

Textual scope of linguistic variants in the direct transmission of the nineteenth-century Cuban novel *Historia de un bribón dichoso*

Alcance textual de las variantes lingüísticas en la transmisión directa de la novela cubana decimonónica *Historia de un bribón dichoso*

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Abstract

Not a few philologists have warned about the alteration of modern texts during their transmission, despite being materials fixed and legitimized by the printing press. As today's society relies heavily on written records, this is a matter of significant interest for the preservation of the culture of peoples. However, these variations are often associated with normative updates of the language, stylistic flaws, or minor errors. Within the Cuban context, no studies are known to have investigated alterations in national literature during its transmission, except for a few critical editions, which are generally based on traditional methods and interests that are more descriptive than pragmatic. Based on this issue, as partial results of a more comprehensive study, this article aims to describe the textual scope of linguistic variants in the direct transmission of the novel *Historia de un bribón dichoso*. From a mixed approach, which assumes quantifiable criteria and qualitative interpretation of the categories of study, this research is descriptive in nature, based on the content analysis method, interested in investigating both the textual surface and the non-explicit framework of the deep textual structure in order to make valuable inferences. The results reveal significant alterations at different levels of the work's textual structure. This study demonstrates that, despite the relative recentness of the regional literary heritage, its transmission history presents important aspects of interest.

Keywords: linguistic variant, textual scope, literary transmission, Cuban literature, *Historia de un bribón dichoso*.

Resumen

No pocos filólogos han advertido sobre la alteración de los textos modernos durante su transmisión, pese a tratarse de materiales fijados y legitimados por la imprenta. En tanto la sociedad actual se sustenta en gran medida sobre sus testimonios escritos, este es un asunto de gran interés para la preservación de la cultura de los pueblos. Sin embargo, suelen asociarse estas variaciones con la actualización normativa de la lengua, vicios de estilo o erratas menores. En el contexto cubano no se conoce de estudios que hayan indagado en las alteraciones de la literatura nacional en su transmisión, salvo las escasas ediciones críticas, asumidas casi generalmente desde métodos tradicionales e intereses más descriptivos que pragmáticos. A partir de esta problemática, como resultados parciales de un estudio más integral, este artículo tiene como objetivo describir el alcance textual de las variantes lingüísticas en la transmisión directa de la novela *Historia de un bribón dichoso*. Desde un enfoque mixto, que asume criterios cuantificables e interpretación cualitativa de las categorías de estudio, esta investigación es de tipo descriptiva, asumida desde el método de análisis de contenido, interesado en indagar tanto en la superficie textual como en el entramado no explícito de la estructura textual profunda para asumir con ello inferencias de valor. Los resultados revelan una alteración significativa en diferentes niveles de la estructura textual de la obra. Este estudio demuestra que, a pesar de la relativa juventud del patrimonio literario regional, su historia de transmisión presenta importantes afectaciones de interés.

Palabras clave: variante lingüística, alcance textual, transmisión literaria, literatura cubana, *Historia de un bribón dichoso*.

INTRODUCTION

Almost since the very emergence of the written text, those responsible for its reproduction and transmission have been concerned with addressing the various alterations that often occur during these processes. In general, the longer a text survives and is reproduced, the more likely it is to undergo significant alterations in its textual tradition. Each moment of transmission becomes a potential source of accumulated errors, overlaps, editorial decisions (objective and subjective), censorship, and pro-normative updates of the language. Although it should be assumed, *a priori*, that any scientific approach to literature is interested in verifying the reliability of the study sample, in practice it is rare in non-editorial studies to find a preliminary collation phase or consultation of the first edition, facsimile or critical edition; an issue that seems to be mainly motivated by skepticism about its relevance.

A non-specialist reader is unlikely to be interested in how much the language has changed as the material structure on which a literary work is based. However, they do assume with unquestionable certainty that each testimony maintains the integrity of its content, just as its author conceived it. A specialized reader, on the other hand, although more aware that a literary work is the result of collective collaboration involving multiple actors, often takes it for granted that textual dynamism refers only to linguistic updating, amendments to stylistic flaws, and the correction of errors, with no major incidents that invalidate the scientific approach to a given testimony as if it were the original text.

Today, substantial contributions have been made to the critical presentation of notable works in literary history, with efforts primarily focused toward textual fixation. From a theoretical and methodological perspective, there is also evidence of a growing appreciation of the value of variants, although they are predominantly considered as material supports that underpin textual restoration (Carvajal Córdoba *et al.*, 2015; Carvajal Córdoba & Mejía Solanilla, 2015; López Torres & Ruz Puebla, 2025; Riva, 2018). Likewise, genetic criticism has been applied predominantly to modern texts in recent years, mainly associated with the paradigm shift brought about by the introduction of artificial intelligence (Camacho & Vanessa, 2023). In this

field, although the textual transmission of a work involves linguistic and extralinguistic elements, as well as the circumstances and forms of publication of its testimonies, variants are the focus of attention in eclectic work with multiple testimonies, due to their ability to function in textual meaning, to disrupt the meaning of the text, and to distance it from its original semiosis.

Given this general trend, studies on the subject are scarce in Cuba, with limited scope compared to the richness of its written heritage. Within the country, interest in textual criticism has been restricted almost exclusively to the field of publishing and under the classical principle of reconstruction and fixation of the authentic text. Added to this is the almost non-existent interest in approaching national literature from a perspective that investigates the history of textual transmission and its effects on the reading of works. It is currently unknown to what extent much of Cuban literature may or may not have changed in its transmission. Furthermore, it is common practice in Cuba to carry out textual studies without first consulting the original, facsimile, or critical edition. These approaches disregard the fact that the work is based on its linguistic support and that an omission or change, insignificant to the average reader, can invalidate certain scientific approaches to literature. In this regard, it should be noted that, although Cuban literary history is relatively recent, the seemingly peaceful nature of its transmission, combined with the poor textual quality of some copies, may obscure phenomena that undermine its proper assessment and reproduction. All in all, the issue of variations in Cuban literature in its transmission remains largely unexplored today, especially from non-editorial perspectives.

