

Synopsis

Hypothesis

- MesoSpace: team, goals, tools
- · Frames of reference
- Data: the Ball & Chair study
- · Qualitative data
- Quantitative analysis:
 - the distribution of the response variables
 - the impact of the predictor variables
- Discussion and conclusions
- · Appendix: the linear regressions

Hypothesis

- Central question: are practices of language use
 - Diffused through contact (neo-whorfian)?
 - Modified by non-linguistic factors, ex. education/literacy, environment (Li, Gleitman)?
 - Altered by other factor(s)?

• Hypothesis:

 The use of the relative Frames of Reference by contemporary speakers of Mesoamerican (MA) languages is largely – possibly exclusively – the result of contact with Spanish.

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MesoSpace: team, goals, tools

- NSF award #BCS-0723694
 Spatial language and cognition in Mesoamerica
- MesoSpace aims to contribute to the debate from two angles
 - we are working on a series of studies
 - that pit linguistic against non-linguistic predictors
 - in reference frame use across languages
 - we are also investigating a possible lexico-syntactic factor that may bias speakers against relative FoRs
 - namely the productive use of shape-based meronyms in the representation of space

MesoSpace: team, goals, tools (cont.)



13 Mesoamerican (MA) languages

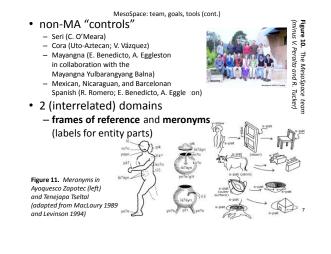
– Mayan

- Chol (J.-J. Vázquez)
 K'anjob'al (E. Mateo)
- Tseltal (several variants; G. Polian)
- Yucatec (J. Bohnemeyer)
- Mixe-Zoquean
- Ayutla Mixe (R. Romero)
 Soteapanec (S. Gutierrez)
- Tecpatán Zoque (R. Zavala)
- Oto-Manguean
 Juchitán Zapotec (G. Pérez Báez)
 - Otomí (N. Hernández,
 C. Hernández,
 - S. Hernández, E. Palancar)
- Huave (S. Herrera)

gure 9. MesoSpace: Field

sites

- Purépecha (A. Capistrán)
- Totonac-Tepehuan
 Huebuetla Tepehua
- G. Smythe)
 Uto-Aztecan
- Pajapan Nawat (V. Peralta)



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Frames of reference

• background on reference frames

- two kinds of place functions (Jackendoff 1983)

- i.e., functions from reference entities into regions
- topological (Piaget & Inhelder) perspective=frame-free
 - independent of the orientation of the ground, the observer, and the figure-ground array (the configuration)
- (1.1) The apple is on the skewer
- (1.2) The band aid is on the shin
- (1.3) The earring is in the ear (lobe)



Figure 1. Some configurations that might be described in terms of topological place functions

Frames of reference (cont.) – projective – framework-dependent

- the place function returns a region defined in a coordinate system centered on the reference entity
- the axes of the coordinate system are derived from an anchor
 - » in intrinsic frames, the anchor is the reference entity
 - » in relative frames, it is the body of an observer
 - » in absolute frames, it is some environmental entity/feature

The man is on the side of the tree. The man is to the right of the tree.

Absolute



Figure 2. The three types of spatial FoRs distinguished in Levinson 1996, 2003

The man is east

of the tree.

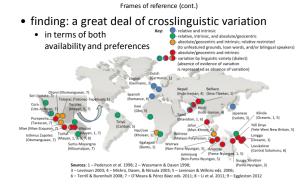
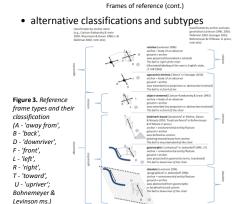


Figure 4. Reference frame use in small-scale horizontal space across languages (Bohnemeyer & Levinson ms.)



