

Dialectical Unity in Central America? An Analysis of its Dialectical Lexicon

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ONOMÁZEIN 47 (March 2020): 158-177

DOI: 10.7764/onomazein.47.07

ISSN: 0718-5758



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Received: January 2018

Accepted: September 2018

Abstract

The lexicon that coincides with the geographic region formed by the six countries of the American isthmus has not yet been examined as part of a single dialectical area. Our inquiry proposes to analyse and classify the lexical units that are recorded in dialectical dictionaries as a means to answer the question of whether this is a single dialectical area. Through a quantitative and qualitative methodology, we discover that the Central American territory presents two groups according to lexical repertoire. The results demonstrate that the first includes El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which have a greater number of coinciding words compared to Costa Rica and Panama. Data about the indicators that shed light on etymological origin and lexical-semantic creation, adoption and adaptation to understand the trends followed by each group are also provided. This work contributes to the possibility of considering Central America as a dialectical unit.

Keywords: dialectical lexicon; Central America; dictionary of Americanisms; dictionary of Spanish in Panama.

1. Introduction

In studies of the lexicon of the Spanish language in Latin America, there is a notable lack of comprehensive research that demonstrates possible coincidences and divergences in the dialectical vocabulary (Haensch & Werner, 1978; Quesada Pacheco, 2013b; Alvar Ezquerro, 2002; Sánchez Corrales, 2006). For more than thirty years, the publication of dictionaries of American Spanish with new criteria would appear to have overcome some issues raised previously: the fragmentation that impedes overall knowledge; the appearance of new repertoires of geographic areas until then ignored by collectors, the banishment of prescriptivism or dependency on the dictionary of the *Real Academia Española* [Royal Spanish Academy] and the possibility of recording marked words (colloquialisms, slang, etc.) as dialectical and differential lexicons of Spanish-speaking America (López Morales, 2003; Carriscondo Esquivel, 2006; Fajardo Aguirre, 2010).

The research problem we intend to address relates specifically to the possibility of considering the Central American lexicon as a lexical repertoire that exhibits a common unity (Canfield, 1981; Lipski, 2000; Rosales Solís & Zamora Úbeda, 2016). To clarify this issue, we detected the need to identify and analyse the shared vocabulary in the Spanish language of Central America with data gathered from current regional dictionaries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). Studies of the phonetic and morphosyntactic levels of Central American Spanish utilizing survey-based methodologies have yielded data by country but have not yet provided up-to-date conclusions regarding the lexical plane that would allow us to justify whether we are facing a geographic area that exhibits unity or, on the contrary, lexical repertoires with different degrees of coincidence (Quesada Pacheco, 2009, 2013a).

Our primary interest is recognizing the lexical-semantic similarities between the words of the countries of the isthmus to determine whether it is feasible to establish a classification within this geographic territory. Thus far, lexicographical collections understand as a Central American word that which is recorded in the six countries or in some of them, as they appear in dictionaries that offer examples of the lexicon of this area (Lévêque, 2010).

A review of studies that have analysed the lexical repertoire of the Spanish language of this geographic zone provides us with the following theoretical contributions:

- a) Historical, commercial, cultural and social links that have existed since the 16th century among countries of the isthmus suggest that lexical Americanism presents a high level of lexical-semantic similarity. This continuous intercommunication can be a promoter of a certain degree of coincidence, without disregarding the particularities of each nation. In fact, relations between these nations could not always be achieved: El Salvador has no Caribbean coastline, a site of intercommunication between countries, and Honduras,

owing to its very mountainous terrain, also had difficulties communicating with the other Central American countries (Quesada Pacheco, 2013b).

On a historical level, the Central American territory was incorporated into the Royal Chancery of Panama (1538-1752) until the creation in 1542 of the *Audiencias* [Royal Audiences or courts] of Guatemala (Chiapas, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica) and Quito (all of South America). According to Pérez (2001) and Lovell and Lutz (2003), various vicissitudes alternated periods in which those of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala came to depend on Mexico, whereas in other periods it remained an independent administrative body (Pinto Bernal, 2012). Likewise, Panama was part of Gran Colombia during the 19th century, and it previously belonged to the Viceroyalty of New Granada based in Bogotá (*Real Audiencia de Santafé de Bogotá*).

- b) The theoretical trajectory of research about the description of lexical Americanisms concludes that indicators for their definition are Indo-American words (Nahuatl, Mayan, etc.), in addition to possible borrowings from other languages (English, French, Portuguese, etc.). Above all, however, it highlights the capacity to adopt, adapt and create new words with regard to the signifier and signified from patrimonial or archaic words in European Spanish (Frago Gracia & Franco Figueroa, 2001). Also important is the selection of derivative morphemes that derive from the lexical bases, in addition to the figurative use of vocabulary (Scavnicky, 1974; Urrutia Cárdenas, 1978; Montes Giraldo, 1983; García Tesoro, 2002; Torres Torres, 2004; Mantica, 2008; Enguita Utrilla, 2010; Aleza-Izquierdo, 2017).

Likewise, the diatopic information provided by the recording of each word in a country facilitates research on lexical Americanism, as has been demonstrated by the various studies performed on the vitality of these words. In the works of Kany (1963), Rivas (1978), Moreno de Alba (1988), Sala et al. (1977, 1982), Quesada Pacheco (1992, 2003), Quilis and Stanziola (2003), Enguita Utrilla (2010) and Cáceres-Lorenzo (2018), the geographic diffusion of each word is analysed together with productivity or the possibility of creating derivatives and semantic richness.

