
THE ANGLICIZATION OF HISPANIC PLACE NAMES IN COLORADO, USA

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The Territory of Colorado, USA, was admitted to the Union as a state in 1876. Many ethnic groups and cultural influences have played a role in the settlement and development of Colorado. The Hispanic sub-culture has been the greatest influence with the exception of the Anglo-American.

With the establishment of Mexico City as the capitol of New Spain the early Spanish explorers were able to colonize this part of the world at least a century before French explorers began to penetrate the region. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 King Philip of Spain turned with avenging zeal to the settlement of the Pacific before the English took possession.

The early Hispanic explorers needed land marks for guidance. They had been instructed by the Spanish king to name all places, for he believed that naming was part of empire. They fought the native Indians for possession of the land and proceeded to enculturate the people and Hispanize the area.

On the Atlantic seaboard the Colonies gained independence from England in 1776 and with independence they began the settlement of the west. The English speaking settlers came late, but remained longest and in greater numbers. Although many places had been named they rejected most of them and gave new names of their choice and in their own language.

Today Colorado has a population of approximately two million, 75,000 of whom are bilingual, Spanish surnamed citizens. Because of the Hispanic subculture and the predominance of the Anglo-American linguistic influence this research was undertaken. The aim was to investigate the approximately one hundred eighty Hispanic place names that remain and to determine the extent of Anglicization used in the native culture. The conclusions are based on examples of actual usage of several hundred informants who were interviewed.

SUMMARY OF THE VOWELS

1. The vowel *a*: Initial *a* → /ə ~ æ/. *Alamosa* → /æləməʊsə/. Medial *a* → /æ ~ ə ~ ə ~ a/ depending on the amount of stress. *Baca* → /bæ ~ ka/.

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2. The vowel *e*: Initial *e* → |ɛ|. *El Paso* → |ɛl pæso|. Medial *e* → |ɛ ~ ɪ ~ i ~ eɪ|. *Del* → |dɛl|; *Dolores* → |dɔləuri ~ ɪs|. Exceptions: *Hermosa* → |hɛmɔvsə|; *Verde* → |vɛdɪ ~ vɛd|. Final *e* → |ɪ ~ ə|. *Grande* → |grændɪ ~ ə|. *de* → |də|. Exception: *Santa Fe* → |eɪ|, sometimes |i| thus, |sæntɪ feɪ ~ i|.

3. The vowel *i*: Initial *i* → |aɪ ~ ɪ|. *Idalia* → |aɪdeɪlɪə|. Medial *i* → |ɪ ~ i| with more frequent use of |ɪ|. *San Luis* → |sæn luɪs|; *Bovina* → |bovɪnə|. In a few words the expected |i| → |aɪ| as in *Limón* |lɪmən|.

4. The vowel *o*: Initial *o* → |oʊ ~ ɔ|. *Oro* → |óvro|; *Orlando* → |ɔrlændo|. Medial *o*, if it receives the primary stress, → |oʊ| as |Cebolla| |səboulə|. If it receives the weaker stress |o ~ ə| as *Bonita* |bo~nɪtə|. In a few words such as *Norte, Florida* → |ɔ ~ a|, thus |fló ~ arɪdə|. Final *o* unstressed usually remains |o|, less frequently |ə|. *Rico* |rɪko|.

5. The vowel *u*: Medial *u* → |ʌ ~ u ~ ə|. *Burro* → |bʌ ~ uro|; *Archuleta* → |arčə ~ ulétə|. *u* as an element of a diphthong usually remains |u|. *Pueblo* → |pjúeblo ~ píeblo ~ péblo|.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSONANTS

1. Dental |t, d| quality of Hispanic speech → English |t, d|. 2. The unaspirated quality of voiceless Hispanic |p, t, k| → English, |p^h, t^h, k^h| as *Pando* |p^hæ ~ ando; *Timpas* |t^hɪmpəs|. 3. Fricative |β, ð, ɣ| → |b, d, ɡ| as in *Adobe* |ədovɪ|; *Carbonera* → |k^harɔnerə|; *Segunde* |səɡundə|. 4. Trilled |ʀ| has been abandoned for English fricative |r| as in *Rico* |rɪko|. 5. Initial *h* has become |h| as in *Hermosa* |hæmóvsə|. 6. The palatal friction of *j* → |j, h|, less frequently |j| as in *La Junta* |la j ~ huntə| or |jantə|. 7. Palatal |λ| has been abandoned for |l, lj| less frequently |j| as in *Estella* |estelə ~ esteljə| or |estejə|. 8. *s* often becomes |z| as in *Dolores* |dɔləuri ~ ɪz|; *Kumbres* |kumbrɪs|. 9. *v* in graphemics always → |v| in the Anglicized usage as in *Vigil* |vɪjɪl|. 10. *ñ* → | ~ nj|, less frequently |n| as in *Cañon*. Other consonants are treated almost exactly as the English pronunciations.

The stress pattern has shifted to the first syllable in the following words: *Conéjos* → |k^háɲɪjɔs ~ k^háɲɪhos|; *Cimarron* → |sɪmɪrən|; *Limón* → |lɪmən|; *Arriba* → |áɾɪbə|; *Florida* → |florɪdə|; *Pinón* |p^hɪnən|; *Romeo* → |róumto|; *Cristobal* → |k^hɪstəbəl|; *Vigil* → |vɪjɪl|.

The following words have become Anglicized in graphemics: *Arroya* → *Aroya*; *Bronco* → *Broncho*; *Cañon* → *Canon*; *Pinón* ~ *Pinon*; *Fruta* → *Fruita*; *Güero* → *Guero*.

The prosodic features of intonation, rhythm, stressing and timing were not considered in this paper. These features belong primarily to the sentence and not to the word.

A final summary seems to indicate that Hispanic influence in Colorado is one of names rather than orthoepy. The early Spanish explorers gave part of their culture

to this new land. The English speaking settlers who arrived later have taken the place names and changed them according to their linguistic patterns.

DISCUSSION

Hill:

I would merely like to add a comment since I come from an area in which similar phenomena occur. We, however, occasionally, go a step further and create pseudo Spanish names. One such is a street I pass every day—Verde Vista—evidently a translation of the next street, Greenview.

Marquardt:

The anglicization of Hispanic names is probably being paralleled in Colorado by Spanish speaking Americans in the Hispanicization of Anglic names there. To what extent do you know this to be true and what is happening to Anglic names among such speakers where it occurs?