

JOHN M. LIPSKI

TRINIDAD SPANISH:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRO-HISPANIC LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION: THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING *BOZAL* SPANISH

The question of Spanish language usage among African-born slaves (known as *bozales*) and their descendents in Spanish America is the subject of much controversy, and has had a major impact on theories of creole formation and the evolution of Latin American dialects of Spanish, Portuguese and French. Briefly, one school of thought maintains that, at least during the last 150-200 years of African slave trade to Spanish America, *bozales* and their immediate descendants spoke a relatively uniform Spanish pidgin or creole, concentrated in the Caribbean region but ostensibly extending even to many South American territories. This creole in turn had Afro-Portuguese roots, derived from if not identical to the hypothetical maritime Portuguese creole (sometimes also identified with the medieval Sabir or Lingua Franca) claimed to be the source of most European - based creoles in Africa, Asia and the Americas.¹ The principal sources of evidence come in 19th century documents from the Caribbean region, principally Cuba and Puerto Rico, where many (but not all) *bozal* texts share a noteworthy similarity with other demonstrably Afro-Portuguese or Afro-Hispanic creoles in South America, Africa and Asia.²

Other researchers, comparing existent Afro-Hispanic texts and contemporary language, postulate that no such uniform *bozal* Spanish ever existed; what was found instead was a rudimentary and broken Spanish pidgin which arose spontaneously each time African speakers were forced to learn and use Spanish under unfelicitous conditions, and this pidgin naturally disappeared after one or two generations. Such Afro-Hispanic language would share few structural similarities from one region to the next, except

for those common to all forms of reduced language and 'foreigner talk', including phonological misidentification, unstable conjugation and concord, simplified syntax and preference for holophrastic utterances with emphasis on communication of basic necessities.

Critically important in assessing theoretical reconstructions of Afro-Hispanic language are test cases which depart from the structural parameters that define putative monogenetic theories of *bozal* Spanish. Among the variables which need to be individually isolated are contact with Spanish dialects where *bozal* features are known to have existed, linguistic input in the form of regional (non-Africanized) varieties of Spanish, and demonstrable existence of spontaneous creolization which differs in essential fashions from reconstructed pan-American *bozal* Spanish.

It is the last of these issues that is addressed by the present study, namely the possibility for development of Afro-Hispanic speech modes in the absence of a prior Afro-Lusitanian or monolithic *bozal* Spanish basis upon which to build. The following remarks focus on Spanish-speaking enclaves of Trinidad, which represent potentially significant sources of new evidence in the evaluation of theories of the African influence on Latin American Spanish. Based on examination of a corpus of recently-collected specimens, it is suggested that Trinidad Spanish as spoken by descendents of Africans shows evidence of earlier creoloid status. The same language samples provide little or no evidence of the unique Afro-Lusitanian creole features presupposed by monogenetic theories. While these data do not directly disconfirm monogenetic theories, they do suggest alternative routes of evolution, as well as greater heterogeneity among Afro-Hispanic linguistic communities throughout colonial and postcolonial Latin America.

THE SPANISH OF TRINIDAD

The official language of Trinidad is English, which at the vernacular level shades into an English-based creole. Earlier in this century, varieties of Hindi were spoken in many rural regions by Indian indentured laborers (Mohan and Zador 1986). In rural regions, creole French *patois* is still current, although few if any monolingual speakers remain. This language was once the lingua franca of all of Trinidad, for towards the end of the Spanish period, Spain encouraged French planters from the Caribbean to settle in Trinidad, together with their creole-speaking slaves. Further immigration resulted from the Haitian revolution, and the Francophone plantocracy together with *patois*-speaking slaves and free blacks dominated most of the colonial life during the British period. Finally, and despite

the close proximity to Venezuela and the historical links with Venezuelan Spanish, an undetermined but very small (considerably less than 1%) of Trinidad's native-born population speaks Spanish as a first or ancestral language; these speakers are scattered throughout the national territory.³ No monolingual Spanish speakers are known to remain, and those Trinidadians who speak Spanish are usually trilingual Spanish/English/*patois* (Anthony 1985:36; Magid 1988:chap. 2). The entire population of Trinidad shares a Christmas tradition of singing folk songs in Spanish, known as *parang* (from *parranda*), although the majority of people who sing and even compose these songs are not fluent in Spanish and have an incomplete understanding of the lyrics (Moodie 1970).

