

## THE SPANISH OF ASTURIAS, LEON, AND CANTABRIA

### THE SPANISH OF ASTURIAS AND LEON

Nowadays most of Asturias and Leon is monolingual in Spanish, with regional characteristics which make Asturian/Leonese Spanish different at times from neighboring Castilian dialects. The decline of the Asturian language, known collectively as *bable* although representing a number of quite diverse regional dialects, has spread rapidly throughout the 20th century, and there are currently few areas of Asturias where *bable* continues to be spoken, except by some elderly rural residents. However, as much as 1000 years of contact between Asturian and Castilian dialects has left indelible traces on the speech of many parts of Asturias and neighboring areas, ranging from slight effects on vocabulary and pronunciation to profoundly hybrid forms reflecting both code-switching and bilingual blending.

Aguado Candanedo (1984) describes lexical variation in a dialect of León, including sociolinguistic differentiation and attitudes towards local vs. national norms.

Historically, Asturias was one of the few areas of the Iberian Peninsula that never came under Moorish control. This fact is crucial to understanding the nature of the Ibero-Romance dialects that developed and spread throughout Asturias. The Cantabrian-Asturian area is the only part of Spain that was never conquered by the Moors; as a result, following the reconquest, there was no influx of settlers from other parts of Spain, driving the Mozarabic language out of the Iberian Peninsula, all the while absorbing Mozarabic linguistic traits and levelling Castilian, Leonese, Aragonese, and Valencian/Catalan dialects spoken by the reconquering settlers. Asturias/Cantabria contains the unbroken linguistic descendents of early Latin dialects formed when this region was Romanized in the first centuries of the modern period. In the valleys and mountain redoubts, high individualized dialects developed and survived among the fiercely self-reliant peoples of Asturias and Cantabria: 'Asturias es un conjunto de valles, de comarcas. Era un ambiente propicio para el establecimiento de pequeñas agrupaciones humanas, con una vida relativamente autónoma. Se podía vivir y morir sin apenas haber salido de aquel rincón. En cada valle, el habla primitiva pudo perdurar o moldearse de un modo particular' (Neira 1976: 58-9). The resulting dialect diversity is similar to that found in Italy, Switzerland, and parts of France, and stands in sharp contrast to the more gradual regional isoglosses which characterize those portions of the Iberian Peninsula which were reconquered from Arab control and repopulated from other dialect zones.

A strong Visigothic presence was later implanted in Asturias, and when in the 9th and 10th centuries the court at Oviedo became the most important urban center in northern Spain, both Visigothic and Carolingian influences were felt. There were French-speaking settlements in Asturias, while to the west, as Galician emerged as a language, it affected the developing Asturian dialects. With the death of Alfonso III in 910, the court was transferred to León, thus leaving Asturias as a linguistic and cultural backwater. The lack of strong centripetal forces which would favor the use of Asturian dialects, least of all one dialect to be favored over all others, the expansion of Castilian into Asturias was a logical outcome. By the end of the 15th century Castilian was known and used throughout Castile and León, not only for official purposes, but as a *lingua franca* among speakers of diverse regional dialects. The Asturian *babes* were never supplanted, but the early Castilization of Asturias impeded the formation of a central literary and linguistic standard; a true 'lingua de Asturias' never coalesced from amidst the plethora of isolated rural varieties.

Rodríguez-Castellano (1952) describes the speech of Alto Aller, near Oviedo, as used more than half a century ago. In addition to the more general Asturian/Leonese features, some peculiarities were found, few of which are still current:

(1) Word-final /a/ realized as [e] (in Bable dialects in general, this change is common in the plural before final /s/): *puerte* < *puerta*, *sheñe* < *leña* (Rodríguez-Castellano 1952: 65).

(2) A weak paragogic -e at the end of infinitives and other words ending in stressed vowel plus /r/, particularly phrase-finally, as found in some other Leonese dialects: *no pue ser<sup>e</sup>*, *a ver<sup>e</sup>* (Rodríguez-Castellano 1952: 71). It is not clear whether this fleeting [e] is a carryover from Late Latin and early Romance, or an innovation in an isolated dialect. In central and western Asturian dialects this paragogic vowels is still found (Neira 1976: 121).

(3) Hiatus-breaking consonants were once extremely common in vernacular speech: *abora* < *ahora*, *rigu* < *río*, *rigada* < *riada* (Rodríguez-Castellano 1952: 74).

(4) Retention of initial /f/, normal in Asturian/Leonese, is also found in rural varieties of Asturian Spanish: *ferrá* (*herrada*), *formigero* (*hormiguero*).

(5) Earlier Ibero-Romance initial /l/ > [ʎ] becomes [ʃ]: *šingua* (*lengua*), *šégrima* (*lágrima*), *šonga* (*longa*). The same sound [ʃ] also replaces Castilian [x] or [θ] < Latin g- in word-initial position: *šenru* (*verno*), *šinero* (*enero*), *šugu* (*jugo*).

(6) As elsewhere in northern Spanish dialects, syllable-final /s/ is often realized as [r]: *irla* < *isla*, *arma* < *asma*, *lor gatos* < *los gatos*.

(7) At the vernacular level, there is much metathesis: *probe* < *pobre*, *calros* < *Carlos*, *apiertan* < *aprietan*, *perdicar/pedricar* < *predicar*, *friba* < *fibra* (Rodríguez-Castellano 1952: 111).

(8) Castilian /k/ is normally realized as [ʃ], so that, e.g. *ellos* > *ešos*, *ella* > *eša*, etc.

(9) The third person singular dative clitic *le* is *ye* in the traditional Alto Aller dialects: *ya ye lo dishe* (*ya se lo dije*). The plural clitic is *yos*.

