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THE /ʎ/-/j̰/ MERGER (*YEÍSMO*) IN CENTRAL SPAIN: ADVANCES SINCE THE ALPI[*]

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Abstract

This paper studies the advance of the /ʎ/-/j̰/ merger (*yeísmo)* from the 1930s in territories linguistically considered transitional between northern and southern Castilian, in rural speeches from the center of the Iberian Peninsula. Its starting point is the *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (ALPI) maps, and the paper published on them by Tomás Navarro Tomás, comparing them to those from the *Atlas Lingüístico y etnográfico de Castilla-La Mancha* (ALeCMan) and from the *Atlas Dialectal de Madrid* (ADiM). Our results allow us to confirm the unstoppable progress of the /ʎ/-/j̰/ merger and the geographical direction of the change.

Keywords

Geolinguistics, linguistic change, /ʎ/-/j̰/ merger (*yeísmo)*, Castilian-Manchegan and Madrilenian speech varieties

[*] The present study has been written within the framework of two research projects directed by Pilar García Mouton: FFI2011-29595, *Colaboración española al* Atlas Linguistique Roman *y al* Atlas Linguarum Europae: *Materiales geolingüísticos de Madrid*, and the CSIC's internal project *Elaboración y edición de los materiales del* Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica *(ALPI),* 200410E604.

EL YEÍSMO EN EL CENTRO PENINSULAR: AVANCES DESDE EL ALPI[1]

Resumen

Este trabajo estudia el avance del yeísmo desde los años treinta del siglo XX en territorios que lingüísticamente se consideran de transición entre el castellano septentrional y el meridional, en las hablas rurales del centro peninsular. Toma como punto de partida los mapas del *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (ALPI), y el trabajo publicado sobre ellos por Tomás Navarro Tomás, y los compara con los del *Atlas Lingüístico y etnográfico de Castilla-La Mancha* (ALeCMan) y con los del *Atlas Dialectal de Madrid* (ADiM). Los resultados permiten comprobar el progreso imparable de la fusión de /ʎ/ y /ʝ/ y la dirección geográfica del cambio.

Palabras clave

Geolingüística, cambio lingüístico, yeísmo, hablas castellanomanchegas y madrileñas

1. Introduction

In Spanish, the difference between two palatal phonemes, one voiced lateral /ʎ/, and the other one voiced central /ʝ/, with a variety of phonetic realizations and a great "cercanía articulatoria, acústica y perceptiva" (RAE 2011: 220) between them, has had in this closeness the historic justification of its precariousness. When the tension with which /ʎ/ is articulated becomes relaxed, the phoneme is pronounced as an obstruent fricative [ʝ], marking the beginning of the merger of both phonemes in favor of /ʝ/ known as *yeísmo*. This process, already accomplished in other Romance varieties, has been underway for several centuries in Castilian.

The consolidation of the /ʎ/-/ʝ/ merger is one of the major processes whose evolution we are consciously witnessing in European Spanish. In addition to being characteristic of several core linguistic areas in the Peninsula — especially Andalusia —, it became particularly visible during the last century, when it spread from educated Madrilenians to the educated population of other cities and to the media, lending prestige to a phonetic simplification with phonological consequences in most of the southern speeches and in Latin American Spanish.

[1] This research was conducted within the CSIC's intramural project n. 200410E604: *Elaboración y edición de los materiales del Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (ALPI).

Although the /ʎ/-/ʝ/ merger has a well-documented, long-standing historical presence (Alonso, 1967[3]), some Castilian varieties did keep — and some of them still do — the distinction between /ʎ/ and /ʝ/, which until recently was considered a sign of careful pronunciation and which, like other northern phonetic features, was part of the linguistic standard generally taught. In the last fifty years, however, Peninsular speakers have seen to what extent the merger pronunciation has become widespread in traditionally non-merger areas, with the spatial dimension of the process varying noticeably and the merger reaching among educated speakers a status comparable to the one the phonological distinction used to have. At any rate, although very advanced in some Castilian-speaking areas, this dephonologisation process is not yet been completed, contrary to what we find in large Latin American Spanish-speaking areas.

The aim of this paper is to study the advance of *yeísmo* during the 20th century in areas linguistically considered transitional between northern and southern Castilian, home to the rural speech varieties of the autonomous regions of Castilla-La Mancha and Madrid. In a general overview of the Castilian varieties, these regions have always been at an intersection of influences (García Mouton 2006; Molina Martos 2010).

We will be comparing the data compiled during the 1930s from the survey points of the *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (ALPI), directed by Tomás Navarro Tomás, with the data from the *Atlas Lingüístico y etnográfico de Castilla-La Mancha* (ALeCMan), by Pilar García Mouton & Francisco Moreno Fernández, compiled in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as with the data from the *Atlas Dialectal de Madrid* (ADiM), by Pilar García Mouton and Isabel Molina Martos, compiled between 2000 and 2003. The images provided by these atlases cover a time span that allows us to evaluate the progress of *yeísmo,* without considering here the interesting phonetic variants they document. The social framework reflects the phonetic situation of the ALPI maps, which only consider rural speech.[2] As it is known, linguistic atlases favor the spatial aspect of language and usually study only one level of language — that of elderly rural informants with almost no formal education, to avoid the influence of the educated

[2] The ALeCMan also surveyed the provincial capitals and the ADiM also surveyed two generations younger the usual one, but the ALPI didn't, so we have focused our study mainly on the rural speech and older informants.

urban language. The particularities of these informants provide us with a more conservative language stage than that of urban speech varieties from the same areas.

Although the autonomous region of Castilla-La Mancha is still a fundamentally rural area, the fact of its being so close and well connected to the country's capital — as is the case of cities like Guadalajara, which has become a commuter town and the main city in the Henares Industrial Corridor, and Toledo — is of undeniable linguistic relevance. Needless to say, the region of Madrid is conditioned by its centrality and by the presence of the capital city and its metropolitan area. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that the isolation in which the inhabitants of the communities surveyed for the elaboration of the ALPI lived during the 1930s has greatly decreased and the differences between rural and urban speech varieties have become less distinct.

2. *Yeísmo* in the ALPI

In 1964, Tomás Navarro Tomás published a state of the question of *yeísmo* in the Iberian Peninsula based on three of the maps included in the first volume of the ALPI, *Fonética* — map 29, *caballo;* map 37, *castillo* and map 58, *cuchillo* —, showing the behavior of the intervocalic /ʎ/. His very illuminating study summarizes the works carried out before the publication of the atlas and discusses, putting them in perspective, the possibilities of extrapolating their conclusions to others levels of language. Navarro Tomás rightfully noticed that geolinguistic data always have a conservative nature — due to the type of informant and to the particularities of the survey points —, and that in the ALPI "sólo reflejan la situación del habla en el aspecto más conservador de su tradición popular" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 130). He added that, since *yeísmo* was an educated and urban phenomenon, a top-down phenomenon, the fact that it had not been documented in a given survey point did not necessarily mean that it could not have been observed had younger or more educated informants been interviewed in the same locality.

At any rate, the same caveats could be made today regarding the results of the other linguistic atlases. In the case of the ALeCMan, the only difference with the ALPI is that it surveys a greater number of communities, as it is to be expected in a regional

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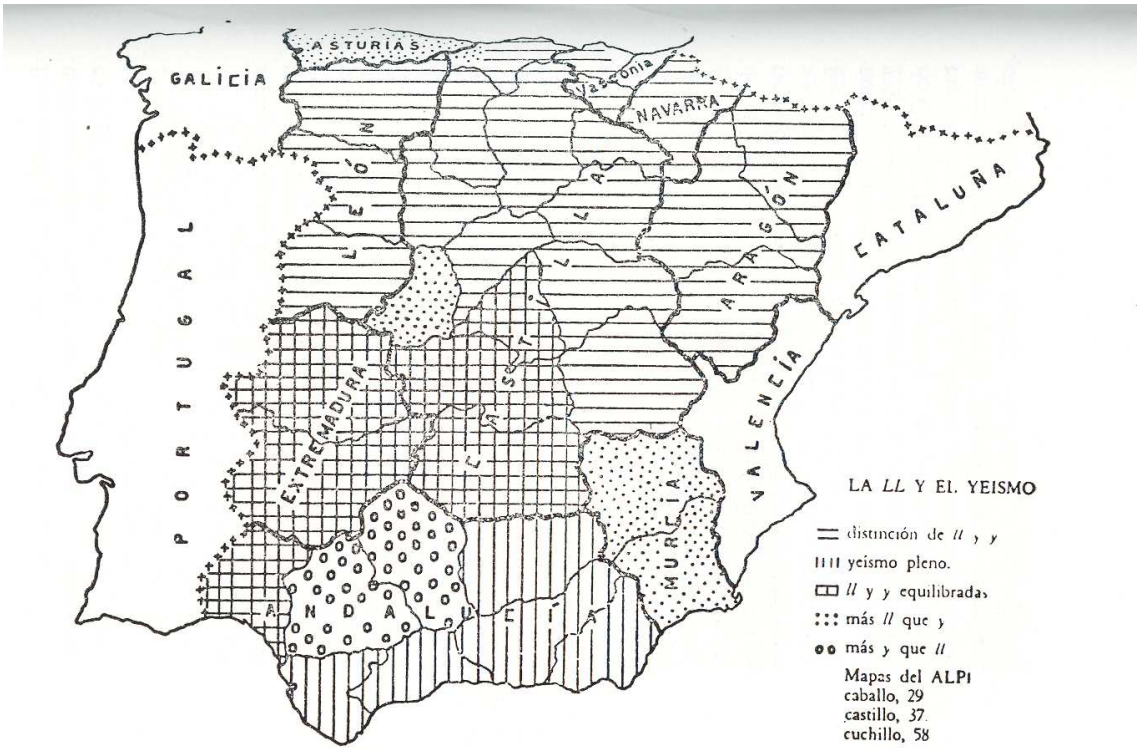
atlas, and that it works with two informants, male and female, in every one of its survey points. This methodological choice regarding the nature of the informants was also made in the ADiM (García Mouton y Molina Martos 2009), although we also added two younger generations to the usual informants.[3]



Map 1. Navarro Tomás (1964)

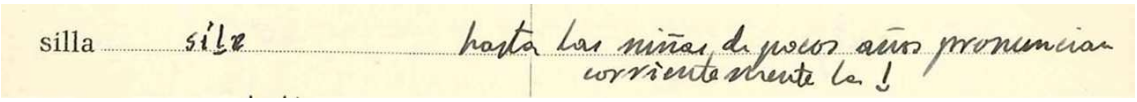
According to Navarro Tomás ([1964] 1975: 130-133), several areas could be established regarding the process in question: *a*) the area where the /ʎ/ was still present — with different more or less tense phonetic variants —, León, most of Castile, Navarra, Aragón and the provinces of Guadalajara and Cuenca; *b*) the area of complete *yeísmo* — with articulatory variants —, mainly eastern Andalusia, and *c*) the area of partial *yeísmo*, which included the provinces of Madrid, Toledo, Ciudad Real, Cáceres, Badajoz and Huelva. In Ciudad Real the distinction prevailed over *yeísmo* while in

[3] In the areas currently known as Castilla-La Mancha, the ALPI surveyed mainly male informants, although in other areas, such as Asturias, Cantabria, Zamora or Palencia, Lorenzo Rodríguez-Castellano and sometimes Aurelio M. Espinosa Jr. occasionally used female informants for their first questionnaire, information that was unknown at the time of writing García Mouton (1988).

