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Regional pragmatic variation in the use of the discourse marker *pues* in informal talk among university students in Quito (Ecuador), Santiago (Chile) and Seville (Spain)

The discourse marker *pues* in spoken Spanish has been studied extensively in Peninsular Spanish (cf. Fuentes Rodríguez 1987; Portolés 1989; Garcés Gómez 1992). There is also a growing body of studies on *pues* in Latin American varieties of Spanish (cf. Zavala 2001; Travis 2005; Vázquez Carranza 2013). Less attention, however, has been given to this discourse marker in Chilean and Ecuadorian Spanish (cf. Poblete 1998; Olbertz 2013).

Taking a variational pragmatics perspective (Schneider and Barron 2008; Placencia 2011; Schneider and Placencia forthcoming), this paper examines the impact of region in the use of *pues* among university students in Quito (Ecuador), Santiago (Chile) and Seville (Spain). It is based on a corpus of 60 role-play interactions within each location eliciting advice-giving and complaint talk in –SD (social distance) –P (power) scenarios.

The paper looks at variation in relation to form, position and distribution relating to turns and sections of the conversations. It also looks at the function of *pues* across data sets, noting its use as both a connector and an operator (Fuentes Rodríguez 2003, 2009), and thus highlighting the close interconnection between position and discursive function. Some shared features as well as features of variation were observed. Concerning function, for example, *pues* was found to occur as both a connector and an operator across varieties; however, we found a clear preponderance of *pues* as an operator in Quito and Santiago, and of *pues* as a connector in Seville.

1. Introduction

The discourse marker *pues* in spoken Spanish has been studied extensively in Peninsular Spanish (cf. Portolés Lázaro 1989; Garcés Gómez 1992; Porroche Ballesteros 2002; Fuentes Rodríguez 2009) (see Section 2.1).¹ There is also a growing body of studies on *pues* in Latin American varieties of Spanish such as

¹ *Pues* is a polyfunctional form, as will be seen, equivalent to the English *well* in some contexts (cf. Serrano Montesinos 2001); as a phatic token, equivalent to *uh*, and as a closing device as in *ya pues*, equivalent to the English ‘okay then’, etc.

Bolivian (Soto Rodríguez 2013), Colombian (Travis 2005), Mexican (Vázquez Carranza 2013) and Peruvian (Zavala 2001) Spanish (see Section 2.2). Less attention, however, has been given to this discourse marker in Ecuadorian and Chilean Spanish. Concerning the former, the only study available, as far as we know, is Olbertz's (2013), based on a corpus gathered in the 1970s in Salcedo, a small town in the Andean region. Also, very little attention has been given to the study of discourse markers in Spanish from an inter-varietal perspective.²

Conducting inter-varietal studies can be useful since, as Foolen (2011: 222) puts it, “[n]ot all varieties of a language (national varieties, dialects, sociolects, etnolects, etc.) use the same pragmatic markers and, more difficult to discover, the same pragmatic marker can be used in different ways in different varieties”. A number of studies on English pragmatic/discourse markers indeed have showed regional variation. For example, O’Keefe and Adolphs (2008) investigated listener response tokens in British and Irish English and found some differences relating to both form and frequency of use. Likewise, Schweinberger (2015) compared the use of *like* as a pragmatic marker also in British and Irish English. He found regional differences that relate to two different levels: the ‘language-external social level’ and the ‘language-internal discourse-pragmatic level’ (p. 114). He concludes that

² One such study is Jørgensen’s (2012) on the use of *como* among teenagers in Chile (Santiago) and Spain (Madrid). It is also possible to find a few works that highlight subnational regional variation at the phonological level. For example, Stearman’s (1981: 230) who notes the frequent use of *pues* in Bolivian Spanish as a “space filler” in conversation, or as a “softening agent to create a sense of familiarity between speakers” also observes phonological variation in its use in Bolivian Spanish according to region. He observes that highlanders tend to preserve the sibilant as in /pwis/ and /-ps/, whereas lowlanders tend to drop it, as in /pweh/ (p. 231). This variation, according to Stearman, serves as a marker of origin (p. 230).

historical and identity related factors are at the core of these differences. As such, inter-varietal studies can be very valuable in that they “may confirm or may refute functional interpretations made from one variety or language as not being idiosyncratic to one culture or speech community” (McCarthy 2002: 69).

Drawing on work in variational pragmatics (cf. Schneider & Barron 2008; Placencia 2011; Schneider & Placencia, forthcoming), in discourse markers in general (cf. Schiffrin 1987; Fraser 1990, 1996, 1999), and in Spanish in particular (cf. Portolés Lázaro 1998; Fuentes Rodríguez 2009), we focus in this paper on the impact of region in the use of the discourse marker *pues* in informal talk among university students in Quito (Ecuador), Santiago (Chile) and Seville (Spain).

Variational pragmatics is a discipline of recent creation (Schneider & Barron 2008) that examines the influence of macrosocial factors such as region, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic background on language use in context. Schneider and Barron (2008:20-21) distinguish five levels of analysis for language use in interaction: the actional or illocutionary level; the interactional or sequential level; the topic or content level; the organizational or turn-taking level, and the formal level. Regarding the latter, forms constitute the starting point of analysis; the aim is to determine the communicative functions these forms may have in discourse. Our study falls under this last level: we aim to look at the distribution and functions of *pues* across the three varieties of Spanish in question. This, in turn, forms the basis of our discussion of the type of category that *pues* constitutes in our study.

In relation to discourse markers, while we draw on a range of works in the area, we use in our analysis Fuentes Rodríguez's (2003; 2009) distinction between connectors and operators which builds on the work of Fraser (1990; 1996; 1999), among others. For Fraser, discourse markers constitute a subcategory of pragmatic markers. Fuentes Rodríguez, on the other hand, argues that connectors (Fraser's discourse markers) and operators (the rest of Fraser's pragmatic markers) are two distinct categories, with their own pragmatic functions and syntactic features: connectors operate at the structural level providing cohesion and they involve intersentential connection, whereas operators work at the interpersonal level and are found intrasententially.

All in all, we seek to answer the following questions:

- What variants of *pues* are in use in the three varieties examined and how frequently are the different forms employed?
- What is the distribution of *pues* and its variants across varieties according to situation?
- What turn / act position(s) do *pues* and its variants occupy?
- What are the functions of *pues* and its variants according to position across varieties?
- How can the uses of *pues* and its variants in the corpora examined be characterized overall? What categories of discourse markers do they constitute?

As such, the present study aims to contribute to the characterization of *pues* in Spanish, and the theory of discourse markers more generally, and to the study of regional pragmatic variation across varieties of Spanish (García & Placencia 2011; Placencia 2011). The paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, we start with a review of the literature on discourse markers with a focus on *pues* in Peninsular (Section 2.1) and in Latin American (Section 2.2) varieties of Spanish. A description of the data employed and a consideration of methodological issues are provided in Section 3. In Section 4.1 we look at the frequency of *pues* and its variants across data sets. The distribution of *pues* and its variants across varieties is examined in the next section in relation to situation (4.2). In 4.3 we look at the turn and act position that *pues* and its variants occupy. In 4.4, we consider the functions of *pues* and its variants according to their position in a given turn or act. Finally, in 4.5 we discuss the type of discourse marker that *pues* constitutes –connector or operator– on the basis of our results.

