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## Variation in Language Interaction Phenomena: A Global Approach

### 1. Introduction

This paper argues for the need to analyse language interaction<sup>1</sup> phenomena from a variety of social and linguistic perspectives working on different language combinations and in different social contexts involving multilingual and multidialectal communities. More specifically, this paper has two objectives. Firstly, to offer a provisional but representative comparative analysis of language interaction in two different corpora gathered in Catalonia (Spain): the *La Canonja Corpus*, which contains Catalan-Spanish interaction phenomena, and the *English Corpus*, which contains English-Spanish/Catalan interaction phenomena. The comparison of these corpora brings to light a number of interesting differences, in both quality and quantity, which are even more significant if we bear in mind that the interviews were carried out following the same methodology and that Spanish and Catalan are present in both corpora. The differences observed are complex and diverse and motivate an appeal to an integrated model of language interaction that is fundamentally multifactorial in nature. One such approach is Turell (1997) (see Diagram 1). This framework stands on the idea that that both **internal** and **external** factors constrain language

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<sup>1</sup> We adopt the term *language interaction* rather than the more commonly used terms *codeswitching* and *language contact* in order to cover all linguistic manifestations (phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic).

interaction phenomena, and that there is an interplay between them which accounts for the appearance, distribution, diffusion and type of these phenomena. By **internal** factors what is meant are factors of a linguistic nature, basically language proximity/distance. More specifically, these factors are: a) the order of constituents, b) morphological typology, c) marking typology in the predicate/arguments relationship, and d) contrastivity of phonological typology and the degree of lexical/morphosyntactic distance/proximity; **external** factors require several subclassifications: a) *pragmatic* factors, such as communicative needs (in turn affected by socio-collective factors, as will be seen) and interaction type, and others, b) *individual* factors related to the individual speaker: a) psycholinguistic, that is, the individual's degree of competence in L2 and degree of bilingualism (with implications for Foreign Language Acquisition and Second Language Acquisition), b) cognitive, c) attitudinal, with positive or negative attitudes towards the host community, its culture and language, which however very much depend on what the group's attitudes as a whole are, and as such these factors interact with the socio-collective and socio-psychological ones, c) *socio-individual*, that is, factors such as sex, age (first generation, second generation), educational level, which are individual indices of the speaker's belonging to a specific group; family type (mixed or not mixed); the degree of contact, which, in turn, will interact with the previous psycholinguistic and attitudinal factors, d) *socio-collective*, that is, factors relating to the community's social structure (that is, whether it is *more open* or less open), the community's social history (social type of migration and settlement pattern: stability or non-stability of the settlement, social status of community before and after migrating, reasons for migration, social prestige before and after); and finally, cultural distance or proximity (between the migrated and the host communities) and the duration of the contact situation. This kind of framework provides the theoretical tools needed to account for the differences between the La Canonja Corpus and the English Corpus.

A second more specific objective is to propose a recategorisation of syntactic calque as a new type of codeswitching in Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model, a theoretical framework that will be discussed below, and thus show that different linguistic perspectives can be used as a theoretical background to frame this variable from a conceptual point of view and to understand it better for further analysis within the multifactorial context mentioned above.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

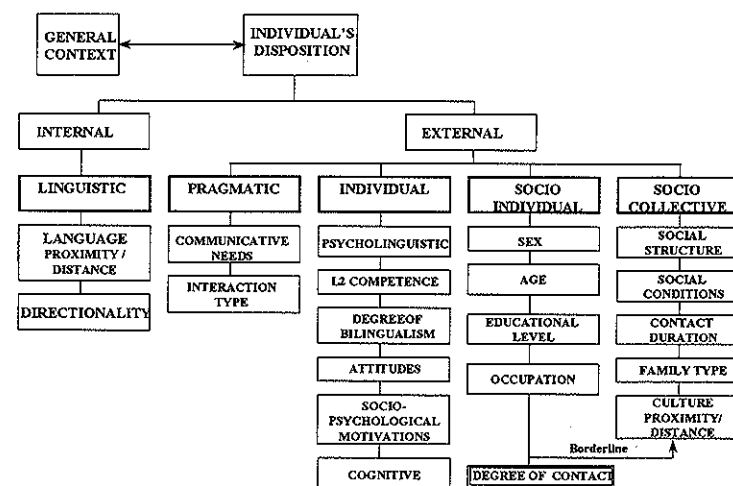


Diagram 1. Turell, 1997.

