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Affective motivations for borrowing: Performing local identity through loan phonology☆

Anna M. Babel

The Ohio State University, 298 Hagerty Hall, 1775 College Rd., Columbus, OH 43210, USA

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ABSTRACT

Speakers of a contact variety of Bolivian Spanish use aspirates and ejectives, primarily on Quechua loanwords, due to long-term, intense societal contact with Quechua. Speakers employ aspirates and ejectives to express affective stances such as anger, humor, and intimacy, and to index a local identity. Affective ties to language through expressive and sound symbolic associations motivate the use of aspirates and ejectives in the sound system of this language. The question of what linguistic features mean to people is key to understanding how they are transferred between languages and why they are maintained by members of a speech community.

1. Introduction

In this article, I describe the use of aspirates and ejectives in a variety of Spanish in contact with Quechua, and demonstrate that the use of aspirates and ejectives is associated with the construction of a distinctive local identity and with affective stances such as humor, anger, and intimacy. The use of aspirates and ejectives occurs primarily on Quechua loanwords, which function as part of an enregistered system of linguistic features that index a relaxed, informal style of speech (Babel, 2011). This enregistered system is linked to activities that are typical of the rural Andes and to intimate relationships among family and close friends.

In language contact, social factors play an essential role in shaping the way that linguistic features are borrowed and transferred between languages (Thomason, 2001; Thomason and Kaufman, 1988). Aspirates and ejectives are highly salient (Fallon, 2013; Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1996: 78; Poot, 2014) and seem to be under speakers' conscious control (Babel, 2010). Furthermore, they are relatively uncomplicated to adapt to the Spanish phonological system (if only by omission). However, speakers make prominent use of aspirates and ejectives in particular social contexts. Why do contact features persist in language contact situations, even when they are easy to control? In order to answer this question, we must attend to language contact as contact between speakers of a language—to the status of language as a social phenomenon and to the system of social meaning to which it contributes. I argue that the motivation for the maintenance of these sounds can be found in their socially meaningful character.

Studies in loan phonology have generally focused on formal and perceptual motivations for loan adaptations (Boersma and Hamann, 2009; Chang, 2008; Kenstowicz, 2003; Yip, 2006), although some authors have suggested that socially mediated

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E-mail address: babel.6@osu.edu.

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factors such as orthography play a role in the adaptation of phonological loans (e.g. Vendelin and Peperkamp, 2006). However, the significance of the use of aspirates and ejectives by Spanish-speakers goes beyond their structural role. The use of aspirates and ejectives as expressive forms of language links them to other sound symbolic features such as ideophones, which have been shown to play a part in the production of a 'stretched' phonological system in the broader Andean context due to their links with affective or expressive stances (Nuckolls et al., 2016). I explore social motivations for the maintenance of salient borrowed sounds, suggesting that sociolinguistic associations influence the maintenance of aspirates and ejectives as distinct categories rather than their adaptation to the canonical Spanish sound system. The literature on loan phonology has focused largely on sounds which are adapted to a grammatical system due to borrowing from an L2, a process based on 'recipient language agentivity' (Winford, 2005). Recipient language agentivity implies that speakers incorporate borrowed material from a second or other language into their dominant language. In this study, I discuss a case in which massive historical bilingualism and shift has resulted in the use of sounds that come from outside the Spanish linguistic system as it has been historically conceptualized, but which are part of the native competence of Spanish speakers in this region due to large-scale bilingualism and lexical borrowing. As Winford indicates, source- vs. recipient-language types of strategies can result in significantly different patterns of contact outcomes. In this case, the social phenomenon of language shift results in strong sociocultural associations with elements of language that are tied to Quechua. This means that ideological associations with loanwords and loan phonemes are closely tied to the positioning and identities of the language speakers who use them.

