

SPANISH AND ENGLISH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Christopher J. Pountain
Queens' College, Cambridge

1 Introduction¹

Talking about the future is not something that linguists are given to doing, especially historical linguists, who know only too well that any prediction of what will happen to a language and when can be thwarted by the large number of variables involved in any linguistic change and the essentially random effects of the 'invisible hand' (Keller 1994). I have a number of reasons for having the temerity to address the question, however. In the first place, it seems to me that there is something of a wave of hysteria in the Spanish-speaking world about the future of Spanish and its supposed 'invasion' by English, and evidence of the impact of English on modern Spanish is often treated in the press with a mixture of ridicule and paranoia. Even respected linguists are tempted to take a puristic stand on the matter and make rather extravagant predictions about the future on an essentially unrigorous basis. Such attitudes and conclusions ought to be the subject of critical scrutiny. Secondly, and on a more positive note, there has been in recent years some interesting work, largely informed by techniques of economic and demographic forecasting, on the likely future of Spanish and English during the next 50 years, notably by the Fundación Duques de Soria in Spain (Tamarón ed. 1995) and the English 2000 Project and the Nuffield Languages Enquiry in Britain (Graddol 1997; Moys ed. 1998). It seems to me opportune, therefore, to make some attempt to marry the results of such macro-enquiries with the more particular question of linguistic borrowing, at the same time setting such speculation firmly in the context of what historical linguists have deduced about the mechanisms of language contact and borrowing in the past.

2 The international status of English and Spanish in the 21st century

2.1 Some facts and figures

All linguistic forecasters appear to be in agreement that in the 21st century English and Spanish will number amongst the dominant languages of the world.

- Both languages have currently vast numbers of native speakers, falling within the top five languages of the world from this point of view. In fact, Spanish is reported as having already overtaken English in this respect:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Language Name</u>	<u>Population</u>
1	Mandarin Chinese	885,000,000
2	Spanish	332,000,000
3	English	322,000,000
4	Bengali	189,000,000
5	Hindi	182,000,000
6	Portuguese	170,000,000

Source: Grimes ed. 1996 (updated 1999).

- They are both spoken as native or official languages over vast geographical areas (English comes first, Spanish fourth) which cover a large number of countries (Otero 1995:245).
- They are both official languages of the United Nations and many other international organizations, and often both used within a much more limited list of working languages (Ybáñez Bueno 1995). We should also note that the status of Spanish within the European Union, that is, as coequal with ten other European languages and one of six working languages, is in fact out of line with the status of Spanish internationally.²

2.2 The changing fortunes of Spanish?

While English is some way ahead of Spanish on the second and third of the above counts, Spanish nevertheless scores consistently well on all three, and significantly better overall than Chinese, Hindi, French, Russian, Arabic and Portuguese, which are the other current and prospective main players on the international stage. Moreover, the situation is in some respects poised to change:

- There is evidence that the dominance of English on the Internet is now to a certain extent declining. Graddol (1997:61) cites figures predicting that English will go from 80% of computer-based communications in the 1990s to 40% in just the next decade. Much has been said and written recently about ‘Ciberespanglish’. English will no doubt lend a number of technical items to Spanish in this area, especially terms which are ‘economically motivated’ (see 4.2 below). However, there is now evidence that as the Spanish-speaking world becomes an important market, Spanish-language versions of programs are consequently being developed, even if such versions do not have the benefit of expert linguistic advice (this, incidentally, highlights the need for involvement of language planners at this level: see Castro Roig 1996).
- Tamarón (1995:55-7) is much exercised by the outside perception of the Spanish-speaking world as negative, and consequently feels that the best way to improve the chances for Spanish internationally is to improve the image that Spanish-speaking countries have. There is no easy metric for ‘image’; however, I think that there are some signs that the image of Spanish is improving in the UK at any rate. Spanish has registered an increase in A-Level entrants over the last four years while French and German have both dipped (Towell 1998:47). More generally, familiarity with Spanish literature abroad has been increased by a succession of Nobel prizewinners and a consequent increase in available translations of major works of fiction into English.

2.3 The different prospects of English and Spanish

These statistics do hide some important prospective differences between English and Spanish, however.

The numbers of native speakers of both English and Spanish will shrink proportionally to a smaller percentage of the world’s population, which will make the search for an international lingua franca more significant. There is little doubt that this will be English, which is already significantly different in status from Spanish in being very widely used as a lingua franca by non-native speakers. (There are already many countries in Africa and Asia in which English

is an official language whilst not being spoken natively, the advantage of English being that it is neutral between ethnic and linguistic divisions; to my knowledge, this situation only occurs in the Spanish-speaking world in Equatorial Guinea: see Lipski 1985). What sort of English this lingua franca will be is not clear. The likelihood is that it will not simply be an imitation of American or, still less, British, English, or necessarily readily understandable by monolinguals of these areas (Graddol 1998:24-5); we can see this process happening already in India and many African countries, though these are not necessarily to be taken as paradigmatic since users of such varieties of English are embedded into a worldwide English-speaking cultural matrix to which they have now begun to contribute themselves. It is unlikely that Spanish will be used as a lingua franca in this way: the vast majority of Spanish speakers will continue to be native speakers, and so Spanish may be expected to maintain a greater degree of unity than English.

This question highlights another major difference, often pointed out, between the English-speaking world and the Spanish-speaking world. English has no international standard and no overall legislative body; by contrast, Spanish has the Real Academia, whose standing, probably because of its sensitivity to change and variation within the Spanish-speaking world, is paramount. The fundamental linguistic unity of the Spanish-speaking world is acknowledged and much-prized (Tamarón 1995:53). If these trends continue, it could be that Spanish, despite not being a lingua franca, fragments less than English. One could imagine, for example, that following the excellent beginnings of the Academia on the Internet,³ the time would soon come when provisional decisions on standardised words and usages could be posted almost instantly and updated regularly as actual usage is monitored. This is not to say that the differences between the various regional varieties of English and Spanish, which are already fairly gross at the informal spoken level, will not continue to intensify, though in the case of Spanish, normativist teaching of a pan-Hispanic standard is likely to be more uniform.

