

**Syntactic anglicisms in Spanish:
exploitation or innovation?¹**

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1. In this paper I wish to examine the hypothesis that foreign linguistic influence can bring about innovatory changes in a language's syntactic structure. The testing-ground for this hypothesis will be the influence of English on the syntax of present-day Spanish. The reality of English influence on the lexical, and possibly other, levels of Spanish is of course beyond dispute. But existing studies of anglicisms have not given the detailed attention to syntax that they might have done² and yet have tended, either explicitly³ or implicitly,⁴ to accept that innovatory change in Spanish syntax is being caused by English influence. The uncritical acceptance of this hypothesis is even more surprising since the weight of general linguistic opinion from Whitney onwards (see Haugen 1950, 224) goes against it by considering syntax as the level most resistant to foreign influence. It is surely time, then, that the matter received more detailed and considered investigation.

I intend to consider only data which are clearly established in modern Spanish. Many anglicisms prove to be either essentially ephemeral phenomena which blow hot and cold with fashion and establish no long-term footing in the language, or else they are transitional phenomena which remain recognizably 'foreign' until they are modified to suit the host system or vice versa. (See the distinction made between 'crude' and 'assimilated' anglicisms in Smith (1975); also the various criteria proposed in England and Caramés (1978, 80ff.).)

2. Syntactic anglicisms

2.1 *The selectivity of foreign influence*

I begin by posing a question which to my knowledge has never been posed, and on which I will insist repeatedly: why should English influence operate in some areas of Spanish syntax and not others? In other words, what is the basis for the selectivity of foreign influence? In the area of lexis, the answer to such a question is easily given: certain semantic fields associated with a characteristic area of anglophone culture (for example sport, technology, business) effectively lend not only words but indeed the concepts those words represent. But why, for instance, should the English passive be apparently so readily adopted in Spanish (see 2.2.1 'The English and Spanish passives' below) whereas, say, there is no reduction in the use of the personal *a* or the subjunctive, or any inclination to use the gerund as a nominal form (see 2.2.2 'Gerund structures' below)? One possible answer is that, as in the area of lexis, English lends syntactic constructions which increase rather than decrease the expressive possibilities of Spanish. Another answer, and the one I will principally argue for here, is that Spanish only borrows what it is in a sense disposed to borrow, patterns which are an extension or further exploitation of those which already exist in the language. These two answers are of course not mutually exclusive.

2.2 *Some specific examples*

2.2.1 *The English and Spanish passives*

Increase in the use of the *ser*-passive in Spanish has often been blanketly ascribed to the influence of English (Lorenzo 1971, 92; Pratt 1980, 209). *MEU* is, however, more discriminating, and regards as the true anglicism the passive sentence with (passive) subject first, for example:

(1a) X⁵ Un crédito ha sido votado por el Congreso para los damnificados

'A credit has been voted by the Congress for the victims'

the 'acceptable' version being given as

(1b) Ha sido votado un crédito por el Congreso para los damnificados.

It is undeniable that (1b) is strongly preferred by many speakers. But it is far from obvious that the subject-first passive is inherently 'foreign' to Spanish. Examples are to be found regularly in formal register, the most famous being the *GRAE*'s assertion (255) that 'la construcción pasiva es poco usada en castellano'. The *ser*-passive is of course a

notoriously 'difficult' area of modern Spanish: it is undoubtedly favoured in some registers rather than others (Green 1975), and the constraints on it are multiplex (Pountain 1992-3). It is no surprise that native speakers feel unease with a sentence like (1a) without being able to say exactly why: one informant accepted without demur such versions as

(1c) Este crédito ha sido votado por el Congreso para los damnificados

'This credit...'

(1d) Este crédito para los damnificados ha sido votado por el Congreso

commenting that the problem with (1a) lay not in the word order as such, but rather in the indefinite subject NP. Perhaps another ground for preferring (1d) to (1a) is that (1d) unites the noun and prepositional phrase constituents of the subject NP which are split in (1a).

