# Spanish Dialectal Variation in the Foreign Language Classroom: Students' Attitudes, Instructors' Beliefs and Teaching Practices, and Treatment of Variation in Textbooks

by

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## Abstract

Communicative competence is a key concept in the field of foreign/second language (FL/L2) teaching and learning. In fact, the development of the learner's communicative competence is one of the essential goals of FL/L2 teaching. In Bachman's model (1990) of Communicative Language Ability, sociolinguistic competence is one of the elements of language competence, which includes the sensitivity to differences in dialects and varieties, among other abilities. Thus, the treatment of regional varieties in L2/FL classes is needed for learners to be able to reach a high level of communicative competence.

Most of the studies about the treatment of Spanish dialectal or local varieties and the attitudes towards them have been conducted in the U.S., where there is a large number of Spanish native speakers (e.g. Achugar & Pessoa, 2009). Therefore, conducting this type of research in a different context is needed. While in the U.S. there is still "the implementation of educational policies and language ideologies that promote monolingualism" (Achugar & Pessoa, 2009, p. 200), which seems to endorse conflicting and negative attitudes towards the Spanish language, in Canada multilingualism and multiculturalism are promoted instead. Moreover, Spanish-English bilingual communities are not widespread in Canada, making contact with real speakers and regional varieties a challenge for Spanish FL students.

Due to the scarce research in contexts other than the U.S., this dissertation investigates the issue of dialectal variation in Canadian university Spanish FL classes from different perspectives. The dissertation consists of three independent

studies that look at students' attitudes towards Spanish varieties, instructors' beliefs and their reported teaching practices in regard to dialects, and how the pedagogical materials used in Spanish FL classes address dialectal variation. The findings suggest that attitudes towards regional varieties tend to positively increase when learners have travelled abroad. Instructors do recognize the lack of exposure to dialects in FL classes, but their lack of explicit sociolinguistic knowledge may hinder their ability to deal with the topic adequately in class. Pedagogical materials do provide some information about dialectal characteristics, but such information is limited and at times overly general, and is rarely part of the core content, resulting in a lack of exposure to dialectal features.

## Preface

This thesis is an original work by Laura Monerris Oliveras. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Attitudes and Beliefs of Learners and Instructors of Spanish as a Second or Foreign Language towards Different Varieties of Spanish", No. Pro00012141, 17/03/2010.

**Dedication**

*Als meus pares, Francesc i Margarita*

*a la meva germana Ariadna*

*al meu germà Xavier*

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## Table of Contents

## List of Tables

## List of Figures

# INTRODUCTION

## 1 Purpose and Significance of the Current Research

Language varies based on the characteristics of the speaker and the context of the interaction. Variation is one of the reasons why foreign language (FL) students often experience considerable frustration in their first encounter with native speakers of the target language. Within the classroom environment, they have likely been exposed to a controlled version of the target language and have probably been practicing dialogues based on set phrases and language chunks previously studied. Yet, in real life, when travelling to a Spanish-speaking country, for example, and needing to interact with custom officers at the border of the country or airport entrance, vowels sound different, and word endings seem to disappear. Students are confused and soon become frustrated because of lack of comprehension. They face the issue of language variation every time they encounter a native speaker outside the classroom. Students think they "know" the language, but they are not prepared to interact successfully in real situations.

Today, the attainment of communicative competence is the declared goal of FL education in North America. Thus, learners are trained in order to develop their grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic skills, and an interaction-oriented approach to language learning is the one that prevails in FL classes. However, one aspect of sociolinguistics —dialectal variation— is still not fully addressed, hence the students' frustration on their first real contact with native speakers, especially in light of the fact that most students have little or no exposure to the foreign language outside the classroom. Thus, more attention needs to be paid to language use in real life situations, including the use of different varieties. Providing knowledge about variation to our students would be one way to help them reach a more complete understanding of the target language. In order to do so effectively, we need to start with the recognition of students' attitudes towards different varieties and teachers' beliefs and

pedagogical practices regarding variation, as well as the examination of the treatment that textbooks give to this issue.

The most important contribution of the research presented here would be towards the development of students' sociolinguistic competence, with special attention to dialects in a FL learning environment. By explicitly addressing language variation, students' communicative competence may be enhanced through an awareness of variation, an understanding of the implications of variation in real situations, and more linguistic choices when they interact with native speakers. In this way, dialectal variation should be considered a tool of communication and not as a judgement of different ways of speaking.

An immediate implication that can be drawn from the current research is an increased understanding of students' attitudes towards Spanish varieties and their speakers. This may also have an influence on teachers' expectations, so that they can act according to their own beliefs, as well as provide a basis for pedagogical steps that might be appropriate. As a result, the student learning of dialectal varieties would improve, since they could develop their knowledge more consciously. That is, through an explicit exploration of language variation, students could expand their knowledge in the form of consciousness raising, since students already possess linguistic schemata they are not always aware of.

Given the dearth of research in the field, one last significance of these three current studies lies in stimulating and encouraging other scholars to continue researching the area of language varieties within the teaching field so that informed steps can be taken in pedagogical decisions to efficiently address dialectal variation in FL classrooms.

It is not the intention of this dissertation to establish or defend a single position nor to provide a definitive answer to the issues discussed, but rather to present the findings of three exploratory studies as a starting point in addressing the lack of research on the teaching and learning of dialectal varieties in Spanish as a foreign language, especially in the Canadian context, and to provide some directions for further research.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

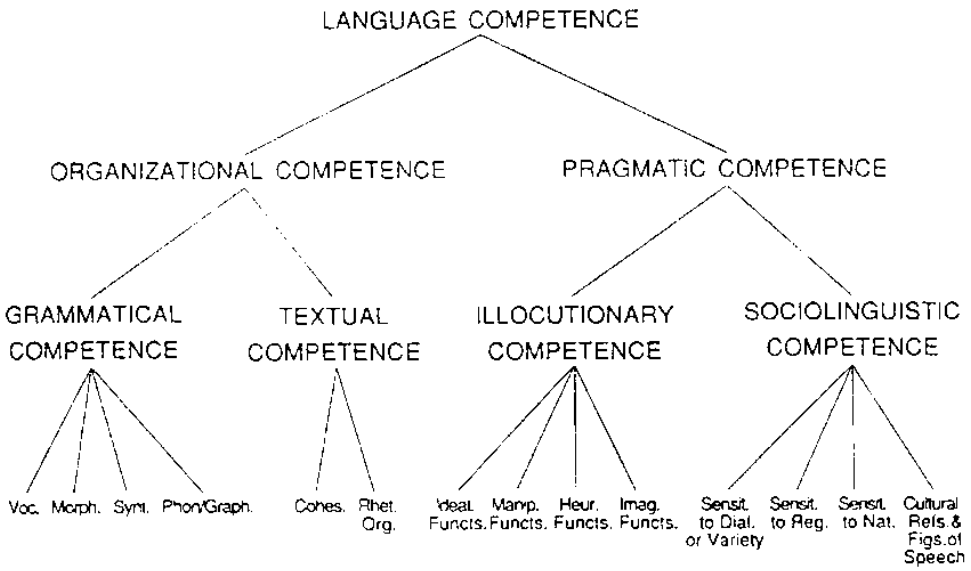
The concept of communicative competence is important since language use needs to be appropriate in a given social context. Consequently, the development of communicative competence is a key goal in foreign or second (FL/L2) language teaching. Here we will draw detailed attention to one of its components: sociolinguistic competence.

The main tenets of Chomsky's theory of Transformational Grammar are linguistic competence (innate knowledge of language) and performance (production of language), a model which neglected sociocultural features. Some scholars rejected his view of language and reacted in disagreement to his notion of linguistic competence, which represented only part of what one needs to know to be a competent language user. For example, Hymes (1972), based on a tradition in sociolinguistics, had a broader view of the concept and proposed that the knowledge that people have when they communicate, that is, rules of language use in socially appropriate situations, or what he called *communicative competence*, should also be considered in a model of language competence. Thus, Hymes' notion of communicative competence draws attention to sociolinguistic appropriateness in communicative language use —what is formally possible, feasible, contextually appropriate, and actually performed— which also connects language and culture.

Consistent with Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), and other work on communicative competence, Bachman (1990) includes sociolinguistic competence as one of the elements of language competence in his model of Communicative Language Ability (CLA) (see Figure 1), in an attempt to define "what language proficiency is" in order to provide "a broad basis for both the development and use of language tests, and language testing research" (p. 81). Bachman defines sociolinguistic competence as the "sensitivity to the conventions of language use (...) determined by the specific language use context", which "enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to that [specific] context" (p. 94). According to him, sociolinguistic competence consists of the ability to see the differences in dialects and varieties, knowledge of

registers, the naturalness of speech, and the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech within discourse. Hence, sociolinguistic competence is necessary to be fully proficient in a language.

**Figure 1.** Components of the Language Competence model (Source: Bachman, 1990)




Therefore, based on Bachman's CLA model, being competent in a language means to have both the knowledge of language structure and the "ability to select appropriately, from among an enormously large set of options, the linguistic form(s) that will most effectively enable the speaker to realize her [or his] momentarily changing goals" (Valdés and Figueroa, 1994, p. 34) by taking into account the situational context in which communication occurs. Here is where sociolinguistic competence plays an important role, in helping with the selection of the appropriate linguistic elements by considering the origin of the addressee and the speaker, and the context of communication. Thus, sociolinguistic competence is currently considered an equally important element of communicative ability that needs to be highlighted in order to achieve effective communication.

In sum, since the introduction of the concept of communicative competence by Hymes in 1972, in contrast to Chomsky's linguistic competence, the notion of sociolinguistic competence (Bachman, 1990) —or the sociocultural

use of rules and rules of discourse, as Canale and Swain (1980) define it— has gained interest among researchers as well as language teachers. Since then, there has been an attempt to attribute the same level of importance to sociolinguistic competence as to grammatical competence in language classes, but more work needs to be done in this respect, as sociocultural rules of language use could be better promoted when teaching a second or foreign language. For the present dissertation, the focus is on the ability to distinguish and understand the use of the main Spanish dialectal features in the appropriate situational context. While we may refer to other aspects of sociolinguistic competence, they are not the main focus here.

It is clear that sociolinguistic competence is needed in order to become proficient and communicatively competent in a language, which is the ultimate goal of FL/L2 learning. This is the main reason why treatment of dialectal varieties in FL/L2 classes should be included as part of the core content, so that learners can have a good command of communicative competence.

## 3 The Importance of the Spanish Language

There is no doubt that the Spanish language is becoming more and more important on a global scale. Spanish is a language that counts on a large native population due to the vast geographical regions it covers. The Spanish language is official in 21 countries around the world, alphabetically listed as follows: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. According to the annual report by Instituto Cervantes (2012), Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world with over 387 million native speakers,[1] after the Chinese languages (1,000 million speakers).[2] However, we should also add the Spanish speakers living outside the mentioned Hispanic countries (almost 90 million) and

[1] According to Ethnologue, there are 406 million first-language speakers of Spanish (last accessed on March 23, 2014).
[2] Demographic trends show that while the number of Spanish native speakers is growing, the rate of English and Chinese native speakers is decreasing (Graddol, 2006, p. 60).

those who study the language in 86 non-Spanish-speaking countries (over 18 million[3]). Therefore, Spanish is, at present, spoken by over 495 million[4] people around the world, for whom it is either a mother tongue or a second or foreign language. However, this number will continue to grow, as it is estimated that, by 2030, there will be 535 million Spanish speakers, which will represent 7.5% of the world speakers. It has also been calculated that 10% of the world population will be able to understand Spanish within three or four generations, and by 2050, the US will become the largest Spanish-speaking country (Muñoz & Muñoz, 2012; Instituto Cervantes, 2012).[5] These figures represent how the Spanish-speaking population is rapidly increasing on a global scale.

The great demographics of the language (i.e. number of speakers, number of countries where it is official, and its vast geographic extension) and, above all, its worldwide attraction (i.e. the large number of students) allow the Spanish language to be considered an international language. As such, it is a language that shows ample linguistic variation, which makes it an appropriate language to examine when considering how dialectal variation is treated in the FL/L2 classroom.

## 4 Spanish Dialectal Variation

Spanish presents diverse internal characteristics that allow the identification of speakers from different regions. However, this identification is not straightforward because diatopical (i.e. regional) particularities are not contained in clearly cut areas, but along a continuum and in distinct regions at the same time. Having a relatively homogeneous space where certain characteristics are accumulated would help to define the dialectal regions. However, the

[3] The Instituto Cervantes (2012) claims that the accessible data in those countries is neither complete nor exhaustive, since these data don't reflect private teaching institutions, and has calculated that the real demand for Spanish is 25% higher (p. 10).
[4] Muñoz and Muñoz (2012) present different numbers in their article. They estimate approximately 460.2 million speakers (including natives, non-natives, and learners), of which 359 million have Spanish as a native language in Hispanic countries, and 46.5 million speak it in countries where Spanish is not official (p. 63). None of the two references cited here clearly details their sources.
[5] These are the estimates given in various sources. However, it is not clear how these estimates were arrived at.

geographical limitations of Spanish dialects are difficult to identify, to the extent that Pottier (1992) "honestly" concluded that "when it is about such an extensive, widespread and spoken language like Spanish, no border dense enough with linguistic features can be established" (p. 294, my translation). Thus, making dialectal divisions for a language spoken in such a vast geographical extension is a challenging task.

Linguistic characteristics that reveal the different regional varieties are found in phonology (e.g. *seseo*, the pronunciation of the letters *s*, *z*, and *ce/ci* as /s/), morphosyntax (e.g. the subject pronoun system), and the lexicon (e.g. *autobús*, *guagua*, *camión* 'bus'). These linguistic features reveal distinct regional varieties, and different approaches to the categorization and division of dialects have been adopted for educational purposes.

In regard to dialectal division, a distinction is traditionally made between Peninsular and Latin American varieties. This simple division is the one used by Arteaga and Llorente (2009) to present morphosyntactic features, since they argue that most regional morphological and syntactic characteristics belong to one of these two main areas. However, there are other approaches to the categorization of Spanish dialects. For example, Moreno Fernández and Otero (2008) provide a general division into 8 distinct dialectal varieties of Spanish after considering phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic features: Castilian, Andalusian, and Canary varieties in Spain; Caribbean, Mexico-Central American, Andean, Rioplatense, and Chilean varieties in Latin America. Others have divided the different varieties according to phonological characteristics alone, e.g. *tierras altas* (highlands) and *tierras bajas* (lowlands) (e.g. Schwegler & Kempff, 2007), or according to differences in the lexicon, as in the Varilex project,[6] where the frequency of use of specific lexical items is compared among some of the main cities, as centers of prestige, in each of the Spanish-speaking countries. In fact, the lexicon is where the most diversity is observed, which makes the teaching task seem almost impossible to carry out. However, for the average educated user, these differences do not usually cause a communicative breakdown.

[6] http://lecture.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~cueda/varilex/

In the field of teaching Spanish as a foreign or second language, for pedagogical and mostly practical reasons, the dialectal varieties of the language have generally been considered along geographic lines, whether it be countries, regions, or groups of regions. Even though political contemporary borders do not coincide with dialectal divisions, the dialectal classification by country, which also coincides with most of the bibliography available, is useful as a teaching tool and for descriptive purposes (Lipski, 1994). Thus, the names of the countries or regions are used to reference a dialect (e.g. Argentinean, Caribbean, Chilean, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Nicaraguan, etc.). This approach in dialectal nomenclature is the one used in the current study as well. Using political borders as a defining factor for dialects, and perhaps also as a representation of the national standard dialect for each country, simplifies the job of the teacher, even though it does not reflect the true dialectal division, which would be too complex for most FL students anyway. The goal here is not for instructors or students to study dialectal characteristics in as much detail as dialectologists would, but to become aware of the main dialectal features. The key here is to acknowledge, know, accept, and enjoy the richness of the Spanish varieties. All varieties of a language are equally legitimate from a communicative, linguistic, historical, and cultural perspective. This non-judgmental message is the one that FL/L2 teachers must understand and learners must receive.

## 5 Context of the Current Research

Spanish is the third most studied foreign language, according to the First Berlitz Report on the study of Spanish in the world, elaborated in 2005,[7] and the demand for Spanish continues growing.[8] The Instituto Cervantes (2012) estimates that there are at least 18 million students of Spanish as a FL in 86 countries where Spanish is not an official language. The U.S. and Brazil rank, respectively, first

[7] Berlitz is an education company that offers language training around the world. The main findings of the I Berlitz Report have been cited in numerous consulted resources, but I have not been able to access it.

[8] The number of enrolments at the Instituto Cervantes around the world has grown thirteen times between 1993 and 2011 and the demand is still growing. In the 2010/2011 academic year, the number of registrations increased by 8% over the previous year (Instituto Cervantes, 2012, p. 10).

and second with respect to the number of Spanish FL students, while Canada is in the tenth position (pp. 9-10). Thus, Spanish learners have opportunities to communicate not only with the millions of native speakers in the 21 countries where Spanish is the official language, but also with many more non-native speakers.

Given the ever-increasing number of students of Spanish and the great variation in the language, it is of the utmost relevance to examine the issue of dialectal variation in Spanish FL classrooms. Students, teachers, and publishers are all involved in the task of continually finding newer and effective pedagogical strategies. Thus, research in this field is full of possibilities. It is surprising that despite the ease with which variation is perceived by speakers and the interest shown by sociolinguists, little attention has been paid to variation in the teaching field. For this reason, the present dissertation focuses on the issue of dealing with dialectal variation from the perspectives of the learners, instructors, and textbooks.

Research in the teaching of Spanish as a FL/L2 has not been equal in different countries. For example, Spanish teaching in the US already counts on an extensive bibliography, in large part motivated by the needs of a growing Hispanic population. However, most research there has concentrated on the teaching of Spanish for heritage speakers. In Brazil, the analysis of the teaching of Spanish is prompted by the geographical proximity of several Spanish-speaking countries, by the Mercosur agreement, which promotes trade and immigration between Brazil and other South American (Spanish-speaking) countries, and, above all, by the fact that Spanish is now obligatorily offered as an optional course for students in secondary schools since the approval of the *Ley del español* 'Spanish Law' (Lei 11.161, 5-August-2005). Spain, being the origin of the Spanish language, promotes the learning and teaching of the Spanish language around the world through the Instituto Cervantes and international exchange programs offered by the Spanish Ministry of Education (e.g. sending visiting teachers to schools around the world). Research on the teaching of Spanish as FL/L2 is

mostly presented at conferences in Spain, Latin America, or the US. However, not as much research in this area has been conducted in Canada.

The Canadian context offers great research potential in this area, and despite the fact that the Spanish-speaking population is much less than in the US, the interest in the study of Spanish has increased, particularly in recent years (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). Among the reasons for this increase are the development of immigration policies (immigration from Spanish-speaking countries is progressively growing in Canada),[9] which has added to the already heterogeneous population of Canada, [10] and the economic, commercial and cultural relationships between Canada and Spanish-speaking countries.[11] All these factors have certainly caused an increase in the popularity of the Spanish language, and thus student enrollment in Spanish courses in educational institutions. For example, Spanish is now offered in primary schools in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Québec. In Alberta, where the current research was conducted, there has been a considerable effort to promote the Spanish language. There is a Spanish Language Consultant/Advisor working with the Alberta Ministry of Education, a recently-opened Spanish Resource Center in Edmonton in 2010, and, since 2006, a branch of the Instituto Cervantes in Calgary, which offers teacher training and proctors the official DELE (*Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera*) exams of Spanish language proficiency. According to the Spanish Ministry of Education (2012), Alberta was the first province to implement Spanish-English bilingual programs in primary schools in

[9] There has been a strong growth (32%) of Spanish speakers from 2006 to 2011 (Statistics Canada). This increase allows the Spanish language to gain importance among the immigrant languages spoken in Canada, which also promotes a wider acceptance for learning Spanish.
[10] According to the 2011 Canadian census, 56.9% of the population has English as their mother language (or language used at home) and 21.3% has French, while 19.8% has a different mother language (the most common of which, with more than 400,000 speakers each, are: Punjabi, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, German). Also, Spanish is one of the top 12 immigrant languages most spoken at home in Montreal (15.2%, 2nd place), Ottawa (8.1%, 2nd place), Calgary (7.9%, 4th place), Edmonton (6.5%, 5th place), Toronto (5.3%, 7th place), and Vancouver (3.2%, 8th place).
[11] For example, Canada has been part of the NAFTA agreement with the US and Mexico since 1994. Also, according to a report by the Oficina de Economía y Comercio 'Economic and Trade Office' of the Spanish Embassy in Ottawa in 2012, Mexico is the third largest supplier of Canadian imports after the US and China (p. 36). In addition, Canada has bilateral free trade agreements with other Latin American countries such as Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Peru (p. 37).

2001-2002. In 2009, bilingual programs were also established in secondary schools, and the number of learners registered increased from 100 to 3954 in 2011-2012, with 20 schools offering such programs within the International Spanish Academies (ISA) network. At the post-secondary level, around 200 teaching centres in Canada offer Spanish language and culture courses. Almost all of the 94 Canadian universities offer Spanish courses, with 42 of them offering undergraduate degrees in Spanish language and literature, and 10 offering graduate degrees (Ministerio de Educación, 2012). At the University of Alberta, where the current research was conducted, students can obtain a BA, MA, and PhD in Spanish and Latin American Studies, and numerous programs also require a language other than English, with many students choosing Spanish.

Despite the rising popularity of Spanish as a FL in Canada, learners do not have much direct contact with native Spanish speakers, in contrast to the US, for example, as the number of Spanish speakers in Canada is still relatively small. Thus, it is all the more important that topics such as dialectal variation be dealt with in the classroom in light of the scarce opportunities for practice outside the classroom. However, one serious difficulty is the lack of knowledgeable teachers, as "specific programs aimed at the training of Spanish teachers are non-existent, although there are some attempts to create them [programs] in some universities" (Ministerio de Educación, 2012, p. 164, my translation). Thus, much research remains to be done on the state of Spanish language teaching in Canada.With all this in mind, the three studies presented in this dissertation intend to start filling this gap by investigating, at the post-secondary level, the attitudes of Spanish FL students towards dialectal variation, instructors' beliefs and attitudes towards teaching variation, and how some of the textbooks used in Canadian Spanish FL courses deal with the issue.

## 6 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of three independent papers tackling the issue of dialectal variation from different perspectives. Each individual paper has its own structure, its own reference list, and its own appendices. Article 1 is dedicated to

analysing students' attitudes towards speakers of different Spanish-speaking regions. Article 2 is dedicated to the exploration of instructors' beliefs about dialectal variation and their own teaching practices. Article 3 is devoted to the examination of Spanish FL textbooks in regard to how they treat dialectal characteristics as part of their content. The concluding chapter provides a summary of the three papers, a general discussion, and the general implications of the three studies. The reference section at the end contains a list of all the resources cited in the dissertation, including those from the individual papers.

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# ARTICLE 1: DOES CONTACT LEAD TO MORE POSITIVE LANGUAGE ATTITUDES?

## 1 Introduction

Any learner of Spanish will sooner or later come to realize that there are many different ways of speaking Spanish in different parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Acknowledging dialects and their features is an important part of the development of a student's sociolinguistic knowledge, which is a component of communicative competence. In order to develop what Bachman (1990) defines as "sensitivity" to dialect, learners must be exposed to different varieties. In the Canadian context, learners of Spanish as foreign language (FL) have only limited opportunities to have contact with speakers of the target language (TL). How do they get exposure to different varieties and does the limited exposure that they do get influence their attitudes towards the language of Spanish speakers from different regions? The study presented in this article examines learners' attitudes towards these varieties of Spanish. Although there is an extensive body of research that has explored different aspects of language attitudes in different contexts, surprisingly little empirical research has considered the learner of Spanish's perspective on regional variation. This study seeks to address this gap by examining whether Canadian university-level learners have positive or negative attitudes towards Spanish speakers of different varieties and by exploring potential predictors of these language attitudes.

## 2 Review of the Literature

Spanish is a language with a large amount of linguistic variation, mostly due to the vast geographical extension in which the language is spoken. Geographical delineation of Spanish dialects is not simple, as variants transcend political borders; however, for practical reasons, political borders are used as identifying labels for dialects (cf. Lipski, 1994). Thus, in the current article, different

countries or groups of geographically-close countries are used to refer to the different varieties spoken in these regions.

## 2.1 Literature on Language Attitudes

Although attitude is a commonly-used term, it is not often defined. Language attitudes rarely involve linguistic features themselves, but rather reflect judgements of the people who speak the language rather than how they actually speak. After all, the terms attitude and opinion are generally synonyms in daily usage, as indicated by Baker (1992, p. 14). Thus, by asking students for their opinions about speakers, we can infer their attitudes towards varieties. It is widely accepted that language attitudes comprise cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. For the purposes of the current study, only the first two elements will be considered, since the nature of the method used to collect the data involves a questionnaire rather than the observation of participants' behaviour. Through cognitive processes "[l]inguistic forms, varieties and styles can set off beliefs about a speaker, their group membership, and can lead to assumptions about attributes of those members" (Garrett et al., 2003, p. 3), while the affective element refers more to emotional reactions, as "a person may hear a language or linguistic variety which they are unable to identify, but may nevertheless consider it 'pleasant', or 'ugly'" (p.4).

The literature on language attitudes has addressed a range of topics, only some of which are directly relevant to the present study. A pioneering study by Lambert (1967) introduced the matched guise task to measure stereotypical attitudes of French and English speakers' towards their own and each other's language. The technique of having listeners' judge language samples has been widely adopted and adapted in sociolinguistic research. An important topic of research among applied linguists has been native speakers' and non-native speakers' (negative) attitudes towards L2 accented speech (e.g., Fayer & Krazinski, 1987). A smaller number of studies have explored L2 learners' attitudes towards non-native accent in English (e.g. Derwing, 2003). There also exists a growing literature addressing the topic of learner attitudes towards the

variety of English that is most appropriate for residents of non-English-speaking countries who need to use English as a tool for international communication (i.e., the so-called English as a lingua franca or ELF variety proposed by Jenkins, 1997, 2002). A study by He and Zhang (2010), for example, found that in their survey most of the Chinese learners preferred to have an English native-speaker target for grammar but an indigenized "China English" model for pronunciation. While the latter studies may offer some interesting analogies to the situation of Spanish as a world language, relatively little empirical research has specifically investigated learners' attitudes towards regional varieties of Spanish. Two studies that stand out are by Beaven and Garrido (2000) and Ducar (2008).

Beaven and Garrido (2000) examined FL students' attitudes towards distinct Spanish varieties using a questionnaire that probed the learners' general perceptions of language varieties and their priorities to learn a specific variety as well as differences between proficiency levels. Their study was conducted at a university in the UK where the Spanish language program promoted Spanish as a global language of communication, that is, dialects were explicitly addressed in class through audiovisual materials, grammar and vocabulary sections. Beaven and Garrido found that students in their second year were less concerned with learning a particular variety than first year students, claiming that all varieties were intelligible. Furthermore, a large percentage of participants (85%) believed that exposure should not be limited to one language variety. In fact, only 20% of the students thought that they would be confused if they were exposed to more than one variety. Also, while all students had similar contact with speakers from Spain, second year students had almost double the amount of contact with Spanish speakers from Latin America (67%) than first year students (35%). The researchers argued that this could be due to the fact that students at this level were proficient enough in Spanish to be able to interact with a wider range of Spanish speakers.

The second study of particular relevance to this discussion is by Ducar (2008) who also examined students' attitudes towards language varieties and their preferences for specific varieties, but focused on heritage language (HL) learners

in the US. These students showed a preference to learn specific varieties: Mexican (30%), academic (28%), Mexican-American (16%), Castilian (12%), or other (12%). It was presumed that the preferred varieties were those that the students believed would be most useful to them. Ducar concluded that it is important to promote the learning of a second dialect while validating the HL learner's own variety. An interesting design feature in Ducar's study is that participants were presented with a choice among many varieties including Mexican-American Spanish, Chicano Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Puerto Rican Spanish, Cuban Spanish, Castilian Spanish (from Spain), Tucson Spanish, U.S. Spanish, and Academic Spanish (as well as having the option of an "other" category). In Beaven and Garrido's study (2000), everything seems to indicate that they used the traditional labels of Spanish vs. Latin American varieties.

In the current study, data about students' attitudes towards different Spanish varieties are collected through questions that ask about the people that speak these varieties, and not about the dialects themselves. Since students are not dialectologists, political borders, rather than linguistic features, are used to identify the varieties spoken by people from different geographical regions (see section 3.3).

## 2.2 The Role of Contact in Language Attitudes

In SLA theory, contact (or exposure) with the TL is important because it provides the learner with linguistic input that fuels the language learning process, which leads to interlanguage development (e.g., Ellis, 2008). Contact with TL speakers is also important for the development of attitudes. In social psychology, intergroup contact is theorized to reduce stereotypes and prejudices towards other group members (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Specifically, the Contact Hypothesis posits that prejudice stems from a lack of knowledge and exposure to other ethnic groups. Interaction and contact with members of different groups should allow individuals to gain information about them and lead to a reduction in hostility and prejudice. Extending Pettigrew's idea to the area of language attitudes, it can be hypothesized that the more contact students have with Spanish-

speakers from different geographical backgrounds, the more positive their attitudes towards these diverse people and their regional varieties become. This study tested this hypothesis by examining the relationship between learners' contact with Spanish and the positivity of their language attitudes.

### 2.3 Statement of the Research Questions

The current study aims to contribute to this very limited literature on L2 learners' attitudes towards Spanish varieties by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are students' orientations, interest, and attitudes towards the learning of Spanish?
2. Are there differences among students' attitudes towards people from various Spanish-speaking regions, hence their varieties?
3. What factors influence the students' attitudes towards diverse Spanish speakers and their varieties?

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Context

The present study took place in a Spanish language program at a large university in Western Canada. Spanish language or content courses may be taken by students of any discipline, either as an Arts course required for their degree or as an elective. In this particular context, the Spanish-speaking community of the city is very small; as a result, students do not generally have much personal contact with Spanish speakers or much exposure to the different varieties of Spanish-speaking regions and their culture, unless they have travelled to Spanish-speaking countries. Their actual contact with speakers of the Spanish language is usually limited to their course instructors, who may be native speakers of Spanish from various origins or non-native speakers of Spanish who acquired their Spanish language proficiency in different ways and places. At the time of data collection, the sixteen instructors of the classes who participated in the study were

from Mexico (n=4), South America (i.e. Argentina, Chile, and Colombia) (n=3), and Canada or other non-Spanish-speaking countries (n=9).

## 3.2 Participants

Participants for the study were recruited from undergraduate courses in Spanish language, culture, linguistic or literature from different levels. A total of 257 students signed the consent form (see

Appendix A) and completed the questionnaire (see Appendix B, and section 3.3 for a description) during approximately 30 minutes of class time. Out of all of the collected questionnaires, 43 were excluded from the analysis because the students either immigrated to Canada after the age of 6[12] (n=32), or were heritage speakers of Spanish[13] (n=11). This exclusion was necessary due to the fact that their different cultural background would have influenced their responses about their attitudes towards Spanish speakers in a different way from students of a solely Canadian background. The analyzed data were from the 214 participants, 55 males and 159 females, with an average age of 21.66 years, ranging from 17 to 49 years. At the time of the study, participants were enrolled in language courses at the 100 level (n = 70), 200 level (n = 55) and 300 level (n = 26), or in content courses taught in Spanish (n = 63).[14]

## 3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study elicited data about participants' attitudes towards speakers of different varieties of Spanish and collected information concerning their general social background and their linguistic experiences. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of four sections: 1) attitudinal/motivational variables, 2) open-ended questions about attitudes towards Spanish speakers and culture from different regions, 3) semantic differentials about the Spanish spoken in the different regions, and 4) social and linguistic background information. The questionnaire was written in English and distributed during Winter 2010 semesters.

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[12] Arriving to Canada after the age of 6 implies that these students were not fully schooled in a Canadian education system.

[13] A broad definition of Heritage Spanish Speakers was used here as a criteria for the exclusion of these participants "language students who are raised in a home where a language other than English is spoken, who speak or merely understand the heritage language, and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (Valdés, 2000, p. 1). The presence and/or use of a certain dialectal variety in the family context would undoubtedly influence attitudes towards that and the other varieties.

[14] Levels of language courses are defined based on the semesters enrolled in Spanish university courses: 100 level (1 or 2 semesters), 200 level (2 or 3 semesters), and 300 level (4 semesters). Content courses refer to courses where the Spanish language is not the focus of study, but the means through which students learn about Spanish culture, linguistics or literature. Students enrolled in these classes may be taking one or more of these content courses at a time.

The first section of the questionnaire was adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), originally developed by Gardner (1958), later improved by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and further developed and cross-validated by Gardner and Smythe (1981). The original AMTB contains 19 subscales. Of the 19 scales, only 5 were selected and adapted for the purposes of the current study: 1) Attitudes towards the learning of foreign languages, 2) Attitudes towards the learning of Spanish, 3) Attitudes towards speakers from different Spanish-speaking regions (i.e. five distinct geographical groups mentioned below), 4) Integrative orientation, and 5) Instrumental orientation. Thus, this first and main component of the questionnaire consisted of a total of 45 statements or items, adapted for the purposes of the current study, which were divided into 9 attitudinal and motivational variables, each tested for reliability with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The 45 items were presented to the participants in random order, and each had to be rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). High scores on all variables reflected a positive or favourable attitude. Negatively worded items were scored reversibly. A description of the attitudinal and motivational variables follows:

1. *Interest in Foreign Languages*. This scale consists of six positively worded items and two negatively worded items referring to the participants' interest in learning and using foreign languages in general. No specific language is mentioned in the items. (Cronbach's alpha = .58).
2. *Attitudes towards Learning Spanish*. This measure is made up of four positively and four negatively worded items that assess the desire to learn Spanish. (Cronbach's alpha = .77).
3. *Attitudes towards the Mexican people*. This scale consists of five positively worded items about Mexican people. (Cronbach's alpha = .87).
4. *Attitudes towards the Spanish people*. This scale consists of five positively worded items about Spanish people. (Cronbach's alpha = .84).
5. *Attitudes towards the Central American people*. This scale consists of five positively worded items about Central American people. (Cronbach's alpha = .87).
6. *Attitudes towards the South American people*. This scale consists of five positively worded items about South American people. (Cronbach's alpha = .82)
7. *Attitudes towards the Caribbean people*. This scale consists of five positively worded items about Caribbean people. (Cronbach's alpha = .85).

8. *Integrative orientation*. There are three items in this variable that emphasize the importance of studying Spanish for the participants in order to enhance interaction with Spanish speakers. A high score indicates that the student has integrative reasons to learn Spanish. (Cronbach's alpha = .62).
9. *Instrumental orientation*. Students are presented with three items that emphasize the pragmatic or utilitarian value of learning Spanish. A high score indicates that the student has instrumental reasons to learn Spanish. (Cronbach's alpha = .26).[15]

As can be seen from the description of items above, the questionnaire probed attitudes towards the selected geographical groups: Mexico, Spain, Central America (including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama), South America (including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela), and the Caribbean (including Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico). Due to the large number of Spanish-speaking countries and the limited space and time to administer the questionnaire, this regional categorization was considered appropriate and practical. This grouping also is in accordance with Lipski's distribution of dialectal characteristics by countries (1994), and not by dialectal limits. At the same time, country labels commonly used by the general population to refer to different dialects have also been used in language attitudes research (Garrett et al., 2005).

The inclusion of the two scales designed to measure integrative and instrumental orientation were added in order to investigate whether these individual differences variables might influence learners attitudes towards varieties. *Integrativeness* (also referred to at different times as integrative disposition/ orientation/ motive) is a concept that has evolved in Robert Gardner and colleagues' comprehensive program of research on attitudes and motivation in L2 learning in the Canadian context (e.g., Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Integrativeness is defined by Dörnyei (2003) as "a positive interpersonal/affective disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with and become similar to valued members of that group" (p. 5). In contrast, some learners do not feel

[15] The unfortunate wording of 2 of the items in this variable, which included the word *only* right before the given motivation for studying Spanish, might be the reason for the very low correlation found. The mean of inter-item correlation is .09, with values ranging from -.084 to .225. This suggests a weak relationship among the items.

integratively motivated but rather have an instrumental orientation, which is characterized by more practical concerns such as getting a job or passing an examination. It is hypothesized here that an integrative orientation may predispose a learner to be more positively oriented towards a language variety they have been exposed to since integration involves "a psychological and emotional identification" with speakers of the target language (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 5).

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions about the participants' opinions and beliefs of the Spanish-speaking people from each of the five geographical Spanish-speaking regions specified, such as "What do you think of the people from Mexico? Why? Explain your reasons". Garrett et al. (2003) explain "language varieties and forms have indexical properties which allow them to 'stand for' communities, metonymically" (p. 12), which make it difficult to distinguish attitudes towards language varieties from attitudes towards users of these varieties. Thus, by asking students for their opinions on people, we can infer their attitudes towards varieties.

Participants' responses in the third section, which consisted of semantic differentials to rate the Spanishes of the different regions, were not complete or were extremely incoherent (e.g. the same rating was given for each of the semantic differentials for the Spanish of one country, and no ratings were specified for the other regions), making the results unreliable. Consequently, data from this measure was not analyzed.

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions from which social background information (i.e. gender, age, etc.) and linguistic experience information (i.e. knowledge of other languages, years studying Spanish, travel to Spanish-speaking countries, Spanish-speaking acquaintances, etc.) of the participants was elicited. Within this section, participants were also asked about their preferences and reasons for the selection of their Spanish language instructor.

