

AN OVERVIEW OF SPANISH DISCOURSE MARKERS OF REFORMULATION*¹

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to shed light on the nature and behaviour of Spanish Discourse Markers of Reformulation by looking into the scope of the reformulator and their distributional properties. Taking previous research on English reformulators (Del Saz 2003; Del Saz 2005, in press; Del Saz and Fraser, in press) as a framework of analysis, I have analyzed a set of Spanish reformulators using the two parameters above in order to complement the research already carried out on Spanish markers of Reformulation. Outlining the scope of the reformulator has proved useful to discriminate between the uses of these markers. Likewise, looking into co-occurrence of markers of the same and/or different types has allowed me to identify the basic instructions they convey. The results outlined here seem to support the view that these markers display multifunctionality and are insightful with regard to the level of prototypicality that each marker displays.

Key Words: Discourse markers, scope of reformulation, sequencing of Discourse Markers

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es contribuir a un mejor conocimiento sobre la naturaleza y el comportamiento de los Marcadores de Reformulación en español mediante un análisis de dos aspectos básicos, el alcance de la reformulación y la distribución o combinación de estas unidades con otros marcadores del mismo y/o diferente grupo. El punto de partida de este estudio lo constituye el marco teórico de análisis elaborado para un conjunto de marcadores de reformulación en inglés (Del Saz 2003, Del Saz and Fraser, in press, Del Saz 2005, in press). El delimitar el alcance de la reformulación es una herramienta útil para discriminar entre los posibles usos de estas unidades. Del mismo modo, al ahondar en cómo se combinan estos marcadores se ha podido obtener resultados útiles sobre cuáles son las instrucciones básicas de los mismos. Los resultados que aquí presentamos de forma tentativa parecen ir en consonancia con otros factores como son el grado de prototipicalidad del marcador y su capacidad para llevar a cabo varias funciones de reformulación.

Palabras clave: Marcadores del discurso, alcance de la reformulación, distribución discursiva

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article stems from the need to complement the contrastive study carried out in a previous article (Del Saz 2005 in press) on a group of Spanish and English Markers of Reformulation. Taking previous research into English reformulators (Del Saz 2003, Del Saz and Fraser unpublished manuscript) as a starting point, I set out to compare how the reformulative space is configured in two languages, Spanish and English. In order to do so, I analyzed a set of Spanish reformulators to provide an answer to the following research questions which I had already tackled for their English counterparts (Del Saz in press):

- (1) What Reformulation Types exist?
- (2) What is the correspondence between Reformulation Markers and Reformulation Types?
- (3) Can we establish a tentative taxonomy of Spanish and English Discourse Markers of Reformulation, that is, synonyms, hyponyms, hypernyms, exclusive uses, etc.?
- (4) Do English and Spanish reformulators pattern almost unequivocally?

The four questions posed above constituted a first and necessary step to approach the study of the Spanish markers, since they allowed me to systematically assess the existing Reformulation Types, the correspondence between Reformulation Markers and Reformulation Types, as well as to tentatively classify them into a hierarchy of hypernyms, hyponyms, synonyms and exclusive uses by applying the test of semantic substitutability (Rossari 1990, Knott 1996, Del Saz 2003, to name a few). However, due to space limitations, the questions below were excluded from the analysis of a set of Spanish Discourse Markers of Reformulation (therefore SDMs of RF):

- (5) What is the scope of reformulation markers?
- (6) What sequences of markers are permissible?

These questions deal primarily with the syntactic, semantic and distributional properties of Discourse Markers of Reformulation as a necessary complement to the description of their functions or environments of use. Although Spanish studies on reformulation and its markers are pervasive, they approach these units either from a purely theoretical perspective or from a limited descriptive approach, that is focusing on individual markers or sub-groups². Questions such as the ones above have never been addressed systematically for the different classes of SDMs or RF. Thus, in this article I will mainly report on previous descriptive research on Spanish reformulators and look into these questions to complement our knowledge of them in an attempt to demonstrate how the findings reported here support conclusions obtained elsewhere with regard to the way these markers function and behave in the language.

² Spanish research has limited itself to either theoretical studies (Briz 1993a, Briz 1993b, Portolés 1998, Portolés and Zorraquino 1999) or descriptive, while exclusively focusing on individual markers (López 1990 on *es decir*, Cortés 1991 on *o sea* and Schwenter 1996 on *o sea*) or specific sub-groups (Casado 1993 and Fuentes 1987, 1993 on a group of DMs of Explanation, Bach 2001 on Catalan reformulators, and Veiga 1994-5 on a group of markers of Recapitulation and Conclusion).

