PART III

Morphosyntactic variation and change
This paper treats the use of third-person pronominal objects *le*, *lo* and *la* in Amazonian Colombian Spanish. Pronoun selection was analyzed in relation to linguistic variables (case and grammatical gender of the co-referent), extralinguistic variables concerning the speakers (age, gender and occupation) and a geographic variable (municipality). Results show that only linguistic variables have a significant effect on pronoun selection. In particular, we observe a significant interaction of case with grammatical gender, indicating a greater proportion of *leísmo* for feminine co-referents than for masculine co-referents. These findings contribute to understanding Spanish third-person pronominal objects in language contact, with additional insights about competition and second language learning strategies.

1. Introduction

The Spanish third-person pronominal object system is composed of *le*(*s), *lo*(*s) and *la*(*s). Unlike other grammatical persons, the third-person system is the only one that is able to distinguish case with different forms: canonically *lo* and *la* for accusative and *le* for dative. It is also the only one that distinguishes gender in accusative case and pluralizes with the suffix -s, as opposed to the first and second persons, which pluralize with different forms (e.g., *me* “I” / *nos* “we”) and have no gender distinction. This system originated in the rearrangement of pronouns and case markers in Late Latin, which produced the third-person anaphor *ille* (Wanner 1987: 75–76). This anaphor is the etymological basis for the third-person pronominal system in Romance languages, and it includes a diverse range of accusative and dative cases. The system is a source of variation both diachronically (Alfonso 1997) and synchronically (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999).
Using naturalistic data, this paper analyzes the use of the pronominal objects *le*, *lo* and *la* in Amazonian Colombian Spanish. The purpose of the paper is to study variation patterns on the selection of these pronouns in relation to linguistic variables (case and gender) and non-linguistic variables of the speaker (age, gender, occupation) and the geography (municipality). The corpus is composed of 68 spontaneous oral narrations of sixty-three Tikuna-Spanish fluent bilinguals recruited by the investigator using the snowball sampling method (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 32). Thus, generalizations of the results are constrained by the narrative style of the texts, as they favored the emergence of the pronouns due to frequent cross-references to the characters, spaces and objects of the narrations.

1.1 Context

This study was carried out in rural and urban indigenous settlements in Leticia and Puerto Nariño, Colombia as shown in Map 1 in the appendix, in 2005 and 2006. As the capital of the Department of Amazonas, Leticia had 42,877 inhabitants in 2005. Of them, 29,669 lived in the urban area and 13,208 in the rural communities (Asamblea Departamental, 2005: 11). Most of the non-indigenous inhabitants were highland Colombian immigrants established in the urban area, which also hosted local indigenous inhabitants. The rural area is dominated by indigenous people, who live in traditional communities. Puerto Nariño, on the other hand, is a smaller municipality located in the inner Amazon, 55 miles away from Leticia. At the time of fieldwork, this municipality had a smaller population of 7,190: 2,115 in the urban area and 5,075 in the rural communities (Asamblea Departamental 2005: 11). Tikunas were the dominant indigenous population in both municipalities with about 5,978 people (Gutiérrez et al. 2004: 234–243).

Located in Colombian borderlands, Leticia and Puerto Nariño have been socially integrated into the broader Amazon, which includes Brazilian, Ecuadorian, Colombian and Peruvian territories (Fenzl 2011: 30; Zárate 2011: 57). Leticia and Puerto Nariño have been especially linked to Peru and Ecuador via migration processes during the rubber boom (Domínguez 2004: 16; Marticorena 2004: 40). The patterns of migration indicate that the colonists entered through different rivers that connect the Andes and the Amazon. These migration processes may explain similarities between findings of this paper and uses of *le*, *lo* and *la* reported for the Andes and the Amazon in Peru. Iquitos was the main Peruvian city connected to Leticia and Puerto Nariño for extraction activities during the rubber boom in the Amazon (Ayarza 2004: 103; Arroyo 2004: 117; Flores 2004: 86; Riaño 2003: 20–21, 45–47, 81–82, 216–217). In addition, the national boundaries between different
countries on the Amazon were extensively debated until the 20th century (Zárate 2011: 71–72).

The establishment of different settlements in riverbank regions and the recruitment of indigenous people for the rubber industry may partially explain uses of le, lo and la found in the current speech of Tikunas. Nevertheless, demographic information presented by Alvar (1977: 381–382) shows that Peruvian immigrants surpassed the Colombian population in Leticia until 1946, when Colombian immigrants started to outnumber Peruvians. Census data from the 1990s indicates that about 3,659/22,866 (16%) and 146/5,490 (2.7%) of people in Leticia and Puerto Nariño, respectively, were Colombian immigrants. The data is complemented by census information from 2005 summarized in Table 1. These patterns of immigration comprise two main trends of immigrant population: Peruvian and Colombian (Aguilar 1992: 60; DANE 2005: 111–116; Sánchez 2012: 178).