## 3.4 Analysis

The data collected from the Lickert-scaled statements and the closed-

ended questions on the questionnaire were analyzed statistically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v.15. The statistical analyses included correlations and tests for mean comparisons such as t-tests, one-way between-groups, within-groups, and multivariate ANOVAs, together with pairwise comparisons or post-hoc tests, when applicable. The latter were carried out to test the effects of different independent variables (i.e., course level, having travelled to Spanish-speaking regions, knowing Spanish-speaking people, country of origin of instructor) upon several dependent variables including attitudes towards the Spanish of each of the five different regions and their speakers, attitudes towards the learning of the Spanish and foreign languages, and instrumental and integrative orientations. The alpha level was set at .05, unless otherwise specified.

Descriptive qualitative analyses were performed on the answers provided in the open-ended questions. Participants' responses reflected both the affective and cognitive components of attitudes.[16] All responses were classified into different categories, according to the type of comments provided by the participants: 1) positive, 2) negative, 3) neutral or undefined. The different categories were counted for frequency, and later examined in more detail in relation to the five different regions.

# 4 Results

The results are presented in order to answer the research questions. Statistical analyses are presented first, and a qualitative description of data from the open-ended questions follows.

## 4.1 Orientation, Interest in Learning Spanish and Foreign Languages

The first research question sought to explore students' orientation, interest, and attitudes towards the learning of the Spanish language. Regarding students'

[16] The behavioural component of attitudes was not addressed in the data, since participants never provided an answer that would fall into this category. In order to account for this component, different types of questions and/or observations of participants' actions would have been necessary.

reasons for studying Spanish, it was hypothesized that students would equally hold both types of orientation, instrumental and integrative. A paired-samples t-test was employed to compare the mean scores of both types of orientation, and to determine whether students were either integratively or instrumentally oriented, or both. Results show that participants had significantly more integrative ($N = 212$, $M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.6$) than instrumental ($N = 212$, $M = 2.7$, $SD = 0.7$) orientation to learn Spanish, $t\ (211) = 22.56$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed). The mean difference (md) was 1.4, with a 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging from 1.3 to 1.5, and the eta squared[17] statistic ($\eta^2 = .7$) indicated a very large effect size.[18] Likewise, when asked directly what was the main reason for studying Spanish, 71.5% of students ($n = 153$) selected an integrative motive (i.e., because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people), while only 19.6% ($n = 42$) picked an instrumental reason (i.e., because it will someday be helpful in getting a good job). As one would expect, it was observed that the higher the course level, the higher the scores in integrative orientation and the lower the scores in instrumental orientation, and vice versa for the lowest level group (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics for integrative and instrumental orientations by level groups

| Group | Integrative | | | Instrumental | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ***n*** | ***M*** | ***SD*** | ***n*** | ***M*** | ***SD*** |
| 100 level | 69 | 4.04 | 0.62 | 69 | 2.83 | 0.70 |
| 200 level | 55 | 4.28 | 0.63 | 55 | 2.73 | 0.74 |

[17] Measure of strength of relationship, alternative to Cohen's measure of effect size: *d*.
[18] In Cohen's terms, .01 indicates a small effect, .06 a medium effect, and .14 a large effect (1977, pp. 22-7).

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 300 level | 26 | 4.21 | 0.56 | 26 | 2.79 | 0.84 |
| Content course level | 62 | 4.29 | 0.56 | 62 | 2.58 | 0.69 |
| All | 212 | 4.20 | 0.60 | 212 | 2.72 | 0.73 |

The integrative orientation of students was moderately correlated with students' interest in learning foreign languages (FLs) ($r$ = .526, $N$ = 210, $p$ = .001) and with their attitudes towards the Spanish language ($r$ = .539, $N$ = 210, $p$ = .001). Students' responses confirmed an overall high interest in learning FLs ($N$ = 211, $M$ = 4.65, $SD$ = 0.37) and a largely favourable attitude towards Spanish ($N$ = 211, $M$ = 4.51, $SD$ = 0.51). Also, about 30% of students ($n$ = 65) were studying at least another FL in addition to Spanish. The most studied language was French ($n$ = 43) followed by Italian ($n$ = 11) and German ($n$ = 8); around 36% of participants ($n$ = 78) stated that they were fluent in different FLs besides Spanish, with French being the most frequent ($n$ = 51), and then Italian ($n$ = 7) and German ($n$ = 7).

As predicted, one-way between-groups ANOVA tests revealed a statistical effect for course level (i.e. 100-level, 200-level, 300-level, and content course level), resulting in an increase in the interest in learning FLs $F$ (3, 207) = 4.938, $p$ = .002, as well as in more positive attitudes towards the Spanish language $F$ (3, 207) = 12.752, $p$ < .001.

**Table 2** provides the descriptive statistics for both variables. However, in both cases, this increase was only statistically significant between the 100-level course and the content course groups: md = -0.238, 95% CI: -0.401 to -0.074, $p$ = .001, $\eta^2$ = .099, for interest in learning FLs; and md = -0.481, 95% CI: -0.693 to -0.268, $p$ < .001, $\eta^2$ = .21, for attitudes towards the Spanish language.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics for interest in learning a foreign language and attitudes towards the Spanish language by level groups

| Group | Interest in Learning Foreign Languages | | | Attitudes towards the Spanish Language | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *n* | *M* | *SD* |
| 100 level | 68 | 4.54 | 0.44 | 69 | 4.24 | 0.66 |
| 200 level | 55 | 4.68 | 0.36 | 54 | 4.61 | 0.35 |
| 300 level | 26 | 4.62 | 0.31 | 26 | 4.53 | 0.42 |
| Content course level | 62 | 4.78 | 0.28 | 62 | 4.72 | 0.29 |
| All | 211 | 4.65 | 0.37 | 211 | 4.51 | 0.51 |

The mean scores for interest in learning FLs and the positive attitudes towards the Spanish language were significantly higher for those students who had travelled to Spanish-speaking regions as compared to those of students who had not travelled (Table 3). However, the effect sizes ($\eta^2$) were quite small, indicating that these increases are practically not meaningful. In contrast, knowing or not knowing Spanish-speaking people did not significantly increase their interest in learning FLs or their positive attitudes towards the Spanish language (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Statistical results for the effects of having travelled and knowing Spanish-speakers on students' interest in learning foreign languages

| Group | *n* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *df* | md | 95% CI LB | 95% CI UB | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Interest in Learning Foreign Languages** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Travelled**[a] | | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | 52 | 4.53 | 0.41 | -2.825 | 209 | -0.16 | -0.28 | -0.05 | .005* | .04 |
| **Yes** | 159 | 4.70 | 0.35 | | | | | | | |
| **Know**[b] | | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | 21 | 4.48 | 0.50 | -1.803 | 22.267 | -0.20 | -0.43 | -0.03 | .085 | .01 |
| **Yes** | 189 | 4.68 | 0.35 | | | | | | | |
| **Attitudes towards the Spanish Language** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Travelled**[a] | | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | 51 | 4.35 | 0.50 | -2.580 | 209 | -0.21 | -0.36 | -0.05 | .011* | .03 |
| **Yes** | 160 | 4.56 | 0.50 | | | | | | | |
| **Know**[b] | | | | | | | | | | |
| **No** | 19 | 4.22 | 0.74 | -1.841 | 19.448 | -0.32 | -0.68 | -0.04 | .081 | .02 |
| **Yes** | 191 | 4.54 | 0.47 | | | | | | | |

*Note. df* = degree of freedom; md = mean difference; CI = confidence interval; LB = lower bound, UB = upper bound.

[a] Travelled to Spanish-speaking regions. [b] Know Spanish-speakers.

* The difference in the means is significant at $p < .05$.

## 4.2 Attitudes towards the Different Geographical Areas

The second research question related to students' attitudes towards people from different Spanish-speaking regions. Quantitative data examined the (significant) differences in students' attitudes towards the people and culture of the various geographical areas. Qualitative data, from the open-ended questions, show the types of attitudes that participants have towards the culture and Spanish speakers from the different regions. In section 4.3, the role that certain factors (i.e. independent variables) have in these attitudes will be explored.

### 4.2.1 Quantitative data

A one-way within-subjects ANOVA was performed to compare the means of each participant's attitudes towards the five different Spanish-speaking regions (i.e. Mexico, Spain, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean). Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4, which show high values for all geographical areas (above 4, within a five-point scale). The results of the test indicated that there was a significant difference among the regions, using the Huynh-Feldt correction,[19] $F$ (3.833, 766.514) = 6.287, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, observed power = .95.

The pairwise comparisons revealed statistically significant differences only for the attitudes towards the culture and people of Mexico compared with Spain (md = 0.094, 95% CI: 0.006 to 0.181, $p = .028$), and the Caribbean compared with Mexico (md = -0.132, 95% CI: -0.213 to -0.051, $p < .001$), Central America (md = -0.086, 95% CI: -0.155 to -0.016, $p = .006$) and South America (md = -0.093, 95% CI: -0.181 to -0.004, $p = .035$), respectively. The comparison between Caribbean and Spain was not significant (md = -0.039, 95% CI: -0.127 to -0.05, $p = 1.000$). Nevertheless, from a practical point of view, the mean differences amongst all the regions were quite small (i.e., less than 0.2 point difference between 4.03 and 4.16 on a five-point scale) (see Table 4). Despite the significant statistical results, the high observed power (.95) to find differences, and the big

[19] Since the assumption of Sphericity was violated, $p = .001$, the results from the Huynh-Feldt correction were used. It is slightly less conservative and more robust than the Greenhouse-Geisser correction, which is the one usually reported, according to Larson-Hall (2010).

sample size ($N = 201$), the overall effect size is very small (partial $\eta^2 = .03$), indicating that, in real life, these differences do not imply that participants have considerably more favourable attitudes towards one Spanish-speaking geographical group over the others. These quantitative results can be complemented with the qualitative responses provided by the participants in the questionnaire, which are explored in subsection 4.2.2 below.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics for attitudes towards all regional categories

| Region | *N*[a] | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 201 | 4.16 | 0.61 |
| Spain | 201 | 4.07 | 0.58 |
| Central America | 201 | 4.11 | 0.62 |
| South America | 201 | 4.12 | 0.57 |
| The Caribbean | 201 | 4.03 | 0.62 |

[a] Statistics are based on all cases with valid data for all dependent variables in the model.

In addition, these findings are consistent with the finding that students showed, for the most part, no preference for choosing their Spanish language instructors based on their country of origin. About 36% of students ($n = 78$) specified that they would choose a native instructor from a particular Spanish-speaking region (i.e. from Mexico ($n = 22$), Spain ($n = 21$), Central America ($n = 10$), South America ($n = 15$), or The Caribbean ($n = 9$), and 1 student indicated a preference for an instructor from two regions simultaneously. Two types of reasons were offered for their preference: 1) because they wanted to travel, work, live or study Spanish in the respective particular areas, or 2) because they liked or understood the accent from that region. However, a high percentage of this group of students (73%, $n = 57$) also explicitly indicated that they would choose a native speaker from *any* Spanish-speaking country, showing that, for the most part, their selection was not prejudiced by the Spanish variety spoken by instructors or their specific cultural background. On the contrary, students argued that "it is good to be exposed to different varieties and accents of the Spanish language" and that "it's important to hear all different accents". Around 57% of all students ($n = 121$) explicitly stated that the instructor's country of origin did not matter to them, arguing that the instructors' quality of instruction and their language knowledge

were much more valuable selection criteria than their place of origin or variety.

In short, students answered with overall positive attitudes towards all cultures and people from the five different regions, with most students not reporting a preference for a specific region or variety.

### 4.2.2 Qualitative data

The brief responses provided in the open-ended questions were also explored in detail in order to examine learners' attitudes towards the Spanish-speakers from the five geographical areas described. Participants' short responses were coded as follows: 0) no response (the participant did not provide a written answer), 1) positive (when positive adjectives or comments were used to express their opinions), 2) negative (when negative adjectives or comments were used), and 3) neutral or undefined (when the adjectives or statements used were not clearly under one of the previous categories, and/or when a neutral statement or adjective was provided with the intention to avoid making judgements towards people or positioning oneself). Examples of responses for each given code are provided in Table 5. The statements were also tallied in order to account for the frequency of each response type, as shown in Figure 2.

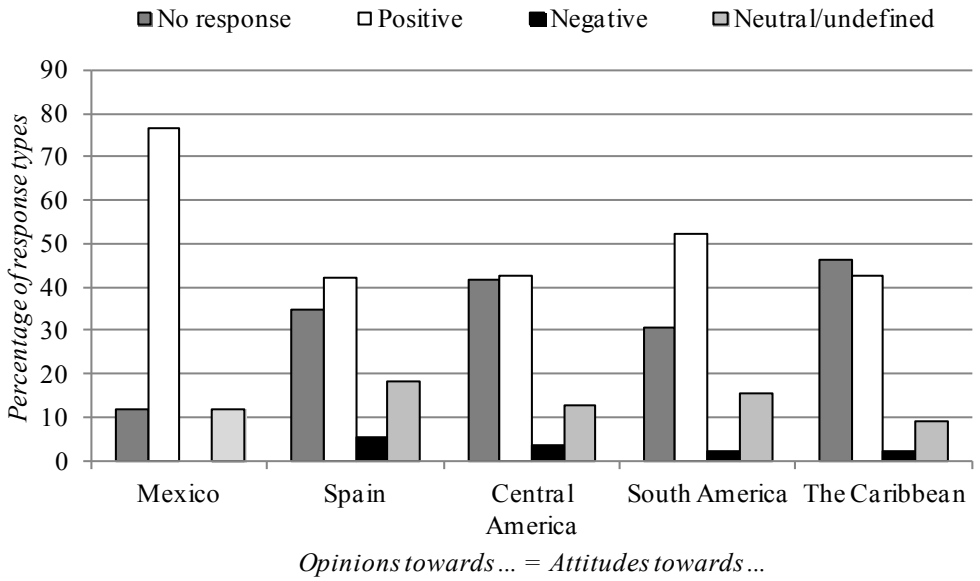
**Table 5.** Examples of response types regarding attitudes towards Spanish speakers from the five different geographical areas.

Attitudes towards Spanish speakers from **Central America**

| **Category code** | **Examples of response types** |
|---|---|
| 1- positive | I find them interesting and respectful (5); very loving and hospitable, love simplicity and family/friends (91); they are friendly and nice (88); very outgoing and easy to get along with (92); generous, patient, and kind. Would take the shirt off their back and give it to you if they thought you needed it (146); generally very enthusiastic and happy. I like that (157); etc. |
| 2- negative | very bad people gangs, corruption, low class (24); gender stereotypes are stronger there than here (51); I would guess they are fairly poor in general, maybe not well educated because of this. Most are probably laborers (205); etc. |
| 3- neutral or undefined | they seem similar to people from other Spanish-speaking areas/countries (13); I have no reason to have any negative feelings or prejudices against them (30); they are humans (100); I have not had much opportunity to meet them. I have a neutral opinion of them (194); I think everyone is different and it's not appropriate to make generalizations or stereotypes (203); etc. |

*Note*. The numbers in parenthesis represent the ID number assigned to each participant.

**Figure 2.** All participants' attitudes towards the people and culture of the different geographical areas, in percentages.

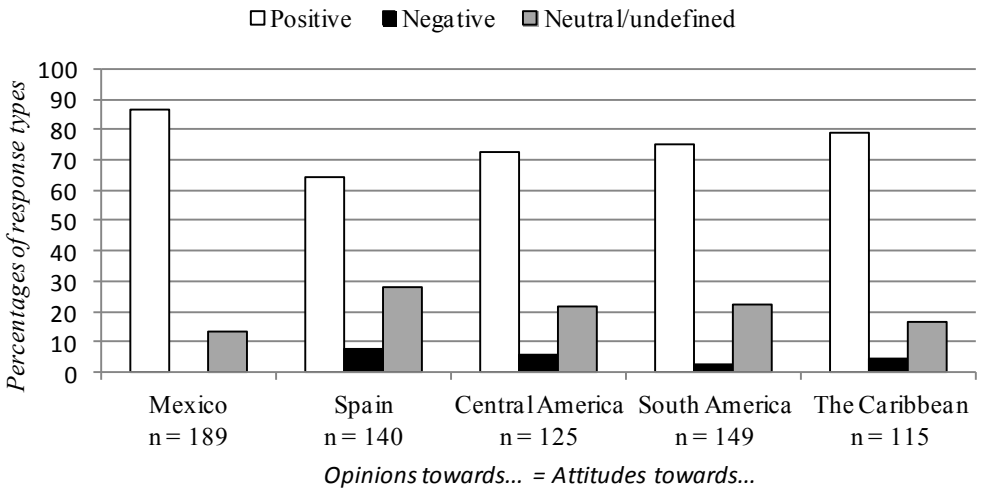



From Figure 2, it is apparent that a fairly large percentage of participants (average of 32.9%) did not express their opinion or refused to provide an answer by leaving the space blank for some of the regions. Interesting, only 11.7% of participants left the question blank when it was regarding Mexico. This contrasts with a total of 46.3% who failed to comment on the Caribbean, or the 41.6%, 34.6% and 30.4% of participants who skipped over Central America, Spain and South America, respectively. It seems that a larger proportion of students had some familiarity with the people and culture from Mexico, possibly due to geographical proximity.

In general, we could conclude that these students had positive attitudes towards the people and culture of all five regions listed in the questionnaire (average of 51.2% of positive responses). However, it seems that a much greater number of participants provided more positive comments towards the people and culture of Mexico (76.6%) than for the rest of the geographical areas: South America (52.3%), Central America (42.5%), the Caribbean (42.5%), and Spain (42.1%). However, this considerable difference in percentages of positive statements towards people and culture of Mexico and the other regions diminishes when we exclude students who did not provide a response, as shown in as shown in

Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3.** Participants' attitudes, of only those who provided explicit responses, towards the people and culture of the different geographical areas, in percentages.




Considering only those explicit responses provided, as in Figure 3, it is clear that positivity is the attitudinal value that prevails within the students' statements towards all five different regions (an average of 75.64% of all comments). Thus, these findings support the statistical results, presented in subsection 4.2.1 above. However, participants provided more positive answers towards the people and culture of Mexico (86.8%) than towards the other regions, with Spain being the one to receive the least number of positive comments (64.3%). Furthermore, more negative comments were elicited with respect to the people and culture of Spain (7.9%) as compared to Mexico, which did not receive any. Spain also elicited somewhat more neutral comments (27.9%) than the other regions.

## 4.3 Independent Variables Effects on Attitudes towards the Different Geographical Areas

In connection with students' attitudes towards Spanish speakers and culture from the five geographical areas, this section provides an examination of the effect of certain independent variables (proficiency or course level, origin of

current instructor, having travelled to Spanish-speaking regions or not, and knowing Spanish-speakers or not) on these attitudes.[20]

One-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to investigate language proficiency level effects on participants' attitudes towards the various Spanish-speaking regions. Five dependent variables were calculated: attitudes towards the people and culture for each of the five regions. The conceptual reason to consider these dependent variables together is that the subjects were surveyed about their attitudes towards five distinct Spanish-speaking regions, and the goal was to see whether their attitudes differed from one region to the other. The independent variable was course level, with four groups (100-level, 200-level, 300-level, and content courses in Spanish). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity. Unfortunately, the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was violated,[21] and the assumption of multicollinearity was partially violated having several dependent variables strongly correlated ($r > .8$). The relationship between the attitudinal variables towards the five regions was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a strong correlation amongst attitudes towards all regions ($r < .7$), but specifically between Mexico and Central America ($r = .835$, $N = 209$, $p < .001$), and Central America and The Caribbean ($r = .837$, $N = 210$, $p < .001$). This is problematic since it has been argued that "MANOVA works best when the variables are only moderately correlated […] correlations up around .8 or .9 are reason for concern" (Pallant, 2007, p. 282), and that "using very highly positively correlated DVs [dependent variables] in MANOVA is wasteful" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 268).[22] However, I continued with the analysis despite the

[20] Other independent variables such as age, gender, or grade obtained did not showed considerable relationship with the analysis conducted.
[21] However, Tabanick and Fidell (2007, p. 280-1) warn that Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices tends to be too strict when you have unequal sample sizes.
[22] Removing the strongly correlated pairs of dependent variables or combining them to form a single measure, as suggested in Pallant (2007, p. 282), would leave us with only two out of the five dependent variables, and the distinct regions from which this study is based would not be applicable any more.

violations of these assumptions, but these could have been the reason that the outcome of the MANOVA test was not statistically significant: Pillai's Trace = .11, $F$ (15, 585) = 1.481, $p$ = .107, partial $\eta^2$ = .037, while the alternative tests conducted found statistically significant differences, as presented below.[23]

Alternatively,[24] since not all assumptions were fully met, separate one-way between-subjects ANOVAs for each dependent variable were conducted, in order to determine whether proficiency level had a significant effect in students' attitudes towards each of the five Spanish-speaking regions. A more strict alpha value of .01 was set in order to reduce the risk of a Type I error.[25] There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .01$ level between the three level groups (in order to reach equal variances amongst all level groups, the 300-level language course group ($n$ = 25) was removed from the analysis)[26] in their attitudinal values towards all five regions: Mexico $F$ (2,184) = 7.05, $p$ = .001; Spain $F$ (2,184) = 5.02, $p$ = .008; Central America $F$ (2,181) = 6.03, $p$ = .003; South America $F$ (2,179) = 8.07, $p < .001$; and the Caribbean $F$ (2,185) = 6.2, $p$ = .002. The post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD tests[27] indicated that statistical differences in attitudes towards all five regions were detected only between those students enrolled in the 100-level language course and those taking content courses in Spanish as shown in Table 6. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual differences in mean values between these two groups were relatively modest (less than 0.4 scale points), leading to medium effect sizes[28] (see

[23] Larson-Hall (2010) affirms that "most real data sets will likely violate one or all the assumptions of parametric tests" (p. 75) and the consequence is that one "may not have the power to find differences that may actually exist" (p. 356).
[24] As proposed in Pallant (2007, p. 276), and considering that "the only advantage to MANOVA over separate ANOVAs on each DV [dependent variable] is control of familywise Type I error" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 268).
[25] One way to control for the Type I error (i.e. finding a significant result when there isn't really one) across multiple tests is to apply a Bonferroni correction (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Putting it simple, this adjustment involves dividing the typical alpha value of .05 by the number of tests that one intends to perform (Pallant, 2007; Forshaw, 2007, p. 69). In this case, there are five dependent variables to investigate; thus, the value of .05 is divided by 5, giving a new alpha level of .01.
[26] Larson-Hall (2010) recommends that "we could choose not to compare groups which have non-homogeneous variances or combine certain groups to achieve a better effect" (p.88).
[27] The Tukey test is usually used when testing *all pairwise comparisons*, as it has more power than the Bonferroni test when more tests are done (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 282).
[28] See Footnote 18.

Table 6). In short, these results show that the higher the course level, the more favourable the attitudes of the students tend to be.

**Table 6.** Post-hoc comparisons between 100-level and content course groups on each region

| Region | 100-level course vs content course groups | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 99% Confidence Interval | | | |
| | Mean Difference | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
| Mexico | -0.39 | -0.71 | -0.08 | .001 | .09 |
| Spain | -0.31 | -0.61 | -0.01 | .006 | .06 |
| Central America | -0.37 | -0.68 | -0.05 | .002 | .08 |
| South America | -0.37 | -0.66 | -0.07 | .001 | .09 |
| The Caribbean | -0.36 | -0.67 | -0.04 | .003 | .08 |

**Table 7.** Descriptive statistics of attitudes towards the five regions for course group

| Region | Group[a] | *n* | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 100-level course | 70 | 3.95 | 0.59 |
| | 200-level course | 54 | 4.17 | 0.69 |
| | Content courses | 63 | 4.35 | 0.57 |
| Spain | 100-level course | 70 | 3.89 | 0.55 |
| | 200-level course | 55 | 4.09 | 0.61 |
| | Content courses | 62 | 4.20 | 0.59 |
| Central America | 100-level course | 68 | 3.91 | 0.61 |
| | 200-level course | 53 | 4.14 | 0.71 |
| | Content courses | 63 | 4.28 | 0.52 |
| South America | 100-level course | 66 | 3.89 | 0.59 |
| | 200-level course | 55 | 4.20 | 0.55 |
| | Content courses | 61 | 4.26 | 0.53 |
| The Caribbean | 100-level course | 70 | 3.80 | 0.59 |
| | 200-level course | 55 | 4.08 | 0.69 |
| | Content courses | 63 | 4.17 | 0.59 |

[a] In order to reach equality of variance between the groups, the 300-level course group was not included in the analysis of each ANOVA.

Due to the violation of the multicollinearity assumption for the MANOVA test, as previously explained, the subsequent analyses to investigate the effects of the remaining independent variables on the students' attitudes towards the five different regions were conducted through alternative tests (see above and Footnotes 24 and 25). Thus, in order to verify whether the origin of the students'

current instructor, the fact of having travelled to Spanish-speaking countries or knowing Spanish-speaking people had an effect on their attitudes towards the five Spanish-speaking regions, additional one-way ANOVAs for each of the dependent variables (i.e. geographical groups) were performed when applicable.

With regard to the origin of the students' current instructor (categorised as: non-native, or as native from Mexico, Spain, Central America, South America or the Caribbean), no statistically significant outcome was shown amongst the students' attitudes towards any of the dependent variables: Mexico $F$ (2, 210) = .092, $p$ = .912, $\eta^2$ = .001; Spain $F$ (2, 210) = .245, $p$ = .783, $\eta^2$ = .002; Central America $F$ (2, 207) = .271, $p$ = .763, $\eta^2$ = .003; South America $F$ (2, 204) = .454, $p$ = .636, $\eta^2$ = .004; and the Caribbean $F$ (2, 211) = .564, $p$ = .57, $\eta^2$ = .005. Thus, it can be concluded that the place of origin of the students' instructor at the time of the study did not influence students' attitudes towards the people and culture of the various regions.

With respect to the fact of knowing or not knowing Spanish speakers, no significant differences on their attitudes towards the people and culture of the various regions were found. The results for the independent t-tests were: Mexico $t$ (210) = -1.605, $p$ = .110, $\eta^2$ = .012; Spain $t$ (210) = -0.924, $p$ = .356, $\eta^2$ = .004; Central America $t$ (207) = -1.628, $p$ = .105, $\eta^2$ = .013; South America $t$ (204) = -1.138, $p$ = .256, $\eta^2$ = .006; and the Caribbean $t$ (211) = -0.742, $p$ = .459, $\eta^2$ = .003. Likewise, the relationship students had with the people they knew (i.e. family, friend, acquaintance, and/or professional colleague) did not influence students' attitudes towards the people and culture of the different regions, as shown in the one-way between-groups ANOVA tests: Mexico $F$ (3, 204) = 2.211, $p$ = .088, $\eta^2$ = .031; Spain $F$ (3, 204) = 0.287, $p$ = .834, $\eta^2$ = .004; Central America $F$ (3, 201) = 1.118, $p$ = .343, $\eta^2$ = .016; South America $F$ (3, 199) = 3.212, $p$ = .024, $\eta^2$ = .046; and the Caribbean $F$ (3, 205) = 0.053, $p$ = .984, $\eta^2$ = .001. No significant differences were found when the analysis was conducted with regard to the region of origin of the people that students knew. Results for all tests failed to show any noteworthy pattern. It was concluded that the origin of people that participants

knew did not influence their attitudes towards the people and culture of one region over another as measured by the questionnaire used in this study.

In contrast, the fact of travelling to any Spanish-speaking country and spending time abroad was found to have an effect on students' attitudes towards the people and culture of the different geographical areas. The independent t-tests conducted to explore the differences in the mean scores between those students who travelled abroad and those who did not (see Table 8), show statistically significant outcomes for all regions, as shown in Table 9. From both tables, it can be concluded that travelling to Spanish-speaking countries has a statistically significant positive effect on students' attitudes towards these regions. However, the small effect size for each dependent variable tells us that these statistical differences appear to have limited impact on their actual attitudes.

**Table 8.** Descriptive statistics of attitudes towards the five regions for those students who travelled and those who did not travel to Spanish-speaking countries.

| Region | Travelled? | *n* | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | No | 52 | 3.90 | 0.58 |
| | Yes | 162 | 4.23 | 0.60 |
| Spain | No | 52 | 3.87 | 0.54 |
| | Yes | 162 | 4.11 | 0.57 |
| Central America | No | 52 | 3.88 | 0.52 |
| | Yes | 162 | 4.17 | 0.62 |
| South America | No | 52 | 3.90 | 0.59 |
| | Yes | 162 | 4.18 | 0.55 |
| The Caribbean | No | 52 | 3.77 | 0.54 |
| | Yes | 162 | 4.09 | 0.62 |

**Table 9.** Statistical results of t-tests performed on attitudes towards each region for the effects of travelling to Spanish-speaking countries

| Region | *t* | *df* | md | 95% CI | | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | LB | UB | | |
| Mexico | -3.430 | 211 | -0.33 | -0.52 | -0.14 | .001 | .05 |
| Spain | -2.678 | 211 | -0.24 | -0.42 | -0.06 | .008 | .03 |
| Central America | -2.902 | 208 | -0.28 | -0.48 | -0.09 | .004 | .04 |
| South America | -3.062 | 205 | -0.28 | -0.46 | -0.10 | .002 | .04 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Caribbean | -3.344 | 212 | -0.32 | -0.51 | -0.13 | .001 | .05 |

*Note. df* = degree of freedom; md = mean difference; CI = confidence interval; LB = lower bound, UB = upper bound.

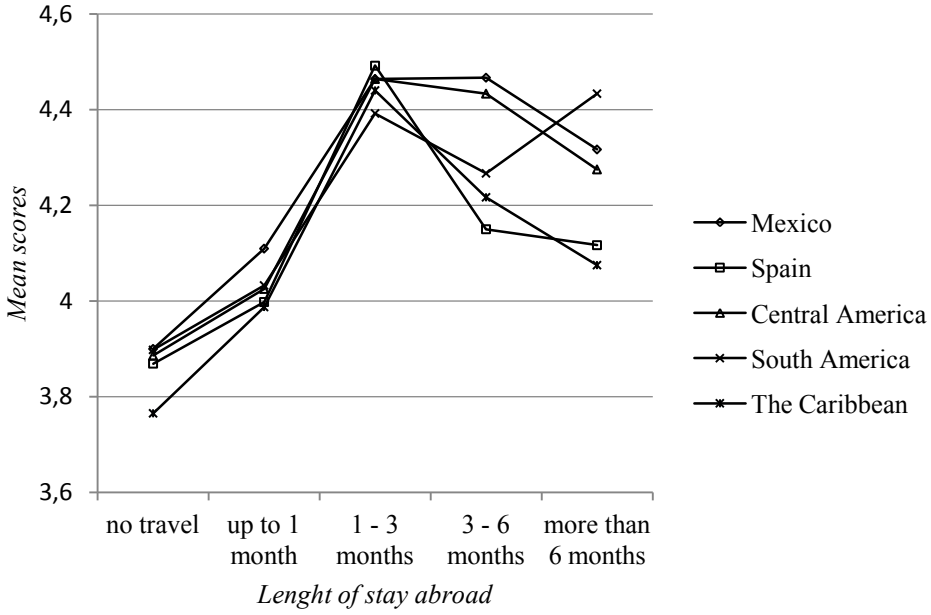
Nevertheless, when the data were analysed according to the amount of time spent in any of the different Spanish-speaking regions, statistical differences with larger effect sizes were detected. The independent variable was regrouped (see Footnote 26) in order to reach homogeneity of variances amongst the groups, which are: 1) no travel ($n$ = 52), 2) up to 1 month ($n$ = 96), 3) from 1 to 3 months ($n$ = 25), 4) from 3 to 6 months ($n$ = 12), and 5) more than 6 months ($n$ = 24) (5 participants did not specify their length of stay abroad). One-way between-groups ANOVAs were performed and the outcomes indicated a significant effect for time spent abroad in all regions: Mexico $F$ (4, 203) =.5.574, $p$ < .001; Spain $F$ (4, 203) =.5.779, $p$ < .001; Central America $F$ (4, 200) =.6.089, $p$ < .001; South America $F$ (4, 197) =.6.541, $p$ < .001; and the Caribbean $F$ (4, 204) =.6.070, $p$ < .001. The Tukey post-hoc comparisons indicated that these significances existed between those who stayed abroad for more than 1 month but up to 3 months and those who never travelled for all regions, as well as those who travelled for up to 1 month, for Spain, Central America and the Caribbean (see Table 10, where only the statistically significant comparisons are shown). This indicates that by spending more than 1 month and up to 3 months abroad, learners' attitudes towards the different regions changed positively. However, it was also observed that spending more than 3 months abroad caused a decrease in the positivity towards the different geographical areas (see Figure 4), except towards South America; this outcome does not have a straightforward explanation except for the fact that South America was the least visited area by the participants ($n$ = 23) (see below). As it can be seen in Figure 4, the attitudinal mean score for South America is lower after spending more than 3 months in the foreign countries, similar to the other regions, but is higher when the trip overseas is longer than 6 months, which is also significantly higher than the mean score of those who did not travel, from a statistical point of view (see Table 10). Furthermore, there were medium or large effect sizes, using eta squared ($\eta^2$), which indicate the actual magnitude of these differences.

**Table 10.** Significant post-hoc comparisons for travelling time effect for all regions

| Region | Travelling time Group comparisons | | md | 99% CI LB | 99% CI UB | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 1-3 months | no travel | 0.56 | 0.09 | 1.04 | .001 | .17 |
| Spain | 1-3 months | no travel | 0.62 | 0.18 | 1.07 | .001 | .22 |
| | | up to 1 month | 0.49 | 0.08 | 0.90 | .001 | .12 |
| Central America | 1-3 months | no travel | 0.58 | 0.11 | 1.05 | .001 | .19 |
| | | up to 1 month | 0.44 | 0.01 | 0.87 | .008 | .09 |
| South America | 1-3 months | no travel | 0.49 | 0.06 | 0.93 | .002 | .16 |
| | > 6 months | no travel | 0.54 | 0.09 | 0.98 | .001 | .18 |
| The Caribbean | 1-3 months | no travel | 0.67 | 0.20 | 1.15 | .001 | .23 |
| | | up to 1 month | 0.45 | 0.02 | 0.89 | .007 | .09 |

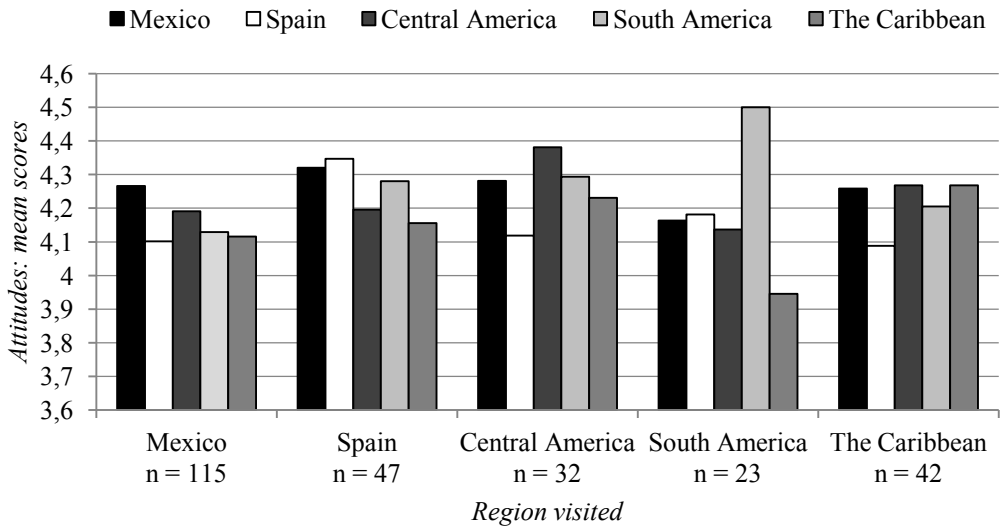
*Note.* md = mean difference; CI = confidence interval; LB = lower bound, UB = upper bound.

**Figure 4.** Mean comparisons for attitudes towards all regions based on the length of stay abroad




**The travel destination also appeared to have an effect on students' attitudes, as there was a clear tendency for them to have more positive attitudes towards the region visited than towards the other regions (see Figure 5). All geographical areas were visited, with Mexico being the most visited area as 115 participants declared having travelled there, followed by Spain (*n* = 47), the Caribbean (*n* = 42), Central America (*n* = 32), and finally South America**

**(*n* = 23). Separate one-way within-groups ANOVAs were conducted for each region visited, which led to significant outcomes (see results in Table 11**




). It was found that differences between the mean scores for the visited places and those for certain other regions had statistical significance ($p < .05$), with medium or (very) large size effects, except for the group of students who visited Spain ($n = 45$). The statistical results of only the significant pairwise comparisons are reported in

Table 12.

