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*Quiero que tú me enseñe', que sea' mi teacher: The cultural impact of the use of codeswitching in
urban music on the interaction patterns of Puerto Rican bilinguals*

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Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Part 1: Introduction</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Part 2: Theoretical Framework, Review of the Literature and Justification of the Study</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Part 3: Methodology</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Part 4: Findings and Analysis.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Part 5: Conclusion.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	<i>37</i>

Abstract

Key Words: Codeswitching, Bilingualism, Pop Culture, Urban Music, Language, Speech, Lyrics, Discourse Analysis

This research essay analyzes the use of code-switching in the *música urbana* songs of Puerto Rican popular culture. The study explores how codeswitching has become an integral part of the everyday communication system of English-Spanish proficient bilinguals in Puerto Rico through the use of urban music songs. The study also explores how codeswitching has begun to reshape a part of the local society's conception of bilingualism. The most notable way that codeswitching among Generation Z is seen through the impact of songs made by famous artists from urban music whose work is quite popular and also structurally different than the typical reggaeton song. Each artist adds their unique spin to the genre while also showcasing their different codeswitching patterns. This is a qualitative study based on the ethnographic methodology of Dell Hymes (1974) whose main focus on language is based on his view that language has to be seen and analyzed in a communicative setting. Such a setting is the rendition of urban music before the public. In addition, the analysis of lyrics will follow van Dijk's (2008) methodological approach to discourse analysis. The artists selected for this paper have material that lends itself well to this analysis. In order to provide authentic material, lyrics by Bad Bunny and Villano Antillano were transcribed and served as the main data for the investigative part of the study. I will showcase that these artists are using codeswitching not only to connect with a wider audience as they expand beyond only having fans in Puerto Rico, but also how their songs contain an excellent representation of and relevance to our interaction patterns.

Part 1: Introduction

“Popular culture is the set of practices, beliefs, and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system. It includes media objects, entertainment and leisure, fashion and trends, and linguistic conventions, among other things” (Kidd, 2021). Popular culture (also pop culture) is one of the most important aspects in a young person’s life. It not only provides them with context as to what is currently meaningful in the modern world, but it also acts as each generation’s historical footprint. Think about it, when we reminisce about the impact of 1970s pop culture, we think of the groovy disco craze that had people dancing all night to “On the Radio” by Donna Summer and kept “Stayin Alive” thanks to The Bee Gees, classic films that have stood the test of time such as *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*, *Jaws* and even *The Godfather*, the iconic Farrah Fawcett haircut that you have probably seen in a photograph of one of your relatives, the rise of the fashionable & musically gifted Elton John, as well as one of the most important fashion partnerships between Cher and Bob Mackie whose work is still celebrated today, and that barely scratches the surface. Pop culture is truly a melting pot of many ideologies, trends, movements, and most importantly art that has impacted people’s lives to the point where those who lived through it treasure them as a reminder of how life used to be. It is more than just a spectrum of the entertainment industry, but rather an important catalyst that creates and indicates current and future trends, as well as moments that deem themselves worthy of being preserved to enrich our history for future generations to appreciate.

Fast forward to right now, the year 2023, and you will notice that we are currently witnessing the return and appreciation of pop culture aspects from the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. The phrase “Everything is new again” could not be more relevant as it is always associated with this aspect of pop culture, but there is a reason for that. You can argue that each

generation chooses to bring back aspects from the past to reincorporate them into their present as a way of honoring them. However, you could also argue that some people love certain aspects from the past so much that they want to bring them back in a nostalgic fashion so they can experience and appreciate what others had the chance to do in the respective eras which they lived. Even if society does recycle or repurpose certain aspects, this speaks more to the impact it leaves on our culture and how we take these pieces to create something new and special of which we can feel proud. Another example is how current popular artists like Dua Lipa and Lady Gaga brought back the disco sound for their hit songs “Don’t Start Now” and “Stupid Love” respectively, and audiences loved it so much because while it was reminiscent of the past, it still felt like something that perfectly belonged as part of our current timeline.

Pop culture is not just limited to one location on the globe; it is a worldwide phenomenon that can change or expand based on the region in which you live. While I previously mentioned aspects of pop culture mostly made famous in the United States, Puerto Rican pop culture is just as important and memorable. While our culture contains many moments that involve politics, one aspect that constantly inspires every generation is our music. Music is meant to speak to its audience and contains multiple ways in which the listener can heal by forgetting their problems temporarily, can gain a further appreciation of the wonders of life, can experience joy or even connect with their emotional side that allows them to vocalize through words their pain or sadness in a way they just have not been able to express. Music finds a way to represent us when we don’t feel understood but also represents us to ourselves as we find our path. In a way, music acts as the soundtracks of our lives as we associate them with memorable moments that end up defining and guiding us.

One of the more popular genres in today's Puerto Rican music is known as *música urbana* which is a category of music that acts as an umbrella term for different genres including but not limited to reggaeton, dembow, Latin Hip Hop, dancehall, trap and many others. (Cruz, 2020). This style of music has become very popular on the island not just for its unique sound, but also due to how the artists that explore this genre put their own unique spin on it. Puerto Rico's urban music sound has recently been taking over the global music industry through mainstream channels such as the Billboard charts and even sometimes by being a trending soundbite on TikTok. This is due to artists like Bad Bunny who choose to make their impact by singing exclusively in Spanish as a way of honoring and representing their native tongue. Not only is it their way of remembering where they came from and wanting to share that experience with the world, but also showing their audiences and critics that regardless of the language they speak in, music can still unite the world. While artists like Daddy Yankee and Bad Bunny are seen as the faces of this genre due to their successful years dedicated to the industry and their catalogue of hits, they have also paved the way for up-and-coming artists, especially female artists (such as Villano Antillano, Young Miko, Rainao, Paopao, etc.), a gender that has been underrepresented in the reggaeton genre for quite some time. By doing so, they have allowed them to create their own path and change the game for a generation that has been waiting to experience a moment like this. A genre of music that was once frowned upon by many is now an undeniable force that has not only found an audience willing to embrace it, but also amplified the voices of people who used to be considered voiceless.

