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A Note from the Editors

We can look back on a year that has been notable in many respects. First of all, the year 2004 really made us editors sweat: the number of submissions may have been higher than ever before. This was not an altogether positive feature, since a high proportion of this flood of papers unfortunately turned out to be of relatively poor quality. In fact, we editors could not quite escape the suspicion that some of the papers were submitted in the hope that no review process would take place. In order to counter any future speculations of this kind, we therefore decided to publish in this issue a list of the referees of *SKY JoL* 16 and 17 (overleaf). The current editors suggest that publishing the names of referees every second year be made standard practice: this will not only help dispel any doubts about the rigorousness of the review process applied, but may also serve as a well deserved public recognition of the work of those referees who do not belong to our advisory editorial board.

In the course of the year, the board of the Linguistic Association of Finland made the decision to start publishing *SKY JoL* as a free-access web journal alongside the print version. From this issue onwards, *SKY JoL* will therefore combine the advantages of the traditional and electronic publication formats: the longevity of paper and the wide distribution of a web journal. As a consequence of this decision, the morale of our members will of course be put to a certain test. However, we are convinced that the availability of *SKY JoL* as a web publication will not result in a sudden fall in our membership.

The international impact of *SKY JoL* has developed further this year. We have started co-operation with *Cambridge Scientific Abstracts* and the *Modern Languages Association International Bibliography*. From issue 16 onwards, the abstracts of the articles will be published by *CSA* and the contents of the journal will be indexed in the *MLA Bibliography*.

It goes without saying that we editors again owe a debt of deepest gratitude to our contributors and referees, not to mention many of our colleagues who have helped us with matters of language or provided hints for the referee hunt.

Pentti Haddington

Jouni Rostila

Ulla Tuomarla

Referees of *SKY JoL* 16 (2003) and 17 (2004)

It is gratefully acknowledged that the following scholars, among a few others, have acted as referees for *SKY Journal of Linguistics*:

Werner Abraham (University of Vienna), Arto Anttila (Stanford University), Johan van der Auwera (University of Antwerp), Mark Baltin (New York University), Sjef Barbiers (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), Paul Bennett (University of Manchester), Maarit Berg (University of Helsinki), Raymond Bertram (University of Turku), Ina Bornkessel (Max Planck Institute, Leipzig), Ellen Brandner (University of Konstanz), Frank Brisard (University of Antwerp), Mathias Broth (Stockholm University), Piotr Chruszczewski (University of Wrocław), Bernard Comrie (Max Planck Institute, Leipzig), Mathias Creutz (Helsinki University of Technology), Isabelle Darcy (University of Potsdam), Agurtzane Elordui (University of the Basque Country), Caroline Fery (University of Potsdam), Susann Fisher (University of Stuttgart), Steven Franks (Indiana University), Volker Gast (FU Berlin), Riho Grünthal (University of Helsinki), Britt-Louise Gunnarsson (Uppsala University), Hubert Haider (University of Salzburg), Martin Haspelmath (Max Planck Institute, Leipzig), Eva Havu (University of Helsinki), Jukka Havu (University of Tampere), Marja-Liisa Helasvuo (University of Turku), Ilona Herlin (University of Helsinki), Heinrich Hettrich (University of Würzburg), Anders Holmberg (University of Durham), Helen de Hoop (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen), Tuomas Huumo (University of Turku), Juhani Härmä (University of Helsinki), Juhani Järvikivi (University of Turku), Fred Karlsson (University of Helsinki), Anneli Kauppinen (University of Jyväskylä), Seppo Kittilä (University of Turku), Göran Kjellmer (University of Gothenburg), Wolf Peter Klein (Ruhr University of Bochum), Bernd Kortmann (University of Freiburg), Meri Larjavaara (University of Helsinki), Christian Lehmann (University of Erfurt), Torsten Leuschner (University of Ghent), Krister Lindén (University of Helsinki), Satu Manninen (Lund University), Anna Mauranen (University of Tampere), Cynthia L. Miller (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Tanja Mortelmans (University of Antwerp), Jussi Niemi (University of Joensuu), Urpo Nikanne (Åbo Akademi University), Rafael Nunez-Cedeno (University of Minnesota), Lisa-Lena Opas-Hänninen (University of Oulu), Päivi Pahta (University of Helsinki), Carita Paradis (Lund University),

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Michaël Abecassis

Schwa-deletion in the Dialogues of 1930s French Films¹

Abstract

My aim in this article is to identify whether schwa deletion was a social or stylistic marker in the 1930's. The videos and transcripts of five films provide the corpus on which this analysis is based: *Fric-frac*, *Circonstances atténuantes*, *Le Jour se lève*, *La Règle du jeu* and *Hôtel du Nord*. Though these video recordings are samples of not natural but artificial language, these films are some of the only material available for linguistic analysis in that period beside radio broadcast and music hall songs. I will first quantify the deletion of schwa in word-initial position in the film dialogues and in a second stage focus on schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in order to establish whether these features of pronunciation can be used to differentiate the lower and upper group speeches.

1. Introduction

My aim in this analysis is to identify the level of schwa-deletion displayed by the speakers in a 1930s film corpus. I intend to establish whether the dropping of schwa correlate with social membership. I will first quantify the deletion of schwa in word-initial position in the film dialogues and in a second stage focus on schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je.” In a third stage, I will analyse the contexts in which this feature has occurred. The five 1930s films which I have chosen to analyse provide a very interesting source of data, because they offer a fairly stereotyped vision of a society divided roughly into two distinct social classes: one which I shall call “lower group” and the other “upper group.” This division, which is deliberately simplified, will allow me to study the relationships which are established between the two groups: these groups, in 1930s French films,

¹ The following revised research was conducted in the course of my doctoral dissertation on “The Representation of Parisian Speech in the Cinema of the 1930s” (University of St Andrews, Scotland 2000). I am very grateful to Dr W. J. Anderson for her help with the revision of this article.

co-exist to offer the spectator a representation of what has come to be called the “social voyeurism” of the pre-war period.

2. A social classification of the characters

For this research, a corpus of five French films dating from the 1930s has been assembled: *Hôtel du Nord* (1938), *Fric-frac* (1939), *Circonstances atténuantes* (1939), *Le Jour se lève* (1939), *La Règle du jeu* (1939). I chose these films above all because each film presents the interaction of a variety of Parisian speakers from different social classes, and depicts the contrast between the ‘vernacular speech’ of the proletarian speakers and the ‘standard speech’ of the upper-group characters.

To help us to assign a category to each speaker in the films I have used the following stratification adapted from the INSEE (*Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques*) classification:

- A. Professions libérales et cadres supérieurs
- B. Cadres moyens
- C. Employés
- D. Contremaîtres, ouvriers qualifiés
- E. Ouvriers spécialisés, manœuvres

Among these five occupational groups, it is possible to distinguish three broad social classes: lower class (Category E), middle class (Category B, C, D) and upper class (Category A). By “lower class”, I mean people who earn low wages, mostly by manual labour. By “middle class”, I mean high school graduates, semi-professionals and white collar workers. By “upper class”, I mean aristocrats, the nobility and well-to-do people who hold no job but live on private incomes. The jewellery employees in *Fric-frac* with most probably modest salaries are middle group, whereas the public prosecutor in *Circonstances atténuantes* and Robert de La Chesnaye, the aristocrat of *La Règle du jeu* can be said to be upper group. Because the majority of the characters in my films fall into the lower group, a division of the remaining ones into middle group and upper group is not methodologically convenient. So, in my study, middle-class and upper-middle class speakers will be put together into one social class which I shall refer to as that of the upper group. Another category should be added to my subdivision: *floaters*. Such characters waver between the upper and

lower groups. Examples of this category are Marcel, Valentin, Octave and Edmond.

Most speakers are placed clearly in either the upper group (the *bourgeoisie*) or the lower group (the *classe populaire*). There is a danger of circularity in my classification. By classifying *a-priori* the characters in each film into the upper and lower groups and establishing my own rather *ad hoc* social categories, I end up with a picture of Paris society divided into two social groups. Parisian society in the 1930s was naturally much more complex than this and my bi-partite division is an oversimplification. However, it is still valid for my purposes, as the script-writers of the films clearly blur all social distinctions other than upper and lower.

Film 1: *Fric-frac*

The employees of Mercandieu's jeweller's shop encapsulate the category which INSEE refers to as "employés" (Offord 1990: 66). The upper-group characters are Renée and Marcel, although Marcel is better classified as a floater. The lower-group characters are made up of two leading figures Loulou and Jo who belong to milieu of petty thieves.

Film 2: *Circonstances atténuantes*

The upper-group characters are former prosecutor Monsieur Gaëtan and his wife Madame Nathalie Le Sentencier and the lower-group characters, dominated by male figures, are the innkeeper Bouic and a group of small gangsters known as Môme de dieu, Cinq de Canne and Marie. I will in this study concentrate on Marie and Bouic's speech, which is the most stereotypical.

Film 3: *Le Jour se lève*

Valentin is the upper-group figure. He is a cabaret dog trainer who is said in the film to have a degree in philosophy. His educational background is well-rated by Clara, who on several occasions is filled with admiration for his manner of speaking. The lower group is made up of three main characters: François, a factory worker, his homonym Françoise, a flower-seller from a modest background, and Clara, an assistant to a cabaret artist. Both François and Françoise were brought up in an orphanage.

Film 4: *La Règle du jeu*

The study of this film is made difficult by the high number of characters. I will concentrate on the most stereotyped characters. Robert La Chesnaye and Geneviève de Marras are the upper-group characters. Marceau is the lower-group Parisian. Octave, a friend of Robert and Jurieu who belong to the upper group, is more of a floater between the groups.

Film 5: *Hôtel du Nord*

In this film, the upper-group characters are Renée and Pierre. The lower-group characters are a prostitute Raymonde and former pimp Edmond.

3. The corpus

The language used in 1930s French dialogues does not constitute naturally-occurring speech, but is a stylized form which present a caricature of what both script-writers and actors consider to be salient features of vernacular speech. Indeed, although being artificial, this corpus is far from completely fictitious. A “constructed” language borrows from natural conversation to create its own singular speech. Features are presented in higher frequency that they would normally occur in natural language. The data that I will analyse is the result of a collective creation partly of a script-writer, partly of the director and partly also the actors who not only play roles but bring in a particular stress, intonation and accent. As such, film languages represent a genuine and very valuable source of information which has its own status and can be used as linguistic material.

FILM 1: *Fric-Frac*

Adapted from a play by E. Bourdet, performed in the Théâtre de la Michodière, and starring Arletty, Michel Simon and Fernandel, *Fric-frac* was released at the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. The story of *Fric-Frac* is set in Paris. **Marcel** (Fernandel) a honest man and an employee in a jeweller’s shop, has become infatuated with **Loulou** (Arletty), a girl from the milieu of petty criminals. By his acquaintance with gangsters, Marcel gets initiated to their colloquialisms and their moral and intellectual values. With her friend **Jo** (Michel Simon), Loulou takes advantage of Marcel’s working in a jewellery store and of his gullibility to organise a break-in. The break-in fails, when Mercandieu, the owner of the

jewellery shop and his daughter **Renée** (Hélène Robert), who is in love with Marcel, burst in unexpectedly.

FILM 2: *Circonstances atténuantes*

The French comedy entitled *Circonstances atténuantes* presents a variety of Parisian speakers ranging from the upper-middle class to the lower-working class. Adapted from a novel by M. Arnac, *Circonstances atténuantes*, starring Michel Simon, Suzanne Dantès and Arletty, was also released at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Suzanne Dantès (**Madame**) is the stereotype of the pedantic and coquettish Parisian snob while the other female character (**Marie**), played by Arletty, typifies, as in *Fric-Frac*, the outspoken and coarse-mannered whore with a heart of gold. In *Fric-Frac*, Michel Simon normally plays the part of a gangster, but in *Circonstances atténuantes*, he embodies the other extreme of the social ladder, a respectable and highly sophisticated lawyer (**Monsieur**). Among the secondary characters, one should note the presence of Andrex (born in 1907 in Marseille) as Môme de dieu and Dorville who plays the part of **Bouic** the innkeeper. Although the bourgeoisie is the target of ridicule in the film as the “stereotype of moral rectitude” and social injustice (Hayward 1993: 185), it eventually comes out on top to show that righteousness prevails and that crime does not pay.

FILM 3: *Le Jour se lève*

Carné's film scripted by Jacques Prévert opens with a shooting. **François** (Jean Gabin) barricades himself into his attic room. Chain-smoking cigarettes, he recollects events that led him to kill. François is a sandblast worker in a foundry. By way of flashbacks, we return to the time when François was in love with **Françoise** (Jacqueline Laurent), until the climactic moment when, abandoning himself to fatalism, he shoots **Valentin** (Jules Berry). The film encapsulates the pessimistic mood that pervaded France in the 1930s.

FILM 4: *La Règle du jeu*

La Règle du jeu is one of Jean Renoir's most famous films. On the eve of the Second World War, the aviator André Jurieux (played by Roland Toutain) is welcomed triumphantly back to Le Bourget airport, after crossing the Atlantic ocean. Jurieux intends to win back the love of Christine (Nora Grégor) who is married to Marquis **Robert** de La

Chesnaye (Marcel Dalio). However, when Jurieux arrives in Paris, he is very sad because Christine is not there. Christine has refused Jurieux's advances, as she prefers the Marquis Robert de La Chesnaye's aristocratic life with its privileges. A rabbit shooting is organised by the Marquis at their property named "La Collinière" which results in a series of love intrigues among servants and masters. A common friend, **Octave** (Jean Renoir) manages to have Jurieux invited to the shooting party. The Marquis's mistress, **Geneviève** du Marras (Mila Parély) with whom he strives to break up, is also invited. Things get out of control when Christine discovers that her husband has a lover and that **Marceau** (Julien Carette), a former poacher newly employed by Robert as his domestic, is flirting with Lisette.

FILM 5: *Hôtel du Nord*

In *Hôtel du Nord*, a young couple **Renée** (Annabella) and **Pierre** (Jean-Pierre Aumont) hire a room for a night at the Hôtel du Nord in Paris, near the Canal Saint-Martin. They wish to die together in a suicide pact, but after shooting Renée, Pierre lacks courage and runs away. Another guest at the hotel, Paulo, who has himself called Monsieur **Edmond** (Louis Jouvet), a former procurer, rescues her. Monsieur Edmond lives with a prostitute called **Raymonde** (Arletty). When Renée leaves the hospital, she is employed as a waitress in the Hôtel du Nord. Monsieur Edmond falls in love with her, but Renée cannot help thinking of Pierre.

Table 1 presents all the characters investigated in alphabetical order, listing their profession in the films and the name of the actors. Lower-group speakers will appear in bold in this study.

	Film	Actors	Profession
Blin	<i>Fric-frac</i>	R. Génin	jeweller's assistant
Bouic	<i>Circonstances atténuantes</i>	Dorville	innkeeper
Clara	<i>Le Jour se lève</i>	Arletty	assistant
Edmond	<i>Hôtel du Nord</i>	L. Jouvet	former pimp
François	<i>Le Jour se lève</i>	J. Gabin	worker
Françoise	<i>Le Jour se lève</i>	J. Laurent	florist
Geneviève	<i>La Règle du jeu</i>	M. Parély	Countess
Jo	<i>Fric-frac</i>	M. Simon	petty criminal
Loulou	<i>Fric-frac</i>	Arletty	petty criminal
Madame	<i>Circonstances atténuantes</i>	S. Dantès	unknown
Marceau	<i>La Règle du jeu</i>	J. Carette	servant
Marcel	<i>Fric-frac</i>	Fernandel	jeweller's assistant
Marie	<i>Circonstances atténuantes</i>	Arletty	prostitute
Mercandieu	<i>Fric-frac</i>	M. Vallée	jeweller
Monsieur	<i>Circonstances atténuantes</i>	M. Simon	prosecutor
Octave	<i>La Règle du jeu</i>	J. Renoir	unsuccessful artist
Pierre	<i>Hôtel du Nord</i>	J.-P. Aumont	artist
Raymonde	<i>Hôtel du Nord</i>	Arletty	prostitute
Renée	<i>Hôtel du Nord</i>	Annabella	hotel maid
Renée	<i>Fric-frac</i>	H. Robert	bank clerk
Robert	<i>La Règle du jeu</i>	M. Dalio	Marquis
Valentin	<i>Le Jour se lève</i>	J. Berry	animal trainer

Table 1. Classification of characters by profession

4. Methods

The following results are based on my auditory perception of schwa-deletion. Each statistical exercise poses technical problems and is open to criticism. Due to auditory difficulties, my findings are prone to unwitting errors of interpretation (Blanche-Benveniste and Jeanjean 1987). There is always a risk that the analyst may misunderstand or mishear a particular phoneme. The deletion of schwa is often so difficult to perceive than even

after hearing the tapes several times one cannot be absolutely certain that one's perception is 100% correct. Instrumental techniques could have been conducted in a phonetic lab or using computer software,² but the poor quality of some of my recordings makes “a phonetically trained ear” (Milroy 1987) more reliable than transcriptions made using voice recognition or other technical instruments.

5. Schwa-deletion

Variable deletion of schwa in French is a complex topic which has been investigated in depth, though the problems raised have not yet been completely resolved. There is some uncertainty about the phonetic nature of schwa. In the 70s, the quality of the /ə/ vowel was investigated. Dausès (1973) and Walter (1977) showed that Parisian teenagers tended to pronounce the mute -e as /ø/ or /œ/. Sequences like “ample rang” and “en pleurant” or “elle se le demande” and “elle seule demande” were pronounced identically by the informants investigated. Price gives [ə] full phonemic status, but argues that “there is a case for considering that it is not in fact a phoneme but merely an allophone of /ø/ or /œ/” (1971: 25).

Most works are concerned with the question of the retention and elision of schwa. Schwa-deletion is in some contexts categorical and in others variable. My concern here will be with variable deletion of schwa. Tranel (1987: 88–89) distinguishes three potential sites for schwa in French:

- (1) Final schwas at the end of polysyllables:
e.g. “chemises”, “parlent”, “table”
- (2) Initial schwas in the first syllables of words:
e.g. “fenêtre”, “chemise”, “petit”

The nine monosyllabic words “je,” “me,” “te,” “se,” “ce,” “le,” “ne,” “de,” and “que” also belong to this category.

² J. Durand's international project entitled “La phonologie du français contemporain: usages, variétés et structure” used a software called “comparateur” in his quantification of schwa-deletion (see <http://www.univ-tlse2.fr/pfc/compar.htm>).

(3) Internal schwas in the middle syllables of words:

e.g. “vendredi”, “fixement”

- In standard French, final schwas are not generally pronounced except in special cases.
- Deletion is variable for initial schwas: e.g. “s(e)rais”, “f(e)nêtre”, “j(e) l(e) vois”, “p(e)tit”
- Deletion is categorical for internal schwas when the schwa follows a single pronounced consonant as in “samedi” /samdi/, “grandement” /grãdmã/, “phonétiquement” /fõnetikmã . / When schwas are preceded by more than one consonant, the schwa is retained according to “la loi des trois consonnes”: e.g. “brusquement”, “vendredi”

Gadet notices that the dropping of schwa is “le trait le plus fréquemment souligné de l’usage populaire” (1992: 37). She then adds that the tendency is for non-standard speakers throughout France to “maintenir les impairs et faire chuter les pairs” (ibid.) and for standard French speakers to do the reverse:

Non-standard

e.g. “tu peux te l(e)ver”

“je m(e) le d(e)mande”

Standard

e.g. “tu peux t(e) lever”

“j(e) me l(e) demande”

In continuation of this observation, Gadet adds that schwa is generally retained in contexts such as CəC_C: e.g. “je n’fais”, according to the *Loi des trois consonnes*, except for sequences of the type “qu’est-ce que c’est” and “quelque chose” pronounced [kɛskse] and [kɛlk ʒoz].

In the 1930s, schwa-deletion was a social marker. Documents of that period are scarce. Songs by musical-hall singers are amongst the rare audio testimony one has of that period. Although like films they are “artificial” data, they still inform us on the phonetic features characteristic of Parisian vernacular. Texts of Aristide Bruant’s songs give us indications of the recurrence of schwa-deletion in Parisian vernacular speech:

Malgré que j'soye un roturier
 Le dernier des fils d'un Poirier
 D'la rue Berthe,
 Depuis les temps les plus anciens
 Nous habitons, moi-z-et les mains
 A Montmerte.
 L'an mil-huit-cent-soixante et dix
 Mon papa qui adorait l'trois six et la verte
 ("A Montmartre" in Antoine and Martin 1999: 309)

Maurice Chevalier's song titles also give numerous examples of schwa-deletion ("Moi, j'fais mes coups en dessous", "Un p'tit américain", "Y'a d'la joie"), which show how common this phenomenon was in Parisian low-status French.

While the studies conducted in the 50s and 70s (Malécot 1955, Peretz-Juillard 1977) on Parisian speech had shown that young speakers would often delete schwas in all phonetic contexts investigated, Hansen notices at the time of her survey that mute -e tended to become stabilised between two consonants (1994: 46). In a more recent study (1997), she observes the tendency in educated Parisian speech, especially among females aged 20-25, for "schwa-tagging", in other words to use a pre-pausal schwa in word-final position:

e.g. "c'était Pierre" [setɛ pjɛrə] (see Armstrong and Unsworth 1999: 135).

For Léon, the "intrusive schwa" is characteristic of "une parlure, chic, moderne, jeune" (Léon 1987: 112). It is sometimes seen as a phatic feature which conveys the same function as filled pauses of the type "euh", "bon" and "ben." Hansen (1997) finds it is associated with certain intonation patterns and suggests that it is quite closely connected to discourse (see Fónagy 1989: 244; Armstrong 1993: 75).

In Northern French, on the whole, "schwa is deleted at higher rates in informal (...) French" (Armstrong and Unsworth 1999: 132). In Southern French, schwa-deletion is much less widespread than in the North and has been studied to establish social and gender differentiation (Diller 1978, Taylor 1996, Armstrong and Unsworth, 1999: 132), higher schwa-deletion rates being observed in the informal speech of upper groups and younger female informants who tend towards the prestige of the Northern norm (Armstrong and Unsworth 1999: 132).

5.1 Analysis of schwa-dropping in a representative extract from *La Règle du jeu*

In the first instance, I will quantify the deletion of variable schwa per speaker in a small section of *La Règle du jeu*. My intention is to establish whether the deletion of schwa correlates with social groups. I will essentially be concerned with the deletion of initial schwas in order to observe whether lower-group speakers in the films drop the “impairs”:

e.g. “chemise”, “je ne veux pas”

Analysing schwa-deletion in every context is time-consuming, not to say impossible, and my general impression in previous studies I conducted was that the various contexts were not very different. To make this study feasible, I have limited it to schwa-deletion of initial schwas which I consider representative of the film corpus. Jacques Durand deems that “initial schwas are certainly a factor that will differentiate varieties and varieties within varieties” (personal communication: 2003). Certain types of undeletable schwas have been excluded from my quantification for example in “serions”, “le onze” etc (see contexts in Hansen 1994: 26–27). Armstrong and Unsworth (1999) adopt the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Actual deletions} \times 100}{\text{Potential sites for inclusion}}$$

The following tables indicate schwa-deletions rate (%) and number of *tokens* (N). I will in this study calculate the percentage of retention immediately on the basis of the percentage of deletion (e.g. 30% deletion = 70% retention). I will not consider all the sites where deletion could potentially occur, but focus on the first thirty occurrences of schwa-retention or deletion per speaker. As suggested by L. Milroy (1987: 134–136), thirty *tokens* per speaker is a statistically significant sample.

The extract I am using first of all to illustrate the dropping of mute “e” in my corpus of films is a dialogue between Marceau, the proletarian speaker, Schumacher, the gamekeeper and Robert de La Chesnaye, the upper-group speaker. I am here counting all instances of retention and deletion of initial schwas per speaker in this given passage.

	actual deletion
Robert	14%
Marceau	43%
Schumacher	29%

Table 2. Schwa-dropping in an extract of *La Règle du jeu*

Marceau is the speaker who deletes schwas most in initial positions (e.g. “un p’tit lapin,” “alors j’m’occupe,” “j’dis pas non,” j’n’peux pas,” j’vous remercie,” j’aurais dû l’voir”). This statistical exercise bears only upon a small section of *La Règle du jeu*, but it indicates that in this film at least schwa-dropping is used to build up a picture of linguistic differences between the upper group of characters and the lower group.

5.2 Analysis of schwa-dropping in each film

The purpose of the statistics which follow is to compare variable schwa-deletion rates in the lower and upper groups in each film. I will here count the first thirty occurrences of schwa-retention or deletion per speaker in initial position. The percentage indicated in column 1 is the percentage of deletion of variable schwas in this linguistic context.

Film 1: *Fric-frac*

	actual deletion
Renée	23%
Marcel	20%
Loulou	23%
Jo	33%

Table 3. Schwa-dropping in *Fric-frac*

There are no clear differences between the two groups except for Jo. Statistically, Jo obtains the highest rate of schwa-dropping with 33%. This is significant in that Jo is supposed to be a particularly low-class male.

Although this study is confined to the deletion of variable schwa, one can pinpoint, as Carton noted, that the use of “schwa-tagging”, at the end of word finals, is a salient feature of the vernacular of *Fric-Frac*: “le ton traînant ‘faubourien’ allonge les *e* [in word-final position] qui ont la même durée que les voyelles accentuées (18 à 29 cs)” (Carton 1999: 36):

e.g. “Marcel-e?”, “sur la tron-che”, “chuis d’Barbès-e” (ibid.).

Out of eighteen occurrences of “Marcel” in Loulou’s speech, twelve show the intrusion of a “parasitic mute -e” (Armstrong 1993: 112) in pre-pausal position which gives extra emphasis.

Film 2: *Circonstances atténuantes*

	actual deletion
Monsieur	0%
Madame	3%
Marie	50%
Bouic	57%

Table 4. Schwa-dropping in *Circonstances atténuantes*

There are clear differences between the two groups. Schwa-deletion is insignificant in the upper-group speech.

Film 3: *Le Jour se lève*

	actual deletion
Valentin	47%
Clara	57%
Françoise	67%
François	80%

Table 5. Schwa-dropping in *Le Jour se lève*

There are discernible differences between the lower and upper groups. Lower-class speakers tend to delete schwas more frequently.

Film 4: *La Règle du jeu*

	actual deletion
Geneviève	7%
Robert	13%
Octave	67%
Marceau	40%

Table 6. Schwa-dropping in *La Règle du jeu*

There are discernible differences between the two groups. The upper group rarely deletes schwas. Octave, the floater of *La Règle du jeu*, has the highest percentage of schwa-deletion. Marceau's deletion rate is lower than Octave's. Marceau's figure can be explained by his desire to accommodate with the upper-group usage as the film unravels, due to his position as a servant. Schwa-deletion particularly affects the pronoun "te" in both the lower and the upper group:

e.g. "Allez, viens t'coucher"

"Alors, si tu veux t'tuer pour Christine, ben tue-toi, mais tout seul"

"T'as une façon de t'jeter au cou des gens!..." (Octave in *La Règle du jeu*).

Film 5: *Hôtel du Nord*

	actual deletion
Renée	0%
Pierre	3%
Raymonde	43%
Edmond	17%

Table 7. Schwa-dropping in *Hôtel du Nord*

The preceding results parallel those of *Circonstances atténuantes*. There are significant differences between the upper and lower groups: Pierre's percentage of schwa-deletion reaches 3%, while Raymonde's amounts to nearly 43%.

5.3 Schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal "je"

5.3.1 General deletion rate of schwa in "je"

In the following statistics, the elided "je"s have been divided into three linguistic environments:

- 1) **J'** + Consonant + Vowel (e.g. "J'le", "J'te"; "J'ne")
- 2) **J'** + C + V + C (e.g. "J'monte")
- 3) **J'** + C + C + V (e.g. "J'n'm'en...")

To begin with, I counted all instances of non-elisions and elisions of “je” + C. I included in my percentages of non-elision all realisations of “je sais pas” and “je suis” as [ʃεpa] and [ʃui].

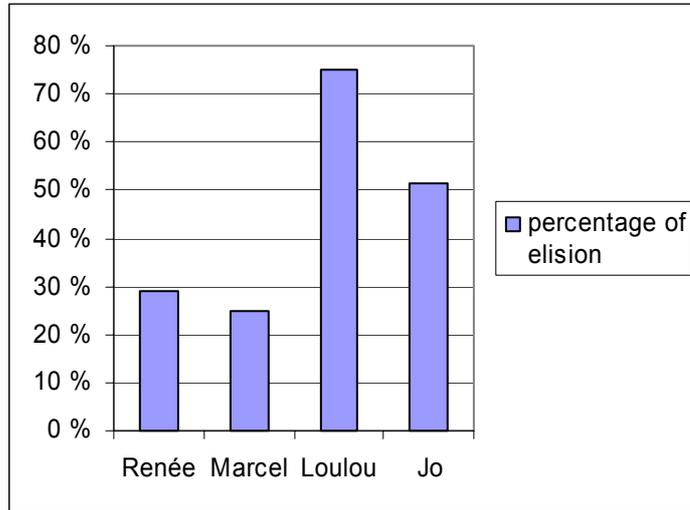


Figure 1. Proportion of schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *Fric-frac*

Film 1: *Fric-frac*

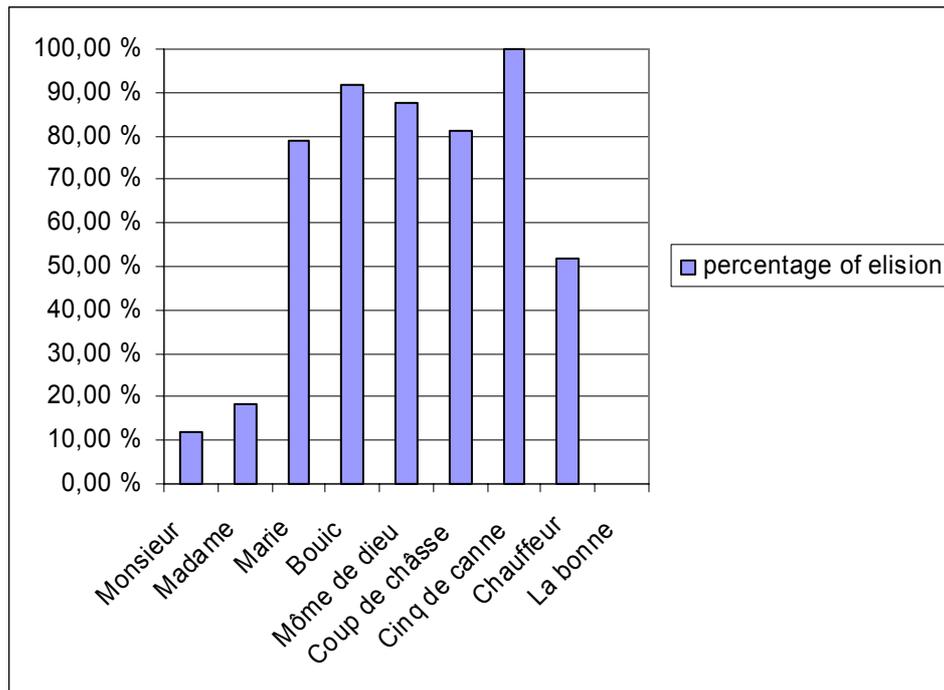
	percentage of elision
Renée	29%
Marcel	25%
Loulou	75%
Jo	51.2%

Table 8. Schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *Fric-frac*

The results give a high percentage of “je” elision in Loulou and Jo’s speech. Reduction of “je” into “j’ ” is regarded by the script-writer of *Fric-frac* as a particularly lower-group feature. This feature is also present in the upper-group speech, but at a much lower rate.

Film 2: *Circonstances atténuantes*

	percentage of elision
Monsieur	11.7%
Madame	18.5%
Marie	79.1%
Bouic	91.6%
Même de dieu	87.5%
Coup de chasse	81.25%
Cinq de canne	100%
Chauffeur	51.7%
La bonne	0%

Table 9. Schwa-deletion in *Circonstances atténuantes*Figure 2. Proportion of schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *Circonstances atténuantes*

As it appears very clearly on this figure, the form “je” with a schwa is most frequently maintained in the speech of the upper group. There are rare instances of elision by Monsieur and Madame, when they interact with the lower-group speakers, perhaps reflecting a desire on their part to

accommodate linguistically to the proletarian community. The reduction of “je” into “j’ ” is a feature even eschewed by La Bonne, although, with two *tokens*, her result is not statistically significant. Apart from her, the lower-group informants almost systematically elide the first-person pronoun.

Film 3: *Le Jour se lève*

	percentage of elision
Valentin	68%
Clara	85%
Françoise	67%
François	83%

Table 10. Schwa-deletion in *Le Jour se lève*

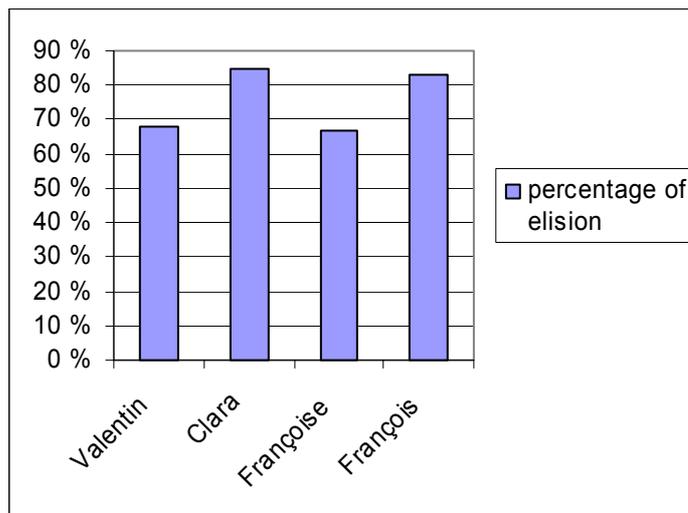


Figure 3. Proportion of schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *Le Jour se lève*

In this film, schwa-deletion in “je” does not show clear social group correlation. Clara and François obtain, however, the highest rate of deletion.

Film 4: *La Règle du jeu*

	percentage of elision
Geneviève	43%
Robert	27.2%
Octave	78%
Marceau	84%

Table 11. Schwa-deletion in *La Règle du jeu*

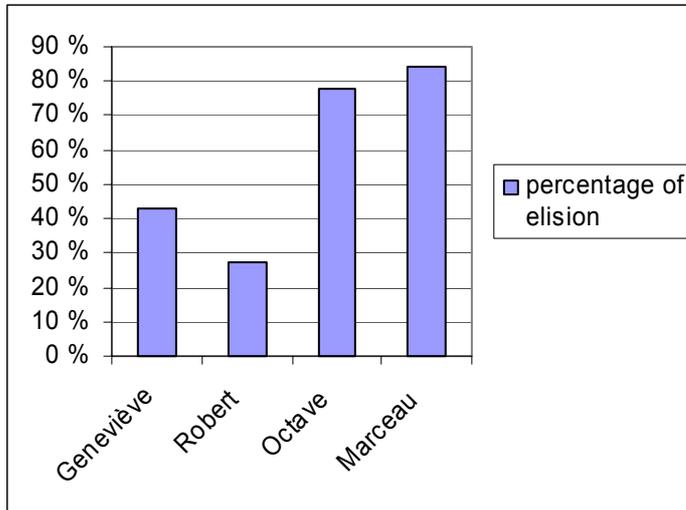
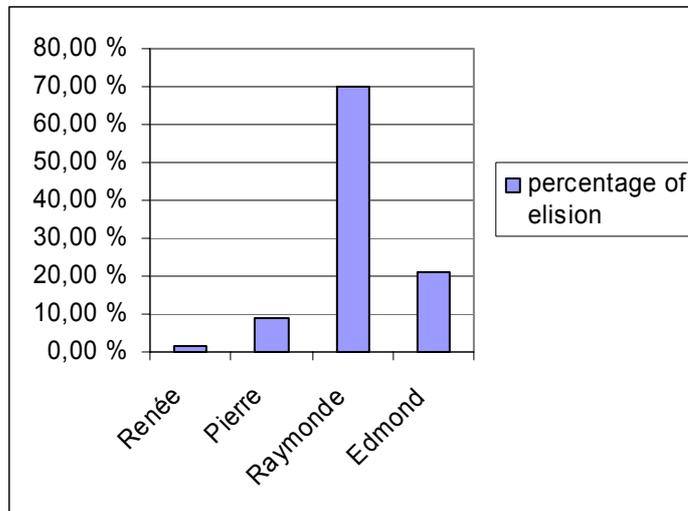


Figure 4. Proportion of schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *La Règle du jeu*

The results given in Table 11 confirm the impression drawn from the other films that the non-standard elision of “je” in front of a single consonant is most frequent. Marceau, the lower-group character, obtains the most significant result. Octave’s high score does not weaken the social group correlation, but confirms his position as a floater who moves in the direction of lower-group features. The data show that the elision of “je” is a social feature.

Film 5: *Hôtel du Nord*

	percentage of elision
Renée	1.5%
Pierre	9%
Raymonde	70%
Edmond	21%

Table 12. Schwa-deletion in *Hôtel du Nord*Figure 5. Proportion of schwa-deletion in pre-consonantal “je” in *Hôtel du Nord*

There are clear differences between the upper and lower-group characters. Raymonde has the highest score. The variant is not absent from the upper-group speech, but it is rare. With 21% of elision, Edmond fluctuates between the two social groups with a preference for the standard form.

5.3.2 Contexts of schwa-deletion in “je”

The following statistical exercise shown in Table 13 intends to establish, for each of the characters in the five films, in which phonetic contexts the dropping of [ə] in “je” mostly occurs.

The first pattern (**J'** + C + V) consists of the elision of “je”, in front of clitic pronouns or monosyllabic verbs (e.g. “j’te connais”, j’sais”). Pattern number 2 (**J'** + C + V + C) gives instances of elision in “je” in front of polysyllabic words (e.g. “j’connais”). The last pattern (**J'** + C + C + V)

targets elisions that produced a clash of three consonants (e.g. *j'n'sais pas*). Armstrong distinguishes likewise, in his study of the Dieuze data, “post-pausal mute *e* in monosyllabic and in polysyllabic words” (1993: 87–89).

	J' + C + V	J' + C + V + C	J' +C + C+ V
Upper group	82%	18%	0%
Lower group	73.4%	26%	0.60%

Table 13. Percentages of schwa-deletion in “je” in three different contexts

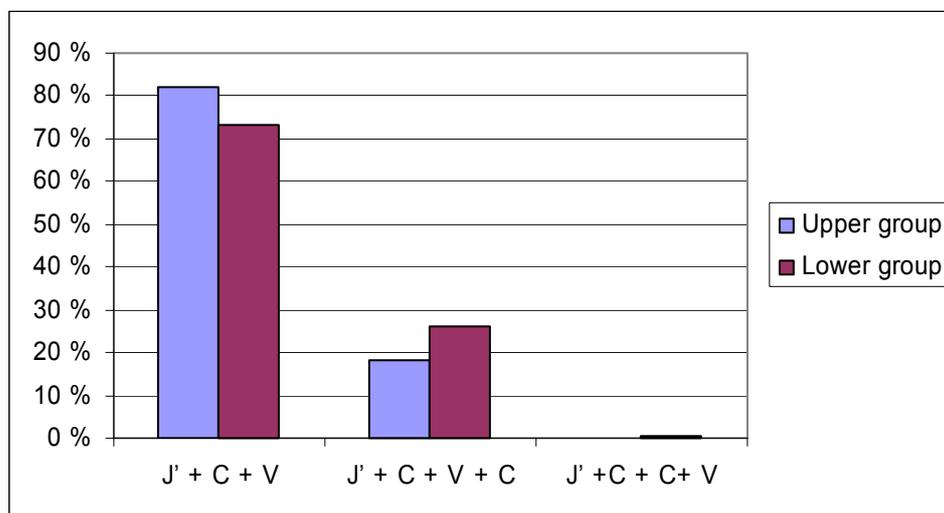


Figure 6. Schwa-deletion in “je” for the lower and upper groups in three different contexts

1) It is noticeable that “je” is mostly elided in front of a consonant that is immediately followed by a vowel, where there is no risk of a clash of three consonants. Upper and lower-group speakers behave in rather similar ways. The tables show that “je” is most frequently elided before clitic pronouns in the first phonetic context. All the characters that have been studied follow the same pattern, whatever their social group. I did not observe any clear social correlation in their treatment of schwa-deletion in this environment. The tendency in the film corpus is for both groups to drop “les impairs”:

- e.g. “j’me demande” (*Fric-frac*)
- “j’t e d’mande pardon” (*Fric-frac*)
- “j’me rappelle” (*Circonstances atténuantes*)
- “j’me rattraperai” (*Circonstances atténuantes*)
- “j’me serais” (*Le Jour se lève*)

2) The middle pattern (J' + C + V + C) is where I find the most social differences. On the whole, the lower-group speakers use more elisions than the upper-group speakers in this phonetic context.

e.g. “J’reconnais que c’était pas des choses à faire” (*Fric-frac*)
 “Vous permettez, que j’y réponde? ...” (*Fric-frac*)
 “Ah, bah j’y préfère ça pour ma dignité.” (*Circonstances atténuantes*)
 “J’potasse l’anglais.” (*Le Jour se lève*)

3) There is a very small proportion of elision in front of two consonants (J' + C + C + V) in both the upper group (Robert) and the lower groups (Marceau, Raymonde, Edmond): this phenomenon is extremely rare:

e.g. “j’n’m’en consolerais pas” (*La Règle du jeu*)
 “j’n’peux pas” (*La Règle du jeu*)
 “j’n’l’aime pas” (*La Règle du jeu*)
 “j’s’rais jamais” (*Hôtel du Nord*)

6. Conclusion

In this analysis, I have made a phonetic analysis of 1930s Parisian speech, as it is represented in French cinema. I make no strong claims about the representativity of the data. French dialogues give us an indication of the treatment actors made of schwa in that period.

Schwa-dropping is a salient variant of the lower-group speakers, although it is not completely absent from the upper-group speech. In most of the films studied, the percentage of variable schwa-deletion is two to three times greater in the lower-group speech than in that of the educated speakers. The script-writers and actors of the films saw this feature as characteristic of uneducated speech. In this corpus, schwa is normally elided in monosyllabic words followed by a fricative or a plosive (e.g. “pour qui qu’vous”, “j’yous”, “qu’est-ce qui s’passe”). Schwa is likewise deleted in initial position before an obstruent or a nasal (e.g. “r’pique”, “r’viendrez”, “d’avant”, “p’tit”, “tout d’même”). Schwa-tagging is only found in *Fric-frac* as a sociolinguistic marker of lower-group speakers.

The results demonstrate a clear correlation between schwa-deletion with “je” and social group membership. The tendency is for both lower and upper-group to delete schwas in front of monosyllabic verbs and clitics. However, the statistics indicate a higher proportion of schwa-deletion in

front of polysyllabic verbs in the lower-group speech. The fusion of the subject pronoun (“j’me”, “j’tu”, “j’le”) is clearly a feature of informal speech, while the fusion of the subject pronoun with a polysyllabic verb which creates a long word cluster is more of a social marker.

If in 1930s French films, schwa-deletion was clearly social, today, schwa-deletion is geographical. There is a North-South divide with regards to schwas. Schwa-deletion is not a significant marker in Northern French, but it is more widely spread than in Southern French. However, this is a dynamic feature, with young women more and more complying with the Northern norm. To investigate whether it is a stylistic or social marker, one would need to examine these features on a larger scale. On a larger corpus, auditory techniques should be accompanied with instrumental techniques.

Appendix: Data extract

Hôtel du Nord (1938)

Raymonde: Arletty, Edmond: Louis Jouvet

- Raymonde: Coquard mis à part t’es plutôt beau mec. Par terre on se dispute, mais au lit on s’explique. Et sur l’oreiller on se comprend. Alors?
- Edmond: Alors rien. J’en ai assez tu saisis? Je m’asphyxie. Tu saisis, je m’asphyxie.
- Raymonde: A Toulon y’a de l’air puisqu’il y a la mer, tu respireras mieux!
- Edmond: Partout où on ira ça sentira le pourri.
- Raymonde: Allons à l’étranger, aux colonies.
- Edmond: Avec toi?
- Raymonde: C’t’idée!
- Edmond: Alors ça sera partout pareil. J’ai besoin de changer d’atmosphère et mon atmosphère c’est toi.
- Raymonde: C’est la première fois qu’on me traite d’atmosphère. Si j’suis une atmosphère t’es un drôle de bled! Ah là là, des types qui sont du milieu sans en être et qui crânent à cause de ce qu’ils ont été, on devrait les vider! Atmosphère, atmosphère, est-ce que j’ai une gueule d’atmosphère? Puisque c’est ça vas-y tout seul à la Varenne! Bonne pêche et bonne atmosphère!

Fric-Frac (1939)*Jo: Michel Simon, Marcel: Fernandel, Loulou: Arletty*

- Jo: Merci.
 Marcel: A la vôtre Mademoiselle, euh ...
 Loulou: Loulou.
 Marcel: Loulou. Oh oh, c'est un joli nom ça. Moi c'est Marcel.
 Loulou: Ah oui?
 Jo: Et à la vôtre!
 Loulou: T'as gagné?
 Jo: Un ... Deux.
 Loulou: Oh, tu vas pas nous compter toute la soirée devant le blair. C'est pas marrant.
 Jo: Si je compte pas à haute voix je m'embrouille moi. Je vais pas rester toute la soirée ici. J'ai rendez-vous avec Petit Louis. Trois.
 Loulou: A cause?
 Jo: Pour une affaire.
 Loulou: Qu'est-ce que c'est?
 Jo: Un cassement.
 Loulou: Où ça?
 Jo: Je vais pas te bonir ça devant un étranger.
 Jo: Quat'... non quat' ou cinq? Bon, je sais plus ou j'en suis maintenant.
 Marcel: J'ai du mal à comprendre ce qu'il dit. Il est français?
 Loulou: Pur sang de la Villette. Moi je suis de Barbès.
 Marcel: Ah, tout ça c'est de l'argot.
 Loulou: Vous avez mis le doigt dessus. L'oseille c'est le fric. Se faire la paire c'est se débiter. Casser les pieds c'est emmouscailler. Bonir un truc c'est jacter.
 Marcel: Jacter?
 Loulou: Causer quoi!

Circonstances Atténuantes (1939)*Bouic: Dorville, Monsieur: Michel Simon, Madame: Suzanne Dantès*

- Bouic: Ah, dites donc, y m'reste pas grand-chose à manger à c't'heure-ci. J'vais toujours vous faire une petite omelette.
 Mme: Les œufs vous sont défendus.
 Bouic: Oh, pas les miens. Des œufs du jour. Des poules nourries avec du blé. Ah. Ils sont recommandés aux malades, mes cocards, oui madame. Alors voilà: nous disons une omelette baveuse pour deux. Et puis j'ai un p'tit restant de lapin, j'vais vous l'faire réchauffer.
 M.: C'est-à-dire le lapin nous fait mal.

Bouic: Ah le lapin de Paris, moi aussi, le lapin d'chou, qu'a l'goût d'Colombin. Ah, ah. Pas l'mien! Et comme boisson?

Mme: De l'eau minérale.

Bouic: De l'eau minérale? Mais j'vends pas d'flotte, moi. D'abord c'est plus cher que l'vin. Et puis l'eau, en bouteille surtout, mon médecin me l'a défendue, moi. Il m'a dit que c'étaient des eaux mortes, tout ce qu'il y a de malsain. Mais, en revanche j'ai un p'tit beaujolais...mine de rien...mais qui vous a tout de même trente ans de prison! Et une beaujolais une!

Le Jour se lève (1939)

Clara: Arletty, François: Jean Gabin

Clara: La vache! Ah, les femmes sont bien folles et moi j'suis la reine. Faut avouer qu'il faut avoir d'l'eau dans le gaz et des papillons dans le compteur pour être restée trois ans avec un type pareil.

François: Vous êtes bien gentille, mais quand vous aurez fini de faire le ménage, vous m'le direz.

Clara: Le ménage?

François: Ben oui quoi, vous arrivez là, vous ouvrez votre tiroir, vous battez vos tapis. J'vous ai rien demandé. Vous me racontez tout vot' vie. Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que ça me foute.

Clara: Faut pas m'en vouloir. Si je vous ai parlé, c'est histoire de ne pas causer toute seule. Ce soir j'suis tellement heureuse. Vous pouvez pas savoir.

La Règle du jeu (1939)

Robert: Marcel Dalio Marceau: Julien Carette

Robert: Pas fort. Dis donc, Marceau, y'a pas des moments où tu voudrais être arabe?

Marceau: Ah ! Non, monsieur le Marquis, pourquoi faire?

Robert: A cause du harem !

Marceau: Ah ! ah ! oui !

Robert: Les musulmans sont les seuls qui aient fait montre d'un peu de logique dans cette fameuse question des rapports entre les femmes et les hommes.

Marceau: Ben !

Robert: Bah ! dans l'fond, ils sont bâtis comme nous !

Marceau: Ben voyons !

Robert: Y'en a toujours une qu'ils préfèrent.

Marceau: Oui...

- Robert: Mais ils ne se croient pas obligés à cause de c’la de flanquer les autres à la porte, ... et de leur faire de la peine.
- Marceau: Ben voyons !
- Robert: Moi, j’voudrais faire de peine à personne. Surtout pas aux femmes. Merci! C’est l’drame de ma vie.
- Marceau: Oui, mais pour ça, il faut avoir les moyens.
- Robert: Comment ? Mais même avec les moyens, j’finis par rendre tout l’monde malheureux: femme, maîtresse et moi-même... par-dessus l’marché !
- Marceau: Moi, monsieur le Marquis, les femmes.... que ça soit pour les avoir ou pour les quitter ou pour les garder, j’essaie d’abord de les faire rigoler. Quand une femme rigole, elle est désarmée, vous en faites c’que vous voulez !

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Lexically Selected Expletives: Evidence from Basque and Romance¹

Abstract

This paper argues for the existence of lexically selected expletives, i.e. semantically vacuous elements subcategorized for by a predicate. It draws primarily on evidence from weather expressions in Basque and Italian, but it also uses independent evidence from Spanish existential *haber* ‘there is/are’ and French *falloir* ‘be necessary’ structures. These constructions are problematic for an analysis based on either quasi-arguments (Chomsky 1981) or ‘traditional’ (i.e. non-subcategorized) dummies, but they are amenable to an account with lexically selected expletives. Besides offering a unified analysis of seemingly unrelated phenomena, the proposal developed here yields a parsimonious theory of expletives. Moreover, the account provides additional evidence for Postal and Pullum’s (1988) claim that dummies can appear in strictly subcategorized positions, challenging the traditional assumption that syntactic licensing is necessarily concomitant with semantic role assignment.

1. Introduction and overview

Expletives have long been at the center of some the most important debates concerning the syntax/semantics interface, including the need for a putatively universal subject stipulation (i.e. the EPP or its equivalent in other frameworks), the legitimacy of movement to subcategorized positions (e.g. raising to object), and the relationship between syntactic subcategorization and theta-role assignment.

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Current syntactic theory has qualified the traditional view of expletives as non-referential, semantically vacuous elements in several respects. First, some recent analyses (particularly within Minimalism) have claimed that expletives may have featural content. For example, in some proposals dummy *it* has both case and person/number/gender features, whereas pleonastic *there* only carries case features (e.g. Chomsky 1995, Groat 1995; cf. Bennis's 1986 view of both dummies as full arguments). Second, a variety of accounts within different theoretical traditions have claimed that expletives can be associated with thematic arguments via chain formation. For example, in impersonal constructions like *there arrived three men* the dummy has been traditionally analyzed as forming a chain with the postverbal nominal (e.g. Chomsky 1981, 1986, 1995, Perlmutter 1983, Burzio 1986, Rizzi 1986, Postal and Pullum 1988, Authier 1991, Haider 1991, Lasnik 1992, 1995, Dubinsky and Nzwanga 1996, Groat 1995, Rothstein 1995, Svenonius 2002; but see, among others, Alsina 1996, Stroik 1996 and Chomsky 2000 for alternative proposals). Third, some recent (Minimalist) accounts have claimed that expletives such as English *it* or *there* formally denote a null element (Rothstein 1995) or "an interpretable instruction to do nothing" (Groat 1995), so that they actually have a semantic interpretation at LF. Despite these qualifications, however, the cross-theoretical consensus is that expletives do not occur in theta-marked positions.

Another traditional assumption about expletives is that, since they lack thematic content, they do not satisfy the selectional requirements of any predicate. Their presence in syntactic structure only contributes to the organization of old and new information in the sentence (Bennis 1986) and/or satisfies some structural requirement, most notably the need for every clause or syntactic predicate to have a subject (e.g. Chomsky 1981, 1995, 2000, Perlmutter 1983, Burzio 1986, Rizzi 1986, Groat 1995, Lasnik 1995, Rothstein 1995, Alsina 1996, Svenonius 2002, Hazout 2004). The claim that expletives cannot occur in lexically-projected positions follows from a more basic assumption of contemporary syntactic theory, i.e. that syntactic subcategorization necessarily entails theta-role assignment, so that syntactic licensing is entirely predictable on the basis of (semantic) argument structure.

One of the few studies to challenge this assumption is Postal and Pullum (1988). Working within GB, Postal and Pullum argue that certain English structures involve expletives in subcategorized syntactic positions. These structures include clausal extrapositions from direct object position

(1), prevention complements with *from* + *gerund* (2), extraposition of infinitival VPs across matrix clause dependents (3), certain objects of prepositions (4), extraposed irrealis clauses (5), and idioms such as (6), where the pleonastic does not form a chain with any argument (examples from Postal and Pullum 1988: 643, 645, 646, 648, 649, 651). According to Postal and Pullum, the expletive in (1)–(6) is not the subject of an embedded clause. Instead, it appears in a non-thematic object position projected by the main verb. As they note, the fact that expletives can occur in strictly subcategorized positions invalidates Chomsky's (1981) Projection Principle, whereby every position strictly subcategorized by a lexical head is theta-marked by that head.

- (1) *They never mentioned **it** to the candidate that there will be an appeal.*
- (2) *They kept **it** from becoming too obvious that she was pregnant.*
- (3) *I figured **it** out to be more than 300 miles from there to Tulsa.*
- (4) *You may depend upon **it** that we won't abandon him.*
- (5) *I would prefer **it** if Kim were not informed.*
- (6) *to buy **it** (= to be deceived)*

Building upon Postal and Pullum's proposal, Authier (1991) also analyzes the expletives in (1)–(6) as occurring in subcategorized object position. In his view, the dummies appear in positions projected by verbs that assign accusative case, but not a theta-role, to their object. This analysis, Authier claims, requires only a minor modification of the Projection Principle: allowing both theta-role assignment *and* case assignment to project syntactic positions.

The notion of expletives in subcategorized syntactic positions has been rejected in more recent generative accounts, particularly within Minimalism. The consensus appears to be that Postal and Pullum's examples can be reanalyzed in such a way as to preserve standard views on expletives and lexical selection. For example, cases like (2) and (3) have been claimed to involve expletives licensed as subjects of non-theta-assigning predicates within the clausal complements of ECM verbs, rather than as main clause objects. On the other hand, those cases where the pronoun is not the subject of an embedded predicate have been claimed to involve ordinary theta-marked pronouns, rather than expletives. For instance, in (6) the pronoun would have an unspecified referent (*buy **it** = buy **the story***), whereas in (1) and (5) our 'regular' pronoun would either be anaphoric to the extraposed CP or denote a specific event prominent in the discourse and identified explicitly by the clausal complement (for details,

see Rothstein 1995, Kiss 2002, Holmberg and Nikanne 2002, and Svenonius 2002, among others).

According to Rothstein (1995), this reanalysis allows us to preserve the generalization that expletives occur only in subject position, where *subject* is defined as the subject of a syntactic predicate, not as the subject of a clause. In her proposal, a predicate is a primitive defined in terms of syntactic projections of heads (including VPs, APs, PPs and NPs used predicationally), not in terms of the theta-roles assigned by those heads. For example, in *I consider it [obvious that you should have done that]*, pleonastic *it* is the subject of the bracketed adjectival phrase, which is a syntactic predicate. The object position where the expletive is realized is not projected by the matrix verb. Instead, it is projected to satisfy the Predication Condition, the requirement that all predicates must have subjects. Expletives, then, can only be licensed as subjects because subject position is projected syntactically and not thematically, so it must be filled even when it has no semantic relevance. Rothstein's Predication Condition has been widely adopted in recent Minimalist accounts. However, her analysis of object expletives has also been critiqued on both empirical and theory-internal grounds (see Stroik 1996 for details).

My goal here is to argue for the existence of lexically selected expletives. The evidence includes weather expressions in Italian (7) and Basque (8), French *falloir* 'be necessary' constructions (9), and a subset of existential *haber* 'there is/are' structures in Spanish (10)—all of which are natural and typical in the respective languages. As we will see below, (7)–(10) involve a dummy realized as an empty category in Spanish, Basque and Italian, and as an overt pronominal (*il* 'it') in French.²

(7) *Piove (acqua sporca)*
rains water dirty
'It's raining (dirty water).'

(8) *Atzo hotz handi-a egin zuen.*
yesterday cold big-det-abs(Ø) do have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)
'Yesterday it was very cold.'

² Some of the arguments developed in this paper appear in my doctoral dissertation (Alba-Salas 2002), where I briefly discuss the notion of lexically selected expletives using light *fare* 'do' in Italian and French *falloir* 'be necessary' expressions.

- (9) *Il faut des techniciens.*
 it is-needed some technicians
 ‘We need some technicians.’
- (10) *Había libros en cantidad.*³
 there-was books in amount
 ‘There were lots of books.’

A key element in my argumentation, weather expressions like (7) and (8) have received only marginal attention in syntactic theory (cf. Chomsky 1981, Perlmutter 1983, Burzio 1986, Belletti and Rizzi 1988, Rosen 1988, Farrell 1994, Levin and Rappaport 1996, Holmberg and Nikanne 2002, Kiss 2002, Svenonius 2002; but see Ruwet 1989, 1991). This situation presumably stems from two assumptions: (i) that weather predicates do not license full arguments, and (ii), and more importantly, that syntactic licensing is necessarily concomitant with semantic role assignment. Here I question both assumptions by arguing that weather predicates can license not only full arguments (as in the case of Italian), but also expletives (as in Basque and Italian).

As is well known, the empty category in Italian weather expressions such as (7), like English weather-*it*, and unlike typical dummies, can serve as a controller, so it cannot be analyzed as a ‘traditional’ expletive (e.g. Burzio 1986, cf. Chomsky 1981). This situation has led linguists within GB/Minimalism to analyze weather dummies as quasi-arguments. Yet, as some critics have noted, the quasi-argument analysis is ad-hoc and complicates our theory of semantic role assignment by positing a special type of theta-role without any independent motivation (Postal and Pullum 1988, Ruwet 1989). Moreover, as we will see below, such an analysis does not explain why quasi-arguments in Italian pattern together with true arguments with respect to control, but not with respect to cliticization.

Basque weather expressions like (8) are also problematic for accounts based on either quasi-arguments or traditional (i.e. non-subcategorized) expletives. As I show below, (8) is a syntactically transitive construction

³ Note that in (10) the postverbal nominal does not trigger verb agreement. As I show in section 5, this example has a counterpart where the nominal does trigger verb agreement. The agreeing and the non-agreeing constructions differ from each other with respect to several key properties, including the presence of a lexically selected-expletive (see details below).

with an expletive subject and the weather nominal as the direct object. Among other limitations, a traditional analysis would have to stipulate the obligatory presence of either a dummy or a quasi-argument subject—an ad-hoc solution that is both empirically and conceptually inadequate.

Equally problematic are *falloir* expressions like (9) and *haber* constructions such as (10). As I show below, (9) and (10) pattern together with transitive, rather than with unergative or unaccusative, structures. The subject position is filled by a semantically vacuous element, and the postverbal nominal is an underlying direct object. Importantly, (9) and (10), unlike impersonal unaccusative structures, do not have counterparts where the underlying object appears in subject position. Apparently, unaccusative advancement (i.e. object-to-subject movement) of the postverbal nominal is blocked by the expletive subject. The two key, interrelated questions are, first, why this should be the case, and, second, what the exact nature of this dummy subject is. As I argue below, a quasi-argument analysis is ad-hoc and undermines the already suspicious notion of a quasi-argument by proliferating its semantic properties. An alternative account with a non-subcategorized expletive is also ad-hoc, since it must stipulate the obligatory presence of an expletive, missing the insight that the dummy's presence is contingent upon the lexical properties of *haber* and *falloir*.

According to my proposal, the four structures under consideration involve an expletive licensed by the valence of the corresponding predicates, rather than by general principles of grammar such as the EPP or Rothstein's Predication Condition. This proposal is empirically and conceptually adequate, it provides a unified account of seemingly unrelated phenomena, and it yields a coherent, parsimonious theory of expletives.

My account uses the framework of Relational Grammar (RG), but it also considers alternative proposals made within other theoretical frameworks, particularly GB and Minimalism. The discussion does not assume in-depth familiarity with RG, whose principles will be introduced as they become relevant to the argumentation.

The analysis developed here is not meant to argue for a particular framework over another. However, my choice of RG is motivated by several considerations. First, this framework provides a simple analysis using minimal, yet powerful, theoretical machinery. Second, RG emphasizes the autonomy of syntactic subcategorization from semantic role assignment. Third, the theory does not a priori exclude the notion of lexically selected expletives, since it has abandoned a strong version of the Universal Alignment Hypothesis imposing an obligatory one-to-one

mapping of semantic roles onto initial grammatical relations (cf. Rosen 1984). This situation contrasts with what we find, say, in GB and Minimalism, where principles such as the Theta Criterion and the Projection Principle conspire to exclude subcategorized expletives by ensuring that lexical selection necessarily entails semantic role assignment (but see Hazout 2004 for a recent Minimalist revision of the Theta Criterion). In this sense, my proposal reexamines an important assumption of generative syntax by exploring a theoretical possibility that has not yet been pursued in the RG literature.

