

VARIABLE WITHIN VARIABLE - SIMULTANEOUS STABILITY AND CHANGE. THE CASE OF SYLLABLE-FINAL *s* IN CIUDAD REAL*

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ABSTRACT. Spanish syllable-final *s* has been found to be completely stable in the great majority of the varieties in which it has been studied as a sociolinguistic variable. The same is true for the variety of Ciudad Real, Spain, where our data have shown not only lack of indication of any type of change at the present moment through inferences made from apparent time, but also evidence of its stability in the last hundred years by looking at the data from the available linguistic atlases. However, in our investigation, we performed a study of all the separate contexts in which the syllable-final *s* occurs, and it was discovered that in one of them, the sequence /s/+t/, a different kind of behavior was registered. Namely, in this specific context, apparent-time inferences additionally supported by the older linguistic atlas data show a clear pattern of a change from above towards a normative realization of the sibilant. In this paper, we will try to explain how it is possible for a stable variable to contain within itself a subvariable which in turn shows signs of a change in progress.

Keywords. syllable-final *s*; /s/+t/ sequence; change from above; stability; sociolinguistic analysis

RESUMEN. En la gran mayoría de las investigaciones en las que se ha estudiado como variable sociolingüística se ha encontrado que la *s* implosiva en español está completamente estable. La situación es idéntica en la variedad de Ciudad Real, España, donde nuestros datos muestran no sólo que en este momento no hay señales de cambio a partir de las inferencias en tiempo aparente, sino que se encuentran pruebas de su estabilidad a lo largo de los últimos cien años cuando se comparan los datos de esta investigación con aquellos de atlas lingüísticos disponibles. No obstante, en esta investigación se ha efectuado un estudio de todos los distintos contextos en los que la *s* implosiva puede ocurrir y en uno de ellos, en la secuencia /s/+t/, se ha descubierto un comportamiento divergente. En esta secuencia las inferencias en tiempo aparente en combinación con los datos más antiguos de los atlas lingüísticos disponibles muestran un patrón claro de un cambio desde arriba en dirección de la realización normativa de la sibilante. En este artículo intentaremos explicar cómo es posible que una variable estable encierre dentro de sí otra subvariable que, por su parte, muestra señales de encontrarse en un cambio en marcha.

Palabras clave. *s* implosiva; *s* final de sílaba; secuencia /s/+t/; cambio desde arriba; estabilidad; análisis sociolingüístico

1. Introduction

The weakening of syllable-final *s* is without a doubt one of the most important, and therefore one of the most studied variables in Spanish linguistics; some authors (Ferguson, 1996: 204) even sustain that it can be considered one of the most treated phenomena from a variationist point of view in general. This phenomenon has been

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observed in numerous varieties of Spanish on both sides of the Atlantic, with considerable differences as to its stage of development. Samper Padilla's classification (2001; 2011: 100), largely accepted by experts in the field, distinguishes three groups of dialects based on their syllable-final *s* weakening rates. He classifies as incipient those varieties in which the weakening process has begun, but the prevailing allophone is still [s], he considers intermediate those in which the most frequent variant is the aspiration, [h], and regards advanced the varieties where complete deletion [ø] is the preferred form.¹ Among peninsular varieties, northern Spanish dialects do not take part in the coda *s* weakening process, and are not included in this classification; the varieties of Madrid and Castilla-La Mancha (Alcalá de Henares (Blanco Canales 2004), Getafe (Martín Butragueño 1995), Toledo (Calero Fernández 1993; Molina Martos 1998) Madrid (Momcilovic 2009), Salamanca district, Madrid (Gil Peña 2006), villages in the northern part of the Autonomous Community of Madrid (Ruiz Martínez 2003)) would fall into the category of the incipient ones, and the Andalusian dialects would mostly be advanced (Jaén (Moya Corral 1979), Málaga (Vida-Castro 2002), Linares (Gómez Serrano 1993), Écija (Gunnarsdóttir 2011), Granada (Tejada Giráldez 2015)) although some of them might still be classified as intermediate (e.g. Córdoba (Iglesias 2000)).

However, the stage of development of the phenomenon in a given community notwithstanding, it is of great importance to note that the variable syllable-final *s* on a general level has been found to be completely stable in the great majority of the dialects in which it has been studied (cf. for example Labov 1994: 547-99; Silva-Corvalán 2001: 24-5; Gimeno Menéndez 2006, 2008; Samper Padilla 2011: 106). This means that in both incipient as well as in intermediate and advanced dialects there are no indications of change either in apparent or in real time.² This stability has been attributed to the neutralization of the innovative systemic forces from below and opposing standardizing pressure from above, or in terms of status (Labov 1994: 595), as a result of the balance achieved between covert and overt prestige.

The variety under study in this paper is the urban dialect of Ciudad Real, a town situated in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha, which, in phonetic terms, constitutes a transitional area between the openly innovative southern varieties and the more conservative northern dialects. With respect to the variable of interest in this study, this means that the northern dialects retain the sibilant categorically, whereas the southern part of the country, most notably the Andalusian varieties, strongly prefer the weakened forms and are considered to be in an advanced weakening phase. The study of the transitional areas between these two poles is therefore interesting as it allows insight into varieties in the incipient phases of the syllable-final *s* weakening process, which can both help us understand the mechanism behind this phenomenon, and determine whether these varieties are more influenced by the northern national prestige, or by the southern regional usage. In this sense, sociolinguistic investigations that try to determine whether this variable in a particular community is going through a change in progress or is showing signs of stability are of great importance.

The findings of our investigation in Ciudad Real regarding syllable-final *s* (Kapović 2014) are on a general level in accordance with those of other sociolinguistic studies concerning this variable. This means that multiple regression

¹ For a critique of this type of classification, see note 25 in Kapović (2015a: 433-434).

² For the explanation of the apparent-time hypothesis and other well established sociolinguistic terms that will be appearing throughout the text, such as *change from above* and *change from below*, *covert* and *overt prestige*, as well as for the mechanism of linguistic change in general, see Labov (1972: 122-182).

analyses have found that the variable age was not a statistically significant predictor of syllable-final *s* variation with respect to the use of the standard allophone [s] (see Section 4). Moreover, our analysis of the dialectological data proceeding from previously elaborated linguistic atlases has also corroborated that this variable, when concentrating on the frequency of appearance of the standard allophone, has been stable for the past hundred years (see Section 4).

However, our initial study (Kapović 2014) included the analysis of the behavior of our variable not only generally, but also in specific phonetic contexts. This decision required a much greater amount of data to be analyzed, which was most certainly worthwhile since it was discovered that the following phonetic context was the principal linguistic factor influencing the variation of syllable-final *s* (cf. Kapović 2015a). This also enabled us to take a closer look at the behavior of our variable in specific environments and to find some interesting diverging patterns among them.

The topic of this paper is precisely the study of a specific context, the sequence /s/ + /t/, which has been found to show a different conditioning pattern from the rest of the individual contexts and the variable syllable-final *s* as a whole. Namely, in difference to the results on the general level, in this sequence both apparent-time inferences and the comparison of our results with older dialectological data suggest that it is currently going through a change in progress (see Section 5). The research question that arises from this fact is the following one: how can it be possible that a variable is on the whole completely stable in apparent time, and, according to previous investigations, has been stable for the last hundred years, while one of the subvariables it comprises which accounts for as much as 20% (16581/81846) of the data is going through an apparent change in progress?

To be completely clear, it must be emphasized that the overall results and conditioning of syllable-final *s* in Ciudad Real are not the objective of this paper and different linguistic factors that condition it, such as word-position, stress, functional factors etc., will not be addressed here.³ Furthermore, although, as will be explained in the section on methodology (see Section 3), in the initial study we have worked with five possible realizations of syllable-final *s*, in this paper we will concentrate on the opposition between the standard variant [s] and the other allophones, since we are dealing with a change from above (see Section 5), which in our case implies the increase in the usage of the prestigious standard variant as opposed to the non-standard ones. Consequently, the change to which we will be referring throughout the paper will actually be the reinsertion of the sibilant in the specific sequence under investigation (see Section 5). Another thing that needs to be mentioned to avoid possible terminological misunderstandings is that this change does not imply, as may be more usual in cases of linguistic change, an adoption of an innovative form within the community, but rather an increased usage of the conservative form. In other words, in a situation where a variable as a whole is completely stable, we are witnessing a reaction from above to the original change, with its reversal in one specific context only.

2. Previous research

Prior to our investigation, no previous linguistic research had been undertaken in the province capital of Ciudad Real. The only studies which can provide us with some useful data on the earlier stages of this dialect are those of the varieties spoken in the

³ We refer those interested in more details regarding this variable in Ciudad Real to Kapović (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c and 2015d).

province. Among these data we find two linguistic atlases and two smaller dialectological studies. Among the former, the broader scoped Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica (ALPI) was edited in 1962 although its samples had been collected in the early 1930's, and the regional Atlas Lingüístico (y etnográfico) de Castilla-La Mancha (ALECMAN) was edited in 2003, while the fieldwork on which it was based had been undertaken in late 1980's-early 1990's. In the study by Alther (1935) we find useful data on three villages on the south-eastern border of the province, and Bedmar Gómez (1992) studies two villages in the north-east. In the methodology section it is explained how these data were used to gather information on the previous stages of this variety.

With respect to previous findings regarding the specific sequence under study in this paper, it needs to be stated that this is not the first time it has been scrutinized in the context of syllable-final *s* weakening process. Namely, it has already been noted in Kapović (2014, 2015a) that this sequence is exceptional among the preconsonantal contexts in various respects. First of all, it was found to be by far the most conservative consonantal context with retention rates of 72% word-internally (in words like *fiesta* 'party') and 67% word-finally (in sequences like *es típico* 'it is typical'). This, compared to other preconsonantal contexts that never surpass a 30% retention rate and average 14%, is surprisingly high and, in fact, resembles more the conservative prepausal (*así es*. 'it is like that') and prevocalic contexts (*es así* 'it is like that') with 78% and 82% retention rates respectively. Secondly, it was also found to be by far the most frequent context word-internally appearing in 74% (14261/19274) of the cases in this position and thus skewing significantly its lenition rates. In Kapović (2015a), where we tried to determine the importance of word-position on syllable-final *s* weakening, it was claimed that due to this skewing factor of word-internal *st*, neither the direct comparison between word-internal and word-final contexts nor the comparison between word-internal and word-final preconsonantal contexts were methodologically sound. This means that individual preconsonantal contexts need to be contrasted in order to determine the importance of word-position as a predictor of syllable-final *s* weakening rates. Assessed in this way, it was found that following phonetic context is by far a more important predictor of syllable-final *s* variation than word-position.

