

# Literary Linguistics in the Context of a Literature Department

**Milton M. Azevedo**  
University of California, Berkeley

This paper reflects my experience teaching literary linguistics, or linguistics applied to literary texts, in the context of a department of Spanish and Portuguese. Seven articles in Martín-Estudillo *et al.* (2006) expressed guarded optimism about the field of Hispanic linguistics, which in my view has a rather uneven situation in academe. In Fall 2007 I surveyed eight of the ten campuses of the University of California and found considerable variation in the number of linguists in the departments of Spanish (or Spanish and Portuguese, or Hispanic Studies). There was only one linguist in three of these, two in two others, and three linguists in each of the remaining three departments. I suspect a random sample of institutions across the country might yield similar results, with a majority of departments with only one or two linguists.

Since an important way by which academics assert themselves professionally is through degree programs offered by recognized academic units, the image of Hispanic Linguistics as a field suffers from having to exist as an appendix to departments primarily devoted to language teaching and literary and/or cultural studies. In fact, the situation of Hispanic Linguistics contrasts poorly with that of research fields of recent creation—such as Ethnic Studies or Women's Studies—that have acquired departments of their own.

Academic specializations also manifest themselves through congresses and journals. As Lipski (2006, p. 107) and Toribio (2006, pp. 135-136) pointed out, there are a number of venues in the U.S., such as the present symposium and other congresses, as well as journals—some of them of recent creation—that welcome papers on Hispanic linguistics, such as *Spanish in Context* and *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana*. It remains to be seen whether these journals will become durable professional venues or follow the fate of the defunct *Hispanic Linguistics*.

An obstacle to maintaining a professional dialogue within language departments is that whereas in the United States linguists are trained as social scientists, literary specialists follow models typical of the humanities. Consequently, Hispanic linguists' research often goes unnoticed, when not misunderstood. Ocampo (2006) has linked this situation, in part, to the divergence between the European tradition of philological studies, in which literature and linguistics coexist and reinforce each other (as, for example, in the preparation of critical editions), and the American tradition of anthropologically-oriented linguistics, which grew out of an effort to analyze American native languages without a written tradition. The latter trend prevailed in American linguistics until the late fifties, when theoretical approaches largely derived from generative-transformational analysis came to dominate the field. Like anthropological linguistics, these new trends did not deal with written texts, literary or otherwise. The other major theoretical current, represented by Labovian sociolinguistics, likewise focuses primarily on narrative texts collected from spontaneous conversations.

A complicating factor is that Hispanic linguists are often involved in service activities that their literary colleagues do not undertake, such as coordinating language instruction, teaching methods courses, and training teaching assistants. Consequently, linguists are seen as pedagogues and administrators rather than researchers (Lipski 2006, p. 111, Núñez-Cedeño 2006, p. 124, Ocampo

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2006, p. 196). When I joined the profession three decades ago, language coordinators were perceived as applied linguists, but since then second language acquisition has grown into a recognized field, with a doctoral specialization that includes some training in linguistics and in pedagogical disciplines that are not part of linguistics. Furthermore, second language acquisition includes an increasingly more diversified technological component. Consequently, the task of coordinating multiple section courses and supervising and training teaching assistants has become more complex and demanding than it used to be, and so it requires full-time dedication that leaves little time for research in linguistics as such. Nevertheless, as the ads on the MLA Job List show, such positions continue to be listed under "Applied Linguistics," used as a catch all label for activities ranging from course design, curriculum planning, training and supervising teaching assistants, and generally keeping the language courses under control.

For specialists in Hispanic linguistics to be able to concentrate on their specific work as linguists, it is crucial to define their role in the department. If there are enough professors to offer a graduate program in Spanish/Hispanic linguistics, that role is more easily defined, at least insofar as the linguistics students are concerned. But one might wonder whether there are grounds for meaningful professional interaction between specialists in linguistics and specialists in literature. More to the point, one might ask what linguists have to offer literature students. Considering that a literary text is a manifestation of language, and considering the importance of written literature in our culture, one might suspect linguistics would have something to say about such a gigantic corpus of a specific form of language use —reflecting what the late British linguist, writer, and literary critic Anthony Burgess called "the aesthetic exploitation of language" (Burgess 1992, p. 379).

