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Ca' Foscari      Spanglish: two languages and a unique  
Dorsoduro 3246      perspective.

30123 Venezia      An analysis of three short stories by U.S.  
Latinos

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## Abstract

The number of Latino immigrants in the United States has risen substantially during the last decades, the inevitable consequence being a language contact situation where both Spanish and English coexist. This paper aims to provide a thorough investigation of the phenomenon known as 'Spanglish', which is examined as an important element of "border culture" (Gonzales, 1999:30).

In asking the question "what is Spanglish?", both linguistic and sociocultural issues are problematized, demonstrating that Spanglish entails a powerful assertion of a multicultural identity.

Attention is given to the historical and social forces that prompted the emergence of Spanglish, alongside the attitudes towards the phenomenon. Surrounded by waves of hysteria, both from the Hispanic and Anglo-American press and academia, because of the threat that Spanglish allegedly represents for the integrity of both Castellan Spanish and English, this phenomenon points beyond language variation to a much broader cultural shift in the United States.

This study centres on literary manifestations in order to verify whether Spanglish is a systematic phenomenon governed by specific grammatical constraints and to identify the function of Spanglish in narrative discourse.

Overall, by examining this linguistic phenomenon the purpose is to shed some light on how Spanglish reflects the sociocultural situation of the Latino population in the United States, with particular attention to issues of transcultural identity.

**KEYWORDS:** Spanglish, linguistic convergence, bilingualism, code-switching, hyphenated identity, Spanglish literature.



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## INTRODUCTION

Spanglish is an ever-growing reality in the United States. With over 56 million citizens, Latinos are today the largest ethnic minority in the United States and one of the fastest growing communities since their number has increased at a strikingly rapid pace over the last decades.

The demographic trends which resulted from the latest U.S. Census reveal that almost one in five U.S. residents will be of Latin origin by 2025 and nearly one in four U.S. residents by 2030, a stunning increase considering the ratio of one citizen of Latin origin in seven U.S. residents as recently as in 2000. Such a major demographic shift and its implications for both the United States and the growing Latin population constitute pressing issues to be addressed, Spanglish being one of them.

Spanglish is a linguistic contact phenomenon resulting from English/Spanish convergence that eludes rigorous definitions. There is no agreement on what this mode of speaking actually is, which in turn explains the disparate attitudes towards it.

Spanglish is a phenomenon worth analysing not only as the expression of the encounter of two languages, but also because beyond the purely linguistic level, it represents race and cultural mixing, which have an impact on contemporary North America that cannot be underestimated. Spanglish is a hybrid phenomenon that clearly reflects a mixed raced culture that cannot be defined in terms of binary categories and oppositions, inviting to rethink ideas of identity and race in XXI century United States, in an era marked by an ongoing recombination of diverse cultures.

Moreover, the way Spanglish is used interestingly reflects the characteristics of Latino-U.S. relations and sheds light on changing modes of immigration. Whilst the first waves of immigrants tended to fully absorb North American mainstream culture assimilating to its linguistic and sociocultural parameters, recently, multiple factors are determining a significant shift in perspectives and attitudes. Firstly, Latinos are the fastest-growing population in the United States, which entails an increasing sociocultural, political and economic influence upon U.S. society. Secondly, a marked propensity to passionately retain native Latino roots is worth noticing, their original culture previously left behind is reevaluated and viewed as an integral aspect of their identity, no longer as a stigma to be effaced. Nevertheless, Spanglish does not imply a rigid and categorical assertion of Latino heritage over U.S. culture. By contrast, as the name “Spanglish” (or “Espanglish” or “Espanglés”) suggests, at the core of the

phenomenon there is the idea of mixture, which gives revealing insight into a new revitalizing modern concept of what it means to be American in the XXI century. U.S. Latinos are now consciously embracing an ambiguous, labyrinthine identity, reinventing their self-image. The previously prevailing attitudes of either fierce resistance or resigned assimilation have been superseded by the crucial notion of transculturation. The new U.S. Latino undergoes unrestrained and dynamic transformation, he is an eternal mutant at the centre of perpetual cultural, spiritual and linguistic metamorphosis.

It is necessary, therefore, to examine the complex process of reinvention of U.S. identity because, as Du Bois correctly foresaw, the problem of the XXI century was meant to be the problem of the colour line, with miscegenation and multiculturalism as its distinctive leitmotifs (Stavans, 2000:14). Spanglish is, thus, a powerful determinant of U.S. culture in the contemporary era.

Notwithstanding its undeniable far-reaching relevance, Spanglish has often been despised by Hispanic and Anglo-American linguists, who fear it can severely undermine the integrity of both Castellan Spanish and English. Nonetheless, the past few decades have seen a remarkable increase in the number of studies devoted to both sociolinguistic and purely linguistic aspects of Spanglish.

Moreover, numerous researchers (Pfaff; 1979; Poplack, 1981; Berk-Seligson, 1986; Poplack, 1988; Musyken, 2000; Poplack, 2000; Callahan, 2004; Zentella, 2008; Jalil, 2009) have attempted to detect the linguistic principles allegedly operating in bilingual discourse, though the investigations conducted so far have produced highly controversial results. Yet, despite the lack of general consensus about the existence and the nature of rules governing language contact interactions, there are three widely recognised grammatical constraints on code-switching, which most researchers acknowledge as systematic rules that govern Spanglish, namely, the Free Equivalence Constraint, the Size-of-constituent Constraint and the Free Morpheme Constraint proposed by Poplack (Poplack, 1980).

A brief review of the literature on bilingualism, language transfer in second language acquisition and code-switching is, therefore, presented in this paper with the aim of providing theoretical foundation for a thorough understanding of Spanglish and for the analysis of the data examined.

Spanglish has also entered the learned domain of literature through a growing body of texts that employ both English and Spanish side by side, thus opposing the widespread

idea that it is an oral phenomenon relegated to uneducated environments. However, little attention has been drawn to these works; hence, an investigation of the principles underlying this linguistic behaviour and an analysis of some literary examples in which Spanglish is used as a powerful resource might be extremely useful in view of a thorough investigation of the phenomenon.

In particular, the present research has been prompted by and intends to answer the following questions: what is Spanglish? How does Spanglish transfer cultural information? Are there rules that govern the linguistic contact between English and Spanish? If so, can any patterns be drawn for Spanish/English code-switching? As far as language contact is concerned, which are the reasons that lie behind the choice of one language instead of another? Why is Spanglish gradually spreading into educated environments? How will Spanglish evolve in the upcoming future?

Therefore, the objectives of the present paper are, first of all, to demonstrate that Spanglish cannot be limited to the linguistic domain as it involves articulated cultural and identity issues.

Spanglish is a phenomenon of language contact that stretches back to crucial historical moments such as the Mexican-American war and the Spanish-American war, which, respectively, resulted in the inclusion of Texas, California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico to the U.S.A in 1948, and in the colonial control over Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Cuba in 1898. These events initiated patterns of resistance and convergence that would characterise the economic, political, sociocultural and linguistic relationships between Latino and Anglo-American populations until the present day (Gonzales 1999).

This study proposes to offer a comprehensive framework to gain a more complete understanding of the way Spanglish developed.

The task of studying Spanglish has mainly been taken up by academics in Spanish-speaking countries who have usually regarded it as Spanish being “under siege by an external invader” (Morales, 2002:5), English. In opposition to this stance, this study seeks to highlight that we are facing a bidirectional phenomenon that entails both the Hispanization of the United States and the Anglicization of Latinos.

Furthermore, with respect to U.S. Latinos’ bicultural identity, it is a primary aim of the present investigation to prove that “to live on the hyphen, to inhabit the borderland”

(Stavans, 2000:5) does not necessarily imply a loss due to the choice of one cultural world over the other. Conversely, it may represent a fertile and rich terrain where the notion of nuance acquires central prominence replacing strict racial categories. Spanglish lies at the crossroads, where the “yo soy” meets the “I am” engendering a unique transformation of both languages and identities into a new sense of self. This recalls Blaise Pascal’s idea of perfect spheres that have the circumference nowhere and the centre everywhere. Consequently, far from being the owners of a pure, crystallized identity, U.S. Latinos benefit from the enriching encounter and continuous interconnections between two civilizations.

Additionally, another major concern of this research is to debunk the diffused idea that Spanglish is the product of ignorance and poor language competences to demonstrate, instead, that Spanglish, and especially code-switching, requires proficiency in the two languages.

Finally, this paper endeavours to reach a more thorough understanding of the reasons that induce authors to use Spanglish as a meaningful strategy to communicate to their addressees, and to examine the function of Spanglish within narrative discourse.

The investigation follows an empirical, textual methodology, which implies the close textual analysis of three short stories by U.S. Latino writers to analyse in detail the lexical, syntactic and morphological principles at work, to test the validity of the generally recognised constraints on intersentential and intrasentential code-switching, and to identify whether there are constant patterns that recur in Spanglish interactions. The data examined will be considered as an insightful point of departure for broader reflexions of sociocultural aspects intimately connected to the phenomenon.

In particular, the paper is structured in three chapters. The first aims to provide a definition of Spanglish and a description of how it rose and developed. In addition, it takes into consideration the social context in which it is used, including essential elements such as its speakers, the places, means and domains of communication, the reasons which induce speakers to use it and the purpose they wish to achieve, which is tightly linked to issues of culture and identity this paper aims to explore.

The second chapter concentrates on Spanglish as a linguistic phenomenon and examines its characteristics, with particular attention on key features such as code-mixing, loanwords and calques; then presenting some considerations on the possible future of this linguistic phenomenon.

Chapter three is devoted to the presence and use of Spanglish in contemporary North American literature. In particular, it centres on the notion of choice, which is fundamental in literary texts where language is always the result of a conscious, carefully considered decision on the part of the author. It analyses more in depth three selected texts trying to discover the reasons behind the choice of a language and the exclusion of the other in the various parts of the narration.

The chapter is subdivided into three sections that correspond to the three short stories under review; namely “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” by Mexican-American writer Gary Francisco Keller, “El bacalao viene de más lejo y se come aquí” by Aurora Levins Morales, and “Pollito Chicken” by Ana Lydia Vega.

## CHAPTER 1

### What is Spanglish?

Before starting to investigate the phenomenon of Spanglish, it is worth clarifying the difference between two terms. ‘U.S. Hispanics’ and ‘U.S. Latinos’ are often interchangeably employed to refer either to immigrants who came from any Latin American country and settled in the United States, or to subsequent generations of immigrants, which is to say U.S.-born individuals with Latin American descent. The usage is often mixed, and it is not unusual to find both terms coexisting in the same text or discourse. Nonetheless, these terms bear crucially distinct connotations that cannot be ignored.

In particular, ‘Hispanic’ comes from the Latin word *Hispania* and it means “citizen of Hispania”, which is the way Romans addressed Spaniards; the adjective is used to encompass all Spanish-speaking people, thus establishing language as the common denominator among different communities. Furthermore, ‘Hispanic’ implicitly suggests a close connection with the Spanish peninsula that most of Latin American countries refuse to identify with, especially because it is associated with the painful chapter of Spanish colonialism. As noted by Stavans, one of the foremost and most prolific Spanglish cultural critics, from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century the part of the American continent known today as Latin America was called ‘Spanish America’ or, sometimes, ‘Iberian America’ (Stavans, 2000). Consequently, in the United States there has been until the 1960s a propensity to use the term ‘Spanish’ to indiscriminately name those coming from the Iberian Peninsula or from south of the border; to Anglo-Saxon eyes, they were all homogenised by a common mother tongue. Nevertheless, when nationalism began emerging as a cohesive force in Latin America, ‘Hispanic’ was contested because of its strong connection to the Iberian Peninsula that was seen as a foreign, imperialistic, invader. In particular, after the Bolivarian Wars of Independence in the early XIX century, Latin American intellectuals, with the exception of Puerto Rico (as discussed below), have markedly distanced and differentiated themselves from Spanish culture in the search for a unique American identity.

‘Hispanic’ is still used by conservatives and normally by the U.S. government and the media to refer to the heterogeneous ethnic minority with ancestors who are native of Latin America or the Caribbean archipelago, though ‘Latino’ is often preferred when talking about Latino music, cuisine and traditions in general. The choice of one term or the other is totally unclear and arbitrary but what is certain is that ‘Hispanic’ describes individuals only on the basis of a common verbal heritage.

By contrast, ‘Latino’, which is the shortened form of the Spanish word *latinoamericano*, refers more exclusively to the inhabitants of any Latin American country. Although the Spanish cultural heritage in Latin America is undoubted, the present study will privilege the term ‘U.S. Latinos’, mostly due to the socio-political divide in the usage of ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ in the United States. ‘Latino’ carries connotations of ethnic and cultural pride, in stark opposition to the white, Catholic and European Spanish essence often perceived as totally alien to Latin America reality. ‘Latino’ also evokes the complex mixture of Latin American peoples, a whole set of diverse and multiform cultures, traditions, language varieties and customs.

In particular, the present paper will use ‘U.S. Latinos’ to refer to U.S. citizens from the Spanish-speaking Latin American world living in the United States, while ‘Hispanic’ is more appropriate to broadly indicate Spanish-speaking people living in the Iberian peninsula or elsewhere. Accordingly, a Latino is also a Hispanic but not necessarily the other way round.

Despite the adoption of the term ‘Latinos’, it is important to highlight that it does not refer to a monolithic, uniform group due to wide national differences.

### **1.1) Status of the issue**

Latinos are the largest minority in the United States and, more specifically, in 2014 they were 55,4 millions out of 318,9 millions, representing 17,4 % of the whole U.S. population<sup>1</sup>. This population explosion is likely to transform cultural and social aspects in the United States, especially language. Spanish has become ubiquitous in the last decades, the “unofficial second language of the United States” as Stavans defines it (Stavans, 2000:11), with two twenty-four-hour TV networks and more than 275 radio stations. Moreover, Spanish is not only spoken in 70% of Latino households, it is also

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<sup>1</sup> Source: United States Census Bureau. 2014 Population Estimates Available from [www.census.gov/popest/](http://www.census.gov/popest/) and 2014 American Community Survey [www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs).

the most studied foreign tongue at universities; moreover, bilingual education introduced in an increasing number of primary and secondary schools has expanded knowledge of Spanish nationwide.

Notwithstanding this, Spanish has not spread in a pure form across the United States; English and Spanish have mixed in a new and creative form giving rise to what is called 'Spanglish'. Spanglish is neither English nor Spanish but an amalgam of both; whether there are rules governing Spanglish is one of the most debated issues.

Lipski claims that the term was first coined in 1952 by Tío, a Puerto Rican journalist who regarded Spanglish as "the deterioration of Spanish in Puerto Rico under the onslaught of English words" (Lipski, 2004:1). Spanglish remains a highly controversial concept; on the one hand, it is contemptuously defined as the jargon of poor, uneducated immigrants who have little proficiency in both their native language and the one of their new country. On the other hand, it is welcomed as a legitimate language in its early stages, "the embryonic lingua franca of the future" (Maduro, 2012:1), the natural result of XXI century globalization and multiculturalism.

So far, most debate (Lipski, 2004) has focused on the linguistic nature of Spanglish, striving to determine whether it is a formal language, a slang or simply a variety of either Spanish or English. Nonetheless, the aim of the present paper is to highlight that all these labels are reductive and fail to adequately describe what is, in fact, a complex socio-linguistic phenomenon.

Most research has centred on Spanglish influence on standard Spanish, for example the introduction of numerous English loans; however, it is worth considering that English is not immune to Spanglish influence either. There is abundant evidence that Spanglish is the result of a two-way relationship, a linguistic convergence that affects both languages. In fact, Morales notes that in the Spanglish deliberately used by second or even third generation immigrants, most discourse is in English with Spanish words scattered through it (Maduro, 2012). The ratio of either English or Spanish may vary considerably depending on multiple factors such as the conversational context, the age and level of education of the speakers, the geographical area, etc. Because of its varying features, authoritative scholars, such as Stavans and Morales who have devoted considerable time to study the phenomenon, stress that the concept of contact is central for a deep and thorough understanding of Spanglish (Stavans, 2000; Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2003, 2005).

## 1.2) Towards a definition of Spanglish

Many authors vaguely refer to Spanglish as the mix of Spanish and English but give almost no further insight into the type of mix and its linguistic features. Maroney defines it as “a hybrid lingo spoken by second- and third-generation Latinos” (Maroney, 1998:52), while Hernández describes Spanglish as “the fluid vernacular that crosses between English and Spanish” (Hernández, 2004:4). Other critics look at Spanglish more as a cultural or ethnic phenomenon; for instance, Jaimes suggests that “para la nueva generación de hispanos de Miami [...] el spanglish es una marca étnica que los identifica” (for the new generation of Latinos from Miami [...] Spanglish is an ethnic mark that identifies them) (Jaimes, 2004:90). Similarly, Morales underlines that Spanglish is something “birthed out of necessity” (Morales, 2002:25), maintaining that “at the root of Spanglish is a very universal state of being. It is a displacement from one place to another place in which one feels at home in both places, yet at home in neither place. The only choice you have left is to embrace the transnational state of in-between” (Morales, 2002:7).

The common denominator of the numerous definitions of Spanglish is the amalgamation of two languages and two cultures; there is not, however, a universal agreement on what Spanglish really is (Montés-Alcalá, 2009) and the effort to apply a specific status to Spanglish has steered heated controversy.

First of all, it has been regarded as a pidgin, which is a simplified form of language that develops as a means of communication between groups that, otherwise, would not have a common language. It combines elements of two or more languages though, unlike creoles, it is not spoken as a first or native language; it has rudimentary grammar structures and vocabulary. Nonetheless, Spanglish does not adequately fit this definition since its speakers are native speakers of either Spanish or English and may perfectly know both.

However, Spanglish cannot be considered a full-fledged dialect either because a dialect is “a particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group”<sup>2</sup>. Conversely, Spanglish is not specific of a confined region with distinctive vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation; there are multiple varieties of Spanglish with different nuances according to the geographical area, yet, the phenomenon is vast and

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<sup>2</sup> Oxford Dictionaries. [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

articulated; thus, it would be reductive to define it as a “dialect”, a localised variation of either parent language.

Stavans has repeatedly underlined the similarities between Spanglish, African American Vernacular English, also known as ‘Ebonics’, and Yiddish. His opinion is shared by Cole who considers Spanglish as a kind of jargon similar to Ebonics (Stavans, 2000, 2003; Cole in Maduro, 2012). Despite the numerous differences between Spanglish and Yiddish, for instance, Yiddish derives from many different languages while Spanglish draws from two, Stavans points out that they have many common features and that both languages have entered the domain of literature (Stavans in Maudro, 2012). Then, he notices that both Ebonics and Spanglish serve as intra-ethnic modes of communication and have flourished in rap music. Nevertheless, there are two important differences to be noted. Firstly, Ebonics does not involve two different languages and, despite the controversies that surround its definition, it is normally considered as a Creole English variety, or simply a variation of Standard English, whilst Spanglish is the product of two full-blown languages. Secondly, Stavans maintains that Spanglish is not marked by class, while Ebonics is usually connected to lower class speakers (Stavans, 2003:44). To conclude, Spanglish is neither the result of many languages melting, as Yiddish, nor the product of one language being manipulated by young people as an ethnic code like Ebonics (Montés-Alcalá, 2009:102).

Spanglish is an extremely complex linguistic phenomenon that bestrides two languages and encompasses manifold regional varieties. Its definition has been subject to debate among critics; consequently, an exhaustive analysis of this phenomenon needs to address the plurality that lies at its very heart.

Spanglish varieties are frequently classified in terms of the geographical areas where they are spoken:

- Nuyorican, spoken by U.S. Puerto Ricans, which is Puerto Ricans born or raised in New York.
- Dominicanish, it is found in the Dominican neighbourhoods of New York, especially Washington Heights.
- Cubonics, the variation of Spanglish used by first, second and subsequent generations of Cuban immigrants in Florida, predominantly in Miami and its surroundings.
- Chicano Spanglish, spoken by Mexican-Americans mainly in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

- Tex-Mex or Tejano; as Olague explains in her detailed article “Towards New Dialects: Spanglish in the United States”, is a variety typical of Houston, San Antonio and their environs; specifically, it consists of a combination of Texan English, Texan Spanish and North Mexican Spanish (Olague, 2003:5).
- Pachuco. Originally, *Pachuco* referred to a native or inhabitant of the Mexican city of Pachuca; then, the name acquired a new nuance of meaning used in the 1930s to identify the members of the Mexican organised crime. Pachuco Spanglish was developed as a secret code by an underworld that was in constant flux between Mexico and the South-western American states. Afterwards, it was adopted by the “zoot suiters” as a means of expression of their rejection of Standard Spanish and Standard English and, more generally, of the establishment (Vento, 1998:186–188).

Furthermore, Maduro identifies further categories of Spanglish (Maduro, 2012):

- Gang Spanglish, it is a further development of Pachuco and today it is spoken by the so-called *cholos*, that is to say gang members of Latino descent. Since it is used by a socially and class defined community it could also be considered as a sociolect.
- Mock Spanish. It is not properly a variety of Spanglish since it is a humorous or even derogatory pseudo-Spanish introduced in the United States by non-Hispanic whites. Hence, this type differs from all the previous ones. Very well-known examples of Mock Spanish are the expressions *hasta la vista, baby* (and its many variations like *hasta la pasta* or *hasta la bye-bye*), *no problemo*, *por favoro*, *no way*, *José*, etc. (Maduro, 2012:7).
- Cowboy Spanglish. As noted by Stavans in his landmark work *Spanglish. The Making of a new American language*, this type of Spanglish originates from the time when the South-western American states still belonged to Mexico; it includes words for animals (*bronco* and *coyote*), for plants (*mesquite*), cowboy traditions (*rodeo*), and outlaw life (*desperado*, *vigilante*, *calaboose*), among many others (Stavans, 2003:24).
- Command Spanish, it is often used by English-speaking bosses when addressing their Latino workers. It comprises words such as *comprende*, *pronto*, and *vámonos*. Moreover, Morales notes that the very common *amigo*, *compadre* and the interjection *¡Hombre!*, can also be included in this category (Morales, 2002:96).

With respect to mock and command Spanglish, they are often employed in a humorous tone. Nevertheless, as Vento observes, beneath the hilarious surface there might sometimes be an element of denigration, contempt and even racism involved in the use

of common Spanish words to talk with lower class employees, especially due to a disparaging conception of Latinos' idleness "as a cycle between *fiesta* and *siesta*" (Vento, 1998:191). In mock Spanglish, it is also frequent to incorporate Spanish obscenities as euphemisms to avoid English invectives or simply to add a colourful touch to the discourse; a common case is the word *cojones*, which often replaces 'testicles' or 'balls' in English (Hill, 2003:150).

In his insightful article "Spanglish and its influence on American language", Morales proposes a different classification of some of the Spanglish varieties that can be identified today in the United States (Morales, 2012):

- Immigrant Spanglish. It is the first phase of Spanish mixing with English words, usually extremely basic vocabulary, by Latino immigrants when they first arrive in the United States with no, or scarce, knowledge of English.
- Informal Spanglish. It is the form Spanglish speakers occasionally lapse into, mainly due to the global prominence of North American pop culture and technological expertise. Hence, according to Castro, Cyber Spanglish is a variation within this typology (Castro in Morales, 2012).
- Formal Spanglish. It is the variety used by U.S.-born Latinos and it comprises a wide range of different variations depending on the speakers' level of education and attitude towards immigration and integration; the choice of a specific type of blend instead of another is also highly influenced by communication requirements, including the linguistic context, the addressee and the purpose the communication wants to achieve.

The third category is, by far, the most complex, fast growing and, consequently, the one with the deepest influence on both standard Spanish and English. Numerous are the varieties which can be included within this type of Spanglish which is under continuous evolution. Garrido, for instance, has identified two further sub-categories (Garrido, 2004):

- Adaptive bilingualism.
- Deliberate Spanglish.

Adaptive bilingualism refers to the unconscious and effortless process of absorbing two languages and cultures; in the specific case of Spanglish, the most significant factor in generating and, then, fostering this type of bilingualism is the speaker's milieu. Concerning this point, it is worth underlining that bilingual speakers are not only the

children of recently settled immigrants, but also the offspring of mixed-race homes, whose number is steadily increasing in the United States.

Conversely, deliberate Spanglish is the result of an explicit intent to voice one's bicultural identity through bilingualism; therefore, it is intimately related to important sociocultural issues and communicative strategies employed by the speaker.

As the above list of definitions shows, it is impossible to provide a strict definition of Spanglish because it is not a monolithic, singular entity and diversity constitutes its very essence.

The broad range of definitions of Spanglish found in literature aptly illustrates the elusiveness of this phenomenon (Maduro, 2012). Teck, author of *The Official Spanglish Dictionary*, claims that: "Spanglish is a strange thing. Like art you may not be able to describe it, but you know it when you see it" (Teck, 1998:189). Hence, Spanglish appears as a phenomenon that is quite easy to recognise but almost impossible to encapsulate in self-contained semantic categories. It is, therefore, more accurate to consider it as a 'linguistic contact phenomenon', as Maduro suggests (Maduro, 2012:6).

### **1.3) Spanglish reception: aberration or valuable resource?**

Because of its huge expansion, Spanglish is surrounded by fears in both North American and Hispanic academic environments. Americans are worried about a possible Latinization of the United States and the risk of adopting a new tongue that is spreading at steady speed (Suro, 1998); on the other hand, Hispanic purists refuse to accept and to endorse Spanglish as a means of communication because it lacks dignity of its own and undermines the correct use of Spanish. For example, Hernández defines Spanglish as "only an inside joke" and claims that it is not a language used by fluent English speakers; it is a "temporary crutch", an interlanguage only used in the process of second language acquisition until the person becomes proficient in English (Hernández, 2004:4). Osio uses terms such as "educational idiocy" and "language aberration" to refer to Spanglish (Osio, 2002:1), and Li-Hua Shan states that "those who speak Spanglish expose how ignorant they are about both languages" (Li-Hua Shan, 2002:54). Likewise, González considers Spanglish as the language of poor and illiterate Latinos (González, 2008), while Molinero sees the phenomenon in terms of Spanish linguistic and cultural subordination to English (Molinero, 1998)

However, Spanglish advocates, among whom Stavans is one of the most ardent, underline that while Spanish is often regarded by U.S. Latinos as the connection to their collective past and English as the instrument to success, Spanglish reflects both aspects and manages to express U.S. Latino identity as a whole. Biculturalism and bilingualism have always gone hand in hand, and Spanglish is the creative product of such linguistic blend, it is “the verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations” (Stavans, 2003:5).

The extensive and incessantly growing use of Spanglish is undeniable and cannot be altered; furthermore, language cannot be conceived as static since it undergoes a continuous evolution, “only dead languages are never changing” (Stavans in Friedman, 2001:196).

A significant number of linguists (Stavans, 2000; Salaberry, 2002; Fairclough, 2003; Racine, 2003) have pointed out that Spanglish is not a strange phenomenon, but a rather the natural result of language contact situations, such as “portuñol” (the mix of Spanish and Portuguese in the Brasil-Argentina border), “franglais” (mix of French and English in Canada) and “cocoliche” (mix of Italian and Spanish in Argentina) (Montés-Alacalá, 2009). It is a natural process that “can neither be stopped nor imposed” (Fairclough, 2003:200).

In the United States English is undoubtedly the sole official language of the country, yet, this does not mean that other languages might not live side by side. Unlike the majority of other immigrant communities such as the Czech, the Germans and the Italians who abandoned their native language within two or three generations, U.S. Latino communities have preserved Spanish through Spanglish. In this way, Spanish has remained alive 150 years after the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which brought to an end the Mexican-American war, commonly known as the “trauma of encounter” (Stavans, 2000:28). The geographical proximity of Latin American countries to the United States and the ongoing migration waves throughout the XX century is one of the main reasons for Spanish survival in the U.S.. Additionally, the rapid and wide diffusion of Spanglish in the media (radio, TV, newspapers), music, literature and *en la calle*, cannot be underestimated as a crucial factor in the lively presence of Spanish in American everyday life.

What is at issue, thus, is less the future of Spanglish than its acceptance from both Hispanic and American intelligentsia. Nonetheless, despite all the criticisms around

Spanglish, it is worth noting that it is expanding also into educated environments such as art and literature, from short stories and novels to poems and theatre.

It will be a central concern of the present investigation to analyse what are the literary and communicative functions with which Spanglish is increasingly employed in literature.

#### **1.4) The origins of Spanglish**

The way Spanglish is normally conceived is primarily linguistic, however, it is important to point out that Spanglish is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but rather the outcome of a whole set of complex social, economic, political and historical factors. In particular, Spanglish arose as the result of numerous migration waves from Latin America to the United States, migrations made necessary by economic forces. Once in the United States, Latinos had to face a hostile environment where they became the victims of overt intolerance and contempt. The only way to avoid bitter discrimination was to passively adapt to the rigid parameters of North American society. Consequently, the process of linguistic and cultural assimilation started.

In order to gain a thorough understanding of Spanglish, an analysis of the historical and sociocultural forces that led to its emergence and development proves fundamental.

The origins of Spanglish go back to the period of the Mexican-American War and, in particular, to 1848 when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo formalised the United States' acquisition of Texas, California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. In addition, the United States insisted on the inclusion of the fertile land between the Nueces<sup>3</sup> and Rio Grande, an area, known as "the Nueces Strip", that was majority Mexican. There is a famous Chicano saying that goes: "We didn't cross *la* border; *la* border crossed us" (Morales, 2002:20), which clearly illustrates how political and border dynamics had a crucial impact on the subsequent phenomenon of linguistic and cultural cross-fertilization.

Language contact became more intense and frequent, words such as *bronco* (untamed horse), *buckaroo* (cowboy), *burro* (small donkey), *mesa* (a flat tableland with steep

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<sup>3</sup> A County incorporated in the state of Texas

edges), *canyon*, *rodeo* (cowboy contest), *corral* (a livestock enclosure) and *radial* (a radial tyre) were imported from Mexico (McWilliams in Morales, 2002:34).

As it is chronicled by Acuña in *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, in the 1920s Mexican-Americans began to move from rural areas to urban centres in massive numbers, Los Angeles and San Antonio being the primary destinations (Acuña in Maduro, 2012:43). In the meanwhile, in southern California and Texas, Mexican-American migrant labour had already become a significant presence in cities such as Santa Barbara and Corpus Christi.

Not surprisingly, Spanglish rose on the borderlands, in Tuscon (Arizona), for instance, Mexican-American Lalo Guerrero was one of the first singers to write and record bilingual music.

Once arrived in the United States, to protect themselves from an unwelcoming environment, Mexican-Americans formed organisations such as *Los Hijos de América* in the 1940s and the *pachuco* movement; the ensuing racial attacks that broke out in Los Angeles were a clear sign of U.S. bitter intolerance and disdain towards Mexican-Americans not conforming to melting pot requirements. *Pachucos* were Mexican-Americans typically dressed in the ‘zoot suit’ originally worn by African-Americans in Harlem, and who contributed significantly to the assertion of Mexican American identity. In a moment of national conformity, these figures were mocking with their showy dresses the status of invisibility of their community, denouncing the oppression and discrimination they were forced to endure. *Pachucos* are significant for the scope of the present study since they give insight not only to the process of Mexican immigration and racial relationships with U.S. residents, but also to the phenomenon of language contact that arose. *Pachucos* originated in the 30s from El Paso, a Mexican border town with a high hybridisation rate, just across the border with Ciudad Juarez in Mexico. Hence, many *pachucos* spoke a mixture of English, Spanish, archaic Spanish and border slang. In addition, working class Mexican-American youth spoke Caló, which was a hybrid language influenced by zincaló — a dialect resulting from the blend of Hispanicized English, Anglicized Spanish and indigenous languages such as Nahuatl.

The growing public resentment fuelled by the press against the zoot suiters’ defiant style and culture, led to the association of Caló to Pachuco gang life as a secret code known only to its members. The use of Caló by Mexican-American youth was an open act of protest and resistance in a climate of intense ethnic and social discrimination; it

represented their refusal to silently and submissively assimilate to North American culture and it expressed their determination to forge a legitimate bicultural national identity as both North Americans and Mexicans.

