

Pronouns of address in Costa Rican Spanish

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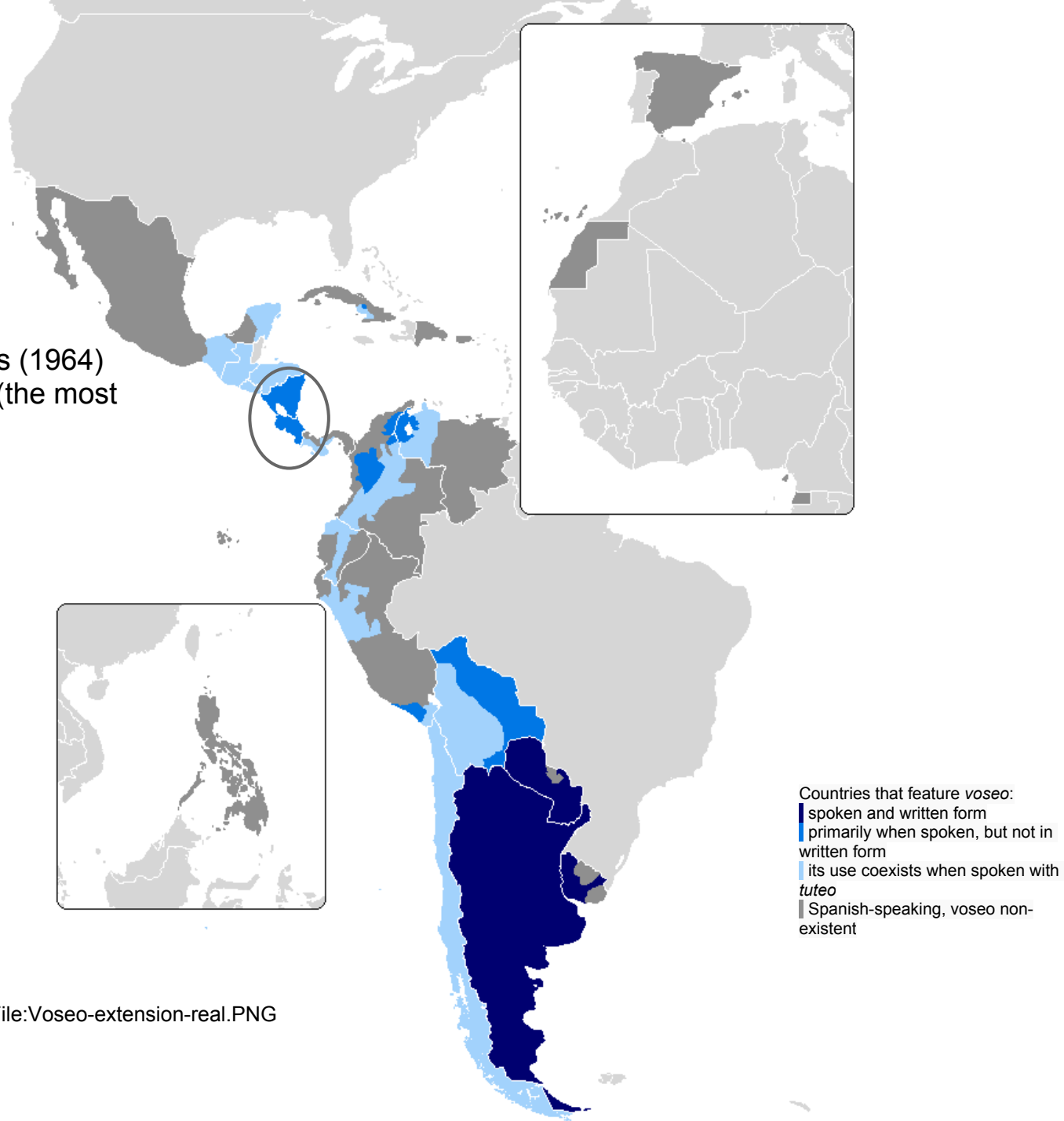


Background: Pronouns of address

- Many languages, including Spanish, codify relations of power~solidarity and/or distance~intimacy in the system of pronouns of address (Brown & Gilman 1960)
 - Some dialects: 2-way distinction (Spain, Mexico, Caribbean, Argentina, among others)
 - *Usted* vs *Tú* or *Vos*
 - Other dialects: 3 pronoun system (Chile, Uruguay, much of Central America)
 - *Usted* vs *Tú* vs *Vos*

Costa Rican voseo corresponds to Rona's (1964) Type C classification (the most common type in Latin America):

-ás
-és
-ís



Pronouns of address in Costa Rica

- Early studies report little to no *tuteo*
 - Gagini (1892), Agüero (1962), Arroyo (1971), Vargas (1974), Palma & Mathieu (1980), Quesada (1981)
- Also report that *voseo* was increasing in frequency at the time of the studies
 - Vargas (1974)
- Finally, two uses of *usted* are identified
 - Formal, [+power, -solidarity] Ud.
 - "*El otro Ud.*" (Vargas 1974:28); "*El ustededeo*" (Quesada 2010: 659-660) [+solidarity]
 - "...se trata de un usted que indica, como el vos, verdadera confianza y proximidad, presencia de una actitud sincera y ausencia de formalidad. Es curioso que éste sea el trato que se da a los animales domésticos: se toma como una relación de familiaridad, de cariño, ya que ciertamente no es de formalidad ni respeto".

Pronouns of address in Costa Rica

- *"...lo más peculiar del español costarricense actual es que el ustededeo alterna con el voseo (y últimamente el tuteo), hasta en [una] misma conversación y con los mismos interlocutores, de manera que se puede afirmar que la oposición vos-usted no se maneja...según las tradicionales reglas sociolingüísticas que giran en torno al eje solidaridad-distancionamiento..." (Quesada 2010: 667)*
- *Ustededeo patterns according to pragmatic-functional factors (Moser 2010)*

Pronouns of address in Costa Rica cont.

- More recent studies note the growing use of *tuteo* (although still at low levels)
 - Possible influence of writing and/or mass media (Quesada 2010; Moser 2002)
 - *Tú* is reported by some speakers with friends, as well as in some [+power] contexts (police, profesor, etc) (Thomas 2008)
 - A *licenciado* reports using *tú* with coworkers
 - While a 26 year old woman notes that she uses *tú* with her father, only "*para vacilar*".
 - Thomas (2008) consists of only 20 surveys, so the results are probably not generalizable.
 - At the same time, there are still negative reactions towards *tuteo*
 - "*El tú no me gusta usarlo porque no suena natural.*" (present study)
 - *Tú* is also viewed as pedantic and effeminate (Solano Rojas 1995)

Data collection

A screenshot of a survey form titled "Encuesta: Costa Rica". The form has a light gray header with the title. Below the header, it says "Favor de contestar las siguientes preguntas ..." followed by a red asterisk and the word "Required". Below that, it says "Parte 1 de 3". At the bottom, there is a label "Edad: *" followed by a dropdown menu.

