

On the transcription of Galician intonation

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There are few studies on Galician intonation, and none of them approaching intonation from a phonological point of view (Fernández Rei 2005). This is the first approach to Galician intonational phonology using the AM framework. It will be mostly a descriptive approach using laboratory data we have collected at the AMPER project (Romano 1999, Contini 2005, Romano, Lai & Rouillet 2005), as well as data from my PhD thesis (Fernández Rei 2002). The corpus of the AMPER project is designed for looking at contrasts between neutral declaratives and neutral interrogatives, as well as the influence of lexical accent on the intonation of these sentences across the different Galician dialects. The corpus of my PhD thesis does not focus primarily on intonation, but on sandhi processes.

In our data, we have found five basic pitch accents: H*, L*, L+H*, H+L*, L*+H and some examples of upstepping and downstepping. If the sentence is mapped into one intonational phrase, then the prenuclear accents are usually L+H*, the nuclear accent H+L* and L-L% at the boundary (Figure 1). If declaratives present an intermediate phrase, we have found the phrase accents L- or H- (Figures 2 and 3).

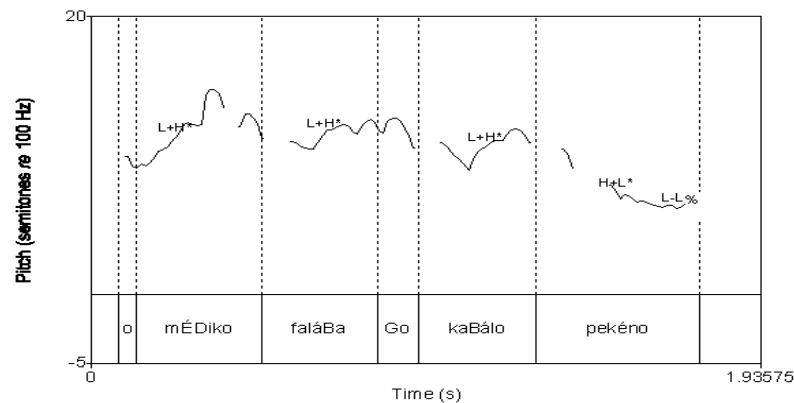


Figure 1 *O médico falaba co cabalo pequeno* (The doctor spoke to the little horse). Declarative sentence from Camelle (feminine speaker).

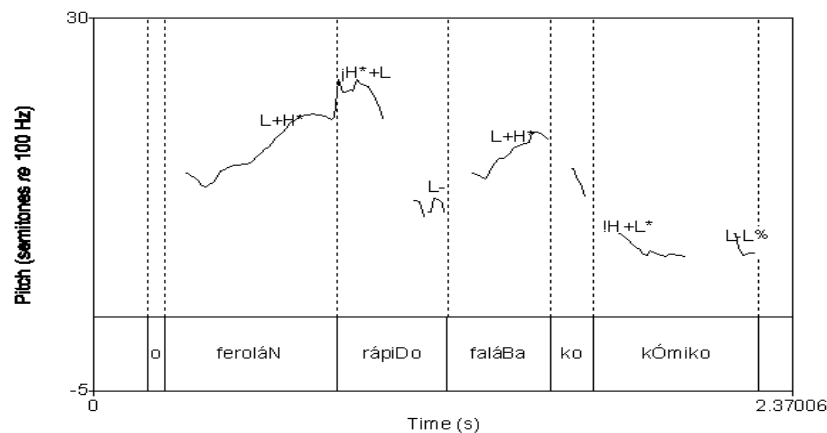


Figure 2 *O ferrolán rápido falaba co cómico* (The fast man from Ferrol spoke to the comedian). Declarative sentence from Carballo (feminine speaker)

