

Is “Spanglish” the third language of the South?:  
truth and fantasy about U. S. Spanish

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## INTRODUCTION

Spanish first arrived on the North American mainland in what is now part of the southern United States, and the first stable contacts between Spanish- and English-speaking colonies also occurred in these same regions. Today with upwards of 35 million native speakers Spanish is the de facto second language of the United States (and the first language of many regions), and the United States is on the verge of becoming the world’s fourth-largest Spanish-speaking nation (counting only native speakers). Even today the largest number of Spanish speakers in the United States resides in southern latitudes, and the 2000 census presents dramatic evidence that the areas of most rapid growth of the Spanish-speaking population in the last decade and a half are southern states such as Georgia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Alabama. If we temporarily exclude Texas, the majority of Spanish speakers in the southern states have arrived during the past half century, many during the past decade, although a few long-standing enclaves continue to exist. In terms of demographics—and increasingly in terms of economic and political strength—Spanish is clearly the second language of the South, mostly representing varieties originating in Cuba and Mexico, but also in several Caribbean, Central and South American nations. In addition to speaking Spanish and—usually—English, Spanish speakers living in the United States typically exhibit a wide range of language-contact phenomena that have led observers in this country and abroad to postulate that a new creation is arising from this sustained bilingual contact. Some call it this and some call it that, but the one name that everyone recognizes is ‘Spanglish,’ a word whose very morphology connotes hybridity, mixture, and—to the most cynical—illegitimate birth. But what is ‘Spanglish’? Does it really exist? Can the thousands of individuals worldwide who use the term with conviction—albeit with a wide variety of meanings—be describing a non-existent entity? Like the search for ‘family values,’ ‘democracy,’ and ‘national security,’ ‘Spanglish’ has become a deeply-rooted cultural construct highly charged with emotion while eluding a widely accepted definition. Since neither the term itself nor the notion of a ‘third language’ arising from the head-on collision between English and Spanish is likely to disappear anytime soon, it is imperative that serious empirical research complement the popular chaos that has embraced aspects of mass hysteria, conspiracy theories, and media feeding frenzy, while doing little to elucidate the actual linguistic situation of Latino bilinguals.

## OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS OF “SPANGLISH”

Outside of the United States, the situation of the Spanish language in the U. S. is often entangled with anti-imperialistic political postures that assume as axiomatic that any language

and culture arriving in the United States will be overwhelmed by Anglo-American values, and will be denatured, weakened, contaminated, and ultimately assimilated by the mainstream juggernaut. Defenders of language mixing and borrowing have largely come from literary circles and from the political left, and have been frustrated in attempts to bring their views to the attention of mainstream educators, journalists, and community leaders. Despite the fact that nearly every Spanish speaker in the United States and throughout the world, as well as the majority of Anglo-Americans recognize this word, there is no consensus on the linguistic and social correlates of 'Spanglish.' One common thread that runs through most accounts of spanglish is the idea that most Latinos in the United States and perhaps in Puerto Rico and border areas of Mexico speak this 'language' rather than 'real' Spanish. Since upwards of 50 million speakers are at stake, the matter is definitely of more than passing interest. A survey of recent statements will demonstrate the diversity of definitions, viewpoints, and attitudes regarding the linguistic behavior of the world's fourth-largest Spanish-speaking community.

We begin by considering dictionary definitions, typically the most neutral, widely accepted, and carefully researched. This first encounter yields dramatically contradictory results. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (p. 1666) gives the very generic and neutral definition 'Spanish characterized by numerous borrowings from English.' On the other hand, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (v. XVI, p. 105) defines *spanglish* as 'A type of Spanish contaminated by English words and forms of expression, spoken in Latin America.' The term *spanglish* (or *espanglish* in Spanish) appears to have been coined by the Puerto Rican journalist Salvador Tío (1954), in a newspaper column first published in 1952. Tío—who certainly considers himself the inventor of this word, an opinion largely shared by others in Latin America—was concerned about what he felt to be the deterioration of Spanish in Puerto Rico under the onslaught of English words, and waged a campaign of polemical and satirical articles over more than half a century.<sup>1</sup> Tío (1954:60) states his position unashamedly: 'No creo ni en el latín ni en el bilingüismo. El latín es una lengua muerta. El bilingüismo, dos lenguas muertas' [I don't believe in Latin or bilingualism. Latin is a dead language. Bilingualism: two dead languages]. Many of Tío's examples are legitimate borrowings from English—some in unassimilated form—that are found in modern Puerto Rican speech. Most refer to consumer products marketed in the United States or to aspects of popular youth culture, but Tío felt that Puerto Rican Spanish could suffer a far worse fate than simply absorbing foreign borrowings—which, after all, had been occurring for more than a thousand years. Evidently not understanding that creole languages are formed under conditions far different from the bilingual borrowing found in Puerto Rico, he examined Papiamentu, an Afro-Iberian creole language spoken mainly in Aruba and Curaçao and concluded that it was a degenerate form of Spanish.<sup>2</sup> He warned that the same fate could befall Puerto Rican Spanish: 'Si en ese estado de postración cayó el español de Curazao y Aruba, también podría ocurrir algo similar en Puerto Rico si no se extrema el rigor para evitarlo. Puede tardar más tiempo por muchas razones pero si le ha ocurrido a otras lenguas en todos los continentes no hay razón para creer que somos indemnes al daño' [If the Spanish of Curaçao and

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<sup>1</sup> Granda (1972) and Pérez Sala (1973) are among the linguists who have taken a similar stance, as do the journalists Lloréns (1971) and Varo (1971). See Lipski (1975, 1976) for a different viewpoint.

<sup>2</sup> Some Cuban writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Bachiller y Morales 1883) had referred to Papiamentu as 'español arañado' [torn-up Spanish], so Tío was not the first to form such an opinion).

Aruba could sink to such depths, something similar could occur in Puerto Rico if stiff measures are not taken to avoid it. This could take longer for various reasons, but if it has happened to other languages in every continent there is no reason to believe that we are exempt from this danger] (Tío 1992:25). Tío's early article also contained humorous `Spanglish' words of his own invention, which were not used at the time and have not been used since, thereby creating some confusion between legitimate examples of language contact and sarcastic parodies. Although Tío had lived in New York City, and therefore had experienced first-hand true bilingual contact phenomena, he accepted uncritically others' parodies of Spanish-English interaction (Tío 1992:91): `[el español] se pudre en la frontera nuevo-mexicana donde, como dice H. L. Mencken en su obra *The American Language*, dos nuevo-mexicanos se saludan con esta joya de la burundanga lingüística: “¡Hola amigo! ¿Cómo le how do you dea?” “Voy very welldiando, gracias” [Spanish is rotting on the New Mexican border {sic.} where as H. L. Mencken says in *The American Language*, two New Mexicans greet each other with this gem of linguistic nonsense ...]. This example, from Mencken (1962:650-1), does not actually come from the latter author, whose other observations on Spanish in the United States and its influence on English are in general well-documented and factually accurate. Rather, Mencken quotes (uncritically, it appears) a `recent explorer' (McKinstry 1930:336), whose concern for linguistic accuracy is highly questionable. McKinstry wrote during a time when Mexican-bashing was an acceptable literary pass-time, and although his witty anecdotes about his linguistic experiences on the U. S.-Mexican border suggest that he actually spoke Spanish, his factual account of borrowed Anglicisms stands in stark contrast to his mocking account of the language skills of Mexicans living near the border:

While the Mexican of the border appropriates the words of his neighbor in a truly wholesale manner, there is neither hope no danger that he will ever become English-speaking. It is only the bare words that are adopted. They are woven ingeniously into a fabric of grammar and pronunciation which remains forever Mexican. Although every other word your Nogales or Juárez peon uses may be English, he could not, to save his sombrero, put them together into a sentence intelligible to an American, that is, beyond such simple household phrases as *all right* and *goddam* [...] This mongrel jargon of the border is naturally shocking to the ears of the well-bred Mexican of the interior.