From the field of textual linguistics and discourse analysis, when considering the relationships among the structures of a text, authors such as Calsamiglia and Tusón (1999) or van Dijk (van Dijk, 1978, 2012) propose a propositional model based on: microstructure, macrostructure, and superstructure. According to Pinto & Gálvez (1999), this model is equivalent to a textual structure of surface, content, and schematic, respectively. For van Dijk, microstructure is the interconnected network of propositions that denote the local structure of a text, based on sentences and the relationships of connection and coherence. A network of propositions established through the processing of textual units stored by the receiver in short-term memory.

Based on these details, the reader applies a set of macro-operations that connect the relevant propositions to produce the overall meaning of the text. In general terms, Calsamiglia & Tusón (1999) define microstructure as the local and superficial elements that make a text cohesive and coherent. Understood in this way, macrostructure corresponds to an overall structure of meaning produced by textual processing at the microstructural level, that is, it functions as an overall semantic representation resulting from the conversion of the microstructure into a set of higher-level propositions (macropropositions) that contain the theme of the text.

In this sense, if studies on the variability of Cuban literature are unexplored territory from the perspective of more traditional textual criticism, they are even more so from current philological perspectives that are not subject to eclectic ends or from interdisciplinary standpoints. In this context of little or no attention to linguistic variation in the Cuban literary canon, Ramón Piña's Cuban novel *Historia de un bribón dichoso* (Story of a Happy Rascal) is one of those works that has been virtually ignored by critics, despite the fact that a previous exploration determined that its history of transmission reveals important issues that, in some way, may influence an inadequate assessment of its values.

This research has shown partial results regarding the textual variability of this work (Santos Gallardo, 2022, 2024), which constitute direct background information. In these cases, alterations were found that affect its transmission history and interfere with its proper reproduction, specifically in relation to the omission of linguistic constituents, typographical variants, or linguistic updating.

Based on this background, this research aims to determine the textual scope of linguistic variants in the structure of the testimonies that make up the direct textual tradition of the novel *Historia de un bribón dichoso*. Although this work does not achieve the fullness of nineteenth-century Cuban narrative milestones (Friol, 1968), it is among the second-tier narratives that shaped the genre in the colonial era through motifs from Spanish picaresque literature. From the model of peninsular influence, its narrative construction glimpses a creolization that provides a critical view of the gestational literary concerns of Cuban national literature.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a mixed epistemological approach with a pragmatic foundation, a dynamic conception of the text, and a linguistic-editorial and philological orientation that drew on tools and principles from textual criticism, ecdotics, textual linguistics, and literary theory. Content analysis was adopted as the general method, based on its advantages for analyzing a phenomenon consisting of two realities, one objective and the other subjective (Creswell, 2014; Hernández Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018; Hernández Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, according to Pinto & Gálvez, any content analysis must be carried out in relation to the context and justified on the basis of this (1999, p. 26). In terms of its scope, this is a descriptive study (López Morales, 1994).

Techniques and principles for collation and analysis of variants were adopted from textual criticism, with a tree-like arrangement of the testimonies, understood in their concrete, historical, and context-dependent materiality. From eclectic processes, the conditioning factors of variability and the typological delimitation of linguistic phenomena associated with editorial processes in the printed book product were adopted, as well as the contextual or linguistic causes of the editor's conscious intervention. From textual linguistics, the examination of the text (or the testimony as a structurally unique text) was assumed, together with its pragmatic context (Rico, 1988, 2020).

In terms of its temporal scope, it is a longitudinal study and was not based on editorial or linguistic criteria, but rather on the integrity of the first edition as a linguistically fixed product and in relation to the contexts involved. Variation was also assumed from its synchronicity and diachronicity (Segre, 1990), considering variants as structural units with their own system (diasystem) that is integrated into the textual structure; as well as the active nature of textual transmission, taking into account the centrifugal qualities of textual tradition and the centripetal forces of syntactic and stylistic cohesion. In this sense, the testimonies were considered as systems of structures under tension (Contini, 1986).

Some standard uses of language were not widely known in the Spanish-speaking world of the nineteenth century, a period in which the

democratization of reading was just beginning to take hold. Furthermore, even today, the average reader acquires much of their knowledge of written language empirically, through reading (non-metalinguistic) texts that they recognize as models. Thus, according to the considerations of Pratt (1977) and Eco (1979) on the fact that the production and interpretation of literary works depend largely on tacit and culturally shared knowledge of the rules, conventions, and expectations of the context in which language is used, the notion of variant was not approached from what a linguist would recognize, but from its ability to camouflage itself within the text in the eyes of a standard reader. For the purposes of this research, the following categories were defined:

Linguistic variants: products of the process of linguistic variation in a text which, to the untrained reader, make sense in the context of a specific witness and pass for an original reading, so that they can only be detected by collation.

Textual scope: refers to the scope of variants at different levels of the textual structure, conceived not in relation to the physical extent of the units of analysis, but rather based on their scope over their units of context. Thus, each unit of analysis is addressed according to the unit of context established in each case, the latter being understood as the locatable basis of meaning that functions as its interpretive framework and is delimited according to it and depending on the research. these units are defined on the basis of a textual criterion, in relation to a characteristic of the environment of the units of analysis; or extratextual, in relation to the conditions of textual production (Fernández Chaves, 2002).

Each unit of analysis was conceived as a unique register, regardless of its incidence in more than one linguistic aspect. Linguistic structures with a defined formal delimitation and an objectively recognizable unitary character, ranging in length from a grapheme to a chain of linguistic constituents, were assumed as units of analysis. On this basis, quantifiable frequency criteria were established, which were interpreted qualitatively and compared in terms of their quantity/quality equivalence. The aim was to identify and describe the linguistic properties of the variants objectively and systematically and to draw conclusions based on the linguistic and non-linguistic properties of the contexts. This multimodal perspective allows for a deeper understanding of both manifest and latent content (Krippendorff, 2004).