Table 1. Colombian and Peruvian immigration in the twentieth century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombian migrants</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>3,805</td>
<td>7,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian migrants</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Concepts and definitions

Regarding the distribution of third-person object pronouns in the Hispanic world, Fernández-Ordóñez (1999: 1320) names two types of zones: case distinction zones and zones which exhibit case confusion. The case distinction zones differentiate between accusative and dative cases with the pronominal objects lo(s) and la(s) for the former and le(s) for the latter. This system consistently distinguishes accusative and dative cases, distinguishes number agreement features and differentiates between masculine and feminine objects in accusative case. This is the etymological prescriptive system most diffused in standard varieties, including Colombian Spanish. Using data from the current study, in example (1) the speaker chooses the pronominal object la for a feminine determiner phrase la muchacha “the girl”, while lo is selected for a masculine singular phrase el cuchillo “the knife” in example (2). On the other hand, the speaker chooses the pronominal object le when indexing a feminine phrase la primera niña que usted tenga “the first daughter that you have” in example (3).¹

¹. These and further examples represent unedited utterances of study participants.
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(1)  A la muchacha, pintan ahí, poco de gente ahí.

“They paint the girl there, a bunch of people there.”

(2)  Ahora bótalas, el cuchillo.

“Now throw it away, the knife.”

(3)  Mi mamá me dijo “pero la primera niña que usted tenga, esa sí le voy a hacer [la pelazón].”

“My mother said to me ‘But we will do the haircut to the first daughter that you have.’”

For the zones with case confusion, either le is given totally or partially accusative functions or else lo or la are given dative functions. The first case is known as leísmo, which simplifies case distinctions with le(s) for both accusative and dative cases. As shown in example (4), the speaker chooses the pronominal object le as accusative case for a feminine phrase mi abuela “my grandma” and for a masculine pronoun él “he” in example (5). Therefore, the differentiation between accusative and dative cases does not persist as they merge in the unique form le(s). Leísmo has been extensively documented both diachronically (Flores 2006; Alfonso, 1997) and synchronically (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999) in Spain and Latin America.

The second case corresponds to either loísmo or laísmo, which simplify case distinctions with the forms lo(s) or la(s), respectively, for both accusative and dative cases. As shown in example (6), the speaker chooses the pronominal object lo as accusative case for the feminine pronoun ella “she” and for a dative masculine phrase su hermano “his brother” in example (7). As a consequence, gender is simplified for the former and case is simplified for the latter. Loísmo and laísmo are less common cases which, however, have been documented in both Spain and Latin America, including the Amazon (Caravedo, 1997). Of those, laísmo is the rarest case.

(4)  Yo no le conocí a mi abuela.

“I didn’t meet my grandma.”

(5)  Él tuvo un problema, por allá le cogieron y está golpiao.

“He got in trouble. Somebody caught him and he is injured.”

(6)  El hermano de ella se enamoró de ella, y lo buscaba, buscaba, buscaba y nunca lo encontraba.

“Her brother fell in love with her, and he was looking and looking for her and he never found her.”

(7)  Ese era castigo de su hermano, pues, o sea pa’ no hacerlo mal nada, así lo castigó.

“That was his brother’s punishment for him not to be bad, he punished him in that way.”
Chapter 8. Clitics le, lo, la in Amazonian Colombian Spanish

1.3 Mufwene’s competition model

The arrangement and distribution of le, lo and la can be understood as a competition process between these units tied to a particular ecology. The competition is part of language change processes. Indeed, Mufwene (2001: 1–24) posits ‘language evolution’ as speciation processes via ‘competition’ of species in a given ecology, so that ‘linguistic varieties’ (languages and dialects) and ‘variants’ (specific linguistic features) are understood as species. In this paper, ‘competition’ is understood as an inherent process of linguistic diversification that can be maximized in language-contact situations. Specifically, competition is understood as a pool of linguistic features available for speakers to convey the same or similar functions. For example, the pronouns le, lo and la can compete for speakers’ usage and result in different forms of ‘case distinction’, leísmo or loísmo. Similar competition processes are documented in this volume for pa'/para (see Fafulas et al., this volume), future tense forms (see Kyzar, this volume) and the complementizer que/Ø (see Ricelli, this volume).

‘Ecology’, on the other hand, is understood as a unique configuration of language and space. The ecology is usually shaped by unpredictable and non-replicable relationships between the language(s)/dialect(s) of a geographical space and the ethnohistorical and sociocultural conditions of the environment where they live. Under this framework, available linguistic units, such as le, lo and la, take part in contentious competitions of variable intensity as the index of particular ecologies. Dialect leveling (overlapping of different dialects) and koineization (mixing of dialects) are some of the processes that can take place in the competition among linguistic features (Mufwene 2001: 4–6).

The broader range of functions or meanings of each form is important when analyzing competing solutions since their motivations might be more closely related to semantic-cognitive functions in the speaker’s mind than to morphosyntactic-grammatical factors in a linguistic system. Some of these factors/processes include animacy effects (Fernández-Ordoñez 1993: 5–6; Fernández-Ordoñez 1999: 1350–1355; Klee & Caravedo 2005: 15), cardinality and voice (Arnoux & Martínez 2001), continuity and definiteness (Fernández Ordoñez 1999: 1355–1360), transitivity (Flores 2006: 686–687), aspectual and pragmatic factors (Flores 2006: 688–706), the interaction of linguistic and external factors (Palacios 2007: 264–269) and social indexicalities (Mick & Palacios 2013). Although these factors may shape the results, an analysis of them is beyond the scope of this paper.

