University of Victoria | Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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"Variation and Clitic Placement among Galician Neofalantes"

Department of Linguistics

Monday, July 31, 2017
10:00 A.M.
David Turpin Building
Room A136

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Abstract

This thesis examines variation in clitic placement among Galician *neofalantes*—a speech community of urban, L2 speakers of Galician, in a bilingual region in Northwestern Spain (Dubert 2005; Freixeiro Mato 2014; O'Rourke & Ramallo 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015). Galician has a complex system of pronominal clitics that can be either proclitic or enclitic depending on a range of grammatical factors (e.g. verb type, sentence type, triggering particles). Among *neofalantes*, clitic placement is variable, sometimes following the rules of traditional Galician, and sometimes not. Non-traditional clitic placement has been criticized as one of the most salient "errors" in *neofalante* speech, both by speakers and by linguists (Dubert 2005; González-González 2008). Due to language contact, the bilingual nature of the region and the genetic proximity of Galician and Spanish, most research has argued that non-traditional clitic use results from Spanish influence (e.g. Kabatek 1997; Dubert 2005). However, to date no empirical research has targeted *neofalante* clitic usage to test this assertion. To probe possible contact effects, this thesis is based on an accountable variationist analysis of pronominal clitics (N = 3,736 tokens) in the vernacular of 15 *neofalantes*. Overall results reveal that the vast majority of tokens follow traditional Galician grammar, suggesting that *neofalantes* are relatively good at mastering Galician clitic placement. However, variation is not evenly distributed. Where proclitic placement follows traditional grammar at a rate that approaches categoricity (98.6%, N = 2,036), nearly 40% of enclitic tokens conflict with traditional grammar (39.2%, N = 1,700). Logistic regression suggests that variation is largely isolated to those contexts where Galician and Spanish differ (e.g. verb type, where finite verbs favour non-traditional placement), lending support to previous claims. However, social predictors are also relevant, with speakers who have Galician parents and who were born after the implementation of bilingual education favouring non-traditional placement as well. These results suggest that other sociolinguistic factors, such as the need to assert one's Galician identity, can also impact clitic placement.