

*13<sup>th</sup> International Columbia School Conference  
on the Interaction of Linguistic Form and Meaning with Human Behavior*

Faculty House  
Columbia University  
New York, NY

In person: January 18 – 20, 2023

Online: January 27, 2023



## **Conference Organizing Committee**

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University of Groningen

Kelli Hesseltine  
The City College of New York, CUNY

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**The generous support of the Columbia University Seminars and of the  
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## **Columbia School Linguistics**

The Columbia School is a group of linguists developing the theoretical framework first established by the late William Diver and his students at Columbia University. Language is seen as a symbolic tool whose structure is shaped both by its communicative function and by the characteristics of its human users. In grammatical analyses, we seek to explain the distribution of linguistic forms as an interaction between hypothesized meaningful signals and pragmatic and functional factors such as inference, ease of processing, iconicity, and the like. In phonological analyses, we seek to explain the syntagmatic and paradigmatic distributions of phonological units within signals, also drawing on both communicative function and human physiological and psychological characteristics. The Columbia School Linguistic Society was founded in 1996 to promote and disseminate linguistic research along these theoretical lines. The Society furthers this goal by sponsoring conferences, institutes, seminars, reading groups, and general scholarly exchange, as well as through our electronic discussion list CSLing and our web site [www.csling.org](http://www.csling.org).

## **Columbia University Seminars**

The Columbia University Seminars bring together professors and other experts, from Columbia and elsewhere, who gather to work on problems that cross disciplinary and departmental boundaries. The Seminars have the additional purpose of linking Columbia with the intellectual resources of the surrounding communities. Since their founding by Frank Tannenbaum in 1944, the University Seminars have provided a means of exchanging, recording, validating and responding to new ideas. As independent entities, the Seminars encourage dialogue and intellectual risks in a culture that is open, innovative, and collaborative, placing them among the best contributions that the University makes to the intellectual community and to the society at large.





## Conference Schedule

### Wednesday, January 18

- 8:30-9:15 Registration and light breakfast
- 9:15-9:30 *Greetings*  
Nancy Stern, Society President and Seminar Co-chair,  
Eduardo Ho-Fernández, Seminar Co-chair
- 9:30-10:00 *The system of Event Attentionworthiness. Configurations with one participant, mentioned and inferred*  
Eduardo Ho-Fernández
- 10:00-10:30 *A Columbia School analysis of the form through*  
Ludmila Novotny
- 10:30-11:00 *On saying how: Towards a monosemic account*  
Andrew McCormick
- 11:00-11:15 Break
- 11:15-11:45 *Teaching Bill French: Comparing a Construction Grammar account of ditransitive clauses with the English System of Degree of Control*  
Nancy Stern
- 11:45-12:15 *"Relación desnivelada": el aporte del significado de la forma de. Una aproximación a partir del contraste de vs. cero*  
Gabriela Bravo de Laguna
- 12:15-12:45 *A meaning hypothesis for English while using journalistic data*  
Joss Sackler
- 12:45-1:45 Lunch
- 1:45-2:45 Keynote Presentation  
*"It all has to click at the end." English verb forms:  
The learning task and the inference of signals*  
Alan Huffman



### Wednesday, January 18, continued

2:45-3:15	Discussant: Eduardo Ho-Fernández Discussion
3:15-3:30	Break
3:30-4:00	<i>The alternation vos vs uno in Argentine Spanish: Semantic differences and generic use</i> Lucía Zanfardini
4:00-4:30	<i>Dime dónde está el ar —: The relevance of lexical stress in Spanish word recognition</i> Daan van Soeren
4:30-4:45	Break
4:45-5:15	<i>The semiotic systems underlying finite verbal morphology in Kolyma Yukaghir</i> Albert Ventayol-Boada
5:15-5:45	<i>Is Columbia School sign-based?</i> Wallis Reid
5:45-6:00	<i>Closing remarks</i> Bob de Jonge
6:00-9:00	Reception and dinner at Faculty House

## Thursday, January 19

- 9:00-9:30 Light breakfast
- 9:30-10:00 *Columbia School Applied Linguistics:  
Teaching Spanish as a foreign language*  
Bob de Jonge
- 10:00-10:30 *Propuestas para la enseñanza de gramática en las aulas de  
Educación Secundaria y Superior de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*  
Dolores Álvarez Garriga & Gabriela Bravo de Laguna
- 10:30-11:00 *Invariancia y variación: El aporte significativo de por  
y la naturaleza de la oposición Involucrada*  
Angelita Martínez
- 11:00-11:15 Break
- 11:15-11:45 *Meaning and human behavior in the teaching of English  
as a second language: "Non-past" forms*  
Verónica Norma Mailhes
- 11:45-12:15 *The need for a new meaning hypothesis for él/ella in Spanish*  
Berenice Darwich
- 12:15-1:15 Lunch
- 1:15-2:30 Keynote Presentation  
*A critique of named languages and the dual repertoire of bilinguals*  
Ofelia García & Ricardo Otheguy
- 2:30-3:00 Discussant: Nancy Stern  
Discussion
- 3:00-3:15 Break



**Thursday, January 19, continued**

- 3:15-3:45            *The construction of the speaker is variable: Shifting between uno ('one') and yo ('I') in Spanish oral and written texts*  
Maria José Serrano
- 3:45-4:15            *LINKED TO THE SPHERE OF SPEECH:*  
*A meaning hypothesis for the Spanish 'present' morpheme*  
Dolores Álvarez Garriga
- 4:15-4:30            Break
- 4:30-5:00            *A detailed investigation into the Assertion of Characterization hypothesis for English with pronouns — a B is a B is a B*  
Kelli Hesseltine
- 5:00-5:30            *An article with a new semantic substance:*  
*Introducing Instantiation*  
Eve Danziger & Ellen Contini-Morava
- 6:00-9:00            Dinner at Le Monde  
2885 Broadway (between 112th Street & 113th Street)



## Friday, January 20

9:00-9:30	Light breakfast
9:30-10:00	<i>Beyond reflexives and emphatics: Literary Chinese reflexive zì as a signal of meaning</i> Ryan Ka Yau Lai
10:00-10:30	<i>Spanish A: An attempt at a Columbia School single-meaning analysis</i> Roxana Risco
10:30-11:00	<i>PAST, BEFORE: The communicative contribution of the English pluperfect</i> Max Miller
11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-12:15	Keynote presentation <i>Columbia School theory: Strengths, limits, and applicability to ESL teaching</i> Patrick Duffley
12:15-12:45	Discussant: Ricardo Otheguy Discussion
12:45	Closing and lunch



## Online Presentations

Friday, January 27

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 10:30-10:40 | Greetings  |
| 10:40-11:00 | <i>Pre-Diverian CS meaning analyses in the service of theological claims</i><br>Nadav Sabar  |
| 11:00-11:20 | <i>To not let it happen or not to let it happen? Corpus-based analysis of negative infinitive alternation in discourse</i><br>Marina Gorlach                             |
| 11:20-11:40 | <i>Reinforcing 'Phonology as Human Behavior':<br/>The case of Urdu as spoken in Bareilly</i><br>Shabana Hameed & Mehvish Moshin  |
| 11:40-12:00 | Discussion   |
| 12:00-12:10 | Break  |
| 12:10-12:30 | <i>Sustancia semántica y distribución: -ra y -se + participio en el discurso de ficción</i><br>Elina Giménez   |
| 12:30-12:50 | <i>The construction of reference with Spanish passive and impersonal reflexives: Specificity and accessibility as dimensions for a taxonomy</i><br>Miguel A. Aijón Oliva |
| 12:50-1:10  | Discussion   |

*The general picture of human language is that of a particular kind of instrument of communication, an imprecise code by means of which precise messages can be transmitted through the exercise of human ingenuity. The code and the ingenuity must be kept clearly separate; most of the difficulties encountered in the various schools of linguistic analysis result, simply, from the attempt to build the ingenuity into the structure of language itself.*