- 219 surveys collected, both in person (150) and online (69)
 - 209 surveys included in the final analysis
- 16 interlocutors, each with a common and uncommon verb (based on Davies 2006)
 - 32 total items
 - Choice of verb form - all in present tense (see Bishop & Michnowicz 2010)
 - Con su compañero/a de trabajo/universidad: ¿Quieres/Querés/Quiere ir a comer?
- Open-ended question
 - ¿Cómo decide si va a usar *vos*, *tú* o *Ud.* con otra persona?

Survey methodology

- Surveys can be problematic
 - Participants may respond with what they think they say, or with what they consider correct
- Most recent studies, however, take survey data as insight into speakers' attitudes towards certain forms
 - Thomas (2008)
- Studies have shown that, while speakers may over/underestimate the frequency of use, the *pattern* of use is (more or less) accurately portrayed
 - Bishop & Michnowicz (2010); Lamanna (2012)

Quantitative analysis

- Statistical analysis with R and Goldvarb
 - Logistical regression with Goldvarb
 - Why?
 - / function allows for ignoring missing tokens
 - Mixed model not as useful with survey data of this type
 - Dependent variable: Form of address (*tú* vs. other, etc)
 - Independent variables:
 - Interlocutor
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Social class
 - Region (San José vs Other)
 - Verb frequency (common vs. uncommon)
 - Conditional inference trees with R (see Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012)
 - Crosstabs on steroids

About social class

- Participant social class, as measured by education, was fairly consistent
 - Paper surveys mostly collected around the University of Costa Rica
 - Parents' occupations were used as an (imperfect) proxy
 - Divided into three groups
 - Higher: jobs requiring significant education (lawyer, doctor, professor, etc.)
 - Middle: jobs requiring some formal education/training (technician, empresario, etc)
 - Lower: jobs requiring little to no formal training (limpieza, chofer, etc)

Research questions

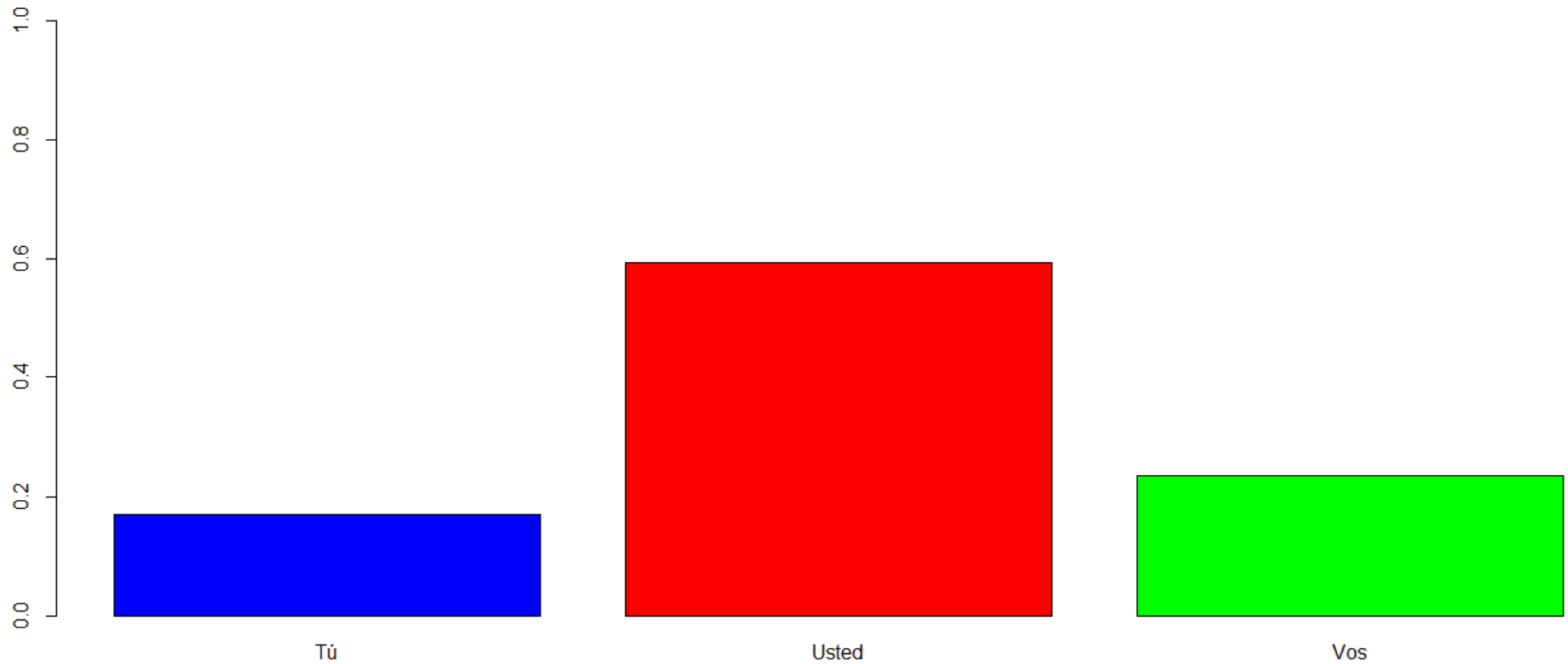
Is *tú* increasing among younger speakers, as indicated by some previous research?

- Hypothesis: survey data will reveal an increase in tuteo among younger speakers

Are younger Costa Rican speakers using more informal pronouns (vs. *Ud.*), as has been found for some other varieties?

- Hypothesis: survey data will reveal less reported *Ud.* among younger speakers

Results



17% Tú
59% Ud
24% Vos

Variable rules analysis:
Vos vs other

Vos is favored with/by:

- close peer relationships and children
- upper/middle social classes (barely)
- older/middle aged speakers
- participants from San José (barely)

Variable (factor group)	Factor weight	%	N
Interlocutor			
Amigo/a	.72	41.9	228
Niño/a	.72	40.6	164
Novio/Esposo/a	.70	38.9	158
Hijo de un amigo	.64	32.3	131
Compañero/a	.63	31.2	127
Hermano/a	.60	29.1	118
Empleado menor	.51	21.9	89
Extranjero – habla esp.	.49	20.6	83
Madre/Padre	.48	20.1	81
Desconocido de su edad	.41	16.1	65
Abuelo/a	.41	15.8	64
Extranjero – no habla esp.	.34	12.5	51
Empleado mayor	.30	10.4	42
Jefe	.25	8.4	34
Profesor/a	.23	7.4	30
Range	.49		
Social class			
Upper	.52	24.5	574
Middle	.51	23.9	392
Lower	.37	17.4	112
Range	.15		
Age			
Older	.60	29.5	217
Middle	.55	27.6	256
Younger	.47	21.8	992
Range	.13		
Region			
San José	.51	24.3	1038
Other	.47	21.3	373
Range	.04		
Gender			
Male	[ns]	23.5	702
Female	[ns]	23.7	763
Verb frequency			
Common	[ns]	23.9	742
Uncommon	[ns]	23.3	723
Input: 0.21; Log likelihood: -3123.870; Chi-square/cell: 1.4594; p-value = 0.007			

Variable rules analysis:
Tú vs other

Tú is favored with/by:

- children and spouses
- middle social class
- middle-aged speakers
- participants from outside of the capital (barely)