**Figure 5.** Mean comparisons for attitudes towards all regions based on the region visited

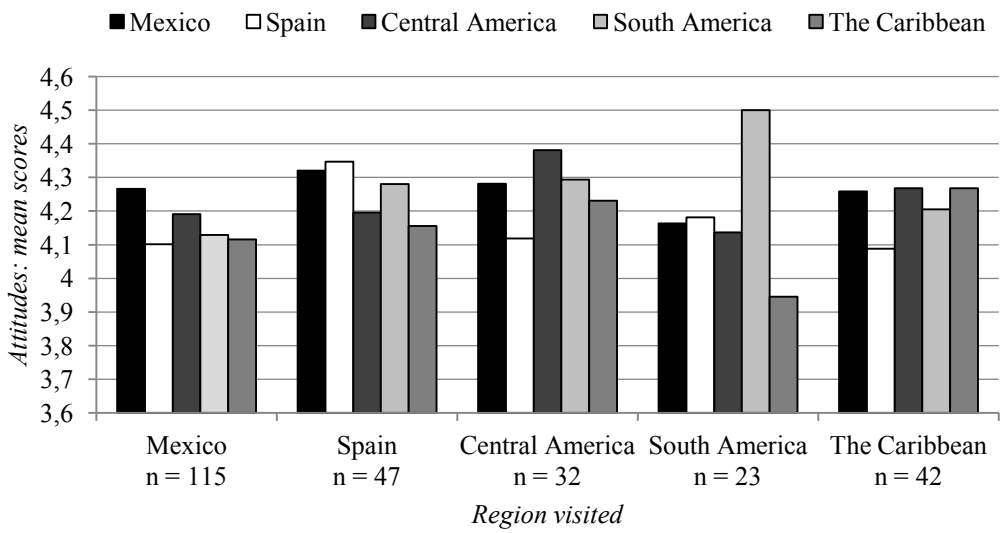



**Table 11**. Results of the one-way within-groups ANOVAs for each region visited

| Region visited | *F* | $df_1$ | $df_2$ | *p* | partial $\eta^2$ | Observed power |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 7.256 | 3.556 | 394.685 | .001* | .061 | .992 |
| Spain | 2.541 | 3.027 | 133.208 | .059 | .055 | .619 |
| Central America | 6.530 | 2.851 | 88.379 | .001* | .174 | .960 |
| South America | 5.192 | 2.742 | 57.578 | .004* | .198 | .889 |
| The Caribbean | 4.440 | 2.367 | 94.662 | .010* | .100 | .800 |

*Note*. Since the Sphericity assumption was not met, results reported are those using the Huynh-Feldt correction. *df* = degree of freedom.
* Significance level: p < .05.

**Table 12.** Significant comparisons of attitudes towards different regions based on region visited

| Region visited (*n*) | Pairwise comparisons Attitudes towards: | *M* | *SD* | md | 95% CI LB | 95% CI UB | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | Mexico | 4.27 | 0.58 | | | | | |
| (112) | Spain | 4.10 | 0.58 | 0.16 | 0.04 | 0.28 | .002 | .121 |
| | S. America | 4.13 | 0.54 | 0.14 | 0.05 | 0.23 | .001 | .151 |
| | Caribbean | 4.12 | 0.57 | 0.15 | 0.04 | 0.26 | .003 | .112 |
| C. America | C. America | 4.38 | 0.42 | | | | | |
| (32) | Spain | 4.12 | 0.50 | 0.26 | 0.05 | 0.48 | .008 | .310 |
| | Caribbean | 4.23 | 0.45 | 0.15 | 0.01 | 0.30 | .026 | .255 |
| S. America | S. America | 4.50 | 0.41 | | | | | |
| (22) | Caribbean | 3.95 | 0.81 | 0.55 | 0.08 | 1.03 | .014 | .391 |
| Caribbean | Mexico | 4.26 | 0.60 | 0.20 | 0.02 | 0.32 | .014 | .226 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (41) | Spain | 4.10 | 0.61 |

*Note.* md = mean difference; CI = confidence interval; LB = lower bound, UB = upper bound.

As indicated in

Table 12, within the group of students who travelled to Mexico, attitudes towards Mexico were significantly more positive than those towards Spain, South America and the Caribbean. Among those students who travelled to Central America, the means were statistically different between their attitudes towards Central America and Spain, as well as the Caribbean. For those who travelled to South America, their attitudes towards this specific region were only significantly higher than those towards the Caribbean. Finally, amongst those who travelled to the Caribbean, the significant differences were found between their attitudes towards Mexico and Spain, but not in relation to the geographical area visited. The group of students who visited Spain did not show any significant attitudinal differences towards any of the regions.

To sum up, from all independent variables considered, only course level and the fact of having travelled, for certain lengths of stay and to specific regions, have been found to have a statistical relationship with learners' reported attitudes towards the people and culture of the five different geographical areas described. On the other hand, the origin of students' current instructor, or knowing Spanish-speaking people, regardless of their relationship with them or their origin, have no apparent influence on students' attitudes towards the people and culture of the five regions.

# 5 Discussion

To begin with, it must be emphasised that, students unanimously report favourable attitudes towards the Spanish speakers of different varieties. Overall, these attitudes seem to be fairly homogeneous, not showing a preference for a specific variety or people from a specific region, as argued in section 4.2.

Likewise, the homogeneity observed in relation to their attitudes towards the different Spanish-speakers is maintained when analysed from the perspective of the origin of their current instructor, and the fact of knowing Spanish-speaking people. It is worth noting that this uniformly positive attitudes towards all varieties is not necessarily the same as the undifferentiated view of Spanish that has been reported in the literature. For many Spanish language students in the US, Latin America is believed to be a homogenous region, as Gorka and Niesenbaum (2001) noted in their study of college students participating in study-abroad programs. Shedivy (2004) also found that, at high school level, "several participants admitted that they had thought of Latin America as a generalized, monolithic culture. They were surprised that there was within-group variance" (p. 109), implying a lack of participants' awareness that the inhabitants of the various regions of Latin America do not speak the same Spanish variety. In the case of the Canadian students in the present study, it seems plausible that the ratings reflect an interest in languages and language learning and the values of acceptance and tolerance promoted in Canada's multicultural society.

The results also show that integrative orientation is significantly higher than instrumental orientation in this population of learners and is positively correlated with course level which, at the same time has a significant effect on the increase of interest in learning FLs and positive attitudes towards the TL. These findings are consistent with those of motivation researchers that learners who are integratively oriented may sustain interest and desire to learn the language longer (Dörnyei, 1990, 2003).

The analysis in this study aimed to test the Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew, 1998), which assumes that prejudice is reduced through contact and interaction with people. Contact in this foreign language instructional setting was operation-alized in terms of the variables of course-level (i.e., amount of instruction), travel abroad, and knowing Spanish-speakers. With respect to the first variable, the results in the current investigation demonstrated a relationship between course level and attitudes, with a steady but non-significant increase in ratings across levels and a statistically significant difference between the lowest and the highest

levels. Thus, students in more advanced courses responded more positively to the statements about Spanish varieties. It was also found that students' attitudes towards Spanish speakers and their varieties significantly increased in positivity when learners experienced travelling to Spanish-speaking countries. Contact with Spanish-speakers from diverse origins or exposure to different varieties either through class or trips to Spanish-speaking countries appears to have had a positive effect on students' opinions of the Spanish language speakers and their varieties. All of these forms of contact thus appeared to influence attitudes and therefore provide support for the Contact Hypothesis.

Unexpectedly, the positive effect of contact only occurred up to a certain point; when contact extended for a longer time, it did not increase attitudes in a linear manner. Stays in Spanish-speaking countries longer than three months tended to lead to a slight decrease in positivity (with the exception of attitudes towards South America, see Figure 4), as they do not reach the lower mean scores given by those students who did not have travelling experience. As can be observed in Figure 4 above, the attitudinal mean score for South America decreases after spending more than 3 months in the foreign countries, similarly to the other regions, but increases when the trip overseas is longer than 6 months. We can speculate that after three months, students may reach a plateau, and the excitement created due to new experiences, interesting knowledge, and enthusiastic discoveries ends, affecting their attitudes towards the people they have contact and interact with. This non-linear or U-shaped pattern has been found in a large number of studies of the Contact Hypothesis as Dörnyei and Csizér (2005) point out in their review of the social psychological literature. They were thus not surprised to find in their own large-scale study of EFL learners in Hungary that there was evidence of both a general positive effect of contact on learners' motivation alongside of a non-linear pattern for contact with a particular group. Further research on the impact of students' travel abroad experiences is needed in order to better understand this pattern with respect to linguistic varieties.

# 6 Limitations of the Study

As an exploratory study, the current investigation has some limitations that would need to be considered for future research. Thus, it is important to note that no generalizations can be made beyond the conditions of this particular project.

The population for this study was rather homogenous: it is probably expected that Canadian university students of Spanish as a foreign language will show positive attitudes overall, as they are willingly studying this FL, have grown in a multilingual and multicultural environment, and the Spanish language is not seen as a low prestige minority language but rather as a fashionable FL with which students can communicate with a huge number of speakers in the world. Participants for this study could be understood as a convenience sample, but it can be taken as a reflection of the usual population of the department in which they were enrolled.

Another limitation is that data was not triangulated with other measurements. Conducting personal interviews with students in order to clarify the content of their answers to the questionnaire would have been helpful and very informative. These would have provided a more extensive and deeper understanding of their brief qualitative responses in particular. Students' responses for the short open-ended questions could be stereotypical answers, not reflecting their real opinions. Also, the instrument for measurement of attitudes provides "formal statements [that] are made reflecting the cognitive component of attitudes" but "these may only reflect surface evaluations" (Baker, 1992, p. 12). Furthermore, students may not have wanted to make a categorical or simplistic judgment about a language variety and culture as they were asked to do on the questionnaire. The following two statements provided by participants illustrate this point:

> I refuse to make blanket statements about the people, their characteristics, personalities, etc. from any country or region because I don't think there is such a thing as a unified national or regional identity. As a politically and internationally minded person, I feel I have a common interest in sharing experiences and knowledge with working people around the globe, but I don't think I have anything in common with a rich/powerful/capitalist person, regardless of the country they are from or the language they speak. (209)

> They are humans. The reason I answered all these questions like this is because all the cultures have great folks and not so great folks. I also do not see extreme differences between latinos from different parts of the world. There are differences, but each country has internal differences too. (100)

# 7 Implications

First, it is essential to remember that the results reflect student attitudes towards and perceptions of the Spanish language varieties and its different speakers, rather than their actual knowledge of the characteristics of the different Spanish regional varieties. The results provide evidence that students did not appear to have prejudices towards one variety over another, and that they rated the different varieties more or less equally.

The findings here also provide reassurance to instructors of Spanish that their condition of NNS or their regional origin as a NS is not a discriminating factor when students choose their instructors and that their ability to teach is more important to students than their place of origin. These results also reinforce the findings of other research (Hertel & Sunderman, 2009) showing that students appreciate NNS instructors' ability to empathize with students' learning difficulties. These findings should be considered when hiring language instructors, paying attention to the many variables involved in good teaching and not necessarily include the native characteristic as a criterion for their selection.

While the present study provides mainly quantitative descriptive data from a large number of participants, the teaching profession would benefit from further research that included a qualitative investigation of students' and instructors' attitudes towards the Spanish regional varieties in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions and eventually make the necessary changes in teacher training programs to better address these issues in the language class.

Naturally, future research examining attitudes towards the different Spanish regional varieties in other locations such as in the US, where the majority of the immigrant population is Spanish, or in Brazil, which is geographically surrounded by neighbouring Spanish-speaking countries, or in countries where the national population is more homogeneous and there is less of a multicultural tradition (e.g.

China), and with other pluricentric languages such as French, would be informative to the education field.

Since it has been shown that travelling abroad for a period between one and three months significantly improves students' attitudes towards the variation of the Spanish language, it would be worth considering the inclusion of more funding for students to be able to participate from short-term study abroad opportunities within the foreign language programs.

# 8 Conclusion

The findings of this study show that while students of all levels show positive attitudes towards all Spanish dialects, contact with the Spanish language and its varieties helps to further the development of favourable attitudes towards dialects. Given the limited contact that students have with the Spanish language in the current context, it is essential that exposure to linguistic variants be promoted in Spanish as a FL classes, so that the students' sociolinguistic competence is developed.

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## Appendix A – Participants' Consent Form

My name is Laura Monerris Oliveras and I am a Ph.D. student in the Modern Languages and Cultural Studies department at the University of Alberta. I am conducting a research project to examine the opinions of university students about the Spanish language and the people who speak Spanish.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right not to participate. If you decide not to participate, you may simply hand back a blank questionnaire when I collect them. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which is expected to take approximately 20 minutes. Before you start, please read the following carefully and sign below if you agree to the terms.

Please be assured that **your participation is VOLUNTARY**, and that you can withdraw at any time without any harm or bad consequence. In order to protect your privacy, your identity will remain anonymous. Then, your name will immediately be replaced by a code number. There is **NO testing** involved in the completion of the questionnaire. Your answers will not be shown to anyone nor to your instructor in any case, and **your grades will NOT be affected in any way by your answers or your decision to participate or not in the study.**

The data collected for this study and the findings might be used for further academic presentations or conferences and publications in the future.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at lauramonerris@ualberta.ca or the acting supervisor, Dr. Leila Ranta at lranta@ualberta.ca

Please check if you agree with the following:

____ I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary.

____ I understand that my grades will not be affected in any case.

____ I understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this study.

____ I understand that I will be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

____ I understand that I will not be identified in any research report.

____ I have read and understood the consent form and I agree to its terms.

_____ _____ _____

NAME (please print) SIGNATURE DATE

Thank you for participating in my study ☺

## Appendix B – Questionnaire

Name: _____ Nº of questionnaire _____

The questionnaire is ANONYMOUS, your answers will be kept confidential, and there is **NO** testing involved. Please, answer the following questions as **HONESTLY** as possible.

Following are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. There are NO right or wrong answers since many people have different opinions. I would like you to indicate your opinion about each statement by placing a check mark in the space that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Please, if you have any questions, let me know immediately.

Note that due to the large number of Spanish-speaking countries, I had to classify them into groups:
**Mexico**
**Spain**
**Central America:** Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá
**South America:** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay,Venezuela
**The Caribbean:** Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico

Example:
**Strongly Disagree (D), Disagree (d), Neither Agree nor Disagree (N a/d), Agree (a), Strongly Agree (A)**

| **Statement** | **D** | **d** | **N a/d** | **a** | **A** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canadian hockey players are better than Spanish hockey players | | | | | **x** |

| **Nº** | **Statement** | **D** | **d** | **N a/d** | **a** | **A** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The people from Central America are a positive contribution to the Canadian culture. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 2 | I wish I could speak another language perfectly. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 3 | I would like to know more people from Spain. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 4 | Studying a foreign language is not an enjoyable experience. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 5 | South Americans add a distinctive flavor to the Canadian culture. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 6 | I don't like learning Spanish. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 7 | The people from The Caribbean are very friendly and hospitable. | D | d | N | a | A |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | a/d | | |
| 8 | If I were visiting a foreign country I would like to be able to speak the language of the people. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 9 | I would like to get to know the people from Spain better. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 10 | I would like to know more people from The Caribbean. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 11 | Studying Spanish is important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 12 | The people from Central America are very friendly and hospitable. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 13 | Learning Spanish is a waste of time. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 14 | I would like to get to know the Mexican people better. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 15 | I really enjoy learning Spanish. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 16 | Studying Spanish will help me understand Spanish-speaking people and their way of life. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 17 | I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 18 | I would like to get to know the people from The Caribbean better. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| **Nº** | **Statement** | **D** | **d** | **N a/d** | **a** | **A** |
| 19 | Even though Canada is relatively far from countries speaking other languages, it is important for Canadians to learn foreign languages. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 20 | The Mexican people are very kind and generous. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 21 | I would really like to learn different foreign languages. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 22 | I would like to get to know the people from Central America better. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 23 | Studying Spanish is important for me because other people will respect me more if I have a knowledge of a foreign language. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 24 | Mexican people add a distinctive flavor to the Canadian culture. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 25 | I would rather spend my time on subjects other than Spanish. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 26 | The more I get to know about the South Americans, the more I want to be fluent in their language. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 27 | If I planned to stay in another country, I would make no effort to learn the language even though I could get along in English. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 28 | The people from Spain are very friendly and hospitable. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 29 | Studying Spanish is important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with fellow Canadians who speak Spanish. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 30 | The people from The Caribbean are a positive contribution to the Canadian culture. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 31 | The more I learn about the people from Spain, the more I like them. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 32 | The South Americans are very kind and generous. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 33 | I am fascinated by the Spanish language. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 34 | I would like to know more people from Central America. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | When I leave school, I shall give up the study of Spanish entirely because I am not interested in it. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 36 | I would like to know more Mexican people. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 37 | I think Spanish sounds really nice. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 38 | The more I learn about the people from The Caribbean, the more I like them. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 39 | The people from Spain are a positive contribution to the Canadian culture. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 40 | The more I get to know about the Mexican people, the more I want to be fluent in their language. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 41 | I would like to get to know the South Americans better. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 42 | Studying Spanish is important for me only because I'll need it for my future career. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 43 | The more I learn about the people from Central America, the more I like them. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 44 | I am studying Spanish only because it is part of my university degree. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |
| 45 | I would like to know more South Americans. | D | d | N a/d | a | A |

1. Do you know people from **Mexico**? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? _____ person(s) (approx.)
What do you think of the people from **Mexico**? Why? Explain your reasons.

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Do you know people from **Spain**? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? _____ person(s) (approx.)
What do you think of the people from **Spain**? Why? Explain your reasons.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Do you know people from **Central America**? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? ____ person(s) (aprox.)
What do you think of the people from **Central America**? Why? Explain your reasons.

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Do you know people from **South America**? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? ____ person(s) (aprox.)
What do you think of the people from **South America**? Why? Explain your reasons.

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Do you know people from **The Caribbean**? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, how many? ____ person(s) (aprox.)
What do you think of the people from **The Caribbean**? Why? Explain your reasons.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Nº of questionnaire _____

You will find pairs of opposed adjectives regarding attributes of the different varieties of the Spanish language. Place a check mark where that comes closest to your opinion about the language.

Example:

| **Snakes are …** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dangerous | **x** | | | | | safe |
| friendly | | | | | **x** | unfriendly |

| **Note** |
|---|
| Due to the large number of Spanish-speaking countries, I had to classify them into groups:<br>**Mexico**<br>**Spain**<br>**Central America:** Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá<br>**South America:** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay,Venezuela<br>**The Caribbean:** Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico |

| Spanish from **Mexico** is … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| beautiful | | | | | | ugly |
| passionate | | | | | | dispassionate |
| difficult | | | | | | easy |
| warm | | | | | | cold |
| unpleasant | | | | | | pleasant |
| complex | | | | | | simple |
| romantic | | | | | | unromantic |
| hard | | | | | | soft |
| useless | | | | | | useful |
| musical | | | | | | unmusical |

| Spanish from **Spain** is … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| beautiful | | | | | | ugly |
| passionate | | | | | | dispassionate |
| difficult | | | | | | easy |
| warm | | | | | | cold |
| unpleasant | | | | | | pleasant |
| complex | | | | | | simple |
| romantic | | | | | | unromantic |
| hard | | | | | | soft |
| useless | | | | | | useful |
| musical | | | | | | unmusical |

| Spanish from **Central America** is … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| beautiful | | | | | | ugly |
| passionate | | | | | | dispassionate |
| difficult | | | | | | easy |
| warm | | | | | | cold |
| unpleasant | | | | | | pleasant |
| complex | | | | | | simple |
| romantic | | | | | | unromantic |
| hard | | | | | | soft |
| useless | | | | | | useful |
| musical | | | | | | unmusical |

| Spanish from **South America** is … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| beautiful | | | | | | ugly |
| passionate | | | | | | dispassionate |
| difficult | | | | | | easy |
| warm | | | | | | cold |
| unpleasant | | | | | | pleasant |
| complex | | | | | | simple |
| romantic | | | | | | unromantic |
| hard | | | | | | soft |
| useless | | | | | | useful |
| musical | | | | | | unmusical |

| Spanish from **The Caribbean** is … | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| beautiful | | | | | | ugly |
| passionate | | | | | | dispassionate |
| difficult | | | | | | easy |
| warm | | | | | | cold |
| unpleasant | | | | | | pleasant |
| complex | | | | | | simple |
| romantic | | | | | | unromantic |
| hard | | | | | | soft |
| useless | | | | | | useful |
| musical | | | | | | unmusical |

**BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE.** Nº of questionnaire _____

1. Age: _____ 2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Were you born in Canada? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Not, where were you born? _____
   How long have you been living in Canada? _____ years.
4. What Spanish course are you currently taking? _____
5. What grade do you expect to obtain in this course? Remember that your answers are anonymous and will not be shown to your instructor. (check one)
   ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ Don't know
6. How many years have you been studying Spanish? _____ years.
7. How many Spanish courses have you taken? _____ courses. Specify: _____
8. How do/will you choose your Spanish language instructor? (you can check more than one option)

☐ native speaker from Mexico. Why? _____
☐ native speaker from Spain. Why? _____
☐ native speaker from Central America. Why? _____
☐ native speaker from South America. Why? _____
☐ native speaker from The Caribbean. Why? _____
☐ native speaker from any Spanish-speaking country. Why? _____
☐ non-native speaker. Why? _____
☐ his/her country origin does not matter to me. Why? _____

9. What is your **primary** reason for taking Spanish? (check only ONE option)
   ☐ It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.
   ☐ It will someday be helpful in getting a good job.
10. Have you ever traveled to a Spanish-speaking country? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, which one(s)? _____ For what purpose did you go? (check all that apply) ☐learning the language ☐tourism ☐business ☐other _____
    For how long? ☐ 2 weeks or less ☐ 2 weeks – 1 month ☐ 1 month –3 months
    ☐ 3 months – 6 months ☐ 6 months – 1 year ☐ more than 1 year
11. Do you know any Spanish speaker(s)? ☐Yes ☐No If Yes, how many? ___ person(s) (approx)
    What is your relationship with him/her/them? (check all that apply)
    ☐ family ☐ friend ☐ acquaintance ☐ professional colleague ☐ other: _____
    Where is/are he/she/they from? ☐ Mexico ☐ Spain ☐ Central America
    ☐ South America ☐ The Caribbean
12. Are you fluent in other language(s)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If Yes, which ones? _____
13. Are you currently studying (an)other language(s), excluding Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If Yes, which one(s)? _____

# ARTICLE 2: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SPANISH INSTRUCTORS' BELIEFS AND TEACHING PRACTICES CONCERNING DIALECTAL VARIATION

## 1 Introduction

In a survey of 457 American teachers of Spanish, French and German, Bell (2005) found that 65% of those surveyed agreed with the statement that "the effective foreign language teacher exposes students to different dialects of the TL" (p. 263). These responses are consistent with the view that communicative competence includes knowledge of regional varieties as well as other aspects of sociolinguistic competence (see for example the model by Bachman, 1990). With respect to the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, several scholars (Gutiérrez & Fairclough, 2006; Arteaga & Llorente, 2009; Moreno Fernández, 2000, 2010) have argued that regional variation must be integrated into Spanish classes from the beginning. However, since dialectal variation in Spanish is quite extensive, mainly due to the large number of speakers (406 million first-language users of Spanish, according to Ethnologue) in a vast geographical extension (21 countries where Spanish is the official language), it is difficult for a single individual to know about all dialectal features. How do teachers cope with this pedagogical dilemma? The present study aims to shed light on this issue by examining teacher cognition with respect to the inclusion of dialectal variation in Spanish foreign language instruction.

## 2 Review of the Literature

Research into teachers' cognition is an area of interest in the field of L2 educational research (Borg, 2006). Teacher cognition is "the unobservable cognitive dimensions of teaching" (Borg, 2003, p. 81), or more precisely, "what second and foreign language teachers, at any stage of their careers, think, know or believe in relation to various aspects of their work" (p. 86). Borg uses this term

broadly to comprise the complexity of teachers' mental lives and the relationship between cognition and teaching practices. His qualitative-interpretive research on teacher cognition has focused mainly on the teaching of grammar in English as a foreign language classes. The present inquiry broadens the scope of teacher cognition research to the sociolinguistic domain by examining teacher cognition with regard to the inclusion of dialectal variation in Spanish FL classrooms.

Although they were not framed within the teacher cognition framework, questionnaire-based studies by Beaven (1999), Beaven and Garrido (2000) and Andión Herrero (2009, 2013) are relevant to the present discussion since they explored teachers' beliefs and practices with respect to the teaching of Spanish varieties.

Beaven (1999) surveyed Spanish FL teachers at a British long distance university. This particular university had implemented a program of Spanish courses with the explicit purpose of presenting the Spanish language as a "lengua mundial" (worldwide or global language); that is, to intentionally present students with different dialectal varieties throughout the program. The main results from the analysis of questionnaire responses from 38 instructors was that although almost all (79%) agreed with the goal of teaching Spanish as a "global language", in practice, each of them reported that they preferred to teach the variety that they knew best. Most of the teachers in this sample (68.5%) identified Castilian Spanish (the variety spoken in central-northern Spain) as their L1 variety or the one they had learned as a second language. Furthermore, most of the accessible pedagogical materials were published in Spain, which influenced their teaching practices. Also, around 40% of respondents agreed with the statement that "when grammatical differences exist between Castilian and another Hispano American variety, it is best to teach only the Castilian norm so as not to confuse students" (p. 120, my translation), while 50% disagreed. This statement shows a lack of consensus among teachers, possibly because one of the challenges to overcome when adopting a global approach is how not to confuse or overwhelm students. In relation to this, it is worth noting that, in a later study conducted by Beaven and Garrido (2000) at the same university, only 20% of students surveyed stated that

they "would feel confused if they were presented with different varieties of Spanish" (p. 186, my translation).

Another result from Beaven's study (1999) that deserves mentioning is that teachers, almost unanimously (81.5%), avowed that they did not care about the dialect that the student chose to speak as long as he or she always used the same one (p. 121). The implementation of a program with such a global perspective seemed to have had a very positive impact on the attitudes of its students (both, beginners and advanced), the majority of whom claimed to not have a preference for a specific Spanish variety, arguing that all varieties are equally legitimate (Beaven & Garrido, 2000).

A later study inspired by Beaven's work was conducted by Andión Herrero (2009). She explored the results of a survey[29] answered by 50 (pre-service) native Spanish L2/FL instructors, who were registered in two online courses at a long distance university from Spain. A few years later, Andión Herrero (2013) expanded her study by including 27 non-native and 2 native (pre-service) Spanish teachers taking a professional development in-person course in Brazil. The same survey was distributed among the Brazilian participants.[30] The first interesting finding from these surveys concerns how the instructors identified themselves. Most of the 79 participants (including both native and some non-native speakers) defined themselves as speakers of the Castilian variety. However, some of the non-native subjects defined themselves as speakers of panhispanic (standard) Spanish. Thus, the definitions that the Brazilian participants provided about their identities included descriptors which were non-existent among the native speakers.

[29] The survey contained questions about the participants' dialectal identity, the knowledge of and contact with other Spanish varieties, the chosen variety taught to their own students and the motivation(s) behind this choice. From their answers, the author inferred their attitudes towards the different dialectal varieties.

[30] In the publication of 2013, the author uses the data from her previous publication in 2009, but no reference to it is made. Instead, the author presents the two sets of data (1-teachers in Spain, 2-teachers in Brazil) together, as if it had all been collected for one single study. In the last publication, it is specified that data was collected over a period of three years and a half, but no more details are provided. The findings from both data sets are presented here together, but referring to the first or second set alone when relevant.

All instructors seemed to understand that they "ha[d] to choose a specific variety that will be presented and described to the students" (Andión Herrero, 2009, p. 172), or "the linguistic model." Of the native instructors that were teaching at the time of the study, a majority claimed that the Castilian variety was their linguistic model, even if, in some cases, that was not the one they identified themselves with; only a few declared teaching another variety, which always coincided with their own. Of those non-native teachers who were teaching, half claimed to teach a neutralized or standardized Spanish, and the others taught different models, namely Castilian (central-northern Spain), Rioplatense (Argentina and Uruguay), Andalusian (southern Spain), and Chilean. In general, they all taught the variety that they knew.[31] It is of interest to mention that one of the Brazilian non-native teachers, self- defined as a speaker of the Mexican variety, declared that he/she taught "neutral norms" and complained that the materials presented only the Castilian norm,[32] which caused a dialectal conflict.

According to Andión Herrero (2009), it was "their scarce dialectal knowledge (of academic type)[33] that made them opt for their own variety" (p. 172, my translation), adding that "this limitation is due to the fact that the variety that we speak is actually the only one that we know well" (p. 173, my translation). Andión Herrero (2013) concluded that a teacher's choice of a specific linguistic model was determined by the teacher's own variety, the one represented in teaching materials and the one from the context of teaching.

Prestige was also identified as an important factor. Most of the participants (83.5%) responded that their own variety had prestige, which suggests a strong ethnolinguistic identity. In contrast, 15.3% of native teachers from countries other than Spain did not identify their variety as prestigious, from which the author inferred that they did not think their variety was part of the norm (Andión Herrero

[31] The non-native participants commented that their dialectal knowledge was based on their own life experiences, and contact with other varieties of Spanish, which was greater than the contact native speakers had had (Andión Herrero, 2013).
[32] This complain is justified since, in Brazil, the availability of pedagogical materials published in Spain is greater and much more diverse than those published in Latin America (Moreno Fernández, 2010, p. 185).
[33] Only a few respondents declared having attended courses about Spanish varieties (Andión Herrero, 2009, p. 173).

2013). Other varieties were also recognized as prestigious by all participants. The general tendency of the results showed that Latin American varieties were more valued than varieties from Spain. (Surprisingly, the Castilian variety was ranked second.) The Andalusian variety was considered non-prestigious mainly by native speakers, while non-native participants rated Latin American varieties as non-prestigious more often than native speakers.[34] On a positive note, 38% of all respondents refused to answer the question about non-prestigious varieties. They either wrote "none" or provided comments expressing a view that all varieties have prestige and that one is no better than the other.

Andión Herrero (2013) concluded that, considering all results, none of the varieties, regardless of the linguistic area to which they belong, is free from instructor's prejudices, either positive or negative. The same varieties are prestigious for some but not for others. Both Beaven (1999) and Andión Herrero (2009, 2013) emphasize the importance of teacher training in dialectal variation specifically. They also conclude that merely including some variation in the materials or just knowing the language are insufficient for a professional teacher of the Spanish language.

The present inquiry offers a deeper analysis through qualitative data from one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, it adds to the research in this area because it explores not only the cognition of Spanish FL teachers, but also their reported teaching practices. Thus, the main goals of the current study are to discover the extent to which Spanish FL instructors are likely to address dialectal variation in their own classes, and to examine the factors that influence instructors' practices based on their self-reports.

# 3 Method

## 3.1 Participants

Participants for this study were recruited at a Western Canadian university where they taught within a Spanish language and literature program. All

[34] This goes in accordance with the idea that Brazilians have a preference for Peninsular varieties, given the fact that many Brazilian university teachers have received their education or professional training in Spain (Moreno Fernández, 2010, p. 185).

instructors from the Spanish courses in the program were verbally invited by the researcher to participate in the current study. Ten instructors agreed to take part in the research. They were all instructors of Spanish FL courses, actively teaching undergraduate students at the beginner and intermediate levels at the time the study was conducted.

The teachers had all become Spanish language instructors in the same department where they had completed or were completing their M.A. or Ph.D degree. Some of the instructors who had some kind of previous teaching experience were hired as principal instructors of Spanish language courses, while others went through the Teaching Apprenticeship program during their first year of graduate studies, before becoming Principal Instructors. Two of the instructors, with 10 and 14 years of experience teaching Spanish at the time of the study, were put in the position of Principal Instructor right when they started their graduate studies, without having previous teaching experience of any sort, because the Teaching Apprenticeship program had not yet been implemented in the department. This situation reflects a common one within the North-American context, where it is well-known that graduate students who become language instructors often lack specific linguistic and/or pedagogical training, or teaching experience (Gutiérrez & Fairclough, 2006; Arteaga & Llorente, 2009). It is important to emphasize that all participants were graduate students when they started to teach Spanish as a Foreign Language, and their educational and linguistic backgrounds were heterogeneous. As part of their graduate program, if they are assigned teaching responsibilities, they are offered a general pedagogical training course. However, only some of them had received some training in linguistics, not necessarily in Spanish. None of them reported having been trained in Spanish sociolinguistics, and they had never specifically learned about dialectal variation.

The participants were 9 females and 1 male, with an average age of 30.8. They were 4 native (3 Mexican and 1 Colombian) and 5 non-native speakers of Spanish (4 Canadian and 1 Croatian). The last participant, identified with the ID number 6, was considered to be an early bilingual individual in English and

Spanish. Table 13 below provides a more detailed description of each of the instructor participants involved in the study.

**Table 13.** Detailed description of instructor participants at the time of research

| Participant ID | Gender | Age | Origin | Mother tongue(s) | Education | Linguistics training | Teaching experience: Principal Instructor (PI) or Teaching Apprentice (TA)[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Female | 32 | Croatian | Croatian, Serbian | BA in Spanish Comparative Literature<br>MA in Latin American Studies | No | 6 years as PI: usually 1st year Spanish, and one time 2nd year Spanish |
| 2 | Female | 25 | Canadian | English | BA in Linguistics, minor in Spanish<br>MA in Spanish Applied Linguistics | Yes | 1 year as TA<br>2 years as PI: 1st year Spanish |
| 3 | Female | 42 | Canadian | Italian, English | BA in Psychology<br>MA in Latin American Studies | No | 10 years as PI: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year Spanish |
| 4 | Male | 31 | French Canadian | French | BA in Spanish and Criminology<br>MA in Latin American Studies | No | Previous teaching experience<br>6 years as PI: 1st and 2nd year Spanish |
| 5 | Female | 51 | Canadian | English | BA (interdisciplinary studies)<br>MA in Spanish | Yes | 14 years as PI: mainly 1st and 2nd year Spanish , and occasionally 3rd year Spanish |
| 6 | Female | 26 | Mexican American[1] | English, Spanish | BA in Spanish and Linguistics<br>Completing MA in Latin American Studies | Yes | 1 year as TA<br>1 year as PI: 1st year Spanish |
| 7 | Female | 30 | Mexican | Spanish | BA in Hispanic Literature in Mexico<br>MA in Latin American Studies | No | 1 year as TA<br>3 years as PI: 1st year Spanish |
| 8 | Female | 38 | Mexican | Spanish | BA in Sciences of Communication<br>Completing PhD in Latin American Studies | No | 1 year as TA<br>4 years as PI: 1st year Spanish |
| 9 | Female | 26 | Mexican | Spanish | BA in Teaching Foreign Languages<br>MA in Spanish Applied Linguistics | Yes | Previous teaching experience<br>3 years as PI: 1st year Spanish |
| 10 | Female | 39 | Colombian | Spanish | BA in Fine Arts<br>MA in Education | No | Previous teaching experience<br>10 years as PI: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year Spanish courses |

[1]This instructor explained that as a child she used to travel back and forth to Mexico and the US several times due to her father's job.
[2]The teaching experience reported here is at the institution where they completed or were completing their graduate studies.

## 3.2 Data Collection

The participants who volunteered for the study were interviewed at their convenience on campus, during the Spring 2010 semester. Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews that lasted an average of 92 minutes. The researcher is a native speaker of Spanish, and the interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish, according to the participant's preference. All five instructors who were non-native speakers of Spanish decided to be interviewed in English. Three participants who were native speakers of Spanish opted to use Spanish. Another instructor, also a native speaker of Spanish, started and maintained most of the conversation in English, but freely code-switched into Spanish whenever she felt she could explain a specific point better. The early Spanish-English bilingual chose to express herself in English during the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured. Despite the well-known criticisms with interview research such as intersubjectivity, a leading question effect, predisposed answers due to the wording of questions, bias, etc.(Kvale, 2007, pp. 84-90), semi-structured interviews are a widely used instrument in teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006). In order to understand what teachers do in their classrooms, we also need to understand what they believe, what they know, and their attitudes (Borg, 2003). The semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to take an active role in the research since the direction of the conversations was determined by the responses of each participant. The reflective nature of this type of interview is of particular importance. The goal was to elicit *verbal commentaries*, in Borg's terms, from instructors about their cognition, beliefs and teaching practices in regards to different issues of dialectal variation. Instructors are not usually asked to explicitly express their own thoughts about a specific pedagogical topic. The reflective focus of the semi-structured interview allowed for an introspective process to happen (Borg, 2006), and gave a chance to the instructors' internal voice to speak out. Interviews, as Kvale (2007) explains, are "particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and

clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world" (p. 46). No attempt was made to disguise the focus of the study on regional variation. I, as interviewer, asked questions regarding the themes in a straightforward manner, allowing the participant to be focused and reflect on the specific topic of the inclusion of dialectal variation in Spanish FL language classes.

The interviews were based on a set of general themes about different issues regarding the inclusion of regional linguistic variation into Spanish L2 classrooms. For this, questions about the instructors' cognition on dialectal variation, their learning experiences and educational background in relation to variation, and the self-reports of their teaching practices were explored. I developed a list of potential questions organized under different general thematic headings (e.g. interest in learning Spanish and other languages, relationships and social networks with Spanish speakers, experiences with Spanish speakers, opinions and stereotypes about the speakers and varieties they spoke, varieties and standard, teaching practices) that served as a guide (see Appendix C), but these were used flexibly and in no particular order. I did not use the same wording of the suggested questions, and I was not constrained to the list, which gave me the opportunity to go with the flow of the conversation and build on the participants' responses by asking additional, pertinent questions for the elaboration or clarification on a specific issue. Because of the unique nature of each one-on-one discussion, questions asked were not exactly the same for each participant, and they were not asked in the same order.

## 3.3 Data Analysis

Keeping in mind that, within a qualitative approach, it has been argued that there is no single "right way" to analyze the data and that analytic decisions are inevitably subjective (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 32), I describe here the processes followed for the interpretation of the data from this study. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. In order to check for the accuracy of the transcripts, I read them while simultaneously listening to the

recordings, and any possible omissions or transfer errors[35] were amended. I also reread thoroughly all interview transcripts before beginning with the analysis, a technique used to enhance the reliability of the research (Schmidt, 2004), to ensure that the findings and conclusions provide an accurate description of the data.

Within an inductive approach, a thematic analysis was conducted, with the intention of finding specific patterns, commonalities, differences, and relationships in the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009, pp. 128-129). First, the general headings from the interview guide were used as "apriori codes," in Gibson and Brown's terms, since they firmly represented the interests that motivated this study. Then, through exploration of the transcripts, the common themes that emerged from the interviews were used as "empirical codes" for coding the data. These codes were transformed into the following categorical labels or themes: 1) *instructor's Spanish and own identity through their own variety,* 2) *instructor's awareness and knowledge of dialects,* 3) *instructor's teaching practices,* 4) *instructors' perspective of standard and prestigious varieties.* Other categories, indirectly related to the topic and the main goals of the current study, also arose, but they will not be explored here.

