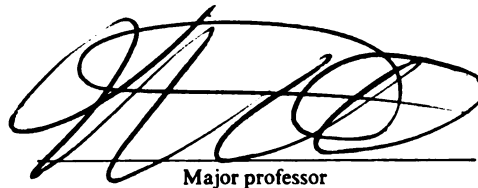This is to certify that the

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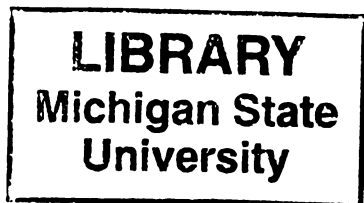
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LEXICAL VARIATION IN DISCOURSE: SOCIO-RACIAL TERMS AND IDENTITY IN AN AFROMEXICAN COMMUNITY

By

Chege John Githiora

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

LEXICAL VARIATION IN DISCOURSE: SOCIO-RACIAL TERMS AND IDENTITY IN AN AFROMEXICAN COMMUNITY

By

Chege John Githiora

This work is an interpretive analysis of discourse focusing on situated lexical meanings in interactional settings and within other genres. The dissertation focuses on a set of socio-racial terms — *indio, blanco, negro* and *moreno* — used in a rural, Afromexican community as tags of social identity. Conversational data show how members of this speech community use socio-racial terms as "footing" devices (Goffman 1981c) to align and re-align themselves with speaker or addressee according to their interactive goals. Using Gumperz's (1982) notion of situated inference, I illustrate a relationship between lexical itemswhich are part of the surface structures of language, their use in discourse and, what they reveal of the social identity of their users. While these local meanings appear to be informed by a social context confined to this particular speech community they can also be linked to the wider domains of mainstream talk. I use naturally occuring data collected during fieldwork in this speech community, and, popular literature materials to highlight the differences between mainstream and local communicative functions of these terms, and to link local concepts of "race" to Mexico's national discourse about race and identity.

I dedicate this piece of work to the Afromexican Diaspora

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Objectives

This work is primarily a study of lexical variation in discourse. It is an interpretive analysis of discourse focusing on situated lexical meanings obtained from interactional settings and within other genres. My aim is to investigate the relationship between lexical items in surface structures of a language, their context and the social identity of their users. For this purpose I chose a set of socio-racial terms used in a rural Mexican community known as San Nicolás Tolentino[1]. I selected this site The selection of these terms was based on their salience, frequency and social value as markers of regional dialect and ethnic identification (Labov 1972a:8). In this dissertation I discuss how these terms are used in the speech of San Nicolas in certain ways that create contexts or "generate presuppositions in terms of which the content of what is said is decoded" (Gumperz 1982a:98). Conversational data will also show how members of this speech community use socio-racial terms as "footing" devices (Goffman 1981c) to align and re-align themselves according to their interactive goals. These contextual meanings are informed by a social context confined to members of this particular speech community but I also correlate those meanings to the wider domains of mainstream talk.

The community or *pueblo* of San Nicolas is located in the Mexican state of Guerrero, in a region known as the *Costa Chica* which lies near the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the southeastern part of the country (see Map 3.1). Like several other populations in the area, most people of San Nicolas are historically of partial or whole

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[1] The full name of the *pueblo* is San Nicolás Tolentino, but I will use the abbreviated form, San Nicolas, or SN, henceforth.

African ancestry, or Afromexicans. The Spanish dialect spoken by Afromexicans is typical of the regional *costeño* dialect which is characterized by a distinctive phonology and vocabulary.

Some of the communities in this part of Mexico emerged as *maroon* settlements or havens for Africans fleeing slavery (Beltrán 1958). This name is derived from Spanish *cimarrón,* which referred to established communities of Africans who had escaped from slavery to live in remote areas. In many cases, the survival of these communities depended on alliances with local native populations, although conflict occurred where native communities felt, rightly, usurped from their territory by Afromexicans. A degree of geographic isolation was a necessary aspect of their survival, and this contributed to a significantly greater retention of some African and native cultural and linguistic characteristics. Maroon communities were found throughout the centuries prior to the abolition of slavery in every part of the Spanish Americas and Caribbean. The most prominent example of this phenomenon in Mexico was the case of Yanga, described in section 2.3 in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Other communities of Afromexicans originated from colonial slave plantations and cattle ranches or *haciendas.*

The *Costa Chica* region and in the inland mountainous *Costa Grande* areas witnessed a lesser Spanish Colonial presence compared to other regions of Mexico such as Veracruz on the Gulf Coast, where other important communities of Afromexicans are found. This relatively limited colonial impact was the result of several factors — the physical inaccessibility of the area, a lack of extensive plantation or mineral industry, its distance from points of mineral and other wealth exported to Spain (such as the port of Veracruz), and a tradition of active resistance to colonialism and slavery through maroon

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activity. In one of the classic studies on Afromexico, the well-known scholar, Dr.

Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran, noted that:

> The nucleus of *negros* that may still be considered as such [*negros*] in Mexico today are
> principally derived from *cimarrones* who reacted against slavery and maintained their
> freedom thanks to a violent and aggressive *ethos* created within their culture making
> them to be feared individuals ...(Beltran 1958:12)[2]

One consequence of the physical isolation and economic history of the *Costa*

Chica region is that the Afromexicans, and other ethnolinguistic groups of the Pacific

region, have retained many elements of local culture and traditions.

> ...these remnants of our Black colonial population today are found in both coasts [of
> Mexico]...those of the Pacific coast have remained in isolation which they are coming out
> of only now as modern means of communication are recently being established (ibid).

The effects of this history are well reflected in the language, attitudes and social relations

of Afromexicans today. The relative isolation of San Nicolas from mainstream Mexico as

a result of its spatial location, the historical background and personal contacts I

established during a period of cultural immersion in the communuity are the chief reasons

why I selected this community as the principal site of investigation.

1.1. Socio-Racial Terms

I define these terms — *negro, indio, blanco,* and *moreno* — as "socio-racial

terms" because they are linguistic expressions of the social construct of "race" used for

self and other identification in San Nicolas. The term "social race" is used because "these

groups or categories are socially, not biologically defined in all American societies,

although the terms by which they are labelled may have originally referred to biological

characteristics ...such terms as "negro", "blanco" etc do not have genetic meaning"

---

[2] All translations of passages or other material quoted in this dissertation are mine except where otherwise
indicated.

(Wagley 1965). I selected these particular terms for study because they are ubiquitous in the ordinary speech of speakers of San Nicolas dialect. Also they are used in structured ways that reveal insights not only into speech in that community but also into the local population's ongoing construction of their identity in the local and even national setting.

The lexicon is an ideal place to enter the study of language and social identity, as it often has a better recorded history than, for example, phonology or syntax, and is constantly being (re) created by its speakers according to changes in that society. Speakers are much more able to isolate, and reflect upon, particular lexical items than upon phenomenon of grammar. For example, informants can readily remember or identify older words or those that have fallen out of use in their dialect. Words used to label social groups constantly surface in contexts of ordinary language practices, manifesting an underlying subconscious knowledge. Words do not simply reflect a taken for granted world; they also help constitute such a world by defining relations among speaker, hearer, referents and social activities.

Lexical choice provides an index to background cultural understandings that provide covert but nevertheless critical knowledge about how to make inferences about what is meant in an utterance. Lexical choice also has a symbolic function that provides an index to the social identities and relationships being constructed during face to face interaction. Socio-racial terms in Mexico and elsewhere are rooted in a specific socio-cultural and historical setting which I will examine in detail in this dissertation, because it is an important component of the *context* of the language practice and interpretive conventions I am studying.

The lexicon is the repository of vast accumulations of local meanings and experience which it then preserves and transmits to the following generations. Words that have unique meanings provide insights into the cognitive values resulting from historical processes which then inform the "communicative grammar" of a speech community. In their analysis of how reality is socially constructed, Berger and Luckman (1966) argue that language "is capable not only of constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from everyday experience, but also of bringing back" those symbols and presenting them as objectively real elements in everyday life. In this manner, symbolism becomes an essential part of the reality of everyday life and apprehension of reality. The chief "symbols" of language reside in the lexicon, "which is constructed to express concepts of the speakers' social reality" (Berger & Luckman, 1966: 35).

For instance, my earliest work in the area revealed that the term *negro* is used as a symbol of local identity and functions as a compendium of local history in San Nicolas; at the same time, *negro* remains a stigmatized term in the non-local, national setting. Such "symbolic" uses of socio-racial terms reveal interesting things about their use in creating contextual meanings. The lexicon is therefore an important point of departure for the language and society interface, a site where the expression of social identity is (re) created, overtly or in subtle, discourse-specific ways.

The question of how groups of people are referred to and how these should be treated in Mexico's national discourse is an ongoing debate which I hope to contribute to in a meaningful way through the study of language practices in a minority community of the country. Traditionally modern Mexico has focused only on the European and Indian "roots" of their nationality. However, the ideology of *mestizaje* defined in these two terms

(European and Native) alone is untenable as more of the African dimension is understood and accepted by Mexicans today. Issues of Mexican national identity remain prominent and unresolved in national debate. In 1989, for example, the Mexican government established a program *Nuestra Tercera Raiz* ("Our Third Root") under the *Direccion General de Culturas Populares* (General Directory of Popular Culture). This move was prompted in part by the intervention of a group of scholars of African presence in Mexico or "Afromexicanistas." The objectives of this program were to investigate and sensitize the nation about the forgotten "third root," that is, the African component of Mexican nationhood, through research, publication and cultural events.

1.2. Background to Socio-Racial Terms in Mexico.

Language practices such as lexical resources (including terms of address) used to identify self or others and have always played a central role in defining Mexican society and in defining social relations among Mexicans. A wide range of socio-racial terms is used in Mexico today, even outside the Afromexican communities, and the race-based lexicon is abundant in the language. Consider the following occurrences obtained from various present-day sources and the context of their utterance:

1   *pinche negro feo* = 'stupid ugly nigger' (insult reported by a San Nicolan)
2   *oye guera!* = 'hey blonde (fem.)! (call for attention to a passerby in Veracruz)
3   *trabajar como negro para vivir como blanco* = 'to work like a black to live like a white' (popular Mexican proverb)
4   *pobre indito!* = 'poor little indian!' (statement by *mestizo* housekeeper in Mexico City)
5   *al negro le gusta el baile* = 'the black likes to dance' (popular Mexican saying)
6   *el blanco tiene sangre fria* = 'the white has cold blood' (statement by San Nicolas narrator)

Throughout the history of Mexico's conquest and subsequent colonization by the Spanish, socio-racial terms have been used to assign hierarchical social status to the people of the country. As intermarriage between Europeans — mainly Spanish *(blancos)* — and Africans *(negros)* and Native Mexicans *(indios)* increased, socio-racial terms correspondingly diversified and gained greater significance as race-based stratification of the society became more pronounced. Officially "races" were abolished with Mexico's independence in 1817, but the preeminence of social "race" in defining social relations continued. Quite naturally, Mexican language reflected, and continues to reflect, these social relations. Individuals, or groups of them, were generally referred to in terms of their social "race," as the following examples from 17th-19th century archives show:

a) Año 1598, Vol. 176. Exp. 6, F.4 "case against Baltazar, *negro* slave for Blasphemy.
b) Año 1608 Vol. 283 Exp. 26 F. 186: "case against *negros* cimarrones, Veracruz
c) Año 1650 Vol. 454 Exp. 14., F.39: "case against Juan de Morgan, *mulata* of Oaxaca, slave of Diego Arratia…for attempting to flee her master"
d) Año 1785 Vol. 1673 No. 38: "*indios* de tlapiches de Ayotla"

At the height of colonial administration in Mexico, a small but powerful elite group occupied the highest rung of the socio-racial hierarchy — the *blancos*, theoretically people of pure European lineage, the architects and primary beneficiaries of the *sistema de castas*. Mestizos (a mix of *blanco* and *indio*), and *castizos* (*mestizo* and *blanco*) enjoyed greater privileges than the 'castas' (those of any degree of African ancestry), although their possibility of social mobility largely depended on individual cultural orientation. For example, the union of a *blanco* and a royal *indio* would result in a *mestizo* whose cultural orientation was European. Such an individual would very likely maximize the privileges offered to that group, such as opportunities for formal education,

skilled training or priesthood. An individual of similar racial origins (i.e. union of a *blanco* male and an *indio* woman) could also decide or be banished to live in an *indio* community or *republica*, and thus be culturally *indio* with all the associations of that group. Such facts underline the claim that "race" is a social construction and not necessarily a biological fact. In figure 1.1 I attempt to capture some of the dynamics involving social race in Mexico during the 16th -19th century. Arrows are directional, indicating parental origins of a given individual or group, and the resulting "race." They also indicate down or upward mobility along the ladder of social "race." For example, a *blanco* and *negro* created a *mulato*, while a *mulato* and *blanco* union resulted in a *morisco*, a social race that was slightly higher up on the social hierarchy than the *mulato* (parent), but far lower than the *blanco* parent of the same union. Those individuals located in the shaded area were the *castas*, people with *negro* lineage. An array of terms fell under this category to accommodate the resultant range of racial mixtures involving an African bloodline; *mulatos, moriscos, zambos, prietos, pardos, jarochos*, and several others which were descriptions of convenience. Such other-identifying terms as "*no-te-entiendo*" ("I-don't-understand-you") fell out of use and will not be part of this study. The term *moreno* does not appear with great frequency in early colonial archives although we know that it probably derives from *moro*, the term was used in Spain to describe non-christians of north African origin in pre-columbian times. All members of *castas* shared the feature [+African]. I illustrate in the diagram below (Figure 1.1.), the dynamics of social race in colonial Mexico.
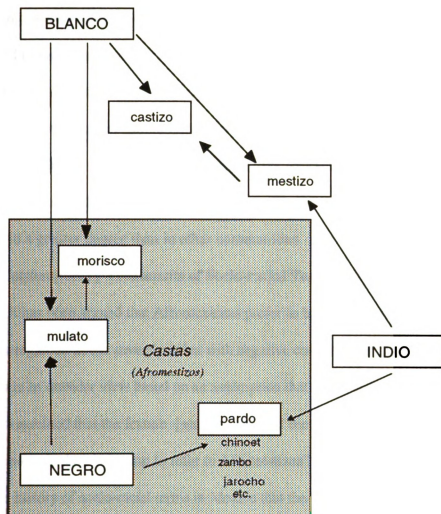
Figure 1.1. Socio-Racial Categories and Hierarchy: Mexico 19th Century

Although *blancos* and *indios* group lie outside the shaded '*castas*' area of the diagram on what may appear to be equal footing, there were great differences in their social status. While *blancos* occupied the highest level in the social hierarchy, many *indios* were excluded from the mainstream society for a number of different reasons. One was the recognition of a relative "autonomy" as long as they remained confined to their *republicas*, which were "autonomous" regions assigned to indigenous Mexicans by the Church-State (Beltran 1992:25). These provided no tangible economic or political benefits for the

indios and were in fact set up to facilitate evangelization. To the extent that they were designed to marginalize native Mexican groups based on a false belief in "separate development," these entities compare well to the "Indian reservations" in the United States or "bantustans" of South Africa during the era of *apartheid*. In the case of Mexico, *republicas* served to insulate some native Mexican communities from mainstream colonial society. This helped those affected to retain their language and culture to a greater degree than in other communities.

1.2.1. Contemporary Treatments of Socio-racial Terms in Mexico

It has been argued that Afromexicans prefer to be referred to as *morenos* "because *negro* is regarded as too strongly laden with negative connotations" (e.g. Beltran 1958:xxi). But this is an outsider view based on an assumption that *negro* and *moreno* are synonymous. It is also assumed that the feature [+negro], which I used above to define *castas*, "translated as *moreno*, a euphemistic term to refer to Afromestizos" (Love 1971:256). It is consistent with the history of socio-racial terms in Mexico that the "euphemism" would have been quite an appropriate lexical innovation reflecting the changing face of Mexican society. Parallel to such a development would be the emergence of the largest socio-racial group, "*mestizos*," whose ideological viewpoint *("mestizaje")* remains the dominant one in Mexico.

However, several observations that argue against this are evident from the language data obtained in the course of this research. First, terms such as *jarocho, prieto* as well as *moreno* and *negro* did not completely fall out of use since they continue to be used even today. It is therefore not quite the case that *moreno* replaced all the *afromestizo* subcategories. Second, *negro* is used as a term of self identity by Afromexicans referring to

themselves as an in-group ("insiders") in homogenous settings, but *moreno* is not used in this way. *Negro* is also used positively as an assertion of the recognition of an affiliation with a distinct social group. Expressions like *"aquí somos puros negros"* (here we are all [very many] Blacks), or *"la raza de nosostros es negra"* (our race is Black) are interspersed in recordings of conversations with Afromexicans in San Nicolás, El Pitahayo, Cuajinicuilapa, and other Afromexican communities. Overall, the most common terms used in San Nicolans on a daily basis are *negro, indio, blanco*, and *moreno*. The existence of a lexical register that codifies the complex racial mixture of Mexico is not restricted to the *Costa Chica*, but it appears to be most prevalent in Afromexican communities, where the salience of use is evident, whether in unmonitored discourse or in structured interviews. The euphemism theory therefore does not account for all these uses of *moreno* in Mexico but it does demonstrate that euphemism is a process restricted to external group relations while the internal relations remain dynamic. The same applies in the case of the term *nigger* and how it is used by Blacks and Whites in the USA, respectively.

In addition, literature on the subject shows the presence of a regional awareness of physical differences. Angela Gilliam (1976) found in the town of Pinotepa Nacional in the *Costa Chica* of Oaxaca a set of terms describing those differences. She reported the following terms (with her own glosses): *igualado* (Indian or black who tries to pass as white, to be equal), *morena limpia* (woman of dark skin with white physiognomy and straight hair), *güera sucia* ("dirty brunette," a white woman who has some black features and loose curly hair), *chanda* (curly hair), *acotejado* (man of dark skin who relates only to women of lighter skin), *chango vestido* ("dressed up monkey" or black man who dresses in expensive clothes), *labio volteado* ("turned over lip" or person with big lips), *medio lavadito* ("half-

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washed"), *mulato fuego* (pink or red lipped mulatto) and *mulato tizón* (charcoal colored mulatto).

That these terms codify social relations in Mexico is fairly evident in discourse situations. Data from interviews and participant observations will make it obvious that situated inferences are critical in understanding interactional meanings of these socio-racial terms. Consider one more example of how these terms define the context of such situations. An Afromexican woman (*"morena"*) who self-identifies as *"negra"* during interviews with me (dark skinned, curly hair and more somatically African) goes to a Mexico City market, and a *mestizo* market woman calls out to her *"güera!"* This is as near an open insult as can be to the Afromexican, but it is "harmless humor" according to the *mestizo*. Another example is the uses of *indio* which, uttered in most parts of Mexico, may evoke pride and respect, or it may be derisive to the referent.

What then are the social or situated meanings of these terms in an Afromexican community such as San Nicolas? How are the terms used in interpersonal communication (e.g. not to be "offensive," to evoke pride or claim affiliation with a distinct racial group, etc.)? What do Afromexicans themselves prefer to be called (in local and non local settings), and what do such designations reflect of their self- and other-constructed identity? These are the questions I address in this dissertation by analyzing language data from a sociolinguistic perspective.

1.3. Discourse Structure and Genres

The structure of discourse and even such details of form as phonological variants have been seen to encode and therefore reveal the history, attitudes, social class, and status of a community (e.g. Labov 1966a; 1972a; Trudgill 1974; LaFerriere 1982;

Gumperz 1982). I will use the results of this study to demonstrate how lexical variation can contribute to an understanding of the structure of a speech community and how such findings could shed light on sub-group characteristics. This study focuses on the variation of socio-racial terms only, but to do this it is necessary to enter into a broader analysis of the San Nicolas dialect of Spanish. I will examine select areas of the use of language in different social contexts and the functional value of linguistic features associated with them, in the spirit of Hymes' (1974) idea of an "ethnography of communication." Of course my attention to the 'linguistic features' within these genres is on socio-racial terms.

Genres serve to contextualize speech in important ways, and larger social processes are invoked during such speech events. Chapter five of this dissertation presents analyses of genres typical of San Nicolas speech. These provide a broader social and historical context that underlies socio-racial terms. They include narratives — arrival myths and legends — and oral art forms: *corridos,* songs (ballads) which are composed locally and sung to tell of memorable events or persons in the community's history, and *versos* of the traditional type which are composed and memorized by individuals who then recite them during special occasions. There is a second type of *versos* known as *controversias,* of which I obtained data that illustrates but was not sufficient for analysis. These are verbal duels similar to *versos* in form and content, but are created spontaneously during a *retada* or challenge session.

I examine the structure of available data, describe the content, and analyze the social function before drawing my conclusions. Of course, the chief purpose is to study the embedding of the targeted socio-racial terms in these genres.

1.4. Contributions

This dissertation will make a contribution to sociolinguistics by providing a principled analysis of socio-racial terms which illustrate the relationship between language and context. By specifically examining the interrelated structural, functional and linguistic properties of the terms *negro, indio, moreno,* and *blanco,* I demonstrate important group characteristics of Afromexicans and the nature of internal social relations as inferenced from interactive speech data. This investigation will contribute to the understanding of how socio-racial terms are evoked in speech to create "participatory frameworks." I think that this may explain, for example, when and why a participant refers to self or others as *negro* or *moreno* and to what extent such factors as setting, power or solidarity (Brown and Gilman 1960) are involved in lexical choice. It will become apparent that these socio-racial terms are linguistic tools used to project fluid social identities among this particular group of Afromexicans.

My dissertation will also directly contribute to the understanding of race or ethnic based terminology and its social significance within the particular socio-cultural context of Mexico. From an Afromexican (insider) perspective, it becomes apparent that serious deficiencies occur when Standard Mexican understandings of race or ethnic-based terms are applied in this community because there is lack of shared interpretive conventions, the result of differences of socio-cultural background. I will also use data from popular literature to illustrate this gap and to show that these understandings are sometimes used in the reproduction of racism in everyday talk at the national level. The analysis will contribute to an understanding of discourse about race and ethnicity within the complex

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sociolinguistic context of Latin America. Beyond that, the findings will highlight elements of racism existing in certain language practices of Mexico today.

Diaspora studies have contributed a great deal to modern social scientific study, and they continue to produce important findings about socio-historical processes, cultural adaptation, and the formation of New World societies. My dissertation will add to this volume of research by contributing a case study of a relatively unknown branch of the African Diaspora in the Americas: Afromexicans.

Finally, this dissertation work provides a data base of a unique regional dialect of Spanish which is changing rapidly as Afromexican communities become less isolated. My transcriptions and audio recordings will be available for use in future studies.

The conditions under which language contact between Native Mexicans, Africans and Europeans took place in this corner of the New World should become visible in the course of the study, whose findings will not only serve to illuminate the linguistic consequences of Afrohispanic encounters in the New world, but also add to the comparative knowledge base for African Diaspora linguistic and cultural adaptation in the Americas. These findings will be useful contributions to the theoretical debate on language contact and loss, ethnic or regional identity, and may shed further light on the process of creolization.

1.4.1. Data Collection

All of the informants in this study identified themselves as *negro* or *moreno* and were quite willing to provide biographical and other personal data. This was important in order to eliminate the possibilities of using outsider categories to identify potential informants. I tried to conduct group interviews, however small the number of participants, in

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order to encourage conversation, different opinions or controversy about social racial terms, and to achieve the maximum possible level of "normal" conversation that would approximate unmonitored discourse. The topic itself appeared to be one which, like Labov's "Danger of Death" (1972), triggered lively, natural interaction. These interviews were conducted in San Nicolas and El Pitahayo, the two sister villages and my principal research sites. However, I also collected data in several other Afromexican communities in Guerrero's Costa Chica, such as in Playa Ventura on the north coast near the port of Acapulco, and in Pueblo Nuevo, south past the border into Oaxaca State[3]. In total I have approximately 700 minutes of usable conversational data and interviews on audiotape and 120 minutes on videot_____small da_____to illustrate some points.

Transcriptions follow standard practice in discourse analysis, and the conventions I have used are those summarized in Shiffrin (1994). For example CAPS indicate emphasis and ([) indicates the start of overlapping talk and (]) indicates where it ends. CH is an abbreviation for Chege, the present researcher, and it is used in all subsequent transcriptions. The full inventory is in the appendix section of this dissertation. None of the informants' real names are used in order to ensure confidentiality as promised to them and in accordance with University regulations regarding human subjects (UCHRS).

All translations of original data are mine, and I take full responsibility for their accuracy or faultiness. I opted for literal translations or even morpheme-by-morpheme translation of Spanish to English in order to retain as much as possible some idiomatic senses expressed in the original Spanish especially since the cultural distance between

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[3] Actual sites where I obtained interviews or field notes in Guerrero/Oaxaca are: Playa Ventura, Marquelia, San Nicolas, El Pitahayo, Maldonado, El Faro, Cuajinicuilapa, Pueblo Nuevo.

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American English and Mexican Spanish is sufficiently small. This approach to translation permits the reader more insights into the nuances of the Spanish dialect of Afromexicans by highlighting structural differences and commonalities that exist between the

_____grammatical focus, etc.).

The reader also needs to note some features of the Spanish language which are pertinent to this analysis. For instance, Spanish normally indicates grammatical person through verbal inflection. In one of the sentences in the conversation below, for example, it is implicit that the speaker is also the referent of 'tengo sesenta y tres anos' ("I have (am) sixty three years (old") since overt personal pronouns are not required in Spanish except for specific communicative reasons such as emphasis. Likewise, the honorific address term (e.g. usted) is implicit in the use of third person by CH in line 4 to refer to RC with whom he is carrying out the conversation:

> RC: *tengo SESENTA Y TRES*
> I have SIXTY AND THREE
> CH: *tiene escolaridad?*
> have (you (usted)) schooling?
> RC: *primaria, primaria nada mas-*
> elementary, elementary only-

The T/V (*tu / usted* in Spanish) distinction discussed in chapter 2 is relevant in such cases as this because pronouns contain important clues about speaker-hearer relationships. As an outsider and interviewer, for example, I used the honorific pronoun (*usted*) nearly all the time I conversed with those senior to me in age. Also, those who used the honorific pronoun to address me in the beginning sometimes gradually switched to the familiar (*tu*), reflecting changes in our relationship.

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1.4.2. Plan of Work

I have laid out the aims and objectives of the dissertation in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. I present the conceptual framework and methodological assumptions that underlie my analysis of socio-racial terms in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 is dedicated to a broad ethnography of Afromexicans: who they are, where they are located and the significance of their status as part of a larger global African Diaspora formation. The information in Chapter 3 is the result of my own research using many primary or secondary sources in Mexico, but some ideas in the discussion therein are obtained from my work with the African Diaspora Research Project (ADRP) at Michigan State University (MSU). Following a general introduction in that section, I examine the role of slavery, conditions of slavery, and the idiosyncrasies of Spanish colonialism especially as these conditions pertain to naming practices and the racial hierarchy that formed the basis of the socio-racial terms used today in Mexico. Chapter 3 also contains a very brief overview of published research on Afromexicans, and it is dominated by one scholar, Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran (1908-1995). It also contains a section with my notes from research in Mexico's National Archives (*Archivos Generales de la Nacion* or AGN). Chapter 3 is therefore not so linguistic in nature, but it is important because it spells out a crucial component of the context of the present study, the "background to presuppositions informed by historical forces" as Gumperz (1982a:13) puts it. I also consider Chapter 3 as an important statement of some basic facts about a New World society that remains relatively unknown among scholars and general public. Chapter 4 contains the main analysis of the data where I examine more deeply the occurrence of the terms and contextual meanings through inferences. I then juxtapose those meanings to those

obtained from popular literature data in Chapter 5 where I also focus on socio-racial terms within other genres, looking at some Afromexican arrival myths and legends. I then look at an oral art form, *versos,* and two examples of another genre — *corridos.* Chapter 6 is a summary and conclusion

In terms of a contribution to the understanding of world cultures, a general idea that is present in my paper is to "say something significant and revealing... about *key words* of a given culture (Wierzbicka 1997:55)." I have chosen discourse analysis, a sub-area of linguistics integrating scholarship from other disciplines such as anthropology and sociology because it promises to be most productive in realizing the stated objectives.

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Chapter 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-RACIAL TERMS

2.0. Methods of Analysis

In this chapter I discuss the conceptual framework that informs my discussion of the symbolic uses of socio-racial terms in San Nicolas, and their context defining properties, but first I will also introduce the methods I have used to analyse the data I collected in field work.

I analyze conversational data in Chapter Four, and in Chapter Five I look at other genres of speech — *versos*, *corridos* and narratives. These four areas of discourse practice represent several distinct and important areas of language use in the speech community. First I do a structural analysis of narratives and *corridos*, using Labov's (1972a) 'narrative structure' model, before looking at the embedding of socio-racial terms in those two genres.

In keeping with the aim of sociolinguistic investigation, I made every effort to obtain and use 'naturally' occurring language samples. This type of sociolinguistic data is best described as "mixed-genre" because samples are not generally confined to one form of speech alone; these interviews represent "hybrid" speech events (Schiffrin 1994), part institutional talk, part conversation. It is generally difficult to find "pure" forms of talk typical of one single genre. For example, in a conversational interview, a *verso* may be inserted while another may be embedded in a narrative. Social structures may also impose on "ordinary" conversation. Since the main objective is to obtain insights about social structures based on evidence from surface features of language, such "mixing" causes no impediments to the analysis.

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In Chapters Four and Five, I first look at the distribution and use of the socio-racial terms in the data, paying particular attention to their patterning with personal pronouns and reference groups in general (e.g. "*nosotros* (we)...*negros*" or "*ellos* (they)...*indios*"). These correlations provide rich insights about conversational content as demonstrated by, among others, Mülhäusler & Harré (1990). I then apply a method used by Preston (1993) to tabulate anaphoric elements[4] which may be overt pronouns, referring expressions, implicit pronominal references of inflected Spanish verbs, or other elliptical references. I look at each socio-racial term individually, using the same method. For clarity and convenience, I analyze and tabulate the results of genres separately in Chapter Five.

Chapter 4 carries the weight of my intersubjective analysis of conversations. I use the notion of 'footing' or "the alignments we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman 1981:128). The psychological alignments represent social personae adopted by speakers during the particular conversational interaction. For example, a speaker may, at different points of the same conversation, express his or her position as a "moreno" or a "negro" or a "mexican." Such shifts in psychological stance are best revealed by lexical choices made by speaker/addressee (e.g. personal pronouns) or, in this case, socio-racial terms.

Gumperz's notions of situated inference in interpersonal communication is valuable to my method in that it contributes to an understanding of what is contained by a "context" which provides presuppositions necessary in an effective conversational exchange. A basic assumption in both Goffman's and Gumperz's approaches to features of language is that performance in not based on individual psychology (including

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[4] Used in a non-technical sense to designate that linguistic element whose application within the conversation can be co-referenced to the term under examination.

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temporary emotions) but rather on social rules deriving from the interpersonal contexts that provide presuppositions for decoding meaning, at both conscious and unconscious levels.

One discovery I make in subsequent analysis is that at least one of the socio-racial terms — *negro* — fits this type of analytical framework very well. It not only triggers presuppositions by its use in speech, but also evokes (or even creates) contexts. To capture the dynamic, interactional meanings of this term, I apply my own notion of *foregrounding* (Figure 4.1. and 4.2.) which best captures the senses that emerge from the study of those contextual meanings and which are ultimately linked to the interactional goals of the conversations. Those figures are simply diagrammatic representations of those presuppositions gleaned from my analysis of San Nicolan discourse — a list of attributes which speakers/hearers associate with the term and which they then insert in the conversation as cues. It needs mention that this a very different notion from the type of 'foregrounding' described by Hopper (1979) which has to do with information content of clauses in narratives. 'Foregrounded' clauses, according to Hopper, are exemplified by one which, among a number of other properties, carries the narrative forward, and contains the new information; backgrounded clauses are unsequenced (temporally) and are descriptive of the setting of the events of the narrative.

2.1. Language and Context

Studies such as Duranti (1995) have shown that the use of a special set of words of a dialect cannot simply be predicted on the basis of addressee or referent. They must also be related to the kind of activity and the kinds of social relationships and social personae that the lexical items are used to activate. In other words, linguistic choices are

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shown to be both passively context defined and actively context defining while the status and rank distinctions they presuppose are constituted in the constant struggle to reassert, manipulate or challenge the existing social order.

Duranti shows that these characteristics make it possible to understand the Samoan honorific terms he studied. Respectful words recognize the addressee's high status and hence suggest virtual immunity from imposition. By providing "deference" to the addressee (or to a third party), they can be employed to diffuse potentially face threatening acts such as requests and denials.

The notion of "respect" (*fa'aaloalo*), for Samoans, is not only linked to "politeness" but also to "tradition" and hence to culturally specific obligations such as the dignified controlled behavior expected from high-status individuals. In this view, respectful words are activated not only to defer to another's authority but also to coerce, or to oblige the recipient(s) or target(s) of the speech act to behave according to the expectations dictated, through tradition, to the social persona indexed by the honorific term. Duranti proposed an alternative parallel function of these honorifics — a function that is shown to be frequent in the recorded interactions and consistent with Samoan beliefs. The evoking of a particular context through lexical choice can be seen not necessarily as a politeness strategy, but as an *instrument of power* which sets the tone for what can be said, done, and understood by the participants. I will now revisit an observation made in section 1.2.1 about how the context evoked by the use of the socio-racial term "*güera*" in addressing a "*morena*" created a ground where lexical choice was the instrument for expressing a power dynamic among the participants of the speech event.

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Conversation 2A

1   CH: *bueno, que te digan "negro,"que, que cosas,*
           well, that they call you "negro"what, what things

2   Tere: *bueno, que por ejemplo que te diga NEGRO con*
           well, that for example they call you NEGRO with

3   *desprecio o NEGRO por el COLOR o NEGRO porque*
           distaste or NEGRO because of COLOR or NEGRO because

4   *muy feo, no se..porque decia una vieja que decia*
           very ugly, I do not know, because used to say an old woman

5   *"pues aqui somos negros pero bonitos!"*
           "well here we are *negros* but beautiful!"

6   ALL: *heh heh heh!*

7   SA: **pero, este tambien, porque uno, uno yo voy**
           But ,well also, because one, one, I went

8   *al mercado y que me dicen "guera!" me enoja TAnto*
           to market and they call me *"guera!"* I get SO mad

9   *porque se, que este, es por desprecio, es por*
           because its, that well, its looking down, its

10   *gracia, porque mejor que me digan negra..*
           to make fun, because better they call me negra..

The speech event (a type which we understand is recurrent) took place in a public setting (market) and involved non-solidary participants (strangers) of different social identities defined in terms of their 'racial' appearance. The term *güera* was offensive to the addressee because the speaker did not have the correct participatory ('insider') status to allow him or her to produce a solidary ('friendly') reaction from an Afromexican (*negro, moreno*). This interaction causes the addressee to feel "angry" (line 8,2A), according to the adressee, although the speaker may have intended to be 'friendly.' Of course, it is also possible, and quite likely, that such speakers achieve the intended communicative goal. The example shows how reflexive behavior is often based on special uses of language, a fact that needs to be accounted for at the linguistic level of performance.

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The relationship between language and context is captured in Figure 2.1 which

illustrates how socio-racial terms (lexicon) serve as mediators between language and

context. Each one of these two,in turn, is defined by features which ultimately determine

the success of such mediation.. In Chapter 4 I will show how an awareness of these

features is necessary for effective communication between speakers, especially in

situations where internal differentiation needs to be observed. Participatory status and the

setting gain much significance as framework for this type of interpretation of socio-racial

terms which speakers use to address or define context.

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│     LANGUAGE                          CONTEXT               │
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│        LEXICON    (e.g. Socio-racial Terms)                 │
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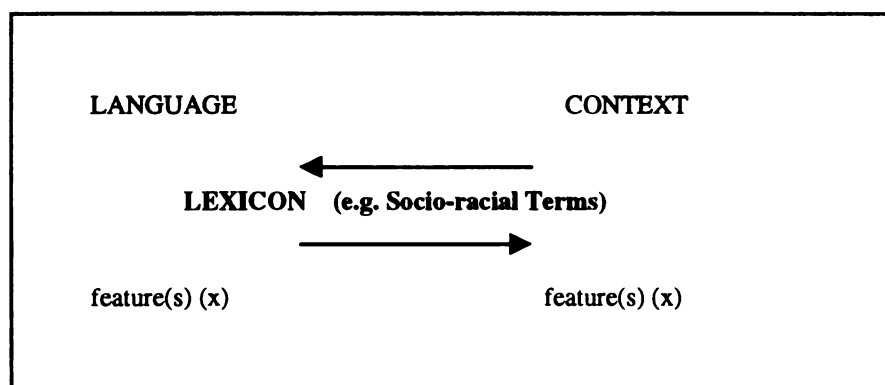
(Adapted from Duranti 1995)

Figure 2.1 Language and Context: A Reflexive Relationship

In general, my data shows that the use of socio-racial terms is a very important

feature of community discourse in San Nicolas. These uses are causally defined by

certain (language independent) properties of the context such as speaker/ referent's

insider/outsider status, power/ solidarity relations, or as an internal differentiation device.

These components of the context then form the basis for the deployment of socio-racial

terms inside that community. In the example above, it can be seem how such factors are

consciously or even unconsciously understood by Afromexican speakers. Notice how the

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speaker (Tere, lines 2-5) lists those properties of the context which determine her interpretation of *"negro,"* a term that she knows refers to her social group.

So, who, where, when and why is one called a *negro* , a *moreno* or an *indio*? When does *negro,* for example evoke pride in one context and offense in another? What do the social meanings attached to these terms tell us about Afromexican identity and its relation to the larger, mainstream society? Are sayings such as the one in Line 5 forms of symbolic reflexivity? My goal is to address the way in which social order and social organization are constituted and how these are expressed in language. This entails the understanding of how Afromexicans negotiate or achieve a common context and how the boundaries of use and the indexing of these terms with regard to speakers and referents are determined. Failure to achieve common context results in miscommunication, or the expression of unintended meanings.

2.2. Discourse

Schiffrin (1987) defined discourse analysis as "the study of the language of utterances in relation to its function in social interaction (p. 352)." The structure of discourse emerges in terms of the local sequential relations of utterances in a "chain of self/other reciprocity."

Discourse is viewed as "structure" having larger units within the global level, and it is assumed that surface linguistic forms ("discourse markers") operate in concert with the speech event in which they are embedded. Schiffrin studies their role in bracketing units of discourse, thereby guiding interpretations of utterances. For example, the marker "oh" marks information state transitions where a hearer displays recognition of familiar information or receipt of new information; it may also clarify or help manage information state transitions (p.97). In this research, I am interested in looking at the relationship

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between surface forms of language (socio-racial terms) and their function as identity

markers as revealed by their specific context in discourse.

There are several different ways of doing analysis of discourse, and Fasold (1990)

distinguished two broad areas: the study of text and the study of interactive events in

discourse. The former deals with recorded language (spoken or written) while the latter

looks at the problems and successes that people have in using language in their

interactions. Text linguistics (Van Dijk 1980) is concerned with coherence and cohesion,

those features that contribute to the sense of unity in a text. Interactive studies (e.g.

Gumperz 1982) look at how people manage their discourse behavior with respect to their

cultural backgrounds and their interactive goals at the time of their talk (e.g. turn-taking,

error corrections and discourse markers such as "well," "but," "heh-heh," etc.). The

analysis in this dissertation is mostly concerned with discourse meanings of socio-racial

terms and the interactional goals of their use. Of course, the cultural backdrop provides a

framework for that interpretation.   Consider the following discoursal sample:

CH: *pero sus padres tambien eran gente negra?*
        but your parents also were black people?
SG: *SI..negros..morenos...chinos..si*
        YES..blacks..*morenos...chinos*...yes

It is clear in this sample, that CH (present researcher) achieved limited success in getting

an answer to the (apparently straightforward) question "were your parents *negro?*"

First, the question was based on CH's assumptions about (SG's) Black identity,

i.e. that SG is Black (as self-defined) and therefore her parents must be *negro*. Her

response, however, contains three different words which describe people of African

origins in Mexico. So why does SG use all three at the same time? Is the order of their

utterance important? If to an outsider like CH they are unclear, how does an insider interpret their meaning and occurrence?

