

Bilingualism and glocality in “Cachanilla” urban jargon on Mexico’s Northwestern border

Bilingüismo y glocalidad en el argot urbano “cachanilla” en la frontera noroeste de México

DOI: 10.61820/dis.2683-3298.1064

Jahiro Samar Andrade Preciado 

Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, México
samar.andrade@uabc.edu.mx

Recibido: 3 enero 2023 / Aceptado: 18 octubre 2025

ABSTRACT

Urban language is a phenomenon that has rapidly developed in the city of Mexicali, Baja California, exerting a strong impact on everyday speech. Inhabitants of certain low to middle-low socioeconomic neighborhoods have coined new words and phrases or, in some cases, adopted borrowed verbs and idioms from other Mexican states, partly due to internal migration and, on the other hand, as a result of intense cultural exchange with the U. S. border. This study is based on the construction of a corpus specifically designed to document the urban slang used in Mexicali. The corpus, comprising approximately 50 000 tokens (words and phrases), integrates diverse linguistic data such as written texts from blogs, news sites, and social media, as well as recorded interviews and oral samples. These materials were systematically organized to facilitate linguistic analysis, enabling a clearer description of the role, structure, and function of urban slang in the local speech. The corpus not only highlights the influence of American English through borrowings, calques, expressions, and neologisms, but also illustrates the dynamic processes of linguistic innovation and identity construction among specific social groups.

Keywords: culture, colloquialism , slang words

RESUMEN

El lenguaje urbano es un fenómeno que ha desarrollado rápidamente en la ciudad de Mexicali, Baja California, ejerciendo un fuerte impacto en el habla cotidiana. Los habitantes de ciertos barrios de nivel socioeconómico bajo y medio-bajo han creado nuevas palabras y frases o, en algunos casos, han adoptado verbos e idiomatismos

provenientes de otros estados de la República, en parte debido a la migración interna y, por otro lado, al intenso intercambio cultural con la frontera estadounidense. Este estudio se basa en la elaboración de un corpus diseñado específicamente para documentar el argot urbano utilizado en Mexicali. El corpus, conformado por aproximadamente 50 000 tokens (palabras y frases), integra diversos datos lingüísticos como textos escritos de blogs, sitios de noticias y redes sociales, así como entrevistas grabadas y muestras orales. Estos materiales se organizaron de manera sistemática para facilitar el análisis lingüístico, lo que permitió describir con mayor claridad el papel, la estructura y la función del argot urbano en el habla local. El corpus no solo evidencia la influencia del inglés estadounidense a través de préstamos, calcos, expresiones y neologismos, sino que también ilustra los procesos dinámicos de innovación lingüística y construcción identitaria entre determinados grupos sociales.

Palabras clave: cultura, coloquialismos, habla colloquial

INTRODUCTION

The slang or urban language,¹ is not only a lexicon created by the youth, as we will see later on, but it is nourished by different linguistic modes that are useful and expressive for them; for example, narcocorridos. This is how juvenile slang borrows words from the discourse of delinquency, through fashionable songs, movies, series, etc., or because of some kind of closeness. As Sanmartín says: “do not form totally separate entities with clear boundaries, but rather there are clear intersections and interferences” (1998, p.199).

Urban language is perceived as the change in the way of speaking, in which little by little phrases or jargon are introduced that change the standard use of Spanish. On the other hand, and making history, the concept of *jerga* (slang) is derived from *jargon*, or more precisely, from another ancient Occitan word: *gergon*, which is related to *gorjeo*. In turn, *gorjeo* is derived from an onomatopoeic root (Corominas, 1954).

The *Diccionario de la lengua española* of the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (RAE), on the other hand, defines *jerga* as:

1. f. Special, the non-formal language used by individuals of certain professions and trades among themselves.

¹ In this research, these concepts are used interchangeably.

2. f. Special language originally used for cryptic purposes by certain groups, which sometimes extends to general use; e.g., the slang of the criminals.
3. f. *jerigonza* (|| difficult to understand language).²

According to Casado (1988, p. 101), youth jargon is understood as the set of linguistic phenomena —most of them related to the lexicon— that characterize the way of speaking of wide sectors of youth, with a view to expressing age and/or group solidarity.

On the idea of language, López and Gallardo (2005, p. 127) point out that apart from a trunk, language is an open window to current culture, a transcendental tool for its study. Through language, you can glimpse the personality of a people. To punctuate, urban language is known in different ways: as colloquial language, neighborhood language, village speech, colloquial register, low register, slang, among others, according to Domenech and Romeo (2010). The aforementioned authors state that the colloquial register is used in the language in an informal and familiar context. They explain that colloquial language is not exclusive to a group or tribe, since regardless of the speaker's profession or social status, it is used in a natural, everyday way. Domenech and Romeo state that urban language is a relaxed and familiar form of speech that allows the speaker to be who he or she really is.

On the other hand, for De Hoyos, “jargon contains a very specific lexicon and linguistic structure used in very different circumstances, determined by the type of work or by a reduced sector of daily coexistence” (1981, p. 31). At the same time, Moreno (1999) states that the so-called specialty languages have traditionally received the generic name of “jargons”, understood as a set of linguistic characteristics specific to a group of speakers dedicated to a given activity; in a certain way, the use of jargon is always a way of marking a sociolinguistic identity or belonging to a group. In our case, this identifies certain social groups of the “Cachanilla” society, and although it is a phenomenon that manifests itself in the region, it develops without a systematic record; hence the shortage of resources related to it. It should be added that the inhabitants of the city of Mexicali are known as “Cachanillas” —Cachanilla is the name of the region's official plant, which grows abundantly near bodies of water.

