

REGIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE *EJQUE*: EXPLORING ATTITUDES TOWARD VELARIZED /s/ OUTSIDE OF MADRID

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ABSTRACT. This paper explores the language attitudes of listeners from six different regions of Spain, Asturias, Castile and León, Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, towards a nonsibilant variant of coda /s/, the velarized /s/. This velar pronunciation, known by some as the *ejque madrileño*, has previously been found to index a Madrid identity for Madrileño listeners, though the traits ascribed such a speaker are quite negative. The current paper finds that like Madrileños themselves, participants from Asturias and Castile and León also associate velarized /s/ with Madrid. Participants from Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands do not consider the velarized variant to be Madrileño. Furthermore, differing judgments of the nonsibilant /s/ are found among the regions tested, with participants from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands showing the most negative judgments while participants from Castile-La Mancha show no negative variable effect in their judgments. It is found that all of these out-group listeners do not show as severe of judgments as those seen by in-group members (Madrilenos themselves) in previous literature.

Keywords. Madrid Spanish; perception; velarization; aspiration; coda -s; language attitudes

RESUMEN. El presente trabajo examina las actitudes lingüísticas hacia una variante no-sibilante de la /s/ implosiva, la /s/ velarizada, de participantes españoles de seis regiones de España, Asturias, Castilla y León, Castilla-La Mancha, las Islas Canarias, Cataluña y las Islas Baleares. En investigaciones anteriores, se ha observado que la pronunciación velarizada, conocida por algunos como el *ejque madrileño*, se identifica con una identidad madrileña entre hablantes madrileños, aunque a la vez se asocia con rasgos bastante negativos. La presente investigación ha encontrado que, al igual que los madrileños, los participantes de Asturias y Castilla y León asocian la /s/ velarizada a Madrid. Por el contrario, los participantes de Castilla-La Mancha, las Islas Canarias, Cataluña y las Islas Baleares no consideran la variante velarizada como madrileña. Además, se han encontrado diferencias en la percepción de la /s/ no-sibilante en las distintas regiones examinadas, siendo los participantes de Cataluña y las Islas Baleares los que mostraron las actitudes más negativas mientras los participantes de Castilla-La Mancha no mostraron ningún efecto de esa variable en sus evaluaciones. Por último, se ha encontrado que todos los participantes del estudio no muestran juicios tan severos como los de los propios madrileños, según la literatura existente al respecto.

Palabras clave. Español madrileño; percepción; velarización; aspiración; -s implosiva; actitudes lingüísticas

1. Introduction

Peninsular Spanish is frequently thought to be the “best” or most “correct” dialect of Spanish, associated with the birthplace of Spanish and home to the *Real Academia*

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Española (RAE), the institution that sets the standards for the Spanish language (Alfaraz 2002, 2014; Mojica De León 2014; Sobrino Triana 2018; Suárez Büdenbender 2019). This prestige centers specifically in the Spanish capital region of Madrid (where the RAE is housed) and the surrounding areas (Castile) (Ropero Núñez & Pérez Santamaría 1998; Yraola 2014). In a panhispanic study designed by Cestero and Paredes (2015, 2018a), several researchers find that the perception of Madrileño Spanish as the standard is held throughout the Spanish Peninsula and islands (Cestero & Paredes 2018b; Hernández Cabrera & Samper Hernández 2018; Manjón-Cabeza Cruz 2018; Méndez Guerrero 2018; Santana Marrero 2018), though González-Rativa et al. (2018), Guerrero and San Martín (2018) and Gutiérrez Böhmer and Borzi (2018) find that this does not hold true for participants from Latin America.

Among those throughout Spain that consider Madrileño Spanish the best variety of Spanish are Madrileños themselves (Cestero & Paredes 2018b; Yraola 2014). Ethnocentrism displayed through language attitudes is a common finding (Garret 2010; Preston 1996, 2002), and the Madrileños in Cestero and Paredes and Yraola's studies exemplify this tendency. These attitude findings, however, are based on perceptions of the Madrid dialect in its entirety, and in the case of Cestero and Paredes (2018b), the variety examined is educated speech (*habla culta*) in Madrid. Wright (2021) also examines the perception Madrileños have towards their own speech, focusing, however, on a single phonetic variable. In contrast to the positive perception of Madrileño speech by Madrileños found in Cestero and Paredes (2018b) and Yraola (2014), Wright (2021) finds a very negative perception of a characteristically Madrileño variant, velarized /s/. The current study aims to understand how this variant, known colloquially as the *ejque Madrileño* (Guillén 2018; Wright 2021), is seen outside of Madrid. Though several studies have shown that speakers of different dialects throughout Spain view Central Castilian Spanish as the best, and indeed it is considered the standard, this paper aims to discover whether when tested on single nonstandard Madrileño variant participants continue to view the speakers in a positive light or whether, rather, they echo the negative attitudes seen in Madrileños themselves.

2. Background

2.1 /s/ variation in Madrid

Variation of /s/ in Spanish has been extensively studied throughout the Spanish-speaking world (Ferguson 1990; File-Muriel & Brown 2011; Kapović 2017; Rodríguez-Pineda 1994, among others), although the overwhelming majority of this research has been on speech production. In recent years, /s/ production studies within the community of Madrid include Blanco Canales (2004), Gil Peña (2006), Martín Butragueño (2002), Molina Martos (2015), Momcilovic (2005), Turnham and Lafford (1995) and Wright (2020). /s/ variation in Madrid is particularly interesting because in addition to the nonsibilant variants widely used across the Spanish-speaking world, aspirated and elided /s/, Madrid is one of the dialects of Spanish that employs the velarized /s/. Nevertheless, of the aforementioned Madrid studies, only Wright (2020) analyses the velarized /s/, [x], as its own category without combining it with either the aspirated variant [h] or several other variants in the category of "assimilated /s/". Wright's (2020) data is comprised of reading task data, and in this more formal language task, the standard sibilant /s/ is used 90.1% of the time, while velarized /s/ occurs 5.4% of the cases, aspirated /s/ 4.1% and elided /s/ 0.4%. We know from the other production studies that in conversation nonsibilant /s/ occurs more frequently, Blanco Canales (2004) finding that 36% of /s/ tokens are produced as nonsibilant in

Alcalá de Henares, Gil Peña (2006) 17% in the Salamanca district, Martín Butragueño (2002) 41% in Getafe, Molina Martos (2015) 32.3% in Vallecas, Momcilovic (2005) 33.8% in Madrid proper and Turnham and Lafford (1995) 37.6% in Madrid proper.^{1, 2}

Findings from these studies of /s/ production in Madrid show that linguistic factors that condition /s/ realization include the following segment (Momcilovic 2005; Wright 2020), word position (Gil Peña 2006; Molina Martos 2015; Momcilovic 2005; Wright 2020), morphological role (Gila Peña 2006; Wright 2020), stress (Molina Martos 2015; Wright 2020) and priming in the Noun Phrase (Molina Martos 2015). Specifically regarding velarized /s/, in examining the context of pre-voiceless stops (/p t k/) in reading tasks, Wright (2020) finds that the velar variant occurs categorically before /k/.

The extralinguistic factors found to condition the realization of /s/ in Madrid include age (Blanco Canales 2004; Martín Butragueño 2002; Gil Peña 2006), gender (Gil Peña 2006; Martín Butragueño 2002; Molina Martos 2015; Momcilovic 2005; Turnham & Lafford 1995), class (Gil Peña 2006; Martín Butragueño 2002; Turnham & Lafford 1995), education (Blanco 2004; Gil Peña 2006; Molina Martos 2015; Momcilovic 2005), style (Molina Martos 2015; Momcilovic 2005; Turnham & Lafford 1995; Wright 2020) and family roots in Madrid (Wright 2020). While not all studies find each of the above factors to have a significant effect, the main tendencies include that younger participants use less sibilant /s/, men use nonsibilant /s/ more than women, lower classes produce more instances of nonsibilant /s/, speakers of lower education levels produce more instances of nonsibilant /s/ and less formal styles use less sibilant /s/. When specifically examining the velarized /s/ variant, Wright (2020) finds that a speaker's roots in Madrid influence /s/ realization, with deeper family roots conditioning an increase in velarized /s/ production.³ Interestingly, Wright (2020) did not find this effect for other nonsibilant variants in Madrileño speech.

Though the frequency of the velarized variant is fairly low, this velarized pronunciation of /s/ is often considered characteristic of Madrid speech (Guillén 2018; Wright 2020). For this reason, Wright (2021) set out to learn about the perception of the velarized variant among Madrileños by means of a matched guise language attitudes study. Wright (2021) examined the language attitudes of 59 Madrileño participants and found that Madrileños do in fact associate velarized /s/ with Madrid, the velar variant aiding participants in correctly identifying a Madrid origin for speakers. This effect was more pronounced for female speakers, leading Wright (2021) to postulate that the velarized variant is perhaps more marked for women. Although Wright (2021) found that Madrileños do consider the velarized /s/ indicative of a Madrileño identity, the study found that velarized /s/ speakers are not well regarded. It was found that judgments of a speaker's status, pleasantness and confidence were all negatively affected by the velarized variant. Furthermore, Wright (2021) found that participants were less likely to want a velarized /s/ speaker as a friend, less apt to say they would

¹ Alcalá de Henares and Getafe are municipalities within the Madrid region, while Salamanca and Vallecas are neighborhoods of Madrid proper, the former considered a particularly wealthy neighborhood.