The study of lexical Americanism through these indicators classifies each word in terms of its distribution, formation through affixes and the influence of other languages with which the Spanish language came in contact: indigenous languages, English, Portuguese, African languages and German. Also, in the arena of content, according to Sala et al. (1982: 3-5) and Buesa Oliver and Enguita Utrilla (1992: 237-247), many words come from European Spanish but exhibit dialectical semantic evolution in American territory.

- c) Despite the complexity and diversification of American Spanish, attempts at zoning have focused on the geographic grouping of the analysed countries. The proposals made are aimed at establishing areas with common characteristics. In this sense, and despite some

reluctance to accept certain dialectical divisions based on the different criteria that have been followed in its development, it seems that certain unanimity exists in considering Central America a territory with Nahuatl influence (Alba, 1992: 63-84).

The survival of Nahuatl vocabulary in the Central American region has been confirmed on several occasions. To clarify some issues, it must be taken into account that not all the countries of the isthmus utilize Nahuatl words with the same profusion, and those that are recorded are not always linked to the possible influence of Mexico but rather to a regional Nahuatl (Pipil) from El Salvador. In fact, Lipski (2000) and Cáceres-Lorenzo (2015) present data indicating that Panama, and perhaps also Costa Rica, possesses an inventory of minority Nahuatls with respect to those of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Other distributions separate Guatemala and Costa Rica as highland territories (with little contact with the metropolis) and El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua as lowland territories (maintaining relations with Europe through their ports). This assertion has not been endorsed by other researchers (Canfield, 1981: 23; Zamora Munné, 1993: 87-96; Quesada Pacheco, 2013b: 34; Lipski, 2000: 250), who prefer to unite El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, on one hand, and Guatemala with Mexico. The dictionary of Central Americanisms (DICA) of the researchers Rosales Solís and Zamora Úbeda (2016) presents a total of 34,376 words, of which 751 are shared throughout the Central American region. At the level of each country, the DICA registers 5,007 words from Guatemala, 7,667 from El Salvador, 5,857 from Honduras, 4,672 from Costa Rica, 6,429 from Nicaragua, and from Panama 3,993 words.

For his part, Cahuzac (1980: 385-461) contributes a zoning scheme that expands on the above. In his analysis of the dialectical semantics of 600 lexemes that designate the concept of 'peasant', after classifying the meanings and assessing their vitality as recorded throughout the Americas, in one or several nations, he concludes that Central America should be grouped with the United States, Mexico, the Antilles, Venezuela, Colombia (non-Andean) and coastal Ecuador. Meanwhile, the contributions of the project known as VARILEX (*Variación léxica del español en el Mundo* or Lexical Variation of Spanish in the World) (<http://lecture.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~cueda/varilex/#>), which has been active since 1997, situate Central America together with Colombia and Venezuela as one of the zones into which the Spanish language is divided in the world with respect to the urban lexicon compiled (Ueda, 2009). A few years later, from the joint analysis of the nineteen countries in Ueda's *Diccionario de Americanismos* [Dictionary of Americanisms] (2016: 221-235), another grouping obtained using association coefficients was presented: Costa Rica and Panama are grouped with the Caribbean, and the remaining Central American countries join Mexico and other South American nations.

All of these assessments, developed under the three aforementioned points, have not provided an answer to the problem of considering Central America a single dialectical area and doing so without overlooking the fact that each country has its own internal variations.

Given this situation, we have proposed the following research questions regarding the vocabulary of the countries of Central America obtained using current synchronic dictionaries: what level of lexical-semantic similarity is recorded in the common vocabulary of the countries of the American isthmus? Is it possible to speak of a glossary common to a group or several groups of nations? Finally, how are the possible groups characterized from the point of view of the indicators that define lexical Americanism (diversity of origin, creation, adoption and adaptation in the signifier or signified)?

The results of the analysis and classification of the Central American lexical repertoire will be a contribution that serves to discern the possibility of considering this geographic area as a unitary zone.

2. Materials and methods

The materials selected for this research are the latest dialectical and differential dictionaries published in the context of the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española [Association of Academies of the Spanish Language] (2010, 2014). The objective of these sources is to contribute trustworthy and comparable data in works that are identified by their dialectical, differential and descriptive nature. The sources from which the terms have been extracted are the *Diccionario de americanismos* [Dictionary of Americanisms] (2010) and the *Diccionario del español en Panamá* [Dictionary of Spanish in Panama] (Vásquez, 2010). The first is a lexical repertoire that has been developed as a lexicographical thesaurus and draws on prior research conducted from 1975 to 2010, and the second is a new study not included in the *Diccionario de americanismos*.

In the process of data gathering, the diatopic framework and the definition that accompanies each term were utilized. The etymological reference was also taken into account when it appeared in the academic dictionaries. All of these data are references regarding the indicators of each lexical unit and facilitated a holistic study of Central American Spanish. In this study, each country is taken as the unit of analysis, rather than the possible variations in each of the regions of each country.

The study, which was designed to answer the research questions, was performed in different phases:

- 1) The creation of a database of 34,494 Americanisms that are found in one or several countries of the American isthmus, in addition to other nations. This lexicon was reduced to 11,750 examples after discarding, for the purposes of our analysis, those lexical units recorded in only one Central American country. Terms appearing in only one country do not provide information about possible affinities existing in the lexicon of each nation and thus are not included in the lexicon utilized.

