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THE DIATOPIC DEVELOPMENT OF ASPECTS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY GALICIAN. A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY DATA

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Abstract

Several projects related to Linguistic Geography have been carried out in Galicia during the last century and the beginning of this century. Fieldwork data obtained through personal interviews with informants provides us with an opportunity to observe the diatopic distribution of features that have traditionally been considered relevant in Galician linguistics. Since these surveys were performed at different points in time, they also provide an opportunity to analyse the material in terms of diachrony. This article presents some examples of the results obtained from such research, focusing on three issues, of which one concerns phonetics, another morphology, while the third delves into a lexical matter involving Spanish loanwords. In the morphological study, the different patterns seem to have remained stable over time, but the phonetic and lexical data examined show significant change during the period covered.

Keywords

Galician, diatopic variation, diachronic variation, phonetics, morphology, Spanish loanwords, linguistic geography

EVOLUCIÓN DIATÓPICA DALGÚNS ASPECTOS DO GALEGO NO S. XX. ANÁLISE CONTRASTIVA DOS MATERIAIS QUE OFRECE A XEOGRAFÍA LINGÜÍSTICA

Resumo

Durante o século pasado e principios deste desenvolvéronse en Galicia distintos proxectos relacionados coa Xeografía Lingüística. Os datos obtidos nos traballos de campo a través de entrevistas

persoais con informantes permiten observar a distribución diatópica de diferentes trazos tradicionalmente considerados relevantes pola lingüística galega. Ademais disto, os diferentes momentos históricos en que estas enquisas foron realizadas ofrecen a posibilidade dunha avaliación diacrónica dos materiais. No presente artigo amósanse algúns exemplos dos resultados desta investigación. Analizáronse fundamentalmente tres cuestións: unha fonética, unha morfolóxica e outra léxica relacionada co castelanismo. As distintas solucións morfolóxicas semellan manter a mesma distribución ó longo do período estudado, mentres que as cuestións fonética e léxica amosan cambios salientables.

Palabras chave

galego, variación diatópica, variación diacrónica, fonética, morfoloxía, Spanish loanwords, xeografía lingüística

1. Introduction

In 2005 the Instituto da Lingua Galega (henceforth ILG) started a project called *ALPI_Galicia* whose aim is to make better use of information contained in the *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (henceforth ALPI) collected in Galicia between 1934 and 1935. The main objective of the project was to create a database out of the material in the original notebooks. The initial tasks were transcribing and organizing the headwords.

During this initial stage, some striking agreements and differences were noted between these data and those of the *Atlas Lingüístico Galego* (henceforth ALGa), collected between 1974 and 1977. The following three points are of particular interest:

- different diatopic distributions of some phonetic-phonological phenomena;
- generally few discrepancies regarding morphological phenomena;
- an increased presence of Spanish loanwords[1] in ALGa in comparison to ALPI.

In view of this first evaluation, a more in-depth, systematic contrastive analysis was clearly called for. Moreover, it was decided to carry out a new survey, known as the *Nova Enquisa* (henceforth NEnq), of a similar type to those performed for *ALPI* and ALGa, in order to obtain more recent data which will help determined whether or not the tendencies observed are continuing.

[1] *Spanish loanwords* are here taken to be lexical forms that have found their way from Spanish into varieties of Galician where they have ultimately displaced traditional forms. Spanish loanwords are excluded from the standard variety and avoided in formal registers.

The present paper outlines the methods and material used for this diatopic and diachronic research. Three representative samples of comparative data analysis will be presented, with corresponding maps. Finally, a few conclusions will be presented.

2. Data and methods

2.1. Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica

The ALPI took as its model the *Atlas linguistique de la France* (henceforth ALF) by Gilliéron in order to provide an account of diatopic variation in the Romance languages spoken in the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands. The initiative was begun by Menéndez Pidal in 1914, and the renowned phonetician Navarro Tomás was put in charge of the project (Sousa 2008).

