Where and how does bozal Spanish survive?

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1. Introduction

It is well-known that Africans who learned Spanish in adolescence or adulthood spoke with the characteristics of second-language learners, at times exhibiting areal characteristics of specific African language families, and in other cases replicating errors found among L2 speakers of Spanish worldwide. There exists a large and diverse corpus of literary imitations of the speech of bozales, beginning in Spain at the turn of the 16th century, and continuing into colonial Spanish America beginning in the early 17th century and lasting until the early 20th century.

Many of the linguistic features of these imitations are typical of all learners of Spanish: unstable subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement, use of disjunctive object pronouns instead of clitics, confusion of ser and estar, misuse of common prepositions, and avoidance of grammatically complex sentences containing subordinate clauses. Other traits are found in Afro-Iberian creoles and probably represent the influence of African areal features: prenasalized consonants, paragogic vowels used to produce open CV syllables, in situ questions, double negation, and use of adverbial particles instead of verbal inflection for tense, mood and aspect. Finally, many of the literary imitations are simply grotesque racist parodies, devoid of any resemblance to the true results of Afro-Hispanic language contacts.

Central to the debate over the reconstruction of bozal language, especially in Latin America, is the extent to which bozal speech exhibited consistent traits across time and space, and the possibility that Afro-Hispanic pidgins may have creolized across large areas of Spanish America. The abundant bibliography of studies based on corpora of literary, musical, and folkloric texts has broadened the discussion to include a wide range of hypotheses and scenarios,
but ultimately the texts in question are imitations or recollections produced by non-\textit{bozal} authors, and therefore of debatable validity. Only evidence from authentic speech communities can round out the discussion, and the search for such remnants among contemporary Afro-Latin American groups is one of the most exciting research ventures of contemporary Spanish linguistics. In the search for authentic relics or remnants of \textit{bozal} speech, it turns out that nearly all contemporary discoveries have been made by the members of this panel, making my task a very happy event. In the following sections I will briefly summarize the types of authentic \textit{bozal} evidence to be had, together with some examples of recent discoveries, and concluding with an enumeration of the challenges still remaining.

Remaining fragments of \textit{bozal} Spanish that go beyond or popular culture imitations (e.g. popular music, jokes, stereotyped imitations) can be found in the following situations:

- **ISOLATED ENCLAVES** of Afro-Hispanic speech where post-\textit{bozal} forms coexist with regional varieties of contemporary L4 Spanish
- **RITUALIZED FOLKlorIC REPRODUCTIONS** of earlier \textit{bozal} speech
- **COLLECTIVE RECOLLECTIONS** of the speech of the last remaining \textit{bozal} speakers
- **DESCENDENTS OF RETURN-DIASPORA \textit{BOZAL} SPEAKERS**

We shall briefly cover each of these categories, with more emphasis placed on little-known or recently discovered configurations.

2. **Remaining enclaves of post-\textit{bozal} speech**

    There exist several isolated Afro-Hispanic speech communities throughout Latin America where traces of apparently post-\textit{bozal} Spanish coexist with regional vernacular varieties. In most cases deviations from standard Spanish are limited to occasional lapses of agreement not found among monolingual Spanish speakers lacking the former \textit{bozal} connection.
In a few cases words or grammatical elements once found in *bozal* speech have survived, and in a very few instances regional vernacular dialects coexist with truly restructured post-*bozal* Afro-Hispanic varieties. The following chart illustrates the principal post-*bozal* communities investigated to date:

**Table 1: surviving post-*bozal* speech communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>RESEARCHERS</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL TRAITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Yungas</td>
<td>Lipski</td>
<td>invariant verbs, paragogic vowels, invariant plurals, plural marking only on first element of NP, loss of final consonants, <em>ele</em>, zero prepositions, possible use of particle <em>ta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Chocó</td>
<td>Ruiz García, Schwegler</td>
<td>double negation, occlusive prevocalic /d/, occasional lapses of agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>San Basilio</td>
<td>Morton, Schwegler</td>
<td>double or postposed negation, occasional lapses of agreement, postposed genetives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Oriente, etc.</td>
<td>Ortiz López, Schwegler</td>
<td><em>elle</em>, <em>agüe</em>, occasional double negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Rep.</td>
<td>Villa Mella, etc.</td>
<td>Green, Megenney, Ortiz López, Schwegler (Lipski)</td>
<td>double negation, occlusive /d/, occasional lapses of agreement, possible use of preverbal particle <em>a</em> (Green)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Chota Valley</td>
<td>Lipski, Schwegler</td>
<td>lapses in S-V and N-Adj agreement, loss of prepositions, possible <em>ele</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Costa Chica</td>
<td>Aguirre Beltrán, Althoff</td>
<td>occasional lapses of agreement, paragogic vowels, loss of prepositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>coast, Chincha</td>
<td>Cuba, Lipski</td>
<td>prevocalic occlusive /d/, occasional /r/ &gt; [d], occasional lapses of agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>various</td>
<td>Lipski, Moodie</td>
<td>occasional lapses of agreement, loss of prepositions, loss of final consonants, possible use of preverbal <em>ta</em> (Moodie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Barlovento</td>
<td>Megenney, Mosonyi et al.</td>
<td>occasional lapses of agreement, neutralization /r/-/mr/, /rl/, /dl/ &gt; [d]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the chart it can be seen that few traces remain to indicate what pidginized *bozal* Spanish may have actually been like. Some representative samples are:

**CHOCÓ, COLOMBIA: DOUBLE NEGATION:**

De esas cosas de sembado, yo no sé no (Ruiz García 2000)
El no ha vuelto no (Ruiz García 2000)
No me había ocurrido esas cosas más no (Ruiz García 2000)
Ellos no le hacen caso a él no (Ruiz García 2000)
Pero atracan no. Aquí en Tadó no atracan (Ruiz García 2000)
Por no verme acostada ahí, ellos llegan aquí no (Ruiz García 2000)
AFRO-DOMINICAN EXAMPLES—POSSIBLY REPRESENTING COGNITIVE LANGUAGE DISORDER (GREEN 1997, 2002)

No yo no a mendé e zapote no. ‘I don’t sell zapotes’
sí, a sigui ‘yes, [she] went on’
A cogé aquelloh mango. ‘[I] picked those mangoes’
Hay muchacho sí tabajá sí. ‘There are young men who work hard’
yo no hacé eso ‘I didn’t do that’


VESTIGIAL SPANISH OF TRINIDAD (LIPSKI 1990):

Tó nojotro trabajaban [trabajábamos] junto
Yo tiene [tengo] cuaranta ocho año
Asina, yo pone [pongo] todo
Yo no sabe [sé] bien
yo mimo [misma] me enfelmó [enfermé]
nosotro ten[emos] otro pehcado que se come bueno
habita la fecha yo tiene [tengo] conuco
cuando yo viene [vème], tiene [fíe] que trabajá mucho
paltera lo llamó [llamamos] nosotros
lo que ello ehtbralían en lo [las] echuela
Si pa mí [yo] tocaba un cuatro, yo no volví cantá
me complacé de encontrala[me] con uhtede
si el gobieno encontraba con tú [te encontraba] con calzón lalgo
La salga eh buena pa uté [su] cabeza
Tú tiene [cuando tú tengas] tiempo, viene aquí
[a] crihtofina cogió [el] puehto del cacao
yo tiene cuatros helmano

EXAMPLES OF SPANISH-PALENQUERO HYBRIDS (MORTON 1999)

Esa agua ta malo
Nosotro no quedamo con ese grupo no
Yo me voy mi camino esta vaina ‘voy a dejar tranquila esta cosa’
Yo no conocí al abuelo mí
Yo habita a tenia [hubiera tenido] experiencia