- 2) To understand the index of similarity between the lexical repertoires of each country, the Jaccard similarity index was utilized. The proximity matrix resulting from the statistical analysis will suggest to us possible groupings of countries in a quantitative manner that may be made visible through agglomerative hierarchical clustering (AHC).
- 3) Subsequently, qualitative criteria will be utilized to examine the lexical repertoire common to each group generated in the statistical analysis with regard to the indicators that define the Americanism: 1) etymological origin, 2) American creations in the meaning (original or derived), and 3) new meaning with regard to another term from America or Spain.

With a view towards simplifying the study of these common repertoires, two tables that are differentiated by the first indicator are developed, as the value of the indigenous words as a characteristic element of Central American lexicon has been demonstrated on countless occasions.

3. Results and discussion

The total number of lexical Americanisms that are present in at least two countries among those studied is 11,750 (34.063% of the total), which implies a high percentage of local terms. Table 1 presents the number of terms belonging to this group that are present in each country, in addition to the number of words that are shared between each one of the Central American countries.

TABLE 1

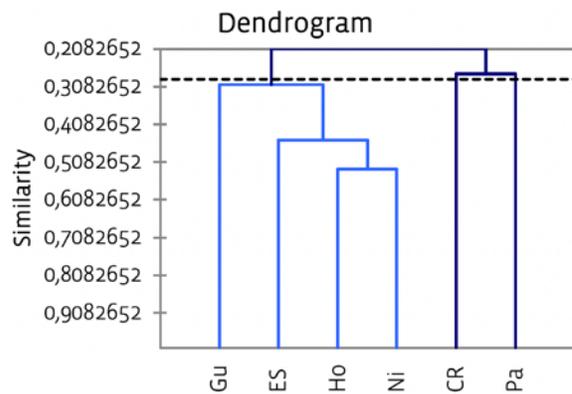
Lexical Americanisms recorded in at least two countries of the isthmus. Gu: Guatemala; Ho: Honduras; ES: El Salvador; Ni: Nicaragua; CR: Costa Rica; Pa: Panama. Figures for each country are shaded in grey, whereas the numbers of coincidences are shaded in white

	Gu	Ho	ES	Ni	CR	Pa
Gu	6,835	3,010	2,677	2,643	1,347	1,083
Ho	3,010	14,740	5,227	5,657	2,254	1,660
ES	2,677	5,227	11,467	4,037	1,731	1,259
Ni	2,643	5,657	4,037	11,543	2,632	1,912
CR	1,347	2,254	1,731	2,632	5,981	1,365
Pa	1,083	1,660	1,259	1,912	1,365	5,868

The AHC obtained with these data by calculating the Jaccard similarity index allows us to separate these countries into two differentiated groups. This result can be observed graphically in the dendrogram in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1

Visual representation of the compound correlation data. Gu: Guatemala; Ho: Honduras; ES: El Salvador; Ni: Nicaragua; CR: Costa Rica; Pa: Panama



The lexical repertoires that are most similar are those of Honduras and Nicaragua, which share nearly 50% of the American vocabulary recorded in both. These two countries constitute the basis of a group that is completed by El Salvador and Guatemala. The other two territories studied, Panama and Costa Rica, have a greater similarity with one another than with the group formed by the other four Central American countries; thus, because they do not share a large number of terms, they are distinguished from the rest. It is interesting to note that although the Costa Rican repertoire shares 1,365 words with the Panamanian repertoire, versus 2,632 words with Nicaragua, its obvious differences from the rest of the countries composing the latter group distance it from that group in the dendrogram shown in Figure 1.

In sum, the similarity between Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua is notable, as is the scant relationship with the repertoires of Panama and Costa Rica.

This division may be related to the conclusions explained by Nahuatl in this region, as discussed by Lipski (2000: 65) and Cáceres Lorenzo (2015: 62).

Once the grouping of the Central American countries is clarified, each of the repertoires common to each group is studied. Regarding those Central American words that coincide in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, there are a total of 219 words exclusive to these countries. On the other hand, the lexicon common to Costa Rica and Panama and not present in any of the other Central American countries is only 45 lexical units.

Through a comparative study of each group of terms with regard to the aforementioned indicators and considering the indigenous lexicon as a differentiating element we have found Indo-Americanisms. The etymological origin of the words is not always clear; however, it is possible to count 87 indigenous words in the first grouping (39.72% of the 219) and 16 in the second (35.55% of the 45). In this lexicon, the lexical Aztecism is present in the two groupings,

although, as demonstrated in Tables 2 and 3, it is much more evident in the first. The signifier or signified signs of the lexical units are derived from words recorded in Mexico, with the exception of *apachar* (*apacharse*) [to squash], *caite* [footwear] (*caitazo*, *caitudo*) [hit, in sandals], *chiltepe* [plant and fruit], *chiquirín* [insect], *majoncho* [banana] (*macuache*) [rough], *oajaca* [tiger flower], *pupusa* [pupusa or corn tortilla] (*pupusería*, *pupusero*) [pupusa shop, pupusa vendor], *talpetate* [earth] and *tepescuintle* [mammal] (Group 1), and of *pachita* [bottle] (Group 2). Although it is only one example, the record of the interjection *¡chinchilete!* [I want!] represents the presence of a different grammatical category from the general tendency, in accordance with what is described by Buesa Oliver and Enguita Utrilla (1992: 237-247). Likewise, there is evidence of modifications such as *cachamenta* [horns] for *cacho* [horns], *enchachado* [married] for *chachaguato* [twins], *chichinear* [indulge] for *chinchín* [cheers], *pachita* [bottle] for *pacho* [calm] or the apocope *chacha* [bird] for *chachalaca* [chatterbox], which partly corroborates the hypothesis that Central America has disseminated its own Nahuatlisms (Quesada Pacheco, 2013b: 22). There are few examples of Mayanisms in these groupings, despite the fact that traditionally these borrowings are from Guatemala, as explained by García Tesoro (2002: 31-58), but with little influence in the analysed territory.

