

**Modelo lingüístico-cultural para el análisis del bilingüismo en el
discurso literario*****A Cultural - Linguistic Model of Analysis of Bilingualism in Literary
Discourse*****MSc. Yisel Gallego-de Moya***gallego@uo.edu.cu***PhD. Pura de la Caridad Rey-Rivas***pura@uo.edu.cu***MSc. Tania Vivar-Pérez***vivar@uo.edu.cu***Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba****Resumen**

La identidad cultural de los pueblos e individuos ha estado históricamente amenazada por las constantes migraciones de los países subdesarrollados hacia los desarrollados. Este es un tema de importancia en la actualidad, que ha sido objeto de estudio de diferentes ramas del saber. Sin embargo, se le ha prestado poca atención desde la perspectiva lingüística, aun cuando la lengua es uno de los pilares fundamentales de la identidad. El uso de la lengua en la literatura cubano-americana es una de las formas de representar el hibridismo cultural de los inmigrantes cubanos en Estados Unidos. Por ende, el presente trabajo tiene como objetivo proponer un modelo lingüístico – cultural de análisis del bilingüismo como representación de identidad cultural en el discurso de autores cubano-americanos, ilustrado a través del análisis del bilingüismo en *Next Year in Cuba*, una obra representativa de la literatura cubano-americana. El enfoque hermenéutico-dialéctico ha estado presente a lo largo de toda la investigación, el cual ha permitido transitar desde la observación, la comprensión, la explicación hasta llegar a la interpretación. El modelo que se propone ha posibilitado demostrar que el bilingüismo es un rasgo de identidad lingüística que expresa la identidad bicultural de los inmigrantes de origen cubano en los Estados Unidos de América.

Palabras clave: bilingüismo, identidad cultural, discurso literario.

Abstract

Cultural identity of peoples and individuals has been threatened by the continuous migrations, mainly from under-developed to developed countries. Therefore, it is an issue of current importance that has been approached from different fields of study. However, the study of this phenomenon from the linguistic perspective is insufficient, even when language is one of the vital pillars of identity. The use of language in the Cuban-American literature is a way of representing the cultural hybridism of Cuban immigrants in the United States. Hence, the objective of this research is to propose a cultural-linguistic model of analysis of bilingualism in the discourse of Cuban-American authors as a representation of cultural identity, illustrated through the analysis of bilingualism in *Next Year in Cuba*, a representative Cuban-American literary work. The hermeneutic-dialectic approach has been present throughout this research

which has permitted the transit from observation, comprehension, explanation, and interpretation. Through this model it has been possible to demonstrate that bilingualism is a feature of linguistic identity that expresses the bicultural identity of immigrants of Cuban origin in the United States.

Keywords: bilingualism, cultural identity, literary discourse

Introduction

In our days, the phenomenon of migration is a problem that threatens the identity of peoples and individuals. Every day, the number of persons moving from underdeveloped into developed countries is greater. In most cases, immigrants in a foreign land try to maintain the elements that identify them as belonging to a place and a human group to which they do not longer belong. This way they fight against assimilation to the hegemonic culture.

An eloquent example of this phenomenon is provided by the immigrants of Hispanic origin in the United States. Unlike other immigrants, Hispanics have created their own enclaves, refusing to lose the ties that connect them with their origin. Therefore, their assimilation is slower and less complete than that of other immigrants. Notwithstanding, the surrounding foreign environment inevitably influences them. Thus, Hispanic immigrants in the United States have to redefine their identities, considering themselves as beings that have a bicultural identity.

Among the different groups that constitute the Hispanic community in the United States, Cubans represent the third biggest group. Like the rest of Hispanics, Cuban immigrants have experienced the transition from a Cuban identity to a redefined Cuban-American identitarian position. This redefinition has covered language as one of the main supports of cultural identity.

