

The Language: Faetar / lu fajdar /



- Descended from Francoprovençal
- ~500 speakers in Italy
- ~200 Heritage speakers in Canada
- ~1000 tokens were extracted from recordings of 12 Heritage Faetar speakers (HLVC Corpus, Nagy, 2009b) using ELAN, and analyzed using Rbrul.

The Thing Studied: Pronoun drop (Pro-drop)

Forms of Subject Pronouns in Faetar	
None (Null or Ø) aka “pro-drop” (The pronoun is “dropped” and not actually stated) Transcription : / diʃi sa fən / Translation : Ø (<i>she</i>) said that woman	
Strong pronoun / iɬe / Transcription : / no iɬe sta dut:o / Translation : No, <i>she</i> was always	
Weak pronoun / i / Transcription : / i abid a mejpəl / Translation : <i>She</i> lives in Maple	
Strong + Weak pronoun / iɬe i / Transcription : / iɬe i e lu preferi:tə / Translation : <i>She (she)</i> was the favourite	HLVC Speaker: F1F79

The Thing Studied: Faetar Pronouns

	Strong	Weak	Null
1 st (sing./pl.)	dʒi / nus	dʒə / nə	Ø / Ø
2 nd (sing./pl.)	ti / vus	tə / və	Ø / Ø
3 rd (sing./pl.)	iɬə / is	i / i	Ø / Ø

Michael Iannozzi
NWAV44, 2015

Heritage Faetar

I/ø want to know: why do you/ø pro-drop?

The Thing Studied: What I Wanted to Know

• Does something about the verbs themselves (e.g. tense) affect whether the pronoun is stated or null?

• Do the same significant factors for pro-drop found in varieties of Spanish in contact (Travis, 2007; Carvalho & Child, 2011; inter alia) apply to Heritage Faetar: an endangered language “without agreed-on stigmatized forms” (Nagy, 2009a, pg. 398)?

The Other Studies: Overall Rates of Pro-Drop

Location	Ø Rate	Language	Contact Language	Study
Madrid, Spain	79%	Spanish	N/A	Cameron (1994)
Portugal	78%	Portuguese	N/A	Barbosa et al. (2005)
Rivera, Uruguay	65%	Spanish	Brazilian Portuguese	Carvalho & Child (2011)
Buenos Aires, Argentina	64%	Spanish	N/A	Barrenechea & Alonso (1977)
Santiago, Chile	62%	Spanish	N/A	Cifuentes (1980)
San Juan, Puerto Rico	55%	Spanish	N/A	Cameron (1994)
Brazil	44%	Portuguese	N/A	Duarte (1993)
Val d'Aosta, Italy	86-72%*	Franco-provençal	Italian	Diémoz (2007)
Faeto, Italy	52%	Faetar	Italian	Heap & Nagy (1998)
Toronto, Canada	39%	Faetar	English	Nagy & Iannozzi (2014)

* Diémoz studied 5 towns. 4 fell within this range. The other town was an outlier with 24%

Table adapted from Tables 2 & 3 of Carvalho & Child (2011). Francoprovençal data only refers to 2nd person singular pro-drop rates. Diémoz did not perform analyses of variables, only overall rates.

The Other Studies: Their Constraints

Same Verb as Previous	We went to the store, and then we <u>will go</u> to class.
Previous pronoun null vs realized	(We / Ø) went to the store, and then (we / Ø) went out.
Same Tense as Previous	We went to the store, and we <u>bought</u> some groceries.
Same Person & Number as Previous	We went to the store, and <u>we</u> will buy some groceries.
Same Person, Number & Tense as Previous	(He / Ø) goes to the store, and (he / Ø) buys some groceries.
Ambiguity	(I / you / she / we / they) <u>went</u> to the store

Verb endings aren't morphologically marked enough in Faetar to be unambiguous in person and number—unlike Spanish.

Verb Class					
Psychological	Speech	Motion	Other	Say	Be
know	call	go	have	say	be
believe	ask	come	do		
think	tell	take	want		
remember	yell	leave	work		
imagine	(say)	bring	give		
understand			(Travis, 2007, pg. 116)		

Say was put in a separate class: “[say] should be considered independently from other *speech* act verbs in future studies” (Travis, 2007, pg. 117).

