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John M. Lipski

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group of second year students to Mexico, and to my surprise they not only used Spanish with confidence when they met Mexican people but also used it among

themselves in their rooms and on the train—everywhere! And these were not all “super” students.

## TEACHING SPOKEN SPANISH

JOHN M. LIPSKI

*Michigan State University*

That there exists a difference between “written language” and “spoken language” is a generally acknowledged fact, and forms the basis for the teaching of composition and rhetoric in any language. Thus, we do not normally speak in a style characteristic of the written language, for fear of being considered affected or pedantic; conversely, writing in a style more appropriate for a spoken situation is, except in reporting spoken material, considered bad form. In this fashion, every literate individual automatically acquires at least two code-levels characterizing the usage of his language; normally more than these two levels are present; since both the written and the spoken dimensions are usually divided into categories of language deemed most appropriate for particular situations. The manipulation of these various levels or strata of linguistic behavior is a reflection of the automatic linguistic competence of native speakers, and forms, in fact, the basis for much of the current work in sociolinguistics.<sup>1</sup>

Since the presence of several well-defined levels of linguistic ability is implicit in every normal individual's verbal repertoire, such behavior is often taken for granted. Surely, no one has to be taught how to speak the colloquial varieties of his language;<sup>2</sup> consequently, classroom instruction centers around developing proficiency in the more formal styles. In the foreign language classroom, however, the situation becomes radically altered, for everything taken for granted by native speakers of the language being taught must be explicitly presented to students acquiring it as a foreign language. In presenting foreign language material, the teacher cannot rely on the intuitions or experience of his students, but must guide the process of language learning along explicit channels

not normally present in the fundamental stages of first-language acquisition. Ideally, the amount of such explicit portrayal should be kept to a minimum if a maximally natural-sounding linguistic performance is expected of the students, but given the practical limitations of most language teaching situations, it is simply not feasible to duplicate the process of native language acquisition by letting the student arrive at his own generalizations on the basis of a large corpus of received material.

The need for explicit, analytic drills is rarely questioned in the area of teaching the basic grammatical and phonetic structures. The end result of such instruction, however, is (ideally) the acquisition of a single linguistic code, which may or may not be appropriate for the linguistic situations in which the student will typically find himself. Turning to the specific case of the teaching of Spanish, it may be presumed that the majority of the students in our Spanish classes are there due to a practical desire to communicate with, and understand, the representatives of a language and culture which, in addition to their distribution throughout the world, are becoming increasingly significant within our own country. In recognition of such motivation, there has been an increase in the number of basic Spanish courses which teach a variety of the Latin American language, rather than the once “classic” Castilian standard. Among Spanish textbooks, the same general trend is in evidence, although vestiges of the older feelings regarding Castilian continue to appear even in the newest editions.

As noted above, the eventual goal of any basic Spanish course is to equip the students with dominion over a single, rather formal, and hopefully homogeneous, linguistic code, together with a generous

sprinkling of expressions labeled "colloquial" and possibly, depending upon the teacher, a handful of truly "vulgar" locutions. In practice, even this goal is hard to achieve, for several readily apparent reasons. First of all, the variety of available textbooks and tapes present a hodgepodge of Spanish material, covering various dialects and colloquial levels, according to the whim of the compilers. Thus, right from the start, students may be subjected to a capriciously presented array of material which, broken down into its constituent parts, may constitute valid Spanish examples but which, if combined into an extended discourse, results in a ludicrous amalgam unsuited for any situation. For instance, in the same course, students may be taught that "you're welcome" is *no hay de qué* and that the plural of *tú* is *ustedes*. The Pan-Hispanic perspective sought by most Spanish texts often results in the student's sounding like a stranger wherever he might go. While it is impossible to broach the subject of fine dialectal characteristics, including vocabulary items, which change from area to area, the fundamental choice between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish should be made and kept.

