L2 LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AND PERCEPTIONS OF SPANISH VARIETIES

by

VIVECA POWER

(Under the Direction of Sarah Blackwell)

ABSTRACT

Although every person holds attitudes toward and perceptions of languages, the language attitudes of second language (L2) learners are of particular interest because they can affect the acquisition of the target language (TL). The present study concerns L2 Spanish learners' attitudes toward four Spanish varieties, Argentinian, Caribbean, Mexican, and Peninsular Spanish, measured in a verbal guise task. The literature review reveals three key factors that have been found to influence L2 learners' language attitudes: (1) themes of identity, (2) contact with the TL, and (3) perceptions of the "standard" TL. Results from the present study show that Mexican Spanish was rated highest in all judgments (solidarity, prestige, and comprehensibility) by the US university L2 Spanish learners who participated in the verbal guise task, and high levels of proficiency correlated with more positive language attitudes toward the Spanish varieties. Time using the TL did not sufficiently account for participants' language attitudes.

INDEX WORDS: language attitudes, proficiency, standard, L2 acquisition, Spanish varieties

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Every speaker possesses attitudes towards their own language, its varieties and other languages. Language attitudes can affect how a speaker is perceived by others, and, at the same time, the language and language variety a person speaks may influence others' presumptions about their socioeconomic class, sex, age, area of origin, and education level, among other characteristics. The language attitudes of second language (L2) learners are of particular interest because they can affect the acquisition of the L2. Previous studies have shown that several social, linguistic, and educational factors can play a role in L2 learners' attitudes toward their target language (TL). Additionally, L2 learners' educational expectations and cultural perceptions and values can also impact their language attitudes (Artamonova, 2020).

Foreign language instructors note, using anecdotal evidence, that students in the L2 classroom who exhibit signs of having negative language attitudes toward the language they are learning, or target language (TL), are often less successful in the L2 classroom than students who seem to show positive language attitudes towards that language. The aim of this thesis is to collect empirical evidence to attempt to determine whether or not certain factors, including the language variety spoken, proficiency level, and time spent in contact with the TL, affect language attitudes of L2 learners. Specifically, the study examines the language attitudes of L2 Spanish learners toward four Spanish varieties: Argentinian, Caribbean, Mexican, and Peninsular Spanish. Additionally, whereas most earlier studies on L2 learners' language attitudes focused on intermediate to advanced learners, the present study examines the language attitudes of L2

beginners as well as intermediate and advanced learners. This introductory chapter defines language attitudes, briefly reviews language attitudes of native Spanish speakers toward their native language and its varieties, and reviews common methodologies employed to study language attitudes.

1.1 Definition of language attitudes

Artamonova (2020), who studied L2 Spanish learners' attitudes toward their TL, defines a *language attitude* as "an evaluative view of a particular language held by an individual or a group of individuals regarding any one aspect of the language …or any combination of aspects inherent to the language or associated with it" (p. 810). According to this definition, one is not required to speak the language in order to develop an attitude toward it. In other words, language attitudes can refer to any perceptions a person may have about a language. Additionally, Giles and Billings (2004) emphasized that oftentimes language attitudes are based on stereotyped judgments, facial expressions, body language, and other social assumptions a person can make during the act of communication.

Artamonova (2020) describes how attitudes are composed of three groups of influences: cognitive (knowledge or beliefs), affective (emotions and feelings), and behavioral (experience and actions). She also notes that often, study participants are not able to justify their language attitudes, and sometimes they give explanations that contrast with their true views. Language attitudes are equally rooted in one's perception of individual speakers, as well as entire social groups (Giles & Billings, 2004). Frequently, language attitudes are measured by how participants rate their perceptions of individual speakers in terms of perceived levels of amicability (friendliness), prestige (intelligence), and dynamism (charisma) (Giles & Billings, 2004).

Sometimes, perceived linguistic differences are entirely based on one's stereotypical assumptions and expectations, as was the case in Niedzielski's (1999) study of vowel perceptions. Her study exemplified how vulnerable participants' perceptions of language were to general stereotypes. When participants in her study were told the recorded speaker was Canadian, they reported having perceived significantly higher instances of vowel raising than when the same recording was introduced as a speaker from Michigan, in turn revealing that their expectations affected their perceptions. The present study focuses on how such expectations of L2 Spanish language learners, which may have been molded by the amount of time spent in contact with the TL or by the proficiency level of the L2 learners themselves, may also affect their attitudes toward Argentinian, Caribbean, Mexican, and Peninsular Spanish.

1.2 Evidence of language attitudes in L1 Spanish

Native (L1) speakers have their own language attitudes about their language, its varieties, and other languages. For instance, Cestero and Paredes (2018) found that university students from urban areas in central and northern Spain generally judged their variety of Spanish, Castilian, most favorably in all judgment clusters, or subsets of language attitudes. Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsada (2009) summarized diachronic investigations on Spanish varieties and their evolution in Andalusia and Murcia (Spain), and the authors pointed to Castilian Spanish as holding the most national prestige. These authors also observed that Andalusian Spanish was stigmatized nationally, a generalization coinciding with stereotypes describing Southern Spain as having low socioeconomic status and a large rural population. They further noted that "nonstandard" speech is often stigmatized and associated with speakers from lower socioeconomic classes and rural areas. However, results from their study also showed that Sevillian Spanish was deemed regionally prestigious and "standard" by speakers from Andalusia.

Santana Marrero (2022) asked students studying journalism at a university in Andalusia to evaluate recordings of speakers with Andalusian and Castilian accents through a verbal guise task with question items involving a Likert scale. The results of this task revealed that students considered the Castilian variety to be more prestigious than the Andalusian variety, but they preferred the familiarity and solidarity with others that the Andalusian accent expressed. In a subsequent study, Salazar Caro (2023) investigated Colombian teachers' language attitudes toward the varieties of Spanish used by the students in their classes. Their data, consisting of semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with the teachers, showed that a majority of teachers deemed "non-standard" speech "incorrect" or "poor Spanish", and associated its use with students of low economic status and rural origins.

Van Hooft, Van Meaurs, Van de Qouw, and Van Maren Díaz (2023) studied the language attitudes of Spanish and Catalan bilinguals' responses toward COVID-19 vaccination advertisements. The responses to their online questionnaire revealed that bilingual participants tended to rate advertisements in what they reported to be their first language more favorably. Understandably, participants in studies by both Cestero and Paredes (2018) and Van Hooft et al. (2023) demonstrated having a clear preference for their first language and native dialect respectively, due to greater contact with them and a stronger connection to their identity. Only in cases in which speakers' variety of Spanish was deemed "non-standard" either nationally (Santana Marrero, 2022) or by language teachers (Salazar Caro, 2023), did study respondents demonstrate less favorable language attitudes toward "nonstandard" varieties of Spanish.

1.3 Evidence of language attitudes of L2 Spanish

As noted so far, native speakers have demonstrated a preference for their native language and dialect in language attitude investigations (Cestero & Paredes, 2018; Van Hoot et al., 2023). However, when a native speaker's variety is not considered "standard" by a population, that native speaker may demonstrate a clash in language attitudes between the native language or variety and the "standard" variety. In such cases, the "standard" variety is deemed more prestigious, but the native variety is still preferred in terms of solidarity (i.e., friendliness, belonging, happiness). L2 learners' language attitudes have also been shown to be influenced by the following three factors: (1) themes of identity, (2) quantity and quality of contact with the TL, and (3) perceived deviation from the "standard" TL (Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022). However, these factors manifest themselves differently in the development of L2 learners' language attitudes, than in those of L1 speakers' language attitudes.

Two investigations whose results and conclusions encapsulate the influence of themes of identity on L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes are those of Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras, and Comellas (2016) and Miller (2017). Cortès-Colomé et al. (2016) studied the language attitudes toward Spanish and Catalan of immigrants to Catalonia, Spain, all of whom were L2 learners of these languages. Their participants asserted that they preferred Catalan to Spanish because, as both members of a minority population and immigrants in Spain, they felt more connected to the minority language, Catalan. In research examining school-aged children in the United States Miller (2017) studied the language attitudes of bilingual English and Spanish children from first to fifth grade. She found that students demonstrated different language attitudes between grade levels, and she related these differences to her participants' changing levels of pride in their heritage or to their desire to belong to their peer groups at English-only elementary schools.

Studies whose results demonstrated the strong influence of quantity and quality of contact with the TL in L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes include works by Schmidt (2020), and Artamonova (2023). Schmidt (2020) investigated how L2 learners' language attitudes toward phonetic variants in the Argentinian dialect changed after a short study abroad program. In her post-test analysis, she found that the participants rated Argentinian Spanish more favorably after having been immersed in it for six weeks. Artamonova's (2023) longitudinal study analyzing differences in L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes after a short study abroad program in Spain showed similar results, in which participants asserted that an increase in positive reinforcement, due to more opportunities for contact with the TL, increased their favorable language attitudes toward Peninsular Spanish.

The perceived alignment or deviation from the "standard" Spanish variety spoken in a community can also affect L2 learners' language attitudes, just as it can influence native Spanish speakers' language attitudes. A key difference, demonstrated by Denbaum-Restrepo (2023) in her longitudinal study, is that the "standard" variety of Spanish for L2 learners may not be determined by geographic location, but rather by what L2 Spanish textbooks, instructors, and authorities such as the *Real Academia Español* may present as the "correct" variety. In Denbaum-Restrepo's study, although participants completed a short study abroad program in the Dominican Republic, their language attitudes about Dominicans' use of preverbal subjects did not change, nor was there an increase in their use of preverbal subjects. Denbaum-Restrepo cited internalized "standard" grammar taught in the L2 Spanish classroom as the reason for the lack of change in preverbal subject use by participants. Martinez Franco (2019) investigated L2 Spanish instructors' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties in her doctoral dissertation in which she presented evidence showing clearly that instructors who spoke a Spanish variety deemed

"standard" by other instructors, themselves, or by textbooks did not report changing their form of speech for L2 Spanish students. By contrast, instructors that self-reported speaking "nonstandard" varieties admitted that they changed their speaking patterns (e.g., they used different vocabulary and pronounced words more clearly) to accommodate for students' understanding. As the results from Denbaum-Restrepo (2023) and Martinez Franco (2019) show, L2 Spanish users may choose to express more "standard" forms in Spanish for a variety of reasons. Chapter 2 examines in greater detail research related to the construction and development of L2 learners' language attitudes.

1.4 Overview of methodology

Multiple methodologies have been enlisted in the investigation of language attitudes. One common method to measure language attitudes is the matched guise technique, developed originally by Lambert, Hodgeson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960). This technique collects data from study participants reacting to audio recordings often produced by native speakers in their languages and varieties. To gather their reactions, participants are asked to complete scaled judgments of speakers based audio recordings of their speech (Lambert et. al., 1960). Giles and Billings (2004) emphasize that language attitudes can be affected by any information available to us. They point out that the matched guise technique assumes that style of speech can affect study participants' social categorizations (e.g., the speaker's perceived sex, level of education, level of amicability, etc.) and can reveal hearers' inferences based on the stereotyping of language groups. To account for as many underlying variables as possible, the recordings used in matched guise technique studies try to maintain consistency in speakers' "prosodic and paralinguistic features of voice (such as pitch, voice quality, and speech rate) as well as …reading style and expressiveness" (Giles & Billings, 2004, p. 189). In studies using the matched guise technique,

typically, participants judge an audio recording by rating it in terms of three judgment types, also called clusters: status (intelligence, respect), solidarity (friendliness, happiness) and dynamism (engagement, charisma) (Campbell-Kibler, 2009; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022).

Since Lambert et al.'s original study in 1960, researchers have modified the matched guise technique. In recent work implementing a guise method, the most commonly used version is the verbal guise technique, which uses audio recordings produced by multiple speakers of a language rather than one speaker (Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022). Verbal guise tasks are particularly favored for investigations in which varieties of the same language are compared, because then one speaker is not required to mimic various dialects. Instead, recordings for each language variety are made of speech produced by native speakers of each dialect, creating more authentic stimuli. This technique is used in the present study.

Apart from the guise tasks, another popular method of collecting data about language attitudes is through structured or semi-structured interviews. For instance, this method was used by Beebe (1980), who studied L2 English speakers' pronunciation of phonological variants in formal and informal contexts, and by Suby and Asención-Delaney (2008) in their investigation of the quantity of Spanish spoken by the instructor in the L2 classroom. It was also employed by Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras, and Comellas (2016) (reviewed in Chapter 2), and by Miranda-Barrios (2011) in her investigation of L2 French and L2 Spanish learners' opinions on the perceived "nativeness" of their instructors' accent.

Investigators who complete sociolinguistic interviews do so in conjunction with the distribution of questionnaires. Questionnaires can also be used alone, or in conjunction with guise tasks. Studies that employ this method are reviewed in detail in Chapter 2 (Alford &

Strothers, 1990; Zhang & Hu, 2008; Miller 2017; Schmidt, 2018; 2020; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022; Wheeler & Kang, 2022; Santana Marrero, 2023). When questionnaires are used alone, often they explicitly ask participants about their general language attitudes, or they are used in conjunction with other judgment tasks, as was the case in the study carried out by Van Hooft et al. (2023).

Questionnaires can also measure attitudinal changes through pre- and post-tests administered to participants in longitudinal studies often used to investigate the influence of study abroad programs (Schmidt, 2020; Artamonova, 2023; Denbaum-Restrepo, 2023). LoCastro (2001) used questionnaires, along with other instruments, in her longitudinal study of language attitudes toward English throughout a semester-long L2 English course (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3).

For the present study, data were collected using an online Google Forms questionnaire distributed to L2 Spanish learners at the University of Georgia. Participant eligibility was determined by a pool of potential participants' responses to sociodemographic questions and responses to a language background questionnaire. Responses to a verbal guise task were then elicited from 66 participants using this instrument to gather data regarding the learners' reactions and attitudes toward the Spanish varieties under study. Specifically, the verbal guise task required participants to watch seven videos of native Spanish speakers from four macro dialects, Peninsular, Argentinian, Mexican, and Caribbean Spanish. After watching each video, they rated the speaker on a Likert scale of one to five regarding three types of language attitudes: perceived friendliness, perceived intelligence, and perceived comprehensibility of the speaker. The 66 participants were divided into groupings in two ways in order to address the two hypotheses. The first division created three proficiency groups: beginner, beginner-intermediate, and

intermediate-advanced. The second division created four groups based on participants' self-reported amount of time spent hearing or using Spanish. Data were analyzed statistically through descriptive statistics and a linear mixed model in the statistical analysis program JASP (an R Studio interface).

1.5 Rationale, hypotheses and aim of the present study

The present study aims to answer the following research questions regarding four Spanish varieties (Argentinian, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Peninsular Spanish): How do L2 learners feel toward these varieties of Spanish? How does L2 learners' proficiency level in Spanish influence how they perceive these four Spanish dialects? How does the amount of weekly contact with Spanish influence their perceptions of these four Spanish varieties?

This research is informed by Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) study of L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties, as well as work by Artamonova (2023), Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras, and Comellas (2016), Chappell and Kanwit (2022), Denbaum-Restrepo (2023), Martinez Franco (2019), Michalski (2023), Miller (2017), Schmidt (2018, 2020, 2022), and Wheeler and Kang (2022) (see Chapter 2). Previous studies regarding language attitudes of L2 Spanish learners toward Spanish varieties often focused on learners with higher proficiency levels. In contrast, the present study's participant pool includes beginner, beginner-intermediate, and intermediate-advanced learners. The hypotheses formulated for this study are:

H1: Beginning L2 Spanish learners have stronger (negative or positive) language attitudes toward Spanish varieties than intermediate-beginner and intermediate-advanced learners, as measured by the verbal guise task.

H2: L2 Spanish learners will demonstrate more favorable attitudes (as indicated on the verbal guise task) according to reported time spent using Spanish per week. In other words, more time spent using Spanish per week, will correlate with more favorable ratings in all judgment types.

These hypotheses were based in part on anecdotal evidence including comments from Spanish instructors and interactions with students, in which beginner students have expressed having strong (either very positive or very negative) opinions of Spanish and its varieties. Also, some participants might be more familiar with varieties on account of listening to music and watching television and films in those dialects. Of the three factors (identity, quantity of contact with the TL, and perception of the "standard" variety of the TL) shown to affect L2 learners' language attitudes, amount of contact and perception of the "standard" are most closely related to these two hypotheses. Themes of identity were not accounted for in this study apart from the eligibility requirements for participants.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 reviews previous research completed in the field of language attitudes, beginning by briefly describing studies of native Spanish speakers' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties. Then, studies examining L2 learners' language attitudes in general, followed by those focusing on Spanish L2 learners' language attitudes about Spanish varieties, are reviewed. Chapter 3 describes the instrument used for the present study, the data collection process, the participants, and the statistical model used for data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the study's results and discusses their significance in relation to the proposed hypotheses. Chapter 5

reviews the present study's conclusions and limitations and offers suggestions for future research related to the field.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter reviews research on the language attitudes of native speakers and L2 learners, particularly the language attitudes of L2 Spanish learners. Section 2.1 briefly examines studies investigating the language attitudes of native Spanish speakers. Section 2.2 focuses on relevant studies about the language attitudes of non-Spanish L2 learners while highlighting three factors (identity, contact, and standardization) that impact L2 learners' attitudes. Section 2.3 reviews studies that have aggregated data about L2 Spanish learners' attitudes about their TL. Finally, Section 2.4 reviews studies specifically concerning L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes toward Spanish and its varieties.

2.1 Brief review of L1 Spanish language attitudes research

As noted in Chapter 1, native Spanish speakers can develop and exhibit language attitudes toward their language and the variety they speak, and toward other languages and varieties. Native Spanish speakers have shown a preference for their native language and dialect. When their native variety is not deemed "standard" by a community, they do not rate the variety as the most prestigious or "correct".