The mentioned conservativeness of the sequences /s+/t/ is by no means an anomalous feature found in the variety of Ciudad Real, but it is practically a constant in the great majority of syllable-final *s* weakening dialects, such as for instance Toledo (Calero Fernández 1993: 110; 115), Alcalá de Henares (Blanco Canales 2004: 164; 174), Madrid (Momcilovic 2009: 37), Getafe (Martín Butragueño 1995: 31), Málaga (Vida-Castro 2002: 159; 166), Jaén (Moya Corral 1979: 112-114; 116-118), Las Palmas (Samper Padilla 1990: 70; 75; 84-85), Chihuahua (Brown and Torres Cacoullós 2002: 23; 2003: 7), San Miguel, El Salvador (Taler 1997: 120), San Juan, Puerto Rico (López Morales 1992: 81-82), Panamá City (Cedergren 1973: 42-43) etc.⁴ Previous investigations in the province of Ciudad Real also follow the same pattern;

⁴ In the majority of these dialects, there were no data regarding the specific preconsonantal contexts, and the conclusions we make are based on the fact that they showed more *s* retention word-internally than word-finally. Seeing that the sequence /s+/t/ is overwhelmingly frequent word-internally (74% in our data from 19,274 occurrences seems to be a representative piece of data, which should be valid across all varieties), Kapović (2015a) argues that this apparent conservativeness of word-internal contexts is in fact a consequence of the conservativeness of the sequence in question, and that it was based on its skewing effect that it was thought that the distributional factors played a significant part in the conditioning of the syllable-final *s*.

both in the linguistic atlases, ALPI and ALECMAN, as well as in the works by Alther (1935: 95-125) and Bedmar Gómez (1992: 63-4) this sequence is the most conservative one among the preconsonantal contexts.⁵

Another important body of research regarding this sequence concerns the interesting developments currently under way in Andalusia. Namely, in the last ten years various authors (Moya Corral 2007; Moya Corral et. al. 2007; Torreira 2007a, 2007b, 2012; Ruch 2008, 2013; Ruch and Harrington 2014; Ruch and Peters 2016; Vida-Castro 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Parrell 2012; Tejada Giráldez 2015: 140-195) have taken notice of the fact that this most conservative preconsonantal sequence seems to be going through a change in progress in which the pre-aspiration is variably starting to metathesize into post-aspiration with the new affricate sound [ts] as the final result. It is worth pointing out that, in difference to the more conservative variety of Ciudad Real, in Andalusia the conservativeness of the /s+/t/ sequence manifests itself with a greater frequency of aspirated variants [h] as opposed to the more common complete deletion [ø], as can be seen for instance in Moya Corral et.al. (2007: 278) or Moya Corral (2007: 461) for Sevilla and Antequera, Moya Corral (1979: 112-114; 116-118) for Jaén; Vida-Castro (2002: 166) for Málaga; Tejada Giráldez (2015: 162) for Granada; Gunnarsdóttir (2011: 82) for Écija. In the discussion section (see Section 6.2) we will see how this process relates to the one registered in Ciudad Real.

These previous investigations definitely show that the sequence /s+/t/ is an exceptional environment which favors syllable-final *s* retention. The explanation for the conservativeness of this sequence can be offered from a strictly articulatory point of view. First of all, /t/ is a voiceless consonant in front of which the sibilant never sonorizes, and research has shown that voiceless fricatives are less likely to suffer weakening than their voiced counterparts. As Solé (2010: 302) explains: “the fact that, relative to their voiceless counterparts, voiced coda fricatives show a more delayed onset of frication (Section 3.3), do not exhibit compensatory glottal adjustments, at least not to the same degree as voiceless codas (Section 3.5), and have a less intense frication (due to reduced transglottal flow through the vibrating vocal folds) is in accord with the historical data indicating that voiced fricatives tend to be weakened and lost earlier than voiceless fricatives.” Seeing that when preceding a voiced consonant, /s/ tends to be sonorized (which in itself is a first step in the weakening process), it becomes clear that syllable-final *s* will be more likely to be retained in front of a voiceless consonant than before a voiced one.

However, the nature of the following voiceless phone seems to be of great relevance as well. The experimental findings by Schwartz (1970) and Borden and Gay (1979) show that [s] tends to be pronounced significantly shorter before [p] (according to Schwartz (1970: 1144) 129ms, and according to Borden and Gay (1979:29) between 94ms and 130ms) than before [t] (according to Schwartz (1970: 1144) 154ms, and according to Borden and Gay (1979: 29) between 103ms and 150ms), and that its duration in front of [k] is somewhere in between (according to Schwartz (1970:1144) 146ms, and according to Borden and Gay (1979: 29) between 103ms and 140ms). Méndez Dosuna (1985: 647-648) explains these differences as a consequence of a principle he considers universal⁶ which maintains that “the duration of /s/ in /sK/ groups is in a direct relationship with the rate of homorganicity that

⁵ In the first three cited works this can be observed directly, while in Bedmar Gómez’s (1992: 63-64) study this can be inferred from the data the author presents for the voiceless stops as a whole seeing that, as has already been stated, the context /s+/t/ word-internally appears in as much as 74% of the cases.

⁶ Examples from other languages can be found in Méndez Dosuna (1985: 648-649).

exists between the sibilant and the stop.”⁷ This means that the more homorganic the two sounds, the less likely they are to overlap articulatorily. In this sense, since the articulation of [s] and [p] involves two distinct organs (the tongue and the lips) there are no obstacles for the beginning of the articulation of [p] while the articulation of [s] has still not finished, which results in an average shorter duration of [s] before [p]. In the case of the production of the sequence [s] + [k], the same articulator is involved, although it is its apex or predorsum in the production of [s] and its dorsum when articulating [k]. This means that it is harder than in the case of [s] + [p] for the preparation for the articulation of the following stop to be simultaneous to the articulation of the fricative, although they do overlap to an extent. Finally, in the case of the sequence [s] + [t], the two sounds are completely homorganic, which means that for the production of [t] we must wait until the production of [s] is completely over and no overlapping of the two neighboring sounds occurs. It is precisely this overlapping which is responsible for the shorter duration of the sibilant before [p] and [k] which in turn makes these contexts more favorable for syllable-final *s* weakening: the shorter the sibilant, the weaker it is and the more likely not to be perceived as such.

Contrasting evidence is, to our knowledge, presented only by Henriksen and Harper (2016: 301). In their investigation of coda *s* production in /s/+ voiceless stop sequences in Toledo, it is in /s+/k/ clusters where /s/ duration is the longest, followed by /s+/t/ and /s+/p/ sequences. However, the fact that only one age group of only one educational level was included (university students) and that the data do not represent casual speech is an important limitation to this study. One possible explanation of these findings might be that [s] is longer in front of [k] in this investigation due to the speakers’ hypercorrection. Namely, all informants in the study were university students asked to narrate a story in front of a digital recorder at their university. These types of situations are known to produce less spontaneous speech than non-structured dialogues and result in a non-natural and a formal situation for the majority of the informants. Moreover, having in mind that they were all university students, one might expect that in a formal situation they would be inclined to use a higher frequency of standard forms as opposed to individuals with a lower education level. Furthermore, if we know that they are aware of the stereotypical Manhegan pronunciation of [s] in /s+/k/ sequences as [x], as reported by the authors (Henriksen and Harper 2016: 290), it is, therefore, very plausible to think that they could consciously change their natural pronunciation specifically in this position to try to speak ‘better’ or ‘as one is supposed to’, and that in this way, at least in some occasions, in order to avoid aspiration in this stereotyped sequence, they would have produced unnaturally long *esses* in an effort to speak more correctly. In the sequence /s+/t/ there would be no need for hypercorrection, as the sibilant is almost categorically conserved there, and /s+/p/ sequence does not seem to be as recognizable a stereotype as the /sk/ cluster. A study of the length of the sibilant in these clusters in a non-weakening variety might provide valuable data, since in this case no hypercorrection would be probable. This investigation should also study all relevant subsections of the population and ideally use spontaneous speech data.

In any case, with all cited empirical evidence pointing to the exceptional conservativeness of the /s+/t/ sequence (e.g. in our investigation, retention rates in the sequence /s+/t/ are almost six times as high as those in /s+/k/ sequence (Kapović

⁷ My translation. In Méndez Dosuna’s paper /sk/ refers to the sequences of [s] and a voiceless stop (Méndez Dosuna 1985: 647)

2014: 97)), it seems most probable that its inherent articulatory characteristics, as described in the experimental findings by Schwartz (1970), Borden and Gay (1979) and Méndez Dosuna (1985), are what causes this behavior.

3. Methodology

The investigation in question was carried out in the winter semester of the 2011-2012 academic year in Ciudad Real, the capital of the homonymous province in the Spanish autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha. Its objective was to study the social and linguistic variation of the variable syllable-final *s* in the aforementioned town. Even though this investigation was not part of the PRESEEA project (Project for the Sociolinguistic Study of Spanish in Spain and America), due to its importance for Hispanic sociolinguistics, this study broadly follows its guidelines (see Moreno Fernández 2003) to facilitate data comparison with other similar projects.

The fieldwork strategy employed was quota sampling with the same number of informants in each of the cells. This procedure was selected to avoid getting empty or almost empty cells on one hand, and overcrowded ones on the other. The population of Ciudad Real was divided into three age groups (18-35; 36-55; 56>), three groups according to the education level (primary school, secondary school, university) and two gender groups (males and females). In this way, 18 subgroups were obtained (e.g. young females with university education; middle-aged males with primary school etc.) and three informants were assigned to each of the cells for a total of 54 interviewees. Having in mind that Ciudad Real has a population of 75000, our sample constitutes 0.072% of the town's inhabitants which is almost three times as high as the minimum (0.025%) recommended in sociolinguistic literature (Labov 1966: 170-171).⁸

The eligible informants were all people born in Ciudad Real or those who came there as infants or very young kids (before the age of five), i.e. those people who have learned how to speak in Ciudad Real. The interviews with each of the informants lasted for at least an hour and were recorded with a quality Olympus digital voice recorder VN-8700PC in silent places (informants' workplaces, informants' homes, the author's home, University of Castilla-La Mancha) with minimum background noise. They consisted of approximately 45 minutes of casual conversation (conversations were as unstructured as possible and were usually steered towards everyday, casual topics and the informant's interests in order to get as close as possible to the vernacular), a reading text task and a reading word-list task.⁹ The reading tasks were used to study the more formal styles, following Labov (1972: 79-109). The text consisted of 714 words and 183 tokens, and the word-list of 247 words and 373 tokens. The text and the word-list can be found in the Appendices.

The total of tokens of syllable-final *s* that were analyzed in conversation style was 81846, and additional 29468 tokens were analyzed in reading exercises. This

⁸ In total, according to the census of 2011, our study includes one in 1389 speakers. If we were to exclude minors and people living in Ciudad Real who were not born there (Ruiz (2014: 4) reports that only 54.6% of the people living in the province capital of Ciudad Real were actually born there), this ratio would be even better.

