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Decolonizing Spanish: Ladino and Chavacano as Sites of Global Hispanophonia

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Abstract
The current institutional attempts by the Cervantes Institute of Manila and the Spanish Royal Academy of Tel Aviv to revitalize Chavacano and Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), respectively, by assimilating them into Spanish pose a fundamental paradox: how can the official institutions of the Spanish language document, map, and characterize the subalternized speaking communities of the "Global Hispanophone" (Calderwood) while resisting the temptation to impose a neocolonial agenda on their cultural sovereignty? (DeGraff; Deumert et al.) Drawing upon an understanding of languages as cultural and political artifacts, in this essay I will first discuss the "modern" colonial invention of Spanish as a North Atlantic universal (Trouillot 2002) and the subsequent development of the pan-Hispanic and Hispanophone linguistic ideologies in postcolonial times (Del Valle). My historiographical critique of "Global Spanish" from the peripheral perspectives of Ladino and Chavacano will expose both the discursive enthronization of Castilian into "(Global) Spanish" and the century-long pejoration of Ladino and Chavacano as processes motivated by ideological factors, rather than structural (morpho-syntactic) aspects. I will conclude that a genuinely decolonizing dynamic cannot accept any form of linguistic re-Hispanicization premised on the supposed unsuitability of Ladino and Chavacano for contemporary purposes. Rather, it can only materialize through the implementation of linguistic self-determination and self-organization, both of which are predicated on the self-respect and dignity of their community of speakers.

Keywords: decolonial linguistics, Global Hispanophone, Spanish, Ladino, Chavacano.

Decolonizing the Global Hispanophone

Over the past eight centuries, scholars have discursively constructed Castilian Spanish as a global language worthy of the highest literary tradition and prestige at the expense of many other linguistic varieties inside and outside the Iberian Peninsula (Del Valle, *A Political History of Spanish*). By contrast, Ladino (the language spoken by the Jews expelled in 1492) and Chavacano (a set of linguistic varieties that emerged as a result of the cultural exchanges fostered by the Manila galleon's trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific slave trade) have been traditionally dismissed as "dialects" (Calvet) and "degenerate offshoots" (DeGraff) of Castilian Spanish. This stark distinction has been exploited since the second half of the nineteenth-century to justify the supposed need for Ladino and Chavacano to reconnect with modern Spanish. I argue that the current institutional attempts to de-creolize Chavacano by the Cervantes Institute of Manila and to re-Hispanicize Ladino by the Spanish Royal Academy of Tel Aviv are best understood in light of these dynamics. In this essay, I will carry out an emancipatory

historiographical critique of "Global Spanish" from the peripheral perspectives of Ladino and Chavacano in order to explore the discursive enthronization of Castilian into "(Global) Spanish" as the inverted specular image of the discrimination against Ladino and Chavacano. This combined critique of these linguistic varieties will provide me the opportunity to challenge the political invention of Spanish as a "modern" colonial language and the subsequent development of the pan-Hispanic and Hispanophone linguistic ideologies in postcolonial times (Del Valle *Total Spanish, Panhispanismo e hispanofonía*), and finally the eventual adoption of re-Hispanicization/de-creolization policies from several, complementary angles. First, exploring the crystallization of Ladino in the Mediterranean diaspora and the ensuing preservation of its own diasystem (set of dialects) around the globe will help us problematize the geographic, cultural, and linguistic borders of Spanish as a "modern" colonial language (Quintana; Papo). Second, critiquing the modern invention of Chavacano as a supposed "creole" against the backdrop of the Manila galleon's trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific slave trade imposed by the Spaniards will allow me to expose the modern coinage and contemporary (de)creolization of Chavacano as the function of a colonial linguistic ideology designed to pejorate this linguistic variety by opposition to its European "lexifier" (Castilian Spanish) (DeGraff; Mufwene).

Beginning our analysis in the Mediterranean as a center of power and knowledge and then expanding away from it and into a network of contacts, exchanges, and flows that reach across the world will allow me to trace the long durée of a global network that constitutes a negative mediation or B-side of the Global Hispanophone, understood as a homogenizing neocolonial discourse designed to naturalize our understanding of modern Spanish as a "global" language. In addition, it will help me to identify and deconstruct a common everyday underlying neocolonial discourse apropos both linguistic varieties, that is, contemporary attempts by Western states and institutions to reappropriate these subalternized linguistic varieties and their speakers' community in the name of their own humanitarian protection. In this sense, drawing upon the rebellion of the global Sephardic community against the institutional assimilationism displayed by a member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), will serve to provide a blueprint for new generations of Ladino and Chavacano speakers in the task of linguistic self-organization. Ultimately, my combined critical historiography of Ladino and Chavacano as part of the "Global Hispanophone" (Calderwood) will blur the distinction between "colonizer" and "colonized," as well as "language" and "dialect/"creole," showing that the very invention (i.e., discursive articulation) of Spanish as a "language proper" began with the early consideration of Castilian and other Romance languages as "degenerate offshoots" of Latin that could only acquire prestige by "reconnecting" with the imperial language of the colonizers

(Bagno). In so doing, it will unfold the Global Hispanophone as a plane of immanence that already encompasses Spanish and its outside, exposing the former as a North Atlantic abstract universalization (Trouillot), a "named language" (Heller; Jørgensen et al.; Makoni and Pennycook), that is, a socio-political construct that (no less than Ladino, Chavacano, and Latin) does not exist outside its discursive ontology. Lastly, this exploration is decolonial by drawing on Walter Mignolo, Joseph Errington, Ana Deumert, and Anne Storch to engage in a critical interrogation of the conditions of possibility of contemporary neocolonial discourse that leads to the deconstruction of the latter and, therefore, to the rejection of any form of linguistic re-Hispanicization/de-creolization proposed in postcolonial times. From this perspective, I will conclude that just like the epistemological success of Spanish is that of no longer measuring itself vis-à-vis Latin, the decolonizing potential of Ladino and Chavacano relative to Spanish (and by extension, that of "the Global Hispanophone") can only materialize through the adoption of linguistic self-determination and self-organization, both of which are predicated on the self-respect and dignity of the community of speakers.

