

Trans-Cultural Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition: Understanding the Sociolinguistic Effects of International Tourism on Host Communities

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the nature of linguistic interactions between host communities and international tourists. The tourism-based context provides an excellent platform from which to describe the sociolinguistic influences that American tourists have had on Mexican communities. Specifically, the language use of local vendors in Puerto Peñasco/Rocky Point, Mexico, is described in terms of the various linguistic characteristics that constitute their particular dialect of English. Not only does this work emphasize the sociocultural foundation of language acquisition, it also illustrates the type of language that is learned in economically motivated situations. The results also emphasize how the growing ubiquity of (American) English in tourism contexts establishes distinct attitudes towards the United States and those who live there.

Key words: trans-cultural bilingualism, second language acquisition, interactional, biliterate, discourse, pidginization, diglossia, linguistic marketplace

INTRODUCTION

On any given weekend, droves of Americans flood the small Mexican community of Puerto Peñasco (a.k.a., Rocky Point¹). Located just four hours south of Phoenix on the northern edge of the Sea of Cortez, Rocky Point is an extremely popular beach destination for tourists of all ages. There is such a prominent American presence that it is hard to go anywhere without seeing an Arizona license plate or hearing conversations in English. Instead of acting like they are traveling abroad in a foreign land, tourists in Rocky Point often participate in their

¹ The ubiquity of the English name “Rocky Point” underscores the influence of American tourism in this community. Due to the popularity of the name “Rocky Point” among American tourists and Mexican merchants, the name “Puerto Peñasco” will not be used in this paper.

vacationing activities with an air of confidence and ownership as if they were still in the United States. While the ubiquitous presence of other English-speaking Americans creates a sense of linguistic comfort for non-Spanish-speaking tourists is an obvious cause for such behavior, the communicative strategies employed by local merchants also contribute to this sociolinguistic environment. Given the global stature that English has taken on as an economic lingua franca (Crystal 2003), it is not surprising the Rocky Point community has developed a high level of communicative competence as a strategy to accommodate American tourists. This specific case demonstrates how tourism-motivated language abilities are developed, and how the proximity of Rocky Point to the US has influenced this specific linguistic environment (i.e., as opposed to tourism-supported communities in other parts of the world).

Motivated by American dollars, many *Rocky Porteños*, as they call themselves, have compensated for many linguistic and cultural barriers in order to facilitate economic transactions. The constant exposure to English-speaking clients has provided this community with a contextually authentic bilingual education, such that American tourists in Rocky Point rarely find themselves in linguistically compromising situations. Even without the most basic Spanish-speaking skills, travelers American tourists can easily negotiate any activity without a problem. This specific example provides an optimal platform for studying both the ways in which a host community integrates the language of the visitors as well as the sociocultural effects that accompany the prominence of such a politically dominant language as English. The variety of processes inherent in this sociolinguistic context evokes two fundamental questions concerning language acquisition in a cross-cultural tourism setting:

- 1) How is English manifested in the daily language practices of individuals in a tourism-based community?
- 2) What types of social factors motivate a host community to acquire English?

Moreover, analyzing the use of English in Rocky Point from these two perspectives demonstrates that language acquisition patterns can offer great insight into the structure of social power-relationships. While the dialectal characteristics described here might not be unique (*per se*)

to Rocky Point, they could be considered representative of the types of linguistic patterns that emerge in *similar* touristic-based contexts in Mexico. Furthermore, this analysis contributes to anthropological views of language acquisition as well as the field of second language acquisition and instruction. Specifically, this study both emphasizes the influence of economic currents on linguistic development as well as bolstering the validity of an interactional approach to language instruction in more formal educational contexts. Additionally, it highlights the role of economic dependency in the formation of worldview and identity.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT

Besides looking at the linguistic characteristics of English in a touristic context, the Rocky Point example highlights the importance and prominence of English in Mexico on a global level. In his thorough discussion of English as a global language, Crystal (2003) emphasizes the role of English in the spread of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, and the expansion of the United States' economic and political influence in the twentieth century. Interestingly, though, Crystal (2003:62-65) does not mention Mexico in his list of "Speakers of English in territories where the language has had special relevance." Of the seventy-five countries listed, thirteen are listed as having 5,000 or less L1 (first language) and/or L2 (second language) English speakers. Considering the proximity of Mexico to the U.S., and the abundance of popular tourist locations, it can be easily stated that there are well over 5,000 L1 and/or L2 speakers of English in Mexico. Therefore, looking the processes by which English has proliferated in Rocky Point might help understand the true status of English throughout Mexico.

While Rocky Point's principal economic focus has traditionally been the fishing industry, a surge in tourism in the past few decades has dramatically reshaped the financial opportunities of everyone in the community. Once claiming to be Arizona's secret beach retreat, Rocky Point has recently been anything but a hidden. Over the past few decades, Rocky Point has been experiencing heavy Mexican and US investment, primarily in the numerous tourist-zone housing developments.

Accompanying the commercialization (and commodification) of Rocky Point by US property developers and various other foreign small-

business owners is the proliferation of English-speaking tourists and American views. In order to cultivate economic success, Mexican and US government officials, foreign investors, and resort developers are all now involved in the area's commercial transformation. Besides focusing on the tourist-zoned properties surrounding Rocky Point, Mexico's federal government has plans for convention centers, marinas, shopping centers, water, sewer, road systems, airports, etc. Such phenomenal growth can only be sustained by a constant flow of tourists and other outside consumers.

Looking at the general effects of tourism, Chambers (2000) outlines the general progression of social change due to tourist-host interactions. In his description of tourist-based contexts, Chambers (2000:54) describes that "[t]ourists can introduce new or intensified social practices to a region." He continues by suggesting that where tourism constitutes a majority of the economic revenue in a community, "it might contribute to increased social distance and inequality between those members of the community who directly benefit from tourism and others who do not" (Chambers 2000:54). These socioeconomic pressures play an integral part in the process of a large-scale shift in language use within a host community such as Rocky Point.

