

The Basque substratum in the intonation of Spanish in the Basque Country and the influence of linguistic attitudes

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The present study is part of a wider research project that seeks to determine whether there are intonational features of Basque in the Spanish varieties of areas where the two languages are in contact, and to observe to what extent social factors and the degree of contact with Basque can determine the degree of linguistic transfer. We have recorded two monolingual speakers of Spanish, two L1 Spanish-L2 Basque and two L1 Basque-L2 Spanish bilingual speakers in each of two urban areas (Bilbao and San Sebastian) and a smaller town (Ibarra). The presence of Basque in these locations ranges from low in Bilbao to medium in San Sebastian and high in Ibarra. The speakers engaged in semi-spontaneous conversations with an interviewer. First, the subjects responded to questions about their views of the Spanish and Basque ethnolinguistic groups, so as to obtain declarative utterances from the subjects. Then, the subjects posed the same questions to the interviewer, so as to collect absolute (yes/no) and partial (wh-) interrogative utterances from the subjects. The questions were interiorized by the subjects and asked in as natural a style as possible (they were not read). We report results from 400 declarative utterances and 213 absolute questions, distributed in roughly equivalent numbers in 18 subjects (two speakers per linguistic profile in each of the three locations, i.e., 6 speakers in each location).

All the speakers present a majority of prenuclear accents with early peaks. The most frequent one is L+H*, followed by H* and then H*+L. The percentages of occurrences of early peaks range from 55% for the speaker with the lowest percentage (female monolingual, Bilbao) to 73% for the speaker with the highest percentage (male L1 Spanish, San Sebastian). This result contrasts with the well-known fact that prenuclear accents in Peninsular Spanish varieties are rising accents with H tones realized on the posttonic syllable, at least in read speech (L+<H*, cf. Face 2008, Estebas-Vilaplana and Prieto 2008, 2010, Hualde and Prieto 2015). We argue that this could be influence from Basque intonation. On the one hand, prenuclear rising accents with early peaks are found in the Spanish of native speakers of a variety of Northern Bizkaian Basque, spoken to the northeast of Bilbao. Elordieta (2003a) and Elordieta and Calleja (2005) argue that these speakers transfer the early peak alignment of the H*+L pitch accent of N.B. Basque, thus producing L+H* accents in their Spanish. On the other hand, Elordieta (2003b), Irurtzun (2003) and Elordieta and Hualde (2014) describe pitch accents with peaks on the stressed syllable in varieties close to San Sebastian and Ibarra. However, Elordieta and Irurtzun (2016) found prenuclear accents with delayed peaks in the Spanish of monolingual Spanish speakers of Bilbao and San Sebastian, in read speech. There is hence a contrast between spontaneous and read speech.

All speakers have absolute interrogatives ending in a L+H* (H)L% contour, that is, rising accents followed by a falling boundary tone (cf. also Robles-Puente 2011, 2012 for Bilbao Spanish read speech). This contour differs from the L* H% nuclear contour in absolute questions in Peninsular Spanish (Face 2008, Estebas-Vilaplana and Prieto 2008, 2010, Hualde and Prieto 2015). This is arguably an influence from Basque, where absolute questions end in a (H)L% boundary tone (Elordieta 1998, Robles-Puente 2012, Elordieta and Hualde 2014). Interestingly, the speakers had different degrees of use of this nuclear contour, which

correlated with the sociolinguistic attitudes of the subjects towards Basque and the Basque ethnolinguistic community. The speakers showing a neutral or a positive attitude used L+H* (H)L% in a higher percentage than those showing a distant attitude. The language attitudes were more determinant than the degree of knowledge of Basque, as monolingual Spanish speakers could have high percentages of Basque intonational features.

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