

How do syntax, semantics-pragmatics, and prosody interact in clause-combining?

Víctor Royo Viñuales
Université de Liège – Université catholique de Louvain

As previous studies have suggested, clauses introduced by conjunctions can display different degrees of syntactic and discursive dependency (D’Hertefelt 2018; Sansiñena 2019), they can express a range of non-prototypical meanings (cf. Lastres-López 2021), and these features may correlate with their prosodic behaviour (cf. Elvira-García et al. 2017). In line with these studies, I provided a qualitative account of HYPOTHETICAL MANNER clauses (i.e. introduced by *comme si* in French and *como si* in Spanish, both meaning ‘as if’), in which we describe (i) how they relate to other clauses in terms of syntactic dependency (Royo-Viñuales et al. 2023), (ii) the semantic-pragmatic functions they serve in discourse (Royo-Viñuales et al. 2022; Royo-Viñuales and Van linden 2022); and (iii) how their prosody co-signals different degrees syntactic dependency on the one hand, and correlates with specific functional types on the other (Royo-Viñuales 2023).

While all these studies explored HYPOTHETICAL MANNER clauses in qualitative terms, i.e. by inventorying their syntactic, semantic-pragmatic and prosodic patterns in discourse, this talk rather introduces a quantitative approach. Based on the analysis of a 278-hit spoken dataset (including 180 instances of *comme si*-clauses and 98 of *como si*-clauses from different corpora), I will present how the quantitative distribution of HYPOTHETICAL MANNER clauses in discourse is affected by the interaction between:

- i) syntactic dependency and semantic-pragmatic function
- ii) syntactic dependency and prosodic integration
- iii) semantic-pragmatic function and prosodic contours

For instance, among the distinct types of syntactic dependency observed, not every semantic-pragmatic function identified is equally present. Subordinate HYPOTHETICAL MANNER clauses, as in (1), are found to most frequently serve the expression of *manner* of any kind (e.g. *doing, being, or perceiving*, cf. Bledin and Srinivas 2019; Dixon 2009: 35-37; Olguín-Martínez 2021; Rett and Starr 2022: 872), whereas their in subordinate counterparts, as in (2), mostly express what in the literature has been called *denial of an assumption* (cf. Brinton 2014).

- (1) French – bound subordinate *comme si*-clause expressing *manner of doing*
Vous me parlez comme si je connaissais le Wallon.
‘You talk to me as if I knew [something about] the Walloon language.’
- (2) Spanish – in subordinate *como si*-clause expressing *denial of an assumption*
¡Como si yo tuviese una cámara!
‘As if I had a camera!’

Small language-specific uses aside (e.g. two functional types only found in Spanish), the results show some clear-cut tendencies of distribution in the two languages, and for the three interactions analysed. Thus, as I will argue, syntax, semantics-pragmatics, and prosody (along the interaction(s) between them) seem to serve similar functions in clause-combining across closely related languages.

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