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# The Argument Structure of the Light Verb hacer as a Means for Incorporating English Borrowings Into Peninsular Spanish

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**ABSTRACT**
The present study explores a phenomenon of indirect language contact that shares similar properties with the so-called *bilingual complex verbs* that bilingual speakers produce spontaneously in code-switching. *Hacer el check in* 'to check in' and *hacer ghosting* 'to ghost' are some of the multi-word units made up of the Spanish light verb *hacer* 'to do'/'to make' and an Anglicism used in monolingual conversations and press texts in Peninsular Spanish. Still, these hybrid light verb constructions do not reproduce the syntactic pattern of their English counterparts. For example, *hacer el check in* corresponds to the phrasal verb *to check in*, while *hacer ghosting* to the simple *verb to ghost*. Through a qualitative-inductive method, this research aims to uncover the reasons behind the productivity of this lexical incorporation strategy in the monolingual oral and written discourse of Peninsular Spanish speakers. Additionally, it invites the Spanish-speaking community to reflect on the implications that the integration of unnecessary English borrowings may have on the reconfiguration of the Spanish language.
**Keywords:** Light verb constructions, *hacer*, lexical borrowing, Spanish, English

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## 1. Introduction

Light verb constructions (LVCs), also known as *support verb constructions* (e.g., *to give advice*, *to make a statement*, *to set in motion*), are multi-word units made up of a semantically bleached verb (e.g., *to give*, *to make*, *to set*) and a predicate noun (e.g., *advice*, *statement*, *motion*). One of the main functions of light verbs is to serve as morphosyntactic support for predicate nouns (Alonso Ramos, 2004, p. 18). In addition to contributing to the syntactic configuration of the verb-noun construction, light verbs convey grammatical information such as mood, tense, and aspect. In contrast, the noun expresses most of the meaning of the multi-word unit.

These multi-word units involve a limited number of verbs combined with a wide range of nouns (Stevenson et al., 2004, p. 1) encompassed in noun phrases (e.g., *She can't make eye contact*, *I'll do some digging*) and prepositional phrases (e.g., *I'll take it into account*, *He got in trouble*). Although light verbs have a slight lexical meaning, they can convey semantic data consisting of ''a modulation of the event description'' of their coverbal elements (Butt & Geuder, 2001, p. 326). Therefore, the verb and the noun work as a joint predication (Butt, 2010). The most frequent light verbs in English are *to take*, *to have*, *to make*, *to do*, and *to give* (PropBank corpus/Palmer et al., 2005, as cited in Wittenberg et al., 2014, p. 65). The three most used light verbs in Spanish are *dar* 'to give,' *hacer* 'to do'/'to make,' and *tener* 'to have' (Koike, 1993; Sanromán Vilas, 2009).

Light verb constructions have been studied from varied theoretical and applied perspectives, such as syntactic analysis (Giry-Schneider, 1987; Alba-Salas, 2002), lexical grammar analysis (Gross & Vives, 1986; Gross, 1998), corpus linguistics (Rácz et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2022), diachronic linguistics (Alba Salas, 2012; Butt & Lahiri, 2013), natural language processing (Tan et al., 2006; Wittenberg et al., 2014), first language acquisition (Barner, 2001; He & Wittenberg, 2020), foreign language learning (Buckingham, 2008; Tu & Roth, 2011), code-switching (González Vilbazo & López, 2011; Purmohammad et al., 2022), cognitive linguistics (Brugman, 2001; Wittenberg, 2016), and psychopathology of language (Koukoulioti & Stavrakaki, 2017; Kintz & Wright, 2022). However, the strategy of resorting to the argument structure of light verbs to incorporate English borrowings into Spanish is still uncharted territory. The present study aims to fill this gap in the literature to determine the reasons behind the productivity of this lexical incorporation strategy in the monolingual written discourse of Peninsular Spanish speakers.

