Word stress and intonation in Conchucos Quechua and Spanish

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In this talk I describe the variation in intonational contours found in the Quechua and Spanish spoken by bilingual inhabitants of Huari, Conchucos, Peru, based on fieldwork from 2015 and 2017. In the Spanish of these speakers, less paradigmatic variation is observed than might be expected: across a similar range of neutral and biased statements and questions, considerably fewer different nuclear configurations are found in the data than has been described for other varieties, e.g. Peninsular Spanish (Hualde & Prieto 2015) or Ecuadorean Andean Spanish (O'Rourke 2010). Syntagmatically, however, there is a large amount of variation: it ranges from contours where a pitch accent (analyzed as LH*) occurs at the lexical stress position on nearly each content word, via contours where a pitch accent only occurs on the final word in a longer phrase, to contours where only phrase-final boundary tones can be found. Some of this variation in accentuation can be shown to be due to information structure, but there is also a high degree of inter- and intra-speaker variability. The Quechua spoken by the same speakers covers a similar range: it is analyzed as having phrasal contours consisting of either two or three tones (LH, HL or LHL), with variable alignment of the high tone: it can either align with a phrasal boundary or with a fully regular prominent position on the penult of the most prominent word in the phrase. Pitch accents on a lexically determined position (i.e. on a syllable other than the penult), however, only occur on loanwords from Spanish. Based on an OT-analysis, I argue that the most important factor for the attested variation is whether a prominent position at the word level serves as an anchor for F0 movements or not, and that this holds in utterances from both languages. This is argued to be a variable factor because Conchucos Quechua is a language that "cares" little about stress (cf. Hyman 2014): e.g., reduction processes do not avoid the stressed penult. Much of the rest of the attested variation can be seen to fall out from this factor: the same tones that form pitch accents when a prominent position does serve as an anchor occur as boundary tones when it does not. While utterances from the two languages thus do differ prosodically, there is a considerable overlap in both surface appearance of frequently attested contours and the variation space they can be shown to occupy. Effectively, both languages vary between head-prominent and edge-prominent prosodic behaviour (cf. Jun 2005, 2014). Some consequences for prosodic typology are discussed.

References:

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