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Magari*

FRANCESCA MASINI and PAOLA PIETRANDREA

Abstract

We propose a constructionist approach to the polyfunctionality of the Italian focus particle magari (roughly corresponding to 'maybe', but also 'I wish'). The sheer syntactic versatility of this word leads us to detect its formal regularities at the level of discourse configurations. This level of analysis, identified within the French linguistic tradition, is defined by the maintenance of a predicate-argument-adjunct structure in discourse. The salient feature of discourse configurations is their shape, which can be described by referring to a number of topological patterns: lists of elements in the same syntactic position, repetition of syntactic structures, shifting of elements from a post-verbal to a pre-verbal position and so on. These topological patterns are meaningful to an extent and they are eligible to be regarded as constructions. Magari is shown to be regularly associated with a general topological pattern, namely a list of items that occupy the same syntactic position as the item focused by magari. Each semantic function of magari correlates with one particular kind of list. These associations of a form (the different types of lists) and a meaning (the functions of magari) are shown to be related to one another by means of inheritance links.

Keywords: non factuality, focus particle, construction grammar, discourse configuration, topology, lists.

1. The polyfunctionality of magari

The word *magari* has attracted considerable attention among Italian linguists because of its especially intriguing polyfunctionality that knows no parallel in its counterparts in other European languages (cf. Arcaini 1997, 2000; Licari and Stame 1989; Schiemann 2008).

Firstly, *magari* can have the function of a general marker of non factuality. In this case, it roughly corresponds to the English adverb 'maybe'. See example (1):

- (1) ***Magari è a casa***
'Maybe (s)he is at home'

Magari can also function as a scalar operator (in the sense of Fillmore, Kay and O'Connor 1988 and Kay 1990), triggering a scale of non factuality whose extreme position is occupied by the constituent in the focus of *magari*. See (2):

- (2) ***Bisognerebbe negoziare una tregua, un armistizio, magari la pace***
'It would be necessary to negotiate a ceasefire, an armistice and maybe peace'

Besides, *magari* may act as a non factual concessive marker, as in (3), where the speaker concedes that the subject is clever despite thinking that he has not studied enough:

- (3) ***Magari è intelligente, ma non è abbastanza preparato***
'He might be clever, but he has not studied enough'

In imperatival contexts, *magari* weakens the illocutionary force of the order, as in the following example:

- (4) ***Magari parlagliene tu!***
'Perhaps you yourself could talk to him about it!'

Finally, *magari* functions as an optative marker. This happens when it occurs in exclamative contexts:

- (5) ***Vorrei tanto vedere un film come quello. Magari ne facessero ancora!***
'I really would like to watch a movie like that. I wish they still made some!'
- (6) A: ***Vuoi un po' di riposo?***
'Would you like to rest a bit?'
- B: ***Magari!***
'I'd love to! / I wish I could!'

2. The problem

The problem that arises is: how can we account for the polyfunctionality of *magari*? First of all, one should decide whether the functions of *magari* are somewhat related to each other or are completely independent, i.e. homonymous. There is a good reason for rejecting the latter hypothesis, namely: the set of functions held by *magari*—non factual, scalar non factual, non factual concessive, imperative, optative—recalls in most respects the semantic network developed by several irrealis markers of non factuality in various non-European languages (cf., e.g., Elliott 2000; Lazard 1998). The crosslinguistic presence of similar semantic networks makes it fairly unlikely that we are dealing with pure homonymy.

We therefore consider the various functions of *magari* as microsenses of this word, that is “distinct sense units [...] that occur in different contexts and whose default construals stand in a relation of mutual incompatibility at the same hierarchical level” (Croft and Cruse 2004: 126–7). Under this perspective, the word *magari* has a hyperonymic reading and a cluster of hyponymous readings, whose default construals are sister incompatibles (Croft and Cruse 2004: 127).

The question now arises of identifying the contexts that licence the various functions of *magari* and the nature of the relations holding between these functions. Such a task is made more complicated by the sheer syntactic versatility of *magari*. Indeed the contexts in which *magari* occurs can be properly detected only by adopting a wide-ranging notion of context. In section 3 we describe the practical difficulties encountered in the analysis of *magari* and the theoretical approach and tools adopted for solving them, whereas in section 4 we provide a qualitative and quantitative description of *magari* and its various functions. In section 5, we give a construction grammar account of our findings.

3. The theoretical approach

3.1. Construction grammar

A fruitful theoretical approach to the kind of problem outlined in the previous section is to place the analysis of *magari* in the wide framework of construction grammar. As is well known, construction grammar comprises a number of different models (cf., among others, Croft 2001; Fillmore, Kay and O’Connor 1988; Goldberg 1995, 2006; Kay and Fillmore 1999), which nevertheless share a set of basic tenets. The main tenet regards the very notion

of “construction”, which is defined as a conventionalized association of a form and a meaning and is considered the basic unit of linguistic analysis. This definition virtually captures every meaningful unit of language, ranging from simple words to more complex and abstract sentence-level structures, such as argument structure constructions (Goldberg 1995) or sentence types (Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996). It is thus clear that certain higher-level abstract patterns, those that are commonly considered as “context” for lower-level lexically specified units, may be treated as full linguistic objects in this framework, provided that they prove to be meaningful to some extent.

Another assumption of constructionist approaches that is crucial for our purposes is that they take into account “not only syntactic and semantic information, but also lexical and/or pragmatic information” (Kay 1990: 61) and that all this information is coded simultaneously in the construction and contributes to characterize the constructions itself.

This provides the tools for the detection of the correlations between certain contexts, or rather “constructions”, and the various functions of *magari*. This latter theoretical issue has been recently addressed by Fried (2007), who has convincingly argued that the relations between the different functions of the same polyfunctional lexical unit are better understood if one takes into account the entire construction in which they occur, rather than the single item under examination. Therefore, the entire construction becomes the true linguistic form to be investigated.

Still another aspect of constructionist approaches—and in particular of Goldberg’s “cognitive construction grammar” (Goldberg 2006)—that will prove useful in our analysis is the use of inheritance links, which account for the relations holding among constructions. The inheritance system works this way: if construction A shares some formal properties with construction B, then construction A also shares some semantic properties with B, and the two constructions are related by an inheritance link. As is well known, according to Goldberg (1995: 75ff), there are four major types of inheritance links: polysemy links (I_p), subpart links (I_s), instance links (I_l) and finally metaphorical extension links (I_M).¹ Given this framework, all the possible abstract constructions that host the adverb *magari* can be regarded as constructions that share at least one formal property—namely the presence of *magari*—and that are eligible to be linked to one another at the representational level. Therefore, once we have identified the form

of the constructions in which *magari* occurs, we will have to determine which kind of inheritance links connect these various constructions to one another. First of all, though, we have to address the formal analysis of the contexts of *magari*, which is not unproblematic.

3.2. *A practical difficulty*

A practical difficulty in the formal analysis of *magari* concerns the above-mentioned syntactic versatility of this word, which makes it particularly hard to define its contexts of occurrence.

Indeed, *magari* occurs in every illocutionary act: assertions (cf. examples (1) to (3)), orders (4), exclamations (5). It can also occur in questions, as exemplified in (7):²

- (7) *Non potrebbe essere uscito con un amico? Non sarà magari con suo fratello?*
 ‘Don’t you think he might have gone out with a friend?
 Couldn’t he be with his brother?’

What is more, the categorial status of *magari* is not easy to define: it can be used either as an interjection (6) or as an adverb (cf. examples (1) through (5) and (7)). Occasionally, and retaining some of the semantic properties of its adverbial function, it can also be understood as a clause connective, as exemplified in (8):

- (8) *Magari un po’ debilina, magari me la sono immaginata, magari è solo un effetto ottico... Ma vi giuro che l’ho vista* [Web]
 ‘Maybe a bit feeble, maybe I dreamt it, maybe it’s just an optical effect, but I swear I saw it’

As an adverb, *magari* can have scope on units of different size and category. First, it can have both a clausal scope, as in (1), (3), (4) and (5), and a phrasal scope, as in examples (2), (7) and (9) to (11):

- (9) *È un piacere venir qui e vedere tutta questa gente che si commuove per me e che magari ha pianto per la mia vittoria* [Web]
 ‘It’s nice to come here and see all these people who are moved because of me and who, maybe, cried for my victory’
- (10) *Gli aerei piccoli e molto utilizzati, con personale poco pagato e magari stanco, non possono dare la massima tranquillità né agli utenti né ai sindacati* [Web]

‘Small and thoroughly exploited aircrafts, with a badly paid and possibly tired staff, cannot fully reassure either users or trade unions’

- (11) *Si discute magari male, ma sempre molto a lungo*
 ‘We discuss perhaps badly, but always at great length’

When *magari* has scope on a phrase, the latter can be a verb phrase (9), an adjectival phrase (10), an adverbial phrase (11), a prepositional phrase (7) and even a noun phrase as in (2). Besides, *magari* is endowed with an almost unrestrained syntactic mobility: it can occur in fact at every major phrasal boundary. For example, if we consider the proposition in (12), we may have the patterns in (13):

- (12) *Luigi è venuto*
 ‘Luigi has come’
- (13) a. ***Magari*** *Luigi è venuto*
 b. *Luigi magari è venuto*
 c. *Luigi è venuto, magari*

Some regularities can be easily detected even in such a complex picture. For example, *magari*’s use as an optative is preferably expressed with an interjection in exclamative contexts. The imperative use is associated with orders.

Nevertheless, some difficulties remain in detecting the relevant context associated with non factual, scalar and concessive uses of *magari*. The assertive context, for example, appears to be associated with all these functions. The size and category of the unit within the scope of *magari* is not a relevant factor in determining the function of this word. As a matter of example, we have shown above that *magari* retains the same scalar function whether it has scope on a verb phrase (9), an adjectival phrase (10) or a nominal phrase (2). Such a function is also compatible with a clausal scope of *magari*, as shown in (14):

- (14) *Forse è venuto ieri, ha passato qui tutto il pomeriggio e magari si è fermato a dormire*
 ‘Perhaps he came yesterday, he spent the whole afternoon here and possibly he stopped for the night’

Not even the distribution of *magari* within the clause seems to be a relevant parameter to detect its correct function. For instance, when it has a sentential scope, *magari* may have the same

concessive function whether it fronts the clause (15), is pre-verbal (16) or, finally, post-verbal (17):

- (15) *Magari* Luigi ha sbagliato, ma io non me ne sono accorta
 ‘Luigi might have made a mistake, but I couldn’t spot it’
 (16) Luigi *magari* ha sbagliato, ma io non me ne sono accorta
 (17) Luigi ha sbagliato, *magari*, ma io non me ne sono accorta

This syntactic versatility of *magari* makes it not trivial to identify the structural constraints that characterize the maximally abstract *magari* construction (the “hyperonymic” *magari*) and all other sub-constructions. As things stand, we could simply propose that, in all its functions, *magari* can be described as the only lexically specified part of a maximally abstract construction in which the only relevant information regards the internal make-up, i.e. the presence of the unit *magari* with its phonetic properties (even the information about its categorial status is underspecified, since it may behave both as an adverb and as an interjection). Such a characterization is obviously largely unsatisfactory for our purposes.

