

## **Subject expression in heritage speaker (HS) Spanish oral production vs. judgments**

Variationist and generativist examination of Spanish HS subject pronoun expression (SPE) reports an increase in overt third person pronominal subjects, largely attributed contact with English, irrespective of data collection method (e.g., Otheguy & Zentella 2012, Rothman 2009). Results for first person, however, are less conclusive (Torres-Cacoullos & Travis 2011, Travis 2007). In this paper we discuss first and third person interview and judgment data from second-generation Spanish HSs from Florida.

In addition to person, the variationist literature indicates that Spanish SPE is restricted by a variety of linguistic factors (speech connectivity, verb form ambiguity, clause type, and semantic verb type), as well as extralinguistic factors, such as region and language contact (e.g. Carvalho, Orozco & Lapidus Shin 2015, Otheguy & Zentella 2012, Shin 2012, Silva-Corvalán 1982). Contact effects have variably been reported both in terms of SPE rates, significance of variables, and direction of effect. These differences in previous research can be attributed to differences in methodologies: sociolinguistic interviews vs. contextualized scalar acceptability judgment tasks (AJTs), and/or the grammatical persons included in the analysis. To the best of our knowledge, no previous research compares first vs. third person singular SPE in Spanish HSs, or different methodologies.

The current study, thus, elaborates and expands on previous findings by comparing 28 HSs' (10=low, 10=intermediate, 8=advanced) SPE in an oral interview and a written AJT (1). In the AJT, participants rated three contextualized sentences differing in subject form (null, pronominal or lexical), following a context (n= 48, 8 items x 6 conditions), which was manipulated for person (first vs. third) and speech connectivity (same referent and same TAM, same referent and different TAM, different referent) and controlled for discourse structure (all topic continuation), clause type (all main clauses), verb form ambiguity (all non-ambiguous), animacy (all animate referents) and verb type (external activities). The oral interview data was transcribed and coded for several variables, with subject form, person, speech connectivity, ambiguity, and verb type included in the analysis. Only tokens in topic continuation, main clauses, and with animate referents were included (with a total of 4,676 tokens). Additionally, for both tasks, the analysis included the individual variables proficiency level in Spanish and region.

The preliminary results from both tasks indicated increasing sensitivity to linguistic constraints with proficiency. Data from both intermediate and advanced speakers in the AJT returned a Person\*Connectivity\*Subject form interaction, indicating sensitivity to SPE distribution, while low proficiency speaker data did not (Graph 1). Nulls were rated higher in first person with more speech connectivity while in third person pronouns were rated higher irrespective of connectivity. In contrast, results from the interview data indicated no sensitivity to the variable person. Spanish HSs did not use more overt pronominal subjects in first than in third person, unlike monolingual speakers do. Thus, contact effects were only attested in the first person. In all the groups, connect was highly ranked, but variation was attested for the variables ambiguity and semantic verb type.

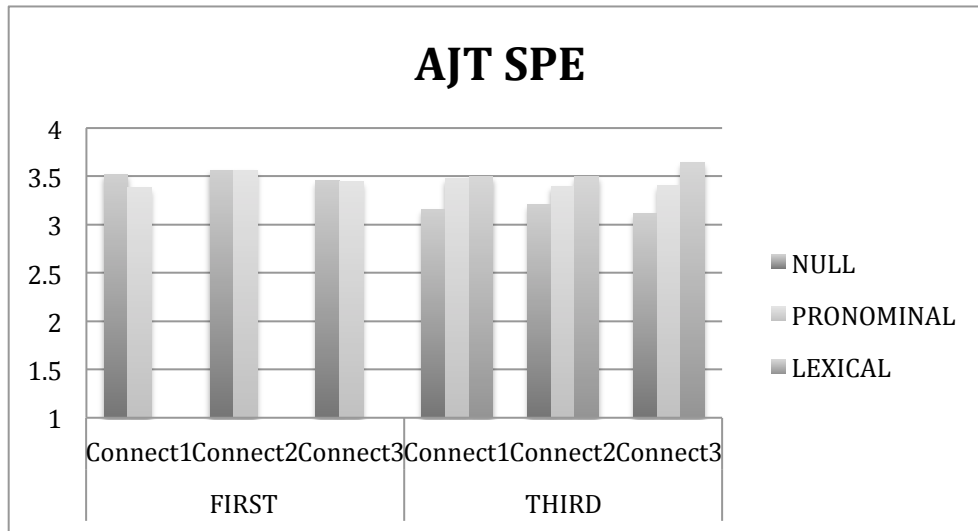
This paper contributes to current discussions in the fields of language contact and bilingualism, presenting new SPE data from two different tasks and contrasting two different grammatical persons to clarify some contradictory results in the previous literature. The data will be discussed in terms of simplification and convergence. Additionally, the paper contributes to variationist approaches to SPE by examining a novel community of HSs in the US.

(1) Sample question from the AJT: Third person singular, same referent and same TAM.

Yo soy enfermera. María también lo es y tienen un horario complicado.

- |   |    |    |   |   |
|---|----|----|---|---|
| a. Trabaja de noche los fines de semana       | -2 | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| b. Ella trabaja de noche los fines de semana. | -2 | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| c. María trabaja de noche los fines de semana | -2 | -1 | 1 | 2 |

Graph 1: SPE ratings in the AJT



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