HAL
open science

# Why can be : the use of 1 person plural forms with hearer reference in English and Spanish

Barbara de Cock

## To cite this version:

Barbara de Cock. Why can be : the use of 1 person plural forms with hearer reference in English and Spanish. Journal of Pragmatics, 2011, 43 (11), pp.2762. 10.1016/j.pragma.2011.04.009 . hal-00844142

**HAL Id: hal-00844142**

**https://hal.science/hal-00844142v1**

Submitted on 13 Jul 2013

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# Why *we* can be *you* : the use of 1st person plural forms with hearer reference in English and Spanish

Barbara De Cock

Hogeschool Universiteit Brussel, Erasmusgebouw, Stormstraat 2, B1000 Brussel, Belgium

University of Leuven / Université de Liège

Abstract

This article focuses on the phenomenon of 1st person plural forms being used with hearer reference, e.g. a teacher saying to his/her students "We're going to be quiet now" in Spanish (a pro-drop language) and English (a non-pro-drop language), paying attention to both contrasts and similarities between them. The physical persons involved in interaction (speaker and hearer) are distinguished from the discursive roles (addresser and addressee). Whilst coinciding by default, in some cases the interpretation of the 1st person plural forms shifts towards the addressee, thus triggering a hearer-dominant reading. On the one hand, this shift is argued to be not merely a matter of contextual interpretation, but to be triggered by linguistic elements, such as vocatives, interrogative speech acts and tense. On the other hand, the politeness judgment of this strategy is questioned in the light of various (im)politeness theories and a plea is made for taking into account the broader linguistic and non-linguistic context of the utterance. While the hearer-dominant reading occurs both in English and in Spanish, there appear to be differences as to the impact of the subject pronoun and the position of the strategy within the address system as a whole.

Keywords

Person reference, person deixis, speaker, hearer, (im)politeness

## 1. Introduction and theoretical framework

The prototypical meaning of 1st person plural forms is denoting the "speaker and a variable" (Nunberg, 1993). Thus, the speaker explicitly profiles him-/herself as part of a group (Helmbrecht 2002: 31) or, alternatively, shows that the group is linked to the speaker role. In this study, we will look at a use where the speaker is not the main intended referent, thus deviating from the prototypical meaning suggested by Nunberg and Helmbrecht. In (1a) and

(2a), the person reference device is formally a 1st person plural. However, pragmatically speaking, the hearer is targeted, rather than the speaker.[1] This study looks at what licenses this non-prototypical reading where the hearer dominates over the speaker (henceforth HD-reading). I investigate the hypothesis that it is triggered by linguistic elements in the broader context. The aim is also to examine the differences with prototypical 1st person plural uses, mitigated directives by means of exhortative forms, and the 2nd person equivalent (1b, 2b). And to round up, it will be argued that the broader context and genre need to be taken into account to answer the questions non-prototypical uses raise as to their polite or impolite interpretation, as in the examples below (1a) and (2a).

(1a) ***We're going*** *to be quiet now.* (teacher to students)
(1b) *You're going to be quiet now.*

(2a) *¡Hola!, buenos días. ¿Qué tal* ***estamos****?* (UAM)
hello, good days how are-1PL
'Hello, good day! How are we?'
(2b) *¿Qué tal estás?/¿Qué tal estáis?/¿Qué tal está?/¿Qué tal están?*
How are you-2SG/ How are you-2PL/ How are you-2SG-HON/ How are you-2PL-HON
'How are you?'

In order to account for the apparent mismatch between form and pragmatic meaning of the 1st person plural in utterances such as (1a) and (2a), I will distinguish between, on the one hand, speaker/hearer as the physical persons engaging in interaction and producing speech/text, and, on the other hand, addresser/addressee as roles, i.e. textual representations or conceptualizations of these interaction participants. This layered representation leads to a conceptualization of the addresser and addressee which does not directly correspond with the speaker and hearer. Consider, for example, the 'interior monologue' where the speaker represents him-/herself not as addresser but as addressee.

One of the forerunners in theorising the layered nature of 'speaker' and 'hearer' is Goffman(1979, 1981). His plea for a decomposition of speaker/addresser and hearer/addressee into different participant statuses has the merit of bringing to the fore the

[1] The cases in which the main target is not a conversation participant are extremely rare and will not be the subject of this study.

complexity of multi-person communication events (including non-linguistic signs such as gaze, body orientation), as opposed to more traditional models based on dyadic interaction. The speaker is thus further analyzed as the animator/author/principal distinction (Goffman 1979), based on whether the involvement of the speaker is merely at the level of the production of the utterance or whether it also represents the speaker's feelings and ideas. The animator is then the physical speaker or writer; the author the person responsible for the wording; the principal, finally, is the person who takes authority for what is being said/written. These generally coincide but in case of political speeches, for instance, the principal is the politician whereas it is no secret that the author (and animator) of these speeches is generally someone else. Similarly, a spokesperson reading out a statement can be the animator without being the author or principal. The HD-reading takes this distinction even one step further, since it makes the hearer responsible for executing the action, whereas the speaker remains the animator and principal and, to a certain extent, also the author.

The complexity of the addresser and addressee concept is yet another argument to place the conceptualizations of addresser and addressee on a continuum. We can then situate the reference of the 1st person plural forms themselves along this continuum, as proposed by Bazzanella (2009: 114). At the poles, only the addresser or addressee is referred to. Towards the centre of the continuum, however, other conceptualizations are possible, which are not founded on mere inclusion or exclusion, but may express various degrees of involvement.

By default, we associate the addresser, expressed by the 1st person singular, with the speaker, and the addressee, expressed by the 2nd person singular, with the hearer. This conceptualization can be presented as in Figure 1: the black arrow indicates the default interpretation. However, this is not always a one-to-one-relationship. Indeed, person referring expressions can entail other, more complex conceptualizations, with shifts along the addresser-addressee continuum.

[insert Figure 1]

In 1st person plural forms, for instance, such shifts are facilitated by the fact that the 1st person plural form is to a certain extent non-specific, since it represents the addresser and a variable (Nunberg, 1993). This variable is not further specified by the 1st person plural form itself (at

least in English and Spanish)[2]. A 1st person plural form permits, for instance, us to conceptualize the speaker and hearer as one group, linked to the addresser, thus suggesting a closer link between them. This interpretation corresponds to the inclusive[3] reading and can be represented as in Figure 2. The black arrow signals the default speaker-inclusion, while the white arrow represents the contextually determined gliding towards hearer-inclusion.

[insert Figure 2]

Examples (1a) and (2a), however, manifest yet another contextually driven gliding, viz. one toward a hearer-dominant reading. Unlike the 2nd person form (1b) and (2b), this HD-reading of the 1st person plural does not conceptualize the exclusion of the speaker, but rather represents a shift on the continuum from the addresser/speaker towards the addressee/hearer end (right-hand side), as shown in Figure 3.

[insert Figure 3]

The HD-reading then combines two mechanisms. On the one hand, the addresser/addressee blended in the 1st person plural, keeps present the involvement or interest on behalf of the addresser. On the other hand, the shift towards the addressee (right-hand side of the continuum) obeys contextual constraints. The hearer's physical presence indeed seems a prerequisite to obtain the HD-reading: this strengthens the link between addressee and hearer. The link is further reinforced by the significant co-occurrence with a vocative in the form of a proper name: a proper name instantiates the extra-linguistic reality, i.c. the hearer, in the most direct and undisputable way.