⁹ In this respect our methodology differs from that of PRESEEA seeing that we did not follow its guidelines regarding the topics of the conversations (Moreno Fernández 2003: 11-15), and that we have included the reading tasks of which PRESEEA does not make use. Although there are advantages that justify PRESEEA's procedure, such as the unity of the topics used by different investigators in different communities which ensures that the stylistic performance of the different informants is comparable, we have found that the necessity to broach all the designated subjects can sometimes be really artificial and may lead to unnatural exchanges. This is why we have decided to opt for completely free, non-structured interviews in order to try to get as close as possible to the vernacular.

extremely high number, which was required if we were to obtain a representative amount of occurrences for each of the possible contexts,¹⁰ made us decide to code the tokens impressionistically since, in our experience, this was less time consuming than the acoustic analysis. In order to guarantee the objectivity of the coding, a small portion of the transcriptions was controlled and verified by another expert with interrater agreement degree greater than 90%. The tokens that were not clearly discernible (for whatever reason, like voice overlapping, unintelligible or very silent speech, sudden unexpected burst of noise etc.) were disregarded and are not included in the above token count. The excluded tokens were, however, very few.

The allophonic continuum¹¹ of syllable final *s* was divided into five distinct sound types. The standard variant, [s], was taken to include all sibilant realizations, regardless of their occasional voicedness when in contact with voiced consonants or in intervocalic position. The aspiration, [h], also included a family of sounds encompassing voiced, voiceless, glotal or pharyngeal variants. All cases in which the etymological underlying *s* was not pronounced in any way were coded as elision, [ø], whether or not this complete deletion of the sibilant was accompanied by lengthening or opening of the preceding vowel. Alongside these canonical weakening forms, assimilation and rhotacism are also important realizations of syllable-final *s* in Ciudad Real Spanish (see more on this topic in Kapović 2015b). The assimilation to the following consonant varies significantly depending on the consonant in question. Thus, for example, the result of the assimilation of the sibilant can be a geminated or a longer consonant (for example, the assimilation in a sequence /s+/l/ usually results in a geminated or longer [l], as in *isla* ‘island’ [illa] or [il:a]), or a sound which can be perceived as a kind of an amalgamation or coalescence of the two interacting sounds (for example, in a sequence /s+/d/, a voiceless fricative and a voiced approximant merge into a voiced fricative, as in *desde* ‘from’ [deðe]). Finally, rhotacism can manifest itself as any kind of rhotic sound, ranging from a tap/flap to approximant and fricative variants, as in *los dos* ‘both’ [loɾðos]. However, as has already been stated, in this paper only the opposition *s* occurrence vs. *s* weakening will be considered, since in changes from above (see Section 5) only the contrast between the standard form and the non-standard ones is relevant.¹²

The data were statistically analyzed with the program Statistica¹³, which was used to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistical data, primarily one-directional repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA), important in this paper as they were used to determine whether the differences among the three different styles were statistically significant, and multiple linear regressions used to measure the effects the different predictors have on the realization of syllable-final *s* (see Sections 4 and 5).

One methodological procedure which requires additional explanation is the use we make of the previous dialectological studies in the province of Ciudad Real. Namely,

¹⁰ Even this number of analyzed tokens and more than 58 hours of recorded conversations were not enough to ensure this, and there were several contexts that remained completely unrepresentative or obtained only basic representativeness. For more on representativeness in this study see Kapović (2014: 86–88, 2015a: 426–427 or 2015b: 405).

¹¹ Although some authors like Recasens (2002: 359–361) question whether syllable-final *s* weakens along a continuum, we concur with others like Alarcos Llorach (1965[1950]: 280) and Penny (2002 [1991]: 106–107) and refer the interested reader to their work or to the discussion on this issue in Kapović (2015b: 414, note 20).

¹² We again refer those interested in the details regarding the different syllable-final *s* realizations to Kapović (2014, 2015b).

¹³ Statistica for Windows. (StatSoft, Inc. (2012). STATISTICA (data analysis software system), version 11. www.statsoft.com).

although the possibility to study changes in progress thanks to the apparent-time hypothesis is considered to be one of the most important contributions of sociolinguistics to the discipline of linguistics, it is nevertheless more than advised to compare the apparent-time inferences with existing real-time data in order to see whether they corroborate the conclusions reached (cf. Labov 1972: 275-276). This procedure, however, in our case is by no means straightforward due to the fact that no previous investigations had been undertaken in the province capital of Ciudad Real. The only studies which could provide us with some useful data on the earlier stages of this dialect are those of the varieties spoken in the province. As has been seen in the literature review section, among these data we find two linguistic atlases and two smaller dialectological studies. Seeing that the latter, even though they contain valuable data, are of a more limited scope, we feel it is more reasonable to compare our data with those from the atlases.

Of course, when we compare data from such different enterprises as our sociolinguistic study of an urban center and dialectological atlases, some caveats have to be made. First of all it has to be considered that the nature of the data collected in these kinds of studies is pretty disparate. While a sociolinguistic study, on one hand, aims to understand the diversity of a community by studying different social strata present therein, dialectological investigations tend to concentrate on the search for archaic linguistic forms characteristic of the “purest” and “oldest” version of the dialect in question, which very much influences their methodological choices. This is why, when comparing these kinds of works, some adjustments have to be made. Seeing that the atlases used mostly older informants with as little formal education as possible, the comparison of our global data and the data from the atlases would not objectively compare the two datasets. For this reason we decided to use the data proceeding from the least educated stratum in our study in an attempt to obtain more commensurable figures.¹⁴ Also, in this way we try to minimize the effect of the typical differences encountered between urban and rural speech patterns; namely, one of the principal contrasts, the much more varied configuration of an urban community, is reduced to its least educated sector which bears most resemblance to the typical rural speaker. Another difference between these types of studies, which unfortunately can hardly be remedied, is the way in which the data are elicited; questionnaires are used in dialectology and free conversation in sociolinguistics, which makes the dialectological data less spontaneous.

Still, in our opinion, these data, although not proceeding directly from the community studied in the present investigation, can be used to make some conclusions about the evolution of the process under study during the last century because of the relations that exist between the province capitals and their surroundings. Martín Martín and Vázquez Sánchez in their article on the demography of the province of Ciudad Real (2015: 386) explain the position of Ciudad Real within its province in the following way:

Ciudad Real ha tenido un crecimiento constante de población, aunque en los últimos años se está estancando. Este crecimiento está íntimamente relacionado con el hecho de ser capital de provincia, pues concentra gran parte de organismos oficiales, administrativos, sanitarios y universitarios, así como con el desarrollo de una importante actividad comercial, lo que la convierte en una ciudad de servicios que atrae a gran parte de la población de la provincia.

¹⁴ Seeing that ALECMAN used both male and female informants, we decided to compare the data for the least educated stratum as a whole, and not only for the least educated males. For ALPI, of course, only male informants had been interviewed.

The statistics provided by Ruiz (2014: 2-3) show that the city has grown significantly during the 20th century: at its beginning it was only the fourth biggest municipality in the province with some 15000 residents (Instituto nacional de estadística), whereas now it is by far the most populated one with some 75000 inhabitants, which accounts for 14.2% of the population of the province. The current data (Ruiz: 2014: 4) also show that 20.7% of the inhabitants of the capital were born in other municipalities of the province which goes to show Ciudad Real still functions as its center and a focal point of the province. Our own data add further support to this claim: 51% of the parents of our informants were born in the capital, 38% somewhere else in the province and 11% in other parts of Spain. In this context, seeing that a province capital functions as a center of confluence for the people living in the province, and that its population largely consists of people who have, at one moment or the other, moved there from the smaller villages, the supposition that the dialect spoken there in fact reflects the speech of the entire province or is a result of a kind of mixture, a koine of the different varieties spoken in the province, does not seem at all unreasonable. The two atlases used encompass the whole province and when the data for the different points in the province are computed together, what we get is in fact a similar kind of mixture or the amalgamation that we can expect to find in a province capital melting pot.

While this procedure is far from ideal, we still think that the relation of our data with those from two other points in time can be fruitful and will help us better understand the process at hand. Although we must remain conscious of the limitations of this kind of comparison, we consider it could provide us with commensurable data and a possibility to establish certain real-time tendencies. Labov's study of (ay) and (aw) variables in Martha's Vineyard (1972: 1-42; 165-171), where he compares the results of his study with the data from the Linguistic Atlas of New England (Kurath et.al. 1939-1943), is a well-known predecessor of these kinds of comparisons and a good example of their potential importance.

Furthermore, as we shall see throughout this paper, the fact that the data obtained in this way correlate sensibly to our own and that the results analyzed in this way do not seem to be haphazard, irregular or awkward for interpretation, further encourages us to proceed in this way. This means that the apparent-time results from our investigation are systematically corroborated by the dialectological data; that is, in cases where our results indicate stability, stability is also inferred from the data proceeding from the atlases, and in situations where we can appreciate changes in apparent time, the development of these changes can also be observed in real time. The results for the global stability of syllable-final *s* during the past hundred years, and for the instability of the sequence /s/+t/ will be discussed in detail in the following pages (see Sections 4 and 5), as this is the main topic of this paper, but here we shall briefly consider some other contexts that have shown stability in our investigation in order to show that the relation between our data and the data from the atlases is consistent both in cases of stability as well as in those of change. The sequences we will consider in Table 1 are marginal for the topic of this paper, but are included in the methodology section in order to demonstrate the commensurableness of our results with those from the atlases.

VARIABLE WITHIN VARIABLE - SIMULTANEOUS STABILITY AND CHANGE.
THE CASE OF SYLLABLE-FINAL S IN CIUDAD REAL

Table 1 – Percentage of [s] retention in different contexts in ALPI, ALECMAN and Ciudad Real

	sk	s#k	sp	s#p	s##	s#V
ALPI (1934)	1.8 (N=55)	1.3 (N=78)	7.7 (N=26)	1.5 (N=65)	69 (N=304)	63 (N=112)
ALECMAN (1990)	7.7 (N=168)	1.6 (N=129)	7.8 (N=103)	0.5 (N=139)	63 (N=803)	57 (N=74)
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 56>	0.7 (N=132)	2.4 (N=1095)	2 (N=196)	1.3 (N=450)	70 (N=1661)	75 (N=1500)
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 36-55	7.1 (N=151)	2.2 (N=893)	0.6 (N=152)	5.4 (N=325)	74 (N=1507)	68 (N=1449)
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 18-35	4.6 (N=129)	4.8 (N=1122)	4.6 (N=231)	3 (N=421)	69 (N=1367)	60 (N=1516)

In Table 1 we can see the comparison of the retention percentages in six different contexts. These contexts were selected among the ones which are best represented in the ALPI, the source with fewest overall occurrences of all consulted. When considering representativeness in our investigation and in the sources we used for real-time comparisons, we concur with Milroy and Gordon (2003: 163-4) who follow Guy (1980, 1993) sustaining that in statistics about 30 tokens per variable can be considered fully representative, and 10 tokens can be used for basic representativeness which should guarantee some 90% accuracy. We can see in Table 1 that in general the rate of occurrences in different contexts is far superior to these numbers, and we shall also be able to observe (see Section 5) that this is especially so in the sequence under study in this paper (for the exact overall number of occurrences in each atlas, see below).

