

# Spanish/English Speech Practices: Bringing Chaos to Order<sup>1</sup>

*Almeida Jacqueline Toribio*

*The Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, USA*

This paper presents a linguistic analysis of Spanish-English bilingual speech for scholars and practitioners of bilingualism. More specifically, the study surveys several outcomes of language contact, among these, inter-lingual transference, code-switching, and convergence, as evidenced in the speech practices of heritage Spanish speakers in the United States. The emergent assessment is linguistically informed, thereby illuminating our understanding of bilingual speech forms, and encourages perspectives and pedagogies that validate bilingual speech practices.

**Keywords:** contact, codeswitching, convergence

## Introduction

I am the sum total of my language. (Charles Sanders Peirce)

¿Y si soy más de uno, Peirce?

¿Y si soy dos,

o tres

o – como diría David –  
un millón?

¿En qué momento, en qué participio del mundo

se convierte tu suma en mi resta, Peirce? (Gustavo Pérez Firmat)

The language situation and linguistic behaviours of heritage Spanish speakers in the United States are seldom regarded impassively; the ambiguity expressed in the above title is intended to invoke the contradictory and conflictive fervour with which Spanish-English bilingual speech practices have been addressed by scholars, educators and policymakers. On one representative position, the bilingualism and attendant linguistic manifestations that may result from the sustained contact of heritage and dominant language are lauded as essential to communication in bilingual communities, where speakers are commonly called on to access a continuum of grammatical, discursive, and sociolinguistic competencies in one or the other of two languages (cf. Valdés, 2000).

A lot of people look at it as a disadvantage... 'Oh, you're Spanish'.<sup>2</sup> But the way I look at it is this: blessed, you're blessed to speak two different languages. (quoted in Toribio, 2003a)

[I]t is helpful to imagine that when bilinguals code-switch, they are in fact using a twelve-string guitar, rather than limiting themselves to two six-string instruments. (Valdés, 1988: 126)

However, as lamented by Zentella (1998, 2000), it is also, indeed much too frequently attested that in the 'linguistic logic' of US society, heritage Spanish is a negative carryover that must be cancelled out, and the would-be benefit of possessing and deploying Spanish alongside English is equated with zero:

A teacher comes up to you and tells you, 'No, no. You know that is a filthy language, nothing but bad words and bad thoughts in that language'. I mean, they are telling you that your language is bad. (quoted in Salazar, 1970, cited in Crawford, 1992)

Those poor kids come to school speaking a hodgepodge. They are all mixed up and don't know any language well. As a result, they can't even think clearly. (quoted in Walsh, 1991: 106)

The present article elaborates a linguistically informed assessment of the contact Spanish, contact English, and Spanish-English bilingual speech of heritage Spanish speakers in the United States, devoting attention to bilingual development and deployment and to several phenomena of language contact and interaction, among others, inter-linguistic influence or transference, especially salient in early stages of learning, codeswitching, the alternating use of two language codes, and convergence, the increased equivalence between two languages or language varieties.<sup>3</sup> The survey will make evident that rather than compensating for linguistic deficiency, 'illicit language acts' signal the strategic and efficient use of linguistic and cognitive resources in the appropriation and management of two language systems.

The paper is organised as follows. The discussion is deliberated in the exposition of relevant research in bilingual codeswitching, English-language development, heritage language decline and loss, and contact-induced convergence, together with illustrative contact English, contact Spanish, and Spanish-English bilingual samples culled from the literature. The work ends with the presentation of three activities, suitable for classroom use, that may further advance educators' appreciation of the speech practices of Spanish-English bilinguals, and in so doing, dispel certain misconceptions of the linguistic abilities of heritage Spanish speakers in the United States.

## Bilingual Speech Practices

Spanglish is the language of border diplomacy (Guillermo Gómez Peña)

In most bilingual communities, members find themselves situated along a continuum that induces different 'language modes' (Grosjean, 1998) within a 'bilingual range' (Valdés, 2000).<sup>4</sup> For instance, Zentella (1981, 1997), reports that in her long-term participant study of the linguistic practices of *el bloque*, a Puerto-Rican community in *el barrio* of East Harlem, children could be observed to speak English with each other, while shifting to Spanish in deference to their elders, as illustrated in the recorded exchange in (1). For these children, Spanish and English together constitute their linguistic competence in a singular sense, and their linguistic performance will draw primarily upon English or Spanish, as required by the 'observables' of the speech situation, e.g. pragmatic norms, specific setting, and participants.<sup>5</sup>

- (1) Context: Lolita (age 8) pushes Timmy (age 5) off her bike, and Timmy tells the adults nearby.

**L to T:** Get off, Timmy, get off.

**T to adults:** Ella me dio! ('She hit me'.)

**L to T:** Porque TU me diste! ('Because YOU hit me!')

**T to L:** Liar!

**Adult to L:** ¿Por qué? ('why?')

**L to adult:** Porque él me dio, por eso. El siempre me está dando cuando me ve. ('Because he hit me, that's why. He's always hitting me whenever he sees me'.)

It is also commonplace in such communities that as bilingual speakers interact in bilingual mode, they will extend this ability to alternating languages in unchanged speech situations – that is, to codeswitching (Zentella, 1988).

Gumperz, in his seminal work on discursive strategies, notes the important functions served by codeswitching (Gumperz, 1976, 1982).<sup>6</sup> The premise underlying his and many subsequent studies is that codeswitching is a conscious choice on the part of the speaker. Consider, by way of example, the study by Montes-Alcalá (2001), which is dedicated to analysing bilingual email exchanges and imputing particular stylistic goals to specific code-alternations; sample forms appear in (2):

- (2) Stylistic features commonly marked by language alternations:

- (a) reported speech

I think so, *dijo él*.

'I think so, / said he'.

- (b) emphasis

*Mientras estará a miles de millas* away from here.

'Meanwhile he must be thousands of miles / away from here'.

- (c) elaboration

*Caminamos por Melrose*, checking out the stores, *y luego decidimos ir a cenar*.

'We walked on Melrose, / checking out the stores, / and then we decided to go to dinner'.

- (d) parentheticals

*Allí*, totally out of the blue, *acabamos planeando un viaje para la semana que viene*.

