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The Grammar of Interaction

Epistemicity, information management and discourse in language use

EDITED BY

Susana Rodríguez Rosique

Jordi M. Antolí Martínez

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The Grammar of Interaction

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Volume 46

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Edited by

Susana Rodríguez Rosique
Jordi M. Antolí Martínez
University of Alicante

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Preface

Susana Rodríguez Rosique & Jordi Antolí Martínez
Universidad de Alicante

This volume deals with the relations between grammar and interaction from different perspectives, with the aim of unraveling the way in which a language — through the different forms of discourse from which it emerges — reflects certain social and community-based schemas; that is, how language originates within the space shared by the speaker and the addressee(s).[1]

Any type of discourse constitutes a joint activity (Levinson 1979; Clark 1996). Its nature requires at least two participants, who may be real or fictitious, institutions or individuals, and who must perform joint actions (Clark 1996: 19). These joint actions are communicative actions — or speech acts (Searle [1969] 1980) —, which involve the encounter between the speaker's intention and the addressee's interpretation (Grice [1957] 1989). In turn, the successive communicative actions constituting a form of discourse may be used for broader social actions, such as planning holidays, gossiping, debating politics, doing business, teaching, or entertaining.

The most basic setting in which discourse takes place is conversation, which therefore acquires a special status (Fillmore 1981; Chafe 1994: 41; Clark 1996: 8–11). There are several reasons that motivate its being considered as a basic environment: it is universal, since it is found in all human societies; it does not require any type of instruction; and it is the natural environment where children acquire language. Conversation is defined as a type of discourse emerging from the succession and alternation of speaking turns that are occupied by different speakers (Briz and Val.Es.Co group 2014), and exhibits a number of characteristic features, such as orality, immediacy (face-to-face), dialogicity and dynamism, and cooperative nature (Chafe 1994: 42–45; Clark 1996: 9–10; Briz 2000: 51; Hidalgo 2002: 9–10; Portolés 2004: 68; Pons 2022).

The fact that conversation is a basic or natural setting does not mean, however, that it is an easy one. In the simplest scenario, a speaker's utterance can trigger two reactions in the addressee: the addressee may accept the proposition

1. In fact, there is a consolidated tradition under the umbrella of interactional linguistics studies (cf. Ochs, Schegloff and Thompson 1996; Lindström 2009, 2022, to mention just a few).

— and thus incorporate it to the shared knowledge file to update it (Stalnaker 1978; Lewis 1979; Heim 1982); or he/she may question it and display the necessary strategies to discuss it (Ginzburg [2012] 2015). For a long time, the analysis of common ground was the battlefield for information-structure studies, which focused on the increase of shared knowledge through the various types of interaction in which the speakers participate and on the linguistic realizations of an information-based status. However, in the last decades the focus of interest has broadened, and the aim of numerous studies is to reveal the architecture of the discourse moves that allow the negotiation of the Common Ground (Roberts 1996; Farkas and Bruce 2010; Krifka 2015; Malamud and Stephenson 2015; Geurts 2019).[2] Furthermore, with the arrival of new categories on the linguistic landscape, information management has also been addressed from other perspectives. In its classical sense, evidentiality is conceived as the category addressing the source of information and the medium of accessing it (Willet 1988). In some languages, evidentiality is morphologically or grammatically codified, while in others it is expressed through specific strategies (Aikhenvald 2004; Squartini 2008; Boye and Harder 2009). In the latter cases, in particular, the connection between evidentiality and epistemic modality — i.e., the category dealing with the speakers' evaluation of the status of a proposition according to its degree of coincidence with reality — is usually intense, and although numerous studies defend their independence, addressing the relationship between these two concepts has been a very prolific field in linguistic panorama in the last decades (Givón 1982; Mithun 1986; Palmer 1986; Chafe and Nichols 1986; Kronning 1996, 2024; Van der Auwera and Plungian 1998; Dendale and Tasmowski 2001; Nuyts 2001a, 2008; Squartini 2001, 2009; Cornillie 2009, just to mention a few). In addition, the rise of studies on evidentiality has led to certain discursive (re)interpretations, which are especially productive in European languages. In this sense, Bermúdez (2005) proposes adding a new parameter to the evidential domain, which includes the difference between universal information (accessible to a whole community) and exclusive or private information (restricted to the speaker); in this model, information shared between the speaker and their interlocutors should be placed in between. In the same vein, Nuyts (2001b, 2012) reinterprets Lyons' classic epistemic distinction between objective modality and subjective modality as a matter of exclusive (subjective) or shared (intersubjective) responsibility. Specifically, the author claims for a category that extends along a subjective pole (which would include information that the speaker presents as their own and for which he/she assumes personal responsibility) and an intersubjective pole (which would include infor-

2. Or, conversely, there is even crosslinguistic evidence of the emergence of structures whose purpose is to signal that the speaker and the addressee are not on the same shared ground (cf. Schwenter 2024).

mation that is presented as shared). The original collapse between epistemic modality and evidentiality starts to move towards the realm of discursive modality (Marín Arrese 2004; Diewald and Smirnova 2010; Albelda 2015; González, Izquierdo and Loureda 2016; Giannakidou and Mari 2021).

If the status of information, within the field of shared knowledge, is usually set up in relation to both its origin and the assessment that speakers make of it (thus enabling the overlapping or rather the division of labor between information structure, evidentiality, epistemic modality or intersubjectivity), the domain of new-*ness* is no less relevant. In contrast to the information that we take as a background for communicative exchange — i.e., that we take for granted —, there is another type that surprises us, in the same way that we find balance between a bland vanilla ice cream and an exotic kiwi sorbet (Chafe 1994). Aimed at addressing the linguistic codification of this type of information, DeLancey (1997: 48–49) proposed a new category: mirativity, or the natural tendency of languages to make a distinction between information that forms part of the speaker's integrated picture about the world and information that remains outside this structure — that is, information that surprises us or that does not meet our expectations. Again, some languages show a morphological or grammatical codification of this new category, while others rely on lexical resources or display mirativity strategies (Aikhenvald 2012). Although the categorial status and independence of mirativity seems uncontroversial, from a psychological, semantic, and typological perspective (DeLancey 2012; Peterson 2013), it usually overlaps with some other categories in European languages, especially if we move away from the mirative core (surprise as sudden realization) and delve into the range of mirative meaning that is included within the category (Aikhenvald 2012). Indeed, in European languages, mirativity usually interacts with exclamativity — either because both are conceived as manifestations of a certain illocutionary content (*exceded expectations*, in the terms of Rett (2011) and Rett and Murray (2012)) or because the modal nature of the former is opposed to the illocutionary character of the latter (Hengeveld and Olbertz 2012) — or with expressiveness — since mirativity is related to the linguistic manifestations of surprise and mirative meaning addresses the way in which emotions are encoded (Trotzke and Villalba 2021: 1–2). Likewise, the kind of information triggering surprise from the mirative perspective is not exactly the same as new information from the perspective of information structure. While new information is always evaluated from the speaker's perspective, in mirative terms information may be surprising to the speaker, to the addressee, or to the main character of a story (Hengeveld and Olbertz 2012; Aikhenvald 2012; Dessì-Schmid, Momma, and Wiesinger 2025). Furthermore, the breaking of expectations with which the mirative spectrum is usually associated brings mirativity to some other categories traditionally related to contrast, such as concessiv-

ity or adversativity (cf. Cifuentes 2022; Rodríguez Rosique 2024, 2025; Mari 2025; Mauri and Russo 2025;).

Despite its complexity, conversation — understood as a meeting point between the speaker's intention and the addressee's interpretation — is taken as a reference point from which any other type of discourse is considered a deviation, as pointed out by Fillmore (1981):

> The language of face-to-face conversation is the basic and primary use of language, all others being best described in terms of their manner of deviation from that base (Fillmore 1981: 152)

The distinction between conversation and other types of discourse is not just limited to that established between speaking and writing (cf. López Serena 2007). Among oral discourses, there may be differences, such as those exhibited between a debate versus an interview or a discussion. Similarly, among written discourses, an academic article, an advertising text, or a shopping list are not the same. Even within the same discursive product, such as that represented by a newspaper, its news section does not function the same as an editorial, letters to the editor, social columns, or even comic strips (Chafe 1994: 48–49). Additionally, and in keeping with our times, the very essence of certain discourses increasingly shows liquid boundaries (Bauman [2000] 2025) between orality and writing (Yus 2010): note, for instance, the intrinsic orality that characterizes the "utterances" that make up the chats of instant messaging applications (Mancera Rueda and Pano Alamán 2014); or, conversely, the possibility of sending audiotexts (spoken messages) that follow the dynamics of differed communication.

Clark (1996) establishes a number of focal parameters which allow to outline different types of discourse — understood as deviations from face-to-face oral conversation — and which can be used as an initial map for exploring the intricacies of the different possibilities governing the interaction between the speaker and his/her addressee.

Table 1. Parameters defining discourses as deviations from the basic setting (Clark 1996: 8)

	Speaking	**Writing**
Personal setting	Face to face conversation	WhatsApp
Non-personal setting	Master class	Press article
Institutional setting	Lawyer-witness interrogation	Business letter
Prescriptive setting	Getting married	Purchase and sale contract
Fictional setting	Theater actor, story teller	A chapter from a novel
Mediated setting	Simultaneous translation	People writing discourses for other people (in politics)
Private setting	Talking to yourself	Write yourself a reminder (a post-it)

Each of these environments may show other levels of activity, with its own participants and a specific location. The first level always represents real people doing real things. From there, the real level can be, for example, a writer and his/her readers, in which the novelist inserts other levels. A speaker acting as a participant in a conversation can also introduce different levels of activity into his/her turn, as happens with situations of telling a joke or an anecdote.

A relevant question now is whether grammar should account or not for the issues discussed so far. And, to a certain extent, the answer depends on the conception of grammar itself. According to Traugott and Trousdale (2013: 95), grammar is a hypothesized system of linguistic knowledge, which includes morphosyntax, semantics, and phonology, but also pragmatics and discourse functions. One way to approach grammar in these terms comes from Construction Grammar (Lakoff 1987; Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor 1988; Goldberg 1995, 2006; Croft 2001). Constructions are language-specific pairs of form and meaning. The information provided by form includes syntax, morphology, and phonology; among the information provided by meaning we find semantics, pragmatics, and discourse function. Another way of expanding the conception of grammar is offered by Discourse Grammar (Kaltenböck, Heine, and Kuteva 2011; Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva, and Long 2013; Heine 2023). From this perspective, grammar consists of two levels: the grammar of the sentence and what was originally called (paren)thetical — later interactive (Heine 2023)[3] — grammar. Sentence Grammar is based on a restrictive meaning — anchored in the semantic structure of a sentence or its constituents. It is organized into propositions and clauses; its core is the verb and its corresponding argument structure; and its components are phrases, words, and morphemes, along with the syntactic and morphological structure that relates them. (Paren)Thetical or Interactive Grammar, on the other hand, includes linguistic elements that are situated outside the sentence; and it addresses a nonrestrictive meaning, based on reasoning processes and inferential mechanisms that are not anchored in the sentence, but in the discourse situation. Heine (2023: 22–47) claims that interactives belong to grammar and emphasizes, based on a number of common features, the similarities between the grammar of the sentence and that of interactives: (a) both systems are made up of conventionalized forms — form/meaning associations that are learned, stored and retrieved, which also differ from one language to another — that are essentially

3. Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva, and Long (2013) recognize that the Discourse Grammar approach resembles conversational analysis, although it displays a greater interest in orthodox linguistic taxonomy. In his most recent proposal, Heine (2023: 245) claims that interactives emerge as the result of locating the linguistic behavior of theticals in the general scope of interaction.

arbitrary (there is no absolute connection between the formal manifestation and the concept); (b) both systems allow discrete units — the same opposition that exists between the nouns *sin* and *son* also occurs between the interactives *ah* and *oh*); (c) the components of both systems are transmitted from one generation to another; (d) as happens with sentences, interactives can constitute turn-takings by themselves; (e) both types of grammar contribute to the linear ordering of discourse, although they behave in different ways (following syntax, in the grammar of the sentence; and following discourse organization in the case of interactives); (f) both types of grammar are sensitive to deixis (in interactive grammars, deixis is a general feature, but it is also related to certain constituents of sentence grammar, such as pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, or temporal morphemes); (g) the constituents of both systems play a role in cohesion (both may show instances of agreement); (h) both types of grammar are universal (there is not a single attested language lacking sentence grammar or interactives); (i) both systems make use of gestures, although they differ in typology and intensity — in fact, gestures are linked to spoken language, not to a specific type of grammar – ; (j) both types of grammar are subject to grammaticalization. According to Heine, both systems (Sentence grammar and Interactive Grammar) are part of language, and hence the system responsible for computing propositional meaning should be the same as the one that computes interactive meaning. The integration of these two levels, in fact, makes possible to reconcile two complementary conceptions of grammar: as an inventory of conventionalized objects — that is, as information that is more or less fixed or schematized and stored to be repurposed in a more or less routinized manner (Langacker 2008) — and as an activity — that is, as an interactional tool that reflects the language in use (Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva, and Long 2013). These two levels have also been recently recognized from more formal perspectives, such as that of Witschko (2021), who distinguishes between the level required to talk to people — that is, interactive — and the level required to talk about the world — i.e, sentence grammar. See König and Heine in this volume for a further comparison between the two models.

This volume is aimed at following this path by contributing to the investigation of the relationship between grammar and interaction from various — both theoretical and applied — perspectives. The layout of the book is in fact based on these different perspectives. Thus, the first part ("Grammar and interaction") concerns how interaction may intervene in grammar. The first chapter ("Impersonal and middle constructions in Spanish oral conflictive discourse", by Ricardo Maldonado) approaches the difference between impersonal and middle constructions from a discourse perspective; more specifically, the paper explores the competition between impersonal and middle constructions as two polar points reflecting the proximity versus the distance sustained among interlocutors in con-

flictive discourse: while impersonal constructions operate as good mitigators, middle constructions impose the opposite effects. The second chapter ("The Spanish epistemic dative construction: a modal-evidential stance expression", by Nicole Delbecque) deals with the epistemic dative construction in Spanish — i.e., a non-causative modal variant of the possessive dative construction which is characterized to occur with epistemic verbs and which conveys a kind of modal-evidential appraisal. In the intra-clausal possessor-possessee relation, the dative clitic designates the possessor, as co-dative compatible with all the other dative functions. With transitive predicates, the clitic functions as reference point for the direct object, conceived as a possessee. This possessee denotes the property or quality which, from the perspective of the conceptualizing subject — the evidential source —, stands out in the dative participant's domain, treated as object of thought. The verbal predicate specifies thus the modal-evidential nature of the appraisal. The judgment's relative reliability further hinges on the Subject's commitment and diagnostic competence, the tangibility or verifiability of the direct object, the expectation patterns associated with the dative participant's profile, and other modal markers. The third chapter ("Perceptionally constrained repair strategies in morphophonology. Interaction as negotiation", by Nicolau Dols) focuses on the role of the addressee to integrate phonological and morphological information. The author analyzes certain negotiation between the speaker and the addressee to both set the sound inventory and to determine the scope of structure repairs. More specifically, the inventory of nasal consonants in Catalan, and three cases of phonology-morphology interaction in Majorcan Catalan are analyzed to show how preserving morphological information serves the interests of the addressee, and how morphological synthesis can be a bartering strategy when negotiating the exchange of meaning

The second part of this volume ("The grammar of interaction") approaches both notions and linguistic structures which are anchored in interaction while revolving around epistemicity, evidentiality and modality. The fourth chapter ("Evidence type and trustworthiness: the view from social media", by Marie Boscaro, Alda Mari and Anastasia Giannakidou) claims that the perceived adequacy of an evidence type stems from a subjective evaluation of trustworthiness from the part of the speaker of both the evidence and the propositional content it conveys. This evaluation is shaped by the speaker's informational basis, which includes subjective preferences, prior beliefs, background assumptions and biases, as well as external knowledge about the world. After a corpus-based analysis of instances of social media, the authors argue that speakers ground their assertive statements in various types of evidence, including indirect evidence. The statistical results of this study indeed indicate a strong correlation between reported evidence and bare assertions, suggesting that speakers often rely on reported

information while still expressing a strong veridical commitment. The fifth chapter ("Quotatives and stance taking", by Juliana De la Mora) further explores the relation between source and stance. More specifically, the author shows that new and old quotatives in Mexican Spanish are undergoing a discourse specialization process; i.e., following an epistemic continuum, quotatives have taken on novel functions related to epistemic and mirative stances. The sixth chapter ("Speech acts and interrogative particles: an empirical study on the grammar of Catalan *eh?*", by Elena Castroviejo and Laia Mayol) emphasizes the conception of information as commitments rather than believes. The papers delves into a distinction between two fundamental pragmatic meaning for the Catalan interrogative tag *eh?*. In one (*eh1?*), the speaker asks the addressee to reveal a private commitment *p*, corresponding to the denotation of the sentence anchor; in the other (*eh2?*), the speaker reinforces a conversational implicature associated with the speech act intended. In the case of an assertion, *eh2?* prompts the addressee to believe that *p* is true. Based on a corpus study, they show that *eh1?* engages the addressee more efficiently than *eh2?*. The seventh chapter ("From reference identification to discursive alignment: The (counter)argumentative power of *es eso* in Spanish", by Susana Rodríguez Rosique) analyzes the Spanish construction *es eso* as an intersubjective structure which is used to reinforce a previously activated proposition. In its process of constructionalization from an original identifying / (pseudo-)cleft structure, *es eso* acquires a (counter-)argumentative function that facilitates the speaker's alignment with the addressee while distancing from a third part. Overall, the author argues that *es eso* constitutes the best candidate to transition from sentence grammar to interaction grammar.

The third part of the book ("Interaction as a model for discourse") concerns how certain constructions emerge from interaction and are further used to model discourse. The eighth chapter ("The Grammar of Interactives in !Xun (Namibia)", by Christa König and Bernd Heine) revises the keys of interactive grammar to extend the model to the study of narrative texts. To this end, the paper is concerned with a set of 20 fictional spoken narratives in !Xun (a little-known African language which is spoken by traditional hunter-gatherers in Namibia, Angola and Botswana) to explore the role that interactives play in them. From their analysis, the authors demonstrate that interactive grammar provides an important tool for processing narrative discourse. The ninth chapter ("Discourse relations and evidentiality", by Teresa Rodríguez Ramalle) departs from the conception of discourse as a cognitive unit (Garrido 2014) that is integrated by rhetorical relations (Duque 2016) to examine the Spanish evidential structures *así que* and *conque* as markers of head sentences. More specifically, the author shows that, due to the position these structures occupy and the configuration they help to create, indirect evidentiality (inferred and reportative) is relevant in the construction

of discourse. The tenth chapter ("How questions shape interactivity in spoken monologic discourse", by Agnès Celle) shows how questions shape interactivity in TED talks — which are conceived as a non-dialogical discourse where commitment updates cannot be regulated by turn-taking. Although the majority of questions are reported to be unanswered, questions are reported to be highly interactive by inferring and anticipating questions that may arise in the audience. More generally, the author concludes that behavior of polar, *wh-* and verbless questions in TED talks supports the theory that this single-speaker discourse genre is dialogically-motivated.

Finally, the fourth and last part of the book ("Interaction as a driver for change") focuses on how interaction may help to delimit linguistic categories. The eleventh chapter ("How Catalan Expresses Indifference: Patterns and Variants", by Mar Massanell) deals with the linguistic strategies employed to convey indifference in Catalan, from those that are most fixed and widespread to lesser-known expressions. Among the former, qualitative comparatives with the adjective *igual* 'same' and quantitative comparatives in which *tant* 'as much' precedes the verb it modifies (typically *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', or *valer* 'to be worth') are included. Concerning the latter, certain constructions based on the verb *tenir* 'to have' are analyzed. In chapter twelve ("From subjunctives to imperatives. The Romance Subjunctive Schema and its Ramifications", by Hans-Ingo Radatz), the author argues that the percentage of meaning-bearing subjunctives tends to be overrated because many imperatives are still considered to be subjunctives on the basis that their morphology coincides with this mood. Against this scenario the paper evinces a constructional network which allows for a direct comparison between various Romance languages and a visual representation of various stages of constructionalization.

The Grammar of Interaction emerges as one of the results of the international meeting *The Grammar of Interaction. Between Synchrony and Diachrony*, held in October 2024 at the University of Alicante. It represents the synergia between two research projects: *Gestión de la Información y Estructuración Lingüística II (GestINFII): Avances Teóricos, Análisis del Corpus GestINF y Propuestas de Aplicación* (PID2021-126858NB-I00), supported by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by FEDER, UE, and *El Catalán antes y después de Pompeu Fabra (S. XVII-XXI). Impacto de normativización sobre la evolución de la lengua catalana* (PID221-128381NB-I00), supported by MICIU/AEI/10.13039/501100011033 and by FEDER, UE. From these pages, we would like to thank the participants for the insightful academic discussion that they made possible, as well as for the warm, human atmosphere to which they contributed during meeting.

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PART 1

Grammar and interaction

Impersonal and middle constructions in Spanish oral conflictive discourse

Ricardo Maldonado
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

This paper elaborates on the problem of shielding in interactive discourse. It attempts to explore specific syntactic constructions responding to particular communicative requirements in conflictive discourse. The discourse of couples in therapy is analyzed to identify how grammatical phenomena adjust to communicative situations, i.e., how grammatical cues change as the interaction evolves in couple therapy sessions. The paper explores the competition between impersonal and middle constructions as two polar points reflecting the proximity versus the distance sustained among interlocutors in dealing with conflict. The baseline is that distanced couples accessing therapy need to find ways to re-connect. While problematic issues need to be addressed, they need to be exposed in a way that does not increase the gap between participants. Mitigators are crucial in therapy since couple members are always ready to avoid addressing painful issues in everyday life. While impersonal constructions operate as good mitigators, middle constructions impose the opposite effects.

Keywords: *se* constructions, middle, passive, conflictive discourse

1. Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to analyze two functions of the clitic *se,* impersonal and middle, in different genres (written and oral), with particular interest in the manifestation of conflict in couple therapy sessions. Conflict in couples can be defined as a phenomenon where participants fall into disconnection and lack of emotional confidence in the otherwise natural emotional bond (Johnson 2008). Anger, frustration, or criticism are subsidiary emotions that shade other more basic emotions, such as fear and insecurity. Behind most conflictive situations there is a deep desire for emotional re-connection and a fear of rejection or abandonment (Estellés 2023). In conflict, the empathy and communication normally assumed in a relationship are drastically diminished such that people back away

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to remain in their own space. From a conversational analysis, Schiffrin (1984) defines conflict as the manifestation of *sustained disagreement*. At least three turns of miscommunication must be sustained to characterize an interchange as conflictive (Muntigl y Turnbull 1998; Norrick y Spitz 2008; Clancy 2018: 229).

Sustained open conflict is not common in everyday interactions. Colloquial conversation tends to be harmonious (Briz 1995, 1998; Allwood 2007). Speakers make efforts to avoid confrontation and find resolutions for blockage in communication. Keeping the interlocutor's face and avoiding behaviors interpreted as offensive is crucial in seeking conflict resolution. Only in specific contexts, such as parliamentary discourse, child language interactions, and familiar contexts is confrontation sustained. All other contexts presuppose some type of control to avoid disagreement and recover harmony. Conflictive interaction provides the basis to pinpoint the linguistic strategies employed by speakers to downplay conflict. They imply different mitigation strategies. For the speech act of advice-giving, two types of mitigating moves have already been identified: argumentation and empathy (Figueras 2020), such as sentence types, markers of modality and syntactic agency (Albelda and Cestero 2011; Albelda *et al.* 2014). Following Caffi (1999, 2017), Figueras (2020) identifies three main mitigating types: bushes (affecting the propositional *content*), hedges (reducing the illocutionary force) and shields (modifying the deictic origin of the assertion 'I-here-now').

This paper elaborates on the problem of shielding in interactive discourse. It attempts to explore specific syntactic constructions responding to particular communicative requirements in conflictive discourse. The discourse of couples in therapy is analyzed to identify how grammatical phenomena adjust to communicative situations, i.e., how grammatical cues change as the interaction evolves in couple therapy sessions. The paper explores the competition between impersonal and middle constructions as two polar points reflecting the proximity versus the distance sustained among interlocutors in dealing with conflict. The baseline is that distanced couples accessing therapy need to find ways to re-connect. While problematic issues need to be addressed, they need to be exposed in a way that does not increase the gap between participants. Mitigators are crucial in therapy since couple members are always ready to avoid addressing painful issues in everyday life. While impersonal constructions operate as good mitigators, middle constructions impose closeness.

1.1 *Se* constructions

In the languages of the world, there is always a grammatical phenomenon that permeates all facets of its structure. Undoubtedly, the clitic *se* is the form running across all kinds of constructions (passive, impersonal, middle, reflexive, dative,

anticausative, and spontaneous) along the Spanish grammatical system. Two types of *se* constructions play a fundamental role in conflictive communication. In one extreme, impersonal *se* constructions encode distance between participants. Since the agent is not identified, no participant is responsible for the event. On the other hand, middle *se* constructions involve a high degree of involvement of the participants in the event since it encodes the subject's inner feelings and emotions of an involved participant.

An issue not sufficiently addressed in the Hispanic tradition is the fact that Spanish *se* constructions exhibit important ambiguity between the passive and the impersonal interpretation as in (1) and (2):

(1) Ahí se apuesta la vida y se respeta al que gana (Mariachi song)
There SE bet the life and SE respect to-the one that wins
a. 'There one bets his life and people respect the winner'
b. 'There life is at stake and the winner is respected'

(2) Se vende-n caballo-s de pura sangre
SE sell-PL horse-PL of pure breed
a. 'Selling thoroughbred horses'
b. 'Thoroughbred horses are being sold'

The ambiguity pertains to the degree of prominence of either the theme (*vida* 'life', *caballo* 'horse') or the implied agent driving the event. The classical mariachi song in (1), Caminos de Guanajuato, almost a national anthem, undoubtedly refers to what people traditionally do and respect, not to whatever may happen to *vida* in Guanajuato. Likewise, in (2), at stake is what someone is offering for sale, not what happens to *caballos*. The interpretation favors an impersonal construal, not a passive one, albeit in (2) the verb agrees in number with the theme. Although problematic theme-verb agreement, as in (2), has been the most recurring argument determining the passive nature of the *se* construction (Mendikoetxea 1999; Sánchez López 2002; López Machado and Falk 1999 and many others), agreement in singular, as in (1), presents several problems that have seldom been addressed in the Hispanic literature. One crucial problem for the passive interpretation is the degree of prominence of the unexpressed agent as it might be more salient than the theme, as in (1a) and (2a).

In traditional structural terms, the passive interpretation comprises "promoting" the informative value of the theme to be interpreted as the clausal subject. In contrast, the impersonal construction involves letting the initial NP remain schematic as an unspecified "agentive force" driving the event as a schematic subject. Such human force can take either an arbitrary ('someone') or a quasi-universal ('one, everyone') interpretation. While the label passive or impersonal itself may be of secondary importance, what is worth observing is that the imper-

sonal interpretation of the so-called "passive" construction may be more frequent than it has traditionally been acknowledged (Llorente Maldonado de Guevara 1971). This paper identifies some crucial syntactic-semantic conditions determining the impersonal interpretation in *se* constructions (see Maldonado 1999b, 2007). The paper also explores the genres and discourse profiles determinant for impersonal *se* constructions.

Leaving aside reflexives and reciprocals, which are seldom employed, the most dominant uses of *se* constructions are passive, impersonal, and middle. This paper explores whether the clitic *se* specializes in particular styles and genres. From a Cognitive Grammar perspective (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2000, and *multi allia*), I assume a *usage base* approach to language in which construals are determined by the use of language in ordinary communication. I will offer an alternative characterization of a set of so-called "*se* passive" constructions, where the impersonal interpretation is dominant. I will also offer a network model to interpret various impersonal readings. Under scrutiny is how the agentive force is construed in impersonal constructions. *Se* constructions will be analyzed in two environments: (a) written and oral corpora and (b) couple interaction in therapy sessions. The aim is to show how grammar adjusts and reflects mental distance or involvement in different genres and contexts.

The data for this study come from different corpora reflecting several levels of formality in written and oral use in Mexican Spanish. Journalistic writing (*CREA,* Real Academia Española) will be compared to three types of oral data: parliamentary discourse (*CREA*), informal interviews (*CSCM*, Butragueño & Lastra 2014–2016) and informal spontaneous dialogue (AMERESCO-CDMX, Maldonado 2021). *CSCM* complies recordings of semi-guided informal interviews, while AMERESCO-CDMX renders spontaneous conversations in informal situations without the linguist's monitoring. It is expected that the properties of each discourse scenario will favor specific types of impersonal or middle construals. The analyzed data from these corpora will be compared with conflictive discourse for couples in therapy sessions.

The overall exposition is organized as follows. Section II is devoted to a syntactic-semantic overview of impersonal vs passive constructions. I will offer a panoramic view of impersonal interpretations for *se* constructions in Cognitive Grammar terms. Section III provides a usage-based description of *se* constructions in the four Mexican Spanish corpora mentioned above. Section IV focuses on couple interaction in therapy. I'll analyze the evolutionary behavior of *se* constructions in two separate couples from Madrid and Malaga (Spain). Finally, section V, as a way of conclusions, compares the results from each genre and offers a dynamic characterization of the use of *se* constructions where, despite the diver-

sity of genres and contexts, the behavioral patterns for conceptual proximity and distance are the same.

2. A note on impersonal and passive constructions

The core of the analysis is middle and impersonal constructions. These two are central in the array of situations considered here. Reflexive constructions are not relevant for this study. They involve a split-self representation of the subject as two interacting co-referential entities (3). On the other hand, middles are crucial. They profile simplex events in which the action remains in the subject's sphere of action/interests (Maldonado 1999a), as in (4):

(3) a. (Vale$_i$) se$_i$ entiende a sí misma
'(Vale) She understands myself'
b. (Adrián$_i$) se$_i$ imagina bailando con Tongolele
'(Adrian) He imagines himself dancing with Tongolele'

(4) a. Me fastidié de trabajar
'I got fed up of working'
b. Valeria se quedó dormida
'Valeria fell asleep'
c. Adrián se alegró de verla
'Adrian was (became) glad to see her'

Middles, events that are significantly compressed in time, exhibit notable similarities with passive and spontaneous events (Maldonado, 1999). Just like passive, impersonal, or anticausative construals, the mental scanning of the event is compressed to the precise moment of change, resulting in inceptive or inchoative *energetic construals* (Langacker 2000).

Passive constructions contrast with two-participants transitive constructions and may be obtained through two types of conceptual operations: (i) profiling the Theme, thus relegating the Agent to the background, and (ii) downgrading the Agent leaving some schematic presence of her/his acting in the event (Shibatani 1985). These strategies impose different effects: in the first, the initiating properties of the Agent may be either omitted or expressed in an oblique prepositional phrase; in the second, the inducing properties of the agent remain present in a somewhat reduced manner. The change to passive represents an attention shift where a participant with secondary salience, the THEME, is selected as the primary figure in the event.

Just like Romance, Germanic, and many other languages employ the passive structure to encode Theme prominence. Most commonly a passive marker is used, as in Indonesian:

(5) Saya di-periksa oleh dokter itu. Indonesian
I PASS-examine by doctor the
'I was examined by the doctor.'

The content of passive structures in Indonesian, Nepali, Romance and Germanic languages fully coincide with the representation in Figure 1 (Langacker 1982):

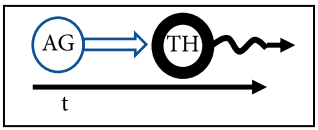

Figure 1. Passive. Theme profiled

The circles represent participants. The Agent imposes energy on the Theme (the double straight arrow). The circle with the squiggly arrow in boldface represents the profiled theme undergoing some change-of-state. The event's processual time (t) is represented by the dark arrow below the circles.

Shibatani's (1985) second strategy for passive formation is one where the Agent is somehow downgraded. For some languages, passives develop from potential, honorific, spontaneous and reflexive constructions, as exemplified by Japanese and Ainu. The following are examples from Japanese (Shibatani 1985), where *-are* marks honorific (6a), potential (6b), spontaneous (6c) and passive (6d) constructions:

(6) a. Sensei ga waraw-*are*-ta.
Teacher NOM laugh-HON-PST
'The teacher laughed (honorific).'
b. Boku wa neinur-*are*-nakat-ta.
I TOP sleep-POT-NEG-PST
'I could not sleep.'
c. Mukasi ga sinob-*are*-ru.
old.time NOM think.about-SPON-PRS
'An old time comes (spontaneously) to mind.'
d. Taroo wa sikar-*are*-ta.
Taroo TOP scold-PASS-PST
'Taro was scolded.'

According to Shibatani's survey, the use of the same form for passive and potential constructions is also found in Hindi, Turkish, Russian, and Nahuatl. Passives may

develop from Potential construals since they designate propensity for an event to happen, yet its actual happening remains uncertain.

On the other hand, the most common coincidence is the use of the same marker for middle, passive, impersonal, and spontaneous events, as attested in Romance as well as, for instance, in Russian, Chamorro, Guarijio, and Nahuatl. The association between passives and spontaneous events involves excluding the control otherwise imposed by the Agent. The potentiality of an event may be determined either by the event's natural propensity to occur or by the influx of some unspecified force. The presence of a schematic human force may change the event's profile such that the Theme may not always be the most prominent participant in the event.

Spanish, as many other languages, has more than one passive construction: one strongly implies a specific Agent that may or may not be overtly coded (7) and the other leaves the Agent present in schematic terms (8):

Periphrastic passive

(7) La puerta fue abierta (por el cerrajero)
DET door be-PST.3SG open-PP (by DET locksmith)
'The door was opened (by the locksmith).'

Middle / passive (spontaneous)

(8) La puerta se abrió (??por el cerrajero)
The door MID/PASS open-PST.3SG (*by DET locksmith).
'The door opened/got opened ('by the locksmith).'[1]

Two conceptualizations are at hand, the periphrastic passive (7) designates an elaborated process profiling the Theme. The "demoted" Agent may be elaborated for further detail in an oblique phrase. In contrast, the clitic *se* in (8) corresponds to Shibatani's *Agent defocusing construction*. Here there are two options for the agent: (i) it may be totally erased from the incident to designate a spontaneous (anticausative) event, as in (9) or it may remain in schematic terms to signal the presence of a human force driving the event, as the impersonal construction in (10). Figures 2 and 3 illustrate such a contrast:

1. The oblique agent can be introduced in the *se* construction for purposes of clarification or further elaboration, particularly with generic agents, such as institutions, government officials and public characters:

(1) *Se prohibió la firma del tratado (por las autoridades)*'The signing of the treaty was prohibited (by the authorities)'

(9) Se reventó la cuerda Spontaneous
SPONT break-PST the rope
'The rope broke'

(10) *Se espera una nueva propuesta* Impersonal
IMP wait a new proposal
'(People/they/we) expect a new proposal'

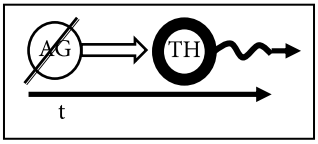

Figure 2. Spontaneous. Profiled Theme's change of state

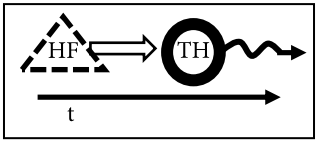

Figure 3. Impersonal. Schematic human force

The circles represent participants. In the spontaneous event in (9) the agent is erased from the scene such that the change-of-state (the squiggly arrow), takes place with no apparent driving force. The double arrow represents the force driving the event and the straight arrow with a **t** stands for the event's processing time. As for the impersonal construal in (10) in Figure 3, the triangle represents the human force driving the event, even though no specific human agent is expressed. The human agent is primarily retrieved from the meaning of the verb.

In the Hispanic tradition, impersonal constructions have been treated as a limited class corresponding to one core morphemic condition: there is no theme-verb agreement. This can be the consequence of an intransitive verb (11a), a plural theme with a verb in 3rd person singular (11b) or an oblique theme marked by a preposition (11c):

(11) a. Intransitive verbs
Se vive bien aquí
'One lives well here'
b. Plural theme with no verb agreement
Se estudia problemas de enorme complejidad
'One/people studies problems of great complexity'

c. Prepositional theme (oblique theme)
Se respeta a los mayores
'One/we respect the elder'

By default, all other *se* constructions are treated as passive, a construction that has been considered the most dominant passive construction in Spanish (Mendikoetxea 1999, Sánchez López 2002, López Machado and Falk 1999 and *multi allia*). Be it an affix (Mendikoetxea 1999) or a clitic (Sánchez López 2002) *se* determines verb agreement with the theme in third person. This observation can only be sustained for plural agreement:

(12) a. *Se* afectaro-n los techo-s
SE affected-PL DET roof-PL
'The roofs were affected'
b. *Se* alquila-n habitacion-es
SE rent-PL room-PL
'Rooms for rent'
c. Ambos acuerdo-s *se* rubricará-n esta semana.
'Both-PL agreement-PL SE signed-PL this week
'Both agreements will be signed this week' (López Machado & Falk 1999)

NPs in *se* constructions are neither definite nor animate. If animate the NP designates a type, not an instance anchored in a specific situation. Consequently, the theme's degree of prominence is rather low. Thus, the impersonal interpretation in (13b) is more adequate than the passive: somebody's need for waiters is more prominent than the waiters themselves:

(13) *Se necesitan (*los) camareros.*
a. '(*the) Waiters are needed/hired'
b. 'We (someone) need (*the) waiters (here)'

Plural Theme-verb agreement (as in 12–13) has traditionally been considered determinant for subject identification. Now, since *se* constructions have only one argument, agreement cannot be the most robust argument for subject selection since it is not contrastive. Indeed, the verb agrees with ANY OVERT NP in the clause but here there is only one NP. The case of *se* is but one of several constructions in Spanish where the verb agrees with the Theme without determining subject choice.[2]

2. Quantification and predications are well-known agreement problems (*La mayoría de los muchachos… tratan de venirse a Caracas* 'Most of the boys… try to come to Caracas', *Su preocupación son sus hijos* 'His concern are/is his children' (Soler 2014). Impersonal *haber* is also

In previous work (Maldonado 1999b, 2007), I have provided arguments showing that many of the so-called "passive *se* constructions" are, in fact, impersonal. I have shown that theme-verbal agreement is not as robust an argument as the verb requirement for human agency and aspect. Here, I will underline the relevance of the impersonal interpretation. Agreement in singular is generally undermined. In (14), in the absence of an inductive force, there is a spontaneous *se* construction. In contrast, if a human agent can be implied, an impersonal interpretation reigns, as in (15) where a traditional social practice is described:

(14) El plato se quiebra con cambios fuertes de temperatura
'The plate breaks with strong changes in temperature'

(15) En Oaxaca el plato se quiebra después de comer el buñuelo
'In Oaxaca one breaks the plate after eating the buñuelo (a pastry)'

Notice that theme anteposition does not prevent the schematic human force to be most prominent in situations with high demand for a human agent (15). As in European Portuguese (Raposo & Uriaguereka 1990), the periphrastic passive construction can take NP anteposition. This is excluded for *se* constructions. Theme anteposition clashes with the agent's prominence in initial position and renders questionable results. This is particularly the case for verbs of perception and mental processing which exhibit a stronger demand for human agency. Fronting the Theme in (17b) is problematic:

(16) Todas las familias fueron visitadas/atendidas
'All families were visited/served'

(17) a. Se visitaron/atendieron todas las familias
'We all visited/attended all houses'
b. *Todas las familias se visitaron (non-reciprocal)

This suggests that in *se* impersonal constructions the schematic agent still occupies the position preceding the verb.

This is corroborated by the behavior of modal and EQUI verbs, such as *dejar* 'let' and *querer* 'want' respectively, where anteposition only allows for a reciprocal reading. Thus, the alleged passive value of the clitic *se* cannot be sustained:

(18) a. Los prisioneros quieren ser ayudados
'The prisoners want to be helped'
b. *Los prisioneros quieren ayudarse (non-reciprocal)

---

a classic problem (*Había(n) muchos problemas* 'There were a lot of problems') (DeMello 1991, Lastra and Martín Butragueño 2016, Arteaga Santos and De la Mora Gutiérrez 2022).

The prominence of the agent has further been identified in so-called 'modal passives' (Zúñiga 2023), an intermediate construction where the agent's activity designates a deontic reading:

(19) Y ¿cómo se leen estos cuentos? [...] De una sentada.
'And how do you read these stories? [...] In one sitting.'
(*El Universal*, CORPES, *apud* Zúñiga, 2023)

Indeed, *se* constructions with modal verbs highlight ways in which a schematic agent can, may, or must behave.

Although traditionally treated as passives, the impersonal interpretation here is notable. A long-time-held contradiction has been imposed by using "passive *se*" as an umbrella term that blurs the presence of a dominant impersonal construal where the schematic agent's activity is profiled. More arguments for impersonals regarding aspect and theme genericness are provided in other manuscripts (Maldonado 1999b, 2007). Let us now observe the type of information impersonal constructions can provide.

3. A proposal for the interpretation of impersonal *se* constructions

In previous work (Maldonado 1999a, 1999b, 2007), I have proposed that the interpretation of impersonal constructions is determined by the role assigned to the SCHEMATIC AGENT. This interpretation depends on whether such role is interpreted as the SPEAKER (first person), the HEARER (second person), or some OTHER participant (third person). Linkage is represented in Figure 4:

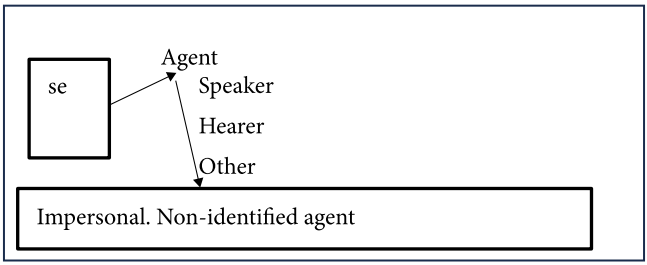

Figure 4. Impersonal interpretation

The schematic agent *se* is linked for further elaboration to either the SPEAKER, the HEARER, or OTHER. Yet the interpretation is always as an impersonal non-specified agentive force, as in the rectangle at the bottom in Figure 4.

Temporal definiteness determines two sets of readings: the definite involves a specific temporal reference that renders an IMPERSONAL ARBITRARY interpretation *alguien* 'someone' (Cincue 1988; Hernanz 1990; Maldonado 1999b). Some event/action done by someone is reported. This construction is commonly used in official reports and news broadcasts. In (20) *se* designates what the camera members decided to do regarding the budget, whereas (21) renders what people did in Beirut all night:

(20) En el presupuesto *se* ha dado prioridad a la inversión
'In the current budget we have been given priority to investment'

(21) Hoy en Beirut, se ha matado a un inocente
'Today in Beirut, someone has killed an innocent man'

Given this meaning, the schematic agent *se* must be linked to the agentive 3rd person OTHER, as in Figure 5:

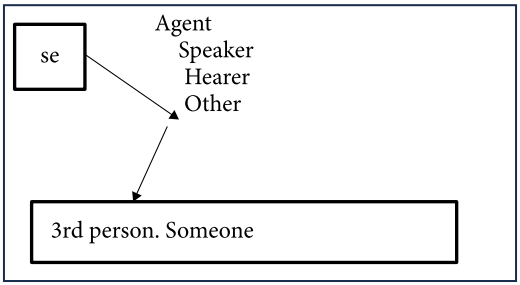

Figure 5. Arbitrary interpretation. *Se firmó el tratado* 'They/someone signed the treaty'

In contrast, when *se* is linked with the speaker (FIRST person), the clitic allows the speaker to avoid the responsibility of the event that s/he drives. Responsibility is diluted since the agent is left unspecified. In (22) a former president of Mexico declared, in first person, his intention to protect the Mexican currency, and only a few days later, after the devaluation of the Mexican peso, he protected his image with an impersonal statement:

(22) Defenderé el Peso como perro. (Days later): *Se* hizo lo que *se* pudo .
(former president López Portillo, circa 1982)
'I will defend the Mexican Peso like a dog (days later): What could be done, was done [We did what we could]'

Figure 6 shows the linkage between *se* and 1st person:

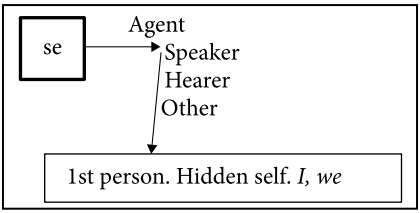

Figure 6. Hidden-self interpretation. We *Se* hizo lo que se pudo 'What could be done, was done [by me/us]'

As related to the interpretation for first-person, *se* can be linked to the location occupied by the speaker. This is the case for contexts where the agent represents some institution or public place. As shown in Figure 7, the voice of the speaker represents the rules of the place/institution s/he represents. In these cases, the locative *aquí* 'here' is consistently implied as the location from which the speaker utters the statement (23):

(23) *Se* prohibe fumar [aquí]
'Smoking is prohibited [here]'

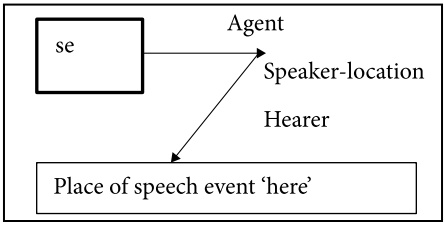

Figure 7. Fictive speaker's location. *Se* prohíbe fumar 'Smoking is prohibited [here]'

Still linked to the voice of the speaker, *se* encodes a PERFORMATIVE CONSTRUCTION which is, in fact, an extension of the locative construction in (23). Here the action takes place as the sentence is uttered:

(24) *Se* levanta la sesión y *se* cita para la que tendrá lugar el día martes diez
'The Session is adjourned and an appointment is made for the one that will take place on Tuesday the tenth'

(25) *Se* da por aprobado el acuerdo parlamentario
'The parliamentary agreement is approved' [The members hereby approve the agreement]

The session is canceled and the agreement is approved as the speaker utters her/his statement. Since *se* links the agent to the temporal immediacy of the utterance, the construction subsumes a performative value:

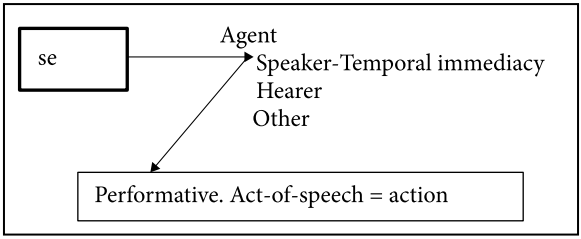

Figure 8. Performative. Temporal immediacy *se* cancela la reunión 'The meeting is cancelled' [I hereby cancel the meeting]

The *se* construction can also designate non-definite temporal construals that render quasi-universal readings equivalent to 'one/everyone'. Not surprisingly, this schema can exhibit important polysemy. When agentive *se* is linked to all members involved in the context, it designates NORMS and RULES shared by all participants in the relevant context, be it parliament members (26) or cooks (27):

(26) La propuesta *se* discute en el pleno
'The proposal is discussed in the plenary session' (CREA-Oral)

(27) El jitomate *se* muele con los chipotles, *se* fríe en una cucharada de manteca, *se* sazona con sal y una cucharadita de azúcar (CREA-México 1976)

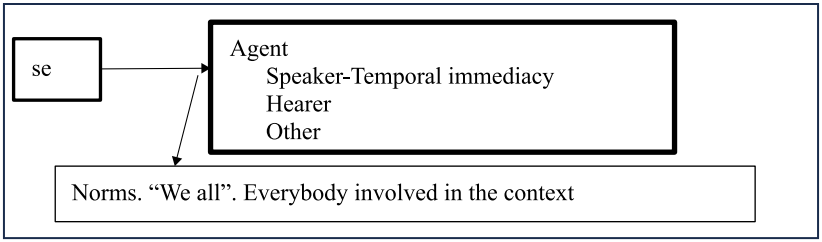

Figure 9. Norms 'We all' La propuesta *se* discute en el pleno 'The proposal is discussed in the plenary session'

There is a further specialization by which norms established in a group are used as commands imposed on the hearer to control their behavior. In (28–29) the implied hearer receives the indirect command. Notice that the postverbal plural NP may or may not control verbal agreement with no particular change in meaning:

(28) *Se saluda al entrar*
'You greet as you enter'

(29) Se respeta(n) las normas
'The norms are to be obeyed'

Norms shared by a whole group are imposed on the hearer, as represented in Figure 10.

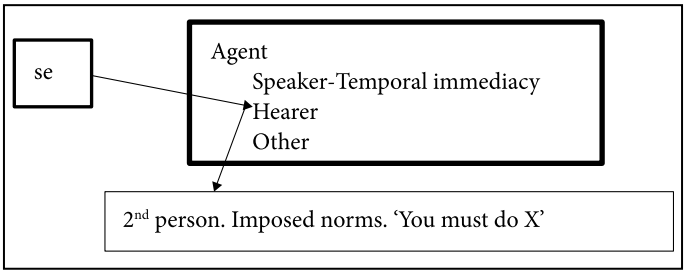

Figure 10. Imposed norms 'You' *Se* saluda al entrar 'You greet as you enter'

Other quasi-universal uses of the impersonal construction, such as thematic subjects for unaccusatives are treated elsewhere (see Maldonado Soto 1999b; Gutiérrez Ordóñez 2002). Let us now observe the behavior of *se* constructions in discourse.

4. A usage based study: Written and oral discourse

In this section, I show how constructional meanings tend to specialize as responding to specific communicative necessities of speakers in particular contexts. Choosing passive, impersonal, or middle constructions may be related to genres or styles. We may be able to define the type of impersonal readings prevailing in each context. The samples in the corpus were labeled according to the categories in Table 1:

Table 1. Categories for *se* constructions

PASSIVE	Theme in profile. *Los problemas se solucionaron* 'The problems were solved' (CREA México).

Table 1. *(continued)*

IMPERSONAL	Schematic human force in profile. *Que nuestra propuesta no se confunda… con la de los otros partidos* 'Let our proposal not be confused … with that of the other parties' (CREA México).
IMPERSONAL-PASSIVE	Ambiguous passive-impersonal interpretation. Schematic agent prominent. *Las propuestas se turnan a la comisión* 'Proposals are referred to the commission' (CREA México)
SPONATENOUS	Unidentified driving force. *O tal vez por última vez para ver que los cambios se puedan dar en nuestro país* 'Or maybe for the last time to see that changes can take place in our country' (CREA México)
MIDDLE	One participant event change-of-state. *Esperando verdaderamente que el senador pronto se recupere* 'Truly hoping that the senator will soon recover' (CREA México)

The data from the four already mentioned corpora (Journalism and oral formal, from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*. Real Academia Española (CREA), informal interviews *Corpus Sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México*, Butragueño y Lastra 2011-2015 (CSCM), and informal dialogue *Corpus de Conversaciones Ameresco-Ciudad de México*, Maldonado, 2021 (AMERESCO-CDMX)) were extracted in the same manner. There were 2242 instances of *se* constructions retrieved from AMERESCO-CDMX. The same number of samples were extracted from the other three corpora to balance the data. Using *Antconc,* combinations of se+1 word were ranked by frequency to identify the 50 most frequent *se* collocations. The threshold was set to 7 instances. Based on this procedure, most combinations were *se*+VERB. Yet, as expected, some highly grammaticized combinations, such as *se*+OBJECT clitic (*se lo, se la(s), se le(s)*) were quite frequent and presented different functions. These combinations were analyzed to identify the type of construals where *se*+CLITIC were dominant in each genre.

4.1 Journalistic writing

General tendencies for journalistic written data from CREA include the 50 most frequent combinations with an interesting distribution:

Table 2. Distribution for *se* constructions CREA Press

Categorycategory	%	Instances
Imp	64%	32
Imp, middle	26%	13
Middle	10%	5
CREA Press	100%	50

Impersonal constructions were more frequent than middles. It is worth breaking the impersonal uses. The vast majority of impersonal uses correspond to norms and common practices among groups, as per Table 3.

(30) En votación económica, *se* consulta a la asamblea si *se* aprueba…
'In an economic vote, the assembly is consulted if it is approved…'

(31) Conforme a la ley, cada año *se* entrega el detalle, *se* aprueba en el presupuesto
'In accordance with the law, each year the detail is delivered, it is approved in the budget'

Table 3. Impersonal *se* constructions. Norms. Press CREA

Combination	Rank	Instances
se consulta	4	41
se hagan	4	41
se aprueba	9	28
se dispensa	9	28
se concede	11	27
se sirva	12	25
se deroga	13	24
se realice	15	19
se turna	15	19
se está	18	18

Norms may be most frequent since a considerable number of texts were related to analyses and reports of government practices and public policies.

4.2 Oral formal discourse

Most of CREA-MX data correspond to parliamentary interventions. Thus, we should expect a behavior similar to written language. Indeed, there was an evident

dominance of impersonal constructions. There were also cases labeled as impersonal-passive where verb-theme agreement was not enough an argument to disregard the impersonal profile of the construction: *se emitieron* 'were issued', *se turnan* 'are turned'. For these verbs, the requirement for human agency is high enough to determine the schematic human inductive force as more prominent than the theme. Cases like (32–33) are marked as impersonal-passive based on Agent prominence and plural agreement. All examples exhibit crucial impersonal properties:

(32) La solución de los tres asuntos que aquí se han abordado, y ampliemos el horizonte (CREA ORAL)
'The solution of the three issues that have been addressed here, and let's broaden the horizon'

(33) se turnan dichas comunicaciones a las Comisiones (CREA ORAL)
'these communications are turned over to the Commissions'

Let us identify the kind of impersonal constructions controlling formal oral discourse. Since it is parliamentary discourse, PERFORMATIVE IMPERSONAL constructions are dominant:

(34) *se* consulta a la asamblea si *se* aprueba el anterior punto de acuerdo (CREA ORAL)
'the assembly is consulted if the previous point of agreement is approved'

(35) ...culminando la agenda política *se* concede el uso de la palabra a... (CREA ORAL)
'to culminate the political agenda, the use of the floor is granted to...

Also coherent with parliamentary discourse is the frequent use of quasi-universal constructions designating norms:

(36) veinticinco mil millones de pesos, si no *se* le ponen candados en el presupuesto (CREA MEX)
'twenty-five thousand million pesos [are spent], <u>if no locks are put</u> on the budget'

(37) ...normas aprobadas por la Colegisladora por las que <u>*se* reforman y adicionan</u> los artículos cuatro y siete (CREA MEX)
'[these are the] norms approved by the Co-legislator by which articles four and seven <u>are reformed and added</u>'

The comparison between Tables 4 and 5 evidences the dominance of the performative construction:

Table 4. Performatives Oral Formal CREA

Performatives	
se consulta	56
se sirva	41
se aprueba	40
se concede	37
se dispensa	36
se turna	36
se deroga	24
se levanta	23
se pone	23
se autoriza	14
se cita	14
se hace	14
se abre	13
se instruye	13
se ruega	13
se reconoce	12
se somete	12
se ratifica	6

Table 5. Norms. Oral Formal CREA

Norms	
se les	33
se le	31
se trata	12
se reforma	11
se habla	9
se require	8
se reserve	8
se considera	7
se define	7
se dice	7
se discute	7
se remite	7

Finally, *se* constructions with arbitrary interpretation are seldom present in the data. These constructions correspond to definite temporal contexts, most commonly in past tense as in (38); yet, future projective uses are also possible for this construction (39):

(38) De la Secretaría de Gobernación se recibió oficio en relación con la demanda (CREA MEX)
'An official letter was received from the Ministry of the Interior in relation to the lawsuit'

(39) nosotros hacemos un llamado a que ésta se realice respetando los límites que establece la ley (CREA MEX)
'We call for this to be carried out respecting the limits established by the law'

The dominance of performatives and norms is undoubtedly determined by genre. Parliamentary discourse involves situations where laws and procedures are approved, agreements are voted, new issues are discussed, and sessions are

opened and adjourned. The PERFORMATIVE *SE* CONSTRUCTION seals agreements according to preestablished NORMS.

The similarities between journalistic writing and formal parliamentary discourse are outstanding. Yet the differences are quite informative. Journalism favors impersonal *se* constructions designating norms; alternatively, the interactional oral interchange and the necessity to reach agreements make performative *se* constructions the default for this genre.

One may wonder whether such dominance will prevail in other contexts. The analysis of oral informal data may be informative.

4.3 CSCM: Oral informal interviews

Given CSCM's dialogical profile, no performatives and no norms should be expected since there is no need for immediate agreements or official reports. Here we move to narratives about personal stories.

The behavior for *se* constructions in CSCM is quite different than that of previous corpora:

Table 6. CSCM general tendencies for *se* constructions

Middle, Imp	35%	18
Middl	33%	17
Imp	25%	13
IO, Middl	8%	4
Total	**100%**	**52**

In contrast with previous data, we may observe that middle *se* constructions are dominant. In some cases, middle *se* alternates with the indirect object clitic *se* (<u>*se*</u> *lo dieron* 'they gave it <u>to her</u>). But the vast majority of *se* collocations are either middles alone or middles alternating with impersonals. As already pointed out, middle construals focus on the change-of-state undergone by the only participant in the event. Thus, common meanings found in the corpus relate to sudden dynamic changes (40) or spontaneous events (41):

(40) porque// en la escuela a lo mejor/ <u>se les ha dificultado</u> (CSCM)
'because// at school maybe/ <u>it has been difficult for them</u>'

(41) En últimos años/ <u>me</u> he dado el gusto/ se han dado las circunstancias afortunadas (CSCM)
'In recent years/ I have pleased <u>myself</u>/ fortunate circumstances have occurred'

Many non-alternating middle constructions come from energetic construals that have been lexicalized as middle verbs (*irse* 'leave', *morirse* 'die [unexpectedly]', *descomponerse* 'break [unexpectedly]', *encargarse* 'be(come) in charge for', *meterse* 'enter rapidly' and many more. Middles focalize changes of state:

(42) días/ ves dos películas de la muestra/ se acaba en quince días (CSCM)
'you see two films from the festival/ it ends in fifteen days

(43) cuando el riñón se descompone/ se descompone todo el organismo (CSCM)
'when the kidney breaks down/ the whole organism breaks down'

Notice also that impersonal constructions are still quite frequent. Not only do they alternate with middles, but there is an important 12% of impersonal collocations responding to norms (44), or to arbitrary interpretations (45):

(44) y las pencas se asan// el consomé se prepara con cebolla garbanzo arroz... (CSCM)
'and the leaves are roasted// the broth is prepared with onion, chickpea, rice...'

(45) I: porque se hizo con la/ cooperación de todos (CSCM)
'I: because it was done with everyone's cooperation'

CSCM exhibits a different profile than the CREA corpora. While the number of impersonal constructions referring to common practices and specific events done by an unidentified agent is still considerable, the majority of *se* constructions correspond to middle constructions depicting changes-of-state or energetic events that have undergone lexicalization as middle verbs. This profile may respond to the narrative nature of interviews where speakers bring about stories of their personal history or describe common practices of their social group. We may explore, as per the following section, if the same profile will hold for informal dialogue.

4.4 Ameresco: Oral informal dialogue

The AMERESCO informal data come from totally spontaneous dialogues recorded in natural contexts. The use of these recordings was authorized by anonymous participants of different genders, ages, and social groups. No linguist intervention took place. We may expect illuminating differences in the use of *se* constructions since there are more dialogues than personal narratives. Indeed, middle constructions rein in oral informal discourse:

Table 7. AMERESCO *se* constructions

Se	Tokens	%
Imp	57	8%
Imp-pas	21	3%
Middle	**623**	**89%**
Total	**701**	**100%**

There is a dramatic dominance of middle constructions for AMERESCO. Neither passive, nor impersonals exhibit significant numbers. There are no clear passive samples where the theme overrides the agent's prominence. As in previous corpora, specific *se* + clitic (*se me, se le*) middle constructions are at the top of the list together with particular well entrenched middle verbs *se llama* 'his/her name is', *se va/fue* 'he is leaving/he left'. As already argued, middles depict emotional and physical changes-of-state which tend to be dynamic and abrupt, and these may extend to designate unexpected events such as *se me perdió* 'I lost it [by accident. Lit: 'It got lost on me'], *se le descompuso* 'it broke down on her'. Most collocations in Table 8 correspond to changes being focused upon: *se puso* (triste) '*he got* (sad)', *se mete* 's/he gets in', *se enoja* 's/he gets mad, etc. The most recurrent samples of this construction type are presented in Table 8:

Table 8. Middle *se* constructions

Construction	Freq
se llama	87
se va	69
se fue	42
se te	41
se murió	26
se iba	23
se van	23
se queda	19
se quedó	16
se fueron	14
se llamaba	13

Besides *se llama(ba)* 'his name is/was', an old Spanish middle development from the reflexive '*se llama a sí mismo* 'S/he calls her/himself', all other uses represent dynamic events focusing on the change-of-state. Here are some instances:

(46) el auto *se* detiene (AMERESCO-MEX)
'the car stops'

(47) con eso tengo para llevarla pero sí *se* ha puesto bien cañón ¿vea? (AMERESCO-MEX)
'with that I have enough to carry on but it got real hard, right?'

(48) se doró bonito ¡ay *se* hizo bien rica! (AMERESCO-MEX)
'It turned brown beautifully, oh, it came out delicous!'

Although not abundant, the behavior for impersonals is quite informative. As can be seen from Table 9, most cases involve verbs of perception, as well as some modal verbs and one verb of speech:

Table 9. AMERESCO Impersonal collocations

Construction	Frequency
se ve	53
se escucha	44
se siente	34
se puede	30
se hace	19
se veía	13
se tiene	11
se dice	9

In other words, for informal speech, impersonal constructions are restricted to designate whether we can, may or have to hear, see or sense something in the communicative event:

(49) le echaron nada más ahí se ve luego luego mhm (AMERESCO-MEX)
'they just threw some of it, you can tell right away mhm'

(50) "ps">pues</fsr> nada más se ven ahí parados los dos (AMERESCO-MEX)
'well you just can see them both right there standing'

As in CSCM, Impersonal constructions may also designate norms:

(51) ¿cuánto] se le pone? niñas [creo que]... (AMERESCO-MEX)
'how much] do you put? girls [how much do you put on it?] [I think] it's...'

These data suggest that informal dialogue does not privilege impersonal constructions, even less so passives. Moreover, spontaneous *se* constructions were restricted to two verbs *se da(n)* 'grow/do well' and *se acabó* 'run out of X'. Only occasionally speakers exploit impersonal constructions to depict norms people follow or signal how people perceive things in their immediate surroundings. Middle constructions were unquestionably dominant. Speakers tend to focus on changes-of-state they may have undergone. Some of these changes may be abrupt and unexpected. In this environment, passive constructions signaling what happens to the theme seem rather unusual.

There is a tradeoff between genres. Journalistic writing and formal oral discourse are characterized by a high frequency of impersonal constructions with some presence of middles. This profile is reversed in oral informal discourse where impersonals drop dramatically in favor of middle constructions referring to everyday emotional and physical changes.

Let us extend the analysis to conflictive discourse. The rendition of impersonal mitigators and middle emotional constructions is at stake.

5. Impersonals and middles in conflictive discourse: Couple therapy

The data for conflict comes from the Esprint-Terapia Valencia linguistic Corpus (Albelda y Estellés in progress). One-hour sessions were recorded and transcribed. Since, behind most conflictive situations, there is a deep desire for emotional connection and a fear of rejection or abandonment, couples attend therapy seeking reconnection (Estellés 2023). From the Esprint-Terapia corpus, I have selected sessions 1, 2, and 15 for two couples, one from Madrid and one from Malaga, Spain. The goal is to identify the discourse adjustments couples make as the therapy process evolves. In general terms, in therapy there are three roles: the "seeker-nagger", the "avoider", and the "mediator". The initiative to attend therapy normally is promoted by the seeker-nagger who convinces the avoider to attend therapy. A crucial role of the mediator is to set the basis for interlocutors to find ways to interact such that feelings are not hurt and communication is not broken. Nagger and avoider address the therapist to narrate the conflictive situations they share in their lives. This indirect interaction through the therapist facilitates naming conflictive matters as gently as possible, until participants gain confidence to address things straight and clear. Before that happens, we may expect a dominant use of mitigators in discourse. Sessions 1, 2, and 15 are selected to see if grammatical structures reflect changes in communication as couple members build a common ground to improve their interaction. Since we already know from the corpora analysis that impersonal and middle constructions adapt to genres

and speech styles, we may expect comparable adjustments as therapy evolves and interlocutors' interactions become more collaborative.

In the following sections, I do a longitudinal exploration of impersonal and middle *se* constructions to identify adjustments in each couple´s discourse strategies as therapy evolves. Malaga will be presented after Madrid.

5.1 Couple sessions: Madrid 1

The first outstanding property is the almost exclusive use of third person singular in the first session. The scarce use of first person is natural since participants mostly report on the behavior of the "other" to the therapist.

The use of middle mental constructions in third person is particularly useful to report on the emotional reactions of the couple:

(52) Una serie de problemáticas o sea, o M **se enfada o se molesta** o tiene temas recurrentes…
'A series of problems, that is, either **M gets angry or upset** or has recurring issues'

(53) los explica me los comenta en, en algunas cosas pues **se altera** M y yo tengo la percepción de que…
'He explains them to me, he tells me about them in some things, because **he gets upset** and I have the perception that…'

Also frequent is the use of impersonal *se* constructions to establish distance. Example (54) is crucial since there is a shift from the third person direct object clitic *lo* to the impersonal clitic *se*. *Lo* is used to refer to an adequate action the couple was doing. Yet, when referring to some mutual action, the speaker switches to the impersonal form to refer generically to the couple:

(54) M.- pues lo había- lo había gestionado muy bien y **se había podido más o menos hacer todo** y bueno…
'M well I had- I had managed it very well and more or less everything could be done and so…'

Together with the impersonal form, the potential *podido* 'could' reinforces distance, lack of involvement on the participant's part. This is corroborated by other uses where the event is transported to an alternative MENTAL SPACE (Fauconnier 1994). Reference to the *here and now* of the speech situation is excluded. Hypothetical forms, as the conditional in (55), are recurrent to refer to possible environments where the speakers would feel the need to refer to the event in neutral terms:

(55) M.- pues me siento frustrada porque **quizás se necesitaría tener en el otro lado alguien** que dijese…
'M.- well I feel frustrated because **maybe it would be necessary to have someone on the other side** who would say…'

Even more distant is the use of spontaneous impersonal *se* constructions where things happen on their own, spontaneously, free of the couple's intervention. Again, the contrast between the first person *ya no puedo más* 'I can't handle it any more' and the climax of the conflict *Se convierte en demasiado* 'It becomes too much' is rather informative:

(56) Ya no puedo más, llega un punto</cita> ¿verdad? P <cita>donde **se convierte en demasiado y ahí es donde salta la liebre**
'I can't handle it any more, there comes a point</quote> right? P <quote>where **it becomes too much** and that's where **the problem pops up** [the rabit jumps]'

(57) M La solución es [separarnos] P [((RISAS))] M sí sí
H sí sí **se vuelve incómodo** y los dos coincidimos que no es lo mejor
M The solution is [to separate] P [((LAUGHS))] M yes yes
H yes yes **it gets awkward** and we both agree that it is not the best…

(58) él así</cita> M o si veo que **esta situación se está yendo un poquito de madre** por la circunstancia
'he like this</quote> M or if I see that **this situation is getting a little out of hand** due to the circumstances'

Things become uncomfortable or get out of hand by themselves. No responsibility is attributable to any of the members of the couple.

Table 10 shows general tendencies of impersonal and middle constructions.

Table 10. Madrid 1

Se	Tokens	%
Middle-mental	33	46%
Imp dist (imp, spont)	25	36%
Middle	5	7%
IO	8	11%
Total	**72**	**100%**

As can be seen, there is a balance between middle constructions referring to emotional changes, and impersonal and spontaneous constructions excluding any participation of the couple; that is, emotional changes happen to the other par-

ticipant, and problematic issues happen out there with no one's intervention. As encoded by third person middles and impersonals, speakers do not seem ready to expose their inner personal feelings, or be held responsible for inconveniences. All other *se* constructions are not frequent enough to be meaningful. Middles refer to dynamic changes such as *irse* 'leave', *salirse* 'get out', etc. which, like indirect objects, have very few instances.

5.2 Couple sessions: Madrid 2

It is relevant to check if the results for Madrid I are not sporadic. Madrid II corroborates a consistent pattern:

Table 11. Madrid 2

Se	Tokens	%
Middle mental	26	41%
Imp	19	30%
Middle	12	19%
IO	6	10%
Total	**63**	**100%**

Middles referring to emotional changes are quite frequent and they keep being used in 3rd person referring to the emotional changes the partner may have undergone:

(59) M---y además ---al final **se acaba moderando** un poco M---[lo que pasa]
'and also ---in the end **he ends up moderating** a bit M---[what happens]'

(60) H---son más por por por por cómo **se siente ella** y que me transmite a mí
'They are more about how **she feels** and what she transmits to me´

Similarly, impersonal constructions keep serving the distance necessary to avoid responsibilities. Most notably, in arguing for the child's education, the discussion is sustained by deontic *se* constructions designating norms. The husband argues based on the way things should be:

(61) H--- no es lo habitual ---o **no se considera** ---o sea no es algo ---normal
'It is not usual ---or **it is not considered** ---that is, it is not something ---normal'

(62) H---¿y esos veinticinco minutos que **se supone que tiene que estudiar**?
'H---And those twenty-five minutes that **it is supposed she has to study for**?'

These norms are not presented as personal views but as normal procedures in an optimal world. Norms are there to be followed. The impersonal *se* construction for norms gives the statement all the illocutionary strength needed, more than the one it would have should it be presented as a personal opinion:

(63) H <cita>**es que la forma de hacerlo**</cita>
H <cita>**e para que**</cita>
H <cita>**Eva estudie** es</cita>
H <cita>así así y así</cita>
H <cita>vale pues</cita>
H <cita>**pues nada pues se intenta y se puede hacer**</cita>
'H <quote>The way to do it</quote>
H <quote>And so that</quote>
H <quote><anonymized>Eva</anonymized> studies is</quote>
H <quote>So, so, so</quote>
H <quote>Okay, well</quote>
H <quote>Well, then, you try and you can do it</quote>'

We may conclude that the relative concord of the interactions, in the first stage, is determined by avoidance. Harmony is granted by a set of middle constructions in the 3rd person pointing at the interlocutor's actions, and a set of impersonal constructions detaching the speaker from the scene and referring to alternative spaces in potential or ideal worlds. We may now explore whether discourse strategies change along the therapeutic process.

5.3 Couple sessions Madrid 15

As therapy evolves, we may expect participants to be more willing to open up and address issues and feelings more directly. This could be reflected by the higher frequency of middle and impersonal constructions. Indeed, as contrasted with sessions I and II, middles and impersonals present a tangentially opposite behavior:

Table 12. Madrid 15

Se	Tokens	%
Middle mental	34	41%
Middle	30	36%
Imp	19	23%
Total	**83**	**100%**

While mental middles are about the same, middles in general increased. Yet the crucial data comes from the drastic decrease in impersonal constructions. This may suggest a disposition on the participant's part to stop using mitigators: i.e., to get more involved in the process and assume responsibility for their feelings and actions in issues that have been conflictive for the couple all along.

There is a tradeoff between impersonals constructions and middles. The former imposes distance, the latter proximity. As therapy evolves, a closer interaction begins.

A crucial shift in personal pronouns also takes place. We can attest that 3rd person *se* is still used to report on the couple's behavior:

(64) está dolorida está [molesta] P…[((entiendo))] P…[mmh] H…eh **se pone más [agresiva]** esta semana ha estado muy agresiva
'She is in pain, she is [upset] P…[((I understand))] P…[mmh] H…eh, **she is getting more [aggressive]** this week she has been very aggressive'

Yet, what is crucial is the emergence of first-person pronouns to talk about self-feelings:

(65) P…sabes que M…no y luego además que **se me complica** con mi familia porque luego hay veces
'P… you know what M… no and then it also gets complicated for me with my family because then there are times'

(66) una situación M…que puede llevar a más M…no **se me ocurre** P…pero entonces- Observaciones…tos P…perdón
'a M…situation that can lead to more M…I can't think of P…but then- Observations…cough S…sorry'

The increase of first and second person reflects direct interaction among participants. This suggests a reduction of distance among them, yet impersonal *se* constructions reflecting possible and ideal worlds is still attested (*no se puede evitar* 'one cannot avoid the conflict'):

(67) H…eh **estoy intentando**
H…evitar el problema
H…**seguís y habláis**
H…de política todo lo que queráis
H…**a mí no me interes**a</cita>
H…y se lo dije de esta forma no **se puede evitar** el conflicto
'H…eh I'm trying to
H…avoid the problem
H…you go on and talk
H…about politics all you want

H…I'm not interested</quote>
H…and I told her this way **one can't avoid** the conflict'

The decrease in dominance of the impersonal construction as therapy evolves suggests a reduction of distance among interlocutors, and a higher disposition to find common ground. We may wonder if this change is corroborated in other couples' behavior. As we shall per the following section.

5.4 Couple sessions Malaga

It is crucial to explore if the change observed in the couple from Madrid can also be attested in other couples. The data from Malaga reflects a parallel behavior.

Indeed, Table 13 from Malaga I evidences a balanced number of impersonals and middles similar to the one of Madrid I in Table 10:

Table 13. Malaga 1

Se	Tokens	%
Middle mental	25	37%
Imp	25	37%
Middle	18	26%
Total	**68**	**100%**

The behavioral change would be corroborated if impersonal constructions decreased in the evolution of the therapeutic process. The data for session 15 show a remarkable increase in proximity among participants:

Table 14. Malaga 15

Se	Tokens	%
Middle	60	90%
Imp	7	10%
Total	**67**	**100%**

For Malaga, the decrease in impersonals is even more dramatic than that of Madrid: only 10% as opposed to 37% in the first session. Even more notable is the increase of middle constructions covering 90% of the data. Once again, the shift in behavior suggests that, as therapy evolves, there is more confidence on the participant's part to open up and let their partner see their feelings and fears to find ways to solve their conflict.

The similarities in the changes for impersonal and middle constructions, both along the written and oral corpora, and in the evolution of therapeutic discourse are remarkable. In the conclusions, I will offer some reflections regarding the parallelisms between the four corpora, and the language adjustments in therapy sessions.

6. Conclusions

In *se* constructions, significant competition for prominence between theme and agent can be observed. Our analysis suggests that ambiguity is resolved in the context as a result of the interaction between the properties of the verb and the theme, as well as aspectual-temporal information. The data presented in this paper shows a small number of ambiguous cases, practically reduced to verb-theme plural agreement. In contrast, it was found that, even in cases of plural agreement, the prominence of the agent overcomes that of the plural theme. All other cases favor different types of impersonal interpretations. The preservation of the "passive" label has held a long-time contradiction by which *se* constructions are passive by syntax and impersonal by meaning. The division between syntax and semantics is not only artificial but quite inadequate as it leads to wrong conclusions. In this paper, I have shown that the so-called "syntactic argument" (plural theme-verb agreement) for the passive construction generally assumed in the Hispanic tradition is rather weak. Based on previous work (Maldonado 1999a, 1999b, 2007) I have suggested that *se* constructions can best be evaluated based on three arguments that are hierarchically organized: verbal requirement for human agency, aspect, and the theme's degree of indefiniteness. I have also underlined the urgency of retrieving the significant variety of impersonal interpretations for the *se* construction. The set of interpretations for impersonal constructions responds to two factors: (i) the link that the clitic *se* establishes with either the speaker, the hearer or some other participant, and (ii) the degree of temporal specificity of the event. Quasi-universal constructions correspond to non-specific temporal reference, while different types of arbitrary interpretations, where some unidentified agent drives the event, are specified for time and space. On the other hand, performative acts, norms sustained by groups, shared knowledge determining social practices and rules imposed on the hearer govern an ample set of interactions that different types of *se* impersonal constructions encode.

The use of *se* constructions in four different scenarios (written press, formal oral, informal interviews, informal dialogue) revealed that genres and interaction styles determine the frequency of use of both impersonal and middle constructions. For journalistic writing, the dominant pattern was the impersonal *se* con-

struction depicting norms and common practices among groups. These uses are coherent with a type of discourse that describes and analyzes public policies and practices for social groups. For formal oral discourse, the frequency of performative *se* constructions was outstanding. Constructions designating norms were less frequent but still quite common. This makes sense since parliamentary discourse involves affirmative actions and immediate approvals for agreements as the Congress sessions ran along. In contrast, the transition to oral informal interviews was crucial since the profile for *se* constructions changed. Impersonal constructions competed with the dominant middle *se* construction. Here, middle verbs depicting emotions and changes of state were more frequent. This behavior makes sense since interviews comprise personal and proximal group affairs, narratives involving specific change-of-state events, and well-established practices in the speaker's community. Finally, for spontaneous dialogue, a new profile emerged. Middle constructions and middle mental verbs constituted the most dominant pattern. Many collocations depicting energetic events and unexpected events with rapid changes were common. Speakers tend to narrate previous events, describe what they perceive, invoke what they like and transmit feelings and emotions they undergo. Middle *se* constructions depicting the speaker's world are ideal for this type of communicative endeavor. Yet there are good reasons to exploit impersonal constructions. In this context, impersonals respond to signaling what people can perceive or feel, things and events creating a common ground to establish empathy and sustain contact among interlocutors in dialogue. Thus, impersonal constructions were practically restricted to verbs of perception referring to the immediate context. Comparing the four genres of our corpora, a continuum for *se* constructions adjusting to different communicative styles can be offered:

Table 15. Distribution for *se* constructions across genres

Journal writing	Oral formal	Oral interview	Oral dialogue
Impersonal norms > Impersonal-arb	Performative > Impersonal norms	Middle/Impersonal norms	Middle > Impersonal perception

Impersonal constructions relate more to formal styles, while middles belong in the informal arena. Interestingly enough, the changes in discourse along the therapeutic process parallel the continuum outlined in Table 15. In the first stages of therapy, interlocutors exploit impersonal constructions together with third-person middles to avoid confronting their partner and yet be able to address conflictive issues. As therapy evolves, the frequency of impersonal constructions drops dramatically in favor of first-person middles allowing participants to show their emotions and deal with their potential disagreements. Session 15 is the mir-

ror image of the first sessions, both in Madrid and Malaga. It reflects a shift where interlocutors start looking at each other face to face.

Conceptual distance seems to be determinant in the use of impersonal/middle constructions. Impersonals impose distal situations where the responsibility of the agent is somehow diminished or blurred in shared generic terms. Social groups, official roles, or non-identified forces carry the load of the event. The frequent use of performatives makes sense since conclusions and agreements are validated through the illocutionary act by all participants involved in the event. At the other end, middle constructions designate the participant's involvement as they see and feel events in their everyday life. This contrast correlates with degrees of formality in genres. More formal communication excludes the overt presence of the speaker, while informal genres presuppose close contact among interlocutors. In the first stages of therapy, participants treat each other as aliens and require the distance of unidentified people in public arenas. In contrast, informal speech presupposes contact, the type of proximity that is not face-threatening, the kind of closeness that would protect the most vulnerable profiles. This is the space where middles show up to express the speaker's inner feelings. Such space is equivalent to the most informal oral contexts where people express themselves freely, disregarding norms, rules, and criticism.

Our data suggest the relevance of retrieving Monge's (1955) seminal suggestion that the impersonal interpretation of *se* constructions deserves better attention, even more so as we attend to language in use. Moreover, the idea that grammar emerges from discourse is, of course, not new (Hopper and Thompson 1984; Hopper 1987, 2011), but facing how language manifestations differ in specific genres and contexts provides invaluable evidence to conclude that language is dynamic, and, yet it crystalizes linguistic interaction through the most robust grammatical means.