My analysis is secondarily concerned with a more general cultural symbolism in that I want to place interactional understandings of social-racial terms at the local community level on the larger plane of national discourse. For example, what aspects of Mexican culture help account for the dichotomous, paradoxical or other uses of the terms? Are there communicative differences arising from distinct understandings of their significance at the national level, and how do they fit in with ideas of "race" and "nation" in Mexico?

2.3. Social Identity

Social identity is a complex phenomenon intertwining race, class and ethnicity in a fabric of history. Identity formation is an ongoing process with a dynamic of its own. It entails an "distinctiveness," and is therefore necessarily defined in relation to "others" (Hamilton 1995). A form of multi-layered identity can result from the convergence of several identities within the profile of an individual or group of individuals. For example, Afromexicans identify themselves or are identified with a social "race", (*negros, morenos*); they are also "Mexicans," proud members of a nation state. At another level, the layers of distinct but closely related identities can also be viewed as being arranged along a continuum. Spatially, the continuum of "racial" identity may change. For example through "whitening" ("*blanqueamiento*") in the context of *mestizaje* (racial mixing in the Latin American context), *negros* "become less" in number as Afromexicans "mix up" with other races. The process is dynamic, since it is also possible to "darken" the generations by doing the opposite of "whitening" i.e. marrying darker-skinned partners. Social phenomena

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associated with social identities — such as *"limpiar la raza"* ("cleaning of the race") — become articulated in symbolic uses of language based on social meanings, i.e. socio-racial terms. This gives coherence to discourse that may otherwise be unintelligible or subject to misinterpretation. In this case, it can also provide important clues about how a group (Afromexicans) identify themselves in relation to others.

An example of a discourse approach to the study of social identity can be found in the work of Gumperz, e.g., *Discourse Strategies* (1982a) and in an accompanying volume, edited by him, *Language and Social Identity*, (1982b), in which diverse case studies supporting this view are presented. Those case studies lay emphasis on understandings of the symbolic value of language, a view parallel to that in the work of Berger & Luckman (1966) discussed earlier (i.e. the linguistic basis of the "social construction of reality"). Briefly recapitulated, face-to-face interaction is deemed to be the source of meaning, a view that renders meaning negotiable. This interpretation of language and communication echoes the idea of *meaning as intent* (Austin 1962). Austin obtained an important insight about language, which was that "to say is to act." Words or utterances ("speech acts") produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts or actions of the audience or the speaker, or of other persons. Therefore, by making certain "performative" utterances, a speaker realizes that same action whose force is literally indicated by a performative verb (e.g. "promise"). Austin used three terms to interpret the three levels involved: *locution, illocution* and *perlocution*. My goals in this research too are concerned with intended meanings as defined by context, setting and participants, but my analytical framework is discourse rather than sentence based and I highlight the relationship between form (or

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locution) and interpretation (or perlocution) as guided or determined by socio-cultural factors.

Gumperz's (1982b) collection of case studies reflects on social conflict arising from communicative disharmony in Western bureaucratic settings (e.g., job applications, interviews for employment, etc.) which are also public speech events. Despite ethnographic differences from the speech community I am studying, some of his findings are relevant to the Afromexican situation. For example, they demonstrate that unforeseen difficulties tend to arise when individuals of different cultural backgrounds communicate.

My general hypothesis is that the "cultural background" of mainstream Mexican society differs significantly from that of San Nicolans (the in-group) to account for important differences with regard to the evaluation of socio-racial terms, thus bringing about communicative difficulties, as earlier discussed in this and the previous chapter. Gumperz notes that where communicative conventions and symbols of social identity differ, the social reality itself becomes subject to question:

> our main goal is to show how ideology enters into face-to-face speaking practices to create an interactional space in which the subconscious and automatic sociolinguistic processes of interpretation and inference can generate a variety of outcomes and make interpretations subject to question...hence a detailed discussion of institutional and socioecological forces that affect communication (1982b:3).

The key point of Gumperz's argument is that social identity is in large part established and maintained through language. It is because of the historical character of the process through which groups are formed and the symbols of identity created that particular characteristics become attached to the ways of speaking. This approach lays emphasis on the historical roots of language divergence to account for the specific divergences in the use of language today. For example, *moreno* is used in mainstream

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society to describe Afromexicans of San Nicolas who do not ordinarily refer to themselves as such, as the following sample shows:

SG: *como yo ahora me dicen morena por allá*
        like me too, they call me "morena" out there
        pero ya aquí nosotros no decimos "morena"
        but here we we don't say "morena"
        porque ya somos, tenemos, tenemos el mismo color
        because we all are, we have the same color

Other terms such as *mulato* and *cuculuste* continue to be used in this community but not in mainstream Mexican Spanish. The approach I use to understand the variation of these terms in discourse recognizes the explanatory relationship between language, ideology and speaking practices.

2.4. Language and Function

The study of discourse transcends sentence-grammar, i.e. the knowledge of the syntactic rules and phonology of a language. My approach emphasizes the "communicative competence" aspect of language or the cultural knowledge that includes social and psychological principles that govern its use (Hymes 1974). Important variations (dialects and styles) have functional uses that entail semantic structures such as the lexical variations I am studying. Without such "communicative competence," it is difficult to use such variable elements properly to realize communicative functions. This *communicative competence* is interpreted in interactional terms as 'the knowledge of linguistic and related communicative conventions that speakers must have to create and sustain conversational cooperation' (Gumperz (1982a: 209). In order to have full competence in a given language, a speaker must possess not only knowledge of the grammatical structure of that language, i.e. the rules of sentence formation, but also the

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ability to use such sentences in appropriate manners and social contexts. Thus, communicative competence allows for the appropriate use of language in social contexts, and even for the interpretation of meaning. In writing (parts of) a grammar of discourse there is an implicit acknowledgement that language is not unitary; the language of a given speech community must be described not only in terms of those rules that govern proper sentence formation, but also those that allow their correct application in social contexts.

Such an approach to functional uses of language is also espoused by Hymes (1974) who used anthropological field methods and analyses to work out a framework of functional language study widely known as the *ethnography of communication*. He focused on the description of *speech events* or "sequences of acts bounded in real time and space, and characterized by culturally specific values and norms that constrain both the form and content of what is being said" (p.110) in a particular speech community with the aim of obtaining a systematic understanding of their organization. Speech events such as 'greetings," "leave-taking," "story sessions," or, "throwing a *verso*," singing a *corrido*, etc. may provide important insights into the functional uses of socio-racial terms in this community.

According to Hymes, the goal of the ethnographic or descriptive approaches to language is "to fill the gap between what is usually put into ethnography and what is put into grammar." I am interested in looking at how socio-racial terms are employed in different speech events which include 'forms of talk' such myths, epics, tales, and personal narratives. Although I am not doing a complete ethnography of the speech of San Nicolas, I shall look at several 'forms of talk' to draw useful data regarding the functional uses of this set of vocabulary in San Nicolas. For example, do contextual

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meanings differ when *negro, indio* or *moreno* is used within a *verso* or *corrido* or in a narrative? Do these terms evoke similar contexts when uttered in different settings?

2.4.1. Power and Solidarity

The influence of social factors on language use is perhaps most obvious in the selection of address forms. In many languages such as Spanish, and in English in an earlier time in history, there are two or more pronouns for 'you.' One of these is used for people one is close to or who have a lower social position (e.g. *tu* in Spanish). The other is used for people one is less acquainted with or who are socially superior (e.g. *usted*). The use of these terms in several languages was analyzed in a classic article by Roger Brown and Albert Gilman (1960). They found that the use of the familiar pronoun, which they dubbed 'T,' and the deferential pronoun ,'V,' was governed by two forces, which they called `power' and 'solidarity.' 'Power' derives from higher or lower status, and 'solidarity' comes from intimacy and 'shared fate.' According to Brown & Gilman, European dual second person pronoun systems originally expressed power primarily and solidarity only secondarily. Now solidarity dominates power as the semantic that is most important in selecting T or V forms.

According to the authors, the bases of power are several; older people are assumed to have power over younger people, parents over children, employers over employees, nobles over peasants, military officers over enlisted men. The power semantic appears to have been the original one since the Latin plural was used to address the Roman emperor during the 4th century, the reason being that at the time there were two emperors, one in Rome one in Constantinople, and addressing either was considered addressing both. Or the emperor might have been considered plural in the sense that he represented all the people he governed.

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Royal people often use 'we' in self-reference, and the plural of 'you' might have been the extension of that or perhaps the causation went in the reverse direction. In any case, the use of the plural form (i.e. *usted*) seems to have become generalized and came to be used to address all 'powerful' people. The power semantic would be sufficient only if a society were so finely stratified that each individual has an asymmetrical relationship with every other individual; in other words, there were no power equals. Since this was never the case in most societies, a residual rule for power equals was necessary. This rule called for the reciprocal use of the same pronoun between power equals. That is, you use the same pronoun to a power equal that they use to you. Since the V form entered European society from the top, it was associated with the noble classes, and nobles originally addressed each other with mutual V. Among the common people power equals used T with each other. Nevertheless, not all differences are connected to power and hence a second semantic, the solidarity semantic, developed; in other words, the need developed to distinguish a degree of common ground between people which went beyond simply having equal power. Solidarity implied a sharing between people, a degree of closeness and intimacy. This relationship was inherently reciprocal; if you were close to someone else, in the most natural state of affairs that person was close to you, and wherever the solidarity semantic applies, then the same pronoun is used by both people, thus V could be used between non solidary equals, among common people as well as nobles. If power equals were solidary, they would exchange mutual T, even if they were members of higher classes.

Moreno is often used as an address form in Mexico, and even *negro* in a few cases. Participant observation and data from Afromexicans indicates that asymmetrical use bearing the characteristics of the T/V solidarity and power dynamic can explain how these two are

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used as terms of address. *Morenos* are located at the bottom of the socio-racial hierarchy I have described, therefore a speaker of higher social status ('power') position (e.g. *'blanco'*) can use *moreno* to addresss an individual of lower socio-racial status (i.e. dark skinned). In addition, the setting within which such exchanges are embedded is relevant because *moreno* or *negro* are used as address terms always in 'mainstream' settings, that is, outside San Nicolas or another Afromexican community. For example I was personally addressed as *moreno* numberless occasions in Mexico City and, in all the instances cited by Afromexican informants the setting was the same: in mainstream settings outside of their home environment. In such settings Mexican *mestizos* (*'blancos'*) can and frequently do address darker Mexican as "*moreno.*" The inverse situation where *'blanco'* is used as a term of address is undocumented although the term 'güera' is often used in this way. Such uses are salient among San Nicolans who overtly describe these communicative rules. It is abundantly clear that *moreno* is not employed as a term of address in solidary relationships and settings (e.g. between San Nicolans in the local setting):

Conversation 2B

1	CH:	aha. ah ha
2	SG:	*ya a él le dicen "oye moreno!" una gente que sea más blanca verdad?*
		to him they say "hey moreno!" some people more white, right?
3	CH:	ah ha
4	SG:	*como yo ahora me dicen morena por alla pero ya aquí nosotros no*
		like me they call me "morena" out there but here we no
5		*decimos "morena" porque ya somos, tenemos tenemos el mismo color*
		we don't say "morena" because we all are, we are of the same color
6	CH:	a ha
7	SG:	*cómo le voy a decir a él moreno si estamos igual, verdad?*
		how can I call him *moreno* if we are the same, right?

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SG made it clear during this interview that "here we are all *same, so* we don't call each other

moreno." This type of solidarity sentiments described by Brown &Gilman clearly has an

impact on language use (performance) since it becomes a factor (a "weight") in the selection

of the socio-racial term during conversation. Interactional goals also play an influence. At

first glance, lexical choice in the speech of San Nicolans is determined by the asymmetrical

relationships that exist between Mexicans of different social "races."

2.4..2. Address terms

In English as well as other languages, the choice between first name (FN), e.g.

"John," and title and last name (TLN), e.g. Mr/Mrs/Dr. Gonzalez, is in many ways

parallel to the T/V dichotomy. Susan Ervin-Tripp (1972) conducted a classic study of

American English address terms and created a computer flow chart showing that, for the

most part, only three patterns are used: reciprocal FN, reciprocal TLN, and non reciprocal

FN/TLN. The two reciprocal patterns are governed by intimacy (similar to solidarity) and

the non reciprocal pattern is governed by age and occupation status (related to power). For

example, familiarity between members of the same family (solidarity) apparently allows for

use of *negro* or *negra* (fem) as an address term but not otherwise.

Conversation 2C

1	CH:	*por ejemplo, tu amiga, OLga, no se le llaman*
		for example, your friend OLga do they not call her *"guerita?"*
2	TS:	*GüERA, la güerita*
3	CH:	*a ha. y no hay otras palabras que usan? negrita?*
		and are there not other words that you (pl) use *negrita?*
4	TS:	*bueno. ami me dicen, me dicen NEGRA*
		well. To me they call me, call me NEGRA
5	SA:	*NEGRA. a ha, pero no todos*
		NEGRA. a ha, but not all
6	TS:	*pero no todos..entre mis amigas me dicen de mi nombre, por mi nombre*

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		but not all..among my friends they call me name, by my name.
7		*Los que me dicen negra son hermanos de mi MAMA*
		those who call me negra are the brothers of my MAMA
8		*asi en la casa, pero mis amigas no*
		like in the home, but my friends no
9	CH:	*gente extrana no?*
		people strange, no?
10	TS:	*pues SI..aveces SI, verdad ma-*
		well..YES sometimes YES, right ma-
11	SA:	*si si..fuimos ( )una vez, y te digo un hombre que me*
		yes yes, we went ( ) once, and I tell you one man that
12		*dice NEGRA TAN FEA que me dice, ah nos agarraron a prevenir,*
		called NEGRA SO UGLY that he told me, ah we were stopped
		[from fighting]
13		*pero yo le digo a TS pobre yo le iba a decir que se iba a morir!*
		but me I tell TS poor me I was going to tell him he was gonna die!

Not everyone can call TS *negra*; only her uncles do within the home setting. Her friends do not address her as such, even though they do use a socio-racial term to address another friend as *güera* or *güerita*.

Notice how CH's question in Line 9 above (whether strangers can address one as *negra*) provoked an instant memory of an unpleasant incident involving TS and her mother (SA). It is clear that in certain situations (outside the community, in the regional town) *negra* can be used in certain ways to insult.). This reaction reminds us of Labov's (1972) "danger of death" type question in that it brought about animated narration of an incident that is central to the topic of discussion.

Lambert and Tucker (1976) made it clear that the application of the power-solidarity semantics can vary substantially not only from language to language but also from one community where the language is spoken to another, and from one social grouping to another in the same community. Furthermore, it is clear that there are even differences from one individual speaker to another: "a shared language, does not

necessarily mean a shared set of sociolinguistic rules (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1972:229)." Not

only is this true across language but even within the same language and community,

depending on the speaker's social class, age, sex and other factors, in this case, socio-

racial status. Also, different rules will be established, say, among military people, or in

cases where assumptions about a respondent's social class are undermined by that

respondent's individual identity. For example, an upwardly mobile Afromexican, a

moreno who aspires to be in the *blanco* or *mestizo* class, may respond to or even employ

local discourse rules differently.

2.5. Ethnicity

Ethnicity is often treated by sociolinguists simply as one more of the factors that

influence linguistic behavior or variation, alongside other factors such as age and sex.

But ethnicity is a complex parameter of social identity, one that is not so easily defined. It

is not necessarily a distinguishable physical trait, or time bound as for instance age is.

Genetic criteria which may include physical traits have a limited application in defining

ethnicity, or race for that matter, because both are social constructions. For example, a

"Black" person in North America may not be viewed as such in Africa and what is

acceptable as "White" in Africa may not "pass" in North America. Arabs and Jews may

share many similar physical traits, yet they regard one another as of different ethnicity.

There are many facets to the term "ethnic," and it becomes complicated where society

has been transformed radically from its native base as in Latin America where

Afromexicans are located spatially. African or South Asian ethnic groups may be more

readily identified based on such distinctive aspects as language (e.g. "Tamil"), religion

(e.g. Hindu, Muslim) or cultural practices (e.g "castes," "circumcision"). The term "tribe"

is often used when talking of African "ethnic groups," yet it is doubtful whether "tribe" and "ethnic" are synonymous as such uses imply. Hamilton (1995) noted that "in American sociology in particular, ethnicity [in the US] has tended to be used exclusively to refer to European peoples of a different cultural background than the original settlers, but not to persons racially differentiated" (p. 6). It is therefore necessary to approach ethnicity with caution by making distinctions about *how* and *who* defines it, or even *where* the group referred to is located. While ethnicity becomes more complex in the New World context, it is no less intricate in the Old World. In Africa or India for example, ethnic identification and politics continue to be closely intertwined. Grey areas also are to be found in many parts of Africa. For instance, what is the ethnicity of children of inter-ethnic marriages, or that of urban children who have grown up away from the ethnic enclaves of their parents? Do they simply 'select' one of the parents' ethnicity or does a new, third identity emerge from the situation? Tutsis and Hutus of Rwanda and Burundi are of 'different tribes,' but how is Tutsi "ethnic identity" defined separately from that of Hutus with whom they intermarry frequently and who are not, physically easily distinguishable, contrary to popular Western media presentations?

Conversely, Somali ethnicity is defined in terms of language alone, such that they are normally referred to as 'one ethnic group' whose internal differences are termed as "clan differences." There are however, significant dialect variations in their language, and differences in social organization and even oral traditions. The answers to these questions may be approximated by conceiving "race" and "ethnicity" as social constructions which exist at the intersection of many variables, but often, are political acts.

Economic, political, emotive or socio-psychological factors play a role in defining

ethnicity; it is 'fluid' as noted by Hansel (1996) in a study of Bethel, a bicultural Alaskan

community, defined in terms of "native" and "non-native." Ethnicity in Bethel is "[...]

people can claim legitimacy in either group...at issue is not "is she white?" but "how

white is she?" (ibid, p.14). This observation is very similar to the discourse of

"whitening" or "cleaning the race" which is so prominent in San Nicolas. As a parameter

of social identity, ethnicity cannot resist the fact that it is negotiated in ongoing

interactions, and in fact this may explain why understandings of socio-racial categories in

San Nicolas are also fluid. This fact is quite evident in interviews with Afromexicans. For

example, my questions about the use of socio-racial terms were treated with caution. My

informants did not seem sure of my "outsider" understandings of those terms, so

hedging, requests for clarification, backchannelling and other discourse strategies appeared

frequently in the data to signal such confusion. The following example is illustrative:

CH: *aquí tambien hay de raza india?*
are there people of the Indian race here also?
MG: *raza india, cómo?*
indian race, how [do you mean]?
CH: *de los que, bueno. de los que hablan otro idioma por ejemplo.*
Of those, well, those who speak another language for example

In another sample here repeated from earlier in this chapter, a direct question yielded a

'vague' response which indicated incomplete understanding of my intentions with regard

to socio-racial identification of the informant::

CH: y.. *sus padres también eran gente negra?*
and..were your parents also black people?
SG: SI..*negros..morenos...chinos..sí*
YES...negros...morenos..."curly-haired"..yes

Some sociolinguistic approaches start with *a priori* assumptions regarding the subjects' ethnicity. For example in a study by LaFerriere (1982) of phonological variation among speakers of Jewish and Italian background, it was taken for granted that there do exist phonological differences among these speakers whose identity was defined within a context of urban networks of a particular social class. Hansel (1996), noted that "Euroamerican notions of ethnicity generally accept ethnicity as biologically determined at birth, thus equating ancestry with culture" (p.89).

Gumperz (1982) discussed two types of *ethnicity*, using distinctions that I find relevant. A first view of ethnicity is one that has been used to refer to "relationships based on the linkage of similar people, whose social identity was formed by influences from outside the society in which they now live" (1982b, p.7). However, socio-political and economic changes in the twentieth century have modified these conditions. Ethnicity has increasingly come to indicate relationships based on "differences distinguishing one, *new, indigenous* group from another." These he refers to as the *old* and the *new* ethnicity, respectively. Nowhere are such perceptions of ethnicity more evident than in migrant societies of the New World, where great changes in society have taken place during this century. In this sense, I find that these definitions correspond to "tribe" and "ethnic group" since the former is more closely identified with Africa or Native America, while the latter is equated to those immigrant communities that maintain a level of cohesion in the US; the Old and New World respectively.

The *old* ethnicity was supported both regionally and interpersonally through reinforced social networks of neighborhood, occupation and political ties, parameters that are clearly present in San Nicolas today: a rural community tightly bound by occupational

networks of peasant agriculturists and fishermen, strong family ties through intermarriage, and equally strong political ties (clientelism) with a national, state, municipal authority imposed from the metropolis.

The *new* ethnicity is defined more as a need for political and social support in the pursuit of common interests than as a regional similarity or sharedness of occupational ties. Indeed, it is possible to argue a case for a new type of ethnicity among Afromexicans, nascent within the context of social networks among immigrant workers in Mexico City or in the USA. Rural-urban and cross border migration is now an established phenomenon among Afromexicans of San Nicolas. Emigrants in Mexico City are linked not only by a common origin, but also by common occupations in the service industry as waiters, attendants, or skilled laborers (shoemakers, carpenters and welders), or in the case of young females, in the domestic labor and entertainment industry. In California or Oregon, most join the farming industry as laborers. Although these networks exist outside their regional base, they are an important extension of local ones. It should be quite interesting to explore further how this new type of ethnicity is created and maintained among emigrant Afromexicans, and how it is negotiated within the context of mainstream or even foreign society in the case of immigrants to the USA. This aspect, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

2.6. Summary

In this chapter I briefly looked at literature that provides a background to my own analysis without any pretense at having exhaustively treated each area. The main point of this review was to lay the grounds for a conceptual paradigm that allows me to make certain claims about language use in society. Based on an interpretation of the

'ethnography of speech,' I defined socio-racial terms as "proper native lexical categories" whose understanding as a distinctive language practice can be reached through a systematic study of discourse. I adopt some concepts and even terms from authors cited in this chapter to guide my interpretation of, for example, 'discourse markers,' 'ways of speaking' and 'cultural assumptions.' Fundamentally I want to draw attention to the fact that *meaning* (of socio-racial terms) and *intention* (of speaker) are inseparable in the same way that *language* cannot be removed from its (social) *context*. I hope to show that this indeed is the case with social-racial terms in San Nicolas. I adopt a pronoun-based approach to socio-racial terms — in terms of 'footing,' — because like pronouns, socio-racial terms signal shifting alliances of speaker in terms of his or her self-identification. In the next chapters, I concentrate on analyzing samples of discourse to create space for an understanding of the meanings and attributes of socio-racial terms, and how they are used in San Nicolas, although first I will provide a more general socio-historical account of Afromexicans.

Chapter 3

AFROMEXICANS

3.0. Introduction

This aim of this chapter is to provide an alternative view of the Africans in Mexico by highlighting the dynamism of their participation in Mexican nationhood at many levels of culture. For example, the African factor in Mexico's colonial population was largely responsible for the invention of the *sistema de castas* by adding complexity to the racial mixing. This in effect, motivated the coining of a wide range of socio-racial terms I examine in this dissertation. The term that today describes a vast number of Mexicans is *'moreno,'* which in fact, describes 'Afromestizos,' not merely *mestizos.'* While many details of this chapter do not have direct bearing on language practices, the "backdrop" gives coherence to the interpretation of discourse that I carry out in Chapters 4 and 5 about uses of of socio-racial terms. That this set of socio-racial terms is of widespread use says something about their relative importance in Mexico today.

I provide in this chapter, a profile and brief discussion of the various episodes of African entry (and exits in some cases) which have contributed to the social formation of the African Diaspora in Mexico. In section 3.7 I also provide a sketch of contemporary Afromexicans lifestyles in order to show the continuities of those early (colonial) socio-cultural practices and lifestyles, as well as social relations between them and other "racial" groups. I expect that the details of this chapter will give the reader a better sense of the historical and socio-cultural context within which the terms *negro, moreno, blanco* and *indio* are used in Mexico today.

3.1. The African Diaspora

The term "Diaspora" is an old one that was initially used by ancient Greeks to designate to nationalities of people living among other nations, away from their native land, but maintaining their own culture (Hamilton 1995). Increasingly during this decade, it has been applied to different groups without a specific understanding of the process or processes behind the term. Even the criteria for definition remain disjointed and varied, so that, for example, it is used to refer to groups or even individuals who simply no longer live in their homeland regardless of the reasons or conditions of self-exile which are sometimes simply economic ones. The criteria for defining "Diaspora community" used here are narrower, focusing on elements of "forced dispersion," "resistance to domination" and "retention" of sociocultural and other patterns. According to Hamilton the term "Diaspora" refers to "a global aggregate of actors and sub-populations differentiated in social and geographical space yet exhibiting a connectedness based on a shared history and connected by and within a dynamic world order (1995:8)." The "actors" and "subpopulations" are people of African descent who today are found in many parts of the world, particularly in the so-called New World. In the Caribbean, such island nation states as Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago have significant populations. In South America, Brazil has the largest concentration of people of African descent, but many more live in Colombia, Uruguay, Surinam, Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela. There are significant populations in Central America; Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Panama also have significant populations. In North America (Mexico, the U.S. and Canada), the U.S. has the largest concentration (approx. 20% of the total population), and in Europe descendants of African and Caribbean immigrant workers have a well documented presence (e.g. Gilroy

(1993). Older and smaller but no less important African diasporas are found in the Middle

East and Asia, with the most recent dispersion being that of the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews)

who were airlifted in 1984 from Ethiopia and resettled in Israel (Gadi, 1994). This list of

locations is not exhaustive, and in those mentioned states, descendants of Africans are very

much part and parcel of the societies where they now live.

The term "Diaspora" connotes "forced dispersion," the scattering of people into

other places and their settlement in a new "home" environment. Diaspora therefore also

connotes roots and growth and is part of the transnational phenomena now challenging

the homogeneity of the nation-state. Hamilton (1995, p. 2) summarizes the parameters of

defining Diaspora communities as follows:

- Geographical dispersion due forced removal from a homeland e.g., slavery.
- a degree of identity, real and mythical, the notion of "promised land."
- persistence in the Diaspora and development of sociocultural identities, cumulative historical experiences across time and space.
- ongoing experiences of social oppression and struggle in hostile places of domicile.

The history, spatial location and origins, and the processes of identify formation

of African Diaspora communities in Mexico nicely fulfill these criteria. Introduced to

Mexico through slavery, Africans in Mexico have survived several hundred years as a

recognizable social group (a social "race"), thus accumulating a collective history in time

and space even as they developed sociocultural identities which are the focus of this

dissertation.

There is no doubt that the African Diaspora is a reality, existing in significant

numbers and distribution as well as "biological remembrances" (Hamilton 1995) which

form part of the interconnectedness of the Diaspora people. This obviously led to the fact

that in nation states where they are a minority, most Africans in the Diaspora live in isolated

places. Their physical location is tied to places of historical settlement such as *palenques* (Colombia), *quilombos* (Brazil), distant mountainous regions of Jamaica or Surinam, or simply in out of the way regions such as Guerrero communities in Mexico.

One characteristic of the African Diaspora that distinguishes it from others is that it does not have one center of origin in Africa and is not a nationality like Chinese or Korean. This, of course, does not diminish their role as transmitters, retainers and sources of innovation and enrichment of the societies in which they were inserted, albeit by force. In any case, some African ethnic or language groups did have a higher numerical presence in certain locations of the Americas. This makes it possible to identify and trace some of the African contributions to cultural or linguistic practices now found in the Americas back to Africa (for example, religion and forms of worship directly transplanted from West Africa to Cuba, Brazil and other locations). Another example is that of speakers of Bantu languages such as Angolans, Congos and Mozambicans who appear to have had a significant presence in Mexico due to a number of reasons discussed later in this chapter. However, a strong presence of non Bantu-speaking Africans such as Wolofs, Yorubas and Mandingas is also recorded.

3.1.1. African Diaspora in Mexico Today

Most people — including Mexicans themselves — are quite surprised to learn of the existence of people of African origin in Mexico. Germane to this is an understanding of the notion of *mestizo* ideology, which is a driving national ideology in Mexico and in other parts of Latin America. In an effort to create a "nation," the contribution of Africans is obscured by the unique consideration of the other two racial groups that came into contact: Native Mexicans and Europeans. The ignorance of African contributions to the building of a

Mexican nation - indeed of other Latin American societies - has to do with exclusionist approaches that have been used by scholars. These approaches are summarized by Nicolas Ngou-Mve in an article published in June 1997's issue of *America Negra*:

- an exclusionist African approach
- an exclusionist European approach
- an exclusionist American approach

The first approach regards slavery as an interruption in the "natural" historical development of Africa. Weaker versions of this approach focus on blaming Europe and regarding the African merely as a poor victim of European brutality, but the stronger view recognizes correctly that slavery was the critical "watershed event" in the formation of the modern African Diaspora. The second view is characterized by attempts to downplay or hide slavery, and when it does, it looks at it only as the foundation of capitalism and the subsequent enrichment of Europe. Such an approach ignores the human and social significance of a momentous historical event that saw the settlement of millions of Africans in a new environment. The African is seen only as a slave, not an active agent in molding a New World society. The third approach insists that slavery defined the social and economic existence of the African in America and, as such, had no history prior to reaching American shores. Mve also notes that this view is most prevalent in countries where Afro-Americans are vocal in their expression of problems of their current existence.

The reality of Afromexicans defies their obscurity within and outside of Mexico. They remain an important component of Mexican nationality, and they have contributed significantly to the nation building process. The African has been an active agent in the molding of modern Mexico, in music and dance (.e.g. *musica jarocha*), language (e.g.

chamba, chingar, negro, moreno, prieto, and toponyms seen below), as a significant

factor in the process of *mestizaje* and subsequent creation of "races," and even in major

political movements such as in the 1810 Mexican War of Independence (.e.g. Hidalgo's

moreno battalions, and in the Mexican Revolution one hundred years later - e.g. Luka

Parral of San Nicolas, see Chapter 5).
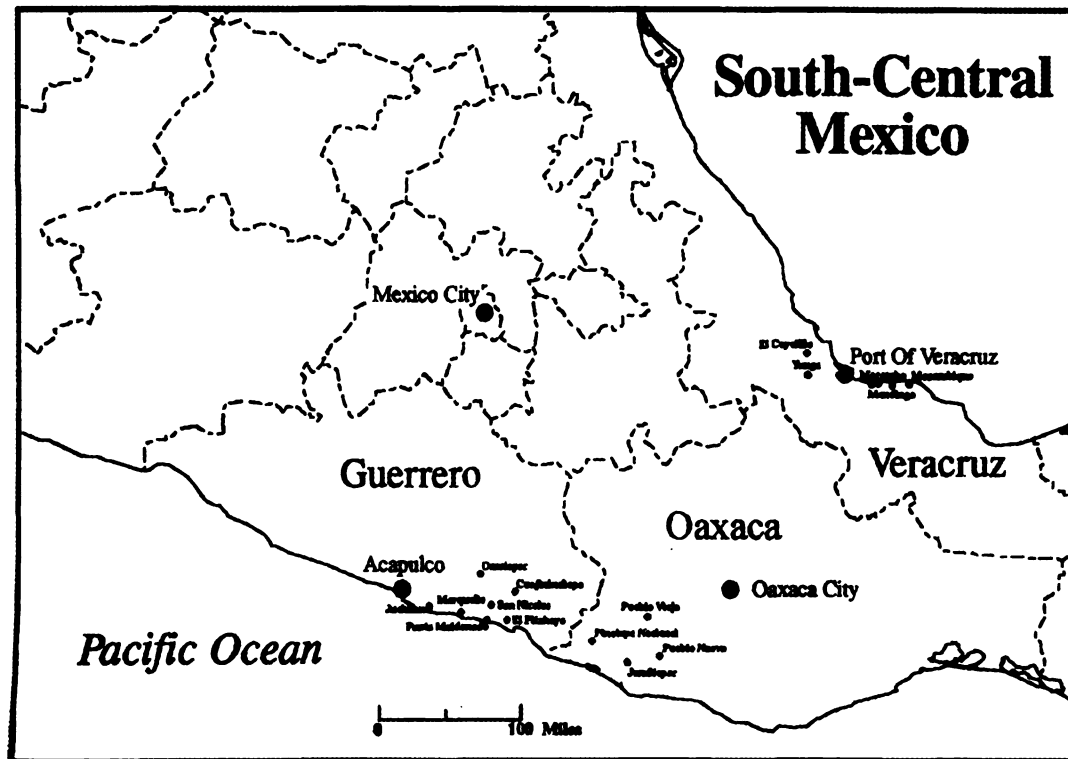
Figure 3.1. Afromexican Communities of South-Central Mexico

Afromexican communities today are concentrated in two areas: the central part of

the state of Veracruz in the Gulf zone; and in the coastal zone known as the *Costa Chica,* an

area lying between the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, in the Pacific region (see Figure 3.1.).

In both areas, people of African descent live mainly in villages or *pueblos* which are small

communities which are also called *ranchos.* In the case of Guerrero, in communities where

they are found, Afromexicans tend to be the predominant group where they coexist with

indigenous populations of peasant agriculturists, mainly *mixtecos*, *amuzgos*, *chatinos*, *nahuas* and *tlapanecos*. These are best described as ethnolinguistic groups because they describe broad ethnic and linguistic families which are nevertheless differentiated widely according to region. Linguistically, the first three groups listed are of the Uto-Manguean family of languages, while *nahuatl* and *tlapanec* are Uto-Aztec and are spoken by a relatively large number of speakers. These two Aztec languages are non-tonal, with SVO (subject-verb-object) word order, while the others are tonal, with a VSO (verb-subject-object) word order. Each of these languages exhibits sharp regional differences, so that, for example, Oaxacan Amuzgo and Guerrero Amuzgo have less than 67% mutual intelligibilty, even though the states are geographically proximate and contiguous. Most individual members of these indigenous groups are monolingual, a lesser number is proficient in spoken Spanish, and general levels of bilingualism do not exceed 5% (Ethnologue 1994).

Afromexicans of the Gulf Coast live in a more *mestizo* environment, although there are many indigenous peoples whose languages continue to thrive in that region. Communities of people of African descent in Mexico are relatively small, although no conclusive data exist about populations of African descent living in Mexico today. Reasonable calculations establish that between 0.4 and 1.0 percent of the total population of Mexico (approx. 100 million) can be regarded as having African ancestry (Hamilton and Tellez 1990). Living in small rural communities, Afromexicans have maintained distinctive physical, cultural and linguistic characteristics some of which reflect their African origins.

Afromexican communities identified in the state of Guerrero include Huehetán, San Marcos, Juchitán, Marquelia, Cuajinicuilapa, Maldonado, San Nicolás, El Pitahayo, Comaltepec, Playa Ventura, Cerro de las Tablas and Cruz Grande. In the State of Oaxaca

in the Costa Chica region, the following communities are predominantly Afromexican: Tacubaya, Lo de Soto, Estancia Grande, Santo Domingo, Armenta, Corralero, Collantes, Charco Redondo, Chacagua, Morelos, Monroy, Piedra Ancha, Pueblo Nuevo, Río Verde, Río Viejo and Rio Grande. Many other Afromexican communities are found in the northern states of Coahuila, Durango and Tamaulipas, but the best known ones are in Veracruz.

In Veracruz, Afromexicans live largely as part of predominantly *mestizo* communities. Of those pueblos identified as significantly Afroveracruzan, Mata Clara (pop. 2,000) near Yanga is the best example. Others include El Coyolillo near the City of Jalapa, Tamiahua, Matamba or Las Tres Higueras, Las Iguanas, La Roca and Guadalupe. These are all in the Veracruz city port area. There are a few others such as Mandinga (also christened as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa) and Mozambique, whose names clearly suggest a historical link to the African homeland. Afromexican communities also exist in localities outside the two regions described. We know, for instance, of the community of El Nacimiento in the northern State of Coahuila bordering the U.S. This particular community of Afromexicans are known as the *Mascogos*, descendants of African American immigrants into Mexico during the late 19th century. In the States of Michoacán and Tabasco, Afromexican presence has also been reported. For example there is an African presence in the village of Guaracha on the shores of Lake Cempoala in the state of Michoacán. Given the limited of research on Afromexicans to date, there is reason to believe that many more Afromexican communities exist in those regions and elsewhere in the Mexican Republic.

3.2. Afromexican Communities and Lifestyle

Afromexicans today are mainly peasant agriculturists, fishermen, and campesinos or rural proletarians. *Costa Chica* Afromexicans still largely coexist with indigenous populations, while in the Gulf area Afromexicans live in a *mestizo* environment with far less interaction with indigenous people. The reality of Afromexican communities on either coast reflects the socioeconomic history of each region. Illustrative descriptions of two representative communities will provide a clearer picture. In Veracruz, for instance, we find communities well integrated and dependent on the sugar cane based industry that has been the mainstay of the state's economy ever since the establishment of the Spanish colony. This was also the principal motive for the massive importation of Africans to drive the labor intensive sugar industry. Sugar is also the reason that Veracruz has been central in the economic history of the country. A second significant source of development comes from the petrol industry, which provided great impetus for national and regional development since its discovery in the south central states of Mexico in the 1970's; in Veracruz are found many of those oil fields, and this wealth has trickled down to the people of the state. Good, paved roads are found throughout the state, and communication between the major towns ensures that many of those villages are easily accessible by public or private transportation. Buses run regularly from Veracruz City to Córdoba, El Fortín, Orizaba and other towns of the region. Houses have electric light, and tap water is available although it has not been installed inside houses in the smaller communities. Although the sugar industry dominates the regional economy, people of those villages which are located near the ocean or lakes and rivers engage in fishing, while those from the interior are agricultural workers.

Figure 3.2. Casimirio, Chege and Roy, Mata Clara, Veracruz

Mata Clara (pop 3000) is representative of Gulf area Afromexican communities. It is easily accessible, only a short walk from the highway that runs from Veracruz to Córdoba, with Yanga lying between the two cities. Streets in Mata Clara are not paved, and only two small stores serve the community; most household items have to be obtained from Yanga or from the center that lies on the highway. There is one grade school which accommodates most children from the village despite poor attendance records and high absenteeism, according to the school-teacher I interviewed. Women generally work in the household, feeding, washing and taking care of their families. For this group, levels of education in general are very low, and few females go beyond the second year of secondary school before they are required to stay home to prepare themselves for marriage. The overwhelming majority of males works in the sugar cane industry as cane growers, cutters, transporters or in the factory (ingenio) itself.

Cane is the exclusive crop grown by farmers of the *ejido* (commune) whose fields lie a distance of at least three miles away from their homes, but mango trees are abundant in

the settled area. Farming and life activities of *ejido* members are governed by the plantation system. They have to sell their crop to the plantation, and in return they receive loans, pesticides, fertilizers and other inputs from the plantation; their farming techniques are planned and regulated by agronomists, engineers and overseers who are all plantation employees. There are three big *ingenios* in the nearby area, but Mata Clarans operate under the auspices of *Ingenio San José de Abastos*, a three hundred year old, family owned sugar factory. Inherent in this system of production is a fair amount of coercion upon the peasant farmers who have little choice in farming policy and practice on land that technically belongs to them. For instance, those that may opt to raise crops other than sugar cane are penalized by being denied loans, fertilizers and farming implements to develop their land. In addition, monocultivation and excessive use of chemicals have degraded soil quality according to informants.

Other male members of the community are engaged in trades and crafts in the nearby urban centers of Córdoba and Veracruz City, or migrate to Mexico City to join the service industry as waiters, artisans and wage workers. A good number of young men migrate to the United States to work for wages in farms and industry.

Social and economic activity in Mata Clara, including the annual cycle, revolve around cane growing. Planting, tending, harvesting and payments are determined by the demands of *ingenio*'s mills. During the period between the end of a harvest, and the new crop for instance — around March and April — the village is shrouded by a lethargy of heat and inactivity, resting from the hard work of the cane harvest and getting ready for the planting of the next half of the biannual cash crop.