(10) The tonic possessive forms include *mió/miós*, *tó(s)*, *só(s)*. Distant demonstratives take a single /l/: *aquela*, *aquelos*, etc.

(11) There are many idiosyncratic verb conjugations, some of which are found in other Spanish dialects. The verb *ser* includes the forms *soy/sé*, *yes*, *ye*, *semos*, *sois/seis*, *song*. The imperfect forms begin with *y-*: *yera*, *yeras*, etc.

(12) Lack of noun-adjective agreement is frequent, especially when dealing with mass nouns: *šeche frío* (*leche fría*), *šana prieto* (*lana prieta*), *erba bwinu* (*hierba buena*).

(13) *Quién* is often invariable for number: *¿Quién son esos?* (Neira 1976: 116).

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Example of a popular central *bable* text representing language of the turn of the 20th century, from Alto Aller (Rodríguez-Castellano 1952: 195; Neira 1976: 231-2):

Una muyerina de Extremaúra, atsá per ende ye la siega tsueñe, tenía los malinos en cuerpo; y fo al cura de la parroquia a que i los chara fuera, y el cura chaba el conxuru pa sacalos, y etsos querían salir en figura de diablo; y díxoyos el señor cura: salii en figura de cuarto [moneda] y después tardóren salir. Y díxoyos el cura que como tardaban tanto en salir del cuerpo, y contestoren etsos: fuemos pal caliyu de Vitsar a baltar la maniega a l'ama del cura que tesvaba la comía pa los segaores ...

Another text, from Lena, is (Neira 1976: 230):

Yera de guaje un mozecu ruin y descoloríu. Pa comer yera un mico, y facía de sudar a só madre pa metéi algo de alimintu nel cuerpu. Por mor de que yera ruin y taba deliqueu de los güeyos, teníanlu algu estrozeu y encinayeu. Pelos veranos, diba pa casa de los sós güelos. La casa yera entóncenes destes antigües, de cocina de cheña. Pa sentase, taba l esquenu y tayuelos y tayueles.

An example of western *bable*, from Sisterna, is (Neira 1976: 216; Fernández 1960):

Il tíu Duloru foi pa Strimadura a facer madeira cun a sua cuadricha, ya in Castañor d'Ibor ricomindóudi a un homi d'aquel dugar qui si quiría búa madeira di carbachu pa facer custiedas pas cestas, qui si fora a Astierna, ya qui priguntara eidí pur a sua muchier qui si chamaba Manula Gavela. Il bon señor imprindíu il viax ya al chigar a Astierna priguntóu pur a tía Manula. Forun chamada a sua casa, ya baxóu anquéi Picía, ya dixu, "¡Ah, tíu! ¿Usté cuñucirá al mióu Manulu, quiciabis?"

An eastern *bable* text from Cabrales is (Neira 1976: 236; Alvarez Fernández Cañedo 1963):

Ebu una muyer que era amiga 'l cura y cul esu al paicer los jiyos erin los del cura. Entós siempri qu'andaba l'ombrín anti l'ilesia icíai 'l cura "Xuan oveya". Y ya dibin muchas vecis que i yamabin esu y entós vienu pan casa. Iz: "¿qué tendrá 'l cura cumigu que mi ta yamandu Xuan oveya" ...

An example of an oral Pasiego text (Penny 1969: 177) with partially normalized orthography:

unu que tien qu'acer mañana una labor ... y li igo yo, yo mañana teu qu'acer una labor ... i li igu a istē muchachu, digu ... mañana ties que venir a ayudiarmē acer esto ... y dicēs ... sí, sí, ya vendré ... unquē dēspués si marcha istē y bien otru por aí ... y digu, mañana teu qu'acer esto ... y dicē ... pus igual ... y sólu lu vas acer?

Neira (1976) provides an overview of contemporary Asturian *bable* dialects, noting correctly that within Asturias there is no single designation for the language, comparable to *gallego*, *catalán*, or even regional Spanish language designations such as *castúo* and *panocho*, 'porque no hay una modalidad específicamente asturiana, un idioma especial en el que se entiendan las gentes que viven entre el mar y la cordillera Cantábrica ...' (p. 24). In general, Asturians who still speak some dialect of *bable* do not regard their speech as inferior to other varieties, but there is considerable teasing among speakers of different dialects: 'Por eso es frecuente oír que los de tal lugar hablan "muy mal", "muy cerrado", "demasiado fino", o que aquello no es bable sino "gallego" o "cazorro"' (Neira 1976: 25). Some examples of the differences: *chiche de güey/leche de hoy*, *fichos/fíus/jíus/hijos*, *perros/pirrus*, *gatos/guetus*. At the western end of Asturias, the vernacular speakers are really using Galician dialects, whereas 'Asturian' dialects extend into the provinces of Zamora, Santander, Cáceres, Salamanca, and León. As to the supposed designation 'Asturian-Leonese' and the notion of 'Leonese' as a separate language or definable dialect, Alarcos Llorach affirms: 'Se dice "dialecto leonés" para

referirse a las variadas hablas extendidas entre Asturias y Extremadura, como si en algún momento este territorio hubiera tenido unidad lingüística. El "dialecto leonés" no ha existido nunca, porque el progreso de integración que lo hubiera constituido (mediante la "coiné" de sus hablas o por el predominio relativo de alguna de ellas) fue detenido por la expansión del castellano vecino. Lo que sí hay son dialectos con rasgos sincrónicos o diacrónicos comunes, pero también con discrepancias. Podríamos, eso sí, trazar un diastema de hablas leonesas, pero no un sistema leonés.' (Neira 1976: 31; Alarcos Llorach 1971: 89).

