Pragmatic and Discursive Aspects of the U.S. Spanish

Domnita Dumitrescu

1

Topic: Pragmatic and discursive aspects of the Spanish spoken in the United States

Summary: This report focuses on some aspects of U.S. Spanish, namely its pragmatic dimensions, including the alternation between Spanish and English in bilingual speech. The main points addressed in this presentation deal with the changes that occur, either due to the influence of English or because of the dialect leveling that occurs between different varieties of Spanish in contact with each other, in the areas of forms of address, direct or indirect realization of speech acts, and politeness. On the other hand, at the discursive level, emphasis is placed on the linguistic manifestations and socio-political implications of the language switching both in the intra-group communicative oral interaction and in the literature written by prestigious U.S. authors.

Keywords: U.S. Spanish, pragmatics, speech acts, politeness, forms of address, Spanglish, code-switching, discourse markers, dialect leveling, intercultural communication.

Introduction: the best-known aspects of the U.S. Spanish

There is no secret that the Spanish is the *de facto* second language of the United States —or, as Carlos Alonso (2007) has inspiringly called it some time ago, "the foreign national language" of the country— and there are countless books and articles to prove it, including several of the reports published by the Observatory of the Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures in the United States. And there are many who believe, today, that one should speak of a Spanish no longer *in* the United States, but *of* the United States, as one more variety of this great international language that is Castilian. As Francisco Moreno-Fernández (2013) categorically stated, "[l]linguistics is clearly accepting that the Spanish of the United States must be incorporated into the mosaic of geolectal varieties of the Hispanic world."

This is because the Spanish of the United States, despite having, as any variety of Spanish, its internal variants —which, according to the same Francisco Moreno-Fernández (2013) would be, "a Cuban-U.S. Spanish (in Florida), one external Puerto Rican (in the Northeast, different from the one on the island), other U.S. Central-American (in the middle east) and, finally, another Mexican-U.S. Spanish, spread all over the country"— has, overall, "sufficient homogeneity and stability" for one to be able to trace its linguistic profile overall.

Of course, within this profile, U.S. Spanish lexical aspects are the best known, even by non-specialists, as the time-honored influence of English, due to the lengthy linguistic contact between the two languages, is remarkable, especially in the vocabulary of U.S. Spanish, which abounds in so-called Anglicisms. These are actually English loans that are adapted to the phonetic and grammatical system of the target language (i.e. Spanish), like the well-known *troca, lonche, brecas, rufo*, or *bil*, for example, but also what specialists call semantic calques or semantic extensions, in which an existing Spanish word adds a new meaning, which is exclusive to the English word with which the Spanish bears a formal

resemblance ("cognate"), such as *aplicar* (apply) rather than "solicitar*," carpeta* (carpet) instead of "alfombra*," realizar* (realize) instead of "darse cuenta*,"* or *librería* (library) instead of "biblioteca*."*

The influence of English is also easy to recognize in certain syntactic constructions, especially found among speakers of the second generation, such as the use of the gerund instead of the infinitive as subject or object of a preposition (as in *Fumando es malo para la salud* or *Lo hizo sin sabiendo qué hacía*, instead of *fumar* and *saber*, respectively), some simplifications of the grammatical system (especially regarding the distinction between the imperfect and the preterite tenses, the use of the subjunctive vs. the indicative, or the agreement between the noun and the adjective), or a different use of certain prepositions (Ex. *Nos vemos en lunes* instead of *el lunes*; *depende en lo que diga él*, rather than "depende *de* lo que diga él*,"* etc.). And, of course, there are quite frequent lexico-syntactic calques, as Silva-Corvalán (1994) calls them, such as *tener un buen tiempo* (have a good time) instead of "divertirse, pasarlo bien"; ser *seis pies de alto* (to be six feet tall) instead of "medir seis pies "; *¿Cómo te gusta tu carro nuevo?* (how do you like your new car? rather than simply "¿Te gusta tu carro nuevo?"; or the phraseological calques Ricardo Otheguy considers to be a kind of lexical-cultural convergence typical of bilingual Hispanics, who "speak Spanish but live within American culture" and "resolve this discrepancy using the conceptual convergence" (Otheguy 2013: 140). This convergence consists, basically, in expressing North American concepts by means of Spanish linguistic structures and meanings, like saying *Secretario de Estado* -Secretary of State- instead of "Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores," and also *vida en prisión* 'life in prison' instead of "cadena perpetua," and *centro de cuidado diurno* 'day care center' instead of "guardería infantil," among many examples that can be listed.