CHOTA VALLEY, ECUADOR (LIPSKI):

se trabajaban en las haciendas vecino
sobre la materia mismo de cada pueblo
era barato la ropa, barato era
hay gente colombiano
Chota compone con, compone dos sequíos, se llaman un pueblo
Estamos 17 comunidades
últimamente la gente está dicando a la agricultura
se pone lo guagua medios mal de cuerpo, se ponen amarillos
comienza a colorearse las vistas
yo soy [de] abajo
depende [de] las posibilidades del padre
San Lorenzo que queda muy cerca con [de] la Concepción
porque [el] próximo pueblo puede ser Salina
material de aquí del[l] lugar
con yerbas de campo curaban a nosotros
a poca costumbre se le tiene cuando mucha fuerte está la fiebre
casi no más, lo más lo tocun guitarra y bomba
si te acordá la familia Congo

The Spanish spoken in the Afro-Colombian village of Palenque de San Basilio is in contact with the creole language Palenquero, itself the product of the Spanish, Portuguese, Kikongo, and possibly other languages once present in a 17th century maroon community. The
bozal-like features of Palenquero Spanish are due to contact with the creole language, rather than
direct descendents of bozal Spanish. In the remaining cases so few non-standard Spanish
manifestations remain that in the absence of knowledge of the former presence of bozal speakers
it would be difficult to connect contemporary speech patterns with an earlier pidgin. The only
exception to this extreme erosion of post-bozal leftovers comes in the Bolivian Yungas, where I
have recently discovered tiny groups of speakers of a highly restructured Afro-Hispanic dialect
that more closely resembles a true creole language such as Palenquero than post-bozal remnants
found elsewhere in Latin America. These speakers, who live in isolated hillside squatter
communities in the remote tropical valleys of the Yungas to the northeast of La Paz are arguably
the oldest surviving Afro-American speech community, and the oldest community members
continue to speak a dialect (used only within the extended family groups), combining severe
phonetic reduction of final /s/ and /t/ (unlike the highly resistant /s/ and /t/ in surrounding
Bolivian dialects), use of the third person singular verb as invariant verb form, marking of plural
/s/ only on the first element of the NP as in vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, use of the invariant
plural article lo/lu, lack of gender concord in NPs, null articles, invariant plurals, many null
prepositions, and considerable reduction of complex sentences. Some examples of this unique
dialect are:

lo peón < los peones, lo mujé < las mujeres, persona[s] mayó < personas mayores, etc.
tiene su mujé, mujé aprendió toma;
bueno, carro es ciento cuarenta; expreso entra cuarenta mil;
mujé murió año pasao;
la una, gallo iba cantá;
mayordomo pegaba gente, patrón atrás de mayordomo; negro muy poco fue [a la guerra].
tengo un hermano allá [en] Corico;
en este tiempo di cosecha siempre nojotro va [al] trabajo;
he ido [a] Caranavi seis año;
cuando gallo canta [a las] seis de la tarde.
Bo tiene juamía de quién? ‘What family do you belong to?’
nojotro tiene jrutita; yo no entiende eso de vender jrut;
yo creció junto con Angelino; nojotro creció loh do;
ello vivia, ello salía mi avisá aquí;
¿de qué nojotro pobre va viví?
nojotro trabajaba hacienda; lo patrón siempre tenfa partera; leña no cargaba como nojotro cargaba.
yo no fue jai; aquí levantamo jai temprano; ahora días jai corto, hay que avanzar trabajo di madrugada;
va murí [murió] jai hace tiempo;
cuando mis hermana vivía, hacían jai semana ellos cada uno tenía que hacer semana [los quehaceres de la casa];

The features of Afro-Yungueño Spanish are unlike those of any other contemporary or reconstructed Afro-Hispanic dialect, although all fit generally into established contact variety patterns.