TABLE 2

Terms of European origin common in each group. 1: Etymological origin: E: Peninsular Spanish; F: French; I: Italian; O: onomatopoeic; V: Basque; ? : uncertain origin; 2: American creations in the signifier (original or derived); and 3: new meaning with regard to another word from the Americas or Spain (x = new signifier or signified; - = existing signified or signifier)

GROUP 1	1	2	3	GROUP 1	1	2	3	GROUP 1	1	2	3
<i>abocarse</i> 'consultar' (to consult)	E	-	x	<i>camellada</i> 'caminata' (walk)	E	-	x	<i>paterna</i> 'fruto' (fruit)	E	-	x
<i>aflitado</i> 'afligido' (distraught)	E	x	x	<i>canastada</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	E	-	x	<i>patricia</i> 'pie o pierna' (foot or leg)	?	x	x
<i>aflatarse</i> 'afligirse' (to become distraught)	E	x	x	<i>cerote</i> 'despreciable' (despicable)	E	-	x	<i>peinar</i> 'robar' (to steal)	E	-	x
<i>aflatarse</i> 'sentir miedo' (to feel fear)	E	x	x	<i>chambre</i> 'chisme' (gossip)	F	-	x	<i>pelona</i> 'cabeza calva' (bald headed)	E	-	-
<i>ahorcadora</i> 'avispa' (wasp)	E	x	x	<i>charra</i> 'sombrero' (hat)	V	-	x	<i>pelonear</i> 'rapar' (to shave)	E	-	-
<i>ahuevar</i> 'avergonzar' (to embarrass)	E	-	x	<i>chillar</i> 'denunciar' (to complain)	E	-	x	<i>pergamino</i> 'grano de café' (coffee bean)	E	-	x
<i>alcanforarse</i> 'desaparecer' (to disappear)	E	-	x	<i>chillo</i> 'denuncia' (complaint)	E	-	x	<i>perro</i> 'mal carácter' (bad-natured)	E	-	x
<i>alumbrar</i> 'sobornar' (to bribe)	E	-	x	<i>chillon</i> 'llorón' (crybaby)	E	-	x	<i>perro</i> 'tema difícil' (difficult topic)	E	-	x
<i>amargo</i> 'mal carácter' (bad-natured)	E	-	x	<i>chinola</i> 'mezcla' (mix)	I	x	-	<i>persogo</i> 'cuerda' (sane)	E	x	x

<i>amolada</i> 'hecho molesto' (annoyed)	E	-	x	<i>chipotazo</i> 'golpazo' (big hit)	E	x	x	<i>picado</i> 'semilla enferma' (rotten seed)	E	-	x
<i>amolado</i> 'cansado' (tired)	E	-	x	<i>choco</i> 'tuerto' (one-eyed)	P	-	x	<i>piedrín</i> 'gravilla' (gravel)	E	x	x
<i>apelmazar</i> 'apisonar' (to tamp down)	E	-	x	<i>cinchaceada</i> 'azotaina' (beating)	E	x	x	<i>pijazo</i> 'golpazo' (big hit)	?	x	x
<i>apersogarse</i> 'casarse' (to get married)	E	x	x	<i>cinchacear</i> 'dar golpes' (to hit)	E	x	x	<i>pijeada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	?	x	x
<i>aporreada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	E	-	x	<i>clarinero</i> 'zanate macho' (great-tailed grackle)	?	-	x	<i>pijear</i> 'golpear' (to hit)	?	x	x
<i>arreada</i> 'represión' (repression)	E	x	x	<i>divierta</i> 'diversión' (fun)	E	-	-	<i>pjiada</i> 'derrota' (defeat)	?	x	x
<i>arriada</i> 'robo' (theft)	E	x	x	<i>doblete</i> 'dos veces' (twice)	E	-	-	<i>pjiado</i> 'golpeado' (hit)	?	x	x
<i>arriada</i> 'redada' (raid)	E	x	x	<i>draiclineado</i> 'lavado' (dry-cleaned)	I	x	-	<i>pjiar</i> 'golpear' (to hit)	?	x	x
<i>arriada</i> 'represión' (repression)	E	x	x	<i>draiclinear</i> 'lavar' (to dry-clean)	I	x	-	<i>pjiado</i> 'suceso bueno' (good event)	?	x	x
<i>arriado</i> 'veloz, rápido' (quick, fast)	E	x	x	<i>dulce</i> 'bloque de azúcar' (block of sugar)	E	-	x	<i>piña</i> 'gran cantidad' (large quantity)	E	-	x
<i>arriar</i> 'comer' (to eat)	E	x	x	<i>embrecado</i> 'frenado' (braked)	I	x	x	<i>piñal</i> 'con piñas' (pineapple plantation)	E	-	x
<i>arriar</i> 'velozmente' (quickly)	E	x	x	<i>empurrado</i> 'enojado' (angry)	E	x	x	<i>platada</i> 'dinerál' (a lot of money)	E	x	x
<i>arrimazón</i> 'cercanía' (proximity)	E	x	x	<i>encachimbar</i> 'enfurecerse' (to become furious)	P	x	x	<i>platanillo</i> 'planta' (plant)	E	x	x
<i>arruinar</i> 'desvirgar' (deflower)	E	-	x	<i>estanco</i> 'tienda' (store)	E	-	x	<i>puyazo</i> 'pieza de carne' (piece of meat)	E	x	x
<i>arturo</i> 'comilona' (feast)	?	x	x	<i>esteban</i> 'este' (this)	?	x	x	<i>recado</i> 'aliño' (seasoning)	E	-	x
<i>atenido</i> 'negligente' (negligent)	E	x	x	<i>estocada</i> 'mal olor' (bad smell)	E	-	x	<i>ronrón</i> 'escarabajo' (beetle)	O	x	x
<i>babosear</i> 'engañar' (to fool)	E	-	x	<i>frijolillo</i> 'arbusto' (shrub)	E	x	x	<i>sacabuche</i> 'instrumento' (sackbut)	F	-	x
<i>beiby</i> 'niño' (baby)	I	x	-	<i>fueraño</i> 'extranjero' (foreigner)	E	x	x	<i>sacón</i> 'persona servil' (servile person)	E	x	x
<i>bienteveo</i> 'herpes' (herpes)	E	-	x	<i>fulear</i> 'comilona' (feast)	I	x	x	<i>secaleche</i> 'último hijo' (last child)	E	x	x
<i>bisnero</i> 'negociante ilegal' (illegal businessperson)	I	x	-	<i>gallo</i> 'clítoris' (clitoris)	E	-	x	<i>sonar</i> 'matar' (to kill)	E	-	x
<i>bisnero</i> 'amante del dinero' (lover of money)	I	x	-	<i>gancho</i> 'tipo de palo' (type of stick)	E	-	x	<i>tapaculo</i> 'guásimo' (West Indian elm)	E	x	x