Considering that English is so pervasive in a place where Spanish is the native language, Rocky Point provides an optimal environment to study the sociocultural effects that a foreign language has on a host community. Not only is the use of English common in the oral discourse of this Mexican population, it is hard to go anywhere in Rocky Point without seeing written materials in English. While it might seem natural that the host population should accommodate linguistic differences to make money, this phenomenon is quite remarkable to those of us who have had to learn another language in order to interact in a foreign country. Chambers (2000:105) has recently commented on such processes in a touristic context:

An area that is ripe for linguistic research revolves around trying to determine the cultural implications of the ways in which international tourists and hosts exchange their languages. What, for example, are the modern touristic equivalents of the creolized and pidgin languages that are usually associated with earlier periods of trade and colonialism? Words convey ideas and concepts, and their analysis in touristic exchanges could help us sort out some of the social and cultural

consequences of tourism. To my knowledge, very little work has been done in these areas.

Stemming from Chambers' call for further investigation, the present discussion analyzes these issues and provides a framework for understanding a linguistic ecology consisting of overlapping languages. A closer look at the linguistic processes involved in this context indicates that meaningful language is being used and acquired primarily through *social* (i.e., non-instructional) interactions. While Spanish is definitely the main language spoken in this area, English is so prevalent that Rocky Point could be considered a bilingual and biliterate community. Moreover, even though it is possible that small pockets of other minority-languages (i.e., indigenous or other foreign languages) are periodically used in Rocky Point, the focus of this project is on the two most economically and politically dominant.

To demonstrate that a high level of English communicative competence can be acquired in environments where language is primarily used in economic contexts, the data for this analysis include excerpts of spontaneous oral discourse and examples of the written materials that abound in the public visual space. Considering the opportunities that some of the vendors may have had to travel to the U.S., as well as the availability of English media, the language acquisition processes discussed here should not be viewed as occurring within a vacuum. Rather, the language used in Rocky Point, and characteristics of that use, are understood as occurring and proliferating within a prescribed space that exists within the overall context of modern globalization. Even though some of the linguistic strategies and characteristics analyzed here might stem from the vendors' previous experiences abroad, it can safely be assumed that the wider community of English speakers in Rocky Point has acquired specific discursive traits as a direct result of the touristic context in which they live. While the different samples of social discourse provided here could potentially be scrutinized for non-conventional variations, I contend that the orthographic, semantic, and lexical variations displayed constitute actual acquired characteristics of this variety of English. Characterizing the variety of English used in Rocky Point descriptively (versus prescriptively) allows us to view language as a set of acquired social *as well as* cognitive strategies.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

ENGLISH

The spread of English on a global level has been the topic of great concern lately (Crystal 2003). Currently, English is the fastest spreading language throughout the rest of the world. On a global level, Kachru (1985) offers a framework of three concentric circles that concisely categorizes all societies that use English:

- The inner = societies where English is the medium of public and private life and where English is overwhelmingly the first language of speakers.
- The outer circle = societies where English is used by the state as an official language, although it may not be the first language of all citizens, or where English has a significant role as an additional language, in education, for example.
- The third circle = a rapidly expanding circle consisting of those states whose members use English for international communication.

In countries where English is appropriated as the dominant language, "the tension between retaining the culture and values associated with the mother tongue and the adoption of a national identity symbolized by a foreign language is not easy to reconcile" (Tollefson and Tsui 2004: 7). Hence, many countries are caught in an ideological tug of war between cultural, global, and national agendas in their quest for economic and technological advancement (Gill 2004; Pakir 2004). Williams (2003: 39) offers a critical view of English as an instrument of imperialism and modernization, maintaining that it "perpetuates an unequal relationship between 'developed' and 'developing' societies because access to information and power does not depend solely upon language fluency. It also depends upon institutional structures, economic resources, and relationships." Phillipson (2000: 89) notes the inequities involved in recognizing a global language: "Such terms as 'global English,' 'anglophone Africa,' or reference to English as a 'universal' lingua franca conceal the fact that the use of English serves the interests of some much better than others."

Nickels (2005) description of Puerto Rican English offers a good backdrop for understanding the political and social tensions involved in a bilingual Spanish/English society. Acknowledging the importance of

English within the economic realm, Nickels (2005: 231) mentions that the use of English in more family/private contexts, while not a social norm, provides an opportunity for practice “where the speaker can save face.” Nickels (2005: 233) also considers Puerto Rican English as being “a little more than a performance variety, and is not consistent with all the characteristics of an institutionalized variety.”

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

This project outlines the specific traits of language that host communities acquire through social interaction in a touristic context as a result of economic motivation. While the main premise here is that such types of interaction has have produced many functionally bilingual individuals, Baker (2000: 1-3) insists that characterizing the true essence of bilingualism is very complex. Instead of getting bogged down in describing how fluent an individual must be in her or his second language in order to be categorized as bilingual, the focus of this discussion revolves around the context of functional language use. Henceforth, bilingualism shall be used to indicate any context in which an individual draws on and/or demonstrates the use of two sets of languages to negotiate daily life.

Henceforth, the notion of *language* will be discussed in terms of culture, literacy, and discourse. By framing language in this context, it can be looked at in a multidimensional context where its production, consumption, and dissemination are all tied together. This view of language use establishes a sociolinguistic platform from which to discuss language acquisition. From an education perspective, language acquisition and instruction has been one of the most hotly contested issues in recent decades (Johnson 2005). When it comes to the formation of educational policies on language instruction, there are many misguided views on the nature of language acquisition and how to implement effective pedagogical methodologies (Crawford 2004). Addressing the similarities between first and second-language acquisition, Bialystok (2002: 162) states that “language and cognitive development proceed through the same mechanisms, in response to the same experiences, and with considerable mutual influence on each other.”

Analyzing language acquisition outside of the isolated context of the classroom posits “language and language acquisition as

simultaneously occurring and interactively constructed both in the head and in the world" (Atkinson 2002: 525). Establishing a connection between "the head" and "the real world" is a key component of this project. Apart from the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition, Atkinson's (2002) sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition illustrates that meaning is derived from social products, social practices, and social tools. Atkinson (2002:526) contends that "people use language to act in and on their social worlds: to convey, construct, and perform, among other things, ideas, feelings, actions, identities, and simple (but crucial) passing acknowledgments of the existence of other human beings." This assertion is directly reflected in the use of English found in Rocky Point, Mexico.

