



OCTOBER 4-5, 2018

UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ  
MADRID - SPAIN

SPIRIM Research Project (FFI2015-63497-P)

FUNCTIONAL  
CATEGORIES  
& SEMANTIC  
MISMATCHES

## MISM4TCHES 2018

October 4-5. Universidad de Alcalá  
SPIRIM Research Project (FFI2015-63497-P)

There are expressions whose interpretation seems to bring in additional content which, in principle, is not part of the semantics of any of the units that make them up, as in *Peter began the book*, interpreted as 'Peter began [reading / writing /...] the book'. This constitutes a challenge for compositional approaches, since the expected isomorphism between syntactic structure and semantic structure is absent.

At the core of this phenomenon is a mismatch in the semantic features of some of the units that are composed together. The clash, however, does not lead to ungrammaticality, but triggers an interpretive operation designed to restore compatibility, by adding the content required to adjust the semantic features that are at play.

The best-known proposals related to these phenomena have focused on mismatches that affect lexical-conceptual content. Among the notions that have been applied to explaining how these processes are resolved are those of *type-shift* and *type mismatch*, particularly since Partee & Rooth (1983) and Partee (1987, 2003, 2007); *fitting operations* take place to resolve these conflicts, and allow semantic composition to follow the usual patterns (Winter 2007). From a somewhat different theoretical standpoint, the notion of *coercion* has been developed, especially after work such as de Swart (1998, 2003, 2011).

The goal of this workshop is to tackle those cases in which at least one of the conflicting features encodes grammatical or procedural meaning. Among these are the functional projections responsible for reference assignment in the nominal and verbal domains (classifiers, determination, quantification, tense, mood, aspect, evidentiality), for the manifestation of information structure (topics, foci), and for individualising propositional attitude and illocutionary force information. Most significantly, adjustment operations are, in many respects, systematic and predictable, and do not have the strong contextual dependency that characterises conversational pragmatic processes, which suggests that the interpretive processes are partially governed by grammatical features.

The core questions we intend to focus on include the following:

- Under what conditions are non-matching feature combinations allowed?
- Between which units, and levels of representation, are mismatches legitimated?
- What are the status and properties of the operations for restoring mismatches?
- What are the limits and limitations of these processes?
- What are the implications and consequences of mismatch resolution processes for linguistic theory in general, and for the semantics/pragmatics interface in particular?
- What are the consequences and implications of mismatch resolution for language acquisition and learning?
- What do these processes tell us about the way in which human cognition represents and manages meaning?

## ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Victoria Escandell-Vidal (UNED)  
Manuel Leonetti (UAH)  
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Edita Gutiérrez Rodríguez (UCLM)

The workshop is organised by the research project SPIRIM (The Semantics/Pragmatics Interface and the Resolution of Interpretive Mismatches) FFI2015-63497-P, with the support of the SigGram Network

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Oliver Bott (U. Tübingen)  
M. Teresa Espinal (UAB)  
Maria Mercedes Piñango (Yale)  
Louis de Saussure (U. Neuchâtel)  
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Leopoldo Labastia (U. Comahue)  
Elena Vilinbakhova (U. St Petersburg)

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Oliver Bott (U. Tübingen)  
M. Teresa Espinal (UAB)  
Maria Mercedes Piñango (Yale)  
Louis de Saussure (U. Neuchâtel)

## VENUE

Universidad de Alcalá (UAH) Palacio de San Ildefonso  
Plaza de San Diego:  
Sala de conferencias internacionales

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# MISM4TCHES OCT 4th

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00-11:00 | REGISTRATION                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 11:00-11:30 | OPENING SESSION                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 11:30-12:10 | Gabriela BILBIIE (U. Bucharest) and Israel DE LA FUENTE (U. Lille-STL CNRS):<br><i>Mismatches and ellipsis: an experimental approach to prodrop in Romance Gapping</i>                      |
| 12:10-13:10 | INVITED SPEAKER. Oliver BOTT (U. Tübingen):<br><i>Aspectual coercion from a cross-linguistic perspective</i>                                                                                |
| 13:10-15:00 | LUNCH                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 15:00-15:40 | Eva KLINGVALL (U. Lund) and Fredrik HEINAT (Linnaeus U.):<br><i>Referential mismatches – complement set reference</i>                                                                       |
| 15:40-16:20 | Benoît LECLERCQ (U. Lille):<br><i>Mismatch, coercion and procedural meaning: Insights from Construction Grammar and Relevance Theory</i>                                                    |
| 16:20-17:00 | Aoife AHERN (UCM), Jose AMENÓS-PONS (UCM) and Pedro GUIJARRO-FUENTES (UIB):<br><i>To what extent is evidentiality encoded in the Spanish tenses? Evidence from L1/L2 Spanish and French</i> |
| 17:00-17:30 | COFFEE BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 17:30-18:30 | INVITED SPEAKER. Louis DE SAUSSURE (U. Neuchâtel):<br><i>Some pragmatic reasons for semantic temporal mismatches.</i>                                                                       |
| 18:30-19:30 | GUIDED TOUR UNIVERSITY                                                                                                                                                                      |



# MISM4TCHES OCT 5th

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09:00-09:40 | Victoria ESCANDELL-VIDAL (UNED):<br><i>Mismatches and aspect-preserving reinterpretations</i>                                                                                                        |
| 09:40-10:20 | Silvia GUMIEL-MOLINA, Norberto MORENO-QUIBÉN and Isabel PÉREZ-JIMÉNEZ (UAH):<br><i>A non-coercion account of minimizers in Spanish</i>                                                               |
| 10:20-11:00 | Manuel LEONETTI (UAH/UCM):<br><i>Individual-level predicates, locative adjuncts and perspectivization</i>                                                                                            |
| 11:00-11:30 | COFFEE BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 11:30-12:10 | Carmen HORNO-CHÉLIZ and Esther ALBALAD (UniZAR):<br><i>Individual-level adjectives with estar in Spanish (L1 and L2). An experimental study about the possible interpretations of the mismatch</i>   |
| 12:10-13:10 | INVITED SPEAKER: María Mercedes PIÑANGO (Yale U.):<br><i>"Mismatches" as Context Construal Demands: Psycholinguistic underpinnings of the semantics of Spanish estar</i>                             |
| 13:10-15:00 | LUNCH                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 15:00-15:40 | Olga BORIK (UNED) and Daria SERÉS (UAB): <i>Syntactic position and interpretation: the case of Russian preverbal subjects</i>                                                                        |
| 15:40-16:20 | Feifei LI, Joan BORRÀS-COMES and M. Teresa ESPINAL (UAB): <i>Mismatches in the interpretation of sentences with multiple negative expressions in Mandarin Chinese. An experimental investigation</i> |
| 16:20-17:20 | INVITED SPEAKER: M Teresa ESPINAL (UAB):<br><i>Semantic mismatches in the interpretation of negative expressions</i>                                                                                 |
| 17:30-19:00 | FAREWELL DRINK                                                                                                                                                                                       |



# MISM4TCHES OCT 6th

## POST-WORKSHOP EVENTS

Sign in at the registration desk

- |             |                                                                                            |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00-13:00 | Guided walking tour. The Roman City of Complutum + House of Griffins + House of Hyppolytus |
| 11.30-13:30 | Guided walking tour. Alcalá de Henares, the town of Cervantes. World Heritage City         |



MISM4TCHES  
ABSTR4CTS



Oliver BOTT (U. Tübingen)

**Aspectual coercion from a cross-linguistic perspective**

In my talk I will present two cross-linguistic psycholinguistic studies looking at the intricate interplay of lexical and grammatical aspect and the resulting processing consequences. The first study investigated accomplishments such as "build a house" under adverbial modification with for-adverbials resulting in a non-culminating interpretation. I will present contrastive reading time data from German and English showing remarkably similar interpretations with yet very different processing profiles in terms of processing costs. The experimental data suggest that we need to derive the 'coerced' interpretations in different ways and that the richer aspectual system in English with a grammaticalized progressive form may be responsible for the observed difference. The second line of research compares the processing of aspectual semantic mismatches in the case of for-modification of achievements such as "win the fight" in an aspect language, Russian, with a non aspect language, German. Cross-linguistic eyetracking research shows that the aspect system shapes the time course of semantic interpretation. Again, grammatical aspect strongly modulates effects that are commonly treated as lexical aspectual mismatches.