But my purpose here is not to discuss the genesis or the legitimacy of such words or constructions, nor am I going to get into the question of what will continue to be "condemned" or what will, on the contrary, end up being accepted by public

3

OBSERVATORIO
de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

opinion and included in future editions of the DILE (*Diccionario de la Lengua Española* 'Dictionary of the Spanish Language,' published by the Royal Spanish Academy together with the Association of Spanish Language Academies, which was known, until its last edition came out in 2014, as the DRAE, or *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* 'Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy'). I simply wanted to indicate that these aspects —the lexical-semantic and to a lesser extent, the grammatical ones— alongside with the mixture of Spanish and English called popularly "Spanglish" (a subject to which I will refer later), are the most well known and most discussed when it comes to U.S. Spanish (*cf.* Blas Arroyo 2005; Díaz-Campos & Newall 2012, and others).

Less known but no less important aspects of U.S. Spanish: Pragmatics and Discourse

There are other aspects, however, that do not have to do with the structure of the linguistic system of Spanish (spoken, with varying degrees of fluency and accuracy by different generations of users), but rather with the specific use of this language within the concrete communicative context of the United States and its subsequent discursive structure; these aspects are less known to the public and less studied (with the notable exception, as mentioned before, of the alternation between the Spanish language and English). It is to these pragmatic and discursive aspects of U.S. Spanish that I want to refer below. Because, as Francisco Moreno-Fernández rightly observed, when one speaks of the integration of migrants into the culture of the host country, a distinction has to be drawn between linguistic integration, which is simply a matter of knowing the host language, and "sociolinguistic integration, which, if it is to be completed, requires familiarity with the sociolinguistic and communicative practices (*pragmatics*) of the host community" (Moreno-Fernández 2015: 626,emphasis added).

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What does Pragmatics study?

The term *pragmatics* was first used in 1938 by Charles Morris, who, in his work *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, distinguished three branches or areas of research within the general theory of signs, or semiotics: syntax (dedicated to the study of the mutual relationships of linguistic signs), semantics (dedicated to the study of the relationships between signs and the extra-linguistic objects they designate) and pragmatics (dedicated to the study of relationships between signs and their users). Subsequently, there have been many other definitions of the term, more complex and more comprehensive, but all pointed to the essence of pragmatics, which is the study of language in its context of use. Personally, I am very satisfied with the definition of Jacob Mey, which I quote: "Pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language use as these are determined by the context of society" (Mey 1993: 42). This definition, in fact, allows us to understand the multidisciplinary nature of current pragmatics research, which, in fact, has come to subsume methods and results from other related disciplines, such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, conversation analysis, cognitive psychology, philosophy of language, intercultural communication, etc. (*cf.* Márquez Reiter and Placencia 2005).

Among the topics studied by pragmatics in its various theoretical and methodological aspects, there are some that, in my view, are particularly important for U.S. Spanish, constituting an intrinsic component of, but with its own profile within, the overall Hispanic linguistic map, even though they do not come to mind as easily as the Anglicisms of various kinds when it comes to U.S. Spanish. I am going to focus on three of these topics, namely: forms of address, the performance of certain speech acts, and the expression of politeness.

5

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It is well known that forms of address (i.e. the pronouns used to address an interlocutor) vary throughout the Hispanic world according to multiple parameters, among which the most important are, within each geographical language variety, the relationship between the partners, the social distance between them, and the communicative situation in which the verbal exchange takes place. While in Spain only *tú* is used to address a partner with whom you have confidence, and with whom you communicate in informal situations, in much of Latin America the use, in such situations, varies between *tú* and *vos*; the use of *tú*, in such situations, is called *tuteo*, and the use of *vos, voseo*. Moreover, in the plural, there are also differences between the Old and the New World: in the latter, *ustedes* is the only form used to address several partners, no matter if they are addressed as *tú, vos* or *usted* in the singular, whereas in Spain, *usted*, with its plural *ustedes*, is reserved only for formal addresses, since for the informal ones, the plural forms are vosotros or *vosotras* (fem.). On the other hand, in Latin America, the singular *usted* indicates, generally speaking, distance or respect between the speakers, although in some places, *ustedeo* also occurs, as a form of affection (*cf.* Arroyo Blas 2005, among others).

