

# Gender in Context: Features and Factors in Men's and Women's Speech in Rural Puerto Rico<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Introduction

At the outset it is important to clarify the use of the phrase “gender in context” in the title above, and in this study. It will not refer to gender acculturation in the rural context, or to the performance of gender in discourse. Rather, it will refer to the examination of gender as a factor in the context of a variety of features and a number of factors to provide a broader view of the place of gender in relation to dialectal variation and change, in this case, in the Spanish of the mountainous region of west-central Puerto Rico.

## 2. Features and Factors

Sociolinguists study a wide variety of features, or variables, in the languages and dialects with which they work; they may be lexical, phonological or grammatical, or features of discourse or of code selection. William Labov, in *Principles of linguistic change* (2001: 263), observes that the effects of social factors, including gender, “... take different forms for different types of features: stable sociolinguistic variables, and features involving change from above and change from below.” In the sense used by Labov, change from above introduces features of which there is conscious awareness, and change from below occurs when conscious awareness is lacking. Labov (2001: 266) and Peter Trudgill (2000: 27) also distinguish between prestige features and stigmatized forms. In *Principles of linguistic change* (2001: 321) Labov writes: “In adopting new prestige features more rapidly than men, and in reacting more rapidly against the use of stigmatized forms, women are the chief agents of differentiation, responding more rapidly than men to changes in the ... status of linguistic variables.” Another common distinction that has been made by Labov (2001: 196) and also by Carmen Silva-Corvalán in *Sociolingüística: Teoría y análisis* (1989: 68) is between features characterized as sociolinguistic indicators, markers, and stereotypes, that is, features that distinguish social groupings but of which there is little awareness, features that distinguish social groupings and to which populations are sensitive, and features associated, rightly or wrongly, as defining qualities of social groups.

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Sociolinguists work with a range of factors as well as linguistic features. Linguistic variation that is subject to social constraints occurs in a setting of linguistic processes that may involve positioning, whether phonological or syntactic, grammatical categorization, grammatical or discourse function, or some combination of these. Social correlations with variation may be geographical or involve groups within a single community. They may also be stylistic, defined in relation to more or less formal or casual speech, as in the early work of Labov (1973: 70-109), or situational, defined as appropriate with different categories of people or in particular social interactions, as in the work modeled by Joshua Fishman (1964) and John Gumperz (1985).

In *Sociolingüística: Teoría y análisis* (1989: 68) Silva-Corvalán also distinguishes social characteristics, or factors, as either “*adscritas*,” or “*adquiridas*,” that is, given at birth (such as age, sex, and race) or resulting from life experience (such as education level, occupation, or network group). In actuality, a factor such as age, or generation, group may be both – combining an age cohort with its experience during a given period of social history.

### 3. Gender

In *Principles of linguistic change* (2001: 263), Labov suggests that “Given the very general interaction of gender with social class, [we should expect] ... that the route by which ... [gender] categorization affects language is mediated through [other] social factors.” That is, gender as a factor typically does not act alone but rather in association with other social factors such as age, class, and ethnic or network groupings. In discussing the Northern Cities vowel shift in US English, Penny Eckert (1988) suggests that the interaction of gender and other social factors may not occur at all stages of change. She suggests that the female advantage may occur in later stages of the shift, while early stages may be sensitive to other, gender-neutral factors. It is also possible that cases of variation and change are not subject to gender conditioning at all.

It is, however, another assertion made by Penny Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet that may capture the theme of the present study. Eckert and McConnell are recognized for outlining a range of possibilities for gender distinction in language in their book *Language and Gender* (2003). Nevertheless in the book (2003: 123) they also write:

“Focusing on what’s different between men and women, ignoring the large preponderance of behavior that is the same, gives the impression that men’s and women’s concerns are overwhelmingly different ... it elevates a proportional difference at the margins to something resembling an overall difference.”

Eckert and McConnell, here, are actually writing about thematic distinctions in discourse, but their assertion may be just as true, or more, with respect to the areas of dialectal variation and change.

Writing in her article “Gender and sociolinguistic variation” in Coates (1998: 66), Eckert also suggests that “it has been common practice to generalize on the basis of observations in a restricted population, and it has also been common practice to interpret gross statistical gender differences as reflecting pure gender effect.” It might also be added that it has been common practice to generalize regarding gender differences on the basis of the study of a single restricted feature and of statistical correlations with the selected feature’s use.

Within Spanish sociolinguistics there have been many meaningful studies of gender differences focusing on individual features, including Fontanella de Weinberg’s study of final  $-\underline{s}$  in Bahía Blanca, Argentina (Fontanella de Weinberg 1973); López Morales’ study of the lateralization of  $-\underline{r}$  in San Juan, Puerto Rico (López Morales 1983); my own study of the  $-\underline{u}$  in Ucieda, in northern Spain (Holmquist 1985); Rissel’s study of the assibilation of  $-\underline{r}$  in San Luis Potosí, Mexico (Rissel 1989); and Silva-Corvalán’s study of pleonastic clitics in Santiago, Chile (Silva-Corvalán 1981). However, studies focusing on a variety of features from the perspectives of a number of factors, including gender, are more limited. Broader studies such as those of Henrietta Cedergren (1980) in Panama City and Humberto López Morales (1983) in San Juan do include gender in the study of a variety of features and factors, but without gender as the guiding theme, and usually with a focus exclusively on phonological features.

The goals of the present study, then, will be: 1) to demonstrate that although specific differences are present in the sample of men’s and women’s speech examined they are not all-encompassing; in

fact what may be more remarkable are the similarities, and 2) to do this by looking at a number of feature groups from the perspectives of several factors, with a central or unifying focus on gender.