The units of analysis (i.e., instructor sentences or extracts from the interview) for each of the categories were put together across participants to identify patterns and interpret the general ideas or trends within each theme or category. This allowed for a more holistic analysis of the trends of all instructors' thoughts and teaching practices regarding dialectal variation rather than individual case studies. Once this step was completed, a more thorough look at the data was needed in order to understand the trends within each category. As a result, subcategories emerged, and these subcategories are used to organize the presentation of the data.

[35] When one listens, one may sometimes transcribe what one thinks was said, and not what was actually said.

# 4 Presentation and Discussion of Data

The data is presented from a holistic perspective rather than individual case studies, providing an exploratory examination of the findings of this inquiry. Thus, the general and common trends from the interviews regarding some of the specific themes are presented, and, when convenient, these tendencies are exemplified with appropriate quotes or excerpts from the data. Numbers in parenthesis, used after quotations, are the identification code for the excerpt from the data. The first number designates the participant, and the second number indicates the data unit (e.g., statement, dialogue excerpt) from which the quote is taken from. Also, when relevant, reference to particular details from the individual participants will be made for a deeper understanding of the matter being explored. I first start with a description of the teachers' own Spanish variety and identity and then continue with a general overview of the participants' declarative knowledge (i.e., the nature and depth of the instructors' knowledge, beliefs and awareness of the language in regards to dialectal variation), followed by a description of the teachers' procedural knowledge, (i.e., their pedagogical practices). The last section deals with instructors' understanding of the concept of standard language.

## 4.1 Instructors' Spanish Variety and Identity

The most prominent theme that emerged in the data concerns the differences encountered in the instructors' variety description and their Spanish identity in relation to their status as native/non-native speaker. The relationship between the variety they use and the degree of their identity with the Spanish-speaking world (i.e. how much they felt they belonged to a Spanish community) becomes apparent, as shown below.

The native participants defined their own variety according to their country of origin (i.e., Mexican, or Colombian in the current context). For example, the statements "I speak Mexican Spanish" or "I use my Mexican Spanish" were unanimously said by all four instructors from that country. This shows that the variety they use is closely related to the country they identify with. In contrast, the

descriptions provided by the non-native instructors of their Spanish variety were not that clear-cut.

On the one hand, and consistent with previous findings (Andión Herrero, 2013), those participants who did not have strong emotional connections with Spanish-speaking people or experiences provided labels such as "standard"[36] (1.2) or "bookish Spanish" (1.1) to describe their own Spanish variety, or they were not able to clearly define it, as shown in this short interaction: "R[esearcher]: how do you describe your Spanish then? I[nstructor]: I also ask that myself too" (3.5). In that case, the instructor couldn't identify with a specific variety and switched between corresponding dialectal forms in line with her lived experiences and the influences she received from the context around her. For example, she explained "when I came back from Spain, you know how you have the [θ], I did do that, but then I changed, because (...) I don't hear it, then I don't use it" (3.9) and she continued "remember I went from Spain and then went to Latin America, I did change it [the personal pronoun use: *vosotros* for *ustedes*], but if I have to go back [to Spain], I probably will change it again" (3.39). This clearly suggests non-commitment or a lack of emotional attachment of non-native speakers to any particular variety as well as the teachers' flexibility and adaptability to distinct life circumstances, and thus, different (undefined) identities. Despite her undefined regional variety, this participant could be described as one of the "regionally mobile individuals (...) who accommodate to a non-mobile majority that they have come to live amongst" (Trudgill, 1986, p. 3).

On the other hand, those non-native speakers who had travelled for longer than holiday periods and had had extensive contact with a specific variety expressed a more definite identification of their own Spanish variety, along with a stronger Spanish identity. For example, one instructor described the variety she speaks as "Mexican, definitely" (2.17), and she argued: "I kind of made it a real

[36] This instructor defined "by standard I mean that I pronounce every single letter" (1.2).

part of my life [...] I kind of feel like two people sometimes" (2.28).[37] This feeling of dual personality was also mentioned by another non-native instructor:

> "I think you have a different soul in every language [...] I think you have to be a different person, because it's a whole other way of expressing yourself, it's a different mindset. But, language is not just words; you have to think about things differently" (4.118).

Nevertheless, even when there is strong identification with a specific variety on the part of the non-native speaker, time span and context can cause changes to their variety. Exposure is a key factor in the acquisition and maintenance of a specific variety. An immersion context would promote the preservation of the variety learned, while a non-Spanish-speaking context could eventually cause the loss of dialectal features (e.g. lexical items, idiomatic expressions, accent). The views of two participants demonstrate such involuntary, and sometimes frustrating, shifts. One instructor stated: "I used to speak a Mexican variety of Spanish, specifically the Chiapas variety [...] but, now that I've been here so long [...] I find it's gone kind of generic [...] I lost my Mexican accent" (5.1). Another instructor, who registered for formal Spanish classes upon his return from abroad for more than one year, declared:

> "so I learned a whole new way of expressing myself in Spanish, kind of like an academic Spanish,[38] and, in the process, I forgot a lot of my Mexican Spanish, expressions, even my accent. I have lost a lot of my Mexican accent" (4.40).

Although the non-native speakers' variety can suffer modifications due to external circumstances (e.g., time span, context, contact with other varieties), native speakers consciously alter or adjust their own variety (i.e. accommodate) when interacting with Spanish speakers from other varieties in order to improve mutual comprehension. In those cases, native participant instructors stated that pronunciation and intonation always stay intact, whereas they claimed to use more standard vocabulary items (7.3, 8.10, 9.20, 9.25).

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[37] This instructor traveled a lot to Mexico, studied her M.A. in Mexican Spanish, has a Mexican husband that does not speak English (at the time of the interview), and is teaching Spanish. She claims to teach the Mexican variety, but without the slang she knows. Teaching practices are discussed in section 4.3.

[38] I here interpret "academic Spanish" as another variety, specifically standard variety.

However, the early bilingual participant, who reported having travelled back and forth from the US to Mexico several times as a child, consciously modified her pronunciation in order to accommodate to the speech of the person(s) she was talking to. She explained "I'll say [ʒo] for the most part, but then, if that evening I'm hanging out with Mexican friends, they'll only say [ʝo], the next thing I might say is [ʝo]" (6.15). This conscious choice and adjustment to the variety of her friends shows her fluency and linguistic flexibility as well as her need to accommodate in order to have a sense of a shared identity with her interlocutors, rather than to solve communication breakdowns. She appears to engage in the process that Giles (1973) called "accent convergence" with the intention "to gain the receiver's social approval" (p. 90). She described her accent as "fairly consistent, but less consistent than most of the people that I know" and blamed it on her childhood of "moving around."

Conversely, a non-native late bilingual speaker declared "I am not going to go from speaking [ʒo] to [ʝo] or something like that. I am consistent because that's how I learned it" (1.2). By making the effort of not using features from different dialects in her discourse, she sought to be *coherent* and *consistent* with the variety she chose to speak, or so as not to be perceived as being incorrect. As Beaven (1999) has found, most instructors were convinced that their students were free to choose the regional variety they wanted to speak as long as they were consistent in its use. Then, it would seem that *sounding coherent* or *being consistent* is probably the ultimate goal of every non-native speaker as well as foreign language teachers, who serve as models to their students. However, it should not be forgotten that it is widely accepted that "all speakers of all languages are subject to some degree of accommodation [...] during conversation" (Penny, 2000, p. 39). Trudgill (1986) proposed that one of the effects of contact between speakers of mutually intelligible dialects is accommodation in face-to-face interaction, which may lead to dialect mixture. He also noted that the short-term adjustments could turn into being long-term, as one of the non-native participants in this study affirmed: "I had some Spanish [from Spain] friends in Mexico too, that were really close friends of mine, but they kind of adapted their Spanish to

Mexican Spanish, you know, they stopped using *vosotros* and things like that" (5.11).

These findings clearly indicate while the native-speaker instructors show a strong attachment to the variety spoken in their country of origin, the non-native instructors, with the exception of one, appeared more flexible and adaptable, showing less emotional attachment to a specific dialect. It seems that their own variety is malleable as well; because they also expressed their willingness to learn other varieties with the intention of expanding their explicit knowledge of Spanish dialects (2.41, 4.122), and better respond to student requests (4.122). In this case, it would not be surprising that a non-native speaker variety would include dialectal features of distinct varieties.

## 4.2 Instructors' Knowledge of Dialectal Variation

The next most salient theme that emerged from the interview data is the knowledge of dialectal variation that instructors possessed. Here again, the individual's status as a native vs. non-native speaker of Spanish emerged as a prominent factor.

None of the instructors interviewed claimed not to know about Spanish dialectal variation. Not only because variation is present everywhere, but also because instructors themselves are also bearers of a specific dialectal identity, although we have seen that, in the case of non-native speakers, this regional identity may be vague and shifting. Thus, awareness about dialects is a given, as illustrated through this straightforward declaration by one of the instructors: "when you know about the world you know things like that" (5.15). However, perception or recognition or explicit knowledge of dialects is a different story, as another instructor participant explained: "[it is] one thing is to know it and another thing to live it" (10.2, my translation).

On the one side, all of the non-native speakers stated that they were aware about dialectal differences when they were learners of the Spanish language, but they usually experienced some degree of difficulty in detecting or identifying the specific differences. One instructor travelled to Spain and claimed that, before her

trip, she "knew that there was a different accent, but didn't know what it would sound like" (2.14) because she had never been exposed to that accent in class, either through her instructors (mainly from South America), or through the class materials. Another instructor attributed her knowledge of dialectal differences between Latin America and Spain to her education and not from experience (1.23). Thus, these examples show that it is usually not until FL learners are really exposed to other dialects that they actually perceive and distinguish the characteristics of distinct varieties. One instructor explained: "I never put it together, until I went to Spain" (3.18). In this case, it was exposure to a new variety that made her appreciate distinct regional features from the varieties she had been in contact with in class through her instructors (Chilean and Mexican), since she was never explicitly instructed about dialects. This evidence suggests that exposure or contact with native speakers from different geographical areas is of great value for raising awareness and improving recognition of regional varieties. A study by Schmidt (2009) has found that dialect familiarity, through a study abroad program, had a positive and significant impact on comprehension of such dialect by L2 learners.

But it does not appear that being a native speaker is a guarantee of familiarity with dialectal variation, as many native speakers have limited exposure to other dialects. In fact, for some of the participants, it was not until they moved out of their own region that they became aware of the existence of the vast geographical variation of the Spanish language:

> "My world was actually very local, let's say that it was very difficult for me to meet a person that was from another country. There was not as much contact [with people from other countries or regions] as there is here [in Canada] (...) I don't think I was that aware [of variation]. Even amongst people from my own country, Mexico, I believe that I became more aware of this by being here than when I was there, that we have a great amount of different ways to refer to the same" (7.4, my translation),

And she later added:

> "[Before moving to Canada] I had never heard an Argentinean or an Uruguayan speak in my life, but I knew they spoke differently from the way I speak" (7.36, my translation).

Another instructor acknowledged:

> "They [speakers of other varieties] have different vocabulary to describe the same thing that I didn't know, but it is now part of the vocabulary one already understands, but I didn't understand it when I was recently arrived from Colombia (...) They have different vocabulary, but also different pronunciation" (10.1, my translation).

And she also added: "by travelling, one realizes that there are many differences" (10.3, my translation).

These findings seem to be in accordance with those of Andión Herrero (2013), who found that non-native participants claimed to have had more contact with other regional varieties through their own life experiences than native speakers did. In the present study, native instructors recognized that their knowledge of dialectal features was limited. For example, one instructor admitted: "I don't think I've heard enough Argentinean Spanish to know exactly when you would and how often it [the personal pronoun v*os*] is used" (6.40). This also implies that they had not studied nor received any training on dialectal features. Thus, native and non-native instructors alike need to be exposed to dialects and learn about them in order to have an explicit knowledge of their features.

The very fact of becoming a Spanish language teacher can also motivate instructors to become more knowledgeable about dialectal variation. This comment was made by one non-native instructor: "but then I started doing teaching, you know, that's when I started really focusing on the differences because I needed to present it to the students" (3.21). It is of interest here to mention that what non-native instructors experienced as learners may be somehow reflected in what they do as teachers now (see section 4.3 below). Indeed, their limited explicit knowledge of dialectal characteristics will possibly determine their teaching practices.

We can conclude that teachers have different levels of implicit knowledge of dialectal variation but it seems that there is a need to enhance their explicit knowledge. In fact, all participants declared not having received any education in dialectal variation, and expressed their willingness to learn more about it.

## 4.3 Instructors' Teaching Practices

Another theme that the current study aimed at exploring is that of the teaching practices of the instructor participants. During the examination of related data to this theme, various subthemes emerged, which are presented in the following subsections.

### 4.3.1 Implicit Teaching and Beliefs about Dialectal Variation

All instructors recognized that dialectal variation is important and that it needs to be addressed in class, which emphasizes the idea that explicit knowledge of regional differences is needed for them, which became evident in section 4.2 above. The following excerpts are evidence that instructors transmit a message of inclusiveness in order for their students to be aware of variation and be understood wherever they go:

> "R: should we make the teaching of varieties part of the curriculum to be taught?
> I: I always do, I think it's important." (7.40)

> "R: Do you think you are expected to teach it [dialectal variation]?
> I: I don't think so, but I do, because… because of my own beliefs that they should know (…) I teach them [students] the differences." (1.46)

> "I: I think that it's essential that students know this [dialectal variation].
> R: is it essential?
> I: yes! They have to know this. Because this way they know that when they go, let's say, from Argentina to Mexico, there's not a shock (…)
> R: okay, so, then, students should be taught…
> I: yes, definitely. I think it's important!!" (3.24)

> "I try to just gear it, because they might not be interested only in Mexico, so many people might want to go to Spain or to South America, so you have to kind of keep it..., so they can go somewhere and communicate and everyone could understand them. You are trying to help them to be understood everywhere" (5.24)

However, despite their expressed belief in the importance of teaching about dialectal varieties, some of the teachers, especially those with no background in linguistics, also expressed a lack of self-confidence about actually teaching this

content, or even a lack of explicit knowledge. For instance, several instructors expressed discomfort in teaching about varieties due to a lack of knowledge. However, all instructors assumed their responsibility as teachers and addressed dialectal variation in class, in line with their own pedagogical beliefs.

There is no doubt that the Spanish used by each individual instructor is determined either by their upbringing in a particular geographical location in the case of native instructors or, in the case of non-native instructors, by the variety used in the country or region where they developed their communicative abilities and/or identity. As found in other studies (Beaven, 1999; Andión Herrrero, 2009, 2013), participants in the present study also reported teaching the variety that they knew best. These teachers, thus, provide exposure to their own variety to their students who then presumably acquire features of that variety through implicit processes. This idea is expressed by one teacher:

> "If I am Mexican, I have to teach them Mexican Spanish because I don't know how Argentinean is spoken; I don't know how people speak in Uruguay, in Cuba, and in Spain. You have an idea, but you do not master it. Thus, I think that you teach your own" (8.44, my translation)

Another instructor defended this position by claiming:

> "How can you tell a Puerto Rican that he has to make the effort of not changing the /r/ for the /l/? You just learn this as a kid and it is difficult to change" (10.49, my translation).

Most instructors claimed that if they change the Spanish they use in class, it is always to adapt to the proficiency level of the students and not to modify their own dialect, as exemplified in this statement: "I speak my Mexican Spanish. I modify it in the sense that I speak slower, and I try not to use slang" (8.9). Thus, it appears that the teachers were aware of implicitly teaching a particular variety. However, as language instructors, they also claimed to make an effort to implement explicit teaching of dialectal variation, especially when responding to students' requests (see section 4.3.2), and through the use of pedagogical materials and other teaching practices or strategies of their own (see section 4.3.3).

### 4.3.2 Reaction to Students' Requests and Questions

Instructors sometimes will have to face questions from their own students in regard to dialectal variation. For example: what is the best form, for instance, of the word *ejercicio* 'exercise' is it [eher'sisio] or [exer'θiθjo]?, where do we use a certain form?, what form is more used (hence, more useful to learn)?, etc. The ability to answer such questions with ease or with difficulty will depend on the instructor's explicit knowledge of the Spanish language regional diversity (see section 4.2 above).

Teachers may not always be able to satisfactorily provide an explanation. For instance, one instructor confessed "I tried to use a clip, and … [the characters in the clip] used the *vos*. They [students] pointed it out, and I said 'they use it, but it's very confusing to me, so I'm not gonna teach you this. I don't know how to do it', and that's it" (6.40). In order to avoid such situations, it is important for instructors to be knowledgeable of dialectal variation.

In their responses, all participants demonstrated inclusiveness and tolerance of all dialects as well as support for their use by the learners, as illustrated by the following two quotes:

> "I'd be like 'okay, you know that's fine because they say it that way there'. This is just hard to say because you know, I only speak Mexican Spanish, but it's not wrong, you know?" (2.37)

> "I ask them where they learned that and what it means, and I'll use it as an example. I'd be like 'you see, this is a great example'. I encourage ..., I don't discourage them from using things that we didn't cover in class. Like if they have a friend, who told them a cool expression, and, you know, students do that, they'll start studying Spanish and they'll realize 'oh yeah, you're Chilean right? Teach me something.' And then you can tell that they are just waiting for the opportunities so that they can use it in class, and so that they seem smart in front of the teacher. And then they use that, and you're like 'what was that?' (Laughs) (…) And sometimes I even write it on the board and I'd be like 'here we go, I learned something new today'." (4.71)

None of the instructors expressed a wish for their students to be consistent in the use of only one dialect, as found in previous studies (Beaven, 1999). However, it could be inferred that this was expected, since some of them avowed

consistency in the use of their own variety (see section 4.1above). This is somewhat surprising, given the fact that some of the participants expressed the need for consistency and coherence in the use of the language (see section 4.1 above). However, instructors supported students' freedom to choose whatever variety they want to use, in line with their own Spanish proficiency. For instance, one instructor encourages her students to use their personal interests to further motivate their learning process: "I tell people 'if you're interested in Argentina, you can use the /ʃ/ sound, and if you're interested in Spain, pay attention to those forms, watch TV, do whatever you can to learn that form' … by all means … 'do it that way'" (5.26).

### 4.3.3 The Use of Pedagogical Materials and Other Teaching Practices

As seen in section 4.2 above, instructors unanimously expressed their recognition of dialectal variation even though their explicit knowledge might be limited and/or stereotypical. One instructor surprisingly acknowledged U.S. Spanish as another Spanish dialectal variety to take into account. Thanks to the sociolinguistic research on the Spanish used in the U.S., as Gutiérrez and Fairclough (2006) note, there has been a "revelation" of U.S. Spanish as a variety of a language spoken by more than 350 million in the world, but with distinctive characteristics due to its contact with English" (p. 175).[39] As one participant commented:

> I[nstructor]: …this is what I liked about the books; I didn't consider it, the Hispanic area of the United States, the *chicanos*, is included. Or the *latinos* that are in the United States. And this is what I liked about the books, that this area that I didn't really consider is included.
> R[esearcher]: Is this area included in the culture section?
> I: No, the book mentions 'there are that many Hispanics in the United States…' Well, this is for example another variety, the Spanish of that region; in my opinion this is very interesting.
> R: You said that vocabulary from every region is included, is vocabulary from the United States also included?

[39] Moreno Fernández (2004) predicted the possible creation of "a variety of Spanish that is characteristic of the United States which, based on an American Spanish, would gather elements from diverse Hispanic areas, as well as components derived from the contact with English, the most spread and accepted by all the Hispanic communities of the Union" (pp. 5-6), if the growth of the Hispanic population and their socioeconomic presence persisted.

> I: No, vocabulary from that region is not included, only the panorama from there is given…, that there are that many Hispanics and bla bla bla.
>
> (8.64, my translation, my emphasis)

This excerpt from the data shows that the textbook, together with other pedagogical materials, can be a tool for broadening instructors' awareness and explicit knowledge of Spanish dialectal variation. In this case, it served to make the instructor aware of the existence of the various U.S. Spanish dialects, and consider it as a distinct variety. Unfortunately, the information appearing in the textbook seems to have been limited to an acknowledgement of the Hispanic population and its own Spanish variety in the U.S. but no further details on the linguistic features of the dialect were included.

All instructors stated that they thought the textbook was geared towards a general or standard Latin American variety, which makes sense given the context where the current inquiry took place. Previous studies (Beaven, 1999; Andión Herrero, 2009, 2013) found that textbooks were clearly geared towards only one particular variety (i.e., Castilian) and that teachers would need to present that variety to their students due to the limited materials available. This was an inconvenience when the dialect represented was not the teacher's (for non-native instructors or native instructors from outside of Spain) or the dominant one in the teaching context (i.e., Brazil). Conversely, the participants in this study did not express any worries with regard to the representation of varieties in the textbook, nor did they mention it as a limitation to their teaching practices, probably because the materials they were using did not seem to favour one variety over another. Given the evidence from the current and previous studies, it seems that when materials adopt Castilian as the pedagogical norm (i.e., when published in Spain), this norm is more noticeable, because it is a minority in the Spanish-speaking world. On the other hand, when the teaching materials use Latin American Spanish as the linguistic model, it is more difficult to identify a specific country to refer to, and the Spanish portrayed could be seen as more general, inclusive, or neutral. In any case, the participant instructors were influenced by the minimal representation of dialectal variation found in the textbook as shown

in the following quote: “I only try to mention whatever comes there [in the textbook], considering that those who wrote the textbook have a bit more knowledge about the topic than me” (7.12, my translation).

Despite relying on the textbook, the teachers reported researching about regional features that they were not familiar with when they appeared in the textbook in order to project an image of being knowledgeable about what they were teaching. Furthermore, almost all participants agreed that, although the teaching materials may be a representation of a type of a standard language, it is the teacher’s responsibility to present diversity in the classroom. Given the time-demands such extra preparation entails, some instructors opted to ignore unfamiliar dialectal features. These instructors expressed a desire for accessible and ready-to-use material. Indeed, all instructors expressed a need and desire for training or professional development on the topic of dialectal variation (see section 5 below).

It is clear that instructors learn about dialectal variation through both their teaching experiences and available pedagogical materials. For instance, within the Spanish program where this study took place, a reader was used as part of the core curriculum. The little book is usually shipped from a publishing house from Spain. In reference to this, one instructor declared:

> “I think they [students] appreciate it [the reader]. *I* appreciate it because it shows *me* vocabulary that I probably should know. You know, I go through the back [where the glossary is] and I am like ‘that’s what that means’ ‘that’s what that is’, and I have actually learned from it, because I don’t know, I mean, how would I know?”
>
> (6.71, instructor’s own emphasis)

All instructors valued the reader as a useful and interesting resource to address dialectal variation because the dialectal features are in context rather than isolated; the book includes an audio-recording of the text on CD, and activities that allow for practice of regional features at the end of the book. This type of pedagogical resource appears to be ideal support for teachers who want to include dialectal variation in both informed and practical ways.

In addition to the use of the course pedagogical materials to address dialectal variation, instructors also made use of other teaching practices and strategies to explicitly deal with this topic in class. For instance, in the case of non-native instructors, their experience as learners probably influenced what they did as teachers. That is, they were able to see the gaps or lack of coverage in regards to dialectal varieties and react accordingly. For example, one instructor claimed to be told about varieties but not being exposed to them: "I know that instructors said that there were different accents and this and that, but we never knew what they sounded like, it wasn't really a huge part of the class or the program to focus on different accents right?" (2.11). As a result, she promoted exposure to different varieties with her own students: "I tell them where my accent is from, and I play different music and stuff like that from different countries to try to expose them to different pronunciations" (2.33).

Since the Canadian context in which this inquiry took place is not an immersion context, real exposure to different dialects depends mainly on the attitude and actions of the teacher. The instructor quoted above already promoted exposure through music. Most instructors claimed to use music as well as videos, usually from YouTube or the Internet. During the interviews, one instructor stated: "the classroom setting cannot teach you a language, it can teach you skills to eventually learn a language, but you really need to be in a real environment to really thrive in a language" (4.21). Following this argument, he and other participant instructors provided some suggestions of potential practices on how to bring the real environment into the classroom, listed below:

- get involved in the community (e.g., volunteering for a Spanish-speaking association, organizing Spanish-speaking cultural activities).
- invite guests to come to the classroom (e.g., instructors from various origins). When in-person attendance is not a plausible option, the use of technology could make it possible.
- exchange instructors from different countries for one, two, or three class sessions. Students will get real exposure to certain varieties within the class.

- use videos included with the pedagogical materials as a base for a role play, pretending students are from the regions portrayed in the videos. They would need to include certain expressions, lexical items and pronunciation seen in the textbook or video.

The data has shown that the teaching practices used or recommended are mainly aimed at increasing students' exposure to different dialects. Thus, exposure seems to be an essential requirement to address dialectal variation in FL classes, but pedagogical materials are not enough to ensure sufficient exposure.

## 4.4 Instructors' Perspective of Standard and Prestigious Varieties

A final theme that is also worthy of some exploration is that of the conceptualization of standard language or variety, in relation to other (prestigious) varieties. When talking about the standardization of a language, we usually refer to the creation of rules of use and tools such as a reference grammar, orthography, and lexicon, mostly for the written language and more formal registers of spoken language (which tend to emulate written language), as the standard is taught through the education system. In the case of the Spanish language, the Castilian variety was the first to be used as a standard, because it was the source variety used in Spain; hence it has gained and maintained prestige over time. It was the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) that used the Castilian variety as the basis for creation of a norm, or language model. Today, the RAE and the *Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española* work together to include regional features other than those from Spain as part of the norm, embracing the idea that Spanish is a pluricentric language (Clyne, 1992), as it recognizes the existence of several linguistic centres of prestige, each with its own variation. It is through standardization that the Spanish language maintains certain homogeneity amongst the different regions where it is spoken, and this allows for the perception of a common core. In the context of this paper, I define a standard language or variety as one that contains common features accessible to all speakers of a same speech community (e.g. Chilean community, Spanish-speaking community at the university, etc.), and is neutral to specific contexts. Given the difficulty in

defining language and dialect/variety as two separate linguistic concepts (Moreno Fernández, 2010), these terms are used as synonyms in this section.

In the eyes of linguists, all dialects are equal. We all agree that a dialect is a political and social creation and that there are no linguistic reasons for one variety being better than another. However, in the eyes of the general population, including FL instructors, regional varieties can be perceived differently, with more or less prestige. In previous research (Andión Herrero, 2013), it was found that Spanish dialectal varieties received different treatment depending on the speaker's characteristics (e.g., native/non-native, and country of origin). This was not evidenced in the data from this study. Instead, all instructors interviewed projected an attitude of neutrality, considering all varieties equally prestigious, as exemplified in the following excerpts:

> "I don't think that there is a worst or a best Spanish; and I think it is different for every country; and I think that wherever you are, that is the best Spanish there." (3.50)
>
> "I think that Europeans like to think that they have the best version of the language (...) I think they are speaking their version of it, definitely. They speak what people speak in Spain, and I think that for them to expect that the rest of the Spanish-speaking people speak like them is pretty egocentric." (4.108)
>
> and he also wishes that this is not the thought transmitted through teaching:
>
> "I hope that we [instructors] are promoting that every version of every language is equally important" (4.111)
>
> "Just like the Queen's English is the best kind of English, you call that the highest form, Spanish from Madrid is the same thing, but it's still kind of class... imperialistic. It's a class thing, rather than an actual form that is better. <u>But I don't necessarily view it as a prestige form</u>, or better than, say, Cuban Spanish." (5.8, my emphasis)
>
> "There is <u>a common belief</u> that European Spanish is THE Spanish, right? It's THE proper Spanish, and everything else is a derivation, <u>which isn't true</u>, in a sense, and because it's a derivation, it's kind of considered to be less important, or a bastardization" (6.45, my emphasis)
>
> "I think that <u>there is a perception</u> that maybe central Spain would probably speak the Spanish that is considered the best, (...) <u>it's just a wide</u>

> conception, and not just in Spain, but in Latin America too." (6.49, my emphasis)
>
> "I have heard a lot that in Spain ... that the Spanish from Spain is considered much better precisely for being the origin of the language. But I have also heard, as a mere prejudice, a mere comment, that Colombians are the Spaniards of Latin America; they say that in Colombia, they speak the most perfect Spanish and the most similar to the original than the rest of the Hispanics. Definitely, I believe that there are lots of people who think there are better Spanishes than others. I don't think that there are better Spanishes than others." (7.41, my translation, my emphasis).

Although all instructors acknowledged the stereotypical and traditional view that considers Spanish from Spain and that from Colombia the two most prestigious varieties, they also made it very clear that they did not agree with such a perspective by expressing non-judgemental opinions and promoting the equality of all dialects. Thus, compared to previous research by Andión Herrero (2013), which was conducted in Spain and Brazil, we could conclude that context influences teachers' language attitudes and beliefs. It seems likely that the small proportion of Spanish speakers in Canada, hence no single predominant Spanish variety, as well as the bilingual and multicultural characteristic of this country would make people feel less prejudiced and more tolerant towards diversity.

In the current study, instructors tended to define the standard in neutral, and inclusive terms even if, on one single occasion, the stereotyped and traditional notion of Castilian as the prestigious and also the standard variety is mentioned:

> "I would say Spanish from Spain, but, you know, probably because I've been told that that's the standard (…) but we could argue what the standard is. There is probably a Mexican Spanish standard, too, right? That's different from standard Spain Spanish." (2.75)

Fortunately, she also seemed to maintain an open stance in regard to the pluricentric characteristic of the Spanish language. This idea and the importance of commonality as one of the defining characteristics of the standard are repeatedly found in the current data. That said, it does not seem that most of the interviewed instructors have a clear definition of what *standard* means, and some disagreed with the concept. The following statements are examples of the distinct

descriptions given. Some instructors included the idea of pluricentricity in their declarations:

> "I think that each variety has its own standard." (1.52)
>
> "The central part of a country is going to speak in the way that's considered standard, and more representative. But I disagree with that because you can't say that Central Mexican Spanish is more representative than the North, because it's just not fair." (6.55)
>
> and she also added:
>
> "I have a problem with the idea of the standard Spanish; I don't agree with it, I don't think it should exist because it's so discriminating. What makes something standard and something not standard?" (6.58).

Some participants addressed the concept of commonality in their responses:

> "R: What do you understand by standard Spanish?
> I: when you take away your accent, when you can speak the language without your regional accent, and you can speak the language without your regional expressions, then you are communicating something to your students that allows them to travel anywhere in the Spanish-speaking world." (4.106)
>
> "A standard is all the words that all of us who speak Spanish can generally understand." (8.31, my translation).
>
> "The standard, as I understand it, is to use a lexicon and a grammar that we all understand, and there is no problem in communication." (8.72, my translation).
>
> "I think it is the language commonly used; and the one that is supposed to be taught in school." (9.23)
>
> "I would say standard Spanish is spoken well, without grammatical errors, without huge pronunciation differences. Most intellectuals speak standard Spanish. Intellectuals, wherever they are from, tend to speak standard Spanish, because they need to be understood." (5.42).

In addition to the commonality notion, the last two excerpts also suggest that standard Spanish would be the language that educated people use, and probably the one to be taught to our Spanish FL students. This was also the impression that instructors had of the textbook, which provides the students with a

standard language, and dialectal variation needs to be integrated by the instructor (see section 4.3.3).

Two other instructors referred to accuracy or clarity of enunciation, when attempting to define a standard variety:

> "To me, standard is when all the letters are pronounced, independently of the accent […] so that it is comprehensible" (10.48, my translation)

> "By 'standard' I mean that I pronounce every single letter. I'm never going to say "*lo[h] estudiantes*" without an -s or something." (1.3)

It seems that they would not include the dialectal feature of elision or aspiration of [s] as part of the standard variety, but, probably, as a characteristic belonging to a non-standard variety. However, another instructor provided a clear sense of inclusiveness in her definition: "The standard should be a mixture of everything" (7.44, my translation). In this case, even a feature (e.g. elision or aspiration of [s]) that would presumably not be part of the standard for some would definitely be considered for her.

Given all these different descriptions, one could find confusion in what particular characteristics the standard should contain, especially in the given teaching context:

> "R: speaking of grammar, the standard would include *yo* (I), *tú* (you, singular), é*l* (he), *nosotros* (we), *ellos* (they).
> I: *Yo* (I), *tú* (you singular), *él* (he), *nosotros* (we), *vosotros* (you plural, used only in Spain), *ustedes* (you plural, used elsewhere) and *ellos* (they)
> R: But the *vosotros* would be part of the standard as well?
> I: yes, it is.
> R: Why?
> I: I don't know. To me, it is, because it is another way of, I don't know, of speaking. I would include it. I would include the *vosotros*; the *vos*, I have never included it, but it would be good to do so. And I don't know what other important grammatical differences there are."
>
> (8.39, my translation)

This excerpt from the data suggests that certain dialectal features would be considered part of the standard to be taught, but not others. Discrimination against less known, or less studied features could be a result of lack of sociolinguistic knowledge for the part of instructors (see section 4.2), or of prejudices towards

them. Why would the *vosotros* be included in standard Spanish but not the *vos*? The *vos* is accepted in many communities of Spanish speakers, and it achieves prestige in certain regions such as in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina.

All this diversity, and sometimes confusion, in the participants' definitions of and reflections on the standard implies that a debate on this concept is necessary for FL instructors in order to clarify its meaning. Instructors need to understand the concept better, because of the value judgements associated with the standard that some participants appear to acknowledge. Ducar (2006) and others insist that teacher preparation programs should require a course on sociolinguistic dialect awareness including the notion of the standard. This would likely result in a reduction of pre-existing language or dialect prejudices and negative ideologies from the instructors. For example, "what was once regarded as 'bad' grammar can be seen as a systematic non-standard dialect [e.g., elision or aspiration of [s]; non-inversion and explicit use of personal pronoun in questions: *qué tú quieres?* – what do you want?], and corrective teaching can be replaced by awareness of multi-dialectalism [e.g. *vídeo* vs. *video*]" (Llamas & Stockwell, 2002, p. 166). We would certainly avoid what Flórez Márquez (2000) calls "extreme situations in which one could sometimes hear the teacher […] say to his students that one cannot say *papas* but *patatas*,[40] or "correct" their pronunciation if they say *seseaban*,[41] because their prior teacher was from Latin America" (p. 311, my translation).[42] The students would also benefit from all this as they would have "a greater repertoire in their performance [...] and a greater confidence in their own language abilities" (Llamas & Stockwell, 2002, p. 166).

Happily, the instructors' data from the interviews did not reveal any cases as drastic as the one exemplified by Flórez Márquez (2000). It must not be forgotten, however, that the participating instructors were interviewed by the researcher;

[40] *Papas* is the word used in many Latin American countries, while *patatas* is the corresponding word used in Spain.
[41] *Seseo* is the linguistic phenomenon of pronouncing the letter combinations <ce, ci, za, ze, zi, zo, zu> with the sound /s/, instead of /θ/, as pronounced in Spain.
[42] These types of interventions create a very bad impression of the teacher by students, especially if the students have already been exposed to other varieties or if they have even learned about other dialectal norms.

consequently, they might have provided the responses that they thought were expected from them, and avoiding expressing less socially acceptable opinions.

# 5 Implications

The findings that emerged from the thematic analysis of teacher comments during the semi-structured interviews lead to a number of implications or recommendations.

## 5.1 Accommodation to Interlocutor's Dialect

All speakers, native and non-native, accommodate their speech during conversations, despite the fact that a few participant instructors wrongly see this common and natural occurrence as evidence of being incorrect in their own use of the language (see section 4.1). This inaccurate belief should be discouraged, and the notion of speech accommodation should be explained to and better understood by language users, especially those who teach it and learn it. After all, speaking a pluricentric language such as Spanish "entail[s] multiple group membership of their speakers (e.g., people may be part of both a Peruvian and a Spanish-speaking community)" (Clyne, 1992, p. 5). As a result, I suggest that this acknowledged phenomenon of dialect accommodation during real interaction (Trudgill, 1986) should also be transmitted to (pre)service teachers as well as to our students.

## 5.2 Pedagogical Materials

Since instructors rely to a certain extent on the textbook for dialectal information, and even learn from the materials themselves, it is necessary for textbooks to do a better job at including dialectal information. The information featured in textbooks could be more extensive and complete, and highlighted so that instructors and students pay attention to it. Also, it would be interesting for instructors as well as students to get a glimpse of the characteristics that distinguish U.S. Spanishes, as distinct varieties, from the other varieties due to

contact with English (e.g. lexical loans, code switching, etc.).[43] This could also mitigate the popular prejudices towards U.S. Spanish, or so-called *Spanglish*, a term that is often used in a pejorative way.

## 5.3 Increase Exposure to Dialects

It became clear from the findings that exposure to dialects is essential for deeper awareness and knowledge of regional varieties, and further development of the learner's sociolinguistic, and in turn, communicative competence. The current research context is different from one where there is a predominant dialect used, or where the influence of neighbouring countries is strong, as in Brazil. In the latter cases, a particular language model or variety is usually chosen or preferred; in the Canadian context, any model seems to be acceptable, justified by the geographical distance from any Spanish-speaking region, all of which may be a potential holiday or work destination for our students. Since it is certainly difficult to achieve an immersion environment within Canada, real exposure to different dialects will depend mainly on the attitude and the actions of the teacher, as well as on those of the learners. Whenever possible, it is desirable that students have the experience of studying the language abroad, in a Spanish-speaking country. However, this is not always within reach for everyone, and the recommendation here would be to seriously consider the ideas given by the instructors themselves to bring "a real Spanish environment" into the classroom, listed in section 4.3.3, as they unanimously agreed that current pedagogical materials do not provide enough exposure to dialects.

In particular, it would be a good idea to increase learners' exposure to the the personal pronoun *vos* referred to in various occasions in the data as a teaching challenge for instructors, as shown in section 4.3.2 above. Arteaga and Llorente (2009) advocate teaching the dialectal characteristics of the dominant or local variety in the area. For example, *vosotros* would be actively taught in Spain, but not in Latin America, while *voseo* would be addressed in Latin America but not in

[43] We do not have to forget that languages in contact are another source for lexical variation. In most Spanish-speaking countries, the Spanish language coexists with indigenous languages in Latin America and with other languages in Spain.

Spain. This makes sense when Spanish is taught as a second language in a Spanish-speaking context, or to heritage language learners. However, the context of the current study is a foreign language one, in a non-Spanish-speaking environment. Thus, it could be concluded that since there is no local or dominant dialect that students are exposed to regularly, we should teach them both the *vosotros* form and *voseo*, so that they are ready to interact with Spanish speakers from any region. In the current study, all the participants explained that they address the *vosotros* form, together with its paradigms, because it appears in the textbooks used, but that they don't actually use it. In contrast, none of the instructors mention *voseo*, unless there is a direct reference to it in the textbook or in other materials used, and these forms are not evaluated in tests or exams. Given this finding, it is suggested that instructors receive training (further discussed below) about distinct features such as these ones, of which they are not users, so that they can provide informed explanations to their students. Also, since instruction is usually affected by the way assessment is carried out, including dialectal features in tests, quizzes, or exams would serve as a motivation for instructors to address dialectal variation as an integral part of the curriculum.

## 5.4 Enhance Teacher Education

Given the pedagogical challenges that some instructors encounter at the time of dealing with dialectal features in class due to their lack of explicit knowledge, they all agreed that there is a need for education or professional development regarding regional variation. If this information was to be put together for easy teachers' access, it would surely be successful, since they all expressed their willingness to learn more about the topic. However, it would be advisable that this information be addressed prior to the moment teachers enter service, that is, during their teacher training courses. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, not all foreign language instructors in the university context receive teacher training. Although in the English as a Foreign Language teaching field it has been found that the topic of language variation is usually included in teacher education programs, even there the extent to which this topic is dealt with varies.

For instance, pre-service teachers in the UK complained that their sociolinguistics course was theoretical rather than practical (Edwards & Owen, 2005). Thus, any suggestion to include language variation training in teacher education programs or in professional development should explicitly address practical pedagogical applications, so that instructors can more easily implement language variation-focused instruction.

Moreover, the potential benefits of providing teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their practice, as occurred during the research interviews, is exemplified by anecdotal evidence. One of the research participants reported enthusiastically two semesters after the interview that she had developed activities that involved different dialectal expressions for one of her classes. Her fill-in-the-blank activity targeted the present perfect subjunctive verb forms, but also included regional ways of expressing the idea of "cool", indicating the different Spanish-speaking countries where each expression is used.

## 6 Limitations and Further Research

Limitations of this exploratory descriptive study and possible ways in which it could be further extended deserve some attention. The goal here was to describe the beliefs and knowledge of Spanish FL instructors regarding dialectal variation and what they do to include dialectal characteristics in their own classrooms. The viewpoints expressed by the ten participants are not necessarily shared by all Spanish teachers at the university level and so cannot be generalized.

Also observations of actual classroom practices were not conducted as part of this study. Connecting teachers' commentaries with their actual practice, as done in studies of grammar teaching by Borg (1999), would shed further light on the pedagogical dilemma Spanish teachers face when trying to expose their students to different varieties.

Teaching or instruction does not happen without the presence of students. Therefore, students' beliefs and knowledge about dialectal variation should also be given some attention. A comparison of both perspectives, from teachers and students, would be very interesting in order to determine whether their views are

close or, on the other hand, very different. For example, in previous research carried out in Europe, the teachers' perspective was considered first (Beaven, 1999), and the students' views were analysed in a second investigation (Beaven & Garrido, 2000). When comparing the results of the two studies, it seems that there is no clear agreement between teachers and students regarding the level of confusion caused by the presentation of dialectal variation in class (see section 2 above). Deeper examination of this issue is needed in order to be able to understand better whether it is beneficial or detrimental to present students with the different Spanish dialects in foreign language classes.

A final issue that is also worthy of some attention is variation of teachers' beliefs and cognition across instructional settings and over time. The more professional experience we get as instructors, the more chances of professional development, as it happens in any other profession. Thus, teachers' views on the inclusion of dialectal variation in foreign language classrooms could certainly evolve over time and in different contexts (e.g., teaching different levels), suggesting that longitudinal and cross-sectional studies may deepen our understanding of the factors that influence these views.

## 7 Conclusion

Qualitative research studies such as the one presented here can provide data about cognition and teaching practices of foreign language teachers that can be of value to teacher educators and pre- and in-service teachers. From the data presented in this paper, it has been shown that the inclusion of dialectal variation in the Spanish L2 classroom was important for all instructors interviewed, even if it was not the main focus of instruction. But it is also clear that we cannot take for granted that language instructors, native or non-native, are knowledgeable about geographical varieties simply because they are speakers of the target language. All of the participants, native speakers and non-native speakers alike, recognized their limited sociolinguistic knowledge. Both groups need to be exposed to the varieties and receive explicit instruction about the varieties and about how to teach L2 learners about varieties. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher

educators include training in dialectal variation in professional development courses and workshops and that researchers continue to explore both the linguistic and pedagogical aspects of variation-focused instruction for learners of Spanish.

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## Appendix C – Semi-structured Interview Guiding Questions

I will address the following general topics:

- Personal information (history of learning Spanish) and linguistic background
- Interests for learning languages
- Specific interest for learning Spanish
- Expectations for the future, reasons for studying/learning Spanish
- Relationships and social networks with Spanish speakers
- Experiences with Spanish speakers (e.g. travel to Spanish-speaking countries)
- Opinions and stereotypes about the Spanish speakers and the different Spanish varieties
- Teaching practices of dialectal variation
- Preferences of the Spanish varieties (to learn, to study, to speak, to listen, etc.) and why

Pseudonym: _____ Age: _____ Gender: ☐ Male ☐

Female

Where were you born? _____

Mother tongue: _____ Other languages you speak: _____

Years teaching Spanish: _____

- **Your friends/acquaintances** from other Spanish-speaking countries, do you get along with them? Do they speak very differently from you? Are these differences a problem in communication? How do you solve these differences?
- Do you understand each other? What do you do if you don't?
- What do you think of the Spanish you speak compared to theirs?

**In class:**

- Do you teach culture in your classes?
- How do you bring your cultural heritage into the classroom? How do you teach culture?
- How do you teach cultural information from other Spanish-speaking countries? Do you know about the culture that you have to teach (because it appears in the textbook)? Do you look for extra resources (internet, other books, library, etc.) in order to be able to teach the culture section? How do you decide what cultural knowledge to include?

- What do you do if you don't know about any cultural information presented in the textbook?
    - ignore it
    - explain even if not knowing (based on textbook info only)
    - do extra research and explain it
- What do you do if you are unfamiliar with any linguistic information presented in the textbook?
- Does the textbook (instructor's version) provide enough and extra information to the instructor to help provide a better and more informative instruction?

- Do you generally use Spanish in your classes?
- Do you use your Spanish in class? Do you modify / change it any way? Why? Do you think you should use a different Spanish in class? What Spanish do you think you should use?
- Do you adapt/change the variety of Spanish you speak to a more standard version when you teach? And when you speak to other Spanish speakers, do you do the same?
- Do you teach your variety to your students? Do you use x in your class? Do you explicitly talk about the variety?
- Do you make your students aware of the different varieties of Spanish? Why / why not? Do you tell them examples about it?
- If your students use a Spanish feature from another variety of Spanish, how do you react?
    a. Correction, saying this is not what you use (and it is incorrect) and impose an alternative you use
    b. Acceptance, clarifying that this is used in another variety
    c. Acceptance, not giving importance to it // not making any comment regarding the variety used
    d. ?
- What Spanish do you think students should learn? What Spanish variety do you think is easier for students to understand / to learn from?

    Student preferences:

    - Do students prefer one variety over another?
    - What should they learn? Would you change if many students expressed a strong preference for a variety?

In Canada, in this context, you have to make a pedagogical choice. Do you teach the variety that students want to learn? Because they are close to Mexico?

**Textbook:**

- What do you think of the textbook you use in your course? Do you like it in general? What do you like the most / the least about the textbook?

    Selection of the textbook:

    - Do you have input in the decision as to which textbooks will be used in the Spanish courses?

- If so, If you could have input, what would be your selection criteria? do you consider the amount of coverage of Spanish varieties as a criterion in your choice?
- Do you use the audio texts that come with the book? Do you always read the texts yourself?
- Is the Spanish language and its varieties covered well? Do you think the textbook used for your course is representative of the different varieties of Spanish?
- Do you think the exposure to the different varieties of Spanish through the textbook is adequate for students? Why?
- Do you think there is enough representation of the different varieties of Spanish in the textbook?
- Do you think teaching materials do a good job of supporting student learning of varieties?
- Do you feel comfortable teaching varieties of Spanish? Why / why not? (not enough knowledge, not trained?)

Did you get training on how to teach about varieties? If yes, tell me about it. If not, would you have liked to get that?
- The exposure to the different varieties of Spanish through the textbook is limited. What do you recommend your students to do to be exposed to the different varieties?

**Standard:**

There is some controversy about the Standard language.
- What do you think is Standard Spanish?
- Do you think is there a best or worst Spanish? Who do you think speaks the best/worst Spanish? Why?
- Do you think all the varieties of Spanish should be standardized?

**Non-native instructors:**

Start with your first exposure to Spanish. Can you remember it?
- Where did you learn Spanish? Tell me about your story as a learner of Spanish.
- Did you travel abroad to learn Spanish/to be exposed to the Spanish language? Where? Why?

- What variety of Spanish do you speak? Do you like it? Do you want to change it? Why?

- Why did you choose to go for a study abroad program in _____?

- Did you speak differently before your study abroad program? How different? Why did you change it?

- Have you tried to change your Spanish now that you are back in Canada? Did you have to change it? Why?

- Do you feel you have an identity in Spanish? Does it have a relationship with the variety you speak?

Does the variety you speak have anything to do with your identity?

- What helped you to be aware of and understand the different varieties of Spanish?
- Do you make your students aware of the different varieties of Spanish? Why?
- Do you have a preferred variety to teach? Why / why not?
- Do you have difficulty understanding some varieties? Which ones?
- Do you feel comfortable teaching varieties of Spanish? Why / why not? (not enough knowledge, not trained?)

Did you get training on how to teach about varieties? If yes, tell me about it. If not, would you have liked to get that?

# ARTICLE 3: DIALECTAL TREATMENT IN SPANISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

## 1 Introduction

The main purpose of teaching a second or foreign language (L2/FL) is to provide learners with the necessary tools to be able to carry out successful communicative interactions with native and non-native speakers of the target language (TL) in the various social situations they will encounter. Educators want to prepare language learners in a way that they can achieve good communicative competence and approach a native-like proficiency of the language. Within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach currently used in many L2/FL classrooms, the development of communicative competence is the primary goal to be achieved. Part of communicative competence is sociolinguistic competence, which Bachman (1990) defines as the "sensitivity to the conventions of language use (...) determined by the specific language use context", which "enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to that context" (p. 94). This includes knowledge of dialectal features, which plays an essential role in achieving effective communication.

One way of providing tools for learners to develop their sociolinguistic competence is through pedagogical materials; thus, this article examines how Spanish FL textbooks deal with regional variation. This information is also of value for teachers, who may not be well versed in dialectology, especially for a language with a large number of speakers such as Spanish, and who therefore rely on textbooks to raise students' awareness of dialectal features. With the goal of providing learners of Spanish with the essential tools to successfully communicate with speakers from the vast Spanish-speaking world (i.e. speakers of different dialects), this article provides a description of the coverage of dialectal features in some representative Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) textbooks used at a Western Canadian university.

The objective of this study is to determine whether textbooks give students a proper representation of the main characteristics of the Spanish regional varieties. I consider "proper" representation to include the salient characteristics of the most widely spoken dialects (e.g. Castilian, Rioplatense, Mexican, Caribbean). Some of these features are *voseo*, *seseo/distinción, yeísmo, leísmo*. Given that Spanish is a foreign language (as opposed to a second language) in the context of this study, a multicultural and multidialectal approach, as opposed to an approach that is biased towards a specific variety, would seem more adequate, as there is no particular Spanish dialect that dominates in Canada. Thus, reference to the linguistic diversity of all or almost all 21 Spanish-speaking countries[44] would be expected. Also, textbooks should ideally address dialectal variation in all the language areas where variation occurs —the lexicon, phonology, and morphosyntax— with adequate explanations, examples and a practical component. Explanations and examples would help to raise awareness of regional features, while a practical component would increase attention to dialectal variation. This practical component could consist of activities that promote the recognition, identification, and comprehension of dialectal features and also include occasional production activities in order to strengthen knowledge of the different dialectal features. The main pedagogical goal is for the learner to achieve the ability to distinguish and understand the use of Spanish dialectal features in authentic situations, and, if needed, employ them during interaction. Given the importance of this knowledge, dialectal awareness and recognition should be addressed from the beginning levels, with more detail being added as the proficiency level of students increases.

In order to find out how SFL textbooks address the issue of dialectal variation and deal with particular dialectal features, this article will answer the following research questions:

1) Do SFL textbooks raise awareness about the dialectal variability of the Spanish language? How do they do so?

[44] Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Some consider the U.S. as a Spanish-speaking country.

2) What information about the dialectal variability of the Spanish language is found in SFL textbooks? How do they present this information?

## 2 Previous Research

Textbooks for different foreign languages have been extensively analysed, and the main focus of many of these studies has usually been their representation of culture and its integration with language teaching (Arizpe & Aguirre, 1987; Ramirez & Hall, 1990; Wieczorek, 1994; Puig, 1996; Roca, 1996; Young 1999; González Casado, 2002, to name a few). Since the beginnings of the use of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, the sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the language have become as important as the linguistic system itself. Thus, when analysing cultural features and their relationship with the target language, the sociolinguistic component should always be addressed as well (Areizaga, 2002; Hernando García-Cervigón, 2002; Paricio, 2005).

The number of research studies that have concentrated specifically on textbooks' representation and treatment of dialects and the sociolinguistic characteristics of the target language is more limited, despite the fact that the inclusion of sociolinguistic information is considered crucial in order for L2/FL learners to speak natural language and not 'textbook language', and to facilitate communication with speakers of different TL dialects (Wigdorsky, 1985; Wieczorek, 1991, 1992; Mason & Nicely, 1995; Arteaga, 2000). [45] The first study addressing this specific issue was conducted by Wieczorek (1991). He analysed and compared fifteen SFL textbooks of various levels for high school and college, focusing on their treatment of phonological/phonetic dialectal features. He was specifically concerned with the presentation of variation in pronunciation and the structural layout of exercises for pronunciation in the texts. The findings revealed that the concept of 'dialect' was addressed only superficially, and dialectal distinction was made mainly between Spain and Latin America, with Spain being considered the country where the norm lies. When analysing the accompanying

[45] See also O'Connor di Vito, 1991; Wieczoreck, 1994; Fonseca-Greber & Waugh, 2002; Nadasdi et al., 2005, for specific research studies on French; and Jones & Ono, 2001, for Japanese.

multimedia materials, only two textbooks had videos. In one of the books, the Castilian dialect was the only one represented in the videos; the other provided more varied exposure (Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Florida), but not all dialectal pronunciations were found. Wieczorek (1991) claims that textbooks misrepresent the variability of the Spanish language and the concept of 'dialect' itself, and they do not deal with all the important dialectal elements that would be beneficial to the L2 learner as a listener, since "this listener would be accountable for comprehension of textbook and non-textbook Spanish at some point in his/her language career" (p. 180).

From that same perspective, regarding variation in pronunciation, Arteaga (2000) reviewed the phonetics sections of ten popular first-year SFL textbooks. Only four texts included these sections in the book itself; the others addressed phonetics in the lab manual, and one did not deal with the issue at all. The basis for Arteaga's study is that the teaching of dialectal variation in pronunciation is helpful for the learner's comprehension of the Spanish language. The author stated that there were (at least) three common dialectal phonological processes that L2 learners should be taught to recognize in native speech in order to improve communication with speakers of different Spanish dialects: 1) the aspiration or deletion of syllable-final consonants, 2) *distinción/seseo* (the pronunciation of *s*, *z*, and *ce/ci*), and 3) *yeísmo/ žeísmo/lleísmo* (the pronunciation of *y* and *ll*) (p. 345). Arteaga found that the coverage of these features in the textbooks reviewed was "highly incomplete; only two texts present *žeísmo*, and none presents the process of deletion/aspiration of syllable final consonants" (p. 347). The presentation was also "inaccurate" since "many texts overgeneralize dialectal features" (p. 349).

Concerning variation in morphosyntax, in a later study Wieczorek (1992) compared thirteen beginning- to advanced-level SFL textbooks with the intention of examining the "(mis)use" of the subject pronoun *vos* (used to refer to the second-person singular in large parts of Latin America, but not in Spain). Similar to his previous study, Wieczorek found Castilian-dialect dominance among the texts, with the consequent suppression of other dialects, and "varying or misleading intuitions about dialects of Spanish" (1992, p. 34) because the subject

and object pronoun systems are not well-represented in terms of dialects. The pronoun *vos* and its corresponding verb conjugations are completely ignored, and the texts' general tendency seems to be a "selective non-use of certain dialect pronouns", which results in the fact that "students cannot create well-rounded intuitions about Spanish if the input is lacking" (p. 36).

Using the same sociolinguistic feature as Wieczorek (1992), Mason & Nicely (1995) surveyed 37 first-year secondary and post-secondary SFL textbooks for their coverage of *voseo*. The results revealed that only 16% of the textbooks reviewed referred to the pronoun *vos*, while *vosotros* (used in Spain) and its conjugations were addressed in most of the texts. Mason & Nicely's findings support those of Wieczorek (1992) in terms of the misrepresentation of the subject pronoun system in Spanish, and the researchers provide justified arguments for the inclusion of the *voseo* in SFL textbooks and classroom instruction, such as the fact that there are more chances for their students to encounter a speaker using *vos* than one that uses *vosotros*.

Some years later, Arteaga & Llorente (2009) published a book entitled *Spanish as an International Language: Implications for Teachers and Learners*, which includes a review of three first-year college-level SFL textbooks, *Impresiones*, *Puntos de partida(8th ed.)*, and *Plazas (3rd ed.)*, popularly used in the U.S. and which do address dialectal variation (pp. 168-187). This review was more complete than that in the previous studies cited above, as it considered dialectal features in the lexicon, morphosyntax and phonology, as well as other sociolinguistic differences (particularly register). Their findings revealed that these textbooks have different strengths and weaknesses when addressing dialectal and sociolinguistic variation. *Impresiones* presents dialectal variation in a meaningful manner, since it also provides exercises for students to practice the variants addressed —the only text to do so— but, when presenting alternatives for vocabulary items, the regions in which they are used are not always mentioned. *Plazas* is the textbook that provides the most sociolinguistic information in a consistent and informative manner for the student, but *Plazas* presents lexicon from a Latin American standard for the most part, and sometimes it is not

consistent in the vocabulary items offered, reflecting the use of a 'cafeteria approach', that is, "randomly selecting vocabulary words from widely divergent dialects for active presentation" (Arteaga & Llorente, 2009, p. 172). Finally, *Puntos de partida* provides outstanding information for teachers who lack a sociolinguistic background by considering the needs of heritage speakers, but unfortunately, it also adopts a 'cafeteria approach' when teaching vocabulary. Overall, the three textbooks recognize the importance of Spanish regional and sociolinguistic variation, but the authors also recommend that "they [textbooks] at least briefly explain the phonological processes involved in sociolinguistic variation [...] for students to develop communicative competence" (p.186).

Most of the studies reviewed here concentrate on the analysis of beginner-level SFL textbooks, which is important as most students do not continue onto the more advanced levels. According to Wiezcorek (1994), "95% of American students do not continue language study beyond the intermediate level" (p. 487). However, it is also crucial to foster a multicultural and multidialectal perspective not only from the beginning stages of language learning, but also all along the language learning path in order for the student to be able to review and master the dialectal information learned and to eventually become sociolinguistically aware in a native-like manner. Thus, in the current study, a review of textbooks from the three levels —beginner, intermediate, advanced— of a SFL post-secondary program is presented. Also, similar to Arteaga and Llorente (2009), this study includes dialectal features from all three subfields (lexicon, morphosyntax, and phonology) in its analysis rather than focusing on one only, as many studies have done.

# 3 Method

## 3.1 Corpus Analysed

The textbooks listed below, in alphabetical order, constitute the corpus for analysis in the current study:

*De Paseo*, 3rd edition (Long & Macián, 2005)
*Entre nosotros*, 2nd edition (Jarvis & Lebredo, 2007)
*Imagina*, 1st edition (Blanco & Tocaimaza-Hatch, 2007)

*Miradas* (Mejía & Davis, 2008)
*Mosaicos*, 4th edition (Castells et al., 2006)
*Mosaicos*, 5th edition (Castells et al., 2010)
*Plazas*, 2nd edition (Hershberger et al., 2005)

These textbooks were the ones used in the Spanish language program at a Western Canadian University from 2006 to 2010 at the beginner (1st and 2nd semesters), intermediate (3rd and 4th semesters), and advanced (5th semester) levels. Table 14 shows the textbooks by level in relation to the time period they were used. These textbooks provide a substantial part of the input that students are exposed to as well as guide the curriculum for the class.

**Table 14.** Corpus of the study: textbooks used from 2006 to 2010

| Course[a] / Semester | | Span 111 | Span 112 | Span 211 | Span 212 | Span 300 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2006-2007 | Fall | *Plazas* | *Plazas* | *De Paseo* | *Entre nosotros* | N/A[c] |
| | Winter | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Plazas* | *Plazas* | *De Paseo* | N/A |
| | S & S[b] | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | N/A |
| 2007-2008 | Fall | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | N/A |
| | Winter | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | N/A |
| | S & S | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | N/A |
| 2008-2009 | Fall | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | *Miradas* |
| | Winter | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | *Miradas* |
| | S & S | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Entre nosotros* | *Miradas* |
| 2009-2010 | Fall | *Mosaicos 5th ed* | *Mosaicos 4th ed* | *Imagina* | *Imagina* | *Miradas* |
| | Winter | *Mosaicos 5th ed* | *Mosaicos 5th ed* | *Imagina* | *Imagina* | *Miradas* |
| | S & S | *Mosaicos 5th ed* | *Mosaicos 5th ed* | *Imagina* | *Imagina* | N/A |

[a] SPAN 111 and 112: *Beginner Spanish I* and *II* (1st and 2nd semester)
SPAN 211 and 212: *Intermediate Spanish I* and *II* (3rd and 4th semester)
SPAN 300: *Advanced Spanish* (5th semester)
[b] Spring & Summer semesters
[c] N/A refers to the use of the instructor's own material, not available to the researcher

The seven textbooks reviewed are all published in the United States, and their targeted audience are North American Anglophone students, specifically

from the U.S., and not from Canada, since there are no references to the latter country and all references to the students' life and culture, and comparisons with the Spanish-speaking world, are drawn only from the U.S. and the English language. Overall, these textbooks constitute a rather homogenous corpus and presumably are representative of the current teaching trends in North America. They were published between 2005 and 2010, and they all adopt a four-skill approach focusing on developing proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Also, they support the implementation of a communicative approach, and their teaching philosophy is rooted in the Five Cs–Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities–of the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning*. The exceptions are *De Paseo* and *Entre nosotros*, which do not explicitly state such an affirmation in their opening pages; however, through analysis, it seems that their approach is also informed by the Five Cs.

It is important to note here that the ancillary materials which accompany the textbooks were not considered in the analysis, with the exception of the in-text audio component. First, it is logistically difficult to gather all the ancillary materials for the textbooks, and it seems inadequate to examine some but not all. Second, given the tight time constraints of a university FL course, instructors usually do not have time to integrate all of them into the course, even if they are included in the syllabus, and the students themselves, who are usually enrolled in four to six university courses per semester, are unlikely to make use of these materials on their own. Finally, and most importantly, the treatment of dialectal variation consigned only to complementary materials would mean that the authors did not consider such a component of the Spanish language as an essential part of the curriculum, but rather, as Bugel (2000) pointed out, "se propone como un complemento para mostrar las variaciones de una lengua que se trata como si fuera homogénea. El trabajo con variedades no surge como una necesidad, sino tan sólo como una curiosidad" (p. 76).[46]

[46] "It is suggested as a complement to show the varieties of a language, which is treated as if it were homogenous. Working with varieties does not emerge as a necessity, but only as a curiosity." (my translation)

In this study, dialectal features are categorized within the three main areas: phonology, lexicon, and morphosyntax. For the phonology component to be complete, there is a need for audio files. Thus, the only ancillary materials considered were the in-text audio components that were part of the tasks to be covered in class, such as listening comprehension activities or readings accompanied by an audio file. The purpose for the consideration of such audio files is only to determine whether speech samples from different Spanish dialects were included, and whether these were relevant for the situation presented. In other words, speakers from a particular Spanish-speaking country should be represented in the recording if a dialogue in the textbook was presumably happening into that country. In addition, two of the books, *Imagina* and *De Paseo*, include videos as an integral component of the text. Thus, the in-text videos of these two books were examined as well.[47]

In sum, the (online) workbook, supplementary files, online resources for the student or the instructor (i.e. companion websites containing cultural videos, supplementary activities, additional grammar practice, quizzes and tests, lab manual, etc.), and the testing programs of the textbooks were not considered for the analysis. Only the main student core textbook, including any integrated audio/video components, together with the corresponding instructor's version, were included in the review.

## 3.2 Instruments for Textbook Analysis

The instrument used in the analysis was a checklist (Appendix D), which provided organised descriptive data for the textbook review. In addition, a "dialectal tokens grid" (Appendix E) was also created and used to categorise the data in the attempt to quantify it. Data were obtained via a careful and thorough page-by-page review of explanations, readings, vocabulary lists, maps, tasks and activities, marginal or intra-page notes, etc. All relevant information regarding the

[47] From my personal experience and fellow instructors, unless the videos are an integral part of the textbook material, instructors tend to regard them as ancillary and do not always use them in class, because of lack of interest from the students and/or limited class time. The same happens with songs included in the text.

linguistic variation of Spanish dialects was noted in the checklist and simultaneously classified in the dialectal tokens grid (see Appendix G). The structural layout of the textbook was considered as well, using a "textbook structure grid" (Appendix F).

### 3.2.1 Checklist

Criteria lists have been developed since the 1960s to evaluate and compare textbooks in a methodical and objective manner (Sercu, 2000). Thus, in order to conduct a systematic analysis of textbooks, checklists created around the subject of study are usually used (Byrd, 2001; Bader, 2000; Ur, 1996; Skierso 1991). The cited references contain published checklists that are models to be adapted and used as guidelines for the evaluation and consequent selection of textbooks and ancillary materials, which is not the purpose here. However, these checklists did provide a basis for designing an adequate checklist for the present study.

The elaboration of the checklist for the present study was done in different steps, starting with a short list of Spanish dialectal features in the lexicon, phonology and morphosyntax, based on the features addressed in previous studies. This initial version of the checklist was used for a first review of one of the textbooks that explicitly addressed dialectal variation. Next, the checklist was revised in light of the data extracted from the textbook, and subsequent versions were improved upon until a concrete final version was attained, reproduced in Appendix D, which was then used to review all the textbooks. As well, as the analysis of each textbook was being completed, a review of how the data from the previous books had been interpreted was also performed. These techniques helped to achieve reliability in the collection of data and enrich validity in its analysis.

The checklist does not evaluate or grade the textbooks and the dialectal features found in them on a numerical scale; rather, it presents questions in a yes/no format and includes open-ended questions and a space for comments and observations to further describe the treatment that textbooks give of these dialectal characteristics. This format allows for a more complete description of the

textbooks than a purely quantitative approach and facilitates comparison of all the books.

The questions in the checklist are constructed so as to understand how the textbooks address the diverse dialectal features of the Spanish language. Questions address both general and detailed aspects of Spanish dialects. In order to simplify the task, the questions were organized into subgroups: a) general dialectal issues, b) variation in the lexicon, c) variation in morphosyntax, and d) variation in phonology. This organization allowed for direct answers to the research questions presented above and helped with a clear presentation of the data below.

### 3.2.2 Dialectal Tokens Grid and Textbook Structure Grid

The dialectal tokens grid, reproduced in a smaller size in Appendix E, was created in order to quantify and classify all dialectal tokens or any reference to dialectal issues in the textbooks. Based on the three major elements that instructors and students seek in textbooks —content, examples, and exercises or tasks (Byrd, 2001)— each explanation or note, example, or activity regarding linguistic variants was counted as a token. These tokens were tallied and categorised according to the corresponding linguistic area: lexicon, phonology, or morphosyntax. Any other reference to Spanish dialects (e.g. map, reading, etc.) was counted as a token as well and classified in the category named 'other'. Within the lexicon category, the examples were sorted into the following types: those featuring the region(s) of focus in the chapter, those for which the region(s) of use was specified, and those for which the region(s) of use was not given. Explanations and activities were also divided according to whether they referred to the regions(s) of focus or not. At the same time, all tokens were grouped according to their target audience (student or instructor) and their physical location in the textbook[48] (within a particular section or context, or isolated). Tokens were classified as "isolated" if they were written in a smaller font size and

[48] The format in which the dialectal tokens occur in textbooks tells us about the degree of importance given to them and determines whether their content is part of the core material (i.e. in context) or not (i.e. isolated).

occurred in a footnote, margin or box. Tokens were classified as "in context or in section" if they maintained the font size of the page and appeared consistently in a chapter section or as part of the main text. Also, all pages containing at least one dialectal token were tallied, and a space for detailed observations and comments was provided as well, allowing for a brief description of the quantified data when necessary.

The textbook structure grid (Appendix F) was used for analyzing the structural layout of each textbook. It served to understand how the chapters dealt with various topics or themes as well as culture, and how this information was distributed throughout the books.

In the next section, the findings of the data collected are provided. The goal is not to evaluate or rank the analysed textbooks, nor to determine which one(s) is (are) the best.[49] The instruments used here helped to identify the characteristics of each of the textbooks in order to compare them with regards to their treatment of Spanish regional variants and the number of dialectal tokens found within their pages.

# 4 Results

In order to conduct a more complete analysis of the materials, I used the Instructor's Annotated Edition (IAE) of each textbook, when available[50], so that the information aimed at both the instructor and the student could be reviewed and compared at the same time.

First, a general overview is presented in order to determine whether the textbooks do or do not address dialectal variation in general and to classify all dialectal tokens for each textbook in a quantitative way. The ratio of pages containing any tokens to the total number of pages[51] was calculated for each

[49] I have intentionally avoided the word *evaluation* and its derivatives, using *analysis* and *review* instead, since the former could imply value judgements. Rather, my intention is to carry out a neutral systematic analysis and to achieve an objective review of the textbooks regarding their treatment of Spanish dialectal features.
[50] *Miradas* does not have IAE, but an Instructor's Resource Manual .
[51] The total number of pages used to calculate the ratio excludes glossaries, appendices, answer keys, transcripts, self-tests or built-in grammar expansion included at the end of the textbooks.

textbook. Thus, a percentage of the pages that contributed to the promotion of dialectal diversity in each textbook was obtained. Furthermore, from the total number of tokens, those addressed directly to the student and those provided only to the instructor were calculated, and the proportion of tokens dealing with the different linguistic areas –lexicon, phonology and morphosyntax– was also computed. These quantitative findings are followed by a qualitative description of each of the textbooks, presented by level and in alphabetical order.

## 4.1 Quantitative Results

From the thorough page-by-page review of the seven textbooks,

Table **15** shows the gross percentage of explicit references made to any aspect of dialectal variation in each of the textbooks (IAE). The term 'gross' is used because these percentages are here indicated only by way of guidance, with the simple purpose of having an idea of the weight granted to dialectal variation in each textbook. The figure does not consider that each of the tallied pages could contain more than one dialectal token; in such a case, only one page was counted.

**Table 15**. Percentage of dialectal treatment in all textbooks (IAE)

| | **Total # of pages**[a] | **# of pages with dialectal tokens** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st year textbooks | | | |
| ***Mosaicos (4th ed.)*** | 557 | 47 | 8.4 |
| ***Mosaicos (5th ed.)*** | 525 | 54 | 10.3 |
| ***Plazas*** | 455 | 45 | 9.9 |
| 2nd year textbooks | | | |
| ***De Paseo*** | 282 | 7 | 2.5 |
| ***Entre nosotros*** | 187 | -- | -- |
| ***Imagina*** | 373 | 31 | 8.3 |
| 3rd year textbooks | | | |
| ***Miradas***[b] | 242 | 1 | 0.4 |

[a] Excluding appendices, glossaries, built-in grammar expansion, self-tests, etc.
[b] IAE non-existent. Instructor's Resource Manual reviewed instead.

Regarding the amount of dialectal variation treatment in the textbooks, it can be seen in

Table **15** that four of the textbooks —the two editions of *Mosaicos*, *Plazas*, and *Imagina*— maintain a percentage between 8.3% and 10.3%, indicating that the four books give similar weight to dialectal features. An increase of 1.9%, despite having fewer pages, can be observed from the 4th to the 5th edition of *Mosaicos*; it seems that the more recent edition of *Mosaicos* gives greater emphasis to dialectal features. Details on the type and quality of this treatment are provided in section 4.2 below. On the other hand, one of the textbooks, *De Paseo*, shows a much lower proportion, 2.5% only. As for the two remaining textbooks, *Entre nosotros* does not explicitly address dialectal variation at all, and *Miradas* does so on only a single occasion. This is partly due to the fact that these books are structured a bit differently from the others, as later described in sections 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3.1, respectively. As a result, *Entre nosotros* and *Miradas* are not included in the further quantitative analysis but in the qualitative review only.

In order to provide a more exact scope of the dialectal content found in the textbooks, the results presented from here onwards consider the total sum of dialectal tokens per textbook, provided in Table 16. For comparison purposes, percentages are the values used in the following figures.

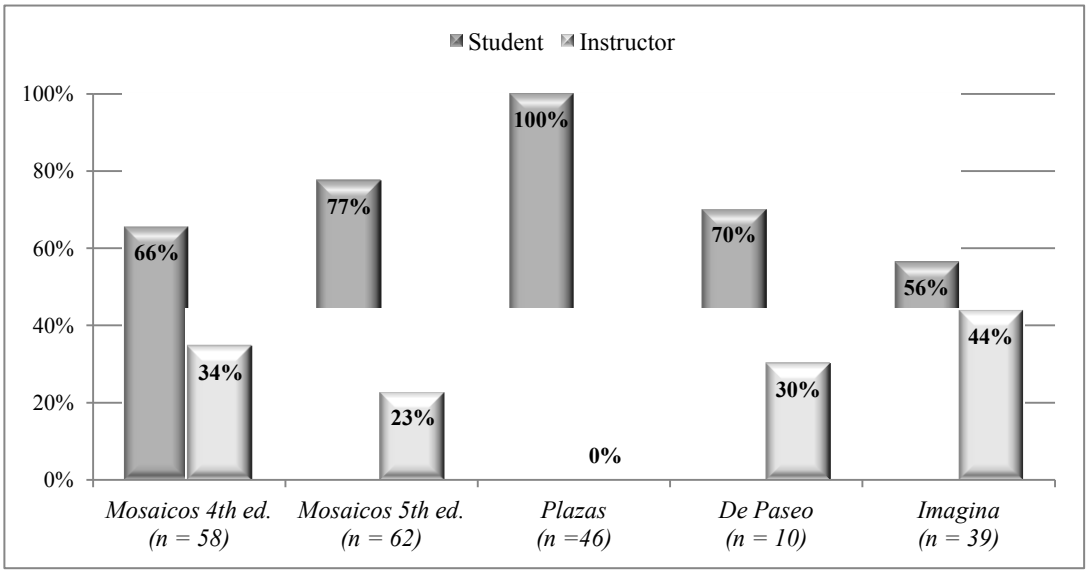
**Table 16.** Number of dialectal token-types per textbook (IAE)

| | ***Mosaicos 4th ed.*** | ***Mosaicos 5th ed.*** | ***Plazas*** | ***De Paseo*** | ***Imagina*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Morphosyntax** | 7 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 |
| **Phonology** | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Lexicon** | 50 | 51 | 33 | 5 | 35 |
| **Other** | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| **Total** | 58 | 62 | 46 | 10 | 39 |

The proportion of dialectal information provided to the student directly or to the instructor alone, illustrated in Figure 6, gives us an idea about the authors' approach to dialectal variation in each of the books. The textbooks could show one of two tendencies: learner-centered, in which the student is the main or even

the sole person receiving dialectal information, or teacher-centered, in which the instructor is the person in control of dialectal information.

