

EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE AND INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT IN ARANESE OCCITAN

*Ryan Furness*¹

University of Minnesota

1. Outline of study

In studies of language contact and interference the question of just how much and in what ways one language affects another have been hotly debated. The main purpose of this pilot study is simply to identify and categorically classify the amount of interference found in modern, spoken Aranese Occitan. The study consists primarily of an outline of interference found in the phonetic, lexical-semantic, syntactic, and morphological subsystems of modern, spoken Aranese Occitan. It will be comparatively examining the grammar systems of the languages in contact with Aranese, as well as some developments in languages, such as French, that are typologically similar. As secondary points of examination, we will also attempt to label the type of interference found, as well as discuss some of the possible causes of it, including both internal and external factors for change.

2. Theoretical framework

Thomason and Kaufman outline two basic types of interference (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 37). The first type is borrowing and the second is interference through shift. Borrowing is “the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language...”. Words, they argue, are typically the first things to be borrowed in a language, but that “if there is a strong long-term cultural pressure from the source-language speakers on the borrowing language speaker group, then structural features may be borrowed as well”. (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 37). Interference through shift, or substratum interference, on the other hand, is that type of interference that “results from imperfect group learning during a process of language shift” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 37).

¹ Ryan Furness, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Minnesota. 34 Folwell Hall, 9 Pleasant Street S.E. Minneapolis, MN 55455-0124, USA. Phone: 612 625 5858; email: furne001@umn.edu

While not the primary objective of this pilot study, the idea of how to define the interference is a matter of on-going debate in research in language-contact phenomena (see Pfaff, 1979; Poplack, 1980; Poplack & Miller, 1988; Sankoff, Poplack & Vanniarajan, 1990; Myers-Scotton, 1992). In this study, all of the analyzed tokens are simply argued to be borrowings, or interference through shift, and not codeswitches. Tokens identified as interference that do not occur in more than four informants have not been extracted for analysis in this study. The theory behind this argument is based on Myers-Scotton's structural constraints on codeswitching idea which argues that "absolute frequency/relative frequency is the single criterion best linking B forms more closely with the ML [Matrix Language] mental lexicon than single CS [codeswitching] forms" (Myers-Scotton, 1992: 30). In other words, the tokens in the data set not to be considered codeswitches or, as Poplack and others have postulated, simple "nonce" borrowings (Poplack & Miller, 1988; Sankoff, Poplack & Vanniarajan, 1990) with limited overall distribution among the speakers of the interfered language.

In order not to limit this study's theoretical scope to external factors, and to open up the possibility of multiple causation (Dworkin, 1982; Granda, 1995, 1996; Godenzzi 1996), internal factors will also be briefly discussed. Internal motivation for change has historically been considered to be the primary determinant of interference in situations of language contact (Meillet, 1921; Weinreich, 1953; Winter, 1973; Bickerton, 1981). But in light of newer studies, such as Thomason and Kaufman's, sociolinguistic factors are considered along with purely linguistic ones. Silva-Corvalán, in her research on the Spanish of Los Angeles, argues that while sociolinguistic aspects like those argued by Thomason and Kaufman, are an important determinant of contact-induced language change, it is "that the structure of the languages involved, to a large extent constrained by cognitive and interactional processes, that governs the introduction and diffusion of innovative elements in the linguistic system" (Silva-Corvalán, 1994: 9). It is within this theoretical framework, then, that we will seek to identify, classify, and briefly explain interference and change in Aranese Occitan.

3. Methodology and data collection

Labov theorized that the use of the vernacular is the most regular and spontaneous in its structure. It is the style of speech in which the least attention is paid

to monitoring speech. It then provides the most systematic data for the analysis of any linguistic structure (Labov, 1972). It would seem that the most appropriate data should be that of “natural language”. However, the data collection on which this pilot study is based on semi-guided recorded interviews taken from the one local public radio program available in Aranese. The reason this set of data has been chosen for analysis is that even though it may very well be guarded and semi-formal language, any interference found at such a register is that much more telling of the level of penetration attained by the interference.