## 2. Description of the corpora

### 2.1. The La Canonja Corpus

La Canonja, a municipality 8 km south-west of Tarragona (Catalonia), can be taken as a miniature example of what happens in many small interethnic communities throughout Catalonia. Its sociolinguistic situation cannot be understood unless one takes into account the migratory movements into Catalonia from other regions of Spain during the third quarter of this century, but particularly during the sixties. The language contact situation in Catalonia has therefore been long and continued. As Pujadas, Pujol & Turell (1998) write:

La Canonja is a minor local entity with a total of 4,307 inhabitants at the time the research was conducted (1988-92). Differently from what happens in other main cities and neighbourhoods outside Barcelona and the other cities and provincial capitals in Catalonia, La Canonja presents a demographic balance between locals and immigrants. The last census available (Tarragona, 1986) shows the following figures: 48.9% born in the municipality, 9.6% born in other areas of Catalonia, 40.7% in the rest of Spain, and 0.8% of foreign origin.

The La Canonja Corpus consists of 30 recordings of approximately two and a half hours each. The data were gathered by means of sociolinguistic interviews. The interview modules ranged from personal domains (family and friendship both in the country of origin and the host country) to social and professional domains (education, languages used at school, employment, neighbourhood), and included two or three questions which would allow the researcher to elicit narratives and indirectly determine the effect of style (i.e.: more or less informal) in the specific forms of the informants' linguistic behaviour and use, and patterns of language contact. The informants constitute a sample representative of the

three main linguistic groups present in this community: native speakers of Catalan, immigrants and second generation immigrants, and are also stratified according to standard sociolinguistic parameters, i.e. sex, age, profession and education, to which we add a measure of the degree of contact<sup>2</sup> of the members of the two communities (locals and immigrants), following Ash & Myhill (1986), among others.

### 2.2. The English Corpus

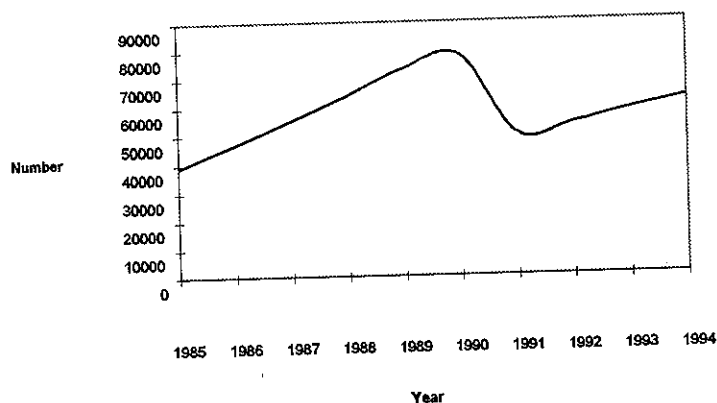
The English Corpus consists of 23 recordings of about one hour each. The sociolinguistic interview was also used in this case. The informants constitute a sample representative of the English-speaking minority group living in Catalonia (12 British and 11 North-American informants). This sample has been stratified according to sex, age, level of education and profession, to which we have also added degree of contact.<sup>3</sup>

For practical purposes, informants have been grouped according to the area of origin — the British Isles and the United States — into two subcorpora. According to the 1996 official statistics of the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE), the distribution of these two speech communities in Spain goes as follows. In 1994, there was a total of 62,317 British immigrants in Spain and the immigration rate has followed this pattern: there was an important peak between 1989-90, a decrease between 1990-91

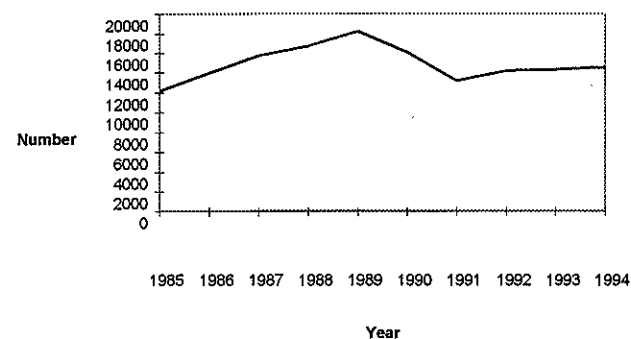
<sup>2</sup> This degree was measured through the *index of contact*, an instrument which included questions relating to the social networks and to any factors that would bring members of the communities under analysis in closer contact. Values were attributed to each of the answers, to reach a scale between 1 and 8 in such a way that values between 1 and 2 would characterise **low** contact, values between 3 and 6, an **average** contact, and values between 7 and 8, a **high** contact.

