



Morphosyntactic accommodation in Spanish: methodological challenges

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Accommodation and language change

Spread of linguistic features assumed to take place via face-to-face contact between speakers^{1, 2, 3}.

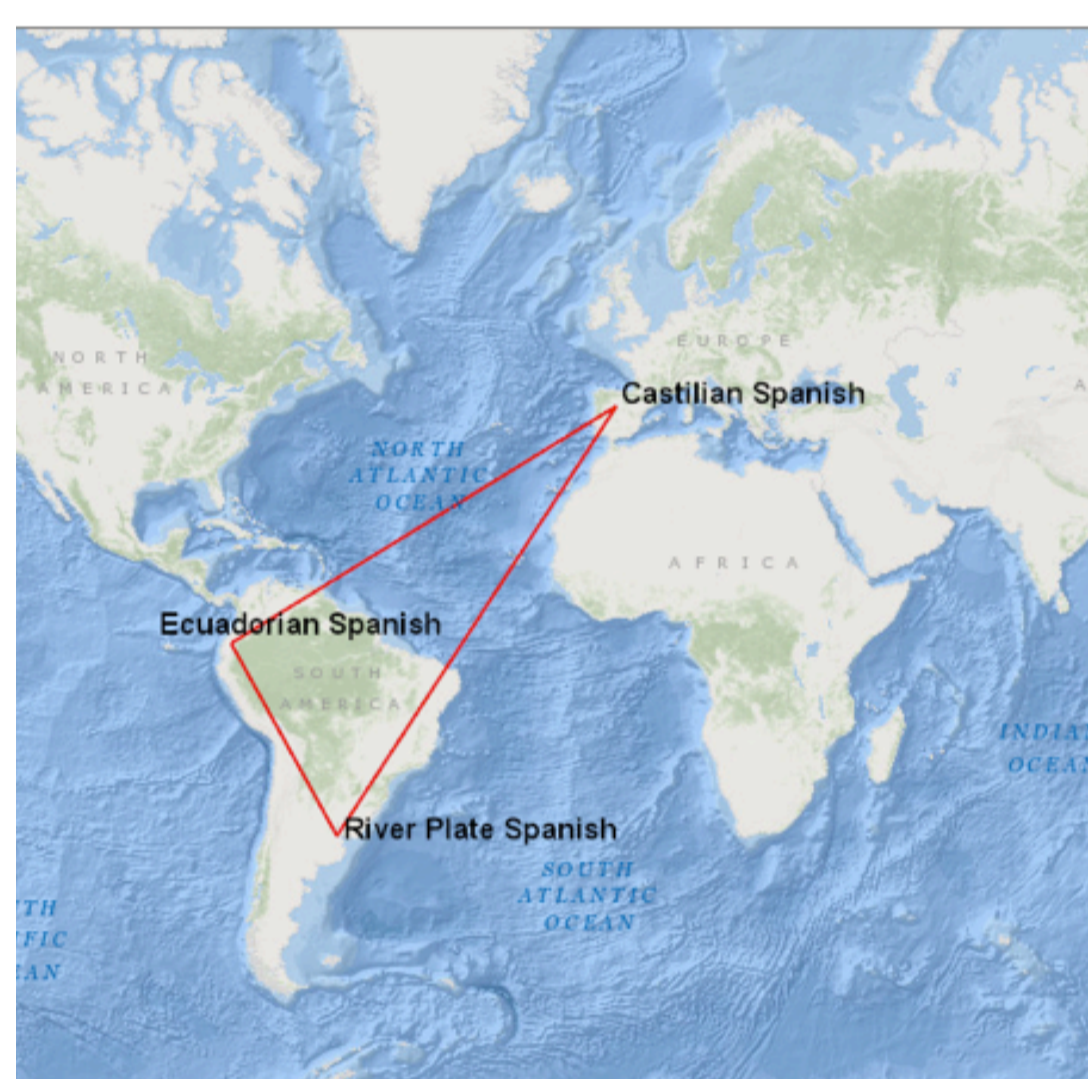
Repeated short-term accommodation (interaction) > long-term accommodation > (if critical mas) language change³

Previous literature

- Short-term accommodation literature focuses (mostly) on the phonetic level^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12}.
- Literature on accommodation in Spanish focuses on long-term accommodation, mostly on the morphosyntactic level^{13, 14, 15, 16}.

