

PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION IN LA SELVA CATALAN: DIALECT LOSS OR MAINTENANCE?

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**Research supported by MINECO & FEDER (FPI2011 pre-doctoral scholarship, project number FFI2010-22181-C03-02).*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Goals

- a) To describe three phonological features found in Catalan speakers from the region of La Selva (Central Catalan):
- i. Historical yodization ($[\text{ʎ}] > [\text{j}]$)
 - ii. The voiceless realization of intervocalic affricates ($[\text{d.}\widehat{\text{d}}\text{ʒ}] > [\text{t.}\widehat{\text{t}}\text{ʃ}]$)
 - iii. The particular distribution of stressed mid front vowels ($[\text{e}] - [\text{ɛ}]$)

1.1. Goals

- b) To analyze variation in the production of instances of those features between two generations of speakers from La Selva:

G1 = speakers born between 1982 and 1992, aged 20-30

G2 = speakers born in or before 1952, aged 60 or more

- c) To show that those linguistic variables are differently affected by variation across generations and, thus, that tendencies towards dialect loss or maintenance are due to a variety of factors, some of which seem to be directly related to geographical variation.

1.2 Interest of the Research

- Typical dialect leveling factors:
 - Linguistic normalization
 - Standardization
 - Schooling in Catalan
- Lack of studies concerning Catalan from La Selva:
 - Central Catalan is the base for Standard Catalan, and this has led to a limited number of studies on the actual varieties
 - Cf. Bosch (2012)
- La Selva is crossed by the borders of a vaguely defined sub-dialectal area seemingly coincident with the diocese of Girona (cf., e.g., Adam 2006).

1.2 Interest of the Research



Source: *Gran enciclopèdia catalana* (1970). Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana. <www.enciclopedia.cat>.

2. METHODOLOGY

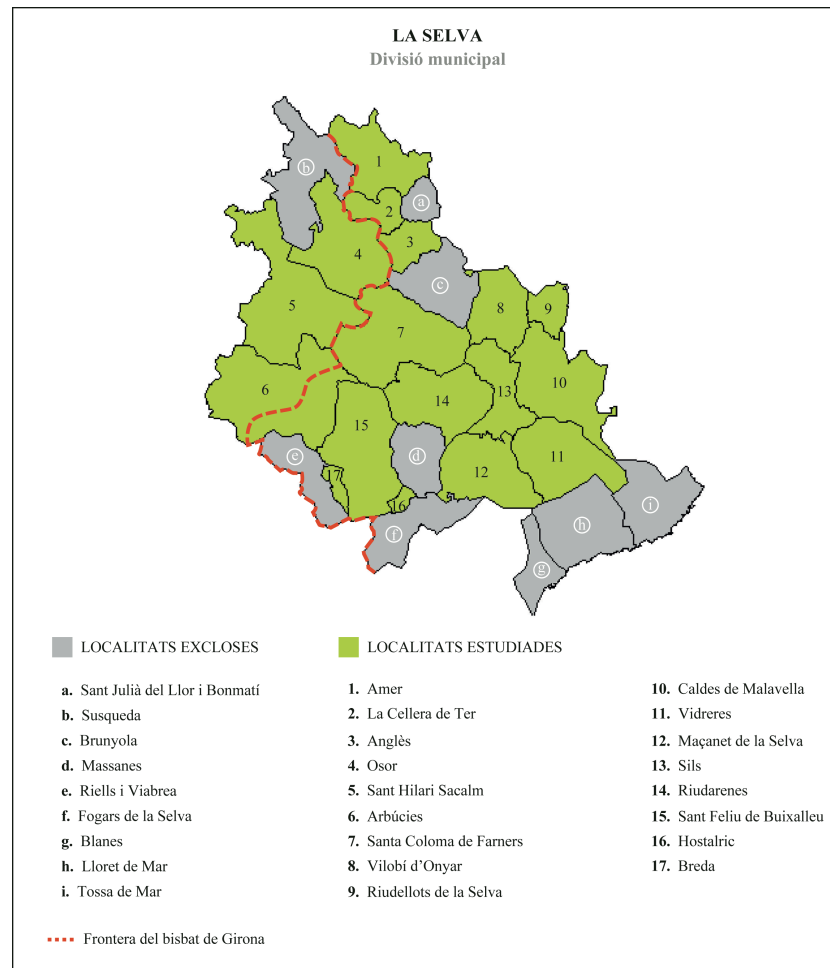
2.1 Studied area



- La Selva is an extremely complex area in terms of:

- Geography
- Economy
- Demography
- Resources
- Structure and definition

2.1 Studied area



2.2 Participants

- 34 participants: 1 G1 participant and 1 G2 participant in each of the 17 municipalities.
- Profile:
 - Speakers from Catalan-speaking families.
 - Born either between 1982 and 1992 (G1) or in 1952 or before (G2)
 - Born and lived (almost) exclusively in the studied municipality.
 - Born to at least one parent from the same municipality. The other must come from that same municipality, La Selva or the areas nearby.
 - Do not have university-level education.