Toledo *yeísmo* was more prevalent. He considered that Albacete — like Ávila and Murcia — was then "en los primeros pasos de su adhesión a la corriente yeísta" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 134).

Navarro noted several important factors to interpret his map: that the three words chosen — *cuchillo, caballo* y *castillo* — "se habían comportado de distinto modo comportado de distinto modo en lo que se refiere a su actuación expansiva", didn't share the same spatial boundaries and neither "han recibido siempre igual tratamiento en lo que concierne a la diferenciación o igualación entre *ll* y *y*, ni aun en boca de las mismas personas" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 139), which led him to consider likely that the same informants would have shown a different pronunciation under different circumstances. Hence, he concluded: "Salta a la vista la imposibilidad de establecer una línea divisoria entre uno y otro modo de pronunciación" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 140). In fact, he pointed out — like all phoneticians — that the position and phonetic context of /ʎ/ should be taken into account in these words, since some phonetics contexts, such as i + [ʎ], favor the pronunciation of [j̰]; that was the reason, he noted, the map for *cuchillo* had shown the greater number of modifications (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 141-142).

In the 1930s, *yeísmo* was widespread in metropolitan Madrid (Alonso 1967[3]), so the director of the ALPI and the fieldworkers trained by him were particularly focused on the progress of *yeísmo.* In one of their first surveys, carried out in 1931 in Valdepiélagos (Madrid), Navarro Tomás noted next to question number 193, *silla,* that the answer was pronounced with a [ʎ] and added a comment that revealed a certain amount of surprise:



Shortly afterwards, in the survey carried out in Rascafría (Madrid), regarding question number 738 of the second questionnaire, *toña*, he writes that the answer is [palíʎo], but also that

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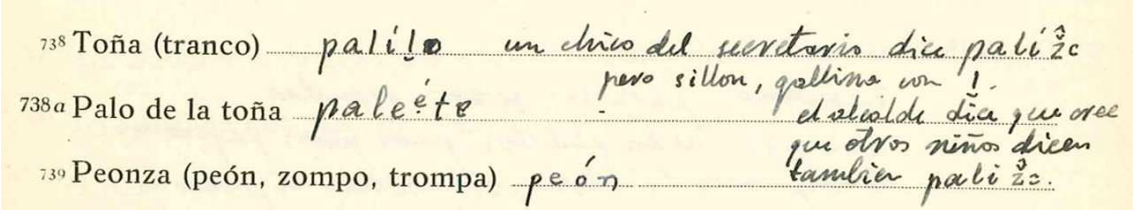
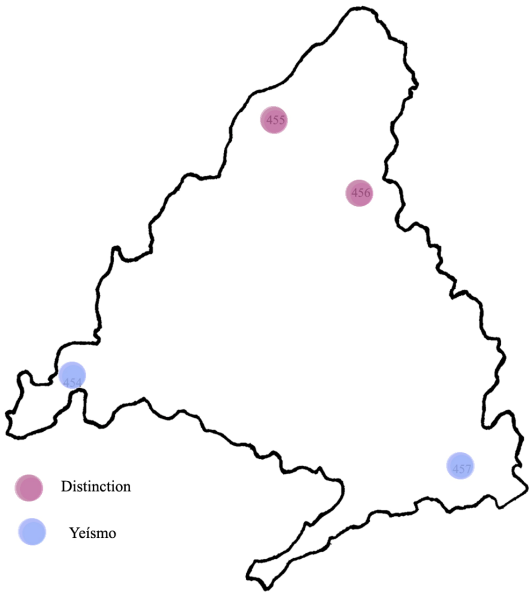


Although only four points were surveyed in Madrid, two in the north (Rascafría and Valdepiélagos) and two in the south (Cadalso de los Vidrios and Valdelaguna), they were able to swiftly confirm that they represented different stages of the process: Map 2 shows how the pronunciation of [ʎ] was still present in both of the northern points, whereas in the two southern communities — Cadalso y Valdelaguna — the merger had been completed.[4]



Map 2. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Madrid [ALPI]. Synthesis of data from questions 188, *caballo*; 96, *castillo*; 145, *cuchillo*.

Navarro Tomás was aware of the speed of the change. Thus, in his 1964 study, he advised that the possibility that things had changed in the twenty five years gone by since the surveys had been carried out could not be dismissed: “Otra circunstancia que

[4] Even fronted pronunciations and *rehilamiento* were documented.

hay que tener en cuenta es que la misma situación reflejada por el *ALPI* puede haberse modificado en el cuarto de siglo trascurrido desde que se realizó el cuerpo de la investigación" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 131). In Navarro Tomás' opinion, *yeísmo* had its origins in the south, in an upward moving Andalusian linguistic core area that, contrary to other cores of *yeísmo*, "es relativamente moderno, afecta a la *ll* de cualquier origen y en cualquier posición, prospera especialmente en círculos instruidos y se halla en situación de desarrollo y expansión" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 143), and was progressing uniformly towards the north through Extremadura and the west of Castile.