William Diver, 1995, p. 43

*Insight into how the mind 'functions' may presumably be gained from observing under what circumstances it chooses one rather than another (to all referential purposes equivalent) linguistic alternative. There is good psycholinguistic reason, then, to engage in the analysis of syntactic variation.*

Érica García, 1996, p. 2



*The construction of reference with Spanish passive and impersonal reflexives:  
Specificity and accessibility as dimensions for a taxonomy*

Miguel A. Aijón Oliva  
Universidad de Salamanca, Spain

Agent-defocusing constructions differ regarding their referential scope (Siewierska & Papastathi, 2011; Posio, 2015; Aijón Oliva, 2020) and particularly the inclusion vs. exclusion of the direct participants. Spanish passive and impersonal constructions formed with the reflexive clitic *se* are ambiguous in this respect, which makes them a powerful tool for stylistic desubjectivization (Serrano, 2018). From an isomorphic viewpoint, the meaning and function of reflexives are always the same, i.e. the conversion of a transitive event into an internal process – or, in García’s (2009, pp. 67–70) terms, the introversion of the event within its patient. How is it, then, that an agent or experiencer can usually be inferred in *se* clauses, and that this participant can be attributed variable references? It can be assumed that the meaning of a grammatical construction is ‘completed’ contextually thanks to the co-occurrence of linguistic and non-linguistic elements from a variety of semiotic levels.

Based on such premises, this study will analyze the possible referential interpretations of the agent in reflexive clauses in a corpus of news items from the Spanish town of Salamanca. A taxonomy of four referential categories is proposed by combining two dimensions: *specificity vs. non-specificity* (or *genericity*) and *accessibility vs. non-accessibility*. In general terms, the more episodic the event – most clearly with aspectually telic actions – the higher specificity will be attributed to its agent. In turn, accessibility depends on whether the context includes some element aimed at restricting referential interpretation. Such elements act as space builders (Fauconnier, 2014) and their potential relevance has been underlined with regard to other agent-defocusing constructions (e.g. Meulleman & Roegiest, 2012; De Cock, 2018).

The quantitative distribution of referential types is calculated across the different textual sequences. Main news texts have nearly 80% of accessible references, which can be explained as reflecting the requirement for reporters to provide as much information as possible. In turn, readers’ comments have non-specific references, either accessible or not, in more than 90% of the cases. The analysis makes it possible to conclude that the quantitative patterning and contextual uses of the reflexive construction are



undetachable from its invariant syntactic-semantic features, which interact with a range of contextual features for the achievement of different pragmatic goals. This, in turn, supports García's (1985, 2009) vision of grammatical variation as involving not just form but also – and decisively – meaning and function.

## References

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**LINKED TO THE SPHERE OF SPEECH:**  
*A meaning hypothesis for the Spanish 'present' morpheme*

Dolores Álvarez Garriga  
Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina

In this presentation, we want to propose a meaning hypothesis for the Spanish present morpheme, which is found in the verbal structures known as: Presente (*voy - I go*), Futuro Perifrástico (*voy a ir - I'm going to go*) and Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto (*he ido - I have gone*), as well as in other structures that the paradigm does not contemplate but are very frequent too such as '*estoy yendo*' (*I'm going*), '*estoy por ir*' (*I'm about to go*), among others.

Based on the assumption that 1) all these forms share a signal called 'present' and 2) this signal has a unique and constant meaning, we will try to prove that the meaning could be defined as: OPEN or LINKED TO THE SPHERE OF SPEECH, where the SPHERE OF SPEECH is the core which encompasses the 'here, now, I' of each communicative event (Álvarez Garriga, 2019, 2020).

We are considering an oppositional system in which there are forms that are OPEN/LINKED TO THE SPHERE OF SPEECH (structures with present morphemes), and others that are CLOSED/UNLINKED to that SPHERE (verbal forms without present morpheme that alternate with 'LINKED' forms in specific contexts).

During my Columbia School Linguistic Society Fellowship (2020-present), and in dialogue with the Columbia School's conceptualization of time —PAST/NON PAST—, we find this proposal valuable since it focuses on a dimension that involves not only time, but also the space HERE and, in particular, the I of the speech, which, based on our perspective and research, is the most determining element of the system. The challenge is to demonstrate that, in language, this dimension of the I, and the intervention/no intervention of his/her experience, opinion, subjective view, can be codified in language and not simply be an inference derived from a temporal system.



## References

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*Propuestas para la enseñanza de gramática  
en las aulas de Educación Secundaria y Superior de la Provincia de Buenos Aires*

Dolores Álvarez Garriga & Gabriela Bravo de Laguna  
Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina

En concordancia con los fundamentos teóricos de la Escuela Lingüística de Columbia, nuestro trabajo en las aulas intenta ofrecer una mirada del lenguaje como un instrumento único de comunicación, y mostrar la incidencia fundamental que tiene el interés comunicacional de los seres humanos en el diseño de este instrumento (Diver, 2012[1975], 2012[1995]). En este sentido, nuestras prácticas ponen especial énfasis en la idea de que las gramáticas son el resultado de los usos regulares que llevan a cabo los hablantes para lograr sus objetivos comunicativos (García, 1988, 1995) y buscan propiciar, más que la corrección automática y sinsentido que divide lo correcto de lo incorrecto, un diálogo permanente sobre el grado de adecuación de ciertas estructuras lingüísticas para determinados contextos comunicativos.

A partir de estos conceptos, nos proponemos describir una metodología de trabajo para la enseñanza de la gramática en los niveles educativos Secundaria y Superior de las ciudades de La Plata y Mar del Plata de la Provincia de Buenos Aires en los que conviven variedades lingüísticas diversas. Para ello vamos a mostrar estrategias concretas de enseñanza que muestren cómo este abordaje teórico favorece la reflexión metalingüística necesaria para que los estudiantes puedan comprender y revisar los recursos lingüísticos de los que disponen, tanto en el habla como en la escritura, tanto en contextos discursivos formales como informales.

### **Referencias**

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***“Relación desnivelada”: El aporte del significado de la forma de.  
Una aproximación a partir del contraste de vs. cero***

Gabriela Bravo de Laguna  
Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina

Esta presentación forma parte de una investigación mayor cuyo propósito es el estudio del llamado *dequeísmo*, es decir, la inserción de la preposición *de* antes de la forma *que* en la narración de eventos cotidianos en el español rioplatense. En esta oportunidad propongo profundizar el significado básico de la forma *de* postulado en el marco de una beca de Columbia School Linguistic Society: RELACIÓN DESNIVELADA. La presencia de *de* relaciona y desbalancea, es decir, desequilibra la unión entre los elementos. Se vincula con *de* para RELACIONAR DESBALANCEANDO, que tiene que ver con una decisión del hablante de marcar su intención en la instancia comunicativa, intención que tendría que ver con marcar DISTANCIA o PROMINENCIA CONCEPTUAL de uno de los elementos de la relación respecto del otro. El corpus con el que trabajo corresponde al género epistolar: cartas enviadas por combatientes de Malvinas desde las trincheras. Voy a describir el empleo de la forma *de* en diferentes contextos formales y pragmáticos a partir del contraste *de vs. cero* (0) con el propósito de dar cuenta de la frecuencia de uso de las formas lingüísticas para poder así (des)confirmar el significado propuesto a la luz de nuestros datos.





## *An article with a new semantic substance: Introducing Instantiation*

Eve Danziger & Ellen Contini-Morava  
University of Virginia

The Mopan Maya “article” (ART) signals that its associated lexical center, along with any satellites, is to be construed as an entity rather than a predication. For example, the lexical item *winik* ‘man’ is interpreted as ‘a/the man/men’ when preceded by ART, but as ‘be (a/the) man/men’ when inflected with a person/number suffix.