A number of the syntactic areas supposedly susceptible to innovation through English influence are extremely volatile in the sense that historically they have been subject to long-term processes of restructuring. The passive is such an area. It may be that what we are witnessing today is a slight tendency in certain registers to restore a situation which has become eroded by the rise in frequency of alternative constructions, notably the reflexive passive,⁶ and certainly it seems that the *ser*-passive was relatively more frequent in earlier stages of Spanish.⁷ If so, then the growing acceptability of subject-first *ser*-passives can be seen within the context of this ongoing process of restructuring.

But to return to (1a). The existence of this sentence may be seen as due to the convergence of a number of semantic and pragmatic requirements: (a) the topicalizing of *un crédito*, which leads to its initial position; (b) the indefinite nature of *un crédito*; and (c) the expression of a *por* agentive phrase. None of the so-called 'alternatives' to the *ser*-passive can cope with these three requirements simultaneously: for example, the reflexive is incompatible with the expression of an agentive phrase:

(1e) ??Un crédito se ha votado por el Congreso ...

'A credit itself has voted by the Congress'

and a preposed direct object with an active verb construction, while allowing the topicalizing order to be retained, is incompatible with the indefinite nature of the new object NP:

(1f) ??Un crédito lo ha votado el Congreso ...

'A credit it-OBJECT has voted the Congress'

On the other hand, the other 'passives' of Spanish (the reflexive and *estar*-passive) freely admit subject-first order, and while in Spanish sentence-types overall there is a well-known propensity to verb-first order (Green 1976), subject-first order is rarely impossible. In short, syntactic analogical pressure and semantic/pragmatic need seem to conspire to favour sentences like (1a), even without the supposed helping hand of English.

We should note also that the parallel with the English passive does not extend so far as to allow passivization on indirect and prepositional objects, and that, as I have argued elsewhere (Pountain 1992-3), the *ser*-passive is aspectually marked, in a way that its formal English counterparts are not, in the present and the imperfect tenses. The possible influence of English is thus at the very least highly selective in this area.

2.2.2 Gerund structures

The English and Spanish gerunds (*-ing/-ndo* forms) are very different in their syntactic properties. The gerund in Spanish almost never acts as an attributive adjective pure and simple: *hirviendo* 'boiling' and *ardiendo* 'burning' are the only candidates, but there is never any adjective-like agreement of gerund and noun (*agua hirviendo* 'boiling water', *casas ardiendo* 'burning houses'). Moliner (1982, 1394) also points out the restriction on the contrastive use of these two gerunds:

- (2) *El agua hirviendo es la del puchero pequeño
 'The water boiling is that of-the pot small'
 ('The *boiling* water is in the small pot')
 (but *El agua caliente es la del puchero pequeño* 'The hot water...')

- *La hoguera ardiendo está más lejos que la apagada
 'The bonfire burning is more distant than the one-which-has-been-extinguished'
 ('The *burning* bonfire is further away than the one which has gone out')
 (but *La hoguera encendida está más lejos que la apagada* 'The lighted bonfire...')

The gerund never acts as a predicative adjective following a copula (although *estar* + gerund forms the present continuous aspectual form of the verb). The possible impact of English on Spanish in this area has made no inroads into these limitations, and this should be borne in mind in what follows.

2.2.2.1 *The gerund introducing an adjectival clause.*

This usage is only infrequently cited as an anglicism in the literature (for example Lapesa 1963, 199), although it is regularly castigated by purists, and the parallel with English is patent:

- (3) X⁵ Se han celebrado dos congresos tratando de la misma cuestión (*MEU* 51)
 ‘Themselves have held two conferences dealing with the same question’
 (‘Two conferences dealing with the same question have been held’)
- (4) X Una señora halló al niño deambulando por el parque (*ibid.*)
 ‘A lady found OBJECT + the child walking around the park’.