1.1. The Colonial Engineering of Modern Spanish as a North Atlantic Universal

The gradual colonial engineering of "Modern Spanish" encompasses three milestones: Alfonso X of Castile's sponsorship of Castilian (thirteenth century), Elio Antonio de Nebrija's publication of the first Castilian grammar in 1492, and Juan Manuel Fernández Pacheco's foundation of the Spanish Royal Academy of the Language in 1713. The first stage is constituted by the gradual transformation of a particular sociolect of vulgar Latin spoken in the kingdom of Castile into a "language proper," first known as *Castilian* and then (also) as *Spanish*. Key to the discursive articulation of Castilian as a language of prestige was Alfonso X of Castile's proto-imperialist decision to financially support the translation of Toledo's Arabic scholarship into the local romance vernacular (Castilian). As intimated by Jo Labanyi, "Despite–or because of–the reverence accorded Arabic as the language of science and culture, this was a colonial project designed to grant Castilian the status of an imperial language, equal to Arabic or Latin. This is the start of the process that would convert Castilian into 'Spanish'" (19). The second stage began two centuries later when Nebrija consolidated this ideological maneuver by authoring the first Castilian grammar, published in the *annus mirabilis* of 1492. Addressing Isabella of Castile in the prologue, Nebrija famously underscored the intractable link between the Spanish language and empire: "siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio; y de tal manera lo siguió, que junta mente començaron, crecieron y florecieron, y después junta fue la caida de entrambos" (25). Thus, the violent imposition of a policy of monolingualism is intractably linked to the political

articulation of the modern-burgeois colonial national-state in Europe (Calvet) at the end of the fifteentth century. While canonical postcolonial thinkers have traditionally focused on the French and British colonial experiences and empires (Said, Spivak, Bhabha), decolonial thinkers have underscored the need to backdate the relationship between colonialism and modernity to the Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires (Mignolo, *Western Modernity*, *Geopolitics*).

This proposed shift allows us to critique the modern invention of "(Global) Spanish" as a North Atlantic abstract universalization. Michel-Rolph Trouillot has defined "North Atlantic universals" as "words," that just like "modernity" or "globalization . . . project the North Atlantic experience on a universal scale that they themselves help to create" (847). While contemporary hegemonic North Atlantic narratives have tended to downplay the role of the Spain and Portugal in the discursive articulation of "the West" (854-55), recently scholars in decolonial linguistics have insisted in the need to locate modernity's start in the so-called "early modern" period, which entails the positioning of Spain as the primary early modern imperial power. In Colonial and Decolonial Linguistics (Deumert et al.), Nick Shepherd has observed that the rhetoric of modernity is rooted in the colonization of time and space during the European Renaissance and its subsequent universalizing projection across the globe. The colonization of time situated the Renaissance in the present time (i.e., Western Christian time) and at the center of space, with the goal of expanding Christianity in America, Asia, and Africa. The colonization of space started with Pope Alexander VI's appropriation of the *Indias Occidentales* (later the Western Hemisphere) in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), which he then offered to the Kings of Spain and Portugal. Indias Orientales (later the Eastern Hemisphere) was divided amongst themselves in the Treaty of Zaragoza In 1529. As such, this theological usurpation of the globe was then consolidated into international law, thus establishing the subsequent legalized appropriation and expropriation of land (325-26).

The third and final stage of the colonial engineering of Modern Spanish as a North Atlantic Universal was inaugurated by the disembarkation of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain following the War of Spanish Succession against the Habsburgs (1701-1714). As noted by Eric Hobsbawm, while the Catholic Kings had already decreed the linguistic, cultural, and religious homogenization of Castile and Aragon in 1492 (qtd. in Labanyi 43), Philippe V was the first to successfully unify Spain's administrative roles in the 1707-1716 Nueva Planta decrees. Key to this centralizing effort was the foundation of the Spanish Royal Academy of the Language (henceforth RAE, from Real Academia Española de la Lengua) by Fernández Pacheco, Duke of Escalona and Marquis of Villena. Philip V approved the RAE's constitution on the third of October in 1714, which was then placed under the

Crown's protection. The RAE adopted a posture reflecting religious and racist implications of purity ("cleans, fixes, and gives splendor" [limpia, fija y da esplendor] through its publications of normative volumes that spearheaded the colonial spread of Spanish to include a dictionary (1726-1739), an orthography (1741), and a grammar (1771). Subsequently, the RAE would strengthen its complicity with the Spanish State and its role as the official administrative institution of the Spanish language in the domain of education (Villa).

In sum, the progressive and historical re-conceptualization of the Castilian sociolect as a language worthy of a literary tradition and honor (Castilian Spanish) was the conscious product of a century-long, top-down form of language planning designed by highly influential Spanish humanists, linguists, and translators in conjunction with the Castilian, Catholic, and Bourbon monarchies. This process, which was dialectically shaped by conquest and colonization, resulted in the enthronization of Spanish and its speaking communities at the expense of many other linguistic varieties that have been historically repressed as unworthy of an equivalent literary tradition and prestige, within the Iberian Peninsula (i.e., Catalan, Galician, Euskera) and without (i.e., Ladino, Chavacano) (Del Valle, *A Political History of Spanish*).

1.2. Post-colonial Spanish and its Linguistic Ideologies: From Pan-Hispanism to Hispanophonia

Following the collapse of the Spanish empire in the nineteenth century, its scholars engaged in a national reflection on the nature and strategic value of Spain's relationship vis-à-vis other Spanish-speaking countries. As a result, Spanish colonialism (i.e., the historical phenomenon that ends with the formal decolonization of most of its colonial territories worldwide) gradually morphed into Spanish coloniality (i.e., the logic and legacies of colonialism). Spanish nationalists championed the idea that even though Spanish colonialism had ended, a culture had persisted that was still common to all Spanish-speaking countries. This allowed Spain to position these territories as the natural and legitimate target of its economic and cultural policies (Del Valle, *Total Spanish* 881). To perpetuate the "global" scope of Spanish over Spain's former colonies, as rooted in a "common culture," these nationalists relied on the discursive articulation of two fundamental linguistic ideologies: pan-Hispanism ["pan-Hispanismo"] and Hispanophonia ["Hispanofonía"] (Del Valle, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía*).

