"¿Eres de aquí?" 'Are you from here?' Spanish dialects in contact and fundamental frequency (f0) accommodation in yes-no questions

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Prosody conveys not only linguistic meaning, but also extralinguistic information determined by the situational context (e.g. 'speaker and addressee attributes') (Cole 2015; Henriksen 2013). Therefore, speakers may encode sociolinguistic meaning in intonation via phonetic accommodation, "the process whereby speakers in an interaction modify their speech in response to their interlocutor" (MacLeod 2012:ii). While accommodation may be partly automatic and subconscious (Pickering & Garrod 2004; Trudgill 2008), speakers can exercise socially-motivated agency when accommodating (see e.g. Giles et al. 1991 for Communication Accommodation Theory; Babel 2010 for vowels; Babel & Bulatov 2011 for f0; Romera & Elordieta 2013 for group-level accommodation). Given these findings, to what extent do speakers of different dialects with contrasting intonation accommodate when they come into contact? To address this question, I quantify whether a speaker changes her fundamental frequency (f0) to converge with (accommodate to) or diverge from a Spanish speaker of another dialect when asking information- and confirmation-seeking yes-no questions—a crucial locus for analysis given the cross-dialectal variation in the nuclear accent and boundary tone configurations in Andalusian (rising: L*HH%; Henriksen & García-Amaya 2012), Porteño (falling: L+¡H*HL%; Gabriel et al., 2010, 2013) and Mexican (rising: L*LH%/H%; de-la-Mota et al. 2010) Spanish.

Data come from a two-session (S) experiment involving native speakers of Andalusian Spanish (N=3) or a foreign dialect (Porteño/Mexican; N=3) living in Granada, Spain (total speakers=6). In S1, speakers of the same dialect individually completed a baseline intonation survey and an Implicit Association Task (IAT; Greenwald et al. 1998, 2003), which gauges a speaker's implicit socio-cultural bias for her interlocutor's dialect (cf. Babel 2010). Speakers then completed a map task and 20 questions game to elicit yes-no questions and a paired sociolinguistic interview to capture sentiments regarding life in Granada. In S2, the same speakers completed another map task and 20 questions game in dialect-mismatched pairs. Information- and confirmation-seeking questions from both sessions (excluding interview) were hand-segmented by syllable and annotated in Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2015) using Sp_ToBI (Hualde & Prieto 2015; Aguilar et al. 2009; Vilaplana & Prieto 2008). In the baseline and when speaking with someone of the same dialect, speakers usually produce the canonical contour (i.e. rising/falling) for their dialect. To capture more finely-grained phonetic effects, I compare nuclear accents (N=651) and boundary tones (N=651) across speakers using time-normalized f0 measurements and Smoothing Spline ANOVAs. Compared to baseline, all speakers of a foreign dialect phonetically accommodate f0 to an Andalusian in nuclear accents. In contrast, 2/3 of the Andalusian speakers phonetically diverge from a non-Andalusian. At the phrase-final syllable, speakers do not categorically change their boundary tone (e.g. from rising to falling) when speaking with someone from another dialect. However, speakers display sensitivity to their interlocutor in terms of the percent of rising vs. falling contours used. Finally, results from the IAT suggest that bias for a particular Spanish dialect does not consistently predict the degree of accommodation or divergence (cf. Babel 2010). Nevertheless, this study demonstrates group-level accommodation (cf. Romeira & Elordieta 2013) and supports Communication Accommodation Theory.

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