The strict normative rule in Spanish is that the gerund must have an adverbial value and that the implied subject of the gerund must be the subject of the next higher clause: thus

- (5) Me canso subiendo escaleras (*MEU*, 48)
 ‘Myself (I)-tire climbing stairs’
 (‘I get tired climbing stairs’)

Subiendo here has a causal adverbial value; (5) implies *Subir escaleras me cansa* ‘Going up stairs tires me’/ *Me canso si, cuando subo escaleras* ‘I get tired if, when I go up stairs’. The implied subject of *subiendo* is *yo*, which is also the subject of the higher clause verb *me canso*.

But there are some precedents in Spanish for the gerund introducing an adjectival clause: the usage referred to by *MEU*, 50, as the ‘gerundio del Boletín Oficial’ is a well-known feature of this publication’s rarefied and idiosyncratic register:

- (6) Mañana se publicará un decreto regulando la exportación de vinos (*MEU*, 50)
 ‘Tomorrow itself (it)-will-publish a decree regulating the exporting of wines’.

The usage is indeed recognized as anomalous within Spanish.⁸ Yet there are other structures in Spanish which create similar surface patterns. In a sentence such as

- (7) El presidente, comprobando que no había quórum, levantó la sesión (‘acceptable’ according to *MEU*, 48)
 ‘The president, establishing that not there-was (a) quorum, caused-to-rise the session’

the clause introduced by the gerund is strictly adverbial in nature (*comprobando que no había quórum* = *ya que comprobó que no había quórum* ‘since he established that there was no quorum’). Yet the

boundary between adverbial and adjectival function in such clauses is surely hazy: it might equally be construed as a non-restrictive adjectival clause (*que comprobó que no había quórum* 'who established...').⁹ The gerund is also used in the complements of an increasing number of verbs in modern Spanish. Of long standing is its use in the complements of verbs of perception such as *ver* 'see' and *oír* 'hear':

(8a) De madrugada oíamos manifestantes gritando eslóganes
(*MEU*, 49)

'In (the) early-morning (we)-heard demonstrators shouting slogans'

MEU also mentions verbs of graphic representation such as *pintar* 'paint', *retratar* 'portray', *fotografiar* 'photograph', *dibujar* 'draw', and so on, as belonging to this category, for example:

(9a) Docenas de fotógrafos retrataban a los cardenales entrando
en el cónclave

'Dozens of photographers were-taking-pictures-of OBJECT
the cardinals entering-GERUND into the conclave'

In fact, native speaker judgments seem to suggest that the matter can be put rather more strongly. The basic difference in meaning between the infinitive complement and the gerund complement for such verbs is that the gerund indicates progressive aspect (Fente 1971, 103): where progressive aspect is obligatory, the infinitive is actually unacceptable:

(9b) *Docenas de fotógrafos retrataban entrar en el cónclave a
los cardenales¹⁰

'...entering-INFINITIVE...'

In such complement structures, significantly, the implied subject of the gerund is not the subject of the higher sentence: the subject of *gritando* in (8a) is the object of the higher sentence (*manifestantes*), and similarly the subject of *entrando* in (9a) is *cardenales*. It is no doubt this complement use of the gerund which has led to the 'photo caption' usage, which is admitted by *MEU*, 51, and by Seco (1989, 207), who glosses (10) and (11) by an elliptical structure involving a verb of perception:

(10) Las ranas pidiendo rey (Seco, 207) (Seco: *Las ranas están, en este relato, pidiendo rey* 'the frogs are, in this story, asking for a king')

'The frogs asking-for (a) king'

(11) Napoleón pasando los Alpes (Seco, 207) (Seco: *Napoleón está, en este cuadro, pasando los Alpes* 'Napoleon is, in this picture, crossing the Alps')

'Napoleon crossing the Alps.'

