

The conceptualization of hearer reference in Spanish
Barbara De Cock

Whereas person reference research has often focussed on referentiality and identifiability, this study will focus on the impact of person reference on the different conceptualizations of the (relationship between) the interaction participants, and subsequent intersubjective effects (Benveniste 1966, Lyons 1982, Closs Traugott 2003).

The analysis deals with 1st and 2nd person plural forms (expressed in Spanish in the verb morphology, as a subject pronoun or as an object pronoun) in interactional data (conversation and debate sections of the COREC-UAM-corpus, and parliamentary debates). These plural forms combine deictic grounding (linked to the speaker resp. hearer) with a group component (for the plural). The flexibility of this group component allows us to place the different readings of plural forms on a continuum ranging from the speaker pole to the hearer pole.

I will show that the 1st person plural form is frequently used in utterances where the hearer is included or even the main intended referent, i.e. the reading is situated towards the centre or hearer-end of the continuum. Most of these utterances imply some deontic reading, in that they express the desirability of an action. I will look at (1) speaker-and-hearer-inclusive deontic-readings, (2) the *ir a*-periphrasis, which can receive both a future and an exhortative reading, (3) the exhortative and (4) the hearer-dominant reading of the 1st person plural (De Cock, *forthc.*).

This hearer-orientation is not merely inferred by our world knowledge but is often triggered by linguistic cues pointing towards the hearer, e.g. a 2nd person reference form (*seas* in (2)), a vocative (*señores* in (3)), an interrogative speech act (4).

The use of a 1st person plural form has then a specific intersubjective effect since the 1st person plural conceptualizes the speaker and the hearer as part of one group and suggests that both are ‘modal agent’ (viz. the person expected to carry out the action, Verstraete 2005: 1410).

- (1) **Tenemos que actuar** ahora. (‘**We have to act** now’.)
- (2) No seas así, hombre. **Vamos a dejar** que el público haga alguna pregunta a alguno de vosotros. (‘Don’t be like that, man. **We’re going to let** the public pose a question to someone of you’.)
- (3) Señores, **no entremos** en una discusión metafísica. (‘Gentlemen, **let’s not enter** into a metaphysic discussion.’)
- (4) ¿**Nos hemos tomado** la medicina? (nurse to patient) (‘**Have we taken** our medicine?’)

Besides these hearer-oriented readings of 1st person plural forms, I will look into the uses of the prototypical hearer-reference form, viz. the 2nd person. These occur rarely in requests for concrete action, but seem to specialize for some specific speech acts, e.g. asking for an opinion or information (5) or requests concerning the organisation of the interaction (6).

- (5) ¿**Sabéis** lo que cuesta el Twinings? (**Do you-2PL-INFORMAL know** what Twinings costs?)
- (6) **No entren Ustedes** en discusiones, por favor. ('Please **do not enter-2PL-FORMAL** in discussions.')

The combined analysis of 1st and 2nd person plural forms allows us to conclude that the choice for a 1st resp. 2nd person plural is not only motivated by the referentiality of the person reference form but crucially hinges on the intersubjective effect that its conceptualization entails.

References

- Benveniste, Emile. 1966. De la subjectivité dans le langage. *Problèmes de linguistique générale*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.
- Closs Traugott, Elizabeth. 2003. From subjectification to intersubjectification. *Motives for language change*. ed. Raymond Hickey, 124-39. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- De Cock, Barbara. Forthc. Why *we* can be *you* : the use of 1st person plural forms with hearer reference in English and Spanish.
- Lyons, John. 1982. Deixis and subjectivity: *Loquor, ergo sum? Speech, place and action: studies in deixis and related topics*. eds. R. J. Jarvella, and W. Klein, 101-24. Chichester: Wiley.
- Verstraete, Jean-Christophe. 2005. Scalar quantity implicatures and the interpretation of modality: problems in the deontic domain. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, 1401-1418.

Corpora

- Congreso de los Diputados. 2001. *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados. Pleno y diputación permanente*. Sesiones plenarias del 26 y 27 de junio del 2001. pp. 4619-4721. <http://www.congreso.es>
- Congreso de los Diputados. 2005. *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados. Pleno y diputación permanente*. Sesiones plenarias del 11, 12 y 17 de mayo del 2005. pp. 4329-4527. <http://www.congreso.es>
- COREC-UAM. 1992. *Corpus de Referencia de la Lengua Española Contemporánea*. <<http://www.lllf.uam.es/~fmarcos/informes/corpus/corpulee.html>>