*Semantic mismatches in the interpretation of negative expressions*  
M.Teresa Espinal (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

In this talk I will focus on the interpretation of negative markers and negative indefinites in various languages, and I will consider some mismatches in interpretation (i.e., unexpected readings according to the current literature): a negative interpretation of *no* in expletive negation contexts in Catalan, a non-reinforcer use of *pas* both in expletive and negative concord contexts in Catalan, and a double negation interpretation of sentences with multiple negative expressions in Spanish. I will show the results of recent experimental studies and their theoretical implications regarding the negative polarity vs. n-word distinction (the case of Basque vs. Spanish), the different role of *pas* (the case of Catalan vs. French), and the variability in the status of (Strict vs. Non-Strict) negative concord.

DÉPREZ, V., S. TUBAU, A. CHEYLUS & M.T. ESPINAL (2015), “Double Negation in a Negative Concord Language: An Experimental Investigation”. *Lingua*, 163, 75-107. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2015.05.012>.

ESPINAL, M.T., S. TUBAU, J. BORRÀS & P. PRIETO (2016), “Double negation in Catalan and Spanish. Interaction between syntax and prosody”. In P. Larrivé & C. Lee (eds.), *Negation and polarity: experimental perspectives*. Chapter 7. Berlin: Springer, 145-176.

ETXEBERRIA, U., S. TUBAU, V. DÉPREZ, J. BORRÀS-COMES & M.T. ESPINAL (2018). Relating (un)acceptability to interpretation. Experimental investigations on negation. *Frontiers in Psychology. Language Sciences* 8:2370.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02370/full>

TUBAU, S., V. DÉPREZ, J. BORRÀS-COMES & M.T. ESPINAL. (2018). “How speakers interpret the negative markers *no* and *no...pas* in Catalan”. *Probus*, 30(1):121-167. <https://doi.org/10.1515/probus-2017-0008>

**Some pragmatic reasons for semantic temporal mismatches.**

It's a trivial fact that tenses can be interpreted as to refer to times other than what their semantics encodes. The present tense has, across languages, such a variety of possible temporal references that it has been considered 'vacuous' (Sauerland 2002, based on presupposition entailments, contradicted by Thomas 2015). Past tenses can have future time reference, future tenses can have present reference, depending upon collocations and contextual elements. Similarly, the (grammatical) aspect normally attached to a tense can be canceled in specific occurrences, such as when the English progressive is forced with a stative VP, or when a Romance imperfective combines with achievements or temporal ordering connectives. However, it would be simplistic to assume that contextual requirements merely overcome semantic features when needed for reasons of coherence or relevance. The semantics of the procedural expression does impose subtle restrictions to such pragmatic processes.

In this paper, we begin by arguing that the type of pragmatic enrichment that takes place in such cases systematically exploits conceptual features encoded by the grammatical item. However these features are more or less specific. We will argue that less specific features, such as the notion of past, present or future tense, open to a wider potential of interpretations which can be available regardless of a particular morpheme; for example, epistemic necessity with Future tense is available in a number of languages and does not depend upon a specific morpheme (if it is available with the simple Future tense, they will be available as well with other Future tenses). Conversely, the more specific the feature, the more a pragmatic enrichment resolving a mismatch is tied to a specific expression. (Grammatical) aspect, we argue, is more specific to specific tenses than time and therefore is more deeply encoded by specific temporal morphemes (tenses). As a result, the Imperfect past in French and more generally in Romance licenses specific enrichments, such as irrealis, that are not systematically licensed by other imperfective tenses, and which are tied to the specific internal structure or representations that is encoded by these tenses, which is more specific than simply 'imperfective aspect'. Dynamic aspect, which is one other such more specific aspect than imperfective, and which is coded by English progressive tenses, does not licence similar enrichments.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, we address the issue of why such mismatches do occur at all in conversation. Why would one prefer to use, for example, a composed past tense with a future adverb in French ('J'ai bientôt fini') rather than an anterior future tense, which in the end provides the exact same temporal reference but without any mismatch ('J'aurai bientôt fini')? Our answer is that the surplus of processing involved by the semantic mismatch in such case is compensated by a surplus in meaning (or 'cognitive effect') that is only attainable by such means. We suggest that, at least for a number of cases where tenses are involved, this element of meaning has to do with perspectival representations of situations (de Saussure 2013) and possibly weak modal implicatures relevant in the conversation.

María Mercedes PIÑANGO

**“Mismatches” as Context Construal Demands:  
Psycholinguistic underpinnings of the semantics of Spanish *estar***

The acceptability of Spanish *estar* (English ‘be’) with some adjective predicates e.g. *Pedro está inteligente* ‘Pedro estar intelligent’ appears to be dependent on the context in which the sentence is uttered. Yet, even with the “right” context, acceptability appears to be variable across speech communities of the language. *Estar*’s developmental trajectory is also a puzzle: children are reported to overuse *estar* as compared to adults, a use that overtime undergoes attrition. Finally, diachronically *estar*’s use is shown to be encroaching on the domain of *ser*. From every perspective then *estar*’s behavior appears to be “in flux”. Converging with most previous proposals, we propose that the causes of this instability appear to be semantic in nature, suggesting in turn a situation of "mismatch" between its lexical properties and that of the context.

In the talk I present the results of a multiyear exploration by our research group on the *cognitive consequences* of the meaning of *estar* in both children (4-12 years-old, Venezuelan variety) and adults (Argentinian, Iberian, Mexican and Venezuelan varieties). Discussion centers around our proposal that *estar*’s meaning is distinct from that of *ser* in that it contains in addition a contingency presupposition whose accommodation makes specific demands on its context. And it is the computational and communicative demands of this process of accommodation what constrain the variation, developmental and diachronic trajectories observed.

One take home-message from this exploration which goes beyond the particulars of *estar*’s use is a view of “mismatches” not as accidents of the grammar, but as expected manifestations of an interaction between lexical meanings and their context; an organizing feature that due to its particulars cognitive demands gives rise to the grammar’s constant flux.

## TO WHAT EXTENT IS EVIDENTIALITY ENCODED IN THE SPANISH TENSES? EVIDENCE FROM L1/L2 SPANISH AND FRENCH

This talk will focus on one way in which the Spanish imperfect (IMP) differs from the future tense (FUT), in relation to evidential interpretations, and will link the distinction to empirical data. The IMP encodes temporal-aspectual meaning; evidential readings are derived from this tense by way of a last-resort, pragmatic interpretive procedure arising only in linguistically restricted environments. Specifically, discourse conditions involving telicity, imperfectivity, and the absence of an accessible past temporal frame trigger the process (author, 2016). In contrast, we consider the Spanish FUT to have evolved into denoting inferential evidentiality (Escandell-Vidal 2010, 2014), obtaining this reading even in seemingly neutral contexts such as (1). To express chronology, the periphrastic future (P-FUT) is becoming the default tense (2) (Squartini 2001; Cartagena 2017). This implies that the evidential interpretation of Spanish FUT is derived directly from linguistic processing.

In other Romance varieties, such as French, evidential IMP may be found, but with more highly restricted discourse conditions; and the evolution of FUT into an evidential has not taken place (Barceló, 2007; Abouda and Skrovec 2006, 2015). The French morphological future (M-FUT) can have epistemic readings, but they are derived by means of pragmatic enrichment processes (Saussure, 2013): conjectural readings similar to (3), are possible, but concessive constructions in M-FUT, equivalent to (4), are not acceptable.

The talk will present two sets of data related to how these distinct means for expressing evidentiality (IMP and FUT) are interpreted by L1 and L2 Spanish-speakers. In relation to L2 acquisition, data on interpretation of the Spanish IMP and M-FUT by L1 French speakers (two series of multiple choice interpretation tasks performed by L2 Spanish learners at two different proficiency levels, from upper-intermediate to advanced), and by L1 European Spanish-speaking controls. Additionally, we examine the results of a follow up, oral production task performed only by L1 Spanish speakers, aiming at providing evidence of spontaneous spoken uses of future tenses.

If evidentiality is at the core of the Spanish M-FUT, interface-related properties are not systematically involved in the evidential interpretation of the tense by L1 speakers. Thus, based on the predictions of the Feature re-assembly hypothesis (Lardiere 2008, 2009), a significant degree of inconsistency is expected in the L2 data (these speakers are in the process of reconfiguring the L1 M-FUT features), while variability should be much less prevalent in L1 Spanish interpretations.

