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Spanish-English contact in the Falkland Islands: an ethnographic approach to loanwords & place names

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Citation

Rodriguez Gutiérrez, Y. V. (2022, June 14). *Spanish-English contact in the Falkland Islands: an ethnographic approach to loanwords & place names*. LOT dissertation series. LOT, Amsterdam. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3348457>

Version: Publisher's Version

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An ethnographic approach to loanwords & place names

Language contact has presumably had an impact on all of the world's languages. This Ph.D. dissertation provides a thorough description of the lexical outcomes of the contact between the arguably young American Spanish and the youngest variety of Southern Hemisphere Englishes, thus closing a gap in the literature on Spanish and English as contact languages.

Situated at the crossroads of toponomastics, lexical semantics, and language attitudes, and embedded within a theoretical framework of contact linguistics, this thesis addresses the contact history of Falkland Islands English with Spanish and examines to what extent such contact played a part in the shaping of the archipelago's official language. To do so, an innovative mixed-methods approach is used to broaden the analytical depth of the results. Furthermore, a range of sources are used, i.e., archival research, literature reviews, and ethnographic fieldwork.

The findings show that (i) Spanish-English contact in the Falklands has left two main linguistic products: loanwords and place names; (ii) even though the Falklands currently host an English-speaking community, the Islands have a long history of Spanish-speaking settlers; (iii) Spanish loanwords are mainly related to horse tack and horse types, and most words are tightly connected to gaucho vernacular but not exclusively with their equestrian duties, and (iv) Falkland Islands English hosts a handful of loanwords that are originally from autochthonous South American languages.

This dissertation will be of interest to scholars working on language contact, toponomastics, world Englishes, and ethnolinguistic approaches to data collection.

ISBN 978-94-6093-406-3
DOI <https://dx.medra.org/10.48273/LOT0621>



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