Cestero and Paredes (2018) have spearheaded a project since 2014 that collects data about the beliefs and attitudes of different groups of speakers toward Spanish varieties called

Proyecto para el estudio de las creencias y actitudes hacia las variedades del español en el siglo XXI, or PRECAVES XXI. As a part of their ongoing project, Cestero and Paredes (2018) completed a study with university students from north-central Spain in which they assessed their own variety of Spanish (Castilian) and other varieties (Canarian, Andalusian, River Plate, Mexican, Chilean, Caribbean, and Andean). The students completed a 12-part questionnaire which included a verbal guise test of the eight aforementioned varieties, scaled judgment questions and a sociodemographic questionnaire. Generally, as the authors expected, all participants, who were from the central-northern urbanized region of Spain, pointed to their own dialect, Castilian, as the "best Spanish". Participants' age and gender influenced the strength of their preferences for Spanish varieties, as the results from the study indicated that participants who were under 20 years of age and women demonstrated stronger opinions about Spanish varieties. When participants evaluated varieties other than their own, they generally showed preferences for the Rioplatense and Canary Islands Spanish dialects. The Andalusian and Andean dialects received the lowest ratings from the participants. According to Cestero and Paredes (2018), the rating of the Andalusian dialect as low was expected because the participants were from central-northern Spain, where the stigmatization of the Andalusian accent is prominent. Overall, the authors noted that varieties that the participants did not have much contact with were usually evaluated in accordance with stereotypes, such as the cases of the Latin American dialects.

Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsada (2009) summarized a slew of investigations related to the standardization of Spanish varieties within Spain over time. After summarizing how Spanish national history and politics affected how Castilian Spanish became the perceived national standard, the authors described the use and perception of Spanish varieties in southern

Spain (Andalusia, Extremadura, and Murcia). Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsada noted that although Castilian Spanish was the national standard, there was evidence of a regional standard variety in the Sevillian dialect. They also observed that, while Murcian Spanish showed signs of continued evolution and demonstrated more and more use of phonetic and morphosyntactic variants in alignment with Castilian Spanish, the Spanish spoken in Andalusia and south-eastern Extremadura showed signs of accommodating more and more with the perceived regional "standard" variety from Seville. While Castilian Spanish was still deemed nationally prestigious, the occult prestige of Sevillian Spanish affected participants' perceptions as well.

In her 2022 study, Santana Marrero asked students studying journalism at a university in Andalusia to evaluate recordings of speakers with Andalusian and Castilian accents using a questionnaire and verbal guise task. Her data were collected in accordance with the PRECAVES XXI guidelines to be included in the PRECAVES project. She investigated how Andalusian students studying journalism felt about and perceived their own accent in comparison to the Castilian variety. She chose journalism students specifically because they must navigate the competition between dialects (particularly Sevillian and Castilian) when studying how to present themselves in the media. In accordance with the diachronic research presented by Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsada (2009), Santana Marrero noted that the Sevillian dialect exerts some regional prestige in the west of Andalusia, but that the Castilian variety still maintains a level of prestige in the eastern part of the region. However, the results of Santana Marrero's study also showed that, on one hand, students preferred their Andalusian accent because of the dynamism and naturalness it expressed, while on the other hand, they admitted to believing that the Castilian accent was clearer for audiences to understand and considered it more "correct"

than the Andalusian variety. Santana Marrero concluded that even students who are going to enter the media industry continued to show clashing attitudes toward the two dialects. They admired the Castilian accent for its clarity, an important characteristic of speech in the media, but they still preferred the comfort, familiarity, and informality of the Andalusian accent and felt their audience enjoyed these characteristics too. Cestero and Paredes (2018), Santana Marrero (2022), and Hernández-Campoy and Villena-Ponsada (2009) all reported that the majority of the native Spanish speakers studied rated their variety of Spanish as "the best" due to its importance in the development of their identity and the overwhelming amount of daily contact they have with it. As seen in the language attitudes studies by Cestero and Paredes (2018) and Santana Marrero (2022), the native Spanish speakers' own varieties of Spanish were only rated less than other Spanish varieties when their native dialect was not associated with the "standard" or deemed a prestigious variety.

In addition to evidence of speakers' preference for what they deem to be the "standard" variety of their language, bilingual speakers have demonstrated preferences their first-learned language. Van Hooft, Van Meurs, Van de Wouw, and Van Maren Díaz (2023) studied L1 language attitudes of Spanish and Catalan bilinguals' responses toward COVID-19 vaccination advertisements. Participants completed an online questionnaire that asked screening questions, questions about participants' feelings about an COVID-19 vaccination advertisement (in either Spanish or Catalan), and explicit questions about their general language attitudes, and also requested sociodemographic information. Results from this study continued to support the theory of first-language preference, in which bilingual speakers who are fluent in two or more languages will still rate their first-learned language more favorably. This study was interested in

discerning whether or not data pointing to implicit biases between languages could be collected, but its results were not statistically significant.

Salazar Caro (2023) conducted 45 semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with teachers in Colombia. The interviews were structured to focus on the teachers' beliefs and language attitudes toward the varieties of Spanish they heard in their own classroom, and specifically, examples of phonetic variations were discussed such as the aspiration or loss of /s/ or the frequent use of velarized [-ŋ] in word- and utterance-final position. Participant responses in the discourse were analyzed qualitatively. Although a small group of teachers rated their students' variation in pronunciation positively, the majority of the teachers negatively rated any variant that clashed with the perceived "standard" speech in their city of Valledupar. The participants associated the majority of the "nonstandard" variants with low socioeconomic status, or rural upbringings. These results coincide with those of other studies regarding the most influential factors affecting native speakers' language attitudes, namely, speakers' first-language and first-variety preference (related to their identity), and their perceptions of a "standard" variety or language prescribed by officials or by common stereotypes.

2.2 Language attitudes of L2 learners

Native speaker language attitudes are often strongly influenced by speaker identity and the speaker's perceptions of what is the "standard" variety in their language. L2 learners' language attitudes are influenced by perceptions of a "standard" and themes of identity as well, but they are developed in relation to their L2 acquisition. What L2 learners perceive as the "standard" form of their L2 is the form taught to them in language courses, the vocabulary exemplified in L2 textbooks and called "correct" by L2 instructors and language authorities.

Several studies provide evidence of how (1) themes of identity, (2) contact with native speakers, and (3) perceptions of deviation from the perceived "standard" variety of the TL can affect language attitudes.

Studies by Alford and Strothers (1990) and Zhang and Hu (2008) highlighted how quantity and quality of contact, as well as general stereotypes, can affect study participants' language attitudes. Additionally, Gatbonton and Trofimovich (2008) observed that L2 learners' personal identities, as Quebecois French Canadians, affected their language attitudes. Both Beebe (1980) and LoCastro (2001), who worked with L2 English learners, and Miranda-Barrios (2011), who worked with L2 French and Spanish learners, cited L2 learners' perceptions of what they believed to be the "standard" form of the TL as an influential factor affecting their attitudes toward the TL.

2.2.1 Development of Personal Identity

Speakers' development of their personal identity often affects their language preferences. For instance, they may want to match the speech of a specific community to fit in. In their study with 59 L1 French-speaking adults from Quebec whose L2 was English, Gatbonton and Trofimovich (2008) measured how participants' personal identity and ethnic group affiliation were associated with their L2 proficiency. Through a reading task, in which participants were recorded reading aloud, and a demographic questionnaire, Gatbonton and Trafimovich collected data related to participants' proficiency levels in their L2 and their attitudes toward their affiliation with an ethnic group (in this case Quebecois French Canadian). Their results showed no correlation or associations between Core Ethnic Group Association (basic pride and loyalty to one's ethnic group) and a participant's L2 proficiency. However, Gatbonton and Trafimovich did

find that the stronger a participant's support for their ethnic group's socio-political aspirations, the lower their L2 proficiency. Lower L2 proficiency also correlated with participant responses in which participants admitted they perceived the use of the L2 (English) as a threat to the survival of their L1 (French). Unsurprisingly, higher English proficiency was associated with more positive orientations toward the L2 group and sometimes even a strong self-identification with the L2 group's culture. From these findings, the authors surmised that, if an L2 learner's identity and worldview was in direct conflict with their acquisition of an L2, their attitudes toward and perceptions of their L2 would likely be negatively affected.

2.2.2 Quantity and Quality of Contact with the TL

L2 learners' identity can impact their language attitudes toward their TL, and the level of exposure to and contact with the TL can also affect L2 learners' attitudes toward it, as exemplified by the results from studies by Alford and Strother (1990) and Zhang and Hu (2008). Alford and Strother's (1990) study compared US English varieties (North, South, Midwest) using a verbal guise test, which was given to two groups of participants. The first group, composed of L1 American English speakers, was used as a control group, while the second participant group consisted of L2 English speakers, who were international students at an American university. Both groups showed an ability to distinguish between the American English varieties, although a notable finding was that the L2 learners showed a statistically significant difference between their opinions of male and female speakers of each of the three US English varieties. The male speakers used as stimuli in the verbal guise task speaking all three English varieties were rated higher overall in the judgment clusters of prestige and solidarity than the female speakers in the verbal guise task. The Northern US English variety was rated lowest of all three varieties, no matter the gender of the speaker in the audio recordings.

Alford and Strother surmised that Northern US English was rated uniformly low because their participant pool had less contact with this variety. Their participants attended a Southern American university and consumed popular American media which often exhibits a neutral accent. Unfortunately, because the L2 learner participant pool was demographically so diverse, clear conclusions about the influence of quantity of input in a particular variety of the TL could not be reached.

The quantity and quality of contact that L2 learners have with native speakers of the L2, or TL, can influence their language attitudes. Zhang and Hu (2008) completed a study on language attitudes toward international English varieties (US, UK, Australia) using a verbal guise test on 30 Chinese graduate students, who spoke English as an L2 and were pursuing degrees in the US. Data were collected on judgment clusters of solidarity (kind, enthusiastic, likable, etc.) and comprehensibility (natural, understandable, no accent, etc.). As is common practice, responses to these judgment clusters were rated on a Likert scale in order to empirically measure participants' language attitudes. Zhang and Hu found that their participants demonstrated a preference for the variety of English with which they had the most contact, American English. For this group of L2 learners of English, American and British English varieties had been widely taught in their L2 classrooms, while the Australian English variety had been widely ignored. According to Zhang and Hu, this factor led to lower ratings of preference for Australian English by the participants. The quality and quantity of contact with different dialects of the TL were reported to have affected learners' attitudes toward English varieties the most because the participants had had more contact with the American variety in their daily lives studying at the American university, and the Chinese graduate students had rated American

English more favorably in the study. Additionally, some participants noted their enjoyment of English television shows and movies.

Zhang and Hu's (2008) results showed similar trends to those reported by Alford and Strothers (1990). Additionally, some of Zhang and Hu's findings corroborated their hypothesis regarding the impact of general stereotypes related to geographic groups. For example, in participants' ratings of the scaled judgment perception of the verbal guise speaker's education level, British English was rated highest, following the stereotype of the British population being the most educated of the three countries' populations. The results did not show a significant difference in language attitudes in terms of comprehensibility of English varieties, although this result was attributed to the participant pool's composition, given that all participants were graduate students in the US and thus had high proficiency levels in English. In both Zhang and Hu's (2008) and Alford and Strother's (1990) studies, higher contact with particular varieties of the participants' L2 (English) influenced how they rated English varieties. The more the participants had been exposed to a variety, the more favorably they rated it.

2.2.3 Perceived level of deviation from the "standard"

The perceived level of deviation from the "standard" of a language is a prominent factor affecting L2 learners' language attitudes toward varieties of the TL. When lexicons appear to be outside the norm, for example in the case of higher rates of expletive use by speakers from lower social classes, language attitudes about such variation tend to be more negative (Giles & Billings, 2004). Perceived atypical phonological variations can also affect L2 learners' perceptions of a speaker's "native-ness" which is often measured against "the ideal of the monolingual" in linguistics (Ortega, 1999, p. 249).

This idealization of the native accent was clear in the results of Miranda-Barrios's (2011) study conducted on L2 Spanish and L2 French learners to investigate their perceptions of their language instructors' accents. Through a series of semi structured interviews and responses to an attitudinal questionnaire, Miranda-Barrios found that the majority of her L2 learner participants preferred instructors with native accents, although they cited different reasons for their preferences. The L2 Spanish learner group showed a preference for native accents on the grounds of wanting to learn more about the L2 culture, while the L2 French group cited increased perceptions of qualifications and respect for the instructors with native accents. For these L2 learners the "standard" form of their TL was the one that their instructors spoke in their L2 classrooms.

While "nonstandard" phonological variants may not be desirable in L2 classroom contexts, they can be more acceptable in other social situations. Beebe (1980) conducted interviews with nine L1 Bangkok Thai participants, who were L2 English speakers and of varying social and educational classes. She found that in all cases the speakers showed less preoccupation with their own pronunciation in English and with other speakers' English pronunciation in informal settings. From her analysis of the sociolinguistic interviews, Beebe concluded that the level to which L2 learners deemed it appropriate to deviate from "proper" pronunciation varied based on the social environment and how comfortable in the interview setting.

In some cases, deviation from the "standard" language is considered desirable. This preference was observed in LoCastro's (2001) study focusing on L2 English students at a Japanese university. She collected data from native Japanese speakers, all students in four L2 English courses, in the form of tape-recorded group discussions, essays and reaction papers,

language awareness worksheets, and questionnaire results. In the data collected, LoCastro observed that some students expressed an unwillingness to abide by pragmatic English norms, often speech acts of argument, mitigation, and expressions of understatement, and would actively choose to not use them in their L2 practice. Even when the students were informed that the use of such norms would positively affect others' perceptions of their L2 English use, they still expressed hesitancy to adopt all English pragmatic norms. LoCastro's participants showed that they understood how following the pragmatic norms of English could reduce the perceived gap between their English language production and "standard" English, but they cited preoccupation with losing touch with their identity as a reason for not following English pragmatic norms. In this case, the importance of one factor in the development of language attitudes (themes of identity), outweighed another (perceived deviation from the standard).

This section has examined prominent early language attitude studies related to L2 learners. These works highlighted three factors that predominantly influence how negatively or positively L2 learners view their TL and its varieties: (1) themes of identity, (2) quantity and quality of contact with the TL, and (3) perception of the "standard" in the TL. In the following two sections (Sections 2.2 and 2.3) studies on the language attitudes of L2 learners towards Spanish and its varieties are reviewed.

2.3 Language attitudes toward L2 Spanish

Questionnaire-based studies have provided data about L2 Spanish learners' attitudes to their TL. For example, Ibarraran, Lasagabaster, and Manuel Sierra (2008) asked high school students to respond to a language attitudes questionnaire in the province of Araba in the Basque Autonomous Community of Spain. The province and schools studied contained high populations

of immigrant students, so data collection designed to compare the language attitudes of native Spanish students and immigrant students in Spain was possible. Both groups of students, native Spanish-speaking students and immigrant students with L2 Spanish, showed negative language attitudes toward the Basque language (‘Euskara’), and both showed preference for Spanish. The L2 Spanish immigrant students also exhibited more positive language attitudes toward English, a commonly studied foreign language in high schools, than they did toward Spanish. The authors concluded that the immigrant students valued multilingualism more than the native Spanish students, but interestingly, they still held negative language attitudes toward the minority language of the region (Euskara), in that they preferred Spanish, the hegemonic and standardized language. While it can be assumed the variety of Spanish studied for this investigation was Peninsular Spanish, no clarification between Spanish varieties was made to participants.

In another study aggregating data on L2 Spanish learners’ attitudes toward their TL, Suby and Asención-Delaney (2008) collected data from six L2 Spanish courses at a university regarding the quantity of Spanish spoken in class by the professors. The professors were interviewed, and their students were asked to complete questionnaires regarding the use of Spanish in the L2 classroom. Suby and Asención-Delaney found that all the Spanish professors used primarily Spanish in the classroom, and the students adjusted to and comprehended the TL in the classroom. Responses collected via the questionnaire also revealed that students did not feel frustrated with the variety of Spanish their professors spoke, and the majority of students believed that their professors spoke “the right amount” of Spanish in the classroom or wanted their professors to speak more. Data gathered with the questionnaire also demonstrated that students adjusted quickly to the variety of Spanish they were most exposed to (in this case their

professor's). However, no data were collected regarding the students' perceptions of other Spanish varieties apart from their professors'.

In a more recent study, Artamonova (2020) collected data related to language attitudes of Spanish L2 learners from over 100 US university students in upper-level Spanish courses. She used a questionnaire to measure participants' attitudes toward multilingualism, language learning, and the Spanish language. The goal of her study was to examine L2 Spanish learner's language attitudes toward the Spanish language and develop a more effective general L2 Spanish language attitude questionnaire. Participants rated their personal language learning experience, Spanish's socio-cultural appeal, and the value of multilingualism on a Likert Scale, and their responses were great indicators of the nature of the L2 learners' language attitudes toward Spanish. Since all participants in this study were Spanish majors or minors, the results cannot be generalized, nor were any data collected about particular Spanish varieties. Artamonova's results showed that all participants responded positively to questions targeting attitudes toward Spanish language speakers and their cultures. For example, statements such as "I dislike that there are many Spanish speakers living in the US", and "I like at least one of the following activities: Watching movies in Spanish/reading books in Spanish/listening to music in Spanish" were rated by the learners in support of L2 Spanish study, which was not surprising given the participant pool, as it was comprised of students who had chosen to work toward majors and minors in Spanish. The results of the study by Artamonova suggest that often, L2 learners' language attitudes are inextricably linked to questions of multiculturalism and multilingualism, and consequently identity.

