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**Determiner variation with English-origin nouns in New Mexican Spanish:  
Borrowing bare forms**

## Determiner Variation with English-Origin Nouns in New Mexican Spanish: Borrowing Bare Forms

Rena Torres Cacoullas and Jessi Elana Aaron

### 1 Lone English-Origin Nouns in Spanish: Borrowings or Codeswitches?

In contact situations, language mixing is manifested most frequently in isolated, or lone, other-language-origin words, mostly nouns. Examples of English-origin nouns in New Mexican Spanish discourse appear in (1) and (2):

- (1) *cuando comenzaron a entrar las trocas mercamos troca* (010.5)  
'when trucks started coming in we bought a truck'
- (2) *no hacen dinero las beauticians* (318.37)  
'beauticians don't make money'

Are troca(s) and beauticians here borrowings or codeswitches? While borrowings, or loanwords, are integrated into the grammatical system of the recipient language, codeswitching fragments are internally consistent with the morphological and syntactic rules of the donor language (Poplack, 1993).

A cursory appraisal, based on the criterion of phonological adaptation, would be that troca (<truck) is a borrowing, while beauticians is a codeswitch. Nevertheless, we cannot rely on phonetic criteria to settle the status of these words. The extent of the correlation between grammatical and phonological integration is an empirical question for each speech community: for example, it may be that the phonetics are similar in the language varieties in contact (Poplack and Meechan, 1998:134). Other criteria we might appeal to are extralinguistic: frequency of use, degree of diffusion, and attestation in dictionaries. By these criteria, troca is a borrowing, while beauticians, which occurred only once in the entire corpus, would be a codeswitch.

A growing body of research on lone items in different contact situations confirms, first, that it is possible to establish a clear distinction between borrowing and codeswitching, and second, that these items are overwhelmingly nonce borrowings (Poplack and Meechan 1998). *Nonce borrowings* differ from established loanwords in the extralinguistic features of frequency and diffusion, yet they behave grammatically like established loanwords.

How do we distinguish between borrowing and codeswitching? Given the inherently ambiguous appearance of isolated, non-phonetically integrated examples like beauticians, we cannot classify tokens on a case-by-case basis.

Only quantitative studies of distribution patterns can reveal their status. The *conflict site* is one of the methodological tools that enables disambiguation: "A conflict site is a form or class of forms which differs functionally, structurally, and/or quantitatively across comparison varieties" (Poplack and Tagliamonte 2001:101). To evaluate the grammatical integration of the polemical items, it is necessary to identify divergent structures in which the marking of comparable functions is distributed differently in each language.

Even though Spanish and English are typologically very similar, noun determination is to some extent a conflict site, as comparison of the Spanish examples in (1) and (2) with their English glosses suggests. In this study, we examine patterns of distribution of determiner-less English-origin nouns in New Mexican Spanish discourse, which we will refer to as bare or zero forms (see Dubois 1980:212), as in (3).

- (3) *Y le puse 0 complaint a ese chota* (219.16)  
 'And I made a complaint against that cop'

Bare forms on their own offer no clue as to their status as borrowings versus codeswitches. We assess their status by considering not only rates of occurrence, but also constraint hierarchies of conditioning factors through variable rule analysis. We find that the group of words that includes complaint follows Spanish, not English, patterns of distribution of bare nouns. This finding provides one more piece of support, the first from Spanish-English contact in the U.S. Southwest, for Poplack's nonce-borrowing hypothesis.

However, while the conditioning of bare nonce English-origin nouns is the same as for Spanish nouns, the rate of such bare forms is higher than for either monolingual Spanish or English nouns. A close look at nonce English-origin nouns indicates that these may be used preferentially in a Predicating function. To anticipate our final discussion, complaint in (3), far from a prototypical object, is not even an argument but rather part of an intransitive predicate, *poner complaint* 'make a complaint'. It is not lack of grammatical integration, but the use of nonce borrowings to form predicates with semantically weak support verbs in the recipient language that accounts for the relatively high frequency of bare forms.

