DIMINUTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN BILINGUAL SPEECH: A CASE STUDY OF SPANISH-ENGLISH CODESWITCHING.

Abstract

The diminutive construction is formed and used differently in Spanish and English, which leads us to the question how this construction with different morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic characteristics in the input languages is governed in Spanish-English bilingual and codeswitching speech. Through the analysis of a dataset of diminutive constructions extracted from the Bangor Miami corpus, this paper contributes to a better understanding of how one and the same construction differently represented in the input languages is administered in bilingual contexts. As this is a first approach to studying diminutives in codeswitching, three well known structural codeswitching models serve as a primary theoretical tool against which the diminutive is tested. These are Poplack's Universal Constraints (1980), Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model (2002), and Blom and Gumperz' Metaphorical Codeswitching Framework (1972). The results show that Miami bilinguals prefer the prototypical markers of each language, *-ito* and *little* (e.g. *un partimecito, un little estante*). Furthermore, while the data largely confirm Poplack's Constraints, they refute our hypothesis based on Myers-Scotton's MLF model. Regarding Gumperz' theory, the use of diminutive markers in a particular language correlates with a certain meaning the speaker wants to communicate (i.e. quantitative or qualitative), which again provides support to the framework.

1. Introduction

Codeswitching, the alternating use of (at least) two languages within a conversation, is a commonly occurring linguistic phenomenon in bilingual communities where two or more languages stand in contact (Montés Alcalá 2000). Generally, two types of codeswitching can be distinguished: while intersentential codeswitching alludes to switching languages between sentences, intrasentential codeswitching denotes switching within clauses (Deuchar 2006). The form, and especially the (un)grammaticality, of intrasentential codeswitching has been studied for decades by sociolinguists and theoretical linguists (i.a. Poplack 1980; 2004; Lipski 2005; 2011; Myers-Scotton 1993; 2002; 2006; Bullock and Toribio 2009; MacSwan 2014). An established practice to address these matters is the examination of switches at 'conflict sites', structures in which the grammars of both input languages differ (Poplack and Meechan 1998, 132). Recurrent conflict sites in Spanish-

English codeswitching studies are morphosyntactic phenomena as word order (relatively free vs. strict; Chan 2008), the use of subject pronouns (pro-drop or not; González-Vilbazo and Koronkiewicz 2016), and gender agreement within noun phrases (analogical vs. default strategy; Valdés Kroff 2016).

Other linguistic phenomena have not yet or only scarcely been tackled in this research domain, though they could deliver valuable insights into bilingual and codeswitching grammar. On this account, this paper looks into the morphology and semantics of the diminutive construction in Spanish-English bilingual contexts. Following Mintsys and Mintsys (2015, 30-31), the diminutive is defined as a conceptual category consisting of (morpho)syntactic structures which can express a reduction (e.g. *a tiny box*), but also affective connotations towards the referent (e.g. *my granny*). As the diminutive shows differences on a morphosyntactic and semantic-pragmatic level in monolingual Spanish and English (Enghels and Vanhaverbeke 2020), it is interesting to examine how this construction is used in Spanish-English codeswitching. As such, this study contributes to a better understanding of bilingual processes, specifically of how constructions with different features in the input languages are governed in bilingual and codeswitching contexts.

In line with this central theme, the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the diminutive as a testing ground for investigating bilingual, including codeswitching, settings. It looks into the implementation of the diminutive in both monolingual and bilingual contexts. Three codeswitching models serve as theoretical tools to provide a first descriptive account of this construction in Spanish-English codeswitching. Section 3 elaborates on the methodological aspect of this investigation. It provides details on the data collection and sets out the parameters for analysis. Section 4 examines the use and formation of diminutives in Spanish-English bilingual contexts. The three codeswitching models are applied to the diminutive construction and it is verified to what extent they account for the cases observed in the corpus. Finally, section 5 offers a discussion and conclusion to the article.

2. The diminutive in monolingual and bilingual contexts

The diminutive is considered a near-universal linguistic primitive (Jurafsky 1996; Nieuwenhuis 1985), since its semantic and pragmatic functions are cross-linguistically shared. Common definitions refer to the diminutive as a morphological category of suffixes which evaluate the size and/or quantity of the referent they are attached to (Ponsonnet 2018; Schneider 2013). These definitions, however, only take into account the prototypical[1] (i.e. synthetic) marker and its traditional semantic (quantitative) meaning of reduction

(Schneider 2013). Nevertheless, the affective (i.e. qualitative) aspect is a just as prominent feature of diminutives cross-linguistically, "so important […] that in many cases the meaning of 'smallness' becomes relatively unimportant" (Nieuwenhuis 1985, 1). The diminutive can serve to convey positive attitudes towards the referent expressed by the base, such as endearment, appreciation, sympathy, and more (e.g. *my hubby*), but it can just as well attribute pejorative feelings (e.g. *a stupid little strike*) (Stepanov 2020). Moreover, the diminutive can even acquire relational values when used to influence the reaction of the interlocutor towards the speaker's discourse (Padilla Cruz 2020; Reynoso Noverón 2005). For instance, in (1a) the speaker uses the diminutive to come across as polite. Example (1b) shows the use of the diminutive as a mitigating device that attenuates the speaker's statement. In concrete, the friend is described as not too young, but not old either. In (1c) the speaker uses the diminutive to compare her friend's physique with a thin pole, enabling the interlocutor to share this mental image of how the speaker perceives her friend (i.e. the referent).

(1a) *Quieren* ***cafe-cit-o***[2] *(.)* *antes de* *empezar?*
You.want coffee.CN.M:-DIM.SX-M[SG][3] before to start
'Do you want any coffee before you start?' (Sastre5)[4]

(1b) *Tengo una amiga que tiene treinta y siete años (…) tú sabes*
I.have a friend that has thirty-seven years you know
ahí que no es (.) ***joven-cit-a*** *pero tampoco es vieja.*
that.way that NEG is young.ADJ-DIM.SX-F[SG] but neither is old
'I have a friend who's thirty-seven years old, you know so she's not that young but she's not old either.' (Zeledon8)

(1c) *Es flaquita como* ***un*** ***pal-it-o*** *de tanta*
She.is thin:DIM:SX:F[SG] as a pole.CN.M-DIM.SX-M[SG] of so.much
yoga que hace.
yoga that she.does.
'She is as thin as a pole/rake from all the yoga she does.' (Zeledon8)

This richness of diminutive values logically results in the difficult application of a categorical classification. In this respect, the context serves as a critical factor to determine what is conveyed with the diminutive instantiation (Reynoso Noverón 2005; Stepanov 2020).

Additionally, apart from synthetic markers[5], diminutives can just as well be constructed through periphrastic constructions (e.g. art + *little, small, tiny, etc.* + N ; *a little*

(bit) + ADJ/ADV) (Schneider 2003). As such, even though the diminutive is considered a near-universal semantic primitive, its formal expressions may strongly diverge across languages, as is the case in Spanish and English.

2.1. The Spanish diminutive

Spanish speakers regularly use diminutive expressions, especially in oral, colloquial conversations. The Spanish language disposes of an extensive inventory of diminutive markers, composed of derivational affixes which can be added to a wide range of grammatical categories, such as nouns (*gat-it-o* 'little cat'), adjectives (*verde-cit-o* 'greenish'), adverbs (*ahí mism-it-o* 'right there'), and even verb forms (*andand-it-o* 'strolling'). In particular, the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE 2011) documents the following suffixes as diminutive markers: *-ito*[6] with allomorphs *-cito, -ecito; -illo* with allomorphs *-cillo, -ecillo; -ico* with allomorphs *-cico, -ecico; -uelo* with allomorphs *-zuelo, -ezuelo; -ín, -ino, iño; -ejo; -ete;* and *-uco*. These affixes do not occur with the same frequency across regions and some have developed specialized semantic connotations over time (Malaver and Paredes García 2020). The suffix *-ito* is generally considered the prototypical diminutive marker in Spanish (RAE 2011).

Although the diminutive may express various semantic values, such as size-reduction (e.g. example 2) (cf. supra section 2.1), it appears that the Spanish diminutive is above all established as an affective category used to express personal attitudes towards the diminutivized entity (Montes Giraldo 1972; Reynoso Noverón 2005), as in example (3).

