

Linguistic Accommodation by Argentinean Immigrants in Spain: The case of the pronoun *vos* and other features

Andrea Barrancos*

Birkbeck, University of London

Abstract

Based on the analysis of authentic service encounter interactions and a perception questionnaire, this paper examines the accommodation patterns shown by Argentinean immigrants living in Valencia, Spain. The main focus is on the informal second person singular form *vos* used in Argentina as opposed to the form *tú* used in Spain in similar contexts. Given the marked differences in the pronominal address systems available in Argentinean and Peninsular Spanish, this study is aimed at finding out if speakers of Argentinean Spanish interacting with Spaniards in Spain accommodate to the Peninsular system or maintain their own. An analysis is also offered on lexical and phonetic accommodation. The study sets out to determine if the participants' gender, activity (i.e., service user or service provider) and the years of residence in Spain have any effect on their accommodation behaviour towards Peninsular forms. Results show that men accommodate slightly more than women, that service providers display higher accommodation rates than service users and that the years of residence in Spain do not play a role in accommodation patterns. With respect to the results from the questionnaire, the study also found a significant discrepancy between actual and reported linguistic behaviour.

Introduction

Numerous studies have been carried out on pronominal address systems in different varieties of Spanish, including Peninsular and Argentinean Spanish. With respect to Peninsular Spanish, these include Borrego Nieto, Gómez Asencio and Pérez Bowie (1978), Aguado Candanedo (1981) and Blas Arroyo (1995) among others. These studies show that there are two second

*E-mail address for correspondence: andreabarrancos@yahoo.com

person singular pronouns in use: the informal *tú* and the formal *usted*. Regarding Argentinean Spanish, there are also numerous publications -the first dating back to the 1940s- that focus particularly on the widespread phenomenon known as *voseo*, which is the use of the informal second person singular pronoun *vos*. Scholars have looked at this phenomenon both from a diachronic as well as a synchronic perspective (Fontanella de Weinberg 1989, Donni de Mirande 1992, Rigatuso 2000 and Rizzi 2004, among others).

However, there is a dearth of material on what happens when speakers of these two varieties of Spanish come into contact. This is a topic of interest considering that in the past few years a large number of Argentines have emigrated to Spain, particularly after the collapse of the Argentinean economy in 2001 and 2002 (in 2005 there were more than 260,000 Argentines living in Spain according to official figures (INE, 2006)). Given the marked differences in the pronominal address systems available in the two varieties it is interesting and relevant to study what strategies speakers of Argentinean Spanish adopt when interacting with Spaniards in Spain, particularly to see if they accommodate to the Peninsular system or if they maintain their own.

The present study analyzes the linguistic behaviour of 17 Argentinean immigrants living in Spain, focusing on the informal second person singular form *vos* used in Argentina as opposed to the form *tú* which is used in Spain in similar contexts. The study sets out to determine if the participants' gender, activity (service user or service provider) and the years of residence in Spain have any effect on their pattern of pronominal accommodation. It also attempts to compare naturally occurring linguistic behaviour and reported behaviour in order to see if there is any discrepancy. The phonetic and lexical features under study are analyzed from a qualitative perspective and the most relevant examples of (non)accommodation are presented.

Background to the study

Address Pronoun Systems in Spain and Argentina

According to Fontanella de Weinberg (1999: 1401-1406), the following are the pronominal systems for the second person used in most of Spain (excluding Andalusia and the Canary Islands) and Argentina:

Spain

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Informal	<i>tú</i>	<i>vosotros/as</i>
Formal	<i>usted</i>	<i>ustedes</i>

Argentina

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
Informal	<i>vos</i>	<i>ustedes</i>
Formal	<i>usted</i>	

As we will see, however, one of the authors does mention the occurrence of *tú* in Argentina as an intermediate form between *vos* and *usted* but with very restricted use.

Studies Focusing on the Argentinean ‘Voseo’

Fontanella de Weinberg (1989) describes *voseo* as the most significant morphosyntactic feature of the Spanish spoken in Spanish America but stresses the importance of this form in the Río de la Plata area when she states that “[...] Buenos Aires is the only city among all the large capitals of the Spanish-speaking world in which *voseo* is used in all social levels and in all registers” (my translation). Donni de Mirande (1992) agrees with the previous author in that the pronoun *vos* is used in all social levels, in all regions and registers. As regards the formal pronoun *usted* she indicates that its use is undergoing a fast decline and is being replaced by *vos* when the use is reciprocal. When the use is non-reciprocal, the pronoun *usted* is used by inferiors to superiors but with frequent exceptions. Rigatuso (2000: 304) who has studied address forms in Argentina extensively does not mention the use of the pronoun *tú* in Argentina and describes the pronominal system for the second person singular as comprising the forms *vos* and *usted*.

A more recent study carried out by Rizzi (2004) on Argentinean *voseo* points out that the form *vos* was initially considered ‘vulgar’ and for many years the education authorities have tried to abolish it by teaching the standard pronominal forms, i.e., those of the Peninsular system. Therefore, Argentineans have been familiarised with the pronoun *tú* and its verbal paradigm during the early school years. She dissents from the previous authors with regards to the pronominal system in use in Argentina and posits that the Argentinean pronominal system for the second person singular consists of three forms: *vos*, *tú* and *usted*, the pronoun *tú* being used to express a distance with the addressee which is not possible to establish with *vos* but which is not enough as to use *usted*. For instance, in Argentina the form *tú* is the most common form to be used when addressing God or deceased friends or relatives. As we shall see, this usage seems to have parallels with what Uber (1985) describes for Bogotá, Colombia, where there is a continuum of (non)solidarity with two types of *usted* in the extremes and *tú* in the middle.

Phonetic and Lexical Features of the Argentinean and Spanish Dialects

The main phonetic differences between the Argentinean and the Spanish varieties are the pronunciation of two phonemes: /θ/ and /j/. While in Spain /θ/ (used for letters ‘z’ and ‘c’ after ‘i’ and ‘e’) is pronounced [θ], in Argentina it is pronounced [s]. This is a feature in which the standard

Spanish variety differs from the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, including Andalusia and the Canary Islands, and therefore is not a feature that would immediately identify an Argentinean speaker. On the other hand, the pronunciation of the phoneme /j/ as [ʃ] and [ʒ] (both voiceless and voiced forms occur) in Argentina, as opposed to [j] in Spain for letters 'y' and 'll' is something that Spaniards immediately recognise as a characteristic of the Argentinean variety. This phenomenon known as *rehilamiento* was registered in Buenos Aires already in the 18th century and according to Donni de Mirande (1992:403) it is an urban feature that spread from the capital to the rest of the country.