Work phases

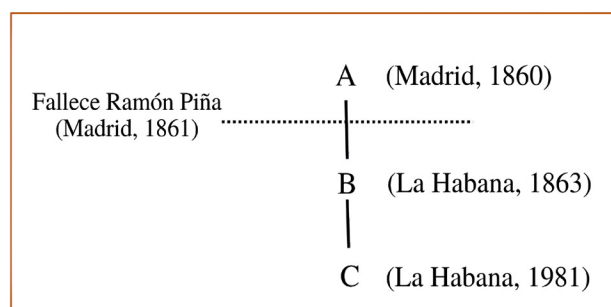
- This research was carried out in several phases based on the essential tasks of textual criticism, but with a focus on the variability of the work rather than its canonization.
- Bibliographic and documentary review phase: Bibliographic and documentary review techniques were applied, based on criteria of relevance and comprehensiveness.
- Collation, recording, and coding phase: This phase focused on collating testimonies, as well as recording, coding, and tabulating data. It was structured in two fundamental stages that shared an operational nature, without any evaluative intent.
- Description, analysis, and synthesis phase: The variants were analyzed, recorded under the criterion of exclusivity, but understood during the qualitative analysis from their interaction in the textual structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the first phase of work, it has been confirmed that, in addition to its first edition, the work has been published twice in Cuba. In this regard, this research considers textual testimonies as concrete historical objects that can be scientifically compared.

Figure 1.

Family tree of the direct textual tradition of the work



According to its chronological order of publication, the textual tradition of this work presents a three-level genealogical structure, as expressed in Figure 1:

A total of 12,073 linguistic variations were detected among the surviving witnesses of the direct textual tradition of the work. For the

purposes of a standard reader, 99.35% (11,994) are variants. At the lower end of the tradition (C), the witness receiving the collation records, a

total of 310 useful pages were analyzed, yielding an average of 38.76 variants per page.

Table 1.

General list of variants identified according to their textual scope and operation

The textual scope of linguistic variants in the structure of the work					
Operation	Word	Microstructure	Macrostructure	Narrative structure	Disp. Gráf.
Union	1	13	1	0	0
Separation	0	3	0	2	0
Transposition	0	12	0	0	0
Deletion	3301	310	31	13	0
Change	1136	1180	37	29	14
Addition	4528	1360	14	8	1

In relation to its textual scope, Table 1 shows the list of variants identified in each of the levels of the textual structure by operations. From an operational point of view, the variants associated with the addition of elements account for 49.11% of the variations (5,929), followed in descending order by deletion, with 30.45% (3,676); change, with 20.06% (2,422); union, with 0.21% (25); transposition, with 0.12% (14); and separation, with 0.06% (7).

The word as a grammatical and semantic unit

74.76% of the variants recognized in the sample—all identified in C—have a scope limited to the word as a grammatical and semantic unit. Most of these are related to spelling, although some are associated with the use of italics. They are identified based on the basic operations of addition (4,528), deletion (3,301), change (1,136), and union (1).

Noteworthy examples include the addition of prosodic or diacritical accents, provided that the latter does not serve to disambiguate. Thus, given that its “absence or presence does not, in principle, alter its basic meaning” (Royal Spanish Academy and Association of Spanish Language Academies, 2010b, pp. 208-209), its scope is limited to the internal structure of the word, to indicate the syllable carrying the prosodic accent.

¿Y no es cierto que cada **dia** se pone más **galán**? [01: 273]

¿Y no es cierto que cada **día** se pone más **galán**? [03: 227]

(And isn't it true that he's getting more handsome every day?)

Similarly, other variants associated with changes in graphemes with no distinctive orthographic function and changes from one form to another in words with existing graphic variants have this scope. In both cases, the scope is limited to the graphic form of a grapheme, with no scope outside the word.

una bugía de los monumentos [01:195]

una bujía de los monumentos [03: 169]

(a spark plug from the monuments)

profesaba mayor despego y desconfianza [01: 417]

profesaba mayor desapego y desconfianza [03: 335]

(professed greater detachment and mistrust)

And also, in the change from the abbreviation of the treatment formula to the full spelling.

No era el **Sr. D.** Homobono ciertamente lo más á propósito para desempeñar aquel delicado encargo. [01: 108]

No era el **señor don** Homobono, ciertamente, lo más a propósito para desempeñar aquel delicado encargo. [03: 105]

(Mr. Homobono was certainly not the most suitable person to carry out that delicate task)

From an orthographic point of view, textual highlighting limits its scope to words, for example, in the change from capital letters to small letters for the names of months or in terms of a single meaning of general use in the Spanish language, cases in which they do not fulfill a syntactic function.

Y sin duda por mañana de **Abril** con todos sus encantos se contaba él. [01: 326]

Y sin duda por mañana de **abril** con todos sus encantos se contaba él. [03: 266]

(And undoubtedly, he counted himself among the charms of that April morning)

discurre por entre las aguas del **Océano** [01: 233]

discurre por entre las aguas del **océano** [03: 198]

(runs through the waters of the ocean)

However, from a typographical point of view, when the change from italics to roman type eliminates the emphasis on place names, note that the emphasis is marked by the initial capital letter, which means that, for the sake of economy, the typography is redundant.

no á larga distancia del **Cerro**, porque la tenían en el barrio del **Horcón** [01: 61]

no a larga distancia del **Cerro**, porque la tenían en el barrio del **Horcón** [03: 72]

(not far from Cerro, because they had it in the Horcón neighborhood)

In A, the use of italics was also identified to emphasize locally used vocabulary, including cases where the initial capital letter was also used as a form of emphasis. In these situations, the elimination of the typographical mark does introduce variants in C with a scope beyond this function originally marked in A, which cannot be resolved with the orthographic function of the

initial capital letter of relevance. In these cases, the scope was identified as limited to the word, since, rather than a syntactic function, these variants act on the highlighting of these terms throughout the text.

Al dueño ó arrendatario que asiste en la **Estancia** se llama **Estanciero**, palabra que el diccionario de nuestro idioma da por anticuada [01:02]

Al dueño o arrendatario que asiste en la **estancia** se llama **estanciero**, palabra que el diccionario de nuestro idioma da por anticuada [03: 27]

(The owner or tenant who works on the ranch is called a rancher, a word that our language dictionary considers obsolete)

un lujoso **quitrín** [01: 33]

un lujoso **quitrín** [03: 51]

(a luxurious carriage)

Although these variants represent three quarters of those identified in the sample, their behavior is relatively simple. They allow us to verify that, although those associated with orthographic phenomena occupy a high volume, their structural scope is mostly low, largely limited to the graphic form of the word, although in a small number of these, changes are introduced in their communicative functions, as was found in the cases of typographical emphasis.