## 2 Corpus and Data

Previous studies on anglicisms in the Spanish spoken in the Southwest have had to rely on lists of words out of context or dictionary listings. Though these studies offer valuable clues, they can provide only indirect evidence about the linguistic process at the moment speakers insert a word from one

language into the discourse of another: is it one of integration into the recipient language (borrowing) or one of maintaining the structure of the donor language (codeswitching)?

In this study we examine distribution patterns in a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews during which English-origin words appeared in the spontaneous discourse of the speakers. The *New Mexico-Colorado Spanish Survey* comprises 355 interviews carried out between 1991 and 1994 with the goal of producing a linguistic atlas (Bills and Vigil 1999). The speakers for the present study, 11 women and 10 men, are residents of Río Arriba, Taos, Mora, and Bernalillo counties in the north-central region of New Mexico, are between 45 and 96 years of age, with 2 to 17 years of school. The materials analyzed were extracted from approximately 203,000 transcribed words.

We extracted all of the lone nouns of English origin, that is, those surrounded by Spanish words. For example, we included the occurrence of *trampe* in *ir de trampe*, but not the one that appears in the sequence of English words *there were a lot of tramps*, which we consider a clear instance of codeswitching (4). Besides multiword sequences, other manifestations of language mixing excluded were adjective-plus-noun units (5) (unless they had a dictionary entry, for example, *ice cream*); phrasal calques or loan translations, such as *casa de corte* (from *court house*) (6); and place names and other proper nouns, such as *Wal-Mart*, *Taos News*, and *English Plus*. The few cases of English-origin loan words that appeared with English determiners (N=26) were also excluded (7).

A total of 1018 English-origin nouns were coded. The vast majority (N=840) are of English etymology, some with different corresponding word(s) in other varieties of Spanish, for example *bos* (= *camión* (e.g., Mexico), *guagua* (e.g., Puerto Rico), or *autobús* (e.g. Spain) (8), and others with no alternative that is not of English origin, for example, *televisión* (9). Some tokens demonstrate morpho-phonological integration, as in *bores* (8), and others do not, as in *kids* (10). English origin was verified in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* and in Corominas' *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*; in cases in which the word was attributed to Latin or Greek, such as *televisión* (from *tele-* and *vision*), we consulted the *Oxford English Dictionary* to determine if it was first used in English with the meaning that appears in the corpus.

A second group, coded separately, are cases of nouns that originate from a common ancestor (e.g. Latin) if they were used according to their main English meaning, such as *grado* (11) (N=81). Although these kinds of words have traditionally been characterized as calques, in which the process involved is one of semantic extension or change, equally valid is the alternative hypothesis that considers them to be borrowings, taken with their form

and meaning directly from English. A third group is cognate nouns that were produced with English phonology, even though their etymology may not be English, such as separation (12) (N=97).

- (4) *que él se iba a ir de trampe, en ese tiempo, in those years there were a lot of tramps* (117.13)
- (5) *Este cuate era state police eh en un tiempo* (156.3)  
'This guy was a state police eh for a time'
- (6) *Bueno en Taos está la casa de corte, ahí se juntaban* (020.31)  
'Well in Taos is the court house, they would get together there'
- (7) *Yo tengo my nephew ahora* (88.8)  
'I have my nephew now'
- (8) *Ahora camina la gente en los puros bofes* (010.2)  
'now people always get around by bus'
- (9) *No había lo que hay ahora en día como muchos carros y televisiones*  
'there wasn't what there is now like lots of cars and televisions' (102.8)
- (10) *camisas y dresses para las muchitas, para los kids* (020.32)  
'shirts and dresses for the girls, for the kids'
- (11) *yo me estuve en la en la escuela ... al grado tres no más llegué* (219.2)  
'I was in school [...] I just got up to the third grade'
- (12) *estaba todavía muy disturbed, con su separation, con su divorce*-(017.4)  
'she was still very disturbed, with her separation, with her divorce'

### 3 Extralinguistic Characteristics: Diffusion, Frequency of Use, and Dictionary Attestation

We define two measures of frequency to describe the distribution of the lone English-origin nouns under study. Type frequency, or diffusion, is based on the number of speakers using a lexical type, while token frequency, or frequency of use, is based on the number of occurrences. The two measures do not always coincide: for example, chansa 'chance' has a high diffusion (5 speakers), but a relatively low token frequency (6 occurrences), compared to grandma (5 speakers, 26 occurrences).