3. **Ritualized folkloric imitations that include bozal speech**

In addition to the use of post-bozal remnants in Afro-Hispanic speech communities, imitations of earlier bozal language occur in a number of ritualized events throughout Latin America. Most center around two poles: the first is the Carnival tradition, and the second are religious ceremonies in which the speech of bozal ancestors is imitated, either through song or through spirit possession in which the possessed individual purportedly channels the voice of an ancestor. The most extensive Carnival-time reproduction of earlier bozal speech—although by no means the most trustworthy—comes in the ritualized speech of the negros congos of Panama, centered around the colonial ports of Portobelo and Nombre de Dios. During the spring Carnival season and at other times Afro-Hispanic residents of these communities—whose daily speech is simply the local vernacular Spanish—employ a deformed variety of Spanish referred to as hablar congo ‘Congo talk’ and which contains, in addition to humorous distortions of patrimonial Spanish words, a considerable number of African or pseudo-African lexical items grafted onto a Spanish grammatical system with Spanish functional categories. The congo dialect spoken only by Afro-colonial Panamanians, is in some way related to the linguistic situation which obtained among black slave and free groups in colonial Panama, particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries, when slave trade through Portobelo was at its peak. Members of the community assert that congo speech is the direct descendent of the speech of the negros bozales, but the reality is much more complex. Nowadays, speaking congo involves a high degree of verbal improvisation and prowess, based on the notion of saying things ‘backwards’ (Spanish al
revés, which also means `upside down’ and `inside out’). According to Afro-Panamanian oral tradition, during the colonial period Spanish slaveowners would allow their African slaves some liberties during the Carnival season, allowing the slaves to wear castoff finery, which the slaves put on backwards or inside out to indicate their inconformity with slavery. Contemporary congo speakers use semantic reversals, such as vivi (Spanish vivo) `alive’ to mean `dead,’ entedo (Sp. entero) `whole’ to mean `broken,’ etc. True congo adepts can put on dazzling improvizations, at times also introducing formulaic phonetic deformations into each word. Under the layer of verbal improvization and word play lies a rather systematic suspension of noun-adjective and subject-verb agreement in fashions which closely parallel literary or attested specimens of earlier bozal Spanish. Awareness of popular stereotypes of `black’ Spanish from other times and places is almost nonexistent in this region, given the traditionally low literacy rate and the lack of availability of literary or popular culture works which would facilitate propagation of ethnolinguistic stereotypes. Any similarities between congo dialect and early bozal Spanish must be due either to fortuitous similarities, highly unlikely in the case of specific evolutions, or of the transmission, distorted across time and through the jocularity of Carnival, of previous Afro-Hispanic language. Modern congo leftovers do not suggest a complete creolization of earlier Afro-Panamanian Spanish, but rather a series of second-language approximations which fell short of the systematic restructuring implicit in creolization. An example of congo speech is:

¿Y tú qué haces ahí padao? Y si tu te pones entedo. Te vas a poneder er cudo Mayadi, aquí pade cubuyete ... y ahoda que vas a ayudá ... si no hay ná que lloidda, y uhtede que hacen en mi dancho, eh, uhtede qué tan buacando, contrubanda, yo no vendo opia, aquí do que vendo so gulline tieda, y tumbiénde de pado ... Gumecinda, ve saca de tu e ponte dojo ... pue si pide e cañadía dápidi ... dápidi da un anuncia ahí que llegado e contrubandista ... pue .. munga, munga, fruto, fruto, domblín, pupaya, cadamedo, qué dicen ustede, ya ehtama acuanda, e pa da útima todavía fatta prusupia, vengan todo que sacúa se ehta cuando ...