There are a total of 8 informants, of which there are 6 men and 2 women. There are two age groups; the first includes three men and one woman aged between 17-35. The second group is made up of three men and one woman over the age of 65. Unfortunately, time limitations have prevented further age-group breakdown and analysis, even though the current separation is arguably deficient. All informants are L1 speakers of Aranese Occitan, but also, unavoidably, have native-like competence in Spanish and Catalan. The use of L1 speakers is important because it attempts to circumvent the need to account for some SLA variables, for example imperfect learning. Admittedly, though, the fact that they are trilingual doesn't help control some variables on the individual cognitive constraints of interference. These considerations are taken into account when analyzing token usage in the speech samples. So as to diminish any possible arguments similar to those of the “nonce-borrowing” proposed by Silva-Corvalán, all tokens analyzed are found in at least 50% of informants. The interviews lasted from 20-50 minutes, and were done in a radio station studio. They were first transcribed orthographically by the author, and then later revised with the collaboration of an Aranese language teacher from the Valley.

4. Historical and (socio)linguistic background

4.1. Location and language

The Aran Valley is a small Occitan-speaking enclave situated in the Northeastern corner of Catalonia, bordering France. Occitan, also referred to (erroneously) in the past as Provençal, is the language spoken in Southern France, including most of the northern half of the Pyrenees and parts of the Franco-Italian Alps. Aranese, the autochthonous language of the Valley, is typologically considered a dialect

of Gascon. Gascon Occitan is spoken in Southwestern France and is itself considered a variety of Occitan. Gascon Occitan is the most similar Occitan dialect to the Aranese Occitan spoken in the Aran Valley. Aranese is, however, considerably different than other varieties of Occitan due mainly to its geographical isolation, and more recently to the intense contact with Catalan and Castilian. The census of 1996 shows that 90% of the population admits to being able to understand Aranese, while 65% can speak it, 59% can read it, and 35% can write it (Vila, 2000). While these numbers seem relatively high, the social use of Aranese, which is arguably the most important for its survival, has steeply declined in recent years (Suñls & Huguet, 1998).

The Valley has an area of only 620 square kilometers and a total, fixed population of 6,991 inhabitants (Vila, 2000). It is divided up into *Parçans*, which would be roughly equivalent to US “county”. The three main *Parçans* are Naut Aran (Upper Aran), Mijaran (Middle Aran) and Baish Aran (Lower Aran), named in reference to their geographical position within the mountains of the Valley. Baish Aran is the northernmost *Parçan* and closest to the French border, while Upper Aran is the southernmost *Parçan* and closest to Catalonia. Historically, the Aranese have had much more contact with southern France, almost exclusively the Gascon (and French)-speaking region, than they have with Catalonia. This lack of contact with the rest of Spain was due mainly to the lack of easily accessible routes through the mountains. The harsh winters left them snowbound for several months of the year.

The Spanish language, much more so than Catalan, has played an important role in the Aranese society, especially in government and education. This is partly shown in the fact that there are many more borrowings attributable to Spanish than there are to Catalan (Coromines, 1990). Contact with Catalonia, and Catalan, on the other hand, has been traditionally reserved for the “local” trans-Pyrenean livestock and farming trade. Recent developments in, among things, communication and transportation, have blurred the traditional boundary lines once created by weather, terrain, and other obstacles, and have opened the Valley more to its southern Spanish and Catalan neighbors.

4.2. Recent demographic change in the Aran Valley

There are three important events of the 20th century that have caused irrevocable change in the Aran Valley. The first was the construction of the hydroelectric plants in

the 1920's; the second was the building of the "Túnel de Vielha" (Tunnel of Vielha), which opened up the Aran Valley to Northern Catalonia and the rest of Spain; and the third was the opening of the Vaqueïra Beret Ski Resort in the early 1970's, and the subsequent tourist boom that it brought with it.

