New insights on spoken Cocoliche: a linguistic analysis of three samples from Argentina

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New insights on spoken *Cocoliche*
A linguistic analysis of three samples from Argentina[1]

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Abstract: The paper deals with three language samples taken from previously unpublished interviews with Italian emigrants living in Argentina. These excerpts are particularly interesting due to the linguistic varieties of the speakers, which, to different degrees, display consistent phenomena of interference between Spanish and (southern) Italian dialects. As a further point of interest, the interviews were recorded in different periods and places (1986 in Buenos Aires, 2019 in Santa Fe), as well as with speakers coming from various Italian regions (Calabria, Campania, Sicily). This allows valuable insights into the different degrees and shapes of language mixing phenomena. The wide variety of data collected and commented by the authors enriches the grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge of mixed languages in Argentina and delves into the problem of the so-called *Cocoliche*.

Keywords: mixed languages, language contact, Cocoliche, southern Italo-Romance dialects, Argentinean Spanish
Parole chiave: lingue miste, contatto linguistico, cocoliche, dialetti italo-romanzi meridionali, spagnolo d'Argentina

1 Introduction

Linguistic contact between Italian (dialects) and Spanish in Argentina has been the object of particular attention by scholars. After Grossmann's (1926, 206–215) preliminary observations, remarks and investigations on the mixed varieties spoken by Italian immigrants living in the River Plate region have proliferated thanks to specialists of Ibero- and/or Italo-Romance linguistics (cf. Wagner 1949, 130; Meo Zilio 1964 [1989]; 1993; Lavandera 1978; Fontanella de Weinberg 1987, 138–142; 1992, 251–256; Lipski 1994, 176–179; Cancellier 1996; 2001; 2003; Schmid 2005; 2008; 2015; Jones/Pountain 2013, 386–387; Lescano Franco 2022, etc.), as well as typologists and experts of language contact (cf. Hancock 1971, 515; Whinnom 1971, 97–102; Gardani 2024). Such varieties have usually been classified under the generic label of *Cocoliche*, a term borrowed from the Argentinean popular literature of the late 18th and early 19th century, in which it refers to Italo-Spanish mixed varieties, in many cases with caricatural function (cf. Engels 2012; [Author 1], in print). From now on, we shall thus distinguish between *literary Cocoliche* (a possibly stereotyped and therefore not entirely reliable language) and *spoken Cocoliche,* which refers to the interfered varieties used in daily life by Italian immigrants.[2]

Despite the large number of studies on *Cocoliche*, relatively few non-literary sources have been published so far. To the best of our knowledge, transcriptions of interviews were provided only by Meo Zilio (1993, 101–102), Lavandera (1978, 397–398), Asencio (1995), Falzone (2010, 49–52), and Schmid (2015, 257). The first published a brief excerpt of an interview with an Apulian informant (Pompeo Ortizio, born in Molfetta in 1904 and arrived in Argentina in 1924), while the second shared some materials (two short texts and three sentences) from «more than 50 hours recorded by 50 first-generation Italian immigrants in Buenos Aires» (Lavandera 1978, 396) – an impressive amount of data, which unfortunately

[1] All non-English citations have been translated by the authors of this paper.
[2] German scholars refer to the latter as to *Alltagssprachliches Cocoliche* or *Alltagscocoliche* (cf. Kailuweit 2004; Engels 2012).

does not seem to have been preserved after the scholar passed away in 1998.[3] Asencio (1995) analysed the syntax of relative clauses giving some examples from a corpus of *Cocoliche* spoken in Uruguay. As for Falzone's (2010) master thesis, it transcribes only few interfered words and sentences taken from interviews with first-generation immigrants in Buenos Aires; the recordings of these interviews have not been further studied, although Schmid (2015, 257–258) has transcribed and analysed a short passage of them.

A bigger attention has been paid to letters (cf. Giunchi 1986, 132–133; Palermo 1990; Schmid 2005, 130–131; 2008, 323–324; 2015, 256–257; Salvatore 2017). Such documents are of great linguistic interest, yet they display a different kind of mixed language. Non-literary written texts, by the very fact of being written, are likely to reflect the Italo-Romance component to a lesser degree than spoken interviews do.

Given this situation, we aim to contribute to this topic by publishing three samples taken from interviews which were carried out in 1986 (Buenos Aires) and in 2019 (Santa Fe). Despite the diachronich and diatopic differences, we believe that each text is of remarkable value for documenting spoken interference between Ibero- and Italo-Romance. As a matter of added interest, all interviews were conducted with southern Italian speakers, which will in some cases lead to more comparable linguistic observations.[4]

After a brief contextualisation (§2), we will outline the edition criteria and then move on to the transcription and analysis of each sample (§3). The linguistic commentary, rather than dwelling on theoretical aspects, will address each level of analysis with the purpose of a qualitative discussion of single contact phenomena. A short conclusion (§4) will frame our results within a more general point of view regarding language contact.

2 Italian immigrants in Argentina

2.1 Short overview on the Italian immigration to Argentina

As recalled by Bagna (2011, 312), "Argentina ranks second (after the United States) among the countries that received the largest number of Italians in the Americas in the period 1876–1990". Scholars agree on identifying different phases of this large migration flow, each of them characterised by groups of speakers of different origins and social backgrounds. After a period of "far and obscure origins (from the end of the 18th century to 1820)", when "the Italian population in Argentina was mostly Ligurian, concentrated mainly in the city of Buenos Aires and the surrounding countryside" (Nascimbene 1987, 209; see also Toso 2011), the history of the Italian migration to Argentina can be briefly outlined as follows:

> at the end of the 19th century/in the early 20th century [we have] an emigration wave, more consistent than the one that had already begun around 1830, with a prevalence of people from northern Italy (Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Veneto, Friuli) [...], with 1913 as the peak year [...], when massive immigration had already begun from southern Italy (Campanians, Calabrians, Sicilians) in concomitance with return flows of a part of the emigrants; modest flows in the period between the wars, due to the international economic recession [...]; flows

[3] We owe this information to Dr. Salvio Martín Menéndez (Universidad de Buenos Aires), whom we would like to thank.

[4] It should be recalled that Meo Zilio (1964 [1989], 211) considered southern Italian immigrants more interesting for the investigation of *Cocoliche* ("for the linguist who wants to study *Cocoliche*, southern immigrants present a much more fertile field of observation and interest than northerners"). This belief was based on the observation of different structural distances between Spanish and northern Italian dialects on the one hand and Spanish and central-southern Italian dialects on the other.

and returns after World War II. After 1945 emigration is markedly southern, from Calabria, Campania, Abruzzo, Molise, Sicily (cf. Bagna 2011, 312–313).[5]

The massive impact of Italian immigration had several linguistic consequences: not only the emergence of mixed languages such as *Cocoliche*, but also the transplant of Italo-Romance dialects in different part of Argentina and the survival (sometimes up to the present day) of these varieties among heritage speakers (see Meo Zilio 2002 and the outputs of the *Microcontact* project [§3.2]; for the migration of Genoese to Argentina cf. Toso 2007; 2011; for Friulian cf. Rizzolatti 2007; Finco 2014; Iliescu/Melchior 2015; for Piedmontese cf. among others Goria 2015; 2021; 2023; Cerruti/Goria 2021).[6]

Nowadays, it is possible to find both first-generation immigrants still living in Argentina (predictably enough, they usually belong to the last wave: 1945–1955) and people born in Argentina from Italian roots. The latter often share a tendency to abandon their (grand)parents' language (typically, an Italo-Romance dialect). This normally happens already within the second generation, mainly due to "massive schooling policies aimed to educate 'true Argentines'" (Ennis 2015, 115). That is why, rather than the uninterrupted continuation of overseas Italo-Romance varieties, the researcher witnesses the 'return' of new generations to their family dialect (rarely) or to Italian (more frequently) through language courses, associations (such as the Società Dante Alighieri), media, etc.

2.2 Defining spoken *Cocoliche*

Cocoliche has been variously defined over time.[7] Scholars have often referred to it as to a *mixed* or *undifferentiated language* (cf. especially Meo Zilio 1964 [1989], who draws a boundary between *Hispanised Italian*, *Italianised Spanish*, and *Cocoliche stricto sensu*).[8] Lavandera (1978), who examined the relationship between Cocoliche and Rioplatense Spanish from a sociolinguistic point of view, described the former as a *reduced* or *underdeveloped* variety of the second (the interpretation is based on the concept of *broken language*, as it is intended by Ferguson/DeBose 1977). The difference between *Cocoliche* and pidgins has often been emphasised: Whinnom (1971, 97), while rejecting the interpretation of *Cocoliche* as a pidgin (it would, at best, be the result of an *incomplete* or *proto-pidginisation*), suggested "to regard this imperfect code-switching as a case of 'secondary hybridization' [...]. *Cocoliche* [...] was an open system which had, theoretically, every grade of a finite but huge number of series of continua ranging from (usually sub-standard) Italian to non-native *porteño* Spanish".[9] In the same volume, Hancock (1971, 515) spoke of "an Italianized Spanish" that "[m]ay be rudimentarily pidginized". More recently, Cancellier (1996; 2001) stressed that *Cocoliche* cannot be regarded as jargon, dialect, emergency language (pidgin), or creole;[10] this *transitional*

[5] An interesting prophile of Italian pre- and post-World War II immigrants has been outlined by Meo Zilio (1964 [1989], 209–211).

[6] For Piedmontese, see also the website of the *PILAR* project (University of Turin): https://www.pilar.unito.it/english/the-project [last access: March 8th, 2025].

[7] In this section, we provide an overview of some definitions without offering an exhaustive list. Besides Veith's review (cf. below), a summary table of different terminological proposals has been presented by Kailuweit (2004, 53), a.o.

[8] According to Meo Zilio, a further distinction, based on the immigrants' regional origin, should be made between *southern*, *central* and *northern Cocoliche*. On mixed languages cf. Berruto (2006).

[9] Lipski (1994, 177) also refers to the notion of *continuum*: "the (somewhat derogatory) term *cocoliche* [...] refers to a hybrid Italo-Spanish speech used by first-generation Italian immigrants [....]. Many people came to believe that *cocoliche* existed only in the imagination of comic authors and actors, but in reality a stable and consistent continuum of (dialectal) Italian-influenced Spanish was spoken for several decades in the River Plate region".

