Transferring, switching, and modeling in West New York Spanish: an intergenerational study

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Introduction

This paper provides a description of English contact features in the Spanish of Cuban Americans in West New York, placing special emphasis on the phenomenon known as modeling (Weinreich 1974 [1953]: 30–31), and offering a comparison between modeling and other types of contact phenomena, both within and across different generations of speakers. In addition, particular attention is paid to whether the innovations found in the speech of these Cuban Americans can be interpreted as providing internal evidence of stable bilingualism or of language shift.

Method and corpus

The study is based on a corpus of approximately 13,000 spoken words gathered in taped conversations with 12 informants. The interviews, carried out and transcribed by Mariela Fernández, were conducted entirely in Spanish. Subjects were all Cuban Americans residing in the town of West New York, New Jersey. Six interviews were conducted with United States–born, second generation informants. Another six were conducted with Cuban-born, first-generation informants. The second generation informants were all young adults, ages 15 to 21, born in the United States of Cuban parents. The first generation informants were all born in Cuba, and all but one lived there until at least the age of 40. At the time of the interview, some had been in the United States for as long as 18 years, others for as little as two years, and they were all mature adults.

Transferring and switching

Although Weinreich's categories of transferring, switching, and modeling have proven durable and useful, they are not as clear as they might first

appear. Each presents problems that need to be addressed briefly before proceeding with our analysis.

When stretches of English elements appearing in a Spanish discourse are several words long, it is an easy matter to classify them as cases of switching. But in stretches consisting of a single word, the theoretical question arises whether it is still possible to distinguish between switching and borrowing. The position taken in this paper is that such a distinction can be made, even when the English stretch consists of just one word. In this we follow Poplack et al. (1988: 93), who maintain that 'code switching and borrowing remain distinct processes, even at the level of the single word'.

Once a conceptual distinction is made between single-word switches and single-word borrowings, the problem remains of deciding, for every single English word appearing in a Spanish discourse, whether it belongs to one category or the other. In the work of Shana Poplack, a complex set of criteria are brought to bear on this decision, such as level of phonological assimilation, level of social integration, and discourse function; in addition, the conceptual framework is refined by subdividing the category of transferring into nonce borrowings and established loanwords (Poplack 1987; Poplack et al. 1988).

Even though this multi-dimensional approach to the distinction between transferring and switching is highly desirable, considerations of social integration and discourse function are beyond the scope of this paper. The only factor that is taken into account to distinguish between single-word switches and single-word borrowings here is phonological integration. Furthermore, no distinction is made between nonce and established borrowings. Thus all phonologically integrated single-word items have been counted as instances of transferring, without regard to frequency or level of diffusion; likewise, all single-word items that preserve English phonology have been counted as switching, without regard to their role in discourse. As a result, some of the words that are considered instances of switching here would no doubt be regarded as transferring under Poplack's richer classificatory scheme, and vice versa. This limitation should be kept in mind in interpreting the findings (as should the excessive simplification incurred in separating sharply between phonologically integrated and unintegrated items, when a continuum is in fact involved).

The fact that there can be both single- and multiple-word switches creates a methodological problem, namely whether to make the calculations in terms of number of switching events or in terms of number of switched words. (For instance, in [2a] there are three switched words, corresponding to three events of switching; but in [2b] there are 18

switched words in only two events of switching.) We will present the data below in terms of number of switching events, irrespective of whether these events contain one or many words.

Loanwords

(1)   a.   A veces tengo oportunidad de hacer *overtime* [oBertain] y ganar un extra money.
      'Sometimes I get a chance to do overtime and earn some extra money.'

      b.   La casa tiene un *basement* [bEyhmEn] que no está en muy buenas condiciones.
      'The house has a basement that's not in very good condition.'

Code switches

(2)   a.   [The conversation deals with school rules.] Si tú eres un *senior* y estás *absent* más de quince días, te aguantan los *credits* y no te puedes graduar, so son bien estrictos.
      'If you're a senior and you're absent more than fifteen days they hold back your credits and you can't graduate, so they are pretty strict.'

      b.   [The conversation has to do with cheerleading.] Porque unas veces nos fajamos, tú sabes, no somos *we don't agree on one thing*, y todo el mundo quiere ser lo que quiere, y no puede ser. Y si queremos *be, to be good, we would have to agree on one thing*, y no es así.
      'Because sometimes we fight, you know; we aren't, we don't agree on one thing, and everybody wants to be what they want to be, and that can't be. And if we want to be, to be good, we would have to agree on one thing, and it's not like that.'