CULTURE

Since this project involves a cross-cultural context, the intricate notion of culture must be acknowledged. From a socioeconomic perspective, the idea of culture shall be understood as described by Williams (1977: 19) as "a constitutive social process, creating specific and different 'ways of life.'" This general abstraction helps to view culture as a dynamic process that is constantly sustained and reinvented through social interaction. Since societies are driven by certain economic and normative needs, it is imperative to acknowledge that the institutions that govern these needs produce relationships and networks of interpersonal (and intrapersonal) interactions. Moreover, given that the interactions that maintain and perpetuate a "culture" are mediated through social communicative patterns, the concept of language as it contributes to the formation of an individual's identity and culture need to be expanded.

Acknowledging that language is an important component in the structuring of an individual's perception of the world allows us to discuss how people view themselves within the world (Atkinson 2003; Pease-Alvarez 2003; Tollefson and Tsui 2004). Specifically, language can be seen as a principal force in the formation of identity (Fishman 2001). Focusing on the social and political depths of identity, Schmidt (2000) and Pease-Alvarez (2003) assert that language is the foundation of identity (individual and group).

Furthermore, the relationship between language and culture is dialectical in nature. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 273),

this implies that “every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations.” Understanding how language use conforms to economic and political demands illuminates the processes by which cultures and identities are forced to adapt and accommodate such changes. Fishman (2001, 2002) demonstrates how determining and/or limiting language use directly defines the patterns of interactions within a given community. While explicit language policies are easily described, the implicit forces behind language shift, death, and revitalization are often more difficult to see.

Applying this to the Rocky Point community, the acquisition and use of English creates relationships and forms new identities for both native and non-native speakers. These new relationships and identities are drawn on during future interactions, thereby causing further development and contributing to social change. When arguing that culture is embedded in discourse, it is necessary to understand that each instance of interaction is a vehicle for cultural reification or change.

DISCOURSE

Since discourse is crucial to the transmission of culture, it requires a sound definition. Even though, for the purpose of this project, the term *discourse* is primarily applied to specific communicative strategies, it should also be viewed as it relates to the formation of the entire communicative context. As stated by Johnstone (2002: 3), discourse involves “patterns of belief and habitual action as well as patterns of language.” The ways in which these patterns are transmitted form the nexus of communication and should be liberated from mere verbal exchanges. While this study is based on the verbal and visual interactions that take place in a prescribed cultural space, it must be understood that these interactions are the products of larger historical processes and social formations (van Dijk 2000).

LITERACY

The large quantity of written text in this project necessitates a sound definition of literacy. Rockhill’s (1997) construction posits literacy in terms of cultural and communicative practices and patterns that are situated in different communicative environments. Taking into consideration the power dynamics involved in the definition of literacy,

it is necessary to understand why certain practices (e.g., calculating receipts or keeping basic financial records) are often perceived as "lower" literacy skills, versus seeing other forms of literacy (e.g., writing novels or journal articles) as more prestigious. Instead of a monolithic view of literacy practices, Rockhill (1997) emphasizes the importance of the context in which literacy practices take place. This view endows literacy with multiple applications that include various communicative strategies and forms. Therefore, literacy is freed from the popular notion of reading and writing. Instead of defining literacy, these traditional characteristics are subsumed within a broader assortment of skills.

Street's (1999) application of multiple literacies confronts the desire to label individuals with nontraditional skills as illiterate. Street (1999) describes two main models of literacy: 1) the autonomous model; and 2) the ideological model. The autonomous model assumes that literacy in itself will have effects on other social and cognitive practices (Street 2001). He supports his claim by describing the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin this popular view of literacy. He rejects the autonomous model due to the fact that it imposes a Western concept of literacy without taking into consideration the possibility of different culturally embedded contexts (Street 1995). To compensate for this myopic view of literacy, Street (1995, 1997, 1999, 2001) employs his ideological model of literacy. Through this model, Street situates literacy within the larger social context. He argues that it is necessary to see "literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts" (Street 1997: 7).

Central to this argument, the notion of *literacy practices* requires some clarification. Literacy practices encompass broader patterns of knowledge applications that might otherwise not appear to be related to literacy (Street 2001). Simply looking at the events that involve reading and writing do not allow us to see how people apply their knowledge in other contexts. Street (1995: 162) defines literacy practices as "a broader concept, pitched at a higher level of abstraction and referring to both behavior and conceptualizations related to the use of reading and/or writing."

Viewing literacy as a network of related practices, along with positioning it in a socially embedded context, is important to the present investigation of touristic language. This concept expands the social

context of guest-host interactions and lends merit to the use of multiple languages and literacy strategies to accomplish communicative ends. In the Rocky Point context, some might tend to view language use as divided into Spanish and English, written and spoken, and/or correct and incorrect. This view might be useful if the concept of language could be divorced completely from the variety of social interactions that take place in Rocky Point. Since this is impossible, language use shall include all acts of communication: where spoken Spanish and English are used together to complete utterances; where written forms are used to support the oral communication (or *visa versa*); and where prescriptive aberrations do not interfere with the intended goal of a communicative strategy. This depiction highlights the generative and creative nature of language use exemplified in Rocky Point.

METHODOLOGY

The linguistic data that were collected for this project can be divided into two categories: 1) written text; and, 2) oral discourse. As a participant observer, I gathered data through basic social interaction within the contexts of an average tourist, though from an ethnographic observation vantage point. The written data were collected in public places. Yet, with such an abundance of written material available to observe, only a limited number of examples were recorded. While the written samples were selected due to their marked variations from standard/prescriptive English norms, they are a good representation of the general characteristics of printed materials that abound Rocky Point. All of the samples used in this project were photographed and described in a written log. After the photographs were developed, each example of written discourse was analyzed for lexical, orthographic, and semantic features. Since the collection of these data did not include interviewing the “authors” of the written materials (concerning their writing strategies, views of English, educational background, etc.), this offers an excellent opportunity for future investigation. Such interviews might enable us to better understand the prevalent attitudes of locals toward English and its place in the community.

Gathering the verbal data demanded much more focus and preparation. Consultants were self-selected, meaning that I conducted conversations with vendors and street merchants who approached me first. While this opportunistic sampling method might exclude non-

English speakers and/or shy individuals, it does provide a strong sample of speakers that are eager to use their linguistic skills as an economic tool. In keeping with the fishing port context, I utilized a trolling method to bait the local merchants into talking with me. To do this, my research assistant and I walked through the main marketplace and waited for vendors to call out to us. The market consisted of/comprised a series of permanent curio shops, restaurants, and a row of seafood kiosks, the majority of which included vendors standing out front looking for prospective customers. In this environment, it is the norm for vendors to call out to passing tourists in an attempt to lure them into their stores to browse around.

