Typological and social constraints on language contact: Amerindian languages in contact with Spanish

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Chapter 12

Conclusions

The analysis of Spanish borrowing in the last chapters was conducted in the framework of the theory of parts of speech and the scales of borrowability and intended to test a series of borrowing hypotheses. The broader context of analysis was an explanatory model of contact-induced language change that encompasses linguistic and nonlinguistic causes, factors and triggers. This chapter seeks to 1) put together the findings in a comprehensive account of linguistic borrowing; 2) outline the interplay between typological and sociolinguistic factors; 3) discuss the overall hypotheses from linguistic typology in the light of the borrowing data; and 4) outline a research agenda on linguistic borrowing.

12.1 Spanish borrowing in cross-linguistic perspective: similarities and differences

The data confirm the widespread occurrence of Spanish in the three languages of the sample, even if such occurrence does not correspond to a situation of heavy borrowing. On the one hand, the overall percentage of Spanish borrowings is fairly uniform: the difference is less than 5% between the language with the largest number of borrowings (Quichua) and the language with the smallest number (Otomí). Uniformity in the distribution of borrowings in lexical classes is attested in all the dialects. Similar results were found on the type of morphemes borrowed in these languages: all the languages borrow free morphemes and roots but none of them borrow bound morphemes.

Apart from the above similarities, the data show all remarkable differences across languages, as summarized below.

• Differences in the relative proportion of borrowing and codeswitching. The most salient feature in this case is the amount of codeswitching in Guaraní (eight times larger than borrowing) due to the higher degree of bilingualism of Guaraní speakers. The primacy of codeswitching and its coexistence with borrowing have made Paraguayan Guaraní a language different from classical Guaraní, even though both continue to share the same typological features. Given the ongoing contact with Spanish, it is possible that the combination of codeswitching and borrowing eventually lead to the emergence of a mixed variety of Guaraní and Spanish.

• Differences in the contribution of lexical and grammatical borrowing across languages. It was found that lexical borrowing decreases proportionally to grammatical borrowings, so that the language with the largest number of lexical borrowings (Quichua) shows the smallest number of grammatical borrowings,
while the language with the largest number of grammatical borrowings (Otomí) shows the smallest number of lexical borrowings. In Guaraní, the contributions of both types of borrowing are less dissimilar, but lexical borrowing continues to be more frequent. Because contact with Spanish is equally characterized in time and intensity for the three contact situations but only Otomí shows an inverse proportion between lexical and grammatical borrowings, I conclude that neither time nor intensity alone determine the primacy of either type of borrowing. More crucial in this respect is how languages accommodate to communicative pressures in diglossic situations within the frame of their structural possibilities, and how speakers react to such pressure according to their sociopolitical position in the mainstream society. For example, the higher frequency of lexical borrowing in Imbabura Quichua and the larger amount of grammatical borrowing in Bolivar Quichua are ultimately determined by the sociolinguistic condition of each dialect: one of maintenance, increasing bilingualism and higher socioeconomic status in Imbabura, which enable speakers to maintain their mother tongue while incorporating the lexicon of the dominant language; and one of increasing bilingualism, language shift and lower socioeconomic status in Bolivar, which accelerate the loss of the native language in a context where Hispanicization is a pre-requisite for social mobility.

- Differences in the contribution of major parts of speech to lexical borrowing. Loan nouns rank first in terms of frequency (tokens) followed by verbs, adjectives and manner adverbs. The outstanding contribution of noun borrowing is explained by the morphological simplicity of (Spanish) nouns and their referential potential which is strategic in situations of intercultural contact. In addition, the data show that each language has its own distribution of loanwords according to lexical class. Quichua stands out for the largest contribution of loan nouns. Otomí stand out for the smallest contribution of loan verbs and loan adjectives. Guaraní stands out for a balanced distribution of loanwords in terms of parts of speech. Relative percentages (major parts of speech in isolation) show similar tendencies (Table 10.11) with one major exception: Otomí privileges the borrowing of nouns to that of other lexical classes. If we assume that predicative and non-predicative borrowings compete for the same semantic space in the recipient language, the data suggest that Guaraní and Quichua prefer predicative loanwords while Otomí privileges referential borrowings. Typologically, this is explained by the existence of a separate class of nouns in Otomí which encourages noun borrowing in this language.