1.4 Languages in contact and the role of second language acquisition

The arrangement of the Spanish third-person object pronouns in bilingual contexts, such as the one examined in Leticia and Puerto Nariño, may be constrained by both the language contact setting (Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 65–109;
Thomason 2000: 70–71) and the strategies used by individuals when learning a second language (Andersen 1988). The former has been the dominant approach in accounting for clitic uses in Spanish-Indigenous language contacts in South and Central America. The latter has been supported by extensive research on L2 Spanish in instructional settings in environments in which English and other major L1s are spoken.

No previous research has been carried out on object pronouns in Amazonian Colombian Spanish. However, such studies have been conducted on neighboring areas, which are relevant for the current investigation as these areas share a geographical continuum with Leticia and Puerto Nariño, along with socio-historical relationships. For example, Caravedo (1997: 132–133, 140–141) documents the presence of both leísmo and loísmo, along with gender and number disagreement in the Peruvian Amazon. She analyzes a 360-minute oral corpus of 30-minute interviews with 12 literate and illiterate Spanish monolingual speakers.

Caravedo found 120 cases of leísmo among 249 pronominal constructions containing the pronoun le(s) and 7 cases of loísmo among 175 pronominal constructions containing the pronoun lo(s); the remaining pronominal constructions belong to case distinction. These results show a stronger presence of leísmo with 48% (vs. 3% of loísmo); 85% of leísmo instances appeared in the illiterate group, while loísmo registers were evenly distributed between the literate and illiterate groups. This is the most relevant study on third-person pronoun objects from Amazonian Spanish. Importantly, the author explains the relationship between Andean and Amazonian Spanish through migration processes. Given such connections between these regions, some degree of dialect leveling among Peruvian and Colombian Spanish varieties may explain the arrangement of Spanish clitics in the communities surveyed.

Other authors have also documented leísmo and loísmo phenomena in the Peruvian Amazon. Barraza (1998: 26–27), for example, found leísmo as the dominant third-person pronominal use in Iquitos, a semi-urban city located in the Peruvian Amazon. She also found competing cases of loísmo under semantic and syntactic constraints, such as inanimate reference and preverbal position of the antecedent (Barraza 1998: 26–34, 41–47). However, other utterances did not select the loísmo variant under the same constraints. Similarly, Rojas (2004) found the dominance of leísmo as the most preferred third-person pronominal use in Lamas, a small Amazonian town in San Martín, Peru. This town is located in the highest part of the Amazon, known as the selva alta, which is a transitional region between the Amazon and the Andes.

Furthermore, a larger range of competing uses has been documented in the Andes. They include leísmo, loísmo and laísmo, as well as distinction and deletion of third-person pronominal objects in Quechua-Spanish contact settings (Escobar
2000: 41; Godenzzi 1996: 71–99; Martínez 1996: 139–177). If the Quechua-Spanish contact were the source of Peruvian *leismo*, *loismo* and *laismo*, it is possible that such uses fossilized in the speech of bilinguals and then disseminated to monolinguals, such as those reported by Caravedo (1997) in the Peruvian Amazon or Tikuna communities, who are not Quechua speakers.

However, similar simplification processes of third-person pronominal objects have been reported in other regions of contact between Spanish and indigenous languages, such as Guaraní in Paraguay (Palacios 2000) and Tzutujil in Guatemala (García 2006). These findings raise the question of whether all cases of simplification of the third-person pronominal object system, extensively reported in different Spanish varieties of the Americas, may result from contact with local indigenous languages. In such a case, Spanish would tend towards such simpler systems and the simplification processes would be triggered or accelerated by the local indigenous languages, producing the same or similar predictable results in different geographical locations. Although the interpretation of these phenomena cannot be reduced to finding similarities between the grammatical inventories of the languages in contact, it is important to take this factor into account.

In the Amazon region surveyed, Spanish is an L2 among Tikuna communities. As the national language of Colombia, it serves official functions and acts as a lingua franca for communication with other ethnic groups. Tikuna, on the other hand, is the L1 of all participants and is the dominant indigenous language in the region examined. The third-person pronominal system of Tikuna is summarized in Table 2. This system distinguishes subjects with a different form for masculine and feminine singulars and a unique form for plurals. The system features agreement with verbal prefixes. According to Montes (2004a: 162–165), it assigns accusative case by affixation of the suffix -ū to either a noun or a personal pronoun. The suffixes -kà and -na supply dative functions for benefactives and goals, respectively. The Tikuna system is illustrated in examples (8)–(9) taken from Montes (2004b: 125). In these examples, accusative (-ū) and benefactive (-kà) affixes coexist in the same sentence and can appear in alternative order.

Table 2. Tikuna third-person pronominal system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd-person pronominal system</th>
<th>Verbal prefix</th>
<th>Subject pronoun</th>
<th>Object suffixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td><em>ni/-na-</em></td>
<td><em>nūma</em></td>
<td>-ū (ACC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td><em>ngi-</em></td>
<td><em>ngimà</em></td>
<td>-kà (BEN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td><em>ta/-ti/-to-</em></td>
<td><em>tūma</em></td>
<td>-na (GOAL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding language development, Montrul’s (2010) study of the use of clitics among Spanish heritage speakers and adult second language learners in the U.S. shows differences between adult learners of L2 Spanish, who had late exposure to Spanish in instructional contexts, presumably showing explicit knowledge of Spanish clitics, and Spanish heritage speakers, who had earlier exposure to Spanish in naturalistic contexts and displayed more intuitive knowledge of Spanish clitics (Montrul 2010: 198). These results may inform the Spanish clitic uses of Tikunas who had early exposure to Spanish without formal instruction on this particular structure.