'There, / totally out of the blue / we ended up planning a trip for the coming week'.

- (e) fixed or formulaic phrases

*No tenía fuerzas para nada, así que lo dejé* and I called it a day.

'I did not have strength for anything, so I left him / and I called it a day'.

As shown, the author carefully controls her languages, bending them to her will rather than simply confining herself to the dictates of their individual form (cf. Ferguson, 1982; Widdowson, 1994).

Another, however markedly different, example of the 'ownership' of langu-

age is discerned in the dictionaries in (3), created by the adult migrant farm workers depicted in Kalmar (1980, 2001). Presented with few opportunities for developing English language skills, Jacinto, Cipriano, and Alonso took hold of their own education, directing their Spanish-language abilities in asserting themselves in English.

- (3) (a) Jacinto's dictionary  
 AVIVAC ..... 'ahorita regreso' ('I'll be back')  
 LIMISI ..... 'déjame ver' ('Let me see')  
 AIDONO ..... 'yo no sé' ('I don't know')  
 LRERO ..... 'poco' ('a little')
- (b) Cipriano's dictionary  
 JAMACH DU YU ORN ... .. '¿cuánto ganas?' ('How much do you earn?')  
 AI NID SAM ER ... .. 'necesito aire' ('I need some air')  
 AI GUENT TU TAON ... .. 'yo fui al pueblo' ('I went to town')  
 GUIQUEN GOU NAU ..... 'podemos ir ahora' ('We can go now')
- (c) Alfonso's dictionary  
 TU URRILLAP ..... 'darse prisa' ('to hurry up')  
 RUAT AUEY ..... 'en seguida' ('right away')  
 GUIOLTY ..... 'culpable' ('guilty')  
 TU RUICH ..... 'alcanzar' ('to reach')

Though neither English nor Spanish, this non-native and non-target variety is not to be characterised in terms of acquisitional inadequacy (cf. Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Kachru, 1983; Romaine, 1992), but rather in terms of linguistic empowerment: through these entries, migrant workers claim an 'other' language in communicating and recording everyday life events.<sup>7</sup>

To be sure, the language samples in the dictionaries differ in significant respects from those in the email exchanges, the latter of interest here. Most obviously, the Spanish-English bilingual author of the forms in (2) does not alternate her languages for lack of knowledge of structures or lexical items in her language systems, but in fulfilling 'a conscious desire to juxtapose the two codes to achieve some literary effect, an exercise of self-consciousness' (Lipski, 1982: 191). However, similar to the language forms of the dictionaries, code-switched forms are context-bound, practiced by bilinguals, for bilinguals. Indeed, for many bilinguals, codeswitching is an in-group or community norm (cf. Toribio, 2002; Zentella, 1981, 1997). *Not* mixing languages in certain circumstances would be considered irregular and socioculturally insensitive (cf. Seliger, 1996).

### Spanish-English Bilingual Codeswitching

'Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English y termino en español' (title of Poplack, 1980)

Parallel to studies focused on the social and discursive factors that enter into its use are research efforts that have examined the grammatical properties

of codeswitched speech.<sup>8</sup> Consider the codeswitched forms that comprise the children's narrative in (4).<sup>9</sup>

(4) 'Robin el Chicano bird' (Campbell, 1977, cited in Timm, 1993)<sup>10</sup>

'Robin, get up', said Mrs. Bird.

The sun was coming up. *Era una fresca mañana en primavera.*

'Robin, get up!'...repeated Mrs Bird.

Robin could hardly open his eyes. He was so sleepy.

'Robin!' called Mrs Bird, for the third time.

*Robin escuchó el canto de unos pajarillos que celebraban the arrival of spring.*

'If only I could sing', said Robin. He got up and went to the window.

*Vio lots of birds jumping from place to place mientras cantaban alegremente.*

'If only I could sing', Robin said again, with tears *en sus ojos*.

Then he flew away *yendo a parar* on top of a dried bush by a little pond.

In the first lines of the above narrative, inter-sentential codeswitching is prevalent; entire segments may be identified as well-formed Spanish and English sentences. As the narrative progresses, the author moves between English and Spanish within the confines of a single clause, unveiling a mode that offers greater expressive possibilities without violating the grammatical rules of either Spanish and English (Pfaff & Chávez, 1986; Toribio & Vaquera-Vásquez, 1995).<sup>11</sup> Such intra-sentential codeswitched forms readily suggest a high degree of competence in the component languages. Nevertheless, as Poplack (1980: 615) asserts, it is 'precisely those switch types which have traditionally been considered most deviant'. Furthermore, the nomenclature – terms such as *Spanglish* and *Tex-Mex* for Spanish-English codeswitching – carries pejorative connotations reflecting these misconceptions about the intellectual or linguistic abilities of those who codeswitch (cf. Fernández, 1990; Flores & Hopper, 1975). Perhaps most injuriously, the latter impressions are given voice not only by educators and policymakers, but by persons within the bilingual speech communities themselves; i.e. many heritage speakers internalise the stigma attached to their speech forms and ascribe only negative or covert prestige, if any, to their community speech norms (cf. Toribio, 2002; Wald, 1988; Zentella, 1998).<sup>12</sup>

But it is by now well-established among researchers in linguistics that intra-sentential codeswitching is not a random mixture of two flawed systems; rather, it is rule-governed and systematic, demonstrating the operation of underlying grammatical restrictions.<sup>13</sup> Proficient bilinguals may be shown to exhibit a shared knowledge of what constitutes appropriate intra-sentential codeswitching. For example, Spanish-English bilingual speakers will agree that all of the codeswitching examples previously illustrated represent acceptable bilingual forms, whereas other language alternations do not. Consider the excerpt from the 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' fairy tale narrative in (5); the language alternations in this invented text include switching at boundaries known to breach codeswitching norms (e.g. between auxiliary and main verb, between object pronoun and main verb, between noun and modifying adjective).