Slang, then, is a living dialect that has had a strong impact on the city, to the extent that some urban areas have created and/or borrowed words, phrases, or

2 All translations from Spanish to English appearing here are by the author of the article.

in some cases verbs and idioms from different states of Mexico and from the American English. Due to the above, we seek to create a tool to help identify and better understand this lexicon by any speaker of the city of Mexicali, and by those who have the desire to learn this variant of Spanish, with an interest in regional biculturalism. As part of this research, we also sought to create a bilingual glossary (see Annex 1), which could help translators and interpreters in works containing words or vocabulary with urban language. The glossaries consist of English adaptations of the most important words and phrases, obtained on the basis of a corpus of texts that integrate the urban jargon used in the border area of Mexicali-Mexico and Imperial Valley-United States (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Border between Mexicali, B. C., Mexico and Calexico, California, U. S.

Overall, from this work we derive: the *Diccionario de coloquialismos del estado de Baja California* (Andrade, 2018), where definitions of words and phrases in urban contexts are provided, which will help to understand the slang in the city of Mexicali; and the Glossary of Cachanilla urban slang (GJUC for its acronym in Spanish), presented here, which has adaptations and equivalences from Spanish to English, which is intended to help professional translators and interpreters to ensure that their translations are accurate and that the intention of the message is not lost.

The corpus, on which this research is based, sought to record the urban slang of the city of Mexicali in the Spanish language, as well as the phrases, expressions and neologisms used by people of the urban community or individuals with a low register. However, it is pertinent to clarify that Fernández establishes that:

There is no unanimity among specialists when it comes to establishing the typology of sociolects or sociocultural levels; these are some of the most common denominations: low, lower middle, upper middle and high stratum; on the other hand, language manuals and dictionaries always speak of levels: vulgar, popular, middle or standard and cultured. (1997, p. 242)

Our research question explores what are the words and expressions of Mexicali's urban language that translators and interpreters, at the border region MX-US, have the most difficulty interpreting? As part of the development of this study, we hypothesize that there is an urban slang in Mexicali, alive and latent, which is nourished by biculturalism, the bilingualism of the border area, and the lexical contributions of migrants from other states of the country, which is difficult to find in the existing lexicography of Mexican Spanish. Our intention is to make this existence and its real use clear, as well as to support the creation of a dictionary with definitions in Spanish and the bilingual Glossary of Cachanilla urban slang (Spanish-English), which will help in different fields of linguistics in which this type of vocabulary is used.

The presence of urban language in the city of Mexicali has grown parallel to the transition from rural to urban culture and to the economic development of the region, and due to the bicultural nature of the area, it has crossed borders, so in order to record this phenomenon it is necessary to create a registry that will serve to improve communication. On the other hand, the search for English equivalents of "Cachanilla" slang can be of help to translators working in the area.

SPATIOTEMPORAL SITUATION

The geographic location of the city of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, on the border with California, U. S., has led the inhabitants to create a lexicon and vocabulary that is very prone to adopting or copying words from the English language. According to the record of the Government of the state of Baja California (Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2016), urban areas have been expanding throughout Mexicali and its valley, therefore, urban language, as a sociocultural phenomenon may expand.

In its beginnings, Mexicali was an agricultural valley, a cotton emporium, which gradually gave way to the maquiladora industry as the main source of domestic product. According to Basich and Muñoz (2008), Mexico's border states host more than 3 000 manufacturing plants (maquiladoras), which account for 71 % of the national total and generate nearly one million jobs. In Mexicali

alone, maquiladoras currently import goods valued at approximately 12.05 billion USD and report international sales of about 13.91 billion USD (2024 data). The maquiladora industry thus remains a cornerstone of both local and national economies, playing a decisive role in Mexico's export-oriented production model (Secretaría de Economía, 2024).

As part of the economic development, in the city there was the traditional change from rural to urban, and a new worldview, a new urban culture that left behind the agricultural culture and its values, adopting new models of behavior and thinking (the television subculture, for example). This produced linguistic changes and generated a new language, a different way of expressing the new reality. Halliday (1982) asserts that "in a hierarchical social structure, such as that which is characteristic of our culture, the values assigned to linguistic variants are social values, and linguistic variation serves as a symbolic expression of social structure" (p. 203).

Therefore, urban language can manifest itself as a communication code of groups of inhabitants, since a social dialect, in order to be distinct, needs "a configuration of phonetic, phonological, grammatical and lexicological features that is associated with a more or less objectively definable social group and that functions as its symbol" (p. 207).

Some other authors such as Ramírez (2009) affirm that slang can be observed in the use of words with meanings different from the official use and with a humorous, metaphorical, ironic nuance, among others; in addition, "this use demonstrates the great vitality that this language possesses and the difference with the language of adults which is generally more formal compared to that of young people" (p. 67). No matter how high the subject's speech register or economic position, any individual can make use of this language, sometimes without realizing it.

Relating to the concept of *glocality* in culture, according to Ortiz-Boza (2014), our days, not even the physical or material ownership of capital goods has become as important as it was for industrial capitalism. Today we are in *cultural capitalism* and the most relevant property is precisely *information and culture*. "We are facing a world of symbols, of networks and feedback loops, of connections and interaction, whose borders are obscured where everything solid vanishes into thin air" (Rifkin, 2004, cited in Ortiz-Boza, 2014, p. 118).