The complement use of the gerund accordingly brings it very close to introducing an adjectival clause,¹¹ and interestingly many Romance languages are able to commute such complement constructions with (preferentially, though not exclusively) non-restrictive relative clauses:

- (8b) Oímos a los manifestantes(,) que gritaban/estaban gritando
 ‘(We)-heard OBJECT the demonstrators(,) who were-
 shouting-IMPERFECT/were-IMPERFECT shouting-
 GERUND’
- (9c) Docenas de fotógrafos retrataban a los cardenales(,) que
 entraban en el cónclave
 ‘Dozens of photographers were-taking-pictures-of
 IMPERFECT OBJECT the cardinals(,) who were-
 entering-IMPERFECT into the conclave’

and compare French

- (12a) Je l’ai vu qui parlait à la voisine
 ‘I him-have seen who was-talking-IMPERFECT to the
 neighbour’
 (‘I saw him talking to the neighbour’)

which similarly foregrounds progressive aspect by contrast with

- (12b) Je l’ai vu parler à la voisine (Fente 1971, 103)
 ‘I him-have seen talk-INFINITIVE to the neighbour’
 (‘I saw him talk to the neighbour’).

Crucially, all the constructions examined above ((7), (8a), (9a), (10) and (11)) present a surface pattern N + gerund in which there are strong reasons for considering the clause introduced by the gerund to have, at least, partially, an adjectival value. The puristically castigated structures (3), (4) and (6) can be seen as a further exploitation of this pattern. Furthermore, we have seen how the exploiting of the opposition between gerund and infinitive in sentences like (8a) allows an aspectual discrimination within the non-finite verb which parallels that within the finite verb-system.

We must note too that this gerund usage is certainly not a recent innovation in Spanish, but has antecedents of long standing, as the following example from *Don Quijote* shows:

- (13) En un instante se coronaron todos los corredores del patio de criados y criadas de aquellos señores diciendo a grandes voces: Bien sea venida la flor y la nata de los caballeros andantes (cit. Moliner 1983, I, 1393).

'In an instant all the corridors of the patio were crowned with manservants and maidservants of those lords (and ladies) saying (say-GERUND) aloud: Welcome to the flower of knight-errantry.'

2.2.2.2 *estar + siendo*

The paraphrase *estar + siendo* ('be-(ESTAR) + be-(SER)-GERUND) is very often (*MEU*, 50; Lorenzo 1971, 124; Kany 1945, 237–8; Gómez Torrego 1991, 22–3; Lorenzo 1990, 78; Pratt 1980, 210) considered an anglicism, and is apparently deliberately avoided by many writers, with the interesting possible consequence (Pountain 1992–3) that the imperfect tense of the *ser*-passive may be making good the 'gap' in the aspectual system, at least by comparison with English.

However, the form finds a natural place within the Spanish verb-system. There are restrictions on its use, as indeed in English: the progressive is not available with many adjective complements of *ser* because of the restriction that stative expressions are inconsistent with the progressive, as in

(14a) *John is being tall

(14b) *Juan está siendo alto

'Juan is-(ESTAR) be-(SER)-GERUND tall'.

Spanish also appears to be more resistant than English to non-stative progressive *ser* + adj or noun expressions:

(15a) He's being naughty

(15b) Está siendo travieso

'(HE)-is-(ESTAR) be-(SER)-GERUND naughty'

but

(16a) He's being creative

(16b) *Está siendo creativo

'(He)-is-(ESTAR) be-(SER)-GERUND creative'.

However, this restriction may not be due to any restriction on *estar + siendo* as such. In what Quirk *et al.* (1972, 48) call the 'transitory condition of behaviour' use of the English progressive, the implication is often that the adjective is not an inherent property of the subject: therefore the corresponding Spanish structure *ser* + adjective, which precisely does imply that the adjective is an inherent property of the subject, is impossible. For example, the English sentence

(17a) I'm being very optimistic about the future

(even though normally I'm a pessimist) cannot be appropriately translated by the Spanish

- (17b) Soy muy optimista con respecto al futuro
 '(I)-am-(SER) very optimistic with respect to-the future'

since this would imply that I am by nature an optimist, which is quite the reverse of what is implied by the English sentence. On the other hand,