54

Economic activity and the yearly cycle in Veracruz contrasts with that of Afromexicans of the *Costa Chica*. Plantation agriculture is uncommon, and an independent form of agriculture is practiced. As in the case of Veracruz, local economic activity is conditioned by the imposition of culture on the physical environment. The climate of the Costa Chica is dry and savannah-like, while Veracruz is tropical and humid. Costa Chicans also live in pueblos far removed from regional transport and communications; the closest town to San Nicolás — Cuajinicuilapa — lies twenty kilometers away on the single lane highway from Acapulco to Pinotepa. The town's structure and development can not be compared to any of those mentioned in Veracruz: there is one bank in this regional headquarters, and no regular public transportation plies the interior route to San Nicolas or El Pitahayo or other locations. Villagers rely on open personal (unlicensed) trucks which operate according to the owner's availability or business schedule. The twenty kilometer ride into San Nicolas is on unpaved road, which becomes impassable during the wet season. Security in that area is poor and is aggravated by social policy that fosters drug running and political violence. Military patrols largely usurp the role of regular police force, effectively increasing a sense of insecurity because of arbitrary and brutal law-enforcement tactics emplyed by the federal military "outsiders". In addition, the army and police have always been intimately linked to political control by state authorities which use Guerrero's history of peasant resistance to government oppression as pretexts for harassment.

Veracruz is under regional *caciques* who ensure that "order" is maintained, giving a semblance of social order and peace. But due to its economic marginalization and subsequent logistic difficulties in maintaining social control, the *Costa Chica* — Guerrero in particular — is "freer" from government intervention: "*aquí el gobierno no se mete* (here

the government does not enter) is a popular, perhaps exaggerated refrain among Afromexican males. Local security operations are done by local armed possies (e.g. during local festivities or cockfighting and gambling events) which are managed by the residents with sanctioning from the local sheriff (*el comisario*). These "Wild West" aspects of social life are easily gleaned from local legends, popular regional ballads or *corridos,* but they are also evident to the outside observer.

Afromexicans of pueblos that lie very close to the Pacific are engaged in commercial fishing. In El Faro, a small beach town on the shore of the Pacific about ten kilometers from San Nicolás Tolentino, fishing is done by men on a cooperative basis, using motor boats run by the same cooperative. While men do the actual fishing, a significant share of the wholesale buying and retail selling of the fish is in fact dominated by women who purchase the catch and take it to the interior *pueblos* for salting, drying and resale. A good part of it is sold in the larger cities such as Acapulco, Pinotepa and Ometepec.

San Nicolás Tolentino lies ten kilometers away from the fishing village of El Faro, and it is one of the larger, representative Afromexican communities of the *Costa Chica.* With only a twenty-minute truck separating the two communities, trade and family ties are close. As in much of rural Mexico, the members of the community belong to an *ejido* which is cultivated according to the needs and desires of the family which has been assigned a particular *parcela* or tract of land.

The *ejido* is an important feature of Mexican rural organization. It is a small, communally held plot of land for farming adapted from the Native Mexican tradition of communal farming. Under the provision of Article 27 of the Mexican constitution, the state retained ownership of the *ejido* and granted peasants the right to use it for whatever purpose

they deemed appropriate. The intent was that, by allowing this right to pass only from father to son, and by banning the renting or sale of *ejidos,* large ownership or holdings, such as those prevalent before the Revolution of 1910, would be prevented from reappearing. The article was dropped in 1990 by the Salinas adiministration to allow for the monetary transfer of land title, but the *ejido* system remains in operation in San Nicolas as in most parts of rural Mexico.

The *ejido* lands of San Nicolans extend quite far away from the pueblo itself, and men often spend several days out in the fields while the women remain in the village. Maize is the principal subsistence crop; the surplus is usually sold as *milpa* (fresh corn-on-the-cob) in Acapulco or in other larger towns, including Mexico City. Fruit growing for cash is a major occupation of Guerrero small farmers; lemons grow and mature abundantly in the hot climate and are later sold in bulk to large city markets. Melons and watermelons are another important cash crop aided by an irrigation system instituted by the government and run by the *ejidatarios* or community members. Some cash crop farmers use tractors, although less prosperous ones rely on horse and manpower to plough their land.

Beef cattle rearing is another important activity in that part of Guerrero. Big herds of long horned, large bodied Zebu cows are raised in the open range by experienced Afromexicans on horseback, a task they have performed ever since colonial times. The Zebu (*Zebú* in Spanish) is a heat resistant breed that was introduced from Africa, along with a species of grass known as *Star of Africa* that has proliferated in the Mexican countryside.
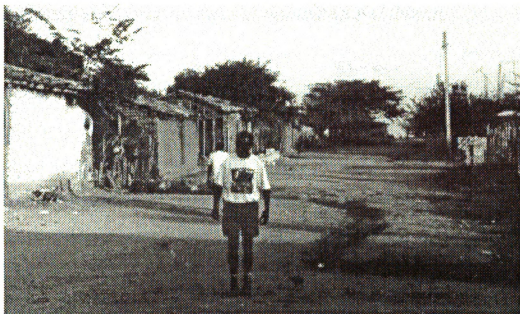
Figure 3.3. Village Street, San Nicolas, Guerrero

While land is abundant and available for rent to willing farmers, funding problems prevent many from acquiring the land needed to grow cash crops. The major problem is that of having the necessary cash to invest in cash crop growing, such as, fertilizers, chemicals, tractor fees, labor for planting and harvesting, etc. For instance, the "best" melon seed comes from Texas and is three times as expensive as the local strain, according to one informant. As a result of existing local inequalities, many men work as peons for others, or wage laborers working for the more prosperous individuals. The table below shows official statistical profiles of some representative Afromexican communities which I am familiar with, indicating gender distribution and literacy levels.

Table 3.1. Population and literacy of Nine Afromexican Pueblos of Guerrero

Pueblo	Total pop.	women	Men	#illiterate
San Nicolas	3,359	1,640	1,519	874
Copala	11,409	5,793	5,616	n/a
Cuaji	24,369	12,272	12,097	11,977
Ometepec	38,057	19,422	18,635	7,757
Juchitan	3,409	1,760	1,649	800
Huehuetan	1,662	862	800	350
El Pitahayo	2,186	1,115	1,071	440
Maldonado	964	472	492	n/a
Montecillos	880	417	463	235

Source: INEGI (1991)

3.2.1. Cultural Practices

The long history of African presence and persistence in Mexico today is manifested in many, often subtle and unrecognized forms. In the two regions where large Afromexican presence is strong and obvious, many cultural, social and linguistic artifacts reflect the rootedness of Africans in this country.

In the Veracruz area, for instance, many toponyms reflecting African presence are found: Yanga, Mandinga, Mocambo, Matamba, Mozambique, Cerro del Congo, etc. are some of those names that to this day uphold the legacy of the African Diaspora. For reasons yet to be fully understood, in the *Costa Chica* there are fewer such toponyms, despite an even larger Afromexican presence. *El Guineo* ('The Guinean' — usually synonymous to "African" in 16th-18th century Spanish American terminology) is one such community found in Guerrero.

In the two regions described, as in other parts of Mexico, the influence of people of African ancestry in regional life is unquestionable. Africans have not only contributed to the creation of a specific "somatic-norm image" and socio-racial identity - *el moreno* - the dark Mexican, they are also an integral part of the formation of the national character and culture which most frequently is not recognized as such.

Veracruzan regional music reflects more clearly the African elements in what is called the Afro-Andaluz Caribbean music, having developed from the mutual influence between African and Spanish (i.e., New World) cultures. Such cultural developments are found in most of the Americas, making it easy to compare, for example, these Veracruzan rhythms with Cuban *salsa*, Santo Domingan *merengue* and Jamaican *reggae*. The relatedness of Afromexican music to the rest of Afroamerica is an underrated phenomena which may provide crucial evidence of linkages between the Mexican and other parts of the African Diaspora. A Cuban musicologist working in Mexico established this connection very clearly (Pérez 1990). By means of the comparative method, he linked Afromexican music genres to others of African origin in the Americas. Even more importantly, he made the claim that the roots of Mexican Afromestizo music are traceable to Africa and not just to Cuba or other parts of the Americas, as it is popularly believed. Other than showing the musical links between diverse African diasporas, the importance of Peréz's claims is that they give greater credence to the Afromexican cultural identity both in its formation and continuity.

In chapter 5 of this dissertation I also focus on distinctive Afromexican cultural production with regard to verbal artistry, including *versos* or lyrical poetry that rhyme while telling a story, anecdote or social commentary. Another verbal art involves verses made on

the spot during *controversias* or verbal duels which involve two persons or groups

'throwing' witty and fast verses at each other. *Versos* are popular in most of Mexico but

much more in those coastal areas which we have identified as Afromexican. Additionally,

corridos (ballads) are very popular in the *Costa Chica* where they are sung and (now)

recorded as community's archives of local history (e.g. in memory of fallen heroes of tragic

events).

As Gutierrez's 1988 study of this genre of music established, the *corrido* musical

tradition is rooted in violent settings; an overwhelming proportion of these songs recount

tragic events that are remembered by a particular community. Their importance as an area of

formal study is underscored by the historical value of such songs given the familiarity of the

singers in relation to the actors and the nature of conflicts. In my observation, the *corrido*

songs evoke very powerful emotions from the audience, and they are often collectively

constructed by members of a community who actively engage themselves in recording their

collective history. However, it must be noted that corridos are not unique to Afromexicans;

indeed, they form a part of rural Mexican tradition and are in fact more widespread in

northern Mexico.

3.2.2. Musical Instruments

Musical instruments are also indicative of Afromexican presence and cultural

heritage and African influence. Two percussion instruments widely used in Mexico but

more in Veracruz have been identified as being of African heritage: the *marimba* and the

marimbol (or *marimbola* and *marimbolo*). The former instrument is well known and widely

used around the country. The *marimbola,* on the other hand, is a smaller box that has keys

like a piano, sometimes called the "thumb piano," and "it is widely used by blacks and

mestizos on the American continent (Lo 1980:30)." It has been compared to similar instruments used in several parts of the African continent today under various other names such as *marimba* or *mbira*. Its use in Mexico has been reported in the states of Veracruz, Campeche and Yucatán (Lo 1980).

In the Costa Chica, the single most important instrument that may very likely be of African origin is the *arteza* (also *cajón*). It is a long, log-like block of wood about nine feet long and it is carved from a single tree trunk of a special sort. On one end the head of a bull is carved and a serpent on the other end. It has a flat surface and is played by dancing on its top rhythmically by one or more persons. Both men and women can participate in this energetic activity that requires good coordination, especially when the rhythm is being created by more than one individual at the same time. It has been put forward that the *arteza* developed as a reaction to the banning of "heathen" drums under 15th and 16th century Inquisition laws; the creative Africans turned to making rhythms with their feet when they could not do it with their hands.

PART II

3.3. African *Conquistadores*

The modern African Diaspora into Mexico began with the arrival of Hernando Cortes, leader of the very first band of *conquistadores*. Bernal Díaz, who wrote the classical document of Captain Cortes's submission of the Aztec Empire, describes how a black man came in the service of Juan Sedeño, "the richest man in the fleet" (Bernal 1963). According to this chronicler, writing fifty years after the events, the black man-servant introduced smallpox that eventually decimated millions of Native Mexicans who encountered the disease for the first time. In 16th century Spain and Portugal, black Africans were part and

parcel of contemporary society; in Lisbon and Seville, African art and dance were performed in public places, and in both cities, *barrios* of Africans are known to have existed (Duncan 1994). It is not strange then that some Africans came to America in the early 16th century, albeit as servants or assistants of the wealthier, self sponsored *conquistadores*.

There was yet another class of Africans who had become fully assimilated i.e. hispanisized, christianized and educated, and these were often enlisted in the service of the Crown. These individuals came as conquistadors of equal status to the Spaniards and were assigned *encomiendas* or captainships over various districts of the newly conquered lands. The position of those Africans is a probable source of some of the eventual conflicts between blacks and Native Mexicans, since the latter did not view the blacks any differently — and with reason — from the white European conquerors. One of the better documented examples of a black conquistador is that of Juan Garrido who accompanied Hernán Cortes in the conquest of Mexico. He is also credited as being the one who first planted wheat in the New World.

It appears that Juan Garrido first came to the New World as a free black, having previously lived in Lisbon and Castile, Spain. Peter Gerhard, in a sketch of his life and pursuits, puts his initial New World landing in the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo in the early 16th Century. From there he spent time in Puerto Rico before joining the Cortés expedition in 1519 in Mexico (Gerhard 1978). He was with Cortés in the conquest of Tenochtitlan; and he was a survivor of the Aztec slaughter of Spaniards at the Battle of *Noche Triste* on July 1, 1520. Apparently, he built a small adobe chapel to commemorate the Spanish dead. Later in the second decade of the 16th Century, Garrido was part of the

Spaniards' Christianizing mission of Amerindians in the area of Michoacán and along the
Zacatula coast (ibid).

Garrido was a unique man of African heritage whose presence superseded in time
the larger number of African people who came to *Nueva España*. He does, however,
represent the small role of African people as conquerors under Spanish colonial domain. His
experiences also suggest that, from the very beginnings of conquest, African people were
present and even contributing, innovatively, to New World productive culture.

3.4. Africans of the Colonial Slave Trade

A brief overview of the origins and backgrounds of Afromexicans informs our
understanding of their significance as part of the first modern Diaspora. In 1544 Hernándo
Cortés gave the first order for 500 Africans to provide labor for his first sugarcane plantation
and processing factory or *ingenio*. They arrived at Veracruz Port, brought from Africa by
Leonardo Lomelín, a Genovese slave trader and merchant (AGN Hospital de Jesus, Vol
247 Folio 8). However, the apex of slave importation to Mexico took place in the late 16th
and early 17th century; it has been estimated that between 100,000 and 250,000 Africans
arrived in New Spain (Mexico) during this period. Other European colonies soon began to
take shape and began importing slave labor from Africa. Colonists also began to rely on a
new generation of American born slaves called *negros criollos,* and thus slave trading in
Mexico was no longer in business. By the start of the 18th century, insignificant (official)
numbers of Africans came into Mexico barring clandestine trade and exchanges between
plantations in nearby colonies (Hita 1992).

3.5. The African Background

It has been possible to trace the geographic origins of Africans to the West, North and Central Coast of Africa, from some existing records of the slave trade. Aside from Beltran (1958) attempts to reconstruct some of the "tribal origins" of the African who came to Mexico, some of the most commonly cited places of origin of Afromexicans I found in the 16th century '*Historia*' section of Mexico's National Archives are Angola, Guinea, Sâo Tome and Congo. Later, ethnolinguistic names are mentioned as the Africans underwent a renaming process by being given names according to their alleged origins: *Bafaras, Jolofs, Matambas, Mandingas* and *Yorubas (or Lucumí)*, the *Zapes, Cazangas* and *Xhosas (or 'Zozas')* among others. This is indicative of the ethnic and linguistic diversity of early Africans in Mexico - from the River Senegal to the Limpopo River region in South West Africa.

Because of early Portuguese incursion and establishment in Eastern and Central Africa and her close alliance with Spain, many Africans brought to Spanish colonies came from those regions as well as West Africa. Colonization of Mozambique by the Portuguese, for instance, began in 1506, eight years after Vasco da Gama had sailed to Mombasa on the Kenyan coast and further down the Indian Ocean to reach Beira (now Maputo) in Mozambique and even rounded the Cape of Good Hope; this of course, made the ultimate goal of the Europeans: to reach the coveted spices of the Indian subcontinent. Thus these were among the earliest sources of slaves brought to Spanish possessions by their Portuguese allies. Among those African groups mentioned in archives were the *Zulus*,

Xhosas and the *Nguni*.[5] Beltran (1958) even suggested that *Zibaro* Africans recorded by the Spanish were actually from the island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa which was under Arab rule. Two other names that occur with frequency in archives are Angola and Luanda. At this point, I will only highlight the fact that many apparent origins of Africans bound for Mexico are in what is generally called 'Bantu-speaking Africa,' since Africans in that area are overwhelmingly speakers of one Bantu language or another.

While the named place origins of displaced Africans can be traced to specific regions and groups of Africa today or in the past, they are not necessarily accurate. Other than the problems of inaccuracy in transcribing African names, slave traders were often native speakers of one of a number of different European languages. French, Dutch or English slave merchants would have variously catalogued their human cargo with some variations which at times obscure or distort the original African name. The *Biafara* were probably the same as *Bafara; Mandika* were also *Mandingo, Manding* or *Malinke; Congo* was at times recorded as *Kongo, Xoxo, Bakongo, Makongo* or *Manikongo*[6] and the *Xhosa* were frequently called *Zozas*.

Secondly, the places where the Africans are said to have originated such as Senegal, Guinea or Congo may only describe the port of origin of widely diverse inland peoples. Thirdly, generic terms for Africans perceived to be related in some way or another would be used in a similar manner in which South African whites used '*Bantu*' during *apartheid* to denote black Africans of wide ranging linguistic and cultural affiliation, as is the previously

[5] Zulu and Xhosa are actually languages of the Nguni family. That they are listed as separate groups in the archival entries reflects limited or skewed European knowledge about Africans. This problem is discussed further in the following sections.
[6] This actually refers to the Africans captured in the kingdom of *Manicongo* Alfonso I (1506-1543), a christianized King of the Congo who was later to complain of slavery activities by his very allies, the Portuguese. 'Mweni' or 'Mwinyi' is a Bantu root which means 'owner of', 'sovereign' or 'king' therefore Manicongo (or Mwenikongo in some references) translates as 'owner/sovereign/king of the Kongo.'

mentioned case of the Nguni. The Spanish and Portuguese similarly used such designations as *Manicongo* as cover terms for the Bantu speaking people of Central Africa; the terms *Mozambique* and *Malinke* and *Mandinga* described Africans acquired from areas under control of those kingdoms known by the same names.

Slavery in Mexico ended in 1810 when Mexico declared itself independent from Spain although the actual abolishment was not signed on paper until seven years later. Before it was officially abolished in Mexico on the 23rd of September 1817, direct importation of African labor had been replaced by a locally produced force, namely the *negros criollos* or blacks born and raised in slavery in the Spanish colonies. Spanish plantocracy in the American colonies often formed tight alliances in family and business, so there was frequent exchange, sale and transference of those black laborers in the nearby colonies, especially from the islands of Cuba and Santo Domingo.

3.5.1. Notes from *Archivo General de la Nacion (AGN)*

The *Archivo General de la Nación* (AGN) holds historical documents and administrative records of modern Mexico's existence. These proved very useful in reconstructing the story of Africans in Mexico. In particular, the archives provided leads about possible origins of Afromexicans and their official as well as ordinary existence in Mexico. Records of official slave trade were meticulously kept, the description of individual slaves, their numbers and other aspects of their existence in Mexico. The archival work gave me a crucial insight into a period of Mexico's history when Africans were a prominent albeit denigrated component of the society.

The archives are arranged in three broad periods which represent the watershed phases of modern Mexico's history (i.e. post columbian) and its socio-political

development. These three periods cover the whole colonial era including slavery

institutions, the revolutionary, pre-independence period, and post-colonial phases such as

the Reform, the Era of Cardenas (*Cardenismo*) and the contemporary ruling party's PRI

(Partido Revolucionario Institucional) period which properly began in 1929.

1) Colonial Period (1510-1810);
2) National (Statehood) Period (1810-1910);
3) Post Revolution Period (1910-1993).

A separate set of archives were the *Archivos Particulares* which contained documents on

prominent individuals of Mexico, such as Emiliano Zapata with a photographic collection of

him. It also includes illustrations, maps, and a photograph and audiovisual collection relating

Mexico's history and culture. There is also a Microfilm Library which contains, among

others, archives from the University of Texas at Austin, and the Cuban National Archives.

Within each one of these periods are administrative categories under which specific

files are kept thematically in what are known as *Unidades Documentales* (UDs). There are

at least 322 UDs covering all the periods. The following are selected for their relevance to

my research. A brief commentary follows this description.

Table 3.2. Select Archives of the Colonial Period: Mexico (1510-1810)

Unidad Documental (UD)	Description
Inquisicion	The Inquisition against 'non-believers' (*indios, negros* and Jews) e.g. for bigamy; witchcraft; superstition, etc.
Reales Cedulas	Royal permits to individuals or trading companies e.g. Slave traders
Civil	Civil suits and litigations before the Crown authorities (Audiencias) e.g. disputes of slave ownership
Padrones	Censuses and other administrative records e.g. slave counts
Mercederes	Merchant records e.g. bills of sale of slaves
Historia	Diaries, missionary and private records
Tierras	Records of *Ingenios* (sugar factories) and *Haciendas* (plantations)
Alcaldes Mayores	Official missives and instructions to provincial governors e.g. on treatment of slaves
Bienes Nacionales	Transactions and freeing of slaves e.g. the declaration of freedom of slaves (1837, Vol. 137. Exp. 135)
Concurso de Calvo	Crown liquidation of seized properties (including slaves)
Criminales	Criminal records e.g. of *negros* accused of participating in the revolution of 1810

The *Inquisición* archives in particular provided a very detailed picture of the extreme forms of punishment against *negros*. The documents also gave insights about the conflict that arose from differences of faith or religious practices, for example, the case of an African man accused of marrying two wives. They also describe the resistance with which some Africans confronted the slave system and the religion which supported it. These documents show also how the religious persecution and discrimination was not exclusively directed against Africans since all 'non-believers' such as indigenous

69

Mexicans and Jews or those suspected of being Jews were similarly persecuted. The most common "crimes" Africans were accused of under the inquisition, listed in order of their frequency were: a) bigamy; (b) witchcraft; (c) "use of herbs;" (d) having pacts with the devil; (e) denouncing God; (f) superstition; (g) praying to the moon. Others I have listed not so much for their frequency as for their peculiar interest are: (h),Sebastian, a Negro, for saying that simple fornication is not a sin; (i) "Juan Nicolás, alias Matamba, for blasphemy; (j) a *Negro* who said that God and the whole world lies; (k) Juan, *Criollo Negro*, for saying that the Virgin had not only Jesus Christ but also three other daughters — Las Tres Marías — who were already married. Many other insightful records appear in this section of the archives.

The *reales cédulas originales* were royal permits that individuals or trading companies received in order to engage in various trades in the New Spain. Slave-traders were commissioned by the Crown, therefore their trading records and inventories were considered official documents. This set of records tell us much about the nature of the Mexican slave trade such as prices put on Africans, but more importantly, names and points of origin of enslaved Africans. They also show inventories of individual traders, their incomes and profits. *Civil* records contain suits and litigations by individuals before the Crown authorities (*Audiencia*) many of which included slave deals gone raw and, quite frequently, they reflected a unique aspect of Spanish slavery: manumission, a process through which enslaved Africans could obtain their status as *negros libres* or freemen. This archival unit contains for example, citations by enslaved persons seeking freedom by filing suits of abuse against their owners (which could entitle them to freedom) or through purchase of their freedom.

Padrones show administrative records on individuals and municipalities, and population censuses. These therefore provided an important source of numbers and locations of slaves in different parts of the country. Bills of sale of slaves gave insights about how the trade was conducted, prices and desired physical and emotional features of slaves; these were abundantly found in the *Mercederes* section of the archives. Records of the daily activities of *ingenios* (sugar estates) and *haciendas* (plantations) where most enslaved Africans lived are found in the *tierras* section of the archives; these also contain records of the division and use of land. Diaries and other records of missionaries under the *historia* section were useful sources of information about the religious life of Africans in New Spain (e.g. the story of Yanga) while the *alcaldes Mayores* give an idea of the official policy toward the treatment of slaves since these were instructions and official missives to provincial governors particularly with regard to forms of punishment and measure to take in order to reduce the risks of insurrection and running away. The *bienes nacionales* and *concurso de Calvo* were useful sources about various transactions related to slaves including (e.g. the Freedom Charter of 1837, Vol 137, Exp. 135) which declared official end of slavery. This section also presents records of government sales liquidating seized property, including such property as slaves. Information about the social "race" of individuals and groups were found in every area of the archives. Even among the criminal records (UD *criminales*) we find such information that illuminates the background to socio-racial terms as they are used today. Under this section for example, I found cases on file against individuals accused of claiming to have no African blood in order to join the army. Another example was a case against "*negros* accused of delivering messages to rebels of the revolution, in Veracruz," and so on. The archives therefore were for the purposes of this

research, an important window from which earlier uses of socio-racial terms in Mexico can be viewed in order to help our understanding of their contemporary uses.

3.6. Traditions of Maroonage in Mexico:

Throughout the Americas, enslaved Africans did not take their condition passively. Many forms of resistance developed in the colonies, including rebellions and maroonage. While these two required a level of organization, many individual runaways also sought to escape slavery by disappearing within the free *mulato/mestizo* population. According to records of the time, Spanish colonists lived under constant fear of this "menace" and often carried out drastic actions against the African population. One such case was the 1612 public hanging of *negros* in downtown Mexico City plaza ordered by authorities to "calm down colonists' fears" inspired by rumors of a black uprising.

Living in isolated areas, many maroons turned to highway robbery and joined together with bands of vagabonds living off pillage, especially on the Mexico-Veracruz Royal Highway. Other maroons set up farming communities, especially but not always in the mountains as in Sierra de Zongolica, Veracruz or in the Sierras de Guerrero. Some also joined existing Native Mexican communities and assimilated there, especially through intermarriage. Still others formed their own new communities by banding together with other marginalized racial groups such as *mulato* slaves and *indios* (Beltran 1946). Nonetheless, Mexican maroon societies have not maintained the strong African influences that one finds in, say, the Jamaican Maroon communities. The reasons are detailed in an unpublished paper by Pereira (1993):

1. The presence in Mexico of major developed civilizations and firmly established native communities meant that Africans in Mexico related not only to one other racial/ethnic community (Europeans)
2. Relatively smaller numbers of Africans inserted into this context

3. Roman Catholicism of Spanish enslavers was far more pervasive and hegemonic than the Protestant denominations of the British counterparts in the colonies. Intense conversion and indoctrination undermined many possibilities of retaining African cultural traditions
4. The extended period of a single colonial power dominating the society from the start of sixteenth century and relatively lengthy period of time of 170 years since Mexico's independence and abolition of slavery during which Afromexicans have become involved in the formation of a Mexican national identity

It can be argued that traditions of maroonage explain the sparse knowledge that today exists about the African Diaspora in Mexico given that a large number of the Africans in Mexico lived beyond the arm of Spanish rule. Data or records about their communities - including that of their physical location and social organization - is little recorded, while some may have been distorted or destroyed by colonial authorities. During my personal interview with Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, (November 10, 1993, Jalapa, Veracruz), he too concurred with this view and that "maroonage [in Mexico] was a much more extensive phenomenon than is currently believed." In the following section, to illustrate this tradition, I present a story of the most representative of Mexico's Africans: slave, maroon, liberator and national symbol of resistance.

3.6.1. The Story of Yanga

Mexico's Yanga may be considered the precursor of the maroon tradition in the New World. Yanga was an African born man who led a successful uprising of slaves in South Central Mexico, fleeing into the mountains of Sierra de Zóngolica to form a viable community of *cimarrones* and successfully resisting submission for over thirty years. Originally named *San Lorenzo de los Negros* and later renamed in honor of its founder, today this town (located near the city of Córdoba, Veracruz) boasts of being "the first free *pueblo* of the Américas." The description of Yanga's origins found in historical documents suggest that he was from the Bari nation of South Sudan (Moreno 1898).
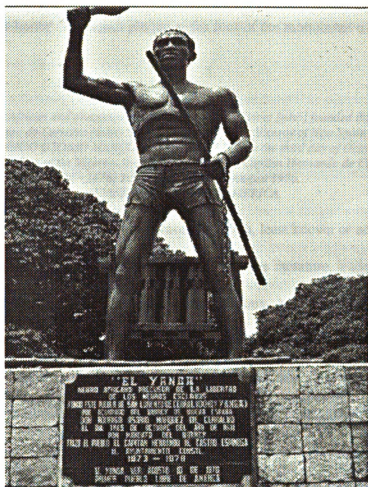
Figure 3.4. Yanga Monument, Yanga, Veracruz

Yanga's statue stands today on a quiet park next to Yanga Technical High School in southern Mexico on the edge of a town named after him (Figure 3.4.). Tall and alone, the fifteen foot high bronze statue depicts a well built African man holding high in his right hand a wooden machete (the original bronze one was stolen in 1990) and in his left a staff and broken chains. He is poised defiantly under the hot sun of Veracruz, bare of clothes save for a pair of tattered shorts. He cuts a stern figure, and his face reflects serious determination. With a luxuriant green backdrop of a mango grove, the statue of this man is solitary, almost shunned away on the fringes of this town of 5000 that is

named in his honor. The small plaque at the foot of the monument titled "El Yanga," reads:

*Black African and precursor of liberty of the negro slaves [who] founded this town of San
Lorenzo de Cerralvo (today Yanga) as agreed by the Viceroy of New Spain Don
RODRIGO OSORIO MARQUES DE CERRALVO, on the third day of October, 1631,
by mandate of the Viceroy. Designed (planned) by Capitan Hernando de Castro Espinoza.
City Council (1973 - 1976) Yanga, Veracruz, 10 August 1976.
FIRST FREE TOWN OF AMERICA.*

The monument represents one of the most forgotten, least known or acknowledged Black leaders of the New World, Yanga or Ñanga as in some literature, leader and patriarch of Africans in Mexico, the abundant new Spanish colony. As the town's motto claims, Yanga was indeed the first African of the New World to lead a group of his people to demand and achieve freedom from slavery and colonialism and to found a free town within a colony in 1631. It was well before Toussaint Louverture led an uprising against the French in Haiti and before the North American states had rebelled and freed themselves from English rule. It is therefore no idle claim that Yanga is "the first free *pueblo* of America." While ignorance of the African component in Mexican history is not strange, Yanga's stature in African Diaspora history should by all means be as important as that of Frederick Douglas of the USA, Zumbi of Brazil or other continental African liberators. Even though Yanga led an uprising in Mexico, he was in fact an African — born in the continent and brought to Mexico as a slave: "prince Yanga was a son of the King of the Yang-Bara tribe, one of the tribes that are part of the Upper Nile, of the Dinka nation, Southeast of Gondokor, between the Bari and the Makaras" (Moreno 1892:xii). This description of Yanga's geographic origins and nationality suggest that he spoke a Nilotic language of the larger Nilo-Saharan languages related to the Kalenjin group of languages, and others spoken in Kenya today.

Yanga and its variant *Nyanga*[7], is a common personal name to this day, according to Sudanese informants.

It is estimated that another 250,000 Africans came to Mexico (Beltran 1946), directly from Africa's West Atlantic coast as far down as the Congo and Angola. The immediate origin of some was in such distribution centers as Cuba and Jamaica, or in Lima and Sevilla, which served as processing centers for Africans destined to the colonies (e.g. to be baptized and to be taught some Spanish language). Many others were brought in clandestinely as demand grew higher than authorized quotas.

Yanga landed on the shores of Mexico on a ship from Africa, and after a few years he fled to the mountains in 1579 with a group of fellow enslaved Africans. For the next thirty years, Yanga organized his group of fugitive *cimarrones* into a well functioning community which included a military arm headed by an Angolan, Francisco de la Matosa. The site Yanga and his people chose as refuge deep in the mountains of Sierra de Zongolica on the banks of Río Blanco in central Veracruz was typical of maroon communities: "extremely mountainous and difficult to access... also extremely fertile...family huts surrounded by cultivated fields from which bountiful harvests of maize, beans, potatoes and tobacco were collected; small plots of cotton and abundant fruit trees...in the middle of the village was a small rustic church which reflected the Christian education the Africans had gone through (Moreno 1892:12)".

Yanga's community prospered. Bold and confident, sometimes vengeful, they often attacked travelers and nearby haciendas which they would loot and burn. But who suffered most from the raiders were the royal caravans bearing silver and gold on its way to Spain via

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[7] *Ethnologue,* 1990 edition, where the variant *Nyanga,* and the linguistic classification are also found. There is also a record of Nyanga or Yanga language spoken in Congo.

the port of Veracruz, on the *Camino Real*. It is notable that all the recorded attacks by Yanga's people were against White people and their properties (Hita-Naveda 1992), thus representing a race-class war.

In the year 1612, rumor spread all over Mexico that there was a Black uprising planned and that the Africans had a King to be crowned on the day of general uprising to be held on January 6th, the traditional "Day of Kings." The contemporary Viceroy of New Spain, Don Luis de Velasco, decided to settle the colonial society fears by ordering the public hanging of black men and women who had been jailed for other crimes, in the central Plaza of Mexico City. The gruesome event was supposed to calm the colonist's fears by "proving" that the plot had been uncovered and the plotters punished. A curfew was imposed on the Black population countrywide, and the Viceroy immediately dispatched troops to Veracruz to destroy Yanga and his ideals. In charge was Captain González de Herrera, who took with him 100 soldiers, a similar number of adventurers, and 150 Indian bowmen; further on they were joined by another 200 Spanish, mulato and mestizo mercenaries. Two Jesuit missionaries accompanied the raiders, sent to try to break Yanga by religious persuasion; it was one of these two who kept a diary of the events that followed.

As Capitán Gonzalez and his troops advanced up the difficult terrain, Yanga had in his mountain kingdom, a captured Spaniard whose life he spared then sent to deliver a message to Capitán Gonzalez warning him that his efforts to subdue the Cimarrones was useless as long as their demands for freedom and equality were not met. Confident of the strength of his soldiers, Capitán Gonzalez continued up the mountain, determined to destroy the haven of freedom seekers. When Yanga's scouts warned of the approaching danger an ambush was laid by the Cimarron troops. Unfortunately, one of Gonzalez's men came upon the trap and raised alarm. Robbed of their weapon of surprise, Yanga's men found themselves hard pressed and in retreat from the Spaniard's gunfire and showers of arrows of the Indian bowmen. Of advanced age at this time, Yanga had stayed behind with those left to guard the town; they resisted until most of his people were killed or captured by the crown soldiers and mercenaries, but many others fled further up in the mountains. (Extract from Moreno (1892:25))

Although Yanga was militarily defeated on this occasion, he refused a complete surrender, instead accepting a peace treaty. This treaty was also influenced by pressure on the crown from other rebels who continued to raid and plunder, joined by more who continued to escape slavery. Yanga reached an agreement with the Viceroy in which he finally got what he had for so long fought: the establishment of a town where his people would live as free men and women. In return, Yanga promised not to allow any more escaped slaves to find refuge in his town and to respect civil and church authorities.

Viceroy Velasco agreed to these conditions and designated an area where Yanga and his people established a town of their own, about 20 kilometers southeast of Córdoba. It was named San Lorenzo de los Negros. Although Yanga's achievement was remarkable, he paid a heavy price from having to turn his back on others who came seeking for freedom as he had done himself. And though he had gained official recognition, his new community was encroached by still hostile — and powerful — whites and their *mestizo* allies. Also by agreeing to integrate rather than remain outside colonial governance, Yangans had to join and compete within a racist, exploiting society, as a minority group, occupying the lowest rungs of the racially stratified society. Given this context, the "freedom" enjoyed by that "first free pueblo of America" was probably severely curtailed.

Such was the climate of fear and mutual hostilities before San Lorenzo was founded that in 1622 a group of eighteen Spanish gentlemen wrote the Viceroy requesting "permission and aid to build a fort on the Zacatepec (Royal) route, to protect ourselves from *los negros cimarrones* who are about...attacking and robbing His Majestey's silver...we need 150 Indian bowmen...and this settlement will be called Villa de Córdoba." (AMC, Año 1622, Vol. 2Exp.4).

The Viceroy agreed as long as the gentlemen would get "thirty Spanish families as pioneers." This was done, and Cordoba, today a city of 150,000, is also known as the 'City of 30 Gentlemen,' but it was also thanks to Yanga and other Africans who pressured the colonists into taking such reactionary measures. Ironically, the building of Cordoba served to strengthen Spanish control over the region, including the constant fight against *cimarrones* who were forced to retreat further at every defeat. To this day, private houses in Yanga and Córdoba have thick, ancient walls that once were erected by a society that lived in fear of another uprising of the *negros*.

Gradually Yanga faded from national prominence as Blacks progressively became integrated into colonial society. And as Spanish authority strengthened in the region and other towns were built, Yanga's significance diminished, becoming a nasty memory in the mainstream society's mind. The event and date of his death are unclear, and while the manner of his death is known to have been violent, we know of no narrative — oral or written — nor a clearly discernible collective memory in today's area people, presumably Yanga's descendants. One version has it that he was assassinated in front of the church of his own town. Another claims that he was summoned to Mexico City by authorities only to meet his assassins en route.

The campaign to wipe out the history of Yanga was initiated from the onset by the next Viceroy after Velasco, a Spaniard named Don Rodrigo Pacheco y Osorio Marquis de Cerralvo. He ordered the renaming of San Lorenzo de *Los Negros* to San Lorenzo *de Cerralvo,* the name which it held until 1928, when the State of Veracruz Legislature approved the renaming of the town in honor of its founder, Yanga.

Today, there are hardly any Blacks in Yanga itself, and most Mexicans have never heard of Yanga. But about five kilometers from Yanga is a smaller pueblo of 2000 called Mata Clara. This and several others in the area, such as Rio Moreno and Las Palmillas, leave no doubt that, while Yanga's descendants may have been driven out of the town their forefathers built, they continue to thrive as a distinctly African Diaspora community.

3.7. U.S. Refugees and free Blacks in Search of Freedom

Throughout the nineteenth century Mexico provided a lure as a safe haven for enslaved Africans in North America, and many individuals and families headed South in search for a life free from bondage. The Mexican authorities, at the time of a liberal ideology arising from an anticolonial war, also found it convenient to provide refuge to persecuted U.S. Blacks. Still bitter and shaken by the recent loss of more than half its territory to the U.S., the Mexicans would have encouraged black settlement in their territory near vulnerable borders in order to bolster sparse Indian populations in those regions bordering the U.S., hoping to discourage further expansionist moves by the Anglo United States.

3.7.1. Black Seminoles

While the majority of African people arrived in Mexico during the colonial era between the mid 16th and late 18th century, other people of African descent entered Mexico more recently, although only a few of those arrivals are well documented. These entries were generally numerically small and in some cases temporary. For example, black Seminoles (i.e. Blacks integrated into Seminole communities through intermarriage to form communities of Afro-Indian identity) entered Mexican territory after being removed from northern Florida to Oklahoma as a consequence of the Second Seminole War (1853-1842).

They began to escape to Mexico in the Fall of 1849. In 1850 more than two hundred black Seminoles fled to the Northern Mexican State of Coahuila close to the Rio Grande and settled in La Navaja. Later they moved to El Nacimiento as they sought to escape relentless North American mercenaries who made constant attempts to return them to American slave holding territory. Some of those blacks did return to the U.S. voluntarily in 1870, at the end of the Civil War, but some of them stayed on, and their descendants today still maintain oral traditions of their North American origins. Especially among the older generations, they are bilingual in Spanish and in a distinct English dialect that is directly derived from Black English or African American English (AAE). Their descendants are known today as *Mascogos*.

3.7.2. Durango Settlers

The covert policy of Mexico motivated many private enterprises to continue to lure oppressed northern minorities into Mexico by offering "cheap, fertile land unlimited freedom and equality," as advertised in southern United States publications (Rippy 1921). Some blacks took their chances from what proved all too often to be bogus, money hungry businessmen. One such private company, the "Agricultural, Industrial and Colonization Company of Tlahaulilo," signed an agreement in 1894 with a black U.S. citizen to recruit one hundred black families for settlement in an area in the Mexican State of Durango. In February of the following year, around eight hundred free blacks arrived there, only to find themselves in disastrous working and living conditions; many of them fell sick and died (Rippy 1921). Those who survived the Mexican odyssey were repatriated to the U.S. by November of 1895, leaving behind one hundred and forty eight who did not survive.