Asturians thus think of themselves as speaking Castilian, or just *español*, except for those in the western region who admit to speaking *gallego*. Unlike Galician, Catalan, or Aragonese, Asturian *bable* has no separate literary tradition around which could be formed a linguistic standard. Neira (1976: 31-2) affirms that those defenders of a *lingua asturiana* falsely postulate an asymmetrical diglossic situation: 'El castellano es la lengua invasora, ajena, de colonización, pero es el idioma oficial con las ventajas consiguientes ... el bable, a pesar de ser la lengua propia, autóctona, vernácula, está en una situación desventajosa, injusta: está invadida, oprimida, marginada. Los que la hablan se sienten disminuidos, acomplejados. Por eso tienden a ocultarla.' For Neira, Castilian has never been an invading language, but always a native language in Asturias, and the language of all Asturian literature.

In partial summary, most dialectologists accept a three-way division Asturian *bables*, with essentially the following common denominators in each group:

(1) EASTERN BABLES: Conservation of Latin /f-/ as [h-]; some aspiration of syllable-final /s/; forms of *ser* include *e* [es] and *era*; frequent palatalization of initial /n-/ to [ɲ]; use of the *neutro de materia*.

(2) CENTRAL BABLES: in addition to the *neutro de materia*, three-way morphological distinction in nouns and adjectives among [-u] masculine, [-a] feminine, [-o] neuter; realization of *x* as [s]. Within the central *bables* are found the dialects which exhibit metaphony (*mitu* < *metu*, etc.), as well as those which pluralize -a to -es (*la casa/les cases*). The verb *ser* includes the forms *yes* [eres], *ye* [es], *yera* [era].

(3) WESTERN BABLES: presence of falling diphthongs /ou/, /ei/; rising diphthong /ie/ sometimes realized as [ya] or [ía]; /ɰ/ realized as [č] or [š]; no metaphony or neuter morphology; use of many Galician preterite verb desinences, including -ei, -eu, -ou; *vos* and *nos* as tonic subject pronouns; *non/nun* as negative particle;

Díaz González (1986) describes the traditional Spanish of Candamo, in Oviedo province, which shades off into Bable. In this dialect Castilian atonic /o/ is normally realized as [u]. The combination ARTICLE + POSSESSIVE is common: *el mi padre*. The final /s/ can be lost from the possessive: *las mi fías*. There is retention of the Leonese/Galician falling diphthong [ou], e.g. in the subject pronouns *nusoutrus*, *vusoutrus*: *nun era asina cuandu éramus mozus nusoutrus*. Masculine or feminine adjectives can be used with mass nouns: *buon/buona llechi*. The verb *ser* is conjugated *soy, yas/yes, ya/ye, somus, sois, son*; the imperfect is formed with initial *y-*.

The Spanish language as spoken in Asturias is in essence Castilian, shading off into Galician subvarieties in extreme western Asturias and particularly Leon. Monolingual Asturian Spanish speakers and those individuals who have only a passive awareness of *bable* are difficult to distinguish from Castilians at first, although subtle traits often identify their origins. Among the phonetic traits found in Asturias are:

(1) The phonemes /s/ and /θ/ are consistently differentiated. The /s/ is strongly apicoalveolar. Syllable- and word-final /s/ is strongly pronounced and tenaciously resists aspiration or other phonetic weakening.

- (2) The posterior fricative /x/ is a strong uvular fricative or trill [χ].
- (3) Word- and phrase-final /n/ is normally alveolar [n], although in Leon velarization begins to occur, and carries over into Galicia. In the Cantabrian region, velarization of /n/ is more common (Holmquist 1988).
- (4) Urban *asturianos* do not normally distinguish /j/ and /ɣ/, although [ɣ] may appear sporadically in a few lexical items. Older speakers and those from rural regions distinguish more instances of /ɣ/.
- (5) Word-final /d/ is usually a voiced or voiceless fricative [θ]; it rarely disappears. Intervocalic /d/ is weak and, as in the remainder of Spain, frequently disappears in the combination *-ado*

#### SPANISH OF THE CANTABRIAN REGION

Most dialectologists agree that the traditional Spanish dialect of the Cantabrian region (mostly in Santander province) warrants special treatment, although falling generally under the rubric of Asturian (García Lomas 1922, 1949; Huidobro 1907; Alvar 1995; Penny 1969, 1978; Nuño Alvarez 1996, Holmquist 1988). For the most part, what is found is not Bable but rather a vernacular variety of Spanish liberally sprinkled with Asturian phonetic and morphological features. At the extreme eastern edge, Basque influence was once felt (García Lomas 1949: xxxiv-xli). Locally, the dialect is often referred to as *montañés*, referring to La Montaña or the mountainous region of Santander province. The 19th century writer José María de Pereda (1833-@). The most typical features of *montañés* speech is the Asturian/Leonese raising of unstressed /e/ and /o/ (*abri* < *abre*, *matahti* < *mataste*), and the occasional raising of tonic or pretonic mid vowels when the final vowel has been raised: *miti* < *mete*, *jurnu* < *horno*, *churizu* < *chorizo*, *gulusu* < *goloso*, *mitías* < *metidas*, etc. (Holmquist 1988: 10). Often, final unstressed [i] is further reduced to schwa. In general, Cantabrian speakers do not distinguish /y/ and /ll/, being uniformly *yeístas* (García Lomas 1922: 16-17). The realization of /y/ varies from a rather strong fricative to a weak semivowel, which may fall in contact with /i/, and in some gerunds: *traendo* < *trayendo*, *leendo* < *leyendo* (Nuño Alvarez 1996: 187).