In what follows, section 2 discusses weather verbs in Italian, section 3 examines weather expressions in Basque, section 4 considers French *falloir* constructions, section 5 deals with Spanish existentials, and section 6 raises the possibility that lexically selected expletives are also found in English and German. Finally, section 7 sketches a new theory of expletives incorporating the notion of lexically selected expletives.

2. Weather verbs in Italian

The first source of evidence for lexically selected expletives involves weather verbs in Italian, e.g. *piovere* ‘rain’, *nevicare* ‘snow’ and *tuonare* ‘thunder’. In what follows I argue that, contrary to what is often assumed, these verbs can license full arguments and (phonologically null) expletives. First I consider the empirical properties of *piovere*-type verbs, next I show the limitations of previous analyses, and finally I propose an alternative account using lexically selected expletives.

2.1 Empirical properties of Italian weather verbs

As is well known, Italian weather verbs can be auxiliated with *essere* ‘be’ or *avere* ‘have’ (e.g. Perlmutter 1983, Burzio 1986, Rosen 1988). This is illustrated in (11) using *piovere* ‘rain’.⁴

⁴ According to Farrell (1994: 97), when weather verbs are auxiliated with *avere*, they tend to indicate activities and thus are compatible with temporal complements headed by *per* ‘for’, e.g. *ieri ha nevicato per un’ora* ‘yesterday it snowed for an hour’. By contrast, when they are auxiliated with *essere*, they usually express achievements, so they tend to reject *per* phrases, e.g. *ieri è nevicato (*per un’ora)* ‘yesterday it snowed (for an hour)’. However, not all native speakers share these judgments. In fact, some of my informants uniformly accept *per* phrases with *essere*, and they seem to make no aspectual distinction that correlates with auxiliary selection. Although the existence of

- (11) *Ha/è piovuto.*
has/israined
'It rained.'

Similar to what Chomsky (1981) first noted with respect to English weather-*it*, the null subject of *piovere*-type verbs can control the empty subject of an embedded infinitival (12). In this respect, the subject of *piovere* patterns together with the null argument in (13) (*pro*), and differently from expletives such as those found in raising constructions (14).

- (12) [*e_i*] *piove sempre dopo* [[*e_i*] *avere/essere nevicato*].
rains always after to-have/to-be snowed
'It always rains after snowing.'
- (13) *Il canarino? [pro]_i canta sempre dopo* [[*e_i*] *aver mangiato*].
the canary sings always after to-have eaten
'The canary? It always sings after eating.'
- (14) *[[*e_i*] *sembra sempre che Eva canti dopo* [[*e_i*] *avere/essere sembrato*
seems always that Eva sings after to-have/to-be seemed
che balli].
that dances
lit. 'It always seems that Eva sings after seeming that she dances.'

A third, less well-known property of Italian weather is that they can license overt nominals, both with a literal and figurative meaning (15) (Perlmutter 1983, cf. Svenonius 2002 for English). This pattern is entirely productive.

- (15) (a) *Sono piovuti sassi.*
are rained stones
'It rained hailstones.'
- (b) *Sono grandinate bombe e proiettili tutt'intorno a noi.*
are hailed bombs and missiles all-around to us
'Bombs and missiles hailed all around us.'

an aspectual contrast correlated with auxiliary selection would be consistent with my claim that weather verbs in Italian come in two shapes (see section 2.6), nothing in what follows hinges on this possibility.

The overt nominals licensed by *piovere*-type verbs are underlying direct objects, as evidenced by their behavior with respect to three well-known diagnostics: participial absolutes, participial adjective formation and *ne*-cliticization.⁵ As the examples below show, the nominal can be cliticized with partitive *ne* ‘of it/them’ when it is indefinite (16), and it can appear in participial absolute (17) and participial adjective constructions formed with the weather verb (18).

(16) *Ne sono piovuti tanti.*
 ne are rained so-many
 ‘It rained so many of them.’

(17) *Nevicata quella neve sporca, il cielo si è schiarito.*
 snowed that snow dirty the sky ref is cleared-up
 ‘After that dirty snow fell, the sky cleared up.’

⁵ The status of *ne*-cliticization as a diagnostic for underlying objects has been questioned by Lonzi (1985) and Saccon (1992) (both cited in Levin and Rappaport 1996). Lonzi and Saccon note that certain unergative verbs allow *ne*-cliticization when they occur in a simple tense (ia), but not when they appear with an auxiliary (ib) (examples from Levin and Rappaport 1996: 275-276). Despite this qualification, *ne*-cliticization still remains a reliable test. This is so because unaccusative verbs, unlike their unergative counterparts, allow *ne*-cliticization even when they are auxiliated (ii). Hence, we can still use *ne*-cliticization to test the unaccusative/unergative contrast in auxiliated environments. This is what I do throughout this paper.

(i) a. *Ne cammina tanta, di gente, su quei marciapiedi.*
 ne walk so-many of people on those sidewalks
 ‘So many of them (people) walk on those sidewalks.’

b. **Ne ha camminato tanta, di gente, su quei marciapiedi.*
 ne has walked so-many of people on those sidewalks
 ‘So many of them (people) walked on those sidewalks.’

(ii) a. *Ne arrivano tanti, di ragazzi.*
 ne arrive so-many of guys
 ‘So many of them (guys) arrive/are arriving.’

b. *Ne sono arrivati tanti, di ragazzi.*
 ne are arrived so-many of guys
 ‘So many of them (guys) arrived.’

- (18) *Le strade erano coperte dal fango piovuto la settimana scorsa.*
 the streets were covered-by-the mud rained the week last
 ‘The streets were covered by the mud rained last week.’

For most speakers, Italian weather verbs are obligatorily auxiliated with *essere* when they license an overt nominal, as in (15) above. However, some speakers also allow *avere* in such cases, with no apparent difference in meaning (19). This possibility has either been neglected in the literature (e.g. Perlmutter 1983, Rosen 1988, Farrell 1994) or categorically labeled as ungrammatical (Stussi and Cinque, both cited in Ruwet 1989: 341, note 23).⁶

- (19) *Ha piovuto sassi.*
 has rained stones
 ‘It rained stones.’

Cases like (19) pattern together with sentences containing a transitive verb. This is evidenced by three facts (cf. Perlmutter 1978, Burzio 1986, Rosen 1988). First, in (19) *piovere* is auxiliated with *avere*, just like transitive and unergative verbs, and unlike unaccusatives. Second, the postverbal nominal can be *ne*-cliticized (20), just like the underlying object of transitive and unaccusative verbs, and unlike the subject of unergatives.

- (20) *Di sassi, ne ha piovuto/i un sacco.*
 of stones ne has rained-sg/pl a lot
 lit. ‘Stones, it rained a lot of them.’

Third, the postverbal nominal in (19) does not control verb agreement, just like the direct object of a transitive verb, and unlike the subject of unergatives. This property is illustrated in (21), where agreement of *avere* with *sassi* ‘stones’ results in ungrammaticality regardless of whether the nominal appears in preverbal or postverbal position.

- (21) **Hanno piovuto/i sassi / (Quei) sassi hanno piovuto/i.*
 have-3pl rained-sg/pl stones those stones have-3pl rained-sg/pl

⁶ Nine out of the fifteen native speakers consulted accept *avere* with a postverbal nominal, whereas the others do not. The contrast in judgments does not seem to reflect any clear pattern of dialectal variation, but further research is needed. At any rate, this contrast should be accounted for by our analysis.

Taken together, these facts indicate that, in its surface structure or final stratum, (19) is a transitive construction with an empty category in subject position and the postverbal nominal as the direct object (*e ha piovuto sassi*).

To sum up, weather verbs in Italian license an empty category that has different control properties from typical expletives. Moreover, *piovere*-type verbs can optionally license an overt nominal that behaves like an underlying direct object. When weather verbs occur without an overt argument, they can be auxiliated with *essere* or *avere*. When they license an overt argument, some speakers seem to use only *essere*, but others also accept *avere*. In the latter case, the weather expression patterns together with transitive structures.

2.2 The standard GB/Minimalist account: quasi-arguments

The standard GB/Minimalist account of weather verbs in Italian goes back to Burzio (1986) (cf. Rizzi 1986). In turn, Burzio's proposal is based on Chomsky's (1981) analysis of English weather-*it*, which has been widely adopted in the literature (e.g. Svenonius 2002 for English, Holmberg and Nikanne 2002 for Finnish, and Kiss 2002 for Hungarian).

According to Chomsky (1981), weather-*it* is not referential, since it does not denote a designated member of D (D being a domain of individuals that serve as values of variables and as denotata). However, like true arguments and unlike expletives, it can bind PRO in an adjunct clause, e.g. *it_i sometimes rains after [PRO_i snowing]*. Thus, weather-*it* is a quasi-argument, "similar to arguments in that it can control PRO but unlike them in that it denotes no member of D, as a matter of grammatical principle", and it receives a special type of theta-role (1981: 325). Although Chomsky does not make it explicit, the assumption is that quasi-arguments, like true arguments and unlike expletives, are subcategorized-for syntactic dependents.

Following Chomsky, Burzio (1986) argues that the null subject of *piovere*-type verbs is not an expletive or a true argument, but a quasi-argument. This analysis, he claims, is corroborated by two facts. First, the subject of *piovere*-type verbs can also serve as a controller (cf. (12)–(14)). Second, this empty category, unlike *pro*, cannot be pronominalized with object clitics like *lo* 'it' (22). According to Burzio, the contrast in (22) follows from the assumption that object clitics in Italian can be coindexed with arguments, but not with quasi-arguments.

- (22) (a) Lo_i *ritengo* pro_i *partito*.
 3sg.masc believe-1sg left-masc.sg
 ‘I believe him to have left.’
- (b) * Lo_i *ritengo* e_i *piovuto*.
 3sg.masc believe-1sg rained-masc.sg
 ‘I believe it to have rained.’

In Burzio’s proposal, *piovere*-type verbs have both unaccusative and unergative uses (in his own terminology, *ergative* and *intransitive* uses, respectively). Whereas the unergative variant licenses the quasi-argument as a subject, unaccusative *piovere* licenses the quasi-argument as an underlying direct object.⁷

Under these assumptions, the choice of *essere* or *avere* follows from Burzio’s account of auxiliary selection in Italian: *essere* is used if, and only if, there is a binding relation between the subject and a “nominal contiguous to the verb” (a clitic or a base-generated direct object), otherwise we use *avere* (1986: 55–56). Thus, the quasi-argument licensed by unaccusative *piovere* moves to subject position ([Spec,TP] in current terms) to receive nominative case (*quasi-argument_i è piovuto t_i*). This movement creates a binding relation between the quasi-argument and its (postverbal) trace, so *essere* is selected. By contrast, unergative *piovere* is auxiliated with *avere* because there is no binding chain involving the quasi-argument, which is base-generated in subject position (*quasi-argument ha piovuto*).

Burzio’s analysis does not consider examples where the weather verb licenses an overt nominal, such as *sono piovuti sassi* in (15). This overt nominal is a true argument, not a quasi-argument, as evidenced by the fact that, among other properties, it can be cliticized with an object pronoun (23) (cf. (22)).

- (23) [*Quei sassi*]_i, li_i *ritengo* *piovut-i* *ieri* *sera*.
 those stones them believe-1sg rained-masc.pl yesterday evening
 lit. ‘Those stones, I believe them to have been rained last night.’

To account for cases like (15) and (23), Burzio’s proposal would presumably have to claim that the underlying object of unaccusative

⁷ Burzio uses the standard terms *external argument* and *internal argument* to designate, respectively, base-generated subjects and base-generated objects. Here I avoid this terminology so as to clearly distinguish semantic arguments from syntactic dependents.

piovere can be either a quasi-argument or a true argument (a theme). In principle, Burzio's proposal could also be extended to cases where, at least for some speakers, the weather verb licenses an overt nominal and is auxiliated with *avere*, as in *ha piovuto sassi* in (19). As we saw earlier, these structures are transitive, since they are auxiliated with *avere*, and the postverbal nominal cannot be *ne*-cliticized and does not control verb agreement. To explain these properties, we could claim that movement of the underlying object to subject position is precluded by the presence of a quasi-argument in base-generated subject position. This approach would allow us to maintain Burzio's Generalization, whereby all and only verbs that assign an external theta-role can also assign structural case to their object (Burzio 1986, cf. Svenonius 2002: 6 for a similar proposal for cases like English *it rained mackerel*). Since the weather verb assigns a quasi-argument theta-role to its subject, it can also case-mark its direct object. Thus, there is no movement to subject position.

Based on the observations made in the previous paragraph, our revised proposal would have to claim that speakers who accept *avere* with overt nominals have three, rather than two, uses of *piovere*: unergative (with a quasi-argumental subject), unaccusative (with either a true argument or a quasi-argument as the underlying object), and transitive (with a quasi-argumental subject and a theme object).

Even in its expanded version, such a proposal is problematic. An important limitation has to do with the very notion of a quasi-argument. As we saw earlier, quasi-arguments receive a special theta-role. The problem is that the nature and properties of such a theta-role have not been discussed in any detail in the literature beyond the vague notion that quasi-arguments "are special cases of arguments, *receiving atmospheric or temporal theta-roles* and being in the domain of the Theta-Criterion on a par with referential arguments" (Rizzi 1986: 528–529, my emphasis). As Ruwet (1989) notes, it is difficult to characterize the putative semantic content of an atmospheric theta-role in terms that are consistent with our traditional notion of theta-roles, and it is unclear whether this semantic role could be part of the very restricted and presumably innate set of concepts that we associate with semantic roles. Moreover, as Postal and Pullum (1988) note, quasi-arguments are ad-hoc and conceptually undesirable because they lack any independent motivation and they insulate the analysis from any possibility of disconfirmation.

Also problematic is the fact that quasi-arguments in Italian pattern together with true arguments with respect to control (cf. (12) and (13)), but

not with respect to *lo*-cliticization (cf. (22)). As we saw earlier, Burzio (1986) accounts for this contrast by stipulating that object clitics can be coindexed with arguments, but not with quasi-arguments. Does this mean that control and *lo*-cliticization are differentially sensitive to the theta-role of the quasi-argument, or is the contrast due to a more fundamental difference between true arguments and quasi-arguments? By leaving this and other key questions unanswered, the quasi-argument analysis is ad-hoc and incomplete, and it undermines our theory of semantic roles.

In what follows I show that the standard RG account, based on non-subcategorized-for expletives is also problematic. Before discussing the analysis, I introduce some basics of Relational Grammar for the sake of readers unfamiliar with the theory (other readers may go directly to section 2.4; for a more detailed introduction to RG, see Blake 1990 and Alba-Salas 2002).

2.3 Some basics of Relational Grammar

Like other generative theories, RG posits several levels of syntactic structure and seeks to uncover the universal principles underlying language-specific variation. However, RG claims that grammatical relations like subject and direct object are undefined primitives, not notions derived configurationally. Moreover, it posits a set of structures (e.g. passives and Inversion constructions) subject to language-specific and universal well-formedness conditions on syntactic representations. Each individual language selects its own subset of structures from this universal set, determining their morphosyntactic realization via language-specific rules.

RG distinguishes two basic types of grammatical relations: *term* and *non-term*. Term relations include Subject (or 1), Direct Object (or 2), and Indirect Object (or 3). Non-term relations belong to one of three types. The first one is the Predicate (or P) relation, which is borne by the dependent licensing the nominals of a clause. Importantly, the Predicate relation can be held not only by verbs, but also by adjectives, and nouns, prepositions and phrases used predicationally. Together with the three term relations (i.e. 1, 2 and 3), Predicates form a natural class known as foundational relations. The second type of non-term relations includes a variety of Obliques, including Benefactive, Instrumental, Locative, Temporal and Manner. The third type includes Chômeurs (abbreviated as Cho). This undefined primitive, which has no parallel in other theories, owes its

colorful name to the French name for ‘idle’ or ‘unemployed’. A *Chômeur* is a clause dependent that bears a foundational relation in a given stratum but which loses this grammatical relation to another clause dependent in a subsequent stratum. Simply put, a *Chômeur* is an *ex-1*, an *ex-2*, an *ex-3* or an *ex-P* (examples to follow).

RG uses different types of representations to show the grammatical relations held by each syntactic dependent. The example in (24) shows a tabular representation of *Eva eats an apple*, where *eat* (the Predicate) licenses *Eva* as its subject and *an apple* as its direct object.

(24)	1	P	2
	Eva	eats	an apple

According to RG, clauses involve a sequence of levels or strata in which a given dependent may bear distinct grammatical relations. Each stratum is represented with a separate line. Our example in (24) contains a single stratum. By contrast, the structure in (25), where the past participle of *eat* occurs with the auxiliary *have*, contains two strata. The first stratum has the same array of grammatical relations in (24). In the second stratum, however, the past participle no longer holds the Predicate relation. In fact, the P relation has been ‘usurped’ by the auxiliary, which inherits *Eva* as a subject and *an apple* as a direct object (the auxiliary is needed because past participles in English, unlike finite verbs, cannot bear tense morphology and cannot be the final predicate of the clause). In RG terms, we say that the past participle (the initial predicate of the clause) has been *chômeurized* by the auxiliary (the final predicate), so *eaten* is a *Chômeur* in the final stratum. By convention, we use a dotted line to separate the strata where each predicate holds the P relation.

(25)	1	P	2

	1	P	Cho
	Eva	has	eaten
			2
			an apple

In (25) the past participle loses the Predicate relation to the auxiliary by virtue of the Stratal Uniqueness Law, a universal principle that prohibits two syntactic dependents from bearing the same foundational relation (1, 2, 3 or P) in the same stratum (Perlmutter and Postal 1983). If *eaten* kept the

predicate relation here, the second stratum would contain two dependents bearing the P relation, thus violating the Stratal Uniqueness Law.

The process whereby *eaten* becomes a Chômeur is also constrained by two other universal conditions. The first one is the Chômeur Law. This principle mandates that if a dependent is demoted to another grammatical relation, it must acquire the Chômeur relation, unless a language-specific rule prescribes another alternative (Perlmutter and Postal 1983). The second condition is the Motivated Chômage Law, which imposes that a clause dependent can only acquire the Chômeur relation if it has lost its foundational relation to another dependent (Perlmutter and Postal 1983). This principle prevents Chômeurs from either appearing in the initial stratum of the clause or appearing ‘spontaneously’ in a non-initial stratum. The representation in (25) obeys the Chômeur Law and the Motivated Chômage Law because *eaten* becomes a Chômeur only after the past auxiliary usurps its P relation.

As noted earlier, in RG a given syntactic dependent may bear more than one grammatical relation in the same clause. In (25), for example, the past participle bears the P relation in the first stratum and the Chômeur relation in the second. Similarly, in passive structures like *the apple was eaten by Eva*, the noun phrase *the apple* bears the direct object relation in the first stratum (just as in (25)), but it subsequently undergoes 2-1 advancement, usurping the subject relation from *Eva*, the underlying subject (cf. passive movement in GB theory). Hence, *the apple* bears both the 1 and 2 relations in the clause.

A given syntactic dependent may also bear up to two distinct grammatical relations *in the same stratum*. This possibility is illustrated in the Italian example in (26), which involves the reflexive clitic *si* ‘himself/herself/itself’. As we can see, here *Eva* bears both the subject and direct object relations in the first stratum, so we say that it is 1,2 multiattached. Since syntactic dependents in Romance cannot bear more than one grammatical relation in the final stratum of the clause, this multiattachment must be resolved. The resolution is always in favor of the higher relation in the relational hierarchy (1>2>3>Cho). Thus, *Eva* loses the 2 relation and keeps only the subject relation in the final stratum. The reflexive clitic—which is part of the verb morphology, rather than an

argument in its own right—signals the resolution of 1,2 multiattachment of *Eva* (for independent evidence for all these claims, see Rosen 1988).⁸

- (26) a. *Eva si guarda nello specchio*
 Eva ref looks in-the mirror
 ‘Eva looks at herself in the mirror.’
- b.
- | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------|
| 1,2 | P | Loc |
| 1 | P | Loc |
| Eva | si guarda | nello specchio |

And just as a given syntactic dependent may hold more than one grammatical relation, it can also bear more than one theta-role (cf. Alsina 1996). For example, in (26) *Eva* receives two theta-roles from *guardare* ‘look’ (agent and theme), since it bears both the subject and direct object relations to this verb in the initial stratum of this verb (i.e. in the stratum where *guardare* assigns a theta-role to its subcategorized dependents). An NP/DP can also receive distinct theta-roles from different predicates if it satisfies the selectional requirements of each predicate. For instance, in a control structure like *John forced Eva to swim*, *Eva* receives a theme role from *force* (since the nominal bears the direct object relation to this verb in the initial stratum of the matrix clause) and an agent role from *swim* (since *Eva* also bears the subject relation to this predicate in the initial stratum of the embedded clause). It is worth emphasizing that a syntactic dependent may be theta-marked by more than one predicate if and only if it satisfies the argument structure of each predicate, as is the case in our control example. By contrast, in (25) *Eva* does not receive a semantic role from the auxiliary *have* because this verb does not assign any semantic role to its subject. Hence, *Eva* is simply inherited by the auxiliary as a 1 without any additional theta-role assignment.

Among other information, the lexical entry of a predicate specifies both its semantic argument structure and its syntactic subcategorization. On the one hand, the entry supplies a syntactic valence that states in terms of

⁸ Italian also has constructions where the reflexive element is not a clitic, but an NP, i.e. an argument in its own right, e.g. *Eva guarda [sé stessa] nello specchio* ‘Eva looks at herself in the mirror’. Contrary to what we saw in our example above, here *Eva* bears only the subject relation and *sé stessa* ‘herself’ is the direct object, just as in any plain transitive structure (Rosen 1988).

grammatical relations (subject, direct object, etc) what dependents it can or must take in the stratum where it first bears the Predicate relation (Davies and Rosen 1988). On the other hand, the entry specifies the semantic roles licensed by that predicate, and their mapping onto each subcategorized-for syntactic dependent (Alba-Salas 2002, see also section 2.5). For example, the entry of *like* specifies that this verb licenses a subject linked to an experiencer and a direct object mapped onto a stimulus. Importantly, the lexical entry of certain predicates also includes an extended valence specifying which revaluations of their underlying syntactic dependents are allowed or disallowed in non-initial strata (Davies and Dubinsky 1991). To understand this notion, consider the Spanish example in (27), which includes the verb *gustar* ‘like’. As the glosses show, this structure differs from its English equivalent (*Eva likes blond guys*) in that the experiencer (*Eva*) is realized as an indirect object (as evidenced by dative case-marking), whereas the stimulus (*los chicos rubios* ‘blond guys’) is the surface subject. In RG terms, (27) is an Inversion structure, where the initial subject undergoes 1-3 demotion, triggering other syntactic manipulations in the clause (Blake 1990; for a sample representation, see (53) below).

- (27) *A Eva le gustan los chicos rubios*
 to Eva to-her like-3pl the guys blond
 ‘Eva likes blond guys.’

The fact that the underlying subject of *gustar* must obligatorily revalue to an indirect object is a lexical property of this verb vis-à-vis other predicates, including its English equivalent *like*. Simply put, *gustar* is just like English *like* in that it licenses an experiencer subject and a stimulus direct object, but it differs in that it also requires its initial subject to revalue to 3 in a subsequent stratum so that it surfaces as an indirect object. This requirement is encoded in the extended valence of *gustar* (see Davies and Dubinsky 1991 for details and a formal implementation). Importantly, extended valences are regulated by the Valence-Initiality Principle or VIP, a universal constraint that restricts the satisfaction of extended-valence statements included in the lexical entry of a particular predicate to syntactic dependents that bear an *initial* grammatical relation to that predicate. In practical terms, the VIP prevents natural languages from allowing predicates or classes of predicates that positively require the appearance of non-subcategorized-for syntactic dependents (Davies and Dubinsky 1991).

As in other frameworks, in traditional RG theory, expletives or dummies are elements inserted in a non-initial stratum to contribute to the distribution of old and new information in the sentence and/or to satisfy well-formedness constraints on syntactic representations, most notably the requirement that every clause must have a subject in the final stratum (i.e. the Final 1 Law, roughly equivalent to the EPP). Such dummies have been postulated for a variety of structures, including existential constructions (e.g. *there is a book on the shelf*), extrapositions (e.g. *it's ridiculous the way they all talk all at once* or *I took it for granted that you had a license*), raising structures (e.g. *there seems to be only one car in the street*) and impersonal constructions (e.g. *there arrived three men*) (Perlmutter 1980, 1983, Perlmutter and Postal 1983, Rosen 1988, Blake 1990, La Fauci 2000). In all these structures the presence of the expletive is explained with the notion of Dummy Birth, a colorful term emphasizing the status of the dummy as a non-initial syntactic dependent.

To illustrate Dummy Birth, consider the Italian impersonal construction in (28), which involves a phonologically null expletive. Like other impersonal structures, (28) is characterized by the fact that the final subject is an expletive coindexed with a postverbal NP/DP (*due ragazzi* 'two guys'). As (29) shows, this sentence has a personal counterpart where *due ragazzi* appears in preverbal subject position.

(28) [*e*_i] sono arrivati [*due ragazzi*_i] ieri.
 are arrived two guys yesterday
 'Two guys arrived yesterday.'

(29) *Due ragazzi* sono arrivati ieri
 two guys are arrived yesterday
 'Two guys arrived yesterday.'

According to RG, (28) and (29) involve the same initial stratum where unaccusative *arrivare* 'arrive' licenses *due ragazzi* as an object. As (30) shows, in the personal construction *due ragazzi* undergoes 2-1 advancement and becomes the subject of the clause in the second stratum in order to satisfy the Final 1 Law (this is the equivalent of unaccusative object-to-subject movement in GB/Minimalism). In the third and last stratum the structure is auxiliated with the past auxiliary, which

chômeurizes *arrivare* by ‘usurping’ its P relation and inherits *due ragazzi* as a subject.⁹

(30)	2 1		P P	
	1	P	Cho	
	due ragazzi	sono	arrivati	

The impersonal construction involves Dummy Birth. As (31) shows, here there is a dummy (*D*) that is ‘born’ (i.e. inserted) as a 2 in the second stratum, chômeurizing *due ragazzi*. In the third stratum the expletive undergoes unaccusative advancement to fulfill the Final 1 Law. The fourth and final stratum involves auxiliation.¹⁰

(31)		P P P	2 Cho Cho	
	2 1			<i>DUMMY BIRTH</i>
	1	P	Cho	Cho
	<i>D</i>	sono	arrivati	due ragazzi

Dummy Birth is constrained by two universal principles. The first one is the Nuclear Dummy Law (32), which allows expletives to be subjects or direct objects, but never Obliques, Chômeurs or indirect objects (Perlmutter 1980, Perlmutter and Postal 1983). The impersonal construction in (31) satisfies the Nuclear Dummy Law because the expletive bears only the 1 and 2 relations (in different strata). The second principle is the Active Dummy Law in (33) (Perlmutter 1983). This constraint applies to structures where there is a nominal bearing the 1 or 2 relation in a stratum prior to the ‘birth’ of the expletive. Combined with (32), the Active Dummy Law effectively imposes that in such cases the expletive must ‘usurp’ the subject or direct object relation from this nominal. The impersonal structure in (31) obeys the Active Dummy Law because the expletive chômeurizes the 2 relation held by the postverbal nominal.

⁹ As we will see in section 2.4, the unaccusative advancement of the underlying object determines the selection of the ‘be’, rather than the ‘have’, auxiliary.

¹⁰ This analysis is motivated by a variety of empirical arguments that are irrelevant here (for details, see Perlmutter 1983, and Perlmutter and Zaenen 1984, among others).

- (32) NUCLEAR DUMMY LAW: Expletives can only bear the 1 or 2 relation.
- (33) ACTIVE DUMMY LAW: A dummy must chômeurize some nominal if the first stratum where the dummy bears a grammatical relation (i.e. its departure stratum) contains a 1 or a 2.

Note that in (31) the auxiliary must agree in person and number with the postverbal nominal, as is characteristic of impersonal unaccusative constructions in Italian, cf.

- (34) *Sono arrivati* / **è arrivato* [*due ragazzi*].
 are arrived is arrived two guys
 ‘Two guys arrived.’

This property follows from the fact that Italian has brother-in-law agreement (Perlmutter 1983, Perlmutter and Zaenen 1984). Informally, the expletive is the *brother-in-law* of the postverbal nominal by virtue of the fact that it chômeurizes this nominal (in traditional GB/Minimalist terms, the expletive forms a chain with the postverbal nominal, its associate; cf. Chomsky’s 2000 new analysis based on Agree, and Hazout’s 2004 critique thereof on empirical grounds). In languages with brother-in-law agreement, the postverbal chômeurized nominal controls verb agreement if the expletive is the final subject, i.e. if it holds the 1 relation in the last stratum of the clause. In (31) the dummy is born as a 2 and usurps the direct object relation previously held by the postverbal nominal, so the expletive is the brother-in-law of *due ragazzi*. Since Italian has brother-in-law agreement, and since the dummy is the final subject of the clause by virtue of its unaccusative advancement, the postverbal nominal controls verb agreement. The postverbal position of *due ragazzi* follows straightforwardly from Italian linearization rules, which impose that only final subjects can be preverbal (Rosen 1987).

Equipped with this information, we can return to weather verbs in Italian.

2.4 The standard RG account: dummy birth

The standard RG account of weather verbs goes back to Perlmutter (1983) and Rosen (1988). To the best of my knowledge, it is the only analysis that has been proposed in this framework.¹¹

The analysis claims that weather expressions in Italian (as well as in other languages) involve traditional expletives, i.e. the same type found in extrapositions and existential, raising and impersonal constructions (cf. section 2.3). Under this proposal, Italian weather verbs subcategorize a direct object that is optional.¹² When *piovere*-type verbs license a 2, we have sentences like *sono piovuti sassi* ‘it rained stones’ in (15). When they do not license an object, we have cases like *è/ha piovuto* ‘it rained’ in (11). As (35) shows, cases like *sono piovuti sassi* are analyzed as impersonal unaccusative constructions, on a par with *sono arrivati due ragazzi* in (31) above. Here the weather verb licenses the overt nominal as a direct object in the first stratum, and this nominal is chômeurized by a dummy that is born as a 2 in the second stratum. The expletive then undergoes unaccusative advancement (third stratum) to satisfy the Final 1 Law, and in the fourth and final stratum the clause is auxiliated with *essere*.

(35)		P	2	
	2	P	Cho	<i>DUMMY BIRTH</i>
	1	P	Cho	
	1	P	Cho	Cho
	D	sono	piovuti	sassi
		are	rained	stones

As in other impersonal unaccusative constructions, in (35) the final (i.e. surface) subject is the expletive, not the postverbal nominal. Among other properties, the analysis explains why in (35) the auxiliary must agree in person and number with the postverbal nominal, cf. (36). As we saw in

¹¹ Farrell (1994) proposes that English weather verbs license expletives in an initial stratum. However, his claim is relegated to a very brief footnote (1994: 148, note 13), and it remains at the level of speculation.

¹² In RG, contrary to what we find in other theories, subcategorized syntactic dependents may be optional. A typical example involves the direct object of *eat*, as in *John ate (his supper) and then left*.

section 2.3, this requirement follows from the fact that Italian is a brother-in-law language, so the verb agrees with the postverbal nominal chômeurized by the dummy (again, in generative terms, the associate controls verb agreement via chain formation with the expletive subject).

- (36) *Sono piovuti* / **è piovuto* [sassi].
 are rained is rained stones
 ‘It rained stones.’

The analysis in (35) also explains why the clause is auxiliated with *essere* ‘be’, rather than *avere* ‘have’. As is well known, the ‘have’ auxiliary in Italian occurs with transitive and unergative verbs, whereas ‘be’ appears with unaccusatives. RG accounts for this distributional asymmetry with a simple rule: *essere* is used if the final subject is also a 2 in the clause, otherwise we use *avere* (Perlmutter 1978, Rosen 1988, 1990). A more precise formulation from Rosen (1990) is given in (37).

- (37) AUXILIARY SELECTION IN ITALIAN: A perfective auxiliary is *essere* ‘be’ iff its P-initial 1 bears the 2 relation in the same clause. Otherwise, it is *avere* ‘have’.

The term *P-initial 1* designates the subject of the auxiliary in the first stratum where this verb bears the Predicate relation. In (35) the expletive bears the subject relation in the first (and only) stratum where the auxiliary holds the P relation (the fourth stratum), so the dummy is the P-initial 1 of the auxiliary. Since the expletive also bears the 2 relation in the clause before its unaccusative advancement, (35) is auxiliated with *essere*.

Let us now turn to cases like *è/ha piovuto* ‘it rained’, where the weather verb does not license an overt nominal. According to the standard RG analysis, in such cases the initial stratum contains only a predicate (the weather verb), and nothing else. The auxiliary alternation follows from Dummy Birth. As (38) illustrates, in *ha piovuto* the dummy is born as a subject. Since the expletive only bears the 1 relation in the clause, the structure is auxiliated with *avere*. By contrast, in *è piovuto* the dummy is born as a direct object and then advances to 1 to become the final subject (38). This unaccusative advancement determines the choice of *essere*.

(38)	(a)		(b)	
		P		P
	1	P	2	P
		P	1	P
	1	P	Cho	
	D	ha	piovuto	
		has	rained	
			1	P
			D	è
				piovuto
				is
				rained

Though insightful, this analysis has several limitations. First, it is circular with respect to auxiliary selection in weather expressions lacking an overt nominal. In fact, the analysis infers the particular grammatical relation(s) borne by the dummy based on auxiliary selection: when *piovere*-type verbs appear with *avere*, the expletive must be born as a 1, and when it appears with *essere*, the dummy must bear both the 1 and 2 relations. The problem is that then auxiliary selection is also explained by reference to the grammatical relations held by the expletives. Second, the analysis cannot explain why some speakers accept sentences where the weather verb licenses an overt nominal and is auxiliated with *avere*, as in *ha piovuto sassi* in (19). A Dummy Birth analysis violates the independently motivated requirement that dummies must usurp the subject or direct object relation from another nominal, i.e. the Active Dummy Law in (33). As we already know, cases like (19) behave like transitive sentences with respect to auxiliary selection, *ne*-cliticization and verb agreement, so we cannot analyze them as impersonal unaccusatives on a par with (35). As (39) shows, to account for these properties we have to posit a dummy that is born as a subject in the second stratum so that the postverbal nominal can keep the direct object relation in the final stratum. In GB/Minimalist terms, we have to stipulate that the expletive subject cannot form a chain with the postverbal nominal. In RG, this ad-hoc stipulation violates the Active Dummy Law, since the expletive does not chômeurize the postverbal nominal by usurping its 2 relation.

(39)			P	2
	1		P	2
	1	P	Cho	2
	D	ha	piovuto	sassi

Crucially, abandoning the Active Dummy Law cannot save the traditional RG account. On the one hand, the analysis in (39) still has to stipulate the

obligatory presence of a dummy to prevent the postverbal nominal from advancing to subject. Such as stipulation violates the Valence Initiality Principle. As we saw in section 2.3, this independently motivated universal constraint bans predicates from requiring the obligatory appearance of non-subcategorized-for syntactic dependents in a given structure. On the other hand, and more importantly, the traditional RG account of all weather expressions in Italian—and not just cases like (39)—cannot explain why weather dummies, like true arguments and unlike typical expletives, can control the empty subject of an embedded infinitival clause (cf. (12)–(14)). If the expletive found with weather verbs is the same type of dummy found, for example, in raising constructions like (14), the contrast in their control properties remains unexplained.

Clearly, the traditional RG analysis is inadequate on empirical, conceptual and theory-internal grounds. In what follows I develop an alternative account with lexically selected expletives. I start by introducing the notion of an initial expletive in the context of some further assumptions about argument structure.

2.5 Initial expletives and argument structure

As we saw in section 2.3, in RG the lexical entry of a predicate specifies, on the one hand, the semantic arguments licensed by that predicate, and, on the other, the grammatical relations borne by those elements in the predicate's initial stratum. Since traditional RG has yet to articulate a comprehensive theory of lexical semantics, in this section I sketch some additional assumptions about argument structure that are relevant to my argumentation.

Under my proposal, a predicate's argument structure includes the array of theta-roles (e.g. agent, theme, beneficiary) licensed by the predicate. The notion of a 'theta-role' is understood as a convenient label for a cluster of semantic properties that are prototypically associated with each role (for example, 'agents' are canonically associated with properties such as animacy, sentience, volition, movement, and existence independent of the event designated by a predicate, among others, cf. Dowty 1991). Argument structure serves as an interface between a predicate's syntactic subcategorization frame (formalized in terms of primitive grammatical relations) and its conceptual structure, a 'lower' level of semantic representation that decomposes the predicate's meaning and includes syntactically implicit arguments, along the lines proposed by Jackendoff

(1990) and Jackendoff and Culicover (2003), among others (cf. Grimshaw 1990, Alsina 1996). Semantic arguments are linked to grammatical relations following a canonical mapping between theta-roles and the syntactic dependents licensed by the predicate, a mapping possibly mediated by a universal hierarchy of theta-roles. By default, a subject is mapped onto an agent, a direct object onto a theme, and an indirect object onto a goal or recipient (e.g. in the case of English *give*). Any deviations from this canonical mapping are explicitly indicated in the lexical entry of the predicate (for example, the entry of *perceive* would indicate that its subject is mapped onto an experiencer, rather than an agent).

A crucial assumption here is that semantic licensing and syntactic subcategorization are independent of each other. Thus, a predicate licenses an array of theta-roles *and* a set of grammatical relations linked to each theta-role. Although in the default case there is a one-to-one correspondence between theta-roles and initial grammatical relations, in a few lexically-marked cases a predicate may license a syntactic dependent that does not bear a theta-role, i.e. a grammatical relation that has no correspondence in argument structure (cf. Alsina 1996: 45, 72). Formally, this situation could be construed as involving the mapping of an initial grammatical relation onto either an unspecified set of the thematic features that constitute a theta-role, or an interpretable instruction to do nothing in Groat's (1995) sense (cf. section 1). At any rate, what is important is that such a dependent is a lexically selected expletive. It is what I call an *initial expletive*, i.e. a syntactic dependent of the clause that (i) does not receive a theta-role, but (ii) is licensed by the valence of a predicate, so (iii) it bears an *initial* grammatical relation to the predicate.

As we will see below, initial expletives are licensed by a small set of lexically-marked predicates, and they are subject to some universal constraints to be discussed below. My assumption is that initial expletives and non-subcategorized dummies (which, of course, are still needed in the theory) do not necessarily differ in terms of their lexical properties. In other words, we do not have separate lexical entries for each type of expletive characterized, say, by different featural content. However, this assumption is not critical to the analysis. What is important is that initial expletives are licensed by a predicate's valence, whereas traditional expletives are not. As we will see below, this difference plays an important role in their syntactic behavior.

2.6 A new analysis of Italian weather verbs: lexically selected expletives

My claim is that weather verbs in Italian, and possibly also in other languages, can license expletives. Like the standard GB/Minimalist account, I claim that the empty category found in weather expressions is lexically selected by *piovere*-type verbs, so it is not a traditional expletive. However, like the standard RG analysis, I argue that this subcategorized dependent does not bear a theta-role, so it is an initial expletive, not a quasi-argument.

For clarity, my discussion below distinguishes between two groups of speakers: those who accept *sono piovuti sassi* in (15) but not *ha piovuto sassi* in (19); and those who accept both auxiliaries with an overt nominal (cf. section 2.1).

For speakers who only accept *sono piovuti sassi*, *piovere*-type verbs have both an unergative and an unaccusative variant.¹³ The subject of unergative *piovere* is an initial expletive. This is shown informally in (40). The same information is given in (41) using more formal notation. Because (40) is easier to understand for readers unfamiliar with RG, hereafter I use this informal notation.

(40) $\text{piovere}_{\text{unergative}}$: 1 -- Expletive

(41) $[\text{P}(\text{piovere}_{\text{unergative}}, \text{b}) < \text{c}_i >] \rightarrow [1(\text{a}, \text{b}) < \text{c}_i >] \text{ -- Theta}_\emptyset$

As (42) illustrates, the underlying object of unaccusative *piovere* can be a true argument (mapped onto a theme) or an initial expletive.

(42) $\text{piovere}_{\text{unaccusative}}$: 2 -- Theme/Expletive

Cases like *ha piovuto* involve unergative *piovere*. As (43) shows, here the weather verb licenses the initial expletive (*InExp*) as a subject, according to its valence in (40). In the second stratum the structure is auxiliated with *avere*, which chômeurizes *piovere* and inherits the initial

¹³ Positing two valences is not an ad-hoc solution for weather verbs, since dual valences are also needed for a handful of other Italian verbs that display a similar auxiliary alternation, such as *correre* ‘run’. Remember also that Burzio’s (1986) account too must posit two different uses of weather verbs (unaccusative and unergative).

expletive as a subject. The choice of *avere* follows from our auxiliary selection rule in (37), since the initial expletive bears only the 1 relation in the clause.

(43)	1		P
	1	P	Cho
	<i>InExp</i>	ha	piovuto
		has	rained

Cases like *è piovuto* involve unaccusative *piovere*. As (44) illustrates, here the weather verb licenses the initial expletive as a direct object, according to its valence in (42). The initial expletive undergoes unaccusative advancement to satisfy the Final 1 Law and is subsequently inherited by the auxiliary as a subject. As predicted by our auxiliatation rule, *essere* is chosen because the initial expletive bears both the 1 and 2 relations in the clause by virtue of its unaccusative advancement.

(44)	2		P
	1		P
	1	P	Cho
	<i>InExp</i>	è	piovuto
		is	rained

Cases like *sono piovuti sassi* also involve unaccusative *piovere*, but with a thematic argument. Their representation is identical to the traditional RG analysis in (36), repeated here as (45). As we saw earlier, here the initial 2 of *piovere* (the postverbal nominal) is chômeurized by a ‘regular’ dummy born as a 2. The choice of *essere* follows straightforwardly from the fact that the subject of the auxiliary is also a 2 in a previous stratum. It is important to note that a traditional expletive is needed here because (45) is an impersonal construction, not because it involves a weather verb (cf. section 2.3).¹⁴

¹⁴ This fact is corroborated by the existence of *personal* unaccusative constructions with weather predicates –constructions which have been typically ignored in explanatory accounts. Two examples appear in (i) ((ia) taken from Dogliotti and Rosiello 1988: 842). Here the overt nominal precedes, rather than follows, the weather verb. Although these constructions are less common than their impersonal counterparts, they are perfectly acceptable. As (ii) shows, cases like (i) involve unaccusative advancement of

(45)		P	2
	2	P	Cho
	1	P	Cho
	1	P	Cho
	D	sono piovuti	sassi
		are rained	stones

Let's now turn to those speakers who accept both *sono piovuti sassi* and *ha piovuto sassi*. These speakers would also have two different versions of *piovere*. The first one is the same unaccusative verb in (42). Thus, for these speakers cases like *è piovuto* and *sono piovuto sassi* have the same representations given, respectively, in (44) and (45) above. The only difference is that, instead of the unergative *piovere* in (40), these speakers have the version in (46). Like its unergative counterpart, this variant licenses an expletive subject. However, it also licenses an optional direct object mapped onto a theme (by convention, I indicate the optionality of this dependent by including it in parenthesis).

(46) <i>piovere</i> _{transitive} :	1	-- Expletive
	(2)	-- Theme

When this transitive *piovere* licenses only its expletive subject, but not its direct object, we have cases like *ha piovuto*, which have the same representation as in (43) above. On the other hand, when this verb licenses

the overt nominal, without Dummy Birth. This analysis would account for word order and auxiliatation facts.

- (i) (a) *Bombe e proiettili grandinavano tutt'intorno.*
 bombs and projectiles hailed-3pl all-around
 'Bombs and missiles hailed all around.'

- (b) *Quei chicchi di ghiaccio sono piovuti quasi ogni giorno.*
 those lumps of ice are rained almost every day
 lit. 'It rained those lumps of ice almost every day.'

(ii)	2	P	Time
	1	P	Time
	1	P	Cho
	[Quei chicchi di ghiaccio]	sono	piovuti [quasi ogni giorno]

the expletive and a direct object, we have examples like *ha piovuto sassi*. The corresponding representation is given in (47). Since the initial expletive does not bear the 2 relation elsewhere in the clause, the sentence is auxiliated with *avere*, as predicted by (37).

(47)	1		P		2
	1	P	Cho		2
	<i>InExp</i>	ha	piovuto		sassi

Evidence for the analysis above comes from participial agreement facts. As (48) illustrates, when *piovere* is auxiliated with *essere*, there is obligatory agreement between the past participle of the weather verb and the postverbal nominal. By contrast, participial agreement is impossible if the clause is auxiliated with *avere* (49).

(48) *Sono piovut-i/*o sassi.*
 are rained-masc.pl/sg stones
 ‘It rained stones.’

(49) *Ha piovut-o/*i sassi.*
 has rained-masc.sg/pl stones
 ‘It rained stones.’

Past participle agreement in Italian follows a simple rule: a past participle agrees with a clausemate 2 whenever its P-final stratum is intransitive, i.e. when the last stratum where the past participle holds the Predicate relation does not contain both a 1 *and* a 2 (La Fauci 1989, Rosen 1990). In the representation of *sono piovuti sassi* in (45) the P-final stratum of the past participle (i.e. the last stratum where *piovere* bears the Predicate relation) is the third stratum. This stratum contains a 1, but not a 2, so it is intransitive. Thus, as predicted by our rule, the past participle agrees with *sassi* ‘stones’, which bears the 2 relation in the clause. By contrast, in the representation of *ha piovuto sassi* in (47) the P-final stratum of the past participle (the first stratum of the clause) contains both a 1 and a 2, so there is no participial agreement.

The analysis of *ha piovuto sassi* in (47) requires a trivial revision of the Active Dummy Law in (33). Note that (47) seemingly violates this principle because the expletive does not usurp the 1 or 2 relation from another nominal. This violation, however, is only apparent if we assume

that the Active Dummy Law applies only to non-subcategorized-for dummies (cf. section 7). Unlike the traditional RG analysis, my account satisfies the Valence Initiality Principle: (47) requires the obligatory presence of an expletive subject because the expletive is subcategorized for (though not theta-marked) by the weather verb.¹⁵

My proposal offers other advantages over the standard RG analysis. First, it accounts for auxiliary selection in a non-circular manner. Here the auxiliary alternation exhibited by *piovere*-type verbs follows from their dual valence, thus constraining this phenomenon to a small and relatively homogenous class of lexical items (cf. notes 4 and 13). Second, my proposal offers a more satisfactory account of cases like *ha piovuto sassi*. According to my analysis, the differences in native speaker judgments with respect to auxiliary selection follow from the lexical properties of *piovere*-type verbs. All speakers have two variants of these verbs. One variant is unaccusative (42). The other one is either unergative (40) (for those who only accept *essere* with an overt nominal) or transitive (46) (for those who accept both *essere* and *avere* in such contexts). Third, my analysis explains the unique control properties of weather expletives: the expletive subject of weather verbs is lexically selected, whereas the dummy found in raising constructions is not. Given this critical difference, we can posit a principle that accounts for the shared control properties of arguments and initial expletives:

- (50) CONTROL PRINCIPLE:
 Only P-initial (i.e. lexically selected) syntactic dependents can control PRO in embedded non-finite clauses.

Since *pro* and initial expletives are licensed by a predicate's valence and thus are P-initial dependents, both empty categories can control the subject of an embedded infinitival. The fact that initial expletives, unlike *pro*, are thematically vacuous is irrelevant, since the Control Principle applies to any and all subcategorized syntactic dependents regardless of

¹⁵ In its precise formulation the VIP claims that for a syntactic dependent to satisfy the extended valence of a predicate, it must bear an initial grammatical relation to that predicate, but it need not receive a semantic role. This clarification is important because at certain points in their discussion Davies and Dubinsky (1991) assume the default state of affairs where each lexically selected syntactic dependent is mapped onto a theta-role.

their semantic properties. By contrast, traditional expletives cannot serve as controllers because they are not lexically selected.¹⁶

An initial expletive analysis also explains why, as Burzio (1986) notes, the empty subject of *piovere*-type verbs cannot be coindexed with a direct object clitic (e.g. **lo_i ritengo e_i piovuto* ‘I believe it to have rained’ in (22)(b), contrary to what we find in the case of *pro* (e.g. *lo_i ritengo pro_i partito* ‘I believe him to have left’ in (22)(a)). The contrast stems from the fact that object clitics in Italian can only pronominalize *thematic arguments*, but not expletives. This claim is corroborated by the observation that the overt nominal (optionally) licensed by *piovere*-type

¹⁶ Note that the Control Principle also accounts for raising constructions such as *John_i always seems [t_i to understand [without PRO_i really having understood]]*. At first sight, this example appears to violate the Control Principle, since *John* is not subcategorized by *seem*, and yet it can control PRO. The contradiction is only apparent. In fact, the Control Principle only requires the controller to be lexically selected, but it does not say *by which predicate*. In fact, the principle mandates that a controller must be a P-initial dependent, but it does not specify whose P-initial dependent it must be. In our example *John* can be a controller because this nominal is lexically selected by the embedded verb, *understand*. Importantly, my proposal is relevant to the current debate over whether control is primarily a syntactic phenomenon, with semantics playing only a secondary or minor role (e.g. Hornstein 1999, Boeckx and Hornstein 2003), or whether it is ultimately reducible to lexical semantics (e.g. Jackendoff and Culicover 2003). Within this second approach, Jackendoff and Culicover (2003) (hereafter J&C) have claimed that argument/conceptual structure determines controller choice and the contrast between obligatory and non-obligatory control in English. J&C argue that predicates selecting action complements show obligatory control, whereas those that select situations (a category including both actions and non-actions) show non-obligatory control. Moreover, J&C also claim that in cases of obligatory control the controller is always the character to which the control predicate assigns the role of Actor for the event designated by its action complement, regardless of its syntactic position. Although J&C’s evidence suggests a robust correlation between argument structure and controller choice, control phenomena cannot be reduced to argument/conceptual structure. In fact, as Boeckx and Hornstein (2003) note, the distribution of controllees (i.e. PRO) is ultimately a syntactic issue, since controllees are always subjects with no apparent thematic restrictions. Moreover, as Hornstein (1999), Boeckx and Hornstein (2003) and others argue, lexical semantics cannot account for control in adjunct clauses like *John_i saw Mary [before PRO_i leaving the party]*, which show obligatory control even though (by definition) they are not selected by the matrix predicate. My analysis is more consistent with the syntactocentric approach to control, but it does not discount the role of argument structure, whether it be in addition to the requirements imposed by the Control Principle and other syntactic constraints, or as an epiphenomenon of the default mapping of semantic roles onto initial grammatical relations.

verbs, which is mapped onto a theme, *can* in fact be pronominalized, as in [*quei sassi*]_i, *li*_i *ritengo piovuti ieri sera*, literally ‘those stones, I believe them to have been rained last night’ in (23). Unlike Burzio’s analysis, my account explains why the empty category licensed by weather verbs is treated differently by control and *lo*-cliticization. As we just saw, the Control Principle is sensitive only to the P-initial status of the controller, but not to its thematic properties, so initial expletives can serve as controllers. By contrast, *lo*-cliticization can only target syntactic dependents that are mapped onto a theta-role, thus excluding initial expletives. Another important advantage of my proposal is that it avoids the problematic notion of a quasi-argument. In fact, my analysis does not need to posit a special type of empty category and theta-role only for weather predicates, since, as we will see below, lexically selected expletives are independently needed for non-meteorological predicates such as French *falloir* and Spanish *haber*.

By acknowledging the possibility that certain predicates can license non-theta-marked dependents, my analysis echoes Torrego’s (1989) GB account of weather expressions such as *hacer calor* ‘be hot’ (literally ‘do heat’) in Spanish. Torrego argues that, cross-linguistically, weather predicates do not assign theta-roles but can still license semantically vacuous dependents—what she calls an external hidden argument or d-argument. In other words, weather verbs are [- theta-assigners, + d-assigners]. This analysis, she claims, provides “a way of capturing the import of Chomsky’s proposal about the quasi-argument role of weather verbs without assuming that weather verbs assign any theta-role” (1989: 261). Torrego’s proposal neglects the fact that weather verbs in Romance *can* license thematic arguments, as in Italian *piovono sassi* ‘it’s raining stones’ or Spanish *llovieron ranas* ‘it rained frogs’. In principle, her analysis could be modified to accommodate such cases by claiming that weather verbs are [\pm theta-assigners, \pm d-assigners], so they can license true arguments. However, Italian examples like *ha piovuto sassi*, where the verb is auxiliated with *avere*, would present theory-internal problems. Since such cases behave like transitive constructions, our revised proposal would have to claim that here the verb licenses both a true argument (in object position) and a hidden argument (as a subject). Such an analysis violates Burzio’s Generalization, since *piovere* would not license an external theta-role, and yet it would be able to assign structural case to its object (the postverbal nominal). Hence, an expanded version of Torrego’s proposal would force us to either claim that *piovere*-type verbs assign partitive case

to their object (assuming, as Belletti 1988 does, that partitive is not subject to Burzio's Generalization) or revise Burzio's Generalization so that all and only verbs that assign *an external argument* (narrowly construed as a syntactic dependent in [Spec,VP], not as a theta position) can also assign structural case to their object. At any rate, Torrego's analysis would require a modification of the Projection Principle so as to allow not only theta-role assignment, but also case assignment to project syntactic positions, as proposed by Authier (1991) (cf. Hazout 2004). Under this proposal, for example, the equivalent of my unergative *piovere* in (40) would license nominative case, but not an external theta-role, so it would project a subject position filled by an expletive. Since Burzio's Generalization and the Projection Principle have no status in RG theory, I do not pursue these options any further.

3. Weather expressions in Basque

Weather expressions in Basque typically involve a light verb combining with a nominal designating a meteorological phenomenon. Of these verbs, three are relevant here: *egin* 'do/make', *bota* 'throw' and *ekarri* 'bring' (51) (cf. note 23 below). Before analyzing these expressions, we need some background information about Basque morphosyntax and the non-meteorological uses of *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri*. I turn to these issues in the next subsections.

- (51) a. *euria egin* 'rain' (lit. 'do rain'), *haizea egin* 'be windy' (lit. 'do wind')
 b. *euria bota* 'rain' (lit. 'throw rain'), *elurra bota* 'snow' (lit. 'throw snow')
 c. *ekaitza ekarri* 'storm' (lit. 'bring storm')

3.1 Case-marking, verb agreement and auxiliary selection in Basque

A pro-drop language with both null subjects and null objects (Oyharçabal 1991, 1993), Basque has a relatively free word order, though it favors SOV as the unmarked order (Ortiz de Urbina 2003b). There are a wide variety of cases, including ergative, absolutive and dative, among others. With a few exceptions (*ekarri* 'bring' being one of them), finite verbs are typically periphrastic, and they usually consist of an invariable participial form and an auxiliary that carries all the agreement marking. Verb agreement can register the grammatical relations of up to three nominals in the clause,

which are usually marked with ergative, absolutive and dative (Levin 1983, Mejías-Bikandi 1990, Zubiri-Ibarrondo 1991, Etxepare 2003b).

Nominals (or, more precisely, noun phrases) are case-marked according to the rule in (52), adapted from Mejías-Bikandi (1990: 263).

- (52) CASE-MARKING ON NPs: The case of a noun phrase is determined by the lowest term relation it holds in the clause, according to the relational hierarchy 1>2>3. If the lowest relation the NP holds in the clause is a 1, it bears ergative case; if it is a 2, it is marked with absolutive; and if it is a 3, it has dative case.

The operation of this rule is exemplified in Inversion structures like (53), which involves the verb *gustatu* ‘like’ (example from Mejías-Bikandi 1990: 268–269). As I noted in section 2.3, in Inversion structures the nominal that was initially the subject becomes an indirect object via 1-3 demotion. In (53) *neska* ‘girl’ undergoes 1-3 demotion in the second stratum, triggering unaccusative advancement of the underlying direct object (*mutila* ‘boy’) in the third stratum to satisfy the requirement that all clauses must have a surface subject. As predicted by the rule in (52), *neska* shows dative case because the lowest term relation that this nominal holds in the clause is a 3. *Mutila* bears (zero-marked) absolutive case because the lowest term relation it bears is a 2.

(53)	2	1	P	
	2	3	P	
	1	3	P	
	1	3	Cho	P
	Mutil-a	neska-ri	gustatu	zaio
	boy-det-abs(3sg)	girl-dat(3sg)	like	be-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)
	‘The girl likes the boy.’			

In (53) the clause is auxiliated with *izan* ‘be’ in the final stratum. Verb agreement in Basque follows the rule in (54) (C. Rosen p.c., cf. Mejías-Bikandi 1990: 264). Note that this rule requires that the nominals registered in verb morphology bear a term relation in the *final* stratum of the clause, not just in any stratum.

- (54) VERB AGREEMENT: The verb bearing the Predicate relation in the last stratum registers all final terms according to the lowest term grammatical relation they hold in the clause. A 1 determines ergative case, a 2 absolutive case, and a 3 dative case.

In (53) the auxiliary registers the two nominals that bear a term relation in the final stratum (*mutila* and *neska*) according to the lowest term relation they hold in the clause (2 and 3, respectively). Thus, *mutila* is registered as an absolutive, and *neska* as a dative.

Like Italian, Basque also exhibits an unaccusative/unergative contrast (Levin 1983, Mejías-Bikandi 1990, Hualde and Ortiz de Urbina 2003, cf. Laka 1993). Among other properties, the contrast is marked by case-marking on the surface subject. Thus, the subject of unergatives like *dirdiratu* ‘shine’ (55) bears ergative case, just like the subject of transitives (56). By contrast, the sole argument of unaccusatives like *etorri* ‘come’ is marked with absolutive (57), just like the direct object of transitives (examples from Mejías-Bikandi 1990: 271). Given the case-marking rule in (52), this contrast reveals that the surface subject of unergatives is an initial 1 (an underlying subject), whereas the argument of unaccusatives is an initial 2 (an underlying direct object).

- (55) *Izarr-ak dirdiratu du.* *unergative*
 star-erg shine have-erg(3sg)
 ‘The star shined.’

- (56) *Miren-ek ni ikusi nau.* *transitive*
 Miren-erg me-abs(1sg) see have-abs(1sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Miren saw me.’

- (57) *Gizon-a etorri da.* *unaccusative*
 man-det-abs come be-abs(3sg)
 ‘The man came.’

As (56)–(57) show, the transitivity contrast is also marked by auxiliary selection and verb agreement. Unaccusative verbs are auxiliated with *izan* ‘be’ and show absolutive agreement with their sole argument, whereas unergatives occur with *edun/ukan* ‘have’ and register their subject as an ergative, just like transitive verbs (Levin 1983, Mejías-Bikandi 1990, Etxepare 2003b). The rule for auxiliary selection in Basque is the same as in Italian: a sentence is auxiliated with the ‘be’ auxiliary if, and only if, it

contains a nominal bearing both the 1 and 2 relations in the same clause, otherwise it is auxiliated with ‘have’.

Similar to what we find in Italian, the transitivity contrast is confirmed by the distribution of partitive case. Since this case marks only underlying direct objects, it can be assigned to the direct object of transitive verbs (58) and the sole argument of unaccusatives (59), but not to the subject of unergatives (60) (Levin 1983, Etxepare 2003a).¹⁷

(58) *Ez du gizon-ak ikusi ikasler-ik.*
 not have-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg) man-erg see student-part
 ‘The man didn’t see any student/a (single) student.’

(59) *Ez da gizon-ik etorri.*
 not be-abs(3sg) man-part come
 ‘No man/men came.’

(60) **Katur-ik ez du kurritu.*
 cat-part not have-erg(3sg) run
 ‘No cat ran.’

3.2 Non-meteorological uses of *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri*

Egin ‘do/make’, *bota* ‘throw’ and *ekarri* ‘bring’ are often used as heavy (i.e. semantically full) verbs. As (61) illustrates, heavy *egin*, *ekarri* and *bota* are transitive verbs that can also license an optional dative-marked recipient/beneficiary (Etxepare 2003b). As expected, these verbs take the ‘have’ auxiliary, which registers the subject as an ergative, the direct object as an absolutive, and the indirect object (if any) as a dative. Also as expected, their direct object can bear partitive case (62).

(61) a. *Jon-ek Maria-ri ogi-a egin zion.*
 Jon-erg Maria-dat bread-det-abs make have-past-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Jon made some/the bread for Maria.’

¹⁷ As Levin (1983) and Etxepare (2003a) note, partitive case requires licensing by some polar element and is found primarily under the scope of negation in alternation with absolutive. Like Italian, Basque has a further diagnostic for underlying objects: participial adjective formation. I ignore this test here due to space considerations.

- b. *Jon-ek ogi-a ekarri du.*
 Jon-erg bread-det-abs bring have-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Jon brought some/the bread.’

- (62) *Jon-ek ez zion Maria-ri ogi-rik*
 Jon-erg not have-past-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)-erg(3sg) Maria-dat bread-part
egin.
 make
 ‘Antonio didn’t make any bread for Maria.’

