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Backflagging revisited: A case study on *bueno* in English-Spanish bilingual speech

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ABSTRACT

Most approaches to discourse markers tend to rely on observation on the behavior of monolingual classes of markers. In this paper, we offer a detailed analysis of the behavior and function of a single Spanish discourse marker, namely *bueno*, in bilingual discourse as opposed to its bilingual counterpart *well*. In particular, we compare pragmatic factors, and namely fine-grained differences between Spanish *bueno* and English *well*, with interactional factors such as the position of the marker in monological vs. dialogical sequences. Finally, we also take into account the impact of individual linguistic choices by comparing the behavior of different speakers when using the scrutinized discourse marker. Thus, we do not only contribute to and expand on previous literature on the behavior of discourse markers, but we also offer a new perspective to further study discourse markers in situations of language contact.

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1. Introduction

The behavior of discourse markers (DMs) in bilingual speech is a topic that lies at the intersection between different subfields of linguistic research, and has in fact been investigated from a number of different perspectives in the last decades (Dal Negro and Fiorentini, 2014; Fiorentini, 2017; Hakimov and Rießler, 2021; Heine, 2016; Maschler, 1994; Matras, 1998, 2000). However, most existing studies seem to have been dedicated to wide-ranging analyses of how the whole class of DMs behaves in a particular contact situation and what we can learn about DMs by analyzing their behavior in such situation. More in-detail studies of single DMs are, on the other hand, less common (e.g., Fiorentini, 2020). In this paper we will adopt the latter approach; we will thus provide an analysis of how the Spanish DM *bueno* is used in Gibraltar's English-Spanish code-mixing, and what factors favor the preference for bilingual patterns over monolingual ones in English discourses. For this purpose, we first study the functionality of *bueno* as opposed to its counterpart *well* from a qualitative perspective; and later we examine the bilingual use of the DM *bueno* in sentences in which English is the matrix language from a quantitative perspective. The broad theoretical goal of this research is therefore twofold: on the one hand, looking at language contact data may indeed shed light on formal and functional aspects of the DMs investigated; on the other hand, this analysis may also give a significant contribution to code-mixing research, and particularly to an evaluation of the pros and cons of Pieter Muysken's (2013) notion of *backflagging*, which was specifically introduced to define the use of other-language DMs.

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The case of Gibraltar is an ideal scenario to study DMs in code-mixing, first of all because, as discussed in several studies (Levey, 2008; Moyer, 2000; Weston, 2013; Goría, 2017), code-mixing is a common practice in the community, which makes it possible to observe the patterning of DMs with a relatively large amount of data. Furthermore, we already know a lot about the linguistic situation of Gibraltar from previous accounts (Feijóo Rodríguez, 2015; Goría, 2018; Kellermann, 2001; Moyer, 1998; Weston, 2013), and, more relevant for the present enquiry, general accounts of the behavior of DMs in bilingual communities and in this specific setting (Weston, 2013; Goría, 2021a,b) are already available. However, most accounts offer a global analysis of DMs as a unitary class, while accounts of single DMs are relatively rare. Therefore, in this paper we aim to describe bilingual patterns in code-mixing by combining sociolinguistic-oriented explanation with a fine-grained pragmatic account of specific DMs. For this purpose, we present a single case study concerning the use of *bueno* vs. *well* in bilingual discourse.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In §2 we give an overview of the main topics concerning code-mixing and discourse markers, and particularly of Muysken's (2013) proposal, establishing the bases for the analysis carried out in the subsequent sections. In §3 we present the sociolinguistic scenario of Gibraltar, discussing the relationship between language shift occurring in the community and the emergence of code-mixing involving DMs (*backflagging*). In §4 we start the discussion of our case study by giving an overview of the functions of the two scrutinized DMs in monolingual speech. We then proceed in §5 to the discussion of the data and methods of this study. In §6 we present the results of our case study concerning the distribution of *bueno* and *well* in bilingual speech. A general discussion and our conclusions are presented in §7.

2. Backflagging and discourse markers in code-mixing

Even though DMs in bilingual speech represent a relatively common topic in the recent readership, accounts of this phenomenon are still very heterogeneous. This is probably a result of the great fragmentation of theoretical approaches and methods dealing with either DMs or bilingual speech separately. While the formulation of a one-size-fits-all model for the analysis of bilingual DMs is far beyond the scope of this paper, in §2.1 we provide a critical review of the main theoretical issues on this topic, in order to reach some working definitions for the analysis carried out in §4.

2.1. DMs and language contact

In this paper the term *discourse markers* is used in a broader sense, based on Schiffrin's (1987, p. 31) fortunate definition of "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk". We therefore subsume under this label a set of more or less conventionalized expressions that typically convey pragmatic values of an utterance, as they "function in cognitive, expressive, social, and textual domains" (Maschler and Schiffrin, 2015, p. 189), and conversely bear little, or no, truth-conditional values.

From as early as Weinreich (1953), contact linguistics has shown that the use of other-language DMs is a common phenomenon in most contact situations. In this section, we will review some of the most influential theories discussing DMs in bilingual speech. Before this, we want to address a major distinction occurring in the existing readership: in fact, DMs appear to be a disputed territory between "borrowing oriented" and "code-mixing oriented" accounts, mirroring the distinction between code-mixing and borrowing adopted especially in structuralist accounts of language contact (see the discussion in Matras, 2009). We must observe, however, that more often than not this dispute boils down to a mere terminological discussion (see e.g., Auer's, 2014 remarks on Poplack's account of borrowing). Moreover, in a usage-based approach there is no need to identify a radical distinction between code-mixing and borrowing, fundamentally for the same reason why, in this approach, grammatical knowledge is not detachable from language use (see Bybee, 2010 for a general overview). As argued by Backus (2010, 2020), code-mixing pertains to the synchronic dimension of language contact, while borrowing reflects the diachronic one. As a major theoretical point, in our paper we will follow the latter approach and thus, since our study is more concerned with the synchronic dimension, we will treat all the instances of use of other-language DMs as cases of code-mixing.

The great facility to which other-language DMs are used in bilingual discourse has been dealt with from different theoretical perspectives. Global models of language contact such as Thomason and Kaufman (1988) or Matras (2009) have sought to explain the greater accessibility of DMs to code-mixing with respect to other grammatical categories, in reason of both their functional and formal properties. Thus, it is now commonly accepted that DMs are ideal candidates for code-mixing due to (a) their formal properties; (b) their functional properties; and (c) their socio-indexical value.

With respect to (a), studies normally point to the fact that DMs are typically uninflected and monomorphemic (see Moravcsik, 1978 or Weinreich, 1953); even more complex items, such as *to tell the truth*, are in fact treated as unitized chunks (Backus, 2003), and thus count as single lexical items. Furthermore, they are loosely integrated in or external to the syntactic core of the clause (see e.g., Myers-Scotton, 1993).¹

¹ The existence of a syntactic core, and conversely a periphery of the clause, is an assumption in most structuralist accounts, as well as in the generative tradition, at least since Rizzi (1994). However, it is worth noting that such an approach, in our opinion, reflects an implicit qualitative distinction between grammar and discourse which is not fully compatible with some contemporary approaches to syntax, such as construction grammar (Goldberg, 1995, 2006 among many others) and usage-based linguistics (Bybee, 2010).

As for (b), most studies point to the fact that DMs are accessible to bilingual speech because they express functions at the pragmatic or discourse level, which do not affect the semantics of the clause (Berk-Seligson, 1986; Fiorentini, 2017; Matras, 1998, 2000; Stolz and Stolz, 1996). According to Matras (2009, 2000, 1998), it would constitute a cognitive advantage for bilingual speakers to draw on a separate set of items for discourse-regulating functions. In his account, he identifies a set of *utterance modifiers* which, in several contact situations, are supplied by what he calls the *pragmatically dominant language* which is typically the major, or most widespread, language in a given society and a language with a tradition of literacy. However, as we argue below, this approach is not free of problems, because the identification of the pragmatically dominant language is not straightforward in all situations. Or in a different interpretation, as for Maschler (1994), the possibility to separate languaging from metalanguaging, understood as the use of other-language DMs, would constitute an additional interactional resource available to bilingual speakers.