One of the aspects that I have noticed as a popular trend when analyzing these lyrics is how these artists manage to seamlessly codeswitch between verses. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, writer Carlos D. Morrison formally defines codeswitching (CS) as the “process of shifting from

one linguistic code (a language or dialect) to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting" (Morrison, 2023). CS allows a bilingual or multilingual speaker to alternate between two or more languages in the context of a phrase, clause, sentence or conversation. When we think about how CS is used in our daily lives, we might start to see that it is a more common practice than we think, especially in Puerto Rico. This is what people at first erroneously called Spanglish. The most common way that non-linguists can see CS is in a verbal conversation where they observe two people start a dialogue in one language and then, all of the sudden change into another language. They will also comment on how the conversing partners will sometimes even end the sentence or their part of the conversation in the language in which they originally started speaking. As Grosjean discusses in his 1982 book *Life with two languages*, bilingual speakers not only have a tendency to do this naturally, but they do this as their way of strengthening their argument or making their statement feel more passionate because sometimes the speaker feels that a phrase or a word just does not have the same impact in one language as it does in the other. To the untrained eye, Grosjean comments that one can easily confuse this act as one in which the speaker does not know the direct translation of a word or phrase in the language that they were originally speaking in and must refer back to their main language to express themselves because they do not know one of the languages well enough to complete their thought. However, what is most impressive about this is not how the speakers are able to express themselves in more than one language, it is seeing how they are able to follow the train of thought without questioning the reasoning behind why they alternated languages and simply just continue the conversation.

From my perspective, I have noticed that this act has increased in occurrence among my bilingual friends in PR from generation (Z), as we have been able to include this as part of our

daily lives. As someone who constantly codeswitches out of habit, I realized I started doing this when I had to begin strengthening my Spanish speaking skills during my first year of university. In Puerto Rico, there is an impressive number of speakers who consider themselves to be fully bilingual with a strong command of English and Spanish. After going to a middle school and high school that outright encouraged mostly speaking in English, it became not only my preferred language, but also the dominant language. However, once you end up exiting your bubble, you realize that you have to adapt to survive and without communication we are practically helpless. Thankfully, I met friends, mostly fellow English majors, who understood my predicament and were very willing to help me get adjusted to this new “Fish Out of Water Syndrome” that I was experiencing. Throughout our conversations we began codeswitching naturally, at first, because we did not know the words in one of the languages and doing so can only take you so far until a Spanish professor, who was born and raised in Spain and does not agree with the alternation between languages, hears you having a conversation, but we continued because we made the transition from speaking mostly English to using both languages which made it a lot easier.

Baker and Wright (2021, p. 107) confirm our belief that a number of terms have been utilized by academics to refer to switches between languages in everyday interaction, not to mention the derogatory terms such as Spanglish or Tex-Mex used by the regular population. Another academic term that has recently entered the picture is that of translanguaging. This is a term that originated in a 1994 Welsh experience and that described “the planned and systematic use of two languages inside the same lesson in a classroom.” (P.108). In other words, translanguaging was originally utilized to explain language switching in a classroom situation. In 2009, Ofelia García defined translanguaging as “the act performed by bilinguals of accessing

different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential” (P. 140). Although this definition brought the term closer to CS, García still placed it in the bilingual classroom setting.

Due to the developing concept of translanguaging, I will continue to refer to CS as the theoretical concept that constitutes the basis of my study. There are three types of CS: intrasentential, intersentential and extrasentential. According to Katherine del Monte from *Lectura Books*, intrasentential is “is a shift that is done in the middle of a sentence, without hesitations, interruptions, or pauses that would indicate a shift in language” (del Monte, 2018, blog with no page number). An example of intrasentential would be the sentence “Tengo que ir to the bank y al doctor. Intersentential “occurs when the switch of the language is done at sentence boundaries” (del Monte, 2018, blog with no page number). An example of intersentential would be the sentence “If I end up being late to class, pues está bien.” And extrasentential involves “the insertion of a tag phrase from one language into a sentence in the other language” (del Monte, 2018, blog with no page number). An example of this would be “I like going to the movies, pero, seeing anything in 3D gives me a headache.”

The aim of this paper is to showcase the use of Spanish-English CS by Puerto Rican singers of urban music and how this has impacted bilingual interactions in our culture and how it will affect pop culture moving forward. It will also underscore how these artists use CS as a modern representation of how our current generation uses and modifies the act of bilingual speaking. By creating this paper, I will be able to prove that these artists are using CS not only to connect with a wider audience as they expand beyond only having fans in Puerto Rico, but also how their songs contain an excellent representation and relevance that shows how our speaking patterns have adapted and been modernized.

Part 2: Theoretical Framework, Review of the Literature and Justification of the Study

This study is based on the qualitative research approach. This means that my research will not contemplate the use of statistics or any other sort of the application of numbers to the data that will be analyzed. I will therefore be focusing on my own interpretation of the facts that I will discover through my analysis of the discourse used in the lyrics of songs from urban music. Further on in this section, I will explain the two theoretical frameworks which constitute the basis for my study.

Throughout my research, I found excellent resources through textbooks and articles that discussed CS. One of the main reasons as to why researching CS is so important is due to the fact that it can help change people's perspectives by showing how it characterizes the speech of many bilingual speakers (Grosjean, 2010). In addition, this research clarifies the factors that influence the act of CS itself. It is illuminating to study the different language practices bilingual or multilingual people use when communicating with each other. The work of Baker and Wright in *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism (2021)* has provided me with a lot of helpful insight to carry out this research. For example, when they discuss how they view CS, they state that "Very few bilinguals keep their two languages completely separate, and the ways in which they mix them are complex and varied" (p. 107). When you analyze this quote from your own life perspective, you not only begin to see the validity within the statement, but also how this language model of using two or more languages in the same discourse is first implanted into our minds as a behavioral pattern through our own lives at home. Conversations with our parents, other family members, friends from school and even our neighbors have all potentially contributed to our speaking patterns, at least in my experience and that of many bilinguals on the

island. Certainly, we adopt ways of speaking from the concepts of situations in which we grow up.