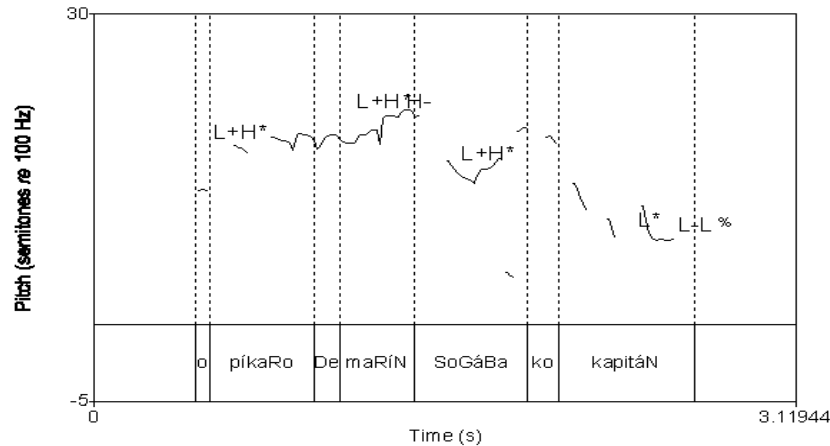


Figure 3 *O pícaro de Marín xogaba co capitán* (The boy from Marín played with the captain). Declarative sentence from Santiago (fem. speaker)

D’Imperio et al. (2005) analyse intonational phrasing in Romance languages and they show that the most common phrasing is (S)(VO) (with the exception of SEP). This seems to be the most usual phrasing in Galician as well, although it is possible to find examples where the size of constituents makes the prosodic organization vary, so that tonal markers appear at different prosodic locations. Thus, we have found phrase accents (H-) between the verb and the object, and even between a noun and an adjective.

As far as we know, there is a very common pattern for absolute interrogatives, which is spread along most of the Galician linguistic domain. This pattern presents L+H* and H* prenuclear accents, the nuclear accent H+L* and L-L% at the boundary (Figure 4).

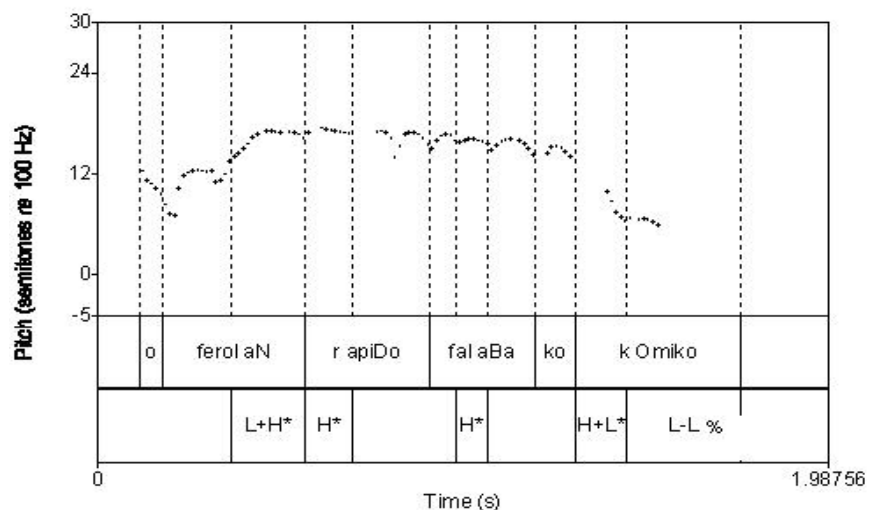


Figure 4 *O ferrolán rápido falaba co cómico?* (The fast man from Ferrol spoke to the comedian). Interrogative sentence from O Incio (fem. speaker).

Usually there is no downstepping and the interrogative utterance is always mapped into one intonational phrase, even when the subject, or any other constituent, is very long. In

addition, questions stand out because prenuclear accents are realized in a higher register (an octave or more above the speaker's baseline in some feminine voices), unlike the nuclear accent that reaches the speaker's baseline. Perceptively this high register appears to be pertinent and it allows us to identify the utterance as a question very early on. A possible account for this fact involves establishing an initial boundary tone %H (See the solution adopted by Sosa 1999:153-154 for certain types of Puerto Rican interrogatives). Besides this pattern, we will show some examples of interrogatives from the Western coast. In Camelle (west of Coruña province) there is a pattern similar to that described above, with the difference that a prenuclear accent H+L* is associated to the last stressed syllable of the subject (Figure 5). In Goián (area at the border with Portugal), we have found a pattern with a rise-fall movement at the end of the sentence, which can be transcribed with a nuclear accent L+H* and H-L% at the boundary (Figure 6).