Examples for the analysis of discourse markers have been taken from two Spanish corpora of analysis, viz., the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA)*, the *Corpus del Español (Brigham Young University)* and for English from the *British National Corpus (BNC)*. Discourse markers sequences from these three corpora have been complemented with examples taken from other sources, such as novels, books, newspapers, spoken discourse on TV or radio, as well as from constructed and/or intuited examples³.

2. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

2.1. What is the Scope of Reformulation Markers?

An important aspect of a reformulation concerns what aspect of a source segment or S1 is reformulated in the second formulation or S2. As stated in Del Saz 2003, a reformulation takes place between a source discourse segment, S1, or any of its constituents, and a following reformulated segment S2 and is signalled by a marker of reformulation, which specifies the type of relationship created between the two linked discourse segments. Thus, I have set out to identify whether the scope of SDMs of RF can be a *concept*, a *proposition*, a *speech-act*, an *implication* and/or a *felicity condition* or the semantic relations of *entailment* and *presupposition*.

After the analysis of occurrences, I have found that the prototypical Expansion markers, *es decir (that is to say)*, *o sea (that is)* and *quiero decir (I mean)* and, occasionally, *en otras palabras (in other words)* display the widest scope of all in that they can reformulate concepts, propositions, speech-acts, presuppositions, entailments, implications and a felicity condition from the previous discourse segment. This feature seems to be germane to their multi-functionality; in fact, they were reported to function in all the Expansion sub-types identified (Elaboration, Definition, Identification and Illustration) and they share some environments of use with members from the Compression and Modification types, while also having their own exclusive environments of use. The following examples illustrate the various types of scope identified for the reformulators in bold type and italics⁴:

Example 1 (Concept)

Cascada. Organiza las ventanas abiertas en cascada, ***es decir/o sea/quiero decir/en otras palabras/esto es***, superpuestas las unas sobre las otras. (España, Escrito, CREA, 2000)

Cascade Windows. It arranges the multiple open windows as a cascade, ***that is to say/that is/I mean/in other words/i.e.***, each overlapping the others. (España, Escrito, CREA, 2000)

³ Cases of constructed/intuited discourse are used when it is difficult to come across real instantiations of the use of a marker. These examples have been checked with native speakers of both languages to ensure scientific rigour.

⁴ The first reformulator is the one originally found within the sequence taken from the corpus of analysis. The other markers have been included since they share their environments of use with the one in bold type.

Example 2 (Previous proposition)

El modo de interpretar la música y de expresarse de la raza negra, que se remonta a antiguas tradiciones africanas, constituye la esencia del Jazz: los instrumentos de viento imitan el canto; la entonación sucia, cargada de emoción, se realiza en el canto y la interpretación instrumental con una vibración característica; suspiros, pausas, ruido. Las alteraciones del pulso regular de la obra (swing) y la intensidad; el juego entre la intervención de un instrumento (la llamada) y la respuesta que recibe de otro (por ejemplo, entre trompeta y piano o trombón); el arte de la improvisación de la melodía en virtud de la tessitura, estilo y temperamento de los instrumentos musicales (y de los intérpretes, también), etc., *es decir/lo sea/quiero decir/en una palabra*, todo un amplio y rico conjunto que sitúan al Jazz como una de las aportaciones musicales más importantes del siglo XX y de la historia de la música. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1997)

The way that Afro-Americans/Black people have of interpreting music and of expressing themselves, which is rooted in African traditions, constitutes the essence of Jazz: the wind instruments imitate singing; the dirty intonation loaded with emotion is realized through the singing, and the musical interpretation with characteristic vibrato; sighs, pauses, noises. The alterations of the regular beat of the piece (swing) and the intensity; the interplay between one instrument (the call) and the answer it obtains from another (for example, between a trumpet and a piano, or the trombone); the art of improvisation of the melody depending on the tessitura, style and temperament of the musical instruments (as well as the interpreters) etc., *that is to say/that is/I mean to say/in one word*, one rich unit that make Jazz one of the most important musical movements of the XX century and in the history of music. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1997)

Example 3 (Implicit)

B. – Se hace ahora un cine más serio, importante. Me gusta más.

A. – ¿Y le han hecho ofertas?

B. – Sí, algunas, pero no las he aceptado porque tengo los pies sobre la tierra y sé lo que puedo dar de sí. Siempre me he negado a volver al cine, me he encerrado y ni mi marido puede conmigo. Me he retirado con el estilo mío y con mis películas famosas ya hechas. Hasta que un día vi una película de Almodóvar y cambió mi forma de pensar.