#### 4. The Community of Castañer

Fieldwork for this study took place in and around the town of Castañer, which is situated below Monte Membrillo and Sillas de Calderón, two of the highest peaks in west-central Puerto Rico, in the middle of the richest coffee growing region on the island. Castañer is situated between Lares and Adjuntas, two larger municipal centers, and is approximately two and a half hours from San Juan by car.

The general social and historical interest of the community of Castañer is certainly greater than its sociolinguistic interest, which is significant. Although small, approximately 3000 people, and until recently very remote from San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez, the population centers on the island, the history of Castañer is intimately linked to the larger history of Puerto Rico. There is a strong independent tradition associated with the mountains of west-central Puerto Rico, and Castañer in particular. The single armed insurrection against Spanish rule known as the *Grito de Lares* departed from the house of Manuel Rojas on the outskirts of Castañer and occupied the municipal building in Lares, if only for a few brief days in 1868. Lolita Lebrón, a Castañer native, and a small group of *nacionalistas* several of whom were also from Castañer attacked members of the U.S. House of Representatives when they opened fire from the balcony of the House chamber in Washington, D.C. in 1954. And, in 1995 the bandit Toño Bicicleta, who had become legendary in Puerto Rico for eluding authority for decades, was captured and killed on a coffee farm above the community of Castañer.

The town of Castañer has nevertheless also had a very strong association with the U.S. It was built beginning in 1936 on land that was part of Hacienda Castañer as a project of the Puerto Rico Redevelopment Administration with support from the Roosevelt Administration (the hacienda itself was built in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on land that previously belonged to hundreds of small farmers). The hospital and high school of Castañer, in both cases the first in the interior of the island, were built in the 1940s with support from the Church of the Brethren and other pacifist groups from the U.S. The association with the U.S. is reflected as well in the fact that many of the males of the Castañer region, beginning as far back as World War I, have served in the U.S. military.

Connections between the mountainous interior and the coast have been commercial, originally in the form of mule trains that carried the coffee to coastal markets and shipping points, and they have been for purposes of education, with veterans initially travelling to the coast to study under the GI bill after World War II, and for purposes of employment in the increasingly active manufacturing centers of the coast beginning in the 1940s and 50s.

#### 5. Methods

My project in Castañer began in 1993 and has continued with regular visits. In the course of the project, a number of different informant samples were developed, one of which will be drawn upon here. This is the base sample of 60 individuals, including 30 men and 30 women; each gender group is subdivided into three generation groups of 10 members each; and each 10-member generation group of men and women includes 5 with closed network ties within the community and 5 with more open links to the outside world.

The generation, or age, groups are sociological generations: the oldest, 65 and above, grew up during the time of the hacienda; the middle group, 40-64, grew up during the period of construction of the town of Castañer and the founding of its institutions; and the youngest, 39 and below, grew up with Castañer, its schools, hospitals, and the local consumers, savings, and health cooperatives that supported life in the community already in existence. Closed and open network groups have been indexed here following the model of Milroy (1987); they are based on criteria including time spent in and outside of Castañer and the highlands; membership in local organizations (churches and cooperatives); educational experience (primary, secondary, and post-secondary, with post-secondary requiring study outside of Castañer); and participation in the agricultural economy, at least in the form of picking coffee during harvest season.

Data, here, are drawn from recordings made between 1993 and 1997 of semi-directed conversations focusing on topics: personal and family histories, the churches, the schools, the cooperatives, coffee-growing, and relations between Castañer and the surrounding “municipios” and between the interior and the coast, and Puerto Rico and *Estados Unidos*. My role as investigator was facilitated by the fact that the prior presence of volunteers in the hospital and the schools made the presence of a Spanish speaker from the U.S. very normal, by the fact that I stayed with a local family, and by the fact that I was frequently accompanied by my young son on my visits to Castañer and that together we participated in community events.

Data analysis is based on the transliteration of the texts of the semi-directed conversations, identification of variables and variants in the texts and on tape (by means of impressionistic phonetic transcription often based on repeated listening for phonological features), codification of variants and data entry, and statistical analysis and interpretation. A decision made to simplify the task of analysis at the outset by working with the sample of 30 men first, in part because the men’s interviews were finished somewhat earlier than the women’s, led to the question – How different or similar might the results be when the data from the women were developed subsequently as a completely separate analysis, often through repeated listening to individual items of large data sets? Would patterns of use developed in the two analyses demonstrate that both the men and the women were from the same small community in rural Puerto Rico?

## 6. Stable Sociolinguistic Variables

First to be considered will be three long-term stable sociolinguistic variables, which may be considered markers or even stereotypes of regional speech. They involve the maintenance of high-final  $-\underline{u}$  and  $-\underline{i}$ , and the velar long  $\underline{r}$  that distinguishes the speech of Puerto Rico from that of other Spanish-speaking areas. The concentration of these features in the mountainous western interior is one of the things that led Tomás Navarro Tomás in *El español en Puerto Rico* (1948), based on dialectological research done in 1927 and 1928, to characterize this region as one of the most linguistically archaic, or conservative, on the island, and in the case of the vowels to associate usage in this region with origins in Galicia and Asturias, in northern Spain. In a popular saying that almost every Puerto Rican can quote, national folklore associates final  $-\underline{i}$ , in particular, with “*la lechi de poti que se toma en Lari* [Lares].” Navarro Tomás (1948: 48-49) described final high  $-\underline{i}$  and  $-\underline{u}$  as being particularly frequent after high tonic vowels, as in *picu* or *dulci*, and after palatal consonants, as in *mayu* and *nochi*, and even more so after combinations of the two, as in *muchu* and *niñu*.

