

# The Genesis of Traditional New Mexican Spanish: The Emergence of a Unique Dialect in the Americas

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## Abstract

The origin of New World Spanish (NWS) is often identified as an original leveled dialect that arose during the earliest moments of Spanish arrival and then spread throughout the Americas. One common denominator in the available accounts of dialect contact and koinéization in NWS is the fact that such studies usually attempt to encompass its evolution as a single process. Perhaps as a consequence of such analytical approaches, little or no reference is commonly made to the possibility that some areas may have followed highly idiosyncratic sociohistorical paths, causing explanatory difficulties for the single leveled dialect approach. In this article we offer an analysis of the genesis of Traditional New Mexican Spanish that suggests the possibility of a variety of NWS that arose independently of others.

## 1. Introduction

A common assertion in the study of the origins of New World Spanish (NWS) is that its current varieties have evolved from an original leveled dialect that arose during the earliest moments of Spanish settlement in the Americas as a result of linguistic contact among the Peninsular varieties spoken by the first European immigrants. According to this common assumption such a variety, referred to as *español koiné* (Granda 1994), *español americano nivelado* (Parodi 1995) or *koiné americana* (Parodi 2001), included a collection of elements from the different contributing dialects. It has been asserted that the combined effect of the demographic weight of Andalusians, who constituted the largest group of settlers during the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Boyd-Bowman 1976), and the linguistic simplicity of several Andalusian traits (*seseo*, *yeísmo*, loss of word final and intervocalic *-d*, neutralization of the *r/l* opposition in syllabic codas, etc.), theoretically made the Andalusian variants easier to acquire. This then caused the koinéized variety to demonstrate a marked Andalusian character (cf. Hidalgo 2001 for an excellent reassessment of the traditional opposition between defenders and detractors of the Andalusian origin of NWS and the evolution of the debate, Penny 2000, p. 142). In addition, prolonged contact with the speech of new settlers from specific Iberian regions, along with the influence of prestige models emanating from the new colonial administrative centers, are usually cited as having determined the dialectal diversification of this original koiné. These factors are often invoked to explain the traditional opposition between the coastal areas (where consonantal reduction along the lines of Andalusian is paramount) and the highlands (which tend to be more conservative, approximating north-central Peninsular varieties; see e.g. Fontanella de Weinberg 1992, Granda 1994, Hidalgo 2001, Menéndez Pidal 1962 and *rekoinización*, Parodi 2001 on the reinforcement of the Andalusian traits of the original koiné in the lowlands). The above generalizations are applicable to most of the recent literature on NWS history, although some alternative accounts questioning the single NWS koiné approach have been proposed (cf. especially Lispi 1994, pp. 33-62, 2002).

One common denominator in many of the available accounts of dialect contact and koinéization in NWS is the attempt to encompass its evolution as a single process. Even if many of these approaches allow for regional processes of dialectal differentiation resulting in more individualized varieties, the focus of the literature on Spanish in the Americas has tended to be universalist. Granda (1994) offers perhaps the most radical position in this approach, identifying a single original koiné as the substrate for every dialect of NWS. Other approaches are more cautious, but they all share Granda's emphasis on finding an "ideal type" (*tipo ideal*), which he defines as "un esquema teórico previo que, aplicado a la delimitación de esta empresa [= identifying the origins of New World Spanish], sirva [...] para seleccionar de modo correcto los datos a considerar, para configurar los mismos en estructuras dotadas de sentido, y [...] para poder interpretar correctamente estas últimas dentro de los contextos sociohistóricos adecuados" (Granda 1994, p. 19: "a theoretical scheme previous [to the analysis of the data] that ... may be used to ... adequately select the data to be considered in order to position [these data] into meaningful structures... and, ultimately, to be able to interpret these [structures] correctly according to the adequate sociohistorical contexts that may be able to account for them," authors' translation). This analysis generated a

variety of studies proposing processes of dialectal differentiation that are local in their results but general in their application (Fontanella de Weinberg 1992, Guitarte 1980, Hidalgo 2001, Lipski 2002 outside of the koiné approach and Parodi 2001). Perhaps as a consequence of such analytical approaches, little or no reference is commonly made to the possibility that some areas may have followed highly idiosyncratic sociohistorical paths, causing explanatory difficulties for describing several of the varieties that developed in the Americas.

Traditional New Mexican Spanish (TNMS) possesses unique characteristics for exploring this issue, as it represents the oldest surviving variety of NWS in North America (Bills 1997) and is the result of very particular sociohistorical circumstances involving dialect contact, considerable degrees of demographic isolation, and lack of influence from urban or standard linguistic pressures (Lipski 2008, pp. 200-201). TNMS was introduced in 1598 into what is now the northern area of the State of New Mexico with the arrival of Juan de Oñate and a group of settlers in that year. The subsequent 150 years would see significant historic events that would set TNMS apart from other varieties of Spanish in what was the northernmost reaches of the Spanish Empire in the Americas.

Most significant is the fact that the particular historical and demographic conditions in this distant outpost of the Spanish colonies favored at least two stages of dialect mixture –one in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the other in the transition between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries– that are altogether separate from any process of dialect leveling that may have occurred in NWS during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Several generalized characteristics of present-day TNMS from those two developmental phases persist. The analyses we present here suggest that TNMS cannot be fully accounted for by resorting to the available models of dialectal formation proposed for other areas in the former Spanish colonies. They also offer TNMS as a useful case to rethink the application of current models of dialectal evolution to understand the formation of NWS varieties from a more local point of view.

## **2. Traditional New Mexican Spanish: A brief historic overview, 1598-1750**

As noted in the introduction, Spanish was introduced on a permanent basis into the vast regions north of the Río Grande in 1598 with the arrival of Oñate and the colonists he led. Earlier Spanish-speaking explorers had passed through the region, but the Oñate expedition represented the first permanent settlement (for descriptions of the pre-settlement era, see e.g. Bannon, 1997 and Kessell 2002). As we will detail below, the Oñate group was linguistically and ethnically mixed, consisting of *criollos* (here, American born offspring of European parentage), Spaniards from different regions of the Iberian Peninsula, *mestizos* (individuals of mixed indigenous, European and African ancestry) and indigenous members who may have learned Spanish as a second language. They arrived at the Tewa Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh (*olim* San Juan Pueblo) and established a community nearby. This group differed from initial settlements in the Americas (such as that of Cortés in 1521) in that it was much more diverse demographically, including women and children as well as men, many individuals of non-European descent, and non-native speakers of Spanish (Kessell 2002, p. 74).

