RECONHECIMENTO DAS VARIEDADES GEOGRÁFICAS DO ESPANHOL POR ESTUDANTES DA "ELE" DA ESLOVÁQUIA, REPÚBLICA CHECA E POLÔNIA

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LAS VARIEDADES GEOGRÁFICAS DEL ESPAÑOL POR PARTE DE ESTUDIANTES DE ELE DE ESLOVAQUIA, REPÚBLICA CHECA Y POLONIA

SPANISH GEOGRAPHICAL VARIETIES RECOGNITION BY SFL STUDENTS FROM SLOVAKIA, CZECH REPUBLIC AND POLAND

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RESUMO: Este trabalho estuda a identificação e categorização das variedades geográficas do espanhol por estudantes da "ELE" das Seções Bilíngues da Eslováquia, República Checa e Polônia. Além disso, são discutidos os possíveis fatores que influenciam este reconhecimento, bem como os imaginários coletivos e protótipos no caso de cada variedade. Para a coleta de dados, foram utilizadas pesquisas e gravações do projeto PRECAVES XXI. Depois de analisar as respostas dos participantes, verificamos que as variedades mais fáceis de identificar eram castelhana, rioplatense, andaluza e mexicana, enquanto as outras (canária, caribenha, andina e chilena) têm um nível de reconhecimento muito baixo. Além disso, verifica-se que os imaginários se alteram de acordo com a variedade, por isso cada uma delas funciona de forma independente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Variedades de espanhol. Espanhol como língua estrangeira. Identificação de variedades. Imaginários coletivos. PRECAVES XXI.

***RESUMEN**: En el presente trabajo se estudia la identificación y la categorización de las variedades geográficas del español por parte de alumnos de ELE procedentes de las Secciones Bilingües de Eslovaquia, República Checa y Polonia. Además, se discuten los posibles factores que influyen en este reconocimiento, al igual que los imaginarios colectivos y los prototipos en caso de cada variedad. Para la recogida de datos, se emplean la encuesta y las grabaciones del proyecto PRECAVES XXI. Una vez analizadas las respuestas de los participantes, pudimos comprobar que las variedades más fáciles de identificar fueron la castellana, la rioplatense, la andaluza y la mexicana, mientras que las demás (canaria, caribeña, andina y chilena) cuentan con un grado de reconocimiento muy bajo. Además, se comprueba que los imaginarios varían dependiendo de la variedad, por lo que cada una de ellas presenta un funcionamiento independiente.*

***PALABRAS CLAVE**: Variedades del español. Español como lengua extranjera. Identificación de las variedades. Imaginarios colectivos. PRECAVES XXI.*

***ABSTRACT**: The present paper examines the identification and categorization of Spanish geographical varieties by SFL students from the Bilingual Sections of Slovakia, the Czech*

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Republic and Poland. In addition, the factors that may influence this recognition are discussed, as well as the social imaginaries and prototypes for each variety. The PRECAVES XXI project survey and recordings are used for data collection. After analyzing the participants' responses, we found that the varieties that were easiest to identify were Castilian, Rioplatense, Andalusian and Mexican, while the others (Canarian, Caribbean, Andean and Chilean) showed a very low level of recognition. Furthermore, it was found that the imaginaries vary depending on the variety, showing that each one of them works independently.

KEYWORDS: *Spanish varieties. Spanish as a foreign language. Identification of the varieties. Social imaginaries. PRECAVES XXI.*

Introduction and status of the issue

The study of the recognition and identification of geographic varieties is relatively recent and there is still little research dedicated to this topic. We can mention, for example, Williams, Garrett and Coupland (1999), Clopper and Pisoni (2004) and Baker, Eddington and Nay (2009) for English; Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (1999) for English and Dutch; Gooskens (2004) for the Norwegian and Cunningham-Andersson (1996) for the Swedish. In the case of Spanish, we have the contribution of Díaz-Campos and Navarro-Galisteo (2009). In addition, it should be noted that most of the works published under the PRECAVES XXI project (*Project for the Study of Beliefs and Attitudes for Spanish Varieties in the 21st Century*) have one or more sections dedicated to the recognition of varieties (see *Bulletin of Philology*, 2018).

On the other hand, this is an area still little known in the case of non-native speakers. We can mention Cunningham-Andersson (1996), who focuses on the recognition of varieties of Swedish by native English speakers, or Schoonmaker-Gates (2018) who does a similar study for Spanish, also with native English speakers.

Although in the Hispanic field we only know one of these contributions, we consider that this is a particularly interesting topic, since speakers of Spanish as a foreign language (ELE) can offer another point of view, precisely because it is not their mother tongue. Therefore, in this work we propose to carry out a pilot study, in which we analyze the extent to which ELE students, from the Spanish Bilingual Sections of Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland, are able to correctly identify the geographic varieties of Spanish from the recordings offered by PRECAVES XXI and establish which area or region is perceived as the prototype for each of them.