2. Studies on discourse markers in Spanish with a focus on *pues*

Over the past 25 years, studies on discourse markers in different languages, including Spanish, have proliferated (see Foolen 2011 and Fuentes Rodríguez 2016 for a recent overview). Classic works include Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1990; 1996; 1999) and Jucker and Ziv's (1998) collection of papers, among others. In relation to

Spanish, the study of discourse markers under different guises³ is an important and vibrant area of research. Indeed, in 2004 Hickey observed that it is the area in which Spanish authors have made the most significant contribution within the wider field of (Peninsular) Spanish pragmatics (Hickey 2004: 5). Key influential works in (Peninsular) Spanish include, among others, Fuentes Rodríguez (1987; 1996; 2009), Martín Zorraquino and Portolés Lázaro (1999), Pons Bordería (1998), and Martín Zorraquino and Montolío Durán's (1998) collection of papers and, more recently, Loureda and Acín Villa's (2010) collection, among others. With reference to Schiffrin's (1987) work, a matter that has been debated among Hispanists is what elements can be categorized under the notion of discourse markers and what the most adequate terminology should be (cf. Loureda Lamas & Acín Villa 2010). This discussion is closely linked to the consideration of the polyfunctionality of these forms (cf. Fuentes Rodríguez 1998; Hummel 2012). One issue that has emerged, however, is that under the notion of discourse markers, different types of what Fraser (2006) refers to as pragmatic markers (in contrast with discourse markers) have been included. This is indeed problematic, given that connectors and operators have different pragmatic functions and syntactic features (see above).

Concerning *pues*, it is a form that has been studied extensively (see below).

Nonetheless, it is important to differentiate its functions as a conjunction and as a

³ Terms employed by Spanish authors include: *operadores discursivos* 'discursive operators' (Garcés Gómez 1992); *partículas discursivas* 'discursive particles' (Briz Gómez, Pons Bordería & Portolés Lázaro 2008-to-date); *conectores y operadores* 'connectors and operators' (Fuentes Rodríguez 2003; 2009). Terms employed by other Hispanists include: 'interaction markers' (Martirena 1976); *marcadores conversacionales* 'conversational markers' (Cepeda & Poblete 1996); *expresiones pragmáticas* 'pragmatic expressions' (Carranza 1998).

discourse marker, since they are easily confused. Here we focus on *pues* as a discourse marker. Examples 1 and 2⁴ below illustrate the use of *pues* as causal (1) and consecutive (2) conjunctions, respectively.

(1)

Luisa ya no vive en Madrid pues ha cambiado de trabajo.

'Luisa does not live in Madrid any longer *pues* she has changed jobs.'

(2)

No te cae nada bien Luis. No lo invites pues.

'You don't like Luis. Don't invite him *pues*.'

In these examples, *pues* is a conjunction even if it occurs in intersentential position (example 1 above) or sentence final position (example 2). *Pues* as a conjunction cannot co-occur with another connector (**Luisa ya no vive en Madrid porque pues ha cambiado de trabajo*, 'Luisa does not live in Madrid any longer because *pues* she has changed jobs'). This is indeed one of the key features that differentiates *pues* as a conjunction from *pues* as a discourse marker. Example (3) below, on the other hand, illustrates the use of *pues* as a discourse marker where it serves to reinforce the expression of a reproach (first line) and of disagreement (last line).

⁴ These two examples are invented examples for illustrative purposes.

(3) (M7, Laptop, Quito)

M7: *Qué fue loca oye qué pasó con mi computadora pues?*

'How are things crazy one what happened with my laptop *pues?*'

FP: *Qué computadora?*

'Which laptop?'

M7: *La computadora que te presté y me la devuelves CAGADAZA no sirve [no se prende*

'The one I lent you and you return it to me FUCKED UP it's not working [it cannot be switched on'

FP: *[O sea no no no (.) a ver a ver primero relajación ni [cagando*

[I mean no

no no (.) let's see let's see first relax (.) it's [not fucking possible'

M7: *[Relajación me dice chucha [loca*

['You are asking me to relax for fuck's

sake [familiar address]'

FP: *[Ni cagando ni cagando te pude haber dañado la maquina o sea qué! de dónde sacas eso?*

['There was no fucking way I could have damaged your laptop I mean what! why do you say that?'

M7: *Porque le llevo a un técnico y el man me dijo qué has bajado que han bajado un programa en el tiempo que yo te presté*

'Because I took it to a technician and the guy told me that you've downloaded a programme during the period you borrowed it'

FP: *O sea es imposible [sinceramente*

'I mean it's impossible [it truly is'

M7: *[Cómo va ser imposible pues*

*['How can it be impossible *pues* ⁵*

⁵ Example taken from our corpus. FP stands for fixed participant in the role play; M stands for male; F stands for 'female' in other examples. The number following M or F corresponds to the number of participant in the

Pues as a discourse marker, as in (3) above is not really an essential element from a grammatical point of view, that is, it can be omitted. However, leaving such discourse markers out can affect the force of the utterance and/or the discourse cohesion (see Section 4.3 and 4.4).

2.1. *Pues* in Peninsular Spanish

Works on *pues* in Peninsular Spanish have focussed on its functional categorization. They mainly refer to the conjunctive use of *pues*. There are fewer studies that centre on the use of *pues* as a discourse marker. Empirical works such as the present one are scarce. In the characterization of *pues* authors tend to deal with its uses as both a conjunction and a discourse marker.⁶ Here, we will focus on the works that deal with the latter.

Starting with the *DRAE* (2014: s.v.) dictionary, it includes different uses of *pues* as a conjunction, adverb, and interjection, recognizing in b) and f) below the function of *pues* as a discourse marker:

corresponding role play scenario (see Section 3). A list of transcription conventions employed can be seen in the Appendix.

⁶ It is not unusual to find that the discourse and conjunction functions of certain forms overlap. This phenomenon is often referred to within grammaticalization theory (cfr. Hopper and Traugott 2003; Lehmann 2002; Brinton 2010).

a. Conjunction: Cómo 'how', por qué 'why': Used on its own accompanying a question:

(4) A: *Esta noche iré a la tertulia.*

'Tonight I will go to the social gathering.'

B: *¿Pues?*

b. Conjunction: Used at the beginning of a clause to support it or to emphasise its importance.

(5) *Pues como iba diciendo. ¡Pues no faltaba más!*

'*Pues*, as I was saying. *Pues*, it goes without saying!'

c. Conjunction: Used to convey different meanings depending on the tone with which it is uttered.

d. Adverb: Affirmative *sí* (yes affirmative).

(6) A: *¿Conque habló mal de mí?*

'Did you/he/she speak badly about me?'

B: *Pues.*

e. Adverb (old usage): Later

f. Interjection: Colloquial use: Implies certainty with regards to a previous assertion, or regarding something that was expected or presumed.

(7) *¡Pues, lo que yo había dicho! ¡Pues, se salió con la suya!*

'*Pues*, just what I have said. *Pues*, you/he/she got away with it/this!'

In the Seville corpus, as we will see in Section 4, we found similar examples of the use of *pues* presented above under category f), but no other examples relating to the rest of the categories:

Apart from dictionaries, among the early works on *pues* as a discourse marker is Hernando Cuadrado's (1996) who refers to the presence of *pues* after an interrogative clause, as in the following example (p. 43):

(8) *¿Cometiste la culpa? Pues sufre la pena.*

'Are you to blame? *Pues* live with the consequences.'

This use of *pues* is similar to the *pues* that introduces a response in dialogic discourse.

Another use of *pues* as a discourse marker acknowledged by Hernando Cuadrado (1996: 45) is *pues* as a continuer (see also Portolés Lázaro 1989; Porroche Ballesteros 2002), found in two contexts:

a. After conditional clauses:

(9) *Si volviera a nacer, pues sería torero.*

'If I was born again, *pues* I would be a bullfighter.'

b. After causal clauses:

(10) *Como no abría los ojos, pues pensaba que estaba durmiendo.*

'As he didn't open his eyes, *pues* I thought he was sleeping.'

In these contexts the function of *pues* is anaphoric, alluding to what was said previously. As such, *pues* invites the speaker to consider previous information in order to create inferences.