<i>bocarada</i> 'humo o líquido' (smoke or liquid)	E	x	x	<i>gato</i> 'bíceps braquial' (biceps brachii)	E	-	x	<i>tarúpedo</i> 'persona bruta' (dumb person)	E	x	x
<i>boris</i> 'pistola' (pistol)	?	x	-	<i>golillero</i> 'provocador' (troublemaker)	E	x	x	<i>uva</i> 'grano del café' (coffee bean)	E	-	x
<i>botar</i> 'cortar árboles' (to cut trees)	E	-	x	<i>gomoso</i> 'con resaca' (hangover)	E	x	x	<i>vapués</i> 'de acuerdo' (agreed)	E	x	x
<i>buchaca</i> 'boca grande' (large mouth)	E	-	x	<i>guardabarranco</i> 'ave' (bird)	E	x	x	<i>venadear</i> 'matar' (to kill)	E	x	x
<i>bulla</i> 'rumor' (noise)	E	-	x	<i>guitarrona</i> 'avispa' (wasp)	E	x	x	<i>vergaceo</i> 'pelea' (fight)	E	x	x
<i>burra</i> 'tarea del campo' (farm work)	E	-	x	<i>huevoarse</i> 'robar' (to steal)	E	x	x	<i>vergazo</i> 'choque' (crash)	E	x	x
<i>caballada</i> 'dicho soez' (rude saying)	E	-	x	<i>jura</i> 'agente de policía' (police officer)	E	-	x	<i>vergueo</i> 'desorden' (mess)	E	x	x
<i>cachimbazal</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	P	x	x	<i>ladino</i> 'mestizo' (mixed-race)	E	-	x	<i>vergueo</i> 'pelea' (fight)	E	x	x
<i>cachimbazo</i> 'golpe' (hit, blow)	P	x	x	<i>lana</i> 'oportunista' (opportunist)	E	-	x	<i>verguiada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	E	x	x
<i>cachimbazo</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	P	x	x	<i>mandrio</i> 'torpe' (clumsy)	I	x	x	<i>verguiado</i> 'paliza' (beating)	E	x	x
<i>cachimbeada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	P	x	x	<i>matagusano</i> 'conserva' (preserves)	E	x	x	<i>verguiar</i> 'golpear' (to hit)	E	x	x
<i>cachimbear</i> 'pegar' (to hit)	P	x	x	<i>motero</i> 'fumador' (smoker)	E	-	x	<i>volado</i> 'ayuda' (help)	E	-	x
<i>cachimbo</i> 'cantidad grande' (large quantity)	P	x	x	<i>pando</i> 'torcido' (twisted)	E	-	x				
<i>cachito</i> 'cruasán' (croissant)	E	x	x	<i>parado</i> 'frijoles fritos' (fried beans)	E	-	x				
<i>camaronero</i> 'red' (web)	E	-	x	<i>patacón</i> 'garrapata' (tick)	?	x	x				
GROUP 2	1	2	3	GROUP 2	1	2	3	GROUP 2	1	2	3
<i>apelotarse</i> 'agruparse' (to gather)	E	x	x	<i>galerón</i> 'construcción' (construction)	E	-	x	<i>queque</i> 'tarta o pastel' (tart or cake)	I	x	x
<i>averaguarse</i> 'mancha' (to stain)	?	x	x	<i>gallinazo</i> 'pachaco' (weak)	E	-	x	<i>torcaza</i> 'paloma' (pigeon)	E	-	x
<i>brochazo</i> 'adulación' (adulation)	E	-	x	<i>hornilla</i> 'cavidad' (cavity)	E	-	x	<i>rancho</i> 'lugar para fiesta' (place for a party)	E	-	x
<i>carmelo</i> 'colour café' (coffee-coloured)	?	x	x	<i>moracho</i> 'guataco' (chubby)	E	x	x	<i>repellar</i> 'comer' (to eat)	E	-	x
<i>cerillo</i> 'árbol' (tree)	E	-	x	<i>mostrenco</i> 'árbol' (tree)	E	-	x	<i>resbaladera</i> 'bebida' (drink)	E	x	x
<i>chaneado</i> 'elegante' (elegant)	I	x	x	<i>muñeco</i> 'suchicahue' (Spanish elm)	E	-	x	<i>rodín</i> 'tipo de rueda' (type of wheel)	E	x	x
<i>chingar</i> 'cortar el rabo' (cut the tail)	?	x	x	<i>pandereta</i> 'sectario' (sectarian)	E	-	x	<i>tijereta</i> 'cama plegable' (folding bed)	E	-	x

