LANGUAGE CONTACT AND CHANGE: ENGLISH’S IMPACT ON SUBJECT PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN SPANISH

Angela Lorenz
First Things First

- Thank you!
  - Dr. Maylath
  - Dr. Stickney
  - Dr. Birmingham
### What is the SPP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>We</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>You all/Y’all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>He/She, It</td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<td>We</td>
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<td>Tú</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She</td>
<td>Él/Ella</td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>Usted</td>
<td>Ellos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(not used)</td>
<td>Ellas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ustedes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why?

- Things I ♥
  - Grammar/linguistics
  - Spanish

- SPP Illustrates overall language change
  - Specifically Spanish/English because...
  - English—non-pro-drop
    - I went to the store vs. Went to the store
  - Spanish—pro-drop
    - Yo fui a la tienda vs. Fui a la tienda
  - Vocabulary
    - Jeans—los jeans
    - Tennis—el tenis
    - Leader—el líder
  - Grammar
Research Question

- So, is English affecting the use of the SPP in Spanish?
- Hypothesis
  - English has an effect on Spanish SPP
    - Language Contact
    - English language power
What do Linguists Say?

- NO, English has not had an effect.
- YES, of course there is English impact!
Anti-English

- Flores-Ferrán, 2004
  - Puerto Ricans in NYC
  - 41 subjects
  - Native NYC residents used SPPs more than new arrivals
    - Native residents are assumed to have more English influence, whereas new arrivals know more Spanish than English
    - This would support a contact hypothesis, but...
  - Inconsistencies/contradictions in use
  - Similar use in San Juan
    - No correlation between overt (expressed) SPPs and exposure to English
Pro-English

- Otheguy, et al., 2007
  - Spanish-speakers in NYC
  - 142 subjects
  - Native NYC residents also used SPPs more than new arrivals
    - The more years in NYC, the more expressed SPPs
  - Older the person at age of arrival, less SPPs
    - Resistant to change
    - Generational change
  - Support for a contact hypothesis
My Research

- *Extra* Newspaper
  - Bilingual newspaper
  - Chicago, Il—15% of Illinois residents Hispanic

- Analysis of 10 news articles
  - SPP in English/Spanish
  - When in Spanish, why?
    - 3 categories
    - Sometimes necessary for clarification
      - Ambiguous (unclear what the subject is)
      - Different Subject (ex. switch from he to she)
      - No apparent reason
Results

- On average, only about 27% of the time a SPP was used in English appeared in Spanish
  - Doesn’t seem very promising
- However, when used:
  - Ambiguity: 42%
  - No reason: 38%
  - Different subject: 19%
Conclusions

- Limitations
  - Small sample
  - Speech vs. written
  - Translator vs. Writer
  - Synchronic vs. diachronic

- What does it all mean?
  - More research is needed!
Works Cited

- Flores-Ferrán, Nydia. “Spanish Subject Personal Pronoun Use in New York City Puerto Ricans: Can We Rest the Case of English Contact?” *Language Variation and Change* 16 (2004): 49-73. Web. 05 November 2012.