We believe that such a study can provide interesting data on how and if these students perceive the geolinguistic variation of a language that is not theirs and that can be useful not

only for the analysis of their attitudes and beliefs, but also for the planning and model of the classes. from him.

Theoretical considerations

The perception of linguistic variation in ELE students

The fact that Spanish is a polycentric language has caused controversy when choosing materials for ELE classes, asking the following question: What Spanish to teach? However, it must be remembered that such questions, as well as the study of attitudes and beliefs in relation to geolinguistic phenomena, are part of the fact that speakers are able to perceive the geographical variation of the language. As Caravedo quotes, "the speaker's perception is prepared to capture and acquire both aspects that vary and those that do not vary in his community and the period in which he is able to live" (2018, p. 72)[2]. Their perception of this variation, however, does not necessarily have to correspond to the classification proposed by scientists.

On the other hand, and related to the contact that a speaker (native or foreign) has with the varieties, Moreno Fernández (2017, p. 9-12) divides users of a language according to the "focal model", depending on their degree of knowledge of it. The first group is the "monofocal" speakers, who have only a good knowledge of their own variety, while they are practically unaware of the others and can only classify the speakers according to the great varieties of Spanish (for example, Latin America). Bifocals, on the other hand, have a deeper understanding of the dialectal reality of a region other than their own (for example, through contact with their speakers or by residence). Finally, a "multifocal" speaker is one who would have a thorough understanding of the dialectal reality of an indefinite number of varieties. However, as the author himself mentions, the largest group is monofocal. The question, however, would be what happens in the case of the group of foreigners, especially given the complexity of the "own variety" issue in this case.

One of the reasons why it is problematic to establish what an ELE speaker's perception of the Spanish dialectal situation is, perhaps, what Fernández Martín mentions (2014, p. 31 and 36-38), that is, what is generally taught in ELE's classroom is often "artificial" language (as opposed to natural or dialectal language). We suspect that this lack of contact with the real language may make a foreigner unaware of the dialectal reality of Spanish and, therefore,

[2] "la percepción del hablante está preparada para captar y adquirir tanto los aspectos que varían como los que no varían en su comunidad y en el periodo en que le toca vivir"

become unable to correctly identify what he hears. However, we consider that this does not necessarily prevent the differences between the different varieties from being perceived, even if it is not completely known. In this sense, it is worth emphasizing the importance of formation and contact with different types of discourse, which allows the speaker to know the variation of a language (CARAVEDO, 2018, p. 77).

Finally, when conducting a variety recognition study, it is essential to deal with the topic of its categorization by users of a language. As Garcia (1998, p. 11) argues, "for linguists, languages are conceived as sums or intersections of their features, for speakers almost always as prototypes"[3]. In general, as Moreno Fernández (2001, p. 3) mentions, "the perception of linguistic variation - and let us not forget that not all variation is consciously perceived - responds to a categorization process based on discriminatory learning"[4]. However, this categorization can be done in different ways. According to the same author (2001, p. 3), there are three theoretical proposals that aim to explain how speakers classify varieties: trait theory, exemplar theory and prototype theory. In the case of the first, the "presence or absence of a particular characteristic is responsible for an element that is being attributed to a certain category" (MORENO FERNANDEZ, 2001, p. 3)[5]. For example, the rioplatense Spanish can be identified thanks to its restructured yeísmo. The sample theory "holds that the categorization of objects depends on the memory of a sample (specific case) and the category to which it belongs" (MORENO FERNANDEZ, 2001, p. 4)[6]. That is, a speaker can only recognize a variety because he knows friends, teachers, singers, etc. who belong to it and "speak alike". Finally, according to the prototype theory, "a prototype is defined as an abstract set of characteristics commonly associated with members of a category" (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2001, p. 5)[7]. Thus, Canarian Spanish could be identified by all its aspiration to implosive -/s/ and the use of the word "guagua"[8], that would differentiate it from other varieties with aspiration of final consonants.

The dialectal situation of Spanish

[3] "para el lingüista las lenguas se conciben como sumas o intersecciones de rasgos, para el hablante casi siempre como prototipos".
[4] "la percepción de la variación lingüística - y no olvidemos que no toda la variación se percibe conscientemente - responde a un proceso de categorización basado en un aprendizaje discriminatorio".
[5] "para el lingüista las lenguas se conciben como sumas o intersecciones de rasgos, para el hablante casi siempre como prototipos".
[6] "sostiene que la categorización de objetos depende del recuerdo de un ejemplar (caso concreto) y de la categoría a la que pertenece"
[7] "un prototipo se define como un conjunto abstracto de características comúnmente asociadas con los miembros de una categoría"
[8] With the meaning of bus.