Mexican-American youth had the unique ability to code-switch between Standard English, Spanish, and Caló, while inventing new neologisms. They were, therefore, multilingual pioneers and creators of a new language, identity and culture.

Another significant date for the formal beginnings of Spanglish is 1898 when Spain lost Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States as a consequence of its defeat in the Spanish-American War. Subsequently, from the early twentieth century onwards, a substantial number of Puerto Ricans moved north and established small communities in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Fahey aptly notices that until recently, Puerto Rico held an anomalous position among Latin American nations. Particularly, it was not engaged in Simón de Bolívar's wars for independence and the subsequent symbolism they engendered. By contrast, until the mid XIX century, the island's elite encouraged tight cultural associations with Spain, which were viewed as obsolete by the majority of intellectuals throughout the rest of Latin America. Nevertheless, in the following decades attitudes changed significantly (Fahey, 2001).

The youth who emigrated to New York in the 1950s spoke very little English and quickly became the product of their era, learning the codes of New York's streets and, thus, absorbing the seeds of a rising culture of resistance that would manifest its powerful voice during the civil rights era (Morales, 2002:63).

This first wave of immigrants represented the poorest strata of U.S. society, coming from a country that had almost no material wealth or possibilities of upward mobility. It was, nonetheless, a culture laden with mythic and spiritual beliefs and traditions, which would remain as an integral part of a slowly emerging U.S. Puerto Rican identity. During the post-war years, from mid to late 50s, many Puerto Ricans, as well as other ethnic groups, became engaged in criminal activities and gang disputes. Morales observes that such involvement in the illegal underworld was the result of "growing up lower class" (Morales, 2002:64), and it decisively contributed to cement the U.S. stereotypical perception of Puerto Rican immigrants as illiterate delinquents.

The majority of Puerto Ricans were desperately struggling to free themselves from a childhood of poverty and ignorance, adapting with effort to the drastic transition from

their poor but peaceful tropical island to the chaotic and dangerous streets of one of the world's biggest metropolis. The result was, as Morales notes, a process of class differentiation that reflected different modes of assimilation usually along racial lines, specifically, lighter-skinned and better-educated Puerto Ricans on the one hand and darker, poorly educated Puerto Ricans on the other hand (Morales, 2002:66).

The 50s were a decade of white hegemony that obscured any cultural identity not in line with the mainstream one; cultural diversity was, thus, forced underground. Nonetheless, as Vega notes in his *Memoires* written in the 40s, even if the constant growth of the Puerto Rican community in New York engendered high tensions, at a time when their number was considerably lower than Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans' cultural impact in the United States was far greater. While Mexican-Americans were involved predominantly in agricultural activities and, thus, found themselves scattered throughout the Southwest of the United States, Puerto Ricans were concentrated in large urban centres, mainly in New York. The process of close cultural and linguistic interaction ensued as a direct consequence (Vega in Stavans, 2000).

Another large group of migrants came from Cuba. Though formally independent and exporting its labour and culture especially to places such as Florida and New Orleans since the second half of the XIX century, the island was simultaneously undergoing a process of Americanisation. This process is well documented by renowned Cuban expert Pérez in his sweeping study of Cuban culture and history from 1850 to the Cuban revolution in 1959, where he traces the evolution of U.S.-Cuban relationships. Above all, he highlights that Cuban culture was deeply influenced by ever-present North American culture and ideas: U.S. naval stations, corporations and land speculators, growing massive consumption, Protestant missionaries, tourists and forms of entertainment like baseball. Hence, while Cubans willingly welcomed North American lifestyle as a sign of modernity and promise of material improvement, the island was being progressively integrating into U.S. orbit (Pérez in Morales, 2002).

These on-going migration waves coming to the United States from Latin America have blurred the boundaries imposed by historical and political forces, thus causing a continuous shift of the cultural borders of both countries. The consequence is a profound shift in the conceptualisation of national identities no longer conceived as sealed-off, isolated entities, but rather as transnational. The implications of such

reconceptualization are far-reaching and they are at the centre of the most recent debates over U.S.-Latin America relationships and mutual influences.

As far as identity is concerned, it is necessary to consider that North American and Latin American ideas of race contrast greatly. In particular, the one-drop rule of North American racial identity, according to which blackness can be ascribed to any individual with any amount of African descent, conflicts with Latin American more blurred racial identity. Indeed, even if Latin America still shows a privileged attitude towards pure whiteness, discrimination is confined to people with explicitly undiluted African traits. Furthermore, in most Latin countries racism is also mitigated by the widespread tendency to acknowledge, and even worship, indigenous and African ancestry as an integral part of Latino identity.

Conversely, once in the United States, even the minority of fair-skinned immigrants met clear-cut racial categories and had to choose whether to enhance their whiteness, or to define themselves as non-white, which immediately relegated them to a lower social status (Morales, 2002).

### **1.5) Assimilation vs. cultural identity**

Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and all South and Central Americans have often been considered as a whole, yet, it is more appropriate to talk about a plurality of Latino sensibilities and cultures.

Despite the possibility to recognise certain common trends in Latinos' migrations and settlement in the United States, national, historical, economic, political, social, cultural and linguistic differences have profoundly influenced the migrating experience of each group.

Cubans, for instance, mainly arrived in the United States after the 1959 Cuban Revolution as educated upper- and middle-class migrants; their adaptation experience was, thus, markedly different compared to Puerto Ricans and Mexicans who generally came from rural areas and who entered the United States illegally with no economic means.

Notwithstanding these differences, what characterised the first decades of immigration in the United States, roughly between the 1920s and the 1950s, was a tendency to

assimilate to U.S. mainstream culture based on fixed prerequisites that had to be met (Catholicism, a passive and unthreatening behaviour, U.S. patriotism, etc.).

Research on Latinos' assimilation process in the United States have long led scholars such as Gómez-Quiñones<sup>4</sup> to coin the expression "negative assimilation" (Stavans, 2000:7). According to numerous historians, anthropologists and sociologists (Vento, 1998; Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2003), after the first decades of silent and forced acquiescence, immigrants of Latino origins began to manifest a firm intention to retain their ancestral heritage, especially as an act of resolute rebellion against an unwelcoming milieu. Mexicans in East Los Angeles, Puerto Ricans in Upper Manhattan's El Barrio and Cubans in Key West and Miami's Little Havana engaged in a strong-willed battle against an environment imposing values.

It was, therefore, a period characterised by a sharp "we/they" dichotomy of views between the disdainful and intolerant attitude of U.S. residents and, on the other hand, the resentful Latino population. Anglo-Americans were seen as the enslaving enemy, as the poignant poem *Refugee Ship* by Lorna Dee Cervantes, a Chicana poet in California, evokes:

"Like wet cornstarch, I slide  
past my grandmother's eyes. Bible  
at her side, she removes her glasses.  
The pudding thickens.  
Mama raised me without language.  
I'm orphaned from my Spanish name.  
The words are foreign, stumbling  
on my tongue. I see in the mirror  
my reflection: bronzed skin, black hair.  
I feel I am a captive  
aboard the refugee ship.  
The ship that will never dock.  
*El barco que nunca atraca*".

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<sup>4</sup> He is the author of the pioneering and extremely influential essay on ethnicity and resistance entitled "On Culture", first published in *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*.

Born in San Francisco in 1954 to Mexican and indigenous ancestry, Dee Cervantes is one of the most renowned voices in Chicana literature. *Refugee Ship* is a revealing text about the psychological condition of U.S. Latinos along different decades of the XX century: Lorna's grandmother embodies South American traditions, suggested here through the reference to religion and food; her mother represents the first generation immigrant who arrived in the United States in the 1950s and struggled hard to assimilate at the cost of losing her heritage. Cervantes was discouraged from speaking Spanish at home in the attempt to protect her from the racism and intolerance predominant at that time. Therefore, she has experienced a painful loss of her roots and feels unable to identify with her native culture and with North American one either. *Refugee Ship* is, hence, an extremely insightful poem that expresses the major dilemma of U.S. Latinos, which is to feel adrift between two cultures, no longer belonging to the ancestral one but neither welcomed by the new one.

The gloomy conclusive image of the wandering ship vividly evokes the disappointed hopes of most Latinos who left their countries in search for better conditions and found themselves stuck in a new form of captivity in a hostile and unfamiliar environment.

The 1960s marked a time of raising consciousness and consequent fight against the harsh realities of Latino immigrants who were confined to the bottom of society. At the end of the 1960s a politically charged era started.

This greater awareness and growing concern about Latinos' conditions resulted in socio-political movements and organizations such as the 'Young Lords' in New York or the Chicano movement in cities such as Los Angeles, and an emerging body of literary works began to deal with such pressing topical issues.

The Chicano movement led by César Chávez and Rodolfo Gonzalez, the latter being intimately involved in the anti-Vietnam war and the civil rights era, represented, according to many scholars the apex of such social strife (Vento, 1998; Stavans, 2000; Morales, 2002; Foster, 2004). The term *Chicano* embodies, as Stavans explains, "the effort to overturn the dire conditions existing within Chicano communities during the post-war period" (Stavans, 2000:8). In their activism Chicanos were joined by Puerto Rican revolutionary nationalists, such as the above-mentioned Young Lords, who fought for the independence and self-determination of Puerto Rico. The political situation of their native country was a deep concern also for other Latino migrants; pro-independence exiles in the United States wished that both Puerto Rico and Cuba

freed themselves from U.S. influence, a hope that would be dashed because Cuba remained independent only formally because, in fact, it was subject to the economic control exerted by U.S. investors (Morales, 2002).

The affirmation of collective culture and traditions was considered a fundamental act of loyalty for U.S. Latinos in this period, so much so that it led to antithetical and incompatible views of resistance versus domination.

Spanglish culture emerged precisely from a reaction against conformity; in particular, Caribbean Latinos, such as Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, refused to deny their African blood, while Mexicans and Central Americans felt deeply anchored to their indigenous roots.

Hence, in the 1960s the concept of negative assimilation was replaced by the idea of a cultural war in which Latinos were soldiers in a battle to change North America from within, reinventing its core and celebrating diversity in opposition to assimilation (Morales, 2002).

The following decades were characterised by the emerging concept of multicultural identity, though it was intimately associated to a deep sense of loss and confusion.

“I am a child of crisis and cultural syncretism. [...] our generation belongs to the world’s biggest floating population: the weary travellers, the dislocated, those of us who left because we didn’t fit anymore, those of us who still haven’t arrived because we don’t know where to arrive at, or because we can’t go back anymore” (Gómez-Peña in Stavans, 2000:14).

These are the words used by Chicano writer and artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña to describe his position in the type cultural hodgepodge experienced by Latino immigrants in the United States. It is a situation of great uncertainty: being an immigrant, regardless the country of origin, signifies to leave one’s country behind and to face the challenge to adapt to a new environment. “Our deepest generational emotion is that of loss, which comes from our having left. Our loss is total and occurs at multiple levels” (Gómez-Peña in Stavans, 2000:14).

Judit Ortíz Cofer’s *The Latin Deli: An Ars Poetica* (Whitaker, 1996:265-67) is a revealing poem that illustrates the deep nostalgia felt by migrants when they are far from their country of origin.

Presiding over a formica counter,  
plastic Mother and Child magnetized  
to the top of an ancient register,  
the heady mix of smells from the open bins  
of dried codfish, the green plantains  
hanging in stalks like votive offerings,  
she is the Patroness of Exiles,  
a woman of no-age who was never pretty,  
who spends her days selling canned memories  
while listening to the Puerto Ricans complain  
that it would be cheaper to fly to San Juan  
than to buy a pound of Bustelo coffee here,  
and to Cubans perfecting their speech  
of a "glorious return" to Havana--where no one  
has been allowed to die and nothing to change until then;  
to Mexicans who pass through, talking lyrically  
of dólares to be made in El Norte--

all wanting the comfort  
of spoken Spanish, to gaze upon the family portrait  
of her plain wide face, her ample bosom  
resting on her plump arms, her look of maternal interest  
as they speak to her and each other  
of their dreams and their disillusion--  
how she smiles understanding,  
when they walk down the narrow aisles of her store  
reading the labels of packages aloud, as if  
they were the names of lost lovers; *Suspiros*,  
*Merengues*, the stale candy of everyone's childhood.

She spends her days  
slicing *jamón y queso* and wrapping it in wax paper  
tied with string: plain ham and cheese

that would cost less at the A&P, but it would not satisfy  
the hunger of the fragile old man lost in the folds  
of his winter coat, who brings her lists of items  
that he reads to her like poetry, or the others,  
whose needs she must divine, conjuring up products  
from places that now exist only in their hearts--  
closed ports she must trade with<sup>5</sup>.

Ortiz Cofer was born in Puerto Rico in 1952. She spent most of her childhood travelling back and forth between Puerto Rico and the United States and at the age of five her family moved to New Jersey. Afterwards, her family moved to Georgia, where she earned a BA in English. She later received a MA in English from Florida Atlantic University and worked at Oxford University.

The author employs an inviting metaphor that clearly depicts the psychological state of Latino immigrants in the United States. Specifically, the poem describes Latinos who have heterogeneous backgrounds and who are summed up by a mature woman. The *bodega* becomes a sort of curative store where customers look for a medicine to heal their depressed spirit; the lady listens to Puerto Ricans', Cubans' and Mexicans' complaints. On the whole, the poem expresses with notable intensity the elusiveness of the American dream, the disappointed hopes of the immigrants who dreadfully miss their native language, their traditional food and customs, seeking solace in past memories.

The customers metaphorically represent Latino citizens in the United States; although they are racially diverse and historically heterogeneous, they all find themselves in the same grocery store, which is a captivating metaphor to represent the United States.

As Stavans observes, the process of assimilation inevitably leads to a divided loyalty and sense of belonging (Stavans, 2000:13). Over the last few decades, U.S. Latinos have increasingly accepted and even celebrated the United States as their new home; yet, they have inevitably kept strong emotional ties to their homeland. For instance, today many Latino parents show a strong desire to teach Spanish to their children, especially because many of them had rejected it in their childhood (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas,

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<sup>5</sup> Whitaker, D. S. (1996) *The Voices of Latino Culture: Readings from Spain, Latin America, and the United States*. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Edition. Pp. 265-67.

2003). This discrepancy between embracing U.S. mainstream culture on the one hand and emotionally sticking to one's heritage on the other hand is the major dilemma engendered by bicultural identities. Nevertheless, U.S. Latinos have recently reconsidered their migrant experience wondering who they are, the result being a hybrid identity where Latino and North American values may coexist in a newly mixed sense of self.

This change that has occurred in the United States is a far-reaching shift in perspective on the part of second and third generation U.S. Latinos: the United States are no longer seen as a battlefield for a bitter conflict between two opposing civilizations, but as a fertile area for the formation of a rich multiracial identity. Thus, after a period during which the borderland was conceived as a place of loss of one's roots and of reluctant acceptance of North American culture, the frontier has been reconsidered and reevaluated as a land of possibilities. U.S.-born and raised Latinos are all frontier dwellers immersed in a multi-ethnic environment. Unlike for first Latino immigrants, *la patria* does no longer refer exclusively to their native country, but also to their life in the United States, as vibrantly stressed by poet Tato Laviera in *AmeRícan*:

we gave birth to a new generation,  
AmeRícan, broader than lost gold  
never touched, hidden inside the  
puerto rican mountains.

we gave birth to a new generation  
AmeRícan, it includes everything  
imaginable you-name-it-we-got-it  
society.

we gave birth to a new generation,  
AmeRícan salutes all folklores,  
european, indian, black, spanish  
and anything else compatible:

AmeRícan,     singing to composer pedro flores' palm  
                  trees up high in the universal sky!

AmeRícan, sweet soft spanish danzas gypsies  
moving lyrics la española cascabelling  
presence always singing at our side!

AmeRícan, beating jíbaro modern troubadours  
crying guitars romantic continental  
bolero love songs!

AmeRícan, across forth and across back  
back across and forth back  
forth across and back and forth  
our trips are walking bridges!  
it all dissolved into itself, an attempt  
was truly made, the attempt was truly  
absorbed, digested, we spit out  
the poison, we spit out in malice,  
we stand, affirmative in action,  
to reproduce a broader answer to the  
marginality that gobbled us up abruptly!

AmeRícan, walking plena-rhythms in new york,  
strutting beautifully alert, alive  
many turning eyes wondering,  
admiring!

AmeRícan, defining myself my own way any way many  
many ways Am e Rícan, with the big R and the  
accent on the í!

AmeRícan, like the soul gliding talk of gospel  
boogie music!

AmeRícan, speaking new words in spanglish tenements,

fast tongue moving street corner "que  
corta" talk being invented at the insistence  
of a smile!

AmeRícan, abounding inside so many ethnic english  
people, and out of humanity, we blend  
and mix all that is good!

AmeRícan, integrating in new york and defining our  
own destino, our own way of life,

AmeRícan, defining the new america, humane america,  
admired america, loved america, harmonious  
america, the world in peace, our energies  
collectively invested to find other civili-  
zations, to touch God, further and further,  
to dwell in the spirit of divinity!

AmeRícan, yes, for now, for i love this, my second  
land, and i dream to take the accent from  
the altercation, and be proud to call  
myself american, in the u.s. sense of the  
word, AmeRícan, America!

The poem is part of Laviera's latest collection published in 1985 and it perfectly expresses the new attitude adopted by many U.S. Latinos from late XX century onwards. It exudes great pride in being both a Puerto Rican and an American living in the United States. In particular, the first three stanzas start with the same sentence and emphasise the birth of a new generation. The following stanzas begin with the word *AmeRícan*, which is also the title of the poem; the importance of this word is strengthened by the fact that it stands on its own on the left side of each stanzas, which is an extremely effective device to bring the title of the poem to the foreground. It represents the cornerstone of the text which centres on the celebration of a new way of being American, of a new identity that merges tradition, including dances and songs

(Pedro Flores is one of the most popular Puerto Rican composers of ballads and boleros), with life in the new land, “integrating in new york and defining our/ own *destino*, our own way of life” (Americán, 1985).

Through the title chosen, Laviera redefines U.S. Latinos’ national identity and *AmeRícan* immediately suggests the harmonious blend of two worlds. The pronoun ‘we’ is interestingly used to indicate the collective experience of multiculturalism of all Puerto Rican-Americans.

Despite Spanglish is confined to a few Spanish words scattered through the poem, it is explicitly mentioned as a new mode of communication typical of multi-ethnic environments such as New York. Far from being despised as a vulgar tongue, Spanglish is beautifully described as a “talk being invented at the insistence/ of a smile!” (Americán, 1985).

The entire poem is a highly positive affirmation of multiculturalism, “we blend/and mix all that is good!” (Americán, 1985), it is the joyous celebration of the possibility to integrate into the United States, which signifies neither to assimilate at the cost of one’s heritage, nor to keep one’s culture blindly rejecting the one of the host country. Rather, it means to “define [oneself in one’s] own way any way many/many ways Am e Rícan, with the big R and the/ accent on the í” (Americán, 1985).

Laviera’s poem is telling about the changing perspective of most U.S. Latinos towards the end of the XX century; furthermore, it is a proof that Spanglish escapes a purely linguistic dimension to embrace issues of culture and identity. The combination of both languages in the word *AmeRícan* mirrors the union of two civilizations and, specifically, it symbolises the enrichment of North American culture through Latino contributions, a process linguistically marked by the incorporation of the Spanish accent on the vowel “i”.

This new attitude is confirmed by Stavans who highlights that among new generations of U.S. Latinos animosity and resentment towards the United States have considerably reduced due to the recognition that “Gringolandia, after all, is our ambivalent, schizophrenic *hogar*” (Stavans, 2000:13).

The urgent need to define a new multicultural identity on the part of U.S. Latinos also comes from the divide they perceive with their countries of origin. Latino immigrants in the United States and, most of all, subsequent generations of U.S.-born citizens of Latino descent, are often approached as traitors in the place once called ‘home’. Stavans points out that Cubans in exile are known with the disparaging term *gusanos*

(‘worms’) in Havana; mainland Puerto Rican-Americans often lament lack of support from the island community. Similarly, Mexicans have mixed feelings towards Chicanos (Mexican-Americans) (Stavans, 2000:18).

The Rio Grande is a geographical frontier line, the end and the beginning of the United States and Latin America. However, the river does not only separate the twin cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez and of Brownsville and Matamores, but also, and more essentially, it represents a wound, a borderline, a symbolic rupture between what journalist Alan Riding once forcefully described as “distant neighbours” (Riding, 2000)<sup>6</sup>. Although cultural bonds remain strong between migrants in the United States and their native communities south the border, Latinos who have settled in the United States have been negotiating a new identity on North American soil; a complete return to Latin traditions and culture would be an idealised attempt, which would prove disappointing and not feasible. It is in the United States that the young generations of U.S. Latinos have been reshaping their identity; what was the foreign, unfamiliar land of the exile for the first waves of immigrants has now become home for subsequent generations of Latinos.

### **1.6) Negotiating a new multicultural identity**

In light of what has been underlined above, it would be reductive to consider Spanglish just as a means of communication; it is, rather, a way of conceiving identity and culture, it is a space where racial lines fluctuate widely. Spanglish allows for the creation of a new multifaceted sense of self and brings to light a new way of being American based on miscegenation and diversity. Resisting affiliation exclusively with a single race, Spanglish is “a space where multiple levels of identification are possible” (Morales, 2002:54).

Extremely helpful concepts in attempting to define Spanglish are the notions of “border” and “hyphen”, which describe U.S. Latinos’ experience as being caught between two languages and cultures that are closely interwoven and in constant evolution (Johnson, 2000:160; Price, 2010).

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<sup>6</sup> “Distant Neighbors” is the title of Alan Riding’s famous and in depth study on Mexican political, social, cultural and economic complex relationships with the United States.

One aspect that is normally stressed about Spanglish is its condition of deviation from both its parent languages, English and Spanish, which makes it a linguistic phenomenon seemingly not worthy of attention and disparaged by purists on either side. Consequently, a number of U.S. Latino writers who identify with the phenomenon, such as Azaldúa, highlight the orphaned condition that Spanglish suffers.

“We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestizaje*, the subject of your *burla*. Because we speak with tongues of fire, we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally, and linguistically, *somos huérfanos*—we speak an orphan tongue” (Azaldúa, 1987).

This is a highly poignant quote that exudes great energy, anger, piercing pain and defiance at the same time; almost a threat, it openly challenges the numerous Spanglish opponents who hold it in deep contempt. The term “crucified” suggests an image of extreme and deliberate cruelty, which symbolises the unjust denigration Spanglish often suffers.

Nonetheless, Morales aptly observes that many writers and critics mistakenly demonise the hyphen, the border, as a space of nothingness. It is improper to define U.S. Latinos’ identity and, consequently, Spanglish, by negation; in other words, Morales interestingly proposes to overturn the perspective when approaching the phenomenon, transforming the “neither/nor” definition into the celebration of “a fertile terrain for negotiating a new identity” (Morale, 2001:6).

In order to convey in a vivid way the complexities that Spanglish involves, Stavans has borrowed Herbie Hancock’s description of jazz: “It is something very hard to define, but very easy to recognize” (Stavans, 2003:5). As linguist Price observes, the reference to jazz is revealing because it draws a comparison with a creative and innovative force that arose from the lower classes, then securing a place of power and status amongst higher echelons of society (Price, 2010:30). Likewise, Spanglish emerged from U.S. Latinos’ need to voice and give visibility to their culture, thus rejecting a passive acceptance of North American standards forced upon them. In addition, Spanglish has been compared to music also because of the spontaneity, creativity and dynamism that lie at its core.

At the present early stage of its development, Stavans is firmly convinced that any attempt to confine Spanglish within rigid precepts would twist its very nature. It is a phenomenon under constant evolution due to manifold intervening forces at play,

which render every Spanglish-speaker a linguistic pioneer (Stavans, 2003). It is in this light that Spanglish has been compared with jazz improvisational style: “Spanglish is Spanish adapting the crazy rhythms of English, and English inheriting the multicultural content of Latin America” (Morales, 2002:6). Similarly, Nuyorican poet Pietro Pietri interestingly defines Spanglish as a “free-style language” (Pietri in Stavans, 2003:3), implying that it is essentially spontaneous escaping standards and strict rules.

U.S. Latino communities are rehabilitating the term ‘Spanglish’ and numerous linguists who have investigated the phenomenon have observed that the youth see this linguistic behaviour as a denial of the dichotomy “we/they”, and, more broadly, of the very notion of racial purity (Morales, 2002; Toribo, 2002; Stavans, 2003, 2008). Challenging essentialist notions of identity together with pre-established models of categorisation, Spanglish has opened new perspectives on questions of cultural identity; in particular, older rigid patterns of either inclusion or exclusion have gradually been replaced by new hybrid transnational forms (Morales, 2002).

No longer stuck between the “prestigious English monolingual world” and the “stigmatized Spanish monolingual world” (Zentella, 1997:114), young generations of U.S. Latinos regard Spanglish as the possibility to reject U.S. white supremacy while, at the same time, recognising U.S. culture as an integral component of their multicultural identity. Spanglish mirrors, therefore, a hybrid identity that encompass both Latino and U.S. cultures.

### **1.7) The future of Spanglish:**

Discussions on the future of Spanglish have excited lively controversy among critics; an increasing number of scholars has recently been supporting positive projections supported by unquestionable data (Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2000, 2003, 2008; Price, 2010; Maduro, 2012).

Firstly, Latinos have become the largest minority in the United States, and they are likely to continue to grow in the forthcoming future because of their high birth-rate (U.S. Census; Litvina, 2001; Ramos, 2002; Olague, 2003; Garrido, 2004).

Another significant demographic factor is the younger average age of the Latino population compared to non-Latino white and African-American communities. This is

important for the future of Spanglish since it is mainly among young U.S. Latinos that Spanglish is most extensively employed. In multicultural cities, such as Los Angeles, Spanglish has become the largely preferred choice for many U.S. Latino teenagers in informal settings, as a detailed study conducted by the Los Angeles-based Cultural Access Group suggests (Kong, 2003). Moreover, the unceasing immigration flux from Latin American countries has replenished cultural and linguistic elements that had been lost to assimilation, thus fostering a rich and fruitful exchange that sustains Spanglish development. Finally, miscegenation constitutes another fundamental multilingual context for future hybrid codes (Morales, 2002:274).

Together with the exponential demographic growth of the young U.S. Latino community, the marked increase of both its political and commercial influence across the United States is another factor that points to a future expansion of Spanglish. U.S. Latinos are increasingly considered among the crucial targets of political and advertising campaigns (Suro, 1998:298). In particular, Kong notices how politicians and marketing experts are working to appeal this promising market by conveying their messages not only in standard Spanish but also in Spanglish (Kong, 2003).

Álvarez observes that the United States are witnessing a notable change in perception of Latinos' culture, which has allowed Spanglish to overcome class and regional boundaries. Spanglish is less viewed as a symbol of illiteracy, poverty and marginalization, than as the energetic voice of a new generation of teenagers and young adults who proudly express their hybrid identity (Álvarez, 1997). Concerning the relation between Spanglish and lack of academic education, we can note that the phenomenon is willingly welcomed by a sizeable proportion of educated U.S. Latinos. For instance, the main public of New York bilingual magazine *Latina* are young women with secondary and even university education (Betti, 2008).

Spanglish is, thus, acquiring new prominence in the United States and the growing body of literature in Spanglish is certainly one of the chief indicators of a shift in perspective. As it will be analysed in the present paper, Spanglish literature employs various linguistic devices, such as code-switching and loanwords, to capture the cadence of street talk, with the aim, as Morales underlines, not only to reproduce a type of informal, everyday language, but primarily "to convey the contradictions and dilemmas of biculturalism" (Morales, 2002:95).

Similarly, music is another productive field of cross-cultural experimentation, as it is proved by mixed genres such as Latin pop, Latin hip-hop and rap, the latter having promoted a mutual influence between Spanglish and Ebonics (Morales, 2002:149).

The recent rehabilitation of this hybrid linguistic phenomenon has been prompted also by the media, which have become effective and powerful vehicles for its wide diffusion. *Latina*, for instance, stands out among high quality magazines that use Spanglish to reflect the overlapping cultures of its audience (Álvarez, 1997; Betti, 2008). "If we were an English magazine, we would just be general market, if we were a Spanish-language magazine, we would be Latin American. We are the intersection of the two, and we reflect a life between two languages and two cultures that our readers live in", said Haubegger, publisher of *Latina* magazine (Haubegger in Álvarez, 2009:2). An increasing number of radio and TV stations are also tackling the theme of hybridity; for example, in California-based LaTV air programs the hosts speak nothing but Spanglish.

Additionally, Stavans remarks on the rapidity with which Spanglish has penetrated the Internet; political satire Web site Pocho.com displays in the upper left corner of its homepage the motto "Spanglish is my language" (Stavans, 2008:68).

At this point in time, it is impossible to predict whether Spanglish will ever evolve into a full-fledged language, though it will never become a Creole because, as suggested by Maduro, a creole is a pidgin that has acquired a structured grammar and a stabilised lexis and whose speakers do not know their respective native languages (Maduro, 2012). Notwithstanding this, the spreading of Spanglish into mainstream America continues to gather momentum through commerce, the arts and the media, which makes Spanglish a growing and increasingly sturdy phenomenon whose diffusion seems hard to arrest (Betti, 2008; Stavans, 2008; Price, 2010, Maduro, 2012). Spanglish still presents itself as an extremely hard-to-define linguistic contact phenomenon that will not cease to heat controversy. Whilst some will still label it a "mongrel jargon", a "linguistic nightmare", an "orphan tongue", others will celebrate it as the means that connects them with their heritage (Maduro, 2012:7).

Concerning possible norms governing Spanglish it is interesting to note that although Spanglish varies wildly between different communities, its presence in the media is prompting the use of standard terms and forms (Stavans, 2003:14).

Being the United States' official language, the world lingua franca and the language predominantly used in fields like technology and academic research, English will arguably continue to exert major influence in the XXI century worldwide. However, it is important to consider the significant impact other languages may have in the future, Spanish in particular.

## CHAPTER 2

### Linguistic features of Spanglish

Phrases coined by artists of Latin origin - like *Living' la vida loca*, made famous by Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin back in 1999 - have implications far beyond the entertainment arena. They represent the amalgamation of two languages and, mostly, two cultures traditionally viewed as separate, the result of which is Spanglish (Rothman, Rell, 2005).

Spanglish remains a code of communication that defies standardization. Nevertheless, linguists and cultural critics such as Stavans (Stavans, 2000) have made various attempts to classify its lexicon. Galván and Tesher compiled their *Diccionario del español chicano* in 1989; then Sánchez-Boudy published his *Diccionario de cubanismos más usuales* and Cobos edited *A Dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish* in 1983. These are just a few of the valuable, though incomplete, efforts made so far. Most studies have not been exhaustive primarily because of the reduced scope of their analysis; in particular, their central focus has almost always been the impact of English on Spanish in certain geographical regions and specific communities. Journalist Billy Cruz has examined Spanglish in *Cuban Americanism* published in 1996; yet, as Stavans observes, though rich in appendices, Cruz's thesaurus is limited to Miami jargon. As far as dictionaries are concerned, Cruz published *The Official Dictionary of Spanglish* in 1998, containing 300 words, and Stavans included a list of 2000 Spanglish words in his book *Spanglish: The Making of a New American Language* (Stavans, 2003).

The word "Spanglish" evokes a mixture, specifically the commingling of Spanish and English. Nonetheless, little research has been carried out so far on the diverse ways these two languages blend. In this section we will shed some light on the linguistic characteristics of Spanglish, such as code-switching, code-mixing, use of loanwords, morpho-syntactical and phonetic mutations.

