Discourse markers of rejection in three varieties of Spanish

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ᴱᴺᴳ **Abstract:** In the study of discourse markers in Spanish, a field with great vitality in the last few decades, it is common to overlook the expressions used to accept or reject a proposal, suggestion or petition, often included within the broader functions of agreement and disagreement. These answers, used in an informal oral interactive context, exhibit a rich dialectal variety. Due to the transitory nature of their contexts of use, it is difficult to formally register them for further study, especially when looking at them from a Pan-Hispanic perspective. For this reason, an anonymous survey was designed in order to ask native speakers about their familiarity with a series of discourse markers used to answer "no" to a proposal. The questionnaire was disseminated in Spain, Mexico and Colombia, specifically around the capital areas. Participants (N=223) evaluated from 1 (I would never use it) to 5 (I use it frequently) a series of possible responses, and they were offered the option to provide some other answers not included in the original list. Results show that, while some discourse markers are used to a certain degree in the three varieties, others are widely used in only one of these dialects. The opportunity to offer new expressions was very productive, especially in the case of participants from Colombia and Mexico. Although this study focuses on three particular regions, it opens the door to a comparative analysis of discourse markers of negation throughout the Spanish speaking world.
Keywords: discourse markers, negation, varieties of Spanish, agreement and disagreement

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1. Introduction

When looking at studies on Spanish discourse markers in Spanish, it is clear that this field has enjoyed an abundance of attention in the last few decades. Since the seminal article by Martín Zorraquino and Portolés (1999), the quantity of works has grown exponentially. A high number of the studies about discourse markers put an emphasis on polysemic particles: the amount of works that can focus on just the particle *pues* is always remarkable, even if looking only at recent years (Flores Ferrán 2014, Guevara 2015, Muñoz Medrano 2017, Raymond 2018, Vande Casteele and Fuentes Rodríguez 2019, Vázquez Carranza 2019, Escamilla 2021 or Haboud Buchamar 2022). Another group of works concentrate on specific functions, for instance Domínguez García (2014), on "marcadores de cierre" (closing markers) or Murillo Ornat (2016) about "reformuladores" (markers of rephrasing). There are, however, some areas in which there are still some research gaps that need to be filled, for example the functions of agreement and disagreement, and, more specifically, negative markers to express rejection, which are the focal point of this work.

Discourse markers were defined by Schiffrin as "sequentially dependent elements which brackets units of talk" (1987: 31), however, there is not an agreement about what falls within this category. As stated by Pons Bordería (2016: 77):

> The study of discourse markers does not constitute a unitary approach. Significant disagreements can be found among scholars regarding the linguistic units which must be considered discourse markers, the dimensions involved in their study, or even the distributional features of the class.

Regardless of these inconsistencies, there seems to be an agreement that discourse markers are often grammaticalized (Ruiz Gurillo 2010), although some of them not completely. For instance, *o sea* would be a completely grammaticalized particle, while *no me digas* admits change between *tú/usted*. These expres-

sions operate at the speech level: they help the listeners infer the intentions of the speaker and sometimes they have a different meaning when it is not being used pragmatically. For instance, *anda* is a discourse marker when the speaker is showing surprise, but it is not when used in a sentence with the meaning 'he/she walks'. Also, while some of the most canonical particles are monoverbal (i.e. *pues*, mentioned above), there are a high number of them that consist of two or more words. In the *Diccionario de Marcadores Discursivos* (Holgado Lage 2017), it is possible to find *por la cuenta que me tiene* (page 216) or *para qué nos vamos a engañar* (page 201), discourse markers that are compounded of six words. For the present work, a discourse marker will be considered in a broader sense, meaning an often-short expression, grammaticalized or in the process of grammaticalization, that connects utterances while stating meaning relations among them, and is relevant at the speech level. With this definition in mind, it is possible -and necessary- to include longer expressions, such as the ones showed in the examples, and also particles of agreement and disagreement, in the dominion of discourse markers.

The goal of the current work is to examine the existing situation regarding discourse markers of disagreement (expressing rejection through a negative marker) in three varieties of Spanish: Spain, Mexico and Colombia. To do so, we will analyze the results of a field work conducted in those three countries, in which participants were asked to evaluate their use of certain expressions. There were some specific preliminary questions that we were hoping the results would provide an answer for: first, we wanted to know which of the studied markers are used in all of the varieties, and which were specific to a particular dialectal region. We also wanted to find out if there are discourse markers that do not appear in the literature but are somehow widely used in some of the varieties, and therefore we gave participants the option to provide new expressions, as will be explained in the methodology section. It is important to put a focus on different regions, since discourse markers, especially the ones that operate mostly in the informal oral speech, are known for their diatopic variation and, in some particular functions, can be extremely short-lived.