3.3. *Theoretical tools: discourse configurations, topological structures, topological patterns*

The difficulty described in the previous section has led us to look for tools that could help in better defining the trans-categorial and trans-level nature of *magari*. Within the French linguistic tradition, a level of analysis has been identified that is called *configuration de discours* (‘discourse configuration’) (cf., among others, Blanche-Benveniste 1993, 1997; Blanche-Benveniste et al. 1979, 1990; Gerdes and Kahane in prep.). In order to define discourse configurations, we assume as a primitive what Blanche-Benveniste et al. (1979) called *construction maximale* (‘maximal construction’), i.e., the predicate-argument-adjunct structure. The predicate-argument-adjunct structure is hardly ever realized together in a sequence in discourse. More frequently, it is gradually built by means of repetitions, rewordings, additions, and other kinds of insurances on one or more of its positions. So, for example, the predicate-argument-adjunct structure in (18) may be realized as in (19) as well as in (20):³

- (18) *ADJ₁-ARG₁-PRE-ARG₂*
 (19) *Forse chissà io ho scelto il momento sbagliato*
 ‘Maybe, who knows, I have chosen the wrong moment’

1	<i>forse</i> 'maybe'			
2	<i>chissà</i> 'who knows'	<i>io</i> 'I'	<i>ho scelto</i> 'have chosen'	<i>il momento sbagliato</i> 'the wrong moment'
	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	PRE	ARG ₂

- (20) *Magari lui rincorre un sogno, un'utopia, un ideale qualunque*
'Maybe he pursues a dream, a utopia, an ideal whatsoever'

1	<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>lui</i> 'he'	<i>rincorre</i> 'pursues'	<i>un sogno</i> 'a dream'
2				<i>un'utopia</i> 'a utopia'
3				<i>un ideale qualunque</i> 'an ideal whatsoever'
	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	PRE	ARG ₂

A given predicate-argument-adjunct structure can also be instantiated more than once in discourse. For example, the spoken sequence in (21) features two repetitions of the ADJ₁-ARG₁-PRE-ARG₂ structure, beside the multiple instantiations of the ARG₁ and ARG₂ positions:

- (21) *praticamente per ogni tipo di gioco c'era un edificio specifico.*
Per esempio il circo serviva alle corse dei carri, l'anfiteatro
alle lotte dei gladiatori, lo stadio per i giochi atletici
'In practice, for every kind of game there was a specific building. For example the circus was for the chariot races, the amphitheatre for the gladiator fights, the stadium for athletic games'
[from Bonvino 2005: 61]

1	<i>praticamente</i> 'in practice'	<i>per ogni tipo di gioco</i> 'for every kind of game'	<i>c'era</i> 'there was'	<i>un edificio specifico</i> 'a specific building'
2	<i>per esempio</i> 'for example'	<i>il circo</i> 'the circus'	<i>serviva</i> 'was'	<i>alle corse dei carri</i> 'for the chariot races'
3		<i>l'anfiteatro</i> 'the amphitheatre'		<i>alle lotte dei gladiatori</i> 'for the gladiator fights'
4		<i>lo stadio</i> 'the stadium'		<i>per i giochi atletici</i> 'for athletic games'
	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	PRE	ARG ₂

The chunk made up of the sequence of units “that instantiate or repeat a given predicate-argument-adjunct structure” is called **discourse configuration** (Pietrandrea 2008a).

As this definition makes clear, discourse configurations are objects defined in purely syntactic terms. Interestingly, though, they may have a semantic investment. Let us consider the following example:

- (22) *Io mangio. Il mondo crolla*
 ‘I eat. The world collapses’

In this case there is a discourse configuration defined by one repetition of the syntactic structure ARG-PRE. The two sentences making up the discourse configuration depict totally unrelated situations. Still, the syntactic parallelism between the two sentences forces the addressee to find a semantic relation between them: in this case a relation of contrast. Interestingly, when the same situations are depicted by two contiguous but distinct structures, which hence do not form a proper discourse configuration, the addressee is not invited to postulate a relation between the two situations:

- (23) *??Sono io che mangio. Il mondo crolla*
??‘It is me who eat. The world collapses’

Discourse configurations can be more or less extended: while the discourse configurations in (19) and (20) are limited to a clause, the discourse configuration in (21) spans an entire text. Therefore, crucially, discourse configurations are defined regardless of the boundary between the clausal and the supra-clausal level.

The discourse configurations from (19) through (25) are represented in “grids”, i.e., through a rewriting procedure elaborated mainly by Blanche-Benveniste and colleagues (1979), Bilger (1982), Blanche-Benveniste and colleagues (1990), Bilger and colleagues (1997), and Bonvino (2005) and Pietrandrea (2008a) for Italian. This rewriting procedure consists in a representation of the speech flow on a bi-dimensional plane and is constrained by three rules: (i) the horizontal axis of the plane should feature the sequence of the positions that define the predicate-argument-adjunct structure; (ii) the vertical axis should list all the actual realizations within each position; (iii) a left-to-

right and top-down reading of the string contained in the grid should render the linear order of the represented chunk.

This representation highlights an important fact, namely that the salient feature of discourse configurations is their shape and not the categories they are made up of. We refer to the shape of a discourse configuration with the term “**topological structure**”. Such a topological structure can be described by referring to a number of bi-dimensional “**topological patterns**”: lists of elements in the same position, repetitions of syntactic structures, chiasms of elements shifting from a pre-verbal to a post-verbal position (or *viceversa*) and so on.⁴

It should be noted that units belonging to different levels and categories may enter the same topological structure. For example, the two discourse configurations used as answers in (24) and (25) are made up of clauses and nominal constituents respectively. Nevertheless, they present the very same topological structure, characterized by a list of instantiations of the rightmost position, whose last element is preceded by *magari* (cf. section 4.4 for more details on this structure).

(24) A: *Come mai è così tranquillo?*

‘Why is he so calm?’

B: *Sarà rientrato presto, si sarà riposato, magari avrà dormito*

‘He probably came back home early, rested, maybe slept’

1		<i>sarà rientrato presto</i> ‘he probably came back home early’
2		<i>si sarà riposato</i> ‘he probably rested’
3	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’	<i>avrà dormito</i> ‘he probably slept’
	ADJ ₁	PRE

(25) A: *Chi può essere stato?*

‘Who could have done this?’

B: *Un gatto, un cane, magari una scimmietta*

‘A cat, a dog, possibly a small monkey’

1		<i>un gatto</i> 'a cat'
2		<i>un cane</i> 'a dog'
3	<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>una scimmietta</i> 'a small monkey'
	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁

The body of research carried out on discourse configurations has shown, albeit incidentally, that certain topological patterns, as well as the various topological structures within which those patterns are unified, may have very abstract meanings. For example, we have seen above in (22) that the repetition of the same syntactic structure may carry a meaning of contrast (see also Blanche Benveniste 1997: 113). Another example of “meaningful” topological pattern comes from the listing of elements in only one position of the grid. The abstract topological pattern “list” has the very general meaning of “relation among the conjuncts” and may assume more specific meanings according to the exact way in which it is instantiated. For instance, it is acknowledged that a list instantiated by conjuncts preceded by one or more additive particles, is interpreted as an additive list (26).

(26) *Ha comprato il pane e il latte*
'(S)he bought bread and milk'

1	<i>ha comprato</i> '(s)he bought'		<i>il pane</i> 'bread'
2		<i>e</i> 'and'	<i>il latte</i> 'milk'
	PRE	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁

Accordingly, a list instantiated by conjuncts preceded by one or more exclusive particles is interpreted as an exclusive list (27).

(27) *Torna domani o dopodomani*
'(S)he will come back tomorrow or the day after'

1	<i>torna</i> '(s)he comes back'		<i>domani</i> 'tomorrow'
2		<i>o</i> 'or'	<i>dopodomani</i> 'the day after'
	PRE	ADJ ₁	ADJ ₂

Yet other types of lists are possible (cf. Bonvino and Masini 2007 for a preliminary study, but also Gerdes and Kahane in prep.). A list which features the repetition (for two, three or more times) of the same lexical material in the same position conveys a general meaning of intensification that, we may suppose, specialises according to the categorial nature of the repeated constituent. For example, the repetition of the adjective *piccola* 'small' in (28) acts as a superlative, while the repetition of the verb in (29), as noted by Bertinetto (1991: 50), is a special way to express continuous aspect in Italian.

- (28) *Ho visto una casa piccola piccola*
'I saw a little little house'

1	<i>ho visto</i> 'I saw'	<i>una casa</i> 'a house'	<i>piccola</i> 'little'
2			<i>piccola</i> 'little'
	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₁

- (29) *L'eroe cerca cerca cerca ma non trova nulla*
'The hero searches, searches, searches but does not find anything'
[from Bertinetto 1991: 50]

1		<i>l'eroe</i> 'the hero'		<i>cerca</i> 'searches'	
2				<i>cerca</i> 'searches'	
3				<i>cerca</i> 'searches'	
4	<i>ma</i> 'but'		<i>non</i> 'not'	<i>trova</i> 'finds'	<i>niente</i> 'anything'
			ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₁
	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	PRE		ARG ₂

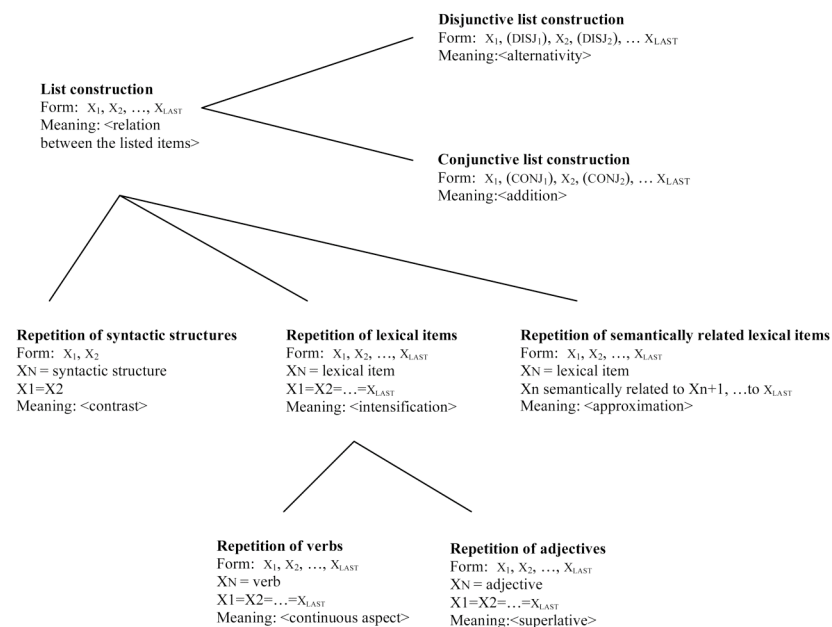
A list which features the repetition of semantically related elements, especially co-hyponyms may convey a meaning of lexical approximation (30).