The paper is structured in the following sections. I will first sketch language-specific constraints on the use of the English and Spanish person reference paradigms (section 2) and review existing studies on discourse exploitations of 1st person plural forms, especially the HD-reading (section 3). I further discuss linguistic contextual cues for interpreting 1st person plural forms as referring to the hearer mainly (or only): more specifically, I will look into the combination of hearer foregrounding devices (especially vocative forms) and verb tense

[2] See Siewierska (2004:82 ff.) and Cysouw (2003) for a typological overview of further specification at the level of the 1st person plural pronoun or flexion.

[3] An exclusive interpretation of the 1st person plural excludes the hearer at the benefit of a 3rd person (i.e. a person not participating in the interaction), next to the speaker.

(section 4). The HD-reading of the 1st person plural further patterns with the use of exhortatives as mitigated directives (section 5). The challenges the HD-reading poses for the main politeness theories will be discussed by way of conclusion (section 6).

This analysis explains how the interplay between linguistic information and inferential processing that leads to an HD-reading of the 1st person plural. Since the HD-reading presents a mismatch between form and pragmatic meaning, automatic data retrieval is not possible. An additional obstacle to automatic retrieval is the unavailability of large tagged Spanish (spoken language) corpora. Although a fully quantified corpus survey remains out of realm, the triggers retained through a thorough contextual study can be considered to have typological value, since they rely on an empirical base. For this research, a total of 100 examples per language were analyzed for a variety of features such as context, tense, presence of attenuating adverbs or discourse markers, relationship between interlocutors and (perceived) politeness effect. The examples are mainly drawn from the following corpora: *British National Corpus* (BNC), *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), *Corpus del español* (Davies), *Child language data exchange system* (CHILDES), *Corpus de referencia de la lengua española contemporánea* (UAM) and parliamentary debates (Congreso). The analysis also relies on newspaper, novel and television programme excerpts. Examples from previous studies are, of course, quoted as such.
Examples were selected as cases of HD-reading (or, at least, as strongly privileging an HD-reading) on the basis of the judgments of two native speakers (per language). These speakers also commented upon the (perceived) impolite effect.

Research on the uses of 1st person plural, in general has shown that this HD-reading is very infrequent in corpora (less than 0,05%) as compared to other, more typical 1st person plural readings (De Cock 2010). This holds even for specialized corpora of genres and interaction types that are more typically associated with this reading (such as teacher-student interaction). This phenomenon can therefore not be considered a prototypical reading from a quantitative point of view. However, when adopting a broader perspective concerning prototypicality and cognitive salience (among others Gilquin 2010), it can be argued that also elements such as readiness of elicitation or 'goodness-of-example' are highly relevant. In this respect, the HD-reading scores well in that native speakers flawlessly produce and interpret it. Furthermore, they spontaneously come up with examples of HD-readings in a variety of contexts, thus demonstrating their familiarity with this phenomenon and its pragmatic or rhetoric effects.

## 2. The Spanish versus English pronoun system: pro-drop and forms of address

Contrasting Spanish with English is interesting both for historical and linguistic reasons. In the first place, most of the seminal contributions on the non-prototypical use of 1st person plural forms concern English (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987). Although these analyses should of course not be transposed to Spanish as such, they certainly provide insights into the underlying mechanisms leading to an HD-reading. The second reason is related to the different structuring of the person reference paradigms in the two languages. I will include these differences in my analysis and discuss their influence on the HD-reading. However, since Spanish is a pro-drop language, while English is not, it may be supposed that the person reference paradigms occupy a different structural position in the two languages and, crucially, that this will have an impact on the HD-readings they are susceptible to convey. In most of its forms, Spanish verbal morphology marks grammatical person and number[4]. Hence, it generally goes without overt subject pronoun[5] (3). The marked option, with subject pronoun, can be motivated, e.g. by a reference switch.[6] In (4), for instance, *nosotros* introduces a new referent with respect to the previous utterance (each dash represents a new turn).

(3) ¡**Hemos traído** empanada! (UAM, acon017a)
**have-1PL brought** empanada
'**We have brought** empanadas (pastries)!'

(4) - Después tiene unas playas "Ríos Martín" cerca de Ceuta y eso que son unas playas extraordinarias.
Then has some beaches "Ríos Martín" close to Ceuta and that that are some beaches extraordinary.
'Then there are some beaches "Ríos Martín" close to Ceuta and there's the fact that they're extraordinary beaches.

[4] The exceptions are the 1st and 3rd person singular forms of the indicative imperfect, of the conditional present and of the subjunctive present and imperfect, none of which are relevant to this analysis (see 4.2 on the impact of verb tense on the HD-reading).
[5] Gelabert (2004:135) found only 6.2% of the first person plural verb forms in a general corpus to be constructed with an explicit pronoun.
[6] A reference switch must be accompanied by some indication of the switch, yet the pronoun is not the only device available for this function (Matos Amaral and Schwenter, 2005).

- **Nosotros** tenemos amigos allí en Ceuta. (UAM, ccon035a)
  **We** have-1PL friends there in Ceuta.
  '**We** have friends there in Ceuta.'

The markedness of explicit *nosotros* enhances the speaker profile, thus precluding its downgrading and the gliding towards an HD-reading (Gelabert-Desnoyer, 2006:11). Our data corroborate this observation: none of the Spanish utterances with an HD-reading have an explicit pronoun. *Nosotros* adds to the 1st person plural verb inflection *–mos* its pragmatic weight (Davidson, 1996). Thus, the deictic anchoring of the addresser is strengthened. This makes a mainly addressee-oriented (or addressee-dominant) reading as in (3) impossible. The presence of a subject pronoun effectively cancels the possibility of a reading in which the addressee has more weight than the addresser (Gelabert-Desnoyer, 2006: 11; De Cock, 2010).

In English, by contrast, the subject pronoun is compulsory and, by default, unmarked. Markedness can be realized by, amongst other features, intonational accent. Its effect is similar to the presence of the Spanish subject pronoun, in the sense that it strengthens the deictic anchoring and precludes an HD-reading.

In addition to being pro-drop vs. non-pro-drop, English and Spanish also differ in the complexity of their address system. As is well-known, Spanish, being a T/V[7]-language, distinguishes between an informal form of address, *tú/vosotros*, and a formal or honorific one, *usted(es)* – or their corresponding verb morphology (Brown and Gilman, 1960). It will be shown in section 6.4 that the HD-reading may also be related to the (avoidance of) T/V-choice, bringing in an extra dimension of the HD-reading. English, by contrast, has only one form of address, *you*, for informal and honorific, singular and plural address. Besides, both languages of course turn to full NPs to make formality distinctions.

The present analysis takes into account these differences so as to distinguish between language-specific constraints and cross-linguistic tendencies regarding pragmatic phenomena that involve person reference, in particular hearer-reference.

## 3. Previous accounts

[7] T/V refers to the distinction between Latin *tu* and *vos*, respectively the familiar and polite singular form of address. Brown and Gilman introduced the term *T/V* to refer to a familiar vs. a polite pronoun of address in any language.

Previous accounts of the HD-reading have focused mainly on two aspects: on the one hand, the non-prototypical character of the HD-reading of the 1st person plural, and on the other hand, the illocutionary effect, which, in its turn, has given rise to various publications on the politeness effects of the HD-reading.

