

Journey With Language - Variations in Spanish (2)

Cuba

In our “Journey With Language”, we will first visit the Caribbean: Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico under the US Dominion. In each country, there is the Caribbean Sea, the wonderful smiles of the local people, and the fascinating sound of their unique Spanish.



【Picture 1: Middle School Student in La Habana】

●Destination -Cuba

“Cuba” is pronounced [kúba] in Spanish. “Havana” is spelled “Habana”, and pronounced [abána] without the “h” sound, and becomes “La Habana” with the article “La”, and ends up being pronounced [labána].

Despite the difficulty of its economic situation, Cuba maintains a high level of education, and focuses much on the development of culture and sports. In the field of Spanish language study, the Academy of Sciences in Havana has conducted research covering the entire island. The last time we visited, their “Linguistic Atlas of Cuba” (*Atlas lingüístico de Cuba*) was close to completion. The study of sociolinguistics (*sociolingüística*) is also gaining attention in Santiago de Cuba, a city in the East.

If you have a chance to visit the country, you will find that watching baseball is an unforgettable experience. Being in the stadium filled with excitement and the sound of Caribbean Spanish, you will be thrilled to see the game played by first-class players such as Antonio Pacheco, the captain of Santiago de Cuba, Orestes Kindelán, the leading home run hitter in the country, Germán Mesa and Lázaro Vargas, the great short-stop and the third baseman of the Industriales. The baseball season is from November to May, and the ticket price is nominal at most stadiums.

When we discussed Cuban Spanish in the seminar last year, we saw a movie called “Full Count” (*En tres y dos*. Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos). It is a story about a baseball player, and a “full count” is “three balls and two strikes”, or “*tres y dos*” in Spanish. In the beginning of the movie, there is a live coverage from the Latin American Stadium (*Stadium Latinoamericano*) in Havana. Here is how the commentary goes;

... **Batea** Roberto Rodríguez en la **cuenta** de dos **strikes** y una **bola**, un paseíto fuera del **box**. El derecho Lázaro de la Torre, se coloca de espalda al **home**. Ya va entrando de frente a la **lomita** buscando la **seña**... Se lleva las manos sobre la cabeza, impulsa, viene el **lanzamiento**. Rodríguez saca **fly** por **tercera base**, esto se va a acabar, se acaba... ¡se acabó el **juego de pelota!**, ... ¡una impresionante victoria del **equipo** Industriales!

...Batter Roberto Rodríguez, and the count is 1-2, just walked out of the batter's box. The right-hander Lázaro de la Torre, with his back at home plate... now takes the mound, waiting for the sign... puts his hands over his head, and there goes the pitch. Rodríguez, flies to third, and this is it... that's the ballgame!, ...an impressive victory for the Industriales!



【Picture 2: Stadium of Santiago de Cuba】

●Pursuit of Language --Loanwords

In baseball, the vocabulary is a mixture of Spanish and English. As this chart shows, the commentary in the movie was also comprised of the two languages.

Spanish	English
<i>batear</i> – hit	<i>strike</i> – strike
<i>cuenta</i> - count	<i>box</i> - batter’s box
<i>bola</i> - ball	<i>home</i> - home base
<i>lomita</i> - mound	<i>fly</i> - fly
<i>seña</i> - sign	
<i>lanzamiento</i> - pitching	
<i>tercera base</i> – third base	
<i>juego</i> - game	
<i>pelota</i> - baseball	
<i>equipo</i> – team	

Although Spanish seems to be prevailing in this chart, English is still a strong language in baseball.

- **out**
- **average**
- **manager etc.**

The word “baseball” itself has two variations: *pelota* of the Spanish origin, and *béisbol* of the English. Most baseball terms used in Japanese are also English. Such words borrowed from foreign languages are called “*extranjerismos*” (loanwords).

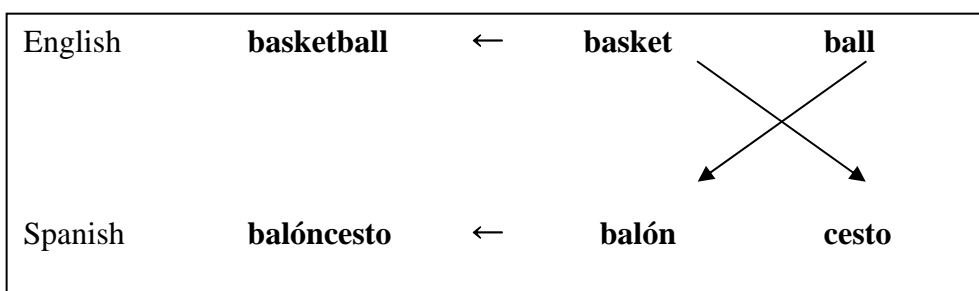
Some loanwords are assimilated with Spanish, and it is difficult to tell that they are loanwords from the way they are spelled. For example, “computer” is:

- ***computador(a)*** in Latin America
- ***ordenador*** in Spain

They are derived from “computer” (English) and “ordinateur” (French) respectively, and the words are borrowed from closer countries. A loanword is called “*anglicismo*” when borrowed from English, and “*galicismo*” when borrowed from French.

