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# Spanish Additions to the Cowboy Lexicon from 1850 to the Present

Heather A. Robles

Before the development of the windmill, barbed wire, and the modern machinery now used in the cattle industry, "cowboys" inhabited Texas and other western states and herded cattle all year. The work of the cowboy was unlike that of any other profession. For minimal wages, he worked seven days a week and was on call twenty-four hours a day. He regarded his job satisfaction as compensation for the low pay, and took pride in his skill at various herding and roping techniques. The first and, for a long time, best cowboys came from Mexico, since the cattle market in Mexico preceded the one in the United States. The first Anglo cowboys were young men from the East whose interest in the unknown West led them to their new career. They learned the trade from the Mexican *vaqueros* and, as a result, came to use Spanish vocabulary for many of their surroundings, techniques, and tools.

This paper will briefly discuss the Spanish terms found in cowboy English from the late 1800s to the present. The terms described are found in authentic literature written by cowboys describing the many facets of their profession. Included in the fiction and non-fiction sources are biographies, autobiographies, diaries, a book on campfire stories, novels, and books written by cowboys describing the "colorful" nature of their language. The terms are cross-referenced with definitions from western dictionaries, etymological dictionaries, and various Spanish regional dictionaries. In addition to identifying Spanish loanwords in the American cowboy

lexicon, this paper also includes an analysis of the categorial and semantic changes common to many of these terms. These changes in category and meaning indicate the degree of integration of a specific term into the English language. Some, like the term "corral," have become highly integrated into English. "Corral" is recognized by nearly all English speakers, and most do not realize that the term comes originally from Spanish. It is used not only as a noun (like the Spanish term *corral*), but also as a verb, meaning to force an animal into an enclosure. "Corral" is also used metaphorically, in the sense of cornering a person (not just an animal). This paper will show how similar categorial and semantic changes have occurred in many borrowed hispanicisms, indicating that they have been accepted and integrated into the English language.

## Spanish Borrowings in the Cowboy Lexicon

### *Clothing and Other Accessories*

Many of the terms from the cowboy's wardrobe are originally from Spanish. Over his durable pants he wears *chaps*. The origin of the word *chaps* is Spanish, but there is some disagreement as to whether the word descends from *chaparreras* or *chaparejos*. *Chaps* can be worn to the ankle or to the knee. Shorter *chaps* are also known as "chinks," a term whose origin is attributed by many authors to the Spanish *chincaderos* or *chigaderos*, although neither of these terms appears in modern Spanish dictionaries. Short *chaps* are also known as

*armitas*. The *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* gives the following definition for the term *armas de agua o de pelo*: "Llamábanse así dos piezas grandes de cuero de chivo, con pelo, casi cuadradas, que sujetas en la cabeza de la silla o atadas a la cintura del jinete, le cubrían pierna y pie, y le preservaban del agua. En caso necesario se tendían en el suelo para dormir sobre ellas. Las había ricamente adornadas. Hoy se han sustituido con las *chaparreras*, que no pueden prestar iguales servicios, porque no cubren el pie ni sirven para dormir" (p.80). According to this definition, *armas* are the predecessors of *chaparreras*. *Armitas*, then, correspond with the definition above and are a smaller variety of *armas*. Since chaps don't cover the feet, as the above definition of *armas* explains, cowboys used *tapaderos*, or "taps," which are leather coverings attached to the stirrups to protect the toes. The term derives from the Spanish *tapar*, "to cover." The cowboy's chaps and taps are often trimmed with shiny metal decorations called *conchos* or *conchas*. *Concha* is the Spanish word for "shell." Though the silver decorations have a shape similar to that of a shell, Spanish regional and general dictionaries do not provide a similar definition.