Although there are several proposals from the Spanish dialectal division, in this work we follow the proposal of Moreno Fernández (2019), since it is the one that manages PRECAVES XXI, whose research we applied in our study. Thus, this author differentiates eight major areas of Spanish. On the one hand, we would have the Spanish areas, to which the *Castilian* (central and northern Spain), the *Andalusian* (mainly in Andalusia, although for the purposes of this work, and above all because of the phonetic proximity, we include here the lines of transition from Murcia and Extremadura) and *Canary* (Canary Islands). On the other hand, we would have Hispanic-American areas. They belong to *Mexican or Central American Spanish* (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua), the *Caribbean* (Antilles, continental coastal lands in contact with the Caribbean Sea, Costa Rica, Panama, most of Venezuela and the coastal part of Colombia), the *Andean* (most of Colombia, part of Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia), the *Chilean* (Chile) and the *Southern* (Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina; unlike Moreno Fernández, we will use in this work the denomination of Rioplatense Spanish)[9].

Finally, it is worth mentioning the existence of two large groups of varieties: the conservative (Spanish, Mexican or Central American and Andean) and the innovative (Spanish Andalusian, Canary, Caribbean, Chilean and Rioplatense). The difference between them would be that, while the former tends to retain certain phonetic traits (such as the maintenance of final word consonants, intervocalic consonants and cultured consonant groups, the non-aspired pronunciation of /x/ and not affricate /t°/ and a distinction between /ante/ and /l/, as between /0/ and /j/), the latter tends to weaken or lose them (such as weakening, aspiration or loss of final word consonants, weakening of interleaving consonants , simplification of cultured groups, aspiration of /x/, surdrication of /t°/, neutralization of liquids and yeísmo) (MORENO FERNÁNDEZ, 2019, p. 83).

Objectives and methodology

Objectives

The main objective of this work is to study the extent to which ELE students are able to identify the geographical varieties of Spanish from a recording, which prototypes exist around them, how they are categorized and, in a way, which characteristics of each one of them can influence this categorization.

[9]Para obter mais informações sobre a divisão territorial das áreas espanholas e suas características, consulte Moreno Fernández (2019).

Data collection

To perform this analysis, we use or survey PRECAVES XXI. It is a project that aims to study how attitudes and beliefs of speakers in Spanish varieties and consist of an anonymous, online survey (accessed by a unique code), based on the technique of false pairs or *matched-guise*. Although it is a tool that allows us to collect a large amount of data, in this work we will only sweat or recognize the varieties, so that we will explain simply as the correspondent sees. For a complete methodology, see Cestero and Paredes (2018).

As for the questionnaire structure, it consists of two parts: the first, in which the student must fill in his sociographic data, and the second, in which he hears, one after one, stimulus tapes of about 3 minutes in length and belonging to the standard cult of the eight varieties mentioned above. Each of them appears twice, once in spontaneous speech (all speakers talk about the same theme: traffic problems in large cities) and once in a read speech (the text is always the same and its main theme is experience). Each of them allows a single reproduction. Finally, it should be noted that, depending on the code the interviewee receives, throughout the survey you will hear recordings with a male or female voice.

After listening to each recording, the participant must answer a series of questions related to the evaluation (direct and indirect) of the variety and its recognition. Of all these, in this work we are only interested in the following: a) *Point out an aspect of the pronunciation that you particularly liked*; b) *Point out an aspect of the pronunciation that particularly disturbed you*; c) *Which country or region do you think the person is talking about?*. It should be noted that, in all questions, the interviewee responds freely and without any support.

It should be mentioned that this research was not designed to study the recognition or categorization of varieties, but to study their evaluation. Therefore, it does not allow us to obtain information about the specific traits that the respondent recognized in the variety, as he can identify them, but does not value them negatively or positively. However, this section can give us some idea of what features are impressive. The choice of this method in our work is based mainly on research that offers a wealth of data that can be used in a subsequent study of attitudes and beliefs. Despite this, we consider it to be a sufficiently valid tool for a first approach to this problem.

Sample and variables

The sample we work with is made up of 57 students (16 men and 41 women) from ELE, from the Bilingual Sections [10] (SSBB) of Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland[11]. Its composition can be seen in Table 1. At the time of the research, some of the students were still doing their secondary studies in one of the SSBB, while others were already enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree (philological or non-philological). The decision to work with a specific sample is based on the following:

a) Spanish teaching at SSBB is done through the Spanish Language and Literature theme and, in the case of each section, there is an official curriculum that establishes its content and planning [12]. The analysis of these documents suggests that a student of these SSBBs must have some knowledge about the dialectal situation of the language, although without specifying the specific contents, so it is usually the teachers who select them (the curriculum does not establish which geographic division and what characteristics should be taught). We believe that our analysis can provide valuable data on students' real knowledge of geographic language variation that may be greater for future curriculum development or modification.

b) Students in these sections receive training both at ELE and in other subjects taught in Spanish. In addition, we know that they come into contact with native speakers, not only because of the cultural activities that are usually organized in these centers, but also because the Ministry of Education and Professional Formation (MEFP) annually calls for vacancies for teachers with Spanish nationality within the Teachers in bilingual Spanish sections at schools in Central Europe, Eastern Europe and China to teach in these sections.

c) The language level of these students is usually high enough for them to understand applied research[13].

