BIBLIOGRAPHY
Tratado de los odduns de Ifá: manual: Ifá en tierra de Ifá: a Ifá le corresponden los 3 días creados por Ocha en la tierra. 2001. Colección En tierra de Ifá. [Cuba]: [s.n.].

LANGUAGE: SPANISH

John M. Lipski

Overview of the Spanish language in Cuba, including the formation of the Cuban dialects of Spanish.

With a population of roughly 12 million, Cuba ranks around tenth place among the world's most populous Spanish-speaking nations (eleventh if the United States is taken into consideration). Even taking into account the several million more Cubans and their Spanish-speaking descendants living outside of Cuba, speakers of Cuban Spanish represent less than 5 percent of the world's more than 400 million native Spanish speakers. Within the Spanish-speaking world, however, Cuban Spanish has played a much larger role than these numbers suggest, due to the prominence of Cuban writers, teachers, artists, athletes, activists, and politicians, who for over a century and a half have placed Cuban varieties of Spanish before a global audience. Issuing from the largest of the Antilles, the Spanish of Cuba has several unique characteristics, and at the same time it represents a dialect cluster embracing the Caribbean basin and also encompassing—due to historical settlement patterns—the Canary Islands and southwestern Spain. Outside of Cuba there are substantial numbers of Cuban Spanish speakers in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and Spain, but expatriate Cuban Spanish has received the greatest attention in the United States, where the majority of an estimated 1.5 million Cuban Americans continue in the early 2010s to use the language in their public and private lives.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SPANISH IN CUBA

The Spanish language has been spoken in Cuba since the early sixteenth century, and since then it has undergone many changes, cycling in and out of the linguistic mainstream as Cuba's fortunes waned and waxed. Although the first permanent Spanish settlements were in eastern Cuba, it was Havana that became the most important city, due largely to colonial trade routes that dictated that ships leaving Spanish America for Spain exit via the northern Caribbean, with Havana being the final port of call before crossing the Atlantic. Deprived of officially sanctioned commercial ties with Spain, eastern Cuba often turned to contraband for its economic support, and linguistic and commercial ties with other Caribbean islands were more significant than contacts with Havana. The results are noticeable in contemporary Cuban Spanish, where the speech of the Palestinos (Palestinians, the modern term for Cubans from the easternmost provinces, because "Palestinians come from the East") is more similar to Dominican and Puerto Rican Spanish than to Havana's, in both vocabulary and intonation.

After Spain expanded its trade routes, Havana declined in importance and Cuban Spanish was relegated to a linguistic backwater through the end of the eighteenth century. With the Haitian revolution of the 1790s and the collapse of the French sugar-producing colony of Saint-Domingue, the Cuban sugar industry enjoyed a meteoric upsurge; later, the economy was further supplemented by commercial tobacco production. Following the Spanish-American War of 1898 and continuing through the Revolution of 1959, the United States was the largest external economic force in Cuba. Ownership of many Cuban companies by North Americans, large communities of expatriate Americans in Cuba, and frequent visits to Cuba by American tourists in the first half of the twentieth century brought many Cubans into close contact with English, particularly English terminology of sports and consumer goods. After the Revolution, Cuba's economic domination by the United States was replaced by the patronage of the Soviet Union. Thousands of Cubans studied in Eastern bloc nations, including Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union, but even the obligatory teaching of Russian in Cuban schools resulted in almost no lexical borrowings or other imprints on Cuban Spanish. As of the early 2010s, the Cuban economy is subsidized by the government of Venezuela, where a type of Caribbean Spanish not unlike that of Cuba is spoken. Because this economic support does not involve large-scale displacements of either Cubans or Venezuelans, it is unlikely that Venezuelan Spanish will have any significant impact in Cuba.