Portolés Lázaro (1989) describes *pues* as a discourse marker relating this use to that of a causal coordinative conjunction. He recognises the function of *pues* as a connector that can be classified as an anaphoric adverb, with argumentative properties, and as a continuative conjunction, with two different functions. These are: initiating a reply which indicates the restart of a negotiation process that could have been considered to have ended, and initiating an answer indicating additionally that the question has been understood and that an answer is being prepared (Portolés Lázaro, 1989: 233). The following examples illustrate these uses of *pues*:

(11) A: *¿Qué vas a estudiar?*

‘What are you going to study?’

B: *Pues...* no lo sé, aún no lo he decidido.

‘*Pues...* I don’t know, I still have not decided.’

(12) A: *Voy a la Plaza de España.*

‘I’m going to Plaza de España’

B: *Pues* ha subido el autobús.

‘*Pues* the price of the ticket has gone up.’ (Portolés's example)

B informs A of a fact that can make A reconsider the idea of taking a bus, a fact that B is expected to infer from what A says.

Porroche (2002) identifies the following functions of *pues* as a discourse marker: it is used to introduce an answer (confrontational or nonconfrontational), to start a conversation (e.g. *pues dígame usted 'pues you tell me'* p. 42) and after causal and conditional narrative sentences. It has a continuative value in some contexts.

According to Calvi and Mapelli (2004), with reference to Uribe Mallarino (2002), the above use of *pues* aims to facilitate and encourage contact with one's interlocutor. Therefore it has a cohesive function. Calvi and Mapelli (2004) also acknowledge this function of *pues* in relation to the following contexts:

- a. *Pues* as an emphatic particle in exclamations or in answers that mark emphasis as in *pues qué* 'pues what'.
- b. *Pues* with disagreements as in *¡pues qué!* 'pues what!' This expression can also be used as an invitation to close the interaction. Therefore it could be considered as a synonym of *¡y entonces qué!* 'and then what'.⁷
- c. *Pues + claro* 'of course' in a reactive response to a question or assertion. *Pues* has also been found to have this emphatic value when it co-occurs with *yes/no* answers signalling agreement or disagreement (Garcés Gómez 1992).

⁷ Distinguishing between a and b, however, is probably unnecessary as the difference between the two contexts is minimal.

- d. *Pues* also occurs in sentences that combine exclamation and interrogation.

In all the above contexts, Calvi and Mapelli (2004) found that the emphatic function of *pues* is associated with its consecutive value, as it can appear as a conclusion or can be brought about by preceding information or a previous turn.

- e. Colloquial interrogative *¿pues?* equivalent to *¿por qué?* 'why?', *¿y eso?* 'and that?', *¿cómo es eso?* 'what is that about?'

Garcés Gómez (1992) also acknowledges the cohesive and continuative function of *pues*, in openings in her case. In this context, it shows hesitation before initiating one's turn or answering a question. It is also used to hold our interlocutor's attention, as well as for asking or inviting our interlocutor to provide an answer or a conclusion.

Martín Zorraquino and Portolés Lázaro (1999: 4083-4084) refer to the function of *pues* as a commentator. In this context *pues* introduces new information presented as a reaction to information previously provided. Both authors acknowledge the phatic function of *pues* when collocated with *entonces* that reinforces the consecutive value of this unit (*pues entonces* 'pues then'). Fuentes Rodríguez (2009: 291-294) identifies six types of *pues* as a connector (see Section 1): consecutive (*pues* 1); continuative, the latter with two subtypes: anaphoric (*pues* 2) and a *pues* that introduces the rhematic information (*pues* 5); *pues* as an opening

(*pues* 3 and 4) and closing device (*pues* 6). As an opening device, it can be followed by *mira* 'look' and *verás* 'you will see'. It can introduce a commentary or evaluation in an answer, or a reply in reaction to someone else's turn. As a closing device, it can be followed by *nada* 'nothing/that's all'.

Finally, in the context of grammars, in the *Nueva gramática de la lengua española* 'New grammar of the Spanish language' (RAE 2009), *pues* is linked to explicative causals that omit implicit meaning. The authors of this grammar recognise the use of *pues* as an intensifier, a continuative and an illative (p.3516), fulfilling the following functions in discourse (pp. 3524-3526) (i.e., in all these functions *pues* is a discourse marker):

- a. Supporting the start of an answer or reply; also at the beginning of a narration fulfilling the function of breaking the silence or continuing the conversation.
- b. Introducing an assertion that contradicts the one that has just been presented. In this case *pues* reinforces the antagonistic response, or conveys surprise at the unexpected. It appears mainly at the beginning of a conversational turn, but it can also appear inside the sentence. This use of *pues* represents the opposite of the hedged *como que* 'like' in replies as in *como que es de Neruda* 'It's like it's Neruda's' (p. 3525).
- c. Signalling insecurity and indecision when the final vowel or final *s* is elongated. It can appear at the start of an answer or after a *como +* sentence, in structures with suspended intonation.

- d. With a recapitulative use, *pues* accompanies *bueno* (*bueno pues* ‘well, *pues*’), retaking previous information that is presented to the hearer as an argument that supports what was said by the same speaker.
- e. With a phatic use, *pues* links together what does not appear to have a natural connection. This use of *pues* is similar to the use of *o sea* (RAE 2009: 3526).

In brief, the works that focus on *pues* as a discourse marker in Peninsular Spanish acknowledge its use as an initiator of reactive responses and some also refer to aspects of modality. Nevertheless, more work is obviously needed in this area.

2.2. *Pues* in Latin American Varieties of Spanish

While attention paid to the use of *pues* with the function of a discourse marker can be traced back to works on Spanish morpho-syntax of the 1940s and 1950s (cf. Kany 1945; Flórez 1946; Toscano Mateus 1953), systematic studies started to develop in the 1990’s (see, for example, Cepeda & Poblete 1996; Poblete 1998: in relation to Chilean Spanish).⁸ At present, there is a growing body of work looking at *pues* in a range of national varieties including Bolivian (Soto Rodríguez 2013), Peruvian (Zavala 2001), Colombian (Travis 2005), Mexican Spanish (Vázquez Carranza 2013) and Ecuadorian Spanish (Olbertz 2013). We will briefly consider a

⁸ Earlier studies on other discourse markers can be found in the work of Martirena (1976), for example.

few examples of the early works before we look at the more recent, empirical studies.

Toscano Mateus (1953: 354) describes *pues* as one of the most widely used particles (*partículas*) in Ecuadorian Spanish, across the social spectrum, that functions in his view almost as an interjection. He observes that, in contrast with Peninsular Spanish, in Ecuadorian Spanish it tends to occur after, and not before the word or words that it accompanies (i.e., in post position). Finally, he lists the variants of *pues* in use in Ecuadorian Spanish at the time, including *pes*, *p's*, and *b's* in Andean Spanish, vis-à-vis the aspirated *pueh* in Coastal Spanish.

More recently, with reference to Paceño Spanish (La Paz, Bolivia), Laprade (1981) observes too the widespread use of *pues* with two variants in this case: *pues* and *ps*. He describes *ps* as a reduced form with “a strong sibilant character ... recognized as a distinctive dialectal feature by La Paz Spanish speakers themselves” (p. 215). Laprade (1981) also remarks that in Paceño Spanish “*pues* occurs almost exclusively in post position” (p. 215) which is what our results also show for both Quito and Santiago unlike Seville (see Section 4). Laprade finds a parallel with the Aymara suffix [-*ya*], which by its very nature is postposed, and which, like *pues*, may be added to nouns, verbs or particles (p. 216).⁹ Pfänder, Ennis, Soto and Villegas (2009) examine Cochabamba Spanish and consider a modal use of *pues* that they relate to the Quechua particle *ari*. Soto Rodríguez (2013), in turn, looks at conversations from a range of sources (e.g. informal

⁹ See also Calvo Pérez (2000) who suggests influence from both Aymara and Quechua in the use of final *pues*.

conversations, and formal interactions on television, radio, etc.) also in Cochabamba Spanish and considers two uses of *pues*: the standard use, pre-posed, employed to comment on what was said previously, and what he refers to as “Andean usage” (p. 93), that occurs post-posed, particularly after verbs. The variant *ps* is found in this position, conveying subjectivity. It assumes a context of familiarity and informality, denoting commitment to and responsibility with what the person claims. However, according to this author, this modal value is not exclusive to colloquial speech. It can also be found in what he refers to as the standard use of *pues* (cf. p. 93).