<sup>3</sup> Which was also measured through the *index of contact* used in the analysis of the La Canonja Corpus.

and a steady increase since 1992. As regards the American-English community, the INE statistics indicate that there was a total of 14,528 US citizens living in Spain in 1994. They concentrated mainly in Madrid (4,880), Andalusia (2,420) and Catalonia (1,648). As for their immigration rate, US citizens' immigration to Spain increased steadily between 1985 and 1989, fell a little between 1990 and 1991 and increased again as of that year (as shown in figures 1 and 2 below).



**Figure 1.** UK citizens in Spain (1985-1994) Source: *Anuario Estadístico 1995*. INE (1996)



**Figure 2.** US citizens in Spain (1985-1994) Source: *Anuario estadístico 1995*. INE (1996)

### 3. A sociolinguistic description of the corpora

The sample under study in this paper consists of 6 recordings (3 from the La Canonja Corpus and 3 from the English Corpus) taken to be representative of the three values of the *index of contact* which are significant in our study. These values are classified as *high*, *average* and *low*. The La Canonja Corpus reflects the linguistic behaviour of immigrant speech communities (primarily speakers of Andalusian Spanish) who moved to Catalonia in the sixties, whereas the English Corpus reflects the linguistic behaviour of linguistic minority groups (in this case speakers of American English and British English) who have moved to Catalonia within the last two decades.

An important factor which helps us characterise the corpora has to do with the speakers' degree of bilingualism. In the case of the La Canonja Corpus, almost all Catalan-speaking locals are balanced bilinguals (Badia 1969; Vallverdú 1986; Fishman, 1972, 1991); that is, they are proficient both in Catalan and Spanish, and a still small

proportion (now increasing) of Spanish-speaking immigrants are also proficient in Catalan or have adopted Catalan as their most usual language. As for the English Corpus, the speakers' mother tongue is English, and so they use mostly English, but some of them have a fairly good command (both receptive and productive) of Catalan and/or Spanish.

Another important factor to consider is the relationship of the informants with the host community (measured by means of the *index of contact* described above) and the linguistic input they receive. In the case of the La Canonja Corpus, the informants may receive input from both languages, Spanish and Catalan, because of the demographic balance mentioned earlier. However, in the case of the English Corpus, the informants are members of an immigrant community, constitute a minority group and thus receive very little linguistic input in their own mother tongue.

#### 4. Theoretical framework

As mentioned above, one of the specific goals of this paper is to offer a comparative analysis of language interaction phenomena, and more specifically, of codeswitching, in two different corpora gathered in Catalonia. This comparison brings to light a number of interesting differences which are complex and diverse and motivate an appeal to the *Language Interaction Integrated Model* (LIIM), proposed by Turell 1997. This model provides a framework where internal and external factors can be considered together. Another proposal that has proven useful in weighing the contribution of internal linguistic factors, and particularly in characterising the linguistic variable from a theoretical point of view is the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF) proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993b).

#### 4.1. The LIIM and MLF models

##### 4.1.1. The LIIM model

For reasons of space, it is not possible to describe the *Language Interaction Integrated Model* model at length here. We will focus instead on its most important predictions regarding intrasentential codeswitching. These predictions account for the interplay between internal and external factors, on the one hand, and the degree of cognitive effort required by this phenomenon, on the other. The latter is explained by the *Language Typology/Cognitive Markedness Constraint* (Turell 1997), which, in turn, is based on the *Cognitive Markedness Constraint*, proposed by Fontana & Vallduví (1990).

##### 4.1.1.1. The LIIM Predictions

As to the interplay between internal and external factors, the most important factors that may prove to be significant in the context of this model are language typology, L2 competence, and degree of contact. The following is a complete description of the predictions made by the LIIM:

###### Prediction [1]

Intrasentential codeswitching will appear in individuals and later on be extended to the community if the following factors coincide: quite high L2 competence, language proximity, cultural proximity, high contact, positive attitudes, communicative needs, need for upward mobility, open community or open settlement, youth and female.

###### Prediction [2]

It is predicted that codeswitching will be less extensive, if present at all, with the following speaker profile: a speaker of a typologically-distant language, from a culturally-distant community of a very *endogamic* type, and therefore with low degree of contact, negative or neutral attitudes, no socio-psychological motivations for mobility and no communicative needs.

