

THE CHOTA VALLEY: Afro-Hispanic Language in Highland Ecuador*

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The African influence on Latin American Spanish is undisputed, and yet the field of Afro-Hispanic linguistics is hampered by the lack of widespread Hispanic creole dialects, or even areas of widespread Afro-Hispanic language usage. A few tiny dialect pockets continue to exist, however, such as the *palenquero* dialect of Palenque de San Basilio in northern Colombia,¹ and the special dialect of the *negros congos* of Panama's Caribbean coast;² until the first decades of the twentieth century, a partially creolized Bozal Spanish (spoken by African slaves who had learned Spanish as a second language, and only imperfectly) was still to be found in Cuba as well as vestigially in Puerto Rico and perhaps the Dominican Republic.³ Given the geographical inaccessibility of many areas of Latin America containing large African populations, it is possible that additional traces of vestigial Afro-Hispanic language may still be found or may have recently disappeared.

Afro-Hispanic dialectology naturally impinges on general creole studies. The considerable structural similarity among known Afro-Iberian dialects has often led researchers to postulate that during colonial times, most African slaves brought to Latin America spoke some variety of creolized Portuguese, learned in the Portuguese slaving stations in Africa or on board ship during the middle passage. Some researchers believe that this creole language (which may also have been responsible for creole formation in other regions of the world) continued to be spoken at least by some second-generation Africans in Latin America, thus shaping their usage of Spanish.⁴ Some of the opposing, nonmonogenetic theories admit the influence of creole Portuguese on the formation of at least some creole dialects but postulate independent developments in other areas. Finally, a third kind of theory appeals to language universals in creole formation, with the implication that structurally

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similar creole languages in geographically separated areas came into existence through the application of universal cognitive processes.⁵

While Colombian Palenquero, Papiamentu, and what is known of nineteenth-century Caribbean Bozal Spanish appear to support some version of the monogenetic theory, the Panamanian congo data do not fit this theory, nor do the vestigial creole examples found in the Dominican Republic, and possibly on the island of Trinidad.⁶ This non-congruence in turn suggests that alternative hypotheses may also be valid for at least some instances of Afro-Hispanic linguistic contact because although the monogenetic hypothesis is usually cited as a unique theory of creole formation, it is in reality the extreme point on a continuum of possible models.

It is nearly impossible to separate putative African linguistic influence on Latin American Spanish from general demographics of Spanish colonization and slavery. Although during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries African slaves were found in nearly all parts of Latin America, including highland regions now totally devoid of African traits, many of these early groups were eradicated through high mortality rates and inevitable dilution with indigenous races.⁷ The end result is that the only significant Afro-Hispanic populations are found in those areas where slavery and large-scale plantation agriculture continued well into the nineteenth century; these areas include the island republics of Latin America and the coastal areas of Central and South America. At the same time, nearly all of the nonlexical linguistic characteristics that have been variously attributed to African influence (generally involving reduction and loss of syllable-final consonants as well as certain syntactic modifications) occur precisely in the same coastal regions where the linguistic influence of the Andalusian and Canary Island dialects was strongest.⁸ Because these dialects share many of the same characteristics that have been suggested as Africanisms within Latin American Spanish, it is difficult to separate the variables of Spanish dialect base and African demographic influence in the absence of control situations in which one of the key variables may be at least partially separated out. One possible configuration is found in the Valle del Chota, in northern highland Ecuador, where a relatively isolated population of African origin exists surrounded by a Spanish dialect zone not exhibiting the coastal and Andalusian traits just mentioned. A study of the history of the black Choteños and a brief discussion of the features of their speech hinting at earlier partially creolized language will be offered as a small contribution to the theories of Afro-Hispanic language and Spanish dialectal diversification.

Although Ecuador is not one of the Latin American areas normally associated with large African populations, the Afro-Ecuadoran component may account for as much as 25 percent of the national to-

tal.⁹ The majority of the black and mulatto population is concentrated in the northwest sector, principally in the province of Esmeraldas, where over 80 percent of the residents are of African descent. The origin of Ecuador's black population is surrounded by some controversy: although black Ecuadorans evidently arrived from the north, their dates of arrival and region of origin have yet to be determined satisfactorily.

One theory, as yet unproved, maintains that the first permanent black residents arrived on the Ecuadoran coast as the result of a shipwreck at the end of the sixteenth century and another in 1600,¹⁰ although it is known that the first blacks arrived in Ecuador between 1533 and 1536.¹¹ Subsequently, the Jesuits imported large numbers of black slaves to work on plantations along the coast and in the central highlands. The Jesuits' example was followed by other planters and landowners, given that indigenous labor was scarce in certain areas and rebellious in many others. Early in the nineteenth century, the wars of colonial liberation brought contingents of black soldiers to Ecuador from Colombia, and when slaves were manumitted in Ecuador in 1852, many of these black subjects remained in the province of Esmeraldas. Yet another group of black citizens arrived in the late nineteenth century, when between four and five thousand Jamaican laborers were brought in to work on plantations and construction projects—the last significant migration of Afro-Americans to Ecuador.

Other scholars have maintained that the black population of Esmeraldas resulted from the immigration of laborers from plantations in the central highlands.¹² This theory, however, is difficult to reconcile with the historical and demographic facts of colonial and postcolonial Ecuador.¹³ It also leaves unanswered the question of the ultimate origin of highland blacks in Ecuador.