Cepeda and Poblete’s (1996) study of conversational markers in Chilean Spanish (Valdivia) describe *pues* and its phonological variant *poh* as turn-final markers with the main function of reinforcing what was said or commented on previously (p. 108). Cepeda and Poblete also look at prosodic features in the realization of *pues* and other conversational markers. They associate the key reinforcing function identified for turn-final markers with a certain melodic curve that conveys finality (*conclusividad*) and reassurance (*seguridad*) (p. 116).

Poblete (1998) considers *poh* as a modality marker at the textual level, a type which constitutes 13% of the markers employed in the corpus of semiformal interviews that she examined. In terms of its functions, *poh*, found in utterance-final position, is described as supporting the expression of opinions and the closing of the utterance. *Poh* was also found to co-occur, post-posed, with other modality markers with a similar function. These include, among others, *sí*, and *claro*. Finally, *poh* was

found to co-occur with other modality markers that perform a mitigating function such as *no sé (+poh)*.

Valencia Espinoza (2014) looks at *pues* and other discourse markers in spoken discourse in Santiago de Chile, identifying two main uses of *pues* in her corpus: (1) as a commentator (*comentador*) within the broader category of information-structuring markers (*estructuradores de la información*) (e.g. *Ya, pues, te quedas aquí inmediatamente*, p. 252), and (2) as a consecutive connector, within the broader category of connectors. She found a very low incidence of *pues* as a commentator in both data sets. Consecutive connectors were found to be the most frequent within the category of connectors. An observation that Valencia Espinoza makes that is relevant to our study is that in Chilean Spanish, unlike Peninsular Spanish (cf. Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999), most of the time *pues* does not appear at the start of a conversational turn, but after the first element of an utterance. In these cases it appears to function sometimes as an intensifier, an argumentative operator, a metadiscourse marker or a reformulation marker and, with a high incidence, as a modality operator (p. 253). This use, different from that of a typical discourse marker, is closer to an argumentation device as our data shows (Section 4).

In the context of studies of languages in contact, Zavala (2001) focuses on the use of *pues* among bilingual male peasants from Ayacucho (Central Peruvian Andes) on the basis of a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews. Like Laprade (1981) in the case of La Paz, she finds reduced forms of *pues* in use, namely *pe* and *pes*. She

attributes this use to Quechua influence, pointing out that Quechua is “a language that does not permit vowel sequences in its syllabic structure” (p. 1003). This explanation could also account for the reduced forms found in our Quito corpus (see Section 4.1). Regarding its position, along the lines of Laprade’s (1981) observation for Paceño Spanish, Zavala finds that *pues* only occurs in clause-final position. Again, she suggests Quechua influence in that Quechua is “an agglutinating language with a very rich morphology, where many suffixes are attached to the words to form different meanings” (p. 1004), but see Olbertz (2013) below. Concerning the functions of *pues*, she identified a few instances of standard uses of *pues* as a conjunction where it conveys causality, but mainly cases where it functions as a confirmation or clarification device, referring to what was said before.

Travis (2005) examined *pues* and other discourse markers in Colombian (Cali) Spanish, based on a corpus of naturally occurring informal conversations. Travis finds *pues* in turn-initial, turn-medial and turn-final positions. She notes its use with continuing or final intonation and identifies a series of discourse environments in which *pues* occurs which she links to different functions such as highlighting an upcoming element, marking a repair, or prefacing an answer to a question.

Vázquez Carranza (2013), in turn, takes a conversation analytic perspective on *pues* in Mexican Spanish, classifying *pues* as a sequential marker (cf. Schegloff, 1987) on the basis of the work it performs in the sequential organization of talk-in-interaction. He finds that *pues* occurs with a range of actions such as (dis)agreements and responses to *wh*- and polar questions. In agreements, for

example, *pues* is found to co-occur with *sí* (*pues sí*), indexing “some sort of obviousness on what the speaker is agreeing with” (p. 289). With respect to *pues* in disagreements, also in initial position, Vázquez Carranza highlights its interpersonal function when he indicates that it conveys “not a dramatically sharp disagreement but instead a delicate one” (p. 291). In sum, Vázquez Carranza, like other authors, pinpoints a number of functions that *pues* can perform depending on the context of its occurrence, functions that are not necessarily limited to Mexican Spanish.

Finally, Olbertz (2013) looks at the uses of *pues* and its variant *ps* (see Toscano Mateus’s (1953) *p’s*) in Salcedo, a small town in the Cotopaxi province (Andean region), based on the Corpus de Salcedo, collated in the 1970s (Muysken 1978). She observes that *pues* mostly occurs in clause-final position, with two basic meanings that are sometimes combined: to mark emphasis and to express conclusion. In the latter case, obviousness may sometimes be part of the meaning of *pues*. The uses she describes occur, according to this author almost exclusively among people of low socio-economic status in rural areas (p. 3). The results from our study (Section 4), however, show that final *pues* and its variants, albeit not necessarily the same one(s), are used in urban areas too, and not only by people from a low socioeconomic background.¹⁰ Additionally, Olbertz looks at the issue of

¹⁰ See also Placencia (1997) where examples of final *pues* can be encountered in telephone conversation exchanges among relatives and friends of middle-class background in Quito. From personal observation by the second author, the *f* variant is currently employed in Quito not only by the young but across age groups including speakers in their 50s and 60s. This is an example of an e-mail exchange among Quiteño relatives in their fifties:

Female: *El abogado debía habernos informado sobre este trámite*
 ‘Our solicitor should have told us about this paperwork’

the influence of Kichwa on *pues* as proposed by Zavala (2001) and other authors. Taking into account features of the Kichwa suffix *-mi*, she is able to show that there is no exact parallel with *pues*. For example, *-mi* shows certain restrictions in Kichwa that *pues* does not have in Spanish: *pues* can occur with an imperative, but *-mi* cannot. Also, direct evidentiality is a key feature of *-mi*, but is not present in the meaning of *pues*. Likewise, while according to Olbertz, *pues* conveys conclusion,¹¹ this is a meaning not present in Kichwa *-mi*. In brief, Olbertz concludes that Zavala's (2001) proposal is not a satisfactory explanation for the use of *pues* and its variants in Andean Spanish.

For an explanation of final *pues*, Olbertz suggests looking at the evolution of *pues* in Spanish instead. She notes in CORDE¹² similar uses of final *pues*, to convey conclusion, with a hint of insistence, akin to Salcedo uses in works corresponding to the XVI and XVII centuries. She observes a decreasing use of final *pues* in Spanish texts after the XVII century, whereas she identifies numerous cases in Hispanic American texts, specially from the XIX century onwards. All in all, Olbertz (2013) offers a valuable study that sheds light on differences in the distribution of *pues* variants vis-à-vis their position, and reinforces the conclusions we derive from our own study (Sections 4 and 5): that the position of *pues* is not a matter of absolute

Male: *Siffff*

'Yes + fffff' (meaning 'obviously' or 'I couldn't agree more').

Two examples from Facebook interactions among males in their twenties as follows: Response by male to previous turn: *deleiff ...* with *ff* added to *de ley* 'of course' for emphasis; response by another male: *sif ñaño ya es el colmo* 'yes +f brother it's too much'.

¹¹It's important to remember how close the meanings of necessary consequence and evidentiality are.