Despite the tiny number of Spanish speakers in Trinidad, three partially overlapping sources for Trinidad Spanish can be identified. The first dates from the Spanish occupation, which lasted over 200 years, ending in 1797, but which never succeeded in settling more than a few hundred Spaniards on the island (Ottley 1971). The Spanish language was never firmly implanted, being immediately replaced by French, French creole and English following the transfer to British sovereignty at the end of the 18th century. Spain left behind no large plantation owners, government or military officials or significant merchant class which would have continued to speak Spanish following the shift of Trinidad's status and at a national level, the former Spanish linguistic presence is felt only in *parang* songs and place names. However, Spanish religious orders (especially the Capuchins) did establish schools and convents for the native Carib population, which then as now was never fully integrated into the *mestizo* and *criollo* population of Trinidad. Today, a few ethnic Caribs continue to speak Spanish, by all evidence a direct continuation of the instruction imparted by the Spanish religious figures, and their language represents the oldest surviving form of Spanish in Trinidad (Brereton 1979:165).

The second group of Trinidad Spanish speakers derives from the immigration of 'peons' from eastern Venezuela, beginning in the first decades of the 19th century and continuing for several decades thereafter (Brereton 1979:8; O'Connor 1978:44-45; Anthony 1974:18-19). Other Venezuelans have subsequently immigrated to Trinidad, but have quickly integrated themselves into the English-speaking society, and have left no appreciable linguistic traces (but cf. Richards 1966, 1970). The first immigrants, however, came from the most marginalized sectors of rural Venezuela, and upon arriving in Trinidad, worked primarily as agricultural laborers and subsistence-level farmers. Since their lives were centered on rural regions, and their socioeconomic condition was not conducive to wider integration, these individuals continued to speak Spanish, often

monolingually, at least until the middle of the 20th century, and many of their descendents are bilingual. Although they may occasionally visit Venezuela and make use of their Spanish language skills, they do not ordinarily maintain contact with other Venezuelans, do not listen to Venezuelan radio stations (which are easily heard in Trinidad) or practice recognizably Venezuelan customs.

The final subvariety of Trinidad Spanish, which will be the central focus of the present study, is spoken by descendents of African slaves who formed part of the Spanish colonial empire in the Caribbean. Although the majority of black slaves and laborers in Trinidad were brought following the departure of the Spaniards, and learned some form of English or creole French, an Afro-Hispanic presence is discernible in Trinidad, consisting of Spanish speakers descended from African slaves or servants either held in Trinidad or in Venezuela (Brereton 1981:25; Newson 1976:121; Magid 1988:chap. 2; Ottley 1971; Moodie 1970b). Unlike the Spanish American nations, in which the African presence is well documented in literary and cultural history, there is virtually no information concerning any variety of Trinidad Spanish spoken prior to the middle of the 20th century, nor of any language variety or register used by Africans in the colonial period. Descriptions of language and culture in Trinidad usually make no reference at all to the Spanish language, or briefly mention the disappearance of all Spanish cultural elements at the turn of the 19th century. Thus for example Brereton (1981:64) mentions that some old Spanish speakers were found around St. Joseph and Arima in the early 1800's [and still are: JML]. Anthony (1974:18-19) notes the continued existence of Spanish speakers in Lopinot, whence they moved from Caura, and Brereton (1979:131) mentions that Spanish was [and still is: JML] spoken among half-castes (mixed European-Amerindian-African) in Arima and the surrounding area. The *Area Handbook for Trinidad* (Black et al. 1976:79), purportedly an objective compilation of geographical and cultural facts, makes the misleading statement that 'French and Spanish creole' is still spoken in some isolated areas. While French creole (*patois*) is still found in Trinidad, there is no Spanish *creole*, but only nonstandard but non-creolized Spanish. Brereton (1979:137) mentions the previous existence of a group of disbanded black soldiers in Manzanilla, who were given land to settle beginning in 1815, and who spoke a 'mixture of military English, Spanish and African languages'; regardless of the accuracy of this designation, the group in question had all but disappeared by 1870. Oxaal (1982:chap. 3) makes the briefest of mention of (earlier) Spanish language, while MacDonald (1986:34-5) states that Afro-Creoles 'often spoke a form of local patois (mixed Spanish, French and English), which was not easily

understood by English authorities'. In 1872, a bishop in Port of Spain stated that 'the language talked in the streets is the scouring of Babel, a negro commixture of French, Spanish and African, to which for Coolies [East Indians] is added mashed English' (Brereton 1979:164). These statements, which are empirically meaningless, reflect two common misconceptions found throughout Latin America, both reflecting racially-motivated prejudice. The first regards the status of creole languages or other folk vernaculars, widely regarded (by outsiders, and by self-effacing apologists from within the groups in question) as patchwork mixtures, devoid of grammatical structure, lacking the capacity for intellectual expression, and having no societal value. The second stereotype, partially overlapping with the first, is that of the 'unintelligibility' of Afro-American speech of any language basis. Remarks to this effect (without exception made by observers of European origin) abound for black American English as well as West Indian English and French, both creolized and noncreolized, and similar statements are found regarding Papiamentu, Brazilian Portuguese as spoken by marginalized black citizens, and Spanish as spoken by Afro-Americans in many countries (Lipski 1985a). The linguistic reality behind such assertions varies; in some cases the Afro-American groups in question do speak a different language or dialect from that of other residents of the same regions, while in other cases what is at stake is simple nonstandard speech of socially marginalized groups of all racial backgrounds.

