

RRG and utterance negation: the case of negative mirativity in Spanish.

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In both the descriptive tradition of Spanish and formal approaches, propositional negation has received special attention, often neglecting other types of negation, both more internal and, especially, more external. However, in contrast to those mentioned above, this paper adopts the perspective that negation is fundamentally an interpersonal category with a broader scope than the proposition. Based on this premise, we aim to describe a specific construction in Spanish that expresses mirativity and is formally manifested through negative elements. We seek to characterize it as a construction where negation occurs in the most external layer, accounting for the exclusive multilayered capacity of this category (Dik, 1997; Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997; Hengeveld and Mackenzie, 2018).

From a broader perspective, following Delancey (2001), mirativity refers to the grammatical marking of a proposition that presents new or unexpected information to the speaker. Within this theoretical framework, negative mirativity is a linguistic phenomenon in which the speaker indicates that the expectation generated by an event, previously conveyed by the same speaker, is negated, thus causing surprise.

Thus, for example, in (1), the speaker indicates that it is cold (which naturally generates the expectation that they have a way to combat it) and they run out of gas: that is, the construction as a whole has a positive polarity, so this cannot be the meaning of the negation. Our proposal is that the negation in the construction communicates that the occurrence of the event in the proposition goes against the speaker's expectations, which results in a surprise.

(1) *Hacía mucho frío y ¿no se me acabó el gas!?*

It was very cold and it turns out that I ran out of gas! (Lit.: It was very cold and didn't I run out of gas!)

In the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), we propose that this negative mirative construction would be treated as a clausal operator with scope over the utterance, similar to evidentiality and illocutionary force. Like evidentiality, it focuses on the acquisition of the stated information, but not to indicate the manner of information acquisition, rather to indicate that the event in question is surprising.

More broadly, this construction is rooted in the semantic-pragmatic characteristics of negation. This is because the classic negation operator is inherently uninformative since it informs about the non-occurrence of a state of affairs, which is the baseline knowledge of the interlocutors. In order for it to be truly informative, the speaker must assume that the listener has a representation in the mind of a certain state of affairs, 'p', and therefore, it becomes

relevant to inform them that reality is contrary to that state of affairs: '¬p'. The value of counter-expectation is thus inherent in the expression of negation.

In this framework, it is expected that a specialized operator for conveying counter-expectation, considered as its objective value, would be used to express the subjective value related to counter-expectation: surprise. In other words, we propose that the mirative construction with negative elements arises from the grammaticalization through subjectivization of the propositional operator of negation, which would explain the expansion of its scope from the proposition to the utterance.

#### References

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