6

U.S. Spanish is spoken by Hispanics who come from very different geographical areas, and it seems normal for first-generation Spanish speakers to continue to use, within their adopted communities, the forms of address from their country of origin. However, it has been noted that this is not always the case: the vast majority of U.S. Hispanics are of Mexican or Caribbean origin (i.e. mainly Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans), and the norm in their countries of origin is the *tuteo*. However, especially in recent decades, the United States has received a large number of Central Americans who are users of the *voseo*, and this is where a sort of "culture shock" occurs, since, if Central Americans are familiar, at least in theory, with the *tuteo* that they are taught in school, speakers who do not use voseo often react with bewilderment and even irritation or mockery, thinking that

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being addressed with *vos* is offensive or funny, and definitely "wrong." The result is that many Central Americans —but not all— abandon the use of *voseo* in favor of *tuteo*, mainly to better integrate into the majority Hispanic communities in the country (or, as some Salvadorans living in Los Angeles told me, to go unnoticed among the Mexicans, when they did not have legal residence). As for the children of Salvadorans living in Los Angeles, abandonment of *voseo* in favor of *tuteo* seems to be categorical, as evidenced by the work of Claudia Parodi, director of the Center for the Study of Spanish in the United States (CEEUS) at the University of California, Los Angeles, whose main task at the moment is the analysis of the vernacular Spanish of Los Angeles (LAVS, for its acronym in English).

One can say that the abandonment of *voseo*, especially in the interactions with members of other Hispanic communities, coming from different regions, is a manifestation of a larger and more comprehensive phenomenon that occurs throughout the United States, especially in large metropolises, where many Spanish speakers of different backgrounds and many social levels come into contact, producing what linguists call a "dialect leveling" or "koineization," in the sense that speakers of a dialect adopt traits of another dialect, for various reasons which are often family-motivated[1].

On the other hand, Lipski (2008) comments on the behavior of Central American parents who, after living for a while in the United States, gradually abandon the use of *usted* with children (a practice firmly rooted in Central American families trying to accustom their children to this form of respect), and tolerate with increasing frequency that the children do not speak to them using *usted*, but rather with a more familiar form of address. He also notes a sharp decline in the use of *voseo* by second generation Salvadorans, who no longer use the verbal morphology corresponding to such form of address, but retain *vos* as an

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[1] See Potowski 2008 and Parodi 2009.

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appellative at the end of questions and assertions, perhaps as an affirmation of their Salvadoran identity (Ex. *¿Vienes mañana, vos?*).

In other cases, Spanish heritage speakers from other origins can mix *tuteo* and *ustedeo*, especially in the case of verbal morphology (which, as we know, tends to be simplified between speakers of second or third generation), resulting in "socially contradictory" statements such as: *Mira, como usted es un señor mayor, te voy a ayudar, aunque esto yo no lo hago normalmente* (third generation Cuban American, born in Miami) or *Estimado profesor, prometo entregarte a usted mi trabajo mañana a primera hora. Gracias por tu comprensión* (second-generation Cuban American born in Miami) (Klee and Lynch 2009: 253). The latter e-mail, from a student to his teacher, actually reminds me that my heritage students also tend to address me with *tú* despite the big age difference between us, and not to show me any special affection, but rather because, under the influence of English, which only has one form of address (*you*), it is presumable that young generations, who heavily favor the use of English among themselves, are losing the distinction between the degrees of formality typical of the native Spanish of their parents and grandparents. This is, for example, the conclusion of a study by Sigüenza-Ortiz 1996 (cited in Pinto 2012), showing that East Los Angeles speakers dominant in English tend to create a syncretism in the second person singular, with *tú* replacing *usted* in several domains of use. There have been even linguists who have postulated the advancement of *tuteo* versus *ustedeo* in the United States as a socio-linguistic change in progress (e.g. Jaramillo 1995), although others —like Andrew Lynch— consider that it is rather "a process of overgeneralization of the pronoun *tú* because it is the preferred use within the nuclear family, even when it comes the older generation" (Klee and Lynch 2009, my translation). As this author explains, if the *tuteo* is the most common form in the nuclear family, "it is the first to be acquired and then it overgeneralizes in other areas, the process also being driven by the preferential use of English in many contexts and a lack of exposure to Spanish in schools where, in many parts of Latin America, the form of *usted* (between teachers and students)

8

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OBSERVATORIO
de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

predominates, and where the speaker would develop a formal awareness of the distinction between address pronouns and their grammatical forms " (Klee and Lynch 2009: 255, my translation).