Since the early nineteenth century, pan-Hispanist scholars sought to legitimize the ascendancy of the Peninsular Spanish Royal Academy over Spain's former American colonies. In the words of Rafael

Altamira (1866-1951), one of its leading ideologues, "No podemos negar los españoles que el mantenimiento y desarrollo de nuestro idioma conforme a su propio espíritu en las naciones que con él despertaron a la vida de la civilización moderna . . . es una base indispensable para la influencia y la intimidad intelectual" (qtd. in Del Valle, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía* 470). Although the rhetoric of pan-Hispanism was officially inclusive and horizontal in practice, it could hardly conceal an underlying hierarchical structure that positioned Spain's former colonies in a relationship of subordination and dependency vis-à-vis the metropolis. This latent reality surfaced at the 1951 conference of Spanish language academies and marked a turning point in the RAE's endeavor to expand its trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific reach. During the congress, Mexican writer Martín Luis Guzmán (1887–1976) called for a radical reform of the postcolonial relationship between all the Spanish language academies, highlighting the need for the American and Philippine academies to become fully autonomous (see Del Valle, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía* 474). The intellectual disputes of the 1951 congress led to the creation of the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language (henceforth ASALE, from *Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española*). This was the first step towards the RAE's rebranding from its conservative, elitist, and Eurocentric image at the end of the twentieth century to an open, democratic, and, above all, "new" identity built around the notion of "Hispanophonia":

> Until a few years ago, the strategies advanced to reach these objectives were grounded in a desire to keep the language "pure" . . . and to protect it against contamination from foreign words and changes that might result from the language's internal evolution. Now the academies, with a more practical and realistic orientation, have established as their common task the protection of the language's basic unity, which is, ultimately, what allows us to speak of a Spanish-speaking community, making the unity of the language compatible with the recognition of its internal variety and evolution. (ASALE, *Nueva política* 3, qtd. in Del Valle, *Total Spanish* 882)

Since the 1990s, the RAE has pushed for the "unity" of global Hispanophonia, which draws upon pan-Hispanism while acquiring a renewed impetus based on a nascent entrepreneurial and political commitment. The RAE's renewed branding revolves around trying to distance itself from prior accusations of paternalism and emphasizing its supposed egalitarianism. In the words of Spanish diplomat Antonio Papell, "Hay que dejar muy claro que no se trata de construir el equivalente de la Francofonía, o la Commonwealth en las que las antiguas metropolis juegan un papel hegemónico. En el caso español, la relación no es paterno-filial sino fraternal" (qtd. in Del Valle, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía* 478). To be sure, the labels "Pan-Hispanism" and "Hispanophonia" are less the names of a supposed reality than

paradigmatic linguistic ideologies embraced and disseminated by Spanish nationalists. Their discursive articulation is based on activating the alleged existence of a "common homeland" [*patria común*] shared by all Spanish-speaking countries to exploit its market value. This is done through the adoption of multiple neoliberal-cum-neocolonial policies that function for the benefit of State-sponsored institutions (RAE, Cervantes Institute) and Spanish multinational companies (Telefónica, Endesa, BBVA, Grupo Santander, Prisa and Planeta) (Del Valle, *La lengua, patria común* 22). Both the ideological character and the prescriptive nature of "Pan-Hispanism" and "Hispanophonia" resonate with Trouillot's characterization of North Atlantic universals as "particulars that have gained a degree of universality . . . They appear to refer to things as they exist, but because they are rooted in a particular history, they evoke multiple layers of sensibilities, persuasions, cultural assumptions, and ideological choices tied to that localized history" (847). Decolonizing Spanish as a North Atlantic Universal requires us to look at the modern colonial engineering of Spanish from the perspective of those whose voices and languages have been repressed as unworthy of an equivalent tradition and prestige. In what follows, I shall turn my attention to this task, focusing on the critique of "Global Spanish" from the analytical vantage points of Ladino and Chavacano, respectively.

1.3. Decolonizing Spanish: Border Thinking and the Global Hispanophone

Whereas subaltern speakers of the (Spanish) empire have traditionally confronted the choice of either accepting their imposed inferiority or assimilating; in his decolonial work, Mignolo exposes this cul-de-sac as a false binary, advocating instead a third option which he terms "border thinking and border epistemology" (*Geopolitics* 133). According to Mignolo, border thinking aims "to undo the subalternization of knowledge and to look for ways of thinking beyond the categories of [elite] Western thought" (*Local Histories/Global Designs* 326). This implies a "double critique" or "to think from both traditions and, at the same time from neither of them" (67). From this perspective, the elsewhere of Modern European languages (including Spanish) is not an absolute outside, as in a magical space untouched by the forces of global capitalism and modernity. Instead, it is a "constitutive outside," an outside created by Western modernity in the process of constituting itself as the inside (*Geopolitics* 146). Adding to the already problematic nature of the "global" as a North Atlantic universal and "Hispanophonia" as a Spanish postcolonial linguistic ideology, Eric Calderwood has observed that the "Global Hispanophone" can serve homogenizing projects as much as pluralizing enterprises inasmuch as it: "describes the tension between Spanish as a language of imperial power and Spanish

as a language that spawns creative responses to power, often through nonstandard uses that throw into question the borders (geographic, cultural and even linguistic) of the language" (53).

Notwithstanding this tension, the discursive category of "(Global) Hispanophonia" helps us transcend the essentialism inherent in adopting the nation-state as our basic unit of analysis. In the spirit of Iberian Studies, it allows us to provincialize the traditional monolingual focus on Castilian culture, and by doing so, my analysis is placed within the context of (post)Iberian multilingualism. Following in the footsteps of Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific Studies, it also enables us to displace the Mediterranean as a center of power and knowledge, and to examine the Global Hispanophone varieties as mediated by contacts, exchanges, and flows that reach across the world. Like Iberian, Trans-Atlantic, and Trans-Pacific studies, the Global Hispanophone signals a call for more capacious geographic, cultural, and linguistic imaginary. But unlike either, it reaches beyond supranational categories such as the "Iberian," the "Trans-Atlantic," and the "Trans-Pacific" to assume a one-world system. As Calderwood ponders, the question then becomes: "how do we ensure that the Global Hispanophone contributes to, and does not inadvertently work against, the pluralism of our field?" (54). Drawing upon my above discussion of Trouillot's "North Atlantic universals," José Del Valle's critique of pan-Hispanism and Hispanophonia as Spain's postcolonial linguistic ideologies (*Total Spanish*, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía*), Mignolo's "border thinking" (*Local Histories/Global Designs*, *Geopolitics*) and Calderwood's conceptualization of the "Global Hispanophone," in what follows I shall carry out a critical historiography of the modern (neo)colonial linguistic invention of "(Global) Spanish" from the perspective of two privileged sites of Global Hispanophonia: (1) Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), the vernacular spoken by the Jews who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the 15th century, and (2) Chavacano, the common name used for "creole" varieties that have Spanish as the "lexifier" and Philippine languages as the adstrates.

