

Fall 12-11-2017

Understanding a Discourse Marker in Quito, Ecuador

Hannah Jesberger
hjesber@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects>

 Part of the [Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics Commons](#), [Discourse and Text Linguistics Commons](#), [Language Description and Documentation Commons](#), [Phonetics and Phonology Commons](#), and the [Spanish Linguistics Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Jesberger, Hannah, "Understanding a Discourse Marker in Quito, Ecuador" (2017). *Honors Projects*. 414.
<https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects/414>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

UNDERSTANDING A DISCOURSE MARKER IN QUITO, ECUADOR

HANNAH M. JESBERGER

HONORS PROJECT

Submitted to the Honors College at Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

UNIVERSITY HONORS

DECEMBER 11, 2017

Dr. Lynn Pearson, Advisor
Department of World Languages and Cultures
Dr. Virginia Dubasik, Advisor
Department of CDIS

Abstract

1) **Motivation:** The present research project examines the possible factors to explain the word-final /f/ in Ecuadorian Spanish including but not limited to: where it is used, who uses it (gender, age ranges, social class), and with which words it is most commonly used.

2) **Approach:** I created an online survey and received responses from 120 participants. These participants were contacted via email and through Facebook posts. I posted a link to the survey on three different Facebook pages and sent twenty emails to professional and academic contacts in the various regions of Ecuador.

3) **Findings:** The discourse marker word-final /f/ is a variation of the marker *pues* but still follows the same rules. Specifically, it is an emphazior marker located at the end of a short statement with the role of drawing attention and interest to emphasize the stated utterance. It can be commonly found with **replies, commands, greetings, questions, and nouns** and is only used informally.

4) **Conclusion/implications:** As the first extensive research study on the word-final /f/, the project may lead to other investigations of this phenomenon and other features of Ecuadorian Spanish. In addition, if there are other variations of the marker *pues* in the Spanish varieties spoken in different regions and/or countries, researchers can use this present study as basis to analyze the specific function of *pues*. Lastly, those interested in the phoneme /f/ at the end of words can now know and understand its role in the Ecuadorian Spanish and its discourse.

Keywords: discourse marker, Quito, Ecuador, discourse marker *pues*, phoneme /f/, emphazior, word-final /f/

Introduction

This study examines the phenomenon of a word-final /f/ observed in Ecuadorian Spanish that appears to function as a discourse marker when used at the end of words, such as “Sífff”. The objective of the present research project is to investigate the possible factors that may explain the use of the word-final /f/ in Ecuadorian Spanish including but not limited to: where it is used, who uses it (gender - males or females, age ranges, social class), and with which words it is most commonly used. The discourse marker word-final /f/ is a variation of the marker *pues* but still follows the same rules. Specifically, it is an emphasisor marker located at the end of a short statement with the role of drawing attention and interest to emphasize the stated utterance. It can be commonly found with **replies**, **commands**, **greetings**, **questions**, and **nouns** and is only used informally. To better understand the specific discourse marker that I am investigating, it is important to know exactly what a discourse marker is and have the appropriate background knowledge on Ecuador and its dialects. I will first present various definitions and examples of dialects and discourse markers. I will then describe the four regions of Ecuador and the dialects that belong to each. From there, I can begin to explain the specific discourse marker along with an analysis of my research and examples of its use in film and social media.

Discourse Markers

Discourse markers, according to Schiffrin (1987), are “sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk” (p. 31). She describes and provides examples of several discourse markers in English, which include “and, oh, well, I mean, y’know,” among others (Schiffrin, 1987). Although her describes discourse markers commonly used in English, there is relevant

research in Spanish¹. According to Guevara (2015), “discourse markers can be studied from the semantic, syntactic or morphologic level” (p. 296). Discourse markers are also defined as “invariable linguistic units” that guide “the inferences that are made in communication” (“Conceptos básicos”). Changing a discourse marker without changing the meaning of a sentence is possible and, depending on the role of the marker, it can also change location in the utterance. According to Grajales Alzate (2011),

Simple distributions are found at the beginning of the enunciation (conjunction, contact control and metadiscourse), in the middle of the discourse member (consecutive connector) and at the end of the enunciation (reinforcement of illocutionary act). There are also complex distributions: at the beginning and at the end of the statement (commentator and reformulator). (p. 11)

This means that the location of a discourse marker can help to identify its linguistic role. Given that this investigation examines a discourse marker in word-final position, this function of “reinforcement of illocutionary act” is pertinent (Grajales Alzate, 2011). I will call the word-final /f/ an *emphasizer* which “operates at a discourse level to draw attention and interest from the interlocutor, and intensify the effect that the stated content could provoke in it” (Guevara, Guevara, 2015, p. 309). I hypothesize that the word-final /f/ may have derived from the discourse marker *pues* (well, then).

Dialects of Ecuador

According to the Royal Spanish Academy the word *dialect* has two meanings. The first is “variety of a language that does not reach the social category of language.” And the second is a

¹ All sources in Spanish have been translated to English by the author, Hannah Jesberger.

"linguistic system considered in relation to the group of the various derivatives of a common trunk" (Dialect). In my own words, it is a variation of a language that is dependent on the region where it is spoken. In total there are thirty-one Spanish-speaking countries in the world. With several countries all speaking the same language, it is normal that different dialects arise. The interesting fact of dialects is that Ecuador, being a small country, has different dialects for each region.

Ecuador consists of four important regions and is one of the smallest Spanish-speaking countries in South America. Despite its limited size, "Ecuador is the scene of great ethnic and cultural diversity" (Ayala, 2002, p. 26). The eastern part of the country, the *oriente*, has an abundance of variety in fauna and flora as a result of the diverse Amazon Rainforest. In this region, the culture, the people, and the Quichua language have a significant influence on the modes of speech. In the middle portion of the country, the highlands or the *sierra*, the Andes mountains are located. During the day this region experiences hot days and cold nights. It is not uncommon to find snow located on peaks of the mountains and volcanos, such as Cotopaxi. The third region is the coast, where beautiful beaches and a year-round warm climate can be found. The fourth and last region of Ecuador is the insular or the Galapagos Islands. These are some of the most diverse islands in the world and are well-known for research done by Charles Darwin. There is not only diversity in the geography, climate, flora and fauna but also diversity in the modes of speech.

Ecuador has always been a regionalized country. According to Ayala (2002), "Ecuador is a country of diverse regional identities" (p. 34). Two factors to explain this regionalism are: 1) the history of the country in relation to the Spanish conquest versus the indigenous peoples; and

2) the geography. The Andean mountains make travel difficult from the coastal region to the Amazon and the Pacific Ocean separates the Galapagos Islands from mainland Ecuador by 1,423 kilometers. With this evident regionalism, variances in dialects are expected. Ayala (2002) states that "We, as Ecuadorians, are different even among ourselves and one cannot apply a general cliché to us" and therefore, in my opinion, a general dialect cannot be applied either (p. 69).