As a corollary of the above-mentioned problem, we may note the situation, omnipresent and generally unavoidable, which results from successive instruction by a variety of teachers, each of whom speaks a different dialect. While conscientious Spanish teachers make every attempt to weed out truly local expressions and pronunciations from their classroom presentations, at least until more advanced stages of language instruction, it is impossible to avoid engendering a certain amount of confusion in students faced with two or more teachers each offering a different alternative for a particular linguistic situation. This problem is aggravated by those individuals, alas all too common, who dogmatically proclaim the correctness of one and only one variant (usually from their own dialect) of a particular form or expression, often excluding alternatives found elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking world.

As a final complication, particularly in

large universities, introductory Spanish courses may be taught by graduate students who are either not native speakers of Spanish, in which case their own linguistic performance may not be sufficiently consistent, or who are native speakers of Spanish but who lack adequate awareness of linguistic problems and dialectology, which results in a highly parochial mode of instruction. This situation is alleviated at those universities requiring new teaching assistants to attend a training session prior to the commencement of classes.

The rather long-winded prologue was intended to highlight a situation present in many areas of the country, where large Spanish-speaking populations exhibit the language in its natural habitat. The existence of Spanish-speaking communities offers the possibility of removing the learning of Spanish from its exclusive classroom environment, and presents an added encouragement for students undertaking the study of the language, since ample opportunities for practice are close at hand. When store fronts bristle with Spanish signs, and Spanish may be heard on the streets and on radio and television stations, the ambitious student feels eager to escape from the sterile dialogues and histrionics of the classroom and plunge into the living language. Of course, we all know what happens next: the student returns to the teacher with the often bitter tale of disappointment "I couldn't understand a word they were saying!" Such disillusionment is often blamed on the teachers, for having taught them a brand of Spanish which not only bears no resemblance to that which they hear spoken around them, but which may even occasion ridicule from less tolerant Hispanic individuals. This last problem can be particularly demoralizing, but may be at least comprehended by reflecting upon the abuse often heaped upon Spanish speakers in this country with a non-existent or insufficient command of English; the resulting resentment may cause narrow-minded individuals to reject attempts by English speakers to practice their rudimentary Spanish.

Clearly, the student expecting miracles will be disappointed in any class; it is impossible to achieve mastery of a language

in a year or two of normal classroom practice. On the other hand, particularly in those areas of the country characterized by a large Hispanic population, concessions may be made to those students whose immediate goal is communication with members of their own community. Contrary to an often-raised objection, this does not necessarily entail teaching a nonstandard or Anglicized variety of Spanish, but need only consist of a certain amount of contrastive examples designed to expose the students to the different varieties of the spoken language that they will most likely encounter away from the classroom. The student who achieves perfect mastery of the language laboratory exercises and then meets a Spanish speaker on the streets and is unable to understand him may rightfully feel cheated out of valuable linguistic knowledge. All too often, detailed practice in dialect differences and pronunciation is postponed until courses in conversation and phonetics, generally at the third-year level. By this time, the student will have hopefully grasped the rudiments of the rather formal style presented in his classroom experiences. Suddenly, he is confronted with an array of dialect differences and phonetic possibilities he never even dreamed of. While the student's ability to speak the normative text-book language will be improved under such conditions, his ability to communicate with the man on the street can remain in its critically underdeveloped state.

There is no easy solution to the problem of teaching the living language, particularly given a class filled with students with differing needs and motivations. Nonetheless, it seems desirable to at least acquaint the students with aspects of everyday colloquial Spanish, as spoken not only abroad but perhaps within their own community. This may be accomplished in a variety of fashions, and any methodology will have to be adapted to the needs of each particular classroom situation. In some form, the students are to be presented with representative examples of both the grammar and the phonetics of the particular Spanish dialect(s) under consideration. Compared to the phonetic structures of the Spanish dialects, large-scale grammatical

differences, except on the most colloquial level, are relatively few in number and may be profitably ignored in the early stages of language instruction. On the other hand, differences in vocabulary and local idioms vary so greatly from one area to another as to preclude their inclusion in lower-level courses. It is, however, in the realm of pronunciation that the greatest difficulties in comprehension are incurred by English speaking students, and it is to this area that the greatest pedagogical energy should be directed.