As outlined below in the theoretical framework section, there is a lack of studies that focus on the informal functions of agreement and disagreement, prototypical of the oral discourse, especially from a Pan-Hispanic perspective. We hope to fill part of that void, and, at the same time, shed light on three aspects: the wide variety of expressions that can be used to reject a statement or proposal, the innovation that often occurs with expressions of negation (especially among young people) and the relevance of painting a synchronic picture of the current linguistic situation regarding this particular function.

2. Theoretical framework

The functions of agreement and disagreement, or at least the former, have been considered somehow related to discourse markers since Martín Zorraquino and Portolés (1999) grouped *bueno, bien, vale, de acuerdo, conforme, cabalmente, definitivamente, okey, venga* as part of "marcadores conversacionales de modalidad deóntica". However, because of the restrictions of the deontic modality, there was no room for disagreement in that list, and even the word "agreement" was never mentioned. The expressions in that list, in any case, belong to the realm of agreement and disagreement, two understudied functions regarding discourse markers in Spanish, as pointed out by Porroche Ballesteros (2011: 159): "In the Spanish discursive markers classifications it is not usual to take into account the notions of agreement and disagreement".

The reasons behind the absence of works about discourse markers in these functions are unclear, but they could be related to the fact that "agreement" and "disagreement" have not been traditionally considered one of the traditional groups of discourse markers in the literature. The *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes* (Instituto Cervantes 2006-07), which took more into consideration the oral discourse as it is a central part of the learning of a second language, also grouped the discourse markers, and also did not include agreement or disagreement as functions. There is nonetheless a group called "de refuerzo argumentativo" (argumentative reinforcement) that includes *claro* and *por supuesto*, two of the most prototypical expressions of agreement in the Spanish speaking world (Holgado Lage and Serrano Reyes 2020). Part of the problem with these closed compartments is that they do not allow much flexibility in the number of markers. Martí Sánchez (2008) fixes this problem by organizing all these particles in three more encompassing groups: discourse connectors, pragmatic operators and conversational markers. The agreement and disagreement functions, although not specifically mentioned, would be included in the third group. The *Diccionario de Conectores y Operadores del Español* (Fuentes Rodríguez 2009), as indicated by its name, classifies discourse markers in two broad groups: link words and operators. All of the markers that express agreement and disagreement are included in the second group, in a subgroup called "modales" (modal). In Calsamiglia Blancafort and Tusón Valls (1999: 239) there is a group called "marcadores de desacuerdo", in which they include an extensive list of expressions to disagree in Spanish: *bueno, pero; vaya, no, tampoco, nunca, en absoluto, qué va, para nada, por favor; anda ya, ni hablar, ni modo* (some of these are actually two discourse markers together). Although the focus of their work is not discourse markers, it is relevant that there is a specific group for disagreement, unlike in other sources.

Cantamutto and Fainstein (2019) focus their research on discourse markers of agreement in the context of Spanish as a second language. The authors' object of study is the agreement function, as in some other works analyzed here. However, they mention some disagreement functions, such as some contexts of *ok* used to show discontent and, occasionally, to be rude (2019: 164). This work might not be extremely pertinent since our focus is the function of rejection, but it is worthy of mention since the field of Spanish as a Second Language could definitely benefit from a more Pan-Hispanic point of view regarding discourse markers, including less-studied functions like agreement and disagreement, and the aforementioned *Plan Curricular*

(2006-07) could use an update regarding these expressions. Muniz da Cunha Moreno (1998) uses a comparative approach between Spanish and Italian, however, this author employs the term *señales discursivas* (discursive signals), to include expressions of agreement in both languages, since these expressions have been traditionally categorized as *profasi* in Italian grammar studies (Bernini, 1995), therefore showing that these expressions can be studied as a category independent from discourse markers.