Coupled with the lack of data on earlier stages of Trinidad Spanish is the absence of accurate linguistic data on Venezuelan Spanish from the regions and groups which reflect immigration to Trinidad in the 19th century. Some configurations can be reconstructed by considering contemporary Venezuelan Spanish, as well as other Caribbean dialects, but an element of indeterminacy remains (cf. Megenney 1988 for Afro-Venezuelan linguistic traits). Finally, vestigial Trinidad Spanish contains a high proportion of semifluent speakers, representing the final stages of a once widespread language, spoken in isolation and in the absence of corrective tendencies; this type of situation, which is normally unstable and lasts at most a generation or two, is conducive to the rapid expansion and even creation of nonstandard and ungrammatical combinations which do not occur among fully fluent speakers. Some configurations produced by semifluent or vestigial Spanish speakers are virtually identical to those attested in earlier periods for nonfluent Afro-Hispanic language (Lipski 1985b), and render difficult the separation of sources of nonstandard material in a given corpus. Despite these caveats, which make any analysis of contemporary Trinidad Spanish at best a tentative approximation, a

research paradigm is possible, and promises to yield key data for comparative Afro-Hispanic linguistics.

POSSIBLE *BOZAL*-TYPE FEATURES IN TRINIDAD SPANISH⁴

Legitimacy of Trinidad data for bozal studies

No application of Trinidadian materials in the reconstruction of *bozal* Spanish will ever carry the same probative weight as a study based on first-hand transcription of living speech communities. *Bozal* Spanish is no longer spoken anywhere (although stable creoles such as Papiamentu and Colombian Palanquero provide indirect evidence of its existence), and early written attestations are notoriously unreliable. In the case of Trinidad Spanish as spoken by Afro-Americans known or supposed to have descended from Spanish-speaking *bozales*, scanty documentation of previous speech patterns, the small size of the group and its social and geographical isolation from other Spanish-speaking communities make it impossible to entirely rule out that forms which deviate from contemporary varieties of Spanish and/or which strongly resemble descriptions of *bozal* speech are the result of linguistic drift and language death.⁵ The following observations embody the claim that enough survivals of *bozal* speech remain in Trinidad Spanish to warrant a systematic comparison with other *bozal* attestations. Although proof lies beyond the scope of the present inquiry, no examples were included in the list of possible *bozal* carryovers that are normally found in any known variety of Spanish, past or present. The speakers whose interviews form the corpus for the present study were quite fluent in Spanish, thus reducing considerably the possibility that language erosion is the main source of configurations which would be grammatically deviant in other Spanish dialects. The conclusion to be drawn is therefore that these deviations represent the evolution of earlier *bozal* forms, which from the beginning were in contact with more or less standard varieties of Spanish in the Caribbean. The following paragraphs contain a pairwise comparison between *bozal* and creole Spanish characteristics and the Trinidad corpus, in an attempt to demonstrate that whereas *bozal*/pidgin features are prevalent in Trinidad Spanish, 'leading indicators' found among Afro-Iberian creoles and used to bolster monogenetic theories of creole formation are conspicuously absent. In view of the nature of the present corpus, and the questionable accuracy of written *bozal* texts, it is not feasible to give the quantitative data regarding occurrence of key forms in Trinidad Spanish as opposed to combinations which are found

in other Spanish dialects, but whenever possible, general observations of frequency will be offered.

Lack of verbal particles

The principal syntactic pattern claimed as evidence of a pan-Hispanic *bozal* dialect, namely use of the verbal particles in constructions of the type *ta* + V_{inf} (e.g. Papiamentu *mi ta skirbi* 'I write/am writing'), are absent in Trinidad. Moodie (a) detected one ambiguous case involving what appeared to be the combination *yo ta olvida*. In this particular example, which is unique in a corpus representing a significant subset of Trinidadian Spanish speakers, the articulation is slurred and this combination may well result from the usual process of morphological erosion and insecurity which characterizes Spanish vestigial and semi-speakers.

