



New Developments in Galician Linguistics: An Introduction

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Minoritized languages that have recently been standardized exhibit distinct characteristics that shape the ideologies and social and cultural dynamics associated with them. In recent years, these characteristics have been the subject of focused scholarly investigation (Brincat et al., 2003; Lane et al., 2018; Ó Murchadha & Kavanagh, 2022, among others). Therefore, linguistic studies on such minoritized languages are necessarily influenced and conditioned by the specific historical and socio-political context in which they are situated.

The case of the Galician language serves as a pertinent example of such linguistic situations. In the Middle Ages, Galician was one of Europe's major literary languages; however, it subsequently fell into disuse as a written language until its literary revival in the 19th century. During the early decades of the 20th century, Galician gradually regained prominence in various social domains, but this progress was abruptly interrupted by the Franco dictatorship. Following the regime's end, Galician was officially recognized as a co-official language of Galicia (alongside Spanish) in 1981 (Monteagudo, 2025).

In this context, the 19th century saw the publication of only a limited number of grammars and dictionaries, while the early 20th century produced only a few significant linguistic studies, primarily conducted by foreign scholars. Among these, the contributions of German linguists from the University of Hamburg—Krüger, Ebeling, Schroeder, and, most notably, Schneider—are particularly noteworthy (Regueira, 1991). Until the mid-1960s, no linguistic research, nor any studies on the Galician language, were undertaken at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), the only university in Galicia at the time. The establishment of the Institute of Galician Language (ILG) in 1971 within the USC marked the beginning of a systematic research program on the Galician language. Thereafter, even under the Franco dictatorship, the ILG initiated studies across various disciplines related to Galician, a language that had previously suffered from a near-total absence of scholarly research (Monteagudo & Álvarez, 2017; Regueira, 2022, pp. 41–46). Subsequently, these studies expanded to the universities of Vigo and A Coruña, founded in 1990, and, more broadly, to research centers and universities across Europe and the Americas (Regueira, 2022, pp. 46–47).

The advancement of linguistic studies coincided with political transformations in Spain following the end of the Franco dictatorship, and developed in parallel with the process of linguistic “normalization” initiated during that period. Within this framework, priority was given to the demands of the standardization process (cf. Haugen, 1966), directing linguistic efforts toward the creation of essential linguistic resources and tools, including norms, vocabularies, dictionaries, grammars, models for administrative and legal language, and specialized terminologies. Additionally, this period witnessed the production of significant studies on the sociolinguistic context of Galician, particularly in relation to its social expansion—what Kloss (1969) terms “status planning.”

It was only after the primary objectives of standardization had been achieved, beginning in the 1990s, that a shift toward broader linguistic research—what we might call “the



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linguistic turn”—became possible (Regueira, 2022). This transition became particularly pronounced in the early 21st century, as scholarly works on Galician linguistics proliferated in international publishing houses such as Routledge, John Benjamins, Oxford University Press, and De Gruyter, among others, as well as in esteemed academic journals. These studies introduced innovative lines of research in Galician linguistics, aligning with contemporary trends in the field and encompassing topics such as linguistic structure, variation, language contact and change, and discourse analysis.

The reorientation of Galician linguistic studies required not only theoretical and methodological renewal, but a redefinition of research objectives. This revitalization of Galician linguistic studies has not only strengthened traditional fields, such as grammatical analysis and dialectology, but has also expanded into new areas, including sociolinguistic variation, perceptual studies, and the construction of identities in interaction. This shift was facilitated by collaborations with other disciplines and research centers, fostering interdisciplinary networks that have proven highly productive. Among these achievements, significant projects in linguistic technologies for Galician are currently being developed, with the active participation of linguists from the Institute of Galician Language (ILG).

This Special Issue aims to showcase a selection of recent developments in Galician linguistics, encompassing both well-established disciplines and emerging lines of research. It brings together seasoned scholars with extensive experience in the field alongside early-career researchers who have already made significant contributions. The contributors include academics affiliated with Galician universities and the Institute of Galician Language (ILG), as well as those conducting research at institutions across Europe and North America.