It is widely recognized that a significant portion of foreign words incorporated into Spanish in recent decades have been borrowed from English (see Teschner, 1974; Sánchez, 1992; De la Cruz Cabanillas & Tejedor Martínez, 2012, among others). The socioeconomic development of the United States after the Second World War, its implication in the Cold War, and the subsequent global reach of news agencies, industry, commerce, cinema, music, sports, and informatics are some of the reasons that explain the proliferation of Anglicisms in many languages (López Medina, 1998, pp. 11-12). As far as Spanish is concerned, the role of English as the new *lingua franca* (Kowner & Rosenhouse, 2008, p. 6) and the contact between English and Spanish in

North America (Poplack, 1993) have given rise to heterogeneous manifestations of lexical borrowing and assimilation. In this scenario, the direct language contact that has shaped the sociolinguistic regions of the Spanish of the United States (Escobar & Potowsky, 2015) must be distinguished from the indirect influence English has exerted in the varieties spoken in Spain and Latin America. However, even among the latter, the assimilation of the English vocabulary has been disparate. Indeed, the Anglicisms integrated into the varieties spoken in countries that had less contact with the United States underwent higher morphological adaptation than the borrowings incorporated in the varieties spoken in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and Chile, with a higher North American influence (Haensch, 2005, p. 250).

On the other hand, echoes of the long lexicographic tradition of Peninsular Spanish, the unflagging efforts of the Royal Spanish Academy, the worldwide presence of the Cervantes Institute, and the initiatives of organizations such as Fundéu RAE help contain the contamination of European Spanish from unnecessary Anglicisms. However, the speed through which most neologisms circulate nowadays, primarily through the online press, makes the contingency task more difficult. Therefore, the equivalent words or adaptations proposed by Spanish lexicographers are not always accepted and included in the oral and written speech of real users.

In this context, the present study provides insight into a prolific lexical assimilation strategy used in Spanish, that is, the incorporation of English verbs and nouns through the argument structure of the light verb *hacer* 'to do'/'to make,' as observed in the following examples:

(1) *Hoy con Iberia puedes hacer el check in por WhatsApp.* (elmundo.es, 02/06/2020)
Today, with Iberia you can-$^{2sg\ present}$ do-$^{infinitive}$ the check-in through WhatsApp.
'With Iberia you can now check in on WhatsApp.'

(2) *No tiene Windows Hello ni un lector de huellas dactilares para hacer login.* (elmundo.es, 01/25/2020)
It does not have Windows Hello nor a fingerprint scanner to do-$^{infinitive}$ login.
'It does not have Windows Hello, nor does it have a fingerprint scanner to log in.'

Since lexical borrowing is contingent upon heterogenous interlinguistic factors, this study will only cover hybrid light verb constructions in Peninsular Spanish. Moreover, it is essential to point out that the following pages are for descriptive purposes. Therefore, I will not claim the correctness or incorrectness of these hybrid expressions or propose possible substitutions.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Global-scale insight into light verb constructions

Light verb constructions are widespread in Romance, Germanic, Slavic, and Indo-Iranian languages such as Hindi (Vaidya et al., 2016) and Persian (Karimi-Dostaan, 1999), as well as in languages that do not have phylogenetic relations with the Indo-European family. To name a few, we find LVCs in Mandarin Chinese (Lin, 2001), Japanese (Miyamoto, 2000), Korean (Chae, 1997), Indonesian (Nugraha, 2022), Turkish (Uçar, 2010), Arabic (Ibrahim,

2005), and in the main languages of the Uralic family, like Hungarian (Vincze, 2012), Finnish (Nenonen et al., 2017), and Estonian (Kaalep & Muischnek, 2010).

The ubiquity of light verb constructions depends in part on their capacity to fill the predicative gap left by the lack of one-word verbs in given word families (Koike, 2001, p. 68). For example, the LVC *to make noise* and its Spanish equivalent LVC *hacer ruido* do not have a simple verb counterpart that shares the lexical stem of the nouns *noise* and *ruido*. However, many other light verb constructions do have one-word peers. In this instance, LVCs convey semantic nuances that the corresponding simple verb cannot always transfer independently. For example, the LVCs *hacer una llamada* and *to make a call* select only one of the meanings of the one-word counterpart *llamar* and *to call*. Indeed, these LVCs imply the use of an electronic device such as a telephone, while the referentiality spectrum of the simple verbs *llamar* and *to call* is much broader. Therefore, LVCs are very useful in cases where it is necessary to give accurate information while pursuing linguistic economy. In addition, LVCs allow semantic precision thanks to the incorporation of nominal modifiers such as determiners and adjectives (e.g., *dar un largo paseo - to take a long walk* vs. **pasear largamente - *to walk longly*).