Reduction of verbal morphology

Most *bozal* Spanish texts, from the late 16th century onwards and representing Spain and Latin America, show an unstable use of conjugated verbs, rather than bare uninflected infinitives. The most common manifestation is the third person singular verb form (the least marked), followed by use of the third person plural form instead of the first person plural. Nearly every interviewed speaker produced at least some examples of unstable verb conjugation, a phenomenon which is vanishingly rare in even the most nonstandard Spanish of other nations. Naturally, the proportion of grammatically deviant conjugated forms rises among true semifluent speakers (whose speech has not been included among the present examples), but among the latter group the deviations are more random, whereas among more fluent Spanish speakers the gravitation in favor of third person forms is noteworthy. Examples from Trinidad include:

Tó nojotro trabajaban [*trabajábamos*] *junto* 'we all worked together'
Yo tiene [*tengo*] *cuarenta ocho año* 'I am 48 years old'
Asina, yo pone [*pongo*] *todo* 'I put everything like that'
me alegre [*alegro*] *de ehcuchá eso* 'I am glad to hear that'
ehtoy [*soy*] *de la Cueva* 'I am from La Cueva'
Yo no sabe [*sé*] *bien* 'I don't know'
yo no sabe [*sé*] *na de lé* 'I don't know anything about reading'
yo mimo [*misma*] *me enfermó* [*enfermé*] 'I myself got sick'
un poco, no habla [*hablo*] *claro* 'a little, I don't speak clearly'
ello habla [*n*] *medio venezolano y medio indio* 'they speak half Venezuelan

(Spanish) and half Indian (Hindu)
uté no puedo [puede] decir, yo soy un ehpañol 'you can't say, I'm a Spaniard'
ello no coge[n] la gente de Epaña 'they don't hire (Spanish-speaking) people'
nosotro ten[emos] otro pehcado que se come bueno 'we have another fish that is good to eat'
hahta la fecha yo tiene [tengo] conuco 'until now I have a plot of land'
de que yo vive [vivo] en ese paí 'what I live off in this country'
tiene [tiene] tre pie de alto 'he is three feet tall'
cuando yo viene [vine], tiene [tuve] que trabajá mucho 'when I came here, I had to work hard'
yo tienes [tengo] grandeh por ahí 'I have some big (trees) over there'
paltera lo llamo [llamamos] nosotro 'we call them midwives'
nació [nací] en La Pastora 'I was born in La Pastora'.

Reduction of nominal/adjectival morphology

In Afro-Romance creoles, elimination of nominal and adjectival gender is the rule. Among semifluent speakers and in all *bozal* Spanish texts, partial neutralization of nominal and adjectival gender is frequent, and takes the form of nonetymological gender or number assignment, or of inconsistent use of gender and number morphemes across a single noun phrase. As with the case of verb conjugations, nearly all Trinidad speakers produced at least some tokens of unstable gender and number assignment, and as in established creoles, the gravitation toward the masculine gender and the singular form was evident. Among fluent speakers of other nonstandard Spanish dialects, this type of morphological instability is very unusual, except in the case of a few words with fluctuating gender (e.g. *calor* 'heat'). Discrepancies of number assignment are essentially nonexistent among other Spanish dialects. Examples of reduction of nominal/adjectival morphology from Trinidad include:

Ahora tiene casa[s] uno [unas] sobre otro [otras] 'now there are houses on top of one another'
una mujel mayol como yo mimo [misma] 'an older woman like me'
la gente ehpañol [española] de Trinidad lo llame 'Spanish-speakers in Trinidad call it ...'
los [las] gentes de allá, cuando taba mal 'the people there, when times were bad ...'
lo que ello ehtudian en lo [las] ehcuela 'what they study in school'
un[a] canción en ehpañol 'a song in Spanish'
yo trabajaba en la [el] puelto 'I used to work in Port of Spain'

no poco día ninguna [ningún] paí 'a few of them didn't go to any other country'
el [café] arábica [arábico] é mejol 'Arabic coffee is best'
tiene un caro [carro] de la gobierna [del gobierno] 'he has a government car'
yo tengo una libra [un libro] de oración en ehpañol 'I have a Spanish prayer book'
tenían los [las] hacienda lo gente rico [la gente rica] 'the rich people had plantations'
la tiera [tierra] eh bueno [buena] 'the land is good'.

Modifications of the personal pronoun system

Personal pronouns are rarely affected in nonstandard or semifluent Spanish speech, but creoles often exhibit neutralization of pronominal case. In most Afro-Iberian creoles, this is evident in the replacement of *yo/eu* 'I' by (*a*)*mí* 'me', and third person pronouns are frequently neutralized to a single form (e.g. Papiamento *e* (s.), *nan* (pl.)). In the Trinidad corpus, pronominal modifications occur occasionally, and do not point unequivocally to an earlier period when pronominal confusion was more common. However, in nonstandard Spanish of other regions, the occasional pronominal substitutions that do occur are limited to clitic pronouns or the use of subject pronouns after prepositions. Thus the appearance in Trinidad Spanish of object pronouns in subject position, or subject pronouns as possessives, albeit rare, may indeed be the final glimmers of an earlier creoloid pronoun system. Examples include:

Si pa mí [yo] tocaba un cuatro, yo no volví cantá 'If I knew how to play the cuatro, I wouldn't sing any more'
me complace de encontrarse [me] con uhtedeh 'I'm pleased to meet you'
si el gobierno encontraba con tú [te encontraba] con calzón largo 'if the officials caught you wearing long pants'
La salga eh buena pa uté [su] cabeza 'Willow [bark] is good for headaches'.