[10] A similar remark is found in Meo Zilio (1964 [1989], 207–208 ft. 2); see Veith (2008, 39–40) for other opinions on the inclusion of *Cocoliche* into the pidgin or creole group.

mixed language should be rather described as a kind of *broken language* (in accordance with Lavandera's interpretation) or *pseudo-sabir* (as the word is intended by Perego 1968). Veith (2008, 38–41) reviewed some of the previous definitions concluding that *Cocoliche* should be regarded as a kind of *Übergangsvarietät* or *Übergangssprache* (*transitional language*).[11]

According to our sources (cf. e.g. fn. 9), we know that spoken *Cocoliche* was used mainly by first-generation immigrants from Italy. Its descriptions suggest that it might be considered as a non-homogeneous language variety ("this fluctuating character of *Cocoliche* [...] determines the existence of *as many Cocoliches as there are speakers*, Meo Zilio 1964 [1989], 209 [italics in text]). More precisely, this language variety has two main characteristics: it is a Spanish variety with a considerable number of transfer phenomena from the L1, and, strikingly, *Cocoliche* speakers are apparently able to speak only this variety, giving the impression that their L1 suffered such a degree of attrition[12] that they "forgot" the native language.[13]

The first property makes *Cocoliche* similar to a fossilised interlanguage,[14] with which it shares the following properties:

- *Cocoliche* speakers moved to Argentina when they were adults, thus when they had overcome the critical period;[15]
- *Cocoliche* is spoken by first-generation immigrants only, i.e. it is not transmitted from the parents to their children like creole languages;
- As noticed above, although it has some stable properties, *Cocoliche* varies from one speaker to the other, depending on their geographical origin (and thus their dialectal L1) and on its distance from the target grammar (although all *Cocoliche* speakers are very far from a high proficiency in Spanish);
- Since *Cocoliche* speakers often lived in Argentina for decades, at some point their acquisition process of Spanish must have stopped. This caused the fossilisation of *Cocoliche*.

As far as the second property of *Cocoliche* is concerned, we suggest that it is due to the interplay of two factors: the development of a fossilised interlanguage and the extreme attrition process of the L1 of *Cocoliche* speakers. This led to the result that the two varieties, a scarcely developed Spanish grammar and a highly attrited Italo-Romance grammar, became practically

[11] "It would be inaccurate to define *Cocoliche* as an interlanguage *tout court* (*Lernervarietät*), because Italians did not learn Spanish consciously as L2. In fact, they unconsciously drifted from the Italian to the Spanish pole without the internal systematicity that is typical of interlanguages, and in doing so they lost their original L1" (Veith 2008, 41).

[12] Schmid & Köpke (2017, 637–638) define attrition as follows: "We refer to any of the phenomena that arise in the native language of a sequential bilingual as the consequence of the co-activation of languages, crosslinguistic transfer or disuse, at any stage of second language (L2) development and use, as language attrition. First language (L1) attrition is therefore considered to be the process by which (a) pre-existing linguistic knowledge becomes less accessible or is modified to some extent as a result of the acquisition of a new language, and (b) L1 production, processing or comprehension are affected by the presence of this other language". See references cited therein for more information about this process. On the effect of *language attrition* in *Cocoliche* see Schmid (2015, 258).

[13] This was already pointed out by Meo Zilio (1964 [1989], 207–208): "formally, this undifferentiated language should not be conceived as a third language besides Spanish and Italian [...], for the very reason that the speakers are not aware that they are speaking a language that is distinct from Italian or Spanish".

[14] According to Selinker (1972, 214) an interlanguage is "a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a T[arget] L[anguage] norm." Interlanguages can fossilize at any stage of development. In the data we present in this paper, fossilisation seems to have started at a very low level of acquisition of the target language. On *Cocoliche* as a fossilised *broken language*, see Lavandera (1978, 394–395).

[15] Starting from Penfield & Roberts (1959) and Lenneberg (1967), many linguists believe that there is a critical period (or a series of critical periods, one for each language modules) within which it is possible to reach a native competence in a language. After this point, it is almost impossible to reach a full competence (see also Chomsky 1965).

indistinguishable, and eventually merged in a unique, fused variety.[16] This outcome has been favoured by the structural closeness between Spanish and Italo-Romance varieties. Fig. 1 exemplifies this process.

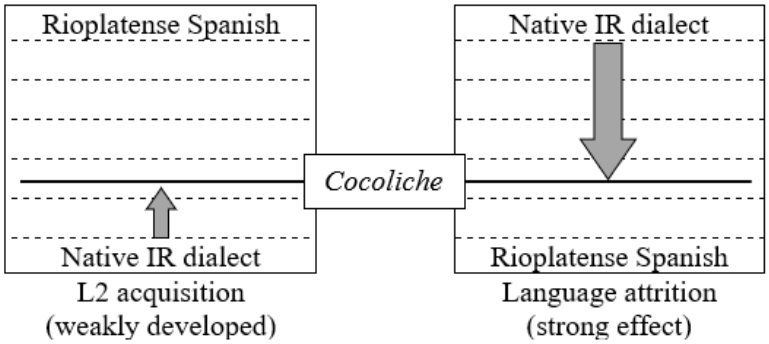

Fig. 1: The processes of interlanguage fossilisation and L1 attrition that led to the emergence of *Cocoliche*.

3 Three unpublished sources for the study of Italo-Argentinian mixed languages

Let us now come to our samples. Each excerpt will be phonetically transcribed by using the IPA. Transcriptions will render all facts that are significant from the point of view of linguistic analysis, yet they should not be regarded as extremely strict, since an exhaustive phonetic analysis is not the main purpose of this paper (vowel length, which does not play a relevant role for our purposes, will be omitted). To account for conversational facts, we will make use of the following symbols (partly taken from Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson 1974):

(a), (aba)	sound/sequence of uncertain interpretation
((laughing))	non-verbal acts
(.), (0.5)	pause (duration is indicated from 0.5 sec onwards)
ma+, ma++	final vowel lengthening
per-	word/speech interruption
=	immediate change of turn
//	overlapping with the following turn
?	interrogative intonation
<...>	indistinct meaningless sounds

Each text has been arbitrary divided into smaller paragraphs ([1], [2], [3], etc.) so that it will be easier to identify the forms mentioned in the linguistic comment (where every example is followed by the number of paragraph(s) in which it occurs). A free English translation will be provided for each sample, to help readers who are interested in language contact but unfamiliar with Italian or Ibero-Romance.[17]

3.1 A text from Giovanni Meo Zilio's interviews in La Boca (Buenos Aires, 1986)

The *Archivio per la Documentazione e la Ricerca sull'Emigrazione Veneta* (*ADREV*, hosted by Ca' Foscari University of Venice) gathers several photographs and audio recordings produced by Giovanni Meo Zilio during his linguistic investigations in Latin America (cf. Cancellier

[16] See Meo Zilio (1964 [1989], 106).
[17] It should be made clear that the translated texts are not glosses and that they do not precisely mirror every characteristic of the original source.

2015, 26–30). The history and actual conditions of this sound archive are well described both by Milani (2020-2021) and on the *ADREV* website.[18]

Among the *ADREV* audio materials there is a particularly interesting interview. It is part of track CN08CT04AFD01 on CD nr. 8 (previously, i.e. before the digitalisation, it was stored in Box 9 on Tape 4, side A) and it was carried out in Buenos Aires in 1986, more precisely in the *barrio* of La Boca (one of the most Italianised neighborhoods of the city, cf. Toso 2011). The informant, whose biographical information is only known from the interview itself, is a Calabrese speaker who had been born in Casignana (in the province of Reggio Calabria) in 1903 and was therefore 83 years old at the time of the interview. According to what he says, he arrived in Argentina when he was 24/25 years old (1927/1928), which makes his story very similar to the one of the Apulian speaker whose interview was transcribed and published by Meo Zilio in 1993 (cf. §1).

After a relatively long spontaneous speech (16'39-18'16 of the entire track), presumably triggered (as we do not have this part of the interview) by a question about his last visit to Calabria, the speaker answers several questions about his immigration experience and Argentinean life, with special regard to his previous jobs. Unfortunately, the interview ends after less than four minutes (20'28) due to an interruption by a third person which also led Meo Zilio to stop the recording. After this interruption, the track suddenly changes of context and informant.

The quality of the recording is not completely satisfying, since the interview was conducted outdoors (as suggested by the background noises) with a portable tape recorder. Nonetheless, as will be soon clear, difficulties in comprehension mainly relate to single sounds/words and do not concern the overall understanding of the conversation, whose linguistic forms are mostly clear. On the other hand, it is sometimes difficult to grasp the meaning of the speaker's speech, both because of the lack of information about the context and the somewhat confusing discourse planning of the speaker himself.

3.1.1 Transcription

Transcription criteria have been presented in §3. Given the turn-taking nature of the conversation between Meo Zilio and the speaker, we shall specify whether a turn is taken by the first or the latter (INT = interviewer; INF = informant; in addition, [?] is used for an unknown informant who briefly takes part in the conversation). Whenever the meaning of a sentence is uncertain, the English translation is followed by a question mark and placed inside round brackets.[19]

INF:	[16'39] **[1]** iŋ kaˈlaβrja (1.4) ehˈtuβe ˈla+ ˈora ˈðos ˈaɲo nel me+ ˈmese ðe seˈtːembre (0.7) el ˈkinse ðe seˈtːembre (.) ehˈtuβe ˈtrenta ˈsetːe ˈðia (1)	**[1]** In Calabria. I was there two years ago, in September, on the fifth of September. I stayed there thirthy-seven days.
	[2] peˈro ˈfw(i) ʤiriˈando ˈtoᵟo lo popuˈlito ˈpara aˈja paˈkːe+ la ˈika ðe (me) siˈɲora (.) kaˈnuʃe ˈmuʧo̯ (.)	**[2]** But I roamed all over the village(s) there because (my wife's daughter?) knows a lot (of people?),

[18] See the following link: https://pric.unive.it/progetti/archivio-fonti-orali/fondi-sonori [last access: March 8th, 2025]. On the *ADREV* sound materials cf. also Chistè (2013-2014). We are thankful to Professor Alessandro Casellato (scientific head of the *ADREV*) for having brought these master's theses to our attention.

[19] Meo Zilio's sentences (in italics) will not be phonetically transcribed as they are not interesting from a linguistic point of view. This also implies that the text will not render the scholar's Rioplatense pronounce of Spanish (e.g. *llama* = [ˈʒama]).