A set of points on the map was established, consisting of small rural villages taken to represent their respective districts. There were 528 such points in all, 53 of which were located within Galicia, one of the areas assigned the highest grid densities in the entire project. The informants were selected to conform to the NORM criteria (non-mobile, older, rural, male), as is customary in Linguistic Geography (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 56). A questionnaire consisting of 1259 items was divided into two sections, one grammatical which addresses phonetic, morphological and to a lesser extent syntactic phenomena; the other section with a lexical and ethnographic focus (ALPI 1962).

In contrast to ALF, it was decided that the collaborators responsible for taking the ALPI survey should not only be expert linguists but also highly knowledgeable of the area they covered and the local speech varieties. This fact would give them the ability to communicate with the informants in their own variety. Another methodological difference from the French project concerned the technique for obtaining responses to items, which was to be indirect. However, it was not always feasible to use this method, so some responses have been marked as “direct”.

The surveys were performed between 1931 and 1951, with a long interruption from 1936 to 1947 on account of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath, but in Galicia all the material appears to have been collected between 1934 and 1935 (Sousa 2008).

The transcription shows great complexity because of Navarro Tomás' determination that the narrowest articulatory nuances should be recorded by the research team. The phonetic alphabet adopted, the RFE[2] of 1915 with some additions, is extremely precise. In the database for the *ALPI_Galicia* project this transcription was simplified and adapted to IPA (García Mouton 2010).

2.2. Atlas Lingüístico Galego

During the sixties many lexical monographs were produced in Galicia. These were based on partial surveys in different areas of Galicia. This material and *ALPI* proved to be adequate to provide a precise, detailed description of diatopic variation in Galician. In 1971 the ILG was founded under the direction of Constantino García, who entrusted to Antón Santamarina implementation of the ALGa project (Santamarina et al. 1977).

A team of researchers with special training about the situation of the Galician language and the methods of Linguistic Geography devised a grid of points much denser than the ALPI one, consisting of 152 localities in Galician territory and 15 beyond its administrative borders to account for places where varieties of Galician are believed to be spoken. Informants were again selected in accordance with the NORM criteria. The questionnaire consists of 2711 items divided into two sections: the first 527 questions are of a phonetic, morphological or syntactic nature; the remainders are lexical and grouped by semantic field.

Teams of three researchers each performed joint field studies in which interviews were carried out in three neighbouring locations, cooperating as necessary. Informants were always addressed in Galician and researchers aimed at methodological consistency in the way questions were asked and answers transcribed. As already mentioned, the information was collected between 1974 and 1977 (Santamarina 1977).

2.3. Nova Enquisa

Once the *ALPI_Galicia* project got started, comparing the ALPI and ALGa results was inevitable. Observations of certain tendencies towards change led to a need to systematize the comparison and make it more thorough. Taking into consideration the

[2] The system used was an extended version of that published in the *Revista de Filología Española*, 2.

fact that the time that had lapsed since the fieldwork for ALGa had been done was comparable to that which had passed between the latter and the earlier ALPI survey, the opportunity arose to collect fresh data which might confirm or contradict the previously observed tendencies, and so the ILG decided to undertake the *Nova Enquisa*, which aimed to reproduce the methods used in the two earlier projects as faithfully as possible in order to obtain comparable information.

The grid of localities consisted of the same 53 Galician localities that ALPI had visited. To carry out a contrastive analysis with the ALGa data, 53 of its 167 localities were selected, most of which coincide with those of ALPI. When this was not possible the geographically (and if possible, linguistically) closest ALGa localities were chosen. Although this grid is unfortunately not sufficiently fine-grained to permit a detailed analysis of some issues, they allow some general conclusions about most of the issues they deal with.