The *Language Typology/Cognitive Markedness Constraint* was hypothesised to account for the significance of the interplay between language typology and cognitive factors, the predictions are: a) that when codeswitching occurs between typologically-distant languages, the number of lexical codeswitches will be higher than that of grammatical ones, b) that when grammatical codeswitching is used, speakers make use of other linguistic strategies to avoid complex grammatical encoding of the other language, and c) that when codeswitching occurs between typologically-close languages, both lexical and grammatical codeswitching will be used, particularly when speakers use it as a pragmatically marked choice (Turell 1997).

We are aware of the fact that a language pair like English and Spanish (and Catalan, in this case) is typologically not very diverse and provides relatively few kinds of cognitively marked syntactic contexts, so it does not constitute an optional test bed for this constraint. However, we think that the distinctions between the different types of constituent proposed for the analysis, couched in Myers-Scotton's MLF model, discussed below, may still prove to be significant in relation to the Language Typology/Cognitive Markedness Constraint.

#### 4.1.2. The Matrix Language Frame Model

The MLF model is lexically and cognitively based and is built on two sets of distinctions: first, Matrix Language (the one that sets out the grammatical frame) versus Embedded Language; and second, content versus system morphemes (as defined by Myers-Scotton).

The MLF model contemplates the following patterns of codeswitching:

- a) mixed constituent [ML + EL], i.e. a lexical insertion of EL congruent<sup>4</sup> morpheme(s).
- b) EL island, i.e. lexical and structural insertion of EL non-congruent morpheme(s).
- c) ML islands, i.e. a change of ML.

The cognitive operation behind the MLF model entails different levels that we present succinctly:

1. The lexical-conceptual structure, whereby, at a conceptual level, abstract lexical entries (i.e. lemmas) are selected according to speakers' intentions; these entries contain all the structural information required to set the grammatical frame.
2. The predicate-argument structure, which involves the mapping of thematic roles and phrase structure.
3. Morphological realisation patterns, which are responsible for the establishment of the surface order and the insertion of functional elements, etc.

The outcome of the operations carried out at the three levels is always one of the three patterns (a-c) described above: a mixed constituent (ML+ EL; when the two grammars are congruent and therefore are able to coexist), an EL island (when the two grammars are non-congruent and therefore accommodation strategies are required to allow for their coexistence), or an ML island (when a different ML is activated).

#### 4.2. A proposal for the integration of syntactic calques in the MLF

The insights of Myers-Scotton's framework and sociolinguistic parameters such as degree of bilingualism and degree of contact in Turell's framework have allowed us to analyse syntactic calque, a well-known language interaction phenomenon, from a completely

<sup>4</sup> An EL morpheme is congruent when its grammar does not clash with that of the ML's.

novel perspective. In fact, we will argue here that syntactic calque should be recategorised as a specific type of codeswitching. To this purpose, we will propose a fourth constituent, type (d), to cover cases of syntactic calque. Calque is a further outcome of the same cognitive process that yields codeswitching, but which consists in switching back to the L1 lexicon once the L2 frame has been set, resulting in what we call an EL structural island. This mechanism accounts for instances such as:

- (1) they had an awful lot of problems trying to **integrate themselves** into their work, so... (mf/93/EC)
- (2) ya no abrian **los días de cada día** (12/87/CC)  
[they didn't open on week days]

The ML of sentences (1) and (2) are English and Spanish, respectively. The fragments where the phenomena occur have been generated by the EL — Catalan or Spanish, and Catalan, respectively — but filled in with ML lexical items.

In the light of the corpus data, EL structural islands appear to be possible only if the ML morpholexical items within the island (both system and content items) stand in a one-to-one correspondence between morphemes in the respective language pairs. In this sense, the fragment *integrate themselves* has a direct counterpart in Spanish or Catalan: *integrar + se*; and the same applies to the other fragment, where *los días de cada día* would correspond to the Catalan string *els + dies + de + cada + dia*.

The corpus samples analysed show that both corpora are mainly monolingual, and that in the case of the English Corpus the switches involve quite short stretches (usually one-word), while in the case of the La Canonja Corpus the switched stretches may involve more than one item.