A possibly significant statistic is that of published translations into and out of various languages. In this, English and Spanish are very different indeed, English showing ten times as many works translated out of English as into English while Spanish shows almost exactly the reverse situation (Otero 1995:260). This of course may be a reflection of 'image' referred to above. On the other hand, it highlights the fact that Spanish is not read as widely as English and that material written in Spanish is therefore not as widely known. This situation could, however, change with the advent of machine translation. Most linguists, unless they are professional translators or interpreters, are unaware of the advances made in this area, which they see either as ludicrous or threatening. They are neither: we may anticipate that within the near future, machine translation will have advanced to a point where it can be routinely used for the translation of formulaic non-literary material at least, but it will for the foreseeable future be an aid to, rather than a substitute for, human translators and will if anything boost the demand for translation and the numbers of texts translated (Graddol 1998:28-9). I reproduce below an example of what is currently possible, a translation of a paragraph from a news item in *El País*, the whole of which was made, in seconds, by the BabelFish on-line translation service of the Altavista websearch site.⁴ The advantage of this facility, as can readily be seen, is clearly not that it will yield a flawless translation, but that it will make a text roughly intelligible to someone with limited knowledge of the original language, and perhaps also eventually save much time and effort for the human translator, who may in time become more of an editor, without having to start the task entirely from scratch.

<p>Para la oposición conservadora, que sí habla de moratoria, la nueva postura del Gobierno representa una victoria. Aunque la entrada en el Reino Unido de semillas transgénicas comenzó mientras los torys ostentaban el poder, estos se han convertido ahora en uno de los principales defensores de la cautela. Tanto su líder, William Hague, como el portavoz de Comercio e Industria, John Redwood, han admitido que el rechazo ciudadano en el país era mayoritario. “Con la crisis de las vacas locas aprendimos la lección. Hacerse el sordo se paga muy caro”, ha reconocido Hague.</p>	<p><i>For the preservative opposition, that yes moratorium speech, the new position of the Government represents a victory. Although the entrance in the United Kingdom of transgénicas seeds began while torys showed the power, these have now become one of the main defenders of the caution. As much its leader, William Hague, as the spokesman of Commerce and Industry, John Redwood, have admitted that the citizen rejection in the country was majority. “ With the crisis of the crazy cows we learned the lesson. To become the deaf person is paid very expensive “, has recognized Hague.</i></p>
--	--

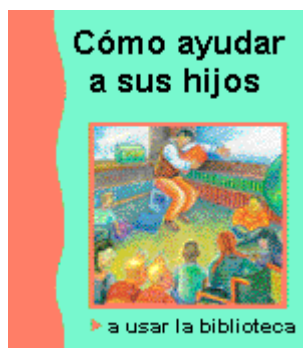
It could be, therefore, that writing in Spanish is no longer the impediment that it is sometimes perceived to be and that multilingual publishing becomes the norm (certainly electronically).

2.4 Spanish in the United States

The case of Spanish in the United States warrants separate consideration because it is a different situation from anything that is encountered in the English-speaking world.⁵ Spanish speakers here represent a very substantial linguistic group (some 22m, see Grimes ed. 1996) which is a minority in federal terms but a majority in many local situations.⁶ Of all the immigrant languages spoken in the US, Spanish is the one that has had most impact, and appears to be treated in a number of circumstances as a *de facto* co-official language (see Rubin 1985). A current US government website I visited giving advice on how parents could help children with reading has two pages in Spanish, for example.



Helping Your Child Use the Library (April 1993) provides information about introducing children to the abundance of books, plus many other valuable resources and services, that libraries have to offer.



Cómo ayudar a sus hijos a usar la biblioteca (julio de 1993) describe los objetivos de las bibliotecas públicas y explica cómo los padres pueden utilizar los servicios de las bibliotecas, especialmente en lo que se refiere a preparar a sus hijos--desde su infancia hasta los cinco años de edad--para la escuela y ayudar a sus hijos de edad escolar a aumentar sus conocimientos y sus logros escolares.

Source: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/hyc.html> (US Department of Education).

Hispanics are an important group that have to be wooed politically; as they become economically more prosperous, they are the target of commercial enterprise. *Chicano* literature burgeons. Spanish is unquestionably strengthened by the fact that it is ‘American’, the language of the US’s closest geographical neighbours; this is no doubt what prompted CNN International to launch a Spanish language service (Graddol 1997:60). US Spanish has attracted much bad publicity from both the English and the Spanish side, the phenomenon of ‘Spanglish’ being universally ridiculed — which is a pity, since it is a very interesting linguistic manifestation as are all such ‘mixed’ languages. At the very least within ‘Spanglish’ we must distinguish between Spanish lexicalized by English (the phenomenon that produces such expressions as *el rufo del bildin* [standard *el techo del edificio*] ‘the roof of the building’), and bilingual code-switching:

Spanish lexicalized by English:

- La Mama: Por Dios, no lo vayas a hacer, m’hijita. Entre más personas, más ruido. Semos capaces de hacer la lucha. ¿Que no?
- Rosa: Sí, ‘áma, sí. De’pues tenemos que sacudir los muebles - el sofa [sic], las sías, tamién el tivi.
- Rosa: Y espérate... tamién chainiar el espejo en la recámara y cambiar las sábanas. Fíjese, ‘áma, tamién en la cocina. Ya hace tiempo no hemos...como se dice... soltado el agua del fridge. Es decir defrost.