Another possible cause as to why these functions have not been more researched is the difficulty of restricting what the notions of agreement and disagreement really are and what should be included in them. For this particular topic, Porroche Ballesteros (2011: 160) summarizes the wide range of this function in her article:

> Consideramos el acuerdo como una función pragmática que supone la aceptación de un juicio (opinión, evaluación, información...), de una propuesta (petición, invitación, ofrecimiento, sugerencia...), del hecho mismo del discurso (enunciación, tema, estructuración...) o de una situación contextual.

According to the author, *agreement* is a pragmatic function that entails the acceptance of a judgment (opinion, evaluation, information), a proposal (petition, invitation, offer, suggestion), the discourse fact (statement, topic, structure) or a contextual situation. The same could be applied to the disagreement function. The author considers focusing on these notions from an "adjacent pair" point of view: judgment/conformity, proposal/acceptance (Porroche Ballesteros 2011: 161), while emphasizing the dialogic nature of these functions. Following this classification, the present work would be based on a proposal/rejection adjacent pair. Following this author, we include several options for what the proposal is: an invitation, a suggestion, a question... But in all cases, we are considering a negative response or a rejection to said proposal.

Porroche Ballesteros's article ends up focusing on four markers of agreement (*bueno*, *bien*, *vale* and *de acuerdo*), same as Cantamutto and Fainstein (2017) and Holgado Lage and Serrano Reyes (2020), as there seems to be less literature that analyzes the disagreement function of the language. Even in the aforementioned classifications of discourse markers, there were not many examples that could be connected to this purpose. Schwenter (2003), on the other hand, has worked with the particles *no* and *tampoco*. While he focuses purely on negation and the non-canonical use of *tampoco* that does not include a negation before, it is mentioned here as a main work on the use of *no*, a prototypical disagreement particle. The following example, extracted from the article, clearly illustrates the use of *tampoco* that he refers to: A: "Pablo está borracho" B: "Tampoco ha bebido tanto" (Schwenter 2003: 1006). Another work on *no* by Moyer (2000) mentions different uses of this word to express disagreement or ask for agreement in bilingual speakers of Gibraltar. It is important to note that the author includes a whole section to explain why the particle *no* is actually a discourse marker (Moyer 2000: 488), which aligns with what was said before about these markers not being traditionally included in classifications of discourse markers. Another interesting article by García-Ramón (2018) examines the use of the particle *uy* as a sign of disagreement. We did not include *uy* in our list of disagreement expressions since it is generally used as a surprise one, but it is a fascinating analysis of the contexts in which *uy* is used to disagree.

Pérez-Salazar has worked extensively in markers of disagreement. The focus of her work is phraseology units, which, in the context of negation and disagreement, intersect with what discourse markers are, something that Holgado Lage pointed out in her work about *ni* expressions (Holgado Lage 2021). The phraseological units that Pérez-Salazar works with follow a pattern that begin with the word *ni*, studying them diachronically. In one of her works (Pérez-Salazar 2009), the focal point is in *ni hablar*, *ni pensar*, *ni soñar*, and in a more recent one (Pérez-Salazar 2017), she uses *ni por lumbre* and some similar ones as models for rejection and negation in Spanish from a diachronic perspective. To finish with *ni* expressions, that have received more attention than other markers of negation, Holgado Lage and Rojas (2016) explore the uses of *ni hablar* not only as a form of disagreement but also as a form of agreement in Río de la Plata.

While there are general works that focus more broadly on the function of disagreement (without studying discourse markers specifically), one of the problems we wanted to acknowledge with the present work is the amount of dialectal variability that exists and has never been registered in the literature. As we have seen in this section, most of the works on agreement and disagreement focus on established particles, generally used in Peninsular Spanish. It is important to study and register the incredible diversity of expressions that logically will emerge from a situation in which speakers in more than twenty Spanish speaking countries linguistically engage with these oral, informal and dialogic functions of the language.

3. Methodology

In order to answer the questions mentioned in the introduction and reach our objectives, a survey was designed to be completed by native speakers of Spanish. The aim was to verify their level of familiarity with some expressions of disagreement in a rejection context, while obtaining data about other phrases that did not appear in the original list. After reviewing the existing sources, including the ones described in the previous section, dictionaries of discourse markers like Fuentes Rodríguez (2009), Holgado Lage (2017) and Santos Río (2003), and also other works like Landone (2009: 287), it seemed logical that some regional expressions might have been missing and not registered in the literature, especially since many of the works on agreement and disagreement are written by authors from the Peninsular Spanish region. Therefore, we also received the input of linguists from several varieties of Spanish, to produce our own inventory. The list could be more extensive but we considered that the amount selected represented the majority of the Span-

ish-speaking world. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to provide new phrases that were not part of the main selection.