Surprisingly in the far north of Spain, there is considerable aspiration of word-internal and word-final /s/, even when the following word begins with a vowel: [lahihtiyah] *las estillas* (Holmquist 1988: 11). Loss of final /r/ in infinitives is common in Cantabrian Spanish (Holmquist 1988: 33), if somewhat stigmatized. Finally, word-final prepausal and prevocalic /n/ is frequently velarized, unlike in surrounding Castilian dialects (Holmquist 1988: 110-11).

In Cantabrian Spanish, there are three morphological gender: masculine, marked with final *-u*, feminine, marked with *-a*, and 'neuter of material' or non-countable, marked with *-o*. This neuter suffix is used with adjectives that modify non-count nouns not ending in *-o*, thus *la lechi fresco*, *la maíz bueno*, etc. (Holmquist 1988: 12). Clitic pronouns include *lu* (archaic) or *le* for masculine count nouns, *la* (feminine), and *lo* (neuter/non-count). The diminutive ending *-ucu* is common, in addition to the pan-Castilian *-ito*. Syntactically, the preposition *de* sometimes disappears in a fashion which is not easily attributable to mere phonetic erosion (Holmquist 1988: 79): *debajo un castru* (*debajo de un castro*), *la hermana Francisco* (*la hermana de Francisco*). The combination of definite article + possessive is also heard: *el mi crú* 'my child' (Holmquist 1988: 97).

Cantabrian Spanish continues to exhibit the unique diminutive suffixes *-ucu/-ucos* (García Lomas 1949: lix-lxi), although largely confined to particular lexical items, such as *mozuco, pozuco*, etc. Enclitic pronouns commonly accompany conjugated verbs, as in Asturian: *dígote, mandome*, etc. (García Lomas 1922: 21). The archaic regional subject pronouns *mujotros (nosotros)* and *vujotros (vosotros)* were once common (García Lomas 1922: 39).

Holmquist (1988) describes the complex sociolinguistic variation which characterizes the appearance of the principal linguistic variables in Montañés Spanish, particularly the realization of final unstressed /o/ as [u]. When asked to name the local dialect, many residents respond 'castellanu con la U.' On the one hand, many Cantabrian residents are proud of their origins and do not avoid using these linguistic variables in their unmonitored speech. At the same time, they are aware of the disdain expressed by outsiders upon hearing these 'strange' pronunciations, and when travelling outside of La Montaña, many Cantabrians attempt to cull out obvious regionalisms. One speaker described his difficulties as follows (Holmquist 1988: 32):

... si voy a Santander ... la o ... no me las arreglo a hablar con la o, por ejemplo, decir *mi pueblo* y tal, pero entonces yo me las arreglo para darle otro nombre a la cosa para no tener que nombrar la o, pero ... no hablar tampoco con la u ... te encuentras con unos amigos y en vez de decir "¡Coño! ¿Cuándo vas a dar una vuelta por mi pueblo?" ... "¡Oye! A ver cuándo vas a dar una vuelta por Uceda" ... ni pueblo ni pueblu.

Many Cantabrians also describe as 'hablar con la U' metaphony of tonic and pretonic vowels, of the sort *miti < mete, gulusu < goloso*.

Nowadays, the final unstressed [u] is typical of older, less educated residents of rural regions and small towns in Santander province. Younger speakers and those with higher levels of education avoid this pronunciation as well as other regional traits, with greater or lesser success depending on individual factors.

Aspiration of syllable- and word-final /s/ in Cantabria occurs at rates considerably lower than those in southern Spain and the Canary Islands, but this pronunciation is considered typical of the region and is subject to the same ambivalence as other Cantabrian traits. Aspirated /s/ is most frequent among the oldest speakers (60 and older), and drops off significantly in the 30-50 age range. Among the youngest generations of *montañés* men, aspiration of /s/ is on the rise, suggesting that this group is consciously adopting aspirated /s/ as a symbol of regional identity. Curiously, young women do not show this same trend, but rather aspirate /s/ at rates lower than those of preceding generations (Holmquist 1988: 89-91). Young women are also deleting word-final /r/ less frequently than older generations, while men of all ages show little differentiation as regards final /r/.

Penny (1969) is a thorough description of Los Montes de Pas, a region in southeastern Santander province. Although the zone is sparsely populated and not served by efficient communication systems, Penny (1969: 28-9) acknowledges that Castilian is rapidly displacing the traditional *montañés* or *pasiego* dialect: '... tal es la marcha de la castellanización ... que no hay ni una persona que no sepa hablar el idioma nacional, aunque sea en muchos casos con un fuerte acento regional. En realidad no se puede hablar de dialecto, sino de un habla que permite, según el estilo que se emplea, la entrada de mayor o menor número de regionalismos fonéticos, morfológicos, y sobre todo, léxicos. El que da libre entrada en su habla a la mayor parte de los fonemas locales resulta, para el forastero, difícil de entender. Sin embargo, delante del forastero,

el pasiego procura evitar los localismos que le parecen más chocantes y sólo conserva los rasgos de los cuales no es consciente.' Among the features which Pasiego speakers find hard to avoid are use of final *-u* and schwa-like vowels, some verbs with intrusive /y/, and the 'neutro de materia' with its concomitant non-agreement of noun and adjective. Phenomena that are avoided in self-conscious speech include metaphony (*mitu* < *meto*), the use of lax and partially rounded [ɪ] and [ʊ] (Penny 1969: 52), and the third-person preterite endings [-ain]/[-ein]. In this dialect, syllable-final /s/ is usually realized as [r], initial and intervocalic /d/ regularly disappear, the final /r/ of infinitives disappears before clitics, word-final is uniformly alveolar, *hoy* is pronounced as [úi], and *veinte*, *aceite*, etc. as *vainte*, *asaite*.

