

Tune choice in utterance-initial vocatives in Asturian
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Vocative marking in Asturian, a minority Ibero-Romance language spoken in Asturias (North Western Spain), is realized both intonationally and morphosyntactically in utterance-initial position. Intonationally vocatives are realized with one of two intonation contours: L+H* (as in Figure 1) or H+L* (Figures 2 & 3). Morphosyntactically they can be marked by an optional phrase-initial particle *a-*, for example *¡A Manolo!* (Manolo!). A previous production experiment confirmed that the implementation of the H+L* pitch accent is subject to phonological restrictions that affect the presence or absence of the particle. There is evidence that monosyllabic nouns and words with word-initial stress do not provide the necessary pre-tonic material that the leading H tone requires to align with (as in 2a below). In such cases, H+L* implementation is licensed by the addition of the particle *a-* to the vocative noun, which automatically provides the leading tone (H) with an anchoring location, as in 2b (text-to-tune accommodation). However, the particle *a-* can precede any vocative noun, regardless of stress placement (example 2d) and is intrinsically associated with H+L* (therefore incompatible with L+H*). In a previous experiment, the author found that, in an imitation task, participants failed to (re)produce vocative calls represented in examples 1b, 1d, and 2a.

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| 1. [L+H*]:
a. <i>Mari</i> , ...
b. <i>#A Mari</i> , ...
c. <i>Manolo</i> , ...
d. <i>#A Manolo</i> , ... | 2. [H+L*]:
a. <i>#Mari</i> , ...
b. <i>A Mari</i> , ...
c. <i>Manolo</i> , ...
d. <i>A Manolo</i> , ... |
|--|---|

The purpose of this study was to uncover the pragmatic restrictions that guide Asturian speakers in tune choice. Cross-linguistically, various melodies may occur for the same utterance type and, oftentimes, this variation can be explained by the different types of epistemic stances that speakers can take. Intonation can convey relations between propositional content of utterances and the mutual belief space between speaker (S) and hearer (H) (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg 1990). Recently, the relation between intonation, propositional content (*p*), and beliefs has been investigated in polar questions (e.g., Vanrell et al. 2014; Armstrong & Prieto 2015), declaratives (e.g., Gravano et al. 2008), and imperatives (Armstrong & Lesho 2016). In these sentence types, interlocutors naturally navigate the mutual belief space, but could Asturian vocatives show similar behavior? In an open-response task, the intuitions of 26 native speakers revealed that H+L* is used in contexts where there is a mismatch in the interlocutors' mutual belief space or common ground (CG). This gap can be either S-oriented (S's surprise/counter-expectation/doubt), or H-oriented (S is reproaching/criticizing/impatient/giving an order). On the contrary, L+H* does not convey those meanings. In order to investigate whether the use of H+L* is more likely to be interpreted as implicating that some *p* is outside of the interlocutors' CG, 15 native Asturian speakers participated in a perception task, where they listened to utterance-initial vocatives, produced either with L+H* or H+L*, and followed by 2 possible completing utterances: one pragmatically biased with a mismatch in CG (either S- or H-oriented), and the other unbiased. They were asked to choose the utterance that would follow each vocative more suitably. The results (Graph 1) reveal that the use of H+L* in utterance-initial vocatives in Asturian arises pragmatically in contexts where S marks a gap in the mutual belief space, either on S or H side. In a larger picture, this study contributes to what we know about intonational meaning. As it is the case with other utterance types (e.g., polar questions), vocatives can also reference belief states through intonation. In Asturian, utterance-initial vocatives are open for marking a gap in the interlocutors' CG.

Figures 1, 2, and 3. Waveform, spectrogram, and F0 track of Asturian vocative calls *jManolo!*, ... (L+H* [left]; H+L* [center]) and *jÁ Monolo!*, ... (H+L* [right])

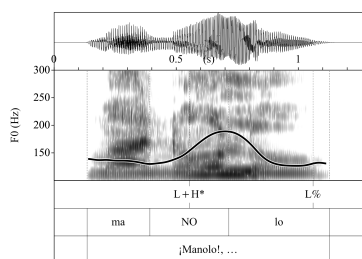


Figure 1

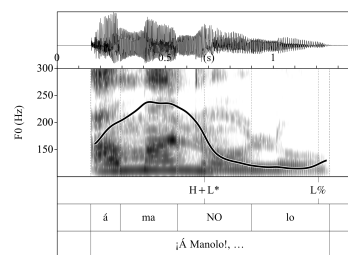


Figure 2

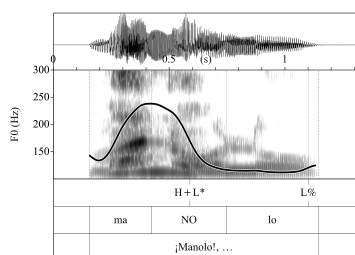
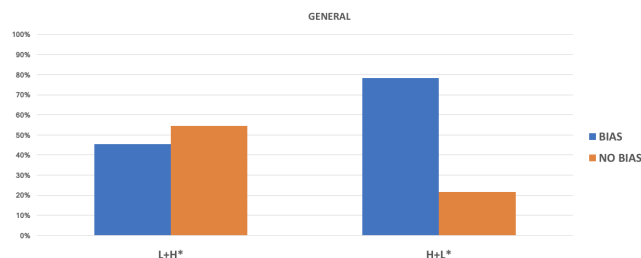


Figure 3

Graph 1. Results from the perception task showing the percentage of biased and unbiased responses associated with utterance-initial vocatives produced with L+H* and H+L* respectively.



Graph 1

References

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