Egin and, to a lesser degree, *bota* and *ekarri* are also used as light or semi-light verbs when they combine with a noun predicate, as in *hitz egin* ‘speak’ (lit. ‘do a word’), *madarikazioak bota* ‘curse’ (lit. ‘throw curses’) and *manu ekarri* ‘order’ (lit. ‘bring an order’). These structures are illustrated in (63) using light *egin*, which is extremely productive in Basque. As in other Light Verb Constructions (LVCs), here the argument structure is determined by the noun predicate in object position, not by the verb (Levin 1983, Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Laka 1993, Alonso Ramos 2001, Etxepare 2003b, cf. Rodríguez and García Murga 2001). Thus, in (63) the nominal *argazkia* ‘photograph’ licenses the two semantic arguments of the clause: *Jon* (the photographer), and *Maria* (the photographee). (Note that, as (64) shows, *Maria* is optional, just like the indirect object of heavy *egin*.) Like their heavy counterparts above, these LVCs are auxiliated with ‘have’, and their surface subject is marked with ergative case. The noun predicate (typically a bare NP) can bear partitive case (65), subject to some aspectual restrictions (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Etxepare 2003b).¹⁸ This possibility reveals that the nominal is the underlying object of the light verb.

- (63) *Jon-ek Maria-ri argazki-a egin zion*
 Jon-erg Maria-dat photograph-det-abs do have-past-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Jon took a picture of Maria.’

- (64) *Jon-ek argazki-a egin zuen*
 Jon-erg picture-det-abs do have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Jon took a picture.’

¹⁸ According to Etxepare (2003b), partitive can be assigned to nominals denoting delimited events (e.g. *eztul/salto egin* ‘cough/jump’), but not to those designating achievements (e.g. *leher egin* ‘explode’) or activities with no clear delimiting point (e.g. *gogoeta egin* ‘think’).

- (65) *Antonio-k ez zion*
 Antonio-erg not have-past-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)-erg(3sg)
Maria-ri argazki-rik egin.
 Maria-dat photograph-part do
 ‘Antonio didn’t take any pictures of Maria.’

Though these LVCs involve different degrees of lexicalization and syntactic freedom, many have the same basic properties as regular verb + direct object sequences (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Uribe-Etxebarria 1989 cited in Laka 1993, Laka 1993, Etxepare 2003b, Alonso Ramos 2001, Zabala 2004, cf. Rodríguez and García Murga 2001).¹⁹ Besides the possibility of partitive case-marking on the noun predicate, the transitivity of these LVCs is corroborated by two facts. First, as (66) illustrates, the noun predicate can be targeted by a number of syntactic operations, e.g. *wh*-movement (a) and focalization (b), just like a ‘regular’ direct object (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Uribe-Etxebarria 1989 cited in Laka 1993, Etxepare 2003b; examples from Laka 1993: 153). Second, when these LVCs are causativized, the causee bears dative case and is registered as a dative by verb morphology (67), just like causativized transitive verbs, and unlike causativized unergatives, whose causee is an absolutive (Ortiz de Urbina 1989, Etxepare 2003b; example from Etxepare 2003b: 398–399).²⁰

¹⁹ This point has been sometimes obscured by the fact that some descriptive and explanatory accounts fail to distinguish true LVCs—where the noun predicate alone determines the argument structure, as in *lan egin* ‘work’, literally ‘do work’—from idioms, where the nominal in object position is not an autonomous predicate licensing the participants, e.g. *hanka egin* ‘get out’, literally ‘do/make a leg’ and *turru egin* ‘make fun’, literally ‘do/make trumpet’ (cf. Alonso Ramos 2001, Rodríguez and García Murga 2001).

²⁰ Importantly, the transitivity of these LVCs is independent of the (presumed) syntactic valence of the noun predicates involved. For example, some *egin* LVCs contain nominals that are morphologically related to unergative verbs (e.g. *dantza egin* literally ‘do a dance’ / *dantzatu* ‘(to) dance’), whereas others involve nouns associated with unaccusative verbs (e.g. *solas(ean) egin* literally ‘do a chat’ / *solastu* ‘(to) chat’). The status of these nominals with respect to the unaccusative/unergative contrast is somewhat controversial in the literature (see, among others, Laka 1993, Rodríguez and García Murga 2001 and Etxepare 2003b; cf. Alba-Salas’ 2002 claim that noun predicates in Romance are uniformly transitive, regardless of whether they are morphologically related to transitive, unergative or unaccusative verbs). At any rate, what is crucial here is that, regardless of the valence of the nominals involved, the LVCs analyzed behave as transitive structures, with the nominal as the (underlying) object of the light verb.

- (66) a. *Nork egin du lan?*
 who-erg do have-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg) work
 ‘Who has worked?’
- b. *Oso ondo egin duzu lan.*
 very well do have-abs(3sg)-erg(2sg) work
 ‘You have worked *very well*.’
- (67) *Jon-i dantza egin-arazi diote.*
 Jon-dat dance do-cause have-abs(3sg)-dat(3sg)-erg(3pl)
 ‘They made Jon dance.’

As we can see, LVCs with *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri* are syntactically transitive, and the noun predicate behaves both as a predicate and as the underlying direct object of the light verb. RG has long recognized the dual nature of noun predicates both as predicates capable of licensing their own arguments and as syntactic dependents that can function as arguments of other predicates.²¹ Building upon Dubinsky’s (1990) analysis of Japanese LVCs, I capture this property by claiming that noun predicates in Basque bear both the Predicate and direct object relations simultaneously, i.e. that they are P,2 multiattached. The analysis is illustrated in (68), which corresponds to (64). This structure is serial in Rosen’s (1997) sense. Simplifying matters a good deal, a serial structure is a monoclausal construction involving two or more predicates ‘stacking up’ one after the other. Each predicate inherits the dependents licensed by the embedded predicate (the predicate holding the P relation in the previous stratum). Of these inherited dependents, at least one (but not necessarily all) must satisfy the argument structure of the inheriting predicate. Inherited dependents that satisfy the argument structure of the inheriting predicate receive an additional theta-role from this predicate (cf. section 2.3). On the other hand, inherited dependents that do not satisfy the argument structure of the inheriting predicate simply ‘fall through’ without any additional theta-marking.

²¹ As La Fauci (2000) notes, this dual function, which has a long tradition within semantic theory, was first formalized by Carol Rosen in the late 1980s in unpublished work that is partly summarized in Blake (1990). For a recent Minimalist analysis that has some important parallels with Rosen’s proposal, see Hazout (2004).

(68)

	1	P,2		
	1	Cho,2	P	
	1	2	P	
	1	2	Cho	P
	Jon-ek	argazki-a	egin	zuen
	Jon-erg	picture-det-abs	do	have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)
	‘Jon took a picture.’			

In (68) the nominal *argazkia*, the initial predicate of the clause, bears both the P and 2 relations simultaneously and licenses *Jon* as a subject.²² In the second stratum *argazkia* loses its P relation to the light verb, the new predicate of the clause. Light *egin* inherits *Jon* as a subject and the noun predicate itself as a direct object. In the third stratum the resulting 2,Cho multiattachment of *argazkia* is resolved in favor of the 2 relation, since it is higher than a Chômeur in the relational hierarchy (see section 2.3). Finally, in the fourth stratum the clause is auxiliated. Since the subject of the auxiliary does not bear also the 2 relation in the clause, ‘have’ is selected. The auxiliary registers the two syntactic dependents that bear a grammatical relation in the final stratum, i.e. *Jon* (as an ergative) and *argazkia* (as an absolutive), according to our rule in (54).

Now we can return to weather expressions.

3.3 Weather expressions with *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri*

As in the LVCs above, in meteorological expressions with *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri* the weather nominal behaves both as a predicate and as the underlying direct object of the verb. This claim is corroborated by two facts. First, the weather nominal can license locative and temporal adverbials (69). Second, the nominal can be marked with partitive case (70).

(69) *Atzo hotz handi-a egin zuen.*
 yesterday cold big-det-abs do have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)
 ‘Yesterday it was very cold.’

²² There is evidence that in Basque, contrary to what Dubinsky (1990) posits for Japanese, P,2 multiattachment of the noun predicate occurs in the initial, as opposed to an intermediate, stratum. However, this claim is irrelevant to my argumentation.

- (70) *Ez zuen elurr-ik egin/bota.*
 not have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg) snow-part do/throw
 ‘It didn’t snow.’

As (71) illustrates, these weather expressions are obligatorily auxiliated with ‘have’ (Etxepare 2003b). Crucially, the auxiliary registers not only a (zero-marked) absolutive corresponding to the weather nominal, but, more importantly, also an ergative, similar to what we find with transitive verbs. Since the independently motivated verb agreement rule in (54) requires dependents registered by verb morphology to bear a term (1,2 or 3) relation in the *final* stratum of the clause, the element triggering ergative agreement in these LVCs must be an empty category holding the subject relation in the final stratum. In other words, the structures must contain a phonologically null surface subject. This fact, together with the possibility of partitive case on the weather nominal, leads us to conclude that weather LVCs with *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri* are syntactically transitive in their final stratum.

- (71) a. *Elurr-a egi-ten du* / **da.*
 snow-det-abs do-habit have-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg) be-abs(3sg)
 ‘It (usually) snows.’
- b. *Euri-a bota zuen* / **zen*
 rain-det-abs throw have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg) be-past-abs(3sg)
 ‘It rained.’

Under my proposal, these weather expressions have the representation illustrated in (72). Similar to what we saw in (68), here the weather nominal is the initial predicate of the clause and also bears the direct object relation simultaneously. The difference is that here the weather nominal licenses an expletive subject in the initial stratum, just like *piovere*-type verbs in Italian. The Predicate relation borne by the nominal is usurped by the light verb, which inherits the initial expletive as a subject and the nominal itself as a direct object (second stratum). Since the initial expletive only bears the subject relation in the clause, the sentence takes the ‘have’ auxiliary, which registers the empty subject as an ergative.²³

²³ Not all weather nominals in Basque subcategorize for an expletive subject. For example, nouns like *lainoa* ‘fog’ and *sargoria* ‘sultry weather’ do not license a dummy. According to my native speaker informants, these nominals do not combine with transitive *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri*. Instead, they appear in existential constructions with

(72)

	1	P,2		
	1	Cho,2	P	
	1	2	P	
	1	2	Cho	P
InExp	elurr-a	snow-det-abs	egin do	zuen have-past-abs(3sg)-erg(3sg)

izan ‘be’ and *egon* ‘be (in a location)’, e.g. *sargori egon/izan* ‘be sultry weather’. In my analysis weather expressions with *sargoria*-type nominals are intransitive constructions with the representation illustrated in (i). Here the weather noun is still the initial predicate of the clause and bears the 2 relation—P,2 multiattachment being a defining property of noun predicates in Basque and Romance (cf. Alba-Salas 2002). The fact that this nominal holds the 2 relation explains why it bears absolutive case, given our case-marking rule above. Because of an independently motivated principle banning predicates from holding the subject position (see Dubinsky 1990, Alba-Salas 2002 for details), the weather noun cannot undergo unaccusative advancement. Hence, the direct object relation held by the weather noun must be chômeurized by a traditional expletive that is born as a 2 (second stratum), in accordance with the Active Dummy Law. After subsequent unaccusative advancement of the dummy (third stratum), the resulting P,Cho multiattachment of the weather noun is resolved in favor of the higher P relation (fourth stratum). In the last stratum the P relation held by the weather noun is usurped by the verb, the final predicate of the clause, which registers the dummy as an absolutive according to the verb agreement rule above.

(i)

	P,2			
	P,Cho		2	
	P,Cho		1	
	P		1	
	Cho	P	1	
	Sargori-a	zegoen	<i>Dummy</i>	
	sultry.weather-det-abs	be-past-abs(3sg)		
	‘It was sultry.’			

This proposal can also explain why weather nouns like *euria* ‘rain’ and *elurra* ‘snow’, which (as we saw above) do combine with *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri*, can also appear in existential constructions with *izan* and *egon*, though with some apparent variation across dialects and speakers, e.g. *euria izan* ‘rain’, literally ‘be rain’ (cf. Ortiz de Urbina 2003a). The alternation follows from the fact that (for those speakers who allow *izan* and *egon*) the initial expletive licensed by nouns like *euria* is optional. If the nominal licenses its expletive subject, it appears in LVCs with *egin*, *bota* or *ekarri*, and the clause is auxiliated with ‘have’, as discussed above. On the other hand, if the nominal does not license an expletive, it appears with *izan* or *egon*, just like *sargoria* in (i).

As in the case of weather verbs in Italian, an analysis that treats the empty category in these weather expressions as a quasi-argument licensed by the weather nominal must rely on the poorly-defined, ad-hoc notion of a quasi-argument (cf. section 2.2). An alternative analysis based on traditional expletives is also problematic. First, it must posit an obligatory dummy subject only in these weather expressions, but not in other light and heavy *egin*, *bota* and *ekarri* structures (cf. section 3.2). This construction-specific stipulation misses an important insight captured by my analysis, i.e. that the obligatory presence of an expletive is contingent upon the presence of a weather predicate (the nominal in object position). Moreover, the analysis also violates the Valence Initiality Principle by requiring the appearance of a non-subcategorized expletive (cf. section 2.3). Second, the account must stipulate that the expletive does not form a chain with the weather nominal. In RG terms, the dummy must obligatorily be born as a 1, not as a 2 (if it were born as a 2, the dummy would undergo unaccusative advancement, so the clause would be auxiliated with ‘be’ and the auxiliary would only register an absolutive, but not an ergative).

So far I have argued that initial expletives can be licensed by a fairly restricted, semantically homogeneous class of lexical items, i.e. (a subset of) weather predicates in Basque and Italian (cf. Hazout 2004 and my discussion thereof in section 6). In the next sections I show that lexically selected expletives can also be licensed by non-meteorological predicates in French and Spanish.²⁴

4. French *falloir* constructions

French *falloir* ‘be necessary’ constructions include a postverbal nominal and a phonologically overt expletive (*il* ‘it’) in preverbal position (73).

²⁴ An anonymous reviewer suggests that the case for lexically selected expletives in Basque is reinforced by weather verbs such as *berotu* ‘warm up’, *hoztu* ‘cool down’, *ilundu* ‘get dark’ and *atertu* ‘stop raining/snowing’. As the reviewer himself notes (see also Etxepare 2003b), these verbs are obligatorily auxiliated with ‘have’, and they register a phonologically null ergative subject. Moreover, as Ortiz de Urbina (2003a: 577) argues, these verbs sometimes appear with a direct object in structures that “show all of the earmarks of regular transitive constructions”. Under my analysis, *berotu*-type verbs would subcategorize for an expletive subject and an optional theme object, just like transitive *piovere* in Italian (cf. (46)). Due to space considerations, I cannot develop this analysis any further.

- (73) *Il faut des techniciens.*
 it is-needed some technicians
 ‘We need some technicians.’

The postverbal nominal can be cliticized with partitive *en* ‘of it/them’ (74), just like the direct object of a transitive verb (75), and unlike the postverbal nominal in a typical idiom chunk (76). Moreover, the postverbal nominal can take *de* + *noun* under the scope of negation (77). As Abeillé (1997) and Marandin (2001) note, in French only (underlying) objects can both be targeted by partitive *en* and take the form *de N* in negative contexts. We thus conclude that the postverbal nominal in (73) is the underlying direct object of *falloir*.

- (74) *Il en faut.*
 it en is-needed
 ‘We need some (of them).’

- (75) (a) *Marie veut des techniciens.*
 Marie wants some technicians
 ‘Marie wants some technicians.’

- (b) *Marie en veut.*
 Marie en wants
 ‘Marie wants some (of them).’

- (76) (a) *Marie fait du cinéma.*
 Marie does some movie
 ‘Marie is pretending/putting it on.’

- (b) **Marie en fait.*
 Marie en does [idiomatic interpretation]

- (77) *Il ne faut plus de techniciens.*
 it not is-needed more of technicians
 ‘We don’t need more technicians.’

Falloir does not pattern together with unaccusative verbs.²⁵ As (78) shows, unaccusative verbs such as *arriver* ‘arrive’ allow their sole argument to be either preverbal (in personal constructions) or postverbal (in impersonal structures with expletive *il* ‘it’, cf. section 2.3). This argument

²⁵ I thank Carol Rosen (p.c.) for first bringing this fact to my attention.

controls verb agreement in the personal construction (a), but not in its impersonal counterpart (b). By contrast, the nominal licensed by *falloir* cannot be preverbal, regardless of whether it triggers verb agreement or not (79). The impossibility of (79) indicates that the object of *falloir* cannot undergo unaccusative advancement, contrary to what we find with *arriver*-type verbs.

- (78) (a) *Des choses comme ça arrivent.* *personal*
 some things like that arrive
 ‘Things like that happen.’
- (b) *Il arrive des choses comme ça.* *impersonal*
 it arrives some things like that
 ‘Things like that happen.’
- (79) **Des techniciens faut / faillent.* **personal*
 some technicians is-needed are-needed
 ‘We need some technicians.’

In my analysis the unique properties of *falloir* stem from the fact that it is a transitive verb that licenses a theme object and an expletive subject. Like the subject of weather nominals in Basque and *piovere*-type verbs in Italian, the 1 of *falloir* is an initial expletive. The only difference is that it is realized as an overt pronoun (*il*) because French, unlike Basque and Italian, is not *pro*-drop. Thus, *falloir* constructions have the representation in (80).

- (80) 1 P 2
 il faut des techniciens

The impossibility of unaccusative advancement of the postverbal nominal follows from independently motivated conditions on syntactic representations. Specifically, the ungrammaticality of (79) follows from the Nuclear Dummy Law in (32), which prevents expletives from bearing any grammatical relation other than subject or direct object. As (81) shows, if the postverbal nominal underwent unaccusative advancement, it would leave the initial expletive bearing the Chômeur relation, violating the Nuclear Dummy Law.

(81)	1	2	P	
	Cho	1	P	<i>*by Nuclear Dummy Law</i>
	<i>*InExp</i>	des techniciens	faut/faillent	

A quasi-argument analysis would be inadequate here. Suppose that we claimed that movement of the postverbal nominal is blocked by a quasi-argument (*il*) merged or base-generated in subject position. Given its lack of thematic content, it is impossible to characterize the special theta-role presumably borne by this quasi argument in any meaningful terms. At any rate, the subject of *falloir* cannot be the same atmospheric quasi-argument posited for weather verbs. Thus, we would have to posit at least two types of quasi-arguments associated with different semantic properties: an atmospheric quasi argument for weather predicates, and a quasi-argument with unidentified thematic properties for *falloir*. If we claimed that the *falloir* quasi-argument is semantically vacuous (as suggested by the evidence), we would be implicitly acknowledging the existence of non-argumental, subcategorized-for syntactic dependents, i.e. lexically selected expletives. At any rate, positing two different kinds of quasi-arguments further undermines the ad-hoc notion of a quasi-argument by proliferating its semantic properties.

An account using non-subcategorized expletives would also be inadequate. Under such a proposal, unaccusative advancement of the object of *falloir* would be blocked by a ‘traditional’ expletive in subject position. The problem is that we would have to stipulate that *falloir* constructions, unlike *arriver*-type structures, obligatorily require an expletive subject. Similar to what we saw in the case of weather predicates in Basque and Italian, this ad-hoc stipulation misses the insight (captured by my analysis) that the expletive’s presence follows from the lexical properties of *falloir*. Moreover, the analysis violates the Valence Initiality Principle by requiring the obligatory presence of an expletive that does not bear an initial grammatical relation to *falloir* (or to any other predicate, for that matter). Finally, the analysis has to require the expletive to be born as a 2 so that it chômeurizes the postverbal nominal, as required by the Active Dummy Law (82). As we know by now, if the dummy were born as a subject, as in (83), the structure would violate the Active Dummy Law, since the expletive would not chômeurize any nominal.

(82)

	P	2	
2	P	Cho	
1	P	Cho	
il	faut	des techniciens	

(83)

	P	2	
1	P	2	*by Active Dummy Law
il	faut	des techniciens	

As we have seen, *falloir* expressions are problematic for analyses using a quasi-argument or a traditional expletive, but they are amenable to an account with initial expletives. The initial expletive analysis is not ad-hoc, since lexically selected expletives are also needed for *piovere*-type verbs, weather expressions in Basque, and (as I argue below) existential *haber* in Spanish.²⁶

²⁶ At first sight, my analysis seems to be inconsistent with the fact that *falloir* constructions cannot occur with embedded infinitival clauses (i). The ungrammaticality of (ia) would seem to suggest that the expletive licensed by *falloir* cannot control the empty subject of the embedded infinitival, so it is not an initial expletive. However, (i) is not counterevidence against my proposal. Indeed, the ungrammaticality of (ia) follows from independent reasons, i.e. the fact that the infinitival form of *falloir* can only appear in the frozen expression *il va falloir* ‘it will be necessary’ (ii).

- (i) a. **Il faut des techniciens [sans [e] falloir des mécaniciens*
 it is-needed some technicians without be-needed some mechanics
 / *en falloir beaucoup*.
 en be-needed many
 lit. ‘Technicians are needed without mechanics being needed/too many of them being needed.’
- b. *Il faut des techniciens [sans qu’il faille des*
 it is-needed some technicians without that-it be-needed-3sgsome
mécaniciens/ en faille beaucoup].
 mechanics en be-needed-3sg many
 lit. ‘Technicians are needed without mechanics being needed/too many of them being needed.’
- (ii) a. **sans falloir / après avoir fallu / il semble falloir*
 without be-necessary after have been-necessary it seems be-necessary
 lit. ‘without/after it being necessary / it seems to be necessary’

5. Existential *haber* in Spanish

In contemporary Spanish existential *haber* ‘there is/are’ appears in two different constructions: one where the verb shows number agreement with the postverbal nominal (hereafter the agreeing construction), and another one where there is no such agreement (the non-agreeing construction). Although non-agreeing constructions are preferred by prescriptive grammarians (e.g. Seco 2000), both structures are entirely productive.²⁷ Importantly, these two constructions differ with respect to their syntactic properties (cf. Treviño 2003). As (84) shows, in the agreeing construction the postverbal nominal (*libros* ‘books’) cannot be cliticized with a direct object pronoun. In this respect, (84) patterns together with unaccusative structures like (85), where the underlying object controls verb agreement (a) and cannot be pronominalized with an object clitic (b).

(84) a. *Habían libros en cantidad.*
 there-were books in amount
 ‘There were lots of books.’

b. **Los habían en cantidad.*
 them there-were in amount
 ‘There were lots of them.’

(85) a. *La semana pasada llegaron/*llegó esos/unos/dos chicos.*
 the week past arrived-3pl/3sg those/some/two guys
 ‘Those/some/two guys arrived last week.’

b. **Los llegaron/llegó la semana pasada.*
 them arrived-3pl/3sg the week past
 ‘They arrived last week.’

b. *Il va falloir que tu lui téléphones.*
 it goes be-necessary that you him call
 ‘It will be necessary for you to call him.’

²⁷ As is typical in existential constructions, both agreeing and non-agreeing *haber* constructions tend to resist definite nominals (Suñer 1982, Treviño 2003; cf. Safir 1985, 1987, Belletti 1988, Lasnik 1995, Vangness 2002). However, it is important to note that, cross-linguistically, definiteness restrictions in existentials reflect robust preferences determined by pragmatic/semantic considerations, rather than absolute constraints (Pollard and Sag 1994, Ward and Birner 1995, Borschev and Partee 2002, Hazout 2004).

By contrast, as (86) shows, in the non-agreeing construction the postverbal nominal can be cliticized with a direct object pronoun. As (87) shows, this nominal patterns together with the direct object of transitive verbs, which does not control verb agreement (a) and can be pronominalized with an object clitic (b).

(86) a. *Había libros en cantidad.*
 there-was books in amount
 ‘There were lots of books.’

b. *Los había en cantidad.*
 them there-was in amount
 ‘There were lots of them.’

(87) a. *La semana pasada Rosa leyó/*leyeron esos/unos/dos libros.*
 the week past Rosa read-3sg/pl those/some/two books
 ‘Last week Rosa read those/some/two books.’

b. *Rosa los leyó la semana pasada.*
 Rosa them read the week past
 ‘Rosa read them last week.’

Agreeing constructions are perfectly amenable to an analysis with traditional dummies, since they are impersonal unaccusative structures (cf. section 2.3). As (88) illustrates, they involve an unaccusative existential verb that licenses the postverbal nominal as a direct object. A dummy inserted as a 2 usurps the object relation from this nominal (second stratum) and then undergoes unaccusative advancement (third stratum). Among other properties, the analysis explains why *haber* shows number agreement with the postverbal nominal. Like Italian, Spanish has brother-in-law agreement. Hence, as we saw in section 2.3, the verb must agree with the nominal chômeurized by the expletive (its associate, in GB/Minimalist terms). In (88) the dummy chômeurizes *libros* in the second stratum, so the postverbal nominal is the brother-in-law of the expletive. Since the dummy is the final subject of the clause, *libros* controls verb agreement.

(88)		P	2
	2	P	Cho
	1	P	Cho
	D	habían	libros
		there-were	books

On the other hand, non-agreeing constructions are problematic. As a first approximation, we could claim that these structures involve the same unaccusative *haber* found in agreeing constructions. The difference would simply involve the fact that *haber* can optionally show number agreement with the postverbal nominal. However, such an analysis is ad-hoc and empirically inadequate. First, it does not explain why *haber* should be different from other unaccusative verbs in Spanish, which show obligatory number agreement with their sole argument (cf. (85) above). Second, the analysis does not explain why in non-agreeing constructions the postverbal nominal can be pronominalized (86), just as in transitive sentences (87), and contrary to what we find with unaccusative verbs (85) and in the agreeing construction (84).

Given the parallels between non-agreeing constructions and transitive sentences, it is reasonable to conclude that the former, like *falloir* expressions, have a finally transitive stratum with an empty category bearing the subject relation and the postverbal nominal as the direct object (*e había libros*). Again, the issue is what type of empty category we have here. This empty subject is devoid of any thematic content, and it cannot be claimed to bear the same atmospheric theta-role posited for weather predicates. As in the case of *falloir*, positing a different type of quasi-argument for *haber* would further undermine the already problematic notion of a quasi-argument. Moreover, positing a semantically vacuous quasi-argument is simply a notational variant of my initial expletive analysis.

An alternative analysis of non-agreeing constructions with traditional expletives is inadequate for two reasons. First, an analysis with traditional expletives does not explain why the empty subject of *haber*, like the subject of *piovere*, can be a controller (89). Second, to account for the lack of verb agreement, we would have to stipulate that the structure obligatorily contains a dummy, and that the expletive must be born as a 1, not as a 2 (90). (Again, in traditional GB terms, we would have to stipulate that the expletive and its associate do not form a chain. In more recent Minimalist proposals, we would have to stipulate that Agree does not apply here.) As

As (92) shows, in the non-agreeing construction the postverbal nominal is a 2 in a transitive stratum (with the initial expletive bearing the 1 relation), so it can be targeted by an object clitic. By contrast, as (88) above shows, in the agreeing construction the postverbal nominal is a 2 in the first stratum, but this stratum is not transitive because there is no subject. Thus, it cannot be pronominalized (cf. Treviño 2003).

Importantly, my account of *haber* structures is compatible with La Fauci and Loporcaro's recent RG analysis of Romance existentials, where the postverbal nominal is both the initial predicate of the clause and the underlying object of the existential verb, so it bears both the P and 2 relations simultaneously (La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997, Loporcaro and La Fauci 1997, La Fauci 2000; cf. Hazout 2004 for a similar proposal within Minimalism). Adapting my analysis to La Fauci and Loporcaro's proposal only requires some trivial modifications to the structures posited above. Thus, the agreeing (impersonal unaccusative) construction would have the representation in (93). This is exactly like the Dummy Birth structure in (88). The difference is that here the postverbal nominal *libros* bears both the P and 2 relations simultaneously in the initial stratum. The 2 relation held by *libros* is chômeurized by the dummy (which becomes the final subject of the clause), and its P relation is usurped by existential *haber* (the final predicate of the clause).²⁸

(93)			P,2
		P	2,Cho
		P	2
2		P	Cho
1		P	Cho
<i>D</i>	habían		libros

²⁸ Since La Fauci and Loporcaro regard existentials as auxiliated, as opposed to serial, structures in Rosen's (1997) technical sense, (i) is a more accurate representation. The difference between (i) and (93) is irrelevant to my argumentation.

(i)			P,2
			P,Cho
2			P
1			
1		P	Cho
<i>D</i>	habían		libros

The non-agreeing construction would have the representation in (94). As in (93), here the postverbal nominal is also the initial predicate of the clause but loses the P relation to the existential verb. The difference is that here *haber* licenses an expletive subject, according to its valence in (91), so *libros* keeps the 2 relation and is thus the direct object of *haber* in the final stratum.

(94)		P,2
1	P	2,Cho
1	P	2
<i>InExp</i>	había	libros

6. Lexically selected expletives in English and German?

Because the default option is for syntactic dependents to be mapped onto a theta-role, predicates subcategorizing for an expletive are expected to occur only sporadically in natural languages. For the sake of offering a more complete picture of the phenomenon, in this section I consider the possibility that such predicates can also be found in English and German. Since space considerations preclude a full discussion of the facts, I must limit myself to sketching an analysis to be elaborated in future research.

One group of predicates that seem amenable to an analysis with lexically selected expletives includes the adjectives found in English meteorological expressions such as *it's cold today*, *it's getting dark* and *it's very hot*. As Hazout (2004) notes, here the pronoun *it* shows all the properties that Postal and Pullum (1988) attribute to English expletives, since it cannot support emphatic reflexives (**it is itself too cold today*), it cannot appear in nominalization *of*-phrases (**my observation/description of it being cold*), and it cannot appear as *tough*-movement subjects (**it was tough to prevent from becoming dark in this room*). According to my proposal, adjectives like *cold*, *dark* and *hot* would license an underlying object that is mapped either onto an expletive (in weather expressions like *it's cold today*) or onto a theme (in their non-meteorological uses, as in *the tea is cold*). The claim that the expletive licensed by *cold*-type predicates is an underlying object is consistent with the independently motivated assumption that adjectives in English and Romance are uniformly

unaccusative (C. Rosen p.c.).²⁹ As (95) illustrates, in weather expressions *cold*-type adjectives would license an expletive direct object that becomes the final subject of the clause after undergoing unaccusative advancement. This analysis echoes Rothstein's (1995) view that adjectives (like other syntactic categories) can act as predicates defined in purely syntactic terms (see section 1). The difference is that my proposal claims that (at least in English and Romance) adjectival predicates license their syntactic argument (whether it be a theme or an expletive) as a direct object, not as a subject, where both grammatical functions are understood as syntactic primitives in the traditional RG sense.

²⁹ Among other sources, evidence for the unaccusative status of adjectives in these languages comes from auxiliary selection in Italian. As is well-known, Italian adjectives appear with *essere* 'be', not with *avere* 'have' (e.g. *Paolo è/*ha intelligente* literally 'Paolo is/has intelligent'). According to RG, the presence of the auxiliary follows from the fact that adjectives in English and Romance cannot be the final predicate of the clause, since they cannot bear tense and aspect inflection (cf. Mirto 1990). The choice of *essere* follows straightforwardly from the auxiliary selection rule in (37) above, which applies not only to structures where the auxiliated predicate is a verb (e.g. *Paolo è arrivato* 'Paolo arrived', *Paolo ha visto Eva* 'Paolo saw Eva'), but also to those where the auxiliated predicate is an adjective or a nominal (e.g. *Paolo è intelligente* 'Paolo is intelligent', *Paolo è un professore* 'Paolo is a teacher', *Paolo ha fiducia in Eva* 'Paolo has trust in Eva'). As we saw in section 2.4, the 'be' auxiliary is selected if the final subject also bears the direct object relation elsewhere in the clause, otherwise we choose 'have'. As (ia) illustrates, in a sentence like *Paolo è intelligente* 'Paolo is intelligent' the adjective is the initial predicate of the clause and licenses its sole arguments (*Paolo*) as a 2. *Paolo* subsequently undergoes unaccusative advancement and is inherited as a subject by the auxiliary, which usurps the Predicate relation from the adjective. Since *Paolo* bears both the 1 and 2 relations, the clause is auxiliated with *essere*. Importantly, the auxiliary selection facts wouldn't follow if the adjective licensed its argument as a subject (ib).

(i) a. [correct representation]

2		P
1		P
1	P	Cho
Paolo	è	intelligente

b. [incorrect representation]

1		P
1	P	Cho
Paolo	è	intelligente

(95)	a.	2	P	cf. b.	2	P
		1	P		1	P

		1	P	Cho		
		it	is	cold		
		<i>(InExp)</i>				

		1	P	Cho		
		the tea	is	cold		

My analysis also differs from Hazout's (2004) proposal. According to Hazout, weather expressions such as *it is cold (today/in Siberia)* involve an expletive subject that is merged into the specifier of a Predicative Phrase headed by *cold* (the predicate head) and subsequently moves to [Spec, IP] for feature-checking. In his view, these weather expressions illustrate a more general phenomenon involving the use of a predicate with an expletive subject. Hazout understands a subject-predicate relation as a purely formal syntactic relation between a head and a dependent that participates in case checking and, for the purposes of that relation, occupies a certain structural position. Semantically, such a configuration does not involve the attribution of a property to some specific entity. Instead, it involves choosing a location (either implicit or explicitly specified by an adjunct such as *today* or *in Siberia*) as the perspectival center, so that the situation is viewed in terms of this location and 'what's in it' (e.g. the instantiation of the property of being cold). Besides weather expressions like *it's cold (today/in Siberia)*, this use of a predicate with an expletive subject is also found with adjectives indicating color (e.g. *it's so green in Scotland*) and mood (e.g. *it's sad here*), among others. Although appealing, Hazout's proposal has two limitations. First, it does not explain why the locative phrase can be absent (or, in his analysis, syntactically implicit) with *cold*-type weather adjectives (e.g. *it's cold*), but not in color and mood expressions involving an expletive. In fact, in examples like *it's so green* and *it's sad* (contrary to what we find in *it's cold*), the absence of a locative phrase forces an argumental reading of the pronoun. This contrast indicates that weather expressions with *cold*-type adjectives are fundamentally different from color and mood expressions, i.e. that the expletive found in the former is not licensed by the same general mechanism presumably found in the latter. Second, given these considerations, it is unclear why the expletive found with *cold*-type adjectives must merge into the specifier of the Predicative Phrase (which encodes the 'core' of a syntactic predication) in the first place. My proposal avoids both problems by claiming that the expletive found in these weather expressions is licensed by *cold*-type

predicates, whereas the expletive found with *green-* and *sad-* type adjectives is a traditional dummy coindexed with the (obligatory) locative PP.

As an anonymous reviewer notes, certain German predicates also seem to provide additional evidence for lexically selected expletives. As is well known, in German (a non-pro-drop language) expletive *es* ‘it’ is obligatory in clause-initial position if no other element appears there, consistent with the V2 requirement (e.g. Bennis 1986, Svenonius 2002). There is, however, an important contrast in cases where some other element occupies the initial position: although pleonastic *es* is excluded clause internally in impersonal constructions (96) and existentials with *sein* ‘be’ (97), it can appear postverbally with existential *geben* ‘there is/are’ (literally ‘give’) (98) and weather verbs like *regnen* ‘rain’ (99).

(96) a. *Es/*Ø lebte hier einmal ein Mann.* [Bennis (1986: 309)]
 it lived here once a man
 ‘A man once lived here.’

b. *Hier lebte Ø/*es einmal ein Mann.*
 Here lived it once a man
 ‘A man once lived here.’

(97) a. *Es/*Ø waren Mäuse in der Badewanne.*
 it were mice in the bathtub
 ‘There were mice in the bathtub.’

b. *Gestern waren Ø/*es Mäuse in der Badewanne.*
 Yesterday were it mice in the bathtub
 ‘Yesterday there were mice in the bathtub.’

(98) a. *Es/*Ø gab Mäuse in der Badewanne.*
 it gave mice in the bathtub
 ‘There were mice in the bathtub.’

b. *Gestern gab es/*Ø Mäuse in der Badewanne.*
 yesterday gave it mice in the bathtub
 ‘Yesterday there were mice in the bathtub.’

(99) a. *Es/*Ø regnete.*
 it rained
 ‘It rained.’

- b. *Gestern regnete es/*Ø*.
 yesterday rained it
 ‘It rained yesterday.’

As the reviewer notes, this contrast follows straightforwardly if we assume that German has two types of expletives: a purely structural type inserted (in the specifier of C) to satisfy the V2 requirement, as in (96) and (97), and lexically selected expletives licensed by predicates like *geben* (98) and *regnen* (99). Importantly, my analysis does not require any additional machinery, since initial expletives are independently needed for predicates in other languages. By contrast, other proposals must posit a special type of category (e.g. our problematic weather quasi-argument, presumably found in (99)), an exceptional mechanism that may contradict some important theory-internal assumptions (e.g. Bennis’s 1986: 310–311 claim that pleonastic *es* always bears a theta-role but, unlike all other NPs, it does not require case), or some other stipulation (e.g. Svenonius’s 2002 claim that cases like (96) and (97) involve a phonologically null expletive, even though German is not a pro-drop language).

7. Towards a new theory of expletives

So far I have argued that lexically selected expletives are needed in order to account for weather predicates in Basque and Italian, French *falloir* expressions, a subset of existential *haber* constructions in Spanish, and possibly also for certain predicates in English and German. Although inadequate for the structures under consideration, non-subcategorized-for expletives are obviously still needed to account for existential constructions (e.g. *there is a book on the shelf*), extrapositions (e.g. *it’s ridiculous the way they all talk all at once* or *I took it for granted that you had a license*), raising structures (e.g. *there seems to be only one car in the street*) and impersonal constructions (e.g. *there arrived three men*) (cf. section 2.3).³⁰

³⁰ Under my analysis, traditional dummies are also found in most structures where Postal and Pullum (1988) posit an expletive in object position, e.g. extrapositions like *they never mentioned it to the candidate that there will be an appeal* and *they kept it from becoming too obvious that she was pregnant*. As (i) illustrates, here the extraposed clause is the initial direct object of the matrix verb and is subsequently chômeurized by a dummy born as a 2 (internal structure of the embedded clause omitted for simplicity). Like Postal and Pullum (1988), I argue that here the expletive is the direct object of the matrix verb at some level. However, the expletive is not an *initial* syntactic dependent

Given these considerations, our theory must include two types of expletives: traditional expletives, which I descriptively call *intrusive dummies* (100), and lexically selected, or initial, expletives (101). As I noted earlier, initial expletives and intrusive dummies may or may not differ in terms of their lexical (i.e. featural) properties. The key difference, however, is that initial expletives are licensed by a predicate’s valence, whereas intrusive dummies are not.³¹

(100) INTRUSIVE DUMMY (D): A syntactic dependent of the clause that
 (i) does not receive a theta-role and (ii) is not licensed by any predicate, so
 (iii) it does not bear an initial grammatical relation to any predicate.

(101) INITIAL EXPLETIVE (InExp): A syntactic dependent of the clause that
 (i) does not receive a theta-role but (ii) is licensed by the valence of a
 predicate, so (iii) it bears an *initial* grammatical relation to the predicate.

An important task here is to properly constrain the licensing and distribution of each type of expletive. As I noted earlier, initial expletives are only licensed by a handful of lexically-marked elements that are predicted to occur only sporadically in natural languages, since the default option is for syntactic dependents to be mapped onto a theta-role.

Like intrusive dummies, initial expletives are constrained by the Nuclear Dummy Law (32), which requires *all* expletives—whether intrusive or lexically selected—to bear only the subject or direct object

of this verb (cf. section 1). My analysis remains agnostic as to whether the pronoun found in idioms such as *John didn’t buy it* is a lexically selected expletive or whether it’s a regular pronoun with an unspecified referent (*buy it = buy the story/lie*), as discussed in section 1.

(i)	1	P		3	2
	1	P	2	3	Cho
	they	mentioned	it	[to the candidate]	[that there will be...]

³¹ It is possible that the contrast between initial expletives and intrusive dummies may be marked morphologically in some language. This is an empirical question open to future research. At any rate, we could speculate that the fact that morphology does not mark the difference between initial expletives and intrusive dummies in Romance and possibly in other languages follows from two factors: the lack of a lexical contrast between both types of expletives, and the homophony that typically pervades pronominal systems (the same reason why, for example, English *it* is an expletive and a referential pronoun).

relations. As we saw in section 2.3, this principle constrains not only the grammatical relations that expletives may bear in their departure stratum, but also the types of revaluations that they can undergo in the clause. The distribution of expletives is also restricted by the Active Dummy Law. In its traditional formulation in (33) this principle requires all expletives to chômeurize a 1 or a 2. However, as I noted earlier, the Active Dummy Law must be trivially reformulated so that it applies only to intrusive dummies, but not to their lexically selected counterparts (102).

(102) ACTIVE DUMMY LAW (REVISED): An intrusive dummy must chômeurize some nominal if the first stratum where the dummy bears a grammatical relation (i.e. its departure stratum) contains a 1 or a 2.

A further constraint on expletives has to do with their categorial status. Here I identified two surface realizations of lexically selected expletives: as empty categories (e.g. the subject of *piovere*-type verbs), and as phonologically overt pronouns (e.g. French *il*). Both realizations are consistent with the traditional view that expletives belong to the class of pronominals. Yet, my claim that syntactic licensing is not necessarily concomitant with theta-role assignment opens up the theoretical possibility that non-pronominal elements (i.e. NPs or DPs) could be licensed as syntactic dependents without receiving a semantic role. To exclude this possibility, I propose the principle in (103).

(103) Expletives must be pronouns (where a pronoun is defined as a nominal whose content is given exhaustively by a matrix of morphological features).

My analysis has identified lexically selected expletives holding the two grammatical relations permitted by the Nuclear Dummy Law: subject and direct object. Most of the predicates that we have studied here select expletive subjects (French *falloir*, Spanish *haber*, weather nominals in Basque, and the unergative and optionally transitive variants of *piovere*-type verbs in Italian). However, my analysis has also attested predicates licensing expletive objects, i.e. unaccusative weather verbs in Italian (cf. (42)), and possibly also *cold*-type adjectives in English. This picture is consistent with Postal and Pullum's (1988: 654) observation that subcategorized-for expletive objects seem to be "less frequent (in terms of some rather obscure notion of frequency of construction types or triggering predicates in a language)" than their subject counterparts, just as, for

example, agreement of verbs with direct objects is more ‘sporadic’ than their agreement with subjects.

8. Conclusion

Here I have argued for the existence of lexically selected expletives, using evidence from weather predicates in Basque and Italian, existential *haber* in Spanish, and French *falloir* constructions. Analyses based on either quasi-arguments or traditional (i.e. non-subcategorized-for) expletives are problematic on empirical, conceptual and theory-internal grounds. These problems can be easily resolved by acknowledging the possibility that certain predicates can license syntactic dependents that are not mapped onto a semantic role, i.e. lexically selected expletives. Besides providing a unified account of a variety of seemingly unrelated phenomena, the initial expletive analysis yields a parsimonious theory of expletives. By arguing that certain predicates can license expletives as subjects or underlying objects, my proposal contradicts the view that dummies can only occur as the subject of a clause or a syntactic predicate in Rothstein’s (1995) sense and provides additional support for Postal and Pullum’s (1988) claim that expletives can also appear in strictly subcategorized positions, thus challenging the traditional assumption that syntactic licensing is necessarily concomitant with semantic role assignment.

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Stance Taking in News Interviews

Abstract

This paper has two aims. First, section 2 introduces a summary of the theory of my dissertation (Haddington to appear). In it I provide an overview of an approach which combines, on the one hand, the successes and tools of conversation analysis, and on the other hand, the discourse-functional “theory of stance” (Du Bois 2004). I further suggest that in order to look at how co-participants construct and display their stances, an analysis of the simultaneously deployed linguistic resources, sequential aspects of turn design and turn construction, is required. Second, in section 3, I focus on the question of how stance taking can be studied with news interview data and consider an example of an intersubjective stance-taking activity called *positioning / alignment*. The second part of the paper relates to the author’s other work (Haddington 2002, to appear, under review-a, under review-b) which provide more detailed empirical accounts of stance taking and also the stance-taking activity reported at the end of this paper.

1. General introduction¹

The main aim of this paper is to provide an understanding of stance taking. In order to do this a distinction is made between the notions of *stance* and *stance taking*. *Stance* is used to refer to the speakers’ subjective attitudes toward something. It is suggested that *stance* has remained an elusive and complex concept. However, *stance taking*, which is the focus in this paper, can be understood as a dialogical and intersubjective activity. When co-

¹ This paper would not have been possible without the help of several people. It stems from a talk I gave at Kielentutkimuksen Kevätkoulu 2004 -conference in Jyväskylä, Finland in April 2004. I want to thank especially Arja Piirainen-Marsh and Sirpa Leppänen for their comments in Jyväskylä and the positive and encouraging discussions we have every time we meet. I also want to thank my colleagues in the *Interactional practices and linguistic resources of stance taking in spoken English* -project, Elise Kärkkäinen, Tiina Keisanen, Mirka Rauniomaa and Maarit Niemelä for the numerous and never-ending discussions we have regarding the essence of stance—and for their heartfelt support. I also want to express my gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful criticism and comments. All the remaining mistakes are my own.

participants take stances in interaction, they do so by relying on multiple linguistic resources and interactional practices. It is suggested that a combination of conversation analysis and a discourse-functional “theory of stance” (Du Bois 2002b, 2004) provides a useful framework for investigating stance taking. This part of the paper comprises a summary of the theory of my dissertation (Haddington to appear).

In addition to this, this paper aims to discuss how stance taking can be studied with news interview data. This proves to be an interesting enterprise, because whilst there have been passing references to *stance* in prior news interview research, with individual emphasis on both linguistic and syntactic issues (e.g. Bull 1994, Bull and Mayer 1993) and on sequential aspects (e.g. Clayman and Heritage 2002, Heritage 1985), much more can still be said about stance *taking* in news interviews, i.e. the use of various linguistic practices within their sequential context, the combinations of different practices and actions, and the degree of intersubjective engagement between the co-participants.

What makes this endeavor interesting is that present-day news interviews—at least in the Anglo-American world—revolve around the activities of questioning and responding (Heritage and Roth 1995: 1). Questioning in the news interview context is an action that is primarily about eliciting a response and requesting information and opinions from informed interview guests, and the guests indeed cannot avoid uttering a response in front of a TV audience. Consequently, it can without a doubt be argued that news interviews are indeed *the* venues for politicians and other experts to publicly convey, formulate and defend their stances, and to align with the interviewers and other interviewees. Research which looks at stance taking in news interview data must naturally take heed of the previous work on stance, but it must also view this work with a critical eye. The type of work undertaken here has not yet, to my knowledge, been done with news interview data.

Even though the main aim of this paper is to provide an account for how stance taking can be studied with news interview data, the claims made are supported with examples along the way. In chapter 3 I analyze an extract from CNN’s *Crossfire*. This extract is only one part of a series of papers which investigate in greater detail stance taking as an intersubjective and dialogical activity in talk-in-interaction. With the help of this example, I investigate a stance-taking activity I call *positioning / alignment*.

2. Introduction to *stance*

2.1 What counts as *stance*?

Since the mid-1980s studies on *stance* have emanated from such different fields as functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, linguistic anthropology and conversation analysis.² Although this vast and interesting body of work shares a common interest in capturing and explaining the linguistic, interactional and/or embodied practices and actions by which speakers express stances in spoken and written discourse, they do not—quite understandably—share the same agendas, aims, approaches or methodologies. In addition to this, for some of this work *stance* is the central analytic notion, whereas for other it is a word used in association with and as a synonym of such concepts as (epistemic and deontic) modality, evaluation, subjectivity, epistemicity, footing, alignment, assessment, agreement, and so on, to refer to a speaker's or writer's attitude, displays of emotions and desires, expressions of beliefs and certainty toward given issues, people, and the speakers' co-participants. In other words, research on *stance* by no means comprises a coherent and uniform paradigm.

Moreover, the notion of *stance* is often used as if it could unproblematically cover numerous linguistic and interactional phenomena. It seems therefore justified to claim that due to its increased usage and application, the notion of *stance* is in danger of becoming an all-embracing and elusive notion (similar to some of uses of "discourse" or "identity" or "ideology"), which includes everything and explains nothing, and which is used to describe phenomena that have already been described by using other notions and terminology. So to some extent, *stance* remains a debatable notion.

² Several symposia and seminars on *stance* have also been organized around the world, such as *Morality and Epistemology: Stance-taking in the Discursive Constitution of Personhood* session at the American Anthropological Association meeting in New Orleans, Nov 20–24, 2002; *Stance Day: 3 presentations on stance*, University of California at Santa Barbara, Feb. 28, 2003; *Stancetaking in Discourse: subjectivity in interaction*, The 10th Biennial Rice Linguistics Symposium at Rice University, Mar 31–April 3, 2004; *Stance in Social and Cultural Context* panel in the *Sociolinguistic Symposium 15* in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, Apr 1–4, 2004; *Workshop on Evaluation, Stance and the Implied Respondent* at University of Birmingham, Department of English, Jun 5–6, 2004.

Consequently, one way to disentangle the complexities of stance is to define it in relation to the analyst's analytic foci, objectives, methodology and the type of data being used. In order to do this, it is useful to split past and ongoing work under the umbrella term *stance* into the following five sub-categories based on their starting points and analytic foci.

1. Single-speaker contributions (syntactic and lexical) to stance
2. Interactional practices, actions, activities
3. A linguistic / syntactic practice in its sequential context
4. Turn construction
5. Larger discourses / texts

Table 1. Sub-categories of stance-related research: starting points and analytic foci

Although these sub-categories in Table 1 and the work done within them overlap with each other in many respects, observing this body of work through this categorization has clear advantages. For example, it shows the starting points from where stance-related phenomena have been investigated. For example in group 1³ the starting point for investigating stance is usually a linguistic form, for example a syntactic unit or a particular word. However, in groups 2, 3 and 4, which concentrate on spoken discourse, look at stance-related phenomena within their interactional contexts,⁴ and in group 5, the research concentrates on how stances are constructed and accrued in spoken and written discourse, for example in the telling of stories, narratives, or even broader texts and discourses.⁵ Furthermore, these different starting points mirror the implicit starting points concerning the “origins” of the stances speakers take. This relates to the notions of *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* and how they are understood in relation to stance and stance taking. This issue is discussed in the following sections.

³ See for example Barton (1993), Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989), Biber et al. (1999), Chafe (1986), Conrad and Biber (2000), Downing (2001), Field (1997), Martin (2000, 2003) and Scheibman (2001) and the papers in the special issue of *Journal of Pragmatics* 37 (2), 2005.

⁴ See Keisanen (in preparation), Kärkkäinen (2003), Scheibman (2000) and Rauniomaa (in preparation) *inter alia*.

⁵ See for example the individual sessions in the 'Stance in Social and Cultural Context' panel in <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ss15/>.

2.2 Stance and subjectivity

The research undertaken in group 1 in Table 1 aims to describe ways in which these linguistic forms from a pragmatic or semantic vantage point express speaker/writer's *subjective stance*. The investigated linguistic forms are often decontextualized from their larger sequential/discourse environments, i.e. they are not considered outside clauses, sentences or utterances, but are mapped onto a stance a speaker conveys (cf. Wu 2004: 3). By implication this seems to suggest that the act of expressing a stance is engendered by an individual human being and hence is a subjective act (cf. Thompson and Hunston 2000: 21).

The notion of subjectivity has indeed received a lot of interest in linguistics. On the one hand, it has been seen to be related to the commitment of the *speaker* to the proposition (cf. Stubbs 1996), even to the degree that some grammatical units expressing subjectivity have become grammaticized in discourse (cf. Kärkkäinen 2003: 19). On the other hand, some work has considered linguistic subjectivity as a phenomenon that comprises markers that are attached to or index the speaker or the point of view or attitude that the speaker encodes in an utterance (cf. Finegan 1995, Stubbs 1986 as cited in Traugott and Dasher 2002: 20).

Moreover, as Kärkkäinen (2003) points out, several studies on conversational data have noted that the use of language and grammar in real interactional contexts is inherently subjective. Much of the time the use of language and grammar express the speakers' subjective views and display speakers' subjective identities, feelings and attitudes (e.g. Scheibman 2001: 61–62; Thompson and Hopper 2001: 53). In sum, what has been characteristic of much of this typological / grammatical research on stance and related phenomena is that stance has been considered first and foremost a subjective feature; a single speaker's stance, accomplished through a single linguistic act, toward the proposition in her own utterance, clause or sentence.⁶ The concern that this raises is how to develop this

⁶ Similar types of studies have also been done with news interview data. These have examined the use of some linguistic stance markers and the relationship of particular uses of interrogative syntax with the co-participants' acts. For example, Simon-Vandenberg (2000) looks at the functions that the expression *I (don't) think* has in political interviews (see section 3.3; see also Simon-Vandenberg (1996) and Jucker (1986)). Bull (1994), Bull and Mayer (1993) and Harris (1991) approach their data from slightly different vantage points. They concentrate on an interviewee activity of not answering the interviewer's questions. Their approach is purely syntactic and

understanding of stance and combine it with a more dynamic idea of stance taking in interaction—i.e., as Wu (2004) also asks, how can stance taking be accomplished as an intersubjective and contingent activity through the use of various linguistic resources and other practices.

One way to do this is to make a distinction between *stance* and *stance taking*. Whereas some studies see a *stance* as an expression of the speaker's subjective attitude toward something (e.g. the content of her subsequent utterance), *stance taking* is better understood as an intersubjective activity. The research in groups 2, 3, and 4 can be seen to approach *stance taking* from this perspective and it is the research in these groups that provides the foundation for the work reported in this paper. Consequently, in the following sections I suggest that one solution for moving away from stance as a subjective feature is to combine interactional analysis with the understanding of language and grammar as also intersubjective, emergent and contingent (i.e. a combination of groups 2, 3, and 4). Therefore, I move forward to consider the research done in conversation analysis and functional linguistics which has explored stance taking and stance-related activities by incorporating the immediate interactional context into the analysis.

2.3 Stance taking as an intersubjective phenomenon: the benefits of combining conversation analysis and “theory of stance”

In the previous section it was noted that the majority of the work in group 1 in Table 1 suggests that stances are expressed through certain syntactic and lexical forms (i.e. stances are linguistic acts). Therefore stances seem to have been treated fundamentally as expressions of the speakers' and

consequently meets with some problems. They suggest that by looking at the use of syntactic constructs, it is possible to make claims about what the speakers are doing. Consequently, they claim that certain types of answers can be classified as non-replies, without looking at what actually happens in the interactional context. Even though these behaviors seem to be attached or typical to the pre-destined participant roles that the participants possess, making such analytical shortcuts totally puts aside the issue of the intersubjective relationship between interviewers and interviewees, and how they engage, and "negotiate" their stances, with each other. Furthermore, this type of analysis suggests that the questions and answers are considered to be more or less independent of each other. For example, interviewees are claimed to do three types of responses: those that answer the questions, those that do not, and those that partly answer the questions. However, the interaction between the interviewers and interviewees is more contingent and dynamic than such an argument suggests.

writers' internal and subjective attitudes (i.e. speakers' stances). However, spoken interaction *de facto* takes at least two subjects, with individual consciousnesses and intentions, who, in spite of their individual input on the interaction, share moments in order to express their subjective understandings. This more intersubjective and emergent view of language hardly comes as a surprise to the scholars in the groups 2–4 in Table 1 (e.g. conversation analysts, linguistic anthropologists, functional linguists and interactional linguists). The research undertaken in this line of inquiry looks at a vast array of interactional practices (including linguistic items, prosody, embodiment, etc.) and how these contribute to the accomplishment of particular actions and activities (cf. Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2001, Schegloff 1997). As is suggested here, these practices and actions can also contribute to a stance-taking activity in the sequential context in which it occurs. Thus, stance taking is not seen as a unidirectional (or subjective) process, but as inherently intersubjective.

The presence of two subjectivities in interaction both constitutes and is a prerequisite to an intersubjective interactional event. The notion of intersubjectivity is central to all communication, and language is essentially the tool for accomplishing intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity becomes relevant in spoken discourse in two ways: the first I call *backward-type* intersubjectivity,⁷ which means that an utterance or an action reflects that what has been said or done in the immediate prior utterance. The second way I call *forward-type* intersubjectivity which refers to the potential of each utterance or action to be designed specifically for the present co-participant. These two different understandings of intersubjectivity are central in my analysis of the *positioning / alignment* stance-taking activity that I discuss below.⁷

In the following, I discuss two approaches to the study of spoken interaction which are not only firmly rooted in the above ideas of intersubjectivity, but are directly relevant for stance taking. The first one is conversation analysis (henceforth CA) and the other is here called the "theory of stance." It is worth noting that these two approaches should neither been seen as mutually exclusive nor in any way in opposition to each other. Rather, they should be viewed as approaches that can provide

⁷ This dichotomy reflects Benveniste's (1971) and Bakhtin's (Holquist 1990, Vološinov 1973) thinking and is later also acknowledged in Tomasello's (1999a, 1999b: 517) work. Since Benveniste and Bakhtin several different understandings of intersubjectivity have emerged. For some, see for example Nuyts (2001), Schiffrin (1998), and Traugott and Dasher (2002).

analytic support to each other for the understanding of stance taking. Nevertheless, they emphasize slightly different aspects of interaction and provide different vantage points which are discussed below.

CA provides a coherent analytic framework for examining and describing the interactional and sequential organization of human conduct in talk-in-interaction. This includes looking at how the interactants' practices, in their situated context, become understandable for the interactants themselves, and how the interactants co-ordinate their actions in relation to each other. In CA the social actions and activities are seen as the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity:

(...) conversational interaction is structured by an organization of action which is implemented on a turn-by-turn basis. By means of this organization *a context of publicly displayed and continuously up-dated intersubjective understandings is systematically sustained*. It is through this 'turn-by-turn' character of talk that the participants display their understandings of 'the state of the talk' for one another." (Heritage 1984: 259)

In other words, no instances of talk should be looked at in isolation. Rather, the shared understandings between interactants can be traced by interactants and analysts alike by considering the sequential context and what a speaker does with an utterance (cf. Schegloff 1996b).

The "theory of stance" (Du Bois 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004) is a discourse-functional approach to language and grammar (or functional linguistics as it is often called). Functional linguistics can be seen as a response to (formalist) views that treat language and grammar specifically as innate, abstract, technicalized, decontextualized and separate from issues of culture (cf. Cumming and Ono 1997: 113–114; Du Bois 2001a: 87). The primary objective of functional linguistics is to uncover functional motivations for particular linguistic patterned forms and structures in natural discourse settings. It looks how these forms and structures emerge from particular discourse situations as local and collocational patterns, which sometimes become routinized as new grammatical forms in language⁸ (see for example Cumming and Ono (1997: 112), Keevallik (2003: 21–22), Thompson (1992)).

Du Bois (e.g. 2002a, 2004), by drawing for example on Bakhtin (Vološinov 1973), on previous work in functional linguistics, and the more cultural contingencies of stance described in linguistic anthropology (e.g.

⁸ "Grammars code best what speakers do most" (Du Bois 1987: 851).

Besnier 1993, Haviland 1989, Ochs 1992), has introduced a framework which is here referred to as the “theory of stance.”⁹ This work is a response to the internal and subjective views of stance (see section 2.2). It claims that stance is not an individual experience or an inner act, but a shared intersubjective activity accomplished in interaction. In other words, a mere analysis of individual lexical or semantic stance expressions which have been removed from their context is inadequate.

According to Du Bois (2002a, 2004) stance taking is a tri-act (see Figure 1), which basically consists of three elements that he calls *Subject₁*, *Subject₂*, and *Object*. *Subject₁* and *Subject₂* stand for the co-participants and the *Object* is what they are talking about: a shared attentional focus, such as a person, an event, a proposition and so on. In very simple terms, as Figure 1 shows, stance taking begins when *Subject₁* introduces a Stance Object in an utterance which simultaneously evaluates the Stance Object. In other words, *Subject₁* takes a stance. By doing the act of taking a stance, *Subject₁* not only establishes a relationship between herself and the Stance Object (i.e. positions herself), but importantly also between herself and *Subject₂*. This latter relationship could be seen as one manifestation of the already mentioned *forward-type* intersubjectivity in interaction. In other words, an important part of *Subject₁*'s act of taking a stance is that she can “tailor” the utterance specifically for a particular recipient.

⁹ Du Bois's theory has also been influenced by research undertaken in such diverse fields as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, phenomenology, neuroscience, and cognitive science, and thereby aims to provide an informing and interdisciplinary framework of stance taking as an intersubjective activity in interaction.