In the lexical category, there are many elements that are exclusive to each of the dialects under study. Since listing all the lexical differences in both varieties would be impossible due to space constraints, only the most distinctively Peninsular or Argentinean lexical items will be analyzed.

Studies on Linguistic Accommodation

Sinner (2006) analyzes the linguistic accommodation strategies used by Argentinean immigrants and travellers in Spain and Germany focusing on the use of *vos*. The study is based on semi-guided interviews with a total of 37 participants, out of which 26 were Argentinean immigrants living in Spain and Germany and 11 were Argentinean nationals travelling around Europe. The conclusions seem to point towards a strategy of adapting to the situation and the speaker rather than completely changing from one variety to the other. The study suggests that the type of immigration (either permanent or temporary) combined with the reason for it (political, professional, economic, etc.) and the duration of the stay in the foreign country are decisive factors in the level of linguistic accommodation. This confirmed the findings of Sinner's previous study where he concluded that the reasons behind the act of emigration have a considerable influence on linguistic attitudes (Sinner 2005).

Pesqueira's (2005) study analyzes sound change by Argentinean immigrants in Mexico City focusing on the pronunciation of the phoneme /j/. The data was obtained from sociolinguistic interviews with 12 Argentinean participants (6 males and 6 females) who had relocated to Mexico City at least two years before the interview took place. The author concluded that linguistic change was more likely to happen if the sound was included in a high frequency word and if the word was learned in the host country. Among the social factors favouring sound change the author mentions being of female gender, having several years of residence in Mexico, not having much contact with other Argentineans, having a Mexican partner and planning to stay in Mexico (Pesqueira, 2005: 16). Her findings are in line with Sinner's (2005) results regarding the fact that having a friendly attitude towards the

second dialect and having resided for several years in the host country tend to favour sound replacement.

Another study worth mentioning is Hughson's doctoral thesis (2005) where she studies address pronoun usage by Spanish-English bilinguals in Australia. The data was obtained making use of a qualitatively-focused and triangulated methodology, including focus groups, interviews and observations of actual usage in both private and public settings. She observed that some of the speakers changed their address behaviour from that of their country of origin/background. All but one of the informants who accommodated in their address usage were from the first generation -i.e., they had been born in a Spanish-speaking country- which suggests that language proficiency is an important factor in pronominal accommodation. In general, speakers converged towards what they perceived to be a more standard address system weighed towards the Peninsular standard (Hughson 2005: 318). The informants of Argentinean background accommodated to the 'neutral' norm by switching to *tú* usage, leaving aside the use of *vos* which they viewed as a regional feature due to the fact that it has not been standardised in other countries. Along the same lines of Sinner's (2006) results, Hughson (2005) also points at the "disjuncture between the perceptions of speakers on the one hand and their practices on the other" (Hughson, 2005, p. 319).

Prestige of the Argentinean Dialect

A study carried out by Sarrible (2000) analyzes the situation of Argentineans who migrated to Spain, mainly in the seventies. The researcher posits that the profile of the Argentineans resident in Spain is different from that of other non-EU immigrants for a number of reasons: Argentineans have European origins and therefore they cannot, in general, be identified by their physical appearance; due to their European origins, they enjoy a privileged situation in terms of complying with the legal requirements to live in European countries; their education and appearance place them in a better off position when compared to other groups of immigrants, which gives them access to highly qualified jobs as opposed to the majority of non-EU immigrants who are often confined to do unskilled work. Another factor mentioned by the author is the contribution of Argentineans towards building the psychoanalysis profession in Spain.

In an independent contribution published on-line, Murias (2004) studies the most recent migration of Argentineans to Spain which took place in December 2001, when the country slumped into a serious economic, social and political crisis. Almost all of the 15 informants, who were Argentineans living in Spain, said Argentineans were highly regarded by Spaniards. One of

them also commented on the Argentinean accent as one of the possible reasons why Argentineans are warmly received in Spain.

Studies on Pronominal Address Forms

Brown and Gilman's (1960) framework will be used as a point of departure to describe pronoun usage in Spain and Argentina. In their seminal work on pronominal forms, Brown and Gilman differentiate between power semantics and solidarity semantics for the use of pronouns. They state that power semantics is nonreciprocal or asymmetrical, i.e., the superior uses T and receives V. (In this case T refers to *vos* and *tú* in Argentina and Spain respectively and V to *usted*). On the other hand there is the solidarity dimension which implies a reciprocal or symmetrical relationship where individuals give and receive the same form. An interesting contribution by the referred authors was noticing that there was a shift from power to solidarity as the governing semantic principle and they also mention the fact that the use of the reciprocal T seemed to be expanding and could be considered as the trend. More than forty years after their study, their predictions appear to be confirmed. Taken as a whole the studies on address forms carried out in Argentina confirm the shift from the asymmetrical to symmetrical uses and within these symmetrical uses, the tendency is to use the intimacy pronoun *vos* rather than the one of distance *usted* (Boretti & Rigatuso 2004).

Brown and Gilman's theory, however, has some limitations. While this framework seems to adequately account for the pronominal system in Peninsular Spanish it does not apply to the Argentinean pronominal system where, according to some studies, there are 3 pronouns in use -even though one of them has a very restricted spectrum. Furthermore, it seems that the pronoun *tú* in Argentina could not be defined in terms of solidarity but rather it seems to have a meaning of 'half distance' Rizzi (2004). It can be argued that the Argentinean pronominal system bears some resemblances to that which Uber (1985) has found for the Spanish of Bogotá, where there is a continuum of (non)solidarity with two types of *usted* in the extremes and *tú* in the middle.

