

that of lexis, one has to say that both Spanish and Portuguese, each in its own way, is a rather eccentric form of Romance.⁴³ And the most innovatory Romance varieties of all (those which gave rise to standard French) certainly belong to the margins of the Romance area, to its northwestern periphery. Marginality should not therefore be equated with conservatism. Quite the reverse: the marginality of the Latin varieties which underlie Castilian is one of the factors associated with its speakers' openness to radical change.

2.5.6 Other models

Our need to visualize complex relationships is intense, so that the desire for visual models (such as the genealogical tree) to help us understand the complexities of the distribution of linguistic features is acute. But no simple model is adequate. The spectrum of visible light is a possible model for geographical variation, or for any single one of the many social parameters along which linguistic variation occurs, since it consists of an infinitely gradated range of wave-lengths which is arbitrarily segmented by the human eye into the 'seven' colours of the rainbow. However, the rainbow is essentially a one-dimensional model, and language variation is multidimensional. When we come to consider the standard languages of the Peninsula and their relationship with non-standard varieties (7.3), we shall use the model of the roof or cupola, eloquently expounded by Vårvaro (1991); the roof represents a standard language and covers a discrete area beneath which non-standard varieties are spread in their interlocking fashion. In modern Europe, contiguous roofs typically abut sharply upon each other, while at ground level the most unpretentious varieties usually pay no attention to the joins between roofs but interlock seamlessly across frontiers. Such a model is complex (and therefore lacks the immediate appeal of simple models). But language is multidimensional and is distorted by any one-dimensional or two-dimensional model.

3 Mechanisms of change

Language history is predicated upon the notion that most linguistic change is regular; what this implies is that all the words, phrases, or other units which are candidates for a particular change are in fact affected by it in a given speech community. Although there are great difficulties in defining what is a speech community, and although, as we shall see when we look at lexical diffusion (Section 3.5), changes do not affect all eligible items at once and some words may not be affected at all, nevertheless it remains true that many if not most changes operate in a remarkably regular way, with all eligible units being affected, in a given place, in a measurable period of time. It may seem paradoxical that this regularity is particularly observable when there are many items eligible for change. For example, we can be fairly sure that in all the words inherited by Spanish through oral transmission from Latin and which in Latin contained an intervocalic [t] (e.g., ACŪTUS 'sharp', CANTĀTUS 'sung') there occurred the same process of voicing and fricativization which produced [ð] in Spanish (*agudo*, *cantado*). By contrast, it is when there are few words which display the feature which is subject to change that we find the greatest irregularity. Thus, there is only a small group of words which in Latin presented the combination NG followed by a front vowel and which have been inherited by Spanish (e.g., TANGERE 'to touch', GINGĪVA 'gum', QUĪNGENTĪ 'five hundred'), yet this small group provides evidence of three different developments: [ɲ] (*tañer*), [nθ] (*encia*), [n] (*quinientos*).¹ We shall be offering a possible explanation for this kind of fragmented development in Section 3.1.6, but we should not lose sight of the fact that every linguistic change, however regular or irregular, presupposes a lengthy chain of imitations of one speaker by another. This chapter is concerned with this kind of imitation, the process by which change spreads through social groups, and how the composition of such groups can affect who imitates whom.

In the second half of the twentieth century, linguists reached unanimity that not only change but also variation is inherent in human

language. While it has long been clear that change leads to variation, it is becoming gradually more clear that language change is dependent upon (some would say caused by) linguistic variation. This is not the place to enter into the continuing and fascinating debate about the ultimate causes of linguistic change; this debate can be followed in, for example, Aitchison (1991), Kiparsky (1988), Lass (1980), or Milroy (1992), each writing from a different perspective. However, there is one major distinction which needs to be made at this point, for the sake of clarifying all the later discussion in this chapter; this is the vital distinction between, on the one hand, the cause and establishment of some change in a particular social group, and, on the other hand, the spread of such a change through the community.

We shall be concerned here with the second of these two phenomena, the spread of change through geographical and social space. In doing so, we shall need to keep an important principle in mind, namely that almost all changes are spread through face-to-face conversation between individuals, as a result of which one individual adapts some aspect of his or her speech to that of the other, and then, at least sometimes, passes on the newly acquired item to another individual.² Until the introduction of mass media, such as radio and television, it is axiomatic that *all* linguistic changes were spread in this face-to-face manner, but even in the global electronic village, it is far from clear that these media are responsible for spreading much change. They may be responsible for introducing new concepts to listeners and viewers, together with the appropriate new terminology, and they may even occasionally cause hearers to replace some existing item with a more fashionable item (for example, of vocabulary or pronunciation), although even this is open to dispute, on the grounds that the media may only reinforce items which a speaker has heard in face-to-face conversation. But it is far from being evident that the media have any more profound effect on the way people speak, and until more work is done in this area, we are safe to assume that the vast majority of changes are spread through person-to-person interaction.

3.1 Dialect contact

Uriel Weinreich (1953) began an important series of studies into the mutual effects exercised upon one another by languages which are in contact, namely in bilingual communities, and helped to define the

kinds of adaptation processes which are to be expected in such situations. More recently, such study has been extended to include situations in which the varieties in contact are not mutually unintelligible languages but dialects which offer complete or substantial mutual intelligibility to their respective speakers. An important example of this work is that of Peter Trudgill (1986), which establishes that the main effect of contact between speakers of such mutually intelligible dialects is short-term *accommodation*, which may become long-term adjustment.

3.1.1 Accommodation

It is becoming increasingly clear that all speakers of all languages are subject to some degree of accommodation. That is, every speaker adjusts his or her speech (by selection of certain items rather than others) to the speech of the person or persons he or she is talking with. It is a common experience that some individuals adjust their speech in this way more than others do, but we probably all make some short-term adjustments of this kind during conversation. Accommodation of speech becomes more obvious when an individual goes to live in another part of the same country or to another country where the same language is spoken; again there are different degrees of speech-adjustment on the part of such speakers, some retaining almost all the features of their native variety, others apparently adjusting completely to their new speech environment, and most falling between these extremes. In the last decade, it has been recognized that contact between speakers of mutually intelligible varieties may lead to broader effects; features which are adopted as a result of adjustment in face-to-face interaction between individuals who speak different varieties may come to be used even between individuals neither of whom once used that feature. An example relevant to Spanish would be that of a couple who emigrate from central Spain to Spanish America. At first such speakers of Spanish would observe the contrast /θ/ vs /s/ (that is, they would remain non-*seseante* speakers, distinguishing *caza* from *casa*) whether speaking to one another or to others, but then can be expected to adopt a *seseante* pronunciation in at least some words when talking to local people. The crucial next step comes when the Spanish couple begin using *seseante* pronunciation between themselves, probably first in the case of words they have only come across in their new environment, but later possibly also in words they have always used. Although

this process is not an inevitable one, and some individuals are much more open to it than others, it seems likely that this is the mechanism by which change is propagated from individual to individual, even in contact situations where there is something closer to numerical balance between the groups who use contrasting features. In this way, a feature which begins as a temporary adjustment in face-to-face interaction may eventually come to be adopted by an entire speech community.

Almost all the systematic work on which accommodation theory is based has been carried out in the Germanic-speaking world, most frequently as a result of observation of contact between mutually intelligible varieties of English, for example in new towns. Trudgill (1986: 1–82), exploiting earlier work by Giles (1973), uses English and Scandinavian data to identify the factors which accelerate or restrain linguistic adaptation in conditions of face-to-face contact. Most of the data are phonetic and phonological, but the conclusions drawn are probably not restricted to these domains. They are that particularly salient items are the ones most readily adapted to, and that salience can be measured in terms of a number of factors, which include the following: contribution to phonological contrast, relationship to orthography, degree of phonetic difference, and different incidence of shared phonemes. In turn, such findings help us to understand why certain features, rather than others, are more readily transmitted through geographical and social space.

Permanent adjustment resulting from dialect contact is particularly relevant to Spanish, since from at least the tenth century there has been constant mixing, in the Peninsula and in America, of speakers of mutually comprehensible varieties of Hispano-Romance, followed (one presumes) by the emergence of new dialects. Throughout the period of the Reconquest of Islamic Spain, during the colonization of America, and during the resettlement of Sephardic Jews in the Balkans and other areas, new communities were constantly being formed, consisting of speakers drawn from different dialectal backgrounds. We can therefore expect that the same kinds of linguistic processes observable today in newly established communities, such as new towns, will also have occurred in medieval Castile, in Andalusia, in colonial America, and in the cities to which the Spanish Jews emigrated.

When speakers of different varieties come into long-term contact, the normal result is, at first, fairly chaotic dialect mixture in which a large number of variant features are in competition. This range of variants may include some which were not present in any of

the varieties which contribute to the mixture; such forms are referred to as cases of *interdialect* (3.1.2). The range of variation is then gradually reduced, leading to the creation of a new dialect, one which differs in some degree from all those that entered into the mixture. The precise mechanisms by which dialect mixture leads to the formation of a new dialect have been identified as: *levelling* of linguistic differences (3.1.3), *simplification* of linguistic systems (3.1.4), *hypercorrection* (see also 1.5), and *hyperdialectalism* (3.1.5).³ Even after the formation of the new dialect, a process sometimes called *koinéization*, some competing variants (originally from separate varieties) may survive.⁴ Where this is the case, such variants are frequently subject to *reallocation*, that is to say that what were once geographically determined variants may be redistributed in such a way that they become social or stylistic variants. We shall examine reallocation in Section 3.1.6.