Variable (factor group)	Factor weight	%	N
Interlocutor			
Niño/a	.64	25.7	104
Hijo de un amigo	.64	25.6	104
Novio/Esposo/a	.63	24.6	100
Amigo/a	.53	18.2	99
Hermano/a	.51	16.8	68
Madre/padre	.50	16.6	67
Empleado menor	.50	16.5	67
Extranjero – habla esp.	.50	16.4	66
Compañero/a	.49	16.0	65
Extranjero – no habla esp.	.48	15.2	62
Abuelo/a	.46	14.3	58
Desconocido de su edad	.44	13.6	55
Profesor/a	.43	13.1	53
Empleado mayor	.39	11.4	46
Jefe	.35	9.7	39
Range	29		
Social class			
Middle	.58	20.3	332
Lower	.50	15.2	98
Upper	.45	13.0	305
Range	13		
Age			
Middle	.56	21.3	198
Older	.49	16.2	119
Younger	.49	16.2	736
Range	7		
Region			
Other	.53	18.7	328
San José	.49	16.1	690
Range	4		
Gender			
Male	[ns]	16.6	497
Female	[ns]	17.3	556
Verb frequency			
Common	[ns]	16.5	512
Uncommon	[ns]	17.4	541
Input: 0.153; Log likelihood: -2748.575; Chi-square/cell: 1.2210; p-value = 0.039			

Variable rules analysis:
Ud vs other

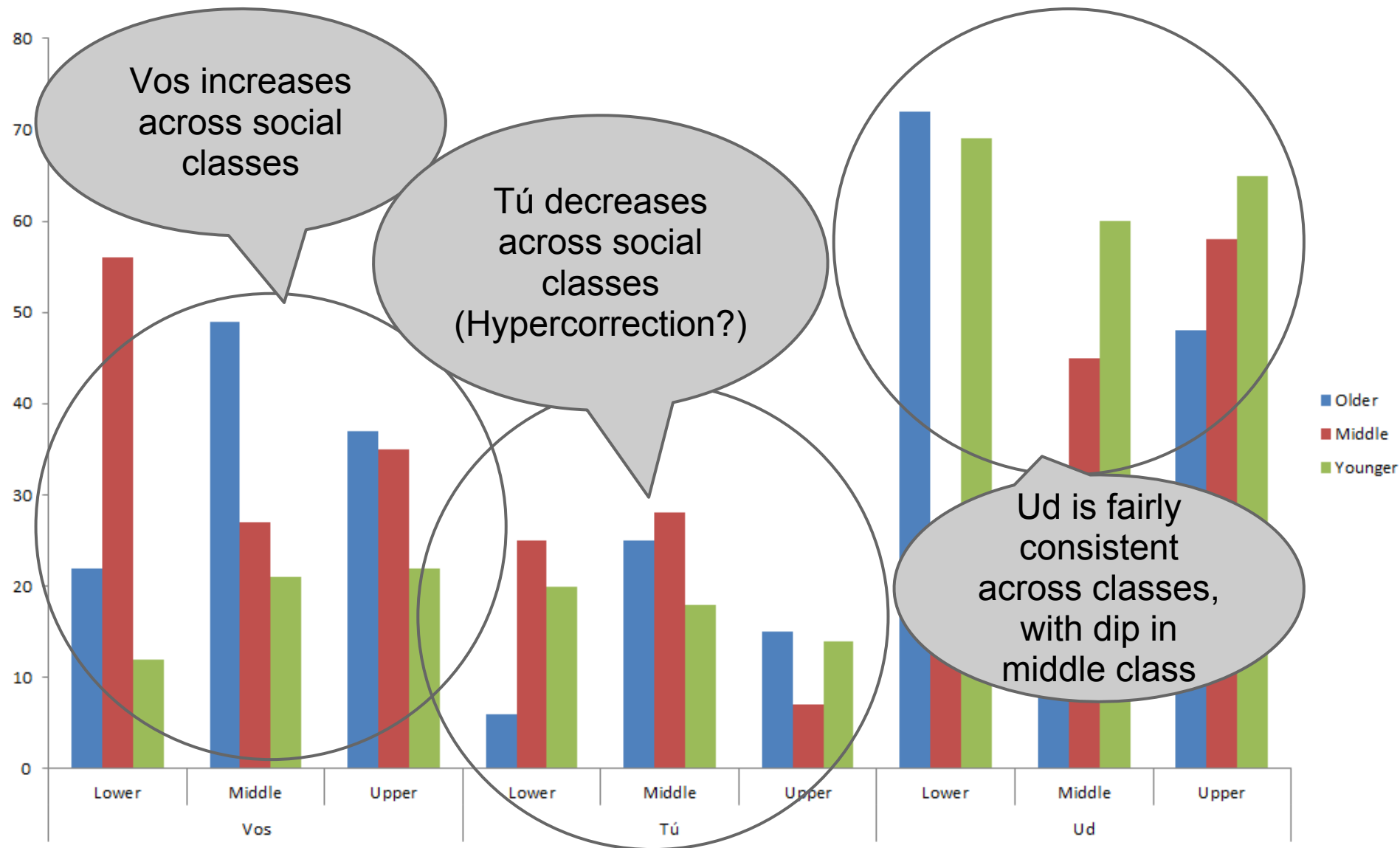
Ud. is favored with/by:

- power relations;
older speakers;
unknown persons
- lower (and upper)
social class
- younger speakers

Variable (factor group)	Factor weight	%	N
Interlocutor			
Jefe	0.75	81.9	331
Profesor/a	0.72	79.5	322
Empleado mayor	0.70	78.2	316
Extranjero – no habla esp.	0.63	72.3	295
Desconocido de su edad	0.61	70.2	283
Abuelo/a	0.60	70.0	284
Madre/padre	0.53	63.3	255
Extranjero – habla esp.	0.53	62.9	253
Empleado menor	0.51	61.7	251
Hermano/a	0.43	54.1	219
Compañero/a	0.42	52.8	215
Hijo de un amigo	0.32	42.1	171
Amigo/a	0.31	39.9	217
Novio/Esposo/a	0.27	36.5	148
Niño/a	0.25	33.7	136
Range	50		
Social class			
Lower	.58	67.4	434
Upper	.51	62.5	1465
Middle	.44	55.8	915
Range	14		
Age			
Younger	.53	62.0	2822
Older	.43	54.3	400
Middle	.42	51.1	474
Range	11		
Region			
San José	[ns]	59.6	2549
Other	[ns]	60.0	1053
Gender			
Male	[ns]	59.9	1792
Female	[ns]	59.1	1904
Verb frequency			
Common	[ns]	59.7	1855
Uncommon	[ns]	59.3	1841
Input: 0.615; Log likelihood: -3825.224; Chi-square/cell: 1.2440; p-value = 0.000			