Communication Accommodation Theory

With regards to the topic of linguistic accommodation, this paper draws on the principles of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) in order to explain the different patterns of linguistic behaviour of the participants. As described by Gallois, Ogay and Giles (2004), the three general assumptions in which CAT is based are: 1. "Communicative interactions are embedded in a sociohistorical context", 2. "Communication is about both exchanges of

referential meaning and negotiation of personal and social identities” and 3. “Interactants achieve the informational and relational functions of communication by accommodating their communicative behaviour, through linguistic, paralinguistic, discursive and non-linguistic moves, to their interlocutor’s perceived individual and group characteristics” (Gallois et al., 2004, p. 137). Accommodation is subsequently defined as follows (Gallois et al. 2004):

Accommodation is the process through which interactants regulate their communication (adopting a particular linguistic code or accent, increasing or decreasing their speech rate, avoiding or increasing eye contact, etc.) in order to appear more like (accommodation) or distinct from each other (nonaccommodation, including counter-accommodation through divergent or hostile moves, under-accommodation through maintenance and unempathetic moves, and over-accommodation through oftentimes patronizing or ingratiating moves). (p.137)

On over-accommodation, the referred authors mention that:

Over-accommodation behaviour is paradoxical in that the speaker may have good intentions (or appear to), but behave in an inappropriate way. Similarly, the receiver may interpret the behaviour interpersonally and thus evaluate it positively as accommodation. This interpretation frequently occurs when intergroup relations are not salient and the interpersonal history is positive. (p 141).

Methodology

This study is based on recordings of naturally occurring interactions in different contexts as well as on a questionnaire given to the participants after the recording was made. In all cases, permission was granted to record the interactions and the participants were told the recordings were made for the purposes of doing research on communication.

After the interaction was recorded, all the participants filled in a questionnaire in which information was requested about their age, the number of years of residence in Spain, their educational level, their feelings towards Spain and Argentina and towards their dialect and the Peninsular one, as well as their conscious linguistic behaviour with regard to accommodation to the Peninsular dialect. A Likert scale was used for each question in the questionnaire.

An analysis of the pronominal, phonetic and lexical features was carried out. The information about pronominal usage was quantified and a percentage of accommodation/nonaccommodation was calculated for each participant. The phonetic and lexical features are analyzed taking a qualitative approach and the results are described below for each participant. The results of pronominal usage were subsequently compared with the responses to the questionnaire filled in by the participants.

Methodological considerations

When quantifying the use of *vos* and the corresponding verbal paradigm only contrasting *voseo* and *tuteo* forms were considered, namely, the present indicative, the present subjunctive, and the imperative¹. Future and imperfective forms such as *caminas* ‘you walk’ and *caminabas* ‘you used to walk’ were not taken into account because they are identical in *tuteo* and *voseo*, as well as some present indicative forms for specific verbs like *das* and *ves* which also coincide. Preterit was not considered in our study due to the common tendency of speakers in *tuteo* varieties to use analogical forms such as *tú caminastes* ‘you walked’ along with prescriptive forms, such as *tú caminaste* ‘you walked.’

The Participants

17 Argentinean Participants, 10 females and 7 males, were recorded in their interactions with Spaniards in different contexts. Out of these 17, 8 were receiving legal advice on immigration-related issues and the other 9 were providing services which varied from providing advice on social benefits to serving customers in a restaurant.

All the participants were aged between 30 and 58 and all had been living in Spain for at least a year with the exception of one informant who had just arrived in Spain. 53% of the participants were educated to secondary school level, 29% were educated to university level and 18% were educated to primary school level.

Results

Qualitative Analysis

The informants were divided into 2 groups: service providers and service users. Except for one, all the service users were receiving legal advice from a Spanish solicitor, which was offered as a free service by an Association of immigrants at the Association’s facilities. The other service user was being interviewed by a Spanish Immigration Officer. In all cases the Spanish legal

advisor as well as the Immigration Officer started the conversation using *tú* with the service users.

In the following transcriptions, the address forms are noted with the following superscripts: *Tú* = T, *Vos* = V, *Usted* = U.

Service Users

This is an example taken from Jaime, a 40 year-old male who had been living in Spain for 8 years. He shows a pattern of mixed pronominal address usage with predominance of *vos* as well as a significant amount of lexical accommodation. At a certain point of the interaction he uses the pronoun *tú* and the corresponding verbal form with his interlocutor:

(1) Jaime

83 [...] *este verano no trabajo* (.) *bueno tú dices que bueno*
 [...] this summer I am not working (.) so **you^T say^T** that it's ok

However, a few turns later, he switches to *vos*, which appears both in the verbal conjugation as well as the pronoun:

87 [...] *bueno vale* (.) *entonces decime algo decime que renuncie por favor que yo después te echo la culpa a vos*
 [...] ok fine (.) so **tell^V** me something please **tell^V** me I should resign so I can then blame **you^V**

The above participant used a significant number of lexical items exclusive to the Peninsular variety. For instance, in a number of occasions he uses the discourse marker *vale* which is broadly used in Spain to convey agreement and which is one of the 'flagship' words of Peninsular Spanish. He also uses a series of swear words which are not part of the Argentinean vocabulary. Studies on the use of swear and taboo words have found that "The use of swear and taboo words is also a linguistic device used to affirm in-group membership and establish boundaries and social norms for language use (Drescher, 2000; Rayson et al., 1997; Stenström, 1995, 1999)" (Dewaele, 2004: 86), so it can be argued that by using these expressions the participant was trying to affirm his in-group membership of the host country community.

The next participant, a 30 year-old male who had just arrived in Spain opted for using a form that was available in his repertoire (*usted*) to address the Spanish Legal Advisor although it would not probably have been used in the same situation in Argentina:

(2) Cecilio

37 *porque yo lo vi:: ay:er creo* (.) *porque yo lo vi en la otra página eso qué*

es es lo bajó recién↑

because I saw it yesterday I think (.) because I saw it on the other web page what is that have **you**^U just downloaded^U it↑

The fact that the participant shows some hesitation manifested by the repetition of the verb *es es* before using the address form may be indicative of his uncertainty about what pronoun to use. As Boretti and Rigatuso (2004) point out, there has been a shift from the asymmetrical uses to symmetrical ones and within the latter, to the use of *vos* rather than *usted*, therefore it is highly likely that this pronoun would not have been chosen in the same situation in Argentina. This participant maintained his dialect features at the phonetic and lexical level, with only one instance of usage of the discourse marker *vale*.