All three events have one thing in common, and that is they brought immigrants to the Valley. Most of the first immigrants, who arrived for the construction of the hydroelectric plants and the Tunnel, came principally from the southern areas of Spain, including Extremadura, Andalusia, and Murcia. All were monolingual Spanish speakers, thus making the use of Spanish more commonplace in the Valley. The most recent waves of immigration, due exclusively to the tourist boom of the last fifteen years, have tended to come from more northern areas of Spain, especially Galicia, Madrid, and Catalonia. They are in many cases bilingual in their respective community languages, namely Galician and Catalan.

4.3. Contact with Catalan, Spanish and Occitan inside and outside of the Aran Valley

Traditionally, the relationship between the Aranese and their Occitan-speaking neighbors in France was rather constant, especially in the winter when it was common for the Aranese to go across the border in search of work. Most of this travel and contact, however, was confined to the Gascony region of southern France, and rarely did the Aranese come into contact with other areas of Occitan-speaking southern France. Most likely, this is due to both geographical and linguistic proximity. More recently, though, Aranese contact with their French neighbors, of whom there are but a scattered few who still speak Occitan, has been reversed. It is now the French who travel to the Valley, although they come for tourism and not work. The Aranese, then, are much more likely to travel south to Lleida, or many times to Barcelona, in search of work or to further their education.

As discussed earlier, the current social make-up of the Aran Valley is extremely heterogeneous, both linguistically and culturally. A telling sign of this is that more than 30% of Valley residents in 1996 were born outside of the Valley (Vila, 2000). It is estimated that L1 Aranese-speakers make up less than half the Valley's total population (Conselh Generau, personal communication). Contact, then, between the Valley's three

co-official languages is unavoidable. Spanish is by far the most widely spoken language, particularly among the younger generations.

4.4. The use of Aranese

At first glance, it would seem that the public use of Aranese is very widespread in the Valley. It's used in the schools, in literary production, and even in the media. This is somewhat misleading, however, because of the limited role that the language has within each of these fields. Aranese has now become the primary language of the first four years of compulsory education, which is significant given that only fifteen years ago, all school curricula was in Spanish. However, after this initial phase of "immersion" education, its use gradually declines, until it accounts for less than 2 hours per week at the secondary school level. Aranese is also present in the media, albeit severely limited. There is a daily one-hour radio show, a weekly *7-minute* news program, and a weekly 4-page newspaper. Literary production apart from the media is stable at an average of eight books per year, including non-fiction, fiction, and school-related books. Aranese has a very small role among the business sector in the Valley, even with those not directly related to tourism. The majority of storefront advertisements, billboards, and other notices, are in Spanish, Catalan or French. All in all, while Aranese is found in many areas of the society, its role is extremely limited.

5. Data and analysis²

The data analysis of the linguistic interference found in modern spoken Aranese has been organized into language subsystems categories. This was done for strictly organizational purposes, even though not all analyzed interference fits perfectly into each established category.

5.1. Lexical-semantic

Aranese has experienced, without a doubt, interference in the lexical and semantic subsystems through contact with Spanish and Catalan.

² The use of quotation marks in the example sentences denotes actual data samples. When an asterisk mark precedes the example, is to be assumed that the examples are made-up by the author. Unless

5.1.1. Widespread borrowing of Spanish and Catalan vocabulary

- (1) Spanish: abuelo, abuela, aguantar, apretar, avalancha, caramelo, colocar, grifo, mantequilha, puesto, suelto, tío, tonto/a.
- (2) Catalan³: *cordèrs*, *esmorçar*, *gosset*, *mare*, *pare*, recordar, sentir.
- (3) Spanish/Catalan: molestar, olvidar.

5.1.2. “Èster” and “Estar” in copular predicates: location and state of being

The prescriptive Aranese, Gascon and general Occitan copular predicate uses of *èster* (Lat. ESSER) and *estar* (Lat. ESTARE) pertaining to location and state of being, are very straightforward; *ser* is to be used almost always. The Spanish use of *ser* (Lat. ESSER) and *estar* (Lat. ESTARE) in copular predicates, however, makes a distinction between temporary and permanent. When the referent is time-related *ser* is used in almost all cases. When the referent is related to the location and state of being, *estar* is used to express temporality, and *ser* permanence. In Catalan, and to very much simplify a hotly debated subject in current Catalan linguistics today, *ser* (Lat. ESSER) is for mere location, while *estar* (Lat. ESTARE) is location extended explicitly over time. Catalan state of being use, in most cases corresponds to that of Spanish.