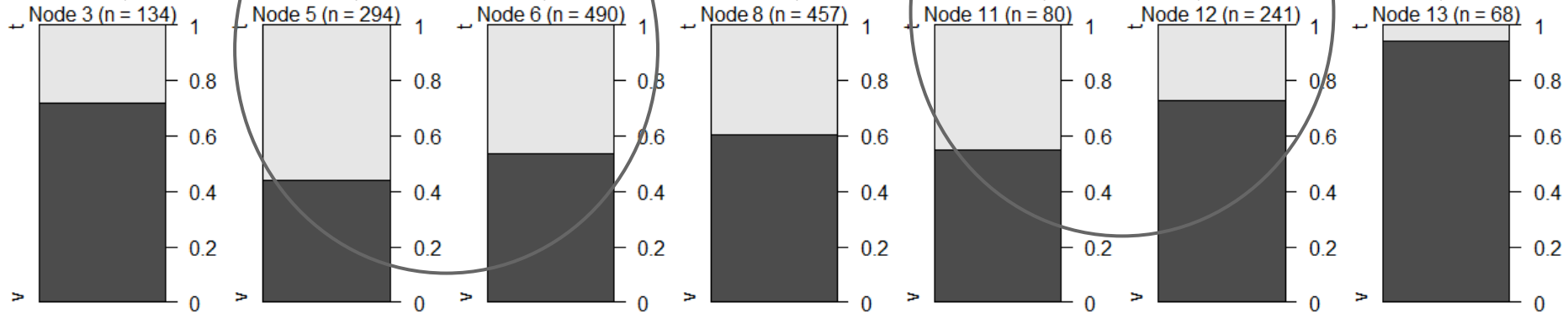
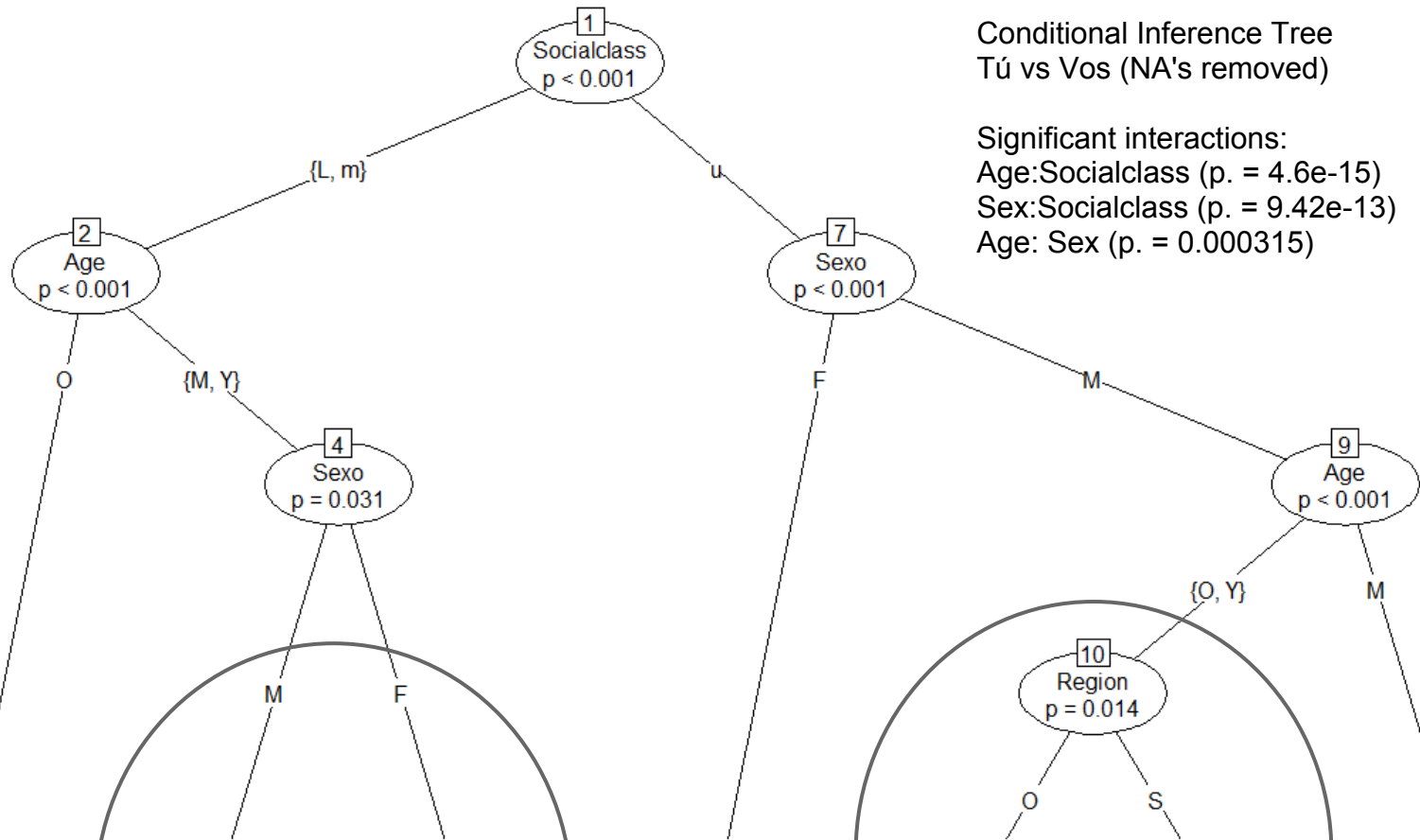
Cross-tabulation: Age and Social class