(2) *En* ***una*** ***tarjet-it-a*** ***de*** ***visita****, escriben los nombres.*
In a card.CN.F-DIM.SX-F[SG] of visit, they.write the names
'On a small business card they write the names of each one of them' (Reynoso Noverón 2005, 79)

(3) *Toma, este es mi primer sueldo. Llévaselo a* ***tu***
Take, this is my first salary. Bring.you.it to your
abuel-it-a, *Dile que con eso te compra los zapatos.*
grandma.CN-DIM.SX-F[SG] Tell.her that with this you buy.she the shoes.
'Here, this is my first salary. Take it to your grannie, tell her to buy you the shoes.' (Reynoso Noverón 2005, 82)

2.2. The English diminutive

In the traditional view, it has often been stated that the English language does not have (m)any diminutive markers (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994; Hägg 2016). This statement only holds true if the typical synthetic devices are taken into account. Preferably, English expresses the diminutive with adjectives, such as *little, small, tiny,* etc., often referred to as 'syntactic' or 'analytic' diminutives, as opposed to 'morphological' or 'synthetic' diminutives (Schneider 2013).

With respect to English synthetic diminutive formation, there is no overall agreement in the literature about how many affixes actually exist. The suffixes *-ie/y, -let,* and *-ette* are generally considered the most common ones. These suffixes are mainly attached to nominal base forms (e.g. *dog → doggie, book → booklet*), but can occasionally also occur with adjectives, which are nominalized in the process (e.g. *fat → fatty*) (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994; Schneider 2003; 2013). In this regard, attenuation of adjective bases usually occurs through the suffix *-ish* (e.g. *white → whit-ish*) (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994).

As mentioned, English predominantly employs adjectives belonging to the semantic field of smallness as diminutive markers (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994; Schneider 2003). These include *small, tiny, (a) little (bit), teen(s)y, wee, minute,* of which *little* and *small* are considered the prototypical markers (Schneider 2003). While *little* can convey a wider range of semantic connotations than the other lexical expressions (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994, 114), it is often stated that the quantitative value 'smallness' is the dominant diminutive meaning in English (4) (Schneider 2003), although the synthetic markers (especially *-ie/y*) are somewhat more susceptible of taking affectional connotations (5) (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994).

(4) *Add* ***a*** ***small*** ***amount*** *of* *sugar*. (Nieuwenhuis 1985, 242)
Add a DIM.ADJ amount.CN[SG] of sugar.

(5) ***Your*** ***hubb-y*** *is* *such* *a* *darling*. (Schneider 2003, 204)
Your husband.CN.M-DIM.SX[SG] is such a darling.

In sum, when placing both languages on an analytic-synthetic continuum regarding diminutive formation, Spanish clearly finds itself more on the synthetic end, while English is placed more on the analytic end. Although we do not exclude that Spanish speakers may occasionally convey diminutive meanings through adjective markers, or English speakers through suffixes, these strategies are the acknowledged diminutive strategies in either language. Moreover, hispanophones use diminutives predominantly with connotative

meanings conveying any emotional attitude towards the referent, while English diminutives largely convey the denotative meaning of reduction. As a result, it is valuable to investigate how these morphological and semantic disparities may impact how speakers use diminutives in bilingual speech, and especially in a codeswitching context.

2.3. The diminutive in bilingual contexts and codeswitching theories

The diminutive in bilingual contexts, including oral codeswitching, has not yet been investigated in linguistic literature. Because Spanish-English bilinguals have access to both grammatical systems, the question arises how they manage these systems when expressing diminutiveness. From the general research literature on bilingualism and bilingual grammar various outcomes can be inferred. It can, for instance, be reasoned that bilinguals combine all the possible devices from the two languages into one bilingual diminutive system. Contrarily, in line with Matras (2000, 84), bilinguals can 'economize' their system by adopting just one set of markers, a phenomenon known as fusion. Still another option is that bilinguals assign specialized discourse functions to particular markers, as a result of which they appear in complementary distribution (Aaron 2004, 163). Moreover, relating to Schmid's From-Corpus-to-Cognition-Principle (2000) and Seliger's (1989) Redundancy Reduction Principle, it can be expected that bilinguals turn to the prototypical markers to express particular functions, since these are the most cognitively entrenched. A thorough analysis of the diminutive in the Spanish-English bilingual context of Miami is therefore imperative to shed light on the principles governing bilingual grammatical systems.

From the previous paragraph follows that specific structural approaches on the diminutive system in codeswitching do not exist (yet), which is why three generic structural theories on codeswitching are discussed and subsequently applied to the diminutive construction. Although these theories have encountered criticisms (Moro 2015, 396)[7], they serve in this study primarily as theoretical tools to present a first descriptive account of this construction in Spanish-English codeswitching. As such, we provide a primary understanding of how the formation and use of diminutives may be governed in codeswitching. After this initial portrayal of bilingual diminutives, more fine-grained theories can be tested against this construction in further studies.

2.3.1. Universal Constraints

Poplack's (1980, 585-586) universal constraints are "an early but influential contribution to the linguistic aspects of codeswitching" (Boztepe 2003). The Free Morpheme Constraint indicates that it is impossible to switch between a bound morpheme and a stem (e.g. **move-*

iendo 'moving'), except when the latter is phonologically adapted to the language of the bound morpheme (e.g. *parquear* 'to park') (Sankoff and Poplack 1981, 5). The Equivalence Constraint specifies that one can only switch at those points in discourse where the juxtaposition of the switched elements does not violate any syntactic rule of either language. In other words, the syntactic structure of the languages must map onto one another to facilitate a grammatical switch. The by now well-known example in Figure (1) demonstrates this principle. The black, vertical lines indicate those points where the structure is similar, while the grey, diagonal lines emphasize where switches are not permissible.

Insert figure 1 here

Figure 1: Equivalence Constraint (Poplack 1980, 586)

Although Poplack put forward these constraints as universally valid, several researchers articulated criticisms towards this theory (Moro 2015) and found counter-evidence, such as Youssef (2016) for Arabic-English codeswitching, Belazi, Rubin, and Toribio (1994) for Italian-English, and Berk-Seligson (1986) for Spanish-Hebrew codeswitching (see Boztepe 2003 for an overview). In this study, the diminutive will still be tested against Poplack's Constraints, since they allow for a general application on codeswitching data and are of use in this primary description of the use of diminutives in Spanish-English bilingual speech.

Premised on Poplack's theory, two assumptions on diminutive formation in Spanish-English codeswitching can be made. First, consistent with the Free Morpheme Constraint, diminutive forms that switch between a lexeme and a diminutive affix would be unacceptable, since affixes are bound morphemes. Accordingly, forms as **catito* ('little cat') or **bolsy/*bolsie* ('little bag') are expected not to occur. Second, we can infer that in switched diminutive constructions analytical markers should not appear postposed to the lexeme (e.g. **una flor small* 'a small flower'; **a house pequeño/a* 'a small house'), since English adjectives by default are not postposed to their base (while Spanish adjectives can in principle occur in both positions), which would contradict the Equivalence Constraint.

2.3.2. Matrix Language Frame Model

A second influential, if not the most influential, theory is Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (1993; 2002). The MLF Model postulates that in intrasentential codeswitching, the two source languages stand in an asymmetric relation to each other and therefore do not participate equally in a codeswitched constituent structure. One language operates as the Matrix Language (ML), i.e. the base language of the clause and its constituents, and provides the morphosyntactic framework, while the other – the Embedded

Language (EL) – supplies linguistic (mostly lexical) elements to insert into the grammatical structure of the ML (Myers-Scotton 1993; 2002). Many studies have tested the MLF model against codeswitching data and provided support for this framework (i.a. Deuchar 2006; Rahimi and Dabaghi 2013; Zahra et al. 2021; Kniaź and Zawrotna 2021), although some propose adjustments to this theory (e.g. Callahan 2002)[8].

To identify which language is the ML, Myers-Scotton (1993, 244) has posited two principles. The Morpheme Order Principle specifies that in mixed morphosyntactic constituents consisting of at least one EL lexeme and any number of ML morphemes, the word order will be that of the ML (Myers-Scotton 1993; 2002). The System Morpheme Principle explains that system morphemes expressing grammatical relations external to their head constituent stem from the ML, while content morphemes can be provided by both languages (Myers-Scotton 2002, 59). The distinction between system and content morphemes is thus essential to discern the ML. Simply put, content morphemes "express semantic and pragmatic aspects and assign or receive thematic roles" (Namba 2005, 2), examples of which are nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and various prepositions. In contrast, system morphemes only express the relations between content morphemes and therefore do not fulfil any semantic function (Myers-Scotton 1993). Based on the criteria of conceptual activation and the level of operation, Myers-Scotton and Jake (2000) distinguish between early system morphemes, bridge late system morphemes, and finally outsider late system morphemes in their 4M-model. The System Morpheme Principle applies only on the latter type, since these morphemes do not meet the criterion of conceptual activation and operate at a suprasegmental level (see Myers-Scotton and Jake 2000 for an overview).

