

Spanish in the 21st Century

Chris Pountain

Queen Mary, University of London
 c.j.pountain@qmul.ac.uk

An on-line version of the Powerpoint presentation will be found via my website, <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/~mlw058/>, until the end of February: follow the Quicklink to 'Spanish in the 21st Century'.

1 Spanish in the UK

Maintenance of A-Level entry against a background of overall decline in languages in schools

A Level entries	2002	2003	2004
French	15,614	15,531	15,149
German	7,013	6,950	6,390
Spanish	5,572	5,781	5,966

Specifically encouraged by Government in recent statements

Possible reasons:

- Spanish culture (music, dance, cinema, literature) is fashionable in the UK
- Spanish 'generates a sense of excitement'
- Availability of cheap flights to Spain: 12m Britons travelled to Spain in 2001
- Popularity of Barcelona and Real Madrid
- Mediterranean diet is fashionable; *tapas* bars have appeared in the UK
- Spanish has the reputation of being easy to learn, and is hence an attractive *ab initio* language at University.
- Spanish is a 'major world language'.

2 Spanish in the world

Language Name	Rank 2000	Population 2000	Rank 2050 (projected)	Population 2050 (projected)
Mandarin Chinese	1	885,000,000	1	1,160,000,000
Spanish	2	332,000,000	3	475,000,000
English	3	322,000,000	2	480,000,000
Bengali	4	189,000,000	?	no figures
Hindi	5	182,000,000	4	520,000,000
Portuguese	6	170,000,000	5	220,000,000

Source: B.F. Grimes ed. 1996 (updated 1999). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics) and D. Graddol (1997), *The Future of English?* (London: British Council).

3 Spanish in the US

3.1 US Hispanics: the possibilities

- Melding: integration into American life and loss of Spanish
- Acculturation: integration into American life and use of English, but with retention of Spanish and Hispanic culture
- Separatism: Latino dominance in certain states with full recognition of Spanish as a (co)official language

3.2 The phenomenon of 'Spanglish'

The difficulty of distinguishing

3.2.1 Code-switching

...yo voy comer allí poquito, y yo voy comer allá poquito so I can... *so they can be happy. When we come here from California, we... I... eat beans over here and chiles — same thing like back home* pero porque tienen papitas con chiles, papas — *potatoes with chile and all that — they think we don't like it because it's [fixed] that way. But I eat the same thing over here because we like them that way. I don't like... no quiero venir a comer dicen, porque... porque son papas con chiles, y no! No! I eat that at home* pero se les hace porque *you just don't feel like [eating] the food. They get mad, you know... you have to eat no matter where, everywhere you go — just a little bit so they'll be satisfied.*

Source: Leonora Timm, 'Spanish-English code-switching: el porque and how not to', *Romance Philology*, 28, 1975, p.482.

3.2.2 Borrowing

Some integrated borrowings:

chainer [tʃajne'ar] 'to shine'
la suera 'sweater'
mapear 'to mop'
el jira 'heater'

Some spontaneous borrowings:

bussing (los están bussing pa otra escuela) 'they're bussing them to another school'
re-enlist (va a re-enlist) 'he's going to re-enlist'

3.2.3 Calquing

Tener un buen tiempo 'to have a good time' (standard **divertirse, pasarlo bien**)
llamar p'atrás 'to call back' (standard **volver a llamar**)

4 Spanish in Brazil

- Spanish being 'taken seriously' in Brazil since the 1980s
- Move to make Spanish obligatory in Brazilian schools
- Interest in Spanish because of
 - Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay + Bolivia, Chile)
 - US
 - EU

The phenomenon of 'portunhol/portuñol'

A possible scenario?

Steven Fischer, *Veja* (April 5, 2000)

...Em 300 anos, o Brasil estará falando um idioma muito diferente do atual. Devido à enorme influência do espanhol, é bastante provável que surja uma espécie de portunhol ... faz parte da dinâmica das línguas ... O português não será substituído por outro idioma. Os brasileiros não irão falar espanhol. O que irá acontecer é a mistura das duas línguas ... Há muito menos pessoas aprendendo português do que espanhol. Essa mescla entre o português e o espanhol não é necessariamente ruim.

(Source: John Lipski, 'Too close for comfort? The genesis of "portuñol/portunhol"', at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/m/jml34/portunol.pdf>)

5 The unity of the Spanish-speaking world

5.1 What do we mean by unity?

- The broad acceptance of a written norm, achieved via the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española, and consisting of:
 - a common spelling system

All four sentences below represent an extension of the *ser* + past participle passive construction in Spanish. However, (1)–(3) are consistent with existing possibilities in the language. (4), though as yet uncommon, is an economical and convenient innovation in journalistic register.

- (1) Elías resucita al muchacho después de haber sido rogado por su madre
Cf. *preguntar* (*preguntar a uno si...*)
(2) La resistencia de los ciudadanos fue respondida con ráfagas de metralladora
Cf. *contestar* (*contestó (a) la puerta, (a) la pregunta*)
(3) El paciente fue transplantado de corazón
Cf. *operar* (*el paciente fue operado (de corazón)*)
(4) La víctima fue forzada sexualmente y prendida fuego
How else can this be expressed as a coordinate sentence?

But we may predict that the Spanish passive will not extend to making prepositional objects the subject of a passive sentence, since this has no existing parallel of any kind in Spanish:

- (5) *La cama fue dormida en

7 Conclusion: the prospects for Spanish in the 21st century

- The number of native Spanish speakers will continue to grow
- Publishing in Spanish and the use of Spanish on the Internet will increase
- Spanish will become the second language of the US, though the exact nature of US Spanish is difficult to predict at this stage
- The demand for Spanish as a foreign language will continue to grow
- Spanish will change, but the unity of Spanish at the cultured written level will be maintained and the sense of a Spanish speech community will be preserved
- Spanish will continue to borrow from English, but the borrowing will be a process of enrichment rather than impoverishment

Some further reading

- Lipski, John M., 2005. 'Too close for comfort? the genesis of "portuñol/portunhol"', at <http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/m/jm134/portunol.pdf>.
- Lorenzo, Emilio, 1996. *Anglicismos hispánicos* (Madrid: Gredos).
- Mar-Molinero, Clare, 2000. *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-Speaking World: from Colonisation to Globalisation* (London: Routledge).
- Moys, A. (ed), 1998. *Where are we going with languages?* (London: Nuffield Foundation).
- <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/~mlw058/spaneng.pdf>
- Pountain, Christopher J., 2003. *Exploring the Spanish Language* (London: Arnold).
- Quiñonez, Ernesto, 2000. *Bodega Dreams* (New York: Vintage Contemporaries).
- <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/~mlw058/spaneng.pdf>
- Sankoff, D. & S. Poplack, 1981. 'A formal grammar of code-switching', *Papers in Linguistics*, 14, 3-46.
- Stewart, Miranda, 1999. *The Spanish Language Today* (London: Routledge).
- Tamarón, Marqués de (ed.) (1995) *El peso de la lengua española en el mundo*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid / Fundación Duques de Soria / INCIPE.
- Timm, Leonora, 1975. 'Spanish-English code-switching: el porque and how not to', *Romance Philology*, 28, 473-82.