The selection process between the light verb and the predicate noun is not entirely arbitrary. In fact, given verbs combine with nouns that belong to the same lexical field and/or share similar semantic properties. For instance, nouns denoting voluntary physical contact between X and Y that requires movement of X toward Y are selected primarily by the verbs *to give* and *dar* 'to give' (e.g., *to give a punch - dar un puñetazo*, *to give a kick - dar una patada*, *to give a kiss - dar un beso*). In these LVCs, the shift of X toward Y recalls the physical movement intrinsic to the meaning of the heavy verb *to give* (i.e., 'to pass something that you are holding or that is near you to someone' as in *Could you give me that book?*). This shows that light verbs are not entirely devoid of meaning. They are semantically light but not empty (see Gross, 1993; Sanromán Vilas, 2011; Fotopoulou et al., 2021; D'Andrea, 2022).

Now see how the syntactic roles are distributed between the light verb and the predicate noun in English and Spanish.

*(3) Les hice una promesa.*
'I made them a promise.'

The clause *Les hice una promesa* and its English translation *I made them a promise* are mainly formed by the LVCs *hacer una promesa* and *to make a promise*. In fact, the syntactic arguments that complete them are the subject (I/yo, which is tacit in Spanish) and the indirect complement (*les* [*a ellos*]/*them* [*to them*]). If we analyze the sentences by applying the rules of traditional syntax, we can consider the nouns *promesa* and *promise* direct objects, since they occupy the direct object position. Nevertheless, they are part of the predicate (Wittenberg et al., 2014).

To a lesser extent, LVCs also display the structure «verb + prepositional phrase» (e.g., *to put into practice - poner en práctica*, *to set in motion - poner en marcha*, *to take into account*

- *tomar en cuenta*). The light verbs that are more often combined with prepositional phrases are *to put*, *to set*, and *to take* in English, and *poner* and *tomar* in Spanish.

### 2.2. Borrowing: an unrestrained consequence for language contact

The process of transferring a word from a donor (or source) language to a recipient (or host) language without translating it takes the name of *lexical borrowing*. Once the borrowed word is integrated into the host language, it becomes a loanword. However, the incorporation of foreign vocabulary is not always immediate or official. Indeed, only a tiny percentage of the borrowed items end up figuring in dictionaries and published wordlists of the recipient language and are considered *attested* (or *bona fide*) *loanwords* (Poplack, 2017, p. 6). For this reason, linguists such as Poplack (2017) appeal to the criteria of *frequency*, *diffusion*, and *attestation history* to draw a line between loanwords and borrowings. In this paper, I will use the terminology of Poplack (2017), who considers *loanwords* the lexical items that are frequent, widespread in one or more speech communities and/or attested in lexicographic works, and *borrowings* the ''items that have not (yet) achieved this status'' (Poplack, 2017, p. 7).

Attested loanwords mainly involve lone words and are either transferred without undergoing morphological changes (e.g., the Anglicisms *party* and *software*, used in many languages, including Peninsular Spanish) or adapted to the morphology of the host language (e.g., the Peninsular Spanish nouns *rúter* and *cóctel* from the English *router* and *cocktail*, respectively).

Halfway between loanwords and calques[1], we find loanblends, namely, compound words or multi-word units formed by one or more lexemes of the donor language and one or more lexemes of the recipient language. In Haugen's words (1950, p. 215), ''loanblends show morphemic substitution as well as importation'' (e.g., in the Spanish noun phrase *acceso a internet* and in the German compound *Internetzugang* 'internet access,' the noun *internet/Internet* is an importation, while *acceso* and *-zugang* [> *Zugang*] represent a substitution).

Special attention must be paid to pseudo-loans or pseudo-borrowings. Since English is the new *lingua franca*, it is no surprise that most false borrowings are pseudo-Anglicisms. As all of these names suggest, pseudo-borrowings are not actual borrowings; indeed, they are words coined in a given language mainly by adopting the signifier–but not the meaning–of a word from a foreign language (e.g., the noun *lifting* 'face-lift,' attested in Peninsular Spanish, French, and Italian, among other languages) or by making up a compound word or a multi-word unit with words belonging to the source language (e.g., the compound noun *autostop* 'hitchhiking,' coined in French by mixing the Greek root *auto-* 'self' with the English noun *stop*, and the noun phrase *smart working* 'remote work,' widely used in Italian since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic).