Again, the MLF model serves in this study as a theoretical basis to present a first account of the morphological applications of diminutives in codeswitching. Based on this model, we classify diminutive adjectives as content morphemes. Additionally, diminutive affixes are considered early system morphemes, because they help shape the semantic message. As such, we expect that diminutive markers can stem from both the ML and the EL when appearing in a codeswitched sentence. Furthermore, we hypothesize in line with the Uniform Structure Principle (Myers-Scotton 2002, 8) that the strategy of the diminutive construction is conditioned by the ML. This implies that if Spanish functions as the ML in a Spanish-English codeswitching context, the preferred diminutive configuration would be synthetic, compliant how diminutives are predominantly formed in the morphosyntactic framework of monolingual Spanish. If English functions as the ML, we assume the analytic diminutive formation to dominate, consistent with the English morphosyntactic framework.

2.3.3. Metaphorical Codeswitching Framework

From a pragmatic perspective, bilinguals switch languages for a number of reasons, such as citing other persons, repeating what (s)he previously said, emphasizing or clarifying something, changing topics, etc. (Auer 1995; Callahan 2004). Bilinguals can also switch because of linguistic economy (because the bilingual phrase is shorter) or momentary inclination (when the word is already on the tip of one's tongue), and because of cultural untranslatability (Betti and Enghels 2018). Moreover, codeswitching can serve social functions, especially when it is used to highlight one's dual identity or to connect with other bilingual speakers by sharing that set of sociocultural values.

According to Blom and Gumperz' (1972), the choice of language in bilingual speech is perceived as having social meaning related to the speaker's identity. Moreover, Vinagre Laranjeira (2005, 32) has put forward that in Spanish-English codeswitching, Spanish is generally used to indicate personal interest and affect towards what is said, while switching to English expresses a more impersonal and objective position towards the discourse. Accordingly, "Spanish can be defined as the language of subjectification and English of objectification" (Betti and Enghels 2018, 28). This leads to the hypothesis that bilingual speakers will tend to use Spanish (synthetic) diminutive markers to add affective (qualitative) connotations towards the referent, and English (analytic) markers to express a (quantitative) reduction of the referent's dimensions.

In sum, these theories not only help us understand how diminutives in bilingual speech are formed, but also why bilinguals use certain markers pertaining to a particular language. In other words, they facilitate presenting a first approach towards bilingual diminutive constructions. In particular, we hypothesize based on Poplack's Constraints that neither mixed synthetic diminutive forms nor analytic constructions with postposed adjectives will occur in our corpus. Furthermore, conform the MLF model, we postulate that diminutive markers can stem from both languages and that the ML determines the strategy of the diminutive. Finally, we posit that the choice of language of the diminutive marker serves a pragmatic function that helps convey a particular semantic meaning. In what follows, these hypotheses will be empirically tested.

3. Corpus and parameters

For the analysis on bilingual diminutive formation and the application of the codeswitching theories data was extracted from the Bangor Miami Corpus. This corpus, compiled between 2008 and 2011, comprises 56 audio recordings and corresponding transcripts of colloquial conversations between two or more participants, aged 11-to-78 (Deuchar 2008). It is the

only corpus for Spanish-English codeswitching publicly available and freely accessible. The corpus consists of approximately 240.000 words of text or 35 hours of conversation, involving a total of 84 speakers. The recordings took place at the participants' locations of choosing without any external researcher present (Deuchar 2008). Of the 84 participants, 49% learned both languages before the age of four. Only 11% learned English at an adult age; all of them already knew Spanish. 73% of the participants assessed their proficiency in both languages to be a similar (high) level (Deuchar et al. 2014).

The data for the diminutive database have been extracted by listening attentively to the conversations and through a close reading of the transcripts. Afterward, each diminutive type was searched again using a search filter to localize possibly overlooked cases. For the sake of completeness, we also covered Spanish analytical forms (e.g. *pequeño, chico, bajo, diminuto, poco*). Although these are not acknowledged diminutive markers in Spanish grammars, they may still appear as diminutives in this bilingual corpus. As such, an initial dataset of 1129 diminutive instantiations was retrieved, from which a final set of 849 tokens was selected to conduct the analyses. We excluded lexicalized diminutive forms (e.g. *tortilla* 'wrap', *bolsillo* 'pocket'), as they have acquired new proper meanings and have become autonomous lexemes. Moreover, diminutive forms of proper names (e.g. *Carmencita*) were also left out from the analysis, since they were pseudonymized in the process and therefore do not reflect the natural speech of the participants. Uncompleted instantiations (e.g. *a little +/, this little //*) were also eliminated.

The final dataset has been analyzed using the following parameters:

- the diminutive strategy: synthetic (*e.g. -ie, -ito, -ico*) or analytic (*e.g. little, pequeño*).
- the diminutive type: suffix, prefix, adjective.
- the position of the marker with respect to its base: ante- or postposition.
- the grammatical categories of diminutive and base: (pro)noun, adjective, adverb, verb, determiner.
- the language of the diminutive and base.
- the language of the constituent[9] in which the diminutive appears: Spanish, English, or bilingual (e.g. *en los folders más finitos*).
- the ML of the clause in which the diminutive appears, determined by the language of the finite verb, the word order, and/or the language of the outsider late system morphemes.
- the semantic value expressed by the diminutive as deduced from the context: quantitative, qualitative, or relational.

It is worth mentioning that some constituents in the corpus contain more than one diminutive construction. These are referred to as accumulated diminutives (e.g. *una*$_{ART}$ *cas*$_{CN}$-*ita*$_{DIM:SX:F[SG]}$ *de muñecas* *chiqu*$_{DIM.ADJ}$-*it*$_{DIM.SX}$-*ic*$_{DIM.SX}$-*a*$_{F[SG]}$ 'a very little doll house', *un*$_{ART}$ *peda*$_{CN}$-*cito*$_{DIM.SX:M[SG]}$ *cort*$_{ADJ}$-*ico*$_{DIM.SX:M[SG]}$ 'a very short little piece'), i.e. a combination of multiple markers that modify different bases within one word phrase. For the sake of transparency regarding morphology, each marker modifying a different base is analyzed as a separate diminutive token. In this respect, double diminutive forms, i.e. multiple markers modifying the same base (e.g. *un poqu*$_{PRON}$-*it*$_{DIM.SX}$-*ic*$_{DIM.SX}$-*o*$_{M[SG]}$ 'a very tiny bit', *a tiny*$_{DIM.ADJ}$ *little*$_{DIM.ADJ}$ *thing*$_{CN}$), have been annotated as one occurrence.

In line with these parameters, we aspire to answer the following research questions. First, an exhaustive formal and functional analysis of the diminutive construction enables us to investigate how the diminutive is formed and used in this bilingual community. Do the speakers use a broader inventory of diminutive structures, combining all the possible markers of both input languages, or do they turn to the prototypical markers of each language, following the Redundancy Reduction Principle (Seliger 1989)?; What is the preferred diminutive type (e.g. prefix, suffix, or lexical)?; Is there a correlation between the diminutive strategy (synthetic vs. analytic) and the language in which it occurs (Spanish vs. English)?; With regard to codeswitched constructions, is there a preference for English marker + Spanish base or vice versa?

Additionally, the application of the general codeswitching theories on the diminutive gives us a first notion of whether and how the diminutive construction is regulated. In particular, we will test the hypotheses formulated in section 2.3. In line with Poplack's Constraints, is there any codeswitching between base forms and synthetic diminutive markers? Can we distinguish any codeswitching where the surface structure of Spanish and English differs? With respect to the MLF Model, does the strategy of the diminutive correlate with the ML of the clause? Finally, as regards Gumperz' framework, is there a correlation between the semantic value (qualitative vs. quantitative) expressed by the diminutive and the language in which it appears (Spanish vs. English)?

4. Data analysis and results

The following sections provide the results of the analyses. The first section examines the formal configuration of the diminutive construction. Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 investigate the morphosyntactic regulations of Poplack's and Myers-Scotton's codeswitching theories. Finally, a semantic analysis of the diminutive construction looks into its functional

inclinations to examine whether the subjectification-objectification hypothesis can be validated (4.2.3).