Another informant, a 56 year-old male with 2 years of residence in Spain, showed very high levels of pronominal, lexical and phonetic accommodation. In the turn transcribed below, which coincided with a moment where the participant was not happy with the advice he had received from the Legal Advisor, he shows an important amount of variation in the pronominal system used:

(3) Javier

138 *no: no escúcheme vos un día me dijiste que yo puedo que tenía que trabajar exclusivamente de eso pero podía vivir en cualquier lado eso me acuerdo que me que me tú me lo has dicho*
no no **listen**^U **you**^V told me once that I can that I had to work only in that but I could live anywhere I remember that that **you**^T **told**^T me that

The participant had been using *tuteo* with the Legal Advisor for the preceding 8 minutes of the interaction, however, when he suddenly gets irritated during the conversation, he changes to *usted* and *vos* forgetting about the *tú* form he had been systematically using. This appears to be a use related to the expression of emotions, showing that the accommodative strategy requires a conscious effort. As soon as he realises this, he seems to try to revert to the use of *tú* in the very same turn, not without some hesitation (*que me que me*).

When analyzing his lexical choices, although the participant had only been living in Spain for two years, he shows a high level of lexical accommodation using words like *ordenador* ‘computer’ which in Argentina is known as *computadora* or *billete* ‘plane ticket’ which would be *pasaje* in Argentina or the discourse marker *pues* which is not widely used in Argentina.

The participant also shows some phonetic accommodation although it is significantly less than the pronominal or lexical accommodation. Consistent with Pesqueira’s (2005) suggestions, Javier mainly converges when the

phonetic feature adopted is part of a word or expression learned in the host country. For example, when he uses the Peninsular Spanish discourse markers *oye* ('listen' used to call the addressee's attention) and *ya* (used to express agreement or to denote one is following the speaker's discourse) most of the times he uses the Spanish [j] instead of the Argentinean [ʒ] (which he uses in the rest of the cases for the phoneme /j/).

In the questionnaire, this participant replied that he was very happy in Spain and in a short interview with the researcher he confirmed he was not willing to go back to his country. This supports Sinner's (2005) observations that the desire to integrate into the host country is much more significant in the case of those who emigrated with the idea of never returning to their native country, which implies a much more positive and open predisposition towards the language of the new country (Sinner 2005: 151).

Two of the participants were mother and daughter and had the interview with the Spanish Legal Advisor at the same time. Suleica was 58 and had been living in Spain for 3 years while Silvana was 39 and had been living in Spain for 4 years.

Suleica shows a very mixed pattern of pronominal usage using the 3 pronouns - *tú*, *usted* and *vos* - with her interlocutor. She also shows some phonetic accommodation, pronouncing the same phoneme differently in the same turn:

(4) Suleica

16 *pero mirá que y^{li}o me fui a Argentina y^ʒa*
but **take**^V into account that I've already been to Argentina

The first 'y' in the word *yo* was pronounced using the Spanish allophone while the second 'y' in the word *ya* was pronounced using the Argentinean allophone. This occurred on the seventh turn in the conversation and was actually the first time this sound was uttered by the participant. In all the remaining part of the interaction, she systematically used the Argentinean variant. This could be interpreted as an intention to accommodate to the addressee's variety and the variability could be explained drawing on Hughson's (2005) findings that the language proficiency level in the participants' native language was a significant factor when it comes to pronoun accommodation since this participant was educated to primary school level.

Silvana, on the other hand, used *voseo* throughout the interview. In terms of lexical choices, she used the term *ordenadores* but generally kept her vocabulary, even using the typical Argentinean discourse maker *bárbaro* 'fantastic', 'great.' This participant showed almost no phonetic accommodation.

The last of the participants who saw the Spanish Legal Advisor was a 41 year-old female with 3 years of residence in Spain. She showed a consistent pattern of maintenance using *voseo* with only one instance of *ustedeo*. In lexical terms, she uses many Peninsular terms related to the topic she was discussing with the advisor such as *Ayuntamiento* ‘City Hall’, *cotizar a la seguridad social* ‘make contributions to social security,’ among others. In the turn transcribed below the participant shows that she is making an effort to remember the specific terminology used in Spain:

(5) Iracema

23 *no (.) pero yo este: en el ayuntamiento cómo se dice hice el empadronamiento*
no (.) but I um: in the City Hall **how do you say** I registered myself

This can be considered accommodation for the purposes of achieving a high level of communication efficiency (Thakerar et al., 1982).

One interesting phenomenon identified in the speech of this participant was the repetition of segments identical to the ones uttered by her addressee in the preceding turn. Transcribed below are some examples (the repeated sentences appear in bold):

14 Advisor: ***se puede solicitar con dos meses de antelación***
you can apply for it two months in advance

15 Iracema: ***se puede solicitar ah no sabía***
you can apply for it ah I didn’t know

84 Advisor: ***haces una fotocopia a esto***
you take a copy of this

85 Iracema: ***le hago una fotocopia a eso***
I take a photocopy of that

124 Advisor: ***de lo que tú quieras***
of whatever type you want

125 Iracema: ***de lo que yo quiera***
of whatever type I want

Like Iracema above, Betty also shows a similar behaviour of repeating her addressee’s sentences. This participant was attending an interview with an immigration officer. She was 40 years old and had been living in Spain for 7 years. She shows a mixed pronominal usage of *tuteo* and *voseo*. She also shows some lexical accommodation, including in her repertoire the Peninsular Spanish discourse markers *vale* and *venga* (an expression used with several meanings, among which, ‘come on’, ‘sure’, ‘ok’) or *y tal* ‘and all that.’ She did not show any phonetic accommodation.