Modeling

The study of modeling, which Weinreich defined as the use of the influenced language's own elements in a manner that replicates, or models, features of the influencing language, is beset with terminological and conceptual difficulties. The terms calque, semantic loan, semantic extension, loan shift, and loan translation have all been in circulation for many decades, all referring essentially to the same modeling phenomenon. In addition, the much larger problem exists of confusing, within the category of loan translation, cases where evidence of language contact is detectable with cases where cultural innovation is present but with no apparent systemic linguistic alteration. Given the present state of research into these questions, the only items in which clear evidence of modeling

can be discerned are individual words. In longer phrases and sentences, what appear many times to be cases of modeling are instances of cultural, not linguistic, contact. Consequently, all potential cases of modeling that involve multiple-word stretches have been set aside here, and only those utterances where modeling can be reasonably ascribed to a specific lexical item have been included. With regard to terminology, *calque* has been selected as the best term, and the one that can be most flexibly handled in English, for the description of modeling phenomena.

Word calques

(3)   a.   A mí me gustan las *cartas* de béisbol para *colectarlas*.
         'I like baseball cards because I can collect them.'
      b.   Cuando no tengo nada que hacer, *juego* música para oírla.
         When I don't have anything to do I play music to listen to it.'
      c.   Para coger una botella de leche, suponiendo, o un *cartón* de leche, suponiendo que de momento te vieras sin él.
         'To pick up a bottle of milk, say, or a carton of milk, assuming that all of a sudden you find you're out of it.'

Three types of word calques

In Weinreich (1974 [1953]) calques were conceived of as lexical items of the replica language being used in the manner of the model language. But in the present study calques are seen as word forms of the replica language into which meanings from the model language have migrated. Under this conceptualization *jugar música* is not a case of using Spanish *jugar* in the model of English *play*, but an instance of one of the senses of *play*—'an act of briskly handling or using an instrument for the purpose of making music'—having migrated into Spanish *jugar*. In this view, modeling is a kind of transferring, but one in which word meanings are borrowed alone, and not, as in true transferring, together with their word forms. There is then a clear parallel between calques and loans: loans are the transferring of meanings and forms, calques the transferring of meanings without forms. In order to reflect this similarity, we will refer to word calques, based on the now widely accepted term *loanword*, as *calquewords*.

Based on considerations that will be discussed presently, calquewords in the corpus were subdivided according to a semantic criterion into similar-sense versus different-sense calques; according to a phonological criterion into merged-form versus independent-form calques; and according to a communicative criterion into duplicating-message calques versus innovating-message calques.

Similar-sense versus different-sense calquewords.

A distinction should be drawn between those calquewords where the migrating senses are similar to already existing senses of the host word, and those where the migrating senses are totally different. Examples of similar-sense calquewords would be *carta* and *colectar* in (3a). The English sense of *card* that has come into *carta*, 'a flat, stiff, usually small and rectangular piece of thin paperboard' is, while not the same, in many ways similar to one of the already existing senses of traditional Spanish *carta*, 'each of the pieces used to play cards'. Likewise, the English sense of *collect* that has migrated into *colectar*, 'to gather together objects', is also similar to a traditional sense of *colectar*, 'to gather funds'.

In contrast, an example of a different-sense calqueword would be (3b), where the sense of English *play* that has been introduced into *jugar* is not similar to any of the existing senses of *jugar*, none of which have anything to do with the handling of musical instruments.

Merged-form versus independent-form calquewords.

In some calquewords, the word form in the influenced language that becomes host to a migrating sense is similar in its phonological shape to the word from which the migrating sense originated in the influencing language. In calquewords of this type the form of the originating word is seen as merging with the form of the host word. Examples of such merged-form calquewords are found in (3a), where *carta* is similar in phonological form to *card*, and *colectar* is similar to *collect*. In other cases, however, the host word and the originating word are totally different in form. An example of such an independent form calqueword is (3b), where *jugar* bears no phonological resemblance to *play* (for a similar classification, see Pratt 1980: 160 ff.).