- (17c) Estoy muy optimista con respecto al futuro
 'I-am-(ESTAR) very optimistic with respect to-the future'

with its implication *aunque normalmente soy pesimista* ('although normally I am a pessimist'), is indeed appropriate. However, *estar* itself does not admit the progressive paraphrase:

- (17d) *Estoy estando muy optimista...
 '(I)-am-(ESTAR) be-(ESTAR)-GERUND very optimistic'

Similarly, the English sentence

- (18a) He's being very good at the moment

cannot be appropriately rendered in Spanish as

- (18b) *De momento es/está siendo muy bueno
 'At the moment (he)-is-(SER)/(he)-is-(ESTAR) be-(SER)-GERUND very good'

but would typically be expressed periphrastically, such as

- (18c) De momento se comporta de manera buena
 'At (the) moment himself (he)-behaves in (a) way good'

Note once again that the supposed influence of the English progressive has been very selective in Spanish. Amongst the English uses of the progressive which are not available in Spanish are (following the terminology and examples of Quirk *et al.* 1972, 88ff.) politeness (*When will you be putting on another performance?*), limited duration (*The professor is typing his own letters (these days)*) and characteristic activity (*John's always coming late*), as well as the very well-known absence of any future time-referring use of the progressive in Spanish, by contrast with English; see also Fente (1971, 99ff.). Furthermore, as already noted, the model of English *to be being* + adjective has not been sufficient to encourage the introduction of **estar estando* + adjective to Spanish. The restriction on **estar estando* may be a 'stylistic' avoidance of the same verb as both auxiliary and main (though English *be being* is exactly cognate morphologically speaking), though it seems also to be consistent with the restriction on the progressive with stative expressions (for example English **I am being sad*/Spanish **Estoy estando triste*).

Looking now to the existing structure of Spanish, we should note two features which I believe are significant. First, many passivizable transitive verbs are non-stative and hence not subject to the restriction on the progressive, for example:

- (19a) Los leñadores estaban cercenando los árboles.
 'The woodcutters were-(ESTAR)-IMPERFECT felling-
 GERUND the trees'

which quite naturally demands a passive

- (19b) Los árboles estaban siendo cercenados por los leñadores
 'The trees were-(ESTAR)-IMPERFECT be-(SER)-
 GERUND felled by the woodcutters'

if its aspectual value is to be maintained under passivization. Secondly, there is no general ban on *siendo* being the complement of an (admittedly small) number of 'semi-auxiliary'¹² verbs in Spanish such as *seguir*, *continuar*. These two facts mean, respectively, that there is a slot which is naturally filled by the progressive passive, and that the surface model of V + *siendo*, as in

- (20) Sigue siendo interesante
 '(It)-continues be-(SER)-GERUND interesting'
 ('It continues to be interesting')

already exists.

Estar + *siendo* + pp therefore not only conforms to an existing syntactic model but is actually needed to fill what would otherwise be an anomalous structural gap in Spanish.¹³

2.2.3 Noun + noun (N + N) combinations

Occasional instances of N + N combinations are recorded in older usage (for example *patrón oro* 'gold standard' (Smith 1992, 826; Pratt 1980, 203)). Lapesa (1963, 203) cites *pájaro mosca* 'humming-bird' and *coche cama* 'sleeping car' as well-established examples, and also points out that proper name usage without *de* dates from the beginning of the present century (*Teatro Apolo*, *Cinema España*, *Instituto Rubio*). But it is clear that the significant increase in frequency of N + N constructions is of recent date, as is also the growth in the range of their functions (Pratt 1980, 203–6). Pratt suggests that the innovation attributable to English is the use of the N + N construction to render a function previously expressed by a preposition, whereas the 'traditional' N + N groups were more truly appositional, being essentially co-ordinate in nature. There has also been extension from simple N + N combinations to N + NP combinations: *trenes largo recorrido* 'long-distance trains',

premio fin de grado 'end of year prize', etc. (examples from Gómez Torrego 1991, 17).

