Toward a Study of Transplanted Languages

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The history of 'transplanted languages', i.e. languages, exported from their original habitat and developing in a new sociocultural and geographic environment, provides insightful material for linguistics. Linguistic situations, where transplanted languages evolve and function, are a natural experimental laboratory revealing the impact of a number of social and functional variables on the development of language. They supply the linguist with extremely valuable data for a strictly differential study of external and internal factors as they affect linguistic changes.

Of particular interest in this connection is the history of some European languages, brought by European colonial expansion to some other continents where they formed distinct varieties of the 'old country's language', described in Soviet linguistics as 'national variants'. Among them English and Spanish in America deserve special mention [1].

While maintaining essential unity with the old country's language, these new varieties of English and Spanish display a number of distinctive features, reflecting certain divergent trends, brought about by new conditions of their existence.

Yet the fate of these transplants is not the same. The social roles and functions of Spanish in Latin America and English in the United States are in many respects dissimilar. Differences in the 'external history' of these languages could not fail to affect their present status and sociofunctional characteristics. The common and distinctive features, revealed between different types of linguistic transplants as well as between each

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[1] STEPANOV, G. V. (1963), *Ispanskij jazyk v stranax Latinskoi Ameriki.* Moscow; STEPANOV, G. V. (1979), *K probleme jazykovogo var'irovanija. Ispanskij jazyk Ispanii i Ameriki.* Moscow; ŠVEJCER, A. D. (1963), *Očerk sovremennogo anglijskogo jazyka v SŠA.* Moscow; ŠVEJCER, A. D. (1971), *Literaturnij anglijskij jazyk v SŠA i Anglii.* Moscow (published in English: *Standard English in the United States and England.* The Hague, 1978).

of them and the old country's language, make it possible to broaden and deepen our knowledge of the typology of linguistic situations.

Let us examine some characteristic features of English in the USA and the linguistic situation in which this linguistic transplant is functioning.

(1) English in the USA is one of the national variants of English. It is characterized by a totality of features, inherent in a 'national variant' as a sociolinguistic entity. In the first place, it performs the maximum range of all the social functions, typical of a national language (an official language, a language of culture, science and office work, a language of mass media, a language of everyday communication, etc.). It reproduces in its hierarchy the entire structure of a national language — from territorial and social dialects to the literary standard. And yet it is regarded by the community of its users as an entity, possessing a number of distinctive features, but not so different from English in Great Britain as to be considered a different (non-English) language. It is a typical feature of the linguistic situation in the Englishspeaking countries that Englishmen, Americans, Canadians, Australians and others, much as some of them tend to overemphasize the linguistic differences between their particular varieties of English, are aware of their membership in a single linguistic community. The fact that English in the USA is a variety of English rather than a distinct language is borne out both by the subjective attitudes of the speakers and the objective measurements of the linguistic distance, separating them from British English.

(2) A linguistic comparison of American English with British English points to an absolute predominance of their common core, comprising not only similar but, in the first place, identical elements. At all levels of language structure differences, affecting variants of linguistic units, outnumber those, affecting the inventory of units themselves. Most of the differences amount to a different functional use of the same units. It is significant that in grammar and word formation there are differences in the inventory of constitutive units while at the phonological level they affect a small number of phonemes with a minimal functional load.

(3) These varieties of English exhibit the closest unity at the level of standard language. It is no coincidence for North America was colonized when the formation of a national standard language in England had been essentially completed. The influence of standard English and its codified norms on all the territorial varieties of English including those spoken in the crown colonies overseas was great indeed. Over a long period of time American schoolchildren kept using grammars, written in England, while the most prestigious reference book in lexicography was the famous dictionary, compiled by the Englishman Samuel Johnson. The vast majority of the changes which affected Standad English in Britain, were duplicated in American English.

(4) Though most of the changes which affected all the teritorial varieties of English were parallel, some changes which originated in England did not reach the periphery of the English-speaking community, including Britain's North-American colonies, or reached them only partially. In fact, a number, of disctinctive features of American English are relics of the past. The articulation of the post-vocalic /r/, the weak diphtongization of /ei/ and /ou/, traceable to the early Modern English monophthongs /e:/ and /o:/, the existence of some word forms, such as *gotten*, and the use of such lexical items as *homely* ('unattractive') are all features of Standard English in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Nevertheless, one can hardly agree with those who tend to view all specific features of American English as relics of the Early Modern English period[2]. While preserving a number of recessive features, American English has also introduced a number of innovations of its own. This was convincingly demonstrated by the West German scholar H. Pilch[3] who, among other things, refuted the popular view concerning the American /æ/ in *half, grass, aunt* as a relic of the Elizabethan era. In fact, the neutralization in American English of the Early Modern English opposition /æ: ~ æ/ is an innovation while the opposition of the long /ɑ:/ to the short /æ/ in British English is closer to the phonological pattern of the Early Modern English period.