In addition to Baker and Wright's publication, I also based my study on Hymes' view of language use in its social and communicative setting (1974). In his particular approach to language studies, he capitalized on his knowledge of anthropology and on his linguistic studies to promote a long-held belief that communicative events took in consideration the sociolinguistic context in order to best explain the interactions. This aspect of theory is the basis for my view of interpreters of urban music and their use of CS.

Since I planned to do an analysis of the lyrics as the main thrust of this work, I decided to use van Dijk's approach to the study of discourse analysis (2008). He emphasizes that in the study of discourse, the focusing on the choice of lexical items is basic in order to unveil the true messages sent by the producer of the language utilized. His work shed light upon the choice of CS and the particular words that were the subject of the change in language. As he explains in his book, it is not so much the social situation that has a bearing on the text emitted, but how the participants of the interaction define the properties of the communicative situation. Thus, when I analyze the lyrics, I looked at the artists' choice of words, particularly in those sections in which there is CS.

Just as it is the case of variation in all the languages in the world, Spanish is also characterized by a number of varieties that it sustains. Puerto Rican Spanish is one such case, and of itself, it is also described as containing many different ways of speaking according to factors such as region, level of education, socioeconomic class, age, and many others such as early access to bilingual education in Spanish and English. As bilingualism began to have a greater

impact on certain areas of Puerto Rican society, it has become undeniable that there are patterns that can be detected when it comes to analyzing how these speakers do alternate languages. These patterns reflect the purposes behind the alternation or CS. Baker and Wright (2021) point out fourteen such reasons in their text, but there are certain ones that truly impacted me as a researcher. The first purpose for CS is *emphasis* which Baker and Wright state is used “to emphasize a particular point in conversation” (2021, p.112). In my opinion, this is the one of the two most obvious ways to explain the use of CS within a conversation. The switch between languages is almost always needed to help a speaker strengthen their point or argument as they feel the word or words will provide them greater support in the other language.

The second most obvious reason to codeswitch is *substitution*. While the authors see this as sometimes a way that helps a person who does not know a word or phrase in one language, I see it also as a way for the speaker to draw inspiration from their more practiced and skilled language to properly express themselves. In fact, I noticed this within myself throughout my first couple of years as a university student. When I was younger, I almost always preferred to speak mainly in English since it was the language I felt most comfortable with. However, as I transitioned from being a high school student in a school where there was a strong emphasis and preference given to the English language to a college student in a school where there was a stronger emphasis and preference given to the Spanish language, I knew that I had to adapt. While both languages were acceptable on campus grounds, I tried to become more comfortable with both languages at home as a way of practicing my speech. Throughout this process of becoming comfortable speaking both languages, I realized that I learned how to codeswitch as a checkpoint where I shifted from using the language I knew the least to the language I knew the most. I began to rely on CS as a potential backup tool to get me through conversations with other

bilingual speakers because I never felt comfortable talking in Spanish. Still, I must accept that knowledge of an L2 can be very useful, for the concept of a perfect bilingual is a myth.

These two notable ways help identify the purpose behind CS in regular conversations. However, there are two purposes that I have noticed that are associated with CS when it comes to the lyrics in music. These are *identity* and *exclusion*. When it comes to identity, Baker and Wright claim that identity in CS can be used to communicate friendship or to indicate a need to be accepted by a peer group (2021, p. 113). However, I believe that when it comes to CS usage in the music industry, singers and listeners use it to clarify their identity to an audience that has not gotten the opportunity to properly get to know them. Music has always been open to interpretation and if listeners do not do research about the artists, it becomes intrinsic to the song itself to help a listener understand who the singers are, what their style of music is and what impact they could have on the music scene. Along with that, sometimes bilingual artists have to constantly remind listeners who may have a preconceived notion of what their ethnicity looks and sounds like, of the idea that they are more than just the image they have created in their minds. Bilingual Puerto Ricans especially have this uphill battle of having to defend their identity constantly because of their concept about their ethnicity. They equate the language that they speak with their identity in Puerto Rican culture. Moreover, they even have to remind people that they are capable of speaking English fluently. You may notice that bilingual singers who incorporate English into their song lyrics are also doing the exact same thing.

As to the other purpose for CS, *exclusion*, it goes hand in hand with the reasoning behind identity in the sense that both are used to protect the elements that distinguish them from other artists and make them sound unique. Exclusion in music can be used as a method of distinction when the artist wants to make sure a listener knows that specific wording, slang, or even styles

are meant to be used exclusively for that specific culture. An artist does not always know when a song could become a mainstream hit, which is why they always want their songs to remain authentically theirs. Sometimes monolingual listeners who listen to a song in a language they do not know, could feel excluded when they listen to that song and tend to look for a translation of lyrics to then determine their feelings towards it. While it could be argued that this is also done to make sure that they are clear when it comes to understanding the intent of a song, it becomes clear that sometimes artists can send a message indicating what specific works are meant for their particular audience and what works are meant to be enjoyed by anyone. Exclusion also allows for an artist to showcase that they will not trade their authentic sounds or identities to make themselves fit into a standard that the majority considers to be currently trending so they can gain approval. Yes, music can be universally enjoyed and appreciated, but like culture (and as part of pop culture), it should not be appropriated or forced to be something it is not meant to be.

While Puerto Rico is primarily a Spanish-speaking population, the English language throughout the years has become more and more prevalent on the island among its citizens. “In Puerto Rico, despite the long-time designation of Spanish and English as co-official languages, bilingualism is controversial” (Pousada, 2017, p. 10). Many factors have contributed to this such as Puerto Rico’s educational system placing a stronger emphasis on students gaining a stronger command over the language, tourism throughout certain Metro areas, people from North America moving to the island and of course the impact of North American popular culture on our society as seen through popular music, films, television series, social media, etc. Of course, being proficient in both languages can be quite an advantage as it shows that a person is educated. Among the different social classes, speakers who have a strong command of the

English language typically end up becoming professionals, academics or even members of the military. While the levels of proficiency in both languages varies, what has become clear is that Puerto Rico throughout the years has not only embraced having both languages as part of their culture but it has also seen their concept of bilingualism change as their citizens adapt to this new normal.