However, even here it can be shown that the development is not inconsistent with the existing structure of Spanish. There are already some nouns in Spanish which regularly act as invariable adjectives: *macho* 'male' and *hembra* 'female' (for example *ardillas macho* 'male squirrels'), the points of the compass *norte* 'north', *sur* 'south', etc., and several colours: *lila* 'lilac', *malva* 'mauve', *rosa* 'pink', *violeta* 'violet' (for example *gafas rosa* 'pink glasses'). The latter also provide the model for complex colour adjectival expressions: *uniformes verde oliva* 'olive green uniforms', *cortinas verde oscuro* 'dark green curtains' (Smith 1992, 826). Cardinal numerals behave similarly: *el día uno* 'the first (day of the month)', *la página tres* 'page three', a formula which in fact is obligatory with higher numbers (*el ejemplo 43* 'example 43'). Like these formations, new combinations of N + N in Spanish essentially use the second noun as a defining adjective, and there is no possibility of changing the order of the two nouns: **macho ardilla* and **verde oscuro cortinas* are as impossible as **límite fecha*. Thus in typical N₁ + N₂ combinations, N₁ is an extremely common noun with a wide field of reference and N₂ marks a very particular property or relation.

There are many more Spanish adjectives, such as *optimista* 'optimist(ic)', *hablador* 'talker/talkative', which are also used as nouns and are invariable in the singular. We should also note that in Spanish, unlike English, the boundary between nouns and adjectives is by no means always morphologically or syntactically marked: thus *francés* 'French (adj) and Frenchman', *bueno* 'good' and (*el*) *bueno* '(the) good one'. The use of an adjective as a noun is far from unusual in Spanish: what the influence of English seems to be doing is causing Spanish to exploit the reverse possibility – the use of a noun as an adjective – more fully than hitherto.

There is also evidence of ongoing internal productivity in this area. *Hombre* is indubitably used as the first item in a number of anglicisms which render the equivalent of English *-man*: as in *hombre-rana* 'frogman'. But *hombre-* has continued to participate in other combinations which do not have an obvious English base: *hombre masa* 'average man', *hombre-anuncio* 'sandwich man'. Smith (1992, 826) makes the same point about *fantasma*: although *buque fantasma* 'ghost ship' is a patent anglicism, *empresa fantasma* 'dummy company' is not so easy to attribute directly to English influence. Another group mentioned by Smith is N + *punta*: *hora punta* 'rush hour', *tecnología punta* 'leading edge technology', *tránsito punta* 'rush-hour traffic' (by association with *hora punta* 'rush hour'), *industrias punta* 'sunrise industries'.¹⁴

We should notice the 'economic' value of N + N combinations to Spanish. Many of these combinations are not gratuitous neologisms in

the sense that they replace existing words, but economically label new concepts for which Spanish originally had no ready expression. It might also be said that Spanish is gaining something of the morphological transparency which is so characteristic of the Germanic languages in this area: the kind of transparency which allows, for example, the immediate perception of a semantic relationship between English *eye*, *eye+lash*, *eye+brow*, *eye+lid* that is not perceptible between Spanish *ojo*, *pestaña*, *ceja*, *párpado*. In short, Spanish N + N combinations are simultaneously fulfilling a semantic need and filling morphological gaps.

The proper name usage identified by Lapesa (1963, 203) (see above) must be a powerful potential force for analogy in the language. Although it is theoretically possible to create constructions with *de* for this purpose, it would be unnecessarily cumbersome and uneconomical: perhaps the motivating factor in change we are looking at here is the need for catching quick attention in the commercial world. *Bar 'Los Mirlos'*, *Automóviles Sánchez, SA*, *Tiendas Cortty* and such-like have now established a firm and invariable pattern within the language.

