PERSUASION IN JOURNALISTIC SUB-GENRES OF OPINION
Interpersonal metadiscursive uses in English and Spanish

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Journalistic sub-genres of opinion: preliminaries

- Communicative purpose of these sub-genres: inform and entertain readers through *persuasion* (major function among others)

- Interpersonal metadiscourse: linguistic devices that comply several functions, *persuasion* in this case

- Sub-genres of opinion in English and Spanish: presumable differences

- Why? Because metadiscourse can be constrained by generic features and socio-linguistic habits changing from one language to another (Suau-Jiménez, 2010a)

- Therefore: necessary to identify and describe interpersonal metadiscursive markers to establish a contrastive English-Spanish model

- Implications: linguistic analysis, translation and/or written communication purposes
Metadiscourse and persuasion in journalistic sub-genres of opinion

“metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assist the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community”
(Hyland, 2005: 37)

“...metadiscourse is dependent on the rhetorical context in which it is used and the pragmatic function it fulfils..”
(Mao 1993: 270)

“..it represents the author’s overt attempt to create a particular discoursal effect..”
(Dafouz-Milne, 2008: 97)

particular community: journalistic
pragmatic function: persuasion
particular discoursal effect: to convince readers
Recent research in persuasion construction through interpersonal markers

Previous research on persuasion in newspaper discourse through metadiscursive markers


- Attainment of persuasion: pragmatic combination of facts narration with mitigated opinion

- Persuasion is constructed cross-linguistically by (in order of frequency):
  1. **hedges** (very high number)
  2. **attitudinal markers** (high number)
  3. **certainty markers** (low number)
  4. **commentaries** (very few)

- Conclusion: **hedges**
- most important markers equally in English and Spanish
- essential for persuasion
This research

. Purpose
1. Analyze journalistic sub-genres of opinion in English and Spanish
2. Contrast our results with previous research, mainly Dafouz-Milne (2008)
3. Verify whether generic features influence outcome of these interpersonal markers cross-linguistically

. Corpus
14 specialized texts in English and Spanish from newspapers FINANCIAL TIMES and EXPANSIÓN (20,000 words)
Sub-genres: News, Opinion
Corpus linguistics tool: AntConc 3.2

. Methodological framework
Hyland & Tse (2004) interpersonal metadiscursive taxonomy
## Results: subgenre NEWS in English

### Markers’ type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers’ type</th>
<th>Can</th>
<th>Could</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Possibly</th>
<th>Would</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td>3.19%</td>
<td>13.82%</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td>21.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boosters</strong></td>
<td>28.69%</td>
<td>A lot more</td>
<td>3.19%</td>
<td>Deep</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment markers</strong></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>Our</td>
<td>5.31%</td>
<td>We</td>
<td>15.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude markers</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Results: subgenre NEWS in Spanish

#### Markers’ type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers’ type</th>
<th>Hedges 6’97%</th>
<th>Puede 6’97%</th>
<th>Boosters 27’88%</th>
<th>Gran 6’97%</th>
<th>Muchos 4’65%</th>
<th>Mejor 2’32%</th>
<th>Mucha 2’32%</th>
<th>Muy 11’62%</th>
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<td><strong>Hedges 6’97%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gran 6’97%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Muchos 4’65%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mejor 2’32%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mucha 2’32%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Muy 11’62%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Commitment Markers 6’97%</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nuestros 6’97%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude Markers 58’13%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Más 58’13%</strong></td>
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</table>
### Results: subgenre OPINION in English

#### Markers’ type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers’ type</th>
<th>Hedges 59’96%</th>
<th>Can 17’14%</th>
<th>Just 0’71%</th>
<th>Might 1’42%</th>
<th>Could 8’57%</th>
<th>Little 1’42%</th>
<th>May 6’42%</th>
<th>Only 2’14%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td>59’96%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boosters</strong></td>
<td>29’98%</td>
<td>Many 7’85%</td>
<td>More 19’28%</td>
<td>Most 2’85%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment Markers</strong></td>
<td>10’70%</td>
<td>I 0’71%</td>
<td>My 2’14%</td>
<td>Our 2’14%</td>
<td>We 5’71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude markers</strong></td>
<td>2’85%</td>
<td>Important 2’85%</td>
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## Results: subgenre OPINION in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers’ type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td>7'85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puede</td>
<td>7'85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boosters</strong></td>
<td>4'28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muy</td>
<td>4'28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment markers</strong></td>
<td>21'86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuestras</td>
<td>1'56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuestros</td>
<td>4'68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>3'12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>6'25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nos</td>
<td>6'25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude Markers</strong></td>
<td>39'06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Más</td>
<td>39'06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main cross-linguistic differences in interpersonal markers: NEWS and OPINION sub-genres

