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Chapter 2. The Spanish creole debate

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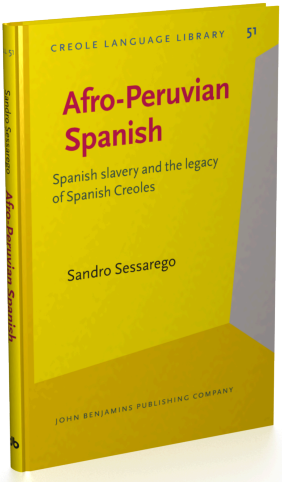

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Afro-Peruvian Spanish: Spanish slavery and the legacy of Spanish Creoles
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CHAPTER 2

The Spanish creole debate

2.1 Introduction

A long-lasting debate in Hispanic linguistics and creole studies concerns the origin and evolution of Afro-Hispanic contact varieties in the Americas. It is a well-known fact that the current number of Spanish creoles in this region is much more reduced than the number of other European-based ones (e.g. derived from English and French). At a first glance, this fact may appear counterintuitive, especially if we consider that Spain was among the most influential imperial powers in the 'New World' and Spanish is today the official language of several Latin American countries. Nevertheless, as we can observe, Spanish creoles are not common in the Americas. Traditionally, only two languages have been classified as such: Papiamentu, spoken in the Dutch Antilles (Jacobs 2012), and Palenquero, used in the former maroon community of San Basilio de Palenque, Colombia (Schwegler 1996a). Furthermore, the study of the origin of these two varieties has given way to the opening of a quite heated debate, since for some scholars these languages are Spanish creoles only from a synchronic point of view, but not from a diachronic one (cf. McWhorter 2000: 14–20). In fact, it has been claimed that Papiamentu and Palenquero should be better analyzed as Portuguese-based creoles, which eventually went through Spanish relexification (see Goodman 1987; Schwegler 1993, 2014; Jacobs 2012; among others).

A variety of theoretical models have been formulated to account for this situation. For instance, the supporters of the Monogenetic Hypothesis of creole formation have suggested that an Afro-Portuguese creole spoken among black slaves once existed in the Spanish Caribbean and in several mainland colonies. According to this view, such a language survived only in Palenque and in the Dutch Antilles, having decreolized everywhere else due to standardization and pressure from normative Spanish (Granda 1968; Schwegler 1993). Conversely, other scholars ascribe the current lack of Spanish creoles in the Caribbean to a concomitance of demographic and economic factors, which differentiated this region from the French and British Antilles, and as a result, allowed the Spanish slaves to learn a good approximation to the language spoken by their masters (Chaudenson 2001; Laurence 1974; Mintz 1971).

McWhorter (2000) agrees that Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic might not have been the ideal places for the development of a Spanish creole in colonial times; nevertheless, he affirms that the mainland colonies under Spanish rule would have been perfect for the development of such a language variety, but yet, Spanish creoles did not form there. In his view, the reasons for the scarcity of Spanish creoles in the Americas should not be sought in the Spanish American colonies themselves; rather, it should be ascribed to specific sociolinguistic conditions found in Africa, from where the slaves were shipped to the Americas (Afrogenesis Hypothesis). McWhorter (2000) argues that the creoles currently spoken in the Americas developed from pidgins, which formed in colonial times from the linguistic contact between the European traders and the Africans involved in the slave trade. Since Spain was the only European colonial power that did not trade directly in African slaves, a Spanish pidgin could never form on the Western African coast and, as a result, a Spanish creole could not possibly develop in the Americas.

The current chapter offers an account of the main hypotheses (and relevant critiques) that have been proposed to solve this long-lasting debate. This will provide a theoretical background on which to base our analysis of the APS case.

2.2 Did the Spanish creoles decreolize?

Germán de Granda (1970, 1978) was one among the first linguists to claim a genetic link among the Afro-Portuguese language varieties formed on the Western African coast and the Afro-Hispanic languages developed in the Americas. In fact, the author saw historical cues in Father Alonso de Sandoval's (1627 [1956]) treatise on slavery (DE INSTAURANDA AETHIOPUM SALUTE) suggesting the existence of a diffused Afro-Portuguese creole spoken among black slaves in Latin America.

This idea was perfectly in line with the proposal of other scholars working on different creole languages (e.g. Schuchardt 1889; Taylor 1961; Valdman 1964; Whinnom 1965; etc.), who claimed that the linguistic similarities among these varieties could not be due to chance, but rather derived from a common protolanguage (the Monogenetic Hypothesis, cf. Stewart 1962). In Granda's view, an early proto-Afro-Portuguese creole must have developed from the first contacts that the Portuguese had in Africa during the fifteenth century and then it must have been exported around the world through the different phases of European colonial expansion. According to this model, such a contact variety would have maintained its basic grammatical structure but its lexicon would have been relexified with lexical items proceeding from other languages. This would account for

the fact that creole languages spoken in places so far apart and scattered around the world have relatively similar grammars. Granda (1968), in fact, claims that the morpho-syntactic similarities found across languages as typologically and geographically distant as Palenquero and Papiamentu (spoken in the Caribbean), the creoles from the Philippines, or the creole from Macau, among others, would be inexplicable if they were not accounted for by recurring to the Monogenetic Hypothesis. In his words, this fact would be "tan extraño como la invención paralela de un mismo sistema alfabético en múltiples y distantes puntos geográficos" (as strange as the parallel invention of the same alphabetic system in multiple and distant geographic locations) (1968: 203).

