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A Proud Corazón: Spanglish in History, Language and Representation

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Riassunto

In questa tesi si andrà ad esaminare il fenomeno dello Spanglish, una nuova lingua ibrida, originata dall'incontro tra Spagnolo e Inglese, usata principalmente negli Stati Uniti d'America. Per fare questo, nel primo capitolo sarà necessario ripercorrere alcune tappe fondamentali nella storia degli Stati Uniti, per quanto riguarda lo sviluppo linguistico, a partire dalle prime colonie. Si parlerà quindi del Melting Pot, il fenomeno che prevedeva la completa assimilazione dei migranti arrivati negli Stati Uniti, comportando così la perdita della loro cultura e lingua, per poi arrivare al Quilt, metafora usata per indicare un tipo di società in cui persone provenienti da culture diverse convivono per dare vita a qualcosa di nuovo. Sarà importante anche parlare di come la lingua spesso viene associata a sentimenti di identità nazionale e patriottismo, motivo per cui alcuni movimenti politici come English-Only Movement si propongono come obiettivo di rendere l'inglese la lingua ufficiale degli Stati Uniti.

Nel capitolo successivo, invece, si andranno a ricercare i motivi per cui al giorno d'oggi la popolazione ispanica è tra le più numerose negli Stati Uniti. Parlerò quindi dei vari flussi migratori dal Messico e dal Porto Rico e delle motivazioni per cui sono cominciati, come la guerra messico-statunitense e il programma 'bracero' per il Messico o la legge Jones-Shafroth per il Porto Rico. Si arriverà quindi a spiegare come queste popolazioni siano state quasi costrette ad imparare l'inglese, ma allo stesso tempo mantenevano il desiderio di conservare le proprie radici e ricordare la propria patria, e come questo abbia favorito lo sviluppo dello Spanglish. Ci sarà quindi un'analisi linguistica dello Spanglish e vedremo come alcuni linguisti prominenti abbiano opinioni contrastanti su di esso.

Nel terzo e ultimo capitolo si vedrà come la cultura e le popolazioni ispaniche siano state rappresentate nei media, principalmente cinema e televisione, a partire dal ventesimo secolo, con particolare attenzione agli stereotipi e vedremo anche qualche esempio di Spanglish usato nell'industria pubblicitaria. Infine, ci saranno delle considerazioni su alcuni personaggi provenienti da tre delle serie TV più popolari di questi tempi e su tre film diretti da Ispanici e riguardanti dei temi strettamente legati alla vita degli Ispanici negli Stati Uniti.

Synopsis

In this thesis I am going to analyze the phenomenon of Spanglish, a newborn hybrid language, originated from the encounter of English and Spanish and mainly spoken in the United States of America. In order to do this, in the first chapter it will be necessary to retrace some fundamental stages in the history of the US that are crucial for its linguistic development, starting from the early colonies. I will speak about the Melting Pot, the phenomenon that intended all the immigrants that reached the US to be completely assimilated, resulting in them losing their cultural heritage and language; and about the Quilt, a metaphor used to determine a kind of society where people coming from different cultures coexist, in order to create something new. It will also be important to talk about how language is usually associated to national identity and patriotic feelings, which is why several political movements, such as English-Only, aim at establishing English as the only spoken language in the US.

In the following chapter, I am going to examine the reasons why today Hispanics form one of the largest populations in the US. I will speak about the various mass migrations from Mexico and Puerto Rico and the reasons why they started, such as the Mexican-American war and the 'bracero' program for Mexico or the Jones-Shafroth act for Puerto Rico. I will then get to explain

how these populations have been forced to learn English, but at the same time kept the will to preserve their roots and to remember their homeland, and how this favored the development of Spanglish. A linguistic analysis of Spanglish will follow, together with the conflicting opinions that important linguists have expressed about Spanglish.

In the third and last chapter, there will be considerations about how the culture and the Hispanic population have been represented in the media, mainly in cinema and television, starting from the twentieth century with particular focus on the stereotypes used, and I will also show some examples of how Spanglish is used in the advertising industry. Finally, I will consider several characters from three of the most popular TV series today, and three movies directed by Hispanics regarding some important themes about the life of Hispanics in the US.

Introduction

When speaking about Language in the United States, our mind immediately goes to English, but things are not that simple. Like in every other country, in the United States one can find countless accents and varieties of English, different from the one we, as Europeans, usually hear on TV or on the Internet, but also smaller communities that speak completely different languages, mainly Spanish and Chinese. I am going to analyze the history of the USA along with the origins and the development of its national language, English, with a particular focus on “Spanglish”: a newborn, code-switching hybrid language, originated from the contact between two languages, English and Spanish, and their Speakers’ different cultures, respectively Anglo-American on one side and Hispanic-American on the other (comprising Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and many other languages and cultures, the latter is more multifaceted than one might suspect). I’m also going to talk about a number of stances embodied by American politicians, writers, linguists and prominent people, concerning language and Spanglish, which is a very debated topic for its hybrid nature and its political implications. Spanglish is in fact the subject of criticism and attacks from both main sides of the linguistic debate in America: the ones who want English as the official language, and those who push to maintain the cultural heritage of minorities alive. Spanglish is the blend, the union of Spanish and English, looking to the future and actively spoken and understood by bilinguals. Fern Johnson, expert in the study of language and culture in the US, adds to this that the dominant part of Spanglish must be Spanish, both for language and culture. Apart from the grammatical aspects, the core of Spanglish lies in its hybrid nature (Johnson in Antonelli, Scacchi, Scannavini 2005, 202-203). Spanish got increasingly common in the US, especially in states and

cities with a high density of Spanish-speaking people: in the Southwest, for example, there is a vibrant movement of educators encouraging bilingual education, in large sections of the community Spanish is the preferred language in daily life, many road signs are written both in Spanish and English. Such contaminations also affect pop culture, like music, cinema, TV and advertisement, especially interesting to analyze, as they hold many layers of Hispanic culture in the US. I will focus particularly on movies and TV series that were distributed worldwide, examining how Spanglish is handled, what its function is, and what it tells us about the personality and the background of the characters who use it, which can help us understand the position of *Latinos* in the US. When a piece of media is distributed worldwide, it is crucial that everyone can enjoy and understand it, overcoming the inevitable cultural and linguistic barrier. In many countries, this is often made possible through dubbing, which is much more than simple translation and voice-over of the work, but also a form of cultural adaptation that makes people able to understand the many layers intended for the viewer to be grasped. As an Italian, I will focus on my country's case and the work on adaptation which is done in Italy, and I will try to analyze how it is possible to send the same implicit messages, allusions and cultural references inherent in Spanglish without the possibility to use it, as there is not a similar phenomenon happening in Italy, and assuming that many Italians don't even know about the cultural and linguistic amalgamation happening in the US.

CHAPTER 1. LANGUAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

1.1 Language at the Beginning

The Federal Republic of the United States of America is a relatively young country, born the 4th of July in 1776 thanks to the Declaration of Independence. The States of the newborn country were the 13 former colonies of the British Empire. Apart from English, in the newborn America there were at least eight European languages, including German, Dutch, Swedish, French, Polish, Spanish and Portuguese, brought by the colonizers which, as time went on, originated different dialects, creole and pidgin varieties; as America started exporting enslaved people from Africa in the seventeenth century, also many African languages were added to the mix.

The first census of the US in 1790 counted almost 4 million people: 3 million were white Europeans, 700,000 were enslaved people of African descent and 60,000 were the formerly enslaved. However, the census did not consider the 150,000 Native Americans of that time. Of the 3 million white people, one fourth was not Anglo Saxon and one fifth didn't speak English. (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 29). Yet, Thomas Jefferson was already dreaming about a nation spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, whose population would be united by the same language. (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 3).

There were concerns regarding the possibility that American English could 'lose itself' in dialects. In linguistics, dialect is a term which linguists use primarily to talk about language differences over geographic space. Most linguists, however, prefer to use the term regional variety, as the word dialect is most often associated with something less developed, capable or worthy, and hence, always subordinate to a "real" language (Lippi-Green 1997, 53). These concerns came from the

fact that the Colonies were far from the English court and could come in contact with foreign languages, abandoning the 'purity' of the 'King's English', which is why, in 1668, bishop and philosopher John Wilkins tried to invent a new "philosophical language", with the goal of stopping the proliferating 'corruption' of English in the American colonies, but also aiming at taking the place of what Latin used to be centuries earlier: a global language that could connect many different cultures. It is in fact true that until the XVIII century, the wide range of different languages in the world was believed to be a divine punishment. On the other hand, the Scottish philosopher David Hume argued that the distance from the homeland itself was the reason why American English could preserve the Elizabethan purity even better: it wouldn't have gone through the decay which every historic language goes through. (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 76)

While the Independence from the British Empire was achieved in 1776, Americans reached linguistic independence way before: we have a testimony from a British traveler in 1770, saying that, even though the population of the colonies consisted of people coming from all over Britain and Ireland but also Europe in general, one would naturally think that the language born out of such a place would result in a confusing miscellany, but he was surprised to notice that their language was quite uniform in every colony he visited (Milroy 2000, 60).

American colonies' population was far from being described as made of immigrants and colonists: even before the Declaration of Independence there had been a considerable growth of people born and raised in the colonies, which grew up using a variety of English which had developed through the generations and distanced itself from British English. Paul Longmore witnessed the first peculiarity of American English: for example, they pronounced "cover as *kivver*, engine as *ingine*, yesterday and *yisterday*, yes as *yis* and Sarah as *Sary*". In England, this kind of language

would have indicated a low social status, in the colonies, instead, was considered standard and everyone used this “unconventional” pronunciations (Longmore 2007, 531).

