

Further sound change in Spanish – postvocalic voicing in Gran Canaria

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Spanish consonants are not particularly stable and tend to undergo a series of processes analysed jointly under the umbrella term 'weakening': coda *s* aspiration, intervocalic stop spirantisation, coda obstruent voicing, spirantisation and elision etc (e.g. Lipski 1996). All of these changes have led to an uneven distribution of sounds: most Spanish dialects lack a voicing contrast in fricatives, while the voicing contrast in stops is maintained only phrase-initially (*dos* 'two' vs. *tos* 'cough') and word-medially after a homorganic sonorant (*manda* 'commands' vs. *manta* 'blanket') due to the workings of spirantisation.

This paper presents an interesting portion of data from a dialect spoken in Galdar on Gran Canaria, which shows a change further in the direction of lenition: postvocalic voicing of *p t k* (my fieldwork). Most importantly, the data cannot be analysed as intervocalic or intersonorant voicing due to the asymmetry between the left-hand and the right-hand environments. It appears that a consonantal sonorant on the left does not trigger voicing while the same context on the right does not inhibit the process as long as there is a vowel to the left. The process applies both inside words and across word boundaries. This is illustrated below.

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| a. | a[b]asionado 'enthusiastic'
fone[d]ica 'phonetics'
la fre[g]uencia 'the frequency'
tengo una [b]rima 'I have a cousin'
juntos y [d]al 'together and so on'
otra [g]lase de 'other type of' | b. | im[p]ortante 'important'
en[t]onces 'so / then'
en un ban[k]o 'in a bank'
un [p]ueblecito 'a small village'
el [t]riple 'three times'
super [k]omodo 'very convenient' |
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Interestingly, voicing is blocked after vowels which become adjacent to the stop as a result of elision. Thus: *e(s)tas son la(s) caracteri(s)tica(s)* 'these are the features' does not present voicing of the stop (in bold) after deleting coda *s*. Neither does the phrase *por pensa(r) tonteria(s)* 'for thinking about silly things' after eliding *r*. Moreover, voicing is blocked if a voiceless segment stands to the right (*cara[**k**]teristicas* 'features'). Coda obstruents undergo other types of weakening in this position.

The process described here very much resembles historical changes in both Spanish and French and very well fits into the realm of category-shifting leniting sound change. I propose an analysis of the data that combines phonetic grounding of the observed changes with a formal/categorical approach, with systemic consequences for (Canarian) Spanish in mind.