Finally, as for (c), other-language DMs may be used to perform *emblematic switches* (Poplack, 1980; among many others) whose function is to claim membership in a specific group, and is based on the social (both overt and covert) prestige of codes in a specific scenario. Sedimentation of such uses may thus lead to the emergence of bilingual registers that are “globally” (Auer, 1999) opposed to monolingual ones. This phenomenon has been accounted for with different terms in the literature such as *mixed code* (Maschler, 1994; Muysken, 2000), *fused lect* (Auer, 1999, 2014) or, more recently *backflagging* (Muysken, 2013). In his paper, Muysken introduces backflagging as a fourth type of code-mixing to his widely shared typology of bilingual speech,² to describe the case whereby, after a community has shifted to a new dominant language, DMs of the shifted-from minority language are retained and used for identity-related motivations, e.g., as a strategy to claim membership in the community and/or express mixed identities.

A few points in this review are of particular interest for the present account. First of all, Muysken's notion of backflagging further explores the idea, also present, e.g., in Poplack (1980), that the choice of code-mixing patterns is determined by global sociolinguistic features of the community. Indeed, backflagging is particularly adequate to describe the behavior of DMs in cases of language shift, which escape the account provided by Matras's theory of utterance modifiers. To give an example, Dal Negro (2004), in her book about language decay in a German-speaking minority in the Italian Alps, shows that when language shift came to an advanced stage, and the majority of the population had already become dominant in Italian (i.e., the major national language), German DMs were the only elements that were maintained from the minority language. In such a case, it can hardly be said that German represents a pragmatically dominant language, whereas the category backflagging seems to proficiently describe the advanced language shift scenario discussed by Dal Negro. The same considerations also apply to a case like Gibraltar, as discussed in §3.2. In other words, most theoretical models focus on the case where DMs are likely to be borrowed from a dominant or majority language. Backflagging focusses instead on the opposite case, whereby DMs are virtually all that is left of the minority language. However, while the idea of backflagging portrays a global tendency of DMs that was perhaps ignored by other accounts, at the same time it only looks at DMs for their sociolinguistic value as markers of ethnicity, or as building blocks of a mixed code (Muysken, 2007). Other functional or cognitive factors do not seem to play a role in this analysis. Under the category backflagging, DMs are treated as an internally homogeneous category, and differences in function and in accessibility to code-mixing between single elements do not seem to play a role in the analysis.

In this respect, the aim of this paper is twofold. First of all, we provide an account of the DM *bueno* in English-Spanish code-mixing adopting Muysken's (2013) category of backflagging; furthermore we also aim to look in greater detail at the structure and functions of single DMs as a potential explanation for their high accessibility in bilingual discourse, thereby evaluating different possible explanations for the patterns observed in our bilingual corpus. For this purpose, Gibraltar—as a community involved in a noticeable process of language shift — provides the perfect context to study the use and functionality of bilingual DMs.

3. Bilingualism and code-mixing in Gibraltar: the case of young adults

3.1. Bilingualism in Gibraltar: a process of language shift

The linguistic history of Gibraltar is rich and extensive. However, this article only offers a brief overview of the social-historical context of this enclave with the aim of presenting the history behind the English-Spanish linguistic change, which is established as the sociological background to the linguistic phenomena presented here. For a better understanding of the linguistic situation in Gibraltar and the process of language shift, it is worth mentioning that, although English was established as the official language of the territory after the signature of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), Spanish kept being used as a *lingua franca* and as the main language of the population, along with other Mediterranean languages such as Maltese (semite) and Genoese (Italo-Romance). According to sociolinguistic accounts (Kramer 1986; Kellermann, 2001; Levey 2008), Spanish kept its status as the main language of Gibraltar until the 1970s, when English started to permeate formal and informal domains of conversation.

Several historical and social facts played a significant role in this linguistic process, however, three big events could be defined as triggers (Kramer, 1986; Mariscal Ríos, 2014; Rodríguez García, under review): (a) the evacuation of the population to other British territories during World War II, and the associated social and institutional changes (e.g., the increased

² The other types introduced by Muysken (2000) are *insertion*, *alternation* and *congruent lexicalisation*.

knowledge of English); (b) the subsequent introduction of the British education system, which established English as the sole language of education; and (c) the closure of the border between 1969 and 1982, a period of more than 13 years of isolation that generated a strong feeling of resentment among the population towards Spain, and which eventually led to the development of negative attitudes towards the Spanish language. While Spanish was virtually lost and confined especially to the familiar and highly informal domains, it is worth mentioning here that the local mixed variety known as Yanito or Llanito, which involves a lot of Spanish elements, emerged as a symbol of Gibraltar identity for a large part of the population.

Early studies on Gibraltar focused attention on the analysis of its diglossic situation (e.g., Lipski, 1986) characterized by a strict separation of languages with English as the “high variety” and Spanish as the “low variety”. However, gradually this scenario shifted into a more complex system when English began to gain ground as a desirable language choice also for communication in less formal settings (Levey, 2008; Rodríguez García and Goría, 2021). The domains of languages were no longer so clear and code-switching emerged as a common strategy among the population (Kellermann, 2001; Moyer, 1993). We notice at this point the well-known transition from diglossia, to spoken diglossia (Fishman, 1967) to dilalia (Berruto, 2012) or diaglossia (Auer, 2005). Following the shift in the linguistic situation from a Spanish-speaking population to a policy of English-Only,³ the interest of linguists also shifted, giving attention to Yanito; the local mixed variety (Rodríguez García and Goría, 2021).

3.2. Code-switching and mixing in Gibraltar

Recent studies analyze the linguistic situation in Gibraltar as a linguistic continuum in which the code-switching variety Yanito plays a central role (Weston, 2013; Feijóo Rodríguez, 2015; Goría, 2021b; Rodríguez García, 2022; *in press*). Studying Yanito and the changes in its structure and functionality allows for a better understanding of the changes in the linguistic panorama of Gibraltar, therefore, authors have explored from different angles how code-switching reflects the process of language shift in the community.

Apparent-time analyses were carried out in order to determine changes in language use and in the structure and functionality of code-switching across the years; all of them underline considerable differences among generations (e.g., Weston, 2013; Goría, 2021b). Crucially, this distinction is also reflected in the preference for different code-mixing patterns. For the older generations,⁴ Spanish constitutes the dominant language and it serves as the matrix language in code-switching while English comes about mostly as insertion (Muysken, 2000) of single lexical items within an otherwise Spanish clause (Kellermann, 2001; Weston, 2013). The second generation corresponds to the most bilingual generation: conversations are mostly bilingual in English and Spanish; and code-switching takes the form of frequent alternations of English and Spanish in unplanned spoken discourse with simultaneous presence of extra-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching patterns (Feijóo Rodríguez, 2015; Weston, 2013). For the third and younger generations, English appears as the dominant language and matrix language in code-switching or code-mixing while Spanish comes mostly as patterns involving DMs and other types of peripheral elements (Goría, 2017; Rodríguez García, *in press*).

Previous studies highlighted that the process of language shift identified at community level has a strong influence on the types of code-switching or code-mixing observed in spontaneous discourse. While generations 1 and 2 seem to reveal a preference for alternation between English and Spanish, or at least a coexistence between alternation and insertion, in the third generation there is a remarkable preference for backflagging, i.e., the use of Spanish DMs, and other peripheral items into an otherwise English clause, while other types of mixing tend to disappear (Weston, 2013; Feijóo Rodríguez, 2015; Goría, 2017, 2021a; Rodríguez García, *in press*). Therefore, a link is identified between the emergence of a specific type of code-mixing and major changes occurring in the sociolinguistic scenario of Gibraltar, mainly due to ongoing language shift. For example, Goría (2021b) demonstrated this quantitatively by comparing patterns involving DMs, coordinating conjunctions, left dislocated elements and subordinating conjunction in different generations. This change is thus interpreted, building on Auer (1999, 2014), as a transition from a code-switching style based on the pragmatically meaningful alternation between English and Spanish, to a quasi-monolingual English style with sedimented use of Spanish DMs.