Nevertheless, in the interpretation tasks (based on written input), significant differences were only found in hypothetical and concessive environments: the L1 Spanish speakers almost systematically chose M-FUT; the L1 French speakers were able to distinguish between different interpretations of FUT (in L1 and L2 Spanish), but often choose lexico-syntactic devices to express hypothetical and concessive content in L2. For the items expressing future time reference L1 Spanish and L2 French speakers, interpretation results were similar, as both groups showed high degrees of variability between M-FUT and P-FUT.

Thus, more research was needed to empirically ascertain the claims of the evidential future hypothesis (Escandell 2010, 2014). To this end, an oral production task was designed, consisting of a semi-structured interview, priming the description of future plans and events, as well as hypotheses on causes and developments of forthcoming and past events; and applied to 20 L1 speakers of European Spanish. If the answers

spontaneously given by speakers displayed a significant preference of P-FUT in the former case, and of M-FUT in the latter, this would clearly favour the evidential future hypothesis. Provisional results show scarce use of FUT as means for expressing future temporality, while the tense is spontaneously used to express hypothetical content. This suggests confirmation of the ‘de-temporalization’ of this verb tense.

## EXAMPLES

- (1) Se lo traerá.  
*S/he will bring (M-FUT) it to him/her.*
- (2) Creo que no va a venir.  
*I think s/he is not going to come. (P-FUT).*
- (3) María no ha venido. Estará enferma...  
*María hasn't come. She must be ill (M-FUT)*
- (4) A: Jorge es muy listo.  
B: Será muy listo, pero no lo parece.  
A: *Jorge is very clever.*  
B: *He may be (M-FUT) very clever, but he doesn't seem like it.*

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### Mismatches and ellipsis: an experimental approach to prodrop in Romance Gapping

The standard assumption for ellipsis in general, and for Gapping (1) in particular, is the fact that a structural parallelism should hold between the elliptical sequence (= the gapped clause) and the full clause (= the source), cf. Hartmann (2000). This idea is captured by the so-called ‘connectivity effects’ (case and preposition marking, category identity, same number of remnants and correlates, same word order) and offers a strong argument for structural approaches (i.e. syntactic reconstruction).

(1) [Ion eats apples] [and Mary bananas].

This assumption was first challenged by Sag et al. (1985) who claimed that (i) the order of remnants in the gapped clause does not necessarily need to parallel that of their correlates in the source, provided that this order is licit in the grammar (2), and (ii) remnants may differ from their correlates with respect to their category, provided that each remnant matches some subcategorization frame of the verbal predicate in the source (3a-c).

(2) A policeman walked in at 11, and at 12, a fireman. (Sag et al. 1985)

(3) a. Pat has become [crazy]<sub>AP</sub> and Chris [an incredible bore]<sub>NP</sub>. (Sag et al. 1985)

b. \*Pat has become [crazy]<sub>AP</sub> but Chris [in good spirit]<sub>PP</sub>.

c. Pat became {crazy / an incredible bore / \*in good spirit}.

Crucially, however, syntactic asymmetries related to the number of remnants and correlates in Gapping have never been investigated in detail or empirically tested before. As Romanian and Spanish are prodrop languages, they allow us to better observe this kind of syntactic asymmetry in Gapping. In this paper, we show, based on experimental evidence from two acceptability judgment tasks on prodrop and Gapping in two Romance languages (Romanian and Spanish) that syntactic parallelism in Gapping constructions is less strict than has been traditionally assumed.

The acceptability judgment task used in our experiment is a crossed factorial design (2x2 design) with two factors (STRUCTURE and SUBJECT TYPE), each with two levels, giving rise to 4 conditions:

(4) Condition a: [+gapping] and [-prodrop]

Condition b: [+gapping] and [+prodrop]

Condition c: [-gapping] and [-prodrop]

Condition d: [-gapping] and [+prodrop]

A sample of the 24 sets of experimental items used in the four conditions is given in (5) for Romanian. We compared elliptical occurrences (conditions a-b) with non-elliptical ones (conditions c-d), in order to better control our two factors and to rule out other explanations (confounds) for any treatment effect that we might see. Each item was presented following a context sentence.

(5) *Context:* Ne-am făcut deja planul pentru weekend.

‘We have already planned our weekend.’

a. **Eu** voi merge la film, iar **sora mea** la muzeu.

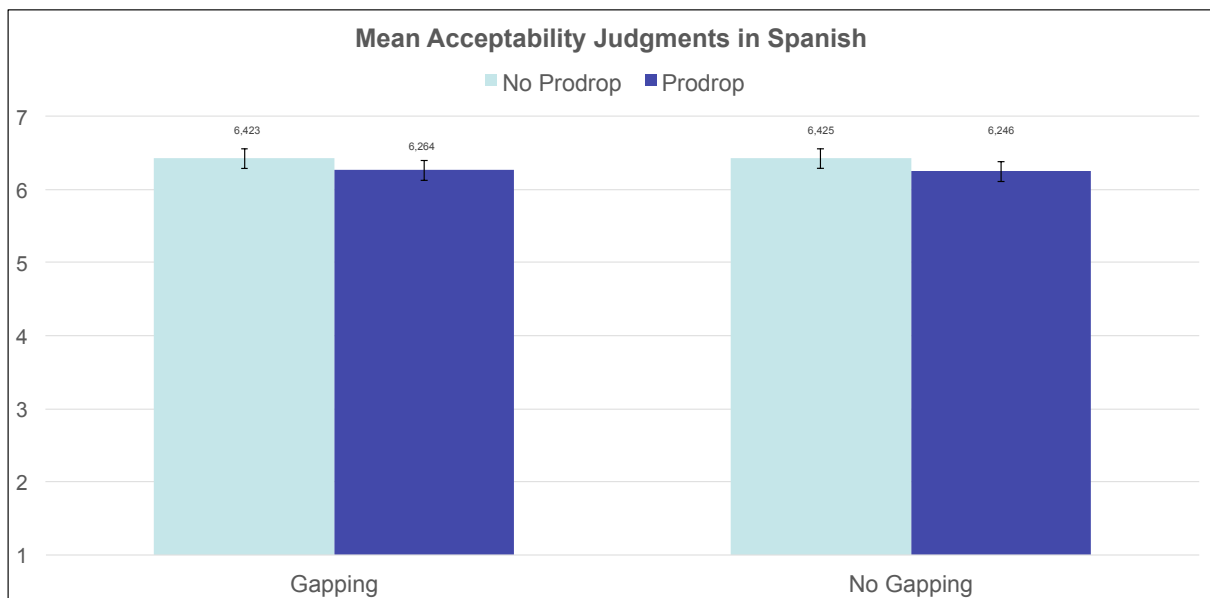
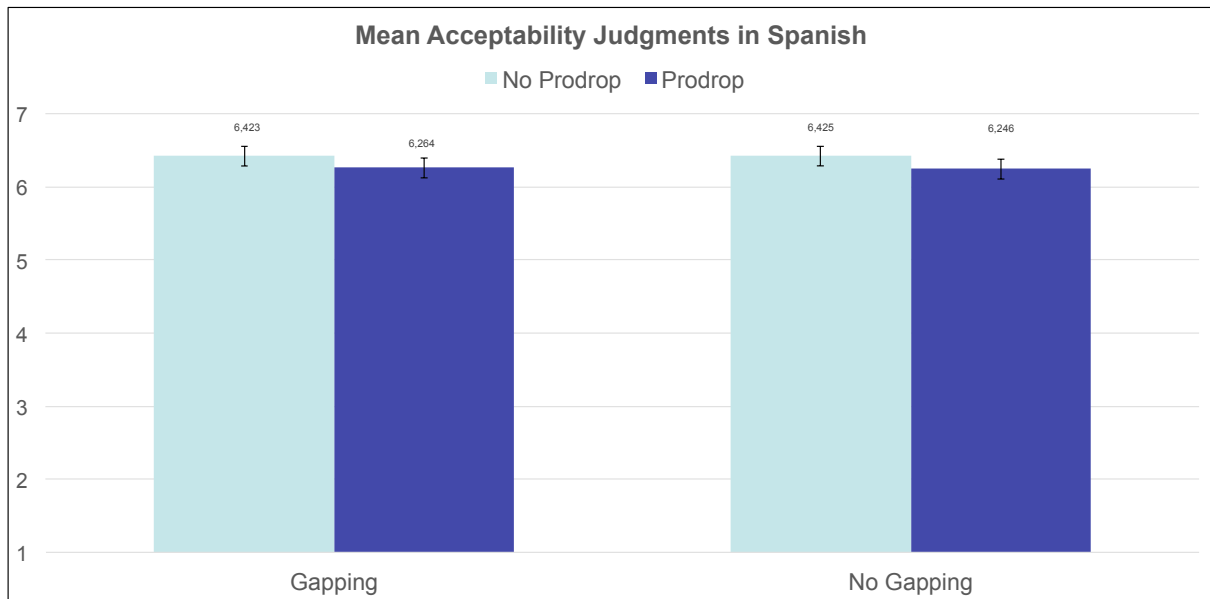
‘I will go to the cinema and my sister to the museum.’

b. Voi merge la film, iar **sora mea** la muzeu.

c. **Eu** voi merge la film, iar **sora mea** va merge la muzeu.

d. Voi merge la film, iar **sora mea** va merge la muzeu.