Duplicating- versus innovating-message calquewords.

Calques are seen here as resulting from the introduction of a message type from the influencing society into the communicative routines of the influenced society. Based on this conceptualization, a distinction can be drawn between duplicating calquewords and innovating calquewords. Duplicating calquewords introduce message types that appear to be unnecessary on strictly cognitive-referential grounds, since the newly introduced message types are not objectively very different from the

existing Spanish types they replace. (For how these message types may be, nevertheless, quite different in the perception of the bilinguals, see the very insightful remarks of Haugen [1938: 19 ff] and the discussion, based on Haugen, in Otheguy [1983] and Otheguy and Garcia [1988].) An example of such a duplicating calqueword is *colectar cartas*, where the newly introduced sense of *colectar* contributes to conveying a message that is almost identical to the existing message conveyed by *coleccionar postales*. An innovating calqueword, on the other hand, is one where the introduction of the new sense appears motivated by the need to communicate in Spanish notions that would not be readily communicable by means of unaltered traditional words. One such example is *cartón de leche*, where the sense newly introduced into *cartón* is pressed into the service of communicating a notion—in this case, identifying a referent—that is not readily manageable in the traditional form of the language.

The categories of analysis for the West New York data will therefore be (a) transferring, represented by phonologically integrated loanwords, that is, single-word items from English that show a fair measure of formal adaptation to Spanish; (b) code switching, represented both by multiple-word items and by single-word items that preserve English phonology, both counted as single events in our calculations; and (c) modeling, represented by calquewords, subdivided according to a semantic criterion into similar sense and different sense, according to a phonological criterion into merged form and independent form, and according to a communicative criterion into duplicating message and independent message.

Overall level of English lexical influence

Table 1 displays the number of events of transferring, switching, and modeling found in our corpus. For transferring and modeling, the number of events is equivalent to the number of loanword and calqueword tokens respectively. For switching the number of events is naturally lower than the number of switched word tokens in the corpus, since some switching events involve several words.

For each innovation, a percentage figure shows the proportion that each represents of the total number of words in the corpus. For transferring and modeling, this percentage figure is simply the proportion of loanwords and of calquewords to total words. For switching, the percentage figure is less straightforward, representing the proportion of switching events to total words. All three percentages are comparable,

Table 1.   *Contact events, categorized by innovation and generation*

Events	First generation		Second generation		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Transferring (loanwords)	53	0.7	53	0.9	106	0.8
Modeling (calquewords)	8	0.1	92	1.6	100	0.7
Switching	73	1.0	252	4.4	325	2.5
Total events	134	1.8	397	6.9	531	4.1
Words in corpus	7162		5724		12,886	

however, in that they all give the number of contact events (of transferring, modeling, and switching) per 100 words in the corpus.

The results shown in Table 1 are surprising because of the low percentages involved. Taking both generations together, the figure for transferring is less than 1 percent, and the same is true of modeling. For switching, where the higher percentages appear, the figure is still only 2.5 percent. The total number of innovating events in the entire corpus is a low 4.1 percent. And even if we take this total from the second generation alone, which is naturally where the greatest amount of English influence is found, the figure is still only 6.9 percent.

Differences between the innovations

The findings displayed in Table 1 make it possible to start to institute comparisons between the three types of lexical innovations, and to begin to establish which of them has the greater impact on Spanish. Table 1 shows that code switching, at 2.5 percent, is by far the most prevalent type of innovation regardless of generation, with loanwords and calquewords exercising a smaller impact on US Spanish.

The findings also make it possible (a) to start documenting the differences in level of English influence between the first and second generations, both globally and with regard to each particular type of innovation, and (b) to start asking whether these data contain any evidence regarding the extent to which the Spanish of Cuban Americans is a permanent or a receding feature of this community.