It is, says Rifkin (2004), a *glocal* fact, that is, how through the new economy, one part of humanity is imposing itself on another, not only the insertion of these different, foreign, physically distant others is propitiated, by giving them access

via Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) and Mass Media (MMC), especially through the investigation of their culture, their consumption patterns, rituals and identity, in order to have the necessary information and design, from the technological and media metropolis, those contents and behaviors that will lead them to apparently access the *global world*.

This is the *glocality* (Ortiz-Boza, 2014, p. 119), from those metropolises, but there is also the *glocal* attitude of the localities and communities themselves around the world that look at the global from their own perspective, while increasingly the CMMs and ICTs (specific case of the internet and cellular) insert them in that process.

Although *glocality* is perceived as a phenomenon of the present century, it is inevitable to remember that several of the ethical, social, recreational and work culture patterns, among others, have permeated into our region due to the coexistence with the still *most powerful country in the world*; as part of that sui generis biculturalism that has been lived in the border since the foundation of the city. Therefore, the openness of the Cachanillas to other cultures and languages is not surprising, since Mexicans populated a territory cultivated and exploited by the Chinese community (being migrants in their own land). According to Schwartz and Unger (2010) biculturalism represents comfort and proficiency with both one's heritage culture and the culture of the country or region in which one has settled.

Regarding the birth of the city of Mexicali, as a melting pot of cultures, Werne (1980) narrates in his work that the U. S. Consul in Mexicali, Boyle, was concerned because in 1920 General Esteban Cantú, Governor of the Northern District of Baja California, had prominent American citizens under his control through gambling debts. In 1920, 90 % of the government's income came from gambling, prostitution, bars, extortion, opium and cocaine; in other words, just like Tijuana, it was the great cantina during the time of alcohol prohibition in the United States.

On Chinese immigration, which concerned authorities in Northwest Mexico, Werne states: "The Sonoran Democratic Club officially opposed Chinese immigration since 1911. An editorial of *El Diario* (June 17, 1911) declared at the same time that the colonization of Baja California should be carried out only by Mexicans" (1980, p. 16). The rumor that Mexicali had a higher number of adult Asians than Mexicans caused anti-Chinese sentiment to rise, according to the *Calexico Chronicle* (October 24, 1919), quoted by Werne in his book.

As we can see, Mexicali was, historically, a large agricultural plot in the backyard of the American Union, a vegetable and cotton emporium, before its global takeover by India and China. At this point, it is necessary to remember the North

American investment in the local economy since its inception, first as large land-owners (Colorado River Land Company) and later as maquiladora entrepreneurs. The city was taking shape, in addition to the constant waves of migrants from the interior of the country (Sonora, Sinaloa, Jalisco, etc.), and the most recent wave of Haitians, who have already integrated into the community.

In recent decades, however, Mexicali has undergone a profound economic transformation, shifting from its agricultural base to a manufacturing hub strongly linked to global markets. The consolidation of maquiladoras, supported by U. S. capital and later expanded through international investment, has positioned the city as a key border economy. At the same time, demographic changes fueled by migration continue to redefine its cultural and linguistic landscape. Alongside Haitian communities, Mexicali is also home to Russian and Ukrainian settlers whose presence dates back to the early 20th century, as well as more recent groups of deported immigrants from the United States. Many of these returnees are bilingual, contributing to the city's complex sociolinguistic profile and reinforcing Mexicali's identity as both a local and transnational space.

HOW THE CITY OF MEXICALI WAS BUILD?

Based on the results of the Censo de Población y Vivienda (2010) conducted by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, the total population of the municipality of Mexicali is 936 826 thousand inhabitants, of which 473 203 are men and 463 623 are women, so the percentage of population is 50.3 % male and 49.7 % female; and 28.0 % of the population is under 15 years of age.

There are 1 474 localities in the municipality of Mexicali, and their approximate number of population in 2010 is shown in Figure 2.

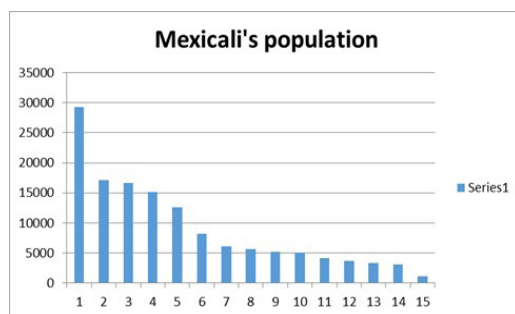


Figure 2. Population of Mexicali. Gobierno del estado de Baja California (2010).

According to the database of the Government of the state of Baja California (2010), Mexicali is made up of neighbourhoods (*colonias*) and its valley is divided into common land. It is worth noting that the city is located on the U. S. border, and a high percentage of the Spanish spoken is Castilianized English, i.e., lexical borrowings conjugated or inflected into Spanish, which are quickly integrated into the everyday speech of border residents. Basich (2012) outlines the above as follows:

As for the impact of the two languages in contact, the secular promiscuity of English and Spanish on the border has led to the development of border slang in both languages, known respectively as Spanglish and Chicano English, although neither is stable. On the Mexican side, English borrowings and calques that characterize border Spanish have been incorporated and generalized. The families gather on the *porche* of the house, which is clean since it *mapeo* and where the mother brings a *pichel* with *ponche* for all. The *carros* make noise if they do not have *mofle*. People greet each other by saying *aló* and say goodbye by saying *ba-bay*. (p. 119)

It should be noted that although these expressions are used across all social levels and in various activities, they occur far more frequently in the informal oral register and are considerably less common in written language (Basich y Muñoz, 2008, p. 5).