By uncritically quoting this unrealistic parody together with legitimate examples of borrowing and calquing, Tío (and Mencken) contributed to the false impression of a `mongrel' language teetering on the brink of total unintelligibility.

Nash (1970:223-4) offers a somewhat different definition and set of observations on `Spanglish' in Puerto Rico:

In the metropolitan areas of Puerto Rico, where Newyorricans play an influential role in the economic life of the island, there has arisen a hybrid variety of language, often given the slightly derogatory label of Spanglish, which coexists with less mixed forms of standard English and standard Spanish and has at least one of the characteristics of an autonomous language: a substantial number of native speakers. The emerging language retains the phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure of Puerto Rican Spanish. However, much of its vocabulary is English-derived. That it is an autonomous language has been recognized not only by some Puerto Rican intellectuals, most of whom strongly

disapprove of it ... but also by the New York School of Social Research, which has offered a course in Spanglish for doctors, nurses, and social workers.

She further clarifies (p. 225) 'Spanglish as defined here is neither language containing grammatical errors due to interference nor intentionally mixed language.' Most of Nash's examples represent the sort of lexical borrowing found in all bilingual contact situations, although some have a relatively high number of Anglicisms, usually related to consumer products or popular culture.

Fairclough (2003:187), in a survey of attitudes and inquiries about Spanish in the United States, defines *spanglish* as simply 'la mezcla del inglés y del español' [the mixture of English and Spanish]. Odón Betanzos Palacios (2001), president of the North American Academy of the Spanish Language (a corresponding branch of the Spanish Royal Language Academy) is of the opinion that '... el *espanglish* y el *engliñol* han sido y son dos problemas normales en comunidades donde conviven los de lengua española y los estadounidenses, comunidades en las que sus hablantes son monolingües y tienen necesidad de comunicarse. El de lengua española ha recogido palabras del inglés, de las que entiende su significado y, sencillamente, las españoliza; igualmente hará con las formas verbales y así, en su variedad de injertos, se aproximará a la comunicación con el de la otra lengua ...' [*Spanglish* and *Engliñol* have been and continue to be two normal problems in communities where Spanish speakers and Americans live together. The Spanish speaker has taken those English words whose meaning is understood and, simply, has Hispanized them; the same is done with verbal forms and with such hybrids, some approximation to communication in the other language will be achieved]. Nonetheless he asserts that 'el *espanglish* es, sólo, medio de comunicación temporal ... Creo que [los que promueven la enseñanza del spanglish] no se han percatado del enorme error que cometen al querer hacer de amplitudes y querer enseñar una jerga de comunidades que ni siquiera podrán entender otras comunidades de sus cercanías' [*Spanglish* is only a temporary means of communication ... I believe that those who promote the teaching of Spanglish are not aware of the huge mistake in teaching this jargon that cannot even be understood in neighboring communities]. He concludes that '... el *espanglish* es un problema temporal, pasajero y todo vendrá a su cauce normal cuando nuevas generaciones de hispanohablantes en Estados Unidos reconozcan y aprecien la bendición del bilingüismo ...' [*Spanglish* is a transitory problem and things will return to normal as successive generations of Spanish speakers in the United States recognize and appreciate the blessings of being bilingual].

The self-declared admirer and promoter of *spanglish* Ilan Stavans (2003:6), whose outrageous imitations and prolific popular writings on *spanglish* have made him a lightning rod for polemic, initially defines the term innocently as 'The verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations.' His anecdotal accounts of learning *spanglish* upon arriving in New York City from Mexico reveal an often less than affectionate reaction: 'But to keep up with these publications [Spanish-language newspapers in New York City in the 1980's] was also to invite your tongue for a bumpy ride. The grammar and syntax used in them was never fully "normal," e.g., it replicated, often unconsciously, English-language patterns. It was obvious that its authors and editors were americanos with a loose connection to la lengua de Borges.'

Adopting an anti-imperialistic stance and considering *spanglish* to consist primarily of the use of Anglicisms by Spanish speakers, the distinguished literary critic Roberto González-Echeverría (1997) laments the negative implications of *spanglish*:

El spanglish, la lengua compuesta de español e inglés que salió de la calle y se introdujo en los programas de entrevistas y las campañas de publicidad, plantea

un **grave peligro** a la cultura hispánica y al progreso de los hispanos dentro de la corriente mayoritaria norteamericana. Aquellos que lo toleran e incluso lo promueven como una mezcla inocua no se dan cuenta de que esta no es una relación basada en la igualdad. El spanglish es una **invasión** del español por el inglés. La triste realidad es que el spanglish es básicamente la lengua de los hispanos pobres, muchos de los cuales son casi analfabetos en cualquiera de los dos idiomas. Incorporan palabras y construcciones inglesas a su habla de todos los días porque carecen del vocabulario y la educación en español para adaptarse a la cambiante cultura que los rodea. Los hispanos educados que hacen otro tanto tienen una motivación diferente: algunos **se avergüenzan de su origen** e intentan parecerse al resto usando palabras inglesas y traduciendo directamente las expresiones idiomáticas inglesas. Hacerlo, piensan, es reclamar la calidad de miembro de la corriente mayoritaria. Políticamente, sin embargo, el spanglish es una capitulación; indica marginalización, no liberación. [Spanglish, the language made up of Spanish and English off the streets and introduced into talk shows and advertising campaigns represents a grave danger for Latino culture and the progress of Latinos in mainstream America. Those who tolerate and even promote [spanglish] as a harmless mixture don't realize that this is not a relationship of equality. The sad truth is that spanglish is basically the language of poor Latinos, many of whom are illiterate in both languages. They incorporate English words and constructions into their daily speech because they lack the vocabulary and training in Spanish to adapt to the culture that surrounds them. Educated Latinos who use this language have other motives: some are ashamed of their origins and try to blend in with everyone else by using English words and literally translating English idioms. They think that this will make them part of the mainstream. Politically, however, spanglish represents a capitulation; it stands for marginalization, not liberation].