² For Blanco Canales (2004), these include 30% aspirated, 4% assimilated and 2% elided. For Gil Peña (2006), these include 14% aspirated, 2% assimilated and 1% elided. For Martín Butragueño (2002), these include 28% aspirated, 7% assimilated and 6% elided. For Molina Martos (2015), these include 26.4% aspirated, 3.1% assimilated and 2.8% elided. For Momcilovic (2005), these include 11.8% aspirated, 9.7% assimilated and 12.3% elided. For Turnham and Lafford (1995), these include 26.1% velarized (which may also include aspirated /s/) and 11.5% elided.

³ It was found that with each additional grandparent a speaker had that was from Madrid, the odds of producing a velarized /s/ increased by 2.07 times.

get along with the speaker and less likely to think the speaker carried out the given task (telling a story) well. The current study expands the work of Wright (2021), seeking to discover first whether the velarized pronunciation is in fact considered characteristic of Madrid by Spanish listeners outside of the Autonomous Community of Madrid and second, the identities ascribed to a velarized /s/ speaker by a listener who is not from the Spanish capital.

2.2 Perception

Despite the wealth of research that has been conducted on the variation of /s/ in speech production throughout the Spanish-speaking world, Wright (2021)'s perception study of syllable-final /s/ in Madrid is one of only a handful of perception studies on coda /s/ variation in Spanish. Others include Walker et al. (2014) and Chappell (2018). In the former, Walker et al. (2014) examine the language attitudes towards aspiration and retention of coda /s/ in Mexico and Puerto Rico. They find that the sibilant variant, [s], increased ratings of status and niceness for both Mexican and Puerto Rican speakers, although a stronger effect for status was seen when the speakers were Mexican. In addition, Puerto Ricans and Mexican men viewed sibilant /s/ as less heteronormative. Chappell (2018) builds on the Walker et al. (2014) study, also investigating the perception of coda /s/ in Mexican and Puerto Rican speakers, this time, however, including only Mexican listeners. Like Walker et al., she finds that sibilant /s/ is associated with higher status. In addition, Chappell (2018) shows that listener judgments of the /s/ variable were made in accordance to dialectal expectations. In other words, while Mexican speakers that used sibilant /s/ were judged as speaking better Spanish than those using the aspirated variant, the opposite trend was seen for Puerto Rican speakers. Chappell also discovered that in-group speakers, Mexicans, were rated more severely than out-group speakers, Puerto Ricans.

Like the judgments of Mexicans toward Mexican speech in Chappell's (2018) study, the results from Wright (2021) show that Madrileños do judge themselves quite harshly with respect to the velarized /s/. The current study investigates how velarized /s/ using Madrileños are judged by out-group listeners. Previous perception studies in Spain have shown that the Madrid dialect is the best considered variety by both in and out-group listeners. While Cestero and Paredes (2014, 2015, 2018b) and Yraola (2014) show that speakers of Central Castilian Spanish most favor their own dialect, Hernández Cabrera and Samper Hernández (2018), Méndez Guerrero (2018) and Santana Marrero (2018) all find that their participants, from the Canary Islands, Majorca and Seville respectively, also believe that the best Spanish is spoken in Madrid.

Cestero and Paredes (2014, 2015, 2018b), Hernández Cabrera and Samper Hernández (2018), Méndez Guerrero (2018) and Santana Marrero (2018) all compare in-group and out-group attitudes in Spain towards various dialects as a whole, and in particular, the educated variety of each of those dialects. The current study compares attitudes toward a single variable, coda /s/, of which one of the variants is not considered educated (Wright 2021), in a single dialect, that of Madrid. The research questions guiding this endeavor include 1) whether the velarized /s/ is in fact associated with Madrid in regions outside of the Spanish capital, 2) how participants from different regions of Spain view velarized /s/ speakers and 3) how these perceptions compare to those of Madrileños themselves as seen in Wright (2021).

3. Methodology

In order to examine the perception of velarized /s/ outside of the Madrid region, the same matched guise survey distributed to Madrileños in Wright (2021) was distributed

throughout the Spanish Peninsula, including participants from Asturias, Castile and León, Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. The design of the recordings and survey used is detailed in Wright (2021), but these are briefly reviewed in Section 3.1. Section 3.2 provides information on the participants in the current study while section 3.3 explains the data analysis.

3.1 Survey design

The matched guise survey is a technique used in many perception studies in order to indirectly access the language attitudes of participants. In their seminal study, Lambert et al. (1960) presented listeners with recordings of the same speaker in French and English, asking respondents to make judgments about the speaker of each recording. Respondents believed themselves to be listening to different speakers, and thus their differing judgments of the same speakers according to language spoken revealed the private attitudes listeners held toward speakers of each language. The matched guise technique has since been used not only to examine attitudes towards different languages, but also different varieties and even, often, individual linguistic variables. In the case of this study, the linguistic variable is syllable-final /s/.

3.1.1 Recordings

As described above, the recordings used in this study were those used in Wright (2021). The recordings were made by four native-born Madrileños, two men and two women currently residing in Madrid, who were recruited to read variations of a scripted narration of the picture-story “Frog, Where are You?” (Mayer 1969).⁴ Each speaker was recorded reading the scripts with sibilant /s/ and once again with velarized /s/. For the latter recording, velarized /s/ was used exclusively in the environment in which it has most frequently been cited to occur, before the voiceless velar [k] (Lipski 1986; Turnham & Lafford 1995; Wright 2020). Quite often in matched guise studies of a single phone, all aspects of the recording are kept the same while only manipulating the segment under study (for instance, Barnes 2015; Chappell 2016; Fridland, Bartlett, & Kreuz 2004; Plitcha & Preston 2005). This practice is adopted so that the only possible variable affecting respondent judgments is the linguistic variable of study. Using a uniform read script is problematic, however, when one of the variants tested is used in less formal contexts and is thus far more marked when reading. The solution adopted by Wright (2021) was to present listeners with recordings of a feigned spontaneous task; that is, listeners were told that the recordings were of speakers who narrated a picture-story aloud. This methodology allowed for a controlled context with very similar scripts and yet provided the space for less formal variants that might not be used in *reading*. For this reason, speakers were given ample time to practice the scripts and were instructed to speak as if telling a story rather than reading.

In order to keep the survey sufficiently short but still maintain enough speakers to be sure the findings were not the result of listeners reacting to a particular speaker, two different versions of the survey were created. The first version used one pair of speakers, Beatriz and Luis, and the second version presented another pair, Ainoa and Dani.⁵ Because each version of the survey included two recordings per speaker, one

⁴ All the scripts were written by the author and then revised by four native speakers from Spain.

⁵ Beatriz, age 36, is originally from and continues to reside in Móstoles. She holds a university degree and works in administration of an elementary school. Luis, age 26, lived in Vallecas until the age of 12, when his family moved to the neighborhood of Fuencarral. Luis did not attend university. Ainoa, age 26, and Dani, age 22, are brother and sister, both growing up in Alcalá de Henares, although Ainoa has lived

with sibilant /s/ and one with velarized /s/, speaker pitch was manipulated in Audacity (Audacity Team 2012) to help lead respondents to believe they were listening to four different speakers.⁶ Participants taking version A of the survey listened to Beatriz using velarized /s/ with a raised pitch, followed by Luis using sibilant /s/ with a raised pitch, then Beatriz using sibilant /s/ with a lowered pitch and finally Luis using velarized /s/ with a lowered pitch. Similarly, participants taking version B of the survey listened to Dani using velarized /s/ with a raised pitch, followed by Ainoa using sibilant /s/ with a raised pitch, then Dani using sibilant /s/ with a lowered pitch and finally Ainoa using velarized /s/ with a lowered pitch.

3.1.2 Survey design

The survey used for this study was the same survey that was distributed to Madrileños in Wright (2021). Participants listened to the four recordings included in their particular version of the survey, and for each recording, they were asked to respond to a set of 10-11 questions regarding their perception of the speaker. Each of the questions and their respective formats are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey questions and question formats included in the study.

Survey question	Question format	Specifics	Included for each recording?
1. Speaker origin	Multiple choice	Options included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Autonomous Community • “I don’t know” • “This person is not from Spain” • “Other” (with write-in option) 	Yes
2a. Speaker personality & character	Semantic differential scales (Ranging from 1-6)	Descriptor pairs included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent/dumb (<i>inteligente/tonto</i>) • Lazy/hardworking (<i>perezoso/trabajador</i>) • Kind/harsh (<i>majo/raspa</i>)⁷ • Fun/boring (<i>divertido/aburrido</i>) • Nice/mean (<i>simpático/antipático</i>) • Cold/loving (<i>seco/cariñoso</i>) • Insecure/secure (<i>inseguro/seguro</i>) • Good person/bad person (<i>buena persona/mala persona</i>). 	Yes
2b. Speaker personality & character	Likert scales (Ranging from 1-7)	Descriptors included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funny (<i>gracioso</i>) • Serious (<i>serio</i>) 	Yes

in Madrid proper for the last year and a half. Ainoa holds a Master’s degree and currently works for a company in the capital city. Dani is looking for a job, as he has just graduated with his undergraduate degree. Ainoa is the only speaker that has lived outside of the community of Madrid, including six months in Galicia and one year of study abroad in Holland.