**SOME EXAMPLES OF PHONETIC DEFORMATION IN CONGO SPEECH:**

zucria `azúcar,' padencia `Palenque,' poquiño `quito,’ ahondamína `ahora mismo,’ diábria `diablo,’ momrienta `momento,’ guquntu `garganta,’ pringamá, bricamá `Panamá,’ codó `color,’ crado `claro,’ síhriá `hablar,’ cocopraya [coco de playa] `cocotero,’ chadé (` chaleró `rancho,’ samana suna `Semana Santa,’ conobrá `carnaval,’ mugaha `mañana,’ tramuya `trasmallo,’ cafí `café,’ pringadigu `cigarillo,’ mundebrió `Nombre de Dios,’ pogriá `pagar,’ madera bronzo (` madera de bronce) `zinc,’ agua sodiya (< agua de chorillo, o tal vez agua de soda) `aguardiente.’
Congo Words of Unknown Origin:

Dumia (posiblemente < rumiar) comer,
jopia ‘fumar’
cudia (posiblemente < acudir) ‘venir’
mojongo / mojobrio ‘mujer’
jotá ‘tomar’
sopodín ‘lancha de motor’
potoñá ‘salar’
juruminge ‘niño’
Fuda ‘aguardiente’ (posiblemente < [agua] pura, o [aguardiente] puro,’ puede derivarse del panameñismo fulo ‘de la raza blanca,’ a su vez un africanismo, del kikongo fúla ‘espuma (p. ej. del vino de palma)’ o del fula fuda ‘pólvora’)

A few vestiges of earlier bozal Spanish also survive in the lyrics of Panamanian folk dances, particularly the Zaracundé.¹ This dance, also known as El Cuenecué or Danza de los negros bozales, is currently performed in the town of Los Santos (with a very small population of African origin), but was once performed during Carnival season in other parts of Panama. One of the characters of this ritual dance is the Negro bozá, a pronunciation reflecting the truncation of final consonants in Afro-Hispanic speech; final /l/ is frequently deleted in vernacular Panamanian Spanish, but final /r/ almost never falls in contemporary speech. Other characters' names also reflect bozal confusion of Spanish morphological endings: Pajarité [pajarito ‘little bird’], Fransisqué [Francisco]. The Negro bozá chants phrases which include Afro-Hispanic bozal language, including yo tené [yo tengo ‘I have’], la huerté [la huerta ‘the garden’], yuqué [yuca ‘yucca’], tamarindé [tamarindo ‘tamarind’], papayé [papaya]. The song even contains a non-inverted question, frequent in the Spanish Antilles but not common in contemporary Panamanian Spanish:² ¿Cuántos hijos tú teneis? ‘How many children do you have?’³ The frequent replacement of Spanish final -o and -a by -e is similar to phenomena attributed in literature to Haitian L₂ speakers of Spanish in the Dominican Republic, and actually verified by Ortiz López.⁴ Other examples are:

Schwegler (2005) has discovered some Afro-Cuban ritual songs from the palo monte tradition that contain fragments of earlier bozal language, evidently reflecting the paleros’ belief
that the voices of ancestors speak during their ceremonies. In addition to containing admixtures of Spanish and Kikongo lexical items, some of the palero songs contain fragments in bozal grammar, containing invariant verb forms, derived from the third person singular, as well as the invariant copula *son*, independently attested in Afro-Cuban Spanish.\(^5\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Yo te llama con mi maña} \\
\text{Riba mundo son bacheche [saludable]}
\end{align*}
\]

Castellanos (1990) also observed the speech of Afro-Cuban religious practitioners during their spiritual trances, when they purportedly speak with the voices of bozal ancestors. Although it is not permitted to record these ceremonies, Castellanos’ reflections include many typical bozal features including non-agreeing verbs and use of disjunctive object pronouns:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta miní kun yo (he/she is coming with me)} \\
\text{akoddá ri yo [(he) remembered me]}
\end{align*}
\]