The early years were arduous, as little communication (and hence a lack of supplies) existed between the Oñate group and the closest Spanish speaking population centers. The small colony struggled; as Bannon (1997, p. 38) notes, “While Oñate was on the plains [on an exploratory mission in 1601], discouragement at home blossomed into revolt. Lieutenant-governor Francisco de Peñalosa could not cope with the dissidents, who demanded nothing short of permission to abandon New Mexico altogether”. A sizeable amount of them did leave in 1601, resulting in an even smaller colony (cf. below). Given that little tangible wealth was shipped back to Mexico from the northern colony, there was talk in the central government of removing it. However, increases in the number of indigenous converts to Catholicism convinced the Spanish government to maintain the colony. During the following decades, the settlements experienced slow growth, their populations mainly concentrated in a small area around Santa Fe, which had replaced the original settlement area as the center of the colony. They experienced few material exchanges with the colonies to the south, and had virtually no external demographic input from them.

Then, in August of 1680, a singular event in the history of Spanish in the Americas occurred. A group of Pueblo Indians, suffering under harsh condition imposed by the colonists, staged a rebellion, killing many of the Spanish-speaking community and forcing the remainder to flee south to El Paso del Rio del Norte, current day Ciudad Juárez. The expulsion lasted from August of 1680 until the waning moments of 1693, when Diego de Vargas re-established Spanish authority in Santa Fe (see Bannon 1997, chapters 3 and 5, for a detailed description of the 1598-1700 era). The importance of this fact for the analysis we present here is that in that in no other region of northern New Spain (or elsewhere in the Americas) did this type of expulsion occur. As Simmons (1994, p. v) notes, “...as historians are accustomed to say, it [the Revolt] was the first successful battle for independence fought against a European colonial power in what was to become the United States”. Those who fled south from the original settlement did not all return, and new families moved north to repopulate the area alongside the former. We return to this point below.

With the re-establishment of the Spanish-speaking community in Northern New Mexico came the gradual improvement of communication with and the flow of supplies from the south. In the early period of resettlement, Lipski (2008, p. 198) compares the *conductas*, the supply caravans, to the supply ships that maintained other Spanish colonies, noting that their trips were usually less frequent than prescribed by the government. As had been the case before 1680, these caravans were supposed to run between Mexico City and Santa Fe once every three years. In reality, however, longer intervals were common (Moorhead 1995 [1958], p. 32), often causing the small colony to be completely cut off from the outside world for several years at a time. However, the establishment of the city of Chihuahua in 1697 served to provide a more northern jumping off point for the caravans, and as the 18<sup>th</sup> century unfolded, commerce between the northern-most colony and points south slowly became more regular (Lipski 2008, pp. 198-199). But external demographic input beyond that of the post-1693 settlers continued to be scarce during most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with only 49 individuals claiming birthplaces outside of New Mexico as late as 1790 (Roberts & Roberts 1988, p. 75). This point signals the end of the early colonial period, and the demographic shifts that would have impacted the development of Spanish during that era.

In closing this section, we note that the demographic history of New Mexico might appear to be exceptional and therefore not relevant to the overall trends of social and linguistic evolution in other areas of NWS. However, TNMS is not the only variety of NWS that has been explained in terms of demographic and linguistic isolation. This same factor has been put forward for other regions: southern Chile (Oroz 1966, p. 51), parts of the Andean highlands (Caravedo 1992), Paraguay and Honduras (Lipski 1994, pp. 268-69 and p. 305, respectively), to mention but a few. The social history of all of these areas presents many differences from that of New Mexico. But we believe that the acknowledgement of these differences and their linguistic consequences should become central to the study of NWS varieties, even if it implies the reassessment of some of the most universalizing models of dialect evolution that have been advanced in the past.

### **3. Analyzing the genesis of Traditional New Mexican Spanish**

A central problem for detailing the emergence of TNMS lies in the fact that very little data exists of the language from the earliest moments of the colonization of New Mexico, due to destruction of documents during the Pueblo Revolt. What little has survived, preserved today in archival repositories, is official or legal correspondence written by individuals who were almost always not natives of New Mexico (see e.g. Coll 1999). Even after 1680, most of the preserved documents were either written by administrative officials who were not native to New Mexico, or by individuals who were familiarized enough with written conventions to be able to filter many dialectal forms, a problem common to the study of the history of Spanish in other areas (Craddock 2006 [1992], p. 201 and Fontanella de Weinberg 1996, pp. 28-29). But whatever may have been the case, the available demographic evidence strongly suggests that the variety spoken by the settlers who fled to El Paso del Norte as a result of the Pueblo Revolt must have been influenced by those spoken by the 'new' settlers who would join this former group in their return to New Mexico, a point we address below.

The solution we present here to the lack of data is a triangulated analysis consisting of a) a demographic study of the original group of colonists that arrived at Ohkay Owingeh in 1598, and the same analysis for the group that returned in 1693 (Sanz 2009), b) a review of the data in the colonial corpus used in Sanz (2009), especially regarding the distribution of spellings for *ll* and *y*, and c) current morphological and lexical items found in Traditional New Mexican Spanish, the latter as documented in Bills and Vigil (2008). This approach has been employed in other research. For example, Santa Ana, López, and Munguía (2010) employ a triangulated analysis of media discourse centered on another historic event, the brutalizing of marchers supporting immigrants' rights in Los Angeles' MacArthur Park in 2007. Media discourse can be manipulated in order to distort public perception of such occurrences, for example casting the MacArthur Park incident as a riot, as opposed to the result of police brutality. The researchers faced a similar challenge to ours in that they needed to recreate an event for which no specific documentation existed. Santa Ana et al. did enjoy advantages we do not possess, such as recorded video data of the event, disjointed as that footage was. Their triangulated approach served to cut through deliberate media distortion to offer a clearer picture of what did indeed occur. In a parallel manner, then, we employ such an approach to offer a clearer picture of the genesis of TNMS.

