

The Lexicon Associated with the Description of Slaves in Notarial Protocols of Central Cuba (1860)

El léxico asociado a la descripción de los esclavos en protocolos notariales de la región central cubana (1860)

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Abstract

The following paper presents partial results of a study on the lexical associated with the description of slaves in a corpus of notarial protocols belonging to Sagua la Grande (1860), present-day municipality of Villa Clara, Cuba. For this case, a corpus of documents related to matters of freedom and buying and selling will be treated. In the analysis it has been taken into account the use of the methods of the theoretical level: the historical-logical, the analytical-synthetic, the inductive-deductive; of the empirical level: the bibliographical review; and as a technique: document analysis. These are used for the selection and interpretation of data, both in the theoretical materials consulted for reference and in the corpus. The perspective presented contributes to the rescue and interpretation of the Cuban historical and linguistic memory in the second half of the 19th century from the study of foreign and own elements of the lexical repertoire of Cuban Spanish and its analysis in the central zone. In addition, it serves to understand how power relations, property and hierarchy are articulated in this period according to ethnic origin through the language documented in the selected texts. The lexical repertoire analyzed refers to elements such as: physical features, ethnic origin with a predominance of Creole lineage, and conditions under which the link with landowners and lucrative exchange takes place. Its composition, schematic in form and repetitive in discourse, allows to obtain a limited but significant corpus for analysis.

Key words: notarial protocols; documents from archives; historical memory; linguistic memory; 19th century Cuba; slavery.

Resumen

El siguiente artículo presenta resultados parciales de un estudio sobre el léxico asociado a la descripción de los esclavos en un corpus de protocolos notariales pertenecientes a Sagua la Grande (1860), actual municipio de Villa Clara, Cuba. Para este caso se tratará un corpus de documentos relacionados con asuntos de libertad y compra-venta. En el análisis se ha tenido en cuenta el empleo de los métodos del nivel teórico: el histórico-lógico, el analítico-sintético, el inductivo-deductivo; del nivel empírico: la revisión bibliográfica; y como técnica: análisis de documentos. Estos se han utilizado para la selección, interpretación de datos, tanto en los materiales teóricos consultados de referencia, como en el corpus. La perspectiva presentada contribuye al rescate e interpretación de la memoria histórica y lingüística cubanas en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX a partir del estudio de elementos foráneos y propios del repertorio léxico del español de Cuba y su análisis en la zona central. Además, sirve para comprender cómo se articulan en este periodo las relaciones de poder, propiedad y jerarquía según la procedencia étnica a través de la lengua documentada en los textos seleccionados. El repertorio léxico analizado hace referencia a elementos como: rasgos físicos, procedencia étnica con predominio de la estirpe criolla, y condiciones bajo las cuales se da el vínculo con los propietarios y el intercambio lucrativo. Su composición esquemática en la forma y repetitiva en cuanto al discurso propicia la obtención de un corpus limitado pero significativo en cuanto al análisis.

Palabras clave: protocolos notariales; documentos de archivo; memoria histórica; memoria lingüística; siglo XIX cubano; esclavitud.

INTRODUCTION

The study of historical or testimonial documents is an essential source for analyzing language behavior in the evolution of a region, country, or community. In this way, the documents that are kept in archives—whatever their nature—preserve linguistic evidence of the period in which they were originated (cf. Bidot-Martínez, 2019; Furé, 2014; Provencio Garrigós, 2019; Zeuske and García, 2008).

Within this classification, legal documents not only provide access to the history of the evolution of laws and legally accepted practices in one or more geographical contexts, but also allow for the analysis of the ideological characteristics and discourse representative of the time in which they were drafted (Alpízar, 1989; Kabatek, 2017; Salado, 2022; Salado González & Peña Olmo, 2023); all of this, of course, through written language. Based on the above, notarial protocols are documentary sources of a legal and administrative nature, whose purpose is to ensure the veracity and legal validity of the registered act.

In this sense, the 19th century presents a wealth of little-explored legal archival documents, which is why it is considered “a complex and dynamic time in the diachronic continuum of language” (Provencio Garrigós, 2019, p. 60). In the case of Cuba, during this period, stability was already evident in our variant of the language, so much so that “not even the subsequent waves of immigration towards the end of the 19th century (on a large scale from Galicia and, to a lesser extent, from Asturias) were able to alter it” (Furé, 2014). While it is true that the Cuban variant is relatively stable, it cannot be denied that contact with other languages and varieties has also left its mark, to a lesser extent, on Cuban Spanish, such as Sub-Saharan languages, Portuguese, English, French, among others.

In central Cuba, the Department of Linguistics and Literature at the Marta Abreu Central University of Las Villas (UCLV, from Spanish initials) has produced a series of works dedicated to the linguistic analysis of legal archival materials such as notarial protocols and capitular acts, among others, based on the subject History of the Spanish Language (HLE). These include: Campo (2013), Corzón (2013), Fuentes (2013), Gómez (2013), Santos (2013), Sardiñas (2017). This line

of research is complemented by the diploma theses of Bravo (2017) and Salado (2022), and the Master's Degree thesis of Hidalgo (2021). In this sense, the aforementioned research serves as direct background for this investigation.