In the histograms below, we present the results from 68 Romanian native speakers and 67 Spanish native speakers. Overall, they show that prodrop is natural and acceptable in both languages, regardless of whether it occurs in a construction with Gapping or with a full clause. These results support the assumption that syntactic parallelism in Gapping is not as strong as commonly assumed (*pace* Hartmann 2000). Therefore, the syntactic parallelism constraints invoked by the structural approaches on ellipsis must be reconsidered.



Our results fit very well with a construction-based analysis of Gapping (with semantic reconstruction of ellipsis), as proposed by Abeillé *et al.* (2014) and Bîlbîie (2017) for Gapping in French and Romanian, and by Ginzburg & Sag (2000) for fragments in general. The only syntactic constraint at work stipulates that each remnant of the target must match a possible subcategorization of the verbal predicate in the source. Otherwise, they may differ from their correlates with respect to their category, position or surface realization. The overall construction is a particular type of asymmetric coordination with the main conjunct as being non-elliptical and verbal, and the gapped one as fragmentary and non-verbal.

**References:** Abeillé, A., Bîlbîie, G. & F. Mouret 2014. A Romance perspective on gapping constructions. In H. Boas & F. González-García (eds.), *Romance Perspective on Construction Grammar*. John Benjamins. 227-267. // Bîlbîie, G. 2017. *Grammaire des constructions elliptiques: Une étude comparative des phrases sans verbe en roumain et en français*. Language Science Press. // Culicover, P. & R. Jackendoff 2005. *Simpler Syntax*. Oxford University Press. // Ginzburg, J. & I.A. Sag 2000. *Interrogative investigations: The form, meaning and use of English interrogatives*. Stanford: CSLI Publications. // Hartmann, K. 2000. *Right node raising and gapping. Interface conditions on prosodic deletion*. John Benjamins. // Sag, I.A., Gazdar, G., Wasow, T. & S. Weisler 1985. Coordination and how to distinguish categories. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 3, 117-171.

## Syntactic position and interpretation: the case of Russian preverbal subjects

There is a common assumption in literature on Slavic languages that preverbal subjects are interpreted definitely, while postverbal subjects are interpreted indefinitely (Pospelov 1970, Krámský 1972). However, there have not been many experimental studies that would test the interpretation of preverbal and postverbal subjects in articleless languages.

We designed an experiment to test this claim in Russian. It was aimed at checking the correlation between word order (SV/VS) and interpretation (definite/indefinite) for Russian BPI nominals in subject position. Our primary goal was to establish whether the position of a nominal, in the absence of articles, (fully/partially) determines its (in)definiteness. We examined the interpretation of bare plural subject NPs using an Acceptability Judgement Test (AJT) with a scale from 1 (not acceptable) to 4 (fully acceptable). 120 participants were given short written instructions: to listen to the items and give their first judgement. The stimuli were presented acoustically in order to exclude the possible influence of prosody on the interpretation. In the following examples of experimental items, the judgment applied to the last sentence:

(1) Preverbal indefinite context:

U nas v dome nikogda ne bylo gryzunov. No včera ja uslyšala, kak **myšy skrebutjsja**.  
*We never had rodents at home. But yesterday I heard (lit.) how mice scratch.*

(2) Postverbal indefinite context:

Nam nikogda ne prinosili počtu. No segodnja v jaščike ležali **pis'ma**.  
*We have never received any mail. But today in the mailbox (lit.) were lying letters.*

(3) Preverbal definite context:

On vošel v komnatu i uvidel mal'čika i devočku. **Deti** nepodvižno *sideli* za stolom.  
*He entered the room and saw a boy and a girl. The children were sitting motionlessly at the table.*

(4) Postverbal definite context:

Xozjaika iskala famil'noe srebro po vsem škafam. No bylo ponjatno, čto **propali stolovye pribory**.  
*The landlady was looking for family silverware in all cabinets. But it was clear that (lit.) was gone the cutlery.*

The experiment showed that there is, indeed, a preference for definite interpretation of nominals in preverbal position and the indefinite in postverbal. This preference for a definite interpretation of preverbal subjects can be explained by the assumption that preverbal subjects in Russian are aboutness topics; they tend to be definite, although a (specific) indefinite interpretation is not ruled out for sentential topics (cf. Reinhart 1981).

Additionally, the results indicated that speakers would be overall more permissive for indefinite NPs, and NPs in preverbal position. These results are statistically significant and we believe they indicate important, theoretically relevant *mismatches* between syntactic position and interpretation. In particular, they seriously undermine the strict version of the hypothesis that preverbal subjects can only be definite.

As for *indefinite preverbal* subjects, our data included examples with non-specific indefinites, which are not, in principle, good candidates for topichood but were still judged fairly acceptable in preverbal position by the speakers. We suggest that weak (i.e., non-specific) readings of indefinites survive in topics when they are already licensed in the sentential context with which the topic is linked (Leonetti 2010). As a piece of evidence that this generalization is on the right track, we can provide an example where such licencing by the previous context is missing and the acceptability of the example drops to 17% vs. mean 29% in other items.



What we would like to pay special attention to is the overall superior adequacy of indefinites, independently of syntactic position. We would like to suggest the following explanation for the observed (this time, interpretational) mismatch between indefinite and definite nominal expression. By hypothesis, bare NPs in Russian (and possibly in article-less languages in general, although there might be variation between different languages) are semantically indefinite (Heim 2011), whereas definiteness is a pragmatic strengthening of indefinites. This hypothesis predicts that indefinite NPs are felicitous in a wider range of positions and contexts, which is exactly what has been observed in our experiment.

To develop this hypothesis, we argue, on the basis of contrastive analysis of the Russian bare and the English definite nominal phrases in argument position, that if Russian bare nominals exhibit definiteness, it is not the same *type* of definiteness that is encoded in English by the definite article *the*. Our crucial argument is that one of the most fundamental characteristics of the English definites, namely, the presupposition of uniqueness associated with them, is absent in Russian alleged definites. We will argue that a semantic analysis based on the assumption that bare nominals in Russian are underlyingly indefinite (see Heim 2011) is the one that best captures the empirical facts. We will also show that definiteness effects exhibited by some of the bare nominals in argument position are cancellable implicatures.

In general, definiteness (as implicature) arises due to a number of factors in Russian.

A. Familiarity (Christophersen 1939; Heim 1982), which can be subsumed under identifiability by the speaker and the hearer (Lyons 1999), and anaphoricity (cf. example (4)) as its special case (Heim 1982) may be one of the most powerful mechanisms for inducing a definite interpretation of Russian bare nominals (see example (3) above).

B. Topicality, which strongly favours a definite interpretation cross-linguistically (cf. Reinhart 1981 and the reasoning above). Topicality is related to the identifiability of the referent. It may be referentially new, but it has to be situationally given or inferable from the context (cf. D-linking in Pesetsky 1987). Identifiable nominals are generally found in preverbal topic position in Russian (or as Šimík & Burianová (2018) claim, in clause-initial position). The stronger the link to the previous discourse, the easier it is for a bare nominal to appear in a position associated with topic.

C. Situational uniqueness, as opposed to semantic uniqueness, can also induce a definite reading in Russian bare nominals. Unique objects like *the sun*, *the moon*, etc., even though are used with the definite article in languages like English, are known to be unique in the world. Their uniqueness is not semantically derived or determined, it is simply ‘reflected’ by means of the definite article. In Russian, there is nothing to reflect the unique status of such objects in the world, so they are linguistically unmarked.