The fieldwork (IRB protocol #0000007574) was conducted during the Spring and Summer of 2017. Participants (N=223) were adults from three different Spanish speaking countries: Spain, Mexico, and Colombia. They were required to answer some questions, via the anonymous survey, about their use of discourse markers of rejection. Initially the work began by recruiting a number of participants online through contacts in the selected countries, but eventually more participants were needed from all age groups and social backgrounds, especially in Mexico and Colombia, as the online recruitment was less successful than in Spain. Therefore, the research was finalized in person in those three countries, mostly around the capital areas: Madrid, Mexico City and Bogota. Some of the surveys were printed as hardcopies for participants that did not have access to a computer. Afterwards, the results were uploaded to the online system, so that it was possible to analyze all of the surveys together. By the time the research was completed, the participants were distributed by country as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by country

Country	Number of participants	Percentage of total
Spain	90	40.36%
Mexico	66	29.60%
Colombia	67	30.04%

The survey consisted of two parts: In the first stage, participants evaluated some negation markers from 1 (I would never use it) to 5 (I use it frequently). Originally there were 18 expressions to respond negatively to a proposal, invitation, question or suggestion, in an informal context: *anda ya, de ninguna manera, nanay, ni a palos, ni cagando, ni de coña, ni en pedo, ni hablar, ni madres, ni modo, ni pal coño, ni pensarlo, no jodas, no mames, no pues, para nada, qué va, venga ya*. However, not all of the discourse markers in the list were relevant for our results. Some of the expressions were not broadly used or recognized in any of the three dialects studied, which was shown when looking at the results, because they were given a value of less than 2 in all of the three variants. Therefore, we will not analyze them here. The final list that is pertinent for this study consists of twelve markers that we will examine in depth in the next two sections. It is relevant to note that *no* was not included as a possible response since it is a Pan-Hispanic marker extensively used. There was a second section in this first part of the survey in which the participants evaluated the same discourse markers but as a response to a statement. However, the results did not show a significant difference among both functions, so for this analysis we will be focusing on the negative response to a proposition. A sample sentence was provided in the prompt, in order to guide the participants in their responses. The restriction of the context was important, as some of these phrases are not considered "polite" in a formal context, a few are even curse words in some dialects. In Figure 1 there is an extract of this first part of the survey.

Figure 1. Screenshot of first part of the survey

* 1. Valore estas posibles respuestas **negativas** desde 1 ("no lo diría nunca") hasta 5 ("lo digo con frecuencia") para una proposición en un contexto informal. Si sus respuestas de la PARTE 1 aparecen en la lista, valórelas igualmente.

Ejemplo de proposición: *¿Me puedes/podés prestar mil dólares?*

	1 (no lo diría nunca)	2	3	4	5 (lo digo con frecuencia)
Anda ya	○	○	○	○	○
De ninguna manera	○	○	○	○	○
Nanay	○	○	○	○	○
Ni a palos	○	○	○	○	○
Ni cagando	○	○	○	○	○
Ni de coña	○	○	○	○	○
Ni en pedo	○	○	○	○	○
Ni hablar	○	○	○	○	○
Ni madres	○	○	○	○	○

In the second part of the survey, participants had the opportunity to provide variations of the markers above or new locutions that were not listed. Also, they were expected to provide an evaluation of those expressions, not taken into consideration in the analysis section since a vast majority of the participants gave the highest value to the expressions they provided. There was an option to include three of these variations, as seen in Figure 2. This part of the survey resulted in a list of very innovative expressions, some of them not studied before, that will be analyzed and discussed in the next two sections.

Figure 2. Screenshot of second part of the survey

4. Results

Before the quantitative analysis of the results, it is relevant to explain that this data merely analyzes a portion of an extensive fieldwork that includes both expressions of agreement and disagreement, with the long-term objective to be conducted in other countries of the Spanish speaking world. For this particular work, we will be studying only markers of rejection in the three aforementioned countries.