ART can signal entityhood of lexical material that otherwise would not be so construed. For example, the word *nooch* ‘be big’ is usually construed as a predicate, but as an entity when preceded by ART (‘a/the big one(s)'). Similarly, *b'inij yalam kama* without ART would be interpreted as a predication, ‘s/he has gone under the bed’, whereas with ART it describes an entity (‘[the] one who has gone under the bed’).

But there are semantic restrictions on the use of ART. First, its associated lexical center must involve only one participant (i.e. the lexical center must be “intransitive”). ART cannot entitize participants such as ‘the one who ate [it]’ or ‘the one that he ate’.

Second, the entity resulting from co-occurrence with ART must be a non-agentive argument of the associated predicate; it cannot indicate the initiator or controller of the occurrence. For example, when ART is associated with the word *pax* ‘play.music’, the interpretation must be either ‘the music-playing’ or ‘a/the musical instrument’, not e.g. ‘a/the music-player’.

We propose the term “Instantiation” to capture the distribution of Mopan ART. We suggest that ART signals ‘some X that play(s) a non-agentive role with respect to the associated one-participant predicate’. In our analysis, phrases like *a winik* ‘a/the man’ – initially appearing to be simply nouns with a determiner – are cases of instantiation. And an example like *a b'inij yalam kama* ‘the one who had gone under the bed’ is likewise an instantiation and not a “headless relative clause”.





## *The need for a new meaning hypothesis for él/ella in Spanish*

Berenice Darwich

Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

The purpose of this paper is to justify the need to revisit the forms *él/ella* in Spanish.

On the one hand, a critical look at the meaning proposed for these forms by García – i.e. IN-FOCUS, HIGH DEIXIS, THIRD PERSON, SINGULAR and MASCULINE OR FEMENINE<sup>1</sup> – in her seminal work about the pronominal system in Spanish (1975) and its reformulation in subsequent studies (1983, 1996); as well as the discrepancies found between some of the communicative strategies described by García and the use of *él/ella* in naturalistic data (Corpus PRESEEA-Cd. de Mexico) lay the ground for further analysis. For instance, in García (1983) the exploitation of the meanings HIGH DEIXIS (“the force with which the hearer is instructed to seek the referent of the pronoun”, p. 65), “serves to distinguish one given referent from **among many**”<sup>2</sup> (p. 188), especially if the entity that it refers to is **not too obvious** in the discourse, it is **not present** in the interlocutor’s mind and it is **less prominent than others** in the discourse. But there are examples like (1), in which the referential entity, *Dolores Padierna* is obvious in the discourse, there are no mentions to other feminine entity with an administrative position, and it is also in the interlocutor’s mind, as it is the inferred participant in focus in relation to the events ‘to come’ (*vino*) and ‘to be’ (*es*):

- (1) hace creo una semana o dos semanas vino Dolores Padierna aquí al barrio y según esto, esta mujer, ya ves que es delegada ahí en Cuauhtémoc, según *ella*, sus planes son quitar el campo ¿sí sabes que hay un campo de futbol? (Intr. 8)

‘A week or two weeks ago I think came Dolores Padierna here to the neighborhood and according to this, this woman, you see that [she] is the delegate there in the Cuauhtémoc neighborhood, **according to her** (*ella*), her plans are to remove the field, you do know there is a soccer field?’

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<sup>1</sup> For *él* and *ella*, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> All bolds are mine.



On the other hand, taking into account previous studies of Spanish subject expression in co-referential clauses (Darwich, 2016) and Klein-Andreu's analyses of *X-Forms* (1995), as well as Davis' work on Italian *Si* (2017), whose analyses of linguistic forms occur at discourse level, will make more solid the proposal of a new meaning hypothesis for *él/ella* in Spanish.

## References

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*Columbia School theory:  
Strengths, limits, and applicability to ESL teaching*

Patrick Duffley  
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The approach I will defend is in agreement with most of the axioms of Columbia School Theory, *inter alia* that the primary goal of linguistics is to determine the identity of the signal-meaning units in a particular language, that this is done by testing proposed signs against actual usage and showing that a hypothesized meaning makes a constant contribution to every message for which its signal is used, and that the ‘meaning’ of a sentence is not a de-contextual linguistic object that can be represented as a Logical Form, but rather a unique, context-bound, inferentially-derived interpretation made by a particular speaker in a particular communicative situation. Company is parted with the Columbia School however on the following two claims:

1. Language is essentially a communicative system and not a representational system at all.
2. Language is a system “où tout se tient”; linguistic explanation must focus on the binary choices that speakers have.

In the view I will propose, the foundation on which linguistic semantics should be built is the linguistic sign itself, the primary task being to work out an analysis of the mental content attached to the linguistic sign by the language community in which the latter is used. An attempt must be made to come to grips with this mental content for what it is, in and of itself, and not as a presumed member of a binary contrastive system. Examples of the greater explanatory power of explanations based on these principles vis-à-vis Columbia School accounts are proposed. Nevertheless, binary pairs are argued to be an extremely effective tool for teaching the meaning of grammatical forms, as long as one is aware that the overall distinction in basic meaning between two forms being contrasted does not always take the form of a binary opposition.





## *A critique of named languages and the dual repertoire of bilinguals*

Ofelia García & Ricardo Otheguy  
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The naturally occurring linguistic practices of communities usually described as bilingual have inspired a range of innovative pedagogical techniques that have come to be known as *translanguaging*. Translanguaging is maximally coherent when the linguistic repertoire of the speaker who is described as being or becoming bilingual is conceived of as *unitary*, that is, as a single linguistic system rather than two separate ones. In turn, the unitary linguistic system of the so-called bilingual is maximally coherent with the theoretical tenets of Columbia School theory.

The recognition of the unitary character of the bilingual's repertoire starts from the familiar position in linguistics that a language name such as "Arabic" or "English" or "Quechua" does not make reference to a well-defined lexico-structural object but refers rather to a contingent sociocultural invention of contestable boundaries. There are no phonological, lexical, or structural features that on linguistic grounds can be said to belong, or not to belong, to a named language. And there are no speakers who on linguistic grounds can be said to be, or not to be, speakers of any one named language, or of two or three of them. The inclusion of a particular linguistic feature or a particular speaker in a named language is under the care of sociopolitical actors, not linguistic scholars.

From this perspective, the two named languages of the so-called bilingual do not represent a dual cognitive reality. Individual linguistic features exist and are manipulated by the speaker, but they cannot be sorted and placed in two distinct psycholinguistically real compartments. The prefix *bi-* in the word *bilingual* makes reference to a social duality, not a cognitive one.

The failure of U.S. monolingual students to learn other languages and of minoritized bilingual students to achieve academic parity with monolingual students has much to do with misunderstandings regarding the nature of bilingualism that the translanguaging approach seeks to overcome. The approach transforms the conception of language pedagogy. Students in bilingual classrooms or in second- or world-language classrooms are now no longer seen as being in the process of adding a separate named language, but



of incorporating large numbers of new linguistic features into their growing unitary repertoire. Translanguaging classrooms are not spaces where only the so-called target language can legitimately be used, but spaces where students marshal their new linguistic features in interrelationship with their old ones for the purpose of communication. Like speakers everywhere who are said to be bilingual, learners of what is considered an additional language leverage their unitary repertoire to learn and communicate.

Columbia School (CS) theory is uniquely compatible with the unitary approach to the linguistic repertoire of all speakers, including those in bilingual, second- and world-language classrooms. This is so because CS data is naturalistic and its conception of the basic grammatical unit is semiotic rather than sentential. These characteristics allow for the gradual aggregation of signals and meanings into a repertoire, free of the limitations imposed by the conception of utterances as manifestations of underlying sentences, and the resulting conception of the speaker as adhering to, or deviating from, grammaticality requirements that are regularly stated in terms of a named language.