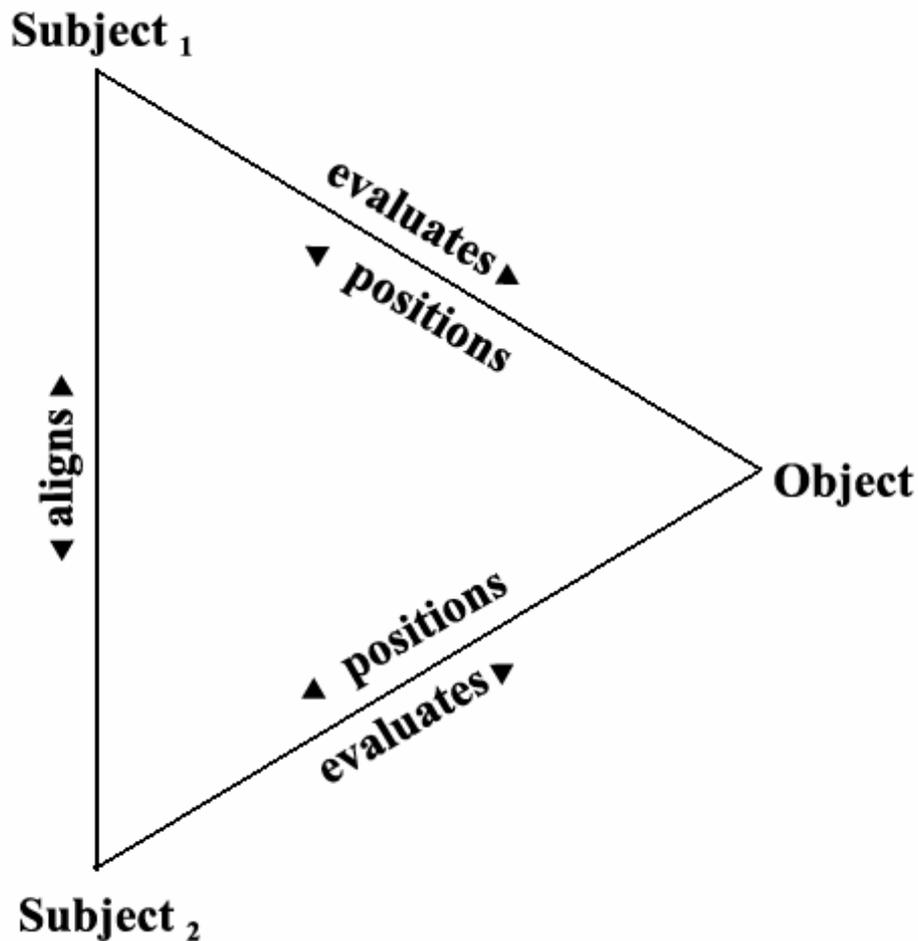


Figure 1. Stance taking framework (Du Bois 2004)

The next act occurs when Subject₂ evaluates the same object that Subject₁ has just evaluated. Also Subject₂ evaluates the Object, positions herself in relation to it and thereby aligns with Subject₁. This can be seen as the *backward-type* intersubjective act. The notion of alignment in Du Bois's "theory of stance" does not mean agreeing *per se*, but rather the ways by which interactants position themselves in relation to each other, or engage with each other. In other words, as Du Bois (2004) suggests, alignment is "putting my stance vs. your stance". Alignment is therefore not an either-or paradigm (aligning or disaligning with actions), but is better understood as a range of possible types of intersubjective alignment which are accomplished by subtle uses of the multiple interactional,

linguistic (morphosyntactic, lexical, prosodic) and embodied practices.¹⁰ Consequently, for Du Bois stance taking is a dynamic, dialogic, intersubjective, and collaborative social *activity* in which speakers actively construct stances by building on, modifying, aligning and engaging with the stances of other speakers. This understanding of course strongly resonates with CA's fundamental conception of interaction; that different practices must be taken into account within their sequential context in order to provide detailed accounts of interactional situations.

An important aspect of the "theory of stance" is the fact that interactants frequently use, borrow and recycle each other's linguistic units (morphosyntax, lexis and prosody) when they negotiate and take stances. This happens regardless of whether the meanings of the co-interactants' utterances are parallel or opposing, agreeing or disagreeing (Du Bois 2001b). Du Bois calls this Dialogic Syntax. One of the main ideas of Dialogic Syntax is that when the referential and indexical features of particular linguistic forms engage and are confronted with other linguistic forms in their interactional context, new local meanings can arise from the paradigmatic resonance between these forms. These meanings are then not fully understood until the forms or utterances are paralleled with each other (Du Bois 2001b; cf. Holquist 1990: 21–22).

The CA approach and the "theory of stance" have some differences between them, which lie in the different analytic emphases they accord to the phenomena they describe. The "theory of stance" provides a theoretical framework with a focus on various morphosyntactic, lexical and prosodic aspects of stance taking. CA, on the other hand, focuses on the social organization of interaction and how it is sequentially organized into actions, sequences, and other types of activities. Although CA does not exclude any linguistic or syntactic item from its analysis, it considers them relative to their relevance for turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974: 721) and as building blocks for actions and activities in talk-in-interaction (cf. Goodwin 2003: 60). Consequently, since the "theory of stance" does not give much attention to how stance taking is managed in the sequential context of interaction, CA provides the very important aspect of describing what actually happens—on the level of actions and activities—in interaction.

¹⁰ Therefore, 'alignment' here differs from the understanding of the same term in CA. In CA 'alignment' refers to the idea that an action fulfills the expectations raised by the previous action in terms of its sequential relevance and appropriateness, whereas here 'alignment' is very much a linguistic process in which speakers' stances are aligned with each other (see also Haddington under review-a).

After this has been described it is possible to examine the intersubjective unfolding of stance taking, i.e. how speakers take stances in relation to prior stances.

By bringing these two approaches together it becomes possible to investigate stance taking from different and alternative angles. One such alternative is the focus on different analytic units. CA has so far, in a successful and sophisticated manner, concentrated on describing relatively small units—turn constructional units (TCUs¹¹) and transition relevance places (TRPs¹²), among others—and bits of conduct and practices (Čmejrková and Prevignano 2003: 25). However, stance taking is better described as a larger activity which the co-participants orient to and which is relatively sustained in terms of its topical coherence and goal-coherent course of action (cf. the definition of “activity” in Heritage and Sorjonen 1994: 4; Kärkkäinen 2003: 106).

Although Du Bois does not give any primary focus on any such units in his work, some help is provided by Ford, Fox and Thompson (1996) and Ford (2002, 2004). In response to work in CA and as a suggestion for an alternative analytic direction, Ford et al. (1996: 431) suggest that

instead of searching out and attempting to define TCUs, we have come to see our task as asking and beginning to answer the following questions: What are the practices according to which participants construct their co-participation? What are participants orienting to in order to locate, situate, and interpret their own and each other’s contributions? (...) And how are subsequent contributions by a same speaker built to be understood relative to prior contributions?

Furthermore, they (Ford, et al. 1996: 431) suggest that it is worthwhile “to focus on the entire range of relevant practices for constructing conversational co-participation.” Subsequently, Ford (2004), by building on Houtkoop and Mazeland (1985), claims that the analysis of interaction

¹¹ Turn constructional unit (TCU) is a central and fundamental notion in CA. It is the basic unit out of which speakers set out to construct talk (Sacks, et al. 1974). One TCU can constitute a recognizably complete turn and can characteristically be lexical, phrasal, sentential or clausal. These linguistic characteristics of turn construction provide for ‘projectability of a turn,’ i.e. the possibility for co-participants to realize and understand what is under way and to project the possible completion point of a TCU (cf. Sacks, et al. 1974). In everyday conversation each speaker gets the right to construct a single TCU to a possible completion. In institutionalized interaction, however, the allocation of turns is different.

¹² TRPs refer to the end of TCUs, i.e. that there is a possibility for transition between speakers at the end of TCU (Sacks et al. 1974).

might benefit from an analytic focus that exceeds TCUs and TRPs, in order to consider larger practices (or discourse units) that are shown to be relevant for the co-participants.

In addition to the different focus on units in interaction, this combined approach allows a possibility to consider how various resources of stance taking are connected to cultural issues, for example values and beliefs (see below). Moreover, the combination of these approaches can shed light on the possibility that *stance taking* (in addition to for example repair, turn-taking, sequence organization) as an activity organizes interaction. Therefore, a stance (or the construction of a stance) is not just a feature of action, but stances taken in interaction are contingent and thus can affect the design of subsequent interaction (see section 2.5). Moreover, this combined approach is able to address how the sequential positioning of practices affects and organizes co-participants' stance taking. This is because the way in which particular practices are sequentially positioned can constitute and determine the meaning of these practices and stances they embody (cf. Wu 2004: 17).

Consequently, the focus is not on the propositions of the individual stances. Rather, the focus is on the activity of how stances are constructed; i.e. how co-participants express and negotiate their stances based on stances taken in prior discourse. This aspect of stance taking has not received much attention.

Many questions are still pending. How can we approach stance taking? Where do we start? How can stance taking be recognized and identified from data? What is the relationship between some of the analytic notions used in CA compared to similar notions that become relevant in the investigation of stance taking? Most importantly, what is the relationship between *action* and *stance taking*? What do we gain from working at the intersection of CA and the "theory of stance" when studying stance taking in news interviews? These are all potentially complicated questions, which are addressed and discussed in the following sections. First I discuss how stance taking can be recognized in talk-in-interaction.

2.4 Recognizing stance taking in talk-in-interaction

Let's continue by asking the following two questions: Where do we start? How can stance taking be recognized and identified from data? It would seem that the notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity and how they relate to each other provides a possible solution. Although subjectivity and

intersubjectivity were treated separately above, they are not mutually exclusive notions. Rather they are intertwined, since intersubjectivity requires subjectivity (Heritage 1984), or, as Du Bois (2004) aptly formulates it, intersubjectivity occurs when “my subjectivity engages with your subjectivity.” Thus the different linguistic units and structures that act as single-speaker (subjective) contributions to stance mentioned in section 2 indeed play an important part in identifying the places in interaction in which stance *taking* could occur. In other words, individual linguistic forms or linguistic practices can and do signal stances.

Another way to examine stance taking is naturally to take a closer look at already described actions or activities which seem to be organizing the co-participants’ stance taking (e.g. assessments and assessment sequences) and see whether those actions or activities contain linguistic or embodied practices that contribute to the co-participants’ stance taking.¹³

Nevertheless, what guides both of the above approaches of identifying patterns of stance taking is (as in CA) the

“unmotivated” examination of naturally occurring interactional materials—that is, an examination not prompted by prespecified analytic goals (...) but by “noticings” of initially unremarkable features of the talk or of other conduct (Schegloff 1996a: 172).

But rather than looking at actions as is done in CA, the focus is on orderly practices of stance taking and the analysis of how the co-participants jointly express and negotiate their stances first, through the management of various interactional and sequential organizations and second, by designing their language and grammar in particular ways at particular moments in time.¹⁴ Since this definition allows an infinite number of individual stance-taking activities, the aim is to find recurrent linguistic, interactional and dialogical patterns of stance taking. In the following section I move to a discussion of the relationship between the CA notion of *action* and the notion of *stance*.

¹³ See Haddington (2002, 2004) who looks at how particular gaze directions function as meaningful resources of stance taking in the production of assessment sequences.

¹⁴ This approach is therefore similar to Sandlund's (2004) work. She looks at the social organization of emotions and how emotions are done in talk-in-interaction. She considers for example how particular emotional expressions can provide a new context for co-participants to formulate a next action.

2.5 The relationship between interactional organization (*action*) and stance taking (*stance*)

At this point it is relevant to tease out the difference between the notions of *action* and *stance*. *Action* is one of the most—if not the most—central analytic notions in CA. Throughout the 20th century the notion of action was accounted for in very different ways, but these accounts frequently bypassed the analysis of what speakers actually do—or “do do,” as Schegloff (1996a: 167) puts it—in the course of interaction. Rather than hypothesizing or attempting to give exhaustive theoretical accounts of what an action is, the best way to understand it, is to understand it not in terms of how an analyst defines an action pursued by interactants, but rather in terms of what the interactants themselves understand their own and their co-participants’ actions to be doing:

(...) there must be a grounding of this formulation [of what action or actions are being accomplished] in the “reality” of the participants. Here the investigator undertakes to establish that the formulation is not an academically analytic imposition on conduct that may have been quite differently understood and experienced by the participants. This requires some demonstration that the interlocutors in the data being examined have understood the utterances (or other conduct) in question to be possibly doing the proposed action(s) or that they are oriented to that possibility—a demonstration ordinarily grounded in the interlocutors’ subsequent talk or conduct (...). This immediately subsequent talk, being appropriate to—or even responsive to—what preceded it, ordinarily displays an understanding of what that preceding talk was “doing” (Schegloff 1996a: 172).

In other words, understanding *action* is first and foremost an empirical undertaking and should not be prespecified by a theoretical characterization of action (cf. Schegloff 1996a: 172). An action is an action when the interactional trajectory is affected by a co-participant’s understanding of a prior action.

An action is constituted by various practices of talk-in-interaction, such as linguistic forms, repetition and so on. These practices of talk-in-interaction are the devices that are used to construct turns and if these devices are used in association with particular interactional phenomena they may form orderly organizations of practices. In other words, certain practices of talk-in-interaction accomplish or produce certain actions (Schegloff 1997: 499–500). A description of an action is thus “a characterization of some form or practice of talking and some

characterization of the place or location in which that practice is employed” (Schegloff 1996a: 169).

Even though *action* and *stance* are fairly elusive notions, there is one important factor that differentiates them. And it is here that Du Bois’ framework becomes important. In CA an action is first and foremost defined in relation to what an utterance is doing (a question, an assessment, an agreement, etc.) and moreover, what the co-participants understand an utterance to be doing. However, as was already mentioned above, when we describe a stance (and consequently stance *taking*) it is necessary to pay attention to the “content” of the utterance, i.e. the stance that is indexed by the linguistic practices in the utterance and the Stance Object in the stance triangle (see Figure 1). Moreover, it is important to look at how the co-participants frame, introduce and negotiate that “content” by certain (recurrent) uses of language and grammar. However, this does not mean describing stance taking would be an explanation of the propositions, statements or arguments in the speakers’ utterances. On the contrary, what is important is to consider how the co-interactants’ stances are motivated by the interactional setting. That is, it is necessary to investigate the role various actions, activities and turn designs have in the stance-taking activity and how they contribute to stance taking in the sequential context of talk-interaction. In addition to this, stance taking becomes apparent in the use of linguistic (morphosyntactic, lexical, and prosodic) practices that are affected by and engage with practices used in prior discourse. And in relation to this, it must be remembered that throughout the process of producing actions and practices, the interactants take into account what they talk about, who their co-interactant is and whom or what this co-interactant represents. As Holquist (1990: 65) argues, following Bakhtin, the speakers’ evaluative attitudes toward what they are talking and their judgment of to whom they are talking, determine the choice of lexical and grammatical units in discourse. So in this sense, the language used when speakers engage in taking stances not only has the potential to reflect social values, beliefs and categories, but also to constitute them.

So stance taking, although composed of individual stances, is indeed an intersubjective activity in interaction. It is therefore important to look at how stances are occasioned, how they are displayed, received and responded to and managed in interaction. Nevertheless, stance taking can be understood neither as an action nor an action sequence in the CA sense, but rather as a larger *activity*. Neither do instances of turn-taking, repair or sequential organization alone explain stance taking, nor can stance taking

be explained solely by the above interactional organizations. In other words, my intention is not to try to rename any of the actions such as *first assessment*, *second assessment* or *assessment sequence* (Goodwin and Goodwin 1987, Heritage and Raymond under review, Pomerantz 1984), even though these necessarily involve taking a position or a stance. The reason for this is that these actions and sequences are used to explain the sequential organization of interaction¹⁵ and not how speakers express stances with the help of them.

What, then, is the relationship between the interactional organization(s) and stance taking? Which is more important for interactants? The interactional organization and the social actions that interactants produce or the stances that they take? In other words, which one of these—stances or the interactional organization and actions—is more consequential for the description of the organization of interaction? In CA the question is crystal clear: the first one, interactional organization and social action, is primary. However, also a stance expressed in an utterance, and the way a stance is designed, can locally impinge upon subsequent turn selection and turn design and the types of turns / actions that are made relevant.

Consider the following example from CNN's *Crossfire*. In this example the way in which a stance is constructed in its interactional setting affects the interactional organization and the design of a subsequent turn and stance. In this extract, the host, Tucker Carlson, and the guest, James Zogby (who is the president of the Arab-American Institute) are talking about an incident in which an Arab-American secret service agent, who was also President George W. Bush's personal agent, was removed from an airliner. In the wake of the events on September 11, 2001, this incident caused major controversy about racial profiling, racism and prejudice against Arab-Americans.¹⁶

¹⁵ Pomerantz (1984) claims that the action of producing an assessment is a routinized way of partaking in a social activity in which a speaker invokes a referent of which he or she has direct knowledge and provides an experience or an assessment about the referent. Assessments frequently act as first assessments which preface and engender a second assessment by a co-participant, who then takes a stance about the same referent and either agrees or disagrees with the first assessment.

¹⁶ The examples in this paper come from a corpus that I have collected myself and with the help of colleagues and friends. The corpus contains about 20-25 hours of news interviews from the United States and Britain, which have been recorded between October 1999 and March 2004. The data in this study have been transcribed by using

- (1) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: Racial profiling
 IR: Tucker Carlson, IE: James Zogby (003 / 4 / 1:21)

1 IR: [Wait a 'second],
 2 IE: ^Be]fore I 'start ^getting hate mail,
 3 coming in,
 4 because ^people 'say,
 5 I'm not ^sensitive.
 6 (H) (0.6) ^We 'believe,
 7 ^scrutiny is 'going to be important,
 8 and 'we ^understa=nd,
 9 ^what September eleventh 'meant,
 10 in ^terms of 'people looking,
 11 and ^taking a 'second look at at,
 12 ^people of 'Arab 'descent,
 13 (H) (0.8) But a ^Secret 'Service 'agent,
 14 [A ^guy who] --
 15 IR: [Wait,
 16 'wait a] --
 17 IE: [2who has2] ^passed --
 18 IR: [2'<A> No no 2].
 19 .. No,
 20 (0) <A> you're ^missing the 'distinction.
 21 This is interes% --
 22 He ^said he was a 'Secret Service agent.
 23 'Mohamed 'Atta said he was a ^crop duster.
 24 The ^point is,
 25 <MRC> ^we= 'don't 'kno=w </MRC>,

The interviewee's utterances that start in line 6 *^We 'believe, ^scrutiny is 'going to be important* etc. and in line 8 *and 'we ^understa=nd, ^what September eleventh 'meant*, etc. report two stances. This is most evident in the use of the two stance markers *believe* and *understand* which are preceded by the first plural personal pronoun "we." In other words, the stances are attributed to the group or the institution that the interviewee represents. It is important to look at how this turn is constructed. First, the two stances in the complement utterances display acquiescence to the fact that in the post-9/11 world there is a connection between increased scrutiny at the airports and what people look like, and that Arab-Americans or the institute that Zogby represents understand this. These two stances are part of a turn design that strongly projects a counter point by the current speaker. This counter point is then produced in line 13: *But a ^Secret 'Service 'agent?* It is noteworthy that this TCU is accomplished by using the *but* together with a single NP that invokes a category. The category

the conventions of Discourse Transcription (hence DT) developed by Du Bois et al. (1991, 1992, 1993) in which one line represents one intonation unit. The key to the relevant transcription conventions can be found in the Appendix.

engages with the category invoked earlier in the same turn (people of Arab descent) and of course its aim is to cast the previous category in a different light or to replace it altogether with this new one. In other words, the aim of the interviewee's turn as a whole is to acknowledge that people in general may be concerned and worried when Arab-American people try to get on planes, but that in this particular case, there are additional circumstances (the fact that the person was a Secret Service agent) that have an impact on this issue.

Immediately after the interviewee mentions the category, the interviewer intervenes in the interviewee's turn at the TRP in line 15 (cf. Piirainen-Marsh 2003). After this the interviewer hastens to produce a disagreeing action. This action *Wait*, 'wait a -- is produced as a repair-initiator (in lines 15–16) and furthered by rapidly produced negative markers <A> *No no* . .. *No*, in lines 18–19.

Even though the design of the interviewee's turn strongly projects the counter point, the interviewer does not produce the disagreeing action only because of this. There are two pieces of evidence for this. First, even though the counter point is foreseeable for the interviewer, he could not possibly know *what* the interviewee was going to say (i.e. what stance is on its way). Second, the interviewee's TCU projects more talk, since it is pragmatically, syntactically and prosodically incomplete (cf. Ford and Thompson 1996). This means that the interviewer intervened in and subsequently disagreed with the category "Secret Service agent" and the assumptions that are attached to it and did not produce the disagreeing action only because the interviewee's turn projected the counter point.

Moreover, as we can see in the interviewer's subsequent turn, the interviewer recycles and uses the category "Secret Service agent" and thus engages with the use of the same category in the interviewee's turn. The interviewer uses it to produce a stance that disagrees with the interviewee's stance in the previous turn. To put it differently, it is both the action type and the implied stance in the interviewee's turn that affect the trajectory of the subsequent interaction and how it is organized. There is a lot going on in this extract,¹⁷ but suffice it to say, the way in which the interviewee constructs his turn, the action that he does in line 13, the language that is used to construct the action and the stance therein affect the turn organization and the design of the subsequent turn.

¹⁷ For more detailed analysis of this sequence and how the racial overtones are constructed through dialogic language use, see Haddington (under review-b).

Consequently, as the above example indicates, the question, which is primary, an action or a stance, is not clear-cut. Even though in the above extract the guest clearly produces an action that shifts the focus of his argument, the interviewer understands that behind the action there is a stance which has been made about a particular issue (about not letting an Arab-American Secret Service agent on a plane), based on a particular background presupposition (that a Secret Service agent should receive special treatment at airports, notwithstanding his ethnic background). The host then displays this understanding by designing his turn in a particular way, by responding to the presupposition implied in the interviewee's turn. So, in sum, the stance in the interviewee's turn plays a significant role in the turn taking and the design of the subsequent turn.

3. Stance taking in news interviews

In the following I combine previous CA findings from news interview interaction with the stance-taking approach outlined above. I introduce a stance-taking activity in which the interviewer sets up a position for the interviewee to take a stance, which is then sequentially followed by the interviewee's attempt to align with that position.

3.1 Conversation analysis and news interviews

CA has successfully adopted a dynamic view of news interview interaction. It sees news interviews as a version of *institutional interaction* (see for example, Drew and Heritage 1992, Drew and Sorjonen 1997, Heritage 1997, Heritage and Greatbatch 1991, Schegloff 1992), i.e. as type of interaction whose turn-taking system differs from ordinary or everyday talk-in-interaction. It approaches news interviews "as a form of spoken interaction and thus examines the recurrent communicative practices that constitute it" (Clayman 1988: 474). As Heritage (1985: 95) points out, such an approach is also of central importance in the investigation of how opinions (i.e. stances) are interactionally generated in news interviews.

A great deal of the practices and the actions these practices accomplish, such as "maintaining a neutralistic stance," "producing hostile / adversarial questions," "not answering questions," and "agenda shifting," are actions that are produced and identified within single TCUs. However, as was already mentioned above, Ford et al. (1996) claim that it is

worthwhile to consider larger practices (or discourse units) which are relevant for the co-participants. This is indeed particularly relevant for news interview interaction in which turns are recurrently composed of several TCUs. In addition to this, since the TRPs have been “neutralized” in news interviews¹⁸ (Schegloff 2001) TCUs play a less significant role in news interviews than they do in everyday talk. Thereby combinations of TCUs are not only frequent, but fundamental elements of interaction in news interviews.

The multi-unit question turns in news interviews provide for several contingencies for the interviewee to design a response. One such contingency is naturally that the interviewer’s question projects an answer from the interviewee. However, as we just saw in the previous section, it is worth asking whether presupposed, implied and actual stances (cf. Clayman and Heritage 2002, Heritage 2002) in a question turn affect the interactional trajectory, i.e. can a stance provide a projectable, but contingent response in the answering turn? And as we saw above, the answer is yes.

However, in addition to this, it seems that way in which stances are invoked and negotiated in news interviews require a broader view of “a unit.” I suggest that a multi-unit question turn in news interviews can be perceived as a discourse unit, which in complex ways, through the different actions it incorporates and the linguistic resources it relies on, expresses some kind of a stance or stances. In other words, the questioning turn as a sum of its components contributes to the construction of a particular stance. The whole question turn and the stances therein provide several paths or trajectories for the interviewee; trajectories which are relevant both sequentially (e.g. answer the question first) and relevant as a response to a stance in the question. As a consequence, additional patterns can emerge which not only play an important role in how speakers show their understanding of the topical matter, but also in the ways in which the guest and the host display an (intersubjective) understanding of each other.

Indeed, the special stance-taking activities that I discuss in the following section, namely *positioning* and *alignment*, are recurrent activities formed by combinations of practices and actions that construct conversational co-participation across the questioning and answering turns. In the first one, the interviewer sets up a position for the interviewee and, in

¹⁸ 'Neutralized' because of the pre-determined turn-taking system and pre-allocated turn types.

the second one, the interviewee tries to engage with the question and constitute a responsive stance. Furthermore, recurrent uses of certain linguistic resources may contribute to the production of these activities.

3.2 Setting up a position for the interviewee to take a stance

In the following I examine another example from CNN's *Crossfire*. This particular program was broadcast on December 27, 2001 in the wake of the terrorist attacks to New York and Washington D.C. The interviewer is Paul Begala and the interviewee Frank Gaffney.¹⁹ They are talking about the possible repercussions of the most recent so-called "bin Laden-tape." I consider some findings made in CA about news interview interaction and how these contribute to the interviewer activity of setting up a position and to the interviewee alignment.

- (2) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

1 IR: .. Uh the ^new bin Laden tape.
2 (H) ... that's,
3 aired by Al-Jazeera ^today?
4 ... (H) (TSK) When,
5 .. he ^began sending these tapes out,
6 .. the President's National Security Adviser,
7 ^told the 'networks.
8 ... (0.7) They ^shouldn't run these,
9 because 'she ^feared,
10 ... ^first that he would whip up --
11 .. uhv,
12 uhm,
13 .. anti-American 'views,
14 but then ^second,
15 and probably more ... 'ominously,
16 (H) that there were <MRC>secret coded messages</MRC>,
17 ^potentially in these tapes.
18 ... <A>Now they've had some of these tapes for eight weeks.
19 We have the best cryptographers in the world.
20 (0) Is there <MRC>slightest shred of evidence</MRC>,
21 that she was right.
22 IE: ... (1.0) (H) (TSK) Well ^nothing,
23 .. has been blown up,
24 ... so 'fa=r.
25 .. So,
26 ... you might deduce from that,

¹⁹ Paul Begala served for example in the Clinton administration as a counselor to the President. Frank Gaffney is the former Assistant Secretary of Defence and an expert on foreign and defense policy.

27 'no.
 28 ... I don't think this is a matter of ^cryptography,
 29 I think this is a ^question of whether,
 30 <MRC>people have gotten instructions</MRC>,
 31 ... (0.7) (H) who are ^here in this country,
 32 or perhaps ^elsewhere in the world,
 33 ... (H) and will be prepared to ^operate on them.

Let's first consider some of the general characteristics of this news interview question/answer -sequence. Already the design of the two turns here show that this extract is not from mundane interaction. Moreover, even if we did not know, we could infer that the above extract comes from a news interview, because of the lengthy turns and the question / answer -design (Greatbatch 1988).²⁰ As the above example shows, the interview sequence is question-driven (Heritage and Roth 1995) and the turn-types are already pre-allocated to the participants according to their institutional identities, i.e. the interviewer confines himself to asking the question (note that the question is syntactically formulated as a yes/no -question in lines 20-21, cf. Raymond (2000)) and the interviewee answers the question (Greatbatch 1988, Heritage 2003). Importantly, the interviewee *does not* answer the question before the interviewer produces the actual questioning element (in lines 20–21). Furthermore, Heritage (1985) points out that certain interviewer activities in news interviews display a tacit orientation to the overhearing audience. For example, interviewers generally avoid producing “small gestures of alignment and solidarity characteristic in question-answer sequences in conversation” (1985: 100), such as third-turn receipt objects (assessments, oh-prefaces, newsmarkers or continuers). In the above extract, for example, the beginning of the interviewer's turn (lines 1–3) seems not only to be addressed to the interviewee, but also to the members of the overhearing audience, who might not be aware of the most recent developments in the world. And simultaneously lines 1–3 introduce the Stance Object.

The interviewer's turn incorporates a so-called question preface (lines 1–19) (Clayman and Heritage 2002: 104), also sometimes called a “prefatory statement” (Heritage 2003: 60) or a “statement turn component” (Greatbatch 1988: 407). The most important function for question prefaces is that they invoke the particular topical agenda or the background that the question is intended to address in the remaining questioning turn

²⁰ Sacks et al (1974: 730) note that the speech-exchange system and the turn-allocation system therein affects the turn-size of the individual turns: the more restricted the turn-allocation system, the longer the turns tend to be.

components (Greatbatch 1988, Heritage 2003). Note that the interviewee could possibly self-select at any transitional relevance place and construct a response, but rather than doing that, he waits until the interviewer produces the question and thus displays orientation to the restricted turn-taking organization. It is noteworthy that question prefaces have important functions in stance taking. This is most evidently perceived in the ways in which interviewees use the questions as linguistic resources for constructing their responses and their own stances.

An important part of the question preface is the third-party attributed statement in lines 6–17 (attributed to "the President's National Security Adviser"). According to Clayman and Heritage (2002: 155) third-party attributed statements cannot by themselves do questioning, but still they frequently invoke controversial topics. The most important interactional function that third-party attributed statements do is to help interviewers maintain a neutralistic stance toward the topical agenda and also toward their guest. The notion of neutralism is an important element of news interviewing. As is exemplified by Clayman (1988), Heritage (2003) and Heritage and Greatbatch (1991), one of the main reasons broadcast journalists work hard to design their turns as questions is that the questions are a resource for them to sustain and display a neutralistic stance toward the question content and other participants. It is noteworthy, however, as Heritage (2003: 59) points out, that

as the term neutralistic suggests, news interview question is not, and cannot be, strictly neutral. Because questions unavoidably encode attitudes and points of view (Harris, 1986), [interviewers] must still design their questions to strike a balance between the journalistic norms of impartiality and adversarialness.

Neutralism can also be explicated by modifying Du Bois' stance-taking triangle. First, (see Figure 2 below) interviewers usually do not *explicitly* evaluate the Stance Object. Nevertheless, there is a possibility that the interviewer's turn in one way or other "evaluates" (NB. grey text in brackets) the Object, and the interviewer thereby positions himself/herself in relation to the Stance Object. Second, even though the interviewers avoid taking a standpoint in relation to what their guests say, i.e. their refrain from aligning with them, some kind of alignment always takes place between the interviewer and the interviewee, in both directions.

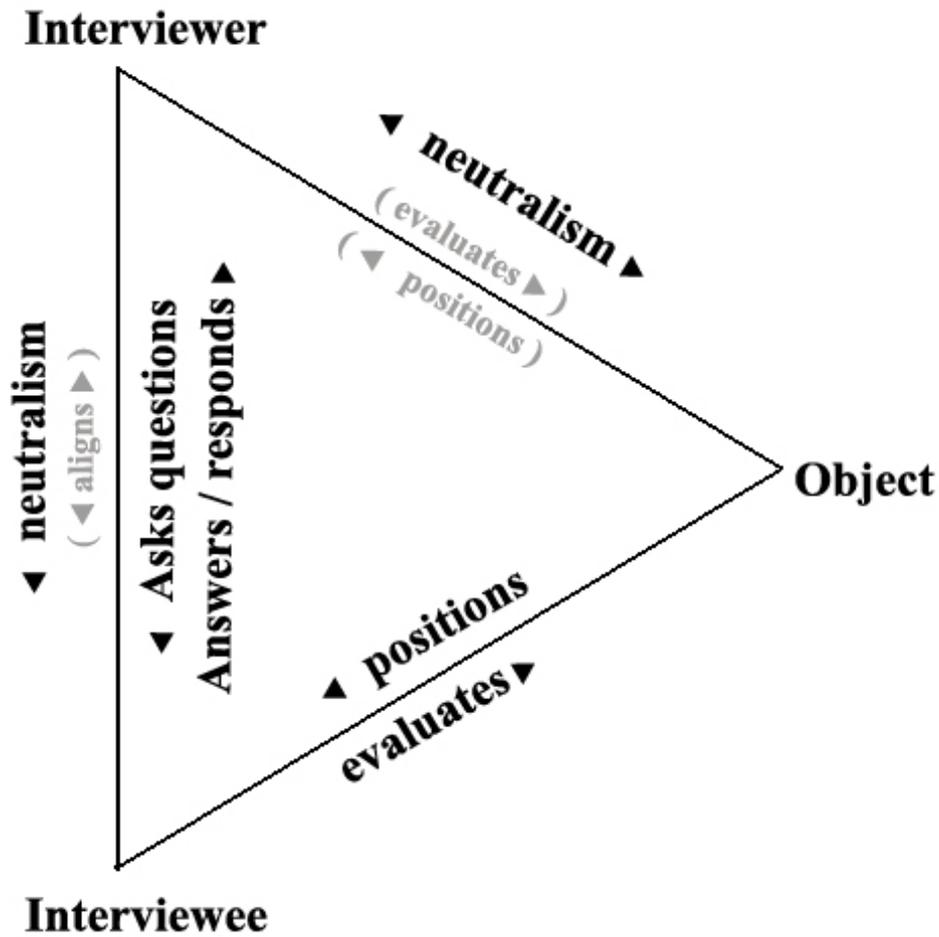


Figure 2. Stance taking in TV interviews

This aspect of the notion of neutralism is very important as we look at stance taking in news interviews. Even though we admit that interviewer questions are designed to be neutralistic, there are always stances embedded in the questions (a third-party stance, a commonly-held fact, presuppositions or whatnot) that the interviewee is expected to engage and align with. Consider the following extract of the above example in which we can identify several individual and subjective stances:

(2a) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
 IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

6 IR: .. the President's National Security Adviser,
 7 ^told the `networks.
 8 ... (0.7) They ^shouldn't run these,
 9 because `she ^feared,

Here the stance is a third-party statement (cf. Clayman and Heritage 2002) attributed to "the President's National Security Adviser" (Subject₁) who has taken a stance about "airing the bin Laden tapes" (Stance Object). The stance is that "the networks should not run these tapes."

(2b) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

16 IR: (H) that there were <MRC>secret coded messages</MRC>,
17 ^potentially in these tapes.

Here the same third-party is reported to have taken another stance "that there are potentially secret coded messages" in the "bin Laden tapes." In other words, the third-party takes a stance about the Stance Object.

As was just mentioned, even though interviewers are expected to remain neutralistic, this does not mean that their questions can not also embody presuppositions, assert propositions or incorporate preferences which invite and favor particular kinds of responses over others (Heritage 2003: 61). Sometimes interviewers apply various techniques to design their questions as downright hostile and adversarial (e.g. Clayman and Heritage 2002, Heritage 2002). The interviewer's turn in the above example does not contain hostile or adversarial elements *per se*, but still he implicitly adds his own voice in the question. Consider the next two extracts:

(2c) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

15 IR: and probably more .. 'ominously,

Here the adverbials *probably* and *'ominously* frame the third-party stance in (2b), but these adverbials are not part of that third-party stance, but rather the interviewer's way of framing and presenting it in lines 16–17 in a particular light. Thus the adverbials represent the interviewer's voice or his stance relative to the third-party stance.

(2d) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

18 IR: ... <A>Now they've had some of these tapes for eight weeks.
19 We have the best cryptographers in the world.

Here the interviewer momentarily shifts the footing and voices a presupposed stance. These two TCUs are uttered much faster than the surrounding talk, which prosodically distinguishes the footing shift from

the rest of the turn. They are also uttered in an almost casual way. The rapidity and the casualness imply that this utterance is produced only as an insignificant side-comment. Nevertheless, they are contextually relevant and affect the way in which the other turn units are perceived, and thereby contribute to the positioning stance-taking activity that the whole turn is doing. Even though the interviewer here does not explicitly disagree with the reported third-party statement, he frames it in a particular light and basically undermines its reliability and accuracy. In addition to this, the question that finishes the interviewer's turn (lines 20–21) contains a preference.

(2e) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
 IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

20 IR: (0) Is there <MRC>slightest shred of evidence</MRC>,
 21 that she was right.

The question is designed as a yes/no-type interrogative which restricts the possible relevant answers to a “yes” or a “no” answer. It has been shown that negative yes/no questions and tag questions prefer particular types of answer (Heritage 2003), but this question is neither of these. Even though the issue regarding the preference structure of yes/no -type interrogatives as actions is complex and in some respects unanswered (cf. Raymond 2000), the above question still seems to prefer an agreeing negative-type answer, which would agree with the idea that there are no secret coded messages in the tapes. But how does it do so?

The yes/no interrogative contains the adjective “slight” and the noun “shred” which invoke the idea of smallness and insignificance. These could be seen as so-called negative polarity items, which contribute to the design of the question so that the question prefers a negative answer (Heritage 2003). Moreover, the interviewer emphasizes the preference further by using the superlative construction. The use of these words and the superlative structure suggests that in spite of all the available intelligence resources and information, Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Adviser, probably does not have even the least bit of evidence to support the claim that the interviewer reported in lines 6–17. This stance is further emphasized by the interviewer's voice quality. Each word in this unit is distinct and emphasized (*marcato* voice quality), and is uttered with a pitch that is higher than the pitch in the surrounding talk. In sum, these linguistic elements, together with the apparent relationship that the interrogative has

with the previously reported third-party statement ("any evidence that *she* was right"), contribute to the impression that the question prefers a "no" answer. This puts the interviewee between a rock and a hard place, because if he complied with the preference structure and answered "no," he would strongly disalign with the a high government official, who works in close co-operation with the President only a couple months after 9/11, i.e. during the time when everyone was expected to and in fact almost everyone did support the government's actions.

It is here that an analysis of the combined effects of what the individual TCUs are doing and the evidence from language use become relevant. First of all, even though third-party statements help interviewers to maintain a neutralistic stance (Clayman and Heritage 2002), the fact that the interviewer brings up a statement by the third party already builds up a relationship between the third party and the interviewee. The interviewee is expected (by the audience and due to the turn-taking rules) to state something, or to take a stance, in relation to the reported stance. This expectation is then made overt by the design of the actual question, which not only requests the interviewee to respond to this stance from a particular angle ("any evidence that *she* was right"), but which prefers—through the linguistic design of the question and the presupposed stance voiced through the footing shift earlier—one of two possible relevant answers. Finally, since the action the interviewer produces is indeed a question (and because this is a live news interview broadcast), the interviewee is—in spite of being put in a difficult spot— bound to respond to the question.

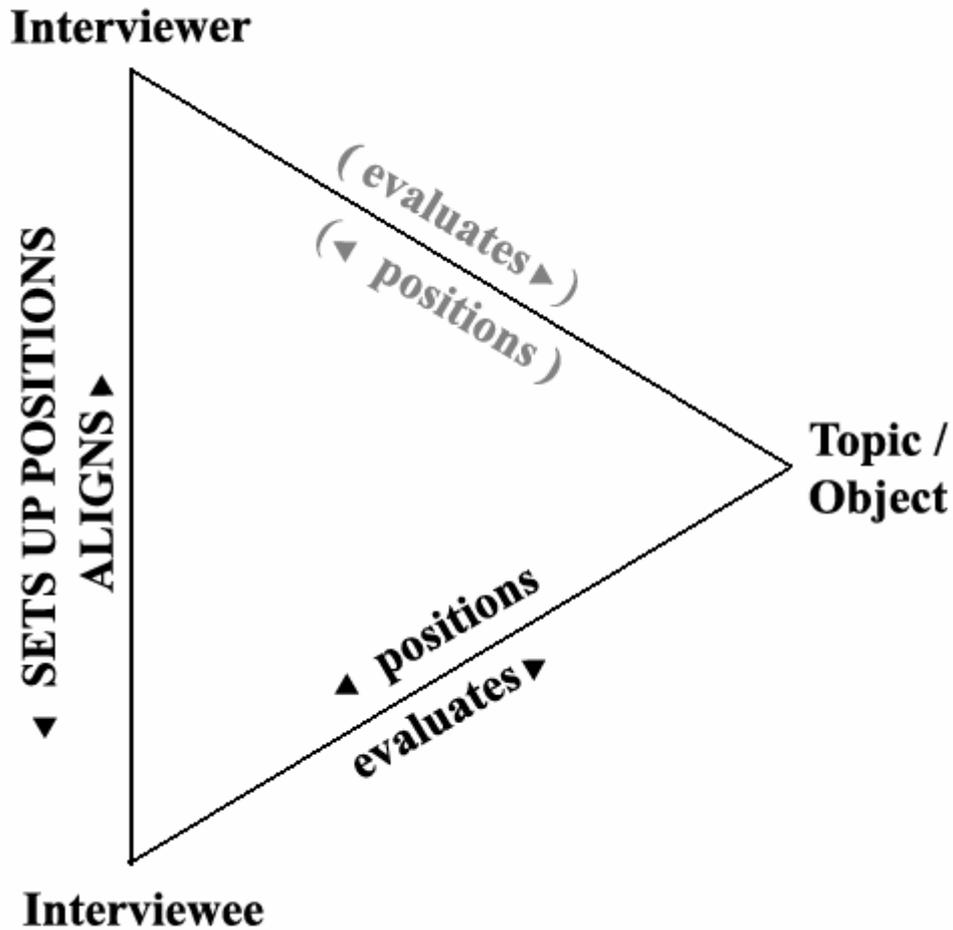


Figure 3. Positioning/alignment in TV interviews

So in effect, these practices and elements in the question turn together contribute to an activity in which the interviewer sets up a position for the interviewee, which he has to take into account when designing his response (see Figure 3). This is a good example of *forward-type* intersubjective activity, because it aims to constrain the possibilities for the interviewee to construct his responsive stance. Moreover, as is shown below, the interviewee’s turn-internal trajectory is not only affected by the individual elements in the interviewer’s turn, but also by the position that the interviewer set up for him.

3.3 Interviewee's alignment with the position in the question

Also the interviewee's response in example (2) contains features described in the conversation analytic literature on news interviews. According to Clayman and Heritage (2003: 62), interviewees can in general

formulate their responses in ways that accept or resist (or reject altogether) any or all of [the preferences in the interviewer's question]. Thus [interviewees'] responses engage (or decline to engage) [with] the agenda set by [interviewers'] questions, confirm (or disconfirm) its presuppositions, and align (or disalign) with its preferences.

Consider example (2f) below.

(2f) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

22 IE: ... (1.0) (H) (TSK) Well ^nothing,
23 .. has been blown up,
24 ... so `fa=r.
25 .. So,
26 ... you might deduce from that,
27 `no.

The interviewee's response and the stance encoded therein display fine-tuned orientation to and alignment with the question. First of all, the interviewee initially responds to the most recent TCU in the question and only after that responds to earlier TCUs in that turn (cf. fn 4 in Clayman and Heritage 2002 106–107).²¹ The interviewer also complies with the action agenda of the question, by choosing one of the two alternatives to answer the question, i.e. he answers "no." By doing so, he also provides the preferred response that the question projected. However, it is important to notice that the interviewee carefully designs the TCU so that he explicitly avoids claiming the stance to himself, and rather relies on evidence or induction (cf. Chafe 1986). He further distances from the stance by using the generic pronoun "you" and the modal verb "might" (cf. "can") (line 26). In sum, the interviewee displays intersubjective engagement with the interviewer's question, but simultaneously bypasses the position set up in the question.

Next, the interviewee says:

²¹ See also Sacks (1987 [1973]) and Heritage and Roth (1995).

(2g) CNN, *Crossfire*, Dec 27, 2001: The new bin Laden tape
 IR: Paul Begala, IE: Frank Gaffney (003 / 1 / 1:13)

28 IE: ... I don't think this is a matter of ^cryptography,
 29 I think this is a ^question of whether,
 30 <MRC>people have gotten instructions</MRC>,
 31 ... (0.7) (H) who are ^here in this country,
 32 or perhaps ^elsewhere in the world,
 33 ... (H) and will be prepared to ^operate on them.

Here (in lines 28-29) the interviewee begins to shift the topical agenda (cf. Clayman 2001, Greatbatch 1986). Since the topical agenda is shifted after the appropriate answer (“no”) is given, the interviewee is doing a post-answer agenda shift (Greatbatch 1986). However, the interviewee does not just shift the agenda. He does this by engaging with one part of the question, namely the part in which the interviewer shifted the footing and added his own voice in the question. Simultaneously by engaging with the question, he disaligns with the presupposition in it. In other words, the interviewee takes a stance “that this issue is not about cryptography” in relation to “airing the bin Laden tapes” (Stance Object).

What makes lines 28–29 particularly interesting is that the agenda shift is a combination of two actions: a denial and a counter-stance (cf. Ford 2002). Based on a collection of this combination, both of these actions have important functions: by first doing the denial, the interviewee dialogically engages with one part of the question and thereby addresses and responds to it. Interviewees frequently construct the denial by using a stance marker, which is often of the type *I don't think*, as in the above example.²² Simon-Vandenberg (2000) argues that in news interviews, *I don't think* conveys and frames the speakers' subsequent opinion (cf. the idea of subjectivity above). However, based on my data, it is not only doing that, but interviewees can also use it in some interactional contexts as a linguistic resource in order to orient to the position set up in the question (i.e. the marker is doing intersubjective work). Therefore, it displays a *backward-type* intersubjective relation between the two stances. What acts as further evidence for this is that the remaining parts of the interviewee's TCUs, which are framed by this type of stance marker, frequently recycle linguistic elements from the interviewer's turn, such as the NP *cryptography* in the example above.

²² However, it can also be composed of a combination of the first person pronoun, a negative particle and another cognitive or epistemic verb.

After the denial, the second action—the production of a counter-stance—then does the actual agenda shift which enables the interviewee to steer away from the position in the question. In other words, by doing the counter-stance, interviewees are able to express their own stance. The use of this action combination and the linguistic pattern

1st person pronoun + NEG + (cognitive / epistemic) verb + predication₁
 1st person pronoun + (cognitive / epistemic) verb + predication₂

which is here realized as

I don't think
 I think²³

is a resource for producing the agenda shift.²⁴ This action combination and linguistic pattern in it could be perceived as a turn-constructural format (Ford 2002), a pattern in which two actions are closely connected. The connectedness can clearly be heard in the prosody. The intonation contour at the end of the denial (in line 28) is produced with clear continuing intonation. There is also no pause between the two actions. Rather the second part is almost latched onto the first part. In addition to the prosodic evidence, the denial also pragmatically projects an explanation or a solution. A denial alone in the news interview context (as well as in everyday talk, cf. Ford (2002)) would be inadequate, because it is expected that the interviewee gives a reason for why he denies some aspect of the question. Therefore, the denial projects a move toward the second part, the counter-stance, and thereby strengthens the claim that the two actions are not just doing individual actions, but that they are organizing a larger intersubjective stance-taking related activity (i.e. an understanding between two subjectivities, cf. Heritage (1984)) of responding to an implied, presupposed or overtly voiced stance in the question. In spite of this, interviewees engage with the question and by using this pattern align with the position set up in the question, rather than just bluntly not answering it. This combination of actions featuring *this particular linguistic pattern* is not only frequent in news interviews, but very rare in everyday conversation. Finally, it is noteworthy that first person personal pronouns occur very frequently in both parts of this linguistic pattern. It is possible

²³ Haddington (2005, under review-a) discusses this pattern in greater detail.

²⁴ Cf. research done in interactional linguistics which looks at the relationship between linguistic structure and everyday language use. See for example Couper Kuhlén and Selting (2001), Ford et al. (2003), Keevallik (2003) and Thompson (2001).

that these pronouns express a more subjective way of approaching the issue than, for example, if the interviewee's used the generic "you." However, the question of how much these first person pronouns actually refer to the speaker, or whether they are completely void of referentiality in different stance markers (e.g. *I think*, cf. Kärkkäinen (2003)) or discourse markers (e.g. *I mean*, cf. Schiffrin (1987)) is problematic and cannot be discussed here. Nevertheless, they would seem to focus attention to the talk that follows them and therefore be important in terms of how stances are constructed in talk-in-interaction.

4. Summary

This paper has approached the notion of stance taking with two foci in mind: first of all, it has discussed the notions of stance and stance taking by outlining some linguistic work on stance, which focuses on various linguistic markers and how these semantically express stance. It has claimed that such approaches are inadequate for describing stance taking as it occurs in talk-in-interaction. Consequently, it has suggested that in order to study stance taking in interaction, one solution is to combine the views provided by Du Bois in this "theory of stance," with the methods, tools and findings of conversation analysis. Both of these provide an understanding and tools for approaching stance taking as an intersubjective and contingent activity. Stance taking has here been defined as an intersubjective activity in which co-participants display their stances by simultaneously using the multitude of linguistic resources available to them and by deploying the sequential aspects of interaction and turn design. In addition to this, it has been shown that stances can construct and organize subsequent interaction. In other words, stance taking is a contingent activity.

Second, scant attention has been given to a combined interactional and linguistic analysis in news interview data. I showed how previous work on news interviews has concentrated primarily on some individual linguistic aspects of stance or on actions within relatively small fragments of talk. I suggested that by looking at how the participants construct their long turns (which are characteristic in this type of interaction) in news interview interaction, certain action combinations and turn-constructional formats (Ford 2002) emerge, which show that co-participants not only carefully design their stances, but that they also display a clear orientation to their co-participants' prior stances. In other words, stance taking in news interviews is intersubjective and dialogical.

The last point was supported with an analysis of an example from CNN's *Crossfire*. With the help of the example, I showed how interviewers set up positions for the interviewees that the interviewees must take into account in order to construct their own stances (cf. the notion of *forward-type* intersubjectivity). In order to do this, interviewers rely on various linguistic resources (morphosyntactic design of questions, particular uses of words and prosody) and other practices (invoking third-party stances). Interviewees, on the other hand, carefully take into account what interviewers have said and what issues they have highlighted (*backward-type* intersubjectivity). Various linguistic forms in their responses resonate with the language in the interviewer's question and thereby display engagement between the host and the guest and their utterances. One particularly recurrent linguistic pattern in this context is

I don't think
I think

The function of this turn-constructural format is to respond to a position or presupposition set up in the interviewer's turn and finally to steer away from it.

Finally, the stance-taking activity (positioning / alignment) is characteristic to news interviews. The reason for this is that it is a result of the combinations of various practices and actions in questions and answers, which altogether are provided for by the turn-taking system in news interviews and the possibility of producing multi-unit turns. In addition to this, the ways in which the co-participants use various linguistic resources contribute to the production of these stance-taking activities.

In spite of all the apparent complications regarding stance as an analytic notion, *stance taking* seems to be a highly meaningful activity for co-participants when they talk to each other. And the news interview data provides an interesting area for the investigation of stance taking.

The Appendix: Transcription conventions

Based on Du Bois (1991), Du Bois et al. (1992) and Du Bois et al. (1993).²⁵

UNITS

Intonation unit	{line break}
Truncated intonation unit	--
Truncated word	- (en dash)

TRANSITIONAL CONTINUITY

Final	.
Continuing	,
Appeal (seeking a validating response from listener)	?

SPEAKERS

Speech overlap	[]
(numbers inside brackets index overlaps)	[2 2]
Name/identity/address is pseudo	~Jill
Name/identity/address is real	Jill

ACCENT AND LENGTHENING

Primary accent (prominent pitch movement carrying intonational meaning)	^
Secondary accent	'
Unaccented	
Lengthening	=
High booster	!

PAUSE

Long pause (0.7 seconds or longer)	... (N)
Medium pause (0.3 - 0.6 s)	...
Short (brief break in speech rhythm, 0.2 or less)	..
Latching	(0)

VOCAL NOISES

Alveolar click	(TSK)
Glottal stop	(GLOTTAL)
Exhalation	(Hx)
Inhalation	(H)
Laughter (one pulse)	@
Laughter during speech (1-5 words)	@ (e.g. @two @words)

²⁵ I use Courier New font type in the examples because it is a monospace font. This makes aligning simultaneous actions easier than with proportional fonts such as Arial or Times, for example.

Laughter during speech (+6 words) @ (e.g. <@>six words </@>)
 Others (SNIFF), (DRINK), etc.

QUALITY

Special voice quality <VOX> two words </VOX>

Loudness
 Forte: loud <F> </F>
 Piano: soft <P> </P>

Pitch
 Higher pitch level <HI> </HI>
 Lowered pitch level <LO> </LO>
 Parenthetical prosody <PAR> </PAR>

Tempo and rhythm
 Allegro: rapid speech <A>
 Lento: slow speech <L> </L>
 Marcato: each word distinct and emphasized <MRC> </MRC>
 Arrhythmic: halting speech <ARH> </ARH>

Voice quality
 Whispered <WH> </WH>
 Breathy
 </BR>
 Creak %
 Creak during speech % (e.g. %two %words)
 Crying <CRY> </CRY>
 Yawning <YWN> </YWN>
 Quotative <QUOT></QUOT>

TRANSCRIBER'S PERSPECTIVE

Uncertain hearing # (e.g. #two #words)
 Researcher's comment (())
 Indecipherable syllable #

SPECIALIZED NOTATIONS

Duration (in seconds) <D:1.2>
 Intonation unit continued &
 Restart {Capital initial}
 False start < >
 Nontranscription line \$

SOME SPELLINGS AND GLOSSES

uh, unh, um	hesitation (filled pause)
m, hm	awareness, wonder, backchannel
huh, hunh	awareness, wonder, backchannel
mhm, unhhunh, uhuh	backchannel or affirmative response
unh-unh	negative response (initial syllable stressed)
uh-oh	alarm cry

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Sociolinguistic Variation and Second Language Acquisition: A Preliminary Study of Advanced Learners of French¹

Abstract

The study of a range of sociolinguistic variables in second language acquisition research has allowed a number of trends to be identified concerning the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by the L2 learner. Based on quantitative analyses, this article considers such trends in relation to the variable use of the liaison in French interlanguage by a group of classroom learners in Ireland. Whilst use of the obligatory liaison poses less difficulty to the learners, findings point to the considerable acquisitional difficulty that use of the variable liaison poses: in a range of syntactic contexts, the learners greatly underuse the liaison which constitutes the formal variant of this variable. In so doing, the learners' overuse of the informal variant, that is to say, non-use of the liaison, contrasts sharply with previous findings for other sociolinguistic variables where overuse of formal variants is seen to dominate in learner language. The results are discussed in relation to potential acquisitional and pedagogic reasons for such discrepancies in findings.

1. Introduction

As noted by Mougeon et al. (2002), the traditional focus of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has been on the second language (L2) learner's acquisition of features of the target language which are typically considered to be categorical as opposed to variable. Categorical features are those that are not generally considered to be subject to linguistic variation in the native speaker, although that is not to say that they are not subject to variation in the L2 learner's language use, as exemplified respectively in the following examples concerning the marking of gender (1), number (2), and tense (3) in French:

¹ I gratefully acknowledge the excellent feedback received from the two anonymous reviewers on this article. I also wish to thank the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) for support received whilst writing this paper as a Government of Ireland Research Fellow.

- (1) *le manuscrit* v. *la manuscrit**
 the-masc manuscript v. the-fem manuscript
 ‘the manuscript’
- (2) *deux journaux* v. *deux journal**
 two newspapers-plur v. two newspaper-sing
 ‘two newspapers’
- (3) *hier je suis allée à Paris* v. *hier je vais à Paris**
 yesterday I aux go-perf to Paris v. yesterday I go-pres to Paris
 ‘yesterday I went to Paris’

Whilst the variable use of such categorical features by the L2 learner has been relatively well investigated, the acquisition of native speaker variation has only more recently emerged to properly establish itself as an area of investigation, although early studies do exist such as Adamson and Regan (1991).² Such variable features concern the use of two or more markers to express the same meaning, such as in the case of the variable marking of negation (4) and person (5) / (6) in native speaker French:

- (4) *je ne viens pas* v. *je viens pas*
 I neg come-pres neg v. I come-pres neg
 ‘I am not coming’
- (5) *tu veux du vin?* v. *vous voulez du vin?*
 you-informal want-pres some wine v. you-formal want-pres some wine
 ‘do you want some wine?’
- (6) *nous partons tout de suite* v. *on part tout de suite*
 we-informal leave immediately v. we-formal leave immediately
 ‘we are leaving immediately’

As studies of the native speaker have amply shown, such variation manifests itself at every level of language use, such as phonology, lexicology, morphology, and syntax, and therefore, in terms of the acquisitional challenge facing the L2 learner, cannot be seen as a ‘luxury’ in foreign language learning which one can easily do without. Rather, studies of the native speaker have shown that such variation is a

² For a presentation of state-of-the-art presentations on variation in L2 acquisition, see Bayley and Preston (1996), Preston (2000), Gass et al. (1989), and Young (1991, 1999).

fundamental feature of his/her language usage, whereby (s)he alternates between use of either variant depending on its appropriateness in context. That is to say, since one variant generally emerges as being more formal than the other less formal variant, the native speaker draws on his/her sociolinguistic knowledge to systematically vary his/her usage of either variant. Whilst the native speaker has already acquired that knowledge, the L2 learner has yet to acquire that ability to vary his/her use of different features of the L2 depending on their appropriateness in context. Indeed, failure to do so will result in considerable discrepancies with the native speaker, whereby the learner may underuse one variant, and, in so doing, overuse another variant which is inappropriate in context. Such inappropriate language use in sociolinguistic terms merely emphasizes the importance of understanding the process of development behind the learner's sociolinguistic competence, in order to avoid the situation of a learner whose language usage is structurally correct, but sociolinguistically inappropriate in context.

This paper aims to provide an insight into that process of acquisition in relation to the instructed L2 learner's sociolinguistic competence. Before presenting the study undertaken, the following section will present an overview of some of the principle findings emanating from previous studies in the area.

2. Literature review

Previous studies of the L2 acquisition of sociolinguistic variation have typically focussed on learners of French, as seen in state-of-the-art collection of papers in Dewaele and Mougeon (2002, Mougeon and Dewaele 2004). Those studies have more typically focussed on sociolinguistic variation in relation to morphology, as exemplified by Dewaele (2002), Dewaele and Regan (2002), Lemée (2002), Nadasdi et al. (2003), Regan (1996) Rehner and Mougeon (1999), and Rehner et al. (2003). In contrast, sociolinguistic variation in the areas of phonology, lexicology, and syntax has been relatively less investigated, although notable exceptions include Blondeau and Nagy (1998), Dewaele and Regan (2001), Howard et al. (2004), Mougeon and Rehner (2001), Nadasdi and McKinnie (2003), Nagy et al. (1996), Sankoff et al. (1997), Thomas (2002), and Uritescu et al. (2004).

Such studies overwhelmingly point to the difficulty posed by the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation for the L2 learner, whereby the

learner typically overuses formal sociolinguistic markers, and, in so doing, underuses their corresponding informal markers. For example, Regan (1996) notes the quasi-total absence of 'ne' deletion in her expansive study of Irish instructed learners of French before a stay in the target language community. That is to say, the learners almost totally relied on the use of the formal variant for the expression of negation, in spite of the fact that that was the structurally more complex form. However, Regan notes that the learners' use of the informal variant dramatically increased during a period of residence in France, whereby she concludes that the acquisition of the informal variant was an important means of 'sounding more native-like' whilst in France, a factor which seems to have spurred its acquisition whilst there in a way that did not occur in the foreign language classroom. Indeed, in view of such a finding, the question arises as to what extent informal variants are present in classroom input, such that their presence may simply not be frequent enough for their acquisition to take place. That is to say, the classroom learner may not be adequately exposed to such informal variants, unlike in the target language community where naturalistic input seems to have a much greater impact. Indeed, on this score, Rehner et al. (2003) report on findings concerning the use of informal variants in foreign language textbooks and by L2 classroom instructors, whereby they find that on certain variables, the informal variant is less used than in the case of the native speaker.

Regan's finding concerning the limitations of the foreign language classroom for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation has been reiterated in a range of other studies which have pointed towards the vital role played by authentic target language contact outside the foreign language classroom in order for the L2 learner to in any way approach native speaker norms. For example, a range of studies by Jean-Marc Dewaele (1992, 2002, 2003, 2004) on the acquisition of various sociolinguistic markers point to the increased usage of informal sociolinguistic markers by learners who have more increased informal contact with the target language outside the classroom such as through friends, TV viewing, reading, and holidays in France. In contrast, classroom learners whose L2 contact is more restricted to the classroom demonstrate increased usage of the more formal variants.

Similar findings concerning the importance of authentic native-speaker contact outside the classroom, as principally facilitated through a period of residence in the target language community are equally evident in a wide range of studies by Raymond Mougeon on Canadian anglophone learners of French in an immersion setting. Findings from such studies

further illustrate that, whilst informal variants such as 'ne' deletion are underused, vernacular variants are positively quasi-absent in the L2 learner's interlanguage. Such variants are defined as variants which have a more stigmatised value in the target language, and are typically associated with lower class speech.

In summary, previous studies overwhelmingly point to the limitations of the foreign language classroom for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, in contrast to the sociolinguistic gains enjoyed by classroom learners who spend a period of residence in the target language community. However, as noted by Nagy et al. (1996, Blondeau et al. 2003) in their studies of L2 naturalistic learners in the target language community, namely Canadian anglophone speakers residing in French-speaking Montreal, being in the target language community alone is often not a sufficient factor in order for the learner to approach native speaker norms. Whilst all the studies mentioned note that the L2 learner approaches native speaker norms, without fully reaching them, Nagy et al.'s work particularly points to the variation evident between learners in terms of their success rate, which chiefly reflects an effect for the learners' level of integration within the target language community, in terms of their interaction with native speakers.³

Whilst the studies reviewed point to a number of limitations on the L2 learner's potential acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, the studies nonetheless unilaterally point to the learner's success in acquiring a similar system of underlying factors as the native speaker which seem to systematically constrain his/her use of the such sociolinguistic markers. For example, studies of the native speaker unequivocally point to the systematic effect of a range of linguistic and extralinguistic factors on the speaker's choice of marker, such that his/her choice of sociolinguistic variant is not in any way random, but is rather subject to very systematic patterns of variation. Studies of the L2 learner equally point to very similar systematic patterns of variation, such that the learner's underlying system of sociolinguistic competence very neatly approaches native speaker norms. For example, studies of both the L2 learner and the native speaker point to the important effect of style, whereby use of informal variants is

³ See also Olson-Flanagan and Inal (1996) who find that length of residence in the target language community significantly affects the learner's level of use of informal variants. Regan (1995) similarly notes differences between her learners in terms of their sociolinguistic gains as a reflection on their level of contact with the target language whilst residing in the target language community.

much more frequent during an informal style than during a formal style.⁴ Likewise, gender has been found to be an important factor in the speaker's choice of variant, whereby males use informal variants to a greater extent than females.