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### Aspectual mismatches and aspect-preserving reinterpretations

The cases analysed in the literature under the label of ‘aspectual coercion’ (Francis & Michaelis 2003; Carlson 2006; Pustejovsky 1993, 2008; de Swart 1998, 2011) usually target *Aktionsart* and event structure adjustments, such as the coercion of an accomplishment into an activity by iterating a punctual event to match the temporal frame introduced by an adjunct PP (*He played the sonata for 2 hours*). Coercing accomplishments, achievements and activities into each other seems to be the prototypical case.

There are, however, instances of aspectual mismatches that are not solved by changing the *Aktionsart* or the event structure of the predicate involved. The examples in (1) and (2) illustrate the cases in point:

- (1) a. *Juan venía en enero.*  
 Juan come.IMPF.3SG in January.  
 ‘Juan was coming in January. (> I was told that Juan was coming in January.)’

- b. *Se examinaba del carnet de conducir {ayer / mañana}*  
 REFL take-exam.IMPF.3SG of-the license of driving {yesterday / tomorrow}  
 ‘She was doing her driving test {yesterday / tomorrow}. (> She was supposed to do her driving {yesterday/tomorrow}’

- (2) a. *María ha estado inteligente.*  
 María bestAGE.PERF.3SG intelligentINDIVIDUAL  
 ‘María has been intelligent. (> María has behaved in an intelligent way.)’

- b. *La película está aburrida.*  
 The movie bestAGE.PRS.3SG boringINDIVIDUAL  
 ‘The movie is boring. (> I found it boring.)’

The sentences in (1), featuring the imperfective past (Cipria & Roberts 2000; Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2003; Leonetti 2004; Saussure & Sthioul 2005) are systematically interpreted as second-hand information, a case of covert quotation in which the state-of-affairs conveyed is presented as sourced in a different speaker (reportive interpretation). The sentences in (2), where the copula *estar* is combined with an individual-level adjectival predicate (Leonetti 1994; Kratzer 1995; Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2002; Maienborn 2005; Escandell-Vidal 2018), commit the speaker to being the direct source for the assertion (experiential interpretation). Most significantly, these enriched interpretations are obligatory without situating the utterances in any particular context. Thus, in addition to the proposition they express, the examples in (1) and (2) carry additional evidential information (Davis et al 2007; Speas 2010).

The aim of this talk is to argue that this additional evidential content arises as the result of a pragmatic process of mismatch resolution. In both cases, a mismatch arises between the constituents in the sentence. In (1), the adjunct modifier does not qualify as an adequate anchor for the imperfective past, and an acquisition-of-information event has to be inferred to avoid the conflict in aspectual and temporal anchoring. In (2) the presuppositional requirements of the copula *estar* are not matched by the individual-level adjective with which it combines. In both cases, the mismatch obtains under very specific

conditions and is solved in a fully predictable way. What is significant here is that the process of mismatch resolution is not carried out by changing the aspectual class of the predicate, but by adding new assumptions that embed the propositional content expressed.

My proposal suggests a general hypothesis about how mismatches involving spatiotemporal anchoring will be repaired by inferring situations of information acquisition that give rise to evidential commitments:

- Reportive interpretations are obtained when the (unsatisfied) head (i.e., the imperfective past) requires a disjoint reference point (relative interpretations).
- Experiential interpretations are obtained when the (unsatisfied) head (i.e., the copula *estar*) does not require a disjoint reference point (absolute interpretations).

The analysis of these phenomena has implications for the design and properties of grammar, and provides new insights on the relations between linguistic form and interpretation.

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### A non-coercion account of minimizers in Spanish

**Goal.** Our goal is to account for the combination of minimizers with gradable adjectives (As) in Spanish, focusing on *ligeramente* (slightly), developing a non-coercion approach for cases of unexpected semantic combinations.

**1. Setting the scene.** From Kennedy & McNally's work (2005), it is claimed that 1) minimizers are degree elements generated as heads of the DegreeP (*pos*) or as MeasurePs in the functional structure of adjectives; 2) they are semantically sensitive to some lexical property of adjectives related to the presence of a minimum degree point on their scalar structure or to their character as absolute adjectives with minimum standards; 3) they operate on that minimum degree/standard and return the meaning that the individual possesses the property in question in a degree that is slightly higher than that minimum point. Consequently, also in K&M's terms, minimizers combine with absolute As with minimal standards, as *ligeramente sucio, húmedo, abierto / slightly dirty, wet, open*. They cannot combine with absolute As with maximal standards (*\*ligeramente limpio/lleño*), nor with relative adjectives with arbitrary standards (*\*ligeramente alto*). In approaches assuming 1), 2) and 3), unexpected combinations like *Esos tacones son ligeramente altos para mí*. (*These heels are<sub>SER</sub> slightly tall for me*) are considered as cases of scalar coercion or standard coercion of As (Bogal-Albritten, 2012, Kagan & Alexeyenko, 2011).

**2. Proposal.** Our point of view is that coercion is a way of resolving semantic mismatches that applies only as a last resort device. We claim that unexpected combinations between minimizers and As of the "wrong semantic type" can be explained without resorting to coercion if an alternative semantics for minimizers is developed. Specifically, we argue that minimizers are degree expressions (type  $\langle e, d \rangle$ ) (1) that combine with gradable As of any scalar type, (2), and build derived gradable As with a more fine-grained set of degrees, (3).

(1)  $[[\text{ligeramente}]] = \lambda x \lambda g \lambda y. g_{g(x)}(y)$

(2) a.  $[[\text{tall}]] = \lambda x. \text{tall}(x)$

b.  $[[\text{wet}]] = \lambda x. \text{wet}(x)$

(3) a.  $[[\text{ligeramente tall}]] \lambda y. \text{tall}_{\text{tall}(x)}(y)$

b.  $[[\text{ligeramente wet}]] \lambda y. \text{wet}_{\text{wet}(x)}(y)$

This derived gradable A, is a function from individuals ( $y$ ) to "minimized degrees",  $\langle e, d \rangle$ , of the original A. The degrees in the denotation of the derived A are more fine-grained than those in the initial denotation of the gradable A, even to the point of make them discrete; this is on the line of the granularity shifting analysis of minimizers by Sassoon and Zevakhina (2014). This allows the possibility of reasoning about (very) small degree differences, a meaning component associated to *slightly* in different proposals like Kagan & Alexeyenko (2011), Solt (2012), Bylinina (2012).

Derived As are of type  $\langle e, d \rangle$ , and need to combine with degree morphology (e.g. *pos*), (4), in order to be converted into predicates of individuals (Kennedy's et al. works). As assumed in Gumiel-Molina, Moreno-Quibén and Pérez-Jiménez (2015) every gradable A is evaluated with respect to a standard value (set by the function M) established with respect to a comparison class (C). The comparison class defines the set out of which the standard degree is calculated.

(4)  $[[\text{Deg pos tall}]] = \lambda C \lambda x. \text{tall}(x) \geq \mathbf{M}(\text{tall})(\mathbf{C})$

"tall to a degree that is greater to the significant standard degree of tallness of the members of C"

Two semantic types of comparison classes can be established: On the one hand, relative adjectives are evaluated with respect to a *between-individuals* comparison class comprised of distinct individuals, which determines an arbitrary standard value. So, the sentence *Mi hijo de 8 años es alto* will be true if my son's height exceeds the arbitrary midpoint degree of height for the 8-year old individuals comprising the comparison class. On the other hand, absolute adjectives are evaluated with respect to a *within-individual* comparison class. A class of comparison comprised of *counterparts* of the adjective's subject (stages) manifesting different degrees of the property in question in different indices of evaluation (typical/normal alternative worlds); one of these degrees is considered the standard value. Consider *El restaurante está lleno, La toalla está húmeda*. In the case of *lleno* 'full', *húmedo* 'wet', the comparison class is comprised of different counterparts of the predicate argument, *the restaurant/the towel*, as it is instantiated in different stages in every contextually salient typical world. The function M applies to this class and returns as its value one of the degrees of the gradable property. The fact that the degrees in question are manifested through stages of a single individual has the consequence that the standard degree

selected by M will count as maximal or minimal for this individual; that is, the standard is a class-maximal or class-minimal standard value, not defined in absolute scalar terms.