Granda (1970), therefore, quotes a paragraph extracted from Sandoval's treatise and takes it as unequivocal evidence that masses of black slaves could speak a Portuguese creole in Spanish America:[1]

> Y los que llamamos criollos y naturales de San Thomé, con la comunicación que con tan bárbaras naciones han tenido al tiempo que han resistido en San Thomé, las entienden casi todas con un género de lenguaje muy corrupto y revesado de la portuguesa que llaman lengua de San Thomé, al modo que ahora nosotros entendemos y hablamos con todo género de negros y naciones con nuestra lengua española corrupta, como comúnmente la hablan todos los negros.
> (And those that we call creoles and natives of São Tomé, due to the communication that they had with so many uncivilized nations during the period they lived in São Tomé, understand almost all varieties, with a sort of broken Portuguese that they called the São Tomé language, so that now we can speak with all kinds of blacks with our corrupted Spanish, as it is usually spoken by all the blacks).

According to this view, given that a creole language was spoken in the Caribbean and in several other Spanish colonies, the current paucity of Spanish creoles in these regions would be due to a systematic process of decreolization, driven by standard Spanish normative pressure and language standardization. In fact, several authors suggest that certain linguistic traits currently found in the popular varieties of Spanish spoken in Cuba (Granda 1971; Otheguy 1973; Perl 1982, 1985; Megenney 1984, 1985, 1993), Puerto Rico (Granda 1968) and the Dominican Republic (Schwegler 1996b) should be seen as indicators of a previous creole stage (e.g. high rates of overt pronouns, non-inverted questions, double negation, etc.) (cf. Sessarego 2013b for a different account). Some of these authors, after analyzing historical and literary texts depicting the speech of slaves in colonial times, concluded that with all likelihood the language spoken by these black

1. For a different interpretation of Sandoval's words see Lipski (2005: 288–289) and Sessarego (2013a).

captives was not just a *bozal*[2] variety of Spanish, but rather, a stable creole. One such author is Perl, who states for the Cuban case: "the Cuban 'habla bozal' was no idiolectally determined jargon of the Blacks in the 19th century but a social variety of Spanish comparable with other varieties of Spanish- and Portuguese-based creoles' (Perl 1982: 423, reported in Lipski 1993: 6).

Lipski (1987, 1993) holds a different opinion. He suggests that bozal Spanish never creolized in the Caribbean. In fact, he shows that the grammatical features ascribed by some authors to a potential previous creole stage for Caribbean Spanish may be seen as common second-language-acquisition strategies, not necessarily linked to a previous creole stage. Lipski acknowledges that the massive importation of an African workforce into Cuba during the sugar boom phase in the 19th century might have briefly set the conditions for language creolization on the biggest sugarcane plantations; nevertheless, he backs the idea that a stable creole never formed since the majority of the blacks already living on the island could speak Spanish. For this reason, the new captives, recently imported from Africa, did not creolize the local dialect and their offspring just learned the Spanish language natively.

Another case of decreolization has been proposed for Chota Valley Spanish (CVS), a black dialect spoken in Highland Ecuador. Schwegler (1999, 2014) ascribes to CVS a potential Afro-Portuguese creole origin. The author claims the existence in this language of a Portuguese third person pronoun, *ele*, which, in his view, would be hard to explain unless we assume that the slaves who entered Chota Valley in colonial times could speak a creole-like Afro-Portuguese contact variety (in partial support of the Monogenetic Hypothesis). Lipski (2009) provides a different account for the presence of *ele* in CVS. He analyzes this element as the result of a paragogic process of final *-e* insertion affecting several items across the CVS lexicon (e.g. *mujer* → *mujere*, *ayer* → *ayere*, *él* → *ele,* etc.). Moreover, a closer analysis at the available socio-historical evidence for CVS highly reduces the possibility of a stable creole formation/introduction in the region, since a variety of demographic, economic, social, and religious factors at play on colonial Chota Valley plantations appear to have facilitated Spanish acquisition among the black slaves (Sessarego 2013c).

For the region of Barlovento, Venezuela, there have been claims suggesting a possible decreolization. Álvarez and Obediente (1998), in fact, have argued that some of the linguistic features encountered in the local black dialect might be

2. The term *bozal* refers to a second-language variety of Spanish. *Bozales*, in fact, were African-born slaves recently imported from Africa. On the other hand, the term *latinos* is generally used to refer to black slaves who were born in Spain or in the Americas, who spoke Spanish, and were familiar with Spanish cultural norms.

ascribed to a previous creole stage (e.g. phonological reductions, non-inverted questions, etc.). Nevertheless, a deeper historical analysis has also shown that the constraints on slave importation into the region were quite strict and a big part of the enslaved population was locally born. Moreover, a linguistic inspection of all the 'creole-like' features has also revealed that the linguistic phenomena pointed out by Álvarez and Obediente as potential creole indicators could be found in several other rural Spanish varieties, thus showing that they are not necessarily quintessential elements of creole languages (cf. Díaz-Campos & Clements 2005, 2008).