When considering the data displayed in Table 1, first of all, we have to state that syllable-final *s* was found to be stable in all of these contexts in our investigation; that is, in none of the regression analyses comparing retention rates of /s/ in each phonological environment has the variable ‘age’ been selected as a statistically significant predictor (*sk* $p=0.316410$, *s#k* $p=0.380776$, *sp* $p=0.414150$, *s#p* $p=0.443762$, *s##* $p=0.921272$, *s#V* $p=0.299696$), suggesting that none of the variables seems to be going through a process of change in apparent time. These inferences are then confirmed by the data from the two atlases. Small fluctuations notwithstanding, Table 1 shows that in none of the cases do we seem to find indications of real-time change. The only notable fluctuation is found in the prevocalic context where the third generation of our investigation and ALECMAN’s informants differ quite a bit, but if we were to look at, for instance, the youngest cohort in our data, then these differences would practically disappear (we insist once again that the differences in our investigation that may superficially seem to point to lower retention rates among the young have been found to be statistically insignificant with $p=0.299696$). In any case, these fluctuations are neither systematic nor consistent. The four preconsonantal contexts all fluctuate between 0%-8% retention and also seem completely stabilized at these low rates. It is clear from these data that the occurrence of the sibilant in the preconsonantal contexts is uncommon in all three studies, with an amount of variance between them that does not seem to be more pronounced than the one we encounter within our study when comparing the three different generations. The linguistic atlas

data in these contexts, therefore, seem to be in line with our apparent-time inferences. The best represented context in Table 1 in both atlases is the prepausal one, and the fact that it is precisely this context that best illustrates the stability of syllable-final *s* over time encourages our belief that the comparably representative context under study in this article, /s+/t/, will also show realistic relations between the different points in time (see Section 5).

Another sequence in which the relationship between our data and the data from the atlases can be meaningfully related, is the sequence /s+/d/. However, had it been included in Table 1, it would only once again confirm the stability of [s] in this context during the previous century. In the context of our investigation, on the other hand, it will be more important to regard the behavior of one of the allophones in this sequence. Namely, the particularity of this context is that it is the most favorable one for the appearance of the rhotic allophone. Nevertheless, our apparent-time data (Kapović 2015b: 406) have shown that rhotacism in this context is in the process of disappearing since it is hardly ever used among the young (in less than 4% of the cases), somewhat more frequently among the middle generation (20%) and is relatively common among the oldest generation (35%). These statistically significant differences ($p < 0.01$) were then contrasted with the data from the atlases to find that the tendency perceived in apparent time could also be clearly observed during the course of the past century with 68% rhotacism rates in ALECMAN and more than 90% rhotacism rates in ALPI (Kapović 2015b: 409).

Upon reviewing all these materials and observing that the cases in which syllable-final *s* shows stability in our study, the same stability is reflected in the data from the atlases (see Table 1), and when our investigation finds contexts in which there are indications of change, this is also corroborated by the same references (see Kapović 2015b: 406 and the preceding paragraph), we are of the belief that it is reasonably safe to proceed with this type of comparison since it once again seems to provide meaningful relations between these three sets of data. This, of course, does not mean that we can afford to forget the aforementioned problems when comparing studies of such different methodologies, nor disregard its potential pitfalls, but it does lend some more support to the inferences we have been able to make based on our apparent-time findings. In any case, the evolution of the variable under study in real time cannot be as firmly established as is the case when more similar investigations of the same community are compared, but the correlations found between the works compared in this paper allow us to corroborate certain perceived tendencies and should not be disregarded.

The procedure by which the mean values in the two atlases were calculated was straightforward. All instances of syllable-final *s* in all points of investigation were added up in each of the contexts in which they appeared (each possible preconsonantal context, word-internal and word-final, was studied separately, in addition to the prepausal and prevocalic contexts) and later these were all added up to obtain global values. However, as might be expected, the data from the atlases were not equally distributed according to contexts. Some of them were far more frequent than others which meant that if we simply computed all the occurrences of syllable-final *s* and calculated its mean value, this mean value would be significantly skewed. For example, the *par excellence* conservative contexts, the prevocalic ones, were represented in ALECMAN by only four sequences and 74 occurrences, while the preconsonantal ones, in which the weakening process is by far most advanced, as can be seen in Table 1, were much more numerous (compare the numbers in prevocalic contexts to 1456 occurrences in preconsonantal contexts word-internally, 697

occurrences in word-final preconsonantal contexts, and to 803 prepausal occurrences). The simple addition of these disparate contexts would have significantly skewed the totals, and we therefore decided to ponder our data in such a way that all contexts carry the same weight. We have done so by adding up the percentages instead of absolute occurrences for the different contexts in order not to let the arbitrarily more represented contexts skew the results. This also does not represent faithfully the natural frequency of appearance of the different contexts, but seems to be more representative than the arbitrary quantity of sequences found in the atlases. Of course, this procedure was needed to obtain global syllable-final *s* frequencies; when working only with /s/+t/ sequence, there was obviously no need for it.

The age of the informants in both atlases is similar; García Mouton and Moreno Fernández (1993a, 1993b) report that the ALECMAN informants were aged 55-65, and the average age in ALPI for the points of inquiry in Ciudad Real was 57. In ALECMAN both male and female informants were interviewed while ALPI only offers data on the male speech. The data in both atlases were elicited via questionnaires available for consultation on the respective atlas websites. Of the two atlases, ALECMAN, as might be expected for a regional atlas, had a far denser net of inquiry points (30) than ALPI (7), which was supposed to cover the entire peninsula.¹⁵ This, of course, has resulted in the fact that ALECMAN registered a far larger number of syllable-final *s* occurrences (N=3030) than ALPI (N=1060). Although both questionnaires were detailed and covered many different contexts pertinent for syllable-final *s* weakening, along with the problems mentioned above, we have to point out that the sequence *s#t* (where word-final *s* meets word-initial *t*, as in *es tuyo* 'it is yours') was poorly represented in ALPI and that therefore we will be forced to work only with word-internal contexts (*st*, as in *este* 'this', N=208). To be more precise, we shall present the results of our investigation for both *st* and *s#t* contexts in order to show that the tendency for the reinsertion of the sibilant is present in both of them and conditioned in the same fashion, but when comparing our data with the atlases, we will be forced to work with word-internal contexts only. This, however, should not pose a significant problem since, contrary to previously established beliefs, the distributional factors have been shown to have only a marginal effect, if any, on the weakening process (Kapović 2015a),¹⁶ which means that the behavior of the sibilant in the sequence /s/+t/ can be observed without problems even if we consider word-internal contexts only.

¹⁵ On the web page of the atlas, the authors report that the localities investigated in ALECMAN were Anchuras, Retuerta del Bullaque, Navalpino, Malagón, Tomelloso, Herencia, Ciudad Real, Luciana, Fernancaballero, Agudo, Alcolea de Calatrava, Cabecarados, Pozuelo de Calatrava, Torralba de Calatrava, Membrilla, Moral de Calatrava, Villahermosa, Alamillo, Villamayor de Calatrava, Brazatortas, Aldea del Rey, Fuencaliente, Puertollano, Solana del Pino, Mestanza, Torrenueva, Villanueva de los Infantes, Montiel, Villamanrique y Almuradiel. It is important to note that although data were gathered for the sociolinguistic study of the capital and the capital is on the list of the inquiry points, these data have never been studied or published. The localities studied for ALPI were Puebla de don Rodrigo, Alcolea de Calatrava, Villarubia de los Ojos, Pedro Muñoz, Fuencaliente, El Viso del Marqués y Carrizosa.

¹⁶ As was noted earlier in bibliography review, in this paper it is meticulously proved that the differences between word-internal and word-final preconsonantal contexts are minimal and, at best, barely relevant for the syllable-final *s* weakening process. This was established not only for the dialect of Ciudad Real based on our investigation, but also for numerous other varieties scrutinized in the article.

4. Syllable-final *s* in Ciudad Real across all contexts

As has already been stated in the introduction, analogously to most other varieties of Spanish, syllable-final *s* in Ciudad Real is completely stable, at least as far as the standard variant is concerned (Kapović 2014).¹⁷ This is evident from the descriptive and inferential statistics available in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Frequencies of overall syllable-final *s* retention in Ciudad Real

N=81846	18-35 (N=26820)	36-55 (N=27702)	56> (N=27324)
s	47.16	52.28	46.52

Table 3: Multiple linear regression analysis for the allophone [s]

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: pronunciation [s] R= ,68270183 R2= ,46608179 Adjusted R2= ,43404670 F(3,50)=14,549 p<,00000 Std.Error of estimate: ,13776						
N=54	b*	Std.Err. of b*	b	Std.Err. of b	t(50)	p-value
Intercept			0,014693	0,087933	0,167089	0,867974
gender	0,496503	0,103336	0,180153	0,037495	4,804734	0,000015
age	-0,014518	0,103336	-0,003226	0,022961	-0,140493	0,888835
education	0,468355	0,103336	0,104066	0,022961	4,532339	0,000037

The descriptive statistical data show very little difference among the three generations in the study, and the regression analysis concludes that age, in contrast to gender and education level, is not a significant predictor for the variation of the allophone [s] ($p=0.888835$).

Tendencies that can be observed when comparing our data to those of the two atlases also point to the complete stability of this allophone throughout the 20th century. Of course, due to the nature of the data we had to use to make these comparisons, it was impossible to perform statistical analysis and we can only rely on descriptive statistics.

¹⁷ It is interesting to point out that the stability of the standard variant does not seem to imply the stability of all the allophones. In fact, as has already been mentioned, although the three most frequent allophones, [s], [h] and [ø] seem to be completely stable, it is the two less frequent and very contextually determined variants [*] and [r] that are currently being reshuffled within the syllable-final *s* allophonic field in a somewhat atypical change from below (see more in Kapović 2015b).

Table 4: Syllable-final s retention in ALPI, ALECMAN and Ciudad Real¹⁸

	Sibilant retention
ALPI (1934) (N=1060)	36%
ALECMAN (1990) (N=3030)	34% ¹⁹
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 56> (N=8705)	37%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 36-55 (N=8290)	41%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 18-35 (N=8520)	36%

The relative frequencies from Table 4 seem to suggest that the retention of the sibilant has remained more or less unchanged during the past century, with some small fluctuations which by no means point to any kind of change. Moreover, the retention rates of the youngest generation in our investigation, born between 1976-1993, and the oldest generation that took part in the ALPI survey, almost exactly one century older, born between 1870-1890, seem not to differ in the slightest.

5. Syllable-final s in Ciudad Real in the sequence /s/+t/

When the data discussed in the previous section are taken into account, the logical assumption would be that this overall stability is also reflected in each of the contexts that comprise the variable syllable-final s. As was shown in the methodology section (Section 3, Table 1), this indeed is the case in the great majority of the contexts (for more details consult Kapović 2014), but the sequence /s/+t/ provides an important exception to this pattern, as is evidenced in Tables 5-8.