At some British universities, and a few American ones, the labels "literary linguistics" and "literary stylistics" have been used to designate interdisciplinary activities in which a linguistic approach is used to analyze fiction texts.<sup>1</sup> There is in fact a substantial corpus of literary studies carried out from a linguistic perspective, as in the case of articles published for over fifteen years in *Language and literature*, which in 2001 devoted an issue to literary dialect,<sup>2</sup> that is, the representation of non-standard varieties, focusing on the representation of African American English. More recently, Schneider and Christian (2006) published a ground-breaking article on the literary dialect of Jamaican creole in Michael Thelwell's novel *The Harder they Come*. The book *The Text and Beyond. Essays in Literary Linguistics* (Bernstein 1995) offers fifteen articles showing that "linguistic approaches to literature could extend beyond the text to all those things outside it that contribute to our understanding of language: history, culture, politics, social context" (Bernstein 1995, p. 1xi). Clearly, these words find an echo in the claim that "Hispanic linguistics is necessarily multidisciplinary" (Toribio 2006, p. 134).

Theoretical and practical aspects of the relation between linguistics and literature have been explored in manuals like Traugott and Pratt (1980), and a great deal of research has been carried out under the label of stylistics, as in Wright and Hope (1996) or Simpson (1997, 2004). Findings on literary texts in English are applicable to texts in Spanish (Nuessel 2002, Azevedo 2005). A number of papers on literary texts written in several languages have been given at congresses of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and at the Modern Language Association, whose Division of Linguistic Approaches to Literature systematically presents papers on linguistics aspects of literary texts in a variety of languages.<sup>3</sup> All this activity gives strong evidence of active interdisciplinary work on linguistics and literary studies, focusing on issues of syntax, semantics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, pragmatics, and translation theory.

Literary linguistics is not a set a discovery procedures or blueprints, but a principled way of examining texts with explicit criteria that produce verifiable results. It is a perspective for asking questions on how the language of the text contributes to create certain effects. To borrow a felicitous

<sup>1</sup> See "Checklist of American and British programs in stylistics and literary linguistics — Directory" (<[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2342/is\\_1\\_37/ai\\_101862389](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2342/is_1_37/ai_101862389)> ).

<sup>2</sup> Sumner Ives characterized literary dialect as "a stylized representation of speech by means of nonstandard, regional, social, or even individual features" (1971, p. 146). The articles on literary dialect published in *Language and Literature* 10 (2001) are particularly insightful.

<sup>3</sup> Those papers are listed in the MLA convention programs, in *PMLA- Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America*, 2002: 1432, 1490, 1528; 2003: 1556, 1570; 2004, 1502, 1546-47, 1588-89; 2005: 1808, 1840-41, 1870, 1829-30; 2006: 1870-71, 1891, 1962; 2007: 1796, 1809, 1842.

metaphor used by some of the contributors to *Hispanic Issues*, this line of inquiry would build a bridge between linguistics and literary studies, exploring areas of intersection between these fields as opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and research. In fact, Lipski made an eloquent plea when he recommended "that linguists make the building of bridges to the other areas of their departments an essential life-sustaining activity" (112). It is apposite, however, to recall that in the articles in *Hispanic Issues online* all of the comments about bridge building came from the linguistic side. Whereas the seven articles on Hispanic linguistics contain references to literature, in the eleven articles on Literary and Cultural Studies I found only three articles containing a word *linguistics* or a cognate term, none referring to cooperation between linguists and literary specialists, whose enthusiasm is apparent in the suggestion that "to some extent one might say that the reintroduction of close reading as a tool that goes beyond the old stylistics can reinforce recent advances in cultural criticism and might even serve to reestablish a modicum of common ground between linguistics and literature" (11).

I turn now to my own experience in teaching linguistics to literature students. Although I graduated from a linguistics department, my research since the early 1990's has focused on the interface of linguistics with literary texts and translation studies. Further, my interest in language variation led me to consider how nonstandard speech, such as regional and social dialects, has been represented in literature. I find that graduate and undergraduate literature students are often quite interested in such topics, and that it is possible to familiarize them to linguistic concepts in a relatively short time, so as to enable them to analyze literary texts from a linguistic viewpoint.