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The Spanish Epistemic Dative Construction

A modal-evidential stance expression

Nicole Delbecque
University of Leuven

The Epistemic Dative Construction is the non-causative modal variant of the Possessive Dative Construction. In the intra-clausal Possessor-Possessee relation, the Dative Clitic designates the Possessor, as Co-Dative compatible with all the other Dative functions. With transitive predicates, the Clitic (N_2) functions as reference point for the Direct Object (N_1), conceived as Possessee. The latter denotes the property or quality which, from the perspective of the conceptualizing Subject (N_0) — the evidential source —, stands out in the Dative participant's domain (N_2), treated as object of thought. The verbal predicate specifies the modal-evidential nature of the appraisal. The judgment's relative reliability further hinges on the Subject's commitment and diagnostic competence, the tangibility or verifiability of the N_1 entity, the expectation patterns associated with the Dative participant's profile, and other modal markers.

Keywords: Spanish, epistemic dative, stance, evidentiality

1. Introduction

The present paper discusses the modal-evidential dimensions of constructions containing a specific kind of Dative, viz. an Epistemic Dative, so called after Ruwet (1982), who identified it for French. The choice of the label was inspired by its frequent cooccurrence with epistemic verbs (ibid: 197). This category of constructions has hitherto not been examined in its own right for Spanish. A typical example appears at the end of (1).

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(1) "Llevo toda la vida esperando este momento", dice, medio en broma medio en serio, Javier Sacristán, de 18 años, nuevo alumno de Comunicación Audiovisual. ¿Por qué? "Porque no podía soportar más las Matemáticas, *no les veía ninguna utilidad*." (CREA, El País, 30/09/1997)
not CLIT.DAT.3PL saw-IMPF.IND.1SG any utility[1]
'"I've been waiting my whole life for this moment", says J.S., 18, a new Audiovisual Communication student, half-jokingly, half-seriously. Why? "Because I couldn't stand mathematics anymore, I didn't see any utility in it."'

Preliminarily, it has to be pointed out that the Epistemic Dative Construction shares an essential structural characteristic with the canonic Possessive Dative Construction: the Dative Clitic construes a specific participant as External Possessor with respect to a possessed entity, thus adding an intra-clausal layer to the construction. As the Possessive Dative can be considered a Co-Dative (Delbecque: in prep.), this also holds for the Epistemic Dative. In (1), the direct object (*ninguna utilidad* 'any utility') denotes a property associated with the participant designated by the Dative clitic (*les* 'to-them'), while the latter simultaneously qualifies as Dative of Interest, i.e., as non-argumental Dative associated with the 2-place predicate *ver* 'to see'.[2]

To understand the communicative functioning of the Epistemic Dative Construction, various factors need to be reckoned with. Firstly, on the basis of their semantics the verbal lexemes can be taken as backbone to qualify the epistemic value of the possessive relation, and to situate it on a gradient going from empirical perception to stance taking, i.e., ranging from low to high subjectivity. To evaluate the degree of neutrality, reliability, confidence or truthfulness, however, the other constituents of the construction have also to be considered. The interpretation is, indeed, crucially codetermined by the type of nominal occupying the object position. In (1), *ver* 'to see' collocates with an abstract entity, thus conveying a more subjective perception than it does with a concrete one. The nature of the entities figuring as Possessee has therefore to be taken up to arrive at an accurate taxonomy in terms of epistemic modality.

Secondly, the Dative designates a topical participant, put at center stage in the mental representation of the Cognizing Subject. Since the latter appears as the experientially involved Source, and the predicate specifies the way the association between Possessor and Possessee is being accessed, the Subject-Predicate com-

1. For reasons of space, glossing is limited to the relevant segment.

2. On the distinction between argumental and non-argumental Datives, as well as on Possessive Datives beyond the transitive constructions, see Delbecque & Lamiroy (1996), Lamiroy & Delbecque (1998), Gutiérrez Ordóñez (1999), Maldonado (1999), NGLE (2009), Cifuentes Honrubia (2015).

bination conveys an evidential dimension (cf. Nuyts 2001: 27, Izquierdo Alegría 2019: 225). At the same time, it is susceptible of being perceived as a modal operator with a narrative and interactional function (cf. Cornillie & Pietrandrea 2012: 2110). The epistemic meaning of the predicate indeed induces an appraisal on the part of the hearer/reader regarding the relative reliability and current relevance of the Possessor-Possessee association as established from the perspective of the Cognizing Subject.[3] In (1), the scope of the mental representation reported by the first person Subject is restricted to the speaker's period as high school student (*no veía* 'I didn't see'): in his view at that time, it didn't have any utility for him. The contrast implied by the negation leaves open which other conceptualizers are implicitly evoked (e.g. others at that time and/or the currently communicating speaker).

Thirdly, the stance dimension can be further enhanced by the presence of other modal markers. In (1), the negation inverts the polarity of the associated property in a dialectic way: it supposes awareness of the existence and relevance of the opposite positioning ("Mathematics is useful"). The statement thus appears as a dialogic unit, i.e., as a reactive intervention vis-à-vis an already established content (Bres & Mellet 2009: 8).[4] At the same time, negation can be considered polyphonic, since it is a typical case in which opposing abstract voices crystallize: a supposed positive polarity point of view coexists with the negative polarity point of view, which rejects the former.[5]

The paper consists of two parts. The first part lays the ground for the analysis developed in the second part. After a brief review of the properties of the External Possessor Construction (2.1) and a justification for calling the Possessive Dative

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3. Boye (2012: 19) considers that the properly epistemic modal meanings express "epistemic support", while the evidential meanings cover the area of "epistemic justification". On the relation between epistemicity and evidentiality, see also Dendale & Tasmowski (2001: 341-3), Izquierdo Alegría & González Ruiz (2016), and Cornillie, Marín Arrese & Wiemer (2018: 20–27).

4. 'Dialogic' does not necessarily refer to the interaction occurring in a dialogue made up by the chaining between speaking turns of alternating interlocutors. It is a more ample notion. As part of a monologue, a dialogic utterance is inter-discursively oriented: the speaker participates in the social process of permanent reconstruction and remodeling of meaning from an infinite number of real or potential discourses (see Bres *et al.* 2019). In other words, he is more a co-actor than a creator of meaning.

5. The polyphonic approach has essentially been developed within the framework of a pragmatics for which discourse does not constitute a category of analysis (Ducrot 1984: 171–233). The dialogic approach, on the other hand, inspired by Bakhtine ([1979] 1984: 278–301), does not separate enunciation and discourse, but rather approaches enunciation from the angle of inter-discursive relations. The notions of dialogicity and polyphony are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

a Co-Dative (2.2), the focus turns to the construction's standard configuration (2.3) and the conception of Possession as open experiential Gestalt (2.4). The second part addresses the properties of the Epistemic Dative Construction as sui generis External Possessor Construction (3.1), highlights its intertwining with evidentiality (3.2), and sets its discourse effect off against that of sentential complementation (3.3), before discussing the degrees of subjectivity it is able to express, going from sensing as perceptual achievement (3.4.1), over extrasensory perception (3.4.2), dialogic engagement (3.4.3) and fictional imaging (3.4.4), to overt stance taking (3.4.5). The exemplification, limited to current peninsular Spanish, is drawn from CREA (Real Academia Española), esTenTen18 (Sketch Engine) and Dueñas' (2009) novel.

2. The Possessive Dative

2.1 External possessor construction

Two basic roles are usually associated with the Dative: on the one hand, a narrowly understood Goal, connected with a voluntary material or metaphoric transfer event, and, on the other, an Interested Party. When both roles are united, the Dative corresponds to the human Recipient, bearing an Experiencer role as Affectee, and metonymically seen as the Beneficiary, especially in the prototypical 'giving' event (2).

(2) Me dio el nombre de un bar y una dirección.
CLIT.DAT.1SG gave-PRET.IND.3SG the name of a bar and an address
(CREA, L. Silva, *El alquimista impaciente*)
'He gave me the name of a bar and an address.'

In the ditransitive structure [N_0 V N_1*a* N_2], exemplified by (2), the Dative occupies the third nuclear argument (N_2) next to the Subject (N_0) and the Object (N_1). Many transitive verbs admit the presence of a Dative (3), including a Possessive one (4). The latter is also called 'Partitive Dative', signaling that the participant is being affected in its totality through one of its constitutive components (*la vida* 'the life' in (4)). For its part, the term 'Dative of Involvement' ("Datif de Participation", Bally 1926: 70; transl. Béal & Chappell 1996: 36) highlights the participant's personal implication. And the classical denomination, 'Sympathetic Dative', evokes a personal connection of use, enjoyment, etc., that goes beyond the legal possession.

(3) [...], *por qué no le arregla Eufrasia una habitacioncita a este pobre muchacho*, y así no se encontrará solo, sino en familia, con nosotros.
(CREA, A. Gala, *Los invitados al jardín*, 2002)
for what not E. CLIT.DAT.3SG fix-PRES.IND.3SG a room-little to this poor boy
'Why doesn't Euphrasia fix a little room for this poor boy, so he won't be alone, but in family, with us?'

(4) Una buena moza le arregla a uno la vida, amigo mío, y le quita veinte años de encima. (CREA, C. Ruiz Zafón, *La sombra del viento*, 2003)
A good girl CLIT.DAT-3SG fixes-PRES.IND.3SG to one-PRO.INDEF the life
'A good girl fixes one's life, my friend, and takes twenty years of one's shoulders.'

The Dative Clitic designates a (generally conscious) Experiencer, having Interest in the event as Possessor, and construed as "External Possessor" (Vergnaud & Zubizarreta 1992: 597, König & Haspelmath 1998: 525), while the Possessee denotes the possessed entity targeted by the action, passively undergoing it (*la mano* 'the hand' in (5)).[6] The construal can be schematically represented as follows: $[N_1 \in N_2] \Rightarrow [N_0$ AFFECTS N_2 BY AFFECTING $N_1]$.

(5) Le toma la mano
CLIT.DAT.3SG takes-PRES.IND.3SG the hand
'He/She takes her/his hand' (CREA, P. Pedrero, *Besos de lobo*, 1987)

The External Possessor Construction thus presents a separate codification of asymmetric roles. It contrasts with the Internal Possessor relation expressed, without Dative, by a possessive marking within the constituent, i.e., either a possessive determiner (6) or a nominal complement (7). Unlike the Possessive Dative, these forms do not present the Possessor as globally affected by the action, but only put the focus on the concerned part, simply informing on the exact location where the verbal action takes place.

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6. The clitic is only exceptionally dispensable, viz., in generic statements (i) and metaphoric expressions (ii):

(i) Puedo asegurar que *el primer golpe devolvió la dignidad a los vencidos de la guerra civil*; 'The first blow restored dignity to the defeated of the civil war'
(CREA, A. Boadella, *Memorias de un bufón*, 2001)

(ii) *Tomar el pulso a las publicaciones de Arqueología* es una práctica creciente dentro y fuera de España. 'Take the pulse of Archeology publications is a growing practice inside and outside Spain' (CREA, *Arqueoweb. Revista sobre Arqueología en Internet*, 12/2001)

(6) [...] cuando saluda a una dama y toma *su mano* nadie sabe si va a besarla o a morderla. (CREA, L. M. Anson, *Don Juan*, 1994)
'[...] when he greets a lady and takes her hand, no one knows if he is going to kiss her or bite her.'

(7) Se acerca y toma *la mano del muerto.* (CREA, M. Delibes, *La hoja roja*, 1987)
'He approaches and takes the hand of the dead man.'

Prototypically, the verbal predicate denotes an action that causes a change in the Possessor and is realized by an Agent, while the Possessee designates a body part (*pars corporis*) in Direct Object position (8) or, less commonly, as Locative phrase (9).

(8) Comencé a toser, *la matutera me palmeó la espalda.* (Dueñas: 235)
the smuggler CLIT.DAT.1SG patted-PRET.IND.3SG the back
'I started coughing, the smuggler patted me on the back'

(9) Mira qué hoyito en la barbilla, y como regalo en la clínica *me han pintado un tatuaje en el glúteo derecho...* (CREA, J. J. Alonso Millán, *Sólo para parejas*, 1995)
CLIT.DAT.1SG have-patted-PRES.PERF.IND.3PL a tattoo on the buttock right
'Look at the little hole in my chin, and as a gift at the clinic they have painted me a tattoo on my right buttock...'

Since the Possessive Dative is defined by an intra-clausal relationship with another nominal entity conceived as its Possessee, it cannot be put on a par with clausal datives (whether they are argumental or not), nor with the extra-clausal ethical one. The Possessor role adds an internal cohesive layer to the event structure. As it is compatible with the whole array of Datives, it is justified to consider it a 'Co-Dative'.

2.2 The Possessive: A co-dative

The focus here is exclusively on transitive verbs. The double dependency relation can be described as follows: the affected object (N_1) functions as DO and as partitive complement of N_2 (the Dative), while N_2 functions as *Reference Point* of N_1 (cf. Langacker 1993: 6, 1995: 57 ff., 1999: Chapter 6). N_2 is thus a Co-Dative with the DO entity as associate. In a 3-term transitive construction of the subset of 3-place predicates (e.g., *quitar* 'to take away', *robar* 'to steal'), N_2 combines the functions of Possessive Dative and IO, i.e. argumental Dative (10).[7] In a 3-term transitive construction of the subset of 2-place predicates (e.g., *ver* 'to see', *besar*

7. The term 'Dative of Possession' is sometimes unduly reserved for non-argumental datives.

'to kiss'), the fusion occurs with a Dative of Interest, i.e. a non-argumental Dative added as adjunct (11).

(10) ¡No le quitéis la vida…! (CREA, J.B. Ortega, *Los invitados*, 1996)
Not CLIT.DAT.3SG take-away-PRES.SUBJ.2PL the life
'Don't take his life…!'

(11) Solemnemente le besa la mano. (CREA, C. Gallego, *Adelaida*, 1990)
Solemnly CLIT.DAT.3SG kisses-PRES.IND.3SG the hand
'Solemnly he kisses her hand.'

Any Dative participant can enter an "external Possessor relation" with the entity denoted by another clausal constituent. As summarized in Figure 1, this intra-clausal inclusion relation can run parallel, at clausal level, with an IO, i.e., an intra-predicative Dative (i), or with an adjunct, i.e., an extra-predicative Dative (ii), and, at extra-clausal level, it is also compatible with an ethical Dative (iii).

Clausal		**Extra-clausal**
(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Intra-predicative	Extra-predicative	
Argumental	Non-argumental	
Indirect Object	Dative of Interest	Ethical Dative
± Possessive Dative	± Possessive Dative	± Possessive Dative

Figure 1. The Possessive: Co-Dative with any kind of Dative

When the Possessive Dative, by definition intra-clausal, combines with a clausal argumental Dative which is intra-predicative, the latter functions as IO and generally designates the affected participant of a privative event, i.e., a transfer away from the Possessor ((10), (12)). When the Possessive Dative co-appears with a clausal Dative which is extra-predicative, i.e., 'non-lexical', not selected by the verb, this non-argumental Dative is usually called a 'Dative of Interest',[8] also known as *dativus commodi-incommodi* or "benefactive / malefactive dative", designating the individual benefited or harmed by the action or process (NGLE 2009: § 35.1e) ((4), (5), (8), (11), (13)). The impact on this participant is determined by the intentionality of the Subject (Maldonado 1998: 698). When the event does not imply contact between the Subject and the non-argumental Dative participant, it is possible to replace the Dative clitic by a prepositional adjunct intro-

8. The denomination 'Dative of Interest' is a confusing label, since the vague notion of 'interest' also permeates the argumental Datives.

duced by *para* (*para él* 'for him' in (13′)), thereby eliminating the intra-clausal possessive relation from the construction.

(12) Hace poco que *le han sacado la muela del juicio*. (CREA, El País, 30/05/2003)
CLIT.DAT.3SG have-removed-PRES.PERF.IND.3PL the tooth of wisdom
'He recently had his wisdom tooth removed.'

(13) Incluso *le guardó el puesto* cuando, en agosto pasado, permaneció tres semanas en coma. (REDES, s.v. guardar, I.49, p. 1091)
CLIT.DAT.3SG guard-PRET.IND.3SG the post
'She even guarded his job when, last August, he remained in a coma for three weeks.'

(13′) Incluso guardó el puesto para él
Even guard-PRET.IND.3SG for him
'She even guarded the job for him'

The clitic functioning as Ethical Dative designates a person external to the event, superposed as (inter)subjective outsider on the clausal structure. This extra-clausal Dative enhances the utterance's vividness. It is typical of colloquial language, usually comes in the first or second person and precludes tonic expansion (**a mí* 'to me', **a ti* 'to you), which means that it cannot be focalized. It is discourse-pragmatically motivated, however: eminently subjective, it adds a testimonial and/or affective touch, signaling empathy, emotive implication of the discourse participants (enthusiasm, surprise, indignation, preoccupation, etc.) (Delbecque & Lamiroy 1996: 106–108; Lamiroy & Delbecque 1998: 63–68; Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1999: 1907; Maldonado 2002: 39 ff.) (14).

(14) *Y usted, Logan, cuídeme a la señorita Quiroga*, que ha pasado un año muy duro trabajando sin parar. (Dueñas: 312)
And you, Logan, look-IMP.2SG+CLIT.DAT.1SG after Miss Quiroga
'And you, Logan, take care of Miss Quiroga, who has spent a very hard year working non-stop.'

The contexts of (15) and (16) illustrate a specific case of multifunctionality of the Dative Clitic (*me*). At extra-clausal level, as Ethical Dative, it marks the speaker's emotional attitude towards a situation of fasting (15) or inappetence (16). Given the intimate family bond which links the speaker to the Subject, as husband (15) or as mother (16), the Dative Clitic is simultaneously an instance of the Possessive Dative at intra-clausal level. And since the state-of-affairs also has an impact on the status of the speaker, in a positive or negative sense (pride (15), worry (16)), the Clitic simultaneously reads as a Dative of Interest accompanying the two-place predicate (*comer* 'to eat') at clausal level as adjunct.

(15) Alardeaba de mi delgadez como si fuese una conquista suya. "Esta semana ha perdido dos kilos. *No me come nada*", decía complacido, y me exhibía como si fuese el saldo positivo de una cuenta corriente.
(CREA, A. Gala, *Los invitados al jardín*, 2002)
Not CLIT.DAT.1SG eats-PRES.IND.3SG anything
'He flaunted my thinness as if it were a conquest of his. "This week she has lost two kilos. She doesn't eat anything," he said pleased, and showed me off as if I were the positive balance of a checking account.'

(16) "Mi niño no me come", "Mi niño no me duerme", "Mi niño no me caga"...
(CREA, VV.AA., *El club de la Comedia ...*, 2002)
"My child not CLIT.DAT.1SG eats-PRES.IND.3SG", "My child not CLIT.DAT.1SG sleeps-PRES.IND.3SG", "My child not CLIT.DAT.1SG shits-PRES.IND.3SG"
'"My child doesn't eat", "My child doesn't sleep", "My child doesn't shit"...'

The blending of the three structural layers (extra-clausal, clausal, intra-clausal, observed in (15)–(16)) may explain the choice of the denomination 'Sympathetic Dative' for the Ethical Dative (e.g. Maldonado 2002: 39 ff.). Yet, on the one hand, as already mentioned, 'Sympathetic' is the traditional term for the Possessive Dative. On the other hand, there are also cases of co-occurrence instead of syncretism. In (17) and (18), the first person Ethical Dative (*me*) co-occurs with a third person Dative clitic. In (17), the latter is associated to the predicate as adjunct (*estropeen* 'ruin-PRES.SUBJ.3PL'), in (18) as IO complement (*sacaron* 'they took away'). In both cases, it also functions as Possessive Dative with respect to the DO entity (*le — la cabeza; le — la humildad*). In (18), the subjective intervention of the speaker manifested in the Ethical Dative is further intensified by the kinship relation with the IO participant (*me — mi hijo* 'my son'). However, such an additional Possessor-Possessee relation does not justify applying the same label twice since, by definition, the Ethical Dative does not function as a Co-Dative, unlike the Possessive, alias Sympathetic Dative, but is situated at the syntax-discourse interface, introducing a pragmatic speech dimension.

(17) - *No, no me le estropeen la cabeza*, carajo, que es un profesor y es en la cabeza donde estos huevones tienen todo, todito lo que piensan.
(CREA, M. Vázquez Montalbán, *Galíndez*, 1993)
– No, not CLIT.DAT.1SG CLIT.DAT.3SG ruin-PRES.SUBJ.3PL the head
– 'No, don't ruin his head, damn it, he's a professor and it's in his head where these assholes have everything, everything they think.'

(18) *Me le sacaron la humildad a mi hijo*, ya no es hambre lo que tiene, me lo han dejado mal las INSTITUCIONES. (esTenTen, over-blog.es)
CLIT.DAT.1SG CLIT.DAT.3SG took-away-PRET.IND.3PL the humility to my son
'They took away my son's humility, it's not hunger he has anymore, the INSTITUTIONS have left him to me in bad shape.'

2.3 The standard syntactic-semantic configuration

The construction's structural skeleton consists of the Dative Clitic (N_2) and the definite article before the noun denoting the possessed entity (N_1). These two components are complementary and induce a unitary view of the clausal event. The Dative Clitic indeed enables the verb to also syntactically integrate a non-argumental participant ((4), (5), (8), (11), (13)).[9] This generally human participant is identified as discursively known Affected Experiencer and is susceptible of simultaneously fulfilling the role of Possessor vis-à-vis the Object (N_1).

The Dative functions as *Reference Point* (cf. 1.2) orienting toward a possessive reading of the targeted DO entity (N_1) insofar as the associative anaphoric link established by the definite article indicates that the impacted Object entity (N_1) is accessed by the Agent Subject (N_0) via the Dative participant (N_2). The latter represents the specific whole affected by the event together with and through a part or Possessee. The verb is causative. It mainly expresses a form of contact and control ((5), (8), (11)), yielding a change-of-state ((4), (9), (17), (19)), e.g., by removal ((10), (12), (18)), or by preventing displacement (13).

The DO entity which delimits the action is by definition conceived of as already included in the Dative participant's domain before the event. Diagnosing a Possessor-Possessee relation between the Dative participant and the DO entity does not only rely on common world knowledge, it is also largely induced by the format of the DO entity targeted by the action. Indeed, using the definite article is key for licensing a possessive reading within the causative action schema.[10]

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9. Analogy with 3-place predicates of communication (e.g. *responder* 'to respond', *devolver* 'to return' (i)) can produce an interpretive glide motivating the upgrade of 2-place predicates, thus allowing a non-argumental Dative to get reinterpreted as IO (ii).

(i) No me devolvió el saludo. (CREA, C. Ruiz Zafón, *La sombra del viento*, 2003)
Not CLIT.DAT.1SG return-PRET.IND.3SG the greeting
'He didn't greet me back.'

(ii) [...] le sostuve unos instantes la mirada [...] (Dueñas, 2009: 160)
CLIT.DAT.3SG sustained-PRET.IND.1SG some instants the look
'I held his gaze for a few moments

10. A possessive determiner can co-appear which the Dative clitic, though. As it links the Object explicitly to another entity (the Possessor), it provides a "ratification value": it characterizes and emphatically reinforces the Possessor-Possessee relation, suggesting its stereotypical or customary character (Picallo & Rigau 1999: 983 ff., NGLE 2009: § 18.6c).This concomitance seems to shift the focus from the type of Possessee to the concrete instance, treating it as an object with a proper existence. This could explain why this double marking hardly occurs with

The dependency relation in the Possessive Dative construction is usually defined in terms of inalienability (Picallo & Rigau 1999: 1011 ff.; Gutiérrez-Ordóñez 1999: 1898 ff.). A person's life as state distinguished from death (10), socio-physical life experiences ((4), (13)), body parts ((5), (8), (9), (11), (12), (17)), physical and mental faculties ((18), (19)) appear as defining properties of the Self. As such, they participate in an obvious part-whole relation and qualify as inalienable, since Possessor and Possessee constitute one single entity. Inalienability does not, however, necessarily equate to inseparability, intactness and stability over time: body parts, e.g., can be subject to extraction (12) and damage (17). Therefore, the notion of Possession deserves some attention.

(19) Te lo digo, más que nada, para refrescarte la memoria.
(CREA, E. José, *Buster Keaton está aquí*, 1991)
CLIT.DAT.2SG CLIT.ACC.3SG say-PRES.IND.1SG [...] to refresh-INF+CLIT.DAT.2SG the memory
'I'm telling you, more than anything, to refresh your memory.'

2.4 Possession: An open experiential Gestalt

Possession is a basic concept. It appeals to common sense, and serves to "organize the physical and cultural realities" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 69). However, it is not a semantic primitive but, in essence, a relational concept that can be approached as an "experiential Gestalt" characterized by the asymmetric, unequal status of the two members (Ibid.: Chapters 14 & 15).

A first useful distinction is that between Possessor and owner or proprietary. Identifying an ownership or proprietary relation requires extralinguistic, ontological, encyclopedic and pragmatic knowledge regarding physical, social, psychological, legal and economic implications. The Possessor-Possessee relation, which interests us here, is much broader. It relies on constructional, discourse-cognitive and stereotypical lexical information.

Spanish is known to make an extensive use of the Possessive Dative Construction (NGLE 2009: § 14.7j, § 18.7g, § 35.7g). Unlike French, Spanish does not restrict the standard pattern to inalienable Possessees. This does not mean that Spanish speakers place alienable possession ontologically on an equal footing with inalien-

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body parts or other inalienable properties, but rather concerns nouns which by themselves do not usually present a relational use (i).

(i) Les preparó el barman sus aperitivos. (Dueñas 2009: 252)
CLIT.DAT.3PL prepared-PRET.IND.3SG the barman their aperitif
'The barman prepared them their aperitif.'

able possession, at least under the definition that inalienable entities "imply the existence of some other entity, the whole to which they belong or with which they are associated" (Chappell & McGregor 1996:11), in "a relation over which possessors exercise little choice or control" (Ibid.).

In the above examples, dependency on another entity is part of the meaning of the entities denoting the Possessee. They fit in with a strict definition of intrinsically relational nouns (Kliffer 1987: 284, NGLE 2009: § 12.10c-e). Component parts of inanimate entities, e.g., a car's wheels (20), are also reckoned among them, as they systematically presuppose inclusion in a larger entity.

(20) Yo le echo gasolina y lo llevo y si hay un pinchazo *le cambio la rueda que sea*, pero la madrina eres tú, ¿no?, que lo has bautizado.
(CREA, C. Martín Gaite, *Nubosidad variable*, 1994)
CLIT.DAT.3SG change-PRES.IND.1SG the tire that be-PRES.SUBJ.3SG
'I put fuel in it and take it, and if there's a puncture I change whatever tire, but you're the godmother, aren't you? You've baptized it.'

Yet, many common nouns without an inherently relational meaning structure also have the ability to instantiate a dependency relation between what they denote and the animate or inanimate entity they affect. They can behave as relational nouns in contexts which, to a greater or lesser degree, presuppose the affected entity to be endowed with the denoted notion. In such a significant association with a Possessor's domain, they then stand out from other constitutive or circumstantial attributes, components or belongings.

Knowledge and practical know-how can vary between communities and between individuals. As already pointed out by Bally (1926: 68–69, transl. Beal & Chappell 1996: 33), "the concept of personal domain is an entirely subjective one. Nothing prevents the collective imagination from attributing to the Self objects that normally have their own independent existence or, conversely, of detaching those things which in reality cannot be". Anything situated in the "personal sphere" (Bally 1926: 68, Picallo & Rigau 1999: 1007) can be considered 'normal' to possess, and linked as Possessee to a particular Possessor.

The Spanish External Possessor construction conveys a dependency relation that is but schematic: it allows for fuzzy boundaries of the Dative participant's domain, and contingency as to the amount and diversity of entities associated with it. In other words, the Possessor and Possessee roles generalize over a variety of connections.[11]

11. The prototype categorization of possessive notions proposed by Heine (1997: 40) relies on the combination of five properties: (i) human, (ii) rightful Possessor, (iii) concrete Possessee, (iv) spatial proximity, (v) no temporal limit. Three degrees of prototypicality are distinguished:

In daily life, a large set of beings and objects are associated with a person "in an habitual, intimate or organic way: e.g. body and its parts, clothes, the family, …", making up that person's "personal domain" (Bally 1926: 68; transl. Beal & Chappell 1996: 33)). Material objects, e.g., articles of clothing, protection, adornment, as well as one's house, furniture, utensils, mechanical and electronic devices, belong to one's living environment. One is further identified by a proper name, qualification, job, mandate or title, as well as by personality traits, mindsets (21), thoughts and sensations. Yet, except for body parts and blood relatives, the link with a Possessor appears to be quite ductile in terms of stability, choice and control, availability, contact or proximity. The presence of a couple of significant characteristics suffices to recognize a Possessee (e.g., Miller & Johnson-Laird (1976: 558), Taylor (1989: 202 ff.; 339 ff.), Heine (1997: 1–44), Cifuentes Honrubia (2015: 15–55)). What matters for the present purpose is that the contents attributed to an individual's personal sphere are rather loosely delimited, obey rather vague conventions, and are susceptible of fluctuating.

(21) Que Dios le conserve la ingenuidad.
(CREA, L. G. Egido, *El corazón inmóvil*, 1995)
That God CLIT.DAT.3SG preserve-PRES.SUBJ.3SG the ingenuousness
'May God preserve her ingenuousness.'

Although the accessibility of the Dative participant as *Reference Point* facilitates the activation of the containment schema, reliance on contextual clues is crucial for nouns that are not inherently relational, all the more so when they are generic (*ropa* 'garments' (22)) or polysemous (*cartera* 'briefcase, portfolio, wallet, purse', *reloj* 'clock, watch, timepiece, time' (23)), and thus have an ample denotational potential. In (22), the construction invites the possessive reading, it does not impose it. The clothes the hosts offer to put to dry are tacitly assumed to be those worn and owned by the guest; since it is not specified otherwise, the Affected participant is casted as Beneficiary and as Possessor. In the robbery scene of (23), the personal belongings seized by the tacit Agent Subject are by default understood to be those of the policeman he holds in check. Assigning the Possessive co-function to the Dative Clitic, in addition to its argumental function as IO of *quitar* 'to take away', relies on the common knowledge that most men carry a wallet and a watch, and on the natural assumption that these are their own.

permanent possession is situated at the center; physical, temporary, and alienable possession belong to the second most central circle; the outer circle contains abstract and inanimate (± inalienable, i.e., ± separable) possession.

(22) - Aquí está mi oficina, que tiene estufa y algo que echarle a usted encima *mientras le secamos la ropa.* (CREA, C. Ruiz Zafón, *La sombra del viento*, 2003)
while CLIT.DAT.3SG-ADDRESSEE dry-PRES.IND.1PL the clothes
'– Here is my office, which has a stove and something to throw on you while we dry your clothes.'

(23) (Se acerca al policía y *le quita la cartera y el reloj.*) ¿Me deja estas tres mil pelas?: muchas gracias. (CREA, J. L. Alonso de Santos, *La estanquera de Vallecas*, 1990)
CLIT.DAT.3SG takes-away-PRES.IND.3SG the wallet and the watch
'(He approaches the police officer and takes his wallet and watch.) You leave me these three thousand bucks? Thanks a lot.'

Framing and cultural norms strongly determine what falls under the notion of possession in a given community at a given moment. In a usage-based perspective, the containment schema bleaches into an associative one, which is highly context-sensitive. To the extent that the relational interpretation emerges from lexicosemantic patterns, the Possessee role is open to a large array of nominal entities. It follows that no exhaustive listing of relational nouns is possible.

Example (24) can serve as transition to the Epistemic Dative construction. It departs from the causative action schema: the Agent-Subject's critique does not produce or affect anything in the Dative participant's personal sphere, but addresses what he feels blameworthy in his conduct. The threefold categorization with contrastive focus (*no… ni… sino…*) articulates the Subject's mental processing of the experienced disappointment.

(24) *No le reprochaba la debilidad ni la ofuscación, sino la curiosidad estéril*: la imperceptible semilla del maestro que había comenzado ya a arraigar dentro de él. (CREA, F. Hernández, *Naturaleza*, 1989)
Not CLIT.DAT.3SG reproached-IMPF.IND.3SG the weakness nor the obfuscation, but the curiosity sterile
'He did not reproach him for weakness or obfuscation, but for sterile curiosity: the imperceptible seed of the master that had already begun to take root within him.'

3. The Epistemic Possessive Dative

3.1 External Possessor Construction sui generis

Like the other Possessive Datives, the Epistemic one can be superposed to an argumental (25) or non-argumental Dative (26), and can combine with an ethical one (27), as shown in Figure 2.

Clausal		Extra-clausal
(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Intra-predicative	Extra-predicative	
Argumental	Non-argumental	
Indirect Object	Dative of Interest	Ethical Dative
± Epistemic Possessive Dative	± Epistemic Possessive Dative	± Epistemic Possessive Dative

Figure 2. The Epistemic Dative: Co-Dative with any kind of Dative

(25) *Muchos le prestan la intención de aspirar también a la nacionalidad belga*, aunque Bruselas asegura no haber recibido ningún pedido formal.
(El País, 20/12/2012)
Many CLIT.DAT.3SG lend-PRES.IND.3PL the intention of aspire-INF also to the nationality Belgian
'Many lend him the intention of also aspiring to Belgian nationality, although Brussels claims not to have received any formal request.'

(26) [...] yo le imaginaba un guardarropa de lujo (Dueñas: 250)
I CLIT.DAT.3SG imagined-IMPF.IND.1SG a luxury wardrobe
'I imagined she had a luxury wardrobe'

(27) Grani, lo que yo quiero precisamente es que te remires mis vídeos, *pa que me les encuentres los defectos y las virtudes...* (esTenTen18, rtve.es)
so that CLIT.DAT.1SG CLIT.DAT.3PL find-PRES.SUBJ.2SG the defects and the virtues
'Grani, what I want precisely is for you to watch my videos again, so that you can find their defects and virtues...'

The Epistemic Dative construction shares essential properties with the standard Possessive one: (i) the ditransitive structure: [N_0 $Clit_{DAT.N2}$ V N_1 (*a* N_2)], (ii) a possessive relation between the N_2 and N_1 entities, (iii) the Dative Clitic as necessary, constitutive component. The Clitic is auto-sufficient to designate an animate participant, but needs a co-referential lexical expansion in the immediate co-text when the Dative designates an inanimate entity ((27), (28)). Like with the

other Possessive Datives, the Possessor-Possessee relation is schematic, i.e., without aspectual-temporal anchoring by a "Possession"-predicate.[12] It is therefore justified to consider it as a subcategory of the External Possessor construction.

3.2 Epistemic modality meets evidentiality

The Epistemic Dative Construction depicts a mental process corresponding to the pattern '[+hum] N_0 perceives [± an] N_2 and focuses on [property/quality] N_1 in N_2'. The inclusion relation [N_1 *is-in* N_2], induced by the projection of N_1 into the N_2 domain, is the product of the Subject's mental activity and represents a more or less bounded characterization of the N_2 entity.

The construal's distinctive properties are the following. The predicate does not express a causative action, but belongs to the epistemic modality domain. As it specifies the cognitive mode of access to the information, the Subject's role is that of a Conceptualizer, and the Dative Clitic (N_2) does not identify a participant causally affected by the action of a Subject-Agent, but one treated as an object of thought in the active mental space of the [+hum] Subject (N_0). The N_1 property/quality associated to N_2 is registered as noteworthy from the perspective of the Cognizing Subject N_0, and linked to (the realm of) the Dative participant (N_2) as if it were an integral part of it. The form of knowledge or belief expressed by the predicate conditions the image the Cognizer (N_0) captures, has or adopts, of the entity designated by the Dative clitic (N_2).

The Epistemic Dative Construction thus combines an evidential and a modal-epistemic dimension. The Subject (N_0) identifies as evidential source of the assessment, while the main predicate epistemically supports the N_2-N_1 connection, specifying the cognitive access path selecting a Possessor role for the percept denoted by N_2.

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12. Also shared are the Conceptualizer-defocusing alternations, viz., the periphrastic passive (i) and the *se*-passive (ii):

(i) Marie Fredriksson [...] se encuentra a la espera de los resultados acerca de la naturaleza de *un tumor que le fue detectado hace unos meses en el cerebro.*
[...] a tumor that CLIT.DAT.3SG WAS-PRET.IND.3SG detected [...] in the brain
'Marie Fredriksson [...] is awaiting the results about the nature of a tumor that was detected a few months ago in her brain.' (CREA, El País, 30/10/2002)

(ii) En la enfermería *se le apreció una cornada grande.*
CLIT.REFL.PASS.3SG CLIT.DAT.3SG appeared a goring large
'In the infirmary, they uncovered a large goring.'
(CREA, D. Tapia Bolívar, *Historia del toreo* (I). De Pedro Romero a "Manolete", 1993)

Distributionally speaking, inanimate Datives ((27), (28)) are quite common, as well as abstract Possessees (N_1) ((25), (27), (28), (29), (30), (31)). The determiners present a certain variety. For instance, N_1 takes a definite article when the Possessee is deemed expected or predictable ((24), (25), (27), (29)); the indefinite article, by contrast, imposes an interpretation from the Subject's perspective, suggesting that the internal composition of the N_1 entity is not supposed to be intersubjectively identifiable nor agreed on, though it may be specifiable by the Cognizing Subject (N_0) (30), the discourse speaker and/or the current speaker[13] ((25), (26), (27), (28), (30), (31)).

(28) Pero leyendo a gente como tú *le he encontrado más belleza a este tipo de poesía*. (esTenTen18, esaotra.es)
CLIT.DAT.3SG have-found-PRES.PERF.1SG more beauty to this type of poetry
'But reading people like you I have found more beauty in this type of poetry.'

(29) Claro que hablo conmigo mismo y discuto conmigo y *me veo los defectos*, que tengo muchos, *mejor que nadie*. (esTenTen18, laverdad.es/murcia/prensa/20070120)
CLIT.DAT.1SG see-PRES.IND.1SG the defects [...] better than anybody
'Of course, I talk to myself and argue with myself and I see my flaws, which I have many, better than anyone else.'

(30) *Los técnicos sólo le [= el Parma] ven un punto débil*: su irregularidad, que le ha relegado a la quinta plaza en la Liga italiana, pese a ser el vigente campeón de la Recopa y de la Supercopa europea. (CREA, La Vanguardia, 04/05/1994)
The technicians only CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.3PL one point weak
'The coaches see only one weak point in Parma: their inconsistency, which has relegated them to fifth place in the Italian league, despite being the reigning champions of the Cup Winners' Cup and the European Super Cup.'

(31) Ella está a años luz de Albiol, mucho más capacitada. *A él le veo un populismo que me desagrada*. (esTenTen18, lavozdeasturias.es)
To him CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.1SG a populism that CLIT.DAT.1SG displeases-PRES.IND.3SG
'She is light years ahead of Albiol, much more qualified. I see a populism in him that I dislike.'

By its very configuration, the Epistemic Dative Construction makes no claim to objectivity. The Possessor-Possessee connection does not stand alone, as if it arose

13. The 'current speaker' is the real or imaginary person who can refer to himself as 'I'. When reporting his perspective in the past, the current speaker is conceived of as discourse person, hence the term 'discourse speaker'.

from a universal source of truth, but reads as an observation, assumption, opinion directly attached to someone's particular viewpoint, i.e., as a stance expression. Typical of oral discourse, the construction is particularly suited for exchanging views on all sorts of topics, commenting on their qualities and defects. Below (3.4.), a gradient of subjectivity will be proposed on the basis of the verb choice, taking into account that other factors also intervene: e.g., the contours of abstract objects are less precise than those of concrete ones, and speaker involvement is most manifest with first person Subject ((28), (29), (31)).

3.3 Nominal versus sentential complementation

The Subject (N_0) of the Epistemic Dative Construction makes mental contact with the Dative participant (N_2), directly grasping its image positively or negatively as Possessor-Container of the property denoted by the DO (N_1). The evaluative approach makes of the Dative also the Interested party ((26)–(32)). The co-selection [N_2-N_1], in charge of the Subject (N_0), is analyzable as a secondary predication ("small clause") of the Possessive type with the Dative (N_2) as 'secondary Subject' and the Accusative (N_1) as Object: [N_0 views (image of) N_2 [N_2 having N_1]].

(32) Así que la pareja que hacían Rosa y Yoni era preciosa, y *yo sólo le encontraba un defecto*: en aquella pareja faltaba yo.
(CREA, E. Mendicutti, *Fuego de marzo*, 1995)
I only CLIT.DAT.3SG found-IMPF.IND.1SG one defect
'So the couple that Rosa and Yoni made was lovely, and I only found one defect in it: in that couple I was missing.'

In the Epistemic Dative Construction, verbs like *detectar* 'to detect', *notar* 'to notice', *ver* 'to see', do not only denote localizing perception (3.4.1), but can also behave as verbs of thought (3.4.2–3.4.4). As Propositional Attitude verbs these verbs also take as DO a finite declarative subclause introduced by the *que* 'that'-operator. This construal is but an approximate paraphrase, however. While the nominal complementation integrates the [N_2-N_1] connection as primary cognitive experience in the Subject's (N_0) flow of consciousness, the sentential complementation testifies to a more abstract, inferential or deductive process. It introduces a distant perspective (Talmy 2000: 69 ff.), presenting a propositional content (P) as Object of the mental process denoted by the main verb (V_1), relegating the Possessor (N_2) to the subclause, and articulating the connection with the N_1 entity alternately in terms of Possession (32a) or Inclusion (32b):

[N_0 V_1-*MENTAL REPRESENTATION* of P [N_2-*POSSESSOR-SUBJECT* V_2-*HAS* N_1-POSSESSEE]] or
[N_0 V_1-*MENTAL REPRESENTATION* of P [V_2-*THERE-IS* N_1-Possessee *in* N_2-*Possessor-Location*]].

(32a) Yo encontraba que esta pareja tenía sólo un defecto
'I found that this couple had only one defect'

(32b) Yo encontraba que había sólo un defecto en esta pareja
'I found that there-was only one defect in this couple'

These reformulations dissociate the mental process (V_1) from its term: the Possessor becomes part of the conceptualized scene, distanced from the Cognizing Subject. The ambivalence between possession and localization gets removed, and the TAM information required in the complement clause identifies the proposition as preexisting, coexisting or prospective with respect to V_1. Unlike the Epistemic Dative Construction, the bi-clausal one yields an 'objectified' view on the Possessive relation, beyond the conceptualizing intervention of the Subject of the intellective V_1. The 'interest'-dimension of the mono-clausal structure is downgraded and, hence, also the stance dimension. Instead of interaction with the Possessor, the interface is now between a Cognizing Subject and a grounded instance of a possession/inclusion relationship.

Body parts and other inalienable physical properties can, of course, not be attributed as Possessee nor evaluated as such. What strikes the observer is the state they are found in. This explains the presence of a second embedded "small clause": '[+hum] N_0'perceives' [+an] N_2 and focuses on [state] N_1 in N_2' (33).[14] The distancing effect produced by turning to a bi-clausal paraphrase can, again, present two forms:

[N_0 V_1-*MENTAL REPRESENTATION* of P [N_2-*POSSESSOR* V_2-*HAS* [$N_{1\text{-POSSESSEE}}$ *IN STATE S*]]] and
[N_0 V_1-*MENTAL REPRESENTATION* of P [V_2-*THERE-IS* $N_{1\text{- STATE S}}$ — *IN* POSSESSEE-$_{N2\text{-Possessor}}$]].

(33) Le noto la voz muy triste.
CLIT.DAT.3SG.ADDRESSEE notice-PRES.IND.1SG the voice very sad
'Your voice sounds very sad to me.' (esTenTen18, rtve.es)

14. Another option is the mono-clausal Epistemic counterpart of the Dative Construction with Locative phrase (cf. (9), e.g., (i):

(i) [...], pero le noté en la cara cierta extrañeza
[...], but CLIT.DAT.3SG noticed-PRET.IND.1SG certain strangeness
'but I noticed a certain strangeness on his face'
(CREA, J.J. Armas Marcelo, *Madrid, distrito federal*, 1994)

(33a) Noto que tiene la voz muy triste.
notice-PRES.IND.1SG that HAS-PRES.IND.3SG.ADDRESSEE the voice very sad

(33b) Noto que hay mucha tristeza en su voz.
notice-PRES.IND.1SG que there-is much sadness in your voice

3.4 Varying degrees of subjectivity

The verb-object combinations can be taken as starting point to situate the access route to the Possessor-Possessee (N_2-N_1) association along a cline in epistemic modality. It can be hypothesized that increasing subjective modality comes with decreasing invitation to alignment, i.e., with prevalence of stance over straight knowledge communication.

For the sake of clarity, the underlying continuum can, albeit somewhat artificially, be decomposed in an interpretation chain going from (i) registration, over (ii) intuition, (iii) dialogic positioning and (iv) fictional imaging, to (v) overt stance taking. Per subdivision, one exemplary verb can be retained: *descubrir* 'to discover' for (i) sensory perception, *intuir* 'to intuit' for (ii) extrasensory perception, *suponer* 'to suppose' for (iii) dialogic engagement, *imaginar* 'to imagine' for (iv) imaginary representation, and *atribuir* 'to attribute' (v) for overt stance taking.

The analysis below highlights the ductility of various verbal lexemes. Their position on the gradient can vary depending on various parameters, in particular, the DO entity's ± tangibility, ± boundedness, ± sub-predication; ± 1st person Subject, ± agentive Subject; ± atemporal present; ± modalized context, ± passive alternation.

3.4.1 *Sensory registration*

The genuine registration as perceptual achievement of a concrete localized phenomenon scores highest on the confidence scale. The assumed truth-factual validity of sensory perception relies on the proximity of the perceiver. The diagnostic reliability is further enhanced when the eyewitness has the status of an 'objective' Expert (34).

(34) Si uno tiene la suerte de que al hacerle una cirugía de estómago *le ven un pequeño tumor en el páncreas*, se lo quitan y no se ha diseminado todavía, pues claro que se cura. (esTenTen18, metode.es)
CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.3PL a small tumor in the pancreas
'If you are lucky enough that when doing stomach surgery they see a small tumor in your pancreas, they remove it and it has not spread yet, then of course you will be cured.'

The following non-causative 3-place locative verbs are apt at denoting an intersubjectively verifiable empirical observation: *apreciar* 'to perceive', *detectar* 'to detect', *descubrir* 'to discover', *diagnosticar* 'to diagnose', *percibir* 'to perceive'. The perfect tenses or punctual reading of *encontrar/hallar* 'to find', *notar* 'to notice' and *ver* 'to see' share this ability. When perceiver and perceived are not coreferential, the perceptual achievement generally concerns a phenomenon which carries negative semantic prosody, and may turn out to be unexpected, especially for the implicated Possessor participant, in the position then of adversative Dative of Interest ((34), (35)).

(35) -Pues mire, *le hemos encontrado una enfermedad*, no es nada grave, pero tendrá que tomar pastillas… (CREA, Ll. Llongueras, *Llongueras tal cual*, 2001)
CLIT.DAT.3SG-ADDRESSEE have-found-PRES.PERF.1PL an illness
– 'Well look, we have found an illness, it is nothing serious, but you will have to take pills…'

Reflexives situate the locus in the proper personal sphere of the Cognizing Subject. They represent a single psyche as divided in a viewing part (*Ego*) and a viewed part (*Self*). The high proportion of first person reflexives suggests that the confidence in life-long self-knowledge is maximized when the speaker is onstage as Cognizing Subject. Conclusive observations are then easily evaluated against the background of former or potentially different stages or states. The auto-dialogic viewing perspective can apply to physical properties, as signaled by the comparative secondary predication (*más matizada*, etc.) in (36). It can also include introspection, as when reporting on the awakening of a compelling inclination (37). As to non-apparency, it takes on a polyphonic dimension, since it cannot be registered without conscience of its positive counterpart (38).

(36) Me gustan los resultados, la piel está más matizada, más luminosa que no brillante y *me veo los poros menos dilatados*.
(esTenTen18, diadermine.trnd.es/2009/11/23)
CLIT.DAT.1SG see-PRES.IND.1SG the pores less dilated
'I like the results, the skin is more matte, more luminous rather than shiny and my pores look less dilated.'

(37) Encontré mucha documentación y *me descubrí una vocación bibliófila que me llevó a recoger todos los testimonios*. (esTenTen18, valentifaineros20015.es)
CLIT.DAT.1SG discovered-PRET.IND.1SG a vocation bibliophile
'I found a lot of documentation and discovered a bibliophile vocation that led me to collect all the testimonies.'

(38) Me he puesto el castaño, *no me veo ni una sola cana*, está genial.
(esTenTen18, menexpert-excell5.trnd.es/2010/06/23)
Not CLIT.DAT.1SG see-PRES.IND.1SG not one single gray-hair
'I've put on the brown color, I don't see one single gray hair, it's great.'

3.4.2 *Extrasensory perception*

Extrasensory perception corresponds to the nonrational skill or talent to comprehend what is (still) obscure, latent, intangible, puzzling or hidden, awaiting to be uncovered or bound to happen. This category covers intuitive comprehension, foreknowing, foresight, precognition. These forms of discernment are still high on the confidence scale, though slightly lower than genuine registration (3.4.1).

In addition to only occasionally locative verbs such as *adivinar* 'to divine', *augurar* 'to augur', *intuir* 'to intuit', *presagiar* 'to presage', *presentir* 'to forebode', *presumir* 'to presume', *prever* 'to foresee', *pronosticar/vaticinar* 'to foretell', the imperfective tenses of *encontrar/hallar* 'to find' and *ver* 'to see' are also naturally enabled to frame this kind of perception.

The verb *adivinar* 'to divine' does not specify whether one has something right by clairvoyance or by chance. In (39), the a priori unsuspectedness and a posteriori factual validation of the Dative participant's strength clearly profile the discourse speaker as perspicacious. Example (40), for its part, illustrates how (free) indirect thought representation enriches the information structure with an embedded mental space and, hence, a further subjectivized belief system. The self-addressed questionings of the character (*Pía*) reveal her intimate conviction: to her mind Monjardin is empowered with prior knowledge. At that point of the story, however, the truthfulness of her presumption, based on the impression that he is tracking her, remains opaque to the reader.

(39) Supongo que otro habría visto en él a un hombre algo vacilante, o sin mucho control de sí mismo. *Yo le adiviné una fuerza fuera de lo común*. Y los hechos me dieron la razón. (CREA, L. Silva, El alquimista impaciente, 2000)
I CLIT.DAT.3SG sensed-PRET.IND.1SG a strength out of the ordinary
'I suppose someone else would have seen in him a man who was somewhat hesitant, or without much control of himself. I sensed in him a strength out of the ordinary. And the facts proved me right.'

(40) Porque estaba tranquila, […], no le extrañó ver levantado el cierre del garaje pero le sobresaltó encontrarse con el Simca 1200 aparcado donde Arce dejaba el Ford Mustang. Era el coche que ayer ella había conducido, ¿cuándo había llegado Monjardín, antes o después que ella? ¿Qué hacía allí si no se habían citado? *¿Por qué siempre Monjardín le adivinaba las intenciones?* (CREA, M. Longares, *Romanticismo*, 2002)
Why always Monjardin CLIT.DAT.3SG divined-IMPF.IND.3SG the intentions?
'Because she [=Pía] was calm, […], she was not surprised to see the garage door lifted, but she was startled to find the Simca 1200 parked where Arce left the Ford Mustang. It was the car that she had driven yesterday. When had Monjardin arrived, before or after her? What was he doing there if they hadn't made an appointment? Why did Monjardin always guess her intentions?'

The interpretation of *ver* 'to see' is particularly context-dependent. Regarding foreboding by seers, e.g. (41), it evokes a 'sixth sense' for other people's intentions. The speaker assertively claims her group's talent to instantaneously penetrate and understand what is hidden to others. In (42), however, the prospective view is underpinned by a likelihood calculus to estimate the viability of a long-term project.

(41) - Claro que sí. *Nosotras, las videntes, les vemos enseguida las intenciones*, aunque yo creo que las otras mujeres también. Cuando viene alguno *y le veo esas intenciones* le digo que puedo tomar una cerveza con él, pero que no se haga ilusiones que no se va a comer un rosco. (CREA, Cambio 16, nº 972, 09/07/1990)
We, the seers, CLIT.DAT.3PL see-PRES.IND.1PL immediately the intentions, [...] and CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.1SG these intentions
'– Of course. We, the seers, see their intentions immediately, although I believe that the other women do too. When someone comes to me and I see his intentions, I tell him that I can have a beer with him, but that he shouldn't get his hopes up, that he's not going to eat a donut.' [Expression meaning "he won't get a date"].'

(42) Como seguramente ya sepas, las LEGO Ideas necesitan 10.000 votos (que pueden realizarse online). Si los logran, un equipo del fabricante de juguetes evalúa la viabilidad del proyecto; *si le ven buen potencial*, la compañía lo fabrica y lo manda a las tiendas de juguetes. (esTenTen18, autobild.es)
if CLIT.DAT.3SG see.PRES.IND.3PL good potential
'As you probably already know, LEGO Ideas require 10,000 votes (which can be done online). If they achieve them, a team from the toy manufacturer evaluates the feasibility of the project; if they see good potential, the company manufactures it and sends it to toy stores.'

The communicative dimension in verbs such as *augurar* 'to augur', *presagiar* 'to presage', *pronosticar / vaticinar* 'to foretell' allows them to be reanalyzed as 3-place predicates, yielding the Dative's upgrade to argumental status. In combination with its intra-clausal Possessive-Epistemic function, the Dative participant is then also conceived of as Recipient (IO) of a success foretelling (43) or a doom prediction (44). Reporting on past forecasts, as in (43), conveys a post facto framing of anticipatory capacity.

(43) Pero los críticos también tomaron buena nota de mí y de mi insignificante papel: alabaron mi voz y *me pronosticaron un futuro en la escena*.
(CREA, J. Carreras, *Autobiografía. Cantar con el alma*, 1989)
CLIT.DAT.1SG prognosticated-PRET.IND.3PL a future on the scene
'But the critics also took good note of me and my insignificant role: they praised my voice and predicted me a future on the scene.'

(44) Sr. Director: Como siga así, *le auguro a Aznar un negro y breve futuro*. De regeneración democrática nada. De ética política, nada de nada.
Soy uno de sus frustrados y desconcertados votantes que, con su breve "hacer político", ya ha perdido definitivamente. (CREA, El Mundo, 15/08/1996)
CLIT.DAT.3SG augur-PRES.IND.1SG to A. a dark and short future
'Mr. Director: As it continues like this, I predict a dark and short future for Aznar. Of democratic regeneration, nothing. Of political ethics, nothing at all. I am one of his frustrated and bewildered voters whom he has already definitively lost with his brief "politicking"'.

3.4.3 *Dialogic engagement*

In situations that ask for taking position, the Epistemic Dative Construction permits to cooperatively comply with the interlocutor's expectation assuming the evidential responsibility while at the same time modulating the epistemic engagement. The verbs found to serve this purpose are: *concebir* 'to conceive', *conocer* 'to know', *encontrar* 'to find', *interpretar* 'to interpret', *notar* 'to notice', *percibir* 'to perceive', *sentir* 'to feel', *suponer* 'to suppose', *valorar* 'appreciate', *ver* 'to see'. Intensifiers and minimizers, as well as the immediate discourse elaboration, offer the necessary resources to express one's view in a polite and face preserving way.

Boosting an outspoken optimistic view (*un gran futuro* (45)) seems to be the prerogative of empowered conceptualizers who adduce convincing insider arguments.

(45) - ¿Qué expectativas ves al futuro de RTVE? Un abrazo.
- *A RTVE le veo un gran futuro*, porque tiene un enorme potencial. Dentro de nada se abre una nueva etapa con la TDT y tenemos canales que van a ser referentes en sus parcelas, 24h en informativos, Clan en infantil, teledeporte en deportes… RTVE tiene músculo para afrontar el cambio. (esTenTen18, rtve.es)
To RTVE CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.1SG a great future
'– What expectations do you see for the future of RTVE? A hug.
– For RTVE I see a great future, because it has enormous potential. A new stage will soon open with DTT and we have channels that are going to be benchmarks in their fields, 24 hours in news, Clan in children's, tele-sport in sports… RTVE has the muscle to face the change.'

This construal displays the speaker's empathy for the N_2 entity (RTVE) and anchors the N_2-N_1 connection in his mental space, free from TAM restrictions. Alternative formats diverge in these respects and are less interactional: (45a) distantly echoes an already circulating content (cf. 3.3), and (45b) comes across haughtily.

(45a) Veo que RTVE podría tener / puede tener / tendrá / va a tener / tiene un gran futuro
'I see that RTVE could have / can have / will have / is going to have / has a great future'

(45b) RTVE pudiera tener / puede tener / tendrá / va a tener / tiene un gran futuro
'RTVE could have / can have / will have / is going to have / has a great future'

A negatively oriented appreciation tends to be counterbalanced by a positive comment (*más capacitada — me desagrada* (31), *preciosa — solo [...] un defecto* (32), *me gusta mucho — un inconveniente importante* (46). Nouns such as *error* 'error', *defecto* 'defect', *fallo* 'failure', *inconveniente* 'drawback', *problema* 'problem', *punto débil* 'weak point', are used as N_1 to categorize objectionable features of inanimate Datives (N_2), and *beneficio* 'benefice', *utilidad* 'utility', *ventaja* 'advantage' for laudable ones. In (46), e.g., *inconveniente* functions as shell noun with a focalizing role in information packaging: it paves the way for the content spelled out next.[15]

(46) *Me gusta mucho este proyecto, aunque le veo un inconveniente importante*: se olvida de que Princesa es la entrada a la ciudad de la carretera de La Coruña, si la deja en esa parte en una calle con solo un carril en cada sentido, el atasco puede ser constante (mayor del actual). (esTenTen18, Madrid.es)
CLIT.DAT.1SG pleases-PRES.IND.3SG this project, although CLIT.DAT.3SG see-PRES.IND.1SG a drawback important
'I really like this project, although I see a major drawback: it overlooks that Princesa is the entrance to the city from the La Coruña highway, if you leave it in that part as a street with only one lane in each direction, the traffic jam can be constant (greater than the current one).'

In (47), reflexivity strengthens speaker involvement (*sinceramente*), since it enriches the interlocutory dialogic expression with an auto-dialogic dimension. The interviewee is not being uncooperative by denying having specific strengths, he just adjusts the expectations to his reality, thus preserving his self-image. Polarity reversal by negation functions as a polyphonic presuppositional modal marker: the position taken is acknowledged to go against that of other voices which remain implicitly present. Recognizing the failure to see or find a property looked for, however, does not amount to asserting its non-existence, even if this inference is easily drawn by conversational implicature, especially when the con-

15. "Shell nouns make up an open-ended functionally defined class of abstract nouns that have, to varying degrees, the potential of being used as conceptual shells for complex, proposition-like pieces of information. [...]. The property of shell-nounhood is a functional property." (Schmid 2000: 4)

ceptualizer is seen as a powerful judge (48). By itself, the negative formulation ((47), (48)) attenuates the Subject's accountability.

(47) - ¿Qué cualidades tienes dentro del campo?
- *Sinceramente no me veo alguna cualidad así para destacar*, lo único que puedo decir es que siempre intento darlo todo para así, sea cual sea el resultado, poder irme orgulloso de haber jugado un buen partido.
(esTenTen18, estoesdxt.es)
Sincerely not CLIT.DAT.1SG see-PRES.IND.1SG any quality so to highlight
'– What qualities do you have on the field?
– Sincerely, I don't see any particular quality to highlight, the only thing I can say is that I always try to give everything so that, whatever the result, I can leave proud of having played a good game.'

(48) Pero como para ejecutarle necesitaban el permiso de la autoridad romana, le enviaron ante Poncio Pilatos acusándole de haber infringido las leyes romanas. *Pilatos no le encontró culpa alguna* y lo envió a Herodes.
(CREA, El Mundo, 13/04/1995)
Pontius Pilate not CLIT.DAT.3SG found-PRET.IND.3SG fault any
'But since they needed permission from the Roman authorities to execute him, they sent him before Pontius Pilate, accusing him of having broken Roman laws.
Pilate found no fault in him and sent him to Herod.'

With *encontrar* 'to find', probably the second most used verb of the present category after *ver* 'to see', the N_2-N_1 connection is characterized by highly predictable isotopic pairings, e.g., *encontrarle respuesta a una pregunta* 'to find an answer to a question', *solución a un problema* 'a solution to a problem' (49), *explicación a una situación* 'an explanation to a situation', *un sentido a la vida* 'a meaning to life', *un título a una foto/un artículo* 'a title to a photo/article', etc. *Conocer* 'to know', for its part, typically takes animate Datives and associates them with relational nouns of a social type (*amigos* 'friends', *enemigos* 'enemies', *novia* 'girlfriend', *novio* 'boyfriend'). Again, negation is a handy tool for signaling the limits of a knowledge state, while preserving the conceptualizer's face (50).

(49) No sabemos qué les pasa, tenemos dudas a la hora de educar, *aparecen problemas que nos desestabilizan y no les encontramos solución*.
(esTenTen18, ayuntamientodequer.es)
Appear-PRES.IND.3PL problems that CLIT.ACC.1PL destabilize-PRES.IND.3PL and not CLIT.DAT.3PL find-PRES.IND.1PL solution
'We do not know what is happening to them, we have doubts when it comes to educating, problems appear that destabilize us and we cannot find a solution to them.'

(50) La familia de la víctima se mostró extrañada de la muerte de Ramos, pues *no le conocían enemigos*. Era miembro de la iglesia evangélica Sandoval.
(CREA, La Prensa, 11/09/1996)
not CLIT.DAT.3SG knew-IMPF.IND.3PL enemies
'The victim's family was surprised by Ramos' death, since they did not know of any enemies. He was a member of the Sandoval Evangelical Church.'

The introspective orientation of *sentirse* 'to feel-REFL' is modally more restricted than that of *verse* 'to see-REFL' (47). It mostly concerns deontic states or conditions (e.g., *necesidad* 'necessity', *obligación* 'obligation' (51), *responsabilidad* 'responsibility') and dynamic qualities (*capacidad* 'capacity, *fuerza* 'force', *posibilidad* 'possibility'). The *se*-passive, finally, does not specify the source of information. In (52), it can be associated with a contextually inferable collective source, viz., regulatory authorities. This kind of construal presents a view the speaker can call into question beyond inter-personal confrontation or controversy. Here the argumentative strategy consists in wrapping an outspoken criticism in an ironical rhetorical question.

(51) ¿Qué va a ocurrir en diez o quince años, cuando estos niños de diez años tengan veinte años? Mi respuesta: Primero que nada, *los niños no se sienten la obligación de obedecer nuestras leyes* porque no se les puede castigar. No se les puede llevar a juicio debido a su edad. (esTenTen18, laitman.es/2009)
The children not CLIT.DAT.3PL.REFL feel-PRES.IND.3PL the obligation to obey our laws
'What is going to happen in ten or fifteen years, when these ten-year-old children are twenty years old? My response: First of all, children do not feel obligated to obey our laws because they cannot be punished. They cannot be brought to trial due to their age.'

(52) Si los hombres no pueden percibir el dinero de la guardería, *¿quiere decir que a todos los empleados se les supone una hacendosa mujercita* que se ha de quedar cuidando de los pequeñuelos noche y día? (CREA, El País, 01/08/1987)
¿wants-PRES.IND.3SG say-INF that to all the employees CLIT.REFL.PASS.3SG CLIT.DAT.3PL supposes-PRES.IND.3G a hardworking little-woman who [...]
'If men cannot receive daycare money, does it mean that all employees are supposed to have a hardworking little woman who has to take care of the little ones night and day?'

3.4.4 *Imaginary representation*

Unlike the preceding categories, imaginary representation is not rooted in the conceptualizer's perceptual and intellective abilities, but originates in his mental creativity. In the Epistemic Dative Construction, *inventar* 'to invent' signals the

counterfactual nature of the Object associated with the Dative participant. In (53), the interviewer's question presumes the deliberate spreading of fake news. Although the agentive sources are faceless, left implicit by the non-anaphoric third person plural Subject, they are accountable for building a false image and for inducing people to hold it for true.

(53) - ¿Le preocupa que *le inventen romances*?
- Es que hay que aguantar mucho en la vida privada de una por ser una figura de la canción… (CREA, Tiempo,13/08/1990)
that CLIT.DAT.3SG-ADDRESSEE invent-PRES.SUBJ.3PL romances
'– Are you worried about people inventing romances for you?
– You have to put up with a lot in your private life to be a figure of the chanson…'

The creative power conveyed by *imaginar* 'to imagine' is more genuine. It evokes an irrational mental representation that is revealing for the Experiencer's mindset, and can be so overwhelming that it gets integrated in his belief system without evident rational thought or inference. In (54), the discourse speaker (*Sara*) puts her past *Self* (*me inventé* 'DAT.CLIT.REFL.1SG invented-PRET.IND.1SG) onstage as an imaginative child, who at that time had her own world in which she 'really' interacted with her imaginary friend. In (55), the improbable, unrealistic personality trait denoted by the Subject of the *se*-passive (*propensiones diabólicas*) captures the image an unspecified, diffuse group of people project on the Dative participant; it says more about their prejudice than about his character.

(54) **JORGE.** ¿Y ahora qué piensas? ¿Que estoy loco o que no?

SARA. ¿No te digo que me da igual?

JORGE. Pero a mí, no. ¿Qué piensas ahora? ¿Estoy loco o no?

SARA. No. *Yo también me inventé a una amiga cuando era pequeña*, se llamaba Laura. Y me lo pasaba de locura jugando con ella, siempre me contestaba lo que yo quería. Pero mi amiga sólo existía cuando estábamos solas…
(CREA, A. Diosdado, *Trescientos veintiuno, trescientos veintidós*, 1993)
I also CLIT.DAT.REFL.1SG invented-PRET.IND.1SG to a friend-ACC when was-IMPF.IND.1SG little

'**JORGE.** And now what do you think? Am I crazy or am I not?

SARA. Don't I tell you that I don't care?

JORGE. But I do. What do you think now? Am I crazy or not?

SARA. No. I also invented a friend when I was little, her name was Laura. And I had a crazy time playing with her, she always answered what I wanted. But my friend only existed when we were alone…'

(55) No le niego que se le detestaba por causas oscuras. Tal vez por racismo, o porque *se le imaginaban ciertas propensiones diabólicas.*
(CREA, R. del Pozo, *Noche de tahúres*, 1995)
CLIT.REFL.PASS-3PL DAT.3SG imagined-IMPF.IND.3PL certain propensities diabolical
'I do not deny that he was detested for dark reasons. Perhaps because of racism, or because certain diabolical propensities were imagined in him.'

3.4.5 *Overt stance taking*

Finally, the Epistemic Dative construal is compatible with 3-place predicates of the 'attribution' type, such as *acordar* 'to accord', *atribuir* 'to attribute', *conceder* 'to concede', *dar* 'to give', *prestar* 'to lend', *prometer* 'to promise', *reconocer* 'to recognize'. In the primary, causative conception of transmission or imposition, the Subject (N_0) 'produces' the integration of N_1 in the domain of N_2. This notion of abstract motion, understood in terms of transfer to an interested party, undergoes a metaphoric extension in the sense that the Agent (N_0) grants or infuses a quality or property (N_1) into the IO participant (N_2). By metonymic effect on this bleached conception of 'attribution', the focus moves from the trajectory of the mental process to its result: in the epistemic, non-causative reading, N_2 does not designate a Recipient-Beneficiary, and the Subject (N_0) does not 'produce' the integration of N_1 in the domain of N_2, but simply validates the [N_2-N_1] association.

Various factors favor the gliding to thought, belief or conviction, first and foremost the type of N_1. Nouns which denote a mental state or disposition, such as *deseo* 'desire', *intención* 'intention' (25), *propósito* 'purpose', *voluntad* 'will', impose an epistemic reading. Nouns such as *capacidad* 'capacity', *competencia* 'competence', *coraje* 'courage', *defecto* 'defect', *habilidad* 'ability', *talento* 'talent' (56), *valentía* 'courage', *virtud* 'virtue', also do so to the extent that they denote a property or modality conceived as inherent to the Dative participant's personality. En (56), the speaker reinforces his words by switching from a sequence with a verb of propositional attitude (*creo que… tiene talento*) to the speech act of paying tribute (*le reconozco un talento…*); in the public debate, this rhetorical move provides a possibly ironical *captatio benevolentiae* which paves the way for critique. To the extent that the N_1 property is selected for argumentative reasons, this construal functions as a framing device.

(56) Yo creo que el señor Wert tiene talento — es más, *le reconozco un talento superior al de la media de sus compañeros ministros* — ; ahora bien, también tengo que decir que creo que no le ha llamado Dios por el camino de la educación. (esTenTen18, congreso.es)
CLIT.DAT.3SG recognize-PRES.IND.1SG a talent superior to-that of the average [...]
'I believe that Mr. Wert has talent — in fact, I recognize him a talent greater than that of the average of his fellow ministers. Now, I also have to say that I believe that God has not called him along the path of education.'

The interpretation is also influenced by the type of Source. A Subject who is not qualified to cause the acquisition of N_1 by N_2 or to make the [N_2-N_1] association happen, orients toward the epistemic reading. This is a fortiori the case when the source of information remains undefined: the generalizing effect of the *se*-passive (57) allows the reporter to echo a rumor and to obtain a generalizing effect without committing himself.

(57) A José María Aznar se le atribuye una estrecha relación amistosa y política con Emilio Azcárraga; [...] (CREA, El País, 19/09/1996)
To J.M.A. CLIT.REFL.PASS.3SG CLIT.DAT.3SG attributes-PRES.IND.3SG a close relation friendly and political with E.A.
'José María Aznar is credited with a close friendly and political relationship with Emilio Azcárraga; [...]'

With valuation nouns such as *autoría* 'authorship', *culpa* 'fault', *éxito* 'success', *fracaso* 'failure', *invención* 'invention', *mérito* 'merit', *responsabilidad* 'responsibility', the reading can oscillate between genuine imposition and stance expression. In (58), e.g., it can go either way. Given the context, however, a layered meaning structure can also be argued for. Prima facie, the speaker presents the association (*civilización griega — invención y progreso del arte*) as informatively presupposed, anchored in the current view of art historiography; as spokesperson for a larger group, he aligns his positioning on that of the *communis opinio*, reproducing an intersubjective epistemic judgment.[16] At the same time, his expert profile enables him to, in turn, corroborate and endorse the acknowledgment.

16. Cf. note 6.

(58) Los primeros que desarrollaron la facultad humana para crear formas bellas fueron los griegos y por consiguiente *es a su civilización a la que atribuimos la invención y el progreso del arte*.
(CREA, F. Calvo Serraller, *Historia del Arte*, 1997)
Is-PRES.IND.3SG to their civilization to which that attribute-PRES.IND.1PL the invention and the progress of the art
'The first to develop the human faculty to create beautiful forms were the Greeks and therefore it is to their civilization that we attribute the invention and progress of art.'

With a Subject having great decision-making power, the reflexive variant is especially prone to produce a blended meaning. In (59), B. can combine the role of Agent and Conceptualizer: unhindered from crediting the good results to his own account, this authoritarian leader can perfectly believe he has that merit, or pretend to do so. Needless to say, the critical reader will relativize his impact as well as his superior self-image, and not consider B.'s discourse as reliable. Likewise, in (60), in claiming authorship the organization does image-building, displaying its power. In journalistic prose, the by name identified Subject generally appears as a self-confident opinionator. Whether it is a reliable, truth- and knowledge-minded Source can be differently appreciated depending on the hearer's or reader's own position. And whether the reporter is committed to the content of the information, is not always inferable from the discourse context, either.

(59) *Berlusconi se atribuye el mérito del crecimiento de la economía real* y acusa a la oposición de boicotear su labor. (CREA, La Vanguardia, 29/12/1994)
B. CLIT.DAT.REFL.3SG attributes-PRES.IND.3SG the merit of-the growth of the economy real
'Berlusconi takes credit for the growth of the real economy and accuses the opposition of boycotting his work.'

(60) Una organización hasta ahora desconocida, *Jihad (guerra santa) Islámica Argelina, se ha atribuido la autoría del atentado*.
(CREA, La Vanguardia, 30/07/1995)
J. (war holy) I.J., CLIT.DAT.REFL.3SG has-attributedPRES.PERF.IND.3SG the authorship of the attack
'A previously unknown organization, Algerian Islamic Jihad (holy war), has claimed responsibility for the attack.'

For contexts which admit a double-layered reading, common knowledge generally tilts the balance in one direction or the other. In (61), vis-à-vis the supranational authority of the IMF, the national authorities' prospects may well be an illusion. In (62), W. does not simply hold an innovative view, but his writings

implement it; here, the Dative clitic is omissible, which sustains the causative reading.

(61) *Las autoridades se prometen un mayor margen de maniobra con el ingreso en el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI)*, que, tras haber levantado Estados Unidos su veto, podría concluirse este año (según previsiones del Gobierno expuestas recientemente por su portavoz, Jerzy Urban).
(CREA, El País, 01/04/1986)
The authorities CLIT.DAT.REFL.3PL promise-PRES.IND.3PL a greater margin of maneuver with the entry in the IMF
'The authorities promise themselves greater room for maneuver with membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which, after the United States has lifted its veto, could be concluded this year (according to government forecasts recently presented by its spokesperson, Jerzy Urban).'

(62) Wittgenstein, a partir de las Investigaciones filosóficas inaugura una concepción del lenguaje que se enfrenta a la que mantuvo en el Tractatus, y por tanto a la posición agustiniana del lenguaje. *Frente a la fundamentación lógica le concede primacía a la praxis lingüística*, el lenguaje aparece como una herramienta regida por reglas gramaticales de uso.
(CREA, Cuaderno de Materiales, nº 18, 12/2002)
Against the logical foundation CLIT.DAT.3SG concedes-PRES.IND.3SG primacy to the praxis linguistic
'Wittgenstein, starting from the Philosophical Investigations, inaugurates a conception of language in opposition with the one he maintained in the Tractatus, and thus with the Augustinian view on language. Compared to the logical foundation, he gives primacy to the linguistic praxis, language appears as a tool governed by grammatical rules of usage.'

4. Conclusion

The Epistemic Dative Construction constitutes a non-causative modal variant of the Possessive Dative Construction. In the intra-clausal Possessor-Possessee relation, the Dative Clitic designates the Possessor, as Co-Dative compatible with all the other Dative functions, be it Indirect Object (argumental), Dative of Interest (non-argumental) or Ethical Dative (extra-clausal). With transitive predicates, the Clitic (N_2) functions as reference point for the Direct Object (N_1), thus facilitating the expansion of the Dative participant's *personal sphere*, i.e., favoring the possessive reading.

While in the causative construction schema the Possessive Dative identifies the Experiencer affected as a whole through one of its components targeted by

the Agent's action, that of the Epistemic schema designates the Percept or Locus onto whose domain the Subject mentally projects some property or quality as Possessee.

The verbal predicate specifies the modal nature of the appraisal construed from the perspective of the Conceptualizing Subject (N_0) who, as evidential source, is accountable for the image given to the Possessor (N_2). The common denominator of the Epistemic Dative Constructions is, indeed, the integration of the Possessor-Possessee association in the Subject's active mental space. Negation, however, can lower the Conceptualizing Subject's responsibility, as part of an avoidance, face-preserving strategy. Other modal markers, by contrast, can boost the Subject's involvement and manifest argumentative engagement.

The evidentially sustained epistemic-modal values range from genuine factual observation ((i) *detectar* 'to detect') to directive stance taking ((v) *atribuir* 'to attribute). In between, extra-sensory perception ((ii) *intuir* 'to intuit') and intellective positioning ((iii) *suponer* 'to suppose') put into play the beholder's inner conviction or viewpoint, while inventiveness ((iv) *imaginar* 'to imagine') situates the Possessee in a nonfactual world. From (i) to (v), subjectivity and image-manipulation increase, while straight knowledge communication decreases.

Tense, aspect and person variation enable a relatively small set of verbs to express a wide range of modal nuances. The verb's ductility is particularly great with the verbs *ver* 'to see' and *encontrar* 'to find'. The epistemic load of the verb is further strongly co-determined by the type of Possessee.

Generally speaking, the reliability of the possessive linkage is the highest with tangible Possessees. With abstract qualities, the degree of confidence is harder to process and is more context-sensitive. At clausal level, the epistemic justification, and hence the Subject's trustworthiness, hinges on factors such as: reflexive Dative, first person Subject, present tense. As part of dialogic discourse — often in interaction — the construal appears to be a strong image-building device, ultimately controlled by the enunciator.

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List of abbreviations used

ACC	accusative
AN	animate
CLIT	clitic
DAT	dative
DO	direct object
FEM	feminine
HUM	human
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
IND	indicative
INDEF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
IO	indirect object
MASC	masculine
N_0	grammatical subject of the active voice
N_1	direct object complement of a transitive verb or grammatical subject of an intransitive verb or pronominally (i.e. intransitively) conjugated transitive one
N_2	dative
NEG	negation marker
NP	noun phrase
PASS	passive
PERF	perfect
POSS	possessive
PL	plural
PP	prepositional phrase
PRES	present
PRET	preterit (simple perfect)
PRO	pronoun
REFL	reflexive
SG	singular
SUBJ	subjunctive
TAM	tense-aspect-modality
V	verb
VP	verb phrase
1/2/3	first, second, third person

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Perceptionally constrained repair strategies in morphophonology

Interaction as negotiation

Nicolau Dols
Universitat de les Illes Balears

The interaction of different parts of the grammar can lead to malformations. This is often the case in the phonological string due to morphological operations. In such cases ill-formed structures can be amended by deletion, epenthesis or feature-changing processes. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the role of the listener in limiting or promoting this type of processes. Blocking the morphological operations for the sake of phonological integrity would result in missing information, while totally preserving morphological information in the way it is initially added to the phonological string would make pronunciation difficult when not totally impossible.

After a general overview of the concept of structure repair, I concentrate on the negotiations between speaker and listener both on setting the sound inventory and on determining the scope of structure repairs. The inventory of nasal consonants in Catalan, and three cases of phonology-morphology interaction in Majorcan Catalan will be analysed, showing how preserving morphological information serves the interests of the listener, and how morphological synthesis can be a bartering strategy when negotiating the exchange of meaning.

Keywords: sound inventory, structure repair, Balearic Catalan, speaker-listener negotiation

1. Structure repairs

Whenever a grammatical process produces an uncomfortable structure a repair strategy is called forth. Of course, comfort is not a measurable dimension of a grammatical structure, but the concept can be taken to the fields of principle-matching, in a hierarchical scale as in OT-models. As in Murphy (2019) approach:

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> The notion of "repair" is found across many domains of natural language, including syntax, morphology and phonology. Broadly speaking, a repair can be characterized as a particular (often generally unavailable) structural change licensed to avoid an illicit output configuration. Phonologists often treat processes such as epenthesis and deletion as repairs. For example, many languages do not allow for consonant clusters in the coda position of a syllable. If such a sequence arises, then this ill-formed structure is often "repaired" in some way.

The concept has been used mainly in phonology, although also morphology and syntax show sharp instances of ill-structure repair, as in the blocking of plural morphemes incurring iteration in pluralia-tantum (1), or the prohibition of repeated prepositions caused by different syntactic needs (2).

(1) *Cap d'aquestes tisores no talla gens bé*
Cap d'aquest-es tisor-es no talla gens bé
None of these-PL scissor-s cut well at all
*Cap d'aquestes *tisoresES no talla gens bé*

(2) *Són forçades o impossibles les seqüències de dues preposicions àtones (*de + a, a + de, de + amb*, etc.), sobretot si són idèntiques (*de + de, en + en*, etc.), en què la primera, tota sola o formant part d'una locució, selecciona com a complement un sintagma preposicional encapçalat per la segona. En aquests casos s'elideix una preposició, com es pot comprovar en els exemples següents, en què s'indiquen entre claudàtors les seqüències amb les preposicions àtones:* Anirem a Banyoles a més de Besalú [a més de + a Besalú […]] [Sequences of two unstressed prepositions (*de + a, a + de, de + amb*, etc.) are forced or impossible, especially if they are identical (*de + de, en + en*, etc.), in which the first, alone or as part of a phrase, selects as a complement a prepositional phrase headed by the second. In these cases, a preposition is elided, as can be seen in the following examples, in which the sequences with the unstressed prepositions are indicated in brackets: *Anirem a Banyoles a més de Besalú* [*a més de + a Besalú*] […]](Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2016, § 19.7a).