**Figure 6.** Proportion of dialectal tokens aimed at the student or the instructor

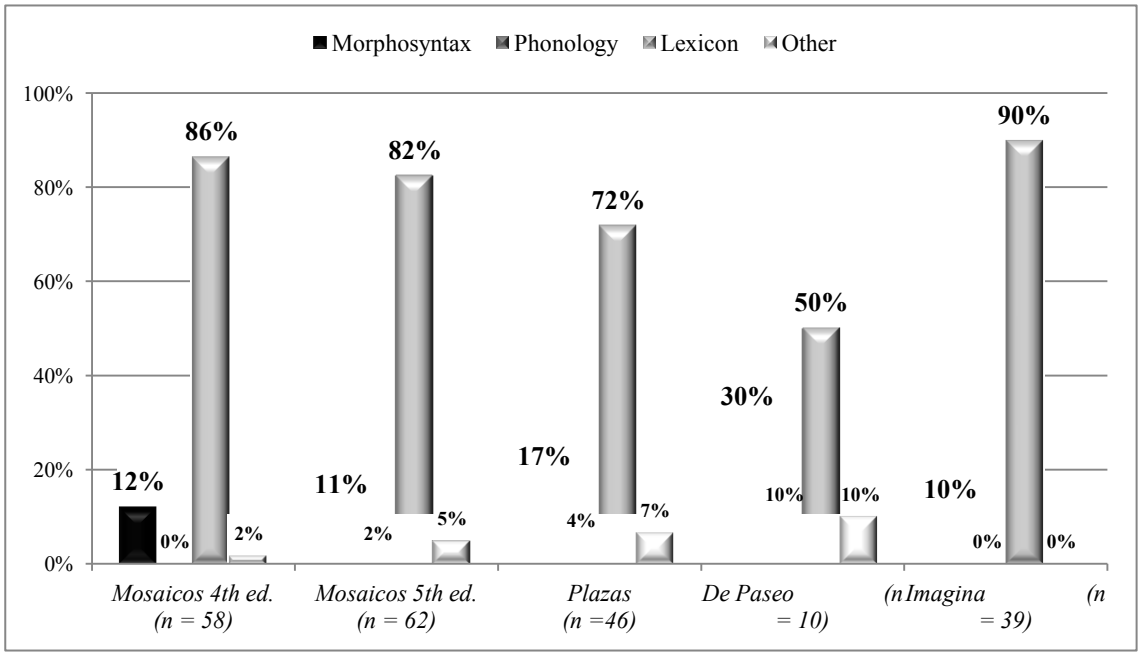



From this graphic, it appears that the student is always the main receiver of dialectal information. In one of the textbooks, *Plazas*, the student is given all the information about dialectal differences. As such, the instructor is not given complementary material nor additional information about the dialectal features presented to students, not even suggestions about how to teach these in class. In contrast, in *Imagina*, 44% of the information about dialectal issues is for the instructor only, representing new and additional knowledge potentially useful for the student. This means that the instructor can decide whether to expand on students' dialectal awareness and knowledge. I also have to highlight the differences in proportions from the 4th to the 5th edition of *Mosaicos*. In addition to the slight increase in the number of tokens (58 for the 4th ed., and 62 for the 5th ed.), the student is provided with a higher proportion of dialectal information than the instructor from one edition to the other. Thus, it seems that dialectal information became a more relevant matter for the authors of *Mosaicos–5th ed.*, since they increased the number of dialectal features in the core material of the textbook, making it more learner-centered and reducing the amount of

information consigned to the instructor only. *De Paseo* comprises an inferior number of dialectal tokens (only 10). In addition, differently from the others, the information provided to the instructor (30% , n=3) does not represent additional information, but mostly gives suggestions on how to deal with the information provided to the student, as explained in section 4.2.2.1 below.

From Table 16 above, we can observe that *Mosaicos–5th ed.* is the textbook containing the most occurrences of dialectal tokens, followed by *Mosaicos–4th ed.*, then *Plazas*, and finally *Imagina*, while *De Paseo* has the lowest number of tokens. We can also see that most of the tokens refer to lexical variation. From Table 16 above, we obtain Figure 7 below, which demonstrates that variation in the lexicon is the most dealt with in the textbooks, followed by variation in morphosyntax, and finally phonological variation.

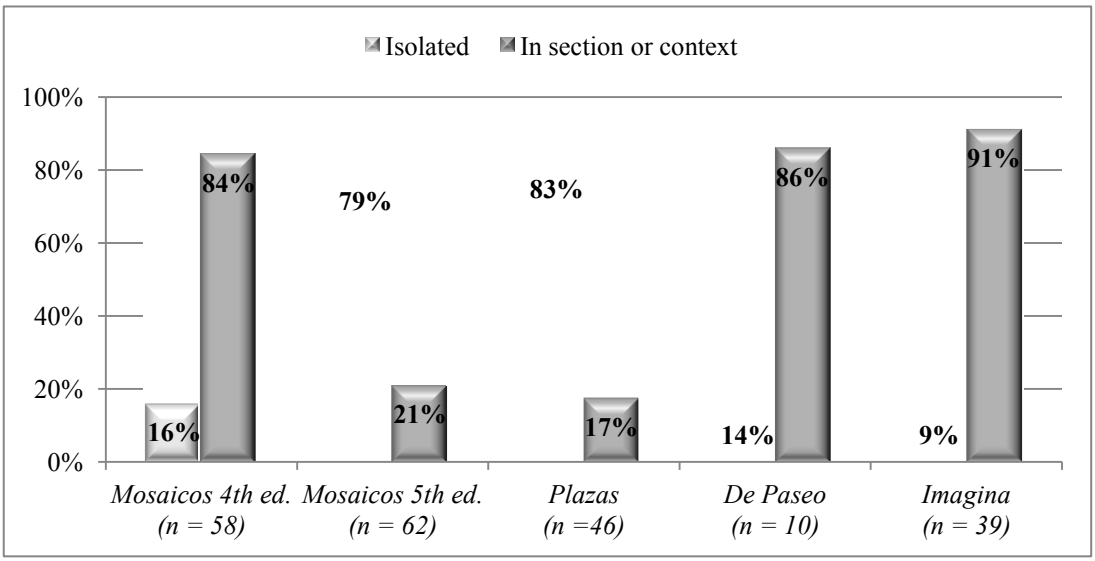
**Figure 7.** Dialectal tokens distributed in categories (morphosyntax, phonology, lexicon, and other)




Another factor considered in the categorisation of all dialectal tokens was the format of their occurrence, either as part of the core content of the textbook or

in isolation, that is, as additional information. Figure 8 shows differences among the textbooks in this respect. The majority of tokens in *Mosaicos–5th ed.* and *Plazas* are written in small font size and appear in boxes, footnotes or marginal notes, while most of the tokens in *Mosaicos–4th ed.*, *De Paseo* and *Imagina* maintain the same font size as the core content of the textbook and appear as an integrated part of a regular chapter section. Remarkably, there is a major change in how the tokens are presented from the 4th to the 5th edition of *Mosaicos*, as seen in Figure 8. Details are given in the individual descriptions in sections 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.1.2 below.

**Figure 8.** Format of dialectal tokens: 'in isolation' or 'in section or context'




## 4.2 Qualitative Results

### 4.2.1 First Year Textbooks

#### *4.2.1.1 Mosaicos – 4th edition*

The structure of *Mosaicos–4th ed.* consists of an introductory chapter followed by fifteen more units. The cultural focal point of twelve of the fifteen units is one or more, always geographically close, Spanish-speaking country(ies), featuring some of their respective key cultural aspects, while the last three chapters focus on a specific theme involving all Spanish-speaking regions. The

cultural aspects of the featured region(s) are addressed at the end of each chapter in the *Vistas* 'Views' section, in which regional linguistic aspects also have a place. Only a few lexical items and expressions of specific use in the region(s) of focus are introduced for their recognition. These are presented within a sentence as a context, which may not be enough to immediately understand the meaning of the regional term or expression. On a positive note, the English translation is also provided. Also, within the same *Vistas* section, a short activity 'tests' students about their comprehension of these terms and expressions. To illustrate this treatment, the terms and expressions and the short activity found in chapter 1, which focuses on Spain, are reproduced in Example 1 below:

**Example 1**

**Expresiones españolas**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ir de tapas** | **¡Vamos de tapas!** | *Let's go have some tapas!* |
| **catear** | ¡Me han **cateado**! | *They've flunked me!* |
| **majo/a** | Ella es muy **maja**. | *She's a very nice person.* |
| **vale** | Te llamo luego, **¿vale?** | *I'll call you later, OK?* |
| **chaval** | ¿Dónde está ese **chaval**? | *Where's that kid?* |

**¿Qué dice Ud…**

1. para describir a una persona agradable?
2. si quiere comer algo con sus amigos?
3. si saca una nota muy mala en un examen?

(*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, pp. 52-53)

'What do you (formal) say…
1. to describe a nice person?
2. if you want to eat something with your friends?
3. if you receive a bad mark on an exam?'

(my translation)

This activity forces students to go over the given dialectal terms and expressions and pay attention to their meaning, although they simply need to copy the example given in order to provide a correct answer to the questions. Given the beginner proficiency level of students, reproducing the example is possibly adequate. This activity is the only opportunity for students to use the dialectal

features presented in the book. All other dialectal tokens in *Mosaicos–4th ed.* are offered for recognition purposes only.

Active vocabulary (vocabulary that is part of the testing program of the textbook) is presented as part of the main content and within a context (e.g. photos, drawings, sample sentences, or brief paragraphs) in addition to appearing in word lists provided at the end of each chapter. Sometimes lexical alternatives of regional use are given. For example, a drawing representing the vegetable and fruit stand at a food market lists regional alternatives for some of the items such as "*el maíz, el elote, el choclo* ('corn on the cob')", "*los plátanos, las bananas* ('bananas')", and "*las toronjas, los pomelos* ('grapefruit')" (*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, p. 358). However, the regions where each of these variants is typically used are not indicated. Other times, variation in the lexicon is provided in isolation, in the small *Lengua* 'Language' boxes located in the page margins. Textual enhancement is used to attract students' attention to these boxes, which are fully coloured. These address lexical variation, but also other linguistic issues, such as comparisons with the English language, orthography, and register, among others. Sometimes, these boxes indicate the specific areas of use of the given alternatives (although in a vague manner occasionally, e.g. "Spain" and "Latin America"), but this is not always the case.

In *Mosaicos–4th ed.*, instructors are given more dialectal lexical items than students. An example of these additional lexical notes to the instructor is provided in Example 2. Thus, the instructor is the one deciding whether the student should receive this information or not. Unfortunately, most of the time, the regions of use of the dialectal terms are not provided, as shown in Example 3. In this last example, it may even seem that the alternatives are presented as synonyms, and not as dialectal variants.

**Example 2**

> Mention vocabulary difference by region, as shown by other words for *autobús*: *camión* (México), *ómnibus* (Perú), *bus*, *guagua* (Puerto Rico, Cuba), *colectivo* (Argentina), *micro* (Chile).
>
> (*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, IAE, p. 432)

**Example 3**

> Point out that vocabulary items often have more than one acceptable form. *Dormitorio*[1] may be referred to as *cuarto*, *alcoba*, *recámara*, or *habitación*. *Piscina*[2] is also called *alberca* and *pileta*.
>
> (*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, IAE, p. 168)
>
> [1]*Bedroom* [2]*Swimming pool*

Regarding the Spanish variety of preferred use in the textbook, a Latin American variety seems to be the choice. The active vocabulary comprises many lexical terms commonly used in Latin America, for instance *el camarón* 'shrimp', *el boleto/pasaje* 'ticket', *el/la auxiliar de vuelo* 'flight attendant', *manejar* 'to drive', *el/la plomero/a* 'plumber', *el/la contador/a* 'accountant', el arete 'earring', *la bolsa* 'purse', *el piso* 'floor', *la computadora* 'computer', and *enojado/a* 'angry'.[52] Still, occasionally other common words used in different varieties are also provided as a choice, for example *el auto(móvil)/coche/carro* 'car', *el plátano/la banana* 'banana', *la carne molida/picada* 'ground meat', and *el baloncesto/basquetbol* 'basketball'. Also, in the instructions for the textbook activities, students are referred to as *ustedes*, the typical forms of address in Latin America, instead of *vosotros*, which is of common use in Spain.

The information given for dialectal variation in morphosyntax is limited. Students are introduced to the key morphological feature that distinguishes Latin American from Peninsular Spanish with a brief note, reproduced in Example 4, when the subject pronouns are presented. At the same time, it is noted for the instructor only (Example 5) that there is another subject pronoun used in several dialects, *vos*. However, it is left to the instructor's discretion to provide this information to students or not, as the textbook does not refer to it at all.

**Example 4**

> In Spain, the plural of **tú** is **vosotros** or **vosotras**. In other Spanish-speaking countries, the plural of both **tú** and **usted** is **ustedes**.

[52] The author is a native of Girona and believes that the more likely terms to be used in Spain are *la gamba*, *el billete*, *la azafata*, *conducir*, *el/la fontanero/a*, *el/la contable*, el *pendiente*, *el bolso*, *el suelo*, *el ordenador*, and *enfadado/a*.

(*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, p. 31)

**Example 5**

> You may wish to mention that the pronoun *vos* is used in several Central and South American countries.

(*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, IAE, p. 31)

In general, *Mosaicos–4th ed.* includes the *vosotros* verb forms in all the verb paradigms, except for the *vosotros* commands, which are relegated to the *Expansión grammatical* 'Grammatical expansion' at the end of the book. It also presents the possessive and the object pronoun for *vosotros* (i.e. *vuestro/a/os/as* and *os*). However, the book does not include any of these forms for practice, as explained to instructors through the following note, which implies an additional effort on the part of instructors if they want students to use and produce these dialectal forms:

> *Vosotros/as* forms are presented in charts throughout *Mosaicos*; however, activities do not require that students produce *vosotros/as* forms since the majority of Spanish speakers do not use them. Instructors who wish to use *vosotros/as* in class can easily incorporate them into the activities.

(*Mosaicos–4th ed.*, IAE, p. 32)

In sum, *Mosaicos–4th ed.* addresses variation in lexicon, mentions one dialectal feature in morphosyntax, but no reference is made with regard to variation in phonology. In addition, the in-text audio files are all recorded by the same voices, regardless of the context of the situation presented. A review of a newer edition of *Mosaicos*, which does a better job of highlighting the dialectal diversity in the Spanish-speaking world, is presented next.

#### *4.2.1.2 Mosaicos – 5th edition*

All information from the previous description of the fourth edition of *Mosaicos* still applies here. However, some noticeable modifications were made to this edition, including to the treatment of dialectal variation.

In this fifth edition, culture is more integrated throughout the book. New cultural notes, "raising awareness of the cultural contexts in which the language is used" (*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. xviii), are spread throughout the book. Different from the previous edition, all sixteen chapters target one country or a group of geographically close countries in the *Enfoque cultural* 'Cultural focus' section at the end of each chapter, but the region of focus is already highlighted from the opening pages of the chapter, in which maps, photos, and a warm-up activity awaken students' interest in the featured region(s). For example, a world map showing the number of Spanish speakers (in millions) in each of the Spanish-speaking countries, including Equatorial Guinea, the Philippines, and the U.S., introduces the preliminary chapter. The map, together with a related warm-up activity, raises students' awareness of the importance of the Spanish language in the world and the large number of Spanish speakers.

The regional terms and expressions from the featured country(ies) are presented within the *Enfoque cultural* section. Unfortunately, in this edition, these are no longer part of the core content, but rather are listed in a box named *En otras palabras* 'In other words', specifically added to "give examples of regional variations in the language" (*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. xvii). In addition, the brief activities that the previous edition provided to "test" these terms are no longer provided, which could be considered as a de-emphasis of dialectal features. Conversely, on a positive note, the awareness of the dialectal diversity of the Spanish-speaking world is addressed more directly with the student being the audience, and not the instructor, as many of the dialectal tokens previously addressed for the instructor alone, as in Example 2 and Example 3 above, are now shown directly to the student, as in Example 6, although the region(s) of uses is not always given, as in Example 7:

**Example 6**

> Depending on the region, different words for **autobús** are used: **camión** (Mexico), **ómnibus** (Peru), **bus**, **guagua** (Puerto Rico, Cuba), **colectivo** (Argentina), **micro** (Chile), **chivita** (Colombia).
>
> (*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. 411)

**Example 7**

> Some words for the parts of a house vary from one region to another in the Spanish-speaking world. Here are some examples:
> **habitación, dormitorio, cuarto, alcoba, recámara**[1]
> **sala, salón, living**[2]
> **planta, piso**[3]
> **piscina, pileta, alberca**[4]
>
> (*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. 156)
>
> [1]*Bedroom* [2]*Living room* [3]*Floor* [4]*Swimming pool*

The addition of *En otras palabras* boxes is at the expense of other material, such as the *Acentos* 'Accents' boxes from the previous edition which deal with orthographic accents, thus sending the message that priority has been given to the issue of dialectal diversity.

Awareness of Spanish dialectal variation is also promoted within the readings provided, as shown in Example 8:

**Example 8**

> **Los gualtemaltecos en Estados Unidos**
> Gustavo Rivera conoció a Marta Rodríguez en un club hispano de Los Ángeles y la invitó a bailar. "¿De dónde eres?", preguntó Marta. "De México", respondió Gustavo. […] Marta, que era de Ciudad de México, se dio cuenta que Gustavo hablaba español con un acento diferente y usaba unas palabras diferentes también. Después de un tiempo, ella le preguntó: "¿De dónde eres realmente, Gustavo?" Esta vez, Gustavo le dijo la verdad: "Soy de Guatemala".
>
> (*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. 319)
>
> **Guatemalans in the United States**
> Gustavo Rivera met Marta Rodríguez in a Hispanic club in Los Angeles and asked her to dance. "Where are you from?" Marta asked. "From Mexico", Gustavo answered. […] Marta, who was from Mexico City, realised that Gustavo spoke Spanish with a different accent and used different words as well. After some time, she asked him: "Where are you really from, Gustavo?" This time, Gustavo told her the truth: "I am from Guatemala."
>
> (my translation)

The diversity, and also the similarity, of the Spanish language is portrayed here among native speakers of different nationalities. The notion communicated to students is that Spanish speakers clearly understand each other, but there is variation. The main differences first noticed among dialects are phonological ("accent") and lexical ("different words"). Variation in morphosyntax is less frequent, and consequently, less noticeable at first glance.

In the fifth edition of *Mosaicos*, one of the most distinguishable dialectal differences in phonology between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish is mentioned: *distinción/seseo*. This is explained in very simple terms in one of the *En otras palabras* boxes, reproduced in Example 9 below, and a comparison is drawn to similar sounds in English, to help students understand more clearly. However, no examples are given, and audio samples of the different sounds used are not provided, either.

**Example 9**

> Like English speakers, Spanish speakers have different accents that reflect their region or country of origin. For example, the letter **c** before vowels **e** and **i** and the letter **z** are pronounced like **s**, except in certain regions of Spain where they are similar to the English *th*.

(*Mosaicos–5th ed.*, p. 8)

In sum, students receive dialectal information more directly here than in the previous edition of *Mosaicos*. They are provided with the lexical variants directly, although only for informative purposes. Variation in phonology is also presented, albeit only about one particular feature. Variation in morphosyntax is presented in the same way as the previous edition, and practice activities for the dialectal features are not offered on any occasion.

#### *4.2.1.3 Plazas (2nd edition)*

*Plazas* is organised into fifteen chapters in addition to the preliminary one. Each chapter focuses on one or more Spanish-speaking countries, around the same geographical area, and all the material in the chapter is focused on the region(s) in question. The cultural component is indeed a strong point of *Plazas*,

as it is integrated throughout the book and not concentrated into a single section at the end of each chapter. Brief *Cultura* 'Culture' notes as well as country-specific sections named *Encuentro cultural* 'Cultural Encounter' are found throughout each chapter and help maintain the cultural focus. It is in one of the *Encuentro cultural* sections (*Plazas*, pp. 17-19) of the preliminary chapter that students are presented with a reading (in English) titled *El mundo hispanoamericano* 'The Spanish American World' about the Spanish language and its speakers and are introduced to the large number of countries where Spanish is spoken through various maps, which specify the number of Spanish speakers per country. The reading makes students specifically aware of the existence of different regional varieties of Spanish by providing clear examples of lexical variants and by affirming that "[t]hese [regional] differences occur not only among the various Spanish-speaking countries, but also within those countries" (*Plazas*, p. 17). Furthermore, the text also states that, beyond the differences, there is a common core in the language by claiming that "[e]ven though these differences exist, it is very rare that Spanish speakers from different places do not understand each other" (*Plazas*, p. 17).[53] Through this reading, students should have an increased awareness about dialectal variation and the impact and importance of the Spanish language in the world. In this way, *Plazas* excels with respect to raising awareness about the dialectal variability of the Spanish language (research question 1).

*Plazas* is a textbook that addresses dialectal variation in an explicit manner. From the beginning, the book announces that it will include variation as part of the program, as stated in the preface by the authors:

> *Plazas* is comprehensive in its treatment of the Spanish-speaking world, yet also recognizes the growing presence and importance of Spanish in the U.S. Furthermore, *Plazas* does not gloss over regional differences in accent, diction or modes of address but rather emphasizes them as subjects of study that further accentuate the cultural richness of the Spanish language.
>
> (*Plazas*, IAE, p.xix)

[53] This is an important point to emphasize at the beginning stages of Spanish language learning in order not to scare students and to make them comprehend that, despite the variability, they will be able to communicate with Spanish speakers from different countries with few misunderstandings.

However, the textbook review reveals that this stated goal is not fully put into practice because dialectal variation seems to be included for recognition or informative purposes only, that is, as glosses rather than as explicit "subjects of study", as there are no practice tasks where students can put this knowledge into use. Moreover, the geographical areas of use for the lexical variants presented are not always indicated or the information is vague, as in Example 10 below, in which the regional variants could be interpreted simply as synonyms. In such cases, it would be easy for students to simply skip these notes, unless the instructor explicitly points them, as there does not seem to be a purpose for the isolated examples provided.

**Example 10**

> **El almacén** is another word for **la tienda**; it can sometimes mean *department store*, *warehouse*, or ever *grocery store*, depending on the region.
>
> (*Plazas*, p. 85)

*Plazas* does address dialectal variation systematically, although not as part of the core content. Almost all dialectal information is found in the *¿Nos entendemos?* 'Do we understand each other?' boxes, which contain "sociolinguistic notes interspersed throughout each chapter" (*Plazas*, IAE, p. xx). These notes are provided in small coloured boxes, and in English, and deal with various types of language issues including orthography, pragmatics, and dialectal variation. Indeed, as shown in Figure 8, 83% of all dialectal tokens in *Plazas* are found in these isolated boxes, mainly for informative and recognition purposes. The *¿Nos entendemos?* boxes usually contain dialectal information which is linked to the geographical focus of the chapter, although that is not always the case, as there are sometimes notes that include lexical variants from other regions. Thus, the connection between dialectal variation and the regional focus of the chapter is not always consistent. While such a connection gives more context to the regional alternatives and makes them more meaningful to the student, adding other variants reflects a multidialectal approach by continuously reminding students of the great diversity of the Spanish language.

For the most part, *Plazas* seems to choose an undetermined Latin American variety to represent the active vocabulary students will learn in each lesson, such as *la computadora* 'computer', *los camarones* 'shrimp', *las papas* 'potatoes', *los aretes* 'earrings', *el(la) plomero(a)* 'plumber', *el noticiero* 'newscast', *el teléfono celular/portátil* 'cellular phone', and *el control remoto* 'remote control'.[54] However, sporadically Latin American and Peninsular variants are used together, producing a mixture of dialects within the same context. For example, in a conversation presumably happening in Spain (*Plazas*, p.111), the term *piso* 'apartment', characteristic of the Peninsular Spanish, is used together with other terms typically pertaining to Latin American Spanish, such as *apartamento* 'apartment' and *renta* 'rent', for which a Spaniard would use *alquiler*.

*Plazas* is the one textbook of all the analysed ones that presents the most complete information about morphosyntactic dialectal features, despite the beginner level of the students. The textbook addresses variation in morphosyntax (e.g. *vosotros*, *vos*, diminutive alternatives, and variation in the subjunctive forms) with integrated explanations in the grammar section, in margin notes, or in the *¿Nos entendemos?* boxes. However, again, no practice exercises are offered to students. *Plazas* includes the subject pronoun *vosotros(as)* and the corresponding verb forms in all verb paradigms throughout the book and even encourages instructors to use it:

> If you use **vosotros/vosotras** in everyday speech and feel comfortable using it with your students, point out the information in the text on this subject pronoun and inform students that you will use it in class. It will be used in the text in a variety of situations, most extensively in **Capítulo 4**, the chapter in which Spain is the country of focus.
>
> (*Plazas*, IAE, p. 10)

Although this comment seems to represent an inclusive attitude by adopting a multidialectal approach, the affirmation that the pronoun will be used

[54] The Peninsular counterparts, according to the author's experience, are *el ordenador*, *las gambas*, *las patatas*, *los pendientes*, *el(la) fontanero(a)*, *el telediario*, *el teléfono móvil*, *el mando a distancia*.

throughout the book is not true. Moreover, the pronoun *vos*, extensively used by speakers from various Latin American countries, is completely ignored here, although it is mentioned in a later note (see Example 11). Even in the chapter devoted to Spain, *vosotros* appears only on one single occasion (*Plazas*, p. 115), in a sentence used as an example for an activity, to which students have to respond in agreement or disagreement. Thus, students do not have to produce the form, but only recognise it.

Despite the lack of use of *vosotros(as)* throughout the book, the *vosotros* commands, the possessive (*vuestro/a/os/as*), and the object pronouns (*os*) are still presented in *Plazas*, but again, not explicitly used. Furthermore, the pronoun *vos*, although not used, is addressed in a *¿Nos entendemos?* box for recognition purposes:

**Example 11**

> The **vosotros(as)** form that is used in Spain could be recognized by the other Spanish-speaking population, but it is not actively used. The form of **ustedes** is used formally and informally as the plural of *you*. In Argentina and other countries in Central America, **vos** is used as another form of **tú**. When **vos** is used with present-tense verbs, it is conjugated differently: for **–ar** verbs, add **–ás**: **Vos habl*ás* español como un argentino(a)**; for **–er** verbs, add **–és**: **Vos com*és* parrillada argentina todos los fines de semana**; and for **–ir** verbs, add **–ís**: **¿Vos decid*ís* estudiar en Buenos Aires o en Córdoba?** The irregular verb **ser** has an irregular form for **vos** also: **Vos sois muy inteligente**.

(*Plazas*, p. 200)

The explanation about the conjugation of *vos* forms is clear and simple (considering the level of students and despite its complex conjugation system), it includes examples, and it is pertinent, since it appears in the chapter in which Argentina is the cultural focus, although the *vos* is used in many other countries, as the note acknowledges.

Two other morphological dialectal features mentioned in *Plazas* are the formation of the diminutives, in Example 12, and the alternative forms for the conjugation of the imperfect subjunctive, in Example 13.

**Example 12**

> The diminutive phrase of **un poquitico** (*a little bit*–derived from the Spanish phrase un **poco**) is also typical of Colombian speech. Most native speakers would use the word **poquito**.
>
> (*Plazas*, p. 80)

This clarification is found inside a coloured *¿Nos entendemos?* box, next to an in-context occurrence of *un poquitico* in an informal conversation, within the chapter devoted to Colombia.

**Example 13**

> The past subjunctive has alternate forms that use **-se** instead of **-ra** endings. For example: **hablase**, **hablases**, **hablase**, **hablásemos**, **hablaseis**, **hablasen** and **fuese**, **fueses**, **fuese**, **fuésemos**, **fueseis**, **fuesen**. These forms are sometimes used in Spain and in literary works or legal documents.
>
> (*Plazas*, p. 436)

This marginal note is not coloured and very small in size, easily unperceivable to the student. However, it is clear and pertinent as it is located next to the grammar explanation for the past subjunctive.

As for dialectal variation in phonology, *Plazas* only alludes to it slightly. The in-text audio files are recorded by native speakers, and they are samples of the speech of the region(s) of focus in each chapter, corresponding to the contextual situations in the listening activities. In addition, at the end of the first ten chapters, a section named *¡A conversar!* 'Let's chat!' presents information about pronunciation. However, as Wieczorek (1991) found, "the concept of 'pronunciation' has been limited to what is difficult to native English speakers" (p. 178), rather than including exercises "that are indicative of variants of Spanish" (p. 179). Only on two occasions are two distinguishable phonological variants addressed: *distinción/seseo* and *yeísmo/ žeísmo,* shown in Example 14 and Example 15, respectively:

**Example 14**

> In most of the Spanish-speaking world, the pronunciation of **s**, **c** before **e** and **i**, and **z** is similar to but stronger than the English pronunciation of **s**. In most of peninsular Spain, the sound of **c** before **e** and **i** and of **z** is similar to the English *th*. Practice the following sentences.
>
> Hay un sofá, dos sillones y una mesita en la sala.
> Necesito sacar la basura, hacer la cama y pasar la aspiradora el sábado.
> La clase comienza a las doce y diez.
>
> (*Plazas*, p. 135)

**Example 15**

> The single **l** sound in Spanish resembles the **l** sound in English. The **ll** is pronounced like the **y** in most of the Spanish-speaking world. This sound is like the ***y*** in the English word *yellow*. In most of Argentina this sound is like the ***z*** in the English word *azure* or like the ***s*** in the English word *Asia*. Practice these sentences.
>
> Me gustan los pantalones de lana, pero no los tienen en mi talla.
> Prefiero la falda de rayas, no el vestido de lunares.
>
> (*Plazas*, p. 222)

The terminology used to explain these features is easily comprehensible and adequate to students' proficiency level. Also, the information is pertinent on both occasions, since it appears in chapters where Spain and Argentina are, respectively, the featured countries. In addition, the idea that dialectal variation can occur within the same country is implied here, with the expressions "in most of peninsular Spain" and "in most of Argentina", suggesting that these are not universal dialectal features throughout these two countries, thus avoiding the overgeneralization of dialectal features that Arteaga (2000) found in many of the textbooks she reviewed. However, the fact that the information appears in a subsection and in the last page of their respective chapters makes it less likely for it to be directly addressed in class. In addition, there are no audio files accompanying the example sentences: thus, unless the instructor is capable of

pronouncing the sounds in question and imitating the dialects, the information is likely of little practical use for students.

All of the dialectal information found in *Plazas* is directed exclusively to the student, which is a positive feature because the issue of dialectal variation is presented as an integrated component of the textbook. The instructor's annotated edition offers guidance regarding teaching, with tips and classroom management suggestions, but not with regard to dialectal variation. Given the weight dedicated to language variation in this textbook, it would be beneficial to broaden the pedagogical information available to the instructor in regard to this component.

### 4.2.2 **Second Year Textbooks**

#### *4.2.2.1 De Paseo (3rd edition)*

*De Paseo* approaches dialectal variation differently from the textbooks reviewed above. Despite its claim that "*De Paseo* does not assume that learners have retained all of the skills and information covered during their previous language courses" (*De Paseo*, IAE, p. 9), it is not rare to find sentences similar to "As you probably learned in your previous courses, ..." (p. 106) throughout the book. This type of statement may be acceptable when reviewing basic grammar; however, *De Paseo* also assumes that much information regarding dialectal variation has already been addressed in the beginner-level course. Therefore, we do not find much explicit and detailed information about dialectal variation.

*De Paseo* does not claim to guide the instructors through a specific teaching approach and does not specifically describe its instructional methodology. Instead, it "offers guidelines incorporating a variety of options for using the program. It enables instructors to accommodate different teaching and learning styles" (IAE, p. 10), and it does not "force" them to follow a specific method. Also, differently from the first-year textbooks, "language functions are organizing principles" (IAE, p. 9), and the primary focus of each chapter is not a Spanish-speaking country, but rather "a high-interest theme" (IAE, p. 3). Therefore, geographical regions and the corresponding cultural information are not found in specific chapter sections in which dialectal features could have been

introduced, as in other textbooks. Moreover, the book does not contain a single map illustrating the different countries where Spanish is spoken. *De Paseo* also does not include an in-text CD[55], but rather an in-text DVD, with ten videos shot in different Spanish-speaking countries.

*De Paseo* does not address dialectal variation systematically. This does not mean that regional variation is ignored, but occurrences of dialectal tokens are scarce in *De Paseo* (n = 10), as noted in Table 16 above, and these do not appear in specific sections or notes, but in arbitrary places all over the book. Indeed, it seems as if these tokens are placed wherever it looks appropriate to add information on dialectal variation, similar to a spontaneous aside made by an instructor while teaching. The overall impression one gets during the review of *De Paseo* is that the textbook takes for granted that the instructor is knowledgeable about dialectal features and assumes that the learners are already aware of and know the characteristics of different dialects through other Spanish courses. Such an impression is reflected in Example 16, for instance, since no guidance or key information is offered in order to help students complete the video-related activity. While it would be ideal that dialectal variation is introduced from the beginner-level courses, it is not appropriate to take for granted that learners can complete the activity with no help at the intermediate level. Instead, learners should be given a guide to help them identify the specific features, and instructors should also be provided with information so that they can offer a clear explanation to students in case of doubt. As Wieczorek (1992) noted, while "aural/oral variation is laudable [...] dialect forms need a clear explanation by either the instructor or the text, so that students might establish correct intuitions about the social and linguistic ramifications of such forms" (p. 37).

**Example 16**

> **El español de San Antonio.** Escucha bien los dialectos de español que se oyen en el vídeo. Apunta algunas diferencias del español que has estudiado en tus cursos de español.

[55] Listening texts and activities are only incorporated in the student workbook, which is for out-of-class use only, and therefore considered as part of the ancillary materials which were not examined in this review.

(*De Paseo*, p. 192)

> **'The Spanish from San Antonio.** Listen carefully to the Spanish dialects that are heard in the video. Note some of differences in the Spanish that you have studied in your Spanish courses'.

(my translation)

This activity is accompanied by an important note to the instructor to "remind students that there are neither "good" nor "bad" dialects of Spanish [and that a]ll dialects are genuine and useful within their own contexts" (IAE, p. 192) in order to convey positive attitudes towards all dialectal varieties of Spanish. However, the instructor is not given any further information about the varieties appearing in the video and so, depending on the instructor's background, may not be able to assist students in this respect..

Regarding variation in Spanish morphosyntax, *De Paseo* takes for granted that students know all the different subject pronouns and where they are used, since there are no explanations offered in this regard. On one occasion, a table with all the subject pronouns, including dialectal variants (casual: *tú*/*vos* and *vosotros*/*as*, and formal: *usted* and *ustedes*), is presented as part of an explanation referring to different registers (*De Paseo*, p. 275). *Vos* and *vosotros* are included, but students are not informed about their use. No other occurrences of *vos* are found within the textbook, although *De Paseo* does include the *vosotros* form in all the verb paradigms, without reminding students that this form is used only in Spain. It seems that the authors of *De Paseo* either consider *vosotros* to be part of "standard" Spanish (indeed, *De* Paseo is the only textbook to require the use of *vosotros* in some activities), or they take for granted that students already know about this variant.

*De Paseo* also points out other morphosyntactic variants such as the use of the present perfect tense, as shown in Example 17, and the alternative forms of the imperfect and past perfect subjunctive in different dialects, as in Example 18.

**Example 17**

> The present perfect tense is generally used less often in Spanish than in English. In most Spanish-speaking countries, in fact, the preterite is used more commonly than the present perfect. The present perfect is most widely used in Spain.
>
> **Spain**: Se **han casado**.
> **Other countries**: Se **casaron**.

(*De Paseo*, p. 195)

For the explanation on how to form the imperfect subjunctive, *De Paseo* states that "[t]here are two sets of endings for the imperfect subjunctive. (They are equivalent forms, but usage varies from region to region)" and illustrates the alternate forms in a table showing the verb paradigm for the three conjugations (p. 141). Later in the book, the student is reminded of such forms when studying the past perfect subjunctive, and this time, general information on where these alternate forms are used is included in an *¡OJO!* 'Attention!' note in the margin:

**Example 18**

> There is an alternate form of the pluperfect subjunctive that is used in Spain and parts of Latin America. The forms are: **hubiese**, **hubieses**, **hubiese**, **hubiésemos**, **hubieseis**, **hubieses** + *past participle*. For example: **yo hubiese leído**.

(*De Paseo*, p. 227)

In regard to variation in the lexicon, *De Paseo* alludes to it but does not provide extensive information about it. The *Vocabulario* 'Vocabulary' section presents lists of items with their translation in English, as well as a *pequeño diccionario*, a monolingual 'little dictionary' for the key vocabulary in the selected texts. However, even if there are occurrences of lexical items that are of regional use only, no information regarding them is provided. Only on two occasions is lexical variation addressed, in the subsection *Sugerencias para aprender el vocabulario* 'Suggestions for vocabulary learning', in which students find a general statement comparing lexical variation with the English language, quoted in Example 19, together with a follow-up activity a few pages later, reproduced in Example 20.

**Example 19**

**Cómo reconocer variaciones regionales.** Spanish, a language that is spoken by more than 300 million people, varies from country to country. Just as the English spoken in Australia or England differs from that of the United States, Spanish vocabulary varies among the Spanish-speaking countries of the world. For example, in Spain a green bean is called **una judía**; in Chile, **un poroto**; in Venezuela, **una vainita**; and in Argentina, **una chaucha**. You will notice these vocabulary differences in the articles and short stories that were selected from the different countries.

(*De Paseo*, p. 146)

**Example 20**

**6-2 ¿Cómo se dice ...?** En las lecturas, vas a encontrar palabras que varían de país en país. Busca variaciones del vocabulario de la lista siguiente en tu diccionario. Escribe también las regiones o los países donde se emplean las palabras, si esta información está incluida en tu diccionario.

**Ejemplo:** ice cream cone
*En la América Latina se dice cucurucho de helado. En España se dice barquillo. En Colombia es cono y en Venezuela, barquilla.*

**1.** yogourt
**2.** candy
**3.** fast food
**4.** low-fat
**5.** cake
**6.** cookies
**7.** shrimp
**8.** hot dog
**9.** steak
**10.** corn

(*De Paseo*, p. 149)

**'6-2 ¿How do you say ...?** In the readings, you are going to find words that vary from country to country. Look for variants of the vocabulary in the following list in your dictionary. As well, write the regions or these countries where these words are used, if this information is included in your dictionary.'

(my translation)

The purpose of the activity in Example 20 is to make students aware of the different variants for the same lexical item and actively involve them in the search for these variants. However, neither context nor adequate references are suggested for students to be able to find this information easily. Not all dictionaries provide

dialectal variants for lexical items, and even fewer sources provide specific information about where each variant is used. Besides, although the activity points out that variants may appear in the selected readings, there is no guidance for the student, nor the instructor to be able to detect these regional terms within the readings.