Having this background proposal in mind, our claim is that the combination of *pos* with derived As will be well-formed if reasoning about small differences is allowed by the nature of the comparison class. The finer granularity introduced by *ligeramente* allows reasoning about small degree differences but this reasoning is only possible (=informative) when the comparison class introduced by *pos* makes the selected standard non-arbitrary (Solt 2011, 2012). If the standard of comparison does not allow reasoning about small differences to be informative, then the combination of *ligeramente* + A will be unfelicitous. This accounts for the paradigm in (5) without claiming that there is a change in the scalar structure of the adjective, or in its relative/absolute character. Consider absolute adjective with minimum standards (5a). (5b) says that the degree in which something can be slightly wet is greater than the minimum standard provided by the function M but it can be a minimal difference from the minimum standard of *wet*. The fact that there are more degrees than can be selected as arguments of M(g)(C) makes it possible that things that didn't count as wet, now count as slightly wet. When *ligeramente* combines with absolute adjectives with maximum-standards, ill-formed sentences are obtained, (5c). We claim that small distances are not informative with maximum standards: small distances cannot be felicitously measured from an origin point whose location is maximum. Relative As (5d) have arbitrary standards chosen from a between-individuals Comparison Class. They don't combine with *ligeramente*, since the arbitrary nature of the distributional standard associated with them makes impossible (=uninformative) referring to small degree differences.

- (5) a. La toalla está ligeramente húmeda. (absolute adjective, class minima standard).  
 The towel <sub>iSESTAR</sub> slightly wet
- b.  $[[\text{Deg } pos \text{ ligeramente húmedo}]] = \lambda C \lambda x. \text{ húmedo}_{\text{húmedo}(x)}(x) \geq M(\text{húmedo}_{\text{húmedo}(x)})(C)$
- c. \*La jeringuilla/botella está ligeramente llena. (absolute A, class-maxima stnd)  
 The syringe/bottle <sub>iSESTAR</sub> slightly full
- d. \*Juan es ligeramente alto/gordo. (relative A, distributional arbitrary stnd)  
 Juan <sub>iSSER</sub> slightly tall/fat

In this proposal, bad-behaved cases in (6) are accounted for if the notion of “functional standard” is taken into account. Consider (5d) vs. (6).

- (6) a. Juan es ligeramente gordo para entrar por ese agujero.  
 Juan <sub>iSSER</sub> slightly fat to fit into that hole  
 ‘Juan is slightly fat to fit into the hole.’

The for-phrase eliminates the arbitrariness of the standard due to the choice of a comparison class based on the requirements of the situation (in this particular case, a goal: The goal of trying to fit into the hole); this allows, once *pos* is introduced, the reasoning about small degrees denoted by *ligeramente* in an informative way. However, there is no coercion. The adjective has an open scale; similarly, the adjective is relative, the property is evaluated with respect to a between individuals comparison class (relative A), and this is shown by the fact that the copula is *ser* (see Gumiel-Molina et al. 2015 on this particular point).

#### 4. Conclusions and further investigations

In this talk, we argue that minimizers like *ligeramente* builds derived gradable As from gradable As, with a more fine-grained set of degrees. The finer granularity introduced by *ligeramente* allows reasoning about small differences once the derived adjective is combined with *pos*. This reasoning is only possible when the standard provided by the comparison class introduced by the *pos* morpheme is non-arbitrary and informative (this is the case when the adjectives is a class-minimal absolute adjective). Unexpected combinations of *ligeramente* with As (relative As, class maximal absolute As) are possible when the comparison class associated with the gradable A introduces a functional standard. Crucially, no coercion process takes place.

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## **Individual Level Adjectives with *estar* in Spanish (L1 and L2).**

### **An experimental study about the possible interpretations of the mismatch**

Individual Level Adjectives (hereinafter referred to as I-level Adjectives) are those that lexicalize properties of individuals (Carlson, 1977) such as *tall*, *big* or *fat*. This kind of adjectives is different from others (called State-Level Adjectives), such as *dirty*, *sick* or *closed*, which lexicalize states of individuals. The differences between these two kinds of adjectives are well-known in the bibliography. Thus, S-Level Adjectives (but not I-Level Adjectives) could be inserted in English existential sentences: *There were people sick* but *\*There were people tall* (Milsark, 1974). In a similar way, I-Level Adjectives (but not S-Level Adjectives) have some restrictions in their combination with locative or frequency adverbs: *\*Peter is tall in the park* but *\*Peter is sick in the park* (Chierchia, 1995). Besides, in languages such as Spanish, there seems to be a copula for each kind of adjectives: If I-Level Adjectives usually combine with *ser* (*Juan es alto*), S-Level Adjectives tend to appear with *estar* (*Juan está enfermo*).

This last difference (the copula) is the object of study of this research. Despite the tendency to appear with *ser*, I-Level Adjectives can, in fact, appear with *estar* in Spanish. When this combination occurs, speakers have to resolve the mismatch and the result is an additional inference. The aim of this study is to know which inference appears both in native speakers and in second-language learners. For that, two questionnaires have been designed. In both, different situations have been described. In the first questionnaire, some of these situations are described with an I-Level Adjective and *ser* (*Ana es guapa*, for example), and others with an I-Level-Adjective and *estar* (*Juan está alto*, for instance). In the second questionnaire, we have inverted the combinations, and therefore, the situations that appeared with *ser* in the first questionnaire appear with *estar* in the second one, and the other way round (e.g. *Ana está guapa* and *Juan es alto*).

We have tried to prove three proposals in this research. The most classical one has to do with the stability of the property. According to this proposal, an adjective with *estar* (as *Juan está guapo*) is understood as less stable than the same adjective with *ser* (*Juan es guapo*). This first hypothesis is especially important because it is the explanation usually offered in second language manuals and, therefore, we expect it to be the most important proposal for L2 speakers.

The second proposal analysed in this research has to do with the standard of comparison of gradual adjectives. All the adjectives used in the questionnaires need a standard of comparison to check their truth conditions. Following Gumiel-Molina and others (2015), an I-Level Adjective with *ser* has an external standard of comparison, in such a way that *Juan es guapo* means that he is more handsome than the average of his group of reference (the man of their age, for example). On the contrary, this same adjective with *estar* has an internal standard of comparison, so *Juan está guapo* means that he is now more handsome than he used to be.

The last proposal checked in this study considers that I-Level Adjectives have an evidential interpretation when they are combined with *estar* (Escandell, 2018). So, a sentence like *Juan está guapo* means somehow that the speaker knows that Juan is handsome because s/he has seen him with his/her own eyes.

In the questionnaires, each situation is followed by 16 sentences: six of them are experimental ('I think Juan has been always tall', 'I suppose Ana is prettier than women of

her age' or 'It's likely that the speaker hasn't seen Pedro for some years, and he knows it only by hearsay), and ten are non-experimental. Informants have to answer *Yes, No* or *I don't have enough information to answer*. Subjects were randomly distributed into the two questionnaires and they had to answer firstly a series of questions about their mother language (just for us to know if they were L1 or L2 speakers). These answers were analysed to know which of the proposals (if any) could be proved and if native speakers and learners show different behaviours in this task.

The findings of this research seem to prove that the three hypotheses have been verified (and therefore that they are complementary). They also show that there are no significant differences between L1 and L2 speakers. These results have important consequences, we think, both for the nature of the interpretation of mismatches and for our knowledge of their acquisition.

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### Referential mismatches – complement set reference

In this talk, we present the results of a semantic plausibility study investigating systematic mismatches in anaphoric reference to quantified expressions (QEs) in Swedish. Sentences as (1)–(2) have a similar meaning but differ in their use of quantifier: *some* is a positive (upward entailing) quantifier, while *few* is a negative (downward entailing) quantifier [1].

- (1) Some students attended the lecture.
- (2) Few students attended the lecture.

Both (1) and (2) are sentences about students attending a lecture. However, when referring back to ‘the students’, a difference can be detected between the two sentences. (1) is naturally followed by a sentence like (3), which, like (1), is about the students attending the lecture (the reference set, REFSET). (2), on the other hand, is naturally followed by (4), which differs from (2) in being about the students *not* attending the lecture (the complement set, COMPSET) [e.g. 2]. While (2) can in fact be followed either by (3) or (4), is also a possible continuation of (2), the case where there is a mismatch, i.e. (4) following (2), is actually the preferred continuation [3]. For (1), the mismatch continuation ((4) following (1)) is not allowed.

- (3) They found it very interesting.
- (4) They stayed at home instead.