(30) *C'era un elenco, un sommario, un indice insomma*
 'There was a list, a summary, an index let's say'

1	<i>c'era</i> 'there was'	<i>un elenco</i> 'a list'	
2		<i>un sommario</i> 'a summary'	
3		<i>un indice</i> 'an index'	<i>insomma</i> 'let's say'
	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₁

We propose in Figure 1 a tentative representation of the relations observed between the listing phenomena mentioned above. Albeit preliminary, this representation shows that the use of a topological methodology allows to provide a unified account for a number of constructional phenomena usually treated under different domains.

Figure 1. The constructional network for "lists"



To sum up, topological patterns can be viewed as indefinitely extended, bi-dimensional, syntactic patterns, defined regardless of the boundary between the clausal and the supra-clausal level and (at least at the most abstract level) regardless of the categories they are made up of. These formal patterns are “meaningful” to a certain extent.

3.4. *Topological patterns as constructions*

The existence of “meaningful” abstract patterns naturally recalls the notion of “construction” in construction grammar. We would propose therefore to consider topological patterns as a type of constructions that operate at the level of discourse configurations.

Including topological patterns among the array of constructions is in line with some important recent attempts to break the boundary of the clause/sentence (Mithun 2005, 2008) and to extend the notion of construction to upper-level entities (Fried and Östman 2004; Fried and Östman 2005; Östman 2005). In fact, as made clear by Fried and Östman (2005) and Östman (2005), construction grammar, as a theory, has no built-in limitation with respect to the extension of the notion of construction to larger stretches of discourse. Yet, only a very limited number of works on constructions deal with upper-level entities. Among them, Östman (2005) should be mentioned, who suggests that constructions can be detected at the textual level, claiming that there exist “discourse patterns” with a form (i.e. text type) and a meaning or function (i.e. genre).

Our paper follows this line of research. However, whereas Östman (2005) extends the notion of construction to entire texts and claims that this textual setting is essential for interpreting certain sentences correctly, in this paper we hypothesize that there exist constructions insensitive to the boundary of the clause/sentence and defined by their topological structure. Like all constructions, they can be more or less specified and enter inheritance systems.

The analysis of *magari* in what follows will be driven by these theoretical hypotheses.

4. **The analysis of magari**

Pietrandrea (2007) has—albeit cursorily—observed that, although distributional regularities cannot be found at the clause level, *magari* has a regular topological distribution in discourse configurations. In particular, she noted that 42 out of the 75 tokens of *magari* occurring in a small corpus of the Roman variety of

spoken Italian (about 56 percent), are associated with a specific kind of topological pattern: the focus of *magari* belongs to a list of items that realize the same syntactic position. In utterance (31), for example, the ARG₂ position is realized by four different arguments ('in a scene', 'in a forest', 'in a jungle', 'in the desert'), the first of which is in the focus of *magari*.

- (31) *Che ne so poteva comparire una scenografia che che magari li riportava ne in un ambiente, in una foresta piuttosto che in una giungla nel deserto* [LIP]
 'I don't know a set could appear that that maybe reconveyed them in in a scene, in a forest rather than in a jungle, in the desert'

1	<i>che ne so</i> 'I don't know'	<i>poteva comparire</i> 'could appear'	<i>una scenografia</i> 'a set'	<i>che</i> 'that'			
2				<i>che</i> 'that'	<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>li riportava</i> 'reconveyed them'	<i>ne</i> 'in'
3							<i>in un ambiente</i> 'in a scene'
4							<i>in una foresta</i> 'in a forest'
5					<i>piuttosto che</i> 'rather than'		<i>in una giungla</i> 'in a jungle'
6							<i>nel deserto</i> 'in the desert'
				ARG ₁	ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₂
	ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂			

This strong tendency to occur in lists induced Pietrandrea (2007) to semantically characterize *magari*, commonly understood as an epistemic adverb, as a generic marker of non factuality, more precisely as a marker of "non exclusion of factuality" (NEF). In other words, putting forward the constituent in the focus of *magari* as but one of a set of possible options, the speaker does not fully subscribe to the factuality of the proposition realized through that constituent ('that reconveyed them in a scene'): (s)he simply does not exclude that that proposition could be factual.

We have further extended Pietrandrea's analysis with the aid of two large, diatopically balanced corpora of both spoken and written contemporary Italian, namely: the *la Repubblica* corpus (written, approx. 380 million tokens, cf. Baroni et al. 2004) and the *Lessico di Frequenza dell'Italiano Parlato* (LIP) corpus (spoken, approx. 500.000 tokens, cf. De Mauro et al. 1993).

We randomly selected 600 occurrences of *magari* (300 in the written corpus and 300 in the spoken corpus). For the sake of consistency, we subtracted from this first corpus 35 occurrences (32 spoken and 3 written) that could not be easily interpreted, such as for example (32), where the speaker interrupts himself right after uttering *magari*, thus making a proper classification impossible:

- (32) *Cioè non vorrei scartare questa possibilità a priori insomma magari*
 ‘I mean I wouldn’t want to rule this out from the outset, I mean, *magari*’

We analyzed the remaining 565 occurrences of *magari* within the context of their discourse configurations; i.e., we took as a relevant unit of analysis the whole chunk made up of the sequence of units that instantiate or repeat the predicate-argument-adjunct structure that each occurrence of *magari* contributes to define.

A first thorough analysis of this corpus allowed us to identify the five main functions of *magari* mentioned in section 1. Afterwards, both authors coded separately the entire data set. The more problematic cases were discussed together.

This led to exclude, for the sake of simplicity, the 20 occurrences of *magari* (9 spoken and 11 written) that fulfilled more than one function. Thus, for example, we excluded occurrences such as (33), where *magari* functions at the same time as a concessive and as a scalar marker.⁵ The final corpus therefore amounts to a total of 545 (286 written and 259 spoken) occurrences of *magari*.

- (33) *Ce la mettono tutta, magari scrivono anche bei pezzi, ma sono troppo limitati, possono esprimersi solo parzialmente* [laR]
 ‘They try hard, they might even write nice pieces, but they are too limited, they can only partially express themselves’

The discussion of the more problematic cases also led to a more precise semantic characterization of the five functions associated to *magari*, which can be defined as follows:

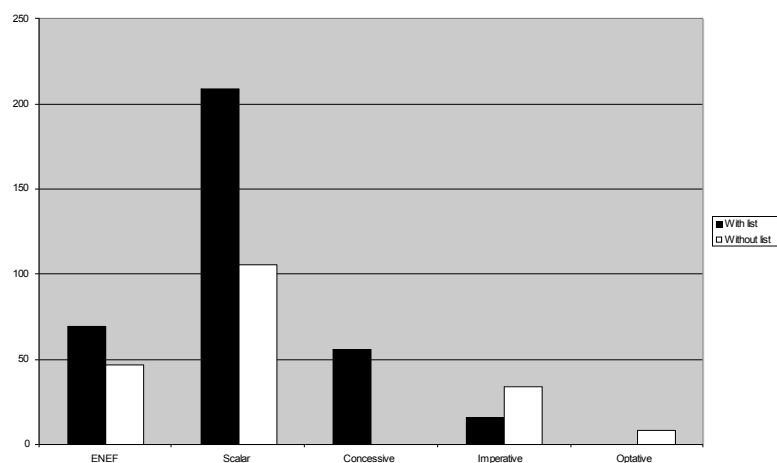
- equipotential non exclusion of factuality (ENEF);
- scalar non exclusion of factuality;
- scalar concessive conditional;
- weakened imperative;
- optative.

The quantitative results of our investigation on the final sample are given in Table 1.

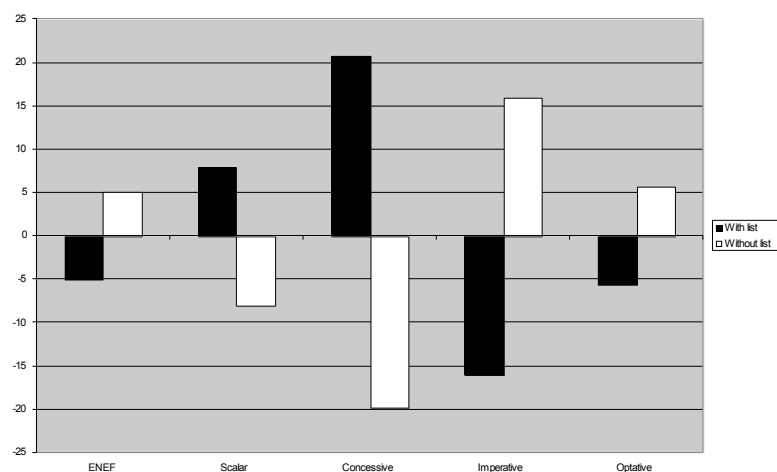
Table 1. Functions of *magari* in the corpus

	ENEf	Scalar	Concessive	Imperative	Optative	Total	%
Written	30	223	27	3	3	286	100%
With list	23	145	27	1	0	196	69%
Without list	7	78	0	2	3	90	31%
Spoken	87	91	28	47	6	259	100%
With list	47	63	28	15	0	153	60%
Without list	40	28	0	32	6	106	40%
Total	117	314	55	50	9	545	100%
With list	70	208	55	16	0	349	64%
Without list	47	106	0	34	9	196	36%
%	21%	58%	10%	9%	2%	100%	

The data in Table 1 show a complex picture. First of all, the five functions of *magari* are not equally distributed across the corpus: the scalar and the ENEf functions cover together 79 percent of the occurrences of *magari* in the corpus (58 percent and 21 percent respectively), whereas concessives and imperatives are more marginal (10 percent and 9 percent respectively) and optatives are very infrequent (2 percent of the occurrences). Secondly, the association of *magari* with lists is regular: 349 occurrences of *magari* out of 545 (64 percent) have in their focus a constituent belonging to a list. It should be noted that, far from being a phenomenon typical of spoken language, the written occurrences of *magari* present an even more regular association with lists (69 percent). It can also be observed that, with the exception of optatives, which are by the way very rare, *magari* tends to be associated with lists no matter its exact function. See Graph 1.