The first step in preparing the questionnaire was the identification of the more than 850 items that recur in both earlier projects. The ALGa questionnaire includes nearly all the items in the ALPI questionnaire owing to the fact that the latter had served as one of the models upon which it was drawn. The purpose of this exercise was not to produce a new atlas (after all, the previous two were still unfinished), so the number of items was whittled down to 369, favouring those thought likely to yield useful information on relevant phonetic, phonological and morphosyntactic issues, questions that have traditionally roused the interest of Galician dialectology, Spanish loanwords and, for control purposes, some diatopically distributed inherited words. Once again, informants were selected in accordance with the NORM criteria.

Data collection was carried out during 2008. The researchers were people who had not only studied both phonetics and Galician dialectology but were familiar with the methods and data of ALPI and ALGa. All the interviews were recorded in digital format and transcribed in IPA.

Subsequently data from all three sources were combined into a database containing (1) answers to the same 369 questions formulated (2) in the same 53 places to (3) people who had similar features (4) at three different periods spanning over 70 years altogether, offering a showcase of diatopic variation, including a diachronic dimension, making it possible to analyse variation and change in varieties of Galician

over a given time, by means of field data obtained by specialists following comparable procedures.

3. The results

A small sample of these research results will now be presented, focusing on three examples:

1. One phonetic-phonological issue: the distribution of the Galician phenomenon known as *gheada*.[3]
2. One morphological issue: the distribution of outcomes of the Latin ending -ŌNES.
3. One lexical issue: the distribution of the pair *nó* / *nudo* (inherited form / Spanish loanword).

3.1. Phonetics: Gheada

One of the first matters that interested project members at the start of the *ALPI_Galicia* project was the fact that the phonetic and phonological feature traditionally known in Galician grammar as *gheada* was shown to be more widespread than was deducible from the ALGa data (González 1999). This feature, often heard in Galician speech, consists of the existence of a fricative phoneme, either voiceless or voiced, articulated somewhere between the soft palate and the glottis, which replaces the voiced velar occlusive phoneme /g/. For practical purposes these sounds are represented by the symbol /ɦ/, since the pharyngeal articulation is the majority solution: *gato* [ˈɦato] ‘cat’. Although there is a diatopic distribution, there is also a diaphasic one. Despite its acceptance in the standard norm, it is not usual in formal style (Álvarez & Xove 2002: 39).

Since a given speaker may or may not incorporate this feature at different points in an interview or even depending on the word in question, these maps take a statistical approach, giving the percentage of answers displaying *gheada* out of the total number