⁶ It should be noted that one coda /s/ segment was manually manipulated in Dani’s sibilant /s/ script, as he produced one of the coda /s/ instances as a velarized variant. This segment was replaced with another of Dani’s productions of sibilant /s/ in an identical context.

⁷ Here, *raspa* is not actually an adjective, but rather is the third person singular form of the verb “raspar”. It was used in this case because native Spaniards offered this as the best “opposite” description for *majo*.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustworthy/reliable (<i>fiable</i>) Tough/bad guy (<i>malote</i>) 	
3. Speaker education level	Multiple choice	Options included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary (<i>primaria</i>) High school (<i>secundaria</i>) University (<i>universidad</i>) Graduate school (<i>estudios posgrados</i>) Technical school (<i>estudios técnicos</i>) 	Yes
4. Speaker class	Multiple choice	Options included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower class (<i>baja</i>) Lower-middle class (<i>medio-baja</i>) Middle class (<i>media</i>) Upper-middle (<i>medio-alta</i>) class Upper class (<i>alta</i>) 	Yes
5. Speaker profession	Open-ended	Respondents asked to postulate the speaker's profession	Yes
6. Friendship preference	Likert scale (Ranging from 1-7)	Respondents asked if they would like to have the speaker as a friend (1= not at all, 7= very much)	Yes
7. Colleague preference	Likert scale (Ranging from 1-7)	Respondents asked if they would like to have the speaker as a colleague (1= not at all, 7= very much)	Yes
8. Employee preference	Likert scale (Ranging from 1-7)	Respondents asked if they would hire the speaker to work for them (1= not at all, 7= very much)	Yes
9. Opinion of narration	Open-ended	Respondents asked if they liked how the speaker told the story	Yes
10. Compatibility	Open-ended	Respondents asked if they would get along with the speaker	Yes
11. Comments on speech	Open-ended	Respondents asked to comment on speaker's manner of speech	No

As can be seen in Table 1, participants were presented with varying formats for the survey questions including multiple choice, scales and open-ended questions. Judgments of personality and character were presented with semantic differential scales (Question 2a), in which one adjective was presented at one end of the scale and its opposite at the other, as well as standard 7-point Likert scales of degree of agreement (Question 2b) for those adjectives that did not have a clear opposite. Among the open-ended questions were questions about the speaker's profession and opinions regarding the narration and compatibility with the speaker. Given the open-ended nature of the profession question and the varied responses received, the results for this question will not be discussed here. The latter two were grouped as categorical "yes" or "no" answers and will be included in the statistical analysis conducted and presented in this paper. Finally, the reader will have noted that the last open-ended question, 11, is unique in that it was not included with each recording, but rather only for the last two recordings, once with [s] and once with [x]. This was done so that participants were not primed to pay attention to certain sounds throughout the survey.

3.2 Respondents

The participants in Wright (2021)'s study of Madrileños targeted younger respondents, and the current study did the same. Several professors in different disciplines at various universities throughout Spain were contacted and requested to share the survey online link with their students. In this way, the respondents consisted of mainly university students, though presumably professors or acquaintances of the professors/participants may have participated as well. There were a total 225 participants in the current study: 21 from Asturias, 30 from Castile and León, 21 from Castile-La Mancha, 56 from the Canary Islands, 67 from Catalonia and 30 from the Balearic Islands. The range and mean of participant ages, the total number of women and men for each region, and the number of participants from each region that had spent prolonged time in Madrid are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of participants per autonomous community by age, gender and prolonged time spent in Madrid.

	Age range	Mean age	Total Women	Total Men	Participants w/ prolonged time spent in Madrid	Total participants ⁸
Asturias	18-61	23.3	16	5	3	21
Castile and León	18-61	25	24	6	3	30
Castile-La Mancha	18-44	25.2	11	10	5	21
Canary Islands	18-55	24.4	27	28	4	56
Catalonia	18-59	23.5	39	27	1	67
Balearic Islands	18-44	22.2	21	8	4	30

3.3 Data analysis

The objective in conducting this study was to compare the language attitude results of participants from other Autonomous Communities with those presented by Madrileños themselves in Wright (2021); however, the quantitative analysis of the current paper is necessarily different from that carried out in Wright (2021) in that principal component analyses (PCAs) and exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were not conducted before fitting linear regression models to the data. PCAs and EFAs are effective steps in data analysis that help to reduce redundancy and allow for the identification of underlying factors shared across variables; for instance, in Wright (2021), the majority of the traits tested in the survey loaded onto two components, an underlying factor of status (which included the traits intelligent/dumb, lazy/hardworking, trustworthy, education level, class, and preferences for a colleague and employee) and one of pleasantness (which included kind/rough, fun/boring, nice/mean, loving/cold, good/bad person). The difficulty in carrying out a comparable analysis, however, was that the PCAs and EFAs for each Autonomous Community included in the current study produced differing results. Only three regions, the Canary

⁸ The total women and men counts for Canary Islands, Catalonia and Balearic Islands do not equal the total amount of participants due to one participant from each choosing not to disclose their gender.

Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, patterned along the two-component *status* and *pleasantness* factor divisions, while Asturias, Castile and León and Castile-La Mancha showed PCAs that highlighted three principal components. The Asturias components could be divided into *status*, *pleasantness* and *character*, Castile and León could be divided into *status*, *pleasantness* and *relationship preferences* and no discernable pattern of traits could be clearly defined for the three Castile-La Mancha components. Even within those component factors shared among most of the communities with Madrid, *status* and *pleasantness*, the specific traits that loaded onto these factors in the EFA were not uniform. Given the variation in the number of components outlined in the PCAs and the specific factor loadings shown in the EFAs, it was decided that though the analysis would not be the same as that conducted on the Madrileño results in Wright (2021), considering each individual trait in the statistical analyses would at least make the results for each of the Autonomous Communities in the current study comparable.

Forgoing the PCAs and EFAs, two types of statistical analyses were run through the software *R* (R Core Team 2018), linear and logistic regressions (Bates, Maechler, Bolker & Walker 2015), controlling for the effect of *participant*.⁹ A linear mixed model was used for the continuous variables, such as the semantic differential scale and Likert scale ratings, while a generalized linear mixed model using the binomial family and logit link was utilized in the analysis of the categorical variables, such as speaker place of origin and preference for the speaker's narration. In order to carry out the latter type of analysis, the variables had to be binary, and for this reason, for speaker origin, the test run simply asked whether the respondent thought the speaker was from Madrid or not. For the categorical variable groups of education and class, responses were translated to a numerical scale and thus were analyzed as continuous variables. Finally, it should be noted that due to the decision not to reduce the number of variables by means of PCA/EFA, several statistical tests had to be run on the data, which in turn reduced the validity of the significant findings. Consequently, a Bonferroni correction was applied to all results with an adjusted significance level of $p=.0025$.¹⁰ Any results not reaching this level of significance were disregarded.

4. Results

The first research question sought to discover whether the velarized /s/ variant is associated with a Madrileño identity in regions outside of the Spanish capital. Of the six different Autonomous Communities included in this study, it was found that only two, Asturias and Castile and León, associated the velarized variant with Madrid. The results for these two Communities will be presented first in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, respectively. Next, the results for the Autonomous Communities that do not associate velarized /s/ with Madrid are detailed, Castile-La Mancha in Section 4.3, the Canary Islands in Section 4.4, Catalonia in Section 4.5 and the Balearic Islands in Section 4.6. Finally, Section 4.7 offers a summary of the results presented in the previous sections in conjunction with a review of the findings shown for Madrileño participants in Wright (2021).

⁹ *Speaker* was not included in the models as a random effect given that there were only four speakers as opposed to the minimum of five outlined by Gelman and Hill (2007).

¹⁰ The Bonferroni adjustment is an extremely conservative method for addressing the multiple testing problem in which the desired significance level, in this case 0.05, is divided by the number of tests run (Baayen 2008).

4.1 Asturias

Asturianos were one of the two groups that showed a strong effect from the velarized /s/ in aiding to identify a Madrileño. All Asturiano responses to the question of speaker origin are shown in Figure 1, where it can be seen that correct Madrileño origin identification jumps from 11.9% with sibilant /s/ to 69.1% with velarized /s/. Indeed, an Asturiano listener is 16.9 times more likely to identify a speaker as Madrileño when velarized /s/ is used ($\beta=2.8283$, $SE=0.5885$, $z=4.806$, $p<0.001$).