Phonetics of the Ecuadorian dialects

The article by Peter Boyd-Bowman (1953) examines phonetics in connection with the geography of Ecuador. For my research, I will focus on certain sounds. More specifically, the *-s*, the *-r*, the *-l*, and the *-j*. According to Boyd-Bowman (1953), "the Ecuadorian highlands, like the Peruvian ones, pronounces a tenuous and firm *s* in any position" (p. 226) ... "On the other hand, the coast inhales the final *s* of the syllable and word..." (p. 226). This is called omission or elision. More specifically, those in the coastal region tend to cut off the *-s* and instead pronounce more of an *-h* in its place. This is known as aspiration. For the sounds *-r* and *-l*, "the montuvios² or *campesinos* of the coast, and especially in the black province of Esmeraldas, both the *-r* and the *-l* finals of acute words tend to disappear..." (p. 227). For the last sound, represented by the letter *j*, is described by Boyd-Bowman (1953): "In the coast, but not in the highlands, the *j* sounds very weak, becoming a mere pharyngeal aspiration" (p. 229) which is similar to the [h] from English instead of the velar variant [x]. To summarize the general observations, the coast of Ecuador aspirates more, while in the highlands, speakers conserve word-final sounds.

Interestingly, the discourse marker I investigate in this study may indicate a variation in the word-final *-s* in *pues*.

² *Montuvio* or *montubio* is the name used by residents of the highlands for any *campesino* of the coast while *montuvio* is used by coastal residents to describe any person from the province Manabí.

Spanish and Quichua

Ecuador has two national languages; Spanish and Quichua. Spanish first arrived to Ecuador in the sixteenth century with Spain's conquest. The Spaniards "sought to implant ... their language ..." (Ayala, 2002, p. 18). Thus, the Spaniards arrived in Ecuador (and the rest of South America) and imposed the language (and much more) onto the indigenous peoples. From that moment, Spanish has been an important component of the country. However, Quichua still has its own essential role in the dialects of Ecuador.

According to Enrique Ayala Mora (2002), "The Amazonian peoples were not conquered" in the sixteenth century (p. 15). This provides an explanation as to why Quichua still exists in regions of Ecuador. In the *oriente*, there are six major indigenous tribes, including: "Siona-Secoya, Cofán, Huaorani, Záparo, Shuar-Achuar and the Amazonian Quichua" and all still have their language [Quichua]" (Ayala, 2002, p. 16). In addition, there are provinces in the highlands where the highest indigenous populations of Ecuador are located. These provinces are as follows: Chimborazo (153,365), Cotopaxi (84,116), Imbabura (86,986) and Pichincha (95,380) (Ayala, 2002, p. 9). The Tahuantinsuyo tribe lived in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. They were the first speakers of Quichua and used Quito, the capital of Ecuador, as one of their major cities. The influence of Quichua in Quito is still very prevalent and one of the most important examples is Rumiñahui. In Quichua, Rumi literally means stone and Ñahui means face. Rumiñahui was an army general who fought against the Spaniards during the conquest and is an example of patriotism and courage. On December 6, Ecuadorians celebrate the life of Rumiñahui much like we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States (M. Amaquiña, personal communication, 2016).

At the *Universidad San Francisco de Quito*, where I studied during a semester, there was a class of Ecuadorian Culture for foreigners. In this class we learned about the Ecuadorian language, or rather the *Quiteño*³ dialect. According to M. Amaquiña (personal communication, 2016) some useful words that come from Quichua are the following:

Achachay = Quichua expression that denotes cold

Arrarray = Quichua expression that denotes something is very hot or burning

Atatay = Quichua expression that denotes disgust

Ayayay = Quichua expression that denotes pain

Guagua = Quichua word for baby or small child

Guambra = Quichua word for a child

Huasipichai = A party that takes place when you buy or remodel a house or apartment

(combines Huasi = house and Pichai = cleaning)

Mushpa / shunsho = Fool in Quichua

Taita = Quichua word for dad.

It is very common to hear these phrases in the daily life of Quito and other cities in the *sierra* and *oriente*. In fact, *guagua* is recognized as one of the commonly used words associated with the word-final *[f]* which I will explain later.

Palacios (2005, 2010) investigated the influence that the Andean languages, such as Quichua, have in Latin America. As Palacios (2010) emphasizes, "cases of a mixture of languages or *lenguas mixtas* [mixed languages] are documented in Ecuador", which causes differences in dialects. According to Palacios (2005, 2010), Quichua does not have gender

³ Quiteño/a: Person from Quito

grammar rules and "this is reflected in the lack of gender concordance, as shown by the ... bilingual Ecuadorians of Spanish-Quechua:

(14) *la problema, la tema, el costumbre*" (Palacios, 2005, p. 9).

Native English-speakers make similar mistakes when learning Spanish. This is due to the fact that English also does not have gender grammar rules. English speakers and Quichua speakers share another common mistake in Spanish, which is the simplification of the pronominal system. Many times, the pronoun "le" will be used for both direct and indirect objects when "le" should only be used for indirect objects and "lo/a" for direct objects. This error is common in two cities in the highlands, Quito and Otavalo, due to the "result of prolonged and intense contact between Quichua and Spanish speakers" (Palacios, 2010, p. 507). The phenomenon has extended from native Quichua speakers to native Spanish speakers as it is commonly heard and believed to be correct⁴.

It is evident that Quichua plays a major role in the *sierra* and *oriente* of Ecuador. However, it does not have much influence on the coastal region nor the Galapagos Islands. This is due to the low indigenous populations in these areas. The lack of contact with Quichua in these two regions explains the limited influence of its features in the Ecuadorian Spanish varieties spoken there.. According to Ayala (2001), the provinces with the lowest indigenous population are the following: Galápagos (739), El Oro (5,505), Los Ríos (5,518), and Manabí (6,448) (p. 9). All of these provinces are located in the insular and coast which demonstrates a large contrast to the highest populated indigenous cities located in the highlands.

⁴ For more information see Palacios, A. (2002), "Leísmo y loísmo en el español ecuatoriano: el sistema pronominal del español andino," en Hontenaje al Dr. Luis Jaime Cisneros, vol. I, Lima: PUCP, 389- 408.

The United States of America: English

Although the *sierra* has a large amount of Quichua influence and its own unique dialect, there is another influence that is also in other areas; English. One of the cities with the highest population of ex-patriot United States citizens is Cuenca. Many Ecuadorians claim that older Americans who retire come to live in that city. Other cities with high American populations are Quito and Guayaquil. The insular also has influence from the United States through travelers visiting as tourists on vacation. Some common words that come from English but are used in Ecuadorian Spanish include:

- a) *Man* which means person (can be masculine or feminine such as *el man* or *la man*);
- b) *Full* which is a word used more in Ecuador than in the U.S. to indicate that 1) someone is no longer hungry (*ya estoy full* 'I'm already full'), 2) that there is a large amount of something (*este lugar está full* 'This place is full'), and 3) a high degree of something (*está full chevere* 'This is very cool');
- c) *Broder* which comes from the English word "brother" and can mean either a literal brother or a friend;
- d) *Chance* which means chance or opportunity⁵;

and several other words are related to technology such as Facebook, *Tuiter* (Twitter), and *Chelfie* (Selfie). It is possible that the influence of English on the Ecuadorian Spanish language can

⁵ This borrowing is present in other Latin American dialects although the gender of the pronoun varies. In Ecuador, it is considered a masculine pronoun and therefore is *el chance* and *un chance*.

continue to grow with more and new technological advances. Without a doubt, both Quichua and English will continue to be important influences for many years to come.

Principle Research Questions

For my research, I have three main questions of investigation:

- 1) How did the discourse marker word-final /f/ of Quito form?
- 2) What is the geographical extension of this discourse marker?
- 3) What are the possible factors influencing its use (e.g., speaker characteristics, mode of communication, and social contexts).