A. – *O sea/es decir/quieres decir/en otras palabras/*esto es*, que Almodóvar la puede llevar al huerto.

B. – ¡Ni borracha vuelvo al cine! (España, Escrito, CREA, 1990)

A. Now, much more serious films are being made, more important. I like them more than before.

B. And have you had any offers?

A. Yeah, some. But I haven't accepted any of them because my feet are firmly on the ground and I know what I have to offer. I have always refused to come back to the film industry, I have secluded myself and not even my husband can make me change my mind. I have retired in my own way and with my most famous films behind me. Until one day when I watched one of Almodovar's films and that changed my view on things.

A. –**That is/that is to say/You mean to say/in other words/*i.e.**, that Almodóvar is going to lead you down the garden path?

B. – Over my dead body! (España, Escrito, CREA, 1990)

Example 4 (Speech-act)

Al principio haz todo lo que te pidan, **es decir/o sea/quiero decir/en otras palabras**, coge esto, lava aquello, coloca lo de más allá, etc. (España, Oral, TV, 2005)

At first, do whatever you are requested to do, **that is to say/that is/I mean/in other words**, take this, wash that, put that over there, etc. (España, Oral, TV, 2005)

Example 5 (Speech act)

Estoy bastante cansada hoy, **es decir/o sea/quiero decir/en otras palabras**, te agradecería que no tocaras la guitarra esta noche. (constructed example)

I am quite tired today, **that is to say/that is/I mean, in other words**, I would be grateful if you wouldn't play the guitar tonight. (constructed example)

Example 6 (Presupposition)

Luis por fin ha dejado de tomar drogas y lo han ingresado en un centro de desintoxicación. **Es decir/o sea/quiero decir/en otras palabras/*⁵esto es**, Luis ha estado tomando drogas desde que dejó el instituto. (constructed example)

Luis has finally stopped taking drugs and he has been admitted to a desintoxication clinic. **That is to say/that is/I mean/in other words/* i.e.**, Luis has been taking drugs since he left high school. (constructed example)

Example 7 (Entailment)

El personaje secundario mató al magnate. **Es decir/o sea/quiero decir/en otras palabras/*esto es**, que éste murió. (constructed example)

The supporting actor killed the magnate. **That is to say/that is/I mean/in other words/*i.e.**, he died. (constructed example)

Example 8 (Entailment)

Luis se rindió al llanto de Manuela. Al fin y al cabo Luis es un hombre, **o sea/es decir/en otras palabras/ quiero decir/*esto es**, un ser humano como tú y como yo. (constructed example)

⁵ An asterisk indicates that the marker is not suitable for this environment of use.

In the end, Luis gave in to Manuela's crying. When all is said and done, Luis is a man, *that is/that is to say/in other words/I mean to say/*i.e.*, a human being just like you and me. (constructed example)

Example 9 (Felicity Condition)

Me congratulo por tu éxito, *quiero decir/es decir/en otras palabras/o sea/*esto es*, que me alegro mucho de verdad. (constructed example)

I'm glad about your success, *I mean (to say)/that is to say/in other words/that is/*i.e.*, that I'm really so happy for you, I really am.

The more specific the markers within the Expansion group, and the more specialized their functions, the more restricted the scope of the reformulator. Thus, the scope of markers which are exclusively appositive merely involves a concept. This is the case of the reformulators such as *a saber/namely*, *esto es/i.e.*, *véase/videlicet* and *por ejemplo/for example*:

Example 10

La cuota de mantenimiento deberá ser abonada en el momento de renovación de la suscripción, *esto es/a saber/véase/es decir/o sea*, una vez finalizado el año natural desde la incorporación a SUSCRINORMA [...] (España, Escrito, CREA, 1999)

The maintenance fee must be paid when the subscription is renewed, *i.e./namely/videlicet/that is to say/that is*, once a calendar year has expired after the incorporation to SUSCRINORMA [...] (España, Escrito, CREA, 1999)

Example 11

Por ello el verso modernista es vaticinador. Recogerá temas nuevos, formas clásicas que remozar o recuperar como ciertos metros castizos (*por ejemplo/véase/a saber*, el alejandrino), ya usado en España en el siglo XII por el Mester de Clerecía, por Gonzalo de Berceo en sus *Milagros de la Virgen* [...] (España, Escrito, Corpus del Español, —).