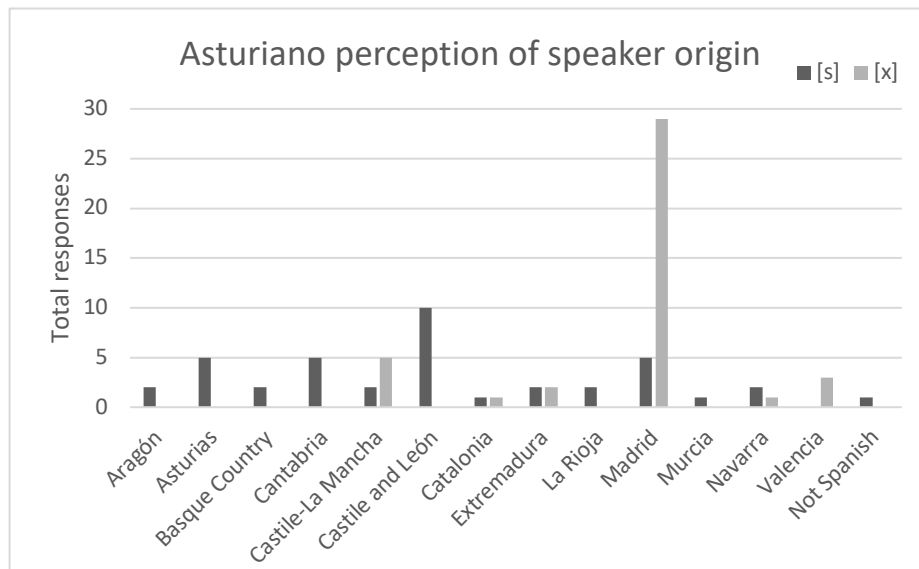


Figure 1: Asturiano perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

With respect to the characteristics tested, Asturianos showed a significant variable effect for three descriptors pairs: *inteligente/tonto*, *perezoso/trabajador* and *seco/cariñoso*, a velarized /s/ making the speaker seem less intelligent, lazier and colder ($\beta=0.805$, $SE=0.198$, $t(60.65)=4.01$, $p<0.001$; $\beta= -0.933$, $SE=.2219$, $t(78)= -4.204$, $p<0.001$; $\beta= -1.308$, $SE=0.281$, $t(57.45)= -4.66$, $p<0.001$). It is worth mentioning that an interaction between speaker sex and the descriptor *gracioso*, in which male speakers who used the velarized /s/ were actually considered to be funnier, approaches the Bonferroni corrected significance level at $p=.0049$. An additional speaker sex effect was found for *seco/cariñoso* in which, regardless of the variant used, men were seen as colder than women ($\beta= -1.352$, $SE=0.276$, $t(56.94)= -4.89$, $p<0.001$). Finally, with regard to education and class, for Asturianos, the velarized /s/ negatively affects the perception of each, lowering the perceived education and class levels of velarized /s/ speaker guises ($\beta= -0.552$, $SE=0.111$, $t(59.94)= -4.979$, $p<0.001$; $\beta= -0.527$, $SE=0.131$, $t(59.2)= -4.02$, $p<0.001$).

As for relationship preferences, the use of velarized /s/ negatively affected Asturianos' preference for a speaker as a friend ($\beta= -0.792$, $SE=0.238$, $t(58.94)= -3.34$, $p=0.0015$), as a colleague ($\beta= -1.027$, $SE=0.272$, $t(59.52)= -3.78$, $p<0.001$), and as an employee, ($\beta= -1.273$, $SE=0.247$, $t(58.93)= -5.15$, $p<0.001$). In addition, the odds of Asturiano participants stating that they like the way the speaker told the story decreased by 92% when a velarized /s/ was used ($\beta=-2.5738$, $SE=0.6361$, $z=-4.05$, $p<0.001$). There was no significant variable effect on whether Asturianos thought they would get along with the speaker or not. Finally, when asked to highlight particular speech traits of the speaker, it should be noted that Asturianos often mentioned the nonstandard /s/, though this awareness of velarized /s/ did not translate to an impression of

incorrectness. While 31.3% of the Asturiano participants mentioned that the sibilant /s/ speakers spoke well or correctly, 15.8% of Asturianos also mentioned that velarized /s/ speakers spoke correctly. Only 5% noted the incorrectness of a velarized /s/ speaker's speech.¹¹

4.2 Castile and León

Like Asturianos, the participants from Castile and León, Madrid's immediate northern neighbor, also associated velarized /s/ with a Madrileño identity. As can be seen in Figure 2, there is a significant variable effect, with the number of Castillanoleonés naming a Madrid origin for the speaker increasing from 10% with sibilant /s/ to 61.7% with a velarized /s/. Very similar to the Asturianos, a Castillanoleonés is 16 times more likely to identify a speaker as Madrileño when the velar variant is used ($\beta = 2.7747$, $SE = 0.5128$, $z = 5.411$, $p < 0.001$).

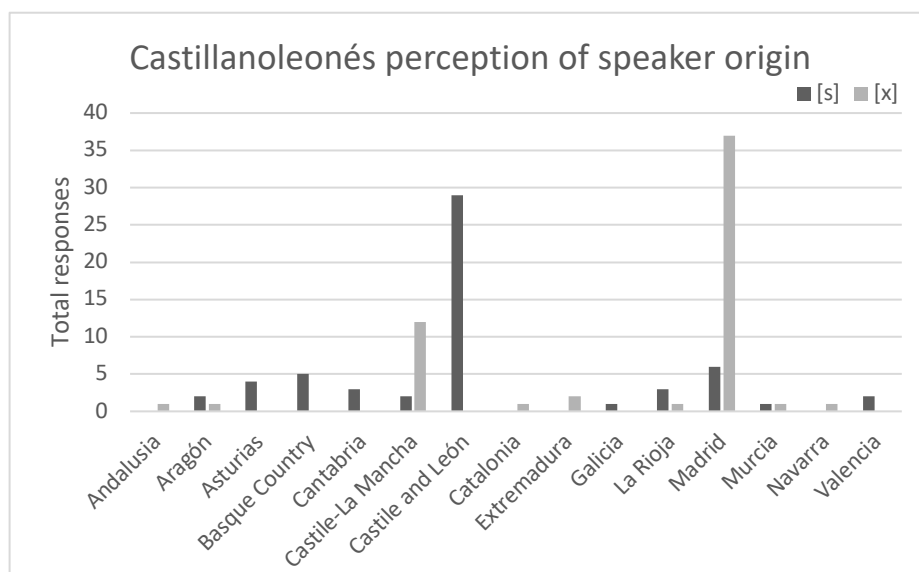


Figure 2: Castillanoleonés perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

Also similar to the Asturianos, the velarized /s/ did not have an overwhelmingly negative effect on speaker perception. For the Castillanoleonés, the only adjective rating significantly affected by the variant produced was that of *fiable*, a velarized /s/ leading a Castillanoleonés participant to consider the speaker less reliable ($\beta = -0.731$, $SE = 0.226$, $t(83.53) = -3.232$, $p = 0.0018$). It is worth mentioning that the /s/ variable effect on ratings for *perezoso/trabajador*, *simpática/antipática* and *malote* approaches the Bonferroni corrected significance level of .0025 ($p = .005$, $p = .0079$ and $p = .0057$, respectively), with a velarized /s/ conditioning perceptions of laziness, meanness and a bad/tough guy quality. With regard to education level and class, similar to the Asturianos, the velarized /s/ speaker guises were judged to have a lower education level ($\beta = -0.436$, $SE = 0.116$, $t(99) = -3.77$, $p < 0.001$) as well as belong to a lower social class ($\beta = -0.648$, $SE = 0.134$, $t(68.58) = -4.85$, $p < 0.001$). As for relationship preferences, the desirability of a speaker as a colleague or as an employee was negatively affected by the use of the velarized variant ($\beta = -0.818$, $SE = 0.227$, $t(80.74) = -3.603$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = -$

¹¹ The following results were discarded after the Bonferroni correction was applied: Regardless of the variant used, men were judged by Asturianos to be lazier ($p = 0.0242$), more serious ($p = 0.0118$) and less desirable as friends ($p = 0.0299$) and colleagues ($p = 0.031$). Likewise, women listeners, regardless of the variant used, found speakers to be funnier than male listeners did ($p = .0304$).

1.058, SE= 0.243, $t(79.17) = -4.36$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, when questioned about particular speech traits, more participants from Castile and León than any other region mentioned the nonstandard /s/ (58% of responses); however, unlike Asturianos, incorrectness of speech was never mentioned. Correctness was mentioned for 9% of responses to a standard /s/ speaker as well as for 5.5% of comments regarding a velarized /s/ speaker.¹²

4.3. Castile-La Mancha

Castile-La Mancha is a particularly interesting community to examine the participant responses because it is the other Autonomous Community where speakers also use the velarized /s/ (Henriksen & Harper 2016; Sánchez-Muñoz 2004). Furthermore, it is the Autonomous Community that shares the most borders with Madrid, and thus one would expect many of the Manchego participants to be quite familiar with Madrid speech. It is perhaps due in part to these two facts that unlike Asturianos and Castillanoleoneses, the /s/ variant does not play a significant role in whether Manchegos identify a speaker as Madrileño. Rather, as can be seen in Figure 3, a velarized /s/ more than doubles the number of Manchegos identifying a speaker as a fellow Manchego, though not statistically significant ($\beta = 1.0507$, SE= 0.5434, $z = 1.934$, OR: 2.8596, $p = .0531$).