Other parts of the cowboy's wardrobe included the *poncho*, which was usually a blanket with a hole for the head. This term could also describe a waterproof shield, but in most regions "slicker" or even "fish" were more common. The cowboy's hat is often called a *sombrero*. The word is originally Spanish, and it refers to any kind of hat. To the cowboy, the *sombrero* is usually a hat with a wide brim. Another style of hat is the "ten-gallon hat." Contrary to popular belief, the name does not refer to its capacity, but derives from the Spanish *galón*, a braided

decoration. American cowboys, misinterpreting the meaning of *galón*, added the number "five" or "ten" to the name of the hat to describe its large size. Some cowboy hats had a *barboquejo*, or chin strap. Another piece of the wardrobe was the *bandana*, which served a multitude of uses for the cowboy. In *The Time it Never Rained*, Elmer Kelton makes mention of the *huaraches* worn by Mexican migrant workers (p. 38). Many cowboys carried a *morral*, a pouch or sack, to carry their supplies.

#### *The Saddle*

Since the cowboy did most of his work on horseback, (many claimed they were uncomfortable when not in the saddle), the saddle and its accessories became a cowboy's most important equipment. Even though many cowboys ride horses belonging to the ranch that employs them, each has his own saddle. The saddle is secured on the horse by one or more "cinches." "Cinch" comes from the Spanish *cincha*. In English it has come to be used as a verb, as well, and has also adapted a metaphorical meaning, as illustrated by the popular Western author Louis L'Amour: "Hopalong rubbed his jaw, his blue eyes twinkling. 'I reckon that last argument cinches it, Sim! I sure was figgerin' on more pie!'" (p. 238). The leather strap that fastened to the cinch and held the saddle in place was called the *látigo*. Saddles were often heavily decorated with silver *conchos* and stamped leather, which indicated their worth.

The saddle horn is often referred to as an "apple," an "apple horn," or a "dally horn." "Apple" is a probable calque from Spanish. The *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* offers a similar definition of the word *manzana*: "cabezal o parte delantera de la

silla de montar" (p.694). Spanish also has a verb related to the noun *manzana*: "*Manzanear*. tr. Entre charros y personas de a caballo, sujetar a la manzana de la silla de la res lazada, dando vuelta corrediza a la reata en torno de ella" (p.694). The meaning of this verb is similar to the English term "to dally" (also spelled "dalley"), which Hedges defines as "to take a wrap around the saddle horn with the rope" (p.334). The term "to dally" is a hispanicism that probably derives from the command form *dale vuelta*. It has also been attributed to the infinitives *dar la vuelta* and *darle vuelta*. Earlier versions of the term were "dolly welter" and "dally welter" (Erickson, p. 95). The term seems to have been adopted into English shortly after the turn of the century. However, it is not found in J. Frank Dobie's *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* (originally published in 1929); he instead talks of giving the rope a *vuelta*: "After a while I'd give the rope a *vuelta* (a turn) around a post, and by taking up the slack when the cow ran would finally get her tied up short" (p.6). In more recent cowboy lingo, a "dally" is one turn of the rope around the horn. Some cowboys prefer this method of securing an animal after roping it; others prefer the "hard-and-fast" approach, which involves tying the rope fast to the horn before roping. Among the cowboys that prefer the *dally* technique, the horn is referred to as the "dally horn."

In addition to the saddle, riding equipment also includes the reins and the headstall fastened onto the horse. One very common type of headstall is the "hackamore." "Hackamore" derives from *jáquima*, a Spanish word of Arabic origin. The *bosal* or *bozal* is a part of the hackamore, the noseband made of rawhide or braided leather, rope, or horsehair. The *mecate* (usually spelled *mecáte*), or hair

rope, serves as reins and completes the hackamore. *Mecate* comes originally from the Nahuatl word *mecatl*, which the *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* defines as "tira larga y angosta o sogá hecha de corteza vegetal" (p.711). The word's origin is not well-known among cowboys because its pronunciation has been altered and it is often spelled "McCarty."

When the cowboy rides his horse on a ranch, he always carries one or more ropes. There are a large variety of ropes that serve many different purposes, some retaining their Spanish names. A *maguey* rope is made of fibers of the maguey cactus and is used exclusively for "dally" roping, which means that it is never tied fast to the saddle horn when an animal is being roped. A "quirt," according to Mackey Hedges, is "a braided, rawhide riding crop or short whip" (p.336). The term has been attributed both to the Spanish word *cuernada*, cord, and to *cuarta*, horsewhip. The latter etymology seems to be more credible. The *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* gives the following definition for *cuarta*: "Látigo corto para las caballerías de silla. Es todo del cuero que llaman *peal*. Tiene en el cabo una asa o anillo del mismo cuero, con que se asegura a la muñeca, y en el otro extremo una pajuela o tira delgada, que es propiamente el azote" (p.319).