LEXICOLOGICAL AND LEXICOGRAPHIC FUNCTION

To understand the context of urban language in the city of Mexicali it is necessary to turn to lexicology, “branch of linguistics that studies vocabulary structure, composition, variety, its origin, the historical changes of the lexicon and the adaptation of the lexicon to the social conditions of the different communities of speakers” (Cerdà, 1986, pp. 178-179).

Lexicology is the science that has allowed a deeper and more detailed analysis of the words obtained from the captured subcorpus, related to the urban language of Mexicali, and in this way to know their contexts and ways of being used effectively, according to the case and level of register.

Lexicography is the part of applied linguistics that studies the theoretical principles applied in the elaboration or preparation of dictionaries and “is above all an applied science” (Rey, 1995, p.113). Lexicology and lexicography generally work together for the creation of precise and coherent definitions, “the relationships between terminology-terminography and lexicography are clearly complex and reciprocal” (p. 118). In the end, the function of lexicography is to assist linguists

in creating definitions. On the basis of previous lexicological knowledge, an exact definition is created to support the understanding of new terms, which, as time goes by, appear and are added to the vocabulary.

According to the twenty-third edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua española*, lexicography is a “Technique of composing lexicons or dictionaries// 2.- Part of linguistics that deals with the theoretical principles on which the composition of dictionaries is based” (Real Academia Española).

BACKGROUND OF LEXICOGRAPHIC STUDIES IN MEXICALI

During the documentary research and compilation of similar studies, we discovered that lexicographic research in Mexicali is scarce and some of it is not very professional or systematic. For this reason, we decided to address the subject and sought to create a dictionary to help identify the urban colloquial speech used daily in the streets. Among other works found online is that of Martínez (2010), *Real Diccionario Chicalense*, which presents a variety of words used in the region, comprising 89 entries with examples of usage. The author gives a brief account of how the geographical position of the city, bordering the United States to the north, led to changes in speech, because, within their vocabulary, Mexicans adopted words of U. S. origin, such as *baika* (for bike), *cachar* (for catch), *carapila* (for stupid), among others. The blog includes some nouns, adjectives and verbs that are used by Mexicans, as well as regionalisms. Martínez justifies the sui generis existence of the “chicalense” as follows:

Denigrating or relating local speech to social subgroups (cholos, pandilleros, paisas, nacos, tecolines), or worse, feeling proud of such property, spreading it as a triumph and hanging a medal on it, represents a cruel way of relegating it. And it is not that the problem is some marginalized group that deserves to be rescued, but rather that, in the particular case of Mexicali, most of its inhabitants use localisms in their daily speeches and messages. (*Real Diccionario Chicalense*)

Online you can consult the *Breve diccionario de la jerga cachanilla* (2009), created with the purpose of making known how the “crew” of Mexicali speaks, it is worth mentioning that for the people of Mexicali “los cholos” or the people of humble neighborhoods is the *race* —a group of people of scarce resources or who live in marginalized areas of the city—. In this dictionary, nouns and adjectives abound, and it is mentioned how commercial bilingualism influences

the Mexicali lexicon. It should be noted that the above-mentioned works lack any lexicographic method, as is the case of the *Diccionario del español de México*, written by Lara and published in 1982.³

Saldívar (2014) conducted one of the few corpus-based investigations to date in the region. His work addresses the narco culture and analyzes the words most commonly used around this criminal phenomenon that has permeated the colloquial language of the region. To achieve this analysis, they compiled texts from diverse sources such as: journalistic texts, internet articles, magazines related to the phenomenon, interviews with professionals in the field, reporters, transcripts, etc. At the end of the collection, all the information was entered into a corpus analyzer program, to identify the most salient words and the context in which they were used by the speakers. Saldívar found a large number of words used by narcos to communicate. Among them, some are codes that were once exclusive.

This author also explains in his results that the narco culture has been on the rise, to the point that it has managed to influence the speech of individuals at the state level; and as mentioned by Rijo (2010) in his theories of colloquial language. Saldívar (2014) finds that people tend to borrow words and expressions used by their leaders or people they admire. Similarly, he mentions that individuals learn new words that they add to their vocabulary after listening to music (narcocorridos) and as a result, these words are incorporated into the lexicon of the speakers, with an informal linguistic register.

TRANSLATION OF URBAN LANGUAGE

Florencia (2006), author of the blog on the Internet: *Spanish translation.US*, explains that one of the challenges or headaches for translators is the translation of colloquial words, jargon, regionalisms, calques, borrowings and phrases, etc. This type of problem arises because the translator is often a native speaker of the target language and is unfamiliar or unfamiliar with the culture of the source language. These situations will make her carry out cultural research with the purpose of finding out what the author of the text wants to express with some phrase or word.

³ “Cholos” is a socio-cultural term originating in Mexico and the southwestern U. S., historically used to describe people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry, and later associated with urban youth subcultures characterized by distinctive clothing, language, and gang-related or marginalized identities. The term can carry both derogatory and identity-affirming connotations depending on context.

The author of the blog also proposes that linguists and translators start creating tools to help with the understanding and translation of these expressions, so that the intention of the message is not lost and is understood by the audience. Also, points out that in order to translate this type of words, a similar adaptation to the target language should be sought in order to be as faithful as possible in the translation; not to lose the meaning and to have the same impact on the target reader as it had on the source reader (Flores, 2006).