- Differences in the use of lexical borrowings. Loan verbs and loan manner adverbs are used exclusively in their prototypical functions regardless of

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1 Suarez (1983: 135ff) states that Spanish influence is far-reaching on the grammar of Amerindian languages.
language, dialect or level of bilingualism. On the contrary, loan nouns and loan adjectives are used in other syntactic functions apart from their prototypical, both in Guaraní and Quichua, as a result of the adaptation of loanwords to their system of parts of speech. In strict terms, however, only Quichua proved flexibility to a significant degree. The different degrees of flexibility in Quichua and Guaraní are the result of higher levels of bilingualism among Guaraní speakers: the Spanish grammar in the mind of the bilingual speaker inhibits the predicative use of non-predicative items for their ungrammaticality in the frame of the Guaraní grammar. As evidence of this statement, an inverse correlation is attested between bilingualism and flexible use, according to which functional adaptation of loanwords decreases gradually as bilingualism increases. Functional adaptation is confirmed also for Otomí by the rigid use of loan nouns in accordance with the system of parts of speech of this language. In addition to adaptation, the data found evidence for the specialization of loanwords in their original functions in the source language: this is the case of loan adjectives in Guaraní and Otomí. Loan adjectives in Guaraní are used increasingly as referential phrase modifiers only, instead of being used flexibly. Loan adjectives in Otomí are used ever more as referential phrase modifiers instead of noun-noun compounds and stative verbs. As a result, a separate class of (loan) adjectives is taking shape in Guaraní through specialization and in Otomí through lexicalization. Of course, it remains to be seen to what extent this emerging category includes also native items. In broad terms, however, the data show that functional adaptation is more operative than functional specialization in the three languages.

- Differences in grammatical borrowing. Only seven of nine classes of grammatical items occur in the three languages. Spanish articles are present only in Guaraní while auxiliaries are exclusive of Otomí. In terms of frequency there are four outlying classes of grammatical items: articles in Guaraní; adpositions in Otomí; conjuncts in Quichua and Otomí; and discourse markers in Otomí. Non-manner adverbs, numerals and pronouns are distributed rather uniformly in the three languages. Otomí proves the most disparate of the three languages due to the widespread occurrence of grammatical elements. Typological factors appear to model grammatical borrowing in a crucial way, even though sociocultural

\[^2\] An intermediate stage in the process is represented by the use of loan adjectives as heads of predicate phrases and modifiers of referential phrases at the same time, according to which property concepts can be expressed through a separate class of items while retaining their originally predicative character.

\[^3\] The frequency of both categories is different, however: articles are the largest category of function words in Guaraní (17%) and the largest of all grammatical classes in the three languages, while auxiliaries occur only marginally in Otomí (0.61%) and rank last with pronouns in the table of frequencies.
factors are the ultimate motivations. Thus, the borrowing of articles in Guaraní is facilitated by their similarity to native deictic particles; the borrowing of prepositions in Otomí is made possible by the absence of phrasal connectors; and the borrowing of conjuncts in Quichua is made easy by the absence of clausal connectives. Under the pressure of the dominant language, the speakers of Guaraní, Otomí and Quichua borrow these grammatical elements with particular frequency in an attempt to bring their speech near to the discourse structure of Spanish. As a result, their languages undergo changes from the replacement of native items (in the case of articles) to the creation of new classes (in the case of prepositions and conjuncts). The effects of grammatical borrowing are multiplied in some cases with the use of borrowings in non-prototypical functions: e.g. articles are used also as pro-forms in Guaraní while prepositions serve to connect clauses in Otomí. Sociolinguistic factors play a double role in the process: bilingualism facilitates the borrowing of grammatical forms to a certain point (compound bilingualism); beyond this point, bilingualism restricts the use of grammatical borrowings to environments not disturbing the grammar of the recipient language, otherwise code switching is preferred. Finally, input structure is a decisive factor in the borrowing of discourse markers, because it determines not only the small number of these items (against the prediction of the principle of functional explanation) but also their types and distribution in each language. In these terms, the lower frequency of discourse markers is modeled by the low frequency of these elements in Spanish, which normally prefers syntactic strategies to convey pragmatic and discourse meanings. By the same token, the higher frequency of discourse markers in Otomí is determined by the higher frequency of these elements in Mexican Spanish as compared to Ecuadorian and Paraguayan Spanish. Finally, input structure also explains why the few borrowed discourse markers are freestanding elements: discourse markers in Spanish are items from other word classes which normally occur in the periphery of clauses and sentences.