Source: Penfield & Ornstein-Galicia (1985:10-11). This is an imaginary conversation.

English/Spanish 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.

Source: Sánchez (1982:15).

Tamarón (1995:61-2) considers a number of possible scenarios for the future of Spanish in the United States and concludes that the most desirable outcome would for Spanish to be regarded as an important and prestigious language, enjoying a special status within the US as a major foreign language: ‘que el español quede en los Estados Unidos, pero como favorita entre las principales lenguas cultas extranjeras, no como germanía o como jerga del “proletariado interno”’. This would mean that Spanish was not associated with an economically impoverished, low-prestige group, and that the essential worldwide unity of Spanish was maintained, a unity that would be broken by the further development of *chicano* into a kind of creole mother tongue. The matter will surely be resolved by the economic future of the Hispanics, since if they were to command enough economic power, they would not only be a significant market, but would also have more prestige and power to determine their own future, which might include the maintenance of ‘Spanglish’ as a badge of cultural and ethnic identity, neither ‘English’ nor ‘Spanish’. At the same time, there will also be economic advantages in speaking English or Spanish, or both, in addition, and current language planning seems to be tending in this direction (Elías-Olivares & al. [1985:3]). But what I think is rather unlikely is that US Hispanics will in the future be monolingual speakers of ‘Spanglish’, and so the greatest challenge to the unity of Spanish will probably be averted.

2.5 Convergence

There will almost certainly be a considerable degree of linguistic convergence in the 21st century, brought about by improved international contacts, especially between languages which are closely related, in which category we must include English and Spanish. Such convergence has been an important factor in language change for centuries, although it has perhaps not been given the prominence it deserves.⁷ Such convergence is fairly obvious and acknowledged on the lexical level: one may think of the diffusion of Arabic words such as *sukkar*, which supplied Sp. *azúcar*, Fr. *sucre*, It. *zucchero*, Eng. *sugar*, Germ. *Zucker*, or the vast numbers of Latin and Greek words which passed first into technical registers, such as *horizōn / horizon*, which yielded Sp. *horizonte*, Fr. *horizon*, It. *orizzonte*, Eng. *horizon*, Germ. *Horizont*. On the morphological and syntactic level it may be a less familiar notion, however. It has been suggested, for instance, that the introduction of a third person form of address (familiar from Sp. *usted* and paralleled in It. *Lei*, Germ. *Sie*) may have irradiated from usage in Charles V's empire (Guitier 1959). Such features as absolute constructions, the increased incidence of the use of adjectives before the noun in the Romance languages, and use of the 'accusative and infinitive' construction, almost certainly have to do with the influence of Latin syntax (Blatt 1957). In the 21st century it would certainly be natural that English exercised a major influence of this kind, but we must also bear in mind that maybe English will need to accommodate as a lingua franca to other languages too.

One obvious way in which convergence may be expected to take place is through translation. Translation from English has been much vilified as a means of corrupting Spanish, though in fact I think that obviously bad translation, which will always be recognised as such, is not such a threat as reasonably good translation, the effects of which go more unnoticed. There are many linguistic features in which English and Spanish are already very similar and which lend themselves to extension, either in terms of contextual application or, more interestingly, in terms of frequency of occurrence.⁸

We should also anticipate increased bilingualism on the part of Spanish speakers in the sense that there will continue to be many Spanish learners of English. This is probably one of the most significant changes that has taken place in Spain within the last 30 years: the commitment to foreign language learning, the replacement of French by English as the first foreign language and the cultivation of English by the younger generations. We all know that awareness of a foreign language often has an influence on our native language: we allow directly quoted words and even sometimes constructional calques into our own language, especially when we are talking about things we have first come across in a foreign context. Most extremely, this can approach code-switching, though we usually remain quite conscious of such importations. Another consequence of awareness of a foreign language is that a speaker may slightly modify his or her own language in order to make it more transparent for a foreign speaker, avoiding excessive use of idiom and colloquialism, articulating more clearly and perhaps even using vocabulary which is known to be cognate.

3 English influence on Spanish

Speakers of Spanish thus need not fear that their language is going to be consigned to oblivion in the 21st century. They may, however, feel that English is bound to encroach upon

it, and I am sure they are right. But is it possible to assess what the nature and extent of this influence might be?

In order to try and answer such a question, it may be instructive to look at the past, although in so doing we must recognize that the circumstances of contact between English and Spanish in the 21st century of the global village and mass media may well be very different from any that have previously obtained. It is very striking that in the long history of the development of Latin into modern Spanish, there is so far little firm evidence of the structure of the language having been very significantly modified purely by foreign borrowing. Loanwords appear eventually to be adapted remarkably successfully to the structure of the language of the time: no new sound has ever been imported into Spanish as a result of such borrowing, for example, though it may be the case that certain sounds or groups of sounds have increased in frequency.⁹ It may well be, therefore, that the initial /sp/ group currently patent in so many anglicisms will be universally adapted into Spanish with a prothetic /e/ rather than with the totally unfamiliar group of /s/ + plosive consonant. Indeed, in the long lists of such words given in the OSD and DC (they do not figure in DRAE), pronunciation is consistently indicated as involving a prothetic /e/, as for example, in the entries for *spray* (/e)sprai/ (OSD) or, less equivocally, [esprái] (DC)). It seems very likely that if and when these words are admitted to the DRAE, they will be spelt with an initial *e-*, as are now such longstanding anglicisms as *esmoquin*, *esnob*, *estrés*, etc. More of a challenge to the Spanish system perhaps is English /ʃ/ (*sheriff*, *short*, *show*) and /dʒ/ (*jazz*, *jet*, *jeans*), though as yet such words are relatively few in number. /ʃ/, we must note, is also becoming familiar, in Spain at least, from Catalan, Galician and Basque, so it is not exactly a ‘foreign’ sound; but its conversion in some instances into /tʃ/ (e.g. *show* [ʃou] or [tʃou]) or /s/ (*flas*) may be a sign of things to come. /(d)ʒ/ is similarly familiar already as a widespread pronunciation of standard /ʎ/ ([d]ʒorar *llorar*, [kaʒe] *calle*) and sometimes adapted to a more familiar sound ([jip] *jeep*). Even if Spanish does end up with a number of words which exhibit such new phenomena, this does not necessarily mean that there will be a very serious impact on the language structurally; for example, Spanish has a relatively small number of words beginning in /ɲ/ which hail from Latin-American indigenous or expressive sources (*ñandú*, *ñandutí* in the former category; *ñoño*, *ñango* in the latter), but these borrowings and creations have not been responsible for a massive expansion in the incidence of initial /ɲ/. The most serious challenge posed to Spanish by anglicisms is not to its phonological structure, in fact, but to its spelling, since such spellings as *striptease* pronounced [es'triptis] rather than *[stripte'ase] deny, as in English, any possibility of phonemically-based orthography, though even in spelling eventual rationalization may be expected, as informal spellings like *estriptis* and *sangüis* (*sándwich*) show.

