

P R E F A C E

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The collection of fascinating articles assembled in this volume is a refreshing attempt to give renewed impetus to the study of a speech variety – Colombian Spanish – that in years past had been one of the most intensely studied in all of Latin America. Towards the end of the latter half of the 20th century, that successful tradition, it seemed, had become a weighty legacy from which most *Colombianistas* seemed unable to free themselves. As a result, linguistic studies in Colombia became overly conventional, thereby gradually losing the opportunity to profit from more theoretically oriented trends in modern linguistics.

To be sure, shortly after the middle of the 20th century, prominent Colombian linguists (e.g., José Joaquín Montes Giraldo) had carried out extensive and well-informed dialectological work that culminated in the ambitious *Atlas lingüístico-etnográfico de Colombia* (1981-1983). At the same time, the Instituto Caro y Cuervo was still actively promoting and publishing informative linguistic inquiries in a mostly philology-based tradition. And, with the able assistance of European colleagues, large-scale lexicological investigations led to ambitious publications that produced the much-celebrated *Nuevo diccionario de colombianismos* (Haensch/Werner 1993). Missing, however, were investigations that would, for instance, have taken advantage of the latest trends in Labovian-style approaches, or of the emerging field of pidgin and creole studies, which in the 1980s and 1990s increasingly attracted the attention of linguists in many parts of the world (Schwegler 2010). Within Colombian academia, other, more recent new directions in linguistics went equally unnoticed. Despite its unusually rich multilingualism, during the last quarter of the 20th century, Colombia had, for instance, been noticeably absent from theory-oriented discussions on language-contact phenomena, studied so profitably by Thomason & Kaufman's trailblazing *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics* (1988). With few exceptions, the impetus for new and fresh approaches to the study of Colombian speech varieties thus seemed to come from scholars located outside of Colombia. This explains, for instance, why, some 40 years ago, Germán de Granda (Spain) and Derek Bickerton (USA) rather than a Colombian national were first to correctly identify Palenquero as a creole rather than simply as a "Spanish dialect". By the same token, this also clarifies why the vast majority of publica-

tions on the same creole have been from the pens of European or North American scholars.

Since the beginning of this millennium, forceful attempts have been made to reconnect the study of Colombian Spanish and related speech varieties with contemporary linguistic theory. Key Colombian institutions are participating in this effort, including the Instituto Caro y Cuervo, whose forward-looking Director (Dr. Genoveva Iriarte Esguera) has expressed genuine interest in restoring the Institute's former leadership role. Within this same post-2000 period, fascinating studies have delved into Colombian varieties from an array of different areas of linguistics, including dialectology, sociolinguistics, contact linguistics, syntax, phonology, morphology, and typology, often from an interdisciplinary approach. The fact that this volume has brought together twelve specialists (with widely differing theoretical orientations and preferences) on Colombian Spanish and/or Palenquero is firm and welcome evidence that the rejuvenation of investigations into Colombia's speech varieties is well under way, and bearing fruits at a time when young(er) generations of scholars in and outside of Latin America are in need of inspiration and guidance.

As readers will undoubtedly note, *Colombian Varieties of Spanish* has several features worthy of mention. First, and foremost, the volume is unique in that it brings together studies on Colombian Spanish that employ current theoretical approaches to linguistics, while at the same time addressing topics and varieties of Colombian Spanish that remain unexplored or understudied. As regards its overall conceptualization, the editors have aimed high by including articles that either extend far beyond the national borders of Colombia (see Hurtado Cubillos's study of Colombian Spanish in Miami, or Orozco's examination of nominal possession in the Spanish of Colombians in New York City), or transcend the narrow(er) confines of Spanish. The latter is the case with Lipski's latest contribution on Palenquero, whose revitalization is occurring far more swiftly than anyone had imagined possible a decade or two ago.

Some of the contributions in this volume are narrow in scope, but are nonetheless very useful for understanding regional variation from a synchronic as well as diachronic perspective. Commendable in this regard are Méndez Vallejo's article on Focalizing *Ser* 'to be' in the Spanish of Bucaramanga, and Travis & Curnow's study of the locational adverbs (*aquí, allí, ahí, acá, allá*) in the conversational Spanish of Cali. As Travis & Curnow demonstrate, the use of these frequent adverbs differs markedly from that traditionally described in the literature. This "deviant" behavior may help to explain in part why Palenquero adopted and subsequently changed these elements into all-purpose prepositions (cp. *Aí kasa* = 'IN/AT/BY/ON the house'). As such, the study – like all the others in this volume – invites further investigations into Colombian Spanish and/or

Palenquero, and serves as excellent point of departure for theoretical considerations into language contact phenomena.

In their introductory article, the editors (File-Muriel/Orozco) correctly point out that the study of Colombian Spanish in the United States is in its infancy. It would be wrong to conclude, however, that certain varieties of Spanish spoken within the national confines of Colombia are not similarly underexplored or unknown. One of the true merits of this book is that it informs readers not only of what *is* being done in the field of Colombian Spanish, but also of what is *not* being done. In this regard, immediate attention must be drawn to the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia, where slavery during the 18th century and the concomitant fluvial gold mining brought Spanish into contact with thousands of speakers of African languages, and probably also with an Afro-Hispanic pidgin similar to that once spoken in Cartagena (Schwegler, forthcoming). Correa's detailed investigation in this volume concentrates opportunely on these Pacific Lowlands by examining two phonetic features of presumed African origin.

As mentioned earlier, throughout most of the 20th century, sociolinguistic and/or variationist studies were largely ignored in Colombia. Moreover, partly because of Bogotá's location in the Highlands, the *Cachaco* macro-dialect – which includes the Spanish spoken in the interior and in the Andean Highlands of Colombia – had received far greater attention from linguists than the remaining speech varieties. This led to a situation in which empirical variationist information on certain Lowland dialects was virtually non-existent until well after the year 2000. Brown & Brown's study (this volume) on syllable-final and syllable-initial /s/ reduction in Cali constitutes a laudable attempt to redress this situation. Fortunately, this volume also supplements the aforementioned contribution with a very informative second study of s-lenition (by File-Muriel) that concentrates on the Spanish of coastal Barranquilla.



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(Bogotá, June 2010)

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This volume could not have been assembled without the enthusiastic collaboration of three generations of linguists from inside and outside of Colombia. All

of us who have enjoyed studying the speech of this fascinating South American country have in one way or another benefited from the pioneering fieldwork and publications of Carlos Patiño Rosselli. An Honorary member of the *Academia Colombiana de la Lengua* and Emeritus professor of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá), he was the first to write a grammar in the Palenquero Creole (Patiño Rosselli 1984) while also tirelessly promoting the study of the indigenous languages of Colombia. Sadly, on June 15 of 2010, he passed away just a few days after he cheerfully attended my three-day seminar on Afro-Hispanic creoles (held at the Instituto Caro y Cuervo, Bogotá). It is to this beloved colleague that the editors, the contributing authors, and I jointly dedicate this volume.