The analysis, then, of Aranese copular predicates reveals a clear break from the prescriptive uses for Aranese and Occitan towards those uses found in Spanish and Catalan (particularly Catalan’s spoken variety, see Sanz & Gonzalez, 1995). The Aranese use of *estar* coincides with that of Spanish and spoken Catalan, particularly in the under-35 group.

- (4) “Aué està [ei] en Barcelona” [Today she is in Barcelona]
- (5) “Non *estongui* [sò] trist, ‘només’ un shinau...” [I am not sad, just a little...]

Data in the over-65 group does reveal a continued adherence to the prescriptive norms of Aranese and Occitan.

- (6) “Èrem en casa quan mos cridèren” [We were at home when they shouted for us]
- (7) “Jo non *sò* pas malaut” [I am not at all sick]

As in many of the other cases in this study, both internally motivated and externally motivated factors are arguably at work. Firstly, the question of internally motivated change could be looked at with a diachronic inspection of Spanish. Silva-

otherwise marked, all sentences outside of brackets are in Aranese. Brackets within the sample Aranese sentences denote normative use.

³ The italicized lexical items were found only in the informants from Naut Aran, the part of the Valley bordering Catalonia to the North.

Corvalán cites numerous studies where “throughout the history of Spanish the contexts of use of *estar* have increased to the detriment of those of *ser*” (Silva-Corvalán, 1994: 95, citing studies by Falk, 1979, Navas Ruiz, 1963, and Vaño-Cerdá, 1982). The same has been shown to be true in Catalan (Sanz & Gonzalez, 1995) where these authors argue, “the generalization of *estar* over *ser* is internal to the language system and not particular to the language situation in which the languages are analyzed”. Even though this generalization has been attested in Spanish and Catalan, the fact that it has not in all other varieties of Occitan invites the argument that contact with Spanish and Catalan have indeed interfered, or at least, accelerated this change in Aranese Occitan.

5.2. Phonological

The three cases of phonological interference found in Aranese are all argued to be cases of phonological borrowing. Thomason and Kaufman discuss in detail how lexical borrowing can lead to the introduction of phonological change. Heath’s article (1978) on linguistic diffusion (cited in Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 63), discusses cases of phonological borrowing that lead to language-specific chain shifts, with results that are different from the source-language phonological structure. In the data, three areas of phonologically interference have been identified.

5.2.1. Shift in stress placement

According to the Aranese-Gascon grammar by Coromines (1990), all words with etymologically antepenultimate stress shift the stress to the penultimate syllable. Examples of this in Gascon, and Standard Occitan include: *simbola*, *lampada*, *granòles*, (*vibora*), *tebeda*, *orbïta*, *peninsula*. However, the data show that the use of penultimate stress of antepenultimate lexical items is limited to the over-65. In the under-35 group, no cases of penultimate stress were found. This coincides with the stress rules of both Spanish and Catalan. The case for internally motivated factors seems less probable than that of contact-induced change given that shift from the Latin has not occurred in other cases outside of French and Occitan.

- (8) “Era política d’aue dia ena Val d’Aran...” [The politics these days in the Aran Valley...]
- (9) “T’agrade, o vos agrade, era música occitana?” [Do you, or both of you, like, Occitan music?]

