

Swimsuit or suit with tie ? : Respect Spanglish in Spanish classes by Kim Potowski

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Part I

(1) Whenever there has been meaningful contact between speakers of different languages, there have been changes in the languages they speak. Always. Add blue to yellow and it turns green. It does not matter the place, the century or the languages in question. And when one of the languages has more prestigious speakers than the other, it is usually the one that exerts the most influence on the minority language.

(2) The case of the back in the United States is no exception. Even the Spanish of the first generation - that is, immigrants - often reflects the influence of English words and expressions. Spanish of the second and third generation (the children and grandchildren of immigrants) shows even more influence. Here is a summary of the four phenomena associated with languages in contact: 1. code changes, 2. loanwords, 3. extensions, and 4. calcos, using examples from United States Spanish, or what some call the "spanglish". And we will see that it makes no sense to criticize green for not being "blue enough".

Phenomenon 1: Change of codes

(3) As the name indicates, code-switching (codeswitching) is when a speaker, in the same conversation, changes from Language A to Language B. Some examples would be "He told me he would arrive at five o'clock but he's not here yet" .o "; Have you never eaten in that restaurant? The food is delicious". The first example is called intra-sentence because it occurred within a single sentence, while the second example is called interorational because it occurred between two different sentences. According to linguists, changing the code within the same sentence without breaking the syntactic rules of any of the languages requires a fairly high level of bilingualism, quite the opposite of the "mental laziness" claimed by some critics of "Spanglish".

(4) Although the code change may seem chaotic or upward, the truth is that it follows empirically proven linguistic trends. For example, we normally don't change in the middle of a word. It is not said, for example, "Juan is dancing with his girlfriend." In addition, it is not usually changed at points where the structure of the two languages is not the same, hence we do not say "I want the big house". Nor do we usually switch between a subject or verb, like "Pedro got mad and so he came out."

(5) Now, why would someone say "See you at ten, right?" When does the word "right" exist in Spanish? Is it because he can't say it? Sometimes yes, we change languages because we do not know certain words. But not always. In fact, the linguist Ana Celia Zentella (1997) found that

in more than 2000 cases in which a group of five bilingual girls changed their codes, 75% of them knew perfectly well how to say in the first language what they had produced in the another language.

(6) If we know how to say something in a monolingual way, then why change codes? There are, many reasons: to give emphasis, to create solidarity, to quote exactly what a person said, to respect the dominant language of the person with whom we speak, to change topics or to make parenthetical changes. And sometimes there is simply no equivalent word in the other language that captures what we really mean. We will return to this point later.

Phenomenon 2: loans

(7) In addition to changing codes, bilingual speakers often make extensive use of loanwords or borrowings). A loan is a word that comes from English, but "sounds" like Spanish; it has been "Spanishized." Surely you know many examples: washar (to watch, from English to watch), busboi (person who cleans tables in a restaurant, from English busboy), "I'm going to have a breik", "The lunch is in the friser", and so on. We must remember that in the same way, Spanish incorporated loans from Arabic, (and let's not forget that Spanish developed from a "bastardized" Latin, that is, there are no "pure" languages), and English has incorporated loans from German , French and even Spanish (such as patio, lasso, plaza and others). A lot of specialized or technological vocabulary is also borrowed, such as

Phenomenon 3: extensions

(8) The difference between an extension and a loan is that the extension is a word that already existed in Spanish, but it took on a new meaning in the United States, that is, its definition was extended. For example, the word apply exists in all Spanish-speaking countries and refers to the idea of dedicating oneself to something, making an effort. But in the United States, and probably due to its similarity to English to apply, the definition of apply has been extended to also refer to the act of applying for a job.

Phenomenon 4: traces

(9) A calco (calque) is the import of a phrase from English to Spanish. The traces then always have more than one word, such as "run for president" (to run for president, from English To run for) "Call back" (to call back, from English To call back).