

# Mexican *Bozal* Spanish in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Villancicos*: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Account

by

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## Abstract

This paper makes a brief linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis of the Spanish language as spoken by enslaved Africans during the Spanish Colony, particularly during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Sor (Sister) Juana Inés de la Cruz published her *Villancicos*. Thus, sounds, forms, and meanings, along with socio-cultural and ethnic features therein, are analyzed. It is shown that the Mexican writer nun imitated the Spanish speech of the enslaved learned as a second language (i.e., *bozal*), with considerable accuracy. It is suggested that this particular imitation should neither be taken simply as an amateur's linguistic work, nor just as a repetition of the Spanish Golden Age literary imitations, due to Sor Juana's substantial formation as a polyglot, as demonstrated in her *Villancicos* (Carols) poems. These poetic compositions are represented at a stage with Black and Indian characters playing folkloric roles as heteroglossia.

## Introduction

Afro-Mexican Spanish is an interesting linguistic research topic still waiting for further study. Although the literature includes important contributions from well-known linguists and sociolinguists, interdisciplinary approaches from a linguistic standpoint are in dire need. This paper intends to contribute to this approach. It focuses on the analysis of the Spanish language as spoken by the enslaved African population brought to Mexico by Spanish *Conquistadores*, mostly around the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The paper shows that Sor Juana's *Villancicos* (carols) contain Afro-Hispanic language in the form of *Bozal* Spanish<sup>1</sup>, that is, imperfect Spanish supposedly spoken by the enslaved African population, which Sor Juana imitated in her villancico poems. The analysis touches upon the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and ethno-linguistic features of this language, and comments on the linguistic validity of her literary imitations. It concludes that *Villancicos* exhibit linguistic features mostly common to other Hispanic areas, with some more specifically Mexican sociolinguistic characteristics.

## Historical Note

The history of enslaved African in Mexico, along with its socio-cultural and linguistic consequences, has often been ignored and officially overlooked for centuries. (See for this section, esp. Hernandez Cuevas 2004, 2010; Lipski 2005, Vinson III, Ben & Vaughn, Bobby. 2004). The so-called “mixed race” actually refers to the mixture of indigenous and European ancestry, in spite of the fact that, during the Colonial period, the African population was equal to or greater than the white European population (Lipski 2005:97), and it even continued to exceed the Spanish population in New Spain until around 1810. (Vinson & Vaughn 2004:25).

Thanks to the struggles and contributions of researchers and socio-ethnic organizations, the awakening of Afro-Mexicans is beginning to emerge. In spite of the scarce data available, it is yet known that over 200.000 enslaved Black people were brought to Mexico from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century on to work, under horrendous conditions, in the sugar plantations, underground mines, or traded in for other manual purposes such as domestic and agricultural labor, among other things. (See e.g. , Curtin 1969).

Like happened in other parts of Latin America, rebellions and escapes were organized, some successfully, like in the case of Gaspar Yanga who, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, fled from his captors to the mountains with a group of enslaved Africans, followed by a group of indigenous Indians to form communities hiding in jungle areas. His long-term struggle finally granted better living conditions for him and his followers. He gave his name to a town built as a maroon colony or *Palenque*. This town, Yanga, still exists in Veracruz. Like in other Latin American areas (Palenque de San Basilio, in Colombia, for example), many other maroon communities were founded in Guerrero from early 16<sup>th</sup> century on.

Afro-Mexicans have greatly contributed not just in folklore and gastronomy, but also in politics and governance nationwide. A few examples include heroes of the Mexican Independence such as José María Morelos, Vicente Guerrero, Mexico’s second president, who abolished slavery in 1822, and Lázaro Cárdenas, one of the best-known presidents of Mexico ever. Besides, Jarocho music and famous celebrations such as Fandango and carnivals have African influence. Afro-Mexicans today live in the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca (along the Costa Chica in the Pacific), Veracruz and Coahuila.