*Sustancia semántica y distribución:  
-ra y -se + participio en el discurso de ficción*

Elina Alejandra Giménez  
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A partir del aporte significativo postulado para las formas *-ra* y *-se*: “grados de confianza del hablante en la oportunidad de ocurrencia” (Martínez, 1993), la presente propuesta tiene por finalidad explicar la distribución del uso del llamado Pretérito Pluscuamperfecto del Modo Subjuntivo, *hubiera* y *hubiese* + participio, en seis novelas de autores latinoamericanos. Ejemplos:

“¡Cuánto más le habría valido al país que estos parásitos de la pluma *hubieran sido* buenos aradores, carpidores, peones en las chacras, en las estancias patrias, no esta plaga de letricidas peores que las langostas!” (Roa Bastos, *Yo el Supremo*).

“Si mi salud *hubiese dependido* de esos pobres yatitases ya me habría curado” (Roa Bastos, *Yo el Supremo*).

En el marco de la presente propuesta se hará referencia, además, a las hipótesis que, en relación con el uso variable de *-ra* y *-se* han postulado Goldberg (1995) y Ruggles (2014). Cartagena (1988) ha afirmado, sobre el uso de ambas formas, que “por tratarse de una variación libre, puede obedecer dentro del mismo registro estilístico a razones casuales de selección.” Sin embargo, una investigación centrada en la observación de corpus genuino y que se apoya en datos cualitativos y cuantitativos (Diver, 2012[1995]), nos permite mostrar que la selección de las formas procede de la adecuación del significado de cada una de ellas a la perspectiva cognitiva del escribiente frente a la escena representada. Cabe señalar que enmarcamos este trabajo en los principios de la Escuela Lingüística de Columbia (Contini-Morava, 1995; Diver, 2012[1995]; Otheguy, 1995; Reid, 1995) y en la perspectiva de García (1985, 1991). Consideramos que los resultados pueden constituir un aporte a la comprobación del significado postulado como así también a la hermenéutica literaria (Diver, 2012[1988]).



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**To not let it happen or not to let it happen?**  
*Corpus-based analysis of negative infinitive alternation in discourse*

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The cognitive complexity of negative meaning underlies the various lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic ways of expressing it in English. This paper discusses the structural expressions of the negative infinitive in various types of discourse, focusing on the alternation between the two forms, *not to VERB* vs. *to not VERB*, as they are distributed across written and spoken texts and correlated with human behavior. The corpus data demonstrate that the so-called split negative infinitive is more frequently used for conveying messages marked for a certain distinctive feature.

This study is aimed at making the connection between the forms and meanings of the negative infinitive constructions, as well as in relation to human behavior and discourse situations.

As per COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) database, the frequency of *to not VERB* constructions is significantly lower than that of *not to VERB* constructions. However, the frequency of *to not VERB* shows a steady growth each decade since 1990, rising from 4.56 per million quotations in 1990-1994 to 9.59 per million in 2010-2015.

The paper explores the relationship between the form and communicative function, as well as the role of the additional lexical and non-lexical devices in generating the negative meaning. This analysis treats the split negative infinitive as a marked item making a claim for the outcome of an action.

- (1) KING: Bob Grant, what can you tell us? GRANT: Well, I would just caution folks *not to lose confidence*. (CNN, 1997)
- (2) After 9/11, U.S. President Bush asked Americans to carry on with their lives, *to not lose confidence*, and to continue spending. (Murray, 2013)



The study takes a closer look at the criteria that go beyond the formal linguistic aspects of language, such as the communicative situation and the human factor (interplay between the interlocutors). As follows from the corpus-based analysis, the distinction between the two constructions is based on the difference in their meaning: the discontinuous negative infinitive is marked for the distinctive feature of result/outcome/endpoint.



*Reinforcing 'Phonology as Human Behavior':  
The case of Urdu as spoken in Bareilly*

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The inclusion of human behavior as an orienting principle for phonological analysis of a language is indeed unique as many phonological skewings like preference for phonological units with fewer number of articulators over those utilizing more articulators or preference for proximate point of articulation instead of a remote one are only some instances where the human factor becomes instrumental in providing explanations for the observed phenomena.

The present paper attempts to highlight more aspects in phonological analysis where human behavior provides justification for the observed phenomena by analysing data collected from Urdu as spoken in Bareilly, a region in Uttar Pradesh in India.

In this paper, we present only two aspects related to the language under study; aperture change and human behavior justification of the phonological processes. The findings of the paper show that large changes of apertures are preferred over small changes of apertures; even among the cluster words, preference is given to those combinations that utilize large changes of apertures. Similarly, it is also found that unidirectional aperture change is preferred over multidirectional change, because human beings prefer movements that need less precision and fineness of coordination among articulators.

Furthermore, in the phonological analysis of Bareilly Urdu, we take up the phonological processes like; addition (eg. zaχm → zaχam), substitution (eg. qõm → kõm) and deletion (eg. keh → ke). Motivated by the fact that deletion is the easiest process, deletion marks the highest frequency followed by substitution and addition. The fundamental axiom underlying the theory is that language represents a struggle between the desire for maximum communication with minimal efforts (human factor).

Finally, it may be noted that this phonological analysis is limited in scope both in the utilization of data and application of aspects related to Bareilly Urdu phonology. The data is limited in that it comprises monosyllabic and selected bisyllabic words only. Furthermore, we have applied the role of human behavior to selected phenomena out of many others pertaining to this orientation.





*A detailed investigation into the Assertion of Characterization hypothesis for English with pronouns — a B is a B is a B*

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Hesseltine & Davis (2020) examine instances of the order of words in English and propose the Assertion of Characterization hypothesis. To communicate an assertion of an entity's characterizing traits, language users employ two different meanings: WEAKER, signaled by the order AB as in *long (A) hair (B)*, and STRONGER, signaled by BA as in *hair (B) long (A)*. The attribution of the characterization is thus made less or more assertively. Expanding on that publication, current work focuses in more granular detail on the use of these meanings in examples where the characterized entity, the B of the signal, is a linguistic form traditionally termed a "pronoun." Although the hypothesis holds regardless of the traditional categorization, one particular aspect of characterized "pronouns," one that marks them as different from other types of characterized entities or Bs, invites this further investigation: pronouns, when characterized by an adjective, occur much more frequently in the order that indicates the STRONGER Assertion of Characterization (BA, e.g., *her lucky, someone special*, vs. AB *lucky her, special someone*). A close look at this subset of Bs makes clear why they skew the way they do.

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*The system of Event Attentionworthiness.  
Configurations with one participant, mentioned and inferred*

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A presentation of qualitative and quantitative evidence supporting the recent formulation of the Spanish grammatical system of Event Attentionworthiness (Fig. 1) in Ho-Fernández (2020) for word order configurations where one participant is both mentioned and inferred (i.e., EP= , P= E).

**Equal sign '=':** co-referential with [participant alluded to by] the verb ending.

**Unequal sign '≠'** not coreferential with [participant alluded to by] the verb ending.

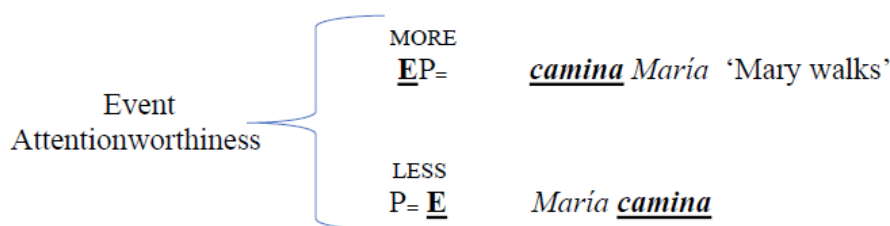


Figure 1. Spanish System of Event Attentionworthiness I: one participant, mentioned (Ho-Fernández 2020)

Contrasts will be drawn against [i] a Spanish grammatical system with word order signals that are similar in form (Fig. 2) as presented in Ho-Fernández (2020) and [ii] the System of Focus in English (Fig. 3) as presented in Huffman (2002). Emphasis will be made regarding differences between the semantic domains Event Attentionworthiness vs. Participant Attentionworthiness, and on the assumption made in the analysis regarding the attention needs of participants vs. events in one-participant events. A brief examination of data extracted from a literary text will be used to illustrate the hypothesis.