This paper proposes an approach to the lexicon of notarial protocols from 1860 related to the processes of buying, selling, and liberating slaves who belonged to the Sagua la Grande area—currently a municipality in the province of Villa Clara. It constitutes one of the partial results of an ongoing investigation whose purpose is to analyze the behavior of legal and official discourse related to slavery in colonial Cuba during the second half of the 19th century, from the perspective of studies in the history of the Spanish language, linguistic anthropology, and discourse analysis.

Important notes about Sagua la Grande

The city of Sagua la Grande is located in an area rich in natural resources. Initially, under the name of Jumagua, the territory belonged to the jurisdiction of Sancti Spiritus, later to Remedios, and finally, at the end of the 17th century, it was incorporated into the Villa de Santa Clara. From the 18th century onwards, with the establishment of the first tobacco plantation in 1778 and, in 1780, with the exploitation of timber on the lands of the Jumagua estate (Melero Lazo, 2019), the first steps were taken towards the economic development of the region.

On December 8, 1812, Don Juan Caballero founded the city of the Inmaculada Concepción de Sagua la Grande (Melero Lazo, 2019). By the 1840s, the port of Isabela de Sagua enjoyed great prestige in the Caribbean region, which exacerbated tensions with the City Council of Santa Clara. It was in this context that it was established as a Political and Military Government Tenancy, bringing together in its constitution the captaincies of Rancho Veloz, Quemado de Güines, Calabazar, and gradually incorporating Santo Domingo, Ceja del Pablo, and Corralillo (Collective of authors, n.d.).

Thus, during the 19th century, known as a period of socioeconomic boom on the island (Melero Lazo, 2019), Sagua la Grande was among the main areas of sugar production in western and central Cuba, along with Havana, Matanzas, Trinidad, and Cienfuegos. An example of this is the record, during the 1840s, of “26 sugar mills along the

banks of the Sagua River, many of them powered by steam engines” (Melero Lazo, 2019: 250). This situation led to slavery becoming another of its economic and commercial structures.

Due to its geographical location and its contribution to the Cuban economy during the colonial era, this territory’s connection with the bourgeoisie, both in the colony and in the Spanish metropolis, is noteworthy.

METHODOLOGY

It is based on a synchronic approach, as it only covers one year of production, corresponding to volume I of the Notarial protocols of the notary Manuel Nieto (1860), part of the manuscripts treasured by the Provincial Historical Archive of Villa Clara. The exhibition brings together evidence of legal transactions and proceedings recorded in the notary’s office between March and December 1860. Due to the historical characteristics of the selected period, elements belonging to the diachronic approach have been taken into account so that the content of the documents examined can be studied in greater depth and from different perspectives. Under the above maxim, methods such as the following are used: at the theoretical level: historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive; at the empirical level: bibliographic review; and technical: document analysis.

Within linguistic studies, we begin with the study of the lexicon through the cataloging of terms that illustrate the context of slavery, its meaning, and connotations within legal language. We also study attitudes toward individuals who are for sale or have been freed. This serves as a basis for future comparisons with similar studies in other geographical areas of the Americas and the Caribbean. In the area of discourse analysis, the contribution is connected to the understanding of how a schematic and formulaic discourse—to a certain extent rigid—reveals the concepts and prejudices within Cuban society at the time, the hierarchical relationships and social stratification based on skin color and ethnic origin. For these reasons, a linguistic analysis of notarial protocols with this orientation not only enriches the history of the language, but also provides a window into the complex social, cultural, and economic interactions of the period.

From a holistic perspective, the usefulness of this research in its connection with other disciplines outside the scope of linguistics contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon from different angles. Thus, the topic explored contributes to Cuba’s social and historical memory through the study of the dynamics of slave buying and selling, and its influence on the treatment of the African ethnic component from the perspective of studies on the formation of stereotypes, the legal treatment generated from slave practices, the construction of Cuban identity, power relations based on human trafficking, among other elements. It also contributes to gender studies, considering that most of the subjects registered in the sample are women between childhood and adolescence. Considering the role of gender brings a new perspective to the research based on the analysis of the descriptions in contrast to those of male subjects, who are less representative than female subjects. Similarly, contributions are made to studies on race based on the legal discourse of the time, as they allow for an analysis of the basis for the legitimization of racist discourse based on the acceptance of trade and the dehumanization—and objectification—of the African component during the colonial period.

In line with the logical structure of this study, we begin by integrating two fundamental methodological proposals from professors Marlen Domínguez Hernández, Ana María González Mafud (Domínguez, 2017; González Mafud & Domínguez Hernández, 2024) and Irina Bidot-Martínez (2016; 2020) for working with historical documents from the perspective of linguistic sciences.

