Phonological Variations in Spanish and Korean Dialects

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PERCEPTION

- Bogotá is the capital city of Colombia with the largest concentration of Spanish speakers in the world while Costeño encompasses a large region including the other Colombian metropolitan centers of Barranquilla, Cartagena, and Cali.
- Bogotano is seen as the ‘standard’ and regarded as the most neutral and comprehensible in Latin America
- Costeño accents are looked down on by Bogotano elites
- While Seoul is an urban metropolis, Gyeongsang is a large region comprised of rural countrysides
- The dialect of Korean spoken in Seoul is considered to be the “standard”, while the Gyeongsang dialect is perceived as the most distinguishable dialect in Korea
- 66% of Gyeongsang residents negatively evaluate their own dialect, with 46% describing it as “boorish” (촌스러운)
PHONOLOGY

- In Bogotano the prescriptive phonological speech pattern of Spanish is followed strictly with regards to the five ‘pure’ Spanish vowel phonemes
- Costeño accents add three lax vowel phonemes (ε, ø, and ə) for a total of eight vowel sounds
- Costeño accents also feature a lengthening of certain consonant sounds preceding the use of a lax vowel phoneme
- Lengthening of consonants and the addition of vowel sounds is the effect of slurring of the implosive /s/ in coastal regions and emerging creole languages
- Bogotano retains the implosive /s/ in speech except for in a few rare occasions
- Costeño speakers are more likely to slur the implosive /s/ sound, weakening it, or in some cases, completely deleting it
- In the Seoul dialect, the open-mid front unrounded vowel “ε” is in the process of merging with the close-mid front unrounded vowel “e”. Minimal pairs featuring these two vowel sounds are only differentiated by context for younger Seoul dialect speakers
- In the Gyeongsang dialect, this merging has already taken place. The dialect now lacks “ε”, and only has “e”
- Gyeongsang dialect lacks a distinction between the close central unrounded vowel “i” and the open-mid back unrounded vowel “ʌ”
- Gyeongsang dialect does not distinguish between the fortis fricative /s*/ and the non-fortis fricative /s/
- The younger generation seems to be in the process of recovering this distinction, possibly due to influence from mass media

CONCLUSION

By comparing the differences between Bogotano and Costeño to the differences between the Seoul dialect and Gyeongsang dialect, we have studied the effect that phonology has on the perception of a dialect and its speakers. While the specific differences in phonology may not be the same, we can see a general relationship between the alteration of the phonetic inventory of a language and the subsequent alienation of those speakers who have altered it.