Throughout the book *Being bilingual in Borinquen*, Pousada (2017) explores many important topics such as the difficulty in defining bilingualism, the complex relationship between Spanish and English in Puerto Rico due to historical reasons, the explorations of key concepts such as CS, borrowings between English and Spanish and also a discussion of how all of these terms and ideas are adopted by students. In regards to CS, Pousada makes reference to Poplack's studies (1980, 1981) by saying that "the most rapid, complex, and fluent code-switching is done by speakers who are highly proficient in both languages." (Pousada, p. 15). To be able to codeswitch quickly and naturally takes years of practice throughout many conversations as it becomes second nature to a speaker. It will usually get to the point where unless the speaker steps back and analyzes what they just said, they may not realize that they are codeswitching in that very moment as the listener not only is able to follow their train of thought but also respond to it accordingly. Pousada (pp. 14-15) also points out that switches occur within a sentence or between sentences; these acts are respectively known as intrasentential and intersentential CS. What becomes interesting about these concepts that Pousada explains is that when you analyze CS within lyrics, intrasentential CS specifically occurs in the middle of one specific line of the song and intersentential occurs between different lines or even between verses.

Pousada also agrees that CS can "serve as a marker of group identity, informality, and solidarity." (2017, p. 15). CS has become more than just a way for a speaker to quickly resolve

their problem if they forget a word in the language they were speaking in as it has now become an important aspect in shaping our identities. This phenomenon has many functions within bilingual discourse, but it essentially manages to establish a creative style of communication that is meant to highlight a unique cultural perspective. Every region's version of CS can feel so different from each other when you hear the conversations, yet the general concept is the same. It is meant to reflect our societies and how the speakers manage to adapt and help languages evolve in their use of phrases, slang, references, even abbreviations. The way we show our social identities is meant to represent who we are, how we live and how we continue to develop our particular bilingualism.

In *Life with two languages* (1982), Grosjean mentions that monolinguals have had a very negative attitude toward CS, and they still do (Baker and Wright, 2021). Grosjean points out that monolinguals believe CS is “a grammarless mixture of two languages, a jargon or gibberish that is an insult to the monolingual's own rule-governed language.” (p. 146). He goes on to state that they see CS as a way of saying that the speaker does not know either language well enough to have a proper conversation in either of them and are instead given the term “semi-lingual” speakers (p. 146). The issue with these statements is that it makes it seem as if CS is the equivalent of proper gibberish instead of a useful communication resource. When you analyze these statements made by monolinguals, you can clearly see the flaw in their argument because it paints certain bilingual speakers as lazy when in fact they are just adding important sociolinguistic information or filling in a momentary linguistic need. Their argument also makes it seem as if in bilingualism only one language works at a time. The area of the brain that contains the languages of a bilingual is always active for both codes (Baker and Wright, 2021).

Another important aspect that Grosjean brings up involves fluency in bilingualism. To obtain a level of bilingual fluency, one could argue that besides belonging to two cultures and being able to write and speak in two languages, to consider oneself truly proficient involves having a native-like control over two languages. Grosjean mentions that fluency in each language is measured by how well a speaker handles the four basic language skills. These language skills include speaking, listening, reading and writing. While this method seems more likely to be associated with standardized testing, it does help determine a speaker's degree of bilingualism rather than just assuming that they truly are completely bilingual. Personally, while I agree with the concept of testing to measure degrees of bilingualism, there should also be a sociocultural aspect measured within these tests. By this I mean, many modern bilinguals use their two languages mainly through social interactions (conversations) which allow for the speakers to feel as if they are in their natural element. Unfortunately, tests often provide an additional sense of pressure to make sure every question gets the exact answer and could result in the speaker trying to bottle up all of their knowledge rather than performing in a natural setting.

The purpose of my research is to focus on how codeswitching has become an integral part of the everyday communication system of English-Spanish proficient bilinguals in PR. By focusing on showing how CS has begun to reshape a part of the local society's conception of bilingualism, I explain how throughout the years our interaction patterns begin to change as our languages evolve and adapt to modern times. In order to do so, I highlighted how CS is also reflected in the songs made by famous artists from local urban music whose work is quite popular, thus emphasizing CS in interactions. This music is also structurally different from the typical Puerto Rican reggaeton song. To conduct this investigation, I sought to utilize the following research questions as the driving force:

1. How has CS been an important key factor in the success of the song lyrics in the urban music genre?
2. What is the specific CS pattern (intersentential, intrasentential, etc.) typically observed within these songs that showcase CS on a regular basis?
3. To what extent are these artists codeswitching in a planned fashion?

Part 3: Methodology

As I explained in the previous section, I utilized Hymes' view of language use and van Dijk's 2008 approach to the study of discourse in its sociolinguistic setting in order to analyze the lyrics of songs from urban music and their rendering in concerts.

For this paper, I focused on the artistry of Villano Antillano and Bad Bunny as I consider them to be important figures in the urban music genre. While they bring their own unique style to the music industry, to many they are considered gamechangers and groundbreakers as they pave the way for a new generation of talent to expand upon the reggaeton genre, in part thanks to aspects such as CS within their lyrics. As someone who is a personal fan of three artists, I wanted to explore their works in a way where I could showcase that they are leaving a bigger impact in Puerto Rican pop culture than we think, and this is just the beginning of their professional careers. The very idea that listening to their music and analyzing it would count as a final project was exciting enough, but as I continued to do my research, I realized that this is a topic that has yet to be thoroughly explored focusing on these specific artists and their songs. History is all about documenting important moments and events that can shape a generation, and music has always stood the test of time and shaped people's identities. That alone makes it worth documenting and remembering.

In order to analyze these songs, I had to look up the lyrics to these songs on the popular website "www.genius.com" and make a few corrections in the transcription that I noticed upon discovery. Once I had the lyrics I created a timestamp to make sure the reader would know at what point of the song the CS being focused on occurred. After that I listened to the section of the song a couple of times as I read the lyrics in front of me to make sure that I was able to

properly detect which type of CS was being used. Once I completed that, I began to write down the CS patterns I noticed in the lyrics and where they were occurring within the verse. By completing this analysis, I was able to showcase where the act of CS was occurring within the song and figure out if there was a noticeable pattern or if there was a specific type CS that was used more frequently.