Velar long  $\underline{r}$  was described by Navarro Tomás (1948: 95) as being most deeply rooted in “... *las alturas del oeste de la isla, retirados reductos de la tradición jíbara*,” that is, in this mountainous region in which Castañer is found. In his study, *Estratificación social del español de San Juan de Puerto Rico*, Humberto Lopéz Morales (1983: 145) also associates the velarization of  $\underline{r}$  with rural origins and finds it statistically more prevalent in word-initial position than in word-interior position, as in *rosa* vs. *arroz*. I have found more statistically significant effects for occurrence in stressed and unstressed syllables.

Here, effects will be presented in the form of frequency rates given as percentages in correlation with specific constraints, and Varbrul weights (or values) representing the strength of constraints when examined in combinations of multiple factors. For the (o>u) and (e>i) variables these analyses are based on 120 sequential tokens per speaker, 60 from the first half hour of the interview and 60 from the second half hour. The data for velarization, (rr>x), are based on all available tokens. As perhaps should be expected but remains to be confirmed, Table 1 indicates that the constraints on high-final vowels seen as frequencies shown as percentages and Varbrul weights reflecting the effects of a factor in combination with other, in this case phonological, grammatical, and discourse factors used in the study, are very similar for men and women for the two vowel features.

**Table 1:** High Word-final Vowels:  
(o>u) and (e>i) by Preceding Tonic Vowel  
for Men and Women

	(o>u)		(e>i)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Frequency Rates				
Non-high	19%	21%	13%	15%
High Glide	20%	27%	18%	28%
High	41%	45%	42%	41%
Total N	910	1025	666	739
%	25%	28%	18%	21%
Overall Tokens	3600	3600	3600	3600
Varbrul Weights				
Non-high	.43	.42	.42	.41
High Glide	.46	.51	.52	.65
High	.66	.65	.75	.75

High-tonic vowels promote high-final vowels with very similar frequencies and weights in both samples, and non-high tonic vowels inhibit high-final vowels nearly identically both in terms of frequencies and weights, while high glides in the preceding tonic syllable are in an intermediate range, although in this position the results for the high-final vowels are somewhat higher for women.<sup>2</sup>

Results for high-final  $-u$  and  $-i$  by positioning following immediately preceding palatal and non-palatal consonants may be seen in Table 2. As found by Navarro Tomás for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, preceding palatal (or high) consonants strongly favor following high vowels. In this case, the frequency rates for men and women for the position following non-palatals are very similar although the percentage of use following palatals for women is higher. The Varbrul weights for this factor's effects in combination with all linguistic factors used in the study indicate that the effects are actually virtually identical for both sexes.

**Table 2:** High Word-final Vowels:  
(o>u) and (e>i) by Preceding Consonant  
for Men and Women

	(o>u)		(e>i)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Frequency Rates				
Non-palatal	24%	27%	18%	20%
Palatal	44%	52%	46%	56%
Varbrul Weights				
Non-palatal	.49	.48	.49	.49
Palatal	.69	.72	.85	.88

<sup>2</sup> The linguistic factors included in the Varbrul analysis for high-final vowels are: positioning after high vowels, high glides, and non-high vowels; positioning after palatal and non-palatal consonants; morphological categorization a nominals, verbals, and other; occurrence in the first or second half hour of conversation; and occurrence in brief and longer turns.

Results for word-final high vowels and interview position, in the first and second half hours, appear in Table 3, below. The percentage rates suggest that where conscious attention may be higher, in the first half hour, both men and women may limit dialect usage, but only slightly. The Varbrul weights for this factor in combination with others indicate, however, that these distinctions are too small to be significant with one exception, the shift from o to u for women in the first and second half hours. The findings for the genders are, once again, similar for both rates and weights.

**Table 3:** High Word-final Vowels:  
(o>u) and (e>i) by Interview Position  
for Men and Women

	(o>u)		(e>i)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Frequency Rates				
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	23%	25%	18%	20%
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	27%	32%	19%	22%
Varbrul Weights				
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	.48*	.45	.49*	.48*
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	.52 *	.55	.51*	.52*

Similar findings are found for the use of the velar rr, which over time has characterized rural Puerto Rican Spanish and especially the speech of this region. Tables 4 and 5 provide results for velarization (rr>x) by syllable stress and interview position. Although the overall percentage rate of use of velars is somewhat higher for men, there is an eight point spread in the frequency rates of both men and women, 55% to 63% and from 60% to 68%, respectively, in stressed vs. unstressed syllables. The very similar effect of stressed vs. unstressed syllables in both samples is indicated by the Varbrul weights as well.<sup>3</sup> As may be seen in Table 5, a small distinction for earlier and later use in the interview is present for men but not for women, as is indicated by both rates and weights.

**Table 4:** Velarization (rr>x) by Syllable Stress  
for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Stressed	60%	55%
Unstressed	68%	63%
Total N	1137	704
%	65%	63%
Overall tokens	1750	1180
Varbrul Weights		
Stressed	.43	.48
Unstressed	.54	.53

<sup>3</sup> The linguistic factors included in the Varbrul analysis for velarization are: word initial and word interior position; position following a consonant, vowel, or pause; occurrence in a stressed or unstressed syllable; occurrence in the first or second half hour of conversation; and occurrence in brief or longer turns.

**Table 5:** Velarization (rr>x) by Interview Position for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	63%	61%
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	68%	61%
Varbrul Weights		
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	.47	.50*
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	.54	.50*

In sum, the effects of syllable stress, the linguistic constraint found to be significant for the velarization of *rr* in the speech sample examined, here, are parallel for the two genders, and the effect of interview position is limited, in this case to the men's sample.

The impact of the social factors age, network, and gender on the use of high-final vowels as well as on this quintessential consonantal feature in Puerto Rican Spanish may be seen in Table 6. They suggest that for the use of these long-term stable sociolinguistic variables in this sample of rural speakers, age and network ties are significant factors, but gender is not. That is, the effects of network ties on each of the age groups are significant, but they are the same for men and women.