Aside from isolated communities scattered throughout the United States, the major Spanish dialects spoken in this country are Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Rican. Mexican Spanish predominates in the Southwest, Chicago, the Detroit-Toledo area and other northern communities, while the Caribbean dialects reach their greatest density in the Southeast, the greater New York area, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Since it has been the observation of this writer that it is the Cuban and Puerto Rican dialects which, from the phonetic point of view, offer the greatest receptive difficulty to beginning students of the language, some rudimentary remarks will be offered concerning the manner by which English-speaking students may be initiated into the linguistic structures of this rather significant segment of our population. The phonetic traits listed below are noted in most works of Spanish phonetics; they are grouped together here merely as a prerequisite for some methodological suggestions.

Common to any spoken Spanish dialect are the general elimination of word boundaries and the fusion of identical or similar vowels. The first-mentioned phenomenon occurs with greater regularity than in English, and results in the formation of breath groups rather than individual words, although retaining contrastive word accent in most cases. The coalescing of similar vowels gives rise to such forms as *mijo* for *mi hijo*, *quizo* for *que hizo*.

More specifically Caribbean,<sup>3</sup> however, is the aspiration of syllable-final [s], which renders many words and phrases unintelligible to the uninitiated. This phenome-

non reaches even the most cultured speakers in the Cuban and Puerto Rican dialects, and may be found, although to a reduced extent, even in formal situations. In everyday conversation, aspiration of [s] to [h], or complete deletion, is the general rule, with higher rate of aspiration or loss being equated with more informal or lower-class speech styles. Careful sociolinguistic investigation, concerned with grammatical functional categories, has demonstrated that syllable-final [s] tends to be obliterated more frequently in certain environments than in others, roughly in proportion to the amount of grammatical information carried by the s;<sup>4</sup> these differences, however, are only apparent by undertaking a macroscopic analysis, and need not concern the beginning student who, if he continues his study of the language, will eventually pick up the relative proportions by imitation. The important point is to signal the existence of this process, together with a hint of the denotative aspects of such a pronunciation. More will be added on this topic in a following section.

Also increasingly frequent in many Spanish dialects,<sup>5</sup> although still labeled "uneducated" by many normative grammarians, is the deletion of intervocalic *d*, normally a voiced interdental fricative [ɖ]. While the details of this process vary from dialect to dialect and even from speaker to speaker within the same dialect, the following general categories of deletion may be outlined, in order of decreasing frequency of occurrence:

(1) In the past participle ending *-ado*. Thus, *hablado* becomes [abláo], then [abláw], etc. The frequency of this phenomenon often leads to hypercorrections such as *bacalado* for *bacalao*. In certain purely colloquial locutions, this pronunciation is the rule; e.g. *escrachao* "damaged" (from English *scratch*), in which pronunciation of the *d*, regardless of the circumstances, would so completely contradict the colloquial nature of the word as to render it ludicrous.

(2) In the past participle ending *-ido*. This is comparatively less common than the deletion of the *d* in *-ado*, and its ex-

clusive use is considered a mark of illiteracy.

(3) In certain determined words, such as *nada*, *todo*, *cada*, and *puedo*. This phenomenon occurs roughly in direct proportion to the rapidity of speech, although less educated speakers consistently use these forms. In this category may also be added the frequent deletion of the *d* in *de*, when occurring intervocalically in the middle of a breath group, e.g. *pedazo e papel*. Depending upon the dialect, and upon the colloquial level, this category may suffer *d*-deletion with a higher frequency than the past participles in *-ido*.

In other intervocalic environments, the loss of *d* may occur in rapid or careless speech; however, its loss in circumstances other than the ones mentioned above is considered unacceptable.

