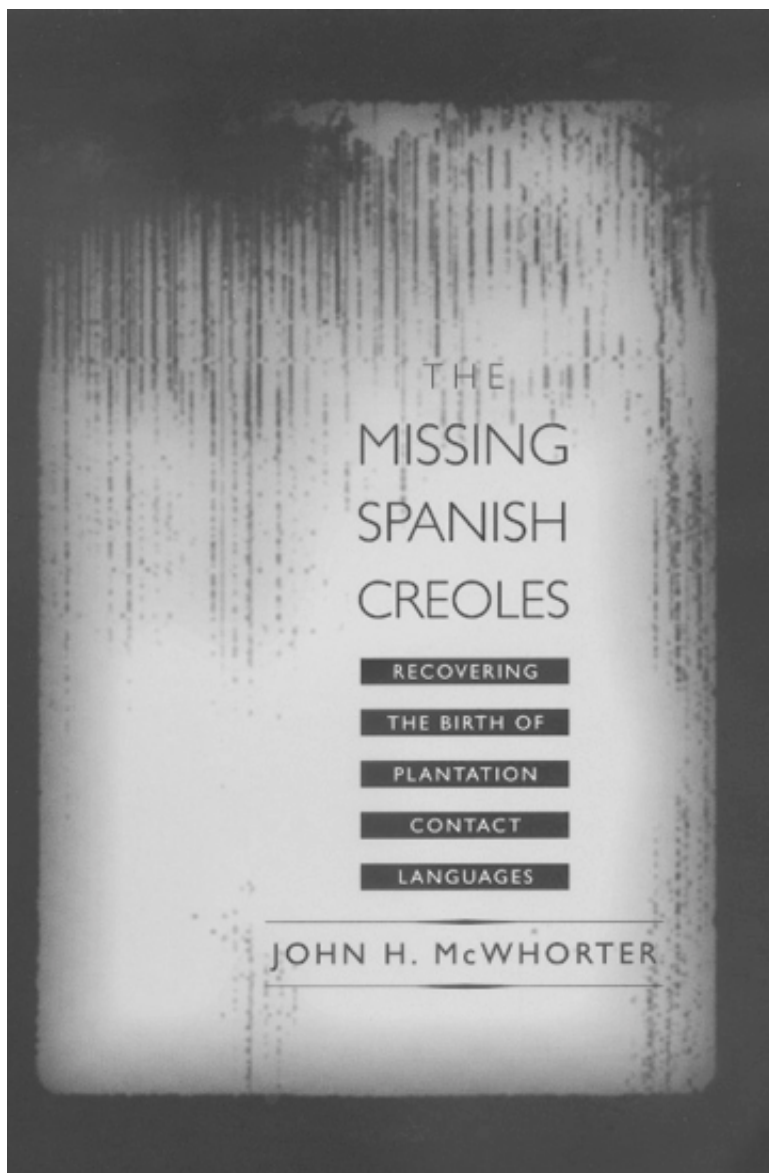


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2 Where Are the Spanish Creoles?

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Forty years of articles, books, dissertations, and presentations have enshrined limited access to a lexifier language as a driving force behind the emergence of plantation creoles. As noted in the previous chapter, while there is great variety among the genesis theories proposed in the field, all of them share the limited access conception as a pivotal component. It is important to recall, however, that the limited access mechanism has never been observed, and documentation sheds only the dimmest of light on the facts. Unlike, say, an interpretation of the causes of World War I, the limited access hypothesis springs not from an examination of empirical documentation, since this would be impossible, but simply from a natural interpretation of the fact that creoles are so often spoken in former plantation colonies, leading to the supposition that something about plantations created the creoles. It is a thoroughly plausible induction that demographic disproportion was the key.

However, what is plausible is not always true. Truth can be identified only via systematic testing, and the limited access conception has yet to be tested *per se*. To truly test it, creolists would have to search out as many plantation contexts as possible where demographic disproportion developed along the lines typical of European plantation colonies, and to ascertain that creoles have emerged in all or most such contexts.

When we actually test the limited access model in this fashion, we find that while superficially plausible when reconstructed for former English, French, Portuguese, or Dutch colonies, the model founders when applied to Spanish colonies. This is a first indication that a large-scale revision of creole genesis theory is necessary.

2.2 COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, PERU, VENEZUELA, AND MEXICO

2.2.1 THE CHOCÓ, COLOMBIA

Creole genesis work on Spanish colonies has generally assumed that under the Spaniards, massive African labor crews were a phenomenon of nineteenth-century Cuba and Puerto Rico. The supposition appears to be that until then, while other powers had developed full-scale plantation economies by the late 1600s, the Spanish were using Africans mostly as domestic help and on small farms.

However, the restriction of this work to the Spanish Caribbean islands is odd, given that it is general knowledge that Spanish colonization of the New World extended much further than these islands. In fact, the Cuban and Puerto Rican explosions of the 1800s were merely the last act in a long tradition of large-scale exploitation of African slave labor by the Spanish. From the early seventeenth century on, the Spanish had gathered massive African plantation and mining crews in their mainland colonies, while their island colonies were still subsisting on small-scale farming. The mainland societies were very much of a kind with the plantation colonies which would emerge later in the century under England, France, and Holland.

Importantly, creoles simply are not spoken in these mainland Spanish settings, contrary to what all leading models of creole genesis would predict. For example, starting in the late seventeenth century, the Spanish began importing massive numbers of West Africans who spoke a wide variety of languages into the Pacific lowlands of northwestern Colombia to work their mines. This context shortly became one which, according to the limited access model, was a canonical breeding ground for a contact language of extreme structural reduction.

In the Chocó region, for example, there were no fewer than 5,828 black slaves by 1778, while there were only about 175 whites—a mere 3 percent of the total population (West 1957: 100, 108). Slaves had little sustained contact with whites. The slaves were organized into large teams, or *cuadrillas*, each formally supervised by a white overseer but actually directed by a black *capitanejo* (131–2). *Cuadrillas* typically consisted of two hundred blacks or more, with ones as large as 567 reported (115–6). One of the most numerically precise hypotheses regarding creole genesis (Bickerton 1981: 4) specifies one in five as the minimum ratio of speakers to learners necessary to produce a creole sharply divergent from its lexifier language. It is significant, then, that in the Chocó, even in the very smallest *cuadrillas*, the proportion of whites would have been, on a day-to-day basis, roughly 3.3 percent, and in most *cuadrillas* the proportion would have been virtu-

ally negligible. Furthermore, slaves were forbidden to communicate with what freed blacks there were (139–40), eliminating the latter as possible sources of Spanish input.

Some creolists might guess that the absence of a creole in the Chocó might be due to there having been a long initial period during which whites and blacks worked in equal numbers, the blacks being thereby able to acquire relatively full Spanish and then pass this on to the larger influxes of blacks later on. For example, Chaudenson (1979, 1992) and Baker and Corne (1982) have observed that a long period of this type prevented the emergence of a French creole on Réunion as opposed to Mauritius, where blacks came to outnumber whites quite quickly.

However, in the Chocó, there was no period of numerical parity between black and white. The nature of mining is such that relatively large numbers of slaves were needed from the outset, and they were immediately engaged in work arrangements ensuring little contact with whites. One of the earliest *cuadrillas*, for example, was established with forty slaves and was increased to sixty-five later that year (Restrepo 1886: 77–8). Sharp disproportion of black to white was not only established at the outset, but also increased by leaps and bounds throughout the 1700s: there were 600 slaves in the Chocó in 1704, 2000 in 1724, and 7088 by 1782 (Sharp 1976: 21–2).

More to the point, the slaves never worked alongside whites as they would have in the English or French Caribbean, but instead alongside Native Americans, who were second-language speakers themselves. Furthermore, the Native Americans had neither lived in intimate domestic conditions with their masters nor been a long-term, stable presence as had the early slaves in Réunion. For one, they were used only for the first fifteen years or so (Sharp 1976: 119–20). In addition, Africans were imported not to supplement and be trained by the Native Americans but to replace them, the Indians tending to die of European disease or escape. In sum, the Indians were second-language Spanish speakers, had had only distant and negative relations with the Spaniards, and had worked the mines for only a brief period during which they exhibited a high turnover rate. The Indians that Africans encountered were thus likely to be recent and miserable recruits unlikely to remain in service for long—they could have transmitted only fragments of Spanish to Africans at the very most.

Today, the descendants of the Chocó slaves live in the same lowlands where their ancestors toiled under the Spanish, subsisting via small-scale mining. Whites, having retreated to the urban centers after the slaves were emancipated, are a negligible presence in the lowlands (e.g., 8 percent by the 1950s; West 1957: 108–9). Relations between blacks and whites are, un-

surprisingly, edgy and distant (Rout 1976: 243–9). In short, we could conceive of no situation more likely to yield a creole: vast numbers of Africans of groups ranging from Senegal down to Angola (Sharp 1976: 114–5), in massive disproportion to whites, with few blacks engaged outside of the trade at hand, all in a difficult-to-access region which the blacks still inhabit in virtual isolation.

Yet the Spanish of black Chocoanos is essentially a typical Latin American dialect of Spanish, easily comprehensible to speakers of standard Spanish varieties:

- (1) Esa gente som muy amoroso. Dijen que . . . dijeron que
 that people COP very nice they-say that they-say-PAST that
 volbían sí . . . cuando le de su gana a ello
 they-return-IMP yes when to-them give their desire to them
 vobe.
 return

Those people are really nice. They say that . . . they said that they
 would come back . . . when they felt like it.