This experience has led me to think of literary linguistics as a research field articulated along two complementary axes. One axis is concerned with the actual application of theories, techniques and procedures derived from linguistics to the analysis of language structures found in literary texts. Some of these texts include structures that occur frequently in spontaneous speech, as well as others that rarely occur, and constitute what is customarily called "literary diction," or "poetic language," or "literary language" — all useful labels, provided we take them with a grain of salt. The other axis involves analyzing how linguistic theory is applied, in order to develop a consistent theoretical basis. This is a slow endeavor, particularly in view of the interdisciplinary nature of the field. But we should not be discouraged by the fact that results are no more tentative than a number of linguistic theories that have come and gone in the last half century.

A basic program of literary linguistics for literature students should include a selection of introductory readings, including texts on diachronic, regional, social, and contextual variation. This introductory work can be done piecemeal, and it must be kept simple, so that, paraphrasing Lipski, we do "not remain so trapped in technical details that [we] cannot make [our] product accessible to our literature students" (112). An essential part of such courses is the analysis of texts whose language deviates from the standard through the use of archaic forms, regional dialects, sociolects, hybrid varieties, foreigner talk, pidgins, and creoles. Some texts, while preserving standard forms, manipulate syntax in a variety of ways to create specific stylistic effects, as in the following selection.

El sargento echa una ojeada a la Madre Patrocinio . . . . La lancha cabecea sobre las aguas turbias . . . . el motor ronca parejo, se atora, ronca y el práctico Nieves lleva el timón con la izquierda, con la derecha fuma y su rostro, muy bruñido, permanece inalterable bajo el sombrero de paja. Estos selváticos no **eran** normales, ¿por qué no **sudaban** como los demás cristianos? Tiesa en la popa, la Madre Angélica está con los ojos cerrados, en su rostro hay lo menos mil arrugas. . . . Pobre viejita, no **estaba** para estos trotes. El moscardón bate las alitas azules, despega con suave impulso de la frente rosada de la Madre Patrocinio . . . y el práctico **iba a apagar** el motor, Sargento, ya **estaban** llegando, detrás de esa quebradita **vení**a Chicais.

(Mario Vargas-Llosa, *La casa verde*, 7.)

In this passage, as others in the novel, variation in the choice verb tenses aids the narrative as an indicator of changes in the voices in the text—a case of verb morphology contributing to heteroglossia in the Bahktinean (1987) sense.

The present indicative conveys the narrative (*echa una ojeada, la lancha cabecea, el motor ronca*), whereas the imperfect indicative signals a shift to a character's voice or flow of thought. Thus, the segment that includes the noun phrases *no eran normales, no sudaban* belongs to the sergeant's thoughts about Nieves, the launch's pilot; *no estaba para estos trotes* tells us about the sergeant's thoughts about the elderly nun, and *el práctico iba a apagar el motor* frames his perception of the

pilot's action. On the other hand, *ya estaban llegando* is an indirect representation of the sergeant's perception of the pilot's warning that they were about to reach their destination, the Chicais hamlet in the Amazonian jungle.

Literary linguistic analysis involves a kind of close reading that pays attention to language details —phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, and so on— that form a frame of reference for conveying not only specific denotative meanings but also a whole spectrum of connotative meanings, like those found in the following passage, written in Vernacular Brazilian Portuguese.

E agora você num qué mais eu só pur causo dessa mulé!... Ocê tá maginano que tenho argum amô pur aquela pirdida!... Eu intê paguei ela!... Foi que ela me falô que o pai apareceu lá im casa da patrôa e pidiu cinco mirréis, dizem que batia nela, eu tive dó, arrispundi: "Pur isso não, você tá quereno í cumigo, intão bamo que despois de eu fazê o sirviço, te dô os cinco mirréis."  
(Mario de Andrade, "Foi sonho," 32.)