In morphology, the Pasiego dialects employ the masculine suffix *-o* for affective or derogatory connotations: *achu* (*hacha*) 'small axe,' *turtu* (*torta*) 'small corn bread,' *cusu* (*cosa*) 'object whose name is unknown or forgotten,' *cazuelu* (*cazuela*) 'small pot,' etc. (Penny 1969: 98-9). There are numerous analogical verb forms: *kayu*, etc. (*caer*), *goyu*, etc. (*oír*), *beyu*, *beyemus* (*ver*). The verb *ser* is conjugated in the present indicative as *soy*, *erës*, *es*, *semus/suemus*, *seis/swis/sweis*, *son*. *Tener* includes the forms *teu*, *tjes*, *tjen*, *tenemus*, *tinís/teneis*, *tjen*. The 'neutro de materia' includes the suffixes [-u] for masculine, [-a] for feminine, and [-U] for neuter.

Penny (1978) studies the speech of Tudanca, in southwestern Santander province. This area shares many of the linguistic features of the other Cantabrian regions mentioned above, but with some differences. Syllable-final /s/ and /θ/ are aspirated to [h], word-final /n/ is velarized. This dialect also exhibits the full range of metaphony and final unstressed vowel raising, as well as the 'neutro de materia' in which mass or non-count nouns do not agree in gender with accompanying adjectives. Among the personal pronouns, the archaic *nos* and *vos* are still sometimes used. The pronoun *ello* may be used with inanimate non-count subject nouns, for example [*la lluvia*] *ello es muy güeno*. It can also be used as a disjunctive pronoun after a preposition: *quiero más de ello* [*la cerveza*, *el dinero*, etc.]. With non-count nouns, *lo* is used in nominalized adjective constructions: *lo otro* [*el vino*], *lo güeno* [*la ropa*]. *Cúyo* and its congeners are still actively used as interrogative words instead of *de quién(es)*. Verb conjugations in Tudanca are generally the same as in Castilian (except for metaphony, unstressed vowel raising and final schwa), but some apocopated forms are found: *diz* (*dice*), *haz* (*hace*), *meréz* (*merece*), *vien* (*viene*), *muel* (*muele*), etc.

Examples of traditional *montañés* literature, by José María de Pereda, are:

¡Ah, malañu pa vusotros nunca ni no! ... ¡Que siempre vos he de alcontrar asina!  
(*La noche de Navidad*)

Ahora mesmo, al pasar por el Muelle, he visto a la mi mujer vestida de comedianta, con un gorro a modo de pimiento, una casulluca con estrellas y un pendón lleno de letreros, y más de un centenar de babiecas detrás de ella ... pus ya, retiña, por poco más, echarvos el bastón y la casaca, y dirvos al Suizo con los señores del Muelle, a tomar chacolote con esponjao y leer los boletines de arriba ... (*El fin de una raza*)

Un ratuco me queda, no más, Sotileza. A aprovechale vengo pa saber el sí ú el no; porque sin el uno ú el otro, no salgo de Santander aunque me arrastren ... y mírate bien antes de hablar ... (*Sotileza*)

...Tan tiernuca y polida, déla usté carena por la mañana; lapo, al megodía, y taringa por la noche, con poco boquiblis, y no digo ella, un navío de tres puentes ...' (*El sabor de la tierruca*; García Lomas 1949: lxxiv)

Juró el sevillanu, por éstas que son cruces, ser callau comu'n jisu, y enestonces la ojancanuca encantá, porqui ella era la feuruca blanca, li diju cómo tenía que ir toas las noches a hablala y cómo había de golver toas las mañanas, antis qui piaran lus gurriones, y debaju el primer cantu qui metiera la manu, se alcontraría una peseta colunaria; pero que si decía palabra a persona viviente, ni golvía a vela a ella, ni golvía a alcontrar más pesetas. (Juan Sierra Pando, *La onjana y el sevillanu*; García Lomas 1949: lxxviii)

---¿Y qué defeutos notas en la noviya, hom?

---Casi denguno, al respetive de lo que angunas presonas tienen y ocultan con regudeñas; voy a señaláteles: un pajazo en el ojo izquierdo; una pala rota; manca de una teta; una costilla añudá, y una aguaura en la pata derecha; añade, como si esto juero poco, su presencia na socorría, de ser de cuerna gacha-aspana.

---Pues, hijo, güena semilla trajiste a casa. Deícala, ¡hom!, deícala cuanto antes a cecina, que la herba que rumie bien perdía la tiens (Hermilio Alcalde del Río, *Escenas Cántabras*; García Lomas 1949: lxxxix).

---Pos, ¿qué fué ello, tú?

---Que con la helá de anoche estaban como un cristal las pozas de la corralá ...