2.4 L2 learners' attitudes toward Spanish and its varieties

In the works related to L2 learners' language attitudes discussed in Section 2.1, three factors, (1) development of identities, (2) quantity and quality of contact with the TL, and (3) perceptions of deviation from the "standard" TL variety, were all shown to have effect on the construction of L2 learners' language attitudes toward the TL. In studies related to L2 learners' language attitudes regarding Spanish and its varieties, Artamonova (2023), Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras, and Comellas (2016), Miller (2017), Denbaum-Restrepo (2023), Martinez Franco (2019), Michalski (2023), Schmidt (2018; 2020; 2022), Schmidt and Geeslin (2022), and Wheeler and Kang (2022) noticed the same factors affecting language attitudes. In the following subsections, these works are discussed in light of these three factors that affect language attitudes. Section 2.3.1 reviews articles that highlight how the development of identity in L2 Spanish affects L2 learners' language attitudes. Section 2.3.2 reviews research that emphasizes and attempts to measure the level of impact the quantity and quality of input in the TL can have on language attitudes; and finally, Section 2.3.3 presents studies that report that L2 learners' levels of perceived deviation from the "standard" TL and its variety can greatly influence L2 learners' language attitudes.

2.4.1 Development of identity in L2 Spanish studies

Several studies have shown that themes of identity can heavily influence the language attitudes of L2 Spanish learners. For instance, Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras, and Comellas (2016) carried out an ethnographic qualitative study on immigrants in Catalonia and their individual language attitudes, which developed based on contact with Spanish and Catalan. Cortès-Colomé et al. completed 13 interviews with immigrants whose first languages were neither Spanish nor

Catalan, but who were living in Catalonia, Spain. The 13 participants reported 11 unique native languages including Bulgarian, Aramaic, Russian, Quechua, Wolof and more. All participants had learned both Spanish and Catalan as foreign languages upon moving to Spain from various countries. The authors noted that study participants showed a preference for speaking Catalan rather than Spanish due to their own identity development as individual members of a minority community. These results contrast with those collected by Ibarraran et al. (2008), who found that immigrant students to Spain in the Basque region preferred to speak Spanish because it was the hegemonic and standardized language of the region. This difference in results is perhaps due to the Catalan language holding more cultural prestige in its region than Euskara does in the Basque region. Cortès-Colomé et al. (2016) concluded that for the immigrants living in Catalonia, language was a hallmark of their identity, so making an alliance with the minority language (in this case Catalan), rather than using the hegemonic language (in this case Spanish), felt more authentic to them as second and third language speakers who were living as minority members in Spain.

Miller (2017), in her cross-sectional study of 65 bilingual English and Spanish children from first to fifth grade at two English-only public schools in the American Midwest, concluded that the children in her study were motivated to use English or Spanish because of themes of identity. Miller's participants completed a Matched Guise task and a language attitudinal questionnaire in which they were asked which language they preferred to speak in, and why. Although her Matched Guise test did not produce statistically significant results, meaning that the bilingual participants did not necessarily hold preferences for or against either language, she noticed a trend in the self-reported language preference results collected from the language attitude questionnaire she used. Miller noted that the majority of first grade students showed

equal preferences for both English and Spanish, but then second to fourth grade questionnaire responses showed an increase in preference for English. The fifth-grade questionnaire responses highlighted again a decrease in preferences for English in the fifth grade. Through a discourse analysis of participants' reasons for their explicit language attitudinal responses, Miller was able to attribute the increase in preference for English by participants between grades two and four to two factors. Miller attributed their preference to use English to the standardization of language participants were feeling in school, and their development of their identities because the participants attended English-only elementary schools and primarily worked in English-speaking peer groups to which, based on self-reporting, they wanted to belong. However, Miller surmised that the development of students' identities also led to the reduction of a preference for English among the fifth graders, noting that "this may be a point at which students start to understand the importance of their home language and become less embarrassed about speaking it" (2017, p. 114). From Miller's study we can glean that the social factor of identity and the linguistic notion of what constitutes the "standard" language seem to strongly influence the language attitudes of L2 learners and bilingual speakers of Spanish and English in the US.

2.4.2 Quantity and quality of contact in L2 Spanish studies

Studies clearly show that L2 Spanish students' ability to parse and notice phonological variants in Spanish grows as their competency in the L2 grows. In Schmidt's (2018) cross sectional study of L2 Spanish learners' categorization of dialectal sounds, it was evident that beginner L2 Spanish students at first categorized Spanish phonemes (and their variants) through the lens of their L1 (English). As competency in Spanish increased, so did students' ability to parse or notice phonological variation between Spanish dialects. Schmidt's results were corroborated by Chappell and Kanwit's (2022) study in which they found that L2 Spanish

learners have a greater ability to distinguish and perceive phonetic variants when they have greater overall proficiency in the language. The results of both of these studies, which focused more on L2 Spanish learners' skills in noticing phonetic variants rather than their attitudes toward Spanish varieties, highlight a part of the language acquisition process L2 learners must experience in order to successfully acquire the language. The findings from these studies show that learners are gradually able to distinguish more sound and thus dialectal differences as their proficiency level increases.

In 2022, Schmidt (2022) investigated the dialectal knowledge and awareness of L2 Spanish learners toward phonological variants. Dialectal knowledge and awareness involved the ability to correctly identify varieties of a language, as well as the ability to identify what about a dialect makes it distinct in comparison to other varieties. Schmidt distributed a questionnaire to L2 Spanish learners from five proficiency levels of Spanish at a US university to measure their dialectal awareness and knowledge. She found that generally, beginning learners did not have much dialectal awareness, but as their knowledge and proficiency in Spanish increased, so did their dialectal awareness. Schmidt cited three reasons that affected the L2 Spanish learners' dialectal awareness: the L2 learners' contact with native speakers of different Spanish dialects, a neutralization of a dialect due to its presence in textbooks, and explicit metalinguistic instruction about dialectal variations in the L2 classroom. In other words, as was also surmised from Schmidt (2018) and Chappell and Kanwit (2022), L2 Spanish learners' ability to notice and identify dialectal variations in the TL appear to be primarily influenced by quantity and quality of language contact but were also influenced by the perceived deviation from the standard and metalinguistic knowledge.

Results from recent studies further support the claim that quantity and quality of input in the TL can affect language attitudes. Wheeler and Kang (2022) completed a study using a verbal guise task and an accompanying questionnaire to collect data about 105 L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties. The proficiency levels of the learners in this study were self-reported and the verbal guise task measured learners' responses to speech samples on a 10-point Likert Scale, in which participants rated each recorded speaker by level of perceived comprehensibility (defined as amount of effort required to understand the speaker), and "accentedness" (defined to participants as the level to which the speaker seemed to be a native or foreign Spanish speaker). They also measured participants´ level of perceived acceptability of the content of each recording, and how open-minded participants were regarding each speaker.

Wheeler and Kang (2022) noticed that as L2 Spanish proficiency level increased, so did positive ratings of "accentedness" which they defined as "the perceived difference in the phonology of L2 speech from native or local speech", in other words, L2 learners with higher proficiency showed more positive attitudes toward Spanish speakers that did not sound "American" or "like an English speaker" (2022, p. 159). It was also clear that the more exposure participants had with a TL dialect (in class or in personal life), the more comprehensible the TL dialect was rated. An interesting result of Wheeler and Kang's study was that self-identified heritage speakers of Spanish showed stronger opinions and language attitudes toward specific Spanish varieties. For instance, they usually demonstrated more positive opinions toward their familial variety, to which they had received the most exposure, and they expressed more negative opinions about the other varieties. These results exemplify the convergence of the effects of the quantity of input and Spanish L2 learners' and heritage speakers' identity.

An increase in social contact between dialects can influence L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes. Schmidt (2020) completed a longitudinal study in which she examined L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes toward dialectal variations of pronunciation before and after a six-week study abroad program in Argentina. She noted that the opinions of her study abroad students toward Argentinian dialectal phonetic variants, such as the lenited-/s/, grew to be more favorable after their time immersed in the culture and dialect. The results from this study demonstrated that quality and quantity of contact with the TL, or in this case the target dialect, can affect language attitudes, and that the more input L2 learners receive, the more commonplace a variant may seem. What Suby and Asención-Delaney (2008) demonstrated inside the L2 Spanish classroom can be just as true outside of it, in that L2 learners tend to become accustomed to the variety of their TL with which they have the most contact.

Artamonova (2023) also completed a longitudinal study of L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes before and after short term study abroad programs, however the students studied in Spain instead of Argentina. Her results evidenced an increase in favorable language attitudes in the students toward Spanish after their study abroad experiences (organized by various American universities). Participants were asked to complete multiple questionnaires both before and after their study abroad programs. Artamonova noted that when students received positive reinforcement from their host culture about their L2 communicative abilities, their confidence and language attitudes toward their L2 increased. The positive reinforcement stemming from an increase of quantity and quality of contact with the TL positively influenced the students' reflections upon their own language learning experience, thereby affecting their language attitudes.

2.4.3 Perceptions of the "standard" in L2 Spanish studies

Research has provided evidence showing how participants' language attitudes toward Spanish and its varieties are influenced by perceptions of a "standard" variety of Spanish. Schmidt and Geeslin (2022) completed a study using a verbal guise test with L2 learners of Spanish at a Midwestern university in which they studied L2 learners' perceptions of regional varieties of Spanish. They asked their participants to rate four varieties of Spanish by answering questions related to prestige and solidarity. The variables characterizing the Spanish varieties in this study were phonetic variations specific to their corresponding geographical regions, in this case associated with four Spanish macro dialects: Peninsular, Mexican, Caribbean, and Rioplatense Spanish. Schmidt and Geeslin found that participants' perceptions of deviation from the "standard" Spanish taught in the L2 classroom impacted their language attitudes. The authors used the prestige judgment results of their verbal guise task, to determine participants' perception of deviation from the "standard" Spanish, and what the results of their verbal guise task showed was a preference for Peninsular and Mexican Spanish. In their discussion of the results, Schmidt and Geeslin surmised that this preference related to the recordings used as stimuli to represent Mexican and Peninsular Spanish being less "radical" than the Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish recordings because the speakers adhered to orthographic pronunciation more than their Argentinian and Puerto Rican counterparts (2022, p. 227). L2 learners, who related the orthographic pronunciation of Spanish words with what was "correct" and "standard", perceived most variation from the orthography (or the "standard") in the recordings of the Puerto Rican Spanish speakers. Schmidt and Geeslin's hypothesis that L2 Spanish learners who reported having spent more time in direct contact with the L2 would greatly affect their language attitudes toward Spanish varieties was partially supported. Schmidt and Geeslin concluded that the impact

of quantity of input did not sufficiently explain L2 learners' attitudes, but rather the quality of learners' contact with native Spanish speakers while abroad also played in role in learners' development of language attitudes. The participants who had reported studying abroad in Spain and creating deep friendships with native Spanish speakers rated Peninsular Spanish significantly higher in the prestige judgment than the rest of the participants. Their findings demonstrate how a combination of factors can influence L2 learners' attitudes.

In Denbaum-Restrepo's (2023) longitudinal study on L2 Spanish learners' use of preverbal subjects in Wh-questions (e.g. *¿Cuándo tú comiste…?* or *¿Cuándo comiste tú …?*), the authors found that the factor of quantity and quality of contact with the TL (with the target dialect being Dominican Spanish) during a six-week study abroad program was not as influential in students' speech as they had originally hypothesized it would be. Instead, students' internalized perceptions of a "standard" Spanish variety outweighed the received input from Dominican Spanish, in which pre-verbal subject pronouns are preferred. The six participants in this study did not increase their use of preverbal subjects in Wh-questions, common in the Dominican Spanish dialect. In fact, their at-home counterparts in the study actually increased their use of preverbal subjects more than the study abroad students. Due to a small sample size, Denbaum-Restrepo could not statistically analyze the results, but through individual analysis of the responses from the pre- and post-tests from the students who studied abroad, she concluded that a student may not acquire the regional dialect or its features if the features are stigmatized. Participants' language attitudes did not change post study abroad, nor did their use of preverbal subjects. Denbaum-Restrepo cited internalized prescriptive ("standardized") grammar rules taught in L2 Spanish courses for this result.

As a part of her doctoral dissertation, Martinez Franco (2019) studied L2 Spanish instructors' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties through questionnaire responses, focus group interviews, and field note observations. Although Martinez Franco described the effects of phonological, morphological, and pragmatic variables, she also presented evidence that instructors who spoke Spanish varieties deemed prestigious (either by them, by their peers, in textbooks, or by their L2 students) did not change their production and use of the language in the presence of their students. These instructors who participated in Martinez Franco's study stated that their natural cadence, pronunciation, and lexical variations increased the quality of input L2 students received in their classrooms. In contrast, those instructors who spoke varieties deemed "nonstandard" (primarily Caribbean dialects) admitted to modifying their production of their Spanish variety for the benefit of the students. These instructors cited issues related to student comprehension of pronunciation, worries about student confusion regarding lexical variations not found in their textbook, and choices to exemplify grammar concepts in speech as reasons for modifying their pronunciation at the expense of speaking naturally. Martinez Franco's dissertation raises questions about how one's identity (as L2 learners or as L2 instructors) is inherently impacted in the L2 classroom and can also influence one's language attitudes.

The results of Michalski's (2023) study corroborated those of Martinez Franco (2019), in that what learners perceive as being the "standard" forms (in this study phonological forms) are usually more desired or favorably rated by L2 Spanish learners in language attitude research. Michalski asked 125 students learning L2 Spanish at a US university to complete a Matched Guise task varying dynamic and mutable phonetic features in Spanish. Using recordings of the same text produced by five male Spanish speakers from different geographical regions, Andalusia, Coastal Colombia, Puerto Rico, North-Central Spain, and Northern Mexico, he

digitally modified the recordings to exhibit or not exhibit coda lenition of the word “para”, and /s/ aspiration. Results of the matched guise task showed that the speakers’ voices were not rated the same by the students and that nonstandard variants with coda elision and /s/ aspiration were rated lower. When the Andalusian and Puerto Rican speakers’ recordings exhibited an eliminated coda, participants rated the speakers more attractive, and Michalski pointed to coda elision being “standard” or expected for such dialects as a possible reason for this finding. Generally, recordings with at least one standard variant were rated higher than all recordings without standard variants. In his discussion, Michalski noted that students who had been exposed to dialectal variation in Spanish (usually due to having taken a linguistics course), had more positive views of nonstandard forms. However, overall, his participants preferred standard forms of speech and Michalski cited their level of exposure to “standard” Spanish in the L2 classroom as the reason for this preference.

At the beginning of this chapter, research regarding L1 Spanish speakers’ language attitudes toward their language and its varieties was briefly described. The ongoing *PRECAVES XXI* project spearheaded by Cestero and Paredes (2014) continues to add to the well-studied field of L1 Spanish speakers. While L1 Spanish speakers’ and L2 Spanish learners’ language attitudes seem to be influenced by some of the same factors (i.e. themes of identity and perceptions of the “standard” variety of a language), the factors’ effects manifest themselves differently between groups. For example, L1 Spanish speakers often demonstrate first-language and first-variety preference, but, as seen in Santana Marrero’s (2022) study of journalism students at a university in Andalusia, Spain, when a Spanish variety is stigmatized, its native speakers may exhibit clashing language attitudes.

For L2 learners, their identities are not intrinsically connected to their L2 language attitudes in the same way as L1 speakers' language attitudes can be. Instead, L2 learners' language attitudes can be affected by their identities as L1 speakers of a different language, as the results of LoCastro's (2001) longitudinal study suggested, in which the Japanese participants were unwilling to fully adopt pragmatic norms of English due to worries of being perceived as "less Japanese". The development of L2 learners' language attitudes is affected by the L2 acquisition process as well, in that previous research demonstrates that the quantity and quality of contact with native speakers of the TL influence L2 learner's attitudes (Schmidt, 2020; Artamonova, 2023). Regarding particularly L2 Spanish learners, it is clear that there are three external factors that are primarily influential in L2 Spanish learners' formation and evolution of language attitudes toward Spanish and its varieties. These factors are: (1) development of identity, (2) quantity and quality of contact with the TL, and (3) perception of the "standard" in Spanish.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the participants, instruments, and data analysis techniques employed in the present study. The methodology was originally inspired by the design implemented by Schmidt and Geeslin (2022). Data were collected through an online questionnaire consisting of a verbal guise task, a short proficiency test, and sociodemographic questionnaire. Section 3.1 describes the sample of participants, all of whom were university L2 Spanish students. Section 3.2 details the manner in which data was collected, and specifies the instruments used in the present study. Finally, Section 3.3 presents the statistical model and tools used to analyze and produce the present study's results.

3.1 Participants

This investigation examined a cross-sectional representative sample of native English-speaking university students enrolled in L2 Spanish classes. Eligible participants were native English speakers who were 18 years of age or older and had been enrolled in at least one L2 Spanish course (1000-4000 level) at the University of Georgia (UGA). Students who were not native speakers of English and those who were not learning Spanish as a second language (e.g., heritage Spanish speakers) were excluded from this study because their language backgrounds could skew results. As shown in Artamonova (2020), often individuals that are fluent in multiple languages have different (usually more favorable) language attitudes due to the likelihood that

such speakers place greater value on multilingualism. Participants were recruited by announcements posted to Spanish L2 language courses' online platforms (eLC). Participants were also recruited using the snowball participant collection technique in which participants encouraged their eligible friends or peers to complete the study.

Eligibility was determined by participants' responses to a portion of the online Google Forms questionnaire used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire automatically forwarded participants to its final page and ended their participation if they responded "no" to being a native English speaker learning Spanish as a second language. The participant pool originally consisted of 70 students from beginning to intermediate-advanced Spanish classes, but four participants were eliminated from the study because they reported studying Spanish as their third or fourth language. They were eliminated because it was thought that participants who have learned or speak multiple languages would more favorably rate all varieties due to their multicultural experiences.

Based on participant answers to socio-demographic questions, participants ranged in age from 18 to 22 years old and consisted of 47 females, 17 males, and two non-binary persons. Seven of the 66 study participants (10.6%) reported never having studied Spanish before enrolling in a course at their university. Six participants (9.1%) reported having studied one year of Spanish before enrolling in a UGA course, and seven (10.6%) reported having taken two years of Spanish before taking a Spanish course at UGA. Fourteen participants (21.2%) reported having taken three years of Spanish, and eleven participants (16.7%) reported having studied Spanish formally for four years prior to university. Nineteen participants (28.8%) reported five or more years of experience with the language, prior to enrolling in a UGA Spanish course.