The use of language in the Cuban-American literature is a way of representing the cultural hybridism of immigrants of Cuban origin and their descendants in the United States. At present, most Cuban-American writers agree that bilingualism serves them to express their condition: English is the language in which most of them have received a formal education, the language they use professionally, and that makes possible the acceptance of their works in the country where these are published; on the other hand, Spanish is the language that complements them, that keeps them connected to their original culture. Thus, literature can be considered as a means through which bilingualism is represented as an important factor of cultural identity.

The results of an exhaustive bibliographical research showed that the study of cultural identity from the linguistic perspective is insufficient. During the last decades, most studies have approached identity from sociological, psychological, and historical views. However, emphasis has not been made on the study of identity based on discourse

analysis from the perspective of language. Nor has attention been paid to language as a representation of identity in the literary discourse of immigrants.

Hence, the **scientific problem** of this research is focused on the insufficient study of bilingualism in literature as a representation of the cultural identity of immigrants, which constitutes a phenomenon of current relevance. Therefore, the **objective** is to propose a cultural-linguistic model of analysis of bilingualism in the discourse of Cuban-American authors as a representation of cultural identity, illustrated through the analysis of bilingualism in *Next Year in Cuba*, a representative Cuban-American literary work.

Discussion

From the psychological point of view, bilingualism has to do with the capacity human beings have to speak more than one language, no matter the degree of communicative competence (Titone, 1976; Blanco, 1981). On the other hand, the sociological studies consider that the concept of bilingualism is based on the relation established between a social group and the language spoken (*Van Overbeke, 1972*).

From the aforementioned considerations, bilingualism can be individual or social. Individual bilingualism refers to the knowledge and command of two languages as well as the factors that intervene in the process of acquisition, and the variables among the individual, language, and the environment.

On the other hand, social bilingualism designates the co-existence of two languages spoken by a social group. Social bilingualism takes place due to different socioeconomic and political situations, among which mention should be made of migration to developed countries in search of better economic conditions. Immigrants have historically been obliged to learn the language of the host country because being able to speak the official language of the new country means better opportunities. Nonetheless, immigrants do not withdraw their mother tongue, which represents their identity and serves as a way through which they interpret their cultural world.

An example of this phenomenon is the case of the United States of America. Unlike other groups of immigrants, Hispanics¹ have not been absorbed into the mainstream of the North American culture. On the contrary, they have created their own political and linguistic enclaves, rejecting the Anglo – Protestant values that rest on the basis of the “American dream”.

The Case of Cuban Immigrants in the United States

Cubans represent the third biggest group of Hispanics in the United States. They are a heterogeneous group. Although there are Cubans in almost all the states of the Union,

¹ In the present research the term Hispanic is used following the definition given by the federal government of the United States, according to which Hispanic is the person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

the Cuban community is characterized by big concentrations, and the formation of ethnic colonies.

Researchers agree that the attitude of Cuban immigrants towards language in all the colonies varies from generation to generation. Cubans belonging to the first generation master their mother tongue but they have very little or no command of English. In the case of Cubans of the second and third generations, an outstanding fact is the acquisition of a certain degree of competence in the official language, maintaining their competence in Spanish.

Several studies have shown that at present times most Cuban immigrants in the United States prefer to live in a bilingual society and they want their descendants to be bilingual since this assures better life conditions. They also consider that the knowledge of English and Spanish is important and essential in their lives. This makes evident the prestige of both languages.

Literature as a means through which cultural identity of individuals and social groups is printed and expressed, constitutes one of the ways that immigrants of Cuban origin possess to exteriorize their sense of belonging to a place to which they no longer belong physically. They also express the characteristics of their new condition, which has many elements of their origins but is influenced by the dominant culture.

A Cultural - Linguistic Model of Analysis of Bilingualism in Literary Discourse

The cultural-linguistic model of analysis of bilingualism in the literary discourse of Cuban-American authors is based on semantic analysis, as the study carried out departs from the postulates of frame semantics, a theory of cognitive linguistics, which makes possible the relation between the use of language and the culture shared by the members of a given society.