2. Ladino as a Site of Global Hispanophonia

2.1. The Diasporic Emergence and Survival of Ladino until the nineteenth century

By way of the Alhambra Decree, the Catholic Kings ordered the expulsion of all observant Jews from the crowns of Castile and Aragon on March 31, 1492. Subsequently, they were expelled from Portugal in 1497 and Navarra in 1498. By leaving the Iberian Peninsula (Sepharad in Hebrew), these Jews engendered Sepharad as a unique nomadic form of global Iberia and paved the way for the gradual crystallization of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish)[1] as a vernacular linguistic variety. Ladino emerged in the diaspora as a koine that resulted from the organic contact between the substratal (underlying)

grammar, lexicon, and phonetics of several Iberian linguistic varieties (mostly Castilian), and embedded onto it, the superstratal (superimposed) lexicon from the various linguistic varieties spoken in their territories where these Sephardim settled (i.e., Turkish, Greek, Serbian, Italian) (Yebra López, *The Digital of Ladino* 96). Eliezer Papo has insisted that Ladino did not exist in its vernacular form before the expulsions at the end of the fifteenth century. Instead, it took a whole century for Ladino to emerge as a unified linguistic variety. Aldina Quintana has discussed the post-expulsion re-assemblage of Ladino in the Mediterranean diaspora around a Castilian substrate, observing that the diasporic evolution of Ladino between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries took place in virtual isolation from the Iberian Peninsula in the economic, political, cultural power hubs of Ottoman Judaism (Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Safed, Vienna, and Belgrade). This three-century process explains why Ladino features its own diasystem (i.e., range of linguistic variation across dialects) and standardized forms, independent of those that characterize Spanish.

From this perspective, the recurring topos of Ladino as "Castilian frozen in diaspora" (Zaraysky) is not an accurate description of its diachronic evolution. Rather, it is a telling sign of the neocolonial anxiety on the part of the Spanish State to domesticate the diasporic complexity of Ladino into a cultural artifact of pan-Hispanism and Hispanophonia, respectively:

> La tantas veces repetida fosilización del judeoespañol . . . no responde más que a la subordinación a que se ha sometido la descripción del judeoespañol a la del estándar peninsular . . . [lo que] resulta todavía más problemático, si tenemos en cuenta fenómenos que en el continuo concepcional del judeoespañol funcionan con valor de estándar, pero que adquirirían las marcas de "inculto", "popular", "vulgar2, etc., en el continuo concepcional del español peninsular. (Quintana 37, 36)

By contrast, Quintana underscores the importance of understanding Ladino as a unique linguistic phenomenon whose inherent extraterritoriality challenges the linguistic homogenization intended by the Catholic Kings by establishing "Castilian" as "Spanish." Consequently, she aptly describes Ladino as "La única variedad diatópica que quiebra la unidad fundamental del español." (Quintana 34, qtd. in Yebra López, *The Digital of Ladino* 97)

2.2. The Post-19th Century Evolution of Ladino: One Language, One Nation, No State

The decline of the Mediterranean Muslim empires in the mid-eighteenth century, including Morocco and the Ottoman Empire (1908-1923), gave way to the rise and proliferation of European nation-States in the second half of the nineteenth century. Inherent to this development were various forms

of Westernization and colonization, of which language planning was a key driver. Following World War I (1914-1918), Western European languages started to be adopted and sponsored as national languages by their respective States (Calvet). In close association with linguists, state ideologues delineated the contours of a one-to-one correspondence between a nation, a state, and a language, leaving stateless languages like Ladino (and its community of speakers) out of the political equation of European modernity. As observed by Monique Balbuena, "these Sephardim had no central organization or linguistic authority for their language, supplied fewer speakers, consumers or cultural activists for Ladino [and] tended to deride their own language " (14). Thus, many Ladino speakers of the erstwhile Ottoman Empire abandoned their Sephardi vernacular (Stein 16), adopting its secular culture and languages. This led to the gradual decline of Ladino, from an international trade lingua franca and a language of prestige in the Levantine region to a variety solely used at home amongst the elderly.

At the same time, the assimilation of expelled Iberian Jews into the "imagined community" of the Israeli, Spanish. and Portuguese nation-states (Anderson; Aliberti) became an ideological priority of their respective political, economic, and diplomatic agendas (Rohr; Ojeda-Mata). Following the brutality of the Holocaust in World War II (which decimated the global Sephardi population), this neocolonial process was sharpened, including the accelerated top-down implementation of many language ideologies and planning policies that would come to be collectively known under the acronym LPP (Linguistic Planning and Policy). Del Valle summarizes this trend as a community-building effort premised on the linguistic homogenization of each nation-State: "LPP became a form of social engineering . . . languages continued to be taken as objective entities and cultural (often including linguistic) homogeneity remained a requirement for community construction" (*A Political History of Spanish* 12-13). In addition, the rise of Zionist nationalism and the implementation of Hebrew as the national language of the newly born State of Israel further accentuated the deterioration of Ladino (Harris). Several States adopted a set of international laws premised on the so-called "Right of Return," which granted people (including Sephardic Jews) the freedom to voluntarily return to or re-enter their country of origin based on nationality, citizenship, or ancestry (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*). In agreement with the linguistic ideology equating each nation with one state and one language, these laws implied an understanding of citizenship as a political right restricted to members of a given nation who could express themselves in that given language. Consequently, the Israeli policy on the Sephardic "Right of Return" (approved as early as 1950) coupled with more recent iterations in Spain (2015-2019) and Portugal (2015 to present), testified to a neocolonial lust that threatens the continuity

of Ladino in the twenty-first century in the name of its paternalistic protection (Yebra López, *The Digital of Ladino* 98-99).