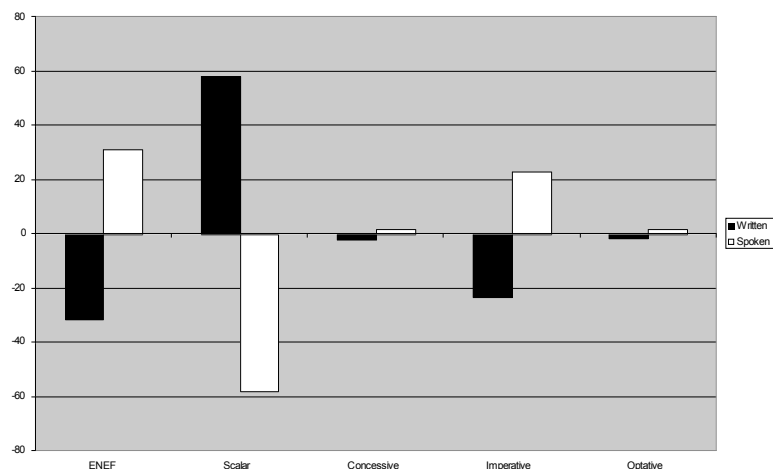
Graph 1. The association of the five functions of *magari* with lists

Yet the association of *magari* with lists is not equally distributed across the various functions ($\chi^2 = 71,48$, $df = 4$, $p < 0,001$). As is shown in Graph 2, scalar and concessive *magari* clearly prefer the association with lists, whereas optative, imperative and (to a lesser extent) ENEF *magari* tend to be associated with lists less than expected.

Graph 2. Interaction between the five functions of *magari* and their association with lists

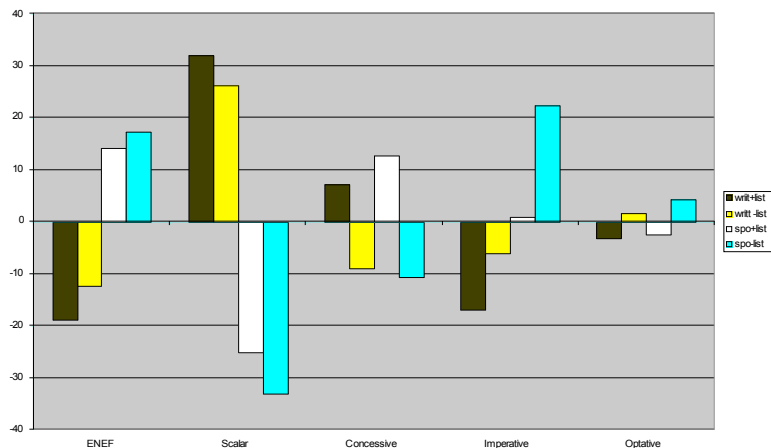
The five functions of *magari* are not even equally distributed across modalities: indeed, there is a significant interaction between the various functions of *magari* and the spoken *vs.* written modality ($\chi^2 = 121,05$, $df=4$, $p < 0,001$).⁶ In particular, scalar uses are more frequent in writing than expected, while all other uses are preferred in spoken data. These regularities are indicated in Graph 3.

Graph 3. Interaction between the five functions of *magari* and their occurrence across modalities



Another significant regularity emerges from the observation of the distribution of the five functions across modalities x [+list] *vs.* [-list] constructions ($\chi^2 204,57$, $p < 0,001$).⁷ As represented in Graph 4, in fact, it is clear that the ENEF *magari* retains its preference for spoken modality, regardless of its association with lists, whereas the strong preference of imperatives for spoken modality breaks down with list constructions. The concessive *magari* prefers list constructions regardless of modality, whereas the scalar *magari* prefers written modality regardless of its association with lists. Finally, optatives disprefer the association with list constructions regardless of modality.

Graph 4. Interaction between the functions of *magari* and their occurrence across modalities and list constructions



All in all, the analysis of the distribution of the five functions of *magari* underlines the peculiar behaviour of the optative function, which is much less frequent than the others and does not occur in lists regardless of modality.

It will be clearer in what follows that, as theoretically hypothesized within the Behavioral Profile approach (Divjak 2006; Divjak and Gries 2006, Gries 2006), the behavioral regularities observed at the distributional level have a relevance at the cognitive and constructional levels as well.

4.1. *Magari as a focus particle*

The tendency of the elements focused by *magari* to occur in lists has led us to consider this word as a particular type of focus particle. As shown by Nølke (1983, 2001) and König (1991), focus particles, such as the English *also*, *even*, *only* or the French *même* are particles endowed with a remarkable syntactic mobility, which have scope on a constituent and focus on a part of it, thereby interacting with the focus structure of the sentence in which they occur (König 1991: 10). By focusing on a part of the scope, in fact, focus particles relate the value of the focused expression to a set of paradigmatic alternatives. For example, in (34) *also* has scope on the entire sentences and focuses on *Piero*, relating the value “Piero” to a set of paradigmatic alternatives. This entails the presupposition that someone else has left:

(34) *Piero has also left*

This property, that derives from the very notion of focus (Rooth 1992), has been highlighted by Nølke (1983, 2001), who defines the focus particles of French *adverbes paradigmatissants* ('paradigmatizing adverbs'), i.e. adverbs presupposing the existence of a paradigm of variables that act as alternatives to the element in their focus.

Magari presents all the features that are typical of focus particles: it is characterized by a noticeable syntactic mobility, it has scope on constituents of various type and size and it focuses on a part of them, relating this focused part to a set of alternatives. In (31), for example, *magari* has scope on the constituent *li riportava in un ambiente* 'reconveyed them in a scene' and focuses on *ambiente* 'scene', which is therefore related with a set of alternatives ('in a forest', 'in the jungle', 'in the desert'). The peculiarity of *magari* is that, in the vast majority of its occurrences, the set of alternatives is not merely presupposed, but concretely realized by the list of units occupying the same position of the focused element. As we will see, the characterization of *magari* as a paradigmatizing adverb will have important consequences for our analysis.

4.2. *Defining the topological structure associated with magari*

Considering *magari* as a focus particle anchored to both a focus and a scope enables us to provide a more rigorous definition of the relevant portion of topological space associated with this word. This can be defined as the space on the grid delimited on the horizontal axis by the position of *magari* plus the extension of its scope and on the vertical axis by the extension of the list of elements occupying the same position of the focus of *magari*.

While the focus of *magari* is easily identifiable through classical tests, the extension of its scope is a less apparent matter. Following the rules established by Nølke (2001: 274) for detecting the extension of the scope of French focus particles, we will distinguish two cases. If *magari* is pronounced with a neutral intonation, as in (35), it scopes over the whole sequence of units to its right, until the intonational phrase ends. If *magari* is pronounced with a parenthetical intonation, as in (36), not only the sequence of units to its right, but also the immediately preceding phrase is included in its scope:

- (35) *magari TORNA SUBITO, se non è proprio scemo*
 ‘He might come back immediately, if he’s not completely stupid’
- (36) *STARÀ CANTANDO, magari SOTTO LA DOCCIA, LA SUA CANZONE PREFERITA*
 ‘He might be singing, maybe in the shower, his favourite song’

How are sentences with broken scope like (36) to be represented in grids? The rules mentioned in section 3.3 impose a representation of the sentence in (36) as in (37). In order to account for the fact that in the abstract predicate-argument-adjunct structure *magari* has scope over the entire clause, we should write it in the down left position; however, in order to preserve the linear order of the sequence, we should also write it one line below with respect to the first constituent uttered.

- (37) Grid representation of (36)

1		<i>starà cantando</i> ‘he will be singing’		
2	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’		<i>sotto la doccia</i> ‘in the shower’	<i>la sua canzone preferita</i> ‘his favorite song’
	ADJ ₁	PRE	ADJ ₂	ARG ₁

The topological structure relevant for our analysis is now univocally defined. Henceforth, it will be visually delimited by a thicker border, as shown in (38) and (39). It should be noted that this is a mere topological unit, which can be instantiated by items of very different type and size ranging from the sole *magari*, as in (38), to an entire text, as in (39).

- (38) *Magari!*
 ‘I wish (it were like this)!’

1	<i>magari</i> ‘I wish’
	PRE

- (39) *Magari stava mangiando, o passeggiando, semplicemente, sul ponte... magari era lì che si stava aggiustando i pantaloni*
 ‘Maybe he was eating, or strolling, simply, on the deck... maybe he was over there straightening his trousers’
 [from Alessandro Baricco, *Novecento*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1994]

1	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’	<i>stava</i> ‘he was’	<i>mangiando</i> ‘eating’
2	<i>o</i> ‘or’		<i>passeggiando semplicemente sul ponte</i> ‘simply strolling on the deck’
2	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’	<i>era lì che si stava</i> ‘he was over there’	<i>aggiustando i pantaloni</i> ‘straightening his trousers’
		ASP	PRE
	ADJ ₁	PRE	

This structure can be defined in constructional terms as a semi-specified topological structure characterized not only by the presence of a fully lexically specified item (*magari*), but also, in most cases, by a specific topological pattern. The latter can be described as a list of equivalent items that occupy the very same position as the focus of *magari* and that can be of different type and size.

Although this abstract structure recurs, no matter what the exact function of *magari* is, the exact form of the list changes according to the function of *magari*. In the following sections, this phenomenon will be examined in detail.