Table 5: Frequencies of syllable-final s retention in the context st

N=14261	18-35 (N=4720)	36-55 (N=5007)	56> (N=4534)
s	79.98	75.84	60.31

Table 6: Multiple linear regression analysis for the allophone [s] in the context st

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: st R= ,79221291 R2= ,62760130 Adjusted R2= ,60525738 F(3,50)=28,088 p<,00000 Std.Error of estimate: ,21505						
N=54	b*	Std.Err. of b*	b	Std.Err. of b	t(50)	p-value
Intercept			-0,064740	0,137263	-0,47165	0,639230
gender	0,650425	0,086302	0,441115	0,058529	7,53664	0,000000
age	-0,236701	0,086302	-0,098304	0,035842	-2,74272	0,008435
education	0,385385	0,086302	0,160053	0,035842	4,46556	0,000046

¹⁸ The years in the table correspond to the dates in which the data were elicited, and not to the publication dates of the cited works.

¹⁹ In Kapović (2014:128) we reported this percentage to be 31% due to minor errors in calculation. Upon reviewing our materials we corrected the previous syllable-final s retention rates from 31,48% to 33,67%.

Table 7: Frequencies of syllable-final *s* retention in the context *s#t*

N=2320	18-35 (N=708)	36-55 (N=824)	56> (N=788)
s	75.29	69.33	57.17

Table 8: Multiple linear regression analysis for the allophone [s] in the context *s#t*

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: <i>s#t</i> R= ,80814860 R2= ,65310415 Adjusted R2= ,63229040 F(3,50)=31,378 p<,00000 Std.Error of estimate: ,21762						
N=54	b*	Std.Err. of b*	b	Std.Err. of b	t(50)	p-value
Intercept			-0,209644	0,138906	-1,50925	0,137529
gender	0,671358	0,083294	0,477397	0,059230	8,06009	0,000000
age	-0,208062	0,083294	-0,090601	0,036271	-2,49792	0,015827
education	0,398864	0,083294	0,173686	0,036271	4,78861	0,000015

As can be seen in Tables 6 and 8, both in internal and in word-final position the independent variable age is selected to be a significant predictor of syllable-final *s* retention. In word-internal position the significance is $p < 0.01$ and in word-final position it is $p < 0.05$, with both positions pointing in the same direction – the younger the person, the more likely they are to retain syllable-final *s* in both contexts.

Even though it is the most important factor for establishing the existence of a change in progress, age, of course, is not the only factor that should be taken into account. In fact, sociolinguistic theory has established patterns typical for changes in apparent time, which include variation according to gender, education level (or social class, depending on how the variable is conceived) and style.

With respect to gender, it has long been known that women are the leaders in the great majority of linguistic changes (cf. for example Labov 1990). Tables 6 and 8 above indicate that this is the case in our investigation as well; in both contexts the difference between the usage of the sibilant by women and men is statistically very significant at the level $p < 0.01$ and shows clearly that women favor the standard allophone. This is also evident from Tables 9 and 10 which show this difference in percentages.

Table 9: Frequencies of syllable-final *s* retention in the context *st* according to gender

N=14261	st	
	M (N=6942)	F (N=7319)
s	49.99	94.09

Table 10: Frequencies of syllable-final *s* retention in the context *s#t* according to gender

N=2320	s#t	
	M (N=1079)	F (N=1241)
s	43.39	91.13

These Tables illustrate plainly the enormous differences we find in the usage of this variable between genders; while women, on the one hand, employ the sibilant practically exclusively in this sequence, in more than 90% of the cases in both positions, in the speech of the men this allophone surfaces less than 50% of the times.²⁰

As regards the education level or the social class, the most typical distribution we find in changes from below is the curvilinear pattern, and in changes from above the pattern can be either curvilinear or the change can originate in the highest-status group (cf. Labov 1972: 122-182). Tables 6 and 8 indicate that, in our study, the differences between groups according to education are statistically significant at the level $p < 0.01$, and in Tables 11 and 12 we can see that the sibilant form is more frequent for speakers with a higher level of education.

Table 11: Frequencies of syllable-final s retention in the context *st* according to education level

N=14261	Primary school (N=4487)	Secondary school (N=4963)	University (N=4811)
s	53.95	76.23	85.95

Table 12: Frequencies of syllable-final s retention in the context *s#t* according to education level

N=2320	Primary school (N=777)	Secondary school (N=852)	University (N=691)
s	47.3	72.45	82.04

Moreover, these data seem to indicate that the difference between the lowest-status group on the one hand and the middle and the highest one on the other is much greater than the one between the latter two groups.

Finally, as is evidenced in Tables 13 and 14²¹, the distribution we find with respect to style is quite expected: the more formal the style, the more probable the appearance of the standard allophone. Here it has to be pointed out that due to representativeness problems,²² only the sequence *st* could be investigated in reading-text and word-list

²⁰ One can observe that the factor gender is important on a general level as well (see Table 3). The fact that women use more prestigious forms in stable situations and that they lead in the process of change as well is well attested in sociolinguistic literature (for a detailed discussion on this issue, see Labov's (1990) analysis of the two principles regarding the behavior of women in stable situations and in situations of change). Here we can point out that gender on a general level is a less strong predictor ([s] retention 39.64% males and 57.66% females, standardized beta $b^* = 0.4956503$) than in the sequence /s/+t/ where it indicates change (differences in descriptive statistics of more than 50% and standardized betas of $b^* = 0.671358$ and $b^* = 0.650425$).

²¹ The data in the table refer to all three contexts studied in the same analysis. Seeing that the differences in the frequencies between reading text style and reading word list style are quite small, an additional analysis of variance that included only these two datasets was performed, and the difference between them was also found to be significant on a $p < 0.01$ level.

²² The text in reading-text task contained 714 words, and the word list in the word-list reading task 247. The reading of each one of them lasted for about five minutes, and, in our opinion, this is the maximum that can be expected of typical informants after they have already spent at least 45 minutes of their time conversing with the investigator. In fact, many of them complained the tasks were too long and cumbersome. However, even with these long tasks we only managed to obtain basic representativeness

styles. This means that in the following discussion the sequence *s#t* will have to be left out. However, this fact should not suppose too big of a problem for our analysis since, as has been seen up to now, the behavior of these two variables has been completely analogous and the differences found between word-internal and word-final positions have been found to be barely relevant (Kapović 2015a). This means that the conclusions we make based on the data for the context *st* will also be valid for the context *s#t*, and that based on them we will be able to make conclusions about the sequence /s+/t/ in general. In this way, in fact, our analysis will be more straightforward and simple, without any detriment to its accuracy.

Table 13: Frequencies of syllable-final *s* retention in the context *st* according to style²³

	CONVERSATION (N=14261)	READING TEXT (N=1560)	READING WORD LIST (N=518)
s	72.04	87.43	91.89

Table 14: Analysis of variance for the context *st* according to style

Effect	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (style) Sigma-restricted parameterization Effective hypothesis decomposition				
	SS	Degr. of Freedom	MS	F	p
Intercept	111,4145	1	111,4145	606,0875	0,000000
Error	9,5589	52	0,1838		
R1	1,1736	2	0,5868	28,4296	0,000000
Error	2,1465	104	0,0206		

In conclusion we can say that the retention of the sibilant in /s+/t/ sequences is favored by the young, women, higher-status groups and more formal styles. This pattern fits in perfectly with what Labov (1972: 180) called change from above that originates in the highest-status group:

If the change originated in the highest-status group of the community, it became a prestige model for all members of the speech community. The changed form was then adopted in more careful forms of speech by all other groups in proportion to their contact with users of the prestige model, and to a lesser extent, in casual speech.

Figures 1-3 illustrate clearly the theory explained in the quotation. It is obvious that the change in question originated among the highest-status groups who currently seem to use the canonical form practically exclusively in all styles with the rest of the groups following their lead at variable distances depending on their contact with the prestigious form and probably on their attitudes towards overt and covert prestige as well.

for both these styles in the most frequent of all contexts, *st*, and the stylistic data in our study (Kapović 2014) were presented, as had been intended beforehand, on a general level.

²³ The number of tokens containing the sequence *st* in the text and word list was 30 and 10 respectively. One elderly informant did not participate in this task because of sight problems, and the differences that can be noted between the expected number of occurrences and the actual one reported in the Table are due to informants' accidental omission of some tokens during the reading tasks.

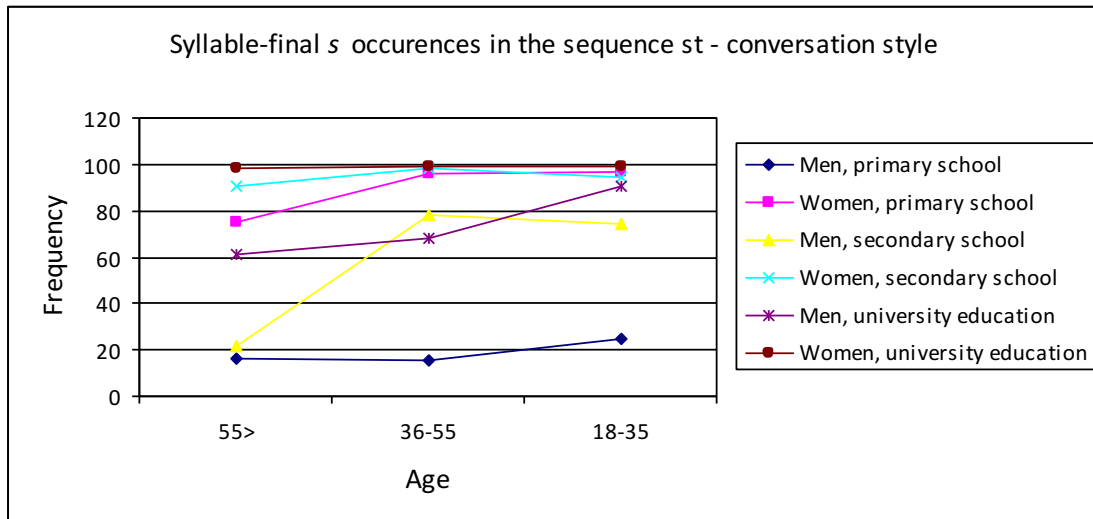


Figure 1

In Figure 1, we can see that this issue, covert vs. overt prestige, could be one of the most important factors in describing the variability we find in this community. On the one hand, the change seems to be practically completed for the highest-status women (known to be most affected by the overt prestige), while on the other, men with a primary school education (the ones impervious to overt and influenced by the covert prestige)²⁴ seem completely unaffected by it. In fact, if we were to compare the retention percentages of the older and middle-aged males with primary school, we would be able to see that their sibilance rates remain below 16% which is completely analogous to the data found in the ALPI (15%) and ALECMAN (17%) (see Table 15), and shows that the change for them has not yet started. The youngest generation in this group, however, seems to have begun to move in the direction of the change with 24.56% retention rates. The only other group that seems to a large extent unaffected by the change are the older males with secondary schooling, whose percentage of sibilance in this context barely surpasses the 20% limit.

The rest of the groups, including younger and middle-aged men with secondary school and university educated males, have already advanced significantly in the direction of the change, with their retention rates never falling below the 60% line. Young, university-educated men are the only group of males that has surpassed 90% retention rates.

