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Social correlates of a linguistic variable: A study in a Spanish village

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ABSTRACT

In this study, linguistic and anthropological research methods are employed in investigating the use of one salient feature in the speech of a small community in northern Spain. Though set in rural Spain, the study is of interest both to readers with special interest in Spain and to those concerned mostly with broader possibilities of inference from linguistic data. In the first case, findings provide insight into social change experienced by generations of villagers marked by the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. In the second, data provide evidence that, in this small and relatively homogeneous community, sex and political orientation are factors that influence the use of an established sociolinguistic variable. Speech data used in the study were obtained in a series of recorded interviews conducted by the author. Material of an ethnographic nature was collected during field research over a period of approximately two years. (Linguistic variation, social motivation, Spanish dialectology, Spanish regionalism, Cantabria, *montañés*)

INTRODUCTION

Findings presented in this study are based on research carried out as part of a project sponsored jointly by the anthropology departments of *La Universidad Complutense de Madrid* and Princeton University, where the investigator did his graduate work in linguistics. Funded by the Joint Committee for Spanish-American Studies, the overall project had the purpose of studying sociocultural integration in the regions of northern Spain, and the scene of the field work that was part of the investigator's contribution to the project was the northern coastal province of Cantabria, which is also known popularly as *La Montaña* 'The Mountain'. Although the field work was carried out during the years 1978 and 1979, the investigator had made four previous trips to Cantabria between 1974 and 1977 and was especially familiar with the area around the provincial capital, the city of Santander.

Ucieda, the village that is the focus of the present study, is located in a

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mountainous area to the west of center in Cantabria and in the direction of the province of Asturias. Lying at the lower end of Cabuérniga, a mountain valley that in many places is less than a kilometer wide, Ucieda actually consists of two towns, *Ucieda de Arriba* and *Ucieda de Abajo* 'Upper Ucieda' and 'Lower Ucieda', which are separated from each other by an expanse of small fields and meadows. In Ucieda there are two churches, four bars, two mesons, and approximately 100 houses, most of which date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sometimes tranquil and sometimes agitated, life for the 534 residents of Ucieda takes place in a setting that is extraordinarily beautiful, lush and green because of the rains that come off the Atlantic, and set before a backdrop of high snow-capped peaks.

THE DIALECT

Traveling by train in the area of the city of Santander, one can't help but notice that people from outlying rural areas stand out because of their speech. Especially noticeable in their speech is the frequent use of *u* in word-final position where in Castilian one finds *o*. The *u*, however, is not the only speech feature that sets these people apart from city dwellers. Numerous features that serve to identify rural residents of Cantabria have been described in detail, particularly in the work of Ralph J. Penny (1969, 1978). On the phonological level, these features include the use of *i* in word-final position where Castilian employs *e*, for example, *leche* ['leče] > ['lęči]. Also shown to be characteristic of rural speech has been metaphony of tonic vowels before both word-final *u* and *i*, for example, *pozo* ['poθo] > ['pǫθu] or ['puθu] and ['leče] > ['lęči] or ['liči].[1] Consonantal features serving to identify noncity dwellers include frequent aspiration of *h* and also of *f*. In the first case, the silent orthographic *h* of standard Castilian words is pronounced, for example, *hucha* ['uča] > ['huča], and, in the second, *f* is articulated as aspiration accompanied by slight labial closure when it precedes high-back vowels, for example, *fuma* ['fuma] > [ᶲhuma]. On the morphological level, the diminutive suffix *-ito*, which characterizes Castilian and the speech of city dwellers, is heard as *-ucu* or *-ín* in the speech of the province, that is, *gatito* becomes *gatucu* or *gatín*, with *-ucu* being the preferred ending (Holmquist 1982). In his dissertation, Francisco García González (1977) describes syntactic features in the speech of rural Cantabrian residents, and among these, the inclusion of definite articles in possessive constructions, for example, *mi chaqueta* > *la mi chaqueta*. The phonological, morphological, and syntactic features mentioned here as well as others characterize the speech that is associated with Cantabria, or *La Montaña*, and that is commonly referred to as *montañés*.