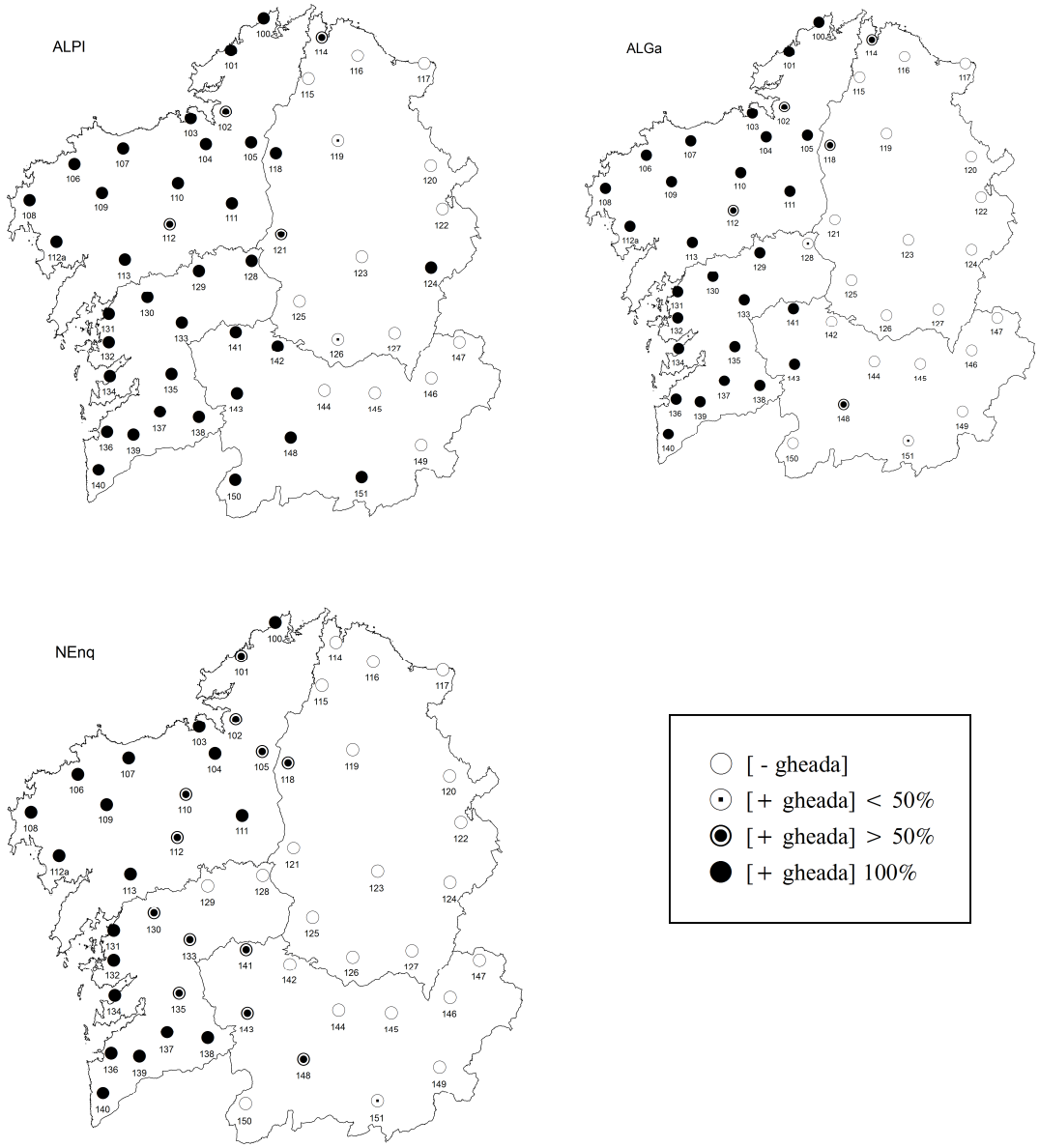
[3] This is described in the next section (§3.1).

of contexts where *gheada* would be possible (excluding the post-nasal context within words given the co-existence of three alternative solutions), always focusing on the *NEnq* questionnaire.

The phenomenon's recessive trend is easy to perceive (Sousa 2009). The north-to-south isogloss is gradually shifting westwards, and we can observe the passage of some localities from one side to the other from map to map. Meanwhile, the percentage of answers with *gheada* is decreasing in the places where it still remains. We can see the feature disappearing from one survey to the next in localities along the feature's eastern border, particularly those where there is a low proportion of responses with *gheada*.

The *NEnq* data show many localities where the percentage of fricative forms is no longer 100%. It is reasonable to assume that the feature is receding in such places. Moreover, the fact that the *ALPI* data reveal an isolated point in the eastern area, number 124, with 100% /ɦ/ realizations in the cases studied, suggests that this phenomenon may have been more widespread before 1934. This strengthens the assumption that the phenomenon is in recession.

The causes of this process are to be sought in the social value attached to *gheada* and the kind of speakers who use it. Traditionally this feature has been frowned upon as an incorrect pronunciation and associated with the lower social classes (Pensado 1970, Santamarina 1980). Furthermore, until the eighties education was entirely in Castilian and Galician speakers of *gheada* varieties had difficulty using the Spanish phonemes /g/ and /x/. Primary school teachers therefore made great efforts to "correct" such speech. Despite this, the fact that the feature has decreased en masse in the west suggests that the greatest pressure on the phenomenon has come from a prestigious *non-gheada* style of pronunciation, that normally used in the mass media, the schools, and generally in formal speech situations.