¹² CORDE: Corpus Diacrónico del Español (Diachronic Corpus of Spanish Language) .

differentiation but of predominance. The different current uses of *pues* that have been identified are all linked to the values of consequence or conclusion, particularly those where *pues* is used in final position in our data, where this form serves to reinforce the speech act that it accompanies (Sections 4.3 and 4.4).

3. Data employed and methodological issues

The present study is based on a corpus of 60 role-play interactions within each location eliciting advice-giving and complaint talk in –SD (social distance) –P (power) scenarios.¹³ These data were initially collected to examine regional variation in speech act realization (Schneider and Barron's (2008) actional level). However, it was clear from our initial analyses that the conversational nature of the talk elicited for this study, from –SD –P scenarios, meant that there were a range of interactive markers in use that could also be examined. *Pues* was one of them. It also explained why multiple instances of *pues* as an interactive marker were found while there were no occurrences of *pues* as a causal or consecutive conjunction. Indeed, the latter uses of *pues* are often linked to formal written discourse.

Participants

¹³ The same data were employed in Placencia, Fuentes and Palma (2015). The data collection involved another scenario eliciting complaints albeit in a +SD +P type of relationship (i.e., within a service encounter), which we did not include in the present study.

60 participants took part: 10 male and 10 female from three urban locations: Quito (Ecuador), Santiago (Chile) and Seville (Spain). They were undergraduate students, aged between 18 and 24, with an average age of 21.

Method

Data were collected through open role plays (Kasper & Dahl 1991) in Quito, Santiago de Chile and Seville. Three role play scenarios involving friendship relationships (i.e., -Social Distance, - Power) were used: two scenarios designed to elicit advice (scenarios 1 and 2 below), and one, to elicit a complaint (scenario 3).

Scenario 1: Illness

Someone who needs to go on a trip to attend a close relative's wedding falls ill; he/she seeks advice from a friend.

Scenario 2: Impending wedding

Someone who is about to get married discovers her partner's infidelity; he/she seeks advice from a friend.

Scenario 3: Broken laptop

Someone who borrowed a laptop from a friend and downloaded material from the Internet, inadvertently damaging the hard disk, returns the laptop to its owner.

Participants were given separate instructions for the role plays. Below is one example, translated into English, relating to Scenario 3:

Fixed participant:

Your friend lent you his/her laptop and you downloaded a programme from the Internet before returning the laptop to him/her. He/she comes to talk with you. Interact with him/her.

Other participants (10 males and 10 females):

You lend your laptop to a friend. Your friend uses it to download some programmes from the Internet and infects your laptop with a virus that erases your hard disk and you thus lose information you are not able to recover. You talk with your friend.

The advantages and limitations of using role plays in pragmatics research have been extensively documented (see, for example, Kasper 2008[2000]; Zhu 2011). A key advantage is no doubt that role plays can facilitate the gathering of comparative data since they allow for variable control. While variable control can also be achieved through other experimental methods, role plays have the advantage over standard DCTs, for example, in that the data they elicit represent “an approximation of spoken discourse” (Félix-Brasdefer 2003: 253).

With respect to limitations, Kasper (2008[2000]: 291), for example, has pointed out that it can be difficult for participants to take part in role plays in imagined contexts with “no real-life history and consequences”. Zhu (2011: 403), in turn, observes that the presence of an audience during the recording and the recording equipment “may have an impact on the acting”. In other words, the ‘naturalness’ of role play data can be brought into question. However, we regard *pues* and similar forms as interactive tools whose incidence has to do more with register (i.e., informal conversations in our case) than with any other circumstances. In this respect, we argue that role play data eliciting informal conversation is suitable for the analysis of discourse markers such as *pues* that help construct the fabric of the interaction, without being an obvious focus of attention for participants. It is particularly useful for contrastive studies such as the present one since the type of activity participants engage in can have an influence on the use of discourse markers such as *pues*. Illustrative of this is the fact that the +SD +P scenario mentioned above, that we did not include in the present study, did not elicit any instances of *pues* in the Seville corpus, only 5 in the Quito corpus, and only 21 in the Santiago data set.

4. Results

4.1. Variants of *pues* in use across the three varieties of Spanish

We identified the use of *pues* alongside various reduced forms as can be seen in the first column of Table 1 below.¹⁴ This is in line with other studies on *pues*, relating to different varieties of Spanish, that have also identified such forms, albeit not necessarily the same (cf. Cepeda & Poblete 1996; Zavala 2001, among others), as mentioned in Section 2.2.

Table 1: Incidence of *pues* and its variants across data sets

Form	Quito	Santiago	Seville
<i>Pues</i>	25 (34.72%)	1 (0.45%)	56 (39.71%)
<i>Pos</i>	1 (1.38%)	0	44 (31.20%)
<i>Po /poh</i>	0	221 (99.54%)	41 (29.07%)
<i>Ps/fs</i>	4 (5.55%)	0	0
<i>F</i>	42(58.33%)	0	0
TOTAL	72	222	141

These are some examples from our corpora.

(13) (F3, Wedding, Quito)

FP: *Ajá ya todos los preparativos el vestido y todo y no sé qué hacer ...*

‘Uh uh all the preparation [for the wedding], the dress and everything [is ready] and I don’t know what to do ...’

¹⁴ Our analysis did not include occurrences of *pues* produced by the fixed participants. As remarked in Placencia, Fuentes and Palma (2015: 553) study, including the language of the fixed participant in the analysis (i.e., their production of *pues* in this case) “can distort the results as it is the same person using certain forms across interactions”.

F3: *Nof (.) es que sí es que se supone que te vas a casar con esa persona o sea no no no (.) [yo de ti o sea nof (.) ...*

‘That’s not right+f(.) the thing is if you expect that if you are going to marry that person I mean that’s not on (.) [if I were you I mean that’s not right+f...’

(14) (F2, Illness, Santiago)

FP: *((laugh)) Sí (.) no, yo creo que voy a ir [vale perro por el consejo*

‘Yes (.) no, I think that I will go [okay mate thanks for the advice’

F2: *Sí po. Tení que ir*

‘Yes *po*. You have to go’

(15) (M7, Wedding, Seville)

FP: *Eso digo yo (.) y ahora qué hago?*

‘That’s what I’m saying (.) and what should I do now?’

M7: *Pues si te engaña (.) no sigas con la boda*

‘Pues if he’s cheating on you (.) don’t go ahead with the wedding’

As can also be seen in Table 1 above, the full form *pues* has the highest incidence in Seville with 40%, and the lowest in Santiago, with less than 1%. Concerning reduced forms, *pos* occurs in Quito and Seville, but not in Santiago; *po /poh* in Santiago and Seville, but not in Quito, and, *ps/fs* and *f* only in Quito.

Finally, in terms of overall frequencies, our results show that *pues* and its variants occurred considerably more frequently in the Santiago corpus (with 222 instances), compared to the Seville corpus (with 141). The Quito corpus displayed the lowest incidence with only 72 instances. Interestingly, our study of nominal address forms in the three varieties, based on the same corpus (Placencia, Fuentes and Palma 2015), showed similar results for Santiago, with 202 instances. Quito came second with 140 instances, whereas Seville displayed the lowest incidence with 111 instances. Based on these two sets of results, in informal conversations, Santiagueños appear to employ devices that operate at the interpersonal level with a higher frequency than Quiteños and Sevillanos. However, a wider range of devices would need to be examined to arrive at more definitive conclusions, since each variety may have different forms in use that may be more frequently employed than others.

With respect to Soto Rodríguez's observation that shortened forms of *pues* are linked to colloquial speech, our findings, based solely on this kind of speech, support his claim. However, we would need to examine the use of *pues* in other situational contexts to draw any definite conclusions. On the other hand, in relation to the position of shortened forms, as in Soto Rodríguez's (2013) study, they appear post-posed in the Quito and Santiago corpora. However, in the Seville corpus, *po*, *pos*, and *pues* appear in different positions and seem to be used interchangeably. Summing up, a larger scale study would be needed to examine how different forms

or *pues* are employed in different registers and whether they occur in pre- or post-posed positions.