Table 1 - Sample composition

[10] For more information about SSBB, see MEFP (s.f.[b]).

[11] The SSBBs mentioned are not exclusive to these three countries. This choice is due to experience, completed secondary studies at one of the SSBBs in Slovakia, so this knowledge could be useful in interpreting the results.

[12] Currículo de lengua y literatura españolas. Cursos III, IV y V. Secciones Bilingües de Eslovaquia, 2016; Currículo de Lengua y Literatura Españolas. Secciones Bilingües en la República Checa, 2007 y Currículo de Lengua y Literatura Españolas. Secciones Bilingües de español. Polonia, s.f.[a]

[13] The duration of formation in the SSBBs mentioned above can vary depending on the country, although it is usually 5 years, with teaching ELE from the first course. For linguistic reasons, in the case of students who are still doing their secondary studies, it is essential that they belong to the last courses, when their proficiency in Spanish is generally equivalent to B2-C1. Since the SSBB curricula do not specify what level should be taught in each course, we are unable to provide accurate information about the actual level of our participants. It should be noted that, at Slovakia's SSBB, the student, after completing his studies, receives a state certificate equivalent to C1, issued by the center.

	Studies						
	Pre-university		University				
			Non-philological		Philological		
Country of origin	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	Total
Slovakia	8	7	2	8	0	4	**29**
Czech Republic	1	2	4	5	1	3	**16**
Poland	0	0	0	2	0	10	**12**
Total	**9**	**9**	**6**	**15**	**1**	**17**	**57**

Source: Devised by the author

Sampling was done accidentally not probabilistically, or by the "snowball" technique, therefore, the number of participants per box is uneven. As more women than men participated in the study (which is because there are generally more women studying at SSBB), this variable is not taken into account. The same goes for age, since all respondents are between 16 and 26 years old. If the participants were divided into two age groups, this cut would correspond to the variable studies, which are taken into account, as well as the respondents' country of origin. Although it is true that several studies have demonstrated the importance of residing in a region where the studied variety is spoken when identifying it (for example, CLOPPER; FLATNI, 2004), and we know the importance of contact with native speakers, in this study we do not have data enough to include these variables[14].

In short, the variables that are taken into account are the following:

a) Typical recording variables: variety (Castilian, Andalusian, Canary, Central American or Mexican, Caribbean, Andean, Chilean, Rioplatense); speech (spontaneous, read); voice (male, female);

b) Variables of the interviewee himself: country of origin (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland); studies (university, pre-university, non-philological, university philological studies).

Results

Variety identification

First, we analyze the degree and type of identification of varieties, for which we use the answers to the question *What country or region do you think the person is talking about?*. The

[14] For data analysis, the IBM SPSS 20 statistical package was used. The use of quantitative analysis is due to the fact that, in total, we obtained 876 responses in total, since each of the 57 respondents evaluates 16 recordings (which should be subtracted from unanswered cases).

degree of success is divided into four categories: exact hit (when answering "Sevilla" or Andalusia for the Andalusian variety), generic hit (for example: "Latin America" for an American variety), error (for example: "Andalusia" for the Mexican variety, but also "Hispanoamerica" for a Spanish variety) and, of course, does not know/does not respond. As can be seen in Table 2, the exact success is relatively low (22.3%), while in almost half of the cases the respondent is not correct (49.66%).