Data processing was interpreted qualitatively—although elements of quantitative analysis were incorporated—through the following stages:

1. Location of documents: For this stage, documents were selected in accordance with the non-linguistic parameters described above. Priority was given to documents that were in usable condition, legible, and stable and schematic in their wording.
2. Transcription of documents: The documents were transcribed in detail in order to facilitate the extraction of significant data for analysis.

3. Corpus identification: Only those lexical units that are highly relevant to the analysis of slavery have been selected to form the corpus.
4. Data processing: In order to process and tabulate the significant data within the study, a series of appendices have been developed for the purpose of organizing and sequencing the analysis.
5. Corpus analysis: The data was analyzed based on the information organized in the previous steps and taking into account the categories for the semantic analysis of the lexicon related to slavery in the documents studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptible voices in notarial protocols

To understand the reality and context of notarial protocols within Sagüera society, it is necessary to highlight the social role of the individuals involved: notaries and scribes as the main officials responsible for the official registration of transactions; owners and buyers as legal entities with legal power over the objects of purchase; and slaves as individuals deprived of their rights due to their condition of servitude and skin color.

It is clear, therefore, that there are three voices within the sampled manuscripts, where the first (notaries and scribes) is expressed in first person and is identified as the author of the document. The second is expressed through third-person references and presence at the act of sale (owners and buyers). A third voice is referred to in third person -as in the previous case- although it is not attributed any benefit other than being transferred from one owner to another, sometimes with their belongings, over which they do not have legal ownership (slaves). Despite this, the sample of manuscripts covers twenty-one subjects as objects of sale (see Annex 1). These linguistic markers strengthen the relationship between writing and orality with routine formulas such as: *before me* [sic.], says, among others (the spelling of the original documents reviewed in the archives has been respected).

The almost exclusive existence of discourses and sources produced by masters, officials, or people from slave-owning cultures reveals a biased view of the phenomenon through legally formalized writing. In this context, slavery can be defined as an act of repression and structural violence formalized through the system of norms and property of the time with a dual legal character, not to mention that only minimal rights were guaranteed in 1842 (Zeuske and García, 2008). In line with the above ideas, it is possible to find, within notarial protocols, expressions that function as linguistic markers specific to the treatment of slaves.

With regard to the focus of this study—the lexical level—Bidot-Martínez (2019) notes that, as “witnesses and memory of the events that occur and organize the life and society of their time,” the appearance of dialectal terms and colloquialisms from the period in which they were written is notable. It is also common to find terms belonging to semantic fields far removed from the discourse of notaries. (*cfr.* Usunáriz Garayoa, 2006; Bidot-Martínez, 2016; 2019).

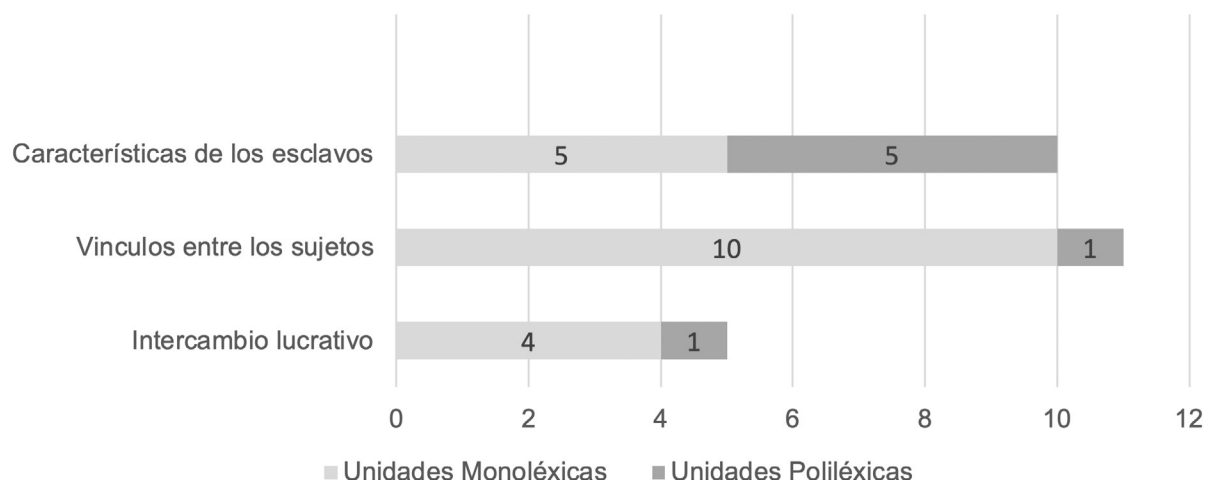
Analysis of the lexicon associated with slavery in Sagua la Grande during 1860

The analysis of the selected sample is based on situational aspects, social representations, power relations, among other elements that are implicit in the discourse of the notarial protocols studied. The corpus is highly descriptive, with lexical units constructing their referential meaning, which adds greater richness to the study.

Semantic fields

Based on the identification of thematic areas related to slavery, and taking into account their delimitation, the terms have been classified into three semantic fields consisting of twenty-six monolexic and polylexic units (see Figure 1). Despite the small size of the corpus, the analysis yielded observations of great interest regarding its use.