A better understanding of global processes involving Gibraltar's sociolinguistic scenario, and notably language shift, may thus provide a valid key to explain the dynamics observed at the discourse level. At the same time, the analysis of structural as well as functional features of single DMs involved in this process represents another important line of interpretation of the code-mixing patterns that characterize bilingual speech. The case study discussed in the following sections will thus attempt to reconcile both global and local motivations for bilingual DMs.

³ Common attempts have been made to enhance bilingualism in the territory (e.g., the opening of the Instituto Cervantes – between 2011 and 2015 – or internal political measures to increase the numbers of hours of Spanish in schools), however, those attempts did not last as long as expected, as the Instituto Cervantes closed its doors few years later and Brexit draws an even more uncertain situation. At the same time, factors such as globalization, the mobility of young people to the UK for professional and educational reasons, and minor accidents occurring at the border are reinforcing a “point of no return” in language shift towards English monolingualism, especially for younger generations.

⁴ Following Goría (2021a,b), the older generation or generation 1 includes people who were adults after the end of WWII and were, therefore, schooled before the reformation of the Gibraltar education system. Generation 2 or the middle generation, includes people who lived in Gibraltar during the blockade years (1969–1982), when contacts with Spain were kept to a minimum. Finally, generation 3 includes people who were born after the border re-opening. This study focuses indeed on this last generation and the subsequent one.

3.3. DMs in Gibraltar's code-mixing

Gibraltar represents the perfect scenario to study bilingual DMs in the process of language shift. As previously stated, new generations are showing a clear preference for the use of English as the main language of communication and Spanish elements are less present in speech and showing a preference for peripheral positions (Rodríguez García, 2022, *in press*, *under review*). In this paper we focus on Gibraltarian young adults (16–35 years old) who are speakers of English as L1.

In Goría's (2018) account of code-mixing, backflagging is the main bilingual strategy characterizing bilingual speech in Gibraltar's scenario. Three types of bilingual patterns involving DMs are identified. Two main patterns will be used here as the starting point for the analysis presented in the following section.

In the first case, a DM – or another type of clause-peripheral element – occurs as the first element in a major alternation between English and Spanish, which may be associated to different pragmatic values. Consider (1).

- (1)
Y SIEMPRE ESTAMOS JUNTAS and then I thought of her **MIRA** LE LLAMO A MERCY (Goría, 2017)
[And we are always together. And then I thought of her look I am gonna call Mercy]

In this passage, a major code-switch occurs, contextualizing the final clause as reported speech. Therefore, the switch between *mira* and the previous context is best explained by the sequential context in which it occurs. A similar case is represented by (2).

- (2)
ES UNA LÁSTIMA **PERO MIRA** hopefully people like you will serve Gibraltar well in that SENTIDO DE QUE we don't raise awareness (Goría, 2017)
[It's a pity but look hopefully people like you will serve Gibraltar well in that sense that we don't raise awareness]

As in the previous example, the cluster *pero mira* expresses a projecting function, as it anticipates an upcoming intervention, namely a contrastive statement, by the same speaker. However, while in (1) there is a correspondence between the new pragmatic context and the switch to Spanish initiated by the DM *mira*, in (2) this correspondence is less straightforward, because the DM occurs in a different language from the clause on which it has scope.

The second case is represented by those patterns where a DM is realized in a different language both from the previous and from the upcoming clause, as in (3).

- (3)
Clara Clara, Torino, she's from Torino. Go, go and **MIRA** go and ask for Clara

Unlike in the previous cases, switching of *mira* (“look”) in (3) cannot be related to any pragmatic or discursive motivation, and can only be interpreted as a pragmatically devoid sedimented behavior. Unlike (1) and (2), this case can be regarded as backflagging in Muysken's (2013) terms. Goría (2018, 2021a,b), in an apparent-time account, shows in fact that there is an increase in the frequency of this type of patterns in younger generations, also involving other peripheral items such as conjunctions, subordinators and left dislocations. Moreover, in Goría's data this pattern is clearly unidirectional and with very few exceptions is only found with Spanish DMs.

Put together, these two pieces of evidence show that the patterning of DMs in discourse follows the direction of language shift in Gibraltar. Simply put, younger generations are mostly characterized by the use of Spanish DMs in an otherwise quasi-monolingual English talk. This interpretation, however, leaves a number of open questions: while the general direction of code-mixing is in some way predictable from aspects of the global sociolinguistic scenario, how do the functions and patterning of single DMs interact with this picture? What is the role of functional explanations in such a model? To answer these questions, the following sections will be dedicated to the analysis of a single case study involving a fine-grained analysis of the DMs *bueno* and *well*.

4. *Bueno* and *well* in monolingual discourse

DMs are well-known for the multiple functions they serve in monolingual conversations. It is now commonplace to distinguish between interactional functions, aimed at regulating various aspects of the ongoing interaction e.g., turn-taking, holding and yielding, discourse-related functions, aimed at facilitating the sequential organization and structuring of units of talk, or managing discourse topics, and modal functions, related to the expression of the speaker's attitudes towards the propositional content of the utterance (see for an overview Fedriani and Sansò, 2017).

The DMs *bueno* and its English counterpart *well*, which are the object of the present case study, have been dealt with in analyses of monolingual discourse as polyfunctional items expressing both a connective and a modal function. In this section, we further explore the different functions ascribed to these DMs, in order to evaluate whether their functional features may contribute to explain their behavior in code-mixing. For this purpose, we rely primarily on the comprehensive studies of *bueno* and *well* by Pons Bordería (2003) and Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021), respectively.

4.1. The functions of *bueno*

Pons Bordería (2003, p. 221) highlights three specific functions for *bueno*: (a) formulative or reformulative functions; (b) agreement functions; and (c) disagreement functions. He then further connects these three functions to two broader areas of pragmatic meaning, namely connection and modality.

The formulative functionality is related to the organization of discourse and to the expression of the relationship between adjacent turns or units. Specifically, *bueno* expresses a reformulative, or repair, function, in that it serves both in monological and in dialogical sequences to modify part of the information introduced in the previous context; as for Dal Negro and Fiorentini (2014) – following Del Saz Rubio (2003) and Del Saz Rubio and Fraser (2003) – there are four main subtypes of reformulation, based on the way some propositional content is reformulated: expansion, compression, modification and reassessment. Consider examples (4) and (5):

- (4)
 J: [tiene] añooo/ casi y medio §
 P: § no/ dee- catorce meses §
 J: § () § C: § faltan dos -**bueno** fa- faltan cuatro / [para dieciocho meses]
 [G68.A2+ G68.B1, 188] (Pons Bordería, 2003, p. 221)
 [J: and she is one year, almost one year and a half
 P: no, fourteen months
 J: § () § C: that is two well four months before eighteen]
- (5)
 E: desde pequeño él ha estado en M./ interno
 L: ah
 E: luego cuando vino a Valencia †/ **bueno** cuando acabó el Cou/// al colegio que está ahora ()
 [L.15.A2, 74] (Pons Bordería, 2003, p. 221)
 [E: since he was a baby he was in M. inside
 L: ah
 E: then when he came to Valencia well when he finished Cou at the school where he is now]

In (4) *bueno* modifies and corrects the first formulation, by providing the correct amount of time, while in (5) its function is rather to expand the previous formulation and to provide additional details.

Furthermore, *bueno* can also express modal functions, especially in dialogical contexts, as a marker of agreement, as in (6):

- (6)
 A: un telegrama † siempre es malo / lo que dice siempre es malo §
 D: § siempre es malo §
 A: § puede ser más malo o menos malo/ pero siempre es malo §
 D: § sí sí sí /// bueno §
 A: § vale → [hasta la vista=]
 [H.25.A1, 275] (Pons Bordería, 2003, p. 221)
 [A: a telegram is always bad. What it says is always bad
 D: it is always bad
 A: it can be more or less bad, but it is always bad
 D: yes yes yes well
 A: well see you]

A more complex case is that in which *bueno* is used to express ‘hedged disagreement’ (Pons Bordería, 2003), i.e., where *bueno* occurs in a move that is in contrast with a previous statement; consider (7):

- (7)
 M: Yo m-en ropa me gasto mucho/ a mí me gusta ir muy bien vestida/ Que en ropa me gasto mucho
 A: Bueno/ pero nos lo hacemos nosotros y no es como ir a [una butik]
 [S.65.A1, 531] (Pons Bordería, 2003, p. 222)
 [M: I spend a lot on clothes I like to be properly dressed I spend a lot on clothes
 A: well but we do it ourselves and it is not like going to a boutique]

It can be argued that in this example *bueno* has both a connecting function, as it links A's intervention to the previous context, and it also works as a marker of (partial) agreement, thus hedging the contrast expressed by *pero*. The value is also labelled ‘concessive’ by Pons Bordería (2003).