Speech acts

Another aspect that pragmatics has been studying since its inception as an independent linguistic discipline is the way that so-called speech acts, or verbal acts, are performed in different languages and cultures. The New Grammar of the Spanish Language 2009 defines speech acts as "the actions that are carried out using words, very often in their appellative function, but also in various forms in which they conventionally acquire an institutionalized value" (RAE and ASALE 2009: 3118, my translation). Examples of such speech acts are greeting, thanking, apologizing, promising, congratulating, complimenting, etc. There is abundant literature about language routine formulas that are used in Spanish and other languages, to adequately express the communicative intent of the speaker, as well as on the direct and indirect ways in which these acts can be carried out in each concrete situation (*cf.* Dumitrescu 2011). To take just one example, a command can be performed directly, using the imperative *¡Alcánzame el bolígrafo!* if the relationship between the two partners is of utmost confidence or if the communicative situation requires an urgent and unavoidable action *¡No te mueva*s!; it can be mitigated through polite markers, such as *por favor* or *si no te importa*, etc.; or it can be expressed indirectly through a question *¿Podrías alcanzarme el bolígrafo*? or an assertion *Me haría falta el bolígrafo* that the listener should be able to interpret, under the communicative conventions of the community to which both partners belong, as a veiled invitation to act .

Speakers without a full command of the language, either because they are learning it as a second language or because they are heritage speakers —of second or even third-generation— may differ from the natives in the performance

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of a speech act in the language they are learning or they master less (in our case, the Spanish of heritage U.S. speakers). In the case of learners of a second language, applied linguistics experts speak of pragma-linguistic errors, which mean, according to Thomas (1983: 94), "knowing the correct thing to say but not knowing how to say it correctly," and of socio-pragmatic errors, which, according to the same author, consist of "not knowing what to say or not saying the appropriate thing as a result of transferring the incongruent social rules, values and belief systems from their native languages and cultures." In the case of heritage speakers, in whose linguistic background two languages (both native to a greater or lesser extent) converge, I think we should talk, instead, about divergent pragmatic solutions.

More specifically: in one study I wrote about the expression of gratitude (and its responses) in heritage speakers, compared to native Spanish speakers and native English speakers (Dumitrescu 2011), I noticed the presence of many (albeit subtle) socio-pragmatic differences. For example, some heritage speakers have turned to literal translations of English formulas of thanks, saying for example, at the end of an invitation to dinner at a friend's home, *Gracias por un buen tiempo* (*cf.* English: Thanks for a good time) instead of using a more idiomatic expression, as *Lo pasé muy bien*, or something like that; others said, when they were thanked for the invitation, *Tenemos que hacer esto otra vez*, which is also a replica of English "We have to do this again," instead of the more traditional formulas chosen by some of the natives, like *Vamos a repetirlo pronto*, or *La próxima vez invito yo*. I was also struck by the frequency with which they used *Aha!* in response to an expression of gratitude —a very common casual interjection in English, instead of the more formal *You are welcome*!, but that is not used in Spanish, in such situations— or *No te preocupes/Pierde cuidado* (Do not worry) instead of *De/por nada*, or *No hay de qué.* It follows from this that the influence of English can be extended, surreptitiously, to linguistic realization of some very common speech acts. However, in Southern California, the most common response to *Gracias* seems to the Mexican formula ¡*Ándale pues*!.

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OBSERVATORIO de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

Another study, this time focused on the speech acts of requests and complaints, with the participation of native speakers of Mexican Spanish, native speakers of U.S. English and heritage speakers of U.S. Spanish, proved without doubt that heritage speakers were closer, in their verbal behavior, to English speakers: firstly, in the case of requests, they systematically avoided direct strategies (the task was to ask a roommate to clean the room), and in the case of complaints, they felt the need on more occasions than monolingual Spanish speakers to justify their complaint (which represents, pragmatically speaking, a mitigation of the impact of the complaint on the listener). Furthermore —and as in the previously mentioned study on gratitude— the authors Pinto and De Pablos-Ortega noted a "linguistic hybridity," as they called it, in the linguistic formulas used, which, while containing Spanish words, betray nevertheless an English syntactic pattern. For example, in order to ask a classmate for his/her class notes, several heritage speakers used attenuated requests, such as *¿Estaría bien si me las prestarías?* or *¿Es posible que me prestes tus apuntes de clase*?, modeled on routine formulas for requests in English, such as "Would it be all right if … / Is it OK if … / Is it possible for you to…," etc. Although these requests are not ungrammatical (with the exception of the use of the conditional in the if-clause), one cannot say they are "a conventional mechanism in the Spanish of monolinguals to make requests" (Pinto and De Pablos-Ortega 2014: 195, my translation), and that is why also they did not show up in the data collected from the latter group.