Syntactic microstructure and propositional meaning

23.99% of the variants—identified in B and C—have a scope in context units limited to syntactic microstructure and propositional meaning and are identified based on the basic operations of addition (1360), change (1180), deletion (310), union (13), transposition (12), and separation (3). The units of analysis in which this scope was identified represent a much smaller percentage of the sample than those limited to the word. However, they show greater dispersion in terms of their typology and group together a more heterogeneous set of variants, with a more diverse scope on the textual microstructure.

Variants associated with orthographic phenomena predominate at this level, mainly in the use of punctuation marks, with a generic function that could be described as demarcative, because they “delimit units of meaning” (Royal

Spanish Academy and Association of Spanish Language Academies, 2010b, p. 67). This is the case, for example, with most of those associated with the use of commas, colons, periods, semicolons, dashes, quotation marks, and modulation signs. Note in the following examples that the addition of a comma marks verbal ellipsis, while the addition of quotation marks delimits a textual quotation.

¿Pero daño no te hicieron, hija mia? Susto sí.
[01: 203]

¿Pero daño no te hicieron, hija mía? Susto, sí.
[03: 175]

(But they didn't hurt you, did they, my child?
They scared you)

de observar los movimientos de la madre
he dicho: el hijo será varon ó será hembra,
cátate que viene al mundo como para no
desmentirme [01: 07]

de observar los movimientos de la madre he
dicho: «El hijo será varón o será hembra»,
cátate que viene al mundo como para no
desmentirme [03: 31]

(After observing the mother's movements,
I said, "The child will be a boy or a girl," and
lo and behold, it came into the world just as I
predicted)

To a lesser extent, some variants associated with orthographic phenomena have a microstructural scope in terms of distinctive function, with an impact on syntactic and semantic relationships at the propositional level. Among these, for example, some uses of modulation signs were identified. Note in the following case the change from an interrogative to a declarative mode.

—Conque tú crees que no sea yo hombre
cumplir lo que ofrezco?

—Sí lo creo [01: 79]

—Conque tú crees que no sea yo hombre de
cumplir lo que ofrezco.

—Sí lo creo [01: 84]

(—So, you think I'm not a man who keeps his
word.

(—Yes, I do.)

Others, such as full stops, mark hierarchical relationships between statements.

—Sí. D. Eustaquio, sin el socorro de ninguna
magia, supo encontrarla y ponerla en mis
manos [01: 364]

—Sí, don Eustaquio, sin el socorro de ninguna
magia, supo encontrarla y ponerla en mis
manos [03: 294]

(—Yes, Don Eustaquio, without the aid of any
magic, you managed to find her and place her
in my hands)

A microstructural scope was also identified in the addition or deletion of accents in stressed paronyms, given that, in addition to the graphic differentiation of the stressed syllable, they mark the grammatical category and meaning of some words in syntactic uses that are ambiguous at first glance but ultimately defined by context. In such situations, their interpretive framework is completed in the microstructure.

aquel acreditado mancebo redactaba los
pedimentos que **hacia** suscribir por letrado
que tenía asalariado [01: 17]

aquel acreditado mancebo redactaba los
pedimentos que **hacía** suscribir por letrado
que tenía asalariado [01: 39]

(That accredited young man drafted the
petitions that he had his salaried lawyer sign)

En la raza negra esclava, no hay para **qué** se
busque moral ninguna en la materia de que
tratamos [01: 148]

En la raza negra esclava, no hay para **que** se
busque moral ninguna en la materia de que
tratamos [03: 135]

(In the black slave race, there is no point in
looking for morality in the matter we are
dealing with)

In this sense, variants associated with syntax predominate, although with relatively simple behavior related to the delimitation of the ways in which words are combined and arranged linearly, as well as the establishment of cohesive connections in the textual surface. For example, variants associated primarily with

the use of pronouns, contractions, prepositions, conjunctions, and articles are identified.

al devolver la taza á Lorenza, cambiaron una mirada de complacencia [01: 232]

al devolverle la taza a Lorenza, cambiaron una mirada de complacencia [03: 197]

(When they returned the cup to Lorenza, they exchanged a look of satisfaction)

hacienda **en** que habitaba [01: 125]

hacienda que habitaba [03: 118]

(the farmhouse where he lived)

On the other hand, in the variants associated with the inflection of the word, a change in grammatical content was generally identified, with scope in syntactic relationships. Thus, the change in number defines agreement.

dientes postizos, que bastante lo dejaban ver por lo que se separaban de las encías [03: 05]

dientes postizos, que bastante los dejaba ver por lo que se separaban de las encías [03: 30]

(false teeth, which were quite visible because they were separated from the gums)

A textual scope on propositional meaning was also identified in some changes with lexical implications.

contraer compromisos sin el **conocimiento** de sus padres [01: 241]

contraer compromisos sin el **consentimiento** de sus padres [03: 204]

(enter into commitments without the consent of their parents)

calculó que no necesitaba de sueldo, cuando del vecindario, con distintos arbitrios y por otros trabajos, podía **sacarse lo** bastante para vivir con decencia y aun para formar un caudalejo [01: 34-35]

calculó que no necesitaba de sueldo, cuando del vecindario, con distintos arbitrios y por otros trabajos, podía **sacárselo** bastante para vivir con decencia y aun para formar un caudalejo [03: 52]

(He calculated that he did not need a salary, since he could earn enough to live decently

and even build up a small fortune from various taxes and other jobs in the neighborhood)

Although variants of the five linguistic types were found in the microstructure, those associated with orthographic phenomena were identified as being more prevalent, confirming that these are not limited to words alone. Among these, those associated with the use of punctuation marks and diacritics with demarcative functions predominate, although some distinctive uses were identified to a lesser extent. Syntactic, morphological, and typographical variants were identified in their individual behavior with a tendency to be mainly microstructural in scope. Meanwhile, those corresponding to lexicon and semantics are relevant at this level to propositional meaning.

The global macrostructure of meaning

The general theme of the novel was determined by applying the textual macro-rule of integration or construction, in terms of the global macro-position: The creole rascal is a product of the society in which he is raised. Then, with the application of the textual macro-rules of reduction, generalization, integration, or construction, the concretization of the global macro-proposition was identified at lower levels based on sub-themes, expressed in the following macro-propositions:

1. The Cuban society is culturally and socially diverse.
2. The forum and power relations are based on ambition, corruption, and unscrupulousness.
3. Slavery is morally, economically, and socially necessary.
4. Love and virtue are rarely authentic.