Despite scholastic, theoretical and methodological differences between language contact studies (LCS), with a wider perspective of the social context, and second language acquisition (SLA) studies, with a narrower focus on the actual speakers’ processes, both approaches overlap in substantive matters (e.g., L1 transfer) and, therefore, they need to complement each other. For example, uses of Spanish clitics in Amazonian Spanish might be triggered either by a Tikuna L1 structure converging with a Spanish system or might be the result of a simplification process towards a dominant third-person pronoun in the input of Spanish L2 speakers. Both language transfer and simplification processes concern LCS and SLA approaches.

Furthermore, a transfer effect from L1 Tikuna favored by the social conditions of language contact and a cluster of SLA strategies might be acting together to produce a given result of clitic uses. For example, masculine is the default gender in Spanish (Franceschina 2005: 100), whereas feminine is the unmarked gender in Tikuna (Montes 2004b: 63). Therefore, while Tikuna case markers and Spanish clitics can converge via positive transfer from L1 (Siegel 2006: 25), gender values of Spanish clitics may be in conflict between the default masculine gender of Spanish and the generic feminine gender of Tikuna via simplification processes (Siegel 2006: 15). The competing variants of Spanish, which fuse gender in accusative clitics lo and la, and Tikuna, in which gender affixes are separated from case markers, are well understood by Mufwene’s (2001) competition model. Although elucidating the exact sources of clitic uses in Amazonian Spanish is beyond the scope of this paper, they may have multiple origins which are not mutually exclusive.
2. The present study

This chapter investigates pronoun selection of third-person pronominal objects: \textit{le}, \textit{lo}, and \textit{la}. It analyzes the dependence of this variable on linguistic (case and gender) and non-linguistic variables of the speaker and the geography. The interaction between variables is also analyzed. For the interpretation of results, historic processes of migration and language contact features are taken into account. The variables under analysis in the present study are summarized in Table 3. The study will give empirical data on the use of third-person pronouns from an undocumented region. It will add naturalistic evidence on the use of these pronouns in contexts of dialect and language contact with additional insights about competition. In light of this purpose and the background provided, the following research questions guided the present study:

– Is there any effect of linguistic variables on third-person pronominal object selection?
– Is there any effect of non-linguistic variables on pronominal object selection?
– What patterns of pronominal object selection emerge from the interaction of variables?

Table 3. Variables analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Non-linguistic independent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object pronouns</td>
<td>Linguistic variables</td>
<td>Speaker variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Word gender</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Methods

This paper uses ethnographic techniques for collection of data and combines them with quantitative methods for the analysis. The investigator collected and transcribed natural spoken data in a bilingual language-contact setting that included small rural indigenous villages and larger urban and semi-urban areas in Amazonas, Colombia. The present analysis involves a repeated measures unbalanced design with nested data, given that the size of the speech sample and the number of observations were not the same for all the subjects. Clitic variation in the third-person pronominal object system is examined using a mixed-effects model, further explained in the Results section.
3.1 Fieldwork

I conducted five weeks of fieldwork in rural and urban areas of the municipalities of Leticia and Puerto Nariño between December 2005 and January 2006, as shown on Map 1 in the appendix. I traveled to the urban towns of each municipality and six rural Spanish-Tikuna bilingual communities, located at the banks of the Amazon and Loretoyacu rivers. Most of the people in rural communities hold to traditional activities for survival such as fishing, farming, hunting and weaving, so that natural resources such as rivers are fundamental for daily activities (Rodríguez 2011). Those in the urban areas tend to develop more stationary lifestyles than those in the rural regions (Ochoa 2011).

During fieldwork, I recorded life stories, tales, open interviews about dreams, happy and sad events and personal anecdotes in Spanish. Subjects were prompted to narrate any story that they wanted to tell, be it traditional tales, their life stories or the history of the city/community they lived in. The corpus contains different modalities of direct and indirect discourse, past and present references and indicative and subjunctive moods, so that the narrators explored a variety of Spanish structures.

3.2 Population and sample

A total of 93 Tikuna-Spanish fluent bilingual subjects were interviewed and/or recorded in different situations. From those, a sample of 63 participants was selected, discarding speakers whose recordings were too short or had poor sound quality. The participants selected came from both Leticia (36/63) and Puerto Nariño (27/63). The majority of them (49/63) were located in rural areas, and 14/63 lived in the urban (Leticia city) or semi-urban (Puerto Nariño) towns. Table 4 summarizes the number of participants by community, whose locations can be found on Map 1 in the appendix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Subjects by community</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjects by communities by municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leticia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San José del Kilómetro 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nazareth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Nariño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Esperanza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuevo Paraíso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santarén</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Leticia &amp; Puerto Nariño</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns (urban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants selected were adult Tikuna-Spanish bilinguals normally distributed at an average age of 44, ranging from 15 to 79 years of age. Fifty-two of them (83%) carry out traditional activities for survival such as fishing, hunting, farming, weaving and handicrafts, while eleven (17%) hold clerical positions (e.g., nurses, health promoters, administrative positions, teachers, students) or combine them with traditional activities.

