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## The construction *pa(ra) atrás* among Spanish-English bilinguals: parallel structures and universal patterns

Spanish and English come into contact on a large-scale basis in the United States, among speakers of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American and other Hispanic origins, and the results are, predictably, an interpenetration of many linguistic characteristics. Given the sociolinguistic embedding of both languages, the influence of English on Spanish is more extensive than in the opposite direction, but evaluation of this influence is affected by many political and educational factors which have no direct correlation with objective linguistic reality. In addition to the borrowing of many English lexical items, both linguistically assimilated and in unmodified fashion, United States Spanish may employ syntactic constructions which directly or indirectly reflect English structures, and which are not normally found in other Spanish dialects removed from active contact with English. In most instances, such syntactic Anglicisms do not radically disrupt established Spanish syntactic patterns, however shocking and disagreeable they may seem to certain Spanish speakers, and at times syntactic Anglicisms merely build on already existent Spanish structures, further extending semantic possibilities or partially reviving archaic combinations<sup>1</sup>. This fact makes the accurate identification of syntactic Anglicisms a subtle and complex process, since it is not sufficient to identify a structural similarity between the two languages, nor even the apparently exclusive existence of such a structural parallel in a Spanish dialect in bilingual contact with English. It also makes the study of syntactic parallels and bilingual interfacing an important component in the search for linguistic universals, those characteristics of natural languages that transcend language- or culture-specific limitations and which more directly impinge on the human communicative capacity.

This note will discuss a well-known construction in United States Spanish, normally acknowledged as a syntactic Anglicism: the combination *para atrás* (*pa tras*) as in:

- (1) *Te lo doy pa tras* „I'll give it back to you“ (*Te lo devuelvo*)
- (2) *Vinimos pa tras* „We came back“ (*Regresamos/volvimos*)

1. Cf. John Lipski, „Structural linguistics and bilingual interference: problems and proposals“, *Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingüe* 3 (1976), 229–37; also in Joshua Fishman, Gary Keller, eds., *Bilingual Education for Hispanic Students in the United States* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1982), pp. 178–90; „The language battle in Puerto Rico“, *Revista Interamerica Review* 5 (1975), 347–54.

- (3) *Te pago pa tras* „I'll pay you back“ (*Te pagaré*)  
 (4) *Nos movimos pa tras el año pasado* „We moved back last year“ (*Regresamos/ nos mudamos el año pasado*).

The combination *pa tras* evidently reflects the English particle *back*, as in *pay back, come back, give back, move back, put back*, etc., and curiously, normally adopts the postposed position in Spanish, even with nominal objects:

- (5) *Pagué el préstamo pa tras*/\**Pagué pa tras el préstamo*.  
 (6) *Di el libro pa tras*/\**Di pa tras el libro*.

However, despite the apparently clearcut case of syntactic transference from English to Spanish, the expression *pa tras* is rather unique in (fluent) United States Spanish as a putative calque of an English verbal particle; verbal combinations such as *knock over, sit down, figure out, come through*, etc. are virtually never calqued into Spanish, despite the fact that their Spanish equivalents are no more common nor morphologically less „difficult“ than *volver, regresar, devolver* and the like<sup>2</sup>. Only non-fluent „semi-speakers“ and Anglophone students of Spanish produce utterances such as

- (7) \**Tomaron la caja abajo* „they took the box down“

and only in early stages of language learning.

The existence of *pa tras* as an apparent calque of *back* could be explained as an idiosyncratic and spontaneous creation if it appeared in a single Spanish dialect, since it could be suggested that for whatever reason, this unusual form caught on and spread through the community once it had first appeared. However, *pa tras* occurs in several Spanish-English bilingual communities, with distribution patterns that defy a simple propagation and diffusion model. A survey of these groups and of the occurrence of *pa tras* will make the situation clearer.

Among United States Spanish dialects, the construction *pa tras* in the sense noted above is attested among speakers of Mexican/Chicano and Puerto Rican origin<sup>3</sup>. Although specific structural comparisons between Mexican-American and New York Puerto Rican Spanish are almost nonexistent, there is no indication in the published materials which would suggest any significant difference

2. See J.F. Bernstein, „On the semantics of certain English phrasal verbs and their rendering into Spanish“, *Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingüe* 1 (1974), 59–66.