4.1. Pan-Hispanic discourse markers

After reviewing the responses to the survey, there were six expressions that were used to a certain degree in the three varieties studied: *de ninguna manera, nanay, ni hablar, ni pensarlo, no jodas, para nada*. To be considered a Pan-Hispanic marker, the values needed to be 2 or higher in every one of the regions. Values between 1 and 2 are considered low use and therefore not part of the repertoire commonly used in that area. The six markers and the values given can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Results from the markers that are relevant Pan-Hispanically
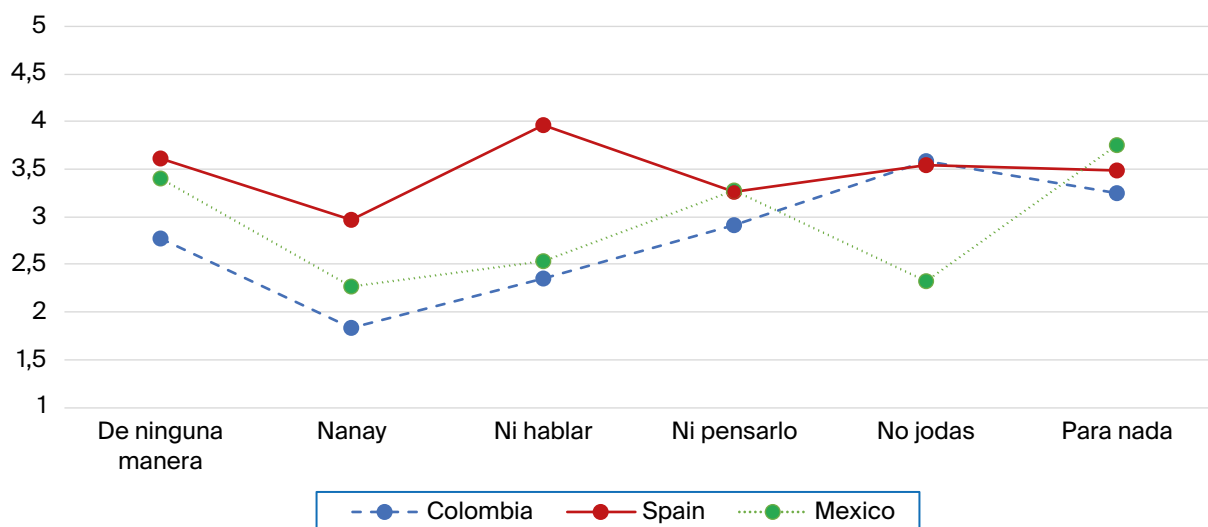
Ni hablar is more popular in Spain and *no jodas* received a very similar value in both Spain and Colombia, while *nanay* was by far the particle with the lowest values overall, and the only value lower than 2 in one of the

varieties: 1.83 in Colombia. Nevertheless, because of how close this expression was to the values in the other two regions (2.27 in Mexico and 2.97 in Spain), and since it did not pass the value of 3 in any of the three varieties (therefore we cannot consider it a prototypical marker), we decided that it was appropriate to assign it to the Pan-Hispanic markers, simply noting that it is less commonly used than the others. The full breakdown of values can be seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Values given to Pan-Hispanic markers

Discourse marker	Colombia value	Mexico value	Spain value
De ninguna manera	2.77	3.40	3.62
Nanay	1.83	2.27	2.97
Ni hablar	2.35	2.53	3.96
Ni pensarlo	2.92	3.28	3.27
No jodas	3.58	2.32	3.55
Para nada	3.25	3.75	3.49