Anaphoric reference to QEs has been extensively investigated in English and one important factor influencing set-reference is the positivity/negativity of the quantifier [see e.g. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]. As quantifiers do not always behave the same across languages [7, 8], we investigated this issue for Swedish in a semantic plausibility study where we tested whether quantified expressions gave rise to REFSET or COMPSET interpretations.

The material was manipulated along two dimensions: positive vs negative quantifier (*några* vs *få* in (5)), and REFSET vs COMPSET targeting disambiguating adjective (*duktiga* vs *dåliga* in (5)). The quantifiers included were: *några* (‘some’), *få* (‘few’), *många* (‘many’), *inte många* (‘not many’), *alla* (‘all’), *inga* (‘no’), *nästan alla* (‘almost all’), *inte alla* (‘not all’).

- (5) Några/Få studenter skrev bra på tentan igår och att de var så  
some/few students wrote well on the-exam yesterday and that they were so  
duktiga/dåliga förbryllade professorn.  
good/bad confused the-professor

A linear mixed model showed that positive quantifiers with anaphoric reference to the REFSET were judged as semantically congruent, while they were judged as anomalous with anaphoric reference to the COMPSET. For the negative quantifiers, the opposite pattern emerged: they were judged as congruent with anaphoric reference to the COMPSET but anomalous with the reference to the REFSET. There was also a difference between positive and negative QEs. The preferred continuation for positive QEs, the matching continuation, was rated as more congruent than the preferred continuation for negative QEs, the mismatched continuation. There were also internal differences within the groups of positive and negative quantifiers. More specifically, sentences where the syntactic subject included the positive quantifier *några* (‘some’) were significantly different from sentences with the other positive quantifiers in the subject: when reference was made to the REFSET, the sentences were judged as semantically congruent to a lesser degree than for the other positive quantifiers. Similarly for the negative quantifiers *få*

(‘few’) and *inte alla* (‘not all’): when reference was made to the COMPSET, the sentences were judged as semantically congruent to a lesser degree than for the negative quantifiers *inga* (‘no’) and *inte många* (‘not many’).

In a follow-up study, we investigated whether the relative size of the sets, in terms of number of members, influence anaphoric set interpretation. According to Zulaica-Hernández [9], the set with the largest number of members is the one most easily referred to. In relation to our results, this would mean that *några* (‘some’) should pick out a smaller REFSET than the other three positive QEs, and *få* (‘few’) and *inte alla* (‘not all’) should pick out larger REFSET than *inga* (‘no’) and *inte många* (‘not many’). To test these claims, we carried out an investigation using a questionnaire where each participant was instructed to write down the number they thought a quantifier corresponded to, given a fixed total number and a specific context, as in the following example [cf. 10]:

- (6) There were 100 students in the auditory. QE of them had been there before.  
How many do you think had been there before? ANSWER:

The results were that *några* (‘some’) was taken to pick out a significantly smaller REFSET than the other positive QEs, and *inte alla* (‘not all’) was taken to pick out a significantly larger REFSET than *inte många* (‘not many’). However, *få* (‘few’) was taken to pick out a smaller, rather than bigger, REFSET than *inte många* (‘not many’). In addition, *få* (‘few’) and *inte alla* (‘not all’) were taken to pick out REFSET of very different sizes. Thus, these studies show that anaphoric reference to QEs in Swedish behaves as in English when it comes to polarity and also, unexpectedly, that the relative size of COMPSET and REFSET plays a role in the focussing one of the two sets.

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## **Mismatch, coercion and procedural meaning: insights from Construction Grammar and Relevance Theory**

The aim of this paper is twofold. Combining insights from Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 1995, 2006) and Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995; Carston, 2002; Wilson and Sperber, 2012), the main goal is to understand more specifically what are the semantic and pragmatic constraints that govern the resolution process in case of a mismatch between a lexeme and its morpho-syntactic context. Then, on the basis of this discussion, I will focus on the main properties (formal and semantic) of the grammatical units that seem to trigger this process.

In Construction Grammar, the term *coercion* is often used to discuss those cases in which a lexeme directly inherits parts of its interpretation from the morpho-syntactic context in which it is used. (Lauwers and Willems, 2011: 1219) In the sentences in (1) and (2), for instance, the lexemes *behave* and *carrier pigeon* are interpreted in accordance with the semantics of the argument structure constructions in which they occur, i.e. respectively the WAY construction (i.e. SUBJ V *one's way* OBL, cf. Israel, 1996: 218) and the DITRANSITIVE construction (i.e. SUBJ V OBJ OBJ<sub>2</sub>, cf. Goldberg, 1992: 46).

- (1) You can't talk your way out of something you *behaved* your way into. You have to *behave* your way out of it. (Twitter)
- (2) They *carrier pigeoned* me an invite this morning. (Twitter)

One of the main challenges from this perspective is to understand exactly the extent to which speakers are involved in the *coercion* process which enables to understand the lexemes. Following Leclercq (2017), I want to argue that although constructions can act as coercion triggers, the resolution process is primarily a pragmatic process. Bringing insights from Relevance Theory, as well as taking into account experimental findings (e.g. Nieuwland and van Berkum, 2006; Yoon, 2012), I will argue that hearers contextually reconstruct the meaning of these lexemes in accordance with their expectations of *relevance*.

Although being primarily a pragmatic process, however, coercion is linguistically triggered (and, therefore, linguistically required) by the grammatical constructions with which the coerced lexemes occur. In order to better understand the coercion process, the rest of this paper therefore aims at identifying the formal and semantic properties shared by these grammatical constructions. On the formal side, I will generally follow the perspective adopted in Construction Grammar according to which units of the language that can trigger coercion are (partially) schematic constructions. (cf. Michaelis, 2011: 1384) That is, from this perspective, only constructions that need to be filled in with a specific lexical element can have some coercive force over that lexeme. (Both the WAY construction and the DITRANSITIVE construction identified above have this particular property.) Concerning the semantic pole of these constructions, I will argue that they encode some kind of procedural meaning. (Blakemore, 1990, 2002) This perspective has already been suggested in Relevance Theory by Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2011: 88) when they argue that units which carry conceptual meaning are coercible and only units that carry procedural meaning have a coercive force. However, I will challenge the notion of procedural meaning as it is currently formulated in Relevance Theory (and which is not always clearly defined, cf. Carston, 2016) and argue that procedures might be better described in terms of meta-conceptual representations which enable the use of concepts. The view adopted here—both at the formal and semantic levels—therefore has strong implications concerning the acquisition and use of these constructions.

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Among the formal tests that are commonly used to distinguish Individual-Level predicates (ILPs) from Stage-Level predicates (SLPs), compatibility with respect to temporal / locative modifiers plays a salient role: only SLPs can be combined with temporal / locative modifiers, as shown in the examples in (1) and (2), from Maienborn (2004).

- (1) Maria was {tired / hungry / nervous} in the car. (SLPs)  
(2) #Maria was {blond / intelligent / a linguist} in the car. (ILPs)

In this presentation I will avoid discussing existing theoretical accounts of the contrast (for instance, accounts based on the existence of an eventive argument in SLPs) to concentrate on the contextual conditions under which an ILP can be acceptable in combination with a locative modifier, i.e. on the conditions that allow speakers to overcome the semantic mismatch between ILPs and locatives. I will simply assume that in fact some kind of interpretive mismatch is found in examples like (2) that precludes the possibility of obtaining a temporal reading of the adjunct akin to the one found in (1). The crucial fact is the possibility of accepting (2) with an *epistemic* or *experiential* reading of the adjunct, i.e. something like ‘Maria was blond / ... according to what you said in the car’; as Maienborn rightly points out, in this case the locative does not locate the subject, or a situation of Maria being blonde, but rather the source of a belief about Maria. According to Maienborn, non-locative readings of locative modifiers (i.e., temporal or epistemic readings) arise when the modifiers behave like *frame-setting modifiers* (Maienborn 2001), instead of VP-modifiers. In copular sentences, locatives tend to be interpreted as frame-setting modifiers. This interpretation is predominant –though not obligatory– when the locative occurs in initial position, as a topic, as in (3a), from Maienborn (2001:197); otherwise, the locative must be under narrow focus –i.e. informationally singled out from the rest of the proposition.

- (3) a. In Bolivia, Britta was blond. (‘For Bolivian standards, Britta was blond.’)  
b. Britta was blond [<sub>FOCUS</sub> in Bolivia].