THE INVESTIGATION

The *u* feature of rural Cantabrian speech possesses several qualities that make it especially attractive for use as a variable for sociolinguistic study. First, it occurs

frequently in natural conversation. Second, its variation is of interest structurally. Both word-final *u* and world-final *i* are derived from Latin high vowels (Menéndez Pidal 1973:79–81), and because unaccented word-final *i* has long since weakened and moved toward merger with *e*, *u* is expected to behave similarly. Also among the reasons for selecting the *u* for use as a sociolinguistic diagnostic is the fact that awareness of it is high among speakers. Of their speech many say, "*Hablamos castellanu con la u*" 'We speak Castilian with the *u*'. Equally intriguing is an association of the use of the *u* with the land, as manifested in the following frequently heard saying, "*El que no dice jacha, jachu, jigu y jiguera no es de mi tierra*" 'He who doesn't say "*jacha, jachu, jigu y jiguera*" isn't from my land'.

Beyond a formal interview process, information on speech and life in Ucieda was gathered through the course of daily living in the village itself over an eighteen-month period; it was not, however, until the tenth month of this period that the interviews began. In order to study the speech of Ucieda systematically, I interviewed a randomly selected sample of more than 10 percent of the villagers over twelve years of age. The total number of interviews was fifty.[2] In carrying out the interviews, use was made of a lexical questionnaire, the items of which dealt with things such as farming practices and farm implements, mountain plants and mountain animals, and the house and articles associated with house life. Because they involved areas of special interest to villagers, the questions yielded animated conversation as well as desired lexical responses. Conversation in the form of a life story was also recorded at the beginnings of the interview sessions. The interviews took place in a variety of places: kitchens, bars, stables, and mountain pastures, and frequently in the company of family or friends of the informants.

Because uniformity of elicitation procedure is desirable in the kind of analysis to be presented here, the data used will be based on the lexical responses to the items on the questionnaire.[3] To facilitate the comparison of data obtained from different informants' responses, an intersubject index to the degree of back vowel closure was established. A four-point scale that was used in transcribing back vowels provides the basis for the index. The scale reflects the fact that both *montañés u* and Castilian *o* occur in village speech, as well as a softer *u* ("*una u menos fuerte*") and an *o* that would retain a bit of village quality. The first of the *u*'s is slightly lower than the *u* of the English word "suit" and also somewhat centralized while the second is articulated in a lower and slightly centralized position. The high *o* has a timbre comparable to that of the *o* in the French *chose* or the German *Dose,* and the middle *o* is similar to that in English "coat." To aid in the preparation of the index, the four variants ([u], [ʉ], [o̞], and [o]) were given the numerical values 3, 2, 1, and 0, respectively. The scale is ordinal in that, while not actually measuring distances between vowels, it represents a scale of points of articulation that run from higher to lower in the oral cavity. A measurement of the overall degree of closure for each speaker may be arrived at

by calculating the mean of the numerical values he has supplied and multiplying by 100. Values of the variable for selected groups of persons, such as the groups considered in tables below, are then found by averaging the values for the members of the groups.

Although linguistic conditioning of the use of the *u* will not be focused on in this study, a few observations concerning possible linguistic effects on the data are in order here. Conditioning of a phonological nature has been found to be minimal,[4] and confusion that could be caused by including two possibly *u* carrying genders, masculine and neuter, has been eliminated by excluding neuter items in the analysis.[5] Lexical conditioning, though found to greatly affect the frequency of appearance of *o*-type and *u*-type variants, need be mentioned but briefly. It is enough to note that archaic words have a far greater tendency than others to bear the dialectal *u* and that the mean closure score for archaic words is, in fact, 40 percent higher than that for other words elicited by the questionnaire. Because the young people of Ucieda, in most cases, are less able to produce archaic forms, inclusion of such forms among the words upon which individual closure scores are based could be misleading. Fourteen archaic words included in the questionnaire have therefore been excluded from consideration.

