



VERB MORPHOLOGY MIXING IN JAPAÑOL

Aja Swalberg (Tanya Flores)

Department of Languages and Literature

This project focuses on Japanese/Spanish innovative verb morphology mixing in Japanese immigrants to Spain. Two examples of the mixing are given at the bottom.

The objective of this study is to find the rules that speakers follow when forming the mixed Japanese/Spanish verbs. One aspect that will be evaluated is whether it is more common or acceptable to have the verb stem be Japanese with a Spanish ending, or Spanish with Japanese ending (borrowing vs interference). Use of the forms will also be evaluated based on age and gender.

The data will come from a corpus collected from about 10 Japanese-Spanish bilingual speakers living in Valencia, Spain. After compiling the initial data from the corpus, the way the speakers form mixed verbs will be analyzed, and if more forms are needed to appropriately analyze the data, speakers will be contacted through video call or email to elicit more forms. The hypothesis will be tested using an electronic survey to test what the speakers consider acceptable verb morphology mixing.

This research is significant because, “Linguistic literature on Spanish acquisition by native speakers of an Asian language is extremely limited due to limited numbers of possible participants” (Clements 2009).

It is also significant because code-switching doesn’t normally happen word-internally (Poplack, 1980: 586). I suspect that the reason the Japanese-Spanish bilinguals are able to do this is because of similar morpheme boundaries and phonological systems in the two languages. The mixed morphemes are expected to be those that “fit well typologically with corresponding features in the recipient language” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1991: 54).

- (1) *come-mashou*
eat-VOL
‘Let’s eat.’
Spanish verb root + Japanese verb ending
- (2) *tabe-t-iendo*
eat-E-PROG
‘Eating’
Japanese verb root + Spanish verb ending

Clements, J.C. (2009). Chinese Immigrant Spanish. *The linguistic legacy of Spanish and Portuguese: colonial expansion and language change*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. 124-157.

Poplack, Shana. (1980). Sometimes I’ll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en español: toward a typology of code-switching. *Linguistics*, 18 (7-8), 581-618.

Thomason, S. and Kaufman, T. (1991). *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. 35-64, 110-146.