## (5) 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' / 'Blancanieves y los Siete Enanitos'

*Érase una vez una linda princesita blanca como la nieve. Su madrastra, la reina, tenía un mágico mirror on the wall. The queen often asked, 'Who is the más hermosa del valle?' Y un día el mirror answered, 'Snow White is the fairest one of all!' Very envious and evil, the reina mandó a un criado que matara a la princesa. El criado la llevó al bosque y out of compassion abandoned la allí. A squirrel took pity on the princess and led her to a pequeña cabina en el monte. En la cabina, vivían siete enanitos que returned to find Snow White asleep in their beds. Back at the palace, the stepmother again asked the espejo: 'Y ahora, ¿quién es la más bella?' El espejo otra vez le answered, without hesitation, 'Snow White!' ...<sup>14</sup>*

In a reading task, reported in Toribio (2001b), bilinguals rejected the language alternations in this narrative as being affected and forced. Several readers involuntarily self-corrected the ill-formed switches in their out-loud performance; and although unable to articulate exactly what accounted for their negative assessment of the alternating forms in the narrative, some participants proposed explicit editing recommendations for improving on the ill-formed combinations of the text:

- (6) The story was easily understood because I understand English and Spanish, but I just think, like, for example the last sentence, 'When Snow White bit into the apple, she *calló desvanecida al suelo*', that I wouldn't say it, it doesn't sound right. I would probably say, 'When White bit into the apple, *ella se calló al suelo*'. Or 'she fell *desvanecida al suelo*'...

Significantly, bilinguals proffer such judgments in the absence of overt instruction – speakers are not taught how to codeswitch. Nevertheless, just as monolingual native speakers of Spanish and English have an intuitive sense of linguistic well-formedness in their language, Spanish-English bilinguals are able to rely on unconscious grammatical principles in producing and evaluating codeswitched strings.

Thus, contrary to common assumptions, codeswitching patterns may be used as a measure of bilingual *ability*, rather than deficit. In fact, the degree of language proficiency that a speaker possesses in two languages has been shown to correlate with the type of codeswitching engaged in.<sup>15</sup> In her research on bilinguals of diverse levels of competence, Poplack (1980) observes that those who reported to be dominant in one language tended to switch by means of tag-like phrases (e.g. ...*sabes*/...*you know* and ...*verdad?*/...*right?*); in contrast, those who reported and demonstrated the greatest degree of bilingual ability favoured intra-sentential switches. This is corroborated by the ethnolinguistic research of Zentella (1981, 1997), which attests that proficient bilinguals display distinct behaviours in codeswitching from their more Spanish-dominant or English-dominant community peers. Likewise, Montes-Alcalá's email corpus (cf. (2)) demonstrates inter-sentential codeswitching at the beginning of the sample, when the author's degree of bilingualism was more limited, and increased intra-sentential codeswitching in the later periods as the author reached a steady state of bilingualism, 'building a bridge between both

languages' (Montes-Alcalá, 2001: 198). Finally, similar patterns are attested among children acquiring two languages from birth (cf. Babbe, 1995; De Houwer, 1995; Meisel, 1989, 1994), among children acquiring a second language in early childhood (cf. McClure, 1981), and among adult second language learners (cf. Bhatia & Ritchie, 1996; Rakowsky, 1989; Toribio, 2001a). Taken together, these investigations lead to the conclusion that, regardless of age, the child/adult bilingual's codeswitching ability reflects the development of linguistic competence in the component languages (Babbe, 1995).

## Bilingual English and Beyond

'English is broken here' (Coco Fusco)

Like Spanish-English bilingual speech forms, bilingual English forms emerge from the ways in which heritage Spanish speakers deploy their languages in contact situations. Consider the English-language segment in (7), produced by a bilingual child developing English-language literacy. The orthographical 'errors' attested in this English-language sample are predictable on the basis of the child's pronunciation (itself indicative of the phonological and phonetic differences between his specific Spanish dialect and the standardised English norm) and the pairing of advanced Spanish-language literacy and incipient English-language literacy (cf. Zabaleta & Toribio, 1999).<sup>16</sup>

- (7) my freybret tv show es pober renyers ders 6 paber renyers day rescu persen adey sey de world edey no ebriting der juymens pat dey morf to paber renyers a sayf da world of Rira an jor masters pat lor zet cam an jiguas guyning da paber renyers pat da paber renyers win de bars and day sayf da world.<sup>17</sup>

In this example, we see that the differences in the inventory and distribution of the sounds of English versus Spanish prove difficult for the child – note the substitutions for the English sounds [v] and [θ] in \*⟨ebriting⟩ for *everything*, the representation of the flap in \*⟨rita⟩ for *rita*, and the fricative in \*⟨ders⟩ for *there's*. English vowels also prove a formidable obstacle for the child; especially noteworthy is the representation of long vowel sounds in \*⟨feybret⟩ for *favorite*, \*⟨seyt⟩ for *saved*, \*⟨juymens⟩ for *humans*, and the representation of lax vowels as in \*⟨jor⟩ for *her*, \*⟨da⟩ for *the*, and \*⟨pat⟩ for *but*. We observe the reduction or deletion of consonant sequences which are disallowed in Spanish: \*⟨persen⟩ for *persons*, \*⟨seyt⟩ for *saved*, and \*⟨eday⟩ for *and they*. Lastly, and most striking, are the Spanish-phonological processes transferred into English orthography: the reinforcement of the [w] glide by the insertion of [b/g], as in \*⟨pober⟩ for *power*, \*⟨guas⟩ for *was*, \*⟨guyning⟩ for *winning* and \*⟨bars⟩ for *wars*. Thus, while the text may be assailed as representative of the intrusion of one system on another, or worse, dismissed as impenetrable by the inexpert reader, it is most properly characterised as demonstrative of inter-lingual influence, and most profitably regarded as an agentive practice, permitting the child author to draw on his native language abilities to their full advantage.

In addition to pronunciation (and its orthographical representation), the involuntary influence of the native language on the second language may be

observed at the level of morphology and syntax (cf. Baetens Beardsmore, 1986; Clyne, 1972; Grosjean, 1982). Consider the bilingual English examples in (8), uttered by kindergarteners in relating scenes from a picture book, and those in (9), prepared in written form by fifth and seventh Grade Spanish heritage students:<sup>18</sup>

- (8) (a) And this is a bear snow... a book coloreding.  
 (b) A pig and a kitty big and a snake big.
- (9) (a) I like the shark because is my favorite sea animal.  
 (b) I didn't like the lake because is to dirty and is not good for swimming...  
 (c) I like the star fish and the diferents snails.  
 (d) Thank you for explaining what eat the animals in the sea.  
 (e) Thank you for letas see the pictures of the sea.