Finally, we support the use of this theoretical approach based on Christie's (1982) work. He offers a partial solution to the problem of the loss of data from the earliest era of the development of TNMS through 'panchronic linguistics', a construct that supports the triangulation methodology suggested above. Christie asserts, "In defining panchrony I am not referring to that study of the same name that was discussed by de Saussure and Hjelmslev.... Both of them refer by this term to the study of what we would today refer to as synchronic universals, those principles that will always be and everywhere valid in human languages studied synchronically. Such a study would

certainly be part of the panchronic approach, but it certainly would not constitute the whole of the approach. The panchronic linguist will range as widely as the historian, drawing on any piece of information that might illuminate the nature of his subject matter” (1982, p. 7).

We begin with the demographic analysis of the early settlers.

#### 4. Demography of the early New Mexicans

As noted above, the party that Oñate led was highly heterogeneous in its membership, made up of those born in New Spain and Europe, those of mixed ethnicity, and included multiple generations of both genders. Into this mix were added speakers of indigenous languages, as the expedition also included an undetermined amount of servants and slaves, most of whom were monolingual or bilingual speakers of Náhuatl and possibly of other native languages of Mexico (Beck 1962, p. 53 and Weber 1992, p. 81). Thus, the group demonstrated some degree of social layering; in spite of the fact that all members were exposed to the same hardships, there were those who could become landowners and those who could not. The recorded origin of the early settlement is found in Table 1 (Sanz 2009, based on data from Chávez 1992 [1954]), bearing in mind that the origins of servants and slaves, as well as women, were usually not included in formal tallies. The data correspond to the whole 17<sup>th</sup> century before 1680, but given that the input of settlers during most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was negligible, Table 1 can be assumed to give an accurate picture of the composition of the earliest European-origin settlers of New Mexico:

<b>Europe</b>		<b>Americas</b>	
Andalusia	24	Mexico City	41
Canary Islands	8	Zacatecas	8
New Castile	6	Parral/Nueva Vizcaya	2
Leon and Old Castile	5	Puebla	2
Extremadura	5	Querétaro	2
Galicia	4	Michoacán	2
Basque Country	3	Other New Spain	10
Other Spain	4	<b>Total New Spain</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Total Spain</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Other Latin America</b>	<b>2</b>
Portugal	7		
Other European	3		
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>Total Americas</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Total documented settlers</b>	<b>138</b>		

**Table 1. Origins of 17th-century European-origin New Mexicans by birthplace**

As noted earlier, the exact total number of colonists has yet to be determined. A figure of between 500 and 700 has been suggested (Weber 1992, pp. 390-391), to which must be added an additional 80 soldiers who arrived in 1600, some of them with their families (Chávez 1992 [1954], p. xv). As can be seen from the data in Table 1, whatever the number of colonists might have been, those not documented (women, children, servants, slaves, etcetera) formed a significant majority of the total party.

Even in the very first years of its existence, the demographics of the fledgling colony were not stable. For example, the settlers that decided not to flee the area in 1601 amounted to a mere forty families (Chávez 1992 [1954], p. xv). Bannon observes, “The next decades [of the 17<sup>th</sup> century] saw slow but steady progress, in a relative way. The number of Spaniards increased from a few hundred to a few thousand” (1997, p. 41). Before 1680, the population growth of the colony was mostly internal, the only significant exception being the incorporation of an undetermined number of detribalized Indians or *genízaros*, indigenous “women and children whom Spaniards had captured or ransomed and taken into their households to become Christians and to provide cheap labor” (Weber 1992, p. 307). New arrivals were scarce (cf. above). By 1630, the Spanish-speaking, non-indigenous population amounted to about 1,200 individuals, and by 1680, the total figure was somewhere between 2,000 and 2,500 (Beck 1962, p. 80, Gerhard 1982, p. 322 and Weber 1992, 90), with some estimates pushing the figure up to 2,900 (Roberts & Roberts 1988, p. 54).

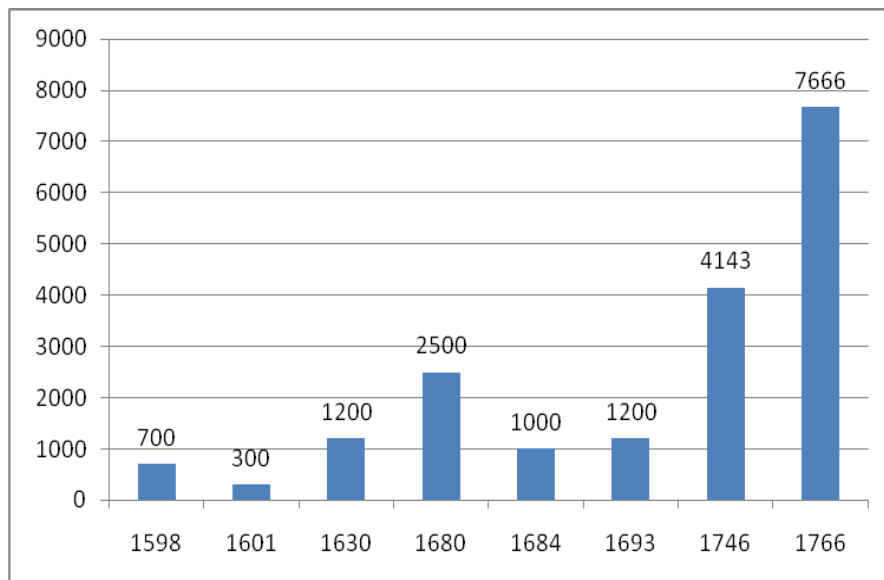
Then, the Pueblo Revolt occasioned a complete break in the presence of Spanish speakers in northern New Mexico. An estimated 400 colonists were killed in the revolt and many more deserted the group of survivors that

concentrated further south in the region around El Paso del Norte, so that by 1684 only about 1,000 of the pre-1680 colonists remained in the area (Beck 1962, p. 82). This residual group mixed with colonists already living in the region around El Paso, as well as with families recruited in New Spain by Diego de Vargas. Thus, the group led by de Vargas that returned to Santa Fe in and after 1693 was composed of original colonists and ‘new’ settlers, amounting to between 800 and 1,200 individuals (Kessell 1979, p. 255 and Weber 1992, p. 139). The origins of the post-1693 settlers who joined the remaining old New Mexico cohort, as recorded in Chávez (1992 [1954]), are found in Table 2 (Sanz 2009). Note Table 2 presents the cumulative data after 1693 (including the whole 18th century), not just the origins of the De Vargas original settlers, but the data recorded by Chávez correspond largely to 1693 and immediately after:

<b>Europe</b>		<b>Americas</b>	
Andalusia	16	Mexico City	185
Leon and Old Castile	9	Zacatecas	47
New Castile	4	Sombrerete	24
Galicia	4	Puebla	22
Extremadura	2	Chihuahua	12
Aragon	2	Querétaro	8
Asturias	2	San Luis Potosí	8
Other Spain	2	Guadalajara	7
<b>Total Spain</b>	<b>41</b>	Nueva Vizcaya	4
<b>France</b>	9	Michoacán	3
		Guanajuato	3
		Oaxaca	3
		Durango	3
		Parral	3
		Zelaya	3
		San Juan del Río	3
		Other New Spain	28
		Other Latin America	1
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Total Americas</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Total documented settlers</b>	<b>417</b>		

**Table 2. Origins of 18th-century non-native New Mexicans by birthplace (based on Chávez 1992 [1954])**

After 1693 there were no further disruptions in the presence of Spanish speakers in New Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking communities in the northern regions continued their slow growth, with new communities being established throughout the region beyond the original Santa Fe nucleus (e.g. Santa Cruz in 1695, Albuquerque in 1706 and Abiquiú in 1747). Contacts with the south, especially with the mining towns of northern New Spain, progressively increased, although these seem to have been economic rather than demographic in nature. By 1746, the population of Spanish-speaking New Mexico reached 4,143, and by 1760, it reached 7,666 individuals (Gutiérrez 1991, p. 167). Figure 1 summarizes the demographic evolution of the period under study – the data in the figure show the size of the population at the time points mentioned in the literature, rather than at regular chronological intervals:



**Figure 1. Evolution of the population in Hispanic New Mexico, 1598-1766.**

An important goal of this section is to establish that the demographic composition of the early New Mexicans and the sociohistorical characteristics in colonial New Mexico provided ideal conditions for a process of new dialect formation that was necessarily separate from that of other NWS varieties. The American born members of the Oñate party would have spoken a variety that already presented many of the features resulting from dialectal leveling in central and northern Mexico. In New Mexico, this variety came into direct contact with multiple varieties of Peninsular Spanish, as suggested by Table 1, thus suddenly increasing the amount of variation present in the linguistic pool and creating a more "diffuse" situation (Kerswill & Trudgill 2005, p. 200). Thus, the process of dialect leveling would have been re-started and continued, given that no particular region, neither European nor American, was represented by a marked majority of speakers, which must have favored the creation of a modified variety in northern New Mexico from the early 1600s. The desertion of many settlers in 1601 then created conditions favorable to Mufwene's (2001) "founder principle"-type diffusion: that is, in a small group certain features that may not have been majority features in the original group might have a better chance of surviving and spreading. The combination of dialectal mixture, demographic isolation and time length (about eight decades) during this first period of colonization provides ideal conditions for the emergence of a new variety according to the process of new dialect formation operative in the most stereotypical situations of koinéization described in the literature (Kerswill & Williams 2000 and Trudgill 2004).

The Pueblo Revolt in 1680 then provided another linguistic environment favorable to the continued modification of the original leveled variety. Although the returning group was made up of a mixture of native New Mexicans, settlers from New Spain and Iberians, at that juncture American-born Spanish speakers outnumbered those of European origin in even greater numbers than in the original Oñate group. Once back in New Mexico, contact between these different populations, followed again by demographic isolation, favored dialect leveling between the first New Mexican koiné and the Spanish spoken by the settlers from central and northern Mexico. Even though there was increasing contact with Spanish speaking settlements to the south during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it would have been infrequent enough during this period to significantly modify the new leveled variety spoken by the descendents of the de Vargas group. In the following section we examine several linguistic features of TNMS that support the demographic analysis presented here.

##### **5. Linguistic evidence for the koinéization in Traditional New Mexican Spanish: *yeísmo* and verbal morphology**

Above we suggest that there existed a period of 95 years (1598–1693) in which geographic isolation and unique population movements provided the necessary social environments that would have made it possible to alter demographic balances and allow for the spread of certain features among new generations of New Mexicans.

Consequently, our analysis is informed by the theory of new dialect formation via koinéization (Kerswill & Trudgill 2005, Kerswill & Williams 2000 and Trudgill 1986, 2004), which has been applied precisely to situations of newly settled territories involving extensive, sudden contact among populations exhibiting different dialectal markup. Within this framework, the result of contact is primarily based on general principles of psycholinguistic processing occurring during acquisition and its outcome is typically assumed to be largely or entirely predictable from linguistic (structural) and extra-linguistic (demographic weight) factors. This line of research shows that “the features that survive the leveling prior to koiné formation reflect not only the role of simplification but also the importance of the geographical origins of the original migrants” (Kerswill 2004 [2002], p. 677). Other models of dialect contact exist, but these are more comfortably applied to situations where the communities in question undergo less sudden, more gradual types of interaction (Britain 2004 [2002], Chambers & Trudgill 1998 [1980] and Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2005 [2003]). Such situations typically involve various types of *diffusion* across the geographical and social space of a less radical type than what is suggested by the historical and linguistic evidence for colonial New Mexico.