• Differences in phrasal borrowing. This type of borrowing is particularly frequent in Quichua, where loan periphrases often replace lexical adverbs. Because adverbial periphrases are typical of colloquial Spanish, their occurrence was expected in Guaraní and Otomí as well, but in these languages the frequency of complex forms is low. In this context, the only possible explanation is that the use of adverbial periphrases are more frequent in Ecuadorian Spanish, just like some discourse markers are more frequent in Mexican Spanish. The hypothesis awaits the results of a corpus-based study that provides empirical evidence of the distribution of adverbial periphrases in Ecuadorian Spanish.
12.2 Social causes and linguistic factors in the modeling of borrowing behavior

The cross-linguistic similarities in the borrowing outcomes are primarily caused by elements in common in the contact situations. These elements include:

- a century-long history of contact with Spanish;
- the pressure of the Spanish-speaking society on the speech communities of the recipient languages;
- the diglossic position of the recipient languages in relation to the source language, and the related Hispanicization as a vehicle for social mobility;
- the lower socioeconomic status of Quichua and Otomí speakers;
- And the introduction of socio-communicative and discourse patterns modeled by the structure of information in the dominant language.

Cross-linguistic similarities in the borrowing outcomes are explained by linguistic factors only for those languages sharing the same morphological type and parts-of-speech system, i.e. Quichua and Guarani.

The differences in the borrowing behavior of Quichua, Guarani and Otomí speakers are modeled primarily by their respective levels of bilingualism. Bilingualism is correlated to borrowing behavior in two different ways. On the one hand, there is an inverse correlation between bilingualism and functional adaptation of lexical borrowings to the system of parts of speech of the recipient languages, such that higher levels of bilingualism correspond to lower degrees of functional adaptation. On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between bilingualism and the usage of grammatical borrowings, such that lower levels of bilingualism correspond to a lower frequency of grammatical borrowings. In addition, bilingualism is positively correlated to codeswitching, such that higher levels of bilingualism correspond to a higher frequency of codeswitching.

Typological factors play a secondary role because they cannot account for differences in borrowing behavior by themselves but always in combination with sociolinguistic factors. Quichua typology explains why there is functional flexibility, but it cannot explain why loanwords are used more flexibly in this language than in Guarani. Bilingualism explains the different degrees of flexibility: Guarani bilinguals – most of them coordinate bilinguals – prefer to use loan nouns and loan adjectives in their prototypical syntactic position, while Quichua speakers – some of them incipient and compound bilinguals – use the same classes of loanwords more flexibly in accordance with the parts of speech system of their native language. In the same way, Otomí typology alone cannot explain the massive borrowing of Spanish connectives (prepositions and conjuncts) unless discourse strategies on the model of Spanish are invoked. Likewise, Guarani typology explains the refunctionalization of Spanish articles but cannot explain why they were borrowed at
all: only the higher degree of bilingualism among Guaraní speakers could have led to the borrowing of grammatical items that are deeply rooted in the grammar of the source language.

Further linguistic factors and conditions modeling borrowability concern the type of lexical classes, the frequency of items in the donor language and the peripherality of items in discourse. These factors correspond to those identified by Muysken and van Hout (1994: 60-61) and have proved particularly influential in the borrowing of certain classes: noun borrowing is favored, among other things, by the openness of the noun class (minimum of paradigmaticity); the borrowing of certain discourse markers was promoted by the comparatively higher frequency of such markers in the local varieties of Spanish in contact with the languages analyzed here; and the borrowing of connectives is furthered by their peripheral occurrence in clause boundaries. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm the influence of the factors proposed by Muysken and van Hout, but not their relative degree of influence as suggested by both authors: the foregoing analysis shows that none of the linguistic factors alone model borrowability, but all of them interact at different levels with each other, with sociolinguistic factors (e.g. diglossia, bilingualism), and with sociocultural motivations (e.g. social mobility, education).