The songs I chose to analyze were:

- Villano Antillano: Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 51
- Besties (Remix) by Joyce Santana and Young Miko
- Moscow Mule by Bad Bunny
- La Corriente by Bad Bunny

I chose these songs because they have had an incredible and recent impact on Puerto Rican pop culture and also because they featured moments where the artists codeswitched within the lyrics in ways that have clearly resonated with listeners. My process for choosing these songs involved making a list of songs by these artists where I originally thought CS was occurring. After the list was made, I began to look up the lyrics to these songs online and listened to them as I read the lyrics. Once I started discarding certain songs to narrow the list down to the ones where the act of CS was strongly present, I ended up deciding on these five songs. The fact that I also happen to love these songs and was constantly playing them continuously last year is purely coincidental. A happy accident, if you will.

Part 4: Findings and Analysis

What is great about falling in love with a song is being able to listen to it over and over again and discover something new with each additional listening moment. Whether it is discovering a harmony you may have missed, appreciating vocal layering in the arrangement of the song, or even realizing that you had been singing a word or phrase wrong but you finally heard the correct version, you always gain a deeper appreciation for an artists' work the more you connect with it. In this section of the paper, I will be introducing the artists selected for this important section of my research and breaking down selected parts of the songs mentioned in the methodology to specifically detect where CS occurs in the song and what type of CS occurs. The great part about breaking down a song for the purpose of analysis and having the written lyrics before you is that it allows you to engage in a close reading of the words and see if you can develop new ideas or interpretations. Sometimes you may even notice that some of the words published on a popular lyrics site could be wrong after hearing the section of a song over and over again and being able to grasp the detail the site missed.

Villano Antillano is a star on the rise who has been named by Rolling Stone a “barrier breaker” (Solá-Santiago, 2023). To receive such praise in the male dominated reggaeton industry is quite an accomplishment and she did it by staying true to her own unique musical style. Antillano's success within the scene is attributed to her rapid rap skills, cheeky wordplay that is unafraid to be bold and sassy, as well as her honesty when writing her lyrics. Within the music world of the urban music and reggaeton genre, sexualized lyrics and romantic pop fusions are commonly seen, as discussed by Solá-Santiago in her Rolling Stone article. However, there is always room for an artist to do more when it comes to creating their lyrics. You can compare the music making process to playing with fashion, an example made famous by Barbadian singer

Rihanna, where she specifies that an artist should be able to enter a studio and experiment with the process and feel free enough to play with it. You can tell that la Villana also follows this mindset not only creating the lyrics within her songs, but also when it comes to determining how her music will sound. She has been known for expressing important messages within her lyrics, including but not limited to: empowering women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community to feel free and confident, exploring the trans experience, criticizing and bringing awareness to important situations such as violence towards women, specifically the femicide and transfemicide crisis that occurred in 2022 and continues to occur in Puerto Rico which can be specifically seen in her song “Mujer” from her debut album “La Sustancia X”.

Isabela Raygoza from Billboard spoke with the artist where she stated “What makes you an outstanding rapper is not about how many words you know, or whether you can rap in an academic way — it’s about how you use the language,” (Raygoza, 2023). What I love about this quote is that it showcases that Villana is not afraid to defend her art and her culture because it is what best represents her to the audience that chooses to listen to her. She is fully aware that her style maybe will not resonate with everyone, but those who do relate to her and enjoy her work are able to see the authenticity in her work as she pours her heart into her work. Villana goes on to state “It can be the language of everyday life. I use a lot of words that maybe aren’t popular like in the rest of the world, but it’s how I speak Spanish, and how it’s spoken in the Caribbean. That’s what really makes a rapper” (Raygoza, 2023). Just like Bad Bunny, an artist that will be discussed later on, Villana will always represent her home Puerto Rico through her art. She not only shares her experience in her music but will always be a proud representation of a Boricua (another genitive for Puerto Rican) living an

unapologetically authentic life who is proud to share her culture with the members of the world who are unfamiliar with the uniqueness of a Puerto Rican.

Antillano teamed up with Argentine DJ and record producer Bizarrap to produce not only the biggest collaboration of her career, but also her most successful song yet. As of May 2, 2023, the song has achieved over two hundred and twenty-six million streams on the streaming platform “Spotify”. The viral hit led her to becoming “one of Latin music’s biggest breakthrough artists of 2022” (Santiago, 2023). What is unique about “Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 51,” from a linguistic perspective, is seen in the way Villana writes her lyrics as the fierce wordsmith uses pop culture references throughout and words and phrases in English, Spanish, and for a brief moment, French, words that are alternated throughout. This is a clear indication of CS as the artist bounces back and forth between languages while keeping the song mainly in Spanish. The section of the song being used for analysis appears twice, thus indicating a repetition and is one of the main choruses of the song.

Villano Antillano (0:45-1:00):

I'm on the top shelf, I'm such a bombshell (1)
Todo el mundo ve que del Dorado soy la Chel
Todo el mundo quiere un pedazo de mi pastel
Perdi'a en el mar, soy yo Pi Patel
La muñeca, la Bratz, la top model de Mattel (5)
Si no quiero contigo no me tires a mi cel
Aló, yo soy Villana, mucho gusto, je m'appelle
La Jennifer, la Aniston, aquella la Rachel (8)

As you can see in the lyrics provided above, the chorus starts with two sentences in English. It then alternates into Spanish for about three lines before returning to English in the fifth line with a new phrase in English. It is then followed by a return to Spanish before being interrupted by a French expression and then ending in Spanish. There is a total of five alternations that occur within this section alone among the three previously mentioned languages. While the alternations are used to include sentences and tag phrases, if you try to create a translated version of the English sections into Spanish, you lose the rhythm, the flow and, in all sincerity, it simply does not sound right lyrically to the ear. You could technically translate the small French saying into Spanish, but then the song does not have the same “je ne sais quoi” effect, nor will the words rhyme, for that matter. Throughout the lyrics, Antillano references the films *The Road to El Dorado* (as seen in the second line with the reference to the character Chel), *Life of Pi* (as seen in the fourth line by stating the main character’s name), the popular toy company *Mattel* and line of dolls known as *Bratz* (seen in the fifth line), and in the final line there is a reference to celebrated actress Jennifer Anniston and her role as Rachel on the popular TV sitcom *Friends*.