In the highlands, the predominant racial type is the indigenous or mestizo configuration, with black or mulatto residents being rare. The one exception is found in the valley of the Chota River and its environs, in the north-central provinces of Imbabura and Carchi. Formerly known as Coangue, this valley is a tropical lowland surrounded by Andean uplands, and its population is almost entirely black with some mulattoes, in contrast to the exclusively indigenous and mestizo population of neighboring areas.¹⁴ The Chota Valley consists of some ten or fifteen small villages whose variable total population probably does not exceed fifteen thousand.¹⁵ From an economic point of view, the Chota or Salinas region is marginalized: nearly all arable land is held by a few large landowners, the land is arid and virtually worthless without irrigation, and most residents practice only the most basic subsistence-level agriculture. The readily available exit routes out of the valley (which is bisected by the Pan American Highway) have resulted in a high rate of emigration by Choteños leaving to work or study in

Ibarra and Quito. A much smaller number emigrate to the coastal towns.

The origin of this black population in highland Ecuador is surrounded by uncertainty. Some investigators have suggested that Choteños are descended from freed or escaped slaves from the coastal province of Esmeraldas, but it appears that most blacks in the provinces of Imbabura and Carchi are descendants of slaves held by the Jesuits on their highland plantations (and also, according to some evidence, in slave-breeding centers). Until the middle of the eighteenth century, Jesuit wealth was considerable in Ecuador, including a number of sugar plantations in Carchi and Imbabura.¹⁶ Many of these estates still exist, as do the settlements that arose around them, and when the Jesuits were expelled from Ecuador in 1767, most of the slaves simply changed masters as these lands were taken over by Ecuadoran owners. These slaves and freedmen formed the population nuclei of the Chota Valley. It has even been claimed that much of the black population of Esmeraldas derives from Choteños who emigrated to the coast, but this assertion remains to be demonstrated conclusively.¹⁷ In the Chota Valley, oral traditions refer only to the fact that the first black residents arrived from other unspecified lands, while in Esmeraldas no collective awareness exists of any immigration from the highlands to the coast.

When slavery was abolished in Ecuador in 1852, the Choteños continued working on the large landholdings that form the economic backbone of the region. Although it is possible that subsequent migrations may have brought black residents from the coast, the majority of the Choteños share a history of more than 250 years of residence in the central highlands. It is not impossible that black Choteños had subsequent contact with coastal speech modes, but given the isolation of the Chota Valley, the poor communication with the coast, and the overwhelming linguistic influence of the surrounding highland dialects, this population may be the only significant black settlement in Spanish America without close and recent ties to the life and language of the coastal lowlands.¹⁸

Although Ecuador is rarely mentioned in the context of creole Spanish, some indirect evidence suggests that in previous centuries a creole or Bozal Spanish may have been spoken among certain groups of Afro-Ecuadorans, particularly those living in isolated communities or *cimarrón* societies of fugitives.¹⁹ In Esmeraldas, where most of Ecuador's black population is concentrated, the local Spanish dialect is by no means creolized, although it is decidedly popular, featuring the Costeño phonetic characteristics found throughout Latin America. Some researchers have claimed that in the jungle villages in the interior of the province, a "special" Spanish dialect is still spoken or was spoken until not long ago.²⁰ More recently, I have been able to verify personally that

the “special” dialects are merely popular variants of Spanish and contain no creole traits.

The Spanish dialect of the Chota Valley has never been the object of serious linguistic investigation, although some indirect testimony suggests that in the past this dialect may have exhibited creole or at least highly nonstandard tendencies when compared with the other dialect zones of Ecuador.²¹ During the course of my investigations, I interviewed Chota residents who were more than ninety years old. They indicated that neither their parents nor their grandparents had spoken any language other than the popular regional dialects of Spanish. This finding does not preclude the prior existence of partially Africanized Spanish in the Chota region, as will be discussed shortly, but it does set back the dates for the gradual decreolization that would have given rise to the present popular, but noncreolized, Choteño Spanish, and it casts a large measure of doubt on casual observations by Ecuadorans and foreigners with regard to the “deformed” and “unintelligible” speech of blacks.

To evaluate the possible African or creole component of Choteño speech, it is first necessary to describe briefly the dialectal divisions of Ecuadoran Spanish. In broad terms, Ecuadoran Spanish may be divided into five or six zones according to phonological criteria, although considerable variation is found within each category.²² The groupings are as follows: (1) the coastal zone (Esmeraldas, Guayas, Los Ríos, and Manabí); (2) the north highlands (Carchi); (3) the central highlands (from Imbabura to Chimborazo); (4) the provinces of Cañar and Azuay; (5) the province of Loja; and (6) the Amazon region.

In the province of Imbabura and the southern portion of Carchi, including the Chota Valley, the linguistic characteristics belong to the third category, with the only major deviations found among indigenous subjects who are not fluent in Spanish. The dialect of black Choteños in general shares the features of the third group.²³ To construct a quantitative presentation of the Chota dialect and to demonstrate the importance of this linguistic area for more general historical and linguistic theories, data were collected in Ecuador in 1984.²⁴

The first aspect of the Chota dialect to be examined is the behavior of the phoneme /s/, which may be realized as a sibilant [s] or [z], an aspiration [h], or may be elided completely [∅]. Table 1 presents quantitative data on the realization of /s/ among the dialect zones described above, in the following positions: word-internal preconsonantal (*este*); word-final preconsonantal (*es mío*); phrase-final (*vámonos*); word-final before stressed vowel (*los otros*); word-final before unstressed vowel (*los amigos*). Variation between [s] and [z] is not tabulated because it is not relevant to the present remarks.