3.1.2 Interdialect

As we have just seen, interdialectalisms are variants which arise under conditions of dialect contact and which do not belong to any of the varieties which have contributed to the mixture. Most frequently such variants are intermediate between the variants in competition. Although most of the studies which have revealed interdialectalism (see Trudgill 1986) are based on phonological data, where the notion of *intermediate* is usually interpreted to mean 'physiologically intermediate', there seems to be no reason in principle to limit interdialectalism to the phonological domain, and therefore it seems we should expect dialect mixing to produce, say, morphological or syntactical variants which are novel and intermediate between those that existed before the mixture came into being. Such interdialectal forms are, it would seem, by no means always eliminated through subsequent processes of levelling, and may survive as stable variants of the emerging speech variety. In Section 4.1.2.3, we shall consider a possible case of syntactical interdialectalism, one which arguably gives rise to the present system of third-person atonic pronoun reference in Old Castile and Madrid.

It is especially difficult to sustain a claim that a given development in the past was due to interdialectalism resulting from dialect contact, since such a claim amounts to attempting to prove a negative, namely that the feature in question did *not* occur in any of the varieties which contributed to the mixture being studied. We may strongly suspect that an innovation arose in this way, but we lack the data to demonstrate

that the feature was not already present, but unrecorded, in the speech of one or more of the groups coming into contact. We shall therefore limit our discussion of interdialectalism in the history of Spanish to the case outlined above.

3.1.3 Levelling: early modern Spanish

Studies of modern dialect mixing (e.g., Trudgill 1986: 98–102) reveal that in the generations which follow the establishment of a new community (or dramatic expansion of an existing community through massive influx of speakers of related dialects) there takes place a process of increasing *focusing*. That is, the range of variants is reduced, through levelling and simplification (3.1.4). It would seem that, in the first generation after dialect mixing, such levelling occurs only in face-to-face conversation with speakers of other dialects, usually by avoidance of those features which represent the most marked or noticeable differences between the dialects in contact. However, later generations may not make any use of such marked variants, in which case those particular cases of levelling become established as part of the speech of the whole community.

It can be argued that cases of levelling are very frequent in the history of Spanish. Both the phonology and the morphology of the modern language are notably simpler than those of most other varieties of Romance, and perhaps offer fewer contrasts than any other variety at all. This relative simplicity has been caused by the repeated dialect mixing which has occurred among central Hispano-Romance varieties, from the beginning of the Christian Reconquest of the Peninsula onwards. We shall examine here a number of cases of linguistic levelling observable in the history of late medieval and early modern Spanish, and attempt to reinterpret them in the light of the theoretical insights produced by modern studies of dialect contact.

3.1.3.1 The Old Spanish sibilants

The history of the reduction of the six medieval Spanish sibilants to only three in central and northern Spain, and to two elsewhere, has been intensively studied.⁵ The facts of the case can be stated succinctly: during the sixteenth century, prestigious varieties of Spanish give evidence of a series of mergers affecting the sibilant sub-system, which (leaving aside /tʃ/, which underwent no change) consisted of the six units shown in Table 3.1, illustrated with typical words shown in their

	VOICELESS	VOICED
Pre-palatal fricative	/ʃ/ <i>caxa</i> 'box'	/ʒ/ <i>muger</i> 'woman'
Apico-alveolar fricative ^a	/s/ <i>passo</i> 'step'	/z/ <i>casa</i> 'house'
Dental fricative ^b	/ʃ/ <i>caça</i> 'hunt'	/ʒ/ <i>dezir</i> 'say'

^a These phonemes were of the retroflex type, like the surviving /s/ of the central and northern Peninsula.

^b These dental (laminal) fricatives resulted from earlier affricates.

Table 3.1 Late-medieval sibilants in Spanish

usual contemporary orthography. By contrast, it is known that in Old Castile and adjacent areas (Alonso 1962a), already in the Middle Ages, certain varieties had allowed the voiced phonemes to merge with the voiceless, with voiceless result. The reasons offered for this merger do not concern us here, but include Basque substratum effects, and levelling rooted in morphology (Penny 1993).

Following its establishment as the capital of Spain in 1561, Madrid grew dramatically, and its population, previously that of a small to medium-sized town, mushroomed in a few decades. Madrid was the 'new town' of sixteenth-century Spain, and the immigrants who contributed to its expanded population would have been drawn predominantly from the north, since the north of the Peninsula had always been, and continued to be until recent times, the main source of surplus population. Many of these new settlers in Madrid, it can be speculated, brought with them varieties of Castilian in which the voiced and voiceless sibilants had merged, with voiceless results, while the existing population and any immigrants from further south would be users of the traditional system. Knowing what is now known about the effects of dialect mixing in twentieth-century new towns, it is not hard to imagine that the linguistic effects of the demographic expansion of Madrid included levelling of the two main sibilant sub-systems that were brought into competition there. No doubt levelling was preceded by a fairly chaotic flux of competing forms, in which words like *muger*, *casa*, *dezir* were pronounced by some with a voiced and by others with a voiceless intervocalic consonant, and in which speakers adjusted their pronunciation only in face-to-face interaction with users of the other phonological pattern. But, by the second or third generation at most, preference for the voiceless pronunciation became general, for the

3 Mechanisms of change

	VOICELESS	
Pre-palatal fricative	/f/ <i>caxa</i> 'box'	<i>muger</i> 'woman'
Apico-alveolar fricative	/s/ <i>passo</i> 'step'	<i>casa</i> 'house'
Dental fricative	/ʃ/ <i>caça</i> 'hunt'	<i>dezir</i> 'say'

Table 3.2 Late sixteenth-century sibilants in Spanish

following reasons. First, there may well have been more speakers who used only voiceless sibilants than speakers who contrasted voiceless with voiced, since the new population seems to have been drawn predominantly from the north, and many areas of the northern Peninsula had by this time probably abandoned voiced sibilants. Although we cannot hope to reconstruct the demography of sixteenth-century Madrid, and although numerical superiority of speakers of one variety over others is not the crucial deciding factor in the results of dialect contact, we cannot ignore the possibility that voiced sibilants in late sixteenth-century Madrid constituted the *marked* variant, one which was salient because of its oddity. Secondly and perhaps more importantly, all speakers used voiceless sibilants, but only some had previously used voiced sibilants, so that the all-voiceless solution was phonologically simpler (see 3.1.4). Finally, the number of minimal pairs which were sustained by the contrast of each voiced sibilant with its voiceless counterpart seems to have been extremely small, so that the adoption of the voiceless-only variant scarcely impeded communication, if at all.⁶

It is presumably in this way that a feature of pronunciation which had previously characterized low-prestige varieties of Castilian, principally from the rural north, came to gain ground in the capital. For many decades, the prestige norm, still for many people enshrined in the speech of Toledo, continued to maintain the earlier phonemic contrasts. However, careful scrutiny of the data, by Amado Alonso (1967b, 1969) and others, has shown that the new pronunciation found its way fairly rapidly into elegant usage in the capital and elsewhere and established itself as the norm, probably by the end of the sixteenth century (Table 3.2). A later (or overlapping) change to this system, in which the pre-palatal phoneme was velarized to /x/ or /h/ and (in central and northern Spain) the dental was interdentalized to /θ/, gave the result shown in Table 3.3, in which the illustrative words are shown in their modern spelling.

3.1 Dialect contact

	VOICELESS	
Velar fricative	/x/ <i>caja</i> 'box'	<i>mujer</i> 'woman'
Apico-alveolar fricative	/s/ <i>paso</i> 'step'	<i>casa</i> 'house'
Interdental fricative	/θ/ <i>caza</i> 'hunt'	<i>decir</i> 'say'

Table 3.3 Modern Spanish sibilants

LATIN	OLD SPANISH
FĪLĀRE	<i>flar</i> = /hilár/ 'to spin'
FABULĀRE	<i>fablar</i> = /haβlár/ 'to speak'
FŪMU	<i>fumo</i> = /húmo/ 'smoke'

Table 3.4 Development to Old Spanish of words displaying F-

3.1.3.2 Old Spanish /h/

By the late Middle Ages, it is likely that everywhere in Castile the glottal phoneme /h/ had displaced earlier labiodental /f/ in words whose Latin ancestors displayed initial F-, and that this /h/ had progressed into that part of Andalusia so far reconquered and was progressing into Murcia. This development is exemplified in Table 3.4, showing the usual medieval graph *f* to represent /h/. This success of what is agreed to be a northern feature was no doubt due, in large part, to the resettlement of southern areas by speakers from northern Old Castile (the main area where this change originated), or to the resolution of variation in southern Spain between /h/ (brought by speakers from northern Old Castile) and /f/ (brought by others or continued by speakers of Southern Hispano-Romance (i.e., Mozarabic; see 4.1.1)) in favour of the Old Castilian variant /h/. Contemporary with this north-south spread of /h/, there was lateral spread of the phoneme into Leonese and Aragonese territories, not apparently mediated by movement of population and dialect mixing, but by the more frequent mechanism of person-by-person imitation of a feature radiating out from Old Castile (see 3.2 and 3.5).⁷

The development which interests us here is the subsequent success of /h/-dropping, a phenomenon which may have more ancient origins but which gains significant attention in the middle of the sixteenth

century, when interested observers contrast the speech of Old Castile, where /h/ is lost, from that of the prestige centre, Toledo, where /h/ is retained. It appears that, very rapidly, in the second half of the sixteenth century, /h/-dropping became acceptable. Why should this feature, associated with what was by this time a culturally peripheral area, have prospered? After all, to take a comparable case from another European language, standard British English shows no sign of adopting /h/-dropping, despite the fact that the large majority of non-standard varieties show loss of earlier /h/.