4.3. *Equipotential non exclusion of factuality (ENEF)*

About 21 percent of the occurrences of *magari* fulfill the function of presenting the focus of *magari* as an element whose factuality is not excluded on a par with the factuality of other elements. We call this function “equipotential non exclusion of factuality” (ENEF). The speaker puts the element in the focus of *magari* and its alternatives on the same level. In doing so, (s)he does not exclude, but (s)he neither subscribes to the focused element, which is considered equally possible with respect to the other options. Examples of ENEF *magari* are provided in (40) through (42):

- (40) *tenterò magari la corona Ibf o Wbc, insomma continuerò* [laR]
 ‘maybe I will try (to win) the Ibf or the Wbc title, in any case I will go on’

1		<i>tenterò</i> 'I will try'	magari 'maybe'	<i>la corona</i> 'the title'	<i>Ibf</i> 'Ibf'
2			o 'or'		<i>Wbc</i> 'Wbc'
3	<i>insomma</i> 'in any case'	<i>continuerò</i> 'I will go on'			
				ARG ₁	ADJ ₁
	ADJ ₁	PRE	ADJ ₂	ARG ₁	

- (41) *avremo modo di discutere sui nostri capolavori e sui titoli che magari sono stati messi una o poche volte* [Web]
 'we will have a chance to talk about our masterpieces and about the titles that maybe have been quoted one or few times'

1	<i>avremo modo</i> 'we'll have a chance'	<i>di discutere</i> 'to talk'	<i>dei nostri capolavori</i> 'about our masterpieces'				
2			<i>e dei titoli</i> 'and about the titles'	<i>che</i> 'that'	magari 'maybe'	<i>sono stati messi</i> 'have been quoted'	<i>una</i> 'one'
3					o 'or'		<i>poche volte</i> 'few times'
	MOD	PRE		ARG ₁	ADJ ₁	PRE	ADJ ₂
	PRE		ARG ₁	ADJ ₁			

- (42) *magari è arrivato l'autobus o è passato un suo amico in macchina* [Web]
 'maybe the bus has come or maybe a friend of his in a car has passed by'

1	magari 'maybe'	<i>è arrivato</i> 'has come'	<i>l'autobus</i> 'the bus'	
2	o 'or'	<i>è passato</i> 'has passed by'	<i>un suo amico</i> 'a friend of his'	<i>in macchina</i> 'in a car'
	ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂

When used in this function, the focus of *magari* regularly occurs (60 percent of the occurrences in the two corpora, 77 percent in the written corpus) at the top of a list of elements that

either occupy one and the same position, as in (40) and (41), or instantiate the same syntactic structure, as in (42).

Although in all the examples above *magari* fulfills the same semantic function, it should be noted that the constituent in its focus may belong to very different categories: it can be a prepositional argument (31), a nominal argument (40), an adjunct (41) or also a clause (42). This fact supports the hypothesis that it is the topological structure of the construction (in particular the position of the focus of *magari* at the top of a list), rather than other categorial variables, that is relevant for licensing the non factual reading of *magari*.

It is worth mentioning that the conjuncts that are listed below the constituent focused by *magari* can be introduced by disjunctive conjunctions—such as *piuttosto che* ‘rather than’ in (31) or *o* ‘or’, as in (40) through (42)—or by a second occurrence of *magari*, as in (43), which can function as a disjunctive connective according to Mauri (2008a, 2008b). Sometimes, especially when the list is long enough, the items can be listed without explicit conjunction markers. In all cases the list is interpreted as a disjunctive list.

- (43) *magari è lì da un attimo magari è lì da sempre*
 ‘maybe he’s been there for a second, maybe he’s been there forever’
 [from Alessandro Baricco, *Oceano Mare*, Milan, BUR, 1999]

The regular association of *magari* with disjunctive lists suggests that the overall effect of equipotential non exclusion of factuality is constructional in nature. As already argued, *magari* is a general marker of non factuality. This marker happens to be regularly associated with lists. It is precisely this regular association with lists that turns *magari* into a more specific kind of marker, i.e., a marker of non exclusion of factuality. The fact that the list we are dealing with is disjunctive in nature adds still another feature. Indeed, the disjunctive list can be characterized as “the semantic relation which obtains between two” (or more) items “that are equally possible [...] and are potential substitutes for each other” (Mauri 2008a: 25). Therefore, the fact that the focus of *magari* belongs to a disjunctive list suggests that it is put forward as an option not to be excluded on a par with the other listed options. This combination of features contributes to produce the interpretation of *magari* as a marker of “equipotential non exclusion of factuality”.

4.4. *Scalar non exclusion of factuality*

As much as 58 percent of the occurrences of *magari* in the corpus (78 percent in the written corpus) fulfill the function of scalar operator of non factuality, in that they trigger a scale of non factuality whose extreme position is occupied by the element in its focus. Examples are in (44) through (47):

- (44) *I film di oggi saranno stati approvati dall'alto tre, quattro, magari cinque volte* [laR]
 'Today's movies have been probably approved from on high three, four, maybe five times'

1	<i>i film d'oggi</i> 'Today's movies'	<i>saranno stati approvati</i> 'have been probably approved'	<i>dall'alto</i> 'from on high'		<i>tre</i> 'three'
2					<i>quattro</i> 'four'
3				<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>cinque volte</i> 'five times'
				ADJ ₁	ADJ ₂
	ARG ₁	PRE	ADJ ₁	ADJ ₂	

- (45) *Vorrei strapparle una parola, una battuta, magari un mezzo sorriso* [Web]
 'I would like to get a word, a quip, maybe a faint smile out of her'

1	<i>vorrei</i> 'I would like to'	<i>strapparle</i> 'get out of her'		<i>una parola</i> 'a word'
2				<i>una battuta</i> 'a quip'
3			<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>un mezzo sorriso</i> 'a faint smile'
	MOD	PRE		
	PRE		ADJ ₁	ARG ₂

- (46) *Li condanna a vivere in una società che non a torto e non per razzismo li vede con sospetto, li sfugge e magari li respinge* [laR]

‘It condemns them to live in a society that not unjustly and not for racism views them with suspicion, keeps away from them and maybe rejects them’

1	<i>li condanna</i> ‘it condemns them’	<i>a vivere</i> ‘to live’	<i>in una società</i> ‘in a society’	<i>che</i> ‘that’	<i>non a torto</i> ‘not unjustly’		
2					<i>e non per razzismo</i> ‘and not for racism’		<i>li vede con sospetto</i> ‘views them with suspicion’
3							<i>li sfugge</i> ‘keeps away from them’
4						<i>e magari</i> ‘and maybe’	<i>li respinge</i> ‘rejects them’
				ARG ₁	ADJ ₁	ADJ ₂	PRE
	PRE	ARG ₁	ARG ₂	ADJ ₁			

- (47) *Alla fine io mi sarei sentita in colpa e magari lui avrebbe finito per detestarmi* [Web]
 ‘In the end I would have felt guilty and maybe he would have ended up hating me’

1	<i>alla fine</i> ‘in the end’		<i>io</i> ‘I’	<i>mi sarei sentita in colpa</i> ‘would have felt guilty’
2		<i>e magari</i> ‘and maybe’	<i>lui</i> ‘he’	<i>avrebbe finito per detestarmi</i> ‘would have ended up hating me’
	ADJ ₁	ADJ ₂	ARG ₁	PRE

The scalar function can be considered a particular instance of the focusing character of *magari*. It was shown in section 4.1 that, as a focus particle, *magari* entails the existence of a certain number of propositions that form a paradigm. In (44), for example, the paradigm is comprised of the following propositions: ‘they have been approved from on high three times’, ‘they have been approved from on high four times’, ‘they have been approved from on high five times’. In the function under examination, *magari* indicates that the constituent in its focus (the proposition ‘they have been approved from on high five times’) realizes the most extreme proposition in the paradigm, i.e. the most non factual one or, rather, the last one for which the speaker would not exclude the factuality. This imposes a directionality—and consequently a scalarity—to the paradigm, which turns into a scalar domain of non

factuality, in which the proposition realized by the constituent in the focus of *magari* has the highest degree of non factuality.

As examples (44) through (47) make clear, when fulfilling this function, the focus of *magari* regularly (66 percent) occurs at the bottom of a list of constituents occupying the same syntactic position or realizing the same syntactic structure. Also in this case, it is clear that the constituents in the list may differ largely from each other in size and category: they can be nominal arguments (45), predicates (46), adjuncts (44) or even entire clauses (47). This suggests that the scalar meaning of *magari* is licensed by the peculiar topological structure associated with it, i.e., by the occurrence of the focus of *magari* at the bottom of a list of constituents.

Our analysis so far shows that the function of *magari* as a scalar operator of non exclusion of factuality is constructional in nature. The general non factual meaning of *magari* combined with a list yields an overall meaning of non exclusion of factuality, as shown in section 4.3. The fact that *magari* focuses on the last conjunct of a list—as already noted by Fauconnier (1976) and Kay (1990) in their analyses of the French word *même* and the English word *even*—introduces in the same construction an entire domain (corresponding to the items listed above the one in the focus of *magari* plus the item in the focus of *magari*) and, at the same time, the most extreme item of that domain (corresponding to the focus of *magari*). Representing one of the listed items as the most extreme in the domain induces a ranking. Given the semantic nature of *magari*, the listed items are ordered for increasing degree of non factuality, more precisely they are ordered from the most likely to the last one for which the speaker would not exclude the factuality.

In spite of the well established association of scalar *magari* with list constructions, 42 percent of the occurrences of *magari* with this function are not associated with a list. We will account for these exceptions in section 4.8.

4.5. *Scalar concessive conditional*

About 10 percent of the occurrences of *magari* have a particular type of scalar function: they are scalar concessive conditionals. An example was provided in (3), another one is in (48):

- (48) *Ciascuna di queste vicende è, magari, piccola; ma la loro
somma è un grande dramma* [laR]

‘Each of these events is, maybe, small; but their sum is a great tragedy’

The name “scalar concessive conditional” has been proposed by Haspelmath and König (1998) to indicate concessive constructions such as that in (49):

(49) *Even if we do not get any financial support, we will go ahead with our project*

This construction can be regarded as a particular conditional construction in which “a set of protases is related to an apodosis” (Haspelmath and König 1998: 565). In (49) the set of protases is made up of the various conditions evoked by the scalar operator *even* (if we get great financial support, if we get some financial support, if we do not get any financial support). These conditions are clearly ranked in a scalar domain according to degree of adversity for the situation described in the apodosis, the condition in the focus of *even* (if we do not get any financial support) being considered as the most adverse. In scalar concessive conditionals, the set of protases describes non factual conditions, whereas the apodosis is normally factual.⁸ It is exactly the combined effect of the factuality of the apodosis and the adversity of the circumstances described in the adverbial clause that triggers the concessive interpretation of this conditional construction.

Examples such as (48) can be considered as particular cases of scalar concessive conditionals. *Magari* in fact evokes a set of conditions arranged in a scalar domain: ‘whether each of these events is remarkable’, ‘whether each of these events is normal’, or ‘whether each of these events is small’. These conditions are non factual—due to the presence of *magari*—and they are ranked not only according to degree of adversity but also to degree of non factuality. The condition in the focus of *magari* (*ciascuna di queste vicende è piccola* ‘whether each of these events is small’) is therefore not only the most unfavorable, but also the most unlikely. The main clause, however, is clearly factual.