We also mentioned that one of the main obstacles in studying the evolution of TNMS before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 is the lack of a sufficiently abundant body of documentation produced by native New Mexicans during that period. However, this lack of documentation from the pre-1680 period can be partially remediated by studying the documents authored after 1680 by colonists born in New Mexico decades earlier, assuming that the fundamental characteristics of their speech solidified during their childhood years (cf. “apparent time” construct, Labov 1994). The documents preserved in the Spanish Archives of New Mexico collection furnish us with this type of information – a selection of these documents was included in the corpus employed and analyzed by Sanz (2009). Close examination of this corpus shows that several of the features that were to become general in TNMS are already remarkably prominent in the documents authored by the older native New Mexicans that returned north after 1693. These features include the following: word final *-d* deletion, monophthongization of /je/ (*arresgar*), syllabic coda /r ~ l/ confusion, *-is* plurals (*apachis*), *aiga(n)*, *antier*, *vid(-e/-o)*, *muncho*, and possibly weakening of word final /s/, among others. Regardless of which variants were brought into New Mexico in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and of their relative frequency of occurrence, these features must have already been salient enough in the input to which the first generations of native New Mexicans were exposed to warrant their selection in the resulting levelled variety (cf. concept of ‘threshold rider’ in Trudgill 2004, pp. 110-112).

The El Paso ‘exile’ period and the subsequent contact with the settlers recruited by de Vargas in central Mexico once again created the conditions for further dialect contact and levelling of a “catastrophic” type (cf. Ross 2003, pp. 177-179). Sanz’ (2009) data clearly support the hypothesis that this was the case with *yeísmo* after 1693. He traces the use of etymological vs. non-etymological spellings for the etymological classes of /k/ (palatal lateral) and /j/ (palatal fricative), using the rationale that the use of non-etymological spellings (i.e., *cabayo* or *cullo* instead of *caballo* and *cuyo*) for the /k/ class is an indicator of at least partial merger into /j/ (i.e., *yeísmo*). It was found that the documents written in the period 1683-1731 (Sanz’s Subperiod 1) exhibited a much lower proportion of use of non-etymological spellings than those in the period 1766-1795 (Subperiod 2) (64.79% vs. 38.08%). The first period corresponds to the original post-1693 demographic mixture and the first generation, while the second reflects the speech of roughly the third generation after the resettlement. Therefore, these documents can be taken as straddling the three-generation time frame customarily proposed in the literature as the locus of new dialect formation via koinéization resulting from dialect mixing, leveling and simplification. It must be noted that the historical evidence invoked by Sanz strongly suggests that the number of scribes who were familiar with spelling conventions was very low throughout the colonial period, but especially in the years corresponding to Subperiod 1. By contrast, the administrative reforms of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Weber 1992, pp. 204-70) and the practice among affluent families of sending their children to study in Chihuahua (Gallegos 1992, pp. 41-42) must have contributed to spread familiarity with spelling conventions among at least some New Mexicans during the years corresponding to Subperiod 2. Since the evolution of the prevalence of etymological spellings runs counter to what might be suggested by these cultural trends, it can be safely concluded that the above figures must be linguistically, rather than extra-linguistically motivated.

It must be noted that Sanz’s corpus leaves the years between 1732 and 1766 uncovered, and in principle the quantitative data for Subperiods 1 and 2 alone do not suffice to demonstrate that *yeísmo* spread as a consequence of catastrophic change (i.e., koinéization) rather than more ‘normal’, change-from-below, age-graded transmission (cf. Labov 2001) of a feature already occurring in the speech of the contributing populations. But the qualitative analysis of the birthplaces of the authors of the documents can be used again to complete the picture. Among the individuals autographing documents in Subperiod 1, those that were born in New Mexico before roughly 1660 do not exhibit any signs of spelling confusion, while those born in New Mexico after 1660 do so only occasionally. By contrast, non-etymological spellings are conspicuously more frequent among those coming from central Mexico and those already born in the mixed population.

It is safe to infer, therefore, that the variety spoken by the population that took refuge in El Paso in 1680 still presented the phonological distinction in the speech of many individuals, although it is possible that the merger may have already started to spread incipiently among the younger generations. This merger, however, was already much more advanced further south in central New Spain and in the mining regions to the north of the capital. The arrival of several hundred individuals from these areas, responding to De Vargas' call to participate in the resettlement of New Mexico, must have had a clear effect in altering the quantitative linguistic configuration of the roughly 1,000 native New Mexicans still living in El Paso del Norte during those years (cf. above). This newly arrived *yeísmo* combined with any incipient rate of merger that may already have been under way among the younger New Mexicans. If, on the contrary, the merger had still not occurred among the community of 'exiles', the sporadic non-etymological spellings found in the texts of those younger native pre-1680 New Mexicans may be in fact the effect of accommodation among adults, the first mechanism in triggering leveling in situations of dialect contact (Trudgill 2004, p. 89). In any event, the data show that the prevalence of *yeísmo* must have been much higher among adults immediately following the resettlement, and widespread enough that the new generations of New Mexicans already acquired a phonological system where the lexical class of *pollo* had completely (or almost completely) merged into that of *pozo*. The fact that the percentage of authors respecting etymological spellings in Subperiod 2 is even lower than the percentage in Subperiod 4 (1888-1926) (i.e. 44.83%), when the literature already describes TNMS as a wholly *yeísta* dialect (Espinosa 1909) confirms that this percentage in Subperiod 2 is attributable to familiarity with spelling conventions rather than to actual presence of the phonological distinction in the speech of these individuals.

Dialect mixing and leveling immediately after 1693 probably also had consequences for the morphological system of TNMS. Generally speaking, much less attention has been paid to morphology in the historical accounts of NWS than to phonology. In his proposal of the original pan-American koiné, Granda (1994) only includes four morphological features: *ustedes* instead of *vosotros*, absence of *leísmo*, the simplification of the possessive system (*de él, de ella* instead of *suyo, suya*), and the proparoxytonic accentuation pattern *téngamos, véngamos*. Although Granda's formulation of this NWS koiné is the most radical one, it shares with most other prior or even later approaches to the history of dialect mixture in NWS the same focus on phonology and the same apparent disregard for morphology. Most approaches to the issue of dialect contact in NWS do not mention morphology or do so only in passing (e.g., Guitarte 1980, Hidalgo 2001 and Parodi 2001).