1.2 Melting Pot, Salad Bowl and Quilt

The history of the USA has seen many cultures intertwine over time, as well as languages: not only because of immigration and colonization, even English speaking communities gave birth to different groups through various cultural processes, a perfect example is African American Vernacular English (AAVE), the English variety spoken mainly by African Americans in the United States.

As these cultures met and converged in the country, different processes took place. At the beginning of the XX century, Israel Zangwill wrote a play called “The Melting Pot” in which he tells the story of a Jewish immigrant who moves to America to escape persecutions, and there he writes a symphony in which he expresses his hopes for a world where all ethnic conflicts have disappeared.

From this very play, the term “melting pot” has started to be a metaphor to explain the way America deals with immigrants or non-English Speakers in general. The metaphor is quite straightforward: whoever goes inside the melting pot undergoes a series of changes that make them come out as an American and leave behind their cultural heritage. This process was intended

to be one-sided and intentional, since everyone is supposed to crave for an American identity. In this view, cultural differences and the rejection of American exceptionalism are seen as a threat for the national togetherness. (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 24)

One of the main supporters of this view was President Theodore Roosevelt at the beginning of the XX century, who believed that linguistic assimilation was the only way to prevent a country from becoming a chaotic linguistic mess. He insisted that in order to be a real American citizen, you had to forget everything about your homeland, from the language to the culture. This meant that if you didn't speak English, you couldn't be a perfect American citizen and therefore were destined to have a low social status (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 3). On September 5, 1917, he gave out for publication an address entitled "Children of the Crucible.", where he wrote:

We are Americans and nothing else. We are the true children of the crucible. This new nation. It is a melting pot of the old world nationalities that come hither. The new type is different from all other types. [...] All the children of the crucible must be loyal to the American tradition as established by the men of Washington's day, as preserver by the men of Lincoln's day. Otherwise, they are not true Americans.

In the 1970s, the nationalistic view of the Melting Pot began to be questioned by groups of people belonging to communities that didn't want to be assimilated completely by the US lifestyle and wanted to maintain their cultural heritage alive, such as Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanos and other minorities, who claimed that in their case, as stated by civil rights activist Malcolm X, Plymouth Rock landed on them, not the other way around, pointing out at the fact that the Melting Pot is a process of cultural colonization and American conventionalism. This is what pushed historian Carl N. Degler to describe the situation of the US, highlighting the uniqueness and peculiarity of every minority, with a new metaphor: the "Salad Bowl". It illustrates

effectively how different and separate ingredients bring something new to life, a whole made out by many diverse pieces (Degler in Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 64).

In 1984, Jesse Jackson, the second African American to mount a national campaign for president and then US senator for the District of Columbia from 1991 to 1997, came up with a new metaphor during his campaign, introduced in one of his speeches for 'The Rainbow Coalition', an international human and civil rights organization founded by him: the Quilt (Antonelli, Scacchi, Scannavini 2005, 65). During his speech, he describes how America is not a white blanket, but a "Quilt", a patchwork of «many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, all woven and held together by a common thread. The white, the Hispanic, the black, the Arab, the Jew, the woman, the native American, the small farmer, the businessperson, the environmentalist, the peace activist, the young, the old, the lesbian, the gay, and the disabled make up the American Quilt» (Jackson 1984)

1.3 Standard American English

The *Columbia Guide to Standard American English* defines Standard American English as linguistic good manners, which, when misused, leads to misunderstanding, disapproval and even outright rejection (Wilson 1993, I-XV). Same goes for other definitions, listed by American writer and linguist Rosina Lippi-Green, such as that of H.W. Fowler's "Pocket Fowler's Modern English Usage", according to which, Standard American English

has been variously defined and heavily politicized, but essentially it is the form of English that is most widely accepted and understood in an English-speaking country and tends to be based on the speech of educated people of a particular area. It is used in newspapers and broadcasting and is the form normally taught to learners of English. (Fowler in Lippi-Green 1997, 57)

Lippi-Green also gives the definition from the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary:

Standard American English: the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood (Lippi-Green 1997, 57).

These definitions have in common the assumption that spoken and written language are equal, both in terms of how they are used and how they should be used; they make room for regional differences but not for social ones, and in fact, it is quite definite about the social construction of the hypothetical standard: it is the language of the educated, leaving unstated, however, what is meant by "educated" and not exploring the implications anywhere else in the dictionary (Lippi-Green 1997, 57). But still, the very existence of a standard version of English is considered to be a hypothetical construct by many linguists nowadays, something purely idealistic and abstract.

Since English has so many varieties and dialects, it is hard to appoint a standard version. In other countries, the standard language is determined by certain institutions, such as l'Académie Française in France and the Real Academia Española in Spain. These Language Academies are responsible for determining what forms are considered acceptable for the normative standard and which new words or constructs deserve to be included in the official vocabulary, so that there are no doubts when one wonders about the official standard language. In the United States there is no

such institution, even if there have been various failed attempts to establish this type of agency (Heath in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 9). Nevertheless, a degree of language standardization is inevitable; in this case, we can attribute it to some ways of behaving of certain individuals that are considered normative to the society: the formal standard is defined by authorities such as grammar books and dictionaries and is mainly written or used in spoken formal occasions, it is very resistant to changes and very strict regarding its forms. Informal language, on the other hand, is more difficult to define, since it doesn't appeal to written rules, but is more natural and changes a lot depending on many geographic, cultural and social parameters (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 8-9).

1.4 Language as National Identity and Political Instrument

National Identity denotes a set of shared beliefs, behaviors, and emotional ties that bind individuals together as a nation. It does not necessarily concern the citizen of a given country, as one can have a certain national identity without officially having citizenship. According to the political scientist Benedict Anderson, a nation is an "imagined community", because people that are part of it do not necessarily know each other, but they create an idea of community in their minds, on account of living in the same place and/or sharing a set of ideals (Anderson 1991, 14).

It is also thanks to Hollywood that everyone has at least an idea of what National Identity in the USA is. For example, Marvel movies, based on characters such as Captain America or Iron Man,

give great emphasis on patriotism, capitalism and the greatness of the American Army, the 'good' forces, and their powerful technology against the 'evil' ones.

Samuel P. Huntington argues in his treatise "Who are we? The Challenges to America's National Identity" that American national identity is being challenged by various historical and cultural events of the 20th century (such as the end of the Cold War and Mexican immigration). He believes that American core values such as liberty, equality, individualism, representative government, and private property are embodied by the "American Creed" (Huntington 2004, 41), which is a statement written by William Tyler Page in 1917 for a patriotic contest, and it goes as follows:

I believe in the United States of America, as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution, to obey its laws, to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies.

To this, Huntington and other advocates of the English language sovereignty add the use of English as a characteristic of American Identity. He argues that the use of English is under attack because of bilingual education. In the past, English was taught to immigrants to ensure communication among these groups and with Americans, but with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of national origin, bilingual education was introduced in schools. So, it was supposed to be a means to ensure that immigrants learned English, but during the 20th century it has become a symbol of cultural pride that produces a positive image of the

other language in the students, and enhances their knowledge of their original culture. According to Huntington and many other conservatives, this produces the after effect of anti-patriotism. (Huntington 2004, 164)

As already underlined, one of the first public figures to advocate English as an essential characteristic of being an American was Theodore Roosevelt, president from 1901 to 1909. In 1907, he wrote: “We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language , for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house.” (Bishop 1920, 474)

Political movements with the aim of proclaiming English as the official language have always existed, but in 1981, the republican Samuel I. Hayakawa proposed an amendment to declare English as the official language. His attempt failed, but it encouraged many people and groups to do the same thing. In 1983, Hayakawa founded the lobby U.S. English, with more than a million and a half members, including prominent personalities such as Arnold Schwarzenegger. The president of U.S. English is traditionally an “excellent immigrant”, with the aim of countering eventual accusations of racism (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 39-40). This practice is called Tokenism and it consists in involving one or more persons that belong to a minority as a symbol of supposed inclusivity, in order to appear supportive towards racial, gender, sexual or religious equality.

Tokenism is practiced in many fields, from politics to media representation, and it is a powerful instrument to influence public opinion. The famous movie franchise of “Harry Potter” has displayed tokenism through race, as all the main characters are white, but in an attempt to appear more inclusive, a few non-white characters, the most relevant being Dean Thomas and Cho Chang,

have been introduced, even though they are very marginal and not important to the main story at all. Another example of tokenism in Harry Potter, through sexuality this time, is the character of Dumbledore, which has been revealed by J.K. Rowling to be homosexual, even though there are no hints about his sexuality through the books or the movies. In politics, tokenism is often used by political parties that are notoriously racist in order to “prove” that they are not, and to win more votes. When Donald Trump became president in 2017, most of his team was made up of mostly white men, making an exception for Dr. Ben Carson, a retired neurosurgeon serving as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Since Donald Trump has always said to want “the best people” for his team, then how could Ben Carson, who had no experience at all regarding city planning and housing policies, be the “best” in that field? Another case was Nikki Haley, who had virtually no foreign-policy experience but was the child of Indian immigrants: she was made US ambassador to the United Nations. It’s clear that these people are being treated as “tokens”: placed there not for their abilities and experience, but for their ethnicity. (Howard 2017). In politics, complaints of tokenism come from both sides: the left accuse the right of using tokens to create the false impression to support and be supported by people of color and women. Those on the right argue that the left values diversity over quality. The difference between these views is evident: the left thinks that people other than white men are equally capable, but too seldom get the chance to prove it, the right implicitly says that they often lack the merit but are rewarded anyway (Howard 2017).