4.1. Formal analysis of the bilingual diminutive construction

4.1.1. Diminutive configuration

For the formal analysis of the diminutive construction, all diminutive markers were independently studied, including those appearing in double or accumulated constructions, as a result of which the total number of diminutive tokens amounts to 891.

Table (1a) presents results from both monolingual and bilingual clauses in which a diminutive occurs. Bilinguals in Miami evidently prefer the synthetic diminutive strategy (63.75%; n=568/891). In only 36.25% (n=323/891) of the cases, the diminutive is formed with an analytic marker. These results are corroborated in table (1b), in which only the bilingual clauses with diminutives are taken into account. In particular, 66.66% (n=50/75) of the diminutive markers in these clauses are synthetic, and 33.33% (n=25/75) analytic. Moreover, a chi-square test revealed no significant correlation between the ML of those clauses and the diminutive strategy (see infra. table 7). Accordingly, suffixes appear to be the unmarked choice for diminutive formation in Spanish-English bilingual speech.

All clauses	#	%
Synthetic:	568	63.75%
suffix	567	63.63%
prefix	1	0.12%
Analytic: adjective	323	36.25%
Total	891	100.00%

Table 1a. Diminutive strategies and construction types in all clauses

Bilingual clauses	#	%
Synthetic:	50	66.66%
suffix	49	65.33%
prefix	1	1.33%
Analytic: adjective	25	33.33%
Total	75	100.00%

Table 1b. Diminutive strategies and construction types in bilingual clauses

Furthermore, table (2) establishes a correlation between the strategy and the language of the diminutive marker. In particular, 92.78% (n=527/568) of all synthetic markers are Spanish, and 78.94% (n=255/323) of the analytic ones are English (as demonstrated in examples 6-7).

(6) *Entonces después se le echa el azúcar. Y cuando está*
Then afterwards one IO.3SG throws the sugar. And when it.is
espés-it-o *se pone en pomo.*
thick.ADJ-DIM.SX-M.SG one puts in jar

'Then afterwards you add the sugar. And when it has thickened, you put it in a jar.' (Sastre2)

(7) *That is the size of* ***a*** ***little*** ***banana*** *right there.* (María40)
That is the size of a DIM.ADJ banana.CN[SG] right there.

Diminutive strategy	Diminutive language					
	Spanish		English		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Synthetic	527	92.78%	41	7.22%	568	100.00%
Analytic	68	21.06%	255	78.94%	323	100.00%
Total	**595**	**66.77%**	**296**	**33.23%**	**891**	**100.00%**

Table 1: Diminutive strategy and language of the diminutive marker.
(χ^2=474.31; p<0.001; Cramer's V=0.732)

Moreover, a chi-square test and Cramer's V value reveal that there is a very strong correlation between the language and the strategy of the diminutive marker. Consequently, we conclude that bilingual speakers incline towards the preferred strategy of both monolingual grammars when forming a diminutive. Even so, not all synthetic markers are Spanish, nor all analytic markers English (examples 8-9).

(8) *Mira* ***tu*** ***blank-y*** *está aquí papo.*
Look your blanket.CN.DIM.SX[SG] is here VOC
'Look here is your blanket, sweetheart.' (María40)

(9) ***Una*** ***reunión*** ***pequeña*** *cuando le agarra y dice:*
A meeting.CN[SG] DIM.ADJ.F[SG] when it grabs.she and says.she
"ay pero sí son de plástico!".
Oh but yes are.they of plastic
'At a small gathering, when she grabs it and says: oh but they [the cups] are made of plastic!' (María40)

A more detailed look at the inventories of synthetic and analytic markers in table (3) provides further interesting insights. In particular, 16 different diminutive types occur in the corpus, of which 6 synthetic and 10 analytic ones. Of these types, the prototypical Spanish suffix *-ito* is employed in 53.87% of all diminutive constructions (n=480/891), and makes up 84.51% (n=480/568) of all synthetic constructions. Moreover, there is also a preference for the prototypical English marker *little,* as it is used in 70.28% (n=227/323) of all analytic

constructions or in an overall 25.48% (n=227/891). Consequently, their status as default markers of each language appears confirmed.

Diminutive markers	#	% of strategy	% of total
Synthetic	568	100.0%	63.75%
-ito	480	84.51%	53.87%
-ico	44	7.75%	4.94%
-y	33	5.81%	3.71%
-ish	8	1.41%	0.90%
-illo	2	0.35%	0.22%
mini-	1	0.17%	0.11%
Analytic	323	100.0%	36.25%
little[10]	227	70.28%	25.48%
poco	54	16.72%	6.06%
small	19	5.88%	2.13%
chico	12	3.71%	1.35%
tiny	3	0.93%	0.34%
miniature	3	0.93%	0.34%
pequeño	2	0.62%	0.22%
petite	1	0.31%	0.11%
itty-bitty	1	0.31%	0.11%
un chin	1	0.31%	0.11%
Total	891	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2: Inventory of synthetic and analytic diminutive types.

As mentioned, not all Spanish devices are synthetic nor all English markers analytic. Specifically, the English suffix *-y* is employed in 5.81% (n=33/568) of all synthetic constructions or in an overall 3.70% (n=33/891) (example 10a). Furthermore, the suffix *-ish* appears in 1.41% (n=8/568) of the synthetic constructions or in 0.90% (n=8/891) of the total corpus (10b). These results affirm what the general literature on the English diminutive system proclaims, namely that suffixes are only marginally used, while lexical devices are preferred (Dressler and Barbaresi 1994; Nieuwenhuis 1985; Schneider 2003).

(10a) *Quién tiene* ***scotch-y*** ***tap-y****?* *Que me preste?*
Who has scotch.PN-DIM.SX[SG] tape.CN-DIM.SX[SG]? that me lend.SBJV
'Who has scotch tape and can lend it to me?' (María18)

(10b) *And I even told Rosa I was gonna get there* ***at ten-ish***. (Herring8)
And I even told Rosa I was going.to get there at ten.CRD-DIM.SX

As regards the analytic devices, 4 out of 10 types are Spanish (examples 9 and 11a-c). Particularly, (*un) poco,* the Spanish equivalent of *a little (bit)*, occurs in 16.72% (n=54/323) of all analytic constructions or in an overall 6.06% (n=54/891). Furthermore, the adjective *chico* is used in 3.71% (n=12/323) of the analytic constructions or in 1.35% (n=12/891) overall. It must be noted that in the corpus *chico* itself was always modified by at least one diminutive suffix (as in (11a)). Accordingly, constructions with *chico* are a good example of accumulated diminutives which combine a synthetic and analytic strategy. The other markers, *pequeño* and *un chin*, occurred rarely. All in all, Miami bilinguals use Spanish analytic markers only sporadically, presumably owing to the fact that these are not acknowledged diminutive markers in monolingual Spanish[11].

(11a) *No este a mí me gustaría* ***uno*** ***chiqu****-it-o*.
No this to me IO.1SG would.like one DIM.ADJ-DIM.SX.-M[SG]
'No, I would like a small one.' (Sastre2)

(11b) *Estuve en uno que se llama El Subuth. Que era* ***un poco*** ***extrañ-o***.
I.was in one that one calls El Subuth. That was a bit.DIM strange.ADJ.M.SG
Y estuve muy ***poco*** ***tiempo*** *ahí porque yo visitaba*
And I.was very little.DIM.ADJ time.CN.M[SG] there because I visited
mucho y no me gustaba y me iba.
much and NEG IO.1SG liked and RFL went.I
'I was in another one that was called El Subuth. It was a little weird. And I stayed there for only a really short time because I would visit a lot and I didn't like it and I left.' (Herring17)

(11c) *Sí es casi igual. Lo que* ***un chin*** *(…)* ***más*** ***fuerte***
Yes is almost same. It that a DIM.ADJ more strong.ADJ[SG]
'Yes, it is almost the same. It is a bit stronger.' (Sastre5).

4.1.1.1. Codeswitching patterns

The 84 participants in the Bangor Miami corpus frequently switch between Spanish and English in their conversations (see Fricke and Kootstra 2016 for an overview). Specifically, in 5.18% of the constituents in which diminutives appear, bilinguals switch between languages (e.g. PP: *en los folders* ***más finitos*** 'in the thinnest folders'; NP: *a lot of* ***viejitos*** 'a lot of elder people'). The question is now whether and how they switch within the diminutive construction itself, and if so, whether they prefer a certain combination, i.e. Spanish bases

with English markers or English bases with Spanish markers. Table (4) provides an overview of the possible language combinations of the base and the diminutive.