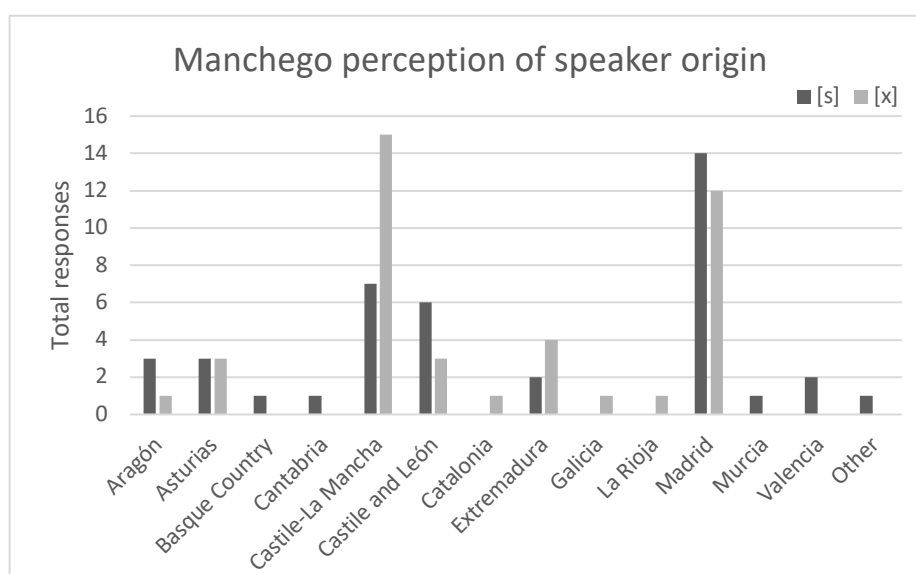


Figure 3: Manchego perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

Manchegos are unique from all other participants because for participants from Castile-La Mancha, the /s/ variable has *no significant* effect on how a speaker is judged for *any* of the traits tested. Furthermore, the velarized /s/ does not influence Manchegos' preferences for friendship, colleagues and employees, nor does it affect whether they liked the way the narration was told or whether they thought they would get along with the speaker. This finding suggests that while Manchegos may use the velarized variant, it is not marked for them. Further support for this claim is the fact that when asked to

¹² In addition to the abovementioned results that approach the 0.0025 significance level, the following results were discarded after the Bonferroni correction was applied: Velarized /s/ speakers were viewed as less intelligent ($p = 0.0307$) and less desirable as a friend ($p = 0.0167$), regardless of the variant used, male speakers were seen as colder ($p = 0.0134$) and finally, women listeners in particular thought that the velarized variant made a speaker colder ($p = 0.0357$), less funny ($p = 0.032$) and more serious ($p = 0.01152$). Furthermore, the odds of a Castillanoleonés liking the narration as well as the odds of them claiming they would get along with the speaker decreased with velarized variant speaker guises ($p = 0.0404$ and $p = 0.0263$).

comment on the speaker’s manner of speech, not one participant from Castile-La Mancha claimed “incorrectness” for the velarized /s/ speaker, though 18.8% of the Manchegos did observe that the standard /s/ speaker spoke correctly. It should be noted that a few traits were initially found to be significantly affected by the variant, but none of these passed the $p < .01$ threshold, and all were discarded as they did not reach the even stricter significance level established by the Bonferroni correction.¹³

4.4. Canary Islands

Like the Manchegos, participants from the Canary Islands did not associate velarized /s/ with Madrid, the /s/ variable showing no significant effect on judgments of speaker origin. All Canario participant responses for speaker origin are presented in Figure 4.

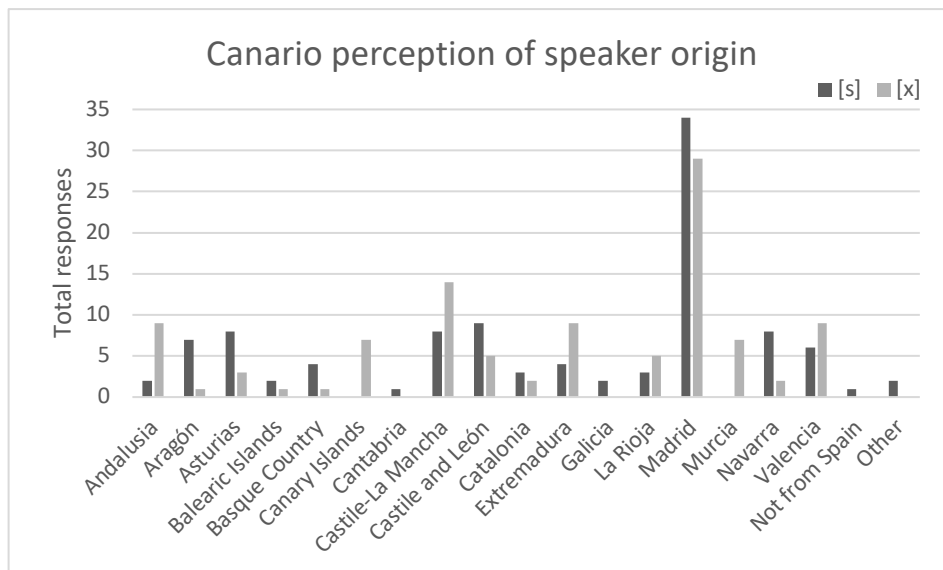


Figure 4: Canario perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

Also similar to Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands are another region where nonsibilant /s/ is used; however, it is not the velarized variant that is employed but rather the wide spread use of the more common variants of aspirated and elided /s/ (Rodríguez-Pineda 1994; Schwegler & Kempff 2007). Perhaps for this reason, the speaker trait judgments of the Canarios did not seem to be strongly influenced by the nonsibilant /s/. Only two adjective pairs were conditioned by the /s/ variable, *inteligente/tonto* ($\beta = 0.606$, $SE = 0.1203$, $t(158.45) = 5.04$, $p < 0.001$) and *perezoso/trabajador* ($\beta = -0.6116$, $SE = 0.16$, $t(160.62) = -3.746$, $p < 0.001$), nonstandard /s/ speaker guises being considered less intelligent and lazier. In the same way, two single descriptor ratings were also significantly influenced by the /s/ variable, *fiable* ($\beta = -0.675$, $SE = 0.163$, $t(158.75) = -4.14$, $p < 0.001$) and *malote* ($\beta = 0.787$, $SE = 0.191$, $t(155.68) = 4.129$, $p < 0.001$), a velarized /s/ making a speaker less reliable and more of

¹³ The following results were discarded after the Bonferroni correction was applied: Velarized /s/ speakers were viewed as less desirable as colleagues ($p = 0.0134$) and employees ($p = 0.0451$), had a lower perceived education level ($p = 0.0286$) and were seen as less able storytellers ($p = 0.0279$). Discarded interactions between variant and speaker sex also hint at a positive variant effect for men, velarized /s/ making male speakers warmer ($p = 0.0349$) and more reliable ($p = 0.0168$), while having the opposite effect for women. Finally, the finding that women listeners found the velarized variant speaker to be a worse person ($p = 0.0284$) also did not meet the established Bonferroni corrected significance level.

a bad/tough guy or girl.¹⁴ With regard to education and class, for the Canario participants, the velarized /s/ significantly lowered judgments of education level ($\beta = -0.483$, $SE = 0.087$, $t(211) = -5.57$, $p < 0.001$) and class ($\beta = -0.502$, $SE = 0.105$, $t(155.65) = -4.78$, $p < 0.001$).

Along with Castile and León and Castile-La Mancha, Canario participants' preference for friendship with the speaker is not affected by the velarized /s/. Unlike their fellow nonstandard /s/ users the Manchegos, however, Canarios do show a significant variable effect on preference for having the speaker as a co-worker and hiring the speaker, a velarized /s/ lowering preference for both colleagues ($\beta = -0.91$, $SE = 0.187$, $t(153.32) = -4.87$, $p < 0.001$) and hires ($\beta = -1.049$, $SE = 0.189$, $t(154.74) = -5.556$, $p < 0.001$). Once again, like the Manchegos and Castillanoleonese, the Canarios showed no significant variable effect on either whether they thought they would get along with speaker or whether they liked the way the story was told, though narration preference approaches the established Bonferroni corrected significance level with a velarized /s/ decreasing the odds that a listener will like the story by 60% ($\beta = -0.9263$, $SE = 0.3468$, $z = -2.67$, $p = 0.0076$). Finally, it should be noted that in the space provided for open comment on the speaker's speech, the Canarios were the group who least mentioned the /s/ variable, with only 21% of participants referencing its pronunciation. Furthermore, 12.2% of Canarios stated the standard /s/ speaker spoke well or correctly and, like Castillanoleonese and Manchegos, no mention of incorrectness was made for either the sibilant or the velarized /s/ speakers. In fact, similar to Asturias and Castile and León, a small percentage, 5.3%, of Canarios also mentioned the correctness of the velarized speaker's speech.