5.2.2. Variation of final -n (restricted dialectal Aranese)⁴

All words that have final -n preceded by a stressed vowel, according to Coromines (1990: 38), are velar, except in the area of Pujolo (southern part of the valley, closest to Catalonia), where they are non-existent. For example, in the Pujolo variety we find *ple*, *regulació*, *accepció*, *ordenació*, *vi*, *pa*, whereas in the rest of the Valley we find a velar final -n: *plen*, *regulacion*, *accepcion*, *ordenacion*, *vin*, *pan*. A few examples of the Pujolo variety are:

- (10) “Non i a (ar)ren en aquest pòble, ne *pa*, ne (ar)ren” [There is nothing in this town, not even bread, nothing]
- (11) “Semble qu’aje passat ua *revolució* aquí ena Val d’Aran...” [It seems like there has been a revolution here in the Aran Valley]

In most, if not all varieties of Catalan, we find the same pattern of final -n deletion as in Pujolo Aranese, leading us to believe that this change is due to contact with Catalan. In this case, borrowing would seem the most likely type of change. Interference through shift seems unlikely due to the fact that this is not an Aranese-wide change, but rather local. On the other hand, final -n deletion is also present in some geographically close varieties of Occitan such as Lengadocian, leading us to speculate that it may very well be an internal tendency of the Occitan grammar system.

5.2.3. Variation of final -l

The phonemic rules governing syllable-final -l in Gascon Occitan, and therefore Aranese, state that all cases of etymological final -l after *a*, *e* and many times *o*, convert to final -u (Coromines, 1990: 39; Conselh Generau, 2001; Comision, 1999). A few examples include: *sau* (salt), *ceu* (sky), *abriu* (April), *generau* (general), and *finau* (end, final). The corresponding Spanish/Catalan equivalents are *sal/sal*, *cielo/cel*, *abril/abril*, *general/general*, *final/final*. This rule also applies to many cases of derivatives, as in *originau* > *originaument*. Given that there is some ambiguity in the rule, the tokens analyzed only include those cases of syllable-final -l found after *a* and *e*. The data indicate that over half of all tokens contain syllable-final -l, and not syllable-final -u. There was not a significant difference between either age group.

- (12) ...a *nivel nacional* [...at the national level]
- (13) “...desvolopar ua facèta tua *personal*” [...to develop your own personal fase/facet]

⁴ This phonological feature is only found in Naut Aran.

In the case of the final -l, there are few arguments available for internally motivated change. The initial phonological change from the Latin final -l to final -u is not found to revert back to the original form in any other Romance language. This fact then *favors* the argument for externally motivated factors for the interference.

5.3. Syntactic

5.3.1. Affirmative adverbs

Both *si* and *òc* are normatively accepted (Conselh Generau, 2001) in Aranese Occitan. However, Gascon Occitan, like many other varieties of Occitan, has only *òc*. The data indicate that while both age groups use *òc*, the under-35 group uses *si* much more. This is an indication that historically *òc* was much widely used in Aranese.

A few comparative examples from the Under-35 group:

- (14) “Me semble que *si* [*òc*] que...” [I think so...]
- (15) “*Si* [*òc*], m’agrade molt jogar a futbol” [Yes, I like playing soccer very much]

And the Over-65 group:

- (16) “*Òc*, m’agradaue anar tàs prats des abuelos [pairs-sénhers]” [Yes, I liked to go to my grandparent’s fields]
- (17) “*Òc, Òc, non i a arren milhor...*” [Yes, yes, there is nothing better...]

As in many of these cases, the lack of a more complete quantitative analysis, including more speakers of both age groups and possible a third, middle-aged group, makes an accurate account of causation difficult at best. But, if indeed there is a greater tendency among the over-65 group to use *òc*, then it could be argued that this is a case of borrowing or interference through shift, considering that the only form in Spanish and Catalan is *si*. Obviously, internal factors have not been considered as a cause for the borrowing or interference of this lexeme.