Spanglish is the combination of a Romance language and a Germanic one (although English itself is highly Latinized since forty percent of its lexis consists of words of Latin or French origin). Hence, Spanglish straddles two linguistically distinct entities. In particular, Spanish is polysyllabic and vowel-centric, whereas English has shorter words and is consonant-oriented (Maduro, 2012). Moreover, Spanish is characterised by a complex conjugation system, gender inflections and similar features that endow it with a range of subtle expressiveness and semantic nuances. English tends to be more concise and straightforward.

## **2.1) Language transfer in language learning**

In 1957 Lado maintained that:

“individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture-both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by natives” (Lado in Gass & Selinker, 1993:1).

His statements paved the path for subsequent research in the field of second language acquisition. They were also highly influential for studies in contrastive analysis in language contact situations.

Language transfer is an important subarea of second language acquisition that examines the influence of the native language in the process of second language learning. Over the past few decades, the approaches to this discipline have varied considerably; Pit Corder, Gass and Selinker are among those who have contributed to this field.

As Pit Corder points out, the framework for approaching the phenomenon of second language acquisition is cognitive. This means that the process of acquisition is seen “as one of creating a body of implicit knowledge upon which the utterances in the language are based” (Pit Corder in Gass & Selinker, 1993:20). Many linguists (Broselow, Corder, Gass, Selinker in Gass & Selinker, 1993) agree that second language acquisition is a creative process whereby learners construct and test hypotheses on the target language in a similar way as it is assumed first language learners do. Nonetheless, Gundel and

Tarone explain that “it is a process which differs from first language acquisition in that the nature of these hypotheses is determined partly by the languages that the learner already knows” (Gundel, Tarone in Gass & Selinker, 1993:87).

Highlighting the essential role of the mother tongue in the process of language learning, Pit Corder notes that there is an evident connection between speed of acquisition and so-called language distance. In other words, the more the target language is linguistically distant from the mother tongue, the longer it takes to be learnt (Corder in Gass & Selinker, 1993:22). In particular, Pit Corder talks about the transfer of mental structures from the mother tongue to the developing “interlanguage”, which is an intermediate linguistic system between the mother tongue and the target language. The evidence for such a process of transfer is the persistent occurrence of incorrect mother-tongue-like features in the learner's performance, what Schachter has called "resident errors" (Schachter in Gass & Selinker, 1993:25). For instance, Broselow observed a considerable number of error patterns directly attributable to the transfer of native language rules to the target language (Broselow in Gass & Selinker, 1993).

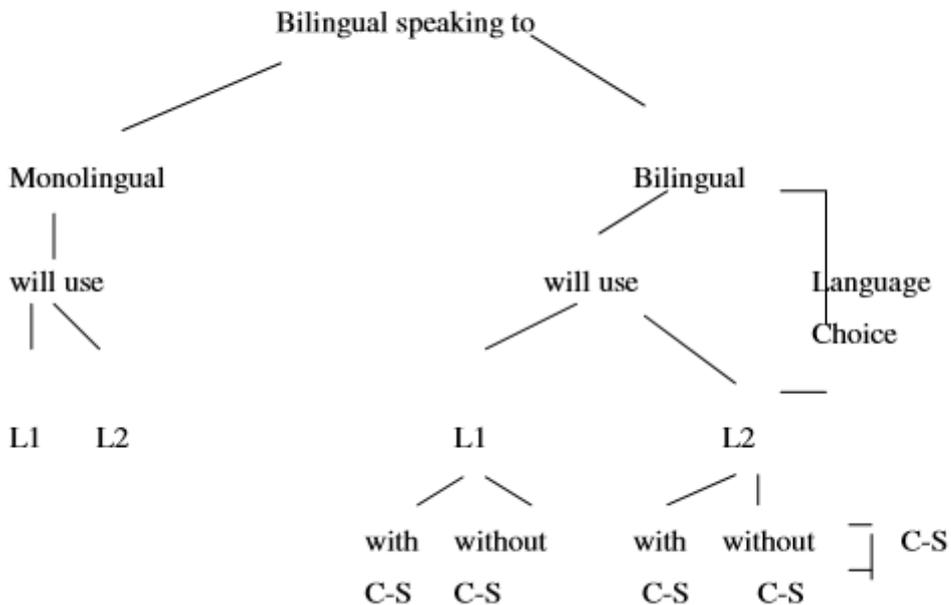
The present paper will examine the results of English-Spanish contact in three short stories by U.S. Latino authors, which will be examined in the following chapter.

## **2.2) Linguistic choices in bilingual interactions**

Bilingualism is a phenomenon that involves “the regular use of two or more languages” (Grosjean, 1982:1). A conversation between a bilingual individual and a monolingual often takes place in the language they have in common; but interactions become much more complicated when two bilingual speakers share the same or similar linguistic background.

To illustrate individuals’ language choice in bilingual conversations, Grosjean proposed the following chart (Grosjean, 1982:129):

C-S = code-switching



Grosjean concludes that a bilingual speaker chooses a language as the basis for conversation according to the linguistic background of his/her interlocutor. Therefore, there is an implicit agreement on the language to be selected. In the case of a bilingual individual speaking to a monolingual, the language of the latter will be used for conversation; but when two bilinguals sharing the same linguistic background interact, communication takes place choosing either language as a “base language”, with or without code-switching, that is the alternation of two languages within the same discourse (Grosjean, 1982:129).

Research on bilingualism has produced a remarkable divergence of findings (Poplack, 1980, 1981; Grosjean, 1982; Bentahila, 1983; Berk-Seligson, 1986; Zentella, 1997; Musyken, 2000; Zentella, 2008; Jalil, 2009), leading Toribo to note that linguistic behaviour is highly context-sensitive. To create a comfortable environment for the participants to the study and to favour spontaneity is, however, rather complicated and research environments are often quite artificial (Toribo, 2002:27). Moreover, reliable data might be considerably compromised when code-switching is racially stigmatised (Montes-Alcalá, 2000).

Research on language contact phenomena is further problematized by the substantial discrepancy between data collection methods, which have a notable impact on the final

data. Furthermore, Poplack remarks on the great confusion surrounding bilingual behaviours, which may lead to falsified contributions to the already misleading literature on code-switching (Poplack in Price, 2010). For example, Torres condemns as “meaningless” all the analyses which concentrate exclusively on the number of occurrences of the phenomenon without making any significant sociological or linguistic analysis (Torres in Price 2010:27).

In light of this observation, we will address Spanglish from a linguistic and sociocultural perspective, highlighting that both levels of analysis are unquestionably and profoundly linked

## **2.2) Features of Spanglish**

As there is no agreement on Spanglish actually is, it becomes problematic to identify and describe its distinctive features with precision.

A considerable number of scholars (Maroney, 1998; Morales, 2002; Stavans, 2000, 2003; Hernández, 2004; Jaimes, 2004; Rothman and Rell, 2005; Ossman, Nabih, Fadry, 2007) working in the field of linguistic and sociolinguistic have provided multiple definitions, making the perception of Spanglish fairly confusing. Lipski has produced one of the clearest description of this mode of interaction. He points out that the term ‘Spanglish’ is typically used to describe code-switching, both morphologically/phonologically integrated and unassimilated English borrowings in Spanish, syntactic and lexical calques, incorrect Spanish grammar used by bilingual speakers with a poor knowledge of Spanish, Spanish spoken as a second language, and mock Spanish (Lipski, 2004:8).

In light of a lack of consensus around Spanglish and its idiosyncratic characteristics, it is instructive to establish a distinction between the diverse phenomena that are typical of bilingual discourse, with a special focus on interactions in Spanglish, so as to achieve a better understanding of the elements that constitute the essence of this linguistic contact phenomenon.

### **2.3.1) Code-switching:**

“Hey, Mary, ¿por qué no vienes pa mi casa? Tengo un magazine nuevo that I got this morning nel drugstore. Tiene todas las new songs, muy suaves, de los... cómo se llaman... You know... los que cantan ésa que tocaron... ahí nel jukebox, when we were at the store. No, hombre, not that one, the other

one, la que le gustó much a Joe. I like it too porque tiene muy suave rhythm y las words también, muy suaves... yeah... what? really!!!... te llamó? OOOOhhhh, Mary. Ese está de aquellotas” (Sánchez in Pountain, 1999:37).

As Maduro points out, code switching is probably the most distinctive feature of Spanglish and, in general, of all linguistic contact phenomena. It “consists of an alternation between two or more languages in the middle of discourse. The fluctuation can span from single-word switches to phrase, clause, and sentence switches” (Maduro, 2012:2). Similarly, Montes-Alcalá describes code-switching as “a natural linguistic phenomenon in bilingual communities where two or more languages come into contact and alternate at the level of clauses and sentences” (Montes-Alcalá in Price, 2010:26). Linguist Gumperz proposes a more specific definition of code-switching as a “juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (Gumperz in Zentella, 1997:80).

The earliest reference to code-switching was introduced by Weinreich in 1953 within the framework of his study on bilingualism; in particular, he defined bilinguals as individuals who switch “from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in speech situation” (Weinreich in Neseh, 1997:202).

While initial investigations on the topic did not differentiate between code-switching and code-mixing, recent literature has introduced some variation in defining the first in comparison to the latter. Muysken, for instance, considers code-switching as “the rapid succession of several languages in a single speech event” (Muysken, 2000:1), whereas code-mixing occurs in “all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence” (Muysken, 2000:1). Likewise, Bentahila defines code-switching as “the use of two languages within a single conversation, exchange or utterance” (Bentahila et al., 1983:302).

Within the wider category of code-switching, there are two types of switches that have been recognised by most linguists (Mac Swan, 1999; Callahan, 2004; Betti, 2008; Toribo in Price, 2010), namely, intersentential code-switching and intrasentential code-switching. The former switch occurs between sentences, whilst the latter within sentences. Therefore, as Toribo suggests, code-switching is an alternation of two different languages that remain grammatically unchanged, for example, portions of discourse that are unmistakably Spanish or English (Toribo in Price, 2010:26). On the other hand, code-mixing is characterised by the convergence of two languages that integrate into each other below the sentence level.

The title of Poplack's paper, for instance, is a perfect example of intersentential code-switching: "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish *y termino en español*" [Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish and finish in Spanish] (Poplack, 2000). The switch occurs at the clause level.

Additionally, Poplack identifies a third type of switch, namely, tag-switching, which is related to the inclusion of a tag (e.g. you know, I mean, right, etc.).

Even though in actual conversational interactions it is often difficult to distinguish the precise category of utterance, for reasons of clarity this paper will henceforth use code-mixing and code-switching to refer, respectively, to intrasentential and intersentential switches.

Research on language contact phenomena has considerably progressed since the pioneering studies of Haugen and Weinreich in the early 1950s. In particular, being code-switching and code-mixing two key modes of interaction among bilingual speakers, research has extensively focused on them.

The numerous studies that have recently been developed on code-switching (Poplack, 2000; Musyken, 2000; Litvina, 2001; Salaberry, 2002; Toribo, 2002; Racine, 2003; Hernández, 2004; Martínez-San Miguel, 2008; Sánchez, 2008; Zentella 2008; Montés-Alcalá, 2009; Price, 2010; Maduro, 2012) have concentrated on both sociolinguistic or linguistic factors. The results have contributed to mitigate the social stigma it once had and they have favoured a better comprehension of the phenomenon that, until recently, was considered capricious and totally arbitrary.

Montes-Alcalá (Montés-Alcalá, 2009) points out that two are the important conclusions that emerge from these investigations. Firstly, that beyond linguistic aspects code-switching serves social and pragmatical functions. In the endeavour to answer the question: "why code-switch?", researchers have realised that to properly address this question it is essential to adopt a sociocultural approach in order to have some insight into the reasons behind the phenomenon. Zentella, for example, proposes a very interesting description of code-switching as "a conversational activity via which speakers negotiate meaning with each other" (Zentella, 1997:113).

Concerning the functional use of Spanglish, scholars have almost unanimously acknowledged that many linguistic choices reflect precise discourse strategies and that varied social functions can be identified in code-switching interactions (Torres, 1987; Johnson, 2000; Zentella, 2008; Montés-Alcalá, 2009).

Among the most relevant devices behind the switches there are strategies of clarification and emphasis, for example when the speaker wants to establish control over a person/situation. Then, switches occur to “mark” or “bracket” certain parts of the speech such as direct or indirect speech, quotations and parenthetical comments. Furthermore, discourse markers are likely places where the switch takes place in order to ensure that the interlocutor is following the dialogue (e.g. “y’know”) (Torres, 1987; Zentella 1997; Johnson 2000). Additionally, focus/topic constructions, idiomatic expressions and stylistic switches are generally parts of discourse where individuals tend to switch language (Valdés-Fallis, Poplack, McClure and Gumperz in Montes-Alcalá, 2009). Finally, the role of the interlocutor is crucially important in determining the speaker’s linguistic choice (Gonzales-Echevarría, 2008).

The second widely shared conclusion is that code-switching use is not aleatory because it follows specific restrictions. In opposition to the numerous linguists (Lance, 1975; Molinero, 1998; Roig, 2001; Li-Hua Shan, 2002; Osio, 2002; González-Echevarría, 2008) who define Spanglish as an anarchic phenomenon, the studies carried out over the last 30-40 years have revealed that code-switching is not a random phenomenon but a rule-governed process (Pfaff; 1979; Poplack, 1981; Berk-Seligson, 1986; Poplack, 1988; Muysken, 2000; Poplack, 2000; Callahan, 2004; Zentella, 2008; Jalil, 2009). Notwithstanding this, there is not yet a general consensus about the rules at the basis of Spanglish code-switching.

There are three different patterns of code-switching that can be identified: insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization. These three processes correspond to three reference models (Muysken, 2000:3). The approach developed from the notion of insertion is generally associated with Myers-Scotton and it conceives “the constraints in terms of the structural properties of some base or matrix structure. Here the process of code-mixing is conceived as the insertion of an alien lexical or phrasal category into a given structure” (Muysken, 2000:3). Then, the approach which departs from alternation is Poplack’s one and it views “the constraints on mixing in terms of the compatibility or equivalence of the languages involved at the switch point” (Muysken, 2000:4). Finally, the notion of congruent lexicalization has been the point of departure of Labov and Trudgill’s approach; specifically, it focuses on the study of shifting and language variation rather than on the use of bilingual language (Muysken, 2000).

Based on these approaches, various models of constraints on code-switching have been formulated (Pfaff, 1976, 1979; Poplack, 1981; Bentahila et al. 1983; Di Sciullo, Muysken

and Sing 1986; Poplack, 1988; Blazi, Rubin and Turbio 1992, 1994; Myers-Scotton 1993; Nishimura 1997). These models of constraints “fall into four major groups: language specific constraints, more general and universal constraints, theoretical constraints and matrix language approaches to the constraints” (Naseh 1997:202), and have been subject to controversy when applied to different language pairs. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, only the three linguistic constraints proposed by Poplack will be considered.

The earliest studies that dealt with code-switching as the central topic of research started in the 1960s with scholars such as Gumperz, Lehtinen and Clyne. Afterwards, as Montes-Alcalá documents, the first attempts to identify some grammatical restrictions on code-switching began in the 1970s and they prevalently addressed the phenomenon of code-switching between Spanish and English to examine the grammatical and syntactic rules governing these two interacting language systems (Montes-Alcalá, 2009). Gumperz, Pfaff and Myers-Scotton have been among the linguists who have dedicated most of their research to the topic (Gumperz, 1976; Pfaff, 1979; Myers-Scotton, 1989, 1993).

Research studies have revealed controversial findings. Lance, for instance, examined the syntax of Spanish-English code-switching and concluded that “there are perhaps no syntactic restrictions on where the switching can occur” (Lance, 1975:143). Nevertheless, according to other studies there is a variety of syntactic restrictions that operate to constrain code-switching, and some rules can be valid only for some languages (Pfaff; 1979; Poplack, 1981; Berk-Seligson, 1986; Musyken, 2000; Poplack, 2000; Callahan, 2004; Zentella, 2008; Jalil, 2009). Pfaff maintained in his 1979 study that it is impossible for a preposition to be in a different language from the items both preceding and following it (Pfaff in Cohen, 2005). In addition, Kachru reached the conclusion that it is forbidden for two sentences from one language to be linked by a conjunction from the other (Kachru in Cohen, 2005).

It was only in the early 1980s, however, that the investigation of Poplack marked a significant evolution in code-switching research. In particular, she formulated the Free Equivalence Constraint, the Size-of-constituent Constraint and the Free Morpheme Constraint.

The Free Equivalent Constraint, or the Equivalence of structure constraint, was one of the first grammatical principles to be proposed as a constraint on code-switching and has been highly influential for subsequent research. Poplack maintains that the Free

Equivalent Constraint accounts for all instances of code-switching and she formulates it as follows:

“Code-switches will tend to occur at points in discourse where juxtaposition of L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language, i.e., at points around which the surface structures of the two languages map onto each other. According to this simple constraint, a switch is inhibited from occurring within a constituent generated by a rule from one language which is not shared by the other” (Poplack 1980:586).

In other words, this constraint states that both parts in a switch must respect the grammar of the languages involved and that, as Pfaff notes, "Surface structures common to both languages are favored for switches" (Pfaff, 1979:314).

Since the Equivalence Constraint ensures that both “sides of the switch are grammatically correct according to their particular rules”, a phrase like “a tree *verde*” would not be possible as it violates the English ordering of words (Poplack, 1988:47).

Then, Poplack claims that "Codes may be switched after any constituent in discourse provided that constituent is not a bound morpheme" (Poplack, 1980:585-86). This is the enunciation of what she defines as the Free Morpheme Constraint, a principle that “prohibits mixing morphologies within the confines of the word” (Poplack, 1988:47). According to this constraint, therefore, switches can never occur at the morpheme level and, more precisely, between a free and a bound morpheme.

For example, a word like \*eat-*iendo* ('eating'), which consists of the Spanish bound morpheme *-iendo* ('-ing') affixed onto the English root 'eat', is unacceptable because of the Free Morpheme Constraint, therefore, it could not occur in the discourse of a Spanish/English bilingual. Poplack notes that similar items have never been attested, "unless the lexical form has been phonologically integrated into the language of the bound morpheme" (Sankoff and Poplack, 1981:5), which means, unless the word has attained the status of a borrowing. *Aparcar* is clear example of a borrowing or loanword since the lexical English word “to park” has been phonologically adapted to Spanish linguistic requirements. Conversely, \**runeando* (to run + Spanish gerund *-eando*) is not acceptable because it is not a borrowing (Clyne in Jalil, 2009:5).

Wentz and McClure have further elaborated this constraint pointing out that "no words with morphology from both languages can exist without first having the stem integrated into the language of the suffix phonologically and semantically" (Wentz and McClure in Poplack, 1981:175). In other words, the Free Morpheme Constraint might be defined as the impossibility of code-switching at a point of morpheme binding, as suggested by Berek-Seligson (Berek-Seligson, 1986). This position is supported by linguist Olague who notices that code-switching generally occurs "at points where the morphological and phonetic integrity of either language is not altered" (Olague, 2004:124).

Finally, another generally acknowledged constraint is the Size-of-constituent Constraint according to which code-switches occur primarily at phrase structure boundaries (Hasselmo, 1970; Poplack, 1980; Shaffer, 1978). In particular, this constraint states that higher-level constituents, that is major constituents (e.g. sentences, clauses), tend to be switched more frequently than lower-level constituents, or smaller ones (i.e. one-word categories such as nouns, determiners, verbs, adverbs, adjectives) (Poplack, 1980). Nevertheless, we can point out that the category of nouns are an exception to this rule. Below the level of the sentence, nouns-switches constitute the largest amount of switches in bilingual interactions (Pfaff 1979; Poplack, 1980, 1981; Timm 1975; Wentz 1977).

It is important to highlight that the Size-of-constituent Constraint has notable implications for theories of bilingualism in that the size of constituents has frequently been closely connected with the bilingual proficiency of the speaker. Studies on child bilingual language acquisition (McClure 1981; Zentella 1981) and adult bilingualism (Pfaff 1979) have repeatedly shown that intrasentential code-switching is a sign of high bilingual ability, whereas intersentential switching is linked to scarce competence in either language. These findings have led scholars, among whom Poplack, to the conclusion that the ability to code-switch intrasententially may be used as a measure of bilingual competence (Poplack, 1980, 1981).

Poplack's hypothesis derives from a study she conducted with twenty speakers; she observed that non-fluent bilinguals could code-switch preserving grammaticality in both L and L2 only when they opted for intersentential switching avoiding intrasentential switches (Poplack, 1980).

Counter to Poplack's deductions about grammatical constraints, some researchers such as MacSwan have suggested that there are no real constraints on language switches others than the ones posed by the two grammars involved (MacSwan in Montes-Alcalá, 2009:105).

The principal point of divergence between MacSwan's assumption and Poplack's theory of constraints is that according to MacSwan there is no grammar to be explicitly formulated for code switching; thus, he rejects the idea of a "third grammar" proposed by Poplack to determine whether switches are acceptable at certain points (Poplack, 1980). He believes, instead, that nothing constrains code switching apart from the requirements of the grammars of the two mixed languages (MacSwan 1999:146). According to him, there is no need for specific code-switching constraints and it is sufficient to observe the grammatical rules of both languages. In particular, the acceptability of code-switching depends on the morphological and lexical grammaticality in monolingual sentences. MacSwan explains that each lexical item introduces grammatical features into a sentence. Hence, the acceptability of a linguistic expression depends on whether the features of its elements match, no matter whether it is a monolingual or a code-switched expression (MacSwan, 1999).

Since in MacSwan's model all syntactic variation is associated with the lexicon, code-switching is seen as "the result of mixing two lexicons in the course of a derivation" (MacSwan 2000:45). Therefore, this approach interprets the grammar used for code-switching as a combination of the lexicons of the two languages involved. MacSwan concludes that phonological systems cannot be mixed because, otherwise, switches would generate "unpronounceable" words (MacSwan, 2000:46).

It is interesting to consider what Maduro calls in his article *SpanGLISH and its influence on American English* the "principle of less constraint", in other words, the tendency of bilingual speakers to switch from one language to the other so as to reduce the struggle to find the right words in either language (Maduro, 2012:4).

A considerable number of studies were also carried out focusing on code-switching between different language pairs in order to analyse the linguistic structures at work in bilingual interactions where code-switching occurs, and to detect the syntactic constraints that restrict the environments where switches are possible; for instance, between Moroccan Arabic and other languages such as French and Dutch (Poplack 1980, 1981; Berk-Seligson 1986; Di Sciullo, Muysken and Sing 1986; Myers-Scotton

1988, 1993; Naseh 1997). Nonetheless, the scope of the present study does not allow to take these cases into consideration.

Another debated issue concerns the proportion in which English and Spanish are present when speakers switch from one language to another. Maduro maintains that English is normally the predominant language and that, consequently, the mixture is “unbalanced by nature” (Maduro, 2012:5). There is abundant evidence, however, that contradicts his position; the examples of short stories where Spanish is the main language and English words are only scattered through the texts are numerous (Gómez, Moraga and Romo-Carmona, 1983; Gaspar de Alba, 1993; Vega, Lugo Filippi, 2002).

The aim of this paper is to take the aforementioned theories and reflexions on English/Spanish code-switching as a framework for a sociolinguistic study focused on contemporary U.S. Latino literature. Specifically, it will investigate the validity of Poplack’s three linguistic constraints discussed above by examining intersentential and intrasentential code-switching between English and Spanish in three short stories by U.S. Latino writers.

### **2.3.1.1) Attitudes towards code-switching**

Alongside the linguistic features of bilingual discourse considered above, it is centrally important to expand the analysis at a sociolinguistic level and to consider the attitudes towards Spanglish of those involved in code-switching practices, either because they are members of a U.S. Latino community using Spanglish, or because they are commenting about the phenomenon from outside.

As anticipated in the first chapter, although it remains a highly complex and contentious issue, attitudes towards Spanglish have remarkably changed over the last decades. Consequently, it is interesting to consider the results of investigations carried out in different periods.

Torres conducted a research in a suburban Puerto Rican community in New York in the mid-1980s and recorded that over 50% of the participants had negative feelings towards the mixing and switching of codes. Conversely, Montes-Alcalá, in her more recent research in California amongst Spanish speaking youth, observed a notable shift

in the traditional attitudes towards code-switching towards a much more positive disposition (Montes Alcalá, 2000:101). Notwithstanding this, in a different community in California, Toribo found a noteworthy diversity of attitudes ranging from utter rejection, apprehensiveness to positive opinions (Toribo in Price, 2010:27).

Even though, as Montes Alcalá underlines, attitudes may not necessarily determine whether the user is able to or actually does engage in code-switching, Toribo observes that when an individual expresses strong disapprobation and despise towards code-switching the actual ability and propensity to adopt this practise is drastically reduced (Toribo in Price, 2010:27).

Code-switching, as Spanglish itself, is an extremely contentious phenomenon. Some scholars view it as “a mutually destructive mechanism between two intersecting tongues” (Maduro, 2012:7); on the other hand, for linguistic experts such as Morales and Skiba it is a signal of linguistic deftness (Skiba, 1997; Morales, 2002).

Severe criticism of the phenomenon comes from the Hispanic world, especially from the *Real Academia de La Lengua Española*, which is the official royal institution that oversees the Spanish language and applies linguistic prescriptions and common standards in order to favour linguistic unity between Spanish-speaking territories. Spanglish has always been viewed as a whimsical and irregular phenomenon, “a bastardized language” (Morales, 2002:5) that is conceivably jeopardizing the integrity of Spanish. Accordingly, one of the accusations that has long been made against Spanglish from the Hispanic academia is that Spanish is seriously affected by the encounter with English.

As Pountain highlights, a considerable number of Hispanic linguists have taken a puristic stand on the matter contributing to a paranoid climate in the Spanish-speaking world about the future of Spanish and its supposed invasion by English (Pountain, 1999; Friedman, 2001). For example, Molinero claims that “*Es un fenómeno que ocurre en el español pero no en el inglés. Mientras que el inglés de los medios de comunicación mantiene su integridad y su nivel culto (standard English), los calcos innecesarios con que se salpica el español son muestra de subordinación cultural*” (it is a phenomenon that occurs in Spanish but not in English. Whilst English in the media keeps its integrity and its formal level- standard English- the unnecessary calques scattered in Spanish are a sign of cultural subordination) (Molinero in Montés Alcalá, 2009:100).

Counter to this widespread conviction, scholars such as Salaberry believe that Spanish will not suffer any more grammatical corruption due to Spanglish than it would without any contact with English (Salaberry, 2002). Since the greater change brought by Spanglish is the insertion of English lexical elements, he does not see much difference between this type of language contact and past phenomena such as the borrowings from Arabic inserted in Spanish, which did not cause any regression in the language.

Furthermore, numerous researchers have pointed out that as English dominance increases, calquing is frequently employed rather than using an unintegrated loanword, which means that in some cases instead of simply shifting to English, Spanish preserves its structure (Torres in Price, 2010). Additionally, besides maintaining that Spanish is not structurally changed by the contact with English, academic investigation has also underlined that Spanish may even benefit from this encounter evolving in a creative and lively way (Pountain, 1999; Torres in Price, 2010).

Spanglish has also been strongly opposed in the Anglo-American world. Pountain points out that Spanglish has often been “universally ridiculed” (Poutain, 1999:35).

Whilst there is a strong and expanding presence of code-switching in the media, outside Latino communities it still meets with negative opinions from part of U.S. Anglo population who believes that code-switching is indicative of a refusal to learn ‘proper’ English on the part of Latinos and, more broadly, to fully integrate into North American society (Johnson in Price, 2010).

Anglo-American code-switching detractors have long assumed that speakers use code-switching for reasons of scarce language proficiency (Montes-Alcalá, 2000). However, although instances of code-switching employed to compensate for poor English vocabulary may be found due to the varying levels of education within the immigrant community, especially among children (Zentella, 1997), a substantial number of studies have shown that this only accounts for a very low percentage of usage (Johnson in Toribo, 2000:28).

Moreover, even if there is no global unison of opinions on the grammatical restrictions governing code-switching, most research has reached the shared conclusion that code switches never violate the communicative and grammatical norms of the two languages involved (Poplack, 1981, 1988; Mac Swan, 1999; Musyken, 2000). Hence, it follows that code-switching requires a strong command of both grammatical systems, which

counters the common belief that Spanglish speakers are only poor uneducated individuals. In particular, whilst tag-switching is rather simple and does not require a high command of the languages in contact, code-switching and, most of all, code-mixing, entail a higher degree of complexity and, therefore, a sound knowledge of both languages due to the greater risk of violation of grammatical rules. Hence, far from being a sign of weakness or lack of language proficiency, code-switching is a complex and meaningful strategy, as researchers such as Zentella remark, might bilingual speakers who code-switch be aware of it or not (Zentella, 1997). Interestingly, evidence has counteracted the 'lexical gap' hypothesis since there have been case studies in which the participants code-switched also when there was no lexical need; for instance, after her extensive investigations in the Puerto Rican community of New York, Zentella highlighted that the vast majority of its members code-switched not to compensate for any vocabulary gap (Zentella, 1997; Toribo, 2002).

The linguistic dynamics of the phenomenon of code-switching are undoubtedly complex, but a considerable number of researchers have concluded that individuals who are more proficient in the two languages, such as fluent bilinguals, demonstrate even more complex instances of switching (Poplack, 1981; Johnson in Toribo, 2010). In addition, supporters of code-switching stress the speaker's ability to select the language that best transmits not only the denotative meaning of words, but also their semantic shadings, namely their connotation (DeVito, 2004). Therefore, code-switching is not merely regarded as a linguistic principle, but as a device which is deeply rooted in a specific culture, as anthropologist Zavaleta points out:

“[. . . ] true code-switching [. . . ] takes more than simply knowing both languages. It's a result of living in an environment like the Texas-Mexican border, where Spanish and English have meshed since the 1800s. Spanglish is a cultural foundation, a sense of ownership and place, to facilitate a person to switch off the languages” (Zavaleta in Koivisto, 2004:203).

Accordingly, defenders of Spanglish consider code-switching as an efficient strategy that improves communication among bilinguals since it allows a thorough and deeper expression of contents (Skiba, 1997; Koivisto, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Hence, smoothness and fluency of code-switching are increasingly referred to by researchers to dispute the lack of proficiency hypothesis (Poplack, 1988).

The findings of most studies suggest the importance of the phenomenon beyond a purely linguistic nature. Code-switching is tightly linked to identity because it functions to maintain Spanish, which is, in turn, a vehicle to preserve important cultural and linguistic traditions. For instance, Johnson observes that the speakers with the highest rates of code-switching are also those who have the most significant and balanced contact with the rest of their community (Johnson, 2000).

Anzaldúa proposes an expressive and telling definition of ethnic identity as being “twin skin to linguistic identity” (Anzaldúa in Johnson, 2000:177). Similarly, Stavans maintains that language constructs our worldview and that, therefore, it can offer illuminating insights into a speech community’s mentality and culture (Stavans in Johnson, 2000). Latino journalist and poet Morales points out that “Spanglish is what we speak, but it is also who we Latinos are, and how we act, and how we perceive the world” (Morales, 2002:3).

What is notable in code-switching is the mediation of two languages and two cultures, which can be interpreted as “an act of self-reflection and construction” (Toribo, 2002:98) or as the creation of a “new powerful voice” (Toribo, 2002:110).

In light of these considerations, it can be argued, borrowing Valdés-Fallis words, that “it is helpful to imagine that [bilingual speakers] are in fact using a twelve-string guitar rather than limiting themselves to two six-string instruments” (Valdés-Fallis, 1988:125).

### **2.3.2) Lexical convergence**

Within the broad phenomenon of code-switching, switches at the word level are by far the most frequent, and this is true for Spanglish as for language contact in general since “the lexical level is probably the most susceptible to display interaction (or interference) between two languages, and the easiest part to be manipulated by its users” (Montes-Alcalá, 2009:105).

As it has been previously underlined, Spanglish is a two-way phenomenon characterised not only by Spanish absorbing English words, but also by English enriched by Spanish ones.