The last example may reflect creole English usage, which would have 'you/ya head' instead of 'your head'.

Elision of prepositions

This is a common feature of all *bozal* Spanish texts. In other nonstandard Spanish dialects, phonetic erosion may result in loss of *de* and *a* in rapid

speech, but there is usually at least some perceptible residue. In Trinidad Spanish at all levels of fluency, loss of *de* and *a* is frequent, at times even in slow speech, thus indicating that true loss has occurred; substitution of other prepositions is less common:

Hay un poco [de] cacao 'There's a little cacao'

Bahtante fueron [a] diferente lugal 'Many people went to different places'

Si uté pasa [por la] casa [de] Lili 'If you pass Lili's house'

tengo como nueves año [de] no habla español 'I have not spoken Spanish in about nine years'

todo son [están en] Trinidad 'they are all in Trinidad'

un piazo [pedazo de] velso que yo mihmo canté 'a little verse that I sang myself'

diferente clase fruto [clases de frutas] 'different kinds of fruit'

con uté ta sufriendo con la cabeza 'if you have a headache'.

Reduction of syntactic complexity

This is a catchall category referring to generally simplified grammatical structures, avoidance of embedded clauses, conditional sentences and relative pronouns, normally in violation of established grammatical norms. *Bozal* Spanish was characterized by short minimally complex sentences; in Afro-Iberian creoles, this pattern has largely been maintained, with semantically complex ideas being expressed through juxtaposition of syntactically undifferentiated clauses, rather than employing an overtly marked system of verbal subordination. Trinidad Spanish at all levels of fluency tends toward minimization of syntactic embedding, such as relative clause formation. There is a wide variety of syntactic phenomena among nonstandard Spanish dialects, but the following examples from the Trinidad corpus contain syntactic reductions which would be ungrammatical elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world:

Tú tiene [cuando tú tengas] tiempo, viene aquí 'when you have time, come back here'

La gente aquí [que] hablaron [hablaba] español se murieron 'The people here who could speak Spanish all died'

hay bahtante otro negocio que sabemo el nombre lo olvidamo 'there are lots of other things whose names we know but we forget them'

si yo encuentro persona [que] hablan ehpañol, yo creo que yo nunca habla inglés 'if I met someone who knew Spanish I don't think I would ever speak English'

ahora [entre la] gente de edá aquí no se jaya ehpañol 'now there are no Spanish (speakers) among the older people here'

ello hicieron lo gente que murieron de allá salí ya de Caura y viví aquí 'they made the people who died (lived?) there leave Caura and live here'
[si] uté tiene castaño, uté puede comiendo [comerlos] 'if you have chestnuts, you can eat them'.

Use of tener with existential force

This usage, common in Brazilian Portuguese and in Afro-Romance creoles, also occurs spontaneously in some vestigial Spanish dialects (Lipski 1985b). *Bozal* texts occasionally exemplify this usage, which has been included in some monogenetic accounts. Existential use of *tener* is not unusual in Trinidad Spanish, but may reflect creole English 'dey have' or 'it have' for 'there is/are' or creole French *tini* (Thomas 1869), since a majority of the Spanish speakers in the corpus also speak *patois*:

cuando tiene mango aquí tú no puede cargá ehto 'when there are mangoes here, you can't carry them all'

Aquí tenía indio, cuando vivía Ma Lui 'there were Indians here when Ma Luis was still alive'

tenía bahtante bitación de fruta 'there were a lot of fruit orchards'

ya tiene bien poco trabajo 'now there are few jobs'

ahí tiene una molina [un molino] 'there is a mill there'

ahora no tiene na ma 'now there's no more left'

en Carami tenía caña y los indios trabajaba[n] 'in Carami there was sugar cane, and the Indians worked'.

Elimination of articles

Such usage is common in foreigner talk, vestigial language and among Romance-based creoles, in contrast with normally categorical usage by fluent native speakers of even the most isolated or nonstandard dialects. In *bozal* texts, elimination of articles is quite frequent. The proportion of dropped articles in fluent Trinidad Spanish is higher than in any other known Spanish dialect, and hints at earlier stages when article loss was quasi-categorical:

[la] crihtofina cogió [el] puehto del cacao 'cristofina took the place of cacao'