4. Collective recollections of former bozal speech

In Cuba, the last slave-importing country of Spanish America and in which bozal Africans could be found through the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century, individual and collective memories of bozal speech persist to this day. Older Cubans remember the phrase used scornfully to describe uneducated black Cubans in previous decades: *es un negro de “yo va di, yo va vení”* Cuban writers and composers continue to produce texts in which reasonably accurate bozal imitations are used, based on the recollections of Cuba’s oldest inhabitants. One example comes in the well-known film *La última cena* by Thomas Alea, where the bozal language was created through consultation with Cuban linguists. One of the earliest apparently authentic Cuban bozal imitations comes at the end of the 18\(^{th}\) century, and is cited even today. At the end of the 18th century, the Spanish priest Duque de Estrada living in Havana published a manual for other priests to teach the Catechism to African-born bozales. Although both condescending and designed to convince Africans that slavery was the will of God (portrayed as
the `great overseer'\), the approximations to bozal language show nothing other than simplified Spanish with lapses in agreement and many circumlocutions:

Nicolás Duque de Estrada, *Explicación de la doctrina cristiana acomodada a la capacidad de los negros bozales* (1797): `yo soi un pobre esclavo, yo tiene dos gallinas no más, gente tiene suelto su cochino, cochino come mi gallina. Yo ya no tiene con que comprar tabaco ni nada ... ¡yo va andando en cueros?' (Laviña 1989)

A very interesting comment on bozal Spanish in early 19\textsuperscript{th} century Cuba comes from unpublished correspondence between the Cuban scholar José de la Luz Caballero and the American encyclopedist Francis Lieber. Lieber queried whether Afro-Cubans spoke a creole language and whether a creolized Spanish was used in religious teachings (as suggested by the recently published *Catecismo*) or in other literature. Luz Caballero’s response confirms other observations, that bozales spoke imperfect Spanish but without the consistent restructuring and transmission to successive generations found in creole languages. He also confirmed that Spanish priests at times spoke deliberately reduced Spanish when confessing the slaves, as suggested by Duque de Estrada’s catechism. In other notes Luz Caballero offers an extensive critique of Duque de Estraeda’s pseudo-bozal imitations, indicating a high degree of awareness of Afro-Cuban pidginized Spanish:

\textit{UNPUBLISHED LETTER TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIST FRANCIS LIEBER BY THE CUBAN SCHOLAR JOSÉ DE LA LUZ CABBALERO IN 1835, COMMENTING ON THE DUQUE DE ESTRADA CATECHISM (FURNISHED BY CLANCY CLEMENTS AND STUART DAVIS):}

Q: ¿La población de color de esa [isla] habla aun un criollo?

A: Casi todas las preguntas … descansan en el supuesto de que existe un dialecto criollo en la isla de Cuba distinto de la lengua española, así como hay francés criollo y otros dialectos de las demás lenguas europeas en las colonias de otras naciones. Pero no es así, y diré sencillamente lo único que hay en el particular. Los africanos corrompen la lengua cada uno a su modo, y esta corrupción consiste principalmente en el modo de pronunciar, lo que, como bien claro se ve, no constituye un dialecto especial, al que podamos darle el nombre de criollo. Esto es tan cierto, cuanto que a los blancos nos es más fácil entender a unos negros más que otros, y a los pertenecientes a una nación más que a los de otra: los congoyes, se explican y pronuncian con más claridad que los carabalíes; pero siempre es la misma lengua española la que todos hablan, aunque estropeándola casi individualmente diríamos. Sin embargo, hay algunos modos uniformes de corromperla, y esto es natural, entre todos ellos particularmente en el campo, no solo alterando uniformemente la pronunciación de ciertas voces, sino también dándoles una significación diferente a veces y otras análogas a la genuina. Por ejemplo es muy común que digan dos viages en lugar de dos veces. Hay otra causa especial para que los españoles-europeos no los puedan entender con tanta facilidad como nosotros, y es el \textit{tono o acento} peculiar con que pronuncian […] Hay además otros signos o palabras que son un lenguaje universal para los negros recién llegados de África (bozales), sea cual fuere la nación a que pertenecan; y esta circunstancia convence evidentemente que se las enseñan en las \textit{factorias} y tanto más claro, cuanto que recaen sobre las más urgentes necesidades y objetos más precisos. Es de advertir que las más de ellos son conocidamente de origen inglés, y repitiendo la palabra de la raíz; cosa muy natural, pues todos repetimos cuando no nos entienden. Tales son lúcu-lúcu (look, look) `ver, mirar’; guashi guashi (wash, wash) `lavarse’, y otras a este tenor. Pero este vocabulario no pasa de unas cuantas palabras indispensables para entenderse con los negros en la navegación y en el barracón hasta que se venden. […] advertiré que es costumbre que los curas y capellanes, antes de \textit{confesar y dar la comunión} a los negros, les expliquen el dogma y la moral de un modo que esté a su alcance, y por consiguiente usando un lenguaje corrompido. En cuanto a predicar, siempre se hace en lengua castiza española, bien que los negros del campo poco o nada oyen predicar, pues el precepto del domingo se limita a oír misa o rezar el rosario. Y respecto a los negros de las ciudades, que sí oyen muchas sermones, esas las entienden muy bien, y aun mejor de lo que algunos blancos pudieran imaginarse.
In 1963, a 104-year-old former slave--Esteban Montejo--was interviewed and taped by the Cuban writer Miguel Barnet, whose interest lay more in relating 19th century slave revolts with the Cuban Revolution than in reconstructing Afro-Hispanic language and culture. Although this slave was Cuban-born and spoke vernacular Cuban Spanish, he recalled the speech of \textit{bozales} and offered accurate imitations:

\begin{quote}
`Criollo camina allá adonde yo te diga, que yo te va a regalá a ti una cosa ... Usté, criollo, son bobo ... mire, usté ve eso, con eso usté consigue tó en cosa ... Mientras tú trabaja mayombe, tú son dueño e tierra ... Tú son bueno y callao, yo va a contá a ti una cosa ... '
\end{quote}

More recently, Luis Ortiz travelled to extremely isolated areas of eastern Cuba and interviewed elderly Afro-Cubans, many of whom were over 100 years old, and who vividly recalled the speech of now-deceased \textit{bozales}. Most of the recollections fit with the pattern of Spanish as a second language, although in Havana itself, some Afro-Cubans recall having heard \textit{bozal} language that might have been more internally coherent, and therefore possibly the first stages of a true creole:

\begin{quote}
Carajo, yo te va joder ... Yo va sarúa [saludar] al niño Otavio ... vá vení o yo ta aquí ... yo te ve se cuento de toro cosa de que to pasó ... poqque yo ta vení de lo tiera mía de llá de lo de lo Africo ... yo mirá tú do ece ... ahora yo te va caigá ... yo tumbar caña la colonia ...
\end{quote}

\textbf{5. Descendents of return-diaspora \textit{bozal} speakers}

There is a final possible hunting ground for surviving traces of earlier Afro-Caribbean Spanish, which to date has received absolutely no attention from linguists. Indeed, the geographical location where such a search might begin seems incredible at first sight: West Africa, the very region from which the majority of Africans arriving in the 19th century Caribbean were taken. In the final decades of the 19th century, there arose "return to Africa" movements in Brazil and Cuba, as well as in some Caribbean colonies. Many African-born Brazilians and even some of their descendents returned to Nigeria and especially Benin, where their descendents still identify themselves as `Brazilians'.\footnote{This reverse diaspora actually began towards the end of the 18th century, where Brazilian slaves who had been freed or purchased}
their freedom established themselves in Whydah, Dahomey, where they maintained Brazilian customs and lifestyle, and at times even participated in the final decades of the Atlantic slave trade.