In the sociodemographic and language background section of the questionnaire, participants were asked how many semesters they had studied Spanish at the university level. Twenty-six participants (39.4%) reported having studied Spanish for one semester or less. Thirteen (19.7%) were either in their second semester of studying Spanish or had studied Spanish for two semesters. Eleven participants (16.7%) had taken Spanish for three to four semesters, and sixteen respondents (24.2%) for five or more semesters. Twenty-seven participants (41%) reported being registered as a student with a major or minor in Spanish.

Participants were grouped in two ways, each way based on one factor, in order to seek evidence to address Hypothesis 1 (H1) and Hypothesis 2 (H2), respectively. The first hypothesis was related to proficiency, and it postulated that L2 Spanish learners with lower proficiency would demonstrate stronger (either more negative or more positive) language attitudes toward Spanish dialects in the verbal guise task. To address H1, three groups of participants were created. Respondents were placed in groups based on their scores on a short Spanish proficiency test. The beginners were those who scored 25% or less on the test; the beginner-intermediate learner group scored from 25% to 75%; and the intermediate-advanced group made over 75%. (see Section 3.2 for a description of the proficiency test). Based on the proficiency test results, there were nine beginner participants, 36 beginner-intermediate participants, and 21 intermediate-advanced participants in the study.

To address H2, the 66-person sample was also divided into four groups based on participants' responses to the sociodemographic questionnaire. This hypothesis speculated that L2 Spanish learners who reported having spent more time in contact with the TL on a weekly basis would rate all dialects more favorably for each of the three judgment types: solidarity, prestige, and comprehensibility, than would those who reported using Spanish less often.

Participants were categorized into four groups based on the amount of contact with Spanish they reported. Time Group 1 (TG1) reported using Spanish outside of the classroom for less than one hour weekly; Time Group 2 (TG2) indicated that they were in contact with Spanish outside of the classroom for one to two hours weekly. Time Group 3 (TG3) reported practicing Spanish for three to five hours weekly, and Time Group 4 (TG4) reported using Spanish six or more hours weekly outside of the classroom. Participants who self-reported having experienced a study abroad trip to a Spanish speaking country lasting six weeks or more and who used Spanish more than 50% of the time while abroad were also placed in TG4. After data collection, there were 25 learners in TG1, 20 learners in TG2, 11 students in TG3, and 10 in TG4.

3.2 Data collection and instruments

In addition to sociodemographic and language background sections of the online questionnaire, a verbal guise task was incorporated into the questionnaire in order to measure the participants' language attitudes toward four Spanish varieties: Argentinian, Mexican, Peninsular, and Puerto Rican Spanish. Like Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) study (see Chapter 2), the verbal guise task was the instrument chosen to measure participants' responses to judgement types of solidarity and prestige. However, in contrast to Schmidt and Geeslin's investigation, the present study included a third judgment type, namely, comprehensibility. Additionally, Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) dialect identification task was not included in the present study's questionnaire, as their reported results on this task were not statistically significant. In the discussion of these results Schmidt and Geeslin noted that often native speakers could not correctly identify a speaker's dialect, and therefore, they concluded that asking L2 learners to do so would not be appropriate or prove useful. Furthermore, whereas Schmidt and Geeslin employed audio

recordings of native speakers saying the same two sentences as stimuli in their verbal guise task, the present study utilized authentic videos of native speakers as stimuli in the verbal guise task.

3.2.1 Selection of videos

The videos used in the verbal guise task were selected from the *Voices of the Hispanic World* archive of native Spanish speaker interviews. This archive, originally named by its creator Dr. Terrell A. Morgan as the *Digital Catalog of the Sounds of Spanish*, is maintained by the Ohio State University Center for Languages, Literatures and Cultures and the Ohio State University Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Seven videos were selected from this archive and to be used as stimuli in the verbal guise task because they exhibit authentic, unscripted natural speech by native speakers.

One video of a male speaker and one video of a female speaker from each macro dialect were selected to be used as stimuli in the study, except in the case of Caribbean Spanish. Due to the lack of a female Caribbean Spanish speaker video in the archive, only one video of a male Puerto Rican Spanish speaker was used as stimuli to represent the dialect. Therefore, learner participants watched and responded to items corresponding to a total of seven videos. Speakers in the videos exhibited geographically-based phonetic and phonological variants common in their respective macro dialects. A list of the phonetic and phonological variants exhibited in the recordings by the speakers of each macro dialect can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Dialect Videos: Linguistic Features

Dialect	**Linguistic Features**
Spain	/s/ aspiration or deletion, deaffrication of /tʃ/, ceceo or distinction, jota uvular
Argentina	/s/ aspiration, jota velar, zheísmo and sheísmo
Mexico	jota velar
Puerto Rico	/s/ aspiration, liquid lateralization, velarization of word-final /n/, jota glotal, uvular /r/

The Mexican Spanish speakers and the Argentinian Spanish speakers demonstrated less phonetic or phonological variants than the Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish speakers. The videos used as stimuli in the study ranged in length. The Argentinian speaker videos were 30 and 40 seconds long. The Mexican Spanish speaker videos were 1:41 and 1:46 minutes each. The Peninsular Spanish speaker videos were each 0:36 and 0:46 seconds long, and the Puerto Rican speaker video was 0:53 seconds long. Each recording was chosen due to its simplicity of content and high sound quality. All speakers used basic vocabulary in their speech, discussing everyday themes such as family, self, sports, or food, which are some of the first themes taught in the UGA's L2 Spanish courses, therefore increasing the likelihood of being comprehended by the beginning L2 Spanish participants.

Because this study was aimed at collecting data from a participant pool that included true beginners who had been studying Spanish for less than a semester, videos were used as stimuli rather than audio recordings, allowing participants to see the speakers in order to facilitate comprehension of their speech.

3.2.2 Judgment questions selection

In addition to the judgment types of prestige (i.e., intelligence) and solidarity (i.e., friendliness) that Schmidt and Geeslin (2022) investigated, a third judgment of comprehensibility was added to the verbal guise task in the present study. All judgments by participants were rated on a Likert Scale of one to five. For the solidarity judgment, participants were asked: *On a scale of 1 to 5, how friendly does this speaker seem to you?* Participants could rate each speaker from *not friendly at all* (1) to *very friendly* (5). The prestige judgment asked participants: *On a scale of 1 to 5, how intelligent does this speaker seem to you*? A score of one was defined as *not intelligent at all,* and a score of five was defined as *very intelligent.* The comprehensibility judgment posed the question: *On a scale of 1 to 5, how comprehensible is this speaker to you?* to participants. A score of one by participants signaled that the video was perceived as completely incomprehensible to the participant, and a score of five represented total comprehension on the participant's part. These questions were similar to those of verbal guise tasks created for previous studies researching language attitudes, including Alford and Strothers (1990), Schmidt and Geeslin (2022), Wheeler and Kang (2022) and Zhang and Hu (2008). In order to recruit more participants, especially given the lack of incentives for study participation, the questionnaire was kept as short as possible and included only one question per judgment type.

Since the study included participants from all proficiency levels, the inclusion of the comprehensibility judgment to the design of the present study was intended to shed light on how one's personal proficiency level could affect language attitudes of L2 learners. The majority of the studies measuring learners' language attitudes noted a preference for native-like pronunciation in the L2 classroom (Beebe, 1980; Martinez Franco, 2019; Miranda-Barrios, 2011; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022; Zhang & Hu, 2008). However, these studies did not include beginning level learners of. This study aimed to fill this gap in the research.

3.2.3 Proficiency test and language background questionnaire

The third part of the questionnaire distributed to respondents was a 20-question multiple choice proficiency test. This proficiency test was included for the purpose of creating groups based on proficiency level in order to address H1 (see Appendix A). It was originally created as a placement test for a midwestern university. The fourth part of the survey collected participants' answers to questions about their language background and a sociodemographic questionnaire. Responses to the language background section were used to create sample groups based on self-reported quantity of Spanish used per week (both speaking and hearing) outside of the L2 classroom. The language background questionnaire also included questions about previous language learning experience, history of contact with Spanish, and their opinions of Spanish varieties.

The final two questions of the questionnaire asked respondents outright: (1) *Which Spanish variety do you enjoy listening to the most?* and (2) *Hypothetically, if you could become highly fluent in any variety of Spanish, which Spanish would you choose?* Question (1) asked participants to choose one of five given options which were: Argentinian Spanish, Caribbean

Spanish, Central American Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Peninsular Spanish, or they could choose *Other* and write in their favorite variety. For the second of these explicit language attitudinal questions, participants were given seven choices to choose from which included the five same answers as Question (1), a choice for *I would like to become fluent in Spanish- any variety*, and *I do not want to become fluent in Spanish*. For this second question participants were also given a space in which they could justify their preference for a particular variety if they so desired, but they were not required to do so. Comparisons between the results of the verbal guise task and participants' explicit responses regarding their opinions of Spanish varieties are examined in Chapter 4. Explicit opinion response data cannot be solely relied upon since often participants' true attitudes toward a language, or its varieties, do not coincide with the responses they provide in interviews or questionnaires (Giles & Billings, 2004). However, a comparison of the results of the two data sets, the verbal guise results and the participants' responses to the language attitudinal questions could offer interesting insights into the perceptions of L2 Spanish learners toward Spanish varieties and uncover any potentially contradictory results.

3.3 Data analysis

For the verbal guise task, the responses were individually coded. Descriptive statistics were created for each macro-dialect according to the data collected from the verbal guise task. Results (mean and standard deviation) were found for each of the three judgment types for both stratified samples (proficiency groups and time groups). A linear mixed model was used to test the statistical significance of results through JASP, a user-friendly graphic interface of the R program.

Linear mixed models were run on the data sets of participants' ratings of each macro dialect (Argentinian, Mexican, Peninsular, and Puerto Rican Spanish) pertaining to each judgment type. In other words, the linear mixed model tested if ratings of each Spanish variety for each proficiency group (ProfG1, ProfG2, ProfG3), each time group (TG1, TG2, TG3, TG4), and for the total sample (all ratings from all 66 participants) were significantly different from one another. Finally, each version of the linear mixed model was used to contrast dialectal ratings to each other in order to find statistical significance between ratings for the four dialects. An example of such a statistical contrast would be between the ratings of ProfG2 for the solidarity judgment, in which a statistically significant difference between ratings of Puerto Rican Spanish and Mexican Spanish was found and exhibited by a p-value <.001 (see Chapter 4, Table 7). Any linear mixed model that produced a p-value less than .05 demonstrated statistical significance. Using the linear mixed model, empirical evidence of difference in ratings and language attitudes between dialects for each participant group could be produced. Detailed results are discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis of the verbal guise task are presented in this chapter and discussed in light of H1 and H2. H1 posited that the lowest Spanish-proficiency learner group, in this case ProfG1, would exhibit stronger (either negative or positive) language attitudes than the higher proficiency groups (ProfG2 and ProfG3). H2 assumed the more time the L2 Spanish learners reported spending time using Spanish each week, the more favorably they would rate all varieties in the verbal guise task. This chapter also summarizes the results produced by (1) the total sample (all participants' responses), (2) the proficiency groups (i.e., responses from each proficiency group), and (3) the time groups (those based on frequency of contact with Spanish outside of the classroom) vis-à-vis H1 and H2.

Section 4.1 presents the results of the statistical analysis of responses by all 66 study participants, using a linear mixed model test. First, results of the total sample statistical test regarding the solidarity judgment (i.e., participants' ratings of each dialect's perceived friendliness) are summarized. These are followed by the results of all respondents for the prestige and comprehensibility judgment ratings, which were intended to reflect participants' perceived intelligence and ease of comprehension of the speakers of each dialect. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe the analysis of the solidarity judgment question and discuss its results in relation to H1 and H2. In Section 4.2, the results of the linear mixed model tests for each proficiency

group (ProfG1, ProfG2, and ProfG3) are compared to seek evidence in support of H1; Section 4.3 does the same for H2 but for each of the time groups (TG1, TG2, TG3, and TG4) which were informed by participants' reported time in contact with Spanish. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 are concerned with the results of the prestige judgment ratings as they relate to the same hypotheses and participant groups. Section 4.6 reports the results of the comprehensibility judgment ratings seeking support for H1 (proficiency level) in the same manner, and Section 4.7 discusses results for H2 (weekly use). Section 4.8 describes results from participants' responses to the explicit language attitudinal questions: (1) *Which Spanish variety do you enjoy listening to the most?* and (2) *Hypothetically, if you could become highly fluent in any variety of Spanish, which Spanish would you choose?* In Section 4.9, results from the various analyses are discussed and summarized.

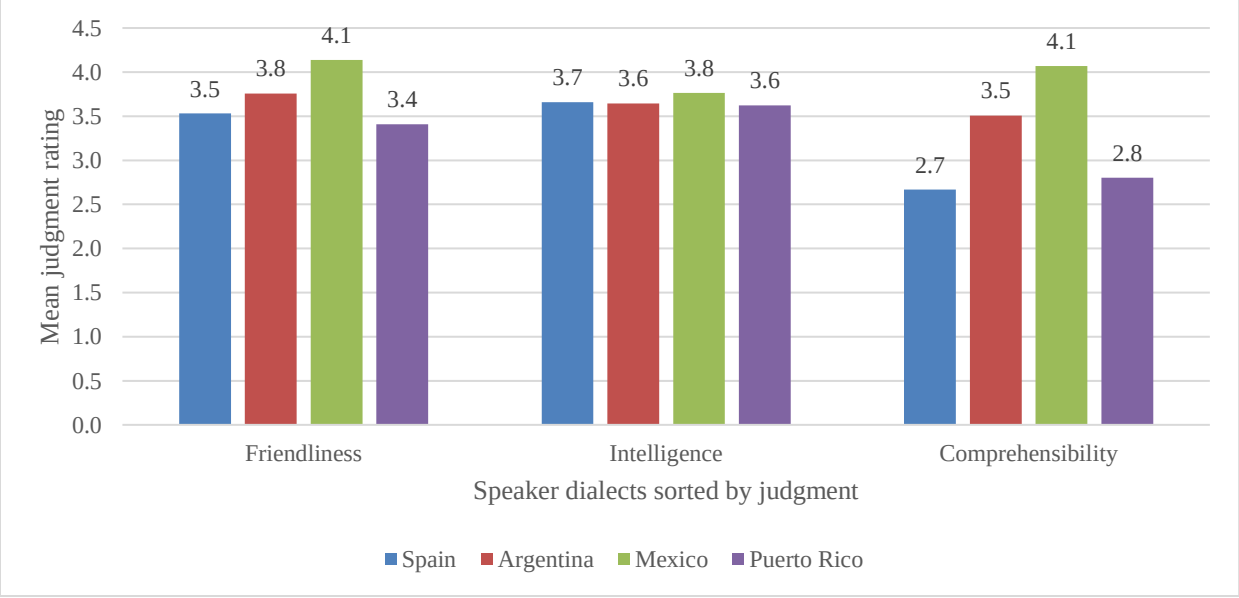
4.1 Total sample results

To understand the results of this study, first it is important to define some terms that will be used throughout this chapter. This study was interested in collecting data related to the opinions of L2 learners towards Spanish varieties and did so by creating datasets of participants' ratings regarding each judgment type. Each of the three judgment types, solidarity, prestige, and comprehensibility, corresponds to one question asked after every video that acted as stimuli in the verbal guise task. The solidarity judgment question was designed to elicit the learners' ratings to demonstrate how friendly they felt the speakers in the videos were. The prestige judgment item in the verbal guise task was meant to elicit how intelligent participants rated the speakers in the videos to be, based on their perceptions. Finally, the comprehensibility judgment question attempted to discern how much L2 Spanish learners perceived being able to understand each of the speakers' discourse after listening to their video.

In Figure 1 each of the average ratings per dialect and per judgment from all 66 participants is displayed. Section 4.1.1 will discuss the solidarity judgment results which were found from ratings elicited using the question *How friendly does this speaker seem to you?* Section 4.1.2 discusses the prestige judgments results were elicited from an analysis of the ratings to the question *How intelligent does this speaker seem to you?* Finally, Section 4.1.3 addresses the results to the comprehensibility judgment, of which ratings were elicited from the question *How comprehensible does this speaker seem to you?*

Figure 1

Total Sample results per dialect and per judgment



4.1.1 Solidarity judgment results: Total sample

A linear mixed model test was used to analyze all solidarity ratings as one sample. The test of all 66 participants (total sample) yielded a statistically significant p-value of less than

.001. The total sample solidarity ratings are summarized in Table 2 and include the sample's estimated marginal means (EMMs), which are located under "Estimate".

Table 2

Estimated Marginal Means (EMMs) of Solidarity Rantings for Total Sample

EMMs: Solidarity Total Sample

				95% CI	
Row	**Video**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**
1	Argentina	3.758	0.086	3.590	3.926
2	Mexico	4.136	0.084	3.972	4.300
3	Puerto Rico	3.409	0.114	3.186	3.632
4	Spain	3.530	0.083	3.368	3.693

As the table shows, Mexican Spanish (M= 4.136) received the highest solidarity ratings from the participants when all their responses to the solidarity question from the verbal guise task were considered together. Argentinian Spanish (M=3.758) was rated second most friendly, and Puerto Rican Spanish (M=3.409) was rated least friendly in the total sample rankings.

Table 3, the first of several dialectal contrast tables, provides the statistical differences among the four Spanish dialects in light of the results of the solidarity judgment ratings produced by the linear mixed model. For all of the dialectal contrast tables throughout this chapter, each abbreviation corresponds to each Spanish variety that was used as stimuli in this investigation. In the dialectal contrast tables, the Spanish variety abbreviation before the slash was contrasted to the Spanish variety following the slash using a linear mixed model test. For example, the first row of Table 3 displays a contrast between the Mexican Spanish (abbreviated MX) solidarity ratings from all 66 participants and the Puerto Rican Spanish (abbreviated PR) solidarity ratings. Peninsular Spanish ratings for the verbal guise task are denoted by the ES abbreviation, and Argentinian Spanish ratings are denoted by the abbreviation AR.