Skiba's insightful academic research reveals that single word switches are the most common alternations from one language to another in the course of bilingual exchanges. Specifically, the following frequencies show the notable difference between speakers' natural disposition to change language at the word level rather than at the phrase or clause level (Skiba, 1997):

- Single word switches 84%
- Phrase switches 10%
- Clause switches 6%

Moreover, beyond their strikingly high incidence, it is extremely interesting to observe that words alternations mirror the cultural duality of Spanglish since there seem to be some criteria, either conscious or unconscious, behind the choice of one language instead of the other.

Lexical interaction between languages includes three main phenomena, namely, semantic extension or reassignment, borrowing and calques.

### **2.3.2.1) Semantic extension or reassignment**

As Montes-Alcalá explains, semantic extension occurs when a lexical item already existing in a language widens its meaning thanks to a lexical item of another language. In 1982, linguist Milán carried out an insightful study on New York Spanish, which offers valuable information on the effects of the merging of English and Spanish in an area where Puerto Ricans have long been present. In particular, Milán observed that semantic extension mostly occurs in pairs of false cognates, which is to say between words that are only apparently synonyms. For instance, the Spanish word *carpeta* (file folder) has expanded its meaning in Spanglish to signify also *moqueta* or *alfombra* due to the influence of the English 'carpet'; *aplicación* (effort/implementation) has become, in Spanglish, a synonym of *solicitud* under the influence of the English 'application'; *renta* (income) has also acquired in Spanglish the meaning of *alquiler* because of the English word 'rent'; or *remover* has become synonym to *quitar* as in English the correspondent verb is 'to remove' (Milán, 1982:198-199).

Moreover, apart from false cognates, Montes-Alcalá proposes further examples to clarify this type of loan process: the morphologically adapted loan-word *mitín* derives

from the English ‘meeting’ but has acquired a more specific shade of meaning that would correspond to ‘political meeting’, or ‘meeting with didactic content, sermon, lecture’, which is considerably different from the more general *reunión*. Then, *sándwich* is not the exact equivalent of the English ‘sandwich’ as it signifies ‘toasted sandwich’, which is different also from the popular *bocadillo* (roll with filling); *puddín/budín* identifies the cooked pudding and is more precise than *postre*, which is the general Spanish term for ‘dessert’ (Monts-Alcalá, 2009:105).

### **2.3.2.2.) Borrowings**

As Pountain underlines, lexical convergence between languages has normally been acknowledged by linguists as an important factor in language change (Pountain, 1999). A few examples are Arabic words such as *sukkar*, which became *azúcar* in Spanish, *sucre* in French, *zucchero* in Italian, *sugar* in English and *Zucker* in German, or the large number of Latin and Greek words such as *horizon / horizon*, which produced *horizonte* in Spanish, *horizon* in French, *orizzonte* in Italian, *horizon* in English and *Horizont* in German.

First of all, it is helpful to point out that while in intersential code-switching there is no integration of the word or clause into the other language, in borrowings there are numerous instances of morphological and phonological integration.

#### **2.3.2.2.1) Morphologically assimilated loans**

English words assimilated into the Spanish morphology are also considered as instances of Spanish lexicalized by English. A clear example of this type of borrowing is the verb *vacunar*, which was integrated morphologically into Spanish (“vacuum”=English verb + *-ar* = Spanish inflection for infinitive verbs). This is the case of acceptable switches at the morpheme level contemplated within Poplack’s Free Morpheme Constraint because, as she notices, switches within the same word become possible when there has been integration of the lexical item into the language of the bound morpheme (Poplack, 1981). Here, the English stem “vacuum” has been integrated into Spanish.

Other recurrent examples are *taipear* (to type), *lonchar/lonchea* (to have lunch), *droppear* (to drop), or *cliquear* (to click). In this last case, a loan word from the donor language (English) is employed in Spanish to fill a lexical need in the field of technology (Montes-Alcalá, 2009:106). Sometimes there is no cultural or linguistic equivalent of a word and a loan becomes useful to express a specific concept.

#### 2.3.2.2.2) Phonologically assimilated loans

As far as phonetically integrated loanwords are concerned, there is abundant evidence of English words that have successfully adapted to the structure of Spanish. On a careful inspection, Pountain stresses that no new sound has ever been imported as a result of borrowing from English, rather, English phonemes have been replaced by Spanish ones. For example, the initial /sp/ group present in a high number of anglicisms has been universally adapted into Spanish with a prothetic /e/ rather than with the unfamiliar group of voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ + plosive consonant (Pountain, 1999:103). These borrowings have been fully integrated into Spanish, so much so that in Spanish dictionaries (except for the DRAE – Dictionary of the Real Academia de la Lengua Española) their pronunciation is indicated as involving a prothetic /e/. Accordingly, ‘striptease’ is pronounced /es’triptis/ rather than /’strip.ti:z/, ‘scanner’ becomes /es’kaner/ and is written *escáner* following Spanish orthographical rules, ‘spray’ is introduced either as /(e)sprai/ or as /esprái/. Similarly, anglicisms such as *esmoquin* (‘smocking’), *esnob* (‘snob’), *estrés* (‘stress’), just to mention a few, are integrated loan-words that have become an integral part of Spanish and are consistently used in Spanglish interactions.

Another sound foreign to the Spanish phonetic system is the English voiceless post-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ (sheriff, short, show) and the voiced post-alveolar affricate /dʒ/ (jazz, jet, jeans); in Spanish this sound has often been converted into the voiceless post-alveolar affricate /tʃ/ (e.g. show /tʃou/, shorts /tʃores/ written *chores*) or the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ (e.g. flash /flas/).

*Líder* (leader), *troca* (truck), *marqueta* (market) and *biles* (bills) are further examples of Spanish lexicalised by English, where anglicisms adjust to the Spanish phonetic and orthographical structure.

### 3.2.2.2.3) Unassimilated loans

Besides phonologically and morphologically integrated loanwords, Spanglish is also characterised by a significant number of English terms that preserve their structure unvaried. ‘Sandwich’ and ‘modem’ are a few of the various loanwords that are morphologically and phonetically unassimilated.

Language purists have fiercely opposed any kind of borrowing from other languages; even the *Diccionario de uso del español actual* (DC) has attacked the introduction of the word ‘light’ commenting that “*Su uso es innecesario y puede sustituirse por expresiones como bajo en calorías, ligero o suave*” (its usage is unnecessary and can be replaced by expressions like *bajo en calorías, ligero o suave*) (DC, 1997). Yet, this inflexible stance denies connotations that are associated to the English word and that do not find a suitable equivalent in Spanish, namely nuances of ‘insipid’, ‘without health risk’, which are not conveyed by *ligero* or *suave*.

This consideration leads to a reflexion on the reasons why certain words are yielded by a language and adopted by the other.

Borrowings are not a random phenomenon and they answer specific conversational needs. Akin to the above example of ‘light’, lexical borrowings may allow finer semantic discrimination. Furthermore, there are anglicisms incorporated into Spanish due to the absence of any Spanish equivalent; this is the case of IT lexis such as ‘software’ or ‘hacker’. Here, the use of the anglicisms rather than an artificially invented word or neologism from within Spanish vocabulary is preferable for reasons of precision of reference in technical fields.

There are, nevertheless, non-linguistic factors that also play a central role in the borrowing process. Firstly, the prestige of the lending language, as it is shown by the use of the English word ‘appetizers’ (Montes-Alacalá, 2009:106).

Similar to Maduro’s “principle of less constraint” cited above (according to which individuals switch from English to Spanish and vice versa in order to find the most appropriate word to best convey a certain concept), Pountain maintains that another factor in lexical borrowing, which in his opinion has not been given sufficient prominence in historical studies, is “an economic motivation”(Maduro, 2012). The integrated loanword *emailear* is a telling example of this process: on the one hand it has a remarkable advantage for Spanish since it encapsulates within one regular verb a concept that, otherwise, would be expressed by some laborious paraphrase such as

*enviar un mensaje por correo electrónico* (to send a message via email); on the other hand, it even has an advantage over the original English word 'to email' in that it can be reflexivised as *emailearse*, meaning 'to exchange e-mails, to communicate by e-mail' (Pountain, 1999:10). Likewise, Álvarez notes that sometimes an English word is borrowed for reasons of efficiency since Spanish is a multisyllabic language. For instance, U.S. Latinos often opt for *parquin* instead of the corresponding Spanish word *estacionamiento* (Álvarez, 1997:46).

Overall, evidence indicates that in Spanglish discourses, English words are mostly related to the fields of technology, business and education, whereas Spanish tends to be inserted to convey a sense of belonging to family and traditions. These different semantic areas reflect essential cultural aspects of both worlds, namely, the American individualistic ethos on the one hand, and the collective nature of Latin American culture on the other hand (De Vito, 2004).

As Maduro notices, for many U.S. Latinos Spanish is the language of their childhood, country of origin and traditions; therefore, the Spanish terms used by bilinguals often evoke a strong sense of identity and are deeply rooted in folklore (Maduro, 2012). For instance, the Spanish word *orgullo* is intimately associated with Latin American culture and the use of its English equivalent 'pride' would prove unsatisfying; 'pride' means 'self-esteem', 'self-respect' and refers to a high opinion of one's own importance, dignity, qualities or superiority, sometimes even conceit. *Orgullo*, however, carries a further nuance of 'cultural, collective pride', a solid sense of belonging to a whole, which is fundamental for one's sense of self (Maduro, 2012:4).

Castellano offers other interesting examples: *alma* cannot be simply translated as 'soul' because "it is a million things. It's passion, it's spirit", then, *respeto* "in *Latino* culture means total devotion to the elderly as the greatest repositories of wisdom and connection to the past. [...] Likewise, 'mother' in English is somebody's mom, but *madre* connects you to spiritual things, the Virgin Mary, [...] to be disrespectful to your *madre* is a sacrilege" (Castellano in Magagnini, 1998:74).

The following example found in Kong's *Hybrid Theory* well illustrates the tendency to associate languages to specific semantic fields: "Hey Dad, I remember sitting in *abuelita's cocina* [grandma's kitchen] when we were little, and we were drinking a *taza de café* [cup of coffee]" (Kong, 2003:20).

As noted above, family bonds and the cherished objects of tradition are expressed in Spanish.

Not surprisingly, idiomatic expressions and popular sayings are normally in the original language; for example, the expression  *echar pa'lante*  is, as Stavans observes, deeply rooted in Latin culture and consciousness echoing the long-lasting hardships immigrants had to face in the United States (Stavans, 2003:17).

Moreover, “Culture-specific items” such as food or cultural institutions, are considered as borrowings (Romaine, 1985:131).

Food is another area that is primarily rendered in Spanish. Maduro notices that this is explained by the impossibility to find an accurate corresponding translation of Latino traditional dishes, ingredients and recipes (Maduro, 2012). The example offered by Anzaldúa is telling in this sense: “Homemade white cheese sizzling in a pan, melting inside a folded *tortilla* [corn pancake]. My sister Hilda’s hot, spicy *menudo* [Mexican dish], chile [chilli] Colorado making it deep red, pieces of *panza* [belly] and hominy floating on top” (Anzaldúa, 20002:260).

Yet, beyond the purely linguistic need for a translation equivalent, there is often an element of nostalgia and affection for one’s birthplace that emerges when food vocabulary is sprinkled within bilingual discourse. Hence, an accurate and complete approach to Spanglish always needs to bring together linguistic and cultural factors, which are inseparable.

Overall, we can conclude that both languages in contact, in this specific case English and Spanish, gain in possibilities of expression.

### **2.3.2.3) Calques**

Calques are direct translations of words or entire phrases from one language into the other one. In other words, they are literal translations of either words or phrases that incorporate the syntax of one language into another.

Calques are one of the key components of Spanglish together with the aforementioned morphologically and phonologically assimilated borrowings, and their use among U.S. Latinos is significantly widespread. In particular, they usually occur when importing

idiomatic expressions or verbal phrases, especially from English into Spanish (Litvina, 2001; Olague, 2003; Montes-Alcalá, 2009).

Examples of syntactic calques widely used among Chicanos and Nuyoricans are *llamar pa´trás* (literal translation of “to call back”), *está p´arriba de ti* (literal translation of “it’s up to you”) or *correr para gobernador* (literal translation of “to run for governor”) (Montes-Alcalá, 2009:106).

As far as lexical calques are concerned, the number of Spanish verb + noun (VN) compounds resulting from the calquing of English words are numerous: *rascacielos* (‘skyscraper’), *limpiaparabrisas* (‘windscreen wiper’), among many others.

As Pountain explains, these creations represent a further exploitation of a long established pattern that produced words such as *sacamuélas* (‘tooth puller’). Interestingly, Pountain also observes that such VN compounds are not entirely random; certain verbs are more likely to participate in these lexical formations, typically those that enjoy a high frequency in the language and have monosyllabic stems. For example, the following stems are extremely productive: *saca-*, *salva-*, *sopla-*, *tapa-*, *tira-*, *torna-* and *traga-* (Pountain, 1999).

To conclude, even though calques cannot be regarded as an innovative phenomenon, the close and continuing contact between Spanish and English in the United States is encouraging a greater development of this linguistic process.

#### **2.3.2.4) Neologisms**

Dynamism is a distinctive feature of language contact and it has given birth to neologisms, that is to say newly coined words or expressions used with a new meaning. In the case of Spanglish, these words are neither English nor Spanish, but an interesting product of the conflation of both languages. A telling example is the word *lipistiquiado*: it is an adjective, which means “completely covered with lipstick”, it stems from the combination of the English noun ‘lipstick’ and the Spanish past participle ending *-ado* and does not have a single-word equivalent in either parent language (Stavans, 2003:165).

### 2.3.3) Morpho-syntactic mutations

Affixation is the most common morphological phenomenon that occurs in Spanglish. It is the process of forming a new term by adding a morpheme (affix) to a word, either to obtain a plural (e.g. tomato → tomatoes) or to create a word with a different meaning or belonging to a different semantic category. The two principal types of subsets are prefixation and suffixation, which respectively correspond to the addition of a morpheme before or after a word (e.g. complete → incomplete; use → useless, paint → painter).

According to Olague's study *Towards New Dialects: Spanglish in the United States* (Olague, 2003), the most common type of affixation found in Spanglish is suffixation. Gender inflection is often borrowed from Spanish and applied to English nouns and, occasionally, to adjectives. Spanglish is often characterised by the importation of the Spanish singular masculine morpheme *-o* (and less frequently the singular feminine *-a*) to English nouns (Olague, 2003). Accordingly, "dog" becomes *dogo* and "root" is *roota* in Spanglish (Hill, 2003). Nonetheless, things are further complicated since Spanglish words may sometimes have a different gender compared to the original Spanish noun, especially when they designate, as Maduro notes, an inanimate object or an abstract concept. For instance, while in Spanish "market" is *mercado*, in Spanglish the gender changes producing the feminine *marketa* (Maduro, 2012).

An additional and highly common case of suffixation is the use of the Spanish diminutive *-ito/-ita*, which is an idiosyncratic characteristic of Latin American Spanish. Through this process, "little dog", for example, becomes *doguito*.

Moreover, verbal endings are also frequent imports, both in English-based or in Spanish-based Spanglish varieties. Olague explains that the infinitive ending *-ar*, which at times becomes *-ear* ("to flip" = 'to go insane' becomes *flipar* or *flipear*), or the past participle *-ado/-ada* belong to this category (Olague, 2003).

Furthermore, also the addition of both Spanish definite and indefinite articles to English nouns has become another peculiar feature of Spanglish. By virtue of this process, unlike English words, Spanglish names are often characterised by gender and number; *el roofo* for the neutral 'roof' is, for instance, one of the most largely used Spanglish terms.

Morphological and syntactic changes in a language as a consequence of language contact are reduced in number compared to nouns and considerably more difficult to be permanently integrated into a linguistic system.

A number of Hispanic linguists are, nonetheless, seriously worried that the continuous contact with English in the United States will irreparably jeopardise the essence of Spanish (Molinero, 1998; González Echevarría, 2008). Criado (member of the Real Academia Española from 1981 to his demise in 2002) produced in 1966 an ambitious work to examine the effects of the impact of English on Spanish at all grammatical levels. Concerning syntax, he expressed his absolute consternation at English colonisation of Spanish, foreseeing the creation of sentences such as *la cama no había sido dormido en* (influenced by the English structure: ‘the bed had not been slept in’) (Lorenzo, 1996). Yet, similar assumptions are fairly extreme and unlikely to occur in the forthcoming decades.

## CHAPTER 3

### Literature in Spanglish

The complex sociocultural, ethnic, economic and linguistic dynamics ensuing from migrations are treated with depth and from a variety of perspectives in literature. In particular, the present paper will focus on three short stories by U.S. Latino authors, namely “La Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” by Gary Francisco Keller, “El bacalao viene de más lejo y se come aquí” by Aurora Levins Morales, and “Pollito Chicken” by Ana Lydia Vega.

For a complete understanding of these works - including the sociocultural context in which they were produced, the intended audience, the communicative goals and the linguistic devices employed - it is essential to take into account the literary tradition that preceded their publication since it substantially contributed to shape the authors’ perception of Latino identity.

#### **3.1) The origins of Mexican-American literature**

As illustrated in the first chapter, *pachucos* were Mexican-American working class migrants wearing the so-called “zoo-suits”; during the 40s, they became the first active protagonists of important sociocultural claims; in particular, they challenged normative definitions of femininity and, in general, they committed to question cultural and gender norms to assert their own distinct identity as Mexican-Americans. The manifestation of *pachuco* awareness is at the root of the Chicano movement. Unlike Caribbean immigrants in New York, the *chicano* was not a stranger in an unfamiliar land, but rather an outcast in his own land. Chicanos, which is American-born people with Mexican descent, had a strong sense of ‘home’ in a land that had been turned into a hostile territory by historical and political forces that went back to the mid XIX century, as noted in the first chapter.

The *chicano* represents the *mestizo*, the Mexican-indigenous American who is deemed as both too European (or American) to be indigenous, and too indigenous to be European or American. The *chicano* is, therefore, the embodiment of a mixed race, but also, as Morales underlines, of a specific class sensibility (Morales, 2002:55). *Chicanos*

belong neither to the Mexican light-skinned ruling elite, nor to the U.S. white working class. They express an identity in-between, a middle ground in constant oscillation. Among the most significant Mexican-American contributions to the emergence of Spanglish culture in the 50s, the novel *Pocho* by José Antonio Villareal is worth consideration. The novel, published in 1959, is one of the first Chicano novels and it received wide recognition. The author analyses the Mexican-American feeling of estrangement when plunged in U.S. modern society, together with a sense of guilt and self-denial when immigrants tried to participate in that new reality. Moreover, the book explores with remarkable depth and sensitivity the intense conflict experienced by young Mexican-Americans such as the protagonist, Richard, between loyalty to family traditions and attraction to new ideas, the struggle to achieve adulthood as young men caught between, and influenced by, two worlds. *Pocho* shows two fronts that are personified in the figures of a father (Juan Rubio) and his son (Richard). Richard grows up in a multicultural, working-class neighbourhood, with families having Portuguese, Spanish, Anglo American, Japanese and Italian ancestries. The search for identity finally finds its proper scope in a transnational horizon, in multilingualism and multiculturalism, which stand against nationalisms on both sides of Mexico-U.S. border.

There are various possible interpretations of the title: the term *pocho*<sup>7</sup> literally means 'rotten'. The word *pocho* also means 'pale', 'sick', thus, it may suggest the dizziness felt by migrants pulled back and forth across the border by a desire to embrace the dynamic North American lifestyle, while retaining their Mexican-indigenous roots.

Additionally, *pocho* is a word used in Mexico for Mexicans who have adopted U.S. customs and who are perceived as traitors of the authentic Mexican culture.

The bildungsroman appears extremely innovative within the nationalist literary traditions of both the United States and Mexico since the protagonist, a second generation immigrant, undertakes a process of discovery towards a more complex and nuanced sense of self when confronted with two distinct, although closely connected, world civilizations.

Sandra Cisneros is another renowned voice among Mexican-American authors. Drawing from her own experience, she explores issues of migration, identity and biculturalism. Her first acclaimed novel *The House on Mango Street* (1984), her short story collection *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991) and her subsequent

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<sup>7</sup> Real Academia Española. Diccionario de la Lengua Española. [www.dle.rae.es](http://www.dle.rae.es)

works earned her numerous Awards in recognition of her efforts in investigating and giving visibility to Chicano identity.

Helena María Viramontes, Gloria Velásquez and Alicia Gáspar de Alba are also some of the most influential writers in Chicano Literature. Employing both poetry and prose, they deal with issues of cultural identity, assimilation, generational and gender conflicts and hybridity.

### **3.2) The origins of Puerto Rican-American literature**

Felicia Fahey points out in her essay “Beyond the island: Puerto Rican Diaspora in America and América” (Fahey, 2001) that Puerto Rican narratives have mainly focused on national issues, in particular on imperialistic forces and on the ethnic, geographic and cultural specificity of the island, omitting, however, the large diaspora population who has further complicated the essence of Puerto Rican identity.

Notwithstanding this, she highlights a new trend in Puerto Rican literature, which is a growing concern about issues of diaspora and multifaceted identity, inviting to widen the perspective far beyond the strictly insular or Nuyorican identity. Such recent efforts over the representation of Puerto Rican identity can only be understood within the context of the historical forces that keep shaping Puerto Rican identity in profound ways, from Spanish colonial rule, U. S. imperialism in the Caribbean and the subsequent relationships between the island and the United States (Fahey, 2001).

### **Literary history of Puerto Rico**

Puerto Rico is a territory that until 1898 was a Spanish colony; it experienced autonomy only for a few weeks before being recolonized by the United States. Once Puerto Rico became a U.S. possession, Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship in 1917 and it became a commonwealth in 1952.

Therefore, as Schoultz notes, Puerto Rico can be considered the oldest colony in the world, passing from the Spanish political map to that of the United States after the Spanish-American War (Schoultz, 1998). Although the takeover of Puerto Rico was an act of colonialism, Fahey observes that not all Puerto Ricans were against the partial absorption to the U.S. since those who benefitted from the economic and political ties to the United States applauded the occupation (Fahey, 2001).

Notwithstanding this, numerous artists and intellectuals strenuously opposed incorporation to the United States and played a crucial role in the development of Puerto Rican nationalist identity. Much twentieth century literature centred on calls for independence, so much so that the birth of the so-called *puertorriqueñidad* can be traced back to that period, when writers strongly rejected assimilation programs emphasising the divide and even incompatibility between Puerto Rican and U.S. cultures. As documented by Dominguez, numerous anti-assimilationist figures appeared after 1898, reaffirming the distinctive Puerto Rican heritage, culture and language, among them José de Diego (1866-1959), Luis Llorens Torres (1878-1944), and Luis Palés Matos (1898-1959) with his afro-Caribbean poetry (Dominguez, 2010). Nonetheless, the initial seeds of the above-mentioned feeling of *puertorriqueñidad* stem from the resistance to Spanish colonial rule during the XIX century.

Under Spanish colonial power, Puerto Rican literature did not emerge until the second half of the nineteenth century with works such as *El jíbaro* (1849), where author Manuel Alonso centres on Puerto Rican local culture, and the nationalist poetry by José Gautier Benítez (1851-1880) who presents the island as a beloved birthplace.

Both *autonomistas* and *independentistas* were advocates of Puerto Rican self-governance and literature produced a national imaginary based on a romantic journey to the interior of the island, taking the *jíbaro* as the icon of Puerto Rican authentic identity (Laguerre, Melón, 1968). This inward motion reflected the desire to find something essentially Puerto Rican, even if it also engendered a hierarchy between the population of the countryside and the belittled inhabitants of the coast (Fahey, 2001). Afterwards, when Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States as a tribute of war, the search for *puertorriqueñidad* united the *autonomistas* and the *independentistas* who had previously held different positions about the form of government they envisioned for the future of the island. *Puertorriqueñidad* was, thus, rekindled by nationalists to fight against the “Americanisation” process, accused of changing the foundation of Puerto Rican society. The issue of Puerto Rican identity remained central in literature and writers such as Manuel Zeno Gandía expressed their preoccupation about the decline of the island’s culture and values under a new colonial power in landmark works such as *Crónicas de un mundo enfermo*.

The figure of the the *jíbaro* was, then, resurrected in the 1930s and further idealised; no longer a sign of backwardness, the *jíbaro* became “a symbol of a pure, rural,

traditional Puerto Rican essence untouched by the transformations brought about by the United States” (Fahey, 2001:8).

Between 1930 and 1950, the moment marked by the greater political instability on the island, nationalists successfully spread a sense of nationhood and determined the prevailing representation of Puerto Ricans. While the island was undergoing profound transformations - industrialization, the decline of rural economy, cultural and linguistic assimilation policies and the growing migration to the United States - , the national imaginary proposed by Puerto Rican literature nostalgically turned to those white Hispanic roots that had long been refused during the Spanish colonial era. The search for identity characterised by this feeling of *hispanophilia* found its major and most influential expression in literature. Most writers, as Fahey observes, adhered to this Eurocentric conception of Puerto Rican culture (Fahey, 2001).

The 1930s were a period of socio-political dynamism: intellectuals strove to abolish compulsory English-language instruction in public schools and rejuvenated the political scene after a period of stagnation. However, both the nostalgic return and transformation of the *jíbaro* into a figure of folk culture in an attempt to recover an idyllic past and "pure" essence, and the endeavour to resume *hispanophilia*, disregarded the complex fabric of Puerto Rican society. The recourse to Spanish culture, language and traditions obscured social and ethnic differences that had contributed substantially to shape Puerto Rican identity over the centuries. Furthermore, with the reaffirmation of the traditional patriarchal Spanish family, women's public voice and struggle for equal rights were silenced. Hence, this attempt to universalise a largely Hispanic character represented a powerful means to sustain repression, preventing any emancipatory opportunity for African-Puerto Ricans, women and the emerging working class. The elite aimed to maintain the white, European cultural hegemony, suppressing African and Caribbean influences on Puerto Rican culture. This renewed notion of nationhood proved fragile as it failed to embrace the distinctive many-sided cultural heritage that lies at the core of Puerto Rican identity. Such simplification of Puerto Rican character continued throughout the forties and fifties, when conservative authors, such as Alfaro Díaz, resorted to the *jíbaro* as a major symbol of national identity (Maldonado, 1969; Fahey, 2001).

The 1960s inaugurated a second phase that has continued through the century up to the present day, characterised by a severe criticism of *hispanophilia* and by the attempt to redefine Puerto Rican cultural identity.

Already in the 1930s, poet Palés Matos had been among the first intellectuals who had sharply criticised the Eurocentric construction of Puerto Rican identity which viewed the core of Puerto Rican culture as Hispanic. Conversely, he developed the theory of *antillanismo*, which reevaluated the role of black and mulatto populations promoting Afro-Antillean identity (African slaves had been shipped over to work in Puerto Rican sugarcane plantations and had obtained freedom only in 1873). Matos radically revised Puerto Rico's cultural geography; first of all, he placed Puerto Rico within the basin of the Caribbean, whereas the advocates of *hispanophilia* denied such an identification overlooking the important presence of black populations along the coastline and considering the island as an insular appendage of Spain. Moreover, Matos highlighted that Puerto Rico was not only geographically but also culturally tied to Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Hence, despite an undeniable tendency to poeticise African culture, Matos' contribution to a change in the hegemonic representation of Puerto Rican's Europeanised essence cannot be underestimated. Although his thought had little impact at the time, *antillanismo*, his rejection of Eurocentric notions of culture would become the predominant stance shared by artists and intellectuals in the 60s and 70s.

Even though Puerto Rico stands as an exception in the pro-independence movements that pervaded most Latin American countries from the struggle led by Simón de Bolívar in the first decades of the XIX century to the Cuban revolution (1953-59), in the 1960s a growing number of intellectuals started turning to those events as important points of reference and inspiration. Maldonado, for instance, stressed the disconnection between Puerto Rico and the rest of Latin America due to an alarming process of assimilation to the cultural sphere of the United States.

Maldonado's voice was not isolated and, as Fahey documents, Puerto Ricans became increasingly attuned to the burgeoning socio-political movements that marked the history of Latin America and the United States during the 60s, from the Civil Rights movement in the U.S., the student movement and subsequent massacre at Tlatelolco in Mexico City, to the worldwide demonstrations against the Vietnam War. "These struggles for political freedom, cultural recognition, and equal rights contributed to a

state of critical consciousness to which intellectuals, students, and artists involved in Puerto Rican politics were hardly immune” (Fahey, 2001).

This changed cultural environment allowed for a more analytical investigation of Puerto Rico cultural roots, leading to the complete redefinition of the island’s identity, which undermined the predominant Hispanophile tendency. In particular, the works by authors such as Rosario Ferré, Manuel Ramos Otero, Luis Rafael Sánchez, Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, Magali Garcia Ramis and Ana Lydia Vega were instrumental in questioning and opposing hegemonic national representations. Furthermore, a new period of communication between the island and the rest of Latin America was fostered by Rosario Ferré’s literary magazine *Zona de carga y descarga* (1972-75) and by Nilita Vientós’ journal *Sin nombre* (1970-1985), which both contributed to end the previous literary insularity. Overall, intellectuals directly addressed the cultural and political situation of Puerto Rico and the effects of massive migration to the United States on Puerto Rican identity.

The 70s and 80s saw a new development of Matos’ *antillanismo* based on the importance of African heritage in shaping Puerto Rican culture. This perception of Puerto Rican identity not only had a crucial bearing on artistic and intellectual currents on the island, but it also had a pivotal impact on Puerto Rican culture in the United States, influencing, for instance, the salsa music by Willie Colón and Rubén Blades (Stavans, 2003).

In the latest decades, critics have identified a twofold perspective in Puerto Rican literature: on the one hand, Puerto Rican literature produced by island authors and, on the other hand, the more recent Puerto Rican literature written in the United States by migrants’ descendants (Fahey, 2001; Morales, 2002).

Puerto Ricans are divided by the contradiction of being, at the same time, Latin American and U.S. citizens, swallowed into U.S. orbit, but culturally and linguistically different from North Americans. The development of national identity in Puerto Rico and, most of all, the definition of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens have been interestingly reflected in literature (Dominguez, 2010).

Puerto Rican literature on the island has focused during the XX century on the recurrent major issues of cultural and national identity and, at a later stage, diaspora. Isabelo Zenón’s *Narciso descubre su trasero* (1974) and José Luis González’s *El país de cuatro pisos: notas para una definición de la cultura puertorriqueña* (1980) belong to a growing body of literary works that furthered a complete rupture with the elite

dominant constructions of national space. Both authors addressed issues of class struggle, racial discrimination and gender oppression. González, for example, rejected the *jíbaro* as the symbol of Puerto Rican character and replaced it with the working class, which he viewed as the real embodiment of a collective identity.

Puerto Rico is a country where over forty percent of the population has left to work in the major cities of the United States. Consequently, as Dominguez notes, Puerto Rican literature has been strongly influenced by Puerto Rico's history of colonisation and massive migratory waves during the twentieth century (Dominguez, 2010).

Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* (1989) is a highly interesting attempt to reimagine Puerto Rican popular culture acknowledging the central role of Puerto Rican migrants. The protagonist, a bolero singer who emigrated to New York in his youth, is a figure from Puerto Rican diaspora used to supersede the folkloric figure of the *jíbaro*. Similarly, an increasing number of writers began to explore the nature of diaspora identity as fragmented, mobile and usually characterised by a sense of deep nostalgia (Fahey, 2001; Burgos, 2008).

The beginnings of Puerto Rican literature in the United States can be traced back to the 40s with pioneering works such as *Memorias* by Bernardo Vega and *Puerto Rican Sketches and other Stories* by Jesús Colón. It is not, however, until the 1960s and 1970s that a more solid literature written by and about Puerto Ricans in the United States can be found. It is what literary critics have widely defined as 'Nuyorican Literature', which has been primarily concerned with the socio-economic conditions of Puerto Rican immigrants, the problematic relationships with other ethnic groups, and the complex issue of second-generation U.S. Puerto Ricans' identity. In particular, it is the publication of *Down these mean streets* (1967) by Piri Thomas that inaugurated the beginning of a literature dealing with life in *El Barrio*<sup>8</sup> and the living conditions of Puerto Ricans in the United States.