Table 2 – General identification of varieties

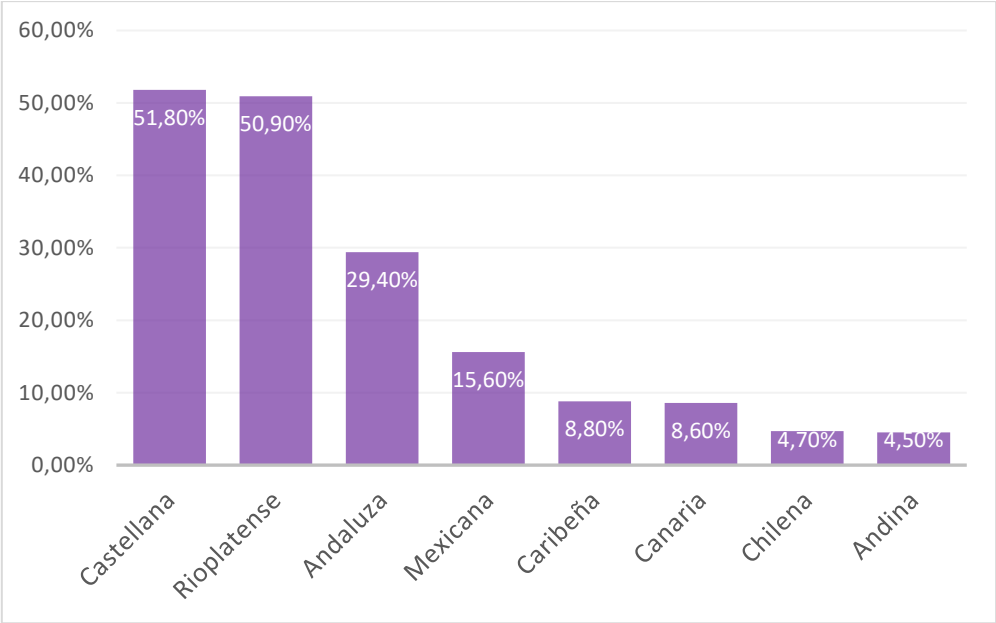
Degree of recognition		
	N	**%**
Exact hit	193	22,03%
Generic hit	142	16,21%
Error	435	49,66%
DK/DA/Others	106	12,10%
Total	876	100,0%

Source: Devised by the author

On the other hand, we are interested in knowing, in case of exact success, which varieties are more easily recognized. The results presented in Figure 1 show that the varieties with the highest degree of recognition are Castilian and Rioplatense, which is probably related to the fact that they have two unique traits: the systematic distinction between /s/ and /o/ in the case of the first and of restructured "yeísmo" in the case of the second. Then, the Andalusian modality also has a considerable percentage, although lower than the previous ones. Finally, it highlights the low recognition of Caribbean, Canary, Chilean and Andean Spanish, so it seems that respondents are not familiar with these dialectal forms.

Figure 1 – Exact identification of varieties[15]

[15] We read on the graph subtitle from left to right: Castilian; Rioplatense; Andalusian; Mexican; Caribbean; Canary; Chilean; Andean.



Source: Devised by the author.

Categorization of varieties

Although Figure 1 allows us to know which varieties are more recognizable, what does not show us is the distribution of the generic hit, error and DK/DA for each variety. This data can be especially useful to determine how the different geographic modalities of Spanish are categorized and which focus is being applied in each case. This distribution is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Disaggregated variety identification

	Degree of recognition									
	Exact hit		**Generic**		**Error**		**DK/DA/Others**		**Total**	
Varieties	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Castilian	59	51,8%	29	25,4%	16	14,0%	10	8,8%	114	100%
Andalusian	32	29,4%	22	20,2%	41	37,6%	14	12,8%	109	100%
Canary	9	8,6%	19	18,1%	61	58,1%	16	15,2%	105	100%
Mexican	17	15,6%	20	18,3%	52	47,7%	20	18,3%	109	100%
Caribbean	10	8,8%	17	15,0%	76	67,3%	10	8,8%	113	100%
Andean	5	4,5%	18	16,4%	73	66,4%	14	12,7%	110	100%
Chilean	5	4,7%	5	4,7%	82	77,4%	14	13,2%	106	100%
Rioplatense	56	50,9%	12	10,9%	34	30,9%	8	7,3%	110	100%

Source: Devised by the author.

However, none of the tables above allows us to really know what happens in the event of an error, or, in other words, how the wrong identification is distributed in each variety and

whether that distribution follows any specific pattern. For this, it is possible to take into account that there are two possible focuses of the analysis. In the first case, the variety heard is based on the analysis and responses offered by the interviewees analyzed. On the contrary, in the second case, we start from the answers and analyze the variety that the interviewees really heard. This study of reverse identification is mainly of interest to us because a dialectal modality may have a very high degree of recognition, but this may be due to the participants attributing this answer to all the modalities heard. On the other hand, the study of cases not correctly identified can tell us if the student is wrong in relation to some specific variety, for example, if he remains within the same group (conservative or innovative) to which the dialectal mode he belongs to. Table 4 shows the complete distribution of responses by recording (only cases of exact correctness and error are taken into account, so that the percentages do not correspond to the tables above).

