

# Towards an understanding on the ideological effects of contact-induced phenomena in the Basque Country

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## Abstract

The outcomes of contact-induced phenomena have been studied from a wide array of perspectives (Thomason, 2001; Corrigan, 2010; Backus, 2013), but the study of language attitudes and ideologies behind contact-induced phenomena have scarcely been studied as an integrated part of contact linguistics (Cornips, 2014). Given the long history of ethno-linguistic contact between Basque and Spanish in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) (Edwards, 2009), this study explores how ideological representations of Basque Differential Object Marking (DOM) as a contact phenomenon can determine its use according to social categorizations connected to an 'authentic' Basque identity.

The revitalization process of the Basque language began in the late 70s when a new standardized variety (Euskara Batua 'Unified Basque') was implemented in schools. The abundant increase of L2 learners in the (BAC) in Spain is thought to be a characterization of its successful revitalization (Eusko Jauriaritza, 2011; Azkarate, 2012), although language-promotion efforts are also regarded as 'not so successful' (Maia, 2012) due to the unguaranteed systematic use of the language. In language contact situations where strong connections between language and identity are the result of political and ethnic status disparities, social meanings of different features, languages and its users are intensified (Urla, 1987; Jaffe, 1999; Azurmendi, et. al., 2008; Montaruli et. al., 2011; Edwards, 2009). Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to show how ideological representations of contact-phenomena (such as DOM) affect the way different bilinguals use it, shape social identity, and how social categorization or grouping can affect the use of Basque at a larger scale.

Sixty Basque-Spanish bilinguals (native and L2 speakers of Basque) participated in 3 experiments: (a) spontaneous data were gathered by means of oral interviews; (b) attitudinal data were gathered through a matched guise experiment (MGE) in which the voice of a female speaker was rated according to DOM (Basque DOM vs. canonical) and dialect (regional vs. standard); (c) a post-MGE debriefing interview was used to discuss overt-attitudes towards Basque DOM. Results show that native bilinguals predominantly use Basque DOM in which a complexification process of replica grammaticalization (Heine & Kuteva, 2010) from Spanish DOM is involved. MGE results show that Basque DOM is regarded as 'bad' Basque but signals 'authentic' Basque identity; L2 speakers like when dialect speakers use Basque DOM. These results are corroborated in the post-MGE interview, in which four types of Basque identities are discussed pertaining to Basque DOM.

The present analysis builds upon theoretical and methodological implications: first, following models of linguistic ideology and identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), it is argued that Basque identity has been reshaped into a linguistic Basque identity in which Basque DOM becomes an important feature of social characterization; L2 speakers of Basque avoid using Basque in order not to produce 'bad Basque' (i.e. Basque DOM). Second, it argues that studying language attitudes as an integrated part of contact linguistics can advance on the success of language promotion efforts.

## References

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