Although the aim of this paper is, on the one hand, to argue for the need of a global approach to analyse language language interaction (Turell 1997), in this case a specific type of codeswitching, and not to give a detailed account of this analysis, and on the other hand, to frame codeswitching within

Myers-Scotton's Matrix language Frame Model (1993b) it seems relevant to mention that the preliminary study of the two corpora under consideration confirmed that high contact consultants tend to favour a) both **proper-type** and **common-type** switches, b) code-switches of both **more cognitively costly type** (bare NPs, NPs within NPs, NPs within prepNPs) and **less cognitively costly type** (bare nouns, nouns in NPs, nouns in prepNPs) grammatical forms, c) code-switches occurring in both **immediate and peripheral constituents** (subject, adjunct apposition), and **more complex arguments** (object), d) both **context-free** and **context-bound**, while average and low contact informants tend to favour a) **proper-type** switches, b) **less cognitively costly** grammatical forms (bare noun, noun within NPs, noun within prepNPs), c) switches occurring in **immediate and peripheral constituents** (subject, adjunct, apposition), d) **context-bound** switches, and e) more **smooth** than **flagged**.<sup>5</sup>

## 5. Examples

### La Canonja Corpus

- ML + EL constituent
- (5) ya puedes **rodolar** mejor (12/87/CC)  
[you can **roll** better]
- ML island
- (6) y entonces me dijeron sí sí **vinga** el lunes ya puede usted empregar (02/87/CC)  
[and then they said sure sure **ok then** you can begin on Monday]
- EL structural island
- (7) amigos, yo tengo bastantes en general **de amigos** (12/87/CC)  
[friends, I do have quite a few generally speaking **of friends**]

### English Corpus

- ML + EL constituent
- (8) I want these people on twelve-month **residencia** (fa/93/EC)

<sup>5</sup> For a complete account of the results see Turell (1995) and Turell and Corcoll (1998).

- [I want these people on twelve-month **residency**]
- EL island
  - (9) making an extract popper **más fuerte** and making the patio (fa/93/EC)  
[making an extract popper **more powerful** and making the patio]
  - ML island
  - (10) Are you sure? Smoke, **va**, come on (mf/93/EC)  
[Are you sure? Smoke, **come on**, come on]
  - EL structural island
  - (11) the man she married had a daughter **of 12 years old** (fa/93/EC)  
[the man she married had a **12 year-old** daughter]

## 6. Hypotheses

On the basis of the two models that have been considered, four hypotheses can be formulated:

1. It is expected that the most frequent codeswitching will be the mixed constituent ((ML + EL) which can be explained in terms of higher degree of competence in the L2 and a greater ability to keep L1 and L2 grammars separate), followed by the ML island.
2. It is expected that the percentage of those codeswitching constituents which are more cognitively costly (e.g. the EL island and the EL structural island) will be higher in the relatively more typologically-distant pair of languages, in other words, English versus Spanish or Catalan.
3. It is expected that the highest distribution of switched constituents will appear among high-contact and average-contact speakers.
4. It is expected that highest L2 competence would correlate with switching of cognitively most costly constituents.

## 7. Results and discussion

As mentioned, the results presented in this study are not entirely conclusive due, among other reasons, to the limited size of the corpus which, indeed, reflects an uneven distribution of data; however, we still think that the figures included in table 1 show some interesting patterns that need to be further analysed.

LA CANONJA CORPUS										
	ML + EL		EL island		EL struct. island		ML island		TOTAL	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
High	82.1	23	100	1	33.3	3	66.6	6	70.2	33
Aver	14.2	4	0	0	55.5	5	33.3	3	25.5	12
Low	3.5	1	0	0	11.1	1	0	0	4.2	2
Total	59.5	28	2.1	1	19.1	9	19.1	9	59.9	47

ENGLISH CORPUS										
	ML + EL		E L island		EL struct. island		M L island		TOTAL	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
High	71.8	74	50	3	7.6	1	0	0	63.4	78
Aver	12.6	13	0	0	77	10	100	1	19.5	24
Low	15.5	16	50	3	15.3	2	0	0	17	21
Total	89.7	103	4	6	10.5	13	0.8	1	99.9	123

Table 1. Distribution of phenomena by communities and index of contact.



One interesting result has to do with overall figures in terms of the N (total number of language interaction phenomena) produced by the three speakers in each of the two corpora considered. As table 1 shows, the N in the La Canonja Corpus is 47, while the N in the English Corpus is 123. These results can be explained not only in terms of individual differences but are also attributable to the different nature of the contact situation from which the data derive.