What seems to characterize TNMS morphology is that, at least at first glance, it does not seem to fit comfortably within the available dialectal diachronic models in NWS. The TNMS described in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Espinosa 1911-1913, Rael 1939, among others) presents in its morphology several forms which are far from constituting the norm in NWS, even among rural varieties. Examples of these forms are:

- (1) *traiba /caiba/ leiba*-type imperfects
- (2) 2nd person singular preterites *-ates /-ites* endings (*cantates, trujites*)
- (3) Elimination of the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation via coalescence with the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*vivemos, dicemos*)
- (4) Widespread use of /g/ roots in a variety of verbs (well beyond *haiga*), including *creigo* (standard *creo*), *veigo* (st. *veo*), *juigo* (st. *huyo*), and others
- (5) Accent regularization in the stem of 1<sup>st</sup> person present subjunctive form (*cantemos > cántemos*) (only feature in this list mentioned by Granda 1994)
- (6) *-mos > -nos* (*cántemos, cantáramos > cántenos, cantáranos*) in all proparoxytonic 1st-person plural forms
- (7) *-nos /-los* postverbally (*díganos > dígalos*)

These forms are challenging from the historical point of view, because a) they are far from being general in NWS, meaning that they cannot be proposed as part of an original common koiné, and b) they are not general in Peninsular varieties either, and obviously have never been favored by any urban model of language. Thus, they fall out of the customary 'single NWS koiné + later local Peninsular dialectal influence' model popular in the literature. The demographic history of New Mexico presented (cf. above) is also a challenge to this model, as the settlement in New Mexico was due to a) several non-continuous rounds of dialect mixture and levelling, and b) the fact that linguistic contacts between New Mexico and Spain during the whole colonial period, and even later, were negligible.

At the same time, none of these forms is completely exclusive to New Mexico. In fact, they are present in a variety of dialects in NWS and Peninsular Spanish. Table 3 represents the degree of dialectal similarity between TNMS and 8 other primarily rural dialects found in Jalisco (J), Guanajuato (G), Chiloé (Ch), San Luis (SL), Sephardic Spanish (Se), Isleño (Is), Tenerife (T), and Panamá (P). The data in this table have been extracted from the following sources: Boyd-Bowman (1960) for Guanajuato, Cárdenas (1967) for Jalisco, Oroz (1966) for Chiloé, Vidal de Battini (1949) for San Luis, Zamora Vicente (1967), Sala (1996), and Alvar (1996a) for Sephardic Spanish, Alvar (1959, 1996b) for Tenerife, Lipski (1990) for isleño and Robe (1960) for Panamá. In this comparison, the



additions by Alonso (1930) and Rosenblat (1946) to the Spanish edition of Espinosa's (1909-1913) studies on NMS are also extremely helpful tools.

Feature	J	G	Ch	SL	Se	Is	T	P
1. <i>-ates, -ites</i> preterites ( <i>cantates, comites</i> )	✓	✓	✓	Not applicable	✓	x	✓	✓
2. analogical /b/ imperfects ( <i>traiba</i> ).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x
3. Merger of /-ir/ > /-er/ conj. ( <i>vivimos</i> > <i>vivemos</i> )	✓	✓	✓ (-er > -ir)	✓ (-er > -ir)	✓ (1P pret.)	x	x	x
4. non-standard /g/ roots (other than <i>haig-</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
5. <i>vayamos</i> > <i>váyamos</i> stress shift	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x
6. <i>-mos</i> > <i>-nos</i> ( <i>cantaríamos</i> > <i>cantaríanos</i> )	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	x	x
7. <i>nos</i> > <i>los</i> ( <i>nos vamos</i> > <i>los vamos</i> )	x	x	✓	✓ (post-verbally)	x	✓	✓	x
<b>Total shared</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**Table 3. Distribution of seven non-general morphological features of TNMS in eight other varieties of Spanish**

As can be seen, most of these forms are shared by other dialects. In some cases, the coincidences are conspicuous. Such is the case with the two Mexican dialects included in this table (Jalisco and Guanajuato), but also with distant dialects, such as the Chilean dialect of Chiloé and, to a lesser extent, with San Luis and Sephardic Spanish. In principle, these similarities might either be a) the result of drift (i.e., independent development) in each of these dialects, b) inherited from a common source by all of these dialects, or c) transmitted from one of these dialects to the other(s). Hypothesis c) is highly unlikely from the historical point of view, and, more importantly, it does not answer the question of why these forms are present in NWS. We are therefore left with the question of whether these forms represent independent innovations in each of these dialects, or whether they were inherited from a common source.

The fact that all of these forms are the result of analogical processes of a fairly stereotypical nature that result in a simplification of verbal paradigms suggests that an explanation in terms of independent development is plausible. However, a strong argument against the hypothesis of the independent origin of these forms is their dialectal distribution. As seen in Table 3, the New Mexican verbal morphology examined here is very similar to that of many other rural varieties of central and northern Mexico. These include not only Guanajuato and Jalisco, but also Chihuahua, Durango, Sonora, and Tlaxcala. Some of these areas, including Guanajuato, Jalisco and Tlaxcala, do not exhibit significant historical links with New Mexico. The fact that this particular cluster of dialects in central and northern Mexico exhibits such morphological similarities strongly suggests that these similarities were inherited from a common source already present during their earliest origins, rather than being the result of independent development or drift in each of them. This fact, coupled with the attestation of every one of these features in several rural varieties in Peninsular Spanish as late as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (cf. particularly Rosenblat 1946), clearly points to a shared origin, and not as completely independent development, as an explanation for the presence of these forms in such a wide variety of dialects. In the particular case of the Mexican varieties surveyed here, the presence of these forms in this cluster of dialects may be related to spread via the *ranchería* system of settlement in rural areas in western and northern New Spain (Parodi 2001, pp. 48-51), a matter that warrants further investigation. In any event, any discussion where the solution is framed from the beginning in terms of independent development vs. dialectal inheritance must be preceded by the caveat that the very notion of independent development relies on the existence of a shared degree of linguistic similarity from the beginning – what Sapir called “fundamental”

conditions basic to the “genius of the language” (quoted in Auer, Hinskens & Kerswill 2005, 16-17). Thus, since multiple patterns of change might be in an initial, embryonic stage in several dialects at a time, it is not always possible “to draw sharp dividing lines between the maintenance of founder or donor dialect features [...], diffusions from outside varieties, and internal innovations” (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2003, p. 209).