3. For example, Rosaura Sánchez, „Nuestra circunstancia lingüística“, *El Grito* 6 (1972), 45–74; Joshua Fishman, Roxanna Ma, Robert Cooper, Eleanor Herasimchuk, *Bilingualism in the Barrio* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971); for two of the few comparative studies of Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish in the U. S., see Rogelio Reyes, „Independent convergence in Chicano and New York City Puerto Rican bilingualism“, in Richard Durán, ed., *Latino Language and Communicative Behavior* (Norwood, N.J.: ALEX, 1981), pp. 39–48; Shana Poplack, „Syntactic structure and social function of code-switching“, in the same volume, pp. 169–84. Interestingly enough, identical constructions with *para atrás* are also found among Portuguese-English bilinguals in New England; cf. Leo Pap, *Portuguese-American Speech* (New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia University, 1949), pp. 89–90.

in the usage of *pa tras* between the two Hispanic communities in the United States; my own personal experience with the speech of both groups, acquired through extended periods of residence in New Jersey, Michigan and Texas, has revealed no notable differences in the behavior of this construction between the two groups. *Pa tras* is used in essentially the same fashion in each dialect, in quasi-stereotyped cases such as *dar pa tras*, *ir pa tras*, *venir pa tras*, and in other, spontaneously produced configurations which roughly correspond to English combinations with *back*. However, there is no compelling evidence for supposing that either group transmitted this construction to the other, in the form of a borrowing, or that mutual influence resulted in the creation of this construction in „general“ United States Spanish. In the first place, the principal centers of diffusion and innovation of Chicano Spanish (Los Angeles, southern Texas, Tucson, etc.) are far removed from major centers of mainland Puerto Rican Spanish (New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, etc.). Moreover, each linguistic group is spread over a considerable geographical area of the United States, with continuous intercommunication often only sporadic and irregular, and yet the combinations with *pa tras* ordinarily appear wherever Chicano and NY Puerto Rican speakers are found. Finally, these two groups come into daily contact in only a few areas of the country, such as Detroit and Chicago, and even in these cities the amount of actual linguistic interpenetration of Mexican-American and Puerto Rican Spanish dialects is probably minimal, since the groups usually live, work and study in nonadjacent regions of the city, and do not frequently participate in the same community activities.

In Puerto Rico itself, the constructions with *pa tras*, unheard of only a few years ago, are becoming increasingly common, presumably as greater social mobility gives more Puerto Ricans a chance to travel to the United States and/or intensively study English in Puerto Rico, and as more „Nuyoricans“ emigrate to live in Puerto Rico<sup>4</sup>. Young Cuban-Americans are also making increasing use of *pa tras* constructions, despite the small amount of active linguistic contact between Cubans and either Puerto Rican or Chicano Spanish speakers, except for small groups of Cubans in New York and in a few other cities<sup>5</sup>. Nonetheless, given the theoretically unlimited possibilities for geographical mobility within the United States and the increasing usage of regional Spanish dialects in radio broadcasting, popular music and even in public educational programs, the possibility that *pa tras* originated in one Hispanic group and was propagated to others may not be entirely ruled out, although this form rarely appears either in mass

4. Cf. Paulino Pérez Sala, *Interferencia lingüística del inglés en el español hablado en Puerto Rico* (Hato Rey: Inter-American University Press, 1971), p. 67; Arnaud Castel, „L'effrètement de la langue et de la culture espagnoles à Porto-Rico.“ Doctoral dissertation, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1974; Rose Nash, „Spanglish: language contact in Puerto Rico“, *American Speech* 45 (1970), 223–33; Humberto López-Morales, *Dialectología y sociolingüística: temas puertorriqueños* (Madrid: Hispanove, 1979), pp. 150–2.

5. Cf. Beatriz Varela, „La influencia del inglés en los cubanos de Miami y Nueva Orleans“, *Español Actual*, abril 1974, pp. 16–25. An example chosen almost at random from contemporary Cuban-American literature comes from *La vida es un special* by Roberto Fernández (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1981), p. 74: „Llárame pa tra cuando tenga un tiempo.“

communication media or in pedagogical materials, even those which utilize or make reference to „popular“ U. S. Spanish.