## Defining *Bozal* Spanish

The term “bozal” has several meanings in Spanish. On one hand, it means “savage” and “untamed”, especially when referred to animals. Literarily, it denotes a halting device put around the neck of the horse and connected to the horse’s mouth in order to refrain or stop him. Metaphorically, on the other hand, eventually it came to be used for the first time during Medieval Spain, and later by Golden Age writers, to refer to the enslaved black African who spoke Spanish or Portuguese only imperfectly (in a halting manner). According to Lipski (2005: 5-7), there are two hypotheses in regard with *Bozal* Spanish. The first one holds that *Bozal* Spanish was acquired by enslaved Africans natively, once this speech was coalesced into a stable creole. It means that slaves could have acquired a creole language formed with a Spanish or Portuguese supersaturate, and a substrate made up with the linguistic traits of their corresponding Bantu languages, such as Kikongo, Kimbundu and other Sub-Saharan languages, typically from Congo and Angola. 1.

The second hypothesis states that *Bozal* Spanish actually extended beyond the pale of the barracks of the enslaved and plantations in Latin America and permanently affected the evolution of all Caribbean Spanish, touching upon not just vocabulary but phonetic/phonology and morphology/syntax as well; not to forget, we add, semantic and pragmatic features. Lipski explains in a note (2005: 6) that the second hypothesis refers to *Bozal* merely to the imperfectly acquired Spanish spoken by the first generation African-born speakers (maybe, we believe, in the form of foreigner’s talk, so not such a creole). However, in the following paragraph, he explains that Spanish may indeed have briefly creolized during the nineteenth century in some of the more labor-sensitive Caribbean sugar plantations, but that “the subsequent abolition of slavery and the rapid collapse of the hermetic enslaved barracks environment precluded extension of such embryonic creoles past the first generation of Cuban-born slaves” (p. 7).

As seen above, Lipski and other researchers favor the second hypothesis. The first one is favored, for instance, by Germán de Granda (e.g., 1988, 1976), among others, who argued for a monogenetic origin of Spanish-based creoles, stemmed from a supposed previous Portuguese pidgin. One could think that, if *Bozal* is cognitively conceived as a language contact phenomenon, which entails not only second language acquisition processes, but also linguistic variation, and socio-cultural interaction, and then various factors of inter-dialectal interference may exist, which may result in a lesser degree of homogeneity. For example, consider Caribbean Spanish (sometimes called *Costeño*), which exhibits, such characteristics as deletion/aspiration of syllable final ‘s’, deletion or neutralization of ‘r’ and ‘l’, deletion of intervocalic ‘d’, nasalization of final ‘s’, and weakening of velar fricative ‘x’, among others. Thus, in the case of Mexico, where African Black communities concentrated, as mentioned above, around the Pacific Coast, including the Costa Chica (Short Coast) of the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero, and the state of Veracruz, in the Gulf coast.

## Linguistic Features of Spanish *Bozal* in Sor Juana's *Villancicos*

Below, an abridged sample of seventeenth-century Mexican *Bozal* Spanish is presented, as appeared in Sor Juana's *Villancicos*. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (México City: 1648-1695), wrote various collections of villancicos (carols): *Los Juegos completos para maitines* and her *Letras sagradas para cantar*, for example, consist of *Asunción* (four pieces or plays published in Mexico City 1676 and 1690), *San Pedro Nolasco* (Mexico City, 1677), *Concepción* (México City, 1676 and Puebla, 1689), *San Pedro Apóstol* (México City, 1677, 1683), *Navidad* (Puebla, 1689), *San José* (Puebla, 1690) and *Santa Catarina* (Oaxaca, 1691). Sor Juana wrote a total of sixteen villancicos, five of which contain Afro-Hispanic language, specifically, *Bozal* Spanish. Also, those villancicos dedicated to San Pedro Nolasco exhibit dense heteroglossia.