Some regional terms and expressions are also referenced in a subsection about slang and colloquial language. Different items from three Spanish-speaking countries are provided along with the more common term, as shown in Example 21. However, these items are given as examples only, with no textual or cultural context. Again, no guidance to detect them in the selected texts is provided.

**Example 21**

> Here are some common expressions from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries that have remained popular for over a decade.
>
> **Spain**
> abrirse = marcharse
> catear = suspender (un examen)
> chachi = fantástico
>
> **Argentina**
> macanudo = buena persona
> zafar = escaparse
> bancarse = aguantar
>
> **Mexico**
> qué buena onda = qué bueno
> hacer el oso = meter la pata, equivocarse
> jefe/jefa = padre/madre

(*De Paseo*, p. 256)

Exceptionally in this case, the instructor is provided with additional examples of expressions and terms used in these three countries in order to "have students determine [their] correct meaning" (*De Paseo*, IAE, p. 256). Also, a communicative task, reproduced in Example 22, is suggested in order to have students be actively involved in discovering the diverse variation in the Spanish language.

**Example 22**

> Have students ask someone from a Spanish-speaking country about informal or popular phrases that express the following ideas: 1. un amigo/a,[1] 2. un curso o trabajo difícil,[2] 3. una persona desagradable,[3] 4. Dinero,[4] 5. Divertirse,[5] 6. una persona aburrida,[6] 7. un perro.[7]

(*De Paseo*, IAE, p. 256)

[1]*a friend* [2]*a difficult course or job* [3]*an unkind person*
[4]*money* [5]*to have fun* [6]*a boring person*
[7]*a dog*

Although the activity in Example 22 is a great suggestion, it would have to be conducted outside of class, requiring additional planning on the part of the instructor. Furthermore, the two in-text activities, shown in Example 16 and Example 20, while they do reflect the intention of the textbook to make students aware of dialectal variation, lack guidance to be satisfactorily completed and offer insufficient practice for students to be comfortable in the recognition and use of the different dialectal features.

In sum, most of the information and knowledge about dialectal variation seems to be taken for granted in *De Paseo*. Variation in the lexicon and in morphosyntax is addressed, but no explicit reference to variation in phonology is made. All in all, although dialectal tokens seem to be pertinent for the level, they are scarce. Therefore, the treatment of dialectal variation may not be perceived by students, and the instructor's intervention is required in order to address it and bring it to students' attention.

#### *4.2.2.2 Entre nosotros (2nd edition)*

*Entre nosotros* is distinct from the other reviewed textbooks in that it is intended for a one-semester intermediate level course. For this reason,it is brief, in comparison with the other books, as shown in Table 15 above, and it focuses on building on first-year concepts with a review and expansion of essential grammar. The textbook is comprised of only six lessons, each dealing with a different theme and focusing on culture in all the Spanish-speaking countries through the *Cruzando fronteras* 'Crossing borders' section. In order to include the twenty-one Spanish-speaking countries in six lessons, each lesson highlights four or five countries, grouped according to geographical closeness, with the exception of Mexico, which is addressed together with the United States in the penultimate

lesson, and Spain, which is addressed alone in the last lesson. The order in which the countries are featured is related to their geographical position only, as the introductory statement to the *Cruzando fronteras* section explains:

> **De los Andes a los Pirineos...** Emprendemos hoy un largo viaje, que comienza en Argentina, atraviesa toda América del Sur y Centroamérica, nos lleva a las islas del Caribe, pasa por México y parte de los Estados Unidos y termina en España, la cuna del idioma español.
>
> (*Entre nosotros*, p. 26)

> '**From the Andes to the Pyrenees…** Today, we start a long trip, which starts in Argentina, crosses all of South America and Central America, takes us to the Caribbean islands, goes through Mexico and part of the United States, and ends in Spain, the cradle of the Spanish language.'
>
> (my translation)

Thus, students will "travel" through the Spanish-speaking countries and briefly read about their geography, history and culture. In addition, authentic readings, sometimes in adapted form, are included in the *Ventana al mundo literario* 'Window to the literary world' section, featuring authors from the highlighted Spanish-speaking countries in each lesson. However, most of these readings are not from contemporary authors[56]; therefore, they may not be an accurate representation of the Spanish language as it is spoken today, but rather a literary and cultural witness of the featured countries. This type of material is included only for reading comprehension purposes.

Nevertheless, authentic *Lecturas periodísticas* 'Newspaper readings', also in adapted form, and numerous short readings, mainly simulated dialogues presumably taking place in the featured regions, are incorporated into each lesson. These are supposed to be samples of the contemporary Spanish language and thus would be an appropriate place for dialectal features. However, *Entre nosotros* does not take advantage of this opportunity to pinpoint dialectal variation. The

[56] Examples of non-contemporary authors include R.J. Payró (Argentina, 1867-1928), R. J. Freyre (Bolivia, 1868-1933), R. Palma (Perú, 1833-1919), J. Martí (Cuba, 1853-1895), A. J. Echeverría (Costa Rica, 1866-1909), F. Caballero (Spain, 1796-1877), among others.

textbook does sometimes provides regional alternatives to some vocabulary items in the lists at the beginning of each chapter, although the region(s) where these variants are typically used is not given. Rather, these alternatives are presented merely as synonyms, since a subsequent activity to practice the vocabulary asks students to provide *equivalentes* 'equivalents' for the terms. Hence, students are not made aware of the fact that lexical variation is not arbitrary.

Moreover, it seems that the authors are not consistent in the use of a specific variety throughout the book. Conversely, *Entre nosotros* appears to adopt a 'cafeteria approach' (Arteaga & Llorente, 2009), since a mixture of dialectal terms is found throughout the book and even within the same text or dialogue. For example, the terms *presilladora* 'stapler', typically used in Cuba and Paraguay; *planilla* 'form', used in some Latin American countries; and neutral terms recognised and used in most of the Spanish-speaking countries, such as *computadora* 'computer', *computación* 'computer science', *grapadora* 'stapler', *automóvil* 'car', are all found among the examples and activities in the first chapter. As another example, dialogues pretending to be happening in Spain employ lexical items of typical use in Latin America such as *el control remoto* 'remote control', *comerciales* 'commercials', and *noticiero* 'news program', instead of *mando a distancia*, *anuncios*, and *telediario* or *informativo* (*Entre nosotros*, pp. 170, 173).[57]

As for variation in morphosyntax and phonology, *Entre nosotros* does not identify dialectal features in any of these areas. When addressing students, it always uses the formal pronouns *usted* and *ustedes*, and the dialogues and texts offered follow the same model. *Vosotros* forms are included in the verb paradigms, but are not actively used. In addition, no audio or video component through which students may be exposed to dialectal variants is integrated into the main content.

In brief, *Entre nosotros* does not seem to promote much awareness of dialectal variation. Although the book provides learners with some lexical

[57] In order to verify where each of these lexical items is typically used, I consulted two references: Molero (2003), and the project *Atlas Varilex* (*Variación Léxica del Español en el Mundo Actual*) published online by H. Ueda.

variants, it does not acknowledge dialectal diversity in an explicit or useful manner. Therefore, unless teachers provide additional information, students run the risk of becoming users of a mixture of dialectal features in their own discourse. Of greater concern is the observation that *Entre nosotros* might (unintentionally) encourage stereotypical attitudes towards Spanish dialects, as it is within this book that we find the statement "algunos afirman que en Colombia se habla el español más castizo de toda América" 'some state that it is in Colombia where the most pure/genuine Spanish of all America is spoken' (*Entre nosotros*, p. 59, my translation). Such a statement could promote unwanted prejudices towards Spanish varieties by suggesting that one variety is better than others. This assertion is indeed one of the most widespread myths about Spanish dialects (Moreno Fernández, 2000, 2010), since it is popularly known to have been uttered by teachers, instructors, and even native speakers of Spanish, even if they have not been exposed to this variety. However, it should certainly not be included in a textbook as if it were a true fact.

#### *4.2.2.3 Imagina (1st edition)*

One strength of *Imagina* is that the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world is acknowledged in short literary and cultural readings in each chapter. Similar to other textbooks, the cultural focus is integrated throughout each of the ten lessons, in which different countries or a group of geographically-close countries constitute the chapter's focus. Differently from the other textbooks reviewed here, *Imagina* adopts a video-integrated approach, incorporating "authentic, short-subject films by award-winning Hispanic filmmakers [that] serve as a springboard for exploring the themes and concepts in every lesson" (*Imagina*, IAE, p. 5). I will refer to this distinctive feature later in this section.

*Imagina* explicitly addresses dialectal variation to some extent. Regional variation is mainly presented within the lexicon, while variation in morphosyntax is only dealt with to a small degree, and no reference to phonological variants is made. In comparison with the first-year textbooks, *Imagina* deals slightly less with Spanish varieties, as shown in Table 15 above, but it gives more attention to

the influence that the Spanish language has received from other languages than the other textbooks reviewed.[58] In the *Imagina* sections, which introduce the featured country(ies) in every chapter, students can find information about languages in contact with Spanish in the region(s) of focus as well as their use and their status (p. 242); examples of terms derived from other languages, such as Arabic or indigenous languages, and still used in the Spanish language today (p. 51); and even examples of *Spanglish* are provided (p. 13), to illustrate the strong relationship between Spanish and English in the United States. Although the other textbooks also talk about the United States, *Imagina* is the only one that provides specific linguistic evidence of the strong influence of the Spanish language and culture in the United States.

Indeed, students' awareness and acknowledgment of Spanish lexical variation seems to be the proposed goal in the textbook, although the lexical alternatives are not part of the active vocabulary of each lesson, and students are not tested on them, as clearly stated in the "general teaching considerations" for instructors:

> Note that regional variations presented in the **Imagina** section and marginal glosses from the readings and film captions are presented for recognition only. They are not included in testing materials, although you may wish to make them active vocabulary for your course, if you so choose. The additional terms and lexical variations provided in the annotations of the Instructor's Annotated Edition are considered optional, as well.
>
> (*Imagina*, IAE, p. 8)

Examples of regional lexical variants and expressions are generally given in marginal glosses for the literary texts and also in the sections *Vocabulario del corto* 'Vocabulary from the short film' and *Expresiones* 'Expressions'. In addition, coloured subsections entitled *El español de...* 'The Spanish from…' introduce lexical items and expressions used in the specific region(s) in question. It is only in this latter subsection that the explicit presentation of dialectal

[58] Attention given to the history of the Spanish language and influences received from other languages seems adequate at the intermediate level. At this level, students already have a basic idea of the structure of the language, and including additional information may even be helpful and help them understand the language better.

variation is given. In the *Vocabulario del corto* and *Expresiones* sections, while some regional terms and expressions are listed among other vocabulary from the film, as shown in

Example 23 below for one of the films from Mexico, more "standard" alternatives are not made available to students. The IAE does include alternate words and expressions in the *Variación léxica* 'lexical variation' notes to instructors, but only for some of the terms presented, and no mention of the region(s) where these variants are used is offered, as shown in Example 24. Thus, it is left entirely to the instructors' own discretion to find and provide the information for students.

**Example 23**

> **¡Aguas!** *Watch out! (Mex.)*
> **ser un(a) hablador(a)** *to be a liar (Mex.)*

(*Imagina*, p. 306)

**Example 24**

> VARIACIÓN LÉXICA
> anotar un gol ↔ marcar/meter un gol
> balón ↔ bola; pelota
> deportista ↔ atleta
> hablador(a) ↔ mentiroso/a
> ¡Aguas! ↔ ¡(Ten) cuidado!; ¡Ojo!

(*Imagina*, p. IAE-306)

In contrast, regional lexical items included in *El español de...* boxes are presented together with more neutral variants, as illustrated in Example 25, from the chapter focusing on the Rioplatense area.

**Example 25**

> **El español de Argentina y Uruguay**
> **Argentinismos**
>
| | |
|---|---|
| **buzo** | suéter; *sweater* |
| **campera** | abrigo; *coat* |
| **¡Che!** | *To get people's attention*; *Hey!* |
| **copado/a** | content/a; muy de moda; *happy*; *very cool* |
| **feriado** | día festivo; *holiday* |
| **micro** | autobús; *bus* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **pibe** | muchacho; *guy* |
| **remera** | camiseta; *T-shirt* |
| **valija** | maleta; *suitcase* |

**Uruguayismos**

| | |
|---|---|
| **apolar** | dormir; *to sleep* |
| **botija** | niño/a; *kid* |
| **buque** | autobús; *bus* |
| **busarda** | barriga; *belly* |
| **caber** | gustar; *to like* |
| **gamba** | favor, ayuda; *favor*, *help* |
| **meter lomo** | esforzarse; *to make an effort* |
| **teca** | dinero; *money* |

(*Imagina*, p. 313)

Although these items are included systematically in a chapter subsection and are part of the core content, they are presented without a context. In other words, they are usually not semantically related, they do not appear in the texts, and a contextual use is not provided, either. Rather, they are only introduced to show that there is lexical variation in the different Spanish-speaking regions. Moreover, students do not use this information to practice or to perform any communicative activity, except for the occasional activity, such as in Example 26:

**Example 26**

7. En Argentina, llaman _____ a los abrigos.
a. buzos b. micros c. remeras d. camperas
8. En Uruguay, al dinero le dicen _____.
a. gamba b. teca c. botija d. busarda

(*Imagina*, p. 315)

'7. In Argentina, they name the coats _____.
[all the choices provided are regional terms used in that country]
8. In Uruguay, money is called _____.
[all the choice provided are regional terms used in that country]'

(my translation)

This type of activity does not contribute much to knowledge of dialectal variants, and students are only exposed to these variants in their written form,

even though it is recommended that instructors broaden students' experience with these variants:

> Call students' attention to the **El español de...** feature. You may wish to bring in film or audio samples from the Film Collection, local TV and radio, or online resources to expose students to lexical variations and regional accent.
>
> (*Imagina*, IAE, p. 11)

While this is a good pedagogical idea, it requires initiative and additional effort on the part of instructors. As acknowledged earlier, the diverse academic backgrounds, and also the personal interests and available time of instructors, could impede the search for such materials.

As previously mentioned, a particularity of *Imagina* is that it integrates short contemporary films from the Spanish-speaking world. These comprise a unique set of authentic samples of contextualized oral input, representing different Spanish varieties. Four of the films are produced in Mexico, three in Argentina, two in Spain, and one is filmed with the collaboration of Mexico and Uruguay. The *cortometrajes* or *cortos* 'short films' do not only introduce the lesson's theme and vocabulary, but they also "highlight and integrate the key concepts, themes, and language functions of each lesson and provide comprehensible input at the discourse level" (*Imagina*, IAE, p. 10). Each *corto* is then further integrated into the *Estructuras* 'Structures' section, in which selected captioned film stills serve as authentic examples of language use, and it is a point of departure for the conversation activities as well. Hence, viewing the *cortometraje* becomes a 'must do' task for each lesson. Since it is an essential component of the course, the *cortometraje* could be a valuable tool through which the instructor could guide students in the exploration of dialectal variation, with specific attention to the diverse regional accents. Unfortunately, this opportunity is not exploited at all in *Imagina*. In fact, no reference to variation in phonology is made at all, even if the *cortometrajes* offer a natural context through which to build on students' comprehension of different Spanish dialects.

No mention is made of morphosyntactic variation, either, despite the inclusion of Argentinean and Uruguayan shorts in which *voseo* is used. While examples of conjugated verbs in the *vos* form occur within the captioned stills of three of the ten films, *Imagina* only provides brief and incomplete footnotes about *voseo*. The first time it occurs, no attention at all is drawn to it. The second time, the footnote provided is imprecise, as shown in Example 27. The third and last time it occurs, the footnote refers to the regional use of *voseo* (see Example 28), but no further explanation is given, despite the numerous occurrences in the *corto* and in the captioned stills provided in the text. Instructors could provide a more complete explanation, but no additional information is offered for them, either, so those who are unfamiliar with *voseo* are at a loss.

**Example 27**

> Caption: "Tenés[1]que darte cuenta de que ..."
> [1]Equivalente de la segunda persona del singular del verbo "tener". Se utiliza en lugar de "tienes".
>
> (*Imagina*, p. 201)

> '[1]Equivalent to the second person singular of the verb "to have". It is used instead of "tienes" [*tú* form].'
>
> (my translation)

**Example 28**

> Captions: "Mirá[1], Mabel, yo quizá […]"
> "Pero Julio, ¿qué decís[2]? ¿Cómo podés[3] pensar en una cosa así?"
> "¿Vos[4] te acordás[5] cuando éramos […]"
> "Volvé[6] pronto. Cuidáte[7]… te voy a extrañar"
>
> [1]mira (en el *voseo**); [2]dices (en el *voseo*); [3]puedes (en el *voseo*); [4]Tú (en el *voseo*); [5]acuerdas (en el *voseo*); [6]Vuelve (en el *voseo*); [7]Cuídate (en el *voseo*)
>
> *La palabra *voseo* se refiere al uso de "vos" en lugar de "tú" y se utiliza en la zona del río de la Plata y otras partes de América Central.

(*Imagina*, p. 275)

> '*The word *voseo* refers to the use of "vos" instead of "tú" and it is used in the Plate River region and other parts of Central America.'

(my translation)

Despite the exemplified authentic use of *vos* forms in the *cortos*, the information about *voseo* is not expanded on nor addressed elsewhere in the book. However, *Imagina* does include the *vosotros* form in all the verb and pronoun paradigms (except for the commands), but they are not actively used in the textbook activities. Another dialectal feature of morphosyntax presented is the alternative forms for the past subjunctive. This time, this variant is integrated in the grammatical content of the lesson, with an explanation and examples (*Imagina*, p. 214). However, it is not practiced in the following activities, and instructors are reminded that these are not included in the Testing Program.

In sum, *Imagina* explicitly addresses dialectal variation, although to a lesser extent than the first-year textbooks reviewed here, but to a greater extent than the other second-year textbooks in this review. The integration of authentic short films provides many opportunities for raising awareness of dialectal variation; unfortunately, *Imagina* does not take full advantage of them. Issues of variation are limited mostly to lexical items, together with reference to the influence of other languages. Variation in morphosyntax, although not deeply explored, is also included, but not variation in phonology.

### 4.2.3 Third Year Textbook

#### *4.2.3.1 Miradas*

*Miradas* is used in advanced-level courses and focuses on cultural awareness. Although it follows the ACTFL guidelines in developing the four skills, it pay special attention to conversation and writing, as the subtitle of the book confirms: *Contextos para conversar y escribir* 'Contexts for conversation and writing'. The structure of *Miradas* is based on five thematic units elaborated through authentic material. Each theme is explored from the perspectives of

different authors, including writers, artists, filmmakers, and musicians from different parts of the Spanish-speaking world, including the U.S. Each unit starts with an artistic image, contains four authentic readings, and ends with a song or a movie. The primary goal of *Miradas* appears to be not the linguistic but the cultural diversity encountered in the Spanish-speaking world.

Concerning the treatment of dialectal variation in the textbook, *Miradas* offers *Nota lingüística* 'Linguistic note' boxes, which prepare students for a better comprehension of the texts by explaining the most difficult linguistic aspects found in them. These usually contain information about the style and register of the readings; however, on one occasion, the note, reproduced in Example 29, refers to the *voseo* that appears in a literary reading from Nicaragua.

**Example 29**

> Un compañero le dice a Belli: «*Vos sos* una mujer inteligente. El trabajo de la televisión es el tipo de trabajo que *hacés* bien». Hablarle a alguien usando *vos* es un fenómeno muy extendido por Sudamérica y Centroamérica llamado *voseo*. El *voseo* se originó en el español del siglo XVI, en el que había tres posibilidades: *tú* para los inferiores o iguales, *vos* para el trato de confianza y *vuestra merced* (origen de *usted*) como tratamiento de respeto. En muchos países se conservó el *vos* para el trato familiar y *usted* para el formal.
>
> Es común que *vos* se use con formas verbales originalmente plurales. *Sos* y *hacés*, los verbos del ejemplo, provienen de la segunda persona plural del presente de indicativo *sois* y *hacéis*.
>
> (*Miradas*, p. 108)

> 'A workmate tells Belli: "You are [in *voseo*] an intelligent woman. The television job is the type of work that you do [in *voseo*] well". Talking to somebody using *vos* is a very widespread phenomenon in South America and Central America called *voseo*. *Voseo* originated in 16th century Spanish, in which there were three choices: *tú* for the inferiors or equals, *vos* for people you trust and *vuestra merced* (origin of *usted*) as a treatment of respect. In many countries, *vos* was maintained for the familiar treatment and *usted* for the formal.
>
> It is common to use *vos* with verb forms that are originally in the plural. *Sos* and *hacés*, the verbs from the example, come from the second person plural of the present indicative *sois* and *hacéis*.'

(my translation)

This note about *voseo* is clearly written. The diachronic perspective is informative at this level and allows students to have a deeper understanding of the use of the pronoun *vos* as well as of other second-person subject pronouns. Students also receive an explanation of the conjugation of *vos* pronoun, although they are not given the whole paradigm so that they could recognise these forms in other contexts. The instructor's resource manual does not include additional information about this variant.

*Miradas* potentially offers many opportunities to direct students' attention to dialectal features and reinforce their knowledge of them. For example, the readings contain numerous examples of regional terms, which could be emphasized (e.g. through input enhancement as well as glossing) for recognition, comprehension, and even contextual use. Also, the movies and songs, which are produced in different parts of the Spanish-speaking world, could be easily used to exemplify some of the most notable differences in pronunciation among dialects, although no CDs or DVDs are provided by the publisher, making it difficult for instructors to access the materials. All in all, *Miradas* fails to take advantage of the rich opportunities for enhancing students' awareness and knowledge of dialectal variation, especially given that the advanced level is where students are likely to be interacting more with native speakers of Spanish from different regions.

## 5 Discussion

In the previous section, the analysis of the textbooks revealed that dialectal variation is addressed in varying degrees, and in different ways according to the structural layout of the textbook. Four of the textbooks, *Mosaicos 4th* and *5th ed.*, *Plazas*, and *Imagina*, present the issue of dialectal variation in a systematic way; one of them, *De Paseo*, considers it whenever convenient, based on the content addressed; and two of the books, *Entre nosotros* and *Miradas*, do not acknowledge it in a methodical fashion (i.e. references to dialectal issues appear arbitrarily throughout the book, and not systematically in specific textbook

sections). In this section, a summary of the results from the textbook review is presented, followed by a discussion of some important issues that emerged from the analysis and which deserve some attention.

The organisation of the textbook seems to be a decisive element with respect to the first research question, which asked whether textbooks raise awareness of dialectal variability. Having a layout in which groups of geographically close countries or a single Spanish-speaking region are the focus of each chapter definitely helps to raise students' awareness of dialectal variation, as this provides a logical context in which to introduce regional lexical items. Maps, such as the ones appearing in *Mosaicos*, *Plazas* and *Imagina*, help students obtain a visualization of the importance of Spanish in the world as well as its diversity. Moreover, if these maps and illustrations are accompanied by an activity or a reading, such as in *Plazas*, described on page 129, this would definitely help students to be aware of and understand the notion of dialectal variation.

Therefore, a chapter division focusing on different regions helps to highlight both the cultural diversity and the linguistic variation within the Spanish-speaking world. Even though political contemporary borders do not coincide with dialectal divisions, a classification by country, which also coincides with most of the pedagogical bibliography available, is useful as a teaching tool and for descriptive purposes (Lipski, 1994). Such an organization allows for a systematic treatment of dialectal variation, as seen in *En otras palabras* boxes from *Mosaicos 5th ed.*, or the *El español de...* section from *Imagina*. In contrast, *De Paseo*, *Entre nosotros* and *Miradas*, which do not have a region but a theme as the focus of each chapter, do not provide such a clear treatment of dialectal variation. Still, all the Spanish-speaking countries are acknowledged in all the textbooks, reflecting a multicultural and multidialectal approach which promotes positive attitudes towards the different Spanish varieties, the 21 Spanish-speaking countries, and the numerous Spanish speakers around the world.

The second research question concerns whether dialectal variation is addressed with explanations, examples, and practice in the three areas of lexicon,

phonology and morphosyntax. Generally, examples of variation in the lexicon are provided extensively, while explanations about alternative constructions in morphosyntax are offered to a lesser extent, and phonological variation barely receives attention. A common drawback of all the textbooks is the lack of practice activities regarding dialectal features, and as a result, the information provided is more likely to be ignored by students.

Lexical variation is mainly provided in isolated boxes, as in *En otras palabras* in *Mosaicos–5th ed*. and *¿Nos entendemos?* in *Plazas*, or in specific sections, as in *El español de...* in *Imagina*, and usually in relation to the geographical area of focus of the chapter, although this is not always the case. These regional variants are provided mostly for recognition purposes, since they are not required for the completion of any of the textbooks' activities.

Variation in morphosyntax is generally presented within the core grammatical content of the textbooks, whenever pertinent, and according to the students' level. It would be expected that the more proficient the students, the more detailed an explanation can be. There are certain dialectal features that require a higher proficiency in the language before its variant forms can be explored (e.g. alternate forms for the subjunctive conjugation). However, students are not asked to use any of the morphosyntactic variants in the language tasks.

In regards to phonology, this area is undertreated overall. The first linguistic element that students distinguish among native speakers from different Spanish dialects is their accent or phonology; however, this is the least addressed issue in the SFL textbooks reviewed. Only *Plazas* and *Mosaicos–5th ed.* tackle the issue, albeit superficially (see section 5.2 below).

With respect to the instructor's annotated edition of the textbooks, there is a clear preference in most of them, particularly at the beginner level, to offer suggestions to make the most out of the materials provided, but dialectal variation is rarely addressed, making it difficult for instructors to foster sociolinguistic competence. Although the analysed textbooks seem to promote a multidialectal approach in classroom instruction by encouraging the instructor to use a different variety other than the one in the book, as stated in *Mosaicos–4th edition* (see page

125), in *Plazas* (see page 131), and in *Imagina* (see page 148), this approach is not reinforced or exploited in the instructor's annotated edition, since no additional explanations or helpful information regarding dialectal variants is offered. Only occasionally are certain morphosyntactic dialectal features suggested as an option to be included during classroom instruction (see Example 5), and additional examples of dialectal vocabulary items are provided (see Example 2 or Example 24). No instructional information is given in any of the textbooks regarding dialectal phonological processes, even though "it is crucial that the instructor's edition of the text provide a detailed presentation of phonetics for the benefit of the instructors, many of whom lack technical training in this area" (Arteaga, 2000, p. 347). Moreover, no ideas to put to use the few regional features that presented are given to the instructor. *De Paseo* is the only textbook that seems to provide minimal teaching guidance to the instructor in regard to dialectal variation by proposing an activity to examine regional lexical items, reproduced in Example 22 above, and by advocating positive attitudes, as in the instructor's note quoted on page 137.

After having provided a summary of the findings of this study, there are some particular issues brought to light during the textbook review which deserve to be discussed in more detail. In the following sections, we will consider the following issues: 1) the role of culture as a framework for the introduction of dialects in class, 2) the lack of treatment of phonological variation in all textbooks, 3) the Spanish pronouns of address, 4) the need for the inclusion of practice activities containing dialectal features, 5) the dialectal features not addressed in the textbooks, and 6) the Spanish variety most represented in the textbooks.

## 5.1 Regional Culture as a Framework for Dialect Presentation

Culture is currently one of the main components of SFL classes, and the different Spanish-speaking regions are the framework within which culture is generally presented.. Although the examination of the cultural component in textbooks is beyond the scope of the present study, it is appropriate to briefly

highlight it here, supporting Paricio's assertion (2005) about "the need to consider culture as an essential part of the linguistic learning from the perspective of the development of communicative competence, which also includes sociolinguistic competence. This implies the presentation of language in its multiple contexts of use and in its distinct varieties" (p. 143, my translation). The affirmation that language and culture are tightly intertwined and that teaching must integrate the two, is one made by many (e.g. Kramsch 1988; Byram, 1993; Omaggio, 2001; Areizaga, 2002). Natural use of language occurs in social interactions, which are always embedded within a specific cultural context. In order for learners to be able to understand the semantics and pragmatics of the target language use, they also need to understand culture.

Some of the textbooks analysed here integrate culture as part of their program, usually centred on a Spanish-speaking region(s), and many dialectal features are introduced because of and in relation to the cultural or regional focus of the unit, such as the subsection *El español de...* in *Imagina*, or the explanations of regional terms in the cultural readings in *Plazas*. Indeed, culture could be used as a more effective way to present dialectal information; as Wieczorek (1992) suggested, "the instructor might wish to address the multi-dialectal nature of familiar/formal pronouns by means other than giving complicated paradigms to students. A cultural reading passage, perhaps supplemented with an explanation of geographic extension of certain forms, may fulfill both cultural and linguistic goals." (p. 38). Hence, a cultural component is essential for presenting dialectal features, in order to promote the development of socially and culturally appropriate language use. Ideally, the usage of sociolinguistic variants should be presented within contextualized input, through an authentic cultural context. However, in the textbook review, it was observed in most texts that the regional items were given in isolation (i.e. textually enhanced boxes), without an immediate context through which students could see their use. This shortcoming could be easily minimised with the addition of (culturally) contextualised examples and practice activities that include the specific dialectal features.

## 5.2 Absence of Phonological Variation

Phonological variation is the least addressed in the textbooks, despite pronunciation being the first difference that students notice when they hear a different dialect, and one that can impede comprehension. This finding coincides with those of Arteaga and Llorente (2009), who also called for the inclusion of brief explanations on phonological processes to improve students' communicative competence. With the exception of *Entre nosotros* and *Miradas,* all textbooks contain an in-text CD or DVD through which students are able to listen to various native speakers from different regions and thus be exposed to distinct Spanish dialects. However, as seen in *Mosaicos (4th and 5th eds.)*, and similarly in Wieczorek's (1991) study, the audio recordings are not always consistent with the dialects presented in the text. All in-text audio programs should include "dialect listening" (Wieczorek, 1991, p. 179), representing the different Spanish dialects, as a media resource to instructors, since there is no language teacher who has the capacity to reproduce or imitate all dialectal variants. This material should be adequately indexed and organized so that both instructors and students know which variety they are listening to and are able to pay close attention to the pertinent phonological features, and also the lexical and morphosyntactic characteristics for each dialect featured. Wieczorek (1991) even proposes that "a reasonable next step in language learning is the ability to integrate speaking practice with a listening component" (p. 178), through which students could actively use dialect pronunciation (Wigdorsky, 1985), in order to increase awareness of the differences. In the same vein, Arteaga (2000, p. 135) also considered the development of the learner's ability to self-monitor pronunciation as a crucial component of pronunciation instruction.

In terms of which phonological variants to address, only two features, *yeísmo/žeísmo* and *distinción/seseo*, are given any attention, in *Plazas* and in *Mosaicos–5th edition*. All other pronunciation sections in the textbooks refer to sounds that cause trouble to English speakers, despite Wieczorek's (1991) suggestion that "it would be beneficial for the students not only to have pronunciation exercises that are troublesome, but also those that are indicative of

variants of Spanish" (p. 179). However, in none of the textbooks are audio files provided to help students hear and perceive the differences between different dialects. This type of material would not only help students appreciate and understand phonological variation but also allow for better comprehension of the various Spanish speakers they may eventually interact with. (Refer to the popular first-year textbook, *Impresiones*, reviewed in Arteaga & Llorente (2009), for good examples of activities of this type).

## 5.3 Incomplete Subject Pronominal System

The *vosotros* verb forms and its related pronouns are referenced in all the textbooks reviewed and presented in the verb paradigms even though most of the native speakers of Spanish do not use it,[59] especially the ones that North American students, at whom the books are directed, are likely to encounter. This begs the question: why, then, do we not include the *vos* pronoun and its verb forms (cf. Mason & Nicely, 1995)? *Vos* is more widely used than *vosotros*,[60] and North American students are more likely to encounter *vos* speakers than *vosotros* speakers.[61] However, *vos* is only referenced when it accidentally appears in a reading or an authentic context. In *Imagina*, for example, the use of *vos* in Argentina and Uruguay is mentioned because it appears in three of the short films integrated in the textbook. Unfortunately, the explanation of this feature is weofully incomplete, as no information is given regarding the verb conjugation for *vos* (which varies from region to region); given that the subject pronoun is not obligatory in Spanish syntax, the only way to recognize *vos* in many cases is through the verb conjugation. In *Plazas*, *vos* is addressed when Argentina is the country of focus in the chapter, with an explanation about the conjugation for this form in the present tense, but it is not revisited when other countries in which *vos*

[59] More than 85% of Spanish speakers do not live in Spain (Butt & Benjamin, 2004, p. vi).
[60] Mason and Nicely (1995) present the geographical distribution of *vos* as follows: "*Vos* is used by all classes in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. The *vos* is also used in mountainous areas of Bolivia, western rural areas of Panama, Arequipa and some northern regions of Peru, certain rural areas of Colombia, Chile, and Venezuela, and in the states of Chiapas and Tabasco in Mexico" (pp. 362-3).
[61] "The population of Spain is approximately 39.1 million and the combined populations of the eight countries where *vos* is dominant is over 69.1 million" (Mason & Nicely, 1995, p. 361).

is also used are the focus of the chapter, with the consequent impression that *vos* is a unique characteristic of Argentina only.

The system for the second person forms of address exemplified in the textbooks reviewed here is represented in

Table 17. Bugel (2000) suggested a different system, reproduced in Table 18. However, for the system to be complete and embrace all dialectal options for the second person subject pronoun, I suggest that Table 19 be the one presented in SFL textbooks.

**Table 17.** Forms of address for second person appearing in textbooks analysed

| | **Informal** | **Formal** |
|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | Tú | Usted |
| **Plural** | Vosotros(as) | Ustedes |

**Table 18.** Forms of address for second person in Latin America (Adapted from Bugel, 2000, p. 74)

| | **Informal** | **Formal** |
|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | Tú/Vos | Usted |
| **Plural** | Ustedes | Ustedes |

**Table 19.** Complete system of forms of address for second person

| | **Informal** | **Formal** |
|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | Tú/Vos | Usted |
| **Plural** | Vosotros(as)/Ustedes | Ustedes |

## 5.4 Lack of Practice with Dialectal Features

Practice activities for dialectal features is virtually non-existent in all the textbooks reviewed. This lack of practice portrays dialectal variation as additional content and thus possibly irrelevant or unimportant for students when studying for tests and exams. Providing dialectal information for simple passive recognition only, without practice, may be defended with the intention of not overwhelming students with excessive concepts and material to be covered. However, if students do not see a practical utility or have an instrumental reason for studying dialectal variation, they may tend to skip it or forget about it quickly. Also, instructors may look at it as information that can be read by the student in their own time, but not much else. Unless the teacher has an idea about how to put this information into a practice exercise in order to draw attention to it, it might be the case that it is not addressed at all in class, especially if the teacher is a non-native speaker and/or had limited linguistic training.

Only two of the analyzed textbooks, *Mosaicos–4th ed.* and *Imagina,* present simple activities (e.g. fill in the blanks or multiple choice) in relation to the regional lexical terms presented. Despite these tasks, neither textbook includes the regionalisms in their testing programs, as explicitly stated in the introduction of *Imagina,* for example (see page 145), claiming that they are optional and for recognition purposes only. Again, this leaves the impression that these features are of secondary relevance in the classroom. However, knowledge of the dialectal features is necessary for the internationally recognized test of Spanish language proficiency, the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera*, which may contain samples from various dialects in the same exam (Soler, 2008). Therefore, dialectal variation should be considered as core content and be included in the curriculum in a practical manner, either through passive or active/productive tasks. The more active the practice, the more attention is given to the linguistic feature addressed, which would in turn foster its recognition, identification, and comprehension, the ultimate goal of practice.

## 5.5 Omissions of Dialectal Features

So far, we have focused on the dialectal features that have appeared in the textbooks reviewed. However, there are some dialectal features which have been not addressed at all. While we cannot expect to teach all the varieties and their features to our students, we should aim for the gradual inclusion of common and pragmatically complex or subtle dialectal issues, especially as the student's proficiency level increases. Initial exposure to dialectal features and later recycling of this knowledge will allow students to enhance their comprehension at first and develop their intelligibility and productive communicative skills at a later stage. Some of the dialectal features omitted in the textbooks analysed here are: *voseo*, *leísmo* (the use of *le* instead of *lo* when referring to masculine human direct objects), variation in the construction of diminutives, *dequeísmo* (the use of *de que* rather than *que* for introducing verbal complement clauses), deletion or aspiration of syllable final consonants, and the exchange of <r> for <l> (*rotacismo*). All of these could be addressed for recognition purposes only at the beginning levels, with deeper explanations and even practice activities at the higher levels to build upon this knwoledge. The choice of dialectal features would depend on the context in which the students operate; for example, in communities with a large population of Hispanic speakers from one particular country, attention could be focused on the characteristics of that particular dialect. In the Canadian context studied here, there is no single country represented by the Hispanic population, so it would seem appropriate for the students to be introduced to the most salient dialectal features that are frequently and widely used by a large number of speakers.

## 5.6 (In)consistent Dialectal Representation in SFL Textbooks

In regard to the lexicon represented in the textbooks reviewed, all of them appear to adopt an undetermined Latin American standard variety to present the active vocabulary in each lesson. With the exception of *Entre Nosotros*, which reflected more of a "cafeteria approach", all the texts seem to succeed in this endeavour, representing the lexicon that is understood by the majority of Spanish

speakers. Indeed, Arteaga and Llorente (2009) had argued that, given the pluricentricity of the Spanish language, the best approach would be to teach a neutral variety. This seems appropriate given the geographical context in which the Spanish language is taught, and is contrary to the Castilian-based dialectology found in previous studies (Wieczorek, 1991, 1992).