Cognitive linguistics proposes a theory based on experience, where meaning is close related to mental experience. One of the theories framed within cognitive linguistics is the theory of frame semantics, proposed by Charles Fillmore, which departs from the assumption that human beings possess in our minds an inventory of frames to organize, classify, and interpret our experiences. Fillmore's theory is based on the notions of 'frame' and 'prototype'. In the field of cognitive linguistics, frames are "*specific unified frameworks of knowledge or coherent schematizations of experience*" (Fillmore 1985). Then, frames are understood as coherent structures of concepts that are related such that the mention of one concept activates, or evokes, the semantic knowledge related to this concept.

The notion of prototype, taken from cognitive psychology, has been used by various linguists, among whom Fillmore stands out, in order to describe lexical meaning. He argues that the meaning of a word depends on the prototype that underlies the concept. As an example, Fillmore (1977) shows the relation between prototype and lexical

meaning through his analysis of the term *bachelor*. According to him, this term has traditionally referred to a man who has never been married. However, the definition of *bachelor* does not explain why the Pope cannot be called that way. In order to explain this case, Fillmore proposes a model in which the word *bachelor* triggers a cultural prototype: men get married at a given age, and a *bachelor* is someone who has not gotten married at the age when it is normal to do so; then he still has the opportunity to get married. This prototype also explains that there are certain people, like the Pope, who constitute the exception, because they are subjected to special situations that exempt them from marriage.

After analyzing the notions of prototype and frame, the authors conclude that through their application to the analysis of lexical units it is possible to unify the linguistic and cultural contexts and determine the ‘slice’ of culture that underlies the meaning of equivalent words in English and Spanish analyzed in this research.

Methodological operations

1. The methodological operations proposed have been established departing from the postulates of discourse analysis and frame semantics.
2. Segmentation: to segment the studied literary discourse with the objective of selecting and separating the excerpts that contain words or phrases the meaning of which we intend to establish.
3. Contextual definition: to identify the meaning of the words or phrases in the context in which they have been used.
4. Comparison of definitions: to compare the definitions of the words or phrases in both languages to establish whether they are equivalents in context.
5. Determination of cultural frames: to analyze the cultural frames that underlie the definitions.
6. Classification: to group the words or phrases based on the classification of frames that has been assumed in this research.

A semantic analysis based on the notions of frame and prototype proves to be right for the formulation of a simple definition of a term and the explanation of its different usages with reference to the prototype that serves as context. In the case of bilingual immigrants, assigning different emotional values to terms that are considered equivalents in two languages reflects differences in their experiences in each of the two cultures. Since frames allow the inclusion of additional information as part of the meaning of a term, the application of semantic frame theory is useful to the analysis that is intended in this research in order to determine the different values assigned to terms considered equivalents in two different languages.

The approach from frame semantics allows us to add the knowledge or cultural information to the explanation of the use of lexical units and grammatical constructions.

That is why we consider it to be effective in the analysis to be carried out in this research.

The conception presented in this model is explained from a functional view point in the analysis of bilingualism as representation of Cuban-American authors' bicultural identity in *Next Year in Cuba*, by Gustavo Perez Firmat. This analysis, based on frame semantics, considers the use of language as determined by the social and cultural context where they are immersed.

Samples from the Analysis of Bilingualism from the Frame Semantics Approach in *Next Year in Cuba*, by Gustavo Pérez Firmat

For carrying out this analysis, the authors of this research start from the typology of frames proposed by Manuel de Vega (1984), according to whom there are five types of frames: visual, situational, social, self-concept, and domain frames.