Relating to the concept of “translation”, House (2009) defines it as the replacement of an original text by another text (p. 3). Because of this, some have come to label a translation as an inferior substitute for an original. However, it can also be seen in a more positive light if one considers that it provides access to ideas and experiences that would otherwise be locked in an unfamiliar language.

On the other hand, Flores (2006) herself argues that translation always involves both language and culture for the simple fact that these cannot really be separated. Language is culturally integrated: it expresses and shapes cultural reality (p. 11). Hurtado (2001), for his part, proposes the following as a definition of a translation technique:

The procedure, visible in the translation output, is used to achieve translational equivalence to textual micro units; techniques are cataloged in comparison to the original. The use of one technique or another is always functional, depending on the type of text, the mode of translation, the purpose of translation and the chosen method. (p. 642)

Adaptation, therefore, is one of the translation techniques whose function is to find a phrase or word that has the same function as it has in the source language. So much for the theoretical points.

METHODOLOGY

Our research, although corpus-based, is primarily exploratory and was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved compiling texts that contained urban language, drawn from a variety of sources including song lyrics, social media publications, fifteen interviews with residents of urban neighborhoods, local news websites, city blogs, and online platforms authored by local writers from Mexicali.

After searching for texts, it was found that this type of documents is concentrated at uncommon words and an informal linguistic register of speech. Since

common language is the main objective of this research, it was decided to work with what was collected. For the purpose of this research, it was necessary to know the environment in which the origin of urban words is present; therefore, in order to locate the marginalized areas of the city, surveys were applied to inhabitants of the city of Mexicali.

During data collection, interviews were conducted with individuals living in marginalized areas of Mexicali. The interviews were randomly administered to fifteen individuals. The only requirement was that the subjects lived in one of the selected popular neighborhoods, according to the *Informe anual sobre la situación de pobreza y rezago social 2016*, of the Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL).

As part of the text collection, approximately 200 song lyrics representing the most popular music among the selected participants were gathered. In addition, websites frequently visited by a pilot group were sampled to trace the use of urban language in different social strata. The group also shared 68 recorded conversations and text message exchanges containing around 100 messages each, which provided valuable oral and written data. Similarly, a set of 30 texts was extracted from news portals, popular blogs, and online community forums published in Mexicali, where Cachanilla slang was clearly observable.

Altogether, the compiled materials constitute a corpus of approximately 50 000 tokens, encompassing both individual words and multi-word phrases. These tokens were systematically organized to facilitate linguistic analysis, allowing for the identification of lexical patterns, the frequency of specific slang terms, and the semantic extension of phrases within local usage. The quantitative description of the corpus in tokens ensures greater precision and transparency in the study of Cachanilla urban jargon.

Once the information was collected, the texts were converted into .doc or .txt formats for the creation of a corpus of the urban language of the city of Mexicali. Once the -corpus was made, it was introduced into the *AntConc 3.4.4w software*. This corpus analysis tool in its demo version is freely available. The first action to be executed in the program was to load the categorized files in the *File* option, then the *Global Settings* option was used. After that, the *stop list function was used and* a txt file is loaded. The text has the 10 000 most used words of any grammatical category in the Spanish language and is provided by the Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA). This was done in order to create a filter and discard the most frequent words of the Spanish language so that only the most used urban slang would remain. The most frequent words were located

with the *word list* option, this is where the searched words and phrases came up. Then, the context of the most frequent ones, which were positioned in the highest ranks, was analyzed.

The second part consisted of applying a questionnaire with the words and expressions obtained from the corpus analysis. The survey asked questions such as: What does the word “x” mean to you, what does the expression “x” mean to you? The above, in order to create a coherent definition of the term. Approximately 50 questionnaires were administered to individuals of different ages, economic status and educational backgrounds. The third part of the research is the creation of dictionary definitions, based on the results of the surveys and corpus analysis.

The fourth and last part of the research focused on the translation/adaptation of urban words and expressions, which, at this point, were already defined. A questionnaire was applied again with the 422 words and phrases already defined, and a blank space was left aside for the subject to write the translation or adaptation he/she believed pertinent. The public to whom the questionnaire was addressed was made up of students from the language school at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali campus; a total of ten subjects. The selection was random, as a pilot test. It was then replicated on U. S. bilingual students in order to obtain more accurate results. Once the pilot test led to positive results, it was applied to U. S. students at the College of Santa Ana and Middle College High School in San Francisco, California, U. S.

The sample consisted of forty students from the aforementioned schools. Once the questionnaires were answered, the most frequently used and recurrent terms were taken in order to achieve adaptations. With the analysis of the coincidences in the subjects’ responses, we proceeded to create the GJUC (Annex 1), which represents the second product of this research.

RESULTS

The creation of a corpus had as its main function to study part of the lexicology and function of urban words and expressions, which are commonly used in the city of Mexicali. The following types of text, in which colloquial and informal language can be found, were taken into account (see Figure 3):

The objective of the study was to find out which urban words exist in the city of Mexicali, and one of the simple ways to do this is to have conversations with individuals who use colloquial and informal language. During the interview, it was not mentioned to these people that their speech register or lexicon would be

analyzed so that they would not attempt to modify their vocabulary or would try to raise their register. Although, the interviewees were only selected by the neighborhood in which they reside, most of them were people without access to primary education or with incomplete secondary education. The individuals interviewed showed greater use of nouns, calques, borrowings, and *pochismos* during their conversations, on some occasions making use of words of U. S. origin.