The literature on lexical borrowing makes a significant distinction between cultural and core borrowings (see Haspelmath, 2009). Cultural borrowings are words assimilated into a

1 A calque (or loan translation) is a neologism that originates from the direct translation of a foreign word into the recipient language (e.g., the compound nouns *gratte-ciel* (fr), *grattacielo* (it), *rascacielos* (sp), *arranha-céu(s)* (pt) from the English *skyscraper*).

recipient language by integrating a referent generated in the socioeconomic context in which the donor language is or was spoken. Cultural ''loan-referents'' can be prepared food (e.g., *sushi* from Japanese), spiritual concepts (*karma* from Sanskrit), or can be related to sports (e.g., *tai chi* from Chinese) and artistic manifestations (e.g., *soprano* from Italian), etc. Therefore, ''borrowing that is motivated by gaps in the lexicon of the host language is generally considered acceptable or even necessary'' (Smead, 1998, p. 118). As a matter of fact, cultural borrowings tend to be lemmatized as dictionary entries without facing much resistance from lexicographers.

Conversely, core borrowings are words incorporated into the recipient language despite the latter having equivalent lexemes that denote identical or similar referents and concepts. Indeed, most core borrowings refer to elements or activities that are considered essential in many societies. For this reason, they also receive the name of *luxury loanwords* (Onysko & Winter-Froemel, 2011). For example, the English adverb *OK*–''used to show that you agree with something or agree to do something'' (*Cambridge Dictionary*, online)–expresses a basic transcultural concept for every person interacting with others. Therefore, its incorporation into other languages that already had a word conveying the same meaning was unnecessary.

As Haspelmath (2009, p. 35) states, two macro-factors explain why certain words are more likely to be borrowed: socio-attitudinal factors (for instance, the prestige of the donor language) and grammatical factors such as the suitability of a given word category or morphology (mainly, nouns) into the system of the recipient language.

Lexical borrowing in monolingual speech should not be confused with intrasentential code-switching, a manifestation of bilingual speech. In line with previous works on the subject, Poplack & Meechen (1998, p. 127) recall that ''mixed discourse is overwhelmingly constituted of lone elements, usually major-class content words, of one language embedded in the syntax of another (Berk-Seligson, 1986; Nortier, 1989; Poplack, Sankoff & Miller, 1988; Treffers-Daller, 1994, to name but a few).'' Suppose we do not have any information about the speech context and recognition that given words have in a speech community; in that case, lexical borrowing may be interpreted as a ''single-word switch'' (Haspelmath, 2009, p. 40).

Bearing in mind the difference between lexical borrowing and intrasentential code-switching is essential to understand the intrinsic nature of the hybrid light verb constructions dealt with in this study («Spanish *hacer* ['to do'/'to make'] + borrowed English verb/noun»), in opposition to a similar morphological phenomenon that occurs in code-switching.

### 2.3. Hybrid light verb constructions in code-switching

The use of a light verb of the matrix language–mostly, an equivalent of *to do/to make*–as a means for incorporating verbs of the embedded language has been observed in several bilingual idiolects (see Muysken, 2000; Boumans, 2007; Versteegh, 2009; González-Vilbazo & López, 2011, among others). For this reason, Edwards & Gardner-Chloros (2007, p. 74) suggest that this hybrid linguistic phenomenon ''may constitute a ''universal'' of C[ode]S[witching].''

Muysken (2000, pp. 184-185) refers to these code-switching realizations as *bilingual complex verbs* and argues that they ''can be of three types: adjoined, nominalized complement in a compound, and infinitive complement.'' The tripartition has its *raison d'être* in the different morphological strategies through which the embedded lexeme (primarily, a verb) is integrated into the matrix language:

- Adjunction: *overtake paṇṇi* (**to cause overtake*) 'to overtake,' *use paṇṇi* (**to accomplish use*) 'to use,' *watch paṇṇi* (**to accomplish watch*) 'to keep a watch' are some of the hybrid constructions observed in the Tamil-English code-switching (cf. Pillai, 1968, as cited in Muysken, 2000, p. 204). As Muysken (2000, p. 204) states, ''the verb *paṇṇi* in Tamil expresses causation or accomplishment, and in native monolingual compounds […] can only be combined with nouns.'' In these constructions, the embedded English verb modifies the Tamil helping verb taking the syntactic position of the noun but without formally becoming one.
- Nominalization of the complement: *fazer o save* (**to do the save*) 'to save,' *fazer o find-out* (**to do the find-out*) 'to find out,' *fazer o give up* (**to do the give up*) 'to give up' are just three of the examples that Pap (1949, pp. 114-17, as cited in Muysken, 2000, p. 207) provides to show how several English verbs were integrated into the Portuguese-English code-switching of Brazilian immigrants mainly residing in New England (United States). In these hybrid constructions, the nominalization process of the English verbs is visible thanks to the use of the Portuguese masculine singular definite article *o*.
- Infinitive complement: *der uitstellen* (**to do postpone*) 'to postpone,' *der voelen* (**to do feel*) 'to feel,' *der voetballen* (**to do play football*) 'to play football' are examples of bilingual verbs of the Moroccan Arabic/Dutch code-switching recollected by Boumans (1995, as cited in Muysken, 2000, p. 216), where the Arabic verb *der* 'to do' works as the helping verb of Dutch infinitives.