A much more telling bit of linguistic evidence is the existence of *pa tras* constructions in the *isleño* dialect of St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. This little-known dialect was first studied in the 1940's, and since that time has rarely been the object of serious linguistic observation<sup>6</sup>. Spanish-speaking residents of St. Bernard Parish are descendents of Canary Islanders who emigrated to the then Spanish territory of Louisiana at the end of the 18th century<sup>7</sup>. Their numbers were slightly increased by a small posterior Spanish immigration, especially in the early 20th century, but most *isleños* are direct descendents of Spanish speakers who arrived in this country nearly 200 years ago. Although few *isleños* under the age of 50 currently speak Spanish, only a generation ago, *isleños* learned Spanish as a sole native language, and frequently suffered from their initial contacts with English, upon first attending school. The key fact of importance for *isleño* Spanish is that this group has been culturally and linguistically isolated not only from English speakers but also from other Spanish speakers, since the St. Bernard region is swampy and inhospitable, and good roads did not exist until after World War II. Following several severe hurricanes in the last decades, *isleños* emigrated in large numbers, and young members of the group, almost exclusively fishermen and fur trappers, are increasingly moving out of the region and/or maintaining contacts with larger segments of society, with the result that a massive linguistic shift has occurred within a single generation. Currently, although the number of ethnic *isleños* has been estimated as high as 50,000, probably fewer than 500 fluent Spanish speakers remain, and it is unlikely that the language will survive another generation under present conditions. The highly archaic nature of *isleño* Spanish is immediately evident, as are the ample indications that this dialect developed in complete isolation from large Spanish-speaking communities, with the result that phonological and morphological information has been severely distorted in the *isleño* dialect. Creole French elements are rather frequent in the dialect, and particularly in the last 50 years, the number of lexical Anglicisms has increased notably, from the handful of technical fishing terms (*trolea*, *night rigging*, *skiff/esquife*) to encompass a much wider range of daily activities. Finally, among the last generation of native Spanish *isleño*, the large-scale language shift and the lack of daily opportunities for speaking Spanish have produced speakers who obviously think at least partially in English while speaking Spanish, and who transfer syntactic Anglicisms to their Spanish in a way that did not occur among earlier, totally

6. Raymond McCurdy, *The Spanish of St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950). Cf. also Samuel Armistead, „Romances tradicionales entre los hispanohablantes del estado de Luisiana“, *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 27 (1978), 39–56; „Más romances de Luisiana“, *NRFH* 32 (1983), 41–54 and articles cited therein; Joseph Guillotte, *Masters of the Marsh: an Introduction to the Ethnography of the Isleños of Lower St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans, 1982); Beatriz Varela, „Isleño an Cuban Spanish“, *Perspectives on Ethnicity in New Orleans* 2 (1979), 42–7. For the educational background of the *isleños* and other residents of St. Bernard Parish, cf. T. Lynn Smith and Homer Hitt, *The People of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1952), pp. 103–8.
7. José Montero de Pedro, *Españoles en Nueva Orleans y Luisiana* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1979).

monolingual generations of Spanish speakers. Significantly, among the last generations of *isleño* Spanish speakers, the construction *pa tras* is frequent, and is used in precisely the same fashion as among Chicano and Puerto Rican speakers. The following typical examples come from my corpus of recorded materials of the St. Bernard dialect:<sup>8</sup>

(8) *Ven pa trah mañana.*

(9) *Dió quiera que eso tiempo nunca vengan pa tra.*

(10) *Te ponían el pie pa tra.*

(11) *Tuve que dárselo pa tra.*

(12) *Cuando se acaba la pehca, se va pa trah pal trabajo.*

It may be seen that these constructions correspond exactly to those which have been attested among other United States Hispanic speakers, as do many other syntactic Anglicisms in the *isleño* dialect. Once again, direct influence of the latter dialects on *isleño* speech is completely out of the question, given the total lack of documented contact between the Spanish speakers of St. Bernard Parish and any other Hispanic community in the United States. The *isleños* themselves confirm this assertion, and historical and demographic data corroborate it, with the result that the appearance of *pa tras* in St. Bernard Parish must be considered independently of its occurrence in other United States Spanish dialects.

Another little-known Spanish dialect is that spoken on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, a nominally English-speaking area<sup>9</sup>. Trinidad belonged to Spain for a brief period in the 18th century, and when the island passed into British hands at the end of the 18th century, small pockets of Spanish speakers remained, generally living together with creole French *patois* speakers. Immigration of Venezuelan peasants in the 19th and early 20th centuries further reinforced these pockets of Trinidadian Spanish, although currently only the oldest residents of the respective areas (less than 1% of the island's total population) speak the language, which is rapidly disappearing. Trinidad Spanish is historically and demographically much like *isleño* Spanish of Louisiana, since most of the oldest speakers learned English as a second language, and until a generation ago, the small communities were virtually monolingual Spanish-speaking, or