5.3.2. Extensive use of Spanish and Catalan adverbs

The extensive use of Spanish and Catalan adverbs, in detriment to their Aranese Occitan equivalents, is very widespread in both age groups. In fact, in the data the Aranese Occitan adverbs are practically non-existent. A few examples taken from both age groups include:

- (18) Adverbs of time: mai (jamès), después (dempús, despús), antes (abantes, abans), asta (enquia)
- (19) Adverbs of quantity: menos (mens),
- (20) Adverbs of place: sobre (sus)

(21) Degree adverbs: bastant (pro)

Obviously, these are clear examples of interference due to contact with Spanish and Catalan. The only adverbs which have similar forms in Gascon and other Occitan varieties are *mai*, which has the meaning of ‘more’, or in French ‘plus, encore’, and the preposition *subre*, used only in the speech of Gévaudan. Again, no internal tendencies have been analyzed for obvious reason. While these examples could be considered simple lexical interference, the fact that they are adverbs, and therefore, much more imbedded in the syntax of the language makes their introduction all that more significant (Wheeler *et al.*, 1999).

5.3.3. Coordinating conjunction interference

Two conjunctions that are common in the data are the Spanish/Catalan *pero* (but) and *i* (and). In the case of *pero*, the Gascon and general Occitan equivalent *mès* has been completely substituted among the informants in this study. In the corpus there are no tokens of *mès* in either group.

- (22) “Jo non sò molt esportista, *pero* m’agrade ‘mirar’...” [I am not very sporty, but I like to watch...]
- (23) “*Pero*, se non ac vòs hèr, non ac hesques” [But, if you don’t want to do it, don’t do it]

The fact that no tokens are found in the over-65 group makes it difficult to determine when *pero* was introduced in Aranese. There is also the question of the internal-motivated change. In Aranese, like in other Occitan varieties, *mès/més* is also an adverb of quantity meaning “more”. It may be, then, that the substitution of *mès* for *pero* was facilitated by a need for semantic simplification.

Another case of possible conjunction substitution is that of *e* for *i*. The data from the under-35 group indicate that there is an increasing presence of the conjunction *i*. Both Catalan and Spanish coincide with this new Aranese form. All other Occitan varieties, and French, use only the conjunction *e*. The *i* in Occitan is strictly reserved, like the French *i*, for the adverb of place. Two examples of this use are:

- (24) “Enes fi(n)s semana, jogui fotbol *i* basquet” [On the weekend, I play soccer and basketball]
- (25) “*I*, *i*...bueno, non digui que non aurién de hèr servir... [And, and,...well, I am not saying that they have to use...]

It seems clear in the first case that external influence due to contact with Catalan and Spanish has occurred. This same argument could be put forth for the second case as

well. However, while we cannot completely rule out possible phonological change, it seems unlikely given that neither Catalan nor Spanish, nor any other varieties of Occitan, has seen such recent change.

5.4. Morphological

5.4.1. Dual system of auxiliary verbs in compound tense use

In prescriptive Aranese, Gascon, general Occitan (and French) grammars, the formation of the compound tenses with participles still uses two auxiliary verbs depending on the transitivity of the verbs in question. For compound tenses with transitive verbs, the auxiliary verb *auer*, or similar Occitan variants, are used. For compound tenses with intransitive verbs, *èster*, or similar Occitan variants, are used. The following examples are of possible normative uses in Gascon and Aranese Occitan.

- (26) Jo sò anat ara farmacia aguest maitin. [I have gone (went) to the pharmacy this morning]
- (27) Jo e crompat truhes e iranjes aué en mercat. [I (have) bought potatoes and oranges at the market today]

In the study's data, there is a clear generational difference in the use of auxiliary compound. The over-65 group, while having some variation, generally maintains this distinction.

- (28) “Qué dides!, non sò pas anat tà vielha aué” [What are you saying, I have not gone to Vielha today]

The auxiliary verb + participle tokens found in the under-35 group indicate a clear simplification of the system. A few examples of this group are:

- (29) “Com ei que non as anat ‘mai’ a Mongarri?” [How is that you have never gone to Montgarri?]
- (30) “Eth tòn ‘pare’ non a vengut ara radio....” [Your father has not (did not) come to the radio...]