Although other villancicos during the Colony were found in other areas of Mexico at the time, exhibiting similar linguistic *Bozal* characteristics (see, for example, Megenny 1986), no specific reference to them is made herein. However, as a point of reference, the main grammatical characteristics of Latin American *Bozal* Spanish, during the Colony, are shown below (See, e.g., Lipski 2005, 2007a). Neither a cross-Atlantic comparison of *Bozal* Spanish will be attempted. Instead, some differences and similarities of *Bozal* Spanish in the *Villancicos*, as compared to the features shown below, are indicated, when possible. So, the list below was adapted from Lipski 2007a only as a guide. Some more features are analyzed but this author in his numerous articles about the topic,

- a. Lack of gender/number agreement in adjective-noun sequences and preference for the masculine gender as an unmarked case
- b. Lack of agreement in subject-verb sequences and preference for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular as an unmarked form ('yo canta')
- c. Invariable plurals
- d. Sporadic bare nouns (/s/ only in the first element of plural noun phrases)
- e. Frequent deletion of prepositions 'a', 'de', 'en'
- f. Deletion of definite articles
- g. Deletion of final 's' in verbal suffix '-mos'
- h. Massive deletion of word final consonants (specially 's' and 'r')
- i. 'd' – 'r' and 'r' – 'rr' neutralization
- j. 'l' – 'r' neutralization in favor of 'l'
- k. Paregoric vowels
- l. Pre-nasalized consonants
- m. Reduction of consonant clusters in onset syllables.

As observed by Lipski (2007a; 38), few of the above features have survived the transition from *Bozal* to Spanish spoken natively by Latin American Afro-descendants, particularly after the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is especially true in the case of Mexico where, except for the generalized deletion of syllable/word final ‘s’ and ‘r’ in Costa Chica and Veracruz, only paregoric vowels are still found in some areas. Thus, the main linguistic features, (i.e., phonetic/phonological and morphological/syntactic), as occurred in the literary imitations of Mexican *Bozal* Spanish made by Sor Juana in the *Villancicos*., are shown below:

### **Phonetic-Phonological and Morpho-Syntactic Features**

i. ‘l’ - ‘r’ neutralization, in favor of ‘l’ in onset, i.e., syllable initial position (Cp. j, above): ‘plieto’ instead of ‘prieto’ (black); ‘Pilico’ instead of ‘Perico’. This is a pervasive feature of Afro-Hispanic language, and the *Villancicos* are rich in it. However, it should not be confused with the Caribbean (mostly Puerto Rican) Spanish change of ‘r’ to ‘l’ in syllable final position (‘puelto jico’) 2.

ii. ‘d’ – ‘r’ neutralization, frequently in syllable initial position (Cp. i, above). This is a common feature of Afro-Hispanic language, too: ‘rivota’ por ‘devota’, ‘Rios(o)’ por ‘Dios’ (God), etc. Note that the paregoric vowel ‘o’ is a variant occurrence (Cp., k, above).

iii. Vowel Raising of ‘o’ to ‘u’ and ‘e’ to ‘i’: ‘durmi’ instead of ‘dormi’ (I slept); ‘dici’ instead of ‘dice’ (he/she/you say). This feature also occurs in some Mexican dialects in restricted contexts, and is not included in Lipski’s list above, so it is debatable whether it is of African or Indigenous origin (e.g., ‘ándili’: hurry up)

iv. Palatalization of ‘n’ + palatal vowel in increasing diphthong: ‘rimoño’ instead of ‘demonio’ (Demon). This feature is not shown in the list above either, probably because it is considered an internal historical change. Nevertheless, it is tentatively proposed here (pending further research), as a *Bozal* feature, partly because it co-occurs in a word containing at least one genuine Spanish *Bozal* feature, i.e., ‘r’ instead of ‘d’, but mainly because it could constitute either a learned sound by *Bozal* speakers, from colloquial Spanish, or part of their Spanish acquisition process.