**Table 6:** Varbrul Analysis for (o>u), (e>i), and (rr>x) by Age, Network and Gender in Full Sample of Men and Women

<u>Age</u>	(o>u)	(e>i)	(rr>x)
39>	.45	.43	.29
40-64	.49	.52	.53
65<	.56	.54	.64
<u>Network</u>			
Open	.35	.36	.33
Closed	.66	.65	.69
<u>Gender</u>			
Women	.49*	.51*	.48*
Men	.51*	.49*	.51*

## 7. Stigmatized Phonological Features

The foci of the analysis here are two stigmatized phonological features that may also become morpho-phonological when they affect affixes. I will characterize use in these cases as representing change from below. Both features have been introduced from the outside although one, the deletion of word-final *-s*, is much more advanced than the other, the lateralization of *-r*. Both are least frequent among the oldest speakers of the sample and increase with decreasing age. Based on his research in the late 1920s Navarro Tomás (1948: 71) writes:

*“La aspiración ocurre en Puerto Rico en el lenguaje de toda clase de personas y lugares, lo mismo en las tierras altas que en las bajas y de igual modo en los centros importantes de población que en los más retirados barrios rurales.”*

He then continues, *“Las personas instruidas dan a la aspiración ... una forma relativamente regular ...,”* perhaps meaning that they retain it. And he says, *“La población popular lo somete a todas las transformaciones dadas a conocer ...,”* which would include deletions. López Morales (1983: 73), based on findings in correlation with the origins of speakers in his study in San Juan, finds that

deletion is “*un fenómeno predominantemente capitalino,*” and he also finds deletion more prevalent in the lower strata of society.

As for the leveling of  $\underline{r}$  and  $\underline{l}$ , for the late 1920s Navarro Tomás (1948: 80) indicates: “*Los pocos lugares en que  $\underline{l}$  y  $\underline{r}$  fueron diferenciados con bastante regularidad ... corresponden a las partes altas e interiores del oeste.*” In Lares, he found that all of the words with final  $\underline{l}$  and  $\underline{r}$  that were included in his study were correctly rendered. In Adjuntas, there were only three incorrectly rendered forms.

In the case of  $-\underline{s}$  deletion, I will concentrate on plural  $-\underline{s}$ . The full analysis to this point includes plural and mono-morphemic  $-\underline{s}$  in a sample that includes 100 tokens per speaker, overall 3000 for the women and 3000 for the men. There are just under 1500 tokens of plural  $-\underline{s}$  in each case. The analysis of lateralization of  $-\underline{r}$  is based on 150 tokens per speaker: 4500 for the women and 4500 for the men.

The linguistic factors examined in correlation with the deletion of the plural  $-\underline{s}$ , here, are phonological positioning, grammatical category, position of use in the noun phrase, and the presence of preceding disambiguating information as well as position in the first or second half-hour of the interview. Table 7 presents positioning before immediately following vowels, consonants, or pause and reveals that there are both similarities and an important difference in the patterns encountered in the men’s and women’s data. The frequency rates shown as percentages for men and women are parallel before consonants and pause, but the rate of deletion is notably lower for women before vowels, 49% vs. 63%. The Varbrul weights representing analysis in the context of multiple linguistic factors show this last effect as well, with a value of only .29 vs. .40 for men. This may indicate that women are restraining deletion more (word finally before vowels), where the presence of  $\underline{s}$  supports CV syllable structure. In fact, the Varbrul weights suggest that in their usage the women have been more sensitive than the men to phonological position (the distinctions are greater), although the directions of distinctions are the same in both cases.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 7:** Deletion of Plural (-s) by Following Phonological Segment for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Vowel	63%	49%
Consonant	66%	64%
Pause	84%	89%
Total N	1063	1012
%	71%	68%
Overall Tokens	1495	1497
Varbrul Weights		
Vowel	.40	.29
Consonant	.50	.59
Pause	.57	.70

Table 8 shows strikingly similar percentage rates for men and women for use of  $-\underline{s}$  as the plural marker in determiners, adjectives, and nouns. However, the Varbrul weights suggest that the primary distinction, for both genders here, is between the determiner categories, where less deletion occurs, and the other categories. For both genders, Table 9 suggests in terms of both frequency rates and Varbrul weights that first position in the noun phrase constrains deletion, while position two and three do not. And Table 10 clearly indicates that plural  $-\underline{s}$  is deleted more and to the same degree by men and women when preceding disambiguating information is present in the discourse.

<sup>4</sup> Included as linguistic factors in the Varbrul analysis for plural  $-\underline{s}$  are: phonological positioning, stress of following syllable, morphological category, positioning in the NP string, presence vs. absence of disambiguating information, type of disambiguating information, occurrence in the first or second half hour of conversation, and occurrence in brief or longer turns.

**Table 8:** Deletion of Plural (-s) by Grammatical Category for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Determiner	37%	38%
Adjective	75%	77%
Noun	81%	79%
Varbrul Weights		
Determiner	.26	.31
Adjective	.55	.62
Noun	.57	.55

**Table 9:** Deletion of Plural (-s) by Position in Noun Phrase

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
First	60%	55%
Second	84%	85%
Third	85%	86%
Varbrul Weights		
First	.45	.45
Second	.55	.60
Third	.55	.56

**Table 10:** Deletion of Plural (-s) by Preceding Disambiguating Information for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Absent	54%	50%
Present	82%	83%
Varbrul Weights		
Absent	.41	.39
Present	.56	.59

Table 11, below, suggests that although position in the interview did not prove to be a clear and consistent constraint on the use of the stable, regional final high-vowels and velar  $r$  features, it is both significant and consistent as a constraint on the importation of non-standard deleted  $-s$ ; both men and women restrict deletion in a statistically significant way in the earlier portion of the interview, although among the women the distinction is somewhat larger.