Ropes in general are referred to as "lariats" or "reatas" (also "riatas"). Both words derive from the Spanish word for a rope used to keep animals in a line, plus the feminine article: *la reata*. The term *lasso*, from *lazo*, is sometimes found, often as a verb. The ropes used for roping animals are made with a "honda" (often spelled "hondo"), a loop or eye in the end of the rope. A honda can be a loop made by tying a knot in the end of the rope, or it can be a

ring of rawhide or metal braided into the end of the rope. The loop used to catch an animal is made by passing the free end of the rope through the honda. The term does not derive from the Spanish *hondo*, but from *hondón*, an eye or eyelet. The uses of the rope include various roping techniques, many of which still use Spanish terminology.

#### *Roping Techniques*

A common roping technique is the *mangana*, a throw used to catch a horse. This throw is also known as "forefooting" and involves forming a loop that the horse steps into with his front feet. There are several variations on the *mangana*. The cowboy uses his foot to throw the loop in the *mangana de pie*. The *mangana de cabra* is used by sheepherders, or *pastores*, to catch goats by the front feet (Dobie, p. 247). A common throw mentioned by Dobie is the *pial*, which is used to catch an animal by its hind feet (p.248). Watts gives "a rope" as a secondary definition for the word *pial* (p.243). Variations on the term *pial* are found in the *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* and *Vocabulario Campesino Nacional* (VCN). The DM notes that the term *peal* comes from the same Latin root as the word *pie*, and defines it as a type of rope:

"(De *pes*, *pedis*, como *pie*.) m. Soga, cuerda con que se laza la res, echándose preferentemente a las patas; hecha de ordinario de fibra resistente, recia, torcida; llamada también reata o lechuguilla. Del sureste a Sur América, hecha de cuero crudo, curado con sebo, torcida y tallada" (p.820).

The DM also includes a verb form: "*Pealar*. tr. Forma vulgar de apealar, por echar el peal

a la res, lazándola en carrera. También se dice *pialar*" (p.820). The (VCN) mentions the term *pial*, citing its use as a rope throw, a type of rope and a loop: "Lazada a la extremidad de la pata. . . Cuerda de cuero sin tejer ni torcer, que sirve para inmovilizar a la vaca cuando se ordeña. . . Lazo que atrapa las patas de una bestia" (p.84). The VCN also mentions the verb form: "PIALAR o APIALAR: Lazar de las patas a las bestias" (p.239). Hedges describes a throw similar to the *pial*, called the *culo*: "A style of throwing the rope so that it wraps around the rear of an animal and catches the hind feet from the back rather than from the side" (p.334).

#### *The Ranch Hierarchy*

The earliest cowboys were Mexicans, and they referred to themselves as *vaqueros*. In fact, among cowboys themselves, "cowboy" has never been a very common term. More common are "cowman" (*vaquero*) and "buckaroo." Buckaroo is an adaptation of the word *vaquero*. *Caballero* was also occasionally used to refer to a man on horseback. A group of cowboys or *vaqueros* was called an outfit or a *corrida*.

There are many levels in the hierarchy of a ranch. The owner of a ranch is known as the "rancher" or *ranchero*, the *patrón*, the *señor*, or even the *Don*. The owner's wife is called *la patrona* or *la madama*. The owner sometimes lives on the ranch, but often he is an absentee owner who counts on his foreman to run the ranch in his absence. Cowboys sometimes refer to a distant absentee owner as the *presidente*. The foreman (sometimes called the *mayordomo*, if he is Mexican) selects a trail boss to supervise trail drives and round-ups. The trail boss might then select a straw boss, or *segundo*, to assist him. Another

term for the straw boss is the *caporal*. Below the *segundo* are the *vaqueros* or cowboys, sometimes referred to as "punchers," as well as the cook, who never helps with the cattle, except in case of emergency.

