

---

2024 Hispanic Linguistics Symposium

---

Oct 17th, 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM

## Lenition and Language Contact in Peru

Brandon Rogers

*Brigham Young University, brogersttv@gmail.com*

Carol A. Klee

*University of Minnesota, klee@umn.edu*

James Ramsburg

*University of Minnesota, ramsburg@umn.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/hls>

Please take our feedback survey at: [https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE](https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE)

---

Rogers, Brandon; Klee, Carol A.; and Ramsburg, James, "Lenition and Language Contact in Peru" (2024).  
*2024 Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*. 35.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/hls/2024hls/17/35>

This Paper Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2024 Hispanic Linguistics Symposium by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).

## Lenition and Language Contact in Peru

Lenition is defined as any type of articulatory consonantal weakening which can result in voicing, spirantization, or elision. Synchronically and diachronically, lenition has had a consistent and considerable influence on the development of Spanish as well as on its variation. For example, historically, intervocalic /p t k/ were lenited and voiced in Spanish and the other Western Romance languages. Contemporarily, varying levels of lenition have been documented in wide array of Spanish varieties, some of which have been shown to correlate with different sociolinguistic factors. While the degree of lenition for different consonantal segments varies, the general consensus is that lenition is present and active in most, if not all, monolingual varieties of Spanish.

In varieties of Latin American Spanish in contact with indigenous languages, variation that differs from what has been observed in monolingual varieties of Spanish has been reported (see Davidson 2019, Lope Blanch 1987 Michnowicz 2009, 2011, among others). The current study examines how contact with Quechua in southern Peru slows down or impedes several lenitive processes in the Andean Spanish of the region. Specifically, 23 sociolinguistic interviews gathered in a community in southern Peru were analyzed. The results of mixed-effects linear regressions indicate that contact with Quechua, specifically Cusco Quechua, is correlated with lesser degrees of spirantization of intervocalic /d/, as well as with minimal intervocalic sibilant voicing. We hypothesize that Quechuan phonology as well as L2 learning of Spanish has resulted in the lessening of the role of certain processes of lenition, some of which are otherwise rather common in Spanish. Likewise, the current study emphasizes the importance of specifying what variety of Quechua contact linguistics researchers work with as different varieties of Quechua have differing consonantal phonologies.

## References

- Davidson, J. 2019. Intervocalic /s/ voicing in Andean Spanish: Problematizing the assessment of contact-induced change. *Contact, Community, and Connections: Current Approaches to Spanish in Multilingual Populations*, ed. G. L. Thompson, and S. M. Alvord, 111-146. Wilmington, DE: Vernon Press.
- Lope Blanch, Juan. 1987. *Estudios sobre el español de Yucatán*. México D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Michnowicz, Jim. 2009. "Intervocalic voiced stops in Yucatan Spanish: a case of contact induced language change?" in M. Lacorte & J. Leeman (Eds.). *Español en Estados Unidos y otros contextos de contacto: Sociolingüística, ideología y pedagogía*. Madrid: Iberoamericana. 67-84.
- Michnowicz, Jim. 2011. Dialect standardization in Merida, Yucatan: The case of /bdg/. *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana* 18. 191-212.