Table 4 – Variety identification: recordings and responses

Variety heard	**Answers**															
	Castilian		**Andalusian**		**Canary**		**Mexican**		**Caribbean**		**Andean**		**Chilean**		**Rioplatense**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Castilian	**59**	30,9	7	5,9	1	6,7	1	1,8	1	4,0	1	2,4	0	0,0	2	2,8
Andalusian	24	12,6	**32**	26,9	1	6,7	3	5,3	1	4,0	5	11,9	0	0,0	1	1,4
Canary	16	8,4	**20**	16,8	**9**	60,0	4	7,0	3	12,0	6	14,3	2	11,8	0	0,0
Mexican	16	8,4	5	4,2	0	0,0	**17**	29,8	0	0,0	7	16,7	6	35,3	3	4,2
Caribbean	18	9,4	**23**	19,3	2	13,3	5	8,8	**10**	40,0	7	16,7	2	11,8	5	7,0
Andean	25	13,1	4	3,4	0	0,0	**18**	31,6	3	12,0	5	11,9	0	0,0	2	2,8
Chilean	18	9,4	**22**	18,5	2	13,3	6	10,5	7	28,0	6	14,3	5	29,4	2	2,8
Rioplatense	15	7,9	6	5,0	0	0,0	3	5,3	0	0,0	5	11,9	2	11,8	**56**	78,9
Total	191	100	119	100	15	100	57	100	25	100	42	100	17	100	71	100

Source: Devised by the author.

The analysis in Table 4 reveals that, in fact, the frequency with which the varieties that appear in the responses is not the same. In addition, it can be seen that they all operate independently. Thus, the variety that appears most in the responses is Castilian, and although it is true that in most cases it is correctly assigned to the recording, it is also very often incorrectly assigned to other varieties. Furthermore, it appears that this does not follow any concrete pattern. This would lead us to think that it is used as a kind of "wildcard" when it is not known which geographic mode is being heard, but, on the other hand, when the participant listens to the recording of the Spanish Central North, he almost always identifies it correctly. It seems, therefore, that its high percentage of success in identification is not due to chance.

The second most common variety in the responses is Andalusia. In this case, we no longer have such a high percentage of recognition. If we look at the number of times that answer was incorrectly attributed to another dialectal modality, we can see that this attribution is maintained mainly within the innovative group, to which the Andalusian belongs, except in the case of the Spanish rioplatense, which we will comment on later. On the other hand, when listening to Andalusian, it is quite common to identify it correctly or, otherwise, as Castilian. Very rarely does another variety appear in the responses.

The Canarian variety appears in the answers almost exclusively when it comes to it. On the contrary, when listening, most responses are "Andalusian" (both are innovative) and Castilian (both are Spanish). With Caribbean Spanish a very similar pattern is repeated (except that this is not from Spain).

The "Mexican" answer is attributed to both itself and the Andean, and the one with a very similar frequency. These responses are hardly attributed to other varieties. When, on the other hand, Mexican Spanish is heard, it is common to answer either "Mexican" or "Castilian" (both are conservative). However, the interesting thing is that the "Andean" answer is hardly in the questionnaire (and if so, no concrete pattern is followed), but when you hear Andean Spanish, most of the answers are "Castilian" or "Mexican". In other words, it seems that the participants recognize the similarity between the three varieties mentioned (all are conservative) and the similarity between Mexican and Andean (the only two conservative Hispanic-American varieties), but of this pair is the Mexican that is most representative.

The Chilean variety hardly appears in the answers and in its analysis we did not find any peculiar pattern, except that, when heard, the majority answers are "Andalusian" and "Castilian".

In the case of Rioplatense, a very clear pattern follows: it is only answered when it is actually heard, and when it is heard, it is correctly identified.

Factors that influence recognition

As for the recording variables (speech and voice), both are significant. Table 5 shows the recognition of the varieties according to the speech (spontaneous or read). Pearson's test 2 defined the significance of this variable at p-0.000064, with spontaneous speech facilitating exact success, while in the case of speech reading it is usually answered generically or DK/DA (table 5). This analysis seems logical when one considers that spontaneous speech favors the appearance of dialectal features, which facilitates the identification of the variety.

Table 5 – Correct recognition according to speech

Discourse	Recognition hit									
	Hit		Error		Generic		DK/DA/Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Spontaneous	122	27,8%	216	49,2%	58	13,2%	43	9,8%	439	100,0%
Read	71	16,2%	219	50,1%	84	19,2%	63	14,4%	437	100,0%

Source: Devised by the author

The voice variable was also significant (p-0.00), where the error is more common for the male voice, while the generic and DK/DA responses are more frequent in the case of the female voice. In the case of the correct answer, there is almost no difference (table 6).

Table 6 – Voice recognition correct

Recorded voice	Recognition hit									
	Hit		Error		Generic		DK/DA/Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Man	98	22,3%	261	59,5%	54	12,3%	26	5,9%	439	100,0%
Woman	95	21,7%	174	39,8%	88	20,1%	80	18,3%	437	100,0%

Source: Devised by the authors.