Transcribed below are the turns where this participant used the repetition strategy:

(6) Betty

01 Advisor *bueno vamos a ver Betty vamos a actualizar tu ficha*
ok let's see Betty let's update your records

02 Betty *vamos a actualizar mi ficha*
let's update my records

and

07 Advisor *la dirección tendríamos que cambiarla porque está en la calle Valencia entonces sé que te has cambiado y vives (.) en otra dirección*
we should change the address because now it is entered as Valencia street and I know you have moved and now you live (.) at a different address

08 Betty *en otra dirección*
at a different address

On the topic of repetition in conversation, Tannen (1989) has found that:

By facilitating production, comprehension, connection and interaction [...], repetition serves an over-arching purpose of creating interpersonal involvement. Repeating the words, phrases, or sentences of other speakers (a) accomplishes a conversation, (b) shows one's response to another's utterance, (c) shows acceptance of others' utterances, their participation, and them, and (d) gives evidence of one's own participation. It provides a resource to keep talk going, where talk itself is a show of involvement, of willingness to interact, to serve positive face. (p. 52).

Therefore, this strategy of repeating the previous speaker's sentence, exactly or with minimal variation as we have seen above, is a phenomenon related to conversation in general and not particularly related to a dialect or language contact situation. It could be argued, however, that in a language or dialect contact situation, the purposes of repetition described by Tannen acquire a new significance for those who try to accommodate to the addressee's speech patterns and hence, it could be one of the strategies prioritised by converging speakers.

Service providers

The remaining 9 participants were providing different types of services from serving customers in a restaurant to providing advice on social benefits. As we shall see, there seems to be a higher level of accommodation by the participants in this group. This may be related to the fact –as one of the participants said– that converging to the Peninsular variety is positively evaluated by Spanish people, possibly more so when the immigrant is providing a service for Spanish clients.

The participant who has been living in Spain for longer showed the highest level of accommodation. In view of this, one would hypothesize that there is a correlation between the years of residence and accommodative strategies. She was 41 years old and she had been living in Spain for 16 years. She was working as a social worker, providing advice to Spanish citizens about social benefits.

Her linguistic strategy was of total accommodation at all levels using the features of the Argentinean dialect only on very few occasions, mainly in words where there is a combination of the /s/ and /θ/ sounds like *necesidad* ‘need,’ *solicitud* ‘request,’ or *circunstancias* ‘circumstances,’ which possibly require more effort for converging. She was the only one of all the participants who used the Peninsular second person plural form *vosotros* with the corresponding verbal paradigm.

In a short interview maintained with the researcher, the participant commented that at a ‘positive feedback session’ organized at work her colleagues expressed their appreciation of the fact that she accommodated to their dialect. This is in line with Kim’s (2001) findings on the expected patterns of accommodation by immigrants in foreign language countries. The author found that convergence by immigrants (especially with an accommodated accent) to the host culture’s language is not only expected by many members of mainstream society but is also considered an indication that they have acculturated to the host country’s culture.

The participant also said that when she used the Argentinean dialect at work, she felt she could not communicate adequately with the Spanish service users she was advising because she felt she was perceived as a foreigner and the users did not feel at ease with her. Another interesting note about this participant is that she was married to an Argentinean man and when talking to him she completely switched to the Argentinean dialect in all aspects. This suggests that she maintains two separate dialects in her repertoire, instead of having acquired the new one at the expense of abandoning the original dialect.

Another interesting feature of this participant was what we could classify as hypercorrection. This happened at the phonetic level, when the participant

used the [θ] sound for /s/ in the word *situación* instead of using [s]. Transcribed below is an example of this:

(7) Marina

67 Marina *sí **estáis** en una s^[θ]ituac^[θ]ión complicada porque con la renta de él y^[j]a ll^[j]egáis al límite que está establec^[θ]ido para la pensión*
 yes you are (plural using *vosotros*) in a difficult situation because with his income you already reach the limit established for the benefit

The phenomenon of hypercorrection appears in the pronunciation of the word *situación* which, in Peninsular Spanish, is pronounced s^[s]ituac^[θ]ión. This phenomenon was also present in the speech of another participant, a 32 year-old female with 3 years of residence in Spain, who was working as a waitress at a restaurant. Like Marina above, she also incurs in phonetic hypercorrection since, by attempting to use the sound [θ] she uses it in the wrong place. For instance, when she approaches some clients and describes the options in the menu she says:

(8) Paulina

01 Paulina *a ver chicos (.) flan cas^[θ]ero*
 ok guys (.) home made creme caramel,

When she utters the word *casero* she uses the sound [θ] for the /s/ in an attempt to accommodate to the Spanish dialect, although in this case it was not needed since the appropriate sound to use would have been [s]. It is understandable, however, why she made this mistake. As we explained above (cf. Phonetic and Lexical Features of the Argentinean and Spanish Dialects) one of the main phonetic differences of the two dialects is the different pronunciation of the phoneme /θ/. In Spain, this phoneme is pronounced [θ] while in Argentina it is pronounced [s]. In this example, the participant possibly did not remember the spelling of the word, i.e. with an ‘s’ instead of a ‘c’ and she chose the wrong sound.

She also used the [θ] sound when saying *dulce de leche* (an Argentinean type of dessert) as we can see below:

07 Paulina *está congelada es un postre argentino sabés↑ es hecho cas^[θ]ero eh lleva dulc^[θ]e de leche y*
 it’s frozen it is an Argentinean dessert you know↑ it’s home-made and it has *dulce de leche* and

It is worth pointing out, however, that she is not consistent in the use of [θ] when referring to *dulce de leche*. Out of the 10 times she mentioned this dessert, four were uttered with [θ] and 6 with [s].

The topic of hypercorrection we have seen above with Marina and Paulina was first commented upon by Labov (1963) and since then a number of studies have been carried out on the topic. According to Giles & Williams (1992), “[h]ypercorrection occurs when speakers attempt to shift their speech towards perceived prestigious (overt or covert) speech variety but in their attempts to do so they miss or overshoot the target.”

Given the parallelisms with over-accommodation, the authors then go on to conceptually locate this phenomenon within the CAT and they state that hypercorrection can often be an example of over-convergence where speakers overshoot a perceived higher status-sounding speaker or it can also be an example of divergent behaviour as when a speaker diverges upwards towards the standard variety and away from the recipient of the message (Giles & Williams, 1992, p. 348). The motives for hypercorrection posited by the referred authors are on the one hand the speakers’ intense desire for social approval, interpersonal affiliation or group identification and, on the other hand, it could be used to indicate or emulate authority, sophistication and/or control (Giles & Williams, 1992, p. 351).