[la] lapa é como un cochino 'a lapa is like a pig'

quería rompé esa casa pa jacé [una] casa nueva 'he wanted to knock down that house to build a new house'

si yo encuentro [una] persona [que] habla ehpañol 'if I meet someone who speaks Spanish'

el camino que llama [la] cohta norte 'the highway called the north coast'
tiene velo [una vela] en su mano derecho 'he has a candle in his right hand'
en [la] ehcuela ahora, hablan la [e] lenguaje 'in school now they speak
 the (English) language'
ante la gente comía de [del] conuco 'before, people ate the food they pro-
 duced on their *conucos* [plots of land]'

Use of redundant subject pronouns

The use of redundant subject pronouns, particularly *yo*, *tú* and *nosotros* is never strictly ungrammatical in Spanish, but categorical use of overt pronouns is not characteristic of fluent native speakers of any dialect. A Spanish speaker who uses overt subject pronouns on most occasions, who uses coreferential subject pronouns two or more times in the same sentence, or who employs two or more noncoreferential 3rd person pronouns in the same sentence does not fit the pattern of a fluent native speaker. In creole dialects, on the other hand, use of overt pronouns compensates for unstable or nonexistent verbal inflection, and use of overt subject pronouns is obligatory in all Romance-based creoles. Trinidad speakers of all levels of fluency use overt subject pronouns at a rate and in combinations which are not found in other fully fluent varieties of Spanish, which may well signify a carryover of *bozal* patterns, in which overt subject pronouns would compensate for unstable or nonexistent verb conjugation:

Cuando ello hablo [hablan], ello comprenden 'when they speak, they understand'

Yo comprendo y yo hablo 'I understand and I speak'

El tiene el cuatro y él juga [toca] y él canta 'He has a cuatro and he plays and he sings'

Elloh quieren el verso que ello hacen ahora 'they like the verses that they are writing now'

cuando yo vine de Caura, yo vine aquí 'when I came from Caura, I came here'

cuando él s'iba a trabajá, él pasaba por una puelta 'when he went to work, he passed through a door'

nosotro no podemos habla lenguaje muy bueno, pero nosotro podemos comprendé 'we can't speak (Spanish) very well, but we can understand'

yo no me acueldo cuanto yo tengo 'I can't remember how (old) I am'

yo me orvidé de cuando yo vine 'I forgot when I arrived'

depué que ello llegaron ello se coltaron el cabello 'after they arrived they cut off their hair'

uhté dice al papa que uhté guhta dea 'you tell her father that you like her'

uté tiene dolol de cabeza uté se amarra esa hoja a la cabeza 'if you have a headache, you tie these leaves around your head'

uté saben lo que uté quieren, y lo que uté tan buhcando 'you know what you want and what you are looking for'.

Phonological wrong division/non-etymological segments

Afro-Romance creoles frequently exemplify wrong division, in which a consonant which normally occurs word-finally or through linking is attached to the beginning of a word. Creole French dialects abound in examples like *zozo/zoizeau* < *oiseau* 'bird', *zami* < *ami* 'friend', etc. Nonstandard Spanish worldwide (including Trinidad Spanish) has *dir* < *ir* 'to go', while earlier *bozal* Spanish show cases like *sijo* < *hijo* 'son' and *sojo* < *ojo* 'eye'. Among contemporary Caribbean dialects, in which syllable- and word-final /s/ is frequently lost (this includes the Trinidad dialect), nonetymological insertion of /s/ is a common form of hyper-correction (cf. Núñez Cedeño 1986, 1988). Most speakers of Trinidad Spanish routinely exhibit wrong division and insertion of non-etymological /s/. This in itself does not constitute evidence of *bozal* carryovers, but in conjunction with other combinations found in *bozal* texts and in contemporary creoles, the large number of words which have undergone phonological restructuring adds support to the Afro-Hispanic connection:

tengo como nueves año no habló ehpañol 'it's been about nine years since I have spoken Spanish'

yo tiene cuatros helmano 'I have four brothers and sisters'

ahora no tienen nas ma [nada mas] 'now they have no more'

a las uno y medio 'at 1:30'

diez años asina o veintes año 'about 10 or 20 years ago'

loh Caribe son loh propio ihraelista 'the Caribs are the true Israelites'

yo tengo una sermana [hermana] aquí 'I have a sister here'

quieren la agua que zentra [que el agua entre] aquí 'they want the water to pass through here'

yo lo puedo comprendel muchos ma 'I can understand much better'.

COMPARISONS WITH EARLIER *BOZAL* TEXTS*Similarities between Trinidad Spanish and earlier bozal Spanish*

There are numerous similarities, as well as significant differences. The principle points of convergence involve instability of inflection (number, gender, verbal inflection), of prepositions, pronouns and the reduction of syntactic complexity. The majority of *bozal* texts from Latin America exhibit characteristics identical to those just given for Trinidad Spanish. A typical non-literary *bozal* example, coming from Cuba in the early 20th century, is (Cabrera 1979:17):

Yo va sé uté lo criollo cuento de mi tiela, pero que no son cuento. Eso son vedá po Dió Santo Bindito y si no son vedá, Mama Punga me condene. Cuando ley Mechó contendia con ley inglés, né ta sentao en su trono y visa que baco inglés ta la bahía. Ley Mechó manda bucá Generá en Jefe. Viene Jefe artillero. Jefe artillero trae alifante grandísimo como montaña. Pone cañón riba alifante. Mete piera, mete yero, metralla, tó, tó que encuentra, tó dentro metió cañón. Acaba y va cogé punterio cuala inglés.