- Visual frames refer to the interpretation of structures that take part in the configuration of objects and scenes in visual perception.
- Situational frames (or scripts) structure the information related to conventional situations.
- Social frames are those that describe the cognitive structures that organize the social knowledge of human beings. These can be divided into *generic frames*, and *themes*. *Generic frames* cover people's prototypes. On the other hand, *themes* are subdivided into *role themes* that help us understand the goals and actions of people with clearly defined social roles; *life themes* that refer to the aims or aspirations of people; and *interpersonal themes* that are related to social and affective relationships. Within interpersonal themes, we can include the use of colloquial and idiomatic expressions, since they reflect the particular forms of expression and social relations of the culture to which they belong.
- Self-concept frames refer to the knowledge that each person has of him/herself. It helps explain the differences between individuals in the same society.
- Domain frames are structures that guide discourse comprehension and production.

I. Situational frames

a) Places:

(1) "For Abuelo Pepe the *almacén* was not just his livelihood but his life." (p.27) "He has visited the *almacén* and recently spent an hour in our Havana house talking to the people who live there now (...)" (p.36)

The word *almacén* (n) refers to: "*edificio o local donde se depositan géneros de cualquier especie, generalmente mercancía// local donde los géneros en él existentes se*

venden, por lo común, al por mayor // Am. tienda donde se venden artículos domésticos de primera necesidad // Col. y Ecuad. tienda de comercio // establecimiento comercial donde se venden géneros al por menor // lugar donde se almacena la mercancía importada.”

Its literal translation is *storehouse*, as the same author explains, which refers to “a place where things are stored // an abundant source, collection, supply.”

But in Cuba, the term referred primarily to food wholesalers and distributors, which does not correspond to the meaning of the word in English but with the second lexical-semantic variant of its meaning in Spanish. From the analysis of the word in context, it is concluded that *almacén* not only reflects the characteristics of the referent, but also the position of the author about that referent. First, the place to which the author makes reference had always been called that way, so that the only mention of this word serves to bring memories back, memories about the time when visiting that particular place was customary. Second, it stops being a static place to become the representation of his predecessors ‘attempts to do well. Third, it represents the trunk that kept family together, the traditional succession of the business management from a generation to the other.

(2) “After opening up the office, we walked down the block to a **fonda**, or **coffee shop**, where we had slices of Cuban bread with butter (...)” (p.114)

The author uses the word *fonda*, the meaning of which is: “*establecimiento público, de categoría inferior a la del hotel, o de tipo más antiguo, donde se da hospedaje y se sirven comidas. // Servicio y conjunto de cámara, comedor y cocina de un buque mercante. // Bol., Chile, Cuba, Ecuad., Méx. y Perú. Puesto o cantina en que se despachan comidas y bebidas*”.

The meaning of *fonda* in this context corresponds to the third lexical-semantic variant of this lexeme. Thus, the author uses the lexical unit *coffee shop*, the meaning of which is: “a small restaurant for light refreshments”

To the author, this was not any coffee shop, but the place where he used to have breakfast every time his father took him to the *almacén*. Therefore, the word *fonda* triggers the author’s situational frame of “going to my father’s work”. Hence, the mention of a part (*fonda*) activates the author’s memories of all the events that surrounded a very important place in his memory: the *almacén*.

b) Spare time activities

(3) “this afternoon I’ve put on a pair of shorts and a tank top (...) and headed for the quaint old stadium to watch the Durham Bulls play a game of what Cubans call simply **pelota**, our word for **baseball**.” (p.6)

With the word *baseball* the author refers to a game played with a bat and ball by two teams of nine players on a field with four bases marking the course the batters must take to score runs.

This word is translated into Spanish as *béisbol*:

“(Del ingl. base ball). m. Juego entre dos equipos, en el que los jugadores han de recorrer ciertos puestos o bases de un circuito, en combinación con el lanzamiento de una pelota desde el centro de dicho circuito.”

In Cuba, as well as other Caribbean countries, this game is known as *pelota*, after the ball used for playing it. Cubans like to play sports but we love baseball. It is the most popular game; Cubans consider it as a ‘Cuban activity’. That is why, by using the Spanish name, the author is representing an important element of Cuban culture. Notice that he uses the pronoun *our* to modify the Spanish word, considering himself as Cuban, and making the Spanish language his own.