The prototypical or 'default' reading of the 1st person plural is that the speaker "explicitly states that he is a member of this group [referred to by means of the plural]" (Helmbrecht, 2002:31). Speaker inclusion is granted by the proper nature of the 1st person plural. The group of which the speaker is a member is variable and can range from a duo with just one other person to the whole universe. A 1st person plural referring to the speaker and the hearer is called inclusive (see Figure 2), whereas the 1st person plural referring to the speaker and the third party – whilst excluding the hearer – is called exclusive. Both in Spanish and English, inclusivity and exclusivity are pragmatically induced; these readings do not correspond to formal differences, as is the case in a wide range of the world's languages (see Siewierska, 2004 and Cysouw, 2003 for an overview). Many 'secondary' meanings of 1st person plural have been attested, though, including the so-called 'editorial we' (Temmerman 2008). One of those 'secondary' or non-prototypical uses of inclusive *we* is the HD-reading. It is an apparent mismatch since the speaker is downgraded and becomes less important than the hearer. Though non-prototypical, the strategy is certainly not unheard off.[8]

The non-prototypicality of the HD-reading has been observed by many authors and is clearly reflected in the terminology, e.g. 'inverted we' (Bazzanella, 2002:245), 'pseudo-inclusivo' (Haverkate, 1984:87), 'discordancia deliberada' (deliberate discordance) (Gili Gaya, 1993:33). Other authors highlight the hearer-dominance in their terminological choice, e.g. $we_{you}$ or $nosotros_{\text{vocativo}}$ (Gelabert-Desnoyer, 2006:11). Iglesias Recuero (2001:265 ff.) uses the label "plural sociativo" for both the exclusively hearer-oriented uses, which are being treated here, e.g. (5), and cases which are not being considered here, in which the speaker includes other persons in order to share responsibility for his/her action, e.g. (6); such cases would be situated towards the left half of the continuum represented in Figure 3.

[8] To my knowledge, no cross-linguistic research has been conducted on this non-prototypical use. It has been described in language-specific studies, e.g. Bazzanella (2002:245) for Italian, Nogué Serrano (2008:197) for Catalan, and Borthen (2010) for Norwegian. In addition, native speakers confirm similar uses in Dutch, French, English, German and Turkish.

(5) *¿**Nos hemos tomado** ya las medicinas?* (Iglesias Recuero, 2001)
**us-REFL have-1PL taken** already the medicines
'**Have we taken** our medicines already?'

(6) ***Nos hemos equivocado** de tratamiento.* (doctor to patient) (Iglesias Recuero, 2001)
**us-REFL have-1PL mistaken** of treatment
'**We have given** the wrong treatment'

Lyons' (1982:109) account of the HD-reading as an example of 'subjective deixis' encompasses the different illocutionary effects highlighted by other authors. Some stress the empathy or involvement dimension, e.g. 'plural sociativo' (Fernández Soriano, 1999:1218; Iglesias Recuero, 2001:265) or 'plural compasivo' (Iglesias Recuero, 2001:265) while others dwell on possibly paternalistic overtones (Iglesias Recuero, 2001:266) or invoke a 'condescending *we*' (Quirk et al., 1985: 350-351) or 'coercive use' (Bull and Fetzer, 2006:13), intended to force the hearer to undertake a certain action.

In politeness studies, the HD-reading counts as a positive politeness strategy. Using a person referring expression is considered to reflect a point-of-view operation, in which a personal-center switch may take place, i.c. the use of "an inclusive 'we' although it is only H who is really being referred to" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:118). As an expression of solidarity with the hearer, the HD-use of the 1st person plural is particularly apt at realizing potentially face-threatening acts, such as directives (De Cock, forthc.). Claiming a common ground is then considered a positive action towards the hearer's face, as opposed to the 2nd person forms, which rather yield a face-threatening effect.

(7) *Ok now, **let's stop** the chatter and get on with our little essays*. (Brown and Levinson, 1987:118)

(8) *Oh dear, **we've lost** our little ball, haven't we, Johnny?* (ibid.)

(9) *Now, **have we taken** our medicine?* (doctor to patient) (ibid.)

Examples (7)-(9) put into play various hearer foregrounding devices, e.g. the exhortative *let's stop* (7), the vocative *Johnny* (8) and the interrogative in (8) and (9). The way the hearer

foregrounding devices function as triggers for the HD-reading will be discussed in Section 4.1.

Examples (7)-(9) are uttered in the context of a power relationship (respectively teacher-student/parent-child/doctor-patient), where persuasive argumentation is a key (Weigand 2008). The power relationship is mentioned in most accounts as an important condition to make the strategy effective (cf. Haverkate, 1984:87; Iglesias Recuero, 2001:266). The HD-reading is to be seen beyond the classical (extralinguistic) power relationship. Indeed, the HD-reading may create an asymmetry, even when the extralinguistic relationship between the interlocutors is not typically defined as an asymmetric one. Thus, Borthen (2010) points out that the HD-reading is also found in contexts where this power relationship is less evident, e.g. among partners (10). Indeed, in both the Spanish and English datasets, half of the examples were uttered in a context where we would describe the sociological relationship between the interlocutors as a relationship amongst equals. Through the deviating HD-reading, the speaker assimilates the addresser (with whom he identifies) and the addressee (identified with the hearer) as part of one group, thus taking the right to speak for the addressee. While this shift can be considered an expression of empathy or, otherwise, as a reminder to work jointly, the presence of a vocative entails hearer foregrounding and edging on the interlocutor. As such, an HD-reading becomes more likely and joint identification of the couple less so (though not impossible).

(10) *Good for you, honey, but listen, we have to do the dishes.* (Grand Magazine)

The tendencies mentioned in the literature can be summarized as follows. In the first place, many authors acknowledge the non-prototypicality of the HD-reading. All recognize some kind of deictic center shift, yet few make further distinctions concerning the (remaining) degree of speaker involvement. In the second place, the influence of other linguistic elements susceptible of activating the HD-reading is generally disregarded. Thirdly, most authors consider the power relation between speaker and hearer to be a necessary condition for the HD-reading. Fourthly, in spite of wide attestations of the HD-reading, little attention has been paid to the influence of language-specific properties. Finally, the pragmatic effect of this strategy is often described in terms of empathy and involvement, as its study has been embedded mainly in the framework of politeness studies.

## 4. The shift towards hearer-dominance

The shift towards hearer-dominance, which is at first sight a form-function mismatch, can be triggered by contextual devices bringing the hearer to the fore, e.g. vocative forms, interrogative speech acts and question tags (section 4.1). The influence of tense on the interpretation of person reference should not be neglected either (section 4.2). The repercussions of the structural differences between Spanish and English on the pragmatic functioning of certain devices will be commented on throughout the analysis.

### 4.1. Hearer-foregrounding devices

The addressee can be foregrounded by means of a 2nd person verb form or by means of a vocative, e.g. *Tom* in (11). These strategies of hearer foregrounding are present in a third of the English and Spanish examples and indicate that a speech act is particularly relevant for a specific addressee (or set of addressees), thus forcing identification upon the addressee(s). Its correlation with an HD-reading, both in English and in Spanish, is therefore all but surprising. The vocative operates a deictic center shift by which the content becomes more readily interpreted as relevant for the addressee and hearer, e.g. (11) and (12). In (12a1), the 1st person plural includes both speaker and hearer (both are to finish their interview); yet, the vocative *Doña Rogelia* bends the interpretation towards the hearer end of the continuum. This is corroborated by the subsequent context: the interviewer's interruptive denegation *¡No!* (12a2) strengthens the coercive force of the HD-reading in (12a1) as a reaction to Doña Rogelia's turn-taking *quiero* (12b1).

