

Analyzing the structure of code-switched written texts: the case of Guaraní-Spanish *Jopara*
Bruno Estigarribia, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Romance Languages and
Literatures Department & Psychology Department
Zachary Wilkins, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Linguistics Department

Codeswitching (CS) is integral to negotiating identity in the linguistic arena (Niño-Murcia 2011; Sebba 2012). Paraguay’s case is unique: it is the only country in the Americas where an indigenous language (Guaraní) is spoken by a non-indigenous majority. Yet, Guaraní and Spanish do not coexist there as “pure” varieties. Rather, speakers employ a third variety, *jopara*, inconsistently described as an unstable language mixing (Lustig 1996; Pottier 1970), a Guaraní with hispanisms (Fernández Guizzetti 1966), an everyday ill-spoken Guaraní (Galeano Olivera n.d.), a Spanish spoken in Guaraní (Morínigo 1959); a transitional pidgin (Boidin 2006a), a third language (Bakker, Gómez Rendón, and Hekking 2008), or a creole (Boidin 2006b; Pic-Gillard 2003). Amid efforts by the Paraguayan government to institutionalize *jopara* as the Guaraní taught in schools, understanding what *jopara* is necessitates a systematic linguistic description.

We apply leading theories of CS to analyze the first novel written entirely in *jopara*: *Ramona Quebranto* (RQ) (Ayala de Michelagnoli 1989). We find that the language choices evinced in RQ-*jopara* don’t comfortably fit current models of CS structure. Following Deuchar et al.’s (2007) quantitative approach, we characterize RQ-*jopara* as predominantly *insertional* (i.e., insertion of single words or constituents), but with strong *alternational* features (i.e., alternation between longer stretches of words). This is consistent with Muysken’s (2000) proposal that colonial settings and asymmetric proficiency lead to insertional CS. Alternation is favored here by Paraguay’s bilingual stability, but disfavored by the lack of complete language separation or strong norms. However, while Deuchar and colleagues also propose that insertion is best captured by the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF, Myers-Scotton 1997; Myers-Scotton 2002), RQ-*jopara* presents problems for the MLF. Word-internal CS clearly identifies Guaraní as ML. For example, if a content lexeme is Guaraní, the morphology (especially subject-verb agreement (1), but also case markers (2)) is Guaraní, but the reverse is never found:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <i>ovende</i> but * <i>ñemu-e/-a/-∅</i> | 2) <i>nuestra casitape</i> but * <i>en ore rógami</i> |
| 3-sell sell-3sg | our house-little-IN in our house-little |
| “sells” | “in our little house” |

Yet, Spanish words are in a 4:1 ratio to Guaraní in RQ, so it is difficult to see RQ-*jopara* as the insertion of Spanish into a Guaraní ML. Moreover, this is not due to the choice of ML being controlled by contextual variables (e.g., if speakers of higher socioeconomic status were addressed in CS with Spanish as ML).

While it is not particularly surprising that theories of spoken CS are not easily applied to a written text, the question remains as to what the exact relationship is between this “literary” *jopara* and its spoken counterpart. We propose that, whereas RQ-*jopara* is derived from spoken *jopara* whose ML is Guaraní, the novel as a genre favors Spanish as ML. These stylistic pressures further hispanicize *jopara* in this case, but without switching to Spanish as ML. This proposal explains the higher frequency of Spanish lexemes in RQ. It also allows us to maintain the general tenets of MLF, while at the same time relaxing constraints on the choice of ML, construing it more broadly as “discourse strategy” (Matras 2009). We conclude by discussing accommodations necessary when applying structural theories of spoken CS to written texts (Sebba, Mahootian, and Jonsson 2012), in particular when CS obtains between a highly standardized language with a strong written tradition and a mostly oral language.

References

- Ayala de Michelagnoli, Margot. 1989. *Ramona Quebranto*. Asunción, Paraguay: Editorial Arandurã.
- Bakker, Dik, Jorge Gómez Rendón, and Ewald Hekking. 2008. "Spanish Meets Guaraní, Otomí, and Quechua: a Multilingual Confrontation." In *Aspects of Language Contact: New Theoretical, Methodological and Empirical Findings with Special Focus on Romancisation Processes*, ed. T. Stolz, D. Bakker, and S. Salas Palomo, 165–238. Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 35. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Boidin, Capucine. 2006a. "Le spanglish au miroir du guarani jopara". Web Document. <http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00257594/en/>.
- . 2006b. "Jopara: Una Vertiente Sol y Sombra Del Mestizaje." In *Tupí y Guaraní. Estructuras, Contactos y Desarrollos*, ed. Wolf Dietrich and Haralambos Symeonidis. Regionalwissenschaften Lateinamerika 11. Lateinamerika- Zentrum/Centro Latinoamericano de l'Université de Münster: LIT-Verlag.
- Deuchar, Margaret, Pieter Muysken, and Sung-Lan Wang. 2007. "Structured Variation in Codeswitching: Towards an Empirically Based Typology of Bilingual Speech Patterns." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 10 (3): 298–340.
- Fernández Guizzetti, Germán. 1966. "Los Determinadores y La Cuantificación En El Pensar Real De Los Hablantes Del Guaraní Yopara." In *Idiomas, Cosmovisiones y Cultura*, by G. Fernández Guizzetti. Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Rosario, Argentina.
- Galeano Olivera, David. n.d. "UH TIENE RAZÓN: GUARANI ES LA ASIGNATURA MÁS ODIADA. (En realidad lo que odian es el Jopara)." *Ateneo de lengua y cultura guaraní*. <http://www.ateneoguarani.edu.py/charlas-y-conferencias/80-uh-tiene-razon-guarani-es-la-asignatura-mas-odiada-en-realidad-lo-que-odian-es-el-jopara>.
- Lustig, Wolf. 1996. "Mba'éichapa Oiko La Guarani? Guarani y Jopara En El Paraguay." *Papia* 4 (2): 19–43.
- Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge University Press.
- Morínigo, Marcos Augusto. 1959. "Influencia Del Español En La Estructura Lingüística Del Guaraní." *Filología* 5: 235–247.
- Muysken, Pieter. 2000. *Bilingual Speech: A Typology of Code-Mixing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1997. *Duelling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Codeswitching*. Clarendon.
- . 2002. *Contact Linguistics: Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Niño-Murcia, Mercedes. 2011. "Variation and Identity in the Americas". In *The Handbook of Hispanic Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Manuel Díaz-Campos, 728–746.
- Pic-Gillard, Christine. 2003. "El Guaraní En El Paraguay: De La Adquisición De La Escritura a La Biliteralidad." *Lingüística, Revista Paraguaya De Sociología* 116: 155–163.
- Pottier, Bernard. 1970. "La Situation Linguistique Du Paraguay." *Cahiers Du Monde Hispanique Et Luso-brésilien* 14: 43–50.
- Sebba, Mark. 2012. "Researching and Theorising Multilingual Texts." In *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse*, ed. by Mark Sebba, Shahrzad Mahootian, and Carla Jonsson, 1–26. Routledge.
- Sebba, Mark, Shahrzad Mahootian, and Carla Jonsson, eds. 2012. *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse*. Routledge.