Figura 1.
List of lexical units by semantic fields



Characteristics of the slaves

The characteristics of slaves include lexical units related to: *ethnic origin, physical features, and qualities* (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

Ethnic origin contains units associated with the origin of the subjects for sale. Terms such as *congo* or *Gangá nation* refer to subjects not born in Cuba. On the other hand, the term *criollo* (Creole) is a special case; although the preceding ethnic composition is not specified, there is recognition of a genetic mixture that has resulted in a new type of classification with respect to the geographical and cultural area of birth of slaves with this designation.

[...] vende á Dⁿ Francisco Artigas de la misma vecindad, una negra nombrada Adela, **de nación Gangá** como de treinta y cinco años de edad [...] (PN. 73, s. fol.)

[...] sells to Mr. Francisco Artigas, of the same neighborhood, a black woman named Adela, of **Gangá** nationality, approximately thirty-five years old. [...] (PN. 73, s. fol.)

[...] y Ventura **congo**, como de veinte y seis años, sin acción á redibitoria [sic.] [...] (PN. 29, s. fol.)

[...] and Ventura **congo**, aged approximately twenty-six, without recourse to restitution [sic.] [...] (PN. 29, s. fol.)

[...] vende realmente y con efecto a D^{on} Miguel Perez Labrador, todos de aquel vecindario, un negro, nombrado Joaquín, **criollo**, de quince años de edad [...] (PN. 101, fol. 106R-107A)

[...] I hereby sell, with full effect, to Don Miguel Perez Labrador, a resident of that neighborhood, a black man named Joaquín, a **Creole**, aged fifteen years [...] (PN. 101, fol. 106R-107A)

[...] dijo: que vende realmente y con efecto á Da Benita Perez Labrador, esposa de Dⁿ Juan Mantilla, de la misma vecindad, una negrita nombrada Altagracia, de siete años de edad, **criolla**, nacida en su poder [...] (PN. 104, fol. 108A)

[...] He stated that he is selling, with immediate effect, to Da Benita Perez Labrador, wife of Dn Juan Mantilla, of the same neighborhood, a black girl named Altagracia, seven years of age, **Creole**, born in his possession [...] (PN. 104, fol. 108A)

En cuanto a los rasgos físicos, se aprecian las unidades léxicas relacionadas con las características corporales de los esclavos tales como color de piel, salud, entre otros. Los términos asociados al color de piel (*negro, a*) guardan vínculo estrecho con la procedencia étnica, ya que es un rasgo distintivo de la comunidad esclava por la procedencia africana casi en su totalidad. El empleo de diminutivos, fundamentalmente asociados a la edad de los individuos, y con un empleo eufemístico

con nociones de afecto. Se observan también dentro de este subgrupo algunas expresiones relativas a mutaciones genéticas, como es el caso del término *alvino* [albino], relacionado con la despigmentación de la piel. Existen, además, expresiones como sano y sin tachas para aludir al estado de perfección del cuerpo de los sujetos.

[...] vende realmente y con efecto á Dⁿ José María Perez Labrador, de la misma vecindad, un **negro** nombrado Antonio, criollo, de veinte y cinco años de edad [...] (PN. 103, fol. 107R)

[...] I hereby sell to Mr. José María Perez Labrador, of the same neighborhood, a **black man** named Antonio, a Creole, twenty-five years of age [...] (PN. 103, fol. 107R)

[...] que ahorra y liberta de toda sumisión, cautiverio y servidumbre á su esclava la **negrita** Felicia criolla, nacida en su casa, como de siete años de edad [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

[...] who frees and liberates from all submission, captivity, and servitude his slave, the **black little girl** Felicia Creole, born in his house, approximately seven years of age [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

[...] que vende realmente y con efecto á Dⁿ Pablo Larrondo, de igual vecindario, un **negro alvino** [sic.] nombrado Guadalupe criollo, como de diez y ocho años de edad [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] that he actually sells and with effect to Mr. Pablo Larrondo, of the same neighborhood, a **black alvino** [sic.] named Guadalupe criollo, about eighteen years old [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] un negro, nombrado Joaquín, criollo, de quince años de edad, **sano y sin tachas**, de cuyo título de dominio esta instruido el comprador [...] (PN. 101, fol. 106R-107A)

[...] a black man named Joaquín, a Creole, fifteen years old, **healthy and without blemish**, whose title of ownership is known to the buyer [...] (PN. 101, fol. 106R-107A)

The subfield relating to the qualities of slaves varies in terms of its composition. Noteworthy is the presence of polylexical units, most of which act as measures of the abilities of the subjects for sale, whether in terms of their capacity for forced labor or for performing domestic tasks.

A case that reinforces the above idea is that of the phrase domestic service, used to raise the esteem of the slave's abilities in terms of work within the home. Another similar case is that of units without flaws, [without] vices, [without] defects. These expressions reaffirm the slave's ability to perform optimally in all types of activities ordered by the owner.