At the bottom of the hierarchy is the "wrangler," or the man in charge of keeping the herd of horses and supplying each cowboy with a fresh horse whenever he needs a change of mount. The term "wrangler" existed in English as early as the sixteenth century. Henry V refers to himself as a the wrangler for the throne of France in William Shakespeare's *King Henry V*: "Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler that all the courts of France will be disturb'd with chases" (p.493). However, it is unlikely that early cowboys were familiar with this use of the term. It is more likely that the modern Western usage of wrangler comes from the Spanish *caballerango*, which the *Diccionario de Mejicanismos* defines as: "El mozo que en las haciendas o casas particulares cuida y ensilla los caballos" (p.162). Watts gives "wrancho" and "wangler" as variations of "wrangler" (p.370). The wrangler of an outfit is usually the youngest and/or least experienced member of the crew. It is a position of little prestige, but considered to be a good starting place for young would-be cowboys. The wrangler is also called the *remudero* because he was responsible for the *remuda*, or herd of horses.

### *Animals*

Some animal terms from Spanish refer to animals found only in the Southwest and Mexico. Since no English word existed, it is natural that cowboys and other newcomers to the West adopted the Spanish names. These animals include the *coyote* (originally

from Nahuatl *coyotl*), the *paisano* (also "road runner"), the "javelina" (from Spanish *jabalina*-also known as the collared peccary), and the "tarantula" (a term originally from Italian).

The history of the word "buffalo" is unique. The American buffalo is more correctly referred to as the American bison. Buffalo comes from *búfalo*, which was the name the Spanish conquistadors originally assigned to the bison, which they found to be similar to the Indian buffalo. The term *búfalo* was first recorded in the Americas around 1530 when it was used by Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca to describe the bison found on the plains of Texas (Watts, p. 57).

Another animal native to the Southwestern United States and Mexico is the *puma*. *Puma* is the Spanish word for the animal that in English can be referred to as *puma*, "cougar," and "mountain lion."

Cowboys also use a number of terms to refer to the stock and domestic animals that they work with. Some cattle breeds have names that come from Spanish, such as *Santa Gertrudis* cattle and "Corriente Steers." *Corriente*, a Spanish word meaning "common" or "ordinary," originally referred to steers in a generic sense. However, the term has taken on a more specific meaning. Hedges reiterates this, though he says that Corriente Steers are not exactly a breed of cattle: "Corrienties [sic] are considered a breed by some people today. In truth, they are a cross of several breeds of cattle found in Mexico and come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They are popular with team ropers because they usually have large horns compared to the size of their bodies" (p.334). Cattle in general are also referred to as *novillos*. A bull might be called a *toro*. Ramon Adams says that many old cowboys preferred to use the term *toro* in the presence

of a lady in order to avoid the more vulgar term, "bull" (1961, p. 159). A wild or unmanageable steer is called either an outlaw or a *ladino*. *Ladino* is a Spanish term meaning "learned" or "clever," and cowboys use it to describe an animal that seems to have unusual intelligence. The DM says: "se le llama así [ladino] sobre todo al toro que habiendo estado en corral, al volver al campo no sólo es otra vez salvaje, sino que tiene una especie de conocimiento del hombre y esquivo los lazos que se le ponen para cogerlo" (p. 652). Motherless calves are known as "dogies" or *sanchos*. The origin of "dogie" is uncertain. It is probably a hispanicism, but whether it derives from a variant of *adobe* or from *dogal*, "halter," has not been established. It has, however, been proposed that the term is not of Spanish origin at all and perhaps derives from "dough-guts," an expression used by cowboys to describe the swollen bellies of malnourished calves (Blevins, p. 114). Another word for an orphaned calf is "leppie," or "lepe," which comes from the Spanish term *lepe*, which Sobarzo defines as an orphaned animal: "LEPE. adj. Dícese del animal, especialmente del becerro o del potrillo, que ha perdido la madre, sea por muerte de ésta o por otra circunstancia" (p. 140).