In a recent study carried out in Palenque (Colombia), Schwegler and Morton (2003) have shown that the influence of Palenquero on the Spanish spoken in the region is minimal; thus, if Palenquero speakers decided to abandon their creole language, it would be virtually impossible to claim that a creole was once spoken in the region by looking at their variety of Spanish. The authors highlight this issue to claim that a creole language similar to Palenquero may have existed in several Afro-Hispanic communities across the Americas, and could have disappeared without leaving many traces behind. This is definitely a good point, which, I believe, further indicates that linguistic studies of this kind should always be corroborated by socio-demographic research to cast light on the history of these languages.

Another instance in which a decreolization account has been proposed is the Afro-Bolivian Spanish (ABS) case. ABS is spoken in the Yungas Valleys, Department of La Paz, Bolivia. Lipski (2008) was the first linguist to closely analyze this dialect and, given the morpho-syntactic reductions encountered in this variety, has suggested a potential creole origin for ABS. Nevertheless, more recently, socio-historical and linguistic evidence has been provided to refute the decreolization account of ABS in favor of a model depicting the features encountered in this dialect as the result of advanced second-language processes, which do not imply any previous creole stage (Sessarego 2011a, b, 2013d, 2014a).

As has been shown, different hypotheses have been provided to account for the current meager number of Spanish creoles in the Americas. For each country of interest, scholars have proposed ad-hoc explanations. However, a broader framework capable of accounting for the whole American continent has yet to be formulated. In fact, a distinction has gradually emerged in the linguistic literature to justify the non-creolization of these contact varieties. These studies have dealt with the Caribbean and the Mainland colonies in different ways, due to the different socioeconomic settings that characterized their colonial realities. In order to expose the main arguments dealing with the origin and evolution of Afro-Hispanic dialects in these two regions of the Americas, in the following sections I will maintain such a distinction; however, I must remind the reader that one of the goals of this study is to find common trends across the diverse colonial

settings to eventually provide a single 'umbrella' framework capable of accounting in a broader sense for the birth and evolution of these language varieties. In line with this objective, a more general hypothesis will be presented, after putting together a puzzle of scattered data, in Chapter 6.

2.3 The lack of Spanish creoles in the Caribbean: Demographic and economic factors

The primary hypothesis that has been proposed in the literature on creole studies to account for the lack of creole formation in the Spanish Caribbean is that, in this part of the world, plantation societies developed only in the 19th century, contrary to what happened in the French and English Antilles, where large agricultural infrastructures relying heavily on an African workforce had been implemented two centuries earlier (Mintz 1971; Chaudenson 1992).

Since the economic structure of the Spanish Caribbean would have been based for several centuries on small- and medium-sized *haciendas*, the so-called *société d'habitation* (cf. Chaudenson 2001), where black bozales were never a significant majority and worked alongside whites and *mestizos*,[3] the acquisition of the Spanish language by the enslaved group would have been facilitated (Mintz 1971; Megenney 1985).[4] For this reason, in the 19th century the language spoken on these islands by the local population was Spanish. At that time, the implementation of a large-scale plantation system brought about radical changes in the mechanisms of production and involved the introduction of new African captives. Nevertheless, the arrival of a substantial African workforce did not entail the development of a Spanish creole (but see Schwegler 1996b, 1999 for a different view on Caribbean Spanish). Conversely, the new bozales, who did not outnumber the local population, simply learned the language spoken by the slaves who were already working on the islands (Lipski 1993, 1998). Such a scenario would have been quite different from the one encountered in the English and French Antilles. In fact, in these colonies the creolization of the European lexifiers did take place since the progressive and massive importation of slaves radically modified the demographic figures of the islands. In fact, the high rate of mortality among the captives implied the need for a constant introduction of new African laborers. From a language acquisition perspective, this system would entail that each new

3. A *mestizo* is a person of mixed White European and Amerindian ancestry.

4. It should be noted that on some islands in the Caribbean (i.e. St Kitts), a *société d'habitation* was present, and yet French creoles developed there (Baker & Bruyn 1998).

wave of slaves would eventually target a 'square approximation' (cf. Chaudenson 2001: 132) of the language targeted by the previous wave, thus resulting in a progressive shift of the language spoken on the plantation from the European lexifier.