[I am going to tell you local people some stories from my land, but they are not stories. They are true, by God, and if they are not true, may I be damned. When King Melchor was fighting the English king, he was sitting on his throne and he saw that the English ships were in the bay. King Melchor sent for his chief general. The chief artillery came. The artillery chief brought elephants as big as mountains. He put cannons on top of the elephants. He put rocks, he put iron, he put everything he found into the cannons. Then when he was finished he started firing against the English.]

All of the divergences from fully fluent Spanish (including nonstandard but occurring variants) which occur in Trinidad Spanish are also found routinely in *bozal* texts. The discrepancies occur in the opposite direction, where certain recurring *bozal* features are pointedly absent in Trinidad Spanish.

Lack of aspectual particles such as ta

This construction is only attested in Cuban and Puerto Rican *bozal* Spanish, of the 19th century, and may well stem from contact with Papiament-speaking laborers transferred from Curaçao to aid in plantation agriculture in the 19th century Caribbean. A few marginal cases of *ta* appear in Dominican folk poetry attempting to portray the deficient Spanish spoken by Haitians, where it may stand for the Haitian creole aspectual particles *te* (past/perfective) or *ta* (conditional) as misinterpreted by Spanish speakers. There is no evidence that Spanish creole forms based on *ta* ever

existed in Trinidad; in particular significant numbers of Papiamento speakers never arrived in distant Trinidad (as they did, for example in neighboring areas of Venezuela, where some are found today, and where there may have been influence on earlier Venezuelan *bozal* and Afro-Hispanic language). The lack of the particle *ta* in Trinidad is in itself not decisive for Afro-Hispanic theories, since this particle does not survive in other areas where it once appeared. However, Trinidad Spanish may be added to the list of regions exhibiting Afro-Hispanic speech but for which no use of *ta* is attested.

Lack of the pronoun vos

This pronoun appears in nearly all Lusitanian creoles, in Africa and Asia; it also figures prominently in Colombian Palenquero and Papiamento, and occurs occasionally in 19th century Caribbean *bozal* texts. In *bozal* texts which do not give evidence of stable creole features such as those of Papiamento, *vos* does not occur, unless set against the background of a regional dialect of Spanish (such as that of Buenos Aires and Montevideo) where *vos* is in general use among the entire population. As with the case of *ta*, the absence of *vos* in Afro-Hispanic vestiges in Trinidad Spanish weakens but does not discredit claims that *vos* was once widespread in all Afro-Hispanic dialects.

Lack of subject pronouns used as possessives or plural markers

A few sporadic examples in Trinidad Spanish appear to demonstrate subject pronouns used as possessives (e.g. *la sarga é bueno pa uté cabeza*), but there is no indication that such usage was ever widespread. Given that both creole English and creole French as brought to Trinidad use subject pronouns as possessives, the lack of such combinations in any variety of Trinidad Spanish strongly suggests that no variety of Afro-Hispanic language in Trinidad made use of polyvalent subject pronouns.

Lack of widespread pronominal neutralization

Trinidad Spanish shows no evidence of disjunctive object pronouns (e.g. *mí*) used as subject, nor of subject pronouns used as objects, with the exception of combinations such as *para yo, a yo*, etc., frequent in nonstandard Spanish worldwide. Pronominal neutralization appears in *bozal* texts principally in Golden Age Spain, in a direct carryover from peninsular 15th-16th century *bozal* Portuguese (Lipski 1987a). In Latin

America, pronominal neutralization occurred in Palenquero and Papiamento, which are stable and well-established creoles, but is rarely attested in Spanish *bozal* texts.

Lack of *lan/lon/nan*

A curious item which appears in *bozal* texts from the Spanish Golden Age, and which reappears in 19th century *bozal* specimens from throughout Latin America, is the portmanteau item *lan/lon/nan* (for sources, cf. Lipski 1987c):

[Cuba and Puerto Rico]

me garra po nan pasa 'he grabs me by the [curly] hair'
nan cañón hacía ipum! 'the cannon went boom!'
ma que lan tiempo si piere 'even if the time is wasted'
cuando lan galla canta 'when the roosters crow'
nunca se quita nan so 'I never get out of the sun'

[Spanish Golden Age] *Sor Juana Inés*

a *lan Dioso que sa yoranda* 'to God who is crying' (1678).