As for women, the situation is much more uniform; it is only among the older ones with a primary school education where we find significant weakening (their retention rates are at 74.76%), while all other women retain the sibilant in more than 90% of the cases, the most advanced group being the young and middle-aged university-educated females with more than 99% of [s] occurrences in this context.

The other two Figures display the same tendencies, but, as expected, in more formal styles, all groups tend to use a higher frequency of the prestigious form.

²⁴ For more details on overt and covert prestige, see Labov (1990).

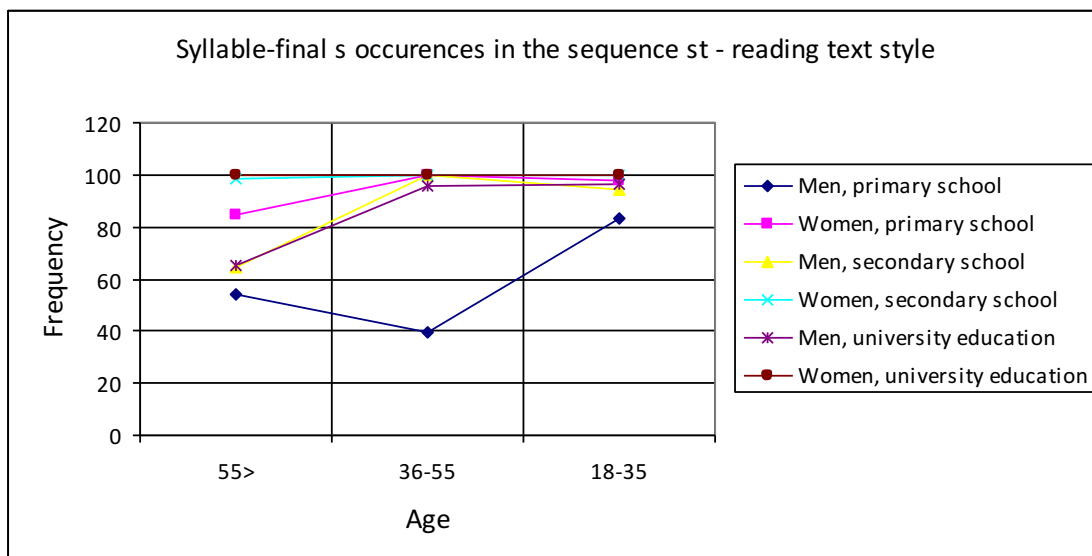


Figure 2

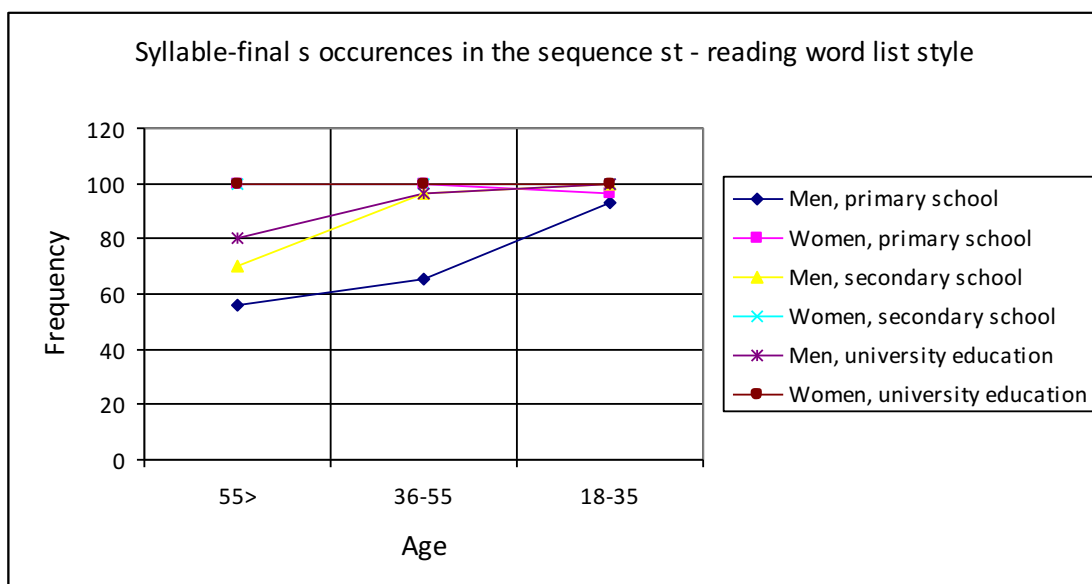


Figure 3

In the reading text style, as can be observed in Figure 2, it is only the older males and the men with primary education that maintain somewhat lower retention rates, while all other groups retain the sibilant practically categorically. Among women, only the oldest and least educated stratum retains the sibilant in less than 85% of the cases.

In the reading word list style, as is shown in Figure 3, the lines tend even more towards the upper side of the figure. Again, it is only the older men and the men with primary education that weaken the sibilant significantly. However, it is important to notice that in this style, the youngest males in the least educated stratum converge towards the norm with 93.33% of [s] retention. The women show almost categorical retention rates. All of these observations are consistent with the interpretation of this process as a change from above originating in the highest-status group.

Finally, in order to take a closer look at this change in progress, apparent-time data have to be contrasted with historical tendencies. Similar to what has been done when all contexts were studied as a whole, the data from our study will once again be

compared to the data proceeding from the linguistic atlases ALPI and ALECMAN, again taking into account only the least educated stratum of our participants.

Table 15: Syllable-final s retention in the context st in ALPI, ALECMAN and Ciudad Real²⁵

	Sibilant retention
ALPI (1934) (N=208)	15%
ALECMAN (1990) (N=235)	17%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 56> (N=1426)	45%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 36-55 (N=1591)	56%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 18-35 (N=1470)	61%

Table 15 shows that, distinct from what we have seen on the general scale, in this particular sequence there seem to be indications of real-time change which corroborate our apparent-time inferences. Moreover, it can be noted that in accordance with the data for all contexts, syllable-final *s* was stable in this context as well until the generation born between 1930 and 1955, which is the oldest generation studied in our investigation. Or, to be more precise, we can conclude that it was stable during those 60 years in the least educated stratum since it is the only group we have some knowledge about; unfortunately, as has already been pointed out, our study is the first of its kind in the province capital, which means that prior to it we have no information about the higher ranking groups of this community. However, if we are to assume that the change in question is a change from above which originated in the highest status group, and this is what our data seem to suggest, this means that it would have had to begin before spreading to the lowest ranking group of the community. We can of course by no means establish the exact starting point of this change, but, seeing that our data first register it in the least educated stratum in those born between 1930 and 1955, we can assume that it had to have appeared in the upper strata before those dates and trace it back to the beginning of the previous century.²⁶ In fact, if we take a closer look at our own investigation, we can see that at the moment when the lowest ranking group starts to accept the reinsertion coming from above, the middle and the higher stratum already exhibit 56% and 80% retention rates respectively. This can be interpreted in the following way. It is plausible to assume there had always existed a stratification characteristic of stable variables in which the highest ranking groups used more standard forms than lower ranking groups, due to

²⁵ The years in the table correspond to the dates in which the data were elicited, and not to the publication dates of the cited works.

²⁶ If we wanted to establish the exact dates of the beginning of this change, we would have to divide the group of the older individuals with elementary education in at least two subgroups to try to see whether there is any difference between the older and the younger individuals that comprise it (for example, subgroup 1 could contain those born between 1930-1940, and the second one those born between 1940 and 1955). However, as things currently stand, there are three males and three females in this age group and social stratum at our disposition, which is definitely too small a sample to be further divided into generational subgroups. Therefore, in order to trace the origins of this change with more precision, we would have to perform a more detailed study of the oldest generation in our investigation and interview additional informants belonging to this group.

the influence primarily of the standard language to which they were exposed during their formal education. In one moment, the pressures from above managed to overcome the resistance from below, the lower strata started to incorporate this upper strata trait in their speech to a certain extent and the change started to roll. Later, the younger generations emulated this pattern and gradually increased their usage of the standard form in this context and even the most resistant group, the lowest ranking males, started to accommodate their speech to the openly prestigious form, at least in more formal contexts.

In sum, based on the data we possess, we can say that after at least 60 years of stability that can be observed for the least educated stratum, starting with the oldest available data from ALPI and ending with ALECMAN, it is in the midcentury generation when first the women and considerably later the men as well started to converge towards the standard forms. As was seen in Figures 1-3, the males are lagging significantly behind in adoption of the canonical form, and, as has already been pointed out, the oldest and middle generation males with primary education in our study seem to have been completely unaffected by the change, retaining the sibilant in only 15.97% and 15.68% of the cases respectively, which is completely in accordance with the initial *s* conservation rates in this sequence registered in ALPI and ALECMAN.²⁷ The women, on the other hand, have advanced very rapidly and now retain the sibilant in more than 90% of the cases in all but the oldest and least educated stratum. It is precisely this rapid adoption of the standard form by women what has lead to the important difference between the generation born in 1925-1935 interviewed for the ALECMAN²⁸ and those born between 1930 and 1955, the oldest generation in our study, who initiated the change in the lowest status group.²⁹ The posterior generations only continued in the same pace, slowly co-opting first the educated and later almost all men. It has to be pointed out that Table 15, due to previously explained methodological concerns, shows the advance of the reinsertion of the sibilant in the lowest status stratum, and that in middle and higher ranking groups these numbers are approaching categoricity. This is shown in Table 16, which adds these two sets of speakers to Table 15 in order to demonstrate to what extent this change has advanced among the higher strata of the community.

²⁷ This fact assures us in our belief that the factors conditioning syllable-final *s* weakening are pretty much similar in the province and in the capital, which is the original supposition that enabled us to proceed with data comparison in the way we have done in this study.

²⁸ García Mouton and Moreno Fernández (1993a, 1993b), as has previously been indicated, declare their informants were between 55-65. García Mouton (personal communication) asserts that on a few occasions some informants were aged over 65, but almost never below 55.

²⁹ That this change is female-led is evidenced by the fact that the mean of 45% that we find in Table 15 for the oldest informants in our study consists of the retention rates of 74.76% for the women and 15.97% for the men. In the middle generation, the rates are 95.76% for the women and 15.68% for the men, and among the young 96.94% for the women and 24.56% for the men.

Table 16: Syllable-final *s* retention in the context *st* in ALPI, ALECMAN and among the three status groups in Ciudad Real

	Sibilant retention
ALPI (1934) (N=208)	15%
ALECMAN (1990) (N=235)	17%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 56> (N=1426)	45%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 36-55 (N=1591)	56%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), primary school, 18-35 (N=1470)	61%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), secondary school, 56> (N=1613)	56%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), secondary school, 36-55 (N=1660)	88%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), secondary school, 18-35 (N=1690)	84%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), university, 56> (N=1495)	80%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), university, 36-55 (N=1756)	84%
Ciudad Real (2011-2), university, 18-35 (N=1560)	95%

6. Discussion

In this section, we will try to make sense of these results and offer some possible explanations for the situation we have encountered. First we will try to determine the type of change described on the previous pages (6.1.), after which we will go on to address our research question. In this regard, we will first try to determine the cause of the change and contextualize it within other Spanish syllable-final *s* weakening varieties (6.2) and then contemplate the reasons which make possible a change to be observed within the 20% of the data even though the data as a whole show complete stability (6.3.).