Maps 1. Distribution of *gheada* in ALPI Galicia, ALGa and NEnq surveys.

There are other phonetic-phonological phenomena which also show important changes during the period documented. Such is the case of another pronunciation feature referred to in Galician grammars as *lleísmo*, which consists of replacing the traditional palatal lateral phoneme /ʎ/ with a palatal occlusive /ɟ/ (also realized as [ɟ] or [ʝ]). A similar phenomenon is commonplace in Spanish. Only one [ʝ] case was recorded in the *ALPI* data, and this is in the Spanish loanword *mayo* ['maʝo] (‘may’). However, the percentage of occurrences of the lateral is lower in the *ALGa* data and a large

number of double answers are recorded.[4] The researchers furthermore observed that members of the younger generations used the occlusive systematically. The *NEnq* data show the use of the occlusive to be common except for some elderly informants. Thus *lleísmo* is correlated with age groups and does not present a precise diatopic distribution. That this abrupt change has come about due to Spanish pressure is suggested by the fact that the occlusive forms have replaced the lateral throughout most of the territory.

3.2. Morphology: treatments of Lat. -ŌNES

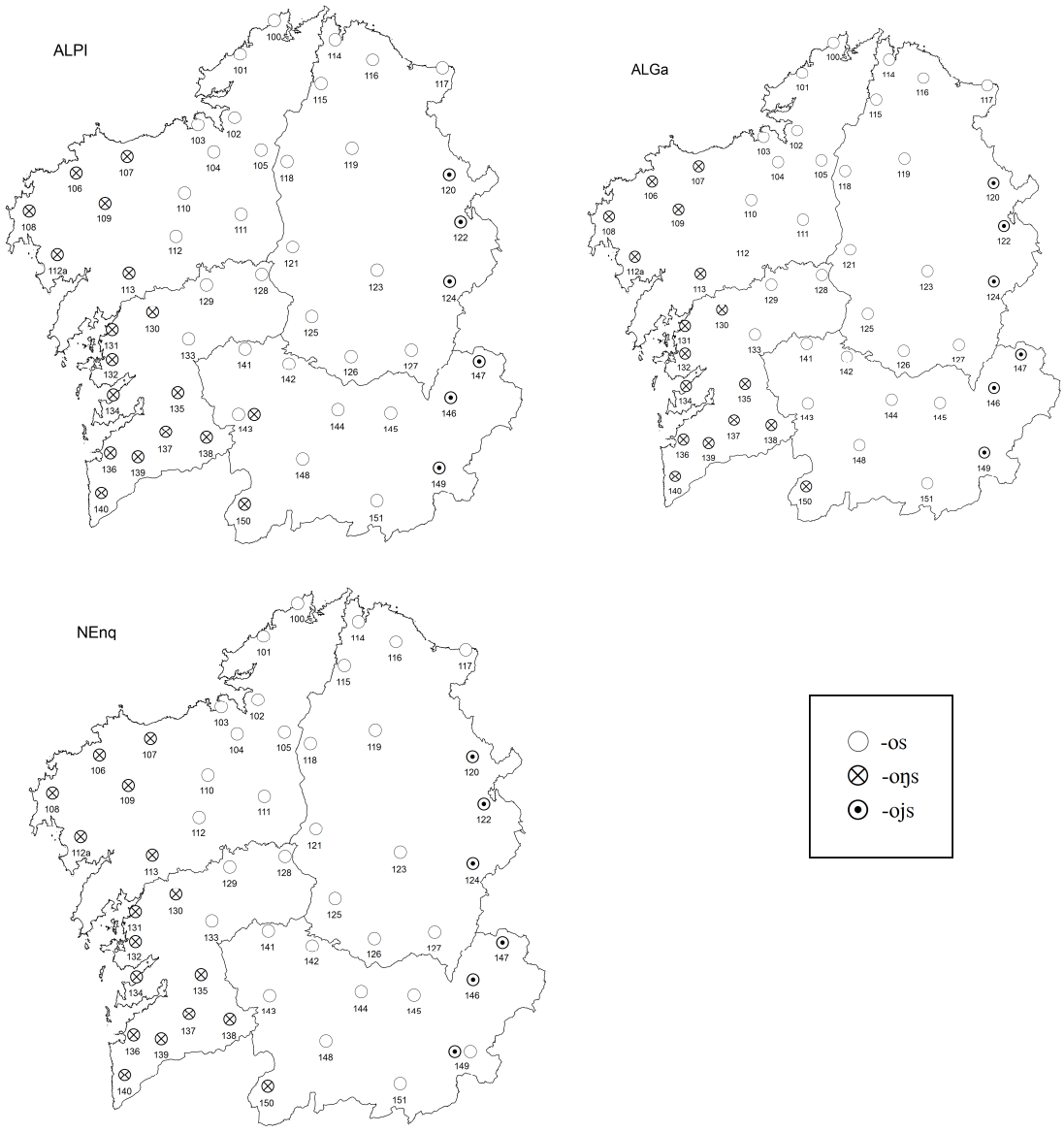
One of the most outstanding features of the Romance language spoken in the western strip of the Iberian Peninsula, which includes Galician and Portuguese, is the loss of -N- in inter-vocalic position. This change was already consolidated by the Middle Ages. In itself the loss of -N- does not entail the loss of nasality, whence the form *-õẽs* < -ŌNES. From that point of departure, two differing solutions occur in Galician. In the east of the Galician area, nasality was lost giving rise to *-oes*, later diphthongized to yield the present-day solution *-ois*. Throughout the rest of Galicia *-õẽs* gave raise to *-õõs* by progressive assimilation, hence the solutions *-os* (with loss of nasality) or *-ons* (with nasality conserved). The former is found across a broad central area of Galician, while the latter is confined to the west.