(4) *“A missed swing was enough to provoke a loud guffaw. A line-drive **single** made him break out in expressions of wonder. “Dis you see that, Josefina, “he would scream to his wife, “did you see that **batazo**?” (p.135)*

Analyzing *pelota* as a frame, we can understand why the author uses the word *batazo*.

batazo: m. *Golpe dado con el bate. // C.Rica. Acierto o casualidad favorable. // Pan. Mentira dicha para vanagloriarse. // ser algo un . fr. coloq. Cuba. Ser de muy buena calidad.*

single: a *baseball hit*

base hit: n. *a hit in baseball that enables the batter to reach base safely with no error made and no base runner forced out.*

There is a correspondence between the definition of the lexical unit in English and the lexical-semantic variant 1 in the Spanish unit, although the English definition is more specific, including the sport in which it is made and the purpose of making it. Since their realization in context refers to the same event, they can be considered as equivalents.

The word *batazo* was formed through the process of derivation, that is, the addition of the suffix *-azo* to the *base bat-*.

Analyzing the meaning of the derivative suffix *-azo*:

1. *“Tiene valor aumentativo. Perrazo, manaza. // 2. Expresa sentido despectivo. Aceitazo. // 3. A veces significa golpe dado con lo designado por la base derivativa. Porrazo, almohadillazo. // 4. En algún caso, señala el golpe dado en lo significado por dicha base. Espaldarazo”*

In the case of the word *batazo*, the suffix completes the lexical meaning of the root with the information *‘golpe dado por lo designado por la base derivativa’*. Then, *batazo* means *“golpe dado por el bate”*. However, Cuban speakers have assigned to the word the augmentative value of the suffix *-azo*. Then, Cubans use this word when there is a great hit. Therefore, the word *hit* is not enough to express the emotion of the speaker.

(5) “I have in my library a 560 - page manual detailing the intricacies of **dominó cubano**. Not even exile could break the **domino** habit.” (p.127)

The author uses the word **dominó**; then introduces its English equivalent.

dominó: “(Del fr. *domino*, y este del m. or. que *dómino*). *m. Juego que se hace con 28 fichas rectangulares divididas en dos cuadrados, cada uno de los cuales lleva marcados de uno a seis puntos, o no lleva ninguno. Cada jugador pone por turno una ficha que tenga número igual en uno de sus cuadrados al de cualquiera de los dos que están en los extremos de la línea de las ya jugadas, y gana quien primero coloca todas las suyas o quien se queda con menos puntos, si se cierra el juego. // 2. Conjunto de las fichas que se emplean en este juego. // 3. Traje talar con capucha, que ya solo tiene uso en las funciones de máscaras.*” // **hacer** alguien ~. *fr. Ser el primero que se queda sin fichas en el juego de este nombre, y ganar así la partida.* □ *V. efecto* ~.

domino: n, pl **dominoes** or **dominos** [F, prob. Fr. L (in the ritual formula *benedicamus Domino* let us bless the Lord)] **1**: a long loose hooked cloak usu. worn with a half mask as a masquerade costume **2**: a half mask worn with a masquerade costume **3**: a person wearing a domino **4** [F, fr. It] **a**: a flat rectangular block (as of wood or plastic) the face of which is divided into two equal parts that are blank or bear from one to usu. six dots arranged as on dice faces **b** *pl but usu. sing in constr.* any of several games played with a set of usu. 28 dominoes.

According to the context, the word **dominó** refers to the game played with a set of 28 tiles. Even when there is no complete coincidence in the definition of both words, speakers of the two languages will understand that they refer to a game that is usually played with a set of 28 tiles.

These words will not trigger the same knowledge in people from different cultures. This game is not exclusive to Cuba; indeed, it is considered as a universal pastime. However, in the United States “**it has never been more than a diversion for children, while in Cuba it is second only to baseball as a national pastime.**” The words of the author express the importance Cubans attribute to the game.