Table 3

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of the Total Sample

Solidarity total sample: Dialectal contrasts

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.727	0.134	∞	0.464	0.991	5.414	< .001*
MX/AR	0.379	0.101	∞	0.181	0.577	3.746	< .001*
MX/ES	0.606	0.123	∞	0.365	0.848	4.919	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.348	0.123	∞	-0.590	-0.107	-2.832	0.014*
PR/ES	-0.121	0.123	∞	-0.362	0.120	-0.985	0.324
AR/ES	0.227	0.112	∞	0.007	0.447	2.025	0.086

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 3 shows the statistical contrasts between Spanish variety pairs for all participants' responses to the solidarity question, using the linear mixed model. Mexican Spanish ratings, when contrasted with the three other dialects, displayed statistical significance. In other words, from the data collected from all 66 participants, Mexican Spanish was distinguished as significantly different from the other dialects in its ratings of how friendly the speakers seemed. From these results, it is clear that Mexican Spanish was perceived as significantly more friendly than the other three dialects when considering the total sample. Another statistical difference of note in these dialectal contrasts was found between Argentinian Spanish, which was rated second-most friendly, and Puerto Rican Spanish, rated least friendly, in the total sample. Overall, based on the participants' verbal guise ratings, Puerto Rican Spanish was perceived significantly less friendly than Mexican and Argentinian Spanish. The total sample linear mixed model test did not statistically rate Puerto Rican Spanish lower, and therefore less friendly, than Peninsular Spanish. However, in Table 2 the EMMs exhibit that Puerto Rican Spanish (M = 3.409) still received a lower average score of perceived friendliness from all participants than did Peninsular Spanish (M = 3.530). No other dialectal contrasts were statistically significant.

4.1.2 Prestige judgment results: Total Sample

The linear mixed model test was also used to analyze the prestige ratings by all the participants in the study. Remember that for the prestige ratings participants indicated on a Likert Scale how intelligent speakers of each dialect seemed to be. The linear mixed model test analyzed all prestige ratings from the total sample but did not produce a statistically significant result (p-value = 0.370). In other words, the ratings of the videos produced by speakers of the four dialects were not substantially different statistically when the results for each of the dialects were compared with each other. The prestige EMMs of each dialect from the total sample are shown below in Table 4.

Table 4

EMMs of Prestige Ratings for Total Sample

EMMs: Prestige Total Sample

				95% CI	
Row	**Video**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**
1	Argentina	3.644	0.078	3.491	3.797
2	Mexico	3.765	0.080	3.608	3.922
3	Puerto Rico	3.621	0.105	3.414	3.828
4	Spain	3.659	0.079	3.504	3.814

Just as in the total sample solidarity ratings, Mexican Spanish demonstrated the highest mean of ratings in the prestige judgment. In other words, the total 66-person sample showed a preference for Mexican Spanish as the most seemingly "intelligent" and therefore the most seemingly "prestigious", based on the learners' perceptions of the Mexican speakers' videos. This outcome was not surprising because as Schmidt and Geeslin (2022) found in their study, L2 learners perceive speech that aligns most with Spanish orthography to be the most "standard". The Mexican speakers in the videos only demonstrated one phonetic variant, that of the *jota*

velar, whereas the speakers from the other regions demonstrated more phonetic variants in their speech.

In comparison with the results from the solidarity judgment, the second-highest rated dialect was Peninsular Spanish rather than Argentinian Spanish, which was rated the second-highest variety in terms of solidarity/friendliness. Overall, the learner participants perceived the Peninsular Spanish speakers as slightly more "intelligent" than the Argentinian Spanish speakers. Puerto Rican Spanish demonstrated the lowest mean (EMM) for the prestige judgment of the total sample. Table 5 presents the summary of differences of EMMs across the total sample and between dialects.

Table 5

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of the Total Sample

Prestige total sample: Dialectal contrasts

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.144	0.102	∞	-0.055	0.343	1.418	0.850
MX/AR	0.121	0.082	∞	-0.040	0.283	1.469	0.850
MX/ES	0.106	0.082	∞	-0.056	0.268	1.286	0.850
PR/AR	-0.023	0.102	∞	-0.222	0.177	-0.223	1.000
PR/ES	-0.038	0.102	∞	-0.237	0.162	-0.372	1.000
AR/ES	-0.015	0.082	∞	-0.177	0.146	-0.184	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

None of the total sample prestige ratings were statistically significant. This is not surprising because the prestige ratings for the total sample were not statistically significant either. Overall, participants did not rate the speakers of the four Spanish dialects differently for the prestige/intelligence verbal guise item. The results of Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) investigation did not show much variation between participants' responses for the prestige

judgment either. While they found that Puerto Rican Spanish was rated significantly least favorably in the prestige judgment, their results for the prestige judgments of the other three dialects did not show any statistical significance. In both Schmidt and Geeslin's study and the present study, the prestige judgment induced less varied responses from participants than did the solidarity judgment, which resulted in stronger statistical differences between dialects.

4.1.3 Comprehensibility judgment results: Total sample

The linear mixed model test for the comprehensibility ratings of the total sample produced statistically significant results with a p-value of <.001. Comprehensibility ratings refer to participants' responses on a Likert Scale regarding how much they felt they understood the speaker in each video of the verbal guise task. Table 6 shows the comprehensibility EMMs of the total sample per dialect. The difference among the EMMs is noticeably greater than the differences among EMMs for the solidarity and prestige judgments.

Table 6

EMMs of Comprehensibility Ratings for Total Sample

EMMs: Comprehensibility Total Sample

				95% CI	
Row	**Video**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**
1	Argentina	3.508	0.091	3.329	3.686
2	Mexico	4.068	0.088	3.896	4.241
3	Puerto Rico	2.803	0.124	2.559	3.047
4	Spain	2.667	0.092	2.486	2.847

As was the case for the total sample results of the solidarity and prestige judgments, Mexican Spanish was rated highest in comprehensibility among all dialects. Argentinian Spanish

was rated second-most comprehensible. Puerto Rican Spanish was rated third-most comprehensible and Peninsular Spanish was rated least comprehensible.

Table 7

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of the Total Sample

Comprehensibility total sample: Dialectal contrasts

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.265	0.128	∞	1.014	1.517	9.859	< .001*
MX/AR	0.561	0.104	∞	0.357	0.764	5.408	< .001*
MX/ES	1.402	0.104	∞	1.198	1.605	13.507	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.705	0.128	∞	-0.955	-0.454	-5.521	< .001*
PR/ES	0.136	0.127	∞	-0.113	0.386	1.070	0.285
AR/ES	0.841	0.104	∞	0.638	1.044	8.122	< .001*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

As Table 7 exhibits, only the dialectal contrast between Puerto Rican (M = 2.803) and Peninsular Spanish (M = 2.667) varieties was not statistically significant. All other contrasts between dialects produced statistically significant results. Clearly, the total sample comprehensibility ratings showed a gap in preference ratings between Mexican (M = 4.068) and Argentinian Spanish (M = 3.508), which were rated much higher than Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish.

4.2 Solidarity judgment: H1 results

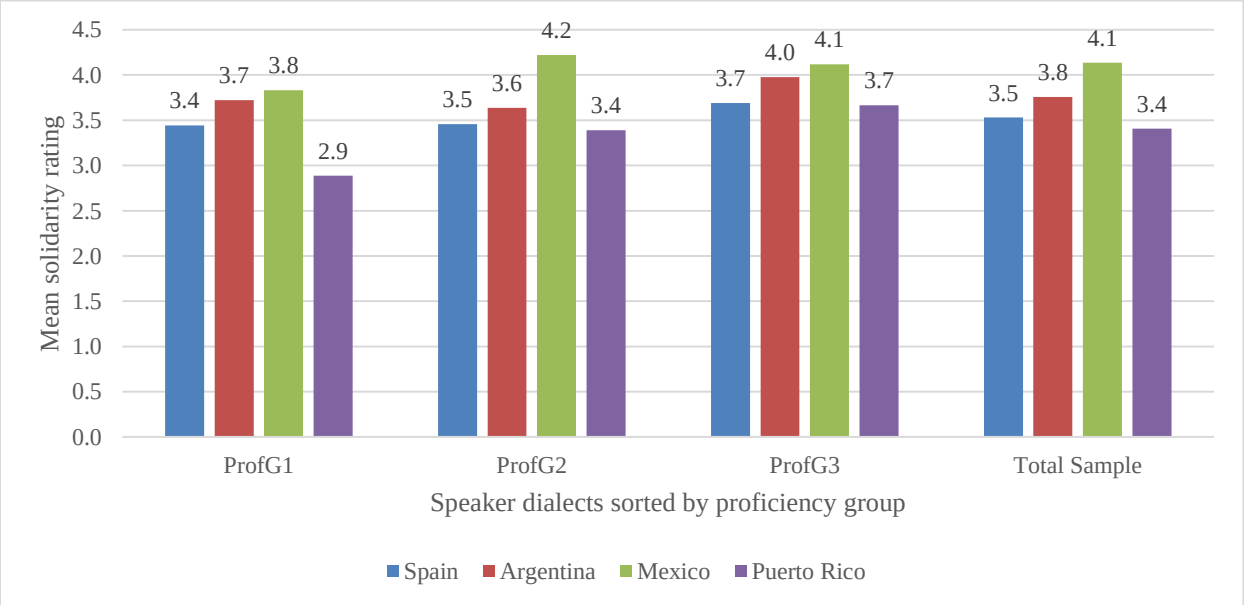
In this and the following sections, the means of the stratified samples (all 66 participants divided into proficiency groups and time groups) are compared between the four identified macro dialects. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe the results of the linear mixed model tests as they relate to H1 and H2, respectively. H1 expected that participants with lower proficiency levels (ProfG1) would demonstrate stronger (negative or positive) language attitudes toward the four

Spanish varieties in comparison to participants with higher proficiency levels (ProfG2 and ProfG3). For the solidarity judgment results, Mexican Spanish continued to be rated most friendly between all four dialects and for all proficiency groups (see Figure 2).

When the linear mixed model was run for the solidarity judgment between proficiency groups, only ProfG2 (beginner-intermediate Spanish learners) showed statistical significance with a p-value of <.001. ProfG1 (beginners) and ProfG3 (intermediate-advanced Spanish learners) did not produce statistical significance for this solidarity judgement. Each proficiency group's p-values of the linear mixed model test regarding the solidarity judgment are displayed in Table 19 in Appendix B. Figure 2 visually displays the rounded EMMs of the solidarity judgment by proficiency group for each macro dialect. For tables of unrounded EMMs and standard deviations, refer to Table 18 in Appendix B.

Figure 2

Solidarity means: Proficiency Groups



Second to Mexican Spanish, participants rated Argentinian Spanish as the second-most seemingly friendly dialect among all proficiency groups. Between proficiency groups, ProfG3 (intermediate-advanced learners) generally rated all Spanish varieties more favorably compared to ProfG1 and ProfG2. ProfG1 rated all dialects lower, and therefore less seemingly friendly, than the other proficiency groups. ProfG2 rated speakers of Argentinian, Peninsular, and Puerto Rican Spanish similarly while rating Mexican Spanish noticeably higher.

H1 supposed that ProfG1 would produce the highest or lowest ratings of the three proficiency groups. Results showed that beginning L2 Spanish learners (ProfG1) rated all four dialects lower than the other proficiency groups (ProfG2 and ProfG3) but did not show statistically different opinions between dialects. As shown in Figure 2, ProfG1 rated every dialect lower in perceived friendliness than ProfG2 and ProfG3. These results support H1 that predicted ProfG1 would show stronger, in this case more negative, language attitudes than higher proficiency level groups. However, the data do not show that ProfG1 distinguished strongly between dialects.

ProfG1 and ProfG3 did not demonstrate statistical significance between dialects in their linear mixed model tests, and neither did their contrasts between dialects. The solidarity judgment dialectal contrasts for ProfG1 and ProfG3 can be found in Appendix B. Table 8 exhibits the dialectal contrasts for ProfG2.

Table 8

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of ProfG2

Solidarity ProfG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.833	0.194	∞	0.453	1.214	4.289	< .001*
MX/AR	0.583	0.134	∞	0.321	0.846	4.358	< .001*
MX/ES	0.764	0.184	∞	0.403	1.125	4.150	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.250	0.166	∞	-0.575	0.075	-1.507	0.395
PR/ES	-0.069	0.159	∞	-0.382	0.243	-0.435	0.663
AR/ES	0.181	0.166	∞	-0.144	0.505	1.090	0.552

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Only ProfG2 showed a statistical difference between dialects in its ratings regarding the solidarity judgment. This may be in part due to its larger size, as it contained 36 participants, and therefore yielded more statistically significant results. However, it may also have been due to the L2 learner profile of ProfG2. ProfG2 consisted of L2 language learners who understand L2 Spanish well enough to begin discerning between dialectal differences in speech instead of needing to focus on parsing Spanish sounds together for comprehension purposes (Schmidt, 2018; Chappell & Kanwit, 2022). However, ProfG2 members have also not studied L2 Spanish long enough to demonstrate language attitudes that seem to strongly align with opinions in support of multilingualism which level judgment ratings, as in the case of ProfG3's results (Artamonova, 2023). The statistical significance demonstrated by ProfG2's responses to the solidarity judgment captures the group's variation of responses and changing language attitudes toward Spanish varieties. The results displayed in Table 8 further demonstrate that ProfG2 rated the Argentinian, Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish varieties similarly. The statistical model only yielded significant results for dialectal contrasts with Mexican Spanish.

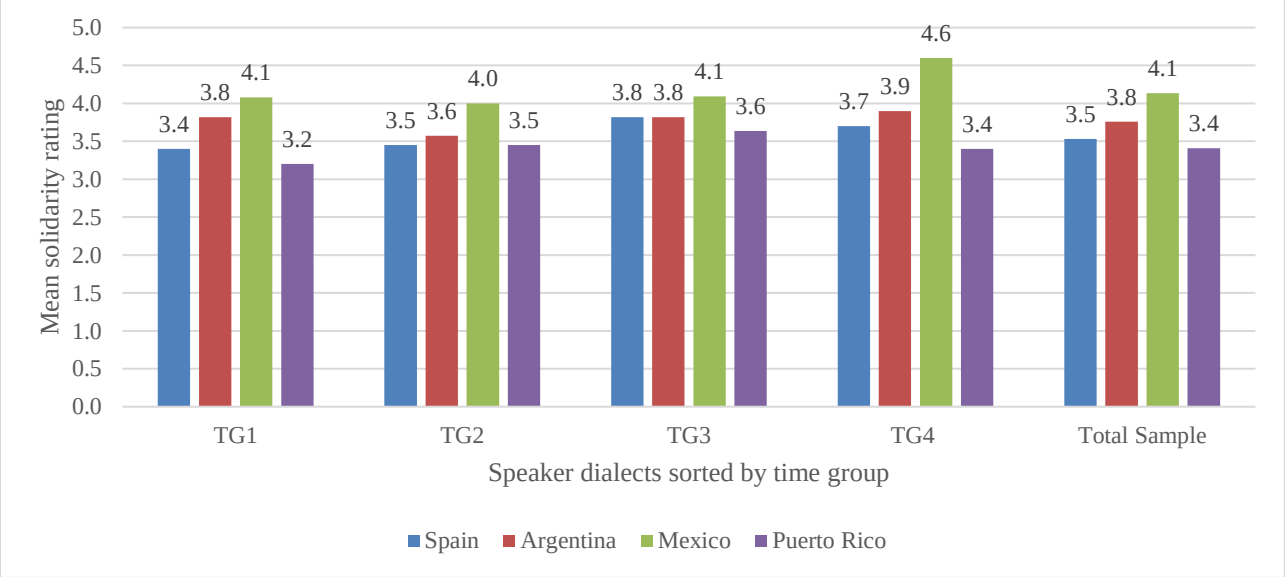
ProfG3 demonstrated more favorable language attitudes regarding the solidarity judgment than the other proficiency groups, rating each dialect higher than the other groups (except for Mexican Spanish which received a 4.222 EMM from ProfG2 and a 4.119 EMM from ProfG3). This is due to, as mentioned in Artamonova (2023) and Schmidt and Geeslin (2022), more proficient L2 learners rating languages and their varieties generally more favorably due to their accordance with ideas of multilingualism often inspired by training completed in upper-level language courses. Students majoring in foreign languages are introduced to variation within a language and taught that there may be more than one "correct" way to express oneself in the TL. While H1 was supported in part by ProfG1 responding most negatively toward Spanish varieties generally but not between dialects, the ratings from participants in ProfG1 did not result in statistical significance. ProfG2 demonstrated the strongest (statistically significant) opinions distinguishing between dialects. ProfG3 demonstrated the most positive solidarity ratings among proficiency groups.

4.3 Solidarity judgment: H2 results

The sample was divided into four groups by time of contact with Spanish in order to address H2 as it related to the results of the solidarity judgment. The second hypothesis posited that L2 Spanish learners who reported having spent more time in contact with Spanish would demonstrate more favorable attitudes toward the Spanish varieties. Figure 3 shows the average ratings found for each time group regarding the solidarity judgment.

Figure 3

Solidarity means: Time Groups



TG4 was expected to rate all varieties as equally highly friendly in comparison to the other time groups, but this was not the case. H2 was not fully supported by the verbal guise ratings for solidarity of the Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish speakers. Specifically, the learners who had reported using Spanish the most (TG4) did not produce the highest average ratings for these varieties. All time groups assigned higher ratings for Mexican Spanish when compared to the ratings for the other varieties. The high ratings assigned to the Mexican Spanish speakers partially supports H2 because participants of TG4 rated the Mexican Spanish variety much higher than the other time groups. According to the results of the language background questionnaire, participants reported that a majority of their professors spoke Peninsular Spanish or Mexican Spanish in the L2 classroom, suggesting they had more contact with these two varieties than with others. In the questionnaire item asking participants about the Spanish varieties spoken by their instructors, 66.7% of participants reported having had an instructor who

spoke Peninsular Spanish, and 62.1% of respondents reported having had an instructor who spoke Mexican Spanish.