The geographical distribution of this phenomenon is essential since it is taken as a reference point for the classification of Galician dialects into three main blocks: *western, central* and *eastern* (Fernández Rei 1990: 106-160). They are clearly visible on Maps 2.

This morphological phenomenon shows no great changes in its configuration between 1934 and 2008. The forms *-ons* and *-os* forms occur together, though predominantly the latter, in locality 143 in the ALPI data. This outcome might indicate an ongoing change, with the central replacing the western form there, since only forms ending in *-os* are found in later data. In point 149, the *NEnq* information likewise gives a double answer. Besides the traditional *-ois* form there is a central form *-os*, which the informant says he uses when he goes to nearby localities where the same variety is spoken. This implies two forms with diaphasic distribution: the locally traditional *-ois*,

[4] For example, at point 131, for the question *folla* 'leaf', we found two solutions in ALGa data: [ˈfoʎa] and [ˈfoja].

which the informant says he uses in intimate contexts, and another form, the central *-os*, which he uses in situations where there is a lower level of familiarity with the interlocutors. Other localities show the same solution in all three sources of data.



Maps 2. Distribution of different treatments of Lat. -ŌNES in ALPI Galicia, ALGa and NEnq surveys.

Other morphological phenomena also reveal either very subtle variations or none at all in the periods studied. Examples of this include the distribution of treatments of the Latin ending -ĀNAM and the distribution of the two forms of the second-person personal pronoun *ti* / *tu* (Álvarez 1995).