Tied to the loss of intervocalic *d* may be added the general loss of word-final *d*, a more general manifestation of the weakening and deletion of word-final consonants, a process common to most Spanish dialects. Pronunciations like *usté* (Caribbean *uté*), *ciudadá*, and *verdá*, are part of the everyday language, and do not normally cause the English-speaking student any problems.

Also found, in the speech of many *jibaro* speakers, is the prothetic *d* occurring initially before *i* in forms of the verb *ir*, including the infinitive: *tengo que dirme*, *tú díbas a hacerlo*, and so forth. While not as frequent as other processes involving the segment *d*, this phenomenon may be illustrated in those areas in which the variants in question are likely to be encountered.

Loss of intervocalic [n] and [r], while considered nonstandard trait,<sup>6</sup> occurs frequently in rapid speech and should be signalled in passing. Most frequently, intervocalic [n] is lost in forms of *tener*, often nasalizing the preceding vowel; e.g., *tiene* > [tjẽ]. Intervocalic [r] often falls in forms of *querer*: *quiero* > *quiéo*.

Also frequently occurring in Caribbean Spanish, although often passing unnoticed by the English speaker, is the velarization of word-final [n] to [ŋ], a process occurring in many Spanish dialects and in Galician. At times, the final [ŋ] is dropped,

leaving only a nasalized vowel, thus paralleling the situation in some dialects of southern France, where pure nasal vowels alternate with nasalized vowels followed by [ŋ].

Another phenomenon found in non-standard speech throughout the Spanish-speaking world, is the interchange of syllable final [l] and [r]. This phenomenon occurs quite often in the colloquial speech of many Puerto Rican and Cuban speakers, particularly from rural regions; in these dialects, the neutralization is generally in favor of [l], although some Puerto Ricans have been observed who quite consistently make the switch in the other direction. While presenting few problems to students of the language, due to the lack of prominence of this opposition in syllable-final position, it is useful to point out the existence of this process, particularly since for many Spanish speakers it has occasioned the disappearance of such minimal pairs as *casar-casal*, *actuar-actual*, and *alma-arma*.

We now face the question of the incorporation of these phonetic data into the Spanish class. While detailed analyses are best relegated to advanced courses, the beginning and intermediate student can be equipped with the rudimentary elements of the necessary information by means of contrastive examples, arranged along two axes: the Spanish-English axis and the formal-informal axis. Starting with the second axis, that of degree of formality in the speech situation, one may, following the lead of sociolinguistic researchers,<sup>7</sup> roughly propose a three-way division into reading style (Style A), formal spoken style (Style B), and informal or colloquial style (Style C). Obviously, many subdivisions are evident in normal linguistic environments, but for the purposes of instruction, the trichotomy suffices. During that period of each class session devoted primarily to developing oral comprehension or pronunciation, the teacher may then present sets of triplets, illustrating the progression from the formal reading style, typified by students' classroom recitations and many language laboratory tapes, to the most informal speech, more likely to be encountered away from the

school environment. By systematically presenting examples of the various linguistic codes, the instructor can instill in his students at least a passive acquaintance with locally available Spanish dialects. While not sacrificing the more formal styles of the language, this method will prepare the student to make the internalized comparison between the grammatical and the phonological structures learned in class and the received language as used in the Hispanic community.