Among the features of this popular variety we find examples of rhotacism (*algum* > *argum*), apocope of word-final /r/ (*quer* > *qué*, *amor* > *amô*, *ir* > *i*, *fazer* > *fazê*, *dou* > *dô*), articulation of **lh** as the alveolar lateral /l/ instead of the palatal lateral /ʎ/ (*mulé* for *mulher*), loss of /d/ in the gerund (*imaginando* > *imaginano*, *dizendo* > *dizeno*), and /b/ for /v/ (*bamo* for *vamos*). In vernacular morphosyntax subject pronouns are used as objects, as in *num qué mais eu* (cf. st. *não me quer mais*) and *paguei ela* (cf. st. *paguei a ela*, *paguei-lhe*). The vernacular lexicon includes archaic forms (*despois* for *depois*, *arrespondi* for *respondi*), and forms that any relatively educated speaker would identify as popular (*ocê*, *intê*, *mirréis* for standard *você*, *até*, *mil réis*). In this poignant story, a homodiegetic narrator addresses his wife, who has left him because he went to a Carnival ball with another woman. His socially marked speech is clearly recognizable as a vernacular variety spoken by the uneducated, and the fact that he, his wife, and the other woman are identified as African Brazilians adds a sharp note of social criticism that cannot go unnoticed by moderately perceptive readers —as long as they understand the linguistic key, which needs to be made explicit to those unfamiliar with the dialect.

Other texts lend themselves to an analysis of forms of address and their relation to social structure. The next example concerns the fact that the coexistence of two languages may lead to the formation of hybrid varieties that have often been used for literary purposes. The arrival in Brazil of large numbers of Italian immigrants, which began at the end of the nineteenth century, contributed to the development of a hybrid of vernacular Brazilian Portuguese and dialectal Italian, not unlike the Cocoliche dialect that grew in Argentina and Uruguay. This nameless, strictly oral hybrid was taken up by authors such as Antonio Alcantara Machado (1972) and Juó Bananére (the pen name of Alexandre Ribeiro Marcondes Machado). The following passage is from an article entitled "A tragedia nu láro" (cf. st. Pg. *A tragédia no lar*), that is, "The tragedy in the home."

Guintaffera as otto ores da notte incominció di currê na città a nutiça di un brutto grimo no Abax'o Pignes. Si diceva che io tenia matado a Juóquina mia molhére c'um settes tiro i quattros facada. Pur causa da brutta consideraçó che io c'oa Juóquina gozava numeio succiali i nas roda giurnalistima as porta das redaço di tuttós giornale, specialmente as porta du "Piralhu" stavo gumpletamente xiigno di gente che queriva sabê os pormenore do roroso grimo. (Juó Bananere, "A Tragedia nu Láro," 103.)

This parody is effective because it systematically incorporates several actual features of that Italianate hybrid speech. As one would expect, there are Italian words, like *otto*, *che*, *notte*, *cittá*, *brutto*, *diceva*, but Portuguese morphology interferes, modifying some of them, as in *ores* for *ore* "hours" (cf. Pg. *horas*), and occasionally pluralization affects numerals, as in *settes* (for It. *sette* "seven") and *quattros* (for It. *quattro* "four"). Other lexical items are formed by combining Italian and Portuguese cognates, as in It. *moglie*, Pg *mulher* > *molhére* or It. *voleva*, Pg. *queria* > *queriva*. Hybridization also affects noun phrases, as in *tuttós giornale*, which stands halfway between Pg. *todos os jornais* and It. *tutti i giornali*. Morphosyntactic features of Vernacular Brazilian Portuguese are also present, such as the plural determiner followed by a singular noun, as in *as porta*, *das redaço*, *tuttós giornale*. As conveying orality is important in representing this dialect, spelling shows the character's unawareness of word boundaries (*guintaffera* < Pg. *quinta feira*, *numeio* < Pg. *nos meios*), and several phonetic features typical of the dialect pop up here and there, such as irregular voicing of initial

/k/ > /g/ as in *gonsideraçó, gumpletamente, grimo* (cf. Pg. *consideração, completamente, It. considerazione, completamente, Pg crime*), as do features of Vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, such as loss of final /r/, as in *currê, sabê* (< Pg. *correr, saber*). Loss of noun phrase agreement, a salient morphosyntactic feature of the vernacular, is represented by *nas roda, as porta, os pormenores* (cf. st. Pg. *nas rodas, as portas, os pormenores*).

Hybrid varieties grow in contact situations and often do not acquire a written representation that might, under more favorable social circumstances, provide a modicum of standardization. Such is the case of *Fronterizo*, a generic term for the Portuguese dialects spoken in some Uruguayan towns along the border with Brazil. Morphosyntax and the lexicon include elements from both languages, besides some hybrid creations. An awareness of the workings of these dialects' fluid structure is essential to understand their literary recreation, as in the following excerpt by Uruguayan writer Saúl Ibagoyen.

—Otra vuelta que se me va y yo con la barriga cheia ¡de novo! —dijo dona Cota para dona Cota, ¿a quéin falar, de qué?