	[3] ke ˈle ˈβa+ ˈtoðo los ˈaɲo ˈβa a paseˈare nord aˈmɛrika iˈtalja ˈhpaɲa (0.5) portoˈrịko (0.8) pa ˈtoðo ˈlao (.) l aleˈmanja (0.5) e++ (1.3) ŋ ˈkuβa (.)	**[3]** because she travels every year to North America, Italy, Spain, Puertorico, everywhere, to Germany, and Cuba.
	[4] ˈedːa ˈβa pa ˈtoðo ˈlao e kaˈnuʃe ˈtoðo (.) (e) me ʤeˈβo kon ˈe(ḍː)a (1) <...> ˈstumo ˈtrenta ˈsetːe ˈðia (0.8)	**[4]** She travels everywhere and she knows a lot (of people?). And she took me with her. We stayed thirty-seven days,
	[5] i aˈi ɣraˈβamːə ˈante ðe saˈlire ˈkwando ʤeˈkamːə (0.7) ˈtoða la faˈmija i+ (1.4) un ˈkosọ (0.5) un ˈdiskọ (0.8)	**[5]** and there we recorded, before we left, when we arrived, all the family, in such a thing... I mean a disk.
	[6] i ˈsi esˈtumo (1) uˈniti ˈmuʧo aˈi (.) porˈke ˈtoða la maˈɲana me βeˈnian a βusˈkar i me ʤeˈβaβan a ʤiriˈar ˈtoðo il ˈkampọ (0.5)	**[6]** So, yes, we were very united there, because every morning they came searching for me and they took me wandering around the countryside,
	[7] aˈonde ˈʤo la^{βu}ˈraβa ˈkwando esˈtaβa aˈḍːa aˈonde (.) teˈniamo il ˈkampo nuˈsotrị (0.5) ˈtoðo aˈi (0.8) kaˈnuʃu ˈtoðo (.) ˈtoðo (1)	**[7]** where I worked when I was there, where we had our land, (everything/everyone?) there, I know (everything/everyone?).
	[8] ˈklaro ke ˈuno no rːịˈkorða ˈma paˈkːe ˈora kamˈbjo ˈmuʧo iˈtalja (1)	**[8]** Of course, one does not remember, but it's like that because Italy has changed a lot.
	[9] ˈjo no me rːịkorˈðaβa ˈma per- me perˈði ðe βolˈβer a mị ˈkasa (1.4) ˈkise saˈlire ˈsolo ˈkwando+ (0.5) ˈkise βolˈβer pa ˈkasa no me rːịkorˈðaβa ˈma^{h} (0.8)	**[9]** I couldn't remember, I lost myself when I wanted to go back home, I wanted to go out only when... I wanted to go home, I couldn't remember anymore.
	[10] porˈke ˈora ˈaị ˈtoða+ (1) ˈkaʤas (.) barˈdata ˈtoðo (0.5) ˈkaʤa ˈanʧa tị ˈraro la ˈkasa ke ˈerano ˈʤa uˈniti le i+ (.) ˈpero ˈanʧo (.)	**[10]** This is because now roads are all walled, they are wide roads. They tore down the houses (as they were already united... but wide?).
	[**11]** ˈtoðo ˈβanːo kuị ˈkoʧe ˈa^{h}ta neị ˈkampo ˈora (.) ˈante no ko um ˈburːo (poˈte^{a}n^{o}) ˈiri (0.5) ˈora ˈβanːo kụị ˈkoʧe ˈahta ˈentre el ˈkampọ ((laughing)) (0.8) si+ (0.5)	**[11]** Now everyone drives even in the fields. Before, they couldn't go there even with a donkey! Now they drive even in the fields, yes.
	[12] aˈɔra ˈhta ˈmuị ˈlindo iˈtalja ˈmuị ˈlindo (1) ˈʤo se teˈnia ˈmeno ˈaɲo (0.5) (i es) teˈnia ˈarɣo ˈla me ˈiβa (2) ˈpero a ˈesta eˈta ke ˈvoị a aˈser	**[12]** Now it's very beautiful in Italy. Me, if I were younger and if I had something there, I'd go, but at this age what do you want to do?
INT:	*¿cuántos años tiene usted? =*	*How old are you? =*
INF:	**[13]** = ºˈʧenta ˈtre	**[13]** Eighty-three.
INT:	*? cuántos?*	*How?*
INF:	**[14]** oˈʧenta ˈtre	**[14]** Eighty-three.
INT:	*y cómo se llama =*	*And what's your name =*
INF:	**[15]** = el ˈkinse ðe++ il ˈsiŋko ðe+ seˈtːjembre lo kumˈpli	**[15]** On the fifth of... I had my birthday on the fifth of September.
INT:	*¿cómo se llama usted?*	*What's your name?*
INF:	**[16]** r[–] k[–]	**[16]** R[–] C[–].
INT:	*¿y en qué año nació?*	*When were you born?*
INF:	**[17]** en noveˈʃento ˈtre^{i}	**[17]** In 1903.
INT:	*¿en dónde nació?*	*Where were you born?*
INF:	**[18]** en eụˈropa? (0.3) // en iˈtalja (0.5) kasiˈɲana proˈβinʃa ðe ˈreʤu kaˈlaβrja	**[18]** In Europe? In Italy, in Casignana, in the province of Reggio Calabria.

INT:	*¿en qué parte?*	*Where?*
	¿y a qué edad vino a América?	*How old were you when you came to America?*
INF:	**[19]** teˈnia+ ˈbente ˈkwatro ˈβente ˈsiŋko ˈaɲo	**[19]** I was twenty-four, twenty-five years old.
INT:	*¿y había estudiado usted en Italia, había hecho la escuela?*	*And had you studied in Italy? Had you been to school?*
INF:	**[20]** nɔ+ no ˈfwe a la // esˈkwela nɔ nɔ	**[20]** No, I didn't go to school, no, no.
INT:	*nada, no fue a la escuela*	No, you didn't go to school.
INF:	**[21]** al ˈkampo (.) traβaˈkare ˈkampo ((laughs))	**[21]** In the fields, working in the fields.
INT:	*aaah...*	*Aaah...*
INF:	**[22]** se+	**[22]** Yes.
INT:	*trabajar el campo*	*Working in the fields.*
INF:	**[23]** e++	**[23]** Eh...
INT:	*aaah...*	*Aaah...*
INF:	**[24]**ˈkwando ˈjo ˈβine ˈpara aˈka βiˈsjente teˈnia un ˈaɲo	**[24]** When I came here Viciente was one year old.
INT:	*cuando vino Viciente* =	*When Viciente came...*
INF:	**[25]** = ˈkwando ˈʤo ˈβine =	**[25]** When I came...
INT:	= *aaah, c-* =	*Aaah...*
INF:	**[26]** = lo ðeˈke ðe un ˈaɲo	**[26]** I left him when he was one year old.
INT:	*el hijo tenía un año*	*The son was one year old.*
INF:	**[27]** e+ la ˈʧika teˈnia (0.7) ˈmese (.) ˈbente+ (.) ˈbente e ˈpiko ˈðia	**[27]** And the daughter was twenty months and some days old.
INT:	*¿qué trabajo hizo usted aquí?*	*What kind of work did you do here?*
INF:	**[28]** ˈjo ˈsempre (nel) friɣuˈrifəko (0.5) ˈkamːara friɣuˈrifika (1) ˈtrenta ˈsetːe ˈaɲo (1) ðe ˈnoʧe ˈsjempre (1.7) e ðe ˈðia traβaˈkaβa al ˈotro ˈlao	**[28]** I always worked in the fridge, in cold chambers. I worked thirty-seven years, always at night, and during the day I worked on the other side.
INT:	*¿dónde?*	*Where?*
INF:	**[29]** ehˈtuβe ˈpwesto ðe+ pesˈkato (0.8) ʰhˈtuβe ˈpwesto+ a la++ de <...> venˈdia (del) reˈparto ˈleʧe kuˈkarːa kaˈβajo (0.7) <...> ((laughing)) **[30]** venˈdia ˈesa ˈkrema ðe loʰ kuˈðio ke ˈkomәno ˈkwando ˈasәno la ˈfjesta ˈesa ˈaɣrja	**[29]** I worked (selling?) fish, I worked … I sold … in the milk, (… horse?) section. I sold this cream that the jews eat when they are having a feast, this sour cream.
INT:	((ride)) *¿qué es esta crema de los judíos?*	*What's this cream of the jews?*
INF:	**[31]** i ˈsi+ // ˈe ˈuna ˈkrema	**[31]** Well yes, it's a cream.
INT:	*¿qué crema es?*	*What kind of cream is it?*
INF:	**[32]** ˈe ˈuna ˈkrema ˈsi ke la ˈkomәno <...> ˈsolo ke ˈe ˈaɣrja	**[32]** It's a cream, yes, that they eat, but it's sour.
INT:	*¿agria?*	*Sour?*
INF:	**[33]** ˈaɣrja (1.7) aˈrɛŋge (0.5) peˈpːino (0.5) saˈlate ˈtoðo ˈeso ke+ ˈkwando ˈasәno ˈfjesta ˈeso se konˈsuma ˈmuʧo aˈi (0.8) (e reˈparte ðe	**[33]** Sour. Herrings, cucumbers, salads, this sort of things that they eat a lot when they're having a feast... (the section of these things?). Then I

	ˈese) **[34]** (daˈpːo) esˈtuβe ðe seˈreno aˈi ku su erˈmano (0.8) aˈja (e ˈsta) libertaˈðor eskinˈtero	worked as a guard there, with his brother, there at [Avenida del] Libertador, [Avenida Lidoro J.] Quinteros.
[?]:	*¿con mi hermano?*	*With my brother?*
INT:	**[35]** ˈklaro	**[35]** Sure.
[?]:	*yo me acuerdo*	*I remember that.*
INF:	**[36]** ^{eh}ˈtuβe+ aˈi ^{eh}ˈtuβe (1) ˈkasi (.) ˈoʧo ˈnoβe ˈaɲo (1) (s)i (1) i+ ðehˈpwe (.) ˈante ehˈtuβe a ˈotro ˈlao la ˈkasa (tranˈtia ka) rːiˈoka e ˈsaŋ ˈgwan (0.8) ˈotro ˈdo ˈtres ˈaɲo (0.5) **[37]** ˈdopo me kuβiˈle+ (0.7) e traβaˈkaβa ðe ˈðia e ðe ˈnoʧe̯ (0.5) e teˈnia ofiˈʧina ðe ˈβɪ̯ndɪ̯ta ðe ˈkasa ku ˈotro (markɪ̯ˈʤero) (0.8) ˈβendɪ̯ta ðe ˈkasa teˈrːeno lo ke ˈpweð(e) (0.3) ˈesto ˈoɪ̯ toðaˈβia	**[36]** I was employed there... I was employed almost eight, nine years, yes. And then I've been first employed on the other side, (the house … ?), La Rioja and [Avenida] San Juan... another two, three years. Then I retired. And I worked day and night, and I had a house sales office with another (?): sale of houses, land, whatever. This up until today.
INT:	*¿todavía trabaja?*	*You still work?*
INF:	**[38]** ˈsɪ̯+ ˈsɪ̯++ [20'28]	**[38]** Yes, yes.

3.1.2 Linguistic analysis

The text displays features that are to be ascribed to the Rioplatense variety of Spanish learned by the informant. These are the neutralisation of the opposition /θ/ ~ /s/ in favour of the latter (*seseo*, cf. Donni de Mirande 1996, 213), the loss of intervocalic [ð] ([aˈonde] 7 bis, [laˈo] 3, 4, 28, 36, cf. Lipski 1994, 168–169; Fontanella de Weinberg 2004, 50), and the aspiration of preconsonantic /s/ ([ˈahta] 11, [ˈa^{h}ta] 11, [ðehˈpwe] 36, [ehˈtuβe] 1 bis, 29, [^{e}hˈtuβe] 29, [^{eh}ˈtuβe] 36 bis, [ˈhpaɲa] 3, [ˈhta] 12, [lo^{h} kuˈðio] 29, cf. Lipski 1994, 169–170; Donni de Mirande 1996, 213–214; see Meo Zilio 1964 [1993], 212; Schmid 2015, 257–258 for the presence of this feature in *Cocoliche*). As for the loss of final /s/ and the rendering of *žeísmo*, as well as the widespread presence of fricative sounds ([β], [ð], [ɣ]), see below.