All clauses					Bilingual clauses				
Diminutive / Base	Spanish		English		Diminutive / Base	Spanish		English	
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%
Spanish	587	99.16	5	0.84	Spanish	40	88.88	5	11.11
English	8	2.68	291	97.32	English	8	26.66	22	73.33
Total	**595**	**66.78**	**296**	**33.22**	Total	**48**	**64.00**	**27**	**36.00**

Table 3a: languages of the base form and the diminutive marker in all clauses (χ^2=829.21; p<0.001; Cramer's V=0.967)

Table 4b. languages of the base form and the diminutive marker in bilingual clauses (χ^2=27.61; p<0.001; Cramer's V=0.635)

It appears that codeswitching within the diminutive construction itself is rather rare, since in only 1.46% (n=13/891) of the cases the diminutive language is different than the base language. The chi-square and Cramer's V tests indicate a very strong association between the language of the base form and the diminutive, which logically results from the high number of non-switched cases. Moreover, the frequency of Spanish monolingual constructions is twice as high (n=587/891) as of the English ones (n=291/891), which may be attributed to the fact that the majority of the conversation turns in which a diminutive appears is Spanish (54.65%; n=464/849) although the dominant language of most conversations is English (57.14%; n=32/56). Even so, it has to be noted that in bilingual clauses the prevailing diminutive language is still Spanish (64.00%; n=48/75), even when the ML is English (67.65% of English ML bilingual clauses; cf. table 6 infra). Either way, we can state that the diminutive is a more 'natural' feature of Spanish speech than of English.

As concerns the codeswitched cases, although the sample is small, it still remains interesting to look into them to see whether they comply with the hypotheses formulated in the previous sections (§2.3.1-2.3.2) based on the morphosyntactic theories of Poplack and Myers-Scotton.

4.2. Empirical evaluation of codeswitching theories

4.2.1. Universal Constraints

It can be deduced from table (4) that 13 codeswitched diminutive constructions occur in the corpus. In particular, 8 constructions (examples 12a-g) consist of an English base with a Spanish marker; the other 5 are a Spanish base with an English diminutive (13a-e).

(12a) *No huevón* ***un partime-cit-o*** *ahí ideay real-it-o-s*
No lazy a partime.CN-DIM.SX.-M[SG] there huh money.CN-DIM.SX-M-PL
extras ahí no te estorban para nada.
extra there NEG you harm.they for nothing
'Right dude, a little part-time here, huh, some extra money there does you no harm at all.' (Herring12)

(12b) *No yo tengo* ***el tique-cit-o.***
No I have the ticket.CN-DIM.SX-M[SG]
'No I have the ticket.' (Herring13)

(12c) *Te alcanza para la bandeja. Y para comprar* ***el sandwich-it-o.***
You reach for the tray. And for to.buy the sandwich.CN-DIM.SX-M[SG]
'You'll have enough for the trail. And for buying the tiny sandwich.' (María27)

(12d) *Es un poco difícil. Es que con tan* ***pocas piece-cit-a-s.***
It.is a DIM.ADJ difficult.ADJ. It.is that with so dim.ADJ:F:PL piece.CN-DIM.SX-F-PL
'It is a bit difficult with so few pieces.' (María40)

(12e) *Sí pero están* ***un poco (.) soft-y.***
Yes but are.they a bit.DIM.ADJ soft.ADJ-DIM.SX[SG]
'Yes, but they are a little soft.' (María40).

(12f) *Así que esto es* ***un pequeñ-o pocket*** *que hay ahí.*
So that this is a little.DIM.ADJ-M[SG] pocket.CN that there.is there
'So that is a little pocket there.' (Sastre1)

(12g) *I know so when they were gonna make the statue he was just* ***this***
I know so when they were going.to make the statue he was just this
little *mini-****guy*** ***muy muy chiqu-it-o*** *como un*
DIM.ADJ DIM.PX-guy.CN very very small.DIM.ADJ-DIM.SX.M[SG] as a
enan-it-o.
dwarf.CN-DIM.SX-M[SG]
'I know so when they were gonna make the statue he was just this very very tiny little miniguy like a little dwarf.' (Zeledon9)

(13a) *It is* ***a little machista.***
It is a little.DIM.ADJ sexist.ADJ[M.SG]
'It is a little sexist.' (Herring1)

(13b) *But I dunno (.) he gets* ***a little pesa(d)o*** *sometimes.*
But I know.NEG he gets a little.DIM.ADJ annoying.ADJ:M[SG] sometimes

'But I don't know, he gets a little annoying sometimes.' (Herring7)

(13c) *I bought* ***un*** ***little*** ***estante*** *de esos like Tupperware*
I bought a little.DIM.ADJ bookshelf.CN[M.SG] of those like Tupperware
that has two drawers.
that has two drawers
'I bought a little bookshelf like those from Tupperware with two drawers.'
(Herring13)

(13d) *What I guess* ***little /*** ***little*** ***marielitos*** *will / van a*
What I guess little.DIM.ADJ little.DIM.ADJ Cuban immigrant:CN:M:SG will / will
estar ahí developing.
to.be there developing
'I guess little Cuban immigrants are going to be there, developing.' (Sastre7)

(13e) *I thought about that because it is getting* ***a little*** ***more carnoso***
I thought about that because it is getting a little.DIM.ADJ more fleshy:ADJ:M[SG]
'I thought about that because it's getting a little more fleshy here.' (Zeledon8)

According to our hypothesis based on Poplack's Free Morpheme Constraint, diminutives that switch between a synthetic marker and its base should not occur in the corpus. Nevertheless, in 4 instances (i.e. 12a-d) bilinguals actually switch between an English base and a Spanish affix. The English base forms of *tiquecito* (12b) and *sandwichito* (12c) were phonologically adapted to Spanish, as a result of which these switches are deemed grammatical. Even so, the higher susceptibility for English bases to take a Spanish suffix compared to vice versa is remarkable, and can possibly be explained by the fact that the synthetic diminutive configuration in English is much less conventional than in Spanish (see *supra* section 2.2).

Following the Equivalence Constraint we hypothesized that in switched analytic constructions, the diminutive marker will occur before the base form, as it is the only position in which both Spanish and English adjectives can occur.

Analytic constructions	Anteposition		Postposition		Total	
SP dim + EN base	3	33.33%	1	1.11%		
EN dim + SP base	5	55.55%	0	0.00%	9	100.00%

Table 5: Position of analytic marker in switched diminutive construction.

Table (5) indicates the position of the analytic marker in the 9 codeswitched analytic constructions. From the few occurrences it appears that analytical markers indeed occur

primarily in anteposition (n=8/9). Nevertheless, there is one counterexample, *this little mini guy muy muy chiquito* (12g), in which the Spanish adjective *chico* modifies the English base *guy* in postposition. The probability has to be noted that the position of *chico* was influenced by the fact that two diminutive markers are already anteposed to the noun, and by the Spanish rule that modified adjectives must be postponed. Note also that the Fisher's Exact test revealed no significant association (p = 0.444), which further confirms the hypothesis. Moreover, the example *un pequeño pocket* (12f) provides support for the Equivalence Constraint, because the Spanish *pequeño* appears before its base.

In conclusion, while the majority of the switched constructions complies with our hypotheses, we have still found counterexamples to both constraints. Although these counterexamples are infrequent, we conclude in line with the research literature that Poplack's Constraints are not entirely universal, but rather strong inclinations that codeswitching bilinguals seem to follow.

4.2.2. Diminutives and the Matrix Language hypothesis

As for the MLF model (cf. section 2.3.2), we expect that diminutive markers can stem from both the ML as the EL, since adjectives are considered content morphemes and diminutive affixes early system morphemes. To investigate this hypothesis, we retrieved from the corpus all 75 bilingual clauses in which a diminutive occurs. The results in table (6), showing the diminutive language and the ML of the bilingual clauses, confirm our assumption, since the chi-square test detected no significant association. In particular, in 48.00% (n=36/75) the diminutive language deviates from the ML.