—Hubiera dejado un nombre, meu rico marido, para batisar el gurí. Si sale machito, lo boto Ney, nombre de alguéin debe ser. . . .

— Béin magro me va ficando, haga alguna coisa, marido —le pidió dona Cota al hombre de pelos rubios. Busquemé a la dotora, perto de pur aquí ella vive y sirve.

— Vo procurar esa dotora. Y si no presta ¿qué? —contestó don José. . . .

—Si no presta, procuramos al doctor Terrapreta, bastón tiene, chapéu de señor fino y polvos de quemar con humo blanco. (Saúl Ibagoyen *Islas*, "Un día domingo para Dona Cota," 111)

In this passage words common to both Spanish and Portuguese (*dona, barriga, rico, vive, sirve, procurar*) cooccur with Spanish words (*vuelta, marido, haga, alguna quemar*) and with Portuguese words (*cheia, novo, meu, gurí, magro ficando, coisa*). Orality is underscored by the fact that several words are written in quasi-phonetic spelling, underscoring the hybrid nature of the dialect: *quéim* for Pg *quem* [kɛ̃ĩ], *alguéin* (Pg *alguém* [al'gɛ̃ĩ], *beim* [bɛ̃ĩ], *pur aquí* for *por aquí* (< Pg. [pura'ki], *vo* (< Pg. *vou*). In Ybagoyen's literary dialect spelling variation fulfills the double function of evoking orality and creating a separate space for the dialect, visually placing it between Portuguese and Spanish. This effect is enhanced by the fact that sometimes it is not possible to determine which language a word belongs to: *dotor* and *dotora* can stand for popular renderings of either Pg. *doutor, doutora* or Sp. *doctor, doctora*. Language indeterminacy creates a twilight zone that presents itself as a linguistic and cultural *tertius quid* situated —literally— on a border, reclaiming a cultural identity of its own.<sup>4</sup>

The tense coexistence of two languages—a daily event in bilingual communities—was used by Chicana writer Alice Gaspar de Alba to reflect a cultural conflict that reaches into family life. In her short story "El pavo," Carlos, a recently-widowed monolingual Spanish speaker, faces his son Pepe's decision to hold a Thanksgiving dinner on which the latter's English-dominant daughter Gabriela is very keen:

— [¿]Oye tú, chirota, que no te dije que te pusieras a barrer?

Gabriela, parada de manos frente a Pepe, le grita:

— Ahí voy, grandpa. Le 'stoy enseñando a mi Daddy un cartwheel.

Se echa la maroma con las piernas abiertas y la blusa se le sube hasta el cuello, descubriéndole su pecho pálido y huesudo.

— 'Hora sí — grita el viejo, casi tropezándose al bajar los escalones — 'hora sí me la pagas, pocha desvergonzada ésta. . . .

Se empieza a quitar el cinturón y la niña sale corriendo por la calle. Pepe, con unos lentes de sol que lo hacen verse como Eric Estrada de Chips, se acerca al viejo y le entrega un cartón de Pall Malls.

— ¿Cómo está 'apá? — le pregunta en voz alta.

— Pos, ¿cómo voy a estar? — contesta el viejo, tomando el cartón de cigarros e inspeccionándolo para ver si está abierto.

<sup>4</sup> On Ibagoyen's literary dialect, see Magdalena Coll (1995).

— Aquí con tu hija que no hace caso. Tres veces le he dicho que barra, pero cómo . . . si anda volada con el güerillo ése. . . .

Pepe . . . se encoge de hombros y va y abre la puerta de atrás de su pick-up.

“¡Gaby!” le grita a su hija que anda jugando a las escondidas con un gato, “ándale, ayúdame con estas bolsas.”

—¿Qué me comprastes, Daddy? ¿Los pencils pa’la escuela? — . . . Pepe no contesta. Le da la bolsa de pan y los huevos y recoge las otras dos. . . .

— ¿No se te vaya a caer, éh?

— No daddy, yo sé como. You know what?

— Habla español, hija, tu abuelo te va a pegar.

Gabriela se detiene en sus brincos y voltea la cara hacia su padre:

—¿Por qué tengo que hablar 'spañol? This is a free country.

Pepe se agacha en cuclillas y baja la voz:

— Free or not, young lady, you talk Spanish in this house. It's his house, ¿me entiendes?