Collocations of *bueno* with contrastive markers, and in particular with *pero* are highly frequent in Spanish. *Pero bueno* is the third most frequent collocation involving *bueno* in the EsTenTen18 corpus (Kilgarriff and Renau, 2013), with a relative frequency of 13.16/million tokens. A further example from written discourse is given below in (8).

- (8)
 No obstante si te quieres complicar la vida puedes leer el manual que incluye el juego que hará que una mecánica tan sencilla requiera de una ingeniera aeroespacial para poder comprenderla... y no te resolverá ni una sola de las dudas que te puedan surgir </s> <s> **Pero bueno** para eso está google. (EsTenTen18)
 [However if you want to complicate your life you can read the manual included with the game which will make that such a simple mechanics require an aerospace engineer to understand it ... and will not solve a single doubt that may arise </s> <s> But well that's what google is for.]

As for its formal features, it is important to highlight that *bueno* does not have a fixed position in the utterance, but it often appears in an initial position both in a utterance and in a turn. *Bueno* also has the capacity to appear in isolation or combined with other markers of negation or affirmation, adversative or explicative, among others. Regarding the prosody, this marker can also appear in stressed and intonated positions, with different intonation contours co-indexing specific functions (Pons Bordería, 2003, p. 225).

4.2. The functions of well

The multiple functions of *well* in monolingual discourse have been extensively documented (see Schiffrin, 1985, 1987; Jucker, 1993; Blakemore, 2002; among others). Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021), in particular, define three possible functional areas for *well*, based on the type of unit in which the DM occurs, following the model of discourse proposed by the Val.Es.Co group (Briz et al., 2003; among many others); in a nutshell, despite the multiple possible positions of *well* within utterances and turns, the marker shows a preference for being used in initial positions. However, there are differences as to the type of unit in which *well* occurs.

While we refer to Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021) for a detailed analysis of *well* in English, we will limit ourselves here to summarize its main functions, which by hypothesis may play a role in our analysis of bilingual speech. Namely Pons Bordería and Fischer distinguish between.

- (a) the “formulation plus modality area” that is represented by tendentially monological acts and subacts;
- (b) the “interactional area” that represents initiative or reactive interventions within a dialogic sequence;
- (c) the “wider scope area” that is constituted by dialogues and discourses.

We will focus here more extensively on functions pertaining to (a) and (b), because they are more directly related to the analysis proposed in the next sections.

The most common function identified by Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021) for *well* at the subact level, which would roughly correspond to a sentence in written discourse, is that of a repair marker. As also pointed out with *bueno* in §4.1, this covers the various types and (sub)functions of repair which include mitigation, reformulation, self-repair, or reorientation of speaker's attention. See examples:

- (9) it has a lot of. **Well** it has a few... (Svartvik, 1980, p. 176 in Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021, p. 111)

- (10) I was on er what happened after that er when we was er, winter time in particular, er we was short of work, er you see, er **well** er the the waggons didn't get er damaged so much because they was er they was extensively but [...] (Nottingham Oral History Project: interview (Leisure). 2 parties, 147 utts, in Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021, p. 112)

Well may also function at the act level as a marker of modality, to stress or hedge the propositional content of the unit to which it is attached.

- (11) <623 A>*((it))*^doesn't pattern with :anything
<624 B>*^yes_* <625 B> **well** that's the whole :trouble ((you ^s=ee_g_)) (Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021, p. 113)

In cases in which *well* appears at the initial position of a reactive intervention, it can serve to express agreement/disagreement, insufficiency of information, or reinforcement. When *well* appears at the initial position of an initiative intervention, a dialogue or a discourse it can serve the function of topic connective, topic change or framer.

At the interactional level *well* may occur, in a dialog, in different types of responsive moves, to express agreement, disagreement or simply uptake or initiate an intervention, as in the example (12) below:

- (12) A: [D_I you are David, aren't you?
B: yes, I am D_I]
A: [D_I **well** David let's get started (Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021, p. 114)

It must furthermore be noted that, while the initial position, at the various levels, is more common in Pons Bordería and Fischer's (2021) account, *well* may also occur in independent position to express interactional functions, mostly agreement and disagreement.

4.3. A comparison between bueno and well

From the overview presented in §4.1 and §4.2, functional parallels between *bueno* and *well* can be easily identified. At the discourse level, both markers are associated with discourse organizing operations such as the expression of repair (and thus various types of reformulations). Modal functions of both *bueno* and *well* involve the illocutionary modification of agreement and disagreement moves, and thus they must be included among stressing and/or hedging devices. Finally, at the interactional level, both markers appear to be used at the beginning of responsive moves, either as markers themselves of agreement and disagreement (under different prosodical contours), or to signal uptake.

A preference for initial position both in interventions (turns) and utterances is also highlighted for both counterparts. This initial position is of special interest for comparative studies, since both markers appear to have undergone a process of grammaticalization that favors their discourse-structuring and make them especially prominent with interactive functions such as turn-taking in the case of *bueno* (García Vizcaíno and Martínez-Cabeza, 2005, p. 88). The initial position of the marker in its relation to a determined function is well explained in Pons Bordería (2003) and Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021).

In a comparative analysis of *bueno* and *well*, García Vizcaíno and Martínez-Cabeza (2005, p. 88) state the following: while both markers appear to function in the same domains of social interaction (namely, illocutionary, discourse, participation and

stylistic), they show some similarities, but also differences in their use. As for the similarities, the most frequent function is transition: continue, start and conclude ideas, statements, or conversations in a less abrupt manner; i.e., discourse-structuring contributing to the social interaction. This points thus clearly to the connective function identified in the previously mentioned studies. Beyond transition, it is found that both markers also share other functions: attenuation, self-correction and direct speech. This can be referred to the stressing/hedging functions identified for both markers by Pons Bordería (2003) and Pons Bordería and Fischer (2021).

However, differences between *well* and *bueno* are also found by García Vizcaíno and Martínez-Cabeza (2005). In their discussion they argue that “*well* is more used as an attenuation strategy than *bueno*” (p. 87), that is as a hedge in the terminology adopted so far. In their corpus-based analysis, the attenuation function is found three times more often in *well* than in *bueno* in disagreements. *Bueno* in their data is interpreted more often as an expletive, expressive and acceptance marker.

To conclude, the existence of a core of formal and functional features that are shared between the two scrutinized DMs is an important pre-condition for the study of code-mixing, because it allows for accountability in a labovian sense (see e.g., Labov, 1972), this means we can model *bueno* and *well* as alternative ways of saying the same thing. This provides the basis for the quantitative analysis carried out in the next sections and leads us to the following research questions that will be better detailed throughout §6: What happens in a contact situation where speakers have free choice between DMs of either language? What factors may influence the choice between *bueno* and *well* in bilingual discourse?

5. Research questions, data and methods

5.1. Research question and scope

In this article we aim to evaluate the impact of different factors in the production of other-language DMs in Gibraltar's English-Spanish code-mixing. More specifically, and given the general tendencies of bilingual speech in Gibraltar discussed in §3, we will focus on the generation of young adults, who are generally English-dominant. We will thus ask what factors correlate with the use of Spanish DMs in code-mixing in predominantly English discourses, by discussing a single case study on the Spanish DM *bueno* and its counterpart *well*.