In summary, whilst somewhat restricted to studies of L2 French, the dominant findings emerging from previous sociolinguistic research as presented principally concern:

- the difficulty posed by the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation for classroom learners in terms of their very evident underuse of informal sociolinguistic markers.
- the relative underuse of vernacular markers by L2 learners.
- the highly beneficial effect of informal contact with the L2, chiefly through residence in the target language community, for the acquisition of informal sociolinguistic markers.
- the similarities between the native speaker and the L2 learner in the underlying system of factors constraining their sociolinguistic variation.

One of the limitations of the studies on which those findings are based concerns the fact that they have predominantly focused upon morphological variables in the case of L2 French, such as 'ne' deletion, as well as the variable use of 'nous' / 'on'. Whilst such studies of the same variable across different learner populations allow an important means of comparing findings, studies of socio-phonological variables in L2 French have been much less numerous. By focusing on the acquisition of a socio-phonological, the study to be presented here attempts to supplement existing findings concerning the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, and in so doing, provide an insight into their validity in the case of the socio-phonological variable of liaison in L2 French.

3. Liaison in target language French

Bybee (2001) provides the following definition of 'liaison': "the appearance of a word-final consonant before a vowel-initial word in words that in other contexts end in a vowel" (ibid: 337). Typically three types of liaison can be identified, obligatory (or categorical), facultative (or

⁴ However, see Rehner and Mougeon (1999) and Uritescu et al. (2004) who report opposing findings.

variable), and forbidden which can give rise to cases of hypercorrection, as exemplified respectively in:

- (7) *Les enfants*
the-plur children
'the children'
- (8) *pendant une heure*
for one hour
'for an hour'
- (9) *Charles a parlé*
Charles aux speak-perf
'Charles spoke'

Numerous studies present an insight into the use of the liaison by the native speaker, such as Ågren (1979), Armstrong (2001), Ashby (1981, 2003), Booij and De Jong (1987), Bybee (2001), Encrevé (1988), Gadet (1989), Green and Hintze (1988, 2001), Klausenberger (1984), Malécot (1975), Morin and Kaye (1982), and Smith (1998). These studies overwhelmingly point to the highly complex phenomenon that is use of the liaison in French, whereby, in the case of variable liaison, its use or non-use is conditioned by a range of linguistic and extralinguistic constraints. An example of such a linguistic constraint concerns, for example, the type of syntactic link holding between the word in which the liaison segment is to be found and the following word: for example, it has been found that use of the liaison is highly infrequent following polysyllabic prepositions such as 'pendant' (during), whereas its use is considerably more frequent following the verb 'être'. Other linguistic constraints include phonological factors such as the type of liaison segment itself: use of the liaison is much more frequent when the liaison segment is /n/ such as in 'nous sommes bien arrivés' (we got there safely), as compared to /t/ or /z/ such as in 'ils sont arrivés' (they arrived) and 'des personnes âgées' (old people). Its use is relatively rare in the case of /k/, /p/ and /r/, such as in 'suer sang et eau' (to sweat oceans), 'beaucoup aimé' (well liked) and 'visiter un château' (to visit a castle). The length of the actual words between which the liaison can be made has equally been found to have an effect on its use, whereby its use is much more frequent when the second word is relatively longer compared to the first, such as in 'je suis arrivé' (I arrived). In contrast, its

use is less frequent when the first word is longer than the second, such as in 'il cherchait un livre' (he was looking for a book).

Apart from linguistic factors, extralinguistic and stylistic factors have been found to condition use of the liaison. For example, as a prestige marker, Ashby (1981) finds that use of the liaison is more frequent during a formal style, and less so during an informal style. However, it is important to note that the issue of formality is not a simple two-way dichotomy between formal and informal markers. Rather, although constituting a formal marker, the various types of liaison cannot be considered to carry the same level of prestige. As Malécot makes the point, certain liaison types are more prestigious than others, only occurring in very formal styles such as a formal speech as opposed to a general conversation where their occurrence is somewhat less frequent. Such highly prestigious liaisons are exemplified, for example, by the infinitive verb form as in 'discuter avec' (to discuss with). Thus, in view of differences in their level of occurrence according to the level of formality, all liaison types are not equal in terms of the level of prestige that they carry. Rather, some are seen to be more prestigious than others, such that style emerges as a very important factor in the native speaker's use of the liaison.

In the case of extralinguistic factors, middle class and older speakers have been found to produce the liaison more frequently than their lower class and younger counterparts. In the case of gender, findings have been mixed: whereas Ashby (1981, 2003) and Green and Hintze (2002) find that use of the liaison is more frequent in men than women, Booij and De Jong (1987) and Malécot (1975) offer opposing findings, whilst Smith (1998) finds no differences between men and women on their use of this variable. A final factor which has been relatively uninvestigated is the issue of how use of the liaison may be geographically constrained. A difficulty with this factor concerns the limited number of studies available, whereby some focus solely on the discourse of media presenters and politicians. Geographical comparisons are further restricted due to other important methodological differences between studies. For example, studies differ in terms of whether they report solely on variable liaison, or on both obligatory and variable liaison together, thus making it difficult to compare levels of use of the liaison in different geographical areas. Further difficulties relate to differences between the informants in the different studies in terms of their age and social background, amongst others.

The range of factors which have been found to condition use of the liaison points to a number of highly complex patterns of variation at work

behind this variable, whereby the acquisitional challenge for L2 learners is not only to learn to vary in their use of this variable, but also, if they are to approach native speaker norms, to learn to vary that usage in similar ways to the native speaker according to the patterns of variation outlined. That task is perhaps made all the more difficult given that cases of hypercorrect use of the liaison are equally highly frequent across native speakers from diverse backgrounds! The study to be presented here attempts to illuminate that acquisitional challenge facing the L2 learner in relation to the acquisition of the liaison in target language French.

4. Presentation of the study

4.1 Learners

This preliminary study is based on a large-scale project which investigates the acquisition of French by Hiberno-English-speaking learners of French. Previous investigations have focused on their grammatical skills, principally in relation to their acquisition of tense-aspect morphology.⁵ In contrast, the study from which this paper emanates aims to illuminate the learners' acquisition of sociolinguistic skills in target language French. The study further complements a number of other studies which have been carried out in relation to a range of sociolinguistic variables in the areas of phonology, morphology, and syntax.⁶ The project therefore provides a wealth of information on the second language acquisition process experienced by Irish learners of French across a range of grammatical and sociolinguistic skills.

For the purposes of the preliminary study to be presented here, data were analysed from a relatively small cohort of six classroom learners. However, similar social characteristics across the learners in terms of their learner profiles, as outlined in the following, ensured that the sample is relatively homogenous. They were Irish university learners of French who had been learning French for 5–6 years at high school, before specialising in French as part of their undergraduate degree programme at university, where, at the time of the study, they had been learning French for two years. Given the learners' sociobiographical characteristics in terms of the

⁵ For specific studies, see Howard (2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004a, 2004b).

⁶ See, for example, Howard et al. (2004), Lemée (2002), Regan (2002, 2003).

length of time they had been learning French, their reasons for learning French, as well as context of learning, the learners can be classed as advanced instructed learners, as defined by Bartning (1997).⁷ The characteristics of their language use equally point to such a classification insofar as the target language forms were no longer emerging in their interlanguage, but rather had emerged.

The learners' programme of study at high school was based on a communicative method as outlined in the national language curriculum in Ireland. The guidelines outlined in the curriculum prescribed a task-based approach using the target language as a means of interaction in the classroom. As part of their language assessment at high school, the learners were tested on the four language skills. All the learners had also studied Irish for 13–14 years during their pre-university schooling, although none reported using the language on a regular basis. It is noteworthy that there is no potential effect for this language on the learners' use of the variable under investigation here, since liaison is not a feature of Irish, or of English for that matter.

In relation to their university programme of study in French, the learners had, on average, 7 contact hours per week, which were divided between both language and content courses in the areas of French literature and culture. A communicative approach was also an integral characteristic of the learners' course of instruction at university: the language of teaching was predominantly French on both the language and content courses being followed by the learners. In the case of their language programme in French which was spread annually over 24 weeks, the learners followed a weekly one-hour informal conversation class, as well as classes on written French. The use of authentic materials was dominant in both classes. As noted earlier, the students also followed a range of content courses in French literature and culture, such that they had access to other sources of input outside of their formal language classes. Access to authentic sources of input was also facilitated through multimedia resources.

4.2 Data elicitation

For the purposes of this study, the data analysed stem from individual sociolinguistic interviews with the learners at the end of their second year of university studies. Each interview typically lasted one hour, and was

⁷ See also Howard (1998, 1999).

conducted in a university office with the researcher, who demonstrated near-native competence in the target language. The learner-informants had had no previous contact with the researcher. Whilst the learners, who provided their services freely, knew that they were participating in a research project, they were not in any way aware of the purposes of the project.

The interviews, which were recorded using a Coomber recorder, followed the guidelines proposed by Labov (1984) for the elicitation of natural spontaneous discourse. The network of conversational modules were suitably adapted to match the interests of the learner-informants, and included both formal and informal topics, such as family, pastimes, holidays, visits to France, studies, career, religion, Ireland and France, as well as Labov's famous danger of death module. Considerable time was spent on developing the interview questions with a view to minimalising any effect for the formality which the learners may at first have approached the interviews. The interviews can therefore be considered to be relatively informal, as attested by various channel cues such as laughter and speech rate. However, the inclusion of both formal and informal conversational modules ensured that a range of speech styles was elicited. Since use of the variable liaison is closely linked to the issue of style, this was imperative with a view to capturing how the learners' use of the variable might differ across styles.

Following their elicitation, the data were transcribed into standard orthography following the transcription conventions proposed by Blanche-Benveniste and Jeanjean (1987).

4.3 Data analysis

For the purposes of this paper, all tokens of liaison contexts were extracted from the data, yielding a total of 962 tokens, which were subsequently coded as part of a variationist analysis of the variable use of the liaison by advanced L2 learners in target language. Whilst those tokens naturally included cases of variable liaison, they also included cases of categorical liaison, since in the case of the L2 learner, supposedly categorical liaison was not as categorical as one might expect, but rather was also subject to considerable variation. However, we did not include cases of hypercorrect or forbidden liaisons which the learners, in the main, did not produce at all. Even in those singular cases where such liaisons occurred, they can perhaps be considered more properly as 'slips of the tongue' as opposed to the

native speaker's attempt at creating the effect of prestige. Whilst a range of linguistic, extralinguistic, and stylistic factors have been proposed as constraints on that variation, as noted previously, given space restrictions, the results presented here will wholly concentrate on the effect of syntactic context on the learners' use of this variable. The results are based on a quantitative analysis which attempts to identify whether certain syntactic contexts constitute more favourable contexts for use of the liaison than others. Examples of the range of both obligatory (10)–(14) and variable (15)–(24) contexts within which use of the liaison was examined are exemplified in the following:

- (10) Article + noun: les enfants (the children)
- (11) Clitic pronoun + verb: ils ont parlé (they spoke)
- (12) following a monosyllabic adverb + modified element: très intéressant (very interesting)
- (13) following a monosyllabic preposition: dans un instant (in a moment)
- (14) within a lexicalised chunk: de temps en temps (from time to time)
- (15) following *quand* (non-interrogative): quand ils parlaient (when they were speaking)
- (16) following a polysyllabic adverb + modified element: nous nous sommes beaucoup amusés (we had great fun)
- (17) following a polysyllabic preposition: pendant une heure (for an hour)
- (18) following *être* (non-auxiliary): c'est intéressant (it is interesting)
- (19) noun + adjective: des enfants aimables (friendly children)
- (20) following a monosyllabic auxiliary: ils sont arrivés (they arrived)
- (21) following a polysyllabic auxiliary: vous avez entendu (you heard)
- (22) following a negative particle: ils ne sont pas arrivés (they did not arrive)
- (23) verb + complement: nous lisons un livre (we are reading a book)
- (24) noun + verb: les gens entendaient mal (people heard with difficulty)

5. Results

Before discussing the learners' use of the liaison across the range of syntactic contexts, it is firstly important to consider the learners' general

level of use of the liaison in both obligatory and variable contexts. On this score, the rate of usage of the liaison was found to be 82.2% in obligatory contexts ($t = 2.452$; $p < 0.05$), and 8.2% in variable contexts ($t = 4.7$; $p < 0.05$). Whilst use of obligatory liaison is considerably more frequent than that of variable use, the rate of use nonetheless indicates that the learners diverge somewhat from the native speaker who produces the liaison in such contexts in a more categorical way. Similarly, differences between the learners and the native speaker are also evident in the case of variable liaison, whereby the learners' level of usage is significantly lower than in the case of the native speaker who has most recently been seen by Ashby (2003) to attain a rate of usage of 28%. Such findings concerning our learners' level of use of the liaison alone already point to the considerable progress that remains to be made by the learners in order for them to approach the native speaker norms described by Ashby. It remains for us to consider whether differences equally emerge concerning the issue of how the learners use the liaison in different syntactic contexts. For the purposes of examining this issue, we will firstly consider the findings in relation to obligatory contexts for use of the liaison, and subsequently in relation to variable contexts.

5.1 Obligatory contexts

The following table indicates the individual learners' level of use of the liaison in obligatory contexts.

Learner	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Syntactic Context	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Article + noun	50	96	23	70	19	70	33	94	62	95	31	97
Subject pronoun + verb	10	100	25	93	7	100	12	92	34	100	20	80
Monosyllabic preposition	12	100	9	82	8	73	7	78	28	96	6	75
Monosyllabic adverb	2	22	3	25	0	0	2	100	4	100	2	33
Lexicalised form	5	50	2	40	7	44	1	50	8	61	1	50
Adjective + noun	1	50	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0
Object pronoun	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1. Level of usage of the liaison across obligatory contexts

The results clearly indicate that use of obligatory liaison is not in any way a uniform phenomenon, but rather its usage by the learners differs considerably depending on the syntactic context. In particular, we note that use of the liaison is favoured between articles and nouns, between subject pronouns and verbs, and following monosyllabic prepositions, where in the case of some learners, levels of use of the liaison approach near-categorical levels. In contrast, the remaining contexts seem to pose considerably more difficulty to the learners, to the extent that use of the liaison is completely absent in some contexts, such as between adjectives and nouns and following an object pronoun. It is interesting to note that use of the liaison is not as extensive as one might expect in the case of lexicalised forms, which are typically considered to be learnt as rote forms. This finding is in contrast with findings from other studies concerning the important role played by lexicalised chunks on the acquisition of sociolinguistic markers. For example, Regan (1995, 1997) notes that such markers tend to be greatly overused with such forms in contrast to non-lexicalised forms.

5.2 Variable contexts

The following table presents the results concerning the learners' use of the liaison in variable contexts.

Learner	1		2		3		4		5		6	
Context	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
'quand'	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polysyllabic adverb	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Polysyllabic preposition	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0
'être'	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	11	6	21	0	0
Noun + adjective	1	33	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monosyllabic auxiliary	1	50	6	66	3	60	1	100	0	0	0	0
Negative particle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	0	0
Verb + complement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3
Polysyllabic auxiliary	-	-	0	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Noun + verb	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conjunction	2	18	1	8	0	0	2	17	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Level of usage of the liaison across the variable contexts

Somewhat in contrast to the preceding table concerning obligatory liaison, the overwhelming feature to emerge from this table is the learners' complete failure to produce the liaison in the vast majority of variable contexts where it could be produced. Indeed, contexts where the variable liaison is produced are restricted to polysyllabic prepositions, the verb 'être', between nouns and adjectives, after a monosyllabic auxiliary, following a negative particle, and following a conjunction. Whilst some of

the learners produce the liaison in these contexts, it is nonetheless to be noted that other learners do not produce the liaison at all. This in spite of the fact that such contexts have been found, in the case of the native speaker, to favour use of the variable liaison, albeit not to a categorical extent. For example, in the case of his study of native speakers in Tours, Ashby (2003) reports a rate of usage of the liaison of 33% following the verb 'être', and of 85% following 'quand'. Such levels of use of the liaison are significantly higher than those presented in Table 3 for our advanced L2 learners. In contrast, however, Ashby's results show that the native speaker's use of the variable liaison is somewhat lower at 5% in other cases such as after polysyllabic prepositions and adverbs, and between nouns and adjectives. Nonetheless, in contrast to the native speaker, these are curiously contexts where some of our learners neglect to produce the liaison at all. In contrast with obligatory contexts where the learners make much greater use of the liaison, variable contexts pose considerably greater difficulty, insofar as the learners' non-use of the liaison would suggest that they may not yet have perceived of such contexts as contexts of potential use of the liaison at all. In contrast, the stark difference between the learners' realisation of the liaison in both context types suggests that the learners first perceive obligatory contexts as contexts of use of the liaison in a way that variable contexts have yet to be acquired.

6. Discussion and conclusions

By focusing on an investigation of a socio-phonological marker, the study presented here aimed to complement recent research on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation which has predominantly been based on a range of morpho-syntactic variables. Results of the study further corroborate a number of the principle findings emanating from such research, and, as such, lend support to their validity across a range of sociolinguistic markers. In relation to the issue of language acquisition, one of the principle findings concerns the limitations of the foreign classroom for the development of the L2 learner's sociolinguistic competence. This has been seen to be very much true in the case of learners from a range of language backgrounds learning a range of second languages. In the case of our classroom learners, our findings have principally noted the relative underuse of obligatory liaisons, as well as the significantly lower usage of variable liaisons compared to the native speaker. In particular, in relation to this latter finding, our results show that, although they have been learning

French for a number of years, and can be classed as 'advanced' instructed learners as previously outlined in Bartning's terms, the learners have significant progress to make on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation. The difficulty which that task poses to the learner is further emphasized in the fact that the learner shows significantly higher use of obligatory liaison than of the variable liaison, suggesting that more categorical markers of the L2 are more easily acquired than variable markers.

Whilst our results corroborate existing findings on the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation from the point of view of the limitations of the foreign language classroom, they nonetheless differ in relation to another general finding: whereas existing research generally points to the similarities existing between the learner's patterns of use of sociolinguistic markers and those of the native speaker, our findings which are restricted to the use of the liaison in different syntactic contexts do not provide such support. Rather, our findings show that use of the liaison by both the learner and the native speaker is not uniform to the point that its use by the learner is non-existent in some contexts. Further, even when it is used, those contexts (dis)favouring its use are not the same as in the case of the native speaker.

A possible explanation for such a finding, however, may relate to the learner population under investigation: previous studies which in their findings have emphasized the similarities in how learners and native speakers alike use sociolinguistic markers have chiefly been based on learners who have spent a period of residence in the target language community, or are learning in an immersion context.⁸ Such residence in the target language community, or immersion learning, may constitute an important means of unconsciously sensitising the learner to those contexts which (dis)favour use of the particular variable. Furthermore, as already noted, those studies have been based on morphological variables, use of which may in some ways be more easily noticeable to the learner. In contrast, the study on which our findings are based has investigated learners in the foreign language classroom, which as a domain of acquisition seems not to provide sufficient input for the learner to subconsciously realise which contexts (dis)favour use of the variable.

A further point concerns the fact that the findings of previous studies are based on analyses of data elicited when their learner-informants' sociolinguistic competence may be more developed than in the case of our

⁸ See, in particular, Regan (1995, 1996).

learners. That is to say, in the case of our learners, results show that their use of the variable liaison is relatively insignificant compared to the native speaker, such that during the early stages of emergence of sociolinguistic variation, the characteristics of use of a particular marker by the learner may be at odds with that of the native speaker. Such an interpretation of the results, however, should be further investigated in studies which focus less on sociolinguistic variables which have already emerged in the learner's language than on the characteristics of their emergence over time. Such an issue could be interestingly investigated in research on a larger-scale involving learners of other L1 backgrounds.

Whilst results of the study overwhelmingly corroborate previous studies which point to the limitations of the foreign language classroom for the acquisition of sociolinguistic variation, the study differs from previous studies in a further important respect: whereas other studies have investigated the acquisition of informal variants, the formal variant being already emerged in the learner's language, our study has investigated a variable whose acquisition has a somewhat opposing starting point. That is to say, in the case of the variable liaison, use of the formal variant is almost absent from the learner's language, but rather it is the informal variant which is present, and manifests itself in terms of the non-use of the liaison. Therefore, our learners' limited use of the variable liaison may give rise to an overly informal quality in their speech, which contrasts with their use of other more formal variants which previous studies have shown the classroom learner to overuse, such as the use of the negative particle 'ne', and subject pronoun 'nous'. However, whilst there is a tendency for researchers to categorize formal variants together, it is possible that the L2 learner, and also their interlocutors, may perceive use of certain formal markers to be more marked than others. That is to say, the formal variants of different variables may in fact be perceived to differ in terms of the relative degree of formality that they assume, such that they cannot be considered to be all equally formal. For example, it may be the case that, from the learner's perspective, the omission of the variable liaison may be a less informal use than the omission of the negative particle 'ne' or use of 'tu' instead of 'vous'. A second area for future research therefore concerns the need to consider how the L2 learner's perception of use of the liaison may differ from other formal variants.

An alternative interpretation of the overuse of such formal variants, which contrasts with our learners' underuse of the variable liaison, concerns the pedagogical requirements placed upon the foreign language

classroom as a domain of acquisition, requirements which are often seen as limiting the learner's opportunities to use informal variants. For example, the classroom is seen as a formal environment where interaction is typically restricted to formal discourse, and where the relationship between the instructor and learner is equally formal. As such, an invitation to demonstrate their use of informal discourse is often not forthcoming, such that it is perhaps not surprising that previous studies note that instructed learners grossly underuse informal variants in favour of formal ones—why would they do otherwise if they are implicitly not encouraged to do so?

However, due to the characteristics of the variable investigated here, results from this study suggest that the picture is perhaps more complicated than one might have thought. In the case of the acquisition of variable liaison, use of the informal variant seems to precede use of the formal variant, as evident in our learners' gross underuse of the liaison in some contexts, and total non-use of the liaison in other contexts such that it is the informal variant that overwhelmingly dominates. Thus, in contrast with the interpretation of previous studies' results which holds that it is the specificity of the foreign language classroom as a domain of acquisition which favours the acquisition of formal variants, and in so doing, negatively impacts on the acquisition of informal variants, our results nonetheless point to the need for attention to be paid to use of the formal variants in the foreign language classroom, at least where the liaison is concerned. For example, there is considerable scope for future research to illuminate the sociolinguistic characteristics of the classroom input with a view to examining how the instructor's use of the liaison may differ from that of the native speaker, such that the instructor's potential underuse of this variable may be reflected in the L2 learner.

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Delimiting the Theme of the English Clause —An Inference-boundary Account

Abstract

This paper is centred on the notions of Theme and Rheme as a resource for the organisation of the clause as a message. It takes, as its starting point, Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) conception of Theme in English as a clause-initial element and as an anchor in the realm of experience. Viewed this way, the thematic segment of the clause minimally requires the presence of an experiential element, without which the clausal message cannot properly proceed (Halliday 1994: 53; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 66, 79). From a message-development perspective, however, we may also view Theme as a constraining force on the development of the clausal message. This places explicit focus on the fundamentals of the Theme-Rheme notions—that they organise the clause as a message—and draws our attention to various cognitive psychological considerations. An alternative model of Theme-Rheme is proposed in this paper. Termed the *inference-boundary* (IB) model—this model holds that Theme is a clause-initial element that is capable of generating a boundary of acceptability within which it is permissible for the Rheme to occur. Underlying the IB model is the *principle of acceptable message development*, the deliberate flouting of which serves as a simple procedure to delimit the thematic segment of the clause.

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the message structure of the English clause. It presents a reinterpretation of the functions of Theme and Rheme in the shaping of the message within the clause. Based on the Hallidayan fundamentals of Theme in English as a clause-initial element, it approaches the thematic structure of the clause from a message-development, rather than a metafunctional (cf. Halliday 1969, 1973; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), standpoint. This leads us to view Theme as a constraining force on the development of the clausal message, providing an alternative understanding of the way messages are organised within the clause.

An alternative model of Theme and Rheme—the *inference-boundary* (IB) model (Leong 2000a, 2004)—is proposed in this paper. Based on

schema theory and the role of inferences in language processing, the IB model holds that Theme is a clause-initial segment that is capable of generating a boundary of acceptability within which it is permissible for the Rheme to occur. Underlying the model is a principle that holds for all well-formed clauses. Termed the *principle of acceptable message development*, or the AMD principle, this states that the Theme of the clause must be acceptably developed by the Rheme. As I hope to show in this paper, it is through the deliberate flouting of the AMD principle that Theme can be delimited in an intuitively appealing way.

2. Historical overview

The notions of Theme and Rheme may be attributed to the work of Henri Weil who, in 1844, made the following observation:

There is (...) a point of departure, an initial notion which is equally present to him who speaks and to him who hears, which forms, as it were, the ground upon which the two intelligences meet; and another part of discourse which forms the statement (*l'énonciation*), properly so called. This division is found in almost all we say. (Weil, 1844: 29)

The ideas of Weil were extensively developed by the Prague circle of linguists, notably Mathesius (1928), Daneš (1970, 1974), and Firbas (1992), among many others. A feature of the Prague approach is to regard Theme as the carrier of the lowest degree of *communicative dynamism* (CD)—an element that contributes least to the development of discourse. Such elements are typically retrievable from context and carry given information. Contextually independent elements, however, may also be thematic, provided they are foundation-laying in function. These include elements which establish the setting (time or place) of the discourse or bear some quality to be expressed by the clause (Firbas 1996: 66).

3. Hallidayan framework

Although adopting the Theme-Rheme terminology of the Prague circle, Halliday departs from Firbas and others by separating the thematic structure of the clause (comprising Theme and Rheme) from the information structure (comprising given and new information). Whereas given information is invariably thematic in the CD approach, the Hallidayan framework takes the opposite view:

(...) although they are related, Given + New and Theme + Rheme are not the same thing. The Theme is what I, the speaker choose to take as my point of departure. The Given is what you, the listener, already know about or have accessible to you. (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 93)

In the English language, Halliday instead conceptualizes Theme as a clause-initial, position-bound element, and Rheme as the development of Theme. Specifically, “a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order—whatever is chosen as the Theme is put first” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 65). In the Hallidayan framework, elements which occur in initial position are categorised as textual, interpersonal, or topical Themes, as shown in Table 1.

Metafunction	Component of Theme
Textual	Continuative
	Structural (conjunction or wh-relative)
	Conjunctive (adjunct)
Interpersonal	Vocative
	Modal (adjunct)
	Finite (operator)
	Wh- (interrogative)
Experiential	Topical (participant, circumstance, process)

Table 1. Textual, interpersonal, and topical Themes (Halliday 1994: 54; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 79)

These labels mirror the Hallidayan division of the major (meta)functions of language. These include the (a) textual metafunction, which enables language to be packaged and presented as an integrated whole, (b) interpersonal metafunction, which enables language users to interact with each other, and (c) experiential metafunction, which enables language users to construe their experience of the world in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances.

The topical Theme, the most important of the three Theme types, comprises only one experiential element and ends the thematic segment of the clause. Halliday (1994: 53) argues that until this constituent appears, “the clause still lacks an anchorage in the realm of experience.” The

thematic segment therefore extends from the beginning of the clause up to and including the first experiential element. As we see in Table 1 and examples (1–3) below, this experiential element is the first occurrence of any participant, circumstance, or process. The rest of the clause after the topical Theme constitutes the Rheme.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (1) | On Thursday,
Topical Theme
(circumstance of time) | the managers will discuss the issue.
Rheme |
| (2) | The managers
Topical Theme
(participant) | will discuss the issue on Thursday.
Rheme |
| (3) | Call
Topical Theme
(process) | the ambulance now!
Rheme |

The topical Theme need not be preceded by textual or interpersonal Themes as these are optional elements. If all three Themes do appear, however, they typically follow the textual–interpersonal–topical order, as in (4):

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| (4) | On the other hand,
Textual Theme
(conjunctive adjunct) | perhaps
Interpersonal Theme
(modal adjunct) |
| | you
Topical Theme
(participant) | should visit us next week.
Rheme |

4. Complications

As it has never been Halliday's intention to account for the acceptability of constructions, his framework is unable to clarify whether a clause is well- or ill-formed on thematic grounds. It is possible, for instance, for a thematic analysis to be undertaken on a clause such as (5) (assuming normal context, but see section 5.4 below), where *John* is the topical Theme.

- (5) John laid an egg.

This, however, is troubling, and I wish to say that if unacceptable clauses are deemed to have a thematic (and, therefore, message) structure, it would be very difficult to appreciate the functional roles of Theme and Rheme as a resource for *organising* the clause as a meaningful message.

In terms of theoretical consistency, further complications are raised. In the Hallidayan framework, it is held that the topical Theme is realised by the first experiential element in the clause. It is argued, as we saw earlier, that until this element appears, the clause has no anchorage in the realm of experience (Halliday 1994: 53). In practice, however, this is not always the case. Consider (6) and (7):

- (6) Is he sad?
- (7) There is a man outside.

In (6), a choice between two competing experiential elements is involved. Here, although the verb *Is* is an (intensive) relational process, it is not analysed as the topical Theme. Instead, many systemicists would rather regard the verb as a finite operator functioning as an interpersonal Theme, and the personal pronoun *he* as the topical Theme. This, however, does not hide the fact that it is the process, rather than the participant, that appears first (see also comments in Fawcett 2000: 165–166). The analysis leaves unanswered why a process that is co-extensive with the finite operator is not regarded as the topical Theme, but is somehow bypassed in favour of the participant. This, in turn, raises a query as to whether similar exceptions should also be made for elements in which an experiential element is fused with a textual or an interpersonal element, such as *wh*-relatives in non-restrictive relative clauses and *wh*-question words in content interrogatives (cf. Table 1).

The situation in (7), involving an existential construction, is slightly different. Here, the empty subject *There* is analysed as the topical Theme, even though it is semantically empty and, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 257) concede, “has no representational function in the transitivity structure of the clause.” If so, it cannot be topically thematic, since the clause technically lacks an anchorage in the realm of experience. But because it is nevertheless regarded as a topical Theme, it raises a problem that is difficult to resolve on grounds of theoretical consistency (Huddleston 1988; see also Leong 2000b on an alternative analysis of existentials).

5. Rethinking Theme

These complications underscore the need to refine Halliday's account with an additional apparatus that is not only able to explain why certain linguistic constructions are ill-formed or less acceptable than others but also account for puzzles in (6–7) above. As a concept of initialness, a reasonable claim about the Theme in English is that it prepares the decoder for what is to come. Among several functions associated with initial elements, Downing (1991: 129) draws attention to their role in directing decoders' expectations towards language structure and meaning, and setting the main semantic framework which holds over the following clause or clause complex. Initial elements, therefore, work to shade in what is to come, and form expectations in this regard. If this is not fulfilled, the decoder will be forced to either revise the earlier expectation or reject the construction entirely.

Approaching the Theme-Rheme issue from the language user's standpoint, then, recognises a multitude of factors that influence the processing of language. Very broadly, these include context and our knowledge of the world, including knowledge of pragmatic principles (knowing when to say what and to whom), conventions of language use, and language itself (phonology, syntax, semantics, etc.). In their totality, these make up the cognitive environment of the language user, described as follows:

An individual's total cognitive environment is the set of all the facts that he can perceive or infer: all the facts that are manifest to him. An individual's total cognitive environment is a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities. It consists of not only all the facts that he is aware of, but also all the facts that he is capable of becoming aware of, in his physical environment. The individual's actual awareness of facts, i.e. the knowledge that he has acquired, of course contribute to his ability to become aware of further facts. Memorised information is a component of cognitive abilities. (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 39)

From the language user's perspective, a useful account of the way we store and apply our knowledge of the world, whether in terms of understanding linguistic impulses or making sense of events, is *schema theory*, first articulated in Kant (1787) and later expanded in Bartlett (1932). The role of inferences—the activation of information derived from background knowledge or memory—is also significant and will be addressed in the following sub-section.

5.1 Schemata and inferences

Schema theory is a powerful account of the way we store and process our knowledge of the world, whether in terms of processing language or making sense of events. We may view a schema as “a data structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory” (Rumelhart 1984: 2). When activated, a schema provides the relevant background knowledge or context that is needed for goal-oriented action, interpretation, or the generation of inferences (Hall 1989: 392–393). The following analogy of schemata as theories is particularly helpful:

Theories, once they are moderately successful, become a source of predictions about unobserved events. Not all experiments are carried out. Not all possible observations are made. Instead, we use our theories to make inferences with some confidence about these unobserved events. So it is with schemata. (Rumelhart 1980: 38)

Here, a schema functions “as a kind of informal, private, unarticulated theory about the nature of the events, objects, or situations that we face” (Rumelhart 1980: 37). That is to say, we rely on our schemata to account for some aspect of a new experience. The processing of any incoming input, therefore, is akin to “hypothesis testing, evaluation of goodness to fit, and parameter estimation” (Rumelhart 1980: 38). Whenever a particular schema fails to account for the new experience, it is either accepted in a modified form or rejected in search for another possibility.

Broadly, the schemata that are activated during language processing can be grouped under three categories (cf. Goatly 1997: 137):

(a) *World knowledge*: an inventory of our generic knowledge of concepts, abstract or otherwise, in our long-term memory.

(b) *Knowledge of context*: our awareness of the range of relevant contextual factors, including co-text, that have a direct or indirect bearing on the discourse (see further section 5.4).

(c) *Knowledge of pragmatics*: our awareness of discourse strategies that are used in a communicative encounter. This knowledge forms part of world knowledge and provides information as to why language is used in a particular way (see Seifert 1990).

To these, we may add our knowledge of language. Since our knowledge of the world is an inventory of schemata, and language acquisition is conditioned by external factors, our language schema, comprising what we know about language, cannot be independent of this inventory but is a part of it. As it is used here, our language schema refers,

narrowly, to our knowledge of the structure of language at the level of the clause (specifically, how declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, etc., are typically structured). We shall refer to the language schema as S_1 and all other schemata (hereafter *other schemata*) that come to bear on our interpretation of any clausal message as S_2 . In terms of consciousness, it is surmised that S_1 tends to operate at a lower level than S_2 . There is an apparent ease by which we are able to produce and comprehend novel constructions. As Wingfield (1993: 201) remarks, these are “automatic processes over which we exert little control.”

When activated, schemata facilitate the generation of inferences. An inference, broadly defined, is “any piece of information that is not explicitly stated in a text” (McKoon and Ratcliff 1992: 440). This includes both transient activations of information, word-based inferences, and any information that is derived from background knowledge or memory (schemata) (van den Broek 1994: 557). In language processing, two types of inferences may be activated. The first, *forward inference*, tends to be non-specific in nature, unless it concerns the structural form of the clause. In this sense, forward inferences merely “[refer] to the anticipation of any aspect of future events, ranging from a specific expectation that a particular event will take place to a vague sense that something will occur” (van den Broek 1994: 570). In terms of message development, on the other hand, forward inferences serve as anticipators for some future event or development of the present input. The second, *backward inference*, serves to connect two stretches of language as a coherent whole. They establish local coherence and are based on information that connects instances of the same concept, pronominal reference, and causal relations.

5.2 Inference boundary model

How do schemata and inferences specifically relate to the notions of Theme and Rheme? As a generator of expectations, it is proposed that a useful way of interpreting Theme is to understand it as an element that determines a boundary within which it is permissible for the Rheme to occur. The primary function of Theme, specifically, is not simply to introduce the Rheme but to do so within a frame of acceptability so that the clause makes sense only if *both* its Theme and Rheme are considered together. The thematic element, as it were, has the constraining force to shape the development of the message in the rest of the clause. This model of Theme

and Rheme—the inference-boundary (IB) model—is represented in Figure 1.

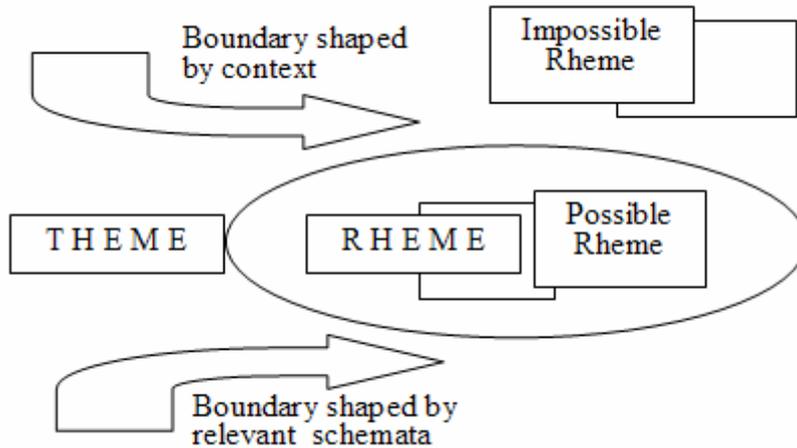


Figure 1. IB model

The ellipse in Figure 1 represents the boundary of acceptability generated by the thematic element. Of the possible Rhemes within the boundary, only one is eventually selected as the actual Rheme. Rhemes that fall outside the boundary are blocked from co-occurring with the Theme since this would result in an unacceptable construction.

By this formulation, when a clause is processed, there is an interplay of schemata related to language (S_1) and the world in general (S_2). Together with the prevailing context, these schemata establish a boundary of acceptability within which it is permissible for the Rheme to occur. Since clausal (mood) structures take a predictable form, forward inferences in S_1 tend to be specific. Clark and Clark (1977: 68), for example, propose the following strategy for language processing: “use the first word (or major constituent) of a clause to identify the function of that clause in the current sentence.”

However, since language cannot be meaningfully processed independently of S_2 , the interpretation of any linguistic input requires the operation of both S_1 and S_2 in tandem. These schemata (S_1 and S_2) in turn generate inferences that aid in the processing of the clausal message. The alternative representation of the IB model, viewed in terms of inference activation, is given in Figure 2.

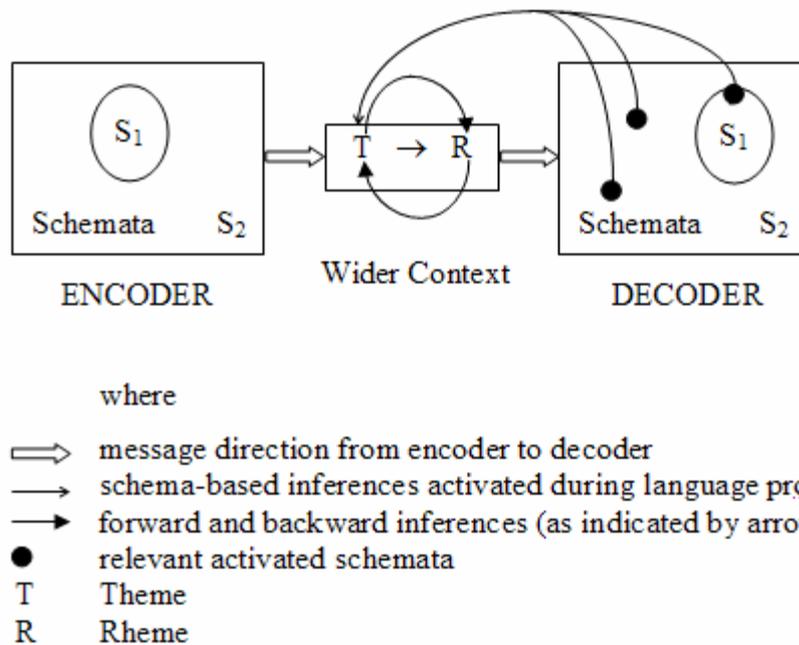


Figure 2. IB model in terms of inference activation

We see here that forward inferences are first activated in both S_1 and S_2 . Such inferences are admittedly difficult to pick out since specific inferences are (usually) generated only in S_1 where the linguistic context is highly predictable. In S_2 , it is generally the case that we can only infer that the message will proceed in a constrained but non-specific way (and hence the boundary of acceptability in Figure 1). Forward inferences in S_2 are unlikely to be specific as it would take up too much processing time for the decoder to continually generate specific predictions for every clause that is processed. Singer (1990: 170) calls this situation *inferential explosion*, where the individual becomes simply lost in thought. The observation below, albeit made in reference to connected texts, has relevance for clauses as well:

When forward inferences are made, they are less constrained than backward inferences. Whereas a backward inference usually needs to be compatible with two sources of constraint in the text, namely the focal statement and its antecedents, a forward inference is constrained by only one event, the focal statement (...) This lack of constraint allows for the possibility of an “explosion” of expectations, thereby making the prediction and investigation of these inferences problematic. (van den Broek 1990: 190)

When the decoder reaches the end of the clause, a backward inference occurs to relate the Rheme to the Theme, thereby establishing the appropriateness of the Theme-Rheme relationship. Backward inferences prompt the decoder to accept or reject constructions on the basis of this relationship, and serve as a check to prevent unacceptable Rhemes—those that fall outside the boundary of acceptability in Figure 1—from surfacing.

5.3 Principle of acceptable message development

Based on the IB model, an interesting fact about Theme becomes evident. Insofar as it activates a boundary which excludes impossible Rhemes, a Theme constrains what can come after it. We shall refer to this as the *principle of acceptable message development* (AMD principle), which states that the thematic Head of a clause must be acceptably developed by the Rheme in the context of the interactive encounter, whether in the written or spoken mode.

Since Theme is capable of activating a boundary of acceptability, it therefore also carries with it the potential of being unacceptably developed by an inappropriate Rheme. We seldom see the actualisation of this potential because there is hardly any benefit to the language user to exploit it. I wish to say, however, that this potential is in fact a very useful way of identifying the Theme of the English clause. Using well-formed clauses, the line separating Theme and Rheme is sometimes difficult to discern. But since the thematic element has the potential of being unacceptably developed, we may approach the delimitation problem from another angle and find out when it is first possible for the AMD principle to be deliberately flouted to form an anomalous construction (we shall refer to this as the *flout-AMD procedure*). Specifically, we are interested in locating the initial segment of the clause that is capable, in context, of being mismatched with the rest of the clause. The flout-AMD procedure is based entirely on the observation we made in section 5.2 that the Theme of the English clause has the constraining force to shape the development of the clausal message. A clause-initial element that is able to be deliberately mismatched with the rest of the clause demonstrates such a constraining force and is therefore thematic. Conversely, a clause-initial element that is unable to be mismatched with the following segment does not yet have such a constraining force and cannot be regarded as thematic in its entirety.

Using the flout-AMD procedure, we may discover, at first, that it is not possible for an anomalous clause to be formed based on the first clause-

initial element and the prevailing context. If so, that element cannot be regarded as being fully thematic since we have not yet been able to locate an unacceptable Rheme. What needs to be done, then, is to keep flouting the AMD principle for each succeeding element until we are able to form an unacceptable clause comprising a mismatch between the clause-initial segment and the rest of the clause. That clause-initial segment—the initial stretch of language that is AMD-floutable—forms the Theme of the clause. The notion of acceptability is of key importance here, and it is understood in terms of one's knowledge or perception of reality, a particular worldview, and common sense. It includes, but need not be confined to semantic well-formedness.

Since Themes have varying degrees of ability to constrain the clausal message, it may be more useful to reclassify Themes, not in terms of the Hallidayan metafunctional categories, but in terms of headedness. This is because, unlike Halliday, our emphasis here is on locating an initial element that is able to enter into a Theme-Rheme mismatch. More precisely, we shall define the thematic Head of a clause as that element that is able to generate a boundary of acceptability for the occurrence of the Rheme such that:

- (a) The boundary is obtained through the interplay of forward inferences in S_1 and S_2 ;
- (b) The boundary is narrow in the sense that it excludes impossible Rhemes that cannot be matched with the Theme; and
- (c) It is possible to form a favourable backward inference relating the Rheme of the clause to the Theme.

Any thematic element preceding or following the thematic Head is a thematic non-Head and is termed thematic pre-Head or post-Head, respectively.

Labelling Themes in terms of headedness acknowledges, as Halliday does, that there is an internal structure within Theme, but it also emphasises the idea of thematic prominence, of some element being more (or less) able than another to satisfy the flout-AMD procedure. Thematic non-Heads provide textual, judgemental, or stative information on the thematic Head, such as modal and conjunctive adjuncts. In line with the wave-like effect of thematic prominence (Halliday 1994: 336–337), thematic post-Heads still retain some thematic flavour but are at the ebb of the wave. Such elements are therefore also regarded as being thematic, but only weakly so.

Let us now examine how the AMD principle may be flouted to delimit the thematic Head. Assuming normal context, consider (8a):

(8a) Bill laughed.

Using *Bill* as the first clause-initial element, we employ the flout-AMD procedure by deliberately mismatching it with an invented segment, as in (8b) (the symbol # is used to indicate that the construction is anomalous):

(8b) #Bill^(Head) dissolved.

By the flout-AMD procedure, therefore, we are able to form an anomalous construction by mismatching *Bill* with the rest of the clause. Since the mismatch is possible, *Bill* is therefore functionally the thematic Head.

Next, consider (9a), again assuming normal context:

(9a) Fortunately, Bill laughed.

Somewhat mechanically, we might proceed to form (9b) and conclude that the AMD principle is floutable using *Fortunately* as the minimal element:

(9b) #Fortunately,^(pre-Head) Bill^(Head) dissolved.

Examining (9b) carefully, however, we soon realise that the construction is odd not because *Fortunately* is unacceptably developed by *Bill dissolved*, but because *Bill*, being human, cannot dissolve. That is to say, a Theme-Rheme mismatch is not yet possible using *Fortunately* as the minimal element. It functions merely as a thematic pre-Head, and we need therefore to look further to the right of the clause for the thematic Head. As we have seen in (8a–b), it is the next element *Bill* that is capable of being mismatched with the rest of the clause. We therefore conclude that *Bill* is the thematic Head, and *Fortunately*, the thematic pre-Head.

5.4 Contextual factor

As seen in Figures 1 and 2, the schemata that are activated in the processing of the clausal message are contextually bound. Since all clausal messages adhere to the AMD principle, it follows that the flout-AMD procedure (to delimit the thematic element) must also be sensitive to the prevailing context. Indeed, the contextual factor is of utmost importance since interpretations can and do vary from one situation to another. Using a simple example, Kittay illustrates this clearly:

Smith is a plumber (...) may be interpreted literally or metaphorically. [The sentence] is metaphorical if we know that Smith is not a plumber but a surgeon. (Kittay 1987: 100)

Cohen also shows that (10a) below would most certainly be considered unacceptable if it were an isolated unit:

(10a) The sparkle on summer dew has just run off with the milkman. (Cohen 1993: 68)

Yet, in context, it would be intelligible as an instance of a metaphor if it occurs in a passage containing (10b) as an earlier unit:

(10b) My wife is the sparkle on summer dew. (Cohen 1993: 68)

Given the importance of the contextual factor in the IB model, we may classify it as either *co-textual* or *situational* to draw a difference between linguistic and non-linguistic context. Within situational context, we may further divide it into *primary* and *secondary* context. Let us take these labels one at a time.

The first category—*co-textual context*—refers to the textual environment within which the element in question is located. The textual environment includes the surrounding words, clauses, or larger segments of text. The second category—*situational context*—refers to “the non-linguistic background to a text or utterance” (Crystal 1997: 88). It is what most people would understand by the term *context*—the physical environment, facial gestures, social distance between the discourse participants, and so on. As it is worded here (“non-linguistic background”), situational context also includes the unreal settings of fairy tales, myths, and legends—angry fire-breathing dragons, owls that spout words of wisdom, and geese that lay golden eggs, among numerous other possibilities, all constitute the non-linguistic background of the unfolding text.

It would therefore be helpful to distinguish two very different types of situational context. The first—*primary context*—applies to the general situation of the real world. This is the world that we are familiar with and comprises the smaller, restricted context of the communicative encounter. The second—*secondary context*—is the make-believe world where reality assumes a somewhat distorted character. Secondary context, however, does not immediately apply to all fictional encounters, but only to those where

the make-believe world has been endowed with some unique characteristic that is either far-fetched or impossible.

The children's tale in (11a) below, for example, represents a situation of secondary context.

(11a) In Eileen's nursery the toys were very busy each night. They held a sewing-meeting and each toy borrowed a needle from Eileen's work-basket, threaded it with cotton, and began to sew hard. They were sewing tiny flannel coats for the pixies who lived in the daffodil beds below the nursery window. They held a sewing-meeting and each toy borrowed a needle from Eileen's work-basket, threaded it with cotton, and began to sew hard. (Blyton 1966: 78)

The secondary context here forces the reader to adjust his schemata to accommodate an unreal world where toys are able to talk and perform various activities. In such a scenario, the flout-AMD procedure can only be applied in line with what is known about the limits of the secondary context, for even in a make-believe world, there still remain boundaries that restrict what can or cannot occur. The flouting of the AMD principle must therefore result in a linguistic construction that is anomalous in the light of the adjustments that need to be made in the secondary context. The toys in the tale from which (11a) is taken from, for example, do not have any skin (this information can be gathered from the co-text; it is not reflected in 11a as that would make the example too lengthy). From the second clause in (11a), we may then proceed to use the flout-AMD procedure to form (11b), which is anomalous in the secondary context:

(11b) #They^(Head) shed skin.

Given the secondary context, the flout-AMD procedure delimits *They* as the thematic Head since it is possible for this element to be mismatched with the following segment, in this case *shed skin*.

Often, when a preceding text is used as contextual information, it becomes trickier attempting to establish a Theme-Rheme mismatch. Consider, for example, (12a–b):

(12a) Bill studied hard for the test. But he failed it.

(12b) Bill studied hard for the test. #But he passed it.

In (12a), the use of *But* in the second clause signals an expectation of contrast that is not followed through in the second clause in (12b). On this count, it would appear that *But* is the thematic Head since there is a

mismatch between *But* and *he passed it* in (12b). To treat such elements as the thematic Head, however, is problematic, not only because they are optional elements in clause structure, but because, more crucially, they are non-robust in character (see further below for a fuller description). That is to say, even though co-text is an important consideration in the delimitation of Theme, the thematic Head itself needs to be sufficiently robust as a message peg. Modal and conjunctive adjuncts lack this feature and have only an indirect influence on the flow of the message proper. Monaghan, in fact, regards such Themes as non-cognitive since:

(...) they only draw attention to the relation of the [clause] as a whole to something else. They thus do not prevent a cognitive thematic choice being made in the same clause. (Monaghan 1979: 133)

How is robustness determined, particularly for optional elements such as conjunctions and adjuncts? In essence, this depends on how well the candidate for thematic Head is integrated within the clause. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1972: 421) regard a clausal element as being integrated in clause structure if it is affected by the clausal process. For example, circumstantial adjuncts (as thematic Heads) exhibit integration by providing additional information that is unique to the clausal message. This makes it possible for them to be contrasted with another similar adjunct in alternative negation, as in (13a). In contrast, this is not possible for non-robust adjuncts and conjunctions, as evident in (13b–c):

(13a) As a teenager, Bill loved to play in the mud, but as an adult, he did not.

(13b) *Amazingly, Bill loved to play in the mud, but surprisingly, he did not.

(13c) *However, Bill loved to play in the mud, but therefore he did not.

For (12a), then, any attempt to formulate an anomalous construction by the flout-AMD procedure and the robustness condition returns us, once again, to our discussion on (9a–b). The thematic Head of the second clause in (12a) is therefore not the conjunction, but the pronoun *he*.

6. Comparison between Halliday's model and the IB model

As a complementary framework, the IB model produces results that are, in large part, identical to those of the Hallidayan framework. That is to say, the Hallidayan topical Theme corresponds generally to the thematic Head of the IB model.

An identical result, for example, is returned for the analysis of (6), reproduced below as (14a):

(14a) Is he sad?

The explanation, however, differs markedly. The IB analysis avoids the difficulty encountered in the Hallidayan framework which relates the topical Theme to the first experiential element in the clause (see section 4). Rather, by applying the flout-AMD procedure, it can be demonstrated that the verb is unable to enter into any mismatch between itself and the following segment. An anomalous result, assuming primary context, can only be obtained when the personal pronoun *he* is included:

(14b) #Is^(pre-Head) he^(Head) creamy?

Nevertheless, differences in analysis do exist, and these involve two broad areas:

(a) *Weak Themes in post-Head position.* Such elements tend to involve modal or conjunctive adjuncts, as in (15).

(15) Bill^(Head) fortunately^(post-Head) paid for the meal.

In the Hallidayan framework, the modal adjunct *fortunately* is regarded as part of the Rheme, simply because it occurs after the topical Theme *Bill*. The IB model, on the other hand, analyses it as a post-Head with weak thematic flavour. This follows the idea of weak Theme as articulated in Fries (1981), although it is not used in the way defined by him. Modal and conjunctive adjuncts that appear immediately after the thematic Head are held to retain some thematic flavour in the IB model, but only weakly so. They are considered thematic, although they are at the ebb of the thematic wave.

(b) *Existential, cleft, and extraposed-subject constructions.* The problem with existential constructions was raised in section 4. It was pointed out that the empty subject, having no experiential function, does not qualify as the topical Theme on definitional grounds. An alternative analysis is offered by the IB model. Using the flout-AMD procedure, it is not possible to formulate a construction that is anomalous due to a mismatch between *there* or *there+be* and the following segment. This suggests that the thematic Head of (7), reproduced below as (16a), is not

the empty subject *There*, but the entity construed existentially, assuming primary context:

(16a) There is a man outside.

(16b) #There is^(pre-Heads) a man^(Head) in the atomic particle.

In (16a), it would not be possible to use either *There* or *There+is* to form a mismatch with the rest of the clause. The invented anomalous construction in (16b) actually represents a mismatch between *There+is+a man* and *in the atomic particle*. By the flout-AMD procedure, therefore, *a man* is the thematic Head, with *There* and *is* as the thematic pre-Heads.

For cleft and extraposed-subject constructions (17a and 17c respectively), the flout-AMD procedure produces similar results:

(17a) It was the conference that ended late. (*cleft construction*)

(17b) #It was^(pre-Heads) the conference^(Head) that melted.

(17c) It is a shame to see her cry. (*extraposed-subject construction*)

(17d) #It is^(pre-Heads) a shame^(Head) to care for others.

We again see that it is not possible for the empty subject *It* and the *be* verb to enter into a mismatch with the rest of the clause. This illustrates that neither *It* nor *be* has the constraining force expected of the full thematic segment. As shown in (17b) and (17d), a mismatch is only possible if the following nominal element in each construction is included as part of the clause-initial segment. The flout-AMD procedure therefore delimits *the conference* in (17a) and *a shame* in (17c) as the thematic Heads. In both constructions, the empty subject *It* and the *be* verb are merely thematic pre-Heads.

On a note of caution, it is not suggested that the result in (16b) is uniformly true for all existentials (see Leong 2000b). Although less common, a few verbs other than *be* are permitted after the empty subject, namely, *exist*, *come*, *ride*, among others. The flouting of the AMD principle remains as the *only* test of the thematic status of each initial element. Consider the existential in (18a):

(18a) There lives a man down the street.

(18b) #There^(pre-Head) lives^(Head) a stone down the street.

Here, the flout-AMD procedure produces the anomalous construction in (18b), and demonstrates that a mismatch is entirely possible between

There+lives and the rest of the clause. We see in (18b) that while it is possible for a man to live down the street, we cannot expect the same of a stone. This means that the empty subject *There* is the pre-Head and *lives* is the thematic Head. Since there is no need in this instance to include *a man* in (18a) to form a mismatch, it is not part of Theme, but Rheme.

7. Conclusion

The IB model, admittedly, goes against the grain of Halliday's metafunctional approach to language description and analysis. It does not depart, however, from the fundamentals of Theme and Rheme. As I have tried to show in this paper, the relationship between Theme and Rheme is not merely sequential, but one that is centred on the clausal message. Beyond a certain point in the clause, the IB model claims that the message can be developed in an acceptable or unacceptable way. It is the thematic Head that dictates what is, and what is not, permissible as the development of the message. The Theme is therefore pivotal in determining how the clausal message will eventually proceed in the Rheme.

In some of their lexical glosses on Theme, interestingly, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 64–66) refer to it as the “point of departure” and that which “sets the scene for the clause itself”. By their very nature, such glosses are imprecise, but they curiously hint at the essence and function of Theme as outlined in the IB model. As we have seen, Theme constrains, in context, what can come after it. It serves as a point of departure in the sense that it permits a range of developments after it, but not others. The clausal message progresses up to a certain point in the clause where it becomes imperative for that initial segment to be acceptably developed by the rest of the clause. The point of departure is not reached, nor the scene set, until such a point is reached.

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Grammaticalization of Syntactic Incompleteness: Free Conditionals in Italian and Other Languages

Abstract

Many subordinate clauses introduced by *se* ('if') in spoken Italian are not actually embedded in any (overt) main clause. Instead, the "missing" main clauses assume a number of semantic values that have become conventionally associated with the *se* clauses under examination. It is argued that such clauses should no longer be described as unembedded, and hence incomplete, conditional clauses. Rather, they should be viewed as a new construction typical of spoken language, constituted by an independent clause introduced by *se* and having its own, almost codified meanings. The absence of the main clause has taken on a precise grammatical function, allowing the unembedded conditional to become a new kind of sentence.

Having clear pragmatic grounds, these phenomena probably occur in similar ways in other languages. This hypothesis is briefly checked on evidence from other languages, both Indoeuropean and non-Indoeuropean.

1. Unembedded conditional clauses

Spoken Italian shows the presence of a construction that may be regarded as belonging to the "periphery" rather than the "center" of grammar, and is completely absent in writing. Many subordinate clauses introduced by *se* (the subordinating conjunction for conditionals and indirect interrogatives, 'if') are not actually embedded in any (overt) main clause. The majority of them can only be interpreted as conditional clauses. In all these cases the utterance shows a certain degree of semantic incompleteness, because the addressee is obliged to imagine the content of the main clause which is not actually produced. This is the case of the examples in (1):¹

¹ All examples are taken from the important spoken Italian corpus *LIP*.

- (1a) LIP, Rd9:
 ... se non lo volete fondo beige non so volete con fondo rosso ce l'abbiamo col
 fondo rosso c'e' qui a terra per esempio **se si puo' brevemente inquadrare un
 tappeto** sempre in questa stessa qualita' eccolo col fondo rosso
(if you can show a carpet briefly....)
- (1b) LIP, Fa13:
 se poi tu 'n l'hai finito ma **se il concetto c'e' tutto_#**
(if the concept is all there...)
- (1c) LIP, Rb7:
 A: ho capito e_ o so d' altra parte va be' **se te sei scordato**
 B: mah v ...
(if you have forgotten...)
- (1d) LIP, Fa4:
 F: ecco **se vedete che avete bisogno di altro eh?**
(if you see that you need something else...)

We will now present an overview of different kinds of unembedded conditionals. We will propose a possible semantic/pragmatic classification for the uses of this construction, and a functional hypothesis on its occurrence.

2. Types of missing main clauses

2.1 “No problem, everything’s fine”

The “unexpressed meaning” suggested by the conditional clause and by its context can be a *reassurance of the addressee*, something like “why worry? everything’s OK (at least as far as I’m concerned), there is no problem.” This meaning can also be expressed overtly, as happens in (2), by linguistic material so loosely linked syntactically to the conditional clause as to be hardly considered the main clause:

- (2a) LIP, Mb30:
 A: guarda io mi sono informato oggi m'hanno detto m'hanno dato dei prezzi
 veramente da sballo
 B: no tu fai cosi' eh XYZ vedi se riesci se a rimanere fino praticamente a venerdi'
 o se trovi un altro appoggio
 A: si' si' si'
 B: poi voglio dire **se stiamo insieme quindici giorni**

A: certo certo
 B: capito? non c'e' problema da venerdì' questa casa ce l'ho
 A: va bene
 B: di conseguenza si tratta capito di tirare avanti questi
 A: certo certo
 B: cinque giorni
(if we spend fifteen days together... there is no problem)

But more often the reassuring content must be inferred from the context:

(2b) LIP, Fa13:

... se tu non ce la fai a finillo # per lo meno pero' fin do tu arrivi che tu l'abbia fatto bene ecco # se poi tu 'n l'hai finito ma **se il concetto c'e' tutto_#** 'un l'ho portata fino in fondo dico 'n ti succedera' mica sempre di rimanere al mezzo...
(if the concept is all there...)

(2c) LIP, Rb7:

A: che a scuola gli avevano non so chi gli ha dato un biglietto pe anda' a vede' Costanzo Show Anto' me ci accompagni? dice si' si' cosi' se ne so' andati tutti e due lui e Federica a vede' chissa' se li hanno fatti entra' non li hanno fatti entra' bo'
 B: ah be' perche' no se ci hai **_se ci hai l'invito**
 A: ci aveva il biglietto per due persone
 B: ah infatti
(if you have the invitation...)

(2e) LIP, Mb4:

B: per cui_ c'e' un po' di_ [RIDE] macello pero' insomma va be' **se facciamo finta di nulla**
(if we pretend nothing has happened...)

2.2 “It’s out of our hands”

Another form of content typically attributable to the “missing” main clauses is something like “there’s nothing we can do, let it be, it’s a disaster, it’s worse than we ever imagined,” and similar. It is, actually, the negative, pessimistic version of the preceding type, with which it shares the nuclear meaning: “there is nothing we need/can do, because, things being as described by the conditional clause, there is no need to change them or no way of changing them”:

(3a) LIP, Fb19:

B: ma insomma allora te vorresti dire che la legge fosse fatta e poi chi ne usufruisce eh ne usufruisce

A: ne usufruisce la stragrande maggioranza **se poi ci sono quei_ quelle sacche di disonesti come sempre ci saranno** che speculano su questo e quest'altro ma scusa la

B: ecco

A: legge faccio un esempio sugli asili nido mi sembra sia una cosa per tante mamme eccetera poi ogni tanto sorte

B: certo eh senz' altro

A: fuori l'asilo nido che i bambini li tratta male che non gli da' da mangiare che li pigliano a calci nel sedere eccetera quelli vanno messi in galera una volta scoperti ma non non fare gli asili nido perche' si pensa che qualcuno debba...