During the 1994 Afrocaribbean Festival in Veracruz, I met with a few of those descendants of African-Americans from Durango and Coahuila and spoke with a delegation from *rancho* El Nacimiento, Coahuila. From interviews with them, it was learned that the small Black communities like El Nacimiento have a strong living memory of their Black North American origins and emigration. Some also maintain contacts with US relatives, and they are aware of their origins in the southern United States and of their racial distinctiveness relative to other Mexican communities in that region. One of them, a 70-year old woman from El Nacimiento who presented folklore, songs and *versos* at the festival, was also perfectly bidialectal in a variety of AAVE and Northern Mexican Spanish, reflecting the unique heritage of Afromexicans in this region, who provide a good example of cultural continuity among Diaspora Africans across national boundaries.

3.7.3. Sudanese Soldiers with the French Army In Mexico 1863-1867

Another fascinating dimension of the African presence in Mexico is linked to nineteenth century world cultural, political and economic conditions. A recent book by Hill and Hogg (1995) provides a detailed history of this episode of African soldiers in Mexico in the service of French colonial and imperial interests.

Charles-Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III), nephew of Emperor Napoleon, was the force behind French intervention in Mexico. In ideological terms, he viewed France as a Latin empire with a moral duty to bring enlightenment, technology and political liberalism to Latin America. Nonetheless, it was the political economy of Mexico in the early 1860s which provided the opportunity for the French to invade Mexico and to further its aspirations to regain possessions and influence in the Americas.

In July of 1861, the President of Mexico, Benito Juarez, announced a two-year moratorium on loan repayments to creditor nations consisting of Spain, Britain and France. On 29 February 1862, an international convention was held at La Soledad, a small town near Veracruz. The Spanish and British delegates made a speedy agreement with Mexico's representatives, which their governments ratified, and their token forces sailed away. The French naval and military contingent stayed, and Napoleon III decided to take advantage of the situation in Mexico, effecting a military occupation of the country. The United States was involved in its Civil War and could not enforce the Monroe Doctrine which forbade European intervention in the Americas. Moreover, to effect further control, Napoleon III offered the "crown" of the new kingdom to Maximilian, then Archduke of Austria. Thus Maximilian was Emperor of Mexico from 1864 to 1867.

The first French expeditionary force landed at Veracruz in March of 1862. However, as they attempted to expand the territory under their control, they were soundly beaten by the Mexicans. Additionally, the French fell victim to yellow fever, malaria, and other tropical illnesses in the Mexican coastal lands. As in the earlier period of European invasion and colonization of the New World, they needed more manpower and military reinforcements. In their misguided world views and racist ideologies, French thoughts turned to Africans. The French "knew" that Africans were more resistant to disease than whites; biologically, Africans were essentially more immune to tropical fevers. Through the provincial government of Egypt, the French recruited 3000 muslim Sudanese soldiers who were dispatched to Mexico. The Sudanese Troops eventually ended their duty in Mexico and returned to Egypt by way of Paris, where they received honor for their participation. Most eventually returned to the Sudan, and they left behind no firm evidence of their legacy

in Mexico, except for six deserters who "must have smoothly blended with their formerly enslaved brothers in the hills of the Pacific Coast (Hill and Hogg 1995:123)."

3.7.4. Afroantillian Indentured Laborers

Another significant infusion of blacks into Mexico took place in the late 19th century as part of the historical process of the development of capitalism in the region when a significant number of Afroantillians came to Mexico. They were overwhelmingly from the island of Jamaica, and the peak of their immigration took place in the late 1880's. A majority of the total population of the Mexican state of Quintana Roo of around 8,000 were black Belizeans settled in *haciendas*, and another undetermined number came from the U.S. (Muñoz 1994:124). While Mexico received the greater portion of this labor force, others found their way to Costa Rica and Panama around the same period. These Afro-Caribbeans arrived during the period when colonization by Europeans was being proposed as a gateway to Mexico's economic progress. This doctrine was endorsed and encouraged at official government levels, especially during Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship, which lasted until the end of the first decade of this century, at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. It was during his reign that major strides in the national infrastructure were made, notably the construction of a national railroad network. These Afrocaribbean workers principally provided labor in this enterprise and in agriculture in the southern Mexican states of Chiapas, Yucatan and Quintana Roo. In the North and central regions, they were employed in railroad construction, and in the new, booming petrol extraction industry, and also in ports such as that of Tampico (Muñoz 1994:126).

While many European immigrants were welcomed with much clamor, the arrival of black workers from the Caribbean and the U.S. was downplayed in the national press.

The immigration of these black laborers was informally regulated by the Mexican government while being left largely in the hands of English and American companies. The use of black immigrant workers had more to do with their being subjects of the world's Anglo dominated capitalist empire which controlled much of the industrial enterprises in Mexico at the time. Linguistic affinity could also explain the reason for their being preferred over native Mexicans by the English speaking engineers and foremen.

The nature of labor they engaged in and the areas they settled provoked two types of reactions among the Mexicans. In the southern *haciendas* where labor was short and much needed, the blacks were welcomed and treated well, but in the north they were rejected and resented by Mexican workers who felt that they were being denied employment opportunities; the immigrants were also better paid. There is sparse evidence of the legacy of these West Indian Blacks in Mexico. Being indentured laborers who received the greater portion of their pay upon their return home, many did return, although there are attested a few descendants of Jamaicans in the Veracruz area.

3.8. Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of African presence in Mexico, and the contemporary situation. I introduced the framework of 'African Diaspora' whose conceptualization is primarily informed by the intellectual effort of Dr. Ruth S. Hamilton of Michigan State University, to situate Afromexicans within the larger processes of African Diaspora formations in the Americas. As discussed in Chapter Two, this historical backdrop also serves as context within which today's use of socio-racial terms must be analyzed. I hope that this review will help the reader to understand some of the

interpretations of language practices that I will do in Chapters Four and Five. It is a fact that while a number of monographs and ethnographic studies published in Spanish by Mexican scholars exist, none involves a linguistic study of an Afromexican dialect of Spanish nor any of their unique language practices. Nor do I know of any (socio) linguistic study of Afromexicans published in English or Spanish. Such a poor record of scholarship has further denied the African Diaspora in Mexico the visibility it deserves. It is my hope that this dissertation will help fill this gap.

Dr. Aguirre Beltrán alone published several in-depth studies about Afromexicans, yet he appears to have discontinued research on this topic very early in his professional career to concentrate on the study of native Mexican cultures, particularly those of his home state, Veracruz. Beltrán's first publication was an ethnohistorical study of the Black African presence in colonial Mexico (1946) in which he also traced cultural and linguistic roots of the Africans arriving there. Beltrán's work deals exclusively with Africans of the colonial slave trade. I have gone a bit further by including other entries into Mexico by Africans prior to and after the colonial period. This will increase the scope of our understanding of the place of Mexico in the circulatory movement of African peoples around the world.

Beltrán's 1958 book is a case study of Cuajinicuilapa, and its subtitle accurately describes its content: 'an ethnographic sketch of a black village.' Today that village is the Municipal head and largest town in the region, lying about 15 km from San Nicolas. In this book he devoted a short, final chapter on 'Language and the Corrido' in which he made notes of a few 'peculiarities of Cuijlan Spanish' (1958:201). He also made allusions as to the possible African origins of those peculiarities. Basing his opinion on the 1946 archival research, Beltran pointed out that with regard to the local language of Cuijla, there were

"other unidentified African influences of popular usage in the local slang" (1958:203).

These, he claimed, stood apart from the more widespread and easily recognizable influences

of local, native Mexican languages. Those features, he claimed, were 'probably of Bantu

origin' including place names such as Zambú and Congo, or variant forms of local Spanish

dialect such as *choco* for *sucio* (`dirty'); *chumbío* for *ave* (`bird'), or *chuquía* for *mal olor*

(`stink'); *buhareke* for thatched, adobe house; *warumbo* for a type of wood used to make the

huacharaka, a musical instrument. The leaf of *warumbo* is also boiled to make a drink that

cures inflamed kidneys.

In the course of my research, I have also recorded unique lexicon and sound changes

in the regional dialect such as final syllable deletion or simplification (e.g. *venao* for *venado*

('deer') or *verdá* for *verdad* ('truth'), and the final /s/ aspiration (e.g. *mah* for *más*, *lohamigo*

for *los amigos* (`the friends'). These observations indicate that the dialect of Spanish spoken

by the area's Afromexicans shares features with that spoken in different parts of the country

and of Latin America where Black influence is most apparent (e.g. Veracruz, Caribbean and

Pacific Coasts of Colombia, etc.). While an analysis of Afromexican Spanish phonological

features is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is hoped that a study of "race" lexicon

will contribute to an understanding of the language practices of this section of the Mexican

Spanish speaking population. The details of this chapter will help the reader to relate some

of those practices to an African backdrop and to see them as part of the New World socio-

cultural history as it relates to diaspora formations.

Chapter 4

SOCIO-RACIAL TERMS IN CONVERSATIONAL DISCOURSE: MEANINGS AND ATTRIBUTES

4.0. The Vocabulary of "Race"

Socio-racial terms in San Nicolas provide material for an analysis of how lexical choices are

employed in discourse to reveal existing social relationships, and those between language

and society. A look at the vocabulary of "race" in this community reveals it to be a

compendium of community history, beliefs and attitudes. This chapter focuses on the

analysis of discourse in which four targeted social-racial terms —*negro, moreno, indio* and

blanco — are embedded. First I will identify their occurrence in conversational data taken

from transcribed verbal interactions in semi structured — "mixed-genre" — sociolinguistic

interviews which I obtained through audio and video recordings. These are supplemented by

photographs and notes taken during the months of field work in Afromexican communities.

I will consider interactional and situational factors noted by me as participant-observer as a

basis for my interpretation to account for conversational cues embedded in the contexts. I

shall then use the results to build an inventory of attributes associated with each term. This

will shed light on their social meanings, their manner of use and what they reveal about the

group identity of speakers involved in the conversations.

On site observation indicated to me that San Nicolan speakers very often used social

racial terms to define their own social identity, that of their addressees and those spoken of.

Nevertheless, the boundaries of identity projected by each term was not always

straightforward and clear to an outside observer such as myself, even though I was

eventually able to determine that each one was associated with a series of attributes which formed the basis for social identity in the community.

In one example, an informant said *la raza de nosotros es negros* ('our race is Blacks') but in later conversations he said *aquí somos puros morenos* ('here [in Guerrero] we are all *morenos*'). Let me illustrate, with an example I used before, the difficulty of these socio-racial terms by showing how, in a short conversation, they may vary apparently hapharzadly.

Conversation 4A

1	CH:	*sí, señora, donde nació?*
		yes,señora,where were you born?
2	SG:	*yo?,me nacieron pues,no sé, así no me acuerdo*
		me?,I was born well,Idon't know, like I can't remember
3	CH:	*pero su padre era de allá?*
		but your father was from there?
4	SG:	*sí era de Tapeztla, Oaxaca*
		yes was from Tapeztla, Oaxaca
5	CH:	*así que,.la gente anda de aquí p'allá*
		so then,.the people move about a lot?
6	SG:	*sí sí sí*
		yes, yes, yes
7	CH:	*mucha gente también se vinieron de otro lado?*
		[do] many people [here] come from elsewhere?
8	SG:	*umh huh,.ellos,*
		umh huh,they
9	CH:	*y, sus padres también eran gente negra?*
		and,were your parents also black people?
10	SG:	*SI,negros,morenos,chinos,sí*
		YES,negros,morenos,chinos,yes

In the last utterance (4A, line 10), it is clear that *moreno, negros* and *chinos* are co-referenced with the third person plural (*ellos*) which refers to the speaker's (SG) parents. But it not clear in this sample, whether *negros* also co-occurs with the first person pronoun (*yo*

or *nosotros*) referring to the speaker herself, who self identified as *negro* at the start of the interview. The two terms — *negro* and *moreno* — seemed synonymous in some discourse examples, but informants saw a difference in reference between the two. In this same example, SG asserted that her parents *and* grandson were *negros* (or at least they are referred to as such) but that she herself was a *morena*. She went on to describe her community as one comprised of *morenos*. She also added the term *chinos*, apparently with reference to the same parents. These assertions occurred within a few lines of each other. Within the same conversation (continued in 4B), other aspects of the social racial terms and their uses emerge, such as the attitudes towards *negros* and *morenos* by different social groups or special uses of *negro* 'to insult' or to express 'affection,' and so on. These types of social relationships embodied in symbolic uses of language are the focus in this chapter. Such differences in self-referencing statements and other-referencing among informants indicated that, in the ordinary discourse of Afromexicans, lexical choice is an integral part of San Nicolan language practices. I will continue to show that the choice of socio-racial terms cannot be assumed to be "free" or arbitrary among speakers of this speech community.

Conversation 4B

1	CH:	*quién es negro?*
		who is black?
2	SG:	eh?
3	CH:	*quién se describe como negro?*
		who can be described as black?
4	SG:	((long pause)) *que dicen que es negro* **fulano?**
		like how they say so-and-so is black?
5	CH:	ah ha
6	SG:	*como ahora este chamaco*
		like now this boy ((gestures at a grandson))
7	CH:	*sí?*
		yes?
8	SG:	*asi como con mi color, y el color del*

chamaco, yo tengo color claro,

compared to my color to that of the color of the boy I have lighter
color

y él tiene color más fuerte

and he has color more darker

9   CH: *sí más fuerte,o sea él como yo se le dice*
negro?

yes, darker, so, like me is he called black?

10   SG: *sí,negro,*ah ha, *sí* dicen *negro* verdad, *negro moreno,*

yes,black,ah ha,yes they say black, right, black, *moreno,*

11   CH: aah. ah ha

I will return to deal more deeply with sample Conversation 4B, but for now let me just point out a few salient features of it. In Lines 1-4 for example, a struggle to define *negro* is evident as SG tries to make sure there is mutual understanding of the term. In Line 4, an "outsider" definition is adopted: "that they say so-and-so is black?" marked by non-inclusive third person plural form of verb ("they say"), and a neutral subject ("so-and-so"). The term is contrastive (line 8) and it becomes evident that there exists a shared knowledge and recognition of who the members of a "race" are, the criteria for membership and values (attributes) attached to each one of them. This view was concretized by the fact that informants readily pointed out who was *indio*, who was *negro* or who was *blanco*. As further analysis of discourse in this chapter will show, clearly, social "races" are recognized in San Nicolas at even the conscious level of language. The following sample further illustrates this observation.

Conversation 4C

1   CH: *y,y ,yo le iba a preguntar,usted, usted,que edad tiene*
and,and,I you was to ask,you(V-honorific), you (V) what age have
you

2   RC: *yo tengo treinta y tre-,no, no treinta y*
I have thirty and thre-,no,no thirty and

3   CH: *[o sea nació en el treinta y uno.*
[that is born in thirty one.

4	RC:	*tengo SESENTA Y TRES*
		I have SIXTY AND THREE
5	CH:	*tiene escolaridad*
		have (you(V)) schooling
6	RC:	*primaria, primaria nada mas -*
		elementary, elementary only -
7	CH:	*um huh,y usted se considera persona NEGRA*
		um huh,and you consider self person BLACK
8	RC:	*ah,si, si,si porque la raza de nosotros es negra pues!*
		ah,yes, yes,yes because the race of ours is black well!

In line 15 RC overtly identifies himself as *negro* because "our race is black."

Contrary to my earlier expectations, as informed by pre-field orientation, participants readily

identified themselves as members of a *"negro* race" (*raza negra*). Such overt statements

about "race" were not unusual during interviews or in conversations with people in San

Nicolas. It was surprising in fact that the socially stigmatized word *"negro"* — according to

outsider observation — was actually the most frequently used self or other-identifying term.

I noted in Chapter One, that Beltran (1958) reported that *"negro* was considered too strong

[offensive]" a term among the Afromexicans of Cuajinicuilapa, a town that is located quite

close to San Nicolas within the same dialect area. Of course it is also possible that my (CH)

personal (self-) identity of *"negro"* may have influenced the conversation as a result of some

degree of "convergence" between participants. According to Giles and Smith (1979), this

may be expressed by participants mirroring each others' linguistic habits during interaction.

Such "convergences" may be phonological (e.g. pronunciation), grammatical (e.g. use of

non-standard forms), or lexical – as in this case, self -identifying racial terms. Whatever the

socio-psychological reasons are involved, I do not believe the accommodation effect has had

a powerful influence in the data I will present here.

4.1. *Indio*

In this section I first look at the distribution and use of the term *indio*, paying

particular attention to its patterning with personal pronouns and reference group in general.

The term "indio" originates from the mistaken identity given to Native Americans by the

principal European explorer Christopher Colombus. Those who followed in his legacy

continued to use the term even after realizing that they had not reached the dreamed of

"Indies" of Asia. Faced by the difficulty of being able to determine the "race" of the Aztec,

Mayan and other native Mexican peoples, the early Spanish opted to use a "cultural"

definition to designate those they had encountered in the new lands (Beltran 1958:155).

Local identities based on pre-colonial ethnic identities continue to exist despite the

widespread use of this particular eurocentric (outsider) term. I shall show in some of the

following discourses that an awareness of native Mexican ethnolinguistic groups still

continues to exist, even among Afromexicans. One of the consequences of the imposed term

is that use of *"indio"* defines the context of its utterance; like *"negro"* it can be an object of

pride or be an affront depending on how it is used.

In the following conversations, I (CH) am recording the personal history of a 62

year old woman (SG) discussing 'race' in general.[8] The interview takes place at the

kitchen table of her daughter-in-law's homestead. SG's daughter-in-law (SS) is also

present.

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[8] The scope of local Spanish "raza" is of smaller dimensions than the English or standard Spanish "equivalent" which
I use here only for convenience. "Raza" is often used to describe extended blood and marriage kinship ties somewhat
like "clan" or "(extended) family." It is not here used in any specialized meaning.

Conversation 4D

1	CH:	**aquí tambien hay de raza _india_?**
		are there people of the Indian race here also?
2	SG:	**raza _india_, cómo?**
		indian race, how do you mean?
3	CH:	**de los que ,bueno,de los que hablan otro idioma por ejemplo**
		of the who,well,those who speak another language for example
4	SG:	**no. no aqui no, pero. pero en Ometepec. Ometepec SI,ya**
		no no here no,but. but in Ometepec. Ometepec YES,no more
5		**p'aca,para Pinotepa,p'allá**
		around here,but over in Pinotepa,yes,that way
6	CH:	**pero los de aquí en PITAHAYO SI, no?, no,no hay?**
		but those from here in PITAHAYO YES,no?,no, none?
7	SG:	**pero vienen de Ometepec,vienen de Pinotepavienen de**
		but they come from Ometepec, they come from Pinotepa, from
8		**San Luis,pero es de Pinotepa,de otro lado**
		San Luis,but s/he ((they?)) really are from Pinotepa, from, the other side

CH the "outsider" started off with an implicit statement that he knows what the category

raza india means to SG whose reaction is marked by hedging, a distancing away from the

presupposition CH would appear to have of their "mutual knowledge." The wariness is

evident in her response in line 2 Conversation 4D repeated here:

> SG: *"raza india, cómo?"*
> "indian race?, how? [do you mean?]"

A similar opening error was observed in Preston (1993) in which the interviewer, C, an

"outsider" to the group to which his respondents belonged, had to make a series of refooting

moves in order to properly establish the grounds for the subsequent interview.[9] It is clear in

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[9] In this case a Taiwanese field worker changed from "we" to "many linguists" in referring to those who are interested in "Black English" presumably to distance himself from the "scientists" and establish greater solidarity with his respondents (Preston 1993).

this case that the speaker, SG, wishes to ascertain that CH and she have a common reference for *indio*.

Rephrasing the question, CH introduces a different identifying characteristic, that is, language, which SG finds more acceptable. In fact, for nearly all my informants, the ability to speak another language than Spanish emerged as a primary distinctive attribute of *indio*. The other association to the term *indio* appearing frequently in my data is that *indios* are outsiders to the *negro* community. For example, SG maintained in Lines 5-11 of Conversation 4D, that there are no *indios* in San Nicolas, but they can be found in other communities such as Ometepec and Pinotepa, bigger towns that lie a considerable distance away. Elsewhere in the data, *indios* "used to live in the hills" and thus their presence among Afromexicans is in the category of "outsiders." In this discussion, SG maintains that there may very well be *indios* in the sister community of El Pitahayo, but those in her community come from elsewhere, i.e. they are not natives or members of the San Nicolas community. Further characterization of *indio* was obtained after CH indicated that he was willing to abandon his original presuppositions:

<u>Conversation 4E (continued from 4D)</u>

1	CH:	*y cómo son?*
		and what are they like?
2	SG:	*india. ellos visten con vestilla, y en Pinotepa con*
		indian. they wear the "vestilla," in Pinotepa with
3		*Huipil, los hombres con vestidos largos y de aquí*
		se doblan por acá
		"huipil,"the men wear long dresses, folded here ((motions))
4		*y se cargan, ellos van a la milpa y cargan su maí en su vestido*
		to carry corn,when they go to the fields they carry their corn in their dress
5		*esto se dice TECUATE, estos son tecuates*
		that is called a TECUATE, those are tecuates
6	CH:	Tecuate.

7	SG:	*tecuate,sí,eso no sabe la gente de aquí noSOtros no sabemos,*
		venían mucha de esa gente de SOLEDAD,esa no puede hablar
		cosen, cosen puros huipiles, hoyas,con flores. los indios tambien
		hablan idiomas que noSOtros no saBEmos
		tecuate,yes,people around here WE don't know [about "tecuate"],
		came (pl) many of those people from SOLEDAD, [and] they cannot
		speak [Spanish], they sew, they sew "huipils" all the time, [decorate]
		pots with flowers the indios also speak in their languages which WE
		don't know

This is an elaborate description of the category *indio* in terms of oppositional values vis a vis the group to which the speaker belongs. Foremost, the *indios* speak differently; that is, `they "can't speak" (our language, Spanish) and "WE don't know their language." They dress differently, since men wear dresses; they carry their corn harvest in a different style, and they carry out distinct economic activities such as pottery making and weaving. This Afromexican speaker (SG) demonstrates inside knowledge of the "other" which is based on how they do things. SG for instance identifies by name the type of dress used by *indios*, the *tecuate*, a native Mexican name itself; how "they" cultivate, decorate, etc.

Overall, these statements assert the existence of a distinct social identity of the *indios* in relation to the speaker. This position is concretized by the use of different personal pronouns such as *ellos* and *nosotros*: "*nosotros (we)* don't know and *ellos* (they) [know how to use a *tecuate*]; "*they* wear dresses; *they* come from far," and so on, to reflect the boundaries of identity that the speaker maintains in relation to the groups she claims allegiance with. A dramatic change of footing is found in line 7, Conversation 4E where SG uses a third person exclusive "*la gente de aquí*" (lit. the people of here [this community]) which she quickly corrects in the same line by adopting an inclusive *nosotros* (we) to signal her alignment with and distinctiveness of the group ('us, the people of here') that she is describing so intimately.

In another conversation with Don RC whom I cited in Conversation 4C, the attributes of

indio are heard again:

Conversation 4F (Continued from 4C).

1	CH:	*que características se dice uno tiene, la persona negra, cómo se describe pues-*
		what characteristics is said one has, the person black - like is decribed well –
2	RC:	*la caracteristica pue- no entiendo lo que es CHARACTERSITIC-*
		the characteristics wel- no understand what is *CARACTERISTIC–*
4	CH:	*[este] (,) siempre hay forma de decir-*
		well ( ) always there is way of to say la
5		*la gente, pues, en se dice ah, los de africa son gente asi,*
		the people, well, in it is said, ah, those of Africa are like
6		*con poco desarrollo, o el indio es callado, y el NEGRO?*
		with little development, or the indio is quiet, and the NEGRO?
7	RC:	*pues el NEGRO siempre es alto, chato*
		well the NEGRO always is tall, flat
8	CH:	*chato- chato quiere decir -*
		squat- squat means
9	RC:	*su nariz*
		his nose
10	CH:	*a ha*
11	RC:	*pero es grande, se ve con fuerza pues- y el INDIO es*
		but [he] is big, looks with strength then - and the INDIO is
12		*chaparro, y narizón, y pelo pues blandito, eso es*
		short and big nose, and hair, well soft, that is
13		*la caracteristica del indio y como quien dice la gente MORENA se*
		characteristic of the indio and as they say the people MORENOS
14		*considera con mas capacidad del indio mentalmente y*
		consider (themselves) to have greater ability than the indio mentally and
15		*fisicamente, pero a veces se equivoca uno-*
		physically, but sometimes one is wrong
17	CH:	*claro*
		of course
18	RC:	*porque a veces los indios uno los ve con un*
		because sometimes the indios one LOOKS DOWN ON them
		DESPRECIO:"es indio," pero hay unos indios que
19		he/she is indio,"but there are some *indios* who
		tiene mas inteligencia que la gente NEGRA
		have more intelligence than the people BLACK
21	CH:	*claro, seguro que si*

97

of course, certainly

Noting the difficulties Don RC in line 1 had in understanding the term, I (CH) clarified the meaning of "characteristics" for RC in line 5-6, partially using examples of attributes I had previously learned about the "races" of San Nicolas. Line 7 reflects an immediate understanding of my question, and the response was indeed in the form of a list of attributes of *indio* and *negro* "races." It is significant that such an inventory of racial attributes is so well known to speakers of the community who easily identified members of such "races" because it highlights the salience of social race in the language of Afromexicans. The attributes ("characteristics") include both physical and psychological ones: the *indio* has soft/smooth hair (*blando*); has a long nose and is short (*chaparro*). The *negro* is tall and strong and has more "abilities" than the *indio*. In line 18 RC admits that "one sometimes looks down on the indio," where "one" appears to refer to "negro" people but might be more general. As such, the statement can be taken to mean that *negros* often look down upon the *indio*, and this attitude is crystallized in the form of a saying among *negros* that "*X es indio*" — "s/he's [just] an *indio*."

"*Capacidad*" in line 8 literally means "ability to do things"; able, talented, not limited. According to RC, *morenos* themselves ("*se,*" reflexive) believe that they are physically and mentally superior to the *indios*. Notice that while saying so in line 8, RC selects the phrase "*gente morena,*" not *negros* or *gente negra*. It is not immediately clear that *negros,* as a sub group of *morenos*, also share this belief. It is inferable that RC is distancing himself from others by adopting a non-inclusive socio-racial term to express a

(negative) local belief. This is an interesting example of the way in which social racial terms are used to shift psychological alliances observed in these data.

RC indicated earlier that the term *indio* includes a number of different peoples. It shares similarities with *moreno* as outsider categories which ignore internal differences otherwise recognized by insiders: between *negros, cuculustes, chinos, prietos, triguenos* etc. on the one hand and, *mixtecos, amuzgos, chatinos, nahuas*, etc. in the case of *indios*.

The superiority of *negros* that is claimed in the conversation can be explained within the context of a society in which racial affiliations have played a very important role in defining social relationships and economic opportunities. *Blancos* historically claim superiority over all other groups, and *negros* similarly appear to want to find a space to claim their own superiority over others as a group. In Chapter 2, I discussed the region's history in which *negros* working for the Spanish Crown were often pitted against local native peoples. One of the consequences was that *negros* were sometimes identified on the side of the *conquistadors* as having participated in the subjugation of Mexico and as foremen (*capataces*) in *haciendas* of Spanish settlers during the colonial period. Some blacks were even granted *encomederos* or captainships (See Chapter 3 of this dissertation). Gillian (1976) noted that the *negros* of the *Costa Chica* region "consider themselves *gente de razon*" (p.97), but they do not consider the mixtecos (*indios*) as such. In the context of regional dynamics of social race, *negros* make such claims of "superiority" as an assertion of their place in society, or to ward off competition with *indios*. Of course, RC recognizes too that these are only social attitudes which may not always be based on facts in line 19, Conversation 4F where he says: "some *indios* are as intelligent as *negros*." He then

continues to describe the changed relationships between the two races that cohabit in San

Nicolas as follows:

Conversation 4G

1	RC:	*yo para mí pues que es, como en todo hay bueno y hay*
		I for me well is that, like in all there are good and are
2		*malos, ya la gente indígena se han aclimatado porque volviendo*
		bad ones,people indigenous have acclimatized because returning
3		*a la historia de atrás te dijeron que pues los MORENOS los*
		back to history of before you were told that the MORENOS the
4		*NEGROS quedaron aca en el bajo y los neg- los indios en el*
		BLACKS stayed here in the lowlands and the bla- the indios in
5		*CERRO - así que los indios venían por aca en las secas, ya*
		the HILLS - thus the indios came to here during droughts,
6		*empezando a llover, se iban al cerro- tenían miedo a la gente*
		start to rain, they'd go back to hills- (they)were afraid of the people
7		**MORENA pero ahora ya NO, ya no, aunque sea en las aguas andan**
		MORENA but now no more, no more, even during the rains
8		*por aca, no tienen miedo ya se ha aclimatado lo que, pues que*
		they're here, no more afraid, they aclimatized what is well
9		*tenían miedo que la INDIA con un MORENO no, no quería este-*
		(they)were afraid that THE INDIO (fem) with a MORENO (masc)
10		*revolverse tenían pues miedo- pero ahora ya no,*
		did not wish to mix up they were afraid but no more,

More legitimization of the present hierarchy (a *negro* majority and dominance in community

life and experience) appears in Lines 4-5 of Conversation 4G. *Indios* continue to be seen as

a separate group, a different "race" historically, and presently distinct from *negros*. *Indios*

used to live up in the mountains, whereas *negros* established the present community; *indios*

came down from the hills only for practical reasons, mainly to pass the dry season in the

settled community, but, after the rains came, they would return to their farms in the hills.

There was fear and mistrust between the two groups, but now, *indios* have become

"acclimatized" to the extent they can now intermarry with *negro* people. This historical

perspective that is recurrent in the conversations is especially detailed in the following data

(Conversation 4H), where the Afromexican speaker further distances himself and his group

from the social identity of *indio*.

4.5.2. The data sample was recorded with a 60 year old Afromexican man (MG) having a

conversation with CH about the same topic of "race." MG is however from a small

Afromexican community near Copala, Guerrero, approximately 200 kilometers south of San

Nicolas. But I choose to include his data because it is illustrative of the regional

Afromexican perceptions of *indios*. The *indios* discussed by MG are of different ethnicity

(e.g. *chichimecas, aztecas*, etc.) not *mixtecos, amuzgos* etc. of the *Costa Chica*).

<u>Conversation 4H</u>

1	CH:	*y aquí en México cuántas razas hay?*
		and here in Mexico how many races are there?
2	MG:	*pues,en Mexico pues hay pura raza india, pues 'staba*
		well,in Mexico all were of indian race, well there was
3		*la raza india azteca,más bien la raza más fina era la*
		the Aztec indian race,actually the finest race was the
4		*AZTECA,graba pues para que,*
		AZTEC,record it well so that,
5	CH:	*ah ha. ponla aquí*
		ah ha put it here [recorder]
6	MG:	*de ahí seguía la ZAPOTECA,la más corriente era la*
		then followed the ZAPOTECS,least fine was the
7		*CHICHIMECA,*
		CHICHIMECA,
8	CH:	*esas trés eran INDIA o eran trés razas diferentes?*
		those three were INDIAN or three different races?
9	MG:	*no,india. INDIA eran INDIA*
		no,indian INDIAN they were INDIAN
10	CH:	*luego?*
		then?
11	MG:	*luego vinieron la raza espanola,y se cruzó con la raza*
		then came the Spanish race,and [it] mixed with the indian race
12		*india y de ahí se vino limpiándo la raza*
		and from then there came the cleaning of the race
13	CH:	*a ha*

The social identity of *indio* is quite clearly demarcated in this Afromexican text, and the dimensions of the definition are placed within a historical framework. MG's explanations are essentially a narrative of the history of Mexican *mestizaje*. An additional aspect of *indio* is seen in the form of a typification of indian identity in hierarchical, value laden terms not unlike the *castas* of the colonial period as seen in chapter 1 of this dissertation.

The Aztecs were a "fine" race of indians, the Chichimecas were the "least fine." The Aztecs were described by MG as "tall and with straight nose," they had straight hair and they were the principal candidates for intermarriage with the Spaniards to produce the Indomestizos. These qualities contrast with those of the neighboring Chichimecas, who are 'squat,' 'coarse,' without the 'fine' features such as those attributed to the Spanish and Aztec "races." The hierarchy is implicit in the sequencing of the narrative lines: "and then followed the Zapotecs" (line 6) and echoes some descriptions of native Mexicans by early Spaniards such as Bernal's classic narrative of *How we conquered the Aztecs (1963)*. In fact, rebellious, pagan "indios" who refused or actively resisted Christianity and enslavement, were known as "*indios barbaros, infieles or gentiles*"; they were also simply called *chichimecas* (Beltran 1946: 155) without distinction of the particular rebellious ethnic group. Echoes of colonial Mexico's "race" discourse can be heard in a modern Afromexican as the very early foundations of social-racial identity remain strong in their discourse today.[10]

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[10] In defending his view that Latinos should emphasize common 'culture' rather than 'race' in defining their society, Prof. De Alva, a Mexican American pointed out that the term "Indian" is a Spanish colonial invention that effectively wiped out important internal differences of the diverse cultural and linguistic groups of Mexico (April 1996 edition of Harper's Magazine)

In general, the boundaries of *indio* identity in relation to the Afromexican speakers are abundant and clear. From data and examples shown in the above sections, the social identity of *indio* as seen by Afromexicans in San Nicolas is delimited along the lines of language, geography, history, and social practice. There appears to be little conflict if any at all in fixing a referent for this category, and the social distance of the "other" is clear. 4.5.3. In Table 4.1 I summarize the uses of *indio* obtained in discourse as illustrated with sample data. Occurrences are marked by line numbers and conversational sample (e.g. B2, E1, etc.) and my own interpretation of their contextual meaning and resultant footing (and refooting) of the speaker, the group and individual spoken to or of. Inflected Spanish verb forms which carry relevant pronominal references are noted also.

Table 4.1. Uses of *indio* and references:

Line	Reference	Contextual Meaning/interpretation
4D,2	*Raza india* "echo" to CH's previous mention	hedging;let's make sure we're talking of the same *indio*; perhaps your definition is different from mine/ours. The utterance is used to establish a frame within which the socio-racial terms are to be discussed
4D,7	*vienen ('they come from')*	Three repetitions of "they come from" add emphasis to this "otherness" of indios in terms of their origin. Note that these mentions come in response to CH's immediately preceding line whose rising intonation and emphasis on PITAHAYO, the sister community of San Nicolas, imply his belief that there are indios here. SG appears to take that implication quite seriously as her three statements "they come from" indicate. She wants to dispel this belief in CH.
4E,2	*India. ellos visten('they dress')*	Further marking of the verb in addition to overt pronoun referring to the indios who dress in a manner quite distinct from that of the speaker. This isimplied by the description she finds necessary to give in order to add to the established "otherness." The description demonstrates SG's familiarity with the "indio" cultural code, including the knowledge of the native names of those forms of dress.
4D,8	*Pero [el indio] es de Pinotepa*	SG switches to a third person singular form of 'they are' after having emphatically established the indios "otherness" in relation to her. By using the existential verb in the singular form, she concretizes her view that indios are not only an "other" social category, but also projects her belief in their "oneness" as a social group, irrespective of their geographic origins.

103

4E,4	*Cargan...ellos van a a la milpa ('they carry...go to the fields')*	SG continues to describe the "otherness" of the style and economic activity of indios, with continued uses of emphatic pronoun and marked verb.
4E,7	La gente de aqui ('the people of here,we')	This [how to carry corn in tecuates] the people of here – "we" do not know how to do it. This line concludes the extended description of the indio's origin, language and economic activities. The natives of `here' are quite distinct from the *indios* in all the manners mentioned (dress, language etc.). Immediate refooting follows the assertion, to indicate that speaker includes herself among the `people of here' and excludes herself from `los indios'. SG adopts an explicit inclusive pronoun which she equates with the expression 'people of here'. It is a conclusive affirmation of the distinctiveness that exist between the "we" [the people of here] and "indios" [the people from outside], which she has carefully tried to explain to CH.
4E,7	Los indios hablan asi ('the indios who speak like that' [i.e. different]	The language of indios is different from ours, as different as their customs and manners of dress. We speak different (language) , further evidence of their "otherness"
4E,7	noSOtros ('WE') no sabemos ('don't know')	Same context as above, a mutual lack of knowledge of each others languages as additional symbols of difference
4F,11	*El indio*	Hypothetical use to illustrate who is *indio* and contrast him with el negro. This usage was common in the conversations, used apparently, as a contrastive device when discussing indio/negro or "other" distinctions. It is not an unusual feature of Mexican Spanish where it is often used to make generalizations about different social groups. Such uses as "el Americano", or "el Africano" are found in many ordinary speech samples
4F,14	del indio	Used here to contrast the physical characteristics with those of el negro in order to illustrate their differences: el indio is short, has a big nose and straight hair. MG uses the term to evoke difference, as in the next lines he goes on to say that the moreno consider themselves 'mentally and physically superior'.
4F,15	Se ...uno	After making a statement that can be easily interpreted as biased, RC selects a neutral ,third person pronoun i.e. non-inclusive, in this line *(a veces se equivoca uno* 'one could be wrong sometimes') as a device to indicate his non-participation in the making of those judgements. This suggests that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the author. In effect, his role changes to that of a mere informant/commentator, not to be held in account for the biased viewpoints.
4F,18	Los indios,los	The socio-racial term as well as the pronoun it is indexed with is definitely used by MG in the capacity of outsider, non-inclusively. While 'one' may see indios as inferior, in actual fact, RC says, it is not an inherent disability since some can be more intelligent than the negros. While still remaining outside the boundaries of the indio identity, RC tries to remedy the biased views he reported in the lines

		immediately prior to this one, indicating an awareness of prevailing attitudes
4G,2	*La gente indigena* 'the indigenous people'	This term has not been used so far, although we are aware of its very frequent use in national discourse; it is the commonly used term to refer to native Mexicans (rather than "indios" which is considered impolite). Interestingly, the frame that RC adopts is that of an historian. His next utterance "now returning to history" has a formulaic or didactic aspect. As such we understand that RC's role in this section of the conversation is that of a "neutral" outsider recounting the past life of his community.
4G,5	Los indios	In this context, the indios continue to be portrayed as the outsiders who "used to come" down from the hills during the dry season. Then in next line, RC claims that these outsiders "were afraid of the people" (F,6), where "*the people*" are understood to be the *negro* natives of San Nicolas. Several other mentions of *india* with same meaning are found in F9
4G,9	*La india* (fem.)	There is an explicit reference to gender here with regard to marriage. After having 'lots their fear', indios now do 'mix-up' with the morenos. Note the CAPS indicating verbal highlighting of these two terms. Historically, blacks sought Indian wives as a means of 'improving their offspring'. This phenomenon may be the reason why RC's specification of feminine gender in his reference to marriage that is now possible between indios and morenos
4H,2	Hay raza india, pues estaba ('in Mexico there are only[see below] indian races, well thre was)	MG adopts the historical present tense, using 'there are' in discussing the indios past. This reveals his awareness of the historical basis of modern Mexican people which is quite well known in national political discourse at every level; in the media, newspapers, educational or historical books, monuments, etc. The ideology of mestizaje. Nevertheless, MG's following lines do not indicate that he includes self in those "races" of Mexico. Again, an awareness of the diversity of indio peoples is evident in his use of "races" which he then goes on to describe in terms of ethnicity: Azteca, Zapoteca, Chichimeca.
4H,2	Ellos 'they' (non-overt)	MG is aware that native Mexicans are/were the original inhabitants of Mexico, but this knowledge does not seem to confer any special status to the indios
4H,3-4	*Raza azteca era las mas fina* 'the Aztec race was the finest' (...) los Chichimecas(...) La raza Zapoteca	Internal stratification among *indios* was, and continues to be a feature of internal differentiation as it is amongst ourselves (in later conversational lines, MG explains the differences among *morenos, prietos, negros* etc. which relate to his particular social group of Afromexicans
4H,2	*pura raza india*	The indio "race" is a primary component of the(Euro)mestizo which does not include *negro*. The word "pura" can be glossed as "many" or "only" in the regional dialect, according to my observations
4H,9	*INDIA. eran india* ('they were india [the first inhabitants])	Despite said internal differences, they were all *indios* (just as we are all morenos), thus the category indio implies a recognizable social identify found within ancient Mexicans. The statement is in response to CH's question as to whether these three indio "races" were different. Thus the internal differentiation does not eliminate the onness of indio as a

		social group

4.1.1. Summary

Table 4.1 provides a summary of the occurrences of the term *indio* in conversational

samples. In the right hand column are contextualized interpretations based on inferences

drawn from surrounding conversational lines, taking into account my role as participant-

observer with some knowledge of background information related to each socio-racial term.

