

A First Look at Miami Latino English: Tracking Spanish Substrate Influence through Prosodic and Vocalic Variation

Phillip M. Carter (*Florida International University*), Nandi Sims (*Florida International University*), Lydda López (*Florida International University*)

Labov, Ash, and Boberg's (2006) *ANAE* classify South Florida as part of the Southeastern Super Region. While this classification is uncontroversial when considering the speech of Anglo Whites, who were studied for the Atlas project, most of South Florida is now non-Anglo. This is especially true in Miami-Dade County, where Latinos comprise 64% of the local population. The lack of attention to this group represents a major gap not only in the dialectological description of English varieties in the U.S., but also in our ongoing account of the development of English in U.S. Latino communities.

In this paper we present preliminary findings of the first large-scale, systematic study of English in Miami using instrumental techniques. Sociolinguistic interviews were conducted with 43 Miami-born participants: 10 Anglo Whites and 33 Latinos of various national-origin groups with varying degrees of Spanish fluency. We focus on two socially salient phonetic aspects in the speech of the second and third generations: 1) prosodic rhythm, in order to examine the extent of syllable-timing in Miami English as compared to contiguous varieties of English, and 2) vowel quality (/æ, o, u, ay/), in order to examine the nature of influence of Spanish on English in Miami over the past 60 years. Both vowel quality and prosodic rhythm have shown to be sensitive to cross-linguistic conditioning in situations of sustained Spanish-English contact in U.S. settings.

The analysis of prosodic rhythm is based on the widely used Pairwise Variability Index (Low and Grabe, 1995), which quantifies the degree of stress- or syllable-timing in a speech variety while controlling for speaking rate. For each speaker studied, 200 syllable-to-syllable comparisons were made and mean PVI scores were calculated. We followed the protocols for adapting PVI to naturalistic speech set forth in Thomas and Carter (2006). For the vocalic analysis, a minimum of 15 non-repeating tokens of each vowel were extracted from interview data and analyzed for F1, F2, and F3 values using PRAAT. Measurements were taken at the midpoint for all monophthongs and at three temporal locations for all diphthongs. Two allophones of /æ/ were considered: pre-nasal and pre-non-nasal, since Latinos in other regional settings have shown to resist pre-nasal /æ/ raising (Thomas 2001). Tokens for all vowel variables were coded for phonetic environment as described by Thomas (2011) and vowel data were normalized using the Bark difference metric (Syrdal and Gopal 1986). Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS and results show that although some individuals pattern with Anglo Whites for some of the features studied, English among Miami-born Latinos as a group exhibits durable substrate influence from Spanish well into the third generation. For the quantitative analysis of prosody, we found that Latinos were significantly more syllable-timed than the Anglo Whites, confirming a pattern now found in New York City, Los Angeles, North Carolina, and South Texas. With respect to vowel quality, we found that Miami Latinos in this sample exhibited the allophonic split for /æ/, though with more backed variants than Anglo Whites, and produced more backed of /u, o/.