As with some of the other cases presented here, it is difficult to determine if the process of simplification of the Aranese present perfect compound tense has been internally or externally motivated. Historically, the use of *ser* + participle with intransitive verbs in Spanish and Catalan (except in the northern and Balearic Island varieties of Catalan where it is still possible today) was simplified to the singular use of *auer* by the sixteenth century (Penny, 1991: 140; Wheeler *et al.*, 1999: 355). However, in all Occitan varieties and French (and Italian), this distinction is still made today, thus making the case for solely and internal motivation difficult to make. The fact then that it

is found in older speakers of Aranese, and simplified in the younger, gives weight to the argument that contact with already simplified forms had an effect on their use in Aranese.

5.4.2. Creation of a progressive (present) continuous verb form

To denote the idea of a progressive action in Gascon, Occitan, and even French, the prescribed form is simply that of the present indicative tense + the appropriate adverb of time. Examples of this in Aranese and French are:

- (31) Aranese: En aguest moment, non hesqui arren [At this very moment, I am not doing anything]
- (32) Aranese: Ara madeish, guardi era television [Right now, I am watching television]
- (33) French: Maintenant, je regarde le television [Right now, I am watching television]

The use of the present tense + adverb form to denote an event actually in progress at the time is not unique to Occitan and French; it also exists in Catalan, Spanish and many other Romance varieties. However, unlike Aranese, Occitan and French, Catalan and Spanish have a second progressive construction made up of *estar* as auxiliary and the gerund of the verb in question.

- (34) Catalan: Ara, *estic mirant* la television [Right now, I am watching television]
- (35) Spanish: Ahora, *estoy mirando* la television [Right now, I am watching television]

The data in this study show that modern Aranese has developed a second progressive form made up of *èster* + present participle, which parallels Spanish and Catalan.

- (36) “Quan estongui ‘mirant’ programes com ‘Operación Triunfo’... [When I am watching shows like ‘Operación Triunfo’...]
- (37) “Estongui hent tot jo en institut, non i a degún que m’ajude” [I am doing everything in school myself, there is no one helping me]

While this use contradicts some research that maintains that in a contact situation, the tendency is for simplification, it is certainly not unheard of. Thomason and Kaufman give a number of examples of this and argue, “moderate to heavy interference is likely to complicate the grammar of the borrowing language... about as often as it simplifies it” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 29).

In examining possible externally motivated factors, the most viable argument would be that of the high level of bilingualism among Aranese speakers. It may very well be that these speakers have found a semantic distinction between both present tenses and wish to also express that time distinction in Aranese, much like they do when

they speak Catalan or Spanish. In order to accurately test this hypothesis, however, we would need spoken data on all three languages, Spanish, Catalan, and Aranese, by each speaker.

5.4.3. Definite article substitution

The singular definite articles in Aranese are *eth* (*er* when preceded by a vowel), in the masculine, and *era* in the feminine. This somewhat peculiar form also exists in other Pyrenean Romance varieties on both sides of the French-Spanish Pyrenees. The data gathered from the under-35 group shows evidence of substitution of the Aranese definite articles by forms common to Spanish, Catalan, and other varieties of Occitan. The first case of substitution found is that of the singular form of the feminine definite article *la* in place of *era*. Two examples from the corpus are:

- (38) “Moltes viatges, baishi a pè, e un cop en *la* [era] carretera, hesqui autostòp...” [Many times I walk down, and once I get to the road, I hitchhike]
- (39) “Guardar *la* [era] tele ei ua pèrdida de temps” [Watching television is a waste of time]

The second case of interference is found in the singular masculine definite article preceded by a vowel. The Aranese article *er* has been substituted by the elided form *l’*, which corresponds to Catalan, and French. For example,

- (40) “Non m’agrada *l’*ambient de pòble qu’i a” [I don’t like the town-like atmosphere that exists]
- (41) “Aguest ei *l’*animal que tròbi mès bèstia” [This is the animal that I find most brutish]

It must be said that this is not as widespread a phenomenon as the use of the progressive tense, and its degree varies from speaker to speaker, but it is found in almost all informants in the under-35 group.

As far as internal motivations for this change are concerned, it would be extremely difficult to argue that there was an inherent tendency, either phonological or morphological, in Aranese to develop from *era* to *la*. Given that, externally-motivated factors must indeed be the sole cause of this change.