Piri Thomas<sup>9</sup>' memoir *Down These Mean Streets* is also the most important early literary manifestation of Spanglish. He was a second-generation immigrant, a New Yorker of Puerto Rican and Cuban descent. In his work, he documents the sharp-edge racial discrimination he was exposed to in the Spanish Harlem area of New York City, which was troubled by crime and violence. The dark colour of his skin was an explicit

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<sup>8</sup> *El Barrio* indicates the area of the Spanish Harlem in New York.

<sup>9</sup> Birth name Juan Pedro Tomas.

marker of his mixed identity and *Down These Mean Streets* represents the hard struggle to define racial identity going beyond rigid categories and acknowledging a multifaceted cultural heritage.

As Morales highlights, Thomas' free use of Spanglish, which consists in the presence of untranslated Spanish words scattered through Black English, was ground-breaking (Morales, 2002). Hence, it can be noted that from the very beginning Spanglish mirrored the effort to define identity rejecting North American white/black dichotomy. Nicholasa Mohr published *Nilda* in 1973, which describes Puerto Rican urban experience from the perspective of an adolescent girl, thus providing a different vision of Puerto Rican life not limited to street gangs, drugs, and violence. Both Thomas and Mohr, are prolific writers who are still publishing and collaborating with their communities.

During the 1980s, a group of politically-involved writers, mostly poets and playwrights, emerged in the New York area. Connected to the Nuyorican Poets Café and to the social and political movement of the Young Lords, they produced a socially committed literature. Some outstanding figures of this literary movement were Lucky Cienfuegos, Pedro Pietri, Felipe Luciano, Miguel Piñero, Tato Laviera and Miguel Alagrín. Pietri was one of the most committed supporters who helped found and sustain the Nuyorican Poets Café, an acclaimed centre for oppositional arts and literature. Nuyorican poetry aimed to raise awareness about Puerto Rican experience in *El Barrio*, exposing the hardships faced and the discrimination endured.

Furthermore, Nuyorican poetry has been essential for the ripening of Spanglish literature; it started as street poetry based on everyday spoken language and characterised by strong ties to jazz and salsa music (especially the poetry by Tato Laviera). It employed both Spanish and English side by side, a combination which was the product of poetic experimentation, but that also served as an important expression of Puerto Rican fragmented identity.

*Puerto Rican Obituary*<sup>10</sup>, for instance, is a highly poignant poem by Pietro Pietri that was first read in 1969 at a gathering in support of the Young Lords Party, an anti-imperialist Latino youth group in New York whose ideas were passionately upheld by Pietri. Akin to the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords were activists who supported demands for fair and affordable housing and decent health care for Puerto Rican immigrants. They shared socialist views being strongly against war and denouncing

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1, p. 135.

oppressions and discriminations worldwide. As Foster, the Editor of the socialist magazine *Monthly Review*, notices, even though The Young Lords dissolved in the mid-1970s, Pedro Pietri continued his activity as a radical activist and poet, two roles that he viewed as indissolubly linked (Foster, 2004).

Pedro Pietri was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in 1944 and raised in Harlem (El Barrio). After high school, he was drafted into U.S. army and served in Vietnam where the dramatic events he witnessed profoundly changed his mind-set. He returned to the United States as a fierce opponent of the Vietnam War and of the American government, which he identified as the real enemy to be defeated. It was precisely the rage against the system that spawned *Puerto Rican Obituary*, first published in a collection of his works with the same title by *Monthly Review Press* in 1973. Petri's poetry was firmly and inherently political and *Puerto Rican Obituary* was warmly welcomed by radical Puerto Rican activists in New York, who soon made it into an anthem for U.S. Puerto Ricans who desperately strove against hardships.

In particular, in 'Puerto Rican Obituary'<sup>11</sup> Pietri exposes, through humour and cutting wit, the hollowness of the American dream for those poor Puerto Ricans that arrived during 'The Great Migration'. The ubiquitous names of Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga and Manuel are used by Pietri as a strategy to reflect on the cyclical nature of migrant life.

The poem addresses issues of language and economics that directly concerned Puerto Ricans' life in New York. The principal reason behind its popularity is contained in the concluding lines: there is not hopelessness at the end of Piertri's reflection and, although he stresses that Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga and Manuel all died, he also emphasises that they died "never knowing that they are beautiful people" (*Puerto Rican Obituary*, 1969)<sup>12</sup>. The conclusion is a touching and intense call to "make their Latino souls the only religion of their race" (*Puerto Rican Obituary*, 1969), in other words, to recognise and preserve Latin cultural heritage as a fundamental component of migrants' identity. Most importantly, he echoes the Young Lords slogan of "*Puerto Rico es en mi Corazon*" (Puerto Rico is in my heart), to highlight the beauty of both the mother country and its people. The power, insight and message of "Puerto Rican Obituary" have continued to resonate among activists all over the world, so much so that at the end of 1990s, the *New York Times* wrote: "three decades ago, a poem ignited

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<sup>11</sup> See appendix 1

<sup>12</sup> Poetry Foundation. [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)

a movement” (Foster, 2004:2). Pietri died of cancer in 2004, but he still occupies an important place in Puerto Rican cultural history since he contributed significantly to a literary tradition of compromised writers who explored with great depth and poignancy the lives of post-Great Migration generations.

Nuyorican poetry has given illuminating insight into the manifold contrasts between Puerto Rican and North American cultures, investigating the experience of bicultural individuals. Moreover, these poems show an interesting experimentation with words, images and sounds from both cultures, thus paving the path for the emergence of U.S. Puerto Rican literature in Spanglish.

Famous Puerto Rican poet Victor Hernández Cruz is among those who extensively introduced in his poetic texts literal translations, or calques, from Spanish into English, so as to enrich the English language with new poetic images. *Puerto Rican Joke Riddle Told in English*, for instance, is a one-line poem that reads: “Can he take the can”, a linguistic play on the Spanish idiomatic phrase “*dar la lata*”, which means to “to be a long-winded person”, or “to be a nuisance”. Hernández refers to “tropicalisation” (which was also the title of his 1976 collection of poems), that is the process by which different elements of Latin American culture penetrate North American culture as an aesthetic response by Latinos living in the United States, prompting, therefore, a transformation of U.S. society and life from within the Latino community (Hernández, 1982).

The urban experience of Puerto Ricans is also represented in U.S. Puerto Rican theatre, Miguel Piñero standing out as one of the best-known Puerto Rican playwrights. His play *Short Eyes*, which earned him the New York Drama Critics Award for Best American Play in 1974, vividly depicts difficult interethnic relations and, especially, Puerto Rican strenuous survival in North American prisons.

In the 80s and 90s, Puerto Rican theatre was mainly interested in the dramatic representation of the daily experience of racism, crime, poverty and drugs. Other Puerto Rican playwrights in the northeast area are Federico Fraguado, Cándido Tirado, Richard Irizarry, Ivette M. Ramírez, Alberto Sandoval and Carmen Rivera (Morales, 2002).

In more recent times, plays have tended to examine characters with psychological depth, always tackling the complex relationships with other ethnic groups and within the community. Important works about the development of U.S. Puerto Rican identity have been produced by writers such as Edward Rivera (*Family Installments*, 1983),

Esmeralda Santiago (*When I Was Puerto Rican*, 1993), Ed Vega (*Mendoza's Dreams*, 1987), Judith Ortiz Cofer (*The Line of the Sun*, 1989), Abraham Rodríguez Jr. (*Tales of the South Bronx: The Boy without a Flag*, 1992) and Ernesto Quiñonez (*Bodega Dreams*, 2000). Although they all reveal divergent perspectives on Puerto Rican identity, usually because of the authors' different experiences, most of them assign the island an essential role in the definition of Puerto Ricans' cultural past, while they simultaneously express the need to find a new home in the United States.

In continuity with these efforts, contemporary writers are increasingly engaged in the complex and arduous struggle to redefine their identity as U.S. Puerto Ricans as the product of the interaction of cultures on North American soil. However, there are still some recurrent concerns such as racism, ethnic stereotypes, social discrimination, isolation, and lack of respect and understanding by mainstream society.

Puerto Ricans living in New York have faced the stigma of being what salsa musician and activist Willie Colón calls "legal aliens". Nevertheless, as it clearly emerges from Aurora Levins Morales' *El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí*, the return trip to the island often reminds Nuyoricans that they cannot totally fit in their home country.

The same idea of lacking a sense of home in Puerto Rico is expressed by poet Miguel Piñero in *This Is Not the Place Where I Was Born*, where he suggests that Nuyoricans cannot feel a sense of belonging to the island because they are met with hostility: "Nuyoricans come in search of spiritual identity / are greeted with profanity" (Piñero in González, 1994:114). In his poem, there is no Puerto Rico to return to because the island has been conquered by the military and corporate interests of United States. Consequently, the lyric I feels more Puerto Rican in New York where his political activism gives him a sense of identity: "Nuyoricans are fighting and dying for in Newark, Lower East Side South Bronx where the fervor of being puertorriqueños is not just Rafael Hernández" (Piñero in González, 1994:114).

The music of Rafael Hernández (alias Daniel Santos) evokes a close emotional bond with the homeland. Yet, both Miguel Piñero and Aurora Levins Morales highlight that the ties created by music and folk culture are not enough to define identity, which is also forged by sociocultural and political complexities.

The activity of Puerto Rican female writers in the United States has grown significantly since the 1970s, even if many of them either live or were raised in places other than New York City (Mankiller, Mink, Navarro, et. Al., 1998). Nicholasa Mohr is one of the

best-known writers of prose fiction for adults as well as young adults and children. Mohr's novels and short-story collections include *Nilda*, *El Bronx Remembered*, *In Nueva York*, *Felita*, *Going Home*, *Rituals of Survival: A Woman's Portfolio*, and *Growing Up Inside the Sanctuary of My Imagination*. Sandra María Esteves has achieved recognition as a poet, especially with her poetry anthologies *Yerba Buena*, *Tropical Rains*, and *Bluestown Mockingbird Mambo*.

Outside New York City, authors such as Judith Ortiz Cofer, Carmen de Monteflores, and Esmeralda Santiago have produced important autobiographical accounts of migrant experience. Ortiz Cofer's *The Line of the Sun*, *Silent Dancing* and *The Latin Deli* have been acclaimed by critics and her poetry includes the collections *Terms of Survival* and *Reaching for the Mainland*. Monteflores' autobiographical novel *Cantando bajito/Singing Softly* and Santiago's *When I Was Puerto Rican* has been positively welcomed by readers (Caulfield, Davis, 2007).

Aurora Levins Morales and her mother, Rosario Morales, belong to the wide spectrum of female Puerto Rican writers in the United States who have dealt with the experience of migration, with a special attention drawn to the oppressions faced by women by reason of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge the contribution of those writers who write primarily in Spanish and who are frequently better known among Puerto Rican literary circles, though their works have sometimes been translated into English.

All in all, a raising consciousness of Latina identity has led to a composite literary discourse, which explores U.S. Latinas' sense of self bringing together a whole set of individual, collective and interethnic considerations.

At the crossroads of the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America, U.S. Puerto Ricans will most likely continue to be at the heart of lively debates concerning identity, as suggested by Fahey (Fahey, 2001).

As a result of the above considerations, we can underline the considerable impact that Puerto Rican and Mexican migration experiences have had on U.S. Latinos' literary works. Concerning language, Morales concludes that when U.S. Latinos began writing in Spanglish they were not inventing an artificial and artsy language from scratch, they were rather reproducing the language already spoken in everyday life (Morales, 2002:70).

Authors always select among a number of possibilities the literary strategies they deem the most effective to convey certain ideas and to achieve specific communicative purposes. It is worthwhile, thus, to dwell on the reasons that induce authors to employ Spanglish as a literary device.

The following section of the present paper will distinguish between the sociocultural motifs behind the writers' deliberate use of Spanglish as a means to convey a precise message to their addressees, and, at the same time, the function Spanglish has as a strategy within narrative discourse.

### 3.2) “Pollito Chicken” by Ana Lydia Vega

Ana Lydia Vega was born in 1946 in Santurce, Puerto Rico. Her best childhood friend was French and encouraged Vega to pursue her university degrees, including a P.h.D., at the University of Provence. Like her mother who was a schoolteacher, Vega taught French literature and Caribbean studies at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, retiring when she became a successful author. In Puerto Rico she was awarded the prestigious *Premio Casa de las Américas* for her second book *Encancaranublado y otros cuentos de naufragio* in 1981, and the *Premio Juan Rulfo* the following year. Vega’s third book, *Pasión de historias y otras historias de pasión* won the Juan Rulfo International Prize in 1984.

Despite her reputation as a writer, she is surprisingly almost unknown in the United States, only a few of her books in Spanish have been translated into English and her body of works, both in English and Spanish, is now out of print.

Being Puerto Rican, Ana Lydia Vega is an American citizen; she wrote her first eighteen novels in English, though she considers them unworthy of particular attention.

Vega’s fiction is as complex and contradictory as Puerto Rico itself. The key she has found to survive such an intricate social, cultural and political situation is humour, and her most impressive stories employ parody and nipping satire as major strategies.

Her first collection of short stories, *Virgenes y Mártires* (a collection of thirteen short stories, six of them by Carmen Lugo Filippi and one co-authored by Vega and Filippi) is written in a combination of Spanish and English, which reflects the bilingualism that lies at the core of U.S. Puerto Rican identity. This first collection of stories anticipates some of the central themes that would recur throughout her canon, namely, female oppression and agency in Puerto Rican society, U.S. colonialism, conflicts between genders and Caribbean identity in general.

Even her children book, *Celita y el Mangle Zapatero* (1998) centres on Puerto Rican identity that intertwines present-day life in the United States and history, myths and traditions; the protagonist, Celita, is a little Puerto Rican girl who lives in New York and spends the summer with her grandfather in Puerto Rico.

Ilan Stavans observes that the author recurrently resorts to memory as the privileged way to investigate Latinos’ idiosyncrasy. Then, concerning Vega’s style, he underlines that she has demonstrated a remarkable ability to combine parody and farce with depth of meaning, thus using satire to dilute the legacy of magical realism (Stavans in McMahan, 2013).

The present paper will centre on the short story *Pollito Chicken* which is contained in the collection *Virgenes y Mártires* published in 1981.

### **3.2.1.) “Pollito Chicken”, analysis:**

The story tells Suzie Bermiúdez’s trip back to her native Puerto Rico for vacation. Suzie is a young woman who works as a housing project secretary in New York. It has been ten years since she last visited San Juan, but being seduced by an advertising she sees in the travel agency of the building where she works, which represents the island as an idyllic place of sensual beauty, she leaves to return to her native town.

The story is characterised by a double-voiced discourse. Even though the speaking voice is that of an external third person omniscient narrator who recounts the events, we can notice an alternation between his/her comments and parts in which his/her voice is inflected with the protagonist’s emotions, thoughts and perceptions that inform the discourse. Besides reported direct discourse, which allows us to hear the exact words of the protagonist, it is also possible to plunge into her mind when the omniscient narrator reports Suzie’s thoughts and impressions. The principal technique employed to give access to Suzie’s consciousness is the free indirect discourse, as the following example shows: “*se dijo que ya había hecho reservations en el Conquistador y que Grandma bastante bitchy que había sido after all con ella y Mother diez años ago*” (Pollito Chicken, 76).

“Pollito Chicken” is all constructed on irony and, therefore, it is fundamental to distinguish between the voice of the protagonist, Suzie, and the voice of the narrator. Suzie always speaks English, both to her chief: “I really had a wonderful time” (Pollito Chicken, 75) and to the hotel employees in San Juan: “This is Miss Bermiúdez, room 306. Could you give me the bar, please?” (Pollito Chicken, 79). Even her thoughts are in English: “Such is life - *se dijo Suzie*” (Pollito Chicken, 77), but the free indirect discourse characterised by code-mixing reveals that she has a high proficiency of both languages.

From the beginning, we are given a description of Suzie as a woman who cares about her physical appearance trying to look attractive. This is conveyed by the “spike-heel” (Pollito Chicken, 75) she wears at work. Apart from the exchange between Suzie and

her chief, which is in English, “spike-heel” is the only English word in the first paragraph; its function is, therefore, worth analysing. Words are always the result of a choice on the part of the author, especially when he/she selects one between two languages.

“Spike-heel” substitutes the Spanish “*tacones de aguja*”, which would evoke the image of a seductive young woman as vividly as English does. The reason behind this linguistic choice becomes clearer continuing the narration; Suzie reflects the attitudes and ideas of the immigrant of Latin decent who has arrived in the United States and attempts to conform to North American behaviours and ideals of beauty. In light of this, “spike-heel” proves not to be an English word randomly slipped into the text, but a term that is charged of important connotations, it is a symbol of North American culture that the protagonist wants to adopt, of the ideal of the beautiful, self-confident career woman, which stands in sharp contrast to the stereotype of the Latin woman confined to the house and subjected to her husband. Consequently, we have a first example of the way Spanglish is employed as a communicative strategy, supporting Montés-Alcalá’s belief that code-switching serves specific pragmatical functions (Montés-Alcalá, 2009).

Since Suzie enthusiastically tells her chief about her holiday in Puerto Rico, the narrator addresses the imagined readers directly explaining his/her intention to recount them Suzie’s trip to San Juan.

The narrator uses a complex variety of Spanglish since he/she always code-switches below the sentence level, a process also known as code-mixing.

Interestingly, in the following passage we can notice that, although the narration is in Spanish, the words that describe the travel agency advertisement are in English:

*“Lo que la decidió fue el breathtaking poster de Fomento que vio en la travel agency del lobby de su building. El breathtaking poster mentado representaba una pareja de beautiful people holding hands en el funicular del Hotel Conquistador. Los beautiful people se veían tan deliriously happy y el mar tan strikingly blue y la puesta del sol – no olviemos la puesta del sol a la Winston tastes good - tan shocking pink [...]”* (Pollito Chicken, 75).

The feeling of deep nostalgia towards the native land expressed by texts such as “*The Latin Deli: An Ars Poetica*” by Ortíz Cofer (Whitaker, 1996:265-67), examined in the first chapter, is not what prompts Suzie to visit San Juan. She decides to return to her country of origin simply because of the travel agency poster that promotes Puerto Rico as a commodity for her consumption.

In describing the poster, it is as if the narrator adopted the perspective of the protagonist who is completely enticed by it. The English noun phrases composed by adjective + noun (e.g. “breathtaking poster”, “beautiful people”), and the adverbial phrases in English in which the adverb is followed by an adjective (e.g. “deliriously happy”, “strikingly blue”, “shocking pink”), reveal a subtle irony on the part of the narrator. It is as if English echoed catchphrases typical of advertising, which is an interesting strategy to show the naiveté of the first immigrants allured by North American consumer culture. The irony towards Latinos’ attraction to North American slogans is clearly hinted at by the narrator’s comment: “– *no olviemos la puesta del sol a la Winston tastes good* –” (Pollito Chicken, 75). Whilst in the previous lines the narrator represents Suzie’s impressions, here we hear his own voice. “Winston tastes good like a cigarette should” is one of the best-known American tobacco advertising campaigns; it is the enduring slogan that appeared in newspaper, magazine, radio, and television advertisements for Winston cigarettes from the brand's introduction in 1954 until 1972, featuring two beautiful, wealthy and in-love couples smoking while playing cards. The narrator is, therefore, suggesting with evident irony that Suzie is trying to make her world similar to the perfect reality shown by advertisements, without understanding that it is far from everyday life.

The first paragraph also describes how, in the attempt to assimilate to U.S. culture, Suzie has considerably distanced herself from her roots, even holding her countrymen in disdain:

*“A pesar de que no pasaba por el Barrio a pie ni bajo amenaza de ejecución por la Mafia, a pesar de que prefería mil veces perder un fabulous job antes que poner Puerto Ricans en las aplicaciones de trabajo y morir de hambre por no coger el Welfare o los food stamps como todos esos lazy, dirty, no-good bums que eran sus compatriotas, Suzie Bermiúdez, repito, sacó todos sus ahorros de secretaria de housing project de negros – que no eran mejor que los New York Puerto Ricans pero por lo menos no eran New York Puerto*

Ricans – *y abordó un 747 en raudó y uninterrupted flight hasta San Juan*  
(Pollito Chicken, 75-76)

The voice of the narrator comes to the fore, as “*repito*” and the parenthetical comment “– que no eran mejor que los New York Puerto Ricans pero por lo menos no eran New York Puerto Ricans –” evidence; the narrator shows that Suzie’s aversion towards Puerto Ricans is not based on logical reasons because although African Americans have the same economic difficulties, she is more willing to help them rather than her compatriots. This might be explained by the psychological mechanism of repression; we have already pointed out in the first chapter that between the 1920s and the 1950s immigrants struggled hard to assimilate at the cost of losing their heritage; English and the United States represented the possibility to achieve education and upward mobility, whereas Spanish symbolised ignorance and poverty.

When Suzie arrives in San Juan, the noisy crowd surrounding her clashes violently with the ideal image of the breathtaking poster she “desperately hold[s] on [to]” (Pollito Chicken, 76).

The following part reflects her thoughts via the technique of the free indirect discourse, which allows the reader to perceive her own reflections despite the presence of the third person narrative voice:

“On second thought *se dijo que había hecho* reservations *en el Conquistador y que Grandma bastante bithcy que había sido* after all *con ella y Mother diez años ago. Por eso Dad nunca había querido – además que Grandma no podía verlo ni en pintura porque tenía el pelo Kinky – casarse con Mother, por no cargar con la cruz de Grandma, siempre enferma con headaches y espasmos y athete’s foot y rheumatic fever y golondrinos* all over *mil other dolamas*” (Pollito Chicken, 76).

Unlike the previous excerpts, here the parenthetical comment is Suzie’s own, she remembers her childhood and the tensions between the members of her family as if she were expressing her thoughts aloud.

However, the narrator’s ironical perspective emerges immediately after, at the end of the paragraph:

*“Por eso fue también que Mother se había llevado a Suzie para New York y thank God, porque de haberse quedado en Lares, la pobre Mother se hubiera muerto antes de lo que se murió allá en el Bronx y de algo seguramente worse” (Pollito Chicken, 76).*

The narrator imagines what could have happened to Suzie’s mother if she had not moved to the United States, but his words are clearly humorous as they reflect the girl’s stereotypical ideas of Puerto Rico and the United States as, respectively, a place of suffering and criminality and a place of happiness and wealth.

Afterwards, the narrator continues revealing Suzie’s perspective about the life she would have had in Puerto Rico:

*“Pensó con cierto amusement en lo que hubiese sido de ella si a Mother no se lo ocurre la brilliant idea de emigrar. Se hubiera casado con algún drunken bastard de billar, de esos que nacen con la caneca incrustada en la mano y encierran a la fat ugly housewife en la casa con diez screaming kids entre los cellulitic muslos mientras ellos hacen pretty-body y le aplanan a la calle a cualquier shameless bitch. No thanks” (Pollito Chicken, 76)*

The stereotypes of Latino men as vulgar, overbearing and unfaithful husbands and of women as submissive wives confined to housework is deeply rooted in Suzie’s mind, as words such as “drunken bastard” and “encierran” (to lock) highlight.

Then, the narrator intervenes, always with veiled irony, to expose Suzie’s complete trust in the North American ideal representation of reality:

*“Cuando Suzie Bermiúdez se casara porque maybe se casaría para pagar menos income tax – sería con un straight All-American, Republican, church-going, Wall-Street businessman, como su jefe Mister Bumper porque esos sí que son good husbands y tratan a sus mujeres como real*

ladies *criadas con el manual de Amy Vanderbilt*<sup>13</sup> *y todo*” (Pollito Chicken, 76-77).

Unlike most speakers of Latin descent who use Spanish to talk about family and traditions (Kong, 2003; De Vito, 2004; Maduro, 2012), Vega’s protagonist mentions the members of her family in English. Additionally, in the time expression “*diez años ago*”, the English structure is preserved, whilst in Spanish it would be “*hace diez años*”, postponing the time reference. This is a clear example of how the two languages in contact influence each other; Suzie learned English and expresses herself in this language, but her thoughts show that Spanish is deeply rooted within her and she actually alternates both English and Spanish very fluently.

Considering the aforementioned excerpts, we can highlight that English words describe, from Suzie’s perspective, two opposite poles, namely life in Puerto Rico and in the United States. The sententious “No thanks” marks great distance between the image of the supposed Latin family where the “fat ugly housewife” takes care of her “screaming kids” while the “drunken bastard” of her husband entertains himself with a “shameless bitch” and, on the other hand, the idealised picture of a “straight All-American, Republican, church-going, Wall-Street businessman” who is a “good husband” and treats his wife as a “real lady”.

Suzie then wonders in San Juan and the narrator reports her impressions as she is positively surprised by the new infrastructures in Puerto Rico. This is one of the passages characterised by the highest irony on the part of the narrator; it is as if he entered her thoughts describing her perceptions, as the initial verb “*le pareció*” suggests. It is interesting to consider in which parts of the discourse the narrator switches from Spanish to English: “very encouraging” refers to Suzie’s comment about the urban transformation of Puerto Rico, “shopping centres” is probably in English because it immediately evokes North American consumer culture which has permeated also the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Then, the contemptuous description of the Communists is in English, “filthy, no-good Communist terrorists”, as well as “crap”, which refers to their ideas of independence.

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<sup>13</sup> Amy Vanderbilt was a famous American journalist and author, known especially for her books and TV and radio shows on manners, mores, and etiquette.

The protagonist's perspective emerges very clearly from her impressions, she attributes the improvement of Puerto Rico to the influence of the United States, which explains her severe criticism of any theory of independence.

As it happens in the previous parts of the story, English words are used to emphasise distance; Suzie represents the immigrant who has striven to adapt to North American society, assuming a highly critical view of her native land and concluding that her compatriots should only "*aprender a hablar good English, a recoger el trash que tiraban como savages en las calles y a comportarse como decent people*" (Pollito Chicken, 77). English words (e.g. "trash", "savages" and "decent people") reinforce the divide between the condition of ignorance and dirt of Puerto Rico, and the United States seen as the highest expression of order, education and improvement.

Once she reaches the Conquistador Hotel, Suzie starts behaving according to the idealised image of the beautiful young woman on vacation who wears a "sexy polkadot bikini" and uses North American cosmetics such as the Wild Auburn dye, a Curl-free hair conditioner, a red lipstick and perfume, enjoying a best-seller at the poolside.

It is interesting to note that Suzie tries to erase the same sign, her curly hair, which made her grandmother refuse her father, a behaviour she previously criticised.

Since she tries to replicate exactly what she saw on the "breathtaking poster", the narrator underlines her disappointment at the discovery that the funicular represented in the advertisement was out of order. Suzie has no option other than resorting to the swimming pool, "*abortando así su exciting sueño del breathtaking poster*" (Pollito Chicken, 77). The irony hinted by the English adjective "exciting" reveals the protagonist's ingenuousness in believing that the ideal reality projected by advertising can exist.

At the swimming pool, Suzie adopts a contemptuous attitude towards Puerto Ricans not paying them the slightest attention. Even the book she reads is a "best-seller *de turno*", as the narrator describes it, where a white girl is the victim of a black Haitian's Voodoo rites, which is a further sign of her alienation from Antillean heritage. It is as if Suzie were trying to fit the much-advertised North American representation of the attractive, educated and successful woman. Notwithstanding this, the evident boredom of the bestseller's clichés prompts her to close it and "*Suzie no tuvo más remedio que comenzar a inspeccionar los native specimens con el rabo del ojo*" (Pollito Chicken, 78), as the narrator humorously recounts.

Also the following comment “*Y - sería seguramente porque el poolside no era air-conditioned – fue así que nuestra heroína realized que los looks del bartender calentaban más que el sol de las three o’clock sobre un techo de zinc*” (Pollito Chicken, 78) exudes great irony. The reader is involved by the narrator in the complex task of understanding the real meaning lying beneath the surface of words. The ironical “*seguramente*” implies the opposite, which is that the “heroine” burns because of her desire towards the Puerto Rican bartender and certainly not due to the heat. The peak of humour is reached at the end of the story when Suzie, urged by her sexual desire, finally resolves to call him asking for room service and sleeps with him.

Although she initially disdained “Latin specimens”, hoping to see “*un rostro pecoso, un rubicondo crew-cut hacia el cua dirigir sus batientes eyelashes*” (Pollito Chicken, 78), her stereotypes of perfect masculine beauty are broken by her impulse.

Moreover, the “tímida y ladylike New York housing project secretary” (Pollito Chicken, 78) unfolds the nationalism that has always be latent in her, as proved by the shouting of “*¡Viva Puelto Rico Libreeeeeeeeeee!*” (Pollito Chicken, 79) in the exact moment of her orgasm. This final emotional and sexual outburst can be interpreted in Freudian terms as “the return of the repressed” (Pollito Chicken, 70).

The “base language” (Grosjean, 1982:129) of the narration is Spanish, with 330 English words scattered throughout the text, which contradicts Maduro’s stance that in English-Spanish bilingual discourse English is always the predominant language and that the mixture is, thus, “unbalanced by nature” (Maduro, 2012:5).

In light of the linguistic analysis of the text, we can notice that all English terms are preceded by Spanish articles. As it has been pointed out in the second chapter, unlike English, Spanglish is often characterised by gender inflection due to the influence of Spanish (Hill, 2003; Olague, 2003). The following noun phrases found in the story show how English words acquire the same gender of the Spanish equivalents: “*el surprise return*”, “*la travel agency*”, “*los beautiful people*”, “*el breathtaking poster*”, “*un fabulous job*”, “*las applications de trabajo*”, “*el Welfare*”, “*los loving arms*”, “*el countryside*”, “*el station-wagon*”, “*la brilliant idea*”, “*la fat ugly housewife*”, “*el trash*”, “*los arrangements*”, “*el sexy polkadot bikini*”, “*la white-sanded, palm-lined beach*”, “*un typical drink*”, “*los full-blood Americans*”, “*un awful hambrecito*”, “*unos primitive Voodoo rites*”, “*las three o’clock*”, “*el bartender*”, “*las platinum-frosted fingernails*”,

“los skyscrapers”, “una frozen strawberry”, “los hairs”, “el poolside” and “los eyeballs” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

Moreover, Maduro’s observation that Spanglish words may sometimes have a different gender compared to the original Spanish noun is confirmed by the following examples: “los Middle Ages” (*la Edad Media* in Spanish), “el pentagonal swimming-pool” (*la piscina pentagonal*), “los sunglasses” (*las gafas de sol*), “los looks” (*las miradas*), “los refreshing mauve bedsheets” (*las sábanas violetas refrescantes*) and “el de luxe suite” (*la suite de lujo*). As Maduro notes, this change in gender from Spanish to Spanglish can be found in particular when the terms designate an inanimate object or an abstract concept (Maduro, 2012:3).

As far as adjectives are concerned, there are 76 instances of noun phrases that comprise an English adjective followed by an English noun: “surprise return”, “native land”, “breathtaking poster”, “beautiful people”, “shocking pink”, “fabulous job”, “uninterrupted flight”, “loving arms”, “rheumatic fever”, “brilliant idea”, “drunken bastard”, “screaming kids”, “good husbands”, “real ladies”, “ravishing view”, “fantastic occasion”, “pentagonal swimming-pool”, “typical drink”, “full-blood Americans”, “quivering voice”, “naked body”, “native specimens”, “frozen strawberry” and “platinum-frosted fingernails” are some examples (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

There are also various instances of multiple adjectives preceding the noun, such as “full-blood, flower-shirt, Bermuda-Shorted Continentals”, “lazy, dirty, no-good bums”, “All-American, Republican, church-going, Wall Street business man”, “white-sanded, palm-line beach”, “Middle-class Suburban Americans”, “blushing young lady”, “fat ugly housewife” and “refreshing mauve bed sheets” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

English is a more concise language than Spanish, hence, the aforementioned noun phrases are probably in English in order to describe something or someone more immediately than it would have been with longer constructions, such as “*un americano de sangre pura, republicano, que va a la iglesia y trabaja como hombre de negocios en Wall Street*” (translating All-American, Republican, church-going, Wall Street business man), or “*playa de arena blanca bordeada de palmas*” (translating white-sanded, palm-line beach). This is what Pountain calls “economic motivation” (Pountain, 1999:10).