As expected, a higher level of English influence is found in the second than in the first generation. But the increase is not the same in all innovations. Transferring continues to be under 1 percent in the second

Table 2. *Percentage point increase, and percentage rate of increase, of innovations between the generations*

	Percentage point increase between generations (points)	Rate of increase between generations (%)
anwords	0.2	28
loanwords	1.5	1500
itched words	3.4	340
innovations	5.1	283

neration, as it was in the first, whereas modeling and switching show big creases. In order to facilitate discussion, Table 2 presents the compari-ns between the generations directly.

For each innovation, Table 2 shows the increase that occurs from the -st to the second generation, expressed in percentage points. It also ows the proportion, expressed in percentages, by which the second neration is higher than the first. Taking all innovations together, we see at the increase in level of English influence from the first to the second neration is 283 percent. More important, we see that what most stinguishes the speech of the second generation from that of the first is alquewords, and that what distinguishes it the least is loanwords. In the cond generation, transferring has increased by a relatively modest 28 ercent and switching by 340 percent. In contrast, calquewords have ncreased by 1500 percent.

The findings in Tables 1 and 2 suggest that switching is the most revalent type of innovation in the speech of Cuban Americans, but that he change from one generation to the next is characterized much more by ncreases in the amount of modeling than by increases in the amount of witching. In addition, our figures indicate that transferring is not uantitatively a significant innovation, either as a defining factor of the ommunity as a whole or as a marker of the transition between the eerations.

aternal evidence of stable or transitional bilingualism

Calquing is significant not only because it is the innovation that most trongly marks the passage between the generations, but also because it an provide some suggestive, language-internal answers to the question of whether Cuban Americans are in a situation of stable bilingualism or of shift (for classic studies in this area see Fishman 1964; Gal 1979). Our

data are subject to contradictory interpretations in this regard. In a well known attempt at generalization, Weinreich, citing work by Emilio Willens among German-Portuguese bilinguals in Brazil, does suggest that stable bilingualism is marked by modeling, whereas situations of language shift are characterized by transferring (1974 [1953]: 109). The importance of calquewords as a differentiating factor between the generations in West New York would thus point to elements of stability in the bilingualism of second generation Cuban Americans. We will see, however, that other factors point in the opposite direction.

A distinction was drawn above between duplicating and innovating calquewords in terms of whether or not there appeared to be some objective, cognitive-referential need for the calque. We think, although with some reservations, that duplicating calquewords are more indicative of language shift than innovating calquewords. We reason that whereas the innovating calque represents the natural, creative adaptation of the traditional language system to its new environment, the duplicating calque reflects the gradual forgetting of traditional Spanish message formulations and their replacement by English ones. Much more so than in innovating calquing, the adoption of English messages embodied in duplicating calquing may be moving contact speakers toward the point where English itself will be adopted for these messages. An alternative interpretation, to which we cannot do justice here for reasons of space, would regard duplicating calquing as reflecting a tenacious insistence on using Spanish even for the communication of highly Anglicized messages. This insistence would then be interpretable as a sign of stability rather than of shift.

Only 5 percent of calquewords in our corpus are of the innovating kind, the rest being of the duplicating kind, the kind that displaces an existing Spanish formulation. Furthermore, the 5 percent calquewords that are innovative are all found in the speech of the Cuban-born, first generation respondents. These findings suggest that Cubans of the first generation engage in modeling in circumstances where an unaltered form of tradi-tional Spanish would not meet basic cognitive-referential needs. Their use of innovating calquewords appears as a motivated, vigorous use of a Spanish lexical system that they know well and adapt successfully to their changing communicative needs. In contrast, Cubans of the second generation use duplicating calquewords that displace existing, traditional Spanish message formulations. Their calquing appears to reflect a dimin-ishing command over the Spanish lexical system, which in turn, and with the reservations already expressed, appears to be a harbinger of language shift.

A distinction was made above between independent-form and merged-

form calquewords in terms of whether or not the originating word in the model language and the host word in the replica language showed phonological similarities. In our data, 80 percent of calquewords are of the independent-form variety such as *jugar*, which bears no phonological resemblance to *play*, and only 20 percent are of the merged form type, such as *colectar*, which does have a formal resemblance with *collect*.