3.3 Corpus

From the corpus of recordings carried out, a sample of 68 of these was selected; some study participants were represented with more than one recording in the sample. Only interviews containing tokens of pronominal third-person objects were included. The corpus totals 20 hours of natural speech recordings and 164,327 transcribed words. Given the size of the sample and of the corpus, the sample is arguably representative of Amazonian Colombian speech in narrative style. As shown in the following results, the number of tokens of third-person pronominal objects was also enough to draw conclusions about the use of these pronouns in the Colombian Amazon.

3.4 Data analysis

For the analysis of pronominal structures with le, lo and la, all tokens of these pronouns were located in the corpus. The nominal referents of those pronouns were identified in order to determine if they were feminine or masculine and accusative or dative. When doing this coding, the investigator did not assume any prescriptive position. Therefore, if the speaker said un inyección “a shot” or el inyección “the shot”, that phrase counted as masculine even if una inyección and la inyección are feminine phrases in standard Spanish.\(^2\) Thus, what took precedence was the gender assigned by the speaker and not a prescriptive norm. Given the very low counts of third-person plural pronouns, the number distinction was not taken into account.

Similarly, the case assigned to each pronoun depended on the semantic roles of the antecedent and their mapping to the pronominal structure. Although semantic roles are not entirely discrete (Dowty 1991: 572–576), accusative cases usually

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2. In complex cases such as la inyección doloroso, I followed Franceschina (2005: 72, 84–87) assuming that the noun inyección is inherently [+fem]. The syntax of this phrase suggests that the feminine gender has reached the target la, with which the noun agrees, but not the target doloroso. So, la inyección doloroso would count as feminine. El inyección doloroso, which is another piece of the puzzle, should count as masculine because the intrinsic feature [+fem] of inyección is not visible in the targets.
map patient and theme roles that undergo a change of state, objects affected by an agent or cause or objects that are stationary with respect to the movement of another participant. Therefore, in a given structure such as example (4), the pronoun *le* counted as accusative, given that the coindexed referent *mi abuela* “my grandma” is represented as the object of another’s experience. Based on Campos (1999: 1519–1574), this would be an ‘(un)known object’ completing the meaning of the verb *conocer* “to meet” in a predicational relationship. Similarly, in example (2), the pronoun *lo* counts as accusative given that the coindexed referent *el cuchillo* “the knife” is represented as an object undergoing a change of location caused by the action of another participant.

Likewise, datives usually map goals, beneficiaries and experiencers (Haskelm-math 2003: 213). For instance, in example (3), *le* was taken as dative given that the coindexed phrase *la primera niña que usted tenga* “the first daughter that you have” is represented as someone that receives the benefit or prejudice of an action (the haircut) performed by another participant. Once these analytical decisions were made, data were coded and submitted to a mixed-effects model for statistical analysis, as shown in the next section.

4. Results

The data were numerically inspected and analyzed using a mixed-effects model as implemented in the Rbrul program (Johnson 2009). This method appropriately handles repeated measures with nested data in non-normal distributions. The model is appropriate for these data as they come from spontaneous oral narrations of variable duration per speaker. Indeed, the number of tokens of pronominal objects per narration fluctuates from low to high frequencies, since a few speakers did not use these pronouns and other speakers used them to a large extent. These are expected behaviors of naturalistic data, which are accurately addressed by the model. For more on the advantages of mixed-effects models in linguistic research, see Fafulas et al. (this volume).

4.1 Statistical analysis

As shown in Table 5, a total of 2,888 tokens of third-person pronominal objects were found in the corpus. Most of them were instances of *le* with 2,192 occurrences (76%, $\bar{X}_1 = 34.8$). *Lo* and *la*, on the other hand, comprised the remaining data, with the lowest proportion consisting of *la* (77 tokens, 3%, $\bar{X}_2 = 1.2$) and a much higher proportion of *lo* (619 tokens, 21%, $\bar{X}_3 = 9.8$). These data show that *le* was the most frequent choice, while *la* seems to have virtually vanished.
For the mixed-effects model, Speaker was set as a random factor and Pronoun was set as a dependent categorical variable with two levels: (1) le and (2) lo / la; thus lo and la were merged as a single level. This merge is justified by the low tokens of la and the fact that lo and la canonically distinguish gender for accusative case. Two independent linguistic variables were analyzed: (1) Case with 2 levels, accusative and dative, and (2) Word Gender with two levels, masculine and feminine gender of a noun coindexed with the pronoun. The non-linguistic independent variables were (3) Age, (4) Gender, (5) Occupation of the speaker and the (6) Municipality where the speaker lived. The interaction between variables was also analyzed. Figure 1 displays the variables included in the model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LE_Total</th>
<th>LO_Total</th>
<th>LA_Total</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>34.79</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>2192</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Tokens per pronoun

The output from Rbrul is summarized in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Table 6 contains the output for the independent variables. Reading from left to right, the second column includes the number of tokens (pronoun tokens) in each level of each factor. The third column corresponds to the coefficients of comparison, with positive coefficients favoring le. The forth column indicates the proportion of application of each level of each variable to le. The next column corresponds to the weights of each level from 0 to 1, in which numbers above .5 favored le. The larger the range of these numbers, the more likely the factor is to be significant. The last two columns include p and r² values as measures of significance and proportion of variation accounted by the factor, respectively. Significant values were flagged with an asterisk (*). Table 7 displays selection of the pronoun le vs. lo/la for both feminine and masculine gender in accusative and dative case. Table 8, on the other hand, summarizes the best cumulative step-up model given by the program, including all significant factors, a significant interaction between case and word gender, degrees of freedom and proportion of variability accounted by the model.