Cases in (1) and (2) can be seen as blocking or elision, but also insertion and change can be used to fix the undesired structure, as in (3) and (4):

(3) *Jo parl del fet que avui no hi ha classe* < **Jo parl de que avui no hi ha classe* [I'm talking about the fact that there is no class today < I'm talking about that there is no class today] (also rewordable by means of elision as in *Jo parl que avui no hi ha classe* [I'm talking about there is no class today]).

(4) *Avui vindràs. Jo no m'ho imaginava* merging into
No m'=imagin-av-a *que avui vvindr-i-es*
No REFL=imagine-PST IPFV-1 SG that *today* come-COND-2 SG
'I did not imagine you would be coming today'
with a consecution temporum to avoid the unacceptable
**No m'imaginava que avui vindràs.*
No m'=imagin-av-a *que avui vindr-às*
No REFL=imagine-PST IPFV-1 SG that today come-FUT 2 SG

It is not the aim of this paper to discuss whether the notion of repair entails a derivational structure or if blocking in models based on constraint competition stay aloof of repairing strategies. Both structure repairing and candidate superseding are taken here on equal grounds to shed light on a different axis, i. e. the requirements of speaker and listener on fixing ill-formed stuctures, eventually leading to parametric differences between languages.

Turning now and for the rest of this paper our attention to the phonology-morphology interface, let us reanalyse in the terms mentioned above Dols 2002 on the phonology of the definite article deriving from Latin IPSE in Catalan. As is well known (Wheeler, Yates, Dols 1999: 45–46), Balearic dialects are the only in Catalan conserving in a productive and regular way this form of the article set, corresponding to the set of articles deriving from Latin ILLE in the rest of dialects and in formal speech in all of them. As can be seen in the examples put forth in Dols (2002: 341), a phonological difference arises when comparing the masculine plural form of the article before a noun beginning with a vowel in Majorcan and Minorcan on the one side, and Eivissan and Formenteran on the other:

(5) a. /s/
s'animal [səni'mal]
the animal
b. /s+s/
es animals [ədʑəni'mals] (Majorca and Minorca)
[əzəni'mals] (Eivissa and Formentera).
the animals.

The principles acting here and their place in the hierarchy leading to the two different solutions (dissimilation and fusion) are not difficult to see: an OCP constraint affecting sibilants (*[sib][sib]) is ranked high enough to prevent the phonetic implementation of *[ss] (*[zz] in fact due to a different phonological process). Two different repair strategies are put into play to ensure compliance with the prohibition of adjacent sibilants: deletion and dissimilation, the latter avoiding the loss of a segment due to the higher ranking of a MORPH! constraint (requiring a morph for every morpheme) over $OCP_{sibilant}$, while the former shows

a different configuration, probably allowing $OCP_{sibilant}$ to outrank MORPH! and some instance of MAX:

(6)

/s+s#animal+s/	MORPH!	$OCP_{sibilant}$
☞ a. [ədʒ͡əniˈmals]		
b. [əzəniˈmals]	*	
c. [əzzəniˈmals]		*

What is remarkable here is not how the production of [ədʒ͡əniˈmals] or [əzəniˈmals] can be explained in terms of constraint interaction, but the emergence of a pattern deep-rooted in the rationale of every system. In terms of speaker-listener interaction, (6a) minimises the listener's efforts while adding effort on the side of the speaker, while (6b) goes the other way round. In short, a constraint such as MORPH! makes interpretation easier, while deletion of a morph makes it more difficult. On the other hand, deletion makes pronunciation easier, while the affricate arising from dissimilation /ss/ -> [dʒ͡] is articulatorily more complex.

I am far from saying that languages can be strictly ranked on a scale of auditory/articulation preferences. Rather, this sort of adherences are to be searched in the discussion of single processes, but my hypothesis goes that conservative constraints (i. e. those calling for respecting underlying structures, the original FAITH constraint family — but not strictly only those —) tend to preserve interpretation, while those simplifyng pronunciation (the MARKEDNESS family) militate on the speaker's side. If the goal is to achieve communication, then Grice's cooperative principle[1] can help interpret the phonological output as the outcome of a negotiation between speaker and listener. It goes without saying that for communication to be effective, a common basis between both participants is necessary, that basis being the purpose of the intercourse and the sort of focusing on the information as for Grice, and the code mastering of the coparticipant in the following way: they both are aware of tensions imposed by articulatory and auditory conditions and tend to cover them both by applying repairs or context-driven interpretations (and overinterpretations) to fill in the gaps (see Dols 2023 and Dols 2025 in press).

1. "Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. [...]. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE" (Grice 1975: 45).

The point here is not on repairs on the speaker's side and non-factual interpretations on the listener's, but on the expectations of the counterpart's ability to manage the information and the effort to make that counterpart's task easier. The way in which such expectations and efforts condition one's own behaviour is of utmost interest, even if that holistic view falls out of the scope of grammar models, usually showing a clear bias towards production, ignoring the role of the interpreter's part.

Rule-driven derivational phonology and harmony-analising non derivational phonology are different ways to map inputs and outputs, but in all cases on the production side ('what has been said and how can we map a proposed underlying structure into the actual acoustic signal'), with little attention paid to the other end of the operation ('what has been understood and how can we map the acoustic signal into the resulting morphophonological / semantic / pragmatic representation'). As posited by Jäger (2001), a long running tradition in grammatical analyses plays only the generative part:

> In the generative tradition of syntax, phonology and morphology, the focus of interest have been on transformation rules, i.e. mappings from underlying abstract representations to concrete surface representations. OT researchers usually adopt this perspective too; competition takes place between different possible realizations of some underlying form. In other words, OT usually takes the generation perspective. It is a theory about the optimal realization of a given underlying form, (Jäger 2002: 428)

whereas semantics and pragmatics have always integrated the interpreter's tasks in their analysis, as claimed by Blutner (2000) when proposing a bidirectional OT-model. Rather than proposing two parallel different systems (one for production and one for interpretation), Blutner explains the extent of interaction between both sides, with the awareness of outputs determining inputs and inputs determining outputs:

> In standard OT the ordering relation between elements of the generator is established via a system of ranked constraints. These constraints are typically assumed to be output constraints, i.e. they may be either satisfied or violated by an output form. In the bidirectional framework just presented, changing the perspectives is possible. This means that an output under one perspective can be seen as an input under the other perspective. Therefore, it is plausible to assume output and input constraints. (Blutner 2000: 200)

In a way, neglecting audition was not an expectable outcome of the first steps in modern linguistics: departing from the saussurean cycle,[2] Sapir gives priority to audition.[3] Boersma (2009) explores the evolution towards a bidirectional phonology and produces a way of combining the analysis of production and comprehension on the basis of a parallel processing of the signal by simultaneously applying constraints belonging to different realms (semantic, morphological, phonological, auditory, or articulatory).

2. Interweaving articulation and audition: The sound inventory

It is a common place in phonological typology that vowel inventories are the result of maximising perceptibility while minimising articulation efforts. Schwartz et al. (1997) summarises the evolution of the idea starting in Liljencrants & Lindblom (1972) and Stevens (1972). Summarising Lindblom (1990), Schwartz *et al.* state that "it is because of a structural equilibrium between articulatory and perceptual demands that , for a given number of vowels , the corresponding

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2. "Le point de départ du circuit est dans le cerveau de l'une, par exemple A, où les faits de conscience, que nous appellerons concepts, se trouvent associés aux représentations des signes linguistiques ou images acoustiques servant à leur expression. Supposons qu'un concept donné déclanche dans le cerveau une image acoustique correspondante: c'est un phénomène entièrement psychique, suivi à son tour d'un procès physiologique le cerveau transmet aux organes de la phonation une impulsion corrélative à l'image; puis les ondes sonores se propagent de la bouche de A à l'oreille de B: procès purement physique. Ensuite, le circuit se prolonge en B dans un ordre inverse de l'oreille au cerveau, transmission physiologique de l'image acoustique dans le cerveau, association psychique de cette image avec le concept correspondant. Si B parle à son tour, ce nouvel acte suivra de son cerveau à celui de A exactement la même marche que le premier et passera par les mêmes phases successives" (De Saussure [1916] 1971: 29).

3. "Language is primarily an auditory system of symbols. In so far as it is articulated it is also a motor system, but the motor aspect of speech is clearly secondary to the auditory. In normal individuals the impulse to speech first takes effect in the sphere of auditory imagery and is then transmitted to the motor nerves that control the organs of speech. The motor processes and the accompanying motor feelings are not, however, the end, the final resting point. They are merely a means and a control leading to auditory perception in both speaker and hearer. Communication, which is the very object of speech, is successfully effected only when the hearer's auditory perceptions are translated into the appropriate and intended flow of imagery or thought or both combined. Hence the cycle of speech, in so far as we may look upon it as a purely external instrument, begins and ends in the realm of sounds. The concordance between the initial auditory imagery and the final auditory perceptions is the social seal or warrant of the successful issue of the process. As we have already seen, the typical course of this process may undergo endless modifications or transfers into equivalent systems without thereby losing its essential formal characteristics" (Sapir 1921: 17).

sounds occupy definite – though possibly quite large – regions in the acoustic or articulatory space. It is as a result of this that phonetic alphabets are finite" (Schwartz et al. 1997: 256).

Instead of entering the intricacies of speech perception theories in the field of articulatory and auditory phonetics, I shall focus on the case study of Catalan nasal consonants to show how deviation from the norm across languages can be driven by a specific combination of speaker's/listener's needs and thus pointing at a different level of typological differences, centred maybe around the preferences for one end of the communication process or the other.

Nasal consonant systems typically consist of between two and four elements. Catalan has three nasals in contrastive position: /m/ (*cama* 'leg'), /n/ (*cana* 'unit of length'), /ɲ/ (*canya* 'reed'). According to the UPSID (UCLA Phonological Segment Inventory Database), the most frequent nasal consonant, and, in fact, the most frequent of all nasals, would be /m/ (425 of 451 languages), were it not for the fact that the consonants that can be identified with /n/ are three: the dental nasal, the dental/alveolar nasal, and the alveolar nasal itself. Taken together, these three possibilities involving the intervention of the coronal area (that is, the tip and blade) of the tongue, are included in a total of 445 languages and, therefore, amount to 98.6% of the 451 languages in the UPSID. However, the classification of languages according to these three categories of coronal nasals should not lead to confusion: some languages maintain contrasts between the sounds /n/ (alveolar nasal) and /n̪/ (dental nasal). On the other hand, no language maintains contrasts between the UPSID nasal alveolar and nasal dental/alveolar categories. Aware of the difficulties of classifying languages according to nasal inventories, Piñeros (2016) starts from a different database, the ANSID (Auckland Nasal-Stop Inventory Database) and states that 92.7% (419) of the total number of languages analysed (452) have both /m/ and /n/, 5.75% (26) have no nasal consonants, and the remaining languages, 1.5% (7) have only one nasal (4 languages have only /n/, and 2 languages have only /m/) or (in the case of a single language) the inventory is of two nasals, but these are /m/ and /ŋ/. Catalan belongs to a large group of languages that have three nasals in contrast (143 languages out of 451 in the UPSID). Of these 143 languages, the majority (93) include /ŋ/, in addition to the two basic nasals /m/ and /n/, and 45 include /ɲ/ instead of /ŋ/. Piñeros (2011, 2016) shows that these general trends, including the choices for a third element either velar or palatal, can be derived from the combination of articulatory ease, from easiest to most difficult:

(7) n > m > ŋ > ɲ > ɳ,

and perceptual ease (in principle, the smaller the resonance space in the mouth, the higher the antiresonance frequency, and the higher the frequency, the less

intensity associated; hence, the more posterior the place of articulation of a nasal sound the more difficult its perception). The perceptibility scale for nasal sounds is

(8) m > n > ɳ > ɲ > ŋ.

The combination of (7) and (8) can explain the vast majority of inventories: Catalan (/m, n, ɲ/) prioritizes perceptibility over articulatory ease, while English (/m, n, ŋ/) prioritizes articulatory ease.

The tension between articulation and comprehension can be a typological factor accounting for the major split between three-nasal languages (93 with /m, n, ŋ/, 45 with /m, n, ɲ/), but also a feature susceptible of (or even triggering) dyachronic evolution. A comment by Alcover (1908) might be interpreted on these grounds:

> *–Ni Mr. Morel-Fatio ni Mr. Saroïhandy diuen una paraula de la n velar sonora (ɳ) intervocàlica, igual a la ng alemanya. Creym qu'un temps era general a tot el territori; avuy només se troba, que sapiguem, a Manacor (Mallorca), i sols entre la gent vella sense lletres, i encara no tota. Aquexa gent donen a la consonant palatal-mitjana-nasal-sonora (ny) el valor de velar-nasal-sonora, la ng alemanya, intervocàlica, que representam per ɳ; en lloc de pronunciar sə́ńó, buńǫ́l, ə́ńoransə, pronuncien: sə́ɳó, buɳǫ́l, əɳoransə, donant a la ɳ el metex valor que té en alemany la ng dins DiNge, briNgen, ZeituNgen, etc.* [–Neither Mr. Morel-Fatio nor Mr. Saroïhandy say a word on the intervocalic voiced velar n (ɳ),[4] equal to the German ng. We believe that at one time it was general throughout the territory; today it is only found, as far as we know, in Manacor (Mallorca), and only among the old illiterate people, and not all. These people give the palatal-mid-nasal-voiced consonant (ny) the value of a velar-nasal-voiced, the German ng, intervocalic, which we represent by ɳ; instead of pronouncing sə́ńó, buńǫ́l, ə́ńoransə,[5] they pronounce: sə́ɳó, buɳǫ́l, əɳoransə,[6] giving the ɳ the same value that the ng has in German in DiNge, briNgen, ZeituNgen, etc.]. (Alcover, 1908: 281)

Were it to be credited, the shift on the nasal inventory reported in Alcover (1908) would have prioritized perceptibility over articulation ease. However, lacking any other source of evidence, the claim cannot be made. In any case, the main idea remains that articulatory and perception scales can be interpreted as harmony scales producing constraint conflicts in the same way in which harmony scales of Peak/Margin affinity of segments (Prince & Smolensky 1993 (2004): 154–155) intertwine.

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4. ŋ in IPA.
5. IPA [sə'ɲo], [bu'ɲɔl], [əɲo'ɾansə].
6. IPA [sə'ŋo], [bu'ŋɔl], [əŋo'ɾansə].

3. Morphonology: Three cases from Majorcan Catalan

3.1 The recovering of morphological information

Dols (2000, 2002) describes the weakness of the coda in Majorcan Catalan: a relatively high position of *ComplexCoda in the hierarchy (crucially above faithfulness constraints like Max) hampers segment preservation in non sentence-final codas (i. e. not analysable as sentence-appendices, when followed by an initial consonant), as in (9):

(9) Aquests ponts construïts durant es mandats que esmentam
Aquest-s pont-s construït-s durant es mandat-s que esment-am
This-pl bridge-pl built-pl during the term-pl that mention-pres2
[ə.kep.ˌpɔŋ.kos.tɾu.ˌid.du.ɾan̪.təz.mən̪.ˌdak.kəz.mən̪.ˈtam]
'These bridges built during the terms that we mention'

Notice that internal complex codas are solved by deletion in (9), in a way rendering the message ambiguous, as there is no acoustic difference between the plurals "Aquests ponts construïts", "mandats" and "Aquest pont construït", "mandat" showing this way that the phonotactic constraint is not outranked by a constraint imposing the preservation of morphological information. This is true also for the sentence in (10a), but not for that in (10b):

(10) a. *Els Reis m'han duit molts de regals*
[əl.ˌrej.man̪.ˌduj.mol.də.rə.ˈɣ̞als]
El-s=Rei-s m=ha-n=duit molt-s de=regal-s
the-pl=king-pl me=have-pl=brought many-pl partitive=present-s
'The kings [=the Three Wise Men] have brought me many presents'
b. *Els reg sovint, es clavells*
[əl.zə.ˌret.tso.ˌvin̪.təs.klə.ˈveʎs]
El-s reg sovint el-s=clavell-s
Them=water1prs often the-pl=carnation-pl
'I water them often, the carnations'

The difference between (10a) and (10b) is the solution adopted to prevent an internal complex coda. In (10a) deletion does the job, while in (10b) the same problem is circumvented by epenthesis. In both cases the coda belongs to a clitic, formally identic, "els" /l+s/ ending in a morph representing plural. However, in (10a) the plural is dismissed altogether, while in (10b) it is preserved. Comparing the cases in (10) with those in (11) can give a hint on the reason for such a difference:

(11) a. *Els Reis han duit molts de regals*
[əl.ˌrej.zan̪.ˌduj.mol.də.rə.ˈɣ̞als]
b. *Els reg amb aigua, es clavells*
[əl.zə.ˌre.kəm.ˌbaj.ɣ̞os.klə.ˈveʎs]

(11a) shows that the missing plural in (10a) is redundant because the noun to which it is attached also produces it except when phonotactic conditions hold. In (11b), on the other side, the clitic is an accusative pronoun accompanying a verb and, therefore, the plural can only be expressed by the clitic, because the verb agrees in number with the subject, not with the object. Even if in (10a) information on number cannot be recovered because both article and noun undergo the same phonotactic difficulties, (11a) shows the logic of the system: just because there can be cases of such recovery in the noun phrase, the plural masculine article is not spared from coda simplification via deletion, but the inexistance of such a redundant configuration as in the noun case, forces the resource of epenthesis in the case of a pronominal clitic. Clearly this goes further away of the usual conflict between phonotactic and morphophonological constraint conflict in local contexts and induces to think about the speaker's taking into account the listener's needs.

3.2 The preservation of morphological information

As mentioned in section § 1 above, the definite article *es / sa* survives in the Balearic dialects of Catalan. A striking form of this article set is the masculine *so / sos* ([so] [sos] in Majorca and [su] [sus] in Eivissa and Formentera; unexisting in Minorca). Due to their formal similarity, it has classically made reminiscent of Latin ablative IPSO, as in *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Balear* (Alcover & Moll 1922–1962):

> *del llatí (ip)so, forma d'ablatiu del demostratiu ipse del qual procedeix l'article dialectal* es ['from Latin (ip)so, ablative form of the demonstrative ipse from which the dialectal article *es* comes']. (Alcover & Moll 1922–1962, IX, s.v. so, 3)

The attribution is easily understandable because of *so* appearing only after preposition *amb* 'with', as in the examples cited in the aforementioned dictionary:

(12) *Pegaven amb so cap per ses parets*
Pegaven amb=s-o=cap per=s-e-s=paret-s
(They) hit with=the-MASC=cap on=the-FEM-PL= walls
'They were banging their heads against the walls'
L'ha envestit amb so ganivet
L=ha=envestit amb=s-o=ganivet
(S/He) 3ACC=has=attacked with=the-MASC=knife
'S/He has attacked him with the knife'
Tropessam amb so dubte
Tropessam amb=s-o=dubte
(We) stumble with=the-MASC=doubt
'We stumble with the doubt'

The possibilities of survival of a Latin ablative in Catalan are extremely low (no other ablative is attested in Catalan), and the examples of "so" in (12) do not tolerate separation from preposition "amb", as shown in (13):

(13) **Pegaven amb ses mans i so cap per ses parets*
✓Pegaven amb ses mans i es cap per ses parets
'They banged their (*f.*) hands and their (*m.*) heads against the walls'
**L'ha envestida amb sa maça i so ganivet*
✓L'ha envestida amb sa maça i es ganivet
'S/He has attacked her with the (*f.*) mallet and the (*m.*) knife'
**Tropessam amb sa por i so dubte*
✓Tropessam amb sa por i es dubte
'We stumble with the (*f.*) fear and the (*m.*) doubt.

It follows from here that the focus should be put on "amb so" rather than on "so" alone. From this shift it turns out a case of contraction or synthesis with parallels in the same domain, and a reversion of the effects of epenthesis via repair pointing at the covering of the listener's needs. The parallelism can be traced between the preposition *de* 'of' and *per* 'for' plus the femenine forms of article (*sa / ses*) and preposition *amb* 'with' plus the same articles, as in (14):

(14) *de* + *sa* [dəsə] *per* + *sa* [pəsə] *amb* + *sa* [ənsə]
de + *ses* [dəses] *per* + *ses* [pəsəs] *amb* + *ses* [ənsəs]

It is of interest in (14) that [pəsə] is formed on the synthetic form *per* + *es* [pəs] by analogy, i.e. the morph for feminine is added on the inflected form for masculine postlexically: *pes* (already including the masculine form of the article) receives a morph for feminine:

(15) *per* (prep.) + *es* (article; masculine) → *pes* [pəs]
pes (prep. + masculine article) + *a* (feminine) → *pessa* [pəsə]

I propose that the combination of preposition *amb* with the feminine article *sa*, rendering [ənsə] by phonotactic rules banning heavy codas and forcing assimilation, is the basis of the masculine synthetic form [ənso] (*amb* + *so*), intended to preserve not only the information about gender but, more importantly, the full article stem. As observed by Easterday et al. (2021), there is a positive correlation between morphological synthesis and syllable complexity: affixation often create illegal phonological strings. This is the case here. If the speaker turns to repairing strategies to facilitate pronunciation, then the morphological information can be compromised. In the case under study here, an hypothetical [əns] (*amb* + *s*)

would drop [b] and [s] before a consonantal syllable onset, as in the examples in (16), where feminine is given for comparison:

(16)

Feminine	**Masculine**
amb sa pala	amb so pal
amb=s-a=pal-a	amb=s-o=pal
with=theFEM=shovel	with=theMASC=stick
'with the shovel'	'with the stick'
[ənsəˈpala]	*[əmˈpal] *ams(a) pal → ams pal*
amb sa pala → amsa pala	✓[ənsoˈpal] *amso pal*

Crucially the ending *–o* does not appear when an initial vowel follows (*amb s'arc* [ənˈsaɾk] 'with the arch'), an argument against its longtime supposed abblative function and in favour of its being a morphologically motivated epenthesis. This would not be a unique case in Catalan morphophonology. A well known case of morphologically motivated epenthesis appears in the analysis of number inflection of nouns ending in a sibilant. As cited in Badia i Margarit 1951: 252 / 1981: 276, different explanations have been proposed for this morphological differentiation, but the actual result of evolution is that whenever the single addition of an *–s* would not be audible because the stem ends in a sibilant (*gris → grisos, mateix → mateixos*), or it would be marked because the stem ends in a consonantal cluster consisting of a sibilant followed by a stop (*bosc → boscos, trist → tristos*), then an epenthetic [o] arises (in the first case). But this epenthetical -o is only added to masculines. Bear in mind that /o/ is not the regular morph for masculine in Catalan, normally producing a null morph: *tots* [ˈtot͡s] / *totes* [ˈtotəs], *plens* [ˈpləns] / *plenes* [ˈplənəs]; and, secondly, that the usual epenthetic vowel is [ə], as in *centre* [ˈsen̪tɾə] (Cf. *cèntric, central*), or *cercle* [ˈseɾklə] (Cf. *encerclar*).

If a move toward synthesis has taken place to build up a contracted form of preposition plus article, in the same way as it exists in [dəs]/[desə] (orthographic forms <des>/<de sa>) [pəs]/[pəsə] (<pes>/<per sa>), then hypothetical forms *ambs / ambsa* would result in cluster symplification and assimilation in the feminine, yielding [ˈənsə], and, crucially, also by cluster symplification, in the total loss of the article in the masculine when followed by an initial consonant (Dols 1993, 2000, 2002): **ambs martell* [əmmərˈteʎ]. As in (11b) above this total loss could not have an offset in redundant elements in the sentence. Cluster reduction cannot be blocked on that basis, because of the high rank of *ComplexCoda. Certainly, a sufficiently high ranked constraint preserving morphological information would

protect the article for deletion, and the usual form *es* [əs] (stem /s/ preceded by an epenthetic schwa) would arise. This is exactly the case in Minorcan Catalan, as in *amb es martell* [əmbəzməɾˈteʎ]. The Majorcan and Eivissan solution shows the preeminence of synthesis when it comes to the compound of weak preposition followed by the article. Let us say that this is an instance of the Optimal Paradigm family of constraints (McCarthy 2001) aiming at the identity of stems in each paradigm (17):

(17)

OP(Contraction$_{\text{UnstressedPreposition+Article}}$)
des
desa
pes
pesa
ambs
ambsa

The strings in (17) show the common stem underlying in each paradigm. The string *amb es* would violate OP(Contraction$_{\text{UnstressedPreposition+Article}}$), and this disqualifies it in Majorcan and Eivissan Catalan, but not in Minorcan where its ranking would be lower.

For all cases as *grisos, mateixos* and also *amso*(*s*) (<amb so(s)>), the schwa, as the most unmarked vowel, would perfectly perform epenthesis to solve the unlawful consonantal cluster according to the sonority scale or to the maximum coda dictated by the particular hierarchy of constraints in the language, but simple epenthesis with a schwa would incur in a NoMerge violation, for there would be no difference between masculine and feminine. An OT tableau capturing all of this is possible as in (18) (tentatively we leave unordered the constraints under *ComplexCoda for the examples being; Morph! militates against non-exponence of morphemes (Matthews 1991), NoMerge against identity of exponence (Trommer 2008)).

(18)

	*ComplexCoda	Max	Morph!	NoMerge	Dep
*griz*MascPl		*	**	**	
*grizəs*MascPl				*	*
☞*grizos*MascPl					*
*ambs*MascSg	*		**		*
ənsə		*	**	*	*
☞*ənso*		*	*		*

The outranking of *ənsə* by *ənso* cannot be traced to a general preference for marked vowels. In a sense, this would overturn Lombardi (2002) if the choice were to be between an unmarked and a marked vowel with no other condition. However, it is clear that outstripping the need for a pronounceable string, the need for maintaining masculine and feminine apart prevails in a way already present in Lombardi's approach to the typology of epenthesis:

> In fact it appears that where there are well attested cases of epenthesis of marked vowels in well described languages, these cases have special qualities: contextual factors are relevant, for example, or there are special morphological restrictions. Therefore, additional constraints must be contributing to the situation, obscuring the expected results of the contextfree markedness constraints.
>
> (Lombardi 2002: 12)

A constraint requiring to keep apart masculine and feminine would be hard to justify in a language that usually deletes the morph for gender under certain conditions, as in the examples in (19):

(19) *Una estudiant intel·ligent = Un estudiant intel·ligent*

un-a=estudiant intel·ligent un=estudiant intel·ligent
a-FEM=student intelligent a-(MASC)=student intelligent
[unəstuð̞ˌiaⁿtiⁿtəliˈʒeⁿt] = [unəstuð̞ˌiaⁿtiⁿtəliˈʒeⁿt]
'An intelligent student'

Aquesta artista = Aquest artista

aquest-a=artista aquest=artista
this-FEM=artist this(MASC) =artist
[əˌkestəɾˈtistə] = [əˌkestəɾˈtistə]
'This artist'

The cases in (19) are possible even when resulting in a loss of morphological information, in the same way as the morph for plural in (11a). In both sets of examples, the morph for plural or gender is lost, but it is originally embedded in a string allowing additional redundant elements, as in (20):

(20) *Una estudiant intel·ligent i aplicada* ('An intelligent and diligent student')
Aquesta artista és molt bona ('This artist is very good')

Even if not necessarily repaired, the homophony is allowed when there is a way to recover the missing morphological information. Not so in (11b) and in a case as **ambs martell* [əmmərˈteʎ] pointed out above. Different views come to light when both speaker's and listener's perspective are taken into account, as in the following scheme based on Nash equilibria:

(21)

		Listener |ənsə| / |ənso|		
		s1 <əmb#s+Masc+Sg>		**s2 <əmb#s+Fem+Sg>**
SPEAKER <əmb#s>	r1 |ənsə|	|ənsə| <əmb#s+Masc+Sg>	→	|ənsə| <əmb#s+Fem+Sg>
		↑		↑
	r2 |ənso|	|ənso| <əmb#s+Masc+Sg>	←	|ənso| <əmb#s+Fem+Sg>

Player 1 (speaker, vertical arrows pointing at preferences) prefers aplying the least effort to pronunciation, and that is why she prefers pronouncing |ənsə|. Player 2 (listener, horizontal arrows pointing at preferences) prefers interpreting |ə| as a feminine and |o| as a masculine. There is a coincidence in the matching (|ənsə| <əmb#s+Fem+Sg>), but a divergence on the optimal form of <əmb#s+Masc+Sg>. As we factually know that |ənso| <əmb#s+Masc+Sg> is the winning candidate match, we can state that the tie (one preference for |ənsə| <əmb#s+Masc+Sg> and one preference for |ənso| <əmb#s+Masc+Sg>) is broken favouring the listener's expectations. As a conclusion, the epenthesis alone is not a sufficient repairing strategy here. Instead, a bonus must be added under the form of a morphologically enriched epenthesis in order to gain an advantage in the negotiating interaction between speaker and listener. In short, for this case, the speaker is forced to comply with the listener's requirements. Do not forget that the intended aim is to make communication effective. It appears sound enough to state that in a case of total unrecoverability of morphological information the system tends to favour the constraints on the listener's side. A deeper insight is needed here to state when this produces a diachronic change, as in *franceses*$_{\text{MascPl}}$ > *francesos*.

Let us put it another way: if we assume that phonotactically [ənsə] does not require effort on the speaker's side, and NoMerge violations charges only the listener because comprehension is impaired, then the negotiation in (21) can be summarised as follows:

(22)

Process	Result	Speaker's gain / loss	Listener's gain / loss
Synthesis	amb sa > ambsa [ənsə]	✓	✓
Analogy	ambs nin	*Complexcoda	
		**	✓
Deletion	[ən'nin]	Max	
		✓	**
Epenthesis	[ənsə'nin]	NoMerge	
		✓	*
Epenthesis with a morphological mark	[ənso'nin]	Dep	
		*	✓

The marks in (22) respond to the articulatory / auditory effort required by every candidate after synthesis, triggered by analogy to other preposition + article contraction has been applied. There is no candidate for the masculine fully satisfying speaker and listener together, and two of them satisfying the listener can be compared on the other end: one of these violates twice a structural constraint (*ComplexCoda), while the other one violates once a faithfulness constraint. Of these, the finally succeeding candidate is the latter. Of course both [ənso] and [ənsə] for the masculine incur a violation of Dependency, the difference between both candidates being that [ənsə] is just a phonotactic solve, an unmarked not underlying segment, while [ənso] produces not just a non-underlying segment, but also a non-underlying morph. In terms of articulatory effort [ənsə] is clearly cheaper. Even so, the final preference for [ənso] shows a slight preference to ease comprehension. Somehow, restricted up to a certain point or for certain constraints, the case under study shows an Auditory >> Production hierarchy, not to be taken for granted everywhere in this phonological system.

3.3 Spotlighting morphological information

Additional evidence for the preservation of inflectional morphology comprehension is a diachronic process taking place nowadays in Majorcan Catalan. In this

dialect, weak pronouns tend to appear in Accusative + Dative order instead of the more usual Dative + Accusative order in the rest of the language:

(23)

Catalan (general)		Majorcan Catalan	
a.	me la dona m=l-a=dona DAT1=ACC3-FEM=gives '(S/He) gives it to me'	a′)	la'm dona / la me dona l-a=m=dona ACC3-FEM=DAT1 = gives '(S/He) gives it to me'
b.	te'l posa t=l=posa DAT2=ACC3(MASC)=puts '(S/He) puts it (on) you'	b′)	el te posa l=t=posa ACC3(MASC)=DAT2 = puts '(S/He) puts it (on) you'
c.	donar-me-la donar=m=l-a to give=DAT1=ACC-FEM [doˈnaɾmələ] 'to give it to me'	c′)	donar-la'm / donar-la-me donar=l-a=m to give=ACC3-FEM=DAT1 [donəɾˈləm] / [donəɾləˈmə] 'to give it to me'
d.	donar-me'l donar=m=l to give=DAT1=ACC3(MASC) [doˈnaɾməl] 'to give it to me'	d′)	donar-lo'm / donar-lo-me donar=l-o=m to give=ACC3-MASC=DAT1 [donəɾˈlom] / [donəɾloˈmə] 'to give it to me'

In the examples of MC showing two forms for the same combination, the first one has given way to the second during the 20th century, and its present time existence is minimal. A second step in evolution is on its way nowadays, with speakers under the age of forty showing a strong tendency to adhere to the general Catalan system, which happens to be the only one in writing and formal speech (see Dols 2024 for data and further details). Beyond the point on clitic ordering, the place of stress is important: Majorcan Catalan places the stress on the last enclitic pronoun, as in (23c') and (23d') above. Torres-Tamarit & Pons-Moll (2019) explain the stress shift in traditional Majorcan and Minorcan Catalan by means of the constraints *Align-Right(Foot, Clitic) (a negative alignment constraint) and a catalectic mora added at the end of the enclitic group to avoid the violation of the just mentioned constraint. Foot-binarity, preference for trochees and All-Feet-Right do the rest of the job. No doubt that the singularity of this machinery might be the cause for the observed diachronic change. Together with this possibility, the observed changes in clitic ordering clear the path for an explanation based on synthesis. Let as assume a constraint hierarchy as AcDat >> Right-Anchor (Flection), responsible for the traditional ordering in Majorcan Catalan. Right-Anchor (Flection) is nothing more than an

instantiation of an alignment requirement of peripherality for affixes. Third person accusatives allow for gender and number morphs, while dative only allows for number differences. Placing inflection affixes at an edge makes them easier to detect by a listener:

(24) *donar-l<u>es</u>-te* vs. *donar-te-l<u>es</u>*

Along with this change, a shift in the stress position has occurred, in a way consistent with an inflectable synthetic compound in a regularly stressed paradigm:

(25)

1DAT=3ACC	2DAT=3ACC	3DAT;REFL=3ACC
-me'l > -mel ['məl]	-te'l > -tel ['təl]	-se'l > -sel ['səl]
-me-la > -mela ['mələ]	-te-la > -tela ['tələ]	-se-la > -sela ['sələ]
-me'ls > -mels ['məls]	-te'ls > -tels ['təls]	-se'ls > -sels ['səls]
-me-les > -meles ['mələs]	-te-les > -teles ['tələs]	-se-les > -seles ['sələs]

As observed by Bonet (2008), the Person Case Constraint demands a third person to be interpreted as a direct object and, for this reason, the clitic for dative in the third person (*li* [li]) turns into *hi* [i], a clitic whose only mark is dative, and normally functioning as a locative. A constraint anchoring underlying syllable nuclei in verbal words to the base of cliticization such as O-ANCHOR-POS$_{IO}$ (Verbal base, Nucleus, X) (Dols 2000: 278) based on O-ANCHOR (McCarthy 1997: 11) would interfere with the movement towards synthesis illustrated in (24). The clitic /i/ would be preferably syllabified as [j] when possible, and this preference would push it rightwards. Epenthesis is only triggered by this instance of O-ANCHOR when O-CONTIGUITY (MCCARTHY 1997) is not violated, thus explaining both *hi era* /i#eɾ+ə/ [ə'jeɾə] and *l'hi don* /l+i#don/ [liˈðon]. The nucleus in [mə], [tə], [sə] is epenthetic, free from O-ANCHOR effect, and O-CONTIGUITY cannot avoid them because it is ranked lower thant MAX. The phonological behaviour of *hi* is paralleled by *ho* (3rd pers neuter acc), as in *ho diu* [əw'ðiw] / *dir-ho* [diˈɾo].

Observe that the paradigms in (25) have been set up of compounds combining accusative and dative and moving most of the inflection to the right edge, as expected in Catalan. The traditional rule of Majorcan Catalan placing stress on the last clitic in verbal words can be maintained if those compounds are seen as synthetic: nominal inflection is now assigned to clitic compounds in the same way as for instance to adjectives. Compare:

Traditional 3ACC=1DAT	New 1DAT=3ACC
/l+o#m/ ['lom]	/məl/ ['məl]
/l+ə#m/ ['ləm]	/məl+ə/ ['mələ]
/l+o+s#m/ [loz'mə]	/məl+s/ ['məls]
/l+ə+s#m/ [ləz'mə]	/məl+ə+s/ ['mələs]

Pushing inflection to the right edge and regularising stress, the new system makes the clitic package more recognisable, and thus easier to interpret.

4. Concluding remarks

Adding the listener's perspective to the analysis of structure repairs in phonology helps understand their scope. The differences in the sound inventory between languages can give a hint on the typological dimensions of the speaker's/listener's preeminence, a factor not to be overlooked. The morphological information can be obliterated due to repair operations in the phonological string. However, as shown in Majorcan Catalan, the resistance against this loss can be gradual according to the listener's odds of recovering the missing information. The analysis of two different packages of clitics in Majorcan Catalan (weak prepositions + articles, and dative+accusative weak pronouns) points out the importance of synthesis as a way to help the listener detect the inflectional information.

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PART 2

The grammar of interaction

Evidence type and trustworthiness

The view from social media

Marie Boscaro[1], Anastasia Giannakidou[2] & Alda Mari[1]
[1] Institut Jean Nicod CNRS | [2] University of Chicago

This paper provides a first analysis of the relationship between evidentiality and the speaker's veridical commitment (Giannakidou and Mari 2021c) in social networks. Our corpus study highlights that speakers ground their assertive statements in various types of evidence, including indirect evidence (Willett 1988). Our statistical results indeed indicate a strong correlation between Reported evidence and bare Assertions, suggesting that speakers often rely on reported information while still expressing a strong veridical commitment. We demonstrated that this should not be interpreted as a non-cooperative linguistic behavior, even if indirect evidence is typically considered inadequate for a strong veridical commitment. We argued that this perspective is too restrictive and that evidence type should be decoupled from reliability. We propose that the perceived adequacy of an evidence type stems from a subjective evaluation of trustworthiness of the speaker of both the evidence and the propositional content it conveys. This evaluation is shaped by the speaker's informational basis, which includes subjective preferences, prior beliefs, background assumptions and biases, as well as external knowledge about the world.

Keywords: evidence, trustworthiness, assertion, social networks, speech acts

1. Assertion, evidence and veridical commitment

The linguistic category of evidentiality has a venerable tradition in linguistic theorizing. Careful cross-linguistic work has brought to light robust grammatical systems where languages encode source of evidence — and while the phenomenon is not homogeneous cross-linguistically (with some languages lacking altogether such a grammatical system), it is accurate to say that the speech act of assertion relies on the veridical commitment of the speaker to the content of the utterance (Searle 1975; Harnish 1994; Portner 2018; Giannakidou and Mari 2021a, a.o.),

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and this in turn depends on the type of evidence the speaker has. It has also been acknowledged that only *best possible evidence* constitutes a solid ground for veridical commitment in bare assertion. Typically, when the speaker has witnessed an action herself, she takes that action to be true and reports it in an unqualified assertion, such as *Bill plays the piano (I saw him play)*; but if the speaker has not witnessed the act of playing the piano she may report this as *Bill plays the piano, I hear*. In this case the speaker relies on indirect, or reported evidence, and many languages actually *have to* encode the difference in every sentence. In the assertion that relies on reported evidence, the speaker may have reservations about the truth of the statement, and the assertion may at first glance appear 'weaker'. These distinctions between evidence type and their associated reliability, and their interactions with veridical commitment, have been fixed in scales of preferred evidence (see among others De Haan 1999; Faller 2002; McCready 2015).

In this paper, we address the relation between the type of evidence — direct, indirect, or no evidence at all — , and the degree of veridical commitment for the assertion as observed in a new discourse area, X (formerly known as Twitter).[1] We tackle this question from the point of view of veridical commitment, evidentiality research, and philosophical literature on testimony epistemology. Our main research questions are the following: what types of evidence do Twitter users tend to rely on more frequently? What are the interactions between evidence-type and veridical commitment in this digital context? The empirical study extends on a corpus of over 3,137 tweets annotated for speech acts and evidence type categories. Our analysis addresses the question of the statistical correlations between speech act categories and evidence-type categories and discusses the theoretical consequences of the correlations found in our empirical survey.

We achieve two main results. First, we provide a linguistic-based classification of evidence in online discourses. Second, we show that the category of indirect evidence correlates strongly with assertion on Twitter — defying the expectation we outlined at the beginning of current linguistic theories that treat indirect evidence as 'weaker' (i.e. conveying weaker veridical commitment). The strong correlation between reported evidence and assertions that we observed in social media shows that this evidence type can be associated with a high degree of trustworthiness, and enhances an assertive speech act on Twitter. We propose a theoretical account of this correlation, arguing that in social media contexts, reported evidence can still function as best possible grounds for full veridical commitment. This perspective calls for a reconsideration of traditional assumptions about evi-

1. As this work was carried on a corpus that was gathered before the advent of X, we will continue to refer to the social network with its previous appellation Twitter.

dence reliability and more specifically about indirect evidence which is typically analyzed as a bad candidate for justifying strong veridical commitment. In this regard, we introduce the concept of *trustworthiness evaluation*, proposing that evidence type and proximity do not solely determine the perceived trustworthiness of evidence, or its assumed intrinsic strength (as it has been previously assumed by Matthewson 2010); instead, it is shaped by a subjective evaluation on the part of the speaker, based on his or her informational state.

Before we move on, we want to provide some background on the relation between assertion, veridical commitment and evidence, which will be necessary if we want to understand what issues are at stake. When speakers make assertions or assess statements of others they form veridicality judgments about the uttered content, and these judgments depend on what speakers know or believe to be true based on the evidence they have, on what kinds of expectations arise given the evidence or other more subjective preferences (Giannakidou and Mari 2021c). Paul Grice in his classic paper *Logic and Conversation* established Quality (*Do not say that for which you lack evidence*) as one of the foundational principles of cooperative conversation. Quality is formulated as a negative principle in Grice, a filter on what *not* to say: do not say that which you know to be false, do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. Building on Grice's seminal work and the long-standing tradition that this work has initiated (a.o. Bach and Harnish 1984; Gunlogson 2001; Farkas and Bruce 2010; Lauer 2013; Krifka 2015), Giannakidou and Mari (2021c,a) formulate Quality positively as the Veridicality Principle of Assertion below, which posits *veridical commitment* as the basis for assertion:

(1) Principle of Veridicality of Assertion
A sentence S can be asserted by a speaker A if and only if A is veridically committed to the content π of S, i.e., if and only if A knows or believes π to be true.

The Veridicality principle can be understood as a sincerity condition of cooperative conversation, and veridical evidence relies on knowledge and (rational) belief. Knowing or believing rationally that a content is true relies on having evidence for that content, and on judging the evidence as reliable. This notion of reliable evidence will require a measure of what we call *trustworthiness* and introduce later in this paper.

Knowledge and evidence-based belief establish full veridical commitment. When the speaker is fully committed to the truth of the content conveyed, by asserting *It is raining*, she signals that she has some evidence that she evaluates as reliable that it is raining, and intends the proposition *p* 'It is raining', to be added to the common ground of the conversation (Stalnaker 1978), thus becoming common knowledge. This function of adding a proposition to the common ground is taken to be the core function of assertion in every formal analysis of asser-

tion. (see a.o. Beyssade and Marandin 2009; Farkas and Bruce 2010; Ginzburg 2012; Krifka 2015; Geurts 2019; Yalcin 2024). When the speaker lacks reliable evidence she will use some device, say an epistemic modal, to indicate uncertainty: for instance, she might utter *It might be raining* if she is guessing; or she may use a *biased* modal (Kratzer 1991; Pietrandrea 2005; Portner and Partee 2008; Giannakidou and Mari 2018) *It must be raining* if she has some evidence but is still not absolutely sure, e.g., if she sees people coming in with wet umbrellas. This MUST sentence still carries uncertainty, but there is preference (yet not knowledge) towards the prejacent proposition *It is raining*. In this case, what is added to the common ground is the modal sentence, not *p* itself. If a speaker relies on inadequate evidence but does not use a modal, her statement can be analyzed as a case of an uncooperative assertion or deception.

Several theoreticians (see e.g., De Haan 1999; Faller 2002; Murray 2010; Ricci and Rossari 2018, to cite just a few) generally accept that the more reliable the source of evidence the stronger the evidence and the commitment are. To the best of our knowledge, all theories of evidentiality distinguish between direct and indirect (reported) evidence. If reported evidence is used, a quantity implicature can be triggered that the commitment of the speaker is lower, perhaps because they didn't witness the event and can't verify the source. This is an implicature indeed, because it is cancelled when the reported evidence is attributed to an epistemic authority: e.g. *The weather app says it will rain tomorrow* will trigger confidence in the prediction because the weather app is an epistemic authority. In ordinary conversation, however, it is true that unqualified assertion (without modals, and without reported evidence) signals the strongest veridical commitment, and that assertions with reported evidence tend to trigger some doubt with the use of subjective expressions such as modals, attitude verbs (*seems, see, hear*, and the like).

This paper is, to our knowledge, among the first attempts to study the relation between veridicality judgment and evidence in online discourses. It is also probably the first study to ask what evidential categories are at play in those networks, and if these categories differ from those observed in ordinary co-operative conversation and in cross-linguistically attested grammatical systems. Strikingly, in contexts where pictures can be shared such as in Twitter, evidentiality is no longer strictly a grammatical category, but extends to encompass a variety of semiotic objects (pictures, videos, GIFs, link to news-media article etc.) that serve the purpose of grounding the veridicality judgment.

Our work addresses two specific questions. What are the evidential categories at play in tweets? And second, how are those evidential categories related to assertion and subjective statements? Our main finding is that assertions empirically correlate with indirect evidence in Twitter. To interpret this association, we propose that a speaker evaluates evidence as adequate (or even best possible)

grounds for veridical commitment because they deem it trustworthy. Trustworthiness is therefore the result of what we call a *trustworthiness evaluation*, which is a subjective measure that assigns a trustworthiness value to each piece of evidence no matter its type.

The discussion proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews previous research on evidence types and assertion, with particular attention to reported evidence and testimony. We engage with linguistic, computational, and philosophical perspectives. In Section 3 we present our corpus study. We unfold the speech act annotation, our new annotation scheme of evidence type categories on Twitter, and we study the correlations between assertions and evidential basis. Section 4 provides a discussion of the main findings and presents our theoretical proposal highlighting the role of trustworthiness evaluation in shaping evidence type strategies. We argue that the type of assertive statements (bare or subjective) is a cue to determine the prior trustworthiness evaluation made by the speaker on the asserted content and on the evidence selected to ground this latter. Section 5 concludes.

2. Evidence and assertions: The existing picture

2.1 Evidence-type and evidential categories

Evidence has been extensively examined across three main fields of research: linguistic studies on evidentiality, NLP research on eyewitness accounts in emergency situations, and philosophical studies on the epistemology of testimony. In this section, we primarily focus on the first two areas, reviewing the different evidence typologies identified in these domains. The final subsection will address more in-depth the philosophical literature on the epistemology of testimony focus on the hapax of reported evidence.

2.1.1 *Evidentiality across languages*

Linguistic theorizing on evidentiality has produced very elaborate descriptions across languages and frameworks and overwhelmingly targets grammatical systems that encode the source of information.[2] In the literature, evidence is generally defined as the *justification* or *ground for a given speech act* (see a.o. Faller

2. It would be impossible enterprise to cite the voluminous literature; some foundational works are Chafe and Nichols (1986); Willett (1988); Nuyts (1992); De Haan (1999); Nuyts (2001); De Haan (2001); Garrett (2001); Faller (2002); Squartini (2004, 2012); Aikhenvald (2004, 2012); Matthewson et al. (2007); Matthewson *et al.* (2010); Speas (2008); Murray (2010); Faller (2011); Smirnova (2012); McCready (2015).

2002; Aikhenvald 2004; Murray 2010; McCready 2015; Murray 2017). In an assertive statement the ground is the information source on which the speaker based his own assertion.

Focusing the correlation between evidentiality and commitment, we focus on the quasi-universal distinctions identified in (Willett 1988; Aikhenvald 2004, 2018), specifically on the most important divide between DIRECT evidence (i.e., information acquired by the speaker witnessing the event) and INDIRECT evidence (i.e. information reported from a secondhand or a thirdhand source) (Faller 2002). Aikhenvald (2004) states, for example, that the Shipibo-Konibo language (a Panoan language spoken in the Peruvian Amazon) has an evidential system with four categories: Direct (or Visual), Inferred, Assumed, Reported. If a speaker is referring to something she has seen (Visual), she will add the clitic *ra* (see (2)).

(2) *westíora nete-n-* ***ra*** *ka-a iki nokon yosi betan e -a, piti*
One day-temp -**DIR.EV** go-PP2 AUX POSS1 elder CONJ 1-ABS fish:ABS
bena -i…
search -SSSI
'One day my grandfather and I went to look for fish **(I see it)**'

On the other hand, if the speaker is referring to an element he has not seen, but infers from direct evidence (**Inferred**), she will add the clitic *bira* (see (3)).

(3) *mi-n bake pi-kas-**bira**-[a]i, oin-we!*
2-GEN child:ABS eat-DES-**INFR**-INC see-IMP
'Your child must be hungry **(inferred on the basis of him crying)**, come and see!'

If the speaker is referring to an event she has not seen but infers it from general knowledge **Assumption** (or speculation), the clitic *-mein* will be added (see (4)). For example, if someone knocks on the door, one would use *-mein* to ask oneself 'who could this be?'.

(4) *tso- a -**mein** i-ti iki*
who- ABS -**SPECL** be-INF AUX
'Who could it be?' (**speculation from general knowledge**)

If a speaker is reporting the words of a general hearsay or quoting someone directly (**Reported**), he will use the clitic *ronki* (see (5)).

(5) *a- **ronki** -a iki*
do.TR- **REP** -PP2 AUX
'**It is said** that s/he did (it)' or '**S/he says that** s/he did (it)'

The cross-linguistic typology established by Aikhenvald (2004, 2018) identifies six evidential categories, that is to say, six types of information source linguistically marked in the languages studied as shown in Table 1. Her classification includes **Visual, Non visual sensory, Inference, Assumption, Hearsay** and **Quotative**.

Table 1. Recurrent semantic parameters in grammatical evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004, 2018)

Visual	It covers information acquired through seeing
Non visual sensory	It covers information acquired through hearing, is typically extended to smell and taste, and sometimes also touch
Inference	Reasoning based on visible or tangible results
Assumption	Inference reasoning based on information other than visible results this may include logical reasoning, assumption, or simply general knowledge
Reported	It covers the reported information with no reference to who it was reported by
Quotative	It covers the reported information with an overt reference to the authorship of the quoted source

In a similar vein, Willett (1988) proposes a typology of evidentials organized around the distinction between Direct and Indirect sources, with the latter being further elaborated into the three sub-categories of **Reported** (i.e., information from a second or third-hand source such as a specific person, a rumor, popular folklore, etc.), **Inference** (i.e., inference or hypothesis based on visible or mental evidence), and **Attested** (i.e., first-hand information related to the senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.)) as represented in Figure 1.

```
                 {                          {  Visual
                 {  Direct  —  Attested     {  Auditory
                 {                          {  Other sensory
                 {
Types of         {          {               {  Second-hand }  (hear-
Evidence         {          {  Reported     {  Third-hand  }     say)
                 {          {               {  Folklore
                 {  Indirect {
                 {          {  Inferring    {  Results
                 {          {               {  Reasoning
```

Figure 1. Classification of evidentiality Willett (1988)

One of the aims of our study is to investigate whether these variants are observed in social media.

2.1.2 *Evidence-type in the literature on social media*

Attention to evidence type has also been devoted in NLP (Natural Language Processing) research, particularly in emergency situations, where discriminating direct from indirect witness is critical. This strand of research examined source types, information credibility, and eyewitness categories to optimize information filtering in emergency situations.

Several classifications of source types (Olteanu *et al.* 2015) or witness types (Zahra *et al.* 2020) have been carried out. Zahra *et al.* (2020) proposed a classification of witness types. They identified five categories of eyewitnesses: **Direct, Indirect, Vulnerable, No Testimony, Irrelevant** (see Table 2).

Table 2. Eyewitness types in urgency situation on Twitter in Zahra *et al.* (2020)

Eyewitness types	Definition
Direct eyewitness	Testimonies associated with the direct perception of an event through senses (hearing, seeing, touching, etc.). They relay first-hand information.
Indirect eyewitness	This category covers testimonies relayed by direct witnesses received from their family, or from a restricted social circle.
Vulnerable eyewitness	This category covers tweets in which the author shares advice, orders and alerts received from local authorities. The aim of this category is to detect users who have anticipated an emergency situation or who are likely to be directly involved in the crisis situation.
No testimony	Do not have any explicit characteristics of testimonials.
Irrelevant	Messages that are too ambiguous to be classified, but which may have the characteristics of testimonials.

Similarly, Olteanu *et al.* (2015) identified six main types of sources: **Witnesses** (for first-hand accounts from people directly affected by the crisis), **Government** (for information relayed by institutional or administrative authorities), **NGOS** (for information relayed by non-profit associations), **Companies** (for information relayed by profit companies or associations), **Media** (for information relayed from traditional or alternative media sources i.e. blogs or online forums), **Outsiders** (for accounts from people not directly affected by the crisis or second-hand accounts).

Beyond source classifications, NLP researchers have increasingly focused on assessing the credibility of information related to source types, a matter to which we now turn.

2.2 On the relation between evidentiality and assertivity

As noted earlier, assertion is associated with a veridical sincerity condition that the asserted propositional content is believed or known to be true. The strength of commitment is governed by norms: the norm of belief (a speaker must believe in the asserted content, see Davidson 1985; Vanderveken 1990; Lauer 2013, a.o.), the Knowledge Norm Account (a speaker must know the asserted content, Williamson (1996)), or the truth norm (asserting something is recognizing it as true (see i.a. with its maxim of quality Grice 1975; Dummett 1981; Wright 1994; Williams 2010; Giannakidou and Mari 2021a). Additionally, social norms also play a crucial role in the strength of the assertion imposing assertor's responsibility (or 'liability to sanctions' for Peirce 1974) and necessitating for the assertor to justify their statement when questioned (Brandom 1983) (for a review of these social conventions see Shapiro 2020).

Commitment to truth is a gradable notion, or as Liu (2019) characterizes it, *elastic*. In a prior literature, Vanderveken (1990), Giannakidou and Mari (2016a, 2021c) have highlighted different degrees of commitment, sometimes implied by terms like *suggest* and *guess* insofar as they involve different sincerity regarding the speaker's intentions.[3] The strong commitment of the speaker in their assertion has often been contrasted with weaker commitment in modal sentences (Karttunen 1972; Giannakidou 2013; Giannakidou and Mari 2021c), polar questions (Farkas and Bruce 2010; Krifka 2015; Farkas and Roelofsen 2017), or belief-based statements (Hawthorne *et al.* 2016).

Unlike bare assertions, assertions with a possibility modal (*John might be home*) are inquisitive (Giannakidou 2013), and designate lower degree of commitment which leads to lower informativity. Veridical commitment can be envisioned as a scale that distinguishes between full, partial, and trivial commitment: (6) (Giannakidou and Mari 2016b, 2021c).

(6) Scale of veridical commitment:
$\ll p$, MUST p, MIGHT $p \gg$;

3. Gradability of commitment also extends in the literature on modal adverbs (Yalcin 2007; Portner 2009; Lassiter 2010) building on scale structures (Kennedy and McNally 2005).

where *i* is the speaker, *p* conveys *full* commitment of *i* to *p*; MUST *p* conveys *partial* commitment of *i* to *p*, and MIGHT *p* conveys *trivial* commitment of *i* to *p*. The order is from the strongest to the weakest expression of commitment.

The selection of information impacts the degree of commitment. Experiments have shown (Robinson *et al.* 1995) that speakers in conversation have the cognitive capacity to prioritize information from the most reliable sources, distinguishing information from reliable sources from information from unreliable sources. Within this framework, evidence that is proximally accessible to the speaker (such as direct perception) is typically more reliable than mediated or reported evidence (indirect evidence) (see for a survey of this philosophical tradition among others Evans 1982; Coady 1992; Shapin 1995; Lackey 2006; McCready 2015; Goldberg 2020). Hence, data communicated through a direct source tends to elicit a heightened commitment level leading to greater credibility in contrast to information conveyed through an indirect source (see Figure 2). This correlation had been highlighted in the semantic and typological literature by De Haan (1999). Each information source is considered to lay on a scale of credibility influencing the speaker's veridical commitment. The idea is supported by Frajzyngier (1985); Palmer (1986) that 'different manners of acquiring knowledge correspond to different degrees of certainty about the truth of the proposition' (Frajzyngier 1985, cited by De Haan 1999). The indirect source holds a particular status (as we will see more in depth in the next subsection): it indicates veridical disengagement from the speaker since another source is explicitly mentioned, and the information it relays can be denied by the speaker without leading to a contradiction (see i.a. Karttunen 1972; Faller 2002, for an analysis of weak sources as indirect; see Von Fintel and Gillies 2010; AnderBois 2014, for another view that considers indirect sources as not weak). Saurí and Pustejovsky (2009) proposes a computational analysis resonating with the same picture based on factuality in relation to information sources. A direct source would commit the speaker more strongly on the factuality of the event described than an indirect source.

This association between credibility and the type of information source has also been observed in the NLP literature on social network analysis in the context of automatically differentiating between credible and non-credible information

Evidential hierarchy

visual < auditory < nonvisual < inference[8] < quotative

direct evidence < indirect evidence

more believable ← - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - → less believable

Figure 2. Relation between evidentiality and credibility in De Haan (1999)

sources (for an extensive review of the literature on credibility, see Castillo *et al.* (2011)). Both the type of sources disseminated on platforms like Twitter (Olteanu *et al.* 2015) and the type of eyewitnesses (Zahra *et al.* 2020) have been identified as crucial markers for discerning credible information (i.e. authentic) from non-credible information (i.e. misinformation or fake news). We will spell out the association between evidence type and credibility at the end of our paper in the discussion part. But let us first present some thoughts on the different epistemological debates that surround reported evidence and testimony.

2.2.1 *Reported evidence: An unreliable evidence?*

As discussed in the previous subsection, different types of evidence have been attributed distinct inherent epistemic values in various fields of research. It has been widely recognized that direct evidence is more likely to be perceived as conveying truthful content, whereas indirect evidence is often regarded with skepticism.

Within this epistemological framework, reported evidence — i.e., second-hand or third-hand information — is frequently classified as unreliable due to its increased susceptibility to distortion or misrepresentation. The inherent skepticism toward testimonial evidence aligns with what Coady (1992) terms 'negative epistemology,' a philosophical tradition that questions the reliability of testimony and denies it the status of knowledge or justified belief.

Philosophical skepticism toward testimonial evidence, or information acquired from the testimony of others, can be traced to two main traditions in epistemology:

Reductionist View: Testimony alone does not constitute knowledge; it must be corroborated by external evidence (or facts) to be qualified as justified belief or knowledge. This perspective is rooted in the empiricist tradition, particularly in Hume's *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, who emphasized habit and experience as justifications (habit to observe a match between facts and testimony). Similarly Mackie (1969) argues that individual observation is necessary for knowledge acquisition, contrasting with the opposing stance found in Reid (1850), which defends testimony as a fundamental source of knowledge.
Conservative View: Reported evidence and testimony are less likely to yield truthful content because the speaker lacks direct epistemic access to the information. The multiple layers of mediation introduce a risk of distortion. This position is exemplified in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, as referenced by Coady (1992) but also a.o. Lackey (2006)).

This skepticism toward reported evidence extends to legal philosophy. In their *Analysis of Evidence*, Anderson *et al.* (2005) recognize that different types of evidence hold distinct epistemic status concerning their ability to serve as proof in

court. In English common law, testimony must generally be firsthand, and hearsay evidence (i.e., reported evidence) is deemed inadmissible in most cases.[4]

Beyond legal contexts, skepticism toward reported evidence is embedded within a broader tradition of cognitive autonomy, which Coady (1992) terms the 'individualist ideology.' This view posits that only individual reasoning or direct observation can lead to knowledge and justified belief. This notion can be traced back to Plato's *Theaetetus* (201d), where it is argued that testimony in trials does not constitute knowledge, even if it can guide decisions. Similarly, Descartes, in *Discourse on the Method*, adheres to negative epistemology, asserting that 'a single man is much more likely to hit upon [proofs of truth] than a group of people.' This tradition of epistemic egoism (a term we borrowed from Foley (1994)) has been extensively analyzed by Coady (1992); Lackey (2006); Adler (2006); Origgi (2004, 2006), and others. However, such a perspective arguably misrepresents scientific knowledge, which fundamentally relies on collective labor and a division of expertise (see Weber 1919; Kuhn 1962; Merton 1973; Latour and Woolgar 1979; Bourdieu 2001; Goldberg 2011) and daily-life knowledge acquisition as David Hume *An Inquiry concerning human understanding* (5, Section 10) highlighted 'there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, or even more necessary to human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men and the reports of eyewitnesses and spectators.'

More recently, linguistic studies have revisited these debates by examining the interaction between veridical commitment and reported evidence. It has been argued that reported evidence may attenuate the illocutionary force of assertive statements, thereby expressing a weaker veridical commitment of the speaker to the asserted content. This perspective aligns with the *Weak Assertion Framework* and we will present them next.

2.2.2 *Weaker assertion?*

The possibility of asserting with an indirect source raises the question of whether the assertion itself becomes weaker. One response is to indeed weaken the concept of assertion itself so that we have stronger and weaker assertions (the gradual theories of assertion). The second response, which we shall adopt in our study, is to acknowledge that veridical commitment remains robust but we must allow for the possibility that the threshold for what counts as adequate or reliable evidence for commitment can be lowered; and this is so because assertions in Twitter have different goals than assertions in ordinary conversations (for the different goals of assertions on Twitter see Boscaro *et al.* (2024a,b)).

4. Other legal systems operate differently and jurisdictions may accept reported testimony based on the principle that a witness can transfer their epistemic authority to others through justifying reported facts.

Within the gradual theory of assertions, evidentials are treated as being able to modify the illocutionary force thus resulting in strong and weak assertion types (for a comprehensive analysis on weak assertion see Mandelkern 2022). Speech acts, including assertions, are subject to both syntactic and, notably, compositional modifications (Cohen and Krifka 2014; Greenberg and Wolf 2018;[5] and more specifically for assertion, Greenberg and Wolf 2018; Incurvati and Schlöder 2019; Krifka 2023). Incurvati and Schlöder (2019) analyze the adverb *perhaps* as a modifier weakening the assertion's illocutionary force. Greenberg and Wolf (2018) analyze assertions as inherently gradable entities, denoting a modifiable degree of credence by both covert and overt modifiers. Modal adverbials (*possibly, probably, necessarily*) are deemed overt modifiers of assertion force altering the speaker's degree of commitment to the asserted content.

Similar to modal adverbials, evidentials exert a comparable influence on assertions, according to Krifka (2023) who suggests that the employment of the indirect evidential *apparently* should be construed as weakening the assertive force of the statement. Meanwhile, Faller (2002) proposes interpreting the reportative evidential *si* in Cusco Quechua as weakening the illocutionary strength of the assertion, transforming it into the alternative speech act called *Presentative*: the use of *si* substitutes the sincerity conditions of the assertion (i.e., the speaker's belief in the content uttered) with an alternative sincerity condition (i.e., the speaker's presentation of evidence for the content uttered).

This alteration in the force of an assertion (either weakening or strengthening) has also been elucidated through social and conversational perspectives. For instance, Krifka (2023) examines the attenuation of assertive force as a strategy to mitigate its social ramifications and remaining credible to interlocutors. A 'strong' assertion, if disproven, entails a greater social cost compared to a 'weak' assertion. Incurvati and Schlöder (2019), on the other hand, scrutinize the adjustment of assertive force as a mechanism to prevent a categorical negation by the interlocutor or the inclusion of an assertion into the common ground when the asserted proposition lacks adequate reliability.

Davis *et al.* (2007) posit that evidentials alter the 'quality threshold' of the contextual utterance (Potts 2007) and substitute it with a new 'quality threshold'. In the scenario of an assertion featuring a reported source, the quality threshold is lower compared to that of an assertion with a direct source, implying that the context is, in this respect, more tolerant with reduced veridical commitment on the part of the speaker.

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5. Prior literature has introduced other modifiers of illocutionary forces for speech acts (Holmes (1984) for a comprehensive list, Sbisà (2001), Wolf (2015), Yatsushiro et al. (2022) for subjective epistemics).

As we now show, the association between relayed evidence and assertion is not an exception or an unexpected phenomenon in social networks. It is conceivable and foreseeable that social networks may favor indirect sources of information –indeed they are defined as platforms of information sharing (Kwak *et al.* 2010). What this default association shows is that assertion is not weakened, but that it serves purposes other than merely adding information to the common ground (see also Boscaro *et al.* 2024a, b). We proceed by presenting the corpus study in Section 3 and interpret the results in Section 4.

3. Evidence and veridical commitment in social media

For this study, we rely on a corpus of > 19K French tweets, originally collected by Kozlowski *et al.* (2020),[6] and augmented by Bourgon *et al.* (2022) that gathers messages related to sudden crises (flooding, explosions, fires, etc.), and annotated according to the speech-act annotation schema in Laurenti *et al.* (2022a, b).[7]

We have added the annotation for evidence type categories. We present these two annotations in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 and presents the main results pertaining to the relevant correlations between speech acts categories and evidence type categories in Section 3.3.

3.1 Speech act categories

Discovered by Austin (1962) and widely promoted by Searle (1975), speech acts have been the subject of much discussion in philosophical and linguistic literature (Hamblin 1970; Brandom 1994; Sadock 2004; Asher and Lascarides 2008; Portner 2018, to name but a few). In Austin's original vision, LAs are intended to perform an action rather than convey information. When the priest pronounces the words '*I now pronounce you man and wife*', he is performing the action of marrying people rather than simply stating a proposition.

Beyond these prototypical cases, the literature has rapidly expanded understanding of the notion of speech acts as a particular type of linguistic object encompassing questions, commands and assertions, and going beyond proposi-

6. https://github.com/DiegoKoz/french_ecological_crisis

7. The corpus gathers messages related to ecological crises that occurred in France from 2016 to 2022 and posted 24h before, during (48h) and up to 72h after the crisis: 2 floods that occurred in Aude and Corsica regions, 8 storms (Béryl, Berguitta, Fionn, Eleanor, Bruno, Egon, Ulrika, Susanna), 2 hurricanes (Irma and Harvey), 2 building collapses (Marseille, Lille), 2 chemical plants explosions (Lubrizol, Sanary), 2 fires (Notre-Dame fire, Gironde and Landes wildfires). The data comes with additional metadata including: number of likes, retweets, followers and followings of the user.

tional content to reveal the communicative intentions of the speaker (Bach and Harnish 1984; Gunlogson 2008; Asher and Lascarides 2008; Farkas and Bruce 2010; Ginzburg 2012; Krifka 2015; Portner 2018, to cite just a few). Speech acts can in fact also be understood as *attitudes* or *stances* towards propositional content *p* in line with Giannakidou and Mari (2021c): by *asserting*, the speaker presents *p* as true, and as worth being added to the common ground; by *questioning*, she reveals her uncertainty towards *p*; by *ordering*, she requests that *p* be realized; and by *exclaiming*, the speaker expresses a subjective evaluation of *p*.

Speech acts have been the subject of an extensive body of work in the computational linguistics literature and have proven to be an important preliminary step in several NLP applications, such as dialogue summarization Goo and Chen (2018) and conversational systems Higashinaka *et al.* (2014). Laurenti *et al.* (2022a, b) propose an annotation schema both at the tweet and the sub-tweet level focusing on natural disasters. Their classification envisions speech acts as stances towards *p*, their research is therefore of particular relevance for us, insofar as it considers tweets that are about a well identifiable event (storms, floods, …). These events are the fact of the matter under discussion and about which truth is stated, evaluations are issued, action is required, and information is asked. The main four-speech act categories at the tweet level are indeed the following ones:

– **Jussives**. The tweets of this category enhance commitment to take action. Laurenti *et al.* (2022a, b) distinguish the following types of jussives: *commissives* (the speaker commits himself or herself to action), *exhortative* (the speaker commits some relevant individuals to action), *orders* (the speaker commits the addressee to taking action), and *open options* (the speaker describes the existence of a possibility of taking action).

  (7) Va falloir ancrer le fauteuil au sol @philousports #Eleanor https://x.com/On3Fr3nch4T53P/status/948215772677050369
  'We'll have to anchor the chair to the ground @philousports #Eleanor' https://x.com/On3Fr3nch4T53P/status/948215772677050369

– **Assertives**. Assertions are declarative sentences that convey objective truth (in opposition to subjective truth, in subjectives, cf. *infra*).

  (8) Immeuble effondré à Sanary-sur-Mer dans le Var: un homme retrouvé mort https://www.bfmtv.com/var/effondrement-d-un-immeuble-a-sanary-sur-mer-le-difficile-travail-des-pompiers-pour-retrouver-les-disparus_AV-202112070434.html
  'Collapsed building in Sanary-sur-Mer, Var: a man found dead' https://www.bfmtv.com/var/effondrement-d-un-immeuble-a-sanary-sur-mer-le-difficile-travail-des-pompiers-pour-retrouver-les-disparus_AV-202112070434.html

- **Interrogatives**. This category generally refers to tweets in the interrogative form that seek information.[8]

  (9) Est-ce que la responsabilité de la ville de Lille est engagée?
  'Is the city of Lille liable?'

- **Subjectives**. This category refers to tweets with a declarative form (like Assertive statements). The speaker shares a mental state in these tweets, which may be an *evaluation*, a *preference*, or an *expressive state* (emotion, feeling). In the literature on evidentiality, subjectivity is often considered an evidential category that encompasses information based on emotions, credence and personal preferences (Nuyts 1992; Garrett 2001; Squartini 2010; Grano 2021; Giannakidou and Mari 2021a). Here we consider subjectives as revealing a specific form of commitment. By using a subjective, the speaker signals that they are not ready to add the informational content to the common ground (Farkas and Bruce 2010; Krifka 2015) and we hereby consider subjectivity as a modal notion rather than a an evidential one.

  (10) Le bébé sauvé dans l'explosion à sanary c'est vraiment un miracle
  'The baby rescued in the explosion in sanary is truly a miracle'

Finally Laurenti *et al.* (2022a, b) added to their classification the category **Others** which corresponds to the tweets where the speech act is difficult to identify or is uncertain.

(11) Le bruit et l'odeur #Chirac https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fh20tDHT068 &ab_channel=FredLille
'The noise and the smell #Chirac https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =Fh20tDHT068&ab_channel=FredLille'

Table 3 shows the distribution of speech acts in the corpus of 3137 tweets spanning over 7 crises, which we have selected to perform our double annotation for speech acts and evidence type. Assertives are the large majority, immediately followed by subjectives.

With this speech act distribution in our corpus, we now turn to the annotation schema for evidence categories in social media.

3.2 Evidence type categories and annotation schema

The Annotation was performed by two independent annotators with a kappa Cohen of 0.7.

8. Biased questions that reveal a preference of the speaker are Subjectives.

Table 3. Speech acts Annotation Distribution

Speech acts	Count	%
Assertive	1892	**60.31%**
Subjective	688	**21.93%**
Jussive	461	14.70%
Interrogative	96	3.06%
Total	**3137**	**100.00%**

Our study of evidence types on social networks relies on the application of the typologies of Aikhenvald (2004, 2018) and Willett (1988). We found that the most common distinction (as seen in Section 2.1) is between **Direct** and **Indirect** evidentiality. However, the landscape of evidence is reshuffled in social media because the majority of evidence is marked extralinguistically with the use of pictures, hyperlinks, videos, etc. Evidence is not only introduced by linguistic marking, but it is also introduced by the extralinguistic elements we summarize in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Different forms of extralinguistic evidence on X

Evidence forms	Description
Hyperlinks	The hyperlink can redirect the reader to a news media article (most common), an online forum, a YouTube video, a video from another user account, a picture from another user account, a GIF, a post from another user, a drawing, a poster etc.
Mention @	The mention can be towards the account of a traditional news media, of a political agent, or of another user.
#	The # can take the form of #sourcename (such as #BFMTV) or it can be # related to some keywords related to the crisis, or some Twitter Trend.

Our corpus leads us to distinguish four main types of evidence. For each type we provide a definition and spell out the overlaps with more traditional categories, especially with the one identified in linguistic literature reviewed in subSection 2.1.

– **Direct**, as defined by Willett (1988), is the traditional first-hand witness category. The source may be Visual or, more generally, sensory (smell, touch, hearing). In the specific case of social media, pictures accompanying the message that are not relayed are considered to belong to the Direct category.

(12) Notre Dame en feu. #feunotredame #notredame #paris pic.twitter.com/eSiCJ5WW6s
'Notre Dame in fire #firenotredame #notredame #paris pic.twitter.com/eSiCJ5WW6s'

(13) Le feu grignote la toiture de Notre Dame #NotreDame pic.twitter.com/qasKOox3eS
'Fire consumes the roof of Notre Dame #NotreDame pic.twitter.com/qasKOox3eS'

– **Relayed**. This category overlaps with the *Reported* — third-hand source of Willett (1988), and the *Quotative* category of Aikhenvald (2004, 2018). This category encompasses cases featuring second or third hand information *explicitly stated in the tweet content*. In relayed tweets the information source is a media, a forum, or an online video. Relayed pictures, hyperlinks and mentions referring to a third-party source (media, institutional source, etc.) are considered Relayed.

(14) Immeubles effondrés à Lille: le gouvernement confie une mission d'étude à des experts pour déterminer les causes du drame https://t.co/ID9anhScWv
'Collapsed buildings in Lille: the government commissions experts to investigate the causes of the tragedy https://t.co/ID9anhScWv'

(15) Je connaissais cette famille: l'emotion du maire de Sanary après le dramatique effondrement d'un immeuble https://t.co/LhPMwcJixh https://t. co/B6w4AIkCJq (source VarMatin)
'I knew this family: the emotion of the mayor of Sanary after the dramatic collapse of a building https://t.co/LhPMwcJixh https://t.co/B6w4AIkCJq (source VarMatin)'

– **Loose sources**. This category overlaps with the Reported category (Willett 1988) with a third-hand source or even the Rumor's category (Aikhenvald 2004, 2018). It can also correspond to Aikhenvald's Hearsay category, which is defined as a reported information with no reference to whom the source of that information is. The information in this category is difficult to identify but it is relevant and related to the annotated crisis.

(16) #VentViolent cette nuit: forte migration de Normands vers l'Alsace…
'#ViolentWind tonight: strong migration from Normandy to Alsace…'

– **No Testimony**. This category is not an evidential category but has been added to our classification in order to identify tweets that are somehow related to the crisis at hand. It corresponds to the usual 'other' class.

(17) marseille mdrrrrr
'Marseille lmaooooo'

(18) Des formations de qualité #TransitionEnergétique, #batiment, #bioenergies, #territoires, #EnR, #economiecirculaire, #Industrie en 2018 et 2019 ? Découvrez le catalogue de #formation en ligne de @nWinstitut, membre du réseau @assoCLER #Datadock
'Quality training courses #Energytransition #building #bioenergies #territories, #EnR, #circulareconomy, #Industry in 2018 and 2019? Discover the online #training catalogue of @nWinstitut, member of @assoCLER network #Datadock'

Table 5 summarizes our classification for evidentiality in Twitter.

Table 5. Evidence type classification

Evidence type	Definition
Direct	Information with first-hand evidence (often a picture or video that has been taken by the speaker).
Relayed	Information with second-hand or third-hand evidence explicitly mentioned by a hyperlink, a hashtag # or mention @.
Loose evidence	Information with second-hand or third-hand evidence not mentioned in the tweet.
No evidence	There is no evidence for the information relayed, or the tweet is unrelated to the topic, which is not mentioned in the tweet.

3.3 Results: The assertive – relayed correlation

Table 6 shows the distribution of the annotation of evidence type. The most frequent category is **Relayed**, which accounts for 62.54% of the corpus, followed by **No Testimony** with 17.18%. The categories **Loose Sources** and **Direct** are less frequent, representing 13.23% and 7.04% of the corpus, respectively.

We have studied the correlations between speech act categories and evidence type categories and performed the Spearman tests on the 16 combinations. In the table we highlight the significant positive correlations and the slightly positive correlations.

Table 6. Evidentiality annotation distribution

Evidence types	Count	%
Direct	221	7.04%
Relayed	1962	62.54%
Loose sources	415	13.23%
No testimony	539	17.18%
Total	**3137**	**100.00%**

Table 7. Evidentiality vs speech acts

Evidentiality	Assertive	Subjective	Interrogative	Jussive	Total
Direct	123 (3.92%)	75 (2.39%)	6 (0.19%)	17 (0.54%)	**221 (7.04%)**
Relayed	**1442 (45.97%)**	161 (5.13%)	33 (1.05%)	**326 (10.39%)**	**1962 (62.64%)**
Loose sources	150 (4.78%)	**217 (6.92%)**	26 (0.83%)	22 (0.70%)	**415 (13.23%)**
No testimony	177 (5.64%)	**235 (7.49%)**	31 (0.99%)	96 (3.06%)	**539 (17.18%)**
Total	**1892 (60.31%)**	**688 (21.93%)**	**96 (3.06%)**	**461 (14.70%)**	**3137 (100%)**

We perform a χ^2 test of independence between. The χ^2 statistics takes a value of 717.54, which correspond to a p-value smaller than 10^{-10}. So we reject the null hypothesis that the phrase type and the phrase mood are independent, and conclude that there is a very strong relation between evidential sources and speech act type.

The table of relative distances to independence, is given below:

Table 8. Evidentiality vs speech acts: Relative difference to independence

Evidentiality	Assertive	Subjective	Interrogative	Jussive
Direct	−10.29	26.53	−0.76	−15.48
Relayed	258.67	−269.30	−27.04	37.67
Loose sources	−100.30	125.98	13.30	−38.99
No testimony	−148.08	116.79	14.51	16.79

Positive difference to independence indicates over-representation of a given evidential category in messages categorized for a given speech act category. Conversely negative difference to independence indicates an under-representation of a given evidential category in messages belonging to a given speech act category. Specifically, Relayed evidentiality is widely over-represented in Assertive sentences, and widely under-represented among Subjective sentences. All the same, Loose-sources evidentiality and No-testimony evidentiality are widely over-represented in Subjective messages.

Overall, setting aside Jussives and focusing on non-addressee oriented speech acts (Assertives and Subjectives),[9] the data show that subjectivity is grounded in very uninformative sources or even lack of sources. This is expected insofar as subjective statements convey an internal mental state whose source is the belief or preferences of the speaker and do not necessarily need external evidence to be formed (see Nuyts 1992; Squartini 2012; Giannakidou and Mari 2021a). As for assertions, which are the main focus here, and which overwhelmingly rely in relayed information, we provide a discussion in the following section.

4. Evidence and trustworthiness evaluation

The results presented in the previous section, particularly the strong correlation between bare assertive statements and indirect evidence (as highlighted in Table 8) present an apparent puzzle for the relationship between veridical commitment and evidence when considered in light of the prior literature we started with, on reported evidence and testimony — as tweets seem to rely on reported evidence.

For the weak assertion hypothesis outlined in Section 2.2, the correlation may suggest that tweets are non-cooperative assertions: social media users do not appear to conform to traditional norms of assertion, particularly the principle of veridicality and conventional evidential scales:

(19) *Tweets as Uncooperative assertions* (attempt):
Social media users do not select appropriate evidence to support their strong veridical commitment. By choosing weak evidence such as reported evidence, they effectively weaken their veridical commitment.

