

# Lectures on non-representational grammar

Andrés Saab

IIF-SADAF-CONICET and University of Buenos Aires

andres.saab@uba.ar

In these lectures, I focus on the grammar of expressivity in Spanish, with particular emphasis in my own variety, Rioplatense Spanish. Essentially, I contend that expressivity in natural language is an epiphenomenon and, consequently, I make a first attempt to decompose the different factors that serve to the expressive function of language, i.e., generally speaking, the way in which different bits of grammar give us a flavor of the speaker and its relation to context.

**Lecture #1:** One of such factors reduces to mere lexical competence. In effect, by virtue of a principle of paradigmatic competition in the lexical space (in de Saussure's terms), the addressees are capable of situating the speaker and her context in a strictly conventional manner. As I will try to show, this requires full mastery of the phonetic form of words and some general principles of pragmatic inference (probably related to the Manner Maxim). In a model in which phonetic forms are not part of the vocabulary of abstract syntax, but of PF, this amounts to the thesis that some expressive meanings don't reach LF, but only PF. I argue that many hybrid terms forming pairs with neutral counterparts (e.g., formality pairs: *trabajo/laburo* 'work'/'work<sub>informal</sub>' or slurs: *sudamericano/sudaca* 'South-American'/'South-American<sub>pejorative</sub>') are amenable to this type of analysis. Evidence coming from ellipsis gives particular support to it. The conclusion is that at least for this empirical realm, the metalogical operators • (Potts 2005) or ♦ (McCready 2010) are deduced from architectural considerations.

**Lecture #2:** Another expressive factor crucially involves the syntax-semantics connection, but in two different ways: via regular combination of syntactic atoms or via what I call syntactic recycling, i.e., the reusing of syntactic atoms in non-canonical positions, typically, in different positions in the functional spine of the phrase (Saab 2022). The first strategy corresponds to the usual way in which syntax composes phrases that are used by the systems of thought and context (in Reinhart's 2006 sense). Some forms of honorification in Spanish coming from the particular use of the honorific *don/doña* fits this way of producing expressive content. In turn, syntactic recycling implies using material that canonically is used in truth-conditional position in new positions, which are not. This gives rise to a particular non-representational syntax. In order to sustain this thesis, I offer an in-depth analysis of qualitative binominals in Spanish (e.g., *el idiota de Andrés* 'that idiot Andrés', *una mierda de departamento* 'a shit of an apartment', *esa estupidez de que Andrés está loco* 'that bullshit that Andrés is crazy').

**Lecture #3:** The proposed theory contrasts in interesting ways with recent proposals in the literature on the grammar of expressivity. I will discuss at least two proposals. On the one hand, I critically revise the theory of pure expressives offered in Gutzmann (2019), according to which some types of expressives involve the Agree system, more or less in the usual sense. Based on recent work by Lo Guercio and Orlando (2022), I claim that pure expressives of the *fucking* type can be accounted for in the model of syntactic recycling offered in these lectures. On the other hand, I discuss the theory of syntactic deviation defended in Corver (2016), according to which some sorts of expressivity require deviated use of the rules of grammar in a way such that the appraisal system gets affected, giving rise to different expressivity flavors. I show that at least for the cases for which Corver's thesis has a certain plausibility in Spanish (e.g., the binominals discussed in Lecture #2), its alternative analysis, the recycling approach, fits the empirical picture better. Yet, I conclude speculating that other types of expressive language (i.e., the so-called inclusive language in Spanish) can be analyzed using syntactic deviation, with interesting theoretical consequences.

## References

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