In the case of the La Canonja Corpus, a long-term contact situation like the Catalan-Spanish one, favours language interaction, but at the same time the existing interethnic conflict between the members of the two speech communities involved, the indigenous Catalan and the Andalusian immigrant, favours the need to keep the two languages as separate as possible and avoid language interaction altogether.

In the case of the English Corpus an explanation for the high frequency of language interaction is the positive attitude towards the host community languages and the host communities themselves by the members of the English-speaking minority communities involved.

Another interesting overall result has to do with degree of contact. The figures included on the right hand side of Table 1 illustrate that in both corpora it is the high contact speaker (70.2% in the La Canonja Corpus and 63.4% in the English Corpus), followed by the average contact speaker (25.5% in the La Canonja Corpus and 19.5% in the English Corpus), that shows the highest percentage of codeswitches, a result that seems to confirm our third hypothesis.

If types of constituents are considered by corpus, interesting patterns are observed regarding the correlation between degree of contact and L2 competence. In the La Canonja Corpus, the figures obtained are expected since the highest proportion of the ML + EL constituent (82.1%) and the ML island (66.6%) appear in the high contact speaker. In the English Corpus the highest distribution appears in the high contact speaker only as regards to the ML + EL constituent (71.8%). This high frequency of occurrence of a mixed

constituent was already expected since this type of phenomenon can be explained by appealing to a higher degree of competence in the L2 and, therefore, to a greater ability to keep the two grammars separate. In this sense, a greater command of the L2 grammar will allow the process (as defined in section 4.1.b.) to occur and license the existence of a given congruent EL constituent.

Our second hypothesis, that is, that typologically more distant pairs of languages would trigger the most cognitively costly constituents is confirmed by the use of EL structural islands in the English Corpus, but in fact the most interesting results have to do with the correlation between this type of constituent and degree of contact. Table 1 shows that in both corpora it is the informants with an average degree of contact that present a higher frequency of EL structural islands.

This can be explained by the fact that, although these speakers are competent enough to make a switch to the L2 (thus allowing for the activation of the L2 grammar by salient L2 lemmas), they are still going through a language acquisition stage (first and second language acquisition sense of Piaget (1952) and Meisel, Clahsen, & Pienemann (1981), respectively) where the separation between the two grammars cannot always be handled successfully, and so there may be cases where the grammar slots generated by the L2 lemmas are filled in with L1 lexical items, as has already been proposed. This may be due to two facts: first, informants with an average index of contact receive similar amounts of input from both languages, thus the divide between the two grammars is not so clear-cut, which may result in a provisional interlanguage; second, the similar levels of input from L1 and L2 may favour a situation where L2 lemmas are more salient and consequently are taken as the abstract building blocks that will generate the grammatical structure of the EL structural island. Taking all this into account, the saliency of the L2 lemmas need not be correlated with a high degree of competence, but with a higher index of contact. Hence, we argue that degree of competence and index of contact should not be directly identified.

## 8. Conclusions

This paper argues that there is a need to consider language interaction in a variety of social environments and from various linguistic perspectives. Indeed, comparative analysis and the results presented will have proven that there is evidence for such a need. Especially, in view of the conceptualisation of EL structural islands put forward here to account for a phenomenon not contemplated as such in Myers-Scotton's MLF model.

In our comparative analysis we used the lexically-based MLF cognitive model to situate the variable from a structural point of view and the multifactorial integrated LIIM model to account for the observed interplay between internal linguistic factors and external (sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive) factors. The pairs of languages involved are not so different in terms of language typology. A discussion of typological distance and its important role in language interaction is beyond the scope of this paper; that is why the types of switched constituents attested in both corpora are basically the same. Therefore, the difference in frequency can only be explained by appealing to sociolinguistic factors. These sociolinguistic factors correlate with psycholinguistic and cognitive processes which ultimately shape the modality of discourse which characterises a specific speech community. This could lead, over time, to the establishment of *inter-languages* (Selinker, 1972; Ellis, 1985), which provide the basis for linguistic change. That is, a particular phenomenon such as an EL structural island, which at a given time was just the product of language interaction, can eventually settle and become part of the L1 grammar of a second generation speaker.

Finally, we hope that this paper has shown that the study of languages in contact is not marginal in the broad field of variation, and that this study can help shed light on the nature of linguistic structure and on the psycholinguistic implications of language interaction.

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