Yet, we argue in this section, this is not the correct characterization of what is happening. Key to our argument is acknowledging that what counts as 'adequate evidence' for veridical commitment relies on trust — but trust does not rely auto-

9. Jussives and interrogatives are traditionally considered addressee-oriented.

matically on the objective hierarchies of evidence that privilege first-hand account (where the source can thus be omitted). Contrary to prior accounts, we argue that what renders evidence reliable for commitment on Twitter involves an inherently subjective *trustworthiness evaluation* which depends on the speaker assessing the source of evidence as trusted therefore as passing the threshold for veridical commitment. Mentioning the source is thus an asset for the evaluation and establishes that the source can be trusted.

The trustworthiness evaluation is a subjective metric that assigns a probability to the asserted content based on the type of evidence used and the speaker's appraisal of it. In other words, evidence is deemed adequate for trust insofar as the speaker considers it so. As a result, the notion of *best possible grounds* is necessarily subjective and shaped by the speaker's informational basis with some endogenous and exogenous reasons (see Section 2). In this discussion, we defend below the *Trustworthiness Principle* as an alternative to the weak assertion hypothesis:

(20) *Trustworthiness Principle*: Trustworthiness is a subjective measure that assigns a probability to the content of an assertion based on the type of evidence presented, and the speaker's appreciation of that evidence. It is the prerequisite to veridical commitment.

The Trustworthiness Principle, as stated, completes the Veridicality Principle of assertion by stating the process that establishes veridical commitment. To articulate this proposal clearly we provide a brief overview of how trustworthiness has been conceptualized in philosophy and natural language processing — which informs our understanding of trustworthiness evaluation. We will argue that trustworthiness plays a crucial role in evidence selection and in determining whether a piece of evidence is perceived or not as the best possible evidence to ground one's veridical commitment.

4.1 Conceptions of trustworthiness

While relatively underexplored in linguistic research (except McCready 2015; Krifka 2023), trustworthiness has been extensively studied in natural language processing (NLP), philosophy, psychology, and also economics. It is distinct from related concepts such as trust, mere reliance, optimism, expectation, gullibility, and epistemic vigilance.

Trustworthiness in social media analysis Within NLP and social media analysis, trustworthiness is typically studied with credibility (for an overview see a.o. Fogg 2003; Fogg *et al.* 2003). Credibility has been related both to content and the source of a message (Wathen and Burkell 2002). Research in this domain has proposed various credibility metrics (Choi and Stvilia 2015) based on speaker

attributes such as honesty, neutrality, and expertise (Hovland and Weiss 1951). Trustworthiness, in this framework, is analyzed as one indicator of credibility assessment — the other indicator being expertise and competence (Hovland and Weiss 1951; Fogg 2003; Fogg *et al.* 2003). It has been defined as a *moral virtue* — i.e. perceived goodness and morality of the source, where the source appears as fair, unbiased, honest, and with integrity. Other external factors have been identified as indicators of this notion of trustworthiness including ethical behavior of the source, his commercial interests, his decency, his transparency.

Trustworthiness in Philosophy In the philosophical literature, trustworthiness is often conflated with trust but remains conceptually distinct: while trust is an attitude, trustworthiness is a property attributed to agents (Hardin 2002; Hieronymi 2008). This ability to assign trustworthiness has been acknowledged to arise very early before even the ability to discriminate between evidence types (Robinson *et al.* 1995; Robinson and Whitcombe 2003). It denotes an individual's likelihood of conveying truthful information, engaging in cooperative behavior — in the sense of Grice (1975) — , or fulfilling a commitment to an interlocutor. Several theoretical perspectives have been proposed:

Moral account (which is the most accepted one where Trustworthiness is viewed as a moral virtue (see Potter 2002).
Motivational account: It is assigned based on an agent's goodwill and cooperative disposition (see a.o., Baier 1986). Its cooperative disposition can also be motivated when both agents have same goal — as in the encapsulated motivations theory Hardin (2002).
Normative account: Trustworthiness is attributed to agents who adhere to specific norms (e.g., the principle of veridicality).
Institutional account: It is linked to institutional affiliation, which compels trustworthy behavior (Hardin 2002).
Affective account: Trustworthiness is treated as an affective attitude, akin to optimism or hope (Baier 1992).
Commitment account: Trustworthiness is assigned based on an individual's likelihood of fulfilling a given commitment (see a.o. Hardin 2002; Hawley 2014, 2019).

These perspectives highlight that trustworthiness is a property attributed to a person for diverse reasons — normative constraints, epistemic constraints, institutional affiliation, affective considerations, or commitment fulfillment. Additionally, research has emphasized variability in trustworthiness judgments, which depend on the speaker's role — e.g., *low trustee* vs. *high trustee* (Hardin 2002) — and on background assumptions that shape these evaluations (Hieronymi 2008).

4.2 Trustworthiness evaluation: View from social media

Our proposal challenges the assumptions found in philosophical epistemology and linguistic studies on evidentiality, which often posit that certain types of evidence inherently convey more truthful information than others. Instead, we argue that the evaluation of evidence is subjective and somewhat speaker-dependent: the same piece of evidence may be assessed differently depending on the speaker subjective preferences, some background assumptions (as already claimed by Hieronymi (2008)), some facts that are directly or indirectly accessible in their physical environments, some norms of the conversation, some institutional constraints, etc. as we just discussed. Our perspective highlights the multidimensional nature of trustworthiness attribution as shown by the various debates on the definition of trustworthiness we saw.

We propose that there is no fundamental distinction between (21) and (22), as both cases involve assertions where the speaker express certainty towards, thus commitment to the asserted content — whether the evidence is direct or indirect.

(21) John went to the grocery store; he told me earlier.

(22) John went to the grocery store; I saw him there.

However, we maintain that there is a distinction between (23) and (24), in that although both involve indirect evidence one (24) is evaluated as certain by the speaker (with a strong veridical commitment), whereas the other (23) is assessed as inadequate leading to a weaker veridical commitment with modal bias, therefore only partial commitment (Giannakidou and Mari 2016b, 2018, 2021c, b).

(23) John must have been to the grocery store this morning; I saw him leaving earlier.

(24) John went to the grocery store this morning; I saw him leaving earlier.

Previous work, such as McCready (2015), has argued that evidential selection relies on a *function of reliability*, which ranks and evaluates evidence based on two factors: (i) an initial reliability assessment and (ii) a posterior evaluation based on the evidence's past accuracy. This account assumes that speakers adjust their assertions based on the perceived reliability of the evidence, particularly when the risk of relaying false information may impact their reputation (McCready 2015; Krifka 2023).

Rather than adopting this account that we consider to be externalist — as it supposes an acquaintance with both the evidence and its history of accuracy or inaccuracy —, we introduce a new framework in which both evidential selection and the evaluation of the conveyed content are explained through a trust-

worthiness evaluation. Unlike McCready (2015), we argue that knowledge of an evidence's past reliability is not a necessary condition for trustworthiness assessment. Instead, trustworthiness evaluation operates as a subjective measure, enabling speakers to assign either a positive value or a negative value independently of the evidence type (as stated in (25)).

(25) *Trustworthiness evaluation (I)*: Trustworthiness is a subjective measure of an individual anchor *i* that assigns to the content provided by assertion a probability measure based on the evidence and *i*'s assessment of the evidence.

Speakers and hearers are individual anchors or judges. When selecting evidence and assessing the truthfulness of conveyed content, speakers consider multiple reasons. Matthewson (2010) identifies evidence type, evidence strength, and evidence location as necessary elements in the selection of evidence. We extend her analysis by proposing that evidential selection is based also on an evaluation of the speaker which is influenced by her informational basis, which consists of both endogenous (background assumptions, prior beliefs, subjective preferences, etc.) and exogenous (facts about the state of the world) components (as spelled out below in (26) and (27)) — see extensive discussion in Mari (2016); Giannakidou and Mari (2021a).

(26) *Trustworthiness evaluation (II)*: The trustworthiness assigned to an assertion's content depends on the speaker's evaluation of both the evidence *e* and the proposition *p* it conveys. This evaluation is based on the speaker's informational basis, which includes (i) exogenous content *C* (factual information about the world) and (ii) endogenous content *B* (beliefs, preferences, and background knowledge of the speaker). A speaker considers *e* to be trustworthy if and only if *p* is supported by *B* and/or *C*.

The speaker's evaluation of trustworthiness thus results from these two components (*C* and *B*), leading to our following formalization of the trustworthiness evaluation function:

(27) *Trustworthiness evaluation function (III)*: Let $\mu(. \mid B \cap C)$ a contextually defined measure. A speaker *A* assigns to *p* the likelihood to be true based on *B* and *C*. *A* assigns *p* as trustworthy iff $\mu(p \mid B \cap C) = 1$.

To illustrate our proposal, we examine two scenarios (scenario 1 and scenario 2) drawn from our corpus observation, each presenting different mechanisms of trustworthiness evaluation. In Scenario 1 we present the trustworthiness evaluation which is at stake in Assertive statement grounded in *Relayed* evidence (where evaluation is based on both *B* and *C*). In scenario 2, we present the trustworthiness evaluation at stake in Assertive statements grounded in *Loose* evidence (where evaluation primarily relies on *B*).

Scenario 1: Assertions with Relayed evidence

We consider Relayed evidence **rp** in this scenario and its correlation with bare assertive statement, which is the most important correlation observed in our corpus as highlighted in Section 3.

(28) Assertions with relayed evidence.
  a. The speaker *A* relies on a source **rp** in context *c*. **rp** is the source of content *C*, and is either a hyperlink, or a mention @ or a #sourcename.
  b. Let *C* and B be the two components of the informational basis of *A*. *C* is the exogenous evidence, i.e., the content provided by the source **rp**. B is the set of subjective preferences and/or privately held beliefs of *A*. The source is trustworthy iff μ (p | B ∩ *C*) = 1.
  c. If the source is trustworthy and *p* is assertable: ASSERT(*A, p*)

Scenario 2: Assertions with Loose evidence

In this scenario, we consider Loose evidence (**le**) and its correlation with assertive statement. Assertions based on **le**, proceed from a different principle.

(29) Assertions with loose sources.
  a. The speaker *A* relies on a source **le** in a context *c*. **le** is the source which is not explicitly mentioned and with no content *C* directly provided. In this scenario, only one # merely determines the *QUD* — i.e. the question under discussion as defined by Roberts (1996); Ginzburg (1996, 2012).
  b. Let *B* and # be the two components of the informational basis *A*. # merely provides the *QUD* for *p*, while *B* is the set of subjective preferences and/or privately held beliefs of *A*. The source is trustworthy and is hereby assertable by *A* iff *p* ⊂ B.
  c. If the source is trustworthy and *p* is assertable: ASSERT(*A, p*)

As illustrated by Scenario 1 with **rp** evidence and by Scenario 2 with **le** evidence, one speaker might evaluate as trustworthy different types of evidence based on both factual content or/and subjective preferences, private beliefs, or background assumptions.

This subjective evaluation — the trustworthiness evaluation — is also signaled directly by the speech act uttered. While in producing a bare assertive statement, a speaker is strongly veridically committed to *p* and hereby evaluates the evidence and *p* as being trustworthy, in producing a modalized assertive statement (or as in our annotation schema a subjective statement, see Section 3), one speaker is weakly veridically committed to *p* and hereby evaluates the evidence and *p* as being less trustworthy. We consider that the type of speech act uttered by the speaker is therefore both a signal of its own veridical commitment (as already demonstrated by (6)), but also a signal of a trustworthiness evaluation function.

Our proposal highlights the fact that the type of speech act produced is not only a marker of the speaker's veridical commitment (as previously demonstrated in (6)) but also an overt signal of the trustworthiness evaluation function. Crucially, the speaker's commitment to a proposition is independent of the type of evidence grounding it but is influenced by the trustworthiness assigned to both the evidence and the propositional content. We argue that this evaluation process — formally captured by our trustworthiness evaluation function — is fundamental to understanding evidential selection and assertion strategies in social media discourse.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper provided a first analysis of evidence selection in Twitter and its relationship with the speaker's veridical commitment. We observed that speakers ground their assertive statements in various types of evidence, which encompass the traditional distinction between Direct and Indirect evidence established in prior linguistic literature.

Our statistical results indicate a strong correlation between Reported evidence and bare Assertions, suggesting that speakers often rely on reported information while still expressing a strong veridical commitment. We demonstrated that this should not be interpreted as noncooperative behavior, even if indirect evidence is typically considered inadequate for a strong veridical commitment. We argued that this perspective is too restrictive and that evidence type should be decoupled from reliability.

Instead, we propose that the perceived adequacy of an evidence type stems from a subjective evaluation of trustworthiness of the speaker of both the evidence and the propositional content it conveys. This evaluation is shaped by the speaker's informational basis, which includes subjective preferences, prior beliefs, background assumptions and biases, as well as external knowledge about the world.

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Quotatives and stance taking

Juliana De la Mora
Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro

Recent studies on quotatives have shown that they can become stance markers. In the case of English, it has been recognized that speakers index their relationship and attitude toward quotatives and express the general probability of the occurrence of the quote, as seen with forms *be like, go* and other quotatives that are used to mark the degree of hypotheticality (Buchstaller 2001). Recent data from young Mexican speakers revealed that novel quotatives can be used to share subjective states of the speaker. In this chapter, we show that new and old quotatives in Mexican Spanish are undergoing a discourse specialization process. Following the epistemic continuum proposed by Buchstaller (2001), we suggest that Spanish quotatives have taken on novel functions related to epistemic and mirative stances.

Keywords: discourse specialization, epistemic stance, interaction, mirative stance, quotatives

1. Introduction

Over the past thirty years, new forms to introduce direct reported speech have popped up in English, being *be like* the most extended one (Ferrara and Bell 1995; Romaine and Lange 1991; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). This change has occurred very rapidly, and according to Labov (as cited in Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012), the *be like* form has become part of the system and is now highly widespread: "it has penetrated as far as Australia and has by now become the way to start a quotation. This change went at a lightning speed. We don't know why" (Labov 2008 as cited in Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012: xi).[1] Many studies have documented how quickly novel forms have entered the system and how the process is socially and linguistically constrained (Buchstaller 2001; Buchstaller

1. Translation and quote taken from Buchstaller and Van Aplhen (Buchstaller and Van Alphen 2012: xi).

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and D'Arcy 2009; Ferrara and Bell 1995; Romaine and Lange 1991; Tagliamonte 2008, 2016; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). The development of novel quotative forms has also been documented cross-linguistically in languages such as Hebrew (Maschler 2002), Greek, Korean (Rhee 2011; Rhee and Koo 2020), Japanese (Oshima and Sano 2012) and Spanish (Cameron 1998; De la Mora 2018; Gallucci 2013; Holguín Mendoza 2015).

Besides the sociolinguistic interest that rapid changes in quotatives systems have brought to the field, quotatives have also been a hot topic within the scope of evidentiality and stance studies. Many scholars have discussed how quotatives have assumed several functions outside the quotative frame (Buchstaller 2001; Clift 2006; Holt and Clift 2006; Jones and Schieffelin 2009; Romaine and Lange 1991; Tannen 2007). Some of these studies have shown how quotatives have taken functions for reporting stance, feelings or attitudes, opinions or point of view (Biber and Finegan 1989; Buchstaller 2011; Jones and Schieffelin 2009; Romaine and Lange 1991; Vincent and Perrins 1999).

In Spanish, the interest in the development of new quotatives grew significantly following Cameron's work on Puerto Rican Spanish (Cameron 1998, 2000) which highlighted the incursion of novel forms as well as its sociolinguistics constrains. Many scholars (Cameron 1998; De la Mora 2018; De la Mora and Reig (in prep.); Estellés 2015; Gallucci 2013; Holguín Mendoza 2015) began documenting language variation and change in Spanish quotatives and consistently found changes in the system, socially and linguistically determined. In the case of Mexican Spanish, a rapid incorporation of novel forms over the past thirty years has been documented by De la Mora (2018), who shows that young Mexican women with high education levels are leading the incorporation of new quotatives in Spanish. In a more recent study comparing the use of quotatives in Mexican Spanish over two time periods, 1970s and 1990s, De la Mora and Reig (in prep.) document the quick incorporation of novel forms which are socially stratified and predominantly in first person singular. In addition to this finding, authors report that the use of *dicendi* verbs to introduce reported discourse is very stable and productive in Spanish over time. That is, verbs of saying, especially the verb *decir* ('say'), were, and still are, a very productive strategy, in contrast to English, where the rate of 'say' has dropped to roughly 20% (Tagliamonte 2016; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2004).

Despite the increased interest in quotative systems in Spanish, studies that provide data on the status of quotatives are scarce. In fact, we still don't know to what extent nowadays Spanish quotatives' have taken new functions within the quotative paradigm with respect to their use with epistemic stances and mimetic reenactments. Therefore, this chapter aims to pursue two goals: (i) to investigate how novel quotative forms are currently used by young speakers in Mexican

Spanish, and (ii) to show whether these forms are taking new functions within the paradigm with respect to their use with epistemic and mirative stance.

2. Quotatives: Language change and polyfunctionality

Quotation as a linguistic phenomenon has been widely studied from different perspectives, such as anthropology, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, functional grammar, historical linguistics, language typology, syntax, semantics and more recently sociolinguistics (Buchstaller 2013).

Sociolinguistic research on quotatives has shown that quotatives are a very dynamic system undergoing language change that is socially and linguistically driven. Cross-linguistic studies have documented the constant incursion of new forms in typologically different languages such as English, Hebrew, German, Japanese, Spanish (Buchstaller 2013; Maschler 2002). Moreover, similar patterns of incorporation of new forms are observed across languages. One of the most studied quotative in English, in the past thirty years, is the form 'be like' illustrated in (1) taken from Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999):

(1) a. *She's like* "Right, you know, we're taking you out"!
b. *I was like*, "Ah I don't want to go out. Please no"
c. And *they're like* "Come on, go and get dressed!"

Previous studies about English have shown that variation in the use of "be like" is socially and linguistically conditioned, there is a quick and constant incursion of new forms and evidence for grammaticalization processes (Buchstaller 2001; Ferrara and Bell 1995; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999).

Same as English, Spanish quotatives have been studied from different perspectives: comparison between direct and indirect speech (Gallucci 2013; van der Houwen 1998); quotatives and intonation (Estellés 2015); sociolinguistics and variation (Cameron 1998; De la Mora 2018; De la Mora & Reig (in prep); Holguín-Mendoza 2015; Kern 2017; Rosemeyer and Posio 2023), to mention a few.

One of the main differences between Spanish and English in the development of quotatives is that in English, the quotations introduced by verbs of saying, specifically 'say', have quickly decreased in the past thirty years. In Spanish, research shows the opposite: verbs of saying, or *dicendi*, are very stable and their rates are quite comparable across dialects. A summary of the main findings from some sociolinguistic works on Spanish quotatives is presented in Table 1. Across the five studies, the most frequent form to introduce quotatives is verb *dicendi*, with similar rates ranging from 53% to 75%. Table 1 also shows that a new form was documented in Puerto Rican Spanish (Cameron 1998) around the 1990s, quota-

tives introduced by an optional conjunction followed by a pronominal or lexical noun phrase (Y) NP as in (2):

(2) a. Entonces, yo digo, "Ahora prepárate, que te voy a quitar un montón de cosas!"
b. Y ella, "¡Ah no, mi'jo!"

Table 1 also shows that this form is documented in Mexican Spanish around the 1990s. It also shows a scarce percentage of quotatives are introduced by *así* 'like'. Neither of these forms were documented in the Spanish data from the 1970s (Lope Blanch 1971), which suggested a possible change in progress.

Table 1. Quotatives in different Spanish varieties (adapted from De la Mora 2018)

	Puerto Rico (Cameron 1998)	**Venezuela (Gallucci 2013)**	**Spain (Estellés 2015)**	**Mexico 1967 to 1975 (van der Houwen 1998)**	**Mexico 1995 to 2005 (De la Mora 2018)**
Dicendi	62%	53%	71%	75%	63%
Null	25%	40%	16%	–	28%
(Y) NP	13%	4%	–	–	2%
Así	–	–	–	–	2%
Other forms	–	3%	13%	25%	5%

In order to determine if the differences found by van der Houwen (1998) and De la Mora (2018) were not due to a different methodology in the collection of data, De la Mora and Reig (in prep.) collected data from two sociolinguistic corpora, with similar methodology and from two different time periods, 1970s and 1990s. The analysis showed that the new forms documented in the sociolinguistic corpus form the 1990s, were not present in the sociolinguistic data from the 1970s. It also showed that the use of new quotative markers was socially stratified. New forms, *así, (Y) NP, o sea* and *SER de que*, were more likely to appear in women with higher education. Concerning the linguistic factors, De la Mora and Reig (in prep.) found that a vast majority of the quotatives corresponded to 1SG and 3SG, the novel forms were more likely to occur in 1SG however some cases in 3SG were observed. While in the 1970s dicendi and null quotatives were used to introduce speech acts and thoughts, the data form the 1990s shows that these functions were also covered by the novel forms.

Besides the rapid incorporation of new forms in the quotative systems documented in the past thirty years, studies have also shown that quotative markers develop into stance markers in English and other languages such as Korean (Rhee

2016) and German (Golato 2002). Rhee (2016) found that quotative *-tanta* in Korean developed into a stance marker. Golato (2002) reports that self-quotations in German can be used to report past decisions. Fiedler (2023) noted that reported thought introduced by *je me sui dit* ('I said to myself') allows the speaker to make publicily available why a course of action that has been previously described was initiated of modified. Thus it was proven that quotatives in many languages were developing other discursive functions. To my knowledge, the only work that explores the pragmatic functions of Spanish quotatives is Holguín-Mendoza (2015) who studied evidentiality and stance development of novel quotatives *así* and *(Y) NP* in bilingual Mexican speakers that live in two US-Mexico border cities. Given the language contact situation of Mexican Spanish form the border, the data was not compared to what we found before with respect to stance marking in Spanish quotatives.

In spite of the considerably amount of work about language change and polifunctionality of quotatives across languages, there is no work that studies the current status of quotatives in Mexican Spanish as well as the possible extensions of the novel form to other domains such as epistemic and mirative stance. This chapter pretends to shed some light to the study of Spanish quotatives by investigating how novel quotative forms are currently used by young speakers in Mexican Spanish, and by determining to what extent these new forms are taking new functions.

3. Quotatives in young Mexican speakers

3.1 Corpus and data

The data presented in this chapter come from two sub corpora that belong to a bigger database, the *Corpus Conversacional de Querétaro (CCQ)*. This corpus (CCQ) is a work in progress; however, some partial data has been already transcribed, reviewed and coded. The two subcorpora that conform the CCQ are the Corcon UAQ (*Corpus Conversacional de la Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro*) and Corpus Ameresco-Querétaro (De la Mora (en línea)).

The Corcon UAQ is composed of 45 recorded conversations between a university student and a friend, a member of his/her family or a classmate. The conversations selected included only young participants whose ages ranged between 18 and 24 years old. These conversations were collected between 2018 and 2024. Only 16 of the 45 conversations were included in this analysis, since those were the ones that fulfilled the age criteria and were already transcribed, checked and coded.

The Corpus Ameresco-Querétaro is part of the *Corpus Ameresco de Conversaciones Coloquiales* available online (www.corpusameresco.com) which is still under construction (see Cercelén Guerrero and Uclés Ramada (2019) for a detailed description of the Ameresco Corpus). So far there are 16 conversations transcribed and available online for free access. Participants were secretly recorded, with previous authorization signed, while performing day to day activities (cooking, studying, having a coffee, etc.) with friends, family members or classmates. In order to have a similar sample of data, only the conversations between young peers were included. A total of 10 conversations were selected following the age group criteria (see Cercelén Guerrero and Uclés Ramada (2019) for a detailed description of the Ameresco Corpus). Table 2 presents a summary of the number of conversations collected per corpus, and the number of conversations and examples extracted for this analysis:

Table 2. Data description

Corpus Conversacional de Querétaro	Number of conversations collected	Number of conversations selected	Number of examples extracted per sub corpus
Corcon UAQ	45	16	299
Corpus Ameresco-Qro	16	10	207
Total number of examples extracted			506

The data analyzed in this chapter consists of 506 examples: 299 from Corcon UAQ and 207 from Ameresco-Querétaro. Given the similarity, the nature of both corpora (data collection and participants sociodemographic profile) and the data distribution all the results were integrated and presented as one set of data.

3.2 New and old quotatives in young Mexican speakers

One of the goals of this chapter is to investigate how novel quotative forms are currently used by young speakers in Mexican Spanish. A total of 8 different markers or strategies to introduce direct discourse were identified and coded for analysis:

a. *Dicendi*. Within this category all verbs of saying were included, such as *decir* 'say', *preguntar* 'ask', *solicitar* 'request'. Most of the examples were introduced by the verb decir 'say' as in (3):

(3) sí// y luego mi mamá *le decía*/ "no/ yo me como tu desayuno y yo te preparo uno"

b. Null (freestanding quotation). This category includes all the verbless direct quotes or freestanding (Cameron 1998; Clark and Gerrig 1990) quotation when no explicit mark is present but prosodically marked (Estellés 2015):

(4) pensé que hasta era un ovni estaba chiquita a mi me dio miedo ¿no? ∅ "papá se está poniendo el cielo verde" que "¿por qué?" ¿no? eso para mí fue muy impactante en mi vida

c. *Así*. All the quotatives introduced by *así* 'like', *así de,* and *así como* where included in this category as in (5) and (6):

(5) porque había un chavo bien guapo y entonces *así de* "ay si" pero el chavo ni en cuenta andaba bien metido en su rollo

(6) y/ o sea/ *así como* "es que no quiero que nadie me vea" que no sé qué y yo "okay/ quédate en el baño// tranquila"

d. *(Y)* NP. This group included all the quotes introduced by and optional conjunction (*Y)* and a lexical or pronominal noun phrase:

(7) *y la tipa* "¡mis fanfictions!" "¡no puedo escribir sin mis fanfictions!"

(8) de repente caí encima de él/ *y yo* "ay no qué pena"/ y ya me quité

e. *(Y)* NP *así de que/como de*. Similar to (d) but accompanied by *así de que* or *como de*[2]

(9) pero E así de "no/ es que yo no quería"/ que no sé qué *y yo así de*// "pues si no querías"//

(10) "no es que no quería lastimarlo" *y yo así como*// "o sea es que es grave lo que estás diciendo/ o sea estás diciendo que te atacó"

f. *Como*. Quotes introduced by *como* 'like' or *es como* 'be like'

(11) no/ o sea/ y después// *como* "qué pedo"/ ¿no?/ y ya después así como/ yo dejé de hablarle porque me di cuenta de que estaba/ está loca

(12) y también me gusta el sabor// pero ya después de eso *es como* "lo que sea" [(risas)]

2. Current use of quotatives include a combination of more than one form (*y yo así como de que, y yo como que, nosotros así de*). In all these cases they were coded based on the linguistic element that occurs first and therefore framed the quote.

g. SER de que. Quotes introduced by the verb 'to be' plus *de (que)*

(13) entonces mi mamá se le antojaba la torta y *era de que*// "te hago lo que quieras pero dame tu torta"

h. Other forms. All other cases were considered in this category:

(14) sí por otros lados/ *y de repente* "ay sí" y una vez nos juntamos y así/ pero no es como tan cercano el el [vínculo]

(15) entonces ya yo en mi viaje *pues si* "¡no asi no asi adiós!"

The frequency and distribution of all these forms are presented in Table 3. *Dicendi* verbs are still the most frequent strategy used by young speakers to introduce direct discourse. More than 50% of the data consists of quotations introduced by *decir*. Only 9% of the examples were freestanding quotations, a surprising result considering that this was the second most frequent form in previous studies about Mexican Spanish (De la Mora 2018; De la Mora and Reig, in prep.). Quotatives introduced by other markers, such as verbs, discourse markers, etc., coded as 'other', occur in 4.9% of the examples. The next five categories correspond to what has been called non-canonical forms. Quotations introduced by *así* and *'como'*, equivalent to the English *'be like,'* can be found in 3.8% and 3.2% of the data. The next two categories, (*Y*) NP and (*Y*) NP+*así de/como de* are the two most frequent novel forms with 8.5% and 11.1% respectively. Finally, quotatives introduced by *SER de que*, were found in 2.8% of the data.

Table 3. Distribution of quotatives in young Mexican speakers

Quotative	Corpus Conversacional de Querétaro (CCQ)	
Dicendi	55.9%	(283)
Null	9.9%	(50)
Other	4.9%	(25)
Así	3.8%	(19)
(Y) NP	8.5%	(43)
(Y) NP así de/como de	11.1%	(56)
Como	3.2%	(16)
SER de que	2.8%	(14)
Total	**100%**	**506**

Since one of the goals of this chapter is to investigate how novel quotative forms are currently used by young Mexican speakers, it is necessary to compare this data with data from the past. Table 4 presents a comparison of quotatives

from young Mexican speakers from three periods: 1970s; 1995 to 2000; and 2018 to 2024. It is necessary to say that data from the first two periods correspond to young speakers from Mexico City and data from the third period corresponds to young speakers from Querétaro City. Needless to say, we are not assuming that no linguistic differences can be found between cities, but unfortunately no previous data for Querétaro speakers could be found, however both cities are part of the Megalopolis,[3] which makes them somehow comparable.

Table 4. Quotatives in young Mexican speakers in three time periods (adapted from De la Mora and Reig (in prep.))

	Quotative	**Corpus Norma Culta (México City 1970s)**	**CSCM (México City 1995–2000)**	**CORCON UAQ & Ameresco-Qro (Querétaro City 2018–2024)**
Canonical forms	Dicendi	69.33%	64.78%	55.9%
	Null	25.67%	16.02%	9.9%
Novel forms	Other	3%	3.69%	4.9%
	Así	–	2.64%	3.8%
	Como	–	0.35%	3.2%
	Y (NP)	1.33%	7.9%	8.5%
	(Y) NP así de/ como de	–	–	11.1%
	SER de que	–	1.76%	2.8%
	De que	0.67%	1.05%	–
	O sea	–	1.76%	–

Comparative data from Table 4 shows how old and new quotatives developed over three time periods in Mexican Spanish. By comparing the frequency of the *dicendi* forms we observe a consistent pattern: *dicendi* still represents more than 50% of the quotatives. This result is not only consistent with previous findings in Mexican Spanish, but also with other varieties (see Table 1 above). Regarding the distribution of the null form, a significant reduction on its frequency is observed. While null, or freestanding quotations, comprised 15% to 25% of the data in previous works, in this analysis only 9.9% of the quotations are freestanding. Following De la Mora's proposal of considering null and *dicendi* as the conventional or canonical forms (De la Mora 2018: 157), another difference arises. The percentage

3. Since 2019 the city of Querétaro has been part of the Megalopolis, a large interconnected urban area primarily centered around Mexico City. It includes the states of Hidalgo, Morelos, Puebla, Querétaro, Tlaxcala, and the cities of Mexico City and the State of Mexico.

of canonical forms in the 1970s was 95% while in the 1990s was 80.1%. Nowadays canonical forms in young speakers' conversation only represent 65.8% of the data which means that the other 34.2% corresponds to novel forms, which is now different from 19.9% in the 1990s and 5% in the 70's.

Besides the increased percentage in the use of novel forms, it is possible to see that a wide variety of markers have developed from the 70's to now. The only novel form documented in the 70's is the (*Y*)NP with a small 1.33%. The presence of new forms such as *así, como, SER de que* and *o sea* was already attested in the 1990s however none of these forms surpassed the 5%. A different scenario is presented in current Spanish; novel quotative forms are being combined with each other and their usage percentage has increased to conform to 34.2% percentage of the data. That is, novel forms went from 5% in the 70's to 34% in 2020'

Two main observations can be drawn from this first analysis: quotatives system in Mexican Spanish is changing and the verb 'decir' is trying to resist this change as it maintains its dominance in the system over time,[4] which is different from what happened in English where the quotative 'say' has quickly disappeared to the point of being almost non-existent in the young population (Tagliamonte 2016; Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999; Tagliamonte and D'Arcy 2004).

4. Discourse specialization and stance taking

In order to determine whether quotative forms are taking new functions within the paradigm with respect to epistemic and mirative stance, data were coded for the content of the quote. Following Buchstaller's proposal (2001), two categories were coded: speech acts and internal thoughts. The speech act category included quotations that referred to a speech act that occurred (realis) and those that might have occurred (situational) as can be seen in Table 5.

Table 6 illustrates the content of the quote by quotative. Results revealed that, except for the null marker, all other forms can alternatively introduce speech acts and internal thoughts. Additionally, some quotatives are more likely to introduce speech acts, as in the case of *dicendi* and *así*. The distribution of the forms *other, así, (Y) NP, (Y) NP así de/como de* and *como* shows that these forms can introduce internal thoughts, twice as often as *dicendi* verbs.

A noteworthy finding is that two of the novel forms, *(Y) NP and (Y) NP así de/como de* can introduce speech acts and internal thoughts with very similar percentages, and they are also the two forms with the highest percentages for inter-

4. For an explanation on why the *dicendi* are still so frequent in the Spanish quotative system, see De la Mora and Reig (in preparation).

Table 5. Quotatives' content (Adapted from Buchstaller 2001)

Speech act		Internal thoughts
Realis	**Situational**	**Inner states**
Real reproductions of past occurring speech acts, embedded in real communicative situation	No communicative situation in the past but in the present. The moment of speaking is in the deictic now ad becomes the quote	These quotes are used to show or index the mental state of the transmitter, their function is to make inner states available to hearers.
entonces / decidí salirme y le dije a mi mamá que no iba a estudiar/ y me dijo mi mamá *"es que tienes que estudiar porque si no/ ¿cómo vas cómo te vas a defender en la vida? y..."*	tú tienes que llegar con voz así de que/ *"¡óyeme/ alto ahí hijo!"/ o sea...*	o sea allá el clima es súper húmedo y el nopal es seco/ entonces necesita un clima seco ¿no?/ no pues<~pos> no (risas) cuando yo vi un nopal fue *"¿qué es eso?"* ¿no? honestamente

Table 6. Content of the quote distribution per quotative

Quotative	Speech act		Internal thoughts	
Dicendi	83.04%	(235)	17%	(48)
Null	100%	(50)	0%	(0)
Other	64%	(16)	36%	(9)
Así	63.2%	(12)	36.8%	(7)
(Y) NP	44.2%	(19)	55.8%	(24)
(Y) NP así de/como de	51.8%	(29)	48.2%	(27)
Como	25%	(4)	75%	(12)
SER de que	78.6%	(11)	21.4%	(7)
Total	**74.3%**	**(376)**	**25.7%**	**(130)**

nal thoughts. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) have suggested that, concerning the content of the quote, a measure of the increasing diffusion of a novel form is the extent to which it is used to introduce different types of constructed dialogue (Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999: 152). Therefore, this result can be interpreted as an indication that the stage of development of these novel forms is relatively advanced. This finding also reveals the polyfunctionality of novel quotatives outside the quotative frame in Spanish, as Güldemann (2008) and Güldemann and Roncador (2002, 2008) have suggested for other languages.

In order to investigate whether Spanish new and old quotatives are taking new functions as epistemic and mirative stance markers, I further analyze the 130 examples in which quotatives introduced internal thoughts. Based on previous literature about stance and quotatives and based on the data collected, internal thoughts as quotations were coded in four categories related to epistemic and mirative stance: decision, opinion, sharing inner world and surprise:

a. *Decision*. This category includes all the quotes in which the speaker communicates a decision made, as in (16) in which the speaker decides not to spend more money on a credit card or in Example (10) that the speaker decides she will stop going to parties:

(16) y dije "verga" aparte no/ no sé que hacer/ *dije "no voy a gastar dinero a lo menso en*
b. *otra"* que/ voy a decir a la mitad no "ya no"

(17) ¿no? entonces<~tonces> es parte como/ como de/ de madurar ¿no? entonces<~tonces> *llegó el momento en el que dije "bueno ya la fiesta ya"*/ o sea ya no te llena/ ya ya es aburrido/ ya es como

b. *Opinion*. Speakers give their opinion regarding an event that was shared in the conversation. Example (18) shows a speaker that is expressing her opinion towards a guy that lives in his own world. Example (19) illustrates the speaker's opinion about young parents:

(18) pero dije que eso ya lo conocía hace como tres años/ pero nunca le hice caso hasta apenas ahorita/ *y fue como "¡wey! este wey está en otro pedo"*

(19) *entonces dices "oye/ ni siquiera tienen la menor idea de lo de lo que está por venir en su vida"*/ porque uno piensa que lo/ lo difícil que es el parto/ en serio que esas personas dices "es que como lo voy a/ a parir o mantener"

c. *Sharing inner world*. Speakers share their thoughts about a person, an event etc., in a certain moment without making a judgment or expressing opinion (unmarked or neutral), as in (20) and (21):

(20) fue una buena experiencia// sí porque pues<~ps> así estaba// o sea *yo dije/ "no pues<~ps> no quiero terminar mucho más grande//"* que ahorita que ya lo veo así hacia atrás/ realmente no era tanto

(21) metí el café adentro porque no tenía bolsas en la orilla/ lo metí adentro/ *y yo "¿cómo se me ocurre venir en el camión con el café que// tiene ese horiyito?"*/ pues todas mis cosas tenían ese olor y mi/ mochila olía a café todo/

d. *Surprise*. Within this category were selected all the examples in which speakers express surprise usually towards unexpected events. This one is the most

marked one for stance. In Example (22) the speaker reveals his surprise because he was not expecting the soccer team Xolos to play on first division for the first time and become champions the same year. Or (23) that shows how surprised the speaker was when he found out that a girl, he wanted to date was lesbian:

(22) Xolos de Tijuana/ bueno/ yo antes le iba al América// pero// cuando ascendió Xolos/ y los vi campeones/ *dije "¡no manches!"// ascendieron y// ascendieron su primer año y fueron campeones*

(23) yo le gustaba mucho/ que estaba muy galán/ y que estaba fuerte/ guapo/ gimnasio/ bla bla bla// entonces (risas) fue donde ya me dijo/ "pero pero pero/ soy lesbiana ahora"/ y *yo dije así como de "what the fuck"* ¿no?/entonces<~onces> yo le dije "es que no inventes/ ¿cómo puedes ser lesbiana si antes tenías novio?"/ como pues<~ps> o sea "¿cómo?" ¿no?/

The distribution of internal thoughts per quotative and by meaning is presented in Table 7. The fact that all the examples that introduced internal thoughts included decision, opinion, shared inner world and surprise, shows how stance marking is becoming an important function of quotation. At the same time these results suggest discourse specialization specially in novel quotatives.

Table 7. Distribution of quotatives encoding internal thoughts by content

Quotative	Decision	Opinion	Shared inner world	Surprise
Dicendi	27%	23%	29%	21%
Other	0%	22%	44%	33%
Así	0%	14%	57%	29%
(Y)NP	8%	8%	30%	54%
(Y)NP así de/como de	0%	26%	4%	70%
Como	8%	25%	42%	25%
SER de que	0%	33%	33%	33%
Total	**12%**	**21%**	**28%**	**39%**

In the case of the *dicendi* forms, data shows how versatile this form is; when speakers do not use *dicendi* verbs to introduce a speech act, speakers can express decisions, opinions, share inner world and express surprise using the verb '*decir*'. This form is also the one that occurs the most when speakers share a decision they are making or they made.

'Other', *así, (Y) NP así de/como de* and *SER de que* can also be used to express opinions, share inner world and surprise, however no examples were found for decision making.

In the case of '*así*' a preference to be used to share inner world is also observed, while the forms *(Y)* NP and *(Y)* NP *así de/como de* have their highest percentages on expressing surprise.

One of the most interesting observations about *decir* when used to introduce speech acts and thoughts is that in the former, the presence of the dative clitic is mostly obligatory as in (24), while in the cases of *decir* expressing inner thoughts, the form mostly occur in first person singular, without the clitic (25) and following the conjunction *y* as in (26) and (27), which seems to be a highly marked form:

(24) y ya me contestó "sí de videojuegos y así"/ *le digo* "ah ¡gamer!/ te escuché otra cosa" y no/ se soltó la carcajada y así y a todos los que nos encontrábamos les platicaba lo que nos había pasado ahí en la cafetería/

(25) E: ¿este es el semestre que se te ha hecho más pesado del
c. I: no que se me hace pesado sino más bien yo estoy como presionado
d. E: ajá
e. I: *digo* "demonios en un año estoy afuera" (risas)
f. E: sí o sea pues <~pus> ya estamos a mitad de semestre ¿no? ¿de sexto?

(26) *y dije* "no ya me espero un año"/ y me hice un año pendeja en mi casa/ bueno seis

(27) ya me metí más/// eh// leía mucho así en// en/ internet de todo lo que// encontrara de programación y eso *y dije*/ "ay/ como que esto es lo que/ lo que me gusta///" entonces<~tonces> ya// desde/ antes de la prepa/ o entrando a la prepa yo ya sabía ya así que quería estudiar una ingeniería en sistemas//

The fact that the verb *decir* can cover different discourse functions, not only to introduce speech acts but also to introduce inner thoughts, can explain the prominence and permanence of this form in the Spanish quotative system as opposed to English in which 'say' is vaguely used as a quotative marker.

With respect to discourse specialization, Figure 1 illustrates another remarkable outcome, some of the novel quotatives seem to be specialized; the forms *(Y) NP and (Y) NP así de/como de* are frequently used to introduce surprise, associated with mirative stance. For the quotatives introduced by approximative forms *así* and *como*, equivalent to 'be like', Figure 1 shows that they can be used to introduce reported thought, attitudes and stance with a preference for introducing opinions, sharing inner world and surprising events. This pattern coincides with what has been found in English for the 'be like' form that is frequently used to encode attitude or stances (Buchstaller 2013; Buchstaller et al 2010; Clift 2006;

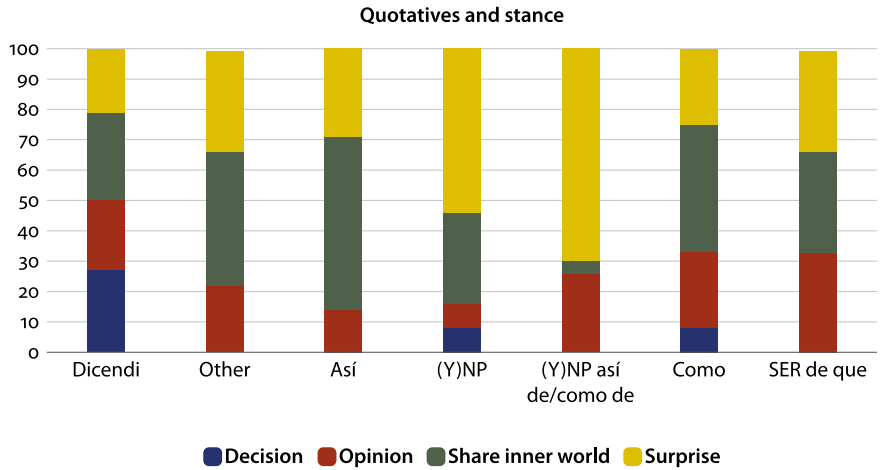

Figure 1. Quotatives and stance in Mexican Spanish

Ferrara and Bell 1995; Jones and Schieffelin 2009), and it also shows how similarity and approximative linguistic forms, such as 'be like' in English, *como* and *así* in Spanish, are a very common semantic source for the developing of novel quotative markers associated with epistemic and mirative stance.

Although more data is needed for quotatives specializing into stance markers over time, the results presented here might be suggesting a different specialization process for stance marking in Spanish and English. Many scholars have found that when the 'be like' form first emerged in English, it predominately framed thoughts, stances and inner monologues and after that, it broadened its remit to introduce quotations of both speech and thought reports (Buchstaller 2001; Ferrara and Bell 1995, Tagliamonte and Hudson 1999). However, in Spanish, the opposite seems to be happening, novel quotatives entered the system introducing reported speech and later some of them specialize into stance markers.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have attempted to show how old and new quotatives developed in young Mexican Spanish speakers, as well as how lexical items that denote comparison, similarity and approximation are the source of some of the new quotatives. I have also tried to show how some quotatives are used to mark epistemic and mirative stance. In line with previous findings in many other languages, data presented here show an ongoing process of language change in the Spanish quotatives system that involves the inclusion of novel forms, with similar semantic

sources, as well as its specialization into stance markers. The fact that the Spanish novel quotatives behave very similar to English ones, can be considered as evidence for a functional correspondence between the functions of these linguistic forms as well as evidence for similar processes of language change in the quotatives' system across languages.

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Speech acts and interrogative particles

An empirical study on the grammar of Catalan *eh?*

Elena Castroviejo & Laia Mayol
University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) | Universitat Pompeu Fabra

The purpose of this work is to characterize the Catalan interrogative tag *eh?*, which has two fundamental pragmatic meanings. In one (*eh1?*), the speaker asks the addressee to reveal a private commitment *p*, corresponding to the denotation of the sentence anchor; in the other (*eh2?*), the speaker reinforces a conversational implicature associated with the uttered speech act. In the case of an assertion, *eh2?* prompts the addressee to believe that *p* is true. After the core analysis, we present a corpus study that compares how the discourse continues after a tag-containing utterance, showing that *eh1?* engages the addressee more than *eh2?*. Finally, we extend our proposal to include other speech acts, thus accounting for the divide between *eh1?* and *eh2?* concerning their possible sentence anchors.

Keywords: confirmationals, tags, commitments, assertion, question

1. Introduction

The starting point of this research is the observation by Cuenca and Castellà (1995) that the two Catalan tags *oi?* and *eh?* convey confirmational questions and are interchangeable in examples such as (1), where the sentence anchor preceding the tag is a declarative clause.

(1) Cuenca and Castellà (1995, p. 69)
  a. Acabaràs la feina aviat, oi?
  b. Acabaràs la feina aviat, eh?
  ‘You will finish your work soon, won’t you?’

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At the same time, though, they claimed that *eh?* can have other pragmatic meanings, as shown by the difference in acceptability of *eh?* and *oi?* in (2), where the sentence anchor preceding the tag is a negative imperative.

(2) Cuenca and Castellà (1995, p. 69)
  a. No ho facis pas, eh?
     'Don't you do it, OK?'
  b. *No ho facis pas, oi?

In view of this contrast in acceptability — alongside a different translation of the interrogative tag — the purpose of this article is to provide a characterization of the Catalan interrogative tag *eh*?. First, we aim to portray the discourse behavior of *eh?* with respect to *oi?*. Second, following the lead of Cuenca and Castellà's (1995) observation, we intend to provide empirical arguments that support a distinction between the two uses of *eh?* (*eh1?* and *eh2?*), and, finally, we will pursue a finer depiction of the two different pragmatic uses of *eh?* that preserves a shared core meaning but is capable of deriving their differences at the same time. Beyond making some progress in the underpinning of the discourse conditions that license *oi?, eh1?* and *eh2?*, this research falls within the broader exploration of the grammar of interaction.

Our claims in a nutshell are the following: To begin with, there are two instances of *eh?, eh1?* and *eh2?*, and only *eh1?* is similar to *oi?* in that they are both confirmational tags. However, a key difference exists between *eh1?* and *oi?*, which we propose concerns whether or not the sentence anchor *p* is placed up for discussion. Thirdly, the distinction between the two instances of *eh?* is associated with whether or not *p* is in the commitment set of the speaker prior to the utterance of the sentence including the tag. Finally, there is a continuum regarding how much the addressee engages with a sentence that is followed by a tag; specifically, the utterance of *oi?* implies a higher expectation of the addressee's reaction than the utterance of *eh1?*, and the utterance of *eh1?* implies a higher expectation of the addressee's reaction than the utterance of *eh2?*.

This chapter follows up with a description of the remarks made by the previous literature on Catalan tags as well as with an overview of the evidence that suggests a distinction between *eh1?* and *eh2?*. Section 3 lays out a theoretical account of *eh?* that takes into consideration both the common core of the two uses and their differences. Later on, in Section 4 a corpus study is presented that empirically tests the predictions made by the analysis with respect to the degree of engagement of the addressee in the utterance of interrogative tags. Section 5 extends the analysis for assertions to other basic speech acts, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Empirical landscape

2.1 Previous literature

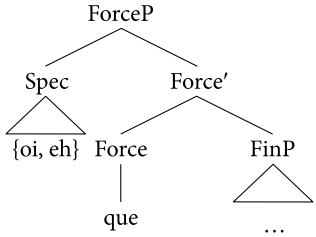
Cuenca and Castellà (1995) vindicate the interest of interrogative tags in linguistic theory despite — or precisely for — being a phenomenon that is typically found in oral, informal speech. They present a first characterization of interrogative sentences in Catalan containing tags such as *oi?, eh?* (see (1)) and *veritat?* ('truth?'), analyzed as mixed constructions, halfway between assertions and questions. More specifically, in a continuum between the affirmative and the negative polarity, confirmational questions are placed between affirmative assertions and polar questions, in that they express a bias towards a positive answer — the speaker is not neutral with respect to the truth value of the question —, but they do not assert it. In the frame of cognitive linguistics, the authors argue that such sentences make interactive constructions in the sense that they reach their full interpretation when both interlocutors (speaker and addressee) are present and engaged in the conversation. Syntactically, they claim that these constructions are composed of a sentence anchor and a lexically empty element (the tag), whose function is that of manifesting the illocutionary force of the entire construction. In their characterization, Cuenca and Castellà also observe the significant variation in the forms of the interrogative tags across dialects in Catalan, something also taken up by Rigau (1998) and Rull (2023). Cuenca (1997) delves into a cross-linguistic comparison of interrogative tags and provides an analysis within the frame of grammaticalization theory, whereby tags in different languages can be classified according to their source. For instance, there are polarity tags, such as English *will you?/won't you?*, which show syntactic variation depending on the polarity of the sentence anchor. German *gell?* and Catalan *oi?* are analyzed as completely grammaticalized elements, whose origin is generally unknown to speakers. English *huh?* and *eh?*, Catalan *eh?*, Spanish *eh?* and French *hein?* are treated as interjections, meaningless forms from a lexical perspective, and the last step in the grammaticalization process.

More recently, research in formal linguistics has paid special attention to an additional property of Catalan tags, namely that they can appear sentence-initially, preceding the complementizer *que* 'that', (3).

(3) (Hernanz and Rigau 2006)
   a. Oi que vindràs? (typical from Central Catalan, especially in the broad Barcelona area)
   b. Eh que vindràs? (typical from Central Catalan, Western Catalan, and Rossellonese)
   'You'll come, wont' you?'

Hernanz and Rigau (2006) analyze (3) as confirmational questions, since they presuppose an affirmative answer from the addressee. They embed these structures in an analysis of the left periphery *à la* Rizzi (1997). In particular, these tags are polarity or truth operators that occupy the specifier position of ForceP, and whose function is to modify the interrogative illocutionary force typed by *que*, (4).

(4)



In fact, Hernanz and Rigau point out that, in the absence of the tags, a neutral polar question introduced by *que* obtains, (5); hence, the tags are responsible for turning the neutral polar question into a biased one.

(5) Que vindràs?
'Will you come?'

In the domain of semantics-pragmatics, Castroviejo and Mayol (2024) provide empirical evidence that support a claim that had not been made before, namely that confirmationals *oi?* and *eh?* in final position make slightly different contributions and, hence, deserve a separate analysis (we turn to this in Section 2.2 and 3.1). However, beyond the observation by Cuenca and Castellà (1995), to our knowledge there is no previous analysis of the pragmatic differences between *eh1?* and *eh2?*. In the remainder of this section, we provide empirical arguments in favor of this distinction.

2.2 Ambiguity

A first argument in favor of the duality of meanings (of pragmatic functions) of *eh?* comes from the fact that, when the sentence anchor is a declarative sentence, an ambiguity can arise. In particular, two different contexts can be described that license the use of this interrogative tag. Consider, for instance, (6).[1]

1. The examples presented in the remainder of Section 2 are constructed, unless otherwise stated. Attested examples come from the Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana (CTILC, Institut d'Estudis Catalans). More details concerning the data extraction are provided in Section 4.

(6) El pastís és bo, eh?
'The cake is tasty, eh?'

This utterance would be felicitous in a context [Context 1] where both speaker (S1) and addressee (S2) are eating cake. S1 suspects that S2 is enjoying the cake, and she wants him to say it out loud. By adding *eh?* after the declarative clause, S1 is asking S2 to confirm that the sentence anchor *p* (i.e., that the cake is tasty) is true. We name this use of *eh? eh1?*.

Now, this utterance would also be felicitous in another context [Context 2]. This time, only S1 is eating cake and she wants S2 to know that *p* is true (i.e., that the cake is tasty), as an invitation to try it. We call this other use of *eh? eh2?*.

Both Context 1 (with an S1 that intends for S2 to overtly commit to *p*) and Context 2 (with an S1 that is certain that *p* is the case and wants S2 to believe that *p* is true) are available for the following sentences extracted from CTILC.

(7) Avui ens veiem, eh?
'We're seeing each other today, eh?'

(8) Ets molt pesat, eh?
'You're a pain, eh?'

(9) Quan vinguis, anirem a donar una volta, eh?
'When you come, we'll take a walk, eh?'

2.3 Compatibility with oi?

Interestingly, *eh1?* — but not *eh2?* — is licensed in contexts that also license *oi?*, which has a similar distribution as the English reverse polarity tag (Asher and Reese, 2007; Cattell, 1973; Farkas and Roelofsen, 2017; Krifka, 2013; Malamud and Stephenson, 2015, a.m.o.), (10).

(10) El pastís és bo, oi?
'The cake is tasty, isn't it?'

Beyond the existing differences — developed in Section 3.1, but see Castroviejo and Mayol (2024) for the details — the utterance in (10) is felicitous in Context 1, but not in Context 2. For our purposes in this chapter, we will use the availability of *oi?* as a diagnostic to tease apart the two uses of *eh?*. That is, in what follows, whenever *oi?* can replace *eh?*, that will be an instance of *eh1?*; conversely, if *eh?* is not replaceable by *oi?*, we will infer that we are facing an instance of *eh2?*.

2.4 An uninformed addressee

In contexts where S1 does not consider S2 capable of answering *?p* (i.e., of judging whether the sentence anchor is true or not), only *eh2?* is possible. Building on the diagnostic described in Section 2.3, we can test this property through replaceability with *oi?*, (11).

(11) CTILC[2]
a. Mira, no vull res, {eh?, #oi?}
'Look, I don't want anything, {eh?, #oi?}'
b. Però amb mi ho tens fatal, {eh?, #oi?}
'You've got no chance with me, {eh?, #oi?}'

Since S1 is the one knowledgeable about her own feelings and it is unlikely that she can assume that S2 knows them better than her, so as to request for confirmation, the felicitous *eh?* has to be *eh2?*.

2.5 Predicted reactions

Even if both uses of *eh?* anticipate positive reactions, these reactions can be of different shape. For instance, if we have in mind Context 1 and Context 2 in Section 2.1, the same utterance may have two reactions depending on whether *eh?* is interpreted as *eh1?*, (12), or *eh2?*, (13).

(12) CTILC
A: M'entén, eh1?
'You follow me, eh1?'
B: Sí, esclar, esclar.
'Yes, of course.'

(13) CTILC
a. A: Parlarem d'altres coses, eh2?
'We'll talk about other things, eh2?'
B: Molt bé.
'Very good.'
b. A: Tens una veu preciosa, eh2?
'You have a beautiful voice, eh2?'
B: Ai, gràcies.
'Oh, thank you.'

2. Obviously, negative judgments are absent in corpora. We include the judgment of the attested sentence with the additional tag for completion.

It seems that in (12) S2 reacts by confirming that *p* is true, so the reply concerns the polarity of the sentence anchor. By contrast, in (13) we observe positive reactions of acceptance of the previous utterance and even an evaluation thereof, as is the case in (13bB).

2.6 Different sentence types as anchors

While both *eh1?* and *eh2?* can follow declarative clauses, as shown in (1) and in the ambiguous example in (6), *eh1?* and *eh2?* establish a clear divide concerning their compatibility with other sentence types. Out of the two, only *eh1?* can appear with exclamatives, as shown in (14), in which *eh1?* can be replaced by *oi?*.

(14) CTILC
  a. Quin cop,{eh?, oi?}
     'What a blow,{eh?, oi?}'
  b. Com puja,{eh?, oi?}
     'How it rises,{eh?, oi?}'

Optative sentences are also compatible with *eh1?* and *oi?*, which is not surprising considering they have sometimes been classified under the same clause type as exclamatives (see, e.g., Grosz, 2012).

(15) CTILC
  a. Tant de bo fóssim rics com abans, {eh?, oi?}
     'I wish we were rich, as we used to be, {eh?, oi?}'
  b. Tant de bo es pogués fer això a la vida, {eh?, oi?}
     'If only you could do this in life, {eh?, oi?}'

By contrast, (16) presents an example where the sentence anchor is an imperative, much like (2) above. Irreplaceability with *oi?* indicates that only *eh2?* is available.

(16) CTILC
  a. Perdona, {eh?, #oi?}
     'Forgive me, {eh?, #oi?}'
  b. Ves-hi, {eh?, #oi?}
     'Go there, {eh?, #oi?}'
  c. Però compte, {eh?, #oi?}
     'Be careful, {eh?, #oi?}'
  d. No te n'oblidis, {eh?, #oi?}
     'Don't forget about it, {eh?, #oi?}'

Finally, *eh1?* and *oi?* are possible with interrogatives, as long as they are interpreted as rhetorical questions, as shown in (17).[3]

(17) CTILC
a. El Joe tenia els seus amics aquí. On, si no, {eh?, oi?}
'Joe had his friends here. Where else, {eh?, oi?}'
b. Qui no té un secret {eh?, oi?}
'Who doesn't have a secret, {eh?, oi?}'

2.7 Interim summary

Summing up the empirical landscape presented so far, *eh1?* and *eh2?* differ in whether or not S1 believes S2 is informed about *p* prior to the utterance of the sentence. In *eh1?* S1 wants S2 to reveal his commitment to *p*, while in *eh2?*, S1 is committed to *p*, and she assumes S2 is not. Besides assertions, where *eh1?* and *eh2?* are both acceptable — albeit in different contexts — *eh1?* is compatible with exclamatives, and *eh2?* is compatible with imperatives. Finally, an *eh1?* positive reaction can be interpreted as a polarity agreement ('yes, of course'), while a positive *eh2?* reaction is rather an acceptance ('Very good, OK').

3. Towards a proposal

We assume a normative account of assertion, along the lines defended by Cohen and Krifka (2014), Geurts (2019), or Krifka (2015, 2019), among others. According to this view, a speaker who asserts a proposition *p* becomes liable or responsible for the truth of *p* and, hence, runs the risk of receiving social sanctions if *p* is false. This view is opposed to a perspective according to which asserting *p* involves communicating what is the speaker's mind, and intending that your addressee believes the conveyed message (a view that is defended by, e.g., Grice 1975, who casts his theory of pragmatics on the basis of the recognition of the speaker's

3. *Eh?* is also possible with non-rhetorical *wh*-questions, as shown in (i). In these cases the meaning of the tag seems to be one of insistence in demanding an answer to the question. For the moment, we will consider this yet another use of the particle *eh?*. However, it may be possible to reanalyze it as an instance of *eh2?* and to derive the different meanings of this tag in assertions and *wh*-questions from the properties of the sentence anchor. For the moment, we leave the analysis of *eh?* in non-rhetorical questions for future work.

(i) CTILC
Què vols dir amb això, eh?
'What do you mean by that, eh?'

intentions). As in Geurts (2019), we assume that communication involves negotiating commitments, and that "Every speech act causes the speaker to become committed to the hearer to act on a propositional content." (Geurts 2019: 1) This allows us to provide a characterization of the Catalan interrogative tags that covers not only assertions but also other speech acts. We will also follow Malamud and Stephenson (2015), who draw from Gunlogson (2001, 2008), to define tentative assertions and to encode such notions within a framework whereby each interlocutor has a separate set of discourse commitments. In fact, they also adopt and extend Farkas and Bruce's (2010) Table model of discourse interaction to explain non-canonical questions such as English rising declaratives (*Sue likes licorice?*), reverse-polarity tag questions (*Sue likes licorice, doesn't she?*), and same-polarity tag questions (*Sue likes licorice, does she?*). In the following, before providing a representation of the discourse effect of the Catalan interrogative tags, we lay out the main definitions of this commitment-based model.

The context is represented as a structure that contains the following components. First, it includes a set of propositions for each discourse participant DC_X, corresponding to the set of commitments to which they have publicly committed and are not yet joint commitments with the rest of discourse interlocutors.[4] Second, this discourse structure also integrates the set of propositions that have been confirmed by all discourse interlocutors, the common ground or *CG*. Third, Farkas and Bruce introduce the Table, a metaphor that represents the current Question Under Discussion (Ginzburg 1996; Roberts 1996/2012) as a pair of a clause type (declarative, interrogative) and its denotation. Finally, they also devised the notion of *projected set* (*ps*, here named CG^*, following Malamud and Stephenson), which represents the set of compatible future cg relative to how the issue on the Table has been resolved. It is a way to capture the "anticipatory nature" of some discourse moves. Malamud and Stephenson added the notion of tentative assertion by extending CG^* to DC_X^*, that is, the projected *DC* of each participant, analogous to Krifka's (2015) concept of *licit future developments* in his Commitment Space Semantics framework.

With respect to the dynamics of context update, it is assumed that the Table is a stack of issues that is updated at each discourse speech turn in a different way depending on whether the sentence is a declarative or an interrogative clause. New items can be placed on top of the stack (e.g., when a question is uttered) or an item can be popped off the stack (e.g., when an assertion resolves a question on the Table). Informally, at each speech turn, a new discourse structure is created

4. Each commitment is a proposition, defined as a set of worlds. In our case, we limit ourselves to S1, the first speaker who utters the sentence including the tag, and S2, the addressee who is expected to react to the sentence including the tag.

by increasing the *CG* with the proposition that has resolved the issue on the Table and by removing any inconsistent sets of propositions. Let us illustrate this mechanism with the simplest case, in which S1 asserts a proposition by means of a declarative clause, and this assertion is accepted by S2 (18).

(18) S1: La Terra és rodona.
'S1: The Earth is round.'

	Previously	**After S1's move**	**After S2's acceptance**
DC_{S1}	{}	{*p*}	{}
DC_{S1^*}	{{}}	{{*p*}}	{{}}
DC_{S2}	{}	{}	{}
DC_{S2^*}	{{}}	{{}}	{{}}
Table	<>	<'The Earth is round'[D];{*p*} >	<>
CG	{*q*}	{*q*}	{*q*,*p*}
*CG**	{{*q*}}	{{*q*,*p*}}	{{*q*,*p*}}

What the discourse structure in (18) shows is that S1 asserts *p* and, in doing that, she places *p* in her DC_{S1}, DC_{S1^*}, on the Table and in the set of projected *CG*, thus anticipating that it will become *CG* once it is accepted. In the next speech turn, either S2 produces an overt acceptance marker or does not objecting to *p*, so the Table is emptied and *p* disappears from DC_{S1} and DC_{S1^*}, because it is now in the *CG*.

With these tools in hand, we can turn to providing a characterization of the Catalan interrogative tags capable of presenting their differences.

3.1 *Eh1?* is not like *oi?*

Castroviejo and Mayol (2024) provide empirical evidence to argue in favor of a relevant difference between Catalan *oi?* and *eh1?*, as well as a theoretical characterization of this difference inspired by Malamud and Stephenson (2015). What they both have in common is that they are confirmational tags. We take the term *confirmational* from Heim and Wiltschko (2020) and Wiltschko and Heim (2016, 2020), who in turn adopt it from Columbus (2010), to name those interrogative tags that are not polarity-based, such as English reverse polarity tags (*isn't it?*). Following Krifka (2015), we assume that the complex syntactic structure composed of a sentence anchor and a confirmational tag also makes a complex speech act, which aligns with the fact that the two components are realized in a single intonational phrase (i.e., there is no intonational break between the sentence anchor and the confirmational).

While *oi?* and *eh1?* have this in common, we contend that *eh1?* is more constrained than *oi?*. Specifically, *eh1?* is not felicitous when *p* is a well-known truth that cannot be considered S2's private commitment. Consider for instance (19), where a minimal pair is shown.

(19) La Terra és rodona, {oi?, #eh?}
'The Earth is round, {oi?, #eh?}'

The sentence with *oi?* successfully conveys the idea that S1 wants to add *p* ('The Earth is round.') to her DC_{S1}, but she first needs S2 to also commit to it. By contrast, in this scenario, *eh?* is infelicitous. Somehow, we need to create a context in which *p* is a previous private commitment of S2's which S1 wants to become public. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the proposition in (19) is a private commitment, because it is general knowledge. By contrast, a different kind of factual truth can make *eh?* felicitous, such as the one described in (20).

(20) T'has tallat el cabell, {oi?, eh?}
'You had your hair cut, {oi?, eh?}'

The two tags are felicitous in (20), even if in a slightly different interpretation. As in the previous case, with *oi?*, S1 wants to resolve whether *p* is true, and she is biased towards a positive answer. Alternatively, with *eh?*, S1 wants S2 to disclose a private commitment. This sentence would be typically uttered — although not exclusively — in a scenario where S2 does not want to exhibit his new haircut, maybe he is hiding it under a baseball cap, and S1 thinks this attempt of hiding it is funny, so she utters *eh?* to make S2 go public about his new hairdo. Note that in this scenario, S1 is not genuinely interested in knowing whether *p* is true.

In Castroviejo and Mayol's proposal, *oi?* is analyzed as a request for confirmation of truth. The speaker who follows up a declarative sentence with *oi?* is genuinely interested in knowing whether *p* is the case, an option that she finds quite likely. Hence, *p* is placed in DC_{S1^*} but not in DC_{S1} thus representing a tentative assertion. It is also on the Table, because S1 sincerely wants to resolve the issue of whether *p*. Finally, *p* is located as part of DC_{S2^*}, thus suggesting that S1 expects that S2 is also willing to commit with her to *p*. In this manner, Castroviejo and Mayol encode S1's bias towards *p* and the fact that the speaker is not considering the option of $\neg p$.[5]

5. This feature sets aside *oi?* from Malamud and Stephenson's (2015) characterization of English reverse-polarity tag.

(21) La Sira és llesta, oi?
'Sira is smart, oi?'

	Previously	After S1's move
DC_{S1}	{}	{ }
DC_{S1*}	{{}}	{{*p*}}
DC_{S2}	{}	{}
DC_{S2*}	{{}}	{{*p*}}
Table	<>	<'Sira is smart' [D]; {*p*}>
CG	{*q*}	{*q*}
*CG**	{{*q*}}	{{*q*, *p*}}

In this view, *oi?* is a confirmational tag with few restrictions; as long as it is plausible that *p* is likely true, *p* can describe all sorts of scenarios.

3.2 *Eh1?* as a request for public commitment

To enforce comparability between the two confirmational tags, we use the same sentence anchor to exemplify the two discourse structures. Following up on what has been said about the differences between *oi?* and *eh?*, in (22) S1 is trying to make S2 publicly commit to the proposition 'Sira is smart', maybe because she suspects he has feelings for Sira. In this scenario, *p* is exclusively placed in DC_{S2*} signalling that S1 expects S2 to go public in the next speech turn. However, *p* is not in her own *DC* or on the Table, because whether or not Sira is smart is not at stake; whether or not this is (objectively) true is not S1's concern.

(22) La Sira és llesta, *eh1*?
'Sira is smart, eh?'

	Previously	After S1's move
DC_{S1}	{}	{ }
DC_{S1*}	{{}}	{{}}
DC_{S2}	{}	{}
DC_{S2*}	{{}}	{{*p*}}
Table	<>	<>
CG	{*q*}	{*q*}
*CG**	{{*q*}}	{{*q*}}

In fact, in this representation, it is left unspecified whether S1 is committed to *p* or whether *p* is going to become *CG* in a future move. As Castroviejo and Mayol (2024) showed, it may even be the case that S1 utters *eh1?* when she is committed to the opposite. That is, *eh1?* is felicitous in the context described in (23), in which S1 does not think *p* is true, but thinks S2 does and is requesting that he makes this commitment public.

(23) a. Yolanda and her nephew are watching a documentary about the breeding of canaries. She is having a good time, since she's a biologist, but her nephew is yawning. Yolanda says to her nephew:
b. El programa és avorrit, eh?
'The show is boring, eh?'

3.3 *Eh2?* is not a confirmational tag

In Section 2 we provided a few arguments suggesting that *eh?* has two pragmatic meanings, also following up on Cuenca and Castellà's (1995) claim. In this section, we will aim at a characterization of *eh2?* that preserves a core semantic meaning with *eh1?*.

First, we want to argue that *eh2?* is not a confirmational tag, because a sentence with *eh2?* involves an S1 who is already committed to *p*. Hence, she does not need S2's confirmation to be ready to place *p* in DC_{S1}. In fact, S2 may not be committed to *p*, so he would not be able to provide such confirmation. Since it is not a confirmational, we also posit that sentence anchor and tag do not form a complex speech act based on the combination of an assertion and a question. As we will argue shortly, utterances with *eh2?* are speech acts followed by a marker flagging a request for acceptance that a proposition be included in DC_{S2} and, ultimately, *CG*.

In particular, by uttering *eh2?*, S1 expects S2 to become committed to *p*. The epistemic states of S1 and S2 are clearly different from those in the utterance of *eh1?*. Recall that, in the latter, the commitment with *p* by S1 is left unspecified, but S1 has evidence that S2 is privately committed to *p*, which leads her to ask for this private commitment to become public, hence the presence of *p* in DC_{S2*}.

Let us briefly consider (24), which is identical to (22) except for the interpretation of *eh?*. The utterance of (24) would be felicitous in a scenario where S1 vindicates in front of S2 that Sira is smart and can thus fulfill the goal that has been assigned to her. In this situation, it can be that S1 suspects that either S2 does not know whether *p* is true or that he is committed to ¬*p*. Therefore, S1 engages in an attempt to make S2 commit to *p* in the next speech turn. This translates as the placement of *p* in DC_{S2*}.

(24) La Sira és llesta, *eh2?*
'Sira is smart, eh2?'

	Previously	After S1's move
DC_{S1}	$\{p\}$	{ }
DC_{S1*}	$\{\{\}\}$	$\{\{\}\}$
DC_{S2}	$\{\}$	$\{\}$
DC_{S2*}	$\{\{\}\}$	$\{\{p\}\}$
Table	<>	<'Sira is smart' [D]; $\{p\}$>
CG	$\{q\}$	$\{q\}$
*CG**	$\{\{q\}\}$	$\{\{q, p\}\}$

Notice that this is something that *eh1?* and *eh2?* have in common in our analysis; so, in both cases, there is a request for S2 to become publicly committed to *p*. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between the two, namely that, in *eh2?, p* is asserted; hence, *p* is placed on the Table, as in (18) above, and in DC_{S1}, signaling that S1 is publicly committed to *p*. We put forth that having *p* both in DC_{S1} and DC_{S2*} creates the observed effect of expressing a commitment and, at the same time, the expectation that it will become the addressee's commitment in the next turn. Note, too, that, in not placing *p* in DC_{S2} we represent that S2 is not publicly committed to *p*. In the case of *eh1?*, we assumed that *p* was not in DC_{S2} because *p* was taken to be a *private* commitment, not a public one. In the case of *eh2?*, we assume that it is generally because the addressee is uninformed. The speaker is not attempting to disclose a private commitment by the addressee, but rather wants to voice her own commitment. Finally, while we do not make this explicit here, the consequence of this discourse move, if accepted by S2, would be that *p* would disappear from both DC_{S1} and DC_{S2*} and become part of *CG*.

As already mentioned, we contend that the sentence anchor and *eh2?* do not form a complex speech act, which was the case of *oi?* and *eh?*, thus giving rise to confirmational questions (i.e., a combination of a tentative assertion and a question tag). In the case of *eh2?*, we want to argue that it lexicalizes the reinforcement of a conversational implicature that typically arises when speech acts are uttered. Let us illustrate this phenomenon with assertions and orders. Within the learned view of assertions (or constatives) as expressing commitments, rather than beliefs, following Krifka (2015, 2019), we assume that the perlocutionary effect of an assertion is that the proposition introduced by the sentence becomes *CG*; that is, when uttering an assertion, S1 wants S2 to become committed to *p*. The important aspect of this claim is that this meaning component is not in the illocutionary force of the assertion — which, as said, revolves around speaker commitment —

but is rather an indirect inference. As a conversational implicature, it can be prevented (for instance, through expressions preceding assertions such as *Believe it or not…*), and it is calculable. Going back to our working example in (24), when S1 commits to *Sira is smart*, she generally conveys the inference that she wants S2 to also be committed to this. This implicature can be cancelled, as in (25a) or reinforced, as in (25b).

(25) a. No em creguis si no vols, però la Sira és llesta.
'Believe it or not, Sira is smart.'
b. Creu-me, la Sira és llesta.
'Believe me, Sira is smart.'

We want to argue that the presence of *eh2?* is analogous to an implicature reinforcement. Specifically, its presence renders this meaning component an entailment rather than a contextual inference. Consequently, as predicted, (26), which contains both *Believe it or not* and *eh2?*, is unacceptable.

(26) No em creguis si no vols, però la Sira és llesta(, #eh2?)
'Believe it or not, Sira is smart(, #eh2?)'

Interestingly, the lexical encoding of this inference may give rise to another conversational implicature: if S1 is using *eh2?* instead of letting S2 grasp the inference that S1 wants him to commit to *p*, so it can become *CG*, this is possibly because S1 fears that S2 is not willing to commit to *p*. This makes assertions with *eh2?* felicitous in contexts where either S2 (or some interlocutor in a larger group) has expressed that *p* is not possible or has cast doubt about the truth of *p*. By contrast, it is infelicitous in out of the blue contexts. We illustrate both contexts below.

(27) a. S2: No crec que trobem cap cova en aquestes muntanyes.
'S2: I don't think we'll find a cave around these mountains.'
b. S1: Això d'aquí és una cova, eh?
'This thing here is a cave, eh?'

(28) Bon dia, sóc la Marta i seré la vostra professora de ciències naturals(, #eh2?).
'Good morning, I'm Marta and I'll be your science teacher(, #eh2?).'

Let us turn now to imperatives, used to express orders or requests. In Geurts's commitment view, when S1 tells S2 to go buy the newspaper, she is committing to the goal that S2 buys the newspaper (and hence to the proposition *S2 will go buy the newspaper*). In making this her commitment, she is committed to S2 to act on this very proposition. As a consequence, she will not go herself, or she may offer help if she sees he has problems fulfilling this goal. As in the case of assertions, we assume that by making this kind of commitments, we can conversationally infer that S1 believes that S2 is capable and willing to take up on the assignment, and hence, that

S2 will make *p CG*. In the same vein, we propose that the presence of *eh2?* is analogous to the lexical encoding of this otherwise conversational inference. Therefore, an order followed by *eh2?* will only be felicitous when it can be inferred that S2 might decline the assignment contained in *p* or may have forgotten about *p*, as in (29), but it will not be felicitous out of the blue, as illustrated in (30).

(29) [Bernat is packing before leaving on a last-minute trip to Venice. He seems overwhelmed by the number of things he has to take into consideration once in Italy.]
Teresa: Bernat, porta'm un record de Venècia, eh2?
'Teresa: Bernat, bring me a souvenir from Venice, eh2?'

(30) Bon dia, sóc la Marta. Obriu els llibres per la pàgina 53 (, #eh2?).
'Good morning, I'm Marta. Please open your books on page 53(, #eh2?).'

4. What happens after a tag utterance

4.1 Additional predictions

Our proposal makes further predictions regarding how the discourse will continue at the turn after the tag has been uttered. More specifically, we can ask ourselves how S2 will address the tag-containing utterance. We argued that, while both *oi?* and *eh1?* are confirmational tags, in the case of *oi?, p* is placed on the Table, while in the case of *eh1?* it is not: with *oi?* S1 is interested in the truth of *p*, while with *eh1?* she is interested in S2 making her private commitment public. This contrast makes us expect that S2 will react to the tag-containing utterance more often with *oi?* than with *eh1?,* given that when an issue is placed on the Table, in the normal course of events, is to address that issue so that it can be removed from the Table. Additionally, we also expect S2 to react to the tag-containing utterance more often with *eh1?* than with *eh2?,* given that the latter is not a confirmational tag, but rather a tag by which S1 expresses her own commitment to p, while with *eh1?* S1 is inviting S2 to publicly commit to *p*. That is, unlike *eh1?* and *oi?*, we do not consider *eh2?* a question tag, but rather the lexicalization of a conversational implicature. Since *eh2?* does not modify the speech act of the sentence anchor, S2 may be less prone to react to the previous utterance. In summary, we expect the following pattern of reactions by S2 after a tag-containing utterance.

(31) *oi?* > *eh1?* > *eh2?*

Another way to test this prediction is to check whether S1 continues with her turn after the tag-containing utterance, rather than yielding it to S2. If S1 continues

with her turn, this indicates that she does not consider that a reaction by S2 is necessary for the discourse to proceed. Here, we expect the opposite pattern than above: with *eh2?*, S1 should be able to continue with her turn to a greater extent, given that she has expressed her own commitments and is not expecting any confirmation, followed by *eh1?*, which is a request to make a commitment public, without placing any issue on the table. Finally, we would expect S1 to not continue her turn after *oi?*, given that *p* has been placed on the Table and normally we would expect this issue to be resolved in the next turns of the discourse.

(32) *eh2?* > *eh1?* > *oi?*

We decided to compare the tags under study in this paper with plain polar questions, which we take to represent a useful baseline regarding reactions by S2 and continuations by S1, against which we can compare the behavior of the tags. In a polar question, clearly an issue is placed on the Table and S1, if biased at all, is certainly less biased than if she had used a confirmational tag. Thus, we expect that, after polar questions, we will find a high number of reactions by S2 and a low number of continuations by S1. Overall, we expect to find the following patterns:

(33) a. Reactions by S2: polar questions > *oi?* > *eh1?* > *eh2?*
b. Continuations by S1: *eh2?* > *eh1?* > *oi?* > polar questions

These predictions will be tested through a corpus study, which we present in the next section.

4.2 Corpus study

4.2.1 *Methodology*

We compared the use of the three tags and polar questions in the CTILC corpus (Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana, Rafel, 1994), which is a reference corpus for Catalan. More specifically, we restricted our search as follows:

- Theater plays, so the data came mostly from dialogues, and it was possible to easily identify S1 and S2. Since the presence of an addressee was important for our purposes, we excluded monologues.
- Central variety of Catalan, which is the variety that has both *eh?* and *oi?*.
- Published between 1980 and 2019, so that we can focus on the contemporary use of the language.

With these restrictions, we obtained 280 instances of *eh?*. This particle is highly ambiguous: apart from the *eh1?* and *eh2?* meanings which are the focus of this article, *eh?* has further uses, as illustrated in (34)–(36). *Eh?* can follow *wh*-questions, as in (34), where it conveys a meaning of insistence, as mentioned

in footnote 4. It can also function as a request for clarification, as in (35), or as a vocative particle, as in (36), a use which shares the same orthography as the others but differs in phonology (while the vocative particle is realized as [e], the other uses are realized as [ɛ]).

(34) On t'has comprat aquest cinturó, eh?
'Where did you buy this belt, eh?'

(35) S1: Quants són, a casa?
'How many are you at home?'
S2: Eh?
'Eh?'
S1: Quants fills té?
'How many children do you have?'

(36) Eh vols un cigarro?
'Eh do you want a cigarette?'

The two authors of this paper coded separately the meaning of *eh?* in the following categories: *eh1?, eh2?*, Ambiguous and Other. An instance was coded as Ambiguous if the meaning of the tag was compatible both with *eh1?* and *eh2?* (recall Examples (7)–(9), which were coded as Ambiguous). In case of disagreement between the two annotators, the item was discussed until a consensus was reached. The 280 instances of *eh?* were coded as follows: 47 as *eh1?*, 55 as *eh2?*, 13 as Ambiguous and 165 as Other.

Considering that we have 115 instances of the types of *eh?* we are concerned with in this paper, we randomly selected a comparable number of instances of *oi?* and of polar questions to annotate. In particular, we selected 136 instances of *oi?* and 279 instances of polar questions.