Although the discourse marker I am investigating has been documented in Quito, I have reason to believe that it may also be used in other cities in Ecuador. Also, my study addresses other factors affecting its use such as the speakers and the linguistic and social contexts for its use.

Methodology

This section describes the methodology used to conduct this study of the word-final /f/ discourse marker in Ecuadorian Spanish. The data were collected from various sources: 1) the existing research about the discourse marker *pues* and a study by Adams (2015) about the word-final /f/ in Quito; 2) an Internet survey of Ecuadorian Spanish speakers⁶; and 3) observations of the word-final /f/ in film, Youtube videos, and other venues.

Survey Instrument

The criteria to participate in the survey was as follows:

- 1) Familiarity with Ecuadorian Spanish;
- 2) Current residence in Ecuador; and

⁶ See Appendix A for full list of interview questions.

3) Ages between 18 and 65 years.

The inclusion of speakers of different ages, genders, and regional origins is very important, due to the previously discussed four different regions in Ecuador, each of which, has its own unique dialect. By surveying respondents from all parts of Ecuador, it may be possible to conclude if the word-final /f/ is an exclusively *quiteño* feature or if it is used elsewhere in the country.

Other Data Sources

To answer the research questions, I also reviewed research about discourse markers in Spanish. In addition, I searched for examples of the word-final /f/ discourse marker in movies, video clips, and Facebook posts/comments in order to observe its use in different contexts and modes of communication (e.g., speech versus written).

Results and Analysis

The following sections detail the results of my data collection.

Discourse Marker Pues

The discourse marker *pues* is commonly used in all Spanish-speaking countries and has been studied multiple times. According to Grajales Alzate (2011), “The discourse marker *pues* stands out for its discursive polyfunctionality” (p. 12). *Pues* (well, then) is unique in comparison to other discourse markers for its effective multiple uses and roles making it “one special case... within the category distinction of markers” (“Conceptos básicos”). The marker *pues* can be found in any of the syntactic positions, “initial, central, final” and the different positions indicate a different role (Guevara, 2015, p. 306). Some of the various roles that it has include, “conjunction, commentator, consecutive connector, reformulator, metadiscourse marker, contact control marker, focalizer and subject closing marker.” Focalizer and subject closing marker can

also be called “the finalization of the topic” (Grajales Alzate, 2011, p. 5). One that is used for this role “is located at the end of the utterance” and also “reinforces the illocutionary act” (Grajales Alzate, 2011, p. 10). While *pues* has several roles in discourse, the most relevant role for the present study is that as a marker in the final position, which functions as an emphazior.

Grajales Alzate (2011) finds that the final position and role of *pues* is common in Medellín, Colombia and can be seen with statements “such as *rapidito pues [quickly then]*, *qué hubo pues [well what’s up]*, among others” (p. 8). However, it has been discovered that this use of *pues* is found in other cities besides Medellín. Other studies have been done in Piura, Peru; Maracay, Venezuela and now my research in Quito, Ecuador. Geographically, it is logical that Quito would have the same use of *pues* as it is located near the previously mentioned cities and countries.

Pues as an emphazior has specific functions and characteristics relating to the syntactic position, its ability to switch, and its relationship with pauses and punctuation marks. According to Guevara (2015),

... the emphazior function of *pues* presents the following characteristics:

- a) **Syntactic position:** it is always at the end.
- b) **Switching:** in this placement, the position cannot be switched.
- c) **Pause:** the marker can be located before or after a comma or appear without any punctuation mark. (p. 310)

And, more in depth, the full function of an emphazior includes the following:

- a) It appears in the *final* position.
- b) It does not allow switching of position.

- c) It can be found before, after or without any punctuation mark in writing.
- d) The emphatic value attributes greater strength to the arguments where it appears.
- e) The locutor uses the marker *pues* in a high percentage to emphasize its enunciation.
- f) The strongest argumentative force is set by the marker.
- g) It guides, thanks to the emphasis, the interlocutor's inferences.
- h) The marker is used to show the subjectivity of the speaker in his argument. (p. 319)

This emphasizer *pues* is precisely the discourse marker that I am investigating. However, its uniqueness shows more in Ecuador than in other Spanish-speaking countries. This is due to the possibility that *pues* has converted into a single sound to be connected to the end of words.

Lenition or Economization and Replacement

Lenition is a change of sounds. In relation to phonetics, it is “a phonological process that weakens consonant articulation at the ends of syllables or between vowels, causing the consonant to become voiced, spirantized⁷, or deleted” (Lenition). In Spanish, the phonemes /f/ and /s/ are fricative and voiceless. The difference between the two previously mentioned phonemes is the articulation placement. The /f/ is labiodental, meaning that the sound it produces is made with the tongue, top teeth and the bottom lip. The /s/ is dental/alveolar as it is produced by touching the tongue to the alveolar or the ridge behind the front, top teeth. Typically, with lenition, there is an actual change in sound. As previously mentioned, both phonemes, /f/ and /s/, are voiceless fricatives. This indicates very little change. For that reason, I hypothesize that the discourse

⁷ Change to a fricative consonant.

marker word-final /f/ is an economization and replacement of the *pues*. The word *pues* is typically phonetically transcribed as [ˈpwes] but can be pronounced as [ps]. According to Hardman-de-Bautista (1982), “The particle *pues* is frequently realized as /ps/, as in *nops* (no, *pues*) ‘well, no’ and *sips* (si, *pues*) ‘well, yes’” (p. 151). This is the economization of the word as it becomes shorter and more easily pronounced. Economization is not unique to Ecuador, however. Mexico, Bolivia, and Peru are all known to share this same phenomenon (Canfield, 1981, p. 48). According to Canfield (1981), “All *serranos* seem to pronounce /s/ with deliberate tenseness: [s] ... [speakers] often slight the vowel of pretonic and posttonic syllables, especially in a sibilant environment: *of(i)cina, accident(e)s, pas(e) (u)sted*” (p. 48). Similarly, in the case of *pues*, the diphthong *ue* is unpronounced, leaving the previously mentioned /ps/. Therefore, the [ff] that is pronounced instead of the word *pues* may be replacing the resultant [ps] economization. For that reason, I would claim that the discourse marker word-final /f/ is rather an economization and replacement than a lenition.

A Discourse Marker in Quito

Why is it that many, if not all, Spanish-speaking countries use the well-studied discourse marker *pues* but only in Ecuadorian Spanish there seems to be this derivative of *pues* as a word-final /f/? According to Schiffrin (1987), “Many ethnographies of communication have shown that cultures differ dramatically in terms of what speaker goals are culturally encoded in patterns of speaking, as units of speech (acts, events), and in situations for speech” (p. 11). This also holds true for why only certain locations in Ecuador use the marker word-final /f/. Although Spanish is spoken throughout many Latin American countries and throughout Ecuador, there may be a distinct culture that has an influence on the spoken dialect.

This has been previously studied by George Adams (2015). Adams's (2015) study aimed at understanding the perception of word-final /f/ users and provided an overview of its use in Ecuadorian Spanish. His study used an electronic survey to: 1) poll the different perceptions using a 1 to 6 scale; 2) identify the word-final /f/ user's' social factors such as age, gender, education level, localization (*quiteño* or not), social-economic class, and friendliness; and 3) discover each participant's previously mentioned social factors (p. 1). He claims that the most common use of the final /f/ is with the word "Sí" (Adams, 2015, p. 1). He acknowledges, however, that it is possible to also find the sound attached to the words "no," "Quito," "de ley," etc. Since he determined that the most common word used with the word-final /f/ is "Sí," he has named the users of this marker as "Sifeístas" (Adams, 2015, p.1). He has found that the most common "sifeístas" were young males from the northern part of Quito. Although Adams has performed his research through surveys, I disagree with his results based on my own experiences of having lived in Quito and traveled to several different parts of the country. For that reason, I developed my own survey and focused on its usage instead of the perceptions of the discourse marker.