The fact that Peninsular Spanish was rated lower for friendliness than Argentinian and Mexican Spanish by all of the time groups is not altogether surprising. Previous studies reported that Peninsular Spanish was often rated less friendly than other dialects by native Spanish speakers and L2 Spanish learners alike (Cestero & Paredes, 2014; Santana Marrero, 2022; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022). The results from Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) investigation were similar to the results of this study in that Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish inspired lower solidarity ratings, and Mexican and Argentinian Spanish inspired higher ratings. However, in contrast with this study's results, Schmidt and Geeslin's data showed that Argentinian Spanish was rated most friendly and Mexican Spanish second-most (2022). The results of the present study show that each time group demonstrated the same hierarchy of friendliness ratings for each variety, in that Mexican Spanish was rated most friendly, Argentinian second-most, Peninsular Spanish third-most friendly and Puerto-Rican least perceived friendly. In the case of TG3, Peninsular and Argentinian Spanish produced exactly equal EMMs.

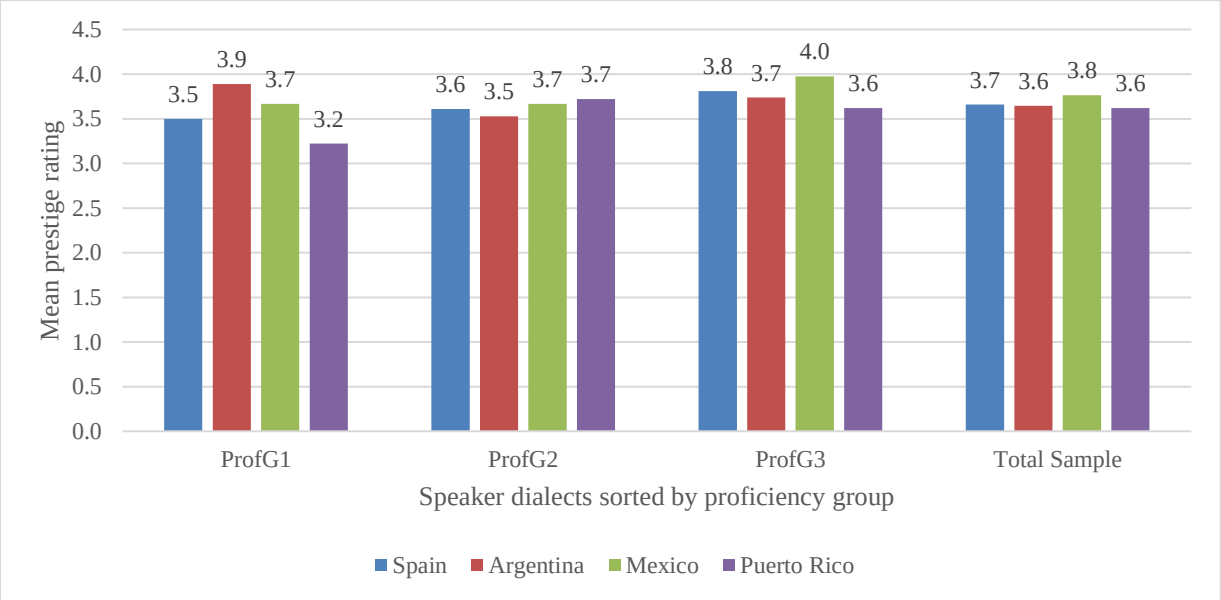
By comparing the average solidarity judgment ratings of each time group, it was shown that ratings increased as contact time with Spanish increased, but only for the ratings of the Argentinian and Mexican Spanish speakers. The ratings of the Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish dialects did not follow the expected pattern. In other words, the predicted effects of increased contact with Spanish were only upheld for the Mexican and Argentinian dialects.

4.4 Prestige judgment: H1 results

The results of linear mixed model tests using data regarding the prestige judgment, closely related to perceptions of the "standard" and questions of intelligence and eloquence, are summarized in Sections 4.4 and 4.5. In accordance with H1, ProfG1 was expected to rate all dialects highest or lowest of the three proficiency groups, because beginning L2 Spanish learners would display stronger language attitudes than higher level L2 learners. Figure 4 shows the rounded estimated marginal means (EMMs) of each proficiency group's judgments of how "intelligent" speakers of each dialect seemed to be.

Figure 4

Prestige means: Proficiency Groups



The results of the prestige judgment did not show a clear favorite among the dialects like the results from the solidarity judgment ratings did. Similar to the total sample prestige judgment results (described in Section 4.1), results from the linear mixed model did not show statistically

significant results for any of the proficiency or input groups regarding the prestige judgment. Table 27 summarizing the proficiency group p-values can be found in Appendix C, along with Table 26 showing unrounded means and standard deviations between groups for H1 and H2.

ProfG1 rated, on average, Argentinian Spanish as most prestigious (M = 3.889), followed by Mexican (M = 3.667), Peninsular (M = 3.500), and finally Puerto Rican Spanish (M = 3.222). ProfG2 rated all dialects closely but rated the Puerto Rican speaker highest (M = 3.722) and the Argentinian speakers lowest (M = 3.528). ProfG3 continued to prefer Mexican Spanish to the other varieties (M = 3.976). ProfG3 rated Peninsular Spanish second-highest (M =3.810), followed by Argentinian (M = 3.738), then Puerto Rican Spanish (M =3.619).

Participants rated all dialects much more consistently in comparison to the ratings of the solidarity judgment. H1 could not be supported by these results, because the results were not statistically significant or conclusive. Overall, ProfG3 showed the most positive language attitudes ranking all varieties high in perceived intelligence, ProfG1 did not necessarily show the most negative prestige ratings out of the proficiency groups. Many of these participants reported having taken a Spanish introduction to linguistics course or a Latinx studies course in which instructors reportedly stress to their students that all varieties of Spanish should be respected. Regarding this judgment question, it is possible that participants were actively trying to not show bias against a variety of Spanish, as they were formally trained to do so in L2 Spanish courses.

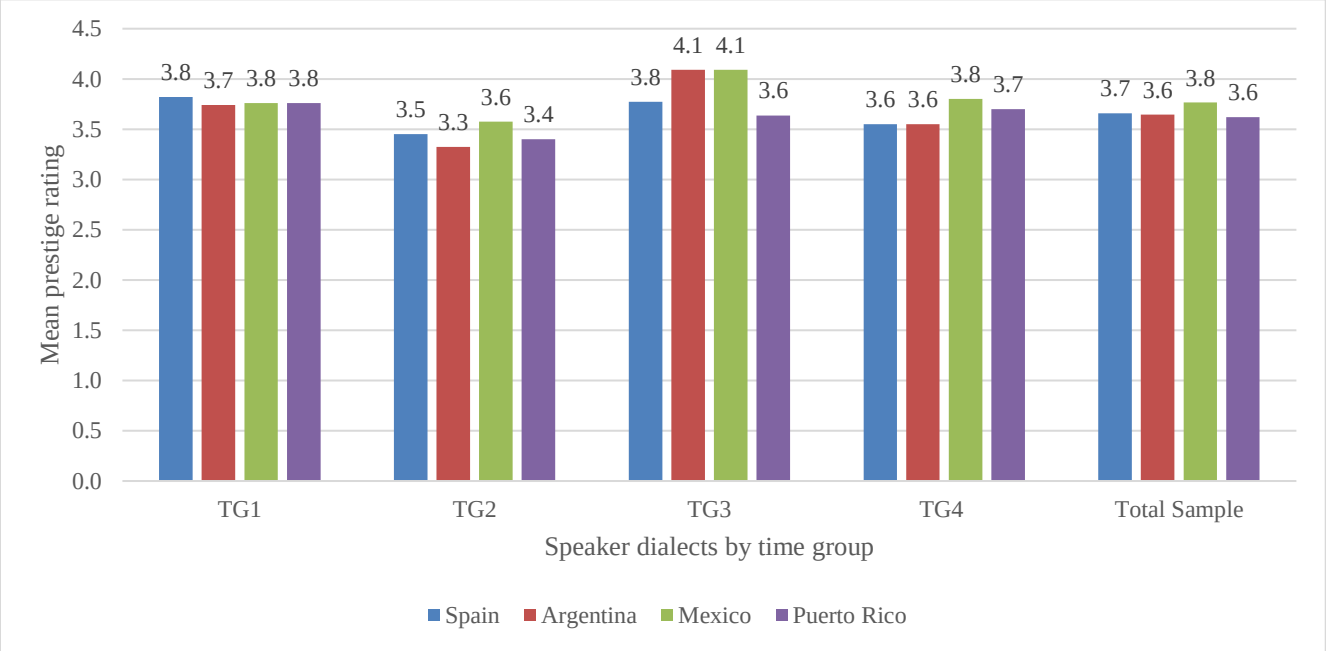
4.5 Prestige judgment: H2 results

H2 posited that the more time L2 learners spent using Spanish, the more favorable their language attitudes to the Spanish varieties would be. Figure 5 shows the EMMs of each time

group for the prestige judgment of each dialect. For the prestige judgment, it was expected that TG4 would demonstrate higher ratings for all Spanish varieties in comparison with the other time groups.

Figure 5

Prestige means: Time Groups



Similar to the results for H1, a linear mixed model did not find statistical significance between dialect ratings for any time group regarding the prestige judgment. TG1 demonstrated a very small preference for Peninsular Spanish as seemingly most prestigious. TG2 rated Mexican Spanish as most prestigious, followed closely by Peninsular Spanish. TG3 results show identical EMMs for the data sets of Mexican Spanish and Argentinian Spanish, both being rated highest of the dialects. TG4 rated Mexican Spanish the highest, followed by Puerto Rican Spanish, then Peninsular Spanish. Table 31 summarizes the unrounded EMMs and standard deviation for each time group in Appendix C.

The EMMs summarized in Figure 5 do not support H2, as TG4, the group that reported using Spanish the most, did not produce the most favorable ratings of all the time groups. TG1, the group consisting of participants that reported interacting less than one hour weekly with Spanish, showed almost no perceived difference in language attitudes regarding the prestige judgment between Spanish varieties, as exhibited by its EMMs. The responses to the prestige item by TG2 and TG3 produced more variation between the EMMs of each dialect than the other time groups, and the EMMs of each dialect for TG2 were lowest of all the time groups. The prestige judgment ratings of TG3 generated the highest EMMs of all the time groups as the Mexican and Argentinian Spanish EMMs were 4.091.

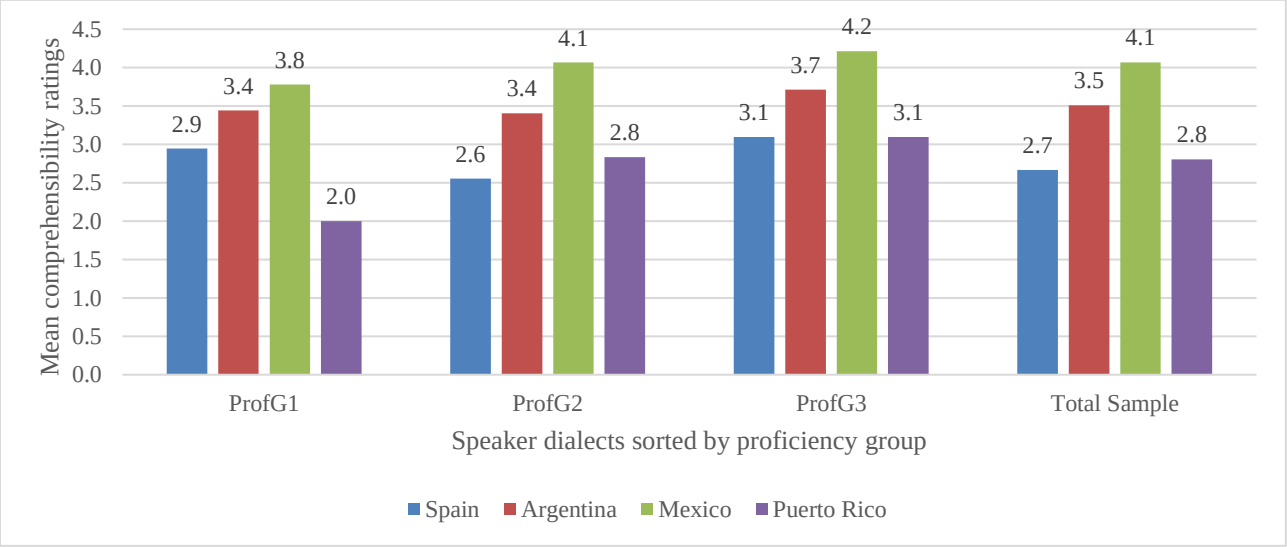
No strong conclusion regarding H2 can be made due to lack of statistical significance of the prestige ratings for any of the time groups. However, the present study's results seem to show that the less contact with learners have consistently with Spanish, the less distinct their prestige judgement language attitudes seem to be between dialects. This tentative and preliminary conclusion aligns with the results of Schmidt (2018) and Chappell and Kanwit (2022) who concluded that L2 learners' ability to notice and identify dialectal variations in the TL are primarily influenced by time spent in contact with the language. As seen in the results of the participants' prestige ratings on the verbal guise task, distinct dialectal language attitudes were not shown among participants who probably had yet to acquire the ability to distinguish between the TL's dialects. H2 expected that the members of TG4 would demonstrate the highest EMMs of the prestigious ratings for all Spanish varieties. The results did not uphold this expectation.

4.6 Comprehensibility judgment: H1 results

The final judgment studied in this investigation was how "comprehensible" speakers of the four macro dialects seemed to L2 Spanish learners. H1 posited that beginning L2 Spanish learners (ProfG1) would demonstrate stronger ratings (highest or lowest) toward the four dialects in comparison to the higher proficiency groups (ProfG2 and ProfG3). For the comprehensibility judgment it was expected that ProfG1 would rate all dialects of Spanish lower because all Spanish varieties are less comprehensible to them than for higher proficiency L2 learners. Figure 6 displays the differences between proficiency groups and dialect ratings. The linear mixed model ran for the results of the comprehensibility judgment and produced statistically significant p-values (<.001) for each proficiency group.

Figure 6

Comprehensibility means: Proficiency Groups



H1 is clearly supported by the investigation's results. ProfG1 rated all dialects less comprehensible than the other proficiency groups. Mexican Spanish was rated as the most

comprehensible and Argentinian Spanish as the second-most comprehensible among all proficiency groups. Table 9 shows the results of the dialectal contrasts from the linear mixed model for ProfG1.

Table 9

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of ProfG1

Comprehensibility ProfG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.778	0.377	∞	1.039	2.516	4.720	< .001*
MX/AR	0.333	0.328	∞	-0.309	0.976	1.016	0.619
MX/ES	1.667	0.307	∞	1.065	2.268	5.433	< .001*
PR/AR	-1.444	0.439	∞	-2.306	-0.583	-3.287	0.003*
PR/ES	-0.111	0.359	∞	-0.814	0.592	-0.310	0.757
AR/ES	1.333	0.355	∞	0.637	2.029	3.754	< .001*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

For ProfG1, Mexican Spanish is statistically significant from Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish. Argentinian Spanish is also statistically significant from Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish. The contrast between Mexican Spanish and Argentinian Spanish was not significant, nor was the contrast between Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish. These results demonstrate that Mexican and Argentinian Spanish were significantly more preferred in terms of comprehensibility than Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish. Table 10 shows the results for ProfG2.

Table 10

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of ProfG2

Comprehensibility ProfG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.222	0.167	∞	0.895	1.549	7.323	< .001*
MX/AR	0.653	0.136	∞	0.387	0.919	4.813	< .001*
MX/ES	1.500	0.136	∞	1.234	1.766	11.033	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.569	0.167	∞	-0.896	-0.243	-3.420	0.001*
PR/ES	0.278	0.166	∞	-0.048	0.603	1.672	0.095
AR/ES	0.847	0.136	∞	0.581	1.113	6.243	< .001*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 10 exhibits statistically significant contrasts between all dialects except in the comprehensibility ratings between Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish. These results are similar to ProfG1 which also showed significantly different ratings between Mexican and Argentinian Spanish when compared to Peninsular and Puerto Rican Spanish. Table 11 shows the results of the dialectal contrasts for ProfG3.