5.4.4. Addition of masculine article after preposition “en”

A second definite article trend found only in the under-35 group is the post-preposition addition of the masculine definite article. In Aranese, the masculine article, unlike Catalan and Spanish, does not appear after the preposition *en* when referring to a specific action (Coromines, 1990). For example:

- (42) *Aranese standard: Normaument(s), (ac) meti tot en Ø coche [Normally, I put everything in the car]
- (43) *Aranese standard: Non m'agrade anar en bosc quan ei fosc" [I don't like to go into the woods when it's dark]

The data, however, shows the insertion of the masculine article, as in:

- (44) "Normalment, meti tot en *eth* coche..." [Normally, I put everything in the car]
- (45) "Non m'agrade anar en *eth* bosc quan ei fosc" [I don't like to go into the woods when it's dark]

Both Catalan and Spanish would use a definite article in this case. As in the following renderings of the data sample:

- (46) *Spanish: Normalmente, lo pongo todo en *el* coche... [Normally, I put everything in the car]
- (47) *Catalan: Normalment, ho poso tot *al* (a el) cotxe... [Normally, I put everything in the car]

Internal motivation seems unlikely due in part to the fact that this change actually complicates the Aranese grammar system. As we have discussed, both simplification and complication do occur, however, Thomason and Kaufman in their discussion on linguistic constraints based on naturalness find that "the commonest form of markedness constraint is...at least in internally motivated change, more marked structures (m>) will become less marked (m<)" (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 22). External motivation again seems the likely cause of change, be it from interference through shift or borrowing.

5.4.5. Substitution of Aranese pronouns

The data contain many instances of Aranese pronoun substitution in favor of their clearly Spanish or Catalan pronoun equivalents. For example,

- (48) Cat. res (arren), Sp. algo (bèth, bèra), Sp/Cat. algú, alguni/algües (beth un,bera una / quaquarren), Sp/Cat. quant-i/a/es (guaire(s))

It is obvious in this case that there are no possible internal motivations for this substitution. Instead, we must again turn to external factors, as mentioned elsewhere in order to explain this change. Also, the fact that these borrowings are function words within the morphological subsystem is telling of the degree of penetration to which Aranese has been subjected.

6. Shortcomings and further research

The initial idea behind this study was to begin to open up areas of possible research related to language contact in the field of Aranese, and Occitan, linguistics. This pilot study is obviously lacking in many ways, but its primary intention was to shed some light on a small, autochthonous Iberian Peninsular language that rarely figures in discussions on the languages of Europe. Future studies on language contact in the Aran Valley should include more in-depth analysis of individual cases of subsystem interference, in order to give a more conclusive analysis. There should also be more complete quantitative analyses of the interference found. Also, in order to better represent all speakers of Aranese, future studies would benefit from the inclusion of different middle-aged groups, as well as an overall larger corpus. In spite of these and other shortcomings, however, it must be remembered that this study's primary purpose is to give a general outline of cases of interference and change found in modern Aranese Occitan.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of linguistic analysis showed that, firstly, interference from Spanish and Catalan has taken place in Aranese. Secondly, this interference has been found on all subsystems of the internal structure of modern spoken Aranese. We have found, among other things, lexical borrowing in the form of function words, semantic drift of copular predicates, shift in antepenultimate stress, and morphological borrowing.

The reasons, however, for this interference have not been as easily determined. Contact-induced change, as we discussed earlier, is motivated by both internal and external factors. Aranese Occitan is typologically very similar to Spanish and Catalan, and therefore, internally motivated change has undeniably been a factor. On the other hand, a high level of multilingualism on the part of L1 Aranese speakers, a constant influx of Spanish and Catalan-speaking migrants, a high percentage of inter-marriage, very little societal use outside of interpersonal communication, and grave deficiencies in the process of standardization, contribute to the argument that externally motivated change has very much been a factor. Further research in the areas outlined will be

necessary before any real conclusive arguments can be made as to the type of, the amount of, and the reasons for, interference and change in Aranese Occitan.

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