The two main types of CS seen in this verse are intersentential and extrasentential. The first instance where we see CS is through intersentential CS within the first two lines as the first line starts in English before seamlessly alternating into Spanish in the second line. While Katherine del Monte stated that intersentential CS is said to occur at sentence boundaries, in this case given that the lyrics are rapped in a fast pace with no room for hesitation, the lyrics end up blending into each other as if the verse were one very long run-on-sentence. The second instance of CS is through extrasentential CS as seen in line five with the insertion of

the phrase “la top model de Mattel”. Antillano in this line is seen alternating between the Spanish word “muñeca”, the pronunciation of the American fashion doll brand *Bratz* and the phrase “la top model de Mattel”. Extrasentential CS is seen here more as a way to alternate back and forward from Spanish to English. The third instance of CS is through extrasentential CS between the end of line seven with the insertion of the French expression “je m'appelle” (my name is) in between Spanish phrasings which is then used to lead the listener into the beginning of line eight which sees the return of the Spanish language. In this case, the extrasentential CS is seen with a specific phrase from one language into a sentence, or in this case line, in the other language.

The second song that I chose for this analysis is called “Besties (Remix)” which consists of a featured verse by Villano Antillano and was released in 2022 by artists Joyce Santana and Young Miko. According to an article by Jeanette Hernández of *Remezcla*, the song is dedicated to the LGBTQIA community and even translates and quotes Joyce Santana’s Instagram post about the song stating “To my brothers and sisters in the LGBTQIA community who day in and day out have to live and go through more than those who point fingers at them for nothing” (Hernández, 2022, information from the internet). The article also reports that the song is also dedicated to all minorities: “To my black brothers and sisters who have always been marginalized and who I will represent until my last day as that is what I came here for”. Antillano’s tweets were also quoted in the *Remezcla* article where she praised artist Santana, who she respects and admires, as well as stated her gratitude for being an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community. In regards to the song itself, she is also quoted as saying “it puts in the hands of two women the sexualization of their respective identities and observes something undeniable in the history of music... it punctuates a revolution that today has many people in hysteria”.

In comparison to “Bzrp Music Sessions, Vol. 51”, this song features Villano Antillano as a supporting artist rather than a leading artist, but in my opinion, she still manages to have the strongest verses in the entire song. From a linguistic standpoint, this song uses English and Spanish, but it also incorporates abbreviations at the beginning of her verse, at the end of every line, in the first four lines. The four abbreviations are: BFF (meaning ‘best friend forever’), DTF (meaning ‘down to fuck’), VHS (meaning ‘video home system’) and BTS (meaning ‘behind the scenes’). The abbreviations are placed at the end of each line in the first part of her verse as a clever way of rhyming, similar to a poem using the AA BB rhyming scheme for two rhyming couplets. In this case, we will be analyzing the first half of Antillano’s verse as it contains the most occurrences of CS through the types identified as intersentential CS and extrasentential CS.

Villano Antillano (2:27-2:43):

- Solita en el mundo con mi BFF (1)
- Si no' da la Rolex estamo' DTF
- No' grabamo' cinta' en un VHS (3)
- Pa' su contenido, mucho BTS
- I'm her bestie (Bestie) (5)
- La Villana e' lesbi'
- Mujere' en mi DM, toda' down to [sic] test [sic] me (7)
- A tu nena yo le gusto, si te va', she texts me
- That's my bitch, I love how she gets me (Ella e' mi galla) (9)

*DM = Direct Message, [sic] = correction from the original source

As it is easy to observe, the first four lines of the verse above have the previously mentioned abbreviations at the end of each line. Between the fourth and the fifth line, the song alternates from Spanish to English and then returns to Spanish in the beginning of the sixth line. However, in the seventh line we see an alternation yet again, but this time it features a phrase in English at the end of the line. The same pattern can be seen in the eighth line of the verse; ironically enough, it also uses two words that are spelled differently, yet in the context of the song they sound almost the same (test, texts). And in line number nine, we end with a line in English until the very end which features a phrase in Spanish that can be heard in the background vocals.

When it comes to analyzing the types of CS seen in this specific verse, the types of CS seen here are intrasentential, intersentential and extrasentential. The first instance where CS appears is between lines five and six, in which intersentential CS occurs as the fifth line is completely in English, whereas the sixth line alternates to complete Spanish including some Puerto Rican slang at the end of the sixth sentence. The second instance where CS is observed is in line seven where intrasentential CS occurs towards the end of that line. Line seven starts in Spanish and then towards the middle of that line a phrase in English is inserted, thus causing an alternation between languages. The same pattern of intrasentential CS is seen in line eight in the exact same placement and ending with the same word 'me'. As for the fourth instance where CS is observed is in line nine. Here extrasentential CS occurs; however, instead of alternating from Spanish to English, an alternation takes place from English to Spanish. The Spanish alternation in this line is heard more in the background vocals, but the CS can still be heard.

When it comes to the urban music genre, not many artists have been able to leave as huge of an impact as Bad Bunny has so far. To quote Eduardo Cepeda from *Billboard*, an American music and entertainment website that provides music charts, news, videos and reviews related to the music industry, “Bad Bunny ranks as one of music’s most exciting new stars, no “crossover” qualification necessary.” (Cepeda, 2019, information from the internet). In fact, Bad Bunny is one of the most exciting and biggest stars in the world right now. His global success has been something other artists could only dream of, as he has had one of the greatest rises to celebrity stardom in recent memory, and he was able to do it his way. Cepeda also states “His ascent — from a small town on the northern coast of Puerto Rico to the biggest U.S. arenas in two years — certifies Latin music’s now-central role in American pop” (Cepeda, 2019, information from the internet). When you think of an artist reaching that next level in their career, you imagine that they would try to mold themselves into an image that appeals to the general population and still has a portion of authenticity. Bad Bunny, on the other hand, has not had to fit this mold for he has metaphorically demolished it with a sledgehammer. He just wanted to be able to make his music the way he desired, and if it reached an audience that genuinely enjoyed it, he would have been satisfied.