An example of harsh criticism against political Tokenism was offered in 1963 by Malcolm X when he criticized early desegregation victories of the Civil Rights Movement as hypocritical Tokenism, saying that:

Tokenism is hypocrisy. One little student in the University of Mississippi, that's hypocrisy. A handful of students in Little Rock, Arkansas, is hypocrisy. A couple of students going to school in Georgia is hypocrisy. Integration in America is hypocrisy in the rawest form. And the whole world can see it. All this little tokenism that is dangled in front of Black people and then he's told, 'See what we're doing for you, Tom.' Why the whole world can see that this is nothing but hypocrisy. All you do is make your image worse; you don't make it better" (Malcolm X, 1963).

CHAPTER 2. SPANGLISH

2.1 Origins

In this section, we will discuss the reasons why Spanish Speakers came to be such a large community in the USA. First it is necessary to define the terms and the labels that we're going to use, following some definitions given to us by Ed Morales:

What's in a name? A rose, no matter what name it goes by, will always smell just as sweet. For years the dispute between Latino and Hispanic as the proper term for those of us with Spanish surnames and varying degrees of South of the Border baggage has lingered like a bad hangover. Hispanic – a term invented by the Nixon administration, probably inspired by his friends in the Cuban exile community – was designed to allow the lighter-skinned to claim a European heritage. Latino – derived from Latin America, originally coined by Napoleon-era France as a public relations ploy to explain why a French emperor was installed in Mexico City – was a mid- '70s incarnation of the term meant to allude to a separate identity from Spain (Morales 2002, 2)

Hispanic is the general term chosen by the government to describe a heterogeneous population (Vaquera and Kao in Malott, et al. 2009, 353), even if the distinct label selections and meanings found across studies demonstrate that labels vary according to individual and contextual differences (Campbell et al. In Malott et al. 2009, 353). For example, most young individuals mirror the cultural identity of their parents, and therefore, their labels. In addition, research has shown that the ones who come from families whose ethnic cultural values are stronger, tend to use an ethnic label. On the other hand, if cultural identity is not communicated or is not as strong, they don't use such labels, indicating an important link

between label and knowledge of the culture associated with one's ethnic group. (Knight, Bernal, Cota, Garza and Ocampo in Malott et al. 2009, 353). In their paper on ethnic labeling, Krista M. Malott, Kathryn P. Alessandria, Megan Kirkpatrick and Justine Carandang, survey 20 young persons with Mexican heritage from 14 to 18 years old of age on their preferred ethnic label, with the purpose of helping school counselors to use the correct label in every different case, since scientific literature indicates positive social and academic outcomes resulting from increased levels of ethnic identity in Latino youth (Greig in Malott et al. 2009, 354). From the survey emerged that all of the participants use at least one ethnic label, and the most popular one is Mexican, selected by 90% of the participants, followed by Hispanic and Mexican American, selected by respectively 30% and 15% of the participants (Malott, et al. 2009). Latino, Latin or Latin American was chosen only by 10% of them; it is important to note, though, that these terms are more inclusive than the ones cited above, as they encompass also those who don't speak Spanish, such as Brazilians, Haitians or Arubans.

While Hispanic became the preferred term of assimilationists (although it is often used by working-class Latinos who identify less with their home countries than with the Spanish language they still speak), Latino became the preferred term of the intelligentsia, identity politicians, and young urbanites. Hispanic best describes a Republican politician in Florida, a CEO of a soft-drink company in Georgia, a lawyer in Texas; Latino, a professor in California, a musician in New York, and recent immigrants all over the U.S. Although Latino importantly alludes to an allegiance to, or at least a sympathy with, Latin America and the pseudo-Third World status that implies, its most significant implication is that Latinos are not just Spaniards, but a mixture of Spaniards, Africans, and indigenous people. (Morales 2002, 2)

That said, I will try to juggle these definitions, and when speaking more generally, the term “Spanish Speakers” will be used, since, for the purpose of this thesis, it’s a broader definition that doesn’t leave anyone out.

According to the US Census Bureau, Spanish speaking people have always been present consistently in the US, but in the last 30 years the growth has been exponential. In the year 2000 the population of Spanish Speakers was 12.5% while today it is 18.9%, which means roughly 62 million people out of a total of 331 million. If we also count Puerto Rico, which is an unincorporated federal state of the US, the percentage rises to 19.5%: roughly 65 million. Most Spanish Speakers are Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan, but also Argentinian and Colombian. Mexican people are the most numerous, being 61.9% of the total number of Hispanics. The Census 2009-2013 reports that over 60 million people (over 5 years old) speak a language different than English at home, of these, 37 million speak Spanish at home. These statistics tell us that Spanish is the second most spoken language in the US: the linguistic meeting between English and Spanish, so, was and is inevitable, and in some instances, this meeting originated what is nowadays called Spanglish.

But before getting deep into describing what Spanglish is and what it is not, let’s examine the reasons behind such a large presence of Hispanic people in the United States: a country mistakenly known for speaking mostly (or only) English.

The Mexican American community is the largest and the one that shares most history in common with the US, because of the Texan Revolution (1835-36) and the Mexican American war, fought between 1846 and 1848, after which Mexico had to give up large part of its territory,

encompassing present-day California, Colorado, Nevada, most of New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and two thirds of Arizona, as established by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the peace treaty signed at the end of the war (Lipski 2008, 76).

The Mexican American war was a consequence of The United States' annexation of Texas in 1845, which Mexico considered its territory, without recognizing its independence, after the Republic of Texas was proclaimed in 1836. The war saw the victory of the US, which stripped Mexico of most of its land. Many inhabitants of the conquered land simply stayed there, "crossing the border without moving" and becoming citizens of the United States. (Lipski 2008, 81). These families were pushed to the edges of society over time and deprived, according to the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, of their legitimate right to own land (Antonelli, Scacchi and Scannavini 2005, 208). It is also important to note that in the 19th century many US Americans shared the ideology of the "Manifest Destiny", according to which the United States was destined to spread over the whole North American continent. The concept had three basic tenets: the special virtues of American people and its Institutions; the mission of the United States to redeem and remake the West in the image of the agrarian East; an irresistible destiny to accomplish this essential duty (Miller 2006). A painting by John Gast, "American Progress", perfectly describes this ideology, as it depicts an angelic woman, Columbia, impersonating America, which flies westward, carrying telegraph wires and a school book. The sky on the east is bright because the land has already been colonized by Americans, while the wild part is dark and cloudy.

In 1910 there was another major event that brought Mexican people to the US: the Mexican Revolution. This time people fled from Mexico, which was in a state of chaos, to seek refuge in the US. It was the first time that Spanish was deliberately taken into areas where English had been the prevailing language, and also the first time Mexicans entered the US from its new southwestern

borders, also because after the Mexican American war, a few years earlier, the situation on both sides was quite the same, plus the hostility coming from Americans towards Mexicans (Lipski 1994, 78-79).

Later came the “bracero” program, during and after World War I, set up by the American Government to make up for the loss of work force that the War brought. The program consisted in recruiting Mexicans and sending them to work in the fields. Even though it was supposed to be a temporary solution, many workers decided to stay, despite the efforts of the government to relocate them, especially during the years of labor surplus of the Great Depression between 1930 and 1942. The “bracero” program marks the beginning of the annual pilgrimages from Mexico to the US that continue even today, of people that want to follow the first ones who were recruited. Their main destinations were obviously rural areas, but as time went by, they started to settle and some of them moved to the big cities where the railroad from Texas was available, such as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit, where they got jobs in the industry. Even later, many started to settle in southwest cities such as Los Angeles and El Paso, establishing the first barrios, which helped legitimizing the Spanish language in those areas (Lipski 1994, 79-80).

After the Mexican, the Puerto Rican population is the largest of the US, being the 15.12% of the total Hispanic population. Most of them are settled on the east coast, mainly in the states of Florida and New York. It is worth mentioning that Puerto Rico has been an unincorporated territory of the US since 1898, after the Spanish American war, and since 1917, with the Jones-Shafroth Act, every Puerto Rican was granted American statutory citizenship (probably because in the same year, the US entered the War). Statutory citizenship is characterized by its lack of protection under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, which means that the US Supreme Court has the power to decide the extent to which Puerto Ricans will have their fundamental

personal rights protected. Their sudden gain of US citizenship is the main reason behind the large presence of Puerto Ricans also in the mainland, along with the fact that starting from 1940, the US began recruiting Puerto Rican workers, similarly to what they did with the Mexicans. In the 1940s and 1950s, mass migrations began from Puerto Rico towards America, as a consequence of the “Operation Bootstrap”, which aimed at rapidly industrializing and transforming Puerto Rico’s economy. With industrialization came the decline of plantations, which were the means to survive of many Puerto Ricans, who found themselves unemployed and poor, leading them to move to the mainland’s big cities, where employers of industries were still looking for cheap labor (Lipski 1994, 119-122).

2.2 The Development of Spanglish and its Linguistic Features

We have seen how Hispanics came to be such a large part of the US population, and how they established different communities in various cities and states. I will now try to analyze the reasons and the means on how Spanglish came to be.

Let’s start with what Spanglish is: shortly, it is a language born from the bilingualism of Spanish Speakers in the United States, a hybrid, conversational variety between the two. Their bilingualism is the result of the urge to learn English in a country that pushes their inhabitants to believe that English is the language of social advancement, and if you don’t learn it you are bound to stay at the edges of society and to live in economic instability, combined with the desire to maintain one’s cultural heritage, but also to keep certain traditions of small communities alive, resisting complete US assimilation.