Another thing which looking at the past suggests to us is that not all borrowings are equally long-lived. This is particularly evident in the case of learned borrowings in the 15th and 16th centuries, where the works of such writers as Juan de Mena and later Luis de Góngora are full of words and structures which are unknown in the language before or since (Lida de Malkiel 1950; Alonso 1950). A phenomenon I recently studied, the use of the ‘accusative and infinitive’ construction during this period, also seems to have had a very limited shelf life (Pountain 1998a). Correspondingly, we may expect that a large number of borrowings from English that we observe today will not stand the test of time. The consideration of learned borrowings also suggests that such imitations may only make an impact within a restricted range of registers, although because of the lack of appropriate texts, this is usually difficult to demonstrate conclusively from former periods of the language. It does not stretch credibility

too far, however, to imagine that Gongorine hyperbaton was not a feature normally encountered in everyday conversation among the lower classes. Similarly today, the much criticised *ser*-passive is little used in colloquial register, and the ‘adjectival’ use of the gerund is restricted to legal and journalistic register (Pountain 1998b).

Many Spanish-speaking writers who have expressed fears on this subject have frankly done so in rather extreme terms. This is perhaps understandable, since it is notoriously difficult to be totally objective about one’s own language, and even potentially dangerous to risk being seen as less than totally committed to what the humanists would have called its ‘defence’ (Pountain 1994:121 fn.4). Even the respected Emilio Lorenzo (1996:491) wrote in quite extraordinary terms about the use of *sobrio* as a calque of English *sober* ‘not drunk’. He took exception to the recording of *sobrio* in this meaning in the 21st edition of the DRAE, claiming that ‘*sobrio*, en español, se considera cualidad, buena o mala, permanente y se construye con el verbo *ser*’. The ‘new’ meaning, of course, is used with *estar*, as is its existing opposite, *estar borracho*, *ebrio* (and indeed we should also note the convenient morphological parallel of *sobrio* with *ebrio*).¹⁰ What has happened, no doubt under the influence of English, is that *sobrio* has extended its meaning; but that extension is actually facilitated by the *ser/estar* opposition of Spanish, as a result of which it fits seamlessly into Spanish, and is no more revolutionary than such oppositions as *ser/estar flexible* (‘to be flexible (inherently)’ / ‘to behave in a flexible manner’). Spanish has thus gained an expressive possibility. Lorenzo’s claim that the ‘real’ meaning of *sobrio* in such examples as Gerardo Diego’s *mis necesidades de embriaguez: la embriaguez –entendámonos, queridos amigos– de un sobrio* is invalidated by the ‘new’ meaning of *sobrio* has no more foundation than to say that the availability of a ‘non-inherent’ meaning for other adjectives invalidates their ‘inherent’ meanings: Spanish is rich in such subtleties as *No soy (un) orgulloso, pero estoy muy orgulloso de mi hijo*; and there would be nothing contradictory about speaking of *la alegría de un triste*. Lorenzo concludes his observations on this subject by saying ‘Nos tememos que con traducciones así algún día se pueda decir: **He trabajado mucho, soy fatigado*’. I would dare to predict, however, that such a development will *not* be countenanced: *soy fatigado* would be quite inconsistent with the plain pragmatic implication that my tiredness is a state which results from my working, and with the systematic *ser/estar* opposition in Spanish. Hence, the two situations are not in the slightest degree parallel.

Even fairly objective descriptions can be censorious. Thus the excellent DC (which admits *estar sobrio* without demur) comments on the word *light* ‘Su uso es innecesario y puede sustituirse por expresiones como *bajo en calorías, ligero o suave*’. Yet this is to deny to *light* its connotations of ‘insipid’, ‘decadent’, ‘without health risk’, amply captured in the dictionary’s own example: *Lleva una vida “light” y aburrida, sin el más mínimo espíritu de aventura*. I submit that this is not the same thing as *ligero* or *suave*. I would go further and say that Spanish has actually gained in possibilities of expression by having this word, which it has accommodated as a convincing adjective which has undergone extensions of meaning which have made it quite independent of its English forbear (*a light life* has no comparable meaning in English). Maybe the same would have been said of *baladí* < Ar. *baladī*, which could conceivably have been substituted by *vil*, and which similarly show evidence of a semantic shift from its original Arabic meaning of ‘indigenous, local’.