THE *U* AND SOCIAL GROUPS

Except where otherwise indicated, the data presented in group analyses are drawn from forty-nine informants of the original sample of fifty; a nonnative of Cantabria who had been selected in the original sample has been excluded. The group mean scores given are averages of individual means based on transcriptions of the first forty word-final, back-vowel-bearing tokens, or responses, elicited by the questionnaire in each interview. Tokens used for different individuals, however, are not necessarily the same. Tables 1 and 2 show frequency distributions and mean scores for use of the word-final, back-vowel independent variable by age and occupational groups.[6] In Table 1, the breakdown by age groups reveals three levels of performance for the variable: relatively high use of the *u* at the highest age level, more mixed usage of *u* and *o* type pronunciations represented by middle range scores for the two middle age groups, and a sharp dropoff into disuse of the *u* at the lowest age level. In Table 2, we find three distinct levels of scores also present in the occupational groups: a high range in the farmers, a middle range in housewives and worker/farmers (who divide their time between factory and farm), and a low range in students and workers.

If we wish to associate back-vowel choice with a more typically *montañés* factor, we may select, for example, the ownership of mountain animals, which are ponies, longhorned cattle, sheep, and goats that are indigenous to the Cantabrian mountain region. Table 3 shows that it is likely that whether or not informants come from families which maintain mountain animals is, indeed,

TABLE 1. *Age groups*

Age groups	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
75 and over	217	71.53	4
50–74	180	50.08	16
25–49	159	56.56	19
13–24	76	37.01	10

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Among Grps.	87,787.70	3	29,262.57	10.71	.01
Within Grps.	122,889.07	45	2,730.87		

TABLE 2. *Occupational groups*

Occupational groups	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
Farmer	231	24.33	8
Worker/Farmer	171	41.30	16
Housewife	173	49.50	10
Student	81	38.93	6
Worker	78	25.11	9

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Among Grps.	139,318.06	4	34,829.52	21.48	.01
Within Grps.	71,358.71	44	1,621.79		

relevant to vowel selection. Across all age groups, membership in a family with mountain animals is associated with a higher score, reflecting a higher frequency of use of the nonstandard, or *montañés*, variants.

The findings just presented for the effects of age, occupation, and mountain animal-ownership factors reveal stratification in the use of the *u* in the data; three distinct levels of scores (high, middle, and low) correspond to subgroups of the occupational and age-group factors. The additional effect of mountain animal ownership is noticed across age groups. To better understand these social effects on the use of the diagnostic variable, it will be helpful to pause at this point to look more closely at the community of Ucieda. In so doing, we will observe a series of socioeconomic changes that have drastically altered the community's original pastoral character and conditioned an association between the age and occupational group factors that is suggested by their parallel ranges of scores (as well as by a correlation coefficient significant at the .01 level).

TABLE 3. *Ownership of mountain animals, by age groups*

Age group and ownership	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
75 and over			
+ Mt. Anim.	254	8.49	2
− Mt. Anim.	180	99.00	2
50–74			
+ Mt. Anim.	201	48.27	5
− Mt. Anim.	169	49.94	11
25–49			
+ Mt. Anim.	202	36.59	6
− Mt. Anim.	139	53.55	13
13–24			
+ Mt. Anim.	122	23.34	2
− Mt. Anim.	65	30.67	8

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Mt. anim. grps.	43,289.15	1	43,289.15	22.13	.01
Age grps.	23,733.94	3	7,911.31	4.04	.05
Interaction	4,882.60	3	1,627.53	.83	
Within cells	80,199.00	41	1,956.07		

A SUCCESSION OF GENERATIONS

Very different lives have been led by members of the different occupational and age groups in Ucieda. The over-seventy-five age group grew up in pre-Civil War Spain, when industrialization had yet to affect most of the mountain valleys of Cantabria, including the valley of Cabuérniga, in which Ucieda is located. Often the only source of cash income was logging, and that involved long weeks, even months of isolation in the mountain forests. At home, men and women still devoted themselves almost exclusively to subsistence farming and to shepherding native animals on the mountain slopes. The hopeless struggle to get ahead under *aparcería*, a system of ownership that left most resources in the hands of local nobility, was still very much a part of reality (Lopéz Linage 1978). The only escape was emigration, often to the Americas. Few returned, and even fewer with the means to improve village life.