Although English-speaking students readily perceive and use the colloquial levels characterizing their own language, many find it difficult to imagine the same range of connotative possibilities for a "foreign" language. As a consequence, the message that there exist distinct colloquial levels in Spanish may be driven home in many cases by suggesting roughly equivalent levels in spoken English. Here the teacher's knowledge of the dialectology of the linguistic areas from which most of his students come will be required to establish the appropriate contrastive examples. The basic trichotomy reading style/formal spoken style/casual spoken style may also be employed, but the parameters chosen as variables will be different depending upon the matrix English dialect. Fundamental to style differentiation in any dialect of (American) English is the general reduction of unstressed vowels to schwa [ə] and the general slurring of atonic environments. Simplification of word-final consonant clusters, for example *-nd* and *-nt* of participles to *-n* and reduction of the velar nasal [ŋ] to [n] in the ending *-ing* also figure universally in English, as does the assimilation and assibilation of such groups as [tj] (to [č]; e.g. *won't you > woncha*), and [dj] to [j]; e.g. *did you > didja*). Thus, as an example, the sentence (1) *I am going to see you tonight* might be pronounced as it stands in Style A by a conscientious speaker. Less formally, corresponding to Style B, would be something like (2) *I'm going t<sup>o</sup><sub>a</sub> see you tənight*, while a more informal level of pronunciation, Style C, would result in (3) *I'm gonna seeya t'night*. Roughly corresponding to variety (1) in Caribbean Spanish

would be the completely enunciated version of (4) *Los muchachos no han comprado nada*. Corresponding to (2) would, for most speakers in question, be something like (5) *Loh muchachoh noán comprao na(d)a*, while the most relaxed pronunciation would result in (6) *Lomucha-cho n {<sup>o</sup>/<sub>u</sub>} án compraw ná*.

Corresponding to more regional varieties of English, we may cite the New York-New Jersey raising and fronting of the vowel [æ] to the diphthong [ejə], making the vowel in *cat* sound like that of *Kate* plus a schwa offglide. Other characteristics of this dialect area include the almost [oə] pronunciation of the vowel [ɔ] in words like *water*, and the general loss of syllable-final *r*, with occasional hypercorrection, e.g. *idear*, *saur* (for *saw*), etc. In Texas and Oklahoma, one may note the change of [z] to a glottalized [d̚] in such forms as *wasn't*, *isn't*, which emerge as *waddn't*, *iddn't*, etc., and the pronunciation of *can't* as *cain't* and of *want* as *won't*. In appropriate situations, examples from Black English dialects may be included as examples.

Other regional variations may be found in the abundant literature on American English dialectology, and should be easily enough spotted by observant teachers. By providing the students with an approximate idea of the connotative range of certain pronunciation styles in Spanish, utilizing comparable situations in English, the groundwork will be laid for establishing a firmer grasp of the variations in spoken Spanish.

As a final addition to the demonstration of connotational schemata, it is possible to give an approximate idea of the IMPLICATIONAL SCALES defined by the various phonetic traits which have been signaled.<sup>8</sup> Explicit knowledge of these implications is rare among native speakers, but such knowledge is used implicitly in determining the appropriate code for each speech situation. In essence, it is frequently the case that use of a particular linguistic variable unilaterally implies the use of one or more additional variables within the same style level. Turning to the particular

Spanish situations being discussed, it may be generally affirmed that a speaker who will delete intervocalic *d* in the participial ending *-ado* will also aspirate most if not all instances of syllable-final [s]; a speaker who deletes *d* in words like *nada* and *puedo* will also delete it in *-ado* forms; a speaker who pronounces *tiene* like *tie* will exhibit all of the above phonetic traits. Such implicational scales are never exact, but serve to generalize linguistic observations for entire speech communities. Taken on an individual level, an implicational scale will roughly categorize the sets of co-occurring linguistic variables which may be expected to appear in a given linguistic situation. From a pedagogical point of view, the basic concept of an implicational scale may be presented to augment the description of connotational levels, by demonstrating the continuum of linguistic production from the most formal to the most casual styles.