These data may be interpreted as follows. As regards pronuncia-

TABLE 1 Realization of /s/ in Ecuadoran Spanish, percentages by dialectal zone, 1984

	Chota	Esmeraldas	Carchi	Quito/ Ibarra	Azuay/ Cañar	Loja
Phonetic	%	%	%	%	%	%
Context	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)
Word-internal						
syllable-final						
/s/ (este)						
[s] ^a	87	2	99	98	98	99
[h] ^b	10	69	1	2	2	1
[∅] ^c	3	29	0	0	0	0
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(4,683)	(1,213)	(892)	(1,407)	(885)	(562)
Word-final						
preconsonantal						
/s/ (eres tú)						
[s]	81	1	90	95	93	99
[h]	13	74	7	3	5	1
[∅]	6	25	3	2	2	0
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(5,544)	(1,266)	(1,051)	(1,953)	(1,299)	(890)
Phrase-final /s/						
(vámonos)						
[s]	90	19	100	100	93	100
[h]	2	4	0	0	2	0
[∅]	8	77	0	0	5	0
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(3,402)	(786)	(532)	(1,137)	(664)	(501)

tion of word-internal preconsonantal /s/, the Chota dialect falls more nearly in line with the highland dialects in retaining the sibilant s, but the percentage of aspiration and loss (13 percent) is significantly higher than in other highland dialects, including nearby towns in Imbabura and Carchi. Substantially the same is true for word-final preconsonantal and prevocalic /s/, whose phonetic parameters are virtually identical to the previous case, and where the Chota dialect reduces /s/ to a greater degree than in other highland zones (19 percent as compared to 4 to 5 percent). The most significant discrepancies occur in phrase-final position, where the Chota dialect weakens or deletes /s/ to a notably greater degree than in neighboring highland dialects. These quantitative differences may not seem important, particularly when compared to the nearly categorical reduction of /s/ in the Esmeraldas region, but the black Chota dialect stands out clearly from its highland neighbors, where loss of /s/ is so rare as to immediately call attention to even a single case of loss of phrase-final /s/ (with the exception of the word

TABLE 1 (continued)

	Chota	Esmeraldas	Carchi	Quito/ Ibarra	Azuay/ Cañar	Loja
Phonetic	%	%	%	%	%	%
Context	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)	(n)
Word-final						
/s/ before						
stressed vowel						
(eş él)						
[s]	97	63	98	100	100	100
[h]	3	10	2	0	0	0
[∅]	0	27	0	0	0	0
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(471)	(133)	(163)	(232)	(189)	(133)
Word-final						
/s/ before						
unstressed vowel						
(loş amigos)						
[s]	86	5	93	95	95	98
[h]	4	60	3	1	0	0
[∅]	10	35	4	4	5	2
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(1,473)	(370)	(331)	(820)	(351)	(301)

^aThe phoneme /s/ as a sibilant [s] or [z].

^cThe phoneme /s/ when elided completely.

^bThe phoneme /s/ as an aspiration.

entonces, which is frequently pronounced without final /s/ throughout Ecuador). The noncategorical nature of the reduction of /s/ in the Chota dialect indicates that the process is not purely phonetically motivated, as it is in the coastal dialects. In many cases, word-final /s/ is lost in the Choteño dialect when it is not morphologically significant. That is to say, loss of /s/ when this consonant signals the plural of nouns, the second person singular of verbs, or other significant differences, is relatively infrequent in the Chota region, as in the rest of highland Ecuadoran Spanish, while in the case of lexical or grammatically redundant /s/, reduction is considerably more common. For example, in the first-person-plural verbal ending *-mos*, the /s/ is purely lexical, as it is in *Jesús*, *además*, *seis*, and other similar words. This configuration is the type to be expected in the last stages of decreolization (or for that matter, in incipient creolization), where grammatical endings have largely been restored but the tendency to ignore grammatically irrelevant endings has not been totally overcome. It might be possible to invoke the influence of coastal dialects,²⁵ but any such influence would have to be remote in time, given the absence of recent linguistic contact between the Chota Valley and Esmeraldas.

The behavior of /s/ in the Chota dialect is at odds with other Ecuadoran dialects of Spanish but is consistent with semicreolized or Africanized Spanish and Portuguese throughout the world. From the earliest attestations of "black Spanish" found in sixteenth-century literary documents, occasional loss of word-final /s/ was predominantly confined to the verbal endings in *-mos* and in cases where the /s/ was solely lexical. Data from currently spoken Afro-Hispanic dialects where /s/ is not reduced in all phonetically weak contexts provide comparable configurations.²⁶ Africanized Portuguese offers an identical panorama, for while no Portuguese dialect, past or present, reduces all instances of /s/ to the extent found in many Spanish dialects, loss of lexical /s/ was common in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literary representations of "black Portuguese," occurs among current Portuguese-based creoles, and characterizes many popular Brazilian Portuguese dialects, where African influence is not to be excluded.²⁷

With respect to the pronunciation of /s/, the Chota dialect differs slightly from neighboring highland dialects, suggesting the possible existence of earlier pronunciation patterns among the black highlanders. It is curious that most highland Ecuadorans who have come into contact with black Choteños have the general impression that these Afro-Ecuadorans speak with a Costeño accent, despite clear evidence to the contrary. From a purely linguistic point of view, highland Ecuadorans probably perceive, perhaps only subconsciously, the occasional loss of word-final /s/ in the Chota dialect, a feature absent from other nearby highland dialects. Moreover, Choteños frequently aspirate implosive /s/ in the word *mismo*, unlike neighboring highlanders, who pronounce the /s/ strongly (usually as a [z]) and may reduce contiguous unstressed vowels. The other reason for the popular opinion that Choteños speak with a coastal accent is racial stereotyping, given that the majority of black Ecuadorans are from the coastal province of Esmeraldas, whose phonetic characteristics are well known in the remainder of the country. Many Ecuadorans automatically associate a black face with the *montuvio* (peasant) speech of the coastal provinces, an association reinforced by the writings of Nelson Estupiñán Bass and Adalberto Ortiz, in which the speech of black Esmeraldeños is featured. On meeting a black Choteño, Ecuadorans are apparently so influenced by the racial features that they "hear" the coastal dialect to a much greater extent than is objectively present, refusing to accept the idea that a black Ecuadoran could speak with a highland accent. In fact, the Chota dialect has even absorbed popular highland Ecuadoran syntactic formations, including some typical of Quechua-Spanish bilinguals, which suggests the further penetration of contemporary highland (nonblack) Spanish among the Choteños.²⁸