In quantitative terms, the variants at this level of scope represent 0.69% of those identified in the sample (B and C) and are identified based on the basic operations of change (37), deletion (31), addition (14), and union (1). In this case, variants associated with lexicon and semantics predominate, with a significant scope of those associated with the deletion of large chains of linguistic constituents. This is because the extension of their units of analysis affects portions of text that go beyond the microtextual. To a lesser extent, a macrostructural scope was also identified in variants associated with spelling, typography, and syntax.

At the macrostructural level, variants with scope over macropropositions 2 and 3 predominate. In several cases, the same variant affects both or several lower-level macrostructures that contribute to these, especially when entire scenes or events, or parts of them, are eliminated. Note, for example, that the deletion of a chain of linguistic constituents removes from B and C several propositions that contribute to the global second-level macrostructure (subtopics): *ya se va haciendo un bautizo esto de entrar negros (contributes to macro-proposition 3), todos quieren coger, y no poco, con las malditas trabas de la introducción (contributes to macropropositions 2 and 3), hay que andar con el talego abierto (contributes to macro-proposition 3), mucho va costando á los pobres armadores (contributes to macropropositions 2 and 3), vienen despues de todo mil aspirantes con sus caras de vaqueta á participar del sudor del hombre honrado (contributes to macropropositions 1, 2, and 3), ya esto va siendo vivir (contributes to macropropositions 2 and 3).* (It's becoming a baptism of fire, this business of entering the black market. Everyone wants a piece of the action, and not just a little, with the damn obstacles of the introduction. You have to walk around with your wallet open. it's costing the poor shipowners a lot, after all, a thousand applicants come with their sour faces to share in the sweat of honest men, this is becoming a way of life)

Furthermore, in B and C, the last part of the deleted content in this variant is marked textually—by adding ellipsis points—which replaces the explicit statement in the paragraph with an unfinished sentence that, in relation to macro-proposition 2, suggests an unexpressed content that the readers must construct according to their own considerations.

En esa Estancia, pues, algunas veces igualmente me ha prestado sus servicios, economizándome mis maravedises, que de otro modo hubiera tenido que gastar; amigo mio, ya se va haciendo un bautizo esto de entrar negros. Todos quieren coger, y no poco, con las malditas trabas de la introducción; y como hay que andar con el talego abierto, por mejor precio que tenga el artículo, mucho va costando á los pobres armadores, despues de haber hecho todo el trabajo.

— ¡Es una iniquidad!

—Que no tiene igual. Expone uno su dinero, da mil pasos para salir del puerto, y para adquirir la mercancía, y para traerla, y para ocultarla, y para colocarla, y vienen despues de todo mil aspirantes con sus caras de vaqueta á participar del sudor del hombre honrado, solo por hacer la vista gorda, ó por prestar un auxilio insignificante. Ya esto va siendo vivir. [01:143]

En esa estancia, pues, algunas veces igualmente me ha prestado sus servicios, economizándome mis maravedies, que de otro modo hubiera tenido que gastar. Expone uno su dinero, da mil pasos para salir del puerto, y para adquirir la «mercancía», y para traerla, y para ocultarla, y para colocarla... [03:131]

(During that stay, then, he has sometimes lent me his services, saving me my maravedis, which I would otherwise have had to spend; my friend, this business of bringing in blacks is becoming quite commonplace. Everyone wants to take advantage, and not just a little, with the damn obstacles of the introduction; and since you have to walk around with your wallet open, no matter how good the price of the item is, it costs the poor shipowners a lot, after they've done all the work.)

(That's unfair!)

(- There is no equal. One exposes one's money, takes a thousand steps to leave the port, and to acquire the merchandise, and to bring it, and to hide it, and to place it, and then a thousand aspirants come with their cow-like faces to share in the sweat of the honest man, just to turn a blind eye, or to lend insignificant assistance. This is what life is all about. During that stay, then, he has sometimes provided me with his services, saving me my maravedis, which I would otherwise have had to spend. One exposes one's money, takes a thousand steps to leave the port, to acquire the "merchandise," to bring it back, to hide it, and to place it...)

Some variations in typographical emphasis also affect the third macro-proposition, as in the previous example of the noun *mercancía*, which appears in A and B without diacritics and in C in quotation marks. If we analyze the context of transmission of testimony C, the addition of diacritics is intended to emphasize that its use does not correspond to a literal meaning. However, in

addition to the use of the term *bultos* in the following examples, whose presentation in italics could respond to an interest in highlighting the vocabulary of the time rather than a connotative intention, in the previous example the same character (in A) refers to slaves as articles, without highlighting a figurative meaning of the term in this case. That is, in A, a slave trader character is presented who objectifies black people and considers slaves, literally, as packages, merchandise, or items, which implies a starker configuration of slavery (macro-proposition 3) than that of C. On the other hand, in the narrative context, it should be understood that this generic name is partly due to the need to keep the nature of the cargo secret in order to evade the law. The addition of quotation marks may be the result of a cultural education policy in Cuban society in 1981, which led the editor to penalize racism by highlighting the figurative meaning, although it would probably have been more appropriate to add italics to those that do not appear highlighted in A. In this case, due to its importance for macro-proposition 3, this variant was addressed from a macro-structural point of view. However, it should be noted that it also interferes with the configuration of the characters.

Debe traer como mil *bultos*, según les llamamos [01: 226]

Debe traer como mil «*bultos*», según les llamamos [03: 193]

menos al capitán, porque á este se le consignan cincuenta *bultos* [01: 250]

menos al capitán, porque á este se le consignan cincuenta «*bultos*» [03: 209]

(except for the captain, because he is assigned fifty “*packages*”)

Also, for example, the typographical highlighting associated with the special nature of the use of certain terms or expressions, as well as the removal of diacritical accents, have an impact in some cases on the overall meaning. With regard to typography, the change from italics to regular font also affects the macrostructure, especially in terms or expressions used in A with a derogatory connotation in relation to macropropositions 1 and 3, which reflects racial mixing, the stance taken towards the emancipation of slaves, and their incorporation into society. See, for example, that in the following variants of C, the loss of typographical diacritics eliminates the pejorative

connotation of a term associated with slavery and race, which may introduce a reading not contained in A about the social acceptance of this process:

no has de reducirte á contraer matrimonio con un *pardo libre* [01: 152]

no has de reducirte á contraer matrimonio con un *pardo libre* [03: 138]