Table 11

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of ProfG3

Comprehensibility ProfG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.119	0.231	∞	0.667	1.571	4.855	< .001*
MX/AR	0.500	0.181	∞	0.145	0.855	2.764	0.017*
MX/ES	1.119	0.184	∞	0.759	1.480	6.084	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.619	0.228	∞	-1.066	-0.172	-2.715	0.017*
PR/ES	-6.106×10^{-16}	0.231	∞	-0.453	0.453	-2.644×10^{-15}	1.000
AR/ES	0.619	0.184	∞	0.258	0.980	3.359	0.003*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 11 shows results that are very similar to those of Table 10, in which every dialectal contrast is significant except for the contrast between Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish. The

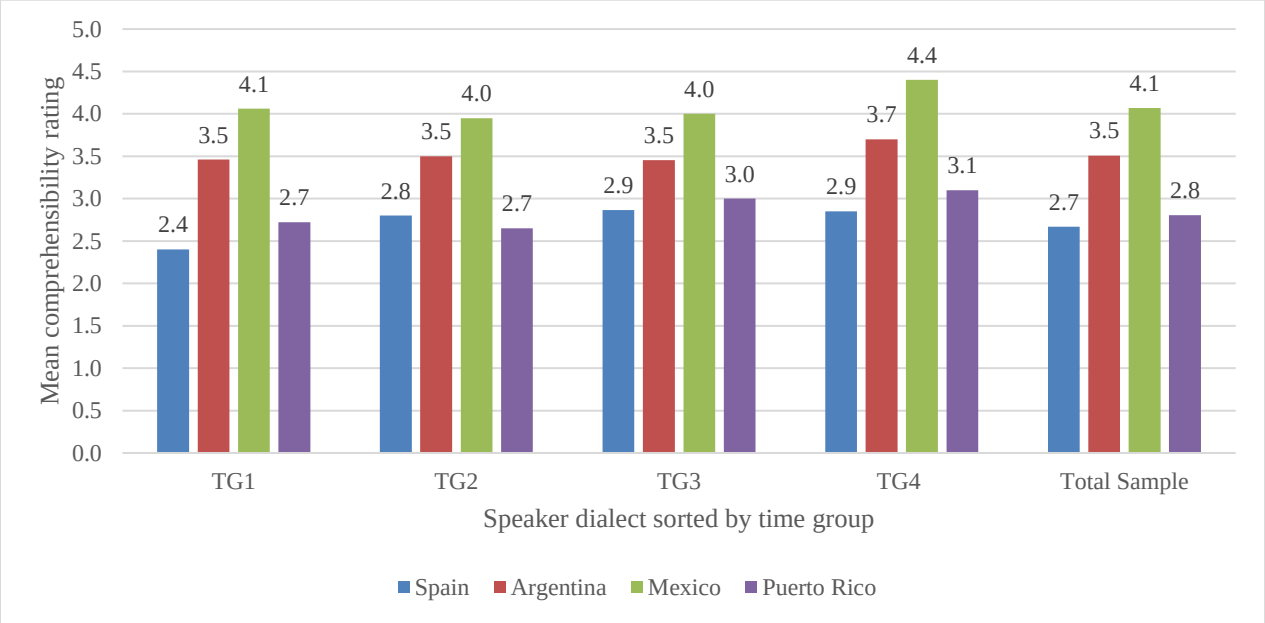
EMMs of ProfG3 for these dialects are equal (M = 3.095). Tables exhibiting the p-values of the linear mixed model as well as unrounded descriptive statistics for each macro dialect can be found in Appendix D. Understandably, ProfG3 had higher averages of comprehensibility ratings for all dialects than the lower proficiency groups. In accordance with previous literature, Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish were rated least comprehensible of the dialects studied (Schmidt, 2018; 2020; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022). Returning to H1, ProfG1 demonstrated lower ratings of comprehensibility in each dialect, while ProfG3 demonstrated the highest EMMs regarding the comprehensibility judgment in each dialect. All proficiency groups reported a preference for Mexican Spanish, then Argentinian Spanish, and they ranked the Peninsular and Puerto Rican varieties significantly lower.

4.7 Comprehensibility judgment: H2 results

In accordance with H2, TG4 was expected to show the most favorable language attitudes for the Spanish variety ratings because TG4 consisted of participants who reported having had the most weekly contact with Spanish. Figure 7 shows the EMMs of each group toward each dialect. The results of the statistical model found that TG1, TG2, and TG4 produced a p-value of <.001, and TG3 produced a p-value of 0.001. Therefore, all input groups rated the dialects significantly different.

Figure 7

Comprehensibility means: Time Groups



The comprehensibility judgment results of H2 were very similar to the comprehensibility judgment results of H1, in which every proficiency and every time group rated Mexican Spanish most comprehensible and Argentinian Spanish second-most comprehensible. H2 was supported by the results of TG4, in which every dialect's EMM of respondents' comprehensibility ratings on the verbal guise task was higher than the EMMs of the other time groups. Table 12 displays the dialectal contrast results of TG1, and Table 13 displays the contrasts of TG2.

Table 12

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of TG1

Comprehensibility TG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.340	0.211	∞	0.927	1.753	6.360	< .001*
MX/AR	0.600	0.171	∞	0.264	0.936	3.499	0.001*
MX/ES	1.660	0.172	∞	1.322	1.998	9.628	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.740	0.210	∞	-1.152	-0.328	-3.518	0.001*
PR/ES	0.320	0.210	∞	-0.091	0.731	1.524	0.127
AR/ES	1.060	0.172	∞	0.723	1.397	6.163	< .001*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 13

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of TG2

Comprehensibility TG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.300	0.236	∞	0.838	1.762	5.518	< .001*
MX/AR	0.450	0.185	∞	0.088	0.812	2.435	0.030*
MX/ES	1.150	0.191	∞	0.775	1.525	6.007	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.850	0.227	∞	-1.295	-0.405	-3.745	< .001*
PR/ES	-0.150	0.223	∞	-0.588	0.288	-0.672	0.502
AR/ES	0.700	0.184	∞	0.340	1.060	3.808	< .001*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

All dialectal contrasts for the comprehensibility rating across these two groups (TG1 and TG2) show statistical differences except in the case of the contrast between Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish. Table 14 exhibits the dialectal contrasts from the linear mixed model test for TG3.

Table 14

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of TG3

Comprehensibility TG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.000	0.273	∞	0.465	1.535	3.666	0.001*
MX/AR	0.545	0.229	∞	0.097	0.994	2.384	0.068
MX/ES	1.136	0.276	∞	0.595	1.678	4.115	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.455	0.274	∞	-0.992	0.083	-1.659	0.194
PR/ES	0.136	0.307	∞	-0.464	0.737	0.445	0.656
AR/ES	0.591	0.248	∞	0.105	1.077	2.383	0.068

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

TG3 differs from the lower time groups' results because statistical significance was only found in the dialectal contrasts of Mexican Spanish (M = 4.060) against Puerto Rican Spanish (M = 2.720) or Peninsular Spanish (M = 2.400).

Table 15

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Comprehensibility Ratings of TG4

Comprehensibility TG4

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.300	0.376	∞	0.563	2.037	3.456	0.003*
MX/AR	0.700	0.290	∞	0.132	1.268	2.414	0.047*
MX/ES	1.550	0.288	∞	0.986	2.114	5.390	< .001*
PR/AR	-0.600	0.382	∞	-1.348	0.148	-1.572	0.232
PR/ES	0.250	0.374	∞	-0.482	0.982	0.669	0.504
AR/ES	0.850	0.293	∞	0.275	1.425	2.898	0.015*

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 15, which displays the dialectal contrasts of TG4 regarding the comprehensibility judgment, shows that all dialectal contrasts were statistically significant except for the Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish contrast and the Puerto Rican and Argentinian Spanish contrast. Most participants self-reported having had most consistent contact with Peninsular and Mexican

Spanish varieties from their instructors in the classroom, so high comprehensibility ratings of Mexican Spanish are not surprising. However, Peninsular Spanish received low comprehensibility ratings across all time groups which does not fully support such reasoning.

The results of the comprehensibility judgment overwhelmingly demonstrated the preference (regarding comprehension) of US L2 Spanish learners across proficiency level and time spent using Spanish for Mexican and Argentinian Spanish, two varieties with few phonetic variants. While results varied by group in terms of which variety was least comprehensible, Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish together were perceived as least comprehensible. In the recordings used for this study the Mexican and Argentinian Spanish recordings used less phonetic and phonological variants than the Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish recordings, and this may have influenced results. Table 1 lists the linguistic features of each macro dialect available in the recordings.

4.8 Explicit language attitudinal question results

The statistical results of the present study qualitatively compared with the participants' answers to two explicit language attitudinal questions seemed to show some correlation. The explicit language attitudinal questions asked in the questionnaire after the socio-demographic questions, asked respondents to identify which Spanish variety they preferred listening to the most, and asked them which Spanish variety they would prefer to speak themselves if they could hypothetically be highly fluent in a particular Spanish variety. Twenty-two participants self-reported enjoying listening to Mexican Spanish the most (33.3% of respondents). Over 27% of the respondents (18 participants) reported that they preferred listening to Peninsular Spanish the most, and over 21% of respondents preferred Caribbean Spanish (14 participants). Only 2

participants (3%) reported preferring to listen to Argentinian Spanish the most to all other Spanish varieties. It is important to note here that UGA offers multiple Spanish study abroad programs in Spain and one study abroad program in Argentina, which may have influenced their high selection of Peninsular Spanish to this explicit language attitudinal question.

While the majority of participants (37.9%) reported that they would like to be fluent in Spanish but did not care which variety, of the varieties participants self-reported hoping to learn and be fluent in Mexican Spanish the most, with 18 participants (27.3%) choosing the variety. Peninsular, Central American, and Caribbean Spanish were chosen by 7 participants (10.6% each) each as the ideal Spanish variety to speak. An overwhelming preference for Mexican Spanish is clear throughout the verbal guise task results and the explicit language attitudinal question results. Due to the participant pool's majority L2 beginner status, it is possible that Mexican Spanish was chosen as the preferred variety in response to these language attitudinal questions because to beginners the variety is synonymous with a generalized form Latin American Spanish. In other words, Mexican Spanish may have been seen by the participant pool as the "default" Spanish.

4.9 Summary and discussion of results

Overall, the participants of this study, who were US southern university students studying L2 Spanish, rated Mexican Spanish highest in terms of friendliness and comprehensibility. For the same judgments, Argentinian Spanish was the second most preferred by this pool of L2 Spanish learners. H1, which predicted that lower proficiency L2 learners would demonstrate the strongest language attitudes towards the L2 of all participants, was partially supported by results for all judgments. In the solidarity and comprehensibility judgments, L2 Spanish beginners

demonstrated stronger (more negative) opinions about the four dialects of the study than L2 Spanish learners with higher proficiency levels. Inversely, L2 Spanish learners with higher proficiency in Spanish rated all four dialects more favorably for all three judgment types. Artamonova (2020) noticed highly favorable language attitudes of advanced L2 Spanish learners in her investigation as well, which she attributed to the students' increased time studying in language classes which emphasize the importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

H2, which predicted that L2 learners who reported to have spent the most time in contact with Spanish would rate all Spanish varieties higher in all judgment types than L2 learners with reportedly less contact with the TL, was supported only by the comprehensibility judgment, although the results of the solidarity and prestige judgments did not contradict H2. Regarding the solidarity judgment, it was expected that the participant group (TG4) that reported having spent more time using Spanish consistently would rate all dialects more favorably. The results did not show this, however the participants in TG4 did rate Mexican Spanish highest, and therefore perceived it to be the friendliest, among all time groups. Mexican Spanish was generally preferred by the learners, which was reflected in their ratings of the solidarity and comprehensibility judgments and the prestige judgment for time groups: TG2, TG3, and TG4. Mexican Spanish and Peninsular Spanish were the two varieties participants reported having had the most contact with inside the L2 classroom from their instructors, so more favorable ratings toward Mexican Spanish are not surprising. However, the ratings for the solidarity, prestige, and comprehensibility ratings did not show any strong preference for Peninsular Spanish. A lack of high ratings for Peninsular Spanish and high ratings for Mexican Spanish could be due to the absence of noticeable phonological variants such as the distinction between /s/ and /θ/ characterizing Peninsular Spanish, as well as widespread aspiration and deletion of /s/.

The results of the comprehensibility judgment produced the most statistically significant results of the three judgement types. The solidarity judgment produced the second-most significant results, and the prestige judgment did not produce statistically significant results. In light of the participant pool, it is possible that discerning comprehensibility between Spanish varieties is the most important of these three judgments that L2 learners must learn to make when beginning to study L2 Spanish. Secondly, they begin to distinguish between dialects in regard to how friendly speakers seem to them. It may be that the prestige judgment is the last of the three studied that L2 learners begin to demonstrate distinct opinions of between Spanish dialects.

Regarding the prestige judgment, like the results regarding the solidarity judgment, H2 was not supported. The present study's results, while not statistically significant regarding the prestige judgment, were similar to the results of Schmidt and Geeslin's (2022) study in that the prestige judgment produced less variation in ratings by respondents overall and less statistical differences between groups or dialects. The responses to the prestige judgment by members of TG1 were the most consistent across dialects. This finding aligns with the conclusions made by Schmidt (2018) and Chappell and Kanwit (2022) in which L2 Spanish learners who had not received much input nor practiced Spanish much, were less able to distinguish between dialects. It seems the inability of members of TG1 to distinguish between dialects may have also influenced their lack of opinions between dialectal speakers in the verbal guise task regarding the prestige judgment.

H2 was supported by the time groups' results only regarding the comprehensibility judgment in which members of TG4 rated all dialects as more comprehensible than the other groups, and TG3 demonstrated the second highest EMMs for the comprehensibility judgment.

However, the results of this judgment may be due more to higher proficiency levels of the participants in each time group, rather than due solely to having reportedly spent more time in contact with Spanish; it is well-known that a higher proficiency level in the acquisition of the L2 is directly related to the amount of contact L2 learners consistently have with the TL (Chappell & Kanwit, 2022; Schmidt, 2018). The results from the present study highlighted the incompletion of this second hypothesis, which predicted that quantity of time spent in contact with Spanish would correspond directly with more favorable judgment ratings for all varieties in the verbal guise task. The verbal guise results for the solidarity and prestige judgments did not uphold this expectation, although the solidarity ratings of the Mexican and Argentinian Spanish varieties increased as time of contact increased. Again, it seems the results of this hypothesis were not necessarily supported, but seemed to have aligned with the common perceptions of perceived friendliness reported in response to Argentinian and Mexican Spanish by previous studies (Cestero & Paredes, 2014; Schmidt & Geeslin, 2022).

Mexican Spanish, which was rated positively across proficiency groups, time groups, and across judgment types by this study's participant pool, seemed to be most preferred. The Argentinian and Mexican Spanish recordings both exhibited fewer phonetic variants (such as lenited or aspirated /s/ and liquid lateralization) than the Puerto Rican and Spanish recordings, and it may be possible that the respondents preferred Spanish varieties that demonstrate "standard" speech patterns that align more closely with the Spanish orthography taught in L2 classrooms. Schmidt and Geeslin (2022) cited this same possible influence to explain their results for the prestige judgment in which Puerto Rican Spanish was rated significantly lower than the other varieties.

Participants' responses to the explicit language attitudinal questions at the end of the online questionnaire did not account for the positive ratings received in the results from the verbal guise task for Argentinian Spanish. For the explicit language attitudinal question that asked participants which Spanish variety they enjoyed listening to the most, Peninsular Spanish was the second-most preferred Spanish variety. The verbal guise task did not rate Peninsular Spanish highest or second highest for the majority of proficiency and time groups regarding the three judgement types. The responses to the language attitude question, which asked participants which variety they aspired to be highly fluent in, revealed that, for a majority of respondents, Mexican Spanish was the variety in which they aspire to be fluent. Mexican Spanish appears to be perceived, at least to some degree, as the "standard" variety in the eyes of these L2 learners. The videos of the Peninsular and Puerto Rican speakers displayed more cases of phonetic and phonological variation than the Argentinian and Mexican Spanish speaker videos. Schmidt and Geeslin (2022) attributed low ratings of preference for Puerto Rican Spanish in their study to their participants' perception of an increased deviation from the pedagogical and orthographic "standard" Spanish taught in the L2 classroom. It could be that the participants of the present study also rated Puerto Rican and Peninsular Spanish lower across judgments because of the videos' demonstrations of more cases of phonetic and phonological variation than the Argentinian and Mexican Spanish videos.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

In this chapter key findings based on the results from the verbal guise task are summarized. Section 5.1 presents conclusions drawn from this study's results in light of the proposed hypotheses which were informed by conclusions drawn from the literature review. Subsequently, Section 5.2 highlights some of the present study's limitations and proposes directions for future investigation in this field of research.

5.1 Conclusions

From the literature reviewed, three factors were identified as heavily influencing the language attitudes of L2 Spanish learners toward Spanish and its varieties: (1) themes of identity, (2) quality and quantity of contact with the L2, and (3) perceived deviation from the "standard" form of the TL. This investigation did not investigate the effects of themes of identity upon the language attitudes of the participants in this study. In the present study, all participants' identities were controlled insofar as all participants were native English speakers learning L2 Spanish at the University of Georgia.

H1, which postulated that the lower the proficiency level of L2 Spanish learners, the stronger (either more negative or more positive) their language attitudes toward Spanish varieties would be, was supported by the results of this study. Lower proficiency L2 Spanish learners demonstrated stronger, in this case more negative, opinions to Spanish varieties than higher

proficiency L2 Spanish learners did. Additionally, it was found that higher proficiency L2 Spanish learners demonstrated stronger, in this case more positive, opinions to Spanish varieties. Artamonova (2020) asserted that this correlation stems from L2 learners beginning to subscribe to multilingualism ideals, which promote the appreciation of all languages and their varieties rather than hierarchically rating varieties of a language as their L2 proficiency grows. Regarding particularly the prestige judgment, the lower proficiency and the lower time groups did not show much variation in their rankings of the dialects, these results align with Schmidt (2020) and Chappell and Kanwit's (2022) conclusions in which L2 Spanish learners with lower proficiency levels and who have not spent much time in contact with the L2, may not have the dialectal awareness to rate one variety of Spanish as more prestigious than another. The participants in the present study did not rate any of the dialects significantly different for the prestige judgment. Due to the largely L2 Spanish beginner participant pool, it is possible that participants opted to rate all native speakers the same for the prestige judgment because they were not proficient enough in Spanish to distinguish between less and more prestigious speech.

H2, which predicted that the more time L2 learners reportedly spent using Spanish, the more favorable they would rate the Spanish varieties, was not supported. While it is true that the comprehensibility judgment was supported by the results of TG4, the prestige and solidarity judgments did not exhibit more favorable ratings for all dialects in comparison with the other time groups. The results of the comprehensibility judgment for H2 may have been influenced by participants' proficiency levels rather than just the amount of time they spent in contact with Spanish, as these two factors are directly related.

The present study's results, both from the verbal guise task in all judgment types and participants' responses to the explicit language attitudinal questions, seem to suggest that

Mexican Spanish is perceived as relatively more prestigious than the other dialects by the L2 Spanish learners in this study, and that it is strongly related with the "standard" Spanish that participants are striving to learn. According to their responses to the explicit language attitudinal questions, Mexican Spanish is reportedly most preferred and fluency in it is reportedly most desired among the learners.