Social causes and linguistic factors cannot explain by themselves the outcomes of linguistic borrowing analyzed in this book. Both interplay in various and often intricate ways: social causes represent the ultimate forces of language change and model the scenarios of contact; linguistic factors set the structural conditions for language change, even though they may be overridden by social forces. How far non-linguistic determinants push structural changes in language is therefore a question of degree. In the last section I evaluate the hypotheses from linguistic typology (cf. 4.3.5) in the light of the major findings of this study.

**12.3. Language typology and contact-induced change**

According to the general hypothesis from language typology (H.8), the longer a typological parameter takes to change without a strong external pressure (e.g. contact with another language), the longer it takes to change with such a pressure. Here I consider two typological parameters deeply ingrained in the structure of languages: the system of parts of speech and the morphological type. The premise is that both parameters are resistant to change insomuch as the reorganization of the lexicon in different word classes and the restructuring of meaning-form units do not occur in non-contact situations and short periods of time. Given the long and intense contact of Quichua, Guaraní and Otomí with Spanish, it is very likely that both parameters are subject to change in these languages.
In relation to the first parameter, the functional adaptation of lexical borrowings in the three languages confirms the resistance of their systems of parts of speech to changes induced by contact. Nevertheless, evidence of incipient changes in Guaraní and Otomí is the restricted flexibility in the former language and the emergence of new word classes in the latter. In relation to the second parameter, a typological analysis shows that Quichua and Guaraní are largely synthetic in their own way while contemporary Otomí shows a mixture of analyticity in the noun phrase and synthesis in the verb phrase. However, a comparison of present-day varieties with pre-contact varieties of these languages shows a number of differences as a result of contact-induced changes. In sum, the system of parts of speech and the morphological type have proven resistant to change in contact situations, but this resistance is rather a matter of degree: clearly the three languages have open the door to incipient changes in their typological profile, and the development of these and other changes is expected in the future given the ongoing contact with the dominant language and the ever increasing bilingualism in the speech communities. Apart from the overall hypothesis about the endurance of core typological parameters in situations of contact, three specific subhypotheses are derived from linguistic typology.

The first subhypothesis (H8.1) holds that loanwords are easier to borrow if their basic syntactic positions in terms of head-modifier relations in the recipient language are similar in the source language. Prepositions and adjectives are good candidates to test this hypothesis for their variety of head-modifier relations across languages. Although loan prepositions are not expected in postpositional languages like Guaraní and Quichua, a number of Spanish prepositions are reported for both languages. The great majority of loan prepositions in Guaraní and Quichua serve as clausal connectives and occur in syntactic calques from Spanish. Nevertheless, the borrowing of prepositions has not made Guaraní and Quichua prepositional languages. The case of Otomí is other: the massive borrowing of prepositions serves to fulfill the lack of phrasal and clausal connectives in this language. The high frequency of prepositions in Otomí demonstrates that head-modifier relations are not an inhibiting factor. In contrast, the low frequency of this class in Guaraní and Quichua demonstrates that head-modifier relations are influential but not enough to hinder borrowing.

As regards head-modifier relations in the referential phrase, it is noteworthy that modification in the three languages is typically pre-nominal (modifier-head) and therefore different from the post-nominal modification (head-modifier) typical of Spanish. Accordingly, the disparity between modification types is supposed to prevent the borrowing of adjectives from Spanish. Needless to say that data disconfirm this prediction blatantly. The rigidity of the modification type is equally disproved as a factor: Quichua has a rigid modification type and the largest number of loan adjectives. Moreover, adjective borrowing has not changed the typical pre-
nominal modification in the recipient languages. These facts demonstrate that head-
modifier relations are not as decisive a factor in lexical borrowing as the hierarchy
of parts of speech.