In a previous article I argued that syntactic borrowings from English ‘do not lead to significant innovation in Spanish, but rather encourage the fuller and more effective use of existing possibilities’ (Pountain 1994:121). Rather than repeat the examples I used in that

article (the passive, gerund structures, the *estar* + *siendo* construction and noun + noun combinations) I will illustrate this hypothesis with a further morphological phenomenon.

It is clear that a number of Spanish verb + noun (VN) compounds are the result of the calquing of English words (eg *rascacielos* ‘skyscraper’, *limpiaparabrisas* ‘windscreen wiper’). However, such creations represent the further exploitation of a pattern which is long established in autochthonous creations such as *sacamuélas* ‘toothpuller’ and *matasuegras* ‘paper serpent’, lit. ‘mothers-in-law killer’.¹¹ And, interestingly, on closer inspection, there is evidence that such VN compounds are not entirely random. Certain verbs appear to be particularly susceptible to participation in these lexical formations, typically those which enjoy a high frequency in the language and have monosyllabic stems (i.e., where the third person singular present, the first element of the compound noun, is disyllabic). A scan of VN compounds beginning with *s* and *t* reveals that a significant number of VN compounds do not obviously correspond to English models, whether they are ‘older’ words, eg *tragasantos* ‘exceptionally pious person’, or obvious neologisms, eg *tomacorriente* ‘electric plug’; that the number of verbal stems is relatively limited (only 16), and that of the stems encountered, relatively many are strikingly productive: *saca-* (10), *salva-* (4), *sopla-* (4), *tapa-* (10), *tira-* (5), *torna-* (3), *traga-* (10). The data is as follows:

<i>sacabocados</i> ‘punch’		<i>tapaporos</i> ‘primer’	<i>tragafuegos</i> ‘fire-eater’
<i>sacabotas</i> ‘bootjack’	<i>soplacausas</i>	<i>taparrabo</i> ‘swimming trunks, loincloth’	<i>tragaldabas</i> ‘glutton’
<i>sacaclavos</i> ‘pincers’	‘incompetent lawyer’		<i>tragaleguas</i> ‘quick walker’
<i>sacacorchos</i>	<i>soplagaitas</i> ‘idiot’	<i>tirabuzón</i> ‘corkscrew’	<i>tragaluz</i> ‘skylight’
‘corkscrew’	<i>soplamocos</i> ‘blow’	<i>tirachinas</i> ‘catapult’	<i>tragamonedas</i> ‘slot-machine’
<i>sacacuartos</i> ‘racket’	<i>soplapollas</i> ‘berk’	<i>tiragomas</i> ‘catapult’	<i>tragaperras</i> ‘slot-machine’
<i>sacadineros</i> ‘racket’		<i>tiralevitas</i> ‘bootlicker’	<i>tragasables</i> ‘sword-swallower’
<i>sacafaltas</i> ‘faultfinder’	<i>sujetapapeles</i>	<i>tiralíneas</i> ‘drawing pen’	<i>tragasantos</i>
<i>sacamuélas</i> ‘tooth-puller’	‘paperclip’		‘excessively pious person’
<i>(sacaniguas)</i> ‘squib’	<i>suplefaltas</i> ‘scapegoat’	<i>tomacorriente</i> ‘electric plug’	<i>(tragavenado)</i> ‘boa-constrictor’
<i>sacapuntas</i> ‘pencil sharpener’	<i>tajamar</i> ‘cutwater’	<i>tomavistas</i> ‘cine camera’	
	<i>tapa(a)gujeros</i>	<i>tornasol</i> ‘sunflower’	<i>trampantojo</i> ‘sleight of hand’
<i>saltamontes</i>	‘jerrybuilder; substitute’	<i>tornavía</i> ‘turntable’	
‘grasshopper’	<i>(tapabarro)</i>	<i>tornavoz</i> ‘baffle’	
<i>salvabarros</i>	‘mudguard’	<i>trabacuentas</i>	<i>trotamundos</i>
<i>salvamanteles</i>	<i>tapaboca</i> ‘slap; muffler’	‘miscalculation’	‘globetrotter’
‘tablemat’	<i>tapaboquetes</i> ‘stopgap’	<i>trabalenguas</i>	
<i>salvaplatos</i> ‘tablemat’	<i>tapacubos</i> ‘hubcap’	‘tonguetwister’	
<i>salvavidas</i> ‘lifejacket’	<i>tapagrietas</i> ‘filler’	<i>(tragabalas)</i> ‘braggart’	
<i>secarropa</i>	<i>(tapalodo)</i> ‘mudguard’		
‘clotheshorse’	<i>tapaojo</i> ‘blindfold’		

(Forms in brackets are limited to certain areas of the Spanish-speaking world.)

This strongly suggests that we have principally to do with a process of analogical extension of an existing (and autochthonous) model; admittedly English may encourage this analogical process, but it cannot be said to cause true innovation.

4 The benefits of English influence

I will now make a controversial suggestion, but before I do so, let me establish a number of things.

4.1 Preliminaries

First, languages are not only susceptible to change, but indeed change is a necessary feature of human language.¹² Secondly, linguistic borrowing is also a constant.¹³ Thirdly, normativist regulation may achieve limited successes but cannot ultimately alter these first two properties (this last hypothesis can of course be tested in only a fairly limited way, since language normativisation is in fact a relatively recent phenomenon).

The influence of English on Spanish thus cannot be averted. But it might be more productive to regard it not as a necessary evil but as an actual benefit. I am speaking now not of the indubitable practical benefits of convergence between English and Spanish (see 2.5), which we might regard as a ‘lowest common denominator’ version of each language motivated by ease of mutual comprehensibility, so much as the effects of English influence on Spanish in its own right. I think it is not out of place for an English speaker to suggest this, since English itself is in some ways the mixed language par excellence, happily combining its Anglo-Saxon base with a Norman French overlay and a major input of Latin and Greek learned words, to say nothing of many borrowings from other foreign sources.