[...] vende realmente y con efecto á Dⁿ José María, de este vecindario, una negra criolla nombrada Catalina, **de servicio doméstico**, como de trece años de edad [...] (PN. 8, fol. 108A)

[...] hereby sells, to Mr. José María, a resident of this neighborhood, a Creole slave girl named Catalina, **for domestic service**, approximately thirteen years of age [...] (PN. 8, fol. 108A)

[...] una negra de nombre Adriana, de diez y seis años de edad, **criolla, sin tachas, vicios, defectos** ni enfermedades [...] (PN. 71, fol. 76A)

[...] a slave girl named Adriana, sixteen years of age, **Creole, without blemishes, vices, defects**, or illnesses [...] (PN. 71, fol. 76A)

Links among the subjects

With regard to positions involving hierarchy and power, there are several links. The terms owner and slave suggest a relationship of domination and submission among the subjects involved, where the former has control over the latter in all aspects of their life (see Appendix 2).

[...] liberta de todo cautiverio y servidumbre á su **esclavo** el negrito Bruno, criollo, de ocho años de edad cuya libertad procede graciosamente; mediante lo cual se separa del **dueño** [...] (PN. 115, fol. 128A)

[...] frees his **slave** from all captivity and servitude, the little black boy Bruno, Creole, eight years old, whose freedom proceeds graciously; whereby he is separated from his **owner** [...] (PN. 115, fol. 128A)

It should be highlighted that the terms show both the close relationships between those with authority over slaves and the legal authority to maintain legal power among equals. Two examples that have been most relevant are **neighbor** and **witness**.

[...] ante mi [sic.] el escribano público y **testigos** compareció Dⁿ Antonio Urquijo, **vecino** del partido de Amaro [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] Before me, the notary public, and **witnesses**, appeared Mr. Antonio Urquijo, **neighbor** (resident) of the district of Amaro [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

Lucrative exchange

This section groups together lexical units that have a referential meaning associated with economic transactions (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

The noun *buyer* refers to the person who has acquired legal power over the slave through exchange, while the verb *transfer* is used in notarial sales protocols to introduce the goods and conditions under which the slaves' possessions will pass from one owner to another.

[...] todo lo **cede** y pasa en la **compradora** para que disponga de ella a su voluntad [...] (PN. 125, 128A)

[...] He **transfers** everything to the **buyer** so that this can dispose of her at will. [...] (PN. 125, 128A)

The lexical family derived from the verb *vender* (to sell) is expressly supported in the discourse

[...] y dijo que: **vende** á D. Pablo Larrondo de igual vecindario, un negro [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] and said that: he **sells** to Don Pablo Larrondo, from the same neighborhood, a black man [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] mediante la cual se separa del derecho de propiedad, posesión [sic.] y dominio y demás acciones reales que el esclavo **vendido** había y tenía [...] (PN. 131, fol. 136A)

[...] by which he is separated from the right of ownership, possession [sic.] and dominion and other real actions that the slave **sold** had and possessed [...] (PN. 131, fol. 136A)

Relationships of identity, opposition, and inclusion

The relationship among the units studied, regardless of their lexical-referential meaning, are not entirely independent in discourse, since

the text as a discursive unit confers links of identity, opposition, and inclusion upon them. On the one hand, there is a lack of polysemic relationships, which is why this phenomenon has not been selected for analysis. However, there are synonyms, antonyms, and links that express various relationships of inclusion.

Synonymy: Lexical units are used which, due to their use in notarial protocols, can function as synonyms in some contexts. These will be analyzed following the observations of Lyons (1997).

In some units, absolute synonymy is observed, as in the example of *amo* (master) and *dueño* (owner). The examples shown are found in two letters of freedom, with very similar fragments of wording. It should be noted that in most protocols, the use of *dueño* predominates over *amo*, which is reasonable in the case of legal documents whose purpose is the exchange of property.

[...] mediante lo cual se separa del antiguo **amo** de **propiedad, posesión** [sic.], **dominio** [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

[...] by which he is separated from his former **master** of **property, possession** [sic.], **dominion** [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

[...] mediante lo cual se separa del **dueño** de propiedad, posesión [sic.] y dominio [...] (PN. 115, fol. 128A)

[...] by which he is separated from the **owner** of the property, possession [sic.] and dominion [...] (PN. 115, fol. 128A)

The examples illustrated above also show the similarity in meaning between possession [posecion in the document], *ownership*, and *dominion*, which function as gradual synonyms.

Ambiguity: Occasionally, within the documents analyzed, there are words that, as a result of the style of the period, are used ambiguously, as a result of the use of euphemisms or lexicalized expressions that become polylexical units.

[...] sin tachas ni vicios (PN. 122, fol. 125R)

[...] without faults or vices (PN. 122, fol. 125R)

[...] sin tachas, vicios, defectos ni enfermedades
[...] (PN. 71, fol. 76A)

[...] without faults, vices, defects, or illnesses
[...] (PN. 71, fol. 76A)

[...] sano y sin tachas [...] (PN. 101, fol. 106R)

[...] healthy and without blemish [...] (PN. 101,
fol. 106R)

[...] cuya libertad **procede graciosamente** [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A; PN. 115, fol. 128A)

[...] whose freedom is **granted graciously** [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A; PN. 115, fol. 128A)

Antonymy: Various types of antonymy relationships have been identified, which can express, depending on their use, either absolute or complementary opposition.