In addition to this southern origin, he also points out that the process is markedly urban and led by women and youth: "El yeísmo en las capitales de Ávila, Albacete, Madrid, Valladolid y otros centros urbanos es reconocido especialmente por el ejemplo de las clases instruidas. Parece que el aflojamiento articulatorio de la *ll* dorsopalatal lateral encuentra terreno propicio para comunicarse y extenderse principalmente en la relativa suavidad de los círculos ciudadanos, alcanzando a los jóvenes, al parecer, antes que a los adultos, y a las mujeres antes que a los hombres. Debe ser, sin embargo, generalización excesiva, sobre todo en relación a las capitales, en que el fondo obrero y artesano es en gran parte de procedencia rural, atribuir el yeísmo a toda la población" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 135). From the vantage point of hindsight, we can now state that the propensity to articulatory relaxation allied with prestige to spread the /ʎ/-/ʝ/ merger in the cities.

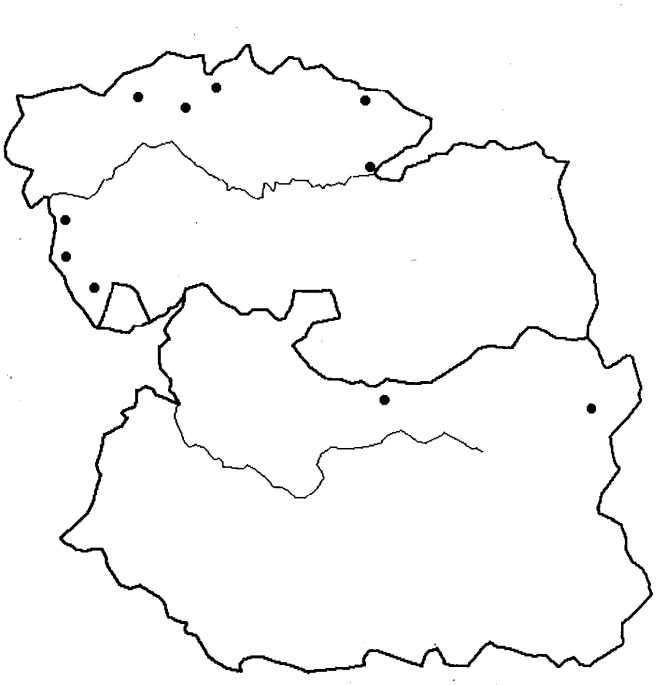
3. *Yeísmo* in the ALeCMan

The surveys carried out in the Castilian-Manchegan provincial capitals for the ALeCMan documented a widespread *yeísmo* (Molina Martos 1998; Moreno Fernández 1996), but what is important here is to see to what extent the "boundaries" established by the ALPI data had advanced or receded.

In 1987, the proposal for a linguistic atlas of Castilla-La Mancha argued the interest of a regional atlas for this area with a few maps based on the data from the questionnaires of the *Atlas de España y Portugal*,[5] among which one on *yeísmo* (García

[5] Directed by Manuel Alvar from the CSIC for the Spanish contribution to the *Atlas Linguarum Europae.*

Mouton and Moreno Fernández 1988: 1480). Years later, in 1994, García Mouton and Moreno Fernández published a preview of the surveys completed in Toledo and Ciudad Real regarding three important questions: *s* aspiration, the neutralization of *r* and *l*, and the /ʎ/-/j̯/ merger. The results pointed towards a very different situation to that established by the ALPI fifty years before, since the points where the opposition between /ʎ/ and /j̯/ persisted had been reduced to two in the province of Ciudad Real and eight in the province of Toledo. They wrote then that, from a phonological standpoint, "la solución que domina con claridad en el occidente de Castilla-La Mancha es el yeísmo" (García Mouton and Moreno Fernández 1994: 148-149), and that the areas where the distinction persisted "pueden considerarse como extensiones fronterizas de otras más amplias: los puntos del norte de Toledo son prolongación de las áreas distinguidoras de la Castilla más septentrional; los puntos del suroeste de Toledo de las zonas distinguidoras de Extremadura; la zona del noreste de Ciudad Real se ve continuada en las provincias de Cuenca y de Albacete. En lo que se refiere al norte de Ciudad Real, podríamos pensar en restos de un área de distinción más amplia que ve cómo sus límites se estrechan" (Navarro Tomás [1964] 1975: 153).

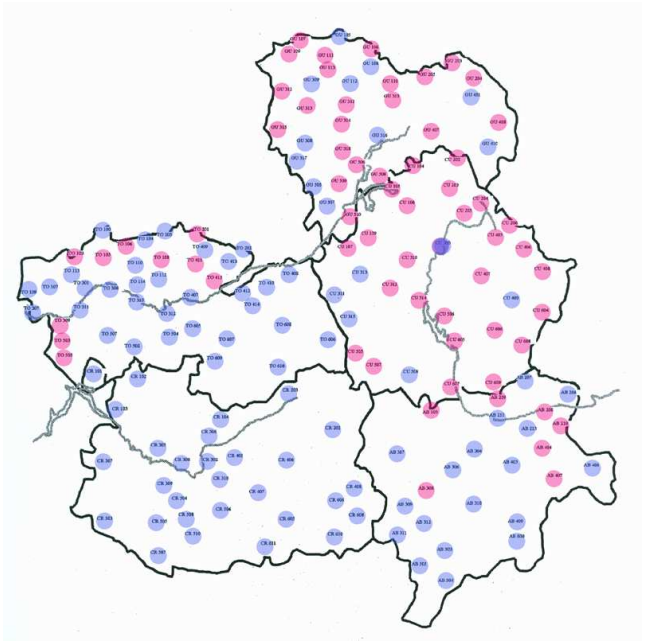


Mapa XIII. Puntos de mantenimiento de la oposición /l̯/ - /y/.