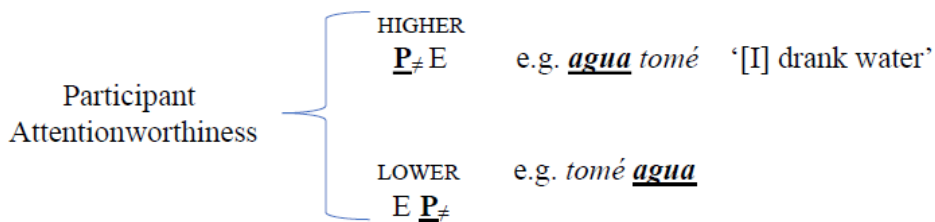


Figure 2. Spanish System of Participant Attentionworthiness II: two participants, one mentioned (Ho-Fernández 2020)



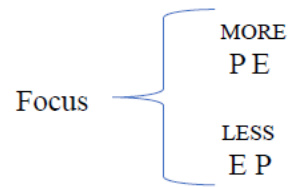


Figure 3. English System of Focus: one participant event (Huffman 2002)

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*"It all has to click at the end."*

*English verb forms: The learning task and the inference of signals*

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Perhaps the most difficult part of English grammar for learners, non-native as well as native, is the English verb, with its profuse roster of forms, both simple and complex, and its accompanying catalog of confusing terminology. One part of the confusion stems from the loose popular use of terminology, for instance, the fact that all the different forms are often lumped together as "tenses", even when their uses and even their traditional names have nothing to do with tense. Another kind of complication is created by the favoring of messages over meanings in the analysis of forms, resulting in an unnecessary multiplication of form categories. Traditional "constructions" like "active", "passive", "progressive", and "perfect" which contain forms like *have*, *be*, and the participles, may actually be analyzed into their separate components, each with its individual meaning; the result is a more accurate representation with far fewer categories to learn. Finally, the traditional approach to basic morphemic analysis, with an insistence on categorizing verbs as "regular" or "irregular", has led to a failure to transmit to English-language learners important keys to mastery of the language.

I will offer a more coherent approach to English verb morphology within a broader consideration of the nature of linguistic signaling. Like meanings, which offer sparse semantic hints to inferred messages, signals provide sparse **acoustic hints** which are bolstered by heavy doses of inference. Starting from the notions of *satellite cluster*, *primary signal*, and *secondary signal*, I will offer a small extension of Diver's taxonomy of signals to include satellite-center status and lexical-class association as potential elements of signals, consistent with his view that the Human Factor profoundly influences the nature and deployment of grammatical signals. In this scenario, the task of learning English verb forms is comparable to that of learning noun genders in languages with grammatical gender, and an innovative meaning hypothesis for the familiar suffix *-ed* is suggested.







*Columbia School Applied Linguistics:  
Teaching Spanish as a foreign language*

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Columbia School of Linguistics (CSL) in its present form is not very suitable to be applied to language teaching in educational realms. For example, semantic substances like 'Degree of control' (García, 1975; Huffman, 1997) are rather difficult to be converted into instruction rules for actual language use, which are common in situations of, for example, foreign language teaching. If, on the other hand, explanation is one of the fundamental concepts of language theory (Diver, 2012), and explanation is an essential concept in all teaching, then CS theory should be the ideal candidate for application in the educational realm.

In this presentation, it will be shown how a CS perspective can be used for foreign language instruction (FLI). A fundamental principle, taken from CSL, that should be adopted in the construction of a grammar course for any particular language should be the non a priori adoption of traditional grammatical categories such as subject, object, or word classes, but rather the objective observation of the linguistic sign and its distribution, taking the linguistic form seriously. Moreover, each form should in principle have one and the same meaning.

Examples will be given from teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language. The pronoun system serves as a good example to show the irrelevance of traditional categories for the understanding of the distribution of the forms *se, le, lo*, (cf. also García, 1975 and García & Otheguy, 1983). Also, typical problems in teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, like the difference in meaning between *ser* and *estar* 'to be' (de Jonge, 2003) may benefit from this approach, just like the meaning and use of simple past tenses (de Jonge, 2000, 2019), and the subjunctive vs. indicative mood (de Jonge, 2004). The challenge of this undertaking is the application of these semantic substances into understandable categories that may be explained to students.



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*Beyond reflexives and emphatics:  
Literary Chinese reflexive zì as a signal of meaning*

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Traditionally, linguists often assume a distinction between *reflexive pronouns* (typically arguments), which mark coreference between two noun phrases, and *emphatics* (typically adjuncts or appositives), which emphasize the identity of a referent, even though they frequently take on the same form, e.g. *self*-forms in English. More recently, however, many linguists have argued that these two uses are pragmatically connected (Levinson, 1991; Ariel, 2008), often not clearly distinguishable (König & Siemund, 2000), and do not cover all uses of forms like English *self*-forms (Stern, 2004).

This presentation develops these points through a novel analysis of Literary Chinese reflexive *zì*, based primarily on the texts *Zhàn Guó Cè* and *Shìshuō Xīnyǔ*. Firstly, I show that *zì* serves several functions in the message: signalling coreference between the subject and the object, the object's possessor or the topic or focus of a complement clause, emphasizing that the subject's identity, and indicating that the event affected the subject itself or had no external cause. By looking into several criteria (indispensability to referential meaning, unique coding, presence of a contrasting referent), I argue against the traditional categorization (Chéng, 1999; Dǒng, 2002) of these uses into reflexive and emphatic uses.

I then propose that the various uses can be given a unified meaning as follows: *zì* is used when the referent is centrally relevant to the event denoted by the predicate by virtue of being its ultimate causer or affectee; coreferential with the participant with the most control in the event; and where the event evokes (a) different possible event(s) where the referent of *zì* plays a different role than in the actual event being expressed. I compare my account to properties of reflexives in other languages like English, and argue that *zì* partially supports Levinson's (1991) theory of the development of anaphoric reflexives from emphatics.



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*Meaning and human behavior in the teaching of English as a second language:  
"Non-past" forms*

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The Forms that have traditionally been called Present and Future in the English language alternate in speech. This is an issue that L2 teachers face when teaching English to students who, in general, do not realize when they can (must) use each form to refer to non-past events, as beginner-students do not have intuition or emotions about that L2.

Example: "We **are going to fix** our inner cities and **rebuild** our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals. We **re going to rebuild** our infrastructure, which **will become**, by the way, second to none. And we **will put** millions of our people to work as we **rebuild** it." (Trump, 2016)

This presentation is based on CS thinking which distinguishes meaning from message (Diver, 1975). It offers a cognitive rationale with the stated meanings, both for the simple forms and for the periphrasis: control & no-control over the occurrence of the event by the speaker (Martínez & Mailhes, 2012, 2019; Mailhes, 2016, 2021).

Following the conviction that "meaning serves as an explanation for the occurrence of signs in communication" (Crupi, n.d., p. 18) and that "explicit knowledge of forms and their meanings can usefully guide the practice of teachers and, potentially, the performance of learners" (Davis, 2015, p. 1), a class experience has been carried out. It consists in a didactic sequence resorting to intra-speaking linguistic variation based on the meaning of the form as a facilitating methodology for L2 teaching and learning English as L2 with Argentine students from Universidad Nacional de La Matanza (Mailhes et. al., 2019).

The results show that linguistic theory helps to teach more effectively (Crupi, n.d., p. 1) and that meaningful grammar (Davis & Rodríguez-Bachiller, 2004) provides teachers with a resource that facilitates the L2 teaching and learning process whereas students achieve a higher learning performance by understanding the relationship between meaning and message.