Among the most obvious examples of absolute antonymy is the relationship between the terms *slave* and *freedom*, where the presence of the former implies the absence of the latter. Below are two excerpts, one from a sales protocol and the other from a freedom protocol.

[...] mediante la cual se separa el **dueño** del derecho de propiedad [...] y demás acciones reales y personales que el **esclavo** vendido había y tenía y todo lo cede renuncia y pasa en el comprador para que disponga de él á su voluntad [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] whereby the **owner** is separated from the right of ownership [...] and other real and personal actions that the **slave** sold had and possessed, and everything is transferred, renounced, and passed on to the buyer to dispose of as he sees fit. [...] (PN. 75, fol. 77R)

[...] Y pasa en favor de su **libertad** p.^a que desde hoy en adelante goce de ella ejecutando cuantos actos judiciales y extrajudiciales pueden hacer y hacen todas las personas libres [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

[...] And it is in favor of his **freedom** so that from now on he may enjoy it by performing all the judicial and extrajudicial acts that all free people can and do perform. [...] (PN. 74, fol. 77A)

As an expression of complementary antonymy, there is the relationship between *slave* and *owner*, since the employment of one implies the existence of the other. This can be seen in the example cited above, which corresponds to notarial protocol No. 75. Another case of complementary synonymy is that of the lexical families associated with the verbs *sell* [for sale] and *buy* [buyer], where the link between the two actions requires the presence of both within the same context.

[...] se **vende** una negra esclava de veinte y dos años de edad nombrada Virginia, versada en las labores de la casa, [...] cuya suma ha recibido del **comprador** en monedas corrientes [...] (PN. 106, fol. 109A)

[...] A twenty-two-year-old black slave named Virginia, skilled in housework, **is for sale** [...] whose price has been received from the buyer in cash [...] (PN. 106, fol. 109A)

CONCLUSIONS

Among the main findings of the study was that the structure of notarial protocols refers to elements such as physical characteristics, ethnic origin with a predominance of Creole ancestry, and the conditions under which the exchange takes place. Their schematic composition in form and repetitive discourse favors the acquisition of a short but significant lexical repertoire for analysis.

The lexicon related to slavery presents a wide range in terms of its lexical and semantic composition, despite its limited number in the repertoire studied in the research. It addresses topics of a social nature, such as freedom and buying and selling; legal and administrative topics, due to its discourse; and economic topics, due to lucrative exchanges. The composition of the semantic fields reveals a wide range of terminology, from general vocabulary to specialized legal terminology, with the most notable field being that of links among subjects, followed by the characteristics of slaves, and the least frequent being that related to lucrative exchange. The integration among lexical relations of identity (absolute, gradual, and referential synonymy; ambiguity), opposition (antonymy), and inclusion (holonymy-meronymy and

hypernymy-hyponymy) is given, on the one hand, by the links of meaning among terms of the same lexical family. On the other hand, it is achieved through semantic opposition (paradigmatic and syntagmatic) within the text. In other cases, it is due to the nature of the meanings (similar, complementary, opposite, or comprehensive).

So far, these have been the most relevant results. The study is not yet complete, as it still needs to be compared with other areas in the central region belonging to the territories of the current provinces of Cienfuegos, Sancti Spíritus, and other municipalities of Villa Clara in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the geographical dimension of the issue.

Contribution to knowledge

From a linguistic perspective, it contributes to the cataloguing and dating of the active lexicon of the 19th century and its use in the context of notarial documents, which helps to track the evolution of the writing style associated with legal language in central Cuba. In addition, it allows for the dissemination and preservation of the content of the documents that have been analyzed for future research in other disciplines and sciences such as law, history, and anthropology.

Limitations

Among the main limitations to the development and continuity of the research, there are several that, from a theoretical and methodological point of view, hinder the progress of the study. On the one hand, from a linguistic perspective, the presence of crossings-out in the manuscripts, the use of abbreviations, the use of formulas and sequences containing euphemisms, variations from the spelling norms of the period, as well as illegible handwriting in several documents have meant that not all useful information is available in the sample selection process. On the other hand, there are other biases that, although extralinguistic in nature, affect the accuracy of the data regarding transactions and the veracity of the acts declared in the notarial protocols analyzed. These are: the quality and recording of information, alteration and concealment of information in documents, and the state of deterioration of the archives.

Roxana Peña Olmo: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Research, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing -Original draft, Writing -Revision and editing.