v. Reduction of word final ‘r’ in infinitives: ‘tocá’ instead of ‘tocar’ (play an instrument); ‘yolá’ instead of ‘llorar’ (cry). Probably also a learned feature of *Bozal* speakers drawn from Caribbean Spanish, typically occurring in Spanish-based Creole languages (i.e., Palenquero and Papiamentu), as an unchanged infinitive used in the third person singular. Afro-Hispanic varieties also exhibit this reduction, although it appears more unstable and restricted in the *Villancicos*, as imitated by Sor Juana (see, e.g., Lipski 2005: 222; 2008; 549ff).

vi. Word final deletion of 's' in the verbal suffix of the first person plural (Cp. g, above): 'vamo' instead of 'vamos' (we go); 'vimo' instead of 'vimos' (we saw). Here, again, this trait also seems problematic. For one thing, it is difficult to know if it is just a second language learning import from Caribbean Spanish syllable/word final deletion, or it rather constitutes an Afro-Hispanic language formation.

vii. Suffix '-s' only in the first element of plural noun phrases (Cp. d, above): 'las leina' instead of 'las reinas (the queens)'; 'las Melcede' instead of 'las Mercedes'. This feature may be due to morphological conditioning. It does not seem to be an import from Caribbean Spanish because only one 's' sound has been elided.

viii. Deletion of definite articles (Cp. f, above): 'sol' instead of 'el sol' (the sun); 'cosa' instead of 'las cosas' (the things).

ix. Regularization of inflexion in the Imperfect: 'quereba' instead of 'quería' (I/you/he/she wanted/would want); 'serviaba' instead of 'servía' (I/you/he/she serve/help). Lipski did not include this feature in his list above, maybe because it seems to be a common process in second language acquisition development. However, COMPLETE

x. Lack of number and gender agreement in noun-adjective sequences (Cp. a, above): 'Parre Mercenaria' instead of 'Padres Mercenarios' (Mercenary Fathers'. However, unlike Lipski's statement in a, above, this example shows preference for the feminine gender.

xi. Lack of agreement in subject-verb sequences (Cp. b, above): 'Y las Parre no mi saca' instead of 'Y los Padres no me sacan' (and the Fathers do not take me out'. Again, here, preference is for the feminine.

For illustration, a couplet ("Ensaladilla"), taken from the Villancico VIII of "Tercero Nocturno", ("Asunción", (1685), is copied below:

(A)                    -¡Oh Santa María,  
                          que a Dioso parió,  
                          sin haber comadre  
                          ni tené doló!  
-Rorro, rorro, rorro,  
                          rorro, rorro, ro!  
¡Qué cuaja, qué cuaja,  
                          qué cuaja, qué cuaja te doy.  
-Espela, aún no suba,  
                          que tu negro Antón  
te guarra cuajala  
                          branca como Sol

Note that this excerpt exhibits many of the features listed above. Also note the considerable instability, including ‘tené’ (to have) for ‘haber’ (there be), ‘branca’, but ‘negro’. Also, one wonders if the word ‘comadre’ was not realized as ‘comarre’, or if the learned word ‘aún’ (yet) was ever attested in *Bozal* Spanish.

## Lexico-Semantic Features

Lexical and sentence meaning and the lexicon are interface grammatical components that are analytically elusive and hard to track, both diachronically and synchronically. This problem worsens when looking for lexico-semantic elements in *Bozal* Spanish, partly because data in this area are not as profuse as data in phonetics/phonology and morphology/syntax, and partly because lexical expressions from African languages have been induced through oral tradition and even through untrustworthy literary imitations. Notwithstanding, the *Villancicos* provide a few sources of information, which, despite obvious limitations, may allow for testable hypotheses). Some of the least controversial features include (Cp., e.g., Aguirre 1995; Granda 1976; Lipski 2005):

(i). ‘Zamba’, a homonym with an African origin; ‘Conga’, a homonym-based “gentilicio”.