Independent of the /s/ variable, an overall negative perception of men was found in the Canario data for affective descriptors. Irrespective of the variant used, Canarios found male speakers to be meaner ($\beta = 0.616$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(159.98) = 5.128$, $p < 0.001$), colder ($\beta = -0.838$, $SE = 0.155$, $t(212) = -5.405$, $p < 0.001$) less funny ($\beta = -1.023$, $SE = 0.187$, $t(158.99) = -5.469$, $p < 0.001$), less serious ($\beta = 1.522$, $SE = 0.299$, $t(159.65) = 5.08$, $p < 0.001$) and more boring ($\beta = 0.754$, $SE = 0.144$, $t(156.48) = 5.237$, $p < 0.001$) than the female speakers. Furthermore, male speakers were perceived as harsher, though this result only approaches the established Bonferroni corrected significance level ($\beta = 0.465$, $SE = 0.156$, $t(159.37) = 2.981$, $p = 0.0033$). In addition to these affective descriptors, speaker sex also had an effect on how the narration was viewed, with the odds of a listener liking the way a male speaker told the story decreasing by 75% ($\beta = -1.3697$, $SE = 0.358$, $z = -3.83$, $p < 0.001$).

4.5 Catalonia

Like Manchegos and Canarios, Catalans did not associate the velarized variant with Madrid. When the velarized /s/ was used, less Catalan participants named the speaker origin as Madrid, from 25.4% to 19.4%, though the effect of the /s/ variant in this decrease is not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.392$, $SE = 0.2976$, $z = -1.32$, $p = 0.188$). The Catalan responses for speaker origin with each of the variants is shown in Figure 5.

¹⁴ An interaction between the /s/ variable and speaker sex for *serio*, in which male velarized /s/ speaker guises were seen as less serious ($\beta = -0.9508$, $SE = 0.425$, $t(162.43) = -2.237$, $p = 0.0267$), was discarded as it did not reach the limit established by the Bonferroni correction.

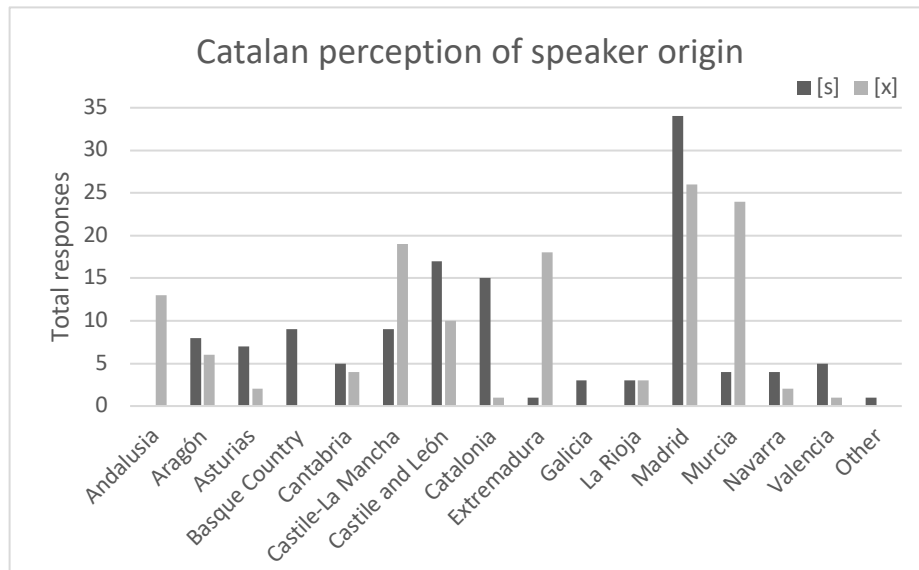


Figure 5: Catalan perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

Overall, Catalans seemed to have a negative opinion of the velarized /s/ speaker guises. The speaker traits significantly affected by the /s/ variable include the pairs of *inteligente/tonto*, *perezoso/trabajador*, *seco/cariñoso* and *inseguro/seguro*. A nonstandard /s/ speaker for the Catalan participants is considered less intelligent ($\beta=0.662$, $SE=0.13$, $t(191.32)=5.104$, $p<0.001$), lazier ($\beta=-0.687$, $SE=0.139$, $t(259)=-4.954$, $p<0.001$), colder ($\beta=-0.699$, $SE=0.187$, $t(194.46)=-3.728$, $p<0.001$) and less secure ($\beta=-0.3929$, $SE=0.1254$, $t(193.04)=-3.133$, $p=0.0024$). In addition, an interaction between the pair *perezoso/trabajador* and speaker sex, in which male speakers in particular when using velarized /s/ were considered lazier, approaches the Bonferroni significance level at $p=0.003$. With regard to the individual descriptors, like the Canarios, the Catalans found the velarized /s/ speakers to be less reliable ($\beta=-1.016$, $SE=0.163$, $t(195.96)=-6.24$, $p<0.001$) and more of a bad/tough guy ($\beta=0.986$, $SE=0.187$, $t(195.83)=5.278$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, for the Catalan participants, the /s/ variable had a significant effect on education and class judgments. A velarized /s/ lowers the Catalans' perception of both the speaker's education level ($\beta=-0.511$, $SE=0.082$, $t(193.85)=-6.225$, $p<0.001$) and class ($\beta=-0.541$, $SE=0.082$, $t(195.29)=-6.578$, $p<0.001$).¹⁵

For Catalan participants, the /s/ variable affected both judgments of narration appeal and compatibility with the speaker. A Catalan was 84% less likely to like the way the speaker told the story with velarized /s/ ($\beta=-1.8074$, $SE=0.3375$, $z=-5.36$, $p<0.001$) and similarly, 82% less likely to say they would get along with the velarized /s/ speaker ($\beta=-1.7025$, $SE=0.3746$, $z=-4.546$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, for the participants from Catalonia the velarized /s/ negatively affects preference for all three relationship categories at the highest significance level, $p<0.001$ (Friend: $\beta=-0.0716$, $SE=0.144$, $t(194.73)=-4.99$; Colleague: $\beta=-1.178$, $SE=0.166$, $t(194.05)=-7.096$; Employee: $\beta=-1.397$, $SE=0.178$, $t(194.69)=-7.856$).

¹⁵ The following were also discarded after the Bonferroni correction was applied: Velarized /s/ speakers were also viewed as harsher ($p=0.0128$), meaner ($p=0.0147$) and worse people ($p=0.03$) and when compared to men, women listeners judged all speakers, irrespective of the variant used, as less serious ($p=0.03$). In addition to the interaction mentioned in the text, two interactions between speaker sex and variant used were discarded due to the Bonferroni correction: Male speakers using the velarized /s/ were less serious ($p=0.04$) and more loving ($p=0.027$).

When compared to the previous two communities, Castile-La Mancha and the Canary Islands, the Autonomous Community of Catalonia is more aware of the velarized /s/, or at least Catalan participants specify the variant as a salient speech feature more, with 31.8% of the Catalans making mention of the nonstandard /s/; however, only one Catalan participant made reference to the /s/ while also commenting on the speaker's Madrid origin. Rather, several speakers highlighted the nonstandard pronunciation of /s/ in conjunction with a comment on a southern Spain origin, for example, "se le nota algunos rasgos típicos del sur de la península [sic] cuando pronuncia las S antecedentes a algunas consonantes" (One notes some traits that are typical of the southern part of the Peninsula when she pronounces the s's before some consonants). These comments support the distribution seen in Figure 5, in which a number of participants from Catalonia seem to associate the nonstandard /s/, even in its velarized form, with southern Spain. With regard to notions of correctness, Catalans noted correct speech for standard /s/ speakers (12.2%) as well as velarized /s/ speakers (6.8%). While no Catalans mentioned incorrectness of speech for sibilant /s/, 11.4% of Catalan participants noted the velarized /s/ speaker did not speak well or correctly.

Finally, like the participants from the Canary Islands, an effect of speaker sex was seen among the Catalan responses, once again with men being viewed less positively than the female speakers. Regardless of the variant used, Catalan participants judged male speakers to be meaner ($\beta=0.373$, $SE=0.115$, $t(194.93)=3.235$, $p=0.0014$), colder ($\beta=-0.892$, $SE=0.188$, $t(193.67)=-4.743$, $p<0.001$), more boring ($\beta=0.411$, $SE=0.131$, $t(195.79)=3.134$, $p=0.002$), more serious ($\beta=1.077$, $SE=0.277$, $t(190)=3.888$, $p<0.001$) and more of a bad/tough guy ($\beta=0.767$, $SE=0.179$, $t(194.62)=4.285$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, evaluations of speaker sex in findings of men as less kind ($\beta=0.327$, $SE=0.12$, $t(195.26)=2.713$) and less funny ($\beta=-0.491$, $SE=0.177$, $t(195.43)=-2.77$) than women approach the Bonferroni significance level at $p=0.007$ and $p=0.0062$, respectively.

4.6 Balearic Islands

The final group of participants were those from the Balearic Islands. Like participants from Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands and Catalonia, Balear participants did not associate the velarized variant with Madrid. No significant /s/ variable effect was found to condition judgments of speaker origin ($\beta=-0.7538$, $SE=0.4551$, $z=-1.656$, $p=0.09765$), though the number of participants correctly identifying a Madrileño decreased from 30.5% to 17.2% when the velarized variant was used. All Balear responses for speaker origin are presented in Figure 6.