As discussed in §3, the code-mixing style of young Gibraltarians is best described by Muysken's (2013) notion of back-flagging, which normally has the form of an insertion of Spanish DMs (and other peripheral items) in an English clause. Goría (2021a,b), in fact, detects a high frequency of this pattern in the speech of young Gibraltarians. However, he does not explain what formal, functional or sociolinguistic aspects of the elements involved facilitate its emergence and diffusion. We contend, therefore, that a better understanding of the behavior of DMs in contact situation can be achieved if we systematically take into account multiple factors in the analysis.

While part of this enquiry is relevant for code-mixing research, as we are seeking to explain the emergence of particular patterns in code-mixing, it may also shed more light on the behavior of DMs themselves: by adopting a fine-grained analysis of the contexts and functions with which Spanish DM *bueno* and its English counterpart *well* are used, we will be able to identify which functions and contexts of the scrutinized DMs are more relevant for bilingual use, and which ones are instead more associated to monolingual discourse.

5.2. Data

The data for this article comes from a series of focus groups collected by Author 1 during 2020 and 2021 following both an online (Zoom) and a face-to-face methodology (in public schools⁵ during May 2021). The focus groups consist of three young-adult participants, aged 16–35, with a very close or familiar relationship. In order to obtain more natural and spontaneous data, the researcher was just present at the beginning and at the end of the focus group's conversation. During the focus group (with an approx. duration of 30–45 min), participants discuss various topics with relatives and friends following a guide for the conversation⁶ that contains topics, pictures, statements and a game. Participants are distributed through age groups to account for differences: group A (16–21), group B (22–28), group C (29–35) and mixed groups with people from different age

⁵ Given the restraints on fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic, Author 1 opted for an online corpus-based methodology with focus groups of three people each. As it was difficult to recruit young participants (16–21 years), the online corpus was supplemented with data gathered in face-to-face interactions in May 2021 in three public high-schools – Westside School, Bayside School and Gibraltar College – following the same focus-group methodology.

⁶ The guideline comprises three sections. Section one contains different topics: from informal ones (childhood memories, funny anecdotes and holidays) to more formal ones (COVID-19 and political measures, education, job opportunities and political response to the pandemic). Section two consists of visual and written prompts dealing with cultural (cultural festivities, gastronomy, etc.), linguistic (Yanito as a local variety or multilingualism in Gibraltar) and political aspects (the border, the Crown, politicians, etc.). Here, again, the formality of the topic changes according to the pictures and the situations the participants describe. Emotions such as nostalgia, happiness or anger appear often and impact the participants' choices for conversation. Finally, part three contains a mystery game with a series of bilingual cues. This part makes it possible to observe how participants communicate while playing, as well as how they react to bilingual input. Overall, the focus groups make it possible to gather data that allows a close analysis of code-switching and its functionality; namely the well-known characterizations of situational, metaphorical and conversational switching (description extracted from Rodríguez García, under review).

groups. After finishing the conversation, participants are asked to complete an online questionnaire that collects socio-demographic information, as well as individual participants' views on language use and competence.

The methodology allows to account for a more informal and relaxed speech with a less clear influence of a “third party”, offering more natural data of a population that has not been researched in depth yet. Although, as we previously mentioned, we expect a lot of English in the conversations, the dialogic data and the relaxed speech allows to explore the use of peripheral elements from a dialogical and turn-taking perspective. Furthermore, the use of a guide for the conversations allows to observe changes in different styles and levels of formality while getting a more structured and comparable speech. A total of 16 focus groups (48 participants) constitutes the corpus.

Despite the undeniable loss of Spanish in the conversations of the youngest speakers, alternation between languages and, specially, insertions of Spanish elements and lexicalized items within an English clause are still present in the corpus. A closer look into conversations allows to observe greater variation between speakers and the groups. What seems to be consistent in most of the interviews is the insertion of peripheral elements and the directionality of this switch: Spanish elements inserted within an English clause, and not the other way around. This has already been attested in previous studies. As Weston (2013) and Goría (2021a) pointed out, the repetitive use of Spanish markers such as *bueno* is something that characterizes the discourse of younger generations.

Furthermore, a closer look at the survey shows the diversity of the population (e.g., religion, background, mobility, employment situation, or level of education). Regarding language use at home, English is the most widespread language (45.5%), followed by Yanito (32.3%) and Spanish (12.1%), as well as other languages (especially Arabic by 2%). Participants also report high or very high proficiency in English, medium or high proficiency in Yanito and medium or low proficiency in Spanish.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several difficulties had to be faced during data collection. Specially, one of the biggest challenges was to access the community and to reduce the influence of the researcher. As a result of individual and collective collaborations and efforts, it was possible to conclude this corpus in December 2021. The corpus constitutes the first exhaustive corpus on Gibraltar's speech based on focus groups. It allows for a deeper study of the use of the local language in semi-guided interactions, in which the formality of the topics and the settings are altered by using a guide for the conversation that enables to observe Yanito in different situations and in its relation to the expression of emotions.

The data presented in this article is obtained from a sample of 8 focus groups, which corresponds to a total of 24 participants.

5.3. Methods

For the present study, the sample was transcribed, annotated, and analyzed in search of cases of *bueno* using the transcription and annotation software ELAN. For the analysis of a total of about 60,000 words, we found 160 cases of *bueno* as a DM. Group A4 was also excluded from the quantitative analysis due to the lack of clear cases of bilingual uses of *bueno* (2 instances of monolingual uses and 2 of unclear pronunciation) (see Table 1). Of course, cases in which *bueno* serves as an adjective ('good') were identified and excluded from the analysis, then we classified the occurrences attending to the structural bilingual patterns mentioned in §3.3. For this purpose, we rely on qualitative and quantitative methods. First of all, from a qualitative perspective, we consider and count cases of *bueno* and *well* to explore their functions and observe differences. Later on, for the quantitative part of the article, we explore the use of *bueno* in bilingual discourse as opposed to the use of *well* in order to observe what factors correlate with the use of either DM in Gibraltar's bilingual speech.

Table 1

Distribution of focus groups (sample for analysis).

Age group A (16–21 years)	Age Group B (22–28 years)	Age Group C (29–35 years)	Mixed group
A1	B1	C1	BA1
A4 ^a	B2	C4	BC1

^a Group A4 was not included in the quantitative analysis due to the lack of clear cases of bilingual *bueno*.

Most important for the purpose of this article, since our focus is to describe the tendencies that most saliently characterize young adults' speech, who are in most cases English-dominant, our analysis takes as a starting point the fact that English is established as the base language of interaction. Building on previous works (Goría, 2017, 2021b; or Rodríguez García, 2022, in press), we assume that the most common pattern in code-mixing is backflagging – i.e., the insertion of Spanish DMs in an otherwise English clause – and that this behavior tends to be unidirectional; we almost never find English DMs attached to Spanish clauses (see Goría, 2021a). For this reason, we will concentrate on the choice between *bueno* and *well* in English clauses, while Spanish clauses have been excluded from the count.

Furthermore, since our major focus is to expand the existing knowledge of DMs in the variety used by younger generations, and since most of our examples actually belong to type 3 in Goría's (2018) terms, in the present paper we propose a new methodology that allows us to analyze in greater detail these patterns, without a priori excluding the others from the account. Therefore, we further elaborate on the categorization of code-mixing presented above, by breaking down the relevant patterns into a number of theoretically unrelated linguistic factors for which the corpus has been annotated. Moreover, we also added annotation of the speaker and of the focus group as a possible random factor that may influence the use of DMs. An overview of the categories considered is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Summary of the variables considered for quantitative analysis.