In discussing the bilingual English forms of the children represented in (8), Miller (1995) points to the differential development in lexicon versus grammar. Specifically, she writes, 'They learned first those elements of English which would prove most efficient, that is, which would convey the most information in the simplest way possible. As a result, their English lexicon approaches the level of their monolingual peers, while their English syntax is not as fully developed' (1995: 23). This is documented in their naming of objects with incorrect adjective-noun order in compounds and in phrases. In (9) there are additional exemplars in which Spanish language grammatical properties underlie English-language productions: we detect the non-expression of subject pronouns in (9a, b), the agreement of adjective and noun in (9c), the post-verbal positioning of a subject in (9d), and the infinitive-plus-enclitic complement in (9e). Of course, continued experience and instruction in English will lead to target-like pronunciation, grammar, and overall literacy for all of the children and adolescents quoted here.

### Heritage Language Decline and Loss

My name hangs around me like a loose tooth (Lorna Dee Cervantes)

Just as bilingual abilities develop with contextualised practice, so too can they decline. It has been reported that as speakers become increasingly proficient in English, they tend to become progressively less proficient in Spanish, in what Silva-Corvalán (1988) has termed 'a bilingual continuum'.<sup>19</sup> For example, the narrative in (10) very clearly exposes Spanish language reduction in the lexicon and simplification and restructuring in morphological and syntactic structures (e.g. gender marking, lack of doubling of indirect objects phrases with clitic pronouns); also evident is the use of English words (e.g. *gun* [cf. *pistola*]), phrases (e.g. *se puso en disguise* [cf. *se disfrazó*]), and discourse markers (e.g. *so* [cf. *pues*]).<sup>20</sup>

- (10) Oral narrative (transcribed)

Esta es la historia de...Cape[l]ucita Roja y...la mamá de Capelucita Roja dijo que...que se lleve este dulce o comida a su abuelita so ...se fue y

encontró un lobo que...habló con ella y después...ella siguió caminando a casa de la abuelita. Pero el lobo se fue...llegó al casa primero y asustó al abuelita y...se puso en ...*disguise* [laugh] de la abuelita so ...cuando llegó Capelucita Roja ella vio que no era su abuelita...pero al mismo tiempo el...*squirrel*, argrilla, argrita (?) dijo a alguien que estaba en mucho ummm *danger* y... [long sigh] el hombre se fue a buscar a Capelucita Roja que sí estaba en... in *danger* y la salvó ummm porque llevó...un... *gun* a salvarla y Capelucita encontró a su abuelita y estaban felices, estaban bien.<sup>21</sup>

The analysis of such speech forms invites careful consideration, however. It may be the case that for this heritage speaker not enough input and subsequent experience with Spanish has resulted in incomplete or imperfect learning, and the dominant language has become an 'indirect data source' for the native language (cf. Seliger, 1996).<sup>22</sup> Or it may be the case that reduced exposure to and use of Spanish has had dire consequences on her linguistic performance, but competence has remained intact (cf. Bullock & Toribio, 2004, Montrul, 2002; Toribio, 2000b). Another pertinent factor is the range of linguistic forms that served as models for the speaker's Spanish language acquisition; for instance, as reported in the literature, the popular repertoire of most 'ordinary' Mexicans who immigrate to the US is made up largely of middle to low registers of Spanish, characterised by a narrower range of lexical and syntactic alternatives (cf. Valdés, 1988, 2000).<sup>23</sup> Thus, without application of qualitative and quantitative methodologies assessing the speaker's language history and abilities, we can only conclude that such forms are non-target-like.<sup>24</sup> And even then, cautions Lipski, 'it is not always possible to separate the overlapping domains of English structural transfer, prior existence of archaic/non-standard forms arising outside the United States, and the general results of language erosion' (1993: 156).

As recounted in Toribio (2002), the speaker whose narrative is represented in (10) presents a profile of features and behaviours that coincide with those described by Lipski (1993) in his discussion of the ontogenesis of 'transitional bilingualism': little or no school training in Spanish; Spanish spoken in earliest childhood as the language of the home often in conjunction with English; a rapid shift to English before adolescence; subsequent Spanish use limited to intimate circles; responding to bilinguals partially or wholly in English when addressed in Spanish.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the speech forms in (11–13), drawn from extracts of a personal diary (cf. Toribio, 2000), exemplify the linguistic characteristics of vestigial Spanish usage signalled by Lipski: instability of nominal and adjectival inflection (11), incorrectly conjugated verb forms (12), errors of prepositional usage and categorical use of redundant subject pronouns (13).

(11) Alterations in nominal and adjectival agreement

(a) Fuimos a dejar *el televección viejo* a la casa. [sic]

'We went to leave the old television at the house'. [cf. *el televisor viejo/la televección vieja*]

(b) Y *les* dices que *haga* una cosa... [sic]

'And you tell them to do something...' [cf. *le dices que haga / les dices que hagan*]

- (c) Nomás los muchachos de *mí tios*... [sic]  
 'Only my uncles' kids ...' [cf. *mis tíos*]
- (12) Alterations in verbal morphology
- (a) Sabes *salemos* todos negríos de la labor. [sic]  
 'We come out all black from the field'. [cf. *salimos*]
- (b) Para los muchachos cuando *vienieran* a medio día. [sic]  
 'For the boys when they would come at mid-day'. [cf. *vinieran*]
- (c) Ama me digo que le *poniera* un bote de agua... [sic]  
 'Ama told me to put a bottle of water...' [cf. *pusiera*]
- (13) Alterations in pronouns, prepositions, and complementisers
- (a) Fui a *despedir* de todos los del grupo. [sic]  
 'I went to say goodbye to all in the group'. [cf. *despedirme*]
- (b) Las vistas *llamaban* 'Rafahel el angel'. [sic]  
 'The movies were called 'Rafael the angel'. [cf. *se llamaban*]
- (c) Las flores que estan en un lado de mi ventana se fueron cayendo las ramas. [sic]  
 'The stems on the flowers that are on one side of my windows started falling'. [cf. *a las flores...se le fueron cayendo*]
- (d) Siempre había sávido que el doctor B. era muy buena jente yo *le dije* era. [sic]  
 'She had always known Dr. B. to be a good person. I said he was that'. [cf. *le dije que lo era*]
- (e) Pos yo digo a uno le hace sentirse... [sic]  
 'Well I say that it makes one feel...' [cf. *digo que a uno*]
- (f) Ama digo que no moviéramos nada hasta sepamos de verdad. [sic]  
 'Ama told us not to move anything until we know for sure'. [cf. *hasta que sepamos*]
- (g) Bueno las tengo que contestar pronto para salgan el Lunes. [sic]  
 'Well I have to respond to them quickly so that they go out on Monday'. [cf. *para que salgan*]

Notably, these characteristics are seldom if ever found among fluent native speakers or even among bilinguals whose Spanish contains structural interference from English, who readily recognise these as being non-target-like.