For a broader definition of Spanglish, it is worth mentioning John Lipski, who states that Spanglish has at times been used to refer to a wide variety of phenomena. In the vast majority of instances Spanglish targets the language usage of Hispanophone people born or residing in the United States. In a few instances it is a strictly neutral term, though some US Hispanic political and social activists have adopted Spanglish as a positive affirmation of ethnolinguistic identity. It is however frequently used derogatorily, to marginalize Hispanics and to create the impression that varieties of Spanish used in or transplanted to the United States become so hopelessly entangled with English as to constitute a third language. Within the US, the term Spanglish is commonly used in reference to the speech patterns of resident Latino communities, usually by non-Latinos, or by Latinos who are openly critical of nonstandard language usage. The term is frequently used for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other minorities, but not for expatriates from Spain, who are perceived as white (Lipski 2008, 39).

Ilan Stavans, the forefather of scholarly studies on Spanglish, defines it as “[t]he verbal encounter between Anglo and Hispano civilizations”, clarifying that he was tempted to use the words ‘clash’ instead of ‘encounter’ and ‘language’ instead of ‘civilization’, but doing so he would have reduced Spanglish to a mere linguistic phenomenon, which is not (Stavans in Montes-Alcalá 2015, 99).

Ed Morales places the birth of Spanglish identity in Los Angeles in the 1940s, “in the flames of the zoot suit riots” (Morales 2002, 44). The zoot suits were the first symbol of identity for Mexican Americans who, since they were originally worn by African Americans in Harlem, claimed their “blackness” by wearing them, asserting the status of oppressed citizens. Zoot suits were looser than normal clothes and allowed dancing and the freedom to move more easily and became popular because jazz singers used to wear them on account of their versatility and flamboyance. The problem with this kind of clothes emerged during the war, when food and textiles were

scarce, so young people who wore zoot suits in many cities, mainly Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, were the target of assaults and were beaten and stripped of their clothes at the hands of Navy sailors, which were heavily present in LA due to the anti-Japanese internment process, in full swing at the time (Morales 2002, 44-45).

The first time the term has been recorded is in 1933 from the Puerto Rican poet Salvador Tió, translated from the Spanish equivalent “Espanglish” (Lambert 2018, 39), but Ilan Stavans places its symbolic origin in correspondence of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. The very same word Spanglish is a portmanteau of the words Spanish and English and refers to any language variety resulted from their contact.

Defining Spanglish from a linguistic point of view is not easy, since it is mainly spoken, it has hundreds of variants and is not a standard language. It’s usually defined simply as a hybrid. The first to attempt a scholarly definition of it was Ilan Stavans, who has written a Spanglish dictionary and translated the first chapter of Don Quixote in Spanglish. Some defined it as an abomination (Montes-Alcalá 2015, 101), like the Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz, who, when asked for his opinion on Spanglish, replied “Ni es bueno ni es malo, sino abominable”. Stavans, in his turn, answered that it is indeed a bastard jargon, part English and part Spanish, without a clear identity, spoken and broken by nearly 35 million people of Hispanic descent in the US, who, no longer fluent in the language of Cervantes, haven’t mastered yet that of Shakespeare. The trouble with this view, he says, is that it’s frighteningly nearsighted and that only dead languages are static. Being English and Spanish respectively the second and the third most spoken languages in the

world, Spanglish spreads effortlessly in the Americas, where they both cohabit promiscuously (Stavans 2008, 64).

The structure of Spanglish can be described in three main points: the adaptation of lexical units or phrasal constituents from one language into the other on a phonological, morphological and/or morphophonological level; the adaptation of some lexical elements or phrasal constituents from one language into another semantically; the phenomenon of code-switching or a rule governed amalgamation of the two languages at the level of syntax (Rothman and Rell 2005, 2-7).

Let's take three examples of lexical modification from the article "Hispanics in the United States: More than Spanglish" (2015), by Cecilia Montes-Alcalá:

- Le robaron la troca con everything. Los tires, los rines;
- Le voy a mandar un e-mail;
- Te llamo pa'tras luego.

In these examples we see instances of lexical interactions, which consist in borrowing words from English and make it so that they can work in some way inside of the Spanish code. Since lexicon is the most visible part of a language, its modification results in a high possibility to display interaction and interference between the two languages that can be summarized in the following phenomena: Semantic Reassignment, Borrowing, and Calquing. Semantic Reassignment is when a lexical item from the first language expands its meaning to one from the second language with a similar meaning, for example "carpeta" for "moqueta" (carpet) or "remover" for "quitar" (to remove). Borrowing occurs when in any given language there is a gap in meaning for something, usually a new technology like the Internet, which caused many English words to be borrowed from many languages. Some morphologically assimilated loan words are: "escáner" (to scan), "taipear"

(to type) or “*marqueta*” (market); unassimilated loan words on the other hand, are simply English words that are used as they are: “*sandwich*”, “*modem*” and so on. Finally, Calques are literal translation of words or expression from one language to another, for example: “*llamar pa’ trás*” (to call back), “*esta p’arriba de ti*” (it’s up to you) (Montes-Alcalá 2015, 105-107).

Phonological adaptation is the pronunciation of adopted English words with phonemes typical of Spanglish while also following its phonetical rules, for example the English word ‘Supermarket’ translates into the Spanglish ‘*supermarketa*’, where an ‘*a*’ is added at the end of the word to ensure cohesion with the Spanish vocabulary, where rarely nouns end in ‘*-t*’, or ‘truck’ which translates into ‘*troca*’, following the same pattern.

Another kind of adaptation is the morphological one, which often involves also a phonological adaptation and it mainly concerns verbs, which are adopted from English and adapted to be used in a Spanglish context: since the infinitive forms of Spanish verbs follow three conjugation (*-ar*, *-er*, *-ir*), it’s important to note that only the first is active and open to accepting new verbs, some verbs in Spanglish are *telefonear*, *luncheare*, *watchear*, as can be seen in the case of ‘*luncheare*’, whose minimal pair is ‘*almorzar*’, ‘to eat lunch’, the English word ‘lunch’ has been borrowed to form a new Spanglish verb by means of phonological and morphological adaptation (Rothman and Rell 2005, 7-9). This is something that happens also in Italian, which follows the same pattern with the *-are* conjugation when adopting and adapting new verbs from foreign languages (for example: *googlare*, *bannare*, etc.).

Language contact on the scale of Spanish and English will logically result in the adaptation of lexical items or manipulation of the already existing lexicon to take on the semantic value of English words or phrases. When borrowings of this type occur, phonological shift and

morphological reorganization of the words also occur, in order to fit within the paradigms of Spanish, for example 'to have a good time' becomes 'tener un buen tiempo' (Llombart in Rothman and Rell 2005, 522). Additionally, there are types of semantic adaptation such as the expansion of the semantic field of already existing Spanish words, so that in their Spanglish form, their meaning is expanded or modified.

Another distinctive element of Spanglish is code-switching, which consists in the alternation of the two languages within certain situations, it was defined by Myers-Scotton as "the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation" (Myers-Scotton 1993, 2). This is one of the main reasons why many scholars describe "hybrid" languages as chaotic and without rules, but it's far from that: Sankoff and Poplack wrote one of the most recognized grammars about code-switching and they formulated rules that every speaker follows subconsciously, which define which code-switching sentences are grammatical and syntactically correct and which are not. Moreover, in their grammar it is stated that code-switching is different from other language contact related effects, such as interference, pidginization, borrowing, calquing, language death, relexification and many others. Unlike these phenomena, "code-switching does not imply the deformation of grammar or syntax of neither of the languages involved". Moreover, code-switching is "a widely operative norm of communication in certain types of multilingual communities" (Poplack and Sankoff 1981, 4-5). A series of empirical studies from one of the oldest Puerto Rican communities of the US has demonstrated that there are only two constraints on where switching may occur:

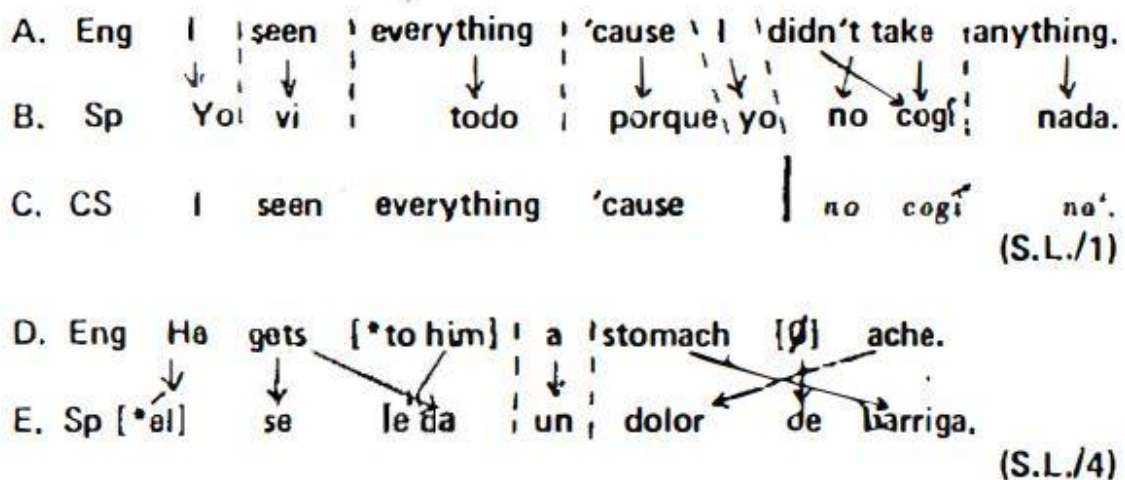
- 1) "The free morpheme constraint": a switch may not occur between a bound morpheme and a lexical form unless the latter has been phonologically integrated into the language of the bound morpheme.