Focus on younger speakers

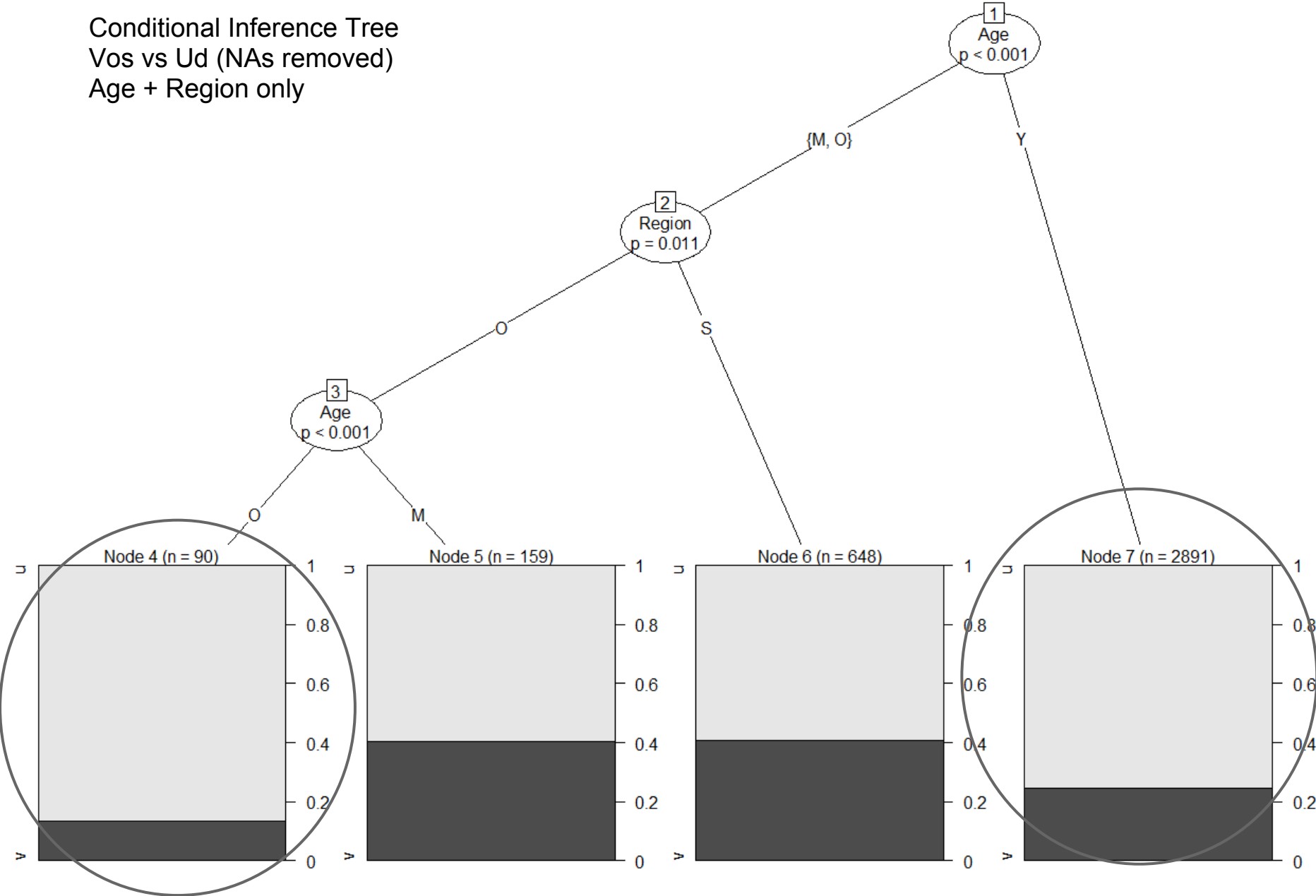


Conditional Inference Tree Tú vs Vos (NA's removed)

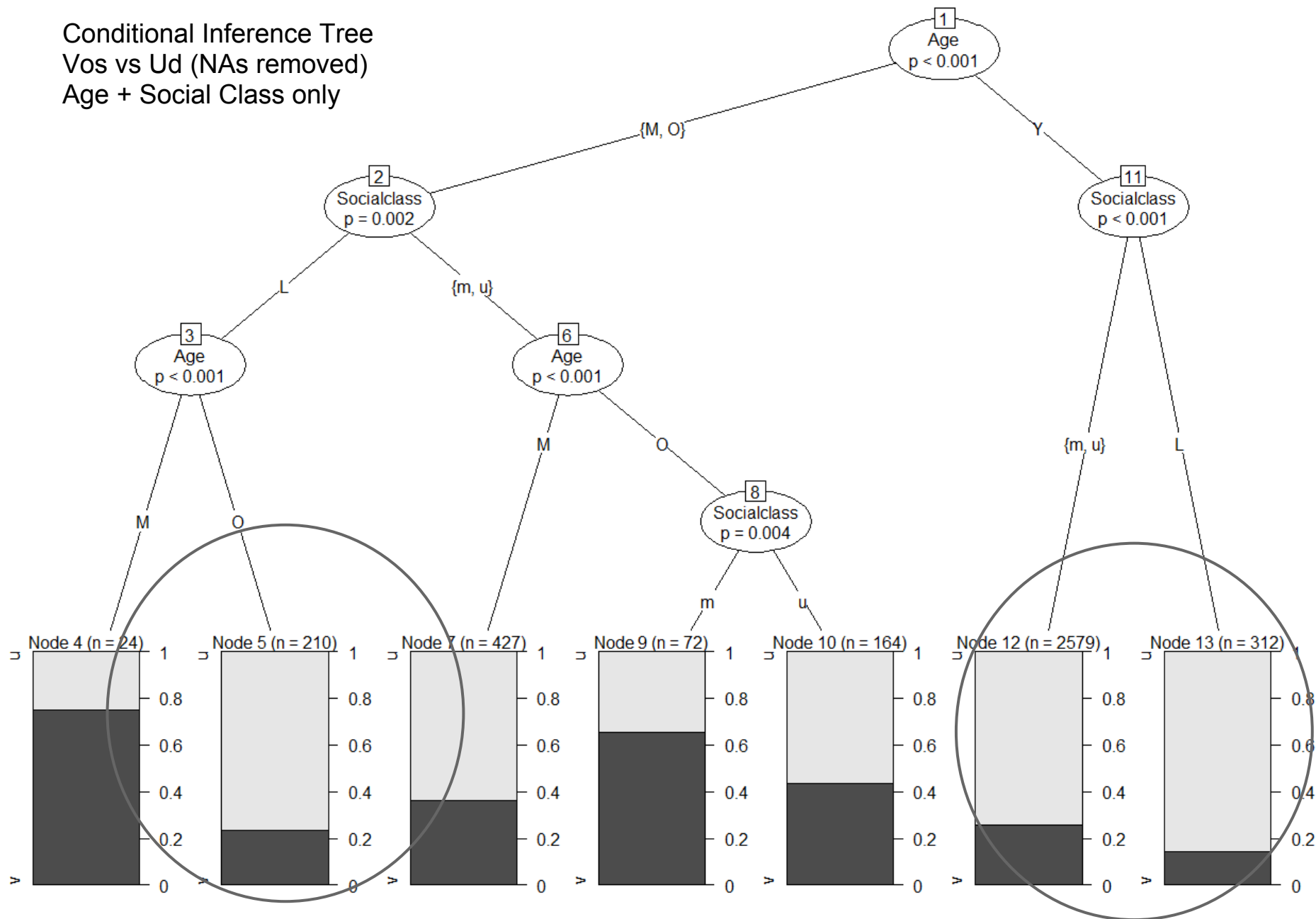
Significant interactions:
 Age:Socialclass (p. = 4.6e-15)
 Sex:Socialclass (p. = 9.42e-13)
 Age: Sex (p. = 0.000315)



