“Somos /ʃʃoqueros:” Indexing locality through nonstandard [ʃ]
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Andalusian Spanish is commonly divided into Eastern and Western varieties. Eastern varieties are said to converge towards standard Castilian Spanish in two salient phonetic features: (i) from the ceceo [sʰ] for orthographic <s,z,ci,ce> to the standard distinción between [s], for <s>, and [θ] for <z,ci,ce>; and (ii) from [ʃ] to standard [tʃ] for orthographic <ch> (Alvar 1996; Hernández-Villena 2009; Narbona et. al 1998; Penny 2000; Stewart 1999; Villena 2008). Western Andalusian varieties, however, are said to maintain these nonstandard features (Hernández-Villena 2009), but nearly all research of Eastern Andalusian varieties has exclusively focused on Sevilla (Dalbor 1980) and Jerez de la Frontera (Carbonero et al. 1992; García 2008). With the exception of Regan (2014), which demonstrated a change from ceceo to standard distinción, there is a dearth of studies of Huelva and its province.

Based on 40 sociolinguistic interviews (ages 18-86) in and around the capital of Huelva, the current endeavor investigated the nonstandard voiceless palatal fricative [ʃ] standardizing towards the standard Castilian voiceless palatal affricate [tʃ] for orthographic <ch>. The aim of the study was three-fold: (i) to examine a change from above (Labov 2001) from [ʃ] to [tʃ], which would challenge the notion that all Western Andalusian varieties maintain nonstandard features; (ii) to investigate if [ʃ] co-occurs with ceceo; and (iii) to observe any indexical or stylistic use of [ʃ]. The two variants were acoustically differentiated using Praat (Boersam and Weenink 2014). Based on an Rbrul mixed-methods multivariate analysis and detailed ethnographic observations, it was observed that participants of younger generations, higher education, females, and distinción speakers favor [tʃ], while older generations, lower education, and ceceante speakers favor [ʃ]. These results parallel the findings of Regan (2014) of nonstandard ceceo standardizing to distinción, reinforcing the notion that Huelva, although in Western Andalucía, demonstrates convergence towards standard Castilian. Of greater interest is the indexical usage of [ʃ] with certain words of participants who favor standard [tʃ]. Through detailed discourse analysis the researcher investigated local Huelvan words such as gentilics (choquero/a), foods (choco, puchero), and colloquialisms (chiquillo, picha).

Huelvans are demonstrating a type of word specific phonetics (Pierrehumbert 2002, 2006) to index inherent locality to Huelva in juxtaposition to the current standardization process from [ʃ] to [tʃ]. This supports previously literature (Eckert 2000, 2008, 2012; Moore 2004; Schilling-Estes 2008; Silverstein 2003) that speakers are active linguistic agents selecting between sociolinguistic resources to create contextually situated meaning within an indexical field. The implications of the current study are three-fold: (i) the speech community of Huelva has moved from nonstandard [ʃ] to standard Castilian [tʃ], contradicting the maintenance claims of Western Andalusian varieties and thus requiring a revision of the traditional dialectal divisions; (ii) ceceo speakers favor [ʃ] demonstrating a co-occurrence of nonstandard features; (iii) and finally, Huelvans utilize the nonstandard variant to index locality in contrast to the standard variant.

References:


