

## The perception of Spanish lexical stress in interrogative and exclamation contexts by L1 Japanese speakers

Dr. Yasaman Rafat (Western university) & PhD Candidate. Elkin Sierra (Western University)

Whereas the acquisition of Spanish lexical stress by English-speaking learners has received some attention (Face, 2003; González, 2001; Lord, 2001; 2004; Marasco, Steele, Sunara, & Colantoni, 2012), very little is known about the perception of Spanish lexical stress by Japanese-speaking learners (Atria, Kimura, Sensui, Takasawa & Toyomaru, 2012). This study has three goals. First, it seeks to make an empirical and a theoretical contribution to the field of second language phonology by determining whether advanced Japanese-speaking learners of Spanish can perceive lexical stress, in particular when the target paroxytone (*límite*; limit) word is in final and non-final position in yes/no questions and exclamatory sentences. Subsequently, it will determine, how the Japanese stress system may interact with F0 peak displacement in the latter contexts in Spanish. Second, it will examine the effect of real versus nonce words. Third, it aims to investigate the effect of the context of learning. Based on the differences between the Spanish (Hualde, 2005; Llisterri, Marín & Mota, 1995) and the Japanese stress systems (Morimoto, 1984; Labrune, 2012; Hirayama, 2009; Kubozono, 2011), it is predicted that learners will have difficulty perceiving lexical stress in interrogative contexts: yes/no questions with trisyllabic paroxytone words in final position, where there is an F0 shift in Spanish. Also, it is expected the participants will experience more difficulty perceiving nonce words than real words. Finally, it is predicted that the learners who have learned Spanish in Colombia will outperform those who have learned Spanish in Japan.

The participants consisted of 20 advanced Japanese-speaking late learners of Spanish (10 in Bogotá and 10 in Japan). Their ages varied between 22 and 50 years old. 10 native Spanish speakers of Bogotá Spanish acted as the controls. All three groups were required to participate in a stress identification task. Nine sets of 3 syllable accentual minimal triplets with each having an oxytone (e.g., nabidó), a paroxytone (e.g., nabído) and a proparoxytone (e.g., nábido) were used in the stress identification task. The participants listened to the target words in five different contexts: isolation (e.g., medíco), final position of yes/no questions (e.g., ¿él dijo límite?), final position in exclamations (e.g., ¡él dijo válido!), non- final position of yes/no questions (e.g., ¿él dijo medicó ayer?), in non- final position of exclamations (e.g., ¡él dijo medico ayer!).

The preliminary results showed that there was an effect of type of sentence ( $p=0.000$ ). In particular, paroxytone words in final position embedded in interrogative and exclamations sentences posed more difficulty than these words in isolation for the participants (77% vs. 90% accuracy rate, respectively). These results confirm the hypothesis that Japanese-speaking learners use their L1 stress cue (F0) to perceive Spanish lexical stress. Moreover, when the data were collapsed, real words yielded a significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) higher accuracy rate than nonce words (86% vs. 67%, respectively). Furthermore, the Japanese-speaking learners in Bogotá outperformed the learners living in Japan (88% vs. 60%, respectively) confirming the hypothesis that context of learning affects L2 perception.

This study is important due to its novel language pairing, it highlights the role of language-specific acoustic correlates of stress in L2 perception of lexical stress. Moreover, it adds to our understanding of the effect of real vs. nonce words and context of learning.

Keywords: L2 phonological acquisition; stress; context of learning; Japanese; F0 peak.