That is why the modernist verse is ominous. It will collect new topics, classic forms to modernize or recuperate such as certain types of native meter (*for example/videlicet/namely*, "the alexandrine"), which was already in use in Spain in the 12th century in the *Mester of Clerecía*, by Gonzalo de Berceo in his *Milagros de la Virgen* [...] (España, Escrito, Corpus del Español, —).

Example 12

Al cumplir los 5: ¿Puede participar en juegos de palabras sencillos en los cuales dos o más palabras comienzan con el mismo sonido? *Por ejemplo*: "Dime los nombres de todos los animales que empiezan con D." (España, Escrito, Internet, 2005)

When they turn 5: Can they take part in easy vocabulary games where two or more words begin with the same sound? *For example*: “Tell me all the names of animals that start with D”. (España, Escrito, Internet, 2005)

The Compression markers can reformulate a concept or several ones:

Example 13

Quisiera, más precavidamente, sugerir algunas reflexiones sobre la noción misma de “valor” y sobre el manejo (a menudo falso y oportunista) que de ella están haciendo los “medios”, las encuestas, los políticos, *en una palabra/ en suma/ en conclusión/en resumen* los hacedores de opinión en nuestro país. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

I would like, more cautiously, to recommend some profound reflection on the notion of “courage” and on the, quite often fake and opportunistic, use that “the media” make of it, the surveys, the politicians, *in one word/in sum/in conclusion/in summary* those the shapers of public opinion in our country. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

they can also reformulate a whole proposition or propositions:

Example 14

Curiosa situación: ahí tenemos a Arguiñano en su misión imposible y prodigando recetas de sabrosos platos mientras que al otro lado el impertinente príncipe rapero extravía a nuestros jóvenes y se muestra como un acérrimo partidario del “fast food”, “junk food” y otras futilidades culinarias capaces de amargarle el almuerzo a las gentes de paladar fino y no digamos a los “gourmets”. No puede pedirse mayor contraste: la merluza a la vasca contra la hamburguesa rebosante de ketchup y acompañada de aceitosas patatas fritas. La cultura contra la barbarie, *en una palabra/en resumen/en suma/en conclusión*. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1995)

An awkward situation: there we have Arguiñano in his impossible mission, offering recipes of tasty dishes while on the other side the impertinent prince of Rap contaminates our youth and presents himself as a staunch supporter of “fast food”, “junk food” and other culinary bagatelles capable of spoiling lunch for those with a delicate palate –not to mention the gourmets. There cannot be a greater contrast: Basque haddock vs. hamburger covered with ketchup and accompanied by greasy chips. Culture vs. Barbarism, *in one word/in summary/in sum/in conclusion*. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1995)

Or even a speech-act:

Example 15

Déjate pues de historias de torres gigantescas, de campo de fútbol nuevo, etc., porque todo esto sin una buena parte deportiva no sirve para nada, primero arregla la parte deportiva que es la que quiere ver el aficionado cada día, cada semana. Ficha a quien haga falta, quita al que sea, remodela algo, *en una palabra* haz algo ya. (España, Escrito, Internet Balearweb, 2005)

Forget about stories of huge towers, of a new stadium, etc; because all of this without good results in the sports area is useless, first concentrate on the actual sport because this is what the supporter wants to see every day, every week. Hire whoever you may need, fire whoever needs to be fired, modernize something, **in one word**, do something right now. (España, Escrito, Internet Balearweb, 2005)

The scope of Modification markers such as *o más bien (or rather)*, *o para ser más preciso (or more precisely)* is that of a single concept or a whole proposition:

Example 16

Así mismo era aficionado a otras ciencias (pseudociencias, *más bien/con más precisión/más exactamente/o para ser más preciso*) ocultas como la astrología, el magnetismo animal o el naturismo. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1995)

Likewise, he was keen on other dark sciences (**or rather**, pseudosciences, ***or rather**⁶/more precisely/more exactly/to be more precise) such as Astrology, Animal Magnetism, or Naturalism. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1995)

Example 17

Como observa a este respecto el citado José Antonio Maravall, los árabes establecidos en España, a diferencia de los cristianos, carecían del concepto mismo de España. Ellos estaban en Al-Andalus y formaban un pueblo, una etnia, unida por el vínculo del islam, y España carecía para ellos de sustancia política, de sustancia nacional, de entidad propia, por encima de las fronteras de los Estados y de las fronteras religiosas. “*O dicho con más precisión/O más bien/o más exactamente*: para los cristianos, España era concepto histórico-político que obliga, mientras que para los árabes es un concepto geográfico del que no se desprende ninguna exigencia.” (España, Escrito, CREA, 1983)