Mintz (1971) and Laurence (1974) provide a list of social and economic aspects of slaves' lives in the Spanish Caribbean and contrast them with the living conditions of English and French captives. They indicate that, contrary to the English and French Caribbean societies, on the Spanish islands the ratio of slaves to freemen was low and manumission was quite easy to achieve, usually by means of *coartación,* a gradual self-purchased manumission. Moreover, it was common for white men and black women to have intimate relations, and mixed-race marriages were not exceptional. For these reasons, a free mulatto group, capable of speaking Spanish, quickly developed. Africans were never a majority group, especially before the 19th century, when they worked on small farms, side by side with white *peones*. Additionally, the hierarchical structure of society in the Spanish colonies was much more flexible than the one found in the French and English territories and, for this reason, Spanish slaves could more easily climb the social ladder.[5]

Lipski (1993, 1994b, 1998), Chaudenson (2001), and Mufwene (2001) restate that the external ecological conditions were not in place for the formation of a creole language under Spanish rule in the Caribbean. In particular, Chaudenson (2001) claims that the Spaniards managed to Hispanize the populations they colonized so that Spanish rapidly became the language spoken in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and remained so for centuries. As a result of this strong Spanish cultural intake across all the social strata, even when masses of new Africans were brought to Cuba during the first decades of the nineteenth century, creolization did not take place.

One of the most detailed accounts on the non-creolization of Cuban Spanish is the one recently provided by Clements (2009: 68–101) in his book *The Linguistic Legacy of Spanish and Portuguese*. In a chapter dealing with Bozal Spanish, the author offers a socio-historical analysis of the economic structure of colonial Cuba from 1492 to 1808 and the demographic evolution of its different ethnic groups. Clements (2009: 70) begins his analysis by presenting Curtin's (1969: 88–89) speculative data on the distribution of the imported slave force during the whole period of the Atlantic slave trade (see Table 2.1). Curtin's calculations estimate that almost 50% of all the slaves taken to Spanish America arrived via Cuba; thus, as Clements correctly points out, "it stands to reason that it would be here where we would expect to find the necessary conditions for the formation of a Spanish-lexified creole language" (2009: 70).

5. Recent works by Wheat (2009, 2011) cast further light on the social stratification of Spanish colonial society.

Table 2.1 Distribution of the estimated slaves in Spanish America (Clements 2009: 70)

Country	Number
Mexico	200,000
Cuba	702,000
Puerto Rico	77,000
Dominican Republic	30,000
Central America	21,000
Ecuador, Panama, Colombia	200,000
Venezuela	121,000
Peru	95,000
Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia	100,000
Chile	6,000
Total	1,552,000

Nevertheless, historical data show that, except for a short period around 1532, the black population never outnumbered the white one until 1811, when the sugarcane boom imposed the introduction of more blacks, who came to form 54.5% of the population (cf. Masó 1976: 115; Clements 2009: 77). Clements (2009: 78–79) also presents demographic data taken from Kiple (1976), which do not exactly match Masó's analysis but appear to be for the most part in line with it. He compares the distributions of racial groups in Haiti and Cuba and states that (2009: 79):

> Comparing the population distributions of different Caribbean islands, we see that the distribution of Cuba's population was more balanced than that of the other islands. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century (1972), Cuba had 54,152 (20 per cent) free colored, 84,590 (31 per cent) slaves, and 133,559 (49 per cent) whites. By contrast, around that time Haiti had 452,000 (98 per cent) slaves and 11,000 (2 per cent whites).[6]

6. Schwegler (p.c.) points out that, in his view, the actual (approximate) proportions of *bozal* vs. *criollo* slaves was not the most important factor in determining the genesis and evolution of creole languages. Rather, he indicates that what mattered the most was whether and how such slaves were grouped and housed. If, for instance, a plantation had 75% *bozales*, then it did not matter what the rest of Cuba had in terms of population mix. It would have been more than enough to create an "ideal situation" for pidginization/creolization. These observations are certainly correct; nevertheless, we should always try to build our hypotheses on the available evidence. Since we do not dispose of the exact percentages of *bozales* for each Cuban plantation, the information provided by Clements can be taken as a reliable indicator of the overall trend on the island. This, however, does not rule out the possibility that in some specific hacienda the situation might have been different.

Clements highlights the key role played by the Spanish crown in limiting the introduction of slaves in colonial times and the consequently slow development of commerce until the second half of the eighteenth century. Due to the difficulties found by the settlers in importing black slaves, for several centuries Cuban commerce relied primarily on the production of goods that did not need a large workforce, such as tobacco and cattle raising (cf. Clements 2009: 81).

Finally, when commenting on the slaves' living conditions, Clements (2009: 77–79) suggests that they were probably better in Cuba than in other European colonies. He reports Alexander von Humboldt's view on the matter (cited in Masó 1976: 115) and indicates that the main factors making such a difference had to do with the higher numbers of manumissions, the emphasis posed on the Catholic religion, and the many advantages that domestic and skilled slaves could obtain from their masters.

2.4 The lack of Spanish creoles on the Mainland: The Afrogenesis Hypothesis

The socioeconomic structure of the Spanish Caribbean, as well as the evolution of its demographic figures over the colonial period, have usually been taken as evidence undermining a possible creole hypothesis for this region. McWhorter (2000) admits that such data may actually account for the lack of a Spanish creole development in the Antilles; nevertheless, in his view, if we accept the current assumptions on the formation of creole languages, then it is left to be explained why Spanish creoles are not spoken in the former Latin American mainland colonies, where massive African slave importations took place. In fact, the author argues that for several of these regions, large-scale agriculture was in place so that it should have created the optimal conditions for a creole to emerge.