Most members of the middle age groups, from twenty-five to seventy-five, entered adult life in post-Civil War Spain. Before 1953, the postwar era was even worse than the prewar period. Once again, the mountains and logging made it possible to earn a few *pesetas*, but those usually went to pay taxes. As Europe recovered from World War II, many Spaniards emigrated northward, including a large number of men from the middle age groups now living in Ucieda. Finally, in 1953, the United States lifted its embargo in exchange for military bases in Spain, and the recovery, which would reach and alter life in Ucieda so drastically, began. Textile, chemical, and rubber factories, including a large General

Tire plant, sprang up in nearby valleys and began to draw on Cabuérniga for labor. Ucieda, because of its location in the lower valley near the factories, prospered. Accompanying the growth of industry was a drastic shift in the agricultural system. The shift resulted from the introduction of dairy animals and brought an end to subsistence farming. For the first time, Ucieda was entering the national money economy. It was no longer necessary to emigrate, and many who had emigrated to Europe returned home. The average male of the middle age groups became the worker/farmer, who rose early in the morning to travel to the factory, often by bike or motorbike, and then returned home in the evening to milk and tend the cows, often until late into the night. *Aparcería* disappeared as increased revenue from dairying and outside employment brought the purchase of land and other resources within reach of virtually all.

Individuals of the under-twenty-five age group in Ucieda have grown up during the postrecovery era. Extending from the late 1960s into the 1980s, this has been the era of the advent of the TV, refrigerator, and car in the town of Ucieda, and of the discotheque, department store, and supermarket in larger communities nearer the Cantabrian coast. Jobs, though recently more difficult to find, pay more; as a consequence, coming home to the cows and dairying is much less attractive. The typical male of working age in this group is rapidly becoming the worker, instead of the worker/farmer. Comments about this group, such as the following, are heard, particularly from members of the oldest age group: "¡*Viven como príncipes, como majarás, pero no saben trabajar, el trabaju del campu no lo saben, y eso tenían que saberlo todos*!" 'They live like princes, like maharajahs, but they don't know how to work, the work of the fields, they don't know it, and they should know it, all of them!'

The generational and occupational shifts accomplished in Ucieda during the periods preceding and following the Spanish Civil War have resulted in a change from a traditional pastoral and agrarian life-style to an existence more typical of modern industrialized society. This broader shift, paralleling the linguistic shift already described has been observed in studies of other communities as well. In his study of the village of Belmonte de los Caballeros during approximately the same period, Spanish anthropologist Carmelo Lisón-Tolosana delineates three generations similar to those outlined here: a declining, a controlling, and an emerging generation (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:181–201). It is Lisón's definition of a generation, however, that may assist in understanding what has occurred in Ucieda. He writes, a generation is "an age group of men and women who share a common mode of existence or concept of life, who assess the significance of what happens to them at a given moment in terms of a common fund of conventions and aspirations" (Lisón-Tolosana 1966:180). It is apparent that the age and occupational groups that have been described in Ucieda are generations in this "sociological sense," whose experiences and differing world views have modeled and remodeled community life, and for whom cultural forms, linguistic forms included, may be expected to hold dissimilar meaning or significance.