Survey Responses

In my survey, I found that the most commonly used word associated with the discourse marker word-final /f/ is "no." The participants not only rated "no" as the most common word to use the word-final /f/ but it has also been chosen fifty-six times as a response to question 11. Although there is a difference, the amount of times that "no" has been mentioned compared to "sí" is minimal. The name "Sifeístas" from Adams' (2015) research could easily be changed to "Nofeístas" as "no" has been selected twenty-five times compared to twenty times for "sí." "Ya"

has also ranked very highly as a common word and has even had more responses than “*sí*” for which word is the most common (23 compared to 20). Together, the words “*no*,” “*sí*,” and “*ya*” compose the top selected answers for the most commonly used word with the word-final /f/.

All three of the most commonly used words are short and simple. It has been noted that, “Only if the sentence is short and the relation between the evident wording, [*pues*] can appear at the end” (“Conceptos básicos”). This is logical based on the results of my research. I have been able to group the commonly used words into different categories such as **replies**, **commands**, **greetings**, **questions**, and **nouns** (See Figure 1). Although there are also other responses that do not directly fit into these categories, they are not significant enough to create a new category or diminish the previously created ones. In fact, only two words do not fit into my categories. These are “chuta” and “osea.” Three other responses that do not fit into my category are ones that do not indicate a common word but rather say that all words or many words are commonly used. Since the vast majority of the data is able to be categorized by either **replies**, **commands**, **greetings**, **questions**, and **nouns**, I will continue to utilize them. All five categories permit shorter sentences. Guevara (2015) stated that a discourse emphasisor “operates...to draw attention and interest from the interlocutor, and intensify the effect that the stated content could provoke in it” (p. 309). This is appropriate considering the categories in which I have organized the responses. With **replies** and **commands** the phoneme /f/ in the final position intensifies the effect while with the **greetings** and **questions**, it draws attention and interest. **Nouns** have the ability to do both, depending on the situation.

Not only is the final *pues*, and therefore the marker word-final /f/, known as the focalizer, finalization of the topic, and emphasisor but it also has the function of an “exhortative” marker.

Working as an “exhortative” marker means that, once again, the it is located in the final position and “does not appear surrounded by pauses and does not support switching.” An example of this is the statement, “Vamos *pues* (*well, let’s go*)” (Guevara, 2015, p. 300-01). *Vamos* is one of the words that has been indicated, by seven participants, as one that carries the phoneme /f/ at the end and has been written in the three following ways: 1) *vamos*; 2) *vamosfff*; and 3) *vamosf* (Question 11). This specific word fits into the category of **commands**. It is obvious that *[ff]* has replaced the word *pues* but still manages to have the same function.

More than half of the participants have indicated a personal use of the marker. Most of those who have selected “*si*” have also included a comment that the marker word-final /f/ is only used with close friends and family. According to Grajales Alzate (2011), this is common as the use of the discourse marker *pues* to intensify an imperative is used when there is “a close relation with the interlocutor” (p. 10). Some participants of this study also mention how use of the emphazior marker stops when the participants move to another part of the country. Once again, this suggests that the variance is regional and cultural. This also aligns with the research in finding that its most common use is in the highlands. Although Quito scored the highest in terms of recognition of use⁸, other places (all in the *sierra*) include: *Cumbayá, Ibarra, Ambato, Otavalo, Cotopaxi* and *Pichincha*⁹.

Despite knowing that the phoneme /f/ has replaced the word *pues*, only 65.63% of the participants acknowledge that its use is similar to that of *pues*¹⁰. Interestingly, three participants have indicated that the word *pues* also carries the word final *[ff]* by responding in the following

⁸ 75% of participants have selected Quito as a response to where use is most common.

⁹ Reference Figure 6.

¹⁰ Reference Figure 5.

formats: 1) *pues*; 2) *puesfff*; and 3) *puesf* (Question 11). Although these three participants do not make the response significant, it is still interesting as they suggest that the marker word-final /f/ and marker *pues* are different rather than a replacement.

In contrast to Adams's results, my research has indicated that all social classes use the discourse marker word-final /f/. According to Figure 7 (see Appendix B), the option: "all social classes" was selected more often than the rest; but of the specific class options, "middle class" had the most responses. Although I have received comments in the last section of the survey (Question 13) stating that the use of the discourse marker is more prominent in the lower class, the survey results suggest that this is not true. Since the marker word-final /f/ is only used when the interlocutors have a close relationship, the use is not permitted between a student and professor, an employee and a boss, and a child and parent and/or grandparent. The use, therefore, appears to be most common in the everyday life between friends. It is typical for those in the middle and upper classes to have more professional jobs or to attend the university where use is uncommon. For this reason, it could be seen as more of a lower class phenomenon when really it is used by all social classes. Another difference between the results of Adams and the present study is that he found that the marker was most common among 18-24 year-olds. This could be due to his participants all being university students living in Quito. My participants indicated more variation in terms of use by groups 18-24 and 25-30 (most common) followed by 31-40 and lower use by groups younger than 18, 41-50, and over 50 (see Figure 3). Responses have also indicated that all age ranges use the marker.

Despite these differences, there is one main similarity. Participants in both studies indicated that use of the word-final /f/ is more common for men than women, when directly

comparing the two. In Figure 4, only one participant (1.04%) selected women as the main users whereas 34 (35.42%) selected men as the main users. However, the majority of the participants, 61 (63.54%), selected that both men and women as users of the marker word-final /f/.

One aspect of the study which addresses the limitations of Adams' (2015) investigation is the fact that I have been able to include participants from various locations in Ecuador. There are responses from the coast, the *sierra*, and the *oriente* of Ecuador. I also have a few foreign participants who now reside in Ecuador who are from: Madrid, Spain; Brasilia, Brazil; Caracas, Venezuela; Mérida, Mexico; Concepción, Chile; and Chicago, United States. The variety of the participants may allow for more conclusive evidence about the use of the discourse marker in Ecuador.

Majority of the responses indicated that the word-final /f/ follow words ending in vowels (Question 6, 11). Out of 145 responses, 123 words selected ended in vowels and only 13 in consonantes (Question 6). Similar results appeared in Question 11 as 340 out of 438 responses were words ending in vowels whereas 75 ended in consonants, including the following final consonants: /s/ (e.g., *quesfff* (*que esfff* 'what is it'), *vosfff* (*tú* 'you'), and *vamosfff* 'let's go'), /ll/ (e.g., *cualfff* 'which one'), /r/ (*comerfff* 'to eat', *por favorfff* 'please', and *tomarfff* 'to drink'), and /n/ (e.g., *Simónfff* 'Yes', *quiéfff* 'who', and *venganfff* 'come'). This suggests that although it is possible for the word-final /f/ to follow a consonant, it is more probable for it to occur after a vowel-final word.