**Table 11:** Deletion of Plural (-s) by Interview Position for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	70%	63%
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	73%	71%
Varbrul Weights		
1 <sup>st</sup> ½ hr.	.47	.42
2 <sup>nd</sup> ½ hr.	.53	.57

As for the lateralization of  $-\text{r}$ , which has characterized Puerto Rican Spanish although not the Spanish of the western interior of the island, the findings here indicate that lateralization is still very limited in this region. Overall, as may be seen in Table 12, men have lateralized the  $-\text{r}$  more than women but the more striking finding, especially as represented by the Varbrul weights in both tables 12 and 13, may be the similarity of the constraints for phonological positioning and grammatical category on both men's and women's use of this feature.<sup>5</sup> Lateralization is most frequent before a pause, where it is perhaps most audible, and in infinitives where the final syllable is also always accented. Position in the interview, for which the results are not shown, is not a significant constraint on lateralization, likely due to the generally low frequency of occurrence.

**Table 12:** Lateralization of (-r) by Following Phonological Segment for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Consonant	7%	9%
Vowel	12%	9%
Pause	37%	27%
Total N	468	423
%	11%	9%
Overall Tokens	4500	4500
Varbrul Weights		
Consonant	.44	.45
Vowel	.47	.46
Pause	.78	.76

(Following /n/ and /l/ are excluded from analysis.)

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<sup>5</sup> Included as linguistic factors in the Varbrul analysis for the lateralization of  $-\text{r}$  are: word-internal vs. word-final position; following phonological segment (consonant, vowel, or pause); morphological category (grammatical or non-grammatical); occurrence in a stressed or unstressed syllable; occurrence in the first or second half hour of conversation; and occurrence in brief or longer turns.

**Table 13:** Lateralization of (-r) by Grammatical Category for Men and Women

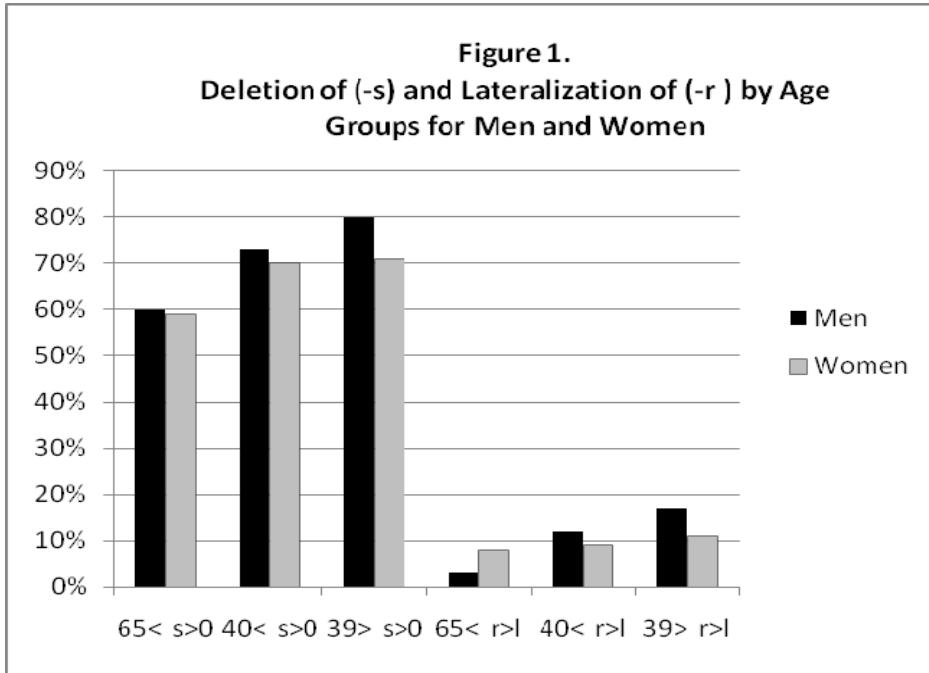
	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Mono-morph.	8%	10%
Infinitive	22%	15%
Varbrul Weights		
Mono-morph.	.47	.48
Infinitive	.57	.56

In contrast to the findings for the social factors and maintenance of the stable regional features reviewed in the previous section, where age and network but not gender were significant, Table 14, below, indicates that it is age and gender that are significant influences on the stigmatized deletion of  $-s$  and lateralization of  $-r$  features, while the distinction between closed and open network is not. That is, the effects of age and gender are uniform for both network groups, with men favoring deletion and lateralization more. The parallel nature of the results seen in Table 14 is also very striking.

**Table 14:** Varbrul Analysis for Deletion of Plural (-s) and Lateralization of (-r) by Age, Network and Gender in Full Sample of Men and Women

<u>Age</u>	Deletion	Lateralization
65<	.38	.37
40-64	.54	.53
39>	.60	.59
<u>Network</u>		
Open	.49*	.49*
Closed	.51*	.51*
<u>Gender</u>		
Women	.47	.48
Men	.52	.53

Finally, Figure 1, below, highlights the intersection of age and gender in correlation with the findings for  $-s$  deletion and  $-r$  lateralization. The figure indicates that in the case of these features, characterized here as having been introduced from below and as being non-standard and stigmatized on the island, although overall the rates of use for the genders are not dissimilar, there is a pattern of higher usage among men, and especially at the youngest age level.



