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## The Use of Linguistics to Improve the Teaching of Heritage Language Spanish

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## What makes a heritage speaker?

- Heritage speakers are early bilinguals, simultaneous or sequential
- Heritage speakers learn one language (the "heritage language") from birth, but their eventual dominant language is different (Valdes 2000: 1; Polinsky & Kagan 2007: 369-370)
- As a result, heritage speakers tend to have specific deficits in their linguistic knowledge

## Heritage speakers' deficits

- Near-native pronunciation (Vago 1991, Godson 2003, 2004, Au et al. 2008, Chang et al. 2009)
- Multiple deficits in morphosyntax (Polinsky & Kagan 2007, Benmamoun et al. 2010)
- Problems controlling multiple registers (Potowski 2005)

## Similarities across heritage languages

- Heritage speakers show significant variance in proficiency and the representation of deficits
- Nevertheless we find recurrent phonological, morphosyntactic, and stylistic patterns of change across different heritage languages (Benmamoun et al. 2010)

## Similarities across heritage languages

- Different heritage languages share recurrent phonological, morphosyntactic, and stylistic patterns
- Therefore, an in-depth investigation of a single heritage language has bearing on the general study of heritage languages

## Reasons to focus on Heritage Spanish

- Highly prevalent: 34.5 million speakers in US
- Despite influx of immigrants, Spanish is being lost between generations, with the third generation wholly English-speaking (Potowski & Carreira 2010)
- More and more heritage speakers choose to re-learn their home language as young adults, becoming **heritage language learners (HLLs)**

### Re-learning of Spanish: Motivation

- Cultural, social, and psychological significance: it is important for HLLs to be reconnected to their families
- Global outreach: American-educated Spanish HLLs can make an impact in developing Spanish-speaking countries
- National resource: bilingual English-Spanish speakers are an important resource in the US, and HLLs are most ready to fill that role (Polinsky & Kagan 2007; Benmamoun et al. 2010)

### Comparing HLLs and L2 learners

	HLL	L2
Pronunciation and intonation	Near-native	Constant need of feedback and correction
Vocabulary	Colloquial	Literary/academic/formal
Grammar	General understanding but with over-regularization	Case by case (bottom up) knowledge
Writing	Can build cohesive text, need correction for spelling, etc.	Have to start at sentence level; rarely approach native ability even at high proficiency
Speaking	Can conduct a conversation, discussion, produce monologues	Initially restricted to dialogue, gradually progressing to discussion
Listening	Can grasp the general meaning of a wide range of natural texts (movies, conversations)	Have to start with short simple texts, need a great deal of input to follow natural rapid speech

### Re-learning of Spanish: How?

- HLLs and L2 learners exhibit important differences in their background and learning strategies
    - HLLs require top-down instruction (macro-approach)
    - L2 learners require bottom-up instruction (micro-approach)
- (cf. Kagan 2005)

### Re-learning of Spanish: Approach

- HLLs and L2 have different learning needs
- Instructors may not be equipped to deal with HLLs (especially in attitudes about dialectal variation)
- Solutions:
  - Separate tracks for HLLs and L2's
  - Special training for HLL instructors

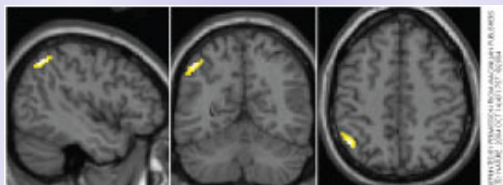
### Top-down approach to Heritage Spanish teaching

- Taking into account global linguistic competencies
- Using aural/oral proficiency as a point of departure
- Using large volumes of written/aural texts
- Clarifying and systematizing what HLLs know
- Not teaching them what they already know (Kagan & Dillon 2001)

### HLLs are bilinguals

- Recall that HLLs are early bilinguals:
  - Simultaneous if Spanish and English were introduced at the same time
  - Sequential if English was introduced later in childhood
- As bilinguals, they have distinct cognitive, linguistic, and cultural benefits