Examples of the Marker Word-final /f/ in Film and Social Media

I viewed films and Youtube videos to observe uses of the word-final /f/ discourse marker. Two famous movies in Ecuador (directed by Ecuadorian directors), *Qué tan lejos* and *Ratas*,

Ratones, Rateros, provide some examples of the marker. In the movie *Qué tan lejos*, directed by Tania Hermida (2006), a young *quiteña* travels from Quito to Cuenca. During the trip she meets several different characters from other parts of Ecuador and the world. One of the characters is from Spain while others are from Guayaquil and Cuenca. The film is very interesting because it contains different Spanish dialects spoken by the characters. Included in the movie as well are examples of the discourse marker word-final /f/. *Quiteño* characters in the film use "puesfff" and "Cuencafff" (Hermida, 2006). It also demonstrates that the marker was in use in 2006 and perhaps before depending on the date of production.

An even earlier example of a film with the word-final /f/ discourse marker, however, is from 1999 in the movie *Ratas, Ratones, Rateros*. This film is the highest grossing and most famous in Ecuadorian cinema today. This movie is similar to *Qué tan lejos*, linguistically, as there are once again different dialects from modern Ecuador. This movie tells the story of the life of young Salvador and the negative influence his cousin Angel plays on his life. Together they travel through some major cities, such as the capital, Quito. While in Quito, use of the marker is evident in the following words: "'Quéfff", "Qué vafff" and "Qué fuefff" by *quiteño* characters (Dávalo, 1999).

Apart from Ecuadorian cinema, the use is also prevalent on social media. I will be mentioning four different videos, two of which I have first seen on Facebook, another I found on youtube after searching for the previously mentioned ones. I also analyze a video I made to compare two dialects in Ecuador. Most of these videos also received comments on Youtube that have written versions of the marker word-final /f/.

In the first video, there is a stand-up comedy act from *El Jack*, a comedian from Quito, who mentions how he believes the use of the discourse marker word-final /f/ makes *quiteños* poor speakers. He also claims that the use is to “emphasize the obvious so that there will be no more questions” and gives the examples of:

Speaker 1: ¿Te vas a la fiesta? [Are you going to the party]

Speaker 2: ¡De leyfff! [Of course!] (Machado, 2016)

His claim that the purpose is to make the response obvious truly demonstrates that **replies** is the most common category of words that use the marker word-final /f/.

Four seconds into the next video, *Diccionario Terminológico Quiteño - Volumen 1*, Jalal Dubois uses the variance of the marker *pues* by responding to a friend and colleague with “*Ya dijistefff.*” Dubois officially starts the *Diccionario Terminológico Quiteño* at twenty-two seconds with the use of the marker word-final /f/. He claims that anyone can speak like a *quiteño* by placing [ff] at the end of any word. Genaro, co-producer of the video, provides specific examples of words that can carry the marker and these include: “aquífff, yafff, de leyfff, sífff, nofff, yafff” (Genaro, 2017). I first found this video on Facebook and noticed that some people have also commented using the marker in written form as well. Some of these comments include: “que más vefff...yafff,” “de leyff,” “Quitofff,” and “vosfff.” Just by examining these four facebook comments and the previously mentioned examples from Genaro, it is clear that the orthography to represent the discourse marker has not been standardized. That is to say that the amount of *fs* placed at the end of the words varies. I have seen other examples where people only place one /f/ and where others place five or six. When orally using the marker, it can be pronounced quickly

or exaggerated and it appears that this is transcribed into the written version to represent a more accurate account of the emphasis.

Both previously mentioned Youtube videos were created by comedians of Quito. The next social media account of the discourse marker word-final /f/ has been published by *El Comercio*, one of the largest periodicals of Ecuador. Fifty-eight seconds into the video, mention is made of how “a *quiteño* economizes words” and an example of such is given as follows: “¿Qué es eso, pues?”, which is abbreviated to become “¿¿Quesfff!?” *El Comercio* also claims that “the letter /f/ is very present at the end of many words.” Examples of this include, “¿¿Qué fuefff!?” and “¡A nooff!” (Ecuador, 2016). The first example fits into the category of a **question**, the second is a form of **greeting**, and the third is a **reply**.

The fourth and final video is one that I made myself to demonstrate the differences between two dialects of Ecuador. The videography is poor in comparison to the others but the content is very similar. The video compares certain word choices that differ based on the Ecuadorian dialect. Specifically, it compares the dialect of *quiteños* with that of the *costeños*. At ten seconds, “*la quiteña*” says “nofff” as a form of a **reply**. At the time of writing the script with the particular features of the dialects, I had not yet known that “no” is the most commonly used word that carries the phoneme /f/, simply that it had been a word I had heard often with the marker.

The use of the marker word-final /f/ in the previously mentioned videos demonstrates how popular the use has become and how well-known it continues to be. It is important to note, however, that three of the four videos have been made comically. This reflects that the change in the discourse marker *pues* to the simple [f] is occasionally mocked but this does not diminish its

importance as a recognizable feature of Ecuadorian Spanish. All of the videos also give examples of both Quichua and English and the influences they have had on the dialects of Ecuador as well.

Although not exactly social media, many participants have responded to my survey with the written version of the marker as well. Some participants have responded that they are from “Quitof” and others have written “Nofff” to whether or not they knew how the marker developed in the dialect of the *sierra*. When I recruited participants on social media, some people commented on my Facebook post by using “clarofff” and “de leyff!” Despite the idea that these comments could have been made exaggeratedly, it still shows emphasis in the response. This reflects that the marker word-final /f/ functions as an emphasisor.

Limitations

Although I am pleased with the survey and participants, my research does have some limitations. I analyzed the responses of 120 participants, seventy of whom are from Quito. Out of the eight participants whose birthplace is not located in Ecuador, six have indicated that they are familiar with the marker and all six currently reside in Quito. When I work to officially publish this study, I hope to have at least two hundred respondents total from all four regions of the country. I am still very much interested to see if the phenomenon is used or known in the insular portion of the country as well. Due to several comments relating to the informal use of the marker word-final /f/, I should have included at least one question, if not more, pertaining to this sociolinguistic aspect.

Conclusion

There is not only diversity in the land, flora and fauna but also diversity in the modes of discourse in Ecuador. Quichua and English play major roles in shaping the Ecuadorian Spanish and will continue to have lasting influences for years to come. Above all it is important to remember that factors such as the Spanish conquest and the nation's geography have had an impact in fostering a regionalism, which has allowed for vast diversity and appears to have created a variant of the discourse marker *pues*. Although *pues* has several different functions as a discourse marker and can be located the beginning, middle, and end of a discourse, the variant used in Ecuador is a word-final /f/ with more specific functions and placement. The marker /f/ is found only at the end of a discourse and does not require a pause or punctuation mark. It cannot be moved to another location in the utterance and plays the role of an emphasizer. The five main categories of words that this marker is associated with includes: **replies**, **commands**, **greetings**, **questions**, and **nouns**. It seems to be a phenomenon of discourse in informal settings and is most commonly used in **replies** such as “*No*,” “*Ya*,” and “*Sí*.” Although it has been gaining popularity, the phenomenon has been used since at least 1999 as documented in the Ecuadorian film *Ratas*, *Ratones*, *Rateros*. The discourse marker word-final /f/ can be found in other movies and on various social media pages as well. The *serranos*¹¹ of Ecuador utilize a very unique discourse marker that is likely the replacement of a word (*pues*) with a single sound (/f/) attached to the preceding word.