Hedges

. **Persuasion is created through non-imposition.**
. Mainly realized through modal epistemics (should, could, can/ puede, se puede).
. In Spanish, **impersonal structures** are central, in contrast with English.

“..all financial institutions **can contribute** to systemic risk..”
“..emerging markets **might be** the spark that helps forge a broader coalition..”
“..likelihood that Rooney **would join** United’s hated neighbours..”

“..esa deferencia, aunque parezca excesiva, **puede ser** una forma inteligente de..”
“También desde este escenario **se puede** comprender la reciente..”
“Lo que sucede es que nada de esto **se puede** tomar a broma..”
Main cross-linguistic differences in interpersonal markers: NEWS and OPINION sub-genres -2-

**Attitude markers**

- Clear positioning of author’s views to create persuasion.
- Central in Spanish for both sub-genres, in strong contrast with Dafouz Milne’s claim (2008). Not in English.
- Variety of realizations, mainly “adjective”, “más+adverb”, “más+adjective”.

“..could be an important voice in the search for peace..”
“The hope this may generate is important in itself.”
“Two important arguments need to be kept in mind..”

“..el argumento más ampliamente utilizado para ponerlo en cuestión.”
“Estamos, en suma, ante los presupuestos más fiables de los últimos años..”
“..el histórico no existe y la pérdida puede ser más que notable.”
Main cross-linguistic differences in interpersonal markers:
NEWS and OPINION sub-genres

Commitment markers

. **Persuasion** based on pronominalization (nuestros, me, nos, etc.) to create persuasion related to opinion.

. Homogeneous in both English sub-genres. In Spanish, however, clearly preponderant in OPINIÓN versus NOTICIA.

“My contacts with the Taliban also indicate a woeful.”
“.as **my colleague** Bill Cline estimates.”
“.as **our government** plans to do with a new generation.”
“.probabilidad hay de que no **me** devuelvan el crédito.”
“**En mi opinión** no. Es cierto que la mejora de la crisis...”
“A **mi juicio**, además, las propias administraciones.”
Main cross-linguistic differences in interpersonal markers: NEWS and OPINION sub-genres -3-

Boosters

Central in creating persuasion, especially in English (Vázquez & Giner, 2009) for academic discourse.

Some elements may have fuzzy boundaries with attitude markers.

"..the inside is likely to be more stable than one in which..
"..local authorities are given more powers to find news ways to save money.
"..once viewed as the world’s most successful welfare state..
"..sooner or later even the most revolutionary French diehards..

"..un 11'5 % hasta los 97.682 millones de €, muy lejos de los máximos..
"..pero que no están muy alejadas del 4/4'5 % a un año..
"..el Gobernador del Banco de España estuvo muy en su papel..
"..puede costarnos muy cara si los mercados descuentan el carácter."
Interpersonal patterns in English and Spanish: *News and Opinion*
OPINION and NEWS sub-genre share of interpersonal markers
English and Spanish
Conclusions

Journalistic sub-genres of OPINION

Persuasion: different interpersonal markers in Spanish and English

- **Spanish:**
  1. attitudinal
  2. commitment
  3. hedges
  4. boosters

- **English:**
  1. hedges
  2. boosters
  3 and 4. attitudinal and commitment

Therefore, Dafouz-Milne’s (2008) claim for construction of persuasion cross-linguistically:
- 1. hedges (very high number)
- 2. attitude markers (high number)
- has proved to be inconsistent for our corpus analysis
- more research is necessary
- implications for discourse, genre analysis and translation
Thanks for your attention!!

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