What this study (and others that have been conducted along the same lines) demonstrates is that, ultimately, heritage speakers who, as a rule, are dominant in English, favor performing indirectly many speech acts that native Spanish speakers, perform, most of the time, in a direct and even blunt manner. The doctoral dissertation of Carolina Rivas Gutiérrez (discussed in Klee and Lynch 2009: 257) is revealing regarding the formulation of requests by three generations of Cubans in Miami. Her research showed that Cuban-Americans of the third generation tended to use two nuclei in their requests: a positive,

supportive one ("reflection of their apparent loyalty to the rules of interaction of their grandparents' generation") and a negative one, reflecting their own preference for the negative politeness typical of English-speaking American society. Meanwhile, their grandparents (the first generation) exhibited an ideology of solidarity and positive politeness, with more direct strategies, like those documented by other researchers on the island of Cuba.

Verbal or communicative politeness

The directness or indirectness of a speech act depends, as can be inferred from the above, on the concept of politeness that is characteristic of a community, so in what follows I will explain very briefly what the so-called theory of verbal (or communicative) politeness is. The first to formulate a theory —in their intention, universal— of politeness were Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987), who adopted the concept of face from Goffman in order to argue that each individual has a positive face (the desire to be appreciated by others and/or to be affiliated with the group) and a negative face (the desire for autonomy, so that one's actions are not hindered by others), and that, therefore, there are also two types of politeness: a positive politeness, geared toward the positive image of the interlocutors, and a negative politeness, which preserves the negative image of those interlocutors. Some speech acts (such as expressing gratitude, complimenting, or congratulating) are directed by definition to the positive face of the listener —and therefore are inherently polite— while others (such as mandates, orders, reprimands) are not, because they threaten the negative face of the listener (without implying that they necessarily are rude) (*cf.* Haverkate 1994). In the theory of Brown and Levinson, politeness consists basically in mitigating threats to the negative face of the listener, protecting it through attenuation strategies or the use of indirect speech acts. The findings of Brown and Levinson, however innovative they were at the time (as they have laid the theoretical and methodological bases of this whole branch of pragmatics) have

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been further quite criticized and, implicitly, modified and enriched with other less Anglo-centric perspectives and new methods and concepts, such as the concept of self-image and the face-flattering acts, as opposed to the face-threatening ones (*cf*. Bravo 2012; Hernández-Flores 2013). Today, especially among scholars of politeness in Spanish (who are many, and have obtained very interesting results in this domain) the predominant approach is a socio-discursive one, that emphasizes the idea that politeness, as well as impoliteness, "is something that the interlocutors negotiate and evaluate at the time of the interaction" (Pinto and De Pablos-Ortega 2014: 160, my translation), by taking as a point of departure their shared expectations resulting from the cultural norms of the community to which they belong[2].

Now, there is no doubt that cultural standards vary greatly from one Hispanic community to another, and some communities favor positive politeness, as an expression of solidarity between their members, while others attach more importance to the negative politeness, as an expression of deference and respect for hierarchies. As Márquez & Placencia hypothetically claimed, after reviewing numerous studies of politeness conducted in the Hispanic world that demonstrate precisely this variation, "[i]f we where to place the different studies reported on a continuum of politeness, we would find the Argentineans, Spaniards and Venezuelans in these studies sitting at one end of the spectrum, followed by the Chilean and Uruguayans in the middle and the Mexicans, Ecuadorians and Peruvians in a slightly lower position towards the negative end of the continuum" (Márquez and Placencia 2005: 190). However, it is worth noting that the socio-pragmatic variation in the Hispanic world is an emerging area of study, and has not yet reached final conclusions, since until now linguists have focused mainly on the socio-pragmatic differences between peninsular Spanish and some varieties of Latin American Spanish, considered in general

13

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[2] See the work of the interdisciplinary group EDICE, centered in the discourse of (im)politeness in Spanish: http://edice.org).

OBSERVATORIO
de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

less direct than the former, not to mention that the issue of the mutual variation between different Latin American varieties has received even less attention so far.