First, Montserrat Recalde and Mauro Fernández examine recent shifts in linguistic attitudes and ideologies within Galician society, focusing on two phonetic phenomena—*gheada* and *seseo*—which are highly stigmatized and commonly associated with rurality and lower socioeconomic status. Although these features have been officially recognized by the Royal Galician Academy, they remain largely excluded from educational settings and public discourse. However, since the late 20th century, they have been increasingly reinterpreted as markers of authenticity and socio-political resistance. By employing the matched-guise technique and semantic differential scales, the authors analyze young people’s perceptions of these phonetic variants. Their findings indicate that while standard pronunciations continue to be associated with success, non-standard varieties are primarily associated with solidarity. Nevertheless, there has been a notable increase in the acceptance of the vernacular varieties over the past fifteen years. This evolving dynamic reflects the growing influence of vernacular language ideologies (VLIs), which counterbalance standard language ideologies (SLIs) and align with broader European trends, leveling their linguistic value.

Next, Vanesa Rodríguez Tembrás examines code switching (CS) in bilingual doctor–patient communication in semi-urban areas of Galicia, aiming to identify general and specific linguistic behavior patterns and assess whether participants’ reported language use aligns with their actual behavior in medical consultations. Adopting a sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic approach, the study analyzes language dynamics in 586 audio-recorded consultations, complemented by questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted both inside and outside the medical setting, totaling approximately 102 h of material. Her findings indicate that around half of the consultations are bilingual, with CS playing a central role as a communicative strategy. Doctors and patients switch languages to accommodate socio-discursive needs, reflecting the linguistic complexity of the Galician healthcare system. As the first comprehensive empirical study of CS in Galician–Spanish medical interactions, Rodríguez Tembrás’ research offers insights into bilingual proficiency in healthcare and contributes to discussions on language use in institutional settings, bilingualism, and sociolinguistic change.

In turn, Nicola Bermingham and Carme Silva examine how the descendants of Galician emigrants (the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who migrated to Latin America) engage with Spanish and Galician. They explore these transgenerational return migrants' language ideologies, particularly regarding Galician as a minoritized language and Spanish as a global language, within a complex sociolinguistic landscape. The authors emphasize the role of language ideologies in shaping the experiences of return migrants and advocate for a more nuanced understanding of language as both a means of communication and a symbol of identity and belonging. They also call for a reassessment of language policies and educational strategies to better accommodate and valorize the diverse linguistic realities of these migrants.

Timothy Gupton and Brian Gravely examine the notion of syntactic interfaces, focusing on noun phrase structures in subject position, clitic directionality, and determiner clitic allomorphy. They review interface theories within formal approaches to monolingualism, bilingualism, and language acquisition, highlighting their relevance to Galician language acquisition and bilingualism in Galicia. This theoretically significant article contributes to generative syntax research, exploring the interface between syntax and other linguistic modules. The authors synthesize existing studies and theoretical issues surrounding these syntactic interfaces, outlining current understandings, open questions, and future research directions for Galician linguistics.

Moreover, Manuel Delicado and M. Carmen Parafita conduct a study on the acceptability of differential object marking (DOM) among Galician–Spanish bilinguals in Galicia. Having surveyed 69 bilingual participants and a control group of 12 monolingual Spanish, they analyzed judgments on DOM in various syntactic and semantic contexts in both languages. Their results show a tendency toward reduced DOM acceptability in Galician compared to Spanish, though no systematic rejection of DOM is found. Spanish responses exhibit variability, with bilinguals showing more “No DOM” instances than monolingual Spanish speakers. Their study also highlights individual differences in DOM use, pointing to the influence of personal language experience on syntactic choices. Delicado and Parafita identify similar trends observed in Catalan–Spanish bilinguals, where speakers deviate from prescriptive grammar. They emphasize the need for further research, particularly exploring sociocultural influences and educational practices on DOM acquisition.

The next two contributions study periphrastic constructions in Galician. First, Esther Brown and Javier Rivas analyze future periphrases in Galician, focusing on the construction [*haber* (PRESENT) + (de) + INFINITIVE]. Their goal is to explore the diachronic shift in the grammaticalization of future markers from obligation markers. Using oral data from the CORILGA corpus and a variationist analysis, they examine the frequency, variation, linguistic conditioning, and grammaticalization of periphrastic forms with “haber” and “ir” in comparison to the morphological future form. They propose a cline of grammaticalization, *haber* >> *ir* >> morphological form, providing evidence of their distinct degrees of grammaticalization. Their variationist analysis reveals that the periphrastic construction with *haber* exhibits all the characteristics of a future marker and is highly grammaticalized. The authors argue that the explanation of language contact supporting the potential loss of *haber* as a future marker could be explored in future studies.