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*Invariancia y variación:*  
*El aporte significativo de por y la naturaleza de la oposición involucrada*

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Desde la perspectiva de la Escuela Lingüística de Columbia (Diver, 2012[1995]), la distribución sintagmática de las formas puede ser explicada por el valor paradigmático de las mismas. Si nos comprometemos en demostrar que un significado invariante (e impreciso) no sólo subyace sino, también, motiva la variación (García, 1991, p. 33), se nos brinda la posibilidad de explicar diferencias de distribución entre variedades de la misma lengua, en tanto un mismo significado puede dar lugar a explotaciones diferentes, a la luz del contexto paradigmático en el que se aplica.

Proponemos reflexionar sobre la postulación del significado de la forma *por* con el propósito de explicar la distribución que hallamos en emisiones del español hablado por paraguayos frente a la observada en el español rioplatense. Analizamos el empleo de *por* en contraste con el empleo de *de*, para introducir acerca de quién se habla, en medios de comunicación gráfica del Paraguay, donde se ha registrado la selección de *por* como relativamente predominante (Granda, 1979):

- (1) Tantas cosas dijo *por mí* ¿Y por qué? ¿Por qué ofenderme tanto si supuestamente ella no tiene nada que ver con él? (Epa! 11 de mayo de 2016)  
(So many things he has said about me (por mí). Why should I feel offended when she supposedly has nothing to do with him?)
- (2) Y ya te imaginarás todo lo que dijo *de mí* en su radio, pero te juro que yo no le conocía. (Epa! 1 de abril de 2016)  
(And you can imagine everything he has said about me (de mí) on his radio, but I swear I didn't know him.)

Partimos de una hipótesis de significado de *por*, como categoría de una sustancia semántica de espacialidad, que intentamos (des)confirmar (tomando en cuenta la naturaleza oposicional del valor lingüístico) al identificar si la variante resulta —cómo y por qué— de la interacción del contexto y del significado invariante postulado.



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## *On saying how: Towards a monosemic account*

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While traditional grammarians and generativists have posited multiple categories for the form *how*, this project aims to show that its distribution is more successfully accounted for within the Columbia School (CS) framework. Adopting CS's monosemic bias (Reid, 2004), we argue that *how* has an invariant meaning. This meaning lies in its contrast with the other *wh*-words. All of the *wh*-words signal that some kind of additional information (Elaboration) is pertinent to the ongoing discourse. While the pertinent type of Elaboration signaled by the other *wh*-words is fairly specific (PERSON, LOCATION, TIME, ENTITY and REASON), in the case of *how*, the relevant Elaboration is simply OTHER. In other words, *how* is the residual member (Diver, 2012[1978]); it means that the relevant Elaboration is not about a person, location, time, etc.

The claim that *how* is the residual member of a grammatical system finds support in the heterogeneous variety of messages to which it contributes. As Diver (2012[1978]) argued, the residual member, in signaling a meaning which is oppositional in nature, will naturally contribute to a "bewildering variety" of messages. Consistent with Diver's argument, *how* contributes not only to messages of manner (probably the form's most stereotypical interpretation [Ruhl, 1989]), but also to messages of degree, personal perspective, and characterization/assessment.

We argue that the traditional categories proposed for *how* reflect the mistake of attributing to the linguistic system what are in fact contextual interpretations arising from the use of that system (Diver, 2012[1975]). *How* can be interpreted in ways that coincide, although only partially and imprecisely, with categories of the tradition such as degree and manner. However, its meaning, Elaboration (OTHER) Is Relevant, is invariant.

Evidence for this analysis includes attested examples drawn from two full-length novels, O'Brien (1990) and Roth (1982), as well as data from COCA, including quantitative tests similar to those carried out in recent CS scholarship (Sabar, 2018).



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**PAST, BEFORE:**  
*The communicative contribution of the English pluperfect*

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We examine the difference between the English Time meanings PAST (e.g. *showed*) and PAST, BEFORE (e.g. *had shown*). Our hypothesis is that the PAST meaning is used to portray an occurrence as having happened to the left of (i.e., earlier than) the moment of speaking (or writing) of the traditional, one-dimensional timeline. Our hypothesis also states that the PAST, BEFORE is used to portray an occurrence that is to the left of the moment of speaking on the timeline, *and* is to the left of another later, past time. (Thus, we find an opposition of inclusion between these two meanings.) This later past time, denoted  $t_R$  (reference time), serves as a tethering point for the PAST, BEFORE event. Using the PAST, BEFORE meaning suggests that that event “is somehow relevant” to its reference time (Huffman, 1989, p. xiii) (as opposed to the PAST, which makes no such claim). The PAST, BEFORE event and its reference time have *some* relationship, according to the author, though the nature of that relationship is not specified. Data primarily taken from John McPhee’s *The Pine Barrens* (1967), but also from various other sources, is used to support our hypothesis.

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## *A Columbia School analysis of the form through*

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My aim is to explain why speakers choose to use the word *through* every time they do so, following the Columbia School framework (Davis, 2004; Diver, 1995; Diver, 2012[1975]; Huffman, 2001, 2006; Stern, 2019). While other authors have analyzed *through* as a homonymous or a polysemous word (see e.g. Benom, 2015; Dirven, 1993; Dixon, 2022, Chapter 11; Evans & Tyler, 2004; Gilquin & McMichael, 2018; Heaton, 1965; Hilferty, 1999; Lee, 1998, 2001; Tyler & Evans 2003, Chapter 7), I propose that *through* has only one, sparse meaning rather than several specific meanings. The various interpretations associated with the use of *through* are the result of inferences made by language users on the basis of the relevant linguistic and extralinguistic context.

My analysis (Novotny, 2022) is based on a corpus of six contemporary American novels and sets out to show that the meaning SUCCESSION OF POINTS IN A THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE successfully accounts for the distribution of *through*. To support my hypothesis, I provide qualitative explanations for the reasons behind the choice of *through* in a variety of contexts, and contrast contexts in which *through* is used with comparable contexts in which another form (*along*, *across*, *over*, or *during*) is rather chosen. In addition, I confirm predictions that certain contextual elements tend to co-occur with *through* (or a compared form) because their contribution to the communication is partially redundant or shares similarities with the contribution of the relevant form. The regular correlation between the use of these contextual elements and the choice of *through* or another form (*along*, *across*, *over*, *during*) serves as more objective support for my qualitative explanations about *through*.

Findings derived from my qualitative and quantitative analysis support that *through* is a monosemic form, and its distribution is explained by the meaning SUCCESSION OF POINTS IN A THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE.



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*The acquisition of sonority plateau clusters in child Greek:  
Evidence from typically and atypically developing Greek-speaking children*

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This study investigates the acquisition of plateau sonority clusters in typical and atypical child Greek. Little is known regarding the acquisition of these clusters. A previous study in typical child Greek shows that reductions of plateau sonority clusters is POA driven, i.e. the consonant with the more marked place feature is preserved (Kappa, 2019, proposed place hierarchy: DOR >> LAB >> COR; >>: more marked). In this study, based on data from typically developing Greek-speaking children (ages: 1;10-3;03) and atypically developing Greek-speaking children diagnosed with Developmental Language Disorder (ages: 4-5 years), we show that the clusters of plateau sonority are reduced to the rightmost cluster member, i.e. the rightmost consonant is preserved and the leftmost one is deleted. We argue that cluster acquisition is based on headedness and constituency and that children have adult-like cluster representations. Specifically, it is claimed that plateau sonority clusters are represented as appendix-head sequences. Thus, reduction results in the realization of the head of the target cluster. The preservation of the head reflects a grammatical requirement, i.e. the head as the fundamental constituent of the target cluster should be in correspondence between the input and the output form. Consequently, the plateau clusters are reduced irrespective of i) the sonority, ii) the degree of markedness of the place feature of the cluster members, iii) the perceptual prominence of the syllable with the cluster, namely POSITIONAL FAITHFULNESS (Beckman, 1998) is irrelevant, and perceptually prominent positions, i.e. initial/stressed syllables, are treated equally with perceptually non-prominent ones, i.e. non-initial/unstressed syllables.