Mire onde pisa, tía Goya, que está to mu helao. Hijuca; si bien se lo dijo, mejor salió ello ... (José Calderón Escalada; García Lomas 1949: lxxxix)

---¡Ah, pezuño, retochu; no tuvieron la tu tochura el tu padre y el tu güelo juntos, encontóu que tenían fama de ellu! ¡Ah, animal sin entendimientu! ¡Güena, güena pareja vais a hacer tú y la pieju esa! (F. Cubría Sáinz; García Lomas 1949: lxxxix)

Pos veraste tú: el otro día juí a por una trampá de hierba al Coterón del Torcu, y llevé pa traela el carru con las dos únicas novillucas emparejáas que me quedaron de resultas de aquel lamberizu pasau que me asoló la cuadra y hasta el cocinu de los chonis. En cuanti lleguemos a la llanauca de mi prau, las solté allí pa que mediaran mientras yo picaba el dalli, que estaba algo corrujientu de daque rociá. Ya había tirau el dalli y hechu cuatro lombíos, cuando me paició que los animalucos restrolizaban como si quisieran moscar, y juí en seguiduca y les tapé el manjuelu de los campanos con una mozá de yerba (García Lomas 1949: lxxxix)

FROM AN ACTUAL TRANSCRIPTION (GARCÍA LOMAS 1922: 47):

...cuando l'otru día juí a atropar el coterucu d'allá ribona, pusi mientras tantu las jatucas a terciar en aquel serón y dimpués me pusi a picar el dalli que estaba corrujientu, de daque rociá y ... entovía no había hechu degún lombíu de yerba, cuando me paició que las mis bellucas querían moscar, y juí en seguiduca y les tapé el manjuelu con unas garabitas ... en cuanti columbré que estaban quietucas



y sosegáas las uncí y me pusi a la rabera con la hijáa en la mano y con la moscuca en la oreja.

## LEONESE

According to Zamora Vicente, traces of Leonese can be found in the provinces of Asturias, Santander, León, Zamora, Salamanca, Cáceres, and Badajoz. In fact, Asturias and Santander contain what today is considered *bable*, while the last vestiges of an independent Leonese were found in León, Zamora, western Salamanca, and in the western edge of Extremadura. Early in this century, Menéndez-Pidal (1962b), originally published in 1906, and representing the turn of the century, studied the last remaining groups of true Leonese speakers. To the south, Leonese shades off into the Extremeño (*castúo*) dialect, also recently disappeared, but with traces still left on local vocabulary and occasionally pronunciation.

Menéndez-Pidal (1962b) contains studies based on field work carried out in the final decades of the 19th century, when Leonese still existed as a viable cluster of related and mutually intelligible dialects. The language that he describes is no longer spoken fluently a century later, although a few elderly speakers recall words and phrases, and phonetic, lexical, and morphosyntactic features of Leonese still permeate local vernacular speech throughout the provinces of León and Zamora, and parts of Salamanca and Oviedo, as well as border areas of Cáceres and Galicia.

Menéndez-Pidal (1962b: 29) offers a brief diagnostic profile of the linguistic continuum ranging from western Galician to Castilian:

Gallego	Gallego oriental	Leonés occidental	Leonés oriental	Castellano
forno	forno	forno	forno	horno
lobo	llobo	llobo	llobo	lobo
ela	ella	ella	etsa	ella
ano	ano	año	año	año
raa	raa	rana	rana	rana
mau	mau	malo	malo	malo
terra	terra	tierra	tierra	tierra
corpo	corpo	cuerpo	cuerpo	cuerpo
caldeiro	caldeiro	caldeiro	caldero	caldero
outro	outro	outro	otro	otro
chave	chave	chave	llave	llave

Menéndez-Pidal observes that there is no single factor which delimits eastern or western Leonese dialects. He describes western Leonese as different from Galician in pronouncing the diphthongized mid vowels in *tierra* and *cuerpo* while retaining the falling diphthongs in *caldeiro* and *outro*. This is essentially the speech of León, Zamora, and Salamanca. He mentions Central Leonese, essentially middle Asturian *bable*. Finally, Menéndez-Pidal's description of eastern Leonese includes the eastern portion of Zamora and León, as well as Santander and parts of

Extremadura (Cáceres) and Salamanca. Asturian in turn is only partially differentiated from Leonese. Menéndez Pidal (1962b: 31) claims that Asturian dialects, in addition to containing most of the above-mentioned Leonese features, also contain such elements as *yera* (*era*), *muyer* (*mujer*), *nueche* (*noche*), *castiello* (*castillo*). For Menéndez-Pidal, western Asturian is exemplified by such Leonese/Galician forms as *él cantou/you cantei*, *muíto*, *tsamar*, *mucher*. Central Asturian lacks many of the western Asturian features, and forms plurals of the sort *la casa-les cases*. Eastern Asturian has few Asturian/Leonese features, but uses *jorno* instead of *forno* or *horno*, and employs the word *hombre* instead of *home*, found in all dialects to the west.

Among the more curious features of the Leonese dialects described by Menéndez-Pidal is the neutralization of /l/ and /r/ in onset clusters, not only in favor of [r] (*praga*, *cravo*, *prantar*), but also in favor of [l]: *pobledad*, *blavo* (p. 81). This latter phenomenon is not found elsewhere in Spain, but was a characteristic feature of Afro-Hispanic pidgin, particularly during the 17th century, when large numbers of Africans speaking Bantu languages, which do not distinguish /l/ and /r/, arrived in Spain.