## Bilingual Spanish

'I don't speak Spanish. I just only speak English with Spanish words'.  
 (eight-year-old boy)

Consonant with the foregoing discussion, the appearance of English language elements in Spanish language contexts need not be interpreted as indicative of attrition; it could simply be an instance of codeswitching, in which case, the grammatical autonomy and integrity of each language may be maintained. This is not to say, however, that the Spanish of proficient bilinguals is impervious to the incursions of the second language system. As affirmed by Silva-Corvalán (1994), among others, the permeability of a grammar to

external influence depends on the existence of superficially parallel structures in the languages in contact (but cf. Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Although the differences between Spanish and English are significant (and therefore, it is premature to speak of one fused syntax and two vocabularies – cf. Muysken's (2000) congruent lexicalisation – as implied by the boy quoted immediately above), there is considerable syntactic parallelism between the two languages, which may lead to convergence. Two salient properties demonstrate the differences and emergent similarities at once. English allows only for preverbal positioning of subjects; Spanish accepts preverbal subjects, but additionally sanctions post-verbal placement (e.g. Llegó Juan 'Juan arrived'). And English requires that subjects be overtly expressed; Spanish tolerates overt subjects, but additionally licenses (and in some contexts requires) that subjects have no overt realisation (e.g. Hablo español 'I speak Spanish'). Such equivalence is the basis for emergent convergence in Spanish-English bilingual settings – to be found in the reduction of grammatical options in the heritage language with greater allowance to those shared with the dominant linguistic system – and may be the basis for further structural convergence between the two linguistic systems (Muysken, 2000). This raises the important question of whether specific language forms are *further* favoured when the languages are simultaneously deployed.

The issue, then, is not whether the Spanish language is maintained while drifting towards or converging with the grammatical options shared with the English language system, but whether this drift is promoted by bilingual (*vs* monolingual) language modes (cf. Grosjean, 1998).<sup>26</sup> In testing these claims of inter-lingual violability, Toribio (2003b, 2004) examines the variation that is attested in the Spanish speech data produced by a codeswitching bilingual as he engages in Spanish and Spanish-English codeswitched speech across two conditions.<sup>27</sup> The above-referenced syntactic features of Spanish – the positioning and (non) expression of subjects – were selected for inquiry.<sup>28</sup> Since these properties of Spanish syntax are determined by discourse – and semantic-pragmatic considerations, their analysis must go beyond the confines of isolated sentences to a consideration of linguistic forms in relation to the narrative or other discourse functions that they perform within a given text. The extended discourse of the monolingual excerpt of *Little Red Riding Hood* in (14) and the bilingual extract of *The Beggar Prince* in (15) prove especially opportune for examination of subject expression and positioning; however, the cursory discussion that follows is focused on the omission (marked by  $\emptyset$ ) versus expression of the subject, to the exclusion of its positioning.<sup>29</sup>

- (14) ...Cuando  $\emptyset$  iba, cuando ella iba cantando y caminando de pronto detrás de un árbol, salió el lobo, el mismo lobo que la iba persiguiendo. Él le dio unas flores y le dijo qué bonita se miraba.  $\emptyset$  También le preguntó que pa' dónde  $\emptyset$  iba, verdad, y ella le respondió, y le dijo, ' $\emptyset$  voy a la casa de mi abuelita a darle un... un en... a entregarle algo que mamá me mandó.  $\emptyset$  No sé qué  $\emptyset$  es'. Entonces, él le dijo, 'Okay, pues,  $\emptyset$  nos vemos. Y ten buen día'. En eso, él se fue y ella siguió por el bosque, feliz, cantando con sus flores que le dio el lobo. Mientras ella iba por el bosque, el lobo se apuró y llegó a la casa de la abuelita.<sup>30</sup>

- (15) ...Since she had agreed to go and live with him. *Ella dijo que Ø voy a ver a ver cuánto Ø puedo quedarme aquí.* Let's see if I could get used to it. Well she did, *Ø se quedó* almost you know, *ella dijo, 'Ø Me voy a quedar aquí un mes y a ver a ver qué tal'.*  
*y llegando el, la cuarta semana, pues ya entonces ella empezó a sentir el, qué tan duro es trabajar,* how, how easy she had it, how all the things that, that, that she took for granted, you know, she, uh, she started to reflect upon, *así que ella decidió en la, durante la cuarta semana de que ella se iba a regresar al palacio, ella no podía vivir como una persona humilde.*<sup>31</sup>

At first observation, the Spanish of both texts appears structurally well-formed: most expressed subject pronouns correctly serve the function of contrast, switch reference, or disambiguation. But, there are some pronominal uses to which no such function can be attributed, especially when the English language is also activated; noteworthy in this respect are the pronouns in the bilingual Spanish samples in (14). The use of pronouns in these bilingual selections is not grammatically incorrect, but discourse-pragmatically odd, being marked by a selection of available grammatical options that coincide with those of English. Thus, unlike the attrition previously discussed, these passages do not involve the incorporation or loss of morphological information or syntactic structures. Yet, similar to the attrition already mentioned, the subtle changes represented, are motivated by a principle of redundancy reduction: the speaker arrives at the most parsimonious grammar that can serve both Spanish and English when both systems are activated (Seliger, 1996; Toribio, 2004).