### HLLs: Cognitive advantage



### HLLs are bilinguals

- As bilinguals, HLLs have distinct linguistic and cultural benefits
  - Better linguistic and metalinguistic awareness
  - Access to multiple cultures

### Linguistic benefits of HLLs

- Notice language differences and think more about how language works
- Pay attention to systematic differences
- Have good word-concept differentiation
- Have advantage in learning still another language
- Have an easier time learning to read

### Metalinguistic awareness

- Unconsciously, we are aware of the structure of our language
- Metalinguistic awareness allows us to make this knowledge more explicit
- Bilinguals are known to be more aware of language differences and structures than monolinguals
  - advantage in language-related tasks
  - advantages in learning to read and in expository writing

### Example: Sun and Moon

- *Suppose we all get together and decide to call the sun the moon, and the moon the sun. What will be in the sky when we go to bed at night?*
- *The sun.*
- Bilingual children (age 3;6) are better at flexible reasoning because they understand that only the names changed (Bialystok 1999, Kuhl 2007, a.o.)

### Building on HLLs' advantages

- Given cognitive, linguistic and cultural advantage enjoyed by HLLs, it is natural to capitalize on these benefits in the classroom
- Capitalizing on linguistic/metalinguistic benefits: introduce linguistic reasoning in the HLL classroom
- Capitalizing on cultural advantages: introduce sociolinguistics and pragmatics in HLL classroom

### Ways to use linguistics in HLL classrooms

- Capitalizing on linguistic/metalinguistic benefits: Use of problem sets featuring linguistics-based methodology as supplemental material and class exercises
- Capitalizing on cultural advantages: Focus throughout course on sociolinguistics and pragmatics
- Used in addition to, not in lieu of other teaching approaches

### Linguistic problem sets in HLL classrooms

- Precedent: Linguistic problem sets have been used in the past to teach other subjects
  - Honda & O'Neil (1995) use linguistic exercises to teach the scientific method to middle- and high-school students.
  - O'Connor (1980) uses linguistic-based phonology exercises to improve the English pronunciation of non-native English speakers by giving them a fuller sense of the underlying rules governing the patterns and distributions of sounds.

### Linguistic problem sets in HLL classrooms: Goals

- To develop and enhance analytical thinking about their language, in and outside the classroom
- To serve as a lead-in to the naturalistic literature, which is crucial in HL classrooms
- To play to the HLLs' strengths in metalinguistic awareness
- To help HLLs overcome deficits by including them in the exercise material

### Linguistic problem sets in HLL classrooms: Outcome

- Once HLLs are provided with the tools to think critically about their own language, by examining patterns and generating rules, they will be able to become active explorers of their own language, rather than passively absorbing grammar rules set forth in a classroom

### Examples of problem sets

- Examples in this talk:
  - Code-switching
  - Borrowing, Semantic Extensions, and Calques

### Code-switching: Intro

#### Goals:

- to make students think about the way they use language and hence create a greater metalinguistic awareness
- to develop better analytical and argumentation skills in thinking linguistically
- to develop awareness of code-switching as a legitimate mechanism of their language

### Code-switching: Intro

*Introduction.* A common linguistic feature of the dialect of Spanish spoken in the United States is the prevalence of code-switching and borrowing from English. **Code-switching** occurs when a speaker switches from one language to another mid-sentence or even mid-phrase, such as in the following sentence:

(1) *No quiero* the red toy; I want the green one.

### Code-switching: Intro

- Speakers of Spanish who employ code-switching are usually told that it is an incorrect way of speaking. Despite this, linguists have found that there are hidden rules that can help predict when or if a Spanish-speaker will start to speak English mid-sentence. By looking closely, we can figure out what some of these hidden rules are!

### Code-switching: Set-up

- QUESTION 1. Examine the following sentences, which have been shown to be “natural” sentences with code switching. (Again, remember that while these sentences might not be considered correct in a formal or scholastic situation, they are occurring in casual conversation among speakers who know both Spanish and English, where it is normal to switch back and forth!)