(Schwegler 1991a: 99)

While displaying certain phonological and morphological reductions, as well as African lexical borrowings (not shown above), this dialect clearly lacks the radical grammatical restructuring in creoles such as Sranan Creole English, Haitian Creole French, and São Tomense Creole Portuguese.

To be sure, pidgins and creoles cannot be defined on the basis of specific *constructions*, since any commonly found in pidgins and creoles can also be found in regular languages, thus invalidating them as diagnostic of pidginization or creolization *per se*. However, it is uncontroversial that pidgins (and their creole descendants) can indeed be defined by two developmental *processes* in their past: marked structural reduction and heavy morpho-syntactic interference from native languages (Hymes 1971: 70–1; see also Chapter 5, Section 5.5.3.2).

Along these lines, then, what is remarkable about Chocó Spanish is that, in contrast to Sranan or Haitian, inflectional morphology is robust, and structural transfer from African languages is minimal (but see Schwegler 1991a and 1996a for certain parallels). Thus there is no need to deny the African heritage of Chocó Spanish, nor that it displays a certain degree of paradigmatic leveling. However, this variety classifies more as a Spanish dialect, retaining some traces of second-language acquisition, than as an example of the extreme reduction and transfer typical of Sranan, Haitian, and others.

Such an assessment cannot be based upon a formal line of demarcation between “dialect” and “pidgin/creole”: to require this would be to set up a straw man. Studies such as that of Thomason and Kaufman (1988) have long demonstrated that contact-induced restructuring operates on a cline. However, such clines do not invalidate the usefulness of a perceptual distinction between “dialect” and “creole,” anymore than we would balk at distinguishing a puppy from a dog. The cline acknowledged, few would disagree that Chocó Spanish falls on the “dialect” end.

What is important is that creole theory predicts that the Chocó context would have generated not a second-language dialect diverging only slightly from the local standard, but a more radically reduced, pidginized register, with much higher levels of structural interference from West African languages. In short, the modern situation in the Chocó is a striking counterexample to current creole genesis theory, all strains of which would predict a Spanish creole in this region.

2.2.2 OTHER CHALLENGES FROM FORMER SPANISH COLONIES

Can we possibly ascribe the Chocó situation to a mere fluke, leaving the limited access hypothesis intact? If this were the only such situation, perhaps we could. In fact, however, the Chocó is nothing less than an unremarkable example of a regular pattern in Spanish America.

For example, when Jesuit missionaries settled in the Chota Valley of Ecuador in the seventeenth century, they established massive sugar plantations worked by Africans. Creolists have considered sugar plantations to be a prime context for the development of creole languages because of the vast manpower which sugar cultivation required. Significantly, then, La Concepción hacienda in the Chota Valley, for example, had no fewer than 380 slaves in 1776, the Cuajara 268, and so on (Coronel Feijóo 1991: 88). Slavery was not abolished until 1852. Today, descendants of these slaves live “a life apart” from the surrounding society, separated from the nearest city by a mountain, not marrying out, and considered an exotic local curiosity (Lipski 1986a: 156–9). Again, current genesis theory predicts a creole here.

Yet the black *Choteños* speak a dialect only marginally distinct from the local standard, typified by occasional, but by no means regular, lapses of gender and number concord (*haciendas vecino* “neighboring haciendas”), prepositional substitutions (*cerca con la Concepción* “near la Concepción” instead of *cercade*), article omissions (*porque o próximo pueblo puede ser Salina* “because the next town may be Salina”; Lipski 1986a: 172). Such

things leave the fundamental Spanish grammar intact, including, as in the Chocó, robust inflectional paradigms (see Schwegler 1996b, however, for some evidence of marginal West African structural transfer).

Once again, there was no initial period of parity between black and white which could explain the absence of a creole here. As in the Chocó, the original intention was to use Native Americans rather than Africans, but even they were brought to the plantations in large numbers at the outset. Unlike the English and French, who first devoted the small farms of their New World colonies exclusively to tobacco, coffee, or indigo, the Jesuits bought large swatches of land and devoted them to several products at a time: cotton, livestock, cacao, and plantains as well as sugar (Coronel Feijóo 1991: 63). Thus at one point two Jesuit haciendas were sharing some ninety Indian laborers (85)—clearly a different situation from the intimate interracial contact among a dozen or so whites and Malagasies on small farms in early Réunion. Even this phase, however, lasted a mere twenty years or so after the first haciendas were purchased in 1614. Consequently, when Africans were imported to gradually replace the Indians, it was immediately in the large numbers necessary to harvest and process sugar cane (e.g., a shipment of 114 in 1637 [86]), and by 1780, the eight Jesuit plantations were worked by no less than 2,615 slaves (88).

Two flukes? No—we find yet another example in vestigial, isolated Afro-Mexican communities in Veracruz, descended from African slaves who were imported at the transformation to sugar cultivation in the 1500s, Indian labor having proven unsuitable to the cultivation of other crops (Carroll 1991: 62–5). African labor forces were as enormous as elsewhere in the Caribbean, an example being the two hundred Africans working the Santísima Trinidad plantation in 1608 (65). Yet in the 1950s, the local speech in these Afro-Mexican enclaves was little different from vernacular dialects elsewhere in Mexico (Aguirre Beltrán 1958: 201), as shown in the following sample (with departures from standard indicated in parentheses):

- (2) Ese plan tubo (<estuvo) bien hecho . . . pero si el gobierno
that plan was well done but if the government

atiende (la) ley, ba a causá (<causar) gran doló (<dolor).
follows the law, go to cause big pain

That plan was well done, but if the government follows the
law it will cause a lot of pain.

(Aguirre Beltrán 1958: 208)

The examples continue. Large forces of African slaves also worked sugar plantations in Peru, in coastal valleys south of Lima (Bowser 1974). After emancipation, a large Afro-Peruvian community established itself in cities, retaining their cultural customs, and persisted until the turn of the twentieth century (Lipski 1994: 318). The African-born of this culture spoke a second-language ("bozal") Spanish, predictably, but blacks born in Peru simply spoke the local dialect of Spanish. More isolated Afro-Peruvian communities also survive on the coast today, who also preserve vigorous African influences in their culture. However, they speak nothing approaching a creole; their speech diverges only rather slightly in phonology from the local Spanish (Gálvez Ronceros 1975).

Venezuela is home to a vibrant, consciously Afro-Venezuelan culture of folklore, music and dance, heritage of the heavy importation of Africans to work mines and plantations. Once again, black-white disproportion reigned, such as the 230 blacks on the Mocundo hacienda (Acosta Saignes 1967: 179). Megenney (1988: 53) notes that "in this type of social situation we would have expected to see the formation of a genuine Spanish-based creole with heavy amounts of sub-Saharan influences," but once again, we find nothing of the sort. Megenney finds merely unremarkable phonological quirks and African lexical items (also in the more extensive Megenney 1985).

Thus we see that on a consistent basis, in Spanish plantation contexts, the sharp reduction and heavy morphosyntactic transfer diagnostic of creole languages failed to occur. Clearly this is no mere blip in the data: this is an important contradiction to any creole genesis model assuming limited access to a lexifier as a significant component.

The data above have played no part in the development of creole genesis theory. This is in part because much of the pertinent literature is in Spanish, and is not as copious as that on slavery under the other leading powers. There exists no general survey of Spanish slavery on the comprehensive, authoritative order of Curtin (1969) on the English, Debien (1974) on the French, or Postma (1990) on the Dutch slave trade. Furthermore, the Spanish-language literature often gives only cursory coverage to the African presence. One is continually struck by how many histories of individual Latin American nations—especially those written before the mid-1960s—scrupulously limn a five-century panorama with scarcely a mention of the tens of thousands of Africans forcibly imported into the country over centuries running (Indians, meanwhile, are generally accorded a full chapter or more).

Moreover, in their early stages, scientific investigations typically work

from data most readily at hand (Kuhn 1970: 15). Thus it is natural that genesis theorists have more readily addressed the presence, rather than the absence, of creoles.

None of these things, however, belie two simple facts. One: a viable creole genesis theory must account for these Spanish contexts. Two: a limited access model simply cannot do so.

Of course, if scientists threw away their reigning framework every time puzzling evidence arose, then science would make little progress. Thus it is natural, and even advisable, that when confronted with challenging data, scientists attempt to defend the reigning theory rather than reformulate it. Along these lines, most creolists will prefer to suppose that the limited access conception is valid, and that the facts in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 must be due to some external factor.

On the basis of reactions to this data which I have received in the past, we can classify the responses into five groups. The first three will take issue with my basic claim about the scarcity of Spanish creoles by claiming either that there *are* Spanish creoles, *were* Spanish creoles, or that there *will turn out to be* Spanish creoles. The fourth group will accept my basic claim, but attempt to accommodate the reigning theory to it. The fifth group will claim that there is in fact nothing at issue at all. Below I address all five of these standpoints, and show that they leave our theoretical hole open.

2.3 "THERE ARE SPANISH CREOLES":

PAPIAMENTU AND PALENQUERO

The most obvious response to my claim that no Spanish plantation creoles have emerged would be to point out that Papiamentu and Palenquero are, after all, Spanish-based creoles, and that therefore Spanish creoles *have* emerged in plantation-style systems under the Spanish. This would seem to suggest that the Chocó, the Chota Valley, Veracruz, Peru, and Venezuela are somehow "exceptions" for which explanations will eventually be found. As it happens, however, neither Papiamentu nor Palenquero contradict my assertion.