(5) The social stratification of English in the USA is characterized by the opposition of Standard American English to social and territorial or rather socioregional and socioethnic dialects. Standard American English has a different degree of variability at different levels. The greatest variability is found at the phonological level with its complex interaction of Standard English with dialects. Yet the national standard seems to be gaining ground at this level as a result of the expansion of one of the regional types ('Mid-Western'). According to the data of American sociolinguists, orientation toward the standard language norms is more pronounced among middle class speakers. Meanwhile, there is diglossia at all levels of social structure with competition between standard and dialect forms, based on code switching, determined by the social situation. A number of social factors (migration and urbanization of the population, the public education system, mass media, etc.) undermine the positions of socioregional dialects of New England, the Midland area and the South-East as well as such socioethnic dialects as Black English, spoken by the lower social strata of the Negro population.

(6) The ethnic situation in the United States has always been characterized by the predominance of Anglo-Saxon culture. The reference group, embodying the norms and values of American society, has been increasingly

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2 Horwill, M. W. (1936), *American variations*. SPE Tract No. XLY. Oxford.
3 Pilch, H. (1955), «The rise of the American English vowel pattern», *Word* 11.

identified with those who are commonly known as White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs)[4]. National and racial discrimination against Indians, Blacks and immigrants has been expressed, among other things, in social attitudes toward the languages of these ethnic groups. Borrowings from these languages into American English are not very numerous and occupy a marginal place in its vocabulary. For example, borrowings from Amerindian languages embrace an extremely restricted conceptual area (the fauna and flora of the American continent, some cultural and everyday realia etc. — *moose, racoon, chinkapin, wigwan*, etc.). Bilingualism among the immigrants is a transient rather than stable phenomenon on the way toward complete linguistic assimilation. The immigrants, using English in addition to the old country's language, have a complementary distribution pattern of their use. In the course of assimilation the use of the old country's language is increasingly restricted to church and family[5].

(7) The Americans' attitude toward British English has undergone radical changes. At first, it was viewed as the only possible model while Americanisms were considered vulgarisms and language errors. Even such a thoroughly educated leader of the American Revolution as Benjamin Franklin opposed the contamination of English with Americanisms. Later on, as the national self-awareness of the American people began to grow, so did the social prestige of their own variety of English. This was reflected in the new attitudes of the leaders of American culture. In one of his lectures ('An American Primer') Walt Whitman called for a dictionary of American English. In his essay *Concerning the American Language* Mark Twain viewed Americanisms as perfectly legitimate phenomena, reflecting the southward and westward movements of the American people.

The present period witnesses a certain re-assessment of values. Formerly it was British English that played a leading role in its interaction with American English due to its higher social prestige while now it is American English that exerts the greatest influence upon the other varieties of the English language, including British English. A tangible contribution to the considerable penetration of Americanisms into British English is being made by the mass media, including the British press. The so-called 'quality press' tends to favour Americanisms, filling a denotational gap while the 'popular press' prefers expressive Americanisms, including slangisms[6].

Unique historical, economic, cultural, political and linguistic developments, involved in the formation of Romanic ethnic groups a n d nations in Europe and the colonial expansion policy, leading to the 'secondary

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[4] BOGINA, Š. A. (1976), *Immigrantskoe naselenie SŠA*, Moscow: 230.

[5] BOGINA 1976: 224-225.

[6] USOV, W. G. (1978), *Sociolingvističeskij analiz otbora i funkcionirovanija smerikaniz-mov v jazyke britanskoi gazety*. Avtoreferat kandidatskoi dissertacii. Moscow. Cf. also: PANTEN, G. (1959), *Amerikanismen in Manchester Guardian Weekly*. München.

Romanization', extended to vast territories beyond the European continent, brought about several types of Romance language situations. The most peculiar of these is the situation that arose in Latin America. It is characterized by:

(a) the existence of autonomous national languages within individual states (Spanish as an official language in some twenty countries, Portuguese in Brasil);

(b) diverse types and forms of contacts, leading to various forms of bilingualism (including 'complete' bilingualism in Paraguay where Spanish and Guaraní are both official languages);

(c) considerable influence of English not only in colloquial speech (e.g. in Mexico, in Puerto Rico with a special term *englañol* for a hybrid 'English + español' but also in writing, chiefly in terminology (scientific, technical, sociopolitical, commercial). The influence of English in Cuba has recently shown a marked downward trend;

(d) different forms of relationships with the former 'mother country's language' — from orientation toward cultural unity and linguistic integration to separatist trends, particularly explicit in 'linguistic nationalism' (these phenomena are conspicuous in such countries as Argentina, Brasil, etc.).

Modern Spanish is a totality of sub-systems. Realizations of the words *cocer* and *coser* as [koθer] and [koser] are both unquestionably Spanish but are part of different sub-systems and different norms. [koθer] and [koser] are differentiated in Pyrenean Spanish but in the Argentinian, Uruguayan and other American varieties this opposition is cancelled by dephonologization /θ/ : /s/ > /s/. Any speaker of Spanish as a user of a particular sub-system is at the same time involved in the overall system of Spanish as a single language. Should a Spanish tourist in Mexico come a cross the sign VENTAS AL MAYOREO Y MENUDEO, he will understand the unfamilar forms *mayoreo* and *menudeo* since they are related to the familiar *-eo* wordbuilding patterns but they would seem strange, uncommon and unusual for they are absent in the Pyrenean norm (particularly *mayoreo* for there is no such verb as *mayorear* while there is *menudear*).