Frame of reference use in Mesoamerica in the context of sustained contact with Spanish



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-a-Row: design

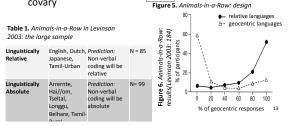
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geocentric

solution

E

- preferences for particular frame types in discourse and recall memory covary



Spatial reference frames in language, culture, and cognition (cont.) two competing interpretations ٠

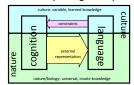


Figure 7. The innatist vision

Innatist interpretation (Li & Gleitman 2002: Li et al 2011: inter alia)

- innate knowledge of all FoR types variation only in usage preferences
- variation caused by adaptation to the environment - topography, population geography, education, literacy
- language plays no role in the cultural transmission of practices of spatial reference

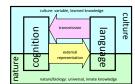


Figure 8. The Neo-Whorfean vision

Neo-Whorfian interpretation (Levinson 1996, 2003: Pederson et al 1998; inter alia)

- knowledge of some FoR types is culturally transmitted
- language plays a key role in the cultural transmission of practices of spatial reference the adaptation to the environment happens at the phylogenetic level, not at the ontogenetic level

The role of language contact

- · Neo-whorfian view
 - Language is a system of transmission for nonlinguistic cognition
 - this suggests that not only a person's L1, but also their L2/3/..., may affect their cognition
- experimental support
 - Athanasopoulos 2006
 - advanced Japanese-English bilinguals pattern with monolingual English speakers in the cognitive processing of number
 - Athanasopoulos 2009
 - · L2 influence on color naming and color categorization in Greek-English bilinguals

500 Relative Intrinsic-Relative 400 Intrinsic-Vertical Vertical 300 Topological Landmark-based 200 Absolute Direct Intrinsic 100 0 Yucatec Tseltal Zapotec Otomi Mixe Tarascan

Frames of reference preference in Mesoamerica Reference frame uses in Ball & Chair locative descriptions

Frames of reference: summary and hypothesis

Premise:

- If language plays the role suggested by Neo-Whorfian accounts (Pederson et al 1998, Levinson 2003, contra Li & Gleitman 2002), both first and second languages should have an effect on FoR preferences.

MesoSpace hypothesis:

- The use of the relative FoRs by contemporary speakers of Mesoamerican (MA) languages is largely - possibly exclusively - the result of contact with Spanish as L2

Frames of reference preference in Mesoamerica

- · MA languages have been reported to make use of the relative FoR in discourse with much less frequency than in other languages Teneiapa Tseltal
 - Brown and Levinson (1992, 1993, 2000, 2009), Brown (1994, 2001, 2006), Levinson (1994, 1996, 2003), Levinson and Brown (1994), Levinson et al. (2002), Polian and Bohnemeyer 2011.
- O'Meara and Pérez Báez 2011 (eds.)

Bias against the use of the relative FoR

(Pérez Báez, 2011)

- MA language sample: Tarascan (Isolate), Tseltal and Yucatec (Mayan), Ayutla Mixe (Mixe-Zoquean), San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomí and Juchitán Zapotec (Otomanguean), Meseño Cora (Uto-Aztecan)
- In no case was the relative FoR the preferred FoR type in either orientation or location descriptions
- Highest frequency of use of the relative FoR Yucatec: 17% of orientation descriptions and 18% of the location descriptions (Bohnemeyer 2011) Still, not the preferred strategy

Tarascan: 1% of orientation descriptions and 4% of location descriptions (Capistrán Garza, 2011)

Juchitán Zapotec: Not used at all in orientation descriptions, 3% of location descriptions.

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The Ball & Chair study

our tool for studying the use of FoRs in discourse

– a referential communication task: Ball & Chair (B&C)

The Ball & Chair study (cont.)