It is interesting to notice that Lapesa gives an alternative explanation of this phenomenon, one which to my knowledge has not been taken up by subsequent commentators. He attributes the elision of *de* in such expressions as *la calle Goya* to phonetic erosion of the initial segment of *de*, a well-known feature of colloquial Spanish.

Lastly, turning to the reverse side of the coin, I once again ask what Spanish has *not* borrowed from English in this area. As we have seen, the Spanish noun-adjective order is for the most part preserved, for example *coches patrulla* not **patrulla coches* 'patrol cars'. There are exceptions, but they are a tiny minority: *cine club* 'film club', *ciencia ficción* 'science fiction', which could in any case be construed in the 'Spanish' way as 'science which is fiction', etc. There is accordingly no major syntactic upset caused by these combinations.

Spanish combinations are limited to those in which the semantic link between the two nouns is fairly obvious and requires for semantic interpretation the supplying of largely predictable prepositional and verbal information. The more idiomatic and figurative combinations of English (for example *book worm*, *rainbow*) have not generally been adopted.

3. Conclusion

My conclusion is brief. In none of the syntactic areas of Spanish I have examined have I found any movements which cannot be understood as

natural extensions of the existing structure of the language, consistent with expected types and directions of linguistic change, and in some cases recalling earlier stages of Spanish. They are all very volatile areas of constant change in the history of the language. The patterns which have sometimes been presented as being peculiar to English in fact, without exception, exist already in Spanish, and what is tending to happen is that Spanish is extending minority structures or 'capitalizing', to use a term I have introduced elsewhere (Pountain 1991), on its own resources. Furthermore, it has often been possible to show that such changes have important expressive advantages for Spanish. The sensationalist terms in which purist utterances are often couched are therefore without foundation: syntactic anglicisms do not lead to significant innovation in Spanish, but rather encourage the fuller and more effective use of existing possibilities.

Notes

- ¹ I am grateful to Wendy Ayres-Bennett and Rebecca Posner for their helpful comments on this paper at Gregynog.
- ² Lorenzo (1971) devotes approximately one page (91–2) of a 23-page article; Pratt (1980) devotes 10 pages (202–12) of a book of 273 pages.
- ³ See Lorenzo's contention (1971, 91) that 'los más dañinos y peligrosos efectos del anglicismo operan en la sintaxis' ('the most harmful and dangerous effects of English are on syntax').
- ⁴ For example, when purist commentators stridently disapprove of what they tend to call the 'perversion' of their language, perversion by definition implying something new and unfamiliar within the native system. Even Lorenzo (1971) indulges in such subjective modes of expression, speaking of certain English calques as 'verdaderas monstruosidades que revelan la ignorancia de los traductores' ('real monstrosities which betray the ignorance of the translators') (89) and referring to the acceptance of subject-first passives by university students as evidence that 'el mal ... está consumado' ('the damage has been done') (92). Estrany (1970, 199) speaks of 'la gran conmoción lingüística producida por el torrente de anglicismos que están invadiendo nuestro idioma' ('the great linguistic upheaval brought about by the torrent of anglicisms that are invading our language') and 'calcos sintácticos, traducciones calcadas de estructuras inglesas, que por negligencia o ignorancia nos llegan sin la depuración necesaria y pueden con el tiempo tergiversar las estructuras españolas' ('syntactic calques, word-for-word translations of English structures that, through negligence or ignorance, reach us without the necessary purification and can, in time, distort the Spanish structures'). Madariaga's famous, or rather infamous, article on spelling conventions (1966), couched in extremist vocabulary ('humillante', 'absurdo', 'lamentable'), begins with the statement that Spanish 'hoy es una colonia del inglés' ('has been colonized by the English language') (a position thankfully refuted by Lapesa (1966) and more recently by Smith (1991)).
- ⁵ X is used here to denote an example judged unacceptable by purist commentators though clearly acceptable to many speakers.