2.3 Interview

- Elements:
 - Casual speech
 - **Formal survey**
- Realization:
 - April-July 2012
 - 40 – 90 minutes long
 - Video and audio recording

2.4 Data processing

- Storage: Phon (<http://chilides.psy.cmu.edu/phon/>, 1.5.2 version)
- Transcription: IPA

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

(i) Historical yodization ([ʎ] > [j])

- In some Catalan-speaking areas, including the region of La Selva, *ll* has traditionally had two distinct realizations:
 - [ʎ] when it derives from the Latin segments L- or -LL- (e.g. *lluna*, [ʎu.nə], Lat. *lūna*)
 - [j] when it derives from the Latin segments -LI- or -C'L- (e.g. *fulla*, [ʎu.jə], Lat. *fōlĭa*)
- In Standard Catalan, [ʎ] is used in all contexts, and orthography reflects this situation (*ll*).

(i) Historical yodization ([ʎ] > [j])

- G1 speakers have pretty much abandoned the forms with [j] altogether.
- G2 speakers' use of the forms with [j] maintains some vitality, but it is in clear regression.
- Those items where yodization still takes place seem to be undergoing a lexicalisation process (cf. Recasens 1996).

(i) Historical yodization ([ʎ] > [j])

- Yodization lacks linguistic prestige: it is highly stigmatized as rural, old and uneducated (cf. Bau & Font 1992; Pons 1992; Recasens 1996), at least in Central Catalan.
 - Over-correction: *desmaiar* [dəz.mə'ʎa]
- Orthography favours the use of the same phonetic segment for both forms traditionally pronounced with a [ʎ] and forms traditionally pronounced with a [j]: *ll* is used in both cases.
- A new form of non-historical yodization affecting all instances of *ll* is spreading across the Catalan-speaking areas, but specially in urban areas and in areas strongly influenced by either Spanish or French.

(ii) Voiceless realization of intervocalic affricates ([d.ɖ̺] > [t.t͡ʃ])

- In some areas of Central Catalan and, apparently, more significantly in the Northern regions, intervocalic affricates may have two distinct realizations (cf. Recasens 1996):
 - Voiced [d.ɖ̺] = used in segments derived from Latin –GJA or –DJA
 - Voiceless [t.t͡ʃ] = used in segments derived from Latin –ATĬCU
(cf. Recasens 1996; Pons 1992)
- Some speakers may also lose affrication and produce [ʒ] in some specific words (e.g. *platja* or *lletja*), derived from Latin –GJA or –DJA as well.
- Standard Catalan considers that voiceless realizations are not correct (IEC, 1999); *tg* and *tj* are the orthographic representations.

(ii) Voiceless realization of intervocalic affricates ([d.ɖ̥] > [t.tʃ])

- G2 speakers show a highly stable behaviour and maintain the traditional division of realizations (e.g., voiceless affricates vs. voiced affricates, with fricative realizations being merely residual). However:
 - The distinction between voiceless affricates vs. voiced affricates / fricative realizations is also used to distinguish between meanings: *mitges* and *mitjons* («panties, tights», «socks») vs. *mitja* (fem. adj., «half»), all derived from Latin MĒDĪA.
 - The voiceless realization is favoured even in *unexpected* cases.
- G1 speakers tend to use the Standard voiced affricate in all cases, although they show a somewhat erratic behaviour.

(ii) Voiceless realization of intervocalic affricates ([d.ɖ̺] > [t.tʃ])

- Voiceless realizations are increasingly stigmatized, due to its use by speakers highly influenced by Spanish (Pradilla, 2008).
- Schooling favours a levelling of spoken language to written language (Carrera-Sabaté 2002): cf. affricate realization of initial palatal sibilant /ʃ/.

(iii) Distribution of stressed mid front vowels ([e] - [ɛ])

- According to several authors (e.g. Coromines 1971; Recasens 1996), stressed mid front vowels show a particular behaviour in the area of Girona, and some argue that this area coincides with that of the diocese (Adam 2006; Coromines 1953).
- In agreement with this theory, such behaviour should affect only part of our participants.
- Standard Catalan does not consider this singular behaviour, and orthography often reflects the standard realization.

(iii) Distribution of stressed mid front vowels ([e] - [ɛ])

- Intergenerational variation is almost non-existent.
- Geographical variation reflects internal variation related basically to (historical) administrative borders and socioeconomic differences:

«Els grups socials (...) mantenen una certa consciència de grup, de solidaritat col·lectiva, que es converteix sovint en defensa de la seva identitat. Aquesta identitat té com una de les seves característiques més rellevants la forma de parlar, i, de manera especial, les peculiaritats lingüístiques del grup» (Viaplana 2002: 222).

4. SUMMARY

- Personal characteristics of each participant should be considered the reflection of social context (cf. Labov 1994: 34).
- Catalan is undergoing quick change processes and a strong tendency towards dialect levelling (cf. Perea 2007; Viaplana 1999).
- Linguistic normalization, schooling and media favour the use of the Standard variety, to the detriment of geographical varieties (Viaplana 2002).
- Linguistic insecurity (cf. Trudgill 2003) plays an important role.
- Catalan spoken in the area of Girona is prestigious (Soler 1986).

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Obrigada pela sua atenção!

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