In face of the variable realization of lexical items, coded forms with the same meaning as the same type even if they demonstrated differing degrees of adapting to Spanish phonology. For example, granma and grandma belong to the same lexical type. We also coded as one lexical type all derived forms, e.g. boguey 'buggy' and boguecito 'buggy + diminutive'. On the other hand, forms with independent entries in English dictionaries such as TV and televisión were coded as different lexical types, as were identical forms with different meanings, such as yarda 'lawn' and yarda 'measurement'.

In 1018 occurrences, we identified 449 different lexical types. In adapting the classification established in Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller (1988) to our corpus, *widespread* are those lexical types that were used by five or more speakers, *recurrent* those used by 2-4 speakers, *idiosyncratic* those used by only one speaker but appearing more than once, and *nonce* those that occurred only once. As shown in Table 1, widespread and recurrent items comprise 17% of the lexical types, but 51% of all tokens. The nonce, on the other hand, comprise 62% of the lexical types, but only 28% of tokens.

*Established loanwords* are those English-origin lexical types that have attained a certain level of acceptance, as reflected by their attestation in Spanish dictionaries or other publications. We consulted Mexican and Peninsular dictionaries, as well as regional dictionaries. Table 2 shows that the great majority of widespread and recurrent English-origin nouns (those used by at least two speakers) are also established loanwords. In contrast, 82% of nonce lexical types (those with only one occurrence) do not appear in any of the consulted sources. These results confirm a strong correlation between established loanword status and level of diffusion (Poplack et al 1988:59).

	Lexical types		Tokens	
	N	%	N	%
Widespread (5+ speakers)	15	3	255	25
Recurrent (two-four speakers)	64	14	260	26
Idiosyncratic (one speaker only)	89	20	222	22
Nonce (occurred once in corpus)	281	62	281	28
Totals	449	100	1018	100

Table 1. Diffusion and frequency of lone English-origin nouns.

	Official dictionaries		Regional dictionaries		Unattested	
	types	tokens	types	tokens	types	tokens
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Widesp.	33	34	60	61	7	5
Recur.	19	18	48	57	33	25
Idios.	10	11	19	20	71	68
Nonce	7	7	10	10	82	82

Table 2. Attestation of lone English-origin nouns in dictionaries by degrees of diffusion.

#### 4 The Comparative Method

The object of this study is the grammatical behavior of nonce English-origin nouns: are they borrowings (Spanish) or codeswitches (English)? We implement the cross-linguistic comparative method (Poplack and Meechan

1998:130-131), drawing on three groups of comparison: established loanwords, monolingual Spanish, and monolingual English. First, we take the widespread and recurrent English-origin nouns to be established loanwords, based on the correlation between diffusion and dictionary attestation shown in Table 2. Established loanwords are expected to exhibit similar, if not identical, distributional patterns to those of Spanish-origin words. Second, we extracted and coded samples of nouns from monolingual English and monolingual Spanish discourse from the same interviews. These monolingual samples were used to establish the norms of determiner distribution in the Spanish and English of this speech community. Since the monolingual speech of these speakers may differ from standard or idealized English and Spanish, it is only through examination of monolingual samples that we may determine conflict sites between the varieties in contact in this community.

For Spanish, the longest monolingual stretch of Spanish discourse was chosen in each interview, and the first 100-150 Spanish nouns in the section were extracted. Due to the dearth of monolingual English discourse recorded in these interviews, only data from five speakers who used at least 50 nouns in a stretch of monolingual English discourse were included. Once all tokens were extracted, the same exclusions, where applicable, were made as in the English-origin loan words; also excluded were lexicalized, invariable expressions, such as a lot of and todo el tiempo 'all the time'.

In sum, the four sets of data compared in the following analyses are: single-occurrence lone English-origin nouns in Spanish discourse (NONCE), established English-origin loanwords in Spanish discourse (LOAN), Spanish nouns in unmixed Spanish discourse (SPAN), and English nouns in unmixed English discourse (ENG).