“Awful *hombrecito*” (Pollito Chicken, 78) is an exception since the adjective following the noun is in Spanish and not in English; this too might be explained through

Pountain's "economic motivation" which influences the choice of one language instead of the other. Here, the Spanish adjective "*hombrecito*" conveys with one single word a concept that, otherwise, would need two words in English, namely 'little man'. Likewise, "subtle *espadeo* de looks" is a figurative expression that vividly suggests the almost imperceptible but rapid exchanges between the eyes of Suzie and the bartender. Then, as noted above, in "exciting *sueño*" the English adjective is employed to reveal Suzie's imagination – it is to her that the holiday advertised in the poster seems "exciting" – and to expose her naiveté in believing that the poster might be true.

Interestingly, there are some instances in which the adjective is in Spanish, though the English syntactic order is respected and the adjective precedes the English noun. This structure appears ten times: "*vociferante* crowd", "*pobre* Mother", "*intempestivo* one-week leave", "*primer* down", "*meliflua* music", "*atléticos* Latin specimens", "*rubicondo* crew-cut", "*batientes* eyelashes", "*febril* rush", "*alborotoso* streetcar" and "*desbocado* marry-go-round" (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

Trying to identify the reason why the adjectives before the nouns are sometimes in English and some other times in Spanish, we reached an interesting conclusion. All the English noun phrases listed above, formed by English adjective + English noun, describe the protagonist's impressions, either her enthusiasm (e.g. "breathtaking poster", "beautiful people", "striking blue", "shocking pink"), or her revulsion (e.g. "drunken bastard", "fat ugly housewife", "screaming kids", "shameless bitch"). Conversely, when a Spanish adjective precedes an English noun, it is the narrator who describes the events with irony. For instance, "*vociferante* crowd" evokes a chaotic situation opposite to Suzie's representation of Puerto Rico, "*pobre* Mother" is a humorous remark on Suzie's conviction that her mother would have had a terrible life in Lares if she had not emigrated to the United States. Instead of "*atléticos* Latin specimens", the narrator could have used the Spanish "*Espécimenes Latinos atléticos*", but the switch to English emphasises a change in perception, from the neutral description of the boys as athletic, the narrator ironically shifts to English to convey Suzie's attitude of superiority. In fact, she looks for "*un rubicondo* crew-cut" to whom she would address her "*batientes* eyelashes". Once again, "crew-cut" is introduced to subtly laugh at her North American ideal of masculine beauty; similarly, the English "eyelashes" is preferred to the Spanish "*pestañas*" because it suggests the image of the attractive American woman Suzie wants to be like.

“*Febril* rush” vividly describes the protagonist’s rapid and violent movement forward, something that would need the longer Spanish term “*apresuramiento*” to replace ‘rush’. This proves Álvarez’s observation that sometimes an English word is borrowed for reasons of efficiency since Spanish is a multisyllabic language (Álvarez, 1997).

“*Primer* down” and “*intempestivo* one-week leave” answer, as other examples already examined, to Pountain’s “economic motivation” (Pountain, 1999:10). “Down” is used as a noun to immediately convey her great disappointment when she realises that the cable car does not work, while “one-week leave” is shorter than the Spanish “*vacaciones de una semana*”.

Nevertheless, there are other instances in which there is no particular reason that would explain the choice of an English noun rather than a Spanish one. For example, “*alborotoso* streetcar named desire” and “*desbocado* merry-go-round” could have been, respectively, “*alborotoso tranvía llamado deseo*” and the even shorter “*desbocado carrusel*”.

Regardless of the adjective being either in English or in Spanish, it might be argued that in noun + adjective compounds English determines the syntactic order; however, “skyscrapers *inalcanzables*” defies this assumed rule since the syntactic order follows the Spanish grammar.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that each time an English noun or syntagm composed of English adjective + English noun is preceded by possessive adjectives, the latter are always in Spanish, as showed by the following examples: “*su* native land”, “*su* building”, “*su* Grandma”, “*su* naked body”, “*su* Coppertone suntan oil”, “*su* beach towel” and “*sus* platinum-frosted fingernails” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

The same occurs with demonstrative adjectives: “*esos* lazy, dirty, no-good bums”, “*esos* filthy, no-good Communist terrorist”, “*esa* crap”, “*esa* ravishing view”, “*esta* fantastic occasion” and “*este* discovery” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

The story opposes Pfaff’s restriction according to which it is impossible for a preposition to be in a different language from the items both preceding and following it (Pfaff in Cohen, 2005). In particular, there is a high frequency of Spanish prepositions between a Spanish word and an English one. “*Una pareja de* beautiful people”, “*secretaria de* housing project”, “*la imagen del* breathtaking poster”, “*casarse con* Mother”, “*enferma con* headaches”, “*cargar con la cruz de* Grandma”, “*a* Mother

*no se le ocurre la idea*”, “*a orillas del pentagonal swimming-pool*”, “*compesto de Middle-class Suburban Americans*”, “*su primer cheque del Social Security*”, “*no más de three feet de alto*”, “*la protagonista del best-seller*”, “*del bikini-bra*”, “*su mejor falsetto de executive secretary*” and “*sus buddies hanguedores de lobby*” are some examples (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

There are also instances of Spanish prepositions connecting two English words. For example, “*estaba cundido de full-blood, flower-shirted, Bermuda-Shorted Continentals con Polaloid cameras*” and “*un crooner de quivering voice*” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

Akin to articles, both demonstrative adjectives and compound prepositions in Spanglish are marked by gender and number.

Counter to Kachru’s statement that two sentences in one language cannot be connected by a conjunction in another language (Kachru in Cohen, 2005), Vega uses Spanish conjunctions to link Spanish and English nouns or adjectives, as it can be observed in examples such as “*raudo y uninterrupted flight*”, “*con ella y Mother*”, “*carreteras y shopping centers*” and “*atrasada y underdeveloped*” (Pollito Chicken, 2002). Moreover, in “*espasmos y athlete’s foot y rheumatic fever*”, the Spanish coordinating conjunction “*y*” unites two English terms. Finally, it also links a sentence to an interjection in: “*se había llevado a Suzie para New York y thank God*” (Pollito Chicken, 2002).

Besides coordinating conjunctions, the text also features subordinating conjunctions, as in “*Por el camino observó, nevertheless, la transformación de Puerto Rico*”; the conjunctive adverb “*nevertheless*” indicates a connection between this sentence and the preceding one.

Another aspect that deserves attention is the linguistic category of idiomatic expressions, which are words or groups of words forming a unit that conveys meaning. Confirming Vledés Fallis, Poplack, McClure and Gumperz’s deductions (Valdés-Fallis, Poplack, McClure and Gumperz in Montes-Alcalá, 2009), interjections, exclamations and idiomatic expressions are in the native language of the speaker. However, the story features the idiomatic expression “*no le iban hacer swallow esa crap*” (Pollito Chicken, 77) which is an interesting example of code-mixing where the switch occurs even at the

verb level: “*hacer* swallow” instead of “to make swallow” or “*tragarse*”, respectively in English and Spanish.

Moreover, in the noun phrase that constitutes the object of the sentence the narrator juxtaposes the Spanish determiner “*esa*” with the English noun “crap”. Once again, English emphasises the protagonist’s feelings of repugnance.

Other idioms are in English: “after all” (Pollito Chicken, 76) is an idiomatic expression that is used in the story as an adverbial phrase to emphasise that, despite Suzie’s initial desire to find refuge between her grandmother’s arms, she will not visit her both because she made a reservation at the Conquistador Hotel, and because of her grandmother’s hostile behaviour towards her mother.

Exclamations and sudden utterances are often in the language the speaker perceives closer to his/her identity. Interestingly, Suzie always chooses English: “Sorry” is the automatic answer she contemptuously gives the Puerto Rican who asks her “*Ujté ej pueltorriqueña, ¿noveldá?*” (Pollito Chicken, 78), and “Oh my God” (Pollito Chicken, 78) is her comment when she becomes aware of her sexual attraction towards the bartender. Then, “Thank God” (Pollito Chicken, 76) is an interjection expressing relief. We can also notice how English sometimes shapes the syntax even when she merges both languages. For example in “*diez años ago*”, the English structure is preserved, whilst in Spanish it would be “*hace diez años*”.

Her language choice is significant as it is an evident sign of her intention to adopt U.S. culture and language.

It is interesting to note that not only Suzie but also the narrator uses English for expressions which function as units that would be meaningless if their elements were separated. “All of a sudden” is an adverbial phrase of time, “on second thought” and “in the meantime” are prepositional phrases of manner and time. These adverbials in English are all followed by the narration in Spanish; this is, therefore, a clear proof that the narrator has a high proficiency of both languages.

Stavans observes that neologisms are an idiosyncratic characteristic of language contact (Stavans, 2003:165); in “Pollito Chicken” the narrator offers an example of a newly coined word towards the end, namely “*hangueadores*” (Pollito Chicken, 79). This term does not exist in either English or Spanish, but it is the conflation of the English verb “to hang”, with reference to the phrasal verb “to hang around”, and the

Spanish suffixes that mark the morpho-syntactic mutation from the verb to the noun, which is also given gender and number according to Spanish grammatical rules. In the sentence “*Esa misma noche, el bartender confesó a sus buddies hangueadores de lobby*” (Pollito Chicken, 79), the noun is used as an adjective that, in one word, describes the habit of the bartender’s friends to hang around in the lobby.

As noted, Suzie has striven to assimilate to U.S. culture in the ten years she has lived away from Puerto Rico. She perfectly represents, thus, the process of “negative assimilation” (Stavans, 2000:7) discussed in the first chapter, which entailed, especially during the first waves of Latinos’ immigration, the assimilation to U.S. mainstream culture at the cost of their language and traditions.

Vélez points out that “the tension of the story and its humor come from her conscious denial of her identity” (Vélez, 1986:70). As it emerged from the analysis of the story, her utterances appear as caricatures of a colonised discourse known to Puerto Ricans as “pitiyanqui”, which is a term of Puerto Rican origin used since the 1940s to disdainfully describe the servile attitude of certain Latinos who admire and venerate U.S. culture, repudiating their heritage. As she did in New York, also in San Juan Suzie continues trying to suppress the traces of her past; for instance, in spite of her first impulse to find refuge from the capital’s chaotic life in her grandmother’s arms, she finally abandons the idea, going directly to the Conquistador Hotel where she reserved a room.

Suzie wants to become part of the poster image and her desire to attain the all-American status makes her reject her Puerto Rican identity. However, despite her intention to enjoy a holiday in Puerto Rico as the couple of “beautiful people” in the “breathtaking poster”, the story reveals that Suzie is not simply visiting her native country, she is also returning to what she has struggled to suppress, as it is demonstrated by her final liberating cry in Spanish: “*¡Via Puelto Rico Libreeeeeeeeeeeee!*” (Pollito Chicken, 79).

Hence, we can observe that Suzie is divided between her conscious North American attitude of superiority and contempt towards Puerto Ricans, and her unconscious repression of her roots, which is revealed through her denial and aversion, but this repressed material, which is a whole set of cultural, linguistic and historical references, presses for recognition. This is demonstrated by her impulse to find comfort in the “loving arms” of her grandmother when she is confronted with a reality that contrasts

sharply with the idealised image that informed her notion of contemporary Puerto Rico. Her grandmother living in the countryside represents Suzie's relation to both her familial past and her traditions. Furthermore, before beginning to recount the events, the narrator points out that she returned to San Juan after ten years of "*luchas incesantes*", thus revealing that the process of assimilation to a new culture entailed inner conflicts.

The title "Pollito Chicken" recalls a song Puerto Rican children learned at school: "Pollito chicken/ Gallina hen/ Lápiz pencil/ Y pluma pen/ Maestra teacher [...]" (McMahan, 2013:21).

In light of the above considerations, we can notice that the allusion to the song "Pollito chicken" serves two purposes. Firstly, it underlines the U.S. attempt to impose its language and culture on the island, for instance through the compulsory teaching of English in schools. In the introduction of his *Anthology of Puerto Rican literature*, Santiago remembers his primary schoolteachers telling him that Puerto Rico had no history, no culture, nothing worth studying, whereas the Anglo-Saxon world was regarded as the highest point of reference to be emulated (Santiago, 1995).

Secondly, the title might be used by the author to raise important questions on translation, as Burgos observes (Burgos, 2008: 40). The song seems to suggest that the words in English and Spanish are equivalent (*pollito*/chicken, *gallina*/hen, *lápiz*/pencil, *pluma*/pen); according to Burgos, this reference to translation is introduced because Vega's intention is to show, at a metaphorical level, that Puerto Rican identity is untranslatable; a person can be either a *pollito* or a chicken.

Burgos claims that Vega wrote to remind her people that they are colonised by the United States, and to offer a conservative model of Puerto Rican identity, which denies hybridity and is exclusively grounded on the island's culture (Burgos, 2008:41).

Holding a similar view, Vélez maintains that the story serves an ideological project of national unity between Nuyoricans (Puerto Ricans living in New York) and islanders. Lares, for instance, has an important political connotation because it is the place of Puerto Ricans' vain attempt to obtain national independence in 1968, and it is the symbol of the national independence movement (Vélez, 1986:71). In Vélez's opinion, the story shows that Suzie is a Puerto Rican just like the island Puerto Ricans who have never left their native country and the message conveyed is that all Puerto Ricans are "*independentistas* under the skin" (Vélez, 1986:70). Vélez believes, therefore, that

island Puerto Ricans are Vega's ideal readership (Vélez, 1986). In particular, she interprets the story as a revenge narrative by Puerto Ricans who have been the object of disdain and who express resentment towards those like Suzie who abandoned their culture in favour of total subservience to U.S. cultural requirements.

Nonetheless, the analysis carried out by this paper contradicts Vélez's position. The focus of "Pollito Chicken" is Suzie's attitude towards her native country and the United States where she lives; the young woman represents the assimilated Nuyorican who apparently does not embody the fusion of cultures but, rather, the suppression of one by the other. As it has been observed, Suzie's discourse and thoughts reflect the colonisation of North American capitalist culture but, at the end, the voice she has long repressed bursts forth with vehemence and expresses the nationalism she has rejected throughout the novel. The sexual act becomes an outlet of the authenticity she previously lacked.

It is interesting to notice that last episode is recounted by the bartender to his friends; this change in the narrative voice is possibly due to the author's intention to reinforce the contrast between Suzie's initial harsh judgement of her compatriots and her true essence which comes to the surface despite her numerous attempts to suffocate it.

Even though the narrator is undoubtedly highly ironical towards Suzie, we can disagree with Vélez's statement that the narrative is merely a joke on the protagonist (Vélez, 1986); the scope of Vega's story is much wider since Suzie symbolises all Latinos who abandoned their roots to comply with North American requirements. Suzie's positive references are always expressed in English as a sign of her willingness to become the All-American girl, "a chicken" we may say, refusing any trace of the "*pollito*". However, her attitude is the object of irony throughout the narration, which proves that, opposite to Burgo's opinion, Vega's intention was not to celebrate Puerto Rican culture making fun of the United States, but to reveal the absurdity of perceiving the world in terms of binary oppositions, inviting U.S. Latinos to acknowledge their bicultural identity.

Therefore, the title could represent the identity crisis, the tension felt by U.S. Latinos who are distressed by a divided sense of belonging. Yet, it expresses, at the same time, the coexistence of both namely Puerto Rican and U.S. cultures which are essential components of bilinguals' identity.

Even though Vélez and Burgos (Vélez, 1986; Burgos, 2008) interpret "Pollito Chicken" as part of a nationalist fight against the "Americanisation" process, accused of changing the foundation of Puerto Rican society, we have observed that this anti-assimilationist

attitude, and consequent celebration of the island, was idiosyncratic of the late XIX century and of the first decades of the XX. Far from idealising Puerto Rico and its inhabitants, the narrator describes the bartender as “*el admirado mamitólogo*” (Pollito Chicken, 79), not without palpable irony towards his boastfulness, and the image of Puerto Rico as a paradise promoted by the “breathtaking poster” is dismantled in the course of the story.

The narrator seems auto-ironical; he/she uses Spanish as the main language, though being able to fluently alternate between Spanish and English even when there is no pragmatical function that might explain the language change. We might argue, thus, that he/she is a U.S. Latino/a who exposes the comical aspects of Latinos’ naiveté in the early stages of their life in the United States. The narrator describes with sarcasm the way first generation immigrants were lured by the idea of leading a wealthy and successful life in the United States. As we pointed out in the first chapter, the first waves of immigrants tended to abandon their native language and culture, sometimes even disdainfully, as they were regarded as a burden to full assimilation to U.S. society, where their dreams would be supposedly satisfied.

Therefore, rather than being a satire of the United States per se, “Pollito Chicken” exudes irony towards the “American dream” and North American ideal representation of reality, thus bringing to the foreground the sharp divide between idealisations and ordinary life.

Irony implies a subject with a strong sense of identity, who has faced and overcome disillusion and who is able to laugh at his/her initial naiveté. The narrator may represent the immigrant who has gone beyond the phase marked by rejection of U.S. culture and who recognises that the United States are an inherent part of his/her identity.

To conclude, we can point out that the choice of an ironical narrator has the function to expose the absurdity of forcing one’s identity into fixed prerequisites rejecting the multiplicity of levels that constitute it. Hence, the message conveyed by “Pollito Chicken” is opposite to the rigid nationalist discourse Burgos and Vélez highlight (Vélez, 1986; Burgos, 2008). It is, instead, a celebration of hybridity that lies at the core of U.S. Latinos’ identity and that is expressed primarily through the amalgamation of both English and Spanish within the same discourse.

It is true that the epigraph by Albert Memmi that opens the story: “*Un homme à cheval sur deux cultures est rarement bien assis*” (Pollito Chicken, 75) (a man on horseback

between two cultures is rarely well seated), seems to negate any peaceful coexistence between two cultures. However, we can observe that it is not the fusion of different cultures but the attempt to strictly adhere only to one refusing the other that is the object of the narrator's humour.

### **3.2.) “El bacalao viene de más lejo y se come aquí” by Aurora Levins Morales**

Aurora Levins Morales was born in 1954 in Indiera, Puerto Rico, to a U.S.-born Puerto Rican mother and a Jewish father. In 1967 they moved to the United States where she started a dynamic career as a poet, a social activist and an historian living in Chicago, Minneapolis and Berkeley.

Levins has always been greatly involved in socio-political and cultural issues of female visibility, gender abuses, racism and oppression. At the early age of fifteen, she was the youngest member of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union and co-produced a feminist radio show, she took also part in a number of demonstrations against the Vietnam War and, more broadly, against discriminations on the grounds of gender and ethnicity. In particular, Levins has always been deeply concerned with issues affecting third world people and, especially, women.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of migrations and identity have been an ever-present interest throughout her career. From 1999 to 2002 she worked at the Oakland Museum of California as lead historian for the Latino Community History Project; in that period she carried on extensive research on the history of Puerto Ricans in California, collecting a considerable amount of oral histories especially from high school students visiting the museum.

Sadly, Aurora Levins Morales' life is burdened by multiple disabilities and chronic diseases such as epilepsy, brain injuries, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and Environmental Illness. In 2007 she started using a wheelchair after a stroke.

She presently works in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she has lived since 1976 and where she has become part of the disability arts community. Moreover, she is an active member of the Latina Feminist Group where she took part in various projects, which culminated with the publication of *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* in 2001. She is also a member of the advisory board of Jewish Voice for Peace and, in 2015, she began working as a consultant for Jews for Racial and Economic Justice in New York City.

Unlike Latino writers brought up in New York City and whose works deal with life in *El Barrio*, Aparicio<sup>14</sup> underlines that Morales' experiences have taken her from the

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<sup>14</sup> Aparicio, F. R. Aurora Levins Morales. Cengage Learning. [www.college.cengage.com](http://www.college.cengage.com).

urban world of Chicago, to the rural quiet of New Hampshire, and to the pluralistic and politically radical culture of San Francisco Bay Area<sup>15</sup>.

After a first phase marked by writings that denounced and protested against the social and economic conditions of Puerto Ricans in the Bronx and *El Barrio*, the younger generations of Puerto Rican writers are now exploring other issues, such as language, multiple subjectivities, international politics, class, feminism, and transnational identities. Moreover, since U.S. Puerto Ricans have moved away from New York City also settling in other urban centres throughout the United States, their life experiences have become more varied, and their writings characterised by a greater diversity of voices. Writers such as Levins exemplify a synthesis between North American and Latin American literary and cultural traditions. Her writings, as noted by Aparicio<sup>16</sup>, have been profoundly influenced by two major literary streams; firstly, by North American feminists such as Adrienne Rich, Susan Griffin and, in particular, Alice Walker; then, by the works of major Latin American writers such as Pablo Neruda and Eduardo Galeano that she has read extensively. Finally, her Puerto Rican–Jewish heritage has also been an important source of inspiration.

Recurrent themes in her works and essays are sexual abuse, racial discrimination but also ecology and social justice. Moreover, as a Puerto Rican writer, Levins explores her Puerto Rican identity and, employing hybrid forms, namely prose and poetry, she has given prominence to women’s voice and to their ethnic and cultural heritage. The use of both personal and collective voices has allowed her to give insight into individuals’ emotional experiences, also widening the perspective to the broader issue of U.S. Latinas’ identities.

Her short stories appeared in *This Bridge Called My Back*, *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas*, and in *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*. Her first and most acclaimed work is *Getting Home Alive* (1986), authored in collaboration with her mother, Rosario Morales, and whose most fascinating characteristic is precisely the generational dialogue and “cross-fertilization”, as Levins describes it, between her mother’s voice and her own<sup>17</sup>. This hybrid collection of stories, poems and personal essays pay homage to the cultural heritage of Puerto Rico, and shows how traditions may serve as a warm shelter to protect oneself against racial and gender discrimination and oppression.

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<sup>15</sup> Aparicio. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Aparicio. Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Levins Morales A. [www.auroralevinsmorales.com](http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com).

Central themes in *Getting Home Alive* are female Puerto Rican identity, third world and working-class feminism, women's relationships, memory as a means of retrieving past heritage and writing as a means of self-discovery. The recovery of one's rich, multiple heritage by means of stories of ancestors, memories of home landscapes, sounds and smells is fundamental to a path of self-discovery. The multifaceted identity resulting from this complex search is, for the author, a source of power since this new hybrid identity transcends races, genders and cultures, thus allowing individuals to feel a comfortable sense of home everywhere. In addition, memory is the key for a revision of painful personal and collective stories and histories, the best way to heal all wounds and face reality with a greater self-consciousness and regenerated identity<sup>18</sup>.

Among her major works that treat the topic of memory there is *Remedios: Stories of Earth and Iron from the History of Puertorriqueñas* (1998), an enthralling collection of prose and poetry which retells the history of Puerto Rican people through the lives of Puerto Rican women's ancestors. These stories aim to rewrite History telling the lives of a long line of women who have been silenced for centuries. Although some of the stories are about pain and abuse, most of them feature female figures of strength and resistance.

Another recent work is *Medicine Stories* (1998), a collection of personal essays grouped in five sections. The main themes are the power of language and the way it is used to silence unprivileged, oppressed people, and the ensuing struggle to express their authentic stories, thus countering the narrative of the dominant classes. Once again, Levins investigates the complexity of Puerto Rican identity, with special focus on integrity, commitment, activism and the integration of collective and individual liberation.

Diversity has always been part of Levins' sense of identity and is a central theme in her literary works. As she explains on her official web page, at the beginning of her career she was "a young immigrant writer who was Jewish and Puerto Rican, from a rural Caribbean coffee farm and a teeming US city, with roots in many communities and movements, a collagist by nature and historical circumstance"<sup>19</sup>.

Levins defines Puerto Rican identity not as a uniform, homogeneous entity, but rather as a blend of manifold elements: Latin American, African, Jewish and North American

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<sup>18</sup> Levins Morales. Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Levins Morales. Ibid.

components. It is, hence, a *mestiza* identity, a crossroad of many diasporas, a collage that is vividly defined in poems such as *Child of the Américas* (1986)<sup>20</sup>:

I am a child of the Americas,  
a light-skinned mestiza of the Caribbean,  
a child of many diaspora, born into this continent at a crossroads.  
I am a U.S. Puerto Rican Jew,  
a product of the ghettos of New York I have never known.  
An immigrant and the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants.  
I speak English with passion: it's the tongue of my consciousness,  
a flashing knife blade of crystal, my tool, my craft.  
I am Caribeña, island grown. Spanish is my flesh,  
Ripples from my tongue, lodges in my hips:  
the language of garlic and mangoes,  
the singing of poetry, the flying gestures of my hands.  
I am of Latinoamerica, rooted in the history of my continent:  
I speak from that body.  
I am not African. Africa is in me, but I cannot return.  
I am not taína<sup>21</sup>. Taíno is in me, but there is no way back.  
I am not European. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.  
I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish.  
I was born at the crossroads  
and I am whole.

This poem closely connects her with the work of contemporary U.S. Latino authors and, in particular, with *To Live in the Borderlands Means You* by Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa<sup>22</sup>.

Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa (1942 – 2004) was a scholar of Chicana cultural theory, feminist theory and queer theory. She based her best-known book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, on her own experience of growing up on the Mexican-Texas border.

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<sup>20</sup> Levins M., A. Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> The Taínos were indigenous people native of the Caribbean islands. The contacts with European settlers resulted in a high mestizaje; however, most Taínos were decimated through war and infectious diseases they were not immune to.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 2, p. 145.

These are poems and narratives on the convergence of different cultures, the Latin one in which the authors were born and the Anglo-American where they grew up.

What is important to note is an element of pride about their ancestral heritage and multiple identities, a conflation of different influences that are experienced as a whole, without the need to choose a single one. Both poems reveal the impossibility to fit into one race or culture alone because identity, as expressed in Levins' sententious conclusion, is "a whole" (Child of the Américas, 1986). Levins and Anzaldúa define themselves as *mestizas* living on the borderland, their identity being a unique blend of races. By acknowledging their past, they do not deny the present reality in which they live because they are defined by both their cultural heritage and by their current state of being.

Consequently, both poems provide a new paradigm, a new perspective on the "self", a new region where multiple cultures are fused into a single self. Proud of their diverse background, they combine a deep affection for their homeland and a lucid recognition of the role played by U.S. culture in their lives, two aspects that are indissolubly linked. Levins and Anzaldúa assert their identities as U.S. Latinas, which comprise a mixture of cultures that are closely interwoven. In so doing, they firmly reject to conform to a fixed assimilation model based on a series of pre-established parameters immigrants had to fulfil in order to be accepted. Both authors recognise their background heritage as an essential part of their identity, and as a shield against the feelings of social and cultural marginalisation so often experienced by immigrants.

The role of food as a recurrent cultural symbol in many narratives is worth noting, though employed with different purposes by authors. Anzaldúa, for example, uses food as a symbol of mixed cultures and traditions, she refers to chili put in the borscht and wheat tortillas, which are all foods that come from different places and cultures; in the borderlands, however, they are consumed together, just as the different people living on the borderlands have merged their cultures over the years.

Levins, instead, associates food with her homeland, garlic and mangoes are both from the Caribbean islands, a land she partly identifies with since it is her native one.

Interestingly enough, both authors employ the alternation of Spanish and English, which serves as a strong affirmation of a multicultural identity characterised by tight bonds between all constituents, beyond rigid classifications and strict categorisations.

Therefore, Levins' search for a language that may express U.S. Latinas' experiences and struggles identifies her within the body of literature produced by U.S. female writers of multiracial descent.

Considering the history of Latino migrants in the United States, Levins' statement is the proof of U.S. Latinos' change in perspective about their identity. As it has been highlighted in previous sections of the present study, first and second-generation Latino immigrants were subject to offenses and humiliations due to reasons of ethnicity and language; they felt, therefore, an extremely heavy pressure to fit into North American society, which often urged them to divorce themselves from their traditions.

We will investigate her short story "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí", part of the collection *Cuentos: stories by Latinas* published in 1983, in order to show that Aurora Levins Morales encourages the recognition and willing acceptance of all constituents that live in harmony within each individual.

### **3.2.1) "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí", analysis:**

In "El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí", Levins deals with the theme of Puerto Rican multi-layered identity, which is a common denominator throughout her body of works. In particular, the author tries to define the protagonist's *mestiza* and female identity through the recognition of the two cultures that have contributed to shape her. Aurora Levins Morales has abundantly written about individuals struggling to find their identities and voices, bringing attention to issues related to multicultural experiences. "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí", however, is not centred on the struggles of women and other abused groups, but on the exploration of U.S. Puerto Rican identity.

The title is in Spanish, which is not surprising because, as it has been underlined in the second chapter, in Latino writings food is almost always rendered in Spanish both because of the lack of an English equivalent and because it suggests a strong emotional bond with the speaker's country of origin and traditions (Morales, 2012:4).

The protagonist, a young woman of Puerto Rican origin living in New England, packs her clothes for a trip back to her native Puerto Rico but instead of rejoicing she is

overwhelmed by the “weight of [her] own fears” (El Bacalao<sup>23</sup>, 204). She is also the first person narrative voice of the story and she recounts the events and sensations that characterised her journey. From the beginning, she expresses her anxiety and dilemma over her uncertain sense of identity, which is effectively rendered by the use of the interior monologue:

“I panic regularly. I can’t go! I don’t want to go. I don’t want to know the answers to my questions: will it be different? Do I belong? Is it home?” (El Bacalao, 204).

Filled with doubts, hopes, expectations, worries and fears, she resolves to go back to her home country to reach a clearer understanding of her own self. The girl is ironic towards the group of friends and relatives who visit her before the departure and who insistently ask her for tokens from Puerto Rico. It is what she sarcastically defines “the ritual: the immigrant going home” (El Bacalao, 204); she observes with great lucidity the feeling of homesickness experienced by her fellow countrymen, understanding their desperate need to be reassured, through those tokens, that they would go back any time. This melancholic sense of nostalgia vividly hinted at in this scene is not shared, however, by the protagonist who is rather sceptical about the advantages her journey might bring her.

On the plane, her memory goes back to her childhood and, specifically, to the other-way journey that she used to make with her family to visit her relatives who had already settled in the United States. Yet, the way she remembers these episodes exudes a palpable remoteness, as it is clearly expressed by the choice of the demonstrative adjective “that”:

“That immigrant crowd with their bags and cardboard boxes and the children in pretty-for-*abuelita* dresses and tucked-in shirts” (El Bacalao, 205).

Devoid of any sense of belonging to Latin America, her words define her as a static actor on the background who happened to be part of a formal and pre-established ceremony.

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<sup>23</sup> Henceforth we will refer to El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí as “El Bacalao”.

In the first chapter, in only two out of five paragraphs there are a few Spanish words are sprinkled on the text, namely “güiro” (a typical percussion musical instrument), *panapén* (a typical fruit), then “*abuelita*” (part of the compound adjective “pretty-for-abuelita”), “*tíos*” and “*tías*”, which are all family names.

It does not take long before she is seduced by Puerto Rico’s peaceful and luxuriant landscape. Interestingly enough, the second chapter, *Esa Noche la Luna Caía en Gotas de Luz*, is written entirely in Spanish, something that cannot be found in other parts of the short story. Therefore, the reasons that lie behind this particular choice on the part of the author are worth analysing.

Unlike the description of the environment seen from above when the young woman is still on the plane, the one which opens the second chapter is markedly different in tone. In both cases she is fascinated by the beauty of the environment, but whilst in the first case the description in English is limited to a list of natural elements accompanied by an adjective (“rainfilled clouds”, “a patch of turquoise sea”, “a line of white surf” and “green palms”), the passage in Spanish is highly poetic.