Matrix Language	Diminutive language					
	English		Spanish		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
English	11	14.67%	23	30.67%		
Spanish	13	17.33%	21	28.00%		
Ambiguous	3	4.00%	4	5.33%		
Total	**27**	**36.00%**	**48**	**64.00%**	**75**	**100.00%**

Table 6: Diminutive language and ML of bilingual clauses.
(χ^2=0.05; p=0.823)

Moreover, we hypothesized that if English is the ML of the clause, bilingual speakers will be inclined to use analytic diminutives. If the ML is Spanish, on the other hand, speakers will turn to synthetic markers. Table (7) shows the ML of the bilingual clauses and the diminutive strategy.

Matrix language	Diminutive strategy					
	Analytic		Synthetic		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
English	11	32.35%	23	67.65%	**34**	**100.00%**
Spanish	11	32.35%	23	67.65%	**34**	**100.00%**
Ambiguous	3	42.86%	4	57.14%	**7**	**100.00%**
Total	25	33.33%	50	66.67%	**75**	**100.00%**

Table 7: ML and diminutive strategy in bilingual clauses
(χ^2=0.315; p=0.854)

In these bilingual clauses, 67.65% (n=23/34) of the diminutive markers is synthetic although the ML of its clause is English (examples 14a-b). Moreover, of the 25 analytic markers, 11 (44.00%) appear in a Spanish ML clause (15a-b). Note also that the chi-square test does not confirm any significant association between the diminutive strategy and the ML. Consequently, these results refute the validity of our ML hypothesis on diminutive formation.

(14a) *they see him más* ***más*** ***embullad-it-o.***
They see him more more excited.ADJ-DIM.SX-M[SG]
'they see him more more excited. (Sastre10)

(14b) *Maybe I can take* ***some*** ***agü-it-a-s*** *to you.*
Maybe I can take some water.CN-DIM.SX-F-PL to you
'Maybe I can take some waterbottles to you.' (Sastre8)

(15a) *Yo creo que están en la oficina in* ***that*** ***little*** ***niche.***
I believe that are.they in the office in that little.DIM.ADJ niche.CN[SG]
'I think they are in the office, in that little niche.' (María31)

(15b) *Dale* ***un*** ***little*** ***banana.***
Give.him a little.DIM.ADJ banana.CN[SG]
'Give him a little banana.' (María40)

One possible explanation can be sought in the semantic domain. Since diminutive language and strategy are correlated, we could infer – conform our hypothesis based on Gumperz' pragmatic framework (cf. §2.3.3 and §4.2.3) – that synthetic markers (default in Spanish) are used for affective connotations (e.g. example 17a) and analytic ones (default in English) for objective meanings (e.g. 16a). As can be seen in table (8), this is indeed the case. The majority of synthetic markers in English ML clauses express a qualitative value

(82.61%; n=19/23), while in the Spanish ML clauses the analytic markers primarily convey a quantitative value (81.82%; n=9/11). Consequently, for semantic-pragmatic reasons, bilinguals may opt for a particular strategy and language to convey a specific nuance, and therefore disregard morphosyntactic regulations. In sum, the ML does not seem to affect diminutive configuration in a codeswitching context. Instead, semantic-pragmatic factors do seem to affect the selection of a certain language or strategy when bilinguals form diminutives.

Semantic values	English ML with synthetic construction		Spanish ML with analytic construction	
	#	%	#	%
Quantitative	4	17.39%	9	81.82%
Qualitative	16	69.57%	2	18.18%
Relational	3	13.04%	0	0.00%
Total	23	100.00%	11	100.00%

Table 8: Semantic values of unexpected constructions as regards the ML.

4.2.3. Language of the diminutive: subjectification versus objectification

Based on Blom and Gumperz' framework, we postulated that in line with the semantic-pragmatic inclinations of each language, bilinguals employ the Spanish diminutive to express qualitative connotations and English markers to indicate a quantitative value.

Looking at the results in table 9[12], bilinguals use more English markers than Spanish ones to convey a quantitative meaning, although the difference in frequency is rather small (in 55.59% (n=179/322) of the cases English markers are used and in 44.41% (n=143/322) Spanish markers are used) (examples 16a-b). For a qualitative connotation, the preference towards Spanish diminutives is much more pronounced (82.39%; n=262/318), although qualitative English diminutives also occur (17.61%; n=56/318). For instance, in (17a) and (b) a pejorative connotation is expressed by a Spanish and English marker respectively.

Semantic value	Diminutive language					
	English		Spanish		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quantitative	179	55.59%	143	44.41%	322	100.00%
Qualitative	56	17.61%	262	82.39%	318	100.00%
Relational	45	32.85%	92	67.15%	137	100.00%
Ambiguous	9	33.33%	18	66.67%	27	100.00%
Total	289	35.95%	515	64.05%	804	100.00%

Table 9: Language of the diminutive and semantic value.
(χ^2=101.05; p<0.001; Cramer's V=0.355)[13]

(16a) *They had to put* ***a little*** ***cat*** *to sleep today*. (Herring1)
They had to put a little.DIM.ADJ cat.CN[SG] to sleep today

(16b) *Tania te voy a buscar* ***en un rat-it-o*** *para que me hagas*
Tania you go.I to seek in a while.CN-DIM.SX-M[SG] for that me do.you
el trim de mi pelo por favor con la máquina.
the trim of my hair please with the machine
'Tania I will come look for you in a little while so that you can trim my hair with the machine please.' (Herring1)

(17a) *Le dije a Bart que si encontraba algún día a* ***nuestro***
Him told.I to Bart that if found.I some day PTCL our
amigu-it-o (.) ***Gerardo*** *que lo iba a matar* (…).
friend.CN-DIM.SX-M[SG] Gerardo that him went.I to kill
'I told Bart that if he finds our "friend" Gerardo someday, that I'm going to kill him.' (María16)

(17b) *Anyways remember Rebecca? (…)* ***That little girlfriend*** *of mine*
Anyways remember Rebecca? (…) That little.DIM.ADJ girlfriend.CN[F.SG] of mine
from Birmingham? (Herring9)
from Birmingham?

The Chi square and Cramer's V test validate that there is a moderate association between language and meaning of the diminutive, which lets us conclude that bilinguals indeed tend to use English markers as objective diminutives and Spanish ones as affective diminutives. However, the preference to employ English markers for expressing quantitative values is more moderate. The Spanish system is thus not only more productive morphologically, but more elaborately used semantically as well.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Spanish diminutives are also preferred for expressing relational values (cf. examples 1a-1c). One possible explanation for this, in line

with Reynoso Noverón (2005), is that the diminutive has undergone a process of subjective grammaticalization, with the relational value as the highest level of subjectification. Since Spanish is preferred to express subjectivity, it is reasonable to assume that it is also the preferred language to express any relational value.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The present article has striven to investigate the morphological configuration and semantic functions of the diminutive construction in a Spanish-English bilingual context. Since the diminutive in monolingual Spanish and English present different morphological and semantic paradigms, it served as an excellent case study to look into the factors governing diverging structures in bilingual speech, including codeswitching contexts. Using a dataset of 849 diminutive phrases retrieved from the Bangor Miami Spanish-English bilingual corpus, we examined how bilingual speakers use both input systems to form diminutives.

In the first place, bilinguals from Miami primarily turn to suffixes for their diminutive formation, which is considered the default diminutive strategy in the general research literature. Overall, six synthetic types (*-ito, -ico, -illo, -y, -ish, mini-*) were used, of which bilinguals clearly prefer the default Spanish suffix *-ito*. Accordingly, *-ito* appears the most grammaticalized, unmarked diminutive not only in monolingual Spanish, but also in Spanish-English bilingual speech. Two of the synthetic affixes are English, but are used only sporadically. As such, bilinguals clearly favor the Spanish default strategy of diminutive formation over the English 'marked' strategy. As regards analytic constructions, the speakers mainly used the default English marker *little*. Ten different analytic types appeared in the corpus, of which four Spanish adjectives (*i.e. pequeño, chico, (un) poco, un chin*). These Spanish adjectives appear only scarcely, in line with the Spanish monolingual diminutive system (which favors synthetic formation). Consequently, bilinguals prefer the conventional strategies of each language over the more marked strategies (i.e. Spanish synthetic over analytic and English analytic over synthetic markers). Noting a strong association between the diminutive strategy and diminutive language, we can conclude that bilinguals do not just combine the input systems into one bilingual system, but carefully select certain markers to express diminutiveness (cf. Seliger's Redundancy-Reduction-Principle). Particularly, bilinguals mainly use the prototypical, cognitively most entrenched markers of both languages to express diminutiveness.