The reason for this is that while these creoles are clearly Spanish-based *synchronically*, both have been shown to have originated as Portuguese-based *diachronically*. Thus these creoles arose not via the pidginization of Spanish input, but via subsequent relexification of *Portuguese* creoles, which had themselves developed via the pidginization of Portuguese. Thus while unequivocally of Spanish-derived lexicon today, these two creoles leave intact our historical conundrum above: on plantations, Spanish itself

—unintermediated by a Portuguese creole predecessor—was never reconstituted into a stable pidginized variety and transmitted as such.

2.3.1 PAPIAMENTU

It is often forgotten that strictly speaking, Papiamentu is not a plantation creole at all. The soil in Curaçao was too dry for large-scale agriculture (Holm 1989: 313); thus this island was primarily used as a holding camp and entrepôt for slaves shipped from West Africa and destined for other Caribbean colonies. Therefore, Papiamentu emerged amidst Africans working within the slave trade itself and in domestic service, not as a plantation communication vehicle.

However, for many, it will perhaps seem *ad hoc* to dismiss Papiamentu on these grounds, since it was, after all, the product of interactions between African laborers and Europeans.¹ In this light, all evidence points to Papiamentu as the result of a gradual hispanicization of what began as a Portuguese-based pidgin.

This has been most conclusively demonstrated by Goodman (1987), who shows that it would have been simply impossible for Papiamentu to have begun as a Spanish-based pidgin. By the time slaves were brought to Curaçao in any significant numbers (the mid-1650s), there were no Spaniards on the island and only a few Spanish-speaking Indians (367–70). In the meantime, the first slaves were brought into the context by Jews from Brazil, who spoke Portuguese. In addition, for a period, Jews were the only people in Curaçao allowed to purchase slaves (369). Finally, many people running the slave depot in Curaçao had worked previously in Brazil. Thus the setting was ripe for the spread of a Portuguese-based contact language, and the motivation for the spread of a Spanish-based one was nonexistent.

The Spanish reentered the Curaçao context only later, when Spanish-speaking Jews from Holland emigrated there and became the majority among whites. The hispanicization of Papiamentu presumably began at this point, supplemented by the extensive business contacts between Curaçao and the Venezuelan coast. It is important to note that Spanish and Portuguese are so similar that no significant linguistic readjustment was necessary on the part of Papiamentu speakers during the relexification process: as Goodman points out, slaves were probably barely aware of Span-

1. For similar reasons, however, Philippine Creole Spanish will not be discussed, given its complete dissociation from slavery, having emerged via marriages between Iberian men and Philippine women. It, too, however, traces back to Portuguese rather than Spanish; see McWhorter (1995: 228–9).

ish as a distinct language (375). Even today, Spanish and Portuguese are partially mutually intelligible, and they were even closer four hundred years ago. Therefore, there was no need for a new Spanish-based creole to emerge at this point: the Jews from Holland could have adjusted easily to Portuguese-based early Papiamentu, especially since they spoke Portuguese as well (363).

The original status of Papiamentu as a Portuguese-based creole is strongly supported by the undeniably Portuguese items in its core lexicon. Table 2.1 is based on Grant 1996, the most exhaustive assessment and identification of Portuguese-derived items in Papiamentu. Grant's version of this list includes even items whose Portuguese derivation, proposed by other authors, he doubts; I have pared it down to what Grant believes to be the most plausible cases. I have further excised cases where the Papiamentu and Portuguese forms have /e/ where Spanish has /je/ (Papiamentu *téra*, Portuguese *terra*, Spanish *tierra*), as the monophthongization of /je/ would have been a plausible simplification of Spanish in a creole language. On the other hand, I have retained cases where Papiamentu and Portuguese have /o/ and Spanish /we/, as /we/-to-/o/ would be a possible, but much less natural, change. *Kabá* could technically come from Spanish, but its presence in other creoles with no Spanish influence (such as Saramaccan and Negerhollands) suggests that Portuguese was the source as well, especially in light of its use in West African Portuguese creoles possibly ancestral to Papiamentu. Similarly, Grant, citing Munteanu (1991: 65–85), notes that *vai* occurred in pre-1650 Spanish; however, its presence in Portuguese creoles like São Tomense tips the scale to Portuguese again. On the other hand, *antó*, *kaí*, and *lánda* are possibly attributable to nonstandard Spanish varieties, and thus I have omitted them (Armin Schwegler, p.c.).

Papiamentu also has some grammatical features linking it to Portuguese creoles still spoken on the West African coast, which emerged amidst the slave trade starting in the 1500s. For example, the plural morpheme *nan* is also found in Fa d'Ambu (Birmingham 1976: 22). Similarly, the parallel between the Cape Verdean Portuguese *el taba ta kanta* "he was singing" and Papiamentu *e tabata kanta* is striking (20), since this usage is impossible to derive from any Iberian construction and is only one of many possible reconceptualizations of the lexifier material.

Some might argue that Papiamentu could still have arisen from the pidginization of Spanish spoken by the Jews, and that this Portuguese element simply represents residual borrowings from some form of Portuguese now no longer spoken. However, as Megenney (1984) notes, these items are *core* lexical items. If they were tokens of a dead Portuguese variety largely

Table 2.1. Derivation of Papiamentu etyma with Spanish for comparison

| <i>Papiamentu</i> | <i>English</i> | <i>Portuguese</i> | <i>Spanish</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>afó</i> | outside | <i>(a)fora</i> | <i>(a)fuera</i> |
| <i>bai</i> | go | <i>vai</i> (3S) | <i>va</i> |
| <i>batí</i> | to hit | <i>bater</i> | <i>golpear</i> |
| <i>bing</i> | come | <i>vim</i> | <i>viene</i> |
| <i>bong</i> | good | <i>bom</i> | <i>bueno</i> |
| <i>brínga</i> | to fight | <i>bringar</i> | <i>pelear</i> |
| <i>dúna</i> | to give | <i>donar</i> | <i>dar</i> |
| <i>fórsa</i> | force, strength | <i>força</i> | <i>fuerza</i> |
| <i>fóya</i> | leaf | <i>folha</i> | <i>hoja</i> |
| <i>kachó</i> | dog | <i>cachorro</i> | <i>perro</i> |
| <i>kétu</i> | quiet | <i>queto</i> | <i>quieto</i> |
| <i>kobá</i> | to dig | <i>cova</i> “hole” | <i>cueva</i> “hole” |
| <i>lémbé</i> | to lick | <i>lamber</i> | <i>lamer</i> |
| <i>lo</i> | (irrealis marker) | <i>logo</i> “soon” | <i>luego</i> “soon” |
| <i>mai</i> | mother | <i>mãe</i> | <i>madre</i> |
| <i>mes</i> | self | <i>mesmo</i> | <i>mismo</i> |
| <i>mesté</i> | to need | <i>menester</i> | <i>necesitar</i> |
| <i>na</i> | at, on, in | <i>na</i> | <i>en</i> (+ article) |
| <i>nóbo</i> | new | <i>novo</i> | <i>nuevo</i> |
| <i>pai</i> | father | <i>pãe</i> | <i>padre</i> |
| <i>pápya</i> | to speak | <i>papear</i> | <i>hablar</i> |
| <i>pertá</i> | to grip | <i>apertar</i> | <i>apretar</i> |
| <i>prétu</i> | black | <i>preto</i> | <i>negro</i> |
| <i>pushá</i> | to push | <i>puxar</i> | <i>empujar</i> |
| <i>te</i> | until | <i>até</i> | <i>hasta</i> |
| <i>trese</i> | carry, wear | <i>trazer</i> | <i>traer</i> |
| <i>tur</i> | all | <i>tudo</i> | <i>todo</i> |

external to the development of Papiamentu itself, we would expect only concepts unique to Portuguese or African culture, in accordance with the lexical contributions typical of a displaced language.

The origin of Papiamentu as a Portuguese pidgin is strikingly supported by a little-known article by Martinus (1989), documenting a moribund secret language in Curaçao called Guene (<Guinea, i.e., the Guinea Coast of Africa). Guene has features tracing it to Portuguese-based contact lan-

guages of West Africa even beyond those in modern Papiamentu, most strikingly the third-person pronoun *ine*, a substrate borrowing also found in the Gulf of Guinea Portuguese creoles. Crucially, its speakers consider Guene to have been the language spoken by their slave ancestors, and it is particularly indicative that “Guiné” is still what some native speakers of Guinea-Bissau Creole Portuguese call their language (Birmingham 1976: 19). If Papiamentu truly emerged as a Spanish-based contact language, then we would expect any preserved “slave” language to be Spanish-based, like the *bozal* Spanish similarly preserved as a ritual language among Afro-Cubans (Cabrera 1954).

In previous presentations of this argument, I have occasionally been misinterpreted as stating that Papiamentu is not Spanish-based today. It must be clear that I mean no such thing: my point is strictly *historical*. While no one could possibly argue that Papiamentu is not Spanish-based today, synchronic, comparative, and historical evidence show that it did not emerge via an initial encounter with Spanish. Its *initial* lexifier was Portuguese; its subsequent *re*-lexifier was Spanish.