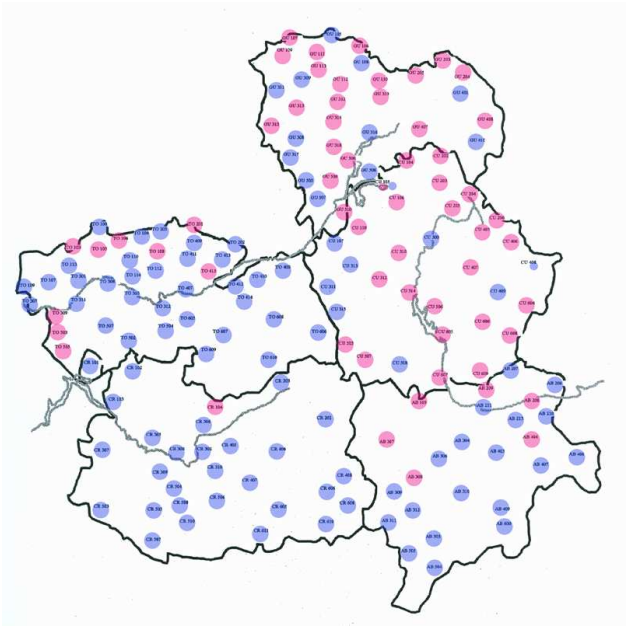
Map 3. García Mouton and Moreno Fernández (1994).

We are today in a position to draw a general map. The ALeCMan doesn't have the same maps as the ALPI because the question *castillo* wasn't included in the questionnaires, but it does have map 616 *cuchillo* and map [Fon-193] *caballo*, the first one corresponding to the female questionnaire and the second one created with the data compiled from male informants. As it happened with the maps selected by Navarro, these maps document the places where the phonological distinction occurs occasionally and the places where it disappears, because neither men nor women are always consistent in their phonetic behavior in every word. Not only are there phonetic contexts that encourage the merger, as it evidently happens in the case of *cuchillo* or *gallina* [Fon-59], but the /ʎ/-/ʝ/ merger, once present, coexists for a while with the distinction and progresses more in some words than others. In other words, some speakers still make the distinction, although not consistently but lexicalized, showing occasional examples of merged pronunciation. This is apparently what happens with the female informant from CR 104, one of the survey points in Ciudad Real: in the case of *cuchillo* she pronounces [ʝ], whereas in map 182 *cebolla* she pronounces [ʎ], and in map 18 *gallo* she produces both realizations, first with [ʎ] and then with [ʝ], which evidently shows a multiplicity of realizations in her speech, whereas the man, in maps *caballo* and *gallina* is consistent in pronouncing [ʎ]. In the other survey point in Ciudad Real, classified as a non-merger community, the woman was consistent in her *yeísmo*, while the man pronounced [ʎ] in *caballo,* but produced both realizations in *gallina,* the first one with [ʎ] and the second one with [ʝ], indicating an ongoing process. From these facts it can be inferred that these two survey points in Ciudad Real can no longer be considered as completely non-merger communities, but as communities where traces of the phonological distinction remain. It should be noted that in these cases the women have progressed more towards the merger than the men, as it usually happens in top-down processes. As it happens with *-s* aspiration, women don't always show the same pronunciation as men, and in a process like this it would be worthwhile to qualify their behavior by also comparing their linguistic attitudes, although the differences might not show huge gaps. We can state that the map for *cuchillo* is the one with the clearest and more advanced boundaries for *yeísmo* in the female informants and that the map for *gallina* is its equivalent regarding male informants, since on it the merger realizations

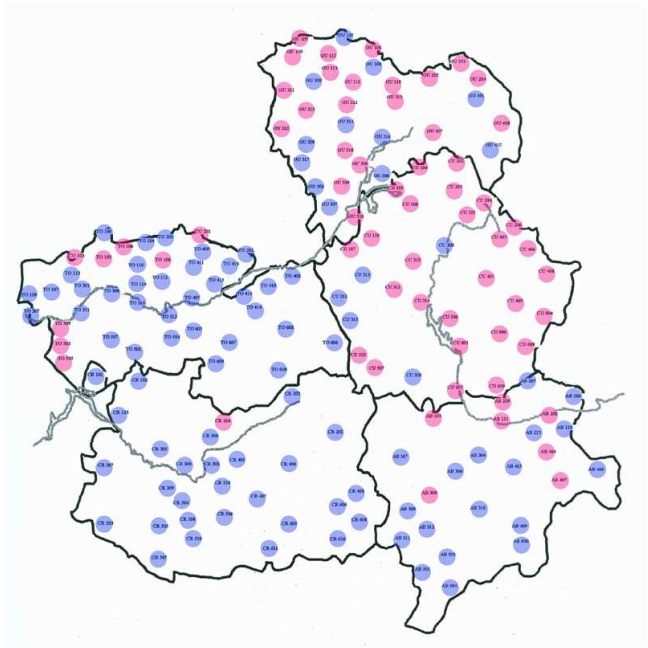
remarkably cover most of north-western Guadalajara in survey points that, for *caballo*, show a preservation of [ʎ].



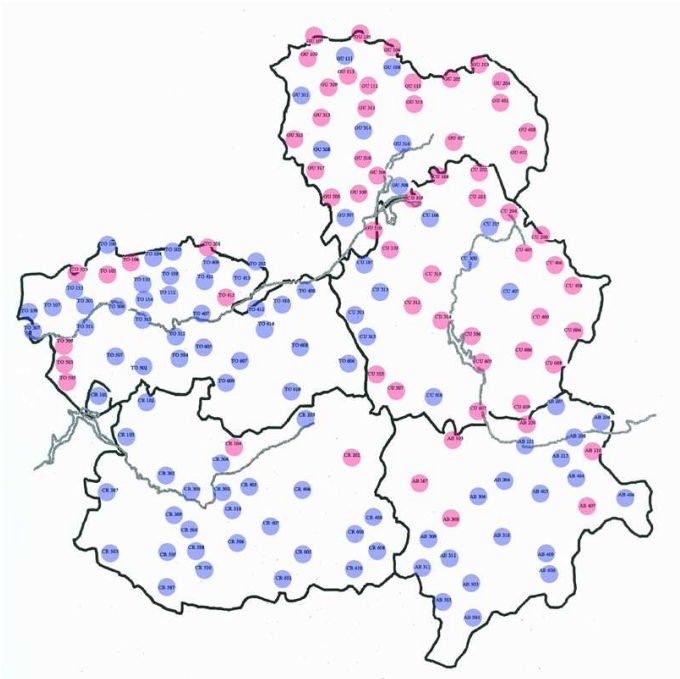
Map 4. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Castilla-La Mancha [ALeCMan] based on map 616 *cuchillo* (women); [pink dot: yeísmo; blue dot: distinction].