In the light of this and considering the significant amount of convergence shown mainly by Marina but also by Paulina we can interpret their hypercorrect behaviour as an expression of their desire to amalgamate with the host country’s people and dialect. In this study, only these two female participants showed hypercorrect behaviour. This is in line with Di Paolo’s (1992) findings which, although based in a considerably small sample, point towards the direction that women tend to favour the hypercorrect forms.

Although it is impossible to determine exactly how the Spanish addressees evaluated the over-accommodative behaviour of the Argentinean participants because they were not interviewed as part of this study, judging by the way the interaction continued after the over-accommodation occurred, the addressees did not seem to take it negatively. Therefore, in the above cases of Marina and Paulina, given that the intergroup relations were not salient in either case and that the interpersonal history between the interlocutors was positive or nonexistent, we could say that the addressees evaluated the over-accommodation positively as accommodation, in agreement with Gallois et al. (2004, p. 141) cited above.

Coming back to Paulina, she also converges phonetically by using the [j] sound when uttering the word *carajillo* (name given in Spain to a local drink) or *bocadillo* (‘sandwich’ in Peninsular Spanish). She also uses Peninsular Spanish phonetics when she says *cebolla* ‘onion’ and *vainilla* ‘vanilla’ but not when she refers to *bollería* (a Peninsular Spanish term to refer to pastries). In view of this, Pesqueira’s (2005) findings that phonetic accommodation is more likely to happen if the word was learned in the host country do not

seem to apply since some of the words learned in the host country are pronounced using the Argentinean dialect while some of the ones learned in her native country are adapted to the Spanish dialect. In terms of lexical items, this participant uses many Peninsular Spanish words with her Spanish clients like *cuño* ‘stamp’ which is known as *sello* in Argentina, *lo siento* ‘sorry’ which is rarely used in Argentina -where the verbs *perdonar* and *disculpar* are used instead- or the swear word *jolín* (a euphemism for *joder* used to express irritation, anger, surprise, etc.).

Sol, a 29 year-old female who had been living in Valencia for 5 years and was working as a sales assistant, showed a 100% accommodation rate with *tuteo*. She did not accommodate at the phonetic level but she did use an important amount of vocabulary of the host dialect.

Rodrigo, 35, and Hugo, 43, were both males who had been living in Spain for 3 years and were serving clients in an ice-cream shop. They showed a similar linguistic behaviour, the first, showing a variable pattern of pronoun usage with 67% maintenance of *vos* and the second with a 73% maintenance rate. Neither of them converged at the phonetic level and both used the most frequent Peninsular Spanish discourse marker *vale* as the only lexical feature adopted from the Spanish dialect.

Suly, a 49-year old female who had been living in Spain for 2 years, showed no accommodation at all at the pronominal level, maintaining the pronoun *vos* 100% of the times. She did not show any accommodation at the phonetic level while in terms of lexical accommodation she only adopted the discourse marker *vale*.

María Clara, a 45-year old female with 5 years of residence in Spain, was working as a waitress in a bar. She showed an accommodation rate of 80%. She did not accommodate at the phonetic level and used only the discourse marker *vale*.

Ana, a 54-year old female with 6 years of residence in Spain, was working at a corner-shop. She showed a 63% accommodation rate with *tú* and one instance of accommodation at the phonetic level with the word *gallego* when she referred to a type of bread.

The last of the participants, Silvano, was a 48 year-old male who had been living in Spain for 2 years. He was working as the representative of the Association of Retailers of an area of Valencia and he was visiting the members of the Association (all Spaniards) in order to give them information about the Association’s activities and future events. He showed a high level of pronominal accommodation (82%) with pronominal switching in some cases. Transcribed below is an example of the mixed pronominal usage shown by this participant. It was taken from an interaction between the participant and a 30 year-old female employee at a printing shop:

(9) Silvano

19 Silvano *tiene cinco participaciones eh ya los puedes adquirir si te*

interesa o bien llámás a la asociación si te lo querés pensar y decir mirá

there are five invitations ok and **you**^T can acquire them now if you are interested otherwise **you**^V call the association if **you**^V want to think about it and say **look**^V

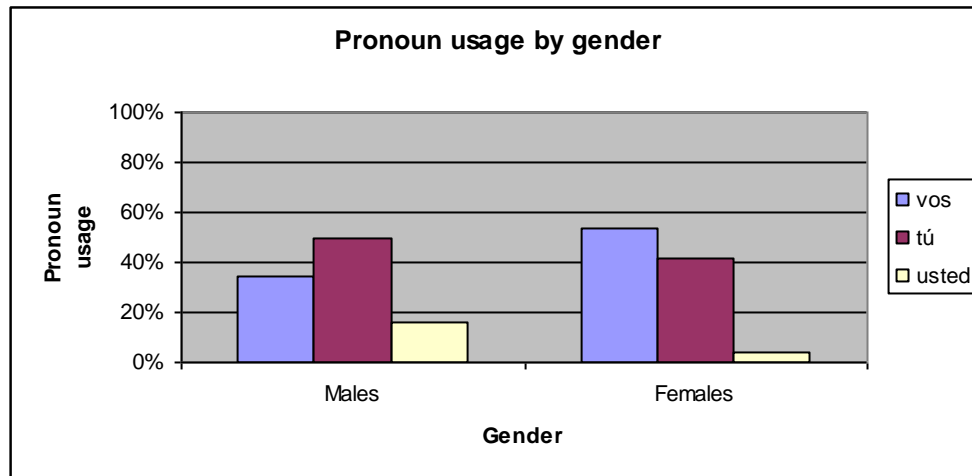
In the example above, the participant switches between *tú* and *vos* usage with the same interlocutor in the same turn. In terms of phonetic accommodation, he only accommodated once using the sound [j] when addressing a 40 year-old Spanish man.