Throughout the article, I will use the term LARYNGEALIZED CONSONANTS to refer to aspirates and ejectives as a class. I do not mean the term to refer to creaky voice, as it is more commonly used. Rather, I use this term to indicate that both aspirates and ejectives share a laryngeal feature that can be used to distinguish them from non-laryngealized consonants (non-aspirated, non-ejective voiceless stops). The term 'laryngealized' is an imperfect label, given that laryngealization covers a great deal more than the limited context to which I apply it in this article. However, there is evidence that aspirates and ejectives form a class in Quechua (Gallagher, 2011, 2015), and 'laryngeal' has been used as a cover term for this class of sounds in this literature. In the Spanish-based context of my research, I would argue that what these consonants have in common is their incongruence with canonical Spanish phonology. Both aspirates and ejectives can be considered 'marked' with respect to canonical Spanish phonology.[1] The laryngeal feature that aspirates and ejectives share functions as an icon of Quechua-influenced Spanish for speakers of rural Bolivian Spanish. The feature is distinctive because it does not exist in normative or non-contact varieties of Spanish. Rather, aspirates and ejectives are both used to mark borrowed Quechua material in Spanish. This iconic association of laryngealized consonants with borrowed Quechua material can be extended to index a genre of speech that references affective stances, rural identity, and an area of intense linguistic and cultural contact.

The fact that laryngealized consonants are both phonetically salient and 'marked' with respect to normative varieties of Spanish makes them useful markers of a genre of Quechua-influenced Spanish that is used in the construction of a distinctive identity. This identity is linked to the Santa Cruz valleys of Bolivia, where Quechua-Spanish contact is pervasive and people characterize themselves linguistically and culturally 'mixed.' In this article, I use evidence from a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives in order to demonstrate the *specific, local* motivations for the maintenance of linguistic material—in this case, aspirates and ejectives—in a contact situation. This argument requires us to take into account evidence from language contact, loan phonology, Andean languages, and sociolinguistics to understand the social motivations behind language contact outcomes.

2. Methods and background information

The data that I examine in this article were collected in a town in the eastern Andean valleys of the Santa Cruz department of Bolivia. The valley region stretches between the Quechua-bilingual city of Cochabamba and the Spanish-monolingual city of Santa Cruz, which are respectively capitals of provinces of the same names. The rural agricultural valleys are characterized by a high degree of Quechua-Spanish bilingualism and language contact on both sides of the provincial border, although towns on the Santa Cruz side of the border are generally considered to be Spanish-dominant spaces. My data were collected in one of these rural towns in the Santa Cruz valleys, which I refer to as "Iscamayo," a pseudonym.

Quechua is a family of indigenous languages spoken by an estimated 3–5 million people, primarily in modern-day Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia (Lewis et al., 2009). Quechua IIC (following Torero, 1964), the variety that is spoken in southern Peru and Bolivia, is characterized by a three-way phonological contrast between aspirated (/p^h, t^h, k^h, q^h/), ejective (/p', t', k', q'/), and unmarked (/p, t, k, q/) voiceless stops at four places of articulation, in addition to the affricate series /ch, ch^h, ch'/. The canonical Spanish phonological system, on the other hand, includes only a voicing contrast between voiced (/b, d, g/) and voiceless (/p, t, k/) stops. In Iscamayo, however, aspirates and ejectives form part of a system of contrast in the local variety of Spanish. Language users can differentiate between voiceless consonants marked with laryngealization and canonical Spanish consonants in minimal pairs in a relatively restricted set of words. However, unlike in Quechua, there is no phonological contrast between aspirates and ejectives; they can be used interchangeably (Babel, to appear).

Spanish and Quechua have been in close and continuous contact in the Andes since the 16th century, when Spanish colonizers encountered the Inca in southern Peru. Quechua has influenced Spanish at all levels of linguistic structure

[1] The 'marked' has been used to discuss phonological universals (Haspelmath, 2006; Hayes and Steriade, 2004). I use the term in the more specific, local sense; laryngealized consonants are marked only in *relation to* canonical Spanish phonology.