In addition to the rather subtle phonetic and phonological di-

mension, the black Chota dialect manifests some syntactic divergence from other Ecuadoran dialects, particularly among the area's oldest or least-educated residents, whose speech patterns have been least influenced by non-Choteño Spanish. In the area of grammatical concordance, particularly between nouns and adjectives and between subjects and predicates, Chota Valley Spanish exhibits subtle, but noticeable, differences from other Ecuadoran dialects, where discrepancies of agreement rarely occur among monolingual Spanish speakers and fluent bilinguals. Examples gleaned from the Chota Valley include these usages: *se trabajaban [-Ø] en las haciendas vecinol[-as]*, "people worked in the nearby plantations"; *sobre la materia mismol[-a] de cada pueblo*, "with the materials from each town"; *era barato[-a]—la ropa, barato era*, "clothes were cheap"; *hay gente colombiano[-a]*, "there are people from Colombia." Lack of concordance in verb phrases also occurs, as does loss of the reflexive pronoun *se* and occasional confusion of *ser* and *estar*: *Chota [se] compone con [de], compone dos sequíos, se llaman pueblo*, "The town called Chota is composed of two portions"; *Estamos [somos] diecisiete comunidades*, "We are seventeen communities [in all]"; *Ultimamente la gente [se] está [de]dicando a la agricultura*, "Lately, the people have turned to agriculture"; *comienza[-n] a colorearse las vistas*, "their eyes start to get red"; *se ponel[-n] lol[-s] guagua medios[-Ø] mal de cuerpo, se ponen amarillos*, "the babies get very sick, they turn yellow."

Errors of prepositional usage are also rather frequent, consisting of the elimination of certain common prepositions and the interchange of others: *yo soy [de] abajo*, "I'm from down the road"; *depende [de] las posibilidades del padre*, "It depends on the father's possibilities"; *San Lorenzo que queda muy cerca con [de] la Concepción*, "San Lorenzo, which is very near La Concepción." Also found is the occasional elimination of articles, which is rarely heard in other Ecuadoran dialects among monolingual Spanish speakers: *porque [el] próximo pueblo puede ser Salinas*, "Because the next town could be Salinas"; *material de aquí de[l] lugar*, "material from around here."

Finally, there are some examples that, in terms of significant syntactic deviance, fall more in line with creolized Spanish from other areas of Latin America and from past centuries: *con yerbas de campo curaban a nosotros [nos curaban]*, "They cured us with country herbs"; *a poca costumbre se la tiene cuando mucha [muy] fuerte está la fiebre*, "It's difficult when the fever is very high"; *Casi lo más lo más lo tocan guitarra y bomba [lo que más tocan son la guitarra y la bomba]*, "Mostly what they play are guitars and bombas."

The above constructions, which occur relatively frequently in the Chota Valley dialect, are virtually unknown in their totality in other Ecuadoran Spanish dialects, although individual examples may at times be heard elsewhere. The use of these constructions in the Chota Valley

is not a function of illiteracy and typical nonstandard usage because despite traditionally limited educational opportunities, most of the oldest Choteños know how to read and write, and all listen to radio programs and have linguistic contact with educated speakers of the Quito dialect. Examples like those cited are also found in the speech of younger residents, even those who have studied at the secondary and university level, although in fewer instances than among the oldest generation.

In popular Esmeraldas Spanish, other syntactic deviations are occasionally found, although usually in the lyrics of songs and chants, and most probably represent the fossilized presence of earlier speech modes. Combinations such as *ochocientos[-as] balas*, “eight hundred bullets,” and *niñas colegial[-es]*, “schoolgirls,” are found in the *décimas* of Esmeraldas but rarely occur in the popular Spanish of this region.²⁹ One potentially significant feature of both the Esmeraldas dialect and the Chota Valley usage is the extraordinary use of redundant subject pronouns, also a feature in many other Afro-Hispanic dialects, past and present.³⁰ Frequent use of normally redundant subject pronouns is not a direct indication of previous creolized language because such behavior is also found in parts of Spain and areas of Latin America that evince no strong African influence. It is perhaps not coincidental, however, that within Ecuador both dialect zones characterized by Afro-Hispanic contacts employ a key strategy found in Afro-Hispanic language elsewhere in the world and that other native Spanish-speaking Ecuadorans do not use this strategy as frequently.

An overall comparison between the grammatical characteristics of Choteño Spanish and known Afro-Hispanic manifestations from other regions and periods reveals certain structural similarities and strategies suggesting that black highland Ecuadoran Spanish in its earliest stages shared some of the features of Bozal or African Spanish of other regions. Contemporary parallels are found in several locations: first, some areas of the Dominican Republic, characterized by a significant African linguistic influence;³¹ second, the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea;³² third, Cuban Bozal Spanish, found until well into the twentieth century;³³ and fourth, the vestigial Spanish of Trinidad, which may not point to true creolization but provides another clue for Afro-Hispanic linguistics.³⁴ Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century folkloric documents give evidence of similar phenomena in the partially Africanized Spanish of black Puerto Ricans³⁵ and Peruvians.³⁶ In the cases cited above, which come from both popular literature and real-life observations, the same strategies are evident: partial reduction of verbal conjugation, particularly in favor of the least “marked” form—the third person singular; reduction and elimination of many common prepositions, particularly *de* and *a*; partial suspension of nominal con-

cordance of gender and number; avoidance of embedded structures; use of paraphrases with *de* or *a* instead of using clitic pronouns and possessive adjectives; and reduction of lexical or redundant word-final /s/.