(if then there are those_ those groups of dishonest people...)

(3b) LIP, Fb35:

A: ecco benissimo allora eh un Lorenzo omonimo eh che studia e uno che in questo momento sta cercando di di recuperare il pranzo perso

B: ho capito

A: perche' ho un tecnico che mi sta mangiando sotto gli occhi e ora **se questo e' il sistema di fare radio** alla RAI non lo farebbero io mi chiedo ma alla RAI mangiano?

(if this is the way to do radio...)

(3c) LIP, Rb7:

B: e niente m<e> me so' dimenticato poi la mattina successiva quando so' annato a compra' della roba la eh ho visto che avevo questo biglietto del cinema che poi e' peccato che s'e' spreco

A: certo certo

B: perche' era solo per il mese di_ d'ottobre

A: ho capito e_ o so d' altra parte va be' **se te sei scordato**

B: mah va be'

A: embe' certo

(if you have forgotten...)

(3d) LIP, Re11:

ah se all'improvviso_ me ne vado io chi chi chi sti macelli chi li leva mo' mo' li sto a fa' io poi chi i fa i fanno i mi fii e lui e mo' provvedero' mo' provvedero' mo' provvedero' passano i mesi passano l' anni e questo non provvede mai **se sto a da' retta a lui_** sempre silenzioso io me ne vado se ne vanno i mi fii la' ce rimane a moglie e_ il proprietario so' io

(if I pay attention to him...)

2.3 Generic question of the kind: “What is going to happen?”:

In assertive utterances like the ones seen so far, unembedded conditionals can have conclusive intonational contour, but also a suspended intonation as they would have if “regularly” followed by the main clause. The illocutionary value of the utterance is nevertheless easily interpreted as assertive. The case of interrogative illocution is different. Here, utterances must be distinguished from assertive ones by means of intonation, and therefore a suspended contour is not sufficient.

In fact, in this case unembedded conditionals are not suspended, and have interrogative intonation, as if they were complete sentences. This fact can be regarded as an important clue, not always available in assertive utterances, as to how we should consider the absence of the main clause. If the main clause were simply absent because of dialogical interruption or shift in discourse planning, the subordinate clause would end with a suspended, incomplete contour. Instead, the subordinate conditional actually assumes the interrogative intonation of the utterance, and consequently its interrogative illocution, thus showing that the absence of the main clause is structurally planned, from the beginning of the utterance production. In other words, the subordinate conditional clause, although regarded as incomplete from the point of view of traditional, prescriptive syntax, is not incomplete at all from a pragmatic point of view. The absence of the main clause is not due to occasional execution, rather it is a construction that belongs to the competence of the speaker. In any case, the interrogation that arises from interrogative intonation is not entrusted to an unexpressed interrogative main clause: it is entrusted to the subordinate clause itself which, under the syntactic appearance of a suspended dependent clause, has the pragmatic function of a full utterance.

From a semantic point of view, the question contained in interrogative conditionals has extremely generic meaning, which varies very little according to the different propositional contents expressed explicitly. It is almost always a question such as: “what will happen? What should we expect?” This can be seen in examples (4):

(4a) LIP, Md1:

A: quindi risulta che le righe sono sette # va bene?

C: sì

A: uno due tre quattro cinque sei sette e che per ogni riga ci sono sette?

C: sette pasticcini

A: allora attenti

[VOCI_SOVRAPPOSTE]

A: adesso se la domanda e' attenti **se la domanda e' quanti sono in tutto i pasticcini?**

C: quattordici

A: ma figurati ti sembra possibile che siano quattor<dici> che tutti questi pasticcini che abbiamo disegnato

sono quattordici?

(If the question is how many little cakes are there in all?)

(4b) LIP, Na11:

E: se io vado da Nello in tipografia e poi gli <?> delle_

[parole_incomprensibili]

A: <??> ho gli esami ah

D: o o va <?> oppure vado adesso

E: Elio Elio solo alle due e venti puo' andare_

D: ma_ **se questo e' preliminare al pacco?** no naturalmente sono due cose separate

E: no no si'

D: io posso andarci adesso se e' tutto pronto

(if this is preliminary to the parcel?)

(4c) LIP, Mb36:

A: sara' andata a scopa' sara' andata a scopare con qualchedun altro che ti frega?

B: benissimo non me ne frega assolutamente niente mi dici vado da Monica Giuseppe [interruzione] Antonia quello che ti pare pero' mi dici dove vai oppure tu mi dici esco chiuso non mi dici la balla

A: mh

B: vado in campagna e mi lasci come un pirla che chiamo tutto il giorno in campagna e_ non ci sei mai poi chiamo la macchina la macchina e' libera e lei non risponde quelle cose oh? ma dico diamo i numeri?

B: e **se dice vado a scopare?**

A: va benissimo vai a scopare se_ eh

B: e poi e poi lei la corcavi di botte

A: ma neanche per idea se mi diceva vado a scopare benissimo vai a scopare se ti piace vai a scopare

B: mh

(if she says I'm going to fuck?)

In some cases the main clause may be present, but syntactically separate, so that when the conditional clause appears it remains syntactically suspended all the same. Also in this case it is produced under an interrogative contour:

(4d) LIP, Fa12:

... e quindi e' un problema che riguarda la direzione ma **se il ministero ci viene a domandare** e le linee gran turismo_ eh regionali provinciali con che cosa le fate? che gli si risponde le facciamo con le biciclette?
(if the ministry comes out asking us...)

2.4 Exclamatory and adversative conditionals: “(But) it is not true!”

In some cases the conditional clause is (more or less explicitly) adversative or exclamatory. The meaning that arises from this is: “what has just been said is wrong, not appropriate, not pertinent,” and the like. Cf. examples (5):

(5a) LIP, Mb1:

B: <??> sai che tutte le volte che lo vedo mi fa dei discorsi_ adesso sta passando prima_ al limite scherzava diceva delle cose_ <?> adesso sta passando sul psicologico mi chiede ma come si fa a conquistare una donna?

C: e' pazzesco # ma quel pazzo che adesso e' diventato secchione_

B: ma si' **ma se non ha dato esami da_**

C: ma ne ha dati due adesso

B: ah si'?

C: si'_ due_ va be' due piccolini pero' li ha dati

(but if he hasn't done any exams since...)

(5b) LIP, Na2:

B: poi a dirti la verita' io mica lo so se lui conosce veramente l'italiano

A: scusa se **lui ha parlato durante una conferenza in italiano**

(if he spoke Italian during a conference...)

(5c) LIP, Re11:

D: signor giudice io ci ho sessantasei anni so' piu' vecchio pure de lui

E: **se ci hai un anno piu' de me**

(if you are one year older than me...)

2.5 Offer and request

The semantic value most often assumed by unembedded conditional clauses in dialogic contexts is that of an offer or request. This happens typically but not exclusively with verbs like *volere* (“want”) and *potere* (“can”). While appearing to express a hypothetical condition, the pragmatic function of the conditional clause is actually that of inviting the addressee to fulfil that condition. In (6a), for instance, the first participant makes the hypothesis that the other may give him some piece of information, but what

really happens is that he invites him to do so; and the other actually complies with the unexpressed request:

(6a) LIP, Na13:

H: non mi ricordo comunque posso vederlo perche' c'ho il giornale qua

C: ahah vediamo un momento questi due Valpolicella e Soave perche' _

H: **se mi dice la pagina_ se mi dice la pagina**

C: la pagina allora trentatre'

(if you tell me the page...)

From the point of view of traditional syntax, this utterance may be seen as lacking a main clause such as "it would be good," "I would be grateful to you"; but we can also see it as a false conditional that is actually an exhortative utterance whose sense is not "if A," but "please, A." As pointed out by Stirling (1998: 281), the result can be an effect of particular politeness. The utterance leaves the addressee completely free to choose what to do, in that "use of the *if*-clause construction allows the communication of the possibility of not-A."

In the following examples the same invitation to do something is activated, although the addressee does not necessarily comply straight away:

(6b) LIP, Ma18:

P: senta io avrei bisogno urgentemente di questa cosa qua se no mi tocca partire a militare sono andato su come e' meglio?

Q: no dico vai nel golfo poi vai nel golfo

P: eh ah si' appunto eh **se me lo fa avere**

Q: allora tutti gli esami sostenuti con dichiarazione che ha presentato domandina <???

(if you can get it for me...)

(6c) LIP, Ra3:

E: **se lo_ fai fare presto** perche' questo e' su di House <?> e allora me lo vorrei leggere chiaramente pero' **se lo fai fare_**

A: lo faccio fare_ lo faccio fare mercoledi'

E: ah va bene

(if you can get it done quickly...)

A typical case is when the conditional clause formulates the hypothesis that the addressee can or would like to do something: the resulting invitation is precisely to do that thing. It may be either an offer or a request:

(7a) LIP, Nb13:

B: io poi invece e' dalle quattro che so' sveglio

A: poveraccio # **se vuoi passare**

B: no_ ti ringrazio ma eh poi sta<vo> o<ggi> oggi pomeriggio ...

(if you want to drop in...)

(7b) LIP, Nb8:

... domani sono in ufficio piu' o meno tra in tarda mattinata e tutto il pomeriggio **se mi puoi fare un colpo di telefono** cosi' ne parliamo un attimo se poi c'hai un attimo di tempo puoi anche venirmi a trovare ciao

(if you can give me a call...)

(7c) LIP, Ne11:

... perche' si sa finche' magari una e' bella e snello viene anche guardata dal marito quando invece si comincia ad avere qualche chilo in piu'_ e allora che cosa succede? ahah succede purtroppo che_ eh il marito comincia a guardarsi un attimino # in giro e che cosa succede quando si guarda un attimino in giro? che di belle ragazze ce ne sono veramente molte **se vuoi allargare ancora un pochino l'immagine** non ci sono problemi e allora che cosa succede? succede che eh dai oggi dai domani e si comincia a guardare intorno e di belle ragazze come ripeto ce ne sono veramente molte

(if you would like to enlarge the image a little bit more...)

(7d) LIP, Rb38:

A: eh XYZ buongiorno sono XYZ della XYZ Italia ho gia' parlato con l'ingegner Leo_ per avere un contatto con lei per un lavoro_ diciamolo extra XYZ eh mi serviva_ un preventivo da lei ed eventualmente **se magari possiamo eh risentirci** mi puo' telefonare fino alle quattro e mezza qui in XYZ e lei ce l'ha il numero ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ e dopo le otto # eh sicuramente a casa ZZZ ZZZ ZZZ la ringrazio ecco **se si puo'_ far sentire** mi farebbe una vera cortesia grazie

(if we can speak again.. ... if you can call me...)

(7e) LIP, Rd9:

... se non lo volete fondo beige non so volete con fondo rosso ce l'abbiamo col fondo rosso c'e' qui a terra per esempio **se si puo' brevemente inquadrare un tappeto** sempre in questa stessa qualita' eccolo col fondo rosso ecco e' stato improvviso telecamera adesso e' questo questo qua eccolo qua guardate questo centro celeste e fondo rosso

(if we can show a carpet briefly...)

Besides the invitation/request to do something, the function of an unembedded conditional may be that the speaker, in a similar way, offers to do something him/herself. By expressing the hypothesis that the

addressee may have some requirement, the speaker pragmatically declares his/her willingness to meet it:

(8a) LIP, Mb79:

A: be? speriamo bene ad ogni modo **se vuoi anche il <?> di questi <??>**

B: quelli li' dovro' cambiarli in franchi svizzeri

A: ecco meglio meglio

(if you also want the <?> of these...)

(8b) LIP, Fa4:

F: ecco **se vedete che avete bisogno di altro** eh?

(if you see that you need something else...)

(8c) LIP, Fb33:

... s'e' trovata bene infatti e' molto migliorata

A: ho capito

B: ah e se lui_ ha bisogno se insom<ma> se e' una ragazza questa e' francese eh?

A: ho capito

B: ah ci ha vent'anni ventidue ventitre anni inso<mma> pero' insomma_ ci sa fare abbastanza

(if he needs...)

2.6 Idiomatizations

The frequency of unembedded conditionals with the meanings examined is turning a number of them into idiomatized expressions in spoken Italian, regularly associated with certain lexical entries and carrying a fixed semantic value. This is true, at least in part, for unembedded conditionals containing the complex verb *se hai/avete bisogno* ("if you need"), as seen in the previous section. And it is certainly the case of *se sapessi* ("if you knew") or *se ci pensi* ("if you think of it"), whose possible main clauses are hardly imaginable, but which regularly express an exclamatory surprise about what has just been said:

(9a) LIP, Re11:

D: e ci ho un anno un anno e mezzo piu' de te e un anno e mezzo quanto conta **se sapessi**

(If only you knew...)

A suspended conditional such as *se pensi che X* (“if you think that X”) always signals that there is some evident relation between X and some just expressed content:

(9b) LIP, Ra3:

C: no io gia' l'ho fatta pero' eh [voci_sovrapposte]

A: perche' io <??> poi abbiamo fino adesso parlato tremendamente con tristezza della politica de golfo della politica del PCI

C: ah dio

D: <??> delle mie tesine

A: delle delusioni che ci abbiamo quotidiane del fatto che non incontriamo persone che ci riesca che si riesce a comunicare caro Ugo stiamo freschi questi sono i veri guai

C: perche'

D: si' embe' certo

C: perche' <??> riferimenti <??>

A: **se pensi che siamo quasi soli al mondo**

(if you think that we are almost alone in this world...)

2.7 The connecting link? Shifts in discourse planning

We will now try to answer the question: how can the rise and consolidation of this construction in spoken language be explained?

Of course such an “incomplete” structure can work because the meanings it leaves unexpressed are always generic enough as to be easily recoverable from the context.² A question such as “what will happen?” can be left unexpressed with much higher probabilities of communicative success than one like “which museum will your father visit when he is in Florence next spring?”

But there are also many conditional clauses that remain suspended in discourse, although it is not possible to guess what the sense of the missing main clause ought to be, because the omission of the latter does not take place within a construction which is, from the outset, specifically designed to compensate for its absence by making its sense evident in some other way. Rather, the main clause happens to be omitted in a way unexpected to the speaker him/herself, because of a shift in discourse planning, or simply because the speaker loses the thread of what s/he is saying. In such cases,

² Stirling (1998: 189), in an article about free *if*-clauses in Australian English, also notices that “the meaning we would have to assume to be supplied is of the most general kind.”

the intonation of the conditional clause is perceivably suspended, although then the planning shift doesn't allow the contour to conclude "regularly."

This type of context probably represents the link between the "complete" conditional construction and the form in question. With the former, they share the original planning and the fact that the conditional clause, when it is produced, does in fact expect a main clause. With the latter, they share the fact that the main clause is actually absent. The presence, and even the high frequency, of conditional clauses that remain syntactically suspended because of shifts in discourse planning may be responsible for the development and establishment, in spoken Italian, of the construction we are examining; namely, unembedded conditionals that are only apparently suspended, but actually self-sufficient.

The following examples contain some shifts in discourse planning that leave the conditional clause suspended:

(10a) LIP, Ra9:

le ho detto le mie impressioni sulla classe che tutto sommato a parte il la vivacita' che a volte disturba di alcuni # sono_ eh simili cioe' secondo me ci sono dei buoni elementi in questa classe delle buone_ ecco io personalmente come mio metodo di insegnamento tendo un po' a_ eh incoraggiarli perche' secondo me e' eh magari un voto_ pero' ecco **se in italiano invece sono stati_** mentre su storia e geografia magari e' piu' facile che dia un sette cosi' su italiano perche' mi rendo conto che molti hanno poverta' lessicale_ sia allo scritto che soprattutto nell'orale_ ci sono ancora degli errori di ortografia retaggi della scuola media eccetera e questo e' un po' _# pero' ecco tutto sommato io di Dario sono abbastanza contenta soltanto
(if on the contrary in Italian they have been_ while in history and geography it may be easier...)

(10b) LIP, Re2:

... dice quale e' la garanzia quando io lo prendo e lo stacco dal televisore ci si accorge amici che non riceviamo piu' questa e' sua chi lo vuole portare a casa anziche' di trentottomila lire provato collaudato munito di garanzia stasera lo pagate solo diecimila lire quindi chi ne ha capito l'importanza chi si e' reso conto come questo_ anche gli altri vengono provati prego questo e' il suo quindi **se avete un televisore o grande o piccolo [tossisce] o a colori o in bianco e nero** non ha importanza la marca non ha importanza la grandezza perche' l'apparecchio lo adopereremo in citta' in paese in montagna in roulotte in campeggio senza avere piu' l'obbligo di avere cavi cordone e prolunga perche' la prerogativa di quest'antenna e' che puo' ricevere un segnale che va dai quaranta ai novecento megahertz quindi o abitiamo sotto lo scantinato o abitiamo al primo piano o siamo praticamente vedete ad una zona dove il segnale e' saturo e zeppo di nevischio con l'apparecchio non avremo problemi perche' l'accessorio riceve un segnale

praticamente a maniera dire poco talvolta migliore di quello che puo' dare l'ante<nna>...

(if you have a television, big or small, color or b/w the make the size don't matter...)

(10c) LIP, Md7:

208. ... andremo a verniciare anche i caloriferi lavoro noiosissimo laddove impieghereste giornate intere grazie guardate a questo tampone che entra da tutte le parti vernicia nell'ambo dei lati guardate **voi se volete disegnare qualche piccola greca sulla vostra parete** sulla vostra finestra ma attenzione un altro brevetto incredibile guardate lo stampo e' distanziato in modo tale che sulla moquette sul pavimento anche se lo appoggiate non cadra' la minima goccia guardate voi lo zoccolino noiosissimo ci vorrebbe una pazienza certossina no solamente una passata e grazie al fatto che il distanziatore distanzia appunto il tampone dalla moquette non sporcheremo...

(if you want to paint a frieze on your wall on your window but pay attention another incredible patent...)

(10d) LIP, Fb19:

... ma non non fare gli asili nido perche' si pensa che qualcuno debba

B: si' ho capito ma questo

A: speculare allora **se c'e'**

B: senz' altro codesto va bene codesto non discuto

A: **un generale che poi truffa eh** la cosa oppure si puo' arrivare in base al al modello settecento e quaranta dice lei guadagna dieci milioni al mese la sua signora no la sua

B: ah ecco

A: signora faccia quello che vole atta a casa o atta a villa

B: ecco ecco era quello che

A: e' la stessa ma -quest- ma questa

(if there is ... a general who is cheating...)

(10e) LIP, Me6:

questo e' quello che non e' entrato ancora nella testa agli imprenditori il sindacato nei luoghi di lavoro e' un momento di modernizzazione e puo' essere un momento propositivo di partecipazione rispetto agli obiettivi io vi dico che **se dovesse servire mi auguro il delegato di cantiere perche' muoia meno gente** magari con qualche_ eh fastidio in piu' per l'imprenditore ma muore meno gente credo che sia un aspetto di civiltà che va perseguito in un grande fermento
(if it can be of any use I hope the site delegate so that fewer people die...)

Conditional subordinate clauses that remain suspended because of a shift in discourse planning can be seen as “lacking a main clause” more than those presented in the previous sections that were planned to be unembedded and to express the content of the “missing” main clause in some other way. Still, it can be observed that even when there is a discourse planning shift, the absence of the main clause does not create any relevant damage to communication. This is due to the fact that when the conditional clause is formulated the content of the prospective main clause is largely (or at least partly) inferable from the context. This can actually be observed in examples (10). It is precisely because of this that the speaker can afford, and consequently in some cases chooses, to change his/her intentions and leave the main clause unexpressed.

2.7.1 Dialogic interruption

The lack of a main clause is more evident in those conditional clauses that remain suspended at the last minute because of an interruption by another speaker, after which the main clause is no longer produced. In fact, in this case the participant who has produced the conditional clause does not give up the main clause because s/he feels it is not indispensable; rather, although s/he may judge it useful, the other participant's intervention prevents him/her from producing it:

(11a) LIP, Ra2:

B: invece l'argilla

C: <?> purifica? no e' [voci_sovrapposte] sali minerali cos'e'?

B: questi sali li' <?> la composizione ah ce stanno pure i sali minerali [ride] che sei matta

C: no infatti <?> le le particelle oligo-minerali a volte **se uno ci ha** che ne so **problemi**

B: fa schifo fa schifo e' pure bruttissima da vedere madonna mia

D: com'è che si chiama?
 B: non ce niente da fa'
 D: argilla?
 B: argilla verde superventilata #
(if someone has who knows problems...)

(11b) LIP, Rb20:

A: XYZ # a che ora?
 B: quando vuole tanto io sono casalinga **se sono fuori perche' sono andata a fa' spesa**
 A: si' in ogni caso non questa sera domani in mattinata o domani pomeriggio o anche forse meglio all'ora di pranzo
 B: va bene va bene okay
(if I'm out 'cause I've gone do the shopping...)

To be fair, as can be seen from examples (11a–b), here also the interruption may not be completely unforeseen, and may not really truncate an utterance whose intention is of continuing at any cost up to the complete production of the main clause. Sometimes one feels that the speaker is interrupted precisely because the conditional clause s/he is producing presents itself as possibly self-sufficient, and consequently, so to say, “invites” the turn transition: the other participant(s) has good reason to presume that the main clause may not come or, at least, is not indispensable for the comprehension of the dialogic turn. This is more evident in cases like the following, where the conditional clause that happens to be interrupted is already interpretable as a generic question “what will happen?”, like those seen in section 2.3:

(11c) LIP, Re11:

E: ah matto guarda che t'ho detto me sa che moro prima io che te
 D: ma lascia perde
 E: ma lascia perde tu lascia perde che i contratti l'ho fatti sem<pre>
 C: **se dovesse morire** facendo le corna
 D: si' ma io avevo detto n' altra cosa <??> ci ho due figli
 C: dovrebbe litigare con i suoi figli allora
(if he were to die...)

(11d) LIP, Mb86:

A: comunque_ oramai di sopra ci sono pantofole tutte le mattine devi andare a tre metri di altezza?
 B: be' anch'io mi metto i paletot ma i paletot poi li lascio fuori me lo cambio te te li cambi tutti i giorni i paletot?
 A: no infatti io dico be' ma **se facciamo un attaccapanni li'**_

B: appunto voi fate un attaccapanni li' e ci lasciate quelli che vi mett<ete> e che fate tutte le sere noi non abbiamo neanche l'attaccapanni li [interruzione]
(if we put a coat-stand there...)

3. Conclusions on Italian free conditionals

We started this paper with the “traditional” idea that unembedded conditional clauses in spoken Italian imply a main clause that for some reason is actually not expressed. This is true for those utterances where the speaker has the intention of producing a complete complex sentence, but s/he does actually not produce the main clause because of some interruption by another participant. It is already less true for those conditional clauses that remain “suspended” because of a shift in discourse planning or a loss of the thread of the conversation. In such cases, indeed, one can observe that often the intention of actually producing a main clause may be absent as well, and the “suspended” conditional clause can express a complete pragmatical meaning perfectly. We have even noticed that many cases of dialogic interruption can be attributed to the awareness (coming from the person who interrupts), that the sense of the utterance has already been expressed before the appearance of a possible (and precisely for this reason largely superfluous) main clause.³

However, there is a large number of cases where, although the conditional clause can be said to be incomplete from the point of view of normative grammar, we cannot say that a main clause is missing according to the spoken language system, because the unembedded conditional clause represents a pragmatically, semantically and intonationally complete and self-sufficient construction whose meaning belongs to the very restricted number of possibilities we have discussed in sections 2.1 through 2.5., namely: (1) the exclusion of further action, either positive or negative, such as: “everything’s fine” or “there’s nothing we can do”; (2) generic questions like “what is it going to happen?”; (3) the adversative and in some way exclamatory challenging of the truth or relevancy of what has just been said; (4) the invitation (offer or request) to the addressee, that s/he

³ One may try, but we do not do it here, to build a scale or a continuum of ellipsis, such as that by Quirk et al. (1985), which is usefully applied to English free *if*-clauses by Stirling (1998: 289).

should act as suggested by the conditional clause and the context, or the offer, on the part of the speaker, to act him/herself.⁴

The recurrence of these semantic-pragmatic values makes them highly predictable, regularly associable to the unembedded conditional construction, and easily recognizable in all appropriate contexts. Thanks to this, “suspended conditionals” work perfectly in spoken Italian as a specific kind of independent clause, with their specific non-conditional value, no differently from other kinds of sentences that fit better into grammatical descriptions (such as adversative, causal, temporal constructions, etc.). For this reason, it seems inappropriate to me to speak of conditional constructions lacking a main clause. Rather, we should speak of a construction typical of spoken language,⁵ constituted by a simple clause introduced by *se*, formally identical to a dependent conditional clause but having different and quite specific meanings that the context allows the participants to choose.

The frequency and regularity of this construction suggest that we propose it as one of the distinctive features of dialogic spoken Italian. Further research appears necessary to find out if it is regularly present also in other situational varieties of the spoken language.

⁴ Italian has also a type of free “subordinate” clauses with optative function, quite similar to those described by Quirk et al. (1985: 11.38, 11.41) and Stirling (1998: 285–288) (ex.: *If only Kitty had not done everything without her!*). Interestingly, if introduced by *se*, such clauses are completely absent from the *LIP* corpus of spoken Italian, exactly as their English counterpart could not be found by Stirling in her corpus of spoken Australian English (cf. Stirling 1988: 275, 285–286 for details). In both cases, they seem to be preferred in the written version of the language. Still, spoken Italian has some similar independent optative clauses, with the past subjunctive, not introduced by *se*, such as the following:

LIP\FiMiNaRo\RA4:
 cioe' **ci fosse una volta che offre il caffè' lei**
 (*if (only) she offered the coffee once...*)

The problem will be treated in more detail in Lombardi Vallauri (to appear).

⁵ As noticed also by Stirling (1998: 285), Ford and Thompson (1986: 365) describe a similar situation for English, where “the polite directive type of *if*-clauses did not occur at all in a written language database,” although it is occasionally to be found in very informal written usages (Stirling quotes the example of a circular milkman message).

From an evolutionary point of view, it would be interesting to inquire whether the diffusion of this construction is recent or not. Of course it is a difficult task, since spoken language of the past is usually not available.

In any case, the origin of the construction can be seen in effort economy. In conditional constructions, the main clause most frequently follows the subordinate clause. For this reason, once the conditional clause is expressed, its content and the context may often make the main clause semantically superfluous. Typically, if you receive some people in your living room, you may say something like: *if you would like to take a seat ...* and at this point there is really no need to add something like: *please do*, or: *I'll be pleased*, etc. This actually causes the main clause to remain unexpressed in many communicative situations, especially in those semantic cases we have mentioned. The conditional clause is thus entrusted with the whole semantic meaning and pragmatic function of the utterance, and this results in the least coding effort.⁶

Since this happens very frequently, it can no longer be regarded as an occasional violation of the norm on the grounds of least effort, rather, unembedded conditionals are increasingly characterized as a specific kind of sentence available to speakers. From the *Parole* the feature has entered the *Langue*. The economic behaviour has been grammaticalized, and spoken Italian now has independent conditionals.

In some sense, since they show a subordinate structure that becomes free, our data may be regarded as violating the supposed unidirectionality implied in definitions of grammaticalization like the following: "A grammaticalization is a diachronic change by which the parts of a constructional schema come to have stronger internal dependencies" (Haspelmath 2004: 26). It is not clear whether such a strict definition of grammaticalization is the most useful for linguistic analysis, and an examination of this question is obviously beyond the scope of the present paper. But as concerns our topic, we can say that the same process may be regarded from another point of view. It is true that the relation of dependency between the main and the subordinate clause disappears, but not in the same way it would if the result were a coordinate structure, i.e. one of weaker dependency. In our case the semantic and pragmatic/illocutionary function of the abolished main clause is actually incorporated into the free conditional. This means that the two original contents of the complex construction end up being cumulated in a single

⁶ A similar process is described (in four steps) by Stirling (1998: 292).

clause. In this sense, the process we have described does not violate the “standard” expectations on the unidirectionality of grammaticalization phenomena.

A side-effect (and testing evidence) of the situation we have described is the fact that in some contexts the main clause is actually present, but quite significantly it is introduced by a coordinating conjunction. This happens because the conditional clause is felt to be complete and independent even on a strictly syntactic level:⁷

(12a) LIP, Ma28:

A: no il controllo dei dati e' gia' stato fatto non sarebbe possibile farlo adesso

B: mh

A: perche' siamo in pellicola

B: certo

A: **se su noi abbiam gia' visto la prima e la seconda bozza di questa roba qua**

B: mh

A: **quindi** vuol dire che i dati sono gia' stati controllati se ci fosse un errore # si puo' ancora_ # cambiare

B: mh

A: non dovrebbe esserci pero' se ci fosse si puo' ancora cambiarlo vuol dire dar rifare la pellicola

B: ho capito

(if we have already seen the first and the second draft of this stuff here... therefore it means that...)

(12b) LIP, Nb8:

... ma che sto dicendo domani e' giovedi' eh no no oggi no no e' mercoledi' quindi domani sono in ufficio piu' o meno tra in tarda mattinata e tutto il pomeriggio **se mi puoi fare un colpo di telefono cosi'** ne parliamo un attimo se poi c'hai un attimo di tempo puoi anche venirmi a trovare ciao

(if you can call me on the phone so we can speak a little...)

(12c) LIP, Fb19:

B: ma quella dovra' essere scusa dovra' essere una legge che -al- guarda sempre alla busta del marito per quanto riguarda la casalinga [incomprensibile]

A: no se no Daniela se una donna **se una donna fa la carriera quindi** sulla carta d' identita' ci gli sara' riconosciuta una professione ma

B: si' ma ok ok ma aspetta

⁷ Letizia Vezzosi (personal communication) points out that conditional constructions where the main clause is introduced by a coordinating conjunction are to be found in ancient texts of Germanic languages. The possible presence of the same pattern in ancient texts may confirm the vitality of the construction in the past also in Italian.

A: ma allora non sara' casalinga
(if a woman has a career consequently...)

We have spoken of grammaticalization, but the most appropriate term may be “pragmaticalization,”⁸ because the common feature of Italian independent conditionals seems to exist on a pragmatic level at least as much as on a strictly semantic one. The mechanism is quite clear: when a conditional clause can do without the main clause, the reason is that (with a little help from the context) it makes clear that the missing content is of an extremely generic and recurring type (“it is a good thing,” “please do,” “there’s nothing we can/must do,” “this is false,” etc.). The consequence of such “denotational lightness” is that the main function of the inferred and non-expressed part of the utterance is not to share its semantic content, but to endow the whole utterance with a conventional pragmatic value (offer/request, inhibition of action, reassurance, challenging/protest).

Some intonational and pragmatic equivalents of the semantic types we have discussed result from Emanuela Cresti’s studies on the pragmatics-intonation interface in spoken Italian.⁹ Conditionals meaning “there’s nothing we can/must do” usually belong to the intonational pattern that Cresti calls “espressione di ovvietà” (expression of obviousness); those with the meaning of a generic question “what is going to happen?” belong to Cresti’s intonational type “interrogative generiche” (generic interrogatives); our exclamatory/adversative type take the intonative pattern of the pragmatic type “protesta” (protest); conditionals expressing offer/request typically belong to the pragmatic/intonational linguistic act that Cresti calls “invito/offerta” (invitation/offer). These pragmatic and intonational patterns are obviously not restricted to unembedded conditionals, and concern many syntactic constructions. What we have shown here is that Italian unembedded conditionals have a tendency to fulfil these pragmatic functions more than others.

⁸ An anonymous referee of *SKY Journal of Linguistics* points out to me that this term was first introduced by Erman and Kotsinas (1993) to describe the development of discourse markers in Swedish and English.

⁹ Cf. Cresti (2000), Firenzuoli (2003).

4. A quasi typological exploration and a hypothesis on the versatility of conditionals

Italian is not the only language using this construction. For example, German free conditionals behave in a similar way.¹⁰ Interestingly, they typically occur in association with the adverb *doch* ‘nevertheless,’ which is much less frequent in embedded conditionals. A *Google* search on the web for *wenn* and *doch* gives many free conditionals but virtually none followed by a main clause. Here are some examples obtained with this procedure:

(13a) Wenn doch Italien nur ein Stückchen etwas von der deutschen Effizienz hätte!

(13b) Wenn doch alle praktischen Dinge so einfach wären.

(13c) Hätte ich doch auch so eine tolle Figur wie meine Freundin! Wie schön wär’s, wenn ich auch so ein Motorrad hätte wie mein Nachbar!

(13d) Und er sprach zu mir von Treue und von Liebe; Ach, wenn’s immer doch so bliebe! ... Doch wenn wir vom Traum erwachen, Dann bleibt die Welt nicht stehn.
...

As can be seen, German free conditionals with *doch* have a desiderative meaning, different from those found in our Italian corpus.¹¹

Apart from the German “*wenn doch*” -clauses, the need to express the pragmatic functions exposed in the previous sections is probably universal. Indeed, it would be interesting to find out if, in other languages as well (especially if typologically different), this is done by means of “incomplete” constructions, and if among them there is a preference or at least a place for free conditional clauses. This would need to be the topic of another paper, but here we can make some very short, provisional remarks about some other languages.¹²

Lindström (to appear) signals that Swedish makes wide use of free conditionals whose pragmatic and semantic functions are similar to those

¹⁰ I owe this observation to Christian Lehmann.

¹¹ This may be partly explained by the fact that, in spoken Italian, desiderative clauses in the subjunctive mode are usually not introduced by *se*. For example: *avessi 100 milioni!* ‘had I 100 million!’

¹² I wish to thank Jan Lindström, Urpo Nikanne, Shingo Suzuki and Richard Valovics for their advice on the matter.

we have found in Italian. For example, they can be used for generic questions, as in (14), and for requests, as in (15):

- (14) A: *om ni inte får[jobb]?*
 If you not get job
 'If you don't get [a job]?'

B: *så då tänker ja fortsätta å studera*
 So then think I continue to study
 'So then I'll continue to study.'

- (15) *Om ni har nån stugkatalog eller nåt*
 if you have some cottage-catalogue or something
 if you've got a catalogue of cottages or something...

Lindström also points out that Swedish has desiderative conditionals similar to those we have observed for German:

- (16) *Om Arthur hade varit där, eller jag!*
 If Arthur had been there or I
 'Oh, if Arthur or I had been there!'

Finnish¹³ also uses free conditionals to express suggestion or request. In these cases, the conditional conjunction *jos* "if" is combined with the emphatic clitic *pA* (*pa* or *pä*, according to vowel harmony). The following examples have been found by Urpo Nikanne on the Internet by means of a *Google* search. They express a suggestion (offer or request, to someone else or to the speaker him/herself):

- (17) *Jospa pelastaisimme leipomotalon*
 if-pA save-COND-1PL bakery.building-ACC
 'Let's save the bakery.'

- (18) *Jospa sovittaisiin vaihteeksi*
 if-pA make.peace-COND-PASS for.change
 'Why don't we make peace, for a change.'
 [In colloquial Finnish the passive is used for 1PL.]

¹³ I wish to thank Urpo Nikanne for his advice on the matter. The Finnish patterns and examples I describe here are his, mainly taken from the Internet.

- (19) *Jospa pilkistäisin hiukan ylös, sanoi pieni muurahainen.*
 if-pA take.a.look-COND-1SG a.bit up, said small ant
 '“Why don't I take a little look up”, said little ant.'

One of the functions of Finnish *jospA* free conditionals is to express desire, similarly to the German and Swedish examples we have discussed above:

- (20) *Jospa sinä tuntisit Hänet, joka ansaitsee kaiken kunnian,*
 if-pA you know-COND-2SG Him/Her, who deserves all glory,
mutta sai osakseen meidän häpeämme.
 but got part.POSS.SUFF(3PERS) our shame-POSS.SUFF(1PL)
 'I wish you knew him who deserves all glory but has received our shame.'

- (21) *Jospa ihmisellä ois joulu ainainen*
 if-pA human.being-ADESSIVE be-COND Christmas eternal
 'I wish people would have Christmas for ever.' [from a Christmas song]

Finnish also has “generic question” free conditionals, where *jos* is usually preceded by the marker *entä*. This happens with the indicative mode, as in (22)–(24):

- (22) *Entä, jos äidin sijaan tuleva isä on HIV-positiivinen?*
 ENTÄ, if mother-GEN instead-of come father is HIV-positive?
 'What (will happen) if the father-to-be and not the mother is HIV-positive?'

- (23) *Projektii ”Entä joselänkin satavuotiaaksi” on alkanut*
 Project ”ENTÄ if live-1SG 100-years-old” is start-PAST.PART
tammikuussa 2003.
 january 2003.
 'The project "What if I live for 100 years" has started in January 2003.'

- (24) *ENTÄ JOS SINUN LAPSESI KÄYTTÄÄ ...*
 ENTÄ if your child uses...
 'What if your child is using...?' [from an advertising headline]

and with the conditional mode as in (25)–(27):

- (25) *Entä jos samaa logiikkaa laajennettaisiin muihinkin*
 ENTÄ if same-PART logic-PART extend-COND other
perheenjäseniin?
 family-members

'What if the same logic was extended to other family members, too?'

- (26) *Entä jos lehmätösais lentää?*
 ENTÄ if cows can-COND fly?
 'What if cows could fly?'

- (27) *Entä jos ryhtyisi yrittäjäksi?*
 ENTÄ if start business-owner-TRANSLATIVE?
 'What if you started your own business?' [from an advertisement headline]

Free conditionals are used for similar tasks also in Japanese, another language typologically very different from Italian. As in Italian, expressing offer or request is probably their most frequent function. But, unlike Italian, in this case Japanese prefers to give the unembedded conditional an interrogative intonation:

- (28) A: *suwareba?* B: *suwattara?*
 sit-COND sit-PAST-COND
 'If you sit...' (= please, sit)

Japanese interrogative conditionals can imply the question: "what will happen?" exactly as the Italian ones do:

- (29) *(moshi) hayaku tsuki sugitara?*
 (if) early arrive exaggerate-COND
 'And if I arrive too early?'

- (30) *(moshi) umaku deki nakereba?*
 (if) clever-ly can do become-COND
 'And if I am not able to do it properly?'

The meaning "there's nothing we can/must do" can be expressed by free conditionals, but they often imply further nuances, associated to the speaker's attitude, such as reassurance, promise and even threat:

- (31) *(moshi) kimi-ga zembu ato-katazuke-o shite kureta nara...*
 (if) you totally clear the table doing give-PAST-COND
 'If you have completely cleared the table...'

- (32) (*moshi*) *boku-ni hanasasete kurenakereba...*
 (if) to-me speak-CAUS give-NEG-COND
 'If you don't let me speak...'

Japanese has many different conditional markers that agglutinate to the verb, thus making the use of *moshi* "if" optional. Interestingly, one of these markers, *nara*, which is used for instance in (31), is excluded when the pragmatic function is that of offer/request already seen in (28):

- (28') **suwaru nara?*

Moreover, this pragmatic type cannot accept the presence of *moshi*. Should we conclude from these restrictions that, being the most frequent type, it has already gone farther than the others in its process of grammaticalization?

The fact that many (and very different) languages have recourse to the same formal strategy (free conditionals) to achieve a wide set of (quite different) pragmatic functions may not be casual. Rather, it suggests that conditionals may (universally, or at least widely across languages) be associated with some features that make them particularly versatile when compared to other kinds of subordinate clauses. These features enable them to be used without a main clause, still effectively communicating a meaning selected by the context.

It must be observed that the same functions cannot be entrusted to postposed subordinate clauses, which, even if they lack a main clause, are not suspended and cannot suggest an "open meaning" to be supplied by the addressee based on the context. A typical function of postposed free subordinate clauses is that of being metadiscursive, depending on an unexpressed performative, as happens in (33):

- (33) *Are you coming to the theatre tomorrow? Because I must reserve the places.*
 (= *I ask* because...)

On the contrary, preposed subordinate clauses that remain suspended can suggest that there may be a continuation. We have seen the kinds of semantic and pragmatic continuations that can be expressed by suspended conditionals in Italian, and partially in some other languages. Whether or not the same functions can be obtained by languages through different kinds of preposed and suspended subordinate clauses such as, say, causal, temporal, or purpose clauses, is a question which lies beyond the limits of

this paper. At first glance, it seems that suspended temporal clauses may well express offer or request (see ex. 34 and 35), and suspended causal clauses may express, for instance, our “there’s nothing we can/must do” meaning (see ex. 36 and 37).

(34) When you need my help... (*tell me, and I’ll come*)

(35) When you receive that extra copy of your book... (*please give it to me*)

(36) Since the shop is already closed... (*we cannot buy anything*)

(37) Since you have already paid... (*we need not do it*)

But it seems probable that no other kind of suspended subordinate clause is able to endorse so many functions as conditionals do. This may be due to the fact that conditionals build an especially generic semantic relation between the states/events coded by the main and the subordinate clauses. *When-* and other preposed temporal clauses specify that the two events are in a given relation of time, thus limiting the sense of a possible unexpressed continuation to something to which the time relation is relevant; *since-* and other suspended causal clauses build a cause-effect relation between the expressed and the unexpressed event, thus significantly restricting the semantic potentialities of the unexpressed continuation. The same holds for purpose clauses, concessives and so on.

On the contrary, conditionals limit their role to signaling the simple concomitance of two states/events. They do not specify what kind of relation there might be between them. They say that the coming into being of the second is compatible with the first and allowed by it, and nothing more. Of course, as shown for instance by Rudolph (1981), they ultimately express a relation belonging to the “kausaler Bereich,” but “looser” and more generic than that of cause, purpose or concession. This leaves the way open to different kinds of possible semantic and pragmatic, context-determined, continuations and completions after a free, suspended conditional clause.

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Academic Precision Reconsidered: A Corpus-based Account¹

Abstract

Although precision in earlier centuries and decades was often treated as one of the major principles in the world of academia, the present paper argues that sometimes vague language is preferable in academic discourse. To show that vague language can serve positive purposes and that precision is not the ultimate goal in communication, the present investigation studies the use of approximators, which make a number less precise. Approximated numbers are investigated in several types of discourse: leisure, business, political and academic discourse. These four discourse types are analysed in both written and spoken modes. The data for the present investigation have been obtained from the British National Corpus. The results demonstrate that approximators are distributed more or less evenly in business and political discourse, in both written and spoken modes. Approximators are most frequently employed in written academic and spoken leisure discourse, though in spoken academic discourse their frequency is considerably lower. To explain this distribution of approximators, their multiple functions in academic discourse are discussed.

1. Introduction

The present paper briefly reviews the traditional perception of precision as a supposedly necessary requirement for human communication and especially in academic discourse. The principle of precision is questioned and re-evaluated on the basis of corpus data, which illustrate the distribution of imprecise quantities in various types of discourse. The category under investigation is approximators (*about, around, approximately, roughly* and *round*), which make a number less specific and, thus, should be avoided in academic discourse if the primary aim of this particular type of discourse is precision. To limit the scope of investigation, the analysis is based only on these five approximators. Since

¹ I am very grateful to Dr. Milda Danyte for reading this paper and making corrections in it. I would also like to thank the two anonymous referees for very useful criticisms and valuable comments made on a previous draft of this paper.

they are a category of high frequency, investigation of a larger number of approximators would hardly be manageable. Besides, these approximators form a homogeneous set on the basis of two other aspects. First, they typically precede a number, whereas some of the other approximating units such as *odd* or *more or less* follow a number. Second, when these five approximators precede a number, they indicate that the quantity can be larger or smaller than the given number. Other approximators, meanwhile, indicate a more limited range. For instance, *odd*, *more than* and *over* indicate that the quantity is bigger than the given number; *almost* and *nearly* indicate that the quantity is smaller than the approximated number. Finally, the approximators *about*, *around*, *approximately*, *roughly* and *round* are typically described in dictionaries as the main approximators and as interchangeable synonyms (see, for instance, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (1987), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1992, 1995)).

The data have been obtained from different subcorpora of the British National Corpus (BNC) to demonstrate the varying frequencies of approximators in different types of discourse, namely, leisure, business, political and academic discourse. Such a comparative approach is expected to reveal some tendencies in the use of approximators in discourse in general. Academic discourse will be contrasted with other discourse types to see how much the frequency of approximators in academic discourse is different from their frequency in other discourse types. Thus leisure, business and political discourse serve as comparative information that helps to highlight the use of approximators in academic discourse.

On the basis of the collected linguistic evidence, it is argued that precision is not the ultimate aim of academic discourse. Approximated numbers are employed in the world of academia with a similar or even higher frequency than in other types of discourse. The high frequency of approximated numbers in academic discourse suggests that imprecision, which can serve a variety of communicative functions, is unavoidable. Indeed, the omission of approximators could even have negative effects on communication. Hence though a certain degree of precision is required in academic discourse, in some contexts imprecise references to numbers are preferred.

2. Vagueness: overview of previous research

Criticism of a lack of precision, or vagueness, goes back to the philosophy of Plato (1914) in *Euthypro* and Aristotle in *Rhetoric* and their attempts to define the ‘essence’ of each word precisely in order to comprehend its ‘true’ meaning. According to Aristotle, when speaking about events we should always aim at specificity and indicate exact dates, numbers, etc. (1946: 1407^b).

Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1967) is one of the earliest non-Aristotelian approaches to word meaning. Wittgenstein’s non-rigid approach can be called the basis of the reversed treatment of imprecision, or inexactness, in language. With respect to exactness and inexactness, Wittgenstein criticizes the widely-spread attitude that “‘inexact’ is really a reproach, and ‘exact’ is praise” (1967: 42). In response to this stigmatisation of imprecision, he claims that “we misunderstand the role of the idea in our language” (1967: 45).

The belief in the exact meaning of words and a clear delineation between different lexemes is categorically rejected as a misleading attitude to word meaning by other philosophers and linguists as well (e.g. Popper 1945, Janicki 1999). Popper rightly points out that we should aim at clarity and simplicity, although absolute precision is unattainable (Popper 1945). Besides, he observes that the ideal of precise concepts is a myth even in physics (Popper 1957).

More flexible approaches to imprecision can also be observed in the recent trends in logic. Some logicians who deal with the issue of vagueness tend to admit the limitations of classical logic by acknowledging the existence of borderline cases and the lack of sharp boundaries in language (e.g. Keefe 2000). Perhaps the most significant departure from classical logic is the logic of fuzzy sets, which was developed by Zadeh (see Yager et al. 1987). As Zadeh (Yager et al. 1987) observes, most of our reasoning is imprecise and most classes of things in the real world do not have sharp boundaries. Therefore, science has to change attitude to vagueness by rejecting the ‘fetishism of precision’ (Yager et al. 1987).

Though for a long time vagueness was mainly an object of philosophical investigations, it has recently become an important object of analysis in linguistics as well. Uses and misuses of vagueness are investigated following the principle that precision is not the ultimate goal of communication, and that vagueness is an important communicative

strategy of multiple applications. Various categories of vague language have already received some attention from linguists in analyses of varying length (e.g. Crystal and Davy (1979), Dines (1980), Aijmer (1985), Wierzbicka (1986), Channell (1980, 1990, 1994), Dubois, B.-L. (1987), Dubois, S. (1992), Overstreet (1995, 1999), Myers (1996), Overstreet and Yule (1997, 2002), Overstreet and Yule (2002), Drave (2002), Cheng and Warren (2001, 2003), Jucker et al. (2003), etc.). These investigations demonstrate that vagueness is a natural language feature which performs multiple functions in communication. Moreover, the results of previous investigations demonstrate that vagueness cannot and should not be avoided, since overprecision can lead to communicative breakdowns, as will be argued later in the present paper.

Vague language and approximators in particular are frequently treated as one of numerous hedging strategies. Hedging helps the speaker avoid categorical and straightforward assertions by allowing the speaker to distance him/herself from a claim and so reduce his/her commitment to the claim. As Myers (1989) points out, hedges are employed when authors of scientific texts cautiously present new research results to other researchers. In such a situation, caution is necessary, since the new data or results might involve lack of certainty. Thus hedging helps the author follow the principle of honesty when presenting uncertain claims to other scientists (Myers 1989). The broad category of hedges as a means of expressing doubt and uncertainty in scientific research articles has been investigated by Hyland (1998, 2000). Approximators as hedges are touched upon by Stenström (1994), who equates the use of *sort of* and *approximately* in spoken interaction (1994: 129). Prince et al. (1982) investigate approximators as a category of hedging in physician-physician discourse and arrive at the conclusion that uncertainty is the main underlying cause of hedging as well as approximating. Similarly, Clemen (1997) observes that vague statements function as a hedging strategy when exact data or precise information are not available, and thus the speaker is uncertain about a particular claim. Approximators as a category of hedges are discussed in relation to various politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1994). Itani (1996) analyses approximators as a type of hedges in English and Japanese. Importantly, Itani (1996) argues that approximators do not always function as hedges.

It has to be admitted that approximators do have a mitigating effect and are used in cases of uncertainty just as many other types of hedges.

However, as will also be argued later in this paper, hedging and expressing uncertainty is just one of the multiple functions of approximators (cf. Channell (1990, 1994)). Besides, hedging, being a very broad issue, is beyond the scope of the present paper and thus will not be discussed here in greater detail.

Investigations of imprecision in academic discourse include analyses carried out by such linguists as Dubois (1987), Myers (1996) and Channell (1990). Myers (1996) studies the strategic uses of vagueness in various types of academic writing such as articles, textbooks, prospectuses, grant proposals, reviews and popularisations. The categories under Myers' (1996) investigation include polysemic terms, general terms, non-numerical references, elliptical expressions and others, but approximated numbers are not touched upon. The investigations by Dubois (1987) and Channell (1990) account for the usage of imprecise quantity references, including approximated numbers. Dubois (1987) focuses on imprecise numerical expressions in biomedical slide talks. Her investigation is especially important for the present analysis, since it also focuses on spoken academic discourse. Dubois (1987) attributes approximators to the broad category of hedges, which express the speaker's stance. Channell (1990) investigates precise and vague quantities in written texts on economics. On the basis of her results, she points out the main functions of vague quantities performed in academic discourse: (a) giving the right amount of information, (b) deliberately withholding information, (c) persuading the reader, (d) lacking specific information, and (e) downgrading and highlighting (Channell 1990). Channell (1990) relates these functions of vague quantities to the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity and manner, which are to be observed in order to achieve successful communication. Thus Channell's investigation clearly demonstrates that vagueness can serve important communicative purposes, and the belief in academic precision and accuracy is 'a mere prejudice' (Channell 1990: 95).

Imprecision in academic discourse is closely related to such notions as modesty, honesty and caution. In relation to medical English written discourse, Salager-Meyer rightly points out that "argumental arrogance and exuberance are not well regarded by the scientific community; whereas in contrast, humility, coyness, and cautiousness are" (1994: 150). Swales (1990) notices that assertiveness and precision are avoided in academic discourse when the principles of honesty and modesty are followed. According to Swales, hedging serves then as a useful means of "projecting

honesty, modesty and proper caution in self-reports and for diplomatically creating research space in areas heavily populated by other researchers” (Swales 1990: 175).

Previous research has shown that vagueness can be treated as a natural feature of language that is sometimes crucially important for successful communication. Vagueness as a natural feature is observed by Channell (1994) and Wardhaugh (1985, 1993). People usually comprehend vague language effortlessly and do not even notice it in everyday interactions. Wardhaugh, for instance, claims that “we seek only occasional clarification of remarks made to us” (Wardhaugh 1985: 8). Moreover, “one of the basic principles of communication is that you cannot, and should not, always ‘tell it like it is’” (Wardhaugh 1985: 36). Generally, vagueness has to be tolerated in a conversation, since “vagueness rather than precision will prevail” (Wardhaugh 1993: 181).

According to some scholars, the increase of precision in communication might have negative effects (Tannen 1989, Popper 1992). Inappropriate use of details, according to Tannen (1989), can be completely ineffective, as they can be boring (mainly observable in interactions between the old and the young), insulting (especially when expressing criticism in a highly specific way) or a basis for humour (Tannen 1989). Popper also notices that precision, paradoxically enough, “usually leads to loss of clarity, and to waste of time and effort on preliminaries which often turn out to be useless, because they are bypassed by the real advance of the subject: *one should never try to be more precise than the problem situation demands*” (1992: 24, emphasis added).

Vagueness, although it usually causes no hindrances to communication, requires mutual tolerance from interlocutors. As Wardhaugh (1985) observes, speakers often do not present very detailed information, and instead use the anaphoric *this* and *that*, or such vague expressions as *something like*, *sort of*, *kind of*, etc. Therefore, listeners inevitably become active participants in constructing the meaning of the speaker’s message. Such cooperation in meaning construction is treated as one of the advantageous aspects of communication by Tannen (1989). One of the involvement strategies in communication that Tannen points out is indirectness. When interlocutors work harder to ‘decode’ the meaning, they comprehend it better and feel the communication process and the result more rewarding. In this way hearers or readers become active participants and are, as she says, ‘meaningfully, mythically involved’ (Tannen 1989:

17). Vagueness as a trigger of active cooperation between the participants of communication is also observed by Danell (1978), who calls vague and ambiguous utterances “*cues* proposed to the listener.” By this label he suggests that when listeners hear a non-specific utterance, their conceptual store is activated. Listeners’ brains instantaneously rely upon their contextual and background knowledge and thus listeners become actively involved in the interpretation of the given cue.

3. Data and method

The present investigation is a corpus-based analysis of linguistic variation across different types of discourse. The data have been obtained from several subcorpora that constitute the BNC, each illustrating a different type of discourse. As can be seen in Table 1, four major categories of texts within the subcorpora of spoken and written texts have been selected for the present analysis.

Text type	Size in word units
Spoken	
Educational	1 265 318
Business	1 321 844
Public/Institutional	1 345 694
Leisure	1 459 419
Written	
Natural and pure sciences	3 752 659
Commerce and finance	7 118 321
World affairs	16 507 399
Leisure	9 990 080

Table 1. Text types of the BNC subcorpora selected for the investigation

All the subcorpora consist of more than 1 million words. Thus, quantitatively, the corpus provides a sufficient amount of authentic and representative material to collect reliable evidence to study the usage of approximators in different types of discourse. However, as can be seen in Table 1, written and spoken types of texts are not represented evenly. Although written texts evidently outweigh the spoken ones, the subcorpora are comparable, since in the present investigation the frequency of approximators is expressed per 1 million words.

The structure of each category of spoken texts encompasses specific types of events. Business events include sales demonstrations, trades union meetings, consultations and interviews. Institutional and public events consist of sermons, political speeches, council meetings and parliamentary proceedings. Leisure events cover sports commentaries, after-dinner speeches, club meetings and radio phone-ins. Finally, educational events cover such in-class events as lectures and lessons, tutorials, seminars, discussions, demonstration lessons, writing groups, workshops, training sessions, and classroom interactions. The topics of the lectures and lessons include a variety of subjects such as computers, mathematics, oceanography, microbiology, chemistry, social studies, politics, economics, geography, bioenergetics, psychology, English, communication skills, music, drama, history, religion, art, food and etching. Thus the topics are highly varied and include both the humanities and natural sciences.

Written texts consist mainly of books, which constitute 60% of the written subcorpus. 25% of the written subcorpus is periodicals (e.g. newspapers, journals). The rest of the texts are miscellaneous published material (e.g. brochures, advertising leaflets), which make up 5–10%; unpublished material (e.g. personal letters, diaries, essays, memoranda), which also make up 5–10%; and a small amount (less than 5%) of material written to be spoken (e.g. political speeches, play texts, broadcast scripts). The last category of written texts to be spoken is the most marginal one. Since it is likely to contain numerous spoken language features alongside written language features, it is not really representative of written texts. However, the amount used of these texts is very small and thus cannot influence the results to a great extent. Besides, these texts belong to different genres and form an even smaller part of the different subcorpora, for example, political speeches belong to political discourse, while play texts and broadcast scripts belong to leisure discourse. When distributed across various discourse types, the occurrence of these texts becomes too small to influence the general results.

Written academic texts include books and periodicals. The subjects that are discussed in written academic texts cover various topics from the field of natural and pure sciences, e.g. microbiology, chemistry, physics, medicine, geology, sedimentology, mathematics, engineering, astronomy, oceanography, ecology and geography. Thus the scope of written academic texts is narrower than the scope of spoken academic discourse. However, some of the subjects occur in both types of academic discourse, including

mathematics, oceanography, microbiology, chemistry, economics and geography.

The labels for the text types within the written and spoken subcorpora in Table 1 might suggest that the text types are different in the two subcorpora. However, though the texts have different labels in spoken and written subcorpora, they can be attributed to the same general categories of discourse types. First, the spoken category of educational texts and the written text category of natural and pure sciences will be referred further to as *academic* discourse. Another text type under investigation is *business* discourse, which is called commerce and finance texts in the written subcorpus. Third, the spoken public and institutional texts and written texts of world affairs will be referred to as *political* discourse. The final category, whose label is the same in both written and spoken subcorpora, is *leisure* discourse. Hence the text types under investigation can be attributed roughly to broader categories of discourse types so that they appear to be comparable.

4. Research questions and hypotheses

The present analysis of approximators in different types of discourse attempts to answer the following questions:

1. If the frequency of approximators is discourse-specific, are approximators less frequent in academic discourse than in other types of discourse?
2. Do the speakers of English demonstrate any preferences for certain approximators in different discourse types?
3. What purposes do approximators serve in academic discourse?

In relation to these research questions, the present investigation offers the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. according to the existing belief in academic precision, approximators should be less frequently employed in academic discourse than in other types of discourse.

Hypothesis 2. Speakers of English prefer different approximators in different discourse types, and these differences are most evident when spoken and written academic discourse is contrasted.

Hypothesis 3. In academic discourse approximators perform specific functions, which differ in spoken and written discourse.

The present investigation will test these hypotheses on the basis of corpus data.

5. Results: approximators in various discourse types

The distribution of approximators in the selected subcorpora reveals several important tendencies in the variation of approximators. First, extensive variation is observed among different discourse types. As will be argued further, the frequency of approximators differs considerably depending on the situational context of a discourse, i.e. leisure, business, political or academic situations. Second, variation is observable in how often different approximators are used. As will be demonstrated, some approximators are more extensively employed than others. In addition, different approximators are preferred in different types of discourse. Finally, approximators serve a variety of functions, which differ in written and spoken academic discourse.

5.1 Frequency of approximators in spoken discourse

The data have demonstrated that the frequency of approximators in spoken discourse amounts up to as many as 1 943.45 occurrences in all the subcorpora. As can be seen in Table 2, the frequency of approximators in leisure discourse is 761.56 occurrences per 1 million words, which makes up more than 39% of the total number of approximators. In business discourse approximators occur in 490.71 instances per 1 million words, which makes more than 25% of the total number. Approximators are even less frequent in political discourse; there are 357.77 occurrences per 1 million words in political discourse, which is 18.41% of the total number. The frequency of approximators in academic discourse is only slightly smaller than in political discourse. In spoken academic discourse approximators occur 333.41 times per 1 million words, which constitutes 17.16% of the total number. The varying distribution of approximators in different discourse types is especially evident in Figure 1. As could be expected, approximators are clearly more frequent in leisure discourse than in any other spoken discourse type. Differences in the frequency of

approximators among the other discourse types, however, are much less notable. The frequency of approximators in political and academic discourse differs by just one percent. In business situations approximators are more frequent than in political or academic discourse by just seven to eight percentage points.

	Leisure	Business	Political	Academic
about	705.46	399.90	277.92	288.70
around	12.43	22.13	15.82	11.66
approximately	14.62	29.76	34.65	9.72
roughly	24.86	37.40	27.87	21.39
round	4.39	1.52	1.51	1.94
Total:	761.56 39.19%	490.71 25.25%	357.77 18.41%	333.41 17.16%

Total number of approximators: 1943.45

Table 2. Frequency of approximators in **spoken discourse** (per 1 million words)

Another interesting observation that can be made on the basis of the corpus data is that speakers of English evidently prefer for certain approximators. In fact, the approximator *about* is the one that clearly predominates in all types of discourse. The outstanding dominance of *about* is especially noticeable in Figure 1. The frequency difference between *about* and the other approximators is extremely drastic. For instance, in academic discourse *about* is almost 25 times as frequent as the approximator *around*. In leisure discourse this difference is even more dramatic, i.e. *about* is almost 60 times as frequent as *around*. In total, *about* is employed in 1671.98 instances per 1 million words, which constitutes 86% of the total number of approximators in all the four discourse types. It is interesting to notice that the frequency of *about* in academic discourse is slightly higher than in political discourse, which again supports the observation that approximators are used to a very similar extent in these two types of discourse.