<i>chiva</i> 'tipo de vehículo' (type of vehicle)	E	-	x	<i>pegapega</i> 'planta' (plant)	E	-	x	<i>tirar</i> 'perjudicar' (to harm)	E	-	x
<i>despiche</i> 'confusión' (confusión)	E	-	x	<i>pilado</i> 'descascarillado' (peeling)	E	-	x	<i>zocar</i> 'acelerar el ritmo' (accelerate the pace)	E	-	x
<i>escorar</i> 'ir lejos' (to go far)	E	-	x	<i>platado</i> 'plato lleno' (full plate)	E	x	x				
<i>frijolillo</i> 'arbusto' (shrub)	E	x	x	<i>precarista</i> 'okupa' (squatter)	E	-	-				

At the same time, words that only designate one referent are recorded, such as *irayol* [tree] or *bocaracá* [snake] (the latter is possibly from the Huetar language), whereas others include different meanings; for example, the Nahuatlism *capulín*, which designates several Mesoamerican tree species, is recorded in Group 1 as *ixepepe* and *majagüillo* (Lope Blanch, 1969: 44; Sala et al., 1982). The former is utilized exclusively in Mexico, and the latter is a diminutive form of *majagua* (from the Tainoism *damajagua*) present in Costa Rica and Panama. Something different occurs with the Aztecism *mayate*, which in the Panamanian vocabulary is recognized with the onomatopoeic word *ronrón* (Lope Blanch, 1969: 33).

Additionally, there are those that have generated different meanings, such as *bayuncada* [triviality, vulgarity, joke], *capulín* [Jamaican nettle tree, majaguillo tree], *garífuna* [Garifuna, Garifuna language], *mate* [gesture, feint, simulation], etc., or that form more or less complicated lexical families, especially in the countries in Group 1, such as *caite* [footwear], *enchachar* [to marry], *guacalada* [a lot], *pencón* [skilled] and *pupusería* [pupusa shop]. The other languages we recorded respond to words with a large geographic dispersion: *guabina* [fish], *mico* [monkey] (a compound with Spanish, *micoleón* [kinkajou]), *pacay* [sprout] and derivatives of *aguacate* [avocado] and *guayabo* [guava tree] (Sala et al., 1982: 67). Other European influences. Among the diverse languages studied, Spanish from Spain has had the most influence. As can be observed in Table 3, these comprise 132 terms from the first group (60.27% of the 219) plus the 29 from the common Costa Rican and Panamanian vocabulary (64.45% of the 45). In the analysis presented in Table 4, it is confirmed that 122 words in the two groups come from European Spanish. Regarding the rest of the influences, we do not know if they arrived in American languages through Spanish or another route; however, they do not represent a very large percentage.

TABLE 3

Indo-Americanisms common in each group. 1: etymological origin: A: Antillean; C: Cumanagota; H: Huetar; N: Nahuatl; M: Mayan; Q: Quechua; +: two etymons; ?: uncertain origin; 2: American creations in the signifier (original or derived); and 3: New meaning with regard to another term from the Americas or Spain

GROUP 1	1	2	3	GROUP 1	1	2	3	GROUP 1	1	2	3
<i>¡chinchilete!</i> 'deseo' (I want!)	?	-	-	<i>chimbomba</i> 'pepesca' (Brachyrhaphis)	?	-	x	<i>micoleón</i> (kinkajou)	+	x	x