(11) ***Tom**, we're doing our homework now.*

(12) a1.-***Doña Rogelia**, tenemos que terminar.*
**Mrs Rogelia**, have to-1PL finish
'**Mrs. Rogelia**, we have to stop.'
b1. -*Quiero*
want-1SG
'I want'
a2. -*¡No!*
No

'No'

b2. *-recordar a los oyentes que Maquillaje es una estampa oriental*

remind-INF to the listeners that Maquillaje is a print oriental

'remind the audience that Maquillaje is an oriental print.'

(CREA, Protagonistas, Madrid, 10/09/91, Radio Intercontinental, Onda Cero)

There are also more indirect ways to activate the hearer than a form of address, viz. various ways to make clear to the hearer that the utterance is particularly relevant to him/her[9], thus activating him/her to identify with the reference of the proposition. Since a question is typically the first 'pair part' of an adjacency pair, it raises expectations that the hearer will produce the second 'pair part' (Keisanen, 2007; Schegloff, 2007), e.g. (13) and (14). The question format thus, by definition, induces some coercion on the hearer. Given the impact of interrogatives on the HD-reading, it is not surprising that 67% of the English examples and 61% of the Spanish examples are interrogative speech acts.

(13) ***Have we eaten*** *our sandwich?*

(14) *¿Qué tal* ***llevamos*** *el trabajo?*

What so us cope-1PL the work?

'How **are we coping** with the work?'

English question-tags, e.g. *haven't we* (8) or *do we* (15a2), are a much more standard component of the interrogative speech act than their possible Spanish counterparts[10]. As they include a person referring expression, they are particularly relevant for our research topic and may reinforce the antagonist status of the hearer in tag-questions. The standard question-tag echoes the verb person of the main clause, as is the case for 4 of the English examples. In fact, turning to a different verb person in the question-tag may strengthen the hearer foregrounding. The English dataset contains one example with such a person switch between main clause and

[9] In view of the data, I will only discuss linguistic means to activate the hearer. Of course, also non-linguistic means such as gaze and pointing may significantly contribute to hearer activation.

[10] Spanish does not have a question-tag of the English type, consisting of a conjugated form of *to do* and a personal pronoun. The question-tag by means of final *¿no?* may be used as an equivalent in some cases though its frequency is much lower. It is generally used to request affirmation or corroboration by the hearer and is in that sense hearer-oriented (García Vizcaíno, 2005:91). However, the functions of *¿no?* are by far less numerous than of the English question-tag (Gómez-González and Gil Iglesias, unpublished paper). Other frequent question tags in Spanish are *¿verdad?* ('is it the truth?') and, mainly in Argentina, *¿no es cierto?* ('isn't it sure?'). However, all of these lack a person reference component and differ in this respect from the English question-tag.

question-tag, *do you* in (15a1), taken from the TV series *Fawlty Towers*. The expected second pair part is an expression of assent, e.g. (15b1). In the series, Basil Fawlty does not always comply with the convention: in (15b2) he does not give the expected answer, e.g. *No, we don't* but, on the contrary, undermines Sybil's use of HD 1st person plural by stating *No, you don't, dear.* The humorous effect precisely stems from the audience's familiarity with the HD-reading: they understand that Sybil's use of *we* was intended to coerce Basil into agreement and that Basil's undermining strategy is part of their regular bickering.

(15) a1. Sybil Fawlty: *Basil doesn't bet on the horses anymore, do you?*
b1. Basil Fawlty: *No, that particular avenue of pleasure has been closed off.*
a2. Sybil Fawlty: *And* ***we don't want*** *it opened up again,* ***do we****?*
b2. Basil Fawlty: *No, you don't, dear.*
(John Cleese and Connie Booth, *Fawlty Towers*)

The hearer activation devices discussed in this section are represented as a radial category in Figure 4, taking into account their quantitative weight and the extent to which their hearer activating effect can be cancelled. Often, more central and more peripheral devices co-occur and reinforce the HD-reading, making it virtually impossible to calculate the exact impact of each specific device.

[insert Figure 4]

The vocative and the English 2nd person tag question count as the most central devices since they activate the hearer in a direct way: their hearer-activating effect can be cancelled only with great difficulty. Especially the vocative also proved to be very frequently used in combination with the HD-reading. The question (in general) figures in the outer circles as it seems to operate less directly than the English tag-question. Its effect is more easily cancellable and, in some cases, the native speakers judging the utterance were found to express some doubt concerning the strength of the hearer activation. No examples of the Spanish tag-question were found in the dataset, yet felicitous examples may be constructed, such as (16).

(16) *Nos hemos tomado ya las medicinas, ¿verdad?*
**us-REFL have-1PL taken** already the medicines, truth

'**We have** already **taken** our medicines, haven't we/isn't it?'

4.2. The impact of verb tense on speaker and hearer reference

The extent to which the speaker is involved in the HD-reading can be related, amongst other factors, to the verb tense and aspect (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 174, 204).[11] I will first look at the contrast between events evoked in future and past, before turning to present tense expressions.

Forms with a perfective aspect tend to trigger a reading of the event as concluded: the participation or otherwise of speaker and hearer may be thus known to the interlocutors. Hence, speaker inclusion can no longer be 'negotiated' and operates only at a conceptual level, i.e. as a means to express involvement at the level of the participant roles and to reduce the possibly face-threatening character of an utterance, e.g. (17). Both the English and Spanish examples with a perfective aspect have a rather straightforward reading as to the person(s) involved.

(17) ***Have we eaten*** *our sandwich?* (said to a child)

Future tense forms, in contrast, signal that the event is not yet realized. This 'virtual' interpretation can include both the speaker and the hearer, thus easily yielding an empathic effect. In (18), the teacher, by choosing a future tense, conceptualizes the cooperation with the student in his/her actions. It is then not surprising that the 1st person plural future form often occurs as a mitigated directive since it can suggest joint action and support, rather than pure imposition.

(18) *En este caso los factores comunes son sólo el dos y el siete... pues el tres no aparece como factor en el numerador. Además, el factor dos aparece como potencia cubo y como potencia cuadrado, por lo que* ***eliminaremos*** *en ambos casos la menor...* (UAM, eedu007e)
In this case the factors common are only the two and the seven well the three not appears as factor in the numerator. Moreover, the factor two appears as power

[11] I would like to thank José Portolés Lázaro for his suggestions concerning the relevance of verb aspect for the interpretation of person reference.

cube and as power root, for it that **eliminate-FUT-1PL** in both cases the smaller
'In this case, the common factors are only two and seven… because three does not appear as a factor in the numerator. Moreover, factor two appears as a cube and as a square root, which is why **we will eliminate** in both cases the smallest one [the square root]'

A similar connection between tense and the interpretation of person reference forms comes to the fore in Scheibman's 2004 research. She shows that future or future-oriented forms correlate with an inclusive interpretation of 1st person plural forms, whereas past forms tend to correlate with exclusive readings of 1st person plural forms. Scheibman's account, however, cannot be directly applied to our examples, since she looks at more typical 1st person plural uses, where the speaker remains prominently included in the reference. Her results, nevertheless, confirm the importance of tense for distinguishing between inclusive or exclusive readings.

