

**Easy come, easy go:
Deictic verbs reveal crosslinguistic influence in Heritage speakers of Spanish**

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INTRODUCTION: **Verbs of motion** reveal cross-linguistic differences in how languages encode key aspects of events (Talmy 1985, 1991). **Deictic verbs** such as ‘come’ and ‘go’ not only capture information about the source or goal, but also the speaker’s or hearer’s location. However, ‘**come**’ and ‘**go**’ impose different restrictions: ‘come’ is claimed to encode an *indexical presupposition* about the relation of the motion goal to the speaker at the reference time and carries pragmatic appropriateness conditions (Barlew 2015, 2017; Fillmore 1971/1997; Oshima 2006; Sudo, 2018), while ‘go’ does not. English is flexible with *come*, allowing for *indexical perspective shift* within the confines of these conditions (Anand & Nevins, 2004; Schlenker, 1999, 2003), whereas Spanish is more restrictive. Notably, in English, *come* may be oriented toward the perspective of a protagonist in narrative (Lewis, 1979; Rall & Harris, 2000), while in Spanish ‘come’ (*venir*) can only be used to express movement towards the speaker. This contrast would appear to present a **dilemma for learners of Spanish**. Indeed, previous work on *venir* has documented cross-linguistic transfer (Chui, 2016, English; Lewandowski, 2014, Polish; Vann, 1998, Catalan), but these studies varied in methodology and were conducted with adult speakers beyond the critical period. **Examining child Spanish speakers** presents us with an opportunity to investigate how this **cross-linguistic contrast** is reconciled in the mind of a young speaker, and determine at a deeper level the **interaction between lexical semantics and pragmatics in language development**. Here, we report part of an ongoing study examining the influence of English on motion verbs in heritage speakers of Spanish.

CORPUS ANALYSIS:

Participants: monolingual Spanish speakers (n=12) (age 12) in Mexico (Aguilar, 2015); monolingual English speakers (ages 10, 11; n=40) and English dominant Spanish heritage speakers (ages 10, 11; n=80) (ages 10, 11) in Miami, FL (Pearson, 2002)

Data: We analyzed child production data from a picture-based story retelling task based on Meyer’s *Frog, Where are you?* obtained from CHILDES (MacWhinney, 2000). Transcripts were hand-coded for the presence of the verbs ‘come’ and ‘go’ in present tense and past tense, imperfect and preterit, then occurrences compared across participant groups. We predicted that in a narrative task, where no motion was directed toward the speaker proper (i.e., the child), monolingual Spanish speakers would avoid *venir*, but English-monolingual and dominant speakers would show a more permissive pattern, as long as the motion was goal directed and associated with the protagonist.

Results: As predicted, while Spanish monolingual children produced no instances of ‘come’, the other groups displayed a highly similar pattern of usage, allowing ‘come’ to express protagonist perspective. See Figure 1 for production examples, and Figure 2 and Table 1 for analysis. Interestingly, **the heritage speakers displayed no difficulty with focus word order, morphosyntax, or discourse markers: the locus of the difference was in use of lexical items, indicating differences in pragmatic restrictions on perspective shift.**

CONCLUSIONS: Our results reveal a more liberal use of ‘come’/*venir* among child heritage speakers, indicating cross-linguistic influence of English on their native Spanish. Thus, their

developmental task is to learn to constrain this use of *venir* and prune perspectival shift for deictic verbs. We discuss open questions about the generalizability of these results to other deictic verbs (e.g., *bring*, *take*) and the overall consequences for language development.

Figure 1. Examples of productions by Spanish heritage speakers in both English and Spanish (participant numbers in parentheses)



English	1. He called his name but nobody came (22132099)	2. Then a deer came (32331466)	3. This deer came along and picked up the boy (22232065)
Spanish	4. <i>la llamó y la llamó y no vino</i> (22132056) he called and he called but [the frog] didn't come	6. <i>cuando vino un reindeer</i> (22132056) when came a reindeer	7. <i>pero vino el reindeer</i> (11131281) but came the reindeer
	5. <i>y llamaron rana, rana, pero no vino</i> (11132198) and they called frog, frog, but [he] didn't come		

Table 1 and **Figure 2** showing raw counts (L) and percentages (R) of ‘come’ and ‘go’ (of total productions of both verbs) in English and Spanish for the three participant groups, reflecting English-like production in the heritage speakers

Figure 2. Raw counts of ‘come’ and ‘go’

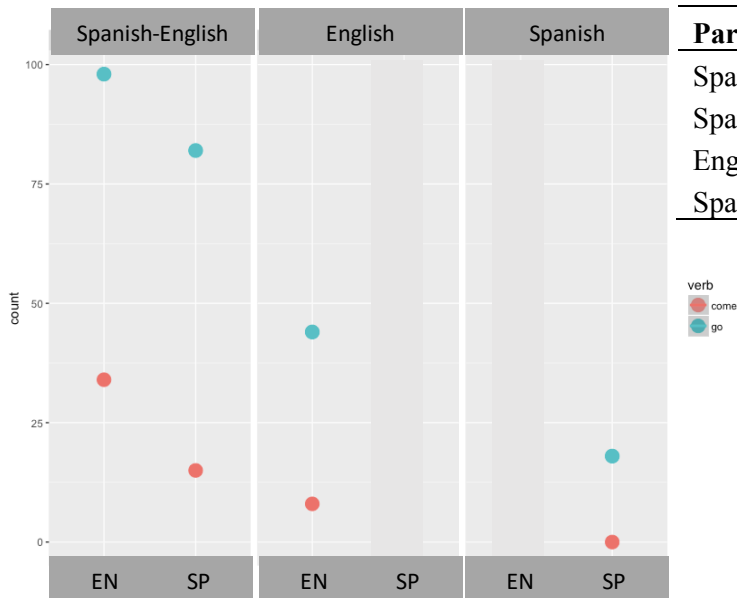


Table 1. Percentages of ‘come’ and ‘go’

Participant group	‘come’	‘go’
Spanish-English (English)	14.80%	85.20%
Spanish-English (Spanish)	15.50%	84.50%
English monolingual	15.40%	84.60%
Spanish monolingual	0.00%	100.00%

ME of language ($F(1) = 13.32, p < 0.003$) and group ($F(2) = 43.87; p < .003$), and interaction ($F(3) = 51.44; p < 0.004$)

Selected references

- Anand & Nevins.** (2004). In *SALT 14*, 20-37; **Chui** (2016). In *New Approaches in Educational Research*, 81-90; **Fillmore** (1975). *Lectures on Deixis*; **Lewandowski** (2014). In *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, 43-65; **Lewis**. (1979). In *Semantics from different points of view*, 172-187; **Oshima**. (2006). Stanford Dissertation; **Rall & Harris**. (2000). In *Developmental Psychology*, 202-208; **Schlenker**. (1999). MIT Dissertation; **Talmy**. (1991). In *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 480-519; **Vann**. (1998). In *Language Variation and Change*, 263-288.