Cowboys have an equally rich Spanish vocabulary to describe horses. A *caballo* is a horse in general. A "bronc," or *bronco* (less common), is a horse that has not been "broken," or trained to wear a saddle and carry a rider. The DM confirms this definition: "*bronco*, ca. adj. Dícese entre gente del campo, del caballo no acabado de educar y reacio por lo mismo a la rienda y al manejo del jinete" (p. 152). In later cowboy literature, a bronc came to mean not just an unbroken horse, but any horse that had a

difficult disposition and was hard to ride: "Through close supervision and careful culling, the rancher should be able to mount himself and his cowboys on the kind of horses he thinks are right for his type of operation. If he ends up with knothead and broncs, he has no one to blame but himself" (Erickson, p. 71). A *potro* refers to a young horse, either unbroken or in the process of being broken. A "mustang" is a wild horse descended from the horses that had been stolen by Indians or those that escaped from the Spaniards during the colonization of Mexico. The word "mustang" is said to derive from the Spanish word *mesteño*. Dobie gives another possible etymology of the word:

It is the English corruption of *mesteño* or *mesteña* (feminine), a word already legalized in Spain when Copernicus asserted diurnal rotation of the earth. In 1273 the Spanish government authorized the *mesta* as an organization of sheep owners. On the long 'walks' between winter and summer ranges, many sheep were lost. They were called *mesteños* (belonging to the *mesta*). They were also called *mostrencos* (from *mostrar*, to show, exhibit). The estrayed animal had to be *mostrado* (shown) in public to give the owner a chance to claim it. *Bienes mostrencos* were, in legal terminology, goods lacking a known owner. . . . *Mestengo*, a later form of *mostrenco*, is a word nearer to mustang than *mesteño*, and some etymologists have regarded it as the origin (Dobie, 1952, cited in Watts, p. 221).

Spanish terms are also commonly employed to refer to the color or breed of a horse. A *grulla* is a mouse-colored horse. A *moro* is

a blue-gray color. A *pinto* or "paint" is a two-colored horse, as if splashed with paint.

A *palomino* is a horse with a golden color. According to Watts, the term *palomino* comes originally from the Spanish *paloma*, and makes reference to the grayish-golden color of the dove (p.237).

Spanish terms are also found in references to groupings of animals. A group of horses including one stallion and several mares of the same coloring is known as a *manada* or *mañada*. A *manada* can also refer to a group of mares and colts, the lead mare wearing a bell and called the "belled mare" or the *caponera*. The group of horses from which cowboys choose their mounts is known as a "cavvy." The term comes from *caballada*, which has the same meaning as the English term: "Manada de caballos o de yeguas" (DM, p. 161). Other variations on the term include "cavvieryard," "cavvie," and "cavieta." *Remuda* is a synonym of *cavvy*.

A herd of cattle is sometimes called a "rodear." This comes from the Spanish verb *rodear*, to encircle or round up. The term can also be used as a verb. Hedges explains this use of *rodear* in his glossary: "As a verb, it means to hold a herd of cattle, as in, 'We rodeared the cattle in a draw across from the dry lake.'" (p.336). A "paratha" or "parada" (also often *parade*, pronounced like the English "parade") is a smaller herd made up of animals separated from the *rodear*.

*Oreana* pairs are an unbranded calf with his mother. A single *oreana* is an unbranded animal. The word (also spelled *orejano* or *orejana*) refers to animals that lacked the ear-mark or cut that identified the animal's owner.

#### *Structures Found on the Ranch and in a Ranch Town*

The word "ranch" comes from the Spanish *ranch*. A ranch is also referred to as an *hacienda*. Structures on the ranch include the big house, which includes a *cocina*, the bunkhouse, and the "corrals." Fences on a ranch are made of wire, or *alambre*. In a Southwestern town, houses of poor quality are called *jacales*. Buildings constructed of *adobe* are called, simply, "adobes." Other structures with Spanish names include the town *plaza*, the *café*, and the "rodeo arena."

### **Innovations**

#### *Categorical Changes*

Many of the Spanish terms mentioned above were not only adopted into English, but they also suffered categorical changes. This section will briefly detail some of these changes, listing the most notable examples.