¹¹ Serranos: Those living in the *sierra* (highlands)

References

- Adams, G. C. (2015). *The Perception of the Discourse Marker Word-final /f/ in Quito Spanish*. University of North Carolina Wilmington. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/10893285/The_Perception_of_the_Discourse_Marker_Word-final_f_in_Quito_Spanish
- Boyd-Bowman, P. (1953). "Sobre La Pronunciación Del Español En El Ecuador." *Nueva Revista De Filología Hispánica*. 221-33.
- Canfield, L. (1981). *Pronunciation in the Americas*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- "Conceptos Básicos para comprender las reglas de los marcadores discursivos." *Universidad Veracruzana*. 1-15.
- Dávalos, I., Rivera, L. & Cordero, S. (1999) *Ratas, Ratones, Rateros*. Ecuador.
- Dialect. (n.d.). In *Real Academia Española*. Retrieved from <http://dle.rae.es/?id=DeWvE0K>
- Ecuador (2016, Dec. 2). Como hablan los quiteños. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/y51UZYeVgGI>
- Genaro Me Cachas (2017, Nov. 27). Diccionario Terminológico Quiteño - Volumen 1. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/G5EEMJXKab4>
- Guevara, G. (2015). "Funciones del marcador discursivo pues: en un corpus oral." *Revista Multidisciplinaria Dialógica*, 12(1), 294-323. doi:2244-7662
- Hardman-De-Bautista, M. J. (1982) The mutual influence of Spanish and the Andean languages, *WORD*, 33:1-2, 143-157, DOI: 10.1080/00437956.1982.11435729
- Hermida, T. (2006) *Qué tan lejos*. Ecuador.

Jesberger, H. (2016, May 2). Así es cómo hablan los ecuatorianos - Quiteños vs Costeños.

Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/jUzuVJThfUk>

Lenition. (n.d.). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/lenition?s=t>

Machado, D. (2016, Dec 3). Los quiteños. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/dTFnFyHGVE8>

Palacios Alcaine, A. (2005). “Situaciones de contacto lingüístico en hispanoamérica:

español y lenguas amerindias.” *Actas del VI Congreso de la Historia de la Lengua*

Española. 1-15.

Palacios, A. (2010). “La lengua como instrumento de identidad y diferenciación: más allá

de la influencia de las lenguas amerindias.” *Argumentos cuantitativos y argumentos*

cualitativos en sociolingüística (Segundo coloquio de cambio y variación lingüística).

503-514.

Quilis, A. (1997). Articulación del sonido. In *Principios de fonología y fonética españolas* (pp.

16-27). Madrid: Arco Libros.

Appendix A

Survey Information

Biographic Information

Please provide the following biographic information prior to beginning the survey.

Age: _____

*Subject must be older than 18. If you are not at least 18-years-old, stop the survey now.

Sex: M / F / Other

Birthplace (City) : _____

If your home city and country is one other than Ecuador please write your city of residence in

Ecuador here: _____

Survey Questions

1. Have you observed that some people pronounce the sound “fff” at the ending of words?

*If the answer is no, the survey stops here.

2. Do you know someone who places the “fff” sound at the end of words?

*Yes or no options will be provided.

3. How old are these people?

*Check all that apply options will be provided for age ranges such as >18, 18-25, 25-30, 30-40, 40-50, <50, or all ages

4. The people who say the final “fff” sound are (select all that apply):

Less than 18 years old

18-24

25-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61+

5. Is the use more common between men, women, or both groups?

*Options for men, women, or both groups will be provided.

6. With which word is the use of the “fff” sound most common?

7. Do you think the “fff” sound could be similar to the word “*pues*”? Why?

*Yes or no options will be provided along with a text box for the explanation.

8. Do you know how the final “fff” sound started? What is the influence of its use?

9. Where is the final “fff” sound used? Is it unique to a specific city or region?

*Check all that apply option will be provided with options such as: The highlands, The

Coast, The Amazon Region, The Galapagos Islands, Guayaquil, Esmeraldas, Quito,

Cuenca, Otavalo, Cumbayá, Ibarra, Ambato, Tena, Orellana, Manta, Pichincha, Santo

Domingo, Guayas, Manabí, Cotopaxi and other with a textbox option.

10. What social class uses the final “fff” sound?

*Check all that apply options will be given such as lower class, middle class, upper class

or all social classes.

11. Can you make a list of 5 of the most common words that carry the final “fff” sound?

12. Do you say the final “fff” sound?

*Yes or no options will be provided.

13. Other comments:

Appendix B

Survey Results

Figure 1. Number of responses that correlate to the types of categories (i.e. **replies, questions, greetings, nouns, and commands**) using data from Question 6.

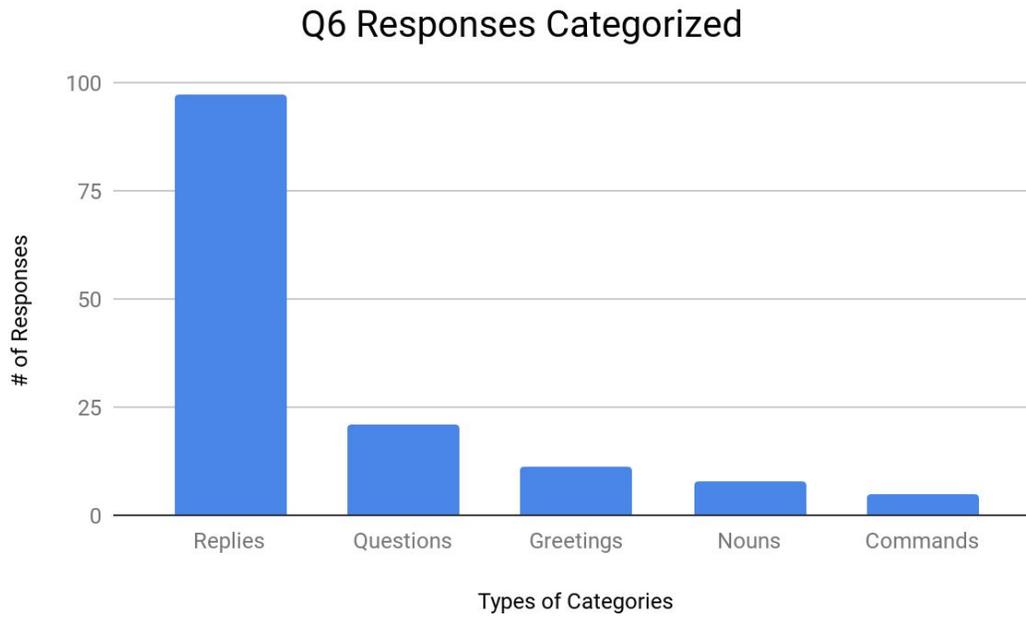


Figure 2. Perceived use of the final “fff” sound by city or region.