- these are all the languages of the MesoSpace sample

only the data from three of the five dyads have been coded

• frequency of use of Spanish (as first or second language)

- Juchitán Zapotec and Barcelona Spanish, where we have data from six

from which the data have been coded so far

- data from five dyads of participants per variety

- responses are accompanied by the researchers'

are included in the analysis

estimates of the participants'

frequency of reading and writing

- Mexican Spanish, where up to now

- except for the case of

dvads

level of education

- replacing Men & Tree (M&T) in Pederson et al (1998) etc.
 B&C allows us to discover selection preferences
- for any of the FoR types
 - » at the in-door scale
 - » M&T may for various reasons depress the use of intrinsic FoRs

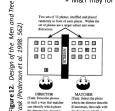




Figure 13. Two of the Ball & Chair fotos, featuring an intrinsic contrast

The Ball & Chair study (cont.)

the data set of the present study

- B&C data from 11 varieties

- 6 Mesoamerican languages
 - Yucatec Maya (J. Bohnemeyer)
 - Ayutla Mixe (R. Romero)
 - San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomí (N. Hernández, S. Hernández, E. Palancar)
 - Purépecha (or Tarascan; A. Capistrán)
 - Cha'jkoma Tseltal (G. Polian)
 - Juchitán Zapotec (G. Pérez Báez)
- · 2 non-Mesoamerican indigenous lenguages
 - Seri (C. O'Meara)
 - Sumu-Mayangna (E. Benedicto, A. Eggleston,
 - Mayangna Yulbarangyang Balna)

• 3 varieties of Spanish

 from Barcelona (A. Eggleston), Mexico (R. Romero), and Nicaragua (A. Eggleston)

The Ball & Chair study (cont.)

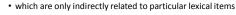
coding

- we coded descriptions of the location of the ball
 - distinguishing among eight categories (see Figure 3 above)

 allocentric intrinsic
 - egocentric intrinsic ('direct'; Danziger 2010)
 - egocentric extrinsic = relative
 - intrinsic and relative aligned (Carlson-Radvansky & Irvin 1993)
 - geocentric (= geomorphic, landmark-based, or absolute)
 - vertical absolute
 - vertical absolute and intrinsic aligned (Carlson-Radvansky & Irvin 1993)
 - topological (no reference frame involved; Piaget & Inhelder 1956)

The Ball & Chair study (cont.)

- all of the languages in the sample have the lexical and grammatical resources for using all FoR types
 - in no case does the grammar or lexicon of the language constrain the use of particular frame types
 - reference frames are semantic patterns





The ball is left of the chair intrinsic relative
Figure 14. Truth conditions of intrinsic and relative descriptions
of Ball & Chair 3.9 (left) and 3.12

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Qualitative Data

- In San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomí the use of the relative FoR occurs almost only in conjunction with the loanword *lado* 'side' (< Sp. lado) (Hernández Green et al 2011)
- Polian & Bohnemeyer 2011 present evidence of increased use of relative FoRs in Tseltal varieties possibly as a result of contact with Spanish

SIT Otomí

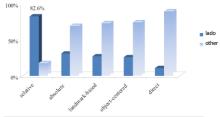
(1) Ø='beng-a=no=r pelohta n'a lado
 3.PRS=lie.A-B=DEF=SG ball one side
 'The ball is lying on the side.'



The word lado

• The relative FoR accounts for only 3.6% of the total number of propositions.

 However, the majority of these expressions (82.6%) contain the word *lado*.



Tseltal

• Brown and Levinson (1990s)

- Tenejapans hardly use relative FoRs

Table 1. FoR categories and frequency of use among adults in Tseltal (Brown and Levinson

2009, p. 438)					
deictic	absolute	intrinsic	landmark	sunrise/sunset	relative	Total
30%	14%	22%	25%	8%	1%	1682

- Polian & Bohnemeyer 2011
 - 'left' (xin in Tenejapa, k'exen in Oxchuc), 'right' (wa'el), and several terms for 'side' (xujk or ts'eel) are used relatively
 - Relative uses of these terms in Tseltal may be due to contact with Spanish.