Aside from the market, I also situated myself on the beach in a central location that received a lot of foot traffic from mobile souvenir vendors. In compliance with the university Human Subjects Board, all participants were asked permission to record the interactions, and their verbal consent was included and logged on the tape recording. Furthermore, all participants were compensated with their choice of an article of clothing (mostly t-shirts brought from Arizona) and/or a cold beverage. While it could be implied that only including consultants who willingly approached me might skew the overall findings, I contend that the individuals who participated are on the forefront of English use in this touristic context. As Rocky Point continues to grow and accommodate more English-speaking tourists, the trends highlighted in this project can be used to predict future patterns of language use and acquisition.

Heeding Spradley's (1979) advice on conducting ethnographic interviews, I strived to establish a certain level of rapport with the participants so as to entice productive interaction. The conversational interaction with the vendors consisted of asking them about their products and allowing them give me their best sales pitch. At some point in the discussion, I began to ask them questions to assess their range of oral English proficiency. For each individual that participated, I was able to arrive at a discursive limit to their English abilities by incrementally asking more conceptually and syntactically difficult questions. This questioning method helped me explore a wide range of syntactic and semantic avenues with the participants. [Is this quantifiable?- maybe not, but it was definitely observable.] While English was the primary language used in the conversations, I

periodically switched to Spanish to broaden the social context of the conversation and test the consultants' reactions. The specific occupations of the participants are outlined below.

<u>Interview Consultants</u>	
Fish Market Vendors:	2
Kiosk/Small Shop Vendors:	5
<u>Beach/Street Vendors:</u>	<u>11</u>
Total:	18

ANALYSIS

WRITTEN TEXT

To best outline the main patterns and characteristics of biliteracy in Rocky Point, I organized the written samples into three analytical categories:

- A) **Lexical Variations:** creative combinations of Spanish and English;
- B) **Orthographic Variations:** spelling or punctuation variations in English;
- C) **Semantic Variations:** English text with ambiguous or culturally peculiar meanings.

The following samples display the data verbatim as they apply to the above categories. Conventionally, specific points of interest will be indicated in bold text and any further translation or explication will be given in brackets. Henceforth, the data will be discussed according to the letter of the category and the number in which they are listed in that category (e.g., A1 = Lexical Variations, number 1 – *Comida Rapid*). Furthermore, comments placed in [brackets] reflect my own commentary concerning the data.

The first linguistic strategy that will be discussed demonstrates an inventive integration of Spanish and English. The lexical variations reflect an inherent acquired knowledge of biliterate vocabulary and phonology. While these examples might be much more meaningful to a bilingual individual, the text is presented in such a way that a monolingual of either language would be able to negotiate the meaning. A sample of the lexical variations is listed below:

A. Lexical Variations

1. Comida Rapid
2. Servicio Express
3. Lonchería- Movil Lunch [printed on side by serving window]
4. El Baile Bubis
5. Cirujano Dentista – Dentist
6. Carrocería y Pintura Los Pinos- CAR WASH
7. Tienda de Servicio SHORT STOP
8. Cafeteria y Hamburguesas Wendy's

Examples A1, A2, and A3 display a direct combination of a Spanish word followed by and English word. Note that in A1 and A2 the Spanish word order is preserved (noun-adjective) but in A3 the word order is more like English (adjective-noun). A4 follows a similar pattern, though the spelling of the *Bubis* phonetically conforms to Spanish (a trait that is discussed in the subsequent category of orthographic variation). A4 is listed as a lexical variation due to the combination of Spanish and English. A5 and A6 are examples of the common strategy of providing text in Spanish followed by a translation. A7, on the other hand, is an example of a business with an English name. While the description of the business (*tienda de servicio*) is in Spanish, the name *Short Stop* would probably be easily recognized by an English speaker as a convenience mart. A8 displays an interesting combination of lexical and syntactic variations. Due to similar spelling, cafeteria can be both an English and Spanish word. In Spanish, though, it is written *cafetería* with an accented "i." Omitting the accent might have been a creative way to integrate the two languages. Finally, *Wendy's* is the English possessive form, yet it is placed syntactically according to Spanish word order.

The next category reflects linguistic innovations similar to the spelling variation in A4. Here, orthographic variations include spelling and syntactic modifications.

B. Orthographic Variations

1. Tienda de Servicio Davi's
2. Lily's [large stained glass window in front of restaurant]
Restaurant-Bar Lilys [painted on façade above the stained glass window]

3. Three Boy's [name of kiosk]
4. CIGAR'S
5. Cookie's cream [flavor on menu]
6. Gent's Rest Rooms
7. Don' forget any items, please check everything before you leave.
8. Hamburguesas – Hod Dog
9. Restaurant Maria Bonita-Home Made Mexican Food Made Fresh Daily
10. We Do Not Allow Any Body Under 18 Years Old Inside the Bar
11. [ice cream parlor menu]
Coffe
Cheese cake
Choco malted Krunch
3 Mosketeers
- 12.. Wet T Tonite \$100.00 USD – fun and more
13. Quesadillas chees \$1.00
14. The Worlds finest Tequilla- El Tequila mas fino del mundo

The most ubiquitous feature of this category is the use of the apostrophe “s.” Examples B1 through B7 all show the systematic placement of the apostrophe whenever the word ends in “s.” Breaking it down further, B1, B2, and B3 all represent the possessive form. B1 is an example of the English apostrophe being used in a Spanish phrase. While Spanish businesses usually name the type of business followed by the name of the owner (e.g., *Tienda de Servicio Davis*), the owners placed an apostrophe in their last name to accommodate (or attract) the English speaking customer. In B2, the owners of the restaurant showed a combination of English and Spanish orthography. In their front window, they had a stained glass mosaic that said *Lily's*, exactly how one might see it here in the United States. Above, they had a giant hanging sign that read *Restaurant-Bar Lilys*. This shows English spelling without the possessive marking, but with Spanish word order. Since the name is *Lily's*, a native Spanish speaker would literally describe it by saying *Restaurante-Bar Lilys*. The sign, thus, represents a combination of English spelling and Spanish word order and verbal presentation (i.e., with no apostrophe). B3, B4, and B5 all show the inclusion of an apostrophe in the plural form of a word that does not indicate possession (although B3

might). B6 is an intuitive shorthand representation of *Gentlemen's*; though, like in B3, there seems to be an issue of plurality.

