Crowdsourcing Spanish Variation and Change through an App

Miriam Bouzouita

Countrywide data collection of dialect features has not been carried out systematically within the Spanish-speaking world. To illustrate, although some countries, such as Spain, did start collecting data for inclusion in dialect atlases at the beginning of the 20th century, war and social unrest delayed or even impeded the successful conclusion of these research projects. Moreover, as is usual for traditional linguistic atlases, the data included proceeded mainly, or sometimes exclusively, from non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers, casting thus aside not only women but also other strata of society. Further, no attempt to map the whole Spanish-speaking world at once has been made due to its sheer size and the costs associated with fieldwork, which is labour-intensive and slow in nature. However, the availability of new technological advances has reduced or even done away with many of the disadvantages of traditional data collection methods.

In this presentation we will detail a new project, the *Dialectos del español* ('Dialects of Spanish') App, which following others, such as the Voice Äpp for Swiss German or the English Dialects App for England (e.g. Leemann et al. 2015, 2018), relies on crowdsourcing through an application to collect diatopic and sociolinguistic data. Unlike previous linguistic apps, the current project aims to cover the whole Spanish-speaking world, exceeding as such the countrywide perspective previously employed by most linguistic apps. This widening in scope is made possible due to its main focus on morpho-syntax, which has largely been forgotten in traditional dialectological atlases. Another difference is the attention paid to international migration patterns, revealed by the inclusion of detailed mobility questions.

Apart from sketching the similarities and differences with other linguistic app-projects, we will outline the research design of the *Dialectos del español* web-app, the pilot study conducted prior to its release (Bouzouita, Castillo & Pato 2018), its reception by the public, some first results, as well as a few shortcomings. The app contains 26 questions concerning morpho-syntactic and lexical variables offering data on both studied phenomena (e.g. the use of the forms of address, such as *vos*; pluralisation of existential construction with *haber*, cf. Bouzouita & Pato 2019a), and hitherto unstudied or little studied ones (e.g. *ese agua* vs. *esa agua* 'this water'). The used research design permits to examine not only the geographic and

sociolinguistic distribution of the phenomena under study, but also linguistic changes affecting them, such as innovations introduced by youngsters or due to (inter)national migration movements. In one of the case studies that this presentation will focus on, we show that the currently used research design is also apt to identify contact phenomena. To illustrate this, we will focus on the innovative uses of possessive pronouns instead of prepositional complements in adverbial and verbal contexts in Spain, as in *encima mío / mia* vs. *encima de mí* 'above me' and *habla mal mío / mía* vs. *habla mal de mí* 's/he talks badly about me' respectively. More concretely, it will be shown that the possessive verbal cases, which have not been studied for Spain up until now (for Latin America, see Bouzouita in prep.; Bouzouita & Pato 2019b, in prep.; Casanova in prep.), appear to be a contact phenomenon in which Galician's syntax and morphology is influencing Spanish.

References

Bouzouita, M. (In prep.). 'The Diatopic Distribution of the Use of Possessive Pronouns instead of Verbal Prepositional Phrase Complements in Spanish.' Ms.

Bouzouita, M. & E. Pato (2019a) '*Antes había(n) pozos en el pueblo*: La pluralización del verbo *haber* existencial en el español rural europeo.' *Revue de Linguistique Romane 83*, 137-165.

Bouzouita, M. & E. Pato (2019b) '*¿Por qué no gustas de mí como yo gusto de ti?* El verbo *gustar* y su complemento preposicional en español actual.' *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación 79*, 161-186.

Bouzouita, M. & E. Pato (In prep.) '*¿Por qué no gustas mío, como yo gusto tuyo?* El verbo *gustar* y su complemento posesivo en español actual. Ms.

Bouzouita, M., M. Castillo & E. Pato (2018) '*Dialectos del español*. Una nueva aplicación para conocer la variación actual y el cambio en las variedades del español.' *Dialectología 20*, 61-83. https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Dialectologia/article/view/334686 [last consulted on 08/02/2020].

Casanova, V. (In prep.) 'El uso del complemento posesivo verbal por el complemento de régimen preposicional en español actual' *Moderna Språk*.

Leemann, A., M.-J. Kolly & D. Britain (2018). 'The *English Dialects App*: The creation of a crowdsourced dialect corpus.' *Ampersand 5*, 1-17.

Leemann, A., M.-J. Kolly, J.-P. Goldman, V. Dellwo, I. Hove, I. Almajai, S. Grimm, S. Robert & D. Wanitsch (2015). '*Voice Äpp*: A mobile app for crowdsourcing Swiss German dialect data.' *Proceedings of Interspeech 2015* (Dresden), 2804-2808.