#### *Noun to Verb*

English allows for nouns to easily transform into verbs. For example, to "photograph" someone is to take a photograph of him, and to "telephone" a friend is to call him on the telephone. The Spanish language does not allow for such a smooth transition from a noun to a verb. The Spanish noun *corral*, for instance, can be used in English as a verb, meaning to force an animal into a *corral*. To spur and "quirt" a horse is to urge him on using spurs and a quirt, or short whip. The term "wrangler," from *caballerango*, produced the verb "wrangle" in cowboy English, meaning "to herd and drive horses" (Watts, p. 369). Another example is the verb "to stampede," from the Spanish noun *estampida*. "Stampede" can be a transitive verb, meaning to cause a group of cattle to bolt, or an intransitive verb, meaning to suddenly take off running.

*Verb to Noun*

Just as English allows for nouns to become verbs, the reverse transformation is also permissible. You can call someone on the phone, or make a phone *call*. Some Spanish verbs that became nouns include "dally," from *dale vuelta*. One turn around a saddle horn came to be known as a "dally," and a cowboy's skill at roping was a measure of how he "took his dallies" (Hedges, p. 72). A common verb in cowboy English is "savvy," meaning to know or understand. The Spanish spelling, *sabe*, was often found as well. The following example is found in Ramon Adams's *The Old-Time Cowhand*:

"When scattered schools were established, and teachers imported from the East, the range-bred boy didn't have much respect for them wisdom-bringers because they were pilgrims. To 'im anybody that didn't savvy cows was a greener that couldn't teach a settin' hen to cluck" (p.13).

As a noun, the term refers to knowledge or understanding. It can be said of a person, "There's a heap of truth in that old sayin', 'Put a cowman afoot and he don't know a thing.' Yet the sayin' itself's a compliment to his savvy of hosses and cattle" (Adams, 1961, p. 12); or of a horse: "I was ridin' a big stout chestnut horse called Bob that had lots of cow savvy and was fast on his feet" (Green, p. 227).

Another Spanish verb that is used in English as a noun was *pasear*. As a noun it means a stroll, but is usually used ironically and refers to a fairly large distance: "Now, immediately after coming into possession of Payaso I made, for private reasons, a considerable *pasear* into the Devil's River country to the south and west" (Dobie, p.

123, emphasis mine). Finally, Hedges mentions *rodear*, which can be a verb, meaning to encircle or round up (the origin of the modern *rodeo*), or a noun, meaning a large herd of cattle.

*Verb or Noun to Adjective*

It has already been mentioned how the Spanish verb *rodear* could also serve as a noun, meaning a large herd of cattle. Another noun that came from *rodear* was "rodeo," which is a competitive event at which cowboys show their riding and roping skills. "Cinchy" is an adjective that comes from "cinch"; it refers to a horse that is sensitive to the saddle and difficult to ride: "He saddled him in the corral, and as soon as his cinch went tight, ol' Prescott went up in the air and over on his back. 'Kinda cinchy, ain't he?' was all that Dean had to say" (Hedges, p. 259). "Bronc" is also used as an adjective, referring to the disposition of a horse: "A snubbin' post is used when you rope a bronc horse or bad cattle and need to draw them up tight in order to do something to them" (Green, p. 179).

*Attributives*

In English, nearly any noun can become an adjective, which allows for formations such as "*mañana* manner," which is found in Dobie's *A Vaquero of the Brush Country*: "He was deep in the joys of constructing, purely in an imaginative and *mañana* manner, a ten-storied marble hotel at San Antonio for the use of old time trail drivers and the cattle people of generations to come" (p. xi). English also allows for nouns to be used as adjectives, without necessarily losing their classification as nouns, as in the combinations "ice cream cone" and "basketball team." In these examples the nouns "ice cream" and "basketball" serve to

modify other nouns, "cone" and "team." Spanish allows for this type of modification very infrequently. However, some Spanish nouns, after being integrated into English could be used to modify other nouns. "Rodear" and "rodeo" came to be used in this way, as in the "rodeo circuit," "rodeo boys," and the "rodear ground" (Hedges, 207). Similarly, the noun "cinch" and the verb "dally" serve as modifiers in constructions such as "cinch leather" and "dally rubber."