<i>achicopalar</i> 'avergonzado' (ashamed)	?	?	x	<i>chiquihuite</i> 'planta' (plant)	N	-	x	<i>mozote</i> 'persona molesta' (annoying person)	N	-	x
<i>agigolón</i> 'ajetreo' (bustle)	?	x	x	<i>charamila</i> 'bebida' (drink)	?	x	x	<i>ñeque</i> 'valiente' (brave)	?	-	x
<i>aguacatazo</i> 'golpe' (hit, blow)	N	x	x	<i>chiquirín</i> 'insecto' (insect)	N	-	x	<i>oajaca</i> 'jagüique' (tiger flower)	?	-	x
<i>apachado</i> 'aplastado' (squashed)	N	x	-	<i>chunchucuyo</i> 'rabadilla' (backbone)	?	-	-	<i>ocote</i> 'leña' (firewood)	N	-	x
<i>apacharse</i> 'aplastar' (to squash)	N	x	-	<i>enchachado</i> 'esposado' (married)	N	x	-	<i>pacaya</i> 'cogollo' (sprout)	Q	x	x
<i>bayuncada</i> 'trivialidad' (triviality)	?	x	x	<i>enchachar</i> 'esposar' (to marry)	N	x	-	<i>pachuco</i> 'ropa ceñida' (tight clothing)	N	-	x
<i>bayuncada</i> 'grosería' (vulgarity)	?	x	x	<i>garifuna</i> 'garínagu' (Garifuna)	?	-	-	<i>papada</i> 'tontería' (nonsense)	Q	x	x
<i>bayuncada</i> 'chiste' (joke)	?	x	x	<i>garifuna</i> 'lengua caribe' (Caribbean language)	?	-	-	<i>pencón</i> 'persona hábil' (skilled)	?	x	x
<i>bayunco</i> 'grosera' (vulgar)	?	x	x	<i>guabina</i> 'pez' (fish)	A	-	x	<i>penqueada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	?	x	x
<i>boleco</i> 'borracho' (drunk)	M	x	x	<i>guacal</i> 'fruto' (fruit)	N	-	x	<i>penqueada</i> 'reprimida' (repressed)	?	x	x
<i>bolo</i> 'aturdido' (dazed, stunned)	M	-	x	<i>guacalada</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	N	x	x	<i>penqueado</i> 'agredido' (attacked)	?	x	x
<i>caitazo</i> 'golpe' (hit, blow)	N	x	x	<i>guacalazo</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	N	x	x	<i>penquear</i> 'castigar' (to punish)	?	x	x
<i>caite</i> 'calzado' (footwear)	N	-	x	<i>guacalazo</i> 'golpe' (hit, blow)	N	x	x	<i>penquear</i> 'golpear' (to hit)	?	x	x
<i>caitudo</i> 'con caites' (in sandals)	N	x	x	<i>guanaco</i> 'salvadoreño' (Salvadoran)	Q	-	x	<i>pepena</i> 'recolección' (gathering)	N	-	-
<i>camagüe</i> 'grano' (grain)	N	x	x	<i>irayol</i> 'árbol' (tree)	?	-	-	<i>pepesca</i> 'pez salado' (salty fish)	N	-	x
<i>capulín</i> 'ixpepe' (Jamaican nettletree)	N	-	x	<i>macanazo</i> 'golpe' (hit, blow)	A	x	x	<i>pipián</i> 'semilla' (seed)	?	-	x
<i>capulín</i> 'majagüillo' (majaguillo tree)	N	-	x	<i>macaneada</i> 'paliza' (beating)	A	x	x	<i>pipirín</i> 'alimento' (food)	?	-	x
<i>catizumba</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	?	x	x	<i>macanear</i> 'pelearse' (to fight)	A	x	x	<i>pizpizigaña</i> 'juego' (game)	?	-	x
<i>catizumbada</i> 'cantidad' (a lot)	?	x	x	<i>majoncho</i> 'banano' (banana)	?	-	-	<i>pupusa</i> 'comida' (pupusa or corn tortilla)	N	-	x
<i>chacha</i> 'ave' (bird)	N	x	x	<i>malacate</i> 'malvado' (evil)	N	-	x	<i>pupusería</i> 'local' (pupusa shop)	N	x	x
<i>chagüitoso</i> 'lodoso' (muddy)	?	x	x	<i>matate</i> 'bolsa' (bag)	N	-	x	<i>pupusero</i> 'vendedor' (pupusa vendor)	N	x	x

<i>chagoneta</i> 'broma' (joke)	?	x	x	<i>marero</i> 'pandillero' (gang member)	?	x	x	<i>samotana</i> 'bulla' (ruckus)	?	-	-
<i>chapinizarse</i> 'parecer guatemalteco' (to look Guatemalan)	?	x	x	<i>marufia</i> 'trampa' (trick)	?	x	x	<i>talpetate</i> 'tierra' (earth, dirt)	N	-	-
<i>chapinismo</i> 'guatemalteco' (Guatemalan)	?	x	x	<i>mate</i> 'ademán' (gesture)	Q	-	x	<i>tamagás</i> 'serpiente' (snake)	?	-	-
<i>chichicastal</i> 'con chichicastes' (with nettles)	N	x	x	<i>mate</i> 'amague' (feint)	Q	-	x	<i>tapa</i> 'trozo de azúcar' (chunk of sugar)	N	-	x
<i>chichinear</i> 'mimar' (indulge, spoil)	N	x	x	<i>mate</i> 'simulación' (simulation)	Q	-	x	<i>tapexco</i> 'estera' (mat)	N	x	x
<i>chichineo</i> 'mimo' (indulge, spoil)	N	x	x	<i>mayate</i> 'ronrón' (beetle)	N	-	x	<i>tepesquintle</i> 'mamífero' (mammal)	N	x	-
<i>chiltepe</i> 'planta y fruto' (plant and fruit)	N	-	-	<i>mico</i> 'mono' (monkey)	C	-	x	<i>tilichero</i> 'enseres' (tools, appliances)	?	-	x
GROUP 2	1	2	3	GROUP 2	1	2	3	GROUP 2	1	2	3
<i>aguacatón</i> 'árbol' (tree)	N	x	x	<i>chira</i> 'espata' (spathe)	?	-	x	<i>jiñocuabe</i> 'chacaj' (gumbo-limbo tree)	?	-	x
<i>angú</i> 'puré' (puree)	?	-	x	<i>cholo</i> 'moreno y con pelo lacio' (dark-skinned with straight hair)	?	-	x	<i>pachita</i> 'botella' (bottle)	N	x	x
<i>bocaracá</i> 'serpiente' (snake)	H	-	-	<i>espavé</i> 'caracol' (wild cashew tree)	?	x	x	<i>tiliche</i> 'baratija' (trinket, trifle)	?	-	x
<i>cachamenta</i> 'cuernos' (horns)	?	x	x	<i>guacho</i> 'comida' (food)	?	-	x	<i>zambumbia</i> 'comida' (food)	?	x	x
<i>capulín</i> 'majagüillo' (majaguillo tree)	N	-	x	<i>guágara</i> 'palma' (palm)	Q	x	x				
<i>chichí</i> 'atractivo' (attractive)	N	-	x	<i>guayabón</i> 'manicillo' (Pinto peanut)	A	x	x				

As was the case with the Indo-Americanisms, some words have created new meanings and lexical families in the words coinciding with the Iberian Peninsula: *aflatado* 'afligido' [distracted], *aflatarse* 'afligirse' [to become distracted]; 'sentir miedo' [to feel fear]; *cachimbazal* 'cantidad' [a lot] and *cachimbazo* 'golpe' [blow]; *cachimbeada* 'paliza' [beating]; *cachimbear* 'pegar' [to hit].

