

Categorizing Spanish Pronouns: Evidence from code-switching

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Introduction

Cardinaletti and Starke (1999)

- Strong pronouns: Possess a Determiner Phrase (DP) projection
- Weak pronouns: Lack a DP projection
- Various syntactic, prosodic, and phonological characteristics result from being DP-like or not

- (1) a. **Él** y **Julia** tienen mucho dinero.
3SG.M and have a-lot money
'He and Julia have a lot of money.'
- b. **Él** de la **camisa roja** tiene mucho dinero.
3SG.M of the shirt red has a-lot money
'He/Him in the red shirt has a lot of money.'
- c. Ella es pobre, pero **Él** tiene mucho dinero.
3SG.F is poor but 3SG.M has a-lot money
'She's poor, but HE has a lot of money.'
- d. **Él** tiene mucho dinero.
3SG.M has a-lot money
'He has a lot of money.'

In (1a-c) the pronoun *él* 'he' is able to be coordinated, modified, or prosodically stressed

- According to Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) these all have to be examples of a strong pronoun as a full DP is necessary for such constructions

In (1d) the case is less clear

- The case for this pronominal being strong:
 - Same phonetic realization (suggesting this form is always strong)
 - Does not violate any of the syntactic, phonological, or prosodic criteria for being strong
- The case for this pronominal being weak:
 - Not in a context that necessitates being a strong pronoun (i.e. coordination, modification, or prosodic stress)
 - Cardinaletti and Starke (1999) specifically argue that strong and weak pronouns can be homophonous
 - Does not violate any of the syntactic, phonological, or prosodic criteria for being weak

We can attempt to clarify this issue with a new set of data: Intrasentential code-switching (CS)

Background

At least since Timm (1975) and through recent research (Jake 1994; van Gelderen and MacSwan 2008) it has been noted that pronouns are not easily code-switched

- (2) a. * **Él** works all the time.
3SG.M
'He works all the time.'
- b. **Ese hombre** works all the time.
that man
'That guy works all the time.'

There is a strong restriction against switching between a pronoun and the finite verb (2a), whereas lexical DPs are more generally acceptable (2b)

However, consultant data shows that not all pronouns behave the same with respect to CS

- (3) a. **Él** y **Julia** work all the time.
3SG.M and
'He and Julia work all the time.'
- b. **Él** de la **camisa roja** works all the time.
3SG.M of the shirt red
'He/Him in the red shirt works all the time.'
- c. Ella es perezosa, pero **Él** works all the time.
3SG.F is lazy but 3SG.M
'She's lazy, but HE works all the time.'

In (3a-c) pronouns that are coordinated, modified, or prosodically stressed seem to be more acceptable

We present the findings of two studies that have been run testing all of the various structures in (2-3), both from Spanish-to-English and vice versa

Methodology

Pre-experiment: Consultant data, as in (2-3)

Experiment 1: Baseline for Pronouns in CS

- CS stimuli (n=656): Unaltered pronouns, as in (2a)
- Variables tested: Person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), Number (singular, plural), Function (subject, object), Context (matrix, embedded)

Experiment 2: Varied Pronoun Types in CS

- CS stimuli (n=64): Unaltered, coordinated, modified, and prosodically-stressed pronouns, as in (2-3)
- Monolingual stimuli (n=64): Equivalent sentences entirely in Spanish or English
- Variables tested: Pronoun Type (unaltered, coordinated, modified, prosodically stressed)

Both experiments

- Written Acceptability Judgment Task (1-to-5 Likert scale; 1-to-7 Likert scale)
- Lexical DPs as a control

Participants (n=15; n=5)

- Bilingual speakers of Mexican Spanish and American English
- Learned both languages by a young age (≤ 6)
- Use (and code-switch) both languages on a regular basis

Follow the standards discussed in González-Vilbazo et al. (2013)