In tonic position we do not always find the expected Spanish form: cf. [ˈsempre] 'always' 28 (vs. [ˈsjempre] 28), [ˈsetːe] 'seven' 1, 28, [seˈtːembre] 'september' 1 bis (vs. [seˈtːjembre] 15), [ˈnoβe] 'nine' 36, [rːɪ̯ˈkorða] 'remember.PRS.IND.3SG' 8, and [ˈbente]/[ˈβente] 'twenty'19 bis, 27 bis; see also [noveʃento] 'nine hundred'17. The same can be said for unstressed vowels, as exemplified by the following forms: [siˈɲora] 'madam' 2, [nuˈsotrɪ̯] 'we' 7, [ˈasəno] 'do.PRS.IND.3PL' 30, 33, [ˈkoməno] 'eat.PRS.IND.3PL' 30, 32, and [friɣuˈrifəko] 'fridge' 28 (vs. -[ika] 28); add here [ku] 'with' 33, 36 (vs. [ko] 11),[20] [il] 'the' 6, 7, 15, [iŋ] 'in' 1, [se] 'if' 12. The large majority of these forms can easily be linked to a corresponding Italian or Calabrese word ([nuˈsotrɪ̯] probably crosses Sp. *nosotros* and Cal. [nuˈa(u)ʈɽi], cf. Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 58); as for [ˈasəno], [ˈkoməno] and [friɣuˈrifəko], they may be related with the weakening of postonic vowels (which resulted in vowel harmony) mentioned by Falcone (1976, 31) with regard to the ionic lateral area of southern Calabria. We find -[u] in [kaˈnuʃu] 7 ('know.PRS.IND.1SG') and [reʤu] 'Reggio (Calabria)' 18, -[ə] in [ɣraˈβamːə] 'record.PRF.IND.1PL' 5 and [ʤeˈkamːə] 'arrive.PRF.IND.1PL' 5; in addition, some verbal forms display a final vowel which would be absent in Spanish (-[i]/-[e] in [ˈiri] 'go.INF' 11, [paseˈare] 'walk.INF' 3, [saˈlire] 'leave.INF' 5, 9, [traβaˈkare] 'work.INF' 21, -[o] in [ˈasəno] 'do.PRS.IND.3PL' 30, 33, [ˈkoməno] 'eat.PRS.IND.3PL' 30, 32, [ˈβanːo] 'go.PRS.IND.3PL' 11 bis, [ˈerano] 'be.IMPF.IND.3PL' 10, [poˈte^{a}n^{o}] 'can.IMPF.IND.3PL' 11). While -[u] and -[i] are

[20] See below (morphology) for [kuɪ̯ ˈkoʧe] and [kʊɪ̯ ˈkoʧe] 11.

compatible with southern Calabrese (which has a trivocalic Sicilian system), -[e], -[ə], and [-o] can depend on the influence either of Italian or other IR varieties.[21] Against a well known phonological rule of Spanish, initial [e] is sometimes not realised when followed by [st]: [ˈhta] ‘be/stay.PRS.IND.3SG’ 12, [ˈhtumo] ‘be/stay.PRF.IND.1PL’ 4.

As for consonants, the speaker very frequently produces the fricatives sounds [β], [ð], and [ɣ]. Given that analogous weakened variants of /b/, /d/, and /g/ are widespread in Calabrese dialects, one could link examples like [ˈtoðo ˈβanːo] ‘everyone goes’ 11, [lo ðeˈke] ‘I left him’ 10, [friɣuˈrifəko] ‘fridge’ 28, etc. to the speaker’s native variety rather than to the influence of Rioplatense Spanish. The hypothesis, although attractive, does not hold up to the evidence, since the examples do not respect the allophonic distribution of Calabrese varieties: in these dialects the weak (fricative) variant occurs in intervocalic position while the strong (occlusive) one is realised after syntactic doubling (*raddoppiamento fonosintattico*) or a consonant.[22] Conversely, our speaker provides examples such as [me βeˈnian a βusˈkar] ‘they came searching for me’ 6, [perˈði] ‘lose.PRF.IND.1SG’ 9, [rːi̯korˈðaβa] ‘remember.IMPF.IND.1SG’ 9, [ˈaryo] ‘something’ 12, [teˈnia+ ˈbente] ‘I was twenty’ 19, and even deletes intervocalic [ð], a treatment which we find in Argentinean Spanish (see above) yet not in Calabria. That being said, it is still possible that a propriety of the speaker’s native dialect reinforced the acquisition of a (similar, although non-identical) feature of the L2.[23]

There are some examples of [t] instead of [ð]: [barˈdata] ‘walled’ 10, [pesˈkato] ‘fish’ 29, [saˈlate] ‘salad(s)’ 33, [uˈniti] ‘united’ 6, 10 (see also [eˈta] ‘age’ 12, [ˈβi̯ndi̯ta] 36 and [ˈβendi̯ta] 36 ‘sale’). The substitution of /x/ with [k] (cf. Meo Zilio 1964 [1993], 211; Whinnom 1971, 97, Engels 2012, 78, etc.) is quite frequent, as in [ðeˈke] ‘leave.PRF’ 26, [ˈika] ‘daughter’ 2, [kuβiˈle] ‘retire.PRF.IND.1SG’ 36, [kuˈðio] ‘jews’ 29 ([loʰ kuˈðio]), [traβaˈkare] ‘work.INF’ 21, [traβaˈkaβa] ‘work.IMPF.IND.1SG’ 28, 36.

The loss of /s/ in final word position is widely attested: [ˈðos ˈaɲo] ‘two years’ 1, [ˈtrenta ˈsetːe ˈðia] ‘thirty-seven days’ 1, 4, [ˈtoðo los ˈaɲo] ‘every year’ 3, [pa ˈtoðo ˈlao] ‘everywhere’ (Sp. *por todos lados*) 3, 4, [ˈante] ‘before’ 5, 11, 36, [ˈtoða la maˈɲana] ‘the entire morning’ 5, [teˈniamo] ‘have.IMPF.IND.1PL’ 7, [ˈma] ‘anymore’ 8, 9 (Sp. *más*), [ˈtoða ˈkaʤas barˈdata] ‘all the roads (are) walled’ 10, [ˈkaʤa ˈanʧa] ‘wide roads’ 10, [ˈtoðo] ‘everybody’ 11, [kui̯ ˈkoʧe] ‘with the cars’ 11, [kʊi̯ ˈkoʧe] ‘with the cars’ 11 bis, [nei̯ ˈkampo] ‘in the fields’ 11, [ˈmeno ˈaɲo] ‘less years’ 12, [ˈtre] ‘three’ 13, 14, [lo kumˈpli] ‘I had birthday’ 15 (Sp. *cumplir los aɲos*), [ˈβente ˈsiŋko ˈaɲo] ‘twenty-five years’ 19, [ˈkampo] ‘fields’ 21, [ˈmese] ‘months’ 27, [ˈβente e ˈpiko ˈðia] ‘twenty (months) and some days’ 27, [ˈtrenta ˈsetːe ˈaɲo] ‘thirty-seven years’ 28, [loʰ kuˈðio] ‘the jews’ 29, [peˈpːino] ‘cucumbers’ 33, [kinˈtero] ‘(Avenida Lidoro J.) Quinteros’ 33, [ˈnoβe ˈaɲo] ‘nine years’ 33, [ðehˈpwe] ‘after that’ 36, [ˈotro ˈðo ˈtres ˈaɲo] ‘other two-three years’ 36.[24] The examples show that the feature is not systematic and that it can occur both before a consonant and before a vowel. The first is the more frequent case (otherwise ([kaʤa anʧa] 9, [meno aɲo] 12), just as, conversely, it is easier to find a preserved sibilant before a vowel (see among the forms listed above) than before a consonant (it happens only once, but in this case /s/ is followed by a short pause: [ˈtoða+ (1) ˈkaʤas (.) barˈdata] 10).[25] In preconsonantal position, an aspiration rather than a deletion may take place (the forms have

[21] As we shall see, the linguistic effects of the interaction between immigrants coming from different places of Italy are visible in other forms of our sample.

[22] It should be add that southern Calabrese displays [v] (not [β]) as the weak variant of /b/ (cf. Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 48–49). The dialects of Reggio Calabria and its surroundings either render /g/ as [ɣ] or delete it, but in this area the weakening of -/d/- and -/g/- started not until after 1908 (cf. Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 50).

[23] It is well known that Spanish avoids the spirantisation of /b/ and /g/ after a nasal, that of /d/ after a nasal or a lateral (all three consonants are occlusive after a pause). Our speaker seems to respect this distribution in that he never weakens the occlusive in cases such as [ˈkwando] 7, 24, 25, [um ˈburːo] 11, [venˈdia] 29, 30, [ˈβi̯ndi̯ta] 36, [ˈβendi̯ta] 36, but he also pronounces [barˈdata] 10.

[24] [ˈtoᵟo lo popuˈlito] can be either singular or plural.

[25] This matches with the percentages given by Donni de Mirande (1996, 213) regarding Buenos Aires Spanish.

been presented at the beginning of the paragraph); this occurs even before a pause ([ˈmaʰ] 9). The speaker also produces an isolated vocalisation ([noveˈʃento ˈtreⁱ] 17).

We should recall that "the aspiration and elision of -/s/ are found in almost the entire Argentinean territory" (Donni de Mirande 1996, 213), albeit with different characteristics that depend on diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic factors (see also Lipski 1994, 169–170; Fontanella de Weinberg 2004, 47–48; Coloma 2022, 11): it is thus hard to establish whether we are dealing with the acquisition of an indigenous phenomenon or with an innovation within the group of Italian immigrants (evidently due to the asigmatic nature of their varieties). In any case, Lavandera's observations on the systematicity of the deletion of -/s/ among Italian informants points to a substantial difference between its occurrence in *Cocoliche* and the more articulated repertoire of Argentinean speakers.[26]

One of the most interesting features in the text is the variable realisation of RSp. /ʒ/ (cf. Lipski 1994, 170; Donni de Mirande 1996, 214–215; Fontanella de Weinberg 2004, 48–49).[27] It is well known that among Italian immigrants in Argentina [dʒ] often replaced /ʒ/ (cf. Meo Zilio 1964 [1989], 211). Our speaker himself provides several examples of this feature as well as various other outcomes. We can summarise them as follows:[28]

(-)[dʒ]-	-[dː]-	-[ɖː]-	-[ɟ]-	(-)[j]-
[ˈdʒa] 10 (Sp. *ya*), [dʒeˈβaβan] 6 (Sp. *llevaban*), [dʒeˈβo] 4 (Sp. *llevó*), [dʒeˈkamːə] 5 (Sp. *llegamos*), [ˈdʒo] 7, 12, 25 (Sp. *yo*), [ˈkadʒas] 9, [ˈkadʒa] 9 (Sp. *calles*)	[ˈedːa] 4 (Sp. *ella*)	[aˈɖːa] 7 (Sp. *allá*), [ˈeɖːa] 4 (Sp. *ella*, uncertain)	[kaˈβaɟo] 29 (Sp. *caballo*)	[aˈja] 2, 33 (Sp. *allá*), [ˈjo] 9, 24, 28 (Sp. *yo*)

It is difficult to rationalize this data without knowing the details of the informant's linguistic biography. One should recall that Calabria shows an extreme degree of variation in the outcomes of Lat. -LL-, which include [ll], [ɖʐ], [ɖ], [j], [tt̠]/[t̠], [l̪l̪], [d], [ʎʎ], and [ʒ] (cf. Trumper/Maddalon 1988, 250; De Luca 2023; Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 54; as for Casignana, the speaker's place of origin, the local result is [l̪l̪]). The analysis is further complicated by the fact that Argentinean Spanish itself exhibits a wider range of pronunciations than just Rioplatense *žeísmo* (cf. Lipski 1994, 170–172; Donni de Mirande 1996, 214).