Variation within the same language becomes possible both due to linguistic resources proper and due to a variety of factors of an extralinguistic, cultural and historical nature.

(1) Most of the divergences arise from the choice of optional variants at the norm level. Typical in this respect is the choice between the 'normal' realizations of the phoneme /s/ in America (and in Andalusia) where it is realized as the predorsal [s] and in Spain where it is realized as the apico-alveolar [ś]. In Old Spanish the phoneme /f/ could be represented by two sounds: [f] and [h]; orientation towards one variant or the other could make it an important dialect feature.

(2) The neutralization of phonemic oppositions as well as any positional alternations are also part of the language norm for they are not imperative in the overall language system. «Mechanical realization variants» may and, indeed, do become distinctive features of territorial and social varieties. Thus the aspirated [h] as a positional variant of the phoneme /s/ at the end of a syllable (especially before *k)* has become an important distinctive feature of Urugayan speech at all social levels.

Optional variants at the norm level (an objective norm), realized and adopted in some community, may become an axiologinorm and become mandatory for a given linguistic community.

(3) An independent choice may also take place at the system level with the aid of isofunctional elements. The form *habia amado* was isofunctional in relation to the older *amara* over a long period of time. Since the *-ra* forms were used in conditional clauses, they began to acquire a subjunctive meaning. As a result, forms of the *habia amado* type became the only regular forms of the past perfect indicative. In America out of the two subjunctive forms *(-ra* and *-se)* the *-ra* form is clearly preferred, and, what is more, the former competition between the forms *habia amado* and *amaro* has not found there a radical ('Pyrenean') solution. In America the *canté* forms tend to supplant the *he cantado* forms as distinct from the Madrid vernacular where the situation is just the reverse.

The suffixes *-ito* and *-illo* are isofuctional in terms of expressing diminutive and other connotations. In American Spanish *-ito* is used more extensively as a form-building element than in Spain. As a result, *-illo* becomes more active as a word-building element. According to A. Malaret for 98 instances of words (not forms!), built with the aid of the suffix *-illo*, there are only 20 words, using the suffix *-ito* (as, for example, *vaquita* 'insect' from *vaca* 'cow').

The differentiation of the choice types ('at the norm level', 'at the system level') as well as the use of the term 'choice' are somewhat conventional. The interaction of structures (the system and the norm, according to E. COSERIU), in fact, does not permit one to be isolated from the other. Nothing can appear in the system, unless it has already existed in the norm while a change of the norm is nothog but the realization of an opportunity, already inherent in the system. The distinction is drawn in order to make it clear that 'normative' rather than system changes are typical of variation within a single language as distinct from different (divergent) languages.

It should be noted that variants at the norm level may acquire a functional character. The notion of the functional (distinctive) character of normative phenomena arises when comparing the facts of one norm (in the same social environment, in the same territory) with those of another[7]. In this sense the American predorsal [s] is functionally loaded

[7] COSERIU, E. (1963), *Sinxronija, diaxronija i istorija.* In: *Novoe v lingvistike,* III. Moscow: 176.

for it is opposed to the Castilian apico-alveolar /ś/. It should be stressed, however, that the opposition of 'normal' variants in a single community may serve to distinguish speech styles and reflect the social differentiation of the linguistic community.

(4) The choice may be based on the possible use of elements of different (territorial and social) sub-systems of the Spanish language. Interaction between elements, characterizing heterogeneous traditions, is a continuous process precisely because Spanish, like any other historical language, is a totality of sub-systems. Therefore interference may take different forms in different Spanish-language zones. In the American variety, colonial in origin, interference plays a more important role than in the 'stationary' Pyrenean variety. For instance, a number of lexical items, common to the speakers of American Spanish, correspond to different dialect sub-sytems of Spanish Spanish.

(5) Selection from foreign language systems is another source of variability. This, in fact, amounts to lexical borrowings from foreign languages. The use of a foreign word in its foreign form is an exceptional case, resembling bilingualism. In the Spanish-American and European varieties with a strong cultural tradition these are just a few isolated cases. In Sephardic where the cultural tradition has been considerably undermined such cases are very common.

(6) A number of linguistic facts, differentiating Spanish as a single language, can hardly be associated with choice for there may be no variants for choice. A developing language always produces new elements which are not everywhere immediately accepted. After being accepted in one language community they may remain unknown or be rejected in another. These innovations should be divided into two types: (a) innovations which always conform to the possibilities of the Spanish language system («correct innovations»); (b) innovations, violating or distorting systemic patterns («incorrect innovations»). This division seems to be of some use for in Hispanistics in general and in Hispanic Americanistics in particular the question of «correctness» and «incorrectness» is extremely complicated.