

Melanie Uth (University of Cologne, Germany): *Emerging grammar in language contact: Evidence from word-final nasals in Yucatecan Spanish and Yucatec Maya*

This paper discusses the role of language contact for the non-assimilatory labialization of word-final nasals in Yucatecan Spanish (Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico) based on a comparison of Yucatecan Spanish and Yucatec Maya speech data. In a nutshell, the study points towards the conclusion that language contact did indeed play a (trigger) role for the development of word-final [m] in Yucatecan Spanish at the beginning, but that there has been a contact-independent sociolinguistic development of this feature as a prosodic marker of regional identity in this area.

In Yucatecan Spanish, a nasal consonant is often pronounced as [m] if placed at the end of a word. For example, instead of saying *Quiero comer* [pan] ('I want to eat bread'), the speakers say *Quiero comer* [pam] (Cassano 1977, García Fajardo 1984, Lope Blanch 1987, Yager 1989, Pfeiler 1992, Michnowicz, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008). This phenomenon is widespread in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico, and Yucatecan Spanish speakers both are renowned for, and partly self-identify with this feature, to the degree that it is even used for merchandising purposes by local labels or souvenir shops (*¡Vaya bien!*, 'Take care!'). The particularity of this feature, which is unknown in most of the other Spanish-speaking regions of the world, becomes especially evident if we consider that word-final [m] has been almost entirely eliminated from Spanish diachronically due to systematic apocopation (e.g. lat. *regionem* > sp. *región*) and alveolarization (e.g. lat. *cum* > sp. *con*), meaning that there is hardly any word-final [m] in contemporary varieties of Spanish at all. For this reason, the feature is often linked to the influence of the indigenous contact language Yucatec Maya (Alvar 1969: 169, Klee & Lynch 2009: 124), where word-final labial nasals are more frequent. However, on closer inspection, the contact hypothesis is not as evident as it appears at first sight, and there are, still, now and then observations of similar pronunciation habits in the south of Paraguay and in Columbia.

The main aim of the talk is to shed light on this issue by drawing on the results of two empirical analyses. The first empirical study is based on 104 word-final nasals obtained by means of a production experiment on Yucatecan Spanish which was carried out 2014 in Quintana Roo. The second study analyzes 153 word-final nasals in non-assimilatory contexts in 10 sociolinguistic interviews in Yucatec Maya recorded in 2017 in the same region. Both analyses are based on forced choice perception judgments of four raters, partly combined with acoustic analyses of the second formant and the duration of the relevant segments.

The most important results of the empirical analyses are that, in our Spanish data, (i) the rate of labialization of word final nasals is highest after [-anterior] vowels ([a,o]), as in [pam], whereas labialized nasals are extremely rare after [e,i], and (ii) the labialization rate significantly increases with the length of the subsequent pause, reaching its maximum in utterance-final position. In contrast, our Mayan data set does not exhibit any of these patterns. Thus, even if it is plausible to assume that the feature was originally transferred from Yucatec Maya to Spanish, it seems to have taken on a life of its own in Yucatecan Spanish which is crucially determined by its function as a linguistic marker of right-edge prosodic prominence.

This having said, there are reasons to suppose that the emergence and entrenchment of this feature in Yucatecan Spanish is due to purposes of social indexication in a context of socio-cultural demarcation. Therefore, after briefly sketching the main evidence in favor of the social indexication

hypothesis, it will be proposed to analyze the development from an integrative socio-linguistic perspective and by framing the results in a speaker-oriented socio-cognitive model of linguistic change.

Submission for presentation of a talk (preferred) or a poster.

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