In other words, the free morpheme constraint states that a switch in the middle of the sentence is possible, unless a constituent is a bound morpheme, for example “what a tertulia it was, Dios Mio!” (“What a gathering it was, my god!”) is acceptable, while “Estaba typeando su ensayo” (“She was typing her essay”) is not (Winata 2021, 8) because the phonology of “to type” is unambiguously English, while that of “-eando” is unambiguously Spanish (Poplack and Sankoff 1981, 5).

2) “The equivalence constraint”: the order of sentence constituents immediately adjacent to and on both sides of the switch point must be grammatical with respect to both languages involved simultaneously.

This means that a switch in languages in the middle of the sentence can only be made without the violation of the syntax of either language. So, a bilingual speaker implicitly obeys the syntactic rules imposed by the respective grammars. (Winata 2021, 8-9)

Poplack and Sankoff exemplify this constraint through this scheme that illustrates the permissible code-switching points. The speaker’s actual performance is represented in (C), containing one switch, and (E), containing no switch.



Linguistic performance constrained in this way must be based on simultaneous access to the grammatical rules of both languages (Poplack and Sankoff 1981, 5-6).

2.3 The Speakers and Controversies

“Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language” (Soler in Rothman and Rell 2005, 526). This is something to keep in mind especially when talking about a hybrid, code-switching language such as Spanglish, since most would argue that one cannot be Chinese without speaking Chinese or French without speaking French it is clear the stringent relationship between language and identity. The term Yiddish, a language often compared to Spanglish because of similar origins and development, means Jewish, making clear the link between the identity and the ethnicity of its Speakers (Rothman and Rell 2005, 526), the same goes for Spanglish, since the term incorporates Spanish and English, it denotes an identity and a culture in between that of a North American and that of a Latin American or Hispanic person. So, in some way, Spanglish is the answer for all the people who find themselves living in between two cultures and feel divided within themselves, which is especially the case of the second generation of Spanish Speakers with immigrant parents. The first generation, on the other hand, is the first to have experienced the dual-identity when arriving to the US: as Rothman and Rell point out, nothing makes you feel more attached to your identity and nation of origin than leaving it: in most cases, Spanish speaking immigrants often desperately tried to preserve at least a part of their ancestry, but at the same time they had to live in a country that almost forced them to conform and to speak English and live like Americans. Their children, the second generation, don’t feel as American as their

Caucasian counterparts or as Mexican as their first-generation parents, so terms like Mexican American or Chicano have come to perfectly describe not only their ancestry but also their identity and the realm in which they live (Rothman and Rell 2005, 527).

Nieves Pascual Soler has even dedicated part of her analysis to “code-switching as an expression of identity conflict” and writes about her experience as a Chicana:

Chicana identity is the result of a synergy of cultures. Chicanas or Mexican American women live in the borderlands, at the crossroads of different and often contradictory cultures. They are considered neither white nor black nor fully Indian; they are not viewed as Spanish or Latin Americans, and they are definitely not ‘real’ Americans. They suffer from a painful struggle of identities (Soler 1999, 271).

Identity struggle is not something to underestimate, since from identity comes one’s sense of belonging and community, which is important for personal well-being and prevents people to be isolated when inside foreign contexts. From several studies and surveys, it has emerged that a positive knowledge and consciousness of one’s ethnic identity has many positive effects on the individual, especially in young people. Ethnic identity is a key aspect of self-identity and identity development, it’s a dynamic and complex phenomenon that entails a sense of affiliation and pride in one’s group (Phinney, Yip and Fuligni in Malott, et al. 2009, 352). Group affiliation is reinforced through the practice of a common religion, cultural traits and use of a shared language and history (Cohen in Malott, et al. 2009, 352), and it has been found that increases positive psychological feelings about oneself (Schwartz, Zamboanga and Jarvis in Malott, et al. 2009, 352).

So it’s no wonder that identity struggle has inspired poems from authors who feel this way and who choose to use Spanglish to “mark the incoherence and bilingual nature of the writer’s identity

as it offers a solution to this linguistic dilemma with a reconciliation in the writer's acceptance of Spanglish as his tool of expression and as an identity marker" (Aparicio in Rothman and Rell 2005, 528). A poem by Tato Laviera is a perfect example, as it embodies the feelings related to dual identity through the neglect of certain rules such as capital letters and accents to better give the image of imperfection and uncertainty:

*i think in Spanish
i write in English
i want to go back to puerto rico,
but I wonder if my kin could live
in ponce, mayaguez and carolina
tengo las venas aculturadas
escribo en spanglish
abraham en espanol
abraham in English
tato in Spanish
'taro' in English
tonto in both languages
how are you?
??como estas?
i don't know if I'm coming
or si me fui ya.*

(Lavieria in Rothman and Rell 2005, 529)

These feelings are not uncommon, as Gloria Anzaldúa suggests in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, while tracing back the history of Mexico and the US and explaining how for many Mexicans, the choice was to stay in Mexico and starve, or move north and live: by the end of the Twentieth century one working person in the US could make eight times more what they could in

Mexico, by March 1987, 1088 pesos were worth one US dollar (Anzaldúa 1987, 10). Gloria Anzaldúa is responsible for introducing the term 'mestizaje' in the academic world, a term that literally means hybrid, crossbred, and that summarizes the life at the border between Mexico and the US: the Borderlands. 'Mestiza' is someone who is aware of their heritage, of its contrasting identity, and uses it to challenge the binary western viewpoint. In the preface of *Borderlands / La Frontera*, she states that her style consists in a switching of "codes" from English to Castillian Spanish to the North Mexican Dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all these, because this is the language of the Borderlands, of the new mestiza, a cultural and political formation, not simply a linguistic one, that goes against hierarchies and dualisms (Anzaldúa 1987, iv).

Not only was the brain split into two functions but so was reality. Thus, people who inhabit both realities are forced to live in the interface between the two, forced to become adept at switching modes. Such is the case with the india and the mestiza (Anzaldúa 1987, 37).

The language spoken by the mestiza is Chicano Spanish: a border tongue that developed naturally. Just like everything that is hybrid, Anzaldúa saw her language under attack from both sides of the border: in the US, they used to punish her for speaking Spanish at school, and at home, her mother used to scold her for being unable to cover up her accent when speaking English (Anzaldúa 1987, 53-54). Chicanos on the other hand, accused her to be a cultural traitor, a 'Pocho', because of speaking the oppressor's language and therefore ruining Spanish (Anzaldúa 1987, 55).

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard

Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? (Anzaldúa 1987, 55)

This is how Anzaldúa describes how her language came to life, defining it Tex Mex, Spanglish or Chicano Spanish.

In addition to critiques to Spanglish and hybrid languages themselves and to their Speakers at the hands of linguists and non-linguists, also the single terms chosen to describe these languages have been subject of criticism. An example is an article written by Ricardo Otheguy and Nancy Stern, "On so-called Spanglish", in which they argue that Spanglish should not be called this way for several reasons: according to them, it conceals the fact that popular Spanish spoken in the US is parallel to other varieties of Spanish spoken elsewhere; that Spanish in the US is of an unusually hybrid character; that it inaccurately implies that Spanish in the US is centrally characterized by the mixing with English; that it needlessly separates Spanish-Speakers in the US with those living elsewhere (Otheguy and Stern 2010, 85-86). They believe that what is known as Spanglish should instead be called 'Popular Spanish of the USA', similar to every other Popular Spanish spoken around the world (Popular Spanish of Puerto Rico, Popular Spanish of northern Argentina and so on), because behind the names given to ways of speaking there are always political and ideological attitudes (Otheguy and Stern 2010, 87).

CHAPTER 3. SPANGLISH IN THE MEDIA

3.1 First Appearances in Popular Culture

The concept of culture has several meanings, and, through history, it has been used to separate the commoners from those who have “taste” and pursue what British poet Matthew Arnold called “the best that was thought and said” (Arnold in Crothers, 2013, 12). A character in Shakespeare’s Henry V even implies that this difference in taste comes with a difference in morality, identity and status, when he says, “Discuss with me, art thou officer, or art thou base, common and popular?” (Shakespeare in Crothers 2013, 13). Lane Crothers places the development of the distinction between high and popular culture during the Enlightenment, when intellectuals switched the principles of “real” beauty from what is natural to the products of human thought and exploration. Then, since only the educated were trained to understand the components of “real” beauty, those things that were considered objectively and universally beautiful became associated with “high” culture, while everything else was common and popular, and, therefore, without innate value. After the Industrial Revolution, popular culture became to be mass produced, which increased the split between high and popular culture, since the historical conception of art is that of something created with no purpose other than its own existence, while that of popular culture is to be consumed by the buyers. Things changed when, in the middle of the twentieth century, scholars like Herbert Gans, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood came to redefine the cultural meaning of popular mass-produced items in new and valuable ways. Popular culture provides a way for researchers to learn about the values, needs, concerns and standards by which different communities of people live (Crothers 2013, 12-14).

The main media used in modern times to transmit popular culture are music, television, literature, cinema and the internet. They are sources that are consumed on a daily basis by almost anyone. Analyzing how popular culture works, changes and is distributed to the single consumer is important to understand how it affects us and how we affect it. The first thing to be said, is that most of the popular culture comes from the USA, so local, non-western cultures are usually affected by American goods, services, ideas, values and media as soon as they join the globalized market, with a risk of causing cultural homogenization (Crothers 2013, 26). At the same time, just as other cultures can adopt and integrate American way of life, American culture can adapt and integrate entertainment forms originated elsewhere, turning local costumes or products into objects of popular culture (Crothers 2013, 240). When this happens, minority cultures start to get represented, studied and known all around the world.