As shown in the grid representations in (50) and (51), when *magari* fulfills the function of scalar concessive conditional, its focus is always a non factual item that occupies the first position of a list made up of at least two conjuncts, the last of which is introduced by an adversative conjunction (*ma/però* ‘but’, *invece* ‘whereas’):

- (50) *Il comandante Arguelles si aspettava quindi un temporale, magari violento ma facile da superare* [laR]
 ‘Captain Arguelles therefore expected a possibly violent, but easy to overcome storm’

1	<i>il comandante Arguelles</i> ‘Captain Arguelles’	<i>si aspettava</i> ‘expected’	<i>quindi</i> ‘therefore’		<i>un temporale</i> ‘a storm’	
2				<i>magari</i> ‘arguably’		<i>violento</i> ‘violent’
3				<i>ma</i> ‘but’		<i>facile da superare</i> ‘easy to overcome’
				ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂
	ARG ₁	PRE	ADJ ₁	ARG ₂		

- (51) *magari andrà per le lunghe, ma non finisce così* [laR]
 ‘maybe it will go overtime, but it doesn’t end like this’

1	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’		<i>andrà</i> ‘it will go’	<i>per le lunghe</i> ‘overtime’
3	<i>ma</i> ‘but’	<i>non</i> ‘not’	<i>finisce</i> ‘it ends’	<i>così</i> ‘like this’
		ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₁
	ADJ ₁	PRE		

Also in this case, the conjuncts in the focus of *magari* may be constituents of different category and size, such as adjuncts (50) or clauses (51). Therefore, it is only the kind of topological structure associated with this use of *magari* that licenses its scalar concessive meaning. On the one hand, the list within the topological structure of *magari* instantiates a particular type of list: [X₁ (X₂, ...), ADVERSATIVE CONJUNCTION, X_{LAST}, where X₁ (X₂, ...) = <non factual>, X_{LAST} = <factual>]. This abstract scheme is also typically associated with non factual concessive meanings in Italian:

- (52) *Può essere che è intelligente, però non lo dimostra*
 ‘It is possible that (s)he is clever, but (s)he doesn’t show it’

On the other hand, the occurrence of *magari* in a conditional concessive context licences its scalar reading. *Magari*, as well as other focus particles (such as the Italian *anche/pure* ‘also’ or the

German *auch* ‘also’), always acquires a scalar meaning in conditional concessive contexts. As shown by König (1991: 64), this reinterpretation depends on the Gricean maxim of Relevance: “if a conditional connection between two eventualities is asserted and presupposed, it is invariably the more remarkable case that it is asserted”. Thus in (50) it would be trivial to assert that the storm expected by the captain may be mild. This eventuality is presupposed, whereas the more remarkable case ‘the storm may be violent’ is asserted. This tendency entails that the focus of the conditional concessive *magari* is usually interpreted as the most extreme item in a scalar domain of conditions not to be excluded, i.e., the conditional concessive *magari* is always interpreted as scalar.

4.6. Imperative

About 9 percent of the occurrences of *magari* in the corpus have in their focus an imperative (53) or a related construction (König and Siemund 2007), such as a hortative (54) or a deontically modalized sentence (55).

- (53) *Magari diglielo, faglielo comunque capire che ci tieni a lui!*
 ‘Maybe tell him, anyway make him understand that you care about him!’
- (54) *Senti questo teniamolo, magari vediamolo alle prime bozze!*
 [LIP]
 ‘Listen, let’s keep this, maybe let’s see it at the proofreading stage!’
- (55) *Bisogna seguire un certo regime alimentare, bisogna magari mangiare un po’ meno*
 ‘It is necessary to follow a certain diet, it is necessary, maybe, to eat a little less’

As shown by Elliott (2000: 76) and De Haan (2004), the presence of a marker of non factuality in imperative and related constructions is quite a common phenomenon across languages. This association may be motivated by the fact that commands describe non factual situations, which favors the presence of a non factual marker (see Elliott 2000: 76). Nevertheless, as mentioned in section 1, *magari* does not merely harmonically mark the non factuality of the command, but—as often happens cross-linguistically (Mithun 1995)—it also fulfills another function: it serves to weaken the force of the command (or exhortation). For

example, the commands in (53) are considered as less mandatory, and consequently more polite, than their counterpart in (56) where *magari* is absent:

- (56) *Diglielo, faglielo comunque capire che ci tieni a lui!*
 ‘Tell him, anyway make him understand that you care about him!’

Needless to say, the weakened imperative function of *magari* is marginal in the written corpus, while it is attested in as much as 18 percent of the occurrences in the spoken corpus.

As the examples (53) to (55) and the grid representations below show, the imperatives in the focus of *magari* often occur in lists. This holds for about 32 percent of the imperative *magari* in our corpus. The imperatives may occur at the top of a disjunctive list, as in (57), or at the bottom, as in (58), in which case they also have a scalar meaning:

- (57) Grid representation of (53)

1	<i>magari</i> ‘maybe’	<i>diglielo</i> ‘tell him’			
2		<i>facglielo</i> ‘make him’	<i>comunque</i> ‘anyway’	<i>capire</i> ‘understand’	<i>che ci tieni a lui</i> ‘that you care about him’
		CAUSE	ADJ ₁	PRE	
	ADJ ₁	PRE			ARG ₁

- (58) *prova a calmarti un po’ [...] e magari chiedi scusa alla mamma* [Web]
 ‘Try to calm down a bit and possibly apologize to your mother’

1		<i>prova</i> ‘try’	<i>a calmarti</i> ‘to calm down’	<i>un po’</i> ‘a bit’
2	<i>e magari</i> ‘and possibly’	<i>chiedi scusa</i> ‘apologize’	<i>alla mamma</i> ‘to your mother’	
	ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂

The occurrence of the imperative focused by *magari* in a list of imperatives makes it clear how *magari* weakens the illocutionary force of the imperative. When the speaker puts the focus of *magari*

at the top of a list of alternatives (s)he invites the listener to take his/her command into account as but one of other options. When (s)he puts the focus of *magari* at the bottom of a list of commands he puts forward the focused command as to be executed as a last resort. It is clear that the weakened imperative function of *magari*, is, as well as the other functions, constructional in nature. The imperative (or its related constructions) endows the construction with the illocutionary force of a command. The non exclusion value of *magari*, combined with the occurrence of its focus in a list, is used to present the focused command as an option which is not to be excluded.

4.7. *Optative*

Less than 2 percent of the occurrences of *magari* in the corpus have an optative function such as that represented in the following example:

- (59) *Magari fosse così semplice!*
 ‘I wish it were so simple!’

It has been shown by Pietrandrea (2008b) that, when introduced in Italian in the 13th century, the word *magari*—etymologically related to the Greek *makarios* (‘blissful’)—only had an optative meaning. It was usually employed as a predicative adjective uttered with an exclamative intonation referring to a sentential subject introduced by the complementizer *ke* ‘that’, as in (60):

- (60) *Makare ke –mme abberanno uccisa!*
 ‘If only they killed me!’
 [Iacopone da Todi, XIII laude del Laudario Urbinate, 13th century]

When fulfilling the optative function, *magari* is always associated with an exclamative intonational profile. As the examples below show, in the scope of *magari* there can be a past subjunctive (61), an infinitive (62), a non verbal element (63) or even a \emptyset element as in (6), reproduced in (64):

- (61) *Magari venisse!*
 ‘I wish he would come!’
 (62) *Magari averne!*
 ‘I wish I had!’

- (63) *Magari due!*
 ‘I wish (there would be) two of them’
- (64) A: *Vuoi un po’ di riposo?*
 ‘Do you want to rest a bit?’
 B: *Magari!*
 ‘I’d love to!’

Apparently the focus of the optative *magari* is never associated with topological structures characterized by lists.

Pietrandrea (2008b) suggests that a relation of semantic bleaching exists between the optative and the non exclusion of factuality function of *magari*. Such a bleaching may have been historically induced by ambiguous contexts and reinforced precisely by the coalescence of *magari* within constructions characterized by lists. In fact, as pointed out by Pietrandrea (2008c), an optative meaning can be conceived of as the indication of a selection among a set of alternative (SoAs). Consequently, the occurrence of *magari* within list constructions (where more than one alternative option is expressed) has the effect of weakening the meaning of selection and favouring a more general non factual reading.

Synchronically speaking, the optative and the non exclusion of factuality uses of *magari* are nevertheless related to one another in that they both express non factuality.

4.8. *Exceptions*

The fact that the focus of the optative *magari* never belongs to a list has been theoretically explained in the previous section. However, we know from the data in Table 1 that the foci of ENEF, scalar and imperative *magari* are also not necessarily part of a list. This phenomenon characterizes 36 percent of the occurrences in the corpus and, therefore, it represents an exception to be explained.

Let us consider the cases in which *magari* fulfills an ENEF function, but its focus does not belong to a list, as in the following example:

- (65) *Non rischiò, non operò scelte che magari potevano suscitare contrasti* [laR]
 ‘(s)he didn’t risk, (s)he didn’t make choices that maybe could cause disagreements’

1	<i>non rischiò</i> '(s)he didn't risk'					
2	<i>non operò</i> '(s)he didn't make'	<i>scelte</i> 'choices'	<i>che</i> 'that'	<i>magari</i> 'maybe'	<i>potevano suscitare</i> 'could cause'	<i>contrasti</i> 'disagreements'
			ARG ₁	ADJ ₁	PRE	ARG ₂
	PRE	ARG ₁	ADJ ₁			

We may hypothesize that *magari* behaves in this context as a regular focus particle. It merely presupposes, without realizing it, the existence of a paradigm of unspecified alternatives to the focus of *magari*. For example, the clause in the focus of *magari* in (65) (*potevano suscitare contrasti* 'could cause disagreements') evokes a paradigm of other unspecified, but semantically related, possible alternatives which are not explicitly mentioned in the text, such as: *potevano provocare proteste* 'could cause protests', *potevano procurare inimicizie* 'could cause hostility', etc. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that this type of *magari* has inherited the property of evoking paradigms of elements alternative to its focus precisely from its more frequent association with fully realized lists.

A similar line of reasoning might be applied to the occurrences of *magari* in imperatival contexts. Thus a sentence like (66) evokes, without realizing it, a paradigm of alternative commands ('tell him', 'don't tell him'), thereby weakening the illocutionary force of the imperative.