Bilingual speakers in Miami occasionally switch within constituents in which diminutives appear (e.g. *a lot of viejitos*), although they scarcely switch within the diminutive construction itself (*viejitos*). Nevertheless, the results showed a higher frequency of switches

between English bases and Spanish markers (e.g. *un partimecito*) rather than vice versa (e.g. *un little estante*). Moreover, we remark that in the 13 switched diminutive constructions, the language of the diminutive marker was the same as the ML of the clause.

Second, the codeswitching models of Poplack, Myers-Scotton, and Blom and Gumperz served as primary theoretical models against which the diminutive was tested, in order to provide a first descriptive theoretical analysis of this construction in bilingual speech. While Poplack's Free Morpheme Constraint predicted that bilingual speakers would not switch between a base and a diminutive affix, we did find counterexamples. All instances (e.g. *partimecito, piececitas*) switched between English bases and Spanish suffixes. Two bases had been phonologically adapted to Spanish (i.e. *tiquecito, sandwichito*) and were therefore deemed grammatical. The higher susceptibility for English lexemes to take Spanish synthetic diminutives rather than vice versa can probably be attributed to the fact that the English synthetic diminutive formation is far less customary.

Based on the Equivalence Constraint, then, we postulated that analytic diminutives would occur before its base in switched constructions, since this is the only site where Spanish and English grammars converge regarding the placement of adjectives (e.g. *un pequeño pocket*). Only one counterexample to this hypothesis was found, namely *a little mini guy muy muy chiquito*, in which a Spanish diminutive adjective occurred after its English base. In this example, it is probable that the placement of *chiquito* was influenced by the fact that two English diminutives already occur in preposition. Nevertheless, in compliance with the various studies that formulated criticism against this model, we argued that Poplack's Universal Constraints are not as universal as their name suggests, but they certainly indicate strong inclinations that codeswitching bilinguals seem to follow.

In conformity with the Matrix Language Frame model, we posited that the diminutive strategy depends on the ML. This hypothesis was refuted, since in bilingual clauses the synthetic strategy prevailed, regardless of the ML of its clause. We discovered that in bilingual clauses the choice of a diminutive strategy may be affected by its semantic meaning. That is to say, for semantic-pragmatic reasons, bilinguals may opt for a certain language and diminutive strategy to facilitate the transmission of a particular meaning, as a result of which morphosyntactic inclinations may be disregarded. Furthermore, we confirmed our hypothesis that in bilingual clauses, diminutive markers may stem from both the ML as the EL.

Finally, it was investigated why bilinguals would select a particular language in a diminutive construction. Based on Gumperz' Metaphorical Codeswitching Framework, we postulated that Spanish-English bilinguals prefer the Spanish diminutive for affective

meanings, and turn to English diminutives for quantitative denotations. This hypothesis was confirmed in our analysis. The diminutive language can thus be interpreted as a marker that facilitates the correct interpretation of the diminutive meaning conveyed by the speaker. Consequently, bilinguals seem to use diminutive markers in complementary distribution with specialized discourse functions (Aaron 2004). In future studies, it will be interesting to further look into the relation between diminutive strategy, language, and meaning.

In sum, this study is the first thorough empirical analysis of the diminutive construction in a bilingual context. We demonstrated that bilinguals tend to adhere to the morphological and semantic features of each input language when forming codeswitched constructions. Specifically, bilingual speakers mostly employ the prototypical markers and the conventional strategy of both input systems to which they assign a particular semantic value, as a result of which these markers appear in complementary distribution (Aaron 2004). Still, being the first descriptive account of this construction in bilingual speech, we are mindful that we cannot draw holistic conclusions based on the study of one community. Therefore, it is imperative to study this or similar phenomena in various bilingual communities and based on more fine-grained theoretical models, in order to be able to make more reliable inferences about codeswitching processes.

Notes

[1] The concept of 'prototype' has received several interpretations in the linguistic tradition. In this context, it refers to the most frequent member of a category, reflecting the underlying idea that more cognitively entrenched meanings simply occur more frequently (cf. Schmid's (2000, 39) 'From-Corpus-to-Cognition Principle').

[2] For reasons of clarity, the diminutive form at issue is boldfaced.

[3] The glossing of the examples was carried out following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf). The used glosses that are not included in these Rules are the following: CRD = cardinal pronoun; CN = common noun; DIM = diminutive; IO = indirect object; PTCL = particle; PX = prefix; PN = proper noun; RFL = reflexive pronoun; SX = suffix.

[4] All examples are retrieved from the Bangor Miami corpus (http://bangortalk.org.uk), in which the conversations are named after the investigator that recorded them (i.e. Sastre, Herring, María, Zeledon). More information on this corpus is provided in section 3.

[5] Synthetic diminutive formation comprises derivational affixation (e.g. *miniskirt*, *mommy*), considered the prototypical process across languages, but also reduplication (e.g. *goody-goody*), compounding (e.g. *baby tree*), truncation (e.g. *Betty* < *Elizabeth*), and inflectional affixation (e.g. German *-chen, -lein*) (see Gorzycka 2020 for an overview).

[6] In this study, singular masculine orthographies for any diminutive markers are used, since it is considered the default gender. Of course, these forms also imply the feminine and plural forms as well as their allomorphs.

[7] Criticisms towards Poplack's Constraints include that the Equivalence Constraint is both too limiting and not limiting enough, since counterevidence has been reported for sites where Spanish and English differ in word order (e.g. adjective-noun combinations: *a motorcycle verde*). Simultaneously, researchers have observed a preference for switching between Spanish determiners with English nouns and not vice versa, an observation which the Equivalence Constraint is unable to explain (Moro 2015). Poplack later refined her theories and has added the Nonce borrowing hypothesis to account for the various counterexamples (Sankoff, Poplack, and Vanniarajan 1990). Regarding the MLF model, counterexamples have been found where elements that should normally comply with the morphosyntactic framework of the ML occur in the EL (Moro 2015, 397–98).

[8] Based on her analysis of codeswitching data in fiction, Callahan proposes to adjust the MLF model by emphasizing the possibility of ML shifts and adding to the model a new constituent type, namely EL islands with ML elements (2002, 14).

[9] We define the concept 'constituent' here as a group of words that functions as one syntactic unit within a hierarchical structure. Examples of constituents in which diminutives appear are prepositional phrases (*en los folders más finitos* 'in the thinnest folders') or noun phrases (*un pedacito de tile* 'a little piece of tile').

[10] The diminutive types *little* and *poco* also comprise the phrasal modifiers *a little* and *a little bit* and *un poco* respectively. These phrasal modifiers are used mainly with adjective and adverb bases (e.g. *a little different, a little bit different, un poco diferente*), and as such stand in complementary distribution with *little* and *poco*, which primarily modify nominal bases.

[11] These results are reflected in our benchmark corpus of Cuban Spanish, extracted from the online PRESEEA corpus, in which only the analytic types *(un) poco*, *pequeño,* and *chico* appear. The latter two adjectives are used in only 3.77% of all constructions. Contrarily, *un poco* accounts in the Cuban corpus for 28.02% of all diminutives, remarkably more than in the Miami corpus. However, this marker is mostly combined with uncountable nouns to indicate a quantity (e.g. *un poco de sal* 'a bit of salt'), which Spanish diminutive suffixes are unable to (**salito*).

[12] Accumulated diminutives (e.g. un *pedacito cortico*) and double diminutives (e.g. *chiquitico*) were analyzed as one semantic unit. In other words, the various markers that belong to one diminutive phrase were assessed as conveying one meaning and were not analyzed separately, which brings the corpus to 804 diminutive phrases.

[13] 29 instances have been determined as ambiguous, since the co(n)text did not allow to define its primary meaning.

Funding information

For the research discussed in this article funding was received through an FWO Fundamental Research Fellowship.

References

Aaron, Jessi Elana. 2004. "So Respetamos un Tradición del Uno al Otro: So and Entonces in New Mexican Bilingual Discourse." *Spanish in Context* 1 (2): 161–79.

Auer, Peter. 1998. "From Code-Switching via Language Mixing to Fused Lects: Toward a Dynamic Typology of Bilingual Speech." *Interaction and Linguistic Structures* 6: 1–30.

Belazi, Hedi M., E.J. Rubin, and Almeida Jacqueline Toribio. 1994. "Code switching and X-bar Theory: The Functional Head Constraint." *Linguistic Inquiry* 25, 221-237.