Besides, Cubans have a peculiar way of playing it. Cuban domino has assimilated essential features of our idiosyncrasy, like speaking aloud, making gestures, and telling proverbs. All these elements make our domino unique, to the extent that Henríquez (2002) considers:

(...) *al igual que los juegos del estadio griego nos pintaban la psicología helénica, o las justas y torneos, las del medioevo, el juego de las 155 fichas, mitad ciencia y mitad bachata, retrata, en otra de sus facetas, la forma de ser de los naturales de esta isla.*²

Obviously, to Cubans, **dominó cubano** is more than a simple pastime game played with a given number of tiles. It means being Cuban.

Considering domino game as a structure of knowledge, we can include two phrases the author introduces in Spanish and provides no equivalents.

(6) “When Gustavo places a nine on the table, instead of saying *nueve*, he’ll say **Nuevitas, puerto de mar**, which is the name and description of a town in Cuba.” (p.139)

² (Trans.) “Just as the games at the Greek stadium represented the Hellenic psychology, or the tournaments represented the Middle Ages, the game of the 155 tiles, half science and half fun, portrays the way Cubans are.”

“When my father puts down a domino and says **Blanquizal de Jaruco**, a Cuban town that doubles as the nickname for the double-zero tile, his words transport me back to Cuba.

These two set expressions are very popular among Cubans, not only because they name two Cuban towns³, but because they are used to designate some tiles in domino games. For example, *Nuevitas, puerto de mar* refers to number nine, and *Blanquizal de Jaruco*, to the double blank tile.⁴

The mention of these phrases takes the author back to Cuba. This has to do with the knowledge he has of their existence and location. It also has to do with the activation of the frame of Cuban domino playing, which in turn activates his knowledge of Cuban idiosyncrasy and customs.

II. Social frames

Generic frames (people's prototypes)

(7) “During the first two decades of this century, the streets of Old Havana were teeming with young gallegos like my grandfather (...)” (p.26)

The word gallego, meaning 'natural de Galicia' is the equivalent of the English word Galician. However, the author has used the term in Spanish since it has become a stereotype in the Cuban culture. To Cubans, the word gallegos not only names the immigrants coming from Galicia, but all the poor Spaniards who came to our country with the hope of making fortune, most of whom established their small businesses here. The gallego is a key element in the Cuban culture since it represents one of the two main cultural trunks that contributed to the formation of our identity.

(8) “A great *jodedor*, Pepe wasn't about to let marriage or pangs of conscience change his bachelor ways.” (p.134)

The word *jodedor* refers to someone who likes to bother, pester, or disturb other people. This is often translated into English as 'a pain in the ass'. The author does not provide the English equivalent, but explains it as 'half-prankster and half-hedonist, with a pinch of lunacy thrown in'.

Hence, he cannot find a word in English that suits the idea Cubans transmit with this colloquial word which has some variants in other Latin American countries, but is specific of our country.

b) Interpersonal themes:

(9) “The waiter, who isn't Cuban, complies curtly with **Papi's** demands.” (p.100)

³ Nuevitas is a Cuban city located in Camaguey province. Its harbor is the fifth most important in the island. Jaruco is a small town that belongs to Havana.

⁴ There are other phrases like *caja de muerto* (double six), *la puerca* (double nine), *dar agua* (when the ones who lose have to turn down the tiles and shuffle them).

“When his father, **mi abuelo** Pepe, passed away in 1954, Gustavo became the head of the company.”

“Finally, she dried her eyes with the handkerchief and asked me if I thought the drops had gone in. Invariably, I answered, “**Sí, abuela.**” (...) During my college years, I spent more time with my grandmother than I ever did with my mother or my father.