8. The field work in St. Bernard Parish was carried out in December of 1984 and February–April 1985. Particular thanks are due to Antonia Gonzáles, curator of the *Isleño* Center, Frank Fernández, *isleño* historian, Irván Pérez and Rogelio López, excellent sources of information on customs and traditions, and indefatigable field workers. Details of the sampling, and of the *isleño* dialect, are found in J. Lipski, „Louisiana *isleño* Spanish and its importance for historical dialectology“, forthcoming in the *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*; „Reducción de /s/y/n/en el español *isleño* de Luisiana: vestigios del español canario en Norteamérica“, forthcoming in the *Revista de Filología de La Laguna*.
9. Sylvia Moodie, „The phonemic system of the Spanish dialect of Trinidad“, *Caribbean Studies* 13 (1973), 88–98; „Morphophonemic illformedness in an obsolescent dialect: a case study of Trinidad Spanish“, *Orbis*, forthcoming; Robert Thompson, „A preliminary survey of the Spanish dialect of Trinidad“, *Orbis* 6, 353–72. My field work in Trinidad was done in late 1984, and special thanks are due to Dr. Sylvia Moodie, who aided substantially in the collection of materials, and shared generously of her own extensive knowledge of Trinidad Spanish.

bilingual Spanish–*patois*. Current Trinidad Spanish speakers are strongly English dominant and introduce numerous Anglicisms into their Spanish, similar to bilingual groups in the United States. Naturally, these rural Trinidadians speak a partially creolized English far different from the dialects spoken by bilinguals in the United States, which makes direct comparison with U. S. bilingual communities difficult; the Trinidad linguistic situation is more similar to the Caribbean coast of Central America, from Guatemala through central Panama, where creole English-speaking descendents of West Indian laborers speak Spanish in like fashion. Constructions with *pa tras* do sporadically occur in Trinidad Spanish, and I have also observed them in Central American Spanish as spoken by the West Indian population<sup>10</sup>. Such constructions are quite rare, which may be due in part to the very low frequency of the verbal particle *back* in the creole English of these regions; verbs like *return*, *come*, *put*, and the like are normally used<sup>11</sup>. Nonetheless, the existence of even a few cases of *pa tras* in these dialects is significant, since there is no possibility for postulating the direct or indirect influence of other Spanish dialects which exist in bilingual contact situations with English; in particular, contact with bilingual Hispanic speakers from the United States is completely ruled out.

The final case to be mentioned is another little-known bilingual region, Gibraltar. Although Gibraltar is a nominally English-speaking crown colony of Great Britain, the vast majority of its native-born residents speak Spanish as a first language, since they are descended from mixed marriages between Spaniards and Britons. Spanish has no place in official life of Gibraltar but is the predominant language for informal communication, except for those residents born in the United Kingdom. Given the non-standardized low prestige status of Gibraltarian Spanish (which in essence is a variant of popular Andalusian Spanish as spoken in nearby Algeciras), the influence of English has been enormous, even considering the relatively deficient English spoken by a large number of Gibraltarians<sup>12</sup>. The English used in Gibraltar is based on educated British, but syntactically it is very similar to United States English. The Spanish–

10. Cf. John Lipski, „Central American English and Chicano English: sociolinguistic mirror images“, *English World Wide*, forthcoming. For example, in the Spanish of Belize I encountered examples like *están volteados pa tras* „They are turned back“. I am grateful to Prof. Timothy Hagerty of the University of St. Thomas for allowing me to consult his materials on the Spanish of Belize, which is described in his dissertation „Phonological analysis of the Spanish of Belize“, UCLA, 1979. Prof. Pedro Cohen of the University of Panama, and Prof. Aminta Núñez of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura Panameña graciously allowed me to consult taped materials demonstrating bilingual usage in the Bocas del Toro region of Panama, an area which I also visited. I have also collected examples of Spanish–English bilingualism in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica, in Bluefields, Nicaragua, and in the Honduras Bay Islands. Sporadic use of *pa(ra) tras* occurs in all of these areas, but not to the extent found in the United States or Gibraltar.
11. Cf. C.R. Ottley, *Creole Talk of Trinidad and Tobago* (Port of Spain: Victory Commercial Printers, 1981, 4th ed.); Paul Keens–Douglas, *Is Town Say So* (Port of Spain: The College Press/Keensdee Productions, 1981).
12. Cf. John Lipski, „English–Spanish bilingual usage in Gibraltar“, presented at the Symposium on Spanish and Portuguese Bilingualism, University of Massachusetts, 1984; *Bilingüismo anglohispánico en Gibraltar*, forthcoming in *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*; Manuel Cavilla, *Diccionario yanito* (Gibraltar: Mediterranean Sun Publishing Co., 1978). Locally, Gibraltarians are known as *yanitos* and this term is also applied to Gibraltarian Spanish.