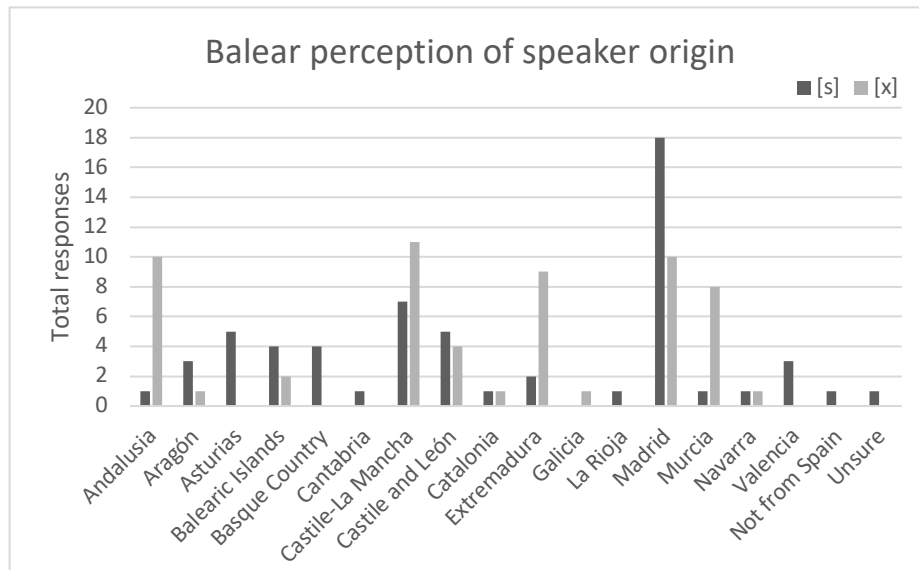


Figure 6: Balear perception of speaker origin per variant of /s/ used

For the Balear participants, the nonstandard variant speaker was less intelligent ($\beta=0.774$, $SE=0.154$, $t(88.36)=5.02$, $p<0.001$), lazier ($\beta=-1.008$, $SE=0.192$, $t(87.53)=-5.261$, $p<0.001$), and not as good of a person ($\beta=0.374$, $SE=0.111$, $t(88.39)=3.358$, $p=0.0012$). Furthermore, the variable effect on the adjective pair *inseguro/seguro* approaches the Bonferroni corrected significance level at $p=0.0038$, with a velarized /s/ indexing insecurity ($\beta=-0.562$, $SE=0.189$, $t(88.3)=-2.973$, $p=0.0038$). It is interesting to note that some of the more affective adjectives were not affected by the /s/ variable, including kind/harsh, fun/boring, nice/mean and cold/loving, although a speaker sex effect was found for the last pair in which male speakers were seen as colder.¹⁶ The single descriptor ratings that were significantly affected by the /s/ variable included *fiable*, reliable, ($\beta=-0.893$, $SE=0.234$, $t(116)=-3.821$, $p<0.001$) and *malote*, tough/bad guy, ($\beta=0.855$, $SE=0.274$, $t(86.68)=3.121$, $p=0.0024$). With regard to education and class, like all other participants except the Manchegos, Balear participants judged velarized speakers to have a lower education and class level. ($\beta=-0.637$, $SE=0.093$, $t(86.57)=-6.809$, $p<0.001$; $\beta=-0.683$, $SE=0.105$, $t(87.34)=-6.506$, $p<0.001$).

For Balear participants, the /s/ variable affected judgments of narration appeal, with the odds of a Balear liking the narration decreasing by 93% with velarized /s/ ($\beta=-2.6828$, $SE=0.7695$, $z=-3.487$, $p<0.001$). Results suggesting a similar result for the odds of Balear participants claiming they would get along with the speaker were discarded due to the Bonferroni correction.¹⁷ Like participants from Catalonia, for the participants from the Balearic Islands, the nonstandard /s/ negatively affects preference for all three relationship categories with $p<0.001$ (Friend: $\beta=-0.926$, $SE=0.21$,

¹⁶ This last trait was also found to be significantly affected by the /s/ variant ($\beta=-0.495$, $SE=0.214$, $t(82.36)=-2.319$, $p=0.0229$), but this result was discarded after applying the Bonferroni correction. Other results that were discarded due to the Bonferroni correction include interactions found between the variant and listener gender for the traits of *seria* ($p=0.297$) and *buena persona/mala persona* ($p=0.162$) where female respondents considered velarized /s/ speakers as more serious and better people while male listeners viewed them as less serious and worse people. Likewise effects found for speaker sex for *majo/raspa* ($p=0.0029$), *divertido/aburrido* ($p=0.0203$), *buena persona/mala persona* ($p=0.0146$) and *gracioso* ($p=0.0382$) and narration appeal ($p=0.0045$), where male speakers were considered harsher, more boring, worse people, less funny and worse storytellers, were discarded due to the Bonferroni correction.

¹⁷ ($\beta=-1.4119$, $SE=0.5788$, $z=-2.439$, $p=0.0147$)

$t(87.88) = -4.403$; Colleague: $\beta = -1.289$, $SE = 0.2328$, $t(85.73) = -5.537$; Employee: $\beta = -1.526$, $SE = 0.242$, $t(86.45) = -6.307$.¹⁸

When compared to Castile-La Mancha and the Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands pattern more like Catalonia in that the participants are more aware of the velarized /s/, that is, they specify the variant as a salient speech feature, with 38.9% of the Balear participants making mention of the nonstandard /s/. The Balears noted correct speech with standard /s/ speakers but unlike the Catalans, did not observe that velarized /s/ speakers spoke incorrectly. Similar to the Catalans, several Balear participants commented on a Southern origin in conjunction with the nonstandard /s/ pronunciation, for instance “cuando decía busca o bosque he notado un acento del sur” (when he said *busca* or *bosque* I noted an accent from the South). Like participants from Catalonia, the Balearic Islands seem to associate the nonsibilant /s/, despite its velarized form, with southern Spain.

4.7 Summary of results

In Tables 3-5 the results of all groups examined are reviewed in comparison. Table 3 compares the results for those participants that associated the velarized /s/ with Madrid, Asturianos and Castillanoleoneses, along with the results found for Madrileños in Wright (2021). Here we can see that the /s/ variable conditioned nine of the judgments made by the Asturiano participants and five of those made by Castillanoleoneses. Table 4 shows the results for the four Autonomous Communities of which the participants did not associate the velarized /s/ with Madrid, Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. In this table we see that the /s/ variable conditioned *none* of the judgments for Manchegos, eight for Canarias, thirteen for Catalans and eleven for Balear participants. Finally, Table 5 compares the open-ended comments provided by participants with regard to the speakers' manner of speech. Specifically, Table 5 compares comments on correctness for each of the variants as well as direct mentions of the /s/ variable. Here we see that while participants from all the Autonomous Communities studied comment on the correctness of the sibilant /s/ speakers, only four comment on the correctness of the velarized /s/ speakers' speech (Asturias, Castile and León, Canary Islands and Catalonia), in addition to the three that comment on the incorrectness of the velarized /s/ (Asturias and Catalonia, along with Madrid [Wright 2021]). Also seen in Table 5 is the fact that Castillanoleoneses and Asturianos are the two groups that most mention the /s/ variable in their comments, while Canarias and Manchegos are those that least mentions the /s/, with Catalans, Balears and Madrileños falling in the middle.

¹⁸ Furthermore, the data for the Balear participants produced a significant interaction, later discarded by the Bonferroni correction, between the variable and respondent gender ($p=0.028$) in their preferences for hiring the speaker, in which, unexpectedly, it was the male listeners that were much less apt to hire a velarized /s/ speaker.

REGIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE EJQUE: EXPLORING ATTITUDES TOWARD VELARIZED /S/ OUTSIDE OF MADRID

Table 3: Comparison of identities ascribed to velarized /s/ speaker among groups that associate velarized /s/ with Madrid

IDENTITIES ASCRIBED TO VELARIZED /S/ SPEAKERS BY GROUPS THAT ASSOCIATE VELARIZED /S/ WITH MADRID						
	Descriptors	Education level	Class	Relationships, Less desirable as:	Storytelling	Compatibility
MADRID (Wright 2021)	Lower status ¹⁹ Less pleasant ²⁰ More insecure	(Included in <i>status</i> factor)	(Included in <i>status</i> factor)	Friend (Colleague and employee included in <i>status</i> factor)	Not a good storyteller	Listener would get along with him/her
ASTURIAS	Less intelligent Lazier Colder	Lower	Lower	Friend Colleague Employee	Not a good storyteller	<i>None</i>
CASTILE AND LEÓN	Less reliable	Lower	Lower	Colleague Employee	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

Table 4: Comparison of identities ascribed to velarized /s/ speaker among groups that do not associate velarized /s/ with Madrid

IDENTITIES ASCRIBED TO VELARIZED /S/ SPEAKERS BY GROUPS THAT DO NOT ASSOCIATE VELARIZED /S/ WITH MADRID						
	Descriptors	Education level	Class	Relationships, Less desirable as:	Storytelling	Compatibility
CASTILE-LA MANCHA	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
CANARY ISLANDS	Less intelligent Lazier Less reliable More bad/tough guy	Lower	Lower	Colleague Employee	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
CATALONIA	Less intelligent Lazier Colder More insecure Less reliable More bad/tough guy	Lower	Lower	Friend Colleague Employee	Not a good storyteller	Listener would get along with him/her
BALEARIC ISLANDS	Less intelligent Lazier Less of a good person Less reliable More bad/tough guy	Lower	Lower	Friend Colleague Employee	Not a good storyteller	<i>None</i>

¹⁹ I remind the reader that traits loaded onto the factor group of *status* include intelligence, laziness, trustworthiness, education level, class, preference for a colleague and preference for an employee.