*“Afuera la luna se derrama en una llovizna finita. El cafetal, los guineos recién sembrados, la tierra roja del camino, mi piel recién acariciada: todo se empapa de luna. Qué truca de la noche! Faltan horas todavía. Paso por paso, calladita, tomo el camino hasta mi casa por el aire florecido en la hora más secreta del barrio, cuando hasta los perros se esconden debajo de las casas. Quise cantar. Quise hablar en poesía, pero cuando llegué por fin a mi puerta, tenía la garganta amarrada de silencio y luz, y florecitas minúsculas de luna llena por toda mi piel”* (El Bacalao, 205-206).

Unlike the English description that closes the first chapter *Passports*, here the protagonist, who has just left the house of her adolescence lover Tito after a night spent together, is totally plunged into the environment surrounding her. She is no longer an allured spectator, a passive observer, she becomes, instead, an active protagonist together with all the natural elements of the landscape she is now part of. In a moment of great emotional intensity, the woman becomes one with nature, her feelings fused with the environment in an intimate bond: her throat tied with silence and light, and tiny flowers of full moon covering her skin. She is entranced by the landscape, so much so that her emotional state is deeply influenced by its beauty; nature fills her with

ecstatic joy and merriment, making her feel the need to sing and to speak poetry although, in the end, she remains speechless, astonished by that unique atmosphere. The relation between emotion and cognition has been increasingly studied over the past decades, and monolingual speakers have been the typical research participants (Damasio, LeDoux, Panksepp in Harris et. Al, 2006). However, little attention has been paid to the interconnections between emotional arousal and the language system in bilingual speakers.

The investigations carried out in the last decades reveal that bilingual speakers can categorise autobiographical memories as occurring in their first or their second language, which means that memories are stored in a specific language (Schrauf & Rubin in Harris et. Al, 2006). For instance, memories of childhood are often stored with their emotional contexts in the first language. It is important to point out that the term first language (or L1) refers to the chronologically first acquired language, even if it is not the language the individual currently knows best or uses most frequently (Harris et. Al, 2006). This is what emerges from the above excerpt; the protagonist uses English as the predominant language but shifts to Spanish for words laden with personal and cultural connotations, which could not be expressed in English.

Except for the first chapter “Passports”, which focuses on the protagonist’s last days in the United States, all the titles are all in Spanish, though the narration remains predominantly in English. “*Esa noche la luna caía en gotas de luz*” introduces the reader to the second chapter in which, as noted above, the protagonist uses Spanish to express intense emotions connected to childhood memories of her country of origin. “*Sí los escritores son así*”, “*Algunas cosas no cambian*”, “*Vivir es un peligro...Y muerto no se puede vivir*” and “*El bacalao viene de más lejos y se ome aquí*” have a precise illocutionary function, they seem aphorisms since they resume experiences and reflections about life. The choice of Spanish for the titles, which represent the entrance to the chapter, is a further sign that the author is addressing a bilingual audience who is able to grasp the deep cultural heritage conveyed by Spanish and, at the same time, to follow the narration in English.

Akin to the objective description of the landscape from the plane, also people’s physical traits and personalities is entirely in English.

All reported direct discourse presents a peculiar alternation of both languages that consists in the formulation of a sentence in Spanish and, then, an almost literal translation in English:

“*Hm! A mí no me vayas a poner ahí con mi nombre, nah!* Don’t you go putting me in there with my name” (El Bacalao, 206).

“But, Sefa, *eso no es ná, ¿verdad que eso no es ná, Dori?* There’s nothing wrong with that” (El Bacalao, 206).

“*¡Mira si la nena no sabe ná!* She doesn’t know much, does she? *¡Mira si no sabe la nena!*” (El Bacalao, 207).

The choice to start the discourse speaking in Spanish could be explained by the speakers’ nationality; thus, it might be plausible to consider their first utterances as an immediate comment that comes to them more spontaneously in their mother tongue. Nonetheless, this hypothesis is confuted by other pieces of conversation where the order in which the two languages are used is reversed; as in the example below, English is sometimes used first, then followed by the Spanish translation.

“Ay, Lori, you really are too much, *tú sí que eres tremenda! Y que Tomasa!*” (El Bacalao, 206).

We can presume the speakers opt for this peculiar alternation of languages so as to emphasise the content of their discourse.

In the fourth chapter *Algunas Cosas No Cambian*, code switching does not appear in reported dialogues except for one single conclusive word: “*Exacto*” (El Bacalao, 208). The narrator remembers the meeting with Tito and their conversation; it is a list of the main events that occurred to them in the last ten years and it is all in English. The only Spanish word that is used in the narration is *barrio* (El Bacalao, 208), which evokes a whole set of geographical, linguistic and cultural connotations. It symbolises home, traditions and community. Its strong implications led Puerto Rican migrants in New York to use the same term *El Barrio* to name New York Spanish Harlem (or East

Harlem), which has always been the heart of the Puerto Rican community since the 1920s. *El Barrio* has never been only a physical place but also an emotional home for U.S. Puerto Ricans, a refuge against outside social and racial discrimination and the centre of New York-Puerto Rican thriving culture.

Akin to the third chapter, also the fifth uses English for brief descriptions of people and events. In particular, the narrator remembers a girl of the neighbourhood, Charo, and lists the circumstances she went through. When she asks her friend Lencho about the girl, his immediate answer is in Spanish “*¡Cómo no! Muchacha inteligente*” (El Bacalao, 209), which confirms that interjections and exclamations are places where the speakers tend to use their native language (Valdés-Fallis, Poplack, McClure and Gumperz in Montes-Alcalá, 2009). However, Lencho continues in English “She was beautiful, too, wasn’t she?” (El Bacalao, 209); therefore, whereas in the third chapter characters code-switched only to literally translate a sentence either in English or Spanish, here Lencho alternates the two languages in two different clauses.

The chapter closes with Lencho’s final comment on the girl, which is another instance of English-Spanish translation code-switching: “A flower...*era una flor*” (El Bacalao, 209).

The last chapter expresses in English the narrator’s desire to find Puerto Rico, her household and neighbourhood, as they were when she was a child, though she is deeply disappointed. She feels a painful sense of loss as a stranger in a land that has profoundly changed. With great nostalgia, she recollects past pleasant smells and flavours, such as “the taste of *bacalao* cooked up with onions” (El Bacalao, 210).

Before arriving in Puerto Rico the narrator expected to be treated as a foreigner, but the inhabitants of the ‘barrio’ warmly welcomed her.

In the last part of the chapter, the narrator reports Tito’s declaration of love; although the paragraph is in English, one sentence in Spanish is slipped within his discourse: “*Que el tiempo lo decida*” (El Bacalao, 210). Possibly, this sentence is uttered in the character’s native language because it is a fixed expression that does not have a literal translation in English, and it also has a conclusive function as the previous “*Exacto*”.

Common sayings are typical of a language and they are parts of discourse where speakers are likely to switch language, as linguists such as Valdés-Fallis, McClure and

Poplack observe (Valdés-Fallis, Poplack, McClure and Gumperz in Montés-Alcalá, 2009).

The short story concludes back in New England with the narrator thinking about her identity and her relation to her country of origin. At the end of her reflection, she reaches a final conclusion: “No. I don’t belong to Indiera. I never will. But Indiera belongs to me” (El Bacalao, 210). Hence, she acknowledges that her Latin heritage is a central constituent of her identity, though it is not the only factor determining it.

Overall, the story features a low number of Spanish words inserted into the narration in English. In particular, there are only 54 total Spanish words in the text, most of which are part of sentences entirely in Spanish which are either preceded or followed by the English corresponding translation.

The nouns that appear isolated in the text support the shared opinion among linguists that Latino speakers switch to Spanish to refer to “cultural specific items” (Romaine, 1985:131) such a food and traditions. “*Güiro*” is a typical Puerto Rican percussion musical instrument; “*bacalao*” and “*panapén*” (the latter meaning breadfruit, a fruit grown in Puerto Rico) belong to the category of food; “*abuelita*”, “*tías*” and “*tíos*” are family names and “*abuelita*” is a diminutive, which is idiosyncratic of Latin American Spanish. Then, “*niño*” and “*chamaluco*” refer to two different ages, namely childhood and adolescence. Finally, “*barrio*” is repeated twice and, as noted above, it carries deep cultural connotations which make it impossible to find an exact translation equivalent in English.

It is important to highlight that all the instances of code-switching identified in the text are used by Lencho and Sefa, two Puerto Rican friends, and not by the protagonist who always speaks and thinks in English, except for the few Spanish words related to family and traditions listed above. This is not surprising since she has lived in the United States for years and English has become her first language. Like Suzie in “Pollito Chicken”, she has become part of U.S. society, distancing herself from her compatriots and their persistent desire to go back to their native land. As it has been underlined, for both women the trip to Puerto Rico is more than a vacation, it is a return to their roots.

The protagonist is confronted with her cultural background and finally understands that her identity is the result of manifold influences brought together in a single self.

The journey back to Puerto Rico reveals her an integral side of her identity that cannot be denied. She is, however, “a child of the Americas” (Child of Américas, 1986) and not just a Puerto Rican girl.

“El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí” interestingly weaves together personal experience and a wider analysis on U.S. Latinos’ identity. The story vividly shows what it means to be at the crossroads of two cultures since the protagonist does not identify with a single race.

History, as noted, has always been interpreted by the author as the instrument to heal the trauma of oppression. Through her body of works, Levins has striven to foster a curative history that, giving centrality to the marginalised, in particular Puerto Rican women, makes visible those who have been silenced and effaced from history. Likewise, in “El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí” Levins stresses the importance of collective memory and history in creating an enriched sense of self. It is a story from which transnational configurations of identity emerge, uncovering the tensions and contradictions masked by previous local and insular definitions of national identity. The text participates, thus, in the attempt to represent Puerto Rican (Fahaey, 2001).

The story reflects a widely shared sensation among U.S. Latinos, especially first generations immigrants, which is that of alienation from their homeland coexisting with a strong desire to return. Yet, Levins shows how U.S. Latinos are far from being a uniform group and she investigates different attitudes towards both the United States and Puerto Rico. There are those like the protagonists’ relatives in the United States who miss their native country and are not able to fully integrate into a new society; Sefa and Lencho who have not left Puerto Rico but fluently use both Spanish and English, and the protagonist who shifts from a distant and conflicting attitude towards her roots to a peaceful fusion of both Latin and U.S. cultures within her hybrid identity.

Akin to the poem *Child of the America*, “El bacalao viene de más lejos y se com aquí” exudes a strong passion towards the protagonist’s native land, language, food and culture in general. Additionally, both the poem and the story do not simply describe a personal experience, but they stimulate a broader reflection on American society and identity. Diversity lies at the very heart of the history of the United States as they were the product of continuous waves of migrants, from the European founding fathers to Latinos looking for better conditions. U.S. identity originates from a complex set of combined influences and by acknowledging the importance of one’s hybrid heritage

Levins undermines the idea of a pure, authentic and homogeneous U.S. identity, shedding light on a new idea of what it means to be 'American'.

### **3.3.) “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” by Gary Francisco Keller**

Gary Francisco Keller was born in San Diego in 1943 from an Anglo-American father, Jack Keller, and a Mexican mother, Estela Cárdenas. He grew up on the U.S.-Mexican border and his father's different occupations required his family to travel between the two countries. Since a very young age, Keller began reading avidly developing an early enthusiasm for literature. After high school, he enrolled at the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City, where he started teaching English. In 1961, he received a Bachelor's degree in philosophy and then continued his graduate studies in language and literature at Columbia University in New York City, where he received a Master's degree in 1967 and a PhD in 1973.

Through his varied interests and accomplishments, Keller has been a highly influential figure for U.S. Latino culture in areas such as literature, cinema and art history.

Keller founded Bilingual Press publishing house (or *Editorial Bilingüe*) in 1973 and soon after, in 1974, the academic and literary journal *The Bilingual Review* (or *Revista Bilingüe*) as a member of the Department of Romance Languages in the City College of New York. He later moved the press and the journal to the State University of New York at Binghamton, Eastern Michigan University, and finally to Arizona State University in 1986. Under Keller's direction, Bilingual Press has grown into one of the two largest and most influential publishers of Latino literature (the other one is Arte Público Press) and has published works by many of the most important writers of the past 50 years, including Alurista, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Sandra Cisneros, Virgil Suárez, Rolando Hinojosa and Gustavo Pérez-Firmat. Furthermore, it publishes the works of younger authors and issues a series of Chicano Classics.

*The Bilingual Review* is one of the most enduring and influential Latino journals; when it came into being, it encouraged the study of bilingual education in academia; then, it soon became an important publisher of original Latino literature.

Keller has been a member of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) since the 1970s and he worked as a co-founder of the intellectually dynamic Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at Arizona State University, holding the position of President of the Chicano Faculty and Staff Association between 1989 and 1990. Afterwards, during the period 1991-1993, he was appointed chair of the Chicano Studies Development Committee by Lattie M. Coor, President of the Arizona State

University, and then of the Office to Develop Chicano Studies. In that role, Keller developed an extensive survey of Chicano Studies.

Additionally, Keller had a leading role within the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition and subsequently the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities between 1979 and 1995. Between 1984 and 1995 he led the Coalition's collaboration with the Educational Testing Service and the College Board, which resulted in a number of initiatives and projects that have helped hundreds of thousands of minority and non-minority secondary school and college students around the nation.

The project *TestSkills*, which he conceived and encouraged, was published in 1989 jointly by the Educational Testing Service and the College Board. Its aim was to help U.S. Latino students maximise their skills and potential; the project represented a major national achievement and had a significant positive impact on Latino secondary school students. A second project, also published by the Educational Testing Service and the College Board, was *iSí se Puede! College is for You and You are for College (Information on Academic Planning and Obtaining Financial Aid for Hispanic and Other Students)*; its first edition was in 1990, followed by a second one in 1991.

Meanwhile, between 1991 and 1995, he was Co-Director of a Consortium that aimed to identify and promote Latino professionals (Arizona State University, Eastern Michigan University, Educational Testing Service, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Michigan State University, University of Michigan were all part of the consortium).

In the following years, he continued making a substantial contribution in the field of academic research and education in many universities to promote the study and dissemination of U.S. Latino literature. In 1988, he was named Regent's Professor by Arizona State University in recognition of his manifold academic, scholarly and creative distinctions and has continued holding that position until present days.

At present, Keller continues directing the ASU Hispanic Research Center (HRC), which he founded in 1997, and he continues working as the general editor of the press of the journal *The Bilingual Review*.

Already in the November 1989 issue of *Hispanic Business* magazine (Vol. 10, No. 11) Keller was presented as one of the one hundred of the nation's most influential Latinos. Throughout his productive career, he has collaborated with the most significant voices of Latino literature; in 1989, for instance, he worked as a consultant to the Sundance

Institute, helping establish the creative writing workshop in Utah with Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez.

In recognition of his important activities, he was awarded a considerable amount of national and international distinctions.

Keller has also been an extremely successful grant writer that has secured over \$30 million dollars in federal and private funding, with which he has incrementally contributed to increase the number of Chicano and Latino graduate students in the universities.

In 1993, for example, Keller was awarded a \$50,000 dollar prize for “Pioneering Achievements in Education” from the Charles A. Dana Foundation, which is the largest annual prize in education in the United States (he donated the \$50,000 to his minority projects through the Arizona State University Foundation).

Then, he received many other awards for his academic achievements and projects; *Project 1000* is among the most warmly applauded; he was the architect and executive director of this initiative that was designed to identify, recruit, admit, and graduate at least 1,000 Hispanic graduate students. *Project 1000* was also positively featured in *The New York Times*, *La Prensa Hispana* and many more journals and newspapers. Furthermore, in light of his many outstanding scholarly and institutional achievements, Keller received the 2006 National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) Distinguished Scholar Award.

His research has covered a wide range of interests from cultural history to linguistics. In particular, he has drawn his attention to the phenomenon of language contact, the emergence of Spanglish and bilingual rhetorical devices used in multilingual and multicultural poetry and prose. He has also written extensively on bilingual education, on the development of English and Spanish among children and educational access for Latinos. In addition to his interest in language, Keller is a major Chicano film critic and art historian.

Another of his central concerns is Latino literature, its spreading and reception in the United States, with a special focus on Chicano literature and culture, its relationship with Mexican culture and the depiction of Chicanos in U.S. cinema and literature.

Furthermore, Keller has been active within the domain of feminist studies and he has had a major national role in fostering creative literary production and literary scholarship by and about United States-Latino women. Before the advent of *The Bilingual Review*, there were just a handful of manuscripts of creative literature published

by U.S. Latino women, and no scholarly books devoted to the subject. Keller's press, instead, has published numerous novels and anthologies of stories, plays, poems by U.S. Latinas and various works on feminist literary criticism. Two examples are, for instance, *Theory and Practice of Feminist Literary Criticism*, published by the Press in 1982, and the landmark *Beyond Stereotypes: The Critical Analysis of Chicana Literature*, edited by María Herrera-Sobek.

To date, Keller has been the most successful publisher, editor and scholar in giving national prominence to U.S. Latino literature. Many of Bilingual Press' books have received critical acclaim and the journal has been praised for its concern with English-Spanish bilingualism in the United States. In 1991, Bilingual Press signed a historic agreement with Bantam Doubleday Dell that provided for the publication by the latter of Bilingual Press' novels by Chicano/Chicana authors and established a continuing relationship between the two presses. This fruitful collaboration has managed to make U.S. Latino fiction more accessible to the general reader in the United States.

Keller is also a respected writer who publishes poetry and short stories under the pseudonym of 'El Huitlacoche', which represents Keller's alter ego, "A detached and somewhat cynical Chicano observer of the social scene. His humorous and satirical poems and stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies" (Kanellos, 2008).

Already in 1977, his short story "The Man Who Invented the Automatic Jumping Bean" won publication as part of the "Best of the Small Presses" competition and was very positively reviewed by writer Anne Tyler in the *New York Times Book Review*. Keller's *Tales of El Huitlacoche* received major national recognition and won the "Writer's Choice" award in 1985; this collection was applauded by such publications as *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Texas Review*. His most recent book, *Zapata Rose in 1992*, has been warmly received by literary critics of the *The New York Times*, *The National Hispanic Reporter*, *The San Diego Tribune*, *Phoenix New Times*, *La Opinión* (Los Angeles), *El Nuevo Herald* (Miami) and *Willamette Week* (Portland, Oregon).

The present paper will focus on the analysis of the short story "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac", published in *Tales of El Huitlacoche* (1984).

### 3.3.1.) “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac”, Analysis:

Gary D. Keller was given honourable mention in 1984 for “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac”, a short story tracing the return of the Chicano protagonist to the country of his ancestors, Mexico. Akin to many other narratives by U.S. Latinos, including “Pollito Chicken” and “El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí”, the return to one’s roots is one of the major themes in U.S. Latino literature, being instrumental in view of a search for identity.

Reminiscent of the form of the Bildungsroman, the protagonist gradually and painfully gains consciousness of his own identity as a Mexican-American.

In a Mexican environment, the protagonist and his Mexican friend, Felipe, pretend to share a common cultural space, even if important differences disrupt the protagonist’s postcolonial Chicano idealization of a “Mexicaness” he initially hoped to possess.

With remarkable wit and acuteness, Keller points to a reality of incommensurable divergences that makes it impossible to easily fit into one single cultural sphere. The acceptance of ethnic ambivalence results, thus, to be a crucial step in the formation of the Chicano/a adult self.

As far as language is concerned, the vitality of the text is what immediately comes to the fore; English and Spanish are richly and profusely intermingled at the word level. Hence, more than code-switching, the story is a perfect example of code-mixing, which entails an even closer contact and deep fusion of English and Spanish. The linguistic complexity is revealed from the title “The Raza who scored big in Anáhuac”, where two words are in Spanish; in the United States *Raza* does not simply refer to all Latin American people, but to “the Mexican-American people; Mexican-Americans as a racial group, especially as characterized by a strong sense of racial and cultural identity”<sup>24</sup>. Anáhuac is a geographical place written according to the Spanish orthography, thus keeping its authenticity.

The protagonist is a young man with Mexican origins who lives in the United States and goes back to Mexico to attend a university course.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>

At the beginning, he feels “just another *extranjero*” (The Raza<sup>25</sup>, 84) in a land he has not visited for a long time. He has gradually lost proficiency in written Spanish and when he arrives in Mexico he is considered a “*güero valín*”, which means a Mexican assimilated to U.S. culture. Notwithstanding this, he expresses a strong desire to be part of the Mexican world Felipe represents, “a Chicano hope for a binational *carnalismo*” and he is moved by their “heartfelt *abrazo de correligionarios*” (The Raza, 85).

The protagonist is plunged into the Mexican world, the Virgin of Guadalupe’s day is approaching and he sees crowds of pilgrims joining in a procession headed by priests. Felipe reminds him of the Mayas because of his indigenous traits and his loyalty to the country’s culture and traditions, this is why although the university professor’s words exude great pride for his *patria*, Felipe harshly criticises him for his hypocrisy since he only teaches the “Porfirian *castellano* of the Mexican empire” (The Raza, 86)<sup>26</sup>.

The story also offers insights into Mexicans’ socioeconomic conditions. For instance, indigenous people from more isolated areas go to the university struggling to improve their education in order to achieve upward mobility, and the protagonist feels high respect and admiration for their efforts and determination.

When the protagonist follows Felipe at the jai alai and bets all his funds, he is excited by a sense of belonging to Mexican life: “Right then I felt *muy raza, muy Mexican. Sí, con el pueblo*” (The Raza, 87). In the euphoria of the moment, he is filled with the mythic culture of the country; his emotional state is reflected in his linguistic choices since his following exclamations are entirely in Spanish: “*¡Sí se puede! ¡Vamos a ganar!*” (The Raza, 90). He feels part of the Mexican crowd, overwhelmed by the excitement of the win.

Afterwards, despite the protagonist’s reluctance, Felipe convinces him to complete the jai alai ritual spending the night into a brothel because no “*güero* can claim to have known Mexico without having visited its *muchachas*” (The Raza, 91). This statement together with Felipe’s bitterly ironic comment “I’m sorry that we are not as advanced as your civilization” (The Raza, 92) reveal that he actually considers the friend less as a countryman than as a “*turista*” (The Raza, 96).

In spite of the protagonist’s feeling of uneasiness that sometimes emerges, for example inside the brothel where he feels “a perfect stranger” (The Raza, 92), he tries to fit into

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<sup>25</sup> Henceforth we will refer to The Raza Who Scord Big in Anáhuac as “The Raza”.

<sup>26</sup> It refers to Porfirio Díaz 35-year long government that led to the Mexican revolution, which was an armed struggle from 1910 to 1920 aimed to end the regime’s political repression and economic problems.

the typical Mexican habits and behaviours; “It’s not my civilization, Shit, I just live there” (The Raza, 92), he tells Felipe to emphasise his distance from U.S. civilization and his belonging to Mexico. His efforts result, however, vain and when he discovers that Felipe only bet his money, the disappointment is painful. The moments spent together made the protagonist think to be Felipe’s “*carnal*” (The Raza, 94), but he finally recognizes the divide between Mexican and U.S. cultures. He understands with resentment that to Mexicans’ eyes he was just:

“the exotic Chicano, the *güero valín* with a rather hairy chest who maybe reminded them in his knit shirt of some phantasm image they had conjured in their head, a Robert Redford, well-heeled, privileged, and native in Spanish” (The Raza, 96-97).

It is a story that exposes stereotypes on both sides of the Mexican-American border. The protagonist does not correspond to the stereotypical image Mexicans have of Chicanos and, at the same time, the complexities of Mexican society make it impossible to reduce it to simplistic stereotypes. For instance, when he gets the gonorrhoea, the pharmacy attendant who treats him is a woman, which makes him realise that “in Mexico the man wasn’t always in the *plaza* and the women only *en casa*” (The Raza, 95).

The story concludes with the protagonist’s afterthoughts one year later. He is now conscious that Felipe considered him according to preconceived views. While thinking about his identity, he points out that “the estranged is different from the tourist” (The Raza, 98). In a complex process of self-discovery, he finds himself in search for identity as a Chicano, and realises that “*Por supuesto*, the Chicano needs to gaze into smoky mirrors” (The Raza, 98), which means that Chicanos have a blurred identity with no definite and stable shape because it merges two cultures and undergoes continuous evolution.

“The Raza Who Sored Big in Anáhuac” is couched in English which is the “base language” (Grosjean, 1982), thus confuting definitions of Spanglish as “Spanish characterized by numerous borrowings from English” (American Heritage Dictionary in Lipski, 2004) or as “a type of Spanish contaminated by English words and forms of

expression, spoken in Latin America” (the Oxford English Dictionary in Lipski, 2004). As this story demonstrates, Spanglish also entails the opposite process, which is English “invaded” by Spanish words.

The story is told by a first person narrative voice, which is the voice of the protagonist. He expresses himself in English often slipping to Spanish at both the word and sentence level. English and Spanish blend not only in reported dialogues, but also in the narration of past events and in the interior monologues and reflections of the protagonist.

There are some instances of intersentential codeswitching:

“Not only the money, but my life’s dream, enough to live on so that I can take a full course of study and graduate. *Porque, compis, tú eres mi cuate, ¿sabes? O, como dicen los tuyos, soy tu carnal*” (The Raza, 94).

“*Pues, ponte chango, carnal. Pa’ la próxima más aguzao, vato. Porque ya aprendiste.* That’s what Buñuel meant in *Los olvidados*. Like they say in these parts, *más cornadas da el hambre que el toro*” (The Raza, 94).

“*No chingues.* You’ll have the needle in my bun for over five minutes. It’ll be an hour before I’ll be able to move my leg!” – “*Cómo que no chingues!* That’s what you should say to yourself” (The Raza, 95).

However, the text is predominantly characterised by intrasentential code-switching, which we will henceforth call code-mixing.

The two following excerpts are examples of code-mixing within narrative parts in which the protagonist remembers past episodes:

“Felipe and I went into an all-night *estancia* where they cut newspapers into napkins. We had steaming hot *caldo tlalpeño*. We had *machitos*, finely minced *tacos* of bull testicles sprinkled with *aguacate* and *cilandro* in *piquante* sauce” (The Raza, 92).

“One afternoon after class, at the *tortería* which surely has the best *crema* in the valley of *México*, *La Tortería Isabel la Católica*, only a few minutes from the university library which is a living historic-revolutionary mural, I confided in him a Chicano hope for a binational *carnalismo*. We were both brought to tears and to a heartfelt *abrazo de correigionarios*, not to mention *compinches*” (The Raza, 85).

Interestingly, code-mixing is not only used by the protagonist who is a Mexican living in the United States, but also by Felipe who is a Mexican who has never left his native country. This shows that Spanglish is a linguistic phenomenon of both the United States and Latin American countries, especially those close to the U.S. border. For example, talking about the university professor, Felipe says: “He’s a living contradiction, a comfortable *gentil hombre*, a *hidalgo* of the professorate” (The Raza, 86). Then, referring to the jai alai game, the protagonist asks Felipe: “Could they construct a paradigm *pa’l fenómeno*? [...] Have you seen all the *grenaderos* about?” (The Raza, 88).

Likewise, in “El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí” we noticed that code-switching was repeatedly employed by Lencho and Sefa, two Puerto Rican friends of the protagonist.

At the beginning of the story, the protagonist tends to please Felipe showing his knowledge of Mexican culture:

“Felipe pressed me hard on *Aztlán*, and pleased with his avid interest, I was proud to tell him about the meaning of César Chávez’s black *águila* in a white circle, of “*vato*” and “*cholo*”, the Sleepy Lagoon riots, the finer points of *pachuquismo*, the fate of *Reies Tijerina*, the difference between an *acto* and a *mito*, Los Angeles street murals, and the Operation Wetback of the ‘50s, and the silly tortilla curtain *que parió*” (The Raza, 84).

However, he does not use Spanish words simply to meet Felipe’s expectations, because the two languages are also mixed when the protagonist expresses his inner thoughts and considerations. This demonstrates that he is comfortable with both English and Spanish, which reflect the two civilizations he belongs to:

“Yet, truly *escarmentado* that I am for having so readily and unselfconsciously confied in *El Otro*, that moment in the *tortería*, that heartfelt *abrazo* over *tortas de lomo*...How is it that two *oprimidos* of such divergent *estirpes*, of such varied formation, could have, if just for a transitory term, communed?” (The Raza, 97).

The portions of discourse in Spanish have always a remarkable emotional or cultural value, as it can be noted in the following sentence by the narrator: “Sure, I know it. There are ruins there. *Hay presencia del pasado*” (The Raza, 92). It is a further example of code-switching since the speaker changes language at the beginning of a new sentence. The two friends are talking about the Mexican region of Tulum where Felipe’s girlfriend lives. It is not by chance that the narrator switches to Spanish to refer to the “*presencia del pasado*”, which does not simply evoke past times as the English word ‘ruins’, but also folklore and myths deeply woven in Mexican culture and history.

The total number of Spanish words is 523, which is a considerable number considering that it is a 14-page long story.

Of the overall 523 words in Spanish, 243 are nouns, which confirms Skiba’s conclusion that bilinguals have a highest propensity to switch language at the word level than at the phrase or clause level (Skiba, 1997).

As far as Spanish nouns are concerned, we have tried to identify the reasons why they were not translated into English. After an analysis of the story, it is possible to reach the following conclusions:

- All names related to religion, eight in total, are in Spanish, such as *novena*, *benditos* (blessed), *Ave María*, *Virgen de Tepeyac* and *Tontantzín* (an Aztec mother goddess, possibly Mother Earth).
- Food is one of the main categories rendered in Spanish, as Maduro notes (Maduro, 2012). In particular, the text features 28 typical Mexican words among which 10 are Mexican dishes: *tortilla* (corn pancake), *guayaba* (guava), *jicama* (Mexican yam), *caldo talpeño* (typical Mexican soup with chicken meat and vegetables), *machitos* (fried offal), *tacos* (meat-filled tortilla), *aguacate* (avocado pear),

*cilantro* in *picante* (Mexican dish with spicy coriander), *tortas de lomo* (salt cakes stuffed with filet), *chile* (chili). These terms would lose specificity if translated into English, which is probably what justifies the speakers' choices to maintain the Spanish names. However, there is no apparent explanation for *crema*, *miel*, *café* and *té* since the speakers could have used the English equivalents cream, honey, coffee and tea. The switches that occur not to compensate for any lexical need lead to the conclusion that U.S. Latinos chose Spanish for food vocabulary because it evokes a tight connection to their birthplace, as numerous linguists observe (Anzaldúa, 2002; Price, 2010; Maduro, 2012).

- Spanish orthographical rules are preserved for Mexican towns and geographical areas such as *Anáhuac*, *Pelenque*, *Aztlán* and *México*. In addition, places with an emotional or cultural value are in Spanish; *casa*, *plaza* and *aldea* are among the most frequent examples.
- Most terms related to Mexican culture and traditions are in Spanish, for a total of 25 instances such as *raza*, repeated five times, *tierra*, *patria*, *carnal*, *cuate*, *amiZgo* and *carnalismo*. These words reveal tight bonds with the speakers' native culture, thus the switch to Spanish highlights a strong sense of belonging to the country of origin.
- The narrator also switches from English to Spanish when he uses typical Mexican terms or expressions that, otherwise, would not have an English equivalent. As Maduro points out, most Spanglish words are deeply rooted in folklore (Maduro, 2012) and similar to his example of *orgullo* and Castellano's examples of *alma*, *respeto* and *madre* discussed in the second chapter, Keller's characters use 11 times the noun *güero* accompanied by adjectives such as *loco*, *pocho* and *valín*. *Güero* is an adjective, here used as a noun, which means 'blond', 'fair-haired'; *pocho* is the Mexican word for 'Chicano', 'Mexican-American', while *valín* is another Mexican slang word to refer to an object of poor quality, or to something or someone that is irrelevant. It would be hard to translate these terms without losing the shades of meaning they possess in Spanish.