Even fewer studies have been devoted to the politeness strategies of U.S. Spanish, so it would be difficult to make assertions about this topic, except that, theoretically speaking, due to, on the one hand, the heterogeneous origin of Hispanics who arrived from all over the Spanish-speaking world, and, on the other hand, the undeniable influence of English on their mother tongue, especially in younger generations born on American soil, one can presume that a sociolinguistic leveling is happening in the U.S. Spanish in this area as well, possibly with a more marked tendency towards a kind of negative politeness, typical not only to the Anglo-Saxon world, but also, to some extent, to the Mexicans, as speakers of this variety are scattered throughout the country. But this could be pure speculation for now, and the future will have the last word. It is worth mentioning, in fact, that the only article that presents an overview of politeness in U.S. Spanish, Cashman ends with several pages of recommendations for future research, because, as the author says, "despite three decades of research, linguistic politeness in U.S. Spanish remains a relatively unexamined topic" (Cashman 2007: 136). The only conclusion that emerges with certainty from the relatively few studies in this field is the undeniable connection between the expression of politeness and the language alternation between Spanish and English in U.S. bilinguals, who, according to the authors that have been interested in this subject, choose the use of English as a mitigating device when carrying out speech acts that threaten the interlocutor's face, or in response to face-flattering acts, as in the case of compliments (*cf.* Valdés & Pino 1981).

14

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The "mixed" discourse of U.S. bilinguals

The above comments provide a good transition to the most prominent and most studied discursive aspect of U.S. Spanish, which is the alternation between two languages (in this case, Spanish and English), a phenomenon known in linguistics as code-switching. Indeed, the influence of English on Spanish in the United States is not only expressed through the lexical borrowing and lexical-semantic and syntactic calques previously mentioned, some of which, incidentally, are present also in the Spanish spoken in other countries —Spain itself being one of them— especially in certain areas of activity in which people "deplore" the invasion of Anglicisms, but can not stop it. Also, and even more conspicuously in the use of both languages in the same discourse passage, that is, in the speech of the same bilingual speaker, who, for different reasons (that have nothing to do, as it is commonly believed, with mental laziness or ignorance), opt for speaking the two languages simultaneously.

Popularly, this alternation of languages is known as Spanglish (or *espanglish*, as it is called in the academic *Dictionary of the Spanish Language*, which, in its latest edition, the twenty-third, incorporates for the first time this term in its lexical repertoire, alongside with a few more *estadounidismos*, that is, words characteristic of the U.S. Spanish, included on an equal footing with other *-ismos* that have been added in recent editions, such as *cubanismos, argentinismos, peruanismos, mexicanismos*, etc.). Alternating the two languages one knows is an ordinary practice among members of any bilingual community, so in this sense Spanglish is nothing unusual, and all the studies on societal bilingualism in general, including the Spanish-English bilingualism (for example, Austin, Blume & Sanchez 2015; Field 2011; Montrul 2012), assert it.

But what is unusual, and distinguishes Spanglish, or whatever else we like to call it, as there is considerable controversy about this name, which not everyone accepts (*cf.* Dumitrescu 2015) are the psycho-socio-political dimensions that this

phenomenon has been acquiring, and the difficulty to define in an appropriate and comprehensive way its exact place within the U.S. sociolinguistic landscape. Ángel López García-Molins, in a recent book called *Teoría del Spanglish* 'Theory of Spanglish' (2015), thinks that "it could be defined as a dialect of Spanish, only that rather than a structural dialect, it is a *psychological* dialect" (my translation). He continues, emphasizing what Spanglish is not: "In other words, Spanglish is not a strip of variation in the continuum of the Spanish language, but a strip of verbal behavior. It is a variant in which Spanish mixes with English, but this variant is not attached to any territory or social class or situation: Spanglish is not a diatopic variant because it occurs in the whole U.S.; Spanglish is not a diastratic variant because people of all social classes use it, the working classes as an attempt to approach an English they do not master, and wealthy classes as a sign of linguistic virtuosity in two languages, Spanish and English, that they master to perfection; finally, Spanglish is not a diaphatic variant because it occurs in a variety of situational registers, from literature (Junot Diaz, etc.) to colloquial speech" (López García-Molins 2015: 43).

Later on, the same author states "Spanglish is a linguistic practice whereby U.S. Latinos express their pride and group cohesion" (López García-Molins 2015: 48). And with this statement, López García-Molins really succeeds in putting the record straight, because in fact the ultimate reason behind all the linguistic, stylistic and psychological motivations that have been attributed to code-switching is the conscious or unconscious desire of its users to assert their dual identity and an underlying attempt to challenge the balance of power in the language domains of the U.S. Many Hispanics in the United States, from famous names such as Gloria Anzaldúa or Ed Morales, who wrote in 2002 that "Spanglish is what we speak, but it is also who we Latinos are, and how we act, and how we perceive the world" (Morales 2002: 3, my translation) to ordinary people when interviewed on the streets, agree in claiming what Rothman & Rell summarized as follows: "Spanglish is the linguistic embodiment of the juxtaposition of two very different cultures, which meet, intertwine, amalgamate and finally emerge as a