As the above mentioned José Antonio Maravall states in this respect, the Arabs established in Spain, unlike the Christians, lacked the notion of Spain. They were in Al-Andalus and constituted a group, an ethnic group, united around the notion of Islam, and Spain lacked any political meaning, any national essence, or self-identity, above and beyond the States frontiers and of religious frontiers. “*Or more precisely/Or rather/or more exactly*: for the Christians, Spain was a binding historic and political concept, whereas for the Arabs, Spain was a geographic notion that did not impose any kind of obligation”. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1983)

Reassessment markers normally deal with single concepts or propositions, but they can also make explicit an implicit idea which is obtained from the source segment:

⁶ *Or rather* in English does necessarily introduce the reformulated discourse segment, unlike its Spanish variant “*más bien*”, which can follow the structure S1, S2.DM.

Example 18

Ahí se me planteó un problema de las malas compañías. ¿Cómo encontrar a un consejero que no fuera un neonazi militante *o, peor aún/todavía*, encubierto? (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

At this point, I had to face the problem of bad companies. How to find an adviser that was not a nazi activist, *or worse still/even worse*, an undercover one? (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

Example 19

Habría que dar pintura a alguna jaula de pájaros, pronto. Comprar una pintura carmesí, *o mejor bermellón, o mejor aún* púrpura. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

We should paint a birds cage soon. We should buy crimson paint, *or better*, vermilion, *or better still*, purple. (España, Escrito, CREA, 1994)

The second discourse segment *o peor todavía, encubierto?* forces the reader to see “encubierto” as a worse alternative than “neonazi militante”, a concept which, in spite of its possible negative connotation due to the word “neonazi”, cannot be conceived as a good or bad option in itself without further contextual cues. However, when the second formulation is introduced, we are forced to interpret the first formulation as dependent on the second, or in other words, as implicitly being marked as a good or bad option in itself.

In the second example, there is a gradual improvement which goes from offering a better alternative with *mejor*, to a much better one with *o mejor aún*. Thus, by using *o mejor bermellón*, and *o mejor aún púrpura* we indicate that carmesí was a good option in itself, *but that bermellón and púrpura are far better* for the speaker/writer. The new reformulation with these markers can also involve a speech act:

Example 20

Lo único que pretendo es beber tranquilo en este bar de Marbueno sin tener que soportar pelmazos. ¿Es posible? ¿Crees que podrás estar calladito? *O, mejor aún*. ¿crees que podrás irte tú también? —Sí, claro, claro claro. Pero antes me excusará por abusar un poquito más de su paciencia. (España, Escrito, Corpus del Español, —)

All I want is to have a quite drink in this bar in Marbueno without having to put up with bores. Is that possible? Do you think that you could remain quiet? *Or better yet/still*, do you think that you could get the hell out of here? —Sure, no problem. But first you won’t mind if I try your patience a little longer? (España, Escrito, Corpus del Español, —)

The following table summarizes the scope of the Reformulation Markers.

RMs Class	Scope of Reformulation						
	Concept	Proposition	Speech-Act	Entailment	Presupposition	Implicit	F Condition
Es decir/o sea	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(o) En otras palabras	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quiero decir	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
(o) Por ejemplo	✓						
A saber	✓						
Esto es	✓						
En resumen/en suma	✓	✓	✓				
(o) Más exactamente	✓	✓	✓				
O más bien	✓	✓					
(O) Mejor/Peor aún/todavía	✓	✓	✓				

2.2. Co-occurrence of Discourse Markers

Sequencing of markers refers to the combination of reformulation makers with markers of the same and/or different types or sub-types. The prototypical markers within each Reformulation type have been shown to combine with markers with a narrower focus reformulator of the same class. Thus, within the Expansion group, the most prototypical markers, namely, *o sea*, *es decir*, *quiero decir* and *en otras palabras* can combine together and with markers from other subtypes. Markers such as *es decir*, *o sea*, *quiero decir*, and *en otras palabras* convey the core relation of Expansion, while the second marker conveys a much more specific relation not necessarily within the first relation's domain.