We annotated the data according to the following three variables:

1. Sentence type. As a sanity check, we coded for the sentence type of the anchor sentence to confirm the patterns described in Section 2.5, according to which only *eh2?* is compatible with imperatives, and only *oi?* and *eh1?* are compatible with exclamatives, optatives and rhetorical questions.
2. Reaction. We decided to break the question whether S2 addresses the issue posed by the tag-utterance in two variables. In the first one, we coded whether there was a direct reaction to the tag-utterance by S2: that is, a direct response in the case of polar questions and utterances with *oi?* and *eh1?*, and a direct acceptance or rejection in the case of utterances with *eh2?*. Examples (37) and (38) show two examples of direct response and acceptance, respectively:

(37) S1: Estic dient tonteries, oi?
'I'm talking nonsense, oi?'
S2: No, no…
'No, no…'

(38) S1: Me l'acabo, eh?
'I will finish it, eh?'
S2: Sí.
'Yes.'

3. Engagement. The previous variable only captures a very limited set of cases in which S2 addresses the tag-utterance: those in which there is a direct response or a direct acceptance/rejection. It is, however, possible for S2 to address the previous speech act even if she does not do it directly, but rather through more indirect means. This is why we decided to introduce a broader category that captures various forms of engagement with a speech act. Engagement includes both direct and indirect answers and acceptances/rejections, as well as cases in which S2 questions a presupposition of the previous utterance or poses a clarification question, for example. Examples (39)–(41) illustrate cases in which there is no direct reaction, but there is engagement to the previous speech act: (39) is an indirect reply, by which the speaker adds more information than what was requested, (40) questions the presupposition in the question that the laptop could be used and (41) conversationally implicates a positive answer to the confirmational question, while adding further comments.

(39) S1: Has dit bona nit al nens?
'Did you say goodnight to the kids?'
S2: Fa estona.
'A while ago.'

(40) S1: No et sap greu que faci servir el portàtil, oi?
'You don't mind that I use the laptop, oi?'
S2: Pensava que no funcionava…
'I thought it wasn't working…'

(41) S1: Impressiona, eh?
'Impressing, eh?'
S2: He llegit que viuen més que els humans.
'I heard that they live longer than humans'

Notice that the first variable (Direct Reaction) is a subset of the second one (Engagement). Thus, all instances that were coded as having a direct reaction were also categorized as displaying engagement. However, some cases may

show neither direct reaction nor engagement, as illustrated in Examples (42) and (43). In (42), S1 poses a polar question, which is altogether ignored by S2, who steers the conversation towards his own agenda. In (43), S2 poses a question, which is dismissed by S1 by means of an utterance with *eh?*. S2 chooses not to react nor engage with that utterance.

(42) S1: Vols dir que no has begut massa?
'Don't you think you drank too much?'
S2: No m'ho demanaràs mai, oi?
'You will never ask me, oi?'

(43) S2: No t'ho vols repensar?
'Don't you want to reconsider?'
S1: Ets molt pesat, eh, tio?
'You are a pain, eh, man?'
S2: Bé, tu t'ho perds.
'Ok, your loss.'

4. Same speaker. Finally, we coded whether, after the tag-utterance, S1 does not yield her turn and continues talking or whether another participant in the conversation takes the floor. In all the examples presented so far, S1 yielded the floor to S2. In contrast, in (44) and (45), he does not. In (44), S1 utters a sentence with *oi?* and, without waiting for an answer, continues with his turn. In (45), S1, utters a sentence with *eh?* and then goes on to pose a new polar question, which is the one S2 eventually answers.

(44) S1: Tot era una revenja, **oi**? Em vas utilitzar. Volies el càrrec i de passada volies veure com m'enfonsava…
'It was all a revenge, oi? You used me. You wanted the position and, while you were at it, you wanted to see me sink…'
S2: Estàs molt nerviós, quan estiguis més calmat ja parlarem…
'You are nervous, when you quiet down, we'll talk…'

(45) S1: I nosaltres sense adonar-nos-en; que fort, **eh**? Ei, ets molt bona amb els números, no?
'And we did not realize it; crazy, eh? Hey, you are really good with numbers, right?'
S2: Sí, I com és que portes aquesta eternitat de dues hores pensant que vols ser un magnat del món de les discogràfiques?
'Yes. And how come you have been thinking for an eternity of two hours that you want to be a record company tycoon?'

4.2.2 *Results*

Let's begin examining the distribution of sentence types across different tags. Our data supports the generalizations outlined in Section 2.5 and no counterexamples were found. *Eh2?* occurs with declaratives and imperatives, but no examples were found with exclamatives. In contrast, *oi?* and *eh1?* appear with declaratives, exclamatives and rhetorical questions but not with imperatives. We also found instances of *oi?* with optatives.

Figure 1 shows the results for the other three variables: Reaction, Engagement and Same Speaker.[6] Recall that we predicted a declining proportion of direct reactions for polar questions, *oi?, eh1?* and *eh2?*. This is what we can observe in Figure 1: following a polar question, a direct reaction occurred in 41% of cases, whereas after *eh2?*, this dropped to just 13%, with *oi?* and *eh1?* displaying intermediate values. The same pattern was expected for Engagement, which is also what we observed: after a polar question, S2 engages with the question 76% of the time, but only 25% of the time after *eh2?*. Since Engagement includes Reaction, the proportion for the former is always higher than for the latter. Yet, both variables exhibit a downward trend from polar questions to *eh2*-utterances. In contrast, Same Speaker follows the opposite pattern, which goes in line with our predictions: the rate of continuations by S1 is lowest after polar questions, increases with *oi?*, then *eh1?,* and reaches its peak after *eh2?*.

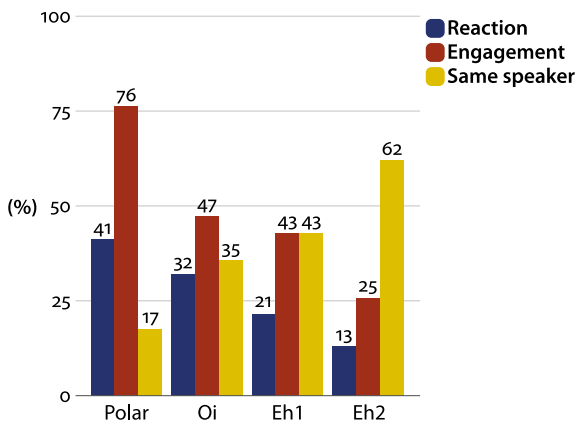


Figure 1. Rates of positive values of the variables Reaction, Engagement and Same Speaker

6. We removed from the analysis the 13 cases which were coded as Ambiguous between *eh1?* and *eh2?*.

The variables Reaction, Engagement and Same Speaker were analyzed using R (R Core Team, 2023) with the package *brms* (Bürkner, 2017). For the three variables, we fitted a Bayesian Poisson regression model to estimate the effect of the tag on the count of each variable, adjusting for the total number of occurrences of each tag. The reference level was *oi?* in the three models. Figure 2 shows the estimated rates in each of the models along with their 95% credible interval.

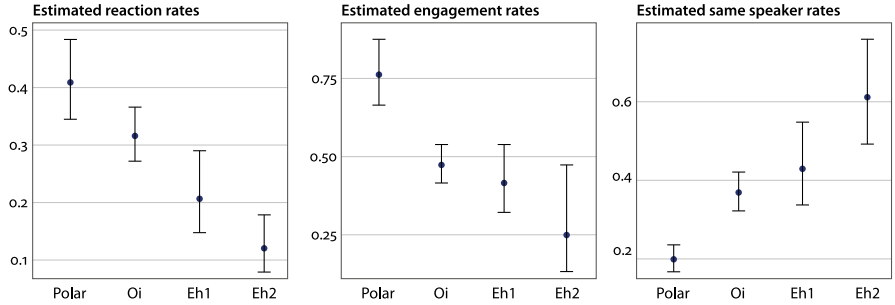


Figure 2. Estimated rates for each tag

In the Reaction model, polar questions were associated with an increase in direct reactions as compared to *oi?*, the reference level, but as can be seen with the overlapping credible intervals, there is uncertainty about the estimate. In contrast, *eh2?* shows the strongest negative effect. In the Engagement model, polar questions lead to a clear increase of engaged answers, while *eh2?* reduced engagement, though with some uncertainty, as shown by the wide credible interval. Finally, in the Same Speaker model, *eh2?* leads to more continuations by the same speaker, while polar questions made those continuations less likely. Thus, the results for the two categories at the extremes of our continuum (polar questions and *eh2?*) are consistent with our predictions, albeit with some uncertainty. In contrast, *eh1?* displays weaker effects, its credible interval overlapping with *oi?*. Still, the general pattern in the three models aligns with our hypothesis.

4.2.3 *Discussion*

In this empirical study we aimed at confirming a prediction that followed from our theoretical analysis, namely that *oi?*- and *eh1?*-containing utterances are confirmational questions, whereas *eh2?* does not modify the speech act of the sentence anchor. As a corollary, we expected that *oi?*- and *eh1?*-containing utterances would somewhat resemble polar questions in attracting a reaction or more engagement from S2 than *eh2?*-containing utterances, on the one hand, and that there would be more instances of same speaker continuations in the case of *eh2?*-containing utterances than in polar questions, and *oi?*- and *eh1?*-containing

utterances. In fact, we predicted a ranking based on the details of the analysis proposed in Sections 3.1. and 3.2. Our data collection supports these predictions and thus contributes to a better understanding of the differences between apparently similar constructions.

5. Extending the analysis to other speech acts

Following the lead in Section 4, Section 5 is also concerned with elaborating on the predictions of the proposal, which so far has essentially had (tentative) assertions in its focus. Building on the data presented in Section 2.6, we would like to discuss how the current analysis derives the patterns of distribution of speech acts with *eh1?* and *eh2?*.

In a nutshell, we argue that *eh2?* is compatible with those speech acts for which there may be a reinforceable implicature that S1 wants S2 to comply with the goal of making *p* common ground. On the other hand, *eh1?* is compatible with speech acts in which the speaker is not yet committed to *p* and for which it makes sense to anticipate a future commitment by either S1 or S2.

In Section 2.6, we organized the data on the basis of the sentence type of the anchor. We saw that declaratives can go both with *eh1?* and *eh2?*. Exclamatives, optatives and rhetorical questions could precede *eh1?*. By contrast, imperatives would only go with *eh2?*. Here, we want to look at this set of data from the pragmatic perspective, too. Recall from Section 3.1, that we claim that *eh1?*-containing utterances are confirmational questions. This holds irrespective of their sentence anchor, so declaratives, exclamatives, optatives, and rhetorical questions have something in common: they are compatible with the analysis according to which a proposition *p* introduced by the sentence anchor can be placed in DC_{S2^*} while not being placed in DC_{S1}. We will discuss the theoretical repercussions of this claim later on in this section. To begin with, we would like to provide a complete picture of the speech acts concurring with *eh2?*, some of which are syntactically encoded as declarative sentences. To summarize the data, in the *eh2?* paradigm, we find assertions, commissives (promises, offers, threats), and some directives (requests, orders and permissives).

For the purpose of characterizing the kind of discourse coordination established by the different speech acts, we rely largely on Geurts' (2019) normative view of communication as commitment negotiation, which covers not only for constatives (assertions) but also for commissives and directives. Geurts's model views these speech acts as actions whereby S1 commits to S2 to act on a proposition *p*. Since this analysis of speech acts involves coordination of propositions — the variable employed in the coordination is a proposition, not a speech act —, to a

certain extent we can adapt these ideas to the extended Table model we have used to represent confirmational questions. In the simplest cases (assertions, promises, requests),[7] where there is a commitment of S1 to S2 to act on *p*, this would amount to placing *p* in DC_{S1}. Since these are cases where S1 puts forth a commitment, and so this typically generates an inference of willingness of compliance from S2, our prediction is that these speech acts are compatible with *eh2?*.

Let us briefly review commissives and, in particular, promises, which stand out as the hallmark case for a pragmatic theory of commitment. In them, S1 commits to S2 to act on *p*, which presents a future act or state.

(46) Et vindré a veure, {#oi?, eh?} Promise
'I'll come see you, {#oi?, eh?}'

In Malamud and Stephenson's (2015) extended Table model, we could place the futurate proposition *p* in DC_{S1} and on the Table, with the syntactic form of a declarative clause. In this sense, this representation would not differ from that of an assertion. Yet, the unavailability of *oi?* suggests that this is a case of *eh2?*. This follows from our analysis: in *eh2?, p* is in DC_{S1}. This is necessary for a promise, which is a speech act in which crucially the speaker is committed to act on the proposition denoted by the declarative clause.

Turning to directives, even if less intuitively, Geurts argues that they also involve the same simple characterization, whereby S1 commits to S2 to act on a futurate action denoted by *p*. As briefly stated in Section 3.3, in directives like *Forgive me*, (47), S1 commits to S2 to act on the proposition 'S2 will forgive S1', so she will see to it, even if it is S2 the one who has to carry out the forgiving event.

(47) Perdona, {#oi?, eh?} Request
'Forgive me, {#oi?, eh?}'

Important for our purposes is that, as predicted, since there is speaker commitment, the available tag is *eh2?*, as deduced by the ill-formedness of *oi?*. As in commissives, S1's commitment is necessary to interpret *S2 will forgive S1* as a request.

Another simple case is that of expressive speech acts. According to Geurts, examples such as (48) also fall in the same commitment framework. S1 is committed to S2 to being sorry; much like constative speech acts that attribute psychological states to the speaker.[8]

7. We leave out more complex cases for future research, where conditional or recursive commitments are needed to yield the particular speech act, such as offers, threats, questions, or permissives.

8. This perspective is also taken by Trotzke and Giannakidou (2025) and Villalba (2024) for exclamations, with some qualifications and differences.

(48) Em sap greu, {#oi?, eh?} Expressive/emotive
'I'm sorry, {#oi?, eh?}'

In (48), S1 is vindicating that, unlike what S2 may think, she is sorry. Again, that S1 is committed to the proposition in the anchor sentence is necessary for her to hold the described emotional attitude.

Before turning to the sentence types that are compatible with *eh1?*, it is worth noting that Krifka (2019) objects to the claim that expressives –which he rather calls emotives — be included as part of the constatives. He argues that beyond the expression of apology, gratitude or regret, emotives also include interjections, exclamations, and optatives. He says that there is more than just an assertoric paraphrase to these sentences, there is the expression of an emotive attitude. He goes on to say that, unlike in constatives, with emotives, S1 cannot *stricto sensu* lie. While there can be deception, because S1 may be insincere, this would not constitute falsity, and there would not be the same social repercussions as the ones the speaker is prepared to bear if she is not truthful when making an assertion. Recall that exclamatives may bear *oi?* and, hence *eh1?*, but not *eh2?*; that is, unlike prototypical expressives conveyed through declarative clauses such as (33). Consider the exclamative sentence in (49).

(49) Quin gran gol, {oi?, eh?} Exclamative
'What a great goal, {oi?, eh?}'

We cannot delve into the details of what happens in the conversational context when there is a request for confirmation on the basis of an exclamative (see Castroviejo, 2019, 2023, for some speculations), but we contend that the unavailability of *eh2?* could be construed as an argument against the claim that in exclamatives S1 is committed to the proposition introduced by the exclamative clause, even if this proposition can be projected to either DC_{S1^*} (in the case of *oi?*) or DC_{S2^*} (in the case of *eh1?*). So, it could be that there is no associated implicature in exclamations that S1 wants S2 to believe that *p* and, hence, *eh2?* is not licensed to reinforce an inference that does not arise.

Close to exclamatives are optatives (see, e.g., Grosz 2012 for a unified analysis of the two sentence types). Roughly, in optatives, S1 expresses a wish. Take for instance, (50), where S1 conveys that she would like to be rich, as they used to be.

(50) Tant de bo fóssim rics com abans, {eh?, oi?} Optative
'I wish we were rich, as we used to be, {eh2, oi?}'

This wish is not expressed by means of a declarative clause, though. So, while the proposition describing this wish is very salient, it may not be able to constitute a speaker commitment, in the learned sense: this proposition is not presented as a

piece of content that S1 is ready to publicly defend and for which she would bear social sanctions were it not true. Nevertheless, this proposition can be placed as S2's projected commitment set, by which an optative would be compatible with *eh1?*, as has been shown in (50).

In a similar vein we could discuss the case of rhetorical questions, such as (51).

(51) Rhetorical questions
  a. El Joe tenia els seus amics aquí. On, si no, {eh?, oi?}
     'Joe had his friends here. Where else, {eh?, oi?}'
  b. Qui no té un secret {eh?, oi?}
     'Who doesn't have a secret, {eh?, oi?}'

In Han's (2002) seminal work on the semantics of rhetorical questions, it was claimed that they had an assertoric illocutionary force; in particular, they were said to introduce a proposition corresponding to the opposite polarity from what it was apparently asked. Taking (51) as working examples, the propositions could be phrased as *Joe couldn't have his friends anywhere else* and *Everyone has a secret*. Later on, semantic similarities were sought between regular questions and rhetorical ones (Caponigro and Sprouse, 2007), and more recently, the pragmatic status of the conveyed proposition has been examined in more depth. For instance, Biezma and Rawlins (2017) propose that rhetorical questions are interrogatives that presuppose that the context entails the answer; so, this answer does not have an assertoric illocutionary force, it is a proposition presupposed to be *CG* between interlocutors, something that aligns with our predictions concerning tag compatibility: rhetorical questions are incompatible with *eh2?*, because the proposition they introduce does not have the pragmatic status of a commitment.

To sum up, in this section we have elaborated on the compatibility of the studied tags with different sentence types and speech acts. We have argued that speech acts for which there is speaker commitment (promises, assertions, requests), are compatible with *eh2?*, which lexically encodes the conversational implicature that S1 wants S2 to commit to *p*. This is indirect evidence that the sentence types that can appear as anchors for *oi?*- and *eh1?*-containing utterances do not involve speaker commitment, even if they introduce a salient proposition. Further research will have to elaborate on this incipient idea, which would contradict recent proposals by, e.g., Trotzke and Giannakidou (2025) and Villalba (2024) for the case of exclamatives.

6. General discussion

The purpose of this paper was twofold: first, we aimed at providing empirical evidence of the different distribution and felicity conditions of two homonymous question tags, *eh1?* and *eh2?*, building on the seminal observation by Cuenca and Castellà (1995). Aside from providing distinctions between the two pragmatic uses on the basis of crisp judgments, partly by relying on the similarities with another confirmational in Catalan, *oi?*, we have conducted a corpus study that has allowed us to reveal new data concerning the graded expectation of a reaction or engagement by S2 with the use of polar questions, *oi?, eh1?* and *eh2?*.

The second goal of this chapter was to frame the characterization of the two uses of *eh?* within Malamud and Stephenson's extended Table model of discourse. We have argued that with *eh1?*, S1's own commitment is irrelevant, but what she does is place *p* in DC_{S2^*} thereby indicating that S1 expects S2 to reveal a private commitment. By contrast, with *eh2?*, S1 is committed to *p*, and the tag does not make the sentence into a confirmational question, but rather is a lexical encoding of the reinforcement of the conversational implicature usually associated with the speech act performed with the utterance. Typically, with an assertion, it is inferred that S1 wants S2 to believe that *p* is the case, so that *p* can become *CG*. We have encoded this idea by placing *p* both in DC_{S1} and DC_{S2^*}, thus presenting a common core between the two pragmatic uses of *eh?*, namely the fact that *p* is in DC_{S2^*} in both cases. Finally, we have entertained the idea that this divide could extend to speech acts beyond assertion, to include, for instance, promises and requests. Future research should establish what is the best model to capture all the facts; to begin with, we should examine the capacity of the Table model to account for speech acts that go beyond assertions and different types of questions.

Another issue for future work is the presence of *eh?* after neutral *wh*-questions, as in (52), repeated from footnote 3.

(52) Què vols dir amb això, eh?
'What do you mean by that, eh?'

We suspect that it could be a case of *eh2?*, since the flavor of insistence that it has is reminiscent of S1's request for S2 to accept the goal of providing an answer to the question, something that comes close to the implicature reinforcement analysis that we have presented.

Additionally, there is the pending issue of how to analyze confirmational questions whose tag stands sentence-initially, as shown in Section 2.1., and repeated below for convenience.

(53) {Eh, Oi} que vindràs?
{eh, oi} that come.2SG.FUT
'You'll come, won't you?'

Are there interpretive differences that correlate with the syntactic position of the tag? An in-depth study that took into consideration differences in grammaticality could also be enlightening.

In this very same line, we would like to conclude by pointing out theoretical issues that arise from this study and which may have cross-linguistic repercussions. For one, we wonder why a question tag *eh?* necessarily has rising intonation, even when we have argued that it does not form a question with its preceding sentence anchor. Does this tell us anything concerning degrees of grammaticalization? Secondly, while we have proposed an analysis that preserves a common core between the two pragmatic uses of *eh?*, it is not obvious whether this should be considered a case of homonymy or polysemy. A look into the tag systems in other languages could be revealing in this respect.

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From reference identification to discursive alignment

The (counter)argumentative power of *es eso* in Spanish

Susana Rodríguez Rosique
Universidad de Alicante

The aim of this paper is to examine the Spanish construction *es eso* — literally '(It) is that', which means 'I agree with you'. Based on the dataset extracted from an interactional, audiovisual corpus (GestINF), *es eso* emerges as an intersubjective structure — as outlined by both Traugott (2010) and Nuyts (2001, 2012) —, which is used to reinforce a previously activated proposition. In its process of constructionalization from an original identifying / (pseudo-)cleft structure, *es eso* acquires a (counter-)argumentative function that facilitates the speaker's alignment with the addressee while distancing from a third part. Overall, *es eso* transitions from sentence grammar to interaction grammar.

Keywords: identifying structures, (pseudo-)clefts, Spanish neuter demonstrative, (inter)subjectivity, (counter-)argumentation

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the Spanish construction *es eso* — lit. '(It) is that' — , which is used to convey an adhesive value similarly to 'I agree with you', as illustrated in (1).

(1) H3: [yo creo que hay] muchos ejemplos como para tener que utilizar [*IMBÉCIL*]
'there are too many examples to have to use IMBÉCIL'
H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'
H3: [(risas)]
'laughs'

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H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'
H2: ayy →/ yo no sé →/ [yo lo vi]
'Well, I don't know… I saw it'
H1: [a mí]
'To me…'
H2: y digo *tampoco hay que ser tan exquisito* ↑
'And I thought that there's no need to be so sensitive'
(GestINF, Int. 4, min. 00:31)

Es eso constitutes an intersubjective construction, both in the sense of Traugott (2010) and in that of Nuyts (2001, 2012), which originally stems from interaction and which is used to reinforce a previously activated proposition. In its process of constructionalization, *es eso* further develops a (counter-)argumentative value that allows the speaker to align with his / her addressee and to distance from a third part. It is precisely this functional meaning which shows how *es eso* varies from the parallel constructionalization *eso es* — lit. 'It is', which means 'sure' —, as shown in (2):

(2) H1: [sí, porque tampoco] ni siquiera en eso hay estabilidad de criterio / ¿no? ↑
'yes, because there isn't even a unanimous opinion, is there?'
H3: [claro / claro // **eso es**]
'Of course, of course. (Lit. *that is*) Sure' (GestINF, Int. 3, min. 40:37)

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 focuses on interaction as a frame for the creation of new grammatical material; Section 3 shows the key properties of GestINF, an interactional, audiovisual corpus that was used as the source of our dataset and to isolate the construction; Section 4 analyzes the individual meanings of the components that participate in the construction; Section 5 approaches *es eso* as a construction — that is, as a new pair of form and (functional) meaning —; and, finally, Section 5 outlines the most relevant conclusions and poses further challenges for research.

2. Conversational interaction as a frame for new grammatical material

Communicative interaction is a joint activity (Levinson 1979; Clark 1996), where at least two participants are required, who must coordinate, in turn, their individual actions: if I play the piano, I just need to attend my own performance; however, if I play a duet, I also have to pay attention to the other's movements.

The most natural environment where this joint activity develops is conversation, which thus acquires a special status (Fillmore 1981; Chafe 1994: 41; Clark 1996: 8–11). Indeed, conversation is universal, since it occurs in every single language that is characterized by an oral dimension; it does not require special instruction, as giving a lecture or telling a joke; and it is the basic setting for language acquisition. Conversation is defined as a process of succession and turn-taking, occupied by different speakers (Briz 2000; Briz and Grupo Val.Es.Co 2003, 2014; Hidalgo 2002; Portolés 2004), thus showing a number of inherent features: intrinsic orality, essential immediacy, dialogic nature, and cooperative spirit.

However, despite the property of naturalness, all participants in a conversation must share something, thus guaranteeing the success of communication; in other words, they have to share a number of suppositions, beliefs, and even feelings or emotions. Stalnaker (1978) called this chunk of information *Common Ground*, which if of avail in determining the specific form that our utterances are constructed. In fact, every single utterance is considered to be planned as an answer to a hypothetical triggering question — i.e., *pregunta inicial* (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1997) —, through which the speaker tries to figure out what the addressee knows in order to choose an appropriate form for his/her utterance. Common Ground is underpinned by multiple sources (Clark 1996: 101–116). Shared knowledge may originate in cultural communities — that is, groups of people who share certain information that is unknown to non-members of the group. Said cultural communities originate as a result of different parameters — such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, political ideology, academic career, or even the type of music they like —, which are simultaneously nestled. By way of illustration, I simultaneously belong to the groups of Spanish people, women, linguists, or pop music fans, which contribute to my communal knowledge. Common Ground may also come from the experiences, actions or perceptions that the speaker shares with his/her interlocutors. This kind of information is determined by the familiarity existing between the participants in a given interaction; i.e., the degree of personal common ground that is experienced between two friends is likely to be higher than that shared by two people who are waiting at a bus stop.

Among all this amount of information that we are collecting and updating by means of different and successive interactions throughout our lives, just a small part remains activated in a specific, particular situation, which means that it is prominent or salient in the addressee's mind (Chafe 1994; Dryer 1996). The (non-/in-)activated status of information is related to the restrictive and selective nature of consciousness; i.e., I can't simultaneously think of my high school years, but I need to sequentially access them through the figure of a teacher, the memories of a friend, the lyrics of a song or a single anecdote. Activated information also has a linguistic impact; as a consequence, when referring to old information,

two orthogonal parameters are usually involved (Prince 1981): old information as shared knowledge; and old information being activated in the participants' minds through a given interaction. While the difference between Examples (3) and (4) is determined by the former, the difference between (4) and (5) is, alternatively, triggered by the latter.

(3) Anoche hablé con *una amiga*.
'I talked to a friend last night'

(4) Anoche hablé con *Noelia*.
'I talked to Noelia last night'

(5) Anoche hablé *con ella*.
'I talked to her last night'

Conversational interaction is one of the main scenarios being involved in participants' updating of the shared file (Heim 1982), which otherwise constitutes one of the most relevant topics in the realm of information structure studies. From this perspective, however, not all the potential reactions, from the speaker's perspective, have been taken into account (Ginzburg [2012] 2015): in fact, when a participant has access to a new proposition, he/she may accept it and integrate it into the shared file; but he/she may also question it, and thus display different strategies to discuss it.

With the rise of new categories, the informational configuration behind a certain conversational interaction has been approached from further angles. In its canonical view, evidentiality has been related to the source of information and the type of access to it (cf. Willet 1988; Aikhenvald 2004). Nevertheless, some authors have argued that a third parameter should be incorporated as part of the evidential spectrum (Bermúdez 2005: 16–18). This new parameter, which is linked to shared knowledge, is conceived as a continuum whose endpoints are, on the one hand, the exclusive, private access to information by the part of the speaker, and, on the other hand, the universal, unrestricted access to information by everyone; and where the information shared by the speaker and other participants is strategically placed in the middle of the continuum. What originally emerges as a new parameter within the evidential domain progressively acquires the status of an independent category, halfway between evidentiality and modality, but with enough space to the development of several interactional strategies. In this vein, Nuyts (2001) claims to reinterpret Lyons' (1977: 797) classical distinction between objective versus subjective information — based on the quality of the evidence and on a subsequent epistemic evaluation — in terms of (inter)subjectivity — based on the perspective of the participants in interaction. According to this reinterpretation, Nuyts elaborates a continuum where one of the endpoints shows that

only the speaker has access to the evidence (subjectivity), while the opposite one shows that the evidence is known or accessible by a larger group of people (intersubjectivity). When the speaker presents certain information as subjective, he/she assumes a personal responsibility in his/her epistemic assessment; when information is presented as intersubjective, the responsibility is shared. Additionally, Nuyts (2012) outlines that subjective markedness is expected when the evaluator thinks that nobody else should be included in his/her assessment — either because he/she is unaware of each other's view, or because his/her position is clearly in contrast with respect to others' —; instead, intersubjective markedness is expected when the evaluator — against the addressee — wants to show that his/her position is not isolated, or when he/she assumes that the addressee agrees with him/her and wants to explicitly mark the agreement.

The strategies for information management used by the speakers to achieve their communicative goals may be linguistically codified. The question now resides in determining the nature of these formal patterns: do they represent cases of pragmaticalization (Brinton 2010) or can they be considered examples of grammaticalization? To a certain degree, the answer to this question depends on the conception of grammar itself. As outlined by Traugott and Trousdale (2013: 95), grammar is defined as a hypothesized linguistic knowledge, including morphosyntax, semantics, and phonology, but also pragmatics and discourse functions. A way to approach grammar from this perspective is represented by Construction Grammar (Lakoff 1987; Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988; Goldberg 1995, 2006). According to Traugott (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 112–135; Traugott 2015), constructions may show two different changes: constructional changes and constructionalization. While constructional changes affect individual features of a construction, constructionalization implies the creation of a pair form_{new} / $\text{meaning}_{\text{new}}$ through small and successive reanalyses, both in form and meaning.

Another way of widening the conception of grammar is that provided by Discourse Grammar (Kaltenböck, Heine and Kuteva 2011; Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva and Long 2013; Heine 2023). From this perspective, grammar is composed by two levels: sentence grammar and thethical — recently referred to as interactive (Heine 2023)[1] — grammar. On the one hand, sentence grammar is organized into clauses and propositions; it revolves around a nucleus, which is usually the verb and its argument structure; and its main representative components are phrases, words and morphemes, along with the morphological and syntactic structures

1. Heine (2023) has revised this second level of grammar and has launched his proposal concerning the Grammar of Interactives, which emerges as a result of locating the linguistic behavior of theticals within the wider domain of interaction.

relating them. Likewise, sentence grammar is based on a restrictive meaning — that is, a kind of meaning anchored to the semantic structure of the sentence or to any of its constituents. On the other hand, interactive grammar focuses on linguistic elements which are located outside the sentence, and pays attention to a kind of meaning that is non-restrictive, which is based on reasoning processes and inferential mechanisms that are not anchored to the sentence, but rather to the discourse situation. Its constituents are distinguished by their being involved in metacommunicative or metatextual (Traugott 1989) functions, including textual organization, information source, speaker attitude, or shared knowledge (Heine, Kaltenböck, Kuteva and Long 2013: 164–173). Heine (2023: 10–31) has characterized interactives in prototypic terms. Morphologically, interactives constitute holophrases (Mackenzie 1998) — that is, even if conveying complex thoughts, they lack internal as well as external morphological structure. Semantically, they are related to the expressive dimension of language; i.e., they are based on use-conditional meaning (Potts 2007), rather than on truth conditions or denotational values. Syntactically, they are independent, and they thus can occur either as unique utterances or occupy a left periphery position, separated from the surrounding text; consequently, they do not represent arguments or adjuncts, and they cannot be subordinated, focalized or coordinated. Prosodically, they are isolated and they often occur between pauses or exhibit a special intonation. Interactives are intrinsically deictic, since their interpretation always points to the communicative situation — blocking then any kind of detachment. Furthermore, they behave as atactic — rather than syntactic —, detaching from grammatical operations such as negation or interrogation. Sentence grammar and interactive grammar are, however, closely connected. One of the most frequent processes to pass from one domain to the other is cooptation — i.e., a cognitive communicative operation that allows the speakers to change their perspective from a reasoning level based on sentence meaning to a reasoning level based on communicative situation and modelled within interaction (Kaltenböck, Heine y Kuteva 2011: 857; Heine 2023: 268).

Es eso constitutes an interactional construction that embodies an information-management strategy used by the speaker to convey his/her discursive stance. Before analyzing its behavior, a brief note on the data used in this paper — i.e., on the essence of the corpus GestINF — is provided below.

3. From theory to practice: The corpus GestINF

GestINF (Rodríguez Rosique and Cifuentes Honrubia, on line) constitutes an audiovisual corpus that was created with the aim of both capturing the bidirectional relation between informational configuration and linguistic structure, and isolating the strategies of information management used by the participants in conversation. GestINF is currently made up of 10 conversational interactions of 40 minutes each. Four different participants intervene in each interaction. The corpus is available free of charge on the website of GestINF at Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/proyecto_gestinf/corpus/).[2] All the participants in GestINF belong to the University of Alicante.

In order to approach the informational configuration behind each interaction as precisely as possible, GestINF was designed according to two orthogonal parameters, as commented before in Section 2 — i.e., shared knowledge and activated information. More specifically, the design of each interaction was based on the intersection of information defining a cultural community. Since GestINF was created as a corpus of the University of Alicante, the correlates of cultural communities within the campus were considered to be equivalent to university groups, such as students, professors, administration service staff, and maintenance service staff. These groups worked then as a starting point to apprehend shared knowledge. Similarly, in order to control activated information as accurately as possible, each group received two texts before the interaction: one of them was specific or specialized — dealing with their academic career or profession —; the other one was general, related to current affairs occurring during the days when the interaction took place. The interactions were recorded in a studio managed by the Image Studio (University of Alicante) on campus, in which we were able to register everything happening throughout the conversation.[3] Table 1 below summarizes the communities, triggering texts and participants in each of the interactions of the corpus.

GestINF is, in essence, a hybrid corpus, half between a guided design and a spontaneous nature (Briz and Albelda 2009; Rojo 2016, 2024; Pons 2022). Since

2. Each interaction offers 3 videos with separate audios as well as the conversational transcription. Eight of the ten interactions are already completed and available at the web; the other two are in the revision process.

3. All the participants were informed about the aims of the project and about its use in researching. All of them signed a consent report, which is available at https://si.ua.es/es/vertice/documentos/contrato-de-cesion-de-derechos-de-imagen-y-de-autor.pdf. Furthermore, GestINF obtained the approval of the Ethics Committee of the University of Alicante in 2024.

Table 1. The corpus GestINF

Interaction	Community	Participants	Triggers
Int. 1	Students (English studies)	2 boys 2 girls	Social media Bloomsday
Int. 2	Administration Staff	2 men 2 women	Movie theaters and streaming platforms Brexit and Erasmus
Int. 3	Professors and researchers (Philology)	2 women 2 men	Future of Humanities Simultaneous degrees
Int. 4	Students (Spanish studies)	4 girls	Elections 2019 RAE and Twitter
Int. 5	Administration staff (libraries)	2 men 2 women	Marie Kondo's philosophy Silence at libraries
Int. 6	Students (Translation studies)	3 girls 1 boy	Eurovision contest 2019 The value of translations
Int. 7	Professors and researchers (Geography)	2 men 2 women	Wedding gifts and taxes Gentrification
Int. 8	Maintenance staff	2 women 2 men	Workday registration Uncopyrighted brands
Int. 9	Students (Primary Education studies)	3 boys 1 girl	People against wars Cells and school
Int. 10	Students (Geography)	2 boys 2 girls	Women empowerment and T. Swift Drought and collapse

there was a process to recruit informants — who received possible triggering topics before the conversation — and since the interactions were going to be recorded — of which the participants were aware —, GestINF can be considered a guided corpus; however, since the only instruction that the participants received for the interaction was "talking" — letting the speakers find their space in the conversation and distribute their roles as they want, and waiting for how interaction would proceed, including topics —, GestINF can be acknowledged as spontaneous. Furthermore, in contrast to the overwhelming quantity of information contributed by currently available big data-based corpora, GestINF stands out as a small — even a kind of *craft* — corpus, which offers the possibility of identifying emerging strategies. *Es eso* is precisely one of these strategies, which has been formally fixed as an interactional construction.

4. *Es eso* in interaction

Es eso represents the perfect fusion between informational configuration and linguistic structure, which further works as a useful strategy for information management. From a formal point of view, the structure exhibits a certain degree of fixation; from a semantic perspective, it plays an interactional value that cannot be transparently explained as the sum of its parts. Nevertheless, a careful look at the constituents making up the construction may help explain the process of constructionalization of intersubjectivity and the functional meaning shown by *es eso*.

4.1 Structural description of *es eso*

The discourse projections often developed by the verb *ser* 'to be' as well as the discursive potentiality shown by the neuter demonstrative *eso* 'that' contribute to the intersubjective nature of the construction and to its functional location within the pragmatic domain.

4.1.1 *On the verb ser 'to be' in Spanish. Beyond attribution*

Together with *estar* 'to be', *ser* 'to be' is one of the Spanish copulas (Porroche 1990; RAE / ASALE 2009: 37.7a-37.7k) — that is, they behave as shell-verbs, lacking lexical meaning and working as mere nexuses between a property and a base of attribution. In (6), the property *simpática* 'nice' is assigned to the base *María* through the copula *ser* 'to be', which presents this feature as a way to characterize María — i.e., María correlates with the category of nice people —; by contrast, with the copula *estar* (7), the property is presented as a stage of the base — i.e., along a temporal-aspectual continuum, where María is at a specific point or stage where she is known for the property *simpática* 'nice'.

(6) María *es* simpática.
'María is nice'

(7) María *está* simpática.
'María is being nice'

Beyond these characterizing predicates, there are some other structures — i.e., identifying structures (RAE / ASALE 2009: 2798–2807) — where *ser* does not relate a property to a base with the aim of characterizing it anymore, but rather equalizing the references denoted in each of the related phrases that make up the construction. Indeed, traditional grammar has labeled these cases as equational structures (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1989), since the verb *ser* 'to be' behaves as happens with equality between two algebraic expressions. In this equality process, the seg-

ment occurring after *ser* 'to be' is usually understood as specifying or restricting the reference denoted in the preverbal segment so that this reference can be identified.

(8) El principal problema es la falta de agua.
'The main problem is the lack of water' (RAE / ASALE 2009: 37.5j)

These structures have received two semantic interpretations (RAE/ASALE 2009: 37.5k): according to the former, the post-copular segment is always considered to be an attribute, which can show properties — as in characterizing predicates such as (6) — or can provide references — as in the identifying structures such as (8) —; as regards the latter, identifying structures are always considered to be inverted — that is, in a case such as (8), the subject should be *la falta de agua* 'the lack of water', while the attribute should be *el principal problema* 'the main problem'.[4]

Regardless of the semantic problems caused by the classification of identifying-*ser* structures as attributive forms, these constructions seem discursively very productive. Among the variety of possible phrases occurring in the post-verbal position, certain patterns are recurring (RAE/ASALE 2009: 37.5l-37.5u), such as proper names or pronouns (9); dates (10); or propositions emerging as semantic or pragmatic hyponyms that specify the hypernym preceding *ser* (11). In discursive terms, indeed, these structures are not interpreted as copulative displaying a semantic relation of attribution, but as two-headed constructions that are formed by two discourse segments — identified and identifying —, which also play several discursive functions, such as introducing persons (9), identifying events (10) — time-wise —; or developing a topic while employing a kind of semantic or pragmatic relation of inclusion (11).

(9) El alquimista de Nespresso es Alexis Rodríguez.
'The alchemist of Nespresso is Alexis Rodríguez'

(10) El estreno será el 6 de enero de 2017.
'The premier will be on January 6th 2017'

(11) La misión de un fotógrafo que se envuelve en el dolor ajeno ha de ser contar esas historias y no la suya propia.
'The mission of a photographer who becomes involved in the pain of others must be to tell those stories and not his own'

4. This analysis is consistent with one of the formal clues to detect the attribute in Spanish — i.e., the replacement by the neuter clitic *lo*. While the replacement of *la falta de agua* by *lo* is hardly acceptable, the result improves if the hypothesis of the preceding attribute is assumed: *El principal problema es la falta de agua* > *#El principal problema lo es vs. La falta de agua es el principal problema* > *La falta de agua lo es.*

Owing to their identifying or specifying nature, these structures have been related to some others where the verb *ser* occurs and where a semantic relation of attribution cannot be traced either — i.e., (pseudo-)clefts (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1989, 2015; Sedano 1990, 2010; Moreno Cabrera 1999; RAE / ASALE 2009; Pérez Saldanya 2021, among others). (Pseudo-)clefts constructions are made up by three components (RAE / ASALE 2009: 40.10b; Sedano 2010: 41): (a) the verb *ser* 'to be'; (b) a free relative with no antecedent (*lo que Juan necesita* 'what Juan needs'); and (c) a noun phrase (*un descanso* 'a rest'). According to the way in which these three constituents are ordered, three different structures are usually distinguished: clefts (12); pseudo-clefts (13), and inverted pseudo-clefts (14) (cf. Gutiérrez Ordóñez 2015; Remberger 2020; Pérez Saldanya 2021, for recent discussion of (pseudo-)clefts in Spanish).[5]

(12) Es un descanso lo que Juan necesita.
'It is a rest what John needs'

(13) Lo que Juan necesita es un descanso.
'What John needs is a rest'

(14) Un descanso es lo que Juan necesita.
'A rest is what John needs'

(Pseudo-)clefts are considered to be identifying structures (Sedano 1990: 21–22), because the verb stablishes an identity relation between the two related segments; and they are also classified as specifying structures (Moreno Cabrera 1999: 4298–4299), since one of the segments — i.e., the noun phrase (*un descanso* 'a rest') — indicates the reference of the other — the relative clause (*lo que Juan necesita* 'what Juan needs') — by saturating the variable (cf. Pérez Saldanya 2021: 6).

The peculiar syntactic configuration shown by (pseudo-)clefts usually relates them to a certain informational configuration. In fact, Example (15) shows a neutral version for the Examples (12)–(14).

(15) Juan necesita un descanso.
'Juan needs a rest'

In contrast to (15), the verb *ser* 'to be' in the (pseudo-)clefts separates an argument or an adjunct from a proposition, which results in the discursive prominence

5. These authors also deal with other structures related to (pseudo-)clefts, such as *que galicado* or some other oral constructions (cf. Borreguero Zuloaga 2016), which are not discussed in this paper for length issues.

of the isolated segment (Pérez Saldanya 2021: 18). Additionally, the free relative clause (*lo que Juan necesita* 'what Juan needs')[6] is presented as assumed or presupposed (Lambrecht 1994; Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1997), operating as a background where the isolated segment — or informational focus (*un descanso* 'a rest') — is foregrounded. This focalizing function of isolating a segment against a background is usually interpreted as possessing a contrastive purpose: the focus (*un descanso* 'a rest') contrasts with some other alternatives (such as a *better job, a close friend, a fancy house…*, etc.).

In fact, this frequent informational configuration constitutes the plausible original context that explains the evolution of what some authors have referred to as "the focalizing use of *ser*" (Bosque 1999; Sedano 2006, 2010; Méndez Vallejo 2015), which occurs in certain varieties of Spanish, such as the Caribbean Spanish spoken in Venezuela, Panamá, Ecuador or Colombia, and in which the structure seems to emancipate from the (pseudo-)cleft pattern, preserving the verb *ser* as a kind of focalizing particle (16).

(16) Juan necesita es un descanso.
('Lit. *Juan needs is a rest*) What Juan needs is a rest' (Sedano 2010: 44)

Some recent studies, however, underscore the necessary equivalence between (pseudo-)clefts and the presupposition/focus informational configuration. After a quantitative survey of Italian press, Borreguero (2016) concludes that the occurrence of anaphoric elements — that is, those which have previously appeared in the discourse and then count as old information — in the position of the isolated phrase clearly exceeds to that of phrases which formally should be more consistent with new information –such as undetermined noun phrases or proper names — and which apparently should be best candidates to occupy the focus position. According to Borreguero, (pseudo-)clefts are then used as mechanisms for textual cohesion that allows the speaker to relate a previously introduced information with a subsequent specification, as shown in (17):

(17) Un presunto pedofilo è stato arrestato dalla polizia a Pavia. È un operaio di 48 anni, accusato di atti sessuali nei confronti di una bambina di sei anni. Lavora in un'industria casearia. Da un mese avrebbe compiuto atti sessuali nei confronti di una bambina di 6 anni che frequentava l'asilo, sfruttando l'amicizia

6. Free relatives are usually considered those that are introduced by the pronoun *quien* 'who' / *quienes* 'who' or by any of the relative adverbs (*donde* 'where', *como* 'how'); by contrast, pseudo-free relatives are those introduced by complex relatives — i.e., formed by the relative que preceded by a determinant —, such as *el que, la que, lo que* 'what' or their plural counterparts (RAE / ASALE 2009: 47.7).

coi genitori. È stata la bambina, confidandosi con un'amichetta, a dare il via alle indagini.
'An alleged pedophile has been arrested by the police in Pavia. He is a 48-year-old worker, accused of sexual acts against a six-year-old girl. He works in a dairy industry. For a month he allegedly committed sexual acts against a 6-year-old girl who attended the nursery, exploiting the friendship with her parents. It was the little girl, confiding in a friend, who made possible to start the investigation' [translation is mine] (Borreguero Zuloaga 2016: 536–537)

According to Pérez Saldanya (2021), this new informational function is consistent with the degree of grammaticalization suffered by the construction. (Pseudo-)clefts have a wide-ranging typological classification, existing both in Romance as well as in Germanic languages. However, they are not at the same stage of grammaticalization in all languages: although they seem to be characterized by a higher degree of grammaticalization in English and French, (pseudo-)clefts point to low- and medium-degrees of grammaticalization in Romanian and Spanish, respectively. (Pseudo-)cleft constructions may even show different grades of grammaticalization in the same language; for instance, they are more grammaticalized in Brazilian Portuguese than in the European variety, and the same thing occurs in American Spanish versus European Spanish. In Pérez Saldanya's view, this degree of grammaticalization has a bearing on (pseudo-)clefts being used with different discursive functions and showing distinct foci. The most prototypical cases in Spanish are those where the free relative contains old information, the isolated phrase originates as a narrow focus (new information contrasting with some other alternatives), and the whole construction plays a corrective, contrastive function. Nevertheless, (pseudo-)clefts may also develop a textual, identifying role, through which the relative may provide new information, in spite of adopting the form of a background or a presupposition, and the isolated phrase may retrieve an old entity, as argued by Borreguero Zuloaga (2016) and as observed again in (18):[7]

(18) Belcourt habla francés, español, italiano, alemán. Es su dominio del italiano lo que le permite infiltrarse en la organización de la mafia que controla el tráfico de estupefacientes en Tánger.
'Belcourt speaks French, Spanish, Italian, German. It is his mastery of Italian that allows him to infiltrate the mafia organization that controls drug trafficking in Tangier' [Translation is mine] (Pérez Saldanya 2021: 6)

7. In a similar way, Traugott (2008), claims that *wh*-clefts in English may denote non-retrievable information and that the non-controversial nature of presuppositional information is sometimes used to show a position that is contrary to the addressee's or even to change the topic of the conversation.

In sum, the verb *ser* may leave the syntax pathway — where it represents the copula in a relation of attribution — to progressively project upon discourse, where it contributes different pragmatic (discursive or textual) functions.

4.1.2 *Discursive potential of the neuter demonstrative eso 'that'*

If the transition undergone by the verb *ser* 'to be' leads us from syntax to discourse, the inherently-deictic nature of the neuter demonstrative *eso* 'that' in Spanish places us within the domain of communicative situation.

Demonstratives in Spanish constitute a heterogeneous category that include pronouns (19), determinants (20) or even adverbs (21), in which an entity is categorized with respect to the participants in interaction (RAE / ASALE 2009: 1269).

(19) Me gusta este.
'I like this'

(20) Esa chica tiene problemas.
'That girl has problems'

(21) Aquí se está bastante bien.
'We are fine here'

Demonstratives are conceived as a deictic category, since they point to coordinates where an utterance is framed (Lyons 1977: 635). From a deictic perspective, they fuse two systems (person and space) and can provide information about a third person according to different degrees of distance in relation to the *origo* (Eguren 1999: 940): *este* (m, sg) / *esta* (f, sg) / *esto* (n, sg) / *estos* (m, pl) / *estas* (f, pl) 'this' means proximity; *ese* (m, sg.) / *esa* (f, sg) / *eso* (n, sg) / *esos* (m, pl) / *esas* (f, pl) 'that' means an intermediate point between proximity and distance; and *aquel* (m, s) / *aquella* (f, sg) / *aquello* (n, sg) / *aquellos* (m, pl) / *aquellas* (f, pl) 'that' means distance. The arrangement of deictics in Spanish is based on a ternary system (Diessel 1999), but in contrast to some other ternary languages, the Spanish paradigm is based on double anchoring, since both the distance with respect to the speaker and that with respect to the addressee are relevant for choosing the appropriate deictic (Da Milano 2007; De Coock 2013: 10).

According to their deictic behavior, demonstratives exhibit ostensive uses — when they are related to 'monstration' or situation signalling — and phoric uses — when the text is the specific domain for signalling — (Eguren 1999: 940; RAE / ASALE 2009: 1719–1723). Furthermore, the flexibility of the system allows speakers to reinterpret the objective spatial dimension and project it onto some other levels of meaning (Eguren 1999: 938; De Cock 2013: 8). This is especially evident in cases of postposition (22), where a determinant conveys the specificity of the referent and a demonstrative denotes its location, thus favoring a highly expressive

structure that projects physical distance onto more abstract values and leading to interpretations such as irony, depreciation… (RAE / ASALE 2009: 1302–1303).

(22) La chica esa.
'(Lit. *the girl that*) That girl'

Spanish is further characterized by having a neuter form within the paradigm of demonstratives: *esto* 'this', *eso* 'that', *aquello* 'that'. Since neuter nouns are nonexistent in Spanish, these demonstratives do not indicate specific neuter antecedent, which means that they can trigger certain degree of inherent abstraction or vagueness in their process of denotation (Gutiérrez-Rexach and Zulaica 2007). The lack of a specific antecedent with which the demonstrative relates generates a process of cognitive manipulation (Achard 2001), which leads the addressee to make use of the joint focus in order to find the abstract region being profiled by the speaker. This means that the use of the neuter demonstrative always implies certain degree of intersubjectification *à la* Traugott (2010), since the interpretation of meaning is highly oriented towards the addressee involvement (De Cock 2013: 13–14).

In contrast to what happens with *aquello* 'that', *esto* 'this' and *eso* 'that' have developed relevant discourse functions. According to De Cock (2013: 15, 30–31), while *esto* 'this' turns the concept closer to the speaker and becomes more specialized in discursive deictic uses,[8] *eso* 'that' is inherently intersubjective, since it turns the reference into an intermediate space shared by the speaker and the addressee; thus, we can say that it has specialized in the expression of intersubjective values that support reaction and assessment of a previous stretch of discourse. The characterization of neuter demonstratives is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Neuter demonstrative in Spanish (De Cock 2013: 30)

	Esto	**Eso**	**Aquello**
Distance	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Participant	Speaker's area	Addressee's area	Outside interaction
Diadic proposal	Face to face: inside interaction Participants next to each other: proximal vs. Distal		Outside interaction
Non-situational uses	Speaker's discourse (discursive deixis)	Addressee's discourse (intersubjectivity / interaction)	Almost absent in interactional discourse

8. For instance, *esto es* 'this is' works a particle that allows the speaker to reformulate his/her previous discourse in search of precision of accurateness.

The intersubjective discursive value is also intensified by its own way of retrieving information. In Lambrecht's view (1994: 43–50), information is always relational — not only the participants are relevant, but also the kind of things in which they participate, so information file increases through propositions. Clear evidence for this relational nature resides in the fact that propositions can be retrieved by pronouns. In a similar way, Dryer (1996: 483–485) vindicates the fact that both entities and propositions extend along the continuum of activation. Significantly, in the case of Spanish, it is the neuter demonstrative which is used to invoke propositions that have been previously activated.

4.2 *Es eso*: Constructionalization of intersubjectivity

Although both the discursive functions displayed by the verb *ser* — that of identification and focalization — and the intersubjective and information retrieval properties provided by *eso* contribute the peculiarities of the construction, the functional meaning of *es eso*, as illustrated in (1) and (23), cannot be compositionally explained as the result of its parts. The example in (23) is obtained from Interaction 4, which is played by students from the degree in Spanish Studies. The participants received two prompts: a specific one — related to the way in which the Real Academia Española de la Lengua answered a question concerning the gender of adjectives in Spanish (specifically, why the feminine of *marrón marrona** 'brown' does not exist) — and the controversy that this answer had sparked in social networks; and a general one — related to the way in which their generation perceived the 2019 general election in Spain, which was about to take place at the moment when the interaction was recorded. In this sequence, the participants discuss whether the RAE's answer — which equates *marrón* 'brown' to other adjectives without gender distinction, such as *imbécil* 'fool' — was malicious, impolite or not. Through *es eso*, H1 retrieves a previously activated proposition to both align with H3 and distance from H2.

(23) H3: [yo creo que hay] muchos ejemplos como para tener que utilizar [*IMBÉCIL*]
'there are too many examples to have to use IMBÉCIL'
H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'
H3: [(risas)]
'laughs'
H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'

H2: ayy →/ yo no sé →/ [yo lo vi]
'Well, I don't know… I saw it'
H1: [a mí]
'To me…'
H2: y digo *tampoco hay que ser tan exquisito* ↑
'And I thought that there's no need to be so sensitive'
(GestINF, Int. 4, min. 00:31)

The structure exhibited by *es eso* in (23) seems to follow a process of constructionalization, which is observed in a certain formal fixation. In fact, it does not admit a first segment specifying a possible subject for the verb, as demonstrated by the anomaly illustrated in (24).

(24) # [es que] que yo creo que hay muchos ejemplos como para tener que utilizar imbécil es eso
'The fact that I think that there are too many examples to have to use *imbécil* is that'

Then, the construction *es eso* seems to behave differently from an identifying (and compositional) structure with the neuter *eso* as a second segment. Indeed, the behavior illustrated in (23) contrasts with that shown by the identifying structure in (25), which is extracted from Interaction 6. This conversation is held by students from the degree in Translation Studies, who received two prompts: a specific one which was related to the literary value of translations; a general one which dealt with the controversy linked to the fact that 2019 Eurovision Contest was going to take place in Israel. While the participants are talking about the rough landscape of Alicante, in the minute 19:55 H1 uses an identifying structure where *eso* occurs as a second segment with a signaling – i.e., external deictic – value.

(25) [y hay un riachuelo] / digo igual **es eso** / el río Seco
'and there's a creek, and I say may (it) is that, the Seco river'
(GestINF, INt. 6, min. 19:55)

In contrast to what happened in (23), the identifying structure in (25) has a syntactic subject, which is dislocated at the right periphery, but which can be syntactically restored within the structure, as shown in (26).

(26) El río Seco es eso
'The Seco river is that'

Similarly, the formal fixation of *es eso* in (23) is justified by the fixed order of the construction; specifically, it does not admit the inversion of its components. Inter-

estingly, the inverted version — *eso es* (lit. *this is*, but meaning 'sure') — represents a different particle or discourse marker, with a different pragmatic function, as shown in (27). The example is extracted from Interaction 3, which is played by the group integrated by professors and researchers of Philological Studies who were also part of the Faculty Team by the time when the interaction was recorded. They also received two prompts: a specific one — related to simultaneous degrees, which were contemplated by the Faculty as a possibility for the students —; and a general one — concerning the future of humanities.

(27) H1: [sí, porque tampoco] ni siquiera en eso hay estabilidad de criterio / ¿no?↑
'yes, because there isn't even a unanimous opinion, is there?'
H3: [claro / claro // **eso es**]
'Of course, of course. (Lit. *that is*) Sure' (GestINF, Int. 3, min. 40:37)

Eso es means here 'sure' and has been constructionalized as a discourse marker, which is employed by the speaker to approve an action that was previously carried out by the addressee or to confirm a proposition previously uttered by the addressee (García Vizcaíno 2006). This type of confirmative function is corroborated in (27): in fact, H3 — who was the Dean of the Faculty and to whom certain authority is acknowledged by the part of the other participants — employs *eso es* to validate a proposition uttered by H1. Note that H1 has introduced her proposition as suspended — subject to a subsequent corroboration or to a social confirmation — through the use of the tag *no?* at the end of her turn.

One may wonder if *eso es* represents a case of *Verum Focus* (Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti 2009). Beyond the syntagmatic constituents of the construction, the focus may fall onto the polarity of the proposition, and there are different strategies to mark this across languages. In Spanish, one of these strategies is anteposition, which may be used both to corroborate previously activated propositions and to refuse previous assertions. According to this perspective, *eso es* could be considered a strategy of *Verum Focus* that originates from an identifying construction of the type *es eso*. The interaction of *eso es* with focus particles, such as *precisamente* 'precisely', is interesting in this way. The focus adverb does not operate in a position that precedes the verb (28); and the discourse marker seems to lose its discursive effect of confirmation when the adverb precedes the whole construction (29).

(28) *Eso precisamente es
'That precisely is'

(29) #Precisamente eso es
'Precisely that is'

Unlike the construction *es eso* — which in the present paper is related to a previous identifying or focal structure —, the function of the discourse marker *eso es* has been linked to a previous characterizing structure, which still admits the recovery of the attribute, as reflected by the paraphrasis of (30) (García Vizcaíno 2006). Interestingly, the original structure would admit a *Verum Focus* strategy (31), with a similar meaning to the discourse marker *eso es*[9] (32).

(30) Eso es así
'(Lit. *that is that way*) that's the way it is'

(31) Así es
'(Lit. *this way is*) that is'

(32) H1: [sí, porque tampoco] ni siquiera en eso hay estabilidad de criterio / ¿no?↑
'yes, because there isn't even a unanimous opinion, is there?'
H2: Eso es / Así es
'(Lit. *that is*) Sure / (Lit. *that way is*) That's the way it is'

Eso es and *es eso* appear to be two discursive constructions with parallel, but distinct meanings. This semantic distinction is confirmed because neither of them is discursively acceptable in a context where the other fits. In the context of (27), *es eso* loses the confirmative value that *eso es* conveyed in the original example, as shown in (33). Similarly, *eso es* is rejected in the original context of (23), as illustrated in (34).

(33) H1: sí porque tampoco ni siquiera en eso hay estabilidad de criterio / ¿no?↑
'yes, because there isn't even a unanimous criterion, is there?'
H3: **Eso es** / # **Es eso**
'(Lit. *that is*) Sure' / '(Lit. *(it) is that*) I agree (with you and disagree with others)'

(34) H3: yo creo que hay muchos ejemplos como para tener que utilizar *imbécil*
'I think that there are many examples to have to use *imbécil*'
H1: es que **es eso** / *es que eso es
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree' / '(Lit. *it that that is*) But sure (and against others'

9. The higher versatility of the fixed construction or discourse marker *Eso es* with respect to the Verum Focus strategy over a characterizing structure (*Así es*) is evidenced by the fact that just the former can validate actions, as argued by García Vizcaíno (2006).

Eso es and *es eso* are two interactional constructions that have been fixed as discourse markers — and specifically as assertion reinforcements (Martín Zorraquino and Portolés 1999: 4147–4148) —, but their roles are divided in terms of (inter)subjectivity. *Eso es* is used to confirm a suspended proposition or an action that requires approval — as claimed by García Vizcaíno (2006) —. When being used, it gives the speaker the status of a primary source — who can validate previous information (Nuyts 2001, 2012; Squartini 2012) —, and the structure is acknowledged as subjective.[10]

By contrast, *es eso* emerges as an intersubjective construction, both in the sense of Traugott (2010) as well as that of Nuyts' (2001, 2012). In terms of Traugott (2010), the meaning of *es eso* retrieves a proposition which has been uttered — and defended — by the addressee; as regards Nuyts' (2001, 2012) perspective, presenting the proposition as shared information, about which the speaker and the addressee assume a shared responsibility, results in a higher quality information, which means that it is introduced as the result of an intersubjective agreement. From a (counter)argumentative point of view, this reinforced proposition turns into a sufficient argument (Portolés 1998) — that is, into a type of argument that stands out as a stronger one as opposed to any other potential counter-argument. In fact, in (23) — also illustrated in (35) —, H1 uses *es eso* to align with H3 and to take a stand against H2's view.

(35) H3: [yo creo que **hay**] **muchos ejemplos como para tener que utilizar [*IMBÉCIL*]**
'there are too many examples to have to use IMBÉCIL'
H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'
H3: [(risas)]
'laughs'
H1: [es que **es eso**]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree'
H2: ayy →/ yo no sé →/ [yo lo vi]
'Well, I don't know… I saw it'
H1: [a mí]
'To me…'
H2: y digo ***tampoco hay que ser tan exquisito*** ↑
'And I thought that there's no need to be so sensitive'

10. *Eso es* would extend then along a continuum of grammaticalization that would result in a subjective value (Narrog and Heine 2021), in contrast to its intersubjective counterpart *Es eso*.

The (counter-)argumentative strategy displayed in (35) is schematized in (36):

(36) H3: original proposition
H1: *Es eso* > Reinforced proposition > Sufficient argument
H2: Counterargument

This (counter-)argumentative function is consistent with the distributional behavior of the construction itself. In fact, *es eso* is frequently preceded by the discourse marker *es que*, which is frequent in oral language and which may also point to an intensive counter-argumentative value (Porroche 1998: 237–239; Fernández Leborans 1999: 2403–2407; RAE / ASALE 2009: 3483; Fuentes Rodríguez 2015; Pérez Saldanya y Hualde 2021). This co-occurrence is observed in (35), but also in (37) below, which is extracted from Interaction 5, played by members of the Library staff. They also received two prompts: the specific one was related to silence in libraries; the general one dealt with Marie Kondo's peculiar philosophy of order. In the sequence reproduced below, they are talking about the hardships of emptying a relative's house after his/her death. Against H4, who is a collector by vocation and is in favor of preserving everything, H1, H2 and H3 agree with the youtuber's advice as a way to avoid unpleasant emotional situations as the one related in this sequence.

(37) H3: yo digo / me canso tanto físicamente como–/ como emocionalmente
'I get tired both physically and emotionally'
H2: claroo / [claro / **porque te remueve todo**]
'yes, sure, because it moves you inside'
H3: [es que es tremendo / sí]
'it is overwhelming, it is'
H2: todo
'everything'
H1: sí / un montón de recuerdos / claro
'yes, too many memories, sure'
H2: [claro]
'yes, sure'
H1: [**es que es eso** / entonces →]
'(Lit. *is that (it) is that*) I agree, then…' (GestINF, Int. 5, min. 40:34)

The frequent co-occurrence of *es eso* with the counter-argumentative marker *es que* may lead us to think that they constitute a unique construction. However, there are some other markers which can appear in lieu of *es que*, as happens in (38). This example is extracted from Interaction 1, which is played by students of

the degree in English Studies at the University of Alicante. They also received two prompts: a specific one — dealing with Bloomsday —; and a general one — which was related to the business fusion of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. In this sequence, they are talking about the possibility of banning bullfights in Spain and about the necessity of elaborating a plan to guarantee the existence of these animals without the suffering inflicted by bullfights.

(38) H4: [**Eso es lo que dijo Fan Cuesta**]
'that is what Fran Cuesta proposed'
H3: [**se tiene que hacer un PLAN**]
'a plan has to be made'
[...]
H2: pues sí // entonces / ¿tú qué harías? ↑ / ¿los prohibirías? ↑ // ¿o no? ↑
'then, What would you do? Would you prohibit that? Or not?'
H3: yo sí (risas) / [yo obviamente]
'I would, obviously (laughs)'
H4: [yo si hubiera– /]
'lit. I if it had' ('I would if I had to')
H3: [pero–/]
'but'
H4: [yo si hubiera un referéndum popular] / sobre sí / no → / °(yo votaría quee → / *no a los toros* / peroo →)°
'If there was a popular referendum whether yes or no, I would vote no bullfights, but...'
H3: pero / **es eso** / habría que hacer [un PLAN para que no los sacrificaran a todos]
'(Lit. *but (it) is that*) but I agree, there should be a plan to avoid their sacrifice' (GestINF, Int. 1, min. 26:22, 28:19)

Note how in (38) the original proposition has emerged as a result of the negotiation of meaning between H4 and H3; with *es eso* H3 further turns this proposition into a reinforced assertion and into a sufficient argument against the view of those who think that prohibiting bullfights would mean the extinction of this breed of bulls.

Es eso may co-occur with any marker of contrast implying a negation of expectations, as happens with the scalar particle *encima* 'lit. on top of that' ('what's more') in (39). The example is extracted from Interaction 6, which has already been introduced above. In this sequence, the participants are talking about the point of getting the celebration of Eurovision contest in a certain coun-

try, and the conclusion they reach is that this can be used as a kind of paint job before the international community.

(39) H2: pero → ¿por QUÉ quie-ren GA-NAR? / ¿qué–/ cuál–/ qué prestigio tienen? / [han gastao dinero →]
'but, why do they want to win? What sort of prestige do they obtain? They have lost money…'
[…]
H4: **[es como un lavado de cara] / como pasa este año con Israel**
[…]
'that is like a paint job, as happens with Israel'
H3: yy → yo pensaba que iba a ganar él // él o *Fuego*
'and I thought that he was going to win, him or *Fuego*'
H1: [sí / yo estaba entre esos dos]
'yes I was between one of them'
H3: [eso fue *unexpected*]
'that was unexpected'
H2: cualquiera de los dos / pero no la quee ((ha ganado↑))
'any of them, but not the one that won'
H2: [(risas)]
'laughs'
H4: [(risas)]
'laughs'
H3: encima **es eso** / [que es–/ está pasando algo parecido como → con Brasil y el fútbol ↑
'(Lit. *on top of that, (it) is that*) What's more / against some other's opinion, I agree with you. This is the same as happens with Brazil and football' (GestINF, Int. 6, min. 03:26, 04:44)

Although *es eso* usually occurs with counter-argumentative markers, this is not a *sine qua non*. It also appears together with agreement markers which in some way anticipate some kind of disagreement or take advantage of a certain latent opposition. This is what is shown in (40), where *es eso* is preceded by *claro* (Portolés 2020). The example is extracted again from Interaction 1, played by the students of English Studies. In this sequence, they keep on talking about bullfights. Through the use of *es eso*, H1 aligns with H3 (bullfights are not like techno discos, because discos don't hurt anyone, while animals do suffer in bullfights) and against H2 (if you don't like bullfights, don't go, but don't support their prohibition).

(40) H2: y digo / *bueno / yyyy* → // ***si no te gusta a ti NO VAYAS / pero no'm prohíbas lo que a mí [sí me gusta]***
'And I say *well, if you don't like it, don't go, but don't forbid me to do what I like*'
H3: [**pero es que eso no le hace daño a nadie**]
'but that doesn't hurt anybody'
H2: [entonces es el mismo–/ es el mismo ejemplo.]
'so this is the same example'
H1: [claro / **es eso**]
'of course, (Lit. *(it) is that*) I agree' (GestINF, Int. 1, min. 29:20)

Table 3 below summarizes the incidence of *es eso* in the corpus GestINF. Although figures are not quantitatively significant and a transversal study across different oral corpora is required, from this preliminary research it is followed that the construction works better within more cohesive groups, which is not surprising: the groups that seem more close-knit show that their members are more willing to negotiate meaning.

Table 3. Distributional incidence of *Es eso* in corpus GestINF

Interaction	Community	*Es eso*
Int. 1	Students (English)	3
Int. 2	Administration staff	–
Int. 3	Professors and researchers (Faculty Team)	–
Int. 4	Students (Spanish)	6
Int. 5	Administration staff (libraries)	2
Int. 6	Students (Translation Studies)	10
Int. 7	Professors and researchers (Geography)	1
Int. 8	Maintenance staff	–

Furthermore, although the appearance of *es eso* with different markers shows a certain versatility, its preference for co-occurring with *es que* sheds some light on the underlying structure or the informational configuration which remains behind the emergence of the new construction. *Es que* is a frequent marker in Spanish oral speech, where, in addition to its contrastive value compatible with the interactional construction *es eso*, it can also play up to 16 other microfunctions, all of them included under either a metadiscursive or a modal macrofunction (Enghels, Jansegers and Van Den Diressche 2024). Beyond these values, the informational configuration of the structure where *es que* emerged seems also

relevant for explaining its co-occurrence with *es eso*. According to Remberger (2020), the underlying structures supporting *es que* may be reduced pseudo-clefts or inverted, identifying *ser* constructions, both of which are structures that show the same informational configuration, as shown in (41a). After a process of shortening or ellipsis, the first segment of the structure — that one working as a topic — would remain implicit, leaving an empty slot that should be pragmatically refilled. This result is compatible with the behavior of *es que*, which introduces an informational focus that provides a justification, explanation, reason or reformulation of something previously uttered, as reflected in (41b).[11]

(41) a. topic / presupposition + BE + focus (pseudo-cleft, inverse copula clause)
b. BE + focus (Remberger 2020: 58–59)

The original informational configuration underlying *es eso* seems quite similar to the one traced by Remberger for *es que*: it may come either from an identifying (inverted) *ser* construction (42) or from a pseudo-cleft (43).

(42) La cuestión es eso.
'The question is that'

(43) Lo que yo opino es eso.
'What I think is that'

Similar to the process displayed by *es que*, Examples (42) and (43) show that a general, unspecific first segment — *the question*, or any other generic noun encapsulating a propositional value (Fernández Leborans 1999), in the case of the bare identifying construction; or *what I think*, in the case of the pseudo-cleft — could be restored. The focalizing effect — due to the verb *ser*, in some author's opinion; or due to the second segment of the cleft construction, in some other's view — falls over the neuter demonstrative, which precisely retrieves an available activated proposition.

Again, the interaction between *es eso* and focus adverbs is relevant to detect the integrated nature of the construction, since although not anomalous, they

11. Remberger's hypothesis is corroborated by the analysis carried out by Pérez Saldanya and Hualde (2021). After a diachronic study, they confirmed that *es que* constructions emerged from reduced pseudo-clefts with an elided but initially retrievable subject and that they were due to the conventionalization of causality inferences. According to these authors, *es que* constructions started to occur in bridging contexts (Heine 2002), where they could be interpreted either as reduced (pseudo-)clefts or as constructions justifying what had been previously said. Thus, *es que* initially exhibited a causal meaning and worked as an argument supporting what had been previously said. In replying answers, *es que* started to acquire a contrastive meaning and was progressively specialized in supporting previous counter-arguments, which explains the intensive value that some authors (cf. Marín and Cuenca 2012; Fuentes 2015) attributed to it.

seem to give the construction back a compositional reading (*es* + *eso*) and to remove the counter-argumentative function displayed by the construction as a whole (44).[12]

(44) Yo creo que hay muchos adjetivos como para usar imbécil
'I think that there are too many adjectives to have to use *imbécil*'
Es que es precisamente eso
'Lit. Is that (it) is precisely that'

Indeed, when *es eso* emancipates from the original identifying / cleft structures and starts to routinize as a new construction, it preserves the focalizing value of the original segment, but it also imposes a re-elaboration of the retrieved information. The available, activated proposition is now reinterpreted as a shared proposition, which then plays a (counter-)argumentative function — letting the speaker who uses it align with the addressee and distance from a third part. If Pérez Saldanya's (2021) hypothesis about the cline of (pseudo-)clefts is assumed, *es eso* would be consistent with a new stage on their path to grammaticalization; that is, one in which a (counter-)argumentative function is the primary functional meaning.

5. Conclusion: *Es eso*, from sentence grammar to interaction grammar

From a particular perspective, *es eso* represents a case of constructionalization (Traugott 2015; Traugott and Trousdale 2013), which shows a certain formal fixation and a unitary meaning. In formal terms, it does not admit syntactic material incrustation or a change of the order of its components; that is, it does not follow syntactic sentence-rules anymore. In semantic terms, it exhibits a unitary meaning which consists in reinforcing a previous assertion (Martín Zorraquino and Portolés 1999), but in contrast to its subjective counterpart *eso es, es eso* emerges as an intersubjective construction, both in the sense of Traugott (2010) and in that of Nuyts (2001, 2012). In functional terms, *es eso* plays a (counter-)argumentative function, since the reinforced assertion emerges as a sufficient argument (Portolés 1998) against some other counter-arguments. In distributional terms, *es eso* seems to operate in highly cohesive communities, which are willing to negotiate shared knowledge.

More generally, *es eso* represents the perfect symbiosis between informational configuration and linguistic structure, since it turns into a very useful strategy

12. In constructions starting a process of grammaticalization and where the value of the whole construction resides precisely in the pragmatic function of the structure (i.e., functional value), these nuances are essential (cf. Cuenca 2024).

for information management which speakers use to achieve their communicative goals. With respect to its process of constructionalization, it can be considered a case of grammaticalization if a wide conception of grammar is assumed; that is, if we move from a conception that is based on a restrictive meaning revolving around semantics and organized around a syntactic nucleus into an interactional meaning reflecting language in use (Kaltenböck, Heine and Kuteva 2011; Heine 2023). Concerning the specific mechanism through which *es eso* has moved from a sentence grammar to a grammar of interaction, it may represent a case of cooptation, since it cannot be interpreted as an identifying / cleft construction made up by the verb *ser* and a neuter demonstrative as a second segment anymore, but as a kind of discourse marker which has specialized in managing the speaker's relations with his/her utterance, with the addressee and, thus, with the communicative situation.

While corpus GestINF has allowed us to detect an interactional, intersubjective construction, some further challenges are posed for future research, such as the close connection between the original configurational structures of both *es eso* and *es que*, as well as the differences in meaning and in original sources between *es eso* and *eso es*. A transversal analysis across oral corpora should be relevant at this stage.

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PART 3

Interaction as a model for discourse

The grammar of interactives in !Xun (Namibia)

Christa König & Bernd Heine
University of Frankfurt | University of Köln

Over the last decades, the nature of social exchange has become an increasingly popular topic of discourse linguistics. The present paper focuses on one particular aspect of the on-going debate. It is based on the model of interactive grammar (Heine 2023), resting on the comparative analysis of grammatical descriptions of well over one hundred languages. In this model, ten types of interactives, that is, extra-clausal expressions of linguistic discourse, are distinguished. Interactives form a grammatical domain of their own, to be distinguished from that of sentence grammar.

Work on interactive grammar has so far largely been restricted to the analysis of conversational interaction. The goal of this paper is to extend the model to the study of narrative texts. To this end, the paper is concerned with a set of 20 fictional spoken narratives in a little-known African language to explore the role that interactives play in them. This language is !Xun (also known as Ju), spoken by traditional hunter-gatherers in Namibia, Angola and Botswana. The paper demonstrates that interactive grammar provides an important tool for processing narrative discourse.

Keywords: argument structure, folktale, interactive, speaker-hearer interaction, !Xun

1. Introduction

Linguists of the past were preoccupied for the most part with the form and meaning of clauses and sentences in their propositional format. Grammars of the languages of the world were — and to quite some extent still are — focused on identifying the elements figuring in these languages, most of all morphemes, words, and phrasal and clausal constructions, and describing their structure and interrelationship. This means that these linguists were on the whole fairly tight-lipped on linguistic discourse beyond the sentence on the one hand, and on what is widely considered to be the main function of languages, namely social commu-

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nication on the other. The situation changed, not only but to quite some extent due to work on conversation analysis — work done not by linguists but by sociologists and social psychologists (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Subsequently, linguists became increasingly aware of the central role played by social interaction and they began to adopt a wider scope of discourse.

Among more recent mainstream theories of linguistic analysis, Functional Discourse Grammar stands out in taking social communication into full account (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008; 2010). On this framework, which has a pronounced comparative-typological perspective, language has a 'hierarchically ordered layered organization', based on the principle that 'pragmatics governs semantics, pragmatics and semantics govern morphosyntax, and pragmatics, semantics, and morphosyntax govern phonology' (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2010: 371). Most interesting for the present purposes is the fact that of the four levels distinguished in the framework it is the interpersonal level which tops all the other levels, namely the representational, morphosyntactic and phonological levels. The interpersonal level pertains to the interaction between speaker and hearer ('addressee' in their terminology).[1]

An interest in social communication also surfaces in other frameworks that have been proposed in the course of the last two decades. Suffice it to mention the Val.Es.Co. framework of Pons Bordería and associates, applied mainly to Spanish discourse (e.g., Pons Bordería 2014; 2022). The framework has been applied to a range of issues, such as word order, functions such as intensification and mitigation, and polyfunctionality of discourse markers. Linguistic discourse no longer centers around information units based on the structure of sentences, it is conceived in this model as a combination of hierarchical, dialogical and monological units, and within each unit, different positions are distinguished. And while the focus of research is on the segmentation of spoken texts, the model has also a social dimension.

However, more than the kind of studies just mentioned, it is frameworks assuming that language processing has a dualistic organization, in short, 'dual-process' frameworks, that have informed our understanding of linguistic discourse (e.g., Van Dijk 1980; Maschler 1994; 2009; Clark and Fox Tree 2002; Haselow 2016a; 2016b; 2017; Wiltschko 2021; see Heine 2023, Chapter 5; for more details, see also Section 5 below). Such a framework, one that is especially relevant to the theme of the present paper, is that of Wiltschko (2021). She proposes a

1. The terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' are used in a general sense to refer to the two characters centrally involved in social interaction, called, respectively, 'sender' and 'addressee', 'receiver' or 'recipient', respectively, by some other authors. In written texts, the corresponding terms are 'writer' and 'reader'.

dual-process framework, distinguishing between two levels of discourse. Level 1, called interactional structure, is 'required to talk to people' (Wiltschko 2021: 199) whereas Level 2, called propositional structure, is required to talk about the world. On Level 1 she distinguishes two sub-levels, one called responding, which aids the interplay between initiating and reacting moves, e.g., in turn-taking. The other is grounding, which manages the common ground between interlocutors, it plays an important role in the synchronization of minds.

Wiltschko's analysis is a pioneering one, for two reasons. For one thing, she shows in detail that 'talking about the world' and 'talking to people' are not only different functions of language but are also formally distinguished. And for another, she demonstrates that discourse processing cannot reasonably be reduced to text organization; rather, it requires a thorough understanding of the mechanism of speaker-hearer interaction underlying it.

The model adopted in this paper is the one expounded in Heine (2023). It resembles that of Wiltschko (2021) in a number of ways. First, it is also a dual-process model, distinguishing two separate domains of language usage. Second, it also argues that speaker-hearer interaction is a central component of language use. And third, it also assumes that what she calls interactional structure represents somehow a 'metatextual' level of processing — a point that we will return to in Section 2.1. Differences concern most of all the following. First, Wiltschko's work rests on generative-syntactic methodology whereas the approach adopted in Heine (2023) is one of mainstream functional linguistics. Second, she is restricted to a thorough analysis of English response elicitors (*eh?, huh?*) and response signals (*no, yeah* and *yup*), called by her confirmationals and response markers, respectively, while we will be concerned with a wider range of interactive types. And finally, our approach has a cross-linguistic, typological perspective, while hers focuses on the structure of the English language.

As shown in Heine (2023), the model of interactive grammar rests on the comparative study of more than one hundred languages of world-wide distribution. It is based on the observation that speakers dispose of two contrasting modes for structuring their discourses.[2] One mode, represented by sentence grammar, organized in a propositional format and having an analytic organization, focuses on conceptual communication about the world; it corresponds to Level 2 of propositional structure of Wiltschko (2021). The second mode, represented by interactive grammar, has a holophrastic organization and a focus on social com-

2. The terms 'speaker' and 'hearer' are used in a general sense to refer to the two characters centrally involved in social interaction, called, respectively, 'sender' and 'addressee', 'receiver' or 'recipient', respectively, by other authors. In written texts, the corresponding terms are 'writer' and 'reader'.

munication, it relates to her Level 1, that is, interactional structure. The two grammars have complementary functions and both are needed for successful communication. The distinction between two grammars exhibits, on the one hand, correlations with observations made in neurolinguistic studies on differential activity in the two hemispheres of the human brain. On the other hand, there are also noteworthy parallels to a similar distinction made in social psychology between two types or systems of reasoning and judgement (Heine 2023, Chapter 5).