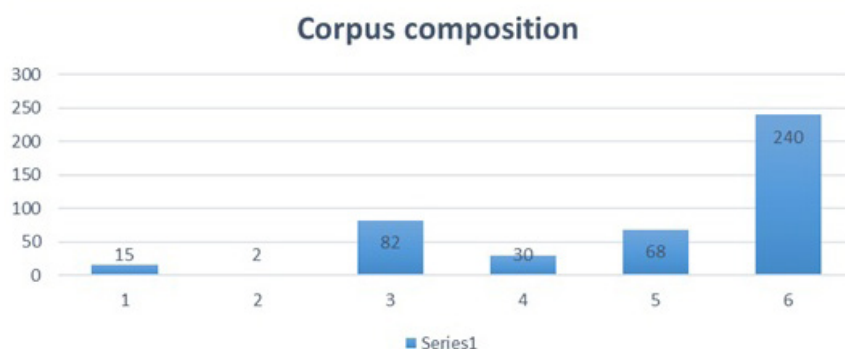


Figure 3. Texts that were part of the corpus of Mexicali slang.

During the planning of the project, it was thought that the use of this language would be exclusive to young people between 14 and 25 years of age. However, it is used by individuals of any age. Young people demonstrated greater urban vocabulary diversity than adult subjects. It seems that young people are the ones who promote the use of urban language, so that it can be accepted and later used by adults and senior citizens. The use of this jargon allows it to be understood by individuals in the same social environment. In the case of children and adolescents, it was observed that they learn and adapt these vocabularies more quickly than adults, so it is expected that adolescents will follow the patterns of young people and continue with the modification or creation of new terms.

The application of surveys during this research helped us to define words and expressions that had diverse uses and employments. The two questionnaires consisted of five words and five different expressions in each. A total of 82 individuals participated in filling out the instruments: 41 completed questionnaire no. 1 and 41 completed questionnaire no. 2 (see Figure 4). Individuals were randomly selected and participants were asked to answer honestly and define, in their opinion, each item of the questionnaire.

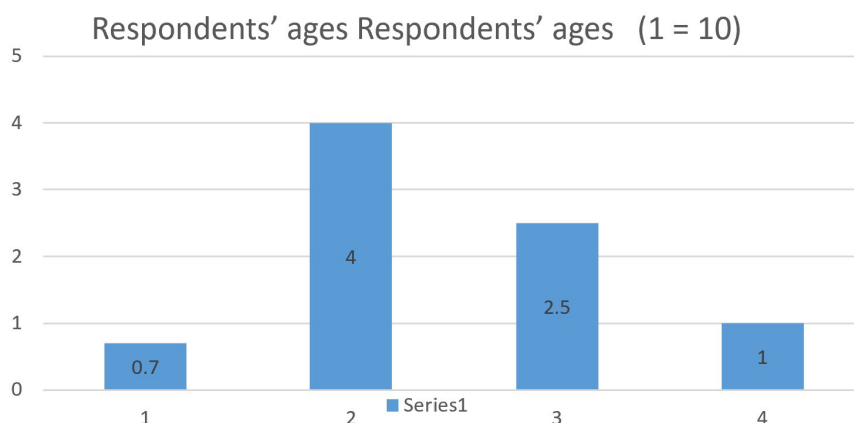


Figure 4. Integration of the sample by age.

The findings from the surveys were similar to those from the interviews. Again, the presence of young people is greater, as shown in Figure 3, young people make up 50 % of the individuals who responded to the instrument; adults form the second largest group, followed by the elderly and in a smaller group: children and adolescents. Initially, it was intended that the questionnaire application would be directed only to young people and adults; however, children, adolescents and senior citizens showed interest in participating in this questionnaire and were allowed to answer it.

Within the analysis of the corpus of urban speech of the city of Mexicali, several results were found, one of them, the use of words and phrases used by popular groups or singers that the speakers frequently listen to. The content of the lyrics is somehow integrated into the vocabulary of subjects because they begin to use words that appear in the lyrics of the songs. Some of the words came from *narco-corridos* and were used by the speakers during the interview and surveys. The most frequent were words such as *cotorreo*, *loquerón* and *pisteadada* (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY OF WORDS PRESENT IN URBAN SPEECH IN MEXICALI.

WORD	FREQUENCY	EXAMPLE (ACCORDING TO THE CORPUS)
Cotorreo	12	El cotorreo se puso bueno.
Loquerón	10	Vamos a ponernos un loquerón.
Pisteadada	8	La pisteadada está al cien.

Finding a high frequency among the different documents added to the corpus, it is understood that these words are part of the urban vocabulary of individuals, so it is inferred that these words began to be heard in popular songs and

are now part of their everyday vocabulary. Another finding was the adaptation of words of American origin that, although they do not appear in the glossary (see Annex 1), were found less frequently in the corpus analyzer program. In the case of the aforementioned words, they are pronounced in their original language, and retain the same meaning, unlike *pochismos* which are hybrid words that are combinations of English and Spanish, and in addition have a change in pronunciation and their spelling is different (Kearney y Medrano, 2001). According to the *Spanish Oxford living dictionaries*, *pochismo* is a “word of American English origin that has been incorporated into Mexican Spanish speech” (Oxford University).