Table 3 shows the distribution of determiners in the four data sets. The most striking difference between Spanish and English is the proportion of definite and indefinite nouns. While NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN have 36-39% definite articles, ENG has only 21%. Conversely, the proportion of the indefinite article is higher in English. The SPAN and LOAN data match at 8-9%, NONCE follows with 11%, and ENG shows 15% for the indefinite article. The higher proportion of indefinites in English is more evident when singular and plural (marked by quantifier or numeral) are combined. NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN pattern similarly, with between 12-16% indefinites, compared to 26% in ENG. These results are consistent with the greater degree of grammaticization of the indefinite article in English (Hopper and Traugott 1993:117) and the generalization of the definite article in Spanish (Company 1991).

It is important that NONCE lines up with LOAN and SPAN and against ENG, as predicted by the nonce-borrowing hypothesis. Nevertheless, the

proportion of zero determiner in NONCE, at 39%, is greater than either SPAN or ENG, both at around 30% ( $p = .0122$ ). Is the higher *rate* of bare forms in single-occurrence English-origin nouns evidence for lack of grammatical integration? The answer is provided by comparing *constraint hierarchies*, which will reveal the grammar—Spanish or English—giving rise to these bare forms.

	NONCE	LOAN	SPAN	ENG
Total N =	280	515	1066	690
Definite article	<b>35.7</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>20.7</b>
Possessive	5.7	16.7	8.4	14.5
Demonstrative	3.9	1.6	3.7	5.1
Presentative <i>this/these</i>				1.4
Indefinite article	<b>10.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>15.1</b>
Quantifier/number	4.6	3.5	8.8	10.6
More than one	0.6	1.2	2.3	2.0
Zero	<b>38.9</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>30.6</b>

Table 3. Determiner distribution in lone English-origin nouns: single-occurrence (NONCE), established English-origin loanwords (LOAN), Spanish (SPAN), and English (ENG).

## 5 Constraint Hierarchies for Bare Nouns

Poplack's hypothesis on loanword integration states, "If the constraints on variability of  $L_d$ -origin [donor language] forms are parallel to those constraining their  $L_r$  [recipient language] counterparts, the former can only be borrowings" (Poplack and Meechan 1998:130). Applying this to the occurrence of bare nouns, we have (13):

- (13) If the constraints on the appearance of bare forms in lone English-origin nouns of a single occurrence (=NONCE) are the same as in lone English-origin nouns of frequent occurrence (=LOAN)—which are overwhelmingly established loanwords—and in Spanish nouns in unmixed Spanish (=SPAN), but different from the constraints for English nouns in unmixed English (=ENG), then the NONCE are behaving grammatically like Spanish, not English, nouns.

We considered three sets of constraints or conditioning factors: semantic class, syntactic position, and discourse specificity. Table 4 shows the results of four independent variable rule analyses (Rand and Sankoff 1990) of the contribution of factors selected as significant to the probability of zero forms in NONCE, LOAN, SPAN, and ENG.

	NONCE		LOAN		SPAN		ENG	
Corrected mean:	.35		.15		.21		.25	
Total N:	280		515		1066		503	
	Prob	%	Prob	%	Prob	%	Prob	%
<b>Specificity</b>								
Non-specific	.62	51	.80	46	.70	43	.64	41
Specific	.27	15	.08	2	.15	5	.23	10
Generic	.17	10	.20	7	.40	12	<u>.96</u>	71
<i>Range</i>	45		72		55		73	
<b>Syntax</b>								
Object	.62	54	.58	36	.64	42	.50	33
Existential verb	.59	50	.77	63	.77	55	.34	19
Copular verb	.48	38	.58	40	.66	44	.44	21
Preposition	.43	27	.41	23	.37	19	.62	42
Subject	.16	8	.20	3	.26	8	.21	10
<i>Range</i>	46		57		51		41	
<b>Semantic class</b>								
Occupation	[.55]	39	.78	47	[.53]	21	.19	9
Abstract	[.46]	39	.40	32	[.59]	39	.69	52
Coincidence sites	[.51]	39	.52	28	[.48]	29	.44	23
<i>Range</i>	<i>n.s.</i>		38		<i>n.s.</i>		50	

Table 4. Varbrul analyses of factors selected as significant to the probability of zero forms [Factor groups not selected as significant in brackets].