4.2. Prototypical discourse markers

Six other particles to express disagreement in the context of rejection to a proposition were found to be prototypical of a particular region: *anda ya, ni de coña, ni madres, no mames, qué va, venga ya*. In order to be considered prototypical, the values had to show a 3 or higher in one of the varieties and stay lower than 2 in the other two. Five of these expressions follow that pattern, the only exception being *qué va*, which is considered widely used in Spain and Colombia, having received more than 3 in the survey for both areas. The six markers and their values can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Prototypical markers in one (or two) of the varieties
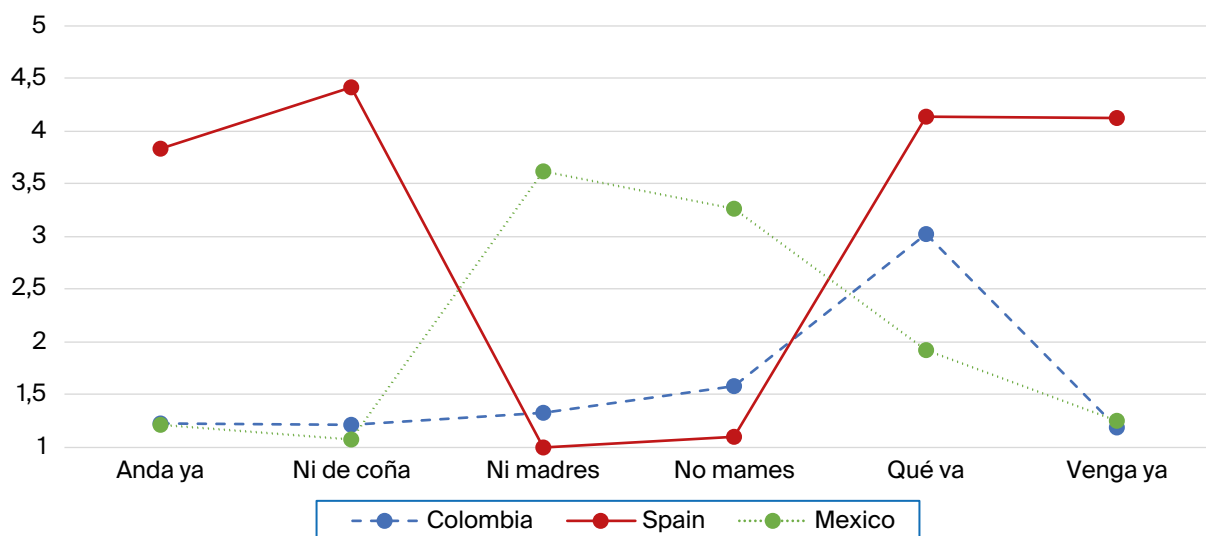
As shown in the graph, *anda ya*, *ni de coña* and *venga ya* are prototypical of Peninsular Spanish with extremely low values in the other two regions. *Ni madres* and *no mames* are prototypical of Mexican Spanish, although more recognized in Colombia than Spain. *Qué va* is more used in Spain than Colombia but, as mentioned above, was given a value higher than 3 in Colombia, so it could be considered prototypical of those two places. The full breakdown of values can be seen in Table 3:

Table 3. Values given to prototypical markers

Discourse marker	Colombia value	Mexico value	Spain value
Anda na	1.23	1.22	3.83
Ni de coña	1.21	1.07	4.42
Ni madres	1.33	3.62	1.00

Discourse marker	Colombia value	Mexico value	Spain value
No mames	1.58	3.27	1.10
Qué va	3.02	1.92	4.14
Venga ya	1.19	1.25	4.13

4.3. New expressions in Colombia

One of the concerns when looking at the results was that there is a prototypical discourse marker of disagreement in Colombia that had been overlooked when preparing the survey. Therefore, the opportunity for participants to provide new expressions was extremely important for this country. While not every participant supplied new markers, we compiled a significant list from those who did. Here, we only include those expressions that were registered two or more times, since one time could be a sign of a participant's own idiolect and not a representation of what is said in the region. The particles provided from participants in Colombia are:

– Ni loco/a (4 instances)
– Pailas (3 instances)
– Norte (3 instances)
– Nocas - nokas (3 instances)
– Ni de fundas (3 instances)
– Ni puel (putas) (2 instances)
– Ni en sueños (2 instances)
– No hay riesgo - ni de riesgo (2 instances)

We separated variation in the marker with a hyphen, and used a parenthesis when one of the variants added a last word. Some interesting facts about these responses are that there does not seem to be a widely used marker provided by a high number of participants, since the expression with the highest number of appearances is only registered four times.

4.4. New expressions in Mexico

Mexican participants offered a shorter list of new expressions, but they were also remarkable:

– Nel (pastel) (15 instances)
– Ni loco/a – ni de loco/a (4 instances)
– Ni de pedo (3 instances)
– Ni en broma – ni de broma (3 instances)
– Ni sueñes – ni soñando (2 instances)

According to the results from this section of the survey, the discourse marker *nel* is highly used in Mexico as a negative expression and was overlooked both in the consulted sources and also when preparing the list. It would be necessary to do further research about this particle to grasp a better understanding of its use and extension. For now, some more information is provided about the participants that included it in their list, twelve of them in the form *nel* and three in the longer variant *nel pastel*. By looking at Table 4, it seems that the expression is used in all ages, tending towards younger, and by both male and female speakers.

