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This book applies recent theoretical insights to trace the development of Castilian and Latin American Spanish from the Middle Ages onwards, through processes of repeated dialect mixing both within the Iberian Peninsula and in the New World. The author contends that it was this frequent mixing which caused Castilian to evolve more rapidly than other varieties of Hispano-Romance, and which rendered Spanish particularly subject to levelling of its linguistic irregularities and to simplification of its structures. These two processes continued as the language extended into and across the Americas.

These processes are viewed in the context not only of the Hispano-Romance continuum (which includes Galician, Portuguese and Catalan), but also of the New World varieties of Spanish. The book emphasizes the subtlety and seamlessness of language variation, both geographical and social, and the impossibility of defining strict boundaries between varieties. Its conclusions will be relevant both to Hispanists and to historical sociolinguists more generally.

Ralph Penny is Professor of Romance Philology at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, where until recently he was Head of the School of Modern Languages. He is the author of four previous books, including *A History of the Spanish Language* (1991) and *Gramática histórica del español* (1993). In addition, he has edited or co-edited four further books, and has published articles in many learned journals.

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Preface

The main aim of this book is to apply certain theoretical insights into linguistic variation and change (insights often derived from studies of English and other Germanic languages) to the Spanish-speaking world, a project I first sketched some years ago (Penny 1987). Although I do not claim, on this occasion, to advance variationist theory, it is my hope that the data deployed here will test, and for the most part support, such theoretical approaches to language.

The data used are most frequently Castilian data, but since I am at pains to emphasize that Castilian emerges from a dialect continuum which embraces the whole Peninsula (and indeed extends beyond it), it is inevitable that all varieties of Romance spoken in the Peninsula (therefore including Galician, Portuguese, and Catalan) will at times be the subject of discussion. Similarly, since dialect mixing is a constant theme of the book, it is inevitable that American Spanish (the product of such mixing) will come under close scrutiny.

Two broad themes are pursued. The first is that of the seamlessness of language variation: the fact that language presents itself to us in the form of orderly but undivided heterogeneity. This is to say that variation is almost infinitely subtle, and occurs along all parameters (geographical and social), so that it is usually inappropriate to seek to establish boundaries between varieties, whether we are dealing with geographically ordered varieties, or with socially determined varieties, or with linguistic registers or styles. Each variety merges imperceptibly with those that are adjacent to it, using the term *adjacent* to refer to varieties which are either socially or geographically contiguous.

It is not the present aim to provide the reader with an exhaustive description of geographical variation in Spanish (in the manner of manuals of dialectology such as Zamora Vicente (1967)), although detailed accounts of the distribution of many of the salient features of Spanish, as used throughout the world, will be found here. Still less can the book claim to describe in detail the correlation between the

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linguistic and sociological features of the Spanish-speaking communities (a project which is currently impossible, given the paucity of data available), although once again the reader will find examples here of significant cases of socially determined variation. What this book does seek to do is to present to the reader the broad patterns displayed by geographical and social variation in Spanish (with the implication that such patterns are the same for Spanish as for other languages).

The second broad theme of the book is more particular to Spanish and is historical in kind. Because of its peculiar ancestry, being the outcome of repeated dialect mixing, we shall claim that Castilian has evolved at a more rapid pace than the varieties of Romance which developed in other parts of the Peninsula. For similar reasons, we shall see that Spanish was particularly subject to levelling of its linguistic irregularities and to simplification of its structures, processes which continued in force as the language was extended into and across the Americas.

The ideas found in certain sections of this book were presented as papers given to a variety of research seminars: the Staff–Student Research Seminar of the Department of Hispanic Studies, the Research Seminar of the Centre for Language Studies (both at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London), the annual meetings of the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland, and at the Romance Linguistics Research Seminar at the University of Oxford. I am grateful to the participants in those seminars for their observations, which have often found their way into these pages.

I am especially grateful to the two referees who acted for Cambridge University Press, both of whom made numerous suggestions for improvement, most of which I have adopted, and to my friend and colleague Professor Ian Macpherson, who read the whole manuscript and pruned it of numerous infelicities and errors. Those that remain are very definitely my own.

Part of the research for this book was carried out with the assistance of a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board, an award which I gratefully acknowledge.

RALPH PENNY

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Ar.	Arabic	Leon.	Leonese
Arag.	Aragonese	Moz.	Mozarabic
Cat.	Catalan	MSp.	Modern Spanish
Fr.	French	OSp.	Old or medieval Spanish
Gal.	Galician	Ptg.	Portuguese
It.	Italian	Rom.	Romanian
JSp.	Judeo-Spanish	Sp.	Spanish
Lat.	Latin		

*	Reconstructed form or meaning (whose existence is claimed)
**	Form or meaning whose existence is denied
x > y	*x* becomes *y* in the course of time
x < y	*x* is the descendant (reflex) of *y*
x → y	*y* is created on the basis of *x* (e.g., through derivation)
x~y	*x* coexists with *y* with equivalent function
Ø	Null segment (e.g., [h] > [Ø] = '[h] ceases to be pronounced')
á, é, í, etc.	Vowel carrying stress accent
ā, ī, ō, etc.	In Latin words (which appear in small capitals), a long vowel; any vowel not so marked in a Latin word is short.
[xxxx]	Phonetic transcription
/xxxx/	Phonemic transcription
<xxxx>	Letters of the alphabet, graphemes
{xxxx}	Morphemes
#	Word boundary

The symbols used are those of the International Phonetic Association, with the following modification: [j̑] is used for the voiced mid-palatal fricative (e.g., standard *ma*y̑*o*), to distinguish it from the (frictionless) glide [j] (as in *ti*e̯*rra*).

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	Bilabial		Labio-dental		Inter-dental		Dental	
CONSONANTS								
Plosive	p	b					t	d
Fricative	ɸ	β	f	v	θ	ð	s̪	z̪
Affricate							tˢ	dᶻ
Lateral					l̪		l̪	
Vibrant								
Flap								
Nasal	m		ɱ		n̪		n̪	
GLIDES								
Opening	ʍ	w						
Closing		u̯						
VOWELS								
High								
Mid-high								
Mid-low								
Low								

˳ denotes voicelessness.

Table of phonetic symbols used

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Alveolar		Pre-palatal		Mid-palatal		Velar		Glottal	
						k	g		
s	z	ʃ	ʒ	ç	ǰ	x	ɣ	h	ɦ
		tʃ	dʒ						
l				ʎ					
r									
ɾ									
n				ɲ		ŋ			
					j	(ʍ)	(w)		
ɹ					j̰		(ų̰)		

	Front	Central	Back	
	i		u	
	e		o	
	ɛ	ɐ	ɔ	
	æ	a	ɑ	

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