(you must not reduce yourself to marrying a free mulatto)

Aquellos negros han de darse en clase de *emancipados* [01: 304]

Aquellos negros han de darse en clase de *emancipados* [03: 249]

(Those blacks should be treated as emancipated)

Likewise, a syntactical variant in a scene in which Matías convinces his nephew Eustaquio that in these times, *man is nothing more than an attachment in his pocket* has an impact on the second global macro-proposition. Firstly, according to the NGLE, it should be noted that the verbal periphrasis *deber + infinitive* usually functions as a radical, in principle, a piece of advice or an obligation, while *deber de + infinitive* usually functions as epistemic, that is, it conveys a conjecture by the speaker, the manifestation of an inferred probability; Although the first construction, to express conjecture, is widespread among prestigious writers and ancient texts, the second is also documented in classical and contemporary texts with the value of obligation (Royal Spanish Academy and Association of Spanish Language Academies, 2010a, pp. 538-539). Thus, in the proposition: *Debe suceder con el dinero lo que con el vino*, (money should be treated like wine), it is possibly stated as advice or an obligation that a love of money leads to excessive ambition as a way to achieve prosperity; mientras en C: *Debe de suceder con el dinero lo que con el vino* (what happens with money must be the same as what happens with wine) stating a probability or inference that this will occur. That said, despite the hesitations between one use and another recognized by the NGLE, in A Matías guides his nephew on how to proceed; in C, the variant can give rise to a new meaning of the proposition, expressing the character’s own considerations about the origin of ambition.

—Indudablemente vales hoy dos mil duros más que antes, suponiendo que algo valieses. En los tiempos que corren, el hombre no es más que una adherencia de su bolsillo. ¡Así te desengañaras de ello!

—Voylo estando más de lo que crees.

—Debe suceder con el dinero lo que con el vino. Mientras más afición se le cobra y más la afición se satisface, más y más crece todavía. [01: 107]

—Indudablemente vales hoy dos mil duros más que antes, suponiendo que algo valieses. En los tiempos que corren, el hombre no es más que una adherencia de su bolsillo. ¡Así te desengañarás de ello!

—Voylo estando más de lo que crees.

—Debe **de** suceder con el dinero lo que con el vino. Mientras más afición se le cobra y más la afición se satisface, más y más crece todavía. [03: 105]

(—You are undoubtedly worth two thousand pesetas more today than you were before, assuming you were worth anything at all. In these times, a man is nothing more than an attachment of his wallet. That will disillusion you!

(—I'm more than what you think.)

(—Money should be like wine. The more you take a liking to it and the more that liking is satisfied, the more it grows. [01: 107])

(—You are undoubtedly worth two thousand pesetas more today than you were before, assuming you were worth anything at all. In these times, a man is nothing more than an attachment of his wallet. That will disillusion you!

(—I'm more than what you think.)

(—It must be the same with money as with wine. The more you take a liking to it and the more that liking is satisfied, the more it grows. [03: 105])

In summary, although extensive units of analysis are more likely to have a macro-structural scope, it was generally found that those involving lexicon and semantics have a greater influence on the global structure of meaning. An impact on this scope was also identified, although to a

lesser extent, in relation to typography, syntax, and spelling. Furthermore, although testimony B generally shows less variability than C, most of the variants identified in it have a significant impact on the overall meaning of the text.

Narrative textual structure

Variants affecting the structure of the plot and the narrative components of characters, narrator, setting, environments, and spaces were identified at this level of scope. These variants represent 0.44% of the category and are identified in the five defined linguistic typologies, with a predominance of those associated with lexicon and semantics. From an operational point of view, they are found in the operations of change (29), deletion (13), addition (8), and separation (2).

Among those associated with lexicon and semantics, those involving the suppression of linguistic constituents or changes in words predominate. In the following case, for example, the change itself would not go beyond the microstructural level, were it not for the fact that it alters the characterization of a secondary character. In A, the character was a man of distinction, that is, of noble lineage; in C, the character was a man of cape, which may refer to a garment worn by soldiers, or also, when said of a helpful person, someone who helps others in need.

D. Bartolo, que la echaba de hombre de **copete** [01: 38]

don Bartolo, que la echaba de hombre de **capote** [03: 54]

(Don Bartolo, pretending to be a man in a cape)

In relation to macro-proposition 2, a variant was identified in the verbal inflection of number which, with scope over the nominal subject with which it establishes its agreement, implies a change in meaning with repercussions on the relationship between two secondary characters. In A, the proposition states that: jokes (explicitly expressed through the relative pronoun *que*) *should never be rushed*, while in C, the implied subject refers to *Matías*, *who should never be rushed*. This, in the voice of Leonardo's character (the pedaneous mayor), expresses in A a generic statement regarding restraint in joking among friends, while in C it refers specifically to Leonardo's warning to Matías about restraint in joking between the two of them. This variant

occurs within a scene in which the village mayor breaks the law by playing monte, an activity that, in the sociocultural context of nineteenth-century Cuba, only took place among trusted individuals, given the illicit nature of the bets involved. By virtue of Leonardo's governmental functions, the change may introduce a new underlying meaning in C, emphasizing the distance between the two as a way of urging Matías to remain silent.

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Basta de bromas, que nunca deben apurarse, por más amistad que haya. [01: 43]

Basta de bromas, que nunca debe apurarse, por más amistad que haya. [03: 59]

(Enough joking around, you should never rush, no matter how close you are as friends)

This level is also affected by changes in the number of syntactic elements, through the joining of two constituents or the fragmentation of one of them into two new words, different from the first. Thus, in the following variant, the adverbial phrase *por supuesto* (of course) is broken up in C, whereas in A it has an emphatic value: *cuidando de callar la que por su parte había jugado a su enemigo* (taking care to silence the one who, for her part, had played her enemy). Instead, in C, the prepositional phrase *por su puesto* is formed, functioning as a causal complement. That said, in testimony A, the character referred to—Eustaquio, the main character—keeps quiet about his misdeeds because it is advisable in order to achieve his goal. In C, however, the variant introduces a change in meaning, as the character keeps quiet so as not to jeopardize his position (*puesto*) in the government.