These hybrid constructions have also been identified in Belizean Spanish/English (Balam, 2015), New Mexican Spanish/English, and Puerto Rican Spanish/English code-switching (Balam et al., 2020). In these complex structures, the inflected light verb is mostly *hacer* 'to do'/'to make,' while the lexeme that takes the place of the predicate noun and carries the semantic content of the whole construction is an English verb which is usually in an infinitive form (cf. Jenkins, 2003; Balam, 2015). In this regard, let us see an example of an English infinitive (*to own*) embedded in the syntax of the matrix language (here Northern Belizean Spanish):

*(4) Supuestamente dicen que él hace own un island.*
Supposedly say-$^{3pl\ present}$ that he do-$^{3sg\ present}$ own an island.
'Supposedly, they say he owns an island.' (Balam, 2015, p. 84)

Let us now contrast (4) with a fragment of an article published in the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* in December 1995. The article dives into the novelty and benefits of the web by comparing web surfing with TV channel surfing.

*(5) Es como hacer "zapping", pero a lo bestia.* (*El Mundo*, 12/25/1995)
It is like do-$^{\text{impersonal infinitive}}$ zapping but like crazies.
'It is like channel-surfing but like crazies.'

Sentence (4) is an example of intrasentential code-switching between two languages in contact in the speech community of Northern Belize. The conjugated hybrid LVC *hace own* is an individual creation of a bilingual speaker (or trilingual if we include the Kriol); in other words, it is a spontaneous manifestation of their idiolect. On the contrary, (5) contains a hybrid LVC formed by the native verb *hacer* and a borrowed word. *Hacer zapping* is a hybrid light verb construction reproduced in a monolingual written text, in which the Spanish verb *hacer* serves as a means for incorporating the English borrowing *zapping* (nominalization of the verb *to zap*). Indeed, *zapping* has been assimilated into Peninsular Spanish through a resemanticization process and constitutes a pseudo-Anglicism (see D'Andrea, 2019, pp. 141-142).

The syntactic structure and, possibly, the mechanisms underlying the creation of the linguistic forms in (4) and (5) are the same. However, when we zoom out, the context helps us determine the nature of each phraseological unit.

## 3. Method

The present study aims to determine the reasons that lie behind the incorporation of English borrowings into Peninsular Spanish through the support of the light verb *hacer* 'to do'/'to make.' For this reason, the hybrid LVCs collected have been analyzed using a qualitative-inductive method.

Since lexical borrowing implies a one-way interaction between the donor and the host language, "any attempt to analyze its course must involve a comparison of the original pattern with its imitation" (Haugen, 1950, p. 212). More concretely, the analysis focused on the morphological and semantic features of the English borrowings incorporated into Peninsular Spanish.

Regarding the selection process of the lexical units, I did not consider hybrid light verb constructions like *hacer pull-ups* 'to do pull-ups' and *hacer un selfi* 'to take a selfie,' given that their English counterparts are light verb constructions themselves. Indeed, following Haugen (1950), they can be considered loanblends (see Section 2.2).

### 3.1. Materials

Extensive web searching has been essential to find magazine articles (e.g., *Hola* [Spain], *Grazia* [Spain], *Elle* [Spain]), newspaper articles (e.g., *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*), and blog posts containing hybrid light verb constructions. At the same time, monolingual

and bilingual general dictionaries and online corpora have been instrumental in collecting Peninsular Spanish hybrid LVCs and detecting their English counterparts. More specifically, the monolingual dictionaries consulted are the following:

For English:

- *Cambridge Dictionary* (online)
- *McMillan Dictionary* (online)
- *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (online)
- *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (online).

For Spanish:

- *Diccionario de la lengua española* (*DLE*) – RAE (online)
- *Diccionario Anaya de la lengua española* (2019)
- *Diccionario de uso del español* - María Moliner (2007)
- *Diccionario Clave: de uso del español actual* (2012).

For the corpus-based search and the extraction of examples, I consulted the following corpora:

- *Corpus del español del siglo XXI* (*Corpes XXI*)
- *Corpus del español* - Davies
- *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (*COCA*)
- *The British National Corpus* (*BNC*).