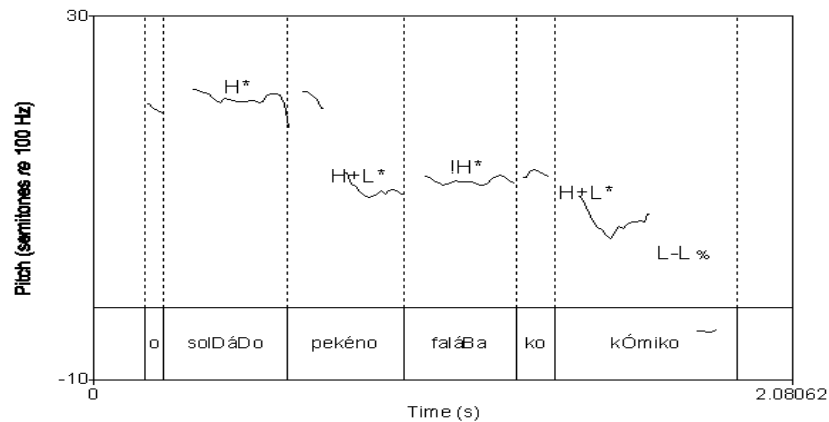


Figure 5 O soldado pequeno falaba co cómico (The little soldier spoke to comician). Interrogative sentence from Camelle (fem. speaker)

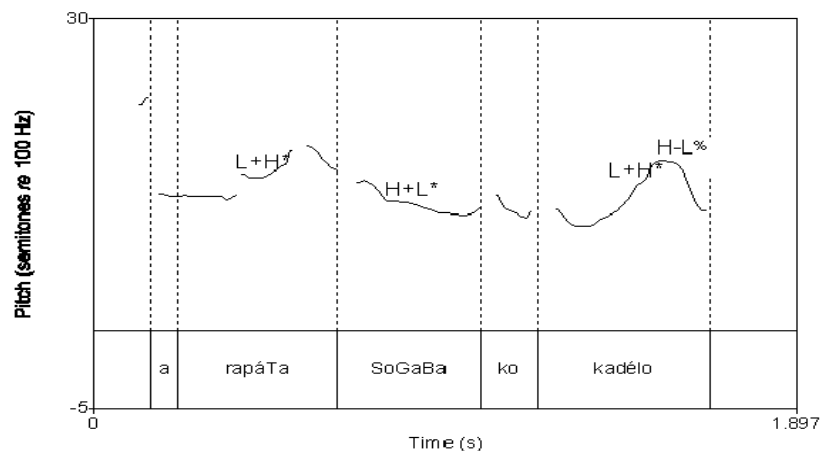


Figure 6 A rapaza xogaba co cadelo (The girl played with the dog). Interrogative sentence from Baixo Miño (fem. speaker).

In the last part of this talk, I will focus on the relationship between the prosodic and intonational levels, with particular emphasis on phrase accents and boundary tones and their prosodic location. In declarative sentences, the behaviour of certain post-lexical phonological rules (e.g. vowel sandhi) indicates that at the boundary between the subject

and the predicate the intonational phrase is usually restructured in two intonational phrases (Fernández Rei 2002).

- (1) O comandante]_I, antes de da-la orde,]_I ora en silencio
- (2) Esa rapaza]_φ odia os veráns]_φ do Mediterráneo
- (3) O neno obediente]_φ abre as ventás]_φ

(In bold the vowels in hiatus and in italics the vowel deleted).

In data from a Northern dialect, vowel deletion is blocked between intonational phrases (1), but operates between phonological phrases (2, 3). In this vowel deletion process, the second vowel involved is stressed and the process only operates if the phonological word that includes the stressed vowel is the weak branch of its phonological phrase.

As we said, vowel deletion applies in sentences such as (2) and (3), but only if the phonological phrases are mapped into one intonational phrase. If the φs are mapped into two intonational phrases, the rule is blocked. In these cases we have found a tonal marker that indicates the presence of an intonational boundary between the subject and the verb. We could transcribe this tonal mark using the intermediate phrase boundary, but in that case this intermediate phrase boundary cannot be understood as the boundary between phonological phrases within the same intonational phrase, as it was defended for Bengali by Hayes and Lahiri (1991). The relationship between tonal boundaries and prosodic levels will be further discussed on the basis of the Galician data.

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