Interactive grammar includes ten types of interactives, that is, extra-clausal expressions of linguistic discourse. They are invariable deictic forms that are in some way set off from the surrounding text semantically, syntactically and prosodically and can neither be negated nor questioned. They all can, at least in some of their uses, form utterances of their own.

Having been treated in previous work as a fairly marginal part of language, interactive grammar is described as a distinct category that contrasts with sentence grammar both in its functions and its discourse behavior. As demonstrated in Heine (2023, Chapter 2), interactives share dependency relations with other pieces of discourse. These relations can be accounted for in terms of the concept of valency (see Section 2.2).

By far most of the time that people across the world use their languages is in conversations, and this is where interactive grammar is at home, and this is also where most research findings have been made. However, speaker-hearer interaction can also be observed in other kinds of discourse genres, and the question is whether this grammar also applies to such genres. To this end, the present paper looks at one specific genre, namely that of story telling, and more specifically at the discourse structure of folktales in the !Xun language of southwestern Africa. The goal of the paper is to test whether, or how, interactive grammar plays a role in structuring narrative texts.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of the model. It provides a concise characterization of the types of interactive categories distinguished in Section 2.1, while Section 2.2 describes the argument structure of interactives. Section 3 is reserved for the !Xun language, where Section 3.1 gives a short introduction into the language, and Section 3.2 deals with the inventory of interactives to be found in this language. Section 4 then is the central part of the paper, where the role played by interactives in the folktales of the language is analyzed. The findings made are then discussed in Section 5, and Section 6 presents the conclusions reached.

2. Interactive grammar

The present section provides a brief summary of the model of interactive grammar as proposed in Heine (2023); for more details, see there.

2.1 Interactives

Interactive grammar consists of ten types of form-meaning units, called interactives, that is, prefabricated routine forms which include what Ferguson (1981) describes as social formulas and Coulmas (1981: 23) as conversational routines. They are 'interactive' in the sense that they are grounded in the world of social communication. A definition of interactives is presented in (1). Note that the definition makes no mention of function, for which see Heine (2023, Table 3.1).

(1) An interactive is an invariable deictic form that is in some way set off from surrounding text semantically, syntactically and prosodically and can neither be negated nor questioned.

One noteworthy characteristic of the category of interactives is that, at least in some of their usages, they can form utterances of their own, as they do in the English examples of Table 1.[3] But, in addition, they share a set of properties that define them as a category and distinguish them from elements of sentence grammar, such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, etc.

For cross-linguistic evidence on which the properties proposed in (1) are based, see Heine (2023, Section 1.3). One may wonder what justification there may be for classifying the ten forms in Table 1 as belonging to the same category considering that they differ from one another in a number of ways. Differences concern in particular the following observations. First, not all instances of interactives conform to all of the definitional properties mentioned in (1). For example, discourse markers and some other types of interactives may lose their prosodic distinctiveness in fluent discourse. Second, interactives are invariable expressions, but some are quite commonly extended by additions like the ones printed in parentheses in (2):

3. In order to distinguish them from other usages of the same form, interactives are, wherever this is feasible, printed with an exclamation mark at the end. Thus, the social formula *Sorry!* is distinguished typographically from the use of the same element in sentence grammar, as in *I'm very sorry for having bitten your dog*. In text examples, interactives are printed in bold.

Table 1. The main types of interactives (Heine 2023)

Type	English example
Attention signal	*Hey!*
Directive	*Shh!*
Discourse marker	*Indeed.*
Evaluative	*Great!*
Ideophone	*Thud!*
Interjection	*Ouch!*
Response elicitor	*Right?*
Response signal	*Yes.*
Social formula	*Bye!*
Vocative	*Mom!*

(2) (Absolutely) **wonderful!** Evaluative
(Certainly) **no!** Response signal
(Many) **thanks!** Social formula
(My dear) **Jeff!** Vocative

Nevertheless, to the extent that they share most of the definitional properties there is justification to assign them to the same *prototype* of interactives. Note that categorization in this paper rests on prototype theory, for more details see Heine (2023: 8; see also Andrason 2020: 124; Andrason and Heine 2023). With regard to the definition in (1), this means that prototypical instances of interactives conform to all the properties while less prototypical ones may lack one or the other of the properties.

And third, most interactives represent paradigm instances of elements of social interaction that, first and above, serve social exchange in the here-and-now of the context. But some, especially interjections, are more marginal instances. Nevertheless, even interjections can be shown to participate in the network of interactional functions characterizing the category. For example, they are related to other types of interactives via the grammaticalization chains presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Paradigm changes observed in interactives (see Heine 2023, Figure 1)

Directive	>	Attention signal	>	Discourse marker
Vocative	>	Attention signal	>	Discourse marker
	>	Interjection	>	Discourse marker

Interactive grammar differs from sentence grammar in a principled way. Major distinguishing features are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Some features distinguishing sentence grammar and interactive grammar (cf. Heine 2023, Table 7.1)

Parameter	Sentence grammar	Interactive grammar
Form	Analytic	Holistic
Speed of processing	Slow	Fast
Locus of semantic-pragmatic anchoring	Sentence	Situation of discourse
Role of context	Highly decontextualized	Context-sensitive
Constraints on usage	Follows morphosyntactic rules	Follows pragmatic principles
Use of gesture	Moderate	Pronounced

Differences between the two kinds of grammar concern in particular the way information is presented in discourse, as can be illustrated with the following case in the examples of (3). Each of the four utterances contains a combination of a clause of sentence grammar and an interactive, namely a response elicitor (*right?*), an interjection (*aha*), a response signal (*yes*), and an attention signal (*listen*). The interactives are presented at either the right or the left periphery of the clause they relate to.

(3) English
  a. Dave hates classical music, **right?**
  b. **Aha,** Dave hates classical music.
  c. **Yes,** Dave hates classical music.
  d. **Listen,** Dave hates classical music.

Like in the case of the examples in (2), one might hypothesize that the interactives in (3) represent more peripheral or marginal discourse material (see especially Ameka 2020). But from a perspective of discourse processing, which aims at reconstructing the communicative intents of interlocutors in structuring discourse, this hypothesis is not adopted here. While we are not able to reconstruct exactly what the intents of speakers may be when designing utterances like those in (3), an alternative interpretation arises when drawing on paraphrase as a heuristic for elucidating the meaning content of interactives, as described in Heine (2023: 56–63). On the paraphrase approach, one may say that speakers uttering (3) are aiming at conveying conceptual information of the kind paraphrased roughly in (4).

(4) Possible paraphrases of (3)
  a. Is it correct that [Dave hates classical music]?
  b. I am surprised that [Dave hates classical music].
  c. It is correct that [Dave hates classical music].
  d. I am calling your attention to the fact that [Dave hates classical music].

This observation suggests in particular the following: What in (3) has the appearance of more marginal elements carries the main discourse information of the utterances concerned in (4). And conversely, what appears to be the main information in (3) is coded in (4) as subordinate information. The conclusion drawn in Heine (2023) is therefore the one in (5):

(5) In combinations of interactives with pieces of sentence grammar, the former tend to present foregrounded information while the latter present backgrounded information.

A number of authors have argued in fact that interactives are located at some superordinate level of discourse processing vis-à-vis sentence grammar, representing a higher level of discourse processing. Evans (1992: 235), for example, suggests with reference to interjections:

> One might argue that we are dealing here with some sort of higher-level organization, paralleling at the level of discourse the sequential organization of words within the sentence.

Similarly, based on her syntactic model of language competence, already referred to in Section 1, Wiltschko (2021: 3) asserts that what she calls interactional language is hierarchically structured, in that 'interactional structure dominates propositional structure', where the latter is roughly the same as what is called here 'sentence grammar'.

2.2 Argument structure of interactives

The stance adopted in this section is based on Heine (2023, Chapter 2), where it is argued that interactives have an argument structure similar to that of verbs. What distinguishes the two kinds of structure, or valency, are the following features:

a. Rather than in the structure of a sentence, interactives are anchored to and shaped by the context (= situation of discourse).
b. Accordingly, their functions and placement are derivative not of any syntactic constraints but of their role in discourse.
c. Rather than the sentence and its propositional format, their field of operation consists essentially of the discourse at large.

d. Accordingly, the argument structure of interactives may extend over larger pieces of discourse.
e. Being shaped by the context, the two main arguments distinguished, namely S (speaker) and H (hearer), are defined deictically with reference to that situation.
f. Being recoverable from the context, S and H do not receive any formal coding.
g. In addition to the arguments S and H, there can be a third argument, namely T (theme).

The nature of these arguments can be illustrated with the dialog in (6), involving the response signal *right*. Response signals present reactions to what another interlocutor just said, where this reaction is typically one in terms of agreement or confirmation, or their opposite, i.e., disagreement or disconfirmation. That A's utterance constitutes an argument is suggested by the fact that use of *right* in (6) would be incomplete without it.

(6) English (Méndez-Naya 2006: 146, (12))
A: You may find it hurts a little at first.
B: **Right.**

On the paraphrase analysis proposed by Heine (2023: 56–63), the descriptive meaning of *right* can be rendered roughly as in (7a), and (7b) summarizes its argument structure.

(7) a. Paraphrase of *right*: I (S) find that what you (H) just said (T) is correct.
b. Argument structure: *right* (S, H, T)

Thus, the response signal *right* constitutes the head of a construction which requires three arguments — without them, its meaning would be incomplete. Following the convention used in orthodox treatments of sentence grammar, the T argument is also called a 'complement'. T arguments can be said

- to be subcategorized for by interactives as their head (cf. Trask 1993: 51),
- to be valence-dependent on an interactive (cf. Bussmann 1996),
- to fill an argument slot of an interactive (cf. Dixon 2010: 424), and
- to be obligatory dependents on the head, which is an interactive (cf. Brown and Miller 2013: 89)

What distinguishes interactive complements (T) from complements of verbal predicates are in particular the following features. First, complement and head can belong to different turns of a conversation, as (6) above and (8) below show. Second, and relatedly, the complement can be presented by an interlocutor other than the speaker presenting the head, cf. *Huh?* in (8): The head (*Huh?*) is pro-

duced by speaker B in (8) whereas its complement is produced by speaker A. And third, head and complement may present different speech acts, as can also be shown in (8), where speaker A uses an assertion and speaker B a question, that is, the response elicitor *Huh?*.

(8) A: Egyptian geese are no geese, they're ducks.
B: **Huh?**

One might wonder whether it is not possible to propose an alternative analysis whereby the utterance made by A in the discourse construction of (8) is a kind of 'head' while *Huh?* in B constitutes an element appended to it. Such an analysis can perhaps be defended on semantic grounds but does not do justice to the dependency relation obtaining between the two (see Section 2.1): Whereas B presupposes something like A, the reverse does not apply — in other words, A is a dependent information unit of B and not the other way round. Accordingly, the utterance by A in (8) is analyzed here as a complement of that in B — that is, *Huh?* requires a complement in order to be well-formed. The argument structure of (8) can therefore be represented roughly as in (9) (see Heine 2023: 207).

(9) a. Paraphrase of *Huh?*: I (S) have not clearly heard what you (H) just said (T).
b. Argument structure: *Huh?* (S, H, T)

In this way, the argument structure of all ten types of interactives has been described in Heine (2023), presented here in Table 4.

Table 4. Approximate paraphrases of interactives (see Heine 2023: 88, Table 2.5)

Type	Example	Possible interpretation
Attention signal	*Hey!*	I (S) am calling your (H) attention (to the following (T)).
Directive	*Shh!*	I (S) want you (H) to be quiet.
Discourse marker	*Indeed.*	I (S) find that what you (H) say (T) is true.
Evaluative	*Great!*	What I (S) have just experienced (T) is great.
Ideophone	*Thud!*	Something (T) gives the impression of a heavy solid object falling to the ground.
Interjection	*Ouch!*	I (S) have just experienced a sudden and sharp pain.
Response elicitor	*Right?*	Am I (S) right in saying what I've just said (T) to you (H)?
Response signal	*Yes.*	I (S) agree with what you (H) say (T).
Social formula	*Bye!*	You (H) and I (S) are now parting from one another for a significant period of time.
Vocative	*Mom!*	I (S) am calling the attention of you (*mom*, H).

3. The !Xun language

The present paper is concerned with one specific type of narrative texts. More specifically, we will be dealing with a set of 20 folktales of the !Xun people in southwestern Africa, which form an essential part of !Xun culture.

3.1 The language

!Xun, also called Ju, includes a cluster of dialects spoken by traditional hunter-gatherers in Namibia, Angola and Botswana. While the area where !Xun is spoken is at least of the size of Spain, the number of speakers is small, presumably not exceeding 20,000. The language used to be classified as forming the Northern branch of South African Khoisan (Greenberg 1963), but the term 'Khoisan' (or 'Khoesan') tends to be avoided when referring to a genetically defined unit, that is, to one of the four language families distinguished by Greenberg (1963).[4] Since 2010, !Xun has been proposed to form one of the two branches of the Kx'a family, the other branch being ǂAmkoe (or ǂHoan; Heine and Honken 2010).

!Xun can be described as an L-complex, that is, as a cluster of twelve 'dialects' or 'lects',[5] which are listed in Table 5.[6] They are linked by a chain of mutual intelligibility, but speakers at the extreme ends of the chain do not understand one another. Table 5 provides a genetic classification of all those varieties of the language for which some grammatical information is available.

The present paper is confined to the W2 dialect, on which we carried out field research between 1989 and 1992 (König and Heine 2001). Speakers of W2 call themselves *|Ākhòè !xòān or |Āwē !xòān*, which literally means 'Kwanyama !Xun'. All W2-speaking communities do in fact live interspersed among the Bantu-speaking Kwanyama people of northern Namibia near the Angolan border, roughly between Eenhana in the west and Ekoka in the east.

!Xun is a fairly analytic-isolating language, characterized among others by the presence of a noun class system and serial verb constructions. The basic word

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4. We nevertheless believe that 'Khoisan' is a convenient reference term applied to the non-Bantu and non-Cushitic click languages of Africa, and it is used here exclusively in this sense. Accordingly, with our use of 'Khoisan' we do not wish to make a claim about historical relationship.

5. So far there is no reliable information on what a !Xun 'dialect' is. We therefore refer to varieties of the language that differ in their grammatical structure from other varieties only loosely as 'dialects'.

6. With the exception of N3, all dialects are discussed in the dialect grammar of Heine and König (2015). The N3 dialect of Angola was added more recently by Heine and König (2016).

Table 5. A tentative genetic classification of !Xun dialects based on grammatical distinctions

Branch	Cluster	Dialect (Abbr.)	Where spoken
1 North	1.1 Northern	N	Southeastern Angola
		N3	Eastern half of central Angola
	1.2 Western	W1	Ovamboland, northern Namibia
		W2	Ovamboland, northern Namibia
	1.3 Kavango	K	Western part of Kavango Region, Namibia
	1.4 Tsumeb	T	Unknown, presumably extinct, Namibia
2 East	2.1 Ju|'hoan	E1	Around Tsumkwe in northeastern Namibia and adjacent parts of Botswana
	2.2 Dikundu	E2	Around Dikundu, Okavango River, northeastern Namibia
	2.3 ǂKx'au-‖'ein	E3	North of Gobabis, eastern Namibia

order is subject-verb-object, although there is a minor pattern exhibiting subject-object-verb word order. The noun-class system distinguishes three genders: Class 1 (N1, *hä̀*) is the reserved for human referents and class 4 (N4, *kā*) for inanimate referents, while class 3 (N3, *yìí*) has a semantically mixed membership.[7] Class membership is not marked on nouns, it is only distinguished in the three pronouns mentioned in parentheses.

Like other Khoisan languages, !Xun belongs to the phonologically most complex languages of the world; the number of segmental phonemes identified is 120, of which 21 are vowels and 99 consonants. These consonants include four click types, which are: dental (/), alveolar (!), fricated alveolar ((!!), and lateral (‖). There are four distinct sets of vowels, namely plain (e.g., *a*), nasal (*an*), aspirated (*ah*), and pharyngeal (*aq*).[8] In addition, there are four distinct tone levels and four register tonemes, namely high (*á*), mid (*ā*), low (*à*), and extra-low (*ä̀*).

The W2 dialect analyzed here is that spoken in Ekoka, a village located southeast of Okongo in northern Namibia. The dialect has been described in some detail (especially in Heine and König 2013; 2015; König and Heine 2001; 2003; 2004; 2008; 2010; 2018). W2 is similar to and fully mutually intelligible with the other dialects of the Northwestern branch.

7. Class 2 does not exist in the W2-dialect, on which the present account is based; it is found in other !Xun dialects (see Heine and König 2015).

8. For practical reasons, distinctions in vowel quality are marked in !Xun by additional consonants rather than diacritics.

Features conspicuously distinguishing W2 from the other dialects is, on the hand, the presence of the fricated alveolar click [!!], corresponding to the palatal click (ǂ) in all other dialects. On the other hand, the W2 dialect is characterized by the use of the topic marker *má*, which is an obligatory part of the sentence, dividing the sentence into a theme (preceding *má*) and a rheme constituent (following *má*). Most commonly, the theme constituent is identical with the subject of a clause, which means that *má* usually separates the subject from the verb, as in (10).

(10) djù-|xòà má ā g|è.
person TOP PROG come
'Someone is coming.'

3.2 Interactives

Interactives are typically set off from the surrounding text by a stronger intonation and a slightly raised tone level. This applies most distinctly to vocatives and interjections and minimally to discourse markers, and in fluent speech such distinguishing features may disappear. The following observations are far from providing a representative account, we are restricted to the data contained in our text collection, which consists entirely of spoken narrative texts. While the texts also contain many conversations, these are not representative of naturally occurring spontaneous discourse; rather, they simply render the narrator's understanding of how conversational interaction proceeds. Each of the ten types of interactives distinguished in Table 1 is now characterized briefly in turn.

Attention signals

There are no function-specific attention signals, but a number of types of interactives can be used to call the hearer's attention to some state of affairs, such as discourse markers, interjections, and vocatives. For instance, when jackal was competing with tortoise in a race in folktale 15 ('Jackal, who has never met tortoise'), jackal would use the interjection *wú* in Example (11) to draw attention to the fact that he lost the race.

(11) **wú** mí má **kòhà** ‖āá ú ǹ|húnyā tí
oh 1.SG TOP MIR surely go leave PASS
'Oh! I must have been left behind![9]' (15/51)

9. Interactives in texts are printed in bold. The source information '(15/51)' stands for '(Folktale 15, line 51)'.

Directives

Directives are for the most part but not exclusively conventionalized, frequently employed imperatives expressing requests or commands (Heine 2023, Section 3.2.2). While many have the same form as corresponding imperative verbs, some have forms differing from those of verbs. For example, the !Xun verb for 'come' is *g|è*, but the corresponding directive is *tsí!* 'Come (here)!'. And the directive corresponding to the verb *ú* 'go' is *tú'à!* 'Go (away)!'.

Presumably the most frequently occurring directive is *hŋ́!* 'Look!', identical in form with the verb *hŋ́* 'see'. In most of its occurrences it takes a T argument: It acts like an attention signal introducing the following utterance, which provides its argument, cf. (12).

(12) **hŋ́** ílò má **kòhà** kí kúlú
look God TOP MIR HAB make
'Look! (What) God has created!' (15/9)

Discourse markers

Of all the ten types of !Xun interactives it is discourse markers that have received most research attention (König and Heine 2018). Discourse markers are by far the most important means for guiding the hearer through the text. They provide boundary markers between segments of the text, inform the hearer about how these segments are connected to one another, and signal what the relative weight of a given information unit is vis-a-vis other units. In the text segment of (13) of folktale 10 ('Jackal and hyena steal a goat'), hyena provides a conclusion on his bodily state after having been cheated by jackal and hit by the goat owner, introducing his comment with the discourse marker *áyè*.

(13) **áyè** mí má n|ūún ̀h-ā khúí
well 1.SG TOP very be-T feel.pain
'Well, I am feeling a lot of pain.' (10/56)

A special sub-category of discourse markers can be seen in what is usually called fillers, like *um* and *uh* in English, also referred to by a number of other terms, such as 'hesitation markers' (e.g., Clark and Fox Tree 2002; Heine *et al.* 2021: 260–6). Being an important device of text structuring, fillers have been attested in a range of different languages of the world (e.g., Hayashi and Yoon 2006; Watanabe 2010). Perhaps surprisingly, however, no clear instances of fillers have been found in !Xun, neither in conversational nor in narrative discourse.

Evaluatives

Providing an assessment by the speaker of what has just been said, evaluatives are rare, !Xun speakers seem to prefer clear-cut polar response signals like 'yes' and 'no'. The only instance we found in the texts is the interactive *tcídjā* 'it is true', as in the response by hyena in (14), where it appears in combination with the preceding response signal *ǎhà* 'yes'; note that the utterance consists of a sequence of three interactives.

(14) **ǎ̀hà áyè tcídjā**
yes well be.true
'Yes well, that is true!' (10/16)

Ideophones

There is not a single ideophone appearing in our text collection. Being one of the most numerous word categories in languages such as Korean or Japanese, ideophones seem to be absent in the Khoisan languages, to which !Xun belongs.

Interjections

The language disposes of a fairly large number of interjections expressing the emotive or cognitive state of the speaker, like *áyè, é, oh,* and *wuh*, all depicting in some way or other the engagement the speaker has in the face of some unexpected state of affairs arising in the course of the narrative; we will return to them in Section 4.3.

Response elicitors

Expressions corresponding to English *right?* or *huh?* were found neither in our text collection nor in our grammatical notes.

Response signals

They are a highly common type of interactives figuring in !Xun narratives. Speakers seem to favor straightforward responses to what was just said, using *ǎhà* or *ǎhàn* 'yes' for affirmation and either of the forms *ān'àn, áyè,* or *|ōā* 'no' for negation, all appearing in utterance-initial position. The negation interactive usually forms an utterance of its own, as in Example (15).

(15) tà |àālè kūndò'à kwèé |ōā
and jackal then say NEG
'And jackal said: No!' (6/27, 28)

Social formulae

A perspicuous typological feature of narrative discourse in !Xun is the paucity of social formulae. To be sure, there are greeting and leave-taking formulae. For example, there is the greeting ritual in (16) when meeting early in the morning.

(16) à á ń-tc'ā. - ǹhàn, mí má tc'ā.
2.SG Q N-sleep yes 1.SG TOP sleep
'Did you sleep?' 'Yes, I slept.'

However, we did not find any formula at all for apologizing. And there is a verb *!áín* 'to thank' but no corresponding interactive for thanking. While *!áín* does occur frequently as an interactive, it does not appear to be used for expressing gratitude; rather, its function is essentially only that of a discourse marker, signalling the end of a narrative text (see Section 4.1).

Vocatives

Expressions for calling or addressing someone are fairly common in language use. We will return to this type of interactives in Section 4.3.

As this overview suggests, !Xun speakers seem to have preferences on which types of interactives they favor in discourse processing. The reason why certain types are not or only rarely attested can be due either to the fact speakers disprefer them or that such types play no role in the particular discourse genre examined. Another possible reason, however, is that the data collection available is simply too small.

4. Fictional narrative texts

The narratives looked at here are folktales dealing with the interaction between anthropomorphized animals, less commonly also between animals and humans, and between humans. They form a central domain of the cultural heritage of the !Xun people. While we were not able to establish how many folktales there are, there is reason to assume that adult speakers know on average at least ten of them, even if there are considerable differences between individual speakers in the number of folktales known. Folktales are transmitted from one generation to another, but speakers were also found to quite commonly design new ones — in fact, for our main information Simon Hampolo there seemed to be no limit to constantly coming up with new folktales.

4.1 Plot and protagonists

In the course of our research we recorded and analyzed altogether 25 narrative texts known to our three main consultants, of which 5 are non-fictional, biographical texts while 20 are folktales (König 2024; see Appendix). Analysis in this paper is restricted to the folktales (see Appendix). The setting of the folktales is one describing an event taking place in some indeterminate location and time in the past. The protagonists, that is, the main characters figuring in the folktales, are generally defined in terms of animal species. In 13 of the folktales, these are exclusively animals while 5 deal with the interaction between humans and animals, and in two of them (Folktales 18 and 20) there are only human characters; a detailed analysis of the folktales is found in König (2012).

The non-human protagonists are most commonly jackal (11 folktales) and hyena (8), followed by lion and monkey (3 each), and elephant, crocodile and goat (2 each), while hippo, birds, chicken, and rabbit figure each only in one of the folktales. There are fairly consistent roles played by the protagonists. Most of the time it is jackal who is the smart one, duping the other animals, but he is not at the top of the scale of smartness, being outwitted by tortoise, who is the wisest, heading the scale.[10] And the bottom of the scale is reserved for hyena, who tends to be portrayed as a bit thick. Human protagonists do not play an exciting role either; when competing with non-human protagonists they are likely to be more at the losing end.

The theme of the folktales is for the most part a problem arising in the course of the interaction between two protagonists and the way the problem is subsequently resolved. The most frequent topic is one where one of the protagonists, most commonly jackal, tries to cheat the other protagonist for some specific personal benefit. In the race between jackal and tortoise, however, it is tortoise who turns out to defeat jackal. The conflict arising thus is generally one between two characters.

Our concern here is with discourse processing, that is, with the structure and style of the plot of !Xun folktales as a type of fictional narrative. And here, our interest is exclusively with the contribution of interactive grammar to structuring the folktales. Due to reasons of space, we are able to achieve no more than providing a scaffold of the level of discourse processing as it is provided by this domain of grammar.

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10. The animal characters figuring in the folktales are typically portrayed as acting like male human beings, we are therefore referring to them with the masculine gender pronoun 'he'; see König (2012) for more details.

4.2 Text organization

The folktales have a fixed frame presenting an exposition at the beginning and a closure at the end. The exposition consists of a presentation of the protagonists, in some folktales combined with a characterization of the theme. Thus, in folktale 7 ('A jackal who is the husband of a lioness'), for example, the narrator describes the theme as in (17).

(17) tā mí má xāŋ̀ ā ǹkx'úí |àālè hà̀-è ń|ŋ̀-ā n!hàè ‖xāún
and 1.SG TOP then PROG talk jackal N1-REL sit.SG-T lion back
'I am telling (the story of) a jackal who is sitting on the lion's back.' (7/4)

This is followed by the complex discourse marker *gāō-è kē má*, which provides the temporal reference of the folktale.[11] The literal meaning of the discourse marker is 'a day which there once was', it can be translated by 'One day' or 'Once upon a time', cf. (18). This discourse marker is an indispensable constituent of all folktales, it marks the beginning of the narrative account.

(18) **gāō-è kē má** |àālè kē ‖àmā hà̀ n!āō
day-PST PST TOP jackal TR be.from N1 house
'One day a jackal came from his house.' (7/5)

Another indispensable discourse marker signals the closure of a narrative text, which is *!áín*, literally meaning 'Thank you!', in Folktale 7 ('Jackal who is the husband of a lioness'), cf. (19).

(19) mí má ǹkx'úí tà-hŋ̀ ‖ú-ā kūndò'à **!áín**
1.SG TOP tell and-EMPH end-T there thanks
'(This is what) I (can tell) and here it ends.' (7/47)
'Thank you!' (7/48)

While *!áín* is the default closing discourse marker, there are four others occurring in a few texts, namely the ones in (20). And occasionally there are combinations of the markers, as in (20e).

(20) a. n!āhín! 'It is finished!'
b. ‖ánní! 'It is finished!'
c. dáŋkì! 'Thank you!' (< Afrikaans *Dankie!* 'Thank you!')
d. goodbye! 'Goodbye!' (< English *Goodbye!*)
e. n!āhín dáŋkì! 'It is finished. Thank you!'

11. In addition to *gāō-è kē má*, there are other variants, like *gāō hà̀ kē má* (day N1 PST TOP). Their meaning is the same.

There is one instance where an utterance of sentence grammar taking *!áín* 'thank' as a verb, cf. (21b). But this utterance is not used instead of but rather as a repetition of the interactive in (21a) at the end of the folktale 'Jackal, hyena and monkey'.

(21) a. !áín
thank.you
'Thank you!'
b. mí má xāŋ́ !áín
1.SG TOP then thank
'I then thank you.' (5/56, 57)

Only one text has been found where no closing discourse marker occurs: In Folktale 4 ('The woman who was gathering food in the bush'), the narrator presents a concluding remark but no marker signalling the end of the text.

In addition to these text-boundary markers, the language disposes of a number of discourse markers serving the segmentation of texts. The following are the ones used most frequently: *kūndò'à* and *kāndò'à*, both can be glossed 'then, there, at that point'. The two are derived via cooptation from the adverbs *kūndò'à* and *kāndò'à*, respectively, both meaning 'there, then' (see Heine *et al.* 2017 on cooptation). Whether the two are used as discourse markers or as adverbs, however, is at times difficult to determine. The adverbs themselves are composed of the distal-demonstrative root *-ndò'à* plus the locative pronoun *kū* and the inanimate noun-class marker *kā* (N4), respectively (Heine and König 2015: 133–134).

When introducing a new text segment such as an episode, the two take the topic marker *má*, as in (22) and (23) below. The function of the two topic-marked discourse markers is to signal the end of an episode and the beginning of a new episode.

(22) **kāndò'à má** n!hǎè xàān tcāō
then TOP lion start wake.up
'Then lion started to get up.' (4/32)

Rather than providing a link between two events following one another, as in (22), these discourse markers can also express a conclusion on what has happened so far. Thus, in folktale 1 ('The hyena and the jackal'), jackal tricks hyena after the two had been looking for fish, and hyena then vows to kill jackal. The narrator concludes the event with (23), at the same time clearing the ground for presenting the event.

(23) **kūndò'à má** cā má xāŋ́ wò̀hà ‖àqñ-ā kòè
there TOP DU TOP then forever separate-T RECI
'From then on the two separated forever.' (1/53)

To conclude, discourse markers constitute the most important tool for segmenting the text into meaningful pieces, providing the hearer with a scaffold of the overall structure of a folktale.

4.3 Speaker-hearer interaction

In the interaction between the two protagonists of the narrative, the speaker is constantly concerned with keeping the attention of the hearer alive. To this end, !Xun speakers draw most of all on the use of vocatives, consisting either of the bare form of address, as in (24), or, more commonly, adding the interjection *yéè* to that form, as in (25). Use of the interjection seems to be optional, there does not appear to be any function associated to it other than that of emphasizing the appeal to the hearer.

(24) **|àālè** tcāō
jackal wake.up.SG
'(And hyena said:) Jackal, wake up!' (10/25)

(25) **g|ùì** **yéè** bà cē tcāō
hyena INT 2.SG OBL wake.up
'Hyena! You must wake up!' (10/37)

Like in other languages, vocatives are predominantly placed at the left periphery of the utterance to which they refer. However, like other interactives they are syntactically independent and can as well appear in other discourse slots. Thus, in the text piece of Example (26) there is a sequence of two vocatives placed at the right periphery of the utterance, the first with and the second without interjection.

(26) bà cē n‖à-hŋ̀ ǒkx'úí tcá-à-ndò'à mí **!ūín-kx'ào yéè mí** **g‖òq-mà**
2.SG OBL NEG-EMPH talk like.that 1.SG friend INT 1.SG man-DIM
'(And hyena answered:) Don't talk like that my friend, my son!' (1/20)

Vocatives are of two kinds, being either calls (or summonses) or addresses (Zwicky 1974: 787; Heine 2023, Section 3.10.3). In the former capacity they are used to single out a hearer or to get the hearer's attention and are invariably placed at the beginning of a discourse segment. As addresses, they serve to maintain or strengthen the contact between speaker and hearer and occur in positions other than at the beginning, as illustrated in (26) above.

Referents of vocatives are most of the time terms for the animal species called or addressed. Thus, the vocative used for the hyena is 'Hyena!' and for the jackal 'Jackal!', etc. In narratives involving humans it is as a rule kinship terms that provide the referents, like 'Mom!' in Example (27).

(27) **tcjè** **yéè** n!!ĩí-m̃hè-tcā cā ā ‖hái-ā-kwè
mom INT dangerous.animal-DIM.PL-DU DU PROG pull-T-RECI
'Mom, the two animals are pulling each other!' (14/34)

Finally, there are also two vocatives which are unspecific as to animal species or other inherent features, namely *!ūín-kx'àò* (cf. Example (26) above) and *hǎ n|úí* (cf. (28), both being glossed 'My friend!'.[12]

(28) **hǎ n|úí** **yéè** mí má kē hń ‖hā kā-è ‖áé cú
N1 other INT 1.SG TOP PST see meat N4-REL die.SG lie.SG
'My friend! I saw meat which was lying there dead.' (1/17)

4.4 Attitudes of the speaker

Among the interactive categories distinguished there is one which crosslinguistically constitutes the paradigm tool for the expression the attitudes of the speaker, namely interjections. The text segments figuring in the present section include three interjections: *é, wuh*, and *kȍhà*. All three express surprise, with surprise being a favored emotive concept in !Xun narratives. The text segment in Example (29) illustrates one use of the interjection *é* 'oh'. The segment is taken from Folktale 14 ('How jackal defeats bush elephant and water elephant'), where elephant and hippo ('water elephant') are wondering:

(29) **é** |àālè kwá tà gè-ā gkhúíñdò
oh jackal Q and be-T strength
'Oh, jackal is so strong?' (14/40)

But the emotive concept of surprise can also be an element of text processing, and here it is what has been called mirativity that plays an important role. Mirative markers involve functional notions such as evidentiality, inferentiality, new information, and surprise; they express a suddenly arising unexpected cognitive and emotive state of the speaker as a result of an experience just made.[13] This experience can be based on contextual information, that is, on what has just been said, but it may as well be based on extra-linguistic stimuli. Mirativity is encoded crosslinguistically by means of a wide range of grammatical expressions. In sentence grammar, such expressions include verbal structures, adverbials, particles, affixes or intonation contours, whereas in interactive grammar mirativity is expressed

12. The literal meaning of *hǎ n|úí* is 'his or her other (one)'.

13. For an insightful recent overview of mirativity research, see Rodríguez Rosique (2025). See also Aikhenvald (2012); Rett (2021).

most commonly by interjections (e.g., *Wow!*) or exclamatives (e.g., *How nice!*) in some of their uses.

In !Xun, a paradigm instance of a mirative interactive is the interjection *kò̀hà*, which is a central element of many fictional narratives. The function of this interjection is to express that the speaker is making an unexpected observation — one that is at variance with the preceding content of the narrative. In folktale 14, jackal manages to engage elephant and hippo in a tug of war. At one stage in the narrative then the two become aware that at the other end of the rope it is not the jackal they were pulling; rather, they were pulling each other. Hence, with the reaction in Example (30) they voice their surprise by means of a combination of the interjection *é* and mirative *kò̀hà*:

(30) **é** m̄hm̄-tcā kwá **kò̀hà** ā ‖hái-ā-kwè
oh 1.PL.IN-DU Q MIR PROG pull-T-RECI
'Oh, it seems, we two were pulling each other!' (14/47)

This mirative interjection normally presents the climax of the narrative account: It signals to the hearer that the protagonists have acquired a new cognitive state, and this state now introduces a new phase in the unfolding narrative. There may be more than one climax in a given narrative and most of the time, each is introduced by *kò̀hà*. For example, in folktale 15 ('Jackal, who has never seen tortoise'), jackal meets tortoise and is surprised about how short the legs of the latter are, making fun of this fact, cf. Example (31) [= (12)].

(31) **hŋ́** ílò má **kò̀hà** kí kúlú
look God TOP MIR HAB make
'Look! (What) God has created!' (15/9)

This insight induces tortoise to propose a race in order to determine who of the two is faster. In the end, jackal is defeated and expresses his surprise in (32) [= (11)], thereby introducing the final phase of the narrative.

(32) **wú** mí má **kò̀hà** ‖āá ú ǹ|húnyā tí
oh 1.SG TOP MIR surely go leave PASS
'Oh! I must have been left behind!' (15/51)

And finally, the mirative interjection is occasionally also employed to draw an unexpected conclusion at the end of a narrative, like that reached by jackal at the end of Folktale 15 in Example (33) when telling tortoise:

(33) **áyè** à **tcí-djā** má **kò̀hà** gè-ā !!hà̀hú
well 2.SG be.true TOP MIR be-T speed
'Well, you are truly fast!' (15/67)

Interjections are almost invariably found at the left periphery of an utterance, but *kȍhà* is different in this respect. Its preferred position is between subject and verb, as the examples above show. However, being an interactive, *kȍhà* can also appear in other positions, and it can be used repeatedly, as it is in Example (34) of folktale 5 ('Jackal, hyena and monkey'), where jackal gives hyena two fish to taste, and the latter responds:

(34) **áè** hǎ̀ má **kȍhà** n|ȍhān ǹ|ŋ̍'ŋ́ má **kȍhà**
oh N1 TOP MIR very be.sweet TOP MIR
'Oh! It is very tasty!' (5/50)

The data presented in this sub-section could achieve no more other than giving an impression of the contribution made by interjections in directing the hearer through the narrative texts examined. This contribution is essentially of two kinds. On the one hand, it shows the emotive commitment characterizing the efforts made by protagonists to pursue their respective goals. On the other hand, interjections play an important role in relating pieces of text to one another and highlighting the relative significance of a particular piece in the unfolding discourse.

5. Discussion

The approach used in the present paper is located squarely in the tradition of dual-processing frameworks, which argues that linguistic discourse cannot reasonably be reduced to just one domain of processing (see Section 1; see also Heine, Kuteva and Long 2020 for a general discussion). Rather, it is assumed to be the product of two separate domains referred to with terms such as the ones in (35) (see, e.g., Hyland 2005: 7–9; Heine 2023, Section 5.2):

(35)
- Microstructure vs. macrostructure of discourse (van Dijk 1980)
- Languaging vs. metalanguaging (Maschler 1994; 2009)
- Autonomous vs. interactive planes of discourse
- Transactional vs. interactional uses of language
- Primary track vs. collateral track of performance (Clark and Fox Tree 2002)
- Discourse vs. metadiscourse (Hyland 2005; 2017)
- Sentence grammar vs. interactive grammar (Heine 2023)

These distinctions do not refer all to exactly the same phenomena; rather, they differ somewhat in accordance with both the theoretical approaches adopted and the data analyzed. Furthermore, the distinction is not to be understood to be discrete; rather, most authors point out that it exhibits overlapping features of some kind or other. What the various distinctions have in common is most of all that

there are two contrasting ways of speaking or writing where one focuses on the transmission of conceptual information while the other has a focus on speaker-hearer interaction in processing discourse.

The approach adopted here is that based on the distinction between sentence grammar and interactive grammar, described in detail in Heine (2023). What sets this approach off from all the others is that it insists on a strictly linguistic definition of the concepts proposed (see Section 2.1 above). This entails that it is fairly narrow in its scope, being restricted in particular to the category of interactives featuring in social communication.[14]

The interactives figuring in the narrative texts discussed in Section 4 serve mainly three functions, namely (a) the organization of texts, (b) speaker-hearer interaction, and (c) the attitudes of the speaker. These functions, however, are not neatly separated from one another, that is, one and the same interactive can serve simultaneously two or all three of these functions.

With regard to function (a), the speaker aims at achieving common ground with their audience by using a set of interactives that provide a textual scaffold for the interpretation of the narrative. And this is in particular the domain of discourse markers. On the one hand, they mark the beginning and the end of the narrative, as the markers *gāō-è kē má* and *!áín*, respectively, do. And on the other hand, they segment the text into a number of utterances and other meaningful segments as well as signalling how the hearer should relate the segments to one another, as the markers as *kūndò'à má* and *kāndò'à má* do. In so doing, the speaker needs to constantly keep track of the cognitive state of their audience, trying to reconstruct the gradually changing state of knowledge they assume the hearer to have.

The main theme of function (b) is for the speaker to establish a bond of interaction with the hearer, trying to make sure that the bond persists and that the hearer does not lose interest in the narrative or gets lost. In the narratives examined here it is the constant use of vocatives that serves as the main device for keeping the hearer logged in. Other conceivable devices, such as response elicitors (e.g., 'right?' or 'isn't it?'), are conspicuously absent in !Xun narratives.

Finally, with reference to function (c), the speaker makes copious use of interjections in order to contribute their personal stance on what is being narrated, thereby introducing an emotive dimension to speaker-hearer interaction. At the same time, interjections are also employed to guide the hearer in recognizing relative differences in the relative value of information provided by the various text segments making up the narrative.

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14. However, interactives themselves are part of a larger domain of discourse processing, namely of thetical grammar (Heine *et al.* 2013).

6. Conclusions

The present paper constitutes the first attempt at exploring the contribution made by interactive grammar in spoken texts beyond conversational discourse. The goal of the paper was to test whether the model can be applied to text genres other than conversational discourse. To this end, a set of folktales of the !Xun language of southwestern Africa was analyzed. The answer provided was in the affirmative. The contribution of interactives in conversations concerns most of all the negotiation of social meaning. In narrative discourse, by contrast, this contribution can be seen, first, in guiding the hearer in the interpretation of the text, second, in maintaining and strengthening the contact with the hearer and, third, in adding an emotive dimension to speaker-hearer interaction.

Whether the observations made can be extended to fictional narrative discourse in other languages or to other types of discourse genres remains an open question, subject to further research. The paper was restricted to one specific aspect of interactive grammar. What this means is that we were not able to do justice to the nature of linguistic exchange, in particular to how this exchange is grounded in the situation of discourse and how meaning is negotiated in speaker-hearer exchange; all this is a matter of research still to be done.

Another issue that needs further attention is whether the !Xun language analyzed in the paper might not be in some ways a special case. We noticed in Section 3.2 that the language seems to differ from other languages studied, in particular in that certain types of interactives, like response elicitors, ideophones, or (hesitation) fillers seem to be absent. Could this possibly be related to the fact that !Xun is the language of a traditional hunter-gatherer culture and has been shaped by this culture in specific ways? Presumably not. Looking at other forager societies shows that such types of interactives are by no means absent. The Akie language, for example, spoken by traditional hunter-gatherers in northern Tanzania, disposes of a set of response elicitors that form an essential part of speaker-hearer interaction not only in conversations but also in narrative discourse. Response elicitors, like *arisʊwɛ́ira* 'do you follow me?', or a filler-type of discourse marker, *ntán(o)* 'you should know', are constantly used to build rapport with and keep the hearer involved throughout the presentation of Akie narratives (König, Heine and Legère 2015a; 2015b; 2020; Heine, König and Legère 2017). Nevertheless, the way !Xun speakers create an interactive frame in processing their narrative texts does not seem overall to be entirely unusual, as a cursory look at other languages we are familiar with suggests.

The content of the paper relates to much of what has been written by students of dual-processing frameworks, like the ones mentioned in Section 5. And it falls squarely within work carried out in the theory of metadiscourse analysis

(e.g., Hyland 1998; 2005; 2017; Ädel 2006; Mauranen 1993; 2010; Zhang 2016). In particular, the category of metadiscourse markers proposed there also includes several of the types of interactives distinguished here. Differences though are considerable, they concern especially the following. First, metadiscourse markers are essentially functionally defined whereas interactives are defined by a combination of functional and formal properties. This accounts for the fact that the class of metadiscourse markers is much larger than that of interactives (see Section 2.1). Second, metadiscourse analysis has a focus on written texts whereas the present analysis rests entirely on spoken language use — note that the vast majority of !Xun speakers has no writing skills at all. And finally, the primary concern of metadiscourse analysis is text organization; interactive grammar, in contrast, looks at language use from the perspective of speaker-hearer interaction.

The concern of the paper was a fairly narrow one. For one thing, we were restricted to a limited set of fictional narratives. And for another, we had to ignore the role played by sentence grammar in analyzing these narratives. It goes without saying that with its virtually unlimited potential of expression, sentence grammar also contributes significantly to discourse processing. An important task for future research therefore is not only to study the nature of this contribution but also to relate it to that made by interactive grammar. Linguistic discourse is beyond any reasonable doubt the joint product of both grammars, but there is also reason to assume that the result is not simply the sum total of the work done by two grammars but that the cooperation between the two adds a wider scope on processing discourse the nature of which is still in need of much further work.

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Abbreviations

C	complement
DI	distal (demonstrative)
DIM	diminutive
DU	dual
EMPH	emphasis pronoun
FAR	far (demonstrative)
H	hearer argument
HAB	habitual
IN	inclusive (pronoun)
INT	interjection
LOC	locative
MIR	mirative
NEG	negation
N	unidentified marker
N1, N4	noun class 1, 4
OBL	obligation
PASS	passive
PST	past tense
PL	plural
PR	proximal (demonstrative)
PROG	progressive
Q	question marker
R	relational suffix
RECI	reciprocal
REL	relative clause marker
SG	singular
S	speaker argument
T	theme argument, transitive suffix
TOP	topic marker
TR	transitive preposition
1, 2, 3	first, second, third person

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Appendix. List of headings of 20 !Xun folktales (König 2024)

1. Hyena and jackal
2. Monkey and crocodile
3. Lion and jackal
4. The woman who was gathering food in the bush
5. Jackal, hyena and monkey
6. Hyena who tries to catch crocodile
7. Jackal who is the husband of a lioness
8. The old man and lion
9. Birds and hyena
10. Jackal and hyena steal a goat
11. Jackal who wants to eat a cock
12. Jackal who stabbed out an eye of a young hyena
13. Elephant and rabbit
14. How jackal defeats bush elephant and water elephant
15. Jackal, who has never met tortoise
16. The old man without legs
17. Jackal, hyena and goat
18. An old man hunting
19. Old men who finds a dead jackal under the tree
20. The blind old man

Discourse relations and evidentiality

Teresa María Rodríguez Ramalle
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

The aim of this paper is to review the connections between paragraphs from a configurational and dynamic approach, following Garrido's papers (2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024). Sentences are integrated into larger discursive units giving rise to a hierarchical constituent structure, consisting of its modifiers or satellites and heads (Mann and Thomson 1988). I will focus on the study of evidential expressions and, specifically, on the use of *así que* and *conque* as markers that head sentences. The study of these evidential expressions makes it possible to show that indirect evidentiality (inferred and reportative) is relevant in the construction of discourse, and this is possible because of the position they occupy in the text and the configuration they help to create.

Keywords: evidentiality, discourse relations, reportative, inference

1. Introduction

Languages differ in the way they express evidential meaning. It is well documented that there are languages that have morphological affixes that codify evidentiality (e.g., Chafe and Nichols 1986; Aikhenvald and Dixon 2003; Aikhenvald 2004, 2006). But in others, reference to the sources of information is encoded in the lexicon. Spanish, French, and English certainly have such expressions (e.g., *it seems, as it appears, it is said, reportedly, according to*), as a part of the lexicon. The lexical means for optional specification of the source of information are universal; but these expressions are not obligatory and do not constitute a grammatical category (i.e., they are neither inflections nor clitics), they do not grammatically encode evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004: 10).

Lazard (1999 and 2001) observes that there are three different situations. There are those forms that encode the evidential meaning and that form part of the morphological structure of a group of languages. In addition, there are lexical resources for the expression of evidential content. Lazard (2001) also states, however, that it is possible for evidential meanings to be conveyed not by specific forms, but by forms whose central meaning is something else.

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Spanish does not have a morphological system of strictly evidential markers, but it is possible to find evidential readings in some contexts and constructions. This is what happens with consecutive locutions — *así que, conque*, and *de manera/modo que* — in their illative uses. In these cases, as Rodríguez Ramalle (2015a and b) has pointed out, although the evidential interpretation is not exclusive, it appears in some specialised contexts, in which these expressions head an independent clause that does not have a relation of result with any immediately prior discourse.

Studying the illative markers makes it possible to examine the extent of the presence of evidentiality in Spanish, which lacks morphological evidentials. It also allows for consideration of the type of evidence on which these categories are based. And, interestingly enough, it helps to understand the discourse relations.

In addition to recovering and introducing context into the syntactic structure, evidential expressions also allow us to link sentences within a paragraph or a text. We are talking about discourse relations in which the sources of information allow us to establish concrete discursive connections and, therefore, to organise the discourse hierarchically, as already proposed by authors such as Mann and Thomson (1988), Asher and Lascarides (2003) and Asher and Vieu (2005), who assume that discourse has a hierarchical structure.

This hypothesis implies that if we take the paragraph as the basis of textual organisation, as the link between the sentence and the text, the study of paragraphs allows us to observe an organisation arranged on the basis of principles of hierarchy and dependence, as happens in the sentence domain. Dependence and hierarchy are concepts that can be applied at the discourse level to analyse the connectional relationships between sentences, as proposed in Garrido's work (2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024). Sentences and utterances are integrated into larger discourse units, giving rise to a hierarchical constituent structure, since not all of them are situated on the same plane — a projecting head can always be identified, together with its modifiers or satellites (Mann and Thompson 1988, and Mann, Matthiessen and Thompson 1992), and it is modified by the inclusion of new units.

The main objective of this paper is to show that evidentiality (both inferred and reportative) is important in organising discourse, the relationship between sentences and the hierarchy among them, i.e., the head and the satellite. To provide evidence for this claim, I will examine how inferred and reportative evidentiality are manifested in the discourse when a sentence is headed by *así que* and *conque*, particles that have been previously analysed as evidentiality markers in Spanish in special context. I will not focus on the proofs of evidential meaning; other papers have studied this objective (Rodríguez Ramalle 2013, 2014, 2015a and b; Sainz 2018a and b). Instead, I will review the evidential interpretation in a con-

text where sentences, linguistic information, and prior knowledge can be integrated into the structure and configuration of a dynamic discourse.

This analysis has two implications: on a theoretical level, for the structure and configuration of the paragraph and the text, and from a more practical point of view, for argumentative chaining, since the way in which evidentiality organises the relationship between sentences guides us on how to construct discourse.

In Section 2, we will discuss the evidential interpretation of *así que* and *conque* by looking at their possible differences. After this, in Section 3 we will present the theoretical framework of discourse organisation and hierarchy, and in Section 4 we will review the implications of the evidential readings analysed in Section 2 for discourse organisation and hierarchy, with special attention to the connection between sentences and the way in which the various sources of information are integrated. In the last section the conclusions will be presented.

2. Indirect evidentiality with *así que* and *conque*

In languages where evidentiality is encoded in the linguistic structure in the form of verbal affixes, the information that serves to introduce an utterance is grouped into four main classes, depending on whether it expresses visual, non-visual, inferred or reportative evidence (Aikhenvald 2004; Bermúdez 2005; Cornillie 2007 and 2009). Visual and sensory or non-auditory evidence is part of a direct evidential system, based on the knowledge acquired by the speaker's own senses; the speaker is a witness to what he/she communicates. Inferred evidence refers to cases in which the speaker knows something that allows him/her to deduce that the situation is likely to occur or has occurred; reportative evidence refers to cases in which the information has been transmitted to the speaker by another person or persons. Reportative evidence includes cultural and/or historical knowledge shared by a whole community; in these cases, the speaker acts as a transmitter of what he/she knows or is told by others. The last two are examples of indirect evidence, as the speaker is not a witness to what he/she claims.

Although in Spanish we do not have a morphological system of evidential markers as such, it is possible to find evidential readings in specialised contexts: this is what happens with consecutive markers *así que* and *conque* in their illative uses.

In this section, I will turn my attention to the interpretation of *así que* when it heads statements that can be based either on reported or on inferred evidence. As shown in Example (1), they can be characterised as discourse-initial when heading an independent sentence.

(1) Permanecí al margen de la conversación por un rato, preguntándome cómo era posible que aquel anciano afable y nostálgico hubiera sido el terror de mi infancia. De pronto, al cabo de una larga pausa y por cualquier referencia banal, me miró con una sonrisa de abuelo. — *Así que tú eres el gran Gabito* — me dijo —. ¿Qué estudias?

(Gabriel García Márquez, *Vivir para contarla*. Barcelona: Random House, 2003, CREA)

'I remained on the margins of the conversation for a while, asking myself how it was possible that this affable and nostalgic old man had been the terror of my childhood. Then, after a long pause and some trivial reference, he looked at me with a grandfather's smile. — "*So you're the great Gabito*," he said. "What are you studying?"' (Adapted from Rodríguez Ramalle, 2015b)

(2) Michelle llegó al Grand Hotel and Towers con el libro escondido en su cartera. Günther le dijo:
'Michelle arrived at the Grand Hotel and Towers with the book hidden in her purse. Günther said to her':
–En estos últimos días te noto rara, como distraída; ¿te ocurre algo?
'In the last few days, you seem strange, as if you've been distracted; is something wrong?'
–Nada, nada…
'Nothing, nothing…'
–Así que Modím ganó un premio.
'So Modim won a prize'.
Al escuchar esa última palabra, que tanto la había elevado en su cita con Lucas, ella se estremeció.
'At that last word, which had so uplifted her on her date with Lucas, she shuddered.'
–¿Ah, sí? -dijo, queriendo fingir indiferencia, y agregó, como si recordara-… ah, sí, algo leí.
'Oh, did he? -she said, trying to feign indifference, and added, as if she remembered, 'oh, yes, I read something'.
Günther la miró, inquisitivo, y acotó con ironía:
'Günther looked at her inquisitively and added wryly:'
–Deberías informarte mejor.
'You should inform yourself better.'

(J. Maronna, Jorge y L.M. Pescetti, *Copyright: plagios literarios y poder político al desnudo*. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2001, CORPES XXI)

There is no prior discourse linked to the sentence introduced by *así que*. The speaker interprets the sentence headed by *así que* as introducing an idea, a discourse which is present in the knowledge of the interlocutors. Something known or heard is taken up and updated.

The utterances introduced by the illative marker *así que* do not express the result of any previous discourse. Instead, the speaker constructs an utterance in which the illative marker introduces an inference based on something he or she has been told previously: either the fact that Gabito has been described to the speaker, and so the speaker is able to guess his identity (1), or some other information has been previously supplied (2). Therefore, in this case, the source of information is the semantic requirement used by the illative markers in order to introduce the statement. Interestingly, the sentences that follow the statement headed by *así que* continue discussing the new topic introduced in the discourse by *así que*, a topic previously known by interlocutors, but updated at the time of the speech by *así que*. We will return to this aspect later, in Section 4.

Let us look at the following data, which are based on direct evidence:

(3) Durante una reunión familiar en la casa de los Yoma, se sentaron en un sofá de tres cuerpos de color celeste, cada uno en un extremo. "*¿Así que pintas?*", le preguntó Carlos Menem, mirando los cuadros que colgaban de la pared. Paisajes coloridos de pueblitos de la costa y retratos de la familia.
(Olga Wornat, *Menem, Boloco, S.A.* Buenos Aires: Javier Vergara Editor, 2001, CORPES XXI)
'During a family gathering at the Yoma home, they sat on a light blue three-piece sofa, each at one end. "*So, you paint?*" -Carlos Menem asked him, looking at the paintings on the wall.' [Olga Wornat, 2001. *Menem-Bolocco*, S.A. CREA]

(4) –Ya, como casi todo el mundo. Nueva York es magnífica pero debería venir al Sur. Aquello es distinto, ¿sabe?, es… — y entonces cerró el puño de la mano derecha, y envió a su brazo detrás para dibujar en el aire una especie de curva enfática y grotesca, una muestra de entusiasmo teatral, tan emparentada con la jubilosa histeria de los anuncios de Coca-Cola que Sara contuvo la risa con dificultad —. Es auténtico.
'Yeah, like almost everyone else. New York is great but you should come to the South. It's different there, you know, it's.... — and then she clenched her right fist, and sent her arm behind her to draw a kind of emphatic, grotesque curve in the air, a display of theatrical enthusiasm, so much like the jubilant hysteria of Coca-Cola commercials that Sara struggled to hold back her laughter. It's authentic.'
–The real thing.
–Justo. *Así que habla usted inglés…*
'*So, you speak English…* '
–Sí, pero no tan bien como usted español.
'Yes, but not as well as you speak Spanish.'
(Almudena Grandes, *Los aires difíciles*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2007, CORPES XXI)
(Adapted from Rodríguez Ramalle, 2014: 213)

In (3), the sentence headed by *así que* is not a consequence of a previous statement. The reason why the speaker asks *¿Así que pintas?* can be found in the next sentence; the speaker is looking at the listener's paintings. The speaker infers that the other person is a painter, based on what he or she can see. In (4), A speaks in English, and it seems that this is the reason why B uses a sentence headed by *así que*. B asserts something that he or she now knows: A speaks English. In both cases, *así que* forces us to look for the basis for justifying the use of this locution in evidence that may have been previously heard by the interlocutors or that is part of their common knowledge.

It is worth recalling that in Examples (3) and (4), the context enables one to detect an evidential reading based on sensorial data: 'seeing the painting' or 'hearing English'.

It is not uncommon for sentences introduced by *así que* heads an interrogative structure, as in (5) and (6):

(5) Pollo con champiñones. Muy rico, con salsa de crema, vino blanco y hierbas, muy rico. Mabel, que casi no había vuelto a hablar en toda la mañana, se sorprendió: ¿*así que* ahora le gustan los champiñones?
'Chicken with mushrooms. Very tasty, with cream sauce, white wine and herbs, very tasty. Mabel, who had hardly spoken again all morning, was surprised: *so now he likes mushrooms*?'
(D. Paszkowski, *El otro Gómez*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2001, CORPES XXI)

(6) Al concluir el verano, fui a casa de los Nagy a despedirme. El propio Nagy — ya de vuelta en el granero — se lo tomó con gran entusiasmo ("¡Será un gran paso para ti, muchacho…!") y me deseó la mejor de las suertes […].
'When the summer came to an end, I went to the Nagy's house to say goodbye. Nagy himself — already back in the barn — took it with great enthusiasm ('It will be a big step for you, my boy…!') and wished me the best of luck […].'
No dijo más, quizás para no evidenciar el nudo que acababa de formarse en su garganta, y me conminó a abandonar de inmediato el granero. De allí pasé a la cocina. Olga estaba de pie junto al mesón, con un café humeante entre las manos.
'He said no more, perhaps so as not to show the lump that had just formed in his throat, and ordered me to leave the barn at once. From there I went into the kitchen. Olga was standing at the counter with a steaming coffee in her hands.'
–*¿Así que te vas?* — dijo sin mirarme, sorbiendo cautelosamente de su taza —. ¿Por un año entero?
'*So you're leaving?* — she said without looking at me, sipping cautiously from her cup. For a whole year?'

Hasta el próximo verano – corroboré.
(J. Collyer, *El habitante del cielo*, 2002, RAE)
'Until next summer, I corroborated.'
(Final example adapted from Rodríguez Ramalle, 2015a: 195)

In (5) the evidence present in the previous discourse allows the speaker to introduce a question with *así que*. In (6), we document a question that can be adapted to many possible contexts: in the proposed example we seek to confirm an already known situation, a farewell; at the same time, *así que* introduces a question that can be presented as an excuse to talk. *¿Así que te vas?* is used to confirm knowledge shared by the speaker and listener. The source of information is an indirect evidential. In this case, following Speas (2010), when I ask the question *¿Así que te vas?*, there is a reference situation in which I see that Maria is ready to open the door and leave. When I make the inference, I am taking into account the direct sensorial data that I have (Maria at the door with her suitcase). Crucially, however, I am also taking into account previous knowledge and the current state of affairs: namely, the previous quarrel (Speas 2010). Considered together, the sensorial evidence and the knowledge about the situation lead to inferential reasoning, which has an indirect evidential value. As I will show in Section 4, sometimes questions headed by illative particles repeat an idea or summarise something that has been said previously in order to confirm it or as an excuse to begin to speak; this is the proper interpretation of the questions with *así que* in (6). Interestingly, no answer is required because the speaker knows what the response would be. The question is a signal that invites the addressee to speak.

In any case, the reason that justifies the question is not in the preceding discourse but in what has been seen, heard or known. In some examples, however, the question comes to confirm something that is explicitly indicated in the preceding discourse:

(7) –Mmm… así hago tiempo… como salgo del trabajo a las tres de la mañana… y llevo a mis dos hijos al colegio cada mañana… a las siete… pues… por eso vengo… supongo.
'Mmm… so I kill time… since I get off work at three in the morning… and I take my two kids to school every morning… at seven… so… that's why I come… I guess.'
–¿Así que tienes dos hijos, eh?
'*So you have two kids, huh?*'
–Mmm… no hay nada mejor en la vida que los hijos, Roque… mira… mira qué guapos.
'Mmm… there's nothing better in life than children, Roque… look… look how handsome they are.'
(J. Parrondo, *Maldito seas, Roque Waterfall*. Madrid: Siruela, 2002, CORPES XXI)

In (7), there is a reference in the preceding text to *mis dos hijos* ('my two children'), information taken up and reintroduced later by *así que*. However, in regard to what was said previously, we are not dealing with a consequential relationship, but rather with the search for confirmation of an already known fact. The speaker uses what he/she has seen or heard, what he/she knows because it forms part of her/his prior knowledge or because someone has told it to her/him directly, in order to construct the sentence introduced by *así que* (Rodríguez Ramalle 2015a and b).

The difference between Example (7) and Example (8) lies in the fact that, in the latter, a previously spoken word, *nada* ('nothing'), is used to construct an inference introduced by *así que*: 'if you know that he didn't say anything, it is because I deduce that you were there'.

(8) ¿Qué es lo que no sabes, lisiado? ¿Qué dijo?
'What don't you know, cripple? What did he say?'
–Nada.
'Nothing.'
–'¿Nada? ¿Cómo sabes que no dijo nada? *¿Así que estabas allí?*'
'Nothing? How do you know he didn't say anything? *-So you were there?*'
–Que no…
'He didn't…'
Y fue cuando me acercó más la cara y toqué la de la Julia.
'And that's when she brought my face closer and I touched Julia's face.'
(F. Casavella, *Los juegos feroces*. Barcelona: Mondadori, 2002, CORPES XXI)

This difference is highly relevant to the configurational construction of the discourse and to its structure. In (7) what has been said is taken up again to confirm it, while in (8) the topic changes, since an inferred piece of information is incorporated from what has been heard or previously known. In this example, the incorporation of a new piece of information based on evidence inferred from previous discourse obliged the hearer to change the configuration of the discourse. The proof of this lies in the fact that the subject of the conversation has changed. The sentence introduced by *así que* becomes the head and the topic of the new conversation. In this example, moreover, we find a question introduced by *cómo* ('how'), which asks about the way of obtaining the information, about the source (Rodríguez Ramalle 2015a).

Así que also has a confirmatory value; in fact, it could be equivalent to some confirmatory particles in directed interrogative questions. For example, take a situation described by Wiltschko and Heim (2016) in their study of the Canadian confirmatory particle *eh*. In a situation where John knows that Mary is looking forward to having a dog and after some time without hearing from her, one day

he finds her walking a dog. In Canadian English it is said: *You have a new dog, eh?* which could be equivalent to *¿Así que tienes un perro?*, a question that seeks to confirm a previous idea, but it is more than that: using previous knowledge as a starting point, the inference is made that this may not be just any dog, but the dog that Maria has always wished to have. Various subjective values can be added: surprise, joy, etc. based on our knowledge of the situation and our inference.

The data with *así que* and *conque* are similar: both particles focus on indirect evidence. According to Sainz (2018a: 41), when *así que* and *conque* head a sentence, at the beginning of discourse, both particles can serve to signal the speaker's inference. In *¿Así que tienes coche?* and *¿Conque tienes coche?* the evidence that allows speaker to infer that someone has a car is the same: seeing the interlocutor take the car keys out of his pocket and turn on the headlights (inference from direct visual evidence), or having heard how another person told the interlocutor to take the car keys (inference from transmitted evidence) or having heard it from a friend or because the interlocutor himself has said it in a previous exchange and wishes to return to the subject (indirect transmitted evidence). The propositional information is presented as shared with the other interlocutor and, therefore, from an informative point of view, the content is topical. The type of statement we are dealing with has an evidential meaning.

In (9), *conque* heads a sentence based on inference from what has been said: in this case from the references to Shakespeare's *Othello*, but it can also take up what has been expressed in context, as in (10):

(9) Dr. Francia: Señorita Zavala, la literatura está llena de momentos como éste.
'Dr. Francia: Miss Zavala, literature is full of moments like this.'
Clara: Mientras no termine como Othello (comenta ella burlonamente).
'Clara: As long as it doesn't end up like Othello (she comments mockingly).'
Dr. Francia (sorprendido pero reaccionando): No se preocupe. Ni Ud. es Desdémona ni yo el Moro de Venecia.
'Dr. Francia (surprised but reacting): Don't worry. You are neither Desdemona nor I the Moor of Venice.'
Clara se detiene en seco y se lo queda mirando. Gaspar también detiene su cabalgadura y le sostiene la mirada burlonamente.
'Clara stops dead in her tracks and stares at him. Gaspar also stops his horse and holds her gaze mockingly.'
Clara: *Conque leyó a Shakespeare ¿eh?*
'Clara: *So you've read Shakespeare, have you?*'
(Luis M. Ferrer, *El emperador chino de occidente*. Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2001, CORPES XXI)

(10) –No sabría decirle, pero sé que lo llevaba dentro. Yo solo quiero hacer películas, escribir historias, nada más, señor juez. Y encenderle un pitillo a Ava Gardner.
'I couldn't tell you, but I know I had it in me. I just want to make films, write stories, nothing else, Your Honour. And light a fag for Ava Gardner.'
–*¿Conque un pitillo, eh?* Menudo es usted. Como si eso fuera algo imposible en este mundo.
'*So a fag, eh?* You're something. As if that's something impossible in this world.'
(Manuel Vicent, *Ava en la noche*. Barcelona: Alfaguara, 2020, CORPES XXI)

However, the expression can also have values inferred from what has been said before or from what has been previously known or heard. The same interpretation can be found in (11), where the information is now taken up not under a confirmatory interrogative, as we have seen with *así que*, but under an exclamation:

(11) MARY: ¡Siéntate, Lucila! (La Abuela sale) LUCILA: — Gracias. (Se sienta en el sofá. Mary lo hace a su lado) MARY: — *¡Conque ya casada!* ¡Si parece imposible! Bueno: también a mí me parecía imposible y ya ves. ¿Quién es tu marido?
'MARY: Sit down, Lucila! (Grandmother goes out) LUCILA: — Thank you. (She sits down on the sofa. Mary sits next to her) MARY: — *So you're married now!* It seems impossible! Well: it seemed impossible to me as well, and now you see. Who is your husband?'. (Sainz, 2018: 48)

According to Sainz (2018a and b), *conque* in its evidential value introduces a type of mirative statement of counter-expectation, which marks the distance and contrast existing between two evidential points of view: that of the origin, the memory of Lucila as a child, far from the idea of marriage and still alive in the memory of the speaker, and that which represents the current Lucila, a now-married adult woman; and from there comes the surprise. It seems that in this sense it contrasts with *así que*, but *así que* can also be a marker of surprise if it is accompanied by an exclamatory intonational pattern, as we will see in Section 4.

The fact that *conque* has more or less stereotyped uses appears to be more relevant, as exemplified in (12) and (13) below:

(12) Una prima de ésta, la Emilia, está en la cárcel por dedicarse a la compra de objetos de procedencia dudosa. *¡Conque ya ve usted!*
'A cousin of this one, Emilia, is in prison for buying objects of dubious provenance. *So you see!*'
(Juan Marsé, *Rabos de lagartija*. Barcelona: Lumen, 2000, CREA)

(13) David sentía que le ardían las orejas de rubor, y así tuvo que soportar que el simpático don Marcelino le presentara a sus amigos de la tertulia. De pronto se vio allí de pie ante aquel inesperado tribunal que le pidió, entre algunas chanzas, que les explicara su caso. Después de manifestarles a todos su admiración,

les dijo balbuciendo que quería ser director de cine. La respuesta fue un silencio que en principio le pareció corrosivo.
'David felt his ears burning in a blush, and so he had to put up with the friendly Don Marcelino introducing him to his friends at the gathering. Suddenly he found himself standing there before this unexpected tribunal who asked him, amidst some banter, to explain his case to them. After expressing his admiration for them all, he stammered out that he wanted to be a film director. The response was a silence that at first seemed corrosive.'
–*Conque esas tenemos, joven* — exclamó Miguel Mihura.
'*So that's what we have, young man* — exclaimed Miguel Mihura.'
–¿Lo has pensado bien? No te veo con pinta de dirigir nada. Estás rojo como un tomate — dijo Tono con una sonrisa irónica.
'Have you thought it through? You don't look like you're directing anything. You're as red as a tomato — said Tono with an ironic smile.'
(Manuel Vicent, *Ava en la noche*. Barcelona: Alfaguara, 2020, CORPES XXI)

¡Conque ya ve usted! refers to what has been said in the previous discourse. The speaker is a witness, he does not quote anyone, as he himself has been responsible for what has been said. In this case, despite the previous discourse and the speaker, there is no evidentiality, in the strict sense of the word, since the speaker is not the source of the information of what he says. This fact is interesting for our argument because, according to Demonte and Fernández Soriano (2013a and b), the speaker himself is not a valid source of the reportative evidence: the speaker cannot be the source of his own information; it is other speakers who must be the source of evidence.

As we will see in Section 4, the projection of illative markers in Spanish has consequences in the construction of discourse. But before going on to analyse this aspect, let us review the theoretical framework.

3. Relations of hierarchy and dependence in discourse

Linguists such as Mann and Thomson (1988), Asher and Lascarides (2003), and Asher and Vieu (2005) assume that discourse has a hierarchical structure. Discourse goes beyond the limits of the sentence and above the sentence in a constituent structure organised by relations of hierarchy and dependency (Garrido 2023; Rodríguez Ramalle 2023), with discourse coordination and subordination (Asher and Vieu 2005), where sentence grammar is extended to discourse (Garrido 2023).

According to this hypothesis, discourse can be defined as a sequence of linked sentences bound to a discourse context (Garrido 2023), where discourse context

means the previous linguistic context or 'the surrounding discourse'. Each sentence is linked to others units, by means of the information it requires to be interpreted, thus building complex discourse units (Garrido 2023) by means of coordinating or subordinating discourse rhetorical relations (Duque 2022).

All the units in discourse, from the simplest to the most complex (the paragraph or the text), are constituents of a larger unit. Consequently, discourse is formed by units which are connected to each other and which jointly represent certain information. This is a general principle of connection or linking, where 'the interpretation of every unit has to be integrated in a wider cognitive unit, according to the unit's position in the corresponding wider syntactic structure' (Garrido 2003: 18). Sentences are discourse units connected to other units in a process where their discourse context provides the required information and a discourse constituent structure is built.

The fact is that the parts and the whole have a parallel organisation on a different scale, like a fractal structure, as Escandell (2018) puts it. This means that, following the criterion of expansion applied to a paragraph, there are units that are connected and organised by connecting paragraphs in a hierarchical and configurational way.

Notably, some syntactic principles can be identified at the discourse level. In the same way that sentences in a paragraph enter into dependency relations based on a hierarchical order, these two concepts — dependence and hierarchy — can also be applied at the discourse level to analyse the links between sentences, as proposed in Garrido's work (2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024). Sentences and utterances are integrated into larger discursive units giving rise to a hierarchical constituent structure, since not all sentences are interpreted as equal, because a head is the dominant unit, and the other parts are satellites that modify and complete the head (Mann and Thompson 1988 and Mann, Matthiessen and Thompson 1992).

The result is a set of complex discursive units that are linked by discourse relations (Duque 2016 and 2022), that serve to connect sentences or statements to give rise to larger discursive units (Duque 2025) through mechanisms such as coordination or subordination (Garrido 2023; Rodríguez Ramalle 2023).

Discourse relations belong to different categories: Elaboration, Circumstance, Background, Orientation, Interpretation, Contrast, Reformulation, Cause, Evidence, Condition, Purpose, Means, Result, among others. Each relation can constitute different connections between sentences while illative expressions add relevant information to establish this type of connectiveness.

This model will be the core of the study of illative expressions when they act as links between sentences in the discourse.

4. *Así que* and *conque* in the construction of the discourse

According to the theoretical framework, the idea that allows the integration of sentences into nodes that are projected from a head is the notion of a frame as a mental model or cognitive scheme that updates data or adds new information to an already represented frame (Garrido 2015: 137).

It is important to bear in mind that background is considered as the frame of the discourse; this is the reason why sentences introduced by *así que* or *conque* are the head of the discourse relation, since the context or previous situation act as the satellite. In other words, evidentiality tends to act as a frame. This would confirm that evidentiality is used to build discourse and relationships and, what is more, that configuration of the discourse structure is dynamic, since the projection of *así que* and *conque* obliges the hearer/reader to look for the previous discourse or knowledge.

If a sentence headed by *así que* or *conque* changes the topic and the previous discourse becomes a base to build a new sentence, the discourse structure is an example of thematic progression, in which the previous sentences are the satellites and the new head is introduced by the sentence with *así que* or *conque*. This is the case in Examples (1), (2), (3) and (4), repeated below as (14), and (8), with *así que*, and (9) with *conque*, where the head introduces new information based on what the speaker has seen or heard.

(14) –Ya, como casi todo el mundo. Nueva York es magnífica pero debería venir al Sur. Aquello es distinto, ¿sabe?, es… — y entonces cerró el puño de la mano derecha, y envió a su brazo detrás para dibujar en el aire una especie de curva enfática y grotesca, una muestra de entusiasmo teatral, tan emparentada con la jubilosa histeria de los anuncios de Coca-Cola que Sara contuvo la risa con dificultad —. Es auténtico.
'Yeah, like almost everyone else. New York is great but you should come to the South. It's different there, you know, it's.… — and then she clenched her right fist, and sent her arm behind her to draw a kind of emphatic, grotesque curve in the air, a display of theatrical enthusiasm, so much like the jubilant hysteria of Coca-Cola commercials that Sara struggled to hold back her laughter. It's authentic.'
–The real thing.
–Justo. *Así que habla usted inglés…*
'So, you speak English…'
–'Sí, pero no tan bien como usted español.'
'Yes, but not as well as you speak Spanish.'
(Almudena Grandes, *Los aires difíciles*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 2007, CORPES XXI)
(Rodríguez Ramalle 2014: 213)

In this example, the speaker infers that his interlocutor speaks English, because he has heard him utter a statement in English, and introduces this inference by means of the sentence headed by *así que*. But this sentence also becomes, in the structure of the discourse, the head of the paragraph, since the following conversation is based on the new content introduced by *así que*. This idea is based on the type of discourse relation that the sentence headed by *así que* establishes with the other sentences that surround it: Background.

In (15), it can be convincingly argued that the sentences that follow the statement headed by *así que* are satellites that, according to the Background relation, act as a frame or presentation of the head, which is responsible for introducing a new topic.

(15) Intuí que él continuaría con su historia y ya faltaban pocas cuadras para llegar a mi estudio. En esa época harto de escuchar hablar a los taxistas, había decidido no entablar ninguna conversación con los que me tocaba en cada viaje [...]. Pero esta vez, como un tonto, me había dejado atrapar por el relato del taxista. Así que Malvinas también, le dije con cierta ironía pero él, siempre observándome por el espejo retrovisor, no se dio por enterado de mi intención burlona y descreída. Sí, y estuve en el peor frente, me tocó estar en la defensa de Darwin-Goose House, dijo. Estábamos rodeados por los ingleses que habían entrado por San Carlos.
'I sensed that he would continue with his story and it was only a few blocks to my studio. At that time, fed up with listening to taxi drivers talk, I had decided not to engage in any conversation with those I met on each journey [...]. But this time, like a fool, I had let myself be taken in by the taxi driver's story. *So the Falklands too*, I told him with a certain irony, but he, still watching me in the rear-view mirror, did not notice my mocking and disbelieving intentions. Yes, and I was on the worst front, I was in the defence of Darwin-Goose House, he said. We were surrounded by the British who had come in through San Carlos.'
(Martínez, Carlos Dámaso: "Taxis". *El amor cambia*. Argentina, 2001, CORPES XXI)

In (15), the new topic is the war in the Falklands. The sentence with *así que* has changed the topic and has updated the subject of the conversation by returning to the topic of a previous conversation not expressed in the dialogue.

It should be noted that the discourse relations may vary depending on the type of evidentiality and the context information. In (5) and (7) with *así que*, and (10) and (11) with *conque*, as we have seen, sentences with *así que* and *conque* seem to confirm a fact known by speakers, about which the sentence headed by *así que* and *conque* asks for further information. In other examples, the sentence with *así que* and *conque* can be used to update something previously said, as in (16), in order to seek more accurate information, or to repeat it, as in (17).

(16) Verá, esa chica rubia de la moto. Le dije que no había vuelto a verla. Bueno, le mentí un poco. Me pareció verla después, lo que pasa es que no estaba segura por una cosa que… En fin, que me daba, no sé…
'You see, that blonde girl on the motorbike. I told her I hadn't seen her again. Well, I lied a bit. I thought I saw her afterwards, but I wasn't sure because of something… Anyway, she gave me, I don't know…'
–No te preocupes. *Así que volviste a verla*. ¿Dónde?
'Don't worry about it. *So you saw her again*. Where?'
–Bueno, eso es lo de menos, ahora. Lo que le importará saber es que he vuelto a verla hoy. Y ahora sí que no tengo ninguna duda.
'Well, that's the least of it now. What you'll care to know is that I saw her again today. And now there's no doubt in my mind.'
–¿Que la has visto hoy? ¿En La Palma?
'What, did you see her today? In La Palma?'
(Silva, Lorenzo: *La niebla y la doncella*. España, 2002, CORPES XXI)

(17) –Bien, Roque, *me gustaría presentarte a un intelectual austriaco; su nombre es Hans-Gunther Flogenhofer*. Es un hombre realmente interesante, está empeñado en hacer un documental sobre un parásito social […]
'Well, Roque, I would like to introduce you to an Austrian intellectual; his name is Hans-Gunther Flogenhofer. He's a really interesting man, he's determined to make a documentary about a social parasite.'
–Flogenhofer no ha logrado encontrar a nadie de semejantes características, al menos nadie que le convenza realmente. Y aquí apareces tú… como caído del cielo en un semáforo en rojo.
'Flogenhofer hasn't been able to find anyone with such characteristics, at least no one who really convinces him. And here you appear… as if you'd fallen from the sky at a red light.'
–Así que se trata de un intelectual, ¿eh?
'*So he is an intellectual, eh?*'
–Efectivamente. Flogenhofer es el autor de El ser: la degeneración del no-ser, libro de gran influencia entre la clase intelectual europea.
'That's right. Flogenhofer is the author of Being: The Degeneration of Non-Being, a book of great influence among the European intellectual class.'
(Parrondo, Jorge: *Maldito seas, Roque Waterfall*. España, 2002, CORPES XXI)

In both cases, the discourse relation is Interpretation, in which the satellite (the sentence headed by *así que*), which appears behind the head, evaluates the situation of the head in the light of another circumstance, since it shows the information from a different, evaluative and subjective point of view. In other words, the sentence with *así que* updates the previous information in order to offer more data, or it adds new nuance to the topic already mentioned in the discourse.

In (17), for example, we can find irony in repeating what has already been said before: that Flogenhofer is an intellectual. It is worth highlighting this aspect, because when someone asks *¿Así que tienes hijos?* ('So you have children?') in (7) when the speaker has already said that he/she has children or someone asks *¿Así que te vas?* ('So you are leaving?') (6) when somebody has told us that he/she is going to depart, the speaker uses the questions to evaluate the previous information and to add new shades of meaning, such as irony, displeasure or surprise (Rodríguez Ramalle 2019: 196):

(18) Context: In response to someone who had previously told the speaker that it was not cold that morning.
¡Así que no hacía frío! Casi me quedo helado.
'*So it wasn't cold!* I almost froze.'