In the case of Spain, these legal endeavors have consistently operated in dialogical fashion with the rhetoric of pan-Hispanism and Hispanophonia. Within the prologue to the highly ideological volume *El ladino, judeo-español calco*, Manuel Alvar, then ex-director of the RAE (2000), framed the Sephardic community and Ladino as living proof of fidelity to Spain, particularly against the backdrop of sub-state nationalisms at home (Catalan, Basque, Galician): "lengua, cantos, costumbres, entre ellos dan lección de fidelidad. Judíos españoles, pueblo nuestro que nos da constancia en la fidelidad y nos muestra caminos que nos hicieron ser y gracias a los cuales- aunque nos los nieguen-somos" (13-14). Taking the above Hispanophonic narrative to its logical conclusion, the same year the Spanish state made effective the Sephardi Law of Return (2015), the RAE announced the creation of the Judeo-Spanish Royal Academy in Israel. This development was unmistakably expressed on their website in a rhetoric of horizontality and brotherhood: "La RAE toma así en consideración la importancia de mantener vivo el judeoespañol". Additionally, the incorporation of Ladino into the ASALE implied the ideological notion that Judeo-Spanish is a variety of Spanish,[2] which would in turn, incorporate Israel into the international market of "global Spanish." Carlos Yebra López has drawn attention to a revealing statement, made by Carlos Hernández, councilor of Tourism at the Spanish Embassy in Tel Aviv,

> Israel forma parte de un mercado muy interesante para nosotros, que es el mercado de Oriente Medio . . . Nos reuniremos con la Embajada y el Instituto Cervantes para ver qué actividades se pueden potenciar entre ambas partes . . . La formación cultural y la visión turística es importante y estamos dispuestos a establecer lazos y sinergias. (EFE, qtd. in Yebra López 21)

The decision to create a Judeo-Spanish Royal Academy was met with mixed reactions in the global Sephardi community. While some interpreted it as a historical righting of wrongs, others voiced their suspicion that it might lead to the acculturation of Ladino into standardized Spanish, thus resulting in the eventual disappearance of the former, rather than its revitalization. This normative tension between the autonomy of Ladino, on the one hand, and its assimilation into Spanish, on the other, became particularly salient in 2018. During the fourth edition of the Fourth Tribune of Hispanism organized by the Cervantes Institute and devoted to Ladino, Shmuel Refael, a prominent member of the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) Royal Academy, took a hard line on assimilationism. Refael claimed that the nascent the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) Royal Academy should seek, ultimately, to help

the Sephardi community "reconnect" with (Peninsular) Spanish, thus teaching its members how to write Judeo-Spanish "properly," by opposition to the current Judeo-Spanish orthography, which he derogatorily labeled "cacography" [kakografia]:

> El peligro del judeoespanyol es que los ladinohablantes . . . ya no estan conectados con el espanyol . . . no es una grafia, sino una kakografia. Cuando uno no conoce los raices del espanyol y no sabe el alfabeto del espanyol, como es que puede salvar una cultura que mucho de ella esta basada en la cultura y la tradicion del espanyol? . . . y por esto estamos muy agradecidos a las iniciativas del director de la Real Academia. (Refael)

This form of unabashed linguistic assimilationism into the prestige linguistic variety has been dubbed "cannibalism" [cannibalisme] by Louis-Jean Calvet and "ontological predation" by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, thus emphasizing the aggressive neocolonial lust that motivates it.

By and large, the global Sephardic community vehemently opposed Refael's proposed language policy. In its September issue of that year, *El Amaneser,* the only newspaper in the world exclusively written in Ladino, gave voice to these almost unanimous reactions. In the editorial, Karen Sarhon, a Ladino-speaker from Istanbul, and editor of *El Amaneser,* identified the (neo)colonial rationale behind both the current "disconnection" between both linguistic varieties and the RAE's intention and the alleged need to assimilate Judeo-Spanish into standardized Spanish:

> Los Sefaradis fueron ekspulsados de Espanya en 1492 i prohibidos de tornar a pena de muerte! I porke el Judeo-Espanyol deve de ser konektado al Espanyol? . . . las linguas no kedan entezadas en un lugar ma siempre evoluan i trokan. El Judeo-Espanyol tomo su propio kamino i no es djusto menospresiarlo en diziendo ke se deve de espanyolizar. De ande para ande? Es ke keresh matar a muestra lingua?

These reactions were further backed by official statements issued by the National Authority for Ladino and Its Culture (Israel), and the Ottoman-Turkish Sephardic Culture Research Center (Turkey). As remarked by Moshe Shaul, the reaction of the global Ladino-speaking community heralds the promise of a better future for this linguistic variety, one where the intellectual defense of its autonomy by linguists and educators devoted to its speakers and cause will continue to prevail over the assimilationist attempts from Western States and their institutional proxies:

> Las palavras del Shmuel Refael tuvieron una konsekuensa pozitiva: la enerjika reaksion ke eyas despertaron al seno de los ke son aktivos en el kampo del estudio i de la propagasion del ladino i su kultura. Podemos estar siguros, agora, ke toda propozision

> de kastelyanizar la grafia del ladino sera enerjikamente rempushada por la grande
> mayoria de los ke luchan por su futuro.

Lastly, and as I shall show in the next section, this reaction also provides a blueprint for new generations of Chavacano speakers to likewise enact border thinking while also rejecting the re-Hispanicization (i.e., in the form of "de-creolization) of their linguistic variety.

3. Chavacano as a Site of Global Hispanophonia

Traditionally, scholars have conceptualized Chavacano (also known as Chabacano) as the common name used for creole linguistic varieties with Spanish as the lexifier and Philippine languages as the adstrates (Bennett and Carruthers 107). In principle, a "creole" language is just a first language (L1) formed from the contact of a European language with local languages. However, the discussion of "creole" languages has been mediated by a colonial form of power imbalance that goes back to the ideological climate of modern colonial linguistics as shaped by the economic, geopolitical, and socio-psychologic agenda of the ruling and slave-holding classes:

> The sociohistorical factors underlying the development of Creole languages out of
> extensive language contact include a continuum of power asymmetries . . . Creole
> languages are the linguistic side-effects of a peculiar type of border-crossing and
> "globalization" so to speak, as occasioned by colonization, slave trade and other
> imperialist and mercantilist practices by the British, the French, the Portuguese, the
> Dutch and the Spanish. (DeGraff 542)

Consequently, postcolonial and decolonial authors have deemed the label "Creole languages" problematic, even redundant (DeGraff; Ansaldo et al.; Faraclas), particularly concerning their alleged exceptionalism concerning the so-called (usually European) "lexifiers." In this section, I will draw upon Michel DeGraff's discussion of Creole exceptionalism (545)[3] to critique the modern colonial linguistic invention of Chavacano in dialogue with the parallel conceptualization of Spanish as a North Atlantic universal.