Within the urban vocabulary, there are several calques, borrowings and some regionalisms that are understood by most individuals in the city. The regionalisms with the highest usage are: *morro*, *suave*, *pistear*, *cheves*. In the case of the noun *morro*, which replaces others such as *chicos*, *chavos*, *plebes*, *muchachos*, is used by most of the young people who live in the marginalized areas of the city, since for them it is more common to use this word to address some other young person than any of the others.

The calques and borrowings used by the speakers come, as mentioned above, from the English language. A variety of casts were found in the corpus, although it was expected that there would be a greater number and variety of them, their frequency turned out to be scarce. Some examples of these words are: *checar* (from verb *to check*), *guachar* (from verb *to watch*), *pichar* (from verb *to pitch*) and *jaina* (from noun *honey*) among others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the corpus, about 113 expressions used by Cachanillas in their informal speech were found. These words cover different grammatical categories. The predominant categories in the *Dictionary of urban speech of Mexicali (DHUM)* (2018) were adjectives, verbs and nouns in that order. However, 83 words were also found that can be used both as a noun and as an adjective, depending on the context.

With regard to the analysis of the data obtained, and without being part of the objective of this study, we were able to perceive that the young people were able to understand or create similar definitions based on the words that were shown to them in the data collection. This leads us to intuit that a large part of young people are the ones who use and recreate this type of vocabulary, which is becoming more popular and is also incorporated into the informal speech

of adults and senior citizens; but unlike the lower-middle and lower strata, it is not their main register of speech, but one of the variants they use in a private communicative situation or with people they trust. For its part, the slang itself is used more frequently, and on a daily basis, by the individuals surveyed in the popular neighborhoods.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the present text the process of how narcocorrido lyrics can permeate urban slang, become popular, and could be a strong influence in the adoption of new terms that listeners later end up using in their conversations remains to be recorded.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, there is an urban slang, which is used by the inhabitants of the city of Mexicali. For this purpose, texts containing urban words or expressions were collected. Individuals were interviewed in the popular neighborhoods where the largest population of speakers of this slang is concentrated. The creation of the urban corpus facilitated the localization of these words and helped to know the context and situations in which they are used. In the *Diccionario del habla urbana de Mexicali*, 50 000 tokens, 420 words and 24 expressions from the compilation of urban texts are defined. With the above, we prove the existence of urban slang used by the Cachanillas and although its use is more common in certain areas of the city, classified as low-income, its use is not exclusive, because like the English borrowings, it permeates the other social strata.

To conclude, it should be emphasized that unlike the *popular* group studied as a priority, where this form of communication may be its exclusive register, in the rest of the population where the *jang* appears, it is usually one of the known linguistic variants, which is used only in certain communicative situations and in certain more intimate environments.

REFERENCES

- Andrade, J. S. (2018). *Diccionario de coloquialismos del estado de Baja California*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jahiro-Andrade-Preciado-2/publication/329962074_Analisis_Lexicologico_del_Habla_Coloquial_Juvenil_en_el_Estado_de_Baja_California/links/5c2594bba6fdccfc706d1743/Analisis-Lexicologico-del-Habla-Coloquial-Juvenil-en-el-Estado-de-Baja-California.pdf

- Basich, K. E. (2012) *La formación de profesores de traducción. Reflexiones desde un caso mexicano*. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.
- Basich, K. y Muñoz, R. (2008). Las fronteras reales de la traducción. En L. González y P. Hernández (Coords.), *El español, lengua de traducción para la cooperación y el diálogo* (pp. 291-305). <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7459408>
- Casado, M. (1988). Lengua y cultura: la etnolingüística. Síntesis.
- Cerdà, R. (1986). *Diccionario de lingüística*. Anaya.
- Corominas, J. (1954). Gorjeo. En *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana* 2 (pp. 1049b-1051b). Francke Publisher.
- Diccionario del habla urbana de Mexicali*. (2018). https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-g9O2r_PRfMMmtFbkl1Skw1eEU/view
- Domenech, L. y Romero, A. (2010). Lenguaje coloquial. En *Materiales Lengua y Literatura*. http://www.materialesdelengua.org/LENGUA/comunicacion/variedades_lengua/lenguacoloquial.htm
- Fernández, I. (1997). La enseñanza de las variedades lingüísticas a través de los textos lexicográficos. *Lenguaje y textos*, (10), 239-253. <http://hdl.handle.net/2183/8032>
- Florencia, C. (2006). Jerga. En *Spanish translation.US*. <http://blog-de-traduccion.es/spanishtranslation.us/etiquetas/traduccion-de-jerga>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1982). *El Lenguaje como semiótica social*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- House, J. (2009). *Translation*. Oxford University Press.
- De Hoyos, M. (1981). Una variedad en el habla coloquial: la jerga “cheli”. *Cauce. Revista de Filología, Comunicación y sus Didácticas*, (4), pp. 31-42. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=87627>
- Hurtado, A. (2001). *Traducción y traductología. Introducción a la traducción*. Cátedra.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. (2010). Censo de Población y Vivienda. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/2010/>
- Kearney, M. y Medrano, M. (2001). *Medieval culture and the Mexican American borderlands*. Texas A&M University Press.
- Lara, L. F. (1982). *Diccionario del español de México*. El Colegio de México.
- Lexicoon. (s.f). Pochismo. En *Lexicoon.org*. <http://lexicoon.org/es/pochismo>
- López, A. y Gallardo, B. (Eds.). (2005). *Conocimiento y lenguaje*. Universitat de València.
- Martínez, V. (2010). *Real Diccionario Chicalense*. <http://diccionariochicalense.blogspot.com/>