Contaba cómo después de haber tomado la mosca le había vendido inicuaamente para granjearse el favor del gobierno, cuidando, por **supuesto**, de callar la que por su parte había jugado á su enemigo. [01: 262]

Contaba cómo después de haber tomado la

mosca, lo había vendido inicuaamente para granjearse el favor del gobierno, cuidando, por **su puesto**, de callar la que por su parte había jugado a su enemigo. [03: 219]

(He recounted how, after taking the bait, he had sold it unjustly to curry favor with the government, taking care, of course, to keep quiet about the part his enemy had played)

Likewise, some variants highlight the special nature of certain terms, such as the use of italics to emphasize an unusual meaning, or capital letters in nouns with multiple meanings. In these cases, the emphasis does affect the meaning of the proposition, unlike the emphasis on terms of local use, where the loss of their connotative content falls on the characteristic value of use in the sociocultural context. Note that italics in A mark the use of *niña* as a form of address, while in C it acquires a noun value, thus contributing to the characterization of the character by adding attributes of childhood, such as inexperience or naivety.

—Comenzó á hacer averiguaciones, y sin fruto, porque la *niña* todo lo negaba. [01: 76]

—Comenzó á hacer averiguaciones, y sin fruto, porque la **niña** todo lo negaba. [03:82]

(—He began to investigate, but to no avail, because the girl denied everything)

Likewise, from a spelling perspective, changing the initial small letter to a capital letter converts a common noun into a proper noun, which, in addition to influencing the overall macro-structure of meaning, specifically in macro-proposition (sub-theme) 1, has an impact on the recreation of environments in the plot, by introducing the perception of a Russian influence on nineteenth-century Cuban society.

un catre de tijera vestido de rusia, con una colgadura de tela muy fina [01: 294]

un catre de tijera vestido de **Rusia**, con una colgadura de tela muy fina [03: 241]

(a Russian-style folding bed, with a very fine fabric hanging)

Although in quantitative terms they represent a small percentage of the variants identified in the sample, their scope is significant in terms of their involvement in the general components of the narrative. It is also noteworthy that, although those

associated with lexicon and semantics predominate in this scope, variants of the other linguistic types defined in the sample are also identified.

Graphic layout and external structure of the text

Variants were also identified with scope over the arrangement of blocks in the text box, such as paragraphs or other separately arranged structures. In general, variants with scope at this level represent only 0.13% of the sample, associated with orthographic and typographic phenomena. From an operational point of view, they are found in change (14) and addition (1) operations.

Those related to full stops predominate, due to their role in the layout of paragraphs.

Dijo que contestaría en persona inmediatamente, y al despedirse Matea, le manifestó el deseo que la asistía de ser pronto su esclava, cuando ganase el título por su parentesco con sus actuales dueños; y quedó Eustaquio preparándose para acudir á la cita é intentando adivinar el motivo del llamamiento. Sin duda la altura que conquistaba su nombre había encendido como nunca la pasión de Paulina [01: 265]

Dijo que contestaría en persona inmediatamente, y al despedirse Matea, le manifestó el deseo que la asistía de ser pronto su esclava, cuando ganase el título por su parentesco con sus actuales dueños; y quedó Eustaquio preparándose para acudir á la cita é intentando adivinar el motivo del llamamiento.

(He said he would answer in person immediately, and when Matea took her leave, she expressed her desire to soon become his slave, once she had earned the title through her kinship with her current owners. Eustaquio remained, preparing to attend the meeting and trying to guess the reason for the summons.)

Sin duda la altura que conquistaba su nombre había encendido como nunca la pasión de Paulina [03: 221]

(Without a doubt, the height that his name conquered had ignited Paulina's passion like never before.)

With regard to typographical variants, in B, the regular replacement of round brackets with italics in verse compositions was identified, while in C, the replacement of quotation marks with a special margin in the introduction of a textual quotation from a newspaper article and the addition of a special margin were identified. In both cases, their scope does not influence the visual delimitation of the blocks involved.

Si de amor ausente muero,
Ya que fortuna decida
Que por tí correspondida
Esta pasión nunca sea,
Permite al menos te vea
Para sustentar la vida. [01: 39]
*Si de amor ausente muero,
ya que fortuna decida
que por ti correspondida
esta pasión nunca sea,
permite al menos te vea
para sustentar la vida.* [01: 55]

(If I die of absent love,
since fortune decides
that this passion will never be
reciprocated by you,
at least allow me to see you
to sustain my life.)

The journalists said in an article that they reproduced from each other:

«Los vecinos del Cerro deben estar altamente satisfechos [...] No nos cansamos de elogiar esos actos repetidos de acierto en todo lo que llega á nuestra noticia, que van formando unos tras otros las más lisonjeras páginas para nuestra historia.» [01: 220]

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Los vecinos del Cerro deben estar altamente satisfechos [...] No nos cansamos de elogiar esos actos repetidos de acierto en todo lo que llega a nuestra noticia, que van formando unos tras otros las más lisonjeras páginas para nuestra historia. [03: 188]

(The residents of Cerro must be highly satisfied [...] We never tire of praising these repeated acts of wisdom in everything that comes to our attention, which, one after another, are forming the most flattering pages of our history.)

Vínole á mano seguidamente otro papel, con apariencia de carta misiva, fechada en Madrid; y leída que fue, resultó decir á la letra:

«Querido Pepe:

»Después de haberte escrito extensamente por este mismo correo, debo encargarte que no olvides decirme con oportunidad cuándo deba remitirte el poder para que se verifique el desposorio, pues no veo la hora de remediar mis faltas. Cuando el hombre envejece, es cuando echa de ver todo el desatino de la mocedad.—TU FELIPE.» [01: 223]

Vínole a mano seguidamente otro papel, con apariencia de carta misiva, fechada en Madrid; y leída que fue, resultó decir a la letra:

«Querido Pepe:

»Después de haberte escrito extensamente por este mismo correo, debo encargarte que no olvides decirme con oportunidad cuándo deba remitirte el poder para que se verifique el desposorio, pues no veo la hora de remediar mis faltas. Cuando el hombre envejece, es cuando echa de ver todo el desatino de la mocedad. »Tu Felipe.» [03: 190]

(Another piece of paper, resembling a letter, dated in Madrid, was then handed to him; and when it was read, it said verbatim:)

(«Dear Pepe:)

(» After having written to you at length in this same post, I must ask you not to forget to tell me in good time when I should send you the power of attorney to verify the marriage, as I cannot wait to remedy my mistakes. It is when a man grows old that he realizes all the folly of his youth. » Your Felipe. »)

CONCLUSIONS

A total of 12,073 variations were identified, of which 99.35% (11,994) are linguistic variants, compared to 0.33% (40) identified as errors and 0.32% (39) as amendments. This figure confirms the high variability of a modern literary work with a printed textual tradition, as well as the high capacity of variations to form linguistic variants in non-specialized readings of the testimonies, regardless of whether they are intentional or unintentional.