Tseltal: Cha'jkoma, Tenejapa

• Limited use of the relative FoR

- half the uses documented were produced by dyad 1

(2) Ta j-**wa'el**-k'ab-tik wil-em moel jteb pelota-i PREP 1POS-right-hand-PL fly-PERF DIR a.little.bit ball-CL 'At our right hand the ball is flying a little bit.'

	Tabl	e 2. Ball &	Chai.	r parti	cipants in C	'h'ajkoma	
	Pair	Speaker	Sex	Age	Bilingual	Literacy	Schooling
<u> </u>	1	1	М	22	yes	yes	secondary school
_	1	2	М	40	yes	some	some
	2	3	М	48	yes	some	some
	2	4	F	44	no	some	some
	3	5	F	30	yes	yes	primary school
	3	6	М	29	yes	yes	primary school
	4	7	F	22	no	no	some
	4	8	М	24	yes	some	primary school
	5	9	F	29	no	some	primary school
	5	10	М	29	yes	some	primary school

Tseltal: Lum, Tenejapa

- Use of relative FoRs: 14%
 - as opposed to 9% in Ch'ajkoma
 - 10% of the Lum population are Spanish monolinguals
 Cha'jkoma has 100% native speakers of Tseltal
- Four out of five pairs used relative FoRs at least once.
 - Pair 4: only pair to use 'left' and 'right' terms
 Native and Spanish terms were used
 - use of relative FoRs accounts for 47% of their descriptions and 59% of all relative uses in the overall results.
- Speakers of pair 4 are neither the youngest nor the most educated
 - This suggests that bilingualism, a linguistic factor, may play a more important role in the use of relative FoRs than the nonlinguistic factors of education and literacy.

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The distribution of the response variables

- · the flow of the quantitative analysis
 - step I: identify the response variables that showed the greatest differentiation among participants
 - response variables
 - the (frequency/probability of) use of each of the eight strategies we coded the data for
 - step II: linear regressions to find the predictor variables significantly contributing to the variance
 - in those response variables identified in step I
 - predictor variables:
 - L1, L2 use, literacy, education, (topography, population geography)

The distribution of the response variables (cont.)

- the similarity matrix
 - for each participant, we calculated a set of eight frequencies
 - these sets can be interpreted as points in an octodimensional space
 - the distances between the points represent the similarity across the participants' responses
 - we calculated the distances in the "Manhattan" metric
 where the distance between two points
 - is the sum of the differences of the coordinates – we can use this similarity measure to analyze
 - how the responses cluster
 - which factors predict the similarity between participants

The distribution of the response variables (cont.)

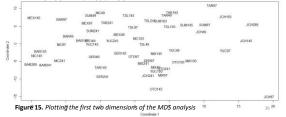
• the similarity matrix (cont.)

- Innovative approach
 - previous multivariate analyses in semantic typology construct similarity matrices over the stimulus items

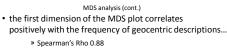
 cf. Levinson & Meira 2003; Majid et al 2008
 - in contrast, our approach treats the (dyads of) participants as statistical units
 - · this allows us to treat language as a direct predictor variable

The distribution of the response variables (cont.)

- how do the participants' responses cluster?
 - we ran a three-dimensional Multi-Dimensional Scaling (MDS) analysis of the similarity matrix
 - three dimensions produced a better goodness of fit than two
 cf. Schiffman et al 1981
 Mos



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... and negatively with the frequency of relative descriptions
 » Spearman's Rho -0.85

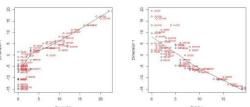


Figure 16. Correlations between the first dimension of the MDS plot and the frequency of geocentric (left) and relative (right) descriptions.