This condemnation of *spanglish* as a manifestation of defeat and submissiveness by Hispanic communities in the United States recalls Odón Betanzos Palacios' lament, when he speaks of el problema de algunos hispanos en Estados Unidos, de los que no han podido ni tenido la oportunidad de aprender ninguna de las dos lenguas (español e inglés)' [the problem of some Latinos in the United States, who have not had the opportunity to learn either Spanish or English]. In another commentary on *spanglish*, Joaquim Ibarz (2002) offers the following observation, which clearly confuses regional and social dialects, youth slang, and language contact phenomena:

Hablar medio en español, medio en inglés, no es tan descabellado si se piensa en la mezcla de las culturas, las migraciones y todas las circunstancias que han hecho que estos dos idiomas puedan combinar ... La lengua resultante del mestizaje entre español y el inglés, conocida como 'spanglish', es hablada por más de 25 millones de personas a ambos lados de la frontera entre México y Estados Unidos, zona en la que residen cerca de 40 millones de latinos. La mayoría utiliza formas diferentes de este dialecto, que cambia según el país de origen de quién lo utiliza, como el cubonics de Miami, el nuyorrican de los puertorriqueños de Manhattan y el caló pachuco de San Antonio [speaking half in Spanish, half in English, isn't so crazy if we think about cultural mixture, migrations, and other circumstances that have brought these two languages together ... the language resulting from the

mixture of Spanish and English, known as `spanglish,' is spoken by more than 25 million people on both sides of the U. S.-Mexican border, an area in which some 40 million Latinos live. Most use some variety of this dialect, which varies according to the country of origins, like Cubonics in Miami, Nuyorican for Puerto Ricans in Manhattan and Pachuco caló of San Antonio]

Xosé Castro (1996) gives a similar appraisal:

El **espanglish** tiene una lógica forma de ser y un origen explicable y comprensible. Su función es claramente comunicadora, pero sólo puede darse cuando existe una carencia de vocabulario en alguna de las dos partes que forman un diálogo. Cuando existe alguna duda o algo que obstaculice la comprensión, se echa mano de la versión inglesa, idioma que ambos interlocutores comprenden, y la comunicación, por fin, se completa ... la marginalidad del **espanglish** ... excluye al hispano que no entiende inglés, y al angloparlante que no entiende español. Se restringe, por tanto, a una reducida comunidad de hablantes. Debemos tener en cuenta que el **espanglish** de Nueva York poco tiene que ver con el de Los Ángeles. Así que, en realidad, no estamos hablando de una lengua sino de un conjunto de dialectos tan variados como sus comunidades de hablantes. [Spanglish has its own logic and a logically explained origin. It serves a clear communicative function, but it can only occur when one of the dialog partners lacks a vocabulary item. When in doubt, to eliminate any obstacle to communication, one reverts to the English version, understood by both interlocutors, and communication takes place ... the marginal status of spanglish ... excludes Latinos who don't understand English and English speakers who don't understand Spanish. It is therefore restricted to small speech communities. We must acknowledge that New York Spanglish has little to do with its Los Angeles counterpart. Therefore we are not speaking of a single language but rather of a group of dialects as varied as the speech communities it represents]

Angélica Guerra Avalos, of the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, gives a more positive analysis:

En los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, la cultura latinoamericana ha tenido tal presencia durante años, que su influencia ha dado lugar a una fusión cultural innegable. Uno de los elementos fundamentales de dicha fusión ha sido la mezcla de los idiomas español e inglés, originando un complejo fenómeno denominado *spanglish*. La importancia de analizar el impacto del *spanglish* en la cultura estadounidense radica en cómo se ha ido extendiendo su uso, tanto en la vida cotidiana de un gran número de habitantes de tal país, como en los medios de comunicación masiva, con lo cual ha rebasado las fronteras estadounidenses para ejercer un efecto lingüístico en diferentes países alrededor del mundo ... En las regiones cerca de la frontera mexicana, por ejemplo, los niños chicanos no necesitan el inglés en su vida cotidiana y por lo tanto es difícil para ellos el aprenderlo; resulta más cómodo y es más usual utilizar el español o, en otro caso, es muy normal que al crecer en un ambiente donde la gente habla tanto español como inglés, mezclen los dos idiomas ... Esa mezcla ha propiciado que el español en Estados Unidos no se haya propagado en su totalidad de una forma pura. Durante varias décadas se ha estado utilizando un híbrido lingüístico conocido como *spanglish*, el cual no es español ni inglés, sino una amalgama que nace del

encuentro (o choque) entre ambos idiomas. Este producto de los pueblos de ascendencia hispana surgió como expresión informal y callejera, debido al intenso flujo migratorio en estados como Texas, Nuevo México, Arizona y California, extendiéndose a Miami y Nueva York. El *spanglish* da una oportunidad de comunicarse en dos idiomas al mismo tiempo y a la vez de tener un sentido de pertenencia a dos culturas. La función del *spanglish* es claramente comunicadora y se ha dado por la existencia de una carencia de vocabulario en alguna de las dos partes que forman un diálogo, motivo por el cual es necesario adaptar las palabras conocidas al esquema en el que se requiere expresar una idea. Es por ello por lo que se le considera una muestra de alto nivel de creatividad lingüística, que por sus características informales no sería posible estandarizar académicamente. [In the United States of America, Latin American culture has had such a presence over the years that an undeniable cultural fusion has resulted. A fundamental aspect of this fusion is the mixture of English and Spanish, giving rise to a complex phenomenon known as “spanglish.” The importance of analyzing spanglish comes from the fact that its use is spreading, in the daily lives of many of this country’s residents, as well as in mass media, which has transcended U. S. borders to produce linguistic effects in various countries throughout the world ... along the Mexican border, for example, Chicano children do not need to use English, and therefore it is difficult for them to learn it; it is easier to use Spanish, or, being in an area where both languages are used, to mix the two languages ... this mixture means that Spanish in the U. S. has not spread in its purest form. For several decades a hybrid known as *spanglish* has been used, which is not Spanish nor English, but an amalgam resulting from the contact (or clash) between the two languages. This form of self-expression among groups of Hispanic origin arose an informal language of the street, due to the heavy immigration to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, and extending to Miami and New York. *Spanglish* provides the opportunity to speak in two languages and the sense of belonging to two cultures. The function of *spanglish* is clearly communicative, and it arises when one dialog partner lacks vocabulary, thereby necessitating the adaptation of known words to fit new ideas. For this reason it is considered a sign of linguistic creativity, which because of its informal nature cannot be academically standardized]

The Cuban linguists Sergio Valdés Bernal and Nuria Gregori Tornada (2001) describe the Spanish of Miami, based on earlier observations of Varela (1992), and affirm that “el *spanglish* queda para los puertorriqueños en sus barrios neoyorquinos. Sin embargo esto ya es historia, y el *spanglish*, como era de esperar, ha hecho su aparición en Miami entre la nueva generación de los cubanoamericanos –los yacas– quienes se “divierten” hablando esta variedad de lengua “en parte español anglosajonizado, en parte inglés hispanizado, y en parte giros sintácticos, que usan niños y adultos, a veces casi sin darse cuenta” [Spanglish was for Puerto Ricans in their New York neighborhoods. But this is now history, and *spanglish*, as might be expected, has made an appearance in Miami among the new generation of Cuban-Americans—yacas—who “mess around” speaking this dialect “part Anglicized Spanish, part Hispanized English, and part syntactic combinations used unconsciously by children and adults]. For these scholars, *spanglish* is mainly code-switching, although sometimes involving linguistic erosion and language loss among U. S.-born Cubans.

A web site devoted to the teaching of Spanish to Americans defines *spanGLISH* as ‘An entity that is not quite English, not quite Spanish but somewhere in between; the ‘language’ spoken by an English-speaking person when attempting to speak in Spanish.’<sup>3</sup> In a few cases (e.g. García Rojas and Molesworth 1996) *spanGLISH* has referred to English as spoken as a second language and with interference from Spanish, a phenomenon that Nash (1971) has dubbed ‘englañol.’ Finally, the president of the Spanish Royal Academy of the Language (RAE) has declared succinctly that ‘el “spanGLISH” no es un idioma’ [*spanGLISH* is not a language].