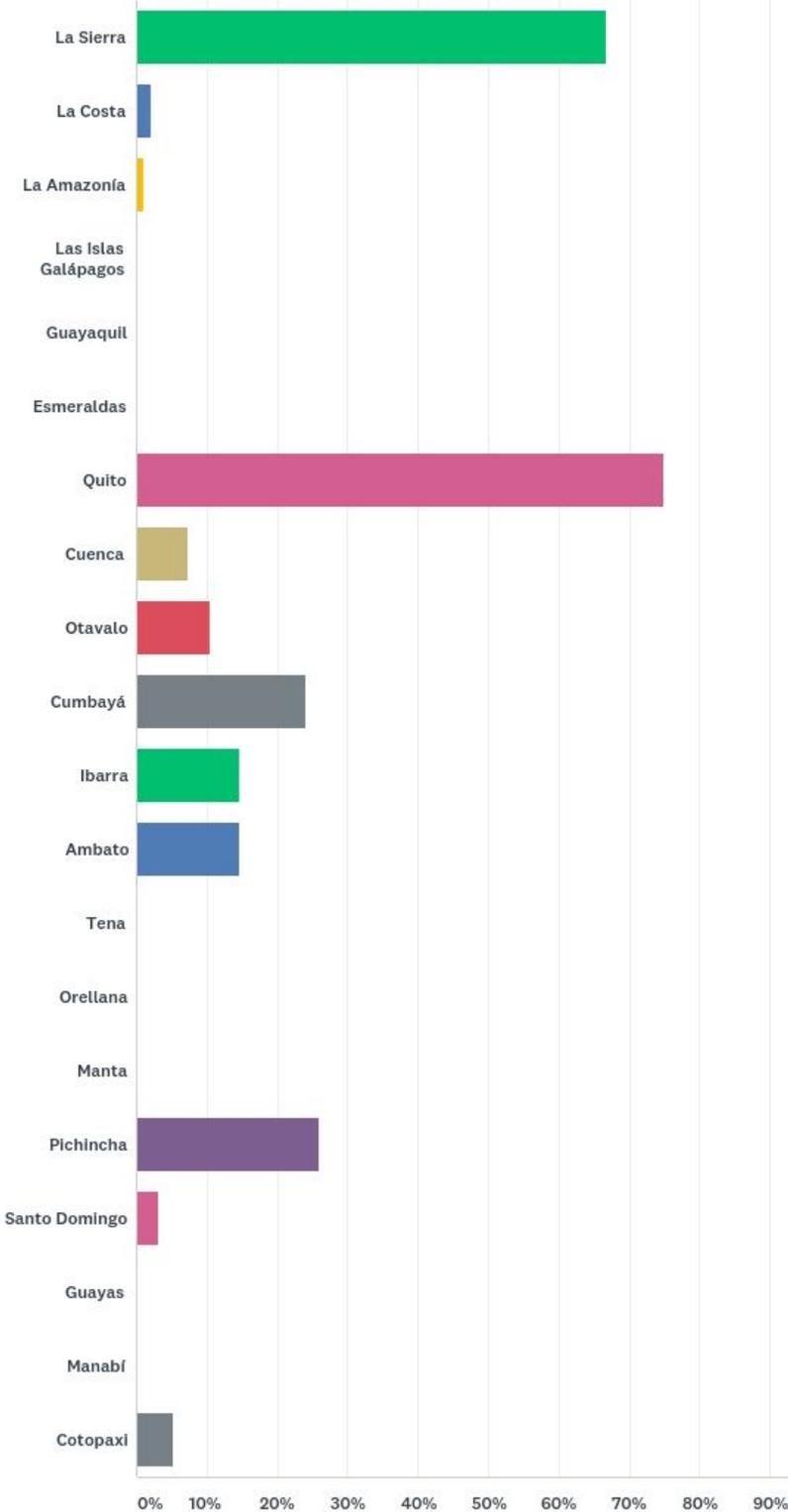


Figure 3. Response to the question “Do you think the “fff” sound could be similar to the word “pues”?”

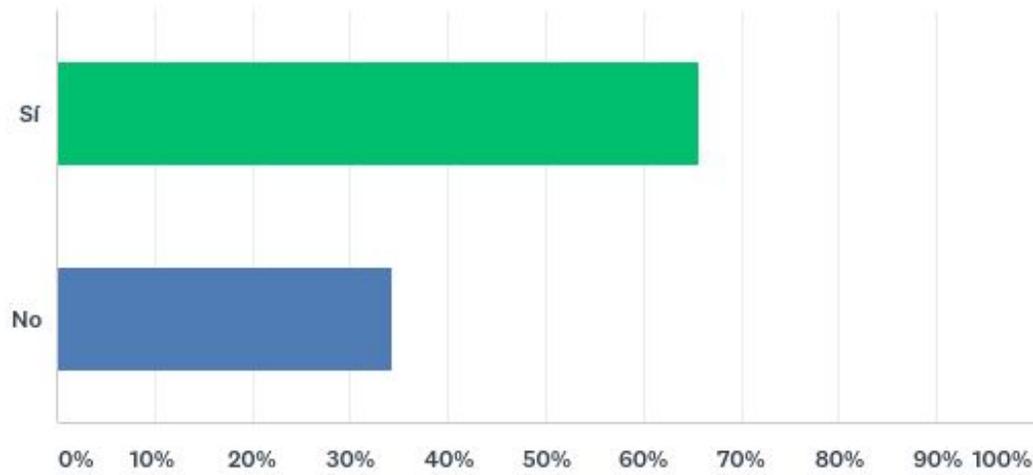


Figure 4. Perceived use of the final “fff” sound by social class.

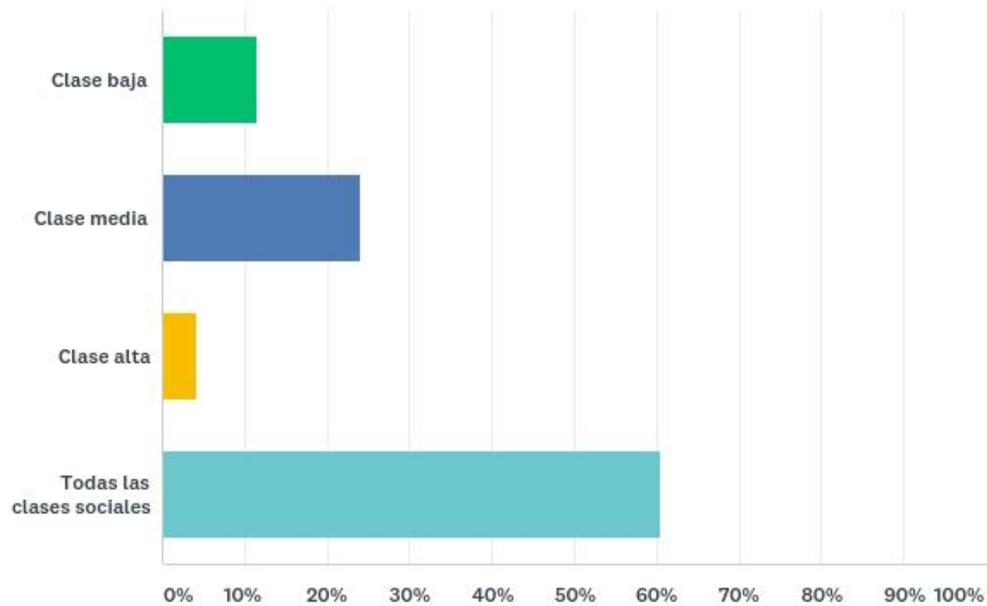


Figure 5. Percentages of people who say the final “fff” sound.