The answer again appears to lie in the results of dialect mixture in sixteenth-century Madrid. As we have seen (3.1.3.1), the dramatic demographic expansion of the new capital after 1561 brings an influx of northerners into Madrid, and many of the new arrivals would have come from /h/-dropping areas. They thus introduced into urban Spanish what had up till then been a disregarded provincialism. But introduction does not guarantee success, since /h/-dropping must have competed with /h/-retention in the dialect mixture created by the expansion of Madrid. But what we know about the normal patterns of development which follow dialect mixing helps us to explain the success of /h/-dropping.

Although we cannot establish what was the demographic balance between /h/-droppers and /h/-retainers, relative numbers are not, we recall, the most important factor in determining the outcome of competition between variants. Levelling can take place even in favour of a minority variant, although in this case it is possible that /h/-droppers were in the majority. More important is the fact that levelling usually disfavors marked variants (Trudgill 1986: 126), and use of /h/ was clearly a highly noticeable feature. Equally relevant, levelling can be expected to favour linguistically simpler variants, and it is evident that /h/-dropping varieties are phonologically simpler than their competitors. /h/-retaining varieties need to keep separate two classes of words (shown in Table 3.5 with their modern spellings), which can be conflated by /h/-droppers.⁸ Of course, the /h/-less solution would be unlikely to gain ground in the community if it were to impede communication. But this is scarcely the case; once again, there are few if any cases where homonymic clash is brought about by /h/-dropping.⁹

Words with /h/	Words without /h/
<i>hilar</i> 'to spin'	<i>igual</i> 'equal'
<i>hijo</i> 'son'	<i>historia</i> 'story'
<i>hiel</i> 'bile'	<i>hielo</i> 'ice'
<i>henchir</i> 'to fill'	<i>empezar</i> 'to begin'
<i>herido</i> 'wounded'	<i>helar</i> 'to freeze'
<i>hablar</i> 'to speak'	<i>ala</i> 'wing'
<i>hacha</i> 'axe'	<i>hábito</i> 'habit'
<i>hoja</i> 'leaf'	<i>oler</i> 'to smell'
<i>hongo</i> 'mushroom'	<i>hombre</i> 'man'
<i>humo</i> 'smoke'	<i>uno</i> 'one'
<i>huir</i> 'to flee'	<i>humilde</i> 'humble'

Table 3.5 Words with and without /h/ in conservative sixteenth-century varieties of Castilian

of the sibilants and in the case of /h/-dropping, although here we lack some of the abundance of chronological and geographical data which have been unearthed in connection with the previously discussed changes.¹⁰

On the basis of data drawn from rhyming verse, it can be established that until the fifteenth century in Spain, the two letters *b* and *v* indicated distinct phonemes; the first was most probably a voiced bilabial plosive, while the second was a voiced fricative. To judge by the absence today of voiced labiodentals across the whole north of the Peninsula, and in Gascony, it seems likely that the voiced fricative phoneme was a bilabial in many, if not all, northern areas, while the southern half of the Peninsula was probably occupied by a labiodental variant, linking the surviving areas of /v/ which are to be found in Southern Catalan and in Central and Southern Portuguese. If this distribution of variants is the correct one, we can summarize it in Table 3.6. In all parts of the Peninsula, then, the distinctive feature which separated the two phonemes under discussion was that of manner of articulation (plosive vs fricative). However, in those areas where this was the only distinctive feature, namely in the north, the two phonemes were

3.1.3.3 The merger of Old Spanish /b/ and /β/

A similar argument can be deployed in the case of the merger of the two Old Spanish voiced labial consonants as has been used in the case

	PLOSIVE	FRICATIVE
Northern Peninsula	/b/ <i>cabe</i> 'it fits'	/β/ <i>cave</i> 'he digs (subj.)'
Southern Peninsula	/b/ <i>cabe</i> 'it fits'	/v/ <i>cave</i> 'he digs (subj.)'

Table 3.6 Voiced labial phonemes in medieval Spain

Northern Peninsula	/b/ <i>cabe</i> 'it fits' = <i>cave</i> 'he digs (subj.)'
Southern Peninsula	/b/ <i>cabe</i> 'it fits' ≠ /v/ <i>cave</i> 'he digs (subj.)'

Table 3.7 Voiced labial phonemes in late medieval Spain

increasingly neutralized, leading to total merger, with allophonic variation between [b] and [β], by about the fifteenth century (Penny 1976; see Table 3.7). The fact that the northern solution has triumphed in all areas to which Castilian was extended (including the whole of America), with the sole exception of some Judeo-Spanish varieties (see 6.3.2(3)), suggests that the competition in southern Spain between the traditional system (/b/ vs /v/) and the newly introduced system (/b/ alone) led to rapid levelling in favour of the northern type.¹¹ The reason why levelling took place in favour of the northern system rather than the southern is no doubt the same as that we have seen in the case of sibilant-merger and /h/-dropping: the northern system was simpler, and its adoption posed little or no threat to communication, since the number of minimal pairs sustained by the /b/-/v/ contrast (or the earlier northern contrast between /b/ and /β/) was very small.

3.1.4 Simplification: the result of the territorial expansion of Castilian

The simplification which takes place in the wake of dialect mixing is closely related to levelling, since levelling usually favours the simpler or the simplest of the competing variants. What is notable about simplification, however, is that it may occur even if the simpler variant belongs to a variety or varieties used by a minority of speakers in the new community (Trudgill 1986: 102–7). What is claimed in this chapter is that the variety which we know as standard Spanish has emerged

from a series of dialect mixtures, and has undergone repeated new-dialect formation or *koinéization*, beginning at least as early as the ninth century (see 3.3 for further development of this idea). In that century we see the beginnings of the Castilian reconquest of central Spain, in the resettlement of the Burgos area, a process which brought in speakers of a number of Romance varieties from regions such as Cantabria, immediately to the north. The next major step was the advance into New Castile and the recovery of Toledo in the late eleventh century, whereupon a new series of dialect contacts took place, involving not only varieties which had earlier emerged in Old Castile (including perhaps the most prestigious, that of Burgos) but Leonese and Mozarabic varieties, together with some from more distant parts of the Peninsula, and even beyond. The *koiné* which emerged from that mixture was to form the basis of the thirteenth-century Alfonsine standard (see Chapter 7), but the process of mixing was repeated at each major stage of the Reconquest, most notably next in Seville, reconquered in the mid-thirteenth century and the destination of an enormous influx of people from all over the Peninsula, a migration which resulted in a further process of dialect mixture and the focusing or *koinéization* which produced the distinctively Andalusian varieties of Spanish. Later migrations (to the Canaries, to Granada after 1492, to the Balkans, and to the Americas) all gave rise to new contact situations, with at least some of the expected linguistic outcomes, namely levelling and simplification. However, these later dialect mixtures took place in a period when the prestige of the Castilian standard was increasing, so that the solutions adopted in each new community were not always those predictable by sociolinguistic theory, but were (at least in part) determined by adherence to the prestige norm (see 7.1).¹²

If we contrast the phonological and morphological structures of Castilian with those of Peninsular varieties which have not emerged from successive stages of dialect contact, we note that such 'unmixed' varieties show markedly greater complexity. A case in point is provided by the varieties spoken in Asturias and Cantabria, regions of northern Spain which, until the nineteenth century, received little or no immigration; on the contrary, they were a continual source of emigration. The traditional speech varieties used in these regions, which do not result from dialect mixing, are more complex than those of Castilian, in at least the following ways (see García Arias 1988): most Asturian and Cantabrian varieties show a system of five unstressed final vowels, by contrast with the three of Castilian; the metaphonic raising of stressed

vowels, in anticipation of a high final, with all the morphological and semantic information this phenomenon usually carries, is present in many Asturian and Cantabrian varieties, but is entirely absent from Castilian; the morphological expression of 'countability' (the use of separate formatives to represent countable referents, from those used to represent uncountable or mass concepts) is common throughout Asturias and neighbouring areas, but has no counterpart in Castilian (Penny 1970b). Since a considerable proportion, but not all, of those who settled Burgos after its reconquest in 884 came from Cantabria, it can be assumed that the features just considered belonged initially to their speech but were lost in favour of simpler alternants, as a result of the first episode of dialect mixing in the history of Spanish.

The implication, from the standpoint of sociolinguistic theory, of the view that Spanish results from repeated phases of dialect mixing, is that Castilian has undergone more simplification (and levelling) processes than other Romance varieties. It has frequently been noted that the phonology of Spanish is simpler, and its morphology more regular, than those of the other standard Romance varieties; and these characterizations of structural simplicity also hold true if one compares Spanish with the large majority of non-standard Romance varieties.

3.1.4.1 The merger of the perfect auxiliaries

Old Spanish, like most other Romance varieties, inherited from spoken Latin a double series of verbal auxiliaries, used with past participles to provide a series of paradigms including present perfect, pluperfect, future perfect, etc. (Penny 1991a: 141–4). On the one hand was the descendant of the Latin verb *HABEO*, at first in Latin used only with the participle of a transitive verb in such constructions as *HABEO CĒNAM PARĀTAM* (lit. 'I have the meal (and it is) prepared'). In such constructions *HABEO* retained its full lexical value ('I possess, I have with me'), and required an overt direct object (here *CĒNAM*), to which the participle was appended as a modifier, agreeing with it in case, gender and number.¹³ Already in spoken varieties of Latin, it is reasonably clear that *HABEO* began to lose its full lexical value, that is, it was weakened in sense in such a way that the notion of possession was attenuated, perhaps via that of metaphorical possession, until it became essentially a grammatical particle indicating the tense and aspect of the total construction, as well as the person and number of the grammatical subject.¹⁴ However, in the medieval period, the Spanish perfect (*he cantado*, etc.) retains a number of the features which had belonged to

3.1 Dialect contact

this construction in Latin: it was appropriate, in essence, for transitive verbs only, and the participle, at least sometimes, continued to agree in gender and number with the direct object.