Geminate consonants are found in the following words: [ˈkamːara] 'room' 28, [peˈpːino] 'cucumbers' 33, [ɣraˈβamːə] 'record.PRF.IND.1PL' 5, [dʒeˈkamːə] 'record.PRF.IND.1PL' 5 and [ˈβanːo] 'go.PRS.IND.3PL' 11 bis. The first is related to Cal. [ˈkamːara] (cf. AIS 4, 874; NDDC, s.v. *cámmara*). The three verbs also display the same ending of the corresponding Calabrese forms (cf. Falcone 1976, 73, 78), while [peˈpːino] is harder to explain.

An interesting case of rhotacism is displayed by [ˈaryo] 'something' 12 (Sp. *algo*). This feature probably reflects a phonological process of the speaker's native dialect, since this kind of phenomenon is well documented in southern Calabria (cf. e.g. AIS 1, 165: *u karkáñu*, pt. 794; 3, 414: *a kárći*, pt. 794; Rohlfs 1966–1969, §243; Falcone 1976, 50). On the contrary, the voicing of /k/ (for Sp. /x/) in [ˈsaŋ ˈgwan] 36 (Sp. *San Juan*) can generically lead to the Mezzogiorno, but not to southern Calabria (cf. Rohlfs 1966–1969, §257; Chilà/De Angelis

[26] According to the scholar, this very fact would make *Cocoliche* a *reduced* or *underdeveloped* variety of Rioplatense Spanish. The loss of -/s/ is very common in literary *Cocoliche* (cf. Engels 2012, 78).

[27] As is well known, "[a]lthough the original sound was voiced [ž], most younger residents of Buenos Aires now pronounce a voiceless [š], and the devoicing is spreading throughout Argentina" (Lipski 1994, 170). See Rohena-Madrazo (2013).

[28] We do not list [markiˈdʒero] 36, which might be useful given the presence of -[dʒ]- but remain semantically (and thus etymologically) unclear. The meaning of [kuˈkarːa kaˈβaɟo] 29 is also opaque, but in this case it seems plausible enough to interpret [kaˈβaɟo] as 'horse' (Sp. *caballo*).

2024, 56).[29] It is likely that this place name bears trace of the linguistic contact with immigrants coming from different parts of Italy. An analogous example may be offered by [ʤeˈkamːə] ‘arrive.PRF.IND.1PL’ 5 (Sp. *llegamos*), given that the voicing of intervocalic /k/ is found in southern Lazio, northern Campania, Puglia and Salento, whereas it is absent in Calabria (cf. Rohlfs 1966–1969, §217; Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 49-50). As we already observed about the rendering of *žeísmo*, the lack of information about the speaker’s biography precludes deeper observations.

Before turning to morphology, let us mention also [kaˈnuʃe] ‘know.PRS.IND.3SG’ 2, 4, [kaˈnuʃu] ‘know.PRS.IND.1SG’ 7 (cf. NDDC, s.v. *canúscere*; DDCM, s.v. *canuscìri*), [faˈmija] 5, and [noveˈʃento] 17, [proˈβinʃa] 18. These latter show an outcome of Lat. -C^{e}-, -CJ- which, as far as we know, is not documented by Calabrese dialects (a further supra-regional feature caused by contact between immigrants?).

An interesting metaplasm is that of [ˈkaʤas] 9, [ˈkaʤa] 9 ‘roads’ (Sp. *calles*). Plural nouns and articles are often just asigmatic (see among the examples of loss of -/s/ listed above); [uˈniti] ‘united’ 6 (M.PL), 10 (M/F.PL?), [aˈrɛŋge] ‘herrings’ 33, [saˈlate] ‘salads’ 33 show instead the IR inflectional type. Alongside several examples of the Spanish article *el*, we also find the Standard Italian form [il] ([il ˈkampo̯] 6 and [il ˈkampo] 7 ‘the land’, [il siŋko] ‘the fifth’ 15).[30] Articulated prepositions may also exhibit the IR form ([nel ˈmese] ‘in the month [i.e. September]’ 1, [nel friɣuˈrifəko] ‘in the fridge’ 28, [nei̯ ˈkampo] ‘in the fields’ 11, [kui̯ ˈkoʧe] and [kụi̯ ˈkoʧe] 11 ‘with the cars’). As for pronouns, it is worth mentioning [nuˈsotri̯] ‘we’ 7 (cf. above) and [ˈle] 2 ‘she’ (It. *lei*, whereas Calabrese moves from ILLA, cf. Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 58). Conjunctions: except the frequent [e] ‘and’, one should consider [paˈkːe] ‘because’ 2, 8 (cf. the Calabrese forms provided by AIS 4, 730); see also [peˈro] ‘but’ 1 alongside [ˈpero] 10, 12.

Verbs are often shaped as (or similarly to) the corresponding forms of Italian or southern Calabrese (for the latter, see the paradigms in Falcone 1978):

- [ˈasəno] ‘do.PRS.IND.3PL’ 30, 33, [ˈkoməno] ‘eat.PRS.IND.3PL’ 30, 32, [ˈβanːo] ‘go.PRS.IND,3PL’ 11 bis;
- [ˈerano] ‘be.IMPF.IND.3PL’ 10, [poˈteᵃnº] ‘can.IMPF.IND.3PL’ 11;
- [ɣraˈβamːə] ‘record.PRF.IND.1PL’ 5, [ʤeˈkamːə] ‘arrive.PRF.IND.1PL’ 5;
- [tị̯ˈraro] ‘pull.PRF.IND.3PL’ 10;
- [ˈiri] ‘go.INF’ 11, [paseˈare] ‘walk.INF’ 3, [saˈlire] ‘leave.INF’ 5, 9, [traβaˈkare] ‘work.INF’ 21 (vs. [aˈser] ‘do.INF’ 12, [βolˈβer] ‘return.INF’ 9 bis, [βusˈkar] ‘search.INF’ 6, [ʤiriˈar] ‘roam.INF’ 6).

As for [ˈe] ‘be.PRS.IND.3SG’ 31, 32 bis and [teˈniamo] ‘have.IMPF.IND.1PL’ 7, the forms may depend on the deletion of -/s/ (cf. above); see also [ˈstumo] 4, [esˈtumo] 6, which are interesting *allegro* forms for Sp. *estuvimos* ‘be/stay.IMPF.IND.1PL’.

Some syntactic constructions also mirror the contact between IR and Spanish:[31] *pero fu(i) giriando todo lo populito para* (vs. Sp. *por*) *allá* 2,[32] *todo vanno cui coche ahta entre el* (= It. *dentro il*, etc.) *campo* 11, *tiraro la casa que erano* (vs. Sp. *estaban*) *già uniti* 10. This latter example is not entirely clear (who were already united?), so that *que* may be interpreted either

[29] A similar example is that of [aˈrɛŋge] ‘herrings’ 33 (Sp. *arenque*), but in this case the form can more easily be explained as a loan from Italian (*aringhe*) or Calabrese (cf. NDDC, s.v. *ringa*/*renga*).

[30] It is uncertain whether [ˈtoᵟo lo popuˈlito] 2 is singular or plural: in the first case, we should list a further form of article. This form would mirror a generic southern IR type *lo*/*lu*, since before consonants southern Calabria has *u* (cf. Chilà/De Angelis 2024, 57).

[31] For the sake of simplicity, syntactic and lexical examples will be generally provided with a non-phonetic transcription (Spanish orthography is employed, with some adjustments: e.g. <g>/<gi> = [ʤ]).

[32] See *pa todo lao* 3, 4, *pa casa* 9, *para acá* 24 instead. Confusion between *para* and *por* is well attested among Italian immigrants and is frequently employed in literary *Cocoliche* (cf. e.g. Engels 2012, 78). See §3.2.2.2.

as a relative pronoun or a generical complementizer (*che polivalente* within the tradition of Italian studies), as is certainly the case of *que le* ['she'] *va todo los año va a paseare* 3.

On the lexical level, *giriando* [ʤiriˈando] 1 and *giriar* [ʤiriˈar] 6 clearly show the interference with the speaker's Calabrese dialect (cf. NDDC, s.v. *girïari*; DDCM, s.v. *girïàri* 'to roam'), while an interesting example of calque is displayed by *populito* 2, a form by which the speaker intends to render Sp. *pueblito(s)*. As for *callas bardata* ['kaʤas barˈdata] 10, which refers to 'roads provided with an enclosure wall', one should recall that an analogous derivative of Sp. *barda* 'hedge, fence or wall' (cf. DLE, s.v. *barda*[2]) is found in Mexico (cf. DA, s.v. *bardado*, *-a* 'provided with a fence, wall or other solution that delimits its perimeter or separates it from other land', and again DLE, s.v. *bardado*[2], *-da* 'protected by a *barda*'). There are some generic italianisms: *dopo* 'later' 33, *ora* 'now' 8, 10, 11 bis, *là* 'there' 12.

3.2 The *Microcontact* project and its interviews

The project *Microcontact. Language Variation and Change from the Italian heritage perspective* (funded by the European Research Council) was led by Prof. Roberta D'Alessandro (Utrecht University) and lasted five years (2017-2021). Its main aim was to collect data from different Italo-Romance dialects spoken in the Americas, by speakers that were born in Italy and subsequently moved to Argentina, Brazil, Canada (Quebec), or the USA. It focused on the effects of language attrition and contact-induced change.[33]

The data were collected through fieldwork. In particular, as far as Argentina is concerned, two data collection campaigns were carried out: the first in 2018, by Francesco Maria Ciconte, and the second in 2019, by [Author 2], one of the co-authors of this paper. In total, around 100 people were interviewed: most of them had been born in Italy, but some second-generation immigrants were also included. In the second campaign (2019), 71 informants were interviewed: out of them, 58 were first-generation immigrants, while 13 were heritage speakers who were born in Argentina and acquired the Italo-Romance dialect from their parents or grandparents (aged 26-92; mean age 74; 29 participants were female).[34] The informants came from different regions of Italy, and they lived in various localities of Argentina: interviews were conducted in the capital district of Buenos Aires, as well as in its province (e.g. La Plata, San Justo or San Martín); moreover, in the cities of Rosario, Santa Fe, Córdoba and in the village of Colonia Caroya (province of Córdoba), which was founded by Friulian settlers in 1878. The interviews were structured in two parts: in the first we gathered spontaneous data: the interviewer asked some generic questions (e.g. "How was the trip from Italy to Argentina?" or "What did you do as soon as you arrived in Argentina?"), to which the informant answered in their native Italo-Romance variety. This part lasted around 5-10 minutes (sometimes longer, if it was evident that the informant was keen on telling stories about their past). After that, some specific tasks were carried out to gather data about the syntactic phenomena considered in the *Microcontact* project. Most importantly, the setting of the whole interview was in the local language spoken by the informant, or, if this was not possible, in Italian: Spanish was hardly ever used, and the informants themselves appreciated the opportunity to talk in their Italo-Romance variety (see Andriani et al. 2022a, b).[35]

In this paper, we analyse two samples taken from interviews collected in Santa Fe in 2019. As we will see, the two samples differ in the ways in which the two languages known by the informant interact: in the first, Sicilian and Rioplatense Spanish are used in a continuous

[33] See https://microcontact.sites.uu.nl/ [last access: March 8th, 2025] for further details on the project.
[34] All the spontaneous data collected during the fieldwork are publicly available on the interactive atlas of the project (https://microcontact.hum.uu.nl [last access: March 8th, 2025]).
[35] This is an important difference with the text collected by Meo Zilio and discussed in §3.1.

code-switching; in the second, the informant uses a fossilised interlanguage that she developed after she had arrived in Argentina, which is still far from the grammar of the target language. On the other hand, it is far from her native (Campanian) dialect, even if she was explicitly asked to speak dialect.

