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Foreword by Teresa Satterfield

"*Puerto Rican Spanish, reggaeton style: The (socio)linguistics of urban music*" is the long-awaited brainchild of Dr. Wilfredo Valentín Márquez. Wilfredo was a highly respected and dedicated Puerto Rican sociolinguist, gifted musician, community leader and humanitarian who passed away unexpectedly in May 2023. I initially came to know Wilfredo in the fall of 2000 when I was an assistant professor teaching my first graduate linguistics course ("Issues in Bilingualism") at the University of Michigan. I was using novel Spanish-English codeswitching data from Afro-Panamanian communities for class analyses. Wilfredo was a first semester "nontraditional" graduate student in the course. (I mention 'nontraditional' only because he was older, driven to excel and unapologetically representing Boriquén in a space where there were no other Latino students or students of color). He would often approach me with curiosity about similar "under the radar" language phenomena that he had attested in Puerto Rico and in US Puerto Rican communities.

Our 'Panama-meets-Puerto Rico' conversations in which we marveled at the sheer creativity and vibrancy of Caribbean Spanish became a standing meeting-and always touched on music. From there, it was very easy to feed our rather guilty linguistic pleasure of tracking innovations in the then emerging reggaeton genre. At the time and for reasons that have been well documented, reggaeton spanning Panama to Puerto Rico was not a musical form that was known to—or viewed favorably by US- and Caribbean-based scholars. Wilfredo and I joked that we were uniquely qualified to introduce the language of reggaeton to the linguistic community– who else could grasp the genius of Crooked Stilo's calque "retrásalo, baby, tú sabes cómo lo hacemos" (*back [that thing] up, you know how we do it*)? But I was untenured faculty and Wilfredo, a beginning graduate student. We put our dream project on hold, but continued to monitor this uncharted linguistic spectrum as reggaeton's popularity and visibility grew.

Post-dissertation, Wilfredo turned his meticulous sociolinguistic lens to "life imitating art" as he investigated emergent glottalization in youth on the island (2007). He attributed this previously unreported feature to the robust presence of reggaeton. Post-tenure, I developed a Spanish linguistics course "Lengua reggaetona" to formally examine lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic features of reggaeton songs, with an eye to African diasporic contributions. The class is still popular today. In terms of research, I was fascinated by the giros sintácticos that were coming "fast and furious (ya tú sabes)" by Puerto Rican reggaetón artists who I classified as "closet bilinguals." For instance, the mid-2000s codeswitching flows from NY-PR artists Arcángel and De La Ghetto remain unequalled today. Puerto Rican icons Ivy Queen and Tego Calderón have strong ties to the Island, but they also were either born or lived for an extended period in the Eastern US in their youth (although this fact is not always evident due to their strong public preference for Spanish). Still, there is a systemic African American English influence filtering into their spoken Spanish syntax (Satterfield & Alexander, 2006) and phonology (Satterfield & Benkí, 2009; 2019) that includes agile calques, hyper-negative concord and iconic AAE sound transfers to Spanish. These recastings are important since not only do they conform to the grammaticality of native Spanish, but they are also quite ordinary structures for kids of color who navigate 'growing up bilingual' (Zentella, 1997). I argue for the likelihood of an Afro-American Spanish variety, on par with African American English such that it contains lexical and grammatical distinctions not found in the Standard/Mainstream Spanish counterpart. In fact, this area of inquiry's time has come precisely due to the now international scale of reggaeton. Is the genre more commercialized? Yes, but it also is being enriched through 'collabs' that highlight a new generation of bilinguals and 'closet bilinguals' (–We see you, Rauw!).

As Wilfredo and I were comparing linguistic notes on the reggaeton-centered Chilean-Puerto Rican telenovela "Don Amor," Raquel Z. Rivera (2008) published the tour de force edited volume on reggaeton, I was beyond thrilled, and I absorbed every page– the high level of scholarly analysis and rigorous probing of the genre were affirming and validated this expression of music on all counts. To my dismay, while "Reggaeton's" content covers a myriad of psychosocial, musical historical and cultural aspects, there is no substantive linguistic analysis among the chapters. Yes, there are surface comments on Spanish versus English, or a nod to African language origins, but in

the totality of the book, the absence of an expert linguistic perspective on reggaeton has always been a conspicuous void for me.

Fortunately, a body of solid academic research on linguistic questions of reggaeton now exists, and in my estimation the scholarship has taken on even greater momentum since 2020. People are exploring reggaeton within the core areas of linguistics, but also in nuanced and important ways that link it to raciolinguistics and social justice. All of which brings us full circle to our year 2000 'linguistics of reggaeton dream project.' Wilfredo and I had published respective articles on reggaeton over the years, but he reminded me, no olvides que tenemos pendiente trabajar juntos con lo del reggaeton ☺ (don't forget we're going to work together on reggaeton)." Of course, had I known that our 20-year conversation was about to come to a sad and abrupt halt, I would have dropped my other projects to focus on this important work. In the end, I am happy to have given Wilfredo my blessing to move forward on this volume, to have provided moral support and to have served without hesitation as a reviewer when asked.

Wilfredo was truly qualified to document the linguistics of Puerto Rican reggaeton. He never forgot his roots. He spent time and money organizing support for Puerto Rico during catastrophic Hurricane María and the COVID pandemic. He wrote Op-Eds to the local newspapers to make the Puerto Rican experience visible and had a social media presence on Twitter/X for Puerto Rican issues (#profesorwilfre). "*Puerto Rican Spanish, reggaeton style: The (socio)linguistics of urban music*" is therefore an excellent resource that taps into the reggaeton movement from the perspective of linguists and language specialists, but it is also a tribute to Dr. Wilfredo Valentín Márquez's lifelong vision and dedication to his field and to his beloved Puerto Rican community.