Bad Bunny is more than just a groundbreaker; he is a game changer and someone who many people looking to get into the entertainment business could aspire to take inspiration from. As pointed out by Andrew R. Chow and Mariah Espada in *Time Magazine*, “Where other musicians reaching for his level of stardom have hidden certain parts of themselves, Benito has refused to compromise: on the language he sings in; the political stances he assumes; the dresses and nail polish he wears” (Chow and Espada, 2023, information from the internet). By being unapologetically himself, Bad Bunny has managed to become not only a symbol of hope

for his fans, but also a role model who is not afraid of being unpredictable, breaking down gender norms when it comes to fashion, grooming and overall presentation, being a vocal advocate for social change or even something as simple as wanting to be known for singing in Spanish. He always wears two things on his sleeves, his heart and the desire to represent Puerto Rico in a way that has not been done before. Besides being an award-winning artist and producer, even getting an opportunity to make one of his childhood dreams come true by competing in WWE, he has also been an activist for women's rights. Bad Bunny has never been a fan of machismo and in the music video for his song "*Yo Perreo Sola*" he not only set out to make an anthem to empower women, but the video itself also advocates for the Queer community by taking a stand against homophobia and transphobia. As expressed by Andrea Bossi in her Forbes article (2020, information from the internet), "At the end of the video, text in Spanish fills the screen and reads 'si no quiere bailar contigo, respeta, ella perrea sola.' In other words, if a woman does not want to dance with you, respect her. She dances alone.". The song's goal was to empower women to be able to dance alone without the fear of a man interfering and for women to feel free to do so in a male dominated culture.

"Bad Bunny is perhaps the world's first reverse crossover artist, whose success comes from a refusal to cater to the mainstream." (Chow and Espada, 2023, information from the internet). Not since Ricky Martin, Ivy Queen or even Daddy Yankee has Puerto Rico had a global star break through mainstream culture in the way that Bad Bunny has. The year 2022 was undeniably his year as he released his record-breaking album *Un Verano Sin Ti* which received high praise and resonated with a lot of members in the U.S. Spanish speaking community as it took them down memory lane reliving past summer moments they had experienced and even created new anthems to enjoy that very season. Bad Bunny achieving this level of success

without releasing a song completely in English is a testament to his talent and star power. He finds a way for everyone to enjoy his music, letting audiences connect with the songs that allow them to let loose through dance or connect with them emotionally. He wants to reinforce to audiences that music can be universal, as it should be, and that anyone and everyone who wants to enjoy it can do so. Language barrier has been a part of an ongoing conversation within the entertainment industry throughout recent years, as the ability to overcome subtitles will allow many audience members to be exposed to and potentially enjoy many new forms of art. While Academy Award winning director Bong Joon-ho expressed this sentiment during the 2020 Oscars ceremony, Bad Bunny has indirectly yet effectively been expressing the exact message within the music industry and audiences are starting to make it a part of their own set of beliefs.

Within his last album *Un Verano Sin Ti*, Bad Bunny released two songs which I consider to have moments of CS as his way of mirroring the bilingual experience that Puerto Ricans on the island live daily. The first song “Moscow Mule” was not only a fan favorite, but also a streaming juggernaut that earned him a Grammy nomination for “Best Pop Solo Performance” at the 2023 Grammys ceremony. If you lived in Puerto Rico during the Summer of 2022, the odds were that, at some point, you were going to hear a car blasting that song as you drove. Although the song focuses on someone the singer is in love with, he also emphasizes the idea of living in the moment by enjoying life to the fullest, a message many can appreciate. From a linguistic standpoint, you are able to notice that Bad Bunny in this song uses some English words or terminology to fill in a temporary need, but it also ends up helping when it comes to sections of the song rhyming. While this song uses a more relaxed and slower sound compared to Antillano’s Bzrp Session, you can still notice the bounce in between the acts of CS. The main

type of CS seen in this verse is actually extrasentential CS as it usually involves the insertion of a tag phrase from one language into another.

Moscow Mule (1:10-1:40):

- Todo e' underwater (Ey) (1)
- Baby, vamo' pa'l cuarto quarter
- En la Uru' comiéndono' el pare (3)
- Te vo'a dar duro pa' que no me compare', ey
- Cuida'o con ese mahón, que se va a romper (Ey) (5)
- Ese booty lo va a romper (Ey)
- Yo no sé si yo te vuelvo a ver (7)
- Si mañana me vo'a perder
- Tú ere' una player, me hiciste un crossover (9)
- Esta ve' metiste, me diste game over, eh-eh (Huh)
- Porque no puedo olvidar (11)
- El perreo aquel que se fue viral

As it is evident in this verse, the first line contains an extrasentential CS with the word 'underwater' placed at the end of the line. However, the second line also contains two instances of extrasentential CS as the words 'baby' and 'quarter' are used. The first word is a term of endearment that has a long history of usage in Puerto Rican interactions involving relationships. Among members of Generation Z, the word has become even more popular. The second word

not only is used to rhyme with ‘underwater’ but is also meant to complete the basketball references that are used below as well. In the sixth line the word ‘booty’ also has the function of an extrasentential CS. Interestingly, in line nine there is once again two instances of extrasentential CS with the words ‘player’ and ‘crossover.’ The first word ‘player’ is being used as a form of slang to implicate the relationship version of that word by implying that they seem to be more interested in pursuing a short-term relationship. As for the use of the word ‘crossover’, it continues to fit in Bunny’s play on words involving the basketball metaphor being used in this verse, but is also meant to keep in tune with the relationship aspect being used in this line referencing a potential blindside. The final instance of extrasentential CS is seen in line ten with the phrase ‘game over’ with the implication that this other person won the cat and mouse game they were playing since he had clearly fallen for this person first as he reminisces about the past. Throughout this whole verse, you can see that the alternation in language is always Spanish to English, unlike Antillano who used more of a rapid back and forth method between certain lines.

The second song being used in this analysis is called “La Corriente” which is a collaboration between Bad Bunny and artist Tony Dize. For the purpose of this analysis, we will be focusing on Bad Bunny’s verse within the song as it features a higher frequency of the act of CS throughout. While the song was not promoted as a single from the album, the song became a fan favorite as reflected during the live performances of this song throughout Bad Bunny’s tour. Unlike “Moscow Mule”, this song features a livelier beat which fits more with the idea of this song being used on a night out on the way to the club or being played at the club. The song uses a throwback approach meant to have listeners reminisce about reggaeton songs from the past that were meant to be danced to through perreo. From a linguistic standpoint, similar to “Moscow

Mule”, this song is using extrasentential CS as a way of filling a temporary need through certain words or short phrases meant to be underscored as slang.