Variable	Values
Language context	monolingual; bilingual
DM	<i>bueno</i> (and clusters); <i>well</i> (and clusters)
Position	initial; medial; final; independent
Discourse context	monological; dialogical
Cluster size	1, 2 or 3 words
Focus group	A1, A4, B1, B2, BA1, BC1, C1, C4
Participant	A003, A013, A014, A015, A016, A017, A018, B002, B003, B004, B007, B008, B009, B010, B011, B015, B016, C001, C002, C003, C013, C017, C018, C019

As for the first variable, we coded as *monolingual* those instances where the DM occurs in a fully monolingual turn, and as *bilingual* all the occurrences where another language is present – including the DM itself or another element –, see examples (13)–(16):

- (13) monolingual English
because ehm: (.) yanito is the main language for: a Gibraltarian person really is like a mi- (0.3) we're obviously mixing words (0.5) from (0.4) like (.) eh English and Spanish (.) and we put them together in a sentence or: (0.5) **well** yeah that's really it
- (14) monolingual Spanish
SI SI (.) PORQUE **BUENO** EHM: DE VERDAD ((laughter)) ES ES BARATO ¿NO? PAGAS COMO CINCUENTA LIBRAS Y YA ESTÁ yeah yeah
[yes yes because **well** actually ((laughter)) it's cheap isn't it? you pay like 50 pounds and that's it yeah yeah]
- (15) bilingual with English DM
oh he's got a gun in his hand doesn't he / **well** PARECE QUE he's killed him (self)
[oh he's got a gun in his hand doesn't he well it looks like he's killed himself]
- (16) bilingual with Spanish DM
A018 (0.3) tsk really we didn't go anywhere I just went eh
A016 home
A018 **BUENO**: I just went a weekend in Spain

Position refers to the position of the DM in the turn and with respect to the discourse units. This was identified adopting a prosodic criterion: we considered if a major pause (>0.2 s) preceded and/or followed instances of *bueno* and *well*, and if the DM was in correspondence of prosodic cues signaling turn conclusion. Following previous work on DMs and the relationship between the position of DMs and their function, we assigned four possible values: initial, medial, final, and independent (Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021, p. 103); see (17)–(20):

- (17) Initial
BUENO I ff. I mean I would say QUE LA VICEPRESIDENTA LO: LO MATÓ because she received that email from him saying that it was all over
[well I ff. I mean I would say that the vice-president killed him because she received that email from him saying that it was all over]
- (18) medial
Tell us more about **BUENO** you mentioned to me QUE: they're contacting you for:
[tell us more about well you mentioned to me that they're contacting you for]
- (19) final
It's hard to shoot yourself ¿NO? on the head or **BUENO**
[it's hard to shoot yourself right? On the head or well]
- (20) independent
B002 SÍ EN EL central service
B003 **BUENO**
[B002 yes in the central service
B003 well]

Discourse context allows us to distinguish between “monological uses” where a DM is used to structure a complex intervention from the same speaker, as in (21) below, and “dialogical uses”, where the DM appears in correspondence of a transition from one speaker to the other, as in (22). It must also be noted that this methodology enables us to use an objective parameter to distinguish between different macro-functions of DMs, and namely between pragmatic functions on the one hand, aimed at managing operations at the discourse level, such as turn taking/seeking and turn yielding, and textual/discourse-oriented functions, aimed at internally structuring the turn, contextualizing self-initiated repair, and so on; see (21)–(22):

- (21) monological
stay home and play with my dad (0.5) **BUENO** (.) when
it's my dad's weekend (0.3) that's it \
- (22) dialogical
A018 tsk really we didn't go anywhere I just went eh
A016 home ((laughter))
A018 **BUENO**: I just went a weekend in Spain

Size refers to the number of words that form the switch, and allows to account for the presence of collocations that include *bueno* and *well*. We may thus distinguish between cases in which a DM occurs alone (e.g., as a single word switch), as in most of the previous examples, and cases where it is part of a cluster of elements, as in (23)⁷ below.

- (23) three-word cluster
SI PERO BUENO BUENO it is what it is:: it is what it is:: ((laughter)) there's more
 [yes but well well it is what it is it is what it is ((laughter)) there's more]

6. Results: *Bueno* and *well* in bilingual speech

6.1. A general overview of the distribution of *bueno* and *well*

An analysis of the patterns involving *bueno* and *well* in the corpus shows a similar number of occurrences for monolingual discourse, but substantial differences in the use of the two DMs in bilingual speech. We considered, first of all, the overall distribution of the two DMs in monolingual and bilingual contexts, which is given in Table 3.

Table 3
 Distribution of *bueno* and *well* in monolingual and bilingual contexts.

	monolingual	Bilingual	total
<i>bueno</i>	48	108	156
<i>Well</i>	46	5	51

As it can be seen, *bueno* is three times more frequent than *well* in the corpus. Importantly, even if the two DMs occur with a similar frequency in monolingual contexts, *bueno* appears to be used more frequently in code-mixing than in monolingual Spanish, while uses of *well* appear to be limited to monolingual English turns, with only five exceptions. Furthermore, it must be argued that of the five bilingual examples involving *well*, only two can be considered as proper instances of code-mixing (see also e.g., example 15 above).

- (24) SÍ SÍ Y NO TENÍA- TENÍAMOS QUE PAGAR ¿O NO? (.) **well** they were like eh two pounds ¿NO?
 [yes yes and (he) didn't ha- we didn't have to pay right? well they were like eh two pounds right?]
- (25) QUE TENGO HAMBRE Y ME QUIERO IR A LA TIENDA ((laugh)) **well** everything is closed
 [that I'm hungry and I want to go to the shop ((laugh)) well everything is closed]

The others are fragments of unclear interpretation, as they do not come immediately followed by a bilingual switch.

- (26) **well** we: CAS(1) NO NO stop it ¿NO? wait for the (0.5) ESTO
 [well we almost don't don't stop it right? Wait for the that]
- (27) A017 LOS Fridays
 A016 bank holiday
 A018 we don't have school
 A017 no work either (.) **well** some people SÍ PERO
 A018 Sí
 [A017 on Fridays
 A016 bank holiday
 A018 we don't have school
 A017 no work either well some people yes but
 A018 yes]

Interestingly, the use of *well* in examples (24), (25) and (27) occurs in a medial position and it is preceded by a longer stop or a laugh. This is remarkable if we consider that, as we will see in the next section, the medial position is the only one that favors the use of *well* instead of *bueno*. Here, as attested in the monolingual functions of this marker (see §4.2), *well* works as a repair marker within a turn and it serves to reformulate the preceding statement.

An aspect that deserves particular attention in our view is that switches of *bueno* in several cases seem to be related to the management of locally relevant activities within the focus group. For example, in (28) the speaker is initially reading the next conversation topic from the guidelines (GCSEs, university, jobs, etcetera). In the subsequent move, initiated by *bueno* he then

⁷ In this case this has been considered as a three-word pattern because we did not consider the repetition of *bueno*. Repetitions of DMs were counted as one and no cluster was counted when there was a pause longer than (0.2) between the words.

claims the floor for himself and starts giving his own contribution to the discussion. Therefore, we must consider that another possible rationale for the use of bilingual discourse markers could be due to the need to mark task-specific activities:

- (28)
 gcses university jobs border etcetera **BUENO** i'll start i'll start with this one because to be honest with you / (.) we're in a pickle right now and (.) if we're talking specifically about Gibraltar / [...] eh we've got absolutely no clue what's happening right now because (.) we tend to normally (.) go with what England decides

The distribution of *bueno* and *well* in the corpus resembles the one identified in other studies discussing code-mixing in young Gibraltarians (Weston, 2013; Goría, 2021b; Rodríguez García, in press), whose informal speech is in general described as monolingual English, with frequent code-mixing at the clause periphery. Even though clear differences between groups can be identified, the use of the DM *bueno* in bilingual discourse seems to be a common element in all the groups analyzed.

Based on these observations, we may now move to our major question, asking what are the contexts that favor the use of *bueno* in bilingual clauses. A quantitative analysis has been carried out, considering the frequencies of *bueno* and *well* in English clauses; Spanish monolingual clauses with *bueno* have been excluded from this part of the study. In this context, *discourse marker* represents the dependent variable, whose values are *bueno*, thus resulting in a bilingual clause, and *well* resulting in a monolingual clause. We compared the relative frequencies of *bueno* and *well* in English clauses, according to each of the predictors discussed in §5.3; namely: turn position; discourse context; presence and size of clusters; focus group; and participant. The results are presented and reviewed respectively in §6.2, §6.3 and §6.4.