Conditional Inference Tree
Vos vs Ud (NAs removed)
Age + Region only

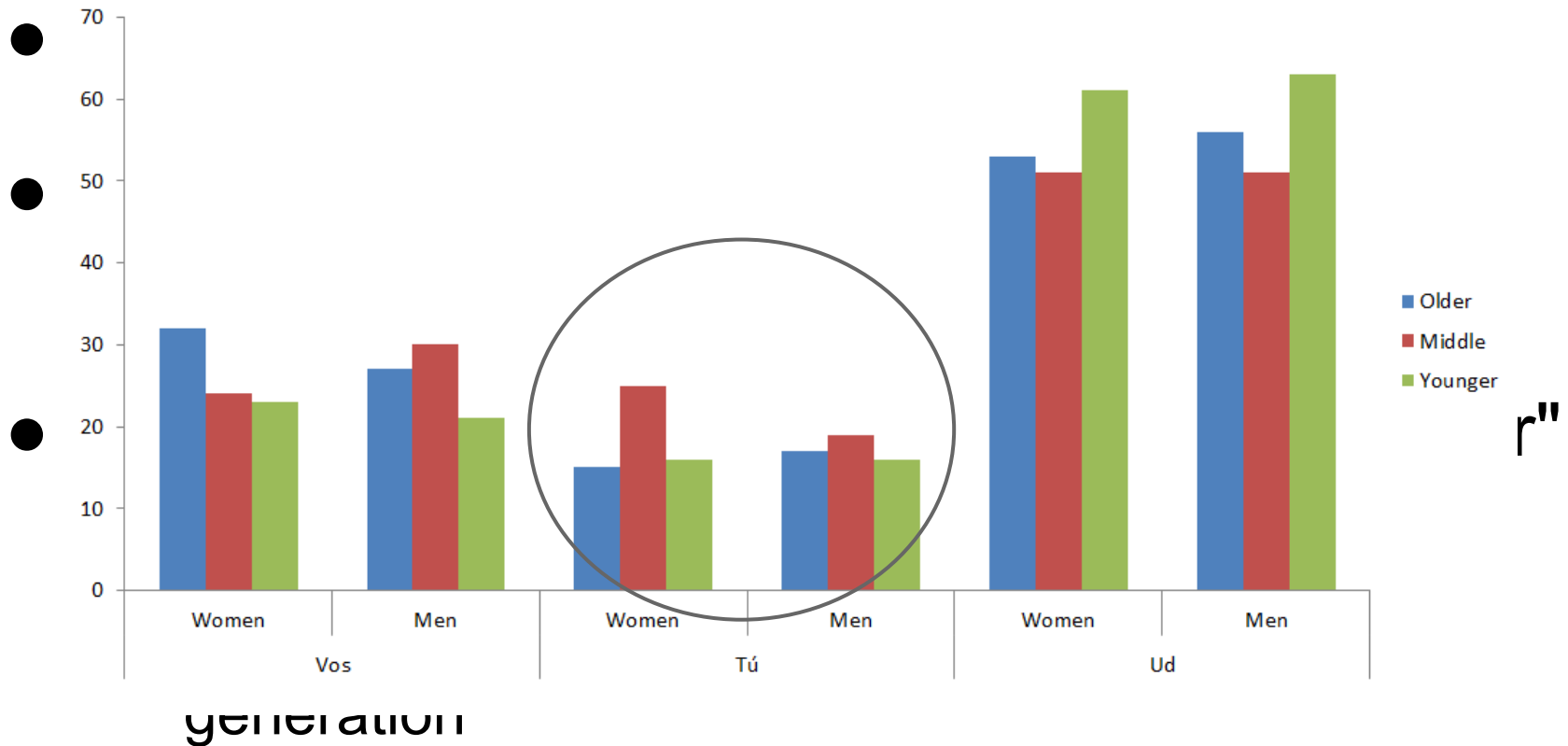


Conditional Inference Tree
 Vos vs Ud (NAs removed)
 Age + Social Class only



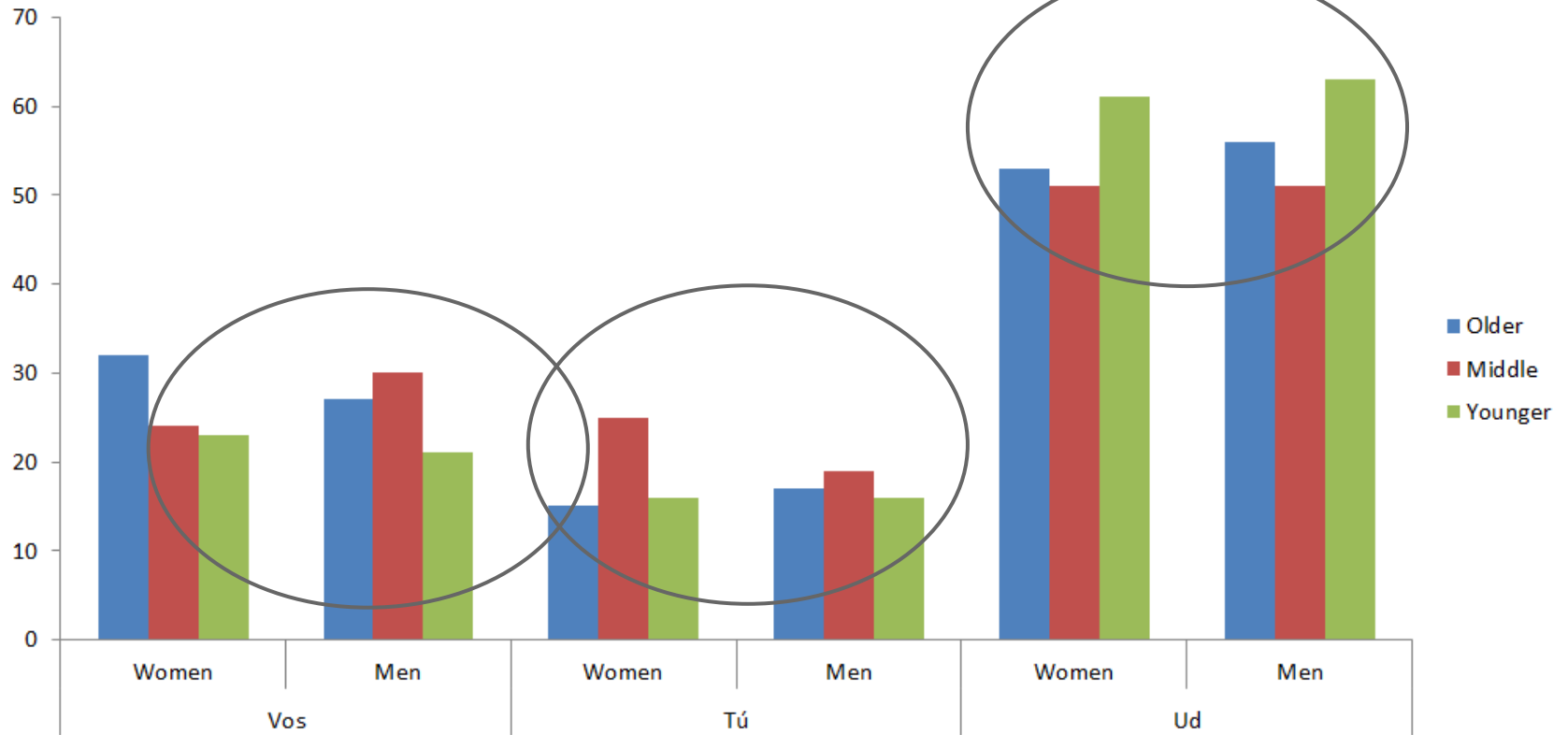
Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Increased use of *tú* among younger speakers