Results

Experiment 1: Baseline for Pronouns in CS

Chart 1 - Unaltered pronouns in CS

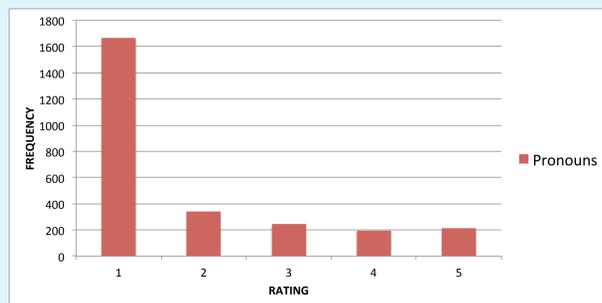
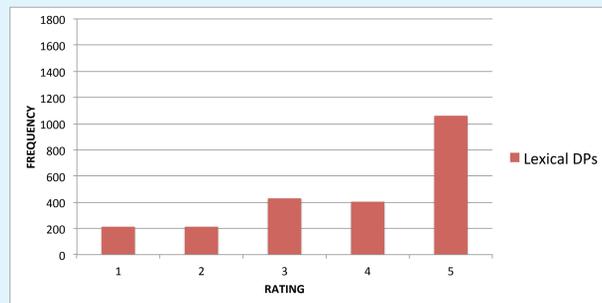


Chart 2 - Unaltered lexical DPs in CS



Experiment 2: Varied Pronoun Types in CS

Chart 3 - Unaltered, coordinated, modified, and prosodically stressed pronouns in CS

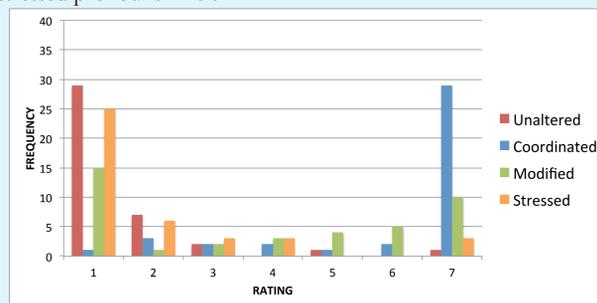


Chart 4 - Unaltered, coordinated, modified, and prosodically stressed lexical DPs in CS

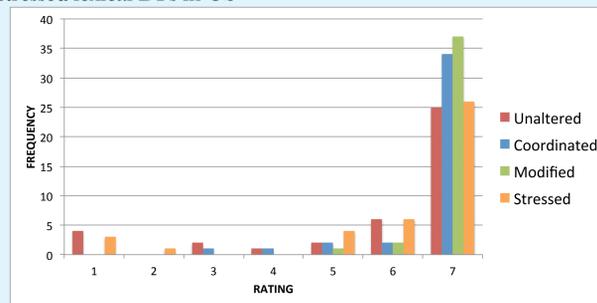


Chart 5 - Modified pronouns in monolingual contexts

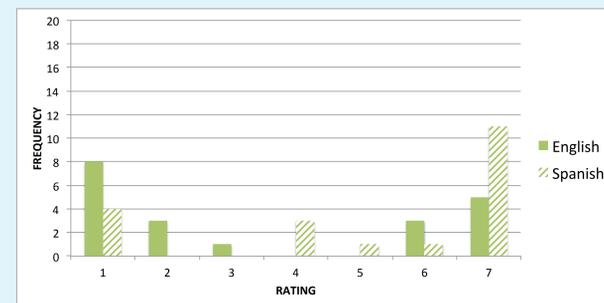
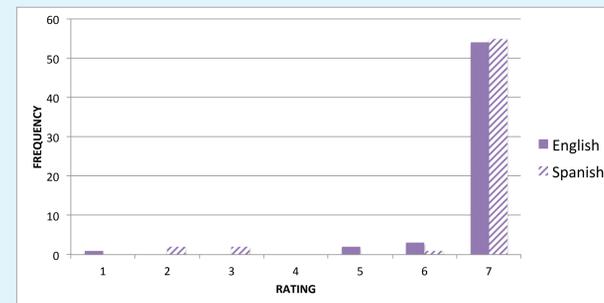


Chart 6 - All other pronoun types in monolingual contexts



Analysis

Our data shows that while normally a code-switch between a pronominal form and the finite verb is prohibited, a switch with (an)other pronoun type(s) can be allowed

- Coordinated: Accepted (comparable to ratings of lexical DPs)
- Modified: ? (unaccepted in monolingual contexts)
- Prosodically stressed: ? (unsure whether participants are reading written stimuli with correct prosody)

The data we find with respect to pronouns in CS is in line with the notion of strong and weak forms as proposed by Cardinaletti and Starke (1999)

- Pronouns that are coordinated (and modified/prosodically stressed) can be switched due to their DP-like structure, confirming their status as strong pronouns
- We are able to categorize the previously "unclear" pronouns in (1d) as weak

Conclusions & Outlook

Remaining question: Why is it that weak pronouns cannot be switched?

A full-fledged study including both experiments is currently under way

- Includes new modality: Aural Acceptability Judgments

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