2.3.2 PALENQUERO

Palenquero is spoken in the rural community of El Palenque de San Basilio in Colombia by descendants of maroon slaves. Just as with Papiamentu, the evidence suggests that Palenquero has its roots in a Portuguese pidgin.

We are lucky enough in the case of Palenquero to have an unusually explicit statement from the seventeenth century which suggests that the language did not begin simply as a Spanish pidgin. In reference to his long-term residence in Cartagena, near where Palenquero is spoken, Sandoval noted in 1627 that there were many slaves who had lived in São Tomé who used a “highly corrupt and backwards” version of Portuguese “which they call the language of São Tomé” (*un género de lenguaje muy corrupto y revesado de la Portuguesa que llaman lengua de S. Thome*; cited in Schwegler 1998: 229). This passage suggests that many of the originators of Palenquero already spoke a form of what is today São Tomense Creole Portuguese.

The connection between São Tomense and Palenquero is supported by sociohistorical facts. There are core lexical items from Portuguese in the Palenquero lexicon. Since the slaves cannot have acquired these working under the Spanish who purchased them, this suggests that at least some of the original slaves already spoke some form of Portuguese upon arrival in the New World. Schwegler (1993a) notes the examples shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Derivation of Palenquero etyma with Spanish for comparison

| <i>Palenquero</i> | <i>English</i> | <i>Portuguese</i> | <i>Spanish</i> |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>ten</i> | has | <i>tem</i> | <i>tiene</i> |
| <i>ele</i> | he, she | <i>ele</i> | <i>él</i> |
| <i>bae</i> | goes | <i>vai</i> | <i>va</i> |
| <i>ele (pl.)</i> | they | <i>êles</i> | <i>ellos</i> |
| <i>ku</i> | with | <i>com+o</i> | <i>con</i> |

Another feature of Palenquero more specifically indicates a connection with São Tomense Portuguese Creole itself. The third-person plural subject pronoun is *iné* in São Tomense, while it is reflexes of standard *êles* in other Portuguese-based creoles (*élis* in Kriolu, for example [Kihm 1980: 44]). Palenquero has *ané*, rather than a reflex of Spanish *ellos* (see Schwegler 1993b on Palenquero pronouns). Schwegler (forthcoming) traces this to a Kikongo demonstrative meaning “those,” such that technically the two creoles could have incorporated the Kikongo pronoun independently. This, however, is unlikely: why would both happen to choose an African etymon for the third-person plural specifically, and why would both happen to recruit a demonstrative rather than personal pronoun in the function?

Palenquero also has a postposed anterior marker *-ba* (*ele kelé ba* “he wanted”) which is also found in the Upper Guinea Portuguese creoles. The most likely source for this *-ba* is *acabar* “to finish,” found as *kabá* in other Caribbean creoles such as Sranan and Saramaccan. The particular elision to simply *ba* in both Palenquero and the Upper Guinea Portuguese creoles suggests yet another link between Palenquero and West African coastal Portuguese pidgins (although São Tomense lacks this particular feature). To be sure, Kihm (1989: 366) argues for Manjaku *ba* “to finish” as a reinforcing model for the construction in Guinea-Bissau creole. This analysis is unproblematic, but only reinforces the tracing of Palenquero back to a pidgin formed on the African coast—any Manjaku influence would have much more likely in their West African homeland than in Cartagena, where they would have been a subsidiary presence at best.

Indeed, the Palenques are firmly traceable to present-day Angola (Granda 1978; Schwegler 1993a, 1997). This is significant because Angola was one of the main sources for slaves shipped from none other than São

Tomé (Schwegler 1991b: 170), again tracing Palenquero to linguistic developments on this island. Kikongo is preponderantly represented in the African lexical retentions in Palenquero. Granda (1978: 455–62) notes that in funeral songs, there are Kikongo etyma for even core words such as “speak” (*bobo* from *vóva*). He also notes that their funeral songs include passages such as *Chi ma nkongo, chi ma ri Angola*, decoded by Schwegler (1996b) as Afro-Spanish dialect for “I am a Congolese, I am an Angolan.”

The Angolan influence extends even to pronouns and core grammatical items. Not only the third-person plural *ané* but also the now archaic second-person plural *enú* are borrowings from Kikongo. Furthermore, Palenquero has even retained all three of the singular bound pronominal clitics of Kikongo, *i-*, *o-*, and *e-* (Schwegler 1996c).

Thus we see that Palenquero has Portuguese-derived core lexical items, idiosyncratic structural correspondences with São Tomense itself, and strong interference from African languages spoken by slaves who were shipped via the Portuguese-owned depot São Tomé. All of this is combined with an actual historical citation of the originators of the language having designated their language as related to the very creole of São Tomé. The connection between Palenquero and São Tomense thus seems virtually inescapable. Schwegler, who has most assiduously identified the Portuguese roots of Palenquero, deserves the last word (1991b: 170): “How could so many (clearly deep-rooted) phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical features of Portuguese enter Palenquero, a creole which has not come into contact with Portuguese since its implantation on American soil?”

As it happens, Sandoval also mentions other African slaves speaking a pidginized Spanish (cited in Schwegler 1998: 229), opening up the possibility that Palenquero developed from this, with Portuguese pidgin as the subsidiary presence. However, this would beg the question as to why Spanish creoles did not develop from the first-generation African slaves’ pidgin varieties in the Chocó, the Chota Valley, Mexico, Peru, or Venezuela. The Portuguese pidgin explanation resolves this question thus: it is unlikely to be an accident that the two places where a Spanish creole is spoken today are exactly the two countries where we have particularly explicit evidence—as opposed to marginal linguistic evidence—of a Portuguese contact language being a vital element in the context in which the creole was born. Only in Cartagena do we have a statement as explicit as Father Sandoval’s; only in Curaçao have we encountered a register attributed to slave ancestors which reveals traits now alive in Portuguese creoles on the West African coast. This suggests that the Portuguese pidgin was the key to the

emergence of creoles in these two places; otherwise we would find a Spanish creole today in at least one or two other places.

It should be said that the scholars who have traced Papiamentu and Palenquero back to Portuguese pidgins have had no investment in any contention such as mine that Spanish creoles have never arisen independently on plantations, and certainly not in my broader cross-creole contentions to be outlined in later chapters. They came to their conclusions independently of each other and independently of me. Thus their work reveals what will become an imposing mass of independently gathered evidence which has all pointed in the direction of the Afrogenesis Hypothesis for years.

2.4 "THERE WERE SPANISH CREOLES": BOZAL SPANISH AND THE "EXTINCT PAN-HISPANIC CREOLE"

My analysis of Papiamentu and Palenquero has been relatively uncontroversial in previous airings (McWhorter 1995). However, some Spanish dialectologists and creolists, aware that the absence of other Spanish creoles is anomalous amidst current genesis theory, subscribe to a hypothesis that Spanish creoles must have existed in earlier centuries. The cases for this, however, are problematic.

2.4.1 BOZAL SPANISH

Although the Chocó, Chota Valley, Veracruz, Peru, and Venezuela have been neglected by creole theorists, some scholars have indeed noted that the absence of Spanish-based creoles in Cuba and Puerto Rico requires address. One result has been an argument that the Spanish of African-born slaves (*bozales*) in these countries is evidence of a once-widespread creole.

2.4.1.1 LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

The most influential *bozal* Spanish data was collected in Cuba by Cabrera (1954) from the descendants of African-born slaves, who could still speak the Spanish of their forebears as a ritual language.

We have noted that creole languages can be distinguished by showing sharp reduction in comparison to their lexifiers and extensive morphosyntactic transfer from substrate languages. According to this metric, the first thing to note about the *bozal* Spanish data is that paradigmatic *reduction* is only moderate. For example, in plantation creoles, the lexifier's inflectional

system has been completely eliminated. However, *bozal* Spanish in Cuba displayed vigorous reflections of the local standard morphology, as in the following example:

- (3) Cuch-a canto. To nosotros brinc-ó la mar.
 listen-IMP song all we cross-PAST the sea
 Listen to the song. All of us crossed the sea.
 (Otheguy 1973: 331)

Although the third-person singular preterit has apparently been overgeneralized to all contexts, the stressed *-o* nevertheless contrasts with the unstressed *-a* of the imperative *cucha*. Thus there is overt morphological past marking in *bozal* Spanish, a rare feature in creoles.

Moreover, what reduction there is in *bozal* Spanish is only variable, not regular. For example, Granda (1978: 481–91) was the first to note that *bozal* Spanish displayed many *reductions* in comparison to standard Spanish, such as lack of gender concord, omission of articles, occasional omission of copula, and omission of some prepositions and complementizers in favor of parataxis. The problem, however, is that many of these reductions are merely optional, as Otheguy (1973: 324–5) observed. In other words, the lexifier morphology appeared to have been basically acquired, although not expressed as consistently as by native speakers.

What this suggests is that *bozal* Spanish was merely a transient second-language register of Spanish, something we would expect of African-born learners. Significantly, no scholar arguing for *bozal* Spanish as a lost creole has explained how this data differs qualitatively from the Yiddish-inflected, second-language English spoken by Jewish immigrants to the United States in the late nineteenth century.