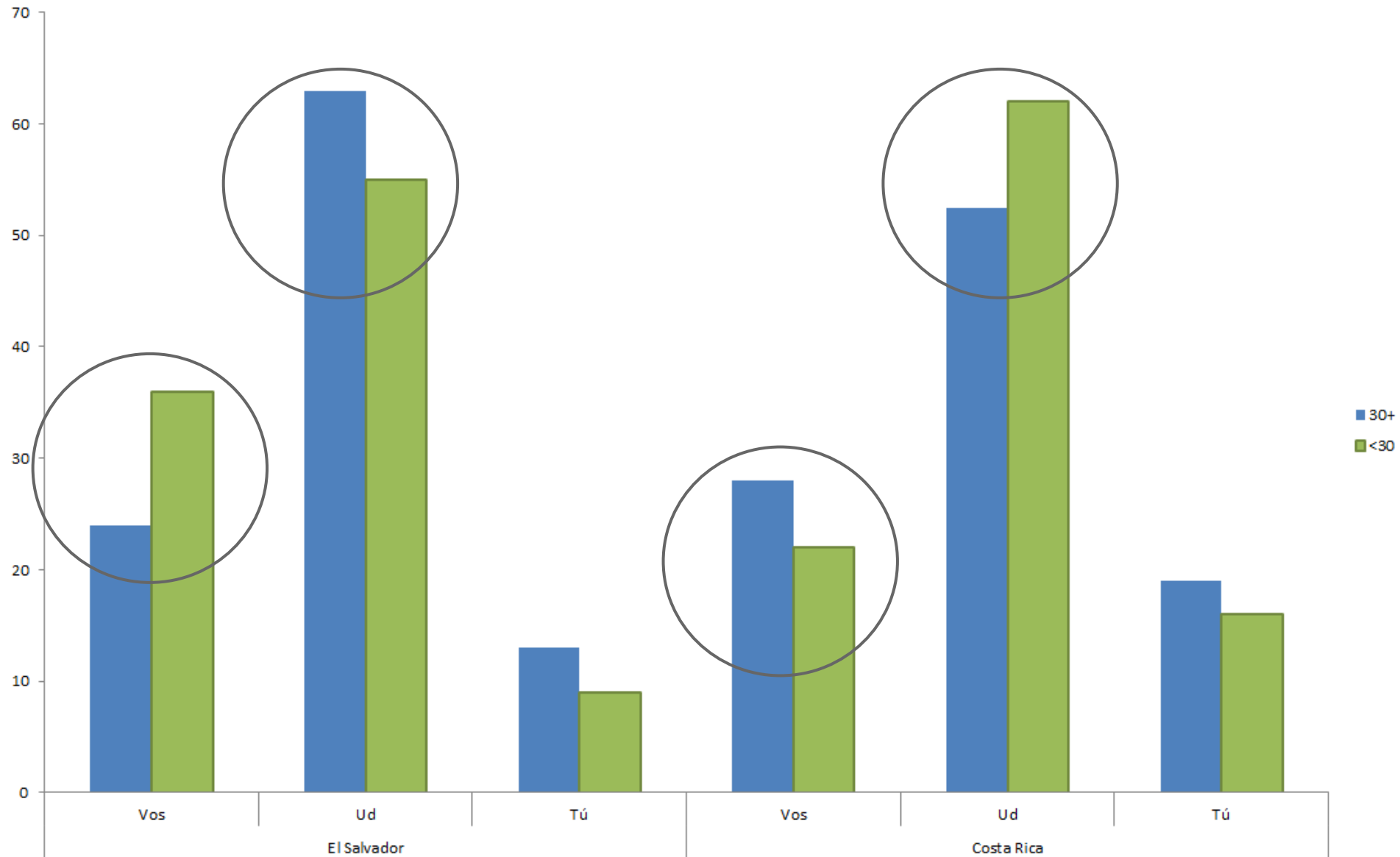


Discussion

Hypothesis 2: Less use of Ud among younger

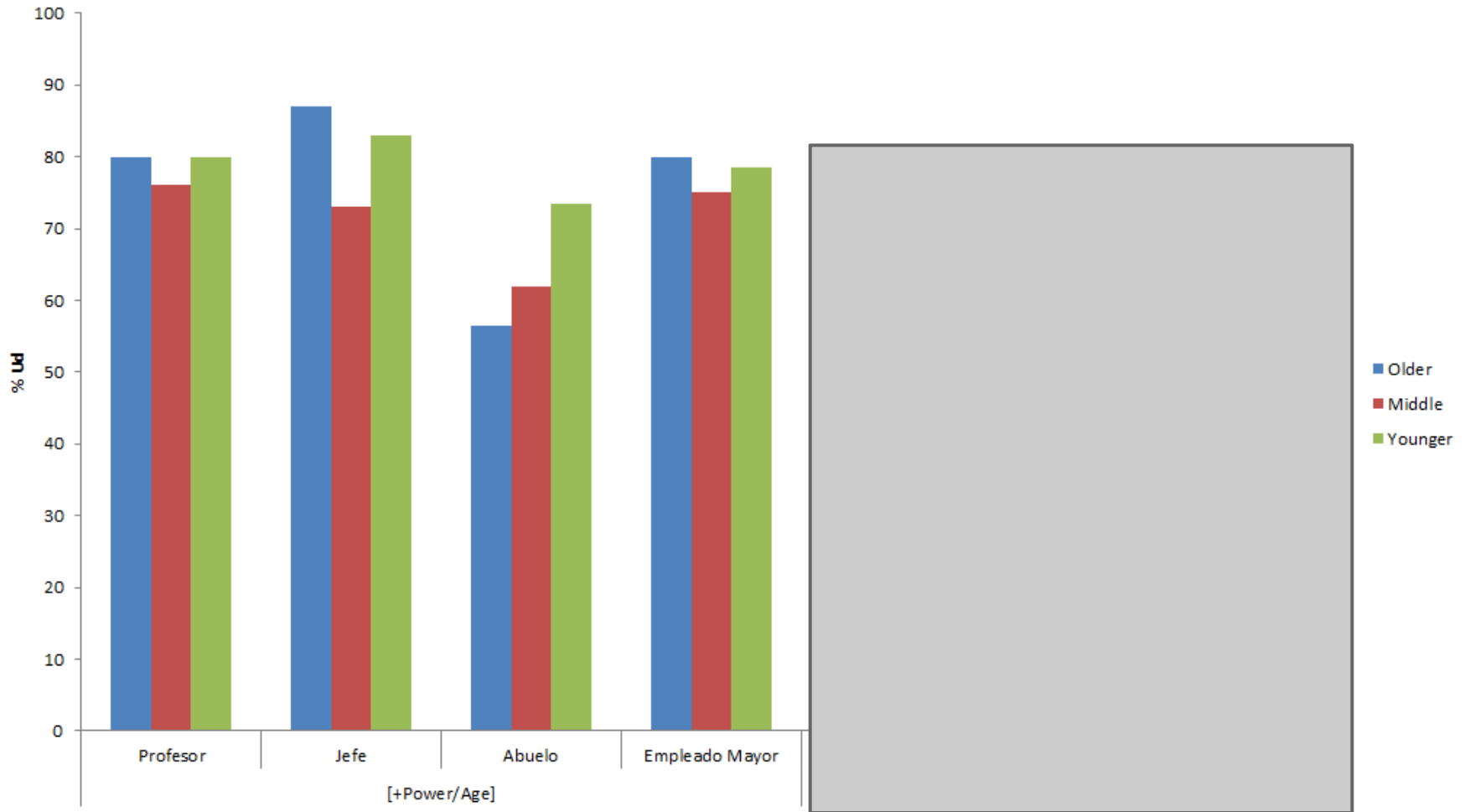


Age comparison: El Salvador (Michnowicz & Place 2010)



Why the observed pattern?