In the case of Spanglish culture, which, as suggested by Morales, can be considered as its own local culture inside the US, its first representations took place from the 1910s to the 1950s, when Western movies, such as *Tony the Greaser* and *Bronco Billy and the Greaser*, used to depict Latinos as stereotypical forms of the alien “other”, such as “banditos”, criminals and drug lords, always evil and negative characters. Some of these clichés still survive and are still represented in today’s media (Crothers 2013, 57). Things started to change thanks to music in the 1940s, when Latin music and dances reached their peak of popularity, which culminated with the sitcom *I love Lucy* in the 1950s (Morales 2002, 51), which later became one of the top rated TV shows of the time. It was a time when the average Midwesterner knew how to do a little cha-cha-cha and the ‘gringo’ world would drink and dance to popular music in the same ways Latinos did (Morales 2002, 72). *I love Lucy* has been very important for the Latino community because it introduced a positive, almost free of stereotypes, Latino protagonist, Ricky Ricardo, in television for the first time: Ricky

is in fact a Cuban American, played by Desi Arnaz. The show made direct use of literal hybridity, that is a marriage between north and south, which produced a Spanglish narrative as spoken by its two central participants: Ricky and his wife Lucy, an American woman from New York. What was extremely significant about the show was that it helped define the American family in the 1950s despite being extremely unorthodox. Unfortunately, the hybridity of their marriage and the Spanglish identity of Ricky were only the subtext of the show, the dominant idea behind it was to reestablish the idea of women as inferior, laughable, frail and dependent on a dominant male, since the country was emerging from a postwar situation in which women had been used heavily in the workforce, and so needed to be put back in place. Other examples of shows with this theme are *The Honeymooners* and *The Burns and Allen Show* (Morales 2002, 51-52).

Towards the middle of the twentieth century, the Western genre got renovated by the subgenre 'Spaghetti Western' in Italy, mainly at the hands of Sergio Leone. The movies belonging to this genre, despite being produced in Italy, often kept the stereotypes of regular Westerns, such as Mexican banditos, cowboys and gun fights. The most famous example is maybe *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, 1966, by Sergio Leone. One of the protagonists, along with 'the Man with no Name' (the Good) is Tuco Ramírez (The Ugly). Tuco is a Mexican bandito pursued by the law and with a bounty on his head for his crimes committed in the past, he is the comic relief of the film and is presented as a dirty, messy man with ripped clothes. Despite this, Leone explores the bandito under a new light: first, not only he is not a bad character, but is one of the protagonists; then, he is given a lot of depth and the reasons behind his being an outlaw are explained and deepened through his family, which Tuco holds dear. Another crucial point is that the white protagonist is equal to the Mexican, in terms of their social standing and their aim, they are in fact both bandits looking for gold (Keller 1983, 41).

Western movies also introduced into popular culture one of the most famous Hispanic icons: Zorro. Originally published as a collection of novels in 1919 under the name *The Curse of Capestrano*, Zorro became instantly famous thanks to its 'superhero' features: mysterious, popular around women, skilled with his sword and with a noble heart. The character became the protagonist of several movies, the most famous being *The Mark of Zorro* from 1920 and then remade with sound in 1940, and *The Mask of Zorro* in 1998. The man behind Zorro, Don Diego De La Vega, is a Spanish-American man who fights against corrupt and powerful men, in his earliest stories, against Luis Quintero, the alcalde of California, who imposes heavy taxes on all citizens. Even inside a story that introduces to us for the first time a Hispanic hero, however, we find a typical stereotype from Western movies, that of the campesinos. The campesinos are the Mexican land laborers and they are always presented as dirty, weak and in need of help from the protagonist, they usually wear sombreros and white tunics and have a thick mustache.

Inaccurate and stereotypical representation of Latinos and Hispanics have also been subject to harsh criticism through time. In 1922, the very same Mexican government threatened to ban movies produced by companies which offended its people, which resulted in clever subterfuges from filmmakers to still use these clichés but without clearly stating the national origins of such characters. An obvious example is provided by *The Dove* (1928), where one of the characters, Don Jose Maria y Sandoval, considers himself "the bes' damn caballero in Costa Roja", stating in the titles that Costa Roja is located in the Mediterranean. When the film was remade with sound, four years later, the screenwriters apparently forgot the situation and located the movie in Mexico. As a result, Mexico renewed its threat to ban offensive movies, since the character in question was a walking stereotype: liar, violent and a ladies' man. Offensive representation did not stop, we can

in fact read in a 1981 article of the New York Times, that the same year there were several protests and boycotts towards the movie *Fort Apache, The Bronx*, because it portrayed Hispanic groups as criminals, prostitutes and murderers. (Woll 1981).

In 1961 another crucial movie regarding Hispanic representation was released: *West Side Story*, inspired by the homonymous Broadway musical, a modern Romeo and Juliet story where two gangs in New York fight for the territory. The 'Jets', one of the two gangs, is composed of white members, while the rival gang, the 'Sharks', is made of Puerto Rican immigrants. Even if it is a love story, different topics are touched, like the difficulties of migrating to the US for Puerto Ricans, well expressed in the song "America", where the boys and the girls debate whether the US is the land of the free or of exploitation. The theme was particularly relevant in those times, since mass migration from Puerto Rico to New York was happening. Despite the apparent support towards Puerto Rican, it has been subject of controversies, mainly because most Puerto Rican characters were not played by Hispanic actors, for example the protagonist, Natalie Wood, so they used makeup to make their faces look brown (Woller 2010, 8), but also because they are represented as violent, impulsive and criminals, supported and symbolized by the color red throughout the whole movie (Woller 2008, 58).

In the 1990s we can finally find movies from Chicano directors that bring to the screen Chicano characters appropriately represented. The cinema of Edward James Olmos, first as actor, then as director, and that of Gregory Nava is significant for this period and for Chicano cinema in general. Their *My family/Mi familia* (1995) opens with a series of shots of the bridges that link East Los Angeles with Los Angeles proper. The bridges suggest a link between Chicano and US communities, languages and cultures, both metaphorically and physically (Williams 2005, 54), it is a story of families, traditions and generations clashing with each other and overcoming the

difficulties Chicanos have had to face in Los Angeles through the decades, topics that are very dear to Olmos, who three years earlier directed and acted in *American Me*, which will be discussed later.

Switching decade and genre, in 2004 an animation movie came out that revolutionized the way animation is conceived, a true masterpiece and a cult movie which cannot be overlooked when speaking about pop culture: *Shrek 2*. A timeless story where one's appearance does not matter, where every fairy tale and fable characters converge in the same universe and where the protagonist is not a prince, but an ogre. The reason why I have chosen to talk about the second chapter and not the first, is mainly that the character we are interested in, 'Puss in Boots' is introduced here, but also because it is way more popular than the prequel and we can find references and quotes all around the internet, even today. Puss in Boots is currently being talked about again, due to *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* coming out last year. He is voiced by Antonio Banderas, so it is no surprise that his personality and style is very similar to Zorro's: a skilled fighter, a smooth talker, who in a scene carves a capital 'P' on a tree.

Another notable animation movie is *Coco* (2017). A movie about traditions and beliefs set in Mexico, particularly about the "dia de los Muertos", a Mexican way of celebrating and remembering those who have passed away. The movie features a positive representation of Mexican culture, highlighting the importance of family, music and traditions and showing the diversity of Mexican Culture. Particular importance is given to music, which, along with family, is the main focus of the story and incorporates various styles of Mexican music, while the lyrics are usually in Spanglish, for example in the song "A Proud Corazón", from which the title of this thesis was inspired. Since it is set in Mexico, the language used in the English version reflect that of

Mexican-Americans or bilingual people in general, and adds to the authenticity of the movie's portrayal of traditions and culture.

3.2 Advertising

Advertising is a communication form that allows sellers of a certain product to attract attention of potential customers. It has been defined by anthropologist David Harvey as "the official art of capitalism" (Harvey in Smith 2015, 168), and if that's true, the greatest advertising artist of our time is the USA, it is enough to think of New York's Times Square: a whole square filled with huge screens that broadcast advertisements all the time of any product one could think of: food, music, movies. Advertising has contributed to make American products known in the whole world thanks also to globalization: it's possible to drink a Coca-Cola or eat at McDonald's in almost every country of the world. In order to be effective and reach as many people as possible, an advertisement has to be relatable, so that the potential customer feels at home when thinking about the product. For example, the American fast-food chain "Taco Bell" has conceived two Spanglish slogans: "Yo quiero Taco Bell" and "Live Más", the first is accompanied by a Chihuahua, a

commonly Mexican dog breed, so that it could reach those who identified with the language and the culture of Spanglish.



Yet, Spanglish in advertisement does not simply mean using Spanglish in slogans, there are obviously other factors involved, for example, who is being targeted by the advertising agencies when they create their advertisements and commercials? Only Speakers of Spanglish or are they looking to sell also to English and / or Spanish Speakers? Why use Spanglish if English and Spanish Speakers are able to buy products without these advertisements? Mixing languages is a great advertising strategy: it's a phenomenon known as foreign branding, according to which foreign words capture the attention of the consumer more efficiently, since they are perceived as "unusual information" and will be remembered more easily by the viewer (Gómez Cerdeño in Smith 2015, 180). Taco Bell is a Mexican food restaurant, so it's not that surprising to find out that they advertise their food using Spanglish, but Taco Bell is just the most emblematic. As of today, Spanglish advertising is very common throughout the US, especially in areas where Hispanics are a high percentage of the population, such as New York and states close to the Mexican borders. This is because there is a very high percentage of Hispanics being bilingual, even among younger generations. A 2011 study from Pew Research Center has stated that about 95% of Hispanics

believe it is very important or somewhat important for future generations to be able to speak Spanish in the US (Pew Research Center, 2012). The online advertising company “Hispanic Online Marketing” has published an article in which they explain how Spanglish advertisements are much more effective in attracting both English and Spanish Speakers, as they produce 72% more engagement and 54% more clicks than the all-English and the all-Spanish ones. Some examples of their advertisements for the League of Conservation Voters, a well-established environmental advocacy group, use catchphrases such as “To make it Fresca you need Clean Water”, “Clean Air and Water, Tendedero Contento, Dirty Air and Water, Tendedero Triste”. Another effective strategy is to use cultural notions recognizable by Hispanics such as the paletero and the abuela’s remedy, for example “Lose the Bees, Lose Abuelita’s Remedy” and “Buy a Paleta, Save el Planeta” (Hispanic Online Marketing, 2015).