Several conclusions can be drawn. First, generic uses disfavor zero determiner in NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN but are highly favorable to zero in ENG. Second, objects are more favorable to zero than subjects in all four comparison groups. However, the ordering of the weights for the factors between these two extremes is identical for NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN (argument of existential verb > attribute of copular verb > object of preposition), and the reverse for ENG. Finally, semantic class coincidence sites make up two-thirds of the data: in both Spanish and English, the ordering of noun classes favorable to zero determiner is: mass noun > countable thing > human > location > time expressions. Nevertheless, occupations are more favorable to zero in NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN (21-47%) than in ENG (9%), while abstract nouns are more favorable to zero in ENG (52%) than in NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN (32-39%).

### 5.1 Semantic class

Though semantic class was not selected as significant for either the NONCE or the SPAN data, and the LOAN data show crossovers between rates and probability weights, some patterns nevertheless emerge. The most notable

result is the similarity between Spanish and English. Earlier analyses with greater detail in the semantic class coding indicate that, in both languages, the ordering of noun clauses favorable to zero determiner is: mass noun > countable thing > human > location > time expression. These coincidence sites make up about two-thirds of the data. It is in a few small areas of the grammar that differences are revealed. The results corroborate stipulations found in Spanish grammars for English-speaking learners concerning nouns designating occupations and abstract entities.

Occupation nouns, which make up 3-8% of the data, are more favorable to zero determination in Spanish than in English, for example, as predicate nominals (14). Abstract nouns, with 16-27% of the data, are less favorable to zero determination in Spanish than in English. These include institutions (15a), events/ activities (15b), and abstract entities (15c).

- (14)a. NONCE *él era 0 tanner* (M02.6)  
           ‘he was a tanner’
- b. LOAN *fui 0 principal en el, eh, elementary y en el, la escuela alta*  
           ‘I was a principal in elementary and in high school’
- c. SPAN *era 0 bombero de, de floresta, de monte* (102.11)  
           ‘he was a fireman for the forests, for the mountains’
- d. ENG *my dad was a logger* (M01.2)
- (15)abstract nouns
- a. when we started 0 school we already knew how to speak English  
    (117.10) (ENG)  
    *después que entramos a la escuela secundaria* (190.18) (SPAN)  
    ‘after we started secondary school’
- b. I went up to 0 second grade (M01.2) (ENG)  
    *hasta el al grado tres no más llegué* (219.2) (LOAN)  
    ‘up to, I only got up to third grade’
- c. *el society ahora demands English first y el español segundo, que no pueden subir no más hablando español* (88.4) (NONCE)  
    ‘society now demands English first and Spanish second, because they can’t get ahead just speaking Spanish’

## 5.2 Syntax

The syntactic position of the noun was selected for all four data sets. We hypothesized that the syntactic position of the noun would have an effect, given the interaction between valency roles and information flow parameters. *Information flow*, as presented by Chafe (e.g. 1994), has to do with how speakers ‘package’ what they say based on their model of the hearer.

It is not surprising that in both languages subjects of all kinds, including agents of transitive verbs, single arguments of intransitive verbs, and subjects of copular verbs, disfavor bare forms the most. Other studies have shown that subjects tend to be Identifiable (Thompson 1997:73). Identifiable nouns are those whose referent the speaker expects that the hearer can identify and tend to be marked with the definite article, at least in English (Dubois 1980:217). Objects, on the other hand, appear to favor zero (but we will return to these). What is of interest for determining borrowing versus code-switching status is the ordering of the contexts existential verb (2-4% of the data), copular verb (4-10% of the data), and prepositional phrase (24-28% of the data). This is a descending order in NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN, which coincide in the ordering of the probability weights for these three factors. The order is reversed in ENG. Examples highlighting the contrasts between NONCE, LOAN, and SPAN, on the one hand, and ENG, on the other, appear in (16)-(18). Thus, the single argument of Spanish existential *haber* or *estar* is more likely to be bare than that of English *there is/there are*, which is most frequently an indefinite form. Similarly, the attribute of copular verbs *ser* and *estar* is more likely to be bare in Spanish than in English, though the rate difference is not as great as with existential verbs. The opposite occurs in prepositional phrases, where English shows a higher rate of zero, while Spanish prefers a definite determiner (Torres Cacoullós and Vigil 2002).