Meanwhile, *bozal* Spanish also lacks the *morphosyntactic transfer* from West African languages which we would expect of a plantation creole. The originators of *bozal* Spanish in Cuba were brought mostly from the West African coast, from an area extending from present-day Togo to Cameroon (Knight 1970: 48), with some from Mozambique. By the 1830s, slaves from the Slave Coast (modern-day Togo and Benin) and Mozambique predominated (Paquette 1988: 36). Plantation creoles whose originators came mostly from the Slave Coast area make extensive use of serial verbs, which are largely agreed to be calques on West African constructions (Boretzky 1983: 161–91; McWhorter 1992a). But where we would expect them, they are absent in *bozal* Spanish. Consider the following examples.

Saramaccan Creole English directional serial:

- (4) A wáka gó a dí opoláni.
 he walk go LOC the airplane
 He walked to the airplane.
 (Byrne 1987: 204)

Bozal directional sentence:

- (5) La mué que fue la río.
 the woman that go-PAST the river
 The woman who went to the river.
 (Otheguy 1973: 329)
 (**La mué que andó fue la río.* [*andó* “walked”])

Sranan Creole English sequential action serial:

- (6) Agu sidõ de krei.
 pig sit there cry
 The pig sat down and cried.
 (Herskovits and Herskovits 1936: 176)

Bozal sequential action serial:

- (7) Obon Tanzé e rey mueto que entrá pecao y pasá
 Obon Tanze is king dead that enter-PAST fish and pass-PAST
 bongó.
 drum
 Obon Tanze is the dead king who got into the fish and into the drum.
 (ibid. 327)
 (* . . . *entrá pecao pasá bongó.*)

Note that *bozal* used conjunctions between verbs denoting sequential action, rather than parataxis, as do classic creoles.

Another example is that in plantation creoles with West African substrates, the etymon derived from the comitative preposition also serves as a conjunction within the noun phrase; that is, “with” and “and” are the same word. This reflects a pan-Niger-Congo feature; for example,

Ewe:

- (8) a. M-á- yì **kplé** wò.
 I-FUT-go with you
 I shall go with you.
- b. dzí **kplé** anyígba
 heaven with earth
 Heaven and earth.
- (Westermann 1928: 143)

Haitian Creole French:

- (9) Papa-m **ak** mama-m te vini. (*ak* “with”)
 father-my with mother-my ANT come
 My father and my mother came.
- (Sylvain 1936: 156)

Principense Creole Portuguese:

- (10) Mínú **ki** mwí sé (*ki* “with”)
 child with mother his
 The child and his mother.
- (Günther 1973: 80)

Bozal Spanish lacks this feature:

- (11) Saya Coba, raya Mbele **y** cota Cambiriso (*y* “and”)
 tunic Coba stripe Mbele and coat Cambiriso
 A Coba tunic, an Mbele stripe and a Cambiriso coat
- (Cabrera 1954: 463)

Another example: all of the deep Atlantic creoles use unmarked verbs to express the past as well as the present in many cases. For example, Miskito Coast Creole English *Wi liiv from der an kom down hiir fo stodi. Ai staat to pas mai gried-dem.* “We left that place and came down here so I could study. I started to pass from one grade to the next” (Holm 1978). This reflects a similar encoding of the past with unmarked verbs in the substrate languages:

- (12) É-flè só ná-m.
 he-buy horse give-me
 He bought me a horse.

(Westermann 1930: 50)

Meanwhile, note that in all of the *bozal* Spanish sentences treated here, the past is expressed with a morphological marker.

At risk of belaboring the point, one more example bears mentioning. Otheguy (1973: 327–8) takes the postposing of the demonstrative adjectives in *bozal* Spanish as evidence of West African calquing, as in the following:

- (13) yo só **pierra ese**.
 I be stone that
 I am that stone.

However, he admits that standard Spanish does allow the construction *la pierra esa*, as opposed to the alternate *esa pierra*, and Lipski (1986: 182) notes that this is a common construction in colloquial Spanish. Otheguy claims that the omission of the definite article *la* identifies this as a radical restructuring of Spanish nonetheless. However, a more economical analysis is that the omitted article represents the effects of second-language acquisition on an otherwise fully acquired colloquial construction.

Otheguy (1973), however, while rightly taking issue with Granda (1978, but initially published before 1973), argues nevertheless that *bozal* Spanish signals an extinct creole, taking a different approach. Otheguy attempts to depict certain *bozal* Spanish features as radical reinterpretations of any Spanish dialect, and thus as diagnostic of creole status. However, as Chaudenson (1979, 1992) has demonstrated, in creoles, one must be careful to distinguish true restructurings of the lexifier from mere phonologically “evolved” inheritances from the regional varieties spoken by white colonials. None of Otheguy’s arguments pass that test.

For example, Otheguy analyzes *tá* as a present-tense marker rather than a reflex of the verb *estar* “to be,” and designates this a creole feature absent in any other Latin American Spanish dialect:

- (14) cómo va sé máno branco . . . ? ¡**Tá jugá!**
 how go be brother white be play
 How could I be a white man? You must be kidding!
 (326)

Table 2.3. Present tense and progressive aspect in standard Spanish and *bozal* Spanish

| | <i>Standard</i> | <i>Bozal</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Present tense | <i>júga</i> | <i>júga</i> |
| Present progressive | <i>está jugando</i> | <i>tá jugá</i> |

However, we note that when *tá* appears before verbs, the verbs always have syllable-final stress. As it happens, the semantics and structure of this *tá* + V construction correspond neatly with that of the present progressive construction in full varieties of Spanish (see Table 2.3). While the *-ando* ending is itself replaced by a simple stressed vowel (itself derived most likely from an overgeneralized and phonologically eroded infinitive), the construction occurs precisely where the present progressive construction appears today. Furthermore, the *tá* + V construction is by no means the regular, obligatory way of expressing the present—it coexists with an equally frequent simple present tense with no preceding marker:

- (15) **Hace** saco pá sacá é d'ahí.
 makes sack for take her of-there
 He makes a sack to take her out of there.

(330)

Thus there is no more motivation to analyze *tá* as a “present marker” than there would be to propose a similar analysis for *estar* in full varieties of Spanish.

In a similar vein, Otheguy proposes that *bozal* Spanish distinguished between completivity, marked with verb-final stress, and noncompletivity, marked with penultimate stress:

- (16) Cuch-**a** canto. To nosotros brinc-**ó** la mar.
 listen song all we cross-PAST the sea
 Listen to the song. All of us crossed the sea.

(331)

Otheguy proposes that since this system departs from any Latin American Spanish dialect, it is a structural innovation. However, we must note that preterit endings are stressed in the standard, and the distribution of the stressed ending in *bozal* Spanish corresponds perfectly with that of the

preterit in the standard. Thus we have merely the leveling of a morphological paradigm, not a semantactic departure from the standard system.

The above data are from *bozal* Spanish in Cuba; however, the same analysis applies to similar varieties across the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America. Here, for example, is a sample of *bozal* Spanish from Puerto Rico, from a play written in 1852 (taking place in the previous year) in which one character is an African-born slave and speaks in a particularly reduced variety of Spanish. Here is a representative selection:

(17) Tu siempre ta jablando a mí con grandísima rigó.

you always be talking to me with great rigor

yo ta queré mucho a ti; grande, grande así—

I be want much to you big big thus

son mi sufrimienta . . . si tú ta queré mi corazón . . .

be my suffering if you be want my heart

You are always talking to me with great harshness. I love you very much, greatly, greatly so—you make me suffer . . . if you want my heart . . .

(Alvarez Nazario 1961: 388)

Of course, the writer most likely adapted the genuine register towards the standard somewhat in the interest of comprehensibility in the theater. However, the features shared with Cuban *bozal* Spanish indicate that the passage is relatively representative of the actual variety, and thus my analysis of the Cuban selections can be applied here as well.

Clearly, *bozal* Spanish departed from the local Spanish varieties in terms of paradigmatic levelings—no fully transmitted dialects of Spanish are known to be phonologically or inflectionally reduced to quite this extent. However, the linguistic evidence gives much reason to suppose that this was simply the incompletely acquired, second-language Spanish of an immigrant generation.

2.4.1.2 SOCIOHISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Sociohistorical depictions of *bozal* Spanish reinforce this analysis. For example, just as the moderateness of the reduction would lead us to expect, contemporary testimony depicts *bozal* Spanish as mutually intelligible with the Spanish of whites. Pichardo (1862: vii) notes in reference to *bozal* Spanish that “it can be understood by any Spaniard, except for some words

known to all which need to be translated". Similarly, we encounter instances such as an instruction to priests in 1796, when working with *bozales*, to "talk to them in the kind of language they use, without cases, tenses, conjunctions, agreement, order" (Castellanos and Castellanos 1992: 349).

Although the language produced by someone following these instructions would certainly diverge considerably from actual *bozal* Spanish, the very fact that such an instruction was given implies a closer relationship between *bozal* and the local standard than between, for example, Sranan and English. Early written accounts of Sranan (Voorhoeve and Lichtveld 1975: 280–2) and Haitian (DuCoeurjoly 1802) treat them as separate languages and do not imply that the creoles are in any sense within the competence of Europeans through the application of some simple reductions. It is significant that while grammars were compiled of these two creoles, no such grammars were thought necessary for *bozal* Spanish. Instead, brief lists of *bozal* vocabulary items (Castellanos and Castellanos 1992: 350) were considered to suffice for the use of the Spaniard.

Furthermore, contemporary sources strongly support our suspicion that *bozal* Spanish was a transient second-language register, not a transmitted badge of ethnic identity. Pichardo (1862: iii) noted that "the Negroes born in Cuba talk like the local whites," and he was not the only person to make this observation (Bachiller and Morales 1883: 100–1; cited in Castellanos and Castellanos 1992: 353). Thus the claim that *bozal* Spanish is an extinct creole is supported neither by linguistic nor sociohistorical evidence.