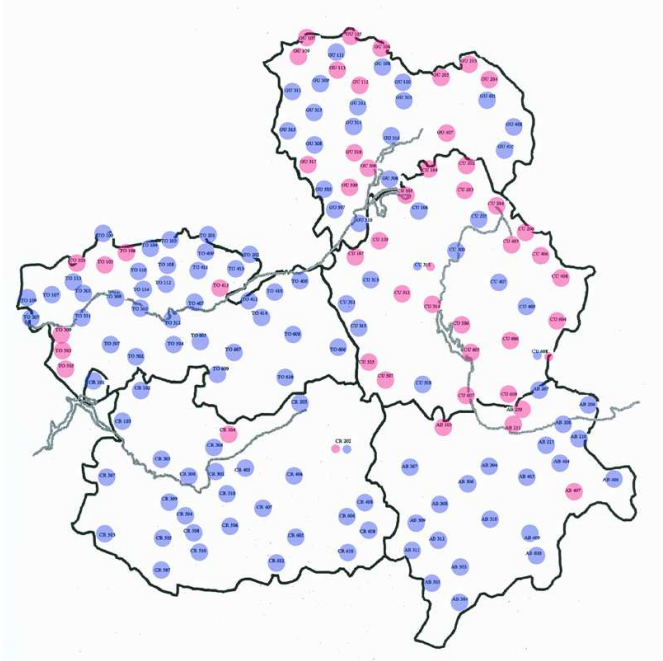
Map 5. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Castilla-La Mancha [ALeCMan] based on map 182 *cebolla* (women); [pink dot: yeísmo; blue dot: distinction].



Map 6. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Castilla-La Mancha [ALeCMan] based on map 18 *gallo* (women); [pink dot: yeísmo; blue dot: distinction].



Map 7. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Castilla-La Mancha [ALeCMan] based on map Fon-193 *caballo* (men); [pink dot: yeísmo; blue dot: distinction].



Map 8. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in Castilla-La Mancha [ALeCMan] based on map Fon-59 *gallina* (men); [pink dot: yeísmo; blue dot: distinction].

Interesting data can be found in the three maps on which Navarro Tomás based his synthetic map, according to which *yeísmo* was only prevalent in Toledo:

	Communities surveyed	**Make distinction between /ʎ/ and /j/**	**Merge**	**Merge occasionally**
GUADALAJARA	5	5	0	
CUENCA	5	5	0	
ALBACETE	8	7	1	
CIUDAD REAL	7	4	3	
TOLEDO	7	2	4	1

Table 1. Data from Navarro Tomás (1964).

The situation in the ALeCMan, in which there is no province where the non-merger pronunciation is consistent, is as follows:[6]

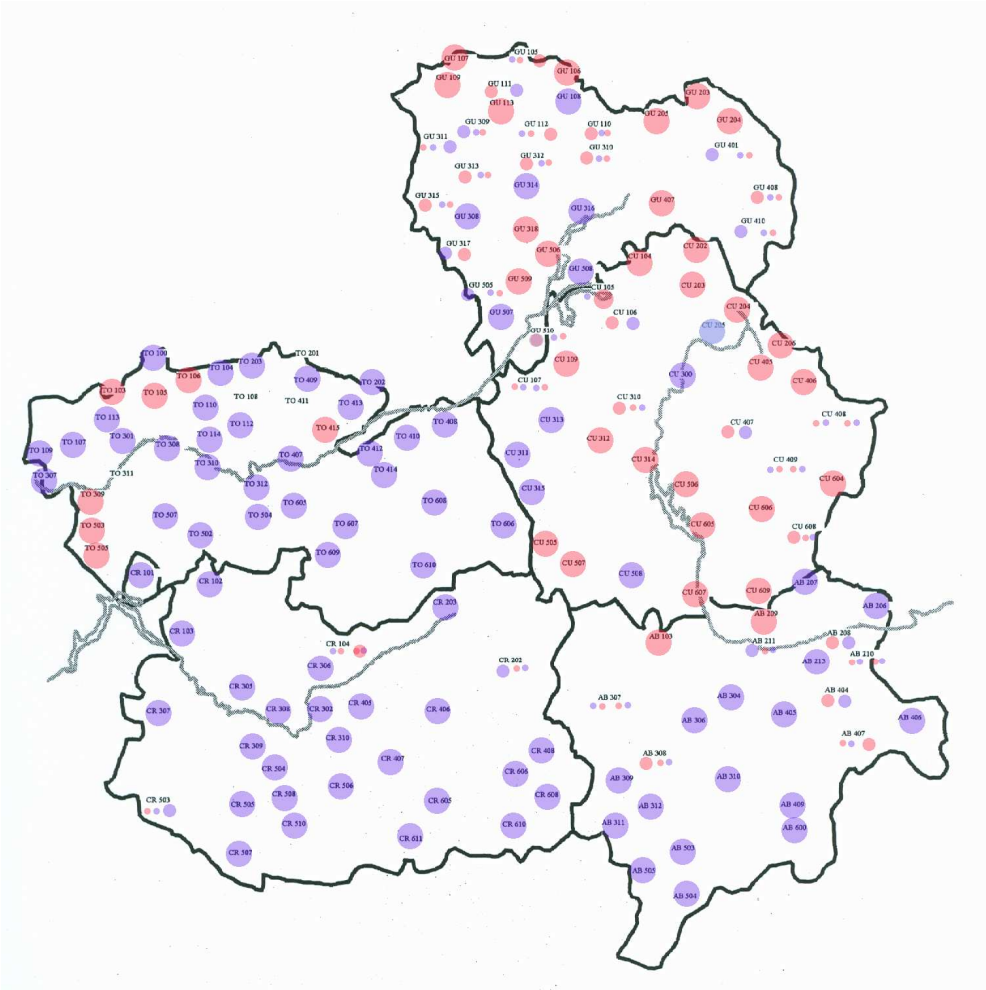
[6] Provincial capitals are not included as survey points. If included, they would increase by one per province the number of non-distinguishing informants of both sexes.