It is quite evident that most Spanglish slogans are used by food companies to advertise their food, this is because food is a central part of Hispanic culture and Identity, and by using Spanglish, food companies can appeal to these cultural values to build stronger connections with Hispanic customers. Others examples are from the Fast-Food KFC, who greeted Hispanic customers during Christmas time with “Feliz Bucket-Navidad”, and from beer companies such as Tecate: “Change to Real Cerveza Flavor”, Miller: “Beerveza, with a hint of Lime and Salt”, and Bud: “Tan buena como encontrar un parking frente al building”.



3.3 Iconic Spanglish Characters in Cinema and TV

As of today, video, that is cinema and TV series, is the main entertainment source for the majority of people thanks to pay TV and other streaming services, which means that for the average person, it is a way to understand the world, a window to the world outside of their reality: from how something is presented in what is being watched, an idea forms in the mind of the viewer. This is something extremely dangerous when the representation is inaccurate and strays far away from the truth, because the viewer is going to develop a wrong idea about a person, a group or even a whole nation. Wrong ideas lead to stereotypes, which then result in racism, so it is very important for the viewer to be conscious about what they are watching and to keep a critical eye when presented with characters on video who represent a community, in our case an ethnic group. On the other hand, it is crucial for movie producers and screenwriters to always be faithful to reality and free of stereotypes when dealing with an ethnic group which is not theirs. Several studies have indicated that a positive representation of a minority on television improves the vision that hegemonic culture has towards that minority. Specifically, Vrij et al. in 1996 argued that television images may change prejudiced racial attitudes. They found three characteristics were critical for such change to occur. First, similarities between majorities and minorities need to be stressed, then, the minority should be represented by multiple members of it. And finally, the anti-discrimination message should be clear (Turner et al. 2010, 103-104)

In this section, I am going to list some iconic characters in movies and TV series that have a Spanglish identity, even if they do not speak Spanglish in each scene, in order to analyze how their character is treated in relation to their identity, their role and their function in the series or movie.

The first iconic character I would like to mention is Oscar Martinez from the 2005 TV series *The Office*, produced by NBC, played by Oscar Nuñez. *The Office* is a comedy series following the daily life of a typical American office and its employees in a mockumentary format: diegetic cameramen and confession rooms where the characters speak with them. Their office is situated in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and is a branch of the paper selling company Dunder Mifflin. The main storylines around which the hilarity of the show is built, are the incompetence and awkwardness of the boss and the love story between two of the protagonists. Inside of the office, every character has an isolated independent job, except for the sales department and accounting. We find Oscar as chief accountant, along with his two colleagues. Even if the protagonists are obviously the focus of the show, secondary characters like Oscar get a lot of screen time as well, which means that we get to see an all-around character development of every member of the staff, thus allowing the viewer to analyze them and relate to them. Oscar is a Mexican American, son of Mexican immigrants, born in the US, and being the only person with Mexican heritage in the office, suffers from the jokes that Michael Scott, the regional manager of the office, makes about him being Mexican and a homosexual. In the tenth episode of the seventh season "China" (2010), Jim Halpert, one of the protagonists says referring to Oscar that "he is known as 'Actually', because he will insert himself into just about any conversation to add facts or correct grammar. He really does fit that old stereotype of the smug gay Mexican". He is openly a democrat and probably an atheist, since in the episode "Dwight K. Schrute, (Acting) Manager" (2010), he refuses to say, "one nation under God", when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He is in fact known for being very rational and

intellectual, to the point that his colleagues consider him to be a know-it-all. Despite being born in the US, he is fluent in Spanish, but rarely speaks it around his coworkers. His speech is in fact not what one would expect from a Mexican character, probably the choice of making him speak almost only English is not random. He is the exact opposite of the Mexican stereotype often seen in TV: quiet, clever, elegant and introverted and his way of speaking reflects this. It is typically precise and articulate and speaks often in a formal way. The only exceptions are when he loses his temper or feels frustrated, like in the episode "Stress Relief", the fourteenth of the fifth season, when he switches to Spanish in order to speak without filters and to freely roast his boss and says: "Me das una úlcera cada vez que me despierto y tengo que venir a trabajar para ti! Para ti!", which roughly translates in "You give me an ulcer every time I have to wake up and come to work for you! For you!"

The second character I find relevant for the representation of Latinos is actually a couple: Gloria Pritchett and her son Manny Delgado, from the TV series *Modern Family*, first broadcast on the ABC, played by Sofía Vergara and Rico Rodriguez. The series follows the life of a large family in Los Angeles in a mockumentary format, similarly to *The Office*. In the series there are three main storylines, corresponding to the three family units of the show, which at some point in every episode are brought together, usually at the end. The name of the show is representative of the family that it brings on the screen, two of the family units represented are in some ways atypical: one consists in a gay marriage with an adopted Vietnamese daughter, and another in an interracial marriage between an elderly man and a much younger Colombian woman, Gloria, and her son Manny, born from a previous marriage. What is interesting about these two characters is that they are respectively Hispanics of first and second generation, so in the episodes where their relationship is the main theme, Manny's identity is in the foreground, since Gloria wants him to be

more in contact with his roots and proud about his origins. Throughout the show we can see how Manny's interest for Colombia weakens over time: in the sixth episode of the first season ("Run for Your Wife") he is about to start the 5th grade and decides to wear a Colombian poncho and to perform a dance while playing his Colombian pan flute on his first day, in order to show everyone how proud he is of his country, even if that meant going against his step-father, Jay, who told him that if he did that he would get beaten up. Years later, in the seventh episode of the sixth season ("Queer Eyes, Full Hearts", 2014), we learn that Manny has forgotten most of his Spanish, because he has not spoken it for many years, so Gloria pushes him to learn it back by telling him to take the Spanish class at school and even hiring a tutor, but with poor results, since he is more interested in learning French, which breaks his mother's heart as she does not understand how it is possible that he is not interested in Spanish. She later tells him that it is very tiring for her to translate every sentence from Spanish into English in her head, and that she wanted someone to speak with in her own language in her own house, since she is frequently made fun of for her English skills and her accent. Gloria, in fact, often pronounces English words with a heavy Colombian accent and uses some Spanish words and phrases when speaking English. She frequently puts "Ay" at the beginning of sentences and, like Oscar, she uses Spanglish more frequently and intensely when she is angry, sometimes even switching completely to Spanish so that nobody understands her.

During the first seasons we also see Gloria struggling to win the approval of her in-laws, since she suspects to be seen as a gold digger because of her attractiveness and the great age gap between her and her husband, even if that is not the case, as we can see several demonstrations of true love from both sides. Still, her character has been at the center of several controversies: first, as already stated, she is frequently made fun of, not only for how she speaks, but also for her heritage. Colombia is portrayed as some kind of unknown, uncivilized country, for example, in the

fifth episode of the second season (“Unplugged”, 2010), Gloria steals the neighbors’ dog, and Jay tells her that it may be legal in Colombia, but not in the US. In the second episode of the second season (“The Kiss”), also Colombian traditional food is depicted as disgusting, as Jay complains of never eating “regular” food like “normal” people. Through Gloria’s eccentric relatives, also Colombian people are ridiculed, like her mother, who brings a gun as a gift to a christening ceremony, or, in the twenty-fourth episode of the sixth season (“American Skyper”, 2014), when her cousin comes to visit her in the US, just to drink and sleep all the time, which causes Jay to confront him. Just as the stereotype of the lazy Colombian was falling apart, he is revealed to be a thief and gets kicked out of the house.

The last relevant character I would like to talk about is Tuco Salamanca, from the AMC series *Breaking Bad*, played by Raymond Cruz. *Breaking Bad* is a crime drama TV series, that follows the life of a chemistry teacher, Walter White, after he finds out to have an inoperable kind of lung cancer and decides to start producing methamphetamine in order to make some money to leave to his family after he will be gone. To do this, he tracks down one of his old students, Jesse Pinkman, who is already in the business, and thanks to Walter’s skill in chemistry, they manage to produce a very pure methamphetamine. They cannot manage to sell it effectively without turning to a high-ranking distributor, so they contact Jesse’s previous distributor, Domingo Gallardo Molino, commonly known as Krazy 8. When things turn bad, the protagonists are forced to look for another distributor, so they go visit Tuco Salamanca. Tuco is presented as a ruthless kingpin in the South Valley, working directly with the Mexican Cartel. Every scene that features him is filled with suspense, due to his unpredictability: in the seventh episode of the first season (“A No-Rough-Stuff-Type Deal”, 2008), he even gets to the point that he kills one of his henchmen barehanded just because he spoke for him. The only thing he seems to care about is his family: in

the second episode of the second season (“Grilled”, 2009), he is seen interacting with his disabled uncle by whom he has been raised, Hector, who he affectionally calls Tio, and treating him with care. The same uncle Hector is seen in a flashback in the seventh episode of the third season (“One Minute”, 2010), when he was still young and was looking after Tuco and his other cousins, who were children at the time. At one point, one of the children, Leonel, says that he wishes that his brother Marco was dead, because he broke his toy, Hector then proceeds to dunk Marco’s head into the water to teach him the value of family, as he says “La familia es todo”. From this scene we understand that Tuco’s respect for his uncle is not out of love, but fear. Tuco’s language reflects his origins from the border and is heavily influenced by his criminal life and the violent world in which he operates, it is in fact fast paced and aggressive, a key feature to his character. His speech features typical Mexican slang words such as “wey” and “chingado” or expressions such as “no mames” and “dale”.