Seen in perspective, the *bozal* Spanish literature typifies a tendency in creole studies to read moderate morphological reduction in a postcolonial language variety spoken by blacks as evidence of an extinct creole. In some cases, the evidence supports this. For example, Barbadian Creole English (Bajan) today is a highly metropolitanized dialect; its speakers do not generally consider themselves to speak a "patois." Nevertheless, sociohistorical plausibility long suggested that a more basilectal creole had once obtained (Cassidy 1980, 1986). In confirmation, field work has unearthed pockets of creole speakers (Roy 1986; Rickford 1992), and historical documentation has finally confirmed that a creole was once widespread (Rickford and Handler 1994; Fields 1995).

As often as not, however, the evidence suggests that the current situation is more or less the original. For example, a decades-long search just as diligent as the one on Bajan has failed to give any compelling evidence that Gullah itself was once spoken throughout the deep American South and

that African-American Vernacular English is its decreolized descendant. Chaudenson's (1981a) case that Réunionnais French was previously as basilectal as Mauritian Creole French is a similar case (see Section 5.5.3.4), and despite top-quality research (e.g., Holm 1987, the work of Alan Baxter [De Mello et al. 1998]), Brazil has yielded only tentative evidence that a creole Portuguese was once spoken there.

These searches are eternally considered "open," however—usually less because the evidence suggests this than because the unearthing of a lost creole would be useful to general concerns. The discovery that Gullah was once spoken across the South would be advantageous to continuum-based models of decreolization, not to mention to the legitimization of Black English. For Chaudenson, a lost Réunionnais basilect would bolster his view of creoles like Mauritian as extensions of regional dialects, via proposing that Réunionnais, a clear derivant of Bourbonnais French, was once merely an intermediate step in a smooth progression of lects down to a Mauritian-like basilect. Meanwhile, the search for a Brazilian creole is motivated by the awkwardness of its absence in view of the limited access model.

However, we must always be open to the possibility that the object of such searches may not have existed. In this light, our question must be, Can it be said that the investigators of *bozal* Spanish have presented us with evidence as solid as the investigators of Barbados have? They have not: instead, the citations show not a creole but a second-language register, and contemporary observations depict it not as a new language in any sense, but as a variety understandable to local whites and spoken only by newcomer slaves. In other words, *bozal* Spanish was no more remarkable a phenomenon than Ellis Island English.

2.4.2 AN EXTINCT PAN-HISPANIC CREOLE?

Related to the *bozal* Spanish argument is a more general one claiming that a Spanish-based creole was once spoken throughout the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America, but that it now survives only in El Palenque as Palenquero, having everywhere else decreolized and disappeared in response to normative pressure from Spanish (Bickerton and Escalante 1970: 262; Granda 1978; Schwegler 1993a, 1996a). However, there is much reason to assume that no such creole ever existed.

The main problem with this argument is basic sociolinguistic implausibility. Sociolinguistics has taught us that vernacular dialects tend to be hardy in competition with dominant standards, and that it takes a great deal more than mere exposure to standard dialects in school to eliminate them

from a speech community. In creolophone communities, authors such as Rickford (1986a) have shown that while the standard indeed has a definite prestige because of its association with advancement, basilectal and mesolectal registers have just as powerful a covert prestige and are maintained as symbols of racial and social identity (see also Mufwene 1991b).

The “covert” aspect is important: we must not be misled by the notorious lack of fit between informants’ statements to outsiders and their actual behavior—another lesson which the study of language attitudes and language planning has demonstrated repeatedly. Thus Schwegler (1991a: 90), for example, notes that in the Chocó, “constant influence from the schools . . . checks and corrects ancient local linguistic customs,” and quotes an informant as saying that “everybody thinks that to speak well is to get ahead, and nobody wants to go back to the old way” [translation from Spanish mine]. To read this, however, as meaning that schoolroom chastisements and negative evaluation from outsiders would lead a long-established, isolated, vital community to shed the language expressing their very souls in warm, casual interactions is quite implausible. Creolophone speakers make similar devaluative comments about their speech across the English and French Caribbean, for instance, and yet the creoles persist, Belizean English Creole being a well-studied example (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985). Claims for an extinct pan-Hispanic creole are incomplete without an explanation for why the basic tenets of sociolinguistics were suspended in the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America.

To be sure, creoles *can* disappear via decreolization. However, this follows from the erosion of the social identity the creole expressed. Clearly, the isolation in which black Chocoanos or Ecuadoran *Choteños* live is hardly conducive to such an erosion. If schoolroom pressure were actually enough to erase a creole in the Chocó, then we would certainly not expect black urban Belizeans or Martiniquans to speak creoles, and yet they have, do, and by all indications, will.

Thus we must ask, Why would a Spanish creole in the Chocó vanish while African-American Vernacular English is vibrantly transmitted to generation after generation of even middle-class American blacks, despite its notorious devaluation in schools? A more likely interpretation of the Chocó and other former Spanish colonies is that a creole never was spoken, and that a community variety of Spanish itself has always served as the vernacular.

Furthermore, even if a case could be made for why local conditions did erase a Spanish creole in *one* Spanish colony, given the basic rarity of complete decreolization, how likely would it be that the pan-Hispanic creole

would have vanished *everywhere* but El Palenque de San Basilio? Indeed, normative pressure is exterminating Palenquero today. However, we certainly would not expect this to occur so uniformly in Spanish America only.

Finally, the pan-Hispanic creole reconstruction is particularly implausible when viewed through a cross-colonial perspective. Namely, the hypothesis lacks an explanation as to why such normative pressure was so strong only under the Spanish. One creolist once argued to me that eloquence in standard registers is closely associated with manhood in Spanish-speaking cultures (the quote from the black Chocoano above could be seen as illustrating this). This acknowledged, the question simply is, What about the French? The French are notorious—more so than the Spanish, even—for their association of eloquence in the standard with status and legitimacy. Nevertheless, in Martinique, now officially even a *département* of France, French and the creole exist in a diglossic relationship in which French is treated as the hallowed vehicle of a noble culture while the creole is predictably stigmatized, to the point of being declared “dead” by some Martiniquan intellectuals. However, it is well known in creole studies and beyond that Martiniquais is a thriving language. Normative pressures are quite similar in the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America and thus cannot be seen as responsible for the “disappearance” of a former creole across the entire hemisphere (especially with such uncanny consistency). As Laurence (1974: 498) put it, “It seems inconceivable that if Spanish creoles did in fact exist, they should have disappeared so completely without leaving behind some residual traces.”

Since Laurence’s statement, Schwegler (1996a) has identified what he presents as just such traces of an original pan-Hispanic creole throughout the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America. However, he traces these clues back ultimately to the *Portuguese*-based pidgin of São Tomé; specifically, a double negation pattern and Portuguese lexical remnants.

I take no issue with slaves having imported a *Portuguese* pidgin to the New World; indeed, as noted in Section 2.3.2, the evidence allows no other interpretation. However, I cannot follow Schwegler in his subsequent conclusion that the pidgin was relexified into a *Spanish* pidgin or creole across the Spanish Caribbean and Latin America, rather than only in Cartagena (where Palenquero formed) and Curaçao. I maintain that it is extremely implausible that a widespread Spanish creole would have disappeared so completely, and that it is much more economical and theoretically sound to assume that a Spanish creole developed, via *relexification* of the *Portuguese* pidgin, only among the ancestors of today’s Palenquero and Papiamentu speakers.

After all, traces of Portuguese pidgin in a variety of Spanish do not automatically imply that the Spanish itself was once a pidgin—other interpretations of this data are equally plausible. Pidgins and creoles can contribute lexical items and isolated grammatical influences to regular languages, just as regular languages do to each other. In other words, a more elegant interpretation of Schwegler's data is that the Portuguese pidgin traces were adstratal influences amidst the full acquisition of Spanish, with no necessary intermediate step of a Spanish creole.

My view hardly requires that there may not have been some Spanish-based creoles elsewhere in Spanish America in the past. Indeed, Granda (1978: 416–7) notes that a now-extinct creole was once spoken in the inner Colombian town of Uré by descendants of slaves who escaped from gold mines in the Antioquia province. It should be said that Granda gives no data and was unable to actually visit Uré. However, assuming that the creole existed, it is most likely that it, too, was based upon an imported Portuguese pidgin. If it were simply the result of a direct encounter with Spanish, then we would expect Spanish creoles in the other Spanish American locales where in fact, there are none.

Thus as noted, many scholars will respond to my interpretation of the Chocó, the Chota Valley, Veracruz, Peru, and Venezuela with the claims that either there *are* Spanish creoles elsewhere, or that there *were* Spanish creoles in the past. Both claims are highly questionable. The Spanish creoles which exist do not appear to have developed via the pidginization of Spanish itself: Palenquero and Papiamentu began as Portuguese pidgins, with Spanish lexicon a later overlay. The *bozal* Spanishes were mere second-language varieties spoken by first-generation arrivals, no more “creole” than the “Yiddishe dialect” of English in turn-of-the-century popular songs about the Lower East Side. The argument that there was once a Spanish creole spoken throughout Spanish America unduly strains sociolinguistic credibility, and the small amount of empirical evidence for it (Portuguese pidgin remnants) is easily accounted for as simply adstratal phenomena.