By contrast with the *he cantado* perfect, many non-transitive verbs in medieval Spanish offered the type *son venidos* 'they have come'. This structure almost certainly descends from the perfect paradigm of Latin deponent verbs, in which the past participle (which agrees in gender and number with the grammatical subject) is accompanied by the auxiliary *SUM* 'I am' (e.g., *NATUS SUM* 'I was born', whence Old Spanish *so nado* 'I have been born').¹⁵ This pattern was evidently extended in spoken Latin to include the perfect (and other tenses) of many intransitive verbs, such as verbs expressing movement, existence, etc., as well as to reflexive and reciprocal constructions involving transitives.

All Romance languages show some blurring of the categories of verbs requiring each of the auxiliaries descended respectively from *HABEO* and *SUM*.¹⁶ For example, the subjectless verbs which indicate weather conditions everywhere unexpectedly allow *HABEO* as the auxiliary, sometimes beside *SUM* (e.g., Old and Modern Spanish *ha llovido* 'it has rained', Italian *è* or *ha nevicato* 'it has snowed'). However, Spanish is in advance of other Romance varieties in the simplification of this part of its grammar, by allowing the total obliteration of the *SUM* perfect by the *HABEO* perfect during the Middle Ages.¹⁷ There is no evidence, for example, that Spanish verbs expressing existence ever had a *SUM* perfect (we always find *he sido*, *han estado*, *ha quedado*, etc.), by contrast with most other Romance languages (e.g., Italian, Catalan). Reflexive and reciprocal expressions once had *SUM* perfects, but these were soon replaced by the alternative type, and by the early sixteenth century it was only verbs expressing some types of motion (*ir*, *venir*, *salir*, etc., but not *andar*, *viajar*, etc.) which occasionally allowed the *SUM* perfect (*son idos*, (*ella*) *es venida*, beside *han ido*, *ha venido*), and this possibility then rapidly disappeared and simplification of the two types to one was complete.¹⁸

3.1.4.2 The Old Spanish strong preterites

A further example, and a dramatic one, of the simplification to which Castilian has been subjected during the Middle Ages is provided by the history of the strong preterites (those which carried the word stress on the stem in the first and second persons singular). Medieval texts give evidence of a broad array of such preterites, belonging to all three verb-classes, although it is probable that not all the forms in the following list were present simultaneously in any given Castilian variety:

- ar: **andove**/*andude*/*andide* 'I walked', *catide* 'I looked', *demandide* 'I sought', **di** 'I gave', *entride* 'I entered', **estove**/*estude*/*estide* 'I was';
 -er: *aprise* 'I learned', *atrove* 'I dared', *conuve* 'I knew', **cope** 'I fitted', *coxe* 'I cooked', *crove* 'I believed', *despise* 'I spent', **fize** 'I made', **fui**/*sove* 'I was', *mise* 'I put', *nasque* 'I was born', *ove* 'I had', *plogue* 'I pleased', *prise* 'I took', **pude** 'I could', **puse** 'I put', **quise** 'I wished', *remase* 'I remained', *respuse* 'I replied', **sope** 'I knew', *tanxe* 'I touched, played', **tove** 'I had, held', *troxe*/**traxe** 'I brought', *vi*/*vide* 'I saw', *yogue* 'I lay';
 -ir: *aduxe* 'I brought', *cinxe* 'I girded on', **conduxe** 'I led', *destruxe* 'I destroyed', **dixe** 'I said', *escrixe* 'I wrote', *fuxe* 'I fled', **rise** 'I laughed', *sonrise* 'I smiled', *tinxe* 'I dyed', **vine** 'I came', *visque* 'I lived'.

Of these forms, some were already infrequent in the earliest texts, but the large majority had been abandoned by the end of the Middle Ages, leaving only the forms printed in bold (which in some cases have undergone minor restructuring of their vowels and/or consonants). In a few cases, the loss of a strong preterite was caused by the complete loss of the verb concerned from the Spanish lexis (e.g., *despise*/*despender*, *remase*/*remanir*), but more usually, the verb has survived but its strong preterite has been replaced by a weak form (one whose word stress always falls on the ending). Thus *entride* gave way to its competitor *entré*, *escrixe* was replaced by *escreví* (later *escribí*), etc. This reduction of strong preterites marks a notable contrast between Castilian and, say, French and Italian, where a whole variety of stem-stressed preterites survive.¹⁹ It is best explained by simplification of the verbal paradigms which took place in medieval varieties of Castilian under conditions of dialect mixing during the Reconquest.

3.1.4.3 The -er and -ir verb classes

A case of morphological simplification, whose origins are to be found in the earliest documents from the Castilian core area (Burgos and surrounding towns), is the near-merger of the -er and -ir verb classes. Such texts show that, already in the eleventh century, as now, there were few differences of verbal ending between the two classes. No difference is found between the preterites of -er and -ir verbs, unlike what is observable in other areas (Menéndez Pidal 1964: 364), where such contrasts are found not only in the endings of the preterite paradigm but also in those paradigms morphologically related to the preterite (the -ra paradigm, at first carrying pluperfect meaning, and the past subjunctive -se

paradigm). In Castilian, the contrasts of ending between verbs of these two classes were reduced to four: infinitive -er vs -ir, first- and second-person plural, present indicative -emos, -edes vs -imos, -ides, and plural imperative -ed(e) vs -id(e).

It is true that there were some differences in the range of vowels that could appear in the stems of the two verb classes (thus /i/ and /u/ were excluded from the stem of -er verbs) and that certain stem-vowel alternations (/e/~i/ and /o/~u/: *medir*~*mido*, *sobir*~*subo*) were limited to -ir verbs. But even these differences were reduced over time (through the loss of the /o/~u/ alternation, in favour of /u/: *subir*~*subo*),²⁰ and Spanish verbal morphology is considerably simpler in this area than that of almost all other Romance varieties.²¹

3.1.5 Hyperdialectalism

Yakov Malkiel has identified a number of cases of what he terms 'excessive self-assertion' in the history of Hispano-Romance, instances in which a linguistic community selects or creates forms in order to sharpen or exaggerate the difference between its own forms of speech and those of some other community with which it compares itself. For example, he claims (1989) that in Medieval Portuguese a particular case of verbal stem allomorphy, *gradesco*~*gradece*s, was levelled to *agradeço*~*agradece*s in order to maximize the difference between that variety and Castilian, where the alternation *gradesco*~*grade(s)ce*s (now *agradezco*~*agradece*s) was a characteristic and increasingly frequent pattern as it spread from the core group of verbs, whose Latin ancestors had had inceptive or 'inchoative' meaning, to other groups.

Malkiel apparently envisages this process occurring at a distance, by reaction of one community to the speech of another. If, however, we take the view that linguistic change of all types is originated through accommodation in circumstances of face-to-face interaction, then such action at a distance cannot be understood. However, in circumstances of dialect contact, it is easier to see how cases like the one cited by Malkiel can arise, provided we reinterpret them as cases of hyperdialectalism.

Hyperdialectalisms are interdialect forms (see 3.1.2 and Trudgill (1986: 68–9)) which originally do not exist in either of two varieties in contact, but which are created in one variety in order to sharpen the difference or to regularize the contrasts between it and the other. Thus, in a contact situation in medieval Portugal in which speakers recognize

CASTILIAN, ETC.	PORTUGUESE
<i>fago, faga</i>	<i>faço, faça</i>
<i>yago, yaga</i>	<i>jaço, jaça</i>
<i>gradesco, gradesca</i>	<i>gradesco, gradesca</i> > (a) <i>gradeço, (a)gradeça</i>

Table 3.8 Hyperdialectalism in Portuguese

that the /t^s/ which they frequently use at the end of the stem in the first-person singular and in all persons of the present subjunctive (e.g. *faço, faça* 'I (etc.) do', medieval *jaço, jaça* 'I (etc.) lie') corresponds to a non-sibilant (e.g., *fago, faga; yago, yaga*) in other varieties, not necessarily Castilian, which they hear from some of their interlocutors, they may be led to introduce /t^s/ into the relevant forms of verbs whose stems previously did not end with a sibilant, in the way suggested in Table 3.8.²²

3.1.6 Reallocation of variants

Following a period of dialect mixing, such as repeatedly occurred in medieval Spain, we have seen that the normal pattern of development is for the great abundance of variants to be reduced through levelling and simplification. However, it is observable in modern situations of dialect contact (Trudgill 1986: 110–26) that, even after such *koinéization* has taken place, there may be a residue of competing forms. These surviving variants, which had earlier been brought together by speakers from distinct regions, are frequently reallocated, that is, they cease to be geographical variants and become associated with differences of social class, or with differences of register.