Verbs with >20 n				
Have	Bring	(to be) called	Hold	Understand
Say	Be	Know	Do	Go
Want	Marry	Talk	Come	Remember
The 15 most-common verbs were run independently to test whether <i>Verb Classes</i> would hold true in Heritage Faetar				

Results

Input = .251 N = 926					
Factor (Application = Ø)	FW (of null)		n		
Person / Num. MOE : .556 (Magnitude of effect)		sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
	3 rd	.77	.773	373	174
	1 st	.311	.411	236	46
	2 nd	.217	[.676]	93	4
Tense MOE : .136	Past	.568		466	
	Present	.432		460	
Preceding object MOE : .604	P.O.	.802		253	
	None	.198		673	
1 st Letter of Verb (LOV)	FW	n	1 st LOV	FW	n
e	.852	92	s	.504	124
i	[.75]	4	d	.494	70
a	.719	89	v	.473	77
r	.7	22	t	.436	94
k	.62	78	j	[.421]	2
f	.612	83	w	.357	16
m	.579	28	b	.336	13
p	.574	107	u	[.119]	9
n	.538	11	L	[.081]	7
MOE : .516	/e/ = null 72% vs /t/ = null 21%				

Non-Significant Factors	
Same Verb as Previous MOE : .072 Same = more Ø	Ambiguity MOE : .044 Unambiguous = more Ø
Negation MOE : .046 Negative = more Ø <i>Unexpected to find any effect as negation is post-verbal in Faetar</i>	Age MOE : .214 Older = more Ø
Verb Class MOE : .094 Say has a distinct FW (.537) from the other <i>speech</i> verbs (FW = .476), and aligns more closely with <i>be</i> (FW = .54)	Same Tense MOE : .022 Same = more Ø
Same pers. & num. + tense MOE : .004 Same = more Ø	Same Pers. & Num. MOE : .010 Diff = more Ø
Verbs with >20 n MOE : .232 <i>Verbs don't fall into classes very well. e.g. Motion class has: bring = FW .62 & come = FW .406</i>	

Conclusions

The significant variables for pro-drop in the cited previous studies did apply in the same way in Heritage Faetar (e.g. Unambiguous verbs are more likely to be unstated/null in Faetar too); however, none was significant in the multivariate analyses run in Rbrul.

Only one new variable was found to be significant in affecting pro-drop: the 1st letter the verb started with. This (as far as I know) was not analyzed in previous pro-drop studies.

I would like to next add structural priming and animacy as variables for analysis of Heritage Faetar; following from Travis (2007).

What effect does the fact that Faetar is moribund in Canada have on variation, and, especially, on change?

Without a standardized orthography or spoken “standard” variety, there are no stigmatized forms. We must therefore be creative in how we approach variationist studies of minority languages.

“When a minority language dies, we lose invaluable opportunities to observe language variation and change in situations that are starkly different from those more commonly studied” (Stanford & Preston, 2009, pg. 5).

References

- Ashby, W., & Bentivoglio, P. (1993). Preferred argument structure in spoken French and Spanish. *Language Variation and Change*. 5(1), 61-76.
- Carvalho, A., & Child, M., (2011). Subject Pronoun Expression in a Variety of Spanish in Contact with Portuguese. *Selected Proceedings of the 5th Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*. 14-25. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Project.
- Diémoz, F. (2007). *Morphologie et syntaxe des pronoms personnels sujets dans les parlers francoprovençaux de la Vallée d'Aoste*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag.
- Heap, D & Nagy, N (1998). Subject pronoun variation in Faetar & Francoprovençal. *Papers in Sociolinguistics*. NWAVE-26. Laval. 291-300.
- Nagy, N. (2009a). Writing a Sociogrammar of Faetar. In J. Stanford & D. Preston (Eds.), *Variation in Indigenous Minority Languages* (Vol. 25, pp. 397-417). Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub.
- Nagy, N. 2009b. Heritage Language Variation and Change. http://individual.utoronto.ca/ngn/research/heritage_lgs.htm.
- Silva-Corvalán, C. (1994). *Language contact and change: Spanish in Los Angeles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Travis, C. (2007). Genre effects on subject expression in Spanish: Priming in narrative and conversation. *Language Variation and Change*. 19(2). 101-135.