4.2. The distribution of *pues* and its variants according to situation

Macrosocial factors such as age, region, and socioeconomic background often interact with situational factors. We looked at the type of situation as a possible factor influencing the higher or lower occurrence of *pues* and its variants, but no clear conclusions could be arrived at. As can be seen in Figure 1, the highest number occurred in the laptop situation in Seville, but in the wedding situation in Quito. In Santiago, on the other hand, similar frequencies were employed across situations. The differences encountered are statistically significant ($24,9115 > 9.4877$).

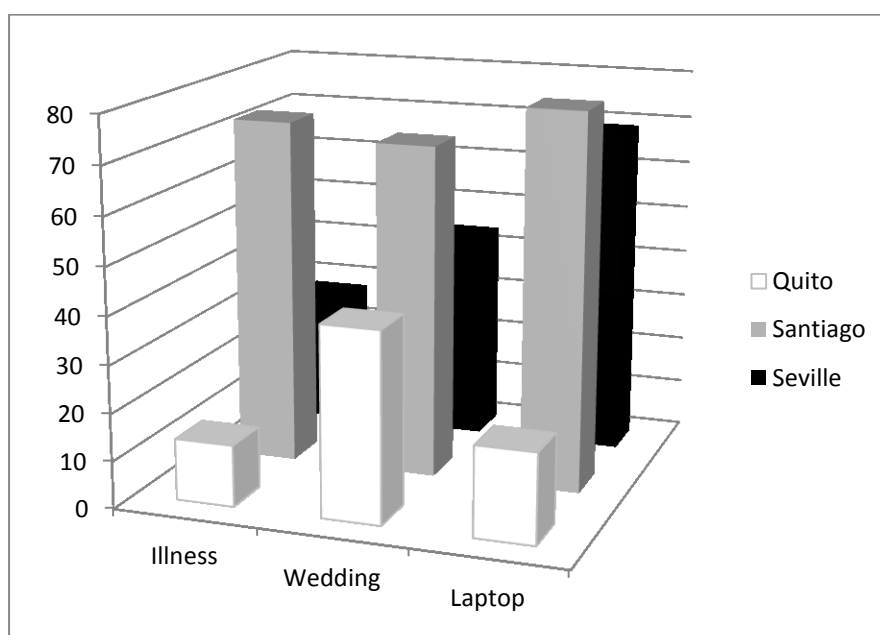


Figure 1: The distribution of *pues* and its variants according to situation

4.3. Turn / act position(s) occupied by *pues* and its variants

The next step in our analysis was to look at the position of *pues* and its variants in the conversational turn as well as within acts or moves in a given turn¹⁵. Like other discourse markers (cf. Fuentes Rodríguez 1987, 1996, 2009; Schiffrin 1987; Pons Bordería 1998, 2014; Portolés Lázaro 1998) *pues* can appear in various positions: sentence initial, medial and final. However, we think it is necessary to go beyond the turn given that *pues* emerged in our study with functions linked to position both within an act and a turn (see 4.4). Therefore, in our analysis we consider the position of *pues* in a given turn and within an individual act in a given turn, as Pons Bordería (2014) does.¹⁶

Porroche Ballesteros (2002: 42-44) proposes considering, in addition to turn positions, what she labels 'exchange initial' position to refer to cases where a given discourse marker occurs at the beginning of an exchange, that is, where it functions as an exchange opener. This is a position that did not emerge in our data. This, however, may be attributed to the nature of the role play scenarios employed.

¹⁵ For these notions we draw on both CA work on turn-taking (cf. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) as well as speech act theory (Searle 1969). As such, a turn may contain various speech acts and *pues* marks both turns and speech acts.

¹⁶ He employs, however, Briz Gómez and VAL.ES.CO's (2003) system of units for the analysis of conversation that puts together elements from the conversation analytic tradition and the Geneva school of pragmatics with the notions of dialogue, exchange, turn/intervention, act, and subact (see also Briz 2014). Estellés and Pons (2014) use this system to analyze the position of discourse markers, and Pons Bordería (2014) considers initial, medial and final positions for each of these units.

We identified the following positions for *pues* and its variants in our corpora: turn initial, act initial,¹⁷ turn medial, and act final. We did not come across any cases of turn final. In turn initial position, exemplified by (15) above, *pues* initiates the turn, forming part of a reactive act (Wunderlich 1980). In this position, *pues* serves as a cohesive device that links the reactive response to the previous turn.

On the other hand, in act initial position, *pues* may or may not introduce a turn. Example (16) illustrates a case where it does not. The turn in question contains two acts: a request for confirmation followed by advice-giving. *Pues* introduces advice giving.

(16) (M2 Wedding, Seville)

FP: *el problema es que me engaña*

‘the problem is that he is cheating on me’

M2: *Ah sí? (.) pues tía no te cases ...*

‘Oh really? (.) *pues* [+familiar form of address] don’t get married ...’

Example (17) below illustrates turn medial position where *pues* mainly serves as a floor-holding mechanism.

(17) (M3, Wedding, Seville)

¹⁷ It should be noted that turn initial implies act initial but not viceversa. This is why we have kept turn initial and act initial as separate categories.

F3: *[yo no lo perdonaría] Vamos yo: pasaría de de: seguir con esa persona porque si realmente me quiere pos yo sabes?, yo no la engaño*

'[I wouldn't forgive him] I mean I: I'd stop being with that person because if he really loves me *pos* you know? I wouldn't be unfaithful to him'

Finally, example (18) below illustrates the use of (a variant of) *pues* in act final position which can be, but is not in this case, also in turn final position.

(18) (F5, Illness, Santiago)

FP: *Sí po (.) ya bacán (.) vale (.) vale por tu consejo*

'Yes *po* (.) yeah super (.) okay (.) thank you for the advice'

F5: *Ya po (.) pásalo bien*

'Okay *po* (.) have a good time'

In terms of similarities and differences across data sets, interestingly, we found turn and act initial positions only in the Seville corpus, and act final, only in the Quito and Santiago corpora, as can be seen in Table 2 below. On the other hand, instances of turn medial position were found across all three varieties. Act final, as can be seen, had the highest incidence in Quito (87.5%) and Santiago (72.52%), whereas in the Seville corpus, act initial had the highest incidence at roughly 50%, followed by turn initial (35.46%). On the other hand, turn medial had the highest incidence in the Santiago corpus (27.47%), followed by the Seville corpus (14.89%),

with the lowest incidence found in the Quiteño data set (12.5%). The four positions identified are, in turn, linked to specific functions, as we will see in the next section.

Table 2: Position of *pues* and its variants

Position	Quito	Santiago	Seville
A.Turn initial	0	0	50 (35.46%)
B.Act initial	0	0	70 (49.64%)
C.Turn medial	9 (12.5%)	61 (27.47%)	21 (14.89%)
D.Act final	63 (87.5%)	161 (72.52%)	0
Total	72	222	141

The results regarding Quito and Santiago are in line with studies on other varieties of Latin American Spanish such as Peruvian (Zavala 2001) and Bolivian Spanish (Laprade 1981) where act final position has been identified as predominant.

4.4. Functions of *pues* and its variants according to their position

We identified two basic functions for each of the four positions of *pues* and its variants, as follows.

- A. Turn initial {
 Introduces a reactive turn
 Starts an antagonistic response

In this position, the first basic function of *pues* is the cohesive or interactive function since *pues* serves to introduce a reactive turn. It is dialogic in nature as it helps with the development of the conversation and marks the start of a turn. Instances of this function can be seen, for example, in expressions of agreement with an opinion (19) or course of action (20).