Situated inferences make it possible to read far more into the conversation than would

otherwise be possible if I analyzed the term out of the context of utterances. In their totality,

the glosses in the right hand column of the table present an exclusionist view of who the

indio is, with respect to the speakers. They also give an index of the social meanings

attached to this term from the perspective of *negro* informants. The interpretation provides

sufficient grounds to assert that San Nicolan informants regard the person or group

identified as *indio* as being a non-member with respect to their own group since the

boundaries of identity are unequivocally demarcated in all instances. The *indio* is associated

with certain characteristics – emotional, psychological and not least, physical ones which are

distinct from those of informants. Overt references to *indio* attributes represent an identity

that lies quite outside that of the *negro* or *moreno*. The pronouns used by speakers in these

conversations are without exception, non-inclusive "footing" stances.

4.2. *Negro* and *Moreno*

The term *negro* in Spanish means 'black,' and it is embedded in the long history of Spanish

and Portuguese contact with Africa. In the late 15th century Portuguese sailors referred to

Africans they encountered during their voyages in the south Atlantic as *'negritos,'* (Colin

1976) a diminutive form of *negros*, "Blacks." In the colony of New Spain (Mexico),

Africans – slave or free – were generally referred to as *negros*, but there were also sub-

classifications. Baptized (christianized) Africans who had also learned Spanish were known

as *negros ladinos,* while those who had arrived from Africa recently and went directly to the

colony were known as *negros bozales* (Beltrán 1946). This particular distinction arose from

the tension created by the former who demanded more rights and freedom as a result of their

enlightenment. A third category of *negros* was that of those born in Mexico or *negros*

criollos. Blacks who escaped slavery and took to the hills and other difficult to access areas,

living in outlawed communities or *palenques* were known as *negros cimarrones*. Other

terms such as *negros retintos* or *atezados* (very black) or *merinos* (wooly haired) were used

to describe physical attributes but were not necessarily racial classifications or *castas*. N*egro*

was the term used in colonial Mexico to refer to (dark skinned) people of African origin.

Unlike *indio,* which was coined thanks to erroneous geography, the term `*negro'*

was based on European concepts of "race," and it continues to have strong racial

connotations in Mexico today. Chief among them is its association with slavery and

disenfranchisement. For example, there is a popular Mexican proverb which says: *"trabajar*

como negro para vivir como blanco" (To work like a Black (slave) so as to live like a White

(master)." The social use of *negro* - whether to refer to or to address people - is conflictive;

it may be appropriate or not, depending on many factors such as context, speaker, or

participatory status in a given conversational exchange. One consequence of this peculiar

history of the term is that *negro* is avoided by many Mexican speakers in ordinary speech to

the extent that it is considered a stigmatized, or at least a heavily marked term in mainstream

Mexican Spanish. Its connotations are mostly negative, and these are often exploited by

mass media to conjure negative images. For example, a famously corrupt government official of the late 1980's whose last name was Durazo was known by the Mexican press as *"el negro Durazo."*

Negro is an item of Afromexican language which allows a fascinating study of language-context/society relationship. Its US English counterpart, *negro* was also used in similar ways during a past era, but it later took on a different trajectory. Its uses have changed from negative to positive — at least among 'insiders' — to reflect changes in society norms and values (Smitherman 1977). These conditions are, of course, quite different in Mexico. Language data shows clearly that colonial Mexican beliefs and attitudes associated with socio-racial terms persist in contemporary Afromexican talk.

4.2.2. I now return to Conversation 4A which I cited earlier. As the search for native socio-racial categories continues, it can be seen that *negro* is one of the harder items to delimit. For reader's convenience in referring to conversational lines, I shall put the sample 4A together with 4B (and its continuation) as one conversation 4I.

<u>Conversation 4I:</u>

1	CH:	*sí, señora, donde nació?*
		Yes, señora, where were you born?
2	SG:	*yo? me nacieron pues, no sé, así no me acuerdo*
		me?, I was born well, I don't know, like I can't remember
3	CH:	*pero su padre era de allá?*
		but was your father from there?
4	SG:	*sí era de Tapeztla, Oaxaca*
		yes he was from Tapeztla, Oaxaca
5	*CH:*	*así que, la gente anda de aquí p'allá*
		so then, the people move about a lot?
6	SG:	*sí sí sí*
		yes, yes, yes
7	CH:	*mucha gente también se vinieron de otro lado?*
		Do many people [here] come from elsewhere?
8	SG:	*uh huh, ellos,*

		uh huh, they
9	CH:	*y, sus padres también eran gente negra?*
		And, were your parents also black people?
10	SG:	**SI,***negros,morenos, chinos,***sí**
		YES...negros, morenos, chinos, yes
11	CH:	*quien es negro?*
		Who is black?
12	SG:	eh?
13	CH:	*quien se describe como negro?*
		Who can be described as black?
14	SG:	((long pause)) *que dicen que es negro* **fulano?**
		Like how they say so-and-so is black?
15	CH:	um huh
16	SG:	*como ahora este chamaco*
		like now this boy (gestures at a grandson)
17	CH:	*sí?*
		Yes?
18	SG:	*asi como con mi color, y el color del chamaco,*
		compare my color to that of the color of the boy,
19		*yo tengo color claro, y él tiene color más fuerte*
		I have lighter color, but his color is darker
20	CH:	*sí más fuerte, o sea él como yo se le dice negro?*
		Yes, darker, so, like me is he called *negro*?
21	SG:	*sí,negro,***ah ha,** *sí* dicen *negro* verdad, *negro, moreno*
		yes...black,ah ha,yes they say black, right, black, *moreno*
22	CH:	aah. Ah ha
23	SG:	*ya a él le dicen "oye moreno!" una gente que*
		sea más blanca, verdad?
		A more white person may say to him "hey *moreno*!, right?
24	CH:	uh huh
25	SG:	*como yo ahora me dicen morena por alla pero ya aquí*
		like me, they call me"morena"out there but here we
		nosotros no decimos "morena" porque ya somos,tenemos
		we don't say "morena" because we all are,
26		*tenemos el mismo color*
		we have the same color
27	CH:	uh huh
28	SG:	*cómo le voy a decir a él moreno si estamos igual, verdad?*
		How can I call him *moreno* if we are are the same [color], right?
29	CH:	*entonces como le dicen?*
		So then what do you call her?
30	SG:	*a ella?*
		her?
31	CH:	ah ha?
32	SG:	*su nombre pues!*
		her name, well!

33	CH:	*cuándo entonces se usa "negro"?*
		when then to use "*negro*"?
34	SG:	*n'mas cuando se enoja la gente*
		only when people get angry-[
35	SS:	((interrupts))
36		[*n'más que dicen PINCHE NEGRO PRIETOTE!*
		only if they say STUPID BLACK NIGGER
37	SG:	*ah sí sí los groseros*
		ah yes yes the dirty mouthed
38	SG:	*moreno, pero es que también moreno es cariño también "oye morena!"*
		moreno is also affectionate like "hey morena"

SG readily affirms that the social race of her parents was *negro*, but she quickly goes on to qualify the use of that term with *moreno*s and *chino*s in line 10. *Chino* appears occasionally in interviews to refer to persons with very curly hair. It was used in the past to describe Afromestizos from central Mexico, but it is not yet clear in this sample if *negro, moreno* and *chino* are synonymous. The continuing discourse provides additional examples of "paired" *negro* and *moreno*.

CH attempts to clarify if many of the local residents had emigrated from another part of the region (like SG's parents). SG's reply is affirmative in a way that generally excludes herself, using the third person plural pronoun *ellos*, 'they', which is also implicit in the conjugated verb *vinieron* 'they came.' These moves not only point to a particular social group but also establish a distance between the speaker and the people who came from elsewhere, *negro*s such as her own father. The "otherness" of *negro*s in relation to this speaker bears similarities to the self-contrast with *indio* just discussed and summarised in 4.1.1. If indeed this is the case, such a situation is consistent with the history of racial terms outlined above, in which a given individual may belong to a different social race than his or her parent(s). *Negro* is clearly used here within a kinship relationship. In fact nothing

prohibits its use between blood relatives or between familiar strangers (such as with CH). However, it will be noted that the term seems to delimit skin color gradations as SG uses her darker grandson to illustrate the color differences between him and herself in an apparent attempt to restrict the use of "*negro*." As such a "differentiation device," the term might seem empty of socio-racial connotations, being used strictly as a descriptive or comparative term. But once more, the term *moreno* is uttered immediately after *negro* in line I,21, suggesting it may have a 'remedial' function, namely to soften the impact of referring to CH or the grandson as simply *negro,* for reasons referred to earlier, namely, the stigmatization of *negro* according to outsider discourse. I will further illustrate this tendency with a "softer" *moreno* discussed below.

SG uses the Spanish clitic *se* and the third person plural *dicen* `they say' when explaining the use of *negro* and *moreno.* These two linguistic devices are used in Spanish to indicate an anonymous, unknown human subject of a phrase, similar to the English use of `it is said...' or `they say....' This is extremely common in Mexican Spanish, used as a hedging device or a denial of personal responsibility over a socially sensitive subject or statement. The use of this formula is significant in that SG is unwilling to claim that she personally chooses to refer to certain individuals as *negro.* SG goes on to suggest a relativistic scale: " I might call him *negro* because he is darker than me, but a 'lighter' person might call him *moreno*." Individual attributes such as physical characteristics (e.g. hair type or color), rather than language, dress, or economic activity provide the defining criteria for *negro* according to this speaker. The definitions are largely indexical and referential in nature.

The distinctiveness of *"negro"* and *"moreno"* may be located in "emotional" and solidarity related discourse such that an outsider may address a native of San Nicolas as *"moreno"*, but an insider will not do the same since "we are all equal…we have the same color." *Moreno's* parameters of definition include relative skin color, and its use is linked to the participatory status (insider/outsider) of the speaker-addressee as can be seen in *"me dicen"* (they call me) as opposed to *"decimos"* (we say).

Apparently when one expresses negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or disappointment at an addressee, *negro* may be evoked, but this use is recognized as socially unacceptable and is used by the 'the dirty mouthed.' On the other hand, *moreno* may be used by people outside the immediate community (e.g. market-place in Pinotepa) to express 'affection.' Recall however that this "affectionate" use is not within the insider speech community (see line 4I,25), rather it is used by the "others" to address San Nicolans. Nevertheless, *moreno* is not ruled out as a term which marks solidarity among Afromexicans. Its use as an "outsider" term of address in reference to San Nicolans and its avoidance among "insiders" may actually be an expression of solidarity among them since it functions as a marker of difference between *outsiders* who use it and *insiders* who do not; the social significance of uttering *"moreno"* is that of a marker of "outsider" identity. In fact, as lines I, 29-32 show, a San Nicolan A refers to B by name, not by socio-racial term. This is affirmed and emphasized by SG in Line 21. In the immediately preceding conversation (first part of H), the discussion revolved around "outsider" uses of terms with respect to "insiders." Once the dialogue is located among "insiders" in the second part of H, the socio-racial terms lose their relevance, as clearly expressed by SG's rhetorical question in line 4I,28: "how can I call her moreno if we are all the same?" SG's emphatic

exclamation in Line I,32 is indicative of the importance she attributes to this change of address terminology. It is not immediately evident what the option is when the name of an individual is unknown. However, being a small, tightly knit community, it is likely that most people know each other by first or family name. The references of *negro* and other person and group labels and mentions are summarized in Table 4.2. The inclusive/non-inclusive use of first person pronouns and referring expressions will be discussed in later sections. Before I look at instances of *negro* in conversational samples A-I, let me present another short conversation to illustrate other special uses of *negro* which express the stigmatized social attributes of this term. These are similar to the 'used to insult' uses seen in an earlier sample, but which derive from a very particular political history of Guerrero state.

<u>Conversation 4J</u>

1	IM:	*si si si pero, este, pues como son las cosas*
		Yes yes but, well, like how things are
2		*dice que muchos le hacia burlas, muchos lo choteaban.*
		he says many made fun of him, many taunted him
3		*en ese tiempo andaba un LUCIO CABAÑAS que andaba*
		at that time there was a LUCIO CABAÑAS who was around
4		*de,de,armero y que le decia cabaña-CABAÑISTA*
		of,armed and they'd call him [son]cabaña-CABAÑISTA
5		*que se agaró con uno y lo pateó y de alli en*
		until he (son) got one [boy] and kicked him and from
6		*adelante ya no,se calmaron, ya no tuvo problemas*
		henceforth, no,they calmed, he had no more problems
	CH:	a ha
7	IM:	*si muchos lo choteaban que NEGRO que quien sabe*
		Yes many taunted him NEGRO who knows what else
		tuvo que pelear..
		then..he..had to fight [back]

Cabañistas were the followers of a guerrilla leader by the name of Lucio Cabañas, a former school-teacher who led poor peasants against the government of Mexico in the 1970's in the state of Guerrero, in the fashion of his contemporary, Comandante Marcos of

Chiapas (See *Corrido de Lucio Cabanas* in Chapter Five of this dissertation). Like any popular hero, myths as well as controversy surround this person who is seen either as a 'Robin Hood' or political gangster. For instance, it said in San Nicolas that he was never really killed, that he fled to live and fight on in the mountains. Cabaña's place in Mexico's long history of violent social action contributes as much as that of the maroons of old, to the popular belief that Guerrero people are a violent people. This belief is best embodied by the term *'negro'* since, I think, it is linked to the larger historical landscape of maroonage in this region of Mexico.

In Table 4.2. I summarize the contextual uses of *negro* gleaned from discourse samples 4A-4J. I will also ask the reader to refer to one sample not seen so far, Conversation 4M and 4N which are found on pages 141-142 of this chapter.

<u>Table 4.2. Uses of *negro* and references.</u>

Line	Reference	Contextual meaning and interpretation.
4A,10	SI,*negros*	*negro* is coreferenced with 'my parents'. Ancestry or blood connection is part of self identity. Notice an immediate use of moreno as a 'softening' device following the first use of negro
4B,4	*es negro* (non-inclusive 3rd person singular) *fulano* ("so and so")	Hypothetical use of *negro* without necessarily making self referencing claims about negro's identity. In fact, it is an outsider category ("**they** say so-and-so is black") indicated by the non-inclusive footing stance taken by SG
4B,10	*negro*,they say...	Another instance of outsider reference to negro. The subject pronouns clearly absolve SG from the claims she makes about skin color i.e.'*they say* [so and so] is negro', not 'I/we say.' Notice another softening 'moreno' similar to that of Line A10
4C,8	*Negra,es la raza de nosotros pues!*	Insider footing is apparent here because speaker uses *negro* in reference to 'our race' emphasizing his position with rising exclamatory intonation
4F,7	*NEGRO...alto, chato*	description of *negro* starts with a list of physical attributes. The use of 'es' (third person singular) form of 'to be' suggests that the impersonal (abstract) use of negro which is nevertheless speaker-inclusive. This usage is discussed further below

4F,9	*Su nariz*	physical attribute (flat nose) refers to *el negro*. The possessive pronoun is in third person indicating a non-inclusive reference of speaker
4F,11	*Es grande*	One more physical attribute of negro: big sized. As in previous two lines, we assume that in this usage, the description is speaker-exclusive
4F,19	*Gente negra*	Some blacks are less intelligent that the indios they may look down on. This usage is speaker-exclusive because speaker is not one of those who look down on indios (see next line G1. In terms of footing however, he adopts that of an outsider describing a situation
4I,36	they say PINCHE NEGRO	people (outsiders because of speaker-exclusive pronoun "they," and the immediately preceding lines referred to "people" outside the community) use *negro* to express anger at referent, as an insult
4G,4	*NEGROS quedaron*	speaker RC here adopts an outsider footing as he narrates the history of negros who stayed in the area to settle. Notice that RC uses the 'softer' moreno before quickly correcting himself and referring to the people as negros.
4N,2	*Es* (non-inclusive 3rd person singular)..la gente negra	the hypothetical *negro* (not me/us) or the *negro* referred to by others has (negative) attributes such as aggressiveness.
4N,4	*es* (non-inclusive 3rd person singular)	another emphasis on the negative attributes (i.e. aggressiveness) of the hypothetical *negro*.
4M,4	They (non-overt) call me/us "negro"	what 'outsiders' call me or others like me. The demarcation line between user (non-negro) and the intended addressee (negro) is clear
4M,6	Inclusive *se* (`*it* feels bad...') somos del color negro we are of black color	causes addressee to `feel bad' being called *negro* in the (outsider) context of negative attributes. Note the immediate refooting move when IS uses `we' in the same line which indicates inclusiveness of speaker in the previous `neutral' pronoun. Clear acceptance of belonging to this group.
4M,7	*Si somos del color* Inclusive `we'	Speaker inclusive verb form follows immediately from previous line is used to describe speaker's group skin color by outsiders; it follows as a refooting move after a neutral pronoun seen above. Speaker accepts this color designation although his group 'feel bad' about its negative social evaluation.
4M,10	*es* (non-inclusive 3rd person singular).	Hypothetical *negro* has more `bad' attributes (in outsider terms) such as *bravo*, although this particular attribute could be positive (i.e.`manly, tough')

There are two more cases which cover semantic territory close to "negro": *chino* and *cuculuste,* both of which refer to the curly hair that is taken as firmest evidence of African heritage in San Nicolas. *Chino,* like *jarocho* in Veracruz, was a regional term for persons of *indio-negro* mixture, and it dates back to at least the 17th century (Beltran 1946:179) in the state of Puebla. Today it is used in mainstream Mexican Spanish to describe curly hair, though not necessarily the same type of San Nicolan curliness for which the latter use the term *cuculuste.* This term is strictly local and is not heard outside the Costa Chica's Afromexican communities, not even among those of the Gulf Coast. This suggests a qualitative difference that would affect perceptions, between the *chino* hair of an urban *mulato* and the *cuculuste* hair of a rural descendant of *cimarrones* in the vernacular of San Nicolas.

Cuculuste's etymology remains unclear; it is not referred to in colonial literature nor was it used as a *casta* category like *mulato, zambo, indio, mestizo* and so on. Beltrán (1958) did observe its use in the area of San Nicolás in the 1950's. Of probable native origin (possibly *mixteco,* the group that most interacts with Guerrero Afromexicans), it still refers to `very curly hair' and, by extension, the individuals who posses it. According to data at hand the *cuculuste* are a subset of the *negros* who are, in turn, a subset of *morenos.* The two terms are markers of internal differentiation, but they are not recognized outside the community as such. Outsiders do not use *cuculuste,* instead opting to use *moreno* or *chino.* These of course do not reflect insider differentiation.

4.3. Uses of *Moreno* and References

Line	Reference	Contextual Interpretation
4A,10	*moreno*	`remedial', uttered immediately after *negro* to soften the potentially negative use of *negro* in this early part of the conversation; setting up the 'participatory framework' of this conversation.
4B,12	*"hey moreno!"*	quoted from "outsider" speech as example of outsider practice of using the term to address the *morenos* 'insiders'
4B,15	*no decimos morena (we don't say morena)*	Implicit in the verb *'decimos'* is the pronoun 'we' referring to speaker's group whose members do not use the same term to address one other, thus contrasting 'insider' Vs 'outsider' usage
4B,17	*moreno,si estamos igual ,if we are equal*	*moreno* is coreferenced to 'we' in *estamos*. Used in this case to underline insider group membership requires not using *moreno, negro* as terms of address internally, since 'we are all equal.' The interpretation suggests an existent hierarchy in the use of socio-racial terms along the insider/outsider lines drawn in previous lines
4B,25	*carino,oye morena* Affection,hey morena!	"affectionate" uses of the term is possible although it remains one for use outsider users
4F,14	gente MORENA	a hypothetical, non-inclusive reference to Afromexicans. Earlier in this conversation, the speaker used inclusive *negro* to refer to 'my race.' Now he adopts a different footing once the discussion gets to the prejudices that some members of his own group have against *indios*
4G,3	MORENOS	Speaker SO first selects the term in reference to the forbears of the present community which he is describing, then quickly re-foots to use the inclusive, historical NEGRO
4G,7	morenos	speaker reverts to this term to describe the emergence of present day community. It is not clear why he does not re-foot back to inclusive term or pronoun this time
4G,9	MORENO	speaker uses a masculine form (moreno) and a feminine version (india) in describing the type of interactions in the community. In chapter 1 we saw that indeed this was the most prevalent marriage pattern in colonial Mexico: black males, native women. In my observation this pattern continues today in San Nicolas
4L,10	Moreno,heh,heh !	As descriptive term, moreno is 'ugly' because it embodies undesirable physical attributes
4L,11	Moreno,chato, cuculuste, TODO!	Clearly used as a color term (as opposed to a social identity/persona) alongside 'flat nosed,' curly haired – it is one of ALL (numerous) stigmatized physical features associated with this term

4L,15	`that one is ugly' (the referent is a *moreno*)	as above, term describes negatively (socially) evaluated physical characteristics. Term of low prestige.
4L,15	i) my grandson *es moreno* ii) "morenoness" *lo moreno*	Concrete referent to illustrate those physical characteristics of `ugly.' But, whether positive or negative feature, there is acceptance of the fact that "morenoness" is a permanent feature of our people Among my relatives are *morenos* such as my grandson (close relative, 'insider'). The morenoness stays on despite intermarriage ('cleaning the races')
4L,16	*piel es morena*	*Moreno* is a color (See 4L,11), and is only skin-deep. In 'us' though, is also found *blanco* blood, since we descend from *blancos* and *negros*, part of our heritage which is not usually recognized.

4.3. *Blanco*

Blanco is a term of common usage in the speech of San Nicolas, especially in

narratives of the past, and it is apparently synonymous with *güero*. As a descriptive term, the

latter is a subcategory of the former since every *güero* ('blonde') is a *blanco* ('white') but

not every *blanco* is a *güero*. Güero is heard more often in Mexico City, usually as a polite or

"affectionate" term for *blancos*, mirroring the *moreno* functions described just above. In

San Nicolas, however, speakers mostly use *blanco* not *güero*, reflecting more of the

differences in evaluation strategies of the speakers of the two speech communities. B*lanco* is

apparently gradable in San Nicolas; for example, one can be "more white" (line H,12) or

"less white" than another. In the following lines SG makes use of *blanco* in an interesting

historical account of her people.

Conversation K

1	CH:	*y aquí hay gente blanca?*
		and are there white people here?
2	SG:	*sí,también sí hay gente blanca,hay una gente blanca pero se*
		yes,yes there are [a few] white people,white people but they ['reflexive']
3		*mezcló la gente*
		the people mixed up
	CH:	uh huh

4	SG:	*antes en aquellos tiempos dicen que no había gente blanca ni*
		in those past times they say there were no white people nor
5		*gente pelo lacio,.pura gente pelo chino,*
		people of hair straight,only people of curly hair
6		*pura gente china,china*
		only curly haired people,curly [hair]
		((interruption by a visitor))
7	SG:	*y aquí la gente somos CUCULUSTE CUCULUSTE*
		and here the people we are CUCULUSTE CUCULUSTE
8	CH:	*ah ha, de pelo*
		ah ha, the hair
	SG:	*crespo como yo,y china cuculuste asi (points at CH) y ya otro gente decolor, chino que venian, se juntaba con las mujeres de aquí,ya tenia sus hijos, tenían sus hijos, ya tenían sus otros pelos,su cara, carácter su naríz,a veces sale un poquito así-*
		ah ha, of hair, it's cuculuste, that is,curly,other hair is wavy like mine,and curly, cuculuste (points at CH's hair) and other people of color, that came, encountered the women of here,and had children, had their children, now they had their other hair,[another] face, [another] character, their nose, sometimes born a bit like-

SG neatly summarizes the rise of her present day community out of the encounter between *blancos* and those chino-haired persons who came to San Nicolas. Their descendants now had 'their' [own type of] hair, nose, etc. Out of that mix, those individuals now had physical characteristics different from their parents. In fact, another 'race' was the result of that mix up. Today, some of 'we' are *cuculuste*, and others like 'me', [the speaker, SG] have 'wavy' hair, while the interviewer (CH) has *chino* or *cuculuste* hair. In short, *morenos* includes a wide variety of physical types, all descending from that mix of "races." Accordingly, the historical encounter between *negros* and *blancos* gave rise to the present day *moreno* community with which SG identifies. Understood in this way, SG no longer sounds contradictory when she describes herself and kin variously as *negros, chinos, cuculustes* - or even as *morenos* - because these terms describe the same set of individuals that comprise the San Nicolas community. In contrast to *indio, blanco* (and *negro*) share the feature of not being straightforwardly defined. In the conversations cited above in which the term

'cuculuste' is introduced, the socio-historical dimension where *blancos* and *negros* are located in another past time 'before people were mixed' is clear. The dynamic aspect of *negro* and *blanco* identity implied in this phrase contrasts with that of *indios*, who are perceived as not having changed since the coming of Spaniards. With *blancos* and *negros* there is no such evidence of unbroken continuity through time in the local perceptions. Evidence from discourse implies that *blanco* and *negro* have changed by 'mixing' to produce another social being, perhaps the *moreno*. Notably, references to blanco are few in conversational samples I have examined, but more references are found in the narratives and versos of Chapter 5. This is illustrative of the absence of blancos in San Nicolas today without losing sight of their preeminence in the past.

Table 4.4. Uses of *Blanco* and References

Line	Reference	Contextual Meaning and Interpretation.
4I,23	*Gente mas blanca* 'whiter people'	Socio-racial terms are gradable since we can have "whiter" persons than others. Obviously this is a speaker-exclusive use indicated by SG's use of "a person" when reporting a sample of the type of comments that may be addressed to a negro/moreno by a blanco
4K,2	*gente blanca* 'white people *gente china*	there used to exist *blancos* here, but are now too mixed up to clearly identify them. Affirms the existence of the category *blanco* at least in the remote past, but it was the *chino*-haired (i.e. negros) who lived here, not *blancos*; oral history further supports the differentiation among individual groups.
4K,4	*Dicen que no habia gente blanca* 'they say there were no white people'	in the remote past these [blancos] were not part of our community; evidence comes from oral history. It is not clear whether the oral history is attributed to outsiders but it can be inferred that since this oral tradition is local, then 'they' refers to insiders, the speakers group
4H,12	*La raza espanola* Spanish race	Refers to another term for blancos, like guero/guera. Notice it is used in the historical sense to explain the racial mixing of blancos and indios to describe the genesis of modern mexican "races." Racial mixing with *blancos* represents the 'cleaning of the races' as discussed in Chapter 1
4L,2	*blanca, narizona*	Physical description of 'beautiful' attributes associated with *blancos*. These include nose shape, straight hair

4L,16	*la sangre es blanca*	Physical appearance does not reveal the true historical identify of the individual. RS acknowledges the *blanco* element found in *negros* and *morenos*. As such, blanco can be insiders although the footing stance indicates that SG is speaking as commentator

4.4. Attributes of Social Racial Terms

Definitions, use, and the association of speakers (and others) with these terms make it quite clear that socio-racial terms in the community of San Nicolas are tags of social identity. Their employment, whether casual or elicited, is inextricably tied to the complex identities of the members of this community and of "others." Thus, it is evident that they are used to designate the social ʿraceʹ of an individual or groups of individuals and are therefore an expression of community awareness of identity boundaries and distinctions. Having delimited them as proper 'native lexical categories' (Hymes 1974), i.e. significant elements of San Nicolan speech, it is necessary to examine their semantic content, that is, the attributes of each term, to pave the way for better comprehending their functional use within the limits of regional speech. What information do these terms carry, and how can it help the outsider explain the variation found in the discourse?

The following sample texts from interviews with different respondents illustrate more precisely the attributes of these socio-racial terms investigated here. These samples are followed by diagrams showing a more complete listing of the attributes drawn from Conversations A-I in the above section, and from similar data not cited here. They illustrate a series of attributes for each "race," individual or group that is socially identified as *blanco*, *indio* or *negro*. Some attributes can be interpreted as "positive," according to the information gathered from informants, but others are clearly "negative." Those attributes vary from physical characteristics to psychic, emotive and socio-economic ones, providing

clear-cut characterizations of the social being projected by each term. *Blanco,* for instance is beautiful, handsome, straight haired, straight nosed (positive attributes), but is cowardly ("of cold blood"); is more delicate ("has thinner blood") and has *"achukía"* ('stinks'); the *indi*o is short and quiet, big nosed, straight haired, stubborn and resilient ("nadie lo saca"; "parece *indio*"), s/he lives up in the mountains and so on. *Negro/moreno* is ugly, stocky, curly haired, abler than the *indio,* likes music and dance, does not like to beg, is brave and strong ("is not afraid of anyone, not even the devil").

Conversation 4L:

1	CH:	*como ,ahora,como está bonita,que,que quiere decir "bonita"*
		like,now, this beautiful, what, what does "beautiful" mean
2	RS:	*blanca, narizona, fresnuda*
		white, long nose, fresnuda]
3	TM:	[*pelo lacio*
		straight hair
4	RS:	*su pelo largo, su narizota*
		the hair [is] long, long nose-
5	CH:	[*es bonita*
		[is beautiful
6	TM:	*es guapo*
		is handsome
7	RS:	*es guapo*
		is handsome
	TM:	heh heh
8	CH:	*y feo?*
		and ugly?
9	RS:	*feo?*
		ugly?
10	TM:	*moreno,heh heh!*
		moreno, heh heh!
11	RS:	*moreno, chato, cuculuste y TODO!*
		moreno, sqaut, cuculuste and ALL
12	All:	heh heh ha! ha!
13	RS:	*ese se le dice "feo"*
		that one is called "ugly"
14	CH:	eh heh
15	RS:	*así es la gente aquí,como ahora de mi nieto dicen uh! ese está feo además moreno, moreno,pero lo moreno nunca se acaba*

that's how people are like here,like my grandson they say uh! he's
ugly on top of moreno, *moreno*,but *morenness* never ends
CH: no, no
16   RS: *porque la piel es moreno pero la sangre es blanca*
because the skin is *moreno* but the blood is white

In the preceding text it is not hard to grasp the attributes associated with the terms *blanco*

and *moreno*. In fact, the terms themselves are used as adjectives to describe what is

'beautiful' or 'ugly,' respectively. It was seen that *moreno* is a general term that describes

residents of San Nicolas. Speakers often used it in taking an "outsider" footing. *Moreno* and

negro have a number of socially recognized negative attributes. For example, a *moreno* is

"ugly" (e.g. "this one is *moreno!*") and part of that ugliness derives from the individual's

cuculuste hair. Another physical attribute associated with *moreno* is *'chato'* ('short,' 'squat')

which previous discourse indicated was also a negatively evaluated adjective. In contrasting

the two, MG described the positively evaluated Aztec race as "tall and handsome," while the

Chichimecas were "short, squat" and "less fine" (lines G, 3-7). The attributes of *moreno* are

embodied in SG's grandson who is used yet again as an example of what is *moreno* and *ugly*

(line J, 15).

While the negative physical attributes are well known by SG as a native of her

speech community, she denies personal involvement in this evaluation by attributing it to

"others" – "they," "the people" and so on (e.g. "like this one, *the people* say he's ugly," Line

J, 15). SG's awareness of *moreno*'s negative attributes is reflected at the end of her talk when

she attempts to mend the talk of her grandson's low prestige by referring to more positive

elements in his ancestry: "the skin may be dark, but [his] blood is white." This coda to SG's

enumeration of "racial" attributes neatly brings together current beliefs and attitudes that

revolve around *blanco* and *negro*. The following texts provide further elements which may

be listed as attributes of the terms *negro* and *indio*.

Conversation 4M

1	CH:	*he oído que la gente india es tranquilo,y la gente NEGRA?* I've heard that the indian people aretranquil, and BLACK people?
2	AD:	*ah,sí,es más agresiva la gente negra,sí sí, es más agresiva* ah,yes,is more aggressive the black people,yes,yes, more aggressive
3	CH:	*y eso porque,así no más?* and why [is] that,just like that?
4	AD:	*yo creo que así no más, por naturaleza, no se que pero es más agresive* I think that just like that, by nature, I don't know but [blacks] are more aggressive,

The oppositional values of the two categories are similar to that seen in section 4.1 where

nearly all characterization of *indio* was done in terms of opposition to those of *negro*: the

latter is aggressive by nature, but the *indio* is tranquil. Although in this case Speaker AD

does not use overt personal pronouns, it is assumed that he includes himself among *"la*

gente negra" (the Black people) since he initially described himself as 'negro'.

Conversation 4N

1	CH:	*y cuando salen de aqui a-]* and when you (pl.) go from here to
2	IS:	*[a otro lugar,* to another place,
3	CH:	*sí sí, como le dicen?* yes yes, what do they call you?
4	IS:	*pues "negro." "los negros"* well *negro*,the *negros*
5	CH:	*ah ha se siente bien o mal* ah ah does it feel good or bad
6	IS:	*pues se sienten mal porque "negro" pero no puede hacer nada porque* well they (we?) feel bad because *"negro"* but have no choice because
7		*si somos del color negro tenemos que ser verdad?* if we are of black color we have to be, right?
8	CH:	*CLARO* OF COURSE

		(silence: 20 secs)
9	CH:	*y porque dicen que el negro* es malo*,porque,*
		and why they say that the black is bad,because,
10	IS:	*porque es mas bravo, eso es, es mas bravo*
		because is more hot headed, that's it, is more hot headed
11	CH:	*y el indio?*
		and the *indio*
12	IS:	*el indio?*
		the *indio?*
13	CH:	*sí*
		yes
14	IS:	*pues mas consciente,es mas consciente*
		well is more conscious,more conscious [controlled]

When outside the immediate community, Speaker IS who is *negro* feels bad when he is addressed as *negro* by outsiders, the reason being that *negro* is negatively evaluated by those outsiders, and the speaker knows it. *Negros* have a reputation of badness: "they say the *negro* is bad,because he is more hot headed." While IS identifies the reasons for that mean reputation ("hot-headedness"), he sees no choice but to accept this negative term of address because 'if that is our color, thus we have to be.' Despite those negative attributes, there is no denial of being *negro*: "if we are of black color we have to be, right?" (4M, line 7).

The use of gender neutral *se* reflexive in the same line is an example of constant but subtle signals of footing changes. This particular pronominal is speaker exclusive, '*they* feel bad,' (as opposed to speaker inclusive 'we feel bad'), yet in the same line (4M, line 7), Speaker IS adopts a solidary pronoun incorporated in *somos* ('if *we are* black of color, we have to be, right?'). The speaker is *negro,* but he can discuss the treatment of *negros* by opting to use non-inclusive pronouns.

4.5. Attributes of *Negro₁* and *Negro₂*

By listing and comparing a series of basic attributes of each term, I propose to distinguish between two meanings of *negro* (*negro₁* and *negro₂*) which arise from

different evaluations of the same concept by members of San Nicolas speech community

("insiders") and the non-members ("outsiders"). The views of the "outsiders" are those

that have been gleaned from the discourse, principally through an examination of co-

occurring pronouns or anaphoric expressions seen in Tables 4.1 – 4.4. Those correspond

roughly to "abstract" and "concrete" attributes of *negro* and are shown on Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: *Negro1* and *Negro2:* Attributes

Negro$_1$	Negro$_2$
- is indexical or referential e.g. "that/the negro" - is historical, existed before "people mixed up" - is of the first inhabitants "they used to be the only ones around here" - can be blood relative e.g. father, mother or grandson - was immigrant: shipwrecked on a boat from Africa or is a descendants of *cimarrones* (maroons) - is *cuculuste* - is used in "identity statements" such as `nostros/ los negros de Guerrero'    - was brave and strong e.g. `my great grandfather could bring down a bull with bare hands' - has admirable strengths (unspecified) - Etc.	• Used when angry, or disgusted • Describes [undesirable] skin color e.g. `I told them it [color] would not stick on them'    • "others" use *negro* to refer to "morenos" i.e. San Nicolans and the inhabitants    • is politically stigmatized by "others" e.g. `they used to call my son *cabanista* • speaks "badly," [-prestige] Spanish dialect • is bad person/ has bad reputation • is aggressive • is ugly • has *chino* hair • is lazy e.g.`they refuse us loans because they say we are lazy.' • Etc.

There is a consistent patterning of each socio-racial term with certain anaphoric references; *indio* and *blanco* for instance are co-referenced with third person pronouns such as *they, those* and *them,* but during the uses of *negro$_2$* the speaker who takes up that footing generally aligns it with "outsiders." *Negro$_1$* involves "insiders" footing. *Negro$_1$*, like *blanco* and *indio,* is located in that period before the "mix-up" of peoples. *Indio* remains that way, but we understand that the first two have changed over time. Speakers use *negro$_1$* in self reference to establish a common link with the past, to claim a line of descendance, and thus express solidarity with one another. Quite significantly, *negro$_1$* is used to lay some primordial claim to the land in statements such as '*negros came first, [before] blancos,*' '*there were only chinos here before,*' etc. This is interesting possible evidence of existing competition or reallocation of territories which we know historically to have belonged to *indios.* These attributes of *negro$_1$* are generally abstract.

Negro$_2$ is a concrete, tangible entity who has negative physical and emotional attributes which *negro$_1$* does not, except for the *cuculuste* hair type which has been seen to be a negatively evaluated attribute. The aggressive, lazy, bad individual who speaks badly and is politically stigmatized is *negro$_2$* but *negro$_1$* is an historical entity, a concept that is not tangibly identifiable in flesh and blood today in the community. *Negros$_1$* are the distant ancestors of today's San Nicolans, the brave, fearless, strong, newcomers. The identity statements examined earlier seem to refer to this special group.

Negro$_2$ is used as a term of address by outsiders in reference to San Nicolans or Costa Chicans when these are outside their home area in a *mestizo* environment such as Mexico City. The personal attributes are largely negative as internalized by informants. Indeed its use where it occurs seems intended to evoke those very attributes. It is not

surprising then that it is used to insult its addressee, a good example being that of the Afromexican youth who complained of being called a *cabañista* whose attributes are closely related to those of *negro$_2$*. While an individual cherishes being a *negro$_1$*, s/he has no defense from overlapping *negro$_2$* meanings since this distinction is below the level of awareness of outsiders. *Moreno* is the general term used by outsiders to refer to *negros* (both *negro$_1$* and *negro$_2$*), *chinos, cuculustes,* and *prietos.* It levels out the internal gradations that insiders recognize by establishing a blanket identity for Afromexicans. But since *moreno's* physical attributes overlap with those of *negro$_1$* and *negro$_2$*, it is easy for the individual who is unversed with the ground rules of their use to assume that the three are synonymous. In addition, *negro$_1$* and *negro$_2$* have the same phonetic form, making it difficult for the outsider to distinguish between the two. In Figure 4.1, positive attributes of *negro$_1$* are foregrounded according to insider view; these are all abstract. But in Fig. 4.2 the (negative) ones of negro$_2$ are foregrounded. The figures represent my conclusions about how speakers' participatory status of speakers projects a certain view of the person or persons defined socially as "*negro.*" Footing stances adopted by speakers during conversation make it possible to unravel the two personae that co-exist in one since *negro* represents a two sided coin; on one side is a positively evaluated, abstract entity (*negro1*) and on the other is a concrete phenotypic reality (*negro2*) of negative attributes.

According to Figure 4.1. "insiders" usually foreground those positive attributes of *negro.* A native San Nicolan speaker who self-identifies as "negro" is more likely to use *negro$_1$* projection when he or she utters *negro*, such as when referring to forbears ("*mis papas eran negros*") or when describing the community s/he belongs to ("*la raza*

de nosotros es negra pues!"), in a solidary sense. Of course, when speaker adopts an

"outsider" footing, s/he may then select *negro₂* just as an "outsider" would do.