Table 4. Age and gender of participants who provided *nel (pastel)*

Marker	age	gender
Nel pastel	45/54	F
Nel	+65	M
Nel pastel	35/44	F
Nel pastel	45/54	M
Nel	18/24	M
Nel	25/34	F
Nel	55/64	M
Nel	25/34	M
Nel	18/24	F
Nel	18/24	M
Nel	18/24	M
Nel	18/24	M

4.5. New expressions in Spain

The least interesting list was the one provided by participants from Spain. This is, to a certain extent, logical, since a lot of the literature is based on Peninsular Spanish and therefore most of the markers used in this region were included in the original survey:

- Ni lo sueñes – ni en sueños (3 instances)
- Ni harto/harta (a) vino – ni borracho/a (3 instances)
- Ni loco/a (2 instances)
- Qué dices (2 instances)
- Y una mierda (2 instances)

As mentioned before, both the first and the third expressions in the list were also in the Mexican Spanish and Colombian Spanish surveys. It is significant to notice the wide variety of expressions that can be used to reject a suggestion, not only in Spain but in the three regions, that are not generally included in the literature.

5. Discussion

In this section we will analyze some of the results, comparing them with the research questions mentioned at the beginning of this work. As seen in the analysis section, we found that six markers are used to a certain degree (value of 2 or higher) in the three regions pertinent to this study: *De ninguna manera, nanay, ni hablar, ni pensarlo, no jodas* and *para nada. Ni loco/a* and also expressions related to dreaming (*ni sueñes, ni soñando, ni en sueños, ni lo sueñes*) are included in the lists provided by the participants for the three varieties, an indication that these markers should have been part of the survey. Of the first six, the highest rates were given to *para nada*, *ni pensarlo* and *de ninguna manera*, with the last being a little lower probably because it is usually more formal than the instructions of the survey indicated. This was expected since they appeared regularly in the sources consulted. Some of these results were predicted (like the high values for *de ninguna manera*, *ni pensarlo* and *para nada*), others were not. *Ni hablar* was thought to be a Peninsular Spanish prototypical marker, however, results show that it is used in Mexico and Colombia as well. It was unexpected that *no jodas* had a higher value in Colombia than in Spain, since it is normally considered a Peninsular marker. Also, it was surprising that *nanay* was used in all three dialects, although the value is slightly lower than 2 for Colombia (the only case of a value that low for the Pan-Hispanic markers). We still considered it part of this group, even if not a very commonly used expression. There is, therefore, a relevant number of expressions that are used to a certain degree in all of the studied regions.

The prototypical discourse markers for every region were those that received a value of 3 or higher in one variety but less than 2 in the other ones. We found three that are used mostly in Peninsular Spanish: *anda ya*, *ni de coña* and *qué va*, all with very low values in the other two varieties. *Ni de coña*, at 4.42, was the highest value given to any marker in the survey. Two expressions, *ni madres* and *no mames*, are used in Mexican Spanish, and were valued extremely low by the Spanish participants (including the lowest possible, 1.00, for *ni madres*). However, the Colombian speakers accepted these two expressions a little more, 1.33 and 1.58 respectively. Those numbers are in the low range, so they are still considered typical from the Mexican variety, but maybe because of the proximity or a higher exposition to Mexican media, the Colombian speakers were able to recognize them more often. *Qué va* was a particular case, with really high values in Peninsular Spanish (4.14) and low in Mexican Spanish (1.92), and around 3 (3.02) in Colombia. The decision has been to consider it a Peninsular expression of disagreement with frequent use in the Colombian region as well.

When looking at the lists of discourse markers that the participants provided to express rejection, we noticed that in Colombian Spanish there was not one that was overwhelmingly used. Since in the analysis of the results there was not one that was just prototypical of this variety, the hypothesis was that maybe one would be provided in this section. This part of the survey was optional, therefore, just six or seven instances would have been enough to consider it a marker widely known. However, no expressions appeared more than four times. Apart from the markers that were also provided in the Mexican and Peninsular lists (*ni loco/a* and some variants with *sueños* or *soñar*), the most common ones were *pailas*, *norte*, *nocas* (also written *nokas*) and *ni de fundas*. The first one had four instances and the rest had three instances, not a very high occurrence. *Pailas*, only registered in Colombia, could be a prototypical marker, but it would be necessary to ask more speakers of the area about their particular use of that word. It is also notable that *norte* and *nocas* (or *nokas*), both extensions of the negation word *no*, a common word formation in some regions (for the agreement section of the survey, *simón* was offered as an alternative to *sí*) were provided in all cases by young participants, in the 18-24 years old range. Further research would be necessary to establish the extent to which these expressions are used. It seems like the most common discourse markers used for rejection in this variety would be the Pan-Hispanic ones.