(19) (F9, Laptop, Seville)

FP: *Eso te puede salir por un pico (.) eh?*

'That may cost you (.) you know?'

F9: *Pues sí (.) la verdad es que sí*

'Pues yes (.) that's true'

(20) (M2, Wedding, Seville)

FP: *Qué qué voy a hacer? que anulo la boda (.) ((que la anulo))*

'You're asking me what I'm going to do? I'll cancel the wedding / ((I'll cancel it))'

M2: *Pos haces bien (.) que le den por culo*

'Pos you're doing the right thing (.) he can fuck off'

The response that *pues* introduces may also be a confrontational one in which case *pues* has the effect of intensifying the confrontational stance adopted by the speaker. An instance of this can be seen in the following example where *pues* introduces a complaint:

(21) (M2, Laptop, Seville)

FP: *No (.) en serio (.) no (.) verá (.) yo me bajé el programa pero el ordenador estaba bien. no sé*

'No (.) I mean it (.) no (.) you see (.) I downloaded the program and the computer was fine. I don't know'

M2: *Pues te aseguro que esto cuando yo lo he encendi(d)o ya estaba to(do) borra(d)o ...*

'Pues I can assure you that when I turned it on everything had already been deleted ...'

Pues, in other words, in addition to having a discourse linking function, helps to set the antagonistic stance of the speaker in a clear and explicit way. There are numerous instances of this use in the Seville data, as will be shown below, but no instances of turn initial position of any kind for the Quito or Santiago corpora.

B. Act initial { Operates as a closing device

Supports the act it accompanies (acts as an intensifier)

In this position, *pues* has two main functions: it operates as a closing device, as illustrated by (22) below, and it supports the act it accompanies (see (19) and (20) above). Instances of this type were found only in the Seville corpus.

(22) (M3, Laptop, Seville)

FP: *Ahí nos vemos.*

‘See you later’

M3: *Venga / **pos** nos vemos*

‘Okay / *pos* see you later’

As a closing device, the metadiscursive value of *pues* stands out. It can combine with various forms in addition to *nos vemos* ‘see you later’; *pos nada* ‘*pos* nothing’; *pos vale* ‘*pos* okay’; *pos ya está* ‘*pos* that’s it’ and *pos bueno* ‘*pos* okay’.

Regarding its supportive function, in reactive turns such as (23 below) *pues* conveys obviousness or a logic consequence, a meaning derived from its use as a consecutive conjunction. As such, one of its functions can be very close to that of an intensifier. This is a function that is described as conveying emphasis in some works (see Poblete 1998; Olbertz 2013, among others; Vázquez Carranza 2013).

(23) (M2, Laptop, Seville)

FP: *Cómo que no / yo / yo sí lo he encendi(d)o*

'What do you mean you couldn't // I did manage to switch it on'

M4: *Po claro / y cuando lo apagaste ya no te volvió a encender*

'Po of course (.) and after you turned it off it wouldn't start again'

C. Turn medial { Acts as a continuer / an anaphoric (after causals/conditionals)
Acts as a phatic token

In this position, *pues* serves two main functions: it acts as a continuer, particularly with conditionals or causatives, and as a phatic token. Instances of this function were found across data sets. Example (15) above illustrates the use of *pues* with a conditional, and (24) and (25) below, its use as a phatic token.

(24) (F3, Wedding, Seville)

F3: *... habla con él (.) y ya pos luego pos ya eso tú decides*

'... talk to him (.) and okay *pos* then *pos* you decide then'

(25) (M10, Laptop, Quito)

M10: *... y me dijo e la computadora tiene:: o sea tiene un daño en sistema(.) y:: ya pues o sea yo te di así en buena onda*

'... and he told me that the laptop ha::s that is has a system failure (.) a::nd okay *pues* the thing is I lent it to you meaning well'

Concerning *pues* as a continuer, it can be regarded as originally an adverb given its function as a linking continuer (Montolío Durán 1991). It has a phoric value that refers the listener to preceding content. On the other hand, as a phatic token, it helps the speaker keep the floor as he/she thinks of what to say.

D. Act final { Supports the act it accompanies (acts as an intensifier)
Operates as a closing device

In relation to *pues* in act final position, two main functions can be discerned: it supports the act it accompanies, including for example, the expression of (dis)agreement, advice giving and suggestions, well wishing, etc. (as discussed for act initial position above), and it operates as a closing device (again, as discussed for act initial position above). Instances of this type were found only in the Quito and Santiago corpora. Example (14) above illustrates the use of *pues* in act final position where it serves to reinforce disagreement, as already suggested; *pues* in (14) also above reinforces the expression of agreement whereas in (26) below, it reinforces the speaker's challenge which precedes his accusation in the turn that follows. On the other hand (18) above and (27) below exemplify the use of *pues* as a closing device in Santiagueño and Quiteño Spanish, respectively.

(26) (M7, Laptop, Quito)

M7: *Qué fue loca oye qué paso con mi computadora pues?*

'How are things [familiar address term] listen what happened with my laptop
pues?'

FP: *Qué computadora?*

'What computer?'

M7: *La computadora que te preste y me la devuelves CAGADAZA no sirve [no se
*prende**

'The one you borrowed from me you returned it fucked up it does not work [it
cannot be started'

(27) (F4, Illness, Quito)

FP: *Ya voy hacer eso ya*

'Okay I'll do that okay'

F4: *Bueno pues (.) te me despido (.) que tengas un buen (.) día[chao*

'All right *pues* (.) I'll say good bye (.) have a nice (.) day [bye'

As a closing device in Quiteño Spanish, *pues* can co-occur with various forms, as in *bueno pues* above, or *dale pues* 'okay pues' and *(entonces) ya pues* 'okay (then) pues'. Likewise, in Santiagueño Spanish *pues* also co-occurs with *ya* 'okay' as illustrated in (18) above and (28) below.

(28) (F1, Illness, Santiago)

FP: *Ya po vale, besos (.) [cuídate*

'Okay *po*, kisses (.) [take care'

F1: *[Ya po besos (.) cha::o*

'[Okay *po* kisses (.) by::e'

Concerning the incidence of these different functions across varieties, as mentioned in Section 4.3, we found a preponderance of act initial position for our Seville corpus, and, of act final for our Quito and Santiago corpus. As can be seen in Table 3 below, in both positions, the supportive function of *pues* stands out in the three data sets albeit in act initial position in Seville (41.84%), and in act final position in Quito (75%) and Santiago (67.11%). In Seville, the function of introducing a reactive turn which can be an antagonistic response also has a relatively high incidence, with a combined 35.45%. Finally, *pues* as a continuer and as a phatic token has a higher incidence in Santiago (18.01% and 9.45%), compared to both Quito (8.33% and 4.16%) and Seville (9.21% and 5.67%).

Table 3: Incidence of the functions of *pues* across varieties

Position	Functions	Quito	Santiago	Seville
Turn initial	Introduces a reactive turn	0	0	17 (12.05%)
	Starts an antagonistic response	0	0	33 (23.40%)
Act initial	Operates as a closing device	0	0	11 (7.80%)

	Supports the act it accompanies (acts as an intensifier)	0	0	59 (41.84%)
Turn medial	Acts as a continuer / an anaphoric (after causal/conditionals)	6 (8.33%)	40 (18.01%)	13 (9.21%)
	Acts as a phatic token	3 (4.16%)	21 (9.45%)	8 (5.67%)
Act final	Operates as a closing device	9 (12.5%)	12 (5.40%)	0
	Supports the act it accompanies (acts as an intensifier)	54 (75%)	149 (67.11%)	0

In brief, in the informal context examined across data sets, that is, among participants who are familiar with each other, *pues* appears to fulfil a mostly supportive function as an intensifier of the act it occurs with, particularly in Quito and Santiago. In Seville, it appears to fulfil a wider range of functions, including that of a connector. As such, these results lead us to reconsider previous characterisations of *pues* in that, so far, only its uses as a connector have been highlighted in the literature. Our contention is that its uses as an operator also need to be considered (see next section).

