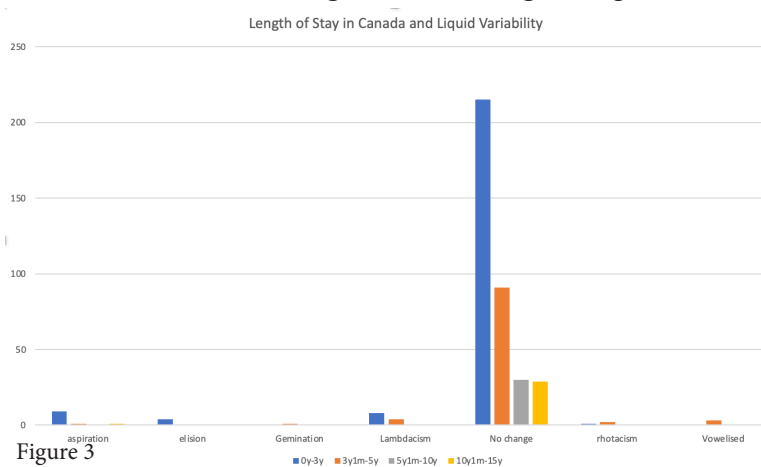
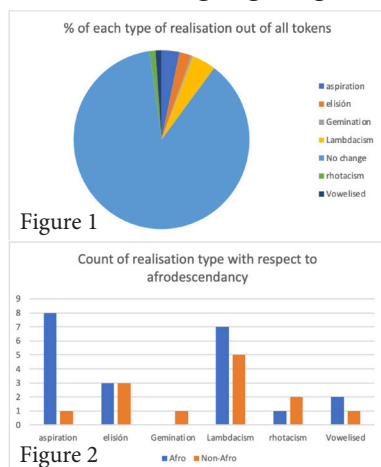


ABCs of Coastal Spanish: Afrodescendance, Bilingualism, Cross-dialectal influence in liquid coda variations of Coastal Spanish.

One of the most established phenomena in Spanish dialectology is the distinction of coda liquid variability between lowlands and highlands (Lipski 2007; Rosenblat 1989). Whereas coda liquids are weakened in the former, for example, pronouncing <perla> ‘pearl’ as [pehla] (aspiration), [pella] (gemination and lambdacism) or even [pela] (deletion), the latter variety maintains the tap-lateral contrast (Hualde 2014). We focus here on coastal Colombian and Venezuelan Spanish speakers from Cali, Barranquilla, Santa Marta, Chocó and Caracas i.e. from the coastal regions of the Pacific and the Caribbean. We hypothesise that, although coda liquid variability will largely involve weakening, the specific manifestations of the weakening process will vary depending on: (i) the specific language Spanish is in contact with in each region (e.g. Indigenous vs. African languages), (ii) cross-dialectal Spanish exposure in Canada and (iii) bilingual contact with English. Particularly, due to the African origins of Spanish in Chocó (Colombia) and its contact with neighbouring indigenous languages, we expect greater rates of rhotic gemination, lambdacism, deletion and low rates of trills (Bastide 1967). To test our hypotheses, participants (N=12) performed a picture naming task which included 24 stimuli and a subsequent spontaneous descriptor task. Tokens extracted from both tasks were analysed auditorily and acoustically using Praat to verify manner of articulation (Boersma & Weenink 2007). Furthermore, given the acoustic similarities between liquids, laterals and approximant rhotic realizations were differentiated through the parameters of duration and F3 (formant) height (Ladefoged & Maddieson 2007). Statistical tests, including Chi-squared, Fisher’s exact test and post-hoc residuals, were employed for hypothesis testing. Preliminary results displayed in figure 1 reveal that, amongst lowland coastal Spanish speakers of Colombia and Caracas, there is a continuum of great variability in liquid realisation ranging from retention, deletion, aspiration, gemination, neutralisation (rhotacism and lambdacism) and vocalisation, against previous research of lowland speech (Díaz-Campos 2013; Díaz-Campos & Killam 2012; Ugueto 2016). This can be explained by cross-dialectal Spanish exposure and bilingual contact amongst participants herein due to their residency in Canada. A weak association was identified, though statistically insignificant, thus arriving at a preliminary conclusion that Afrodescendants tend to pronounce liquids with greater variability that is typical of Afrolatino coastal speech. Furthermore, longer length of stay in Canada, indicating greater exposure to other Spanish dialects and English correlated with a lower liquid variability than the ones observed in coastal areas, highlighting the effects of cross-dialectal convergence and bilingual exposure.



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