La Corriente (0:38-1:17):

Quiero que tú me enseñe', que sea' mi teacher, jeje (1)

Una bicha [sic], una pitcher, ey

Lowkey, anda a switche, je (3)

Loca que me la chi—

Ey, ey, la baby ya va pa' treinta y se ve violenta, se ve violenta (5)

Hace rato está mirando, me di cuenta, ya me di cuenta, ah-ah

Ella sabe má' que tú, así que no sea' tonto, chico, no le mienta', je (7)

No te vivas la película, que ella es la película y de las que no se renta

Sube ese culo y to's comentan (9)

Una bad bitch, girl de lo' 90

In this verse, the first line contains an extrasentential CS towards the end of the line with the word ‘teacher’ which is used as a play on words of how certain Puerto Rican students have used different ways to address teachers in Spanish, such as “profe” being pronounced “proe-fay” as a shortening of the word professor. Within the second line there is an extrasentential CS in the word ‘pitcher’ which rhymes with the CS word ‘switche’ in line three and ends up creating a baseball metaphor. The other instance of extrasentential CS used in line three is the word ‘lowkey’ which has been used as slang recently among those proficient in Twitter. The term is

meant to be used by someone who wants to hide or not draw further attention to how they are feeling about someone, something or even an event. In line five there is another extrasentential CS in the word 'baby' which was also done in the song "Moscow Mule" and is a pattern Bunny seems to exhibit with the use of that word in his songs. An interesting CS occurs in line ten with the phrase 'bad bitch' followed by the word 'girl'. What is interesting about this is that while some argue that it could count as intrasentential CS since it occurs in the middle of a sentence, I actually believe it falls under extrasentential CS since it is a tag phrase being used as a description. As you listen to the song, it does not sound like there is a pause in the line, however the written comma automatically creates a break within the line which goes against the use of intrasentential CS since it has to be uninterrupted.

One of the aspects I noticed when analyzing my findings is that Villana has a better grasp of the English Language relating more to Generation Z's current approach to Puerto Rican bilingualism whereas Bad Bunny relates more to a millennial approach to bilingualism. Villana is much more comfortable codeswitching because it is part of her daily culture in terms of how she has adapted to the Generation Z culture. In comparison, Bad Bunny, while very much relevant to Generation Z, still has a more millennial approach to Puerto Rican bilingualism in the sense that he relates more to a generation that has not felt comfortable speaking English out of fear that their accent will be criticized, a common fear in Boricuas (personal communication from Professor Alma Simounet on May 5, 2023). While Bad Bunny can use tag phrases here and there throughout his lyrics as seen through his extrasentential CS, I find myself able to relate to his situation as I experienced a similar sentiment except I felt afraid to speak in Spanish. Villana, on the other hand, does not seem to feel as awkward or frightened to alternate between English and Spanish because you can tell that it is how she speaks normally. One could trace this back to

a potential comparison of the popular media these artists consumed growing up influencing their lives into adulthood proving that through consumption of pop culture, styles can be influenced.

My first research question asked “How has CS been an important key factor in the success of the song lyrics in the urban music genre?” and the result is that through CS artists are able to incorporate more of their daily conversation style while also using it to create a catchier song that is able to feel more relatable to the current generation (Z). My second research question asked “What is the specific CS pattern (intersentential, intrasentential, etc.) typically observed within these songs that showcase CS on a regular basis?” and the results were that extrasentential CS and intersentential CS were the types that more frequently showed up during the analysis. While this is not meant to be a generalized view of how these artists codeswitch, you can tell that fluency in bilingualism helps determine how often one could potentially codeswitch. My final research question asked “To what extent are these artists codeswitching in a planned fashion?” and the results are that these lyrics were written ahead of the recording, thus indicating that the songs were not meant to be a freestyle or improvised version that allowed for variations throughout live performances. This means that the artists codeswitched based on how they felt like using their language during the writing process and ultimately stuck with what they considered to be a perfected version of the lyrics that best represents how they felt at that time.

Part 5: Conclusion

The Cambridge Dictionary defines the word artistry as “great skill in creating or performing something, such as in writing, music, sport, etc.”. It is clear that this upcoming generation features many talented artists that are focused on not only creating an impact on the industry, but also showcasing the artistry that makes them to be unique and stand out. Through the use of CS, we can see that it is an important key factor in the success of writing song lyrics within the urban music genre as it reflects more of the bilingual culture seen in Puerto Rico today and at the same time invite others whose Spanish may not be as strong to still be able to enjoy the music incorporating a unity through song. In regards to the two artists used in this analysis, I have found that the two patterns of CS seen more frequently within their music is extrasentential and intersentential. While this is not completely representative when it comes to generalizing their CS in all of their music, it is quite possible that through further research of other songs that these patterns are likely to resurface.

CS may sometimes fill a temporary gap in sentences in conversation or songs, but it undeniably shows that in bilinguals both languages are active within the brain at the same time. It is also completely understandable that bilingual artists codeswitch naturally as they are used to the way their brain processes and understands languages in everyday interaction. The act of CS within their songs can follow both an unplanned or planned fashion, as it allows them the freedom to incorporate a stronger sense of how they feel or find a substitution to complete a rhyme that suits the lyrics better in another language. Language can be seen as a social mirror that reflects us in ways we have yet to fully understand. In fact, it opens the door for all of us to discover more about ourselves linguistically and analyze how our modern dynamics affect us and help us evolve. If we embrace different languages and language styles by taking the time to learn

from them, the more likely we are to learn more about each other. CS shows other people not only that you understand them and are willing to learn from them. Aspects such as CS should not be disregarded, but celebrated as an artform itself further developing new ways for humans to communicate.

This research could be furthered through the analysis of CS in the songs of Young Miko, Pitbull, Jennifer Lopez, Ricky Martin, Shakira, or even further analyzing more songs by Villano Antillano and Bad Bunny.

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