

## ***Hacer* borrow: Bilingual compound verbs as a borrowing strategy in Belizean varieties of Spanish**

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This paper employs the comparative variationist approach (Poplack 2000) to analyze the strategy of combining a *do*-verb with an English element (EE) to form a bilingual compound verb (BCV) (Edwards and Gardner-Chloros 2007) illustrated in (1). Data is drawn from a subset of sociolinguistic interviews with bi/tri-lingual speakers in northern and western Belize and which are compiled in the Belizean Spanish, English and Kriol corpus (BSEK) (Fuller Medina 2016).

1.    Lo    hicieron    report  
      it    do3PL.PRET   report  
      ‘They reported it’

Despite documentation in various language pairs, consensus on the definition of BCVs is lacking and variationist studies are scant. Cross-linguistically, BCVs have been described as emergent hybrids (Wilson 2013), borrowings (Sankoff et al. 1990), code-switches (González-Vilbazo and López 2012), of products of a third grammar (Romaine 1986) or creolization (Gardner-Chloros 2009; Pfaff 1979). We therefore aim to determine the status of the EE in BCVs with respect to these competing descriptions.

Verbal EEs, account for 14% (N=191) of all single non-Spanish items and 95% of these appear in a BCV. These were subjected to a comparative analysis with verbs in the monolingual varieties from the same speakers. Verbal morphology and variable pronominal clitic placement, conflict sites (Poplack and Meechan 1998) for Spanish and English, were used as diagnostics to determine which of these grammatical systems the EEs might pattern with, thus, elucidating how BCVs might be best described.

EEs were found to be categorically incorporated into Spanish via *hacer* which carried the requisite Spanish inflectional morphology (see (1)) that monolingual Spanish verbs do. There was no evidence of English morphology on EEs and uninflected English verbs did not otherwise surface in our data, suggesting that EEs are best analyzed as borrowings. Clitic placement associated with BCVs provides further corroboration. Consistent with the Spanish grammatical system, when the BCV was finite, the clitic was categorically preverbal (*lo* in (1) above). When the BCV was non-finite, clitics exhibited variability with respect to enclisis and proclisis as was the case with Spanish verbs with no statistically significant difference ( $p = .14$ ) between the two datasets.

BCVs account for 95% of verbal borrowings and have a type/token ratio of 0.73 highlighting them as productive and the preferred strategy for borrowing verbs, irrespective of dialect region in Belize. Such findings are not widely reported for Spanish-English data or other Romance languages in contact with English (cf Poplack et al. 1988).

While verbal borrowings occur at relatively low frequencies, this does not preclude their analysis through quantitative accountable methods. By applying the principles of the comparative variationist method, the current analysis disentangles the various characterizations of BCVs to show them to be a strategy for borrowing English-origin verbs. Consequently, evidence is provided for distinguishing borrowing and code-switching, as well as for examining claims of creolization and third grammars as the provenance of BCVs given that, in contrast to previous explanations of BCVs, the quantitative evidence reveals BCVs to be functioning as nothing more than a community specific borrowing strategy.