- (16)a. *Cada mes hay  $\emptyset$  baile aquí* (10.6) (SPAN)  
 ‘Every month there’s a dance here’  
 b. And then if there’s **an accident** (M0.5) (ENG)
- (17)a. *Yo me acuerdo when I was a cuando era  $\emptyset$  teenager* (318.27)  
 (NONCE)  
 ‘I remember when I was a teenager’  
 b. When I was a teenager (318.27) (ENG)
- (18)a. *Cuando fui **al high school*** (M02.7) (LOAN)  
 ‘When I went to high school’  
 b. Yet all the years that I went to  $\emptyset$  school (117.14) (ENG)

### 5.3 Specificity

In a discourse-based approach to grammar, the referentiality of an NP has to do with how the NP is used at a given point in the discourse. Following the work of Dubois (1980) and Thompson (1997), we tackle the notion of referentiality by distinguishing two different discourse functions: generalizability, or specificity, and discourse referentiality, or tracking state, to which we will

return shortly. The third factor group hypothesized to have an effect on the occurrence of bare nouns is specificity. Specificity has to do with the way the NP refers: specific NPs are used to refer to specific people or things that are not considered to be interchangeable; non-specific NPs refer to any member of a class of entities (c.f. Ashby and Bentivoglio 1993:69-70). Examples (19) and (20) show specific and non-specific uses of definite, indefinite, and bare NPs. Generic NPs, a subcategory of non-specific, refer to an entire class, usually in a generalizing predication (21). While generic mentions can take any form (Dubois 1980), we expect English to favor bare forms more than Spanish.

Specificity shows the largest range for three of the four data sets, indicating that this factor group has the greatest effect. Spanish and English coincide in the greater favoring of bare nouns by non-specific vs. specific uses. However, although the uses coded as generic make up a very small portion of the data (1-4%), this is a patent point of conflict. NONCE lines up with LOAN and SPAN, and against ENG, in the disfavoring effect of generic uses. (22)

(19) Specific

- a. *una vez que se me quemó el generador de la troca mía* (311.20)  
'once when the generator of my truck burnt out'
- b. *la pusieron sus hijos en un home en Cortez* (318.46)  
'her sons put her in a home in Cortez'
- c. *"grandma" me decía,* (219.16)  
'"grandma' he would say to me,'

(20) Non-specific

- a. *no me gusta el doctor a mí* (219.12)  
'I don't like going to the doctor'
- b. *que no me fuera a subir en un aeroplanito de esos chiquitos*  
'that I wouldn't get on an airplane of those little ones' (318.13)
- c. *yo arrié quince años troca* (214.10)  
'I drove trucks for fifteen years'

(21) Generic

- a. *no hacen dinero las beauticians* (318.37)  
'beauticians don't make money'
- b. you know that people kill other people (M0.3)

- (22) a. *el nombre que la gente usaba aquí para los, para los buzzards*  
'the name that people here used for buzzards' (270.13) (NONCE)
- b. what word we use here for, for  $\emptyset$  buzzards (270.13) (ENG)

In summary, the comparison of constraint hierarchies shows that when single-occurrence lone English-origin nouns in Spanish discourse surface bare, they are following Spanish grammatical patterns. Thus, they behave like established loanwords and Spanish nouns, and unlike English nouns, in support of the nonce-borrowing hypothesis. It is especially important to dwell on this strong evidence for *grammatical* integration when the rate of *phonetic* adaptation of single-occurrence lone English-origin nouns in this corpus is relatively low. Although we have yet to undertake detailed phonetic coding, at least one-third of the NONCE tokens (97/280) were produced with English pronunciation (section 2).

