

The Spanish indefinite pronoun *uno*: interpretation and discursive functioning

The aim of this paper is to analyze the discursive functioning of the Spanish pronoun *uno* ('one'/'you'), in its non-numeral uses. Such uses are typically described in the literature as "generic", "impersonal" or "undefined." In this study, I will show what mechanisms and factors influence their interpretation, paying specific attention to differences in discourse genre. Furthermore, I will propose an analysis of *uno* as strategy of intersubjectivity.

I will establish a classification of undefined *uno* through a qualitative analysis of occurrences obtained from two different corpora, namely an informal conversations corpus (CORLEC) and a written academic discourse corpus (CLAE), which will allow me to discover which factors influence the interpretative mechanisms. Using two corpora of different genres/text types allows me to analyze the impact of the factor discourse genre on the use of *uno*.

I propose a first typology of different uses in terms of reference of this pronoun. It can vary from generic (1) to a particular individual, who can be the speaker (2), the hearer (3) or another person (4). However, I also observe different degrees of genericity within these categories, which justifies the qualitative analysis.

- (1) *Este ejemplo es el contrario de lo que sucede en poblaciones como Woodland California en donde la ciudad es primordialmente mexicana y el español se puede escuchar en casi cualquier lugar que **uno** visite.* (CLAE)

'This example is the opposite of what happens in places like Woodland California where the city is primarily Mexican and Spanish can be heard in almost any place **you** visit.'

- (2) *Si hoy se acabara el agua pues me agarraría de sorpresa ya que **uno** vive al día y para planear lo que **uno** haría a futuro pues tendría **uno** que empezar a cambiar los hábitos.* (YCCQA)

'If the water ran out today, it would take me by surprise since **you** live day by day and to plan what **you** would do in the future, **you** would have to begin to change habits.'

- (3) *Claro, cuando **uno** tiene ya muchas ganas de hacer algo...* (CORLEC – CONV)

'Of course, when **you** are already very eager to do something ...'

- (4) *Tuvo muchos críticos Cantinflas, pero sin críticos, **uno** no puede tener carácter.* (CLAE)

'Cantinflas had many critics, but without critics, **you** cannot have character.'

I will show that some uses of this undefined *uno* are marks of intersubjectivity, as defined by Benveniste (1966) and Traugott (2003), i.e. an expression of attention of the speaker / writer to the hearer. Therefore I will propose a scale of intersubjectivity of the uses of *uno*, in order to describe in more detail their functioning in both genres/text types.

Corpora

CLAE: *Corpus de lenguaje académico en español*. 2009. <http://www.lenguajeacademico.info>.

CORLEC: *Corpus del Español centro-peninsular*, 1990-1993.

References

Benveniste, Emile. 1966. « De la subjectivité dans le langage. » *Problèmes de linguistique générale*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2003. "From subjectification to intersubjectification." In Hickey, Raymond (ed.), *Motives for Language Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 124-139.