To recapitulate, there is implicit in proficient bilingual speech behaviour an appeal towards economy: the speaker reduces processing costs while enjoying the richness of bilingualism (Muysken, p.c.). Such a finding affords an explanation for why Spanish-English bilingual speakers' Spanish language abilities may not be identical to those of native speakers who have acquired and used their Spanish in settings in which only Spanish is employed for all interactions.<sup>32</sup> Finally, such a finding leads to a judgment against cries of corruption and degradation by the self-proclaimed conservators of the Spanish language. For it is uncertain, states Valdés (2000: 119) 'whether linguistic conservatism is a predictor of language maintenance or whether the survival of a language in a minority-majority context requires the acceptance of "interference" phenomena by its speakers' (cf. Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Woolard, 1992).

## Pedagogical Implications

Our real lives are the family, our friends, the street, jobs, and all that we came with from before. (a high school student quoted in Walsh, 1991)

It is hoped that the foregoing discussion may be heeded as an exhortation to educators to become familiar with the research literature on bilingual speech practices. Much is to be gained by educators' understanding of the language diversity of heritage language students, especially as they uphold the standardised linguistic varieties that are required for academic success (cf. Valdés, 2000). The ensuing paragraphs present pedagogical practices that further pro-

mote this positive disposition towards heritage language students, their particular speech forms, and their communities of practice.<sup>33</sup>

Teachers who serve Spanish heritage language students may carry out examinations of bilingual materials in concert with activities in subjects such as social studies and language arts. Suitable exemplars are readily available in the literary output of poets and writers. The linguistic inflections in Tato Laviera's bilingual poem, 'My graduation speech', reproduced in (16), are especially instructive for high school audiences. The poem reflects Laviera's deliberate use of 'anti-aesthetic' language to render an enactment and commentary of the linguistic dilemma of Puerto Ricans in the United States (Flores, 1993).<sup>34</sup>

(16) 'My graduation speech'

i think in spanish  
 i write in english  
 i want to go back to puerto rico,  
 but i wonder if my kink could live  
 in ponce, mayagüez and carolina  
 tengo las venas aculturadas  
 escribo en spanglish  
 abraham en español  
 abraham in english  
 tato in spanish  
 'taro' in english  
 tonto in both languages  
 how are you?  
 ¿cómo estás?  
 i don't know if i'm coming  
 or si me fui ya  
 si me dicen barranquitas, yo reply,  
 'con qué se come eso?'  
 si me dicen caviar, i digo,  
 'a new pair of converse sneakers'.  
 ahí supe que estoy jodío  
 ahí supe que estamos jodíos  
 english or spanish  
 spanish or english  
 spanenglish  
 now, dig this:  
 hablo lo inglés matao  
 hablo lo español matao  
 no sé leer ninguno bien  
 so it is, spanglish to matao  
 what i digo  
 ¡ay, virgen, yo no sé hablar!

Numerous and varied themes arise in the interpretation of this poem, some oriented towards content, and others focused on linguistic form. At one level,

the poem is an indictment of the educational system, at another, the linguistic modulation of the poem represents the difficulty of marking out an 'interlingual' space. Laviera presents a poet-persona who is silenced by the linguistic mismatch between English and Spanish, one who is inarticulate even in Spanglish, not only by assertion ('Spanglish to matao'), but also by employing in his speech such combinations as 'yo reply', 'or si me fui ya', and 'what i digo', switches, which, as noted, are unacceptable among bilingual speakers (Toribio & Vaquera-Vásquez, 1995). Yet, writes Flores (1993: 176), the closing line 'must be understood ironically: the reader is by now aware that the speaker knows what he is saying and can say what he thinks in both languages and in a wide array of combinations of the two'.

Linguistic issues of voice may also be highlighted in discussing prose narrative, such that excerpted from Norma Cantú's *Canícula*:

- (17) Mami was the madrina one year; she sewed the most beautiful outfit for the baby Jesus – of white tulle, embroidered in white silk, complete with knitted cap and socks – we all helped with the preparativos, although we usually did anyway, even when it was some other neighbor who was the madrina. From the tamalada on Christmas Eve, for the acostar al niño, the singing of Mexican carols, and later because we kids insisted, English ones as well, the champurrado and the little bags of goodies (oranges, pecans, Mexican cookies), and the colaciones and other Christmas candy that fell from the star-shaped piñata that invariably Toño, the oldest of the neighborhood bullies, would break, Doña Carmen's posada was the best.

The Spanish lexical items function as echoes of a cultural tradition that remains inaccessible to the main language of the text, English. Thus while we may offer the facile conclusion of lexical borrowing as typical of language contact situations, as an aesthetic practice, its description is more complex, for in mixing languages, there is a mixing of cultures and of world views that is part and parcel of the (im)migrant experience.

Other classroom activities could reference naturalistic language samples such as those afforded in personal narratives. Students could be asked to chronicle their own experiences, independently or in collaboration with siblings and other family members. The brief entries in (18), drawn from the personal history of an agricultural worker (cf. (11–13)), are uniquely valuable in allowing for extensive cultural and linguistic analysis and discussion (Toribio, 2000a).

- (18) Sali para D. en avion a las 2 de la tarde, pero ya mero no la hacía como antes de llegar al aero-puerto se nos fletio la llanta de la troca de J. Estuve en D. por cerca de 4 horas. estaba en 'stand by'. [...]...además no tenemos agua caliente, ni baño para bañarnos y el servicio (escusado) se esta cayendo nomas con unas tablas delgadas sosteniendolo y la puerta del servicio esta toda quebrada; no la puedes cerrar porque si la sierras se quebra; *Nombre* si pisas un poca pesado ...[...] A. y D. no andan trabajando en la labor nomás se quedan en la troca porque toda-