3.2.1 The Sicilian informant

The first sample comes from a male Sicilian informant that grew up in Rosolini (province of Siracusa, South-Eastern Sicily). He moved to Argentina when he was 24 years old, and he was 88 at the time of the interview. He reached the primary school education level. He declared that he stopped speaking Sicilian after he arrived in Argentina, because he did not have contact with other Sicilian immigrants.

In the sample, the informant told the interviewer how his life in Sicily used to be when he was a child.

3.2.1.1 Transcription

[1] faˈʧeva i ˈpːane (0.7) aˈpːreso ˈuna ˈstantsa (1.1) e+ (0.7) ˈfeʧe un ˈforno ˈgrande, a lˈleŋːa (1.8)

[2] enˈdonse (0.7) lo veˈʧino (0.7) non teˈnia ˈkwesto ˈforno aˈsi (.) enˈdonse veˈnivano a ˈfare il ˈpane en mi ˈkasa (0.7)

[3] ˈedʒo porˈtava la faˈrina (1.9) la amːaˈsːava (1.5) e lo poˈneva aˈi (0.5) aˈrːiba ˈuna ˈmesa en kwalˈkjer ˈlado (.) kon manˈtel ˈblaŋko e toðo (0.8) perˈke si- perˈke faˈʧeva- si doˈveva leviˈtare il ˈpan (0.6) ˈke teˈnia ˈlevito (.)

[4] non si poˈdeva ˈsubːito ˈmetːere a ˈfːorno (1.3) teˈnia ke s̪peˈtːar noˈmɛ ˈdue o ˈtre ˈora (1.0)

[5] enˈdonse ˈeʒa mi maˈma (1.2) le meˈtːeva en el ˈforno, prepaˈrava el ˈpane, lo uˈʃːiva (1.1) e koˈsi ˈkada ˈuno no ˈdava no ˈse ˈde ˈkwanto ˈkada ˈkilo (1.2) posːibːilˈmente ˈdue ˈtre ˈpani (1.0)

[6] i ˈkon ˈesto noˈsotro en la ˈgerːa non suˈfːrimːo ˈnaða (.)

[7] peˈkːe no se poˈdia (.) ˈvender ˈpane (1.2) e goˈvjerno unikaˈmente ˈdava ˈuna liˈbːretːa (1.4) ˈke doˈvevano ˈfare (1.2) un ˈmedjo ˈkilo de ˈpan po pːerˈsona (1.5) di ˈpːju no (1.8)

[8] ˈera paneˈria de goˈvjerno (1.0)

[9] de ˈpju non si poˈdeva (1.0) ˈne venˈdere faˈrina (.) ˈne ˈtrigo (.) ˈnaða (1.1)

[10] e aˈi ˈe ˈonde saˈlivɑ el banˈdido dʒuˈljano (1.5) saˈlio por ˈkweʰto (0.8) peˈkːe ˈlui̯ faˈʧeva ke komˈprava ˈtrigo (2.0) i lo venˈdeva (1.1)

[11] lo agaˈrːamo ˈuna ˈve (.) ˈdos ˈvese (.)

[12] ˈuna ˈve ˈiso ˈkomo (2.0) un kaˈxon de ˈmwerto (0.8) esˈtaba ˈtoðo ˈpje((laughing))no de ˈtrigo ((laughing)) (.)

[1] [My mom] made bread. She took a room and made a big wood oven.

[2] So, the neighbors didn't have such an oven, therefore they came to make the bread in my house.

[3] They brought the flour, made a mass and put it there, on any part of a table, covered with a white towel and everything. Because it was necessary to make the dough rise, because it contained yeast.

[4] You couldn't put it in the oven right away, you had to wait two or three hours.

[5] So, my mom put them in the oven, she prepared the bread, she removed it from the oven, and so everybody gave us a part – I don't know how much exactly – for each kilogram, maybe two or three loafs of bread.

[6] And with this we did not suffer at all during the war.

[7] Because you couldn't sell bread, the government gave us only a ledger, so that we could receive half a kilo per person, no more than that.

[8] It was a government bakery.

[9] You could not have more than that, you could not sell flour or wheat, nothing.

[10] And that's when the Bandit Giuliano became famous, because he bought wheat, and then sold it.

[11] We caught him once, twice.

[12] Once he made like a coffin, it was full of wheat.

[13] So the police caught him, and since then they kept him in prison, but he escaped and flew to the mountains.

[14] That's when he became famous, because he killed many policemen, and did much more.

[15] Well, Sicily is famous for that as well.

[13] enˈtonse la poliˈsia lo agaˈrːo (1.9) e de ˈese moˈmento lo ˈpuso ˈpreso (0.6) ˈpero ˈpoi̯ skaˈpːo (1.0) e se ˈfue̯ a la monˈtaŋːa (0.6)

[14] aˈi ˈe ˈonde se ˈiso faˈmoso ke maˈtava (ˈtropːo) poliˈsia i ˈtoðo (0.7)

[15] ora siˈsilja e faˈmoso por ˈeso tamˈbjen ((laughing)) (.)

[16] e koˈsi (1.0)

[17] i ˈehte ˈe la ˈvida i aˈsi kri(ˈovan) noˈsotros, a no̯iˈaʈi̯ (1.8)

[18] ˈera ˈdopo de la ˈgwera (1.3) ˈke doˈvevamo ˈfare? (0.7)

[19] no aˈveva ˈnjente (.) ˈnel ˈpopolo ˈi-

[16] And so…

[17] And so is life, and we grew up in these times.

[18] It was after the war, what should we do?

[19] There was nothing in the village and...

3.2.1.2 Linguistic analysis

In this sample, the informant spoke freely, without being interrupted by the interviewer or by her daughter (who was present, but never talked). At first sight, it is evident that he speaks a very different type of *Cocoliche*, compared to that of the Calabrese speaker discussed in §3.1: while the latter displays a language in which Italo-Romance and Spanish show a high degree of fusion, in the present sample the Italo-Romance and the Spanish parts can be distinguished most of the times, so that the linguistic shape of this recording appears to be the result of a continuous code-mixing between the two varieties known by the speaker. Nevertheless, this sample is interesting because the speaker keeps switching involuntarily, although he was explicitly requested to speak in Sicilian and the interviewer (i.e., the coauthor of this paper) pretended he did not know Spanish at all. According to the informant's daughter, he has always used a language characterised by this type of mixing. To illustrate his way of building sentences, we repeat here utterance 2, in which we mark the IR chunks with italics, the RSp. chunks are underlined:

> **[2]** <u>enˈdonse</u> (0.7) <u>lo veˈtʃino</u> (0.7) *non* <u>teˈnia</u> *ˈkwesto ˈforno* <u>aˈsi</u> (.) <u>enˈdonse</u> *veˈniᵛano a ˈfare il ˈpane* <u>en mi ˈkasa</u>.

Since this sample allows to distinguish quite well between the parts in Spanish and those in Italo-Romance (even though they are not adjacent), we will discuss them separately.

In the Spanish chunks, a first group of features is typical of Rioplatense Spanish (cf. §3.1.2; for Santa Fe, see Donni de Mirande 2004). These are the so-called *seseo* (the neutralization /θ/ ~ /s/), as in [enˈdonse] 'thus' 2, [ˈvese] 'times' 11, [ˈiso] 'make.PRF.IND.3SG' 14; the almost complete loss of final -/s/ ([lo veˈtʃino] 'the neighbours' 2, [enˈdonse] 'thus' 2, 13, [ˈedʒo] 'they' 3, [ˈora] 'hours' 4, [no] 'us' 5, [noˈsotro] 'we' 6, [ˈve] 'time' 11, 12, [ˈe] 'is' 10, 17, [suˈfːrimːo] 'suffer.PRF.IND.1PL' 6, [agaˈrːamo] 'catch.PRF.IND.1PL' 11 – exceptions in [ˈdos] 'two' 11, [noˈsotros] 'we' 17; see §3.1.2); and *žeísmo* (e.g. [ˈedʒo] 'they' 3, [ˈeʒa] 'she' 5). The aspiration of preconsonantic /s/ and the loss of intervocalic /d/ ([ð]) are not found consistently. The former is attested in one out of three cases ([ˈesto] 'this' 6, [esˈtaba] 'stay.IMPF.IND.3SG' 12 vs [ˈehte] 'this' 17 – note that it is found in IR [ˈkweʰto] 'this' 10), the latter has only one dubious occurrence ([paneˈria] 8, possibly from Sp. *panaderia* – which might also be based on Sicilian). Finally, the loss of final /n/ in [teˈnia] 'have.IMPF.IND.3SG' 2 could

be a feature of Rioplatense Spanish (but final /n/ is realised in all other cases, e.g. [ˈpan] ‘bread’ 3, 7, [kaˈxon] ‘box’ 12, [tamˈbjɛn] ‘also’ 15).

Other phonetic properties of the Spanish parts are the presence of a pentavocalic system, coherently with both Sicilian and Spanish, the assimilation [rp] > [pː] in [po pːerˈsona] ‘per person’ 7, and voicing of /t/ in [enˈdonse] ‘thus’ 2, 5 (but [enˈtonse] 13). In addition, we observe four properties that might be due to the IR background of the speaker, namely the realisation of /s/ as affricate ([veˈtʃino] ‘neighbours’ 2; cf. It. [viˈtʃino]), the presence of [v] instead of [β] in [ˈdava] ‘give.IMPF.IND.3SG’ 5 and [goˈvjerno] ‘government’ 7, 8, and the accent retraction in [se ˈfuẹ] ‘go.away.PRF.IND.3SG’ 13; finally, the alternation in the realisation of RSp. /ʒ/ as [ʒ] or [dʒ]. Two cases present consonant lengthening ([suˈfːrimːo] ‘suffer.1PL.PST’ 6 and [monˈtaŋːa] ‘mountain’ 13): this be due either to a phonological process, or to the borrowing of an IR form (code-mixing).