## 8. Grammatical Features and Subject Pronoun Expression

Examined in this section are three standard grammatical, or morpho-syntactic, features and subject pronoun expression. The grammatical features have been imported into this dialectal region as changes from above, i.e., changes of which there is conscious awareness. The standard grammatical features are: 1) the use of *-mos* instead of *-nos* in verb forms with stress on the ante-penultimate syllable (imperfects, past subjunctives, and conditionals): *trabajá**mos*** vs. *trabajá**banos***, *estuviéramos* vs. *estuviéranos*, and *tendríamos* vs. *tendríanos*; 2) the use of *e* instead of *a* as the theme vowel in first person present perfect auxiliaries: *yo **he** ido* vs. *yo **ha** ido* and *hemos terminado* vs. *h**am**os terminado*; and 3) the use of uniform singular existential “*haber*” vs. plural and personalized forms for personal reference: *hay dos personas aquí* vs. *h**ayn** dos aquí*, *hay tres de nosotros aquí* vs. *h**abemos** tres de nosotros aquí*; *había dos* vs. *h**abían** dos*, *había tres de nosotros* vs. *h**abíanos** tres de nosotros aquí*. With one exception the non-standard forms are most prevalent among older speakers, indicating that the standard forms are newer in the region. The exception is *-mos* among the oldest generation, perhaps indicating that *-nos* came into the region at a later time. The standard forms in these cases are all forms of which there is considerable awareness and that may be the focus of education in the schools.

In this section, along with the grammatical features, I have included data on the expression of subject pronouns, a purely syntactic feature. Subject pronoun expression is a much studied feature in Puerto Rican Spanish as well as other varieties. High frequencies of personal pronoun use, when use is optional, have been described in Caribbean Spanish and in the case of Puerto Rican Spanish, in particular, by Judith Hochberg (1986) and Richard Cameron (1996). Much lower frequencies have been described for Castilian Spanish, by Cameron (1966), using his own data and the data of others. Cameron’s work suggests that whatever the overall frequencies of pronoun expression, the constraints affecting expression are similar. What is most striking about the data from Castañer, in the interior of Puerto Rico, is that the overall frequency of expression is low, more similar to the frequencies reported for Castile than those generally reported for Puerto Rico. As will be seen below, the role of constraints nevertheless is similar to that encountered for other varieties.

Tables 15, 16, and 17 present findings in the form of frequency rates and Varbrul weights for the three morpho-syntactic, or grammatical, features. The numbers of tokens used in the analysis of these grammatical features is small, but they are drawn from conversational interaction in the interviews. In each of these cases, the findings indicate that the women are the more frequent users of the standard

forms; however, the linguistic constraints are very similar or virtually the same for both gender groups. In Table 15, standard *-mos* is shown to be favored more in regular verbs, and the Varbrul weights .51 and .53 for regulars by men and women are almost identical.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 15:** Standard 1<sup>st</sup> Person Plural Verbal Morpheme  
(*-mos* vs. *-nos*) by Verb Type for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Irregular	61%	75%
Regular	68%	79%
Total N	143	276
%	68%	79%
Overall Tokens	212	353
Varbrul Weights		
Irregular	.41	.31
Regular	.51	.53

Table 16 indicates that the standard auxiliary is favored more for plural *hemos* than singular *he*, and the Varbrul weights for plurals and singulars for men and women are very similar, .76 and .72 for plurals and .41 and .39 for singulars, respectively.

**Table 16:** Standard Conjugation of 1<sup>st</sup> Person Plural Auxiliary  
(*he*, *hemos* vs. *ha*, *hemos*)  
by Singular and Plural Verbs for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Singular	51%	73%
Plural	88%	94%
Total N	82	128
%	60%	80%
Overall Tokens	137	161
Varbrul Weights		
Singular	.41	.39
Plural	.76	.72

Findings for uniform singular existential “*haber*” appear in Table 17. Once again, although there is a difference in the overall rates for men and women, the Varbrul weights reflecting grammatical influences are virtually identical, .72 and .71 for the present-tense forms that favor the standard for men and women, respectively, and .19 and .21 for past-tense forms.

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<sup>6</sup> The Varbrul analyses for the three grammatical features seen in these tables are based on the linguistic factor in question in combination with social factors. In each case, no other linguistic factors were found to be significant constraints on variation.

**Table 17:** Singular Existential “Haber”  
(hay, había vs. hayn, habemos; habían, habíanos)  
by Past and Present Tenses for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Past	45%	49%
Present	84%	92%
Total N	150	183
%	68%	74%
Overall Tokens	219	247
Varbrul Weights		
Past	.19	.21
Present	.72	.71

Table 18, below, presents the effects of the age, network and gender social factors on the use of the standard form of the three grammatical variables considered here. In these analyses, all three social factors have been found to be statistically significant in their effects on the data. In the case of the stable regional features, high final -u and -i and velar rr, only age and network were significant, while for the non-standard lateralizations of -r and deletions of plural -s only age and gender were significant. It may also be seen in Table 18 that women favor the standard grammatical forms, which may also be qualified as prestige bearing, more than men.

**Table 18:** Varbrul Analyses for Plural Verbal (-mos),  
he/hemos Auxiliaries, and Existential hay/había Existentials  
by Age, Network and Gender in Full Sample of Men and Women

	<u>-mos</u>	<u>he/hemos</u>	<u>hay/había</u>
<u>Age</u>			
65<	.70	.30	.40
40-64	.31	.43	.45
39>	.57	.78	.63
<u>Network</u>			
Closed	.28	.12	.34
Open	.69	.81	.64
<u>Gender</u>			
Men	.37	.37	.46
Women	.58	.61	.53