6.1. Mechanism of the change from above

As we have seen previously, we are dealing with a change from above originated in the highest status group. As far as the mechanism of this change is concerned, Labov (2006 [1966]: 205) illustrates two typical configurations of changes from above: one which involves a substitution of a stigmatized feature, and the other which describes the introduction of a new prestige form. According to nomenclature only, our variable would most certainly be classified as the introduction of a prestige form, since, as far as it was possible for us to establish in our investigation of attitudes in Ciudad Real (Kapović 2014: 169-73), there was no evidence to support the supposition that the weakening was stigmatized specifically in the sequence /s+/t/ or in any other particular sequence. In fact, apart from the comments about the

prototypical aspiration context, /s+/k/,³⁰ none of the other contexts was singled out in our informants' observations, which is consistent with the interpretation that none of them is overtly stigmatized. Syllable-final *s* weakening is of course a non-standard feature which can hardly be considered neutral and the reinsertion of the sibilant by all means represents an introduction of the prestige form, but no overt stigmatization seems to be in force either when the variable is viewed as a whole or when considering one of its subvariables.

However, when our data is compared to Labov's (2006[1966]: 205; 213-221), our change seems to resemble more the mechanism of the substitution of the stigmatized /ʌy/ than the introduction of the prestigious post-vocalic /r/ in New York.³¹ This leads us to conclude that the pathways of change for the loss of a stigmatized feature and an introduction of a prestigious one (which indeed in Labov's model are already pretty similar), could actually be viewed as two alternative paths that changes from above can take, whether overt stigmatization of the phenomenon at hand is existent or not. In fact, these two seemingly different situations can easily be conceived as two sides of the same story; from one point of view we can say that when a feature is stigmatized, it is replaced by a new prestigious feature, and from the other we could say that with the introduction of a new prestigious feature, the older one (openly stigmatized or not) disappears. The only difference between these two mechanisms might be that in the latter (as is the case with our variable, or with post-vocalic *r* in Labov's study) the disappearing variant is not openly stigmatized, whereas in the first case the stigmatization is a key feature. In sum, this study seems to indicate that these differences do not seem to be rigid, and that the mechanism typical for the changes involving stigmatized features can also be observed in changes where no overt stigmatization has taken place and a non-prestigious feature is simply being replaced by a prestigious one in a change from above.

6.2. Causes of the change and its contextualization

The question as to why it should be precisely this context in which the reinsertion of the sibilant is under way has already been dealt with in part in Section 2, where it was shown that this sequence is cross-dialectally most conservative. Having this in mind, it does seem natural that if a standard form is to be reinserted in an incipient variety, this process starts in the context that articulatorily favors it. Another case in point for the reinsertion of the sibilant precisely in the sequence /s+/t/ might be its overall frequency. Namely, as has already been mentioned, this sequence is by far the most frequent one among preconsontal contexts and accounts for as much as 20% of all occurrences of syllable-final *s*. In fact, impressionistically it seems that it is precisely the weakening in these contexts what separates those who "aspirate a lot" from those who "aspirate occasionally" in a community like Ciudad Real. In fact, Kapović (2015a: 430-437) shows that the weakening in this context separates the

³⁰ Here the people of Ciudad Real showed to have a keen linguistic instinct. They correctly identified the prototypical context for aspiration, providing stereotypical examples such as *es que* [éh.ke] 'that is' or *quiosco* [kióh.ko] 'kiosk'.

³¹ Although the two mechanisms are in themselves fundamentally not very much different, in the introduction of the prestigious feature /r/, in Labov's study (2006[1966]: 208) we find abrupt stratification between the upper middle and the rest of the classes, and the older speakers of the intermediate classes seem to join the change before their younger counterparts, which makes the dynamics of this change different from ours and from the stigmatization of /ʌy/.

conservative dialects from the intermediate ones.³² In this sense, it is also plausible that the reinsertion is to be performed in the context which by the token of its frequency has the capacity to differentiate between the more conservative and more innovative dialects. In fact, the data from ALPI and ALECMAN suggest that the varieties spoken in the province could be classified as intermediate and not conservative dialects, and that the capital has reacted against this by reinserting the sibilant in the most frequent context and thus returning this variety to the family of the conservative dialects.

An interesting parallel can be drawn between the process under study in Ciudad Real and some developments we find in Andalusia. There are basically two types of phenomena occurring in that region that we can compare to the situation we encounter in our study: the Western Andalusia treatment of the /s+/t/ sequence and the East Andalusia convergence with the standard. Firstly, regarding the sequence under study in the paper, as was mentioned in the background section, in Western Andalusia an interesting development of post-aspiration and affrication in /s+/t/ sequence is under way. This phenomenon can be interpreted as an attempt to reconcile the conservativeness of this sequence with the tendency of the Andalusian varieties towards the open syllable. According to Vida-Castro, it seems that, in a way, the Andalusians in this case get to have their cake, and eat it too. Namely, as she explains in various recent papers (Vida-Castro 2015a: 450; 2015b: 497, 502-504; 2016: 35), the creation of the new affricate sound is the optimal solution in this context, as, on the one hand, the natural tendency towards the open syllable is satisfied and this sequence is no longer exceptional as far as its structure is concerned, and, on the other one, no underlying phonologically pertinent information is lost, as the etymological sibilant is still there, but now in the more natural syllable-initial position, carrying out its phonological function.³³ As we have seen in this paper, in Ciudad Real there are both similarities and differences to the Andalusian situation as far as the treatment of the sibilant in this context is concerned. First of all, it seems that both varieties opt for the conservation of the etymological sibilant in this sequence, partly due to articulatory mechanics and partly maybe due to the fact that this context presents a considerable number of minimal pairs in which contrast could be lost (e.g. *pasta-pata* 'dough-leg', *casta-cata* 'caste-tasting', *vasta-bata* 'enormous-dressing gown', *acostar-acotar* 'lay down-fence in', *pista-pita* 'clue-agave', *resto-reto* 'rest-challenge', *pasto-pato* 'pasture-duck', *restar-retar* 'subtract-challenge', *gasto-gato* 'expense-cat', *mosto-moto* 'must-motorcycle', *pistón-pitón* 'piston-python' etc.).³⁴ However, the fact that the variety of Ciudad Real belongs among the incipient ones and the Western Andalusian dialects among the advanced ones also accounts for their fundamentally different treatment of this situation. While the advanced dialects opt once again for an innovative solution with the creation of the new affricate sound, the variety under

³² It was established that /s+/t/ is the most frequent preconsonantal context, accounting for more than 30% of these tokens. It was also proved that it is by far the most conservative phonetic context. When these two facts are combined, it is clear that when syllable-final *s* gets seriously weakened in this sequence, which is the last of the preconsonantal ones to undergo this process, it would be very difficult for the variety to continue to be classified as incipient, since the preconsonantal context as a whole make for as much as 65% of all syllable-final *s* occurrences.

³³ This is, of course, a simplified account of the whole process. For more information on the social, phonetic and geographical factors that condition it, see also Moya Corral 2007; Moya Corral et. al. 2007; Torreira 2007a, 2007b, 2012; Ruch 2008, 2013; Ruch and Harrington 2014; Ruch and Peters 2016; Parrell 2012; Tejada Giráldez 2015: 140-195.

³⁴ This is, of course, more pertinent in Andalusia, since there this could be a real issue, while in Ciudad Real, an incipient syllable-final *s* weakening variety, the articulatory factors are probably paramount.

study here, under standardizing pressure from above, simply decides to reinsert the older underlying form with no changes to the syllable structure.

East Andalusian varieties, on the other hand, differ from the Western Andalusian dialects in many aspects. One of the most important ones is the convergence of these varieties towards the national standard, which we do not find in the West. Villena Ponsoda (2006: 243; 2008: 150-154), Hernández Campoy and Villena Ponsoda (2009: 193), Villena Ponsoda and Ávila Muñoz (2014: 215-218) for example affirm that the eastern part of Andalusia is far more influenced by the national prestige, than by the Western Andalusia prestige of Sevilla. According to Moya Corral and Sosiński (2015: 47), variables like the distinction between /s/ and /θ/,³⁵ velar pronunciation of /x/, opposition to the innovative deaffrication of /tʃ/, opposition to the creation of the new affricate [ts], distinction of *ustedes/vosotros* are what distinguishes the eastern converging varieties from the western diverging ones. Villena Ponsoda (2006: 243) and Villena Ponsoda and Ávila Muñoz (2014: 218) sustain that these patterns enhance convergence with Murcian, Extremaduran and South-Castilian varieties. This indeed is the case, since the variety of Ciudad Real, a South-Castilian variety, exhibits all the traits that East Andalusian is moving towards. Moreover, the convergence in the context /s/+t/ that we find in Ciudad Real is matched in East Andalusia by the refusal to accept the western innovation [st]>[ts] (Moya Corral and Sosiński 2015: 47).³⁶

It seems, therefore, that the convergence we are studying in this paper might be, *mutatis mutandis*, a part of a similar process that has been observed in East Andalusia. Namely, both these varieties share the same lack of a strong regional center (which is the role Sevilla performs in Western Andalusia) and they therefore look up towards the national standard as their role model.³⁷ It is important to note that, while not general and all-encompassing, the convergence towards the standard does seem to be an important phenomenon in modern peninsular Spanish, with the variable under study in this paper as one of the possible examples for it.

6.3. *Interrelation between stability and change*

Finally, the fact that there is no evidence for change of the variable as a whole, yet in a subvariable that accounts for 20% of the variable there are indications for it, needs to be explained.³⁸ There are basically two possibilities to be explored. First, it

³⁵ In contrast, recent studies of /s/ and /θ/ distinction in western Andalusian cities of Jerez de la Frontera (García Amaya 2008), Sevilla (Santana Marrero 2016) and Huelva (Regan 2017) report that with respect to this variable the western Andalusian varieties seem to converge with the national standard as well. This does not necessarily invalidate the divide between the converging eastern and diverging western varieties in general, but it does show that this variable does not function as one of the distinctive features between the two continua any more. Regan's (2017: 151-152) supposition that this might be due to the particular salience of the variable *seseo/ceceo/distinción* seems reasonable.

³⁶ The post-aspirated and affricate forms were recently registered in Granada as well (Tejada Giráldez 2015: 162), but the proportions of this phenomenon there seem to be very modest (with 4.66% of post-aspirated and 1.4% of affricate forms registered).

³⁷ Our linguistic attitudes investigation in Ciudad Real (2014: 169-172) clearly demonstrates that it is precisely the northern dialects that are seen by the people of Ciudad Real as prestigious. Namely, when asked to say where they think the best Spanish is spoken, none of the informants cited any of the southern towns, but many northern ones like Valladolid, Madrid, Salamanca, Burgos, Ávila etc. appeared, and the northern speech was in general perceived as far superior to Andalusian. The same seems to be true for other Manchegan towns (Molina Martos 2008: 59-60).