Basketball is *baloncesto* in Spanish. It is also a borrowed word, since *cesto* is a Spanish translation for basket and *balón* is ball. This type of borrowed word is called “*calco*” in Spanish, and “calque” or “loan translation” in English.

In our “Pursuit of Language”, languages other than Spanish cannot be lightly dismissed, for there is often dynamic interaction between language and culture.





【Picture 3: *bicicleta* “bicycle” + *taxi* “taxi” = *bicitaxi*】

●Language Variations - “Sportswear”

There are various kinds of sports (*deporte*) these days, and we often hear new words in the broadcast of international sports events like the Olympics (*Juegos Olímpicos*). The origin of Spanish “*deporte*” and English “sport” is the Latin word, DEPORTARE. The meaning is “to recreate”, thus the purpose of playing sports should be to enjoy rather than to compete and win. In any country, when you go for a walk in a park or a playground on the weekend, you see people enjoying exercise in colorful sportswear. This is how sports are supposed to be, considering its original meaning.



【Picture 4: Classic Convertible】

Chandal (**Ch** in map) is a loanword from French that means “sportswear” in Spain and Equatorial Guinea. In Latin America, there are numerous translations for the word “sportswear” such as **buzo** (**B**: Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina), **calentador** (**C**: Panama), **jogging** (**J**: Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina), **mono** (**M**: Cuba, Venezuela), **pants** (**P**: Mexico, Guatemala), **sudadera** (**S**: the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Columbia), **sudador** (**Sd**: the Dominican Republic), and even more: **conjunto de gimnasia**, **conjunto deportivo**, **equipo de gimnasia**, **equipo deportivo**, **traje deportivo**, **ropa sport**, **traje sport**.



【Map: “Sportswear”】

Assignment -2a

As historical background of Cuban Spanish (especially in its vocabulary), it is essential to consider the influence of the language spoken by black slaves forcibly brought from the west coast of Africa (Lipski 1996, p.253). Discuss the topics below

(*) using references.

* Population ratio of ethnic groups, slave trade, roots of slaves, sugar industry and slaves, emancipated slaves, abolition of slavery, Africanism (africanismo), and Afro-Cuban literature.

Assignment -2b

Ortiz (1924, 1990. s.v.) selected three words out of Cuban-specific vocabulary described by Lipsky (1994: 260) that are supposedly of African origins. Read the following paragraphs, and write what you have noticed about the word forms and meanings.

congrí m. En la región oriental se llama así al plato que más comúnmente decimos en toda Cuba *moros y cristianos*, o sea “frijoles negros guisados y revueltos con arroz blanco”. Lo negro de aquéllos y lo blanco de éste motivaron esta graciosa locución. *Cogrí* es de origen africano, la voz y acaso hasta el guiso; pero no podemos demostrarlo.

bitongo, ga adj. Mimado // Tonto, bobo. Infeliz. Ú. t. c. s. “Es un niño *bitongo*.” “Es un *bitongo*.” (...). Por la terminación *ngo*, parece voz africana. Este sufijo *ng-a* o *ng-o* es muy frecuente en Cuba, en voces que, aun siendo algunas castellanas, o cuando menos como andalucismos, parecen proceder de las africanas por esa terminación cuando no por sus raíces. Acaso se pueda observar un acoplamiento filológico afrohispano; una raíz hispana y una desinencia probablemente africana, que da cierto sentido despectivo a la palabra. *Bitongo*, significa en el Níger “niño no nacido o hachizado”, algo así como “feto” o “sietemesino”, “niño defectuoso” y *bitunga* “un amuleto para el mismo”. (...)

jimagua adj. Gemelo, mellizo. // Aplícase a las frutas que por rareza nacen unidas. (...) Actualmente, úsase casi siempre en Cuba, donde rara vez se oye decir “gemelo”, ni “mellizo”. Los negros emplearon el vocablo para significar dos ídolos muy venerados en los altares de la brujería afrocubana. El vocablo parece que se originó en el Congo. Allí *jimagua* se dice *nximba* o *njimba*, nombre que

conserva el primero de los mellizos, y se le dice, además *nzumi* al segundogénito. Aquel vocablo a su vez derivase de *jimi*, “preñez”.

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