Thus, New Mexican bilinguals seem to behave like those in other bilingual communities in integrating—at the syntactic level—isolated words of English origin upon using them in their Spanish discourse. While degree of phonological integration may depend on frequency and diffusion, syntactic integration occurs “instantly”. The difference between established loanwords and nonce borrowings is not so much linguistic (grammatical integration) as extralinguistic (diffusion and degree of acceptance). We conclude that words like *beautician* (2) are (nonce) borrowings and not codeswitches. As Poplack and Meechan (1998:137) affirm, borrowings, including nonce borrowings, behave linguistically like native elements and not like those of the language to which they belong etymologically.

## 6 Predicating Use of Nonce Borrowings

We return here to the higher rate of bare forms in nonce English-origin nouns than in either monolingual Spanish or monolingual English (section 4, Table 3). The results for syntax in Table 4 indicate a difference between NONCE and the other data sets in the propensity of objects to appear bare. The probability weight for objects is the highest in the syntax factor group for NONCE, unlike in the other data sets, and the rate of bare objects is higher, at 54%.

Structural factors do not provide an explanation, but a discourse approach to grammar does. The referentiality of an NP is independent of its referent's identifiability or activation state (given vs. new). Rather, referentiality deals with the function of the NP in discourse. One function of an NP is to track participants in discourse (called referential, or tracking, NP). In Dubois' (1980:208) terms, “A noun phrase is *referential* when it is used to speak about an object as an object, with continuous identity over time”.

But not all, or even most, lexical NPs serve a tracking function. A major non-tracking function is that of a Predicating NP. As explained in Thompson (1997:71), “Predicating NPs function as part of naming a type of event, ac-

tivity, or situation". This is the case when the NP and a semantically weak verb form a unit. Ashby and Bentivoglio (1993:67-68) call these support verb constructions, in which the verb just marks tense and aspect and the Predicating noun carries most of the semantic content. A good example is (3), repeated as (23). Here, *poner complaint* 'make a complaint' is a unitary predicate. 'Complaint' does not refer to a participant that is meant to be tracked; it is not referential at all. Since 'complaint' forms part of the predicate, it is not really an argument of *poner*.

A scrutiny of the so-called objects we coded in the NONCE group reveals that most of them are not really arguments, but function as Predicating NPs. Six verb types make up more than half (58% (48/83)) of the "object" data for the NONCE borrowings: *agarrar* 'get' (5), *dar* 'give' (8), *enseñar* 'show' (5), *hacer* 'do' (8), *poner* 'put' (4), and *tener* 'have' (18). These semantically weak verbs often combine with nouns to form unitary predicates (24, 25). Thus, one preferential use to which nonce borrowings are put by bilingual speakers is to draw on English nouns to form Spanish predicates.

(23) *Y le puse complaint a ese chota* (219.16)

'And I made a complaint against that cop' (=to accuse)

(24) *para que hagan drawings y pinten* (M02.11)

'so that they do drawings and paint' (=to draw)

(25) *I'd wash the floor de rodillas y le dab~~e~~ wax* (117.23)

'I'd wash the floor on my knees and give it wax' (=to wax)

In summary, the variationist comparative method has shown that superficially ambiguous lone English-origin nouns in Spanish discourse behave grammatically like Spanish nouns, at least as far as their occurrence as bare nouns is concerned. This provides strong empirical support for Poplack's nonce-borrowing hypothesis. Furthermore, the higher rate of bare nouns among nonce items does not reflect lack of grammatical integration. Rather, we have found that nonce borrowing may be preferentially employed in a particular discourse function, that of Predicating NPs. More broadly, the study shows that even with typologically similar languages, variable rule analysis can reveal details of the grammar that constitute conflict sites. When it is possible to undertake this kind of analysis, it seems untenable to evaluate the status of items like complaint on the basis of superficial appraisal on a case-by-case basis. Finally, breaking out of structuralist categories and using a functionalist discourse approach has allowed us to identify a particular function for nonce borrowings. Bilinguals may rely on nouns from the donor language to form predicates in the recipient language. We hope future studies of nonce borrowing will test our hypothesis in other language pairs.

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