Through the use of questionnaires, we have documented elsewhere (Otheguy and Garcia 1988) that independent-form calquewords like *jugar* appear to informants as a more radical type of modeling, and as greater evidence of diminished control over the traditional system, than do merged-form calquewords like *colectar*. Since calquewords of all types appear mostly in the speech of informants born in the United States, the preponderance of independent- over merged-form calquing can be interpreted as further evidence of declining mastery over the Spanish system as one passes from the first to the second generation.

A distinction was also made above between different-sense and similar-sense calquewords in terms of whether or not the incoming sense from the model language was similar to existing senses of the host word of the replica language. In our data, 90 percent of calquewords are of the similar-sense variety, like *colectar*, whose traditional meaning is similar to the meaning it has acquired under the influence of English, only 10 percent being different-sense calques like *jugar*, whose traditional meaning does not resemble the one acquired in the contact situation.

Similar-sense calquewords are regarded here as a less radical form of language contact than different-sense calquewords. We reason that the changes undergone by similar-sense calquewords under pressure from the model language represent the sort of mild semantic drift to which words are subjected as part of the natural evolution of language even outside contact situations. In contrast, we see the changes undergone by different-sense calquewords as representing a more dramatic alteration, one perhaps less likely to be found in traditional dialects and more typical of contact settings.

It was suggested earlier that the greater frequency of duplicating- over innovating-message calquewords, and of independent-form over merged-form calquewords, pointed to a certain deterioration of competence in Spanish, and to the creation of conditions favorable to language shift. But the greater frequency of similar- over different-sense calquewords suggests the opposite. That is, the prevalence of similar-sense calquing highlights areas of strength still found in the Spanish of second generation Cubans in West New York. For even though these Cubans are calquing without any objective communicative justification, as well as without regard for phonological similarities across the languages, they nevertheless appear

for the most part to bring into the Spanish word forms only those new English senses that are highly compatible with existing senses of the word. This considerably greater preponderance of similar- over different-sense calquing suggests a still significant level of Spanish proficiency among second generation speakers, a fact that can be interpreted as more conducive to stability than to shift.

Summary and conclusions

In an effort to correct the imbalance in studies of language contact in favor of transferring and switching to the neglect of modeling, the Spanish of Cuban Americans in West New York has been studied taking all three forms of innovation into account.

It has been tentatively established that the extent of total English influence in the speech of Cuban Americans is on average around 4 percent. Evidence has also been provided to show that the major differentiating factor in the Spanish of second generation Cuban Americans is not their greater use of loanwords, and not even their greater willingness to switch to English. Rather, what sets apart North American–born from Cuban-born informants in West New York is their much greater use of modeling.

As part of the attempt to remedy the lack of theoretical attention paid to modeling in contact situations, we have provided a taxonomy of calquewords ranging along three parameters, namely their use for creative or replacive message types, their form, and their meaning. And an attempt has been made to use this taxonomy to shed some light on whether Cuban Americans in West New York find themselves in a situation of stable or transitional bilingualism. The results of this line of inquiry have been inconclusive, as some of the indicators point in the direction of stability while others point in the direction of shift.

It has been tentatively established that from a strictly cognitive-referential point of view most calquewords used by Cuban Americans are superfluous, since there exist in traditional Cuban Spanish other familiar and serviceable formulations of the message types for which the calquewords are used. This wholesale introduction of North American message types points to a fading collective memory of the traditional norms of the language among Cuban Americans in the United States, particularly among the second generation, which can reasonably be interpreted as creating conditions conducive to shift.

It has also been shown that the most calquewords used by Cuban Americans bear no formal resemblances to the English words from which

meanings have been taken. This finding suggests too, although perhaps less clearly, a diminished competence in Spanish and points in the direction of shift.

In contrast, evidence has been provided that even among the second generation the meanings that are coming from English as part of the calquing process are being lodged in Spanish words whose existing meanings are highly compatible with the new ones being acquired. This pervasive semantic similarity between contact and traditional senses suggests that Cuban Americans born in the United States still possess a fairly clear grasp of the traditional meanings of Spanish words, which would allow, under appropriate social conditions, stable and continuous use of Spanish.

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