As for the interviewee's own variables, they were manipulated so that the sampling technique affected the result as little as possible. Since almost all participants in Poland belong to the philological university level, we removed these participants from the analysis of the variable studies. For the final data set (Czech and Slovak students), this variable is significant (p-0.000207), with the philological university level facilitating the exact correctness. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 – Correct recognition according to the respondents' formation

Participant formation	Recognition hit									
	Hit		Error		Generic		DK/DA/Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Secondary	46	17,6%	136	52,1%	31	11,9%	48	18,4%	261	100,0%
Non-philological university	67	20,4%	171	52,1%	67	20,4%	23	7,0%	328	100,0%
Philological university	80	27,9%	128	44,6%	44	15,3%	35	12,2%	287	100,0%

Source: Devised by the author.

Finally, to establish the importance of the variable country of origin, from the previous set, we also eliminated students at the pre-university level (since in Slovakia we have 15 students of this level, while in the Czech Republic only 3). For this data set, the country of origin variable is significant (p-0.0135), although this difference appears mainly in generic correctness, not in exact/error, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 – Recognition hit according to the interviewee's origin

Country of origin	Recognition hit									
	Hit		Error		Generic		DK/DA/Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Slovakia	43	19,3%	110	49,3%	57	25,6%	13	5,8%	223	100,0%
Czech Republic	48	23,9%	108	53,7%	27	13,4%	18	9,0%	201	100,0%

Source: Devised by the author

Imaginary and prototypes in the recognition and categorization of varieties

As mentioned above, participants could freely respond to what area or region they believe the speaker is. Therefore, in this section we are interested in conducting a detailed analysis of these responses, in order to establish which areas or regions are considered to be the most prototypical for each dialectal modality. In addition, the characteristics highlighted by the participants for each of them are studied (although for reasons explained in the Methodology section, the analysis of this answer is only for guidance). Table 9 presents a summary of each variety and the region that is most prototypical when identifying it. The data are presented below, taking into account only the exact success stories.

Table 9 – Prototypes in the identification of varieties

VARIETIES	REGION
Castilian	Madrid
Andalusian	Andalucía
Canary	Islas Canarias
Mexican/Centro-American	México
Caribbean	Cuba
Andean	Colombia
Chilean	Chile
Rioplatense	Argentina

Source: Devised by the author.

Castilian Spanish

The majority answer by far is "Madrid" (19 replies), followed by "center of Spain" (9), "northern Spain" (8), "Castile and Leon" (4),"Valencia" (4), "Castile la Mancha" (3), "Castile" (Castilla 3), "northern center of Spain" (2), "Catalonia" (2), "Castile/Aragon" (1), "La Rioja" (1), "Asturias" (1), "Zaragoza" (1) and "Toledo" (1).

Among the highlighted characteristics are the fricative pronunciation of /x/, the non-omission of consonants and the implosive pronunciation -/s/, pronunciation of the -/d/ in the end of the word as /-/, the aspiration of the -/k/ final[16], the apicoalveolar pronunciation of / s / and the distinction between /s/ and /s//.

Andalusian Spanish

The most frequent answer is "Andalusia" (14), followed by "Southern Spain" (8), "Northern Spain" (2), "Granada" (2), "Málaga" (1), "Cádiz" (1), "Extremadura" (1), "Murcia" (1), "Southern Spain, America" (1) and "Southeast Spain" (1).

The highlights were the disaffection of /tʃ/, the omission and aspiration of consonants, including also -/s/ implosive, aspiration of /x/, simplification of cultured groups, but also distinction between /s/ and /o/[17].

Canary Spanish

In this case, only the "Canary Islands" (8) or "Canary Islands/Cuba" (1) are answered. As for the characteristics, the aspiration of the pronunciation (/s/ implosive) of the occlusive sound consonants, aspiration of /x/ and aspiration in general, seseo, very smooth pronunciation of /tʃ/ and the use of the word "guagua" are highlighted.

Mexican or Central American Spanish

The prototypical answer is "Mexico" (17), although to a lesser extent also appears "Mexico, Puebla" (1), "Mexico Center, D.F." (1), "South America, Mexico" (1), or "Mexico, Central America" (1).

The characteristics mentioned were the maintenance of -/s/ implosive, vowel stretching, sinus, closure of some gap in diphthongs (/ea/ (/ia/), non-aspiration (in general), omission of some implosive consonants, aspiration of /x/ and the use of "that" and "well".

[16] No concrete case is specified; we assume that the interviewee can refer to the simplification of educated groups.
[17] This fact is impressive when we take into account that in Andalusian Spanish the distinction of wheezing is not systematic and the disaffection of /tʃ/ is not generally associated with the cult pattern, although to some extent it is perceived in the recording.