- the second dimension shows a very strong negative correlation with the frequency of topological description

 Spearman's Rho -0.99
- the third dimension exhibits a rather weak correlation with the frequency of intrinsic descriptions
 Spearman's Rho 0.76

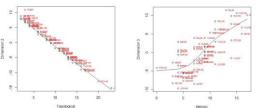


Figure 17. Correlations b/w the 2nd dimension of the MDS plot and the frequency of topological descriptions (left) and b/w the 3rd and the frequency of intrinsic descriptions.

discussion

MDS analysis (cont.)

- the MDS analysis shows
 - that the participants differentiated themselves most strongly in their use of relative and geocentric frames of reference

 with the topological and intrinsic strategies as runners up
- the question now: which factors predict which of these strategies a speaker/dyad selects?
 - candidate predictor variables:
 - (1) L1
 - L2 (... Ln)
 - ③ literacy
 - (d) education
 - (5) topography
 - 6 population geography
 - the linear regression we present in the following tests (1) (4)

The impact of the predictor variables

- to analyze the role of the predictor variables we conducted several linear regression analyses
- we tested separate models for the strongest differentiating response variables
 - the use of relative and geocentric frames
- we tested these models for two sets of populations
 - on all 11 populations
 - with the predictor variables areal-linguistic affiliation (see below!), literacy, and education
 - on the speakers of the indigenous languages only
 - now including the L2 use of Spanish as a predictor variable.

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- the areal-linguistic affiliation variable
 - our dataset includes too many individual languages for a parsimonious model
 - therefore, we grouped the languages according to areal-linguistic affiliation
 - yielding a three-level variable for the 11-populations models
 - languages of the Mesoamerican sprachbund, Spanish, and the two non-Mesoamerican indigenous languages
 - and a two-level variable for the models that include the responses from the speakers of the indigenous languages only
 - Mesoamerican sprachbund languages
 - vs. non-Mesoamerican indigenous languages (Seri and Sumu)

Frame of reference use in Mesoamerica in the context of sustained contact with Spanish

The impact of the predictor variables (cont.)

· summary of findings

- see Appendix for details

/	regressed	probab	ility of
	response		
	variable		
sample			
L1-	L2 use	geocentric use	relative use
Spanish	as a		
speakers	predictor		
	variable		
included	excluded	significant:	significant:
		L1 Spanish	L1 Spanish
		literacy	
excluded	included	significant:	significant:
		literacy	L2 Spanish
	-	-	•

The impact of the predictor variables (cont.)

- discussion: the role of the first language
 - the L1-Spanish speakers differed significantly from the speakers of the indigenous languages
 - using relative frames overall much more frequently and geocentric frames overall much less frequently
 - this finding conforms to the Neo-Whorfian predictions
 - this contribution of L1 cannot be reduced to a combination of any of the other factors
 - to this extent contra Li & Gleitman 2002

The impact of the predictor variables (cont.)

• discussion: the role of the nonlinguistic factors

- literacy, assessed in terms of the frequency of reading and writing, is a significant predictor of frame use
 - this variable makes a significant independent contribution affecting the use of geocentric FoRs, but not the use of relative FoRs
 presumably, speakers who read and write more frequently are less likely to use geocentric frames
- in contrast, we did not find any effect of education
- overall, this picture is consistent with the varying role of education and literacy across our sample
 - some of the indigenous populations
 - have high education scores across the board
 - and nevertheless use geocentric frames more frequently than relative ones
 - especially the Juchitán Zapotec and Sumu-Mayangna communities

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- discussion: the role of the second language
 - the speakers of the indigenous languages use relative frames in their native languages more frequently
 - the more frequently they use Spanish as an L2
 - this suggests that habituation to the use of relative frames diffuses through contact with Spanish
 - consistent with the Neo-Whorfians' view of language as a transmission system for nonlinguistic cognition

Conclusions

- The data presented here suggest that not only do structural linguistic changes diffuse through language contact, but practices of language use do too
- To our knowledge, this study is the first to provide direct evidence of practices of language use diffusing through language contact

Acknowledgements

- we would like to thank
 - ... our teachers and consultants, the speakers of the languages the MesoSpace team has been studying
 - ... our colleagues, the members of the MesoSpace team
 - ... the National Science Foundation, for the necessary resources to conduct these studies
 - ... the institutions who have partnered with MesoSpace to lend us support, CIESAS and the MPI for Psycholinguistics
 - ... Matthew Dryer, Jeff Good, Marianne Gullberg, Florian Jaeger, Jean-Pierre Koenig, Steve Levinson, David Mark, Wolfgang Wölck and the members of the UB Semantic Typology Lab, for advice
 - ... audiences at the International Conference on Yucatecan Linauistics, the Workshop on Quantitative Methods in Areal Typology, and Bielefeld University
 - · for comments on previous presentations of some of the material

- ... you!



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Synopsis

- Hypothesis
- MesoSpace: team, goals, tools
- Frames of reference
- Data: the Ball & Chair study
- Qualitative data
- Quantitative analysis:
 - the distribution of the response variables
 - the impact of the predictor variables
- Discussion and conclusions
- Appendix: the linear regressions

Appendix: the linear regressions

- implementation
 - we used generalized linear mixed-effects models (GLMM; cf. Gelman & Hill 2007, Jaeger 2008)
 implemented using the ARM package in R (Gelman et al 2012)
 - 'mixed-effects' models b/c they include random nested
 - intercepts for individual languages and dyads – in addition to the 'fixed' effects of the predictor variables
 - and an invariable intercept
 - to avoid over-fitting or lack of independence
 - the probability of a given dyad using any of the eight response categories to describe a particular picture
 - is independent of the probability of them using any other type of frame to describe the same picture

- Appendix: the linear regressions (cont.)
- findings I: GEO, L1-Spanish speakers incl.
- the fitted geocentric model revealed linguistic affiliation and literacy, but not education, as significant factors
 there was no effect from membership in the MA *sprachbund*

Generalized linear mixed model fit by the Laplace approximation Formula: Lgeoc ~ (1 | ID) + (1 | LANG) + edu + Ltyp + lit

Data:1					•••					
AIC BIC 1	ogLik devia	nce				Correla	tion of	Fixed	Effects	
1784 1825		770					(Intr)	edu	LtyESP	LtyMES
Random effec			Deer			edu	0.015			
Groups Name ID (Int						LtypESP	-0.379	-0.133		
LANG (Int						LtypMES				
Number of ob				ANG, 11		lit	-0.359	-0.864	0.051	0.309
Fixed effect										
				-						
	Estimate St									
(Intercept)										
edu	-0.6906	0.4709	-1.467	0.14248						
LtypESP	-3.0228	0.6907	-4.376	1.21e-05	***	-				
LtypMES	0.9009	0.5493	1.640	0.10099		1				
lit	1.3133	0.5014	2.619	0.00881	**	-				
										56
Signif. code	s: 0 *** 0	.001 ** 0	.01 * 0	.05 . 0.1	1					

Appendix: the linear regressions (cont.)

• findings II: REL, L1-Spanish speakers incl.

 the fitted relative model revealed linguistic affiliation as the sole significant factor

• there was no evidence of an areal effect

Generalized linear mixed model fit by the Laplace approximation

Formula: Lrel ~ (1 ID) + (1 LANG) + edu + Ltyp	+ lit
Data:1	
AIC BIC logLik deviance	
2208 2248 -1097 2194	Correlation of Fixed Effects:
Random effects:	(Intr) edu LtyESP LtyMES
Groups Name Variance Std.Dev.	edu -0.144
ID (Intercept) 0.71834 0.84755	LtypESP -0.401 -0.149
LANG (Intercept) 0.10877 0.32980	LtypMES -0.789 -0.094 0.568
Number of obs: 2410, groups: ID, 110; LANG, 11	lit -0.312 -0.779 0.002 0.274
Fixed effects:	
Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(> z)	
(Intercept) -1.5700 0.4571 -3.435 0.000592 *	**
edu -0.1684 0.3021 -0.557 0.577328	
LtypESP 1.3228 0.4367 3.029 0.002451 *	* 🛑
LtypMES -0.5622 0.4069 -1.382 0.167073	•
lit 0.1261 0.3101 0.407 0.684163	
	57
Signif. codes: 0 *** 0.001 ** 0.01 * 0.05 . 0.1	1