My claim is that epistemic / experiential readings are not exclusively but mostly obtained as effects of a last-resort inferential mechanism (cf. Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2011): more precisely, they result from an operation of mismatch resolution triggered by the search for a non-locative reading. A non-locative reading is needed when locative modifiers cannot receive a straightforward interpretation as VP-modifiers and must thus be interpreted as frame-setting modifiers (even occurring in VP-internal positions, as in (2) and (3b)). This typically happens with ILPs. Epistemic / experiential readings, then, arise as a way of making the modifier compatible with the predicate: in fact, in the communicated proposition the locative is no longer modifying the lexical predicate, but a higher predicate of communication, belief or perception that must be inserted in the explicature of the utterance (‘The people in Bolivia considered Britta to be blond’). The different flavours of epistemic / experiential readings vary according to contextual factors. The key ingredient is the insertion of a subject that

experiences a situation, i.e. an alternative source of information –which allows us to characterize these readings as evidential. The resolution strategy is pragmatic.

The strongest argument in favour of a pragmatic approach to epistemic / experiential readings is their systematic presence in a wide variety of contexts and grammatical constructions that are completely unrelated to copular sentences and locative adjuncts. The Spanish example in (4) is one among many instances of the same interpretive strategy:

(4) Alzó la vista. El valle se extendió hasta el horizonte.

‘He raised his eyes. The valley extended to the horizon.’

In (4) an experiential reading is again forced as a result of the incompatibility between the fictive motion interpretation of the verbal predicate –the only one compatible with the subject *the valley*- and the perfective feature of the past tense –fictive motion is mostly licensed by imperfective tenses. Thus, the event of extension to the horizon cannot involve the valley itself, and an alternative event of extension **of the perception** of the valley by a subject is inferred to solve the mismatch.

The same mechanism can be observed, for instance, in the evidential readings of the copula *estar* in Spanish (Escandell-Vidal 2018), in perspectival readings of tense in different languages (Saussure 2013), and possibly in logophoric and perspectival readings of anaphoric expressions (Kuno 1987). This opens the possibility of unifying the analysis of many disparate phenomena under the notion of *mismatch resolution*.

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## Mismatches in the interpretation of sentences with multiple negative expressions in Mandarin Chinese. An experimental investigation

**Introduction.** Mandarin Chinese (MC) has been characterized as a double negation (DN) language in the literature (Cheng and Li 1991, Ding 1961, Lü 1985). In so-called DN languages the combination of multiple negative expressions within the boundaries of a sentential domain is expected to yield a DN reading, by which two negative elements cancel each other out and convey an affirmative proposition (*Law of Double Negation*, cf. Horn 1989). However, certain mismatches have been described in a DN language such as modern Dutch (Zeijlstra 2010, de Swart & Fontville 2014) by which at the output of the interaction of syntax and prosody a single negation (SN) reading can be inferred.

**Goals.** This study aims at exploring experimentally whether a SN reading is ever possible in MC when multiple negative expressions combine in a sentence. If so, is this possibility dependent on whether the stress occurs in Word1 (i.e., *cónglǎiméi* ‘never’, *cónglǎibù* ‘never’, *méiyǒurén* ‘no one’, *méiyǒudōngxi* ‘nothing’, *méiyǒu* ‘not’, *bù* ‘not’), or in Word2 (i.e., *méiyǒu*, *bù*)?, and is this possibility dependent on the type of the negative expressions involved and the combination thereof?

**Methods.** We designed an online perception experiment consisting of a judgment task in which 114 native speakers of MC (mean age 27.57, SD=5.97), after reading a question and listening to the recordings of an answer to this question, were asked to choose between one of two interpretations: one corresponds to a DN interpretation and the other to a SN interpretation. The audio-recordings combined ten syntactic patterns (with different distributions of two negative expressions) with four stress patterns (u+u, S+u, u+S, S+S) applied to each pair of negative expressions. By way of illustration, (1) provides an example (in English, for convenience) of a test item like those used in the experiment.

(1)

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**Context:** Every year the students in your school have the opportunity to attend a summer camp abroad.

Today there is a new teacher in your class. During the class, the new teacher asks you:

---

**Question**

Is there anybody in the class who hasn't been to America?

---

**Answer**



Méi(yǒu)rén      méi(yǒu)      qù      guò      Měiguó.

not.have.people    not.have    go    PART    America

'No one hasn't been to America.'

---

**Interpretation**

Interpretation 1: Everyone has been to America.

Interpretation 2: No one has been to America.

---

A total of 40 sentences were provided in a random order to each participant. 4,560 responses were analyzed using a Generalized Linear Mixed Model.

**Results.** Our results show that the choice of SN readings reached, overall, 7.06%, a percentage that is nonetheless statistically significant when analyzing the main effects of the type of negative element ( $p < .001$ ) and the stress on the second negative expression ( $p < .001$ ). This means that the participants' SN interpretation associated with multiple negative expressions is not randomly distributed, but caused by a series of (combinations of) factors. **First**, of all the

fixed factors, only STRESSED1 was not found to be significant ( $F = .518, p = .472$ ). By contrast, STRESSED2 was significant ( $F = 16.297, p < .001$ ), indicating that utterances got more SN readings when the second negative element was produced with stress than when it was not ( $p = .001$ ). The effect of stress on the second negative expression is significant when the first negative element is unstressed ( $p < .001$ ), but not when the first element is stressed ( $p = .302$ ) (see Table1). **Second**, *cónglǎiméi/cónglǎibù* obtained more SN readings than both *méiyǒu/bù* ( $p = .008$ ) and *méiyǒurén/méiyǒudōngxi* ( $p = .001$ ), the latter also being significantly different such that more SN readings were obtained for *méiyǒu/bù* compared to *méiyǒurén/méiyǒudōngxi* ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table2). **Third**, concerning the interaction ELEMENTTYPE × STRESSED1, stressed *cónglǎiméi/cónglǎibù* received more SN readings than unstressed ones ( $p = .002$ ) (see Table3). **Fourth**, concerning the interaction ELEMENTTYPE × STRESSED2, when *méiyǒu/bù* occupied the first position, utterances with stress in the second expression received more SN readings than those with an unstressed Word2 ( $p < .001$ ) (see Table4).

|               | Proportion single negation (SD) |               | Sig.       |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|------------|
|               | W2 unstressed                   | W2 STRESSED   |            |
| W1 unstressed | .0090 (.0030)                   | .0397 (.0087) | $p < .001$ |
| W1 STRESSED   | .0189 (.0053)                   | .0244 (.0062) | $p = .302$ |

Table1

| ElementType, W1               | Proportion of single negation (SD) |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>cónglǎiméi/cónglǎibù</i>   | .0483 (.0120)                      |
| <i>méiyǒu/bù</i>              | .0228 (.0050)                      |
| <i>méiyǒurén/méiyǒudōngxi</i> | .0073 (.0024)                      |

Table2

| ElementType, W1               | Proportion of single negation (SD) |               | Significance |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                               | W1 unstressed                      | W1 STRESSED   |              |
| <i>méiyǒurén/méiyǒudōngxi</i> | .0092 (.0033)                      | .0059 (.0022) | $p = .221$   |
| <i>méiyǒu/bù</i>              | .0248 (.0057)                      | .0210 (.0052) | $p = .377$   |
| <i>cónglǎiméi/cónglǎibù</i>   | .0299 (.0091)                      | .0772 (.0190) | $p = .002$   |

Table3

| ElementType, W1               | Proportion of single negation (SD) |               | Significance |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                               | W2 unstressed                      | W2 STRESSED   |              |
| <i>méiyǒurén/méiyǒudōngxi</i> | .0052 (.0022)                      | .0105 (.0033) | $p = .080$   |
| <i>méiyǒu/bù</i>              | .0105 (.0030)                      | .0491 (.0112) | $p < .001$   |
| <i>cónglǎiméi/cónglǎibù</i>   | .0407 (.0118)                      | .0573 (.0149) | $p = .162$   |

Table4

**Discussion.** We argue that (i) the interaction of syntax and prosody (stress in particular) makes possible the emergence of SN readings in MC; (ii) when two negative markers combine and Word2 is stressed, the latter is the one taken to express sentential negation (interpretive effect of the violation of the expected declination of the fundamental frequency contour, Pierrehumbert 1979, Belotel-Grenié & Grenié 2003); and (iii) when Word1 is a preverbal adjunct, it merely modifies the negative sentence rather than negating it (vs. argumental negative quantifiers).

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