(ii). ‘Tumba’, ‘tumba’ ‘la’ ‘la’, ‘le’ ‘le’; ‘lela’ ‘lela’: African-based ritual expressions originated in bird-song onomatopoeia.

(iii). ‘Prieta’/‘plieta’, a euphemistic term for ‘negro’ (Black), frequently used by Portuguese and Spanish writers during Renaissance and the Golden Age. In post-colonial Mexico it came to be used euphemistically or otherwise for ethnic reasons as “Moreno” (Brown). (See., e.g., Lewis 2000).

(iv). Likewise, in the “Ensaladilla” copied above, two semantic-based instances occur: phonotactic sounds and word reiteration. The example for the former is ‘rorro’ (lull), and for the latter, besides ‘rorro’, is ‘cuaja’ (curd). Both items are common in the ritual semantics of African dance and songs (see, e.g., Megenney 1985; Lewis 2000; Lipski 2008).

(x). In the following “Estríbillo” of Villancico VIII (Maitines de la Asunción, 1679), other (probable) ritual expressions of African dance/songs are shown:

(B)            ¡Ha, ha, ha!  
                 - ¡Monan vuchiá  
                 he, he, he,  
                 cambulé!  
                 ¡Gila coro,  
                 gulungú, gulungú,  
                 hu, hu, hu!  
                 ¡Menguiquilá,  
                 ha, ha, ha!

The above “Estríbillo” includes ritual forms not entirely attested by researchers, thus leaving Sor Juana’s literary imitations on this ground with a shadow of doubt 3. However, such terms and expressions appear to be fitting with the context, and they provide relevant phonological and synesthetic content, commensurate with the dialogic polyphony of *Villancicos*. (See next section below).

### **Sociolinguistic Characteristics of *Villancicos***

As noted above, *Villancicos* are popular Christmas songs originally performed in villages of Medieval Age Spain, in order to accompany religious festivities in honor of some saint. During the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the religious *villancico* developed into a genre that combined the qualities of a song and a minor theatrical form, undergoing the influence of various poetic, musical and theatrical genres, both native and foreign. Among the characters that contributed to the *villancico* by the Spanish theatre is the figure of the Negro. This tradition continued on in Latin America, typically within the Barroco literary movement, like in the case of Sor Juana, in the New Spain.

In this scenario, the figure of the Black is represented along with the figure of the Indian in the *Villancicos*. This histrionic representation is characterized by a functionally interactive discourse structure, that is, a polyphony played at multiple voices. M. M. Bakhtin calls it “heteroglossia”, that is, an interactive diversity of languages or speeches (see, e.g., the 1981 edition). With this theory, Bakhtin attempts to describe the coexistence of different sociolinguistic varieties within a unique linguistic code.



Applied to Sor Juana's *Villancicos*, this "heteroglossic" structure can consist of sociolinguistic as well as linguistic fractures. The sociolinguistic features extend from the socio-cultural to the ethnic and religious. The linguistic features include the phonetic/phonologic, the morpho-syntactic, and the lexico-semantic. As can be seen, it has an interdisciplinary framework. And, according to Bakhtin, for this model to work, for example in socio/linguistic and literary environments, an element is first required, dialogism, because it presupposes the diversity of "voices" in discourse (Cp. e.g., Arteaga, 1997; Holquist, 2002). Thus, Bakhtinian dialogic relations are actualized by the contention of two opposite forces, one centripetal, which tends to stabilize a hierarchy of values and power in authoritarian genres, languages, institutions, and postures; the other centrifugal, which tends to destabilize and disperse the attempt to search for authoritarian and hierarchical values. In fact, heteroglossia stems from the contention of these two forces.

With specific reference to our topic, these concepts are actualized through the analysis of Sor Juana's theatrical characters, where a diversity of social, ethnic, folkloric, and linguistic voices are represented. In this sense, each character plays a fitting role. Characters include a poet, a school graduate, a Nahuatl indian, and an African enslaved person, each representing upper, middle, and lower class, accordingly.