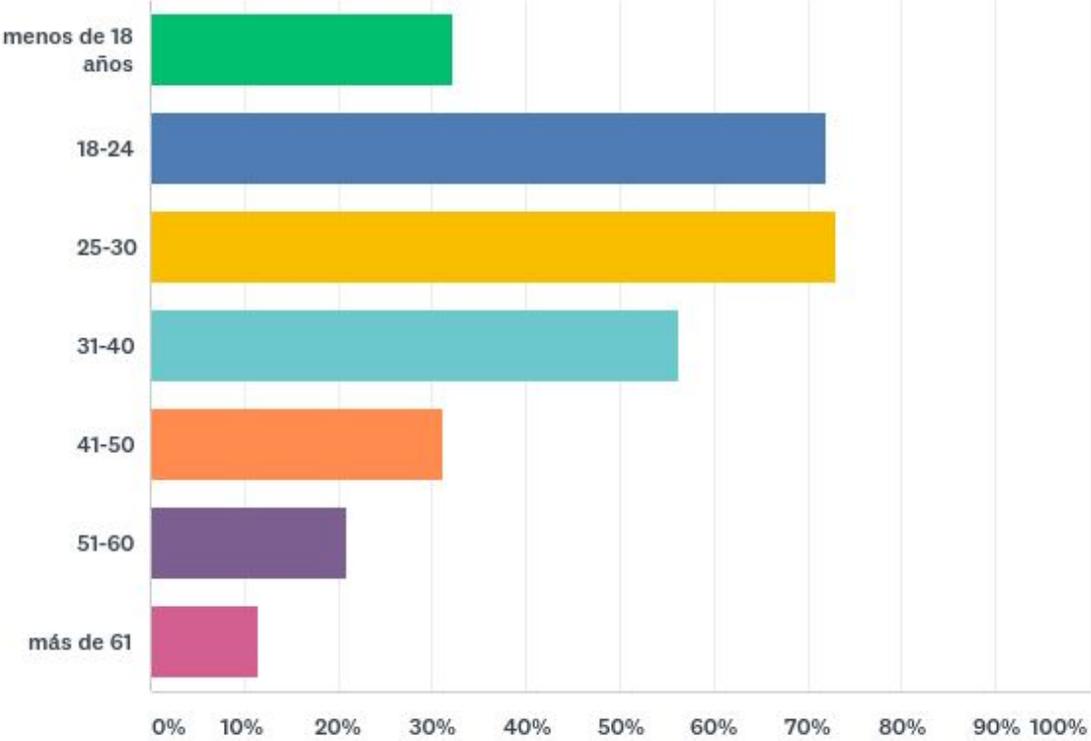


Figure 6. Perceived use of the final “fff” sound by sex.

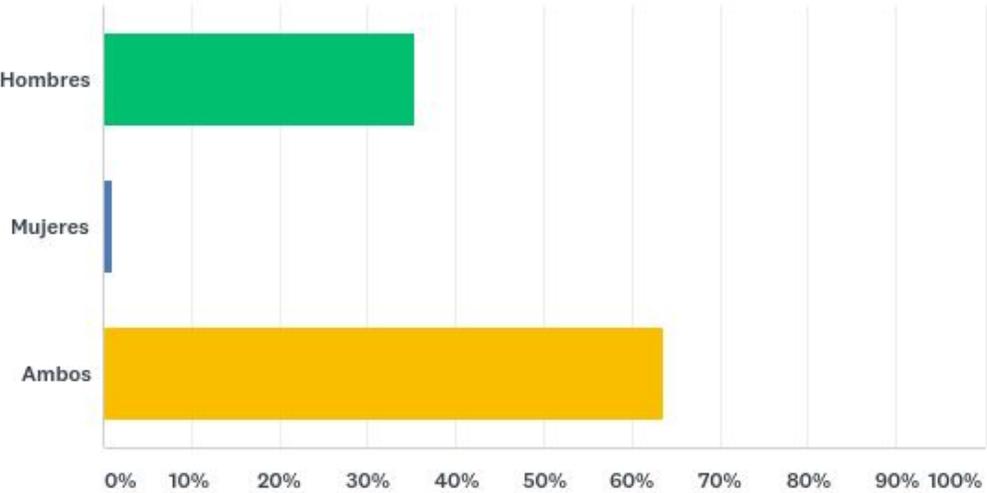


Figure 7. Sex of participant

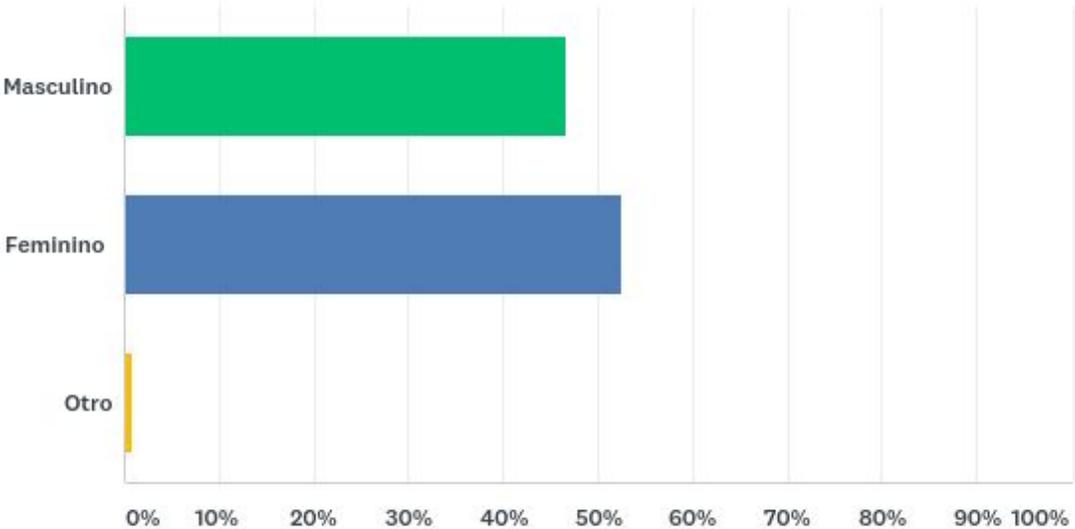


Figure 8. Response to the question “Have you observed that some people pronounce the sound “fff” at the ending of words?”

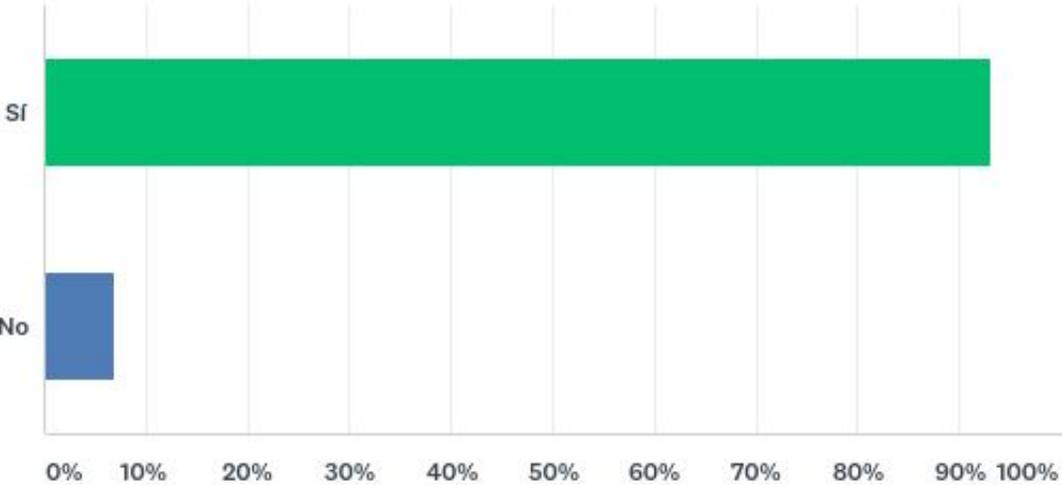


Figure 9. Participants’ reported use of final “fff” sound.