The second subhypothesis (H8.2) stipulates that contact-induced changes in
basic word order patterns are facilitated if borrowed patterns are among the
alternative orders in the recipient language. Being predominantly SVO, Paraguayan
Guaraní shares the same pattern with Spanish and is not expected to show visible
changes in word order. On the contrary, Quichua and Otomí may change their
respective basic word orders to SVO because this is an alternative order in both
languages. As syntactic borrowing has not been thoroughly analyzed here,
conclusive statements cannot be made on this point. However, preliminary results
point to an increasing use of SVO word order in present-day Quichua (Gomez
Rendón 2007a) and Otomí (Hekking and Bakker 2007). In both cases SVO word
order is associated with Spanish conjuncts replacing postpositions or juxtaposition.

The third subhypothesis (H8.3) predicts a gradual shift to analyticity in
agglutinative or inflectional languages in contact with analytic languages. I have
shown above that the three languages preserve their morphological type even though
differences come up when comparing present-day with pre-contact varieties. Most of
these differences are due to contact-induced changes in the direction of analyticity.
The changes in the Otomí phrase are perhaps the most illustrative. Traditional Otomí
marks argument relations on the verb. However, the introduction of Spanish
prepositions is resulting in an ever more analytic predicate phrase, where arguments
are linked by means of prepositions (Hekking 1995: 156). The introduction of
Spanish prepositions at the level of the referential phrase has resulted not only in the
replacement of native forms but also in the explicit marking of relations among
constituents. For example, the genitive construction, which marks possession and
origin in classical Otomí, is increasingly replaced by the Spanish preposition de ‘of,
from’. Notice that this preposition occurs also in syntactic calques and phrasal
borrowings in Guaraní. Thus, the evidence points to Spanish connectives prompting
analyticity and explicit marking.

Summing up, the available data demonstrate that the basic typological
parameters of Quichua, Guaraní and Otomí have proved resistant to contact-induced
change but only in so far as major typological changes have not occurred. Still,
incipient and moderate changes are well attested: functional specialization of
loanwords, lexicalization through borrowing, verb-medial word order, hypotactic
constructions and higher degrees of analyticity. As mentioned above, given the
ongoing intensity of the contact with Spanish, the changes are expected to develop
over time into major typological changes.
12.3 Towards a research program on linguistic borrowing

This study provided empirically based answers to the questions of how linguistic and social constraints influence borrowing and how they interplay with each other to produce specific outcomes. I analyzed the statistical results of a corpus-based investigation of bilingual speech in the framework of a coherent set of theory-driven hypotheses. The analysis answered several questions about the relation between language typology, linguistic borrowing and bilingualism, but left several others without answer. These questions should be included in a research program on language contact whose main goals are to:

- describe the relation between code-switching and borrowing in bilingual speech: can one influence or induce the other?
- describe the role played by phrasal borrowing in bilingual speech and its relation to codeswitching: can phrasal borrowing bridge the gap between borrowing and codeswitching?
- describe the relation between functional adaptation and bilingualism in Guaraní and Otomí (along the same lines followed for Quichua)
- collect further evidence of functional specialization of loanwords in Guaraní by determining to what extent the rigid use of loan adjectives influences the use of native items from the flexible class of non-verbs.
- collect further evidence of functional specialization of loanwords in Otomí by determining to what extent loan adjectives and loan manner adverbs replace non-lexical strategies of modification.
- determine to what extent the flexible use of loanwords is influenced by semantic restrictions or governed by distributional rules of the recipient language.
- explore the co-occurrence of loan forms and native forms in couplets or double-marked constructions: does such co-occurrence represent intermediate stages of a process leading to the full replacement of native forms? Does it respond to discursive needs or fulfill an emblematic function to flag the speaker’s bilingualism in his/her speech community?
- explore the historical record of the three languages in search of borrowings from the initial stages of contact, in order to establish how language typology influences borrowing when bilingualism is minimal or non-existent.
- describe how language loyalty in situations of intense contact inhibits major structural changes when lexical borrowing becomes massive, and how the lack of language loyalty in the same circumstances precipitates rapid structural changes and the eventual demise of the borrowing language.

May the current study be the first step in this ambitious research program, the accomplishment of which will allow us to answer the question about the way
languages and speakers influence each other, and understand why language is one of the most interesting and complex of all adaptive mechanisms of the homo sapiens: a cultural artifact that is not only a most transparent window to the human mind but also the arena of sociopolitical battles for enjoying the right to speak and imposing the duty to be silent.