As for the present tense, the imperfective aspect of the present tenses in e.g. (19) and (20) allows for an open reading in which the speaker can be involved. Note the importance of adverbs with an attenuating effect, such as *quizás* (perhaps) in (19) or *now* in (20). These adverbs reduce the possible authoritarian effect of the HD-reading.

(19) ***Nos faltan*** *quizás unas palabras de reconocimiento a los inventores y científicos*
(teacher comment on student paper, example taken from Stewart, 2004)
**us are-3PL missing** perhaps some words of acknowledgement to the inventors and scientists
'**We're lacking** perhaps some words of acknowledgement to the inventors and scientists'

(20) *Now they were all your new words, now* ***we go on*** *to some of the older words now.*
(BNC)

Both in the English and Spanish data, the interpretation of imperfective aspect present and future tense is ambiguous whereas the hearer-dominant interpretation is much more straightforward with perfective aspect.

In combination with hearer-foregrounding clues that trigger a shift on the continuum (4.1.), tense use influences the possible positions on the continuum (4.2.).

## 5. Exhortatives: a special case of hearer dominance in 1st person plural forms

The exhortatives' main communicative function is to convey a request for (joint) action. The directive meaning is crucial to exhortative forms both in English and Spanish. The use of the 1st person plural makes for a more indirect and mitigated directive than a 2nd person form (De Cock, forthc.). By virtue of their hearer-oriented interpretation and their 1st person plural morphology, they are easily associated with the HD-reading of the 1st person plural (Brown and Levinson, 1987:118).

The grammaticalized English *let's* has arisen from the HD-reading of the 1st person plural form (21). It presents a certain degree of formal fixation with respect to the original form *let us* (Hopper and Traugott, 1993:12-13; De Clerck, 2004, 2006). Semantically, the original request for permission (paraphrased as 'allow us') has evolved into a request for joint action, which can be read as a conjoint reading, a speaker-only reading or a hearer-oriented directive[12] (excluding the speaker) (De Clerck, 2006). As Hopper and Traugott (1993:11) point out, the reading of *let's* is in some varieties of English disambiguated by the presence of the pronoun *you,* e.g. *Let's you go first.* Significantly, the directive value of *let's* thus fluctuates between different positions on the addresser-addressee continuum and no longer expresses a mere request for permission, as originally encoded in *let us*.

(21) *And uh* ***let's just start*** *by establishing the idea of the basilica plan uhm because of course many of the famous…* (International Corpus of English, quoted in De Clerck, 2004:24)

In Spanish, we can distinguish two mitigated directives in the 1st person plural form: one is in the subjunctive present (22), the other is the periphrasis with indicative *vamos a* ('we go to') + infinitive. In neither case does Spanish present formal attrition as the one observed in the

[12] As Hopper and Traugott (1993:11) point out, the hearer-oriented directive use of *let's* is in some varieties of English reinforced by the presence of the pronoun *you,* e.g. *Let's you go first.*

English *let's*. Yet, a 1st person subjunctive in a main clause is always interpreted as an exhortative[13]. It thus has acquired a fixed meaning, which is mainly hearer-oriented.

(22) ***Empecemos*** *por el principio. El principio es que - bueno, ahí tuvimos -*
**start-1PL-SUBJ** by the start. The start is that – well, there had-1PL-IND-PAST
*comimos de todo, ¿eh?,* (UAM, apub004c)
ate-1PL-IND-PAST of all, eh?
'**Let's start** by the beginning. The beginning is that – well, there we had – we ate a bit of everything, eh?

The exhortatives of motion predicate *ir* ('go') and reflexive *irse* 'go, get going'), respectively v*amos* and *vámonos* are irregular exhortative forms. "The expected form *vayámonos* is nowadays virtually extinct and *vayamos* is used as an imperative only in set phrases, e.g. *vayamos al grano* 'let's get to the point'" (Butt and Benjamin 1988: 291). The intervocal palatal of the medieval subjunctive *vayamos* elided at an early stage. As a result, a homophony emerged of indicative and subjunctive *vamos* (González Ollé 2002). This homophony allows for *vamos (a)* to express both an exhortative and a periphrastic future based on motion verb *ir a*[14] (De Cock 2010: 134).

Example (23), taken from a mother to child conversation illustrates the interpretive latitude along the addresser-addressee continuum of this homophonous *vamos a*. (23a) and (23c) receive a rather prototypical inclusive reading and a future interpretation of the auxiliary (both mother and child will go upstairs). *Nos vamos* in particular is clearly non-subjunctive as the reflexive subjunctive-based exhortative has grammaticalized into *vámonos*. The imperative *ven* and the vocative *cuco* in (23b) reflect stronger hearer-foregrounding. In (23d), the use of the first name *Magín* rather than the affective *cuco* is a further indication of the more pressing order towards the child. The use of an interrogative furthermore cancels a possible exhortative reading. Simultaneously, *vamos a* functions in (23b) and (23d) at modal rather than temporal level. Thus, the mother combines the different values of *vamos a* with gradually more stringent strategies of hearer-foregrounding in order to persuade her child to go to bed. This polyvalence of *vamos a* probably accounts for its frequency being much higher than that of the subjunctive-based exhortative (De Cock 2010: 119).

[13] Except when combined with other elements such as the optative particle *ojalá*, or with the 1st person plural subject pronoun (Garrido Medina 1999:3914).
[14] The latter reading is possible beyond the indicative present of the 1st person plural.

(23) a. ***Nos vamos a subir***.

**us go-1PL to go upstairs**

**'We're going to go upstairs**.'

b. *Ven cuco* ***vamos a acostar***.

come sweety **go-1PL to go to bed**

'Come sweety, **we're going to go to bed**.'

c. ***Vamos a dormir***.

**go-1PL to sleep**

**'Let's go to sleep**.'

d. *¿**Vamos a dormir**, Magín?*

**go-1PL to sleep**, Magín

'**Are we going to sleep**, Magín?'

(mother to child, CHILDES)

Finally, exhortatives more frequently fulfill speech-organizational functions, rather than trigger actions, both in English (De Clerck, 2004: 224) and in Spanish, e.g. (24) and (25), or (26) which has become a fixed text-structuring expression.

(24) ***Let's start*** *at the very beginning.*

(25) *Pero, por variar,* ***empecemos*** *por los posibles finales de esta historia* (CREA)

but for change, **start-1PL-SUBJ** by the possible endings of this story

'But, for a change, **let's start** by the possible endings of this story.'

(26) ***Pongamos*** *por caso…*

**put-1PL-SUBJ** for case

'**Let's assume** that we're talking about …'

The Spanish exhortative expressed by means of the subjunctive thus appears to have become conventionally hearer-oriented. Both English *let's* and the Spanish *vamos a*-periphrasis can be mapped on various positions on the continuum, ranging from a prototypical 1st person plural reading to the HD-reading. The shift towards the HD-reading is then facilitated by hearer-foregrounding devices.

## 6. Polite or impolite?

The analysis of the HD-reading of 1st person plural raises a number of issues concerning politeness theories and, more generally, argumentation and power analyses (see among others Weigand 2008). A first question concerns the empirical status of the evaluation of an (im)polite speech act and its repercussions on an HD-reading (6.1). Another point relates to the difference between the commonsensical and the scientific meanings of politeness, and the possible repercussions on the politeness judgment (6.2). Thirdly, implicit or explicit genre conventions play a role in the avoidance of FTAs (face-threatening acts)[15] and, correspondingly, the desirability of mitigated directives (6.3). Finally, the influence of some language-specific properties on the politeness effect will come into focus (6.4).