Cuban Spanish was already well developed by the end of the nineteenth century, despite continued immigration from Spain, but it was during the Republican period (1902–1959) that the dialectal varieties of the newly independent nation were consolidated. The increased exposure to other varieties of Spanish occasioned by improved travel, educational systems, and mass media created a greater awareness among Cubans of the peculiarities of their forms of Spanish. During this period numerous Cuban scholars published articles and monographs on Cuban Spanish, and linguistics and philology were taught at Cuban universities, all of which underscored the fact that Cuban Spanish
CUBA

inventario corporeal y mental (he): "¿qué piensas de mí?" me reírte a Balcó, momó as man pícaco, mandúndu, traíndoé ("¿eres un francés? Si no eres un Francés, no puedes ser en el mundo")

inventario mental (and sometimes) plural pronoun del/e/la instead of Spanish de (he) and ella (she): "Multicó mo contigo en el café de Sancho, que me enteré distorsio" ("A lo sutil de los muertos de la tierra, que se ponan el mundo")

inventario verbal based on the third-person singular: "Hab tú buenec y callan, yo se a comité a una cosa" (You are good and discover, I'm going to tell you something"

inventario verbal based on the first-person singular: "Yo no miro, no, no ("It's not mine")."

These traits were not shared by all Afro-Cuban believers, but they were not simply figments of (white authors' literary imagination) either, because some of these concepts can still be found in the speech of elderly Afro-Cubans in remote rural areas (Ortiz López), in the ritual chants of the pale mogotes cult (Fuentes Guerra and Schwegler), and in the trance-speech of Santería initiates who appear to be channeling the spirits of their local ancestors (Castellanos). In addition to the residual presence of bolal Spanish in Afro-Cuban rituals, several Afro-Cuban lexical items have entered the general vocabulary; three include éliteiro (wonderful), avé (friend), babadá (Afro-Cuban priest), and orisha (Afro-Cuban deity). The rites and practices of Afro-Cuban religions and spirituals include, Santería (Yoruba languages), Palo Mayombe (Kikongo language), and Abakú (Ekit language), which have contributed to the passive vocabulary of many Cubans, including non-participants.

OTHER CARIBBEAN LANGUAGES IN CUBA

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, when African slavery was abolished in Cuba, immigrants from other Caribbean islands arrived in vast numbers to Cuba. In contrast, the population of Cuba remained largely stable, with most work on sugar plantations and other agricultural enterprises. Nearly all of these workers spoke creole languages derived from African languages, and it is likely that a creolized bolal language developed in Cuba. In the nineteenth century, many creoles were imported from the Dutch-Belgian Caribbean island of Curaçao, where the Afro-Spanish creole language Papiamento is spoken. This language bears enough similarity to Afro-Cuban bolal that some scholars thought Papiamento was simply oyogó araibo (southern Spanish)—a viewpoint first offered by the Cuban missionary and ethnographer Alexander Scheil in 1874—and which of what was obviously a mixture of Papiamento and Spanish appeared in nineteenth-century Cuban literature, and among some Papiamento words were the words that made their way into the Afro-Cuban lexicon and still persist among some elderly Afro-Cubans that these include agó (today), yó (son, daughter), and aguina (now). The Haitian presence in eastern Cuba was once considerable, and elderly speakers of Haitian Creole can still be found in this region. Songs sung in Creole form part of the zamba francés tradition among various Cuban groups of Haitian descent (Alfon Rodríguez). Jamaicans working on creole English arrived in large numbers to work on sugar plantations; they figure prominently in the novel of Alain Coppieters (1904–1980), Ensamble (1933). Workers from Barbados settled in coastal regions such as Baragú, where Afro-Antillan carnival continues to be celebrated, and creole English interacts with Cuban Spanish.

CHINESE INFLUENCE ON CUBAN SPANISH

Between the middle of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, Cuba received more than 100,000 Chinese immigrants. The first arrivals were a response to the abolition of African slavery and the consequent demands for a replacement labor force, and Chinese workers often worked alongside former African slaves, some of whom continued to speak bolal Spanish. In time, an identifiable Cuban Chinese community arose, maintaining the Chinese language—and culture while also speaking Spanish and participating in the Cuban lifestyle. The main cultural traces of the Chinese are found in a Cuban variant of the names of shops known as "Chinese shops". The richness of many Chinese lexical items also reached the general Cuban population, although few non-Chinese Cubans actively employed these words.