McWhorter's (2000) book, *The Missing Spanish Creoles*, consists of a strong critique of the current assumptions on creole genesis and evolution; in particular, he criticizes what he labels the "limited access model," or the assumption that plantation creoles formed because slaves had little or no access to the superstrate language. McWhorter (2000: 1) begins his study with the following words:

> This book is written out of a conviction that creole genesis, at this writing, is a field on the brink of a serious mistake.
>
> One would never know this from current creolist literature, in which the reigning tone is that the past thirty years have witnessed great progress in our understanding of creole languages. Indeed, creole studies is currently passing from its pre-paradigm stage – that is, the free-for-all of competing hypotheses typical

> of scientific inquiries in their infancy – into the maturity of a basic paradigm agreed upon by all (to borrow the terminology of Kuhn 1970).
>
> The paradigm is one so deeply rooted in creolist thought that few would even consider it to be a position, as opposed to a verity (a prime sign that a paradigm has set in). The paradigm is what we will call the *limited access model*.
>
> This model stipulates that the plantation creoles of the 'New World' and the Indian Ocean developed as a result of African slaves having had limited access to the lexifier spoken on plantations, due to the disproportion of blacks to whites in such settings. This concept depicts plantation creole genesis as an attempt by slaves to forge a viable lingua franca on the basis of unusually constrained input from a socially dominant lexifier. Thus plantation social structure is seen as having filtered lexifier input to most slaves.
>
> In a field which prides itself upon its contentiousness, it will surprise many to hear that there is any fundamentally accepted tenet in creole studies. To be sure, no creolist subscribes explicitly to anything called the "limited access model." Most important, limited access is not the sum total of anyone's model – creole studies comprise a healthy variety of fascinating genesis theories. However, all work on plantation creole genesis uses some version of the limited access conception as a springboard.

In McWhorter's (2000) view, the limited access model of creole genesis is simply erroneous. It does not account for Spanish colonies and therefore it cannot explain such a "mysteriously absent creoles cluster under a single power" (2000: 39). This would imply that "something broader was at work [in Spanish America] than just unconnected, local demographic constellations" (2000: 39). In fact, if the limited access model were correct, then the Chocó region (Colombia), Chota Valley (Ecuador), Veracruz (Mexico), coastal Peru and coastal Venezuela would have been the perfect breeding ground for the development of Spanish-based creoles, but this was not the case.

If the lack of access to the lexifier was not the reason prompting creole evolution, then there must have been other factors at play. In contrast to Mufwene (1996), who sees creoles as restructured versions of their lexifiers, and Chaudenson (2001), who describes their evolution as the result of cyclical squared approximations to the European superstrate, McWhorter proposes that plantation creoles were once pidgins that were expanded into full-fledged languages by either children or adults (McWhorter 1997, 2000). As a result of this, Chaudenson's (1979, 1992) and Mufwene's (1996) frameworks, as well as those proposed by the creolists who subscribe to some version of the limited access model, would be seriously flawed. This is because such frameworks do not take into account the pidgin stage, which would be fundamental for the formation of plantation creoles in McWhorter's analysis. For this reason, the lack of Spanish creoles in the Americas would just be the logical consequence of the lack of Spanish pidgins on the

other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Indeed, Spain, unlike the rest of the European colonies involved in the colonization of the Americas, did not directly trade in African slaves. Thus there were no Spanish slaving stations in Africa, and no Spanish pidgins could possibly be spoken on the African coast or transplanted to the Americas.

McWhorter does not claim that the demographic disproportions of blacks to whites found on American plantations did not play a role in creolization. What he actually affirms is that they could be conducive of creolization only if a previous pidgin was already in place. Therefore, the lack of Latin American Spanish creoles would just corroborate his Afrogenesis Hypothesis.

The author provides further data to support his model. He offers a linguistic and historical analysis of the evolution of Atlantic and Indian Ocean creoles and claims that all the English- and French-based varieties would have been derived from one French and one English pidgin respectively. The French pidgin would have formed on the Île the Bieurt, Senegal, where the French settled in 1638 (cf. Delafosse 1931: 111; McWhorter 2000: 173), while the English one is supposed to have developed in the Cormantin Castle, Ghana, where the English started trading in African slaves in 1632 (cf. Porter 1989: 128; McWhorter 2000: 111). These contact varieties would have been transplanted to several colonies around the world; thus this would also explain why these creoles show certain grammatical similarities that could hardly be accounted for in terms of substrate/superstrate influence and/or language universals.