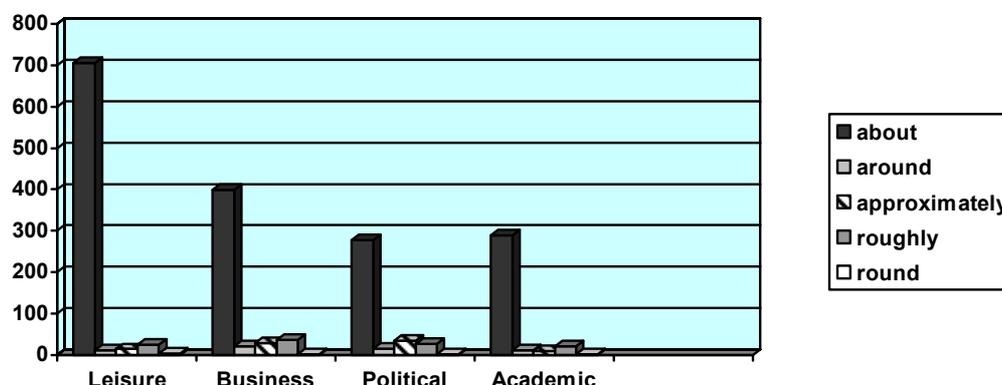


Figure 1. Frequency of approximators in spoken discourse

So far the analysis has revealed two main tendencies about the use of approximators in different types of spoken discourse. First, approximators are most frequent in leisure discourse and least frequent in academic discourse. However, the difference in the frequency of approximators in business and especially political and academic discourse is not very big. Second, the data have demonstrated a clear preference for the approximator *about* in all the spoken discourse types.

5.2 Frequency of approximators in written discourse

In written discourse approximators occur 1 554.33 times per 1 million words. As can be seen in Table 3, they are most frequent in academic discourse, where they occur in 575.93 instances per 1 million words, or slightly more than 37% of the total number of approximators in written discourse. Approximators in leisure discourse amount to 372.34 occurrences per 1 million words, which is almost 24% of the total number. In political discourse approximators are employed in 347.37 instances per 1 million words, or more than 22% of the total number. Thus in leisure and political discourse approximators are almost evenly distributed. Approximators are least frequent in written business discourse, where they make up 258.69 occurrences per 1 million words, or almost 17% of the total number.

Moreover, the difference in the frequency of approximators in written business, political and leisure discourse is no greater than that in spoken business, political and academic discourse (6–7%).

	Leisure	Business	Political	Academic
about	256.57	136.92	223.64	382.18
around	52.05	53.99	66.32	54.44
approximately	38.26	40.79	35.43	79.53
roughly	19.68	26.99	21.91	58.71
round	5.78	0	0.07	1.07
Total:	372.34	258.69	347.37	575.93
	23.95%	16.64%	22.35%	37.04%

Total number of approximators: 1554. 33

Table 3. Frequency of approximators in **written discourse** (per 1 million words)

As for a preference for specific approximators, *about* is considerably more popular than the other approximators, as can be seen in Figure 2. However, in written discourse this difference is less dramatic than in spoken discourse (cf. Figure 1). In written discourse *about* occurs in 999.31 instances, which is 64% of the total number. In spoken discourse, as has been mentioned, it occurs in 86% of the total number of approximators (see Section 5.1). In Figure 2 it is also noticeable that *approximately* is used more frequently than *around* and *roughly* in academic discourse, but this difference is not very great.

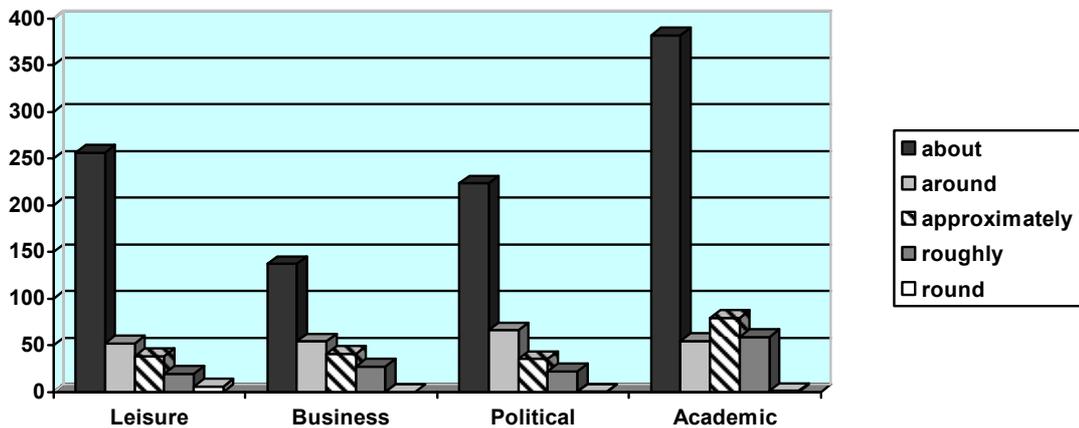


Figure 2. Frequency of approximators in written discourse

To generalise the main tendencies observed in the analysis of written discourse, it can be claimed that the use of approximators stands out in written academic discourse as opposed to the other types of discourse.

Second, the approximator *about* is clearly preferred more than other approximators, but the difference between the frequency of various approximators in written discourse is not as dramatic here as in spoken discourse.

5.3 Comparison of the frequency of approximators in spoken and written discourse

Though the data obtained from spoken discourse might have suggested that approximators are least frequent in academic discourse, the data from written discourse have demonstrated the opposite results. As Figure 3 reveals, in written discourse approximators are more or less similar in frequency as in leisure, business and political discourse. In written academic discourse, meanwhile, approximators are considerably more often employed than in any other type of written discourse. Approximators in written academic discourse amount to 37% of the total number of approximators in spoken texts, which is almost identical to the frequency of approximators in spoken leisure discourse (39% of the total number). This striking similarity between the formal style of academic writing and informal communication in leisure events demonstrates that imprecision can be an equally dominant feature in very different discourse types. The specific purposes of approximators in written academic discourse will be discussed in Section 5.4.

Another observation that follows from the results presented in Figure 3 is that approximators are distributed relatively evenly in business and political discourse, both in written and spoken form. The frequency of approximators in these two types of discourse differs only by several percentage points.

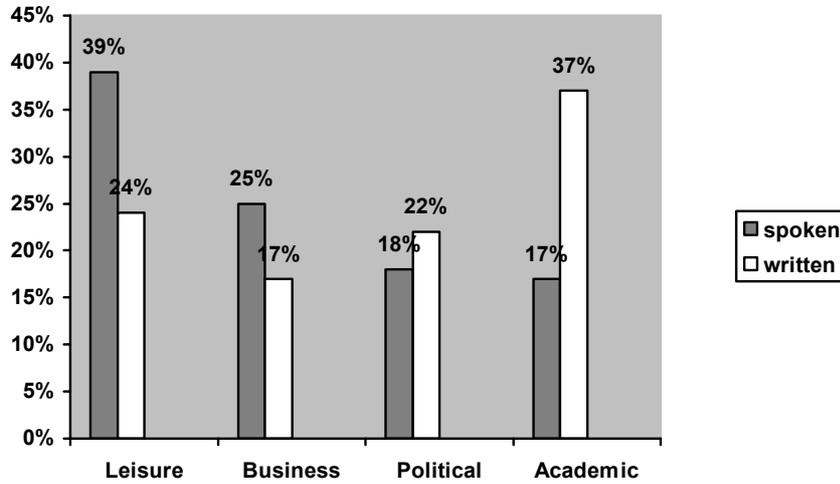


Figure 3. Distribution of approximators in spoken and written discourse

Spoken and written academic discourse differs not only in the frequency of approximators, but also in the speakers'/writers' preference for different approximators. As Figure 4 demonstrates, *about* is evidently preferred in both spoken and written academic discourse. However, in written discourse other approximators seem to have more significance than in the spoken one. In written discourse *about* constitutes 66% of the total number of approximators, whereas in spoken discourse the frequency of *about* reaches even 87%. Another clear tendency that can be observed in Figure 4 is that an approximator that is extremely rarely used in both written and spoken academic discourse is *round*.

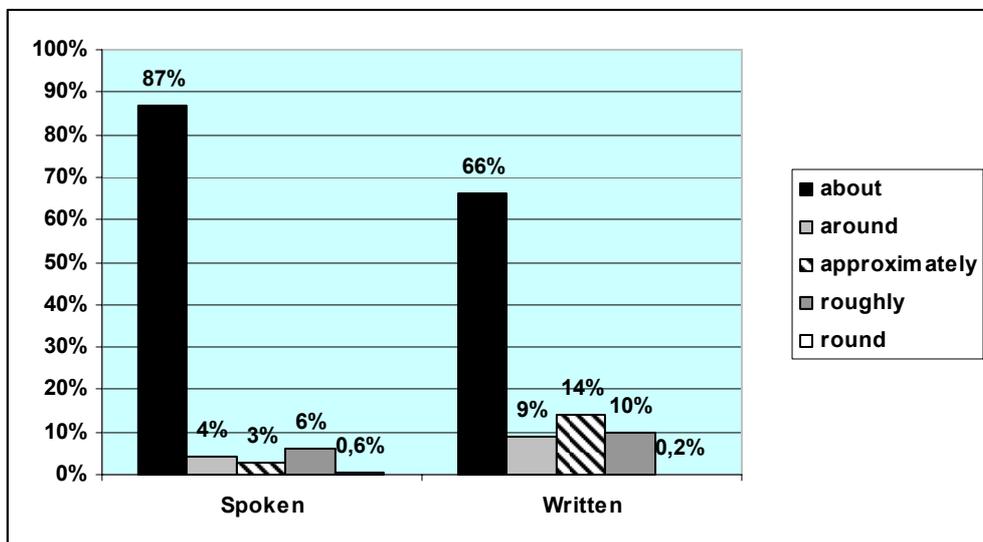


Figure 4. Frequency of approximators in spoken and written academic discourse

Thus the comparison of written and spoken discourse types has revealed several tendencies of the usage of approximators. First, there is a great difference in the frequency of approximators in spoken and written academic discourse. At first glance it seems strange that approximators predominate in written academic discourse, which is considered to be more formal than spoken discourse. This is especially true given that written discourse provides an author with the possibility to reconsider or check a figure and to make it more precise. However, approximated numbers do prevail, which suggests that such numbers serve specific purposes in written academic discourse. This tendency suggests that imprecision is highly recurrent in two very different discourse types: spoken leisure discourse and written academic discourse.

6. Usage of approximators in spoken and written academic discourse

Since the frequency of approximators is so evident a feature of written academic discourse, they can be expected to perform specific purposes in this type of discourse. The difference between the number of approximators in spoken and written discourse suggests that there must be a difference in the use of this category in the two modes. The analysis has revealed that approximators perform multiple functions in both spoken and written

academic discourse. Some of those functions are identical in spoken and written discourse, while others are typical of only one type of discourse. Besides, approximators occur in a different linguistic context in spoken and written academic discourse, as a great variety of hedging devices are employed alongside approximators in spoken academic discourse. This tendency, as will be argued later, is one of the factors that predetermines the higher frequency of approximators in written academic discourse.

6.1 Functions of approximators in spoken and written academic discourse

As has been mentioned, approximators perform a variety of functions, some of which are the same in written and spoken academic discourse. First of all, approximators are employed in both spoken and written academic discourse when more precision is unattainable. A higher degree of precision is impossible in generalisations, which refer to a variety of cases, so that using a range in numbers becomes unavoidable, as in (1)–(6).

- (1) *The average smoker at any time has **approximately** ten percent of their blood out of action... (S)²*
- (2) *Typically sea water is alkaline **around** about eight plus or minus nought point two PH units. (S)*
- (3) *Each year, more than 15,000 women in Britain die from breast cancer and **about** 2,000 from cancer of the cervix. (W)*
- (4) *It is usual to hire a new vehicle on a fully maintained basis for a period of **about** three years. (W)*
- (5) *Most birds take **about** 20 minutes to lay an egg. (W)*
- (6) *An elephant needs **around** 600 lb (270 kg) of vegetation a day. (W)*

The underlined words and phrases in examples (1)–(6) indicate that these claims are generalisations, e.g. *at any time*, *typically*, *each year*, *usual*, *a*

² The letters in brackets after each example indicate the discourse type. (S) stands for spoken academic discourse; (W) stands for written academic discourse.

day, which refer to the regularity of a phenomenon. Such premodifiers of the subjects as *most* in (5) and *average* in (1) show that these generalisations encompass not individual, but typical cases.

Paradoxically, approximators, as a category of deliberate ‘fuzzifiers’, can also specify an abstract notion. Most commonly, such abstract notions are adjectives, as in (7)–(8), where the specified adjectives are underlined.

- (7) *A few years ago a minute fossil only **about** 2 mm long was recovered from limestones of Ordovician age, and christened Janospira. (W)*
- (8) *For nearly two weeks they used very low currents, **about** 0.05 amps, and discovered that the cell cooled down more than expected. (W)*
- (9) *Although he died comparatively young, **around** five years old, he had sired some excellent dogs who were used extensively at stud. (W)*
- (10) *It's very short, it's only **about** fifteen hundred words. (S)*

However, not only adjectives are followed by approximated numbers, but also adverbs are specified by them, as can be seen in examples (11)–(13).

- (11) *After lunch (at **about** two o'clock) many of us feel tired and may take a short nap, even though body temperature does not nominally fall much at this time. (W)*
- (12) *Asteroids often have five arms, but many species have more -- up to **about** forty. (W)*
- (13) *... stags start their reproductive life somewhat later, **around** about age three, and their reproductive life ends earlier, **around** about age fourteen. (S)*

As can be seen in examples (7)–(13), approximated numbers follow such abstract notions as *very low/short*, *minute*, *comparatively young*, *earlier*, *somewhat later*, *after lunch*, *more*. The approximated numbers are provided as additional information, which specifies the preceding abstractions. In written academic discourse approximations appear then either in brackets (as in (11)) or are separated by commas (as in (12)), which suggests that they are additional, but not the main information.

Approximators are also employed when an exceptionally large or small number is referred to, e.g. millions or a millionth of something. In

such instances a higher degree of precision is impossible. In examples (14)–(17) references to such large numbers as *million* and *billion* are made.

- (14) *...it seems that dolphins and porpoises achieved their modern enlarged brains **about** 15–20 million years ago, whereas the evolution of the human brain is a phenomenon of the past few million years at the most. (W)*
- (15) *British pigs produce **about** seven million gallons of liquid muck a day, posing a big disposal problem for farmers and a water quality headache. (W)*
- (16) *The centre of the Sun where fusion occurs is at a temperature of **around** fifteen million degrees but practical fusion needs a much higher temperature than this -- hundreds of millions of degrees. (W)*
- (17) *Our planet formed **about** 4.5–5 billion years ago. (W)*

It has to be noted that large numbers are especially frequently approximated with *about* in written academic discourse. For instance, in written academic discourse *million* is preceded by *about* in 46 instances (or 3.2% of the total number of occurrences). In spoken discourse the frequency of the pattern *about* + number + *million* is considerably lower, i.e. 4 instances (or 1.3% of the total number of its occurrences). *Around*, meanwhile, is employed with *million* in written academic discourse in only 6 instances (or 2.9% of the total number of its occurrences). Similarly, *approximately* co-occurs with *million* in 8 instances (or 2.7% of the total number of its occurrences); *roughly* co-occurs with *million* only once, which is only 0.5% of the total number of this approximator.

Small numbers are approximated less frequently than big numbers. The use of approximators with numbers smaller than one is demonstrated in (18)–(20).

- (18) *If you examined Dover's chalk cliffs with an electron microscope you would see their myriad forms, **about** one millionth of a metre across, the remains of trillions of these microscopic plants. (W)*
- (19) *The lesion is made by dissecting away, using a tungsten needle, a square patch of embryonic skin measuring **roughly** 0.5x0.5mm and about 0.1mm deep (Fig. 1 a). (W)*

- (20) *For the Christian community [**roughly** one per cent of Pakistan's population] the day holds significance, and TV broadcasts special programmes for their benefit. (W)*

The approximated numbers in examples (18)–(20) are sufficient to indicate that the quantities under discussion are exceptionally small, and thus a higher degree of precision is not necessary. In such cases the smallness of the quantity is highlighted, and the exact number made less important (cf. Channell 1990).

Broadly speaking, approximators are used when uncertainty arises. Uncertainty is especially clearly expressed in spoken academic discourse, as in example (22). Here the multiple means of expressing uncertainty are underlined. In written academic discourse uncertainty is also sometimes indicated outright as the reason for a lack of precision (see (21)).

- (21) *The lowest average Reynolds number at which this provides an instability mechanism is again uncertain but is **around** 5×10^3 . (W)*
- (22) *Erm I'm not sure what time yet but erm it's more likely to be sort of just before lunch or just sort of or maybe just after lunch or **round** four o'clock... (S)*

In such instances as (21)–(22) the highest possible degree of precision is provided; the approximators suggest the impossibility of more precision and a lack of certainty.

In spoken and especially in written academic discourse approximators are frequently employed when the speaker or writer refers to a proportion. In such cases approximators precede percentages, as in (23)–(25), or fractions, as in (26)–(29).

Approximator + fraction

- (23) *... cover the pad and as you spiral up the arm all you need to do is to cover **about** two thirds of what you've just done before... (S)*
- (24) *Turnover rose 3.1 per cent to DM 32 520m, with acquisitions accounting for **about** two thirds of this increase. (W)*
- (25) *For three of the shapes the appropriate name was provided by **around** three-quarters of the bottom third pupils and by nearly all the top third. (W)*

Approximator + percentage

- (26) *So we know that so far **about fifty percent** our anthropogenetic CO two has been locked away in this system of the ocean. (S)*
- (27) *By 1988 this had dropped to **about 15 per cent** of spruce, and other species such as pine and fir showed similar improvements. (W)*
- (28) *Although all males try to get a second female, only **about 15 percent** are successful. (W)*
- (29) *Northern offshore spotted dolphins were **around 40–50 per cent** of their original numbers, and common dolphins about 60 per cent. (W)*

The data have revealed that the approximator *about* precedes percentages in 55 instances in written discourse (or 3.8% of the total number of its occurrences) and in 17 instances in spoken discourse (or 5.7% of the total number of its occurrences). *Around* in written academic discourse approximates percentages even more frequently, with 23 instances (or 11.3% of the total number of occurrences). *Approximately* precedes percentages in as many as 32 instances (or 10.7% of the total number of its occurrences). In spoken academic discourse, both *around* and *approximately* precede percentages just once. *Roughly* very rarely approximates percentages in spoken and written discourse, with only 4 instances in written discourse and 1 instance in the spoken one.

Hypothetical situations inevitably involve a high degree of uncertainty and speculations, so that approximators are frequently employed in utterances describing such situations, as in (30)–(31).

- (30) *If the annual quantity of net deployed within all North Pacific fisheries in a 6-month season is taken to be 3–5 million k (**about 2–3 million miles**), the total possible deaths of marine mammals would be about 100,000–181,500. (W)*
- (31) *After **about 100,000 years** or so, the needle of the compass would abruptly become unstable and then swing round to face in the opposite direction, so that what was once compass north would become compass south, and vice versa. (W)*

In examples (30) and (31) imaginary situations are modeled. Therefore, exact numbers would be less appropriate than approximations, since precision is impossible in such speculations.

Similarly, precision is impossible when future situations are predicted. In such cases approximators are frequently used to precede a number, as in (32)–(36).

- (32) *Bidwell believes that a group of **about** 50 consultancies will make up the final membership. (W)*
- (33) *The jacket will weight **around** 820 tonnes and the topsides will have an operating weight of approximately 1,200 tonnes. (W)*
- (34) *The suggested list will fill an area **roughly** 15ft x 5ft. (W)*
- (35) *At some later time they could, by chance, all be in the right half or back in the left half, but it is overwhelmingly more probable that there will be **roughly** equal numbers in the two halves. (W)*
- (36) *But that's gonna take **about** five or six years to come to frui fruition... (S)*

Such future references always involve uncertainty, which reduces the possibility of precision.

It is also common to employ approximators when references to the past are made, such as when a date is provided. Though various approximators are used in such contexts, most typically the approximator *about* is used to approximate a year. Such uses of approximators are demonstrated in examples (37)–(39).

- (37) ***About** 1970 a number of young adult women were found to have a rare cancer of the vagina: the appearance of several cases close together prompted enquiry about possible causes. (W)*
- (38) *It is one of three seedlings of a hybrid raised in Switzerland **around** 1920 and consequently named after Swiss mountains. (W)*
- (39) *Now in fact, before patch clamp came along in in a – in **around** nineteen eighty there were there was another technique... (S)*

If the date refers to the era B.C., the possibility of precision becomes even more reduced, as in (40)–(42).

- (40) *The eruption which probably had the most far reaching effect on civilization was that of Santorin (Thera) in the Aegean, in **about** 1470 B.C. (W)*
- (41) *It begins with the atomic theory developed by Democritus **around** 460 BC. (W)*
- (42) *Then, **around** 1700 BC, the Minoans developed from the hieroglyphic script a new syllabic form, today called Linear A. (W)*

When the author refers to events that took place almost four thousand years ago, as in (40) and (42), a precise date is neither important nor possible.

References to the past are made not only by providing an approximated year, but also by indicating how long ago something happened.

- (43) *I experienced the problem **about** five years ago, when I had a bout of wheezing in the late summer. (W)*

In (43) the approximated time period is sufficient to position the event in the past.

Approximators are employed not only when precision is unattainable, but also when precision is unnecessary. Without knowing the real intentions of the speaker/writer, it is very difficult to identify this function. However, some authors indicate outright that absolute precision is not necessary in certain contexts, as in (44)–(45).

- (44) *The exact strength of solution does not matter -- **about** 1 dessertspoonful of cooking salt in 1 litre of tap-water is suitable. (W)*
- (45) *Its eigenvalues are 9.805, 2.411 and, very **approximately** (great accuracy is not necessary), &formula which yields, again approximately, &formula Proceeding in this way, we find at the end of the fifth step &formula and in the sixth step this gives &formula. (W)*

The examples above suggest that academics are so conscious of the principle of academic precision that they sometimes feel obliged to justify themselves for a lack of precision.

The corpus data demonstrate that in written academic discourse *approximately* is frequently used when shapes are described. Another approximator used to refer vaguely to a shape is *roughly*, though it is less

often used in such contexts than *approximately*. The use of approximated references to various shapes is demonstrated in (46)–(50).

- (46) *The ventral arm plates are **approximately** pentagonal with an obtuse proximal indented in the middle and are separated from one another. (W)*
- (47) *The oral shield is large and is **approximately** triangular in shape. (W)*
- (48) *The oral shield is **approximately** rhombic with the centre of the plate slightly depressed. (W)*
- (49) *Disturbances first appear as **approximately** sinusoidal fluctuations, indicating a selective amplification process like that in a boundary layer. (W)*
- (50) *The sand and silt particles, which are **roughly** spherical in shape range from 2,000 microns (in) to 50 microns in diameter (sands) and from 50 to 2 microns(silts)... (W)*

In such instances the principle of academic accuracy is upheld by employing approximators to point out that the indication of the shape cannot be exact.

Some functions of approximators in spoken academic discourse have not been encountered in written academic discourse. One such function is making impromptu calculations, as in (51).

- (51) *So therefore, if this term I've got one, two, three, four, five weeks **roughly** left <pause> and I know that sometimes <pause> erm <pause> what's that? (S)*

Calculations at the time of speaking can occur only in spoken discourse, since the written one is usually carefully planned and based on accurate calculations.

Another function which is typical of spoken academic discourse, but has not been encountered in the written one, is the use of approximators for encouragement. Most commonly, the approximator *roughly* is used by the teacher to encourage the student to make a contribution. The use of approximators for encouragement is demonstrated in examples (52)–(53).

- (52) *And what's E to the point three? Roughly? What's what's E as a number? Just **approximately**? (S)*

(53) *What's Y equal to, roughly? **Approximately**. (S)*

Such a use of approximators makes classroom communication more interactive and fosters student participation.

Finally, approximators are used for self-correction in spoken academic discourse, as in (54).

(54) *...there were two million, **about** two million names... (S)*

Self-correction is also possible only in spoken discourse, which is much more spontaneously constructed than written discourse.

Thus this investigation has demonstrated that approximators are not only a frequent category in academic discourse, but they also serve multiple purposes in it. The data have revealed that approximators in both spoken and written discourse are mainly used when precision is either unattainable or unnecessary. Precision is unattainable when generalisations are made, proportions and percentages are referred to, and exceptionally large or small numbers are provided. Precise quantities are also impossible when the speaker/writer refers to hypothetical, future or past situations. In written academic discourse approximators tend to precede references to the shape of an object, whereas in spoken discourse such a function was not encountered. Its absence can be explained by the considerably lower frequency of approximators in spoken academic discourse. Thus it can be accidental that this use of approximators does not occur in such a small number of their occurrences. The three functions that occur only in spoken academic discourse are (a) making impromptu calculations, (b) encouraging listeners to participate, and (c) self-correction. These uses of approximators can be characteristic only of spoken discourse, which is a considerably more spontaneous and interactive type of discourse than written academic discourse.

To generalize, approximators do not differ drastically in the two modes of academic discourse, though some functions are performed in only one of the discourse types. Considerably more dramatic differences can be observed when the use of multiple self-distancing alongside approximators is analysed in the two modes. These differences are discussed below.

6.2 Multiple self-distancing devices in spoken and written academic discourse

An evident difference between spoken and written academic discourse is the tendency that, in spoken academic discourse, approximators are used with a variety of self-distancing devices in the same utterance. In written academic discourse, meanwhile, multiple self-distancing is considerably less frequent. When multiple self-distancing does occur, approximated numbers co-occur with modals indicating the degree of probability, as in (55)–(56).

(55) *At the end of November, when the shoots should be **about** 1 -- 1 - 1/4in high, the bulbs can be gradually acclimatised to living room conditions. (W)*

(56) *It may vary from just **around** one tooth, to a whole section of your mouth and is not usually painful. (W)*

Approximated numbers are also followed by general extenders, as can be seen in (57), where the general extender is underlined.

(57) *After **about** 100,000 years or so, the needle of the compass would abruptly become unstable and then swing round to face in the opposite direction, so that what was once compass north would become compass south, and vice versa. (W)*

As demonstrated in (58)–(59), another category that tends to co-occur with approximators in written academic discourse is such hedges as *is thought* or *is believed*.

(58) *The eruption of the volcano buried a town, Akrotiri, which is thought to have had a population originally of **about** 30,000. (W)*

(59) *This is what seems to have happened early in the history of the Earth, because the oldest known fossil remains of proteinoid globules are believed to date back **about** 4 billion years. (W)*

A greater multiplicity of self-distancing devices can be seen in (60), which is closer to the spoken mode because of the variety of such devices used.

- (60) *For a coarse to medium grained mature sandstone, with only a small fraction of clay, porosity ranges from 15 pu or more at **around** 2200 m to 1 pu or less below 6500 m. (W)*

Thus in written academic discourse multiple self-distancing devices do co-occur with approximated numbers to indicate the degree of certainty. However, such co-occurrences are not frequent.

To see the contrast between spoken and written academic discourse more clearly, we should compare the examples provided above (in (55)–(61)) with the following examples in (62)–(64) which have been obtained from spoken academic discourse.

- (61) *... it was appropriate for kids to be introduced to sex when they were **around** y'know sort of seven or eight or something in some cases. (S)*
- (62) *... right okay em are you free a bit later on this afternoon, probably **around** about threeish possibly? (S)*
- (63) *Now in fact, before patch clamp came along in in a in **around** nineteen eighty there were there was another technique which was available for looking at ...*

It can be seen that utterances with approximators contain a variety of self-distancing devices such as discourse markers (*y'know*), hedges (*sort of*, *probably*), general extenders (*or something*), repetition (*in in a in*), and the suffix *-ish* in *threeish*. In fact, approximators rarely occur without multiple self-distancing devices in spoken academic discourse.

Hence the data suggest that in spoken academic discourse considerably more self-distancing devices are available than in the written one. Therefore, the self-distancing effect, which is typical of approximators, can be achieved through various other linguistic categories. It can be assumed that approximators in spoken discourse are not as necessary as in the written one. The formality of written academic discourse restricts the author's choice of self-distancing devices. Besides, the possible number of such devices in an utterance is considerably lower than in spoken discourse. Thus approximators appear to be sufficiently formal to be used in highly technical contexts. Due to their formality, they are a highly recurrent self-distancing category in written academic discourse.

7. Conclusions

The present corpus-based account of approximators in various discourse types has yielded several observations about imprecision in academic discourse. It can be stated that the hypotheses raised at the beginning of the investigation have been only partly corroborated. One of the initial hypotheses was that approximators, whose frequency was expected to be discourse-specific, are less frequently employed in academic discourse than in other types of discourse. However, the data have revealed that approximators are an especially important feature of written academic discourse. Though it has to be admitted that approximators appear much less often in spoken academic discourse, they are almost as frequent here as in business and political discourse. Moreover, the only type of discourse where approximators are more frequent than in written academic discourse is spoken leisure discourse. Besides, this difference in frequency is very slight.

It was also expected that there should be a preference for certain approximators in written and spoken academic discourse (see *Hypothesis 2*). It has been revealed that speakers of English prefer different approximators in different discourse types. Generally, the approximator *about* predominates in all discourse types, whereas *round* is hardly ever used in any type of discourse. However, in academic discourse no outstanding differences in the use of different approximators have been observed. Though spoken and written academic discourse differs by the frequency of *approximately*, this difference is not great.

As was hypothesised, approximators perform multiple functions in spoken and written academic discourse. Those functions appear to depend to some extent on the discourse mode, spoken or written. Generally, approximators are used when more precision is impossible or unnecessary. They are used to generalize certain tendencies, as well as to refer to proportions, percentages, and exceptionally large or small numbers. Approximators are also employed when the speaker/writer refers to hypothetical, future or past situations. The three functions that have been encountered only in spoken academic discourse include the functions of making impromptu calculations, encouraging and self-correction.

Considerable differences can be observed in the frequency of multiple self-distancing devices used alongside approximators in written and spoken academic discourse. Approximators are considerably more frequent in

written than in spoken academic discourse, since in written academic discourse fewer devices for expressing a lack of precision are available. It can be assumed that approximators, as they are sufficiently formal, are one of the main categories used for self-distancing in written discourse. In spoken academic discourse, meanwhile, speakers can rely on a greater variety of such devices. Therefore, here approximators become less important, since other devices can approximate numbers.

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Die Realisierung von Vokallängen: erlaubt ist, was Sp[a(:)]ß macht?

Abstract

In German, some words (e.g. *Bad, Gras, Rad, Liter, Distel*) display variation in their vowel quantity. This variation occurs most frequently in the northern substandard, but is not restricted to it. In some words, the variation is the result of historical developments. However, there are also cases where the modern German realisation deviates from what historical data predicts. In such cases, it is not even possible to predict the syllable structure conditions under which the variation appears. The paper discusses the problems the variants give rise to and proposes some approaches to their treatment. Interestingly, the variants are codified differently in various pronunciation dictionaries of German. Thus they are not entirely a problem of register or dialectal influences. Problems of language standardisation are discussed and the variants are shown to belong in the field of linguistically doubtful cases („Sprachliche Zweifelsfälle“).

1. Aussprachevarianten = phonetische Zweifelsfälle?

Im Folgenden werden einige Überlegungen zu Zweifelsfällen bei der Aussprache von Vokalen im Standarddeutschen vorgestellt, und zwar bezüglich der Vokalquantität.¹ Bei einigen Wörtern (z.B. *Rad, Bad, grob, Distel, Liter*) ist eine Realisierung der Aussprache mit Lang- oder Kurzvokal möglich, und auch in Aussprachewörterbüchern, die die Datengrundlage für die Untersuchung lieferten, verzeichnet. Bei anderen Wörtern, die man als strukturell gleich ansehen kann,² ist anscheinend keine Variation möglich (z.B. *Lid, Lob*), der Vokal wird immer lang

¹ In prominenten Silben im Deutschen (nach den Silbenmodellen in Maas 1999) ist in fast allen Fällen (außer bei [ɑ]) mit der Quantitätsänderung auch eine Änderung der Vokalqualität verbunden. Die unter 2.2. diskutierten Beispiele konzentrieren sich auf Variation in der prominenten Silbe, daher wird die Qualitätsänderung als davon abhängige Folge angesehen und nicht weiter thematisiert.

² Mit CVC-Struktur bei Einsilblern und CVCVC-Struktur bei Zweisilblern und keiner orthographischen Markierung einer Vokallänge oder -kürze.

realisiert. Es soll geklärt werden, ob die Variationen vorhersagbar sind und ob sie als Zweifelsfall in der Aussprache einzuordnen sind. Es können zwei verschiedene Typen von Vokallängenvariationen auftreten. Die häufigste ist die, in der in bestimmten Regionen Varianten mehr oder weniger regelmäßig, möglicherweise auch sprecherintern, auftreten; *Rad*, *Bad*, *Dusche*, *Gras*, *Glas*, *Gas* sind typische Vertreter dieser Variationen. Daneben existieren aber auch Variationen, bei denen der Sprecher unsicher ist, wie die Vokallänge zu realisieren ist. Das kann der Fall sein, wenn ein Bedeutungsunterschied existiert hat und mittlerweile die Unterscheidung standardsprachlich nicht mehr gemacht wird (*Rost*, *Bruch*, siehe unten Beispiele (4) und (5b)), oder wenn eine Bedeutungsunterscheidung möglich wäre, aber dem Sprecher nicht klar ist, ob diese durch unterschiedliche Vokalquantität zu markieren ist (z.B. *Lache* ‚1.Lachen, 2. Wasseransammlung‘).

Verschiedene Fragen zum Begriff „Zweifelsfall“, zu Variation und Standard und zur Vorhersagbarkeit von Varianten werden aufgeworfen. Nicht alle Fragen werden beantwortet werden können, sie dienen vielmehr zur Darstellung der Probleme bei der Behandlung von Aussprachevarianten.³

Bereits die Benennung des Nebeneinander von Formen wird sehr unterschiedlich gehandhabt. Häufig anzutreffen sind Begriffe wie *Varianten* oder *Dubletten*. Muthmann (1994) spricht von *Doppelformen*, während Klein (2000, 2003) solche Probleme unter der Bezeichnung *Zweifelsfälle* behandelt, ein Begriff, der auch in Titeln einschlägiger Wörterbücher vorkommt (Duden, Wahrig). Neben dem Begriff „phonetische Zweifelsfälle“ wird im Folgenden zur Beschreibung der nebeneinander existierenden Formen auch häufig „Varianten“ Verwendung finden.

Bei den phonetischen Varianten ist eine Besonderheit zu beachten: Während viele andere Formen von Zweifelsfällen, die Sprecher, oder häufiger die Schreiber, vor das Problem stellen, ob eine Form grammatisch falsch oder richtig ist, kommt das bei Aussprachevarianten seltener vor. Wie unten beschrieben und in den Beispielen (1) und (2) gezeigt, können zwei Realisierungen auch als sprecherinterne freie Varianten vorkommen.

³ Der Artikel ist keine phonetische Studie (für die sicherlich ein anderes als das beschriebene empirische Vorgehen notwendig wäre), sondern ein Beitrag zur Diskussion um sprachliche Zweifelsfälle und Sprachvariation im Bereich der Aussprache.

Es fehlt gegenüber anderen Zweifelsfällen ein Moment der Reflexion über die Form (vgl. Klein 2003: 8).⁴ Bei phonetischen Zweifelsfällen gibt es oftmals kein Falsch und kein Richtig, da in den seltensten Fällen eine Äußerung unverständlich wird, wenn eine Vokallängenvariante gewählt wird, die nicht dem Standard entspricht. Sprachratgeber versuchen jedoch, diese in eine Richtung hin aufzulösen und schlagen eine einzige Aussprache als Standard vor. Was genau dem Standard entspricht, wird im Folgenden zu klären sein. Zumindest gibt es häufig vom Sprecher/Schreiber eine Erwartung, dass es eine normative Regelung gibt, z.B. durch Festlegung in einem Wörterbuch.

Eisenberg schreibt jedoch im Grammatik-Duden: „Betont werden muß, daß man sich die Standardlautung nicht als eine „Norm“ vorstellen darf (...) es gibt eine Reihe von Aussprachemerkmalen, die als Standard gelten. Daneben gibt es aber auch einen breiten Bereich von Variationen innerhalb der Standardlautung“ (Eisenberg 1995: 51). Anschließend führt Eisenberg einige dieser Merkmale auf. Die in diesem Kontext interessanten Vokallängenvariationen ([glas, rat, grɔp, hɛrtsɔk, tsuk, bətrʊk]) werden jedoch erst unter der Überschrift „Umgangslautung“ genannt. (Eisenberg 1995: 53). Reduktionserscheinungen wie Abschwächung von unbetontem Schwa+Nasal oder Liquid zu silbischem Nasal oder Liquid, oder r-Vokalisierung, gelten auch in der Standardlautung als üblich, so auch in Mangold (2000: 35).

Viele Fälle der Vokallängenvariationen sind in der Tat von Bedingungen wie Region oder Sprachregister abhängig. Ungeklärt bleibt die Frage, ob eine Sprachform, in der solche Varianten vorkommen, als Standard bezeichnet werden kann oder ob bereits von Substandard oder regionalem Standard gesprochen werden sollte (zur Diskussion der Begrifflichkeit siehe Niebaum und Macha 1999: 7, Wiesinger 1997: 28f; 33f). Schwierig ist daneben auch die Festlegung eines Übergangs von regionalem Standard zum Dialekt. Wann kann gesagt werden, bzw. kann überhaupt gesagt werden, eine sprachliche Äußerung sei frei von dialektalen Merkmalen? Beispiele wie (1) und (2), in denen zwei Formen im gleichen Satz vorkommen, und die keinen nachvollziehbaren *shift* vom Standard in ein wie auch immer anders geartetes Register zeigen, weisen

⁴ Wobei sich allerdings sicherlich auch viele schriftliche Beispiele finden lassen, in denen orthographische oder morphologische Varianten nebeneinander vorkommen, und es nicht klar wird, inwieweit eine Reflexion des Schreibers über die Formen stattfand.

darauf hin, dass Varianten innerhalb einer Sprachstufe vorkommen können (und bei einem Sprecher):

- (1) ... *ich versuche Sp[a]ß zu haben, und wenn man Sp[a:]ß hat, hat man auch Erfolg.* (Marcel Hacker, Sportler, 15.9.02, Radio SWR1)
- (2) ... *als was Rad [ra:t] in radfahren [ratfa:rən] anzusehen ist...* (eine Vortragende der AG2 bei der 25. Jahrestagung der DGfS in München)

Bei der Verwendung des Wortes „Zweifelsfall“ ist zu klären, ob bei der Aussprache nur dann ein sprachlicher Zweifelsfall vorliegt, wenn die Variation in einem präskriptiven Aussprachewörterbuch verzeichnet ist. Allerdings sind in verschiedenen Aussprachewörterbüchern oft unterschiedliche Varianten verzeichnet, lediglich Muthmann (1994) versucht, eine Zusammenschau der Formen zu liefern. Nach der Definition von Klein (2003) reicht die Existenz von mindestens zwei konkurrierenden Formen, um von einem Zweifelsfall sprechen zu können; das ist bei den Vokallängenvariationen der Fall. Ob jedoch ein Sprecher wirklich über die hier beschriebenen Varianten ins Zweifeln kommt, ist nicht notwendig, um von einem Zweifelsfall zu sprechen.⁵ Es kann jedoch zu metasprachlichen Reflexionen kommen, z.B. bei Deutschlernern.

Spontane Variation, Versprecher und Reduktionserscheinungen sind in gesprochener Sprache nicht als Zweifelsfälle anzusehen, weil sie nicht systematisch reproduzierbar sind. Ihre „Ergebnisse“ werden nicht als konkurrierende Formen angesehen und in Lentoaussprache oder bei Reflexion über die Formen nicht wiederholt.

Varianten, die in großflächigen Untersuchungen zur Aussprache des Standarddeutschen, wie z.B. König (1989) belegt wurden, sind nicht immer in Wörterbüchern verzeichnet. Ein Sprecher, der eine solche Variante kennt oder benutzt, kann aber doch in die Situation kommen, über die Verwendung der „richtigen“ Form nachzudenken. Nach Kleins Aussage („Denn oft gehen sie [die Sprecher] von der Existenz einer explizit normativ geregelten oder zumindest regelbaren Standardsprache aus, die als Klärungsinstanz bei Varianten fungieren soll.“ (2003: 10) handelt es sich dann auch bei diesen Varianten um Zweifelsfälle. Genau hier kann ein Aussprachewörterbuch die Zweifelsfälle für den Sprecher auflösen.

⁵ Hier wird bei der Verwendung der Begriffs „Zweifelsfall“ die Einzelsprecherperspektive verlassen und eher die Gesamtheit aller möglichen Sprecher angenommen.

Fraglich bleibt jedoch, ob eine immer wieder gehörte Form dann für den Sprecher keinen Zweifelsfall mehr darstellt, wenn er durch Konsultation eines Wörterbuchs oder eines Ratgebers „gelöst“ wurde.

Es zeigt sich hier ein deutliches methodologisches Problem. Das Schwanken zwischen Beschreibung der Varianten und Festlegung auf eine der Varianten bei Zweifelsfällen zeigt der Umgang bei Siebs: „In einzelnen Wörtern ist die in den Umgangssprachen vielfach *schwankende* Quantität [von Vokal V] wie folgt *festgelegt* worden:" (u.a. Siebs 2000: 67, Hervorhebungen S. T.-M.). Siebs ist hier deutlich um Auflösung eines Zweifels bemüht.

2. Suche nach einer Norm

Nach Klein (2003) verfügen die Sprecher über ein normatives Sprachbewusstsein. Eine Variation wird als Abweichung von der „Norm“ oder dem „Standard“ empfunden. Bei Aussprachevariationen ist das nicht immer der Fall, jedoch dann, wenn aus dem Vorhandensein von Variationen Zweifelsfälle werden. Einerseits werden präskriptive Normen gesucht, beispielsweise festgehalten in Aussprachewörterbüchern. Andererseits können auch deskriptive Normen angestrebt werden, zum Beispiel mit der Frage, „wie spricht man X aus, wenn ich nicht Dialekt spreche?“ Bei dieser Frage wird nicht vorausgesetzt, dass der Sprecher über eine bewusste Unterscheidung von „Hochsprache“ oder „regionalem Standard“ verfügt. Dem Sprecher ist nur wichtig, nicht Dialekt zu sprechen, und es existiert für ihn eine deskriptive Norm, die er erreichen möchte.

Die Entwicklung im Umgang mit „Norm“ kann anschaulich am Beispiel von Wörterbuchtiteln dargestellt werden. So änderten sich die Titel des Siebs von „Deutsche Bühnenaussprache“ (Siebs 1915) über „Deutsche Hochsprache / Bühnenaussprache“ (Siebs 1957) zu „Deutsche Aussprache“. Die Untertitel beinhalten „reine und gemäßigte Hochlautung“ und „Hochsprache-Bühnenaussprache-Alltagssprache“ (Siebs 2000). Zunächst sollte eine Aussprachenorm für den Gebrauch in bestimmten Kontexten (Bühne, später auch Rundfunk) vorgeschrieben werden, oder zumindest als Leitfaden dargestellt werden. Heute wird noch von einer „idealen Höchstnorm“ (im Zusammenhang mit der „reinen Hochlautung“) gesprochen (Siebs 2000: 7), die als Orientierung dienen soll. Allerdings wird davon ausgegangen, dass diese fast nie gesprochen wird. Daher wird daneben eine gebildete Umgangssprache dargestellt, die regionale Eigen-

heiten beinhaltet. Diese wird als „gemäßigte Hochlautung“ (Siebs 2000: 7) bezeichnet, und in ihr wird das Nebeneinander von Formenvarianten anerkannt. Dieses Nebeneinander von „Hochlautungen“ wirft die Frage auf, ob beide zusammen eine präskriptive Norm darstellen, oder nur die „reine Hochlautung“ (Siebs 2000).

3. Datenbasis

3.1 Datengewinnung

Die Hauptdatenquelle ist eine Zusammenschau von verschiedenen Aussprachewörterbüchern (Muthmann 1996, Mangold 1962, Mangold 2000, Krech et al. 1982, Krech et al. 1969, Kempke 2000, Siebs 1915, Siebs 1957, Siebs 2000, Viëtor 1909, Viëtor 1931). Um mögliche Zweifelsfälle zu ermitteln, wurden verschiedene Quellen konsultiert: Es wurden die Formen der Quantitätenuntersuchungen in König (1989) aufgelistet. Dazu kamen Formen, die in Siebs (2000) unter der oben erwähnten „vielfach schwankenden Quantität“ aufgelistet wurden. Weiterhin wurden Formen aufgenommen, bei denen in den Untersuchungen von Viëtor (1888, 1889, 1890) Vokallängenunterschiede verzeichnet wurden. Als Letztes wurden noch Formen dazugenommen, die in Muthmann (1994) mit verschiedenen Vokalquantitäten verzeichnet wurden. Die so erstellte Liste wurde in den genannten Wörterbüchern nachgeprüft und die Vokallängen wurden notiert. Weiterhin wurden die Ergebnisse von Viëtor (1888, 1889, 1890) und König (1989) ausgewertet.

3.2 Daten

Exemplarisch werden einige einsilbige Substantive diskutiert. An ihnen werden einige Analysemöglichkeiten gezeigt, im Weiteren werden etwas abstraktere Probleme bei der Analyse von Vokallängenvariationen erläutert.⁶

⁶ Im Anhang werden alle Formen der Wörterbuchuntersuchung aus Siebs (2000) und König (1989) aufgeführt. Dies soll u.a. zeigen, dass bei allen Wortarten Varianten zu finden sind. Unterschiedliche Wortarten erfordern auch zum Teil unterschiedliche Analyseansätze.

Unter (3) sind einsilbige Substantive aufgeführt, auf deren Vokalquantität in der Einleitung von Siebs (2000) hingewiesen wird, und die auch in König (1989) verzeichnet sind:

(3) *Jagd, Magd, Obst, Propst, Ruß, Vogt, Wuchs*

Bei diesen Formen bietet sich Rückgriff auf ältere deutsche Formen zur Erklärung der Herkunft der Varianten an. Hier sind bei *Jagd, Magd, Obst, Propst, Vogt* ältere mehrsilbige Formen zu finden. *Ruß* hat eine mhd. Form mit Diphthong (*ruoz*). Die mhd. Form *maget* z.B. wurde zunächst mit kurzem [a] ausgesprochen, durch Umorganisation der Quantitätenverhältnisse im Deutschen wurde das [a] gedehnt. Die Synkope kann bei Formen mit alter Kürze ebenso wie bei bereits gedehnten vorgekommen sein. So wurde in der einsilbigen Form teilweise die Kürze erhalten, teilweise trat die langvokalige Form auf, die nun als Hochlautung kodifiziert ist (vgl. 3.1).

Unter (4) sind einige einsilbige Substantive aufgelistet, die in König (1989) verzeichnet sind, auf deren Vokalquantität in der Einleitung von Siebs (2000) nicht hingewiesen wird:

(4) *Bad, Buch, Dienst, Glas, Gras, Rad, Rost, Schlacht*

Auffällig bei diesen Formen ist *Dienst*, da in diesem Fall die Vokallänge eindeutig kodifiziert ist (vgl. 3.3). Kurzvokalische Aussprachen sind aufgrund der Langvokalschreibung besonders auffällig, bei Königs Untersuchung sind vier Vorkommen verzeichnet (alle in Süddeutschland).

Bei *Bad, Gras, Glas* wurde eine Variation außer bei König (1989) auch noch im „Wörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache“ (Kempke (2000) verzeichnet. *Rad* ist außer in König (1989) und Kempke (2000) auch noch bei Muthmann (1996) zu finden. Vokallängenvariationen sind für *Buch, Schlacht* nur bei König (1989) aufgeführt. Einen besonderen Fall stellt *Rost* dar: Hier sind die Varianten in mehreren Werken verzeichnet, allerdings größtenteils mit einem Hinweis auf einen Bedeutungsunterschied: [rost] ist die Oxidation von Eisen, während [ro:st] ein Metallgitter bezeichnet. Wenn kein Bedeutungsunterschied vermerkt ist, wird die Aussprache mit Kurzvokal angegeben. Nur Viëtor (1931) verzeichnet *Rost* in der Bedeutung ‚Eisenoxid‘ mit Kurzvokal und in der Bedeutung ‚Metallgitter‘ mit

schwankender Vokalquantität. Gelegentlich wird langvokalische Aussprache als Schweizer Variante aufgeführt.

Bei den unter (4) genannten Formen lassen sich folgende Fälle klassifizieren: *Bad, Gras, Glas, Rad* haben eine C(C)VC Struktur. In der Schrift ist diese mit einer „1 Laut = 1 Zeichen-Korrespondenz“ wiedergegeben. Die Vokale stehen in geschlossenen Silben, die einen Kurzvokal erwarten lassen. Der Langvokal entsteht durch analogischen Ausgleich mit mehrsilbigen Formen, z.B. Pluralformen, bei denen der Vokal in offener Silbe steht und dort im Standarddeutschen gedehnt wird. Bei *Buch* ist die phonologische Struktur gleich. Allerdings ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit für den Kurzvokal in den regionalen Aussprachen geringer, da der Langvokal nicht auf einen Ausgleichprozess zurückzuführen ist, sondern auf einen Diphthong (mhd. *buoch*). Die Belege mit kurzem Vokal stammen aus verschiedenen Gegenden Deutschlands im Norden und Süden (Kiel, Bremen, Wittlich, Karlsruhe und Nürnberg (König 1989: Bd.2,29). Bei *Schlacht* ist die abweichende Länge auffällig, weil sowohl die frühere Form (mhd. *slaht*) als auch die Graphie die Kürze nahe legen.

Besonders interessant sind die Abweichungen, die in Kempke (2000) nachgewiesen sind (*Bad, Rad, Glas, Gras*), da es sich bei der Zielgruppe dieses Werkes, Nicht-Muttersprachler des Deutschen, um Sprecher handelt, die den Wunsch nach einer geregelten Aussprachevorschrift haben.

Unter (5) werden einsilbige Substantive aufgelistet, deren wechselnde Vokalquantität in Siebs (2000) festgelegt⁷ wurde, und die nicht in König (1989) untersucht wurden.

- (5) a. *Arzt, Barsch, Erz, Flöz, Floß, Fluch, Fraß, Gas, Harz, Knust, Krebs, Mond, Quarz, Spaß, Trost, Wal, Wust*
 b. *Bucht, Harsch, Herz, Marsch, Nerz, Schmutz, Spruch, Vers*
 c. *Bruch*

Unter (5a) finden sich Formen, deren Vokalquantität als lang festgeschrieben wurde, unter (5b) Formen mit Kurzvokal. (5c) ist eine Form mit Bedeutungsunterscheidung: Kurzvokal steht bei der Bedeutung ‚Ergebnis von brechen‘, Langvokal bei der Bedeutung ‚Sumpfland‘. Dieser Unterschied wird in vielen Wörterbüchern festgehalten, nur in verschiedenen Auflagen des Duden ist bei der zweiten Bedeutung zusätzlich auch die kurzvokalische Variante verzeichnet. Eine Bedeutungsunterscheidung ab-

⁷ „Festgelegt“ ist die Bezeichnung bei Siebs; dadurch wird eine Aussprachevorschrift vorgegeben.

hängig von Vokalquantität liegt auch bei *Rost* unter (4) vor. Ein weiterer interessanter Fall mit Bedeutungsunterscheidung ist *Barsch*. Während das Substantiv („Fischsorte“) mit Langvokal verzeichnet ist, ist das Adjektiv („unfreundlich“) mit Kurzvokal festgelegt worden.

Unter (5b) auffällig sind viele Formen mit postvokalischem [r]. Durch die in großen Teilen des deutschen Sprachgebiets vorkommende Vokalisierung des [r] in dieser Position kann es hier zu einer langvokalischen Aussprache kommen.

Die Aussprachewörterbücher verzeichnen bei vielen der Wörter unter (5) keine Vokallängenvariation. Daher greife ich hier nur ein paar Beispiele heraus: Das unter (1) mit Variation gezeigte *Spaß* ist nur in Viëtor (1931) mit Kurz- oder Langvokal verzeichnet. *Gas* ist in Kempke (2000) mit Variation verzeichnet. *Erz* findet man in Muthmann (1996) mit Variation, in Krech (1982) und in Krech (1969) wird Variation mit gleichzeitiger r-Vokalisierung genannt. Bei *Arzt* wird in einigen Werken Variation genannt, in Siebs (2000) ist die Kurzvokalvariante als schweizerisch verzeichnet. Die gelegentlich zu hörende kurzvokalische Realisierung von *Krebs* ist nur einmal genannt, und zwar bei Siebs (2000), verzeichnet als österreichische Variante. In Viëtor (1888, 1889, 1890) wird diese Variante für Mühlheim, Remscheid und Bad Ems aufgelistet.

Unter (5a) ist *Wal* mit Langvokal aufgeführt. In der Form *Walfisch* dagegen wurde bei Siebs Kurzvokal festgelegt. In Siebs (2000) ist Langvokal für Österreich genannt, in älteren Auflagen nur Kurzvokal. Nur Muthmann (1996) verzeichnet Variation.

4. Bedingungen für Varianten

Bei der Betrachtung der Aussprachezweifelsfälle begegnen wir einer Vielzahl von Problemen. Ziel sollte sein, die Bedingungen für das Auftreten der nebeneinander existierenden Formen bestimmen zu können. Einige Beispiele zur diachronen Betrachtung, zur Norm und zur Orthographie sollen die Probleme verdeutlichen, einheitliche Faktoren zu ermitteln. Schwierigkeiten bereitet die Kontrolle der Bedingungen. Bei den vorgestellten Beispielen handelt es sich um Einträge in Aussprachewörterbüchern. Betonungsverhältnisse spielen dabei keine Rolle, da es sich hier um Einzelwörter handelt, nicht um Beispiele, die aus einem aufge-

nommenen Text isoliert wurden.⁸ Bei Beispielen aus gesprochener Sprache wiederum lassen sich regionale Faktoren kaum kontrollieren.

4.1 Faktoren, die in der Diachronie zu suchen sind

Wie bereits oben, besonders unter (4), gesehen, ist der Rückgriff auf sprachgeschichtliche Formen teilweise hilfreich. Ein Großteil der Varianten ist historisch zu erklären. Sie stehen in Zusammenhang mit der Umorganisation des Quantitätensystems im Deutschen (vgl. Paul 1884, Schirmunski 1962, Szulc 1987, Wiesinger 1983), bei der Kurzvokale in offener Silbe gedehnt wurden und Vokale in geschlossener Silbe kurz realisiert wurden. Für diesen Rückgriff sind Nachweise von mittelhochdeutschen, in einzelnen Fällen mittelniederdeutschen Formen sinnvoll. Ein einfaches Bild würde sich nun ergeben, wenn die Verhältnisse so wären, dass Zweifelsfälle nur bei Dehnung eines alten Kurzvokals aufträten. Dann wäre die Variation eine Form, in der die Dehnung nicht erfolgt ist. Die Belege zeigen jedoch anderes. So finden sich Längen, die beibehalten wurden (6a), Längen, bei denen die nhd. Formen Variation zeigen (6c) und Längen, die gekürzt wurden (6e). Genauso finden sich mhd. Kurzvokale, bei denen nhd. Formen mit Variation zu finden sind (6c) und mhd. Kürzen, die nhd. Langvokale zeigen (6d). Da letztere analog zu zweisilbigen Formen ihres Paradigmas, z.B. Pluralformen, gelängt wurden, könnte auch hier entweder Variation zu finden sein oder bei den Formen unter (6b) eindeutige Länge (was die meisten präskriptiven Aussprachewörterbücher allerdings auch nahe legen).

- (6) a. mhd lang, nhd lang
rât, buoc, mäs
Rat, Bug, Maß
 b. mhd kurz, nhd var.
rat, bat, grap, grop
Rad, Bad, Grab, grob
 c. mhd lang, nhd var.
schôn, rôst
schon, Rost

⁸ Die Gewinnung der Belege in den genannten Aussprachewörterbüchern ist häufig nicht beschrieben und nachvollziehbar. Von daher muss an dieser Stelle den Autoren vertraut werden, dass es sich um tatsächlich existierende Formen handelt.

- d. mhd kurz, nhd lang
lit, lop, phat, wec, lache
Lid, Lob, Pfad, Weg, Lach
- e. mhd lang, nhd kurz
glôse, schuop
Glosse, Schuppe

Einige nhd. Einsilbler entstanden aus mhd. Zweisilblern:

- (7) *krebes* > *Krebs*, *obes* > *Obst*, *jaget* > *Jagd*, *maget* > *Magd*

Nur so ist zu erklären, warum hier überhaupt Langvokal erscheint. Die kurzvokalische Aussprache ist demnach durch die Schrift motiviert. Die Beispiele unter (6a–e) zeigen exemplarisch, dass der Rückgriff auf sprachgeschichtliche Formen nicht ausreicht, um zu erklären, wann Variation vorliegt.

4.2 Schrift

Die Betrachtung der Zweifelsfälle in der Aussprache des Standarddeutschen bezieht sich auf die Schriftsprache. Hier werden teilweise Vokallänge und -kurze eindeutig kodifiziert, z.B. durch Dehnungs- oder Schärfungsgraphien. Varianten sollten selten anzutreffen sein, sofern sich die Aussprache an der Schrift orientiert.⁹ Tatsächlich sind nur wenige Belege dieser Art zu finden: Eine Ausnahme bildet *liegt* in der Aussprache [lɪkt]. Daneben gibt es Formen mit *vier-*: *Viertel*, *vierzig*, *vierzehn*. Für *gibt*, *gibst* finden sich Aussprachen mit Lang- und Kurzvokal, die langvokalische Version zeigt sich auch in älteren Schreibungen: <*giebt*, *giebst*>. Die oben (unter 2.2) erwähnte Abweichung bei *Dienst* konnte in den Wörterbüchern nicht verifiziert werden.

Die meisten Varianten treten auf, wenn in der Schrift ein einfaches Vokalzeichen steht. Silbenschließende Konsonanten begünstigen die Kurzvokalausprache. Bei mehrsilbigen Formen im Paradigma wird die Silbe offen und der Vokal lang ausgesprochen. Fälle wie *Distel*, *düster*,

⁹ Problematisch ist in diesem Zusammenhang die neue Regel für <ß>-Schreibungen: Nach kurzen Vokal ist <ss> zu schreiben, nach langem <ß>. Im Falle von beispielsweise *Spaß* kann so aus einem Aussprachezweifelsfall ein Orthographiezweifelsfall werden.

Rüster können Hinweise auf Unsicherheiten bezüglich der Silbenzuordnung der Konsonanten liefern (gefördert durch alte Regeln wie „trenne nie st, denn es tut ihm weh“). Zweifelsfälle treten bevorzugt dort auf, wo die Schriftsprache nicht eindeutig kodifiziert. Einfache Vokalzeichen in offener Silbe oder vor <r> und <st> sind besonders anfällig.

4.3 Weitere beeinflussende Faktoren

Bei einigen Formen gehen die Varianten mit Akzentuierungsunterschieden einher. Das betrifft natürlich nicht die Einsilbler und die trochäischen zweisilbigen Formen (z.B. *Distel*, *Dusche*, *Liter*). Eher betroffen sind Formen, die eine zweite Silbe mit einem nicht neutralen Vokal haben, der unter Akzent fallen und dadurch lang werden kann: *davon*, *daher*, *voran*. Das ist jedoch nur bei einer kleinen Gruppe von Wörtern der Fall und geht meistens mit einer Bedeutungsunterscheidung oder mit einer besonderen Betonung einer Silbe des Wortes einher. Häufiger sind Fälle, bei denen die Satzintonation ein Wort nur schwach akzentuiert oder bis zur Enklise abschwächt. Betroffen können davon zum Beispiel die diskontinuierlichen Konstituenten sein: *es läßt nach* [nax], *er hat daran Freude gehabt* [gehapt].¹⁰

Eine große problematische Gruppe bilden die Wörter mit nachvokalischer r-Vokalisierung (siehe auch oben unter 2.2). In Regionen, in denen das [R] vokalisiert wird, kommt es zu kompensatorischen Längungen. Dort ist die Quantitätenbestimmung, besonders nach /a/, sehr schwer. Der in fast allen Aussprachewörterbüchern verzeichnete Unterschied, beispielsweise zwischen *barsch* und *Barsch* (erstes mit [a], letzteres mit [ɑ:]) ist für Sprecher dieser Regionen schwer nachzu-vollziehen.¹¹

Teilweise treten die Quantitätenvariationen nur mit gleichzeitiger Modifizierung des folgenden Konsonanten auf ([ta:k-tax, gəzɑ:kt, gəzɑxt]). Diese Fälle scheinen typisch für Nord- und Westdeutschland zu sein.¹² Die reine Vokalquantitätenvariation findet sich aber auch außerhalb

¹⁰ Die Anlage des Korpus, das vor allem aus Aussprachewörterbuchdaten erstellt wurde, lässt eine umfangreiche Sammlung und Analyse solcher Kürzungen in der Satzbetonung allerdings nicht zu.

¹¹ Tatsächlich ist es auch für den Rest des deutschen Sprachgebiets eine auffällige Form, die einen dreifach besetzten Silbenendrand hätte. Die Wiedergabe bei Mangold (2000) mit [ba:ʁf] steigert dieses noch.

¹² Vgl. z.B. König (1989).

dieses Gebietes, so hört man gelegentlich *ich sag'* [zak]. Während also erstere Varianten möglicherweise sehr stark regional gebunden sind, herrschen für die letzteren offensichtlich andere Bedingungen. Zusätzlich erschwert wird die Einordnung der Bedingungen durch Belege, bei denen zwar die Konsonantenmodifikation auftritt, die kurze Quantität jedoch nicht ([gəzɑ:xt, gəfrɑ:xt]). Durch solche Belege wird deutlich, dass es sehr schwer zu bestimmen ist, ob und wieweit Faktoren wie regionale Aussprache oder Sprachregister allein für die Varianten verantwortlich sind.