Caribbean Spanish

Responses include "Cuba" (4), "Venezuela" (3), "Caribbean" (2) and "Cuba/Dominican Republic" (1). It highlights nasalization, aspiration in general, especially of implosive -/s/, vocalization of /b/, omission of -/d/ final and -/d/- intervocalic, aspiration of /x/ and bone.

Andean Spanish

The only responses collected are "Colombia" (2), "Bogotá/other part of Colombia" (1), "Bolivia" (1) and "Peru" (1). Highlights include the aspiration of /x/, extension of /ante/ at the end of the word, occlusive pronunciation of /b/ intervocalic and seseo.

Chilean Spanish

In all cases, the answer is "Chile" (5), and the characteristics collected were as follows: aspiration of /x/, omission of -/s/ and final consonants and seseo.

The Rioplatenese Spanish

The majority response is by far "Argentina" (40), followed by "Uruguay" (7), "Rio da Prata" (4), "Argentina/Uruguay" (3), "Argentina/Paraguay" (1) and "Paraguay"(1).

Among the striking features are the omission of consonants, a peculiar intonation, aspiration, seseo, and restructured yeísmo.

Conclusions

In this work, we conducted a pilot study on the recognition and categorization of geographic varieties of Spanish by ELE students from the SSBBs of Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland.

Although the overall recognition was relatively low (22.03% of correct answers only; 38.24% with general correct answers), we consider this to be a very significant number, given that these are foreign speakers. In addition, we could see that they use their linguistic knowledge to identify varieties, which is demonstrated not only in free responses, but also in the fact that spontaneous speech facilitates the recognition of varieties (when reading speech). In addition, we could see that philological formation is also important in identifying them correctly, which is probably because students have more linguistic training that helps them to accomplish this task. As for the categorization and prototypes of the different dialectal modalities of Spanish, we could see that each one works almost independently, although there are clear patterns in

their identification. For example, the answer "Castilian" is used as a kind of "wildcard", as it is answered very often for all varieties. These data can show that, for our interviewees, this geographic modality is the prototype of Spanish in general. On the other hand, the "Andalusian" response was also very frequent, but mainly for innovative varieties. In fact, it appears that respondents consider this variety to be the prototype of innovative Spanish. Regarding the latter, it should be mentioned that it seems that the interviewees perceive the difference between conservative and innovative Spanish, since, with the exception of the castile variety, they generally remain within the corresponding group. In addition, Mexican and Andean Spanish (two conservative Hispanic-American varieties) were recognized together, with Mexico being the most representative. As for the Rioplatense, the participants seem to identify it very confidently, since it is rarely answered for other varieties. It should also be noted that the Canarian, Caribbean and Chilean modalities seem to be little known or difficult to categorize.

On the other hand, we consider that our analysis of imagery and prototypes shows that the students surveyed belong to the group of "monofocal" speakers, as is also common in native collectives. Despite this, they do not simply identify the largest areas of the language (Spain vs. Hispano-America. Latin America), but tend to mention more specific regions.

As for the analysis of the striking features of each variety, they seem to show that Rioplatense is recognized thanks to its restructured yeísmo, a characteristic not mentioned by any other. Therefore, in this case, the trait theory proposed by Moreno Fernández (2001, p. 3), while in the rest of the cases the conservative and innovative character of the discourse seems to be recognized, so that the prototype theory would probably be applied here (the theory of the specimen excluded from the analysis would be applied, since we do not have enough information to study it).

As for the analysis of the striking features of each variety, these seem to show that the Rioplatense is recognized thanks to its reticulated yeísmo, a characteristic not mentioned by any other. Therefore, in this case, a theory of the characteristic proposed by Moreno Fernández (2001, p. 3), while in other cases or conservative and innovative character of the discourse seems to be recognized, so that a theory of the protoxically would probably be applied here (a theory of the sample excluded from the analysis would be applied, since it does not tend to inform enough to study it).

In short, we can conclude that ELE students perceive the geographical variation of Spanish and, in addition, are sensitive to it, since they were only able to recognize the existence of the two large groups of varieties, conservative and innovative, but they were also able to highlight quite accurately some characteristics in each variety. In addition, we could see that

this sensitivity increases with the student's education, although the familiarity that the student has with all varieties is also important. For this reason, we believe that the geolinguistic variation of Spanish should be part of the curriculum of the Spanish classes, emphasizing that all the main areas of Spanish are represented in the teaching materials.

Finally, it should be noted that the present work should only be understood as a first approach to this problem. In future studies, we intend not only to design a more suitable method for this analysis, but also to include more variables that may be significant, such as the interviewees' contact with native speakers or their stay in Spanish-speaking countries. However, we believe that the data obtained here may be useful not only for future studies on the valuation and perception of varieties, but also for the field of teaching Spanish to foreigners.

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