Alonso Garrote (1947) studies a now essentially extinct Leonese dialect, in south-central León province. This dialect provides many examples of diphthongization before yod: *cueio* [*cojo*], *güeyos* [*ojos*], *ugüeia* [*oveja*]. Forms such as *muyier* (*mujer*), *ye* (*es*), *yera* (*era*), *tieu* (*tío*), etc. link this dialect to Asturian speech, while diphthongs such as *you* (*yo*), *tou* (*tuyo*), *tieu* (*tío*), etc. bear a closer resemblance to Galician. Raising of unstressed /o/ to [u] was common; there is some paragogic -i in words ending in coronal consonants: *teneri* < *tener*, *mayori* < *mayor*, *paredi* < *pared*, *céspedi* < *césped*, etc. (Alonso Garrote 1947: 53). Latin initial /f-/ is retained in many words, and initial /l-/ is routinely palatalized: *llan* [*lado*], *llobu* [*lobo*], *lleite* [*leche*]. Palatalization of initial /n-/ is less common but does occur: *ñueite* [*noche*], *ñegro* [*negro*], *ñebrina* [*neblina*]. Intervocalic /y/ is weak and may fall in contact with /e/ or /i/: *leó* [*leyó*], *leenda* [*leyenda*], *ói* [*oye*]. There is occasional loss of /s/ in certain morphological combinations, such as *somo[s]* *los* ... and the pan-Hispanic *todo[s]* *los* ... (Alonso Garrote 1947: 69-70). The third person dative pronouns are *le(s)/lle(s)/ye(s)*. Enclisis is common for finite verbs: *pedíoi* [*le pedí*], *coyímuslle* [*le cogimos*]. Second person plural forms retaining intervocalic /d/ as in *-ades*, *-edes* were already disappearing fifty years ago, and are now gone, remembered only in archaic *coplas* (Alonso Garrote 1947: 79):

---¿D'aónde sodes, mozos?  
 ---D'Antoñán del Valle.  
 ---¿Qué traedes d'ende?  
 ---Las barrigas llenas d'aire.  
 ...  
 ¡Oh rapazas! ¡Oh muyieres!  
 ¿Pur qué sodes perezosas?  
 ¿Nun vedes qu'aquestas ñieves  
 trayen fugazas y tortas?  
 Delantre estos asadores  
 que respetarun las ñeras  
 nun temades en culgari  
 llardu, butiello y murciellas.  
 Prepará lus aguinaldus  
 mas que sean de regiellas,

y nusoutrus vus daremos  
 cagayas pa las mundiellas.  
 Las cabras y las ugüeyas  
 vus darán si lu faceis  
 muchus cabritus y años  
 qu;han de ñacer todos reis (Alonso Garrote 1947: 107).

As in other Leonese/Asturian dialects, definite articles are combined with possessives: *el tou payar*, *el míu güelo*. In this dialect, /r/ in OBSTRUENT + LIQUID onset clusters sometimes is replaced by [l], as in earlier Afro-Hispanic pidgin: *plonto heis segau el centeno* (Alonso Garrote 1947: 102), *plocamos* < *proclamos* (p. 103).

In general, Leonese shares the tendencies of western (non-Castilian) Ibero-Romance:

- (1) retention of initial /f-/
- (3) some falling diphthongs [ei] and [ou]
- (3) retention of voiced /z/
- (4) retention of /ʃ/

However, there are also innovations, the most important of which are:

- (1) diphthongization of lax /E/ and /O/, including before *yod*: *viengo*, *güeyo (ojo)*, *puerta*, *cierto*. The diphthongization of /O/ gave *ue*, *uo*, and *ua*, with much vacillation. In the old texts, diphthogization of /E/ gave [ya] as well as [ye].
- (2) Especially in Asturias, there was also much palatalization of initial /l/: *llingua*, etc.
- (3) retention of 5-vowel system
- (4) much raising of final /e/ to [i] and /o/ to [u], accompanied by metaphony (modification of the tonic vowel): *rosario* > *roseriu*, *sujeto* > *sujito*, *šiši* (leche), *tramposo* > *trampusu*, *potro* > *putru*, etc.
- (5) in part of central Asturias, initial /l/ > [ʎ] > [ʃ]: *šeite* (leche), *šobu* (lobo), etc.
- (6) Some palatalization of initial /n/: *ño*, *ñascer*, *ñombre*, etc.
- (7) in western Leonese, /pl-/ , etc. > [tʃ]; in eastern Asturian, they gave [ʎ] as in Castilian.

Contemporary *bable* is really not a stable and consistent language (despite recent attempts by the Asturian academy), but an interlocking series of regional and local dialects, all of which are heavily intermixed with Castilian. Some basic grammatical features are:

ARTICLES: *el*, *los/lus*, *la*, *las/les/lis*

DEMONSTRATIVES: same as Castilian, except: *aquel/aqueli*, *aquellos/aqueshos/aquilos*

POSSESSIVES (typically combined with article):

WESTERN: *mieu/miou*, *mía/miya*; *tou*, *tú/tuá/tuya*; *sou/súa/suá/suya*

EASTERN/CENTRAL: *mió*, *to*, *so*

PERSONAL PRONOUNS: *yo/you*, *tu*, *él/elli/illi*, *ella/esha/ ellos/eshos*, *ellas/eshas/es*, etc.,  
*nosotros/nusotros/nousotros*, etc.

Clitic pronouns are basically similar to Castilian, although postposing to finite verbs is common:

VERB SYSTEM: Basically the same as Castilian, but little or no use of compound forms.

*ser*: *so/soy/sou*  
*es/yas/yes (sos)*  
*ía/ yía/ ya/ ye*

somus/somos/semos

sois/sodes/seis/soes

son

imperfect: yera/yara, etc.

pret.: fo/fui/jui, etc.

subj.: sía, sea, siya, seya, etc.

*estar*: tou, tas, ta, etc.

*tener*: imp. in *tiña*, etc. (pres. *tiens*, etc.)

*facer*: faigu, fais, fai, fademus/faemos/femos, fadéis/faéis/fedes, fan/fain/fainin, etc.