### 3.2. Procedure

This study arose from the observation of a particular use of Anglicisms in the monolingual oral speech of Peninsular Spanish speakers: the incorporation of English verbs and nouns through the argument structure of the light verb *hacer* 'to do'/'to make.' Although *hacer* is not the only light verb used to incorporate Anglicisms, it is the most productive due to its bleached meaning. Indeed, the semantic nuances of 'to perform,' 'to carry out' (Herrero Ingelmo, 2002) encompassed by the verb *hacer* allow the agentization of the borrowed lexemes.

The first hybrid light verb constructions I detected appeared in monolingual oral productions of Peninsular Spanish speakers (e.g., *No me hagas espoiler* 'Don't spoil [the movie] for me'). However, the hybrid light verb constructions collected and the examples proposed throughout the article have been extracted from written texts.

The selection process focused exclusively on general Peninsular Spanish. For this reason, I did not consider hybrid LVCs used in specialized contexts (e.g., *hacer trading*, *hacer staking* from Economics/Marketing). In any case, even in the sample shown in Section 4, it is possible to identify borrowings that belong to domain-specific vocabulary. Nevertheless, they also appear in texts targeting the general audience (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and user manuals).

## 4. Results and Discussion

The table below contains a sample of the hybrid light verb constructions I gathered from the scrutinized corpora.

**Table 1.** Sample of hybrid light verb constructions in Peninsular Spanish

| HYBRID LVC IN SPANISH | EQUIVALENT VERB IN ENGLISH |
|---|---|
| *hacer un back-up* | *to back up* (a computer, a smartphone, etc.) |
| *hacer un casting* | *to cast* (for a TV show, a commercial, etc.) |
| *hacer el check-in* | *to check in* (at an airport, hotel, etc.) |
| *hacer el check-out* | *to check out* (at a hotel, etc.) |
| *hacer (un) crowdfunding* | *to crowdfund* |
| *hacer footing* | *to jog* [low to moderate-intensity exercise] |
| *hacer gaslighting* | *to gaslight* |
| *hacer ghosting* | *to ghost* |
| *hacer journaling* | *to journal* |
| *hacer (el) login/log in* | *to log in* |
| *hacer (el) logout/log out* | *to log out* |
| *hacer mobbing* | *to harass* (in the workplace) |
| *hacer running* | *to run* [moderate to high-intensity exercise] |
| *hacer scroll* | *to scroll up/down* |
| *hacer spam* | *to spam* |
| *hacer spoiler* | *to spoil* (a movie/show/book) [for someone] |
| *hacer streaming* | *to livestream* |
| *hacer un upgrade* | *to upgrade* (a software or a service) |
| *hacer zapping* | *to flick/flip through the TV channels* |
| *hacer zoom* | *to zoom in/out* (an image) |

The sample does not represent the frequency of use, diffusion, or lexicographic attestation of the hybrid LVCs. Indeed, only some of these borrowed words are included in the dictionaries consulted for this study. The analysis of the hybrid LVCs focused primarily on their morphosyntactic features (i.e., the morphology of the predicate noun, the presence/absence of the determiner) and their syntactic configuration (i.e., transitive or intransitive multi-word units).

Regarding the morphology of the nominalized borrowings, 10 of the 20 hybrid LVCs collected have a predicate noun ending in *-ing* (e.g., *hacer running* < *running*), the most visible mark of deverbal nouns. Five are synthetic forms of multi-word units such as phrasal verbs (e.g., *hacer login* < *to log in*). Four have ø (zero) suffix (e.g., *hacer spam* < *to spam*). In contrast, one has an agentive suffix (*hacer spoiler* 'to spoil a movie/show/book [for someone]' < *spoiler*). Indeed, the English morpheme *-er* is a nominalizing suffix (Ryder, 1999) added to verbs and nouns to form agentive and instrumental nouns. In this case, the borrowed word has not been subject to a verb-to-noun recategorization since *spoiler* is already a noun in English–widely used in the noun phrase *spoiler alert* and sentences like *This review contains spoilers.*

The quantifiability of its referent determines the presence of the article in the noun phrase. Thus, hybrid LVCs that refer to activities tend to have ø article when the noun is considered uncountable (e.g., *hacer ghosting*, *hacer running*, *hacer zapping*). Conversely, in LVCs like *hacer el check in* or *hacer el log out*, the definite article is needed to circumscribe the action. As far as the morphological gender, all the deverbal nouns observed are masculine, a tendency that is widespread even in other types of English borrowings (cf. Morin & Robles, 2020, p. 267). The use of the article may also depend on the semantic nuance given to the LVC. In this sense, the morphosyntactic system of Spanish helps to modulate the meaning of the borrowed word, as we can see in the following examples.