A possible case of such reallocation can be seen in the American-Spanish distribution of the phoneme /h/, as it occurs in words descended from Latin words which began with F-. No doubt in the early communities established in the Americas there were speakers who pronounced such words as *hilar* 'to spin' and *humo* 'smoke' with initial /h/, while others pronounced them /ilár/ and /úmo/. This variation had its cause in the different parts of the Peninsula from which the colonists came. We saw earlier (3.1.3.2) that in the sixteenth century (the period when Castilian began to be carried to America), much of Old Castile was an area of /h/-dropping, while in other areas

(such as Cantabria, New Castile, Extremadura, and Andalusia) speakers retained initial /h/ in their pronunciation. But a competition of forms which had its origins in geographical variation appears to have been transmuted into a case of social-class variation. The articulation of /h/ in words like *hilar* is found today throughout Spanish-speaking America (Lapesa 1980: 574; Zamora 1967: 413–14), but is now confined to uneducated speakers, in rural and urban settings, while educated Spanish-American varieties, like their Peninsular counterparts, lack /h/ in words of this class.²³

The process of reallocation of originally geographical variants may provide a useful approach to the understanding of certain recalcitrant facts observable in the history of Castilian (and of other languages). Provided we bear in mind that language history is not a matter of smooth linear development, by which a single variety undergoes a series of changes and emerges transformed, but is a process full of detours, hiccups, backtrackings and blind alleys, the reallocation phenomenon may help us to solve two closely related types of problem. On the one hand, in all languages we find instances in which a single item, observable at one phase, gives rise, at a later stage, to different and competing results within a single variety. On the other, there are those many instances in which we observe, in the past, the results of competing developments, coexisting in the same territory, and where one of the competitors is chosen, apparently arbitrarily, for survival, while the other is abandoned.

The first of these cases was illustrated in the first paragraph of this chapter, with an example taken from the history of Castilian (the competing outcomes of NG when followed by a front vowel, epitomized by *tañer, encía, quinientos*). A possible explanation for such a case is that the three different treatments of the Latin consonant group were once typical of distinct zones, from which separate groups of speakers were drawn, speakers who came together during the process of settlement of reconquered territory. The normal result of such contact, as we have seen, is that one of the variants comes to be adopted by the whole community (i.e. levelling takes place whereby all eligible expressions come to display the feature in question). We have also seen that the successful variant may be the one used by the majority of speakers, but may alternatively be a minority variant, provided that such a variant offers some advantage of simplicity in the newly emerging *koiné*. But what happens if there are few exponents of the feature in question? If there is just a handful of words, for example, in

which the community is divided over whether to use one of two or three rival pronunciations, then it may be that no consensus emerges. The result of this may be that competing forms (e.g., *tañer* vs *tanzer*) continue to circulate.²⁴ What one would then predict (as usual, on the basis of modern sociolinguistic studies) is that competing variants would acquire different prestige, that is that geographical variation would be converted into social variation. Such reallocation of variants may proceed on an arbitrary basis, or there may be some hidden principles at work which have not yet been laid bare, but whichever of the competing variants comes to acquire high status, that is likely to be the form which is reflected in writing (since writing normally reflects the usage of high-status sectors of the community) and which, if a standard is in the process of formation (see 7.1), will become part of that standard.

It is in terms of such reallocation that we should attempt to understand some of the minor quirks and apparent contradictions of linguistic history. By way of experiment only, we present a few cases, from the history of Spanish, in which reallocation may have an explanatory role.

The treatment of the /o/ of spoken Latin (*ō* or *ŭ* of Classical Latin) when stressed and followed by the sequence /nj/ (/n/ followed by a palatal glide, corresponding to the spellings *NE* or *NI* of Classical Latin) shows a double outcome. On the one hand *CUNEU* produces *cuño* 'die-stamp' (whence *cuña* 'wedge'), showing raising of the stressed vowel to the high position (/u/) followed by assimilation of /nj/ to /ɲ/. On the other hand, *CICŌNIA* 'stork', which displayed the same sequence [ónj] in spoken Latin, becomes *cigüeña*, showing transfer of the glide to the preceding syllable (*[tʰigóɲna]) followed by both palatalization of /n/ to /ɲ/ and replacement of [óɲ] by [wé] (for which there are precedents elsewhere in the language (e.g., *AUGURIU* > [agóɲro] > *agüero* 'omen')). Although we can perhaps rule out the existence of an alternant **cueño* 'die-stamp', through avoidance of near-homonymy with the taboo item *coño* 'vagina', it is entirely possible that a form **ciguña* 'stork' existed, as a competitor of the ultimately successful *cigüeña*.²⁵

In another case of competition between alternants which descended from rare word-structures, Old Spanish form *vergüēña* 'shame' (< *VERĒCUNDIA*), similarly structured to successful *cigüeña*, was ultimately discarded. This attested alternant was ousted by *vergüença*, the form later selected as standard (and eventually respelled

vergüenza), but the long coexistence of the two types, possibly differentiated by connotations of prestige, was possibly favoured by the rarity of the original sequence *-UNDIA* and therefore of both its Castilian descendants *-ueña* and *-uença*.²⁶

In the case of the Latin *SINGULŌS*, both the successful *sendos* and an alternant *seños* 'one each' are found in thirteenth-century texts, but the latter thereafter disappears from the written record, no doubt because of its low prestige.

Variation between alternative outcomes of the same original segment is further illustrated by the treatment in Castilian of Latin words beginning with non-syllabic [j] grouped with a following back vowel (e.g., *IŪGU* 'yoke', *IUNCU* 'reed'). In this case, the words that fit the description are slightly more numerous than in the previous cases, but the total number is still low. Although the outcome represented by *IŪGU* > *yugo* is usually regarded as the typical Castilian treatment of this sequence, it is also to be borne in mind that words with meanings related to local flora are unlikely to be loans from other regions, so that we should keep open the possibility that these forms, and the few others like them, are the result of reallocation of competing forms (*yugo* vs *jugo*, *yunco* vs *junco*, etc.), brought together in the same Castilian communities through the process of medieval resettlement.

3.2 Waves

The use of the image of the wave, to represent the spread of an innovation across a territory, is far from new in linguistics. It was introduced into Indo-European philology by Johannes Schmidt (1872), to explain certain similarities between the features of different branches of the Indo-European family, and was further refined by Saussure (1960: 206–8), who likened the boundary of the area occupied by a new feature to the outermost edge of an undulating flood. It has not always been noted, however, that (*pace* Pulgram 1953) the image of the encroaching wave is quite incompatible with that of the genealogical tree (see 2.5.1), since the wave can only spread across a dialect continuum and must be halted where one continuum abuts upon another (see 2.5.2), that is, using the imagery of the tree, a wave cannot pass from branch to branch.²⁷ Attempts to reconcile these two models of linguistic relatedness, such as that of Malkiel (1983), confirm that, so long as one is dealing with a dialect continuum, the image of the

spreading wave of innovation is the only appropriate one, while the image of the tree can only be used (if at all; see 2.5.1) in cases of geographical discontinuity between what were once segments of the same continuum.

Provided that it is remembered that the reality which underlies the image of the wave is one in which innovations are spread as a result of imitation of one speaker by another in face-to-face interaction, then the wave image is a useful one, and will be used repeatedly in what follows.²⁸

3.2.1 Isoglosses

The notion of the isogloss, introduced in Section 2.1, can now be more rigorously defined as a line, drawn on a linguistic map, which delimits an area or areas occupied by a particular feature (say, a sound, or a grammatical item, or a particular word to express a given concept) and divides it from another area or areas in which a different feature is used *under the same linguistic circumstances* (a different sound, a different grammatical feature, a different word to express the same concept, a different meaning attached to the same word, etc.). In the context of wave theory, the isogloss can be envisaged as the outer edge of a ripple emanating from some point in the territory concerned. It is worth reminding ourselves that what this means in human terms is that the point from which the wave spreads is some town or city whose inhabitants have acquired higher social prestige than those living in surrounding areas, and that some feature of the speech of the high-prestige group has been imitated by those in their immediate vicinity, who have in turn passed this feature on, through imitation, to individuals living a little further from the prestige centre, and so on. The reasons for the special prestige associated with our centre of radiation lie outside the domain of linguistics, and are related to such matters as wealth, political power, enhanced educational status, etc.

The drawing of an isogloss on a map, as a result of a dialect investigation, cannot, by itself, tell us in which direction that isogloss is moving (or indeed if it is moving at all), since a map with an isogloss drawn on it is a mere snapshot taken at one moment in time, and does not tell us which of the two features it separates is the innovation and which is the older feature.²⁹ For example, it is possible to draw a map of the Peninsula with an isogloss which separates the area in which the diphthong [éi] appears in the suffix *-eiro* (Latin *-ĀRIU*) from a larger area

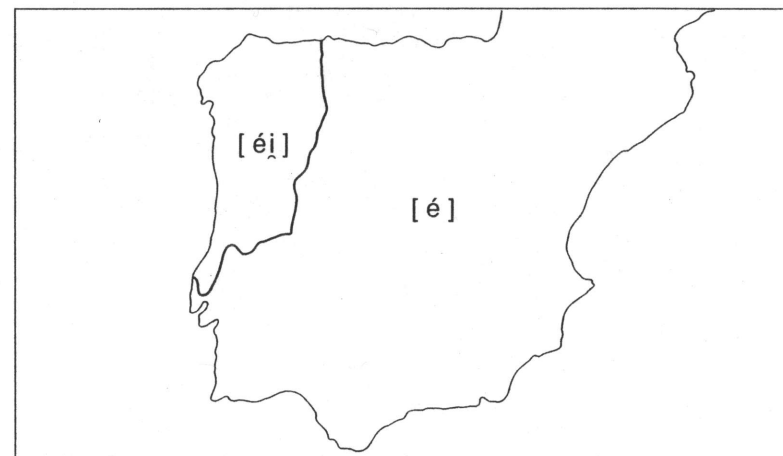


Figure 3.1 Isogloss separating [éi] from [é] in *-eiro, -ero, -er*

in which the corresponding suffix (*-ero/-er*) contains the simple vowel [é] (Figure 3.1). In order to determine in which direction this isogloss is moving, we need information from an earlier period. Such information would ideally stem from an earlier, identical inquiry, but such information is unlikely to be available, and we have to make do with partial information from written sources. Since we have pre-twelfth-century texts from northern Castile which display spellings such as *-eiro* (Menéndez Pidal 1964: 73–4, 483), spellings which suggest (but do not prove) that the pronunciation [éi] was once used where [é] now occurs, and since Southern Portuguese [é] (in forms whose standard spelling shows *ei*; e.g., *-eiro*) appears to be affecting central Portugal, it is reasonable to conclude that the isogloss in Figure 3.1 is receding towards the northwest.