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OBSERVATORIO
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unique identity for a particular cohort of people" (Rothman and Rell 2005: 529). And I quote, by means of illustration, the statements made to this effect by two Mexican respondents interviewed by Rothman and Rell in California. One says: "Spanglish is a cultural symbol, which represents *la mezcla* (in Spanish, in the original) which is California culture... I love to speak it because it shows my diverse identity. I am not only Hispanic and I am not only Anglo-American —I am mixed— and Spanglish is my identity." The other one adds: "Spanglish has become a defining point for Mexican-Americans too Mexican to be American and too American to be Mexican" (Rothman and Rell 2005: 530-531).

Spanglish: from conversation to literature

Moreover, it is well known that code-switching is already a component of the narrative fabric of literary works written by great U.S. Hispanic authors of yesterday and today, like Rudolfo Anaya, and Sandra Cisneros, or even Junot Diaz, a Dominican-American writer who won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 2007, and flatly declared in an interview that his use of Spanish within his texts in English (without quotation marks or italics) is due to a major political imperative, namely to show that Spanish" is not a minority language. Not in this hemisphere, not in the United States, not in the world inside my head" (quoted in Dumitrescu 2014b). Indeed, it has been argued that, in literature, code-switching is "an artistic option with political ramifications" (Torres 2007), because, far from being metaphorical, "[it] represents a reality where segments of the population are living between cultures and languages," so that their "literary language actualizes the discourse of the border and bilingual/bicultural communities" (Torres 2007: 76). Or, as Callahan put it, the use of code-switching by U.S. Hispanic authors "re-defines social reality; and influences what discourse resources are available for what domains." And she adds: "This includes a rejection of monolingual English as well as of monolingual Spanish" (Callahan 2004: 4), with the result that they challenge the balance of power and assert

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their right to participate in the U.S. marketplace on a bilingual and not just monolingual basis.

The speakers, who constantly alternate between Spanish and English when communicating with members of their community, actually do something very similar, without realizing it. It is true that, unlike writers who master to perfection the two languages and use code-switching as an artistic tool, the U.S. Hispanic bilinguals without literary inclinations can use code-switching in a variety of ways, according to their degree of mastery of the languages and their communicative intentions, and get less spectacular results, aesthetically speaking. But still they can achieve striking stylistic effects, as in so-called oral narratives (i.e. accounts of personal events and experiences, inserted in a larger conversation). The structure of oral narratives has been studied in depth, and linguists repeatedly noted that code-switching does not occur randomly, but rather correlates with the various structural components of the narrative; for instance, the narrative sequence is expressed in English, but the description, evaluation and / or narrative climax are expressed in Spanish, or the latter language is used to customize and add dramatic effects to the story (*cf.* Koike 1987).

But leaving aside the issue of oral narratives, in ordinary conversation it is customary to distinguish between three forms of code-switching: the inter-sentential code switching, which occurs within a discursive passage between a sentence (or a string of sentences) and other sentence(s); the intra-sentential code-switching, which occurs within one and the same sentence, not at random, but respecting a series of linguistic constraints, such as the free morpheme constraint and the (structural) equivalence constraint, which were initially discussed by Poplack (2000); and the so called emblematic or tag-switching, which is simply the use of certain tags or "fillers," which linguists usually call discourse markers, that are often used in the other language, without necessarily implying a real mastery of that language. An example of intra-sentential code switching would be, for example, "Y luego, *during the war*, él se fue con *The Union*

18

OBSERVATORIO
de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

General, went down to el valle" 'And then during the war, he went with The Union General, went down to the valley,' while an example of inter-sentential code-switching would be "I was saying good night to her when she asked me, *¿qué te pasa, hija, estás triste?*" 'I was saying good night to her when she asked me, what's going on with you, daughter, are you sad?.' On the other hand, an example of emblematic code-switching would be: *"Y'know,* le pregunté que cuántos, cuántas botellas te dejaba antes y me dijo que dos" 'Y'know, I asked him how many, how many bottles you were allowed before and he told me that two.' The only element in English here is the discourse marker *Y'know*, which occupies a peripheral structural position, and simply aims at "punctuating" the discourse of the speaker who, in doing so, shows, often unconsciously, his aspiration to identify with the other members of the bilingual community with whom he interacts.