3.1. *The Early Emergence of Chavacano (1565-1718)*

The first settlements in what is now known as the *Philippines* (after the then Spanish king Philip II) are best understood within the context of a protracted history of Muslim-Christian conflicts in the Philippine Islands, from circa 1565 to 1663 (Seijas). The chiefdoms of the Philippine archipelago possessed an economy based on agriculture, slaving, craft production, and trade in prestige goods and

other commodities, including human chattel. To acquire laborers, men of arms with diverse political alliances traveled in coastal vessels (e.g., pancos, barangayanes, launches, galleys), raided settlements, boarded captives, and then sold them at the market as slaves, or kept them as captives for their own purposes (Seijas 288-89). Central to this dynamic was the Galleon Trade, a Spanish government monopoly based on two large ships that made the journey between Manila and Acapulco once or twice a year, thus connecting the Philippines and New Spain (the viceroyalty in Mexico) (Seijas 289). In addition to their interaction with soldiers and settlers from Spain, the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific trade brought Filipinos into contact with Spanish-speaking workers from New Spain. Many newcomers settled in Samboangan (now *Zamboanga*), which Spaniards eventually seized in 1635 from the Muslims, and authorized a defense fort called Real Fuerte de San José (Royal Fort of Saint Joseph(. This fort's population directly impacted the development of the Chavacano spoken in Zamboanga (Mehl 13). There were Visayan warriors from Cebu and further areas, Spanish soldiers (from Spain, Mexico, and Peru), and Jesuit priests who served as Spanish-Visayan interpreters who may have also taught others how to communicate.

Drawing upon the pidgin-to-creole life cycle hypothesis (Hall; Bickerton), it has been traditionally understood that this process resulted in a "pidgin" language, that is, a grammatically rudimentary form of linguistic communication that emerges between two or more groups lacking a common language. Thanks to intergenerational transmission, eventually this form of "patois," or "unsophisticated version" of its "lexifier" language (Spanish) would have come to be the first language of a significant community of speakers, thus becoming the "creole" Chavacano. Hence the traditional understanding of Chavacano as a set of linguistic varieties that have Castilian Spanish as the "lexifier" and Philippine languages as the adstrates. However, from a decolonial perspective, this narrative can and should be problematized. When Fort Sant José was eventually abandoned in 1662, some of the population remained and continued to interact with locals, while Jesuit priests prolonged their conversion efforts and eventually reconstructed the damaged fort in 1669. Nevertheless, the Spanish garrisons and several priests and their chosen local people evacuated and returned to fort Cavite to help defend Manila intramuros from a threatened invasion that never took place, though this situation did contribute to the spread of Chavacano and brought additional influences to the language.

The approximate date of the crystallization of Chavacano as a community language remains a contested issue (Whinom; Lipski; Parkvall and Jacobs; Fernández and Sippola 309). Mikael Parkvall and Bart Jacobs (66–67) argue that its formation took place immediately upon the arrival of the Spanish to the Philippines, arguing that Chavacano varieties were formed through contact with

soldiers (59). On the other hand, Mauro Fernández and Eeva Sippola have drawn upon a chain of changes undergone by the Spanish prepalatal fricative [ʃ] to the velar fricative [x] in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an examination of the pronouns "usted(es)" and "vues(tr)a(s) mercerde(s)" and insulting lexical terms like "pendejo" to conclude that Chavacano was not formed until around the second half of the seventeenth century. From a postcolonial perspective, both positions reproduce a key Creole exceptionalism trope identified by DeGraff, namely: (i) *Creoles are unique hybrids with special genealogy, i.e., languages with indigenous community-derived grammatical structures and European sounding words.* While Chavacano scholars disagree on the approximate period of its crystallization, they assume that (a) this was a process of creolization beginning with a structureless pidgin and that (b) Chavacano's supposed "abnormal" transmission allows us to unambiguously distinguish Chavacano from Spanish on strictly structural (e.g., morphological) grounds.

Contrary to this position, DeGraff argues that from a structural viewpoint, Creole grammars cannot be said to belong to a separate class from that of non-Creole grammars: "The discussion thus far, combined with our best available evidence and with robust results from linguistic theory and psycholinguistics, supports an approach in which Creole grammars do not form a typological class that is aprioristically and fundamentally distinguishable from that of non-Creole grammars" (575) From this perspective, creolization is not so much a structural process but a sociohistorical one (Mufwene). DeGraff observes, "the conquered peoples in the . . . Creole genesis scenarios came from many more different language groups than their analogues in, say, the genesis of the Romance languages and these two groups had to face distinct ecologies" (563). Moreover, DeGraff notes that the conceptualization of creoles as a distinct type of (inferior) languages is intractably linked to the pejoration of its community of speakers. This leads to another major trope of Creole exceptionalism, which can shed light on the early conceptualization of Chavacano as a "creole" language: (ii) *Creole languages are "degenerate" "offshoots" (i.e., extremely simplified versions) of their European ancestors (superstrates and lexifiers).* This pejorative view, which has survived in popular culture, was originally tied to colonialist theories of racial degeneracy and perhaps best summarized in Bloomfield's assertion that "the creolized language has the status of an inferior dialect of the masters' speech" (472). Such pejoration is particularly obvious in the very glottonym (i.e., language name) *Chavacano.* The earliest documentary evidence attesting to the adjective *chabacano* in Spanish dates back to 1545, when Diego Sánchez de Badajoz utilizes this term about a coarse, inexpensive object. Thus, the metropolitan use of the glottonym "Chavacano" feeds off this imperial linguistic ideology to frame a creole variety lacking verbal agreement and gender concord as a vulgar and bastardized form of "Spanish proper."