A classic Leonese oral narrative fragment is (Alonso Garrote 1947: 115):

Pur fin y pur postre salimus a la praza mayore, escuyimus las galochas, y jópiu panca'l maragat, onde deyjemus las burras. Pipdimus una 'zumbre, dos riales de guisau para cad'unu, dos mulletes y dos llibras de pescáu, y zampémuslu tou en menus d'un Juasús. Peque un yer hora de marchare, y ya cun la barriga llena, antojousey al ti Pucherus dir al café; y fumus, ¡recongrio!, y aquí escumienza l'outra trigedia ¡Reconcho! peque estábamos dejaus de la manu de Dios. Al abrire la puerta del café el ti Pucherus, que iba delante, creyou que yera lu mesmu que pa puerta del su payare, y diói un emburrión tan grande que ye tirou tous lus cacharos que llevab' un mozu d'aquellus n'un pratu d'hojalata. Allevantouse pasmada cuasi toa la gente del café, ¡y entrounus una vergüenza, recongrio!, que you pensei murire. Peru, amus, llamárunyi animal unas cuantas veces, y así quedou todú; pero, chachicus, nu ye cabía l'alma nel cuerpu.

Borrego Nieto (1996) provides a more recent survey of Leonese linguistic manifestations, in the provinces of León, Zamora, and Salamanca. He distinguishes five sub-zones, based largely on phonetic criteria. The first zone includes far western zones of Zamora and León, and is characterized by diphthongization of tonic /E/ and /O/ before yod: *güeyo/güecho* (*ojo*), *güey* (*hoy*), *fueya* (*hoja*). Falling diphthongs sometimes switch to rising diphthongs or hiatus: *pía* < *pie*, *díaz* < *diez*, *lúegu* < *luego*. Some falling diphthongs are retained: *cousa*, *pouco*, *queso*, and the suffix *-eiro*. Final atonic vowels are routinely raised, and a final *-i* is retained after coronal consonants: *muyeri* (*mujer*), *árboli* (*árbol*), *pared* (*pared*). Latin initial *f-* is often retained, and initial *l-* is sometimes palatalized to [ʃ]: *šadrón* (*ladrón*), *šana* (*lana*). Dative pronouns include *lle/ye*, there are apocopated verb forms such as *tien*, *quier*, *diz*, and many of the verb conjugations are similar to those of Galician and Portuguese.

The second zone includes the center of León province and a strip of Zamora. This is an area of considerably reduced diphthongization before yod, and retention or creation of falling diphthongs. Definite articles are the same as in Castilian, although some Leonese/Galician contractions such as *nu*, *na* are occasionally found. Apocopated third person plural preterites are found: *dijon*, *vinon*, *estuvon*, etc.

A third zone is further to the east in both León and Zamora. It includes the town of Sayago, which in Spanish Golden Age theater was immortalized in the linguistic stereotype of

the *sayagués*, a comic type speaking in macaronic Leonese-influenced Spanish. In this area the diminutive suffix *-ico* occasionally competes with *-ín*. There are few Leonese phonetic traits.

The fourth Leonese zone is located in the northeastern part of León; in this area the 'neutro de materia' or non-agreement of adjectival gender before mass nouns, is found: *leche frío, madera prieto*. There is some voicing of intervocalic /θ/: *idil (decir), jadel (hacer)*, etc. The fifth zone, comprising much of eastern León, is the least Leonese of all, containing only occasional traces of non-Castilian language.

Much more regionalized traits within the Leonese domain include elimination of some prepositions (*voy marchar*), use of some particles (*¿Que quéi o?*--this latter is found in some Asturian dialects), use of *tío/tía* and phonetic variants as terms of address, use of *él/ella* instead of *usted*, use of the article with possessives (*la mi vaca*), partitive constructions with *de* (*me trajo del vino caro*)

Among the surviving dialects of contemporary *bable*, what is typically found is a fluid interweaving of Castilian and Asturian forms. Most consistent is the replacement of final morphological *-a* by *-e*: *las vacas > les vaques, Asturias > Asturies*, etc. There is considerable palatalization of word-initial /l/: *llingua < lengua* (with [ʎ] or [j]), etc. The third-person singular of *ser* is *ye*. Enclitic pronouns are most frequently used with finite verbs: *díjome, parécete*, etc. Word-final atonic /e/ is usually [i] and final unstressed /o/ becomes [u].

In the contemporary autonomous region of Asturias, there are official and scholarly attempts to revive and standardize Asturian or *bable*. The Academia de la Llingua Asturiana publishes a bulletin in a very scholarly and heavily Castilianized *bable*, but unlike in the other autonomous regions of Spain, the regional language is making only a small comeback in official circles. Neira (1976: 40), an early critic of attempts to artificially create a *llingua asturiana* for political and literary purposes, rails against intellectuals who believe they can forge a language by decree when local populations have maintained different dialects for a thousand years: 'El esquema de las lenguas artificiales es rígido. Se va siempre del código a la realización concreta. Por eso, el que escribe en llingua escribe siempre *Caxa de Aforros, ensaniciar, escentralizar*, aunque no lo hay oído a nadie o lo haya oído pronunciar de otro modo. Piensa que a la jota castellana debe corresponder en estos casos una *x* bable, y al prefijo *des-* el *es-*. En los bables auténticos, como en todas las lenguas naturales, no hay esta rigidez. El código se altera a partir de las palabras. Por eso ... se puede decir en correcto bable *dame esa caxa y fui a la Caja de Ahorros, desavisóla y estrozola* ... los que escriben en llingua no hablan de este modo. Lo que hacen es traducir a partir del castellano. Por eso serían incapaces de reformular su pensamiento oralmente.' Neira may be a bit harsh in his criticism, since some Asturians accept written 'llingua' materials, particularly those dealing with everyday topics. It is when technical materials, such as grammatical treatises, are attempted in 'llingua,' that the charges of forced artificiality are most fitting.