	Communities surveyed	Make distinction between /ʎ/ and /ʝ/		Merge		Merge occasionally	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
GUADALAJARA	32	19	14	10	7	3	11
CUENCA	32	23	20	4	6	4	4
ALBACETE	24	5	2	16	24	3	3
CIUDAD REAL	28	0	1	26	26	2	1
TOLEDO	41	9	7	30	33	2	1

Table 2. Data from ALeCMan.

The synthetic map of the current merger and non-merger areas in Castilla-La Mancha indicates the occasional cases of non-merger pronunciation in merger areas, as well as the communities where the merger was documented in any of the original maps, since that presence of the merger is already a symptom of an ongoing process. In view of the map, it is clear that Ciudad Real, along with Albacete — except in some northern points that align with Cuenca —, forms the Castilian-Manchegan area with a more consolidated *yeísmo.* This area covers the south of the region,[7] goes up through Toledo and penetrates into the west of Guadalajara from the south towards the north, undoubtedly encouraged by its closeness to Madrid, and through the west of Cuenca. In Toledo the phonological distinction between /ʎ/ and /ʝ/ is consistently preserved in the three western communities previously indicated, on the border with Extremadura, south of the river Tajo, and the points north of the river that share the Castilian phonological distinction, which were also non-merger areas in the ALPI. And, although Cuenca and Guadalajara are still non-merger strongholds, an undeniably eastern feature, they both already show significant outbreaks and even subareas of stable *yeísmo*.

[7] Although there are cases of inconsistent phonological distinction in TO[ledo] 404, C[iudad]R[eal] 104, 302, A[l]B[acete] 307, 308 and 407, more common in men than in women.



Map 9: Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* in the ALeCMan. Synthesis of the previous maps.[8]

4. *Yeísmo* in the ADiM

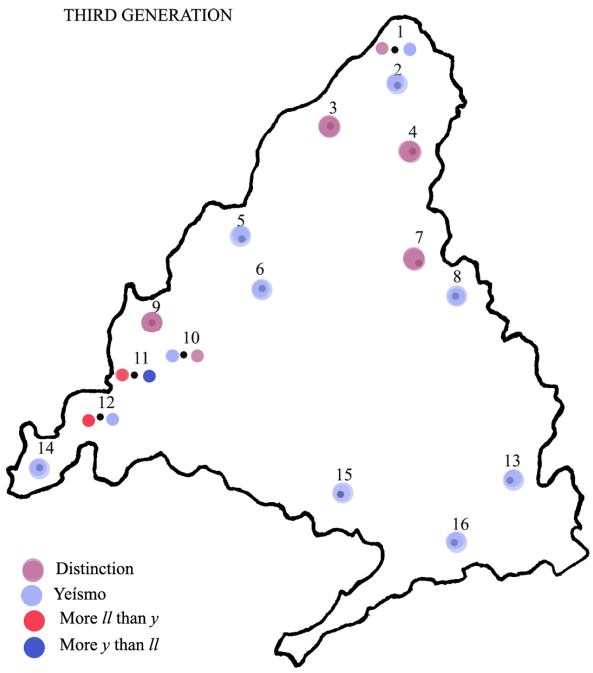
The four Madrilenian survey points of the ALPI barely allowed the researchers to do a linguistic diagnosis of the area, but were insufficient to survey the region in detail — a task better suited for a regional atlas. The central strip of the province remained unsurveyed and leaves us with no way of characterizing what was happening between the two non-merger points of the north and the two merger points of the south

[8] In the maps showing responses from both male and female informants, the big circle means an equal response from both informants, the medium-sized circle means the response is from only one of the informants (with that from the female informant first) and several small dots represent several responses from the same informant (the first ones belonging to the woman).

(Map 2), since, although metropolitan Madrid takes up part of the center of the region, there is still a good number of rural communities that have not been surveyed where it could be expected to record a multiplicity of realizations similar to those found in Toledo and Ciudad Real.

In this sense, the surveys carried out for the ADiM in a network of 16 municipalities make it possible to examine in detail the progress of the change in its geography. With the knowledge that the dialectal speech varieties have been undergoing for decades a fast paced process of convergence with urban standard speech, and that this process must be quite advanced among the youth and the more educated individuals, we decided to work with six informants in each community, a man and a woman from each generation (García Mouton & Molina Martos 2009). The age difference should reveal information about the linguistic change in apparent time, as in fact did happen when analyzing the evolution of *yeísmo* in Madrid: the contrastive study of the three generational groups surveyed reveals, in a single synchronic cut, that the process is well advanced among speakers over 55 years of age and is in its final stages in the two younger generations, who have been more exposed to the standard speech due to their higher level of formal education and mobility.