via no se comienza la escuela para los migrantes creo que empieza hasta la semana que entra y nosotros no nos registramos porque ya nos vamos para Norte Kora y Minnestota. [...] Nomás va a la escuela A. y D., todos los demás vamos a trabajar en el betavel. Estuvimos levantados desde las cinco de la mañana y el (bus) autobus vino como a las 7:30 siete y media. [sic]<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the most immediately outstanding feature of the journal is in its form and what it reveals about the author and her social and linguistic disadvantages. In surviving largely as an oral language, the Spanish of this speaker may be attrited in isolation from the codified (written) norm and adapt in its contact with English. The samples represent a simplification of the complex mapping between sound and graphemes to a few known values, and reproduce many of the phonological characteristics of her rural dialect. Most telling of the direct transcription of oral speech is her rendition of the state name: *Norte Kora*, a phonetic representation of her pronunciation of 'North Dakota'. The vocabulary, e.g. items such as *la labor* 'the field' speaks to her occupational segregation in agricultural communities and to broader features of colloquial Mexican Spanish, e.g. *nomás* 'only'. Another salient characteristic of the journal is the adoption of English words and phrases, e.g. phonetically unincorporated forms such as *stand by*, and loan translations, such as *pero ya mero no la hacía* 'I nearly didn't make it' (lit. trans.), which may be uninterpretable to the reader who has no knowledge of English. With respect to grammar, the principal tendency in the journal is to simplify the verbal morphology, with the result that there is a greater number of verbs that follow the regular conjugation; in addition, mismatches in agreement are noted for subject-verb agreement, especially with null and post-verbal subjects, *va a la escuela A. y D.* 'A. and D. go to school'. But the keynote of this written record is the issue of self-determination: the author literally writes her own history in a voice that clearly articulates her migrant identity.

In conclusion, it should be patently evident that the introduction of materials and activities such as those outlined above can provide the basis for teacher-facilitated peer discussions on a broad range of viable and vital issues – from civics to orthography – that are of personal relevance and educational merit to heritage language students. More than that, the mere act of acknowledging that bilingual speech forms are worthy of examination will cultivate an affective environment that will translate into greater engagement on the part of Spanish heritage students.

## Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Almeida Jacqueline Toribio, Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese, The Pennsylvania State University, 211 Burrowes Building, University Park, PA 16801, USA.

## Notes

1. The paper draws its subtitle from a paper co-presented with Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez at a joint conference of The Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American

Studies and the Pacific Coast Council for Latin American Studies held in Las Vegas in 1995.

2. It is not uncommon for Latinos in the US to self-identify as 'Spanish'; also attested is the classifying of English-speakers as 'English'.
3. As described in Muysken's synchronic study of bilingual speech, in many situations of prolonged language contact, a number of phenomena involving mixing co-occur: lexical borrowing, codemixing, interference, calquing, relexification, semantic borrowing, first language transfer in second language learning (cf. Muysken, 2000).
4. The reader is referred to Grosjean (1982) for a popular, accessible text on bilingualism.
5. Consult Zentella (1988, 2000) for a discussion of the principal communicative patterns – 'who speaks what to whom' – that emerged in her study of the bilingual families of *el bloque*.
6. Gumperz provides a list of discourse functions marked by codeswitching: quotation, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, and message qualification (cf. McClure, 1981; Valdés-Fallis, 1976). The listing is not exhaustive, as a review of the literature will demonstrate; subsequent research has corroborated Gumperz's classification and has revealed additional conversational strategies accomplished by codeswitching. Especially noteworthy are the findings reported by Zentella (1997), who identified at least 22 communicative aims achieved by code alternation among Puerto Ricans in New York City.
7. As such, the forms are bound to the context of this migrant community and need not be regulated by reference to a standardised norm.
8. The reader is referred to the early Spanish-English code-switching studies by Aguirre (1977, 1985), Gingrás (1974), Gumperz (1976), Gumperz and Hernández-Chávez (1975), Lipski (1985), McClure (1981), Pfaff (1979), Poplack (1980, 1981), Timm (1975), and Zentella (1981).
9. We must bear in mind, however, that literary examples do not necessarily represent societal usage, since the former reflect inherent correction, editing, and rewriting. We are nonetheless in agreement with Lipski (1985) that the literary artefact should not be entirely exempted from sociolinguistic criteria (cf. Toribio, 2001b). For relevant discussion on the narrative structure of codeswitching, consult the literature grounded in Keller (1979).
10. The Spanish portions are translated as follows: 'It was a fresh spring morning'; (he) listened to the song of the some little birds who were celebrating'; (he) saw'; 'while they sang happily'; 'in his eyes'; 'going to land'.
11. Note that intra-sentential codeswitching is to be distinguished from lexical insertions and tag-switches (cf. Romaine, 1995 for discussion). Lexical insertions (i) and tags (ii) may be evidenced in both monolingual and bilingual modes of interaction; in contrast, codeswitching, of interest here, is illustrative of a bilingual speech mode which requires a high degree of bilingual competence.
  - (i) Leí el libro en el *reference room*. ('I read the book in the reference room')
  - (ii) It's raining a lot these days, *verdad?* ('It's raining a lot these days, isn't it?')
12. When the parents in Zentella's (1981) study of *el bloque* were asked why they or their children shifted between Spanish and English, they all attributed it to a lack of linguistic knowledge. However, her observations revealed that only ten percent of switches were intended to cover gaps in knowledge.
13. Consult the syntactic-theoretical works of Belazi *et al.* (1994), D'Introno (1996), MacSwan (1999, 2000), Toribio (2001a), Toribio and Rubin (1996), Woolford (1984, 1985).
14. In the monolingual rendition, the language switches are indicated by a slash mark: 'There once was a beautiful princess as white as the snow. Her stepmother, the queen, had a magic / mirror on the wall. The queen often asked, 'Who is the / most fair in the valley?' And one day the / mirror answered, 'Snow White is the fairest one of all!' Very envious and evil, the / queen sent a houseboy to kill the princess. The houseboy took her to the forest and / out of compassion abandoned / her there. / A squirrel took pity on the princess and led her to

a / small cabin in the forest. In the cabin, there lived seven dwarfs that / returned to find Snow White asleep in their beds. Back at the palace, the stepmother again asked the / mirror: 'And now who is the most beautiful?' the mirror again answered / her, without hesitation, 'Snow White!'...