## DATA

(1)	Target	Output	Gloss	Child
<b>Atypical</b>				
a.	ði.a.'ko.ptis	ði.a.'ko.tis	breaker	EIP
b.	o.fθal.'mi.a.tros	o.θal.'mi.a.tros	eye doctor	EIP, MAN
c.	e.kti.po.'tis	e.ti.po.'tis	printer	EIP, NIK
d.	a.'mi.ɣða.la	a.'mi.ða.la	almond	NIK
<b>Typical</b>				
e.	a.'vya	a.'ɣa	eggs	SPI
f.	tra.'kter	ka.'tel	tractor	SPI
g.	e.li.'ko.pte.ro	a.'ko.te.lo	helicopter	DIM
h.	'po.ðja	'po.ja	feet	DIM

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## *Is Columbia School sign-based?*

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Is Columbia School a version of *sign-based* linguistics? This question is important because it determines how signals should be defined. Moreover the issue is currently relevant because recently there have emerged two well-articulated answers within the CS community. My answer is that CS is sign-based in spirit, but morpheme-based in practice. I offer two examples of morpheme-based CS analyses, one mine, one Diver's, and show what the sign-based versions would look like. My case for the sign-based versions is based on Diver's 1979 article "Phonology as Human Behavior". There Diver sketches out the CS theoretical framework with a focus on *scientific explanation*. He begins with a statement of the initial, directly-observable phenomenon that is CS's ultimate object of explanation, namely the acoustic asymmetry of speech. All subsequent constructs are then designed to explain that phenomenon in terms of communication and general principles of human behavior. I will argue that signs explain the acoustic asymmetry of speech better than do morphemes. This is because signs directly map onto the sound of speech whereas morphemes do not.





## *Spanish A: An attempt at a Columbia School single-meaning analysis*

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Traditional approaches to Spanish *a* have emphasized its polysemy, but they have also discussed: whether *a* has meaning at all (c.f. López, 1972, p. 129; Seco, 1972, p. 198); whether the grammar itself provides several meanings (RAE, 2009, §1.4.1b); and what are the structural semantic relations *a* establishes with the so-called prepositional system (c.f. Cifuentes, 1996, p. 175-180; Luque, 1973; Morera, 1988, p. 145-212; Náñez, 2006, p. 10-11;). Prescriptive treatises offer lists of uses of Spanish *a* that could be considered lists of message types (c.f. Alcina Franch & Blecua, 1979; Alonso & Henríquez Ureña, 1981[1938]; Fernández López, 1999, p. 55-73; García Yebra, 1998; López, 1972; RAE, 2014; etc.). The lists frequently contain more than twenty different entries, demonstrating the difficulty in conceiving of Spanish *a* as a sign (in the Columbia School sense of the term).

The purpose of the meaning hypotheses advanced in this presentation, in line with the theoretical perspective of the Columbia School of Linguistics (Contini-Morava, 1995; Diver, 1995; Huffman, 2001; Huffman & Davis, 2012; Otheguy & Shin, 2022; Reid, 2018; Stern, 2019), is to explain why speakers and writers choose the form *a* in utterances such as the following:

- Juan fue *a* París ‘John went to Paris’
- El médico más cercano estaba *a* dos días ‘The nearest doctor was two days away’
- Juan vive *a* café con leche ‘John lives on caffe latte’
- Juan le dio el libro *a* María ‘John gave the book to Maria’ or
- Jugaron *a* las damas ‘They played checkers’) *vs.* Jugaron las damas ‘The ladies played’

From the perspective of Columbia School, the meanings of signs such as *a* are tools available to the user for communication purposes. The tool is sometimes visible in the message, and sometimes it is not. Columbia School sees the tool as a means of resolving communication problems. The meaning we pose for *a* is: POINT-LIKE LOCATION AT WHICH. This meaning helps the hearer figure out the relation between what comes before and after *a*, so that whatever the relational message feature that Spanish *a* is responsible for (as helping inferential connections of direction, location, recipient, goal, inception, and relatedness), it is always highlighting the relation to a point. This point can be a physical or a non-physical one, with the speaker relying on the familiar cognitive metaphor that projects physical objects to abstractions of various kinds.



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## *Pre-Diverian CS meaning analyses in the service of theological claims*

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For my talk I would like to present two meaning analyses found in Jewish thought, each put forth to counter a popular false theological claim held at its time.

The first set of meaning analyses is presented by Maimonides in his work *Guide for the perplexed* (1190) to counter a popular view which associated some physical attributes to God. Maimonides firmly maintains God as a wholly non-physical being. He therefore finds himself responsible to explain how it is that the holy scriptures repeatedly refer to God using physical attributes, e.g., God “sits” or “stands”, etc. Maimonides lists each and every physical attribute associated with God, and shows for each and every one that the same lexeme is also used in the holy scriptures in a similarly non-physical, metaphorical, sense in *other* contexts, that is contexts unrelated to God. Maimonides then shows that the metaphorical connections found in other contexts fit exactly the messages observed when these lexemes are used with reference to God. This supports the claim that the holy scriptures never intend that we associate any physical attribute to God. A special analysis is devoted to the verse in Genesis that asserts that Man is made in the *image* of God. The Hebrew Bible has two distinct lexemes that can be translated to English *image*: there is *Zelem* – the word used here in the verse, and there is *Dmut*. Maimonides demonstrates that *Zelem* consistently concerns the *essence* of the thing, it is something conceptual and non-material, whereas the form *dmot* alone consistently concerns physical appearances. The verse then likens Man to God only in Man’s non-physical essence as a thinking or a conscious mind.

The second meaning analysis is offered by Professor Umberto Cassuto’s (1941) *The Documentary Hypothesis* to counter the documentary hypothesis. The Documentary hypothesis asserts that the *Torah*, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, were written by about four different sources at different historical periods. One of the most important pieces of evidence in support of the documentary hypothesis was the fact that the Torah uses different names to refer to God, primarily: *yehova*, *Elohim* and *yehova Elohim* (the two names combined). The very first chapters of Genesis already display all three sequences, having lead supporters of the documentary hypothesis to propose a “cut and paste” later-date editor of Genesis. Cassuto by contrast offers a meaning hypothesis for each of



these names, clearly differentiating between them semantically. He then explains the distribution of the names, including the combined variant, consistently throughout the book of Genesis with his proposed meanings.

Both Maimonides and Cassuto seem to have displayed deep linguistic understandings of the Diverian mind.

## *A meaning hypothesis for English while using journalistic data*

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This study aims to provide a monosemic analysis for the English form *while*. Tradition has labeled *while* a conjunction with multiple meanings ranging from temporality (e.g. 'I read a magazine *while* I waited') to contrast (e.g. '*While* respected, he is not liked'). Existing literature has referred to *while* as a causative subordinator, an adversative connector, and a coordinating conjunction among other names. The research questions guiding this analysis are twofold: 1) why do speakers choose to use the form *while* in English language use; and 2) why do speakers choose *while* instead of other so-called contrastive subordinator forms *whereas* and *although*.

This paper puts forward a signal-meaning hypothesis, which includes the linguistic sign *while* and the semantic substance DEGREE OF SUBJECTIVITY. The data collected for this analysis (following the work of Grieve et al., in press) is comprised of all tokens of the form *while* occurring in a corpus of 37 articles authored by former *New York Times* journalist Jayson Blair. These 37 articles were later corrected on the record due to evidence of deception, fabrication and plagiarism. The qualitative and quantitative data indicate that the form *while* is often used to communicate messages of opinion. It is therefore argued that *while* is a linguistic form likely to be used by authors in journalistic data when the messages being communicated are particularly anchored in subjectivity, perspective and even falsehood rather than factual evidence.