2.5 “THERE WILL TURN OUT TO BE SPANISH CREOLES”

Many creolists have long hoped that a Spanish-based creole would turn up spoken by a hitherto unstudied Afro-Hispanic group, with Cuba figuring especially large as a possibility. I am the last one to quarrel with hope. However, “they’ll turn up” would have been a stronger counterargument in the 1960s, when less field work had been done. However, at this writing, we have seen thirty years of assiduous field work, during which travel

has become easier, two new generations of creolists have been born, and a small army of linguists, anthropologists, and folklorists (mostly Spanish-speaking) have generated a considerable literature on Afro-Hispanic populations (as the bibliography of, for example, Lipski 1994 attests). Moreover, during all of this, a paradigm has coalesced which makes the scarcity of Spanish creoles a ringing anomaly, begging the discovery of one.

To be sure, work remains to be done. However, would not we expect that after all this time, given the obvious fact that the discovery of a new Spanish creole would make a career, that *someone* would have found a Spanish creole other than Papiamentu and Palenquero *somewhere* across the vast expanse of the Caribbean and Latin America?

2.6 ACCOMMODATING THE THEORY TO THE DATA:

SOCIÉTÉS D'HABITATIONS VERSUS PLANTATIONS

There are scholars who have concurred that no plantation Spanish creole exists, ever has, or is likely to be found. However, instead of reading this as an indication that the limited access model is mistaken, they have attempted to explain it via extenuating circumstances. Successful though many of these arguments have been in themselves, they have all addressed an incomplete data set.

These treatments hinge upon a conception encapsulated in a classic study of Indian Ocean French creoles by Baker and Corne (1982). These authors argue that in plantation societies, disproportion of black to white transformed a European language into a creole only in cases where such disproportion set in soon after the establishment of the colony. If instead, there was a long period of demographic parity between whites and blacks, then by the time massive slave importations began, enough slaves in the society had been able to acquire a full enough register of the dominant language that subsequent arrivals were able to acquire a similar register from them, despite limited access to Europeans themselves. The test case for this hypothesis is Mauritius and Réunion. Slaves were imported to Mauritius in large numbers soon after its colonization, and a deep French-based creole emerged there. Réunion, however, became a sugar plantation society only in the nineteenth century after having begun as a society of small farms (*sociétés d'habitation* in Chaudenson's [1979, 1992] terminology) inhabited by whites and Malagasy spouses and servants in close interaction, followed by a long period of coffee cultivation, which required less slaves than sugar cultivation. Thus during the eighteenth century, slaves brought to Réunion had acquired a restructured, but hardly pidginized, variety of

French. Thus this variety was acquired even by the massive numbers of new slaves brought in at the transformation to sugar, because new slaves were able to acquire this register from older slaves.

Many have argued that the absence of Spanish creoles is due to conditions similar to those in Réunion. According to this argument, Spanish colonies were devoted to small farms, on which blacks and whites worked together in equal number, until conversion to sugar plantation economies in the nineteenth century (Mintz 1971: 481–5; Megenney 1985: 221; Chaudenson 1992: 124–8). This argument is indeed quite valid for Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, as even I myself (McWhorter 1995: 223–6) have argued.

In terms of Spanish colonization as a whole, however, this argument is fatally hobbled by addressing only the Spanish Caribbean islands, while neglecting the many similar Spanish plantation systems which the Spanish established in their mainland colonies. Crucially, these colonies did not follow the Réunion-style sociohistorical trajectory.

From treatments such as Chaudenson's and my own, a general impression has developed in creole studies that the late development of large plantations in the Spanish Caribbean was analogous to the delayed conversion to sugar plantations in English, French, and Dutch possessions, with the Spanish having simply taken 250 years (from the mid-1500s to about 1800) to make the conversion rather than a few decades (from the early to late 1600s) as did the other powers. In fact, the Spanish had the same expansionist bent as the other powers, and restricted their Caribbean islands to small-scale farming only because their mainland colonies offered richer opportunities for the establishment of large-scale plantation economies. In other words, the other powers began sugar cultivation by transforming their island colonies on site; the Spanish, however, moved to the mainland to accomplish this transformation.

One problem for the Spanish island colonies was that geographically, they were exposed to rampant piracy from the English and French, who in the 1500s and early 1600s had yet to establish footholds in the New World. In addition, the Spanish were not as committed to large-scale sugar production in the Caribbean as the other powers would be, out of a mercantilist commitment to avoid competing with the sugar grown in Spain itself (Guerra y Sanchez 1964: xv, Blackburn 1997: 138). The mainland colonies, on the other hand, offered two advantages. One was that, the Spanish colonies themselves needing a sugar supply, sugar could be grown in mainland colonies without interference from piracy. Second was that the Spanish were quite committed to mining gold and other metals, and these were in

much greater abundance in the mainland colonies than in the islands. As a result, the Spanish concentrated their plantation-scale activities in New Spain (Mexico), New Granada (Colombia) and Peru (Blackburn 1997: 137–9, 142–4).

In these colonies, then, large-scale agriculture was an initial goal, small-scale farming having been established and found insufficient on the island colonies. The on-site farm-to-plantation development of the Spanish Caribbean islands in the 1800s was in no way a pan-Hispanic phenomenon. More specifically, the long period of intimate interracial contact—that is, the *société d'habitation* stage familiar to scholars of English and French creoles—simply did not exist in the mainland colonies.

For example, Africans indeed were not brought to the plantations immediately; the original Spanish intention was to use Native American labor. However, the Native Americans were in no sense stand-ins for the early Malagasy slaves in Réunion. They had not coexisted with Spaniards on the stable, long-term basis which would have led them to develop viable second-language varieties of Spanish to pass along to later African arrivals, as whites and older slaves passed on French to new slaves in Réunion. As we have seen, the Native Americans had been used by themselves only briefly, tending to either perish from European diseases or escape. Furthermore, they had not shared households with their masters, often even working under the *encomienda* arrangement which allowed them to live in surrounding villages.

Since the Native American population was waning via death and escape as the Africans came, the proper analogy is not with older slaves passing on French in Réunion, but with the white indentured servants in many early English and French colonies, who at the transformation to sugar were on the wane like the Spanish American Indians, serving limited terms of service and replaced, not supplemented, by slaves. Since creoles emerged in such societies, it is clear that input from the servants did not put a brake on the establishment of creoles once large influxes of slaves were imported. It would therefore be impossible to argue that Native Americans could have been responsible for preventing the emergence of creoles in Spanish America, especially since, unlike the English and French servants, they were second-language speakers of the lexifier.²

2. This is not to say that sociohistorical configurations in the mainland Spanish colonies were *always* of the type which would lead us to expect a creole. In Bolivia, for example, Africans were imported only in moderate number, often worked on small plantations in intimate contact with indigenized mulattoes and Indians, and upon emancipation intermarried with Aymarans and have identified culturally with

We also seek in vain for evidence that blacks ever coexisted in equal number with whites during or after the transition from Native American labor in the mainland Spanish colonies. As we saw in Section 2.2.1, in the mines of the Chocó there was no period of relative black-white parity which could have allowed relatively full acquisition by earlier slaves, nor was there in the Chota Valley, as we saw in Section 2.2.2. In Veracruz sugar was grown at the founding of the colony rather than after a later transition from less demanding crops (Carroll 1991: 42), and the plantations were begun on a large scale, rather than increasing gradually in size over the decades. A typical example is the Albornoz plantation, for which 150 slaves were purchased at the outset rather than accumulated gradually (63); Hernán Cortés himself is documented to have stocked his new sugar plantations with large single purchases of slaves (202). In Venezuela, as in the Chocó, the mines made a *société d'habitation* stage especially untenable: the Cocorote mine was founded in 1620, and after thirty short years, had 114 slaves, 50 Native Americans, and a mere 16 or so whites (Acosta Saignes 1967: 153–7). In Peru, as in the Chota Valley, a given estate usually cultivated a variety of crops at one time and thus immediately required much more than a handful of slaves. In the early 1600s, slave forces of more than 20 were typical, while some plantations had 40 or more slaves (Bowser 1974: 89, 94–5).

In sum, creolists have granted a great deal of useful attention to the social histories of colonies like Barbados, St. Kitts, Suriname, Martinique, and Cuba, their extended and sociologically intriguing *société d'habitation* periods having been widely discussed in the field. It must be clear, however, that one encounters nothing of the sort in the social histories of mainland Spanish colonies.

2.7 THE SPANISH AS KINDER, GENTLER COLONIZERS

Mintz (1971) is an example of an occasionally encountered claim that the scarcity of Spanish creoles was due to Iberians having presumably been more racially tolerant than other Europeans, leading to interracial relations more conducive to full acquisition of the lexifier than elsewhere. It is specifically often noted that manumission of slaves was common in Spanish colonies (Mintz 1971: 488; Laurence 1974: 492) and that the dedication of

them (Crespo 1977; Lipski 1994: 186–7). Thus the absence of a Spanish creole in Bolivia is quite predictable under current creole genesis models. However, this is not the case in the other colonies I have discussed.

Catholic Spain to religious instruction for its slaves led to richer language transmission (Chaudenson 1992: 124–5).