Acosta-Belén (1975:151) observed that ‘Speakers of the non-defined mixture of Spanish and/or English are judged as “different,” or “sloppy” speakers of Spanish and/or English, and are often labeled verbally deprived, alingual, or deficient bilinguals because supposedly they do not have the ability to speak either English or Spanish well.’ Milán (1982:202-3) specifically recommended that researchers and educators [in New York City] refrain from using the term “Spanglish” and use instead neutral designations such as “New York City Spanish.” However recent work by Zentella (1997:82) has demonstrated that younger Puerto Ricans in New York and other cities of the Northeastern United States are beginning to adopt the word “Spanglish” with pride, to refer explicitly to code-switching: ‘... more NYPR’s are referring to “Spanglish” as a positive way of identifying their switching.’ Zentella offers a ‘grammar of “Spanglish”’ which is in effect an account of grammatical and pragmatic constraints on code-switching. She concludes (112-13) that ‘Contrary to the attitude of those who label Puerto Rican code switching “Spanglish” in the belief that a chaotic mixture is being invented, English-Spanish switching is a creative style of bilingual communication that accomplishes important cultural and conversational work.’

*SpanGLISH* has even made its way into children’s literature, for example in a humorously didactic novel by Montes (2003) in which a Puerto Rican girl is teased by her English-only classmates. The cover blurb sets the stage:

Maritza Gabriela Morales Mercado (Gabí for short) has big *problemas*. Her worst enemy, Johnny Wiley, is driving her crazy ... Gabí is so mad she can’t even talk straight. Her English words keep getting jumbled up with her Spanish words.

Now she’s speaking a crazy mix of both, and no one knows what she’s saying!

Will Gabí ever make sense again? Or will she be tongue-tied forever?

The book provides a touching lesson in cultural sensitivity and a few examples of realistic code-switching, although the idea that bilingual speakers ‘jumble up’ their languages when they become angry is unlikely to score any points in the bilingual education arena.

Drawing together literary, cultural, and political views, Morales (2002:3) takes a politically-grounded stance, linking *spanGLISH* with the notion that:

Latinos are a mixed-race people... there is a need for a way to say something more about this idea than the word “Latino” expresses. So for the moment, let’s consider a new term for the discussion of what this aspect of Latino means—let us consider Spanglish. Why Spanglish? There is no better metaphor for what a

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<sup>3</sup> In one case (Avera 2001) ‘Spanglish’ refers simply to an elementary textbook in conversational Spanish written in bilingual *en face* format. The author defines ‘Spanglish’ as ‘the combination of the words Spanish and English. The two languages represent the form of communicating for millions of people in the Americas, Australia, England, Spain, and others.’ No mention of language mixing or interference is found in the textbook, although the use of available cognates is encouraged throughout.



mixed-race culture means than a hybrid language, an informal code; the same sort of linguistic construction that defines different classes in a society can also come to define something outside it, a social construction with different rules.

Spanglish is what we speak, but it is also who we Latinos are, and how we act, and how we perceive the world. It's also a way to avoid the sectarian nature of other labels that describe our condition, terms like Nuyorican, Chicano, Cuban American, Dominicanyork. It is an immediate declaration that translation is definition, that movement is status quo.

While acknowledging that many observers—particularly from other Spanish-speaking nations—regard Spanglish as ‘Spanish under siege from an external invader’ (p. 5), Morales goes on to celebrate the emerging Latino language as an affirmation of resistance and the construction of a powerful new identity. The remainder of his work deals with manifestations of the Spanish-English interface in literature, popular culture, and political discourse, and represents the most eloquent manifesto of *Spanglish* as an originally derogatory term that is being co-opted by its former victims as a badge of pride and courage, thus joining such crossover soul-mates as *Chicano*, *queer*, and—in another time and place, *hippie* and *freak*. While it is my fervent hope that the term *Spanglish* will eventually lose all its negative connotations and soar with the *águilas*, less flattering notions still prevail, and form the basis for the ongoing polemic that has cut across all sectors of Spanish- and English-speaking societies.

#### ENUMERATION OF THE USES OF SPANGLISH AND MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The preceding survey of definitions and points of view—which represents only a very small fraction of an immense and constantly growing bibliography and a highly charged ideological climate—is more than sufficient to demonstrate that there is no universally accepted definition of *spanglish*. The term *spanglish* has variously been used to describe the following distinct phenomena:

- The use of integrated Anglicisms in Spanish
- The frequent and spontaneous use of non-assimilated Anglicisms (i.e. with English phonetics) in Spanish
- The use of syntactic calques and loan translations from English in Spanish
- Frequent and fluid code-switching, particularly intrasentential switches (within the same clause)
- Deviations from Standard Spanish grammar found among vestigial and transitional bilingual speakers, whose productive competence in Spanish falls below that of true native speakers, due to language shift or attrition.
- The characteristics of Spanish written or spoken as a second language by millions of Americans of non-Hispanic background, who have learned Spanish for personal or professional motives.
- Finally the humorous, disrespectful, and derogatory use of pseudo-Spanish items in what anthropologist Jane Hill (1993a, 1993b) has called *junk spanish*.

The following remarks will examine the various phenomena embodied by this heterogeneous list, in an attempt to extract common denominators en route to addressing the principal research questions surrounding *spanglish*, irrespective of the precise definition given to this term:

- Who uses *spanglish* and in what circumstances?

- When and where is *spanglish* used and not used?
- How is *spanglish* acquired?
- Is *spanglish* a language distinct from English and Spanish?
- Can *spanglish* be characterized technically as a jargon, a pidgin, or a creole language?
- Does *spanglish* have native speakers? If so, are there monolingual speakers of *spanglish*?
- Does *spanglish* have a common linguistic core, understood and used by all speakers/listeners?
- Do regional or social dialects of *spanglish* exist?

It is impossible to adequately address all these issues in a single forum, but an overview of the issues and observations will bring matters into a clearer perspective. In the following remarks, attention will be confined to the interface of Spanish and English in the United States. The issue of whether 'ciber-spanglish' and other English-laden Spanish discourse modes used by monolingual Spanish speakers in other countries will henceforth be kept out of the discussion. One possible exception would be Spanish-English contact phenomena in Gibraltar, a speech community whose sociolinguistic profile closely mirrors that of many parts of the United States: English is the sole official and prestige language, while Spanish is the native and preferred language of a majority of the population.<sup>4</sup> Code-switching, calquing, and borrowing in Gibraltar is strikingly convergent with data from the United States, and most of the following remarks can be extrapolated to include Gibraltar.

#### SPANISH-TO-ENGLISH LANGUAGE DISPLACEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Language shift from Spanish to English occurs in Hispanic communities in the United States, at the same time that the total number of Spanish speakers continues to grow, through immigration. Bills, Hernández-Chávez, and Hudson have demonstrated this second-generation language shift in the Southwest (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado), in the midst of continuing growth in the total number of Spanish speakers.<sup>5</sup> The 1970 census indicated that the Spanish language was lost in the Southwest after one or at most two generations.<sup>6</sup> A comparison of the 1980 and 1990 censuses reveals that Spanish is maintained only in those regions where recent immigration from Spanish-speaking countries is intense.<sup>7</sup> These conclusions have been confirmed by Y. Solé (1990) and Hart-González and Feingold (1990). Veltman (1988:3) concludes that 'Spanish cannot survive in any area of the United States in the absence of continued immigration.' Bills (1990:24) adds: 'With a halt to immigration, a complete shift to English would likely occur within a generation or two.' Distance from the Mexican border is a key parameter for Spanish language retention, intimately linked to opportunities for using Spanish on a daily basis at home and in the workplace. There is a sadly negative correlation between level of formal schooling and socioeconomic achievement and loyalty to the Spanish language in the Southwest. In other words, those who achieve success have done so within social and educational systems that favor the use of English over Spanish.