While B7 (*Don'*) shows the normal use of an apostrophe in the formation of a contraction, it demonstrates spelling that reflects an underlying phonological process in rapid spoken English (/t/ → [Ø]). B8 also displays this type of phonological transcription. The voiceless alveolar stop [t] does not exist in Spanish phonology; rather, it would be pronounced as a dental. The voicing of the final [t] in 'hot' has been assimilated to the initial [d] voiced dental stop to produce a voiced sound. Therefore, when sounding the word out, the most natural substitute is the Spanish voiced dental stop [d]. B6, B9, B10 (*cheese cake*), and B6 (*Rest Rooms*) are examples of splitting up a compound noun word into the two constituent parts. Creative spelling adaptations are prominent in B10 (*coffe, krunch, musketeers*) and in B13(*chees*).

The final two examples have an especially interesting cross-cultural significance. B12 is an interesting example (linguistically) due to the adopted American spelling of "tonight" as *tonite*. The fact that this spelling is used frequently (and successfully) in the United States, especially in the marketing realm, reifies these types of spelling strategies. This particular example could represent a strategy that was learned abroad in and brought back to Rocky Point by vendors who have lived or worked in the US. Finally, B14 contains another example of the variation in the use of the possessive apostrophe. It also presents an alternative spelling of "tequila" in English (*tequilla*).

The final category describes instances where the communicative variation resides in the meaning of the English used. These variations have been described as semantic due to the interesting application of vocabulary, syntax, and word order. In most instances, the message is presented entirely in English, yet negotiation of the meaning takes some concentration.

C. Semantic Variations

1. Yes is Here Parking
2. [hand written signs placed on a street vendor food cart, signs hand written]
Tacos Beef
Tacos Chicken

Tacos Beans


Quesadillas with Beef

Quesadillas Chicken \$2.00

Chicken Taco \$1.00

2 Burritos Beans \$1.00

Beef Tacos

3. No A.T.C. Ridden in Park
4. No ATV'S ridden in the Park
5. No Booze brought in or taking it out
6. Don't lean on the Glass
7. Month Flavor [special offer at an ice cream parlor]
8. Chocolate Notfat [flavor at ice cream parlor]
9. The Best Weight [advertising slogan]
10. Santiago's Ocean Services
office at 3 blocks on the right  [arrow included]
11. D.J. in Live
12. [painted on the façade of building with multiple shops]
Esética Unisex
Health Beauty
Corporal Treatment
Relaxing Massage
Reduction Treatment
13. Wet T Tonite \$100.00 USD – fun and more

C1 represents an example of a message that all English speakers would easily comprehend. The interesting aspect of this example is that the word order neither reflects English nor Spanish. Similarly, C2 is an example of creative word order. While most of the text is in English with a Spanish word order, three of the eight examples are written in English word order. Furthermore, *tacos beans* and *burritos beans* exhibit the adjective-noun agreement rule in Spanish syntax morphology. In C3 and C4 we see variation in the name for recreational vehicles (*A.T.C.*- all terrain cycle versus *ATV's*- all terrain vehicles). More intriguing is the use of the past participle *ridden*. Reflecting on similar signs that are posted in the United States, the past participle would not be used; (if included) the verb would usually be used in the present participle. C5 affirms the tension between the use of the present and the past participle.

While neither is inherently incorrect, it is intriguing that they are used simultaneously.

C6 reveals an interesting point concerning contractions. While “Do not lean on the glass” would seem a reasonable request here in the United States, the use of *Don’t* in C6 communicates a more direct or harsh command, almost like a scolding. In spoken English, though, the contraction is more common. Furthermore, this strategy makes more sense when it is considered that contractions in Spanish are obligatory and not optional.

Aside from the previous syntactic variations that affect meaning, the rest of the examples show interesting uses of vocabulary. Effectively conveying the message, C7 displays the two most important concepts and omits the functional words. C8, C9, and C10 exemplify the power of using synonyms. C8 might be more easily understood using *non* versus *not*, C9 *most* versus *best*, and C10 *activities* versus *services*. Regardless, the synonyms adopted here still express the underlying intended meaning (i.e., both *most* and *best* are adjectives that connote *greatest*, and both *activities* and *services* are nouns that include a notion of *enterprise*).

C10 and C11 contain interesting applications of prepositions. In both cases, it seems to be an issue of L1 transfer. While C11 shows direct transfer from the Spanish phrase *DJ en vivo*, the use of the preposition “at” in C10 is a little more complicated. Examining the Spanish version *La oficina está a tres cuerdas a la derecha* [the office is three blocks away on the right], it is easy to see the mandatory preposition “a” before the adverbial phrase of distance and location. Interestingly, though, the preposition “at” in Spanish is “en” when discussing the location of something. This becomes even more interesting when you consider that the preposition “en” also means “in” and “on.” The multiple meanings of “en” usually prove to be very problematic for Spanish speakers learning English; such that it can be very hard to grasp the inherent meaning of each. The “a” in *Está a* is an idiomatic use of the preposition and does not directly translate into English. Even though it does not directly translate, the Spanish “a” closely conveys a notion of “at.” By creatively transferring this L1 expression, the author of the sign demonstrates a solid understanding of the underlying meaning of the English preposition “at.”

The final two samples offer the reader space for some interpretive resourcefulness. C12 appeared on the façade of a building that was

housing a variety of tourist shops. The name of the business (*Esética Unisex*) was painted in such a way that it blended in with the building, leaving *Corporal Treatment* as the most visually prominent text. As in Spanish, *corporal* equates to “bodily” in English; yet, it is more commonly associated with “corporal punishment” in English. Below *Corporal Treatment*, *Reduction Treatment* and *Relaxing Massage* were highlighted as specializations of the business. While *Relaxing Massage* is easily understood, *Reduction Treatment* leaves a lot up to the imagination (if the store had not been closed, I would have inquired about the meaning of this specific service). It would be interesting to ask prospective customers what they understand the meaning of these advertisements to be. Also, it would have been useful to ask people if they would (or would not) consider purchasing services in this store based on what they understood from the signage.

