**Tracing back the Bantu roots of Palenquero Creole**

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Palenquero Creole, which is spoken in the small village of San Basilio de Palenque (Colombia), is the only Spanish-based Creole that has been found to this day in Latin America (Papiamentu seems to be, at least, as much Portuguese as Spanish: Kramer 2004). Interestingly, Palenquero is also one of the very few Creoles whose *substrate* has turned out to be almost as recognizable as its *lexifier*. Linguistic, anthropological and genetic research has recently proven the connection between the Afrodescendants of San Basilio de Palenque and the Bakongo people from the region of Mayombe (Ansari-Pour/Moñino 2016; Schwegler 2016), so we consider Palenquero’s substrate to be mainly (or even exclusively) Kikongo (Bantu H10) and specifically West Kikongo. According to Moñino (2017), a vehicular variety of Civili (also included in the West Kikongo clade: Dom/Bostoen 2015) might be at Palenquero’s core, since, during the 16th and 17th centuries, the Vili people (from the old kingdom of Loango) used to capture the Bakongo and sell them later to the Portuguese and Spanish slave traders.

This talk will start by pointing out those Palenquero elements that most scholars have considered to have Kikongo origins, whereas the second part of the talk will be devoted to show how Kikongo elements can be readapted during creolization. For instance, the plural prefix *ma*- (noun class 6) from Kikongo has been transferred and readapted as the /+specific/ plural marker in Palenquero (Schewegler 2007), consequently getting closer to the function carried by the plural article of Western languages than to that of Bantu noun class markers. To put in other words, “substratal influence” during creolization goes far beyond *replica* and *pivot matching* processes (Matras 2009) and entails functional reorganization of phonetic material out of a shared functional basis that may act as a “trigger” for linguistic change in a multilingual scenario. As a matter of fact, most of the processes observed in the contact scenario Spanish/Kikongo resulting in the creation of Palenquero Creole fit well into Mufwene’s *feature pool* idea.

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