None of the linguistic features just mentioned are peculiar to the influence of a single African language, and most traits are symptomatic of imperfectly learned Spanish, fostered by the sociocultural and economic inferiority of Africans in Spanish America. This situation itself has been claimed as one factor in the evolution of creole dialects. In the majority of Afro-Hispanic populations, linguistic evolution in the direction of greater similarity with received (non-Africanized) Spanish has effectively erased traces of earlier, partially creolized language; and literary and folkloric attempts at preserving or recreating earlier linguistic forms, such as *negrista* literature and the Panamanian Congo dialect, are marred by an element of exaggeration, humor, or satire that renders these forms less than adequate as attestations of earlier stages of Africanized Spanish. Dialect pockets such as the Chota Valley of Ecuador are important for the study of African-Spanish contacts because they provide tiny, partially obscured (but nonetheless valuable) windows into the past in zones where the crushing linguistic modernization of contemporary Latin America has left only vestiges of Afro-Hispanic speech modes. African natives who were brought to Latin America as well as their descendants for one or more generations undoubtedly spoke unique forms of Spanish, and the impact of these speech forms is only now being contemplated in its entirety. The black Choteños who have lived in highland Ecuador for 250 years are of great interest for historical, anthropological, and linguistic studies because even cultural assimilation has not totally obliterated the important African contributions of this group.

In summary, a study of the speech of black Choteños suggests an earlier stage when partially Africanized Spanish was generally spoken in the Chota Valley. This finding is significant in postulating the use of partially creolized Spanish away from the Caribbean "heartland," where most such dialects are found. The finding is also of interest because the Choteños have always coexisted linguistically with non-African neighbors and were never part of a resistance movement or *cimarrón* society. The surviving remnants of their language follow general patterns of creole language behavior, although no traces of putative Portuguese creole have been found. These data are not sufficient to advance theoretical claims as to monogenetic or polygenetic origins of Hispanic creoles, but they underline the desirability of examining the speech of small, isolated Afro-Hispanic groups in the hope of obtaining further pieces of the dialectological puzzle still missing from the study of the major creole dialects.

NOTES

1. Derek Bickerton and Aquiles Escalante, "Palenquero: A Spanish-based Creole of Northern Colombia," *Lingua* 24 (1970):254–67; Aquiles Escalante, "Notas sobre el Palenque de San Basilio, una comunidad negra en Colombia," *Divulgaciones Etnológicas* 3, no. 5 (1954):207–359; José V. Ochoa Franco, *Consideraciones generales sobre costumbres y lenguaje palenqueros* (Cartagena: Dirección de Educación Pública de Bolívar, 1945); Germán de Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos hispánicos, afrohispanicos y criollos* (Madrid: Gredos, 1978), 441–66; Roberto Arrazola, *Palenque, primer pueblo libre de América* (Cartagena: Editorial Hernández, 1970); Nina Friedemann and Carlos Patiño Rosselli, *Lengua y sociedad en el Palenque de San Basilio* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1983); and Nina Friedemann and Richard Cross, *Ma Ngombe: guerreros y ganaderos en Palenque* (Bogotá: Carlos Valencia Editores, 1979).
2. Luz Graciela Joly, "The Ritual Play of the Congos of North-Central Panama: Sociolinguistic Implications," Sociolinguistic Working Paper no. 85 (Austin, Tex.: Southwest Educational Laboratory, 1981); John Lipski, "The Speech of the Negro Congos of Panama," *Hispanic Linguistics* 2, no. 1 (1985):23–47; John Lipski, "El lenguaje de los negros congos de Panamá: ¿vestigios de un criollo afrohispanico?" *Lexis*, forthcoming; and John Lipski, "The Negro Congos of Panama: A Vestigial Afro-Hispanic Group," *Journal of Black Studies* 16 (1986):409–28.
3. Richard Otheguy, "The Spanish Caribbean: A Creole Perspective," in *New Ways of Analyzing Variation in English*, edited by Charles James Bailey and Richard Shuy (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1975), 323–39; Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos*, 311–34, 362–423, 481–91; Manuel Alvarez Nazario, *El elemento afronegroide en el español de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1974); Humberto López Morales, *Estudios sobre el español de Cuba* (New York: Las Américas, 1971); Humberto López Morales, "Sobre la existencia y pervivencia del 'criollo' cubano," *Anuario de Letras* 18 (1980):85–116; Humberto López Morales, "Estratificación sociolectal frente a diglosia en el Caribe hispanico," *Lingüística Española Actual* 5 (1983):205–22; Concepción Teresa Alzola, "Habla popular cubana," *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* 23 (1965):358–69; Antonio Bachiller y Morales, "Desfiguración a que está expuesto el idioma castellano al contacto y mezcla de razas," *Revista de Cuba* 14 (1883):97–104; Arturo Montori, *Modificaciones populares del idioma castellano en Cuba* (Havana: Imprenta de "Cuba Pedagógica," 1916); John Lipski, "On the Construction 'ta' + infinitive in Caribbean Spanish," *Romance Philology*, forthcoming. Papiamentu, spoken in the Netherlands Antilles, is a debatably Hispanic (although clearly Africanized) creole language in that the demonstrably Portuguese component predominates over the Spanish base. Compare John Birmingham, "The Papiamentu Language of Curaçao," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia; Douglas Taylor, "Grammatical and Lexical Affinities of Creoles," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, edited by Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 293–96; and Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos*, 311–34, 424–40, 481–91.
4. Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos*; Alvarez Nazario, *El elemento afronegroide*; Marius Valkhoff, *Studies in Portuguese and Creole* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1966); Douglas Taylor, *Languages of the West Indies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Keith Whinnom, "Origins of European-based Creoles and Pidgins," *Orbis* 14 (1965):510–27; Ian Hancock, "Malacca Creole Portuguese: Asian, African, or European?" *Anthropological Linguistics* 17 (1975):211–36; Germán de Granda, "La tipología 'criolla' de dos hablas del área lingüística hispánica," *Thesaurus* 23 (1968):193–205; and Anthony Naro, "A Study on the Origins of Pidginization," *Language* 54 (1978):314–47. By the fifteenth century, significant numbers of black slaves lived in Lisbon, and many were later transferred to southern Spain. The first examples of Africanized Spanish, which appeared in peninsular Spanish literary documents of the early sixteenth century, indicate a high degree of interference from pidgin Portuguese. See Ruth Pike, "Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century: Slaves and Freedmen," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 47 (1967):344–59; Alfonso Franco Silva, *Registro documental sobre la esclavitud sevillana (1453–1513)* (Seville: Uni-