6.1. Towards an empirical basis for politeness judgments?

In reply to earlier politeness theories, various researchers (among others Watts, 2003; Terkourafi, 2005) have called for a renewed attention for politeness judgments by the hearer, arguing that, in the end, only the hearer's perception of the (im)politeness of an act is what matters in interaction. The interactional reaction by the hearer is then considered a more empirical way of evaluating the (im)polite effect of a speech act on the hearer, as opposed to a judgment based on the researcher's intuitions. Such an approach also presents some drawbacks, however. Not all utterances or speech acts that are perceived as impolite provoke a reaction from the hearer – be it linguistic or non-linguistic. For social or personal reasons, the hearer may choose not to interrupt the interaction or not to draw attention to his/her feeling offended. I did not find any explicit hearer reaction in the spontaneous conversational data, as in constructed example (27).

(27) -Listen honey, we have to do the dishes.
-You mean I have to do the dishes?

However, when discussing this research, many colleagues spontaneously came up with jokes or humorous dialogues based on the pragmatic nature of the HD-reading and the readiness of the hearer to infer the HD-reading. Indeed, as opposed to the absence of such examples in

[15] FTA is understood as "verbal or non-verbal communication" that "by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:65).

spontaneous data, the *Fawlty Towers* example (15) cleverly exploits the reaction by the hearer as a humorous device.

As a response to rhetorical questions or indirectly formulated directives in the 1st person plural, the hearer may simply comply with the requested task or the expected behavior, rather than react verbally. Even if empirical data were available to check non-linguistic reactions (which unfortunately is not the case for the examples available for this study), the interpretation would still be problematic. For instance, if a teacher says *We're going to be quiet now* and pupils continued chatting, this does not necessarily mean that they consider the request inappropriate.

6.2. Politeness1 *vs*. politeness2

Before being introduced as a theoretical concept in politeness studies, 'politeness' already had a commonsensical meaning. To remedy some misunderstandings attributable to the coexistence of both meanings, Watts et al. (1992) and Eelen (2001) advocate a distinction between first-order politeness or 'politeness1'[16] (politeness in its commonsensical, everyday use) and second-order politeness or 'politeness2' (theoretical concept, as for example the one developed by Brown and Levinson).

If we approach politeness as a commonsensical concept (see politeness1, Watts et al., 1992), the analysis of the polite or impolite character of the utterances discussed in this article crucially hinges on the norm-relatedness of the behavior. The polite, impolite or neutral effect may vary according to the circumstances (both linguistic and non-linguistic). In teaching, as in examples (19) and (20), the use of a HD 1st person plural has become a fairly standard directive speech act and is in some contexts "politic" in Watts' sense (Watts,1989), i.e. the socially appropriate behavior. In medical contexts, as in (5), (6) and (9), the HD 1st person plural also seems to be fairly well accepted although elderly people may not appreciate being addressed this way, especially when the social distance to the interlocutor is perceived to be small (e.g. a young nurse), or when it emphasizes the dependency of the patients. In practice, the speaker often has to assist the hearer in the tasks formulated (taking the medicine, washing him/herself). Thus, the use of a 1st person plural is one among many 'baby talking' strategies

[16] The terms were proposed by Watts et al., 1992.

which, though meant to reduce face threat, may result to be face threatening acts since they affect the recipient's personal identity (Coupland, Grainger and Coupland, 1988). The context-dependency is then crucial in the analysis of politeness from a commonsensical perspective.

As laid out in section 3, and in spite of a possible impolite1 meaning, the HD-reading is polite, though, in the theoretical sense of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987, or politeness2 in Watts et al., 1992 and Eelen, 2001). It represents a point-of-view operation and protects the hearer's face by including the speaker.

6.3. Genre-specificity of politeness judgments

According to the politeness1 concept, a commonsensical politeness judgment hinges on the situation and genre, and is therefore context-dependent (Culpeper, 1996). Hence, utterances which express solidarity or empathy in the sense of politeness2, can still be perceived as expressions of power according to politeness1. Conversely, utterances which are impolite2 can be perfectly acceptable from a politeness1 perspective, e.g. Labov's famous 1972 research on banter, i.c. the ritualized use of insults (impolite2) as a device for social cohesion (polite1).

Example (28) is taken from parliamentary debate and seems to be acceptable in the political context, even though it would be impolite1 in normal interaction.

(28) ***Podemos confundir****, como ha hecho hoy aquí S.S., la ballena de Jonás con la de Job, como decía Usted.* (Diario de Sesiones, quoted in Gelabert-Desnoyer, 2006)
**can-1PL confuse** as has done today here your Lordship the whale of Jonas with the of Job, as said you
'**We can confuse**, as your Lordship has done here today, the whale of Jonas with that of Job, as you said.'

The speaker at first seems to create a polite effect by means of a 1st person plural that includes both the speaker and the hearer, *podemos confundir*. He displays sympathy towards making errors and seems ready to share the 'shame' the hearer should feel for his mistaking biblical references. However, he undermines this polite effect by mentioning an error made by the hearer (*decía Usted* and *como ha dicho hoy aquí S.S.*), and invoking bystanders as witnesses,

i.e. other members of parliament (*hoy aquí*). This utterance thus becomes an FTA. The initial – and subsequently cancelled – impression of politeness possibly makes the FTA-effect harsher. From the perspective of Goffman's analysis, the speaker in this fragment plays a highly complex game with the animator, author and principal role. The speaker seems to take over these roles from the hearer by quoting him, but then clearly rejects the principal role by placing the responsibility with the hearer (*S.S.*).

6.4. Constraints on politeness imposed by the language structure: English vs. Spanish

So far, hearer-orientation has mainly been discussed in terms of similarities between the HD-reading in English and Spanish. However, a multidimensional approach of the HD-reading of the 1st person plural also contributes to the debate on the (lack of) universality of politeness phenomena, which has been pursued in the slipstream of Brown and Levinson's seminal work. Critiques on the universality claims, as well as on the norms underlying politeness judgments, were formulated both in language-specific studies (for an overview see Leech, 2007) and in theoretically oriented accounts (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003).

In addition to the pragmatic effects of empathy and attenuation, the use of a 1st person plural in Spanish (and in other languages with a clear T-V distinction) offers a means to avoid choosing between the more familiar T-form (i.c. *tú*) and the formal V-form (i.c. *Usted*), e.g. (29), among colleagues.

(29) A: *¿Cómo vamos?* (UAM, pcon006a)
how go-1PL
'How are we doing?
B: *Bien.*
good
'Fine.'

Although audience of presentations often spontaneously suggested that they use 1st person plural forms with this aim, the asymmetry associated to the HD-reading makes it difficult to use this strategy towards a person with whom one wishes to maintain a relationship of (hierarchical) distance or respect. It is exactly the latter type of relationship, though, that is associated with the use of V-forms. Thus, the deference or respect traditionally associated

with V-forms seems contradictory to the HD-reading of 1st person plural forms. More concretely, one would not use the HD-reading towards one's head of department. However, cases such as (30) are attested, where a restaurant waiter felicitously uses an HD-reading, even though a certain distance or respect seems required and even though the waiter previously used V-forms. A more detailed analysis of the use of T/V-forms is needed, then, in order to account for this paradox. With regard to Spanish, Blas Arroyo (2005) points out that V-forms are part of a 'conversational contract' (Fraser & Nolen 1981). In that sense, their context-dependency prevails over their expressing courtesy or respect. The V-form in restaurant example (30) is then a context-dependent choice, not (only) a sign of deference. As such, it may be combined with an HD-reading. Similarly, Blas Arroyo's approach accounts for the use of V-forms for attacks, insults, aggression, in political debates (Blas Arroyo 2000).

