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LANGUAGE, GENDER, AND COMMUNITY IN AMERICAN FICTION AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

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NO ABSTRACT

BORROWING AS SCAFFOLDING

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ABSTRACT. This article explores the use of English lexical borrowings in Spanish as scaffolding (Oller 1993) for Spanish-speaking learners of English. After a discussion of the distinction between cognate and borrowing, the results of an empirical study are presented that demonstrate that preparatory-school and university students in the northern Mexican city of Monterrey are familiar with a large number of recent English borrowings in Spanish. It is argued that these words should be used in pedagogical materials especially in the lower levels in order to provide learners with much-needed scaffolding. The article concludes with a discussion of the value of 'mixed-language' exercises and classrooms.

SYMMETRIES AND ASYMMETRIES IN THE ACQUISITION OF BASQUE INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY BY SPANISH-SPEAKING CHILDREN AND ADULTS

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ABSTRACT. Basque auxiliary verbs encode tense and agreement relations with the ergative, absolutive, and dative arguments. These morphemes constitute an inflectional verbal amalgam whose acquisition is not problematic for Spanish-speaking children; for Spanish-speaking adults, however, this verbal morphology has caused many difficulties in the acquisition of Basque L2. This asymmetry, we claim, is due to the different processes by which the inflectional amalgam is acquired by both groups. Specifically, native speakers of Basque contemplate the inflectional amalgam as a single unit, and this perception is still available for children learning Basque L2, while adults build the inflectional form by associating the pertinent argument features with the different particles that encode them on the auxiliaries. On the other hand, adults and children share

a similar degree of difficulty in the acquisition of ergative marking on the subject. In this regard, we propose that there is a correlation between the nature of ergative marking in Basque and that of quirky case or of dative case marking of Romance inversion predicates.

GENDER MARKING IN A DIALECT OF SOUTHWEST SPANISH

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ABSTRACT. Much of the literature regarding Southwest Spanish suggests that gender agreement with nouns is being lost, resulting in the simplification of one aspect of grammar. This study treats gender as an inherent grammatical feature of nouns and views its effects in syntax as 'traces' (i.e. -o and -a as masculine and feminine agreement markers respectively) resulting from the rules of article and adjective agreement. Tape-recorded data from 11 Spanish speakers in San Antonio, Texas are considered. Tabulations of agreement traces in 904 noun phrases show that gender agreement is neither random nor largely nonstandard. Interestingly, while the transparency of the noun ending with respect to gender correlates highly with standard gender assignment and agreement, non-transparent endings reflect only a slightly lower percentage of standard agreement. Although problema 'problem' was assigned feminine gender, consistent with transparency-based gender assignment and contrary to its assignment in the standard dialect, gender traces for this and other lexical items suggest that gender marking is a rule still observed by this dialect.

RECYCLED MORPHEMES AND GRAMMATICALIZATION: THE HEBREW COPULA AND PRONOUN

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ABSTRACT. This paper presents an example of a type of grammaticalization that does not conform to normal expectations of unidirectionality. The Biblical Hebrew third person singular pronouns are grammaticalizations from the verbal root 'to be'. In Modern Hebrew, the zero copula in equative clauses has come to be replaced by these same pronouns. Hence we have the following progression: copula to pronoun to copula. The implications for grammaticalization theory are far reaching. Since iterations are potentially unlimited, unidirectional application of the grammaticalization process does not rule out the recycling of morphemes.

WE COULD MAKE A BOOK: THE TEXTUAL TRADITION OF NAVAJO LANGUAGE LITERACY 1940-1990

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ABSTRACT. Ann Nolan Clark, a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) teacher in the 1930s describes her third grade classroom: 'We could make a book. We could build it day by day from the things we knew. This would show the children surely that a book is only the keeping place for the things we know and understand and can use' (1969:110). Robert W. Young and William Morgan worked with Ann Nolan Clark and Willard Beatty to produce the first volume of the Navajo Life Reading Series, a bilingual fairy tale entitled Who Wants to be a Prairie Dog?, which was published in 1940. Illustrator Van Tsihnahjinnie writes, 'I like to use my imagination. When I was a boy my mother used to tell me Navajo legends of animals similar to this story.' (Tsihnahjinnie 1940:67). Between 1940 and 1950, 27 titles were published in Navajo.