6.2. Turn position and discourse context

As discussed in the methods, in order to avoid an arbitrary evaluation of pragmatic functions expressed by *bueno* in each context and following previous work on the position and functionality of DMs (Pons Bordería, 2003; Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021), our analysis relies only on formal factors, namely the position of *bueno* within the turn and the discursive context in which it occurs; distributions are given in Tables 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 4

Frequencies of *bueno* and *well* in different contexts.

	Initial	Final	medial	independent
<i>Well</i>	29	1	20	1
<i>bueno</i>	84	4	17	3

The distribution presented in Table 4 shows that switching to *bueno* occurs more frequently in turn-initial and turn-medial position; however, while in the first context bilingual patterns involving *bueno* are almost 2.9 times more frequent than monolingual alternatives involving *well*, in clause-medial contexts they are observed with a similar frequency. Final and independent positions are very low in frequency and do not allow for quantitative evaluation; in fact, a Chi-square test reveals that the distribution is statistically significant but with a relatively high value of $P(N = 159, p = .0177)$. Better results are given by using instead Fisher's exact test only considering data for initial and medial contexts ($N = 150, p = .0022$). This leads us to conclude that clause-initial contexts are indeed a preferred spot for switching to *bueno*, probably because these often correspond to interpersonal uses of *bueno*, e.g., for turn-taking, while in turn-medial position *bueno* typically introduces self-initiated repair. The initial position of *bueno* stated by Pons Bordería (2003) for monolingual discourse seems to be also the prominent position in bilingual data.

This position is especially linked to the functions of turn-taking or holding and topic-shift; functions salient in initial positions (Pons Bordería, 2003; Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021). As can be seen in the following examples, *bueno* serves as a mechanism to organize the conversation and interventions, i.e., it allows to hold the turn and organize the conversation (see example 29). Furthermore, this marker also serves as a means to accept the previous contribution, conclude the previous topic and shift to a new one (see example 30):

- (29)
 B004 okay so first one is "your relationship (.) friendship how did everything start?"
 (0.3)
 B004 **BUENO** I'll start and then you can just (jump in)

- (30)
 B002 ¿NO TE ACUERDAS DE SAM?
 B003 NO ME ACUERDO DE NADIE
 (0.1)
 B002 **BUENO** "a funny moment together"
 [B002 Don't you remember Sam?
 B003 I don't remember anyone]
 B002 well "a funny moment together]

A particular type of topic shift is also represented by cases in which *bueno* introduces a new activity within the focus group. This is what happens in (30) above, where *a funny moment together* is the name of the track provided for conversation in the guidelines sheet.

Moving to the next variable, Table 5 shows that *bueno* occurs with greater frequency than *well*, both in monological and in dialogical contexts. Dialogical contexts seem to be particularly associated with the use of *bueno*. Fisher's exact test reveals, though, that the distribution has a high P value ($p = .0623$) and is therefore hardly significant.

Table 5
Frequencies of *bueno* and *well* in monological and dialogical contexts.

	monological	Dialogical
<i>Well</i>	28	23
<i>Bueno</i>	42	66

However, from a qualitative perspective, we may add that high frequency of *bueno* in dialogical contexts reinforces the idea of its association with organizational and turn-taking purposes. Many examples in the corpus fall into the category of initial and dialogical (58 out of the 66 examples). In (31) we provide another example of how *bueno* serves organizational and turn-holding purposes in dialogical settings.

- (31)
- B007: six pictures there AH NO HAY MÁS AQUÍ
 B008: there's more
 B007: **BUENO** we'll work our way round quick EN PLAN quick fire round
 [...]
- [B007 six pictures ah no there are more here
 B008 there's more
 B007 well we'll we'll work our way round quick like quick fire round]

In dialogical contexts, *bueno* is also used as a strategy to organize discourse in highly competitive sequences, e.g., when the internet connection does not seem to work and participants have to reaffirm their role as conversation leaders to ensure the flow of the conversation, see example (32) below:

- (32) C002 girls how did we?: ((phone falls)) ay my phone!
 C003 okay **BUENO** let's start
 C001 I don't wanna touch my phone (better) and I've got the questions MIRA EN EL laptop
 C002 Y YO Y YO my laptop is ((problems with the connection)) (0.8) so we met at school ¿NO?
 C003 **BUENO** let's: (0.8) ¿QUÉ DICES?
 C002 we met in school:::!!
 C003 **BUENO ESPÉRATE** let's go through the first eh (.) section [...]
- [C002 girls how did we? ((phone falls)) ay my phone!
 C003 okay well let's start
 C001 I don't wanna touch my phone (better) and I've got the questions look on the laptop
 C002 and I and I my laptop is ((problems with the connection)) so we met at school didn't we?
 C003 well let's what are you saying?
 C002 we met in school!
 C003 well wait let's go through the first eh section]

As can be seen, speaker C003 initially tries to organize the task by formally starting the next activity, but due to internet connection problems, she fails to synchronize with other participants. So, as C003 gives a start to the activity (*bueno, let's start*), C001 signals a problem with her phone and C002 – after signaling a similar problem – starts the narration of how they met (*we met at school*). C003 at this point fails to understand this move, and tries again to start the activity (*bueno let's*). As C002 repeats her first move, she uses *bueno* once again to call the interlocutors' attention and asks for a proper start of the activity (*bueno esperate, let's go through the first section*).

6.3. Multi-word units

As can be seen from Table 6, the presence of clusters involving *bueno* and *well* does not seem to skew the global patterning of the DMs in bilingual clauses; the distribution, in fact, is not statistically significant and the greater number of clusters involving *bueno* seems to merely reflect its greater token frequency over its English counterpart *well*.

Table 6
Frequency distributions of clusters involving *bueno* and *well*.

	1 word	2 words	3 or more words
<i>Well</i>	40	5	1
<i>Bueno</i>	81	21	6

However, if we focus on the clusters involved in code-mixing, two qualitative observations must be added to this picture in our view. Consider [Table 7](#).

Table 7
Clusters involving *bueno* and *well* in bilingual discourse.

bueno	Cluster	frequency	
2-word clusters	pero bueno	5	
	pues bueno	4	
	sí bueno	2	
	bueno vamos	2	
	bueno no	2	
	bueno sí	2	
	bueno espérate	1	
	espérate bueno	1	
	bueno entonces	1	
	no bueno	1	
	>2-word clusters	bueno es que	1
		sí pero bueno	1
		bueno por empezar	1
		bueno espérate te acuerdas	1
		bueno así es	1
bueno entonces comida ^a		1	
Well	cluster	frequency	
2-word clusters	oh well	2	
	well yeah	2	
	yeah well	1	
3-word clusters	so well yeah	1	

^a This example was included – even if it does not represent a proper cluster of discourse markers – because *comida* “food” here is a left dislocated element which sets the topic of the upcoming sentence. Therefore, it does have a discourse-oriented function and represents an utterance modifier in [Matras's \(1998\)](#) terms.

For an analysis of DMs, frequency in code-mixing may reveal what collocations are more accessible in production. We observe, for example, that some of the types occurring in code-mixing represent lexicalized chunks such as *pero bueno*: a corpus search performed on the esTenTen18 corpus ([Kilgarriff and Renau, 2013](#)) reveals that this collocation is the third most frequent of all collocations involving *bueno*, with a relative frequency of 13.16/million tokens. The combination *pero bueno* appears in all positions in the corpus: initial, medial, final, and independent. It is more often found in final position, with even more cases in bilingual than in monolingual discourse. As argued in §4.1, its function is that of hedging a negative statement contained in the previous context; consider (33).

(33)

B008 you see the edge of Tarifa TAMBIÉN
B007 AHÍ ESTÁ the edge of Tarifa: we've got the stadium now there although
(0.1) the block of flats has just (.) sort of (.) cut the scenery **PERO BUENO**
B008 yeah

[B008 you see the edge of Tarifa as well

B007 there you go the edge of Tarifa: we've got the stadium now there although the block of flats has just sort of cut
the scenery but well

B008 yeah]

In this example, *pero bueno* reduces the negative evaluation contained in the preceding clause (*the block of flats has just sort of cut the scenery*). Since no subsequent move is provided by the same speaker, *pero bueno* here also has the function of closing B007's turn and leaving the floor open. Since English *well* does not have a similar function, nor any of its collocations, we can argue that multiword units with idiomatic meaning ([Backus, 2003](#)) provide a relevant context for the use of other-language DMs. Data is, however, less clear for other collocations and a thorough comparison of the frequencies observed in the Gibraltar corpus with monolingual Spanish data is still a desideratum.