### *Semantic Changes*

This section will discuss the semantic changes that many hispanicisms underwent after their adoption into English. The metaphorical use of "corral" has already been mentioned, where it comes to mean to corner a horse or a person. In addition to adopting metaphorical uses, Spanish terms adopted into English came to be used in redundant constructions and even produced new words with new meanings. All of these semantic changes indicated that the term in question had been completely integrated into the English language and was at that point subject to all of the possible transformations of the language.

### *Figurative uses*

The cowboy's language is full of colorful comparisons and metaphors. In fact, the cowboy's unique and picturesque style of language has been the subject of books, such as *The Cowman Says it Salty* by Ramón Adams and *Happy Trails: A Dictionary of Western Expressions* by Hendrickson. The use of hispanicisms in metaphors shows their integration into his language. The verb "to cinch" is sometimes used metaphorically, as mentioned in a previous section. A new form, "to uncinch," also has a metaphorical

meaning. In the following example, Adams (1961) refers to the cowboy's flair for profanity: "When he uncinched this talent and turned 'er loose, he was a top hand at it, and had mighty few equals" (p. 24). A cavvy refers to a herd of horses, but Ramon Adams makes reference to the "cavvy of graybacks" (fleas) that a cowboy might inherit if he wasn't careful about his hygiene (p. 71). Kelton uses the verb "to wrangle" to mean to argue: "Breed was a small matter, something to josh a competitor about -- like wrangling over Fords and Chevrolets" (p. 278). A "dally" is one turn of the rope around the saddle horn to keep a roped animal in place. Adams talks of a "dally" of the tongue that keeps a cowman's temper in place: "It was the greener's ignorance that made the range man hobble his lip and put a dally on his tongue, because the first time he said somethin' 'round a tenderfoot a herd of questions came foggin' his way" (1961, p.18). A cowboy who liked to practice his quick draw was said to have the "pronto bug" (Adams, 187). One of the most colorful metaphors used by cowboys was that of the verb "to pecos": "To 'pecos' a man one shot him and rolled his body into the river -- the one river that drained an empire" (Dobie, p. 275).

### *Redundant Constructions*

The topic of redundant forms falls under the section on categorical change, as well as under the section on semantic change. The hispanicism in such forms was generally a noun that had been converted into an adjective. As such, it became a modifier that referred to a specific variety of thing, rather than the thing itself. For example, *grama* is a Spanish term for grass. In the redundant formation "*grama* grass," however, it refers to a specific type of grass

and distinguishes it from other varieties, such as "buffalo grass" (L'Amour, p. 22). Sometimes redundant forms do not imply a change in meaning, such as "wild mustang horse" and "lariat rope" (Erickson, p. 16).

#### *New words (derivations)*

A third source of proof that a Spanish word has been integrated into English is its propensity to produce new forms. For instance, the noun "stampede" led to the transitive verb "to stampede," from which the agent noun *stampeder* derives: "There was always some old "stampeder" or two layin' out on the fringe lookin' for boogers" (Adams, 1961, p. 36). A "mustanger" is a man who hunts mustangs. A "semi-bronc" is a bronc that is somewhat manageable, but still fairly wild (Adams, 1961, p. 247). The verb form of "cinch" produced the adjective "cinchy" (Hedges, p.259), the verb "to uncinch" (Adams, p. 24) and the verb "recinch" (Adams, p. 248). "Locoed" derives from *loco*, as in "loco weed."

#### *Conclusion*

This paper has presented a detailed, but by no means exhaustive, list of Spanish terms found in cowboy English literature from the 1800s to the present. The categorical and semantic changes experienced by many of the terms have been explained. These changes indicate the degree of integration of a term into the English language. Further proof of this high level of integration is the fact that some terms have become so altered from their original Spanish form and so frequent in English that their origin is not ordinarily recognized by cowboys or other English speakers. (1971. The Cowman S This study has not taken into account the oral language of modern-day cowboys, which would be found in live interviews.

The use of such interviews, including acceptability judgments from the interviewees, would be an excellent addition to a future study because they would lend a current viewpoint to the study and they would enable the analysis of phonetic changes.

Note: An abridged version of this paper has been printed in *La Marca Hispánica*, a journal published by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese of Brigham Young University. This paper differs from that version in several aspects, including the incorporation of the section on innovations.

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