Karen María Martínez Cruz: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Research, Methodology, Validation, Writing -Original draft, Writing -Revision and editing.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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ANNEX

Annex 1. List of slaves

N.º	Description of the subjects	Name	Price	Possessions
1	Creole black girl; eight years old (PN.7, fol. 11A; Sale)	Trinidad	two hundred pesos or four hundred and eight escudos	all rights are transferred, waived, and passed on to the buyer
2	thirteen-year-old Creole black girl domestic service	Catalina	six hundred pesos or double that amount in escudos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
3	Creole black woman; twenty-three years old (PN.29, fol. 26A; Sale)	Celeztina	four hundred pesos or double that amount in escudos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
4	Congo black man; twenty-six years old (PN.29, fol. 26A; Sale)	Ventura		
5	Creole little girl; five years old (PN.36, fol. 34ª-34R; Sale)	Amelia	three hundred sixty-two pesos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
6	Creole black; girl about seventeen years old (PN.37, fol. 34R-35A; Sale)	Asunción	seven hundred pesos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
7	Creole black girl; sixteen years old without blemish, vices, defects or illnesses (PN.71, fol. 76A; Sale)	Adriana	four hundred ninety-six pesos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
8	Black woman from the Ganga nation; thirty-five years old (PN.73, fol. 76R-77A; Sale)	Adela	four hundred seventy-six pesos	Everything is transferred and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
9	Creole black little girl; seven years old born at home daughter of Petrona Conga (PN.74, fol. 77A; Liberty)	Felicia	-----	He gives up everything, renounces everything and passes on in favor of his freedom

10	Creole albino black man; about eighteen to nineteen years old (PN.75, fol. 77R; Sale)	Guadalupe	three hundred twenty-one escudos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
11	Creole black boy; fifteen years old healthy and without blemish (PN.101, fol. 106R-107A; Sale)	Joaquín	eight hundred escudos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
12	Creole black boy; eight to nine years old (PN.102, fol. 107A-107R; Sale)	Cruz	four hundred escudos	It is separated from the right of ownership, possession, domain and other real and personal actions and passes to the name of the buyer.
13	Creole black man; twenty-five years old healthy and without blemish (PN.103, fol. 107R; Sale)	Antonio	two hundred escudos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
14	Creole little girl; seven years old (PN.104, fol. 108A-108R; Sale)	Altagracia	three hundred escudos	Everything is given and passed on to the buyer so that she can dispose of it at her will.
15	Black woman conga; twenty-seven years old (PN.105, fol. 108R; Sale)	Ana	escudos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
16	Creole black woman; twenty-two (PN.106, fol. 109A; Sale)	Virginia	escudos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
17	Creole black boy; eight years old (PN.115, fol. 114R; Freedom)	Bruno	-----	He gives up everything, renounces it and passes it on in the name of his freedom
18	Creole black boy; twelve years old (PN.117, fol. 115A; Sale)	Julián	three hundred escudos	Everything is ceded, renounced and passed on to the buyer so that he can dispose of it at his will.
19	Creole little girl; six years old (PN.122, fol. 125R; Sale)	Ofelia	pesos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer

20	Creole black woman; seventeen years old (PN.125, fol. 128A; Sale)	Antonia	two hundred pesos or double that amount in escudos	everything is given up, waived and passed on to the buyer
21	Congo black man; twenty-nine years old (PN.131, fol. 136A; Sale)	Amansio	four hundred thirty-seven pesos	Everything is given and passed on to the buyer so that she can dispose of it at her will.

Annex 2. List of lexical units and meanings

Semantic field: characteristics of the slaves

N.º	Lexical units	Meaning	Meaning in context
1	ALVINO	Albinos are individuals who lack pigment in their skin, hair, and iris. (Buen Odón, <i>Dicc. Hist. Nat.</i> 1891). (Buen Odón, <i>Dicc. Hist. Nat.</i> , 1891)	Classification given to the slave by the depigmentation of the skin
2	BLACK	It applies to anybody that, when bathed in light, is completely dark in color // that which has black color // the Ethiopian or any other that has that [has its] color (Sal. G., 1846)	Classification given to the slave by skin pigmentation
3	CONGO	The natural black of the Kingdom of Congo in Africa, which is of a darker and brighter black than the other blacks from those regions. // Pertaining to the Kingdom of Congo. (Sal. G., 1855)	Slave allegedly born in the Congo region
4	GANGÁ	[ganga] Priest of Angola in West Africa. (Dom. G., 1853) // Priests of the Congo, of the blacks of Angola, in West Africa (Gas. G., 1855)	Slave presumably born in the Congo region, belonging to the Ganga ethnic group
5	CREOLE	son of European parents who was born in America. — The Negro who is not a muzzle. (Gas. G., 1853)	Slave born in Cuba