Beyond the explanatory power offered by the occupation and age-group factors is that encountered in the ownership of mountain animals, a condition that appears to represent a lingering attraction to agrarian life that may be felt by individuals of all generations. With the introduction of dairy farming, the native mountain animals, which had traditionally been allowed to graze harvested valley crop land in fall and winter, were banished to the mountains year-round. Corn and bean fields that had occupied the central valley area disappeared almost totally, being replaced by meticulously groomed and well-fertilized meadows (García Fernández 1975). Most farmers switched over entirely to dairy animals and, consequently, limited their activities to the sphere of the meadows near the towns. A few farmers, however, continue to dedicate themselves solely to the native stock, and a few more supplement their incomes from dairying by raising native stock as well. For these individuals and often for their entire families, this means sojourns in the mountains, frequently in the company of other hardy and often sentimental folk who seem to live as much in the past as in the present.

SEX AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION

Two additional factors, the effects of which are foreshadowed by the occupational-group factor, remain to be considered. The first of these additional factors, sex, is in large part included within the housewife category of the occupational-group factor. As could be seen in Table 2, the mean score of the housewife category, in which most of the women in the survey are included, is 173, or only slightly above the grand mean of 153, even though the average age of housewives would be considerably higher than the average age for all informants. In Table 4, which presents scores by sex and age group, we see that women generally score lower than men in the use of the dialectal *u;* in the middle age groups the difference is small, and in the highest and lowest it is quite great.

Some of the older women have worked outside the town as cooks and housekeepers for upper-class families and as a result have received more exposure to the standard language than their male counterparts. In the middle and lowest age groups, however, exposure to the standard has been similar for the two sexes and, if anything, probably greater for the males. They have traveled more as emigrants or in military service, and also have more frequently found employment outside Ucieda in the recently burgeoning economy. This increased exposure for males may account for scores more similar to those of females at the middle age levels; it will not, however, account for the divergence of scores in the lowest age group.

When an attempt is made to restrict the male and female groups considered, as in Table 5, differences between men and women with regard to the use of the *u* feature are encountered once again.[7] In the first category of this table, the scores represent male farmers with mountain animals and females married to farmers with mountain animals; all persons here are over forty years of age. Even in this

TABLE 4. *Sex, by age level*

Sex and age	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
75 and over			
Males	254	8.49	2
Females	180	99.49	2
50–74			
Males	189	50.95	11
Females	159	46.47	5
25–49			
Males	159	58.17	14
Females	157	58.27	5
13–24			
Males	108	20.80	4
Females	54	28.48	6

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Sex grps.	21,419.66	1	21,419.66	8.18	.01
Age grps.	23,733.94	3	7,911.31	4.04	.05
Interaction	9,702.94	3	3,234.31	1.24	
Within cells	107,366.00	41	2,618.68		

most traditional of village social categories, the difference between the sexes is sustained, that is, men use the *u* more than women. A greater difference is found, however, when the mean score of men with dairy animals and no mountain animals is compared with that of women married to dairy farmers without mountain animals. Also showing a marked distancing of the sexes, indicated by a difference of scores very similar to that for the dairy group, are female and male students. Only in the worker category, that is, among males and females who do not earn money from the land, do we find no difference whatsoever with regard to the use of the diagnostic feature.

These last findings suggest that the presence of lower closure scores for many women, and younger women in particular, may reflect not a difference of exposure to the standard, but a general turning away from things rural in *La Montaña*. Supporting this interpretation is the fact that an analysis of census records for Ucieda reveals that, in the village, there are twice as many young men in the twenty-to-thirty age range as there are women. Similarly, an examination of marriage records indicates that, for some time, men have been forced to look outside the village to find wives.[8] Many women, it seems, simply will not marry worker/farmers or live in farming villages. As one middle aged housewife put it, "*Ahora, donde hay uno que trabaja en el campu, si viene otru que trabaja en una empresa, le prefieren, porque no tienen que trabajar en el campu. Ya no le quieren. El campu, no lo quiere nadie.*" 'Now, where there is one who works on the land, if another comes who works in a company, they prefer him, because they don't have to work on the land. Now they don't want him. The land, nobody