This study aimed to contribute to the understanding of one of the possible impediments related to the L2 acquisition of Spanish, that of L2 learners' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties. Findings from the present work can also inform the field of applied linguistics because the study sheds light on some of the social factors that most influence (negatively or positively) L2 learners' language attitudes, including L2 learners' perceptions of the "standard" variety of the TL, and amount of time spent in contact with the TL, which, in turn, can impact the language learning process and experience. For foreign language departments and programs, this work can help determine how to address and improve the language attitudes of their students.

5.2 Limitations and directions for future research

This study adds to our understanding of the nature of L2 Spanish learners' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties, but it is not without its limitations. For one, due to a limited number of authentic sociocultural interviews of the same length and complexity in the archive of *Voices of the Hispanic World*, only one video of a Puerto Rican Spanish speaker produced by a male speaker was found to be comparable to the others selected and used in the study. Therefore, a recording of a female native Puerto Rican speaker was not included in the stimuli of the verbal guise task. This lack of a second data set for the Puerto Rican dialect was accounted for statistically, but the addition of a second data set from a female Puerto Rican speaker would have

provided more data to analyze and include in this study. Including multiple and equal numbers of videos by male and female speakers of each Spanish variety in the verbal guise task would also make it possible to investigate the effects of speaker gender on L2 learners' language attitudes toward Spanish varieties.

Another factor that may have skewed the results of this study is the fact that the instrument used to collect data from the verbal guise task included videos of the recordings rather than just audio-recordings. Videos rather than audio recordings were used to facilitate participants' listening comprehension, particularly due to the inclusion of novice L2 Spanish learners in the participant pool. Any student enrolled in an L2 Spanish course could participate in the study, including students in their first semester of studying and being exposed to the TL. Many participants reported having less than two months' experience learning Spanish before participating in the study. The use of videos instead of audio recordings could have affected the study's results, as participants may have been subliminally influenced by the visual information available to them. Some potentially influential information in the videos could have been speakers' body language, their facial expressions, or even the background of the videos. Additionally, the Puerto Rican speaker and the male speaker from Mexico were non-white, and therefore it is possible that the perceived race of speakers subliminally affected participants' ratings in the verbal guise task.

A third limitation to the study was the use of varied stimuli. The native speakers in each recording did not say the same phrase. Instead, each one spoke naturally about basic topics, producing unscripted speech. Additionally, video lengths ranged from 30 seconds to 1:46 minutes long. Such variation in the contents and length of the recordings was considered preferable, since the videos were recordings of authentic semi spontaneous speech of native

Spanish speakers, rather than isolated and contrived sentences to be read out loud by native speakers aimed to include certain dialectal variants, but which might not truly capture the natural speech of a geographical region. Notably, the Mexican Spanish speakers' videos were much longer than the other videos. The third longest video, which was still 49 to 53 seconds shorter than the Mexican Spanish videos, was of the Puerto Rican Spanish speaker. Because of the overwhelmingly favorable responses to the Mexican Spanish videos in this study, it is possible that the length of the videos may have impacted its results. Future studies could ensure the use of stimuli that incorporate the same basic theme in Spanish, for example the topic of family. Every speaker could spontaneously discuss the same theme, but the vocabulary, length, and content would be uniform in all stimuli.

Finally, a fourth limitation of this study is its sample size. The participant pool of 66 people yielded some statistically significant results, but a larger sample size would enhance this study's results and increase its overall reliability and validity. With only 66 participants, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Because this study relied on stratified samples within its analysis, maximizing the size of each group (proficiency group or time group) would improve its results. Ideally, a sample of at least 200 participants would be needed to create sample groups of at least 50 participants each.

A replication of this study using audio recordings uniform in theme and length and a larger sample size would allow for a comparison between the results of the present study and the replication. Future investigations could increase the number of verbal guise judgment questions to include more items focusing on each of the judgment types, rather than only using one question per type as this study did for the purposes of maintaining a short questionnaire length. For example, regarding the questions designed to measure speaker prestige and intelligence,

additional judgment items could incorporate adjectives such as *educated*, *eloquent*, and *articulate.* The addition of more judgment items would balance participants' ratings for the judgment type in the case of possible participant misinterpretation of a question during the verbal guise task.

Future investigations could also focus more closely on the influence of L2 learners' identities upon L2 learners' language attitudes, as the current study did not control specifically for this factor. While this study relied on reported quantity of use of the TL to test its influence, future studies could investigate whether the quality of input students receive in L2 Spanish classrooms affects L2 learners' language attitudes. Suby-Asención and Delaney (2008) conducted a study of the quantity of Spanish used in L2 classrooms by instructors, but they did not investigate what variety of Spanish was being spoken, so this could be a focus of future research as well. Another topic that could be explored is L2 Spanish instructors' use of Spanish in the classroom, the varieties that are spoken there, and which ones are adapted to accommodate toward L2 learners' ears, one of the goals of Martinez Franco's (2019) work.

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Appendix A

Google Form of Data Collection

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWZcv55WDY6tqZbLUApfg4THCNijjztro4RtyBPlPD4uHNlg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Appendix B

Solidarity judgment tables

Table 16

Solidarity Means and Standard Deviation of Proficiency Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**ProfG1 Solidarity:**	**ProfG2 Solidarity:**	**ProfG3 Solidarity:**	**All groups solidarity:**
Spain	3.444 (0.856)	3.458 (0.871)	3.690 (0.604)	3.530 (0.795)
Argentina	3.722 (1.274)	3.639 (0.954)	3.976 (0.841)	3.758 (0.974)
Mexico	3.833 (1.200)	4.222 (0.826)	4.119 (0.832)	4.136 (0.889)
Puerto Rico	2.889 (0.601)	3.389 (0.964)	3.667 (0.658)	3.409 (0.859)

Table 17

Solidarity P Values of Proficiency Groups from Classical Linear Mixed Model (CLMM)

	ProfG1 p value:	**ProfG2 p value:**	**ProfG3 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Solidarity	0.200	<.001	0.036	<.001

Table 18

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of ProfG1

Solidarity ProfG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.944	0.438	∞	0.085	1.804	2.154	0.187
MX/AR	0.111	0.349	∞	-0.574	0.796	0.318	1.000
MX/ES	0.389	0.411	∞	-0.416	1.194	0.947	1.000
PR/AR	-0.833	0.426	∞	-1.667	6.361×10^{-4}	-1.958	0.251
PR/ES	-0.556	0.433	∞	-1.405	0.294	-1.282	0.800
AR/ES	0.278	0.380	∞	-0.468	1.023	0.730	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 19

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of ProfG3

Solidarity ProfG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.452	0.188	∞	0.084	0.821	2.406	0.081
MX/AR	0.143	0.153	∞	-0.157	0.443	0.933	0.702
MX/ES	0.429	0.171	∞	0.094	0.763	2.510	0.072
PR/AR	-0.310	0.185	∞	-0.673	0.054	-1.670	0.303
PR/ES	-0.024	0.191	∞	-0.398	0.351	-0.125	0.901
AR/ES	0.286	0.161	∞	-0.029	0.601	1.777	0.303

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 20

Solidarity EMMs and Standard Deviation of Time Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**TG1 Solidarity:**	**TG2 Solidarity:**	**TG3 Solidarity:**	**TG4 Solidarity:**	**All groups solidarity:**
Spain	3.400 (0.857)	3.450 (0.749)	3.818 (0.733)	3.700 (0.733)	3.530 (0.795)
Argentina	3.820 (1.004)	3.575 (0.874)	3.818 (1.140)	3.900 (0.912)	3.758 (0.974)
Mexico	4.080 (0.966)	4.000 (0.847)	4.091 (0.750)	4.600 (0.598)	4.136 (0.889)
Puerto Rico	3.200 (0.957)	3.450 (0.686)	3.636 (0.674)	3.400 (0.843)	3.409 (0.859)

Table 21

Solidarity P Values of Time Groups from CLMM

	TG1 p value:	**TG2 p value:**	**TG3 p value:**	**TG4 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Solidarity	0.010	0.053	0.610	0.006	<.001

Table 22

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of TG1

Solidarity TG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.880	0.252	∞	0.386	1.374	3.491	0.003*
MX/AR	0.260	0.171	∞	-0.075	0.595	1.522	0.256
MX/ES	0.680	0.240	∞	0.210	1.150	2.837	0.023*
PR/AR	-0.620	0.222	∞	-1.056	-0.184	-2.787	0.023*
PR/ES	-0.200	0.202	∞	-0.597	0.197	-0.988	0.323
AR/ES	0.420	0.202	∞	0.024	0.816	2.080	0.113

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 23

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of TG2

Solidarity TG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.550	0.225	∞	0.110	0.990	2.450	0.075
MX/AR	0.425	0.187	∞	0.058	0.792	2.268	0.093
MX/ES	0.550	0.220	∞	0.118	0.982	2.496	0.075
PR/AR	-0.125	0.203	∞	-0.524	0.274	-0.615	1.000
PR/ES	6.870×10^{-16}	0.223	∞	-0.437	0.437	3.084×10^{-15}	1.000
AR/ES	0.125	0.188	∞	-0.243	0.493	0.665	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 24

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of TG3

Solidarity TG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.273	0.294	∞	-0.303	0.848	0.928	1.000
MX/AR	0.273	0.268	∞	-0.252	0.798	1.018	1.000
MX/ES	0.273	0.235	∞	-0.187	0.732	1.163	1.000
PR/AR	-2.776×10^{-17}	0.289	∞	-0.566	0.566	-9.615×10^{-17}	1.000
PR/ES	-4.718×10^{-16}	0.301	∞	-0.590	0.590	-1.566×10^{-15}	1.000
AR/ES	-4.441×10^{-16}	0.286	∞	-0.561	0.561	-1.552×10^{-15}	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 25

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Solidarity Ratings of TG4

Solidarity TG4

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	1.200	0.328	∞	0.558	1.842	3.663	0.001*
MX/AR	0.700	0.233	∞	0.243	1.157	3.004	0.011*
MX/ES	0.900	0.256	∞	0.397	1.403	3.510	0.002*
PR/AR	-0.500	0.306	∞	-1.099	0.099	-1.635	0.306
PR/ES	-0.300	0.312	∞	-0.912	0.312	-0.962	0.673
AR/ES	0.200	0.292	∞	-0.372	0.772	0.685	0.673

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Appendix C

Prestige judgment tables

Table 26

Prestige EMMs and Standard Deviation of Proficiency Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**ProfG1 Prestige:**	**ProfG2 Prestige:**	**ProfG3 Prestige:**	**All groups Prestige:**
Spain	3.500 (0.857)	3.611 (0.797)	3.810 (0.804)	3.659 (0.809)
Argentina	3.889 (0.758)	3.528 (0.769)	3.738 (0.734)	3.644 (0.763)
Mexico	3.667 (1.085)	3.667 (0.787)	3.976 (0.780)	3.765 (0.837)
Puerto Rico	3.222 (0.833)	3.722 (0.849)	3.619 (0.740)	3.621 (0.818)

Table 27

Prestige P-Values of Proficiency Groups from CLMM

	ProfG1 p value:	**ProfG2 p value:**	**ProfG3 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Prestige	0.179	0.499	0.076	0.370

Table 28

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of ProfG1

Prestige ProfG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.444	0.314	∞	-0.170	1.059	1.418	0.671
MX/AR	-0.222	0.253	∞	-0.719	0.274	-0.877	1.000
MX/ES	0.167	0.261	∞	-0.345	0.678	0.639	1.000
PR/AR	-0.667	0.314	∞	-1.281	-0.052	-2.126	0.201
PR/ES	-0.278	0.333	∞	-0.930	0.374	-0.835	1.000
AR/ES	0.389	0.260	∞	-0.120	0.898	1.498	0.671

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 29

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of ProfG2

Prestige ProfG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	-0.056	0.149	∞	-0.348	0.237	-0.372	1.000
MX/AR	0.139	0.117	∞	-0.091	0.369	1.183	1.000
MX/ES	0.056	0.119	∞	-0.179	0.290	0.465	1.000
PR/AR	0.194	0.144	∞	-0.088	0.476	1.351	1.000
PR/ES	0.111	0.144	∞	-0.172	0.394	0.770	1.000
AR/ES	-0.083	0.116	∞	-0.311	0.145	-0.716	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 30

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of ProfG3

Prestige ProfG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.452	0.188	∞	0.084	0.821	2.406	0.081
MX/AR	0.143	0.153	∞	-0.157	0.443	0.933	0.702
MX/ES	0.429	0.171	∞	0.094	0.763	2.510	0.072
PR/AR	-0.310	0.185	∞	-0.673	0.054	-1.670	0.303
PR/ES	-0.024	0.191	∞	-0.398	0.351	-0.125	0.901
AR/ES	0.286	0.161	∞	-0.029	0.601	1.777	0.303

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 31

Prestige Means and Standard Deviation of Time Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**TG1 Prestige:**	**TG2 Prestige:**	**TG3 Prestige:**	**TG4 Prestige:**	**All groups Prestige:**
Spain	3.820 (0.774)	3.450 (0.749)	3.773 (0.869)	3.550 (0.887)	3.659 (0.809)
Argentina	3.740 (0.694)	3.325 (0.764)	4.091 (0.750)	3.550 (0.686)	3.644 (0.763)
Mexico	3.760 (0.870)	3.575 (0.712)	4.091 (0.750)	3.800 (1.005)	3.765 (0.837)
Puerto Rico	3.760 (0.879)	3.400 (0.681)	3.636 (0.674)	3.700 (1.059)	3.621 (0.818)

Table 32

Prestige P-Values of Time Groups from CLMM

	TG1 p value:	**TG2 p value:**	**TG3 p value:**	**TG4 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Prestige	0.952	0.524	0.117	0.733	0.370

Table 33

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of TG1

Prestige TG1

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	-4.134×10^{-15}	0.168	∞	-0.330	0.330	-2.457×10^{-14}	1.000
MX/AR	0.020	0.136	∞	-0.246	0.286	0.147	1.000
MX/ES	-0.060	0.147	∞	-0.348	0.228	-0.409	1.000
PR/AR	0.020	0.169	∞	-0.311	0.351	0.118	1.000
PR/ES	-0.060	0.176	∞	-0.404	0.284	-0.341	1.000
AR/ES	-0.080	0.141	∞	-0.355	0.195	-0.569	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 34

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of TG2

Prestige TG2

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.175	0.180	∞	-0.177	0.527	0.974	1.000
MX/AR	0.250	0.175	∞	-0.093	0.593	1.430	0.916
MX/ES	0.125	0.147	∞	-0.164	0.414	0.849	1.000
PR/AR	0.075	0.199	∞	-0.316	0.466	0.376	1.000
PR/ES	-0.050	0.179	∞	-0.401	0.301	-0.280	1.000
AR/ES	-0.125	0.162	∞	-0.443	0.193	-0.771	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 35

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of TG3

Prestige TG3

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.455	0.235	∞	-0.006	0.915	1.935	0.265
MX/AR	-3.331×10^{-16}	0.189	∞	-0.370	0.370	-1.762×10^{-15}	1.000
MX/ES	0.318	0.204	∞	-0.082	0.719	1.557	0.478
PR/AR	3.636	0.234	∞	3.178	4.095	15.555	< .001
PR/ES	-0.136	0.256	∞	-0.639	0.366	-0.532	1.000
AR/ES	0.318	0.213	∞	-0.099	0.735	1.495	0.478

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Table 36

Dialectal Contrasts of EMMs: Prestige Ratings of TG4

Prestige TG4

				95% CI			
	Estimate	**SE**	**df**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p†**
MX/PR	0.100	0.245	∞	-0.380	0.580	0.408	1.000
MX/AR	0.250	0.238	∞	-0.217	0.717	1.049	1.000
MX/ES	0.250	0.243	∞	-0.227	0.727	1.027	1.000
PR/AR	0.150	0.286	∞	-0.412	0.712	0.524	1.000
PR/ES	0.150	0.285	∞	-0.408	0.708	0.527	1.000
AR/ES	2.241×10^{-15}	0.200	∞	-0.392	0.392	1.120×10^{-14}	1.000

† P-values are adjusted using Holm adjustment.

Appendix D

Comprehensibility tables of means and standard deviations

Table 37

Comprehensibility EMMs and Standard Deviation of Proficiency Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**ProfG1 Comp.:**	**ProfG2 Comp.:**	**ProfG3 Comp.:**	**All groups Comp.:**
Spain	2.944 (0.873)	2.556 (0.902)	3.095 (1.144)	2.667 (1.031)
Argentina	3.44 (1.199)	3.403 (0.959)	3.713 (1.019)	3.508 (1.015)
Mexico	3.778 (0.943)	4.065 (0.710)	4.214 (0.898)	4.068 (0.812)
Puerto Rico	2.000 (0.500)	2.833 (0.775)	3.095 (1.136)	2.803 (0.932)

Table 38

Prestige P-Values of Proficiency Groups from CLMM

	ProfG1 p value:	**ProfG2 p value:**	**ProfG3 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Prestige	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Table 39

Comprehensibility EMMs and Standard Deviation of Time Groups

Mean (Standard Deviation)	**TG1 Comp.:**	**TG2 Comp.:**	**TG3 Comp.:**	**TG4 Comp.:**	**All groups Comp.:**
Spain	2.400 (0.904)	2.800 (1.137)	2.864 (0.834)	2.850 (1.226)	2.667 (1.031)
Argentina	3.460 (1.034)	3.500 (0.934)	3.455 (0.912)	3.700 (1.261)	3.508 (1.015)
Mexico	4.060 (0.843)	3.950 (0.783)	4.000 (0.756)	4.400 (0.821)	4.068 (0.812)
Puerto Rico	2.720 (0.792)	2.650 (1.040)	3.000 (0.632)	3.100 (1.287)	2.803 (0.932)

Table 40

Comprehensibility P-Values of Time Groups from CLMM

	TG1 p value:	**TG2 p value:**	**TG3 p value:**	**TG4 p value:**	**All groups p value:**
Prestige	<.001	<.001	0.001	<.001	<.001