- (66) ***Magari*** *diglielo*
'Maybe tell him/her'

Another exception to be dealt with regards the scalar function of *magari*. About 34 percent of the scalar occurrences of *magari* appear in contexts without a list. These are cases like those represented in the following example:

- (67) [...] *dovrei parlarvi di vini, magari toscani* [laR]
'[...] I should talk to you about wines, possibly Tuscan (wines)'

In this construction *magari* and its focus have a parenthetical intonation. This characteristic leads us to put forward a possible explanation for these apparently exceptional cases. Indeed, according to the rules established in section 3.3 for grid representations, when the constituent immediately preceding

magari is parenthetical, it should be included in its scope. As a consequence, the grid representations of (67) would be akin to that provided in (68):

(68) Grid representation of (67)

1	<i>dovrei</i> 'I should'	<i>parlarvi</i> 'talk to you'		<i>di vini</i> 'about wines'	
2			<i>magari</i> 'possibly'		<i>toscani</i> 'Tuscan'
	MOD	PRE	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂
	PRE		ARG ₁		

If we rely on this representation, we can hypothesize that *magari* has focus on a constituent that lies at the bottom of a “partially instantiated” list. The constituent in the focus of *magari* is an adjunct that modifies the backgrounded part of the scope. In (67), for example, *magari* focuses on the adjunct *toscani* ‘Tuscan’, which modifies the backgrounded item (*di vini* ‘about wines’). This item is given the first time without modifications in the sequence *dovrei parlarvi di vini* ‘I should talk to you about wines’. It is then modified, without an explicit repetition, in the sequence *magari toscani* ‘possibly Tuscan’. The modification, without reiteration of the backgrounded part of the scope, means that it is elided. The overall effect is that a sequence such as (67) is interpreted as equivalent to the following:

(69) [...] *dovrei parlarvi di vini, magari di vini toscani*⁹
 ‘[...] I should talk to you about wines, possibly Tuscan wines’

1	<i>dovrei</i> 'I should'	<i>parlarvi</i> 'talk to you'		<i>di vini</i> 'about wines'	
2			<i>magari</i> 'possibly'	<i>di vini</i> 'about wines'	<i>toscani</i> 'Tuscan'
	MOD	PRE	ADJ ₁	ARG ₁	ADJ ₂
	PRE		ARG ₁		

In (69), the modifying adjunct focused by *magari*—*toscani* ‘Tuscan’—lies at the bottom of a list of two adjuncts. The first of these adjuncts (position ADJ₂-line1) is a \emptyset element, i.e., the position is empty. Consequently, it conveys a meaning such as “non qualified (wines)” and the whole sequence is interpretable as:

- (70) [...] *dovrei parlarvi di vini quali che siano, magari di vini toscani*
 ‘[...] I should talk to you about whichever wines, possibly Tuscan wines’

In conclusion, the presence of the modifying adjunct at the bottom of the partially instantiated list would trigger a scale of non factual propositions. The actualization of a more specific event—such as that described by the proposition ‘I talk to you about Tuscan wines’—is in fact to be conceived as less likely than the actualization of a more general event—such as that described by the proposition ‘I talk to you about wines’.

To sum up, two hypotheses can be put forward in order to explain the cases in which the focus of *magari* does not belong to a list and to relate these cases to other more frequent cases with lists. The first hypothesis, which virtually applies to all exceptional cases, is that *magari* evokes a paradigm of possible alternatives with respect to the element in its focus by virtue of its frequent association with concretely realized lists. The second hypothesis only applies to scalar occurrences. In these cases the constituent in the focus of *magari* is always parenthetical and can be seen as the second conjunct of a partially instantiated list. In both cases, the presence of a list is posited.

This entails that from a cognitive, if not linguistic, point of view the focus of *magari* always belongs to a list, either fully instantiated, or partially instantiated, or simply evoked. This association of *magari* with a list would mark its general non exclusion of factuality meaning.

5. The network of magari constructions

As mentioned in the introductory sections of this paper, the main goal of our investigation is to understand which contexts license the various functions of *magari* and whether there is a relation between these functions (and of course which sort of relation). In order to reach this goal, we set our analysis within the general theoretical framework of construction grammar, which in principle

allows to treat contexts as linguistic objects, and then we used a specific working methodology, namely the topological methodology, which allowed us to identify a set of topological structures in which *magari* regularly occurs. In this section we will give a more refined constructionist account of our findings.

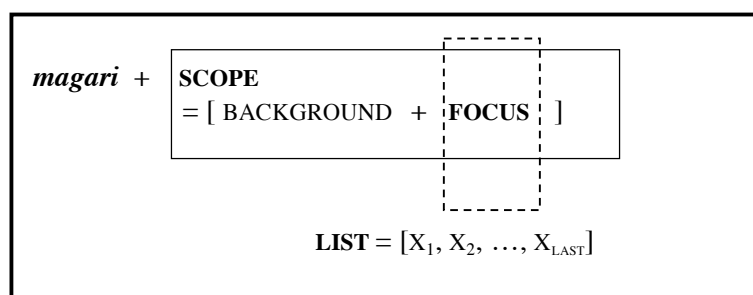
The analysis carried out in section 4 shows that we can distinguish two main *magari* constructions:

- the **optative** *magari* construction;
- the map of **non exclusion of factuality (NEF)** *magari* constructions:
 - ENEF;
 - scalar NEF (with fully and partially instantiated list);
 - scalar concessive conditional;
 - weakened imperative.

As we briefly discussed in section 4.7, the optative *magari* presents specific distributional properties that distinguish it from other *magari* constructions: it is very infrequent, it does not occur with lists and it is always associated with an exclamative intonational profile. However, the two constructions are not completely independent from one another. Firstly, Pietrandrea (2008b) showed that there exists a diachronic semantic bleaching from optative to non exclusion of factuality, thus positing a sort of “diachronic link” between the two constructions. Secondly, from the point of view of our synchronic analysis, the two constructions share the presence of *magari* and a general “non factuality” feature.

As for the set of NEF *magari* constructions, we identified a class of topological structures in which *magari* occurs regularly. All these structures refer to a more general topological structure that can be represented as in Figure 2: the lexically specified adverb *magari* is followed by its scope, which is made up of a background and a focus; the latter is part of a list, i.e. is one of the listed elements. It is important to note that there is no explicit information about levels, categories, word order or sentence types, so all this information is underspecified, as well as the type of list involved.

Figure 2. The topological structure of the Abstract NEF *magari* construction



All the different *magari* constructions analysed in the sections above are more specified instances of the maximally abstract construction outlined in Figure 2. In other words, these constructions have some properties that specify the abstract construction (partially) described in Figure 2. These properties are listed below:

- **ENEF magari construction:**
 - LIST = disjunctive
 - FOCUS = X₁
- **scalar NEF magari construction** (fully instantiated list):
 - FOCUS = X_{LAST}
- **scalar concessive conditional magari construction:**
 - X₁ (X₂, ...) = <non factual> vs. X_{LAST}=< factual>
 - FOCUS = X₁
- **imperative magari construction:**
 - SENTENCE TYPE = imperative
 - SPEECH ACT = command, exhortation, etc.

If we accept the hypothesis of the partially instantiated list put forward for the exceptional cases of *magari* with a scalar function (cf. section 4.8), then we still have another construction with the following overriding properties:

- **scalar NEF magari construction** (partially instantiated list):
 - LIST = [x₁, x_{2=last}], in which x₁=∅
 - FOCUS = x_{2=last}
 - INTONATION: parenthetical

Therefore, from a constructionist perspective, the distribution of the non exclusion of factuality *magari* can be accounted for by

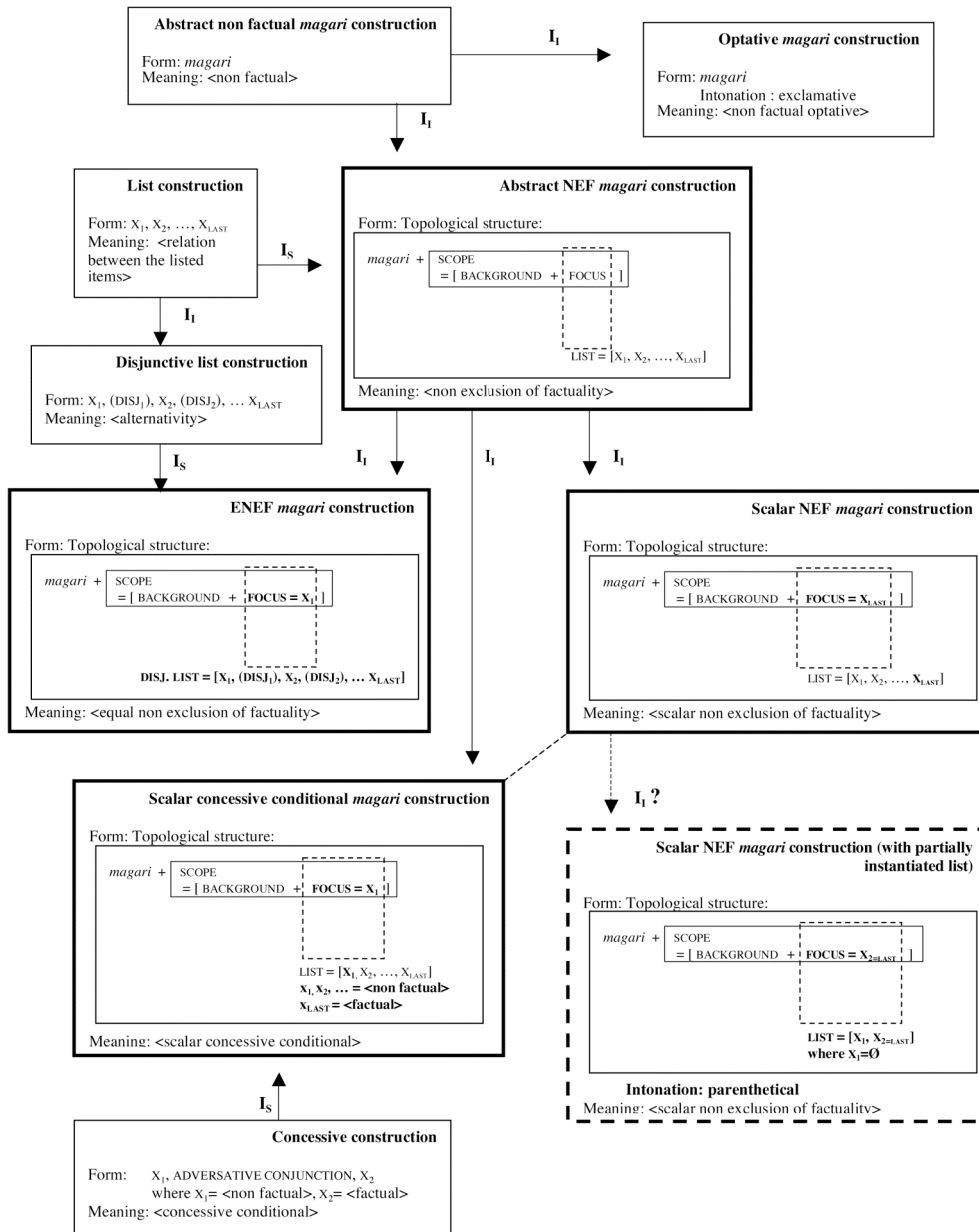
positing a hierarchy of closely related topological structures, each of which is regularly associated with one determined function of *magari* and all of which are linked to a more abstract construction with the general meaning of <non exclusion of factuality> and the topological structure described in Figure 2.