4.2 The lexicon

What I have to say with regard to the lexicon will come as no surprise to a historical linguist. Anglicisms may label new notions for which Spanish previously had no equivalent, such as *software* [‘sofwer] and *robot*. Here use of the anglicism rather than an artificial invented word or neologism from within Spanish not only contributes towards linguistic convergence, which is desirable especially in technical registers, but also achieves precision of reference. (Indeed, one might also comment that the maintenance of English spelling also has an advantage in this regard.) As we have already seen with the case of *light*, lexical borrowing from English may permit finer semantic discrimination. There are parallel examples from the past: we may compare the coexistence of Arabic *aldea* ‘small village which is not an independent administrative unit’ and Latin *pueblo* ‘village (general)’, ‘people’; Arabic *noria* ‘well with a wheel’ and Latin *pozo* ‘well (general)’, ‘pit’, etc. We may compare the anglicism *mitin* ‘political meeting’, also extending in meaning to ‘meeting with didactic content, sermon, lecture’ versus the more general *reunión*. Sometimes the need for semantic discrimination is more obviously bound up with the appearance of a new notion, as in the case of *sándwich* ‘toasted sandwich’ versus *bocadillo* ‘roll with filling’, *puddín/budín* ‘(cooked) pudding’ versus *postre* ‘dessert (general), last course of a meal’, *póster* ‘decorative poster’ versus *cartel* ‘public advertisement’. Another factor in lexical borrowing, which I think may not have been given sufficient prominence in historical studies, which tend on the whole to have concentrated on the cultural correlates of loanwords (also, lamentably, apparent in anglicisms in modern Spanish such as *hooligan*), is what we might regard as an economic motivation. The borrowing *emailear*, outlandish though it may seem, has a decided advantage for Spanish in that it encapsulates within one regular verb a notion that is only laboriously expressible otherwise by some such paraphrase as *enviar un mensaje por correo electrónico*; it even has an advantage over the original English in that it can be reflexivised (*emailearse*) to mean ‘exchange e-mails, communicate by e-mail’.

4.3 Syntax

What is true of the lexicon can also be seen to be true of morphology and syntax. Condemnation of the *ser*-passive in Spanish tends to be indiscriminating. Lorenzo (1996:622-30) reaches the conclusion: ‘Es posible que no esté lejano el día en que topemos con un *la cama no había sido dormido en* (< *the bed had not been slept in*). Si *tregar por las paredes y tuberías* puede transformarse en *las paredes y las tuberías son trepadas*, sólo falta que la preposición, como en inglés, vaya pospuesta y se diga *son trepadas por*.’ I disagree: placing a preposition at the end of a sentence in Spanish is a much more serious challenge to the structure of the language than what can otherwise be seen as an extension of the already existing *ser*-passive construction, and, though time will tell, I would put my money on this not happening, whatever the degree of contact with English. Amongst the 39 sentences which Lorenzo cites as examples of aberrant usage, English-inspired, are the following:

- (1) Esta decisión fue respondida ayer con una nota
- (2) La niña transplantada de pulmones y corazón...
- (3) Elías resucita al muchacho después de haber sido rogado por su madre...
- (4) La víctima fue forzada sexualmente y prendida fuego

In these four sentences we can see how the possibilities for Spanish are gradually being extended. Much hinges on the ‘valency’ of the verbs involved (i.e. what sort of objects they take). The objection to sentence (1) is that *responder* takes the preposition *a* with its objects (*responder a una pregunta*): therefore, the argument goes, it is not a transitive verb and therefore it cannot undergo passivisation with *ser*. In fact, such a relationship or passivisation is not a good criterion either for establishing the limits on passivisation or for making the rather dubious distinction between transitive and intransitive as mutually exclusive verbal categories (see Pountain 1993:93-4). *Afectar* similarly normally takes *a* (*La situación internacional afectó a la economía*), but there appears to be no constraint on its passivisation (*La economía fue afectada por la situación internacional*). *Aludir* always takes *a* in the same way as English *allude (to)* (*Aludí a su falta de interés*), but it can be effectively passivised in Spanish in the expression *darse por aludido* in a way that does not correspond to English at all. With personal objects, which take *a* in Spanish anyway, it is often difficult to establish the exact valency of the verb. It is not surprising that *Preguntaron al ministro si iba a dimitir* can passivise as *El ministro fue preguntado si...* with apparent reanalysis of *ministro* as the direct object (especially since *preguntar* does not often have a noun as its direct object, but more often a clausal complement). Another factor to be borne in mind with *responder* is that it is semantically very close to *contestar*, which has a most unclear valency, taking *a* only optionally (optionally in syntactic terms, that is). A number of features therefore conspire to favour the passivisation of *responder* as in (1). Sentence (2) in fact does not have a formal parallel in English; but again the existing example of *operar a alguien de algo* with a semantically very closely related verb no doubt favours the analogical extension of *transplantar*. The passivisation of *rogar* in (3) may be explained in the same way as that of *preguntar*, already referred to; the established expression *hacerse de rogar* may also add to the indeterminacy of the valency of this verb. It does not seem to me, therefore, that the passives in (1)-(3) really do anything more than slightly extend the existing possibilities of Spanish; they are developments which might have come about without the encouraging pressure of English models (as indeed (2) certainly has). Sentence (4) is the oddest of these; the problem is that the predication of two facts about the unfortunate victim involve the victim in two different syntactic roles if the construction *prender fuego a* is used as the second verb.