Below, tables 19 and 20 present the findings for two of the principal linguistic constraints on subject pronoun expression in the recorded data of the 60-speaker sample. The constraints are the subject pronouns themselves broken down by person and number, and whether or not in the discourse disambiguating information precedes a given opportunity to express the pronoun. The findings are based on total samples of 1500 tokens for both the men and the women, 50 tokens per speaker. Table 19 shows that overall subject pronoun expression rates are nearly the same, 22% and 24% respectively. As may be seen in Table 19, as well, the frequency rates given in percentages and the Varbrul rates indicate that both men and women distinguish between first and second person singular pronouns, those that recognize the interlocutors in conversational discourse, and other pronouns, including third person singular, with first and second person promoting subject pronoun use. Similarly, as may be seen in Table 20, instances that lack preceding clarification of referent of the subject favor expression of the

subject pronoun; these are the instances in which there is either no clarifying information or clarifying information appears after the subject position. And this is also true for both genders.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 19:** Subject Pronoun Expression  
by Personal Pronoun for Men and Women

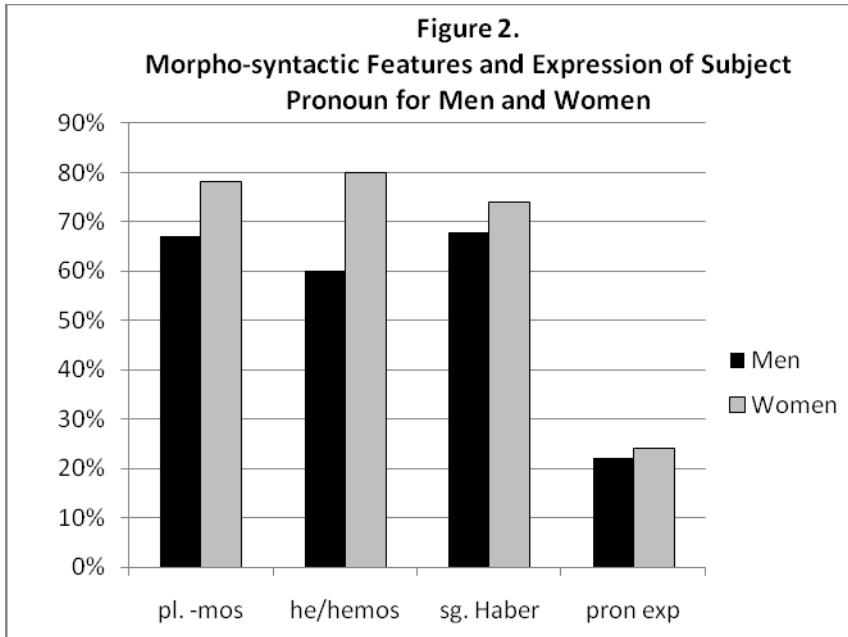
	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
yo	33%	38%
Ud./tú	49%	38%
él/ella	15%	17%
nosotros	16%	17%
ellos/ellas	9%	17%
Total N	332	336
%	22%	24%
Overall Tokens	1500	1500
Varbrul Weights		
Yo	.68	.66
Ud./tú	.76	.64
él/ella	.42	.42
nosotros	.41	.40
ellos/ellas	.27	.39

**Table 20:** Subject Pronoun Expression  
by Disambiguating Information for Men and Women

	Men	Women
Frequency Rates		
Preceding Disamb.	8%	9%
Following Disamb.	33%	25%
None	28%	29%
Varbrul Weights		
Preceding Disamb.	.24	.27
Following Diamb.	.73	.57
None	.61	.58

The findings for the three grammatical features examined here and subject-pronoun expression are reviewed in Figure 2. The figure clearly shows that the standard and prestige bearing grammatical features, which are frequent overall, are more frequently used by women than men. The uniformly low frequency of subject pronoun expression is evident for both genders as well; in fact, none of the social features, gender, age, and network, was found to be a significant constraint on subject pronoun use in these data.

<sup>7</sup> The linguistic factors used for the Varbrul analysis in tables 19 and 20 are person and number of the subject pronoun, disambiguating information (whether before or after the verb or lacking), and potential ambiguity of the verb as a result of  $-\underline{s}$  deletion (no potential ambiguity, in first and second person singular forms, in first, second, and third person singular forms).



## 9. English Mixing

Finally, the incorporation of forms of English origin in the conversational Spanish of the recorded interviews will be considered here as well. For this analysis, I identified all forms that I considered to be of English origin without initially distinguishing between loans and non-loans, or switches, because there were so few forms of any kind. In well over 60 hours of recording with the base sample of 30 men and 30 women, I found only 219. Although the blending of codes has been found by Shana Poplack (1982) to be characteristic of groups of Puerto Ricans in NYC and Puerto Ricans in general are often characterized as mixing Spanish and English, the blending of English and Spanish is certainly not the norm in these data from west-central Puerto Rico.

A review of the small data base of 219 forms suggests nevertheless that some gender-related observations may be possible. In gross numbers, men used English forms more than women (see Table 21, below). In the analysis of linguistic constraints on mixing, I distinguished between English uses of simple nouns, on the one hand, and other forms: verbs, adjectives, adverbs, phrases and clauses, on the other. When the small data base was complete, I also distinguished between what I determined based on my own experience to be English loans into Spanish and other English uses. The English loans are forms like “*cash*,” “*troc*” or “*tro*” (truck), “*friser*” (freezer), “*bonche*” (bunch), and “*marqueta*” (market), phonologically and at times morphologically integrated into Spanish. Non-loans are forms like “high school,” “nursery,” “chapel,” “construction,” and “army,” which may or may not be given Spanish pronunciation.

**Table 21:** English Mixing for Nouns vs. Other Categories for Men and Women

Frequency Rates	Men	Women
Nouns	93%	83%
Other	7%	11%
Loans	16%	11%
Non-loans	84%	89%
Total N	148	71

Based on the frequency rates shown as percents in Table 21, it appears that women have been more frequent users of forms other than nouns in their mixing, and that also that they have performed more code switches, i.e., used non-loan forms more frequently. Table 22, below, makes it clear, however, that these last findings are not significant statistically. Table 22 presents the Varbrul breakdown for the social factors age, time in Castañer (used in place of network ties because of a “knockout,” or lack of other-than-noun forms in the data for the closed network group), and gender. The Varbrul analysis shows that for English mixing viewed in terms of the noun vs. other-than-noun categories and loans vs. non-loans only age is a statistically meaningful predictor of the probability of occurrence. Due in part to the small data sample, neither time in Castañer nor gender is significant.