ENGLISH INFLUENCE ON CUBAN SPANISH

Despite the geographical proximity of Cuba to the United States and the strong cultural, commercial, and political ties between the two countries, stretching from the second half of the nineteenth century through the years of the Cuban Revolution, English language has had very little impact on Cuban Spanish. In addition to the lexical anglicisms found throughout the Spanish-speaking world—including cayman (to check), panorama (beach, especially fast food)—there are only a few uniquely Cuban words derived from English. These include blanquirubla (woman's panties) and the now obsolete...
features. Fueled by the diminutive suffix -ingo (old dilapi-
dated vehicle), following the 1959 revolution, the public use of argot was strongly discouraged if not outright prohibited in Cuba. An apparent excep-
tion is the argot associated with baseball, Fidel Castro’s favorite sport; Cuban sports announcers con-
tinue to employ (with Spanish pronunciation) words such as fijo (to place a bet), chupetín, shortstop, and strike and foul. One possible consequence of the shift in attitudes toward argot is the Cuban pronunciation of the English expression o.k., once heard as oy, reflecting English pronunciation, and now as ok, the latter being a spell-
ing pronunciation of the letters o and k.

FEATURES OF CONTEMPORARY CUBAN SPANISH

Although Cubans themselves distinguish several regional and social varieties of Spanish, most outside observers fail to note these nuances. Speech traits common to all Cuban speakers include:

- Syllable- and word-final -s is aspirated (pro-
nounced like ñ) or eliminated altogether, except in the most formal or excrescent style. This makes Los Estados Unidos (the United States) sound like Los Estados Unidos.

- In Havana and the rest of western Cuba, -t (and sometimes -d) before consonants is often converted to a copy of the following vowels (because) emerges as poppe, puerte (door) as puert, and algo (something) as ago. In central and eastern Cuba it is uncommon for -t or -d to be pronounced as -l in these contexts, especially in vernacular speech, much as occurs in Puerto Rico and the Domini-

can Republic. This lateralization of -l is not regarded favorably in western Cuba, whereas the geminated pronunciation of -t and -d is common among the more educated classes.

- Word-final -s is given a velar pronunciation like English -g (as in flight). This occurs throughout Cuba and in virtually all styles and settings, and carries no negative connotation.

In urban Havana, Cuban Spanish shares with its neighboring Caribbean dialects the practice of forming questions without interrogating the subject and the verb, normally when the subject is a pronoun: ¿qué te quieren? (what do you want?) instead of ¿qué te quieren a ti?

Frequent in Cuban Spanish is the combina-
tion of preposition - con or pronoun - verbal inflection in combinations where a conjugated subjective form would occur in most other dialects of Spanish: ¿Qué comiste antes de ir a la escuela? (What did you eat before going to school?)

In the early 20th century, there was a shift from the extreme estar variety of Cuban Spanish to a more modern variety, which was more influenced by Caribbean creoles and less influenced by the Spanish spoken in the Caribbean. This shift was largely due to the influence of African and Caribbean cultures on the Spanish spoken in Cuba.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC SHIFTS IN POST-1959 CUBA

The Cuban Revolution yielded significant shifts in sociolinguistic attitudes toward varieties of Spanish. Cuban socialism resulted in the dissolution of obvious mechanisms favoring the speech of privileged groups such as private clubs and schools and expanded edu-
cational programs and literacy campaigns in formerly marginalized areas brought about a greater number of speakers of the language in the Cuban population. The shift was most apparent in the 1960s, when the Cuban government began a campaign to promote the use of standard Spanish in all public and private institutions. This campaign led to the abandonment of many of the creole features of Cuban Spanish, such as the use of the second-person singular tú, which had been the standard form in previous decades. Instead, the use of the formal vosotros (you) was promoted, and the use of the informal tú in written and spoken language was discouraged. This shift was particularly evident in the use of Spanish in education, the media, and official communications.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- Cruz, Celia, Changes of Voice (2000).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alco Rodríguez, Olaver, La música de las sociedades de rumba cubana en Cuba: Ministerio de Cultura, 1986.
- "Peculam que en un cálido de negros congo de la ciudad de La Habana pronunció su presidente, Rey Montford Nilson." Havana, c. 1809.