15. It must not go unremarked, however, that although codeswitching is subserved by bilingual competence, it is not an essential feature of bilingual practice. Researchers such as Valdés (1981) and Lipski (1985) have observed that while competence in two languages is a necessary precondition, it is an insufficient prerequisite in determining successful codeswitching performance: membership in a community in which codeswitching is practised may also be required. That is, code-switching practice requires social knowledge that is culturally specific and acquired through contextualised practice (cf. Toribio 2002).
16. These data were made available by Richard Durán, Professor of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara and director of the project entitled 'Activity and Classroom Culture Among Language Learners', sponsored by the Center for Research on Education of Students Placed At-risk, Johns Hopkins and Howard Universities.
17. A normative orthography would render the following: My favourite TV show is Power Rangers. There's six power rangers. They rescue persons and they saved the world and they know everything. They're humans but they morph to power rangers and save the world of Rita and her masters but Lord Zedd comes and he was winning the power rangers but the power rangers win the wars and they save the world.
18. The written texts were made available to me by Karen Beckstead.
19. This pattern of transitional bilingualism is masked by continued influx of monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrants, but the shift to English is evident (cf. Bills *et al.*, 1995; Gutiérrez & Silva-Corvalán, 1993; Martínez, 1993; Silva-Corvalán, 1986, 1994; Torres, 1997), and the lack of intergenerational transmission will usher in language shift away from Spanish (cf. Fishman, 1964).
20. Consult Zabaleta (2001) for further discussion on language variation and attrition among heritage speakers.
21. The text is translated as follows: 'This is the story of Little Red Riding Hood and ...Little Red Riding Hood's mother said that...that to take these sweets or food to her grandmother so...she went and found a wolf that...spoke with her and then...-she continued walking to the grandmother's house. But the wolf went...arrived at the house first and scared the grandmother and...'
22. This speaker could be said to represent Fishman's (1964) fourth stage of immigrant bilingualism: English has displaced the mother tongue in all except for the most intimate or private domains.
23. Valdés suggests that because of the large influx of persons of rural and working-class backgrounds, the Spanish of the Southwest is characterised by features of the Mexican *normal rural*. This is not to suggest, she cautions, that these speakers are unable to alternate Spanish speech styles; rather, the difference between the Spanish spoken by Mexican-Americans in the Southwest and that spoken in Mexico is in the fewer number of styles in the speakers' repertoire, and the frequency with which each style is employed.
24. It is unclear whether such tendencies entail changes in competence, i.e. in the formal morphosyntactic features of the component languages (cf. Platzack, 1996). The interested reader is referred to Vago (1991) for discussion of aspects of native language attrition that indicate that more abstract levels of knowledge may be affected, e.g. as revealed by a speaker's inability to make grammaticality judgments.
25. As reported in Toribio (2000b, 2002), the speaker's everyday interactions are carried out almost exclusively in English, though she embellishes her speech with Spanish-language discourse markers, formulaic expressions, and lexical items (which could be considered part of her core English-language lexicon). The speaker switches into Spanish, even in bilingual interactions that favour English, her dominant language, in order to assert her cultural autonomy and uniqueness; i.e., linguistic modulation

becomes an act of cultural differentiation and reaffirmation, the linguistic material around which her Latina identity is configured.

26. Seliger and Vago (1991) note that such a reduction of redundancy presupposes that the bilingual's languages are not altogether autonomous of each other.
27. The speaker was selected for analysis because he reported engaging in oral code-switching in a diversity of discourse contexts, especially with in-group members such as friends and family, and some reported alternating Spanish and English in their written communications (e.g. personal letters, and email) as well.
28. As is well known, the ordering of phrases in Spanish declarative sentences demonstrates a sensitivity to discourse-pragmatic considerations such as theme-rheme/topic-focus requirements, and lexical considerations such as verb class (cf. *Llegó Juan* 'Juan arrived' vs. *Estudió Juan* 'Juan studied'). In addition, subject pronouns are omissible in Spanish; they are in contexts of contrastive focus, switch reference, or disambiguation.
29. What is required is a thorough quantitative analysis of the positioning of subjects as sanctioned by verb class and by theme-rheme/topic-focus properties. For instance, the low incidence of post-verbal subjects in the 'bilingual' Spanish mode could be due to the fact that the speaker produced few unaccusative verbs that license this pattern, or that the speaker adopted alternate strategies for marking theme-rheme/topic-focus contrasts (the latter possibility, of course, is significant as it speaks to the point).
30. The segment is translated as follows: 'When she walked, when she walked singing and walking from behind a tree there appeared a wolf, the same wolf that was following her. He gave her some flowers and told her how pretty she looked. He also asked her where she was going, right, and she responded, and said to him, 'I'm going to my grandmother's house to give her a... a... to give her something that mother sent me. I don't know what it is'. Then he told her, 'Okay, well, we'll see each other. And have a good day'. 'Just then, he left and she continued through the woods, happy, singing with her flowers that the wolf had given her. While she walked through the woods, the wolf hurried and arrived at the grandmother's house'.
31. The Spanish language segments are translated as follows: '[...] She said that I am going to see how long I can stay here. [...] she stayed [...] she said, 'I'm going to stay here a month and see how it is'. [...] and having arrived the the fourth week, well then she began to feel the how hard work is [...] so she decided in the during the fourth week that she was going to return to the palace, she could not live like a humble person'.
32. This linguistic study also invites investigations into related issues, among these, the assessment of language proficiency among bilinguals (cf. Valdés & Figueroa, 1994), and the simultaneous processing and representation of languages and language modules (cf. the early proposal by Sridhar & Sridhar, 1980).
33. Recent treatments such as those of Haberman (1995), Ladson-Billings (1994), and Olsen (1997) have yielded a consistent profile: successful teachers are those who demonstrate a disposition that includes, among other attributes, an orientation to the specific community of which the students are members, and skills in using students' linguistic strengths to teach a second language or language variety.
34. Consult Bruce-Novoa (1982) and L. Flores (1987) for insightful discussion on Chicano poetry.
35. 'I left for D. by plane at 2 in the afternoon, but I almost didn't make it since before arriving to the airport we got a flat tire on J's truck. I was in D. for close to 4 hours. I was on 'stand by'. [...] ..in addition we don't have hot water, nor a bath for bathing and the facilities re falling only some thin boards holding it together and the door is all broken; you can't close it because if you close it breaks; man, if you step on it heavily. [...]...A. and D. aren't working in the fields they just stay in the truck because school for the migrants doesn't start I think it doesn't start until next week and we did not register because we were going to North Dakota and Minnesota. [...] Only A. and D. go to school, all the others of us go to work

in the beet fields. We were up since five in the morning and the (bus) bus came around 7:30 seven-thirty'.

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