English interface of Gibraltar bears an uncanny resemblance to the bilingual Hispanic communities of the United States, in terms of specific lexical Anglicisms, and especially in the area of calques and syntactic interference. Spanish-speaking Gibraltarians make frequent use of constructions with *pa tras*, in ways that exactly parallel Chicano and Puerto Rican usage, as indicated by the following examples, which come from data I collected in Gibraltar in 1983:

- (13) *Vengo pa trah mañana.*
- (14) *Por favor, póngalo pa trah.*
- (15) *Cuando quiera, te lo doy pa trah.*

Once again, direct influence of United States Spanish dialect is out of the question in Gibraltar, and yet *pa tras* is nearly as frequent as in the United States, and is used in precisely the same environments.

The apparently spontaneous appearance of *pa tras* in geographically and culturally isolated bilingual areas requires the postulate of quasi-universal patterns of interaction between English and Spanish. Bilingual interpenetration is a necessary component of any proposed explanation, since *pa tras* in the sense described in this note is not attested for any Spanish dialect not in active contact with English, and under conditions of bilingualism, *pa tras* combinations are in a one-to-one correlation with English verb constructions using *back*. Given the ready availability of common Spanish verbs as translation equivalents of the major English constructions using *back* (*volver, devolver, regresar, reponer*, etc.), mere lexical convenience or unavailability may not be invoked to account for *pa tras* in so many widely scattered areas. Further study of the syntactic possibilities of *pa tras* and of constructions with *back* in English are called for.

Transitive verbs like *give back* and *put back* are really combinations of verb + particle, since postposition of *back* is optional with nominal objects and obligatory with pronominal objects:

- (16) *I gave the book back/gave back the book.*
- (17) *I gave it back/\*gave back it.*

In intransitive combinations like *come back* and *move back*, *back* is really an adverb, but in essence a two-word verb has been formed since *back* may not normally be separated from the preceding verb, except by an intensifier such as *right, on*, etc. In the Spanish dialects which have evolved constructions with *pa tras*, this element apparently acts as an adverb, which suggests that the equivalent English sentences have also been interpreted as **verb + adverb**, as evidenced by the relative scarcity of cases of non-postposed *pa tras* with transitive verbs, as illustrated by (5) and (6). Thus two essentially different types of English verbal constructions have been identified in the bilingual analysis, and have been rendered into Spanish according to a common pattern, which includes such adverbs as *arriba, abajo, adentro*, and, significantly, *para atrás*. The latter adverb exists in all Spanish dialects, denoting physical movement, as in



(18) *Nos echamos para atrás.*

(19) *Ella miró para atrás.*

Thus, no new lexical item has had to be created, nor has the syntactic value of *para atrás* as an adverb been altered; rather, the combinatory possibilities of *para atrás* have been extended across a wider range of Spanish verbs.

Of equal or greater importance to the analysis of *pa tras* constructions is the high frequency of use of *pa(ra) + adverb* in colloquial Spanish worldwide. It is frequently commented, for example, that Mexican/Chicano Spanish uses *para* in combinations where *a* would be preferred in other areas, as in

(20) *Fuimos para Los Angeles.*

Although sentences like (20) are rejected by educated speakers from Spain and other Latin American countries, this rejection obscures the fact that they are by no means nonexistent in the popular speech of these same areas. One study<sup>13</sup> found that sentences like (20) were accepted by 95 % of the Texas Chicano speakers interviewed, by 68 % of the Mexicans resident in Mexico, and by fewer than 30 % of a group of South American speakers. Even constructions with *pa tras*, which were accepted by 96 % of Chicano speakers, were also accepted by 31 % of Mexicans resident in Mexico, although only 5 % of the South American speakers would accept such constructions. Moreover, *para acá (pacá)* often replaces *acá/aquí* in colloquial Spanish (*nos vinimos pacá*), *para adelante (palante)* replaces *adelante (seguimos palante)*, *para abajo (papajo)* and *para arriba (parriba)* replace *abajo* and *arriba*, *para adentro (padentro)* and *para afuera (pafuera)* replace *adentro* and *afuera*, etc.<sup>14</sup> A sampling of popular Spanish in virtually any area of Latin America or Spain will reveal a host of similar uses of pleonastic or redundant *para*, all in apparent violation of „standard“ Spanish norms. Thus, the combination *para + adverb* has a much higher frequency of usage in popular Spanish of many areas than is indicated by grammatical manuals, written literature, or the reactions of educated native speakers from urban areas. The results of the survey of South American speakers cited above were obtained from educated university-level speakers, and offer no information on the linguistic reactions of less educated individuals from isolated rural regions of the countries in question, which would undoubtedly indicate a higher rate of acceptance of at least some combinations with *para*. The existence of pleonastic *para* as a popular variant across a wide variety of dialects creates a quasi-canonical pattern with *para + adverb* of location or movement, which with little effort could be used to