*(6)* *¿Cómo hacer un crowdfunding para tu libro y conseguir que funcione?* (Jaume Gómez/ café delescritor.com, 03/24/2022)
How to do-[impersonal infinitive] a crowdfunding-[quantified noun] for your book and make it work?
'How to crowdfund your book and make it work.'

*(7)* *Cómo hacer crowdfunding para que sea sostenible en el tiempo.* (Jorge González/ adrenalina.es, 06/30/2021).
How to do-[impersonal infinitive] crowdfunding-[noun with ø article] so that it is sustainable over time.
'How crowdfunding can be sustainable over time.'

In (6), the borrowed noun is preceded by the indefinite article *un* 'an.' By doing so, the blog post's writer delimited the crowdfunding activity. The context helps us understand that the writer refers to crowdfunding as raising money for a specific project: publishing and selling a book. A more appropriate translation for *hacer un crowdfunding* is the collocation *to set up a crowdfunding campaign.* In (7), instead, the lexical unit is not quantified. The hybrid LVC has ø (zero) article, and crowdfunding is regarded as the general activity of raising money from investors, donors, or lenders for different purposes.

As far as the syntactic structure is concerned, most of the collected hybrid LVCs are intransitive (e.g., *hacer ghosting* = ø external direct object), while the English verbs they come from are transitive (i.e., they need to be complemented by a direct object). The reason that lies behind the shift of the argument structure from the English one-word verbs to the Spanish multi-word units is that the external transitivity of verbs like *to ghost* («to ghost someone») passes onto the internal structure of the LVC, as observed in *hacer ghosting*, where *ghosting* takes the function of the direct object. Consequently, the external argument necessarily has the syntactic role of the indirect object (e.g., «hacerle ghosting a alguien» [literally, **to do ghosting to someone*]).

Following the classification parameters exposed in Section 2.2, the 20 predicate nouns are core (i.e., unnecessary) borrowings; indeed, they are not characteristic of a given culture but refer to actions and activities that, despite having originated in a given geographic context, have spread globally. For this reason, lexicographers have proposed alternatives–adaptations or morphosyntactic and semantic neologisms–for most of these hybrid constructions (see *Fundéu*

*RAE*/recomendaciones, online). In any case, determining the lexicographic status of foreignisms (e.g., claiming that a given foreign word is an attested loanword) is not straightforward. For example, in *Diccionario Anaya de la lengua española* (2019)–a descriptive dictionary for Spanish high-school students–we find *back-up*, *casting*, *clic*, *footing*, *spam*, *zapping*, *zoom.* For its part, *Diccionario de la lengua española* (online) of the Royal Spanish Academy–which has a purist and prescriptive tendency–only records *casting*, *clic*, *footing*, and *spam*; and, instead of *zapping*, it records the adaptation *zapeo*. Besides, it is noteworthy mentioning that *zapping* (see D'Andrea, 2019, pp. 141-142) and *footing*–but also *mobbing*–(see Rodríguez González, p. 2013, p. 129) have all the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of pseudo-Anglicisms.

At this point, it is inevitable to ask why the argument structure of the light verb *hacer* is so fruitful for borrowing incorporation. As shown in Section 2.1, one of the reasons that explain the high productivity of light verb constructions is the flexibility of their syntactic structure, which allows the speaker to fill the lexical gap generated by the absence of lone verbs in a given language. For instance, the LVC *to make noise* completes the word family headed by the noun *noise*, which does not have a one-word verb formed by the root *nois-*. The same happens with the Spanish LVC *hacer ruido* 'to make noise' and many other LVCs.

On the other hand, LVCs that have one-word counterparts/synonyms allow the speaker to be more specific in their oral and written communication thanks to (a) the narrow referentiality spectrum of the multi-word unit (e.g., *to make a call - hacer una llamada* vs. *to call - llamar*); (b) the semantic modulation that can be obtained by incorporating determiners and adjectives into the LVC structure (e.g., *They had a heated argument - Tuvieron una discusión acalorada*) (see D'Andrea, 2022, Section 1.2).