- ⁶ See Cárdenas (1967–8, 160): ‘... la perífrasis de pasiva en castellano se ha visto superada por otras perífrasis verbales, en gran número y riqueza y con nuevas posibilidades expresivas: perífrasis con SE, *estar* + participio, *quedarse*, *volverse*, *hacerse*, *resultar*, etc. + participio (adjetivado), de algunos de cuyos matices carece el inglés’ (‘The periphrastic passive in Castilian has been superseded by a great many other periphrastic forms, offering new possibilities of expression: periphrasis with SE, *estar* + participle, *quedarse*, *volverse*, *hacerse*, *resultar*, etc. + adjectival participle, some of whose nuances are lacking in English’).
- ⁷ Thus Moliner (1982, II, 655), who comments: ‘Antiguamente, ... era más corriente que ahora en lenguaje coloquial la voz pasiva’ (‘In the past the passive voice was more common in colloquial language than it is now’).

Such an assertion is extremely difficult to substantiate, however, even for written register (see De Kock and Gómez Molina 1985, 125, note 21). The most conveniently available illustrative statistics are those of Keniston (1937a and b). I reproduce these below, given in his original form x-y, where x represents the ‘range’ or number of texts in which the phenomenon was found, and y represents the ‘frequency’ or number of actual or projected occurrences. The figure in square brackets is my own calculation of y/x, and it will be seen that in nearly all cases the twentieth-century figures are lower than the sixteenth-century figures, the only exceptions being the Perfect and Pluperfect tenses.

Verb-form	16th Cent		20th Cent	
Pres	27–180	[6.67]	32–61	[1.91]
PresSubj			5–6	[1.20]
Imp	22–49	[2.27]	13.24	[1.85]
Pret	27–154	[5.60]	27–72	[2.67]
Fut	19–61	[3.21]	9–18	[2.00]
Cond	7–16	[2.29]		
Perf	9–12	[1.33]	15–35	[2.33]
Plup	4–4	[1.00]	11–15	[1.36]
Inf	27–117	[4.33]	30–72	[2.40]
PerfInf			4–4	[1.00]
PresPart	13–31	[2.38]	3–3	[1.00]
PerfPart	1–1	[1.00]		

- ⁸ Gili Gaya (1948, 172) says ‘es contrario a la naturaleza del gerundio español su uso como atributo’ (‘It is contrary to the nature of the Spanish gerund to be used as an attribute’).
- ⁹ Compare the ‘adverbial’ uses of relative clauses in Latin (Woodcock 1959, 108–9).
- ¹⁰ Note that the syntax of infinitive and gerund complements is different (though this is not, I think, strictly relevant to the matter in hand). The infinitive complement allows subject-verb inversion in the complement structure:
Oímos a los manifestantes gritar eslóganes
Oímos gritar eslóganes a los manifestantes
 (‘We heard the demonstrators shout slogans’)
 whereas the gerund complement does not:
Retrataban a los cardenales entrando en el cónclave
 **Retrataban entrando en el cónclave a los cardenales*
 (‘They photographed the cardinals entering the conclave’)

The infinitive may also have a 'passive' function which is not available to the gerund:

Oí cantar una canción

**Oí cantando una canción*

('I heard a song being sung')

- ¹¹ Moliner 1982, I, 1393 lists such usage under the heading of 'gerundio adjetival' ('adjectival gerund').
- ¹² This category is discussed in Green 1982.
- ¹³ See Gómez Torrego (1991, 23): 'Su éxito en castellano se debe a que viene a llenar la casilla vacía correspondiente a la perífrasis activa "estar + gerundio"' ('Its success in Castilian is due to the fact that it fills the empty slot corresponding to the active periphrasis "estar + gerund"'): "El proyecto *está siendo discutido* estos días en la comisión" (por "se *está discutiendo*"); "El plan *está siendo elaborado* por los profesores del Centro" (por "Los profesores . . . *están elaborando* . . .").'
- ¹⁴ See, in similar vein, Spence (1989) on anglicisms in French.

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