Auch die reine Beschränkung auf dialektale oder eher regionale Variation ist nicht möglich. Belege (1) und (2) zeigen, dass beide Formen bei einem Sprecher vorkommen, ohne dass ein Wechsel des Sprachregisters oder eine Verstärkung dialektaler Aussprache nachzuvollziehen wäre. Eventuell ließen sich einige Variationen jedoch in bestimmten Regionen ausschließen (z.B. [*rat, bat, gröp, fpas, glas*] kommen nicht in Süddeutschland vor). Aber auch die Streuung der Belege in König (1989) zeigt, dass sich selten sehr deutliche regionale Tendenzen bestimmen lassen. Oftmals muss es so bei Einzelfallanalysen bleiben.

4.4 Mögliche weitere Bedingungen für Varianten

Noch nicht hinreichend untersucht wurden mögliche phonologische Faktoren, wie die Folgenden:

Die Qualität des Silbenendrandes ist nur scheinbar ausschlaggebend. Wo ein Paar wie *Rat-Rad* den Eindruck erweckt, dass ein zugrunde liegender stimmhafter Endrand (durch Erweiterung auf zweisilbige Formen erkennbar: [Rɑt – Rɛ:də]) Variation begünstigt, sind doch schnell Gegenbeispiele gefunden: *Lob, Tod, Stab, Sog* sind ohne Variation. Die Konsonantenqualität kann wohl nicht als Kriterium herangezogen werden.

Die Verbindung von Vokal und Konsonant kann ausschlaggebend für die Möglichkeit zur Dehnung sein. In der Silbenschnitttheorie (Sievers 1876, neuere Arbeiten z.B. Maas 1999, Spiekermann 2000, Restle 2001) wäre hier die sanft geschnittene Silbe Voraussetzung für Variation. Scharf geschnittene Silben dagegen könnten nur mit Kurzvokal auftreten, daher wäre hier keine Längenvariation möglich. Der sanfte Silbenschnitt bietet jedoch die Möglichkeit, dass der Vokal gedehnt werden kann, die Dehnung

aber nicht notwendigerweise realisiert wird. Daher kann hier auch ein Kurzvokal erscheinen.¹³

5. Nutzung oder Nicht-Nutzung von Varianten?

Hinsichtlich der Nutzung des Nebeneinanders von Formen im sprachlichen System lässt sich feststellen, dass in nur wenigen Fällen unterschiedliche Realisierungen von Vokalquantitäten genutzt werden, z.B. für Bedeutungsunterscheidungen. Auffällig ist, dass häufig alte Bedeutungsunterscheidungen nicht mehr gemacht werden. Dieses lässt sich durch den Vergleich verschiedener Auflagen des Siebs oder des Duden feststellen, z.B. bei *Bruch*, *Rost*. Bei einem Beispiel wie *Kredit* ist die Bedeutungsunterscheidung fachsprachlich und für Sprecher ohne fachliche Ausbildung im Bankwesen nicht nachvollziehbar ([kre'di:t] = ‚Vertrauen, Geldmittel‘; [ˈkre:dit] = ‚Kontoseite mit Verbindlichkeiten‘, so bei Mangold 2000). Wenige Beispiele finden sich, in denen sich unterschiedliche Quantitätenverhältnisse lexikalisch festgeschrieben haben: N=*Weg*, Adv=*weg*, letzteres etymologisch von mhd. *enwec* ‚auf dem Weg‘.

6. Fazit

Die vorangegangenen Ausführungen können nur ein Diskussionsbeitrag sein und keine endgültigen Ergebnisse liefern. Jedoch kann folgendes Zwischenfazit festgehalten werden:

Die Schreibung kann Einfluss auf die Realisierung der Quantität haben. Wenn die Vokallänge oder -kurze nicht durch Dehnungs- oder Schärfungsgraphien deutlich gekennzeichnet ist, können Varianten leichter beibehalten werden.

Die historische Dimension vieler phonetischer Zweifelsfälle kann für die Erklärung, woher die Variationen kommen, zwar herangezogen werden, allerdings nicht für die Vorhersage von Variation. Zudem steht das historische Sprachwissen, welche Form durch den Quantitätenausgleich gegenüber einer älteren Sprachstufe verändert wurde, dem Sprecher in der Regel nicht zur Verfügung.

¹³ Genauere phonologische Analysen sollen hier aus Platzgründen nicht geliefert werden. Sie wären jedoch ein weiterer Ausgangspunkt für eine sinnvolle Gruppierung der Daten.

Die phonologischen Bedingungen müssen modelliert werden, um die Variationsmöglichkeiten zu klassifizieren. Dabei sollten Strukturbedingungen, die Variationen erlauben, formuliert werden. Hier ist weitere Forschung gefordert.

Die Ermittlung der notwendigen Bedingungen für Variationen ist unvollständig. Die Vielzahl und Kombinierbarkeit der Faktoren verhindert darüber hinaus bisher, dass sich hinreichende Bedingungen formulieren lassen, unter denen Variation auftritt.

Anhang 1: Wörter aus Siebs (2000), bei denen schwankende Vokalquantitäten festgelegt wurden.

an, Arzt, Bärte, barsch, Barsch, Behörde, beobachten, Beredsamkeit, beredt, Beschwerde, Börse, Böschung, brach (liegen), Brache, Bräutigam, Bre(t)zel, Bremse, Bruch, Bucht, Damwild, des, Distel, duzen, Eidam, Erz, Erz-, Ferse, Flö(t)z, Flöße, Floß, Fluch, flugs, Fraß, Garten, Gas, Gebärde, gebürtig, Geburt, Geburtstag, gehabt, Gehöft, Gelübde, Gemach, gemächlich, Geruch, gesagt, Grätsche, habt, hätscheln, Harnisch, Harsch, Harz, hat, Heirat, Hellebarde, heran, Herberge, Herz, Herzog, Hochzeit, husten, Jagd, Kartätsche, Karte, Kebse, Kloster, Knoblauch, Knust, knutschen, Krebs, Kuchen, Lache, Leichnam, Lorbeer, Lotse, Magd, Marsch, Marschall, Marter, Mörser, Monat, monatlich, Mond, Montag, Nachbar, Nachen, nebst, Nerz, Nische, Nüster, ob, Obacht, Obst, Ost, Ostern, Pflugschar, Probst, Propst, pusten, Quar(t)z, Rätsche, Rätsel, Rebhuhn, rösten, ruchlos, Rüsche, Rüster, Ruß, rutschen, -sam (achtsam, folgsam), Scharte, schartig, schluchzen, Schmutz, schon, Schuster, schwarz, Spaß, Spruch, Städte, tätscheln, trösten, Trost, Truchseß, ur-, Urteil, verdutzt, verrucht, Vers, verzärteln, vier, Vierteil, vierteilen, Viertel, vierzehn, vierzig, Vögte, Vogt, vom, von, vor, Vorteil, vorwärts, Wal, Walfisch, Walnuss, Walplatz/-statt, warten, Warze, weg, Wucher, Wuchs, Wust, zärtlich, Zierrat.

Anhang 2: Wörter, deren Vokalquantität in König (1989) untersucht wurde.

Achsel, ächten, ätzen, After, Ameise, an-, Appetit, Bad, Begräbnis, Betrübnis, Bischof, Bräutigam, britisch, Brosche, brotzeln, Buch, Bücher,

Büste, dachte, Damwild, das, des, Dienst, Dusche, Erdgeschoß, fing, gehabt, Gehöft, Gemach, Gemälde, Geruch, Geste, gibt / gibst, Glas, Gras, Grobheit, Habicht, hätscheln, Heirat, heran, Herzöge, Herzog, hing, höchstens, hüsteln, Hupe, Jagd, Kebse, Knoblauch, Kredit, Kritik, Küche, Küken, Küste, Lebttag, Liter, Magd, Miliz, Mystik, nebst, Nische, Notiz, ob, Obst, plustern, Politik, Probst, Propst, Profit, Pustel, quaken, Rache, Rad, rächen, rekeln, rösten, Rost, ruchlos, Rüster, Ruß, -sam (achtsam, folgsam), Schlacht, Schöbling, Schubkarre, Schuster, Sichel, Sonntag, Städte, Strafantrag, Titel, typisch, Viper, Vögte, Vogt, was, watscheln, widmen, Witwe, Wucher, Wuchs, wusch, zukünftig.

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The Syntactic Structure of the Construction: NUMERAL ‘out of’ NUMERAL in Polish¹

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the syntax of the Polish construction NUMERAL *na* ‘out of’ NUMERAL + NP, which is illustrated in examples (1–3), all meaning ‘two out of five actresses could swim’:

- (1) *Dwie aktorki na pięć umiały pływać.*
two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} on five_{ACC} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
- (2) *Dwie na pięć aktorek umiały pływać.*
two_{NOM} on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
- (3) *Na pięć aktorek dwie umiały pływać.*
on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} two_{NOM} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
- (4) *Na pięć – dwie aktorki umiały pływać.*²
on five_{ACC} two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

The English equivalents of the above sentences would be as follows:

¹ A version of the present paper was read at the conference “Linguistic Perspectives on Numerical Expressions,” held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in June 2004. The content and presentation of this analysis have benefited greatly from suggestions made by the anonymous *SKY* reviewer, to whom we are, therefore, truly grateful. We also wish to thank Magdalena Derwojedowa, Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz and Ljiljana Progovac for helpful discussion on several aspects of the material presented in this paper. Paweł Rutkowski gratefully acknowledges grants from the Foundation for Polish Science and the Kosciuszko Foundation. Without this support the work reported here would not have been possible.

² This sentence is definitely grammatical, although, to some native speakers, it seems slightly awkward (similarly to its English counterpart in (8), as the anonymous reviewer of this paper has rightly pointed out).

- (5) *Two actresses out of five could swim.*
- (6) *Two out of five actresses could swim.*
- (7) *Out of five actresses, two could swim.*
- (8) *Out of five, two actresses could swim.*

Structures such as *two out of five* in English could possibly be analysed as complex numerals, syntactically parallel to regular quantifiers or other numerical expressions:

- (9)
- | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---------|
| I have bought | { | two
many
three and a half
two thousand three hundred thirty-two
two out of five | } | apples. |
|---------------|---|---|---|---------|

However, we will demonstrate in this paper that, in most cases, constructions such as *dwie na pięć* ‘two out of five’ in Polish cannot be interpreted as forming one syntactic constituent. In other words, they do not usually occupy a slot that is otherwise occupied by a single numeral. Instead, we interpret them as consisting of the head numeral and a PP adjunct headed by the preposition *na* ‘out of’ (literally ‘on’). The fact that there are two possibilities as regards the location of the quantified NP is accounted for by postulating that two NPs are actually present in the underlying structure of the phrase but one of them gets deleted at PF. The PP-external numeral determines person-number agreement with the verb and case agreement with the quantified noun. However, if the numeral inside the PP adjunct is a Q-numeral, the whole structure may undergo a process of what we call ‘reanalysis,’ resulting in a complex numeral phrase headed by the Q-numeral.

2. Numeral expressions in Polish

In Polish, it seems necessary to distinguish two types of what has traditionally been referred to as numerals: adjectival numerals such as *dwa* ‘two,’ and proper numerals such as *pięć* ‘five.’ Rutkowski (2001) calls them A-numerals and Q-numerals, respectively (this distinction has been made by other researchers as well—see, e.g., Neidle’s (1988) analysis of Russian). The difference between (10a) and (10b) illustrates the divergent behaviour of the two types in question.

(10a) *Dwie aktorki umiały pływać.*
 two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
 ‘Two actresses could swim.’

(10b) *Pięć aktorek umiało pływać.*
 five_{NOM}³ actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
 ‘Five actresses could swim.’

A-numerals manifest agreement with the head noun with respect to all features. This resembles the standard Polish agreement pattern of nouns and adjectives. On the other hand, Q-numerals do not agree with the head noun with respect to case. In the subject and accusative object positions, Q-numerals always assign genitive to the noun following them (the so-called Genitive of Quantification GEN(Q)—cf., e.g., Franks (1995)). Additionally, when in the subject position, the Q-numeral makes the verb assume the neuter singular form. If the subject is quantified by an A-numeral, the verb regularly agrees in number (plural) and gender (virile or non-virile, depending on the noun).

Following Rutkowski (2001) and (2002), we assume that Polish DPs are three-layered. Similarly to Picallo (1991), Ritter (1991) and Shlonsky (1991), among others, we postulate a functional projection between NP and DP. We will refer to that projection as Q(uantifier)P(hrase), following a well-established terminological tradition in Slavic linguistics (cf., e.g., Babby (1988), Franks (1995), Giusti and Leko (1996)). The Q-numeral occupying the Q head imposes GEN(Q) on the following NP. Since A-numerals always agree with the head noun, we will treat them as specifier-

³ Subject Q-numerals are sometimes considered to be accusative rather than nominative (see, e.g., Franks (1995)). We will not discuss this issue here because it does not influence the analysis presented in this paper.

based modifiers (cf. Chomsky (1995)).⁴ Similar explanations of the difference between adjectival and non-adjectival numerals in other Slavic languages have been proposed by Giusti and Leko (1996) and Veselovská (2001) (for Bosnian and Czech, respectively). Adopting this model, we would like to show how to use it in order to account for certain peculiarities of constructions such as *dwie na pięć* ‘two out of five’ in Polish.

3. The structure NUM + [*na* NUM]_{PP}

We argue that the syntactic structure of examples (1–4, repeated below as 1’–4’) should be schematically represented as in (11–14), respectively:

(1’) [*Dwie* *aktorki*] [*na pięć*]_{PP} *umiały* *plywać*.
 two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} on five_{ACC} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

(2’) [*Dwie*] [*na pięć* *aktorek*]_{PP} *umiały* *plywać*.
 two_{NOM} on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

(3’) [*Na pięć* *aktorek*]_{PP} [*dwie*] *umiały* *plywać*.
 on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} two_{NOM} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

(4’) [*Na pięć*]_{PP} – [*dwie* *aktorki*] *umiały* *plywać*.
 on five_{ACC} two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

(11) [Num NP] [*na* Num]_{PP}

(12) [Num] [*na* Num NP]_{PP}

(13) [*na* Num NP]_{PP} [Num]

(14) [*na* Num]_{PP} [Num NP]

⁴ We assume that all adjectival modifiers in Polish are specifiers. We do not follow Abney’s (1987) suggestion that AP dominates NP (i.e. that the A head takes NP as its complement). For an extensive discussion of the structural position of adjectival modifiers in Slavic see Bošković (2003). Note that, according to Bošković (2003), the fact that there is no ban on left-branch extraction of adjectives out of NP in languages such as Serbian (or Polish) indicates that adjectives occupy the Spec-NP position.

In the above examples, the whole construction must be headed by the numeral we underline because it is this numeral (*dwie* ‘two,’ i.e. an A-numeral) that makes the verb assume the plural/agreeing form (and not the singular/non-agreeing form). It is crucial to note that, in sentences such as (2/2’), the verb agrees with the first numeral, although the noun *aktorek* ‘actresses,’ which is the semantic nucleus of the phrase, gets its genitival form from the second numeral (*pięć* ‘five’).

The structure of headedness proposed in (11–14) remains the same if we substitute a Q-numeral for the A-numeral *dwie*. This may be illustrated with examples (15–18), all meaning ‘five out of twenty-two actresses could swim.’⁵ They correspond to sentences (1–4/1’–4’) but, in this case, the Q-numeral *pięć* ‘five,’ which heads the subject, requires the verb form to be neuter singular:

- (15) [Pięć aktorek] [na dwadzieścia dwie]_{PP} umiało pływać.
 five_{NOM} actresses_{GEN} on twenty-two_{ACC} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
- (16) [Pięć] [na dwadzieścia dwie aktorki]_{PP} umiało pływać.
 five_{NOM} on twenty-two_{ACC} actresses_{ACC} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
- (17) [Na dwadzieścia dwie aktorki]_{PP} [pięć] umiało pływać.
 on twenty-two_{ACC} actresses_{ACC} five_{NOM} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
- (18) [Na dwadzieścia dwie]_{PP} – [pięć aktorek] umiało pływać.
 on twenty-two_{ACC} five_{NOM} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

The numeral which is outside the Prepositional Phrase headed by *na* (‘out of,’ literally ‘on’) is always the syntactic subject of the sentence (whether or not it is followed by the quantified noun). The presence or absence of the noun can be explained as a PF ellipsis process. We propose that the base-structure for both (11) and (12) is the following:

- (19) [NUM NP] [na NUM NP]_{PP}

Also (13) and (14) have a common underlying representation:

- (20) [na NUM NP]_{PP} [NUM NP]

⁵ Note that *dwadzieścia dwie* ‘twenty-two’ is a complex A-numeral.

Moreover, we argue that the structure in (20) is derived from the base-structure presented in (19) through a topicalising movement operation (the PP headed by *na* ‘out of’ is raised to a position in front of the main NUM-NP phrase and becomes a topic of the sentence).⁶ Thus, (19) is the most basic representation of all the sentences listed in (1–4) and (15–18).

At PF, either the first or the second instance of NP gets deleted, under identity. The two options are illustrated below: the PP-internal deletion is represented in (21) and (24), whilst the PP-external deletion is shown in (22) and (23), with parentheses standing for ellipsis:

(21) [NUM NP] [*na* NUM (NP)]_{PP} (corresponding to sentences (1) and (15))

(22) [NUM (NP)] [*na* NUM NP]_{PP} (corresponding to sentences (2) and (16))

(23) [*na* NUM NP]_{PP} [NUM (NP)] (corresponding to sentences (3) and (17))

(24) [*na* NUM (NP)]_{PP} [NUM NP] (corresponding to sentences (4) and (18))

It has to be stressed once more that the PP-internal numeral does not determine agreement on the verb whether the noun quantified by this numeral is deleted or not. Therefore, we argue that, in all the four structures represented in (21–24), the PP headed by the accusative-assigning preposition *na* (‘out of,’ literally ‘on’) has to be analysed as adjoined to the rest of the DP in exactly the same way as the underlined non-numeral adjuncts in (25–28).

(25) *Dwie aktorki [spośród nas]_{PP} umiały pływać.*
 two_{NOM} actresses_{NOM} from_{USGEN} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
 ‘Among us, two actresses could swim.’

(26) *Tylko dwie [na całą masę aktorek]_{PP} umiały pływać.*
 only two_{NOM} on whole_{ACC} mass_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}
 ‘Only two out of a whole mass of actresses could swim.’

(27) *[Na pułk żołnierzy]_{PP} tylko pięciu umiało pływać.*
 on regiment_{ACC} soldiers_{GEN} only five_{NOM} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
 ‘Only five soldiers from the regiment could swim.’

⁶ The anonymous reviewer notes that this is reflected in a change of intonation: the topicalised PP has to be followed by a pause.

- (28) [*W całej grupie*]_{PP} tylko pięciu aktorów umiało pływać.
 in whole_{ACC} group_{ACC} only five_{NOM} actors_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}
 ‘In the whole group, only five actors could swim.’

In other words, we propose that phrases such as *na dwadzieścia dwie* ‘out of twenty-two’ in (15) and *na dwadzieścia dwie aktorki* ‘out of twenty-two actresses’ in (17) should not be treated as belonging to the core numerical expressions in respective sentences.

Example (29) shows that the PP cannot separate the head Q from its complement NP, which confirms that the adjunction approach is correct (phrases are never adjoined in between a head and its complement):

- (29) **Pięć [na dwadzieścia dwie] aktorek umiało pływać.*
 five_{NOM} on twenty-two_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

4. Reanalysis: shift in headedness

If we accept the analysis sketched above, the ungrammaticality of examples such as (30) is not surprising. The phrase *na dwadzieścia dwie aktorki* ‘out of twenty-two actresses’ is a PP-adjunct so the head Q-numeral is expected to make the verb assume the neuter singular form. Since the verb is plural, the example cannot be grammatical.

- (30) **Pięć [na dwadzieścia dwie aktorki] umiały pływać.*
 five_{NOM} on twenty-two_{ACC} actresses_{ACC} could_{PL, NONVIR} swim_{INF}

However, example (31) seems to contradict the analysis we have argued for so far:

- (31) *Dwie na pięć aktorek umiało pływać.*
 two_{NOM} on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

The above example is grammatical although it is parallel to the ungrammatical example (30). It is the Q-numeral *pięć* ‘five’ (i.e. a part of the PP adjunct), and not the A-numeral *dwie* ‘two’ (which should head the phrase from the semantic point of view) that controls the verb form. How should we account for this exceptional construction? We propose that, in this case, the whole structure *dwie na pięć* ‘two on five’ should be interpreted as one numerical expression. We consider it parallel to complex

numerals such as *dwieście dwadzieścia pięć* ‘two hundred twenty-five’ in (32) below:

(31') [*Dwie na pięć*]_Q *aktorek* *umiało* *pływać*.
 two_{NOM} on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

(32) [*Dwieście dwadzieścia pięć*]_Q *aktorek* *umiało* *pływać*.
 two-hundred_{NOM} twenty_{NOM} five_{NOM} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

The last element of such structures always becomes the syntactic head of the whole (therefore, it is underlined in the above examples). Since the last element is a Q-numeral, the entire complex selects a genitive complement and imposes the neuter singular on the verb. We assume that the preceding elements (such as *dwie na* ‘two out of’ in (31/31’) and *dwieście* ‘two hundred’ in (32))⁷ are adjoined inside the main QP.

The structure in (31’) is a grammatical innovation—it is possible only due to a syntactic reanalysis of the adjunct PP that has been split into two parts: the elements *na pięć* ‘on five’ have merged with the original head numeral *dwie* ‘two’ to form just one Q-type structure.⁸ The input and output of this process could be represented as follows (with syntactic subjects underlined):

(33a) [A-NUM] [*na Q-NUM NP*]_{PP} VP_{PL, NONVIR} (input – corresponding to (2))

(33b) [A-NUM na Q-NUM]_Q NP VP_{SING, NEUT} (output – corresponding to (31))

We understand the term ‘reanalysis’ as a syntactic innovation in terms of acquisition (i.e. introduction of a new complex Q-type numeral structure to

⁷ The anonymous referee notes that, in structures such as (31’), *dwie na* ‘two out of’ could be viewed as, in a way, parallel to English *kind of/kinda* and *sort of/sorta*:

(i) *these kind of girls*

(ii) *those sort of cars*

Both the element *dwie* in (31’) and the element *kind/sort* in (i–ii) are syntactic heads that have been reanalysed as modifiers.

⁸ Example (29) shows that such a complex Q-numeral can only be formed on the basis of the sequence NUM *na* Q-NUM, and not NUM *na* A-NUM (where NUM could be both Q- and A-numeral).

the Polish language), and not as a derivational process. Thus, the structure in (33b) does not derive synchronically from the structure in (19). The complex in question has to be base-generated as [A-NUM *na* Q-NUM]_Q NP—with only one NP and no PF-deletion.

Note that the reanalysis presented here is subject to some restrictions. For example, it is not possible in structures with the A-numeral *jedna* ‘one’:

- (33) **[Jedna na pięć]_Q aktorek umiało pływać.*
 one_{NOM} on five_{ACC} actresses_{GEN} could_{SING, NEUT} swim_{INF}

We assume that the shift in headedness observed in (31/31’) and schematised in (33b) is a relatively new innovation and, therefore, its impact is still limited.

The reanalysis is not possible also in structures that have an A-numeral as the last element. As shown in examples (16) and (30), A-numerals cannot become heads of complex NUM *na* NUM quantifiers:

- (35a) *[Q-NUM] [na A-NUM NP]_{PP} VP_{SING, NEUT}* (corresponding to (16))

- (35b) **[Q-NUM na A-NUM]_A NP VP_{PL, NONVIR}* (corresponding to (30))

We assume that this is because the A-numeral cannot occupy the functional position Q (which is the only slot that the reanalysed structure can occupy) but this issue requires further research. As suggested by the reviewer, the fact that the sequence Q-NUM *na* A-NUM cannot be a complex A-type numeral could be accounted for by saying that the A-numeral have properties of agreement, which the Q-numeral disrupts.

Interestingly, as noted by the anonymous referee, English numeral constructions of the type NUM *out of* NUM seem to undergo a restructuring that is very similar to the Polish reanalysis described above. Let us have a look at the following examples:

- (36) *Only one actress [out of five]_{PP} is swimming.*

- (37) *Only one [out of five actresses]_{PP} is swimming.*

- (38) *[Out of five actresses]_{PP}, only one is swimming.*

(39) [*Out of five*]_{PP}, *only one actress is swimming.*

The above sentences are clearly parallel to the Polish examples in (1–4) and (15–18). It is always the PP-external numeral that determines the form of the verb (in examples (36–39), the numeral *one* makes the verb assume the third-person singular form *is*). Therefore, sentences such as (40–41) are ungrammatical:

(40) **Only one actress [out of five]_{PP} are swimming.*

(41) **[Out of five actresses]_{PP}, only one are swimming.*

However, the anonymous reviewer points out that the following example is grammatical (at least for some speakers of English):

(42) *Only one out of five actresses are swimming.*

The plural form *are* can be explained if we interpret the above example as parallel to (31), and, therefore, structured as in (43a), and not as in (43b):

(43a) *Only [one out of five]_O actresses are swimming.*

(43b) *Only one *[out of five actresses]_{PP} are swimming.*

The difference between these two patterns could be illustrated schematically in the following way:

(44a) [NUM *na* NUM]_O [NP]

(44b) [NUM] [*na* NUM NP]_{PP}

5. Conclusion

To summarise, this paper has argued for a syntactic distinction between the two numerals present in the structure NUM ‘out of’ NUM in Polish. We have attempted to show that (at least in most cases) one of them has to be analysed as the head of the whole construction, whilst the other must be interpreted as belonging to an adjunct PP headed by the preposition *na* ‘out

of'. This, however, changes when the PP-external numeral is a Q-numeral. Such structures may be reanalysed as one complex numeral headed by the Q-numeral.

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Book reviews

Book review: Michael Brody (2002) *Towards an elegant syntax*. London: Routledge.

Reviewed by Cedric Boeckx

Michael Brody's new book, *Towards an elegant syntax* (TES), is a collection of essays written from 1981 to the present. TES is divided into four parts. Part I ("Principles and Parameters") consists of early essays, written during the Government-Binding era (roughly, the 1980s), focusing on issues of indexing, chains, and empty categories. Part II ("Beyond Principles and Parameters") reviews Chomsky's *Knowledge of Language* (1986) framework, elaborates what has come to be called Single-Output Syntax model, and critically examines the nature of the theta-criterion. Part III ("Towards an elegant syntax") and Part IV ("Aspects of mirror theory") best illustrate Brody's relentless refinement of linguistic theory.

Brody is best known for developing a precisely articulated representational alternative to the largely derivational character of minimalist analyses (see especially Brody 1995; see also essay 10 of TES, "On the status of representations and derivations"). As Brody clearly states,

Having both [representations and derivations duplicating each other] would weaken the theory in the sense of increasing the analytic options available (...), hence very strong arguments would be needed to maintain that both concept-sets are part of the competence theory of syntax. (Brody 2003: 186)

Consider the logic of Brody's argument in the context of the following situation in Lebanese Arabic [LA] (a situation not discussed by Brody).

Like many other languages, LA uses resumption in interrogative contexts. Although resumptives in LA are not confined to island environments, Aoun and Li (2003) note an important difference between resumption inside and outside of island contexts. Whereas resumption outside of islands allows for reconstruction, reconstruction inside islands is impossible. Witness the contrast between (1) and (2).

- (1) *ʔayya taalib min tulaab-a_i fakkarto ʔanno kəll*
 which student among students-her thought.2pl. that every
m fallme_i hatna ʔ-ii
 teacher.fs will.3fs.choose-him
 ‘which of her_i students did you think that every teacher_i would choose (him)?’
- (2) **ʔayya taalib min tulaab-a_i ʔənbasatto la ʔinno kəll*
 which student among students-her pleased.2pl because every
m fallme_i hatna ʔ-ii
 teacher.fs will.3fs.choose-him
 ‘which of her_i students were you pleased because every teacher_i would choose (him)?’

Based on this contrast, Aoun and Li distinguish between “true” and “apparent” resumption. True resumption is understood as the absence of a wh-chain. It is the only strategy available in island contexts. Apparent resumption involves the presence of a wh-chain linking the the resumptive pronoun and the wh-operator. One can (slightly misleadingly) understand the resumptive pronoun as a pronounced trace left behind by wh-movement. This strategy is available outside islands.

Aoun and Li are now able to capture the reconstruction asymmetry noted above by tying reconstruction effects to the presence of a copy left by wh-movement. Since no wh-movement is allowed to take place from within an island, reconstruction in such contexts is impossible.

Aoun and Li (2003), however, provide data that makes the picture much more complex. This time the data come from superiority effects. As expected under Aoun et al.’s view on “apparent resumption”, superiority effects are found in the context of resumption outside islands, as shown in (3).

- (3) a. *miin ʔanna ʔto-u yzuur miin*
 who persuaded.2pl-him to-visit who
 ‘who did you persuade (him) to visit who?’
- b. **miin ʔanna ʔto miin yzuur-u*
 who persuaded.2pl who to-visit-him
 ‘who did you persuade who to visit (him)?’

If superiority is analyzed as Closest Attract or Shortest Move, we expect no superiority effects in the context of true resumption (resumption inside

islands). However, Aoun and Li show that superiority effects obtain in such contexts.

- (4) a. *miin ʔenbasatto la ʔinno saami ʃarraʃ-o ʃa-miin*
 who pleased.2pl because Sami introduced-him to-whom
 ‘who were you pleased because Sami introduced (him) to whom’
 b. **miin ʔenbasatto la ʔinno saami ʃarraʃ miin ʃəl-e*
 who pleased.2pl because Sami introduced whom to-him
 ‘who were you pleased because Sami introduced who to him’

So from the point of view of superiority, true and apparent resumption strategies are symmetric: they behave in exactly the same way. But from the point of view of reconstruction, they behave asymmetrically. To resolve this paradox, Aoun and Li propose “that chains can be generated either derivationally or representationally. The derivational process is at work when Move applies. (...) We further argue that minimality constrains all chains” (3–4). As they note (49),

[Such an] approach unfortunately goes against Brody’s (1995) claim that derivations and properties of LF representations duplicate each other and that a parsimonious theory of syntax should dispense either with representations or with derivations. Grammar seems to contain redundancies.

The important word here is *unfortunately*. The term refers to the fact that Aoun and Li’s solution falls short of the desiderata, laid out very clearly in TES, for an elegant syntax. (For an alternative analysis of the LA facts, consistent with Brody’s desiderate, see Boeckx and Hornstein 2004.) Throughout TES, Brody reviews similar ‘inelegant’ situations involving theoretical concepts such as levels of representation, projection and phrase structure, chains, c-command, syntax-morphology mapping, and thematic relations, to cite but the most prominent ones. I cannot, in the space of a review, provide a detailed overview of the kind of solutions Brody proposes. Suffice it to say that Brody’s general strategy consists in a relentless evaluation and re-evaluation of the tools used in linguistic theory, an exploration of all the unstated consequences of theoretical proposals, and a rare sense of what is essential and what isn’t.

Students of Brody’s work will benefit greatly from his research strategy. Not only will TES provide them with elegant solutions to difficult problems that await to be extended to other complex areas of research, it

will also allow them to understand current, often abstruse theoretical concepts much better, thanks to the great clarity with which TES is written.

In TES, Brody illuminates central issues, concepts, and analyses in modern linguistic theory. It is, in my opinion, required reading for anyone who seeks a deeper understanding of the structure of current linguistic theory.

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Erelt, M. (Ed.) (2003) *Estonian Language*. In Series: *Linguistica Uralica*. Supplementary Series. Volume 1. Tallinn: Estonian Academy Publishers. 413 pp.

Reviewed by Katrin Hiietam*

Estonian Language by Erelt (Ed) is the most recent description of Estonian available for an international reader. It is a compilation of studies in which leading researchers in Estonia and a scholar from Uppsala, Sweden consider various aspects of the Estonian language. The book consists of six chapters and a preface by the editor and it is structured as follows: The structure of Estonian (Chapter I), rise and development of Estonian (Chapter II), dialects (Chapter III), written language (Chapter IV), colloquial language (Chapter V), and study of Estonian (Chapter VI.). Each of the chapters and the Introduction are summarised below along with discussing some research findings and conclusions drawn.

INTRODUCTION by the Editor, Mati Erelt.

Introduction gives the reader the basic facts about the present day Estonian, such as the speaker count (1.1. million) and possible start date in the 13th–16th century by the merger of the North-Estonian and South-Estonian dialects. It is not always easy to determine a starting point for a language and this is what the very approximate estimate reflects.

Estonian belongs to the northern branch of the Finnic languages and is therefore agglutinating. However, it is more fusional and analytic than other languages in the same group. Finally, the Introduction points out the most influential contact languages for Estonian. These are German, Finnish, Russian and currently English.

The Introduction, although not lengthy, sets the Estonian language within the larger context of language typology and language change and prepares the reader well for the subsequent chapters.

Chapter I, STRUCTURE OF ESTONIAN LANGUAGE contains contributions by two scholars, namely Tiit-Rein Viitso (phonology, morphology and word formation), and Mati Erelt (syntax). On the whole, Chapter I is one of the

* I gratefully acknowledge the useful comments and suggestions that Pentti Haddington kindly provided to me while I was preparing the final version of this book review.

most compact and informative overviews of the above aspects of Estonian that I have come across. What I find admirable is the very systematic treatment of topics and clear presentation. For example, in Viitso's contribution, every section starts with a general introduction which is then followed by a thorough examination of the different subtopics.

Chapter I is similar to the existing descriptions of Estonian available in English, e.g. Tauli (1973, 1983). Yet, there exist differences, some of which are outlined below. For example, Viitso offers an interesting approach for classifying words. Namely, he categorises them based on certain morphological properties. According to him, there are four main word classes in Estonian (32):

- 1) words that can be inflected for mood, time and person (verbs)
- 2) words that can be inflected for case, including grammatical case (nominative, genitive and partitive) (nominals)
- 3) words that have no grammatical case forms (some adverb types and adpositions)
- 4) words that have no inflectional forms (some adverb types, adpositions, conjunctions, interjections).

Although Viitso's approach serves as a novel solution when paired with the traditional classification based on semantic and morphosyntactic properties, it remains to be questioned whether it serves the purpose. For example, adverbs and adpositions here come under two separate word classes, 3 and 4, and without further explanation such a division hardly seems to be the most transparent. Viitso states that his list shows the main word classes. However, I would have liked to see a more elaborate classification or references to those since the purpose of the book is to give an overview of the language to academic readers.

What concerns case marking in Estonian, Viitso notes that there are 14 cases, three grammatical ones—nominative, genitive and partitive—and 11 adverbial cases, which fill the same functions as suffixes and prefixes in many other languages (32). In this, Viitso follows the most prevalent approach to the case system in not acknowledging the accusative as one of the grammatical cases (for alternative views see e.g. Ackerman and Moore 1999 who consider Estonian total objects to be marked with the accusative both in the singular and the plural, and Grünthal 2003 who sees only singular total objects as marked with the accusative).

Viitso has also an innovative approach to impersonal sentences in Estonian (64). This is a topic which has received a lot of attention recently.

According to him, only the construction with a partitive NP in complex tenses are in the impersonal voice as illustrated in (1):

- (1) *Hunti oli haavatud.*
 wolf.PART be.PAST.3 wound.PRTC
 ‘The wolf was wounded.’

A corresponding construction with a nominative NP he regards to be an instance of predicative complementation. Alternative analyses where sentences containing both nominative and partitive NPs are classified as impersonal voice, are in e.g. Vihman 2001 and Vihman and Hietam 2002. Classifying these constructions as suppressive and not impersonals, can be found in Pihlak 1993. The question of passives and impersonals in Estonian will also be addressed in the following section from the point of view of syntax.

SYNTAX by Mati Ereht.

The second part of Chapter I deals purely with the syntax of Estonian. It starts with an often-addressed topic, word order. Ereht states that the basic word order in both unmarked main and complement clauses is SVX. Nevertheless, word order in Estonian is fairly flexible and various variants are allowed depending on the pragmatics of the sentence (100, 119). In regard to the position of the verb, Ereht states that in non-negated declarative clauses it stands on the second positions (100). These conclusions are also drawn in Ehala (1995).

The author has a very strict approach to subjects and in unmarked affirmative clauses considers them to be solely nominative NPs that agree with the verb (94–95). According to Ereht, partitive subjects can occur in a notionally negative or hesitant inverted clause, as in (2) and (3) respectively (96)

- (2) *Laul pole raamatut.*
 table.ADE NEG book.PART
 ‘There is no book on the table.’
- (3) *Kas on mõtet seda teha?*
 Q be.3 sense.PART this.PART do.INF
 ‘Is there any point in doing that?’

On the other hand, Erelt takes a much broader view on objects. In addition to total (nominative) and partial (partitive) objects, he states there exists a class of oblique objects which typically open an inverted clause. Oblique objects can be nominals expressing location, time, possessor or experiencer (94). A possible weakness in defining subjects based on morpho-syntactic properties and objects according to semantic ones is that we could potentially be categorising the same NP as a subject and object since we are looking at different properties. This in its turn could lead to an incorrect picture of grammatical relations in Estonian. Also, with Erelt's classification in mind, it remains unclear where the author would like to draw the borderline between adverbials and objects.

Another issue that I would like to discuss is Erelt's treatment of the Estonian passive. According to him, there is no Indo-European type proper passive, i.e. subjective action passive in Estonian (102). He states that Estonian has a special morphological form expressing impersonal passive. This construction has no subject, but only an object, which has some characteristics of a subject: 1) it is in the nominative, 2) it opens the clause, and 3) in the past compound tenses the verb occasionally agrees with it in number, as shown in (4):

- (4) *Raamatud olid loetud läbi.*
 book.PL.NOM be.PAST.3.PL read.PRTC through
 'The books were read through.'

In addition to impersonal passive, Erelt states there is 1) the resultative or stative passive in Estonian, which does contain a subject, as in (5)(103):

- (5) *Uksed olid avatud.*
 door.PL.NOM be.PAST.3.PL open.PRTC
 'The doors were opened/open.'

and 2) in spoken language one can come across double impersonalisation, as in (6) (103–104):

- (6) *Uksi ei oldud suletud.*
 door.PL.PART NEG be.IMPS close.PRTC
 ‘One had not closed the doors.’

If I have understood it correctly, Viitso, the author of the previous section would suggest examples in (4) and (5) should be classified as an instance of predicative complementation and not passive (cf. p. 64). On the other hand, Erelt’s view of the Estonian passive is contradicted by e.g. Vihman (2001, 2004) who considers Estonian to have both the personal (periphrastic throughout the paradigm) and impersonal passive (morphological in simple tenses) constructions. These contradictory claims indicate that passivisation in Estonian is an area that needs further studies to be conducted.

Erelt also addresses the issue of headedness in nominal phrases. For example in numeral phrases he considers the numeral to be the modifier and the noun the head, (112). According to Erelt, the reason why most of the Estonian grammars treat the noun and not the quantifier as the head lies in the fact that in the nominative, numerals starting with two require the partitive head noun and only show agreement in oblique cases (113). This view has been challenged by Payne and Hiietam (2004), who see the numeral as the head based on its syntactic distribution.

Erelt’s contribution contains a lot of examples to illustrate the arguments, however, no glosses are provided, and therefore some morphological details may remain opaque for a reader who is not familiar with the language already.

On the whole, Chapter I is an excellent source of information, yet, there are no references in the body of the text and one is therefore often left to wonder what has been the authors original contribution and what has been referred to other works.

Chapter II: THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE. Tiit-Rein Viitso.

This chapter follows the development of morpho-syntax and phonology of Estonian and maps it onto the larger context of Finnic. According to Viitso, in the Finnic branch there are two state languages—Finnish and Estonian—and the rest can be called dialect continuum due to the fact that they are difficult to distinguish (131). Viitso discusses the existing classifications of Finnic (132ff.) and points out differences and similarities between different dialects in Finnic. Following that, the author moves on to the different

dialects of Estonian. Thereafter the author accounts for the development of phonology, morphology and syntax.

Chapter III. ESTONIAN DIALECTS. K. Pajusalu

Chapter III concentrates on the present day dialects of Estonian. As Viitso noted in the preceding chapter, it can often be difficult to distinguish between different Finnic languages, Pajusalu's chapter states that even different dialects are hard to set apart (231).

Contrary to what one might expect, considering the formation of the literary language through the merger of two most prominent dialects, Pajusalu claims that contemporary Estonian is distinct from all the historical Estonian dialects, including those spoken by people who were born in the second half of the 19th century (233). This is true for both vocabulary and grammatical norms.

Such a phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the present day Standard Estonian is a "a compromise between various dialects, conscious language reform, and recent influences of foreign languages and cannot be traced back to any historical dialect" (233).

Yet, Pajusalu sees the Northern Estonian dialects to share more features with the Standard Language than the southern ones (233). Pajusalu even goes so far as to consider one of the southern dialects, Võru dialect, as a separate language (234). This, however, is open to discussion.

Chapter IV. WRITTEN ESTONIAN. By Heli Laanekask and Tiiu Erelt.

The chapter by Laanekask and Erelt is a historical overview of the development of the written Estonian. Overall, I found the chapter similar to Chapter II which described the development of the Estonian language in general.

The authors have divided the development of the written Estonian into ten periods. These are as follows: 1) the origin of two literary traditions; 2) the beginning of conscious standardisation; 3) emergence of the old spelling system; 4) working towards a common written language, attempts to reform spelling; 5) success of the new spelling system, written Estonian gains some prestige; 6) formation of the nation state, increased authority of the norm; 7) Estonian becomes a state language; 8) preservation of Estonian in the Soviet times; 9) further development of Estonian in the Soviet era, renewed language planning; and 10) Estonian a state language again, special languages become endangered.

Chapter IV informs the reader of the fact that there has been a lot of conscious language planning in the formation of the present day Estonian (326). Laanekask and Ereht list several changes in the language and evaluate how these innovations have been preserved in the present day Estonian.

The authors do not only look at the language strictly, but also tie in different developments of the political climate at the time. For example, they state that during the Soviet time, Standard Estonian was the "foundation of the Estonian identity" and the literary language was a "means of consolidating the nationality" (329).

In connection with political changes in 1980–1990s also the Estonian language changed and this can be considered to be due to both language internal and external factors (330–331). Changes occurred at various levels, including morpho-syntax of the language. For example Laanekask and Ereht report the following syntactic changes: 1) the headedness of a nominal phrase: the quantifier that previously was a head has now become a modifier. This is reflected in number agreement, as illustrated in (7b):

- (7) a) *osa* *inimesi* (b) *osad* *inimesed*
 part.NOM people.PL.PART part.PL.NOM people.PL.NOM
 ‘some people’

2) negation, 3) increased use of verb particles to express perfectivity; and 4) *saama* ‘to get’—future. As Estonian has no morphological future, this construction is a popular innovation.

Also, the sources for borrowings have changed. While Russian was formerly the most dominant language for borrowings, it has now been replaced by English and Finnish. All these changes have induced linguistic diversity that was almost non-existent during the Soviet rule.

Chapter V. COLLOQUIAL ESTONIAN. By Leelo Keevallik

The study of the colloquial language has been ignored until recently and is therefore a new phenomenon. Chapter V constitutes an introduction and a brief overview of this variety of the language. Keevallik concentrates on the core of the present day spoken language and uses as much natural language data as possible. She notes that in much, colloquial language is close to the written Estonian, yet, many standard forms do not exist in it (361). Since the study of spoken Estonian is a new phenomenon, research into it relies on a relatively small database. The spoken language corpuses

that are available are: 1) Tartu corpus which is compiled of student recordings of spoken language, and 2) a data set collected by the author herself (344).

Keevallik analyses both the phonetics, morphology, syntax and communication patterns of spoken Estonian. In regard to the prosody of the spoken language her conclusions are based on the data collected from three informants (359) and I was wondering whether it would be worth conducting a follow-on study to either compare or evaluate her findings.

The chapter by Keevallik is definitely a good starting point for a study of the spoken variety of Estonian and it gives an interested researcher many potential topics to work on, such as e. g.. conversation strategies (cf.p.370 ff).

Chapter VII. STUDY OF ESTONIAN. By Mati Ereht.

The final chapter, *Study of Estonian*, summarises research into Estonian diachronically, starting from the 17th century and finishing with the present day Estophiles. The main contribution of influential researchers is summarised according to different eras, e.g. the national awakening, pre- and post World War II era. This chapter, although the shortest one in this volume, contains the most references grouped diachronically according to research topics. The areas that have interested Estonian linguists through times include phonetics, morphosyntax, dialectology, but also language planning. In the field language planning, *Introduction to a Theory of Language Planning* (1968) by an Estonian linguist, Valter Tauli, has been acknowledged at the international level.

Overall, *Estonian Language* is a lot more than just a description of the language. It is rather an overview of the socio-historical factors surrounding the present day Standard Estonian and its development throughout the history. Also, it provides a unique source of references for an interested researcher.

Since there are very few general overviews of Estonian available in English, this work certainly is a valuable addition to the bulk of typological literature on Finnic accessible for an international audience. It is mainly intended for an academic audience and it makes an excellent textbook for students of Finnic or any other reader interested in typology, language change and language planning.

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Book review: Birgit Stolt (2000) *Martin Luthers Rhetorik des Herzens*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck (UTB für Wissenschaft; Uni-Taschenbücher 2141). XII + 200 Seiten

Rezensiert von Tuomo Fonsén

Von Luthers Schriften zehren viele Theologen und Germanisten zugleich. Es liegt nun eine Untersuchung über Luthers Rhetorik vor, die zwar von einer Germanistin verfaßt worden ist, aber Luthers theologisches Denken in den Mittelpunkt rückt. Die Verfasserin stellt selber fest: „Es gibt nichts in Luthers Leben, das er nicht in seine Theologie integriert“ (S. 184). Auch unter diesem Gesichtspunkt sind die Ausführungen über Luthers Person, Sprache und Theologie in dieser Untersuchung hochinteressant.

Stolts Werk enthält neben Vorwort, Namenregister und Sachregister sieben Hauptkapitel: (I.) Das Lutherbild im Wandel der Sprachwissenschaft. – Aus der Werkstatt der Luthersprachforschung, (II.) Sprache, Glaube und Rhetorik, (III.) Die Predigt, (IV.) Die Bibelübersetzung, (V.) Rhetorik und Musik in Luthers Deutscher Messe 1526, (VI.) Humor in Martin Luthers Schrifttum und (VII.) „Gotteskindschaft“. Mag die Wahl der Hauptkapitel beim ersten Anblick etwas bunt erscheinen, so bleibt doch das Ganze gedanklich einheitlich. Die unterschiedlichen Sachverhalte verbinden sich in dem Forschungsprofil der Verfasserin unter dem Aspekt, „gegen herkömmliche Ansichten Stellung zu nehmen“ (S. IX). Dem Leser werden die Schwerpunkte klar und deutlich dargeboten. Nicht weniger erfreulich ist schließlich, daß Beispiele aus den Texten Luthers und seiner Zeitgenossen reichlich vorhanden sind. – Ich versuche, die wichtigsten Themen dieses inhaltsreichen Werkes im folgenden zusammenzufassen.

Das erste Kapitel dient als Einleitung. Stolt schildert u.a. die Sprache Luthers: Wichtig ist, daß sich Luther, der durch seine deutsche Bibelübersetzung so viel für die Förderung der Volkssprache leistete, dennoch im Reden und Schreiben in hohem Maße ans Lateinische gehalten habe. Die ursprünglichen Tischreden Luthers waren, wie Stolt (1964) nachgewiesen hat, zweisprachig lateinisch-deutsch gemischt. So entspreche die im Jahre 1566 (zwanzig Jahre nach Luthers Tod) erschienene Tischredenausgabe, die durchweg deutschsprachig ist, keineswegs der echten Diktion Luthers. Vielmehr stellten die Tischreden dieser Ausgabe ein Erzeugnis ihres Herausgebers Johannes Aurifaber dar, und seien natürlich nicht als eine Edition im modernen Sinne anzusehen.

Ferner betont Stolt, daß Luther grundsätzlich nicht so volkssprachlich ausgerichtet war, wie es die Forschung lange sehen wollte. Stolt geht auf lexikalische, syntaktische und stilistische Besonderheiten in Luthers deutscher Bibelübersetzung ein, die lateinischen Einfluß aufweisen. Was etwa die Syntax angeht, so erfahren wir, daß die zahlreichen Abweichungen von der normalen deutschen Wortfolge dadurch entstanden seien, daß Luther die alte, vertraute lateinische Wortfolge auch in der deutschen Übersetzung beibehalten habe. Damit korrigiert die Verfasserin zu Recht die Vorstellung, daß Luther die Bibelübersetzung syntaktisch der Sprechweise des gewöhnlichen Volkes hätte angleichen wollen. Als typisches Beispiel für syntaktische Abweichungen erwähnt Stolt u.a. die Worte *Ihr werdet finden das Kind* (S. 28). Doch eines sei bemerkt: Es hätte wohl dem Leser zu besserem Verständnis gedient, wenn jeweils das Original zitiert worden wäre, und auch die Quellenangaben wären hier vonnöten gewesen. Das obige Zitat stammt aus dem Weihnachtsevangelium (Lk 2: 12) und lautet im griechischen Original εὐρήσατε βρέφος; in der Vulgata steht dafür *invenietis infantem*. Läßt man aber diese Pedanterie beiseite, so ist ohne weiteres daran festzuhalten, daß Stolt's Beobachtungen über den *Luther sub specie Latinitatis* sowohl anschaulich als auch aufschlußreich sind.

Von der Rhetorik, die zu den altherkömmlichen *septem artes liberales*¹ zählt, wußte Luther vorzüglich Gebrauch zu machen. Daß er es wirklich tat, wurde aber von der älteren Forschungstradition übersehen, da die Kunst der Rhetorik wegen falscher Vorurteile so „lange verpönt“ (S. 30) war. So ist es Stolt's Verdienst, diesen Irrtum entschlossen zu bekämpfen: Luther habe keineswegs impulsiv geschrieben, sondern beim Schreiben immer einen gut durchdachten Plan vor sich gehabt. Der Eindruck von Impulsivität bei Luther folge also aus sorgfältiger rhetorischer Vorplanung.

Von Interesse ist zudem die Beobachtung Stolt's, daß Luther in seiner eigenen Zeit sowie in den beiden folgenden Jahrhunderten gerade als Meister der deutschen Redekunst, sogar als deutscher Cicero, gefeiert wurde. So lobt ihn etwa der berühmte Barockgrammatiker Justus Georg

¹ Seit der Spätantike unterschied man „sieben freie Künste“, die von einem freien Mann geübt werden können, nämlich *Grammatik, Rhetorik, Dialektik* (die Wortwissenschaften) sowie *Arithmetik, Geometrie, Astronomie, Musik* (die Naturwissenschaften). Im Schulunterricht spielte darunter gerade die Rhetorik die wichtigste Rolle, und zwar wegen ihrer Anwendbarkeit im praktischen Leben (vgl. *Lexikon der alten Welt* 1965: 339 s.v. „Artes liberales“).

Schottelius, der seinerseits mit dem hochgelehrten Varro gleichgesetzt wurde, in seinem magnum opus, der *Ausführlichen Arbeit von der Teutschen HauptSprache* (gedr. 1663, S. 49): Luther habe „zugleich alle Lieblichkeit Zier / Ungestüm und bewegenden Donner in die Teutsche Sprache gepflantzet“.² Stolt deutet diese Worte folgendermaßen (S. 33 f.): Schottelius spiele hier kunstvoll auf die beiden rhetorischen Affekte (scil. *ethos* und *pathos*) an, denn „Lieblichkeit“ und „Zier“ deuteten auf den Affekt des milden *ethos*, „Ungestüm“ und „bewegender Donner“ aber auf denjenigen des erschütternden *pathos* hin. „Gepflantzet“ würden *flores rhetoricales*, d.i. rhetorische Blumen, die in der Rede als Schmuck dienen. Man kann Stolt nur zustimmen, wenn sie bemerkt, daß sich Schottelius' Aussage über Luther „ohne Rhetorikkenntnisse überhaupt nicht korrekt einschätzen“ lasse (S. 33).

Inhaltlich betrachtet steht in Stolts Untersuchung das zweite Kapitel, in dem Glaube und Rhetorik bei Luther gegenübergestellt werden, im Brennpunkt. Zunächst macht Stolt den Leser darauf aufmerksam, wie fest Luther der rhetorischen Tradition angehört: Der von den Humanisten hochgeschätzte römische Rhetoriklehrer Quintilian habe großen Einfluß auf seine Auffassung über den Gebrauch der rhetorischen Affekte gehabt. Der *sermo humilis* (d.i. die einfache, belehrende Weise zu predigen) des Kirchenvaters Augustinus sei wiederum sein christliches Vorbild gewesen. Für Luther, der dem apostolischen Beispiel der Evangeliumsverkündigung folgen wollte, sei immer die gesprochene Sprache am wichtigsten gewesen. Auch beim Schreiben habe er sich an der mündlichen Ausdrucksweise orientiert.

Das menschliche Herz hat laut Stolt einen besonderen begrifflichen Stellenwert bei dem Reformator: Es sei nämlich der Ort, in dem nach Luthers Überzeugung sowohl der Verstand als auch das Gefühl des Menschen wohnten. Diese Vorstellung habe ihren Ursprung in der Bibel, in der das Herz oft in dieser Bedeutung erscheint. Stolt zeigt, daß Luther die Herz-Thematik gerne in seinen Reden benutzt hat, und nennt dafür einige überzeugende Belege. Dazu gehört u.a. der vom Heiligen Geist inspirierte „Glaube des Herzens“, der sich nicht allein mit persuasiven Mitteln der Rhetorik verwirklichen lasse. Ferner hat Luther Stolt zufolge viel Wert auf

² Ich folge beim Zitieren der originalen Schreibweise des Schottelius, die etwas von Stolts Wiedergabe abweicht. – Schottelius fährt fort: Luther hat „[...] den Teutschen gezeigt / was jhre Sprache / wenn sie wolten / vermögen könnte“ (ebd.). Für den kulturpatriotisch motivierten Schottelius gilt Luther schlechthin als sprachliches Vorbild.

die Worte Christi *Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur* („Wes das Hertz vol ist / des gehet der Mund vber“, Mt 12: 34) gelegt, denn, damit der Redner bzw. der Prediger die Zuhörer überzeugen könne, solle er nichts vorzutäuschen versuchen, seine Worte müßten vielmehr von Herzen kommen.

Im dritten Kapitel behandelt Stolt die Predigt, und daraus geht deutlich hervor, welche Bedeutung Luther der Rhetorik beimaß. Die Rhetorik habe ihm beim Predigen als wertvolles Hilfsmittel gedient, um ungebildete Zuhörer besser lehren und bekehren zu können; nach Luther sei nämlich ein affektvoller Stil vonnöten, wenn dem „groben, harten Pöbel“ gepredigt werden soll (S. 72). Dagegen sei „ei[ne]m verstendigen balde gepredigt“ (ebd.; dies ist, nebenbei bemerkt, sicherlich eine Anspielung auf den antiken Gedanken *sapienti sat*). Damit wird die Bedeutung der Rhetorik bei Luther auf gewisse Weise relativiert: Die Redekunst besitze an sich keinen Eigenwert bei ihm, sondern gelte nur als praktisches Mittel zum Zweck. – Interessant ist ferner Stolts Vergleich zwischen Luther und dessen Freund Philipp Melanchthon: Beide seien gewandte Redner gewesen, doch grundsätzlich sei Luther ein Prediger, Melanchthon aber ein Lehrer gewesen; dieser habe intellektuell gesprochen, jener aber affektiv.

Einen weiteren Schwerpunkt bei Stolt bildet Luthers deutsche Bibelübersetzung (IV. Kap.). Die Verfasserin stellt hier zwar keinen expliziten Zusammenhang mit der Rhetoriktheorie her, aber implizit geht aus ihren Darlegungen hervor, daß es sich im Grunde beim Reden und Übersetzen um dasselbe handelt, nämlich darum, wie man mit der Sprache möglichst viel Verständlichkeit und Wirkung erlangen kann. Die Übersetzung erscheint also bei Luther als bedeutendes Anwendungsfeld der „Rhetorik des Herzens“. Die Verfasserin bemerkt, daß nach Luther die Regel *rem tene, verba sequentur* (beherrsche die Sache, die Worte werden folgen) bei Rednern und Übersetzern gleichermaßen Gültigkeit habe.

Beim Übersetzen stützte Luther sich, dem humanistischen *ad-fontes*-Prinzip folgend (S. 92), auf den hebräischen bzw. griechischen Originaltext. Was Luthers Übersetzungspraxis angeht, so betont Stolt, daß er immer der Theologie der Philologie gegenüber den Vorrang gegeben habe: Luther habe den Bibeltext nach Bedarf wörtlich oder frei übersetzt, um die theologische Richtigkeit der Übersetzung zu bewahren (*res* ist also primär im Vergleich mit *verba*, vgl. oben). Auch auf die Emotionalität der Texte weist die Verfasserin hin: Vor allem sei Luther darum bemüht

gewesen, daß die deutsche Übersetzung voller gefühlsmäßiger Intensität wird, denn für ihn sei die Bibel Gottes Wort, das jeden persönlich betrifft.

Das fünfte Kapitel handelt von Rhetorik und Musik in Luthers „Deutscher Messe“ von 1526. Zu Luthers Zeiten wurden Bibeltexte traditionsgemäß rezitiert, d.h. als Sprechgesang vorgetragen. Stolt zeigt, wie genau der musikalisch begabte Luther die deutsche Übersetzung der Perikopen (der im Gottesdienst rezitierten Bibeltexte) den Erfordernissen des Rezitierens anpaßte: Einer der acht Kirchentöne wurde gewählt. Der Text wurde mit Hilfe von *initium*, *comma*, *periodus* usw. melodisch und rhythmisch bearbeitet; Luther achtete dabei weniger auf eine grammatische Interpunktion des Textes als auf eine rhetorische Hervorhebung von Wörtern und Satzteilen, die inhaltlich wichtig sind. Die Musik diente bei Luther als *ancilla verbi*: sie sollte der Sprache und dadurch der Theologie untergeordnet sein. – Rhetorik und Musik wurden bereits von Quintilian gleichgesetzt, der lehrt, daß die Musik, wie auch die Rhetorik, affektiv die Gefühle der Menschen sowohl erregen als auch besänftigen könne. Nebenbei bemerkt wirkte die enge Verbundenheit der Musik mit der Rhetorik noch lange nach: In der Barockmusik und besonders bei Bach war sie noch maßgeblich (vgl. z. B. Platen 1997).

Ein eigenes Kapitel widmet Stolt dem Humor in Luthers Schriften (VI. Kap.). Schon in der Antike war die rhetorische Anwendbarkeit des Humors bekannt. Cicero und Quintilian empfahlen, Humor in der Rede taktvoll und mit gutem Geschmack zu gebrauchen, damit der Redner seinen Ruhm als *vir bonus* nicht gefährde. Doch, wie Stolt bemerkt, hatte dieses Ideal in der Zeit der Reformationsstreitigkeiten wenig Platz. So habe auch Luther des öfteren in Streitschriften satirischen, aggressiven Humor benutzt, um seinen Gegner dem Spott preiszugeben. Was die rhetorische Affektenlehre betrifft, so vertrete solch höhnischer Humor bei Luther den Affekt des *pathos*; den Affekt des *ethos* vertrete wiederum sein familiärer Humor, der z. B. in den scherzhaften, liebevollen Briefen an seine Frau Catharina von Bora vorhanden ist. Daß Luther, der bekanntlich ein stürmisches Temperament hatte, auch eines feinen, sanften Humors mächtig war, wird von Stolt anhand reizvoller Beispiele veranschaulicht.

Stolt beendet ihre Untersuchung mit einer eigenständigen Betrachtung zum Persönlichkeitsbild des alternden Luthers, der keineswegs „vergrämt und verbittert“ (S. 184) gewesen sei, sondern sich vielmehr von seiner Familie umgeben wohlgefühlt habe. Dieses Kapitel weicht zwar thematisch von den vorherigen ab, ist aber nicht weniger interessant. Gezeigt wird, wie sich Luthers Vorstellung von der Vaterschaft geändert hat: Wegen seiner

schlechten Erfahrungen in der Kindheit habe Luther zunächst vermutet, daß ein Vater von Natur aus streng und strafend sei. Doch, sobald er selbst im Alter von 42 Jahren zum ersten Mal Vater wurde, habe er plötzlich die Vaterschaft neu aufgefaßt, als er anfing, väterliche Liebe für sein kleines Kind zu empfinden, von der er bisher wenig Ahnung gehabt hatte. Theologisch ist von Wichtigkeit, daß sich zugleich auch Luthers Gottvaterbild verändert hat, da die alte Konnotation der Strenge durch die der Zärtlichkeit abgelöst wurde.

Im ganzen gesehen bietet Stolt, eine erfahrene Luther-Forscherin, eine Vielfalt anregender Beobachtungen über Luther. Dies ist möglich, weil die Verfasserin so unvoreingenommen die Frage von Glaube und Rhetorik bei Luther angeht. Unhaltbare Ansichten macht sie zum Gegenstand berechtigter Kritik, und darum erhält das Werk gewissermaßen den Charakter eines—gut gelungenen—Korrekturversuchs. Einiges wird von Stolt zwar eher andeutend behandelt (ich meine vor allem die Zusammenhänge mit der antiken Rhetorik), aber diese Bemerkung soll nur die quantitative Seite der Untersuchung betreffen, keineswegs ihre Qualität. Stolt schreibt schlicht, aber sehr transparent, was es einem Anfänger erleichtert, den Gedankengängen zu folgen. Stolts Buch ist allen, insbesondere Studenten, zu empfehlen, die an Luther interessiert sind, und verdient es unbedingt, von einem breiten Publikum gelesen zu werden.

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