Figure 4.1. Insider view of *Negro*

Non-solidary ("outsider") uses of *negro* are generally negative and refer directly to

phenotype. Insiders selected this term by taking outsider footing when describing how

outsiders look at them. Clearly, speakers are well aware of the salient, negative features of

San Nicolas, since this listing was elicited from them. Speakers display an awareness that

"others" employ *negro* in different ways than "we" do. Conversational data indicate that

characteristics of *negro₂* are foregrounded when the term is employed using outsider speech or footing stance. The foregrounding of *negro2* is captured in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Outsider view of *Negro*

Insult
Undesirable skin color
Politically stigmatized
Speaks "badly"
Bad person
Mean reputation
Aggressive
Ugly
Chino(bad) hair
Lazy
etc.
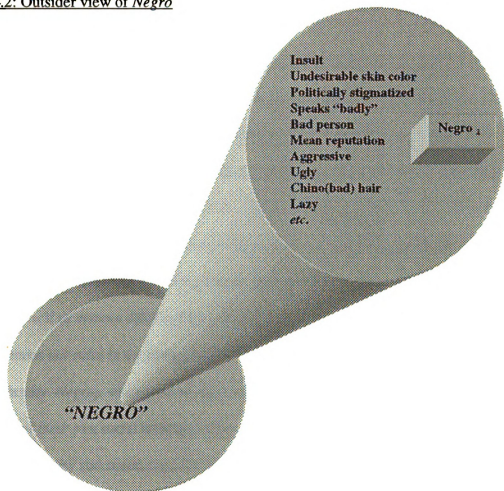
Negro ₂

"NEGRO"

4.5.1. Summary

In conversational samples cited in this chapter, informants made statements such as "*la raza de nosotros es negro*" (our race is Black). In another interview, a sixty year old informant affirmed that her parents and grandson were *negros*, but that she herself was a *morena* (See Conversation 4D). She went on to describe her community as one comprised of *morenos*.

Such differences in self-referencing statements among informants made me hypothesize that socio-cultural motives underlie their variable usage.

From an analysis of footing, it is now easier to see how the informant identifies 'we' with $negro_1$ (abstract, positive e.g. ancestor) to lay territorial claim to that region of Guerrero, the region where his or her *negro* ancestors established themselves. That the same speaker also identified 'we' with *morenos* is now no longer confusing because, in explaining to the outsider about regional and local identity, the speaker knew that the term *moreno* best described the outsider knowledge, namely that the people of Costa Chica are referred to nationally as *morenos*, the historically instituted term for Afromexicans. Internally, *moreno* merely represents a skin color. Such a form of "codeswitching" symbolizes the footing that the speaker had adopted—that of a Mexican "in general" — to describe her community by taking on "outsider" terminology. Along similar lines of interpretation, SG was consistent in regarding herself as *morena* although her parents were *negros* (i.e. $negro_1$) because in this way she retains her stake in the history of her community while also recognizing her modern identity. $Negro_1$, when used by San Nicolans, is a term of solidarity within the boundaries of their own social identity, and the most illustrating example of this function is found in the identity statements found in discourse, such as 'we the negros of Guerrero' or 'we have always been *negros*.' Solidarity and power relationship between interlocutors influence, in some way, the choice of these socio-racial terms; for instance, persons intimately linked to the speaker may be referred to as *negro*, yet the same will not refer to each other as *moreno*; but a [-moreno] person can address these persons as *moreno*.

Indio is largely used without ambiguity to identify the "others" that are in contact with but are not part of the self and socially-identified *negro* of San Nicolas. The term *indio*

131

is consistently used for this function, thus contributing to the maintenance of existing social boundaries. *Blanco* delimits yet another identity, and it has been seen that part of its historical meaning is closely linked with that of *negro*₁ in that these two groups are perceived to be the ancestors of today's *morenos*. As with the case of territorial claims made by Afromexicans in that region today, it is of interest to note that *indio* is left out of the equation of racial mixing process (*mestizaje*) while it is this group that had greatest contact (including intermarriage) with the *negros*₁ of Costa Chica. In fact, this contradicts the mainstream idea of *mestizaje* as a process involving two actors: *blancos* and *indios*.

In the next sections, I will look at how these same terms are embedded in other genres, and how this can add to the knowledge of their uses and attributes in San Nicolas.

Chapter 5

SOCIO-RACIAL TERMS WITHIN GENRES

5.0. Genre

By 'genre' I refer to 'types of talk' or speech events that are readily recognized by participants and identified with specific behavior, i.e. are closely identified with time, place and situation. These may be oral (e.g. a rap or *corrido* session, joke, story, or job interview) or written (e.g. a novel or an essay). Genre studies show that these differ not only across cultures but also within sub-sectors of society; they also highlight contrasts between different speech communities within the same country, such as how minority groups' forms of talk differ from those of the mainstream – 'standard' speakers of the same language. The focus on sub-group language contrasts is reflective of the important role that socio-linguistic analysis in general and genre analysis in particular play in the study of language variation. Labov's (1972) study of "Language in the Inner City" for instance dedicated important sections to an analysis of narratives among African American English speakers in New York City. Pitts (1993) examined another distinctive African American form of talk — the discourse of African American Baptist church ritual to make connections between substrate West African religious discourse in modern African American Baptist 'ritual' in the Southern United States. Genre analyses are important in interpreting culture and in Africa Latin America or elsewhere (e.g. Kipury 1983; Kabira 1993).

5.1. Narratives

Traditional oral narratives are a good example of genres of language which often reflect the philosophy and values of the community that tells them. This makes me believe that critical "assumed cultural knowledge" (Gumperz 1982a) about socio-racial terms I am investigating can be gleaned from the way in which they are used in the narrative discourse of San Nicolans. I am trying to increase the scope of our understanding of the linguistic and cultural background that must be shared among interactants if proper communication is to prevail. These may become more apparent in our examination of narratives and their contextual meanings need to be juxtaposed and reconciled with those understandings of socio-racial terms I presented in the previous chapter of this dissertation. In this chapter I focus on samples of Afromexican narratives and other genres which contain instances of framed talk through which situated meanings of embedded terms can be inferenced. These, I hope, will contribute to a better understanding of what meanings socio-racial terms signal among the speakers, and also what they might project about the speakers' collective or individual identity. I shall therefore look at brief oral narratives I collected in San Nicolas's oral archives.

In discussing Afromexican "narrative," I refer to oral accounts of events that are encoded in local stories, myths and songs. Oral narratives are particularly useful in non-literate societies where they act as the depository of past information and events, preserving and passing on people's history. Afromexican narratives easily fall under this category because, even though the people belong to a literate Western country, theirs is largely a non-literate speech community whose own voice is largely heard through oral traditions. To my knowledge, there are very few literary texts or narratives written in the

past by Afromexicans, such as the poetry of 18th century poet Jose Vansconcelos that I cite in section 5.2 of this chapter.

Narratives serve several functions within a community. They are not only an archive of a community's history as they also preserve and express the rules of behavior of a community. They are used to legitimize contemporary habits and values such as land ownership, women's position in society, eating habits, or, as in the case of Afromexico, to explain social facts such as why there are different "races" with distinct physical, emotional and other characteristics in the communities. In other agrarian societies, they are used to explain natural phenomenon such as why elephants have tusks or why hyenas limp. Some such narratives are better known in the West, such as Anancy the Spider stories originating in Akan speaking parts of West Africa which became part of Caribbean and North American folklore. Among Afromexicans, narratives are used for similar purposes. The narratives are used to explain the diversity of social races found in their communities today, or how the communities were founded. It is therefore worth mentioning a bit about narratives in a non-western society in order to emphasize some of the universal characteristics of this genre in discussing Afromexican ones.

Bennett (1975) studied the narrative structure of two African languages, Kiswahili and Gikuyu, looking at certain features as overlaps and repetitions. Furthermore, Bennet made a count of all verbal elements of non-subordinate clauses and found that the consecutive tense (C-tense) which occurs in both languages but not in English, dominated in those narratives (75% of clauses 5147 clauses counted). He also found that the C-tense in Gikuyu is used for 'pace and dramatic effect' (ibid., p.60). Therefore correlations – or

lack of them — between grammatical elements and parts of the narrative are found in many non-related languages.

Oral narratives also incorporate elements not found in written texts, such as prosodic features or interactional moves which may include listener participation. Bennet (1975) also noted that the normal Gikuyu narrative transferred to print loses a large proportion of its effectiveness "through the loss of inflection and voice indicated narrative pacing" (ibid:28). Not only do different languages display distinct narrative styles; different speech communities within the same language also do. Labov (1972) also found a high concentration of verbal skills in Black English Vernacular culture, "a possible pointer to the fact that they are more advanced in narrative skills than their White counterparts" (p.380). Differences were found cross-linguistically such that for Swahili, the use of the consecutive tense is not the predominant unmarked tense; rather it is the past tense. Swahili apparently has lost most of its consecutive tense, and Bennet claims that this is a direct consequence of influence of western languages on Swahili. Nevertheless, both Kiswahili and Gikuyu styles emphasize narrative qualities diametrically opposed to those of English, e.g. in that Gikuyu emphasizes action rather than description.

In this study I am less concerned with accounting for the structure or specific components of Afromexicans narratives. The aim is to exploit the narratives as a source of data on social racial terms, in order to characterize the historical and/or ongoing constructions of the social reality which lie behind these terms. My interest in this particular genre focuses on the narratives I collected (folk stories, legends and creation myths) from Afromexicans which can inform us with regard to the dynamic use and

meaning of social racial terms under study. The content of oral narratives and genres I shall examine in the next sections of this chapter (*versos* and *corridos*) of San Nicolas is also rich in this sense, and it underscores the centrality of social racial terms in the discourse of this speech community. But first I will refer the reader to the structure of narratives, before I look at their content.

5.1.1. Narrative Structure

The narrative — be it the story or *corrido* — has structure and component parts. Some parts are easily identified such as the beginning or an end. Other parts are subtle such as language devices used in consistent ways to identify or mark parts of the structure (e.g. tense markers that indicate where action is taking place within the narrative). Labov's (1972) work on the structure of narratives focused on personal narratives of members of urban communities in a Western setting. Nevertheless, his approach is applicable to traditional (folk) stories, myths or legends in terms of their structure, as I will show in the following section. Those essential components of the narrative are apparent even in the rural based, non—western narratives such as those of San Nicolas.

Labov (1972) described narrative as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events that actually happened" (1972:375). In his study of African American narratives in New York City among speakers of what he refferred to then as "Black English Vernacular (BEV)", Labov attempted to correlate language features such as syntactic forms (e.g. comparatives and intensifiers) and age with particular components of the narrative. Signaling devices include syntactic features such as tense or aspect and discourse markers such as hedges, overlaps and repetitions. All these gain significance in the deconstruction and

interpretation of narrative. Labov identified six parts in the overall structure of the narrative, and each part is characterized by distinctive grammatical, prosodic or other patterns. I will summarize them very briefly and then show where and how they fit in with the sample Afromexican narratives.

The *abstract* is normally a clause that summarizes for the listener what the narrative will be about. This is usually followed by an *orientation* which provides background information about the narrative (time, place, etc.). The *complicating action* follows to give detailed description of the actual sequence of events which occurred in the narrative; a reversal in the order of the narrative clauses for example, would change the entire meaning of the narrative. Since narratives rely heavily on sequenced description, a minimum number of complicating action clauses are required in order to identity a narrative as such. Comments about the universe of the story from the outside are referred to as *evaluation,* and they occur in the narrative to tell or remind the listener of the significance of the story. Evaluations may therefore be intertwined in the story at different sections. The resolution marks the end of the complicating action, and may be the prelude to a *coda* or that section of the narrative that brings the author and listener back to the present world. In many of these characteristics, Afromexican *corridos* are narratives, and I shall try to show that in terms of both structure and content, how they are.

5.1.2. It needs to be mentioned that indeed oral narratives are best appreciated within their cultural context of performance. The context gives the audience a picture of the implications of the narrative itself, and in the performance paralinguistic features such as movement, facial expression and so on enhance the messages contained in the language

used. As such, transcriptions of narratives such as the ones examined in this chapter

present only part of the performance; significant aspects of rhythm, prosody, or

interaction with the audience, are not easily represented and may also be lost in their

translation from Spanish despite my efforts to minimize that. Nevertheless, Afromexican

oral narratives do certainly seem to encode sufficient information regarding social race,

providing an additional source of data for understanding the uses of social racial terms as

seen in Chapter Four. These narratives encapsulate chunks of Mexican history as it

relates to Afromexicans, revealing consciousness and awareness of a *negro* past

embedded in the conditions we saw in previous chapters. But they are not just a

compendium of the past; Afromexican narratives reveal present day conflicts and social

relations among the cohabiting social "races." In the first sample by Don MO of San

Nicolas, what superficially appears to be a story of romance is used to illustrate the

origins and divisions among social "races," including the basis for their identity

formation.

Narrative A

1 *pue' cuando se enamoro de ella..ella también, entonces él le pidió permiso su padre para*
well, when he fell in love with her, she too, so he asked permission from his father to

2 *ESPOSARLA no: porque, dice, porqué te vas a casar con una negra, es una*
MARRY HER no: why, he says, why marry a black woman, she is a

3 *esclava, porque' la amo. la quiero con toda mi alma, no importa que sea negra.*
slave, because I love her, I love her with all my heart, no matter she's black

4 *quiero. no puede ser, dice, que tú te cases con esa negra. a escondida tuvieron*
I love her. It can't be, he said, that you marry that black. Secretly they had

5 *relaciones a escondidas porque ellos no podían casarse, a ella también hay que*
(sexual) relations, secretly because they could not marry...she too had to be

6   *mandarla lejos..para que el nino nazca allá, dice,*
      sent far away, so that the child be born there, he [father] says,

7   *vamos a armarlo, vamos a ayudarlo, dice, y platicaba con el esclavo viejo y ya fue*
      let's arm him [the mulato], let's help him, he says, and he'd talk with the old slave

8   *creciendo, creciendo hasta se hizo adulto y llegó la rebelion,*
      and he grew and grew till he became an adult till the rebellion came,

9   *a ese joven no le vamos a destruir la hacienda,*
      this one [*blanco* father] we won't destroy his hacienda,

10   *dice, a los demás sí, expropiaron pues, la hacienda de él, ya cuando entró él a la*
      he[old slave] says, others yes, thus they expropriated his [*blanco*] hacienda when he [*mulato*] got into the

11   *hacienda entonces le dieron con un machete al blanco, sí pero mi raza, yo dependo de ellos*
      hacienda, then they hit him [blanco father] with a machete…and he [*mulato* son]says, yes, but my race, I depend on them

12   *si no me quieren ya no me importan,*
      if they [*blancos*] do not like me I don't care,

13   *ya hicieron los paces, hicieron baile para celebrar su triunfo y esos bailes pue' vienen*
      now they [*negros, blancos, mulatos*] made peace, made a
      dance to celebrate the triumph and those dances, well, they come

14   *de Africa, la arteza, ya de allí nació la TARIMBA, pero la primera fue la arteza, la arteza de*
      from Africa, the arteza, from there was born the TARIMBA pero the first was the *arteza* of

15   *madera que es un instrumento de CAJON, de esa historia nació esa danza, por su*
      wood which is a BOX instrument,from that story the dance

16   *triunfo, su sangre e'mah fuerte, y así terminó la historia,*
      was born for the triumph, his[negro] blood is stronger,and thus ended the story,

17   *colorín colorado y la historia está terminado, entro por un callejón y salgo por otro*
      colored colorín and the story is over, I go through an alley and come out through another

18   *para ver quien nos cuenta otro,*
      to see who will tell us another…

Three things can be asserted about this narrative. One is that it conforms to a certain *structure* and, secondly, that certain surface features of language (e.g. past tense gerund forms, see Line 10) match with some structural components. As for the content,

features of the narrative (e.g. story setting, formulaic clauses, lexicon etc.) provide

important clues about the 'cultural backdrop' inside which socio-racial terms in San

Nicolas are used. Unfortunately, the first part or abstract section of this narrative is

missing as a result of technical reasons; while fumbling with my recorder, I missed a few

lines at the beginning of the story. Nevertheless, some features of oral narratives

described by Labov and summarized in section 5.1.1 can be identified even in the

preceding Afromexican narrative. Line 1 therefore begins with an *orientation* which

provides a background to the events that take place in this narrative: a romantic

relationship between a young man and a young woman who belonged to the *blanco* and

negro race, respectively. The narrative quickly goes into a series of complicating actions

starting in Line 2.

1   *entonces él le pidió permiso su padre para*
        so he asked permission from his father to
2   *ESPOSARLA no: porque?, dice, porqué te vas a casar con una negra,*
        es una esclava
        MARRY HER no: why?, he says, why marry a black woman, she is a
        slave

MO uses emphasis (CAPS) in the first words of that line, and the lengthening of the

vowel in "no:" are used by to highlight the importance of the background information in

this section of the complicating action, that is, the impossibility of an interracial

marriage. It marks the beginning point of the set of events and consequences that

underlie the meaning of the narrative. This is the point at which the series of sequential

narrative clauses of the 'complicating action' begin: secret [sexual] relations, pregnancy,

leaving the plantation, going far away to have the child, the raising and socialization of

this child, and his return to the plantation for revenge. In this section of Don M.'s

narrative most details of the narrative are in the form of sequenced clauses:

> Line 4: Secretly they had (sexual) relations
> Line 6: she has to be sent far away so the child be born there
> Line 8: and he grew and grew till he became an adult and the rebellion came, etc.

At least two or three evaluations occur at different parts of the narrative, confirming Labov's view that this strategy is used as commentary to remind the listener the significance of the story. It also seems to play the role of commenting on the relevance of specific events taking place or being newly introduced into the narrative. In Line 4 and 5 for example, MO makes an obvious effort to remind the listener of the circumstances found in the universe of the narrative, that is, prohibition against interracial marriage:

> Line 5: "secretly, *because they could not marry...*"

The 'evaluation' is a very important part of the narrative, according to Labov. It is used as a means to indicate the main point of the narrative. Many Afromexicans of San Nicolas attached much importance to this component in the narratives I collected, possibly because they told the stories specifically in order to explain the issues of social race and identity, in response to my (many) requests.

It had become clear in the complicating actions of Don M's story (ending Line 13) that the narrative was mainly about "races." Line 14 seems to mark the end of the complicating actions; it is the *resolution* but it incorporates a frequently cited attribute of *negros* of San Nicolas, which directly leads to the *coda*:

> 15   *triunfo, su sangre e mah fuerte, y así   terminó la historia ,*
>   triumph, his[negro] blood is stronger, and thus ended the story....

Lines 14-16 were elaborately explicit and even brought in other facts relevant to San Nicolas history and culture which had not been mentioned in the main narrative. The

section of the narrative thus serves to remind the listener of the main point of the story, and its resolution (Line 16). According to Labov, the evaluation is used to remove the possibility of the question "so what?" Since the evaluation is a commentary on the story, it is not surprising that the narrator should take an outsider "voice" to insert the remark. But s/he can also embed an *evaluation* in one of the characters' voice, as in the line occurring just before the onset of the 'resolution' part of this narrative:

Line 12:   if *they* [blancos] do not like *me* I don't care

I will show in the table below in the next section, that pronouns 'they' and 'me' correspond to '*blancos*' and '*negro.*' Notice the rich dialogue embedded in the description of events, giving life to the individual players in the drama, each getting a voice, modulated to suit the image of the participant (i.e. *blanco, negro viejo, esclava,* etc.).

In Line 2 the *blanco* father discourages his son from marrying a *negra* woman with whom he'd fallen in love: "why marry a black woman, she's [only] a slave," then again in Line 4, "it can't be, he [father, plantation owner] said, that you marry that *negra.*" Driven by love, the plantation owner's son turned a deaf ear and had secret sexual relations with the *negra* who eventually got pregnant. Since social prohibitions dictated that "they could not marry," she had to be sent away (Line 6) to have their child far away from the plantation.

Finally, it is perhaps easiest to recognize the narrative's coda, i.e. that final part which brings the listener from the story's universe and back to the present world. Many languages including Kiswahili and Gikuyu — posses an explicit sentence or clause or otherformulaic utterance directly translatable as: "…and that is the end of my story."

There is here a formulaic coda added to the one already seen in line 16. The required, explicit formulaic ending to every San Nicolan (and generally, Mexican) traditional narrative is repeated here from Line 17-18:

> *colorín colorado y la historia esta terminado, entro por un callejon y salgo por otro para ver quien nos cuenta otro,*
> colored *colorín* and the story is over, I go through an alley and come out through another to see who will tell us another...

The transition of timeline within the story is not very smooth (Line 6 – 8). The narrative picks up the story after many years, as the son of the banished *negra* woman is growing into a man, receiving some counseling from an "old slave" (Line 7), until "the time of rebellion came." Two things can be noted here: first is the assigned role of an "elder" within the narrative, his role as tutor, counselor or advisor. In San Nicolas, age is accorded respect, and elders are consulted for all types of advice. When I asked for folklore stories, for example, I was always directed to an "elder," such as the one doing this particular narrative. This was despite the fact that other younger members of the community actually knew these stories, having listened to them many times before. It is therefore not unexpected that an elderly character is inserted in the narrative text, to reflect contemporary social roles. Second, the theme of "rebellion" is strongly rooted in the folklore of many black communities since most them have a historical background of slavery and colonialism. This particular narrative reflects the theme of *negros* having had to rebel against an oppressor at some points during their past.

In Line 10, the story focuses on the particular *blanco*, owner of the plantation from where the *mulato* son, leader of this rebellion, was banished together with his mother. It is not clear in this section of the narrative if the owner of the plantation is the

grandfather or the father of the *mulato*. The plotters decide not to destroy his hacienda, but rather, to *expropriate* it.

The use of this word in the narrative is quite significant. It is a *cultismo*, or formal word which is not common in the discourse of a rural Mexican with little or no formal education. Nowhere else in these data did the word appear in San Nicolas discourse. However, the word is very much part of Mexican national — revolutionary — discourse. The *expropriacion* of *haciendas*, during the years of revolution that began in 1910, and of the petroleum industry in 1938 are important landmarks in the history of modern Mexico. Through the use of this word, the narrator takes a "commentator" footing stance, the history of Mexico's social revolution is superimposed on the contemporary narrative of slavery which took place a century before. Both the war of Independence in the first decade of the 19th century and the Revolution of 1910 were wars waged by the poor against the rich, the oppressed against the oppressor. Although *expropriation* would not have been applicable in the case of slave rebellions since there are no known cases of Black slaves taking over plantations in Mexico — the act of taking over abandoned haciendas by rural peasants was common during the revolution of 1910. In line 10, therefore, the narrator clearly inserts national history and recontextualizes it local terms by transforming the narrative events. This seems like a good example of how "surface forms of language reflect social life, add meaning and structure to discourse practices" (Schiffrin 1987).

5.2.3. The following is a shorter narrative about how the *negros* came to the coast of Mexico. The content of Narrative A explained the state and emergence of social relations among the co—habiting "races" but it did not offer an explantion of *negro* presence or

arrival in San Nicolas. In the following narrative, MO explains *how* and *when negros* came to San Nicolas.

Narrative B starts with an *orientation* in line 4 to situate the time when events took place. It also introduces the protagonists (*la raza*) although it is not yet clear what "race" is being referred to at this point. This orientation section remains full of such references "the people from there," "who spread themselves along the coast," "the morenos," etc. Complicating actions begin in Line 9: "but the time came when after they took them from here..came the ships.." followed soon enough by what appears to be an evaluation midway in line 10 and marked by emphasis: "BUT when they could not fit them they stayed all spread here by the brink of the ocean." Unfortunately, the rest of the sample is conversational as CH tries to get more details such as whether the *negros* were first to inhabit the lands. The response in Line 13 is affirmative.

Narrative B

1	CH:	*bueno,como le digo pue- a mí me interesa toda esa historia[* well,as I told you wel-me it interest me all that history-
2	MO:	*[como no* [of course
3	CH:	*y usted ya tiene-* And you have-
4	MO:	*pues sí: hace como QUINIENTOS años pues* Well yes: about FIVE HUNDRED years ago well *estaba la raza de por aqui allá cuando* there was the race here when
5		*estaban aquí explotaban esta tierra, la gente de allá, este, entonce después que vinieron esta* were here using this land, the people of there, well, then after came this
6		*gente de alla, se regaron a toda esta orilla del mar, quedaron todos los morenos allí ((vendido))* people of there, spread themselves all this coast, stayed all the morenos there ((sold))

7		*allí, pero llegó el tiempo que después los sacaban de aquí..entonces vinio-vinieron los*
		there, but came a time when after they remove them from here then came- the
8		*barcos entonces se echaron la gente para atrás PERO cuando no alcanzó a llevarselo*
		ships to take the people back BUT when could not fit them
9		*quedó todo regado aquí por la orilla del mar.*
		they stayed all spread here by the brink of the ocean
10	CH:	*o sea, vinieron primero[*
		You mean, [they] came first[
11	MO:	*[primero]*
		[first
12	CH:	*y luego el barco vino para traer-*
		And later the ship came to take-
13	MO:	*si: pero dilataron aquí trabajando, DILATARON y ya despúes echaron a reclamar*
		Yes but they stayed working here, STAYED and then after started to reclaim
14		*estas tierras entonces se ((recularon))? Los negros se fueron, en barco*
		these lands then they (( ))The blacks left, on a ship
15	CH:	*otra vez p'africa?*
		back to Africa?
16	MO:	*p'AFRICA*
		To AFRICA
17	MO:	*entonces los pocos que pudieron ir se fueron pero otros se quedaron por aca*
		So the few that could go left but others stayed here
18		*quedaron..por toda la orilla del mar y después esa gente se echó a producir*
		stayed all along the coast and afterwards those people began to produce
19	CH:	*claro*
		Of course
20	MO:	*a fundar que es la gente NEGRA que hay aquí en SAN NICOLAS, MALDONALDO,*
		To found that there people BLACK that are here in SAN NICOLAS,
21		*MALDONADO TAPEZTLA todo eso por alli – toda la BANDA!*
		TAPEZTLA all those over there- all the GANG
22	CH:	*toda la orilla[*
		All along the coast[
23	MO:	*[toda la orilla del mar..de ahi es la descendencia de toda esta gente negra que esta..asi es..*

[all the brink of the ocean, from there descend all these
people black that is here, that's how it is

Although the narrative is a bit confusing, it is easy to reconstruct it once we

properly identify who the participants of the story are. *Negros* were there first in the area;

they came to work but some stayed (apparently) because there was not enough space on

the ship that came to take them back to Africa. (Line 10). Afterwards there was a time

when "*they* wanted to remove *them* from here" (line 9); "they" would not fit them all in,

and so a few of "them" stayed (Line 18) spread all along the ocean brink (coast). The use

of speaker-exclusive pronouns (they and them) indicates MO's footing as narrator. It also

puts an unidentified group (*they*) in conflict with 'them' (*negros*) since the former's aim

was to evict the latter, to take them back on the ship and back to Africa. Notice how

gradually the narrator introduces the term *negro* by first referring to this group as 'the

race" (Line 4); 'the people of there' (Line 6,7), and then "*los morenos*" at the end of Line

7 which is coreferenced to the previous two mentions. In fact it is not until Line 15 where

the term *negro* is used to refer to the same group of people i.e. the migrant workers who

later stayed. In Line 21, the term again is used with emphasis to describe the people of

OM's community and those neighboring others. The story ends without a formalaic coda

as the previous narrative; nevertheless, Line 24 can still can be recognized as one that

'brings the listener back to the present world:'

    24. OM: [all the brink of the ocean, from there descend all these people
                    black that is here, that's how it is..

Table 5.1. Socio-racial terms and co-references in Narrative A and Narrative B

Line	Reference	Contextual meaning and interpretation
A,1	él, ella	Introduction to the main participants of the narrative; a male and a female. Pronouns are speaker exclusive.
A,2	una negra 'a black' (fem)	The identity of the main character is revealed as female, black.
A,3	esclava, negra slave (fem), black	Description of social class and gender of the character; historical but not clear if the feature 'related' or 'part of self' is implied. Social norms prohibit the marriage of a black slave (woman) to a white (master). Framed in the context of conversation between father and son, using the dialogue of *blancos*.
A,4	esa negra 'that black (fem)'	Social identity of protagonist is repeated in the voice of blanco father; takes the form of 'undesirable character' attribute.
B,4	la raza 'the race'	Refers to blacks. Recall that 'race' and 'extended family' ("relatives") mean about the same in San Nicolas. It is not clear yet if MO refers to his own relatives or 'negro race' but most likely both, hence a 'solidary' use.
A,5	ellos ella	'They' main characters of the narrative. 'she' refers to the negra slave. The pronouns are speaker exclusive displaying a form of 'evaluation' inserted as commentary about relations among races.
A,6	El nino 'the child'	Impersonal pronoun does not indicate his social identity ('race') till later below
B,6	Gente de allá (x2)'people of there'	Unclear at this point, who are the 'people of there,' but following lines 7-8reveal that MO means 'immigrants' from 'there.' At the end of this narrative we get to know that 'there' means 'Africa' thus *'gente de alla'* refers to Africans, the historical negro (Negro1).
A,7	Esclavo viejo 'old slave'	More reference to *negros* (since slaves are black). Notice that this becomes a crucial ally of the *mulato* son
A,7	Vamos a armalo, ayudarlo We will arm him, help him	Speaker inclusive pronouns begin to appear here – at least within the dialogue of the narrative — ('We' the *negros*) embedded in the complicating action; we' (negros, slaves) will arm him (mulato) because he is now one of ours
B,7	*Gente de alla..los morenos* 'people of there...morenos'	Similar to the use in 6B referring to 'immigrants.' This is confirmed by the use of *'los morenos'* in the same line in describing who came and stayed. The chain of identity continues
A,8	ese joven 'that young man'	El mulato represents a new generation, not new 'race' (i.e. is part of *negros*)
A,9	los demas 'the others'	*Blancos*, plantation owners, "the others," our enemies
B,9	Los sacaban '[they] were removing them'	While we now know the identity of the direct obejct'los' – them, the negros, immigrants, the 'removers' who are assumed to have brought the former to San Nicolas, are unidentified but we can assume that these are the Spanish slave-traders although MO does not make this explicit; through Line 14, pronominal references have similar content
B,15	Los negros	After a long section of implicit pronominal references, MO uses the overt socio-racial terms of the group he has been describing as 'the immigrants/the morenos/the people of there,etc'
A,11	le dieron...al blanco	He (*blanco*) master is killed by them (*negros*); contrastive

149

	('they gave him [a blow']	pronouns are used here in a speaker-exclusive sense
A,11	yo, mi raza 'me, my race'	My (*mulato*) identity is with "my negro race"
A,11	yo...ellos 'I...them'	Unlike previous line, this is a statement of identity, mutual dependence and solidarity; 'me' (mulato) and them (negros) are together because "my" race is "their" race
A,12	si no me...quieren	If they (*blancos*) reject me, I do (*mulato*) do so too
A,13	Hicieron (X2)	'they' made peace (*blancos* and *negros*) made after a long and serious conflict
A,16	su sangre 'his blood'	footing stance changes to that of commentator about "race"
B,18	Esa gente 'those people'	use of distant demonstrative makes MO seem to have reverted to 'historical negro' of immigrant ancestors who are nevertheless removed from self
B,20	La gente NEGRA de SN 'the black people of SN'	Not clear if the reference is speaker inclusive, but we know that it refers to present day populations, not to the distant ancestors previously talked about
B,21	toda la BANDA 'the whole GANG'	Interesting use of slang to describe group to which self belongs. A solidary term, it has strong connotations of strong in-group alliances
B,23	Esta gente negra These black people	At the very end of the narrative, MO uses a 'closer' demonstrative to indicate that he refers to the present negros, (as opposed to *those* negros of long ago) although he still does not adopt an inclusive pronoun

5.1.2. Summary

The interpretation given to co-occurring pronouns referring to social races in San Nicolan sample narratives shows some of the links between "linguistic surface forms and the presuppositions behind their use" (Gumperz 1982a). Through contextual interpretation of socio-racial terms, it is possible to infer background information that helps to understand their use in narratives or in other speech events. The roots and dynamics of individual 'racial' identity as a function of social conflict, for example, explain why [+*negro*] individuals are forced into an alliance against the *blanco*, driven by the words of the *mulato*:

> A12　　*si no me quieren ya no me importan,*
> 　　　　if they [*blancos*] do not like me I don't care...

The narratives capture the historicity of contemporary social organization. For example, after having fought and killed each other's members for a time, the three 'races' of San Nicolas found a level of peaceful coexistence in which they live today. In what appears to be a continuation of the 'complicating action,' Line 14 of Narrative A contains a dense number of reference to the three 'races,' of San Nicolas as well as the words "triumph," 'dance,' "*Africa*," "*tarimba*," and "*arteza*" (unique musical instruments of San Nicolas, see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.). Such occurrence is significant in that it brings together most of the key elements of Afromexican community and culture: African origins, music, struggle and reconciliation which are all captured in the narratives. Of course we also hear of the 'racial attributes' previously heard in interviews of Chapter 4 and summarized in Table 4.5, such as that the *negro* is of 'stronger blood' than the *blanco* which made the *negro* triumph over his adversary. The point of this particular narrative then is to emphasize the independence of *negros* who have liberated themselves from domination by *blancos*

after an long period of conflict. The counter culture attitude is not uncommon among minorities: "if you do not like me, I don't have to like you either."

The expression "*yo dependo [de mi raza]*" is interesting in the Afromexican context. It was used several times in conversations with members of the community. In this case, the *mulato* character is talking of his 'heritage' rather than 'dependence' on *mi raza* ("my race"). In other instances, we find this usage in such examples as "*yo dependo de la familia X,*" "I am of that family" or "I owe allegiance to X family." This idiomatic use of the verb "depend" is uniquely regional, not part of Standard Mexican Spanish. It's usage probably derives from the heavy reliance on family, clan or other type of

association allegiance commonly found in rural Mexico whereby being a member of a certain family entails a real dependence on that affiliation for all purposes including protection from or involvement in feuds, land rights or access to water, etc.

Narrative A uses individual characters to represent the "races" as they are historically understood in San Nicolas: a *blanco* father, a *negro* mother and a *mulato* son, all within the context of a slave plantation. This reminds us of Figure 1.1. of Chapter One where I showed how miscegenation and intermarriage produced new social "races." For example, *blanco* and *negro* parents produced a *mulato* child. It also reminds us of SG's comment that *"la piel es morena pero la sangre es blanca,"* since she was referring to this mixture of *blanco* and *negro* races in their own family; that despite the social identity of 'moreno,' her grandson also has *blanco* in him. Racial identity was and still is a function of individual identification with a particular 'race' and not necessarily a biological prerogative, an individual choice to a certain extent. The *mulato* son clearly chooses to identify himself with the *negro* (mother) race since the *blanco* father race would not accept him. In the dialogue of the story, *negra* ('black', fem) and *esclava* ('slave', fem.) like *negro viejo* ('old negro') or *viejo esclavo* ('old slave' masc.) are used interchangeably to describe the same individual. The abstract characteristics of *negro* in these sample narratives compares very well with the 'historical *negro*' (*negro$_1$*) discussed in Chapter 4 .

5.2.Versos

A special `form of talk' in San Nicolas is the practice of *versos* or lyrical poetry which

rhymes and whose content provides social commentary on all types of issues of daily life,

such as love, engagement, school and village life, habits and racial attitudes. The practice

of "versifying" (*versear*) is widespread among *Afromexicans* of the Costa Chica during

several occasions of the year. This practice is one of the continuities of African linguistic

and cultural practices in the New World when we look at its origin, content and present

day form. There is some agreement among scholars of African presence and continuities

in Mexico. It is generally acknowledged (e.g. Beltran 1958, Guttierrez 1988; Moedano

1985; Pereira 1995, and others) that Africans in Mexico (re) created forms of expression,

took up new ones from others they came into contact with, and modified their own. It is

therefore not surprising that *versos* are comparable to other oral traditions of certain

African ethnolinguistic communities.

Genres similar to Afromexican *versos* are abundant in continental African

societies such as praise poetry widely practiced in southern African societies and West

African *griot* traditions. Among the Gikuyu of East Africa, the *gicandi* practice very

much approximates Afromexican versos in form, content and social function as they

existed in the past. They are lyrical and they encode social themes; they also have an

entertainment value in that they are performed for an audience (Njogu, 1992). Although

the *gicandi* is basically performed by male artists (women perform a closely related form called *kiriro* (lit. 'wailing'). Like Afromexican *versadores,* performers are noted for their individualism and greater emphasis on words than on body movement (Kabira 1987). *Gicandi* performances deal with coding and decoding of messages gleaned from social norms and events. These parallels exist in such practices found in African Diaspora speech communities.

Nevertheless *versos* origins have also been linked to the Spanish literary genre of *décima* which was widespread and important in Spain during the 15th and 16th centuries. However, important differences are found between those forms and versos as practiced by Afromexicans in the *Costa Chica*. According to Prudente, et al (1993), the metric organization (the *form*) of Afromexican *versos* is quite different from the Spanish *décimos,* and so is the content. Unfortunately these researchers do not elaborate on the "metric organization" alluded to with regard to form.

Afromexican *versos* themes reflect a past world of alienation, present lifestyles and daily experiences. They tell important things about existing or past social relations among the social "races," confirming earlier insights I mentioned about the relationship between discourse and context.

During important social events in San Nicolas such as weddings and funerals or *fiestas* for patron saints, *versos* become an important component of those speech situations. Men, women, children and elders may participate. There are two types of *versos*: *traditional* versos which are memorized by individuals who then recite them whenever appropriate situation arises (see table 5.2.), and spontaneously created versos during *retadas* (lit. "challenges"), sessions when individuals engage in a verbal duel.

The traditional *versos* are taken from the community's reservoir of oral traditions, and they are recited from memory. Their creation may not necessarily be traced back to a particular individual. The lines are learned through memorization and practice, but delivery skills are essential for an individual to become an outstanding *versador*. In fact, I often observed their use by elders in educating younger persons; instead of chiding or lecturing children about manners, marriage and love, my host grandfather would often start to recite versos relating to those topics.

The second type of *versos* is the unique, spontaneously created form called the *retada* (lit. "challenge") or *controversia* (lit. "controversy"). This type represents a socially regulated confrontation or "war of words." It is a public event, frequently held during social occasions such as *velorios* (mourning the dead before burial), festive reunions, at the *cantina* (known as *congale* in San Nicolan dialect), or by the river while women do their washing. The versifier or challenger demonstrates and shows off their verbal skills by throwing at his or her opponents sharp, witty, fast, versos which leave the loser *afrontado* (with loss of face). According to Prudente et al (1993), *retadas* provide an outlet for regulating ordinary tensions in the community. Challenging and defending oneself through *verso* provides a less harmful and efficient means of discharging hostilities without having to resort to physical violence. This is especially true among women whose social position would demand verbal rather than physical confrontations. More importantly, it is a creative exercise requiring spontaneity and quick thinking in contrast to the traditional form which relies on memory and experience. While the traditional versos are still predominantly the domain of adult individuals, today, the 'verbal wars' appear to be falling out of use among adults according to informants.

Spontaneous versos may be created on the spot to illustrate a point during conversation. This is achieved by creating a framework by evoking this type of speech event. In doing so, the speaker is more empowered to mention things or make claims in ways that would not be possible in a different type of speech situation. The verso as a speech event enables the speaker/singer to speak 'baldly, on record,' (Brown and Levinson 1983) without causing (much) offense. This social function is quite similar to the role played by *gicandi* practitioners, as well as the artistic value put on the words, the performers and their expertise.

The impact of speech embedded in *versos* is 'softer' on the recipient who also has a change to respond and 'defend' him or herself in similar ways. In the one of the few examples of spontaneous *versos* I recorded, the verso was inserted into a conversation to say something unflattering about a black man who was then a topic of our conversation. Of course it was not easy to arrange for a *controversia* as it was to obtain interviews. In a few occasions when they did occur I was unprepared, without a tape recorder in hand. These are neither predictable nor frequent since they are by nature spontaneous. However, participant observer notes and a few traditional *versos* available to me do provide sufficient data to illustrate use of socio-racial terms within the genre of *versos*. In my own observation v*ersos* vary little in terms of their content and form in Afromexican villages of the *Costa* where I recorded their performance.