²⁰ I remind the reader that traits loaded onto the factor group of *pleasantness* include kindness, boringness, niceness, coldness, good/bad person and funniness.

Table 5: Percent of participants that mention correctness and the nonstandard variant in their observation of the speaker's manner of speech according to participant group results.

	Notes correctness [s]	Notes correctness [x]	Notes incorrectness [s]	Notes incorrectness [x]	Notes nonstandard /s/
MADRID (Wright 2021)	24.4%	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	16%	29.7%
ASTURIAS	31.3%	15.8%	<i>None</i>	5%	50%
CASTILE AND LEÓN	9%	5.5%	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	58%
CASTILE-LA MANCHA	18.8%	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	26.7%
CANARY ISLANDS	12.2%	5.3%	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	21%
CATALONIA	12.5%	6.8%	<i>None</i>	11.4%	31.8%
BALEARIC ISLANDS	31.8%	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	38.9%

5. Discussion

The first objective of the present study was to discover whether listeners from regions outside of Madrid associated the “*ejque*”, or velarized /s/, with Madrid. Here we saw that only Madrid’s northern neighbors of Asturias and Castile and León do, and curiously, more so than the Madrileños themselves seen in Wright (2021). Furthermore, Wright (2021) found an interaction between speaker sex and the /s/ variable in which velarized /s/ appeared to be much more indicative of a Madrileña for respondents from Madrid than for their male guise counterparts. No such interaction was found in the responses of the current study. For Asturianos and Castellanolesoneses, a velarized /s/ indicates a Madrileño speaker, no matter the gender. The gendered finding of Wright (2021) reflects the findings of the /s/ variation production studies in Madrid: Women use nonsibilant /s/ less (Gil Peña 2006; Molina Martos 2015; Momcilovic 2005; Turnham & Lafford 1995), and thus its use may be more marked for women among Madrileños (Wright 2021). In contrast, Asturianos and Castellanolesoneses may be aware of the “characteristic” Madrileño pronunciation without being aware of its sociolinguistic distribution. This is reflected in part by the judgements made by Asturianos and Castellanolesoneses regarding velarized /s/ speakers.

A direct comparison with Wright (2021)’s study of Madrileño language attitudes is difficult given the differences in data analysis (use of PCA/EFAs); however, as shown in Table 3 in Section 4.7, we see that though Asturianos and Castellanolesoneses also associated velarized /s/ with Madrid, they do not judge it as harshly as Madrileños themselves. This in line with Chappell’s (2018) finding that out-group members are not judged as severely as in-group members. For the Madrileños in Wright (2021), judgments of *all* traits tested were significantly conditioned by the /s/ variable, each time resulting in a more negative perception of the velarized /s/ speaker guise. For participants from Asturias, 47.4% of traits tested were negatively affected by the velarized /s/, and for Castellanolesoneses, this effect lowers to 26.3%. Asturiano and Castellanolesones perceptions align with those of Madrileños mainly along status lines, but not along judgments of pleasantness. In fact, the /s/ variable plays no role in whether participants from either region said they would get along with the speaker, and for Castellanolesoneses in particular, the /s/ variable also does not affect preferences for

friendship. With respect to impressions of correctness of speech, not a single Madrileño in Wright (2021) noted that a velarized /s/ speaker spoke well or correctly, but both Asturianos and Castillanoleoneses did so. Furthermore, though 16% of Madrileños in Wright (2021) commented on the *incorrectness* of velarized /s/ speaker guises' speech, none of the Castillanoleoneses made such a comment, and only 5% of the Asturianos noted this. Here we see that for the two regions that most strongly notice the velarized /s/ in use, it is not considered a sign of incorrectness. As the two regions that associate the variant with Madrid, echoing what we have seen in the variable effect on judgments, the velarized /s/ appears to simply be a variant associated with the Madrid accent without much social stigma attached.

A question that arises, however, with the speaker judgment results of the Asturiano and Castillanoleonés listeners is whether these judgments reflect their views of Madrileños in general, or a particular *kind* (velarized /s/ speaker) of Madrileño. While Wright (2021) shows that the velarized /s/ is clearly indicative of a specific kind of Madrileño identity for Madrileños themselves, it is unclear if this is the case for their northern neighbors. Given the negative view of velarized /s/ by participants from other regions of Spain that do not associate velarized /s/ with Madrid, it is perhaps the perceived Madrileño-ness that caused Asturiano and Castillanoleonés participants to respond with a lesser degree of negativity. Further investigation is needed, though, to explore whether the Asturiano and Castillanoleonés attitudes presented here are indicative of how they view a velarized /s/ speaker identity or a Madrileño identity.

Unlike participants from Asturias and Castile and León, the participants from the other four Autonomous Communities examined in this paper did not associate velarized /s/ with Madrid. Among these four communities, a notable distinction can be drawn between those regions that use nonsibilant variants of /s/, Castile-La Mancha and the Canary Islands, and those that do not, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. Participants in the first group do not demonstrate as negative a perception of the velarized /s/ as the latter group. Evidence from Hernández Cabrera & Samper Hernández (2018) suggests that residents of the Canary Islands have a positive view of aspirated /s/, and perhaps this attitude towards the nonstandard aspirated variant is extended to the velarized variant. Both of the nonsibilant-using populations, Manchegos and Canarios, had no observations of incorrectness of speech for the velarized /s/ speaker guises, though it should be noted that like all Autonomous Communities included in the study, observations of correctness of the sibilant /s/ speaker guises' speech were made. This is unsurprising as many Canarios identified sibilant /s/ speakers as Madrileños, and Hernández Cabrera & Samper Hernández (2018) show that Canary Island participants named central Castilian Spanish as the best variety of Spanish.

A further distinction can be drawn between the nonsibilant /s/-using participants based on the variants used; that is, while the Canarios, who use aspirated and elided /s/, showed a negative perception of velarized /s/ speakers in 42% of the traits tested, the Manchegos, who also employ the velarized variant, do not show *any* negative perceptions of the variant. This finding is in stark contrast to the neighboring Madrileños in Wright (2021), for whom, though they also use the velarized variant, it is very stigmatized. Indeed, while all traits tested for Madrileños in Wright (2021) were negatively affected by the velarized /s/, for Manchegos, none of the nineteen traits tested showed a significant variable effect. The difference in attitudes between these two bordering regions, Madrid and Castile-La Mancha, is striking.

The two Autonomous Communities that pattern most like the Madrileños in Wright (2021) in their perceptions of the /s/ variable were Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, with the exception of the association of velarized /s/ with Madrid. As we saw in

Sections 4.5 and 4.6, it appears the Catalan and Balear participants do not recognize velarized /s/ as Madrileño, but rather associate the nonsibilant /s/ with Southern Spain. The nonstandard pronunciation is viewed poorly with 68.4% of the traits tested resulting in a more negative judgment of the speaker for Catalans and 57.9% of Balear participants. It is difficult to discern whether the attitudes shown here are reactions to the velarized /s/ alone, or toward speakers from Southern Spain. We know from Méndez-Guerrero (2018) that listeners from the Balearic Islands rated speakers from Andalusia worse than almost all other varieties tested in her study. The difference in judgments between the sibilant /s/ speaker guise and the velarized /s/ guise may also tell us, rather, more about perceptions of the perceived “standard” variety. Indeed, like the Canarios, with sibilant /s/, the majority of Balear participants identified the speakers as Madrileños, and Méndez-Guerrero (2018) found that participants from the Balearic Islands name Madrid as the place where the best Spanish is spoken. It would not be surprising, then, that Balear participants would rate a speaker of speech they perceived as Madrileño highly.

6. Conclusion

This paper has contributed a study of language attitudes throughout Spain towards a linguistic variable found in the speech of the capital city. Though several studies have been conducted with regard to the perception of the Madrid dialect, often the speech samples used were those of *habla culta*, or educated speech. The current study focused on a single nonstandard variant, the *ejque Madrileño*, finding in fact that it is only considered to be Madrileño by participants from Asturias and Castile and León. Listeners from Castile-La Mancha, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands all do not associate the velarized /s/ with Madrid. Among those participants that do associate the velarized /s/ with Madrid, we see that these out-group listeners do not judge speakers as harshly as in-group members seen in previous research. Both Asturianos and Castillanoleoneses do not show as negative a perception of velarized /s/ speakers as that demonstrated by Madrileños themselves and in fact, none of Autonomous Communities examined in this paper note the incorrectness of velarized /s/ speaker’s speech as often as the Madrileños in Wright (2021).

In addition, we saw that the two groups of participants that employ nonsibilant /s/ variants themselves were among the groups that were the most accepting of the velarized /s/ speakers. In particular, Manchegos contrast sharply with the Madrileños seen in previous literature by showing no variable effect at all, though both communities use the velar variant. The participants from Asturias and Castile and León also show a more positive view of the velarized variant, but it is unclear whether this is indicative of their attitudes towards speakers that use the nonstandard /s/ variant or towards speakers they recognize to be Madrileños. Such a determination remains for future research. Future investigations should also consider a wider range of ages and gender, as the younger, female skew of the population of study included here is a limitation of the current study.

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