Berk-Seligson, Susan. 1986. "Linguistic Constraints on Intrasentential Code-Switching: A Study of Spanish/Hebrew Bilingualism." *Language in Society* 15 (3), 313-348.

Betti, Silvia, and Renata Enghels. 2018. "Spanglish: Current Issues, Future Perspectives, and Linguistic Insights." In *The Oxford Handbook of Latino Studies*, ed. by Ilan Stavans, 346–80. Oxford University Press.

Blom, Jan-Petter, and John Gumperz. 1972. "Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code Switching in Northern Norway." In *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, ed. by John Gumperz and Del Hymes, 407-434. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Boztepe, Erman. 2003. "Issues in Code-Switching: Competing Theories and Models." *Studies in Applied Linguistics & TESOL* 3 (2), 1-27.

Bullock, Barbara E., and Almeida Jacqueline Toribio, eds. 2009. *The Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-Switching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Callahan, Laura. 2002. "The Matrix Language Frame Model and Spanish/English Codeswitching in Fiction." *Language & Communication* 22 (1): 1–16.

---. 2004. *Spanish/English Code-Switching in a Written Corpus*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Chan, Brian Hok-Shing. 2008. "Code-Switching, Word Order and the Lexical/Functional Category Distinction." *Lingua* 118 (6): 777–809.

Deuchar, Margaret. 2006. "Welsh-English Code-Switching and the Matrix Language Frame Model." *Lingua* 116 (11): 1986–2011.

---. 2008. "The Miami Corpus: Documentation File." Bangortalk, http://bangortalk.org.uk/docs/Miami_doc.pdf.

---, Peredur Davies, Jon Russell Herring, María Carmen Parafita Couto, and Diana Carter. 2014. "Building Bilingual Corpora." In *Advances in the Study of Bilingualism*, ed. by Enlli Môn Thomas and Ineke Mennen, 93–111. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Dressler, Wolfgang U., and Lavinia M. Barbaresi. 1994. *Morphopragmatics: Diminutives and Intensifiers in Italian, German, and Other Languages*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Enghels, Renata, and Margot Vanhaverbeke. 2020. "La expresión de valores diminutivos en contextos escritos de cambio de código. Un análisis comparativo de novelas latinas." *Glosas* 9 (8): 38–55.

Fricke, Melinda, and Gerrit Jan Kootstra. 2016. "Primed Codeswitching in Spontaneous Bilingual Dialogue." *Journal of Memory and Language* 91: 181–201.

González-Vilbazo, Kay, and Bryan Koronkiewicz. 2016. "Tú y Yo Can Codeswitch, Nosotros Cannot: Pronouns in Spanish-English Codeswitching." In *Spanish-English Codeswitching in the Caribbean and the US*, 237–260. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Gorzycka, Dorota. 2020. *Diminutive Constructions in English*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Publishing.

Hägg, Anna Theresa. 2016. "A Contrastive Study of English and Spanish Synthetic Diminutives." Master thesis, Oslo: University of Oslo.

Jurafsky, Daniel. 1996. "Universal Tendencies in the Semantics of the Diminutive." *Language* 72 (3): 533.

Kniaź, Małgorzata, and Magdalena Zawrotna. 2021. "Embedded English Verbs in Arabic-English Code-Switching in Egypt." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 25 (3): 622–639.

Lipski, John M. 2005. "Code-Switching or Borrowing? No Sé so No Puedo Decir, You Know." In *Selected Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, 1–16. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

---. 2011. "El inglés y el español en los Estados Unidos: Lengua e inmigración." In *Lingüística aplicada del español*, 245–50.

MacSwan, Jeff, ed. 2014. *Grammatical Theory and Bilingual Codeswitching*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Malaver, Irania, and Florentino Paredes García. 2020. "Convergences and Divergences In the Use of the Diminutive in Medellin, Caracas and Madrid." *Spanish in Context* 17 (2): 317–40.

Matras, Yaron. 2000. "Fusion and the Cognitive Basis for Bilingual Discourse Markers." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 4 (4): 505–28.

Mintsys, E. Ye, and Yu B. Mintsys. 2015. "Theoretical Principles of Researching Diminutive". *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University* 2 (2): 29–35.

Montés Alcalá, Cecilia. 2000. "Attitudes towards Oral and Written Code-Switching in Spanish-English Bilingual Youths." *Research on Spanish in the U.S.*, 218–27.

Montes Giraldo, José Joaquín. 1972. "Funciones del diminutivo en español: ensayo de clasificación." *Thesaurus: boletín del Instituto Caro y Cuervo* 27 (1): 71-88.

Moro, Mónica. 2015. "The Universality of Syntactic Constraints on Spanish–English Codeswitching in the USA." *Language and Intercultural Communication* 15 (3): 391–406.

Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993. *Duelling Languages: Grammatical Structure in Codeswitching*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

---, and J.L. Jake. 2000. "Four Types of Morphemes: Evidence from Aphasia, Code Switching and Second Language Acquisition." *Linguistics* 38: 1053–1100.

---. 2002. *Contact Linguistics. Bilingual Encounters and Grammatical Outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

---. 2006. *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Namba, Kazuhiko. 2005. "An Overview of Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame Model." *Educational Research Bullitin Senri International School* 9 & 10: 1–10.

Nieuwenhuis, Paul. 1985. "Diminutives." Ph.D., Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.

Padilla Cruz, Manuel. 2020. "Towards a Relevance-Theoretic Approach to the Diminutive Morpheme." *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 24 (4): 774–95.

Ponsonnet, Maïa. 2018. "A Preliminary Typology of Emotional Connotations in Morphological Diminutives and Augmentatives." *Studies in Language* 42 (1): 17–50.

Poplack, Shana. 1980. "Sometimes I'll Start a Sentence in Spanish y termino en español: Toward a Typology of Code-Switching." In *Linguistics*, 581–618. The Hague: Mouton Publishers.

---, and Marjory Meechan. 1998. "Introduction: How Languages Fit Together in Codemixing." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 2 (2): 127–38.

---. 2004. "Code-Switching." In *Sociolinguistics. An International Handbook of the Science of Language and Society*, 589–96. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Rahimi, Meisam, and Azizollah Dabaghi. 2013. "Persian–English Codeswitching: A Test of the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model." *System* 41 (2): 322–51.

Real Academia Española. 2011. "La derivación apreciativa." In *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española Manual*, 163–72. Madrid: Espasa.

Reynoso Noverón, Jeanett. 2005. "Procesos de gramaticalización por subjetivización: el uso del diminutivo en español'. In *Selected Proceedings of the 7th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. by David Eddington, 79–86. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

Sankoff, David, and Shana Poplack. 1981. "A Formal Grammar for Code-switching." *Paper in Linguistics* 14 (1): 3–45.

---, Shana Poplack, and Swathi Vanniarajan. 1990. "The Case of the Nonce Loan in Tamil." *Language Variation and Change* 2 (1): 71–101.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2000. *English Abstract Nouns as Conceptual Shells. From Corpus to Cognition*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Schneider, Klaus P. 2003. *Diminutives in English:* Berlin: De Gruyter.

---. 2013. "The Truth about Diminutives, and How We Can Find It: Some Theoretical and Methodological Considerations." *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics* 10 (1): 137–51.

Seliger, H.W. 1989. "Deterioration and Creativity in Childhood Bilingualism." In *Bilingualism across the Lifespan*, ed. by K. Hyltenstam and L.K. Obler, 173–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stepanov, A.V. 2020. "Semantic Features of Diminutives and Augmentatives in Modern Spanish." In *Scientific Developments of European Countries in the Area of Philological Researches*, 525–42. Riga: Izdevnieciba "Baltija Publishing".

Valdés Kroff, Jorge. 2016. "Mixed NPs in Spanish-English Bilingual Speech: Using a Corpus-Based Approach to Inform Models of Sentence Processing." In *Spanish-English Codeswitching in the Caribbean and the US*, 281–301. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Vinagre Laranjeira, Margarita. 2005. *El cambio de código en la conversación bilingüe: la alternancia de lenguas*. Madrid: Arco Libros.

Youssef, Islam. 2016. "English-Cairene Arabic Classroom Code Switching: An Interactional-Sociolinguistic Approach". *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 16, 7–28.

Zahra, Fatima, Tahir Saleem, Farhat Abdullah, and Muhammad Arif Khan. 2021. "Testing Matrix Language Framework Model On Urdu-English Online News Entity: A Creative Approach". *Multicultural Education* 7 (1): 265–74.