

Antioquian Spanish as a contact variety: The substrate origins of ‘extremity’ > ‘limb’

The present study explores the sociohistorical conditions and linguistic mechanisms that led to the restructuring of body part reference in the Spanish of Antioquia, Colombia. The specific pattern under analysis consists of the use of lexical items for the extremities – that is, *mano* ‘hand’ and *pie* ‘foot’ – for the entire limbs, canonically represented by the lexemes *brazo* ‘arm’ and *pierna* ‘leg’, as exemplified in (1-2), extracted from the *Corpus Sociolingüístico de Medellín* (PRESEEA 2014):

- (1) No podía mover las **manos** porque me quebré por acá.
no could move the **hands** because REFL broke around here
‘I couldn’t move my **arms** because I broke (something) around here.’
- (2) Se me partió la carne del **pie** izquierdo al lado de la rodilla.
REFL DAT opened the skin of.the **foot** left to.the side of the knee
‘The skin of my left **leg** was cut open along the side of my knee.’

It is argued here that the extension of *mano* and *pie* in Antioquia emerged diachronically through language contact as opposed to a language-internal mechanism such as metonymy, the latter having been proposed in a few cases without corroborating sociohistorical evidence to rule out (pre-)historic language contact (see Wilkins 1996:275ff on Proto-Austronesian > Palauan).

A wealth of demographic and sociohistorical data is available for early colonial era Antioquia via Spanish *cronistas*’ accounts of the earliest settlements in the region in the 16th century (Cieza de León 1864 [1553]; Núñez de Balboa 1864 [1515]; Vadillo 1884 [1537]), as well as from the *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (Voyages Database 2009). The picture painted by these materials is further strengthened by 18th-century census data from Antioquia, which demonstrate that *blancos* ‘whites’ – European-descendant L1 Spanish speakers – were vastly outnumbered demographically by *esclavos de varios colores* ‘enslaved people of all colors’, *libres de varios colores* ‘free people of all colors’, and *indios* ‘people of Amerindian origin’ (Tovar Pinzón et al. 1994:102-23). This evidence points to a scenario leading to substratum transfer through shift (Thomason & Kaufman 1988:38-43), a subtype of the general process of pattern replication, i.e. transfer, in second language acquisition (Matras & Sakel 2007; Odlin 1989). In this case, analogous body partonomies from relevant substrate languages – Amerindian languages of the Chocoan family such as Embera (Huber & Reed 1992:19, 22, 25, 29), and West African languages from Bantu H subgroup including Kikongo (Laman 1964:303, 304, 328) – were replicated and later entrenched in Antioquian Spanish by way of community-wide language shifts during the colonial era.

This pattern and process is analogous to several well-attested examples from the Portuguese-based Creole languages of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé e Príncipe, where words derived from the same two Ibero-Romance etyma – *mão* and *pé* – were relexified by adults through naturalistic L2 acquisition based upon L1 patterns from West African languages of the Atlantic, Kwa, Mande, and Bantu subgroups, among others (Parkvall & Baker 2012:237-39). This research highlights the possibilities of a sociohistorical approach to unpacking situations of historically-remote instances of transfer through shift, particularly as it pertains to regional vernaculars otherwise excluded from work on language contact.

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