There is one configuration of isoglosses which allows us, almost unambiguously, to determine the direction of movement without information from earlier periods. The map in Figure 3.2 shows a single isogloss which delimits four zones in which the plural marker {-es} appears in the case of feminine nouns and adjectives whose singular is marked by {-a} (e.g., *casas* 'houses', plural of *casa*). It is overwhelmingly likely that the three western zones are contracting, since if they were to be expanding, our conclusion would have to be that three separate centres of influence were radiating out the same feature, a possibility which is inherently unlikely. In fact, the likelihood is that these three western zones were once part of a single zone, which fragmented as it

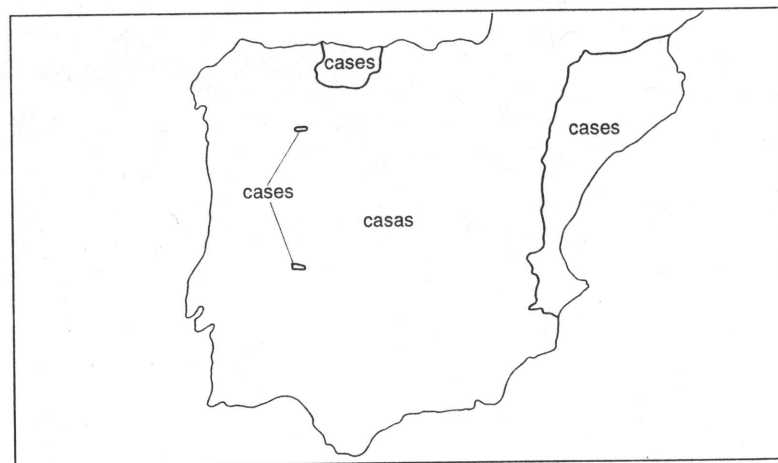


Figure 3.2 Isogloss demarcating Peninsular zones of *cases* vs *casas*

contracted, since some parts of the zone (no doubt those parts whose contacts with the outside were weakest) were more resistant than others to the incoming feature (plural in {-as}).³⁰

Although it is frequently possible to establish that an isogloss is currently moving, and the direction of its movement, there are also cases in which an isogloss is seen to be static. Such cases most notably include isoglosses which have receded towards a frontier, beyond which the prestige centre which drives it has no power to attract further imitation. This was the situation envisaged in 2.5.2, and can be illustrated by those isoglosses which have come to coincide with the French–Spanish frontier in the central Pyrenees (Guiter 1983).

Also to be included among the now static isoglosses are those whose position was determined by movement of population (see 2.5.2 and 4.1.3). Some of the superimposed isoglosses which separate Castilian features from Portuguese features from the Douro/Duero to the mouth of the Guadiana owe their position to two similar but distinct but parallel movements of population. As the county of Portugal (from 1143 the kingdom of Portugal) expanded its territory southwards down the western coastal region of the Peninsula, people from what is now the northern third of Portugal were resettled in more and more southerly areas, within frontiers fixed by conquest or treaty. These settlers would be speakers of varieties from that segment of the Peninsular dialect continuum which belonged to the Oporto area and adjacent zones and their varieties of speech would be subject to the

processes of dialect levelling which are implicit in all cases of resettlement (see 3.1.3). Meanwhile, or a little later, a separate resettlement process was taking place in neighbouring territories to the east; there, speakers of varieties belonging to a separate segment of the Peninsular dialect continuum (perhaps principally from the Leon and Burgos regions, but no doubt encompassing speakers from many other north-central zones) were subject to dialect levelling as they resettled areas adjacent to those of Portugal.³¹ The result of these parallel processes was that the isoglosses which track the differences of speech between these two groups of settlers coincided with a political frontier, since the western group did not settle east of the Portuguese frontier and the inland group did not settle to the west of that frontier.

It is also implicit in this argument that, in the period since the resettlement of these areas, contacts across the frontier have been less frequent and important than those which linked people on either side of the frontier with their respective prestige centres, to the west (Lisbon) and to the east (Toledo). Otherwise, processes of accommodation between speakers on either side of the frontier would ensure increasing similarity of speech, a result which would be demonstrated on the map by non-coincidence between the relevant isoglosses and the frontier. This pattern is not in fact observed.³²

To exemplify this process of dialect-boundary creation, let us take the case of two isoglosses which reflect the separation of Portuguese varieties from those spoken on the eastern side of the Portuguese frontier. On the one hand, we shall consider the isogloss which separates those (western) zones where the diphthong [óu] is used (in words like *pouco*) from those (central and eastern) zones where corresponding words contain [ó] (*poco*, etc.). On the other hand, we shall take the isogloss marking the extent of those varieties which show undiphthongized [é] (in words like *pedra*) by contrast with those varieties which show the diphthong [jé] (in *pedra*, etc.). These two isoglosses are well separated in the north of the Peninsula, cutting through the dialect continuum with widely different trajectories, and with the first well to the east of the second at the north coast (see, for example, Zamora 1967, map between pp. 84 and 85). However, they converge (with one another and with a number of other isoglosses) at a point on the Portuguese–Spanish frontier, below the Portuguese town of Miranda do Douro, and thereafter coincide exactly, following the frontier down to the Atlantic at the mouth of the Guadiana, except where they jointly diverge eastward from the frontier to encompass three enclaves on

Spanish territory, resulting from redrawing of the frontier, where the varieties spoken have a predominance of Portuguese features (including lack of diphthongs in words like *pedra*, but the diphthong [óu] in words like *pouco*). This near-coincidence between isoglosses and frontier (total coincidence if one takes account of frontier-shifts) is brought about in the way discussed above: whereas the settlers on the western side of the frontier spoke varieties which (probably) all lacked diphthongization in words like *pedra* and all showed [óu] in words like *pouco*, settlers on the east of the line came from a variety of areas, some of which were characterized by both of these features (e.g., El Bierzo, etc., with *pedra*, *poucu*), some by only the second (e.g., Astorga, etc., with *piedra*, *poucu*), and the majority probably from areas where neither feature existed (with *piedra*, *poco*). On the west, then, there was unanimity in this respect, while on the east dialectal variety was reduced, through normal contact processes during resettlement (see Section 3.3), in favour of the *piedra*, *poco* variants.³³ Because the two resettlement processes took place under the aegis of separate kingdoms, opportunities for linguistic accommodation between speakers on one side of the frontier with those on the other were few and did not result in any adaptation with regard to these features. The isoglosses separating the two traditions have therefore continued to coincide with the frontier.

Other cases of static isoglosses are not due to movement of populations, but to the fact that both features separated by the isogloss are recessive, challenged equally by a standard feature. Thus, the isogloss which today separates, on the east, the use of an initial aspirate /h/ in words like *hierro*, *hilar*, *huso*, from the corresponding use of /f/, on the west (i.e., *fierro*, *filár*, *fusu*), runs close to the river Sella in eastern Asturias (Figure 3.3): Menéndez Pidal (1964: 214, 219) claims that this isogloss reflects an ancient, pre-Roman ethnic boundary, one which separated the Astures (who learned and maintained the Latin labiodental fricative /f/) to the east, from the Cantabrians, a group who (like the Vascones) lacked any labiodentals in their native phonemic inventory and consequently had difficulty in imitating the Latin phoneme, replacing it with their most similar native phoneme, namely /h/.³⁴ Whether or not this explanation for the innovation can be sustained, it is arguably true that the /f/ vs /h/ isogloss has remained static for centuries. The explanation for this lack of movement no doubt lies in the fact that, in the class of words concerned (descended from Latin words displaying initial F-) the [f] and the [h]

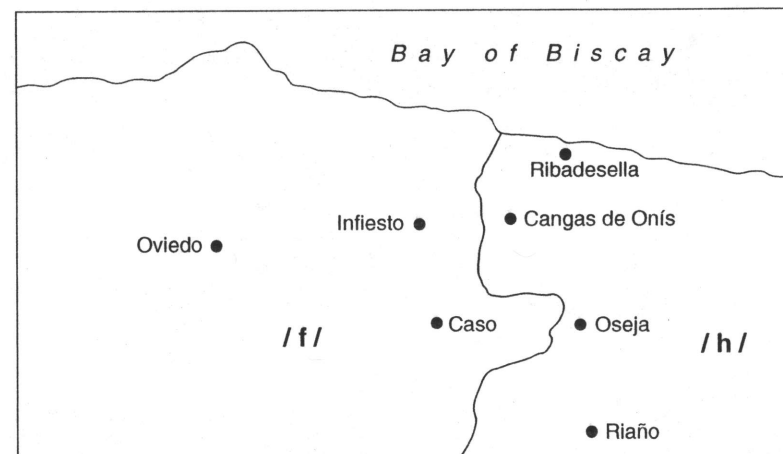


Figure 3.3 Isogloss separating /f/ and /h/ in *filár~hilar*, etc.

variants have equally low prestige, belonging now only to the speech of the uneducated rural population. Neither variant is liable to be imitated by those who do not already use it, which is to say that there is no longer any power to drive the isogloss in any direction, a power which has been lacking for centuries. What is happening, by contrast, is that the standard variant, namely [Ø] (i.e., absence of initial consonant), is steadily encroaching upon both [f] and [h] as the urban/educated pronunciation is increasingly adopted by rural speakers.³⁵ Once this process is complete, that is, once every rural word of the type /filár/ or /hilár/ has been replaced by the standard type /ilár/ *hilar*, the /f/ vs /h/ isogloss will be obliterated without having moved for centuries.