As shown in Table 6, the non-linguistic variables were not significantly related to the pronouns selected: gender (p = .15), age (p = .17), occupation (p = .33) and municipality (p = .59). Only the linguistic variables gave significant values. Thus, case (p = 2.57e-201) and word gender (p = .00187) are significantly related to the pronouns chosen, as dative case and feminine gender of the coindexed nouns gave more weight to le than their counterparts, accusative and masculine.
Figure 1. Variables studied

Table 6. Fixed independent factors on pronoun selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Tokens (N)</th>
<th>Coefficients (Log Odds)</th>
<th>Proportion of application value</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>p-value *sig&lt; .05</th>
<th>r²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.57e-201*</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>1408</td>
<td>2.111</td>
<td>.973</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>-2.111</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.00187*</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>.487</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
Table 6. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Tokens (N)</th>
<th>Coefficients (Log Odds)</th>
<th>Proportion of application value</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>p-value *sig</th>
<th>r²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>−.269</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s age</td>
<td>2888</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>continuous variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(integers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker’s occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>−.22</td>
<td>.728</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Nariño</td>
<td>1226</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leticia</td>
<td>1662</td>
<td>−.104</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*LE was set as the application value for each factor: le / (le + (lo & la))*

The significance of case is explained by a categorical relationship between the pronoun *le* and dative case, which is the canonical function of this pronoun. The significance of gender, in which feminine gives significantly more weight to *le* than masculine, suggests a different distribution of the third-person pronouns by the co-referent word gender across case. Indeed, Table 7 shows a significant interaction between word gender and accusative case but not with dative case. These data indicate no significant variation for dative case, in which the speaker mostly selects *le* regardless of the co-referent word gender, as opposite to accusative case in which there was some variation between *le* and *lo/la* giving room for *leísmo*, that is, selection of *le* for accusative case.

Table 7. Selection of third-person pronoun in accusative and dative case

Selection of third-person pronoun LE vs LO/LA

*LE was set as the application value for each factor: [le / (le + (lo & la))]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word gender</th>
<th>Accusative</th>
<th>Dative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion of application value (% LE)</td>
<td>Proportion of application value (% LE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>FW</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>.576*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>.424*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Input .523 Total N 1480 Word gender p = .00019* p = .249*
Table 8. Best step-up mixed-effects model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deviance</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>r² fixed</th>
<th>r² random</th>
<th>r² total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1566.617</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.419</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaker [random] + Case \((p = 2.57e-201)\) + Word.Gender \((p = .00187)\) + Case : Word.Gender \((p = .0104)\)
This model is significantly better with than without the interaction
Case: Word.Gender, \(\chi^2 = 7.28, df = 1, p = .00695\)

### 4.2 Pronoun selection among the levels of case across word gender

Figure 2 shows the patterns of pronoun selection according to case across word gender. Numbers above .5 indicate greater weight for pronoun *le*, and numbers below .5 indicate lower weight for *le* and, therefore, greater weight for selection of pronouns *lo* or *la*. The perimeter width depicts sample size per cell scaled at .045. The numbers of tokens per pronoun are displayed in the adjacent table.

As depicted in Figure 2, dative case gave greater weight for selection of *le*, and word gender made no difference in this particular trend. Thus, *le* was the most frequent pronoun for both masculine and feminine dative. This is the expected behavior of Spanish third-person object pronouns, in which the Colombian Amazonian speech examined seems to follow the general patterns of standard Spanish described by Fernández-Ordóñez (1999: 1386–1390). Example (10) illustrates *le* in the dative case for a masculine coindexed phrase *el mojojoy*, an earthworm that is part of Tikuna cuisine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LE vs LO/LA</th>
<th>Word Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>Dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO/LA</td>
<td>Dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Pronoun selection by case across word gender

(10) LE masculine dative:

Con el *mojojoy* … mi mamá *le* exprimía la mantequita, el aceitico, de ese *gusanito*

“With *mojojoy* … my mom would wring the butter from it, the oil, from that earthworm.”
Similarly, example (11) illustrates selection of *le* in dative case for a feminine coindexed pronoun *ella* “she”, which is also coindexed to the feminine phrase *una muchacha* “the girl”. In the example, the narrator represents the voice of a young male character, as well as the voice of the character’s mother, who advises the male character. The example is particularly illustrative of the case distinction system, as the speaker chose *le* with a communicative verb *hablar* “to speak” but *la* with the monotransitive verb *llamar* “to call”. Both structures are adjacent to each other and relate to the same referent *una muchacha* “a girl”, suggesting that the speaker clearly assigns a different function to each pronoun.

(11) **LE feminine dative:**

FAC_UPN37: “Encontré en el camino un rastro de *una muchacha*”. Su mamá dijo: “hijo tienes que ir y si ves otra vez el rastro, rastro de *ella*, las huellas de *ella*, entonces usted, hablele, llámela, a ver si se aparece.”

“I found some footprints of a girl in the road. Her mom said, ‘My son, you must go and if you see the prints again, her footprints, the footprints of her, then speak to her, call out to her, and see if she appears’.”