On the other hand, in regard to morphosyntactic features, there does seem to be a Castilian dominance. Most of the textbooks analyzed ignored *voseo*, while they all presented the *vosotros* forms. However, the Castilian dominance is inconsistent, as the textbooks do not mention *leísmo*, which is also characteristic of the Castilian dialect. As Wieczorek (1992) argues, "if dialect information is to be provided (according to the needs of the individual classroom), the information should be consistent, clear, and above all, not misleading" (p. 39).

Nevertheless, from the findings described here, we can see that there does not seem to be a clear "mother country" or a single dialect bias in the books analyzed, unlike previous studies of SFL textbooks (e.g. Ramírez & Hall, 1990; Wieczorek, 1991, 1992; Mason & Nicely, 1995; Bugel, 2000; González Casado, 2002). On the contrary, these textbooks seem to reflect the international quality of the Spanish language by not limiting themselves to the representation of a specific region. They promote the diversity of the language and provide students with basic intuitions towards a complete understanding and use of the language with the vast variety of Spanish speakers in real-life situations, which is the ultimate goal of FL teaching. For the most part, these textbooks present Spanish as a global multicultural, and multidialectal language.

## 6 Conclusion and Further Research

In this paper, the treatment of dialectal variation offered by some post-secondary SFL textbooks was analysed. The rationale for the introduction of dialectal features in FL classrooms through the theoretical framework of *sociolinguistic competence* was presented first, followed by the methodology used to examine the textbooks in regard to dialectal variation. Next followed the review of the seven textbooks used in the Spanish language program at a Canadian

university between the academic years of 2006 and 2010, concluding with a discussion of its pedagogical implications.

In general terms, it can be concluded that students within this program are aware of the great linguistic diversity in the current Spanish-speaking world. The overall position of the textbooks is to adopt a sociolinguistic point of view that considers the changing and complex plural reality that exists in the different Spanish-speaking countries today. However, although students are exposed to different Spanish dialectal varieties through the textbook materials, they are given little explicit guidance to help them identify dialectal differences. We also cannot take for granted that the instructors will step in to fill this gap. Further research is needed in order to determine whether dialect variation is considered a relevant topic for instructors. As well, we need to examine how students value dialectal variation. Observations in actual classes would be necessary in order to understand whether this issue is part of the daily class interaction between instructors and students, and whether students appreciate and value this content and make use of it either productively (i.e. use it in their own speech) or passively (i.e. acknowledge and recognize it) to communicate with diverse speakers of Spanish. Also, an interesting research topic that deserves more exploration is the in-class interaction between the textbook, which selects certain dialectal features to present, and the instructor, who may use a different variety than the one presented (see Bugel, 2000). In the current study, the multidialectal approach adopted by the textbooks may make instructors feel uncomfortable to teach a variant that they are not familiar with.

Furthermore, definitive conclusions regarding the treatment of linguistic varieties in the SFL textbooks cannot be drawn due to the limited number of textbooks examined here. An analysis of a larger number of textbooks will be necessary to see whether the commercial pedagogical materials available in North America are indeed promoting a multidialectal and multicultural approach to make students aware and knowledgeable of the great diversity of the Spanish language. In addition, textbooks aimed at Spanish Heritage Language learners should be included in regard to the issue of dialectal variation, especially in light

of the study by Ducar (2009), which focused on three sociolinguistic features common to U.S. varieties of Spanish and concluded that a pseudo-Castilian dialect is promoted to the detriment of student varieties, consequently 'silencing' heritage speakers. Moreover, SFL textbooks published elsewhere other than the U.S. would also be an interesting corpus for analysis, since they may possibly promote different values and attitudes, depending on the geographical context in which the Spanish language is taught, such as Spanish taught in Brazil (e.g. Bugel, 2000), Spanish taught in Europe or Asia, and Spanish-language courses aimed at foreigners of different origins offered in Spanish-speaking countries (e.g. González Casado, 2002). The manner of treatment of dialectal variation in SFL textbooks could be a decisive factor at the time of choosing pedagogical materials, above all when considering whether it is to be used in linguistic immersion situations or far away from where the target language is spoken.

Finally, I insist on the need to include dialectal variation as part of the core curriculum of a SFL class in order to improve students' sociolinguistic competence, and by extension, their communicative competence. If we were to review, rewrite, and republish SFL textbooks with the intention of integrating dialectal variation and explicitly incorporating dialectal features as part of the core curriculum, it would be preferable to see it included and addressed in a way that keeps the following suggestions in mind: 1) dialectal features should be presented to students so that they understand and recognize them, and 2) students should be given opportunities to use some dialectal features, especially at higher levels of proficiency, in order to promote noticing of the distinct characteristics and improve comprehension of the diversity of the language. The most salient and the most frequently used dialectal features should be the ones addressed in FL classrooms, at all levels, so that reinforcement and recycling is provided throughout the language program, and all of them should be taught within a cultural or regional context. Practice activities should be added for reinforcement of awareness and recognition at the beginning levels, and for mastery of the dialectal features at the higher levels.

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# Appendix D – Checklist for Textbook Review
**(reformatted to maintain the margin sizes)**

Title: _____ Authors: _____

Edition: _____ Year: _____ Publisher/Place:

_____

Level: __ Span111 __ Span112 __ Span 211 __ Span 212 __ Span 300

# of pages: _____ (excluding glossaries, indexes, grammar reviews, appendices, etc.)

# of chapters: _____

Overall, it addresses dialectal variation __ Yes __ No. If Yes: __ explicitly __ implicitly

Instructor's Annotated Edition (IAE) available: __ Yes __ No

In-text additional resources: __ In-text audio CD __ In-text video/DVD

Teaching approach stated: _____

| Questions | Yes / No | Comments and Observations |
|---|---|---|
| **A. General Reference to Dialectal Variation** | | |
| A. 1. Any statement about different varieties in the textbook (e.g. introduction, teaching philosophy of the textbook, preface, etc.). | Y/N | |
| A. 2. Are the 21 Spanish-speaking countries represented in the textbook? What countries are (not) represented in the textbook? | Y/N | |
| A. 3. Is there a focus on a particular Spanish-speaking culture or country? (where in the textbook, and how?) | Y/N | |
| A. 4. Is there any cultural content referring to the Spanish varieties/dialects? | Y/N | |
| A. 5. Is there explicit focus on dialectal variation within the textbook? (how?) | Y/N | |
| A. 6. What variety(ies) of Spanish is/are mostly used or represented in the textbook? | | |
| A. 7. Is dialectal information included in a systematic way?<br>A. 7.1. If Yes, where is dialectal variation information included in the textbook? (middle, beginning, end?; in each chapter?; where in the chapter?; in a particular section?; isolated?) | Y/N | |
| A. 8. Is dialectal information related to/linked with the country-specific or cultural section? | Y/N | |
| A. 9. Is linguistic terminology used? Do students need to have metalinguistic knowledge? (e.g. to explain differences in sounds)<br>9.1. If Yes, are explanations using metalinguistic language comprehensible for the students' level? (e.g. do students understand the explanations about the sounds?) | Y/N<br>Y/N | |
| A. 10. Do activities, tasks and exercises incorporate the dialectal features/ characteristics explained/presented in the chapter?<br>If yes, are these activities:<br>10.1. passive (students fill in a table, listen, etc.)? or<br>10.2. productive (stds. need to put meaning in using the features, stds. must use it loud to complete the activity, etc.)? or<br>10.3. both (consecutively passive and then productive)? | Y/N<br><br>Y/N<br>Y/N<br><br>Y/N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. 11. Are there any written or oral samples (e.g. cultural or literary readings, etc.) from different dialects/countries? | Y/N | |
| A. 11.1. If Yes, can one see any characteristic of the dialect in the text (e.g. regional lexical items, morphosyntactic features, phonological features–if recorded to be listened to, etc.)? | Y/N | |
| A. 11.2. If Yes, are these features marked in any way so that students can identify them? | Y/N | |
| A. 12. Are there any maps with Spanish language or dialect information included? (i.e. number of speakers, other languages in Spanish-speaking countries, etc.) | | |
| A. 13. Is other sociolinguistic information (i.e. register differences, pragmatic explanations, etc.) given? (where and how?) | Y/N | |
| A. 14. Is there any address to the needs of Spanish heritage speakers? | Y/N | |
| A. 14.1. If Yes, is there any use or proposal for heritage speakers to show the origin of their own variant and to talk about dialectal differences from their own personal experience? Any suggestion to use the heritage speaker as an example of dialectal variation in class? | Y/N | |
| A. 15. **Instructor's Annotated Edition.** Does the IAE provide additional help to address dialectal variation in class (extended explanations, further examples, suggestions of activities to introduce and use the dialectal features, etc.)? | Y/N | |
| **B. Dialectal Variation in the Lexicon** | | |
| B. 1. Is the vocabulary used in the textbook mainly *neutral*? (vocabulary used in most Spanish-speaking countries) | Y/N | |
| B. 2. Is the vocabulary used in the textbook mainly of *regional* use? (vocabulary from a specific dialect) | Y/N | |
| B. 3. Are *neutral* lexical items in vocabulary lists given a translation? | Y/N | |
| B. 4. Are *regional* lexical items in vocabulary lists given a translation? | Y/N | |
| B. 4.1. If Yes, is the translation in Spanish by using a *neutral* item, in English, or in both, *neutral* Spanish and then English? (e.g. *guagua* – *autobús* – bus) | Y/N | |
| B. 4.2. Is the regional use of the lexical item given? (e.g. *guagua* – Cuba) | Y/N | |
| B. 5. Are *regional* lexical items presented in contexts (e.g. texts, pictures)? | Y/N | |
| B. 5.1. If Yes, Is/Are the country(ies) or region(s) of use of the items given? (e.g. *pollera* – Argentina) | Y/N | |
| B. 5.2. Are regional lexical items chosen in accordance with the country(ies) or region(s) of focus in the chapter? | Y/N | |
| B. 6. Does the textbook provide examples using *regional* lexical items? (e.g. sentence using the particular item, within a context, etc.) | Y/N | |
| B. 7. Are regional lexical items having different meanings in different dialects explained? (e.g. *tortilla* – 'omelette' in Spain, 'tortilla' in some Latin American countries) | Y/N | |
| B. 8. Does the textbook provide typical regional expressions from specific dialects? | Y/N | |
| B. 8.1. Is the meaning and region of use given? (e.g. *vale* – Spain, *ándale güero* – México) | Y/N | |
| B. 9. Does the textbook provide any explanation about the possible reasons of variation in the lexicon of the Spanish language? (e.g. history of the language, influences from indigenous or other languages, etc.) | Y/N | |
| B. 9. Are there any examples given? (maybe within the cultural chapter section) | Y/N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| B. 10. **Practice**. Does the textbook provide any type of practice with the regional lexical items introduced? (how? passive or productive tasks?) (e.g. exercises including the items to be used by the student in written or oral form) | Y/N | |
| B. 11. Is there **reinforcement** for the regional lexical items introduced? Do the regional lexical items introduced reappear in later chapters of the textbook in order to be practiced and reviewed? | Y/N | |
| B. 12. **Instructor's Annotated Edition.** Does the IAE provide additional information about lexical variation? (e.g. further examples containing regional items, description of regional use of certain items, history of specific items, etc.) | Y/N | |
| **C. Dialectal Variation in Morphosyntax** | | |
| The textbook addresses the following morphosyntactic features, which are characteristic of certain Spanish dialects: | | |
| C. 1. All pronouns/forms of address in Spanish: *tú*, *vos*, *vosotros*, *usted*, *ustedes* (plural of *tú* and *usted*)<br>C. 1.1. *Ustedes* used as second person plural. Is this form explained?<br>C. 1.2. Is sociolinguistic information about these forms given? (register use. *Tuteo* vs use of *usted*) | Y/N<br>Y/N<br>Y/N | |
| C. 2. *Vosotros* conjugation.<br>Is the regional use of this form explained? (Spain) | Y/N | |
| C. 3. *Voseo* conjugation.<br>Is the regional use of this form explained? (Rioplatense region and other Latin American countries) | Y/N | |
| C. 4. Third person direct object pronoun: Leísmo/loísmo (North Central Spain) | Y/N | |
| C. 5. Subjunctive alternative endings: –ara/ –ase (in Spain) | Y/N | |
| C. 6. Use of *pretérito indefinido* (preterit) in Latin America for *pretérito perfecto* (present perfect) in Spain | Y/N | |
| C. 7. Diminutives.<br>Is the formation of diminutives in different dialects explained?<br>Is the preference of regional use explained? | Y/N | |
| C. 8. Question formation in Caribbean Spanish (no inversion of verb-subject) | Y/N | |
| C. 9. **Practice**. Does the textbook provide practice with the regional morphological features introduced? (how? passive or productive tasks?) | Y/N | |
| C. 10. **Reinforcement**. Do the morphological dialectal features introduced reappear in later chapters of the textbook in order to be reviewed? | Y/N | |
| C. 11. **Instructor's Annotated Edition.** Does the IAE provide additional information about variation in morphosyntax? (e.g. further examples containing morphosyntactic features, description of regional use of certain features, etc.) | Y/N | |
| **D. Dialectal Variation in Phonology (Accent)** | | |
| The textbook addresses the following dialectal phonological features: | | |
| D. 1. <c> before <e> < i> and <z> → [θ] in Central-North Spain dialect, [s] in other dialects | Y/N | |
| D. 2. <ll> → [ʎ] in Central-North Spain dialect, [ʒ] [ʤ] [ʃ] [ʧ] in the Rioplatense area and other dialects | Y/N | |
| D. 3. <y> → [j] in Central-North Spain dialect, same as <ll> in other dialects | Y/N | |
| D. 4. Word and syllable final <s> → [h] [ø] in Tierras Bajas/costal dialects, [s] in Tierras Altas/non-coastal dialects | Y/N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| D. 5. <g> before <e> < i> and <j> → [χ] in Central-North Spain dialect, [h] in other dialects | Y/N | |
| D. 6. Word final <n> → [ŋ] in Caribbean Spanish | Y/N | |
| D. 7. Syllable final <r> → [l] in Caribbean Spanish | Y/N | |
| D. 8. Does the textbook provide explanations for the different pronunciations of these sounds in different dialects?<br>(how? Are these explanations comprehensible for our students?) | Y/N | |
| D. 9. **In-Text Audio:** Are the in-text audio files recorded by a variety of native speakers?<br>D. 9.1. Are the speakers' dialects/accents specified/given?<br>D. 9.2. Do the dialects recorded in the audio files correspond with the region(s) of focus of the chapter, activity, and/or reading? | Y/N<br>Y/N<br>Y/N | |
| D. 10. Does the In-Text Audio represent the phonological dialectal differences included in the textbook?<br>How?<br>D. 10.1. Are there audio samples to listen to the specific sounds presented?<br>D. 10.2. Are there audio samples with contrasts of the different sounds? | Y/N<br><br><br><br>Y/N<br><br>Y/N | |
| D. 11. Is there any reference to dialectal differences in intonation (what our students perceive as a different accent)? | Y/N | |
| D. 12. **Practice**. Training or practice for the different sounds (e.g. exercises where students produce the different sounds orally, listening to perceive the sound differences, etc.) | Y/N | |
| D. 13. **Reinforcement**. Do the phonological dialectal features introduced reappear in later chapters of the textbook in order to be reviewed? | Y/N | |
| D. 14. **Instructor's Annotated Edition.** Does the IAE provide additional information about variation in phonology? (explanation, examples, etc.) Explanations of the different pronunciations and in what countries or dialects these are used. | Y/N | |

# Appendix E – Dialectal Tokens Grid

Textbook: _____

Total # of pages: _____ (excluding appendices, glossaries, etc.)

# of chapters: _____

| Page # Tally | Token-type or Item | | Student | | Instructor only (IAE) | Where in textbook (page, chapter or section). Comments & Observations (any relation to cultural section?) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Isolated: a note (foot note, box, margin, etc.) | In context or in chapter/book section | | |
| | Morphosyntax | Explanations | | | | |
| | | Examples | | | | |
| | | Activities/Practice | | | | |
| | Phonology | Explanations | | | | |
| | | Examples (audio files, to perceive different sounds) | | | | |
| | | Activities/Practice | | | | |
| | Lexicon | Explanations | | | | |
| | | Examples (NO region(s) of use mentioned) | | | | |
| | | Examples (region(s) of use given) | | | | |
| | | Activities/Practice | | | | |
| | | Examples of regional terms & expressions of the featured region(s) | | | | |
| | | Activities/Practice for regional terms | | | | |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | | |
| | Other: | Maps, readings, statements, etc. | | | | |

## Appendix F – Textbook Structure Grid

Structural layout of the textbook

**Textbook title: _____ # of chapters: _____**

| Chapter # | Chapter theme / topic | Country(ies) / region(s) of focus | Culture / Maps – What information is presented about the country(ies)? |
|---|---|---|---|
| (0 = Prel.) | | | |
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |

# Appendix G – Dialectal Tokens Categorised

All dialectal tokens categorised for each of the textbooks analysed.

| *Mosaicos - 4th edition* | | | Student | | | Instructor | SubTOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Isolated | Context | *SSubTOT* | | |
| Morphosyntax | Explanations | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| | Examples (+ explanation) | | | | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Phonology | Explanations | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Examples | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lexicon | Explanations | Explanations | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *1* | *2* | *3* |
| | Examples | Examples (NO region(s) given) | 2 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| | | Examples (region(s) given) | 2 | | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | | Examples (featured region(s)) | | 12 | 12 | | 12 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *21* | *14* | *35* |
| | Activities | Activities | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Activities for regional terms | | 12 | 12 | | 12 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *12* | *0* | *12* |
| | | | | SubTOT | 34 | 16 | 50 |
| Other | Maps, readings, etc. | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | | SubTOT | 6 | 32 | | | |
| | | | | **TOTALS** | **38** | **20** | **58** |

| ***Mosaicos - 5th edition*** | | | Student | | | Instructor | SubTOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Isolated** | **Context** | *SSubTOT* | | |
| **Morphosyntax** | Explanations | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| | Examples (+ explanation) | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| **Phonology** | Explanations | | 1 | | 1 | | 1 |
| | Examples | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **Lexicon** | Explanations | Explanations | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *2* | *1* | *3* |
| | Examples | Examples (NO region(s) given) | 6 | 6 | 12 | 6 | 18 |
| | | Examples (region(s) given) | 12 | | 12 | 3 | 15 |
| | | Examples (featured region(s)) | 15 | | 15 | | 15 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *39* | *9* | *48* |
| | Activities | Activities | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Activities for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *0* | *0* | *0* |
| | | | | SubTOT | 41 | 10 | 51 |
| **Other** | Maps, readings, etc. | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | | SubTOT | 38 | 10 | | | |
| | | | | **TOTALS** | **48** | **14** | **62** |

| ***Plazas*** | | | Student | | | Instructor | SubTOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Isolated** | **Context** | *SSubTOT* | | |
| **Morphosyntax** | Explanations | | 3 | 3 | 6 | | 6 |
| | Examples (+ explanation) | | 2 | | 2 | | 2 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| **Phonology** | Explanations | | | 2 | 2 | | 2 |
| | Examples | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| **Lexicon** | Explanations | Explanations | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *0* | *0* | *0* |
| | Examples | Examples (NO region(s) given) | 6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| | | Examples (region(s) given) | 15 | | 15 | | 15 |
| | | Examples (featured region(s)) | 12 | | 12 | | 12 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *33* | *0* | *33* |
| | Activities | Activities | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Activities for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *0* | *0* | *0* |
| | | | | SubTOT | 33 | 0 | 33 |
| **Other** | Maps, readings, etc. | | | 3 | 3 | | 3 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | | SubTOT | 38 | 8 | | | |
| | | | | **TOTALS** | **46** | **0** | **46** |

| *De Paseo* | | | Student | | | Instructor | SubTOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Isolated | Context | *SSubTOT* | | |
| Morphosyntax | Explanations | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 3 |
| | Examples (+ explanation) | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Phonology | Explanations | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Examples | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Lexicon | Explanations | Explanations | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *1* | *0* | *1* |
| | Examples | Examples (NO region(s) given) | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Examples (region(s) given) | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | | Examples (featured region(s)) | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *1* | *1* | *2* |
| | Activities | Activities | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | | Activities for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *1* | *1* | *2* |
| | | | | SubTOT | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Other | Maps, readings, etc. | | | | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | | SubTOT | 1 | 6 | | | |
| | | | | **TOTALS** | **7** | **3** | **10** |

| *Imagina* | | | Student | | | Instructor | SubTOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Isolated | Context | *SSubTOT* | | |
| Morphosyntax | Explanations | | 2 | 2 | 4 | | 4 |
| | Examples (+ explanation) | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Phonology | Explanations | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Examples | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | Activities | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lexicon | Explanations | Explanations | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Explanations for regional terms | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *0* | *0* | *0* |
| | Examples | Examples (NO region(s) given) | | | 0 | 17 | 17 |
| | | Examples (region(s) given) | | 4 | 4 | | 4 |
| | | Examples (featured region(s)) | | 9 | 9 | | 9 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *13* | *17* | *30* |
| | Activities | Activities | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | Activities for regional terms | | 5 | 5 | | 5 |
| | | | | *SubsubTOT* | *5* | *0* | *5* |
| | | | | SubTOT | 18 | 17 | 35 |
| Other | Maps, readings, etc. | | | | 0 | | 0 |
| | | | | SubTOT | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | SubTOT | 2 | 20 | | | |
| | | | | **TOTALS** | **22** | **17** | **39** |

# CONCLUSION

Dialectal variation is intrinsic to the Spanish language (and any other widespread natural language, for that matter). There is no way around it, and learners of Spanish will need a certain level of awareness and knowledge of it, so that they can communicate effectively with Spanish speakers from different regional backgrounds. Variation should be valued since it will improve students' communication skills, and it will provide a greater linguistic repertoire for use when students interact with people in authentic situations as well as a better understanding of the implications of variation in real contexts. Furthermore, developing sociolinguistic competence would allow learners to sound more native-like and less like the constructed textbook language that they are usually associated with. In turn, this knowledge will increase students' understanding of the language, promote positive attitudes instead of potential prejudices, and eliminate some of the frustration most students experience when they first encounter a Spanish speaker outside the controlled environment of a classroom. This is especially true in a Canadian context, due to the limited exposure that students of Spanish have to the language outside the classroom. Thus, it is imperative that instructors provide awareness of and knowledge about dialectal variation as a step towards the goal of improving students' overall communicative competence.

## 1 Summary

In this dissertation, we have explored the issue of dialectal variation from three different perspectives: student attitudes, instructor beliefs and self-reported teaching practices, and textbook treatment of regional variation. The study about learners' attitudes and awareness of Spanish varieties served as the starting point of the enquiry. The investigation on teachers' beliefs allowed for an exploration of what teachers know and do in their own classes in regard to dialectal variation. The analysis of textbooks enabled us to see whether they were helpful for instructors to address variation effectively in class.

## 1.1 Article 1

The first study examined students' attitudes towards diverse regional varieties of Spanish by seeking to determine whether students had positive or negative attitudes towards people from these regions, and what factors influenced their attitudes. Students answered a questionnaire that elicited their orientations and interest in learning a foreign language, their opinions about Spanish-speaking people from different regions (i.e. Mexico, Spain, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America), and their linguistic background (e.g. level of study, experience travelling abroad, contact with Spanish speakers).

The main result from this study was that students collectively expressed positive attitudes towards people from all the regions examined, without preferring one group over another. These unanimously favourable attitudes were not influenced by the country of origin of their Spanish-language instructor or by the fact that they knew Spanish speakers. However, two other factors –course level and experience travelling to Spanish-speaking countries– were shown to have a positive significant effect on students' attitudes. Therefore, exposure, either through experience in FL classrooms or in natural environments when travelling, provides support for the Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew, 1998), which states that contact and interaction with people reduces prejudice.

## 1.2 Article 2

The second study aimed at exploring teachers' cognition in relation to the inclusion of dialectal variation in Spanish FL classes. To that end, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten in-service instructors, and the most salient themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis were examined in more detail. The first emergent theme was that the status of being a native or non-native speaker of Spanish was of relevance. It was observed that native-speaker instructors identified closely with the Spanish variety they speak. In contrast, non-native speakers were more able to change and adapt to the variety spoken in the environment they found themselves in. However, being a native or non-native

speaker was not a reflection of the knowledge they had about dialects. All the instructors interviewed recognized their limited explicit knowledge of dialectal variants and declared their eagerness to learn more about them, especially so that they can provide guidance, information, or explanations for students. Another emergent theme was their reported teaching practices in relation to dialects: they all agreed on the importance of including dialectal variation in FL classes. The instructors all taught the variety they knew best, the one they spoke, suggesting that they used their implicit knowledge about variation. While the instructors relied on pedagogical materials to be a guide through which they could address dialectal variation in class, they also recognized that it was their own responsibility to carry out this task, since the textbooks do not usually offer sufficient material, favouring a neutral variety instead. Instructors acknowledged that exposure to dialects is a necessity and, as a result, gave suggestions on how to increase this exposure outside of the textbook material. Finally, given the results, it was concluded that teacher education needs to be enhanced by including training on language variation and providing practical pedagogical applications.

## 1.3 Article 3

The third study analyzed the treatment of dialectal variation in the Spanish FL textbooks used from the beginner to advanced levels of a university language program. Of the seven books examined, four dedicated between 8.3% and 10.3% of their pages to dialectal features. The other three books either did not treat dialectal variation at all, or to a very limited extent (0.4% to 2.5%). Variation in the lexicon was the linguistic area most addressed in all the textbooks, followed by variation in morphosyntax, while phonological variants had a minimal presence in the texts or were not mentioned at all.

Information about dialectal variation was usually given only for informative or recognition purposes at the beginner level. There were few opportunities for students to put this information to use or to practice any language functions integrating the dialectal variants in question. The textbooks used at the intermediate level addressed dialectal variation to a lesser extent than those at the

beginner level, possibly due to an emphasis on themes rather than countries and the fact that the authors seemed to assume that learners are already familiar with dialectal variation, as they do not often provide detailed explanations or specific examples of dialectal features. At the advanced level, the only text analyzed gave no explicit attention to dialectal variation.

Overall, it could be concluded that textbooks, especially at the beginner level, do appear to promote a multicultural and multidialectal approach by attempting to portray different Spanish dialects, which seem adequate given the foreign language environment of the context of study. However, there are some shortcomings that will need to be addressed in future textbooks. Although they deal with variation, some of the most salient features (e.g. *vos*) are not addressed in a comprehensive way; phonological features are the least treated, despite being the most noticeable variants; and the lack of practice exercises that draw attention to and promote the use of the variants risks giving the impression that knowledge about dialectal variation is secondary to other aspects of language competence.

## 2 Discussion

The three studies show that the learners' attitudes towards regional variation are mainly positive, teachers consider it important and try to present regional characteristics in their classes, and textbooks attempt to adopt an inclusive multidialectal approach. These results support the construct of a "pedagogical norm" as proposed by Valdman (2003), who calls for an interaction of diverse norms or varieties of the target language in the language classroom rather than a standard. In this way, he argues, learners will be exposed to multiple targets or norms, which gives them the necessary input to acquire a more complete scope of variation, resulting "in better auditory discrimination, less puristic attitudes toward linguistic variation, and paradoxically, closer approximation to the orthoepic norm [i.e. standard]" (p. 59).

There are some themes that can be looked at from the different perspectives given in the three studies. The following subsections compare and

contrast some of the views in regard to specific issues previously discussed in the individual articles.

## 2.1 Language Attitudes

First of all, language attitudes seem to be favourable from all three perspectives: students do not show preference for a specific variety; instructors also shared the belief that there is no one variety better than another and showed an eagerness to present their students with dialectal variants, despite recognizing their limited explicit knowledge; and textbooks seem to be inclusive of all varieties, even though more complete information, accompanied by practice exercises, could have been provided.

## 2.2 Exposure

Exposure is a common theme in all three studies. It was shown that through contact gained in trips to Spanish-speaking countries and the exposure attained in language courses, students' attitudes towards regional varieties were positively influenced. Also, the instructors interviewed acknowledged that their awareness as well as their knowledge of dialectal variation improved when they had travelled, arguing that they had not been previously exposed to dialects while studying the language. This is what motivated many instructors to promote awareness of dialects to their own students, since they recognized that textbooks lacked this component.

Thus, contact with or exposure to varieties is essential for dealing with dialectal variation. In a FL context, pedagogical materials are an important source of linguistic input for students; thus, they play a vital role in facilitating student learning about varieties. Unfortunately, the examination of textbooks showed that, with the exception of the book that had a video-integrated program (*Imagina*), the texts did not provide much aural input, and the written input was insufficient and imprecise in its treatment of dialectal features. As a result, the responsibility falls on instructors to collect materials so that their students can be exposed to a more complete range of dialects. Given the limited time that instructors have and their

acknowledged ignorance of Spanish dialectology, placing such a responsibility on instructors may not be a reasonable expectation.

### 2.3 Dialect Mixture

Dialect mixture is a probable result of dialect contact, occurring naturally because of speech accommodation happening during face-to-face interaction (Trudgill, 1986). This phenomenon should be seen as natural and common and not as a lack of proficiency in the language. We saw that some of the instructors claimed to always attempt to be consistent in their use of dialectal features by only selecting those pertaining to the same variety, and to promote the same consistent behaviour in their students (cf. Beaven, 1999). Indeed, Arteaga and Llorente (2009) criticized what they called a "cafeteria approach", which they defined as "randomly selecting vocabulary words from widely divergent dialects for active presentation" (p. 172), as was found in some of the textbooks examined here (e.g., *Plazas* and *Entre nostros*). Thus, it seems to be expected that one and only one dialect, whichever it may be, should be adopted.

However, dialect mixture does happen in real situations, and it is part of an authentic use of the language, especially in a foreign language setting, where being a user of a pluricentric language such as Spanish may involve belonging to more than one speech community at the same time (Clyne, 1992). Thus, perhaps we should not criticize the adoption of distinct elements from different varieties, but rather recognize such behaviour as a reflection of a separate "foreign-language-classroom" variety. Indeed, the students surveyed did not seem to feel the need to ally themselves with one particular group of Spanish speakers, but rather were accepting of all of them.

## 3 Implications

Through the three studies in this dissertation, it has been made evident that the teaching of dialectal varieties is a complex task, as different agents or factors are involved in its success. The teachers' knowledge of and beliefs about varieties, together with their attitudes as well as those of students, play an

important role in the success of the teaching and learning of dialectal features. Also, the teaching materials used certainly influence the success of such a task.

According to Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, the four different components of language competence, namely grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competences, are all necessary in order to become proficient in a language. Students need to not only know how the structure or grammar of the target language works, but also understand the sociolinguistic rules of language use. Although it is possible to study and become somewhat competent in a foreign language without paying much attention to its dialectal varieties, awareness about variation is, at the very least, an essential receptive skill, allowing the student to recognize variation and consequently avoid frustration, miscommunication, and even unfortunate misunderstandings. Thus, it is necessary to address sociolinguistic variation as a tool for interacting with Spanish speakers around the world; otherwise, it would deny students an important tool in their language resource kit.

The results from the current studies indicate that instructors are certainly willing to provide students with such a tool. They stressed that variation should be included in FL classes, even though they sometimes lacked the skills to address it effectively. Most textbooks also discuss variation within their pages, albeit in different amounts, thus contributing to the goal of raising students' awareness about dialects. Also, from the collective positive attitudes towards learning Spanish and towards speakers from different regions shown in the data from the student questionnaires, we can infer that students are certainly open to learning about different varieties. Thus, the findings from the current studies lend empirical support to Bachman's model: sociolinguistic competence is not only theoretically assumed to be part of overall communicative competence, but actual learners and instructors believe it should be included as well.

Most users of Spanish can easily differentiate between Peninsular and Latin American varieties. Listeners can also perceive other accents and sociolinguistic characteristics that act as hints about the origin and identity of the speakers. However, it is not easy to operationalize this intuitive knowledge, as

most students and instructors are not experts who are able to explicitly identify individual dialectal features. What would be a good way, then, to help students learn about dialectal variation? Some could argue that opting for one variety (e.g., Mexican, Argentinean, Castilian) may be helpful for learners so as not to overwhelm them. In that case, the variety that would be used as a model could be the one that the student prefers due to personal interests, or one that they need for professional reasons or for travel, or the local variety of the learning environment in second language (as opposed to foreign language) settings. Although this approach could be considered adequate in these particular learning contexts, I would recommend that in general we should provide students with exposure to dialectal features from all varieties, especially when there is not a dominant variety in the learning environment, but rather a mixture of varieties. Furthermore, it was clear from previous research that most students do not believe that they would feel overwhelmed about being exposed to different varieties simultaneously (Beaven & Garrido, 2000), and giving students access to features from various dialects would improve their general comprehension of Spanish and provide them with a wider linguistic repertoire than if only one dialect were emphasized.

Indeed, the students surveyed here did not seem opposed to learning about different dialects at the same time. Instructors, on the other hand, had more mixed reactions with respect to this issue; while they recognized the existence of different Spanish dialects, not all were comfortable with providing students with a survey of Spanish varieties, since some acknowledged the need for consistency in the use of their own variety if they wanted to sound correct. Textbooks in general tried to present information about different dialects, although they could certainly do it better by providing more precise information about dialectal features, together with practice exercises to draw more attention to the features and increase noticing and awareness. Also, more dialectal features (e.g., *voseo*, *seseo/distinción, yeísmo, leísmo*) need to be presented in textbooks so that students and instructors alike are aware of the dialectal richness of the Spanish language. For example, the misrepresentation of the subject pronoun system in

Spanish had already been criticized in previous studies such as Mason and Nicely (1995) and Wieczorek (1992), where the researchers argued against the presentation of *vosotros*, the Castilian norm, at the expense of *voseo*, widely used in Latin America. Currently, almost 20 years later, the Spanish pronominal system is still misrepresented in the textbooks, with a continued preference for a Castilian norm: few of the textbooks examined in the study mentioned *voseo*, and the instructors interviewed claimed that they did not usually include it because they lacked knowledge of it or they are not users of this feature themselves.

Although I would like to fully subscribe to the view of scholars such as Gutiérrez and Fairclough (2006) who state that "instruction should gradually move from awareness of linguistic variation to productive use of alternative dialects" (p. 184), I recognize that for this to happen the student would need to be at an advanced stage in mastering the language. This is not usually the case for the majority of students who start taking Spanish courses. Most of them stop studying the language after a few semesters, never reaching a high level of proficiency or expertise in it. For this reason, other researchers such as Auger and Valdman (1999) find that the goal proposed by Gutiérrez and Fairclough is unrealistic in FL instruction. Nevertheless, I avow that since dialectal variation is inherent to the language, it is essential for appropriate and efficient communication, and the most effective way to promote dialectal awareness is through productive activities, as only providing examples and explanations of dialectal features is insufficient. In order to prepare learners to identify and use dialectal features in a possible real situation, they need to pay close attention to the features and notice the differences among them. Textbooks, especially those from the beginner level, usually present dialectal features in separate boxes, in margins, or in supplementary subsections, which relegates the information to a secondary role. In addition, textbooks rarely provide practice activities for students to be able to put to use the dialectal features in question, and none of the textbooks reviewed included knowledge of variants in the testing materials (note that the internationally recognized test of Spanish language proficiency, the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera*, does assess knowledge of some dialectal

variants). As a result, it is easy for both teachers and students to ignore or skip the sections on dialectal variation. For this reason, I recommend that variation be included in the core content from the beginner levels, not only as informational asides, but also incorporated into practice activities and testing materials. In this way, instructors are more likely to discuss it in class, and students will have a "motivation" to learn about it. A potential positive repercussion in the long term is that students will more readily remember that they had to learn about variation, even if they do not recall all the details, and when faced with it in a real situation, they will not be frustrated or overwhelmed by it, but embrace it instead.

It is my hope that the three research studies reported here serve as inspiration and stimulus for raising interest in this area. One underlying purpose of this dissertation was the establishment of a database on the beliefs and attitudes towards language variation among students and instructors with a view to incorporate these findings into language planning, teacher training, materials development, and classroom practice. This is an exploratory enquiry that serves as a basis for further research on the topic of teaching and learning dialectal variation. The main factors considered in this investigation, namely exposure to dialects, students' attitudes, instructors' knowledge of variation and related teaching practices, and amount of input about varieties through textbooks could also potentially inform research about acquisition of variation in an L2/FL, which is a relatively new field of research (Geeslin & Gudmestad, 2011).

## 4 A Final Note

Juan Andrés Ospina and Nicolás Ospina, two young musicians from Colombia, wrote a song about the learning of Spanish dialectal variation, which they uploaded to the Internet (February, 22, 2012). Their video, titled "Qué difícil es hablar el español ('How difficult it is to speak Spanish')," went viral on YouTube, with more than 7 million viewers.[62] I invite the reader to go on the web and listen to this entertaining song, in which they pretend to be Canadian

[62] Given the success of their video online, Ospina and Ospina uploaded the video with English subtitles (September 20, 2012) so that non-Spanish speakers can also appreciate their frustrations.

Francophone and Anglophone speakers learning Spanish. The lyrics express their efforts to learn the language, but also their frustration when they realize that native speakers from different Spanish-speaking countries have different ways of expressing the same concept. As learners, the disappointment is such that they decide to quit studying Spanish, ending the song with "…This is exhausting… Yo ya me doy por vencido, para mi país me voy!!! ('This is exhausting… I give up, and I'm going back home!!!')." They dedicate this song to all those who once tried to learn and speak Spanish but did not manage to accomplish that goal.

In order to prevent our students from giving up on Spanish out of frustration, it is essential that we, as instructors, make a concerted effort to provide guidance about dialectal varieties. It is my hope that the research presented here serves as a motivation for further research in order to provide a deeper understanding of the factors involved in the learning of dialectal variation and new suggestions about how to better implement teaching practices regarding dialectal variation.

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