McWhorter indicates that Africans expanded English and French pidgins into plantation creoles not because they did not have access to the European lexifiers; rather, they developed new means of communication because creoles came to represent a symbol of black identity for the slaves working in the fields. For this reason, African workers on colonial plantations would have had two different linguistic targets: the pidgin and the European lexifier. They would acquire the pidgin, thus participating in the making of a creole, to express black identity and, in some cases, they would also acquire a second-language variety of the European lexifier, to interact with whites. Conversely, since Spanish pidgins did not form in Africa, they could not possibly become a linguistic target on American plantations. For this reason, Spanish creoles never developed. The only available target on Spanish plantations was, therefore, just Spanish. Africans acquired this language and managed to encode black identity in it by recurring to phonological variation and African borrowings (McWhorter 2000: 203–204). For this reason, present-day Afro-Hispanic vernaculars would be relatively similar to Spanish and would not show those radical differences from their lexifier that can be clearly observed in English- and French-based creoles.

The Afrogenesis Hypothesis has not found much acceptance among linguists (e.g. Lipski 2000, 2005; Díaz-Campos & Clements 2005, 2008; etc.). Even though McWhorter's effort to provide a unified framework to account for creole genesis has generally been praised (cf. Schwegler 2002: 121; Lipski 2005: 286), his model and his data analysis have oftentimes been criticized.

Lipski (2005: Ch. 9) points out that from McWhorter's analysis it is not clear why pidgins would have formed in the African slaving stations but could not develop on the Spanish Latin American plantations – if the socio-demographic conditions on such plantations were really the ones described by McWhorter. Moreover, given that McWhorter claims that Papiamentu and Palenquero are two Portuguese-based creoles that have been relexified with Spanish words, it is also not clear why a similar relexification process would not have taken place in the Spanish Mainland colonies as well. Lipski also does not find the Afrogenesis Hypothesis solid from a socio-historical standpoint; rather, he indicates that it appears to be more inspired by the ideological position willing to proclaim creoles as the linguistic expression of black identity, rather than based on an accurate historical study.

Schwegler also points out significant shortcomings in McWhorter's hypothesis. In particular, he classifies as radical the view that all the Atlantic English-based creoles would have derived from one single shipment of slaves from the Conradin Castle, since "tracing West African pidgins to the Caribbean creoles has always been tempting, but no one has ever proposed a scenario in which a few dozen (or hundred) slaves on a single ship become the creators of such numerous and widespread contact vernaculars" (Schwegler 2002: 117). Schwegler also points out a few linguistic details mentioned by McWhorter that do not seem to be correct, such as the development of the predicate negation *napa* in Haitian and Mauritian creoles or the etymology of certain lexical items in Palenquero. Finally, he indicates that the socio-historical analysis for the Afro-Hispanic vernacular is, at times, overly categorical. In particular Schwegler (2002: 120) states that:

> One can perhaps agree with him that the Chocó, the Chota Valley, Mexico, Venezuela and Peru may never have harbored a widespread Afro-Hispanic creole, but the absence of reliable historical and linguistic evidence makes it simply too risky to argue outright that the same territories had never imported an Afro-Iberian pidgin. The truth is that we simply do not know at this juncture whether such a contact vernacular was ever spoken anywhere in the Americas.

Indeed, it has to be said that McWhorter does not offer much socio-historical evidence to back his hypothesis. Díaz-Campos and Clements (2008) provide data showing that the account McWhorter suggests for the Venezuelan case does not reflect the reality of the facts. In fact, the demographic disproportions between

Africans and Spaniards in colonial Venezuela were not as radically marked as McWhorter indicates; rather, many of the individuals that he classifies as "Africans" were actually mixed-race people born in the colony, who, in all likelihood, could speak Spanish natively. Díaz-Campos and Clements (2008) also show that the Black/White ratio was relatively low in Venezuela due the Spanish Crown's monopolization of the slave trade, which placed serious constraints on the introduction of an African workforce into the colony, thus indirectly reducing the probability of Spanish creole formation in the region.

McWhorter's description of the Ecuadorian scenario faces some socio-historical problems as well. In fact, when describing Chota Valley slavery, the author (2000: 10–11) claims that "there was no initial period of parity between black and white" and that African slaves were imported in massive cargoes. However, Coronel Feijóo (1991: 81), a historian who studied the evolution of the Chota Valley population in colonial times, states that "hablar de importación masiva de negros, para la época, parece sobredimensionado; difícil resulta atribuir a los estancieros de la zona un negocio de tal magnitud" (talking about massive black importation, by that time, seems to be overstated; it is difficult to ascribe such a large-scale business to local settlers). Indeed, some blacks could be found in the region but planters relied, whenever possible, on a cheaper Indian workforce. In addition, two other authors, Peñaherrera de Costales and Costales Samaniego (1959), state that the introduction of an African workforce was gradual while, in a recent work, I have suggested that in all likelihood the majority of the blacks used on these plantations were *criollos.* Such a study also shows that the living conditions of blacks in Chota Valley might have differed from the conditions slaves experienced in other plantation settings throughout the Americas, particularly since social relations were more flexible and favored the acquisition of Spanish by the enslaved population (Sessarego 2013c: Ch. 2).

As for the other mainland regions mentioned by McWhorter to support his theory (Colombian Chocó, Veracruz, Mexico, and coastal Peru), some studies have been carried out to provide a description of the local Afro-Hispanic varieties; however, no detailed socio-historical analyses have ever been provided to account for their origin.