Finally, C13 exemplifies the complexity involved in cross-cultural translation. While this example has been cross listed (B12) due to its creative use of *Tonite*, here it will be analyzed for the content of the message. At first glance, *Wet T Tonite \$100.00 USD – fun and more* seems to be an innocuous attempt to lure American spring-breakers to a “wet t-shirt contest.” This economic strategy would only seem natural in an environment inundated with hyper-masculine college students. The problem is that the sign promises “fun and more.” What young, sexually motivated college students consider “more” often crosses the boundary of what is considered acceptable in Mexico, often resulting in inopportune acts of belligerence. The use of *\$100.00 USD* can also be scrutinized; does it represent prize money or a ticket for admission?

Aside from this type of communicative ambiguity, the overall use of English in written discourse can be characterized as very effective. Breaking from a prescriptive view of language use, the lexical, orthographic, and semantic variations that have been discussed here display a strong control of English. Considering the role that social interaction plays in the acquisition of a language, it is évident that this community has learned a great deal from both the tourists as well as from each other. Since written text is visually accessible, individuals in Rocky Point are constantly exposed to (and forced to interact with) these types of literacy patterns. The result has been a high level of social biliteracy. The following section delves into the main characteristics of spoken English in this bilingual context.

ORAL DISCOURSE

The pragmatic notion of “oral discourse” often encompasses all communicative strategies that are applied in verbal interactions (Johnstone 2002). Paralinguistic strategies (i.e., body language) and the use of physical props are often used to facilitate communication in contexts where the speakers are at different levels. While these important skills were frequently demonstrated and warrant mention, this discussion will primarily concentrate on the characteristics of spoken language. Of the 18 consultants who participated in the interviews, only three transcriptions have been selected for analysis. The three interviews presented here were selected due to the representative nature of the linguistic characteristics demonstrated by the speakers. I suggest that these three speakers produced clear examples of the variety range of English frequently encountered in Rocky Point. The transcriptions provided include the turn numbers for each excerpt. Furthermore, the following transcription conventions have been applied:

Conventions

E:	- Eric (principal investigator)
B:	- Bianca (research assistant)
C:	- consultant
.....	- pause
upper case	- emphasis/volume
italics	- Spanish
[brackets]	- Spanish translation
(parentheses)	- interpretative narration
?	- rise in intonation, interrogative utterance
‘apostrophe’	- orthographic contraction

The first conversation took place with a seafood vendor located in the main marketplace. The conversation occurred in his small open-air kiosk. He was approximately thirty to forty-years-old. As we walked by, he caught our attention by calling out to us, waving for us to come in his shop, and immediately displaying his products to us.

TRANSCRIPTION 1: SEAFOOD VENDOR (ACTUAL TRANSCRIPTION DATA LINES 2-50)

- 1 C: (unintelligible) over here
 2 E: what is it?
 3 C: (unintelligible) shrimp shrimps
 4 E: are they fresh?
 5 C: (unintelligible speech while opening up a cooler full of shrimp)
 6 B: oh my God

Below, the consultant shows a wide range of vocabulary concerning his specific economic context (seafood products and currency). Additionally, his appropriate use of “slang” (e.g., got, bucks) fits the context. In the following excerpt, he displays a strong command of English word order:

- 7 C: this is my shrimps...we got jumbo for six dollar a pound
 8 E: yeah
 9 C: i got large mediums for five
 10 E: uh huh
 11 C: and i got these ones...look at the sizes
 12 E: those are pretty big
 13 C: the lobster eight bucks a pound lobster

The following utterances show that he easily comprehends and produces questions. Note his consistent use of the contraction in the present progressive structure in lines 15 and 17, and in the question in line 19.

- 14 E: did you uh did you catch these?
 15 C: i i i i'm buy from a fisherman
 16 E: oh you buy from the fisherman
 17 C: i'm buy from the fisherman
 18 E: okay
 19 C: you don't want any now?

Overall, his communicative skills were very effective. It was not until we entered into an esoteric conversation that (mutual) comprehension became more difficult.

- 20 E: what do you got right there? (pointing to a calendar
displaying a woman in a
21 bikini on the wall)
22 C: oh we got a (unintelligible- sounds like "live") ones tonight
(laughing)
23 E: what is that? is there a party?
24 C: oh *es* uh ca ca-calendar...
25 C: (hard to decipher pronunciation for following) it's uh
calendar for uh look at
26 the stores ca-can see the signs tecatit (*tecate* pronounced
strangely or with an
27 American English accent)
28 E: *tecate*? (brand of beer)

Since I was probably one of the first person tourists to ask him (in English) about his sexually provocative calendar, negotiating this conversation proved to be somewhat difficult. Obviously, he was trying to access a set of vocabulary words (lines 22 and 25) that are not usually used in his normal touristic-English register. Also, in line 24 he uses Spanish for the first time, and in line 26 he attempts to pronounce the Spanish word *Tecate* (a Mexican brand of beer) with an American English accent. Yet, even though we had entered into this unique conversation, he was able to successfully convey his intentions.

The second conversation took place with a beach vendor selling blankets. In this sample, the consultant demonstrates a strong ability to comprehend spoken English. While he appeared to be rather confident in comfortable speaking English, he relied heavily on Spanish in his spoken discourse. It is not until line 9 that he produces a significant English response.

**TRANSCRIPTION 2: BEACH VENDOR (ACTUAL TRANSCRIPTION DATA
LINES 14-50)**

- 1 C: oh aqui...mucho viento
[Oh, here...a lot of wind]

- 2 E: yeah it's
 3 C: no bueno
 [no good]
 4 E: too much
 5 C: no bueno
 [no good]
 6 E: no...not at all
 7 C: yeah
 8 E: where um where do these come from?
 9 C: from mexico city

Interestingly, his spoken output consists of a “codemixing” strategy (Baker 2000: 32). Below, he interjects isolated Spanish words (line 11) in English utterances, as well as isolated English words (line 17) within Spanish utterances.