O sea and *es decir* have been found in combination with markers that signal an illustration and a modification of some aspect of the S1; while *es decir*, *quiero decir* and its variants combine with Compression markers. *Con otras palabras* is a reformulator that exclusively combines with markers from the Expansion type. None of the paradigmatic Expansion reformulators combine with Reassessment markers. Thus, distributional properties seem to back up the taxonomy outlined for a group of Spanish markers in previous research (Del Saz 2005 in press). The following sequences have been found in real examples obtained from *the CREA*, and *the Corpus del Español Actual*:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| o | <i>O SEA, es decir/</i> | o | <i>Es DECIR/ PODRÍAMOS decir/ se PUEDE DECIR resumiendo</i> |
| o | <i>O SEA, en otras palabras</i> | o | <i>Es DECIR, más bien</i> |
| o | <i>O SEA, por ejemplo</i> | o | <i>QUIERO DECIR, más bien</i> |
| o | <i>O SEA, más bien</i> | o | <i>ESTO QUIERE DECIR, en otras palabras</i> |
| o | <i>O SEA, mejor dicho</i> | o | <i>LO QUE QUIERO DECIR, en suma</i> |
| o | <i>Es DECIR, en otras palabras</i> | o | <i>DICHO CON OTRAS PALABRAS, es decir</i> |
| o | <i>Es DECIR, por ejemplo</i> | o | <i>En OTRAS PALABRAS, o mejor dicho</i> |
| o | <i>Es DECIR, en una palabra</i> | | |
| o | <i>SE PUEDE DECIR/PODEMOS DECIR para concluir</i> | | |

As far as markers from the other reformulation types are concerned, *o más bien*, has been exclusively found in combination with markers of its own class. When two markers from this type combine, *o más bien* occurs in initial position, thus signaling the much more general instruction of modifying or correcting some aspect from the S1, whereas the second marker specifies the type of modification making it more concrete, as is evident in the semantics of the adjectives or adverbs used (*más preciso, más exactamente*, etc).

Compression markers do not tend to combine with markers from other groups in initial position, and combinations among them have been assessed but limited to the following sequences:

- o EN SUMA, para concluir
- o EN RESUMEN, para concluir

However, the following occurrences do not seem to be plausible, as corroborated by the fact that no examples have been found and by the fact that they sound strange to native speakers:

- o *EN RESUMEN/EN CONCLUSIÓN, en suma
- o *EN SUMA, para resumir

3. CONCLUSIONES

The results obtained from this overview of the scope and distributional properties of SDMs of RF, and briefly reported here, should help to broaden our knowledge of these units and complement previous research thus filling in some of the gaps in their syntactic, semantic, distributional properties and environments of use.

The analysis of these two properties, scope and sequencing, has shown that the most prototypical Expansion reformulators show the widest scope of all the Spanish reformulators analysed and combine with reformulators of the same and different groups. The reformulation conveyed by these markers signals that an expansion on the preceding discourse segment is about to take place. However, by means of a second discourse marker whose focus is always narrower, the new reformulation is further defined to be an Elaboration, Definition, Identification, Compression, Modification, etc. Thus, a reformulator such as *o sea*, for example, seems to be the commonest and most general of them all, whereas its counterparts

es decir, *quiero decir*, and *en otras palabras*, tend to convey a much more specific instruction of reformulation, as can also be seen if we look at their semantic makeup and to the fact that they all signal a more specific reformulation.

On the contrary, the fewer the environments of use where the markers can operate, the narrower their scope and the less they combine with other markers since the instructions they convey are far more specific. This applies to markers of Identification and Illustration, as well as to markers of Modification and Reassessment.

Within each type or sub-type identified, the sequencing of markers has also allowed us to corroborate which markers display a more prototypical use and stand in a position of hypernyms with regard to the rest. For example, this is the case of *o más bien* which has the general function of signaling a correction and stands out as the hypernym of a group of hyponyms *o para ser más preciso*, *o más exactamente*, etc. which are more transparent from a semantic point of view in expressing the type of Modification effected. Likewise, the less abstract the instructions that are conveyed, as is the case of *o mejor/peor*, *o mejor/peor aún-todavía* the narrower their scope, the less functionality they display and the less they combine with markers of the other classes.

Notwithstanding, these results are still rather tentative and further research is needed. Moreover, further investigation on the degree of grammaticalization that these units have achieved, as well as on the grammaticalization processes they have undergone may clarify why some of them have retained more of their semantic meaning and thus signal a more specific instruction than others, something that ultimately affects their behaviour when used in the language (cf. Del Saz & Pennock 2005).

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