³⁸ Here we have to point out that even if we were not to take into account the data obtained by real-time comparisons because of the difficulties in comparing a sociolinguistic study of a single locality and dialectological investigations performed in order to gather data for the broader community, the apparent-time data alone indicate that the sequence /s/+t/ is going through a change in progress, while the variable syllable-final *s* as a whole is showing signs of stability. However, as has been seen in the

can be posited that if there is a strengthening process in progress in the 20% of the data, this might mean that within the remaining 80%, that is, within the rest of the subvariables, there exists an opposite weakening process which annuls the consequences of the change in /s+/t/ sequences and creates the stability we witness on the general level. However, the statistical data at our disposal do not seem to support this idea. Namely, with respect to the occurrence of the standard allophone, in none of the other context do we find evidence of a change in progress in either direction, and even if we remove the data for the sequence /s+/t/ from our dataset and study the rest as a whole, we still encounter no traces of change in the opposite direction which could explain this situation.³⁹

A more plausible explanation would have to take into account the fact that although age was selected as a significant predictor in both *st* and *s##* contexts, which points to a change in progress corroborated by the tendencies we observe when looking at the dialectal data, it is a much weaker predictor than gender or education with standardized beta coefficients (b^*) of -0.236701 word-internally and -0.208062 word-finally (see Tables 6 and 8).⁴⁰ This indicates that the change we have registered in the sequence /s+/t/ seems not to be pronounced enough as to change the general tendency of the rest of the contexts which suggest complete stability. In other words, if there is a tendency towards change in 20% of the data, but this tendency is rather weak, there is no need for a change in the opposite direction in the rest of the contexts to maintain stability. A pattern in which the factor age is simply not significant in the remaining 80% suffices to water down the change existent in the smaller subset of the data. In this regard we could say that the change from above present in this context gets diluted by the stability of the rest of the subvariables, or that, although the pressures from above towards the standard forms seem to be on the rise in this community, the opposing forces from below are still strong enough to maintain stability on the general level.

7. Conclusion

After in the previous discussion the explanation for the simultaneous stability and change encountered in the variable syllable-final *s* in Ciudad Real was offered and the reasons why this specific sequence is the one to go through a change from above were suggested, in this section we will make a few concluding remarks and try to envisage the possible developments of the process at hand.

Although the change from above present in the sequence /s+/t/ is currently not sufficiently strong as to influence the variable syllable-final *s* as a whole, there is good chance that it can continue in the future and that the standard variant will be reinserted in this sequence due to the important fact that the change at hand is a completely female-dominated one. Namely, as Figure 1 suggests, in the foreseeable future, when the oldest generation in our study is no longer around, the sibilant will be practically the only form present in female speech in this sequence. Bearing in mind the women's role as child caregivers (cf. Labov, 1990: 219-220; 243-244) this change is likely to spread to the following generations of both young women and men. If it were to be completed in the future, this would signify a step towards the convergence with the standard dialect, a process not uncommon in modern peninsular Spanish (see Section 6.3.). Nevertheless, according to the present data, other syllable-final *s* weakening

results section (Section 5), the dialectological data do point in the same direction as the data proceeding from our study, which only lends more support to our apparent-time inferences.

³⁹ The significance of the predictor age in this regression is $p=0.587319$.

⁴⁰ The same is also evident if we take a look at the descriptive statistics in Tables 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.

contexts should remain stable and preserve the general picture of this variety as one in the incipient stages of this weakening process. Also, the importance of the covert prestige that can be seen among the men of the least educated stratum who have yet to join the change should not be disregarded, although it is not very plausible to assume that it would be able to stop this ongoing process. All in all, Ciudad Real Spanish, although bordering with Andalusia and although its vernacular forms show analogous development to the ones of their southern neighbors, still seems to be a thoroughly Castilian variety with clear role models in the prestigious northern dialects; this fact becomes most evident in the sequence under study in this paper.

In addition, the methodological implications of this change in progress are pretty interesting. Namely, it seems possible that the change in the sequence /s+/t/ can reach completion without this ever being registered in the overall results. Its completion would have to imply somewhat higher overall retention percentages as well (save for a possible development in the opposite direction in some other context, for which there are currently no indications) and the process by which they have increased would never be reflected on a general level. To be more precise, if a variable that accounts for 20% of the data registers an increase in retention of some 30% (current retention rates in word-internal contexts are of 72% and in word-final ones of 67%), the overall retention rates should go up by some 6%. The fact that this kind of increase would fail to be captured by observation of the overall rates only goes to show the importance of a closer inspection and a more detailed study of specific phonetic contexts.

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Appendix 1 – Text for the reading task

La sombra del ciprés es alargada

Yo nací en Ávila, la vieja ciudad de las murallas, y creo que el silencio y el recogimiento casi místico de esta ciudad se me metieron en el alma nada más nacer. No dudo de que, aparte otras varias circunstancias, fue el clima pausado y retraído de esta ciudad el que determinó, en gran parte, la formación de mi carácter.

De mis primeros años bien poco recuerdo. Casi puede decirse que comencé a vivir, a los diez años, en casa de don Mateo Lesmes, mi profesor. Me acuerdo perfectamente, como si lo estuviera viendo, del día que mi tutor me presentó a él...

Se había iniciado ya el otoño. Los árboles de la ciudad comenzaban a acusar la ofensiva de la estación. Por las calles había hojas amarillas que el viento, a ratos, levantaba del suelo haciéndolas girar en confusos remolinos. Hicimos el camino en el último carruaje descubierto que quedaba en la ciudad. Tengo impresos en mi cerebro los menores detalles de aquella mi primera experiencia viajera. Los cascos de los caballos martilleaban las piedras de la calzada rítmicamente, en tanto las ruedas, rígidas y sin ballestas, hacían saltar y crujir el coche con gran desesperación de mi tío y extraordinario regocijo por mi parte.

Ignoro las calles que recorrimos hasta llegar a la placita silenciosa donde habitaba don Mateo. Era una plaza rectangular con una meseta en el centro, a la que se llegaba merced al auxilio de tres escalones de piedra. En la meseta crecían unos árboles gigantescos que cobijaban bajo sí una fuente de agua cristalina, llena de rumores y ecos extraños.

Del otro lado de la plaza, cerraba sus confines una mansión añosa e imponente, donde un extraño relieve, protegido en una hornacina, hablaba de hombres y tiempos remotos; hombres y tiempos idos, pero cuya historia perduraba amarrada a aquellas piedras milenarias.

Cuando descendimos del coche experimenté una sincera vocación de ser cochero. Él tenía un aspecto imponente encaramado en su sitial delantero, con los pies cubiertos por una media bota acharolada y unas polainas blancas protegiéndole sus piernas delgadas y sin forma. Pero mi tío, que no debía de sentir hacia él el mismo respeto que yo, le despidió tan pronto pusimos nuestras humanidades en tierra.

Antes de nada -me dijo mi tío al verse a solas conmigo-, para cuando lo necesites, sabe que tu padre se llamó Jaime y tu madre María. -(En toda mi vida tuve otra idea de mis padres. En adelante, siempre que sus nombres debían figurar en algún documento, lo hice constar así, añadiendo, entre paréntesis, «fallecido», aun cuando, en realidad, nadie me hubiera asegurado tal desenlace.) Acto seguido mi tío desvió sus consejos hacia otro lado: Estate formal; procura causar a este hombre una buena impresión; no enredes ni te hurgues en las narices. En fin, pórtate como un caballero. Dicho esto, nos acercamos a la casa, cuya fachada no podía ser más deprimente. No sé qué le habría pasado, pero parecía totalmente desastrada, como si no la hubieran pintado nunca. Dirigí los ojos otra vez hacia aquellos árboles. En realidad, los más altos parecían haber estado allí toda la eternidad. Había pasado toda mi vida en esta ciudad, y nunca me había fijado en estos árboles.

Una vez cuando habíamos entrado en casa y nos habíamos acomodado, nos dejaron solos. Entonces pude fijarme a mi antojo en lo que me rodeaba. Los muebles se parecían mucho a los de la sala de la casa de mi tío. En ambas, sobre todo lo demás, predominaban los asientos. En ésta había un pequeño sofá, forrado de raso rojo, lo mismo que las sillas y las butacas. Encima del sofá había un espejo con marco dorado, rematado por un copete de dibujos retorcidos. En un rincón, un velador negro de patas anchas e historiadas, con un mármol encima, sostenía una extraña cajita y un osado florero lleno de rosas de tela con muchas manchitas de mosca. Los tabiques y el techo estaban decorados de un vivo papel rameado. En el ángulo opuesto al del velador había un piano negro abierto, mostrando los dientes cariados de sus teclas, con mucho adorno encima. Al lado del piano una librería baja con varios tomos de *La Ilustración Española y Americana*.

(Adapted from Miguel Delibes, *La sombra del ciprés es alargada*)

Appendix 2 – Word list for the reading task

amistad	los céspedes	los aislados	dificultad
las caderas	dos yernos	cuaresma	los nadadores
asfalto	los tejados	los ascensores	desdoblado
las llaves	dos yugos	desde	los novillos
cerrada	los españoles	los buenos	jurisdicción
los hombros	los desgraciados	las avispas	los ojos
los ángeles	hasta	los callados	los organismos
curiosidad	Israel	dos yeguas	las llagas
desbordado	los nudos	los chanchullos	los posrevolucionarios
los follones	las ascuas	los cisnes	las cebollas
descendido	los cadetes	los codos	los radicales
los asnos	las ballenas	esperar	desratizar
desdén	asbesto	los hipos	los resguardados
las toallas	las castañas	los desnudos	dos chorizos
los necesitados	los radiadores	los desviados	los talleres
desfile	las cerraduras	los disgustos	dos yogures
las escobas	desrizar	merced	los tenedores
desmentir	las chuletas	los esfuerzos	los testarudos
los rasgos	las escenas	dos yunques	dos jadeos
desregular	desliz	resbalar	los valles
las cestas	las esferas	los federalistas	los ecos
desvergüenza	dos lados	descalzo	nada
los nacidos	las grabadoras	los forasteros	las mallas
disfrutar	rascar	dos champús	prescindir
dos chalecos	las laderas	los hechos	las gradas
los fresnos	las limosnas	los hígados	los fallos
los riesgos	los palillos	los desmesurados	respetado
dos gallinas	las llamadas	claridad	salud
dos gemidos	áspero	los islámistas	los malvados
trasladar	las llegadas	los jodidos	todo
dos gobernadores	pared	los labradores	dos gilipollas
dos granadas	las moscas	verdad	variedad
los últimos	las piscinas	los llorones	los lanzadores
dos jorobados	desdibujado	los maduros	
las esquinas	las uvas	sed	
dos pedidos	dos pedos	los mismos	
las variedades	las varillas	los muslos	