- 10 E: is it smaller?
 11 C: no same size *pero* different qualy (quality)
 [but]
 12 E: different quality?
 13 C: uh huh
 14 E: what what do you mean?
 15 C: look at the design is more
 16 E: oh okay I get it
 17 C: *si* you *comprende*?
 [yes] [understand]
 18 E: I got it I got it
 19 C: *comprende comprende...si amigo*
 [you understand you understand...yes friend]

Was he cognizant of his codemixing? It could be suggested that he was not aware of this mixing since he used common (one syllable) words that occur in the same word order position in both languages. Regardless, this codemixing strategy allowed him to accomplish his communicative intentions without feeling appearing inhibited or slow.

The third conversation occurred on the main beach in Rocky Point, next to the luxury hotel *Plaza Las Glorias*. Since the tourists staying this hotel are usually financially well off, it is a popular location for the mobile beach vendors to congregate. The current consultant approached

us soliciting sunset boat cruises. He was approximately forty to fifty-years-old and professionally dressed. The participant's well honed English skills reflected the five years that he spent in Miami. He showed good comprehension and produced lengthy uninterrupted utterances. His use of the present tense (line 1) and future tense (lines 3-4) are near native-like.

TRANSCRIPTION 3: CRUISE VENDOR (ACTUAL TRANSCRIPTION DATA LINES 1-64)

- 1 C: (unintelligible) here they take you by *las conchas* residential
area in that area
- 2 E: yeah
- 3 C: they bring you back they will they will continue can you see
that thing over
- 4 there

His past tense construction in line 55 demonstrates a point of difficulty; however, he still produced the past tense copula "was" to mark a temporal shift.

- 55 C: I was live in miami florida for five years

He even used an English accent when he said 'Miami' (line 55). Furthermore, while speaking English, there is only one occurrence of codemixing (line 5).

- 5 E: so you get food and drinks
- 6 C: uh-huh *pero* a price for the dinner is not (unintelligible) is
forty-five you want
[but]
- 7 with the dinner

He was so consistent with his application of an English speaking register that he did not notice when I switched into a Spanish register. As listed below, between turns 8 and 33, I addressed him primarily in Spanish; in turn 36, he asked me if I knew how to speak Spanish.

- 8 E: that's good that's good y podemos regatear un poquito...
veinticinco es muy
[and can we bargain a little...25 is very]
- 9 duro no?
- 10 C: no because uh...i give you in twenty i don't get commission i
working on
- 11 commission
- 12 E: y cuanto sacas tu del veinticinco?
[and how much do you get out of the 25]
- 13 C: in the twenty five i get five dollars for commission
- 14 E: oh interesante...okay...umm all right...no se no se
[interesting] [I don't know I don't know]
- 15 C: think about it
- 16 E: okay
- 17 C: you change your mind you want to take her uh you don't
have nothing to do
- 18 before five...five you come it's tough to get back
- 19 E: yeah
- 20 C: by six o'clock
- 21 E: sale todos los dias...
[it goes out every day]
- 22 C: a las cinco de la tarde
[at five in the afternoon]
- 23 E: a las cinco de la tarde y...cuantas personas van?
[at five in the afternoon and how many people go]
- 24 C: uh well you know there is a bunch for the people today
- 25 E: yeah
- 26 C: uh the people like you many of them
- 27 E: all right...y donde aprendiste ingles?
[and where did you learn English]
- 28 C: I was live in miami florida for five years
- 30 C: (unintelligible)
- 31 E: hablas super bien
- 32 C: do you understand me?
- 33 E/B: oh yeah
- 34 C: do you speak uh spanish too? can you speak spanish?
- 35 E: uh yeah
- 36 C: hablas español?

[do you speak Spanish?]

37 E: well...si
[yes]

Many of the vendors in Rocky Point rely on codemixing and codeswitching to compensate for the difficult parts of an utterance. This specific vendor exemplifies an individual who is operating within a diglossic cognitive framework. The phenomenon of diglossia occurs in a sociolinguistic context that includes the use of two (or more) languages in the same community for distinct purposes (Baker 2000). In his description of diglossia, Gumperz (1982) emphasizes that the use of separate codes depends on the linguistic *situation* (versus codeswitching or codemixing within the same situation). Here, the choice of language is determined by a touristic situation. Gumperz (1982) also states that while the individual languages do not normally overlap, different languages can be mixed within the same location as the context shifts.

In the present example, the vendor stated that he had learned English while living in Miami. He also commented later in our conversation that his job in Miami included chartering fishing trips for tourists. Due to his tourism-based occupation in the U.S., it could be assumed that he developed his English language skills in a diglossic community where English was applied in the tourist realm. While in Miami, he probably had other opportunities to use English (aside from just work), in Rocky Point, his interaction with English speakers is primarily limited to tourists. Thus, participating in this very familiar communicative situation, he did not even realize that I had been speaking Spanish. It is obvious that he had a distinct English register for dealing with American tourists. When I began speaking Spanish, I was not surprised that he continued using English; this is very common for vendors in Rocky Point. While I did not find it odd that he insisted on speaking English, it caught me off guard when he was not aware that I had been addressing him in Spanish for a significant amount of time.

The variety of linguistic skills demonstrated by these individuals adequately characterizes the variety of spoken English that is spoken in prevalent throughout Rocky Point. While there are many individuals in Rocky Point who are not proficient in spoken English, there are many people who speak it with native-like fluency. The objective of this investigation was to outline the most common linguistic attributes of

those individuals whose occupations place them in contexts that are facilitated by the use of English. This contextual exposure to authentic language use, combined with a high level of intrinsic motivation to learn English, provides an optimal environment for understanding the sociocognitive features of second language acquisition.

DISCUSSION

Unlike other border towns in closer proximity to the U.S., most of the local population in Rocky Point is primarily exposed to English through interactions with the tourists (i.e., versus via the media and border related activities). Therefore, the language (acquisition) characteristics that abound in this cultural space have taken on specific characteristics, almost to the extent of pidginization. The majority of the individuals who use this tourist-based language have not received any formal (linguistic) training in English. Their language development is the product of self-motivation and economic necessity. While this version of English might seem humorous or strange to American visitors in Rocky Point, it exemplifies communicative competence. Instead of being marked for mistakes, Rocky Point English should be looked at as an important social and vocational skill. The fact that real language is successfully used to accomplish a variety of speech acts proves that grammaticality is not a valid means of judging a dialect (as it is in a prescriptive view of language and literacy).