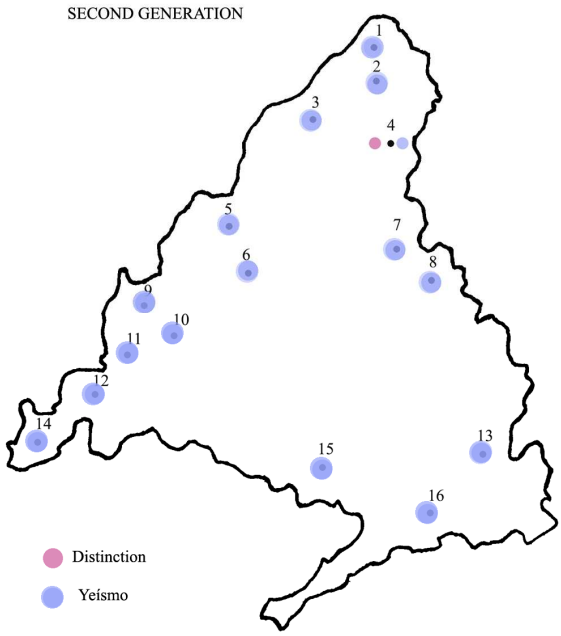
Map 10, based on data from the ADiM, shows how the phonological distinction has survived among informants over 55 in spite of the 70-year time lapse between the two fieldwork surveys, and with a geographical distribution that reproduces that of the 1930s. Non-merger towns are located to the north (Mangirón, Buitrago de Lozoya, Lozoya, Patones, Alalpardo) and west of the region (Santa Mª de la Alameda, Valdemorillo), where the southernmost communities close to Ávila (Robledo de Chavela, San Martín de Valdeiglesias), show signs of the phonological merger.



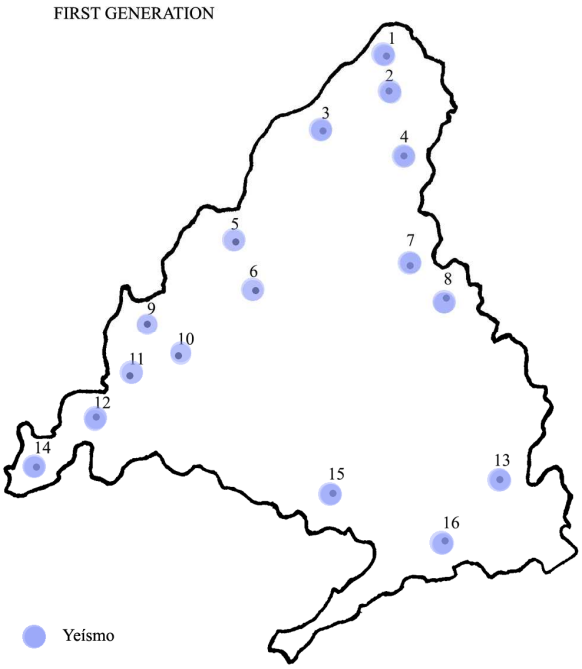
Map 10. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* among the third generation [ADiM]. Synthesis of maps *gallo, bolsillo, cuchillo* for women and *caballo, bolsillo, gavilla* for men.

However, in the two younger generations the process has gained a lot of momentum, consolidating the phonological change, as shown in maps 11 and 12 regarding, respectively, the second (36-54) and first generation (20-35). In the phonological contexts analyzed (maps for *bolsillo*, *hollín* and *cuchillo*), all the speakers from the second generation show *yeísmo*, with the exception of the female informant from Patones, who has kept the pronunciation [ʎ] for *ll* and showed a positive awareness of that pronunciation which undoubtedly had been decisive in her conservatism. The process is complete among younger speakers surveyed for the ADiM, who show a total merger, without any trace of preservation of the lateral consonant.[9]

[9] They have even developed merger realizations with varying degrees of relaxation and front pronunciation, in some cases close to those recorded in Toledan and Andalusian speech varieties.



Map 11. Phonological distinction and yeísmo among the second generation [ADiM]. Synthesis of maps *bolsillo*, *hollín*, *cuchillo*.



Map 12. Phonological distinction and *yeísmo* among the first generation [ADiM]. Synthesis of maps *bolsillo*, *hollín*, *cuchillo*.

5. Conclusions

The comparison between the results of the ALeCMan and those of Navarro Tomás' map reveals a significant advance of the /ʎ/-/j̯/ merger in the years between the ALPI and regional atlas surveys, not only in the cities but also in rural Castilian-Manchegan speech varieties, even in traditionally non-merger eastern areas. Furthermore, the synthetic map of the ALeCMan confirms that the geographical direction of this advance partially coincides with the one proposed by the classical studies, from south to north, while Madrid — along with the city of Guadalajara — acts as an irradiation centre for *yeísmo.* However, since traditional geolinguistic data document the more conservative language level, we must assume that the merger is far more widespread among the younger and better-educated Castilian-Manchegan speakers.[10] This is precisely what the ADiM surveys — where the advance of the change can be sequentially traced throughout three generations — show regarding the Madrilenian communities. Had we limited ourselves to examine the pronunciation of the older informants, whose non-merger and merger realizations remain as proportionally balanced as in the 1930s, we would be forced to conclude that no major advance had been undergone since then and that the region of Madrid is still a merger area with remnants of the non-merger pronunciation, but the virtually complete absence of the phonological distinction in the two younger generations illustrates the final stages of the change.

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[10] These conclusions confirm the map traced by Isabel Molina (2010) regarding the present state of *yeísmo* in Castilian varieties.

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