The above remarks are not designed to offer an original contribution to the methodology of Spanish teaching, but rather to redirect attention to an area which appears to have been neglected in many cases. It has been suggested that basic instruction in the varieties of spoken Spanish not be postponed until advanced levels but rather that the beginning student be introduced to the range of possible variation. Such instruction need not, if systematically presented, rob a great deal of class time from grammatical and pronunciation drills, and may, particularly in more advanced classes, be painlessly introduced through such literary works as René Marqués' *La carreta*, and the various anthologies of short stories representing Mexican and Caribbean writers, in which examples of local speech styles frequently appear. By realistically viewing the use to which the Spanish learned in the classroom is to be put, it may be possible to offer to the students a more satisfying experience, and to the Hispanic communities, a higher esteem for our attitude toward their language and culture.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a good survey of the problems and methodology of contemporary sociolinguistics,

see William Labov, "The Study of Language in its Social Context," *Studium Generale*, 23 (1970), 30-87.

<sup>2</sup>Except for highly detailed colloquial levels which serve as markers of peer-group inclusion and exclusion, thus in effect forming linguistic "cliques." See, for example, William Labov, "The Linguistic Consequences of Being a Lame," *Language in Society*, 2 (1973), 81-115.

<sup>3</sup>As opposed to Mexican Spanish, that is, since the aspiration of syllable-final *s* occurs frequently in other parts of Latin America, and in Andalucía.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Roxanna Ma and Eleanor Herasimchuk, "The Linguistic Dimensions of a Bilingual Neighborhood," in Joshua Fishman et al., *Bilingualism in the Barrio* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 349-464; Joshua Fishman and Eleanor Herasimchuk, "The Multiple Prediction of Phonological Variables in a Bilingual Speech Community," in Joshua Fishman, *Language in Sociocultural Change*

(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 162-78.

<sup>5</sup>This is particularly true in the Caribbean dialects. In some Spanish dialects, for example that of Panama, loss of intervocalic *d* is not as frequent. Determination of the necessity for teaching this process should be made by the individual teacher.

<sup>6</sup>Except for the frequent reduction of *para* to *pa*, whence *para el* becomes *pal*.

<sup>7</sup>This basic procedure is described, for example, by William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966).

<sup>8</sup>The use of implicational scales was introduced into sociolinguistics by David De Camp, "Is a Sociolinguistic Theory Possible?," *Report of the 20th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press), pp. 157-73; "Implicational Scales and Sociolinguistic Linearity," *Linguistics*, 73 (1971), 30-43.

## CODE-SWITCHING IN BILINGUAL CHICANO POETRY

GUADALUPE VALDÉS FALLIS  
*New Mexico State University*

Within the last several years interest in minority groups has led to the publication of Mexican-American writers. Anthologies and collections have appeared which have brought before the public the voices of young Chicanos ardently concerned with the problems of their people, their self-image, and the world which they call *Aztlán*.

In essence, their literature is in a formative state. But in a larger sense, this same body of writings has brought forth new forms, new ideas, and new possibilities. Foremost among them is the creation of a type of poetry in which *both* English and Spanish are used:

Dust about  
swept away in the wind of our breath  
el suspiro de dios por nuestras calles . . .<sup>1</sup>  
Reteniendo mis  
Obras hidden in me  
Pero desnudas a  
Mis instintos  
Who, as I, feels . . .<sup>2</sup>

Code-switching, as this alternating use of two languages is called, has for some time been known to be one of the most characteristic features of the speech of many

Mexican-Americans. And while recently studies of this phenomenon have appeared<sup>3</sup> at this point there are no definitive answers concerning the exact nature of code-switching as it exists in specific Mexican-American communities and many questions are still unanswered. It is not known, for example, whether it can be seen as a particular conversational style, whether the bilinguals involved are actually incapable of speaking without using both codes, and most important, whether such linguistic alternation directly reflects significant information about such matters as group membership, values, relative prestige, and power.

Since bilingual Chicano poetry does in fact provide outstanding examples of bilingual sentences, and is at the same time directed toward the essence and heart of the Chicano movement itself, it can provide an excellent area of study for this elusive phenomenon. The validity of the use of literary texts for sociolinguistic analysis has already been established by such studies as Friedrich's "Social Context and Semantic Feature: The Russian Pronominal Usage."<sup>4</sup> In this case, the validity