(19) Context: The boss knows that his employee did not come to work that morning because, as he was told, the employee was ill. That same afternoon, however, he sees him out for a walk with his family.
¡Conque estaba enfermo!
'*So you were ill!*' (Rodríguez Ramalle 2019: 196)

In (18) and (19), *así que* and *conque* introduce utterances which reproduce the previous discursive situation, in this case, the reportative discourse: 'someone told me that it wasn't cold today', 'my employee told me that he was sick today and didn't come to work'. The contrast is between the information provided as an example of reportative evidence and the situation seen by the speaker, which does not correspond to that previous information.

According to Sainz (2018a and b), in *conque* there is a modal component linked to different tones: surprise, disapproval, irony or scepticism. In general, the type of utterance introduced by *conque* is a sign of surprise at an unexpected state of affairs that does not easily fit in with the speaker's mental state (previous knowledge and expectations).

Conque is especially well documented in this context. It acts as an element of counter-expectation and can be accompanied by a positive emotional evaluation or as a means of criticism, as we see in Example (19). This use is also documented with *así que*, as we see in (18).

These nuances are not codified either in *así que* o *conque*, but derive from their relation to the context and to the sources of the information; to the interlocutors' knowledge of reality and their background. And it is precisely these elements that contribute to creating discursive connections. Let us consider this example:

(20) Context: [Two friends who share a flat meet and start talking].
¡Conque por fin te vas y nos dejas! ('I heard, they told me that you're finally leaving and leaving us'). (Rodríguez Ramalle, 2017: 18)

The value of the sentence introduced by *conque* can be confirmation of an idea already known while also including surprise. In this case, it is based on existing knowledge which is updated at the moment of speaking and becomes the head of the discursive structure. However, the tone can be angry or even ironic if the situation is one in which, after a quarrel, the flatmates see suitcases by the door. In this context, the sentence headed by *conque* is also the head of the discursive structure, but the relation has changed because the previous context has changed: due to the previous fight, flatmates inferred that the suitcases by the door are the sign that *you* (her/his flatmate) is in fact leaving us.

It should be pointed out that when previous information is taken up again, it may contain elements that are part of the background; therefore, we are not starting from something new, objective, unknown; but from something close, subjective, known and already present in the world of the speaker. This updated idea is now expanded, reformulated and commented on. In these cases, the discursive relations start from the previous head, which is not modified. It is the new values added which are emphasised on the basis of the relationship with the previous context.

Interestingly enough, let us consider a situation in which the sentence headed by *así que or conque* does not introduce counter-expectations, but quite the opposite: a conclusion based on what is expected; a conclusion supported by the background and the previous discourse. Consider the following situation:

(21) Eso sí, lo que hay que resaltar es que el vip del hotel Don Carlos, esta vez lo organizó todo perfecto, José Luis, no hubo las grandes colas, a pesar de toda la multitud que se congregó allí y todo el mundo bueno, pues pudo cenar langosta, salmón, güisqui a discreción, bueno, fue una cosa que la verdad.
'What we must emphasise is that the VIP department at the hotel Don Carlos, this time everything was perfectly organised, José Luis, there were no long queues, despite all the crowd that gathered there and everyone was able to have lobster, salmon, whisky at will, well, it was something let me tell you.'
Ya ya ya. Vamos, que os pusisteis morados.
'Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Come on, you guys really went overboard with that.'
(CREA, RAE, Oral, Radio, Madrid, 22/11/91)

(22) A: Estamos muy contentos con tu trabajo, pero, dada la situación actual, no podemos hacer frente a todos los gastos.
We are very happy with your work, but, given the current situation, we can't afford all the expenses.
B: Ya, que estoy despedido.
Yes, I've been made redundant. (Gras 2013: 91–93)
(Rodríguez Ramalle, 2017: 185–186)

In (21) and (22), the concluding reformulating expression: *ya .. vamos* or *ya, que*, can be replaced by the reformulator *o sea que* or by an illative particle such as *así que* or *conque: Así que os pusisteis morados, Conque estoy despedido*. But what is relevant is that these particles start from a discursive situation to introduce a new topic in order to build a conclusion inferred by the background. We are dealing with a head that introduces a new informative framework in a discursive relation of Background.

In sum, the previous situation, the inferred or reportative evidentiality has implications in the construction of the discourse and in the relationship and hierarchy established between the sentences that make up the paragraph.

The discourse relations we have analysed correspond to stable schemes, depend on the organisation of the sentences and allow us to establish hierarchies and dependencies between them, giving rise to a dynamic and configurational structure, which confirms our initial hypothesis and confirms the general objective: to show a way of discursive organisation that depends on the evidential content.

Consequently, discourse relations allow us to establish links between heads and satellites or modifiers; that is to say, they create hierarchical relations, between sentences, between paragraphs and even between prior knowledge (evidentiality) and a sentence. But also, from a theoretical point of view, evidentiality allows us to propose a scheme of discursive organisation and hierarchy based on what has been proposed in order to explain other constructions which are organised at the periphery of the sentence, within the discourse level.

Rodríguez Ramalle (in press) analyzes the contrast in the relationships established by *así* y *así que*, taking into account that only *así que* allows the sentence to be connected with the sources of information.

For Poletto and Zanuttini (2013), *si/non che* structures in Italian are related to a functional projection located behind the Hanging Topic Phrase. It is interesting to note that, according to Poletto and Zanuttini (2013), the topic's position is related to the background and the triggering information is raised by the *si/non che* structures. Since the content of the triggering utterance is crucial in order to interpret the construction with *si/non che*, these researchers suggest that the conversational context is projected syntactically as a null copy in the topic position

related to the hanging topics. This background is phonetically null and deleted before the materialisation of the sentence. Poletto and Zanuttini's proposal, by including the hanging topics position to explain the crucial importance of the contextual element in the licencing of sentences with *si/non che* in Italian, implies not only that the context can occupy a place in the functional structure of the left periphery but also that this contextual component is crucial for interpretation.

In the case of the contextual component which we are studying with the illative conjunctions, it forms part of the structure of the sentence and helps to establish discourse relations. Prior knowledge, the sources of information, would be situated as topics hanging on the structure of the new sentence. These topics are constituents which are present as they allow speakers to organise sentences hierarchically, but which, like the constituents of which Poletto and Zanuttini (2013) argue, do not materialise.

5. Conclusions

My analysis has two implications: on a theoretical level, for the structure of the paragraph and the text, and from a more practical point of view, for argumentative chain, since the way in which evidentiality organises the relationship between sentences guides us on how to construct the discourse.

The inferred and reportative evidentiality act in some cases as satellites and in others as a head updated in the discourse by means of the projection of the illative particle. The difference lies in the fact that while in (1), (2), (3), (4), (8), (9) and (15) the topic is new in the current discourse (though it can be part of the common background shared by speakers, as updated or inferred in the discourse situation), in (5), (7), (10), (11), (16) and (17) the topic is brought up again by a sentence headed by *así que/conque*, because this topic was introduced in the preceding discourse. Consequently, sentences with *así que* and *conque* and a subsequent statement help to understand the topic by adding new nuance.

From the relation with previous discourse and taking as a working hypothesis that discourse units present a constituent structure based on hierarchical and dependency relations, I have also shown that it is possible to explain the way in which previous knowledge, both linguistically expressed and not, is incorporated and relevant in the establishment of hierarchical and dependency relations between sentences. Since discourse organisation is configurational and can change with the inclusion of new units, the type of discourse relation that a sentence introduced *by así que* and *conque* establishes with previous sequences helps us to construct the hierarchy map between sentences in order to identify the head and the satellite.

This way of understanding the relations between sentences should be taken into account in future research in order to investigate the mechanisms of connection in discourse on the basis of criteria parallel to those taken into account to establish relations of dependence and hierarchy within a sentence.

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How questions shape interactivity in spoken monologic discourse

Agnès Celle
Université Paris Cité, ALTAE

This chapter aims to show how questions shape interactivity in TED talks, i.e. in a non-dialogical discourse where commitment updates cannot be regulated by turn-taking. It is argued that the interactional contribution of questions is restricted to discourse-management functions. The majority of questions are reported to be unanswered. However, questions are reported to be highly interactive by inferring and anticipating questions that may arise in the audience. We argue that they rely on an assumed knowledge state that they contribute to updating. The behaviour of polar, wh- and verbless questions in TED talks supports the idea that this single-speaker discourse genre is dialogically-motivated.

Keywords: interaction, interactivity, questions, epistemic authority, monologic discourse

1. Introduction

This chapter investigates how questions enhance interactivity in single-speaker discourse based on a sample of 15 English TED talks. It aims to define the role of questions in a context where interaction cannot be regulated by turn-taking and by a shift in epistemic authority. The single-speaker discursive context precludes the canonical use of questions whereby a speaker seeks information to be provided by the addressee's answer, which has consequences on the nature and functions of questions. The distribution of content and polar questions is reported to be in inverse proportion to what is observed in private and public dialogue. The proportion of verbless questions is reported to be higher than in scripted speech. Although interaction per se is restricted to backchannel and confirmation functions, it is suggested that questions play a prominent role in performing discourse-structuring and attention-grabbing functions. Questions are argued to enhance interactivity by inferring and revising the addressee's expectations, which con-

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tributes to knowledge transmission. First, the theoretical background is outlined. In Section 3, the hypotheses and data are presented. Section 4 presents the results of the annotation of questions with respect to parameters relevant to interaction. The results are analysed in Section 5 and discussed in Section 6. The main findings are summarised in the conclusion in Section 7.

2. Theoretical background

TED talks feature a type of monologic discourse defined by Rossette-Crake (2022) as the 'New Oratory'. The New Oratory is characterised by an asymmetrical relationship between speaker and addressee. The speaker is on stage, addressing both an in-person audience and a remote audience, which blurs the status of the addressee. Even if the in-person audience may respond through backchannel or kinesic responses, there is no turn-taking. The speaker holds the floor and remains the epistemic authority. Nonetheless, TED talks are not reducible to self-talk. They also differ from academic discourse (Celle and Liégeois 2021), as they are promoted by technologically-mediated communication. They target multiple addressees, the speaker engaging in a type of 'controlled interaction' (Cockcroft *et al.* 2014) as in any persuasive speech. We assume that questions thus play an important role in performing interactivity rather than interaction.

In ordinary spontaneous conversation, questions function as a turn-taking trigger that structures social interaction (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). Question-answer relations are represented through adjacency pairs which form a basic unit for sequence construction and structurally involve at least two separate speakers (Schegloff 2007). Most questions are responded to (Stivers *et al.* 2009), not only in requests for information, but also in requests for action and offers (Stivers and Rossano 2010). Dialogue processing appears to be the most basic form of language processing (Pickering and Garrod 2004), with turn-taking reflecting the interactive alignment process through the coordination and synchronisation of talk between interlocutors. However, when the communicative setting does not enable feedback from a recipient, it is unclear how alignment is possible and the role of questions may be expected to be different. The interactive alignment model (Pickering and Garrod 2004, 188) takes monologue to be 'an extreme case of non-interactive language use'. While acknowledging that there is a 'dialogic continuum' between monologue and interactive dialogue, this model assumes that speech participants co-operate to reach a symmetrical knowledge state through alignment. This assumption is challenged by questions that do not initiate turn-taking. Crucially, questions in TED talks are generally unanswered or answered by the speaker, which runs counter to a fundamental principle of interaction.

Questions in TED talks may be viewed as a type of non-canonical questions because they override the default contextual assumptions associated with canonical questions. Following Farkas (2022), we argue that the default assumption that the speaker is ignorant and the addressee competent is overridden, since the speaker has epistemic authority on a subject. The default pairing between the speaker and the questioner on the one hand, and between the addressee and the responder on the other is also overridden. The speaker may take on the role of a responder, although the status of the speaker is not fixed in a systematic way (Cardo and Celle 2025; Zeyrek and Mendes 2025). Relatedly, the issue resolution goal assumption is weakened as the addressee is engaged towards issue resolution but not assumed to be able to resolve the issue on their own. As argued in Cardo and Celle (2024), the input context has consequences on sequence constructions. Questions may appear in clusters to shift the roles of questioner and responder either in salient question sequences that emphasise the metacommunicative act, or in interactive question sequences that mimic dialogue.

3. Hypotheses and data

This paper aims to characterise the type of interaction fostered by questions in TED talks. As a general hypothesis, questions are considered not to be homogeneous. They reflect the shifting role of the speaker as a questioner or a responder, relaying either some collective, possibly virtual opinion, i.e. a vox populi (Grésillon and Lebrave 1984) or the speaker's own voice (Celle 2009). It may be expected that the communicative setting affects the production of questions. Pickering and Garrod (2004) point out that alignment is stronger with addressees than with other listeners. In TED talks, weaker alignment with the audience might correlate with increased self-alignment. Questions are predicted to be used for discourse-structuring and emphatic purposes as strategies to attract the audience's attention and simulate interaction.

The data consist of all the questions extracted from a video collection of 15 TED talks in English. Using ELAN (Sloetjes and Wittenburg 2008), the questions were segmented, time-aligned with their transcription and annotated for syntactic, semantic, pragmatic features, including the discursive relationship with the preceding context (Kehler and Rohde 2017) and the subsequent context (Ginzburg *et al.* 2022), in order to determine their discourse functions. Questions were also annotated for multimodal features (eyebrow movement, head movement, hand gestures) (Bressem and Ladewig 2011; Kipp, Neff, and Albrecht 2007), but these features are not investigated in the present paper (see Lelandais 2025).

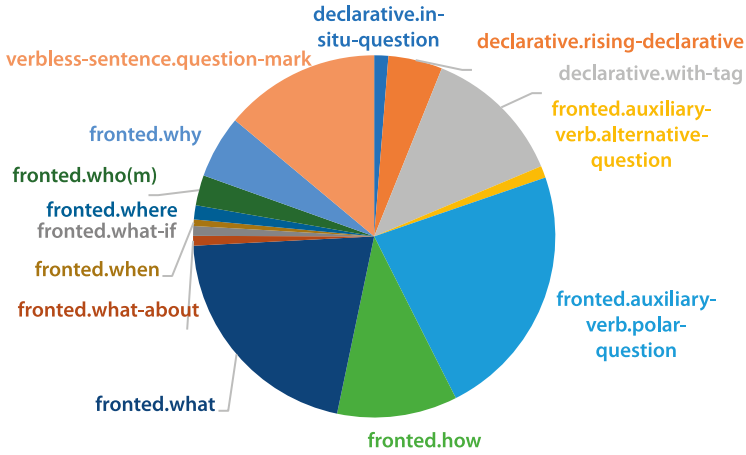
Embedded interrogatives were filtered out for this study, as they are not questioning speech acts. Therefore, they are less relevant in terms of interaction. The study focused on a set of 1034 direct questions and apposed questions, such as 'the question is, Is that an illusion?'. In this paper, we provide a description of these questions in their contextual environment based on parameters that are relevant to interaction, namely answerhood, interlocution and discursive relations with the context preceding and following questions. By correlating these parameters, we subsequently characterise the type of interaction performed by questions in TED talks.

4. Results

4.1 Question marking

The majority of the questions in our sample are wh-questions (43%), *what*-questions amounting to 21% of the data, and *how*-questions to 11%. Polar questions with subject auxiliary inversion are less frequent (23%). So are declarative questions (18%), with declarative questions followed by a tag being more frequent (13%) than rising declaratives (5%). Verbless sentences only marked as questions by a question mark account for 14% of the questions.

Table 1. The marking of questions



4.2 Answerhood

Based on Ginzburg *et al*'s (2022) taxonomy of responses to questions, we made a distinction between answers (whether direct or indirect) and other responses (i.e. metacommunicative and evasive responses). An answer is taken to provide missing information. This is captured by the label 'answerhood', which, in our coding scheme, includes gestural responses (such as hand raising and head nod). The answerhood parameter also identified the responder (e.g., the speaker, a specific addressee, the audience) and the timing of the answer. It is common for questions in TED talks to be unanswered (57%). When they do get an answer, i.e, a direct or indirect answer or a gestural response, it is generally supplied by the speaker. The question may be either immediately answered by the speaker (21%), or their answer may be delayed (7%). Only 11% of the questions are immediately answered by a specific addressee, and 5% by the audience. This confirms our expectation that the speaker's role is not stable in questions throughout a talk. Both speaker and addressee may be responders. Furthermore, a question may be evaded to be addressed later in the course of the talk, or to be completely ignored.

We found a clear correlation between question type and answerhood. Declarative questions ending with a tag generally do not get an answer (92%):

(1) This is my big finish OK?

Polar questions tend to not get an answer (53%), as (2):

(2) Did you know that God smiles when you be you?

However, they may also be answered by the speaker (20%):

(3) A. Is there another replicator out there on the planet?
A. Ah yes, there is.

Or used to address a specific addressee who supplies an answer (18%):

(4) A. Do you understand?
B. Yes.

In their majority, verbless questions get an answer (52%). They make up the most represented question type that gets an answer from the audience (21%):

(5) A. Any parents of young kids in the audience?
B. Gestural response.

and may also get an answer from a specific addressee (17%):

(6) A. You done?
B. Mmm almost.

Only 14% of the verbless questions are immediately answered by the speaker:

(7) A. Chaos?
A. No.

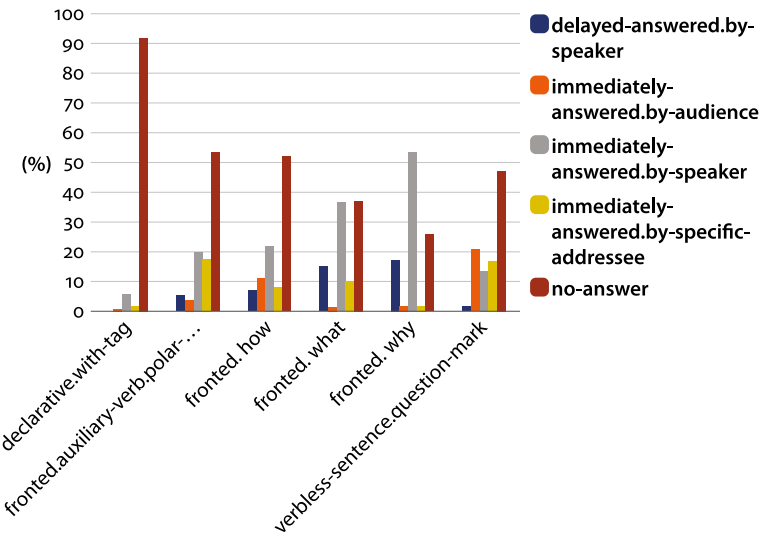
Wh-questions are heterogeneous with respect to answerhood. There is a lot of variation depending on the wh-word.

What-questions either get no answer or are immediately answered by the speaker in the same proportion (37%). A delayed answer by the speaker occurs after 15% of the *what*-questions. An answer is supplied by a specific addressee after 10% of the *what*-questions.

A higher proportion of *how*-questions gets no answer (52%) and a smaller proportion is immediately answered by the speaker (22%). 11% are immediately answered by the audience, and 8% by a specific addressee.

Why-questions behave differently. The majority of *why*-questions are immediately answered by the speaker (53,5%). They may also have a delayed answer by the speaker (17%) or no answer at all (26%). Interestingly, they do not get an answer from a specific addressee or from the audience. These results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Question types and answers



Three observations may be made on the basis of these results:

i. Some questions are more suited for interaction than others: polar questions and verbless questions are more addressee-oriented than wh-questions.
ii. In general, wh-questions are less used for interactional purposes. *What*-questions and *how*-questions may be answered by an addressee, but to a lesser extent than polar questions and verbless questions. At the other end of the cline, *why*-questions are speaker-oriented. They invite a self-answer, which may be either immediate or delayed.
iii. The questions that get an answer from an addressee are the least frequent in the sample. This also holds for the question types used in interaction, polar questions and verbless questions being less frequent than wh-questions. Recall that the majority of the questions in the data set are *wh*-questions with either no answer or a self-answer.

4.3 Interlocution

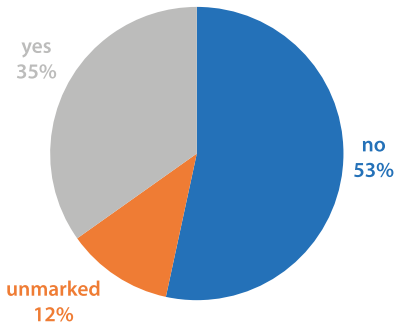
Questions were annotated for interlocution. Interlocution was considered to be marked when reference to the addressee is explicitly marked by a 2nd person pronoun. It was considered to be unmarked when the audience is implicitly addressed, without being explicitly referenced, as in (8) and (9):

(8) Yes or no?

(9) Who was it that wanted to know their birthday?

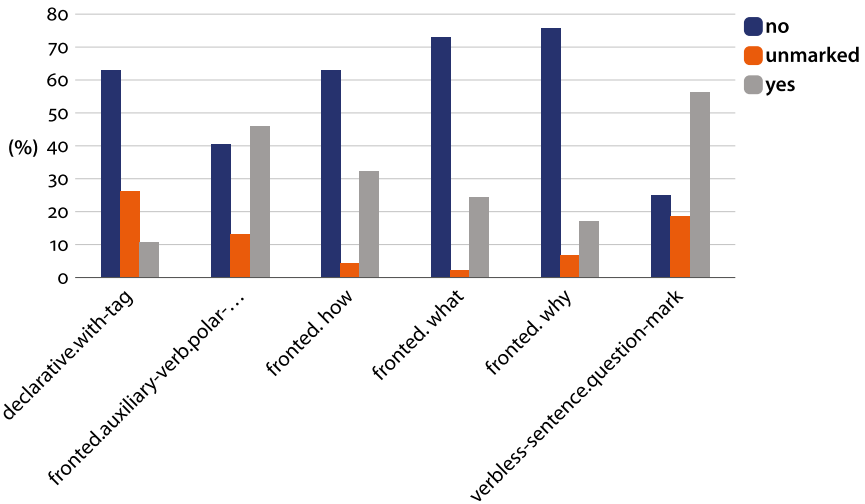
In the absence of any form of address to the audience, questions were annotated as involving no interlocution. The majority of questions involved no interlocution, as appears in Table 3.

Table 3. Interlocution in questions



Looking at the distribution of the interlocution parameter across the various questions, it appears that there are marked differences depending on question types. The absence of interlocution is highly represented in wh-questions — particularly in *why*-questions — and declarative questions ending with a tag. In contrast, polar questions and especially verbless questions are more interlocutive. This is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Interlocution across question types



The interlocution parameter allows distinguishing two types of questions — those that are answered by a specific addressee or by the audience, which are generally interlocutive, and those that are answered by the speaker, which do not involve interlocution. 90% of the questions that are immediately answered by a specific addressee and 84% of those that are answered by the audience are interlocutive. Vice versa, 79% of the questions with an immediate answer by the speaker and 88% of the questions with a delayed answer by the speaker are not interlocutive. In contrast, the status of unanswered questions with respect to interlocution is less clear-cut. The absence of an answer is generally found after non interlocutive questions, 60% of unanswered questions being not interlocutive. 24% of the unanswered questions are interlocutive, and 16% of the unanswered questions display unmarked interlocution, which is the highest rate for unmarked interlocution across all questions. However, it is striking that there is no full mapping between the parameters of interlocution and interaction. Interlocutive questions may remain unanswered, or even be answered by the speaker. Explicitly or implicitly addressing the audience through questions does not guarantee inter-

action in TED talks. Moreover, the case of verbless questions stands out. They are the most interlocutive question class, which correlates with their marked tendency to get an answer from the audience, even if they do not explicity refer to the addressee with a second person form.

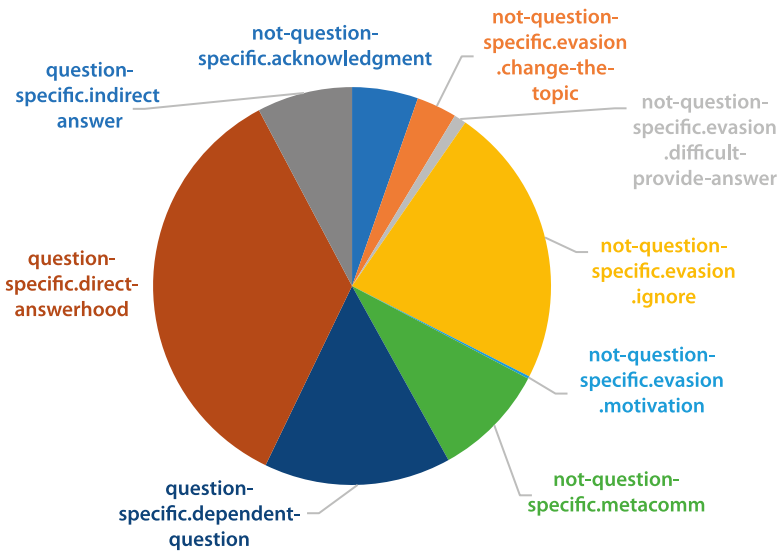
4.4 Discursive context

In order to characterise the discursive contribution of questions, the relationship between questions and both the preceding context and the subsequent context was annotated. As mentioned above, the response space taxonomy proposed by Ginzburg *et al.* (2022) was adopted to code the relationship between questions and the subsequent context. Although primarily intended to cover all response types in dialogue, this model proved adaptable to monologue. Beyond simple answerhood, this model can accommodate utterances that evade a question or that have a metacommunicative function, which is extremely frequent in monologic discourse. In order to establish how questions cohere with the preceding clause, we used the model of discourse coherence relations embedded within a knowledge-based discourse interpretation process, as originally proposed by Hobbs (1990) and extended by Kehler and Rohde (2017) to a question under discussion (QUD) model of discourse interpretation. The reason for this choice is that questions and coherence relations establish similar relationships. For instance, as noted by Kehler and Rohde (2017, 30), *how come* and *what for* convey a relation of explanation, while *where? / when? / how?* convey elaboration. It may be assumed that in the absence of turn-taking, questions are a central structuring device that makes the audience's anticipated expectations explicit to update a shared knowledge state.

4.5 Relation to subsequent context

The results indicate that answers (i.e. direct and indirect answers) are 43% of the responses. Direct answers are the most frequent response class (35%), but they do not constitute the majority of the responses. The second most frequent class is 'ignore' (23%), i.e. utterances that address the situation but not the question as such. Dependent questions amount to 15%, and metacommunicative utterances to 9% of the subsequent context. This distribution is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. The response space of questions in TED talks



4.6 Relation to preceding context

Questions allow inferring a coherence relation with the preceding context. This coherence relation may concern either the semantic content of the clauses, or the metalinguistic level. A distinctive feature of this single-speaker discourse is that metalinguistic coherence relations are frequently made explicit by specifying how the question relates to the preceding speech act. This difference was captured in our annotation scheme by adding a 'meta' category to the coherence relations. For instance, the relation between a question and the preceding context was coded as 'elaboration' when the question exemplifies what precedes, as Q2 in relation to Q1 in (10):

(10) Q1: Anybody use my examples?
Q2: The sun and the football?

In contrast, clarification requests and confirmation questions were coded as 'elaboration meta', as in (11):

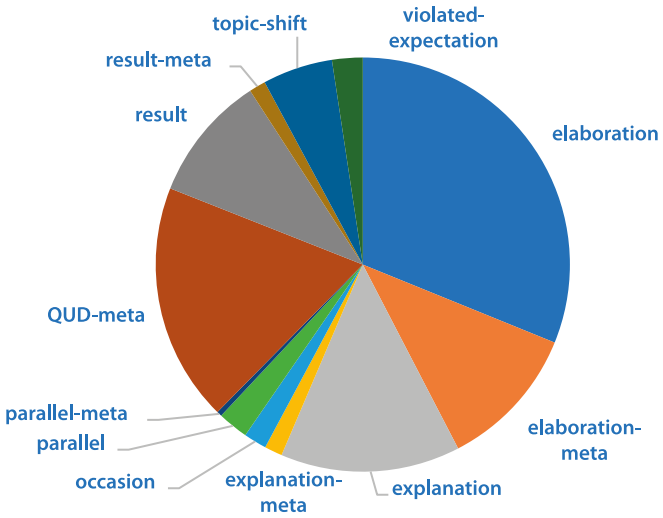
(11) Q1: Do all of you get 1034?
Q2: 1034?

Questions in TED talks are mostly used to elaborate on a preceding utterance (31%) or to meta-elaborate on a preceding speech act (11%). 19% of the questions introduce the question under discussion as in (12):

(12) The question is, Is that an illusion?

Furthermore, 14% of the questions call for an explanation of the preceding context (typically with *why* or *what* questions). This suggests that in their majority (56%), questions are backward-looking. However, they are also used in a sizeable proportion to look forward by raising issues that are to be addressed in the unfolding discourse. The distribution of the relations to the preceding discourse is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6. Questions in relation to the preceding context in TED talks



It is difficult to establish a correlation between the relational profile of the questions and answerhood, unanswered questions being pervasive across all types of coherence categories. However, elaborative questions are more frequently unanswered than other categories, as in (10).

5. Analysis

5.1 Interaction in TED talks

Judging by the number of questions answered by the audience or a specific addressee, to a certain extent, interaction may be said to be possible in TED talks. Clearly, this goes against the default contextual assumption that only the speaker may talk. However, the possibility for the audience to supply an answer is subject

to several restrictions that considerably hamper interaction. We argue that interaction is restricted to discourse management functions. Even if there is a certain degree of interaction, it does not involve the transmission of knowledge. Interactional questions either seek evidence that the speaker's message gets understood or aim to engage the audience in a entirely speaker-controlled scenario that validates the relevance of the speaker's discursive choices. Polar questions, verbless questions and wh-questions are examined in turn. The following polar question is in a meta-elaborative relation to the preceding context. It aims to check the perlocutionary effect of the preceding illocutionary act:

(13) A. Do you understand?
B. Yes.

In some talks, members of the audience may be invited on stage by the speaker to carry out an experiment. The interaction that ensues is not symmetrical, the addressee being expected to provide answers that fit into a scenario planned by the speaker. A 'cornering effect' (Biezma 2009) may be present with the insertion of 'yes or no' either in preposed or postposed position, forcing the addressee's choice between two alternatives:

(14) A. Yes or no did you feel anything?
B. Yes.

By forcing a choice between two alternatives, the speaker limits the choice set. As pointed out by Biezma, the question expressing alternatives indicates that the speaker wants to close the issue. This makes it impossible for the addressee to steer the conversation or to start describing her feelings.

It was observed in our results that verbless questions are the question class that is the most frequently used to perform interaction with the audience. As already mentioned, verbless questions typically elaborate on the preceding context. By way of elaboration, they reformulate a previous speech act they are embedded in. Their interactional potential is contextually constructed:

(15) Did anyone happen to bring with them this morning, a calculator? Seriously, if you have a calculator with you, raise your hand. Raise your hand. I, I, I…did your hand go up? Now, bring it out. Bring it out. Anybody else? Um, I see one way in the back. You sir that's three. And anybody on this side here?

The two verbless sentences 'anybody else' and 'anybody on this side here' may be interpreted as interactional by virtue of their elaborative relation with respect to the directive speech act 'if you have a calculator with you, raise your hand'. The wh-verbless question in (16) follows the same pattern:

(16) Would somebody get us started by giving us a two-digit number please? How about a two-digit number? [Audience's answer: Twenty-two]

The *how about* verbless question coerces the audience into responding by reformulating the preceding indirect request.

The contextual dependency of verbless sentences may also be manifested through syntactic ellipsis:

(17) A. By any chance does anybody here happen to know the day of the week that they were born on? If you think you know your birth day raise your hand. Let's see starting with – let's start with a gentleman first OK sir <u>what year was it first of all</u>? That's why I start with a gentleman first. **What year**?

B. 1953.
[…] A. I'll go way to the back right now, how about you? Yell it out, **what year**?

C. 1959.

As in the previous examples, the sequence starts with a request that is first mentioned in a verbal question and an imperative. The verbless question 'what year' is embedded within that directive speech act, repeated in the imperative 'yell it out' and also syntactically relies on a preceding verbal question for its interpretation. 'What day' is an elliptical question whose verbal antecedent appears in the underlined preceding question 'what year was it?'.

By elaborating on a previous directive speech act, verbless questions reformulate the directive intent in a more effective way. In a context that does not give equal rights to speaker and addressee, the addressee being not supposed to take turns, verbless questions are more likely to elicit an answer from the audience, even if they do not reference any addressees. They are intended to be more interlocutive and interactional, but rely on a preceding directive speech act to perform an interactional move.

Polar questions and verbless questions may be used to foster interaction, i.e. to get an answer from the audience. However, these answers do not advance knowledge exchange. The questions either aim to elicit evidence of understanding or engage the audience in the discourse process. These can be considered to be grounding techniques (Clark and Brennan 1991) by which the speaker coordinates his discourse with the audience. Interactional questions make the grounding process explicit by checking the common ground update. They highlight the speaker's role as a presenter.

5.2 Interlocution without interaction

In TED talks, interlocution does not necessarily give rise to interaction. The speaker may address and refer to the audience in second person questions and not get an answer, which does not hinder the discourse process. This suggests that positive evidence that the audience aligns with the speaker is not necessary:

(18) So are you ready for the lecture?

(19) Can you just take a seat over here for a second?

A positive answer is assumed in (18), taking for granted that the audience is willing to cooperate in the discourse process. In (19), the conventionalised indirect directive speech act is followed by a topic shift.

Interlocutive questions may also be used to draw the audience's interest to the question under discussion:

(20) Look at that. What are you feeling about it? Is it beautiful? Is it exciting? I'm watching your faces very carefully.

Although asked about their stance towards the question under discussion (referred to by the demonstrative pronoun *that*), the audience does not have the time and space to respond. The subsequent questions are inferred potential answers to the speaker's initial wh-question that indirectly orient the audience towards a positive appraisal. As polar questions, they restrict the choice set of the initial open interrogative to a binary choice between two alternatives, and the elaborative repetition of positively-valenced adjectives forces a positive evaluation. The quest for positive evidence about the audience's stance functions as a way to grab the audience's attention.

Interlocutive questions may even get an answer from the speaker. This indicates a switch in the speaker's role. In that case, the speaker acts less as a presenter than an expert in a certain field, in an attempt to update the common ground. Reference is explicity made to the audience's knowledge state, through adjectives (*sure*), attitudinal verbs (*believe*) or factive predicates (*know*):

(21) Why were you all sure that the answer to the question was no before I'd even told you anything about the context? Because most of you compared the price of this Big Mac to the price you're used to paying.

The *why*-question followed by the speaker's immediate explanatory answer aims to show a flaw in the audience's assumed reasoning. The speaker's communicative intention is to revise the audience's expectations according to the general line of thinking proposed by the talk. Alternatively, a delayed answer in the subsequent context may prove the audience wrong:

(22) So do you believe it's possible to see through somebody else's eyes?

The speaker anticipates a negative answer from the audience. The subsequent context provides a delayed positive answer that revises this assumed belief in an unexpected way.

Unanswered interlocutive questions typically function as indirect speech acts that appeal to the audience's assumed knowledge state. Wh-questions are used rhetorically to confirm the speaker's claims and persuade the audience:

(23) When was the last time that you picked up a newspaper and the headline was "Boy dies of Asthma"?

(24) Why would you do that?

Both questions imply a null answer — 'this never happens' in (23) and 'there is no reason for you to do that' in (24). In (23), the rhetorical question appeals to the speaker's and audience's shared knowledge of an obvious null answer to strengthen the speaker's claim that common deaths do not get much coverage and are therefore the least likely to be computed as probable. The communicative goal is to persuade the audience that the way we compute probability should be revised based on the speaker's expertise.

Indirect speech acts may serve to convey a command:

(25) Did you know that God smiles when you be you?

Rather than seeking an informative answer about the audience's knowledge, the polar question is biased towards a negative answer. It presents the content of the noun clause as new information, signalling that 'be you' is a desirable state of affairs. The question thus functions as an indirect directive speech act.

The speaker's expertise appears in interlocutive questions that either get an answer from the speaker or that are unanswered. These questions build on shared knowledge to indirectly enforce belief revision or request a change in behaviour.

6. Discussion

This analysis shows that questions in TED talks have different communicative functions than in conversation. Firstly, we argue that whether a question is interlocutive or not is indicative of its interactive function. In a second step, we argue that the question types investigated do not pattern in TED talks as in conversation, and propose an explanation.

Several studies of questions in a dialogical context point out that questions normatively get a response in conversation. In addition, answers are reported to

be preferred over non-answer responses (Stivers 2010; Stivers and Rossano 2010; Ginzburg *et al.* 2022). In TED talks, questions answered by the audience and those answered by the speaker serve different communicative functions. Questions normatively do not get an answer from the audience. Interlocution may result in interaction when an answer is provided by the audience, but this does not involve a shift in epistemic authority. When verbal, the answers supplied by the audience are one-word answers. They consist in polar particles (*yes / no*), numbers, year months or week days. These answers are sought to engage the audience in the talk and to validate the speaker in their presenter's role. Interaction as such is restricted to a discourse management function.

Interlocutive questions that are answered by the speaker or that remain unanswered are highly interactive, in the sense that they are intended to lead to belief revision. They are a powerful tool that reflects the speaker's role as a knowledgeable expert in a field. The fact that the speaker may take on different roles is a feature that is shared by TED and academic discourse. Fløttum, Dahl and Kinn (2006) claim that the speaker in academic discourse may manifest himself as a writer, a researcher or an arguer. In TED talks, we have argued that questions either mirror the presenter's role (which is akin to the writer's role in academic discourse), or the expert's role, which corresponds to the researcher's role in academic discourse. However, it should be noted that questions blur the distinction between the expert and the arguer because they simultaneously rely on the speaker's knowledge and challenge previous expectations. Arguing through questions involves inferring the audience's potential answers. For instance, in the question sequence in (20), the initial question asked by the speaker allows switching to the putative voice of the addressee. The list of suggested answers to the wh-question orients the audience towards a certain stance. Nonetheless, being phrased as questions, such options are presented in a non-committal way, as if the speaker were waiting for the audience's definitive choice and commitment.

In contrast, non interlocutive questions have a different communicative function. They do not refer to the audience as a distinct entity. Nor do they refer to a specific situation, be it past or present. The present tense is used to denote an extended state or action. Such questions anticipate questions anyone might have at some point. They reflect the voice of a 'virtual speaker' (Grésillon and Lebrave 1984). This may be manifested both through polar questions as in (3) or through wh-questions as in (26):

(26) We know more about mobile operating systems but what we really need is a moral operating system. What's a moral operating system? Alright, well we all know right and wrong right?

The question 'What's a moral operating system' anticipates that the audience has no prior knowledge of the concept introduced in the previous statement. The question meta-elaborates on the definition of that concept and is indirectly answered by the subsequent utterance. This suggests that whether a question is interlocutive or not is essential to determine its function. In a non-interlocutive context, a question may easily lend the speaker's voice to a virtual speaker who does not correspond to an identified participant in the context. This concurs with Zeyrek and Mendes's (2025) claim that a virtual speaker should be introduced as a source for questions in TED talks: 'it represents a nonspecified agent's perspective without explicit clues and potentially involves the addressee's perspective as well.'

The second major difference between questions in dialogue and questions in TED talks has to do with their distribution, which we view as a direct consequence of the communicative functions delineated above. The distribution of question types in TED talks is not similar to the distribution of question types in conversation. We take this difference to be evidence of the hybrid discourse status of TED taks.

The distribution of *wh*- and polar questions is in inverse proportion to what has been observed in private and public dialogue (Siemund 2017; Stivers 2010). In spoken conversation, polar questions have been reported to outnumber wh-questions. In line with Levinson's (2012) theory on the social economics of questions, Siemund (2017) argues that content questions come with a higher cost and are more face-threatening than polar questions. Therefore, they are less used in conversation. In TED talks, our results indicate that the tendency observed by Siemund and Stivers is reversed — content questions outnumber polar questions. We maintain that the social restriction to the use of content questions is lifted in TED talks because the default contextual assumption is that the audience does not provide informative answers, the speaker having epistemic authority. Although interaction is limited, the speaker's epistemic position may force answers that provide evidence of the audience's alignment. In order to maximise the chances of getting short answers from the audience, polar questions are preferred over content questions. Furthermore, as questions in TED talks are mostly used to elaborate on a previous utterance, the use of content questions ties in with the need to focus on and specify a constituent with respect to identity, reason, manner, etc. Recall that such questions need not be answered in the single-speaker discourse context of TED talks, even if they explicitly refer to the audience with second person verbs and pronouns. They have the capacity to elaborate on or explain a previously mentioned constituent and to open a vast discursive response space, ranging from question-specific answers (as in (20) and (21) to metacommunicative responses as in (27):

(27) If decisions shape destiny what determines it is three decisions. What are you going to focus on? Right now you have to decide what you're going to focus on. In this second consciously or unconsciously the minute you decide to focus on something you've got to give it a meaning and whatever that meaning is produces emotion.

Moreover, *why*-questions are answered by the speaker if they get an answer (see (21)). The preference for wh-questions may thus be explicated by the contextual dependency of questions in this single-speaker discourse. Wh-questions are interactive by addressing the audience's assumed needs for clarification and explanation of the speaker's previous claims.

In a similar way, verbless questions are not used in TED talks as in conversation. They are the question type that the most frequently receives an answer from the audience in TED talks. Given that verbless questions prefer direct speech and interaction (Bondarenko 2021), the interactional potential of verbless questions is particuliarly striking. Verbless questions are reported by Bondarenko (2025) to reveal the dialogically-motivated character of TED talks. Bondarenko (2025) observes that the proportion of verbless questions in TED talks is higher than in theater scripted speech. Structurally, she also reports that verbless questions in TED talks are more frequently elliptical than in written text, and claims that verbless questions in TED talks assume interlocutive intent. Based on these findings, we argue that the interlocutive intent is contextually constructed by verbless sentences in TED talks. As shown in our analysis above, verbless questions depend on previous directive speech acts to perform interaction. This type of interaction is limited to direct answerhood and therefore to discourse management functions that aim to engage the addressee in the discourse transmission process.

7. Conclusion

This study has shown that questions in TED talks have specific functions that are intrinsically related to the discourse setting. The default contextual assumption is that the speaker remains the epistemic authority. Despite the use of questions, the audience is not expected to provide information, which has repercussions on the communicative functions of questions. Questions may be used to forcibly engage the audience in the discourse process. This interactional function is generally performed by polar questions and verbless questions. However, the vast majority of questions are used to revise expectations, to raise and anticipate issues. This knowledge transmission process is highly interactive because it relies on an assumed common ground that is constantly updated as the discourse unfolds. In that process, wh-questions are associated with a larger range of discursive relationships.

The hybridity of TED talks is revealed through the use of questions. On the one hand, questions are dialogically-motivated, even if they are unanswered. On the other hand, they are the manifestation of a discourse entirely controlled by a single speaker. Our focus in this study was on interaction in English TED talks. To come up to with a more comprehensive picture of interaction in TED talks, it would be interesting to study questions from a crosslinguistic perspective. A future avenue for research is the comparison with questions in French TED talks. We may hypothesise that questions serve similar interactive functions in English and French. However, the distribution between addressee-oriented interactional and more speaker-controlled interactive functions may be expected to be different.

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Corpus data

Celle Agnès, Dima Alkhateeb, Antonina Bondarenko, Lisa Brunetti, Michele Cardo, Anne Jugnet, Manon Lelandais, Loïc Liégeois, Jacob Rigal (forthcoming). TransQuest : la transmission du savoir en questions dans les TED talks anglais et français. Dataset.

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PART 4

Interaction as a driver for change

How Catalan expresses indifference

Patterns and variants

Mar Massanell i Messalles
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The Catalan language offers various resources through which speakers can express indifference toward the alternatives presented to them. The most widespread ones, documented in both normative works and descriptive sources, are fixed constructions derived from equality comparatives. These include qualitative comparatives with the adjective *igual* 'same' and quantitative comparatives in which *tant* 'as much' precedes the verb it modifies, typically *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', or *valer* 'to be worth'. However, an examination of the geolinguistic survey *Atles Lingüístic del Domini Català* (ALDC) and the corpora *Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana* (CTILC) and *Corpus Informatitzat del Valencià* (CIVAL) reveals lesser-known equivalent expressions, such as those based on the verb *tenir* 'to have'.

Keywords: Catalan language, indifference expressions, equality comparatives, exclamatory questions, *tenir*-based indifference constructions

1. Introduction

Decision-making is an essential aspect of daily life, encompassing everything from minor choices to more significant ones. In social interactions, we are often prompted to express our preferences: "Fish or meat for lunch?", "Will you tell her what happened, or should I?", "Shall we go for a walk or watch TV?". At times, our preferences are clear: "Fish, please!", "You should tell her", "I'm too tired — let's stay home". But there are also moments when choices present themselves without sparking a clear inclination toward any option. In such cases, language offers a repertoire of fixed expressions to signal indifference. For example, when asked "Should we take the bus or the subway?", a speaker might respond with neutral phrases like "It's all the same" or "It doesn't matter — it'll take as long either way". Alternatively, they might convey their disengagement saying: "I don't mind" or

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"I don't care — it's up to you". These expressions illustrate how language allows speakers to navigate decision-making processes while avoiding commitment to a specific choice.

This chapter examines, from both the syntactic and semantic perspectives, the linguistic strategies used to express indifference in Catalan, starting with the most widespread fixed constructions and concluding with those that have a more restricted scope. The analysis is structured as follows:

- Section 2 examines the constructional variants of structures described in the *Gramàtica de la llengua catalana* by the Institut d'Estudis Catalans as equality comparatives expressing indifference (GIEC: § 30.3.5*b*), specifically: *és igual [una cosa] com [l'altra]* 'it's the same [one thing] as [the other]' and *tant {és / hi fa / se val} [una cosa] com [l'altra]* 'it makes no difference whether [one thing] or [the other]'.
- Section 3 explores the broader semantic network formed by these constructions with the verbs *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', and *valer* 'to be worth', alongside related expressions involving *donar* 'to give', such as *tant se me'n dona [una cosa] com [l'altra]* 'I don't care whether [one thing] or [the other]', and *importar* 'to matter', as in *no m'importa* 'it doesn't matter to me', with a focus on their pragmatic functions on the basis of examples obtained from the *Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana* (CTILC).
- Section 4 discusses colloquial strategies that enhance the expressive potential of these constructions, including the insertion of adverbial intensifiers, such as *ben* 'well' in *m'és ben igual*; the substitution of neutral verb *fer* by more vulgar ones, such as *(re)fotre* or *(re)fúmer*; and the addition of evaluative, scatological, or sexual minimizers, like *rave* 'radish', *merda* 'shit', or *carall* 'dick', as in *(no) m'importa {un rave / una merda / un carall}*.
- Section 5 highlights expressions of indifference with more restricted dialectal distributions, as found in the geolinguistic work *Atles Lingüístic del Domini Català* in the map "Tant se me'n dona" (ALDC: map 2166), particularly those featuring verbs like *estimar* 'to value' and *tenir* 'to have' in first person: *tant m'estim(o), ho tinc igual*.
- Section 6 focuses on *tenir*-based indifference constructions, which include the qualitative comparative *té igual… (com)*, the quantitative comparative *tant té… (com)*, and exclamatory questions such as *què té?, què més té?, què té més?*, and *què té de més?*

Together, these sections provide a comprehensive overview of how indifference is linguistically encoded in Catalan, revealing both structural diversity and functional nuance.

2. Equality comparatives as expressions of indifference

In Catalan, the syntactic pattern of comparative structures, particularly equality comparatives, has given rise to a set of fixed constructions that enable speakers to express indifference, as illustrated in Table 1. Among these, *és igual… com* 'it's the same… as' features a qualitative equality comparative construction where the adjective *igual* 'same' functions as the trigger for comparison. Other constructions conveying a similar meaning are *tant és… com, tant hi fa… com* (or *tant li fa… com*), and *tant se val… com*, which are based on a quantitative equality comparative pattern, with *tant* 'as much' serving as the central element. Interestingly, in these forms, *tant* is preposed to the verbs *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', or *valer* 'to be worth', diverging from the more typical post-verbal position observed in non-lexicalized uses (GIEC: § 28.2.2*a*).

Table 1. Catalan equality comparatives conveying indifference

Expressions of indifference	
Qualitative equality comparatives (*igual* 'same')	Quantitative equality comparatives (*tant* 'as much')
és igual… com	*tant és… com* *tant hi fa… com* (or *tant li fa… com*) *tant se val… com*

All these constructions exhibit a function similar to that of disjunctive concessive clauses, which consist of an initial predicate in the subjunctive mood coordinated with another predicate expressing an opposing situation through the disjunctive conjunction *o* 'or' (GIEC: § 30.3.5*b*). A comparable concessive interpretation can also arise from conditional protases linked by the correlation *tant… com* 'as much… as', where the verb appears in the indicative mood (GIEC: § 30.3.5*b*). The proximity between equality comparative constructions expressing indifference and the aforementioned concessive constructions can be observed both in the examples in (1), which depict two opposing situations, laughing and crying, that are relevant but do not encompass all possible scenarios, and in those in (2), which present two contrasting facts, passing and failing, that cover the entire range of possibilities. It is worth noting that indifference comparative structures can be formed either with indicative subordinate clauses introduced by *si* 'if' or with subjunctive complement clauses introduced by *que* 'that'.

(1) a. *Riguis o ploris*, ell va a la seua.
laugh.SUBJ.2SG or cry.SUBJ.2SG he goes to his
'Whether you laugh or cry, he does his own thing.'

b. *Tant si rius com si plores*, ell va a la seua.
as.much if laugh.IND.2SG as if cry.IND.2SG he goes to his
'Whether you laugh or cry, he does his own thing.'

c. {*És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val*}
{is same / as.much is / as.much does / as.much REFL values}
si rius com si plores, ell va a la seua.
if laugh.IND.2SG as if cry.IND.2SG he goes to his
'{It's the same / It's all the same / It doesn't matter / It's of no importance}
whether you laugh or cry, he does his own thing.'

d. {*És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val*}
{is same / as.much is / as.much does / as.much REFL values}
que riguis com que ploris, ell va a la seua.
that laugh.SUBJ.2SG as that cry.SUBJ.2SG he goes to his
'{It's the same / It's all the same / It doesn't matter / It's of no importance}
whether you laugh or cry, he does his own thing.'

(2) a. *Aprovi o no (aprovi)*, cal felicitar-lo per l'
pass.SUBJ.3SG or not (pass.SUBJ.3SG) must congratulate.INF-him for the
esforç que ha fet.
effort that has made
'Whether he passes or not, he must be congratulated for the effort he has made.'

b. *Tant si aprova com si no (aprova)*, cal
as.much if pass.IND.3SG as if not (pass.IND.3SG) must
felicitar-lo per l' esforç que ha fet.
congratulate.INF-him for the effort that has made
'Whether he passes or not, he must be congratulated for the effort he has made.'

c. {*És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val*} *si*
{is same / as.much is / as.much does / as.much REFL values} if
aprova com si no (aprova), cal felicitar-lo per l'
pass.IND.3SG as if not (pass.IND.3SG) must congratulate.INF-him for the
esforç que ha fet.
effort that has made
'{It's the same / It's all the same / It doesn't matter / It's of no importance}
whether he passes or not, he must be congratulated for the effort he has made.'

d. {*És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val*} *que*
{is same / as.much is / as.much does / as.much REFL values} that
aprovi com que no (aprovi), cal felicitar-lo
pass.SUBJ.3SG as that not (pass.SUBJ.3SG) must congratulate.INF-him
per l' esforç que ha fet.
for the effort that has made
'{It's the same / It's all the same / It doesn't matter / It's of no importance} whether he passes or not, he must be congratulated for the effort he has made.'

According to the variants described in the *Gramàtica del català contemporani* (GCC) (Quer 2002: § 25.2.2.1*e*; Cuenca 2002: § 31.3.4.1) and the GIEC (§ 30.3.5*b*), three verbs are alternately used in these comparative constructions of indifference, as summarized in Table 2. These verbs include the copular *ésser* 'to be', found both in constructions *és igual… com* and *tant és… com*; the light verb *fer* 'to do', which appears with an inherent clitic — either *hi* or *li* — that serves no syntactic function, as well as in *tant hi fa… com* and *tant li fa… com*; and the evaluative verb *valer* 'to be worth', which occurs in its pronominal form *valer-se*, as in *tant se val… com*.

Table 2. Verbs used in equality comparatives expressing indifference

Verbs in constructions of indifference		
Copular	**Light**	**Evaluative**
ésser 'to be'	*fer* 'to do' with an inherent clitic	*valer* 'to be worth' in its pronominal form
és igual… com *tant és… com*	*tant hi/li fa… com*	*tant se val… com*

3. Semantic network and pragmatic functions of indifference constructions

In the examples in (3), the fixed constructions analysed in this chapter convey the concept of [EQUIVALENCE], a type of equality that specifically denotes an 'equality of value' between two situations or elements being compared.[1] This notion is expressed through the constructions *{És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val} A com B*, which can be translated as 'it makes no difference whether A or B'.

1. Unless otherwise stated, all examples are taken from the CTILC.

(3) a. Al capdevall, quan no es té res a fer, *és igual* viure en un lloc *com* en un altre. (1964, Jordi Elias, *10 Anys de circ*)
'Ultimately, when there is nothing to do, it's all the same living in one place as in another.'

b. Sinó que quan un home ha nascut per a viure al cubell de la desgràcia, *tant és* que es mogui *com* que dormi.
(1937, Xavier Benguerel, *El casament de la Xela*)
'But when a man is born to dwell in the bucket of misfortune, it makes no difference whether he moves or sleeps.'

c. *Tant hi fa* que fos Zola *com* un altre: el gir venia preconitzat per molts factors simultanis (1964, Joan Fuster, *Diccionari per a ociosos*)
'It makes no difference whether it was Zola or someone else: the shift was foreshadowed by many simultaneous factors'

d. *Tant li fa* ésser criat d'un amo *com* amo d'un criat. És igualment pesat.
(1950, Josep Pla, *Bodegó amb peixos*)
'It makes no difference whether one is servant to a master or master to a servant. It is equally burdensome.'

e. *Tant se val* el monisme materialista de Haeckel *com* el monisme idealista de von Uexküll. (1938, Antoni Oriol, *Conceptes 1939*)
'It makes no difference whether it is Haeckel's materialist monism or von Uexküll's idealist monism.'

Notably, as shown in the examples in (4), these constructions can convey [EQUIVALENCE] specifically between an event and the absence of that same event. This is expressed through structures such as *{És igual / Tant és / Tant hi fa / Tant se val} A com no A*, which can be translated as 'it makes no difference whether A or not A'.

(4) a. Vui dir que *és igual* que avisem *com* que no avisem
(1920, Josep M. Folch i Torres, *La ventafocs*)
'I mean, it makes no difference whether we notify or not'

b. *Tant és* que xiulin *com* que no xiulin. (1983, Joan Brossa, *Xeix*)
'It makes no difference whether they whistle or not.'

c. Si se'ls carrega tots, *tant hi fa* que sobrevisqui *com* que no
(2019, Miquel de Palol, *Angèlica i Rafel*)
'If he kills them all, it doesn't matter whether he survives or not'

d. *Tant se val* que t'escarrassis *com* que nò. Moriràs!
(1913, Eduard Girbal, *El castell d'iràs y no en tornaràs*)
'It makes no difference whether you struggle or not. You will die!'

This equivalence between a situation and its opposite forms the basis of the notion of [IRRELEVANCE], as A is deemed irrelevant if it makes no difference whether A occurs or does not occur. This semantic concept is conveyed by the verbal expressions *és igual, tant és, tant hi fa*, and *tant se val*, which emerge from

the truncation of equality comparative constructions through the omission of the comparative coda, as illustrated in (5).

(5) a. A jo m'hauria agradat tenir una dona, *és igual* si no era guapa, però que fos amorosa. (2009, Ponç Pons, *Lokus*)
'I would have liked to have a wife, it wouldn't matter if she wasn't beautiful, as long as she was loving.'

b. Sempre ens passen la mà per la cara, però ens fan creure que som nosaltres qui portem la batuta. Al final, però, *tant és*, perquè la vida en parella és un projecte col·lectiu. (2015, Albert Rami, *Dones i homes al descobert*)
'They always outdo us, but they make us believe that we're the ones in charge. In the end, though, it doesn't matter, because life as a couple is a collective project.'

c. Sigui com sigui, el centre de gravetat del país havia de seguir essent, com és, la zona catalana. *Tant hi faria* que li afegissin tota la província de Conca! (1962, Joan Fuster, *Nosaltres, els valencians*)
'Be that as it may, the centre of gravity of the country had to remain, as it is, the Catalan area. It would make no difference if they added the entire province of Cuenca to it!'

d. *Tant se val* que ells triomfin amb la teva capitulació, què t'importa el seu triomf o la seva derrota? (1967, M. Aurèlia Capmany, *Un lloc entre els morts*)
'It is of no importance if they triumph with your capitulation; what do you care about their triumph or defeat?'

Cuenca (2002: § 31.3.4.1) classifies these truncated forms as improper expressive interjections that convey a sense of indifference. Similarly, the *Gramàtica normativa valenciana* (GNV: § 35.2.2) refers to them as interjections and documents the construction with *fer* in the variant *tant fa*, notably lacking the inherent clitic pronoun. All these lexicalised expressions function as response formulas that allow the speaker to react to events introduced in the conversation, typically by downplaying their significance. The examples in (6) illustrate their diverse pragmatic functions. For instance, *és igual* in (6a) responds to an apology by minimising the fault; *tant és* in (6b) dismisses an impediment; *tant hi fa* in (6c) counters an objection; *tant li fa* in (6d) puts an end to a pointless debate; and *tant se val* in (6e) neutralises an offer of help.

(6) a. Es va excusar: [/] — M'han fet venir fins aquí, don Rafel… Jo no sabia… […] — *És igual, és igual.* […] Seguiu-me, don Jerónimo. (1991, Jaume Cabré, *Senyoria*)
'He excused himself: [/] "They made me come here, Don Rafel… I didn't know…" […] "It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. […] Follow me, Don Jerónimo."

b. ELL: Per què vol que vingui a passejar? […] Jo ara camino molt a poc a poc i em canso de seguida. No aniríem gaire lluny. [/] DONA: *Tant és.*
(2004, Lluïsa Cunillé, *Barcelona, mapa d'ombres*)
'HE: Why do you want me to go for a walk? […] I walk very slowly now and get tired quickly. We wouldn't get very far. [/] WOMAN: It doesn't matter.'

c. « No ho sé ben bé, però en tot cas me'n mantinc a distància, jueu i alemany és una barreja que no m'agrada ». [/] — No és austríac? — vaig preguntar. [/] — *Tant hi fa*, no? La mateixa llengua, la mateixa manera de pensar.
(2012, Carme Arenas, translator, *El cementiri de Praga*)[2]
"I'm not entirely sure, but in any case, I keep my distance — Jewish and German is a mix I don't like." [/] "Isn't he Austrian?" I asked. [/] "What's the difference, right? Same language, same way of thinking."

d. Finalment quedava la petita, l'última de morir perquè mentre mataven els grans s'havia amagat sota el llit. No, sota el llit no, sota el banc del foc. Doncs a jo m'han dit que es va amagar dintre del sac de la farina. *Tant li fa*, el cas és que, després de morta, se la van menjar els gossos de la casa, pobrissona. (2013, Josep Coll, *Dos taüts negres i dos de blancs*)
'Finally, there was the youngest one, the last to die because, while they were killing the older ones, she had hidden under the bed. No, not under the bed, under the hearth bench. Well, I was told she hid inside the sack of flour. It doesn't matter; the fact is that, after she died, the house dogs ate her, poor child.'

e. — Me l'ha tornat, però… — va mirar als seus peus com si li resultés inexplicable no veure'l lluir en l'ombra — l'he perdut ara mateix. [/] — T'ajudaré a buscar-lo. [/] — *Tant se val!* Mai més no em farà falta!
(1955, Xavier Benguerel, *El testament*)
"He gave it back to me, but…" — he looked down at his feet as though it were inexplicable not to see it gleaming in the shadow — "I've just lost it again." "I'll help you look for it." "It doesn't matter! I'll never need it again!"

One of the verbs involved in these constructions, *fer* 'to do', combined with the lexicalised clitic *hi*, has given rise to two additional structures associated with the notion of [IRRELEVANCE], as shown in Table 3: the negative polarity construction *No hi fa res!* 'It makes no difference!', featuring the negative adverb *no* 'not' and the indefinite pronoun *res* 'nothing', as exemplified in (7a), and *Què hi fa?* 'What does it matter?', with the interrogative pronoun *què* 'what', as illustrated in (7b). The latter is an exclamatory question — an interrogative structure pronounced with the intonational contour of an exclamation — employed by the speaker to emphatically convey a subjective pragmatic value (Payrató 2002: §3.4.5.1). Similarly, the verb of estimation *importar* 'to matter' has given rise to two equivalent formulas:

2. Catalan translation of the Italian book *Il cimitero di Praga*, by Umberto Eco.

the negative declarative construction *No importa!* 'It doesn't matter!', as illustrated in (7c), and the exclamatory question *Què importa?* 'What does it matter?', shown in (7d). It is worth noting that exclamatory questions may undergo verb ellipsis when preceded by the coordinating conjunction *i* 'and', resulting in the reduced form *I què?* 'So what?', as shown in (7e).

(7) a. — Perdoneu [...]. Això forma part del curs altern, ens ho sabem de memòria. [/] — *No hi fa res*. Que potser no és veritat?
(1967, Manuel de Pedrolo, *Totes les bèsties de càrrega*)
"Excuse me [...] This is part of the alternate course; we know it by heart." [/] "That doesn't matter. Is it not true, perhaps?"

b. — Però això és lluny. [/] — Tu no ho entens, Roc. *Què hi fa?* Treballaré en un sol indret, no hauré d'anar per les cases...
(1971, Josep Vallverdú, *En Roc drapaire*)
"But that's far away." [/] "You don't understand, Roc. What does it matter? I'll work in one single place; I won't have to go house to house..."

c. CREONT: Pro devastava el país, mentre l'altre [/] el defensava amb el seu noble esforç. [/] ANTÍGONA: *No importa!* L'Hades reclama aquest ritu.
(2019, Feliu Formosa, translator, *Antígona*)[3]
'CREON: But one was laying waste to the land, while the other [/] defended it with noble effort. [/] ANTIGONE: It matters not! Hades demands this rite.'

d. Salvar la pell, *¿què importa?* La pell no és nostra, l'han portada altres abans — perquè la matèria orgànica és la mateixa (1956, Joan Sales, *Incerta glòria*)
'Saving one's skin, what does it matter? The skin is not ours; others have worn it before — because the organic matter is the same'

e. — Podia costar-te la vida. [/] — *I què!* ¿Per salvar la teva no hauria estat ben empleada? (1927, Josep M. Folch i Torres, *Les aventures d'en Boi Delit o el braçalet de Marciana*)
"It could have cost you your life." [/] "So what! Wouldn't it have been well spent to save yours?"

Table 3. Alternative constructions to comparatives for expressing indifference

Alternative constructions conveying indifference	Negative declarative constructions	Exclamatory questions	Truncated question
With *fer* 'to do'	*No hi fa res!*	*Què hi fa?*	*I què?*
With *importar* 'to matter'	*No importa!*	*Què importa?*	*I què?*

3. Catalan translation of Sophocles' Greek tragedy *Antigone*.

The constructions analysed thus far, with the exception of the one formed with the verb *valer* 'to be worth', can be expanded through the insertion of a dative element that fulfils the semantic role of experiencer. This addition prompts a semantic shift from an external, objective domain to a more internal and subjective one, thereby subjectifying the structure (Traugott & Dasher 2002; Traugott 2012). Consequently, the [EQUIVALENCE] between the two compared situations or the [IRRELEVANCE] of the reported event is no longer framed as an objective reality but is instead explicitly linked to the perspective and evaluation of the experiencer. The inclusion of the dative thus extends the semantic range of these constructions, allowing them to convey a subjective sense of indifference, understood either as a [LACK OF PREFERENCE] between two alternatives or as [DISINTEREST] in a particular event, as represented in Table 4.

Table 4. Semantic network of four nodes in indifference constructions

Indifference constructions	With comparative coda	Truncated forms
Without dative	[EQUIVALENCE]	[IRRELEVANCE]
With experiencer dative	[LACK OF PREFERENCE]	[DISINTEREST]

The introduction of the dative is possible in structures with both *ésser* 'to be' and *fer* 'to do', as illustrated in (8). In the case of *fer*, the clitic *hi* ceases to appear; if the pronoun *li* is present, it is no longer lexicalised but instead functions syntactically as an indirect object equivalent to 'to him' or 'to her', in complementary distribution with *em/me* 'to me', *et/te* 'to you.SING', *ens* 'to us', *us* 'to you.PL', and *els* 'to them'.

(8) a. Si Nietzche deia que a ell *li era igual* que parlés Tucidides *com* Pericles, nosaltres direm que *tant ens és* que parli el català com el portuguès
(1926, Francesc Pujols, *Història de l'hegemonia catalana en la política espanyola*)
'If Nietzsche said that he didn't care whether it was Thucydides or Pericles speaking, we will say that it doesn't matter to us whether it's the Catalan or the Portuguese man speaking'

b. Pel que em sembla, *tant te fa* que jo obri bé o malament.
(1965, Jaume Berenguer, translator, *Alexis Zorbàs*)[4]
'It seems to me that it makes no difference to you whether I do things right or wrong.'

4. Catalan translation of the novel written in Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis.

c. L'home honrat, quan ha de matar, se'n dóna vergonya i cerca que la nit el tapi. Al criminal nat, *tant li fa*.
(1955, Pere Calders, *Cròniques de la veritat oculta*)
'The honest man, when he has to kill, feels ashamed and seeks the cover of night. To the born criminal, it makes no difference.'

Both negative declarative structures and exclamatory questions with *fer* 'to do' and *importar* 'to matter' can likewise be extended by incorporating a dative with the semantic role of experiencer, as illustrated in (9).

(9) a. Que viatgi, i que (no cal que sigui gaire d'amagat) tingui altres dones, a més d'ella. A ella *no li fa res* (1993, Quim Monzó, *El perquè de tot plegat*)
'Let him travel, and let him (without needing to be too secretive about it) have other women besides her. She doesn't mind'

b. Andreu: Que us confesseu? [/] Clavell: I a tu *què et fa?*
(1937, Xavier Benguerel, *El casament de la Xela*)
'Andreu: Do you go to confession? [/] Clavell: What's it to you?'

c. ¿La devem a les formacions espirituals forjades en la més primera Marca o bé és un producte de la lluita que hem menat des del segle XVII per redreçar-nos? *No ens importa*.
(1960, Jaume Vicens i Vives, *Notícia de Catalunya*)
'Do we owe it to the spiritual formations forged in the earliest March, or is it a product of the struggle we have waged since the 17th century to straighten ourselves out? We don't care.'

d. Mateu: Com hauran pogut escapar aquests? [/] Bernat: A nosaltres *què ens importa*? Dorm i no m'atabalis
(1970, Josep M. Benet i Jornet, *Marc i Jofre, o els alquimistes de la fortuna*)
'Mateu: How could they have escaped? [/] Bernat: What do we care? Go to sleep and stop bothering me'

Another similar structure with an experiencer dative is constructed with *donar* 'to give', even though this verb does not form equality comparatives — neither qualitative ones with *igual* 'same' nor quantitative ones with *tant* 'as much' — and, as a result, it has not generated corresponding truncated forms. This contrasts with Spanish *dar* 'to give', which does display such uses with *igual* 'same', as in *¡Da igual!* 'It doesn't matter!', and with *tanto* 'as much', as in *¡Tanto da!* 'It's all the same!', and which has given rise to the exclamatory question *¿Qué más da?* 'What difference does it make?', featuring the quantifier *más* 'more'. Nonetheless, when *donar* 'to give' combines with a pronominal cluster consisting of the reflexive *se* and the partitive *en*, and is accompanied by an obligatory experiencer dative, it forms a construction similar to quantitative comparatives with preposed *tant* 'as much'. This construction conveys the notion of [lack of preference] between

alternatives, as illustrated in (10a), or [DISINTEREST] towards an event, as in (10b). In addition to the form with the more general pronominal cluster, such as *tant se li'n dona* (GIEC: § 8.4.3.3), there is a variant in which the reflexive *se* combines with the adverbial clitic *hi*, again requiring the presence of an obligatory experiencer dative: for example, *tant se m'hi dona* (GNV: § 23.4.2).

(10) a. Els analfabets *tant se'ls en donava* que els receptessin en un idioma com en un altre (1953, Francesc Curet, *Visions barcelonines: 1760–1860*)
'To the illiterate, it didn't matter whether they were given prescriptions in one language or another'

b. A mi *tant se me'n dóna* que em critiquin (1932, Josep M. de Sagarra, *Vida privada*)
'I couldn't care less if they criticise me'

In Table 5 indifference constructions with and without experiencer dative are summarised.

Table 5. Verbs in indifference constructions by presence or absence of an experiencer dative

Verbs	Without dative	With experiencer dative
ésser 'to be'	*és igual… (com)*	*m'és igual… (com)*, etc.
	tant és… (com)	*tant m'és… (com)*, etc.
fer 'to do'	*tant (hi/li) fa… (com)*	*tant me fa… (com)*, etc.
	no hi fa res	*no em fa res*, etc.
	què hi fa?	*què em fa?*, etc.
valer 'to be worth'	*tant se val… (com)*	---
importar 'to matter'	*no importa*	*no m'importa*, etc.
	què importa?	*què m'importa?*, etc.
donar 'to give'	---	*tant se {me'n/m'hi} dona*, etc.

The introduction of subjectivity, through the inclusion of the experiencer dative in these constructions, paves the way for pretence. The expression of indifference by the speaker may be either genuine or feigned, as illustrated in Example (11), where spite is conveyed.

(11) O jo o les altres: tría! Si dius res a cap, si't mires a cap, jo ho sabré, jo ho endevinaré, perque aquestes coses s'endevinen sempre, y aleshores, tot desfet; me caso ab en Xamot, o ab el primer que passi: *tant me fa!*

(1907, Caterina Albert, *Cayres vius*)

'Either me or the other women: choose! If you say anything to any of them, if you look at them, I'll know, I'll figure it out, because these things are always figured out, and then, everything's ruined; I'll marry Xamot, or the first man who comes along: it's all the same to me!'

These constructions often emerge within a dynamic interplay between interlocutors. One party introduces a topic, presuming it holds some relevance or interest for the addressee and anticipating a reaction, whether positive or negative. When raised with malicious intent, the topic can carry an implicit challenge or provocation. The addressee, in turn, may downplay or deny any personal impact, even when the matter genuinely affects them. In such instances, the use of indifference constructions serves a dual purpose: to signal disinterest — whether genuine or feigned — and to express irritation with the interlocutor for raising the subject, particularly if having done so is perceived as antagonistic. This interaction exemplifies the domain of intersubjectivity (Traugott & Dasher 2002; Traugott 2012), as in (12), where the speaker's response reveals bitterness towards the woman who rejected him and, even more sharply, anger at the interlocutor for maliciously mentioning her marriage to another man.

(12) Aslak: N'hi haurà alguna que et voldrà, ja veuràs. Adéu! Donaré records a la núvia de part teva. [(Se'n van rient i parlant a mitja veu.)] [/] Peer [(els segueix amb els ulls un instant, aixeca les espatlles i fa mitja volta)]: ¡Que es casi amb qui vulgui, la noia de Haegstad! *Tant me fa!* [...] [(Picant de peus:)] Ah! ¡El menyspreu d'aquests homes! ¡De bona gana agafaria un ganivet d'escorxador per arrancar-los tot aquest menyspreu del ventre!

(1936, Joan Puig i Ferreter & Ventura Gassol, translators, *Peer Gynt*)[5]

'Aslak: There'll be someone who'll want you, you'll see. Goodbye! I'll give your regards to the bride. [(They leave, laughing and speaking in low voices.)] [/] Peer [(watches them go for a moment, shrugs, and turns away)]: She can marry whoever she wants, the girl from Haegstad! I don't care! [...] [(Stamping his foot:)] Ah! The contempt of those men! I'd gladly grab a butcher's knife to carve all that contempt out of their guts!'

5. Catalan translation of Henrik Ibsen's play, originally written in Norwegian.

4. Linguistic strategies for the intensification of indifference constructions

Building on the pragmatic nuances discussed in § 3, which imbue the expression of indifference with undertones of disdain and latent anger, speakers often amplify the expressive force of these constructions through various strategies. One such strategy involves inserting the intensifier *ben* 'well' or other adverbs of intensity, such as *absolutament* 'absolutely', *completament* 'completely', and *perfectament* 'perfectly', into the construction with the adjective *igual*, as illustrated in (13).

(13) a. ja sé que no ho entendràs, o no ho voldràs entendre, però *m'és ben igual*, [...] jo ja he pres la meva decisió (2007, M. Antònia Oliver, *Colors de mar*)
'I already know you won't understand it, or you won't want to understand it, but I honestly don't care, [...] I've already made my decisión'

b. si espera que tingui ganes de veure'l després d'aquell numeret, ho té clar. *M'és absolutament igual*. I no és rancúnia, és indiferència. (2021, Carme Junyent, *Tancat temporalment*)
'if he expects me to feel like seeing him after that little scene, he's got another think coming. I couldn't care less. And it's not resentment — it's indifference.'

c. Blai: I si ella i jo... eh? [/] Lena: Pallasso! No et posis neguitós. Facis el que facis, *m'és completament igual*. (1984, Agustí Bartra, *L'hivern plora gebre damunt el gerani*)
Blai: And what if she and I... huh? [/] Lena: Don't be absurd! Stay calm. Whatever you do, I couldn't care less.

d. Però, si us haig d'ésser franc, això *m'és perfectament igual*, perquè l'art és una cosa completament secundària. (1928, Josep Pla, *Vida de Manolo*)
'But, to be honest, I couldn't care less about that, because art is something completely secondary.'

The verb *fer* 'to do', in turn, may be supplanted by the vulgar *fotre*, which originally carried a sexual connotation ('to fuck'), or by its euphemistic variant *fúmer*, a softened adaptation of the former (DECat: IV, 151–155). This substitution occurs either in constructions parallel to *tant me fa*, yielding forms such as *tant me fot* or *tant me fum*, or in structures where the verb is paired with a pronominal cluster comprising the reflexive *se*, the partitive *en*, and an obligatory dative with the semantic role of experiencer. In the latter case, the verb may be further intensified by the prefix *re-*, and the quantifier *tant* is often omitted: *(tant) se me'n (re)fot, (tant) se me'n (re)fum*, as shown in (14).

(14) a. — Si et poses filla de puta, ho esbombaré als diaris. Et juro que a mi *tant me fot*. Però t'imagines, l'escàndol? (2004, Jaume Cabré, *Les veus del Pamano*)
'If you act like a fucking bitch, I'll get it published in the newspapers. I swear I couldn't care less. But can you imagine the scandal?'

b. El més greu de tot és que intueixo que els Riveras, Arrimadas i Lorena Roldán [...] saben que és mentida. [...] Però *se'ls en fum*. Són uns irresponsables (2019, Xevi Xirgo, *El punt Avui*, no. 14014)
'The worst of it all is that I sense that the Riveras, Arrimadas, and Lorena Roldán [...] know it's a lie. [...] But they couldn't care less. They're an irresponsible bunch'

c. Jo decideixo amb qui vull viure i *se me'n refot* si és família o no. (2011, Ramon Solsona, *L'home de la maleta*)
'I decide who I want to live with, and I couldn't care less if they're family or not.'

The verb *importar* 'to matter', aside from appearing in the negative declarative structure *no m'importa* 'it doesn't matter to me', has also given rise to other constructions where it combines with an evaluative minimiser — a noun referring to an element of negligible value, such as *rave* 'radish' — or a taboo minimiser, both of which function as adverbial quantifiers (Llop 2020). Taboo minimisers may include nouns with scatological connotations, such as *merda* 'shit', or sexual ones, such as *carall* 'dick'. These constructions do not require the presence of the negative operator *no*, as illustrated in (15).

(15) a. però allò que sí que es nota cada vegada amb més claredat són dues classes d'espanyols, els qui tenen ploma i veu públics [...] i aquells que *els importa un rave* allò que diguin o escriguin els altres (1987, Lluís Racionero, *El discurs*)
'but what is increasingly noticeable is the emergence of two kinds of Spaniards: those who wield a public voice and pen [...] and those who couldn't care less about what others say or write'

b. Però mai no l'havia vista fent petar els dits, exigint tornar a veure la documentació de propietat de can Casic i dient, després d'un silenci, *m'importa una pputa merda* el que digui aquest document. (2011, Jaume Cabré, *Jo confesso*)[6]
'But I had never seen her snapping her fingers, demanding to see the ownership documents for Can Casic again, and then, after a pause, saying, "I don't give a damn what this document says."

c. Com es coneix que [...] no es tornarà a presentar per a alcalde: ha vist que ja *no li importem un carall*? (1998, Jordi Soler, *El Punt*, no. 698)
'How obvious it is that [he] won't run for mayor again! Have you seen that he doesn't give a damn about us anymore?'

In the CTILC, the minimisers that appear, in order of frequency, are: *rave* 'radish', 84 occurrences; *merda* 'shit', 26 (including *una puta merda* 'a fucking shit', *una bona merda* 'a big shit', and *una merda i mitja* 'a shit and a half'); *carall* 'dick', 5 (including *carallot*, which features the augmentative-pejorative suffix *-ot*); *colló* 'ball', 3; the Castilianism *bledo* 'goosefoot', 2; *pimentó* 'pimento', 1; *bufa d'ànec* 'duck's bladder' or 'duck's silent fart', 1; *treseta*, an old coin of little value, 1; and *daixonses* 'thingumabob', 1. In the ALDC materials, the minimisers employed by informants are exclusively evaluative rather than taboo, as would be expected in a survey setting with a stranger. Moreover, they are predominantly Castilianisms, reflecting the significant influence of Spanish on the colloquial register, at least in the 1960s and 1970s, when the data were collected. These minimisers include the Castilianisms *pito* 'whistle', 46 occurrences (including *tres pitos*, featuring the culturally significant number three); *pepino* 'cucumber', 4; *pico* 'beak', 1; *bledo* 'goosefoot', 1; and *bufo* 'puff', 1. The only Catalan minimisers attested, each with a single occurrence, are *rave* 'radish' and *punyeta*. The latter originally carried a sexual meaning (*fer-se la punyeta* 'to masturbate') but has undergone semantic bleaching (Hopper & Traugott 2003) to acquire the more general meanings of 'annoying thing' and 'worthless thing'.

A similar strategy involves inserting taboo words of a religious nature, such as *dimoni* 'devil' (sometimes intensified with the prefix *re-: redimoni*), or of a sexual nature, such as *collons* 'balls', after the interrogative pronoun *què* 'what' in exclamatory questions with *fer* 'to do' or *importar* 'to matter', as illustrated in (16).

(16) a. Jo penso que de fa molts anys que no estic inscrit al registre de Déu, però *què redimoni hi fa*! (1965, Jaume Berenguer, translator, *Alexis Zorbàs*)
'I think I haven't been on God's register for many years, but what the devil does it matter anyway!'

b. — On tens el teu gipó? [/] — I a tu *què collons t'importa*? (2011, Jaume Cabré, *Jo confesso*)
"Where is your doublet?" [/] "And what the fuck do you care?"

In Table 6, the various linguistic resources through which the constructions of indifference analysed in this study can be intensified are summarised.

6. The duplication of the initial consonant in *pputa* 'whore' is intentional, serving as a graphic device employed by the author throughout the work to highlight the emphasis with which the character enunciates the word.