For the Mexican portion of the survey, however, we encountered what seems to be a very well established and widely used expression that was not included in the original list: *nel*, with twelve occurrences, and the variant *nel pastel*, with three occurrences. This could have been expected in the Colombian section, but not in the Mexican section. A quick search in the corpus CREA (Real Academia Española) offers 69 concordances for *nel*. However, when eliminating the texts in Italian, the archaic ones or the ones referring to the first name or last name of a person, only 26 concordances are left, all from Mexico. The annotated version of the corpus, however, still marks them as "extranjerismo" (foreign word) instead of an adverb, even in these cases in which it works as a synonym of *no*, probably because of the amount of results in Italian. It does appear in

the *Diccionario of Americanismos* (Asociación de Academias de la Lengua 2010) and in the *Diccionario de Mexicanismos* (Academia Mexicana de la Lengua 2022: 519), so, even if generally overseen in the discourse markers field, as we never found any mention of it while gathering our initial list, it is registered in some sources. This seems to be an example of how prototypical markers from Latin America are often relegated to the background, keeping Peninsular at the forefront. More research like the current one is necessary to study, analyze and register the linguistic wealth of the Spanish speaking counties in the Americas. The survey also showed that this particular expression is used by both male and female speakers of all ages.

The Peninsular list, as expected, was less productive, with only three new expressions (plus the ones that were in the other two lists), registered two times each. Since there were four prototypical markers in the main list, and a lot of the available literature is produced in Spain, it is understandable that there were less markers from this region overlooked in the original survey.

6. Conclusions

This work offers some insight about the linguistic situation for the disagreement function of rejection in three of the most well-known regions of the Spanish speaking world. The main findings of the article consist on the confirmation of several Pan-Hispanic discourse markers of rejection in the regional dialects of Spain, Colombia and Mexico, along with some new expressions provided by the participants for each one of these areas.

When conducting this research, some important obstacles and challenges were encountered. To begin with, the decision to generate a survey was not without worries. Undoubtedly, the best way to record these kinds of pragmatic expressions is through sociolinguistic interviews. Because of time constraints, it was impossible to rely on this tool, especially when looking for such specific responses, so creating a survey and depending on the speakers' self-awareness of their linguistic capacities was, if somewhat limited, the best course of action.

Creating the original list was also a complicated mission: it was not easy to find literature with specific discourse markers of negation from many countries in Latin America, especially related to disagreement and rejection, and even corpora were not extremely useful, since we did not know exactly what words to look for, and there is not an abundance of recording of transcribed informal oral conversations in Latin America. At some points, we had to rely on the linguistic intuition of some colleagues from the specific countries to add some more expressions to the list. And, after reviewing the results, it is clear that the list, while thorough, could have been slightly more complete.

The final challenge when recording the data was to reach a higher number of participants in the regions of Colombia and Mexico. Thanks to a network of acquaintances and friends and being physically in the countries for a few days, we reached a satisfactory number of participants that could balance out the higher number of respondents from Spain.

Some decisions proved to be very valuable for the research: giving participants the choice of adding their own discourse markers allowed us to understand how many everyday expressions exist in each variety that are not known. It is possible that some of them are short-lived, originated in the younger population and not lasting more than one generation, but others might stay and become more stable. In any case, it was worthwhile to register them and learn about their existence.

While reviewing the results, we noticed that many of the expressions registered in the responses had never been found in the literature. Although, *a posteriori*, we could find them in some sources (such as *nel* in specific dictionaries), we did not see them during the first phase of the project. This is why there is clearly a need for more research in the field of discourse markers, particularly related to the functions of agreement and disagreement.

The world of discourse markers in Spanish is rich, substantial and ever-changing. The goal of this project, which is to show the synchronic situation of rejection markers in three Spanish speaking countries, opens the door for more work on these functions keeping a Pan-Hispanic point of view. We cannot forget that there are twenty countries in which Spanish is official, and, while there are obviously many words we have in common, the different regions present their own lexical variants and their own discourse markers, which could include their own ways to say *no* to a proposal.

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