On the other hand, Figure 2 points out where the significant difference of case across gender is, as that difference only concerns accusative case. Both genders are close to a positive weight for accusative *le*, but accusative feminine cases gave a greater weight for *le* than accusative masculine cases did. Although the pattern seems counterintuitive, it is explained by the very low tokens of pronoun *la* (3% of the corpus) as contrasted with *lo*, the overall generic use of *le* and possibly the unmarked status of feminine gender in Tikuna. This suggests that *le* was mostly selected for feminine coindexed nouns, regardless of case. Accusative masculine coindexed nouns, on the other hand, gave lower weight for *le*, as the pronoun *lo* seems still available for speakers with a proportion of 21% over the whole corpus. In fact, the perimeter width of accusative masculine in Figure 2 confirms a greater proportion of masculine referents as compared to feminine referents. The weighted mean close to .5 indicates that the likelihood of selecting either *le* (457/909) or *lo* (452/909) are almost equal, suggesting some competition between these pronouns in accusative case.

Example (12) illustrates an accusative feminine case with *le*. The speaker is describing the process of growing and preparing *fariña* “manioc”. She selected the pronoun *le* multiple times for the same referent with different transitive verbs: *le tenemos* “we have it”, *le embolsamos* “we put it inside plastic bags” and *le enterramos* “we bury it”. A similar example in (13) illustrates selection of *lo* for a masculine coindexed phrase *el maíz* “corn” in accusative case. In the example, the speaker is describing the process of growing corn and selects *lo* to index this phrase.
(12) LE feminine accusative:
GAP_UPN39: la, la mata de la fariña, nosotros le, tenemos como almacenado, le, le, embolsamos con la bolsa de plástico y le, enterramos “The, the plant, of manioc, we have it stored, we pack it, pack it in a plastic bag and we bury it.”

(13) LO masculine accusative:
FAC_UPN37: el maíz, él lo, hacía y lo, sembraba “Corn, he made it and grew it.”

In general, accusative case seems unstable for pronoun selection. This instability is illustrated in examples (14)–(16). In example (14), the speaker chose pronoun la, as expected, for a feminine coindexed phrase una cartilla “a booklet” in accusative case. However, lo and le are selected for accusative feminine phrases la lengua “the language” and la muchacha “the girl” in examples (15) and (16), respectively. The speaker’s hesitation regarding the pronoun in example (16) also suggests this instability.

(14) LA feminine accusative:
WMD_UNL31: es una cartilla pequeña, que la, hice yo, se perdió “It’s a small booklet that I made, it got lost.”

(15) LO feminine accusative:
LRP_ARL4: esa es la primera lengua, [lengua gēral] … los demás indígenas … por allá en, en Contreras, eso sí lo, hablan y en el Brasil … esa lengua viene del Brasil … de, de, de, de Belén, para abajo. Esa gente sí lo, hablan. “That was the original language [general language] … other indigenous people … over there in, in Contreras, they do speak it and in Brazil … that language comes from Brazil … from, from, from, from Belén, down there. Those people do speak it.”

(16) LE/LA feminine accusative:
DPA_ARL7: Entonces de ahí hacemos la masato y buscar la, una cosa, yanchama para hacer las juegos y le hacemos la masato y tomamos ahí y le, y la, tomamos pa’ pelar la, a la muchacha, “So, that is how we prepare the masato [yucca drink] and we look for, one thing, yanchama [tree bark] in order to play and we prepare masato for her and we drink over there, and we take her, her, we take her to crop her hair, the girl’s hair.”

Isolated cases of loísmo also contributed to the competition of third-person pronouns. There were 38 tokens of dative lo/la. Of those, 16 tokens of dative lo were found in a single community: Santarén, the farthest indigenous community I visited in the municipality of Puerto Nariño, about 25 miles from the town of Puerto
Nariño and 80 miles from the Leticia city (see Map 1). Those were considered geographically isolated instances of loísmo (use of lo for dative case) that make up only 2.42% of all uses of lo but 16.66% of dative cases in Santarén and 42% of the 38 tokens of dative lo/la. The remaining tokens of dative lo/la are spread elsewhere. Example (17) illustrates the exceptional tokens of loísmo from Santarén. The speaker coindexes the pronoun lo with the feminine determiner phrase las personas que salían del pescado using the verb poner “to put”, which implies the imputation of the direct object los clanes “the clans” to a recipient: the people who received the clan names.

(17)  LO feminine dative (Santarén community, Puerto Nariño municipality):

ASA_SRPN93: Yoí lo, puso los clanes a las personas que salían del, del pescao,

“Yoí gave them clan names to people who emerged from fish.”

Overall, this section has illustrated that only accusative case made a significant difference in pronoun selection. In spite of exceptional cases of dative lo, dative case made no significant difference in pronoun selection, as speakers categorically selected le for dative case. Similarly, word gender had no effect on pronoun selection in dative case, in which speakers consistently selected le regardless of gender. However, there was more variation in pronoun selection for accusative case, which triggered the significant difference found by the statistical tests, with an important proportion of leísmo: 37.5% of all uses of le (822/2192). Furthermore, the significant interaction between case and word gender shows accusative feminine cases giving greater weight for le than accusative masculine cases. In short, there was less variation in dative case because gender distinction was not relevant in this case, whereas that distinction did appear to be relevant for accusative case.

