On the locus of expressivity in Spanish

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Proposal: The main claim of this talk is that certain non-truth conditional meanings are exclusively triggered *by properties of vocabulary items* (in the sense of Halle & Marantz 1993 and subsequent work). In other words, those meanings arise "late" and are not part of the syntactic-semantic derivation. Thus, we capture the notion of *parallel meaning dimension* from architectural considerations without the need of any metalogical operator (e.g., the "●" symbol in Potts 2005 and McCready 2010, among others) especially designated to separate meaning dimensions. This proposal finds interesting support from certain interactions involving biased words and ellipsis. Our basic expressive paradigm involves pairs of mixed words whose contribution to truth-conditional meaning is equivalent: They are only differentiated by register (e.g., *comer 'to eat'* vs. ***morfar 'to eat.**$_{inf}$*) or by register plus a derogative dimension (e.g., slurs: *boliviano* 'Bolivians' vs. ***bolita*** 'Bolivians$_{\text{pejorative}}$').

A crucial property of both informal and slurs terms is that they form doublets. In this respect, our initial conjecture is that at least some forms of expressivity are the direct result of (lexical) free variation; i.e., competition in the paradigmatic space among truth-conditionally identical terms gives rise to expressive meanings. We'll not concerned on how to model such expressive dimension: a bias on contexts of use (Predelli 2013), a stereotype for slurs (Orlando & Saab 2017), or a conventional implicature (Potts 2005 and, especially, McCready 2010) are some of the available option that our theory allows. For the purposes of this talk we can remain neutral, inasmuch those meaning don't interact with the truth-conditional dimension.

Sketch of the implementation: We assume a particular separationist view on the lexicon, according to which the lexicon consists of three lists (Harley 2014):

List 1: *Feature bundles*: Syntactic primitives, both interpretable and uninterpretable, functional and contentful.

List 2: *Vocabulary Items*: Instructions for pronouncing terminal nodes in context.

List 3: *Encyclopedia*: Instructions for interpreting terminal nodes in context.

As advanced above, our working hypothesis is that expressive meanings only arise as a property of vocabulary items (i.e., they are a property of list 2) after lexical insertion has taken place at PF. As illustration, consider *trabajar* 'to work' *vs*. *laburar* 'to work.*inf*' in Argentinian Spanish. On this theory, expressivity is triggered by a diacritic associated to the Root of *laburar* in List 2. This diacritic triggers expressive meaning in some of the ways suggested above (in this case, as a conventional implicature or a restriction on use contexts).

List 1: [abstract Root for *trabajar*]	List 1: [abstract Root for *laburar*]
List 2: **[trabajar] ↔ /trabajar/**	List 2: **[laburar] ↔ /laburár/**$_{\textbf{expressive}\ \text{meaning}}$
	Expressive meaning (informal formulation):
	The speaker is being informal
List 3: [trabajar] ↔ ⟦ λx.x trabaja⟧	List 3: [laburar] ↔ ⟦ λx.x trabaja⟧

Empirical evidence: The main empirical support for the theory I defend comes from *the impossibility of bias vehicle change under ellipsis*; i.e., the impossibility of having different expressive content between antecedent and ellipsis site in different varieties of ellipsis. In order to see the form of the argument, consider first Spanish NP-ellipsis. In this language, words like *culo* 'ass' and *cola* 'tail' when applied to humans refer to the same body part, the difference being only in the biased dimension of each word. Thus, *culo* is coarse language and *cola* is the polite form at least in some dialects (Argentinian Spanish, for instance). Interestingly, both nouns

differ in gender: *culo* is masculine, but *cola* is feminine. This allows us to test their behavior in NP-ellipsis contexts. As shown below, bias mismatches are fully ungrammatical in any direction (identical NPs in the antecedent and the ellipsis site are perfectly grammatical, not illustrated here for space reasons):

(1) *El **culo** de Juan es más grande
the.masc.sg ass.masc.sg of J. is more big
que la <**cola**> de María.
that the.fem.sg <tail.fem.sg > of M.
*La **cola** de Juan es más grande
the.fem.sg tail.fem.sg of J. is more big
que el <**culo**> de María.
that the.masc.sg <ass.masc.sg > of M. (< > = ellipsis site)

Facts like these militate against an identity condition formulated in terms of mutual entailment (Merchant 1999) and in favor of different versions of lexical identity. The two sentences in (1) satisfy Merchant's mutual entailment and are, however, strongly ungrammatical.

Now, when it comes to other types of ellipses a puzzle arises. Consider fragments answers: In Argentinian Spanish, for instance, the "neutral" verb *comer* 'to eat' is semantically undistinguishable from the verb *morfar* 'to eat'. This can be demonstrated by well-known substitution tests: any occurrence of the verb *comer* can be replaced (modulo metalinguistic and sociolinguistic tones) by an occurrence of the verb *morfar* and vice versa. The predictions for mutual entailment in ellipsis are more or less clear: In principle, register mismatches between antecedents and ellipsis sites should be allowed, in a way such that modeling the ellipsis sites as indicated in (2B) should be possible:

(2) A: Qué **morfaste**?
what ate.2p.sg.informal
B: Una pizza <**comí**>, pero yo nunca hablo informalmente.
a pizza ate but I never speak.1sg informally
'A pizza, but I never speak informally.'

Here is the dilemma: Either we have a dissociated identity condition (lexical identity for NP-ellipsis and mutual entailment for fragments) or one of the two generalizations is spurious. Notice, however, that on the theory sketched here, there is no such a dilemma: there is lexical identity in the syntax in both cases. Put differently, the ellipsis site in (2B) must be modeled as containing the same roots for *morfar* in the antecedent and the ellipsis site:

(3) A: Qué [$_{TP}$ **morfaste** *t*]?
B: Una pizza <[$_{TP}$ **morfé** *t*]>, pero yo nunca hablo informalmente.

Now, given that lexical insertion is a necessary condition for expressive meaning, we correctly predicts that (2B) contains an ellipsis site lexically identical to its antecedent without raising the informal meaning that *morfar* has after lexical insertion. That is to say, given that register is a property of vocabulary items, it follows now why one can model the ellipsis site as in (3B) (i.e., respecting lexical identity) and have a coherent discourse at the same time. As I'll show slurs, and other types of expressive items, also pass this ellipsis test, providing additional support for this theory of expressivity. Finally, I'll discuss another piece of crucial evidence involving a particular interaction between syllabic inversion at PF and expressive meaning (e.g., Argentinian Spanish *mujer* → *jermu* 'woman' → 'woman.$_{inf}$' after syllabic inversion at PF). Here, expressive meaning only arises after lexical insertion, showing again that expressivity is a PF matter.

Selected references: **Harley**, H. 2014. On the identity of roots. *Theoretical Linguistics* 40: 225–276. **McCready**, E. 2010. Varieties of conventional implicatures. *Semantics & Pragmatics* 3: 1-57. **Merchant**, J. 1999. *The syntax of silence: sluicing,*

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