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3.3. Lexis and contact: nó *(Galician) /* nudo *(Spanish) 'knot'*

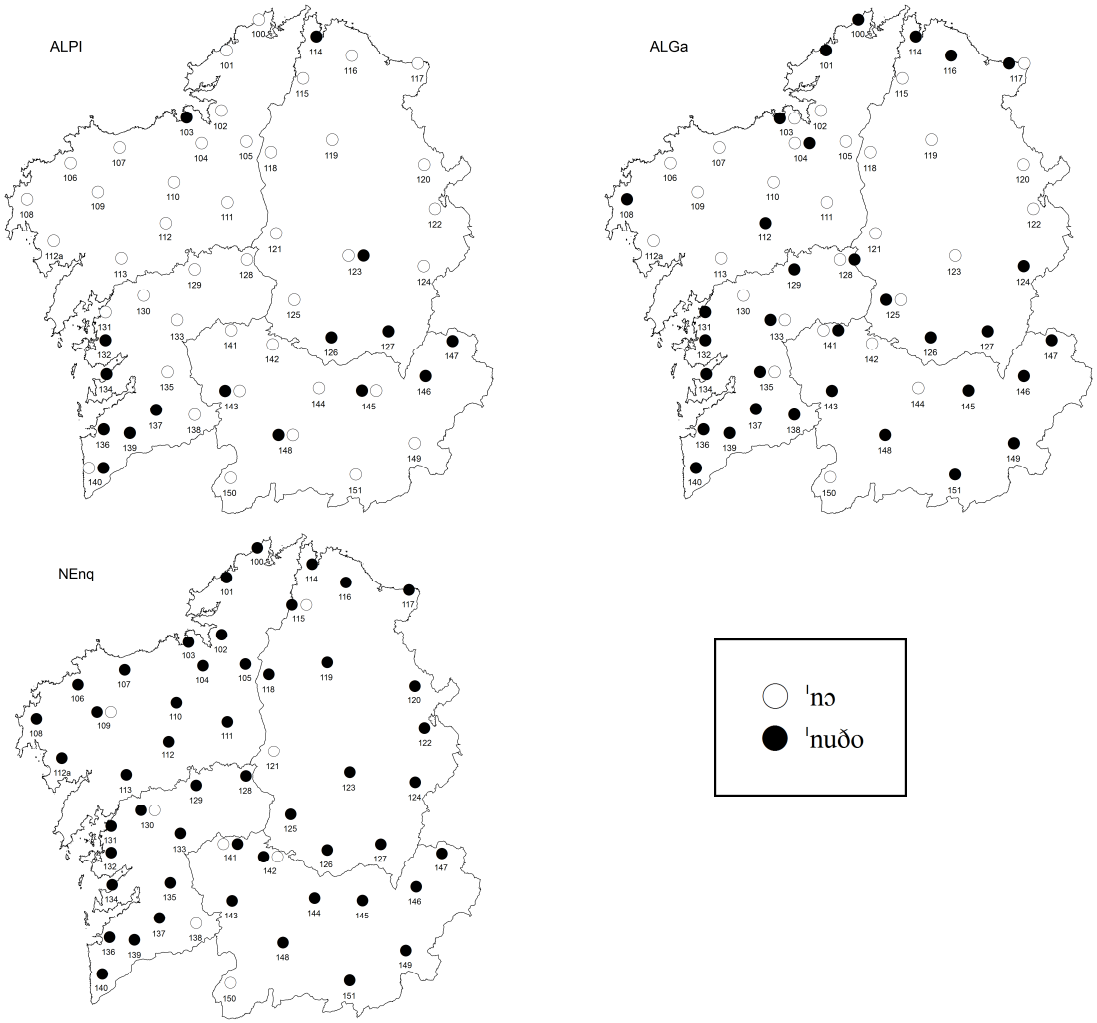
For historical and political reasons, the Galician language has coexisted with Spanish in a diglossic situation for about 600 years (Monteagudo 1999). In this context, the Spanish is in a dominant position and one of prestige. This has two main consequences: the progressive loss of Galician speakers and the adoption of numerous Spanish lexical loans in colloquial speech. This seems to be on the increase. Most of the time, traditional speakers don't seem to be aware whether they are using a form from Spanish or an inherited word. In fact, there are Spanish loanwords so deeply rooted in traditional Galician that they have completely displaced the autochthonous forms; such Spanish loanwords are never perceived as such by speakers without thorough training in the learned standard. They are simply well-established words in certain varieties of Galician, although some comments by informants were recorded in *NEnq* where they indicated that they considered one or another of their responses to be rather more Spanish. This may be a result of some degree of knowledge of the learned standard used in the Galician media and, to a considerable extent, by their grandchildren, who learn standard Galician at school and sometimes inform their grandparents that such-and-such a word is not Galician, and tell them which inherited word should be used instead.