Once again, however, these arguments apply to only a sliver of the proper data set. Throughout Spanish America, it can indeed be argued that in certain contexts, Africans were not as sharply delineated as subhuman as they were under other powers. This appears partly to have followed from the fact that Iberians had imported large numbers of Africans to Portugal and Spain as house servants before beginning to utilize them in plantation colonies. Intimate contact inevitably made the basic humanity of a maid or footman more apparent than that of a fieldhand rarely encountered except in passing. This would also have been the case in many of the Iberian colonies themselves, where comparatively large proportions of Africans were used not in plantation gangs but as individual laborers for single urban households or in small groups on farms. As we have seen, in the slow-developing Spanish Caribbean islands, few Africans were even used as plantation laborers at all until the 1800s.

However, whatever fluidity in racial conceptions this situation conditioned, it predominated only in towns and on small farms. When it came to large-scale plantation agriculture, as Blackburn (1997: 237) succinctly puts it, “There was unpleasant work to be done, and even tender-hearted whites would be grateful for a system of slavery which gradually allowed them to be relieved of it,” and all evidence demonstrates that the brutal exigencies of sugar cultivation obliterated any significant affection or clemency towards black slaves.

For example, the conversion to a sugar economy transformed Cuba into the same hell on earth for slaves that other powers’ colonies were. Sugar plantations required more manpower, longer hours, and caused more injury and death, than any other plantation type. Life for slaves on Cuban sugar plantations was by all accounts as degraded and miserable, and relations between masters and slaves as negative, as on any New World plantation, if not more so. The death rate was as high as 10 percent per year, such that the slave population increased more through new purchases than births. At any given time, 20 percent to 40 percent of the slave force was in sick bay due to injuries (Paquette 1988). Sugar plantations were considered the worst possible lot for an African-born Cuban, and consignment to one was used as the direst disciplinary threat to slaves working in more benign contexts elsewhere in Cuba (Knight 1970: 82; Klein 1967: 150; Paquette 1988: 39). Finally, rates of manumission declined severely after the advent of sugar, due to the high demand for labor (Knight 1970: 93).

The same horrors are painfully apparent in the mainland colonies. For

example, although in Colombia there was indeed a comprehensive slave code established in 1789 to protect slaves from abuse, most slaveowners in the Chocó had no access to it, and the small numbers of people involved in the mining operations did not justify the expense of traveling into the interior to enforce the code with any effective regularity (Sharp 1976: 128). Similarly, the oft-cited restraining influence the Catholic church had upon the treatment of slaves in certain periods of Spanish colonization held negligible force in the Chocó: clerics were in short supply and were often slaveowners themselves (Sharp 1976: 130–1). This also eliminated the possibility of slaves being taught Spanish during religious instruction. Thus slavery was a typically miserable experience: work proceeded from sunrise to sundown, often six days a week (136), and flogging was a regular punishment for any perceived offenses (139–40). The most unequivocal evidence of the misery of the slaves' lot is the simple fact that escapes and revolts were common (140).

Slavery was similarly oppressive in the Chota Valley where, for example, religious instruction was deliberately withheld, whites were notoriously cruel to slaves, and interactions between slave and white were strictly discouraged (Jaramillo Perez 1962: 52–3). Nor was Iberian racial tolerance evident in Veracruz, where slaves were regularly blinded, maimed, and infected with disease during their work (as they were on all Caribbean sugar plantations), and after emancipation were socially marginalized and disenfranchised (Carroll 1991: 82–5). In Peru, manumission of plantation slaves was rare (Bowser 1974: 298–300), corporal punishment was common (231), and religion was withheld even to the point of denying slaves their last rites (236). In Venezuela, blacks were actively maintained as the lowest caste, and their movements were restricted (Acosta Saignes 1967: 297–303). It appears almost unnecessary to state that racial harmony cannot be treated as the reason the descendants of slaves in mainland Spanish colonies speak no creoles.

2.8 “NOTHING IS AT ISSUE”:

THE “CASE-BY-CASE” ARGUMENT

A growing strain of creolist thought emphasizes that the genesis of each creole was a response to a different combination of factors in each colony, requiring thorough examination of the facts in each locale and a general wariness of universal formulas. This movement from the “lumping” tendency of earlier creolist thought (the source of monogenesis, the bioprogram and *Comparative Afro-American*) to a “splitting” one (the source of

Siegel's exhaustive 1987 study of Fiji, the work of Claire Lefebvre, and Speedy's 1995 proposal of two creoles in Louisiana), is partly a reaction to the sweeping orientation of Bickerton's (1981, 1984a) Language Bioprogram Hypothesis, fueled further by the discovery of quirky, taxonomy-straining creoles like Tayo Creole French and Berbice Creole Dutch.

However, it would be overgenerating this approach to claim, in response to this chapter, that it is unreasonable to see the absence of creoles in several mainland Spanish colonies as counterevidence to any "model" or "formula," and that the answer to the conundrum will be found via diligent sociohistorical research on each colony.

As I have noted, the limited access conception is so deeply rooted in creolist thought that it is barely considered a "point of view" at all. To be sure, limited access is not considered an absolute *sine qua non* in the emergence of a creole, Tayo Creole French of New Caledonia being a prime example. However, when it comes to New World and Indian Ocean plantation creoles, limited access, and when it set in, and at what rate it increased, is a pivotal concern in all creole genesis work. One way of illustrating this is to point how reluctant most creolists would be to concur explicitly with the following statement:

Limited access to the lexifier was insignificant or irrelevant to the fact that creole languages emerged in Haiti, the Sea Islands, and Jamaica, and instead, creoles emerged in these colonies as the result of three sets of local circumstances between which no significant parallels could be drawn.

To the extent that this would seem an untenable statement to a creolist, it would appear that the limited access conception is indeed a model which they subscribe to. This is hardly to say that such people consider limited access the *only* factor in creole genesis. Quite simply, however, if a creolist cannot concur with the statement above, then this shows that limited access occupies an important place in their genesis model. My point in this chapter, then, is that the mainland Spanish colonies put in question a model which is crucial to current creole genesis theory.

Furthermore, the sociohistorical data on plantation colonies is usually so broad that it could be bent to "explain" either the presence or the absence of a creole. For example, we can use the surviving documentation of Suriname to account for why an English-based creole is spoken there despite the Dutch having taken it over from the English more than three hundred years ago. We can reasonably posit that Sranan-speaking slaves passed on their creole to new slaves imported by the Dutch; this is nicely supported

by the documentation that the English withdrawal of their slaves took several years, during which English-bought and Dutch-bought slaves would have interacted extensively.

However, imagine that a Dutch-based creole *were* spoken in Suriname today. In that case, with the same sociohistorical data, we would imagine quite plausibly that the withdrawal of the English slaves kept them from affecting language acquisition among the new ones. We would certainly not be scratching our heads as to why no English-based creole was spoken in Suriname.

Similarly, we can quite plausibly attribute the absence of a creole in Brazil to retention of African languages or racial mixing (Holm 1987: 414–6), but if there *were* a creole in Brazil, no one would wonder how a creole had survived in a context of African language retentions and racial mixing (any more than anyone has in, say, Jamaica). We would simply opine that the creole must have been more advantageous to interethnic communication than any single African language, and that racial mixing does not always eradicate the power of vernacular identity.

Thus there is an inevitable degree of *post hoc*-ness in tracing the emergence of a creole—it's the nature of the beast. Given how many interpretations the sociohistorical data in countries like Suriname or Brazil lend themselves to, even if we could concoct "reasons" that no creoles had arisen in the Chocó, the Chota Valley, Veracruz, Venezuela, and/or Peru, how conclusive could such accounts ever truly be? In this chapter, we have seen that these mysteriously absent creoles *cluster* under a single power. This suggests that something broader was at work than just unconnected, local demographic constellations.

2.9 CONCLUSION

To summarize what we have seen, I have brought to attention five mainland Spanish plantation colonies where, despite conditions considered perfect for creole genesis, no Spanish creoles are present. I claim that this data puts strongly into question the limited access conception of creole origin. I have shown the flaws in all of the likely objections to my assertion, as summarized below.

- (1) The claim that Papiamentu and Palenquero *are* Spanish creoles is true only synchronically; they began as Portuguese-based.
- (2) The claim that *bozal* Spanishes *were* Spanish creoles is false; they were transient immigrant varieties. The related claim that a Span-

ish creole like Palenquero was once spoken throughout Spanish America is extremely difficult to maintain in view of sociolinguistic plausibility.

- (3) The claim that Spanish creoles will turn up is reminiscent of the hope many Western explorers have had of finding a living brontosaurus in central Africa: one would have turned up by now.
- (4) The claim that there are no Spanish creoles because Spanish colonies remained *sociétés d'habitation* long before importing Africans in large numbers is false; it applies only to the three Caribbean islands but flatly misdepicts the mainland colonies.
- (5) The claim that creole genesis can be studied only on a case-by-case basis, and that there is thus no limited access "model" to be contradicted, would be belied by the crucial role that limited access plays in all genesis work on New World and Indian Ocean plantation creoles. Besides, sociohistorical data on creole genesis is so broad that it could always be used to "explain" either the presence or absence of a creole.

With all of these objections addressed, we stand faced with a massive contradiction to the limited access conception so deeply rooted in creolist thought. My aim in this chapter has been to show that under no analysis can these creoles and dialects be analyzed as supporting the limited access conception, and that Spanish America in general puts it quite starkly into question. In the next chapter, we encounter an even vaster body of data which further questions the limited access model, despite having served as one of its main demonstration cases: the English-based creoles of the Caribbean.