Table 6. Linguistic strategies that amplify the expressive force of constructions of indifference

Indifference constructions		
Unmarked form	**Marked form**	**Linguistic strategy**
m'és igual	*m'és* ***ben*** *igual* *m'és* ***absolutament*** *igual*	insertion of adverbial intensifiers, such as *ben* 'well' or *absolutament* 'absolutely'
tant me fa	*tant me* ***fot/fum*** *(tant) se me'n* ***fot/fum***	substitution of the neutral verb *fer* by vulgar *fotre* or *fúmer*
	(tant) se me'n ***refot/refum***	prefixation of *fotre* or *fúmer* with the intensifying prefix *re-*
no m'importa	*(no) m'importa* ***un rave***	insertion of an evaluative minimiser, such as *rave* 'radish'
	(no) m'importa ***una merda***	insertion of a scatological taboo minimiser, such as *merda* 'shit'
	(no) m'importa ***un carall***	insertion of a sexual taboo minimiser, such as *carall* 'dick'
què hi fa? *què m'importa?*	*què* ***dimoni*** *hi fa?*	insertion of a religious taboo intensifier, such as *dimoni* 'devil'
	què ***collons*** *m'importa?*	insertion of a sexual taboo intensifier, such as *collons* 'balls'

In contemporary Catalan, in colloquial interactions, emphatic expressions of disinterest can also be conveyed through structures unrelated to comparative constructions, originating instead from sexual metaphors. These constructions invariably involve a clitic cluster consisting of a dative pronoun with the semantic role of experiencer (e.g. *me* 'to me') and the feminine singular accusative pronoun (*la* 'her'), combined with verbs such as *bufar* 'to blow', *pelar* 'to peel', *suar* 'to sweat', and the phrasal verb *portar-la fluixa* 'to have it soft'. These expressions, which are perceived as highly vulgar, are poorly represented in the CTILC, with most attestations dating from the 21st century: *me la porta fluixa* (7 occurrences, 1st attested in 1980), *me la sua* (5, 1st in 1996), *me la bufa* (8, 1st in 2000), and *me la pela* (not attested in the CTILC), as illustrated in (17).

(17) a. Ben mirat, però, tant si és una cosa com una altra, tot això *me l'hauria de portar fluixa.* (2015, Joaquim Carbó, *Va com va!*)
'All things considered, though, whether it's one thing or another, all this should not matter a damn to me.'

b. *Tant se me'n fot* qui mani, si són de dretes, d'esquerres, vermells, blaus, grocs o verd pistatxo. *Me la sua*.
(2017, Guillem Clua, *Al damunt dels nostres cants*)
'I couldn't care less who's in charge, whether they're right-wing, left-wing, red, blue, yellow, or pistachio green. I don't give a damn.'

c. A mi, Noruega *me la bufa*. Ha estat un instrument i punt.
(2000, Jaume Cabré, *Viatge d'hivern*)
'To me, Norway doesn't matter at all. It has been a tool, and that's it.'

The equivalent constructions in Spanish have been analysed by Cifuentes (2018: 350–362). According to this author, the feminine clitic refers to the penis (in line with its vulgar denomination *polla*, a feminine noun), and these expressions originate from a sexual metaphor — either of lack of arousal (*me la trae floja*) or of a sexual act potentially perceived as degrading, such as fellatio (*me la sopla*) or masturbation (*me la pela*). The shift from the sexual domain to the expression of indifference would have arisen through two processes: in the first case, the generalisation of sexual disinterest to a broader sense of detachment, and in the second, the extension of contempt for a sexual act to a more abstract expression of disregard. In this latter case, it is worth recalling the discussion in § 3 regarding the potentially fictitious nature of indifference constructions with a dative experiencer and the underlying tones of disdain they can convey.

5. Other indifference constructions with more limited dialectal reach

The expressions of indifference examined thus far are widely attested and have been catalogued in reference works such as *Diccionari de sinònims de frases fetes* (Espinal 2004: entries *indiferència, indiferent, indiferentment*). However, there exist other, more restricted indifference constructions, such as those documented in the map for "*Tant se me'n dona*" in the ALDC (map 2166). This map specifically records the linguistic expression of [DISINTEREST] across 190 survey points within the Catalan-speaking area, yielding nearly 300 responses, as some informants provide multiple alternative forms. A detailed analysis of these data falls beyond the scope of this chapter, but we outline a preliminary classification.

As expected, the most frequent responses feature the verbs previously discussed: *importar*, 160 occurrences; *donar*, 35; *fer*, 23; *fotre*, 18 (along with its euphemistic variant *fúmer*, 2); and *ésser*, 15.[7] Notably, however, the ALDC data

7. The ALDC informant from Cervelló (El Baix Llobregat) coordinates the expressions of indifference with the neutral verb *fer* and the euphemistic *fúmer: ni em fa ni em fum!* He also provides the response with the vulgar verb *fotre: tant me fot!*, to which he hastens to add *parlant amb perdó* 'Pardon my speech!'.

reveal an expansion of the constructional possibilities for these verbs. For instance, *ésser*, which typically occurs in either the qualitative comparative construction *m'és igual* or the quantitative comparative *tant m'és*, appears in several survey points on the island of Mallorca in less conventional patterns. These include the oppositional correlation *tant m'és com no m'és* (Llucmajor), the negative polarity construction *no m'és res* (Santanyí), and the exclamatory question *i a jo què m'és?* (Son Servera). In fact, these structures had already been attested, but they were formed with other verbs.

Moreover, this geolinguistic work reveals a series of responses featuring new verbs. The most frequent among them is *interessar* 'to be of interest', which appears in 14 purely denotative responses and is typically framed within a negative polarity construction: *no m'interessa* 'this is of no interest to me'. However, it is also attested in an affirmative declarative sentence accompanied by a scalar quantifier of low degree: *m'interessa molt poc* 'this is of very little interest to me'. The remaining responses that diverge from fixed indifference constructions employ verbs or phrasal verbs — often with only a single occurrence — that can express various nuances of [DISINTEREST] or related notions such as [LACK OF IMPACT] or [LACK OF CONCERN]. Specifically:

- Phrasal verbs that align with the semantics of [DISINTEREST] include *no dir res [a algú]* 'not mean a thing [to someone]', which conveys a nuance of 'not attracting', and *no portar cuidado [a algú]* 'not to worry [someone]', which expresses a nuance of 'not being a source of concern': *a mi no em diu res*, Les Llosses (El Ripollès); *no em porta cuidado*, Arbeca (Les Garrigues).[8]
- In contrast, responses based on the notion of [LACK OF IMPACT] involve the verb *implicar* 'to involve' and the phrasal verb *no anar-hi res [en alguna cosa]* 'to have nothing at stake [in something]': *a mi no m'implica res*, Vilamarxant (El Camp de Túria); *no m'hi va res*, Móra la Nova (La Ribera d'Ebre).
- Finally, responses grounded in the notion of [LACK OF CONCERN] include the verb *incumbir* 'to concern' and the phrasal verbs *no haver de fer res [d'alguna cosa]* 'to have nothing to do [with something]' (or its variant *no tenir que fer res [d'alguna cosa]*, which is a syntactic calque from Spanish) and *no fregar-ne res [d'alguna cosa]* 'not be [someone's] business': *no m'incumbix*, Torís (La Ribera Alta); *no n'haig de fer res*, Les Llosses (El Ripollès), Barcelona (El Barcelonès), and Sant Boi de Llobregat (El Baix Llobregat); *no en tinc que fer res*, Oix (La Garrotxa); *no me'n frega res*, L'Alguer (Sardinia).

8. After the name of each Catalan and Valencian locality, the corresponding *comarca* is indicated in parentheses. The *comarca* is a local administrative division based on historical, geographical, and human criteria, roughly equivalent to a district.

But what is most noteworthy is that, within the domain of comparative constructions, data from the ALDC bring to light two verbs that warrant closer examination. Notably, a truncated quantitative comparative involving *estimar* 'to value' is attested at five survey points in Catalonia. This verb, which functions as an estimation verb akin to *valer* in the construction *tant se val*, also appears in pronominal forms, such as *tant m'estimo* or *tant m'estim*. Unlike the previously discussed comparative constructions, however, it occurs not in the third person but rather in the first person, thereby assigning the semantic role of experiencer to the subject.

The alternation between two morphological variants merits attention. On the one hand, *tant m'estimo* is attested in Àger (La Noguera), L'Ametlla de Mar (El Baix Ebre), and Amposta (El Montsià), within the central and Tortosine area of Northwestern Catalan, and features the inflected form with *-o*, now characteristic of this region. On the other hand, *tant m'estim*, lacking a vocalic marker, is documented in Llobera (El Solsonès) and Cambrils (El Baix Camp), within the Central Catalan area transitioning to Northwestern Catalan. This latter form was universal in Catalan during the medieval period. However, for first-conjugation verbs such as *estimar*, it is now preserved exclusively in Balearic and Alguerese varieties. In the survey points cited, *tant m'estim* represents an archaic morphological form that has become fossilised in this particular expression of indifference.

The other verb identified in the ALDC materials, not previously mentioned, appears within a truncated qualitative comparative. It is *tenir* 'to have', a light verb comparable to *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', and *donar* 'to give'. The specific form documented in the ALDC is *ho tinc igual*, appearing in the first person and assigning the semantic role of experiencer to the subject. This variant of indifference constructions is attested at a Valencian survey point, L'Alqueria de la Comtessa (La Safor).

The GNV, published in 2006, does not document any form with *tenir* in the section on expressive interjections (GNV: § 35.2.2), which is cited above (§ 3). However, an indifference construction with *tenir* is mentioned in a different section of this work, which addresses non-normative uses of the definite article *lo* (GNV: § 15.5). In this context, it is suggested that *Lo mateix em dona: no tinc manies*, which contains a syntactic calque of the Spanish indifference expression *Lo mismo me da* (cf. § 3), could be replaced with *Em té igual: no tinc manies*, alongside *Tant me fa: no tinc manies*, all expressing the meaning 'It doesn't matter to me: I'm not fussy'. Note the use of the verb in the third person and the presence of the experiencer dative, contrasting with the response collected in the ALDC, where the verb appears in the first person and the experiencer role is realised as the subject.

In the *Gramàtica valenciana bàsica*, published a decade later in 2016, the construction with *tenir* is incorporated into the list of expressive interjections (GVB: § 42.2.1), while the comparative construction with *ésser* is relegated to a secondary position, enclosed in parentheses. Furthermore, the example *M'és igual el que*

puga pensar Pere 'It's all the same to me what Pere might think' (GNV: § 35.2.2), with the verb *ésser*, is replaced by *Em té igual! No pensava fer-li cas* 'It's all the same to me! I wasn't planning to pay him any attention' (GVB: § 42.2.1), now employing the verb *tenir*. Two additional instances of this construction are provided in other sections: *Que ho sàpia o no em té igual* 'Whether they know it or not, it's all the same to me' (GVB: § 19.2.8) and *Em té igual si se n'ha penedit o no: jo no li ho he perdonat* 'It's all the same to me whether they regret it or not: I haven't forgiven them' (GVB: § 41.4.1).

Similarly, the *Diccionari normatiu valencià* (DNV: entry *igual*) lists three possible constructions of indifference with *igual*: "tindre (o ser, o fer) igual". The first construction uses the dialectal variant *tindre* of *tenir* 'to have', the second employs the previously discussed verb *(és)ser* 'to be', and the third introduces the verb *fer* 'to do', resulting in the not previously seen construction *fer igual*. This final option is exemplified by sentences such as *Fa igual hui que demà!* 'Today or tomorrow, it makes no difference!', and *Vull anar-hi, em fa igual que ploga* 'I want to go; it doesn't matter to me if it rains', the latter featuring a dative experiencer.

The CTILC, covering the period from 1832 to 2020, provides six examples of the collocation *tenir* + *igual*, with and without a dative, from five different authors, all of whom are Valencian. These examples are presented in (18). It is worth noting that the frequency of this form has increased since 2018 (the works where it appears are from 1978, 1986, 2018, 2019, and 2020, as seen in Table 7), and the type of source in which the construction occurs has also diversified, shifting from narrative to non-literary sources.

Table 7. Distribution of *tenir igual* constructions in the CTILC

							1978		
					1986				
							2018	2019	2020

(18) a. Escolta, Dick, ¿és bona esta manteta? És que, si no, te donaré la meua. A mi *em té igual*..., sense manta... (1978, Maria Mulet, *Pere*)
'Listen, Dick, is this blanket any good? Because if not, I'll give you mine. I don't mind..., without a blanket...'

b. El donyet, a causa dels colps, anava de dreta a esquerra, però ben prompte trobà la manera d'assegurar-se: s'agafà a una cosa semblant a uns cabells, uns cabells o uns cabdells? *té igual*, ni ho sabia ni li importava
(1986, Empar de Lanuza, *Criatures minúscules*)
'The goblin, due to the blows, was swaying from side to side, but soon found a way to steady himself: he grabbed onto something resembling hair – hair or threads? It didn't matter; he neither knew nor cared'

c. No pugué recordar en quin quart es trobava la lluna perquè de nit mirava poques vegades el cel i això no li ho deia la seua maquineta compta-dies-hores-minuts i segons però… *tenia igual!*
(1986, Empar de Lanuza, *Criatures minúscules*)
'He couldn't remember which phase the moon was in because at night he rarely looked at the sky, and his little device that counted days, hours, minutes, and seconds didn't tell him that, but… it didn't matter!'

d. A aquesta gent *li té igual* una paella de casa que una d'aquestes que ja venen mig cuites. (2018, Vicent Usó, *El paradís a les fosques*)
'These people don't care whether it's a homemade paella or one of those half-cooked ones they sell.'

e. En una ocasió […] van llançar el missatge als malalts que si la reversió anava avant no rebrien tractament i haurien d'anar a La Fe a València. Això era fals, però *els tenia igual*.
(2019, Sergi Castillo, *La batalla per la sanitat valenciana*)
'On one occasion […] they spread the message to patients that if the reversal went ahead, they wouldn't receive treatment and would have to go to La Fe in Valencia. This was false, but they didn't care.'

f. A les teues neurones, *els pot tindre igual* si una persona empra el pitjor perfum del món. Podria pudir com una espardenya vella i, encara així, enamorar-te. (2020, Teresa Brostea, translator, *Geografia davall del melic*)[9]
'Your neurons might not care if someone wears the worst perfume in the world. They could smell like an old espadrille and still make you fall in love.'

As expected, the *Corpus Informatitzat del Valencià* (CIVAL) provides a more substantial representation of this *tenir*-based construction, tracing its earliest occurrences back to 1930 (without a dative) and 1961 (with a dative), as illustrated in (19). A third example appears in the 1970s, coinciding with the earliest attestations documented in the CTILC, although most (121 out of 135) date from 2000 onwards.[10]

9. Catalan translation of the Spanish book *Geografía bajo el ombligo*, by Valentín Coronel.

10. The CIVAL is not lemmatized. The data extraction was performed using sequences of *igual* preceded by the following verbal forms: *té*, 98 occurrences; *tinc*, 9; *tenia*, 25; *tindrà*, 0; *tindria*, 1; *tinga*, 0; *tinguera*, 2; *va tenir*, 0; *tingué*, 0.

(19) a. — Segur no ho sé; pero me sembla que és cosa de moniatos o pataques… *Té igual*: alló que sembre ho ha de cullir en créixens.
(1930, Vicent Pla Mompó, *¿A miches? ¡Ni en la dona!*)
'I'm not sure, but it seems to me it's something about sweet potatoes or regular potatoes… It doesn't matter: whatever they plant, they'll reap in abundance.'

b. ¿Ho dubta vosté? *Em té igual*. La cosa ja està feta i ningú no deu res a ningú… (1961, Eduard Soleriestruch, *De la ingènua veritat*)
'Do you doubt it? I don't care. It's already done, and no one owes anyone anything…'

c. I en acabant de dir-nos tot allò afegia que quan un és mort ja *tot té igual*, i només servim que per a criar malves.
(1976, Carmelina Sánchez Cutillas, *Matèria de Bretanya*)
'And after telling us all that, he would add that once someone is dead, nothing matters anymore, and we're only good for pushing up daisies.'

6. A diversity of indifference constructions with the verb *tenir* 'to have'

Despite the discussion in §5, the use of *tenir* in indifference constructions does not appear to be restricted to Valencian Catalan. For instance, in the town of Arbeca (Les Garrigues), located within the Northwestern Catalan area, the formula [ˌketeseˈmɛs], pronounced with exclamatory intonation and containing the verbal form *té* (third person singular present indicative of *tenir*), has been documented (personal on-site surveys). This formula likely originates from an exclamative question in which the interrogative pronoun *què* (< QUĬD) 'what', pronounced with [e], as is characteristic of Western Catalan, and the comparative quantifier *més* (< MAGIS) 'more', realised with [ɛ] in the local variety, can be identified. Examples of this formula are presented in (20): (20a) conveys [EQUIVALENCE], while (20b) expresses [IRRELEVANCE], as does (20c), although the latter is specifically employed with the pragmatic function of cancelling an obstacle.

(20) a. — Quin vols, lo verd o ·l blau? [/] — [ˌketeseˈmɛs] la un que l'altre!
"Which one do you want, the green one or the blue one?" [/] "What difference does it make which one!"

b. — Ja s'ha tornat a posar les sabates que li fan mal! I en (a)cabat es queix[e]. [/] — [ˌketeseˈmɛs] D(e)ixa-la fer.
"She's put on those shoes that hurt her again! And then she complains." [/] "What's it to you? Let her do it."

c. — I com és que no hi vols anar? [/] — És que em fa angúnia. No hi conec ningú. [/] — [ˌketeseˈmɛs] Així comences a fer amics.
"And why don't you want to go?" [/] "It gives me the creeps. I don't know anyone there." [/] "So what? That's how you start making friends."

Extraction of the lemma *tenir* in the CTILC makes it possible to identify various indifference constructions that include this verb, one of which accounts for the formula [ˌketeseˈmɛs], as will be shown. In addition to *té igual*, which appears exclusively in Valencian works (§ 5), five other constructions are identified. One of these structures involves the insertion of *tenir* in a quantitative comparative: *tant té… com*, a construction parallel to *tant hi fa… com, tant se val… com*, and *tant és… com*. The sole example of this in the corpus, from Central Catalan, is provided in (21).

(21) Però si us la pagaven bé, *tant té* guanyar els diners en una cosa *com* en una altra. No es això? (1908, Juli Vallmitjana, *Sota Montjuic*)
'But if they were paying you well, it wouldn't matter whether you earned the money doing one thing or another. Isn't that so?'

Furthermore, four types of exclamatory questions are observed. The simplest of these is *què té?*, a construction parallel to *què hi fa?* and *què importa?*, which appears four times in the corpus: three examples are from Central Catalan and one from Balearic Catalan, the last of which is shown in (22).

(22) Veus Margalideta, en Bernat és un bon al·lot, *què té* si és tres anys més jove que tu! Ses diferències d'edat *no hi fan res*
(1972, M. Antònia Oliver, *Cròniques de la molt anomenada ciutat de Montcarrà*)
'You see, Margalideta, Bernat is a good boy; what does it matter that he's three years younger than you! Age differences don't mean anything'

The other exclamatory questions feature the comparative quantifier *més* 'more'. In this regard, it parallels the Spanish expression of indifference *¿Qué más da?*, which uses the cognate *más* 'more' but with the verb *dar* 'to give' (§ 3). In the examples found in the CTILC, *més* can appear in either preverbal or postverbal position. In the preverbal position, as in *què més té?*, thirteen occurrences are identified, nine from Central Catalan, three from Northwestern Catalan — all by the same author, Maria Barbal, such as the one shown in (23) — and one from Valencian Catalan.

(23) — Tant si ho sabeva per endavant com si no, *què més té?* [/] — Què més, què mès, però no veus l'escàndol? (2019, Maria Barbal, *A l'amic escocès*)
"Whether he knew it beforehand or not, what does it matter?" [/] "What does it matter, what does it matter — can't you see the scandal?"

With the comparative quantifier in the postverbal position, that is, *què té més?*, a larger number of examples are found, eighteen in total, including thirteen from Central Catalan, as in (24a), four from Balearic Catalan, and one from Northwestern Catalan, by Pep Coll, shown in (24b).

(24) a. "No pot ser, Eulàlia. Em vaig treure el dol abans d'acabar l'any perquè ja saps que no puc resistir els vestits negres; però anar a una festa, és diferent". L'Eulàlia li posà la mà damunt d'un genoll: "¿*Què té més* deixar passar un any o dos? No t'enterris, creu-me. (1974, Mercè Rodoreda, *Mirall trencat*)
"It can't be, Eulàlia. I put away my mourning clothes before the year was over because you know I can't stand black dresses; but going to a party is different." Eulàlia placed her hand on her knee: "What does it matter whether you wait a year or two? Don't bury yourself, believe me.

b. — Si toques aquesta mula, t'omplo la cara d'hòsties! [/] — No us feu mala sang! — va dir l'altre soldat —. Fes-te la del costat! *Què té més* una que l'altra! (1989, Josep Coll, *La mula vella*)
"If you touch that mule, I'll punch your face!" [/] "Don't get worked up!" said the other soldier. "Take the one next to it! What does it matter, one or the other?"

Finally, a variant of this structure features the comparative quantifier *més* in postverbal position, preceded by the preposition *de* 'of' with a partitive function: *què té de més?* This structure appears only once in the CTILC, specifically in (25), where it is attested in a Valencian source.

(25) — ¿No veus [/] que pòrtes lo cul al aire? — [/] Y li contestí: — ¡Redeu! [/] ¿no pòrta vosté la cara? [/] Puix digam, ¿*qué té demés* [/] *la cara que 'l cul*? ¿Acás [/] tindre cul es un secret? (1900, Josep Francesc Sanmartín, *Del agre dols*)
"Don't you see [/] that you're exposing your backside?" [/] And I replied: "Good heavens! [/] Don't you expose your face? [/] Well then, tell me, what's the difference [/] between the face and the backside? So are you saying [/] having a backside is a secret?"

In total, the CTILC contains 43 examples of these six types of *tenir*-based constructions, spanning from 1865 to 2020, with relative frequencies ranging from 0.3 per million words (pmw) in Central Catalan to 0.76 pmw in Valencian Catalan, as shown in Table 8.[11]

11. The CTILC exhibits a marked dialectal imbalance: Central Catalan, 85,515,366 words; Valencian Catalan, 10,555,258; Balearic Catalan, 8,740,029; Northwestern Catalan, 7,905,251; Northern Catalan, 1,042,422.

Table 8. *Tenir*-based indifference constructions in the CTILC

CTILC (1832–2020)	Central Catalan	Balearic Catalan	Northwestern Catalan	Valencian Catalan	Total
té igual [1978–2020]	–	–	–	6	6
tant té… com [1908]	1	–	–	–	1
què té? [1875–1994]	3	1	–	–	4
què més té? [1865–2019]	9	–	3	1	13
què té més? [1867–2010]	13	4	1	–	18
què té de més? [1900]	–	–	–	1	1
Total	26	5	4	8	43
Frequency pmw	0,3	0,57	0,51	0,76	0,37

The variant *què té de més?* may have given rise to the formula [ˌketese'mɛs] through a process of dental dissimilation: [ˌketeðe'mɛs] > [ˌketese'mɛs]. Like the CTILC, the CIVAL contains only a single attestation of this indifference construction, documented in a philological work that describes it as characteristic of the traditional speech of Alcoi (L'Alcoià). This source provides the three examples in (26), all featuring the variant *i què té de més?*, introduced by the copulative conjunction *i* 'and'.[12]

(26) a. ¿*I què té de més* anar pel de la dreta que pel de l'esquerra si els dos camins són iguals i arriben al mateix lloc?
(2009, Eugeni S. Reig, *Les nostres paraules*)
'And what difference does it make whether we take the one on the right or the one on the left if both paths are alike and lead to the same place?'

12. The CIVAL also includes one attestation of *què té més?* from the same source and seven instances of *què més té?* from various works dated between 1997 and 2009.

b. ¿*I què té de més* que el president de la finca siga el del primer pis o el del tercer, si cap dels dos resoldrà el problema de l'ascensor?
(2009, Eugeni S. Reig, *Les nostres paraules*)
'And what difference does it make whether the president of the flat owners' association is from the first floor or the third, if neither of them will solve the problem with the elevator?'

c. ¿*I què té de més* fer-ho aixina o fer-ho aixana, carabassa?
(2009, Eugeni S. Reig, *Les nostres paraules*)
'And what difference does it make if you do it this way or that way, you fool?'

7. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated how a network of fixed constructions for expressing indifference has emerged from the syntactic pattern of equality comparatives. These constructions encode the notions of [EQUIVALENCE], [IRRELEVANCE], [LACK OF PREFERENCE], and [DISINTEREST] — all closely tied to the overarching concept of [INDIFFERENCE] — depending on whether they retain the comparative coda or undergo truncation, and on whether they incorporate a dative marking the experiencer, as schematised in Table 9. Pragmatically, they serve a range of discourse functions, including downplaying a fact, accepting an apology, countering an objection, neutralising a potential obstacle, or refusing an offer of help.

In constructions derived from qualitative comparatives, *igual* 'same' functions as the element triggering the comparison, whereas *tant* 'as much' plays this role in quantitative comparatives. However, comparative structures are not the only means of expressing indifference: it can also be conveyed through negative declarative constructions with the adverb *no* 'not' or exclamatory questions introduced by the interrogative pronoun *què* 'what'. The verbs found in these structures form a restricted set and fall into two main categories. On the one hand, there are copular and light verbs, such as *ésser* 'to be', *fer* 'to do', *donar* 'to give', and *tenir* 'to have'. On the other, there are verbs of estimation, including *valer* 'to be worth', *importar* 'to matter', and *estimar* 'to value'.

In colloquial registers, neutral constructions coexist with more expressive variants that enhance intensity through various strategies. These include reinforcing *igual* 'same' with adverbs such as *ben* 'well' or *absolutament* 'absolutely'; replacing *fer* 'to do' with more marked alternatives like *fotre* or *fúmer*; quantifying *importar* 'to matter' with evaluative or taboo minimisers such as *rave* 'radish' or *merda* 'shit'; and strengthening the interrogative pronoun *què* 'what' in exclamatory questions by appending religious or sexual taboo words, such as *dimoni* 'devil' or *collons* 'balls'.

Table 9. Indifference through equality comparatives:
Semantic network and syntactic patterns

Comparative constructions of indifference

	Full construction	Truncated construction	
és igual... com *tant és... com* *tant hi/li fa... com* *tant se val... com*	[EQUIVALENCE]	[IRRELEVANCE]	*és igual!* *tant és!* *tant hi/li fa!* *tant se val!*
Without dative	[INDIFFERENCE]		Without dative
With experiencer dative			With experiencer dative
mẽs igual... com *tant mẽs... com* *tant me fa... com* *tant se me'n dona... com*	[LACK OF PREFERENCE]	[DISINTEREST]	*mẽs igual!* *tant mẽs!* *tant me fa!* *tant se me'n dona!*
	Full construction	Truncated construction	

From a dialectal perspective, beyond the range of variants documented in the ALDC that express [DISINTEREST] — as well as related notions such as [LACK OF IMPACT] and [LACK OF CONCERN] — the most significant finding is the existence of indifference constructions with *estimar* 'to value' and *tenir* 'to have' in first person. This pattern implies that the semantic role of the experiencer is encoded as the subject rather than the dative. Furthermore, searches in the CTILC and CIVAL corpora reveal that *tenir*-based constructions for expressing indifference display considerable structural diversity. They include qualitative equality comparatives with *igual* 'same', quantitative equality comparatives with *tant* 'as much', and a variety of exclamatory questions introduced by *què* 'what'. The dialectal variants *té igual* and *tinc igual* appear to be specific to Valencian Catalan, while the exclamatory questions *què té?, què més té?, què té més?*, and *què té de més?* are attested across different Catalan dialects.

Table 10 summarises the neutral expressions of indifference that have been the primary focus of this chapter.

Table 10. Neutral expressions of indifference with copular and light verbs, and with verbs of estimation

Neutral expressions of indifference	**Qualitative comparative** ***igual*** **'same'**	**Quantitative comparative** ***tant*** **'as much'**	**Negative declarative** ***no*** **'not'**	**Exclamatory question** ***què*** **'what'**
		Copular verbs		
ésser 'to be'	*(m')és igual*	*tant (m')és*	*no m'és res*	*i a jo què m'és?*
		Light verbs		
fer 'to do'	*(em) fa igual*	*tant (hi/li/em) fa*	*no hi fa res*	*què hi fa?*
donar 'to give'		*tant se me'n/m'hi dona*		
tenir 'to have'	*(em) té igual* *tinc igual*	*tant té*		*què té?* *què més té?* *què té més?* *què té de més?* [ˌketese'mɛs]
		Verbs of estimation		
valer 'to be worth'		*tant se val*		
importar 'to matter'			*no (m')importa*	*què (m')importa?*
estimar 'to value'		*tant m'estim(o)*		

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From subjunctives to imperatives

The Romance subjunctive schema and its ramifications

Hans-Ingo Radatz
University of Bamberg

In the literature concerning the Romance subjunctive, there have always been two camps: One group of linguists sees the subjunctive as a means for expressing a wide array of modal meanings, while the other one sees this modality rather expressed by the context while the subjunctive as such is frequently only a concomitant and automatised feature, increasingly devoid of any meaning in and of itself. A compromise between these two positions might be the observation that there are clear-cut cases of subjunctives chosen over indicatives for semantic reasons, as there are also clear-cut cases of obligatory and therefore semantically empty subjunctives.

This state of affairs has been argued to be due to a set of subjunctive constructions at different diachronic stages in an overall process of grammaticalisation (or rather: constructionalisation) which slowly turns an erstwhile meaning-bearing inflection into an element of modal agreement by which subordinate clause verbs agree with the modality / illocution of the main clause. An empirical study of this hypothesis would imply determining the percentages of meaning-bearing freely chooseable subjunctive uses as opposed to those that are simply triggered by some context element (main-clause verb, conjunction etc.) (cf. Radatz 2021).

I will argue here that the percentage of meaning-bearing subjunctives tends to be overrated because many imperatives are still considered to be subjunctives on the basis that their morphology coincides with this mood. There are, however, good arguments for analysing the forms in *¡Espere aquí! / Preparin els tíquets! / Faça-me um favor!* no longer as subjunctives but as full-fledged imperatives — a phenomenon conspicuously absent in languages like French or Occitan. An analysis will be proposed which represents the various uses of Romance subjunctives as a constructional network informed by Traugott / Trousdale (2013), allowing for a direct comparison between the various Romance languages and a visual representation of the various stages of constructionalisation (cf. Radatz 2023).

Keywords: Romance subjunctive, imperative, neo-imperative, grammaticalisation, constructionalisation, construction grammar

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1. Introduction

It appears to be a well-established fact within Romance philology and linguistics that some languages make a more extensive use of subjunctive forms than others. Thus, while the subjunctive is heavily used in languages like Spanish or Italian, it is frequently said that subjunctives are considerably rarer and more marked in French, than in the other Romance languages (cf. Rothe 1967; Thieroff 2004: 78), and French grammarians have tended to consider them artificial, superfluous, tedious and sometimes downright annoying. Brunot and Gougenheim call the subjunctive a "servitude grammaticale", Bally "une exigence de la syntaxe morte" and Foulet (1919) writes:

> dans la langue de la conversation, où le subjonctif est relativement peu employé, il n'est qu'un simple substitut de l'indicatif, dont l'emploi est régi par des regles traditionelles et obscures. Si on l'emploie, c'est en vertu d'une convention où il est bien vain de vouloir aujourd'hui retrouver un sens. (Foulet 1919: §§ 209, 211)

Not only is the French subjunctive seen as functionless — it also seems to be disappearing from spoken and informal use altogether (cf. Harmer 1962; Gsell 1979, 50; Holtus 1980). In this vein, Blaikner-Hohenwart (2006) speaks of "oral corpora, where the *subjonctif* is only a marginal phenomenon within the use of verb forms — at least quantitatively" and of

> newspaper and magazine texts, where, for example, in an issue of *Le Monde* (*Le Monde*, 9/1/1996, no. 15 847) only 56 examples were found on pages 1–24, in an issue of *ELLE* (7 August 1995) 50 subjonctifs on 105 pages and in the women's magazine *PRIMA* (September 1995) not a single example.
> (Blaikner-Hohenwart 2006: 615)

But while these different degrees in subjunctive use within Romance as such have been reported time and time again, it remains less clear, what the reasons behind these differences are and, more interestingly, in which areas of subjunctive use these differences originate. In this paper, we will try and argue that a key parameter for the extent of subjunctive use in any Romance language is the etymological nature of the pronouns used in the polite address-system: if this system is based on etymologically 2nd person forms, the language will only make a limited use of subjunctives; if, however, it is based on etymologically 3rd person forms (sg. or pl.), it will exhibit a rich variety of highly frequent subjunctive constructions. We will argue in this article that at the center of these differences lies the emergence of a new class of **Neo-Imperatives** and a rich follow-up of further constructions based on these innovative usages.

In order to make this argument, we will be using a Construction-Grammar-based representation of the various subjunctive uses in a given language in the form of a cognitive network in the vein of Lakoff (1987) or Claudia Brugman's classical study of 'over' (Brugman 1988). For this part of the argument, we will be drawing extensively on material published in two earlier articles, certain portions of which we will have to repeat here, albeit in a more compact fashion.

2. The Romance subjunctive schema: A CxG-analysis

On the subject of the Romance subjunctive there appear to be two alternative (and mutually exclusive) schools of thought.[1] The first one claims that the subjunctive in itself expresses modality, wherever it appears; according to them, the task of linguists is therefore to formulate the modal semantics of the subjunctive in such a way that it is compatible with all occurrences we may find in actual use. The other school contradicts this view radically by assuming that the subjunctive is basically devoid of any semantic content and that its use normally depends on the presence of some triggering element (which will generally be modally tinged in its semantics). Thus, comparing these two schools we are confronted with the conflicting affirmations that subjunctives are either an expression of modality, free of any syntactic considerations — or else a morphological automatism triggered by some syntactic configuration and free of any semantic content. Depending on which school of thought is to be believed, the subjunctive either *expresses* or doesn't express modality.

In Radatz (2023) we have tried to find a dialectic compromise between these two seemingly incompatible positions by representing the whole complex repertoire of subjunctive uses as a structured linguistic network of coexisting stages of various ongoing processes of grammaticalisation or constructionalisation, in which some uses still retain at least traces of the original modal content, while others have already reached a state in which its function must be seen as purely configurational. Construction Grammar offers itself for such a task as it allows for a comprehensive representation of phenomena in the form of a cognitive network which is capable of mapping categorial extensions as branching structures, where every node stands for a new constructionalisation path, based on well-studied cognitive processes like analogy, metonymy or metaphor. In such a representation, it is not the subjunctive itself which is the focus of analysis but rather the

1. For research reports cf. Bergen (1978), Manteca Alonso-Cortés (1981), Bosque (1990), Navas Ruiz (1990), Borrego Nieto, Gómez Asencio & Prieto de los Mozos (1995), Knauer (1998), and Bosque (2012).

various schemas, sub-schemas and constructions it forms part of. The analysis is inspired by Traugott and Trousdale's (2013) concepts of Constructionalisation and Constructional Changes. We first applied this method to a comprehensive analysis of the Spanish SUBJUNCTIVE SCHEMA (Radatz 2023) and later extended it to other Romance languages; this served to illustrate its potential for direct typological comparisons within the Romània (Radatz 2024).

As the basic idea is to represent all uses of the subjunctive in a given language as a constructional network and Spanish arguably has the most comprehensive Subjunctive Schema, we will, for the time being, use Spanish to exemplify the principle. For a global orientation within the full schema of the Romance subjunctive, Figure 1 gives an overview over its maximal extension:

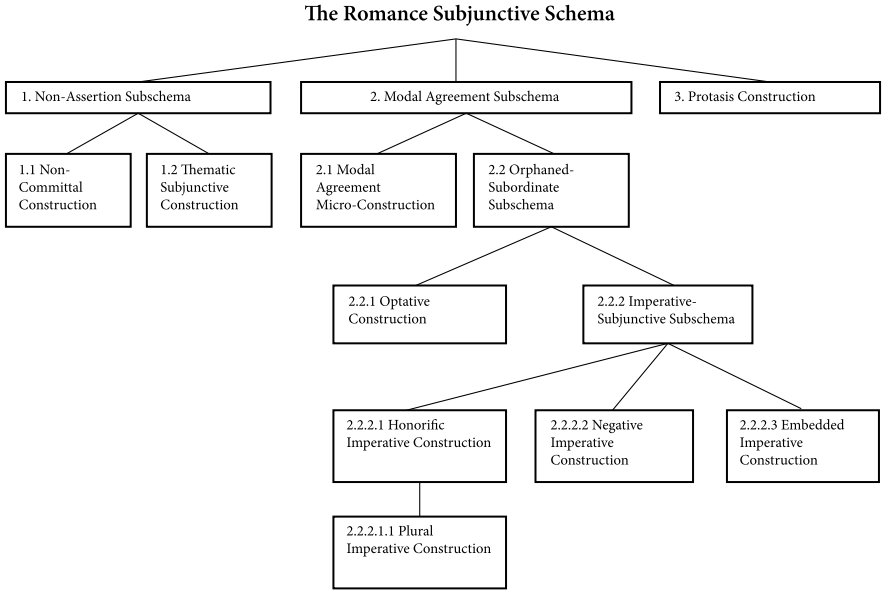

Figure 1. The Romance subjunctive schema

The starting point for the SUBJUNCTIVE SCHEMA, i.e. the mother-construction, simply consists of a subordinate clause which is introduced by a complementiser or subordinating conjunction and which has its verb inflected for subjunctive mood. It is stipulated that this is the basic construction underlying all other schemas and constructions, from which they all are ultimately derived. The constructional network then branches out into different sub-schemas and constructions, beginning with a first split into the three most important sub-schemas: NON-ASSERTION, MODAL AGREEMENT, and PROTASIS:

2.1 Non-Assertion Subschema [S [que $V_{subj\,/\,ind}$]

In this subschema, there is free choice between subjunctive and indicative inflection, depending on a modal (or rather: pragmatic) nuance a speaker wishes to express. Choosing the subjunctive withholds the assertion of the proposition in the subordinate clause, which would otherwise be interpreted as asserted (examples adapted from Gebhardt 1979):

(1) No sé en qué me he equivocado.
= I made a mistake and request information about it.

(2) No sé en qué me haya equivocado.
= You imply that I made a mistake; I request further information before I decide whether I concede this mistake, or not.

It bifurcates into two sub-branches: the Non-Commital Construction, in which the choice of subjunctive inflection in the subordinate clause explicitly withholds the assertion of the proposition expressed therein to achieve some pragmatic inference on the part of the hearer (as already exemplified in examples (1) and (2) and the Thematic Subjunctive Construction in examples like:

(3) Me alegro de que hayas venido.

(4) Je suis content que vous soyez venu.

Both constructions have in common that they use subjunctive inflection to withhold the assertion of the subordinate clause proposition; what divides them into two sub-branches is the pragmatic motivation behind this refusal. In the Non-Commital Construction, assertion is withheld for reasons within the area of epistemic modality, because the speaker may not have sufficient information, may have information to the contrary or may wish to convey that he is only reporting somebody else's opinion. In the Thematic Subjunctive Construction (c.f. Pérez Saldanya 1999: 3280 ff.) on the other hand, the proposition of the subordinate clause is not withheld for lack of information but rather for its obviousness, because here the proposition is already implied by the main clause and therefore thematic, i.e. "known". As re-asserting something thematic is pragmatically awkward and potentially even misleading, the subjunctive has come to be used in these cases to avoid re-asserting the blindingly obvious.

The Non-Assertion Subschema comprises most of those uses of the subjunctive, where it functions as a freely choosable means of expression, corresponding to what has traditionally been dubbed the "semantic" or "modal" subjunctive. Only here we still find cases in which the subjunctive can be used to purposefully express anything. Its potential to withhold the assertion of a proposition puts the hearer in the position of having to interpret the speaker's possible

motivations for this deliberate flouting of the maxims of conversation – e.g. the Maxim of Relation, i.e. "relevance" (Grice 1975: 47): Why would you say something while at the same time refusing to assert it? This pragmatic rule-flouting gives rise to a complex network of more and less conventionalised pragmatic inferences. Rather than expressing modality directly and as such, it is these pragmatically invited inferences which will generate the semantic effects traditionally associated with the subjunctive and which will, by and large, fall within the realm of modality.

Exactly the contrary is the case with the second subschema which represents the "automatised", "obligatory", "triggered" or "syntactic subjunctive". Here, subjunctives will not express modality but rather serve as a morphological agreement marker with some modality or illocution independently expressed elsewhere; hence the name chosen for the:

2.2 Modal Agreement Subschema [[$V_{trigger}$] / [$Conj_{trigger}$] [que V_{subj}]]

This subschema covers all those all the other uses of subjunctive inflection in which the speaker has no choice, and where failing to use the subjunctive will simply result in inacceptability of the utterance. Subjunctive inflection is typically triggered either by the main-clause illocution or a subordinating conjunction:

(5) No importa que [venga / *viene] Juan.

(6) Cal que [vinguis / *vens].

(7) Il faut que tu [viennes / *viens].

These are the two main types of subjunctive use in the Romance languages. There is a third type that we will only briefly touch upon for the sake of completeness, but which arguably belongs to a completely different area of research:

2.3 Protasis construction

Many Romance languages require past tense subjunctives to mark the protasis part of Conditional constructions. Because of this morphology, they must find their place within the Subjunctive Schema. They are, however, restricted to past tense subjunctives and are so deeply integrated into the Conditional Construction that we will not further be concerned with them in the present context.

We have now (superficially) covered the first three immediate daughter nodes of the Subjunctive Schema, of which only Modal Agreement will interest us in the remainder of this paper. This approximately covers the two phemomena that have been called the "automatised subjunctive" and the "subjunctive in main clauses".

3. Subjunctives in independent main clauses? A flagrant case of insubordination!

All nodes under the Modal Agreement schema are characterised by the common principle that the choice of subjunctive inflection is triggered by some element within the main clause of the sentence – generally either the main-clause verb or some conjunction. This is a configuration which arguably exists in all Romance languages alike, albeit with individual differences with respect to the actual triggering elements. In Spanish, these might include conjunctions like *aunque, sin que* or *para que* or expressions like *es importante que* or *quiero que*. To what extent these expressions actually "trigger" or only "invite" the subjunctive is beyond the scope of this paper and would be the subject of empirical studies on each and every individual micro-construction. Suffice it to say that they are a clearly identifiable and relevant sub-category of the subjunctive motivations in all Romance languages.

The other remaining node under Modal Agreement is the systematic place, where most of the innovations and new constructionalisations of subjunctives have taken place, as we will now turn to the Orphaned Subordinate Subschema. Under this heading we will unite all those cases in which there is no overt main clause with which an agreement of the subjunctive could be construed so that, at face value, it might seem that we have subjunctive inflection on main clause verbs. In traditional terms, this part of the schema concerns "the subjunctive in main clauses" (cf. eg. RAE 1973: 458), because these utterances appear to be independent:

(8) Visca el Barça! / Vive la France! / ¡Viva el rey!

(9) Que existeixi la llum. / ¡Hágase la luz! / Que la lumière soit! (Genesis 1:3)

(10) Presenti la seva acreditació! / ¡Vengan todos! / ¡Dígame!

We would, however, contend that none of these are truly independent main clauses, although this appears to be a widely held opinion in the field (cf. De Bruyne 1993: 426–429; Donaire 1998: 225; Laca 2010: 215). Others have, rather more convincingly, interpreted these examples as subordinates whose matrix clauses have been elided for their low and easily recuperable informational content (cf. Harris 1974: 173; Green 1988: 113–114; Posner 1996: 142–143 etc.). As we are dealing with subordinate clauses "bereft" of their matrices, Ruiz Campillo (2008) rather felicitously coined the expression *subjuntivos huérfanos*, i.e. "orphaned subjunctives" which I have gratefully adopted for this branch of the Subjunctive Schema. What binds it together is the fact that some matrix sentences with a non-declarative illocutionary force like Hoping or Ordering that can be easily recuperated from the context has been elided and that the subjunctive in the

remaining "orphaned" subordinate clause functions as a signal inviting the hearer to make precisely this inference.

Depending on the illocutionary force of the elided matrix sentence, the Orphaned Subordinate Subschema gives rise to two further sub-branches, one of which corresponds to the classical Optative Construction, present in all Romance languages — as in (8) and (9)–, in which there is no particular addressee implied. The other branch, however, only developed in some Romance languages, while in others, e.g. French, it never did. This is the Imperative Subjunctive Subschema as in Example (10), in which the original optativity is directed towards a clearly identifiable addressee, thereby crossing the boundary between optative and imperative semantics.

Constructions like the Orphaned Subordinate Subschema appear to have an intermediate status between full main clauses (e.g. in that they can stand alone) and subordinate clauses (in that they may take an open complementiser), i.e. between finite and non-finite clauses. These phenomena have been treated by Evans (2007) who recasts the traditional privative opposition of finite vs. non-finite as a continuum on which certain sentences may be more or less finite. Evans calls the phenomenon of subordinate clause-constructions in which the main clause is conventionally elided "insubordination", i.e. "the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses" (Evans 2007:367). Under the heading of "Special subordinate verb forms", he also lists

> forms such as the subjunctive in Italian [...]. Typically, such verb forms are either non-finite or can be analysed as containing an old complementizer.
>
> (Evans 2007: 379)

The examples given by Evans correspond exactly to the cases which interest us here:

(11) Non voglio che venga domani → ("subordinate")

(12) Che venga domani → ("insubordinated")

The insubordination analysis has various advantages over the traditional view of calling them "subjunctives in main clauses". For one, it is in better agreement with the known facts of Latin where the subjunctive was decisively associated with subordination. Moreover, it allows for an important generalisation about the Romance subjunctive and a more uniform description as a morphological marker of subordination — whether modally tinged, or purely syntactic. Such a description is not only scientifically more sound but can also be fruitfully exported to other more practically oriented disciplines as e.g. school grammar or foreign lan-

guage teaching. Already back in the sixties, Robin Lakoff had called Latin, Greek and Romance subjunctives "complementizers" in the sense of morphologically expressed markers of subordination:

> We are suggesting that no indicators of mood per se can be present in deep structure. The markers of mood — subjunctive in Latin, subjunctive and optative in Greek — are all complementizers and, as such, are always devoid of meaning of their own and are always transformationally introduced. (Lakoff 1968: 161)

We will therefore — provisionally — treat the constructions under the Orphaned Subordinate Subschema not as main clauses but as cases of insubordination, depending on whether an elided main clause must still be assumed to account for the semantics of the construction in question. There may, however, be a point, where the constructionalisation has progressed so far that this interpretation no longer is needed — or even no longer makes sense. This stage is reached, when e.g. the subjunctives have come to the end of their constructionalisation path and have turned into full imperatives.

Our analysis might be criticised by observing that in these constructions the subjunctives are actually meaningful in themselves and that calling them cases of "modal agreement" is not justified. At least on the surface, there is nothing they could be said to agree with and sentences like *Vive la France!* have traditionally been analysed as independent sentences with a subjunctive expressing optativity. This analysis can not be disproven; we would, however, argue that our explanation is superior because it allows to maintain the general principle that Romance subjunctives are bound to subordination, as stipulated in the most basic form of the Subjunctive Schema. It is also better suited to explain the syntactic characteristics of these constructions like the possibility (and at the same time optionality) of a complementiser. And it accounts for the easy pragmatic recoverability of the respective elided main clauses. In this sense, we would argue that the subjunctive in the orphaned constructions does not express "modality"; it functions as a marker of subordination and — in the absence of a surface main clause — a trigger for an invited pragmatic inference to recover the elided main clauses and their illocutionary forces. In this sense, the semantics of these constructions does not emanate from the semantically empty subjunctive but from the elided main clauses.

4. The Orphaned Subordinate Subschema: From insubordination to Neo-Imperatives

We have now finally come to the section of the subjunctive schema in which a major part of the innovations of the last 800 years have occurred in some Romance languages — or failed to occur in others. As a consequence, this is also the part of the schema in which the most prominent differences between the Romance languages are to be found. Some of them (like Spanish) developed a whole new paradigm of "Neo-Imperatives", i.e. morphological subjunctives that have constructionalised into real new imperatives.[2] Others, like French, have remained conservative in this respect and continue to use the old etymological imperative forms directly derived from (or at least closely corresponding to) the etymological Latin imperatives:

	Indicative	**Imperative**
Informal, sg.	Tu viens.	Viens!
Informal, pl.	Vous venez (, les enfants).	Venez!
Formal, sg.	Vous venez, M. Dupont.	Venez, M. Dupont!
Formal, pl.	Vous venez, Mme. et M. Dupont.	Venez, Mme. et M. Dupont!

In French, the polite forms of address are based on the principle of *pluralis maiestatis* in that the 2nd plural used for an individual person conveys politeness; consequently, this differentiation can no longer be made in addressing groups of people.

Other Romance languages (Spanish, Portuguese & Catalan) took a different turn. During the middle-ages, the simple 2nd person plural pronoun *vos* came to be used ever more frequently and began to encroach upon the domain of the traditional informal *tu*-forms in Spanish and Portuguese. This weakened their honorific character and the need for new, more formal ways of addressing higher ranking people arose to mark social distance: forms corresponding to English expressions like "your majesty", "your" grace" or "your excellency" rose in frequency, eventually leading to a restructurisation of the address-system:

> However, in later Old Spanish, it is evident that *vos* has widened its range of reference in such a way that it is used for many social relationships, and thus has lost much of its deferential value. By the fifteenth century, *vos* has become so close in value to informal *tú* that new deferential forms of address are experimented with,

2. For imperatives in general cf. Han (2019).

> based on abstract nouns such as *merced* 'grace', *señoría* ('lordship' etc. [...] it was *vuestra merced* that found favour, together with *vuestras mercedes*, representing an entirely new plural deferential category (Penny 2002: 138)

By virtue of their high frequency of use, these new forms of address first developed pronoun-like shortened forms and eventually lexicalised into the new 2nd person pronouns derived from parallel constructions to Spanish *vuestra merced*, thus giving rise to the modern forms *Usted* (Spanish), *Você* (Portuguese), and *vostè* (Catalan).

These new pronouns came with an inherent flaw in that they were still recognisably 3rd person morphologically, while at the same time they were now referentially used as 2nd person pronouns: the polite distanciation derives from the fact that the addressee is treated as a remote 3rd person entity rather than as a person physically present. One of the problematic consequences of this morphological misalignment derived from the fact that there is no such thing as a 3rd person imperative. In order to circumvent this communicative lacuna, the subjunctives of the Optative Construction came to be used – but now combined with an addressee. At this point, the construction was no longer a classical optative but rather an imperative directed towards the addressee – but camouflaged as a mere wish directed towards a higher 3rd person entity.

The resulting modern imperative system in Peninsular Spanish has morphological subjunctives for all cases of formal address and etymological imperatives for informal sg.; the informal pl. still maintains an etymological imperative (*¡venid!, ¡cantad!, ¡decid!* ...) but this already shows clear signs of erosion (popular forms in -r, resulting in a confusion with the infinitive; conventional public signs already use the infinitive as in *¡No fumar!* or *¡No pisar el cesped!*).

	Indicative	**Imperative**
Informal, sg.	Vienes.	¡Ven!
Informal, pl.	Venís (, los niños).	%¡Venid! / %¡Vengan!
Formal, sg.	Ud. viene, sr. López.	¡Venga, sr. López!
Formal, pl.	[Uds.] vienen.	¡Vengan [Uds]!

This was the first step towards a new constructionalisation-path which developed out of an innovative use of the Optative construction, from which arose the new Imperative Subjunctive Schema. The introduction of 3rd person honorifics gave rise to a whole new branch of constructionalisations, and the innovation would change important parts of the Subjunctive Schema of the languages in question.

Polite pronouns are high frequency items and so are imperatives (cf. Ashdowne 2016). As a result, a sizeable portion of all "subjunctive" tokens occurring in modern Spanish, Catalan and Portuguese texts are Neo-Imperatives. In a following chapter we will argue that Neo-Imperatives are today real imperatives in their semantics, but importantly also in their syntactic behaviour. Only their morphology still binds them together with subjunctives; apart from that, Neo-Imperatives should be discussed with the other imperatives and should be excluded from all debates on the subjunctives of modern Romance languages. Before we embark on this argument, we will first give an overview of the internal ramifications of the Imperative Subjunctive Schema.

The Imperative-Subjunctive Schema is comparable to the Optative Construction in that it is ultimately based on an elided matrix sentence with an imperative illocutionary force, i.e. 'I order / ask / command you to ...'. Its semantics is therefore desiderative, but, unlike the optative, directed at 2nd person addressees, rather than being impersonal. By this, the Imperative-Subjunctive becomes semantically indistinguishable from etymological imperative forms which it has been cannibalising for quite some time. The Imperative-Subjunctive Schema feeds subjunctive forms as **Neo-Imperatives** into the imperative paradigm, in which the older etymological forms slowly become a minority. This massive restructuring of the imperative paradigm is the result of the Imperative-Subjunctive Schema, subdividing further into four individual micro-constructions (one of which is limited to Latin American varieties of Spanish and Portuguese). The resulting constructional network takes the following form:

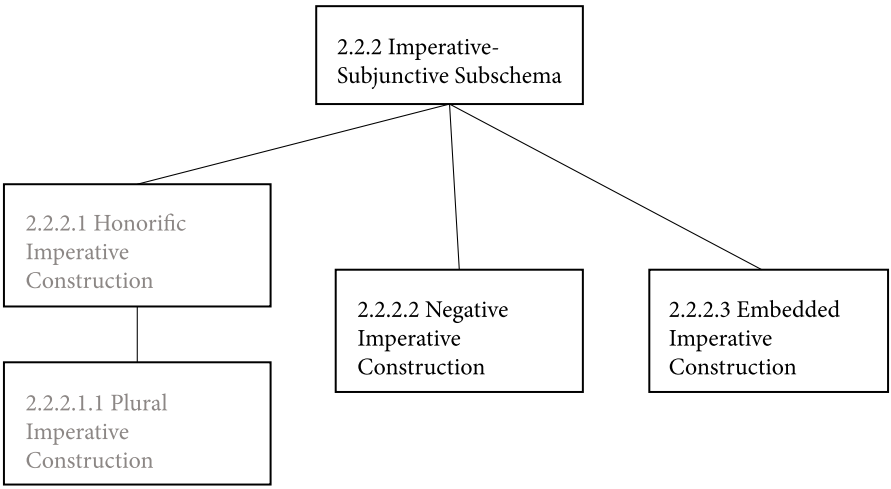

Figure 2. The imperative subjunctive schema

One direct daughter-node is the:

Honorific-Imperative Construction

This corresponds to the development of Neo-Imperatives in Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese as already described, where etymological imperatives may only be used with the informal 2nd person pronouns and verbal inflection, while the formal address system requires the Honorific Imperative Construction:

(13) ¡Ven aquí, Pepa! / Vine aquí, Núria! (informal) [Spanish / Catalan]

(14) ¡Venga aquí,[Vd./sra. Gómez!] / Vinga aquí, [vostè / sra. Pla] (formal) [Spanish / Catalan]

Plural-Imperative Construction

The second micro-construction under the Imperative-Subjunctive Subschema is the Plural-Imperative Construction; it is largely limited to Latin American varieties of Spanish and Portuguese and has made all plural forms of the etymological imperative obsolete in these varieties. It can be seen as an extension of the Honorific Imperative Construction to informally addressed plural referents:

(15) ¡Venid aquí, los niños! [Spain]

(16) ¡Vengan acá, los niños! [Latin America]

So, while the informal plural imperative already shows signs of erosion in Peninsular Spanish, it has been completely lost in Latin American Spanish. Just like the "subjunctives" in the Honorific Imperative Construction, these forms are completely identical to etymological imperatives in meaning as well as syntactical behaviour. The Imperative-Subjunctive and the Plural-Imperative Constructions belong firmly in the domain of imperatives and can no longer be associated with mood in any sense.

Negative-Imperative Construction

The third subschema, the Negative-Imperative Construction, is used obligatorily instead of the etymological imperative forms when an imperative is negated:

(17) ¡Ven! → ¡No vengas! [Spanish]

This is another good example of how the Neo-Imperatives have already encroached upon their etymological predecessors which can no longer be used in

these cases and must be substituted by the corresponding subjunctives. The reason for grouping this Construction under the Imperative-Subjunctive Schema is the conjecture that its development is somehow connected to the same factors that have brought about its sister nodes. This is corroborated by the fact that Languages with a system of 2nd person honorifics do not seem have developed this construction:

(18) Venez ! → Ne venez pas ! [French]

(19) Vieni! → Non venire! [Italian]

Embedded-Imperative Construction

The last of the four imperative micro-constructions is the Embedded-Imperative Construction which is used for indirect and reported commands. Etymological imperatives cannot appear in this function:[3]

(20) ¡Ven! → Dicen que vengas. [Spanish]

In other Romance languages, this construction exists alongside alternative constructions. Thus, while French may use *Ils disent que tu viennes*, the preferred way of expressing this seems to be:

(21) Ils (te) disent de venir ! [French]

Likewise, Italian allows for the subjunctive solution, but seems to favour the alternative construction based on an infinitive:

(22) Ti ordino che lo faccia! / Ti ordino di farlo! [Italian]

5. Neo-Imperatives are no longer "Subjunctives"

Let's now turn to the central argument of this paper: Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan have developed a new class of Neo-Imperatives corresponding to the Honorific Imperative construction which, by and large, have been seen as "subjunctives doing the job of imperatives". We will argue that this is essentially correct but can — and should — be put even more poignantly: they are *ex*-subjunctives doing the job of imperatives. Because, while these forms may still be using subjunctive morphology, there are good semantic and syntactic arguments for claiming that they can no longer be considered "subjunctives" at all because they are

3. Many languages do not allow imperatives to be embedded (cf. Palmer 1986; Han 2019: 229).

now fully integrated into their respective imperative paradigms. The fact that the constructionalisation of these erstwhile subjunctives into full imperatives has now come to a conclusion can be seen from their semantics, but even more compellingly from their behaviour with respect to cliticisation.

As for their semantics, it no longer permits nuances within the domain of deontic modality but is firmly locked into a clear imperative interpretation in that they can only be used for the speech act of ordering or requesting. The syntactic facts derive from the rules of clitic-placement. Modern Spanish and Catalan pronominal clitics are obligatorily proclitic with finite verbs (including subjunctives!) and always enclitic with non-finite verbs and imperatives. This syntactic regularity constitutes a valid diagnostic test for determining, if a *prima facie* subjunctive actually behaves as such (proclitic pronouns) or like an imperative (enclitic pronouns). So when we use subjunctives in the Embedded Imperative construction, the cliticisation test shows proclitic pronouns and so marks these as real subjunctives, rather than imperatives:

(23) Quiero que [me lo diga]! / Vull que [m'ho digui!] [Spanish / Catalan]

We can now turn these into "insubordinated" sentences by eliding the matrix clauses, while keeping the complementisers in place:

(24) ¡Que me lo diga! / Que m'ho digui! [Spanish / Catalan]

This is apparently still felt to be a simple case of conversational elision by the speakers which does not change the inherent syntactical structure: the cliticisation test still marks these forms as "subjunctives". Things change, however, when we also elide the complementisers! Now the speakers quite obviously no longer consider these as cases of elision. Therefore, the clitics now obligatorily move to the end of the clitic-group, marking them out as imperatives:

(25) ¡Díga<u>melo</u>! / Digui-<u>m'ho</u>! [Spanish / Catalan]

Note that this categorial change is not in any way bound to the morphology but to the construction itself, which is why our analysis arises naturally within a CxG framework, while the same phenomena threaten to fall between the descriptive levels of morphology and syntax in many traditional descriptions. Depending on the degree of insubordination, we can distinguish between the subordinate subjunctive in (23), the insubordinate in (24), and the Neo-Imperative in (25). The categorial rupture takes place between the latter two.[4]

4. For an in-depth discussion of subjunctive free-standing que-clauses vs. imperatives cf. Sansiñena, De Smet & Cornillie (2015).

As we have seen, the Imperative-Subjunctive Subschema arose as a reaction to the introduction of 3rd person honorifics into certain Romance languages. This is the reason why we find it in Spanish (where 3rd person *usted* is the standard form of polite address), but also in Portuguese (where either *você* or other 3rd person forms like *o senhor / a senhora* XYZ are used). French, on the other side, has a firmly established and centuries-old tradition of using 2nd person *tu* and *vous*, whereby a 2nd person *pluralis maiestatis* form is the conventional formal address. French therefore has not developed the Imperative-Subjunctive innovations and still uses a fully etymological imperative-system.

On the basis of the above argument, it should be possible to classify all Romance languages with respect to the feature "2nd vs. 3rd person honorifics". And a comparison of various Romance languages shows this implicational universal to be essentially true:

Language	**3rd person polite address?**	**Honorific Imperative Subjunctive?**	**Negative Imperative Subjunctive?**	**Embedded Imperative Subjunctive?**
Portuguese	+	+	+	+
Spanish	+	+	+	+
Catalan	+	+	+	+
Occitan	–	–	–	–
French	–	–	–	–
Italian	+/–	+/–	–	+/–
Rumanian	–	–	–	Ø

We have marked Italian as an unclear case, because for the recent past, a 2nd person system has existed alongside a (more recent) 3rd person system. Traditionally, Italian used the French-style 2nd person pronoun *voi* for polite address. However, in the 16th century, a new formal honorific was introduced, a 3rd person treatment based on titles like *Vostra Reverenzia, la Padronità Vostra, la Magnanimità Vostra, Vostra Prestanza, Vostra Mansuetudine*, etc.; it was finally conventionalised as *Vostra Signoria*. Initially, these titles were combined with the pronouns *tu* or *voi*, but eventually, 3rd person anaphoric pronouns *ella, essa, quella, questa, codesta* and *lei* come into use (cf. Pignataro 2025). Of all these, *Lei* finally developed form an anaphoric reference to *Vostra Signoria* into a new pronoun of formal address (cf. Brunet 2003, Accademia della Crusca 2011). The popular hypothesis that this might have been caused by "Spanish influence" is now

generally rejected.[5] During the fascist regime, this suspicion of being an "alien intrusion" into the purity of the Italian language had led to a campaign to ban its use altogether and to return completely to the older *voi*-treatment (cf. Brunet 2003, 10f.). It was, however, already deeply rooted in everyday usage and this campaign did not survive the fascist era. Today, the formal *lei* + 3rd person morphology is considered the unmarked form of polite address (c.f. Schuepbach *et al.* 2007:6).

At first glance it might seem that modern Italian *lei* + 3rd person inflection is more or less comparable to (Peninsular) Spanish *usted* + 3rd person inflection. But numerous aspects speak against this analysis. Italian *lei* was introduced considerably later. It never managed to completely oust the older *voi*-address but rather coexisted with it in a three-level system *tu-voi-lei*. Moreover, the language situation in Italy is characterised by widespread standard/dialect-diglossia and most dialects never adopted the *lei*-system; as a consequence, most speakers of Italian are also speakers of another variety in which no 3rd person address forms are used.

Most importantly, Spanish came up with a contracted form of *Vuestra Merced* in the new pronoun *usted*, in which the feminine gender of the original honorific was lost, giving way to a form that can unobtrusively be used for both sexes. Italian never took this step; rather, the original term of reference, *Vostra Signoria*, never got contracted — but neither can it be used any longer. The actually used form of address is only the feminine (!) anaphoric pronoun, referring to something that is no longer expressed. This results in situations where a clearly feminine pronoun is used to refer to a man, which led Benedetto Croce to speak of a "grammatical scandal" (Croce 1895: 182):

(26) Sono lieto di conoscerla, signor Miller.
'It's my pleasure to meet you, Mr Miller.'

All these factors indicate that Italian *lei* is not comparable to Spanish *usted*. To all the above observations which have already been made in the literature, we can now add another one: the vacillations of the Italian language with respect to Neo-Imperatives and the other constructions of the Imperative-Subjunctive Schema. For the same reasons as in Spanish, the imperative is expressed by means of subjunctives with *lei*:

5. Nobody ever seems to have noticed that the whole theory is also logically flawed because the so-called "Spaniards" following king Alfonso the Magnanimous (1396–1458) until the reign of Charles of Ghent (1500–1558) were Catalan-speaking and Catalan had largely been the language of the Neapolitan court. But Catalan did not adopt a 3rd person address-system until the 19th century and thus could not have served as a model for Italian.

(27) Vieni, Peter! Venga, signor Müller!
'Come, Peter! Come, Mr Miller!'

This may look like the Spanish situation; but the cliticisation test shows that the step towards full Neo-Imperatives has not yet taken place, as the Italian equivalent of Spanish *¡Dígame!* (with an enclitic pronoun!) is *Mi dica!*, where the proclitic use of the pronoun shows that speakers still treat this as a special case of the Optative construction. As a consequence, the Italian Subjunctive Schema has not fully developed the constructions under the Imperative-Subjunctive Subschema: The Honorific Imperatives are still subjunctives and have not completely grammaticalised into Neo-Imperatives; the Plural Imperative, the Negative Imperative and the Embedded Imperative constructions do not exist (cf. Figure 3).

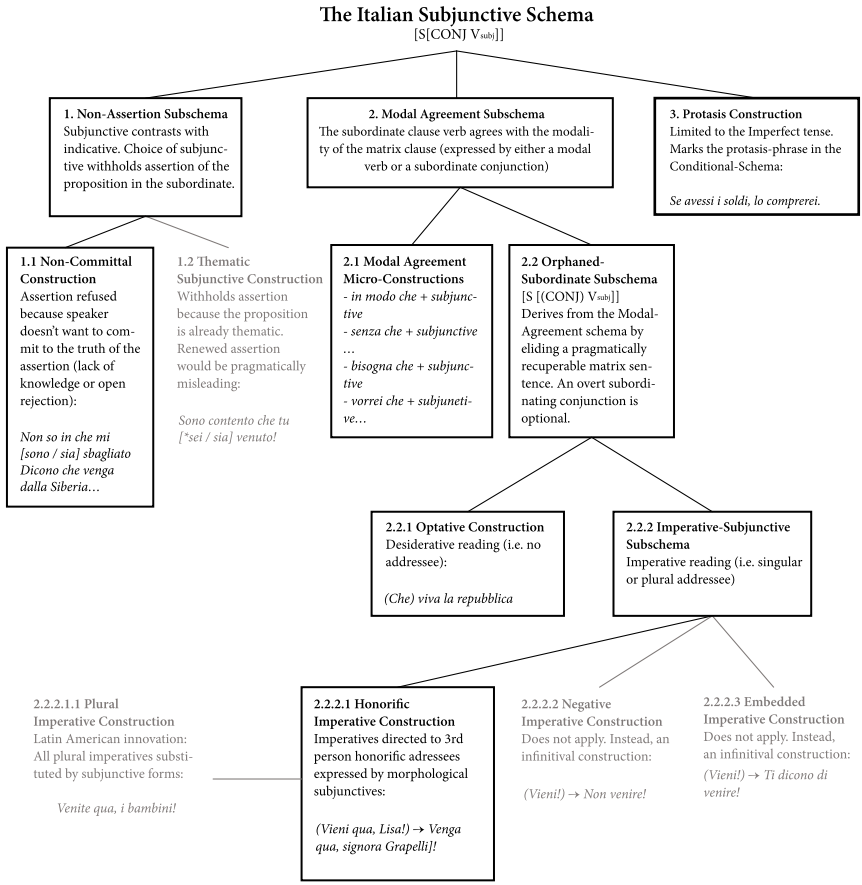

Figure 3. The Italian subjunctive schema

In the Italian case we have already seen that only looking at the modern language may hide relevant difference in the constructionalisation processes of a language; Italian didn't have the time to develop the Neo-Imperatives we find in Spanish. We also saw that looking only at the standard language may hide important influences from non-standard varieties; in the case of Italian, the continued use of a 2nd person polite address system alongside the standard language may have contributed to the state of affairs we have just sketched.

In Catalan we find a situation which resembles the Italian case in many aspects. Catalan is essentially a Gallo-Romance language which had formed a diasystem together with Occitan (cf. Radatz 2012 and forthcoming). When Catalan and Occitan were politically and culturally separated, Catalan came under Iberoromance influence and has been adverging with Spanish ever since. Like French and Occitan, Catalan has always expressed normal politeness with the pronoun *vos* + 2nd person inflection; 3rd person honorifics like *Vostra Mercè* were used but remained limited to especially high-ranking persons and never developed into a new 3rd person pronoun comparable to Spanish *usted* or Italian *Lei*. On the other hand, the modern standard language considers that in Catalan there are three forms of address: *tu* + 1st sg. for intimacy, *vostè* + 3rd sg. for politeness. This address system of modern standard Catalan functions exactly like the Spanish system in all respects – including fully developed Neo-Imperatives. This, however, is by no means the result of a parallel internal development within the Catalan language. Rather, the whole *vostè*-system is just a recent lexical and structural calque of the Spanish system, which was introduced only recently, i.e. in the first half of the 19th century during the reign of Ferdinand VII (1784–1833) (cf. Elies 2001). It took at least another century for it to percolate from the speech of the urban bourgeoisie into generalised used – and, to our days, it still feels alien to many native speakers. In Catalonia proper, the notion of 'please' is still expressed by the formula *si us plau* (an analogue to French *s'il-vous-plait*), containing a 2nd person treatment. The Imperative Subjunctive is also still excluded from public signs like *Empenyeu / Estireu / No fumeu / No trepitgeu la gespa* ('Push', 'Pull', 'Don't smoke', 'don't step on the lawn'). The subjunctive versions would still be seen as Spanish interferences: *ʔEmpenyin / ʔEstirin / No ʔfumin / No ʔtrepitgin la gespa*. So, the traditional *vós* is still present in many ways, underlining the inherently foreign character of *vostè*. Officially, *vós* + 2nd pl. can still be used in writing among colleagues, but to most speakers, its function is no longer really clear. To the ears of city dwellers in Barcelona, *vós* sounds pompous and archaic. This is not the case, though, when we begin to look at the dialects!

Rural Mallorcan (cf. Radatz 2010), for one, retains to this day an address-system in which *tu* + 2nd person singular morphology is the informal and *vos* + 2nd person plural is the formal treatment:

(28) Tu què fas, Toni? / Vós què feu, l'amo en Toni? [Mallorcan Catalan]

3rd person honorific *vostè* is felt to be foreign and will generally not be used for people from the same village and is reserved for interactions with city-folk. When pressed to use *vostè*, this is still felt to be a recent Spanish innovation. Mallorca was a rather remote place until the 1970s and rural Mallorcan Catalan had little exposure to Spanish or mainland Catalan until very recently. So Catalan speakers on the Balearic Isles missed out on the innovation that had taken place in the 19th without ever reaching their islands. So, the wholesale adoption of the entire Spanish system (including the Neo-Imperatives) never happened there and to this day, rural Mallorcan maintains the old system.

From all the above we would expect Mallorcan Catalan to be like Italian in the sense that the Imperative Subjunctive construction never had enough time to constructionalise into full Neo-Imperatives (c.f. Radatz 2010: 193–95, 241). That this is effectively the case can be shown with the clitic-test. In the following examples of Imperative Subjunctives in standard Catalan in (29), all pronouns are enclitic here:

(29) Digui-m'ho! / Porti'm un got d'aigua! / Faci'm el favor …! [standard Catalan]

The corresponding dialectal versions, however, show proclitic behaviour:

(30) M'ho digui! / Me dugui un tassó d'aigo! / Me faci es favor …! [Mallorcan Catalan]

Analogous examples can also be found in other dialects, e.g. in Girona. This reveals that, under a modern Iberoromance veneer, the older Galloromance solutions still live on in Catalan. It also provides further evidence for the hypothesis that the early introduction of 3rd person honorifics is decisive for the development of the Subjunctive Schema, more precisely: the Oprhaned Subordinate branch.

6. Conclusions

Some Romance languages seem to have little use for their subjunctives while for others they are a high-frequency item with many functions. In this article, we have argued that these differences are to a large extent localised within the Orphaned Subordinate subschema where the most important innovations have taken place. Languages like Spanish, which developed 3rd person address systems in the medieval period and made these a part of everyday interaction, had to use a modified version of the *Optative Subjunctive* construction in order to make good

for the structural lack of imperative forms for 3rd person verbs. This modification led to the development of a whole new subschema: the Imperative Subjunctive. The new subschema in its turn became the starting point for a bundle of further Imperative constructions, eventually leading to a whole new class of Neo-Imperatives, at the expense of the older, etymological forms.

Neo-Imperatives derive from Optative Subjunctives but take them one step further on the constructionalisation path: in a first step, the complementiser may be dropped; then, the semantics aligns fully with that of etymological imperatives; the last step is finally a change in syntactic behaviour from finite subjunctives with proclitics towards non-finite imperatives with enclitics.

We have argued that, once subjunctives have developed into Neo-Imperatives, they are to be treated as full Imperatives in all respects, except for their etymology (or morphology). This analysis seems to go against the grain of most traditional accounts which still consider these forms "subjunctives". We have argued against this analysis and we are convinced that this new categorisation as imperatives rather than subjunctives is crucially important for all statistical studies on the use of Romance subjunctives because the high frequency of Neo-Imperatives would otherwise result in incorrectly high token-counts for the subjunctive. Even more importantly, a common research question has been the degree to which the subjunctives in a given language are still meaningful or have already been reduced to purely configurational purposes. Because Neo-Imperatives are clearly meaningful, counting them all as if they still were subjunctives in a corpus study will give the impression that, in a language like Spanish, still an important amount of subjunctives were "semantic" and "modal", rather than a mere device of modal coherence and agreement. If, on the other hand, we take all Neo-Imperatives out of the equation, a radically different — and much more realistic — picture will emerge: even in Spanish, subjunctives are today mostly triggered agreement-devices and are only residually used as a means of expression. This realisation, then, could and should also have far-reaching consequences for the ways in which the subjunctive is taught to foreign language learners.

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Appendix. A comparison

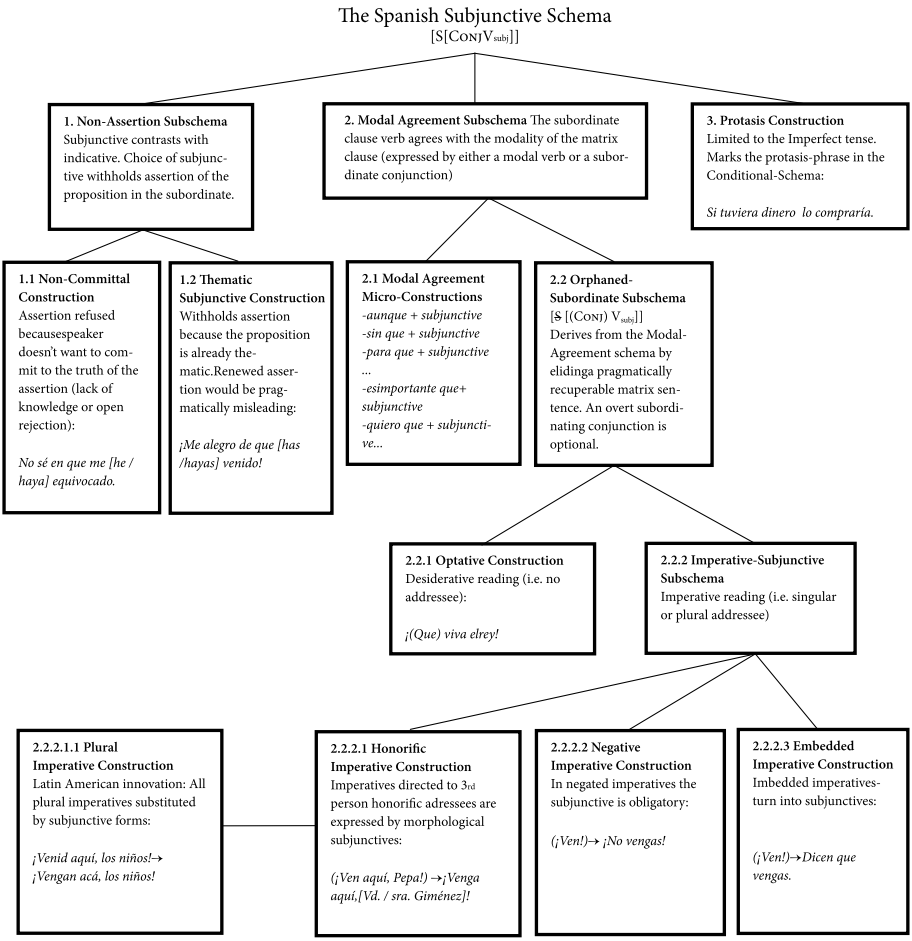

Figure 4. The Spanish subjunctive schema

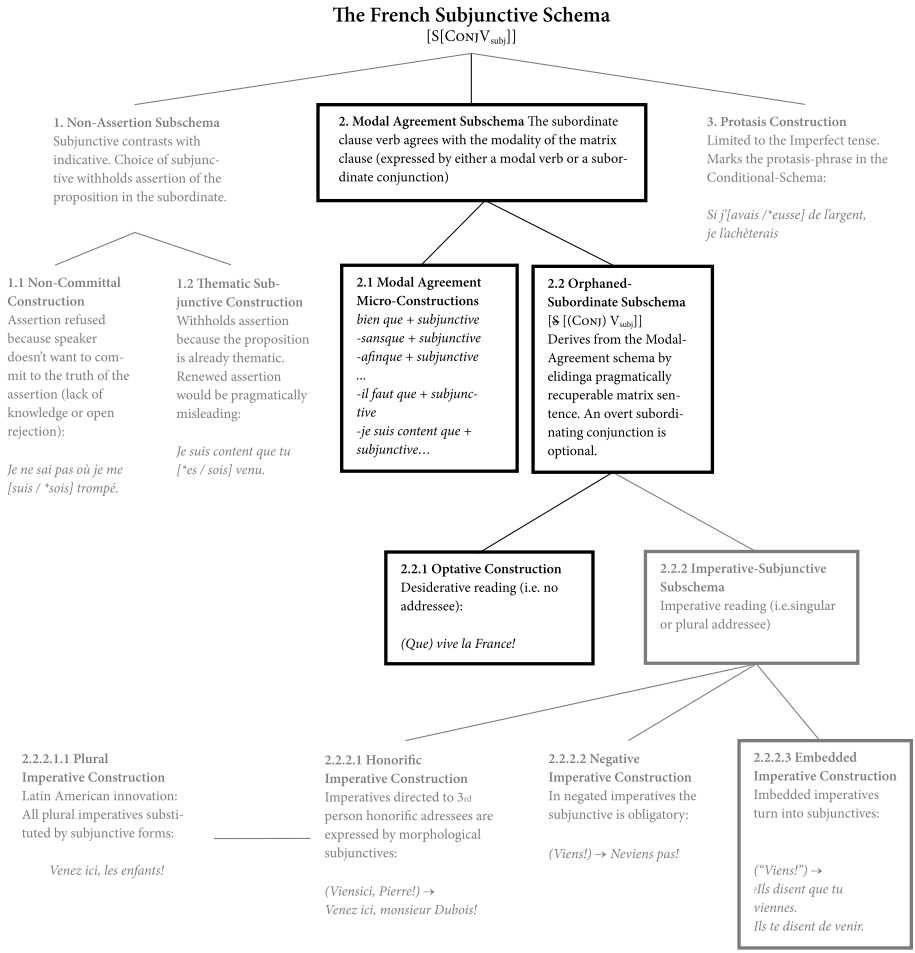

Figure 5. The French subjunctive schema

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This volume deals with the relations between grammar and interaction from different perspectives, with the aim of unraveling the way in which a language — through the different forms of discourse from which it emerges — reflects certain social and community-based schemas; that is, how language originates within the space shared by the speaker and the addressee(s). The first part ("Grammar and Interaction") concerns how interaction may intervene in grammar; the second part ("The Grammar of Interaction") approaches both notions and linguistic structures which are anchored in interaction while revolving around epistemicity, evidentiality and modality. The third part ("Interaction as a Model for Discourse") concerns how certain constructions emerge from interaction and are further used to model discourse. Finally, the fourth and last part of the book ("Interaction as a Driver for Change") focuses on how interaction may help to delimit linguistic categories.

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