When the replacement is not total, Galician forms often end up undergoing a specialization process by virtue of the economy principle. The Spanish loanword is used in a general way, while the inherited form's meaning is restricted to designating some more specific extra-linguistic reality, and only that.

As a case in point, take the process of replacing the inherited word *nó* ['nɔ] ('knot') with the Spanish loanwords *nudo* ['nuðo]. The maps show how the latter is occupying an increasing area. In most of the points with double answers, the Galician form is rare or undergoes semantic specialization. Thus *nó* is still found in expressions like *nó da madeira* ('knot in wood') and *nó da gorxa* ('Adam's apple'). Looking at the maps, it would seem that *nudo* is penetrating via the natural route of people from the Spanish Meseta moving in the direction of Galicia in the landlocked province of Ourense, as well as in a few localities along the coast. Sea ports are always places where people from different places cross paths, and may also be ports of entry for new lexical items. But the study of other items shows that there is no clear geographical pattern for the

entry of Spanish loanwords. Reading the three surveys side-by-side, two conclusions emerge. The first is that the percentage of Spanish loans recorded has risen from 35% in *ALPI* to 50% in *ALGa* to 70% in *Nenq*.[5] The second is that by places that conserve more of the inherited lexicon have in common that they are in relatively isolated places and have relatively small populations.

There are many other examples like this one. In some of them, our data suggest the replacement process has been completed, as in the case of *xeonllo* / *rodilla* (‘knee’) or *deus* / *dios* (‘god’). In other cases, specialization allows the inherited forms to survive, as in the pair *berce* / *cuna* (‘cradle’ / ‘crib’). In other cases such as *calcañar* / *talón* (‘heel’), the inherited form has survived so far, but a large number of Spanish loanwords have begun to show up in the *NEnq* data.



Maps 3. Distribution of traditional *nó* vs. Castilian loanword *nudo* in ALPI Galicia, ALGa and NEnq surveys.

[5] All figures approximate.

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4. Conclusions

This collation of three dialect surveys serves to showcase the development over time of diatopic variations. Although the period studied (about 70 years) is not particularly long, significant changes are visible. In the examples discussed, the causes of these changes seem to be mainly sociolinguistic. Pressure certainly comes from Spanish as a dominant language. It seems that more prestigious varieties of Galician are also putting pressure on other varieties.

In morphology, the lack of change in the phenomenon examined above may be due to the fact that the solutions are not perceived negatively and there is no interference from Spanish terms. However, the analysis of other morphological phenomena in which one of the forms is clearly a minority one and covers a limited area (such as the distribution of the two forms of the first-person-singular personal pronoun, *el* and *il*) reveals some tendency towards expansion of the majority form. But this issue has to be studied in depth.

As we might expect, morphological phenomena are resistant to change, but phonetic and lexical features have proved less so. In the first case study above, we saw how a phonetic change, the abandonment of *gheada*, has progressed towards the west consistently; while in the last, we observed an increase in the number of forms of Castilian origin, though without a clear-cut pattern of diatopic development.

Although the results seem to confirm t the initial hypothesis — morphological patterns remain stable, while phonetic and lexical data show significant changes —, they call for a number of explanations and an exhaustive analysis of each set of answers for each locality before a general conclusion can be reached. This research is as yet unfinished, but the processing and charting of the whole set of data is expected to be completed during 2013.

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