

Exploring accentedness in Spanish as a third and as a heritage language

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Workshop- Heritage Language practices: Current issues and future directions

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BACKGROUND

- ❖ In recent years, increasing interest in Third Language Acquisition and Heritage Language Acquisition
- ❖ In both fields, scarcity of studies on the acquisition of sound systems

L3 learners (L3ers)

Heritage speakers (HSs)

advantage over other types of L2 learners

experienced learners + larger repertoire

advantage more salient in areas other than pronunciation

retain L1 traits, L2 transfer, combined influence

early exposure at home

most noticeable advantage in pronunciation

often short of native-like (labeled as funny or off)



FOREING ACCENT



HERITAGE ACCENT

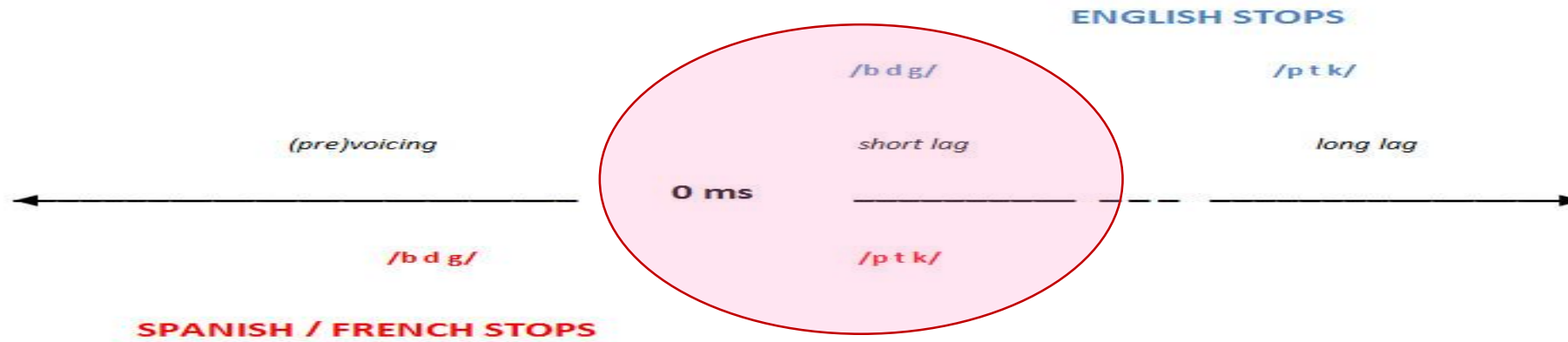


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WHY VOT ?

- ❖ Voice onset time (VOT) is “the time that elapses between the release of the articulators for a stop and the onset of vocal fold vibration of the following segment” (Yavaş, 2009; p. 244)
- ❖ Several studies have found a correlation between VOT and perception of foreign accent in English and Spanish (González-Bueno, 1997)
- ❖ It has been claimed its acquisition is problematic for English-speaking learners of Spanish (Díaz-Campos, 2004; Lord, 2005; Zampini, 1998)

VOT IN ENGLISH, SPANISH AND FRENCH



1. English:

aspiration – in word-initial position



long VOT (+ 30/40* ms; typically exceeds 60 ms)

2. French / Spanish:

no aspiration



short VOT (- 30/40 ms)

VOT IN SLA: PREVIOUS FINDINGS

The acquisition of L2 VOT has been widely studied.

Most reported findings (studies that focus on pairs such as English vs. a Romance language):

- ❖ transfer of L1 VOT values in L2 stop production, mainly at the lowest levels of proficiency (Flege, 1987)
- ❖ creation of a compromise value for the L2 that falls between L1 and L2 values (Flege & Eefting, 1997): hybrid system
- ❖ creation / production of separate categories for stops in each language, mainly in the case of early bilinguals (Magloire & Green, 1999)

VOT IN TLA: PREVIOUS FINDINGS

Together with vowels, most studied issue in L3 phonology / phonetics.