6.4. Conversation and participant

Conversation and participant were considered as independent variables in order to assess whether there are significant differences in the use of *bueno* and *well* in different groups and in different speakers. Consider Table 8.

Table 8
Frequencies of *bueno* and *well* in the 7 focus groups considered ($X^2 = 37,65,235,719$; $p < 0,001$).

	A1	B1	B2	BA1	BC1	C1	C4
Bueno	9	8	10	21	12	30	18
Well	18	0	10	3	8	6	1

As shown, there are statistically significant differences between the seven groups considered. Preference for bilingual patterns over monolingual one is found in 5 out of 7 groups: only group A1 displays a greater frequency of monolingual patterns, and the two are equally frequent in B2. A preference for the use of monolingual *well* is just observed in A1, the younger speakers of the sample. However, a detailed analysis of the participants' use of *well* and *bueno* offers us more clues (see Table 9).

Table 9
Frequencies of *bueno* and *well* by speaker.

		Bueno	well
A1	A016	1	3
	A017	0	7
	A018	8	8
B1	B002	2	0
	B003	1	0
	B004	5	0
B2	B009	6	5
	B010	2	2
	B011	2	3
BA1	A003	1	0
	B007	14	2
	B008	6	1
BC1	C013	1	3
	B015	8	4
	B016	3	1
C1	C001	3	0
	C002	6	5
	C003	21	1
C4	C018	1	0
	C019	10	0
	C017	7	0

Table 9 shows that while all groups – except for A1 and B2 – show a preference for *bueno* over *well* in an English clause, the situation is not as straightforward when considering the frequency for each speaker separately. Thus, the greater frequency of *well* in group A1 must be associated only to two speakers of this group, A016 and A017, as A018 appears to alternate between *bueno* and *well* with the same frequency. More in general, we may find a distinction between speakers who almost categorically produce bilingual patterns with *bueno*, with very few or no instances of *well*, and more balanced speakers who actually show an alternation between the two patterns. In our view, this aspect of variation should be taken into account more seriously in future analyses, as it could represent an effect of different linguistic habits existing within the age class considered.

If we look in more detail at groups BA1, C1, and C4, which contain the greatest number of instances of *bueno*, the speakers producing more instances of *bueno* are precisely the speakers assuming the role of the organizer or leader of the conversation and the ones changing from one task to another one. In the case of C4, both C019 and C017 seem to assume this role in multiple occasions. The same can also be said about other focus groups (BC1, B2 or A1). During the conversations, both the urge to go through internet connection problems (see example 32) and the need to finish the tasks without losing time (see example 31) prompt the need for a well-organized speech. In §4.1, we discussed the value of *bueno* as discourse organizer in monolingual conversations and it appears that for a Zoom and task-oriented conversation type, the discourse marker *bueno* is prominent in this function among Gibraltarian young adults.

Regarding individual variation, no significant similarities can be found among speakers using *bueno* more frequently than *well*, since they show different experiences abroad, different mother tongues, and different socio-demographic backgrounds,

as well as different gender. However, it is interesting to observe that the speaker showing the greatest use of *bueno* (C003) is a woman who has been living outside Gibraltar for 10 years now. The same holds true for speaker B007 who was also living abroad by the time the focus group was done. It is interesting to point to this fact, because it does not seem to be a condition for the use of bilingual DMs to be from a specific group, gender, social class, or even to be living in Gibraltar. It seems that the use of this bilingual marker has more to do with the relationship between participants and the discursive functions in conversations.

7. Discussion and conclusion

Based on previous studies, we assumed that code-mixing of young adults in Gibraltar is best described by Muysken's notion of *backflagging*, and is thus saliently characterized by systematic use of Spanish DMs in an otherwise English clause (see also Weston, 2013; Goría, 2021a,b; Rodríguez García, 2022, in press). However, instead of focusing on the whole class of DM in order to detect global tendencies, in this study we explored the patterns of two quasi-synonymous DMs in order to provide a finer-grained analysis of backflagging.

In spite of the great functional overlap between *bueno* and *well* that emerges from the account given in §4, which allows for their comparison in bilingual speech, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the two DMs in the Gibraltar data was able to reveal a significant asymmetry in their use. As shown in Table 3, (bilingual) clauses with *bueno* are three times more frequent than monolingual clauses with *well*. Which means that for this DM, backflagging is preferred to its monolingual alternative. The research presented in this paper was therefore aimed at comparing different possible explanations for this pattern. Namely, we compared different types of formal, functional and sociolinguistic motivations.

As for formal features, position in the turn appears to be a relevant factor. As shown, the turn- or clause-initial position is the one where most cases of backflagging are observed. The primary reason for this is that also in monolingual speech *bueno* and *well* appear more frequently in this position (see Pons Bordería, 2003; Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021). In terms of bilingual speech, this evidence also goes in line with the findings of Goría (2018), who argues that the turn-initial position is also a preferred spot for code-mixing for other classes of items (other DMs, conjunctions, subordinators, left dislocations). Thus, while the analysis of positioning of *bueno* and *well* in itself did not reveal any new tendencies, it provided an important basis for the identification of functional aspects of the two DMs that are indeed relevant to our analysis of code-mixing. Previous studies in fact demonstrate that there is a strong connection between the position in which a DM occurs and its function in discourse (Pons Bordería, 2003; Pons Bordería and Fischer, 2021).

A partially unexpected result concerns the distinction between monological and dialogical contexts. A considerable amount of readership on DMs in contact situations has in fact demonstrated that interpersonal functions are the ones more exposed to code-mixing: therefore, we would have expected the use of *bueno* to be more frequent in dialogical contexts, i.e., when *bueno* occurs in a turn produced by a different speaker than the previous one. However, the data reveals that variation with respect to this parameter is not significant.

We identified a broader range of interpersonal functions, especially of *bueno*, by looking at a highly specific context of interaction, namely Zoom group conversations. Part of these were connected to the general management of the interaction, other were aimed at managing the task. The methodology employed allowed to study the relation between locally relevant conversational practices, e.g., introducing a new task within the focus group, managing the turn, closing topics, etc. with bilingual patterns that have a global function within the Gibraltarian linguistic ecology.

For both *bueno* and *well* we identified a set of interpersonal functions connected with turn management, and especially turn taking in dialogical sequences, and a set of textual functions related to different types of self-initiated repair. These functions are specially found in initial positions. However, uses of *bueno* display a greater range of interpersonal functions: *bueno* contextualizes different types of activity, especially in highly competitive sequences; introduces a new activity within the focus group (see example 30 in §6.2); or manages problems in turn-taking due to delays or malfunctions in the internet connection (see example 32 in §6.2). This is a function which is accounted and common for the use of *bueno* in monolingual discourse but which appears very present in this bilingual data. On the other hand, *well* appears less often in initial and interactive positions. Furthermore, *bueno* occurs in more collocations than *well* (see Table 7), some of which also have idiomatic meaning and may occur in different positions; see for example the case of *pero bueno* at the end of the turn, given in example 33 in §6.3. This reinforces the use of *bueno* together with other markers to express partial agreement or disagreement stated by Pons (2003).

Therefore, since *bueno* can appear in more contexts and express a greater number of pragmatic functions than *well*, we hypothesized that for the insertion of *bueno* in an otherwise English clause, a functional-pragmatic explanation is likely. Therefore, it seems that bilingual patterns involving *bueno* appear more frequently when they express functions that are not shared by English *well*, and which are associated with turn-initial position and with dialogical sequences. The results are in fact statistically significant for turn position, and, even if non-significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, have a relatively low p value for the dialogic vs. monologic distinction. At the same time, differences between different groups and different speakers were found: this reveals that even if code-mixing involving *bueno* and other DMs is a generally widespread behavior among Gibraltarian youth, future analyses will probably need to take into account more social factors in order to describe the variation existing within the studied group.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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