Goal

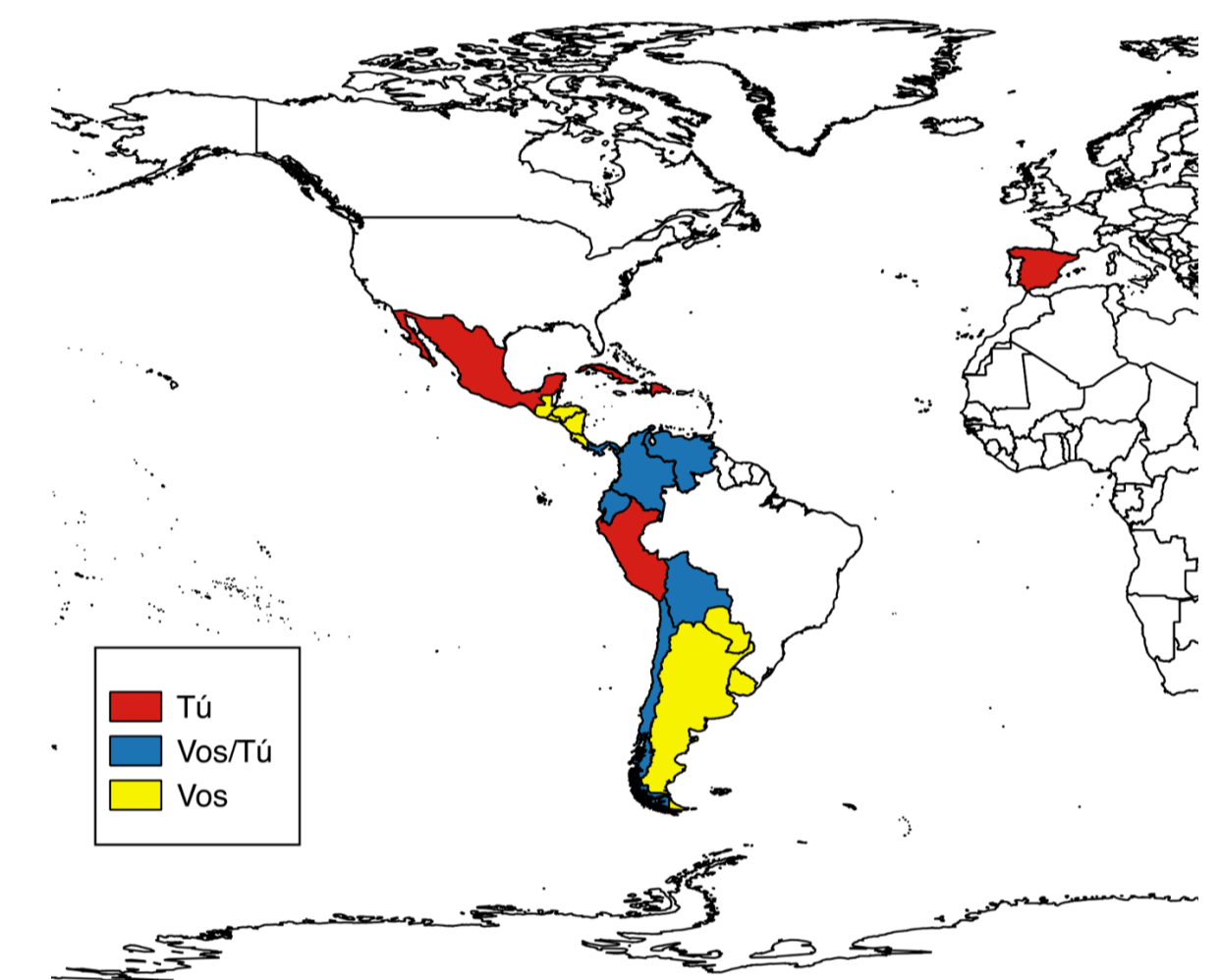
Understand the processes underlying morphosyntactic short-term accommodation between speakers of different Spanish dialects.



Study design (inspired by Ruch 2013-2018)