6	[FROM] NATION	group of men who recognize the same authority and live in a community of customs and language, in a specific territorial space. — The same name is given to any gathering of men, who have a common origin common: thus, although the great Slavic [slave] family today forms part of many different peoples, it is called nation to express that collection of individuals, whose origin is still approved by the identity of customs and language. — It is vulgarly used [to mean any foreigner. — OF NATION: implies the nature of someone, or where he is born. (Gas. G., 1855)	Relating to the alleged origin of the slave from Africa
7	[WITHOUT] DEFECTS	imperfection, physical or moral fault. (Gas. G., 1853)	Quality attributed to the slave who does not present imperfections
8	WITHOUT DISEASES	Any vice, mania, or alteration in the intellectual faculties. — a more or less profound alteration in the liquids and solids that make up the body or in the exercise of certain functions. (Gas. G., 1853)	Quality attributed to the slave who does not present imperfections
9	[WITHOUT] BLEMISH	A lack, note, or defect found in something that makes it imperfect. (Gas. G., 1855)	Quality attributed to the slave who does not present imperfections
10	[WITHOUT] VICES	Poor quality, defect, or physical damage in things. Vitium. // Lack of rectitude or moral defect. // Bad habit as opposed to virtue. Vitium, parvus habitus. (RAE, 1852)	Quality attributed to the slave who does not present imperfections

Field: Links among the individuals

N.º	Units lexical	Meaning	Meaning in context
1	SLAVE	One who has lost his freedom, one who finds himself under the domination of another. — LADINO SLAVE: one who has been enslaved for more than a year. — SLAVE TRADE: immoral trafficking of African blacks, tearing them from their native soil and transporting them to the American colonies, where they are sold like any other object of trade. (Gas. G., 1853)	Subject deprived of his legal and citizen rights
2	FREEDOM	The inherent faculty of man to act as he pleases, and by which he is the master and responsible for his actions. — The state or condition of one who is not a servant or slave. — TO CALL FREEDOM: to demand that a slave, unjustly held in servitude, be declared free. (Gas. G., 1855)	Condition granted to the former slave subject to restore his legal and citizen rights
3	DON	An honorary title of dignity, which was formerly given to very few, even among the highest nobility; which later became distinctive of all nobles, and which is no longer denied to any decent person (DRAE, 1817)	Particle used to introduce the names of the landowners who actively participate in the purchase and sale
4	MASTER	head or lord of the house, head of the family, person who exercises domestic authority. — The owner or lord of something; such as a horse, an estate, etc., and by extension anyone who commands something. (Gas. G., 1853)	Ownership status of the slave subject
5	OWNER	owner of something, and in this sense the same thing applies to a woman as in amorous flirtations, saying: my owner and not my mistress. — The master with respect to the servant. V. MASTER. (Gas. G., 1853)	Ownership of the slave subject. Subject who cedes legal rights to the slave through a lucrative exchange.

6	PUBLIC SCRIBE	One who, by public office, has the exercise of writing and executing deeds with the authority of a prince or magistrate. There are different types, such as Notary of the Chamber, of the King, of the province, of the Number and of the Municipality (DRAE, 1817).	Legal entity in charge of drafting the deed. Participates as a witness and government official.
7	NOTARY PUBLIC	Public scribe. In ancient times, this name was given to those who wrote using abbreviations. Today, a distinction is made between public notaries who deal with secular matters, and notaries with ecclesiastical matters. // Chief Notary. The principal or head of the notary's office. (RAE, 1852)	Legal entity in charge of drafting the deed. Participates as a witness and government official.
8	MUNICIPALITY	Judicial territory or Mayor's Office that includes several districts. In Cuba, this meaning is equivalent to jurisdiction. (Pichardo, 1875)	Locality of origin of the subjects participating in the purchase-sale
9	NEIGHBOR- HOOD	The number of residents in a town. — The list, payroll, or registration of residents [neighbors] arranged for a distribution, or for another purpose. — VECINDAD, resident's ratio. (Gas. G., 1855)	Locality of origin of the subjects participating in the purchase-sale
10	NEIGHBOR [OF]:	Neighbor of: expresses proximity to the province. — Someone who lives with others in the same neighborhood, house, or town. Vicinus, incola. (DRAE, 1817)	A person who belongs to a district or neighborhood. A relationship between several people who live together in a single location.
11	WITNESS	One who bears witness to something or attests to it. — EYE WITNESS: One who was present at the event to which he or she is attesting. (Gas. G., 1855)	Subject who acts as a declarant to attest to the event presented to the notary or clerk

Field: Lucrative exchange

N.º	Units lexical	Meaning	Meaning in context
1	BUYER	the one who buys. (Dom. G., 1853)	Subject who receives the legal right to the slave through lucrative exchange
2	SELL	to transfer to another the ownership of what one possesses for the agreed price. (Gas. G., 1855)	Act of transferring a good (slave) to another subject through lucrative exchange
3	ESCUDO	A type of coin so named because it bears the coat of arms of the king or sovereign prince who orders its minting. It is usually made of gold. In America, pesos and pesos fuertes are used. (DRAE, 1817)	Monetary exchange unit
4	PESO	Castilian silver coin of one ounce peso (DRAE, 1817)	Monetary exchange unit
5	NON NUMERATA PECUNIA	<i>expr. lat.</i> Name of the exception that the person confessing to the receipt of money raised, denying that it had been delivered to him. (Page G., 1925)	Routine formula to express that payment has not been received