La niña empieza a saltar de nuevo.

— Yes, daddy, I mean, sí, papi.

(Alice Gaspar de Alba, “El pavo,” p. 28)

In this story, set in a semi rural environment in the Southwest, dialogues include features of popular Mexican Spanish such as the loss of consonants (*está papá* > *está 'apá*), fusion of identical vowels (*le estoy* > *le 'stoy*), and the loss of initial unstressed vowels (*ahora* > *'hora*). Other popular features include the *-s* ending in the second person plural of the preterite (*comprastes*; cf. st. *compraste*) and lexical items such as *chirota*, *pocha*, *güerillo*, and *ándale*.<sup>5</sup>

Each character reflects a facet of the community's sociolinguistic structure. The grandfather's insistence that only Spanish be spoken underscores his role as the guardian of a language tradition that conflicts with English. In contrast, there is no conflict for the young girl, for whom code switching — reflected in the duality of her name, Gabriela/Gaby— is a natural communicative device. It is apparent, however, that for her English is the dominant language, both in education (*los pencils pa'la escuela*) and for leisure (*un cartwheel*). Ironically, it is also in English that she claims her linguistic rights: *This is a free country*.

Caught between his father's monolingual intransigence and his daughter's bilingual flexibility, Pepe aims for a compromise: while accepting that one should speak the heritage language at his father's home, he too switches to English when talking to the girl: *Free or not, young lady, you talk Spanish in this house. It's his house, ¿me entiendes?* She agrees, but by saying *I mean* she unwittingly suggests that what she says in Spanish (*sí, papi*) is only a translation of what really counts (*Yes, daddy*).

Though a bit disconcerting for monolinguals, codeswitching is a widespread conversational resource in bilingual contexts. When used as a literary device it foregrounds orality, underscoring cultural hybridization and revealing several linguistic processes, as in the following passage by Cuban American author Roberto G. Fernández:

—¿Qué pasa mi broder?

— Super. Aquí vacilando a los vaciladores en el vacilón que es la vida. I got news for you. Ayer me compré tremenda tela. You know, mi tía vende ropa y coge everything half price, y la acabé.

— No estás en nosin mi broder. Tómate un breik de la vacilation y vacila lo que te voy a decir que es important.

— Tell me que estoy ready for everything.

— Yesterday, bostearon a Freddy.

— ¡Coño! Yo sabía que a ese cabrón algo foni le iba a pasar. Se lo dije, te van a joder men. ¿Dónde lo craquearon?

— Frente a su casa. Estaba tripeando y no se dio cuenta y paso la jara el policeman se lo llevó. Ahora hasta lo acusan de haber querido reipear a la vieja de enfrente. Y el pobre Freddy que no conoce a nadie con pul pa' que lo saque.

<sup>5</sup> On literary codeswitching in Chicano literature, see Laura Callahan (2004).

- ¿Y ahora who's going to bring us the material?  
 — ¡Eres del carajo! Freddy descojonado y tu thinking only del material  
 — Sorry men. Cógelo suave. I forgot.  
 — Ok, pásame un numerito y vamono pal carajo.  
 (Roberto G. Fernández, *La vida es un special \$1.00 .75*, p. 40)

In this dialogue two young Latino men talk about a friend that was arrested on a drugs charge. Their colloquial speech includes slang words (*jara* 'police', *vieja* 'woman'), calques from English (*tomarse un breik* < *to take a break*), and borrowings whose spelling indicates their phonological adjustment (*broder* < *brother*, *foni* < *funny*, *men* < *man*, *breik* < *break*, *nosin* < *nothing*, *craquearon* < *to crack* 'arrest', *bostear* < *to bust*, *tripeando* < *to trip*, *reipear* < *to rape*).

Code-switching is not casual: in *vacila lo que te voy a decir que es important*, all is said in Spanish except the key word, *important*, and the switch to English underscores the importance of what is about to be said.

I hope this brief exposition has illustrated some of the ways in which linguistic analysis of literary texts can cast light on the representational possibilities at the level of *parole*, thus revealing systematic relationships between language structure and content. While a thorough grounding in linguistics is ideal, one or two courses combining linguistic theory and text analysis can provide literature students with a powerful tool for enhancing their comprehension of the text, without limiting their choice of a critical approach.

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