### Code-switching: Examples

- (2) I want to go to *la tienda*.
- (3) *Quiero ir a* the store.
- (4) *No creo que son* fifty-dollar suede shoes.
- (5) I want him to come *para que no voy a sentirme sola*.  
(Some data from Poplack 1980)

### Code-switching: Set-up

- Now examine the next set of sentences. These sentences have been judged “unnatural” – you would never hear them, even in a casual conversation. (The asterisk represents this fact.)

### Code-switching: Counter-examples

- (6) \**Quiero ir* to the *tienda*.
- (7) \*I want him to come *para* that *no voy a sentirme sola*.
- (8) \*I want him to come *para que no* going to *sentirme sola*.

### Code-switching: Counter-examples

- (9) \*I want to *ir a la tienda*.
- (10) \**Estoy comiendo*-ing right now.
- (11) \*I'm *comiendo* *ahora*.
- (12) \**Quiero que él venga para que no* I am going to feel lonely.

### Code-switching: Questions

- 1A. What do all of the "natural" sentences have in common?

### Code-switching: Questions

- 1B. How are the "unnatural" sentences (6)-(8) different from the natural sentences? Make up a rule that explains when a code-switch can naturally occur and when it cannot.

### Code-switching: Counter-examples

- (6) \**Quiero ir* to the *tienda*.
- (7) \*I want him to come *para* that *no voy a sentirme sola*.
- (8) \*I want him to come *para que no* going to *sentirme sola*.

### Code-switching: Questions

- 1C. Now look at the unnatural sentences (9)-(12). Does your rule still apply? Modify the rule to explain why these sentences are unnatural.

### Code-switching: Counter-examples

- (9) \*I want to *ir a la tienda*.
- (10) \**Estoy comiendo*-ing right now.
- (11) \*I'm *comiendo* *ahora*.
- (12) \**Quiero que él venga para que no* I am going to feel lonely.

### Code-switching: Questions

1D. As seen above, even the practice of code-switching, which is generally stigmatized and judged to be an incorrect, illegitimate form of language, has rules that govern its use.

What does this tell us about the way our brains handle language? What might be some of the reasons for code-switching?

### Sociolinguistics in a HLL classroom

- Explanation of register differences
- Explanation of dialectal variation (including the stigmatized variant of U.S. Spanish)
- Explanation of language change

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Intro

QUESTION 1. Previously, we discussed how the influence of English on the Spanish spoken in the United States is sometimes manifested as **code-switching**.

Another type of linguistic interference from English that is present in the variety of Spanish spoken in the United States is **borrowing**.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

- (1) *Tienes un **nickel**?*  
'Do you have a nickel?'
- (2) *Voy a **guachar** la televisión luego.*  
'I'm going to watch television later.'
- (3) *Él tiene que conducir la **troca** al supermercado.*  
'He has to drive the truck to the supermarket.'
- (4) *Me llamé por **teléfono**.*  
'He/she called me on the telephone.'
- (5) *Voy a buscarlo en el **internet**.*  
'I'm going to look it up on the internet.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

- (6) *Tengo que pagar mis **tajaciones**.*  
'I have to pay my taxes.'
- (7) *Vas a tomar tu **medecín**?*  
'Are you going to take your medicine?'
- (8) *Me gradué de **jáiscul**.*  
'I graduated from high school.'
- (9) *Vivimos en una **sobmarina** amarilla.*  
'We live in a yellow submarine.'
- (10) *Puedes pagar el **cheque**?*  
'Can you pay the check?'

(Data from Potowski & Carreira 2010, Potowski 2005, Clegg 2010)

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

1A. Do you know the words in standard Spanish for the borrowings listed above? What are the English words being borrowed?

1B. Why might a word be borrowed? How is this similar to or different from code-switching?

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

1C. Sentence (2) actually has two borrowings from English – *guachar* and *televisión*. What are the differences between these two borrowed words?

(2) *Voy a **guachar** la televisión luego.*  
'I'm going to watch television later.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

1C. Sentence (2) actually has two borrowings from English – *guachar* and *televisión*. What are the differences between these two borrowed words?