Conversation 5A

1	CH:	*no ha habido otros hombres GRANDES,negros de aqui?*
		there has not been other GREAT black men of here
2	MQ:	*COMO NO COMO NO, como no! estuvo un FELIPE SILVA,un*
		OF COURSE OF COURSE of course! Was a FELIPE SILVA, a
3		*hombre negro, negro, aqui,se le dice NEGRO PAPAYA*

156

		man black, black, here, we say BLACK PAPAYA
4	CH:	*negro papaya?*
		black papaya?
5	MQ:	*te echo un verso?*
		Shall I throw you a verso?
6	CH:	umh? ((uncomprehending))
7	MQ:	*te echo un verso UN VERSO?*
		shall I throw you A VERSO?
8	CH:	*aha si!*
		aha yes!
8	MQ:	((sings))*VIEJO COMO NO TE MUERE VIEJO, VIEJO COMO NO*
		OLD MAN WHY WONT YOU DIE OLD MAN, OLD MAN WHY
11		*TE MUERE VIEJO, CABEZITA DE ALGODON, SABE QUE NO TE (BUSCO) NI AL DIABLO NI A MEXICO NI A LA NACION!!* **Heh heh!** *eso es lo*
		WON'T YOU DIE OLD MAN, COTTON HEAD, YOU KNOW I NO (SEARCH) FOR YOU AT THE DEVILS NOR IN MEXICO NOR IN THE [WHOLE] NATION! Heh heh
12		*que se canta con la arteza aqui, eso inventan al momento*
		that is how we sing with the arteza here, made up on the moment
13	CH:	*a ver si se te ocurre otro!*
		Let's see if to you comes another[*verso*]!

In Line 3, the speaker referred to a man as *"negro papaya.'* When I asked for clarification by repetition (Line 4) to communicate my lack of comprehension of the term, MQ's response in Line 5 was: *te hecho un verso?* ("Shall I throw you a *verso?*"). The opening line issued by RC is a contextualization cue which signals a change in 'speech activity type:' versifying. However, I do not immediately recognize it as an instance of MQ using a versos as "verbal weapons" to make bald statements about a sensitive topic (e.g. 'why won't you die old man? Why won't you die?' (Lines 10-11). By asking for permission from the audience, MQ signaled the change of speech mode from conversation to *verso*. My confusion about the term *'negro papaya'* was far from clarified by the *verso* that was 'thrown' at me. But it became clear however that the social identity of the man being

discussed was *negro,* but a *"negro papaya,"* or a *negro* ('yellow' under the skin) whose

loyalty to the social group is or was questionable. In Chapter 1 I described a number of

terms used to describe different 'types' of *negros* in the Costa Chica area (e.g. *chango*

vestido 'dressed up monkey'; *labio volteado* 'turned up lip, etc.); of course, the

differences, just like the terms coined to describe them refer to behavioral or peculiar

physical attributes, rather than socio-racial ones since it is understood that their social

identity was *negro* anyway. MQ used a *verso* to respond affirmatively to my question

about prominent blacks of the past in San Nicolas. He used a verso which he 'threw' at

me as a 'softening device,' to reveal some negative characteristic of a prominent *negro* of

San Nicolas.

I will look at a number of short *versos* in greater detail in the next section, but first

I tabulate the occasions during which *versos* are sung in San Nicolas and also in many

other Afromexican communities of the *Costa Chica.* Some dates coincide while others do

not because they are relevant only in San Nicolas, such as the day of the local patron

saint.

Table 5.2 Versifying Occasions in San Nicolas

Date	Event	Situation
August 14	Day of the Virgin Mary	Group of small girls (*mariposas*)versify at church ceremony
September 10	*Baile de Toros* (Bull dance) on the day of the festival dedicated to San Nicolas (the Patron Saint)	Cowboys(*vaqueros*)versify while bull fighting
November	*Dia de los muertos* festivity which includes	free for all versifying by all community members

	danza de los diablos (devil's dance)	
Various	at funerals	*Padrinos*(close friends) bid goodbye to the deceased on the way to burial site
Various	At weddings	Sung by eldersduring *la entrega del presente* (gift giving)
Various	Dance of the *arteza* (also *cajon*); basically a "jam session"	Versos are sung by those present to the rhythm of the *arteza*, praising, ridiculing, chanting those present in collective festivity and spontaneous dialogue
Various	non special occasions, relaxing in the afternoon or evening, chatting and/or drinking	Sung by selected individual at the request from an audience

5.2.1. Socio-Racial Terms in Traditional Versos

V*ersos* of the traditional type consist of carefully constructed oral messages

reflective of collective experience (e.g. slavery, war, racial attitudes, love and marriage,

etc.) with heavy reliance on individual improvisation and expertise in creating *verses*

with an appealing form (rhythm and rhyme). The topic of "race" and identity is present

both in modern *versos*, and in early colonial poetry such as that of Jose Vasconcelos *(El*

Negrito Poeta) — an 18th century Mexican Poet and nationalist quoted at the beginning

of this section. Versos are such an integral part of the language of San Nicolans that from

early on, children are encouraged to listen, recite and make up their own verses —

in general, to acquire competence in composition and interpretation.

Schoolchildren often create and recite verses that reflect their school life and

newly acquired knowledge which often appears to actually be a way of challenging each

others' book knowledge creatively while demonstrating their own. Here are two

examples of versos sang by middle schoolchildren of San Nicolas.

A	B
A	**B**
Por ti suspiro	*te quiero matematicamente*
por ti me muero	*con un amor trigonometral*
por ti en la escuela	*porque fisica y*
me saco cero	*biologicamente*
	tu ere' mi sistema decimal !
because of you I breathe	
because of you I die	I love you mathematically
because of you at school	with trigonometrical love
I get zero	because physical and
	biologically
	you are my decimal system *!*

The words of these *versos* recited by young schoolchildren are located in a school setting, where mathematical concepts are used as words to describe love; they are also used for rhythmical purposes and drama. The words of both *versos* tell of school and love among youth I will use the stanzas of a number of short *versos* recorded in San Nicolas by Prudente et al (1993) to show that uses of social racial terms in Afromexican versos are consistent with those seen in narratives and in conversational data. Each *verso* is numbered for reader's convenience when referring to specific verrsos.

Table 5.3: Versos with embedded Socio-Racial Terms

1.
Me subi a la punta del barco
a devisar pa'l rincon
mi negrito e'bonito
como una flor de algodon
no dejo de quererlo
ha'ta votarlo al panteon
primero le hecho la tierra
y despues le pido perdon
            *

[I climbed to the top of the ship

To see over the edge
My *negrito* is beautiful
Like a cotton flower
I will not stop loving him
Till he's inside the grave
I'll cover him with soil
Then I'll ask his forgiveness]

2.
Corre el agua por debajo
corre el agua y no se enfria
que pensaria este moreno

160

que de cierto lo queria
yo le di la entretenida
mientra' mi amor venia

*

[Water runs underground
it flows but does not get cool
what does this *moreno* think
that I really loved him
but I entertained him along
While love was on the way]
3.
en un pocito profundo
yo sola me andaba ahogando
por e'te negro bribon
la vida me andaba co'tando

*

[Inside a deep well
I was drowning by myself
Because of this "bad nigger"
My life was being cut away

4.
al pasar por una huerta
me corte la mejor cana
no soy blanca ni bonita
soy como la rosa de E'spana
mi color e' triguenito
pero sin ninguna maa

*

[While passing by a field
I cut the best cane
I am neither white nor pretty
I am like the Spanish Rose
My color is *trigueño*
But without a blemish]

5.
de arriba cayo un pañito
derechito al duraznito
deje de querer a un blanco
por querer un triguenito
tendra la sangre muy dulce
y por ser muy hombrecito
*

[From above fell a worm
straight into the peaches
I stopped loving a white[man]
In order to love a *trigueño*
Who had sweet blood
And was very manly]

6.

dicen que lo negro es luto
yo digo que no e'verda'
porque tus ojitos son negros
y me dan felicidad

*

they say we mourn blackness
I say that's not true
Because your eyes (dim.) are black
Yet they make me happy

7.
me desprecia por morena
tiene' toda la razon
entre perla' y diamante
la morena es mejor

*

[They dislike me for being *morena*
they have all the reason
between pearls and diamonds
morena is the best]

8.
negrito de no ser tu
perdi la esperanza ya
porque solamente en ti
se encerro mi voluntad

*

Negrito if it wasn't for you
I'd've lost all hope
because in you, only in you
my will is confined

9.
al subir la e'calera
oi lo's paso' de Adan
acuerdate morenita
que yo soy de Huehuetan

*

[While climbing the stairs
I heard Adam's steps
Remember *morena* (fem. dim.)
That I am from Huehetan]

10.
negra sin tu amor no me hallo
nada, nada me divierte
mejor que te parta un rayo
para dejar de quererte

[black (fem.) without your love
nothing makes me happy
better if lighting tore you apart

so I can stop loving you]

11.
en papel blanco te escribo
porque blanca fue mi suerte
yo no quiero papel fino
yo lo que deseo es verte

*

[I write you on white paper
Because white was my luck
I do not want fine paper
What I want is to see you]

12.

dicen que el negro e triste
pero yo digo que no es verda'
porque lo mejor besos
se dan en la oscuridad

[They say that the black is sad
But I say that's not true
Because the best of kisses
Are given in the darkness

13.
ya no te quiero negrito
porque ere' como la cera
te derrites con el sol
y te pegas con cualquiera

*

I no longer love you *negrito*
For you are like wax
You disappear with the sun
And you hold on fast onto anyone

14.
a las morenas bonitas
una corona imperial
y a las gueras descoloridas
una penca de nopal

[To the pretty *morenas*
a royal crown
and for the discolored blondes
a thorn of the*nopal!*

Table 5.4. Socio-Racial terms in 14 selected *Versos*

Verso	Reference	Contextual Interpretation
1	*mi negrito e' bonito* 'my negrito is beautiful'	'Affectionate' use of 'negro' in its diminutive form coupled with the commonly used phrase of pride; affirmation of self. The use is positive.
2	este moreno 'this moreno'	Singer takes on 'outsider' footing to describe the foolish lover. This use is non-inclusive of speaker, and not affectionate.
3	negro bribón "bad nigger"	The negative (exclusive) use of *negro* is selected by singer here to denounce the irresponsible behavior such as that attributed to Negros2.
4	*no soy blanca ni bonita mi color es trigüeño* "I am neither white nor pretty, my color is *trigüeño*"	Singer resorts to the social uses of (*blanca, trigüeño*) to describe her own identity. Seen little in our samples so far, it is actually a descriptive term for a sub-set of *negros/morenos* , like *prieto, zambo*, etc. it is used to describe internal differentiation among *morenos*.
5	*un blanco es trigüeño*	Singer rejects a blanco in favor of a *trigüeño* who is 'sweeter' and more 'manly.' This is an example of how social 'race' attributes those of Negro2 are used to negotiate personal choices – at least symbolically (in language).
6	*lo negro ojos negros* 'blackness' 'black/dark eyes'	Neither instance refers to social race or to individuals in this case, but this verso only gains meaning when it evokes the (negative) attributes of Negro2.
7	*morena*	Singer selects the outsider term to make an evaluative statement about her 'race.' Notice that she uses the pronoun 'they' in reference to those who dislike her. She then turns the negative views into a pltaform to affirm her pride in self-identity.
8	*negrito*	"affectionate" use of the term in its diminutive form here is similar to the positive use in verso 1. It is a positive use since it refers to a supportive/kind *negro*.
9	*morenita*	Another instanc of affectionate uses by an "outsider" who nevertheless comes from Huehuetan, a prominent Afromexican community mentioned in Conversations with MG (Chapter 4). It may be assumed that the speaker is *negro*, because he's from Huehetan; nevertheless, the user of this term is an "outsider."
10	*negra*	use of *negro* describe great infatuation. Since *negra* is being used positively by speaker, we assume that this is Negro1 and the speaker is an "insider."
11	blanco blanca	A play of words similar to (6) above, but it is not clear whether 'white luck that I had' is a good thing or a bad thing; nevertheless, there is the same exploitation of socio-racial terms for poetic purposes.
12	*el negro*	Hypothetical negro (Negro2), pitied by outsiders, but singer rejects this notion ('I say it's not true'). There play on words (negro/darkness) represents the range of possibilities of use of social racial terms to

163

		describe or express meanings.
13	*negrito*	First instance in which the diminutive form of negro is used in a non-affectionate manner. On the contrary, it is used in senses similar to those of Negro2. Important to note is that the term is evoked for negative uses.
14	*las morenas*	As in Stanza (7) morena (fem) is used in a positive way (*'bonitas'*) and contrasted with the *gueras* [who have lost their blondness], possibly referring to those who seek to belong to a social race they do not belong to.

5.2.2. Summary

All the verses described and analyzed above were created around the theme of "race." Overall, they rely on the understandings of socio-racial terms we have seen so far in ordinary conversations and in narratives. An informant reported for example, that "the ship, the cotton, grave and land are our things that we grow up knowing." In the first *verso*, this background information is present but not readily evident if the listener is not aware of the social meanings of these words and why they are evoked. It is the lexicon that contributes to the fixing of the context of events encapsulated by this story: land, *negros*, cotton, etc, terms which create a 'solidary' basis to the meaning of *negrito,* a diminutive form of *negro.* The term is commonly used by speakers of Standard Mexican Spanish ("outsiders") who invariably describe these uses as "affectionate."

The term used to describe the protagonist in the story changes from *negrito* to *moreno* in Verso 2. This is also a non-solidary term used by insiders but not insiders, according to our previous data; its use in verso 2 refers to the character who is being cheated by his lover is making a shift in psychological alliance by self-distancing herself (by selecting different terms at different points) from the affected individual, but the reasons for this move are not yet clear.

Following that, the negative qualities of the protagonist bring about a switch to the stigmatized social racial term *"negro bribon"* ("bad nigger") who is cutting short the *versador's* life with heartbreak, and who, according to our analysis in Chapter 4, is represented by $negro_2$. Other socio-racial attributes are explicit in the words of the *verso*, such as *"no soy blanca ni bonita"* ('I am not beautiful and white (fem.)') also defined in oppositional values of "good" and "bad," "beautiful" or "ugly." The last line of the stanza is commonly heard in conversations, where speakers assert their [+*negro*] identity by challenging the negative values or beliefs attributed to their social "race." Verso 6 similarly challenges the notion that '*they* say we mourn blackness' by clever use of *negro* as a common adjective devoid of racial connotations ("your eyes are *black*") to reject the negative ones that are associated with his social group. Versos 8 and 10 are more expressions of affection for the [+*negro*] protagonist. Interestingly the term *morena* is consistently used in its feminine version (i.e. refers to females) while *negro* is overwhelmingly masculine in all its occurrences except one in Stanza 10. This lends support to the idea that *morena* is the 'softer' term for use among Afromexicans when used, and '*negro*' is the 'bald' term of use inside the community. Another manipulation of socio-racial terms occurs in Verso 12: "the *negro* cannot be sad because the best kisses are given in the darkness". By using *negro* and 'dark' as synonyms, the *versador* highlights the social (racial) meanings ascribed to the terms '*negro*' and '*blanco.*' The "very manly" attributes of *negro* man, who also has "sweet" blood were seen in previous conversations and analyzed as expressions of racial pride within the context of local competition among the "races." There is a higher frequency of change of footing stances between *negro1* and *negro2* in versos than in narratives. This is to be expected in a verbal

art of this type where sharp nuances and manipulation of meanings are the very basis of their symbolic value. The contextual interpretations in Table 5.4. show that the multiple and antagonistic uses of the term *negro* makes it an excellent 'weapon' for *verso* singers.

5.3. Corridos.

"Corridos are popular Mexican ballads typically celebrating the exploits of cowboy drug runners in western and northern Mexico (Finnegan, 1996)."

The above quote from an article in the New Yorker magazine is just one example of the overgeneralizations or stereotypical understandings of Mexican popular culture in general, for nothing could be further from the truth about the *corridos* of San Nicolas. Although most *corridos* indeed are composed around the theme of local individuals, I have not encountered a single one that overtly celebrates drug runners. The corridos I have listened to are mostly about singular (often violent) events involving local persons and about love.

In general, *corridos* are not happy songs. The lyrics are most often sad commentaries on past events in the community's memory. They are in fact narratives that trigger powerful emotion such as tears of sadness or outbursts of anger at the memory of those events recounted in the ballad. *Corridos* are composed by individuals or musical bands then may be learned by others and sung many times over in the community when people have gathered for recreation, story-telling or any other occasion when people are gathered to exchange stories or experiences. Some spontaneous lines may be added to a corrido, to dedicate the song to someone present at the time of performance, or to add new information to an older *corrido*.

San Nicolans take *corridos* quite seriously as part of their knowledge of the range of local language performances. Corrido singing sessions take place in specific settings

involving a limited number of performers (an individual or band of musicians), male

singers who can also play a guitar. As speech events, the language used in corrido

sessions includes some discourse markers that generally do not occur in other speech

situations (e.g. ay!, line repetition, and others). Corridos also serve the purpose of being a

social commentary on local issues and history, encoding in this way, community values

and socio-cultural rules. Their importance as an area of formal study is underscored by

the historical value of such songs given the familiarity of the singers in relation to the

actors and the nature of conflicts. I find corridos to be an important area of San Nicolan

ethnography of speaking because in their performance we encounter a particular 'frame

of talk' in which slightly different meanings and values may be inferred. My data from

the corridos I collected in San Nicolas does not, unfortunately, provide interesting data

about the use and patterning of socio-racial terms.

Moedano (1989) and Gutierrez (1988) reported that this particular verbal artistry

is a distinctive Afromexican cultural production. One of Gutierrez's findings in his 1988

study of *corridos* was that the *corrido* musical tradition is "rooted in violent settings."

But it is not clear whether this common theme is linked to the African component of their

culture. True, an overwhelming proportion of the corridos recount tragedies that have

taken place in the community, but so do most of the corridos sang in rural, non-

Afromexican communities especially in the northern region of the country. With few

exceptions, corridos are a male affair, sang by men and about men's versions of bravery,

fearlessness in the face of adversity; nobility, chivalry, and those aspects of male

character (machismo) that are viewed as prestigious according to community norms. But

even though Mexican *corridos* are not unique to Afromexicans, they are comparable in

form and content to similar verbal art from Diaspora communities in the Americas such as Jamaican Dance Hall "gun-talk" or US Hip Hop, which are often artistic statements of protest against perceived present or past oppression. They are also "expressions of intra-group conflicts," according to Pereira (1995) who further describes corridos as "another form of resistance of marginalized groups, an affirmation of the self." Afromexican corridos themes reflect some of these conflicts with the establishment — *el gobierno* ("government") — which are frequently threaded into the narratives of intra-group conflict involving local actors. "Government" in San Nicolas most often refers to the "outsider" entity who frequently intervenes in local matters and exercises control over the local inhabitants. By and large these are federal government soldiers or Guerrero state policemen.

In this section I will provide three sample *corridos* from San Nicolas[1] to illustrate some of the socio-cultural information they embody using the same intersubjective interpretation approach I have used in looking at the other areas of discourse practice. Corridos represent a 'form of talk' which have an internal structure that is quite similar to that of the narratives I examined earlier in this chapter, and their content, like that of other narratives, serves to 'recapitulate past experience by matching a series of sequenced clauses.' Corridos are in fact narratives of past experience structured in similar ways to conversational narratives except that they are in the form of songs. I will therefore analyze them using the same narrative structure framework, and I will highlight these structural properties while interpreting their content. I continue to rely on

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[1] Parts of these samples were recorded in El Pitahayo, Guerrero in December 1993. Full and better recorded versions of the corridos are taken from a commercially distributed tape, "*Corridos Guerrerenses*," which I obtained in Acapulco.

my knowledge and first hand experiences while using them to gain more insights into the 'cultural backdrop' of this community.

5.3.1.Corrido de Felicito Noyola

Noyola is one of the most widespread surnames in San Nicolas, El Pitahayo and even beyond in other Afromexican pueblos of the *Costa Chica*. The head of my principal host family in San Nicolas was married to a Noyola, and my host in El Pitahayo was also a Noyola. The official civil registrars of both communities bear the last name Noyola. The founding patriarch of El Pitahayo was also a Noyola. Genz (1975) discussed the nature and origins of endogamy in one Afromexican community of Veracruz, however, I will not discuss that aspect here.

The following *corrido* (source: *'Corridos Guerrenenses'*) embodies the community life and of San Nicolas and El Pitahayo. It is a narrative involving actual members of one of the most extended families there, and some of the events recounted in this *corrido* are quite familiar to me, such as the Fiesta de Santiago, an annual festival to celebrate the patron saint of El Pitahayo. Many San Nicolans who are relatives and friends of the sister community attend this occasion. Horse races, cock-fighting and dancing take place. Food and drink are served in many homes.

<u>Corrido de Feliciano Noyola</u>

1   *Un saludo para todos*
         greetings to all
2   *1970 fecha que no se me borra* *(repeat 2 times)*
         1970, a date I'll never forget
3   *por la fiesta de Santiago ay! mataron a Noyola*
         during the fiesta of Santiago, ay! they killed Noyola
4   *El fue nacido en Peralta y creecido en Acapulco*
         He was born in Peralta and raised in Acapulco
5   *el tenia muchos amigos donde hizo su fortuna (x2)*
         he had many friends where he made his fortune

6   *esa cuestion empezo con el senor mario mendoza*
        those troubles began with senor Mario Mendoza
7   *ay! le robo una yegua a la senora eloisa (x2)*
        ay! he robbed a mare of Senora Eloisa
8   *señor Tenor de Genelo era amigo de Noyola*
        Señor Tenor de Genelo was a friend of Noyola
9   *ay! le paraba la yegua porque no queria problema (x2)*
        ay! he tethered his mare because he did not want problems
10   *ay! dice mario mendoza eso no llega a la ley*
        ay! said Mario Mendoza, this is between us (not the law)
11   *yo a Noyola lo arreglo con un tiro de 16 (x2)*
        me, Noyola I will fix [him] with a blast of (M)16
12   *el senor Mario Mendoza lo tenia todo planeado*
        Senor Mario Mendoza had it all planned
13   *para matar a Noyola por la fiesta de santiago (x2)*
        to kill Noyola at the fiesta de Santiago
14   *El Mario tiro primero con la impresion de ganarle*
        Mario shot first thinking he'd win first
15   *entoce dice a Noyola "tu no me puedes matar"*
        but Noyola told him, "you cannot kill me"
16   *le saco su pistola y le empezo a disparar*
        he whipped out his pistol and started to shoot (x2)
17   *ay! tiraba el senor Perez tambien Alberto Ortiz*
        Señor Perez was shooting so was Altberto Ortiz
18   *tirando desde el cerezo donde se iban a morir (x2)*
        shooting from the bush where they were going to die
19   *ay! gritaba Juan Fernandez, "no se hagan bolas muchachos*
        Juan Fernandez was shouting "don't mess up boys"
20   *tiren con valor muchachos que nos se va Noyola"*
        shoot bravely boys lest Noyola gets away from us
21   *ay! tiraban los Ortizes tiraban sin poders pasar*
        the Ortizes were shooting without being able to pass
22   *tirandose contra todos para poderse salvar (x2)*
        shooting wildly to save their lives
23   *tiraba Reimundo Ortiz tiraba como ninguno*
        Reymundo Ortiz was shooting like no one else
24   *descarga el M1 tumbandole uno por uno (x2)*
        discharging his M1, felling one after another
25   *ay! senor Juan Hernandez parece que de a de veras*
        oh, senor Juan Hernandez saw it was for real
26   *con un balazo en el brazo empezo la carrera (x2)*
        with a bullet in the shoulder he started to run
27   *ya me voy a despedirme, muchachos no se hagan bolas*
        I am now saying goodbye, boys don't make a mess
28   *por la fiesta del santiago ay! mataron a Noyola(x2)*
        at the fiesta de Santiago, oh they killed Noyola

The theft of a horse belonging to Señora Eloisa by Mario Mendoza was the apparent reason for the conflict. But it turned out to be a ruse in a plan to kill Noyola. It appears that Noyola was informed by his friend Señor Tenor (Line 8) of the theft, and went for Mario (the thief) who responded with a challenge that the matter be settled between them, not by the law (Line 10). Within the context of Guerrero, this is a challenge to a duel which is made explicit by Mario's threat "to fix Noyola with one blast of M16" (Line 11). Of course, Mario's intention was to provoke Noyola as a pretext to finding a way to kill him. Indeed, when the duel time came, Mario fired the first shot indicating his role as aggressor, and Noyola responded by whipping out his pistol saying "you can't kill me" (Line 15). As soon as he responded in this way, several other men appeared on the scene of what turned to be an ambush. Señor Perez and Alberto Ortiz were the ones to die on that same bush from where they had laid ambush (Line 18). Meanwhile the Otriz brothers were shooting desperately for their lives (Line 22) to defend themselves from Noyola's counter attack. Desperately, Juan Hernandez urged his gun-men "not to mess up, lest Noyola escapes" even as he (Juan H) himself saw that things were getting too hot, and escaped with a bullet lodged in his shoulder (Line 26). The actual death of Noyola is not mentioned but it is implicit in the song's theme and title.

I will now refer the reader back to the structure of the narrative described in Section 5.2. Essential components of narrative are clearly present in the *corrido*. Lines 1-3 provide an *abstract*: the killing of Noyola in 1970, at the annual Fiesta de Santiago. Of course the brief introduction assumes certain background information, such as the

knowledge of day of Santiago which will help to understand the significance of (the events of) the narrative.

The *orientation* begins in Line 4 where the background of the main actor is given, what he was like ('had many friends,' Line 5) and that he was well-to-do ('had made his fortune', also in Line 5.

The *complicating action* section which gives detailed, sequenced description of the events follows in Line 6: 'those troubles began with Senor Mendoza,' marking the beginning of a series of clauses that describe the conflict that led to Noyola's death (Lines 7-11). An evaluation is inserted in Lines 12-13, where the narrator breaks the flow of narration to comment to the listeners that "Senor Mendoza had it all planned, how to kill Noyola, at the Fiesta de Santiago." Notice how the narrator 'reminds us of the point of the story' by constant repetition of the line that provides the theme of the *corrido*. The complicating action lines resume in Line 14 through 27, intensifying the action around Line 18 where dialogue lines of the actors are inserted for suspenseful delivery of the story's end. Line 27 is a *resolution* section of this narrative which also marks the end of the complicating action. Line 28 marks the coda or the line that brings the listeners back to the present world.

5.3.2. Corrido de Marcelo Figueroa

The structure of the second sample is similar to the previous one with the difference being that the complicating action of the latter is longer and more detailed. A short abstract, similar to the one of the first *corrido*, is found in lines 1-3. The complicating action then follows, starting in Line 4; the events follow neatly in

sequenced, chronological order broken only by an evaluation in Line 33. As in *Corrido*

de Noyola, ay! marks the beginning of each narrative clause in the complicating action.

<u>Corrido de M. Figueroa</u>

1 *el año de 1970 no me quisiera acordar*
   the year 1970 I'd rather forget
2 *murieron tres Huehetecos y de pueblo San Nicolás*
   three Huhuetans died, one from San Nicolas
3 *y uno de Montecillo por no saberse cuidar*
   and one from Montecillo for not knowing how to watch out
4 *le dijo Gracialo a Marcelo Figueroa*
   Gracialo told Marcelo Figueroa
5 *y vamos al otro lado y regresamos ahora*
   we're just going across, we'll be back shortly
6 *ay! le dijo su mujer "oyes Marcelo no vayas"*
   ay! Said his woman, "listen Marcelo, don't go"
7 *"yo como quera me voy me vaya como me vaya"*
   I don't care what happens to me, I'm going
8 *y si no quedo a regresar tal vez ya seria mi raya*
   and if I don't come back, that may be my fortune
9 *ay! agarraon el camino todos despesperado*
   ay! They started out, all in desperation
10 *porque habian sabido huma( ) estaba esperando*
   because they knew ( ) was waiting
11 *y Juan Moctezuma dijo "muchachos a donde se van*
   and Juan Moctezuma said, 'boys, where are you going
12 *tengo el presentimiento que algo les va a pasar*
   I have a feeling that something may happen to you
13 *preguntaron por Alfonso que se lo querian llevar*
   they asked for Alfonso, for they wanted to take him along
14 *ay! llevaron el camino todos como unos gallos*
   ay! They took the road, all were like cocks
15 *na mas cruzaron el campo y estaban en El Pitahayo*
   they'd only crossed the fields and soon were in El Pitahayo
16 *luego que llegaron los empezo a "saludar"*
   as soon as they arrived, they started to "greet"
17 *que se saca su pistola y les empezo a "saludar"*
   they pulled out the pistols and started the greetings
18 *otro dia todos muy tempranitos todos andaban borrachos*
   the next day very early all were drunk
19 *na mas cruzaron a Cuaji detras se fueron los gallos*
   they just crossed over to Cuaji, behind them the "cocks"
20 *llegando a San Nicolas todos andaban bebiendo*
   upon arriving at San Nicolas, all were drinking

21   *tomando en una cantina cuando les cayo el gobierno*
        while drinking at the cantina, the government fell on them

22   *Graciano dijo "muchachos no tengan miedo"*
        Graciano said, "boys, do not be afraid"

23   *vamos dejando las armas porque les cae el gobierno*
        we're dropping the guns, because the government is on us

24   *que cuando llegando a Ometepec con dinero lo arreglo*
        as soon as we get to Ometepec, I'll fix everything with money

25   *ay! Manuel Medina dijo yo no me rendire nada*
        ay! Manuel Medina said, I am not giving no way

26   *se salio su rifle se salio de regulada*
        his rifle popped out, ….?

27   *se solto como rayo y hasta le rebolaba?*
        He jumped like lightening, until ….?

28   *Marcelo Figueroa como queriendo llorar*
        Marcelo Figuero was in tears

29   *"mi hermado ya esta tirado, yo le tengo que pelear"*
        "my brother is down, I got to fight for him"

30   *que se saca su pistola les comenzo a disparar*
        he pulled out his pistol and started to shoot

31   *a los primerso balazos gritaba Manuel Medina*
        at the first shots Manuel Medina was shouting

32   *"ya me mataron a fausto" no dejo la Carabina"*
        they've killed Fausto, I shall not abandon the Carbine

33   *ese salvadora criterio su carabino le salvo*
        it was this thing, the Carbine saved him

34   *en vez de arrancar p'al monte mas p'al centro le metio*
        instead of pulling at the mounting, it went toward the center

35   *su rifle quedo tirado y por eso se salvo*
        his rifle was knocked down, that's what saved him

36   *ya me voy a despedir me deben de dispensar*
        I am now saying goodbye, you should excuse me

37   *murieron tres huhuetecos y de pubelo San Nicolas*
        three Huehuetecos died, one from San Nicolas pueblo

38   *y uno de montecillo tambien Raul Petatar*
        and one from Montecillo,as well as Raul Petatar

5.3.3. Corrido de Lucio Cabañas

The third sample *corrido* is a good example of how corridos function as social

commentaries and as repositories of historical events. It is about a local character of

national reputation, Lucio Cabañas, a former schoolteacher who led a peasant guerrilla

war against the federal Mexican government in the early 1970's and whose name was

mentioned in Conversation J of chapter 4. It will be recalled that the informant (RC) described how his son had to fight boys who referred to him as a *"cabañista"* (follower of Cabañas) at school in Mexico City. This stereotypical reference made it necessary for RC's son to fight back physically against those boys.

In fact, this *corrido* is distinct from the other two in that it does not recount a sequence of actions on a single event. Rather, it is an "insider" commentary about Lucio Cabañas: who he was and what he stood for in terms of local perceptions of him and his cause. It presents an alternative interpretation of who Cabañas was or who he represented from an Afromexican community's point of view. Lines 5-8 explicitly state this.

<u>Corrido de Lucio Cabañas</u>

1   *Escuchen este corrido que les voy a cantar*
              Listen y'all to this corrido I'm going to sing for you
2   *Una historia conocida les voy a relatar*
              A well-known story I'm going to tell you
3   *De un hombre Lucio Cabanas de la sierra de Atoyac*
              Of a man Lucio Cabanas of the mountains of Atoyac
4   *En la republica entera Cabanas es perseguido*
              In the entire republic Cabanas is sought
5   *Dicen que es un guerrillero que tiene fama de bandido*
              They say he is a guerrilla who is known as bandit
6   *Si todo eso fuera cierto tiene que tener motivo*
              If all that were true, he must have a motive
7   *Para buscar a Cabanas se tiene que tener razon*
              To search for Cabanas there has to be a reason
8   *Un hombre que tiene gandalla tiene que tener conviccion*
              A man who has balls must have conviction
9   *Para enfrenetarse a l gobierno con todo su corazon*
              To confront the government with all his heart
10   *Mucho cuidado Cabanas no te vayan a matar*
              Take care Cabanas lest they kill you
11   *Recuerda lo de Genaro eso te puede pasar*
              Remember what happened to Genaro can happen to you
12   *Asi matan a los hombres que no se saben tratar*
              That's how they kill men who do not know how to tread
13   *Guerrero tiene la fama de tener hombres valientes*

Guerrero is famous for her valiant men
14   *Esta Lucio Cabanas para enfrentar a su gente*
      Lucio Cabanas fighting for his people
15   *Y su (asesor) Genaro, aquel guerrero valiente*
      And his assistant Genaro, that brave warrior
16   *Ya con esta me despido de todo el publico entero*
      With this I say goodbye from the whole public
17   *Les he contado el corrido de un hombre guerrillero*
      I have recounted the corrido of a guerrilla man
18   *El hombre es Lucio Cabanas del estado de Guerrero*
      The man is Lucio Cabanas of the state of Guerrero

5.3.4. Summary

The three sample corridos I have presented do not contain references to social "race" even though I am aware that others not in my posession do. I have used them in this chapter simnply to broaden the scope of my description of the speech genres found in San Nicolas, to help contextualize Afromexicans' local culture within the regional, and even national socio-cultural production. Since *corridos* are not unique to Afromexicans, the practice of singing them represents one of the many ties that Afromexicans share with national culture.   One aspect of *corridos* is in my observation, is that they are narratives whose structure bears similarities with the structure of the personal and traditional narratives I looked at earlier on: in fact they share many structural components, and they do seem to serve the purpose of recapitulating past experiences.

Corridos reflect the lifestyle of rural Mexico while representing local experiences. Regional influences come into play. For example, the *corrido* of Lucio Cabañas could only emerge from Guerrero since the actors, the narrative and other aspects emerge from the Guerrero context; similarly, the corrido of Feliciano Noyola reveals events and experiences that arise from this particular Afromexican community. The stereotyped

statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter reveals ingnorance of regional influences and local material conditions behind Mexican cultural productions. Northern Mexico may be a hot bed of drug traffickers and kingpins, which means that regional corridos may reflect such activities, but this does not necessarily extend to the Guerrero region.

5.4. *Negro* in Popular Mexican Culture

CARTOON CHARACTER

Students at the University if Rhode Island deserve congratulations for their principled refusal to apologize for an editorial cartoon that ran last week in their newspaper, The Good 5-Cent Cigar. They are under attack from students who denounced the cartoon as racist. The drawing showed a black student entering a classroom at the University of Texas Law School and being greeted by a goofy-looking professor with the words: "If you are the janitor, please wait until after the class to empty the trash...if you're one of our minority students, welcome!" Other students in the classroom look on in dismay. There is nothing remotely racist about the cartoon which was distributed to the paper by a college press syndicate. In fact, it is **an attack on racial stereotyping** and a defense of affirmative action. It was drawn by John Branch for the San Antonio express during the Texas debate over university admissions. The Rhode Island protesters apparently did not get the irony of the cartoon, reacting only to **the juxtaposition of a black character and the word "janitor".** The Cigar staff responded with a thoughtful explanation of the cartoon's meaning and have expressed regret that people were offended. They will not however apologize, despite the threat of funding cutoff by the Student Senate and mixed messages from the University administration. Tim Ryan, the editor, thinks the cartoon was a lighting rod for racial tensions that have been building at the university. The paper, he says, has worked hard to report on and reduce those tensions. Satire is a volatile commodity. It sometimes explodes in ways unanticipated by its creators, particularly in a contemporary climate where offending someone is too often equated with oppressing someone. Here is a case where a student paper is being charged with racism and threatened with sanctions for publishing an antiracist cartoon. If the URI campus allowed those threats to prevail, then we would surely step through a racial and academic looking glass that satire would be hard pressed to capture (Boston Globe).

One way that power is exercised in society is the representation of groups through stereotyping. It is a way of maneuvering individuals and groups into certain roles, based on simplification and generalizations. The relations usually depicted are ones of domination. Racial images are situated within historical processes, in the midst of ideas and ideologies, and they reflect the relationship between "otherness" and power dynamics in different spheres of society. Afromexican representation in Mexican popular literature continues to play an important role in the distribution, acceptance and maintenance of negative stereotypes, some of which have already been elaborated. The attributes and

uses of socio-racial terms that we have seen so far appear to be reproduced in various sectors of mainstream Mexican culture. In this section, I want to place the previous understandings of socio-racial terms summarized at the end of Chapter 4 within a larger discourse context in order to see how those local observations fit in with the larger culture with this appeal to popular culture representations and the language contained in the dialogues.

5.4.1. Racial Imagery in Mexican Popular Culture

Not only the physical representation of say, Memin, a popular comic *negro* character I shall look at in more detail in this section (See Figure 5.1), but also the discourse therein helps Mexicans continue to "build mental models of ethnic situations and generalize these to general negative attitude schemata or prejudices that embody the basic opinions about relevant minority groups" (Van Dijk 1987).

Racial stereotypes that were once prevalent in the U.S. are still in vogue in Mexico and are constantly reinforced in the present day by what many Mexicans regard as "harmless jokes." But, more importantly, if questioned about the racialist meaning and intent, the existence of racial stereotypes is denied. Such 'expressions' are used for commercial packaging that features a black baker boasting that his skin color gives him the expertise to recognize the right shade of toast. Aunt Jemima pancake mix goes by the brand name 'La Negrita' in Mexico, and even husbands "affectionately" call their wives *"mi negra"* during light moments.

I noted earlier that there are two common sayings in Mexico: 1) *"trabajar como negro"* meaning to work like a black, that is, to work very hard, to be

overworked and 2) *"trabajar como negro para vivir como blanco,"* that is,

working like a black, to live like a white. The idea, it seems, is rooted in the

history of slavery, where hard, inhumane labor is associated with the black slaves,

and easy living is associated with white masters. While these perceptions are

necessarily racist, they do in fact reflect a true historical memory of the

relationship between blacks and whites in the Americas. What is important in

such representation, however, is first the denial of the existence of racism; and

from the point of view of *mestizo* users, the view that such racial stereotyping is

normal. Racist lexicon and views are routinized to become part of every-day life,

nothing abnormal.

5.4.2. Memin: A Mexican "Sambofabrication"

A look at Mexican imagery and discourse clearly reveals the extent to which

widely read pocket books fit within such an approach. Comics of the *Libro Vaquero* type

(Cowboy Books); *Dinastia; Cada Quien Su Bronca; Memin Pinguin* and a host of similar

others — all copyrighted publications — rely on antiquated, outlandish visions of

Africans and blacks in general. Their history of slavery and colonialism is used to

'produce' racial ideology to feed the imagination of the ordinary, relatively (formally)

uneducated Mexican reader (the 'subject') whose perception of the black person as a

perpetual racial underdog is constantly reinforced. These popular comics make good use

of the attributes of "race" as discussed, especially relying on the "outsider" perceptions of

negro. The following instances gleaned from sections of a number of different popular

literature books I collected in Mexico City is a direct reflection of the social forces

involved in the process of socialization of the ordinary Mexican. What is the message

being sent (and internalized) about different social groups? Attributes of Negro which were seen to emanate from "outsider" perceptions and which Afromexicans used in their conversations to self-distance themselves (e.g. *negro2* speaks badly") are exploited to enhance the dialogues and to create plots for public consumption. All of this is regarded as "harmless humor" and reminds us of the "affectionate" uses of *negro* and *moreno* which we cited earlier.