- Age grading?



If not age grading - then what?

- Two hypotheses



Hypothesis 1-

- The lack of a socio-historical event that would elevate the informal pronoun to be the default

- Cultural revolutions/civil wars and dictatorships (both right and left wing) have been argued to affect pronoun selection



- Chile - formal pronoun *usted* comes to be associated with the order imposed by Pinochet (Bishop & Michnowicz 2010)
- Spain - following democracy, *tú* takes over as the unmarked pronoun (Calderón Campos & Medina Morales 2010)
 - Power-based system -> solidarity-based system (see also De Jonge & Nieuwenhuijsen 2012; also Brown & Gilman 1960)
- And...
- Nicaragua - following the Sandinista revolution, *vos* came to represent solidarity and equality, resulting in a dominance of voseo in the private and public spheres (Lipski 1994)

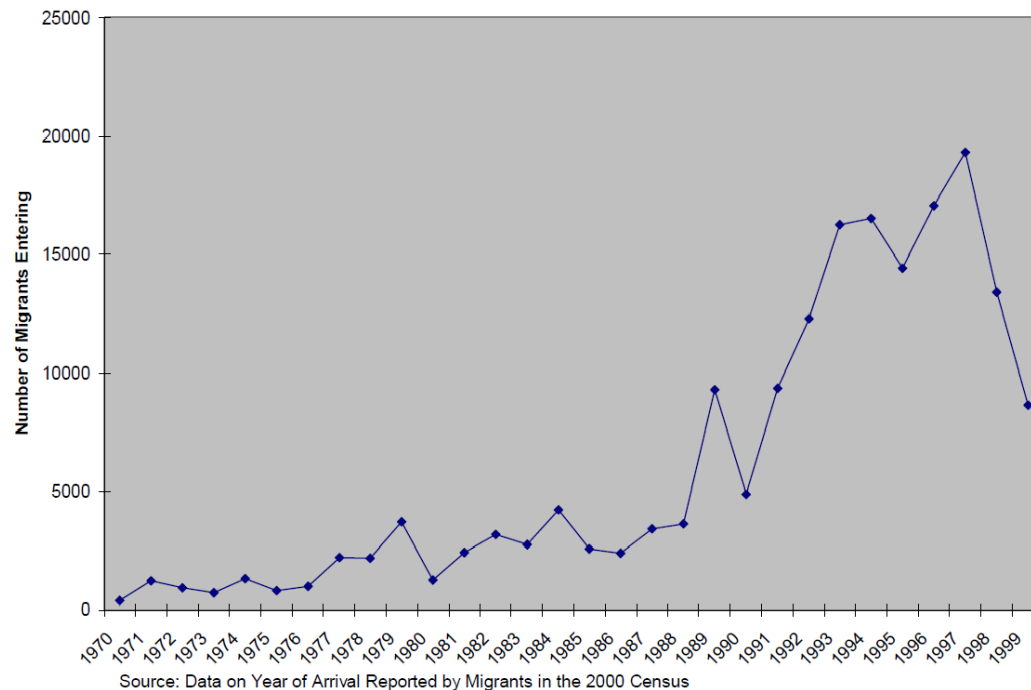
Hypothesis 1



- Costa Rica has not suffered a cultural upheaval of that magnitude in recent history
 - 1917-1919: Tinoco Granados - military dictator. Exiled.
 - 1948: 44 day civil war that resulted in the abolition of the army, and the establishment of a democratic government
- The continued preference for Ud. may be due, in part, to the lack of a social event that would have fundamentally changed the dynamic in Costa Rica, resulting in a change in language use
 - The overall stability of Costa Rica may be reflected in more stability in the pronominal system

Hypothesis 2

- In the past several decades, Costa Rica has received waves of immigration from neighboring Nicaragua
 - Peaked in the 1990s, when the youngest speakers in the present study were born



Taken from
Marquette 2006: 2

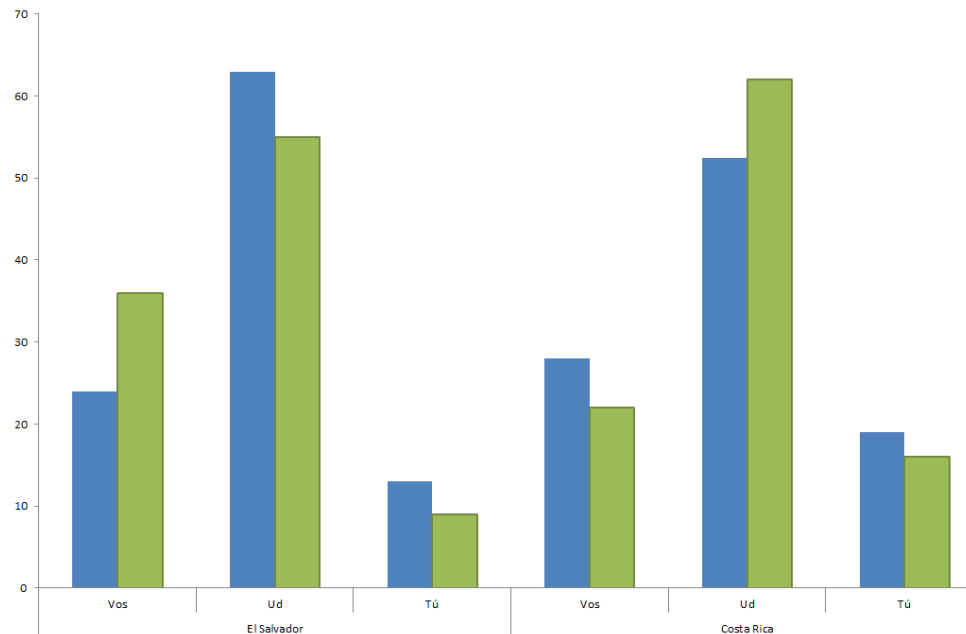
Hypothesis 2



- Sandoval García (2004) argues that Costa Rican national identity is in large part constructed in opposition to Nicaragua and Nicaraguans
- Originally viewed as a difference between "communist" and "capitalist", it has now taken on overtones of racial politics "in which the Nicaraguan nationality has become an offense in itself"

Hypothesis 2

- These immigrants bring with them their preference for *vos*
 - In order to distinguish themselves linguistically from immigrants, young *ticos* may be adopting higher rates of *Ud.* as a sign of CR identity - extending an already extant preference for *Ud*



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Summary and future research

- *Ud.* is reported more among younger speakers
 - Why aren't CR young people moving to more informal pronouns, as reported for other regions?
 - *Tú* does not appear to be a viable option for most
 - *Vos*, while very common, has never been elevated to "formal" status by an overwhelming social event
 - *Vos* may also be associated with Nicaraguan immigrants, coming from one of the most *voseante* countries in Central America.
 - The presence of *el otro Ud.* gives CR speakers an easy "out", creating a pattern that distinguishes them from the rest of Central America and much (but not all) of the Spanish-speaking world.

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