Findings tend to fall in one of three groups:

- ❖ transfer of L2 VOT patterns to the L3 (Tremblay, 2007; Llama et al., 2010; Wrembel, 2011)
- ❖ combined CLI: the L1 and the L2 concur in influencing the L3 (Flege & Eefting, 1997)
- ❖ exclusive (Llisterri & Poch, 1987) or predominant L1 influence (Wunder, 2011; Llama & Cardoso, 2018)

Note: there have been reports of a shift from the L2 to the L1 as a more determinant source of influence as L3 proficiency increases (Hammarberg, 2009; Llama & Cardoso, 2018)

VOT IN TLA: PREVIOUS FINDINGS

STUDY	LANGUAGE COMBINATION	REPORTED SOURCE OF INFLUENCE		
		L1	L2	Combined CLI
Tremblay 2007	L1 English-L2 French-L3 Japanese		√	(√)
Llama et al. 2010	L1/L2 English-L2/L1 French-L3 Spanish		√	(√)
Llama & Cardoso 2018	L1/L2 English-L2/L1 French-L3 Spanish	√		(√)
Wunder 2011	L1 German-L2 English-L3 Spanish	√		√
Sypiańska 2013	L1 Polish-L2 Danish-L3 English			√
Wrembel 2011	L1 Polish-L2 English-L3 French		(√)	√
Wrembel 2015	L1 Polish-L2 English-L3 French			√
Aoki & Nishihara 2013	L1 Japanese-L2 Chinese-L3 English		√*	

VOT IN HLA: PREVIOUS FINDINGS (TRILINGUALS)

Studies on VOT production by trilingual HSs have mainly focused on the L3

Some of the reported findings are:

- ❖ Merged system across 3 languages (Bandeira & Zimmer, 2012)
- ❖ Separate (rather native-like) systems for the two strongest languages (Gabriel et al., 2016; Llama & López-Morelos, 2016)

VOT IN HLA: PREVIOUS FINDINGS (TRILINGUALS)

STUDY	LANGUAGE COMBINATION	IMPACT HL ON L3			HL
		pos	neg	neutral	
Bandeira & Zimmer 2012	HL Pomeranian- DL B. Portuguese -L3 English	√			Merged: similar VOT values across 3 languages
Gabriel al. 2016	HL Mandarin - DL German - L3 French	√			Native-like VOT in HL and DL
Dittmers et al. 2018	HL Turkish or Russian – DL German – L3 English or French	√	√		?
Bondarenko 2018	HL Ukranian or Polish – DL English – L3 Spanish	√			Native-like VOT in HL and DL
Llama & López-Morelos 2016	HL Spanish – DL English - L3 French			√	Native-like VOT in HL and DL

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

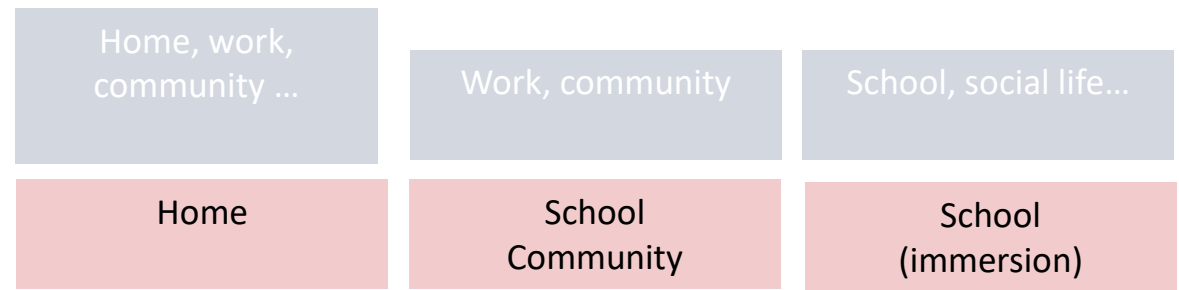
1. Do trilingual HSs produce native-like VOT in their HL Spanish?
 - If not, are their VOT patterns suggestive of an (heritage) accent?
2. Do HSs speakers outperform L3 learners?
 - If so, do the differences justify the use of two labels (foreign vs. heritage accent)?