In the previous excerpts, the author uses Spanish words that can perfectly be translated into the English language: papi (daddy), abuela (grandmother), abuelo (grandfather). But the author chooses the Spanish counterparts. First, these words not only reflect the characteristic features of the referent, but also the kind of communicative situation (the close relation among parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren), and the stylistic value of the lexical units (familiar, informal register). Besides, they arouse the established cultural knowledge Cubans have of family; its importance and extension, as well as the bounds that keep them together. By addressing his parents and grandparents in Spanish, the language in which he first called them, the author feels closer to his past, to his origin.

- Colloquial and idiomatic expressions:

(10) “A Cuban proverb says, **Caballo grande, ande o no ande**; it means roughly that a big lame horse is preferable to a small healthy one.” (p.27)

This, like most proverbs, is a conventionalized metaphor reflecting the image created by a given culture to express the surrounding reality. In this case, the author tries to explain the meaning of the proverb by translating it literally. Cubans use this in order to express their preference for big things. The author, then, resorts to it to describe his father’s preference for opulence, for whom the outward signs of wealth were more important than wealth itself.

(11) “My father, who isn’t thrilled to see his stores depleted day after day, says to me, “**Estás dando mucha lata**”- literally, “You are giving too many cans”- but in Cuban slang what he is really saying is that I am becoming a pain in the ass.” (p.40)

The colloquial phrase **dar la lata a alguien** means ‘**molestarlo, importunarlo, aburrirlo o fastidiarlo con cosas inoportunas o con exigencias continuas**’. In this case the author is playing with words, since the same phrase may have two meanings in this context. He is telling about something that happened when he was a child: every year, the members of his school mounted a drive to collect food for the poor, specially canned food, so that each morning during the drive he would take a number of cans from the pantry since he wanted to be the one to give the most cans. Then, even though the expression **Estás dando mucha lata** literally called his attention on the fact of being giving too many cans, it activated a frame that let him understand what his father really meant, he was actually telling that this issue was annoying him.

(12) “Siblings who had been raised to be **uña y carne**, as close as fingernails and flesh, hardly talked to each other.” (p.169)

Ser uña y carne is a colloquial phrase meaning: “**haber estrecha amistad entre dos personas**”. There is an equivalent in the English language: to be as thick as thieves. However, the author neutralizes the expression by translating it literally into English. In this case, the difference between the two equivalents is great; both cultures approach the same phenomenon from different angles, and the image evoked by the English phrase is not positive. On the contrary, the Spanish expression gives the idea of a positive, close and indissoluble relationship. By using the Spanish phrase, the author emphasizes the strength of the ties among family members in the Cuban culture.

From this analysis the authors of this research conclude that the words and phrases written in Spanish belong to the situational and social frames. It shows the need to use the Spanish language when making reference to places, social recreational activities, people’s prototypes established in the native culture, familiar forms of relation as well as colloquial and idiomatic expressions, which form part of the material and spiritual culture of Cubans.

The study of the use of bilingualism from the frame semantics approach presented in this analysis shows the logical coherence of the Model proposed by this thesis, that integrates language and cultural knowledge shared by the members of a society in an attempt to determine how the use of language can represent their cultural identity.

Conclusions

Language is an indicator of identity and deposit of the experiences of human thoughts, and culture. Therefore, it is possible to approach cultural identity through the study of language.

Through the analysis of the language used in a representative Cuban-American literary work, *Next Year in Cuba*, it has been possible to demonstrate that bilingualism is a feature of linguistic identity that expresses the bicultural identity of immigrants of Cuban origin in the United States.

The study was based on a cultural - linguistic model of analysis of bilingualism as representation of cultural identity through the written discourse of Cuban-American authors.

The application of the model through the analysis of bilingualism in the literary work *Next Year in Cuba*, by Gustavo Pérez Firmat, proved effective since it showed that the use of both languages (English and Spanish) in the literary text was conditioned by the cultural knowledge of the author. The study of meaning from the frame semantic approach proved to be valuable for understanding the different values assigned to terms that are considered equivalents in two different languages (English and Spanish), reflecting the writer’s differences in his experiences in each of the two cultures behind both languages.

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