Now it seems to me that Spanish writers adopt such structures because they are actually of some advantage. The *ser*-passive characteristically allows non-expression of an agent but also carries the implication that an agent is dynamically involved in the verbal activity. This is not possible in quite the same way with any of the so-called 'equivalents' of the passive in Spanish: the impersonal *se* construction does not allow the expression of an agent, and neither, in many cases, at least puristically, does the reflexive passive. The reflexive passive implies a 'middle voice' rather than the dynamic involvement of an external agent. The active construction necessitates an expressed agent. Let us look more closely at the most extreme of the cases dealt with above, (4). How else might it have been expressed?

- (5) Se forzó sexualmente a la víctima y se le prendió fuego
- (6) ?A la víctima se le/la forzó sexualmente y (se) le prendió fuego
- (7) (≠) A la víctima le/la forzaron sexualmente y le prendieron fuego
- (8) ≠ La víctima se forzó sexualmente y se prendió fuego

Sentence (7) and (8) are simply not equivalent to (4) itself.¹⁴ Although (5) is certainly a possibility and puristically the preferred improvement,¹⁵ it would not be totally satisfactory if *víctima* is the topic of the sentence (a condition which (6), (7) and (8) satisfy), as is clearly the case in another example of the same phenomenon I have found, and which is clearly not the product of direct translation from English:

- (9) Durante el trimestre pasado todos los periódicos se hicieron eco de la salvaje agresión que sufrió un inmigrante pakistaní cuando fue rociado con gasolina y prendido fuego, por sus propios compañeros de trabajo en Teruel (CIPIE, at <http://www.eurosur.org/CIPIE/c98t1a6.html>).

In (9) the impersonal and passive uses of *se* would be ruled out because of the expression of an agent (*sus propios compañeros de trabajo*). The topic, *un inmigrante pakistaní*, would only with great difficulty and stylistic clumsiness be susceptible of incorporation into an active structure such as:

- (10) ... que sufrió un inmigrante pakistaní a quien sus propios compañeros de trabajo en Teruel rociaron con gasolina y prendieron fuego
- (11) ... que sufrió un inmigrante pakistaní a quien rociaron con gasolina y prendieron fuego sus propios compañeros de trabajo en Teruel

The *ser* passive, on the other hand, has the advantage of keeping the topic of the sentence in the right place and in maintaining a parallelism between the two verbs. We should also note that, although grammatically anomalous, (4) is pragmatically perfectly intelligible, and other things being equal would probably be thought of as a 'semi-sentence' of Spanish, i.e., one of those constructions which, whilst not being totally acceptable, is on the margins of acceptability. The change in valency of *prender fuego* is also facilitated by the fact that it is a set expression, a verbal idiom in its own right, in which *fuego* is only vestigially the direct object of *prender*.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would suggest the following. The influence of English on Spanish is great and is likely to remain so in the 21st century. On the other hand, it is extremely unlikely that a language with as bright and strong a future as Spanish is going to be 'colonised' by English to the extent of losing its fundamental structural properties. Spanish will change anyway, and probably in directions which will not be inconsistent with English. But rather than oppose all anglicisms indiscriminately, commentators and language planners might do better to recognize some of the benefits of English influence, both in terms of linguistic convergence and in terms of structural advantage and expressive enhancement, confident that the real excesses will probably be short-lived. This is of course the view of a historical linguist whose mother tongue has no legislative body, and who therefore is probably predisposed to the view that puristic objection will in any case not have much effect either on the linguistic creativity of the human mind or of its cheerful embracing of the exotic, whether it is because the exotic has advantages to offer or whether it is just for the thrill of doing it.

NOTES

1. This article is based on a talk given at the Instituto Cervantes, London, on 4 March 1999. I am grateful to a number of people who made helpful comments on that occasion, especially to Enrique Wulff and Anna Whitcher Kutz. I would also like to thank David Graddol, who first made me aware of some of the issues discussed in section 2.
2. In September 1998 Spain threatened to block the Council of Ministers in protest against the Austrian Presidency's proposal to use only English, French and German as working languages in meetings of the Council (*El País*, 23.9.98).
3. The Academia's home page is at <http://www.rae.es/>.
4. Supplied by SYSTRAN, whose products can be sampled at <http://www.onlinetrans.com/freetest.cgi>.
5. The US Constitution does not specify an official national language, though some states have recently established English as their official language (thereby highlighting the impact being made by immigrant languages).
6. It is of course important not to regard 'US Spanish' as a homogeneous phenomenon, either in terms of linguistic features or language attitudes. Two important groups, for example, are the *chicanos* of the South West and the Puerto Ricans of New York. Hart-González (1985), examining the heterogeneous Hispanic community of Washington D.C., comes to the conclusion (p.79) that 'common language seems...to be more referential than experiential'.
7. The balance is redressed somewhat by Posner (1996:155-85).
8. Catford (1965:29-31) spoke of the notion of 'probability of textual equivalence' and commented (33) that typologically similar languages will show a high degree of convergence between formal correspondence and textual equivalence.
9. For example, the incidence of the initial /pl/ group in Spanish is probably increased by borrowing from Latin and French (e.g. from Latin, *plácido*, *plebe*, *plaga*, etc., and from French *placa*, *pleito*, *plancha*, etc.), many of the original Latin words beginning with /pl/ having palatalised to /ɲ/ (e.g. PLĒNUM > *lleno*, PLANUM > *llano*); but it is certainly not introduced by such borrowings: the group /pl/ could by no means have become anomalous in Spanish given the survival of such words as *playa*, *plaza*, *plazo*, *plañir*, *plata*, *plomo*, etc.
10. The analogical pressure of antonyms is well-known: the development of a diphthong in Old Castilian *siniestra* is parallel with the diphthong in its antonym *diestra*.