Classical Latin, Standard Spanish, Nahuatl, and *Bozal* Spanish (the enslaved Afro-Hispanic variety), represent the socio/linguistic component 4.

A brief sample of these representations is provided below, drawn from the *Villancicos* (specially the last part, dedicated to San Pedro Nolasco, where profuse heteroglossia occurs). Also, this sample shows only excerpts including *Bozal* Spanish (the Afro-Hispanic variety spoken by the African enslaved as a second language), so the narrator's introductory verses in Standard Spanish, as well as the rest of the characters will be excluded. The first character called on to stage by the narrator is an enslaved African, who enters church singing and playing an "estribillo"

(C)     *¡Tumba, tumba, la, le, le, tumba, la, la, la,*  
           *que donde ya Pilico, no quede esclava!*  
           *¡Tumba, tumba, la, le, le, tumba, la, la, la,*  
           *que donde ya Pilico, no quede esclava!*

As seen in (C), the onomatopoeic terms in reiteration imitate the frantic drum strikes and the lilting rhythm of African music, all in a noisy festive fun. In the following couplets, the African character then complains in loud laments about the discriminatory treatment he and his people receive from the monastery monks and society of that time in general, who show insensitive to and ignorant of their folklore, customs, and life conditions:

- (D) *Hoy dici que en las Melcede  
estos Parre Mercenaria  
hace una fiesa a su palre,  
¿qué fiesa?, ¡como su cala!  
Eya dici que redimi,  
cosa palece encantala,  
poro que yo la oblaje vivo,  
y las Parre no mi saca.*

Another excerpt from these couplets shows this African character denouncing contemptuous attitudes toward Blacks from colonial society; then he ends up recurring to God's mercy for love and understanding:

- (E) *Sola saca la pañole,  
pues, Dioso, ¡mila la trampa,  
que aunque negro, gente somo,  
aunque nos dici cabaya!*

In sum, Sor Juana shows herself in her *Villancicos* poems as a minority/lower class advocate, something that distinguishes her from Peninsular Golden Age Baroque playwrights, poets, and narrative writers (Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina), who depicted African immigrants (mostly enslaved) as hilarious characters speaking imperfect Spanish (*Bozal*). The Mexican writer nun aimed at vindicating Indians and Africans mainly by attempting to imitate their speech and by highlighting their positive personal values and racial characteristics. In the following paragraphs, an evaluation of her literary imitation of *Bozal* Spanish is proposed, as compared to other kinds of literary imitations.

## **The Linguistic Validity of Sor Juana's Literary Imitations**

Afro-Hispanic linguists usually give poor grades to literary imitations of Afro-Hispanic language (*Bozal*, *habla de negro*, and other Spanish linguistic varieties of the African diaspora), which are fairly justifiable. To be sure, literature writers are not linguists; therefore, they are neophytes in things grammatical, using anecdotal data, and untrained in field linguistics, which practically disqualify them to make acceptably accurate imitations of, in this case, *Bozal* Spanish 5.

However, there are a few caveats about Sor Juana that could set her aside from writers of the Spanish Golden Age and Colonial Latin America. On one hand, it is well known that Sor Juana was a self-taught scholar, a polyglot versed in Latin, Greek, and some Indo-Mexican languages such as Nahuatl and Mayan, plus she had a formation in classical grammar and rhetoric. This fact can qualify her for better imitations than the ones made by other writers without this linguistic background.

On the other hand, she proves prepared intellectually and otherwise to linguistically analyze the African enslaved. First, as noted by Scott (1999: 55), “Sor Juana, in spite of living in perpetual enclosure, remembered the polyglot accents of the streets of the capital: the speech of the black street vendors, the soft sounds of indigenous Nahuatl, voices of Portuguese immigrants, even the fractured Latin of poorly educated clerics and students”.