Additionally, several words designate a single reality, especially when making reference to nature, as is the case with *clarinero* [great-tailed grackle] or *sacabuque* [sackbut] (the latter having the identical meaning in French). The capacity of American languages to create new words is demonstrated in *arturo* [feast] and *ronrón* [beetle], although the large number of affixes demonstrates that this is the preferred practice in American Span-

ish, according to the conclusions of Scavnicky and Quesada Pacheco. The composites *bienteveo* [herpes] and *matagusano* [preserves] (substantive + verb) or *tarúpido* [dumb person] (*tarado* + *estúpido*) [crazy + stupid] confirm what has been described generally for the Americas.

The presence of Anglicisms is very low, and examples frequently refer to technical issues (*draiclineado* or *embrecado*) [dry-cleaned or braked]. Said absence is notable in the glossary of common Panamanian and Costa Rican words because, although Panama has a greater number of English borrowings, these are not present in Costa Rica.

Finally, Table 4 presents the results of all the indicators that we have utilized to analyse each group, according to percentage.

TABLE 4

Results of the indicators in each group as percentages

INDO-AMERICAN Group 1: 87 words Group 2: 16 lexical units			EUROPEAN LANGUAGES Group 1: 132 words Group 2: 29 lexical units		
1: Etymological origin	Group 1	Group 2	1: Etymological units	Group 1	Group 2
Antillean	4.60%	6.25%	Spanish	74.24%	82.76%
<i>Cumanagoto</i>	2.30%	--	French	1.52%	--
<i>Huetar</i>	--	6.25%	?(Uncertain)	9.85%	10.34%
?(Uncertain)	41.38%	56.25%	English	6.06%	3.45%
Mayan	2.30%	4.30%	Italian	0.76%	--
Nahuatl	42.53%	25%	Onomatopoeic	0.76%	--
Quechua	6.90%	6.25%	Portuguese	6.06%	3.45%
			Basque	0.76%	--
2: Signifier	Group 1	Group 2	2: Signifier	Group 1	Group 2
New	54.02%	43.75%	New	56.82%	34.48%
3: Signified	Group 1	Group 2	3: Signified	Group 1	Group 2
New	81.61%	93.75%	New	91.67%	100%

Even taking into account the numerical inequality of examples in the common vocabulary of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua with respect to Costa Rica, our analysis appears to indicate the tendency followed in each indicator. The two groups are generally characterized by the creation of new signifiers and meanings, although this is not the case with the adaptation and adoption of new words.

4. Conclusions

The analysis and classification of the words gathered in this paper demonstrate that the Central American region does not exhibit unity on the lexical-semantic plane and that it is feasible to associate the countries into two groups through quantitative analysis. The first group has a greater number of common lexical examples, despite comprising four different countries, but with very similar percentages in the indicators that refer to vitality compared to the second group. The presence of Nahuatlisms in the countries seems to be the most significant indicator defining each group. The questions proposed at the beginning of this article can be answered as follows:

What level of lexical-semantic similarity is recorded in the common vocabulary of the American isthmus? And is it possible to speak of a common glossary or several groups of nations?

Of the 34,494 words found in the analysed countries, the great majority—nearly 66%—are found in a single national territory. Of the remaining 11,750 terms, only 219 are exclusive to the region formed by Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, which implies 2% shared vocabulary. The figure is even smaller between Costa Rica and Panama, for which there are just 45 terms exclusive to both countries. The two countries of the second group possess 1,365 shared terms, of which only 3.3% are exclusive. Given all this, we must conclude that the degree of similarity between the countries of Central America is low and largely centred on terms of Nahuatl origin, which would form the possible common glossary. This fact, not present in Costa Rica and Panama, results in the division of the analysed countries into two differentiated groups.

Finally, how are the possible groups characterized from the point of view of the indicators that define lexical Americanisms (diversity of origin, creation, adoption and adaptation in the signified or signifier)?

Although it is clear, as was noted previously, that it is indigenous borrowings that mark the greatest difference between the groups identified, this is not the only point of discrepancy between them. Regarding the preference between adaptation and adoption, both groups prefer the creation of new meanings for existing terms, but there exists a clear difference between the geographic groups with regard to the adoption and/or creation of new terms. The first group appears much more creative, as new terms account for more than 55% of those held in common, whereas in the second group that percentage is less than 45%. The creativity of the group formed by Costa Rica and Panama is based on the creation of new meanings, an area in which it surpasses the other group of countries by 10 percentage points.

Our contribution has provided answers to the research questions proposed and has taken into account diatopic frameworks by country, rather than by concrete areas within coun-

tries. For this reason, we have not spoken of zones but rather groupings according to the level of similarity of each lexical repertoire.

The conclusions we provide do not address all of the dimensions of the research problem posed. The lexical-semantic data demonstrated in the regional dictionaries make other analyses of other dialectical lexical units possible, fundamentally with regard to other variables that we have not considered herein (diastratic, diaphasic, of validity through surveys or searches in other sources, etc.). Said questions open up new areas of inquiry that will complement our results. The lexical-semantic complexity and richness of American Spanish should be analysed from different perspectives to find all possible answers to a multifaceted research problem.

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