Appendix: the linear regressions (cont.)

findings III: GEO, L1-Spanish speakers excl. the fitted geocentric model showed literacy as the sole significant factor

Signif. codes: 0 *** 0.001 ** 0.01 * 0.05 . 0.1 1

Generalized linear mixed model fit by the Laplace approximation Formula: Lgoc ~ (1 | ID) + (1 | LANG) + edu + Ltyp + esp + lit Data: BC: D96c.new7seltal.noSpanish AIC BIC logLik deviance 1672 1710 - 028.9 1658 Correlation of Fixed Effects: Random effects: (Intr) edu LtyMES esp Groups Name Variance Std.Dev. edu 0.087 ID (Intercept) 0.60068 0.7002 esp -0.513 -0.022 LANG (Intercept) 0.60068 0.7002 esp -0.513 -0.029 Number of obs: 1840, groups: ID, 81; LANG, 8 lit -0.241 -0.785 0.228 -0.037 Fixed effects: Estimate Std. Error z value Pr(>|z|) (Intercept) -1.8847 0.9264 -2.034 0.04190 + edu -0.5401 0.0422 -1.120 0.25607 LtyPMES 0.7504 0.7769 0.966 0.33415 esp -0.5436 0.2823 -1.925 0.05420 . lit 1.3009 0.4934 2.636 0.00033 **

Appendix: the linear regressions (cont.)

• findings IV: REL, L1-Spanish speakers excl.

the fitted relative model showed

the use of L2 Spanish as the sole significant factor

			LANG) +	edu + Ltyp	p + es	p + lit			
	.9Dec.new		oSpanish						
AIC BIC									
1428 1467	-707.1	1414		Co	rrelat			Effects	
Random effe	cts:					(Intr)	edu	LtyMES	esp
Groups Nam	e	Variance	Std.Dev.	ed	u	0.086			
ID (In	tercept)	0.46167	0.67946	Lt	ypMES	-0.675	-0.067		
LANG (In	tercept)	0.13865	0.37236	es	p	-0.545	-0.256	-0.016	
Number of o	bs: 1840.	groups .	TD. 81: LA	10 9 14		-0.246	-0 789	0.240	-0.03
				au, o 11					
	,	Proups.	,,	au, o 11	6		0.105		
Fixed effec		Broups.	,,	ad, o 11	6		0.105		
Fixed effec	ts:		or z value		6		0.105		
Fixed effec (Intercept)	ts: Estimate	Std. Err	or z value	Pr(> z)			0.100		
	ts: Estimate -2.41519	Std. Err 0.521	or z value 52 -4.631	Pr(> z) 3.64e-06 *			0.105		
(Intercept)	ts: Estimate -2.41519 -0.19986	Std. Err 0.521 0.307	or z value 52 -4.631 13 -0.651	Pr(> z) 3.64e-06 0.5152			0.105		
(Intercept) edu	ts: Estimate -2.41519 -0.19986 -0.56041	Std. Err 0.521 0.307 0.407	For z value 52 -4.631 13 -0.651 71 -1.375	Pr(> z) 3.64e-06 0.5152 0.1693			0.105		
(Intercept) edu LtypMES	ts: Estimate -2.41519 -0.19986 -0.56041 0.43381	Std. Err 0.521 0.307 0.407 0.173	ror z value 52 -4.631 13 -0.651 71 -1.375 72 2.497	Pr(> z) 3.64e-06 = 0.5152 0.1693 0.0125 =			0.105		