Afro-Cubans also returned to Africa, but in smaller numbers, and beginning well past the first decades of the 19th century. It is possible that in Benin they blended in with the already established Afro-Brazilian population, an easy task, both culturally and linguistically. The most well-documented Afro-Cuban return migration was to Nigeria, the homeland of the Yoruba-speaking Lucumíes. Africans who had spent decades in Cuba began returning to Nigeria as early as the 1840's, and in the 1850's a document produced in Lagos quotes one returnee as describing the difference between slave-holding within Africa and slavery in the Caribbean (Pérez de la Riva 1974: 175): `Los negros no Jesú: los blancos todo religión.'. This brief statement suggests that bozal Spanish made its way back to West Africa. More than a century later, in fact just over a decade ago a Cuban scholar (Sarracino 1988) visited Lagos, Nigeria, where he met children and grandchildren of these repatriated bozales, some of whom were able to converse in (presumably bozal) Spanish (cf. also Pérez de la Riva 1974). Unfortunately, neither recordings nor detailed linguistic observations were made, and given the political instability and urban explosion of Lagos, Nigeria, the chances of recovering bozal language in this West African setting grow slimmer by the day. Rural areas of Nigeria and Benin, where family oral traditions still predominate over mass media culture, may still be viable sites for Afro-Hispanic field research. Finally, the Cuban linguist Sergio Valdés Bernal, who lived for a time in Angola, reports meeting a (possibly bozal) Spanish-speaking descendent of a Cuban slave in that African nation.
6. Conclusions

Despite the critical importance of obtaining samples of the last living *bozales* or their immediate offspring, almost no field research has been done by contemporary Latin American linguists. Elderly former slaves or the children of former slaves are among the most marginalized citizens of the Spanish Caribbean, and within these nations there has been little interest in tapping the vast historical and cultural knowledge which they represent. Unlike what happened in many former British and French Caribbean colonies, the Spanish Caribbean nations are not run by primarily Afro-American governments, and there have been no nationwide African roots revival movements which would stimulate interest in the language and customs of Afro-Hispanics. As an example of the contrast in national attitudes, the Trinidadian historian and linguist Maureen Warner-Lewis (1991: xx) writes of newly independent Trinidad that `In the second half of the twentieth century there were still people alive who remembered their ancestors from Africa and who could sing and speak in African tongues. This had important implications for our sense of historical depth, our sense of historical and cultural possession, as well as our ability to reconstruct the processes of cultural transmission in the New World.' Although the same situation obtained for the Spanish Caribbean, there was no comparable interest in tracing the African roots of countries which still continued to identify themselves as anything but African; in South American countries, where denial of negritude has reached even greater proportions, even less attention has been devoted to Afro-Hispanic linguistic studies.

The preceding remarks have demonstrated that much work has been done to uncover remaining traces of *bozal* language, while many challenges remain. Some trails are completely cold, others may still be viable but will require considerable ingenuity and just plain good luck to be traversed. Results to date do not provide definite answers to the ongoing debates over
possible creolization of Afro-Hispanic language, nor on the possible monogenesis of all or even most Afro-Hispanic dialects. Most surviving *bozal* manifestations are so fragmentary as to provide only the most ambiguous testimony. Afro-Hispanic dialects such as the Chota Valley of Ecuador may have been influenced by surrounding Quechua speakers, while the Afro-Bolivian dialect of the Yungas, which bears little resemblance to any other *bozal* attestation past or present, was formed long ago and in such complete isolation from both African and European speakers. It is a counterexample to the strongest monogenetic hypotheses and may shed light on other Afro-Hispanic contact phenomena, but can only be fitted into the full perspective of *bozal* language after additional comparative research is undertaken.

In summary, recent and surprising discoveries of hitherto unsuspected speakers and speech communities, by members of this panel and by other researchers, provide compelling motivation to continue the search for authentic specimens of *bozal* Spanish. Only by comparing surviving speech and living memories with historical reconstruction can the full contribution of Africa to America be appreciated.
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Notes

1 Rhodes (1998).

2 Except among creole English-speaking Afro-Antilleans, probably through the influence of English creole; Bishop (1976:62).


5 Lipski (1999a, 2002).