- Moreno, F. (1999). Lenguas de especialidad y variación lingüística. En S. Barrueco, E. Hernández y L. Sierra (Eds.), *Lenguas para fines específicos (6). Investigación y enseñanza* (pp. 3-14). Universidad de Alcalá.
- Ortiz-Boza, M. L. (2014). Glocalidad, sociedad posmercado y acceso: tres categorías de Jeremy Rifkin para un marco conceptual, *13*(26), 109-122. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=28131424007>
- Oxford University. (2017). Pochismo. En *Spanish Oxford living dictionaries*. <https://es.oxforddictionaries.com/definicion/pochismo>
- Ramírez, N. M. (2009). Lenguaje contracultural en la jerga estudiantil universitaria de la sede Guanacaste de la Universidad de Costa Rica. *Revista Kánina*, *33*(1), 65-70. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=44248784003>
- Real Academia Española. (2017). Jerga. En *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. <http://dle.rae.es/?id=MQ2LGmQ|MQ2t2nA>
- Real Academia Española. (2017). Lexicografía. *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. <https://dle.rae.es/?id=ND4v8oL>
- Real Academia Española: Banco de datos (CREA). [online]. *Corpus de referencia del español actual*.
- Real Academia Española: Banco de datos (CORDE) [online]. *Corpus diacrónico del español*. Retried el 07, 2017, de <<http://www.rae.es>>
- Rey, A. (1995). *Essays on terminology*. John Benjamins.
- Rijo, J. (2010). El lenguaje urbano. *Un poco de cada día*. <http://julyrijo.blogspot.mx/2010/09/el-lenguaje-urbano.html>
- Sanmartín, J. (1998). *Lenguaje y cultura marginal: el argot de la delincuencia. Anejo 25 de Cuadernos de Filología*. Universidad de Valencia.
- Saldívar, R. (2014). *Análisis lexicológico del narcolenguaje en Baja California*. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.
- Schwartz, S. J. y Unger, J. B. (2010). Biculturalism and context: what is biculturalism, and when is it adaptive? Commentary on Mistry and Wu. *Human development*, *53*(1), 26-32. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000268137>
- Secretaría de Desarrollo Social. (2016). Mexicali, B.C. *Informe anual sobre la situación de pobreza y rezago social 2016*. http://diariooficial.gob.mx/SEDESOL/2016/Baja_California_002.pdf
- Secretaría de Economía. (2024). *Mexicali: perfil económico*. DataMéxico. <https://www.economia.gob.mx/datamexico/es/profile/geo/mexicali>
- Werne, J. R. (1980). Esteban Cantú y la soberanía mexicana en Baja California. *Historia Mexicana*, *30*(1), 1-32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25135720>

ANNEX. 1. DETAIL OF GLOSSARY OF CACHANILLA URBAN SLANG (ESP – ING).

SPANISH	ENGLISH	FREQUENCY
Agüitado	Sad, pretty sad	6
Ajerar	To square up, to fight, throw punches	5
Haracle (From Heracles/Hércules)	To know his thang	6
Baica	Bike	5
Bichi	Fully naked	6
Baiquear	To ride a bickle	8
Bichola	Cock	7
Botana	Funny, lit	5
Cagapalos	Hater, douchbag	6
Cantón	Crib, house	8
Caquino	Faggot	6
Carrillero	Bully	10
Chacal	Greedy	5
Chancla	Butch	5
Chante	Crib, house	5
Checar	To check	12
Cheve	Brewsky	22
Charolear	To show-off	5
Chilindrín	Bum	4
Coger	Fuck	7
Cogido	Fucked	8
Cotorrear	To chill, to chatting up, to kick it	6
Cucu	Ass	8
Culero	Asshole	5
Culo	Ass	5
Culón	Pussy	5
Curada	Funny, hoot, goofy	9
Displayado	Chilling	8
Displayar	To chill, to kick back	7
Embichar	To get naked	4
Equis	Whatever	7
Estúpido	Stupid	5
Forjar	To roll-up a blunt, to make a blunt	6

SPANISH	ENGLISH	FREQUENCY
Forjado	Rolled-up, blunt	4
Gacho	Messed-up, effed-up	6
Gandalla	Moocher	9
Gato	Bitch	7
Güey	Dude	27
Guachar	To watch	13
Idiota	Idiot	9
Jaina	Honey/chick/hyna	16
Joto	Pussy	14
Loquear	To black out, to get fucked up	9
Loquera	Faded	9
Machorra	Dyke	6
Malilla	Crackhead	4
Mamalón	Dope	4
Marica/Maricón	Pussy	5
Morro	dude, boy, homie.	34
Paniqueado	high	8
Panocha	Pussy	8
Pendejo	Asshole	9
Perreado	Lame	6
Pichar	To pitch	9
Pinche	Fucking	15
Pistear	Brewing / to get drunk	18
Pisteadada	Party hard	5
Pedo	Tipsy	6
Puerco	Cop	9
Puñal	Gay	6
Putta	Whore, bitch	8
Puto	Dandy	4
Ranfla	Ride	9
Ratero	Thief	6
Reata	Dick	8
Rifado	Badass	5
Rifar	To be a badass	6

SPANISH	ENGLISH	FREQUENCY
Sacatón	Wuss	7
Sarra	Wack	6
Suave	Cool/lit	27
Tabanear	To clean up	6
Talonear	To grind	4
Tumbar	To steal	3
Tumbado	Stolen	5
Vago	Bum	5
Verga	Dick	6
Zorra	Bitch	8