11. Nebrija (Quilis 1980:175) mentions V + N compounding, citing as examples *torcecuello*, *tirabraguero* and *portacartas*. See also Lloyd (1968), where the longstanding presence of verb-noun compounds in Spanish is amply confirmed. Lloyd also underlines (pp.75-6) the autochthonous creativity observable in this area.
12. Lázaro Carreter (1997:575) puts it more dramatically: ‘una lengua que nunca cambiara sólo podría hablarse en un cementerio’.
13. Lorenzo (1996:14) goes so far as to regard the disposition to borrow as a measure of a language’s ‘success’.
14. Compare the difference of implication of the use of the reflexive in *El siniestrado pesquero “El Greco” con pabellón de las islas está bajo reparaciones en un astillero de Montevideo después de haberse prendido fuego* (‘after catching fire’, not ‘after being set on fire’) *en alta mar y ser remolcado hasta el Uruguay* (Agencia de Noticias Mercopress 22/08/97, from <http://www.falkland-malvinas.com/archive/mne3220897.html>).
15. Compare *Inclusive cuentan que en algunas oportunidades se les ha prendido fuego o se les ha destrozado a hachazos, logrando que salgan en libertad —convertidas en palomas— las almas que había tragado* (*Asustadores indígenas*, from <http://encina.pntic.mec.es/~agonza59/indigenas.htm>).

REFERENCES

- Alonso, D. (1950) *La lengua poética de Góngora (Primera parte, corregida)*, *Revista de Filología Española*, Anejo XX.
- Amastae, J. & Elías-Olivares, L. (ed.) (1982) *Spanish in the United States. Sociolinguistic Aspects*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Blatt, F. (1957) ‘Latin influence on European Syntax’, *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague*, 5, pp.33-69.
- Catford, J.C. (1965) *A Linguistic Theory of Translation. An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Castro Roig, X. (1996) ‘El espanglish en Internet y la informática’, paper given at the Novell Internet Conference, Madrid.
- DC: *Clave (Diccionario de uso del español actual)*. Madrid: S.M., 1997.
- DRAE: Real Academia Española (1984) *Diccionario de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.
- Elías-Olivares, L., Leone, E.A., Cisneros, R. & Gutiérrez, J. (ed.) (1985) *Spanish Language Use and Public Life in the USA*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Graddol, D. (1997) *The Future of English?* London: British Council.
- Graddol, D. (1998) ‘Will English be enough?’, in Moys (ed.), pp.24-33.
- Grimes, B.F. (ed.) (1996) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Guiter, H. (1959) ‘L’extension successive des formes de politesse’, *Boletim de Filologia*, 18, pp.195-202.
- Hart-González, L. (1985) ‘Pan-Hispanism and Subcommunity in Washington D.C.’, in Elías-Olivares et al. (ed.), pp.73-88.
- Keller, R., trs. Nerlich, B. (1994) *On Language Change: the Invisible Hand in Language*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Lázaro Carreter, F. (1997) *El dardo en la palabra*. Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg.
- Lida de Malkiel, M.R. (1950) *Juan de Mena, poeta del prerrenacimiento español*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México.

- Lipski, John M. (1985) *The Spanish of Equatorial Guinea: the dialect of Malabo and its implications for Spanish dialectology*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Lloyd, P.M. (1968) *Verb-Complement Compounds in Spanish*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Lorenzo, E. (1996) *Anglicismos hispánicos*. Madrid: Gredos.
- Moys, A. (ed.) (1998) *Where are we going with languages?* London: Nuffield Foundation.
- OSD: *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary*, 2nd. ed. Oxford: University Press.
- Otero, J. (1995) 'Una nueva mirada al índice de importancia internacional de las lenguas', in Tamarón (ed.), pp.235-85.
- Penfield, J. & Ornstein-Galicia, J.L. (1985) *Chicano English: an Ethnic Contact Dialect*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Posner, R. (1996) *The Romance Languages*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Pountain, C.J. (1993) 'De la construcción de los verbos después de sí: la transitividad en la tradición gramatical española', in R. Penny (ed.) *Actas del Primer Congreso Anglo-Hispano*. Madrid: Castalia, pp.89-98.
- Pountain, C.J. (1994) 'Syntactic anglicisms in Spanish: innovation or exploitation?', in Parry, M.M., Davies W.V. & Davies R.A.M. (ed.), *The Changing Voices of Europe*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press/MHRA, pp.109-24.
- Pountain, C.J. (1998a) 'Learnèd Syntax and the Romance Languages: the "accusative and infinitive" construction with declarative verbs in Castilian'. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 96.2, pp.159-201.
- Pountain, C.J. (1998b) 'Gramática mítica del gerundio castellano', in Ward A.M. (ed.), *Actas del XII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, Birmingham 1995. I. Medieval y Lingüística*. Birmingham: University Press, pp.284-92.
- Quilis, A. (ed.) (1980) *A. de Nebrija, Gramática de la lengua castellana (1492). Estudio y edición de Antonio Quilis*. Madrid: Editora Nacional.
- Rubin, J. (1985) 'Spanish Language Planning in the United States', in Elías-Olivares et al. (ed.), pp.133-52.
- Sánchez, R. (1982) 'Our linguistic and social context', in Amastae & Elías-Olivares (ed.), pp.9-46.
- Tamarón, Marqués de (ed.) (1995) *El peso de la lengua española en el mundo*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid / Fundación Duques de Soria / INCIPE.
- Tamarón, Marqués de (1995) 'El papel internacional del español', in Tamarón (ed.), pp.13-75.
- Towell, R. (1998) 'Language in Higher Education', in Moys (ed.), pp.44-53.
- Valdés, J. de (1969) [1535]. *Diálogo de la lengua*, ed. Juan M. Lope Blanch. Madrid: Castalia.
- Ybáñez Bueno, E. (1995) 'El idioma español en organizaciones internacionales', in Tamarón (ed.), pp.77-134.