TABLE 5. *Sex, by social groups*

Sex and social group	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
With mt. anim.			
Males	227	26.88	6
Females	186	40.24	6
With dairy anim.			
Males	178	38.88	14
Females	112	20.35	6
Workers			
Males	79	18.27	4
Females	79	30.16	5
Students			
Males	114	16.86	3
Females	48	22.90	3

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Sex grps.	21,419.66	1	21,419.66	18.16	.01
Social grps.	114,302.71	3	38,100.90	32.30	.01
Interaction	7,227.50	3	2,409.17	2.04	
Within cells	46,006.00	39	1,179.64		

wants it.' For young women, the prospect of being stuck at home with the cows and the children while their husbands are away, as happened to their mothers, typically wives of working dairy farmers, isn't very attractive. Equally revealing of attitudes is the fact that when the three young female students in the sample, with a mean score of but 48, were queried, none expressed any desire to work on the land, whereas the young male students interviewed, whose mean score is 114, did admit to a lingering attraction to outdoor farm and mountain life. That men as well as women may actually be affected by alienation is suggested, however, by another finding already mentioned. In Table 5, male and female workers, who by virtue of their occupational status have rejected the land, or direct involvement with it, were also both seen to reject the use of the *u* in the interviews.

To conclude the consideration of the results found here for sex, it may be said that, in general, they are those that have come to be expected, especially in the Western world; women, in most cases, are closer to the prestige form than men. Social forces, such as exposure and alienation, rather than sex itself, however, appear to underlie different or similar performances of men and women. In particular, these findings bring to mind the article, "Peasant men can't get wives," in which Susan Gal (1978) analyzes a shift from German-Hungarian bilingualism to the exclusive use of German. In the Austrian community in which her study is carried out, Gal finds that the linguistic contrast between German and Hungarian represents the social dichotomy between a newly avail-

TABLE 6. *Political orientation (of individuals 35 and above) and town*

Town and orientation	Mean closure value	Standard deviation	Number of informants
Upper Ucieda			
Ind. Soc.	198	43.87	14
Cent. Right	179	50.61	5
Lower Ucieda			
Ind. Soc.	206	40.94	5
Cent. Right	155	43.94	7

Analysis of variance

	SS	*DF*	*MS*	*F*	*S of F*
Party grps.	8,912.16	1	8,912.66	4.24	.05
Town grps.	1,998.86	1	1,998.86	.95	
Interaction	2,530.10	1	2,530.10	1.20	
Within cells	56,709.00	27	2,100.33		

able worker status and traditional peasant status (Gal 1978:1). She also finds that young women tend to be farther along in the shift toward German, the standard, than older people and young men and that they, too, reject careers as peasant, or farm, wives.

The second additional factor to be discussed in this section is that of political orientation, or division, which itself is reflected in the minor geographical division between upper and lower Ucieda. A difference of political foci characterizes the two communities and is paralleled by an occupational difference. In the upper town, where the farmers are the largest occupation group, one finds the bar that is the meeting place of the independent-socialists. In the lower town, where the worker/farmers are the largest group, one encounters the bar where the center-rightists gather. Farmers, already shown to be traditional in their speech, tend to be independent-socialists in either town. It is in the lower town, nevertheless, where one hears such comments as, "*Los hombrones del pueblo de arriba hablan muy mal*" 'Those big guys of the upper town speak very bad', the "*hombrones*" being political activists on the independent-socialist side.

If politics is indeed another key to understanding linguistic orientation in Ucieda, we would expect to find that centrist people use more *o* and socialists more *u* in either town. Data from the interviews seem to suggest that this is the case, as is indicated in Table 6, where closure scores are broken down by political allegiance and town for informants thirty-five years of age and older.[9] In both towns, scores of independent-socialists reflect more frequent use of *u*-type variants in the interviews than do those of centrists.

To further confirm a correspondence between political and linguistic orientation in Ucieda, one can look within other divisions in the community. Although farmers in the sample are largely socialists, worker–farmers show sharp political

and corresponding linguistic splits, and pure workers are split politically but not linguistically. Within the age-group factor, one finds that the political division in Ucieda continues from the declining, through the controlling, and into the emerging generation, while the correspondence between linguistic and political orientation remains significant into the middle, or controlling, generation.