Although Alvarez Nazario (1974:176) hypothesizes that this item derives from an African third person plural pronoun (perhaps reflected in Papiamento *nan*), *lan/lon/nan* as used in *bozal* Spanish is almost invariably used as a definite article, singular or plural, and never as a pronoun. Unlike the elements mentioned earlier, *lan/lon/nan* does not converge with Papiamento, Palenquero and Afro-Lusitanian creoles, but this polymorphic item recurs throughout the Caribbean and also in Argentina and Uruguay. There are no attestations of *lan/lon/nan* in Trinidad Spanish, although given its disappearance from all contemporary forms of Spanish, this does not necessarily preclude its existence in 19th century Trinidad.

On the positive side of the balance, Trinidad Spanish shares general characteristics of *bozal* texts which reflect imperfect learning, confusion of morphological inflection, false etymology and improvised circumlocutions. None of these items points unequivocally to a uniform *bozal* pan-American dialect and they do not constitute critical evidence in favor of monogenetic creole theories.

CONCLUSIONS

Trinidad Spanish provides another link in the reconstruction of earlier stages of Afro-Hispanic language in the Caribbean. Although Trinidad

Spanish exhibits nonstandard characteristics, as well as creoloid forms resulting from the gradual erosion, there is little convergence with demonstrably related creoles such as Palenquero and Papiamento. This suggests considerably less homogeneity of Afro-Hispanic language across Spanish America than is presupposed by monogenetic or 'pan-American' creole theories.

While the number of African slaves held by Spanish speakers in Trinidad was always quite small in comparison with neighboring countries, Africans and their descendants were exposed to creole French even before the end of the Spanish occupation, and many eventually learned creole English as well. Given the similarity of key structures between creole French and attested Afro-Iberian creoles (including putative pan-American *bozal* Spanish), if creoloid structures were already present in Trinidad *bozal* Spanish, subsequent contact with creole French would be expected to reinforce and extend these constructions. That this has not occurred weakens claims regarding inevitable relexification of existent creoles, and suggests that Spanish as spoken by Africans in Trinidad passed from an unstable pidgin to a stable nonstandard but noncreolized dialect of Spanish, even in the absence of large communities of Spanish speakers.

NOTES

1. For variants of this theory, including both support and criticism, cf. Alvarez Nazario (1974), Granda (1968, 1972, 1978), Hancock (1975), Laurence (1974), Lipski (1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b), López Morales (1980), Megenny (1984, 1985), Naro (1978), Otheguy (1975), Perl (1982, 1984, 1985), Taylor (1971), Whinnom (1965).
2. Cf. Lipski (1987b). In these key *bozal* texts, it is not possible to rule out the possible direct influence of Papiamento on Caribbean *bozal* Spanish, via the introduction of slaves and contract laborers from Curaçao when the sugar plantation boom of the early 19th century necessitated the massive importation of thousands of new workers. Evidence exists that Papiamento was spoken by the *gente de Corsou* in Cuba and Puerto Rico during part of the 19th century, and Papiamento forms appear in *bozal* texts from those countries (Alvarez Nazario 1970, 1974: 146, Bachiller y Morales 1883, Granda 1973, Lipski 1987b). Similar although less definitive evidence also exists for *bozal* Spanish from Venezuela (Aretz and Ramón y Rivera 1955), where communities of escaped slaves from Curaçao mixed with *cimarrones* in Venezuela at an early time period, and possibly gave rise to a high level of linguistic transference. In particular the *ta + V_{inf}* constructions used as evidence in many monogenetic Afro-Hispanic creole theories appear to be direct transfers from Papiamento, or at the very least to be greatly facilitated by Spanish-Papiamento contacts.
3. For initial data on Trinidad Spanish, cf. Thompson (1957), Moodie (1970, 1973, 1982, 1986, forthcoming), Laurence (1970, 1974), Richards (1966, 1970).

4. The following remarks are based on a corpus of tape recorded materials, collected by Prof. Sylvia Moodie and by myself, and representing the last generation of Trinidad Spanish speakers. My field research in Trinidad (in 1984-5) was greatly facilitated by the generous and energetic assistance of Prof. Moodie, whose collaboration I gratefully acknowledge. The combined corpus contains nearly 100 hours of recorded material, by speakers of all levels of fluency, of Caucasian, Amerindian and African descent. For the present remarks, cited examples were produced by Afro-Americans fluent in Spanish. However, given the vestigial nature of Trinidad Spanish, as described above, it is likely that some of the occurring forms represent a diminished level of fluency in Spanish, as compared with earlier, monolingual, generations.

5. In fact, the vestigial nature of Trinidad Spanish has been implicated in accounting for similarities with many known creoles; cf. Lipski (1985b).

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