Secondly, and with reference to Sor Juana’s imitations of *Bozal* Spanish in the *Villancicos*, it should be added that there seem to be some more evidence of her linguistic abilities. For example, Aguirre (1995: 73-76) reports that Sor Juana lived for years with an African servant in the nunnery who spoke *Bozal* Spanish. Sor Juana made this old woman her constant informant for her literary imitations.

One more piece of evidence is that Sor Juana is known, among other things, as the first writer to describe the Spanish spoken by the enslaved Africans during the seventeenth-century New Spain (see, among others, Arteaga 1997; Lipski 2005; Megenney 1985; Porras 2008; Zielina 2007). The latter author refers to her ability to interpret enslaved African socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics in the following words: “These villancicos reveal the special way in which the Mexican nun defined, incorporated and revitalized the project of national legitimation addressed by black Africans since their arrival to America” (Our translation). (Op. Cit.: 37).

Despite some demonstrable deficiencies, Sor Juana’s imitations of *Bozal* Spanish should be taken more seriously, as they may shed light on the form and meaning of this seventeen-century Afro-Mexican variety.

## Conclusions

This paper presented a brief linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis of *Bozal* Spanish, as appeared in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’ *Villancicos* (carols). The term ‘*Bozal* Spanish’ is used in this paper to refer to the Spanish language variety spoken by enslaved Africans as their second language, first in Spain and later in Latin America (in this case, Mexico), during the Spanish Colony. The linguistic section consisted of the main phonetic-phonological, morpho-syntactic, and lexico-semantic features. It was shown that most, if not all, of these features occurred in seventeenth-century Spain and Latin America, as a result of the enslaved Africans’ second language acquisition of Spanish, with some dialectal differences in the case of Afro-Mexico, especially in phonetic and lexical aspects.

The sociolinguistic section consisted of the main socio-cultural, ethnic, and folkloric features of the African presence in Mexico at that time. It was shown that Sor Juana made theatrical representations in poetic form by imitating the speech of the enslaved African (*Bozal* Spanish and Indo-Mexicans (Nahuatl), by using heteroglossia in the form of interactive dialogism. It was also shown that her literary imitations, although not perfect, do outstrip many others in linguistic quality.

## Notes

1. In Medieval Spain two expressions coexisted, sometimes creating confusion, ‘habla bozal’ and ‘habla de negro’ The main difference between ‘habla bozal’ (*Bozal* speech) and ‘habla de negro’ (Black speech) seems to be that the former specifically refers to the acquisition development of Spanish by Africans (‘bozales’), characterized by peculiar linguistic features, while the former, more general and idiosyncratic, was used indistinctly to refer to the people’s perception about the hilarious way the enslaved African spoke Spanish or Portuguese lingua de preto (see, spec. ., Lipski 2005: 89ff).
2. This lateralization of ‘r’ is fairly productive in the *Villancicos*, and well attested by Afro-Hispanic linguists as a common occurrence, while the inverse change, rhotacism of ‘l’ (l > r), is more restricted (see, for example, Lipski 2005: 221).
3. In fact, as Aguirre (1995: 97) argues that it is possible that Sor Juana “fabricated” some of these terms in order to beautify the performing discourse and shed confidence on her ethno-linguistic citations.
4. Nahuatl and *Bozal* Spanish represent the lower class. But, while Nahuatl Is a national Mexican language, *Bozal* Spanish is a non-standard linguistic variety representing a foreign community, i.e., the African presence and, as such, it may receive national dialect status (see, e.g., Porras, 2008).
5. Literary imitations of *Bozal* Spanish have existed since Medieval Spain, and continue to exist in Latin America since the Spanish Colony. However, their linguistic validity is not taken seriously by Afro-Hispanic linguists. In fact, Lipski (2007b: 357), states: “Literary imitations – all of questionable validity – are insufficient... only first-hand data from legitimate Afro-Hispanic speech communities may shed light on earlier stages of language contact”. Is Sor Juana one exception?

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