



Spanish in New York: Language Contact, Dialectal Leveling, and Structural Continuity (Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics)

Ricardo Otheguy, Ana Celia Zentella

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Spanish in New York is a groundbreaking sociolinguistic analysis of immigrant bilingualism in a U.S. setting. Drawing on one of the largest corpora of spoken Spanish ever assembled for a single city, Otheguy and Zentella demonstrate the extent to which the language of Latinos in New York City represents a continuation of structural variation as it is found in Latin America, as well as the extent to which Spanish has evolved in New York City. Their study, which focuses on language contact, dialectal leveling, and structural continuity, carefully distinguishes between the influence of English and the mutual influences of forms of Spanish with roots in different parts of Latin America.

Taking variationist sociolinguistics as its guiding paradigm, the book compares the Spanish of New Yorkers born in Latin America with that of those born in New York City. Findings are grounded in a comparative analysis of 140 sociolinguistic interviews of speakers with origins in Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and Puerto Rico. Quantitative analysis (correlations, anovas, variable hierarchies, constraint hierarchies) reveals the effect on the use of subject personal pronouns of the speaker's gender, immigrant generation, years spent in New York, and amount of exposure to English and to varieties of Spanish. In addition to these speaker factors, structural and communicative variables, including the person and tense of the verb and its referential status, have a significant impact on pronominal usage in New York City.

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