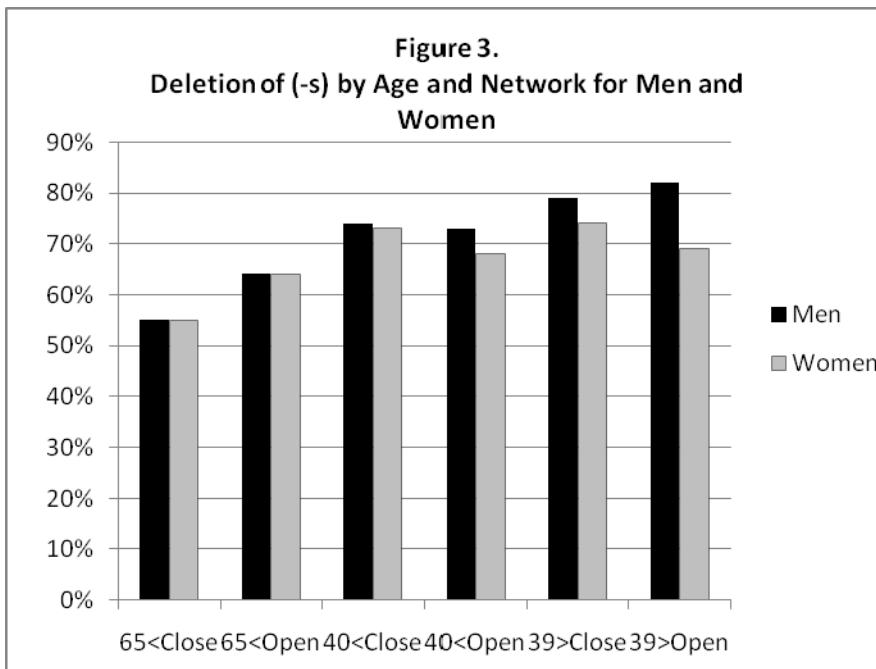
**Table 22:** Varbrul Analyses for English Mixing for Other-than-Noun Forms and Non-loans by Age, Time in Castañer, and Gender for Full Sample of Men and Women

	Other-than-Nouns	Non-loans
65<	.43	.37
40-64	.35	.49
39>	.75	.66
More Time	.48*	.54*
Less Time	.47*	.58*
Men	.43*	.49*
Women	.64*	.53*

## 10. Conclusion

Perhaps the most important conclusion upon completing this review of a variety of features and selected factors, including gender, in relation to variation in the recorded speech of 60 individuals from rural, west-central Puerto Rico is that no single or blanket statement can be made as to the role of gender. As a factor, gender has correlated differently for different types of features. For the maintenance of high-final  $-\underline{u}$  and  $-\underline{i}$  and velar long  $\underline{r}$ , characterized here as stable markers of regional speech, gender has been shown not to correlate significantly with use. In the case of two stigmatized phonological features, the deletion of  $-\underline{s}$  and the lateralization of  $-\underline{r}$ , that are characterized here as examples of change from below, men have been shown to be more favorable, while in the case of several prestige-bearing grammatical features women have been shown to be the leaders of the change. In the cases of a deeply rooted syntactic variable, the expression of subject pronouns, and also of the constraints on the mixing of English forms into Spanish conversation, once again, gender has not been found to play a significant role.

Similarly, although gender interacts with other social factors in predicting patterns of variation in the data, it does so differently for the different feature classes examined here. Gender does not interact significantly with age, or generation, group and closed or open network membership in describing social patterns in the use of the regional markers; the latter factors are significant constraints on use while gender is not. For the use of the stigmatized phonological features, gender interacts with age, but not network, and in the case of the grammar features: standard *-mos*, the standard *he* and *hemos* auxiliaries, and standard uniform existential *hay* and *había* gender, age and network all interact significantly. In these data, none of these three factors, including gender, has been shown to correlate with the syntactic expression-of-subject-pronoun feature, and age but not gender or the time component of the network factor has been shown to be a predictor of tendencies in the limited use of code mixing encountered in the data. As a social factor, it has also been shown particularly for the deletion of plural *-s* that gender effects may be found in relation to specific subgroups, in this case of younger speakers, and primarily at the later stages of a change. This may be seen in the detailed presentation of gender as it intersects with age and closed and open network groups in Figure 3, below. For the oldest speakers and for closed network members of the middle, 40-64 age group, gender is neutral, i.e., it is not a significant factor; it is only among open network speakers of the middle age group that a gender distinction begins to be apparent and it is among young women and, particular, young women of the open network group that a change of direction in relation to deletion becomes most apparent.



Finally, it must also be concluded on the basis of the data reviewed here that while gender effects vary for different features, or sets of features, and in relation to other social factors, there has been overwhelming consensus among the sampled speakers, male and female, with regard to phonological and grammatical or functional conditioning of feature use. This has been found to be true for the conditioning of vowels and consonants, and for morpho-syntactic and syntactic variables, as well as for the use of English forms in Spanish conversation. This result underscores the fact that what have been reviewed in this study are features occurring in the context of linguistic processes with which gender may be associated as a motor for change or a restraint to change, or maybe not at all. This overwhelming consensus with respect to the linguistic conditioning in these data indicates as well that the men and women in this study are clearly from the same community. The men are not from Mars and the women are not from Venus, they are both from Castañer in west-central Puerto Rico.

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