The network of *magari* constructions emerging from our results is presented in Figure 3. Before commenting on this figure, it is worth discussing some of the conventions used. First, we made use of the inheritance links proposed by Goldberg (1995) (cf. section 3.1) to relate the various constructions at issue. Second, regarding the representation of the constructions themselves, we adapted the boxes-within-boxes notation (Fried 2007; Fried and Östman 2004) to our needs by incorporating the outline of the topological structure associated with *magari* as the “formal” part of the construction. Third, some elements are graphically highlighted in order to facilitate the reading of the network: the various *magari* constructions endowed with a topological structure are enclosed in boxes with thicker borders, whereas the overriding properties of each sub-construction are put in boldface. Constructions with an uncertain status are marked by a question mark near the inheritance link and enclosed in a box framed by a dotted line. Finally, as can be seen, Figure 3 does not contain the imperative *magari*. The representation of this construction is given in Figure 4 below, which we will comment on later. Now let us return to Figure 3.

Overall, the network of constructions proposed in Figure 3 reveals that the network of *magari* constructions is basically governed by Instance inheritance links (I_I). A maximally abstract Non factual *magari* construction instantiates both the Optative *magari* construction and the Abstract NEF *magari* construction. The other *magari* subconstructions are inherited from the Abstract NEF *magari* construction by means of instance inheritance links.

The Abstract NEF *magari* construction as represented in Figure 2 is also linked—by means of a Subpart inheritance link (I_S)—to an independent List construction with the maximally abstract meaning of <relation between the listed items>, whose existence has been proposed in section 3.2. As already pointed out, it is precisely the presence of a list that somehow turns the general non factual meaning of *magari* into a <non exclusion of factuality> meaning. At the same time, the ENEF *magari* construction is linked—by means of an I_S —to the Disjunctive list construction, which is an instance of the general List construction.¹⁰

Figure 3. The network of magari constructions



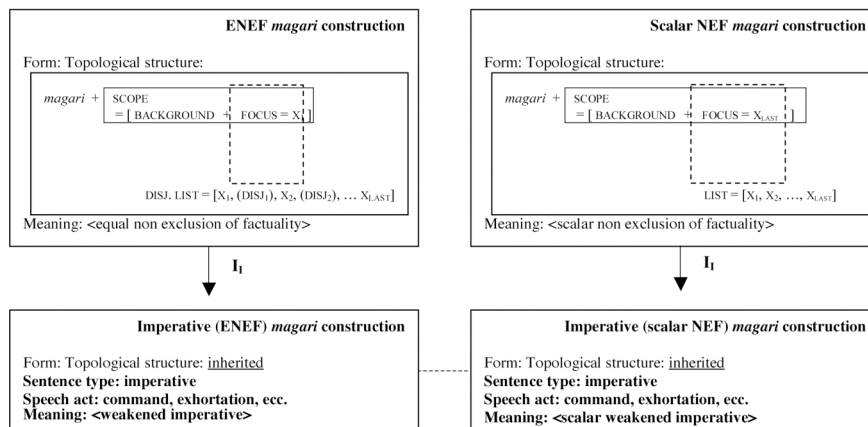
The main property of the Abstract NEF *magari* construction is that it features a topological list that includes the element which is in the focus of *magari*. At this level, however, the interaction between the list and the focus is still underspecified, as well as the list itself.

This information becomes more specified as we reach the lower levels of the hierarchy. Both the ENEF *magari* construction and the Scalar NEF *magari* construction (with fully specified list) specify which element of the list is in the focus of *magari*. In the former, the focus is at the top of the list, and the list is disjunctive; in the latter, the focus is at the bottom of the list.

According to the hypothesis put forward in section 4.8, the Scalar NEF *magari* construction might instantiate another construction—the Scalar NEF *magari* construction with a partially instantiated list—whose topological structure is even more constrained. The list cannot contain more than two elements and the first one is a null element.

Finally, the Abstract NEF *magari* construction instantiates the Scalar concessive conditional construction, which includes a contrastive list in which one or more non factual elements are contrasted with a factual element. The Scalar concessive conditional construction is an instantiation of both the Abstract NEF *magari* construction and the (abstract) concessive construction, therefore we are dealing with a case of multiple inheritance. In addition, this construction is linked by a purely semantic link (represented here by a dotted line) to the Scalar NEF *magari* construction, since they share the scalarity feature.

As mentioned above, the Imperative *magari* construction is not present in this network. In fact, this is due to the fact that we interpret the Imperative *magari* construction as a further instantiation of both the ENEF *magari* construction and the Scalar NEF *magari* construction. As mentioned in section 4.6, and as reproduced in Figure 4, the Imperative *magari* construction may have the topological structure of both the former and the latter. In both cases, the corresponding meaning of *magari* is maintained and a general function of weakening of the command/exhortation is added. Therefore, the Imperative *magari* construction can be seen as a lower-level construction in which sentence type and speech act information is specified. Also, the two constructions are linked to one another (by a dotted link), since they share the Sentence type and Speech act features.

Figure 4. Imperative *magari* constructions

In conclusion, the proposed constructionist analysis allows to connect all *magari* constructions with one another in an inheritance hierarchy and therefore gives us a better understanding of the speaker's knowledge of this piece of grammar.

6. Conclusions

The word *magari* has a number of grammatical meanings: equipotential non exclusion of factuality, scalarity, concessivity, weakening of the illocutionary force of the imperative and optativity. All these meanings proved to be constructional in nature, i.e., they are determined by the various constructions in which *magari* occurs. These constructions were efficiently identified by looking at topological patterns, i.e. structures that are recognizable at the discourse configuration level. This level of analysis, defined by the maintenance of a given predicate-argument-adjunct structure in discourse, crosses the traditional divide between clausal and supra-clausal level and can only be characterized in terms of its topological structure.

The distribution of *magari* within discourse configurations has revealed interesting regularities. With the exception of the more marginal and more ancient optative function, *magari* is regularly associated with certain abstract topological patterns that can be characterized as lists containing the element focused by *magari*. The exact shape of this topological pattern is the only distinctive property that allows to univocally identify each type of *magari*.

Finally, these meaningful topological structures can be reinterpreted as proper “constructions”, whose peculiarity consists in that they are insensitive to the boundary between clauses and are bi-dimensional in nature. They can also be represented in an inheritance hierarchy, which shows how the different *magari* constructions are inherited from a maximally abstract construction.

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1. Polysemy links (I_p) “capture the nature of the semantic relations between a particular sense of a construction and any extensions from this sense” (Goldberg 1995: 75); subpart links (I_s) are posited when “one construction is a proper subpart of another construction and exists independently” (1995: 78); instance links (I_i) are posited when a construction “is a more fully specified version” of the construction it is linked to (1995: 79); finally, metaphorical extension links (I_M) are posited when “two constructions are found to be related by a metaphorical mapping” (1995: 81).
 2. The analysis presented in this article was carried out with the aid of real examples. In particular, we made use of corpora of contemporary written and spoken Italian, respectively *la Repubblica* corpus [laR] and *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* [LIP] (see section 4 for further information about these corpora); in addition, we took examples from the Web [Web] and contemporary novels. Examples taken from the mentioned corpora or the Web are marked with the corresponding abbreviation in squared brackets at the end of the example. Texts taken from novels include the full reference of the novel. Intuition-based examples, on the contrary, have no indication.
 3. Apart from the ARG, ADJ and PRE abbreviations for ‘argument’, ‘adjunct’ and ‘predicate’, respectively, we sometimes use other labels, namely: ASP (aspectual element), CAUSE (causative element) and MOD (modal element). Besides, note that the translations of the examples throughout the paper are deliberately as literal as possible in order to facilitate the grid representation.

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4. For example, the discourse configuration in (21) is characterized by two lists of arguments in the ARG₁ and ARG₂ positions; one repetition of syntactic structure (line 1 and line 2) and a chiasm between the first two realizations of the ARG₁ and ARG₂ positions. The pre-verbal hyperonym in ARG₁-line1 position *per ogni tipo di gioco* ‘for every kind of game’ is exemplified by a post-verbal hyponym in ARG₂-line2 *alle corse dei carri* ‘for the chariot races’, whereas the post-verbal hyperonym in ARG₂-line1 position *un edificio specifico* ‘a specific building’ is exemplified by a pre-verbal hyponym in ARG₁-line2 *il circo* ‘the circus’ (Bonvino 2005: 61).
 5. These are cases of unifications, which are extremely interesting from a theoretical point of view. However, for our current purposes, they would have biased the overall picture.
 6. We thank the Associate Editor who reviewed the paper for pointing this out.
 7. See note 6.
 8. König and Haspelmath (1998: 573) discuss some marginal exceptions to the factuality of the apodosis, but they are not relevant for our purposes.
 9. Constructions like (69) are indeed grammatical and attested. See, for example, the following instances:
 - (i) *poi si vedrà, se troverò il tempo per dedicarmi ad un uomo, magari un uomo vero*
‘then we will see, if I will find the time to dedicate myself to a man, possibly a real man’
 - (ii) “*C’era una volta*” *sarebbe un inizio perfetto per cominciare una storia, magari una storia per bambini*
“‘Once upon a time’ would be a perfect beginning to start a story, possibly a story for children’
 10. It should be noted that this link is not strictly necessary, since the Disjunctive list may instantiate directly within the ENEF *magari* construction, that inherits the more general List construction from the Abstract NEF *magari* construction. We however decided to maintain this link for the sake of explicitness, and more precisely to highlight the semantic contribution of the disjunctive list to the whole ENEF construction.

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