

**Integrating English-origin verbs into Spanish via bilingual compound verb constructions**  
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This paper employs the comparative variationist approach (Poplack 2000) to analyze the strategy of combining a *do*-verb with an English element (EE) to form a bilingual compound verb (BCV) (Edwards and Gardner-Chloros 2007) as illustrated in (1). Data is drawn from fifteen sociolinguistic interviews with Spanish-English bilingual speakers in northern and western Belize.

1.    Lo       hicieron report  
      it       do<sub>3PL</sub> report  
      'They reported it'

BCVs have been widely documented cross-linguistically (Wohlgemuth 2009), however, clear criteria for what is or should be considered a BCV is lacking in the literature. Likewise, there is no consensus on the status of BCVs as they have been variably described as emergent hybrids (Wilson 2013), borrowings (Sankoff et al. 1990), code-switches (González-Vilbazo and López 2012), or products of a third grammar (Romaine 1986) or of creolization (Gardner-Chloros 2009; Pfaff 1979).

The current study provides a series of discourse-based tests which rely on modification, nominal reference and argument structure of the EE as well as the object-taking properties of the construction to distinguish BCVs from other bilingual constructions where *hacer* ('to make/to do') is lexical (or causative) and where the category of the EE is ambiguous given the form-identical nature of many verbs and nouns in English (*I test students, I passed the test*). Thus, only those EEs which are verbal and predicate jointly with *hacer* i.e., bona fide BCVs, enter into the comparative analysis. We subsequently aim to determine the status of the BCVs with respect to the competing analyses noted above.

Verbal EEs, account for 14% of all single non-Spanish items and 95% (N=215) of these appear in a BCV. These were subjected to a comparative analysis with verbs in the monolingual varieties from the same speakers. The conflict sites (Poplack and Meechan 1998) of verbal morphology and variable pronominal clitic placement were used as diagnostics to determine which of these grammatical systems the EEs might pattern with, thus, elucidating how BCVs might be best described.

EEs were found to be categorically integrated into Spanish via *hacer* which carried the requisite Spanish inflectional morphology (see (1)) that monolingual Spanish verbs do. There was no evidence of English morphology on EEs and uninflected English verbs did not otherwise surface in our data, suggesting that EEs are best analyzed as borrowings. This finding is further corroborated by the position of clitics associated with BCVs. In stark contrast to English, and consistent with the Spanish grammatical system, when the BCV was finite, the clitic was categorically preverbal (*lo* in 1 above). When the BCV was non-finite, clitics exhibited variability with respect to enclisis/proclisis as was the case with Spanish verbs.

BCVs account for 95% of verbal borrowings and have a type/token ratio of 0.73 highlighting them as productive and the preferred strategy for borrowing verbs, irrespective of dialect region in Belize. Such findings are not widely reported for Spanish-English data or other Romance languages (e.g. Poplack et al. 1988).

While verbal borrowings occur at relatively low frequencies, this does not preclude their analysis through quantitative accountable methods. By applying the principles of the comparative variationist method, BCVs are clearly circumscribed and the current analysis disentangles the diverse characterizations of these constructions. Results of the current study do not support the view that the provenance of BCVs can be found in third grammars, creolization or code-switching given that the quantitative evidence reveals BCVs to be functioning as nothing more than a community specific borrowing strategy.

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