3.2. *The Middle History of Chavacano (1718-1821)*

Amongst an increasing concern about Muslim pirates, the Spaniards began to reconstruct the San José Fort in 1718, renaming it Royal Fort of Our Lady of the Pillar of Zaragoza. People from the Cavite and Ternate group, which had probably witnessed an isolated transformation of the early forms of Chavacano, were recruited to help rebuild the destroyed fort in Zamboanga, along with other soldiers and workers originating from the Nueva España territories and Spain. The convergence of these peoples and regional varieties resulted in the further evolution of Chavacano. According to Keith Whinom, the garrison consisted of Mexicans, reinforced by Tagalogs from Manila and some Visayans. Many of the Tagalog troops likely spoke Ermitaño or Caviteño, and the conditions that had prevailed in Ternate in the Moluccas were here repeated, including the intimate convivence of Spanish-speakers with indigenous people (isolated by a common enemy) and the intermarriage of illiterate troops with non-Spanish-speaking women. The earliest documentary evidence on language contact involving various forms of Spanish-inflected contact languages (including Chavacano) dates back to 1718 (Fernández). It concerns the first Spanish-Chinese contact language, which emerged from the combination of the following sociohistorical factors: the rapid growth of the Chinese colony in the Philippines, an intense Chinese-Philippine mestizaje that monopolized craftsmanship and mechanical jobs that necessitated a rudimentary knowledge of Spanish, and the fact that the colonial administration (Audiencia, Cabildo Insular, Eclesiástico) deployed interpreters to communicate with Chinese and Filipinos.

The pidgin-to-creole life cycle hypothesis on Chavacano is compatible with Fernández's and Sippola's identification of the period "around the mid-to-late 17th century" as the *terminus post quem* for the emergence of Chavacano (40). However, following DeGraff's and Salikoko Mufwene's critique of creole exceptionalism, the linguistic dissimilarities between Chavacano and the above-referred Spanish-Chinese contact language, would seem to problematize the traditional assumption that Chavacano emerged as a creole from a prior pidgin. It might as well be the case that, from a postcolonial perspective, Chavacano emerged as the result of an "abrupt form of creolization," that is, without the previous existence of a (stable) pidgin (Bagno 70). Alternatively, and from the viewpoint of decolonial linguistics, we could problematize this dichotomy between "gradualist" and "abrupt creolization," instead positing the existence of a continuum. Nowadays, there is not enough conclusive evidence to place Chavacano on any of its extremes (Clements). Be it as it may, the indirect testimonies of padre Murillo in 1749 and the Augustine Fray Martínez de Zúñiga in 1806 suggest that by the

middle-to-late 18th century, Chavacano had consolidated itself as a daily communicative vehicle amongst Filipinos (Fernández). Martínez de Zúñiga states: "En Cavite y en su arrabal de San Roque se habla un español muy corrompido, cuyo frasismo está enteramente sacado del idioma del país" (qtd. in Madrid Álvarez-Piñer).

3.3. The Late History of Chavacano: (1821 to present)

A couple of costumbrista stories written by the Augustinian Fray Juan Tombo in 1859 and 1860 offer direct proof of the existence of Chavacano as a consolidated linguistic variety adopted by local communities of the Philippines, rather than a heterogeneous set of L2 varieties occasionally used by locals. This is further confirmed by Hugo Schuchardt's publication in 1883 of the first systematic study of this linguistic variety, which he called *Malaiospanische*. The widespread use of Chavacano as a local community language is also attested to by the presence of a whole dialogue in this language in José Rizal's novel *El filibusterismo* [*The Reign of Greed*], released in 1891. This excerpt shows that by the end of the ninetennth century, Chavacano was different from Spanish and that, at times, these languages were not even mutually intelligible. Nevertheless, there is abundant evidence that the colonial conceptualization of Chavacano as a "special hybrid" and "degenerate offshoot" of standardized Spanish persisted after the Philippines' independence from Spain (1899). In 1886 José Montero y Vidal had referred to Chavacano as an "imperfect Spanish" [español imperfecto], followed by Juan Doyle's claim in 1889 that the Zamboanga inhabitants did not know "a language other than Spanish, albeit with strange phrases and twists" [otro idioma que el español, aunque con frases y giros extraños.] These sentiments are echoed by Sincero Ruiz who envisaged Chavacano as a "corrupt Spanish" [español corrompido] (qtd. in Madrid Álvarez-Piñer)

It was not until the first decades of the twentieth century that Chavacano started to be widely recognized as a legitimate object of study. In *Voz española* (1931), Jaime C. de Veyra referred to it with the umbrella term "street Spanish" [español de la calle], occasionally dubbing it "the Caló of Cavite" [el caló de Cavite]. Epifanio Santos designated it as "caló ermitense," while Rizal preffered the term "store language" [lengua de tienda]. Additional designators were used interchangeably: (also "Language of the Parián" [Lengua del Parián], "Castilian of the Hermitage" [castellano de la Ermita] and "Chabacano of Zamboanga" [chabacano de Zamboanga] (qtd. in Madrid Álvarez-Piñer). Although Chavacano continues to be highly relevant in the Philippines, under pressure from English, Tagalog, Visayan, and the Mindanao languages, the number of Chavacano speakers has decreased in recent years: from over a million speakers from the 1970s to the 1990s to just 600,000 in 2000, and

then merely 450,000 after 2016 (Madrid Álvarez-Piñer). This decline has led some scholars to embrace the last central trope of creole exceptionalism as diagnosed by DeGraff, namely: (iii) *Creoles as "linguistic dodos" on their decreolization deathbed* (552). According to this form of linguistic prejudice, the "degenerate offshoots" past and "abnormal development" history of creole languages entails a "structural" impoverishment that makes "creole" languages inherently nonviable and subject to their gradual and inevitable assimilation into the "lexifier." Given that this major European language affords more "adequate" means of expression, the acculturation of the creole language into its European lexifier serves to "improve" the language in question, which would run parallel to the socio-economic development of Creole-speaking communities.

In the case of Chavacano, this neocolonial linguistic ideology is perhaps best illustrated by a recent assertion from Carlos Madrid Álvarez-Piñer, Director of Cervantes Institute of Manila. He frames various decreolization attempts as "efforts" conducive to the increased "familiarity" of Chavacano speakers with Spanish:

> Esfuerzos que facilitan esta política se han realizado ya en el pasado, como la promoción desde el Ayuntamiento de Zamboanga de una ortografía uniforme que, al ser más cercana al español, permite a los chabacanohablantes una mayor familiaridad con nuestro idioma . . . es de prever que . . . el chabacano siga siendo no solo uno de los idiomas más importantes del país, sino un vehículo de acercamiento a la lengua española y por tanto una plataforma de desarrollo profesional. (Madrid Álvarez-Piñer)

However, contrary to the promise of inclusive socioeconomic improvement contained in the above excerpt, decreolization in post-independence Philippines has become a tool for the "expression of class self-interest" (Hoffmann, qtd. in DeGraff 570) based on the (promoted) status of Spanish as an "international language" with enormous "prestige." In practice, decreolization reproduces the sort of (neo-colonial) stereotypes about Chavacano and the ethnicity, race, and class of its community of speakers that define Creole Exceptionalism. Consequently, it excludes this community from several spheres where socioeconomic power is created, reproduced, and exercised, effectively making Chavacano speakers second-class citizens and perpetuating their asymmetry regarding the neocolonial elites of the Philippines.