Quantitative Analysis

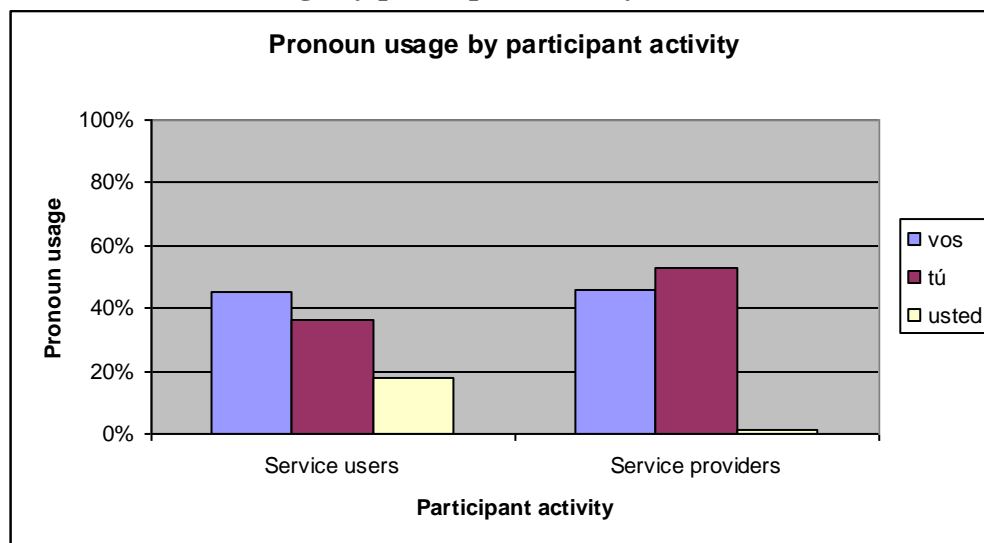
The results suggest that men tend to accommodate slightly more than women (51% for men and 42% for women) using the pronoun *tú*. Regarding nonaccommodative attitudes, the difference is slightly higher with 54% of women maintaining the pronoun *vos* as opposed to 33% of men using it (as can be seen on Chart 1: Pronoun usage by gender).

Considering that in this case accommodating by using the Peninsular *tú* would be accommodating upwards (i.e. towards the standard variety), the results of this study would not seem to follow the same lines as the generality of the literature on the field of language and gender where women are often more inclined to using the standard forms (see Holmes (1998) for an overview). However, some researchers, such as Hudson (1980) and Labov (1982), have found exceptions to this pattern for communities where women's roles are extremely circumscribed and therefore react less strongly to linguistic norms (Labov, 1982). This, however, would not be applicable in this case.

Men showed a higher rate of *usted* usage although it should be noted that the majority of the instances of *usted* occurred while the participants switched pronouns when addressing the same person. Another interesting phenomenon is the apparent tendency of women of a certain age (39, 41 45 and 49 years) to show very high nonaccommodation rates by using *vos*.

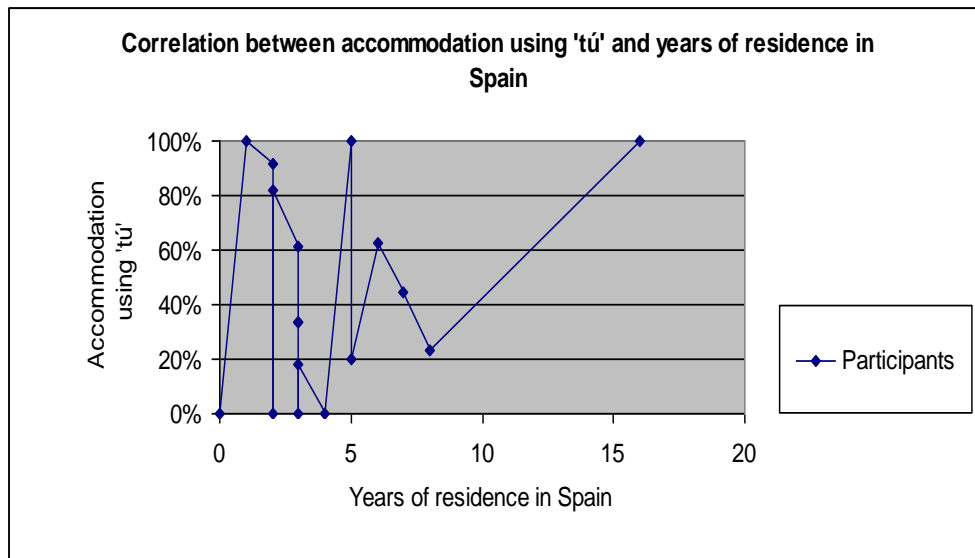
Chart 1: Pronoun usage by gender

If we analyze pronominal usage according to the activity of the participants (Chart 2: Pronoun usage by participant activity), we can see that those who were providing a service tended to accommodate by using *tú* more than those who were using a service (54% for service providers and 37% for service users). The percentage usage of *vos* is very similar for both groups (45% for service providers and 46% for service users). The difference between both groups is that the service users show an 18% usage of the pronoun *usted* while the service providers' usage of this pronoun was only 1%.

Chart 2: Pronoun usage by participant activity

If we look now at the correlation between the use of *tú* and the years of residence in Spain (Chart 3: Correlation between accommodation using *tú* and years of residence in Spain) no clear pattern emerges. Although there are cases where there is 100% of pronominal accommodation using *tú* with only one year of residence in Spain, there are also cases of no accommodation with 4 years of residence. However, from the graph we can see that all the participants who have been living in Spain for at least 5 years show more than a 20% accommodation rate. On the graph below, the accommodation percentage of each participant is represented by a dot.