- versidad de Sevilla, 1979); and A. C. de C. M. Sanders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441–1555* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). For early examples of Africanized Spanish, compare Frida Weber de Kurlat, "Sobre el negro como tipo cómico en el teatro español del siglo XVI," *Romance Philology* 17 (1962):380–91; Germán de Granda, "Posibles vías directas de introducción de africanismos en el 'habla de negro' literaria castellana," *Boletín del Instituto Caro y Cervo* 24 (1969):459–69; Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos*, 216–33; Edmund de Chasca, "The Phonology of the Speech of the Negroes in Early Spanish Drama," *Hispanic Review* 14 (1946):322–39; Howard Jason, "The Language of the Negro in Early Spanish Drama," *College Language Association Journal* 10 (1967):330–40; Juan Castellano, "El negro esclavo en el entremés del Siglo de Oro," *Hispania* 44 (1961):55–65; Paul Teyssier, *La Langue de Gil Vicente* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1959); John Lipski, "Black Spanish: The Last Frontier of Afro-America," *Crítica* (San Diego) 1, no. 2 (1985):53–75; and John Lipski, "On the Reduction of /s/ in Bozal Spanish," *Neophilologus* 70 (1986):208–16.
5. In addition to the sources cited in notes 3 and 4, a minimal bibliography would include: F. Adolfo Coelho, "Os Dialectos Românicos ou Neo-Latinos na Africa, Asia e América," in *Estudos Lingüísticos Crioulos*, edited by Jorge Morais-Barbosa (Lisbon: Academia Internacional de Cultura Portuguesa, 1963), 1–233; Jorge Morais-Barbosa, "Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe: The Linguistic Situation," in *Miscelânea Luso-Africana*, edited by Marius Valkhoff (Lisbon: Junto do Ultramar, 1975), 133–51; W. A. A. Wilson, *The Crioulo of Guiné* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1962); Jan Voorhoeve, "Historical and Linguistic Evidence in Favour of the Relexification Theory," *Language in Society* 2 (1973):133–45; Germán de Granda, "A Socio-Historical Approach to the Problem of Portuguese Creole in West Africa," *Linguistics* 173 (1976):11–22; William Megenney, "Traces of Portuguese in Three Caribbean Creoles: Evidence in Support of the Monogenetic Theory," *Hispanic Linguistics* 1, no. 2 (1984):177–90; David Dalby, "Black through White: Patterns of Communication in Africa and the New World," in *Black-White Speech Relationships*, edited by Walt Wolfram and Naomi Clark (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1971), 99–138; Mervyn Alleyne, *Comparative Afro-American* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1981); Kemlin Laurence, "Is Caribbean Spanish a Case of Decreolization?" *Orbis* 23 (1974):484–99; J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972); M. F. Goodman, *A Comparative Study of Creole French* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964); Alain Yacou, "A propos du parler bossal, langue créole de Cuba," *Espace Créole* 2 (1977):73–92; Marius Valkhoff, *New Light on Afrikaans and Malayo-Portuguese* (Louvain: Editiones Peeters, 1972); Ian Hancock, "A Provisional Comparison of the English-based Atlantic Creoles," *African Language Review* 8 (1969):7–72; John Baugh, "Bipidginization and African-Related Creole Development," *Southwest Journal of Linguistics* 6 (1983):166–84; Douglas Taylor, "The Origin of West Indian Creole Languages: Evidence from Grammatical Categories," *American Anthropologist* 65 (1963):800–814; and William Stewart, "Creole Language of the Caribbean," in *Study of the Role of Second Languages in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*, edited by F. Rice (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1962), 34–53. Derek Bickerton is the leading exponent of the strongest form of the language universals approach; see his *Roots of Language* (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1981). A less extreme approach is taken by Paul Kay and Gillian Sankoff in "A Language-Universals Approach to Pidgins and Creoles," in *Pidgins and Creoles: Current Trends and Prospects*, edited by David DeCamp and Ian Hancock (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1974), 61–72.
 6. Carlisle González and Celso Benavides, "¿Existen rasgos criollos en el habla de Samaná?" in *El español del Caribe*, edited by Orlando Alba (Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1982), 107–32; Sylvia Moodie, "Morphophonemic Illformedness in an Obsolescent Dialect: A Case Study of Trinidad Spanish," *Orbis* (forthcoming); Sylvia Moodie, "Basilectal Survivals in Post-Creole Caribbean Spanish," manuscript; and John Lipski, "Creole Spanish and Vestigial Spanish: Evolutionary Parallels," *Linguistics* 23 (1985):963–84.
 7. Leslie Rout, *The African Experience in Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Rolando Mellafe, *Negro Slavery in Latin America* (Berkeley and

- Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).
8. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "Sevilla frente a Madrid," in *Miscelánea homenaje a André Martinet*, edited by Diego Catalán (La Laguna, Canary Islands: Universidad de La Laguna, 1963), 3:99–165; Manuel Alvar, "Las hablas meridionales de España y su interés para la lingüística comparada," *Revista de Filología Española* 39 (1955):284–313; and Manuel Alvar, *Teoría lingüística de las regiones* (Barcelona: Planeta and Universidad Complutense, 1975).
 9. Rout, *African Experience in Spanish America*, 211, 232.
 10. For example, see Julio Estupiñán Tello, *El negro en Esmeraldas* (Quito: Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, 1967), 45–48; and Humberto Toscano Mateus, *El español del Ecuador* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 19–20. This theory is also repeated by Carlos Alberto Coba Andrade, *Literatura popular afroecuatoriana* (Otavalo, Ecuador: Instituto Otavaleño de Antropología, 1980), 19–49.
 11. Leopoldo Benítez Vinuena, *Ecuador: drama y paradoja* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950), 62.
 12. Robert West, *The Pacific Lowlands of Colombia: A Negroid Area of the American Tropics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 106; and Teodoro Wolf, *Geografía y geología del Ecuador* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1892), 525.
 13. Norman Whitten, Jr., *Class, Kinship, and Power in an Ecuadorian Town: The Negroes of San Lorenzo* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 22–25; Piedad Peñaherrera de Costales and Alfredo Costales Samaniego, *Coangue o historia cultural y social de los negros del Chota y Salinas* (Quito: Lacta, 1959); and Albert Franklin, *Ecuador: Portrait of a People* (New York: Doubleday, 1943), 269.
 14. Kathleen Klumpp, "Black Traders of North Highland Ecuador," in *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Norman Whitten, Jr., and John Szwed (New York: Free Press, 1970), 245–62.
 15. Edwin Ferndon, Jr., *Studies in Ecuadorian Geography* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research, 1950), 7.
 16. Whitten, *Class, Kinship, and Power*, 161–62; Federico González Suárez, *Historia general de la República del Ecuador* 8 (Guayaquil: Publicaciones Educativas "Ariel," 1970), 160.
 17. Estupiñán Tello, *El negro en Esmeraldas*, 49.
 18. Norman Whitten, Jr., *Black Frontiersmen: A South American Case* (New York: John Wiley and Schenkman, 1974), 179; and Klumpp, "Black Traders."
 19. For example, see Modesto Chávez Franco, *Crónicas del Guayaquil antiguo* (Guayaquil: Imprenta y Talleres Municipales, 1930), 524–29. He mentions the village of Palenque, in the province of Los Ríos to the northeast of Guayaquil, where a group of descendants of escaped slaves had settled and where a vestigially creolized Spanish may have existed in the nineteenth century. Chávez Franco cited examples from his childhood days but was unable to provide an exact translation for the highly deformed elements. Granda examines these materials and speculates on the possible survival of creolized Spanish in the Palenque area in *Estudios lingüísticos*, 321, 381–83. The village of Palenque still exists, but my research reveals that none of its residents speak in this fashion, nor did I find any collective memory of a creolized speech being used by past generations. My findings lead to the supposition that the examples recalled by Chávez Franco—if in fact they represent a creolized Spanish (and not, for example, an actual African song or a series of onomatopoeic forms)—were the last remnants of an earlier speech mode.
 20. Estupiñán Tello speaks of the settlements in the interior of Esmeraldas that had virtually no contact with the outside world until the Ibarra–San Lorenzo railroad link was constructed a few decades ago: "los negros vivían semidesnudos y hablaban su propio dialecto . . . así los encontró el ferrocarril Ibarra–San Lorenzo cuando por primera vez atravesó estas comarcas" (*El negro en Esmeraldas*, 71). In interviews with workers who had participated in the construction of the railroad and had visited some of the interior villages for the first time, it became apparent that no creolized Spanish existed in this area. Fieldwork among residents of the interior settlements confirmed this assertion.
 21. For example, Frederick Hassaurek traveled through Ecuador in 1861 and noted on witnessing a celebration among Choteños: "I was unable to make out any of the