3.4 Movies about Spanglish Identity

In this section, I will list some movies about the Hispanic experience in the US that I find relevant and pertaining to the subject. They are all made by Hispanic directors, and they tell different stories about different topics regarding Spanglish identity: one is related to Chicano gang life in Los Angeles, another is a story about racial profiling of Chicano students in Los Angeles, and the last one is focused on the clash between second generation Latinos and their parents.

The first movie is *American Me*, directed by Edward James Olmos, in 1992, it is the story of a gang leader, Montoya Santana. The whole movie is narrated by the protagonist, who is telling the story of his life while he is in prison. He starts by telling us about the story of his parents, who were

living during the Zoot Suit Riots in 1943, during which his mother has been brutally abused by the sailors. We are then introduced to his sixteen-year-old self in 1959, as he starts a gang with his two “crime partners”, Mundo and JD, and he is sent to the juvenile prison. There, his sentence is extended because he murdered an inmate who tried to rape him and is sent to an actual prison as soon as he turns eighteen, and so he begins his prison life. From prison, he starts another gang, “La Eme”, and he trains to become an actual criminal: the prison here is not a place of rehabilitation, but a “school” for becoming actual gangsters. When he is released in 1977, he falls in love with a woman, Julie, but she rejects him, because he is still committing murders and selling drugs. He becomes torn between Julie and the gang life, but he knows that once you are inside, the choice is between crime and death. After being arrested again he doesn’t give the order to murder the one who sent him there, which is seen as a sign of weakness and he knows it, which is why, soon after, he accepts death at the hands of his previous partners. The movie is set in East Los Angeles, and it depicts the experiences of said gang members accurately, along with the language they speak, which reflects the reality of that environment: it is a very rough Spanglish, full of street slang typical of gangsters like “órale”, which is pronounced multiple times during the movie and is used as an exclamation expressing approval or as a greeting amongst gangs, it is possible to hear it in many other movies such as the 1987 movie *Born in East L.A.*, where it is used in the phrase “Órale vato, ¡wassápenin!”, commonly used by Mexican American who have taken the gitano word ‘vato’ from northern Mexico slang, meaning “man”. Every character seems to speak the same kind of Spanglish, which allows them to recognize themselves as belonging to the same group, and when that does not happen, they are distrusted, like JD at the beginning of the movie when he reaches the gang inside the prison and many do not want him inside of it, firstly because he is white, then because his Spanish accent is noticeably different than the Mexican one.

“Carnal”, along with “órale” is pronounced many times by the gangsters, to the point that Julie almost makes fun of Santana because of this slang, reflecting the fact that even if they belong to the same culture and speak the same languages, their worlds are different.

The second movie is *Stand and Deliver*, directed by Ramón Menéndez in 1988. The movie is set in 1982 and is inspired by the real story of the mathematics teacher Jaime Escalante, which is the protagonist of the movie. The film opens with Jaime entering Garfield High School for the first time, situated in a barrio in East Los Angeles. He immediately realizes that the school and the students are quite left to themselves: PE teachers teaching mathematics, students slacking and brawling in the courtyard. During a meeting with the other teachers and the principal, it is said that the school’s accreditation is under threat, so Escalante decides to teach his students Calculus and get them to take the Advanced Placement Calculus by the end of their senior year, which would have helped the school with a better reputation. Two of his pupils are in a gang, but Escalante does not give up on them, he instead makes fun of them for their “gang look” in front of the class, to motivate them to take school seriously, which didn’t work for one, but did for the other, Angel, who undergoes a series of changes during the film, at the beginning he did not even want to be seen around with a book in his hands. Another obstacle is the mentality of the parents of the students, which are most often Mexican immigrants. In a scene, the mother of a girl tells her to quit calculus, because “boys don’t like girls that are too smart”; in another scene, one of the most promising girls of the class announces that she is going to quit school to work in her family’s restaurant, but then Escalante goes there to talk to her father and makes him change his mind. At the end of senior year, the students take the test and all of them pass, but soon after the school receives a visit from the Educational Testing Service, questioning the students’ exam test scores, implying that they all cheated. Escalante argues with the investigators, certain that the only reason

they got called is the race of the students and the location of the school, saying that if it was Beverly Hills High School, nothing would have happened. The investigators demand to make the students retake the exam, initially Escalante opposes to it, because it would be like admitting that they have cheated, but ultimately accepts. Even though the students only have one day to prepare for the second exam, they all pass again. This movie, unlike the first, is primarily in English, but many characters speak Spanglish to highlight their bilingual heritage, since they are all Mexican Americans living in East Los Angeles. Escalante's students frequently communicate with each other using Spanish slang including words such as "ese", this is especially true for the ones that are presented not as bright as the others, such as Angel, who at the beginning of the movie was in a gang, and Ramirez.

The last movie is *Real Women Have Curves*, directed by Patricia Cardoso, the first Latinx woman director to have a film (the one in question) included in the Library of Congress's National Film Registry and to receive a Sundance Audience Award. The movie is about an eighteen-year-old girl, Ana Garcia, struggling with the traditional costumes imposed by her mother. The story begins with her last day of high school, and through a dialogue between her and her teacher we immediately understand the kind of family she lives in, the teacher is in fact asking her to reconsider to apply to a college, as she is very talented and could even get a scholarship, but she says that her family would not allow it and that they are having financial problems. When she gets home, she is surprised by a graduation party organized by her family, but her mother Carmen, tells her that from the day after she is going to have to work at her sister's textile factory, because she herself has been working since she was thirteen, so to her it is unfair that her eighteen year old daughter does not. Both her and her sister Estela are against this idea, but eventually they give up. Throughout the film, Ana is constantly emotionally abused by her mother for being overweight,

she calls her “gordita”, she tells her not to eat her own cake and that she is never going to find a man if she doesn’t lose weight. When she goes to work at the textile factory along with her mother and her sister, her views start to change. She sees how much work her sister puts into the factory and is astonished to learn that for every dress made by the workers, the factory earns eighteen dollars, when the same dress is sold in shops for six hundred dollars. During the film, she falls in love with a classmate, with whom she secretly goes out. Having been constantly told by her mother that virginity is sacred for a woman, she decides to buy condoms and to have sex, probably as a symbol of rebellion and of her belonging to a different generation with different principles. She even decides to fill out the college application for Columbia University and eventually gets the scholarship, but her mother keeps telling her that her place is in East Los Angeles. Only after she gets the courage of standing up to her mother about her being overweight, she also decides to go against her will and accept the scholarship. In the last scene, she is leaving for the airport, as her mother refuses to come out of her room to say goodbye. The type of registry and language in general used in this movie totally differs from the previous two. First of all, Ana speaks in almost every situation in English, even when her relatives speak to her in Spanish, which especially her mother does. Given the topic of the movie, the reason behind this choice is to highlight how younger generations are different from their parents: Ana wants to break free from East Los Angeles and from her family, both physically and linguistically speaking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has explored the phenomenon of Spanglish from multiple angles. Firstly, I examined the historical and social contexts from which Spanglish would have then evolved in the United States, highlighting key events and trends that have shaped its development over time, like mass migrations and wars, since knowing history is a way to prevent misinformation and xenophobia to be spread. From there, I delved into the linguistic characteristics of Spanglish, including its usage patterns like the practice of code-switching. I also discussed some of the ongoing debates and controversies in the field of linguistics surrounding Spanglish, such as whether it should be called Spanglish or Popular American Spanish, on account of the existence of similar hybrid languages apart from Spanglish that are not given the same importance.

Finally, I turned our attention to the portrayal of Spanglish in the popular media, including movies and TV shows. Through this analysis, I gained insight into how Spanglish is represented and perceived by different audiences, and how this may impact broader public discourse around language and identity. I identified some of the potential benefits and challenges associated with the use of Spanglish in the media and noted how the representation of Hispanics and Spanglish Speakers has changed through time, from the stereotypical 'bandito' in Western movies to the celebration of Mexican Identity in the Pixar movie *Coco*.

One challenge for the average consumer of media products, for example, is to be able to distinguish a proper representation from one that is based on stereotypes. If someone grows up having only watched products where Hispanics are wrongfully represented, they may develop an equally wrong idea about the same population, possibly leading to racism and xenophobia. For example, the series *Modern Family* might be misleading, as one may be led to believe that

Hispanic women (or more specifically Colombian ones) are loud and superstitious, even if the theme is always treated with irony. It is in this sense important to raise awareness about such topics and crucial to always be conscious of what one is watching and how it is represented. On the other hand, products made with rightful representation by properly informed screenwriters and directors leads to increased understanding of that culture and to develop a critical view towards certain communities, like the gangs in Los Angeles, which are often represented as violent and inhumane, but the reasons why they came to be and the social system they live in are never explored and the single individual belonging to the gang is never given enough credit, which is what Edward James Olmos tried to do when he directed *American Me*.

This thesis was intended to be an analysis of a phenomenon that is not known much about nowadays, but that concerns millions of people, whose image in today's media may be improved through proper representation, which is why this thesis was also intended to be a call to awareness on such topics.

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