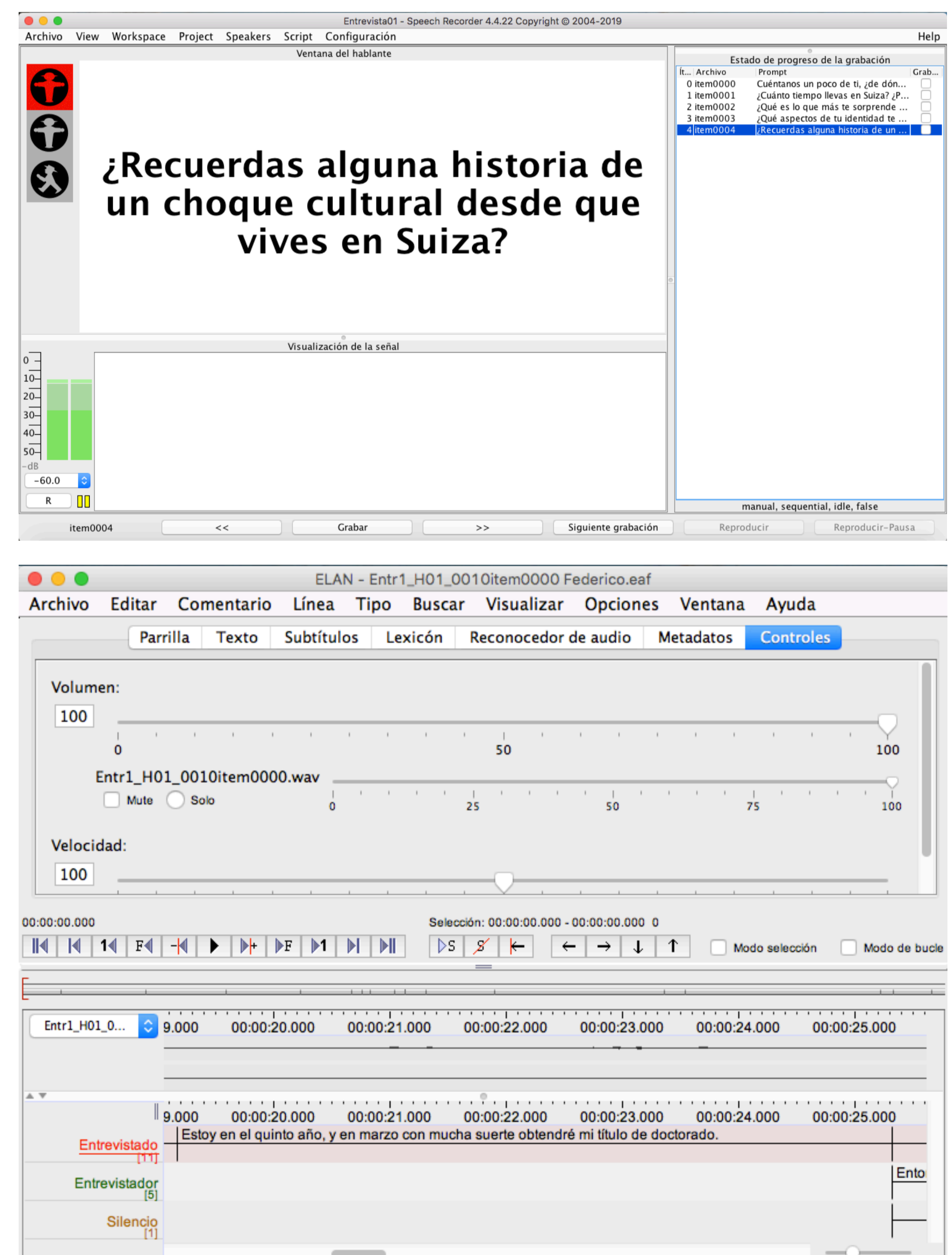
Pilot study: 6 participants (2 groups: female and male), 3 Spanish dialects. Participants with similar social characteristics (all graduate students, similar ages). Within group, each participant (typically in 2 days):

- 1) was interviewed individually (“non-contaminated” speech),
- 2) had a conversation with another participant (interaction with one dialect),
- 3) was immediately interviewed alone (speech after interaction),
- 4) had a conversation with another participant (interaction with another dialect),
- 5) was immediately interviewed alone (speech after interaction).



Methodological challenges

1. Researching morphosyntax
 1. Opposite to phonetic features, morphosyntactic features:
 1. do not surface in reading tasks – semi-free speech is needed.
 2. need large quantities of speech to be observed.
 2. Selection of features that show consistent variation across dialects:
 1. Case-distinction in object pronouns (case-distinction in River Plate Spanish, gender-distinction in Castilian Spanish, generalised *leísmo* in Ecuadorian Spanish).
 2. 2sg personal pronouns and verb-agreement (*vos* + etymologically 2pl verb forms in River Plate Spanish, *tú* + etymologically 2pl verb forms in River Plate Spanish, *tú/vos* + etymologically 2pl verb forms in Ecuadorian Spanish).
3. Finding participants
 1. Ecuadorian speakers were hard to find!
4. Design of the interviews
 1. Eliciting 2sg personal pronouns in individual interviews is especially difficult, since there is no clear interlocutor (the computer) – asking for anecdotes.
 2. The last individual interview addressed perception of and attitudes to own and others’ speech.
5. Conducting the interviews
 1. It is hard to speak to the computer!
 2. Intervention of interviewers turned out to be unavoidable. To keep this intervention consistent, interviewers always spoke a different dialect than the interviewees.



Next steps...

- Transcription of the interviews with ELAN (underway).
- Comparison of usage of pronouns before, during and after the conversations.
- Analysis of self-corrections during the conversations.

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