As far as morphology is concerned, the drop of final /s/ lead to a systematic change of the nominal and pronominal plural morphology (e.g. [lo] ‘it’ 2, [ˈedʒo] ‘they’ 3, [no] ‘us’ 5, [noˈsotro] ‘we’ 6 – but [noˈsotros] 17). This is expected in the Argentinean context, and more generally we can observe that the morphological system is coherent with what we would expect, except for some uses of [e] ‘and’ instead of [i] ‘and’, and the verb forms [saˈlivɑ] ‘come out.IMPF.IND.3PL’ (?) 10 and [cri(ˈovan)] ‘grow.up.IMPF.IND.3PL’ 17: in both cases, though, the exact form is hard to understand, and it might indicate that the speaker himself was unsure about how to realise these words.

On the syntactic level,[36] the most notable properties are the expected use of the possessive pronoun without article (*en mi casa* ‘in my house’ 2), while the use of the complementizer *que* with a generic adverbial function (*se hizo famoso que mataba...* ‘he became famous because/when he killed...’ 14) and the absence of Differential Object Marking (‘DOM’: *asì cri(oban) nosotros* ‘they grew us up like that’ 17) might be due to the influence of Italo-Romance, and in the second case more specifically to Italian (Sicilian has DOM, like Spanish). Finally, we observe some phenomena which might be attributed to a spontaneous, unplanned structuring of the discourse, such as the reduplication in *ella mi mamá* 5, the construction of an indirect interrogative (*no sé de cuánto* ‘I don’t know how much’ 5), and the absence of agreement in *Sicilia es famoso* ‘Sicily is famous’ 15 and *este es la vida* ‘that’s life’ 17.

For the lexical level, see below.

Turning to the Italo-Romance chunks, we observe some properties that can be attributed to the Sicilian background: in phonology, these concern the presence of the retroflex in [noiˈaʈi] ‘we’ 17, the doubling of /b/ ([ˈsubːito] ‘immediately’ 4, [posːibːilˈmente] ‘possibly’ 5), assimilation ([peˈkːe] ‘because’ 7, 10, [i ˈpːane] ‘the bread’ 1, [a ˈfːorno] ‘in the oven’ 4), and syntactic gemination ([a ˈlːeŋːa] ‘the wood’ 1). In syntax, Sicilian features are the use of the *passato remoto* (e.g. *fece* ‘do.PRF.IND.3SG’ 1) and the transitive use of *uscire* ‘exit.INF’ 5. Finally, there are some lexical elements that show the Sicilian origin of the informant: *levito* ‘yeast’ and *levitare* ‘make.rise.INF’ 3 without diphthong (cf. AIS 2, 235, pt. 859 Mascalucia (Catania): [u ˈlɛvitu] ‘the yeast’), *spettar* ‘wait.INF’ 4 without the vowel *a-* (cf. AIS 8, 1643, pt. 819, 838, 875 in Eastern Sicily: [spiˈtːati] ‘wait!’) and the use of feminine *libretta* ‘ledger’ 7 instead of It. *libretto* or *libro contabile* 7, which is typical of Sicilian (Angela Castiglione, p.c.).

In addition to these properties, at the phonetic level there are some phenomena that are probably due to Spanish influence, such as the voicing of /t/ in [poˈdeva] ‘be.able.IMPF.IND.3SG’ 4, 9, the (not consistent) aspiration of preconsonantic /s/ ([ˈkweʰto] ‘this’ 10 – but

[36] Following the same criterion as in §3.1.2, syntactic and lexical items are cited by using the Spanish orthography for the Spanish chunks and the Italian for the IR ones.

[ˈkwesto] 2) and the weakened pronunciation of the labiodental in [veˈniᵛano] ‘come.3PL.IMPF 2). In addition, a notable phenomenon is stress shift in [venˈdere] ‘sell.INF’ 9 and [doˈvevamo] ‘must.IMPF.IND.1PL’ 18, which follow the Spanish stress pattern.

In morphology, the informant usually produces the expected forms. Exceptions are found in the use of the article [el] in [el ˈpane] ‘the bread’ 5, which is otherwise realised as [il], and the use of the preposition [de] ‘of’ (9, 18), which contrasts with [di] in 7. In the verbal morphology the only non-expected form concerns the use of the singular with a plural subject in [porˈtava] ‘bring.IMPF.IND.3SG(/PL)’ 3 (and maybe also in [am:aˈs:ava] ‘put.together.IMPF.IND.3SG(/PL)’ and [poˈneva] ‘put.IMPF.IND.3SG(/PL)’, which are coordinated with [porˈtava], if the informant did not change the subject here).

Turning to syntax, we observe some constructions that might be due to the contact with Rioplatense Spanish, such as the causative use of *levitare* (*si doveva levitare il pan* ‘we had to make the bread grow’ 3), the use of bare nouns in *tenía levito* ‘it contained yeast’ 3, *vender pane* ‘sell bread’ 7, the use of the prepositions *a* in *a fforno* ‘in the oven’ 4 and *de* in *dopo de la guera* ‘after the war’ 18; and finally the use of *avere* with existential meaning in *no aveva niente* ‘there was nothing’ 19.[37]

As far as the lexicon is concerned, we can first observe the distribution of Spanish and IR forms. In total, the sample consists of 263 tokens: 144 of them are in Spanish (55% of the total words), 103 in Sicilian or Italian (39%), and 16 are ambiguous.[38] However, the proportion of words used in one or the other language is not evenly distributed among word categories: if we count the number of lexical types, nouns and adjectives are predominantly in Spanish (21 vs 8 and 3 vs 1, respectively), while there are more IR than Spanish verbs (16 vs 13), see Fig. 2. This seems to point to the fact that the informant’s Spanish lexicon had acquired a greater variety in the case of nouns, while he tends to switch more often to IR when he uses a verb.

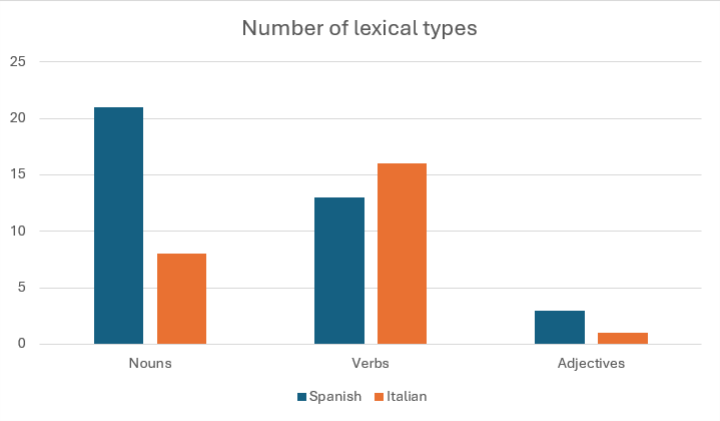

Fig. 2: The number of different lexical types in Spanish and Italo-Romance (Sicilian informant).

3.2.2 The Campania informant

[37] *Avere*-existentials are attested in some dialects of Italy, but crucially not in South-Eastern Sicily, cf. Bentley, Ciconte & Cruschina (2015).

[38] Words that have the same (or a very similar) form in both Spanish and IR or Italian were assigned to one of the two languages if both the preceding and the following chunks were in the same language. If they were different (the preceding chunk in IR/Italian and the following in Spanish, or vice versa), they were considered ambiguous.

The second sample from the *Microcontact* corpus was collected from a female informant who was originally from Gesualdo (province of Avellino, in the Irpinia area). She moved to Argentina when she was 23 years old, and she was 90 at the time of the interview. She reached the primary school education level. She declared that after moving to Argentina she kept speaking her local (Irpinian) dialect with her husband, who died several years before 2019. Since her husband was very conservative, she did not work, and she used to spend most of her time at home, working as housewife and growing up her children.

In the interview, she tells an anecdote about an argument she had with the clerk of a dry cleaning, where she wanted to pick up her husband's suit although she had left the receipt at home. This story was brought up by the granddaughter of the informant, who was present during the interview. Note that also in this case the informant was asked to speak in her dialect.

3.2.2.1 Transcription

As in the first sample, we indicate with INF the informant and with INT the interviewer and we place uncertain translations inside round brackets. In addition, GD refers to the informant's granddaughter.

INF:	**[1]** ˈdʒɔ ˈfuˌi a se- limˈpja un ˈsakːə de mi eˈspɔso (.) lo ˈfuˌi a- o dʒeˈve a limˈpja (1.2)	**[1]** I had brought a suit of my husband to the dry cleaner.
	[2] e ˈpɔ me ˈfuˌi+ m iŋgonˈtraˌi a paˈsːa+ (0.7) e ˈdikə ˈora ˈdʒɔ ˈstɔˌi paˈsːandə por aˈkːa ˈdikə ˈpɔ ˈpa volˈve ˈɔtra ˈve ˈkə ˈdʒɔ (viˈviamə par aˈʒa ˈante) (.)	**[2]** And once I happened to pass nearby, I say well, I'm just nearby, so I don't need to come another time (we used to live far away)
	[3] enˈtonse ˈdigə paˈsːe par aˈi (.) ˈdʒo lo ˈvi esˈpɔsta aˈi ˈsta ˈbolga de ˈtɔdo (.) ˈdigə porˈfa-ˈbon ˈdia ˈke ˈse ˈʒɔ (.) ˈdig ˈdamːə il ˈsakːo de mi eˈsposo ˈdigə ˈdʒa ˈsta aˈi ˈeste ˈɛ ˈmːə ˈest ˈɛ ˈmːio (.) ˈdikə damːeˈlo (.)	**[3]** so I say, I passed nearby, I saw the whole (package?) visible there, I say "good morning and so", I say "please give me my husband's suit, it's over there, it's mine", I say "give it to me."
	[4] "ˈnɔ siˈɲora (.) no ˈaˌi boˈlːetːa no ˈaˌi ˈsakːo" (.)	**[4]** "No madam, no receipt, no suit".
	[5] "ˈpor faˈvore ˈdikə damːeˈlo se ˈɛ ˈmːio (.) (no ˈvoi) a busˈka un ˈsakːə de ˈotrə" (.)	**[5]** "Please", I say "give it to me, it's mine! I am not looking for someone else's suit!"
	[6] "ˈnɔ siˈɲora, no ˈaˌi boˈlːetːa (.)	**[6]** "No madam, you have no receipt.
	[7] no ˈaˌi boˈlːetːa no ˈaˌi ˈsakːo" (.)	**[7]** No receipt, no suit."
GD:	*el ticket*	The receipt.
INF:	**[8]** no ˈaˌi boˈlːetːa (1.6)	**[8]** "No receipt... ".
INT:	*sì certo, la ricevuta*	Sure, the receipt.
INF:	**[9]** ˈai paˈpito, ˈkwanto ˈtuve də luˈtːʃa, no me lo ˈdjɔ ɛ	**[9]** Alas, I fought so much, he didn't give it to me!