4.5 Functions of *pues* as a connector or as an operator across varieties

The last question we aimed to address is how the uses of *pues* and its variants in the three varieties examined can be categorized overall. Our results provide evidence of the polyfunctionality of *pues*, with two main categories emerging: *pues* as a

discourse marker in its connective function (i.e., *pues* as a connector), and *pues* as an operator, that is as an intensifier, supporting the act it accompanies (see Section 2.1). The latter is closer to Fraser's (2009) notion of a pragmatic marker, more specifically, his category of commentary markers. These markers "signal a message separate from but in the nature of a comment on the basis message" (p.4). Their function as intensifiers is closer to that of assessment markers (e.g. fortunately, sadly) than discourse markers. Table 4 below summarizes our findings in this respect, listing the categories that *pues* represents, closely linked to their function and position.

Table 4: *Pues* as connector and operator

Position	Functions	Category	Location
Turn initial	-Introduces a reactive turn (Which may be an antagonistic response)	Connector	Seville
Act initial	-Operates as a closing device	Connector	Seville
	-Supports act it accompanies	Operator	
Turn medial	-Acts as a continuer / an anaphoric -Acts as a phatic token	Connector	Quito, Santiago Seville
Act final	-Operates as a closing device	Connector	Quito

	-Supports act it accompanies	Operator	Santiago
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As such, *pues* in the contexts examined is used more frequently as an operator in Quito and Santiago, and as a connector in Seville. These results are summarized in Figure 2.

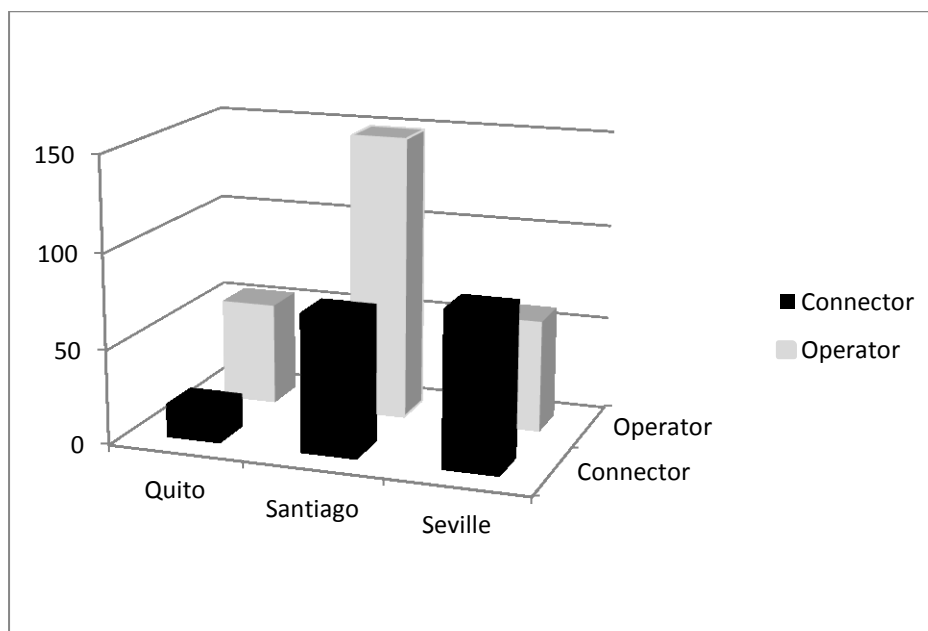


Figure 2: *Pues* as a connector and operator across varieties

5. Summary and conclusions

In this paper we examined the use of *pues* and its variants in contexts of familiarity among participants across three varieties of Spanish. Our results confirm the

fruitfulness of adopting a variational perspective, since it has enabled us to identify both formal and functional similarities and differences, the latter linked to the position of *pues* in a given turn or act, across data sets.

Starting with the question of form, we found that reduced forms were commonly used in the three varieties –something that could be expected given the context of familiarity presented in the role play scenarios. However, there was some variation across varieties concerning the reduced forms employed.

With respect to the incidence of *pues* and its variants across data sets, overall, these forms were more frequently employed in Santiago, compared to Seville and Quito. This is in line with results on a study on address forms in the same varieties (Placencia, Fuentes and Palma 2015). Exploration of a wider range of discourse markers across the three varieties (and other varieties of Spanish) would help us identify further features of similarity and differentiation in this area across varieties of Spanish. For example, the Quiteño corpus displays the occurrence of the particle *ve* (literally, ‘see’ or ‘you see’) in act final position with greetings, for example: *qué fue ve* ‘how are things *ve*’. This form fulfils an interpersonal function that may have features in common with act final *pues* in some contexts.

Region interacts with other macrosocial as well as situational factors. In a future study it would be useful to examine possible variation in the use of *pues* according to the sex of the participants, for example, whether males employ *pues* and its variants more frequently than women or viceversa. Concerning situation, it was found to play a role, particularly in the Quito and Seville corpus, *pues* and its

variants occurring more frequently in Quito with the wedding situation, and with the laptop situation in Seville.

Regarding position, some shared features and some differences across data sets overall could be observed. For example, turn medial position was found across data sets. By contrast, turn and act initial position was only found in the Seville corpus. Also these positions had the highest incidence in the Seville corpus. Act final was found in the Quito and Santiago corpora, but not in Seville. This position had the highest incidence in the Quito and Santiago data sets. All in all, our study has shown that the position of discourse markers such as *pues* is not as free as has traditionally been regarded in the literature and, also, that it is important to distinguish between turn and act in the characterization of discourse markers.

As far as functions are concerned, providing support to the act accompanied, that is, emphasizing it or strengthening it, stands out across data sets; however, there is a relatively higher incidence of this function in Quito and Santiago. On the other hand, starting an antagonistic response is also a function of *pues* that has a relatively high incidence in Seville, but is absent from the Quito and Santiago corpora. Other functions identified include the use of *pues* as a closing device across data sets, albeit in act initial position in Seville, and act final position in Quito and Santiago. Additionally, *pues* and its variants were found to occur as continuers or phatic tokens in turn/act medial position across varieties. All in all, the use of *pues* with its interactive value in the introduction of responses stands out in Seville, while the supportive function of *pues* predominates in Quito and Santiago.

Finally, our analysis of the functions of *pues* and its variants across varieties has revealed the close interconnection between position and discursive function, and hence, the importance of distinguishing between operators and connectors, paving the way for future studies. *Pues* was found to occur as both a connector and a discourse marker across varieties; however, we found a clear preponderance of *pues* as an operator in Quito and Santiago, and of *pues* as a connector in Seville. As such, these two categories have proved to be very valuable tools for analysis.

Appendix

Transcription conventions employed (adapted from Jefferson 1984/2004)

:	Indicates prolongation of the immediately prior sound.
?	Marks rising intonation.
,	Marks sustained intonation.
.	Marks falling intonation.
!	Indicates exclamatory tone.
WORD	Capitals indicate raised volume.
(.)	Indicates a brief interval (\pm a tenth of a second) within or between utterances.
(0.0)	Indicates elapsed time by tenths of seconds.
()	Denotes unintelligible text.
(word)	Denotes doubt about the accuracy of the transcribed text.

- (()) Contains transcriber descriptions.
- [Indicates the beginning of overlapping talk
- ... Marks the occurrence of preceding or subsequent talk, not included in the transcription.
- . Indicates the occurrence of ensuing turns that have been omitted.
- FP: Stands for fixed participant in the study (either Male or Female)
- M: Stands for male (non-fixed) participant in the study.
- F: Stands for female (non-fixed) participant in the study.
- .

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