Similarly, *vato* (homeboy), *guayabera* (loose shirt), *cholo* (mixed-race person), *chavos* (young people), *gachupines* (pejorative term to describe Spaniards),

*huarache* (sandal) and *mestizo* (mixed-race person) are either Latin American or Mexican typical words kept in Spanish.

- Romaine's claim that "cultural-specific items" and, specifically, cultural and political institutions can be regarded as loanwords (Romaine, 1985:131) is validated by the investigation of Keller's story, as it is shown by words such as *Universidad Nacional Autónoma, revolución estudiantil, Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Profesor, maestras, El Frontón México* and *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*. Each time the speakers talk about political or social movements or people with an educational role, they maintain the Spanish terms.

- As it resulted from the analysis of "Pollito Chicken", also interjections, exclamations and idiomatic expressions are in Spanish. A few examples are "*Tienen los huevos en la garganta*" (The Raza, 90) and "*más cornadas da el hambre que el toro*" (The Raza, 94).

An interesting exception is represented by "*los malos hábitos* are difficult to overcome" (The Raza, 94), where the Spanish proverb is subdivided between the noun phrase in Spanish and the verb phrase in English; this is, therefore, a peculiar case of code-mix within the same sentence.

Sudden utterances pronounced by the speakers in moments of emotional involvement are also in Spanish, for example, "*¡Viva la revolución!*" (The Raza, 93).

Sometimes, vulgar words and expressions such as *¡Coño!* (Fuck!) and *¡Qué carajos!* (Damn it!, Fucking hell!) are in Spanish because, as in the examples above, they are words or expressions that come spontaneous to the speakers when they express strong emotions.

- As noted in the previous chapter, many linguists (Poplack, 2000; Musyken, 2000; Litvina, 2001; Salaberry, 2002; Toribo, 2002; Racine, 2003; Hernández, 2004; Martínez-San Miguel, 2008; Sánchez, 2008; Zentella 2008; Montés-Alcalá, 2009; Price, 2010; Maduro, 2012) concluded that code-switching serves social and pragmatical functions. This is confirmed by the analysis of Keller's text.

Each linguistic choice reflects a precise discourse strategy, "*¿Qué me dices?*" (Really?) (The Raza, 93) expresses surprise; *¿Verdad?* (Right?) is introduced by Felipe in the middle of an English sentence to receive a confirmation of what he

has just said and to ensure the interlocutor is paying attention: “And, besides, you have enough money now, *¿verdad?* You’ve got your graduation ticket and you can give up your contingency pigeon, right?” (The Raza, 94). “*¡Qué sé yo!*” is a discourse marker in the sentence: “You know, roots, *¡qué sé yo!*” (The Raza, 84), which supports the shared opinion among linguists (Torres, 1987; Zentella 1997; Johnson 2000) that discourse markers are likely places where the switch takes place.

- As in the conclusive “*Exacto*” in “El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí”, so to in “The Raza Who Scored big in Anáhuac” sentences with a conclusive sense such as “*No más por no más*” (The Raza, 91), “*Tienes razón*” (You are right) (The Raza, 92) and “*no cabe duda*” (without a doubt, undoubtedly) (The Raza, 97) are in Spanish.
- The sentence “but there was no address, maybe the empty swimming pool, *o como se dijo esa noche, una nulidad sin identidad remota*, and barring that I found myself in the library” (The Raza, 96) proves that parenthetical comments are places where the speakers tend to code-switch (Torres, 1987; Zentella, 1997; Johnson, 2000). It is important, however, to consider this as a tendency and not as a general rule because there are instances in which a parenthetical comment shows the juxtaposition of both languages, as in the following sentence: “They will disaggregate into an oppressor and an oppressed, a *siervo* and a *señor*, a leader and a led” (The Raza, 97). This sentence is similar to the examples of code-switching analysed in Levins’ story, where a sentence in English is followed by its translation in Spanish, or vice versa. This usage of Spanglish has the function to emphasise what the character is saying.

The linguistic choices concerning adjectives are worth analysing. Even though, unlike “Pollito Chicken”, in “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” the base language is English, with respect to adjectives both stories interestingly feature a variety of patterns. Of the overall 37 Spanish adjectives present in the short story, 22 belong to noun phrases where also the noun is in Spanish, as in the following examples: “*Pequeño burgués*”, “*gentil hombre*” “*raza cósmica*”, “*té danzante*”, “*novia santa*”, “*casa chica*”, “*malos hábitos*” “*güero valín*”, “*güero pocho*”. All these adjectives together with the nouns form a syntagm that would lose its meaning if the two components were separated. *Pequeño burgués* is a specific social class, likewise, *gentil*

*hombre* describes the professor as a person still anchored in past ideals and living surrounded by all comforts. *Raza cósmica* is a theory by José Vasconcelos according to which all races will disappear into one single fifth race, which he calls the “final race”, engendered by the process of race-mixing (Morales, 2002:12).

*Té danzante* is an ironical comment on the part of the narrator to indicate the only moment when Mexican women and men go out together, at five o'clock in the afternoon. *Novia santa* suggests the ideal of the chaste girlfriend who completely devotes herself to her husband, while *casa chica* is another ironical remark on the part of the narrator to refer to the male chauvinist mentality that confines women to the household environment and duties. “*Malos hábitos*” belongs to the fixed phrase “*los malos hábitos son duros de romper*”.

*Güero valín* and *güero pocho* mean, respectively, ‘irrelevant blond person’ and ‘blond Mexican-American’, and are typical Mexican expressions.

Therefore, we can notice that when Spanish is used in an adjective + noun phrase, the speaker’ purpose is to convey a precise connotation that goes beyond the denotative meaning of words.

A highly interesting example is ‘*campesino multitudes*’; instead of adapting the adjective “*campesino*” to the feminine plural noun ‘*multitudes*’ and following the Spanish syntax (*multitudes campesinas*), the narrator maintains the adjective neutral as in English with neither gender nor number fluctuation, and postpones the noun following the English syntactic structure adjective + noun. This instance might be regarded as a violation of Poplack’s Free Equivalent Constraint. The principle states that both parts of the discourse should be grammatically correct according to the rules of the two languages involved. Nevertheless, we can note that the restrictions depend on the cognitive level of the speaker. In other words, on whether he/she thinks in English or in Spanish.

In “these *campesino multitudes*” (The Raza, 85) the two parts of the switch are not correct according to the grammars of both languages. However, this example gives revealing insight into the narrator’s cognition, allowing us to understand that, despite his Mexican origins, English has become his first language.

A violation is always measured according to a point of reference, which can be either English or Spanish, this is the reason why it is important to take cognitive aspects into consideration.

Unlike the previous examples analysed in which both adjectives and nouns were in Spanish, we can observe that each time the two languages are juxtaposed in an adjective-noun syntagm, the English syntactic rules are respected, the adjective precedes the noun and while the former is always in English, the latter is in Spanish. In particular, there are 55 instances of this paradigm, among which “written *castellano*”, “black *águila*”, “silly *tortilla*”, “political *peripecias*”, “Mexican *feministas*”, “best *crema*”, “binational *carnalismo*”, “heartfelt *abrazo*”, “rural *maestras*”, “obscure *recintos*”, “comfortable *gentil hombre*”, “main *partido*”, “hawking *tostads*”, “striking *mestizo*”, “same *olla*”, “all-night *estancia*”, “old *farmacia*”, “disgusting *putas*”, “dumb *gringo*” (The Raza, 2008).

The same is true for possessive and demonstrative adjectives: “my *tierra*”, “his *patria*”, “our *aula*”, “their *pepitas*”, “their *elotes*”, “my *novia*”, “its *muchachas*”, “these *campesinos*”, “those *pequines*” are a few examples (The Raza, 2008).

An exception is “your *macho* ideas”, where the English syntax is respected though, unlike previous examples, the adjective is in Spanish, followed by an English noun. This is possibly justified by the fact that the switch to Spanish puts emphasis on the adjective “*macho*”, which carries strong cultural implications. With a single word, the pharmacy attendant despises Mexican sexist behaviours, which are evoked much more immediately by “*macho*” than by any English equivalent. This corroborates Maduro’s claim that bilinguals switch language to find the words that best convey certain connotations (Maduro, 2012).

Another exception are the compound adjectives “*sandía*-colored money” and “*sandía*-hued heaven”. The English past participle is preceded by the Spanish word for ‘watermelon’, which might be explained by the fact that food, as it has been underlined above, is predominantly rendered in the native language of the speaker (Romaine, 1985; Maduro, 2012). The story is set in Mexico and food is an integral part of the country’s culture and traditions.

Another interesting example of code-mixing is found in the sentence pronounced by a bourgeois gentlemen who advises the two young men not to bet their money: “You’re just going to make a *tiburón* happy” (The Raza, 89). Here the speaker switches to Spanish only for the noun. Whilst the narrator’s controlling language is English, the gentlemen is a Mexican who lives in Mexico and whose first language is Spanish, this

supposedly explains the his linguistic choice “a *tiburón* happy”. Both ‘shark’ and ‘*tiburón*’ can be used in a figurative way to describe a ruthless person, but the speaker chooses his native language, which confirms that the first language is often charged with emotional and cultural connotations more than the second one (Harris et Al, 2006).

Another interesting characteristic of the variety of Spanglish employed in the text is the use of the Saxon genitive in “the prototype of Vasconcelos’s *raza cósmica*” (The Raza, 89), “*La Madama Lulú’s* was not perverse” (The Raza, 91) and “St. Thomas’s *sandía*-hued heaven” (The Raza, 97). This is a telling feature which confirms that English is the controlling language of the story and the one that structures the narrator’s thoughts at a cognitive level.

As far as the articles are concerned, when the speakers code-switch at the clause and sentence level, the articles are maintained in the language of the sentence they are part of, as in the following example: “What do you mean? Is this a police state? *¡Viva la revolución!*” (The Raza, 93), or “*Pa’ la próxima más aguazo, vato. Porque ya aprendiste. That’s what Buñuel meant in Los olvidados*” (The Raza, 94).

Nonetheless, Spanish nouns are almost always preceded by English articles when the speakers code-switch below the sentence level. For instance in “a *servicio*”, “an *acto*”, “a *mito*”, “an *hidalgo*”, “the *partido*”, “a *güero pocho*”, “a *café*”, “the *novena*”, “the *Ave María*”, “the *campo*”, “the *aldea*”, “the *grenaderos*”, “a *vato loco*”, “a *tiburón*”, “the *huevos*”, “a *novia*”, “an *aventón*”, “the *picos*”, “the *campesinos*”, “the *tortería*” and “an *hombre*” (The Raza, 2008).

The following sentences are, nevertheless, exceptions to the aforementioned pattern: “It goes well with *la casa chica*” (The Raza, 92), “*los malos hábitos* are difficult to overcome” (The Raza, 95) and “The attendant, *una celestina fea y arrugada* who looked like the incarnation of gleeful disapproval, would put the needle in” (The Raza, 95) feature Spanish nouns preceded by Spanish articles though the switch takes place within the same sentence. We could be led to the conclusion that the Spanish noun phrases that, as it has been observed above, represent a unit of meaning are preceded by Spanish articles which are part of the syntagm. Yet, this alleged rule would not explain “the *novia santa*” (The Raza, 92), which is an expression used by both Felipe and the narrator, or “a *té danzante*” (The Raza, 92).

There is only one instance in which an article in Spanish precedes a noun in English: “*Lo que sea, entran los chavitos, haga cola para el financial aid*” (The Raza, 94). This sentence echoes “*a pesar de que prefería mil veces perder un fabulous job antes que poner Puerto Rican en las applications de trabajo y morir de hambre por no coger el Welfare o los food stamps*” (Pollito Chicken, 75). In line with Romaine’s claim that “cultural-specific items” and, especially, cultural institutions are loanwords (Romaine, 1985:131), English is used for institutions and social activities related to the state. The speakers are, respectively, Felipe and the narrator of “Pollito Chicken”; in both cases Spanish structures their discourse at a cognitive level, but English is introduced as it immediately evokes U.S. government programs.

Akin to “Pollito Chicken”, “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” contradicts Pfaff’s restriction concerning prepositions (Pfaff in Cohen, 2005); the whole story is rich of examples of English prepositions followed by Spanish nouns. For example, “in *Pelenque*”, “the finer points of *pachuquismo*”, “they travelled the roads in *huaraches*”, “in the valley of *México*”, “*tacos* of bull testicles sprinkled with *aguacate*”, “the maiden ethics of *niñas de bien*”, “that heartfelt *abrazo* over *tortas de lomo*”, “to *pizcar tomates*” and “they filed down the mountains roads, dog-tired, without *chavos*” (The Raza, 2008). We might deduce that the pattern English preposition + Spanish noun is a rule that Keller follows in code-mixing, but there is also one example of a Spanish preposition which links an English noun to a Spanish one: “and the women only *en casa*” (The Raza, 95).

Counter to Kachru’s restriction on code-switching, already belied by the study of the first short story (Kachru in Cohen, 2005), the text under investigation shows abundant examples of English conjunctions linking both an English noun to a Spanish one or the other way round: “milk and *miel*”, “guava and *cajeta*”, “*pepitas* and pistachios”, “coyotes and *pollos*” (The Raza, 2008).

There are also instances of English conjunctions connecting two Spanish nouns: “an *acto* and a *mito*”, “*aguacate* and *cilantro*” and “a *siervo* and a *señor*” (The Raza, 2008).

With respect to verbs, no language blend at the morpheme level is found; the only example in which both languages are used within the same verb is in the past continuous “We were *tertuliando*” (The Raza, 86). However, there is no violation of the English or the Spanish grammatical rules either because also in Spanish the verb would have been composed by the verb to be at the past tense + gerund (*Nosotros estábamos tertuliando*). Here, therefore, Poplck’s Free Equivalent Constraint is validated.

## CONCLUSION

In light of the analysis carried out by the present chapter, we can note that “Pollito Chicken”, “El Bacalao viene de más lejo y se come aquí” and “The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac” deal with the complex theme of identity for second-generation immigrants.

As we have indicated, in the early XX century many Puerto Rican writers perceived the United States as an invader and highlighted the incompatibility between Puerto Rican and U.S. cultures (Fahey, 2001); this phase of firm rejection of U.S. influence led to the search for Puerto Rican roots. Yet, as pointed out, both the nostalgic return to the *jíbaro* as a symbol of Puerto Rican authentic culture and traditions, and the idealisation of the Hispanic heritage, disregarded the complex fabric of Puerto Rican society. In particular, they denied the important Afro-Antillean contribution to Puerto Rican ethnic identity. This is the reason why from the 1960s onwards, Puerto Rican literature has been characterised by the attempt to reimagine Puerto Rican cultural identity celebrating the importance of African and Caribbean heritage and, especially in the United States, by the endeavour to define the identity of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens, in other words, as U.S. Latinos.

Although employing different narrative devices, both Ana Lydia Vega and Aurora Levins Morales participate in this effort. “El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí” ends with the protagonist acknowledging the contribution of her Puerto Rican roots in forging her identity, though she realises, at the same time, that identity is not solely determined by her Latin descent, it evolves and is equally shaped by her experiences in the United States. Similarly, the message conveyed by the ironical narrator of “Pollito Chicken” is that it is absurd and, in fact, unrealizable to refuse one’s heritage adapting to stereotypical cultural parameters as Suzie does. Like Pietri in “Puerto Rican Obituary” (Pietri, 1969), Ana Lydia Vega exposes the hollowness of the American dream and the great divide between the ideals fuelled by advertising and reality.

As José Antonio Villareal did in his pioneering novel *Pocho*, Keller continues the investigation of the sharp conflict experienced by young Mexican-Americans between loyalty to their native country and integration into U.S. society, striving to achieve adulthood as young men caught between, and influenced by, two worlds.

Rather than focusing on the immigrants' struggles against the hardships and discrimination they faced in the United States as early narratives by Latinos did (Thomas, 1967; Pietri, 1969; Mohr, 1973; Zenón, 1974; González, 1980), all three short stories continue the efforts of Nuyorican and Chicano literature in exploring the experience of bicultural individuals as U.S. citizens who recognise the importance of preserving their Latin cultural heritage as a fundamental component of their identity.

Keller explicitly refers to Mexican roots: the Virgin of Guadalupe's day, typical food, geographical places and Mayan somatic traits. Likewise, Ana Lydia Vega suggests the African contribution to Puerto Rican identity since the protagonist, Suzie, severely criticises her grandmother who did not accept her father because of his frizzy hair. Aurora Levins Morales evokes Puerto Rican culture and traditions, food and landscape in particular.

Notwithstanding this, Ana Lydia Vega, Aurora Levins Morales and Gary Francisco Keller seem to show that the ties created by folk culture are not enough to define identity because U.S. Latinos' life in the United States cannot be overlooked as another fundamental component of their identity.

The protagonists of the stories examined in this paper go back to their native countries for different reasons. The young man who recounts his stay in Mexico in "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" is excited by the opportunity to live authentic Mexican experiences and convinces himself that he is exclusively part of this civilization, rejecting U.S. culture. The opposite situation is described in "Pollito Chicken", where Suzie initially denies her Puerto Rican descent and struggles to fit perfectly into North American society; she goes back to her country of origin only to spend the wonderful vacation advertised by a travel agency poster.

Levins's protagonist seems half way between the other two, she is sceptical towards the advantages the trip to Puerto Rico may bring her, but she resolves to go there in order to better understand where she belongs. Consequently, of the three protagonists, she is the one who is more aware from the beginning of the blend of multiple cultural influences which defines her own self.

In spite of their different attitudes, they all reach similar conclusions. Levins and Kellers' protagonists understand that their countries of origin are an integral component of their identity, though they are also enriched by further aspects, especially their experiences in the United States. In "Pollito Chicken" we do not hear Suzie's final reflections, but the

intimate bond with Puerto Rico, which emerges in the moment of her orgasm, demonstrates that it is pointless to deny her Latino descent.

In line with the messages conveyed by *AmeRícan* (Laviera, 1985), *Child of the Américas* (Levins, 1986), and *To Live in the Borderlands Means You* (Anzaldúa, 1987:94-95), the three short stories examined show that the recovery of one's rich, multiple heritage by means of memories of home landscapes, sounds and smells is fundamental to a path of self-discovery. As Morales highlights, the multifaceted identity resulting from this complex search is a source of power since this new hybrid identity transcends races, genders and cultures, allowing individuals to feel a comfortable sense of home everywhere.

Therefore, the three stories show that "The mixing of languages that occurs in Spanglish is a metaphor for the mixture of race; it allows for races to have different voices in the same language, eliminating the need [...] to [think] in racial category". (Morales, 2002: 48).

From a linguistic point of view, although some common aspects can be identified, it is hard to find common patterns between the three stories under investigation.

The protagonists live in the United States and make a trip back to their native countries. They appear to be perfect bilinguals and the stories are characterised by the fusion of English and Spanish.

In both "El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" and "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" English is the main language; therefore, the study centred on the reasons why the first person narrators sometimes switch to Spanish. All in all, we have seen that food, family bonds, traditions, typical objects, geographical places and all what is related to Puerto Rican and Mexican roots is in Spanish, as well as idiomatic expressions and proverbs.

It is in particular in "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" that intimacy and emotions are expressed in Spanish, which confirms what Pérez claimed in an interview: "English is very concise and efficient. Spanish has *sabrosura*, flavour" (Perez F. in Álvarez, 1997:25). This is consistent with studies that show how bilinguals often perceive their first language to be emotionally evocative because words and phrases are associated to emotionally relevant personal memories. Kroll and Stewart maintain that words in L1 are directly linked to conceptual representations, a "conceptual store", which is a repository of meaning that includes the emotional and

visceral connotations of words and phrases (Kroll, Stewart, 1994:150-151). For instance, childhood memories are more emotionally charged when described in their native language (Schrauf & Rubin, 2000). There is evidence that autobiographical events are mentally represented along with words and phrases from the language in which they occurred. Recalls of autobiographical memories depends, therefore, on the language in which recall takes place, and if language of recall matches the language in which the specific episode was originally encoded, recall is enhanced (Schrauf & Rubin, 1998, 2000).

The protagonists of the three short stories are bilinguals who immigrated to North America in childhood with their parents. Research (Birdsong & Molis, Johnson & Newport, Moyer in Harris et Al., 2006) shows that age of arrival in a new country influences proficiency in the second language. As the majority of the children of immigrants, the protagonist probably maintained their parents' language at home, and learned English when they entered school; English has probably become their strongest, most proficient language because of immersion in U.S. culture. However, contrary to the usual process of second language acquisition where the need to borrow decreases as knowledge of the target language increases (Taylor in Gass & Selinker, 1993), Spanglish is characterised by a high number of borrowings as they respond to communicative needs. Even though it is undeniable that borrowings are initially used to compensate for language deficiency, we have noticed that they are less used to compensate for lexical ignorance in the target language than as communicative strategies.

Supporting Castellano's claim that "The essence of Latino culture often gets lost in the translation to English" (Castellano in Magagnini, 1998:84), we have identified many instances of words that are maintained in Spanish because they are associated with particular cultural connotations that would be lost in the translation to English.

In "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" and in "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" words related to family, religion and culture are in Spanish. In "Pollito Chicken" family names are in English not because they are devoid of any emotional memory, but due to Suzie's attempt to deny her Puerto Rican heritage.

In "Pollito Chicken", the main language is Spanish, though the narrator extensively switches to English in the course of the story. The difficulty of this text derives from the presence of two intertwined voices that are not only different in terms of perspective, but also linguistically. The narrator uses Spanish as the controlling

language and inserts English either when Suzie is the focaliser in order to reveal her impressions and point of view, or when he is overtly ironical towards the great divide between Suzie's idealization of Puerto Rico and reality. The irony that characterises "Pollito Chicken" emerges precisely from the alternation between the more neutral narration in Spanish and the highly frequent adjective-noun syntagms in English, which expose Suzie's naiveté. Hence, we can observe that Spanglish is employed by the author as a communicative strategy within the discourse.

Additionally, there are parts where, even without any pragmatical function, the narrator shifts effortlessly from one language to the other, showing that he/she is perfectly bilingual, possibly a U.S. Latino who once lived the same experiences as Suzie does, and who is now able to look at certain behaviours from a distance, in a more lucid and ironical way.

While in "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" we can notice only a few Spanish words scattered through the text, the rare use of code-switching, and one chapter entirely in Spanish, "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" and "Pollito Chicken" are examples of both code-switching and code-mixing. English and Spanish are fused in reported dialogues, narrative parts and to reveal the thoughts and emotions of the protagonists.

The analysis of the stories confirms that switches at the noun level are the most frequent in Spanglish, as researchers on bilingualism maintain (Pfaff 1979; Poplack, 1980, 1981; Timm 1975; Wentz 1977).

Concerning grammatical rules, there is a slight tendency towards consistency within each text. For example, in "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" when the two languages are combined the adjective is almost always in English followed by a noun in Spanish. The only instances in which Spanish is used for both adjective and noun are noun phrases that constitute a unit of meaning.

Articles, possessive and demonstrative adjectives preceding a noun in Spanish are in English, whilst Spanish, as noted, is the language of proverbs and sudden exclamations. We have noticed, however, a few exceptions to these patterns.

In "Pollito Chicken", we observed different phenomena: there is a high frequency of adjective + noun syntagms in English always preceded by Spanish articles, possessive or demonstrative adjectives. We have also noted numerous instances in which the adjective

in Spanish is followed by an English noun, or the other way round. Additionally, we have seen that since Spanish is the controlling language, gender and number are often applied to English nouns, confirming Olague and Hill's conclusions (Hill, 2003; Olague, 2003). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Spanglish has a narrative function because the way the narrator switches language is tightly connected to the purpose Vega wants to achieve. Spanglish is used, as pointed out above, in order to create irony towards the American dream and Latinos' blind following of it. English is the language Suzie chooses to express herself and we have concluded that the English words introduced in the text, especially adverbs + adjectives and adjectives + nouns, serve to immediately reveal her perspective and sensations through the technique of the free indirect discourse. The union of Spanish adjective + English noun shows, instead, the narrator's voice and his evident irony towards the protagonist and, more broadly, towards the tendency to reason in a stereotypical way. There are also instances where English adjectives are followed by Spanish names because the latter convey a certain concept more vividly.

Both "The Raza Who Scored big in Anáhuac" and "Pollito Chicken" contradict Pfaff's restriction about prepositions, which states that it is impossible for a preposition to be in a different language from the items both preceding and following it (Pfaff in Cohen, 2005). In addition, Kachru's theory that it is forbidden for two sentences from one language to be linked by a conjunction from another is repeatedly contradicted by evidence from the two stories (Kachru in Cohen, 2005).

One of the aims of the present paper was to verify whether Poplack's restrictions operated in the three short stories under consideration. We have found no instances of code-switch at the morpheme level, except for *hangueadores* in "Pollito Chicken". Poplack's Free Morpheme Constraint states that a language switch is unacceptable between a free and a bound morpheme, "unless the lexical form has been phonologically integrated into the language of the bound morpheme" (Sankoff and Poplack, 1981:5). *Hanguear*, and the consequent noun *hangueador*, are examples of neologisms that have become part of Spanglish; although the English free morpheme "hang" has not been phonologically integrated into Spanish, the use of this Spanglish word is attested by a number of authoritative sources, including the BBC (González, 2010). We can, thus, maintain that any word formed by an English and a Spanish morpheme may become part of Spanglish. The introduction of a neologism and its survival in Spanglish, and in general in any

language, is not determined by preordained rules, but by usage. This has always been the principle behind loanwords, regardless of the language pair in contact; the more a word is successfully used in communicative contexts, the more it takes root in a language passing from the status of neologism to that of assimilated loanword.

With respect to Poplack's Free Equivalent Constraint, maintaining that both sides of a switch should respect the rules of the grammars of the two languages involved, we have observed that in a considerable number of occasions this alleged rule is refuted by the evidence. This has been noted especially analysing adjective + noun compounds and the syntactic order they follow. In English, the correct structure requires the adjective before the noun, whereas in Spanish it is the opposite. Hence, it is impossible that the discourse comply with the syntactic rules of both languages; this is the reason why, according to Poplack, it is unacceptable to change language between adjective and noun, as in "a tree *verde*", because it would violate either the English or the Spanish ordering of words (Poplack, 1988:47). Nevertheless, similar instances are abundant.

We may conclude that differences are determined by the language the speaker uses at a cognitive level to structure his/her discourse, either English, in "El Bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" and "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac", or Spanish in "Pollito Cicken". As we have already pointed out in the course of this study, it is pointless to talk about universal restrictions since restrictions depend on individual cognition processes. In "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" the protagonist, who is also the narrator of the story, speaks and thinks in English, except for whole portions of discourse entirely in Spanish when she is emotionally touched by the landscape surrounding her; there are also interesting examples of code-switching that reveal the other characters' proficiency in both languages.

In "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" and "Pollito Chicken", things are further complicated because besides code-switching in dialogues, code-mixing is abundantly used. In the former story, the narrator and Felipe prove to be highly fluent in both languages, but English is undoubtedly the base language, borrowing Grosjean's terminology (Grosjean, 1982:129), which explains the reason why certain constructions respect only the English syntax (e.g. the Saxon genitive and the order of words).

In the latter, although Spanish is the controlling language, the correct English ordering of words is found not only in English noun phrases, but also in other syntagms where the Spanish adjective precedes an English noun, instead of following it. This demonstrates

how English and Spanish are deeply woven in the narrator's mind since, even though he/she expresses himself/herself in Spanish, the English syntax sometimes influences the structure of some parts of his/her discourse.

Finally, Poplack's Size-of-Constituent Constraint states that higher-level constituents (e.g. sentences, clauses), tend to be switched more frequently than lower-level constituents (i.e. one-word categories such as determiners, verbs, adverbs, adjectives) (Poplack, 1980), with the exception of nouns (Timm 1975; Wentz 1977; Pfaff 1979; Poplack, 1980, 1981). In all stories analysed, nouns-switches are numerous; nonetheless, besides nouns, we have noticed that switches take place at other one-word categories, such as adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, articles and adverbs.

As we underlined in the second chapter, research on bilingualism has frequently connected the size of the constituents switched with the bilingual proficiency of the speaker. The fact that in these stories the switches occur at both larger and smaller constituents demonstrate that the authors have a high knowledge of both English and Spanish and address a readership who is equally proficient in both.

Spanglish is employed by the authors for specific purposes, both as a device within the narrative discourse and as a communicative strategy to their addressees. In "Pollito Chicken", Spanglish marks the different voices and perspectives that are interwoven in the narration; in "The Raza Who Scored Big in Anáhuac" it suggests either English civilization or Mexican culture; similarly, in "El bacalao viene de más lejos y se come aquí" code-switching evokes Puerto Rican flavours and traditions and it also reveals the protagonist's emotional relation with her native country.

As Callahan points out about code-mixing, "some of the dialogues would remain beyond the comprehension of a monolingual reader" (Callahan, 2004:31). Therefore, a monolingual audience, either English or Spanish, could not fully enjoy these texts, having difficulty to understand the subtleties and nuances implied by the amalgamation of both languages, not least irony. "If you speak Spanglish you know that someone is bilingual and that you can communicate with them on a deeper level because you share biculturalism", claims González (González, 2010:1). Similarly, talking about U.S. Latino authors, Álvarez explains "We are an intersection of two and we reflect a life between two languages and two cultures that our readers live in" (Álvarez in Callahan, 2004:118).

Finally, we agree with Mac Swan who maintains that there is no grammar explicitly formulated for Spanglish (Mac Swan in Montés-Alcalá, 2009:105); he also claims that the only constraints on code-switching are those imposed on either language by their respective grammars. His statement is supported, for instance, by adverbial phrases such as “all of a sudden” and “after all” (Pollito Chcken, 76) which are not broken into two different languages because they function as units of meaning in English and, thus, also in Spanglish. Likewise, the idioms analysed are either entirely in Spanish or in English, apart from “*Los malos hábitos* are difficult to overcome” which stands as an exception (The Raza, 94).

Notwithstanding this, we have identified abundant examples of constructions that break the rules of either grammar involved.

In order to examine possible constraints on code-switching and code-mixing it is fundamental to understand in which language does the restriction work, in other words, which is the language structuring the speaker’s discourse at a cognitive level.

In light of the analysis carried out, we have seen that the speakers chose either English or Spanish as the base language, which determines the syntax, but they are able to shift from one idiom to the other with great dexterity, especially at the noun level.

We can, thus, agree with Alvarez that “phrases and sentences veer back and forth almost unconsciously, as the speaker's intuition grabs the best expressions from either language to sum up a thought” (Alvarez, 1997:3).

To conclude, even though we have identified certain recurrent linguistic features within each of the texts under scrutiny, in each of them there are numerous exceptions to the most recurrent patterns, which lead us to the conclusion that Spanglish defies standardisation.

## APPENDIX

*To Live in the Borderlands Means You* by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987:94-95)

To live in the Borderlands means you  
are neither hispana india negra espanola  
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed  
caught in the crossfire between camps  
while carrying all five races on your back  
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing  
that the india in you, betrayed for 500 years,  
is no longer speaking to you,  
that mexicanas call you rajetas,  
that denying the Anglo inside you  
is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;

Cuando vives en la frontera  
people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,  
you're a burra, buey, scapegoat,  
forerunner of a new race,  
half and half - both woman and man, neither -  
a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands means to  
put chile in the borscht,  
eat whole wheat tortillas,  
speak tex-mex with a brooklyn accent;  
be stopped by la migra at the border checkpoints;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to  
resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,  
the pull of the gun barrel,  
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands  
you are the battleground  
where enemies are kin to each other;  
you are at home, a stranger,  
the border disputes have been settled  
the volley of shots have shattered the truce  
you are wounded, lost in action  
dead, fighting back;

To live in the Borderlands means  
the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred off  
your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your heart  
pound you pinch you roll you out  
smelling like white bread but dead;

To survive the Borderlands  
you must live sin fronteras  
be a crossroads.

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