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<sup>4</sup> Lipski (1986a, 1986b), Moyer (1992).

<sup>5</sup> Bills (1989, 1997a, 1997b), Bills, Hernández-Chávez and Hudson (1995, 2000), Hernández-Chávez, Bills, and Hudson (1996), Hudson, Hernández-Chávez and Bills (1993, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Thompson (1974).

<sup>7</sup> Hudson, Hernández-Chávez y Bills (1995).

Bills (2000) also establishes an inverse correlation between proficiency in English and retention of Spanish in the home: those who speak English better—although they may have immigrated from Spanish-speaking countries—tend to abandon the use of Spanish for daily needs even at home. In contrast, García and Cuevas (1995) have determined that among Puerto Ricans in New York the factor that most strongly favors maintenance of Spanish is the status of the individuals in their own community. The authors find that Spanish is used more frequently among young “Nuyoricans” than among older speakers, suggesting that younger generations of Puerto Ricans no longer associate use of Spanish with socioeconomic failure. Unlike in the Southwest, there is a positive correlation between educational attainment (particularly at the university level) and the retention and active use of Spanish.

The rapid shift to English among Latino communities in the United States has accelerated the incorporation of Anglicisms, has intensified code-switching, and has resulted in large numbers of semifluent transitional bilinguals, whose incomplete active competence in Spanish—a stage which typically lasts no more than a single generation—has at times been confused with the speech of stable bilingual communities.

#### CODE-SWITCHING AS SPANGLISH

When two languages come into contact in a situation of stable bilingualism, both borrowing and code-switching are normal events. Many observers have claimed that borrowing during language contact is constrained by a quasi-universal hierarchy of elements, with content words such as nouns being the most frequently borrowed, while functional words such as conjunctions, prepositions, and complementizers situated at the opposite end of the spectrum.<sup>8</sup> More recent research has revealed that a priori hierarchies or typologies of grammatical elements susceptible to borrowing are so riddled with exceptions as to be meaningless in the global sense, although recurring patterns emerge within individual language families.<sup>9</sup> The relationship between grammatical structure, comparative typological hierarchies, and sociolinguistic factors, is nowhere better exemplified than in intrasentential code-switching among fluent bilinguals.

Code-switching, at least of the fluent intrasentential variety, is governed by a complex set of syntactic and pragmatic restrictions. Among the former, the most compelling is the requirement that no grammatical rule in either language be violated, and in particular that the point of transition be ‘smooth’ in the sense that the material from the second language is in some way as likely a combination as a continuation in the first language. Fluent code-switching may therefore produce combinations in which, e.g. a switch occurs between article and noun, between a complementizer and a subordinate clause, between a conjunction and one of the conjuncts,

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<sup>8</sup> Whitney (1881) is among the first attempts to systematically define a hierarchy of borrowing-types. Further considerations on the typology of borrowing were made by Haugen (1950, 1956) and Weinreich (1953), and more recently Romick (1984).

<sup>9</sup> For example, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:14) affirm, basing their claim on numerous examples, that ‘as far as the strictly linguistic possibilities go, any linguistic feature can be transferred from any language to any other language; and implicational universals that depend solely on linguistic properties are similarly valid’ They also declare (35) that ‘it is the sociolinguistic history of the speakers, and not the structure of their language, that is the primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact. Purely linguistic considerations are relevant but strictly secondary overall.’

etc.<sup>10</sup> Although there are many exceptions, some general observations will illustrate findings specific to Spanish-English code-switching. Spontaneous code-switches not accompanied by hesitations, pauses, or interruptions, are normally unacceptable in the following circumstances: (1) between a pronominal subject and a predicate; (2) between a pronominal clitic and the verb; (3) between a sentence-initial interrogative word and the remainder of the sentence; (4) between an auxiliary verb (especially *haber*) and the main verb; (5) adverbs of negation are normally in the same language as the verbs they modify. The restrictions reflect the general need to maintain the grammatical rules of each language, following the linear order both in English and in Spanish, and to retain easily parsable chunks of discourse. There are also circumstances that favor code-switching among fluent bilinguals: (1) the anticipated presence of a proper noun in the other language can trigger a switch prior to the actual insertion of the L2 proper noun; (2) switches are especially common between a main clause and a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun or a complementizer. Despite the vigorous theoretical debate concerning the governing properties of the complementizer, according to which the subordinate clause must appear in the same language as the complementizer, observed Spanish-English code-switches occur frequently with the complementizer in the language of the first portion of the switched utterance, suggesting that complementizers act as a linguistic fulcrum for switches, rather than being inextricably linked to the language of the subordinate clause; (3) the presence of a coordinating conjunction (*y*, *pero*, etc.) is another fulcrum point which allows switches.

Despite the well-documented restrictions on spontaneous code-switching, and the somewhat looser but still coherent use of code-switching in literature, Ilan Stavans has offered a purported 'translation' of the first chapter of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quijote* into *spanglish*:

In un placete de La Mancha of which nombre no quiero remembearme, vivía, not so long ago, uno de esos gentlemen who always tienen una lanza in the rack, una buckler antigua, a skinny caballo y un grayhound para el chase. A cazuela with más beef than mutón, carne choppeada para la dinner, un omelet pa los sábados, lentil pa los viernes, y algún pigeon como delicacy especial pa los domingos, consumían tres cuarters de su income. El resto lo employaba en una coat de broadcloth y en soketes de velvetín pa los holidays, with sus slippers pa combinar, while los otros días de la semana él cut a figura de los más finos cloths. Livin with él eran una housekeeper en sus forties, una sobrina not yet twenty y un ladino del

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<sup>10</sup> The literature on the syntactic constraints which govern code-switching is vast and still growing. Among the studies relating specifically to Spanish are Dussias (2003), Gingras (1974), Jacobson (1977a, 1977b, 1978a, 1978b), Klavans (1985), Lipski (1977, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1985b, 1992), MacSwan (1999), Pfaff (1979), Poplack (1980, 1983), Poplack, Sankoff and Miller (1988), Poplack, Wheeler, and Westwood (1989), Pousada and Poplack (1982), Sankoff and Poplack (1981), Sobin (1984), Timm (1975), Toribio (2001a, 2001b), Woolford (1983). Among relevant studies dealing with syntactic constraints in other code-switching situations, and with bearing on the present enterprise, are Bautista (1991), Belazi (1991), Bentahila and Davies (1983), Berk-Seligson (1986), Bokamba (1987, 1988, 1989), Brown (1986), Choi (1991), Di Sciullo et al. (1986), Doron (1981), Eliasson (1989, 1991), Ewing (1984), Gibbons (1987), Grosjean and Soares (1986), Joshi (1985), Kamwangamalu (1987), Marasigan (1983), Meyers-Scotton (1992), Nartey (1982), Nishimura (1986), Nortier (1990), Pandit (1987), Park (1990), Sankoff et al. (1990), Scotton and Okeju (1973), Singh (1981, 1985), Sridhar and Sridhar (1980), Treffers-Daller (1991).

field y la marketa que le saddleaba el caballo al gentleman y wieldeaba un hookete pa podear. El gentleman andaba por allí por los fifty. Era de complexión robusta pero un poco fresco en los bones y una cara leaneada y gaunteada. La gente sabía that él era un early riser y que gustaba mucho huntear. La gente say que su apellido was Quijada or Quesada —hay diferencia de opinión entre aquellos que han escrito sobre el sujeto— but acordando with las muchas conjeturas se entiende que era really Quejada. But all this no tiene mucha importancia pa nuestro cuento, providiendo que al contarlo no nos separemos pa nada de las verdá.