McWhorter (2000: 7–10) maintains that, if we believe the limited access model, Colombian Chocó would have been the perfect place for a Spanish creole to develop. He argues that by 1778 the ratio of blacks to whites was 5,828 : 175, a mere 3 percent of whites. Working conditions were harsh and the access to Spanish was minimal since "slaves were forbidden to communicate with what freed blacks there were (West 1957: 139–140), eliminating the latter as possible sources of Spanish input" (McWhorter 2000: 8). Ruiz-García (2009) analyzes the main phonological and morpho-syntactic features found in the speech of a group of

elder informants from Tadó, Department of Quibdó, Chocó, Colombia. The author, however, does not provide much information concerning the socio-historical background of this variety; thus she neither proves nor disproves McWhorter's claims and does not address the issues posed by the Afrogenesis Hypothesis.[7] Nevertheless, Ruiz-García concludes that this language should be seen as the descendant of a *bozal* variety (rather than a creole), since its grammatical features can be analyzed as the result of second language acquisition strategies and limited grammatical restructuring, which do not imply any previous creole stage.

Another Afro-Hispanic dialect mentioned by McWhorter (2000: 11) in support of the Afrogenesis Hypothesis is Afro-Mexican Spanish, spoken in isolated, rural communities in the proximity of Veracruz, Mexico, where masses of Africans were apparently imported to work on sugarcane plantations in the 1500s to substitute the unsuitable Indian workforce (cf. Carroll 1991: 62–65). Indeed, according to the author, a creole language also did not emerge in this case, since by looking at the data presented by Aguirre Beltrán (1958: 208) in his ethnographic study, it can be seen that this variety closely resembles Spanish, as shown in (1).

(1) Ese plan tubo (<*estubo*) bien hecho … pero si el gobierno atiende (la) lej, ba a causá (<*causar*) gran doló (<*dolor*).
'That plan was well done, but if the government follows the law it will cause a lot of pain.'

It may be noted, however, that in a different study, Aguirre Beltrán (1946: 20) clearly indicates that the majority of the slaves imported into Mexico were not coming directly from Africa; rather, they usually spent some time in previously settled Caribbean colonies, where they learned the Spanish ways; thus they were *ladinos*. This raises questions about the language variety that was used by the slaves introduced into colonial Mexico.

No linguistic monographs have ever been written on Afro-Veracrucian Spanish; for this reason no detailed historical and grammatical studies have been carried out to describe this dialect and its origin. The meager number of linguistic works on current Afro-Mexican varieties has also been pointed out by Lipski

7. In a recent sociohstorical study concerning the genesis and evolution of Chota Valley Spanish, it has been shown that the majority of the slaves sold in Popayán (the main slave market of the Chocó region during colonial times) were *criollos* (Sessarego 2013c: Ch. 2); this was true also for the most intense phase of slave force importation (1690–1789), when the percentage of *bozales* sold in Popayán totaled 41% (Colmenares 1997: 36). These data may lead to a sociolinguistic picture of Chocó that diverges quite significantly from the one hypothesized by McWhorter (2000: 7–10). More research is needed to obtain a better idea of the potential for creole formation in colonial Chocó.

(2007a), who provides an overall analysis of some phonological and morpho-syntactic *bozal* features extracted from colonial Mexican texts. These works consisted of literary and theatrical passages where Spanish writers imitated, and oftentimes exaggerated, the speech of *bozal* slaves. Lipski (2007a: 11) concludes his article by highlighting the need for future research concerning current Afro-Mexican dialects:

> La historia completa de los contactos lingüísticos afrohispánicos en México está por escribirse; ofrecemos las observaciones anteriores con la esperanza de que no sean sino el primer paso en el camino que conduce a la investigación seria de la africanía lingüística de esta inmensa y diversa nación.
> (The full history of the Afro-Hispanic linguistic contacts in Mexico has yet to be written; we offer the aforementioned observations hoping that they will serve as the first step toward a detailed investigation of the African factor in the linguistic evolution of the contact varieties of this huge and diverse nation).

To the best of my knowledge, the only book-length work on an Afro-Hispanic dialect of Mexico is the Ph.D. dissertation written by Mayén (2007), *Afro-Hispanic linguistic remnants in Mexico*, which provides a grammatical analysis of the vernacular spoken in the villages of Collantes and La Boquilla, Costa Chica, Province of Oaxaca. After carrying out linguistic fieldwork in the communities under investigation, the author suggests that the creole hypothesis may not be the correct one since the grammatical features reported also appear to be found in second-language varieties of Spanish and other non-standard dialects for which a creole stage was not likely. Nevertheless, Mayén does not carry out a detailed socio-historical analysis of the origin of this dialect since, as she states, due to the lack of published information on these villages, she had to rely mainly on "personal observation and on tape-recorded information from members of these Afro-Oaxacan communities" (2007: 66).

As for coastal Peru, the last Latin American mainland region which would provide support to the Afrogenesis Hypothesis, McWhorter (2000: 12, 35, 37) offers only three paragraphs of socio-historical data. He states what follows:

> Large forces of African slaves also worked sugar plantations in Peru, in coastal valley 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 1994a: 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).