Returning to the single koiné model proposed by Granda, the fact that these forms survived the earliest stage of settlement of the greater region of northern New Spain shows that colonial NWS in general was not as uniform as some approaches assume, and in particular in the regions studied here. The data do not allow us to determine whether these features were introduced into TNMS during the first or the second stage of resettlement. The first attestation found by Sanz for a *traiba*-type imperfect in his New Mexican corpus dates back to 1769, and the *-ates*, *-ites* preterites do not make an appearance until 1864 (2009, pp. 254-255). But the striking coincidences with other, often distant dialects show that these features, as Rosenblat suggested, “are not recent” (1946, p. 238, authors’ translation). These data are also useful for exploring the connections between TNMS and other traditional rural dialects of the U.S. Southwest that share phonological and morphological similarities (Lozano 1976 and Moyna & Decker 2005, p. 173), including the loss of intervocalic /y/ in contact with a front vowel (*gallína* > *gaína*) and most of the non-general morphological features listed above. The presence of these features in TNMS following its renewed isolation after 1693 directly points at the settlement of northwestern Mexico in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the most immediate source of these features in these other US Southwest varieties. At this point we turn to another attested source that supports the hypothesis that TNMS developed as a unique dialect, distinct from others in northern New Spain: the lexicon.

## 6. Surviving lexical features of the original koiné

We turn now to Bills and Vigil’s (2008) *The Spanish Language of New Mexico and Southern Colorado: A Linguistic Atlas*. This work is based on a series of linguistic interviews of modern day New Mexican and Southern Colorado Spanish, and includes lexical data from the regions mentioned in its title. In very general terms, these differences occur between the southern and northern regions of New Mexico, in part reflecting the historic settlement patterns in the state (see Bills & Vigil 2008, Introduction, for a discussion of the north/south division, and chapter 3 for a detailed description of the Atlas’ creation).

Several lexical categories set TNMS apart from other varieties of New Mexican, Mexican and General Spanish. These items are either unique or highly predominant in TNMS. They are: borrowings from Pueblo languages, retention of certain Peninsular or Náhuatl terms no longer common in other varieties of the language, and lexical innovations unique to TNMS. The first category is presented in table 4.

TNMS	Gloss	General/Mexican Spanish	Referenced in Bills & Vigil (2008)
<i>cunques</i>	coffee grounds, crumbs	<i>asientos, migajas</i>	pp. 155, 157, 197, 333
<i>chaquegüe</i>	blue-corn gruel	<i>atole</i>	p. 155
<i>oshá</i>	wild celery	?	p. 15, 155
<i>coyaye</i>	rattlesnake weed	?	p. 155
<i>tosaye</i>	sun-dried pumpkin strip	?	p. 155
<i>quiva</i>	underground ceremonial chamber	?	p. 155
<i>cachina</i>	ceremonial doll	?	p. 155

**Table 4. Selected borrowings from indigenous NM languages**

To this list we add toponyms such as *Tesuque*, *Pojoaque*, *Abiquiú*, *Chimayó*, *Cundiyo*, *Jémez* and *Picurís*. It is the case that all regions in the Spanish speaking world will have unique toponyms, but we include these as they are borrowed from languages indigenous to the area. Bills and Vigil (2008, p. 155) note that these borrowings are rare in TNMS, but we include them as attested evidence of unique dialectal variation.

The next category presented in Table 5 is made up of Peninsular and Náhuatl origin items no longer commonly used in other varieties of Spanish, or used with a different meaning. The former are sometimes referred to as “archaisms” (see Bills & Vigil 2008, chapter 5, for a detailed discussion of these items). The items are followed with a (P) or (N) to signify if they are of Peninsular or Náhuatl origin.

TNMS	Gloss	General/Mexican Spanish	Referenced in Bills & Vigil (2008)
<i>recordar</i> (P)	to wake up	<i>despertar(se)</i>	p. 54
<i>cuerpo</i> (P)	blouse	<i>blusa</i>	p. 54
<i>calzones</i> (P)	Pants	<i>pantalones</i>	pp. 59, 62, 164, 288, 295
<i>túnico</i> (P)	dress	<i>vestido</i>	p. 56
<i>ánsara</i> (P)	goose	<i>ganso</i>	pp. 34, 58-59, 333
<i>chupilote</i> (N)	buzzard	<i>zopilote, buitre</i>	pp. 108, 112, 313
<i>cajete</i> (N)	wash tub	<i>tina</i>	pp. 95, 105
<i>zoquete</i> (N)	mud	<i>barro, lodo</i>	pp. 15, 80, 95, 96
<i>comal</i> (N)	frying pan	<i>sartén</i>	pp. 95, 104, 160, 162, 218
<i>papalote</i> (N)	Lit. butterfly; here, windmill for pumping water	<i>molino de viento</i>	pp. 39, 105, 108, 130, 226
<i>ganso</i>	turkey	<i>pavo, guajolote</i>	pp. 15, 31, 34, 36, 58-59, 130, 216-218, 261, 333, 340

**Table 5. Unique lexical retention or variation in TNMS**

Finally, there exists a set of lexical innovations that are particularly interesting in that alternative terms were readily available to speakers of TNMS.