Discourse markers 19

Discourse markers (or connectors) are a morphologically heterogeneous class (since they may include adverbs, conjunctions, interjections, and even more complex segments), but a functionally homogeneous one, insofar as its components have the same basic discursive task: "to provide guidance about the way the sentence or the sentence fragment over which they have scope must be interpreted in relation to the preceding context and the subsequent inferences that can be made" (RAE and ASALE 2009: 2358, my translation). And, as seen in the above example, these markers can be taken from another language, which, for different reasons, may be perceived as more suitable or more representative of the communicative intentions of the speaker in question, or simply can mark solidarity with the bilingual community into which one aspires to be integrated.

The most frequent discourse markers, taken from English and used in the U.S. Spanish, including by newcomers, are, for example, *well, you know, I mean,*

anyway, but, and others that have been studied by several authors. But the "king," so to speak, in terms of the attention that it received is the consecutive marker *so*, which can already be considered an integral part of the U.S. Spanish of all categories of speakers, including those who consciously avoid the use of Anglicisms. As Lipski explains about *so-* insertion, "[t]his phenomenon occurs in the speech of a wide variety of Spanish-English bilinguals in the United States — from Spanish-dominant speakers to balanced bilinguals to highly English-dominant semi-speakers of Spanish— and it is found in the speech of many individuals who disavow any conscious use of Anglicisms. It has also been observed in the speech of Spanish speakers born and raised outside of the United States who became bilingual upon learning English in the United States. Of the bilingual speakers who introduce 'so' into Spanish discourse, some freely engage in various forms of code switching when speaking informally to other bilingual interlocutors, whereas others seldom or never do so" (Lipski 2008: 236).

It is also true that sometimes the opposite occurs: Hispanics who have almost lost their ancestral language (the so-called "vestigial bilinguals;" *cf.* Lipski 2008) and whose dominant language is English, can turn to discourse markers in Spanish to point some connection with their roots. In this regard, Field writes: "In situations of advancing shift, where not all participants are highly proficient in Spanish, a bilingual whose linguistically strongest or dominant language is English may switch briefly to Spanish to identify with the non-dominant group, by "throwing" into the conversation a Spanish word or two, like the discourse markers *pues* ('well'), *mira* ('look') or *Órale*! (which can have a range of meanings like "right on!" Or "Go on, get out of here," etc.). This can sometimes be relatively deliberate and conscious. This type of C[ode]S[witching] has been called emblematic because the words themselves become emblems, symbolic of solidarity and group membership" (Field 2011: 98, traducción mía).

That is why, in a previous work of mine I argued that code-switching is, at the level of communicative interaction among U.S. Hispanics," a face-work strategy of

Instituto Cervantes at FAS - Harvard University

OBSERVATORIO
de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

20

intra -group affiliation and simultaneously of extra-group image of autonomy" (Dumitrescu 2014a, my translation). Or, more specifically, that we are confronted with "a face-work that is essentially of a double valence, so to speak, insofar as it strengthens the affiliation between the members of the U.S. Hispanic community —a community defined by its bilingualism and biculturalism— and at the same time distinguishes them from the members of other communities, bilingual or monolingual, that cohabit with them in the U.S., but are part of other cultures and share different socio-linguistic attitudes" (Dumitrescu 2014a: 27, my translation).

Concluding remarks

To conclude, there are many pragmatic and discursive aspects of U.S. Spanish that remain to be analyzed in depth. What has been done until now is insufficient (it only "scratches the surface" of things) but it still traces some very interesting lines of future research. Among them, let us mention, as promising areas of reflection, the restructuring of the forms of address, performing polite speech acts (and in general, what is considered polite or impolite in verbal interaction between U.S. Hispanics), the possible leveling of the norms of intercultural communication, bilingual speech in all its facets, and also all issues related to the so-called "critical discourse analysis," which aims, among its main lines of research, "to [analyze] the denaturalization and deconstruction of the hierarchical and unequal relations that are constituted and legitimized in language use" (Zavala 2012: 163, my translation).

The Spanish language, the first European language to be heard in the American continent more than 500 years ago, thanks to the expedition of Ponce de Leon to Florida (almost a century before the English brought to the same continent by the Mayflower pilgrims), and the first in which a description of a territory of what is now the United States was written —I mean, of course, the description of Florida by Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá in 1610— should not be considered a Cinderella in

the American linguistic landscape, not of yesterday, not of today, and not of tomorrow. Let us hope that the critical discourse analysis, which I mentioned (without elaborating), will be able to restore, with the scientific arguments proper to this discipline, this linguistic balance apparently lost today, but essentially needed, and less utopian.

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22

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Domnita Dumitrescu
California State University
Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española

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