

Indefinite *uno* as a mitigation strategy on the Spanish Yahoo QA forum

Panel: *Mitigation strategies in Spanish digital discourses (González García & Pano Alamán)*

In this paper, we study the Spanish pronoun *uno* ('one') in its indefinite use in a digital genre, the online forum *Yahoo Questions and Answers (YQA)*, from a pragmatic perspective. The main communicative function of this genre is advice seeking and giving (Placencia, 2012).

A careful analysis of the YQA corpus shows that *uno* fulfills different pragmatic functions, which can be related to different kinds of mitigation: dissolve the sender and / or addressee and hence protect their image (1), address a larger audience, include oneself in the reference, give more evidential weight to the advice (Scheibman, 2007), remain vague and create a link between the sender and addressee.

(1) *HOMBRES, que buscan de una mujer en el acto sexual? (...)*

*lo preguntas para llamar la atención? porque esto es algo que se responde **uno** automáticamente en el acto sexual*

'MEN, what do you want from a woman during sex? (...)

you ask this to get attention? because this is something that one automatically responds in the sexual act'

Besides the multiple functions related to the pronoun, we also established a series of different interpretations of the *uno*, for which we propose a scalar typology, ranging from completely generic to completely specific (referring to one person, e. g. the speaker).

Combining both the pragmatic functions and the interpretational types, we find that mitigating *uno* is rather linked with the interpretations based on the addressee or the sender, or both. Moreover, these interpretations are more frequent in this genre in comparison to written academic genres, which we relate to the importance of advice in YQA.

Corpus

YCCQA : *Yahoo-based Contrastive Corpus of Questions and Answers*.

References

Placencia, María Elena, 2012. Online peer-to-peer advice in Spanish *Yahoo!Respuestas*. In Limberg, Holger and Locher, Miriam A. (ed.), *Advice in discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 281-305.

Scheibman, Joanne, 2007. Subjective and intersubjective uses of generalizations in English conversations. In Englebretson, Robert (ed.), *Stancetaking in Discourse. Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 111-138.