(30) *¿Hemos terminado?* (waiter to customers in a Spanish restaurant)
Have-1PL finished?

English does not have a T-V distinction, though it does have different terms of address. When the HD-reading is combined with a term of address in the data, this is usually a T-term: affective address, e.g. *honey*, or a first name vocative, e.g. *Johnny*. The data gathered for this study did not include interactions where the use of a 1st person plural could clearly be linked to avoidance of a certain term of address and/or establishing a common ground, e.g. with both a T- and a V-term of address in the immediate context. It may be argued that (the avoidance of) the choice of a term of address plays a role in the use of an HD-reading in interaction with elderly people.

Presumably cultural differences may also arise as to the context in which these strategies (and other politeness strategies) can be used, even between languages with similar phenomena, as is the case for the HD-reading of 1st person plural forms in English and Spanish[17].

## 7. Conclusions

[17] It is therefore necessary to undertake a contrastive study which takes into account various variables, such as genre and register (Ballesteros, 2001; Contreras Fernández, 2008).

In answer to the initial question "Why *we* can be *you*?", various factors which favour the HD-reading of the 1st person plural have been examined. In the first place, person reference generally functions at a conceptual level, which does not necessarily correlate with physical reference. I have proposed to map the addresser and addressee role at the two ends of a continuum. Shifts on this continuum are possible, resulting in an interpretation of the addresser/speaker ranging from complete inclusion to involvement. These shifts are usually triggered by mechanisms which bring the hearer to the fore. I have shown that, in addition to the explicit mentioning of the hearer, less direct means of hearer-foregrounding, such as discourse markers or interrogative constructions, play an important role. I have further highlighted that tense and aspect influence the interpretation of the role of the speaker in the HD-reading, by virtue of impact of the imperfective aspect vs. the perfective aspect on the inclusion of speaker and hearer.

The case of exhortatives is particular in two respects. Some exhortatives exploit different positions on the continuum (*let's, vamos a)*, whereas the Spanish subjunctive used as an exhortative is predominantly hearer-oriented. While the form of a 1st person plural remains intact in all exhortatives discussed, their interpretation is generally that of a mitigated directive. Furthermore, the shift towards an HD-reading in the case of *let's* and *vamos a* is triggered by similar devices as it is with indicative forms.

English and Spanish data suggest that, while HD-prompting is a cross-linguistical phenomenon, some language-specific constraints may trigger or block the HD-reading. The English tag-question profiles the hearer instance, thus giving way to a hearer-dominant interpretation. In Spanish, by contrast, *nosotros* blocks the HD-reading. Finally, given the Spanish T/V-address system, the non-prototypical use of a 1st person plural without overt subject pronoun can be seen as an avoidance strategy. Since contemporary English does not make the T-V distinction, the avoidance of a certain form of address is not at stake.

In order to establish a politeness judgment of non-prototypical 1st person plural uses, a more precise concept of politeness must be adopted. From a politeness1-perspective (the commonsensical meaning of politeness), the hearer's reaction will depend on the type of interaction and on the nature of the social relationship between speaker and hearer, especially the degree to which speaker and hearer wish to create or accept a power relationship between them. From a politeness2-perspective (politeness as a theoretical construct), the HD-reading

of the 1st person plural reduces the face-threat of the propositional content and, hence, is a politeness strategy. This effect may nevertheless be countered by other strategies which create a FTA. The analysis has shown that the interpretation and the polite effect of the HD-reading are not merely a matter of world knowledge or interlocutors' intuition, but that analyzing the broader context leads to a comprehensive view on the triggers of the hearer-dominant reading, as well as its politeness effects.

Acknowledgements

Elements of this paper were presented at the Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness Conference, Huddersfield, 3-4 July 2006 and at the Notion of commitment in Linguistics conference, 11-13 January 2007, Antwerp. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the FWO-Vlaanderen (Research Foundation Flanders) for my participation in the former conference. I would like to thank Bert Cornillie, Nicole Delbecque, Jaime Gelabert-Desnoyer, Neus Nogué Serrano, Dylan Glynn and the reviewers of Journal of Pragmatics for their comments on previous versions of this paper. I furthermore wish to thank Tomás Albaladejo Mayordomo, Silvia Iglesias Recuero, José Portolés Lázaro and Jean-Christophe Verstraete for useful suggestions. All remaining errors are, of course, my own.

Abbreviations

DAT: dative

HD: hearer-dominant

HON: honorific

FUT: future

SG: singular

PL: plural

References

Ballesteros Martín, Francisco José, 2001. La cortesía española frente a la cortesá inglesa. Estudio pragmalingüístico de las exhortaciones impositivas. Estudios Ingleses de la Universdad Complutense 9, 171-207.

Bazzanella, Carla, 2002. The significance of context in comprehension: the 'we case'. Foundations of Science 7, 239-254.

Bazzanella, Carla, 2009. *Noi* come meccanismo di intensità. In: Gili Fivela, Barbara, Bazzanella, Carla, Fenomeni di intensità nell'Italiano parlato. Firenze, Cesati, pp. 101-104.

Blas Arroyo, José Luis, 2000. Mire usted Sr. González... Personal deixis in Spanish political-electoral debate. Journal of Pragmatics 32, 1-27.

Blas Arroyo, José Luis, 2005. Los grados de la cortesía verbal: reflexiones en torno a algunas estrategias y recursos lingüísticos en el español peninsular contemporáneo. Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana 5, 9-29.

Borthen, Kaja, 2010. On how we interpret plural pronouns. Journal of Pragmatics 7, 1799-1815.

Brown, Roger, Gilman, Albert, 1960. The pronouns of power and solidarity. In: Sebeok, Th. A. (Ed.), Style in Language. M.I.T. Press, Massachussetts, pp. 253-276.

Brown, Penelope, Levinson, Stephen C. ,1987. Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Bull, Peter, Fetzer, Anita, 2006. Who are we and who are you? The strategic use of forms of address in political interviews. Text & Talk 26 (1), 3-37.

Contreras Fernández, Josefa, 2008. Conversational silence and face in two sociocultural contexts. Pragmatics 18 (4), 707-728.

Coupland, Nikolas, Grainger, Karen, Coupland, Justine, 1988. Politeness in context: Interngenerational issues. Language in Society 17 (2), 253-262.

Culpeper, Jonathan, 1996. Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. Journal of Pragmatics 25 (3), 349-367.

Cysouw, Michael, 2003. The Paradigmatic Structure of Person Marking. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Davidson, Brad. 1996. 'Pragmatic weight' and Spanish subject pronouns: The pragmatic and discourse uses of 'tú' and 'yo' in spoken Madrid Spanish. *Journal of Pragmatics* 26: 543-65.

De Clerck, Bernard, 2004. On the pragmatic functions of let's utterances. In: Aijmer, K, Altenberg, B. (Eds.), Advances in Corpus Linguistics. Rodopi, Amsterdam – New York, pp. 213-233.

