

Spanglish in the US, Belize, Gibraltar: the spread and consequences

Academic supervisor – Скальная Юлия Андреевна

Колхидов Иосиф Зурабович

Student (bachelor)

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Факультет глобальных процессов, Образовательная программа «Глобальные политические процессы и дипломатия», Moscow, Россия

E-mail: joseph.kolkhidov@mail.ru

To start with, the phenomenon of Spanglish, once dismissed as a "bastardised" linguistic form, has evolved into a sophisticated marker of hybrid identity in the 21st century. While traditionally associated with the United States, the convergence of English and Spanish manifests itself distinctly in territories such as Belize and Gibraltar. This study explores the diffusion of Spanglish, focusing on the sociolinguistic mechanisms of code-switching, lexical borrowing, and the resulting cultural consequences within the framework of the "Global South" and post-colonial linguistic shifts.

As for theoretical linguistic framework, modern linguistics views Spanglish not as a deficit, but as a "translanguaging" practice. In the context of the Global South, these hybrid forms challenge the hegemony of "Standard English" even though they are viewed as "initially non-standard, . . . language of oral communication (normally qualified as bastard jargon)" [1].

In the United States, the evolution of Spanglish is profoundly connected to the history of migration and the subsequent "mainstreaming" of Latin American culture. Unlike the transitional bilingualism seen in earlier immigrant waves, modern Spanglish in urban hubs like Miami, Los Angeles, and New York has evolved into a prestigious ethnolect that transcends generational divides. The linguistic mechanisms here are characterized by high-frequency "calques" and sophisticated intra-sentential switching, where Spanish morphology is often seamlessly woven into English syntactic structures. However, the consequences of this spread are contradictory. While Spanglish empowers the Hispanic community by creating a distinct "Latino" identity that resists forced assimilation, it also faces "commodification" by global media. This "Commercial Spanglish" often strips the variety of its regional nuances, creating a sanitised version for mass consumption and, in the end, "the customer is manipulated and even overpowered by culture" [5].

As for Belize, it offers a compelling contrast to the US model, acting as a linguistic bridge between the Hispanic Central American mainland and the Anglophone Caribbean. In this territory, the interaction between English (the official language), Spanish (the primary tongue of the majority), and Belizean Kriol creates a unique "trialectal" continuum. Spanglish in Belize is not merely a mixture of two global languages. It is often mediated through the phonological and grammatical filters of Kriol. This creates a linguistic variety that is fundamentally rooted in Global South solidarity. The spread of Spanglish in Belize serves as a de-colonial tool allowing the population to bypass the binary choice between the former British colonial language and the historically dominant Spanish of neighbouring republics.

Another example is Gibraltar. Although geographically situated in Europe, Gibraltar's Llanito exhibits sociolinguistic patterns that mirror the creolisation processes of the Global South. Llanito is perhaps the most politically charged manifestation of Spanglish, serving as a fortress against both British and Spanish cultural encroachment. Structurally, it is characterised by the use of Spanish phonology and morphology layered over an English-dominated administrative vocabulary, with additional influences from Genoese and Hebrew. For the people of Gibraltar,

speaking Llanito is an act of sovereignty. It is a way to assert a “Gibraltarian” identity that is neither fully British nor fully Spanish. The consequence of this spread is the development of a borderland consciousness, where linguistic hybridity is not seen as a deficiency but as a strategic asset for navigating the complex geopolitical tensions of the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, the study of Spanglish in the US, Belize, and Gibraltar demonstrates that the “Global South” is not just a geographic designation but a sociolinguistic condition. The spread of these hybrid forms signifies the “de-centering” of English, transforming it from a colonial monolith into a tool for local expression. While the consequences of this spread include heightened cultural visibility and the formation of resilient identities, the underlying issues of linguistic prestige and institutional gatekeeping remain unresolved. To fully understand the future of global communication, we must recognise Spanglish as a legitimate and highly functional linguistic system that challenges our traditional understanding of language boundaries.

Источники и литература

- 1) Barrios Pardo A. Spanglish, an identity-based discourse strategy of Latino community to respond to segregation through language. Master’s thesis. Université Grenoble Alpes, 2021. 92 p. URL: <https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-03333873>.
- 2) Balam O. Spanglish in the US, Belize and Gibraltar: On the Importance of Comparative Research // Languages. 2025. Vol. 10, No. 11. 283. DOI: 10.3390/languages10110283.
- 3) Mariscal Ríos A. Influence of the sociolinguistic and educational context of Gibraltar on the development of orthographic competence // Porta Linguarum. An International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. 2026. No. 45. URL: <https://revistas.ugr.es/index.php/portalin/article/view/27851>.
- 4) Schneider B. A Diverse Caribbean Island: Historical, Social, and Linguistic Perspectives on a Belizean Village // Liquid Languages: Constructing Languages in Late Modern Cultures of Diffusion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025. P. 73-90.
- 5) Smith A. Spanglish in Advertising // Revista de Lenguas Modernas. Universidad de Costa Rica. 2015. No. 23. P. 1-15. DOI: 10.15517/rm.v0i23.22342. URL: <https://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rm/article/view/22342>.