5. Discussion

These findings provide naturalistic evidence of the use of third-person pronominal objects in two municipalities of the Colombian Amazon, Leticia and Puerto Nariño. The patterns of case difference have indicated the greatest variation in accusative case, in which a significant proportion of leísmo has been found especially for feminine co-referents (63.9% out of 571 tokens). There was a lower but still important proportion of masculine co-referents of le (50.3% out of 909 tokens). A few cases of loísmo have been also found, most of them in an isolated indigenous community.

The migration patterns suggest that leísmo and loísmo are dialectal features of Andean Spanish brought to the Amazon by Peruvian mestizos during the rubber boom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These features arrived in Leticia
and Puerto Nariño from Iquitos, Peru, which was the main enclave of the rubber industry in the Amazon. Given that the specific extractive activities developed in Leticia and Puerto Nariño were controlled from Iquitos (Domínguez 2004:16; Marticorena 2004: 40; Arroyo 2004: 117; Riaño 2003: 20–21, 45–47, 81–82, 216–217), this is the main possible center of diffusion of Andean Spanish features into the Colombian Amazon. These facts explain the similarities between findings of this paper and those reported for nearby areas in the Peruvian Amazon (Cara-vedo 1997; Barraza 1998; Rojas 2004) and suggest dialectal contiguity across these areas. These findings contribute to the cumulative knowledge on Spanish third-person pronominal simplification in language contact areas from Latin America (Escobar 2000; Palacios 2000, 2007; García 2006; Godenzzi 1996).

Likewise, the strengthening presence of Colombia in Leticia, which earlier belonged to Peru, may explain the lower presence of leísmo (28.4% of all data) and isolated cases of loísmo as compared to the case distinction system (70.2% of all data), holding pronoun le for dative case and lo/la for accusative case. Indeed, a quick review of spoken data of Colombians living in Leticia in the 1970s (Alvar 1977: 307–349) reveals 32/37 (86.5%) cases of case distinction, 5/37 (13.5%) cases of leísmo and 0/37 cases of loísmo. Case distinction was the most plausible pattern brought in by the Colombian migrants. However, the depiction of the diffusion patterns of these norms – case distinction, leísmo and loísmo – would need further examination.

Results have been interpreted in light of Mufwene’s (2001) competition model. There were three competing variants: le, lo, la. Of them, la seems virtually eliminated with the lowest percentage (3%), lo stood in second place (21%) and le was the dominant form (76%). Le comprises the majority (97.3%) of all dative cases – which is its canonical function, a significant proportion (55.5%) of all accusative cases (leísmo) and a significant part (63.92%) of feminine accusatives (leísmo). With respect to the forms lo/la, these pronouns comprise 696 tokens (24% of the data). A great majority (94.5%) of these tokens are accusative, leading case distinction, whereas a minor proportion (5.4%) are dative. Dative functions of lo/la correspond to isolated cases of loísmo, mainly from Santarén in Puerto Nariño. All in all, the outputs of this competition took the form of case distinction, leísmo (which brings simplification of case and/or word gender) and isolated cases of loísmo. The coexistence of these outputs is evidence of both dialect leveling and koineization in Amazonian Colombian Spanish. Kyzar (this volume) also indicates some possible dialect leveling between Spanish varieties in Louisiana. In Mufwene’s (2001: 4–6) model, all these facts represent restructuring processes that take place in language evolution/change.

Simplification of case and gender may correlate with SLA strategies or with some influence from the main language of contact: Tikuna. As an SLA strategy, it is reasonable to posit simplification processes towards a generic Spanish form le, perhaps fossilized in bilingual speakers. Furthermore, the pronoun le in accusative
function comprises a larger proportion of all feminine tokens (63.9% out of 571 tokens) than the proportion comprised for all masculine tokens (50.3% out of 909 tokens). Given the larger proportion of accusative feminine cases, it is also reasonable to state some possible influence from the unmarked feminine gender in Tikuna, in which the object suffixes (Montes 2004b: 125) do not fuse gender information. However, the simplification processes observed are not direct evidence of influence from Tikuna, given the geographic and socio-historical contiguity with the nearby Peruvian Amazon, where coincident phenomena have been reported. Ultimately, some possible influence from Tikuna is not incompatible with these results and it can be one of multiple factors contributing to the documented simplification processes.

6. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the use of the third-person object pronouns in Amazonian Spanish. The results were based on oral narrations representative of the speech from rural and urban indigenous settlements in Leticia and Puerto Nariño, Colombia. The three research questions posed at the outset were answered as follows: (1) there was an effect of case and grammatical gender of the co-referent on pronominal object selection; (2) there was no effect of non-linguistic variables on pronoun selection; and, finally, (3) patterns of pronoun selection showed variation for accusative case across the co-referent grammatical gender. Thus, leísmo was dominant for accusative feminine co-referents, whereas the pronouns le and lo/la alternate more evenly for accusative masculine co-referents. These results are the byproduct of migration processes from Peru and Colombia and can be analyzed from the perspective of Mufwene’s (2001) competition model, in which SLA strategies and some possible influence from Tikuna might play a role.

Acknowledgements

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References


Chapter 8. Clitics le, lo, la in Amazonian Colombian Spanish


**Appendix**

![Map 1](image_url)

*Map 1
Fieldwork on Leticia and Puerto Narino municipalities, Amazonas Colombia. Based on and modified from Riano E. and F. Rey (2005).*