*The construction of the speaker is variable:  
Shifting between uno ('one') and yo ('I') in Spanish oral and written texts*

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In this paper it will be shown that the Spanish first-person singular paradigm and the third-person singular pronoun *uno* ('one') may coexist in the same context and be considered morphosyntactic variants, those being understood as meaningful choices. The basic discursive-cognitive meaning of the grammatical singular first person (represented by the pronouns *yo* and *me/a mí*) may be paraphrased as *the speaker*. As for *uno* ('one'), it is a pronoun conjugated mandatorily in third person, which categorically allows inferring a human (singular or plural) referent. More specifically, the speaker's experience is in the background of the use of *uno* and that strongly conditions its reading. For that reason, its variation with first-person singular *yo* and its paradigm is expectable. See the following examples:

- a) *Yo me levanto temprano por las mañanas* ('I get up early in the morning')
- b) *Uno se levanta temprano por las mañanas* ('One gets up early in the morning')

In example (a) the reference undoubtedly encodes the speaker, who is talking about his/her experience, whereas the reference of (b) may also be the speaker. Such a shift has some meaningful consequences; the content of the utterance with *uno* ('one'), as it is formulated in the third person and detached from the personal scope of the speaker, gives rise to a generic or universal reading. What is more, since its referent is less salient than that of the first-person singular, it turns to be a desubjectivizing resource. Given that both choices are often possible in analogous discursive contexts, the analysis will focus on the discursive viewpoint that such choices build. This investigation will be based on oral and written texts extracted from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA). From these we obtained 497 cases of the first-person singular and 288 of *uno*. These texts make it possible to examine the use of the first-person singular paradigm and the pronoun *uno* under a variety of discursive and pragmatic conditions.





*Dime dónde está el ar—:*  
*The relevance of lexical stress in Spanish word recognition*

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According to Diver (2012[1979]) the beginnings and ends of words are not equal in their communicative importance. In Spanish utterance (1) it is very likely that the last word will be *café* 'coffee', as the first two phonemes /ka—/ eliminate most possibilities. The word end is therefore more redundant for word recognition.

- (1) Me gustaría una taza de ca—.  
*I would like a cup of co—.*

Importantly, this phenomenon can account for the distribution of phonemes. The beginnings of words play a more important role in word recognition, and thus word-initial position has a higher burden on distinctiveness than the more redundant word end. This can account, for instance, for the favouring of labials in word-initial position (in many languages, Tobin, 1997); they have a communicative advantage as they can be heard *and seen*.

However, Van Soeren (2022) suggests that in addition to phonemes (e.g. /ar—/), prosodic information (stress) is also relevant in word recognition, which begs the question to what extent stress inhibits candidates in the recognition process. I therefore executed an experiment in which Spanish participants heard utterances ending with either a stressed or an unstressed word fragment over their headset (e.g. /áṙ—/ or /ar—/) after which a complete word (or non-word) appeared on a screen, and they needed to decide whether the word existed or not. Response times were recorded for words that matched with the fragment (e.g. stressed /áṙ—/ for /árko/) versus words that mismatched in the position of stress (e.g. unstressed /aṙ—/ for /árko/). According to my results, fully matching words showed quicker response times, which suggests that stress inhibits mismatching words in the word recognition process. Language users thus seem sensitive to *all relevant acoustic information*, an insight that advances our understanding of functional phonology.



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*Teaching Bill French: Comparing a Construction Grammar account of ditransitive clauses with the English System of Degree of Control*

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Linguists working in a number of functionalist frameworks agree that languages can be understood as systems of form-meaning pairs. This paper compares the Columbia School approach (Diver, 1995) with a Construction Grammar analysis of what is traditionally called the English ditransitive construction (Goldberg, 1995, 2006).

The Columbia School analysis that addresses this phenomenon is the English System of Degree of Control (Diver, 1984; Huffman, 2009; Reid, 2011; Stern, 2018). Its central claim is that the positions of participants in relation to the event signal the relative degree of Control that each of those participants has over that event, where Control can also be understood as degree of participation or involvement. These positional signals are sparse but invariant: the first participant (before the event) is hypothesized to be a signal of HIGHER Degree of Control; the participant named after the event signals a MID Degree of Control, and the second participant after the event a LOWER Degree.

In Goldberg's Construction Grammar analysis, the ditransitive construction is defined as Subj V Obj Obj2 with the meaning X causes Y to receive Z (1995, p. 50). Goldberg makes several observations about the use of this construction. For instance, she notes that in utterances like *Mary taught Bill French* and *Mary showed her mother the photograph*, the activity (*teaching, showing*) must be successful. I will show that this observation is explained by the meanings hypothesized by the Control System, as the completion of the activity follows from the fact that the participant after the verb has been signaled to have a relatively active degree of participation in the event. Additional attested examples will be reviewed to show how the meanings of the English Control System are exploited by speakers to achieve their communicative goals in ways that are not predicted by the Construction Grammar analysis.



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## *The semiotic systems underlying finite verbal morphology in Kolyma Yukaghir*

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Finite verb morphology in Kolyma Yukaghir (Yukaghiric; Russia) has a four-way distinction from which language users choose when making an assertion: *-l*, *-ja*, *-ma*, *-ma#* (Krejnovič, 1982; Maslova, 1997, 2003, 2008; Nagasaki, 2010, 2018). These forms are said to represent the grammaticalization of the “information structure status” of core participants (Nikolaeva, 2005, p. 301) and are classified according to valency alternations and as to whether they highlight the predication. This description, however, fails to account for a significant number of utterances in spontaneous discourse, since examples of intransitive verbs with two participants are attested and transitive verbs do occur with a single participant. My analysis of the monologic texts collected by Nikolaeva in the late 20th century (Nikolaeva & Mayer, 2004) rather shows that the choice among the four finite verb forms is sensitive to subtle discourse factors and, thus, can be best understood as signaling different degrees of attentionworthiness (Diver & Davis, 2012).

In order to investigate what semiotic systems might be at play, I ran an unsupervised machine learning algorithm with linguistic features that have been shown to correlate with different degrees of attentionworthiness. These include the number of (overt) participants in the event (Huffman, 2001; Diver & Davis, 2012), the persons involved (Contini-Morava, 1983), aspect (Reid, 1976; Gorup, 1987), and polarity (Diver, 2012[1969]). The preliminary results show that aspect and polarity contribute to the least to the model, whereas the number of overt participants and the persons involved in the event contribute the most. However, these two are highly intertwined and reveal a somewhat unexpected pattern: two-participant events with two third persons behave differently from any other event. These results thus prompt the question as to what the discourse relevance of these events is to be signaled differently from single-participant events and two-participant events with a speech-act participant.



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*The alternation vos vs uno in Argentine Spanish:  
Semantic differences and generic use*

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In this presentation, we show an analysis of the distribution of *vos* and *uno* in generic use through a corpus composed of in-depth interviews with speakers of the Patagonian variety of Spanish (Argentina). For example, cases such as: “*uno* no alcanzaba a ver todo lo que se venía” and “*vos* no sabías dónde mirar” were considered. This research is inspired by the principles of the Columbia School of Linguistics (Contini-Morava, 1995; Diver, 2012; Huffman, 1997; Reid, 1991); and more specifically as worked out by García (1985, 1995) in relation to linguistic variation as a key phenomenon to understand language use. We propose that the basic meaning of the form *vos* is “reference to the hearer” and its exploitation, as generic, is “(some)one like you”. On the other hand, the basic meaning that we postulate for *uno* is “one (not plural)” and the generic exploitation in the message is “someone like me”. In this communication, based on the postulated meanings, we analyze the influence of three parameters: the persistence of the form in the immediate context, the tense they co-occur with and the case in which they appear. The results indicate that the three factors influence the relative frequency of use of *vos* and *uno*. We conclude that the alternation in the use of these forms responds to the communicative needs of the speaker to explain different ways of extrapolating their experience: s/he uses *vos* when s/he intends to generate empathy in the listener and selects *uno* when s/he tries to blur his/her (self) reference.

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