This grotesque creation not only contains numerous syntactic violations of code-switching, but also phonotactically unlikely combinations in either language (e.g. *saddleaba*), and phonetic imitation of popular or uneducated Spanish (e.g. *pa* < *para* ‘for,’ *verdá* < *verdad* ‘truth’) reinforce the notion that only uneducated people speak *spanglish*. Stavans’ experiences in the United States have given him ample exposure to legitimate code-switching, and in his own expository prose writings (e.g. Stavans 2000, 2003) he demonstrates considerable proficiency in the code-switched format. Although Stavans does not acknowledge his ‘translation’ as a parody, a possible source could be his own former students’ deliberate renderings of the Pledge of Allegiance, the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence into a humorous but obviously non-authentic mixture of languages (Stavans 2003:15):

- (a) Yo plegio alianza a la bandera de los Unaited Esteits de America ...
- (b) Nosotros joldeamos que estas truths son self-evidentes, que todos los hombres son creados equally, que están endawdeados por su Creador con certain derechos unalienables, que entre these están la vida, la libertad, y la persura de la felicidad.
- (c) We la gente de los Unaited Esteits, pa’ formar una unión más perfecta, establisheamos la justicia, aseguramos tranquilidad doméstica, provideamos pa’ la defensa común, promovemos el welfér, y aseguramos el blessin de la libertad de nosotros mismos y nuestra posterity, ordenando y establisheando esta Constitución de los Unaited Esteits de América.

Although Stavans regards these inventions as ‘an exercise in ingenuity ... show[ing] astuteness, a stunning capacity to adapt, and an imaginative aspect ... that refuses to accept anything as foreign,’ many observers—particularly in Spanish-speaking countries—have taken his ‘translation’ of the *Quijote* at face value and used it as a platform from which to hurl charges of the linguistic self-immolation of Spanish. Perhaps if he had published equally long segments of revered works originally written in English, rather than just attempting ‘famous first lines’ (Stavans 2003:16), an English-speaking audience would also have been offended by his version of *spanglish*:

- (a) Sudenmente fuera del air estéril y drowsy, el lair de los esclavos Como un lightning Europa dió un paso pa’lante ... [Walt Whitman, *Leaves of grass*]
- (b) You no sabe de mí sin you leer un book by the nombre of *The Aventuras of Tom Sawyer*, pero eso ain’t no matter {Mark Twain, *Adventure of Huckleberry Finn*}
- (c) La tierra was ours antes que nosotros were de la tierra. It was nuestra tierra más de cien años pa’tras [Robert Frost, “The gift outright”]

THE SPANISH OF VESTIGIAL AND TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL SPEAKERS

The debate on 'Spanglish' and in general the status and vitality of Spanish in the United States is complicated by the existence of thousands of individuals who consider themselves Latinos and whose passive competence in Spanish is considerable, but whose productive competence may fall short of levels produced by fluent native speakers. Educational programs have come to refer to such individuals as 'heritage language speakers,' but their impact on the assessment of Spanish in the United States has yet to be charted. In classic studies of language attrition in minority communities the technical term *semi-speaker* has been used, as distinguished both from the fluent bilingual or monolingual speaker of the language in question, and from foreign or beginning speakers of the language. In the ontogenesis of semifluent speakers, there is usually a shift away from a minority language to the national/majority language within the space of a single generation or at most two, signaled by a transitional generation of 'vestigial' speakers who spoke the language in question during their childhood but who have subsequently lost much of their native ability, and of true *transitional bilinguals* (TB), a more neutral term that I prefer to employ.<sup>11</sup>

In the United States, the rapid displacement of Spanish in favor of English after at most two generations has created a large and ever-changing pool of transitional bilinguals, representing various national varieties of Spanish and a wide range of active and passive language proficiency. Whereas there exist a few tiny communities of long standing where Spanish as an ancestral language is rapidly disappearing, Spanish as a viable language is widespread in this country, and even in areas geographically removed from large Spanish-speaking groups, Spanish speakers have access to various forms of the Spanish language, through public media, travel opportunities, and a nationwide awareness of some aspects of Spanish. At the same time, within individual families as well as in entire neighborhoods and larger community segments, language shifts away from Spanish are commonplace in many regions of the United States, including areas characterized by large and stable Hispanic populations as well as continued immigration from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.<sup>12</sup> Despite the study of marginal Spanish speakers in the United States (e.g. the *isleños* of Louisiana and the Sabine River Spanish speakers of Texas and Louisiana), and the overlapping study of Spanish to English shifts among larger Hispanic populations, theoretical assessments derived from vestigial and TB speakers have rarely been applied to the Spanish language as used by individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban origin who for whatever reason fall into the TB category. There is not even a rough estimate of the proportion of TB Spanish speakers in the United States, either in the school systems or in society as a whole, nor is there an adequate linguistic definition of vestigial or TB status. There is no preferred geographical locus for TB speakers; many are naturally found in regions where immigration of Spanish speakers has been sporadic and has not occurred recently (as in many midwestern states), or in isolated groups where formerly monolingual Spanish usage has given rise to English dominance. Even larger numbers are found in rural regions of the southwest where Spanish language usage is still strong, and in the major cities of the same region.

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<sup>11</sup> Dorian (1977, 1981), Lipski (1985a, 1993, 1996b).

<sup>12</sup> C. Solé (1979, 1982), Y. Solé (1975), Attinasi (1978, 1979), Peñalosa (1980), Sánchez (1983).

At the lower end of active competence in Spanish, transitional bilinguals may produce errors of subject-verb and noun-adjective agreement in fashions that approximate those of true second-language learners of Spanish. Prepositions may be confused or eliminated, and articles may be eliminated or inserted in configurations which are typical of English but ungrammatical in Spanish. Overt subject pronouns—normally redundant and used sparingly in fully fluent Spanish—may be used categorically and repeatedly, as in English. In extreme cases, significant grammatical deviations from Spanish syntax, such as stranded prepositions or eliminated complementizers, may be found, but most departures from Spanish morphosyntax are less drastic.

More fluent transitional bilinguals may produce no utterances that violate Spanish grammatical restrictions, but may not possess the full range of syntactic and stylistic options found among fluent native speakers of Spanish. Transitional bilinguals, most of whom are regarded—and regard themselves—as true bilinguals, are frequently taken as examples of U. S. Latino Spanish, e.g. in business, politics, journalism, law enforcement, and the arts, and much of the criticism directed at ‘Spanglish’ as an impoverished language spoken in the United States stems from confusing the symptoms of trans-generational language attrition with stable bilingualism.