The origins of Ucieda's current political factionalism may be found in the 1930s, during the periods of the Republic and the Spanish Civil War. Previously supporters of General Francisco Franco, today's center-rightists would be satisfied with continued control from Madrid, much as was established during the forty years of the Franco regime. Previously opponents and even prisoners of the Franco regime, the independent-socialists are currently seeking local control over the oak forests, water, and growing tourism in the mountains of Ucieda. On the regional level, the factions differ predictably on the spiritedly debated question of autonomy for Cantabria; the socialists are in favor and the centrists lukewarm.[10]

CONCLUSION

Though based on but one outstanding speech feature, the findings presented here indicate that technical procedures of quantitative analysis are fruitfully applied even in an investigation of a very small population in a rural setting. Stratification has been shown to exist in the use of the dialectal *u* feature in recorded interviews. The strata correspond to subgroups of age and occupational-group factors and are at least partially transcended in the speech of individuals maintaining native mountain animals. Common funds of conventions and experiences, stemming in part from the periods preceding and following the Spanish Civil War, have been suggested to be critical developmental influences on sociological generations defined by age and occupational groups in Ucieda. Finally, significant associations have been shown to exist between both sex and political orientation and scores reflecting the use of the linguistic variable. In the first case, more frequent use of the *u* appears to be consistent with a conservative, usually male, position with regard to village sex roles, while, in the second, frequent use may signal an independent and protective attitude toward village resources.

As for the *u* feature itself, the results of the present study indicate that it is still a marker of the characteristic speech of the village of Ucieda and that its use in the interviews is particularly strong among those people most closely tied to *La Montaña* and its way of life, that is, farmers, owners of mountain animals, old people, men, socialists, and perhaps upper townsmen. The saying "*El que no dice jacha, jachu, jigu y jiguera no es de mi tierra*" appears to be meaningful. However, its significance for the future is in doubt. The old are dying; the average age of the farmer in Ucieda is fifty-four. The young, or emerging, generation is gravitating ever closer to an urban world in which the Castilian

standard language holds more prestige. Its members are avoiding the traditional activities that would bind them to *La Montaña* and *montañés*.

NOTES

1. For purposes of simplification the transcriptions used here have omitted the centralization that is characteristic of word-final *u*, word-final *i*, and the metaphonized vowels.

2. The sample was drawn from the list of residents of Ucieda as reported in the 1975 local government census, the *Padrón Municipal del Ayuntamiento de Ruente*.

3. Although data from the conversational speech recorded during the interviews are not presented here, they reveal values and patterns for the use of the *u* that are very similar to those presented in this study. Figures for the use of the *u* in conversational speech may be found in Holmquist (1982).

4. Figures on phonological effects on the occurrence of the variants of *u* and of other dialectal features may be found in Holmquist (1982).

5. One curious feature of provincial speech is maintenance of a three-gender system in nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Masculine and feminine nouns and adjectives have typically borne the endings /-u/ and /-a/, respectively, while the third gender category, neuter of material, has carried the suffix /-o/and has been used in reference to noncountables.

6. Tables 1 through 6 are based, in part, on census information contained in the 1975 *Padrón Municipal del Ayuntamiento de Ruente*.

7. Because the focus is on married women, the scores of two widows of the upper age group are not included in the calculations for Table 5.

8. The marriage and population records that have been drawn upon are once again from the 1975 *Padrón Municipal del Ayuntamiento de Ruente*.

9. Determination of political allegiance of informants was made by the author based on activities observed and conversations participated in over his period of residence in Ucieda.

10. The findings presented here concerning political orientation and linguistic loyalty recall those of William Labov's (1963) study of the people on Martha's Vineyard, where he finds another vocalic feature, the centralization of diphthongs, to signal an independent and protective attitude toward an island, its life style, and resources.

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