Negative alternations in the bilingual speech: The case of Chipilo, Mexico

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In standard Spanish, negation is preverbal, as in (1) *Yo **no** hablo italiano* ('I do not speak Italian'); the presence of a postverbal marker *no* is considered ungrammatical in declarative sentences. However, in Veneto (a Northern Italian dialect), both markers are used in some specific contexts, as in (2) *Mi **no** parle talian **no*** ('I do not speak Italian NEG'). According to sporadic observations reported in previous literature ([1]-[4]), many lexical, prosodic, and morphological features have been transferred from Veneto into Spanish in the bilingual community of Chipilo, Mexico, which has preserved its minority language for 135 years and today represents a case of a stable bilingual diaspora. Given the fact that the negative doubling (ND) construction is not present in the speech of monolingual Spanish speakers, I hypothesized that the construction in (2) had been transferred into the Spanish of bilingual speakers, resulting in instances of ND as in (3) *Yo **no** hablo italiano **no*** ('I do not speak Italian NEG'), used to reinforce initial negation. I investigated the frequency of use of ND, according to the following social factors: sex, age (18-34, 35-70), and parents' ethnicity. Responses were coded for the following linguistic factors: previous constituent, use of other negators, and negation in the preceding context, which were shown to influence the use of ND in [5] and [6]. Given the infrequent occurrences of morphosyntactic structures in spontaneous speech, I implemented both spontaneous and controlled tasks to elicit speech production with focus on ND. For this project, 83 bilingual participants (42 Chipileños with both Chipileño parents, 21 participants with a Chipileña mother, and 20 participants with a Chipileño father), as well as 34 monolingual Spanish speakers performed three tasks in Spanish: a semi-spontaneous interview (Task 1), a preference forced-choice task (Task 2), and a sentence repetition task (Task 3). 733 tokens (excluding distractors) were analyzed using Goldvarb to construct logistic regression models of the effects of each conditioning factor. Results of the three tasks showed that ND was relatively infrequent but varied across each task: Task 1 – 1% (n=4), Task 2 – 35% (n=76), Task 3 – 43% (n=221). Only bilingual speakers showed variability in their responses, which suggests that the final *no* has been transferred from Veneto. Significantly more males than females favoured the use of ND in Tasks 2 and 3, which can be supported by the general notion that women use more careful speech. With regard to the linguistic variables, previous negation was significant in Task 2 (.58), specifically among the younger group, which corroborates the findings for Brazilian Portuguese in [6]. Other negators, specifically *nadie* 'nobody' in subject position, was significant in Task 3 among older speakers (.65), similar to the results in [5], which favoured the longer distance between a negative word and *no*. Overall, these results shed light on contact variety differences and provide deeper insight into the social and linguistic constraints on ND use.

References

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