3.2.2.2 Linguistic analysis

This sample is very different from the preceding one, and much more similar to what we have seen in §3.1: it is a case of fused language, in which it is impossible to clearly separate Spanish

and IR chunks. We therefore propose a comprehensive description of all the properties together (as we did in §3.1.2).

At a phonetic level, there are some properties that are typical of RSp., some of which coincide with what we have found in the other informants. First of all, *seseo* ([enˈtonse] 'thus' 3), *žeísmo* ([ˈdʒɔ] 'I' 1, 2, 3, [ˈʒɔ] 'I' 3, [dʒeˈve] 'bring.1SG.PST' 1, [aʒˈa] 'there' 2, [ˈdʒa] 'already' 3), and the drop of final /s/ ([ˈve] 'time' 2, [ˈante] 'before' 2, [enˈtonse] 'thus' 3). In addition, this speaker displays stressed enclitics in imperatives, a typical property of RSp. (Colantoni & Cuervo 2013), see [damːeˈlo] 'give.IMP=ME=it' 3, 5. Conversely, two typical properties of RSp. are absent: the drop of intervocalic /d/ (we have instead [ˈtɔdo] 'everything' 3), and the aspiration of prevocalic /s/ ([ˈstɔi̯] 'be/stay.1SG.IND.PRS' 2, [esˈpɔsta] 'display.PST.PTCP.F.SG' 3, [ˈsta] 'be/stay.PRS.IND.3SG' 3, [esˈpɔso] 'husband' 1,3, [ˈeste] 'this' 3, [busˈka] 'search.INF' 5).

Other phonetic features are typical of the Irpinian dialect spoken by the informant. First of all, her vowel system seems to consist of seven stressed vowels, with /e/ distinguished from /ɛ/ and /o/ from /ɔ/ (although with some overlapping): for /e/ see e.g. [dʒeˈve] 'bring.PRF.IND.1SG' 1, [ˈve] 'times' 2, [ˈeste] 'this' 3, [ˈke] 'what' 3, [ˈse] 'know.PRS.IND.1SG' 3, [boˈlːetːa] 'receipt' 4, 6, 7, 8, while /ɛ/ is found in [ˈɛ] 'is' 3, 5. In the case of the back vowels, we find the open-mid vowel in [ˈ(d)ʒɔ] 'I' 1, 2, 3 (but [ˈdʒo] 3), [esˈpɔso] 'husband' 1 (but [esˈposo] 3), [ˈpɔ] 'then(?)' 2, [ˈstɔi̯] 'be/stay.PRS.IND.1SG' 2, [ˈɔtra] 'other' 2 (but [ˈotrə] 5), [esˈpɔsta] 'display.PST.PTCP.F.SG' 3, [ˈtɔdo] 'everything' 3, [ˈdjɔ] 'give.PRF.IND.3SG' 9, while the close-mid vowel is present in [ˈora] 'now' 2, [enˈtonse] 'thus' 3, [ˈbon] 'good' 3, [damːeˈlo] 'give.IMP=me=it' 3, 5, [siˈɲora] 'madam' 4, 6, [faˈvore] 'favour' 5. Another feature of this sample is the drop of [e] in first position, when followed by [sC], and irrespectively of the presence or absence of stress. However, it is not consistent: the stressed vowel is dropped in [ˈsta] 'this' 3 (but [ˈeste] 3), the unstressed in [ˈstɔi] 'be/stay.PRS.IND.1SG' 2, [ˈsta] 'be/stay.PRS.IND.3SG' 3 (but [esˈpɔso] 'husband' 1, 3). Other processes targeting unstressed vowels are the realisation of /e/ as /i/ when followed by a nasal ([iŋgonˈtrai̯] 'happen.PRF.IND.1SG' 2, [il] 'the' 3, [siˈɲora] 'madam' 4, 6), the presence of a final vowel in [faˈvore] 'favour' 5, and in particular the very frequent weakening of final unstressed vowels, which are reduced to schwa (e.g. [ˈsakːə] 'suit' 1, 5, [ˈdikə] 2, 3, 5 and [ˈdigə] 'say.PRS.IND.1SG' 3, [paˈsːandə] 'pass.GER' 2, [ˈkə] 'that' 2, [ˈdamːə] 'give.IMP=me' 3, [ˈotrə] 'other' 5), coherently with what happens in Irpinian.[39]

Regarding consonants, the informant displays several geminates, usually when this corresponds to her native dialect ([ˈsakːə] 'suit' 1, 5, [paˈsːa] 'pass.INF' 2, [paˈsːandə] 'pass.GER' 2, [ˈdamːə] 'give.IMP=me' 3, [damːeˈlo] 'give.IMP=me=it' 3,5, [paˈsːe] 'pass.1SG.PST' 3, [boˈlːetːa] 'receipt' 4, 6, [ˈsakːo] 'suit' 4, 6). The doubling in [aˈkːa] 'here' 2 has an IR correspondent in the form [ˈkːa]. Conversely, the lenghtening of [ɛ ˈmːio] 'it's mine' 3, 5 is due to *raddoppiamento fonosintattico*. Other changes affecting the consonants are the voicing of /k/ when it follows a nasal ([iŋgonˈtrai̯] 'happen.PRF.IND.1SG' 2, cf. §3.2.1), and the drop of final /r/ in infinitives ([limˈpja] 'clean.INF' 1, [paˈsːa] 'pass.INF' 2, [volˈve] 'come.back.INF' 2, [busˈka] 'search.INF' 5, [luˈtːʃa] 'fight.INF' 9). All these processes are again transferred from the informant's IR dialect.

In morphology, we find both Spanish and IR features. In the nominal domain, [ˈ(d)ʒɔ] 'I' 1, 2, 3 and the possessive pronoun [mi esˈpɔso] 'my husband' 1, 3 are features of Spanish; on the other hand, the masculine article is It. [il ˈsakːə] 'the suit' 3, while the Irpinian object clitic [o] 'him' is once used (in other cases, we find [lo], which is both Italian and Spanish). In the verbal domain, Spanish forms are [ˈstɔi̯] 'be/stay.PRS.IND.1SG' 2, existential 'have' ([ˈai̯]

[39] Notably, weakening to schwa seems to occur also after deletion of final /s/, in [viˈviamə] 'live.IMPF.IND.1PL' 2.

‘there is’ 4, 6), [ˈse] ‘know.PRS.IND.1SG’ 3, [ˈdigə] ‘say.PRS.IND.1SG’ 3 (but [ˈdikə] 2, 5), [ˈvoi̯?] ‘go.PRS.IND.1SG’ 5 in the indicative present; [ˈfui̯] ‘go.PRS.IND.1SG’ 2,[40] [paˈsːe] ‘pass.PRF.IND.1SG’ 3, [ˈvi] ‘see.PRF.IND.1SG’ 3, [ˈtuve] ‘have.PRF.IND.1SG’ 8, [ˈdjɔ] ‘give.PRF.IND.3SG’ 9 in the synthetic perfect. IR forms are the already mentioned [ˈdikə] ‘say.PRS.IND.1SG’ 2, 5, the simple past [iŋgonˈtrai̯] ‘happen.PRF.IND.1SG’ 2, all the infinitive forms (see above), and the past participle [esˈpɔsta] ‘display.PST.PTCP.F.SG’ 3.

At the syntactic level, we observe the calque from IR *m’incontrai a passa’* (2, cf. It. *mi trovai a passare* ‘I happened to pass’), the use of *para* instead of *por* (*passé par ahí* ‘I passed nearby’ 3, cf. §3.2.1), and the use of *de* instead of *que* with deontic *tener* (*tuve de lucha’* ‘I had to fight’ 8), maybe influenced by Irp. *agge da* ‘I have to’.

The lexicon can be described as based on RSp.; some notable expressions are the filler *que sé yo* (‘I don’t know’, lit. ‘what do I know?’) and *ay papito!* (‘my gosh’, lit. ‘ahi daddy!’), which are both very frequent in Argentina. There are a few borrowings from IR (*po(i)* ‘then’ 2, *ora* ‘now’ 2, *esposta* ‘display.PST.PTCP.F.SG’ 3, alternations between *dico* and *digo* ‘say.PRS.IND.1SG’), but they do not affect the overall picture.

4 Conclusions

In this paper, we have discussed three language samples that show different degrees of fusion and overlapping between two or even three related languages (Spanish, an IR variety, and in some cases also Italian). These recordings show how the concrete reality of *Cocoliche* can vary, but also that they derive from a common background: it characterises people that came to Argentina as young adults (they were all 23-25 years old), when they had completely acquired their native language (their local IR dialect); at this age, they had also overcome the critical period, which according to influential acquisitional linguists is crucial for a native-like acquisition of a language (cf. fn. 14). A further ingredient in their linguistic biography is that they arrived in a country where there was a huge number of Italian immigrants; this means that they never completely disactivated their native language (maybe with some adaptation towards an IR *koiné*). Conversely, they had limited access to Spanish, and it is probable that the Spanish input they received often came from other L2 speakers, thus it might have been an already modified version of Rioplatense Spanish.

The three samples show on the one hand the transfer from L1 to L2. This includes the application of phonological rules of their L1 in the L2 and the use of L1 morphology. On the other hand, we observed the results of L1 attrition, with transfers from the L2 to the L1. While these processes are expected, what is more striking is the fusion of L1 and L2, which can show up as continuous code-switching between the two languages, or as a fossilised interlanguage, in which the informants have acquired some parts of the target grammar and lexicon, but their acquisition process then stopped due to probably external reasons. The result is what looks like a fused language, an impression that is made stronger by the fact that Spanish and Italo-Romance are typologically and genetically closely related languages. A second striking point is that *Cocoliche* is apparently the only language these speakers are able to speak nowadays:[41] the Spanish interlanguage and the attrited L1 converged in a middle point, in which, depending on the speaker, the language may be closer to the L1 or to the L2 (see Fig. 1 above).

The emergence of a peculiar language like *Cocoliche* was made possible by almost unique external factors, such as the huge immigration waves to Southern America, the age at which these people arrived in Argentina, the close relation between the languages of these

[40] In 1, [ˈfui̯] is ambiguous between the ‘go’ reading and the ‘be’ reading (which would be ascribed to IR).

[41] This fact was directly verified by one of the co-authors during the 2019 fieldwork campaign; we do not have direct information in this sense for the Calabrese speaker interviewed by Meo Zilio, but the descriptions of *Cocoliche* he gives point to the same direction.

immigrants and the official language of Argentina; probably, the low education level of many immigrants also contributed to the fact that they had limited access to Spanish. Nowadays, spoken *Cocoliche* is very difficult to investigate due to the lack of living speakers. Without ceasing to identify further informants, future investigation should be oriented towards the discovery and valorisation of other unpublished recordings, either within the materials gathered and preserved by the *ADREV* and the *Microcontact* project or through still unknown sources.

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List of abbreviations

Cal. = Calabrese
GD = granddaughter
INF = informant
INT = interviewer
IR = Italo-Romance
Irp. = Irpinian
It. = Italian
Lat. = Latin
lit. = literally
pt. = point(s) (of a linguistic atlas)
RSp. = Rioplatense Spanish
Sp. = Spanish