#### SECOND-LANGUAGE SPANISH AS EXEMPLARY *SPANGLISH*

In addition to the more than 35 million ‘Hispanic’ residents of the United States counted in the 2000 census, most of whom speak Spanish, uncounted millions of other Americans have learned Spanish as a second language, through formal education and through life experience. Many of these L<sub>2</sub> Spanish speakers have occasion to use Spanish on a regular basis, on the job and in their personal lives, and many are called upon for impromptu or even official translation and interpretation, in situations which frequently exceed their linguistic abilities. Over the past several decades as Spanish became acknowledged as the language that could no longer be ignored, numerous official and unofficial documents, signs, instruction manuals, and notices have been translated into Spanish and have become cultural and linguistic icons readily available to anyone visiting or traveling in the United States. Unfortunately, those requesting the translations did not always see fit to seek qualified translators or even legitimate native speakers, but often handed the task off to anyone who ‘knew a little Spanish.’ The results are not difficult to imagine, and a torrent of broken Spanish that ranged from slightly off-kilter to grotesquely unintelligible has greeted Spanish speakers in the United States. There are no data on the frequency with which such unintentional travesties of proper Spanish have been correctly attributed to careless or incompetent second-language learners rather than to bilingual Spanish speakers whose command of Spanish has become slipshod through contact with English. Anecdotal evidence, particularly from abroad, suggests that many first-time visitors to the United States are convinced that the barrage of made-up Spanish that can still be found is tangible proof of the decadent state of U. S. Spanish.

#### “JUNK SPANISH” IN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

Most of us older folks remember Western movies in which even the most loutish cowboy could muster enough “lingo” to safely navigate the forbidding territories of Old Mexico, and perhaps parlay with friendly and hostile Indians with equal facility (speaking “Indian lingo” of

course). Peggy Lee could sing “Mañana” in a pseudo-Hispanic accent, and parodies of Spanish cluttered the airwaves, from I Love Lucy to Lawrence Welk. Nowadays Americans are immersed in a morass of what anthropologist Jane Hill (1993a, 1993b) has called “junk Spanish,”<sup>13</sup> typified by the menu items at Tex-Mex restaurants, jokes and stereotypes found in mass media, and the names of streets, buildings, and subdivisions even in the least Hispanic parts of Middle America, which juxtapose real and invented Spanish words with total disregard for grammatical concord and semantic coherence. When the most difficult situation can be shrugged off with a wink and a conspiratorial “no problemo,” when one gets business done by talking to the “head honcho,” bemoans a junky “el cheapo” product and criticizes a teenager for “showing his macho,” who can doubt that full command of Spanish is as much within reach as a margarita or a breakfast burrito? Even the X-Files’ normally sensitive and chivalrous Fox Mulder could only think to say *no-ho with the rojo* when trying to warn a monolingual Puerto Rican not to touch a red button. Yesteryear’s Frito Bandito has been replaced by today’s ‘Spanish’-talking lapdog, and the media rail against “Spanglish” as though cross-fertilization in bilingual communities were not the common patrimony of English, French, Latin, Hebrew, Chinese, indeed all the world’s leading languages and most of the others as well. One does find—it is true—occasional parodies of other languages in American popular culture (although the most obvious examples are now socially unacceptable), but none even remotely approaches the torrent of gibberish that is tolerated as gentlemen’s approximation to Spanish. In a society that has become increasingly intolerant of racial and ethnic slurs and offensive discourse disguised as ‘just plain fun,’ the continued acceptance of pseudo-Spanish is a stark reminder of the challenges that remain.

Hill extends the rubric of junk Spanish to include legitimate Spanish words or constructions used derisively; thus not only are *el cheapo* and *no problemo* charter members of the junk Spanish fraternity, but also *no way*, *José, yo quiero Taco Bell*, and naturally *hasta la vista, baby*. For Hill, junk Spanish is a racist affirmation of the superiority of white Anglo-American culture and language, and has no legitimacy as a merely humorous tip of the hat to the language of neighboring countries. Matters are exacerbated by the fact that many detractors of Spanish in the United States have turned junk Spanish exemplars—including some of their own invention—into urban legends that are now widely believed to be actually occurring instances of ‘Spanglish.’ More than half a century ago the Nobel Prize winning Spanish author Camilo José Cela claimed that he had encountered stores in the northeastern United States that offered home delivery of groceries via the grotesque combination *deliveramos groserías*, literally (and taking into account spelling differences) ‘we think about dirty words.’ This same expression has subsequently been attributed to stores in Miami, Texas, California, and elsewhere, as a brief Internet search will reveal, in all cases without a single eye witness to the alleged impropriety. The chances that even the most precarious bilingual speaker has spontaneously produced such an expression seriously (and not, e.g. as a deliberate parody) are virtually nil, and yet this example is brandished even today as ‘proof’ of the deplorable condition of U. S. Spanish. The continued belief in the existence of such linguistic gargoyles is reminiscent of the often-quoted notion that the Inuit (Eskimo) languages have numerous words for different types and textures of snow, since their society depends so vitally on a snowbound environment. Only recently anthropologist Laura Martin (1986) and linguist Geoffrey Pullum (1991) revealed this fallacy (in fact Inuit languages have no more words for snow than other languages in contact with snow),

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<sup>13</sup> Her original term was “mock Spanish.”



the result of careless repetition of a plausible but unverified assertion. It is plausible that a bilingual speaker whose languages leak into each other uncontrollably would blurt out *deliveramos groserías* in some unhappy moment, but the fact is that no such combination exists in bilingual communities, and precisely because no such unconstrained leakage occurs in normal bilingualism. Because of the continued outpouring of junk Spanish in American popular culture and the elevation of some apocryphal specimens to worldwide cult status, humorous pseudo-Spanish constitutes one of the greatest impediments to the serious study of Spanish in the United States and to the determination of what—if anything—‘Spanglish’ might actually be.

#### EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON SPANISH IN THE UNITED STATES

Set against the backdrop of smokescreens, red herrings, scapegoats, straw men and other metaphorical chimeras, serious empirical research on Spanish in sustained and disadvantageous contact with English in the United States does reveal some grammatical limitation of Spanish morphosyntactic resources in favor of those that coincide with English, although true cases of grammatical convergence are rare except among transitional or semifluent bilinguals.<sup>14</sup> There is some variation in verb tense usage among some bilingual speakers, particularly the historically variable preterite-imperfect distinction, although this distinction is never obliterated, as in English.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the Spanish indicative-subjunctive distinction never disappears, except among non-fluent heritage language speakers, but some constructions that show variable subjunctive usage among monolingual speakers may gravitate towards the indicative among English-dominant bilinguals. Silva-Corvalán (1994) and others have documented a reduction in Spanish word-order possibilities in bilingual communities, restricted to combinations that match the canonical SVO order of English. Bilingual Spanish speakers in daily contact with English may prefer the analytical passive voice construction—congruent with English—to the pseudo-passive constructions with *se* that are peculiar to Spanish. In Spanish overt subject pronouns are normally redundant and used primarily for emphatic or focus constructions, while English requires overt subject pronouns in nearly all finite verb constructions. Research on pronoun usage among bilinguals reveals a broad range of variation, with a clear tendency to use more overt pronouns in Spanish as a direct correlate of English dominance.<sup>16</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To summarize the preceding discussion, coherent notions of *spanglish* cluster around two common denominators, both of which represent unremarkable language-contact phenomena, found in virtually every bilingual society, past and present. The first is the frequent use of unassimilated and assimilated borrowings and loan-translations (calques). The second contender for the legitimate title of *spanglish* is fluent code-switching. Adopting this Janus-faced definition, let us return to the research questions posed at the outset.