TNMS	Gloss	General/Mexican Spanish	Referenced in Bills & Vigil (2008)
<i>gallina de la tierra</i>	Lit. New World chicken; here, turkey	<i>Pavo, guajolote</i>	pp. 31-34, 137, 216-217, 340
<i>gallina de la sierra</i>	Lit. mountain chicken; here, turkey	<i>Pavo, guajolote</i>	pp. 33-34
<i>ratón volador</i>	Lit. flying mouse; here, bat	<i>murciélagos</i>	pp. 15, 34, 140, 143, 197, 219, 246, 340
<i>ratón coludo</i>	Lit. big tail mouse; here, squirrel	<i>ardilla</i>	Not ref'd. in Bills & Vigil, Cobos (1987, p. 145)

**Table 6. Unique coinages remaining in TNMS**

The phrase *gallina de la tierra* for ‘turkey’ has been attested in Mexico for centuries. According to Bills and Vigil (2008, p. 32), Boyd-Bowman (1983, 1987) finds that usage to be dominant in Mexico during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, they continue to note that Boyd-Bowman (1984) “does not document it at all in the nineteenth” (2008, p. 32, for a detailed description of the variation in the words and phrases for ‘turkey’, see 31-37). *Gallina de la tierra* appears in documents produced by the earliest Spanish explorers (Bills & Vigil 2008, p. 32), pre-dating the arrival of Oñate’s group. Thus, this phrase would have belonged to the original New Spain koiné and was subsequently lost in regions outside of northern New Mexico, again, providing further evidence for Mufwene’s founder principle hypothesis. That phrase evidently was common among the settlers driven out in 1680, and was adopted by the ‘new’ settlers who returned to the north in 1693. The semantic extension of *ganso* noted in Table 5 is also unique to TNMS (Bills & Vigil 2008, p. 34), quite possibly another remnant of the early koiné. These terms were well entrenched enough to survive to the present, while elsewhere they disappeared completely.

*Turkey* is a special case in that it is an American bird, and so the coinage of new terms or the semantic extension of others was necessary in order to name it. The same is not the case for *bat* and *squirrel*. These animals existed in Europe before contact with the Americas, so there was no need to invent new words or phrases to name them. Indeed, *ratón volador* is unique to TNMS; Bills and Vigil state that “we have not found this innovation in any dictionary other than those dealing with northern New Mexico and southern Colorado...” (2008, p. 34). They continue to note, “Even more telling is the fact that this term for flying mammal is not recorded among the variants documented in *mapa 618* of the *Atlas lingüístico de México*” (2008, p. 34). While they do not include the phrase *ratón coludo* in their analyses, we also find it only in the same sources they mention, such as Cobos (1987). This further supports the creation of a unique koiné in the early years of settlement. We speculate that such coinages may be a result of the partial learning of Spanish by the non-native speakers in the early years of settlement; lacking the Latin terms for these animals, they employed variants of *ratón* for naming bats and squirrels. Further research into the lexicon of TNMS will shed light on such innovations.

To sum up this section, there exist in modern TNMS a set of lexical items which have either completely disappeared in other varieties of Spanish, or which are unique to the former. Attestations of certain items, such as *gallina de la tierra*, *comal*, *cuerpo* and *túnico*, in other historic Spanish varieties link TNMS to the language as it was spoken in northern New Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The borrowing of indigenous terms unique to northern New Mexico, such as *chaquegüe* and *oshá*, further supports our assertion that a local process of dialect leveling, also affected by language contact, took place in the development of TNMS. Lexical innovations and extensions, such as *ratón volador* and *ganso*, respectively, also support the idea of the creation of a unique variety of Spanish. Due to space limitations, we offer only a small, though representative, collection of lexical items. Again, further research will serve to more completely document this unique aspect of TNMS.

## 7. Conclusion

Our analysis supports the assertion that TNMS developed as a distinct dialect during the colonial period via two rounds of dialect mixture and leveling, one in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the other following the resettlement of the region in 1693. The evidence for the first is mostly demographic and historical, given that the documentary sources from this period are very scarce. Linguistic evidence is available for the second, demonstrating that the merger of /k/ and /j/ was a direct consequence of the demographic and dialectal mixture of the population following the resettlement of New Mexico. Similarly, the occurrence of non-general verbal morphology in New Mexico and the coincidences with other dialects of Mexico and elsewhere calls into question the applicability of the single koiné model for all areas where varieties of NWS developed. Finally, the preservation of lexical Peninsular items lost from most other or all varieties of Spanish, as well as the presence of Náhuatl and native borrowings and lexical innovations, underscore the local roots of this dialect and set it apart from other varieties of NWS. All in all, our analysis demonstrates that TNMS followed, for the most part, a path of its own after 1598. After time, TNMS arrived at the same solutions as other dialects of NWS via different demolinguistic processes (as in the case of *yeísmo*), favored the preservation of features only shared with a handful of dialects (as in the case of verbal morphology) or developed into a highly idiosyncratic dialect (most readily seen in the lexicon). The evidence from TNMS that we have presented is substantial enough to warrant a re-evaluation of the earlier approaches to dialect leveling and diversification in NWS in order to determine which regions fit those ‘universalist’ models more closely, and which ones require other alternatives to have their linguistic histories explained.

TNMS is longitudinally the most extensively researched variety of Spanish spoken currently spoken in the U.S., dating back to the pioneering work carried out by Espinosa, cited above. It continues to be of interest to scholars, who now have the advantage of analytical tools not available to earlier researchers. For example, Davies’ (2002-) *Corpus del español*, a computer-searchable database of 100 million words that date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, supports the assertion that lexical items such as *cunques*, *chaquegüe*, and *ratón volador* do not exist now, nor ever have, in other varieties of the language. Statistical analyses, such as employed in Torres Cacoullós & Ferreira (2000) and Brown (2005), to name only two, offer finely drawn phonological studies not found in earlier works. Relatively new methodologies, such as theories of grammaticization and corpus linguistics, permit innovative angles for better understanding of the mechanism of change that have impacted the development of TNMS. Regarding the former, Torres Cacoullós (2000) examines the development of the Spanish progressive *-ndo* constructions in the dialect. As for the latter, Trujillo (2009) offers a historical perspective on contemporary archaisms found in TNMS, further supporting its status as a unique dialect. Clegg (2009), utilizing the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey (Bills & Vigil, 2008, cited above), in order to analyze the motivation for lexical borrowing in TNMS. These represent but a few of the more recent publications centered on better understanding the linguistic dynamics of TNMS. With this

article, we have aimed at creating an important piece of the rich research mosaic dedicated to this variety, offering a window into the earliest moments of its development as a unique NWS dialect.

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