List other Spanish words borrowed from English that are more like *televisión* than like *guachar*, both in the sentences above and from your daily life.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Intro 2

QUESTION 2. A second way in which English influences the Spanish spoken in the United States is through **semantic extension**.

Below are some examples of semantic extension, in italics, paired with sentences that do not exhibit semantic extension.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

- (1) a. *El acuerdo se aplica solo a los estudiantes.*  
'The agreement only applies to the students.'  
b. *Voy a **aplicar** para un trabajo.*  
'I'm going to apply for a job.'
- (2) a. *Lo escribiré en tu carpeta.*  
'I will write it in your notebook.'  
b. *Aladino tiene una **carpeta** mágica.*  
'Aladdin has a magic carpet.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

- (3) a. *Ella compró sus libros en la librería.*  
'She bought her books in the bookstore.'  
b. *Se tiene que estar muy callado en la **librería**.*  
'You have to be very quiet in the library.'  
(Data from Clegg 2010)

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

2A. What is a semantic extension? How is it different from the examples of borrowings given above?



### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

2B. Explain why you think semantic extension occurred in each of the above cases and rewrite the respective Spanish sentences changing the wording.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Intro 3

QUESTION 3. A third way in which Spanish in the United States is influenced by English is through **calqued phrases**.

Here are some examples of **calques** in bold.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

(1) *Algún día voy a **correr para presidente**.*  
'Someday I am going to run for president.'

(2) *A la fiesta vamos a **tener un buen tiempo**.*  
'At the party we're going to have a good time.'  
(From Pountain 2005)

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

(3) a. *Dani está **comiendo una manzana**.*  
'Dani is eating an apple.'  
b. ***Comiendo** frutas es buena para la salud.*  
'Eating fruit is good for the health.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

(4) a. *No puedo ir a la fiesta porque estoy **estudiando ahora**.*  
'I can't go to the party because I'm studying right now.'  
b. *No me gusta **estudiando** para nada.*  
'I don't like studying at all.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

3A. What is a calque? How is it different from a borrowing? How is it different from a semantic extension?

3B. Explain how the calques above draw from English, and, if you can, rewrite the Spanish sentences so that they do not show English influences.

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

3C. How might the motivations for calques and semantic extensions be similar to the motivations for borrowings and code-switching?  
How might they be different?

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

3D. Sentences (3a), (3b), (4a), and (4b) use gerunds (words with the *-ing* ending in English and the *-ando/iendo* ending in Spanish).  
How are these words usually used in English?  
How are they usually used in Spanish? What does the existence of the calques in (19b) and (20b) tell you about the overlap – or lack of an overlap?

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Examples

- (3) a. *Dani está comiendo una manzana.*  
'Dani is eating an apple.'  
b. **Comiendo** frutas es buena para la salud.  
'Eating fruit is good for the health.'
- (4) a. *No puedo ir a la fiesta porque estoy estudiando ahora.*  
'I can't go to the party because I'm studying right now.'  
b. *No me gusta **estudiando** para nada.*  
'I don't like studying at all.'

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

3D.  
How are these words usually used in English?  
How are they usually used in Spanish? What does the existence of the calques in (3b) and (4b) tell you about the overlap – or lack of an overlap?

### Borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques: Questions

3E. Can you think of any other examples of borrowings, semantic extensions, and calques in Spanish?

### Conclusions

From examples of exercises to general principle:

Linguistics can be used in the HLL classroom as a supplement to traditional methods of schooling involving natural language

### Conclusions

- Problem sets using linguistic methodology within the classroom
  - can be used to teach grammar points by making HLLs think about and analyze information in the language that they already know
- can enhance metalinguistic thinking inside and outside the classroom

### Conclusions

- Overt sociolinguistic instruction, especially as pertaining to dialectal variation and register, can be a valuable tool in the classroom:
  - It enables students to fully understand and command their language
  - It helps prevent undue stigmatization of the students' home language and improves the students' self-esteem

### Thank You

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