3.3 Social networks and speed of change

Having considered the way in which linguistic innovations travel through geographical space, or may be impeded from so doing, we turn our attention to the factors which govern the propagation of innovations through social space, that is, how a feature which originates in one part of the social matrix may spread through other parts of the matrix, or be inhibited from doing so. It should be remembered that the basic mechanisms in both cases are identical: innovations are passed from one individual to another through the accommodation processes which occur in face-to-face contacts. Occasionally, a feature

which has been adopted temporarily under such conditions may become part of the normal linguistic behaviour of the recipient, and may therefore be passed on to other individuals.

The ultimate problem facing historical linguistics is starkly posed by Weinreich, Labov and Herzog in the following way:

Why do changes in structural features take place in a particular language at a given time, but not in other languages with the same feature, or in the same language at other times? This actuation problem may be regarded as the very heart of the matter. (1968: 102)

But as James Milroy admits (1992: 20), we are no nearer to solving this problem of causation than we are to forecasting whether it will rain in a specific place at a given time. Indeed, the ability to make linguistic forecasts, an ability which would follow from the solution of the actuation problem, may be totally beyond reach. However, there have been significant advances in our understanding of the factors which encourage or inhibit the spread of innovations, and which therefore govern the speed at which linguistic change takes place. These advances have come chiefly through the application to language of social network theory, especially in the work carried out by Lesley and James Milroy in the UK and by William Labov in the US.

Social relations between individuals can be represented by the metaphor of the net, in which the knots stand for individual people and the strings represent the connections between individuals. However, unlike real nets, in which two knots are connected by only one string, social networks reveal that two individuals may be connected by several or many links, such ties consisting of features such as the following: family relatedness, living in the same neighbourhood, having the same place of work, attending the same place of worship, spending leisure time in the same places. Two individuals who share one such link are said to be joined by a *weak tie*, while two who share many links are bound by a *strong tie*.

It is noted that groups of individuals who are mutually linked by strong ties exhibit behaviour in which traditional values are constantly reinforced. This self-reinforcing aspect of the behaviour of closely knit groups extends to language, so that such groups will be marked by traditional forms of speech and will be resistant to changes originating outside the group. However, all strongly tied groups have connections with other individuals and groups, typically by simple or weak ties.

What is more, it follows from this discussion that social change, including linguistic change, can be propagated from group to group only via such weak ties.

The significance of these considerations, from the point of view of language history, is that communities which are dominated by strongly tied sub-groups are notably more resistant to linguistic change than are those communities in which most individuals are linked to others via weak ties (see Milroy and Milroy 1985). Work by Lesley Milroy on the working-class speech of Belfast (reported in Milroy 1987) helps to explain not only resistance to change of urban working-class dialects, but also helps to demonstrate (through the study of the effects of the movement of people into Belfast from the Ulster countryside) that when migration from one area to another takes place this inevitably leads to the breaking of strong ties, to the dominance of weak ties, and at least some delay in the formation of new tightly knit groups. That is, migration leads to the dominance of weak ties in a community, and dominance of weak ties fosters linguistic change. Societies on the move are likely to experience more linguistic change, even substantially more change, than those which remain rooted for long periods of time in the same place.

How are these observations related to the matter of change in Spanish? The principle that movement fosters change can be demonstrated repeatedly in the history of Castilian, and in fact has already attracted our attention on a number of occasions. In discussing dialect contacts (3.1), we have stressed that throughout the Middle Ages and well into the modern period, speakers of Castilian have been on the move, successively resettling areas in the centre and south of the Peninsula, as the Reconquest of Islamic Spain progressed southwards, then continuing the process overseas in the Canaries, the Balkans (see also Chapter 6), and the Americas (Chapter 5). Not only that, but the expansion of Madrid in the latter part of the sixteenth century was achieved by substantial immigration from the north (3.1.3). We have emphasized that the dialect mixing which resulted from these movements of population had certain predictable results (typically, levelling and simplification) on the language of the communities concerned.

What interests us in this section is that the social history of medieval and early modern Castile, involving repeated dissolution of strong ties between members of northern communities, and the creation of new communities (in resettled areas) dominated by weak

social ties, leads us to predict a faster than average pace of linguistic change in Castilian.

This rapid pace of change did not pass unnoticed by the great historians of Spanish, but it went unexplained. Menéndez Pidal (1964: 472–82) discussed together the openness to change seen in the Castilian language and certain essentially social changes: the rejection of written Roman law (codified in the *Fuero Juzgo*) in favour of local, customary law; the lessening of social stratification (there were fewer serfs in Castile, and only one degree of nobility, rather than the two that existed in more conservative Leon); the early adoption of Carolingian script (rather than the traditional Visigothic script); political resistance to backward-looking Leon; openness to Moorish customs in matters of dress, etc. It is true that these are social changes which, for the most part, affected the wealthier sector of Castilian society, but we can perhaps infer from them that social change was also occurring at other levels, spurred by the more radical movement of population that occurred in Castilian territory, by contrast with other Romance-speaking areas, including most other Peninsular territories. The movements of population, we can speculate, fostered a society structured in terms of weak ties, along which linguistic innovations were free to spread. These innovations, usually identified as evidence of the 'revolutionary' character of Castilian, appear to have spread successively and rapidly through Castilian society in the period of the early Reconquest. They include the following.³⁶

- 1 Use of /h/ or /Ø/ in the class of words descended from those which contained /f/ in standard Latin (for example, using modern spelling, *hablar*, *ahogar*, etc.), by contrast with the retention of /f/ elsewhere in the Peninsula.
- 2 Use of /z/ in the class of words descended from those which in Latin contained the consonant groups -C'L-, -G'L-, -LJ- (e.g., *OCULU* > *ojo* 'eye', *TEGULA* > *teja* 'tile', *FOLIA* > *hoja* 'leaf') by contrast with the /ʎ/ used in most other areas.³⁷
- 3 Use of /t̪/ (later /θ/) in the class of words descended from those which in Latin contained -sCJ- or -sC- followed by a front vowel (e.g., *ASCIATA* > OSp. *açada* > *azada* 'hoe', *MISCERE* > *mecer* 'to wag, rock'), by contrast with the /f/ used in other parts of the Peninsula.
- 4 Loss of the initial phoneme in the class of words whose Latin etyma showed word-initial I- or G- followed by an unstressed front vowel (e.g., **IENUĀRIU* (for *IANUĀRIU*) > *enero* 'January', *GENESTA* > *hiniesta* 'broom'), by contrast with remaining

varieties of Hispano-Romance, which retain a palatal consonant in this class of words.

It should be noted that many of the cases examined in 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 as instances of simplification and levelling under conditions of dialect contact can also be seen as instances of the enhanced rate of change observable in Castilian, since the resettlements which led to dialect mixture also resulted (we must presume) in the predominance of weak social ties in the new communities, conditions which we know promote rapid change.

In this context, it is worth emphasizing the correlation which exists, among the totality of the present-day varieties of Peninsular Romance, between the geographical latitude to which a given variety belongs and the degree of change to which it has been subjected. Certainly this effect is most notable in the Castilian zone, where least innovation (i.e., greatest conservatism) is seen in Cantabria and increasingly greater degrees of innovation are seen as one progresses through Old Castile, New Castile, and reaches Andalusia, perhaps owing to the progressively larger and more complex movements of population which took place in Castilian territory, by contrast with other Peninsular territories. Nevertheless, similar patterns (of increasing degrees of innovation as one examines more and more southerly varieties) are observable on both flanks of the Peninsula. In Portugal, it is an oft-repeated observation that the dialects of Entre-Douro-e-Minho and of Trás-os-Montes are the most conservative, with increasing degrees of change visible in the central areas (including Lisbon), and with the greatest degree of innovation to be found in the varieties spoken in the Algarve.³⁸ A similar but not identical pattern can be seen on the eastern side of the Peninsula, where the most conservative varieties of Catalan are to be found in the Pyrenees, especially in northern Lérida, and the most innovatory in the Valencia area.³⁹

3.4 Direction of change through society

Linguistic changes that gain ground in society do so by being imitated and adopted by an increasing number of individuals, through face-to-face contacts, and, as we have seen (3.3), such imitation necessarily takes place between individuals who are connected by weak social ties. Our concern here is to consider the ways in which changes are transmitted from one part of the social matrix to another, and in this consideration

we find further confirmation that change is almost exclusively propagated via weak ties. Pairs or groups of individuals who are linked by strong ties, that is those who are joined by multiplex bonds, of necessity belong to the same segment of the social matrix: they have similar jobs, live in the same locality, may be members of the same family, enjoy the same pastimes, and so on. Because of the mutually reinforcing nature of these relationships, such individuals are overwhelmingly likely to use closely similar varieties of speech. Any feature which belongs to a group with other social characteristics can only reach the group under consideration by travelling along ties which link one group with another, links which must be predominantly simple or weak, since a group of individuals who share many social characteristics with another group are likely to be linked to the latter by the multiplex contacts that these similarities imply.