> In Peru […] 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, 94–95).
>
> 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).

Unfortunately, the current linguistic literature on Afro-Hispanic speech is also quite reduced with respect to Peru. The most cited studies are probably those by Romero (1987, 1988, 1994), which explore the main phonological patterns and lexical items of African origin found in Peruvian literary works and songs (from the seventeenth to the twentieth century). Romero's investigation is of great importance since it provides an account of Peruvian *bozal* talk, as depicted by local authors. The significance of this work is also pointed out by Lipski (1994a), who indicates that, even though white writers oftentimes exaggerated certain features of black speech in order to make fun of the African captives, certain morpho-syntactic and phonological patterns must necessarily be accurate, since they recur systematically in a variety of texts.

Romero's studies do not attempt to provide a detailed socio-historical account for the genesis of Afro-Peruvian Spanish. The author also recognizes some methodological limitations concerning the collection of the data since no linguistic fieldwork was carried out in the Peruvian black communities and the research focused exclusively on written texts. Romero (1987: 94, 1988: 18) states that:

> En cuanto a lo que yo expongo a continuación, soy el primero en reconocer que tiene poco respaldo científico. No he podido formar los adecuados registros fonéticos de campo, de que aún carecemos. Preparar el esbozo que sigue ha sido el resultado de una penosa recopilación de las transcripciones literarias que se encuentran en obras, manuscritos y canciones peruanos de los últimos tres siglos, material del que no cabe esperar que contenga muy fieles reproducciones fonéticas del habla costeña.
> (I have to admit that the materials I will present in this book are not backed by much scientific evidence. I was not able to collect the much-needed phonetic fieldwork data. The following work has been the result of a painstaking search and transcription of Peruvian literary works, manuscripts and songs from the past three centuries, materials which probably do not reflect any accurate phonetic reproduction of the actual Costeño speech).
>
> Una sola persona no puede recorrer todos los centros poblados del Perú, que sería un método para obtener una información certera.
> (One single person cannot visit all the Peruvian villages, which would be the proper way to collect the needed information).

Cuba's (2002) work represents the first linguistic book on a currently spoken Afro-Peruvian dialect based on fieldwork research. The author carries out a sociolinguistic investigation in the Chinchano communities of El Guayabo, San José, San Regis and El Carmen and provides an analysis of the local dialect that focuses primarily on its phonetic and phonological traits. The author acknowledges that other aspects of this vernacular (e.g. morpho-syntax, lexicon) have not been extensively explored in her study and should be further analyzed (cf. 2002: 38). In addition, she offers a sketch of the hacienda system in these communities; nevertheless, she does not address any of the questions posed by the Spanish creole debate. In particular, no mention of the Afrogenesis Hypothesis is made and the study does not attempt to provide an analysis of the origin of Chinchano Spanish; rather it focuses on some phonetic and phonological features that diverge from the local variety of standard Spanish.

2.5 The place of this study in the Spanish creole debate

A layout of the main hypotheses concerning the genesis and evolution of Afro-Hispanic contact varieties in the Americas, the so-called Spanish creole debate, has been provided. As it could be observed, much light has still to be cast on this issue, since consensus has not yet been achieved in the literature. Some scholars argued that an Afro-Portuguese creole language was once used among black slaves in Spanish America and then subsequently decreolized almost everywhere, thus surviving only in Palenque (Colombia) and in the Dutch Antilles (Granda 1968 et seq). Others have claimed that the demographic and economic conditions for creoles to emerge were not in place in the Spanish Caribbean, since the massive introduction of Africans took place only in the nineteenth century, when the majority of the blacks already found on the islands could speak Spanish (Mintz 1971; Laurence 1974; Lipski 1993; Chaudenson 2001).

A still different account is the one provided by McWhorter (2000). McWhorter, in fact, has suggested that the real reason why Spanish creoles are not present in Peru and in other former mainland colonies has to do with the fact that Spain was not directly involved in the slave trade, so that a Spanish pidgin never formed in Africa and, consequently, a Spanish creole could not possibly develop in the 'New World'. This hypothesis, in his view, would be the only way to explain the mysterious absence of creole varieties under a single power (2000: 39). An overview of the main studies that have dealt with the Mainland regions mentioned by McWhorter in support of his model has been offered. We concluded that for some of them (Ecuador and Venezuela) historical data appear to disprove his hypothesis, while

for others (Peru, Mexico, Colombia) not much research has been carried out but socio-historical cues do not seem to support the Afrogenesis Hypothesis either.

The current book contributes to a better understanding of the socio-historical scenario that characterized black slavery in Peru to understand to what extent the conditions for a creole to emerge might, or might not, have been in place in colonial times. This study also provides new linguistic data on APS and places this dialect in the broader context of Afro-Hispanic creole genesis. In addition to the socio-historical and linguistic analyses, this work offers a variety of legal insights into comparative slave laws in the Americas. In so doing, this book provides a new proposal (the Legal Hypothesis of Creole Genesis) to account for this "mysteriously absent creoles cluster under a single power" (McWhorter 2000: 39).