WHO USES SPANGLISH AND IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES? Loan-translations and calques are typically used by all bilingual speakers, including those for whom one of the languages is a second language, learned in adulthood. The frequency and density of calques and assimilated loans in Spanish is inversely proportional to formal instruction in Spanish and the ready availability of Spanish-language mass media produced from all over the Spanish-speaking world.

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<sup>14</sup> For example Pousada and Poplack (1982).

<sup>15</sup> Floyd (1976, 1978, 1982), Chasten (1991).

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Lipski (1996a).

The opposite situation occurs in speech communities in which Spanish is the official language and English a non-prestige home language (e.g. much of the Caribbean coast of Central America and some former enclaves in Argentina and Chile). Code-switching, on the other hand predominates among native bilingual speakers born or raised in the United States. Attitudes vary widely and not all bilingual speakers spontaneously engage in code-switching. No true bilingual is 'unable' to speak exclusively in Spanish (e.g. when the interlocutor is monolingual or will not allow code-switching), although borrowings and loan-translations may still be used at all times.

WHEN AND WHERE IS *SPANGLISH* USED AND NOT USED? Loan-translations and borrowings are found in all Spanish-English bilingual communities, and many have spread to monolingual Spanish-speaking areas, in the language of consumer products, popular culture, and the Internet. Fluent code-switching is confined to speech communities in which Spanish and English are used on a daily basis; in addition to bilingual areas of the United States, this includes Gibraltar and some regions of Central America.<sup>17</sup>

IS *SPANGLISH* A LANGUAGE DISTINCT FROM ENGLISH AND SPANISH? No variety of Spanish that has absorbed a high number of lexical Anglicisms is any less 'Spanish' than before. Nor is code-switched discourse a third language, although fluent code-switchers have arguably augmented their monolingual grammars with a set of grammatical and pragmatic constraints on switch-points. Knowing how to switch languages does not constitute knowing a third language, any more than being ambidextrous when playing, e.g. tennis constitutes playing a new sport. Only in the unthinkable event that all immigration to the United States from Spanish-speaking countries were to cease, and that a bilingual enclave such as Miami, Los Angeles, or New York City were simultaneously cut off from the remainder of the English-speaking population it is conceivable that after several generations the legacy of contemporary bilingualism would morph into a language empirically distinct from English and Spanish. In the world as we know it, Spanish and English will remain separate and distinct, although borrowing and lending from each other whenever and wherever they come into contact.

CAN *SPANGLISH* BE CHARACTERIZED TECHNICALLY AS A JARGON, A PIDGIN, OR A CREOLE LANGUAGE? A variety of Spanish which has absorbed many Anglicisms is still Spanish, i.e. a complete natural language, and consequently cannot at the same time be a reduced or partial form of a language such as a jargon or pidgin. The same is true of code-switched discourse, which is predicated on fluency in two natural languages, albeit not always of prestigious varieties. As used by linguistics, the term *creole language* refers to a new language that arises when a reduced contact vernacular such as a pidgin—which, critically, is not spoken natively by anyone—is expanded in subsequent generations into a complete natural language.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, no manifestation of *spanGLISH* qualifies as a creole language. If code-switching were to coagulate into replicable patterns—in itself an unlikely possibility—then a permanently code-switched discourse might be considered an 'intertwined language.' Outside of linguistics, 'creole language' is frequently used to refer loosely to the product of any language contact and mixing, and in this sense U. S. Spanish exhibits some hybrid traits. Once more, however, no creolization in the strict sense has occurred.

DOES *SPANGLISH* HAVE NATIVE SPEAKERS? IF SO, ARE THERE MONOLINGUAL SPEAKERS OF *SPANGLISH*? There are certainly native speakers of Spanish varieties containing a large proportion of Anglicisms, so if *spanGLISH* refers to such dialects then it has native speakers. Similarly fluent

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<sup>17</sup> Lipski (1986a, 1986b).

<sup>18</sup> E.g. Holm (1988, 2000), Mühlhäusler (1986), Romaine (1988).

code-switching is most common among native bilinguals, although since code-switching is not a language *per se*, it makes no sense to speak of 'native speakers' of this bilingual discourse mode.

DOES *SPANGLISH* HAVE A COMMON LINGUISTIC CORE, UNDERSTOOD AND USED BY ALL SPEAKERS/LISTENERS? The key word here is 'common,' since most Spanish speakers in the United States recognize both assimilated and spontaneous Anglicisms, and all bilingual speakers can readily understand code-switched discourse irrespective of personal preferences. While there are lexical Anglicisms and calques such as *para atrás* that are used by nearly all bilingual Latino speakers, spontaneous creations are more common, thus undermining the notion of a stable *spanGLISH* core. Purported dictionaries of 'Chicano Spanish' (e.g. Galván and Teschner 1977) or 'Spanglish' (e.g. Cruz et al. 1998, Stavans 2003) usually include a potpourri of items gleaned from numerous sources and regions, and do not constitute the lexical repertoire of any known speech community.

DO REGIONAL OR SOCIAL DIALECTS OF *SPANGLISH* EXIST? Regional and social dialects of U. S. Spanish continue to exist, representing the dialects of the countries of origin as well as the results of dialect-leveling in some urban areas; sociolinguistic differences are found among each U. S. Latino speech community. Neither the amount of Anglicisms nor the use of code-switching varies regionally or socially in correlation with U. S. Spanish regional and social dialects, and therefore it makes no sense to speak of 'dialects' of *spanGLISH*.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is precisely the rapid shift to English after at most two generations that militates against the formation of any stable United States varieties of Spanish, much less against any empirically replicable hybrid language such as 'Spanglish.' In speech communities where one Spanish-speaking group predominates, the corresponding regional variety of Spanish is retained, together with the inevitable introduction of lexical Anglicisms and some syntactic calques. In large urban areas where several Spanish-speaking groups converge (e.g. Chicago, Washington, New York, Houston, and parts of Los Angeles), some dialect leveling has taken place, again with some introduction of Anglicisms, but the specific linguistic features vary from city to city. In no instance has a homogeneous and consistent 'United States' dialect of Spanish emerged, nor is such a variety likely to result in the foreseeable future. As a consequence, whereas monolingual Spanish speakers in the respective countries of origin (Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, etc.) can identify traits in the speech of their compatriots born or living extensively in the United States that differ from their own, each observer will come up with a somewhat different set of contrasts, whose common denominators form a vanishingly small set. We may choose to designate as 'Spanglish' the totality of the discrepancies between monolingual Spanish of other nations and the speech of Hispanophones in the United States, but to do so is to deprive this term of a place among the languages of the United States.

The South has been the scene of many linguistic skirmishes, and has certainly received more than its fair share of slings and arrows designed to belittle speech patterns. Cultural and racial mixture has always produced the most vehement outcries of all, to wit attitudes surrounding Gullah, African-American vernacular Englishes, Louisiana French and creole French. Linguists—and the more enlightened among us in general—agree that the languages of the South have been enriched through contact and exchange, and that the only thing impoverished or decadent are the viewpoints that seek superiority over these speakers. I suggest that as most commonly used, *spanGLISH* is no more than the latest addition to the list of epithets

and slurs applied to the speech of the underclasses, and that the true nature of the Spanish-English interface must be sought from an additive rather than a subtractive viewpoint. As Spanish speakers in southern states grow in numbers and prominence, the nuanced English and Spanish that result from this cross-fertilization will further enrich the linguistic profile of our communities. ¡Hasta la vista, *spanglish!* We are still “one nation ... indivisible,” but in English ... *y en español.*

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