METHODOLOGY



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PARTICIPANTS



	Group	Age	<i>n</i>	L1 (/HL)	L2 (/DL)	L3
Experimental	L3ers	19-62	15	En	Fr (Ad)	Sp (In-Ad)
	HSs	11-17	11	Sp	En	Fr

“Monolingual productions are not comparable to those of speakers with multiple systems that yield bidirectional influence” (Cabrelli Amaro, 2013; p. 103)

PARTICIPANTS

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Experimental	L3ers	19-62	15	En	Fr (Ad)	Sp (In-Ad)
	HSs	11-17	11	Sp	En	Fr
Control	Monolingual Sp	19-43	15	Castilian Sp	En (Be)	—
	Monolingual Sp	12-17	11	Mexican Sp	En (Be)	—

INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURE

HSs

1. Language background questionnaire
(included self-assessment of proficiency)
2. Picture naming task

17 real words with a voiceless stop in stressed,
word-initial position:

6 /p-/, 6 /t-/, 5 /k-/

3. Three recording sessions

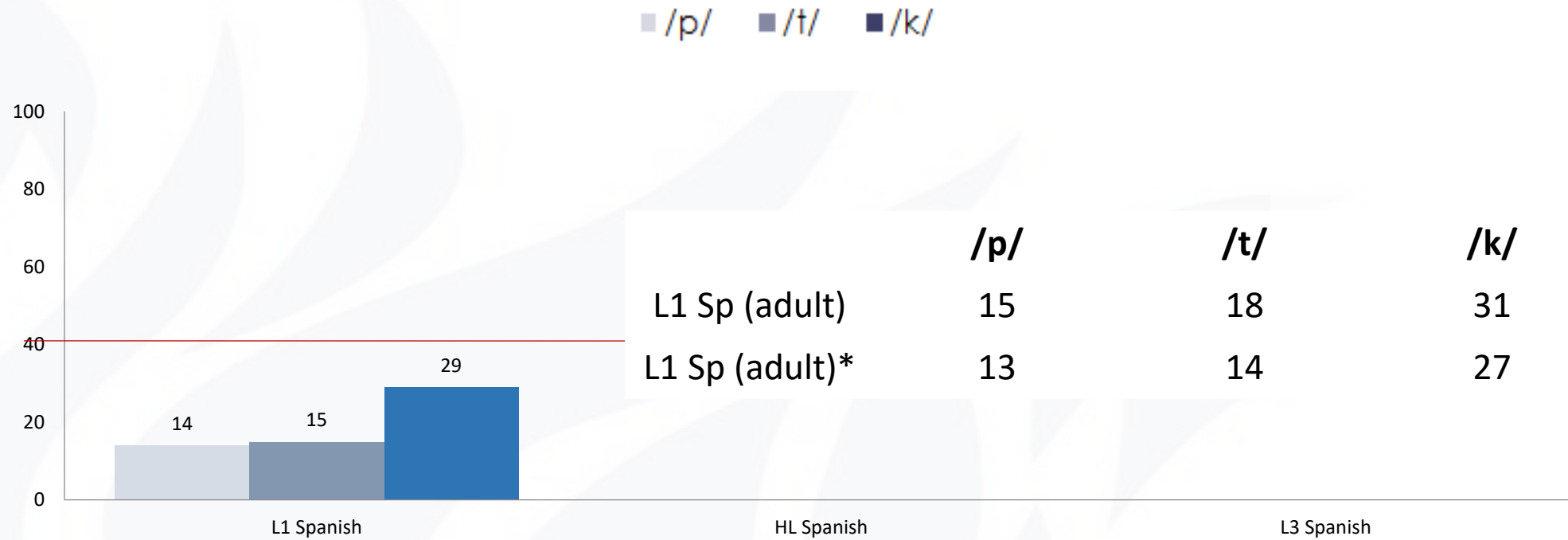
L3ers

1. Language background questionnaire
2. L2 and L3 proficiency tests
3. Reading of word lists

18 real words with a voiceless stop in stressed,
word-initial position:

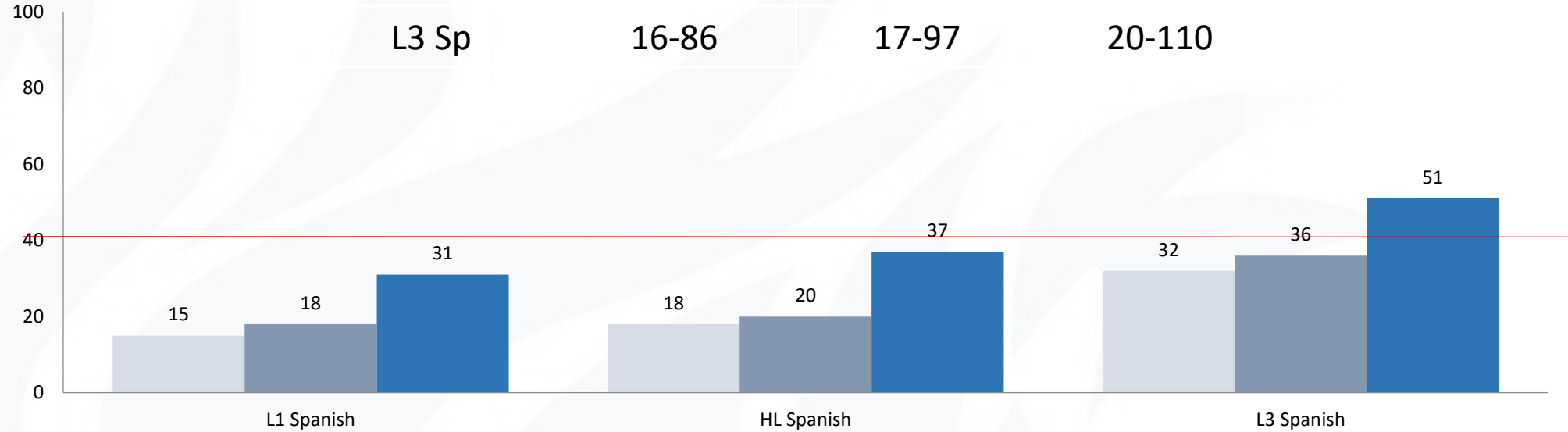
6 /p-/ (ex: pato), 6 /t-/ (ex: taza),
6 /k-/ (ex: casa)
4. Two recording sessions

RESULTS



RESULTS

	<i>/p/</i>	<i>/t/</i>	<i>/k/</i>
L1 Sp	4-26	6-29	15-45
HL Sp	6-56	9-35	15-80
L3 Sp	16-86	17-97	20-110



FINDINGS

1. Do trilingual HSs produce native-like VOT in their HL Spanish?
 - If not, are their VOT patterns suggestive of a(n) (heritage) accent?
- ❖ For the most part, they do.
 - Also, some instances that deviate from the native norm (off-target)
 - In a previous study (Gabriel et al., 2016), similar VOT differences led to perception of foreign accent in an accent-rating task

FINDINGS

2. Do HSs speakers outperform L3 learners?
 - If so, do the differences justify the use of two labels (foreign vs. heritage accent)?
- ❖ They do.
 - In Llama and Cardoso (2018), these L3ers were found to differ significantly from a control group
 - Higher percentage of off-target production: accent could be more constant
 - In Llama and López-Morelos (forthcoming), no significant differences were found between a similar group of HSs and a control group
 - Lower (very low!) percentage of off-target production: accent could be more intermittent

FUTURE STEPS

- ❖ Include measures of global foreign accent
- ❖ Test more than one segment
- ❖ Test perception (and threshold for aspiration)
- ❖ Study Spanish HSs and L3 learners of Spanish in other locations: SWEDEN!!!