A good example of "harmless humor" and racial caricatures is depicted by *Memín Pinguín*, a popular comic character which has been animated for TV and has entertained Mexicans for several generations with its racist stereotype of *"el negrito,"* black people. The examples I use are taken from *Memín Pinguín, Dinastía* and *Cada Quien Su Bronca* Series . The cover of the first comic book (Figure 5.1.) presents three little boys, Ernesto, Ricardo and Memín, who seem to represent three racial or ethnic types: *blanco, indio* and *negro.* Carlos, a *blanco,* appears inside the comic book.

Figure 5.1. Memín Pinguín Comic Cover

Thus the three 'races' are represented. However, while Ernesto, Ricardo and

Carlos look like ordinary little boys, dressed in normal clothes, of normal height and

physical looks, Memín does not. He is a caricature representing a stereotypical

conception of what black people look like. His features are extremely exaggerated. He is

very dark in color, bald, and has large ears that stick out from the sides of his head. He

has big white eyes, and his pink lips are enormously thick and heavy. Moreover, his

stature, compared to the other boys, is diminutive, short, stunted and strangely dressed.

The stereotype conceptualization of Memín transcends the physical representation.

Throughout the interaction among the boys, who are supposed to be friends, Memín is

subjected to demeaning and disrespectful treatment. Denigrating remarks are not limited

to the dialogue among the characters but are also included in the comic writers'

comments. In almost every page, Memin is insulted or yelled at to "shut up!" by his so-

called friends, peers and school-mates. For example Memín is seen entering the

classroom after a conversation with Carlos's father. First he put his hand out for a tip

from his father's friend, "without shame as he extended his hand to accept the expected

500 pesos tip he was used to," then the caption to that frame reads: "After the unexpected

conversation, Memín was even more *zonzo* ("stupid" or "stupefied") than usual and he

entered the classroom without taking off his cap." Further, Memín tells Ricardo and

Ernesto about his conversation with Carlos's father. The caption reads: "In his peculiar

style, not using too many words, the *"negrito"* (little black boy) began his narrative (MP-

132-6).[2]

    While on the one hand, the comic author suggests that Memín has a limited

vocabulary and uses non-prestigious dialect forms (e.g. final s-deletion), non-standard

and non-prestigious prounciations (e.g. *"maistro"* instead of *"maestro"* in MP-132-18),

in another instance he is represented as quite verbose. Thus, sitting in class with other

boys (also extremely racially stereotyped with *Indio* and *blanco* features), Memín talks

too much and quite often irrelevantly before the group of students and teacher. This

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[2] Memin Penguin, Issue No. 132, page 6. Subsequent references are in this format.

feature of Pinguín's dialogue is quite interesting; it is a very long-winded discourse that is obscure and full of idioms and proverbs, another stereotype of renowned African and Afro-American verbal skills and rich metaphorical use of language (often "long winded" and "irrelevant"). In reply to a simple question (MP-132-7), for example, Memín begins with what may be a common opening line of a distinctive narrative style: *"Get ready, but hold on tight and open your ears because you are about to listen to the hottest news!"*

Along with the offensive, derogative remarks which appear as "normal" interaction among the boys, Memín's stereotyped behavior stands apart from the other students in the classroom, as expressed by the creator of the comic. In the classroom, while others are depicted paying attention, Memín is seated with his feet on the desk, finger in his mouth, eyes to the sky thinking far away thoughts. According to the caption, he spent the first hours of class distracted, analyzing the conversation with Carlo's father.(MP-132-5). The three boys are classmates and are most likely about the same age, however: Memín is depicted as simple minded, forgetful, and stupid. In nearly every page, his friends use denigrating remarks, call him names and take his word with skeptism. Searching for a calling card he got from Carlos's father, Memín sweats, shuffles and squirms on the floor before remembering that he put the card away in his "safe": his leaky smelly sneakers. Thus he cannot remember that he hid an important card in his shoe. (See Figure 5.2) (MP-132-13).

Figure 5.2. Inside Memín Pinguín

Memin:	*"Damn!, Where did I ever put it? Holy god! Maybe it fell off,"* *says a frantic Memín.*
Narrator:	*[In his desperate search, he turns a few times over his head to see if it will fall off from his clothes –].* "Little Jesus! I can't find it!," he moans to his flabbergasted friends.
Ernesto:	Didn't I tell you Ricardo! This "*zonzo*" (idiot) lost the card.
Ricardo:	It is unbelievable that his brain fails him even with such a simple thing.
Narrator:	Suddenly, Memín's face lights up with a huge smile:
Memin:	"I remember! I put it in my "safe."

Carlos:	"In your safe?"
Narrator:	Quickly, Memín removes his shoe and pulls out a card which he holds up proudly as the other two hold their noses. (See Figure 5.1)

In yet another frame, the three boys go to meet Ernesto who hasn't been to class for some while. In the first two frames Carlos hugs one and then the other boy, asking how things were going. In the third frame, Carlos lifts up the diminutive Memín and swings him around in the air saying: **Negro!** You deserve a separate and special greeting; I see that despite the time that has passed you are as ugly and black [as usual].

In yet another scene, Pinguín goes with his two friends to visit Carlos who is from a wealthy family. The grandmother they meet there sizes up the three until her eyes fall on the short Memin Pinguín (See Figure 5.3.).

Narrator:	And she was about to abandon her aristocratic stance when she saw the **diminutive and ugly body of Memín**
Grandmother:	Dear God. A *negro!*
Memín:	Yes, Ma'am. Of guaranteed firm color. Not affected by soap or water
Grandmother:	How disgusting!
Memín (to Carlos):	What relationship do you have with this dried up old woman? Despite her being so undernourished, she is a heavy load to take.
Carlos (to Memín):	Shut up!

Figure 5.3. Memín meets his friend's grandmother

As the dialogue continues Memín, the disrespectful one, continues comments about the "vieja" (old woman) and is scolded by Ernesto and Ricardo, who besides telling him that he should respect adults, tells him to shut up. (MP-132-27, 28). Although no one else is referred to by their racial or ethnic identity, Memín is often addressed as "*negro", negrito*" (page 6, 7, 9, 12, 22, 23); *negro interesado* (nosy nigger) page 11; *baboso* (someone who drools, silly; page 4); *pedazo de alcornoque* (blockhead; page 5,

10); *tonto* (fool; page 10); *zonzo* (stupid, idiot; page 13);impertinent, page 24; *tarugo* (stupid; page 28).

⌐One of the functions of stereotypes is to maintain social inequality and to retain the images which represent the "natural" order of things.⌐Hence, to distort and stereotype, to sambofy, is to say something about African people's being, their destiny, their place in the racial ordering system. Ignorance, stupidity, disrespect, zongoness, the obvious superiority of the white over the black are central presuppositions in this dialogue. The existence of such discourse in Mexican popular literature is valuable evidence that points out to the attitudes and internalized 'schemata' of Mexican readers with respect to blacks in general. Memín Pinguín's representation is enough to reveal the extent to which black stereotypes (*negro2*) are used in the Mexican entertainment industry where they are reinforced and reduplicated many times over. There is a deliberate exploitation of all forms of *Negro2* identity, which from the data is an outsider perception of black Mexicans, from language to physical, mental and emotional attributes. It is clear that even though Afromexicans recognize many attributes — both positive (e.g. 'brave, strong) and negative ones (e.g. 'ugly) associated with their "race," they do not accept or recognize others. For example, that *negros* have a distinctive narrative style may be common knowledge among 'outsiders,' but it was cited nowhere in conversations nor was this 'fact' embedded in the genres; nor did the zongoness depicted by Memin emerge from my data as part of Afromexican self-identification. The uses of *negro* in these samples of popular literature and in the discourse of the Mexican creators and readers of Memin, are those "outsiders" uses which I regarded as *negro2*. I have summarized these ocurrences in Table 5.5 below, using the same method I used in

conversational and genre discourses of contextualizing the interpretation of their uses.

Before that I turn to look at another sample within this genre of discourse.

5.4.3. Michael Jackson and Race Discourse

'*Cada Quien su Bronca*' ('Everyone has Problems') is yet another issue of

popular literature, a series dedicated to caricaturizing scandals that involve famous

people. The issue that I examined in this series (No. 15, 1995) is devoted to Michael

Jackson, whose *persona* lends itself very well to these 'outsider' perceptions of 'race'

particularly because it conforms to such stereotypes of *negro* as musical talents ("knows

how to dance") and feelings of insecurity because of possessing "inferior" or non-

prestigious physical looks ("is ugly").

Figure 5.3. Michael Jackson "I don't like being Black."

In another scene after the one depicted in Figure 5.3., Michael is seen lying in an operating room in 'Ward 8' being operated on by four surgeons.

Narrator:	"And it was true that Michael Jackson needed an infinite number of operations to lose the face and features of his own race"
1st Surgeon:	"this *negrito* will end up beautiful!"

After the operation, Michael who is now depicted as physically *blanco* is being massaged by two *blanco* women in nurse's uniforms.

Narrator: "On his skin too, all kinds of treatments were applied"

Michael: "I want to end up *blanquito, blanquito* like **Bush**, or even better, *blanco* as **Snow White**".

A scantily clad blonde provides the final commentary to this episode: "And he (Michael) has almost achieved it [becoming white as Bush or Snow White]. At this date, in 1995, Michael Jackson is more *blanco* than *negro*". Next to this image, a *blanco* Michael is seen standing in front of a mirror, thinking:

Michael: "Mirror, mirror, tell me, who is the whitest *negrito* on the face of the earth?"

At the end of the narrative, Michael Jackson is shown embracing his new wife Lisa Marie Presely who has just announced that she is pregnant:

Lisa: "Listen Michael, what if our baby is born *negrito*?"

To which Michael answers with a confident smile: Michael: "Oh no. It has to be *blanquito* like you and me".

Most aspects of the previously seen treatment of the terms "negro" and "blanco" which derive from the prevailing racial ideology in Mexico are well captured by this dialogue. If Michael represents the Mexican *negro* in this story, it is not surprising that he wishes to rid himself of the stigmatized "ugly" features associated with his racial group, as was caricaturized by Memín. Also, the notion embedded in the mestizo ideology — gradable color — is echoed in Michael Jackson's question: "who is the whitest negrito..." The first doctor's comment underlines this obvious purpose of his work: "This *negrito* will end up beautiful [after we remove his negrito features]".

As a reproducer of existing ideology about race, the writers employed by Editormex astutely exploit what their readers have internalized. The attitudes toward race implicit in these lines are evident ordinary discourse, including that of the Afromexicans

who are the principal subjects of this process. The equation between race and power ("*blanco* master," "negro slave") is also seen where Michael expresses the desire to be "as white as [George] Bush" or "Snow White." George Bush became a symbol of Anglo US power and domination with the invasion of Panama in 1989. At that time, the discourse in Mexico highlighted those aspects of power which represented a threat to Mexico, which, according to the media, "could alsobe invaded any time." Seen in this light, the mention of George Bush in this context of racial stereotypes ties in well with the discourse of power in Mexico: the powerful *blanco* male on one hand, and the white female "beauty" (e.g. "white and beautiful" seen in *verso* 4). These outsider views about "race" are appropriately juxtaposed to the *negro* Michaels or Memins of Mexico in a carefully constructed discourse. Finally, the discourse reflects an area of primary importance in Mexican social attitudes about the issof "race" viz the concern for "cleaning the race" as a means of upward social mobility discussed in a previous section of this dissertation with words which might have come from an ordinary, concerned (Afro) Mexican mother as seen previously, which, in this representation, is said by Michael's new wife:

Lisa: "What if our baby is born *negrito*?"

In the following table I summarize all the instances of socio-racial terms seen in the sample comics. I will show where each one occurs and that nearly all uses of negro refer to *negro2* according to the conceptualization I have developed so far.

Table 5.5. Socio-Racial Terms in *Memín Pinguín and Cada Quién su Bronca* Comics

Line	Reference	Contextual Meanings and Interpretation
MP-39-3	*Memin extendió la mano esperando el acostumbrado billete de 500 pesos* ('Memin stretched his hand waiting the 500 peso bill he was used to'	Memin begs "as usual" . Obviously *negro2* because we know from data that *negro1* "does not like to beg."
MP-39-4	*Memin quedó mas zonzo de costumbre.* ('Memin remained stupid more than usual')	Usually, Memin is *zonzo* but is more so this time. Negative *negro2*.
MP-39-4	Baboso! (drool-mouth)	Insult (*negro2*).
MP-39-5	*Yo me chiviaria si me encontrara un papa* (I wish I would find a father)	Unlike his friends, Memin is the one from a single mother household; abnormal (especially in Mexican context), he wishes for a dad.
MP-39-5	*Pedazo de alcornoque!* (dumbcork/blockhead)	Insult (*negro2*).
MP-39-6	*En su [Memin] peculiar estilo, ahorrando palabras, el negrito empezo su narracion* (in his peculiar style, mincing words, the *negrito* began his narration)	Reference to Memin's unusual discours style (abnormal); *negrito* better refers to 'strangeness' rather than 'affection.'
MP-39-7	*[clarete pero agarense y paren la oreja porque escucharan noticias de primera plana]*	Example of the unusual discourse behavior of Memin.
MP-39-7	*Pensando que el negrito mentia..empezaron a bromear:* *"se le boto la canica!"* *"tienes calentura?"* *"almorzaste mucho?"* *"tienes fiebre"* *digo la verdad! [Memin]* (thinking that the negrito was lying, they started to joke: "do you have a fever?" "Did you eat too much?" "I'm telling the truth!" [Memin])	Even though these are friends of the same age discussing a serious issue, they patronize Memin.
MP-39-10	*Pedazo de alcornoque* (piece of corkhead)	Insult: *negro2*
MP-39-10	Un tonto (a fool)	Insult (*negro2*)
MP-39-10	*Quedaron pensativos ante la conclusión lógica de Memin* (They fell silent faced with Memin's logical conclusion)	His friends are astounded by Memin's "logic" which, apparently, was unexpected of him.
MP-39-11	*Negro interesado!* (nosy nigger)	Insult (*negro2*).
MP-39-12	*Si este negro atinara* Suppose this negro is right	Referential *negro* to a mutual friend indicates a dismissive patronizing attitude.
MP-39-13	*Ernesto: Este zonzo* (This idiot) *Ricardo: increíble que le falle el coco hasta*	Insult (*negro2*). Is dumb; not intelligent.

	una cosa tan simple! (incredible his head fails him even with such a simple thing)	
MP-39-14	Allá tu! (there, you!)	'you' by teacher refers to Memin, followed by recrimination and punishment. Memin is singled out even though the three friends had extended their shool break together.
MP-39-15	*Con gala de erudicion el chiquillo empezo su relato* (with the gala of eruditness, the little thing began his account)	More allusion to the abnormal verbal skills.
MP-39-15	*La margura de todos los inditos* [Memin says] (The bitterness of all indians...drove Hidalgo to lead Mexicans in the war of independence)	Reference to historical 'indio,' but not to historical *negro1* shows the lack of awareness of this aspect of national history which he (Memin) is relating, as part of his punishment.
MP-39-16	*Como pavo real...* - *se cree un historiador!* - *presumido!* Like a peacock... - he thinks he's quite the historian - arrogrant!	Both narrator and students in class make negative remarks to Memin's accomplished recital of the nation's history.
MP-39-17	*No digas tonterias...!* (don't talk nonsense)	Teacher to Memin who is sticking by his version of the history of Hidalgo.
MP-39-18	Baboso! (drool-mouth!)	Insult: *negro2*
MP-39-22	*Negro!...veo que a pesar del tiempo sigues igual de feo y de prieto!* Negro, I see despite the time passed you continue to be dark and ugly	Clearly *negro2* attributes, used by friend "humorously."
MP-39-23	*El negrito solto una pregunta que los sacudió* (the little negro threw a question that shook them	Foolishly (*negrito*) releases information he was not supposed to tell; dumb *negro2*.
MP-39-24	*Impertinente!* (rude!)	One of the friend rebukes Memin for asking about where the swimming pool is.
MP-39-24	*Puedo bañarme en cueros* (I can swim nude)	While others ask for swimming wear, Memin is coarse enough to suggest that he cares not about swimwear.
MP-39-26	*La diminutiva y fea figura de Memin* (the short and ugly figure of Memin)	Narrator's description of the grandmother's impression of Memin.
MP-39-26	*Dios bendito: un negro!* Holy God: a negro!	Obviously *negro2* the undesirable (see next reference).
MP-39-26	Qué asco! (What filth!)	Very negative view of *negro2*.
MP-39-26	*Uno de mis mejores amigos, no obstante su color* One of my best friends, despute his color	Color is a barrier to friendship.
MP-39-26	*No vayan a llevarse algo* (watch they don't steal anything)	Grandmother's instruction to man-servant after seing Memin; untrustworthy *negro2*.

MP-39-32	*Le advierto no soy un cochino ladron!* [Memin to Servant: I warn you that I am not a dirty thief	Memin is aware of his being a suspect because of his *negro2* status.
MP-126-5	Zonzo (idiot) Uttered while correcting Memin's language ("physician" not "physicist!")	*negro2* ("speaks badly").
MP-126-5	*Que dice este negrito? No hagas caso, es un chiquillo inquieto que tiene la cabeza llena de fanstasías* What's this negrito saying? Don't mind him, he's a fussy child whose head is full of fantasies	Dismissive, irrelevant Memin.
MP-126-5	*Callate Memin!* Shut up!	Insult (*negro2*).
MP-126-5	*Que chistoso y hablanin* How funny and talkative	Describing Memin in dismissive terms.
MP-126-8	*Te callas!* (you will shut up!)	
MP-126-13	*Callate Memin, Carlos y yo arreglaremois el asunto tranquilamente* (shut up Memin, Carlos and I will resolve this issue quietly)	Memin is dismissed from serious problem solving even though he is a team mate and class mate of equal standing.
MP-126-20	*Le entendiste Ernesto? Porque yo [Memin] nada* Did you understand Ernesto? I did not get a thing	I [Memin] cannot understand [what it means to rematch a tied game]. Inferiority of *negro2* intelligence.
MP-126-21	*Callate!* Shut up!	Reprimand from friends of equa l standing.
MP-126-22	*Pesado!* Blockhead!	Reprimand from equal friends.
MP-126-126	E: *Mi papa esta ern su despacho* C: *Mi mama en la oficina* Memin: *Y la mia en el lavandero* E: my dada is in his personal office C: my mon is in her office Memin: mine is at the laundry	More difference established between the three: the two have working parents while Memin's is a househelp.
MP-126-126	Apurate que el telefono cuesdta dinero! Hurry up telephones cost money	More allusion to the abnormal ltalk of Memin, his inability to be brief and concrete.
MP-126-126	[To his Mother]: *tenemos que defender nuestra bandera de tres colores la que defendieron Hidalgo y Morelos!* We have to defend our tri-colored flag which Hidalgo and Moreno (founding fathers) defended	Memin is aware of national history but never shows awareness of negro's place in that history.
MP-132-17	Mi negrito adorado [Mama] Followed by exaggerated hugging and kissing	Excessive show of affection while others behave "normally" with their parents.
MP-132-18	*Veo a mi nino un poco asoleado...su pielecita esta quemada*	"Humorous" irony about race and color inserted in this dialoue between Memin

	Memin's mother to Memin: I see that my child has been in the sun a bit..his skin is a bit tanned	and his mom, the only negros in the story.
MP-132-18	Maistro! (= maestro) (teacher!)	"bad" pronounciation of *negro2* "speaks badly."
MP-132-19	*Fuiste nuestro nino de la buena suerte* (you were our child of good luck)	Negro Memin as an object that brings luck; mystification, like labelling of *negro* is part of his dehumanization
MP-132-23	*No quisieron, servirme y advina por que Mama porque soy negrito* They did not want to serve me and guess why Mama, because I am negro	In Dallas (USA) Memin was discriminated against and even thrown in jail: a popular Mexican notion, that blacks suffer in the US, not in Mexico.
MP-132-24	*Asi estan las cosas alla, mama, si uno nace prieto, empiezan las "criminacioneas"...nos lleva la partulla a la carcel* That's the way things are over there, Mama "criminilized" and we are taken in a police car	Same as above.
CB-15-36	*Pero al estar frente del espejo renegaba su color de piel* But standing infront of his mirror, he denied the color of his skin	Denial and dislike of their skin color status is a negro trait.
CB-15-37	*Yo quiero casarme con una mujer blanca* I want to marry a white woman	Negros' desire, according to narrator.
CB-15-44	*Y casi lo ha logrado, a la fecha en este 1995, Michael Jackson ya es mas blanco que negro* He has almost accomplished that, today in 1995, MJ is more White than Black	Gradable uses of socio-racial terms where one can "more" or "less white/black." This view was seen in conversations with SG.
	'Espejito espejito, quien es el negrito mas blanco de la tierra?' mirror mirror who is the whitest negrito of the land	Exploiting folklore
CB-15-42	*Los rasgos propios de su raza* The features of his race	Awareness of *negro* physical attributes which are not part of narrator.
CB-15-44	*Este negrito quedara precioso* (this negro will end up beautiful)	Once "ugly" physical features are removed, one becomes beautiful.
CB-15-44	*Quiero quedar blanquito, blanquito como Bush o de perdis como Blanca Nieves!* I want to be white like Bush or like Snow White	White is *power* as Bush White is *beautiful* like Snow White.
CB-15-93	*Si sale negrito nuestro bebe* (What if our shild is born black?)	Fear of "ugly" stigmatized features and the social consequences of that.

5.5. Summary

In this Chapter I looked at socio-racial terms embedded in other genres. First I looked at their use in sample folk narratives, then their uses within *versos*. *Corridos* yielded no data on socio-racial terms. Then I looked at their uses in popular literature, focusing on two characters who best represent *el negro* in Mexican eyes: Memin, and Michael Jackson. By situating the dialogues within a framework of ideology as discourse practice, it was possible to link the attributes of *negro* (solidary and non-solidary) and *blanco* (power and difference) which I gathered from an analysis of conversational discourse and interviews in Chapter 4, to their uses in the popular literature. Since popular literature appeals to existing "schemata" about people or issues in a given society, the evoking and uses of socio-racial terms in creating dialogues and story lines in popular Mexican literature reflects clear awareness of these ideas in the mind of the Mexican reader. It is also apparent there are discrepancies in the understanding of one term — *negro* — when compared to the understandings of Afromexicans: The physical character of Memin represents the stigmatized, undesirable *negro* (*negro$_1$*) while the dialogue of Michael Jackson interpreted within such a framework of analysis articulate the inner voice of that same *negro* in popular imagination. This particular socio-racial term is used in mainstream Mexican Spanish effectively in the reproduction of existing ideas about "race" in Mexico and in ways that do not exactly reflect Afromexicans' own uses of these terms. It is obvious for example, that almost all uses in Memin and MJ comics use *negro$_1$* meanings and attributes.

Clearly, the negative *negro* is foregrounded in the discourse of mainstream Mexico as evidenced by examples from popular literature but Afromexicans

overwhelmingly foreground the "abstract," positive *negro* at the local "insider" level. An

examination of footing stances revealed a lot of shifting taking place between *negro1* and

negro2 in Afromexican discourse (in narratives, conversations, etc.). but no such shifting

is seen in popular literature discourse because its creators are either unaware of the

dichotomy or are unwilling to flip the coin over and use *negro1* persona as their basis for

projecting the image of *negro* in popular literature.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS

This study has showed that socio-racial terms in San Nicolas are associated with certain meanings and distinctive attributes which arise from a special socio-cultural and historical backdrop. These meanings are evoked in speakers' discourse to create or reveal a conversational framework by speaker's taking on 'footing' (or stances) of social personae, according to their conversational intentions. The changes in footing signal participatory status (solidary, non-solidary) best symbolized by the use or selection of antithetic pronouns such as "we" and "them." Speakers' participatory status during conversation or while versifying is revealed by how these pronouns pattern with the socio-racial terms.

For example, the term *moreno* is used by San Nicolans in conversation when no special regional, racial or historical claims are being made or elicited, but when particular in-group claims (such as land ownership or legitimization of their existence) are made, $negro_1$ is selected. But when a speaker wants to evoke negative aspects of the socially defined '*moreno*,' such as to insult or denigrate s/he will select $negro_2$. The patterning of *moreno* with third person pronominal elements, coupled with its association with $negro_2$, and its use in quoted speech suggests that this is an "outsider" term which also serves to obfuscate internal distinctions otherwise recognized by "insiders". The variable uses of *negro* and *moreno* in the discourse of Afromexicans in San Nicolas may be evidence of change in progress whereby *moreno* is still trying to take *negro*'s (and other Afromestizo terms') historical place as the socio-racial term for *Afromexicans*. Such have been the more successful cases of *indio* (internally differentiated, e.g. *mixtecos, mayas, chichimecas, aztecas*, etc) to *indigena*, and from *euro/indomestizo* (including *castizos, moriscos*, etc) to

198

mestizo. The difficulties of achieving this transition derive from the "invisibility" of Afromexicans since they have so far remained unrecognized as a distinctive social group of Mexico like the *indigenas*. This situation is consistent with Mexico's nationalist ideology of *mestizaje*, which emphasizes the native and European components of the "racial mixing," but does not take into account the African substrate of Mexican national identity. This has created a situation in which '*negros*' are not seen as Mexicans and dark Mexicans are known as '*morenos.*' At the same time, this study has shown with supporting data, that *negro* in mainstream Mexico is a convenient label for deviants, bad persons, slaves or used to insult since, according to mainstream belief, it does not refer to any real group of Mexican people. However, this study shows that this position does not quite capture the "insider" beliefs of many Afromexicans who actually identify themselves as *negros ($negro_1$)*.

It was observed in Beltran (1946:135) that *moreno* took the place of *negro* and *prieto* as the term to refer to Afromexicans; it was supposed to replace *all* Afromestizo terms that existed before, such as *mulato, chino, cuculuste, zambos* and was based on the egalitarian intention of eliminating *castas*. This objective was within the spirit of liberal political changes taking place in Mexico during the early part of 19th century (precisely in 1817 – partly as reward for the decisive participation of Afromexicans in the struggle for independence), but it achieved limited success. While it offered a cover term for outsiders to use in reference to that redeemed group of a formerly disenfranchised *castas* it did not eliminate attributes associated with each one of them. For example the term *negro* continues to carry some of those attributes that are now embodied in $negro_2$. Today, the use of socio-racial terms in Mexico reflects a situation whereby socio-racial terms are being used to convey different meanings at different times. This different symbolisms for different social

groups is in itself an indicator of "difference," a perception that is at the very core of *social identity*. The terms *moreno* and *negro* are used in context along functional lines and are linguistic tools for projecting fluid social identities among Afromexicans of San Nicolás Tolentín. Official legislation abolished social races or castas in the last century, while increased *mestizaje* helped diminish the differences. Nevertheless it is clear that such differences continue to be a social reality in San Nicolas today, and in Mexico at large. By delimiting clearly existing categories of social "race" and by identifying their social meanings which serve to demarcate the boundaries of these groups' social identity, I propose to discredit the current ideology that historically Black communities of Mexico have become "assimilated" into mestizo society to the extent that they no longer retain a sense of one ("imagined") Afromexican community (Anderson 1990). The data from San Nicolan discourse suggest that at a conscious level San Nicolans retain a vision of a larger "imagined community," linked by a common history, linguistic choices, region and cultural patterns stretching to other parts of the *Costa Chica* and even beyond, in Africa.

Lexical choice and contextual meanings of socio-racial terms in the discourse of this Afromexican community are different from those of outsiders and therefore have different meanings giving rise to some misconceptions of Afromexican identity. Indeed while mainstream Mexico (*mestizos* or '*blancos,*' according to San Nicolans) remains insensitive to those distinctions between *negro₁* and *negro₂*, for example, miscommunication is bound to take place. The social meanings of racial terms and how they are used by speakers to define their psychological status shows clearly that legislation alone cannot change deeply entrenched social realities which define the language practices of a community. It also clearly shows how linguistic performance is affected by social factors.

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I laid the groundwork for the view that divergences of meaning occurred in the ideological development — and use — of socio-racial terms. Within mainstream Mexican society their social evaluation as markers of identity is quite different from their value among Afromexicans of San Nicolas where they appear to have remained static in their historical, original senses. They may also have developed in ways which are unrecognized or ignored in today's mainstream language of Mexico. For example, the terms *mestizo* or *blanco* are hardly used in Mexico City to describe individuals and may be considered archaic, or at least heavily marked; but they are prominent in ordinary, contemporary Afromexican discourse.

There are some limitations of this study which have to do with the data. Generally, interactive studies of discourse try to compare speech from the speech communities across which barriers of communication exist. This is useful in establishing the true grounds of miscommunication with evidence from both sides. The data that for instance, Gumperz (1982b) used in some case studies consisted of verbal interactions where speakers of different social and ethnic background unconsciously used discourse strategies (including lexical choices) which conflict with one another. The speech situations that are studied, though diverse, shared common characteristics which differ from mine; they were goal oriented in the sense that each aimed to get something done, i.e. to reach an agreement, to evaluate abilities, or to get advice. The data I analyzed in this dissertation are different in two ways: they do not focus on goal oriented situations but rather on different speech events and genres that provide sufficiently rich data for the analysis of socio-racial terms, and, two, they are not comparative between Afromexican and mainstream Mexican speech.

Discourse analysts argue for the need to study and compare strategies of communication among different speech communities particularly those which lie outside of the mainstream (e.g. Blacks in the USA or Indians and West Indians in Britain). This not only informs us of the roots of miscommunication arising from 'surface features' of a language. They also add to the body of knowledge about performance-based language behavior. Thus, even though Afromexicans use Spanish lexicon, their communicative "grammar" is distinct and may not be intelligible to others who do not have knowledge of the speech community's ways of using them. Labov's 1972 study for example demonstrated that speakers of Black English (or African American English) construct their discourse in significantly different ways from their White counterparts, partly as a result of the Creole origins of their English variety. Such distinctions entail differences in the organization of discourse, particularly such speech events as narratives, ritual insults, and even greetings as informed by their own specific socio-cultural patterns. The recurrent debate on the status of Black English ("Ebonics") is illustrative of the type of social conflict arising from inadequate understanding of dialects and their implications for social behavior. For example, the proponents of "Ebonics" are widely condemned in the mainstream as advocating the use of a sub-standard variety which is considered inappropriate in a school setting. In this dissertation I have concentrated on lexical rather than syntactic or phonological variation to create an entry point for a more comprehensive examination of the grammatical and phonological uses of Spanish among Afromexicans.

"Free variation" of linguistic elements — whether phonological or lexical — is one of the important questions for variationists. It cannot be assumed that speakers make

linguistic choices "freely;" those choices, we now know, are "weighted" by extralinguistic factors, to favor the one choice more than the other. I tried to uncover those "weights" that affect the choice of one term over another through a detailed, intersubjective study of discourse in San Nicolás. We can now see now, for example, that the socio-racial terms do not occur haphazardly in conversations, but rather there are deeper socio-psychological "weights" having to do with 'solidarity,' or participatory status ("insider/outsider") of speaker in relation to hearer/s and intent. An understanding of the socio-cultural and other psychological motives that belie variability of linguistic surface forms makes it possible to see variation in language as an interesting linguistic phenomena, not as the fringe, haphazardly structured surface material of language. Additionally, discourse (linguistic) behavior such as the ones I examined in this dissertation helps us say significant things such as how Afromexicans understand "race" or how people perceive their own social identity as a minority group in relation to others.

The tradition in modern linguistics that has most explicitly dealt with processes of interpretation of intent and attitude in language use is the work in linguistic pragmatics which builds on the philosophy of language, concentrating on speech acts and on Grice's (1975) definition of meaning as *intention*. Linguistic pragmatics is explicitly concerned with presuppositions in the interpretations of intent. However, several differences exist between this approach and those others that focus on discourse to discover intentionality. The data analyses in pragmatics are based on situations where presuppositions are shared, and the analyses are sentence based, concerned with the logical structure of communicative events. It does not attempt to deal with the role of language in interactive processes, and it relies heavily on fabricated (or at least "ideal") data existent in "possible

worlds." While the goal of such studies is to discover the "intent" expressed by language, the sociolinguistic approach I used differs crucially in one important way: the interpretation of intent is based on real data from ordinary speaker-hearers. Such interpretation is a function of listener's linguistic knowledge (of socio-racial terms, their uses and attributes); contextual presuppositions informed by certain *cues* (the terms themselves) and background information brought to bear in the interpretation (the historical and ethnographic backdrop).

I focused on the lexical inventory of socio-racial terms while recognizing other channels such as idioms and other formulaic utterances such as proverbs and common sayings. These are things Gumperz referred to as *ways of speaking* or "the actual linguistic cues used through which relevant information is signaled" (1982b:13); they included those recurrent aspects of speech — socio-racial terms — that seemed to reflect relevant aspects of Afromexican communicative history. Discoursal uses of socio-racial terms are obviously informed by "cultural assumptions" (Gumperz 1982b) that prevail inside this speech community.

It is clear that even though people in situations agree on the purpose of a given interaction, there often are radical differences as to the goals and expectations of the communicative instance, and this affects the reflexive behavior of participants such as how Afromexicans address the intent of lexical choice. I observed that those differences of evaluation arose from the cultural background of the speaker or hearer, and their conversational goals.

With regard to genres that I looked at in this dissertation, *corridos* did not yield evidence of the patterning of socio-racial terms. Nevertheless, their structure showed

interesting similarities with narratives. Considering the cultural value of oral tradition (to pass on information by evoking previous experiences) this is not surprising and it should open the way for a better comparison with similar others among Diaspora Africans. *Versos* was were seen to reflect relationships of inequality, and I hypothesized that they have roots in Africa, as readapted forms, possibly blended with European ones to produce the ones that are today widespread in Mexican rural communities, including non-Afromexican ones. Scholars of Afromexico take two divergent but complementary positions about Afromexican cultural production: one of them is *eurocentric* in that it emphasizes the European substrate of (Afro) Mexican culture; the other position which I take, is *afrocentric*[3] and I interpret socio-cultural life and activities of Diaspora Africans as intimate links to their past. The two approaches have a common basis in that proponents of each position compare present New World forms with parallel ones of the Old World. The differences lie in the analytical paradigm of either camp in terms of which part of the 'Old World' to look to explain present Afromexican lifestyles, language and socio-cultural patterns. A brief comparison of *versos* with the *gicandi* oral traditions found in one African ethno-linguistic group is a first step in the right direction to suggest that Afromexican practitioners of this particular 'form of talk' has a fundamental African substrate.

Feature analysis is an important first step in the study of lexicon. According to Wierzbicka (1997), "the lexicon is the clearest possible guide to everyday cognition and to the patterning of everyday discourse."

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[3] Used only as defined here, and not referring to ancient Africa.

Wierzbicka's concern like mine was to identify "key words" of a culture, an exercise that can serve to identify "focal points for the study of the cultural domains." To achieve an "objective" procedure for the discovery of such "key words" is as important as it is difficult. Wierzbicka's solution to this dilemma was that the question is not to "prove" whether or not a particular word is one of the culture's key words, but rather, to say something significant and revealing about it. I hope I have shown some interesting things about the uses of a particular set of lexical items and what they reveal about the history, culture and attitudes of a very special group of Diaspora Africans.

Within Mexico and elsewhere, discourse and social structures are in a symmetrical and direct relationship, a dialectic one in which one is both a product and determinant of the other (Fairclough 1989). Discourse practice involves the reproduction of social structures and expression of social structures and power relations but this relationship is often an unconscious fact to many practitioners as evidenced by the ability of informants to describe without being able to explain the significance of their own verbal behavior. It is therefore important for the researcher to look at the nature of power *in* discourse and power *behind* discourse, especially power relations in terms of roles — of subjects, producers and interpreters. This pertains to how discourse is internalized by the individual so as to be used in the process of socialization of those individuals in the capacity of subjects. An understanding of the language-culture-society relationship such as the linguistic functions and underlying meanings of socio-racial terms used by Afromexicans can help understand better the dynamic social, cultural and historical forces that continue to shape Mexican society.

Afromexican representation in Mexican popular literature continues to play an important role in the distribution, acceptance and maintenance of the negative *negro*. The physical representation of, say, Memin, a popular comic *negro* character, but also the discourse therein helps Mexicans continue to "build mental models of ethnic situations and generalize these to general negative attitude schemata or prejudices that embody the basic opinions about relevant minority groups" (Van Dijk 1987). The necessary conditions for the reproduction of ideology through mass media are met by the "negro" in Mexican mass media: a deviant, (e.g. Michael Jackson'), labeling (*negrito*), and the projection of *negro* as "troublemaker" (e.g. *cabañista*) and so on. These discourses reproduce, reconstruct and redistribute *negro¡* meanings which then makes potentially positive uses of *"negro"* very difficult in Mexico as evidenced by people's reluctance to even mention the term.

Afromexican social identity should not necessarily be equated to ethnic identity. I discussed how difficult a term "ethnicity" is to define in strict terms. Certain features of an "ethnic" identity do emerge in the case of Afromexicans, but others do not. Markers of their identity fall somewhere between the "old" and the "new" types I discussed in Chapter 2, and find a middle ground in the type of fluid identity found in Bethel, the Alaskan community. It is not clear at this point that Afromexicans of San Nicolas are an "ethnic group" in the same way that Mixtecos or Amuzgos (*indios*) are, for example. Afromexicans do not posses a different language, nor dress in distinctive ways or eat distinctive food. It is equally difficult to compare Afromexicans as a social group, to say, US "Italian Americans" or "Irish Americans" or even "African Americans;" Afromexicans lack strong political networks and goals even though they recognize one another - literally and symbolically — as 'one people,' and they clearly perceive

differences in relation to "others." Their political agenda (i.e. to participate in mainstream society as a group, in one voice) remains largely undeveloped. I believe that this is due to isolation and ignorance, elements that are fast losing significance today as links between them and others outside their immediate environment increase through infrastructure and technology. Afromexican social identity is complexly defined in terms of language and region but chiefly through ideas about "race."

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APPENDICES

Cited Respondents (San Nicolás Tolentino)

Respondent		Sex	Occupation	Education
RC	63	Male	Farmer	Elementary
Tere	18	Female	Unemployed	High School
TM	24	Female	Housewife	Elementary
AD	55	Male	Farmer	Elementary
IS	25	Male	Trader	Elementary
SA	54	Female	Housewife	Elementary
TS	19	Female	Student	High School
*MG	60	Male	Farmer	Elementary
MO	72	Male	Farmer	Elementary
MQ	70	Male	Shop owner	Elementary
IM	47	Male	Farmer	Elementray
RS	45	Female	Housewife	none
SG	60	Female	Housewife	none

UCRIHS - Sample
Ref #: IRB # 97-786

(Saludos). Me llamo Chege y estoy haciendo estudio sobre el lenguaje que se habla aquí en su comunidad. Será usted tan amable como para responder a algunas preguntas o contarme or recitar algúun verso usando su forma normal de hablar? Su participación es voluntaria y no tienes que contestar ni comentar sobre cualquier cosa que no gustes. También puedes dejar ésta conversacioón en cualquier momento. Con su permiso, voy a grabar (mostrar) nuestra platica para ayudarme a recordar sus comentarios después. Voy a usar estas grabaciones para escribir una teésis sobre el lenguaje de aquí, por ejemplo los nombres y formars de dirigirse. Al escribir, no voy a usar su nombre ni de cualquier manera revelar su identidad; tampoco voy a darle a ninguna otra persona estas cintas. Gracias.

(Translation)

"(*Respectful title and name, if known, and greeting*)". My name is Chege and I am studying the language spoken here in your community. Would you be so kind as to answer a few questions or tell me some folk stories or recite a verso (local traditional poetry) in your ordinary way of speaking? Your participation is voluntary and you need not answer or comment about anything you do not want to. You can also stop the interview at any time during our conversation. With your permision, I will record this on audio tape (*show*) to help me remember your responses. I will use these recordings to write a thesis about the language of here, such as naming practices and address terms. In my writing, I will not use your real name or otherwise reveal your identity, nor will I transfer these tapes to anyone else. Thank you.

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* Resident of Playa Ventura, Guerrero.