- verses, but my companions told me the songs were composed by the Negroes themselves, and in their own dialect. Like the Negroes of the United States, the Negroes of Spanish America have a dialect and pronunciation of their own. The same guttural voices and almost unintelligible pronunciation, the same queer gesticulation and shaking of the body, the same shrewd simplicity and good humor" See Hassaurek, *Four Years among Spanish-Americans* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1868), 194. It is evident that regardless of his qualifications as an explorer and anthropologist, Hassaurek was a questionable linguist who was strongly influenced by stereotypes and generalizations that were invalid for Hispanic American dialectology even in the nineteenth century. The fact that the Choteños' songs were incomprehensible to the visitor (who apparently was not entirely fluent in Spanish) says nothing essential about the local Spanish dialect but rather exemplifies a natural phenomenon, the phonetic deformation of sung language and the stylistic discrepancies between daily speech patterns and the lyrics of popular songs.
22. For previous sources, compare D. Lincoln Canfield, *Spanish Pronunciation in the Americas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 48–51; Toscano Mateus, *El español del Ecuador*; and Peter Boyd-Bowman, "Sobre la pronunciación del español en el Ecuador," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 7 (1953):221–33. In general, the phonetic traits are as follows: syllable-final and word-final /s/ is retained except in (1); in (3) and (4) and sometimes in (2) and (5), word-final prevocalic /s/ (*los amigos*) is realized as [z]; the palatal lateral phoneme occurs in (2) and (5), is given a groove fricative pronunciation [ʒ] in (3) and (4), and is pronounced as [y] in (1); the group /tr/ is pronounced roughly as [č] in (3) and (4), where /r/ is also given a groove fricative pronunciation, as is implosive and phrase-final /r/; and syllable-final /l/ and /r/ may be neutralized in (1), where word-final /r/, particularly in verbal infinitives, may disappear. To this list of dialectal characteristics may be added the uniformly velar pronunciation of word-final /n/ before vowels and in phrase-final position (*muy bien, un amigo*) in nearly all of Ecuador, although in the extreme northern province of Carchi, a certain alternation with alveolar [n] occurs. In the Amazon region, considerable idiolectal variation occurs due to the small number of native Spanish speakers, who come from various regions of the country.
 23. Boyd-Bowman claims that the Chota dialect "pertenece lingüísticamente a la provincia negra de Esmeraldas" in "Pronunciación del español," 233. This opinion is echoed by Thomas Weil in *Area Handbook for Ecuador* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), 83. This source declares that on the Ecuadoran coast, a "black" subdialect exists alongside other varieties. My research disproves these remarks and offers possible reasons for the mistaken impressions. In particular, black highland Spanish normally retains the phoneme /s/ in all positions, being essentially the only "black" Latin American Spanish dialect to do so, a fact of considerable importance for theories of Latin American dialectology. Black Choteños also produce the assibilated variant [ʒ] of /r/, frequently assibilate syllable-final /r/, maintain the phonological opposition between /l/ and /r/ in all positions, velarize word-final /n/, give an alveolar articulation to the group /tr/, and frequently elide unstressed vowels in contact with /s/.
 24. In the Chota Valley, ten black informants were used (seven men and three women) from the villages of El Chota, Carpuela, Salinas, and Juncal. Their ages ranged from twenty-seven to seventy-eight, and all were engaged in subsistence-level farming and rudimentary artisanal trades. Each informant provided approximately thirty minutes of taped material consisting of unstructured interviews in which a maximally informal style was sought. Data from the remaining dialect areas were also collected in situ, using a sample of five informants from each dialect region. Informants included men and women from twenty-eight to sixty-five years of age whose socioeconomic status was lower to lower-middle class in order to effect an adequate sociolinguistic comparison with the black Choteños.
 25. Whitten, *Class, Kinship, and Power*, 22–25; Estupiñán Tello, *El negro en Esmeraldas*, 49.
 26. For example, in the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea (the only Spanish-speaking area of black Africa), /s/ is normally retained in all positions, but word-final lexical /s/ falls with relative ease. Compare John Lipski, "The Spanish of Malabo, Equatorial Gui-

- nea," *Hispanic Linguistics* 1 (1984):69–96; John Lipski, *The Spanish of Equatorial Guinea* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1985); and Germán de Granda, "Fenómenos de interferencia fonética de fang sobre el español de Guinea Ecuatorial," *Anuario de Lingüística Hispánica* (Valladolid) 1 (1985):95–114. Speakers in the Colombian Chocó region exhibit a similar behavior, with nonmorphological /s/ being lost more often than in other circumstances. Compare José Joaquín Montes Giraldo, "El habla del Chocó: notas breves," *Thesaurus* 29 (1974):409–28; and Germán de Granda, *Estudios sobre un área dialectal de población negra: las tierras bajas occidentales de Colombia* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1977).
27. Amadeu Amaral, *O Dialeto Caipira* (São Paulo: Editora Anhembi, 1955), 53; Ana Natal Rodrigues, *O Dialeto Caipira na Região de Piracicaba* (São Paulo: Atica, 1974); Milton Azevedo, "Loss of Agreement in Caipira Portuguese," *Hispania* 67 (1984):403–8; and William Megenney, *A Bahian Heritage: An Ethnolinguistic Study of African Influence on Brazilian Portuguese* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978). Compare also Lipski, "The Reduction of /s/ in Bozal Spanish"; Weber de Kurlat, "El negro como tipo cómico"; and Chasca, "Phonology of the Speech of Negroes." Because virtually none of the African languages known to have been current among black slave populations in Latin America used word-final consonantal endings, it is not surprising that even in regions where word-final consonants are normally retained in Spanish, a subtle African substratum influence might weaken certain consonants under conditions of grammatical redundancy.
 28. For example, although few Choteños are fluent in Quechua, most utilize syntactic patterns based on the gerund and the verb *estar* that result from Quechua influence. An example is *dame comprando unas espermitas*, "buy me some candles." Chota Valley Spanish also makes use of the intensive verb *ser*, also found in other Latin American Spanish dialects, to a greater extent than is found elsewhere in Ecuador: *Para el ojeado, se nota es cuando le sale así granos*, "You notice when the person with evil eye gets a rash." Compare Charles Kany, *American Spanish Syntax*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 256.
 29. Laura Hidalgo Alzamora, *Décimas esmeraldeñas* (Quito: Banco Central del Ecuador, 1982), 159–60. In the Chota Valley and in some more marginal dialects of Esmeraldas, the second person singular is formed with *vos* plus verbs with stressed final syllable (for example, *vos hablás*, "you speak," as opposed to *tú hablas, él habla*, or other possible forms), a pattern that precludes explicitly stating the subject pronoun.
 30. *Ibid.*, 165.
 31. González and Benavides, "¿Existen rasgos criollos?"
 32. Lipski, *The Spanish of Equatorial Guinea*, chap. 3.
 33. Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1979), 137; Lydia Cabrera, *El monte* (Miami: Ediciones C. R., 1971); Granda, *Estudios lingüísticos*, 481–91; López Morales, *Estudios sobre el español de Cuba*, 62–71; Lipski, "The Construction 'ta' + infinitive"; and Otheguy, "The Spanish Caribbean."
 34. Lipski, "Creole Spanish and Vestigial Spanish"; and Sylvia Moodie, "Basilectal Survivals" and "Morphophonemic Illformedness."
 35. J. Alden Mason and Aurelio Espinosa, "Porto-Rican Folklore: Folktales," *Journal of American Folklore* 40 (1927):313–414, 410; and Alvarez Nazario, *El elemento afronegroide*, 386.
 36. Enrique López Albújar, *Matalaché*, 3d. ed. (Lima: Editorial Juan Mejía Baca, 1966), 38.