Like the re-Hispanicization proposed by some members of the recent Judeo-Spanish Royal Academy in Tel Aviv, proposals concerning the decreolization of Chavacano into Spanish have been met with skepticism. Ultimately, DeGraff notes that the decreolization process begs the following questions: what structural properties are removed by it? If language change (be it contact-induced or

not) is based on universal psycholinguistic mechanisms, why is there no substantial body of linguistic-theoretical work on, that is, de-Latinization, de-Romanization, or de-Hispanicization? The answer should be evident by now: the Hispanicization of Ladino and Chavacano (as opposed to their de-Hispanicization) is supposedly necessary because today, proponents of this policy continue to consider these linguistic varieties inferior to standardized Spanish. And they are so because they are "defective" or "deviant" when compared to Spanish. This is a circular fallacy premised on the sociopolitical colonial pejoration of the linguistic divergence of Ladino and Chavacano from standardized Spanish rather than any structural (linguistic) aspects.

Ironically, if we look back in history far enough, we will observe a similar colonial-cum-linguistic prejudice involving Latin and Spanish, with the latter being considered a "degenerate offshoot" of Latin and thus, in need of assimilation into it. Many national European languages became "official," replacing Latin as the state language during the Renaissance and even before. In the process of elaborating their linguistic norms, the codifiers of this "vulgar" (literally, "chavacano-like") linguistic varieties turned to classical Latin, borrowing generously from its lexicon and syntax en route to the erudite (as opposed to popular) standardization of these linguistic varieties (Bagno 75-76). This movement culminated in the publication of the earliest "Modern Languages" grammars, the first of which was Nebrija's Castilian grammar in 1492. At which point, we have now come in full circle. Or to be more precise, in full Hispanophone globe.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have shown that the political invention of Spanish as a "modern" colonial language and the subsequent development of the pan-Hispanic and Hispanophone linguistic ideologies in postcolonial times (Del Valle *Total Spanish*, *Panhispanismo e hispanofonía*) can be challenged by the analytical vantage points of Ladino and Chavacano from several, complementary angles. First, the diasporic articulation and survival of Ladino as an alleged "dialect" in virtual isolation from the Iberian Peninsula allowed Ladino to develop its own diasystem (set of dialects), thus constituting itself as an autonomous linguistic variety while problematizing the geographic, cultural and linguistic borders of Spanish as a "modern" colonial language (Quintana; Papo). Second, the emergence of Chavacano as a supposed "creole" following the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific slave trade imposed by the Spaniards exposes the coinage and (de)creolization of Chavacano as the result of a colonial linguistic ideology designed to pejorate this language by opposition to its European "lexifier" (Castilian Spanish) (DeGraff; Mufwene). Third, the very invention (i.e., discursive articulation) of Spanish as a "language

proper" began with the early consideration of Castilian and other Romance languages as "degenerate offshoots" of Latin that could only acquire prestige by "reconnecting" with the imperial language of the colonizers (Bagno).

Ultimately, the critical historiography of Ladino and Chavacano as part of the "Global Hispanophone" (Calderwood) blurs the distinction between "colonizer" and "colonized," as well as "language" and "dialect/"creole." In so doing, it unfolds the Global Hispanophone as a plane of immanence that already includes Spanish and its outside. This exposes Spanish as a North Atlantic abstract universalization (Trouillot), a "named language" (Heller; Jørgensen et al.; Makoni and Pennycook), that is, a socio-political construct which (no less than Ladino, Chavacano, and Latin) does not exist outside its discursive ontology. I have concluded that a genuinely decolonizing dynamic cannot accept any form of linguistic re-Hispanicization/de-creolization premised on the supposed unsuitability of the subalternized linguistic variety (Ladino, Chavacano) for the contemporary world, even at the risk of language extinction. Just like the epistemological success of Spanish is that of no longer measuring itself with regard to Latin, the decolonizing potential of Ladino and Chavacano relative to Spanish (and by extension, that of "the Global Hispanophone") can only materialize through the adoption of linguistic self-determination and self-organization, both of which are predicated on the self-respect and dignity of the community of speakers (Deumert et al. 329). These values should trump any and all opportunistic offerings, particularly when those come from the same institutions that are at the origin of their subalternization, that is, the Cervantes Institute and the Spanish Royal Academy, in Tel Aviv just like in Manila.

As exemplified by the rebellion of the global Sephardic community against the institutional assimilationism displayed by a member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) (Refael), the task of linguistic self-organization relies heavily on the collaboration between the Gramscian "organic intellectuals" of the traditionally subalternized linguistic variety (i.e., linguists and educators devoted to its speakers and cause) and its broader community of speakers (Calvet 11-2; DeGraff 578). It is their joint responsibility to make their ideological assumption explicit, collaborate in the production and dissemination of the necessary discursive practices and publication genres, and place decision-making power in the hands of the subalternized community— all of which will lead to the empowerment of the linguistic variety and its community of its speakers, which is to say, to the transition from colonial and postcolonial to decolonial linguistics.

Notes

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¹ Originally the glottonym "Ladino" originally designated the calque language used resulting from the translation of texts for liturgical purposes in 13th century Spain (a process called "*fazer en ladino*"), "Judeo-Spanish" and "Judezmo" being its vernacular form (Sephiha). However, currently "Ladino" and "Judeo-Spanish." are used interchangeably, as it will be the case in this essay.

² Indeed, according to the DRAE (Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy), Judeo-Spanish is "a variety of Spanish spoken by the Sephardim" (my translation) ["*una variedad del español hablada por los sefardíes.*"]

³ Although in his article DeGraff discusses a total of five canonical tropes that recur in creolistics (creoles are degenerate offshoots of their European ancestors; subject to decreolization as language death; special hybrids with exceptional genealogy; contemporary languages with abnormal transmission coming from their structureless pidginization; the contemporary languages that most closely resemble the earliest forms of human language), for the purpose of this article I have summarized them into just three: (i) unique hybrids with special genealogies, (ii) degenerate offshoots of their European ancestors, and (iii) linguistic dodos on their decreolization deathbed.

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