For an innovation to gain ground within a social group, it has to be adopted by some lead-individual within the group, after which it may be quickly adopted by the other members of the group (Milroy and Milroy 1985). But more important from our point of view are the reasons why innovations pass from group to group, that is, why one individual imitates a feature of the speech of another individual to whom he or she is weakly linked. Although it seems reasonably clear that not all innovations are equally likely to spread (the alternative view is that not all innovations are equally likely to *occur* in a given speech variety, but, having occurred, all have the same potentiality to spread), the main driving force behind the spread of any feature is the relative prestige of the individuals involved. Prestige is, of course, not a linguistic matter, but consists of a number of traits (which we shall not attempt to enumerate) possessed in differing degrees by any specific individual;⁴⁰ this prestige may then be associated with any particular linguistic item or set of items used by that individual, increasing its likelihood (in differing degrees) of being imitated by others.

If, as seems to be the case, the main or only reason for the spread of a feature is the prestige associated with it, it should not be forgotten that prestige may be overt or covert, and that social spread may therefore be top-down or bottom-up.

3.4.1 Downward change

The kind of imitation of linguistic innovations which is due to the overt prestige of the individuals already using such innovations is

usually viewed as spreading 'down' through society. Thus one is more likely to imitate a feature which is heard to belong to the speech of an individual who is more powerful, rich, etc., than oneself, than to imitate a feature heard in the speech of someone 'lower' than oneself in the social pecking order. This 'downward' spread of linguistic change seems to be common in all societies, and has been amply documented in sociolinguistic studies such as William Labov's now classic study (1966) of the downward spread of post-vocalic /r/ in the previously non-rhotic speech of New York.

3.4.2 Upward change

Scarcely less usual, and evidently important, is the process by which changes are propagated 'upwards' through society, from less to more privileged groups. Certain styles of behaviour, prominent among which are those exhibiting 'street credibility' and worldly wisdom, although they are exhibited by individuals who have a small share in wealth, education, etc., may nevertheless possess prestige, of a covert kind. Such styles, which of course include features of linguistic behaviour, may therefore be viewed positively and imitated not only by those of the same social level, but by those at 'higher' points on the socio-economic continuum. A case in point which is frequently cited in this context is the spread of the diphthong /wá/ through French society following the Revolution, at the expense of /wé/ in words like *roi*, *moi*. Previously a low-prestige feature of Parisian French, this item became associated with the newly acquired prestige of working-class social styles and was more widely imitated, perhaps out of a sense of solidarity with the ideals of the Revolution (see von Wartburg 1958: 229, and, for the spread of lower-class Parisian features in general, Lodge 1993: 228–9).

A feature of pronunciation which appears to be spreading in this way in current Peninsular Spanish is the weakening of syllable-final /s/ to an aspirate articulation, that is, the pronunciation [aβi^hpa^h], [é^hto^h], [mó^hka^h] in words like *avispas*, *estos*, *moscas*, etc. (see 4.1.7.2.4). Attested from the sixteenth century in the south of Spain, and presumably in use there rather earlier in humble social groups, this feature begins to be noted in central Spain in the nineteenth century, specifically in working-class Madrid varieties, and was conceivably brought to the capital by immigrants from the south. It surfaces, for example, in the novels of Benito Pérez Galdós, in cases where he is

portraying the speech of individuals from this background (Lapesa 1980: 502).⁴¹ Since then, it appears to have advanced somewhat through the social matrix, so that, even if it is still mostly absent from educated Madrid speech, it is no longer confined to working-class varieties.

3.5 Lexical diffusion

So far we have discussed the spread of linguistic features through geographical and social space as if each innovation simultaneously affected every lexical item or syntagma that was eligible for that change (by offering the specific conditions required for such a change to take place). However, such a view is a simplification, and we now need to make clear that innovations proceed through space and through society *word by word*. This is what is meant by lexical diffusion, which emphasizes that during the spread of any change some words are affected before others, or, to look at the process from the other angle, some words are more resistant to change than others. Those which are more resistant to change will usually be those lexical items which signify aspects of reality which are central to the concerns of the community whose speech is potentially open to the change in question. This differential diffusion of sound change has been evident at least since the publication of the *Atlas linguistique de la France* (ALF 1903–10); the maps in Jaberg (1959), based upon the ALF, demonstrate the way in which, at the beginning of this century, the change by which /k/ (in the reflexes of Latin words containing initial CA-, such as CANTĀRE, CANDĒLA, CAMPU) is replaced by /f/ (standard French *chanter* 'to sing', *chandelle* 'candle', *champ* 'field', etc.), in northeastern and in southern France, has progressed to a different extent in the case of each word examined. The isoglosses which reflect the advance of /f/ at the expense of /k/ do not coincide exactly, and are sometimes markedly divergent, and it is evident that the rate of advance is more rapid in words associated with supralocal concerns and least rapid in the case of words closely related with local lifestyles, such as names of farm implements and farm activities.

Such lexical diffusion of change is, of course, evident also in Spanish. The isogloss which, in Cantabria, separates retention of initial /h/ in *hacer* 'to do, make' from its deletion (i.e., the isogloss which

separates /haθér/ from /aθér/) is to be found further to the west than the isogloss which separates these two pronunciations in *hacha* 'axe' (Penny 1984). The data provided by ALEA (1962–73: maps 1548–50, 1553, 1556) reveal a similar word-by-word retreat of /h/ in western Andalusia. In the words *hiel* 'bile', *hollín* 'soot', *hoz* 'sickle', and *moho* 'mould', /h/ appears in practically all the localities studied in western Andalusia, sometimes recorded alongside a form without /h/. By contrast with words such as these, which refer to concrete notions, the abstract *hambre* 'hunger' appears to be much more open to influence from the standard, showing a large predominance of /h/-less forms, in the same area of western Andalusia.

What has also become evident through work on lexical diffusion (see Wang and Cheng 1977, and especially Wang 1969) is that some of the words eligible for a change may *never* be affected by it. A residue of unaffected words may be created when two or more competing changes are taking place in a community in overlapping time periods. While the first change is in progress, and part but not all of the eligible words have been affected by it, a second change may affect one of the conditioning factors which make words eligible for the first change, thereby removing their eligibility for it. We may illustrate the way in which a residue is produced by examining the interplay between two changes in Castilian:

- 1 The already much-cited change of Latin F to /h/.
- 2 The process of diphthongization whereby stressed short *ō* of Latin, having been modified to mid-low [ɔ], becomes [wé] (PONTE > [pónte] > *puente* 'bridge').

One view of the first change is that it is conditioned by a following syllabic nucleus, which in Latin and Spanish must always be a vowel and can never be a consonant or a glide.⁴² The second change is conditioned only by presence of word stress and is unaffected by any syllable-initial elements that precede the vowel in question.

Let us begin by examining the circumstance in which the two changes do not overlap, and there is no residue. In some varieties of Castilian, the northernmost ones, change (1) must have affected all or almost all eligible words before change (2) spread into the area. As a result, all of the words in Table 3.9 (in which F immediately precedes the syllabic nucleus) had been affected. However, the words of the pattern shown in Table 3.10, in which [f] is not pre-nuclear, could not be affected by this change. When change (2) began to affect stressed [ɔ],

3 Mechanisms of change

FŪSU	>	[húso]	'spindle'
FRONTE	>	[hónte]	'spring'
FAMINE	>	[hámne]	'hunger'
FEMINA	>	[hémna]	'female'
FĪCU	>	[híku]	'fig'

Table 3.9 Early development in Cantabria of Latin words containing pre-nuclear [f]

FRONTE	>	[frónte]	'forehead'
FRIGIDU	>	[frído]	'cold'

Table 3.10 Early development in Cantabria of Latin words containing [fr]

it simply converted [hónte] and [frónte] to [hwénte] and [frwénte], but did not otherwise affect the patterning of these groups of words.⁴³ Following the later adjustment [frwénte] > [frénte], these pronunciations have remained unchanged and are today preserved in the rural speech of western Cantabria and eastern Asturias (Rodríguez-Castellano 1946, Penny 1984). In this area, then, all the eligible words have been affected by both changes.

A different scenario is seen in Castilian varieties spoken to the south of Cantabria. There the two changes interfere with one another and produce a residue of words unaffected by change (1). In the Burgos area, as Menéndez Pidal's masterly examination of place-names shows (1964: 226-7), change (1) was later to begin, and began to spread from the north at a time when change (2) had already begun. In this area, there must still have been competition between innovatory [fwénte] and conservative [fónte] at the time [f] began to give way to [h] in immediately pre-nuclear position, so that the outcome was variation between [fwénte] and [hónte]. As the alternation between [wé] and [s] was gradually resolved in favour of [wé], so the variation between [fwénte] and [hónte] was resolved into competition between [fwénte] and [hwénte].

In the Burgos area, then, the change [f] > [h] has left a residue of unaffected words (*fuelle, fuera, fuerte, fuego*, etc.), although it has to be added that the competition between these forms and their alternants ([hwénte], [hwéra], [hwéle], [hwérte], [hwéyo], etc.) has still not been resolved. Rural speech in this area (and in many other areas of

Castile, Andalusia, and America) maintains the aspirated variants (using a pronunciation identical with the local pronunciation of words like *juego*), while the labiodental variants have become increasingly identified with urban/educated varieties and were ultimately the forms chosen as the standard ones in the later Middle Ages.⁴⁴