In the sample, the scope of variants is limited to the word as the minimum level of influence within the textual structure. Their behavior at this level is simple, with a high frequency of a small group of phenomena and a greater prevalence of orthographic variants. Variants associated with typography are those that, based on the individual behavior of the contextual emphasis of the lexicon, can affect a meaning that exceeds their level of structural scope.

The microstructural scope is quantitatively inferior; however, it shows a greater variety of phenomena with different scopes on elements of the context. Variants of the five linguistic typologies were found in the microstructure, with a prevalence of those associated with orthographic phenomena, which confirms that these are not limited to the word alone. Among these, those associated with the use of punctuation marks and diacritics with demarcative functions predominate, while a few distinctive uses were identified to a lesser extent. Syntactic, morphological, and typographical variants were identified in their individual behavior with a tendency toward a mostly microstructural scope. Meanwhile, those corresponding to lexicon and semantics are of interest at this level in terms of propositional meaning.

In the global macrostructure of meaning and the narrative structure, variants associated with lexicon and semantics predominate. In the latter, the incidence of the five defined typologies was identified. Meanwhile, variants in the graphic layout of text blocks represent a very low number and are of little significance in the testimonies. Orthographic and typographic variants have different scopes in the five structures studied, regardless of the fact that the extent of their units of analysis is, on occasion, minimal.

With regard to the wording and graphic layout of the external structure of the testimonies, the direct tradition of the work and its diasystems maintain a centrifugal movement in formal terms that seeks to adapt each testimony to the potential audience of its context of transmission or responds to the preferences of the editor. However, there is also a centripetal movement that maintains the essence of the denotative meaning in these structures. This means that, despite their high frequency, variants at these levels tend to be centrifugal in form, in order to ensure text-context adequacy, and centripetal in content, seeking to maintain the substance of the

work. On the other hand, in the microstructure, macrostructure, and narrative textual structure, a centrifugal movement was identified in form and semantics, expressed in multiple forms of the local and global structures of the testimonies.

From a quantitative point of view, 98.88% of the variants occur in the lower structures of the text (word and microstructure) or in its external structure, levels that are fundamentally associated with the textual surface, with little implication in the latent content of the work. However, despite their low quantitative representation, accounting for only 1.12% of the units of analysis involved, the variants that reach the upper structures of the text (macrostructure and narrative structure) not only alter the components of the textual surface, that is, the explicit content, but also directly affect the implicit content of the text, associated with the production of meaning, and its main ideological-aesthetic components. The quantitative criterion alone is therefore not valid for establishing parameters for evaluating the textual quality of a copy in relation to its ancestor, nor is it even representative of the compositional integrity of the text in relation to the author's intention.

The ability of linguistic variants to camouflage themselves in the structure of any of the testimonies of tradition, without being perceived except by collation, calls for the need to resort to the first edition or facsimile, in the absence of a critical edition that accounts for textual dynamism, before the scientific approach to the literary text. Otherwise, in textual traditions with multiple testimonies, there is no guarantee of the reliability of the sample.

Instead of a process of diffraction, which would be expected in textual traditions with multiple testimonies, a cumulative process of linguistic variants was observed. The results of the first phase of transmission (A-B) remain constant in the next phase (B-C). Thus, the lower descendant (C) accumulates the linguistic variants resulting from both phases. At the genealogical level, this supports the conjecture that B—and not A—was taken as the model for the editing and reproduction of C. In other words, the prevalence of these extensive deletions confirms the testimony of C in a third genetic line of transmission. This is confirmed in part by the type of change, which could be described as suitable variants, according to traditional textual criticism, due to the impossibility of their originating from unintentional actions. This finding calls into

question the validity of the principle of assuming the last reproduced version of the work as the model for copying, rather than the first edition.

The magnitude of the changes related to extensive chains of omitted linguistic constituents and the presumably intentional nature of these, given their content value in the topics of illegal slave trade and corruption in public office, allow us to conjecture that testimony B was in fact subject to strong censorship at the time, which can be assumed to have been exercised by authorities outside the author's control, given that the author had died two years before its publication. This issue largely determined the subsequent inadequate assessment of its author, who has been described as alien or moderate in relation to the anti-slavery tendencies of his contemporaries.

Recommendation

To propose the publication of a critical edition of the novel *Historia de un bribón dichoso*, so that today's readers, whether specialists or not, can access a reliable copy that allows for a thorough assessment of its merits.

Contribution to knowledge

This study provides linguistic, historical, and cultural data for a critical edition of the text. It contributes to the compilation of evidence on 19th-century Cuban Spanish and its diachrony, as well as to the refinement of historiographical works on Cuban literature. Methodologically, it takes a contextualizing and interdisciplinary approach based on textual criticism, ecdothics, textual linguistics, and literary theory. By studying intra- and intertextual linguistic variability from a pragmatic approach, it shifts the canonical view of the text as a reconstructed or fixed product towards a dynamic vision. It highlights a Cuban literary work that has been incorrectly evaluated in terms of its real value as a result of its inadequate editorial reproduction.

Limitations

Among the main limitations to the development of the research, the first thing that was noted was the absence of theoretical and methodological assumptions that fit the specific interests of the study, so it was necessary to draw on knowledge, techniques, and principles from various disciplines to build a path of our own, both theoretically and methodologically. On the other hand, although digitized testimonies can

be collated automatically, the nature of the study itself and the need to take care not to introduce new variations into the sample required manual collation of a total of 1,140 usable pages, in accordance with the traditional use of symbols for the correction of printed texts. Then, as there was no printed copy of the first edition available for comparison, the instructions for the changes were placed in testimony C. Therefore, during subsequent registration and coding in the database created for this purpose in Microsoft Access, the reverse operation to the symbols expressed had to be considered, introducing added complexity.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest

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