13. Mary Ellen García, „Chicano Spanish/Latin American Spanish: some differences in linguistic norms“, *Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingüe* 4 (1977), 200–7; „Syntactic variation in verb phrases of motion in United States–Mexican Spanish“, in Jon Amastae, Lucía Elías–Olivares, ed., *Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic Aspects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 82–92; „*Pa(ra)* usage in United States Spanish“, *Hispania* 62 (1979), 106–14.

14. For example, Charles Kany, *American Spanish Syntax* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950, 2nd ed.), p. 275.

render English *back* analyzed as an adverb. Such possibilities are not immediately apparent when considering quasi-universal patterns of Spanish syntax, but constitute a partially hidden basis of largely unstudied and officially unrecognized popular variants which, however, may have considerable impact in the absence of counterbalancing normative forces. In the Spanish dialects under consideration, precisely such freedom from normative pressures has characterized the evolution of the linguistic communities, which also share the common denominator of speaking some dialect of English as a first, second or official language. Chicano, NY Puerto Rican, *isleño*, Gibraltarian and Trinidad Spanish speakers traditionally learned English only out of necessity, their home language was belittled and many of its users eventually rejected it, and there was no ready access to models of educated Spanish usage from the respective countries of origin. English was frequently learned under disadvantageous circumstances, with the result that both the English and the Spanish spoken by such groups may only be studied by reference to popular sociolinguistic strata, and bilingual interpenetrations must take into account the configurations present in these popular styles, their frequencies of occurrence, and the principal differences between these configurations and those found in „educated“ English and Spanish of each region. Moreover, the Spanish dialects which constitute the original basis for the bilingual behavior of these communities represents the speech of rural, marginalized segments of the countries of origin, whose linguistic characteristics, often little studied, frequently bear only a slight resemblance to forms which would be accepted by urban professionals from these same nations. Chicano Spanish is largely derived from the speech of semiliterate peasants from central and northern Mexico, often from areas so marginalized that there were no schools or even roads which would put these individuals in contact with urban regional Mexican Spanish prior to arriving in the United States. NY Puerto Rican Spanish is similarly derived from the waves of immigrants from the most destitute classes of Puerto Rico, ultimately proceeding from rural regions. *Isleño* speech is a partially fossilized derivative of the speech of Canary Island peasants, with small additions from the speech of Spanish sailors who wandered into the community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Trinidad Spanish is a transplanted version of the speech of peasants of eastern Venezuela, one of that country's most culturally isolated regions, whose speech patterns are largely unknown even in other parts of Venezuela. Finally, although Gibraltarians have at times enjoyed the possibility of travel to Spain, their dialect of Spanish is derived from the speech of contract laborers and domestic servants from one of the poorest regions of Andalusia, and offers striking contrasts with urban professional linguistic norms in Spain, even in Andalusia. The popular speech of each of the above-mentioned nations makes frequent use of *para + adverb* of motion or location, often with frequencies which far exceed those reported for even popular urban speech of the respective countries. Each of the bilingual groups under study has acquired English as an official language and the only one enjoying a prestige status and the availability of educational programs and contact with the norms of urban professional usage. Spanish has been

free to drift, at the same time that learning of English has often been left to chance, given the low socioeconomic condition of most of the individuals concerned, and the considerable societal prejudice, or at best neglect, of their educational needs. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that English constructions with **verb + particle** would be grouped with **verb + adverb** combinations, and that this group of forms would in turn exercise an influence on local Spanish syntactic patterns. The apparently spontaneous formation of *pa tras* constructions in each of these areas is not mysterious, nor does it inexorably point to profound linguistic universals which, among all the possible permutations and combinations of English-Spanish bilingual interaction, would produce precisely the same result in each area. The use of *para* + **adverb** in the officially ignored popular Spanish substratum, coupled to the inadequate opportunities for fully mastering English grammatical analysis, provide a sufficient mechanism for the creation and extension of *pa tras* configurations.