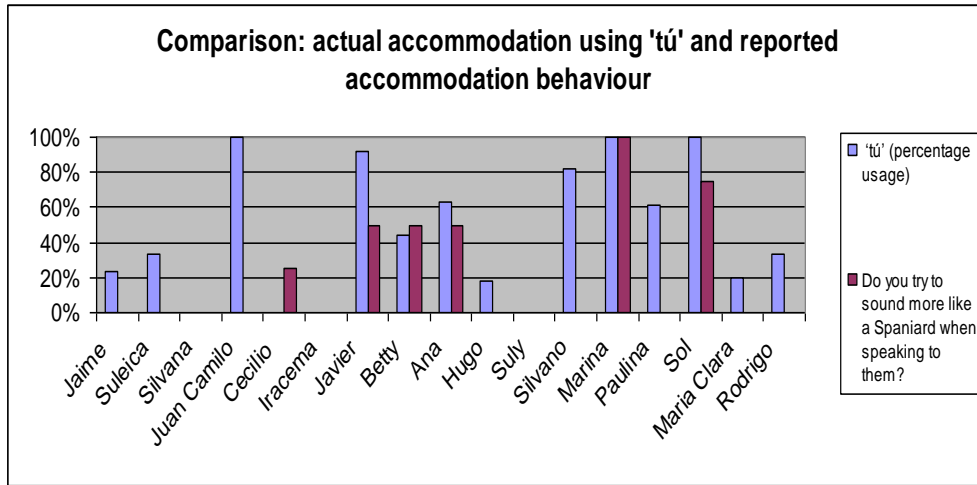
Chart 3: Correlation between accommodation using *tú* and years of residence in Spain



Comparison with questionnaire answers

The level of accommodation found in the naturally occurring interactions was analyzed against the participants' responses to the question "Do you try to sound more like a Spaniard when speaking to them?" asked in the questionnaire. The result is that in many cases there is no correspondence between the participants' actual behaviour and their answer to the question. In fact, only 4 out of the 17 participants analyzed reported their behaviour correctly. The most extreme case is that of Juan Camilo, who displays a pattern of full accommodation, and replied that he never converged. This shows that, methodologically, it is important to examine patterns of use in naturally occurring interactions rather than through questionnaires.

Chart 4: Comparison: actual accommodation using *tú* and reported accommodation behaviour

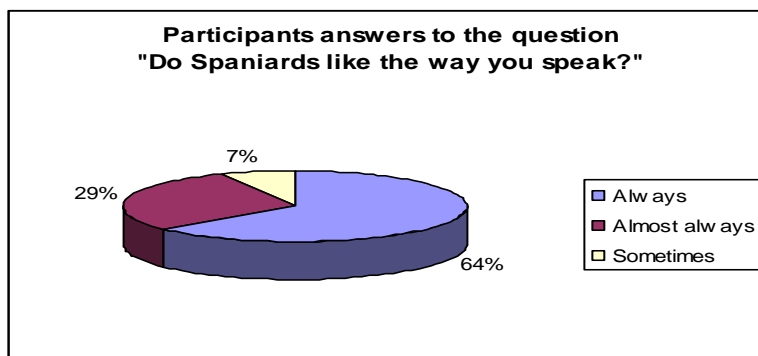


In the questionnaire there was a question intended to evaluate the way the participants thought their variety was perceived by Spaniards. The question was ‘Do Spaniards like the way you speak?’

As it can be seen in Chart 5, 64% of the participants replied that Spaniards “Always” liked the way they spoke, 29% said “Almost Always” and 7% answered sometimes. This is related to the prestige the Argentinean variety enjoys among the Spanish community (Sarrible 2000 and Murias 2004) particularly when compared with other Latin American dialects.

Given this situation one would hypothesize that Argentines do not feel the need to accommodate to obtain social approval since they can obtain this approval simply by maintaining their variety. Further studies should explore the strategies used by other Latin American immigrants in Spain and subsequent comparison studies should confirm this possible interpretation.

Chart 5: Participants answers to the question “Do Spaniards like the way you speak?”



Conclusion

After analysing the accommodative/nonaccommodative strategies shown by Argentinean immigrants in their interactions with Spaniards in Spain in the light of the Communication Accommodation Theory we have corroborated that some variable but interesting phenomena emerge.

The results point towards the direction that women tend to accommodate less by using the pronoun *tú* than men, opting for a higher rate of nonaccommodation with the pronoun *vos* (accommodation for men was of 51% and for women 42%). An interesting finding is that the higher rates of maintenance seem to be all from women aged between 39 and 49.

With regard to the activity of the participants and how it relates to pronominal accommodation behaviour, the results have shown that the service providers accommodate more than the service users (54% for service providers and 37% for service users).

The number of years of residence in Spain did not seem to be a decisive factor in the accommodation patterns shown by the participants; however, the results suggest that after five years of residence in Spain all the participants accommodate using *tú* at least to some extent. Also, the fact that the participant who had been living in Spain for longer showed the highest accommodation rates suggest that the years of residence in the host country and the accommodation rates could be related, an aspect which should be explored in further studies.

Regarding the relationship between actual and reported accommodation behaviour, this study confirms the findings of Sinner (2006) and Hughson (2005). It was found that only 4 out of 17 participants reported their behaviour correctly with cases of reporting completely the opposite behaviour.

With respect to phonetic accommodation, we could verify that many of the participants accommodated towards the use of the Peninsular [j] instead of keeping their own, although this happened only with certain words. Accommodation towards the use of [θ] was less common, with only 3 participants performing it. Hypercorrect forms were registered in 2 of these participants when using the sound [θ].

In terms of lexical items, almost all the participants had acquired some lexical features of the Peninsular variety. The word most commonly used was the discourse marker *vale* which was used by nearly all of them.

It was found that the strategy of repeating the last sentence uttered by the addressee was used by two of the participants. It would be interesting to explore in further detail if this strategy is used with more frequency in a dialect or language contact situation than in conversations with addressees sharing the same language or dialect.

Further studies on this subject could explore the trends suggested in this paper in a wider range of contexts in order to gain a better understanding of accommodation phenomena by Argentinean immigrants in Spain.

Notes

1. In Spanish all the verbs are conjugated according to the pronoun used, therefore, the address form chosen can be identified by looking at the verb conjugation even if the pronoun itself is not used.

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Appendix: Key to Transcript Notation

This notation is adapted from transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (1984).

() unclear fragment on the tape

(.) pause; length noted in the brackets when over 0.5s

: indicates a lengthening of previous sound

- indicates a speaker's self-interruption, often accompanied by a change in rhythm or pitch

↑ questioning intonation

(()) paralinguistic information, such as laughter

(guess) transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance

The names of all participants have been changed.

Andrea Barrancos is a postgraduate of Birkbeck College's Department of Applied Linguistics. This study was originally submitted as an MA thesis.