Following this, Natalia Jardón examines Galician perfective periphrases, focusing on their degree of grammaticalization and the possibility of considering them a perfect tense. The author analyzes the following periphrastic constructions: *ter* + participle (e.g., *teño comido* ‘I have eaten’), *levar* + participle (e.g., *leva escrito* ‘(s/he) has written’), and *dar* + participle (e.g., *dou chegado* ‘I manage to arrive’). These periphrases are assessed in terms of their syntactic and semantic properties, with *ter* + participle identified as the most grammaticalized, resembling the Portuguese perfect tense. Her work also compares the

semantic behavior of *ter* + participle in Galician and Portuguese, highlighting differences in pluractionality and counterfactual uses. Lastly, Jardón explores the impact of these periphrases on Spanish varieties in areas of contact with Galician, where they show morphosyntactic adaptations that distinguish them from both Galician and standard Spanish.

Turning to a different topic, Alba Agüete investigates unstressed vowel reduction in Galician, focusing on its mechanisms, its dependence on word stress position, and its relationship with segment duration. In Galician linguistics, research on unstressed vowel reduction has largely concentrated on the simplification of vowel inventories in pre-tonic and final post-tonic positions, with phonetic studies primarily addressing the realization of final unstressed vowels. Additionally, most of these analyses have been based on read speech data, limiting the scope of spontaneous speech patterns. Agüete's study further develops this perspective by analyzing semi-spontaneous speech data, including the first systematic examination of unstressed intermediate vowels in Galician. She analyzes speech from six native Galician speakers, employing individual linear mixed-effects models for each vowel. Her results reveal that unstressed vowel reduction occurs through two distinct processes: raising and centralization. Crucially, Agüete finds that this reduction is not correlated with segment duration, challenging the view that it is a purely mechanical process. Instead, she argues that vowel reduction is governed by the language's grammar.

Next, Vitor Míguez examines the factors influencing mood selection in Galician uncertainty adverb constructions, employing a logistic regression model. Data were extracted from two publicly available corpora: CORGA, which focuses on written material, and CO-RILGA, which includes speech data. Míguez identifies several key factors affecting mood choice, such as temporal context, the preceding adverb, register (fictional vs. nonfictional), verb type, and speaker gender. He finds that present and future time references, along with adverbs encoding weaker epistemic values, tend to favor the subjunctive mood. Additionally, Míguez observes that women exhibit a preference for the indicative mood in fictional texts. His results support the view that mood selection reflects epistemic commitment, with stronger assertions favoring the indicative and weaker ones the subjunctive. The author suggests that further research, incorporating mixed-effects models and experimental methods, is needed.

Finally, María Álvarez de la Granja and Francisco Dubert address a longstanding and unresolved issue in Galician linguistics: the distribution of lexical borrowings across different semantic fields. Using data from the World Loanword Database (WOLD) within the Loanword Typology (LWT) project, they examine the relationship between borrowability indices from the LWT project and Castilianization indices from the *Atlas Lingüístico Galego* (ALGa) across seven semantic fields. A quantitative comparison reveals a discrepancy between the rankings of these indices. Notably, while the semantic field "The Body" exhibits the highest level of Castilianization in the ALGa, it has the lowest borrowability score in the LWT project. Furthermore, Castilianization levels display greater variation, with most concepts showing limited influence. This analysis suggests that semantic criteria alone are insufficient to explain borrowing patterns, and underscores the influence of prestige, urbanization, cultural modernity, and word frequency.

These contributions provide a comprehensive snapshot of the current state of contemporary Galician linguistics, presenting not only a solid empirical foundation, but a rigorous methodological approach to analysis. Their relevance is further demonstrated by the integration of various disciplines and perspectives, engaging with findings from studies on other languages. While the works presented in this Special Issue do not encompass all topics within current Galician linguistics, they serve as a representative sample of the field's vitality, its diversity of approaches, and its breadth of focus. Each article makes

a valuable contribution, both theoretically and methodologically, and offers avenues for future research into the diverse linguistic phenomena explored.

While this selection is undoubtedly significant, it is not exhaustive. Various factors have constrained the inclusion of additional perspectives and approaches that have gained prominence in recent years, such as discourse analysis, the study of linguistic ideologies, perceptual studies, and advances in dialectometry, among others. This, in part, reflects the limitations of Galician linguistics, which relies on the efforts of a relatively small number of researchers and institutions. In response to these challenges, recent efforts have focused on defining priority research areas and strengthening collaboration among linguists and research teams from both Galician and international universities. The studies herein suggest that this approach is already yielding promising results. At the same time, the fact that this collection represents only a fraction of the ongoing linguistic research in Galician studies underscores the field's diversity and dynamism. This, in turn, reinforces our optimism that this positive trajectory will continue for the years to come.

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