Based on the above considerations, I argue that the syntactic flexibility and the semantic specialization of LVCs are the reasons why the scaffolding of *hacer* light verb constructions has been widely used to incorporate English borrowings into the oral and written discourse of Peninsular Spanish speakers. For example, the hybrid LVC *hacer el check-in*–commonly used on the websites of Spanish airlines and, consequently, by travelers–fills a semantic-pragmatic gap not fully covered by the Spanish verb lexicographers have proposed as the translation of *to check in* (at an airport): *facturar* (see *English-Spanish Collins Dictionary*, online). If we take a look at the entry *facturar* in *Diccionario de la lengua española* (online), we read:

> 1. tr. Extender las facturas. 'To issue invoices.'
> 2. tr. Incluir en una factura cada artículo, bulto u objeto. 'To include each article, package or object in an invoice.'
> 3. tr. En estaciones de ferrocarril, aeropuertos, etc., registrar y entregar equipajes y mercancías para que sean remitidos a su destino. 'In railway stations, airports, etc., to register and deliver luggage and goods so that they can be sent to their destination.'

As shown in Definition 3, *facturar* refers only to luggage registration and delivery, and not to the entire process entailed by the semantic extension of the verb *to check in*: "to report

your arrival, especially, at an airport or hotel, so that you can get the service you are paying for'' (*Cambridge Dictionary*, online), the one that has been borrowed in Spanish.

To contextualize the LVC, let us consider the following sentences, extracted from the ''online check-in'' web page of the Spanish national airline Iberia.

(8) *Reserva tu asiento, completa tu vuelo y obtén tu tarjeta de embarque Iberia.com.*
'Book your seat, purchase additional services, and obtain your Iberia.com boarding pass.'

(9) *Realiza tu check-in en el aeropuerto si: viajas con mascotas u otros animales; eres un menor viajando solo.*
'Check in at the airport if you are traveling with pets or other animals or are an unaccompanied minor.'

Sentence (8) specifies what benefits online check-in includes (e.g., booking a seat, purchasing additional services, obtaining the boarding pass). Sentence (9), which contains the formal variant *realizar el check-in*, informs that online check-in is unavailable if the customer is traveling with animals or is an unaccompanied minor. From both sentences we can infer that the meaning of the hybrid light verb construction *hacer/realizar el check-in* entails the actions mentioned above. Therefore, the semantic extension of *facturar* (Definition 3) is not a full cross-linguistic counterpart of the verb *to check in*. For this reason, Spanish airlines find it more practical and linguistically economical to use the non-adapted English noun *check-in* and the hybrid light verb construction *hacer el check-in*, or its formal variant *realizar el check-in*.

## 5. Conclusions

The present research aimed to analyze a prolific means for incorporating English borrowings into Peninsular Spanish: the argument structure of the light verb *hacer* 'to do'/'to make,' in which the verb carries the semantic nuances of 'to perform,' 'to carry out' (Herrero Ingelmo, 2002). From a cross-linguistic perspective, the resulting hybrid light verb constructions do not reproduce the syntactic pattern of the English counterparts. For example, *hacer spam* or *hacer login* do not correspond to light verb constructions but to the simple verb *to spam* and the phrasal verb *to log in*, respectively.

I argue that this lexical incorporation strategy, abundantly used by journalists and blog writers, is so fruitful due to the syntactic flexibility and the semantic specialization of light verb constructions. On the one hand, the syntactic structure of light verb constructions enables the speaker to fill the lexical gap produced by the absence of lone verbs in their native language. Instead of adapting an Anglicism to the morphology of Spanish–a step that would imply adding a native verbal suffix to the foreignism–the borrowed word is incorporated into the light verb argument structure without undergoing significant changes. On the other hand, the narrow referentiality spectrum of these multi-word units (e.g., *hacer el check-in* vs. *facturar*) and the semantic modulation that can be obtained by incorporating determiners and adjectives into their syntactic structure (e.g., *Su jefe le hizo un mobbing persistente* 'His boss harassed him/

her relentlessly') allow the speaker to be more specific in their oral and written discourse. Besides, unlike in the formation of the so-called *bilingual complex verbs* (Muysken, 2000), the creation of the blend-word units under study is driven by the new social phenomenon, product, or trend to which they refer.

In future studies, I wish to dive deeper into this lexical borrowing and incorporation strategy, considering parameters such as *frequency*, *diffusion*, and *lexicographic attestation*. For now, I invite the Spanish-speaking community to reflect on whether it is worth trading self-sufficient Spanish words for unnecessary Anglicisms.

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