De Clerck, Bernard, 2006. The imperative in English: a corpus-based, pragmatic analysis. Ph.D. Ghent University

De Cock, Barbara, 2010. A discourse-functional analysis of speech participant profiling in spoken Spanish. Unpublished PhD thesis KULeuven.

De Cock, Barbara, Forthc. La deonticidad en español desde la perspectiva de la 1ª persona.

Eelen, Gino, 2001. A Critique of Politeness Theories. St. Jerome, Manchester.

Fernández Soriano, Olga, 1999. El pronombre personal. Formas y distribuciones. Pronombres átonos y tónicos. In: Bosque, I., Demonte, V. (Eds.), Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española, Vol. 1. Espasa Calpe, Madrid, p.1209-1274.

Fraser, Bruce, Nolen, William, 1981. The association of deference with linguistic form. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 27, 93-109.

García Vizcaíno, María José, 2005. El uso de los apéndices modalizadores ¿no? y ¿eh? en español peninsular. In: Sayahi, L., Westmoreland, M. (Eds.), Selected Proceedings of the Second Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics. Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville, MA, pp. 89-101.

Garrido Medina, Joaquín, 1999. Los actos de habla. Las oraciones imperativas. In: Bosque, I., Demonte, V. (Eds.), Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española, Vol. 3. Espasa Calpe, Madrid, pp. 3879-3928.

Gelabert-Desnoyer, Jaime J., 2006. Registro y funciones de "nosotros" en el discurso parlamentario español. Lingüística En La Red 4, 1-21.

Gili Gaya, Samuel, 1993. Curso superior de sintaxis española. Barcelona: Vox.

Gilquin, Gaëtanelle, 2010. Language production: A window to the mind?. In Götzsche, H. (Ed.), Memory, Mind and Language, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 89-102.

Goffman, Erving, 1979. Footing. Semiotica 25(1-2), 1-29.

Goffman, Erving, 1981. Forms of talk. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Gómez González, Maria de los Angeles, Gil Iglesias, Lucía, unpublished paper. The question of tag questions in English and Spanish. 5th International Contrastive Linguistics Conference, Leuven, 7-9 July 2008.

González Ollé, Fernando. 2002. *Vamos*. De subjuntivo a marcador (con excurso sobre *imos*). In: Álvarez de Miranda, P., Polo Polo, J. (eds.), Lengua y diccionarios. Estudios ofrecidos a Manuel Seco, Madrid, Arco Libros, pp. 117-135.

Haverkate, Henk, 1984. Speech Acts, Speakers and Hearers. Pragmatics & Beyond, V: 4. John Benjamins, Amsterdam - Philadelphia.

Helmbrecht, Johannes, 2002. Grammar and function of we. In: Duszak, A. (Ed.), Us and Others. Social Identities across Languages, Discourses and Cultures. Pragmatics and Beyond New Series, 98. John Benjamins, Amsterdam – Philadelphia, pp. 31-49.

Hopper, Paul J., Closs Traugott, Elizabeth 1993. Grammaticalization. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Iglesias Recuero, Silvia, 2001. Los estudios de la cortesía en el mundo hispánico: estado de la cuestión. Oralia 4, 245-298.

Keisanen, Tiina, 2007. Stancetaking as an interactional activity. Challenging the prior speaker. In: Englebretson, R. (Ed.), Stancetaking in Discourse. John Benjamins, Amsterdam – Philadelphia, pp. 253-281.

Labov, William, 1972. Rules for ritual insults. In: Sudnow, D. (Ed.), Studies in Social Interaction. Free press, New York, pp. 120-169.

Leech, Geoffrey, 2007. Politeness: Is there an East-West divide? Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behaviour and Culture 3, 167-206.

Lyons, John, 1982. Deixis and subjectivity: Loquor, ergo sum? In: Jarvella, R.J., Klein, W. (Eds.), Speech, Place and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics. Wiley, Chichester, pp. 101-124.

Matos Amaral, Patricia, Schwenter, Scott A., 2005 Contrast and the (non-)occurrence of subject pronouns. In: Eddington, D. (Ed.), Selected Proceedings of the 7th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium. Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville MA, www.lingref.com, document #1092, Somerville MA.

Nogué Serrano, Neus, 2008. La Dixi de Persona en Català. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona.

Nunberg, Geoffrey, 1993. Indexicality and deixis. Linguistics and philosophy 16, 1-43.

Quirk, Randolph et al., 1985. A comprehensive grammar of the English language. London: Longman.

Scheibman, Joanne, 2004. Inclusive and exclusive patterning of the English first person plural: evidence from conversation. In: Achard, M., Kemmer, S. (Eds.), Language, Culture and Mind. CSLI, Stanford, pp. 377-396.

Schegloff, Emmanuel A., 2007. Sequence Organization in Interaction. A Primer in Conversation Analysis. Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Siewierska, Anna, 2004. Person. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Stewart, Miranda, 2001. Pronouns of power and solidarity: The case of Spanish first person plural nosotros. Multilingua 20 (2), 155-169.

Temmerman, Martina, 2008. "Today, we're all Danes". Argumentative meaning of the 1. and 2. person pronouns in journalists' opinion articles on the Muhammad cartoons. In: Gobber, Giovanni, S. Cantarini, S. Cigada, M.C. Gatti & S. Gilardoni (Eds.),

Proceedings of the IADA Workshop Word Meaning in Argumentative Dialogue. Homage to Sorin Stati. Volume I. "L'analisi linguistica e letteraria" XVI Special Issue, 1, 289-303.

Terkourafi, Marina, 2005. Beyond the micro-level in politeness research. Journal of Politeness Research 1, 237-262.

Watts, Richard J., 1989

Watts, Richard J., 2003. Politeness. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Watts, Richard J., Ide, Sachiko, Ehlich, Konrad, 1992. Introduction. In: Watts, Richard, S. Ide & K. Ehlich (Eds.), Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, 1-17.

Weigand, Edda, 2008. The argumentative power of words or how to move people's minds with words. In: Gobber, Giovanni, S. Cantarini, S. Cigada, M.C. Gatti & S. Gilardoni (Eds.), Proceedings of the IADA Workshop Word Meaning in Argumentative Dialogue. Homage to Sorin Stati. Volume I. "L'analisi linguistica e letteraria" XVI Special Issue, 1, 73-92.

Corpora and electronic sources

BNC. British National Corpus. <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>

CHILDES. Child language data exchange system. <http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/>

Congreso. 2003. Diario de sesiones del congreso de los diputados 289. <http://www.congreso.es>

CREA. Real Academia Española. Banco de datos (CREA) [en línea]. Corpus de referencia del español actual. <http://www.rae.es>

Davies, Mark. Corpus del Español. <http://www.corpusdelespanol.org>

Grand Magazine <http://www.grandmagazine.com/article.asp?id=61>

UAM. 1992. Corpus de referencia de la lengua española contemporánea. http://www.lllf.uam.es/corpus/corpus.html

Biographical note

Barbara De Cock earned a Master's degree in Romance languages and an M.A. in European Studies with master papers on language promotion and the linguistic and cultural diversity discourse of various international organizations. She completed a Ph.D. in Spanish linguistics

at the University of Leuven. Her research deals with person reference in different genres of spoken interaction, more in particular how the denotation of person reference is being established and how person reference conceptualizes and shapes the interaction.