The sheer quantity of English text in Rocky Point warrants the claim that a large portion of the community is biliterate. In this discussion, I have demonstrated the types of linguistic patterns (both written and spoken) that tend to emerge due to the production and reproduction of tourist-based language. It seems intuitive that if my neighbor's sign has helped her or him to attract more business, I would also utilize something similar to bolster my productivity. Whether it is a written sign or a useful phrase, strategies that facilitate relationships will be replicated. This notion is supported by Gumperz (1982: 42):

Whenever networks of relationships reflect long term, interpersonal cooperation in the performance of regular tasks and the pursuit of shared goals, they favor the creation of behavioral routines and communicative conventions that become conventionally associated with and serve to mark component activities.

Even vendors in Rocky Point who do not rely on English for communication with customers display a variety of multilingual and multicultural literacy skills. Maddox's (1997) work on peasant marketplace activities in Bangladesh illustrates how economic literacy (e.g., the application of numeracy skills and record maintenance) increases access to customers and produces a specialized vocabulary. This type of cross-cultural numerical literacy pervades the marketplaces in Rocky Point in the form of price lists, currency conversion tables, menus, receipts, telephone numbers, calendars, and telling time.

Recalling Street's ideological model of literacy, it is first necessary to situate Rocky Point's language use within a socioeconomic context. The dependency of local merchants on the tourism industry automatically establishes a social power structure. American dollars have directly shaped the way this community is economically and socially organized. Even inhabitants who do not see themselves as tied to the tourism business still depend on those who are for economic circulation. This financial dependency has molded the linguistic environment that pervades Rocky Point and has established a sense of acceptance of English. By demonstrating the characteristics and patterns of English use and acquisition in Rocky Point, this project substantiates the presence of a prominent language policy that continues to shape patterns of communication within the community. While the spread of English is not the result of an "official" language policy implemented by governmental bodies, its prominence illustrates an underlying social policy that reflects popular attitudes.

Discussing the use of English in Rocky Point in terms of a language policy helps to uncover larger power structures that continue to develop throughout the US-Mexico border region. One of the most critical aspects of discussing language policies is addressing the tension between viewing language policy as an "officially" established/dictated set of rules and versus the actual ways in which people use language (i.e., contextualized practices) (Sutton and Levinson 2001). Primarily, contextualized social interactions should be seen as products of individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes generated by history (Bourdieu 1977). Drawing from Bourdieu, Sutton and Levinson (2001: 1) specify language policy as "an ongoing process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts." Policy, in this sense, is located

outside of official documents and should be understood as the actual practices driven by socially acceptable attitudes.

While many local vendors have attained a highly competent level of English, their income barely allows them to subsist in this impoverished corner of Mexico. Within this linguistically rich environment, an especially poignant trend in English signage can be found. While learning English for some is a matter of constant exposure and the opportunity for frequent practice, for others, the acquisition of English has emerged as an indispensable skill for earning a living. Thus, English can be seen as a type of economic, social, and cultural capital. Calhoun et. al (2002) demonstrate that *economic* capital can be seen as the amount of material property or wealth that a person has; *social* capital is seen as the types of personal connections/networks that open access to various resources; and, *cultural* capital is determined by a person's knowledge in socially important areas, such that a level of prestige is assigned to that individual.

In Bourdieu's (1991, 2001) discussion of the *linguistic marketplace*, language is a valued good in that it determines the allotment of material goods. Here, it is obvious how language spans the three different types of capital. Besides its inherent value as cultural capital (i.e. identity), as a commodity used to accumulate more commodities, it can be viewed as economic capital. Furthermore, the type of language one uses connects her/him to networks of other speakers of that language (social capital), thereby increasing opportunities for economic gain. The linguistic market, described by Larrivee (2003), "is the glove hiding a large number of individual decisions, which reflect more or less arbitrary individual interests and are more difficult to challenge than the visible hand of the legislator." Looking at the circumstances and nature of the goods that intensify disputes over language policies can shed light on political motivations and ethnocentric views of minority groups (Schmidt 2000; Larrivee 2003). In this light, material interests become inextricable from the politics of identity when the distribution of material goods is linked with group identities (Schmidt 2000; Vuolab 2000; Bourdieu 2001).

In his work with language and power structures, Pennycook (1994: 32) asserts that "to engage in the social practice of language use is always an act situated within some discourse." Considering the power structures inherent in any type of social discourse, the prevalence of English (in both written and oral forms) draws attention to the economic,

political, and cultural relationships between the U.S. and Mexico. Giant billboards tower high above the collage of local signs competing to solicit patronage from visiting tourists. The specific sign that I photographed was one of many giant brilliantly painted billboards displaying luxurious condominiums for sale. The pristine beach sunset depiction was surrounded with elegantly printed English instructions for purchasing the condos. In Meethan's (2001: 168) depiction of "symbolic economy of space," he describes tourism as a force that consumes local spaces and shapes cross-cultural relationships. The enormous condominiums depicted in the billboards serve as a constant reminder to the local population that their space is being consumed and sold to wealthy outsiders. Located high above the Spanish-speaking community below, these symbolic images subordinate the locals by placing the English-speaking consumer in a position of status and wealth. In this light, literacy skills can also act as a catalyst for symbolic demoralization.

This project originated with the impetus to highlight patterns of language use in a touristic context. From a language-acquisition perspective, the Rocky Point context demonstrates the power of communicative motivation within a social interaction context. It quickly became evident that the patterns of communication were part of a larger social process. Noting the variations in written texts offers insight into the development of literacy and language acquisition. In the case of Rocky Point, any language forms that can be used for economic gain are utilized without preoccupation for prescriptive accuracy. Readdressing my original questions, I hope that I have made it clear as to how, where, and why English is manifested in the tourist community of Rocky Point, Mexico. Additionally, I have addressed the issue of how embedded cultural artifacts (signs) contribute to the perception of cross-cultural interactions and symbolic value. While this project has initiated an answer to Chambers (2000) call for an investigation into the social and cultural effects of the cross-lingual environments that tourism creates, further work needs to be done in other communities to establish a more global pattern of these phenomena.

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