In recent years a growing amount of attention and research has focused on various aspects of the intonation of the Spanish language. Despite this growing amount of attention, a relatively small amount of attention has been given to Chilean Spanish. The studies that have been done on the Chilean variety have either been done in controlled laboratory settings, or with less controlled speech on more marked utterances such as interrogatives, vocatives, commands, and requests. One study, Ortiz, Fuentes, Astruc (2010) takes a brief look at more controlled broad focus declaratives, but does so with relatively controlled speech and focuses the majority of its attention on more narrow focus utterances and interrogatives. As a result, with respect to Chilean intonation, more is assumed than is known about what is considered to be the most basic of utterances: broad focus declaratives.

The current study examined and compared global and local intonational patterns across three different speech types. Six native Chileans were recorded doing three speech tasks that that varied from controlled and formal to more spontaneous. Additionally, spontaneous data from four more native Chileans was gathered from the Sociolinguistic Corpus of Spoken Chilean Spanish, or COSACH, in order to better study a specific pattern that continued to manifest itself in the data. Results showed several types of variation across the different speech types. The current study focuses on a previously undocumented tendency that was observed in its majority in the utterance final portion of the intonational contours examined.

Research has shown how dialect in a first language emerges (Siegal, 2010), but less is known about how dialect in a second language develops. Learners of Spanish have adopted more target-like dialectal features after study abroad (Geeslin, 2011; Salgado-Robles, 2011). The current study examines how heritage speakers of Mexican descent with varying degrees of Spanish/English bilingualism develop dialectal features during a semester abroad and how their identity affects this development.

The participants were four advanced U.S. university students, studying in Argentina and Central Spain. A variety of tasks elicited salient phonological dialectal features. In addition, interviews and questionnaires ascertained information regarding identity and attitudes toward the target dialects. The results varied depending on the learner, and to an extent the proficiency level. Of the two in Spain, one adopted dialectal features to identify more with the local dialect and its speakers and one did not adopt any dialectal features, claiming her Mexican heritage. In Argentina both learners adopted local dialectal features. One adopted a specific phonological feature, citing interest in fitting in both in Argentina and a in larger Latino community, while the other struggled more with the dichotomy between fitting in and preserving her Mexican heritage.

These mainly qualitative results have implications for heritage learners planning to study abroad. It shows that the extent to which learners identify with their heritage along with their proficiency level affects whether or not their first dialect of Spanish changes after being immersed in an additional dialect during a semester abroad.