A CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH TO ILLOCUTION: THE CASE OF ORDERS[1]

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1. Introduction

Since Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969, 1975) seminal work on speech acts, the study of illocution has had a central position in pragmatics. Two significant perspectives within the field have been provided by inferential accounts and functional grammar theories. In the early stages of the development of speech act theory, inferential approaches (Bach & Harnish 1979; Leech 1983; Sperber & Wilson 1995) were the leading voices of pragmatics. These studies argued that the production and interpretation of speech acts are, to a large extent, dependent on inferential processes. In general, the few attempts that were made to account for the conventional nature of illocutionary meaning were largely unconvincing (Searle 1975; Morgan 1978). In turn, some functionalist approaches (notably, Dik 1989, 1997; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004) have been concerned with the incorporation of illocutionary meaning into grammar. Halliday and Matthiessen, for example, classify speech act meaning (or speech functions, in their terminology) into four semantic categories: statements, commands, offers and questions, while Dik distinguishes four basic universal speech act types which are codified in the grammar of most languages. In spite of their many advantages, none of these approaches has provided an integrated account of illocutionary phenomena. Recent studies in Cognitive Linguistics have endowed the research

on illocution with crucial insights. Within this framework, illocution has been treated as a matter of inferential activity based on the activation of specific types of cognitive models called illocutionary scenarios (Panther & Thornburg 1998) or situational cognitive models (Ruiz de Mendoza 2005, 2007). Cognitivist studies have also provided a significant amount of evidence supporting the existence of conventional speech acts or, in more precise terms, illocutionary constructions, defined as form-meaning pairings where the form is associated with specific forms of illocutionary meaning (Pérez 2001; Pérez & Ruiz de Mendoza 2002; Ruiz de Mendoza & Baicchi 2007). Such insights have shown that there is a greater degree of conventionalization in illocutionary production and interpretation than has been recognized in the research on pragmatics.

These studies on the constructional nature of speech act meaning have paved the way for the incorporation of illocutionary phenomena into a principled model of meaning construction called the *Lexical Constructional Model* (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal 2008; Mairal & Ruiz de Mendoza 2009). The Lexical Constructional Model (LCM, henceforth), which has deep roots in Relevance Theory, Cognitive Linguistics and Construction Grammar, is concerned with the development of a comprehensive theory of meaning construction that accounts for all facets of the process. To that end, the model is structured into four descriptive levels, which deal with argument structure representations (level 1), implicated and explicated meaning captured by low-level situational models (level 2), implicated and explicated illocutionary meaning (level 3) and discourse structure and relations (level 4). Meaning derivation takes place at the four levels in the form of inference or conventionalized constructions. Lower levels of semantic structure can be incorporated into higher ones as regulated by a number of cognitive and pragmatic constraints. The LCM approach is based on two methodological assumptions. The first relates to the ubiquity of cognitive processes and the second has to do with the existence of a continuum between linguistic categories. These assumptions seek to endow the LCM with refined descriptive and explanatory adequacy.

In this context, the present contribution is a case study of the illocutionary category of ordering and consequently of level 3 constructions for this category within the LCM. The type of illocutionary constructions that will be analyzed consist of a specification of linguistic realizations and a number of semantic features structured in the form of situational cognitive models. The formal pole of the construction includes an array of linguistic devices such as sentence types, lexical items, grammatical properties and suprasegmental patterns. The semantic pole includes the knowledge of the meaning conditions taken by the characterization of an illocutionary type. This concept of illocutionary construction is required by the nature of the object of the study. Illocutionary constructions will be presented

as capturing the illocutionary meaning that arises from everyday interaction in the form of situational cognitive models. We will examine the conceptual grounding and realizations of constructions carrying order values and determine the relationship between their form and their meaning. Our contention is that the expression of orders is based upon linguistic mechanisms capable of activating relevant parts of the semantic base of ordering. After describing the meaning conditions that make up the situational cognitive model of ordering, we will explore the constructional realizations which activate those meaning conditions. The ordering value of these constructions will be determined by the assessment of each of the parameters of the situational cognitive model. We will further argue that the LCM provides an explanatorily adequate framework to understand the semantic and pragmatic behaviour of illocutionary meaning.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the main theoretical assumptions of the LCM. After an overview of the approach to illocution adopted by the LCM, section 3 puts forward a description of the situational cognitive model of the act of ordering that will be a guiding tool in our analysis. Section 4 concentrates on the study of constructions conveying ordering values. The aim of this section is to explore the degree of codification of constructional elements. Such study will make use of the analytical tools proposed by the LCM, thereby providing evidence of their explanatory power. Finally, section 5 summarizes the main conclusions of this research and outlines some future lines of research.

2. The lexical constructional model approach to illocution

In the LCM, traditional implicature and illocutionary meaning are treated as the result of affording metonymic access to situational cognitive models by activating one relevant part of them. Cognitive models of a situational kind involve the interaction between different entities within a certain time and place. The LCM distinguishes low and high-level situational cognitive models (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza 2007). The former are non generic models of representation created by making well-entrenched links between elements of our encyclopedic knowledge store. The latter involve generic models of representation created by deriving structure common to multiple low-level models. For example, begging for money outside a Church building is a low-level situational model. From many different instances of begging in a wide range of diverse contexts, we obtain generic structure common to all these situations, which make up the knowledge that we use to interpret each specific instance of begging. The common generic structure is a high-level situational model.

Metonymic operations on low-level situational cognitive models result in the derivation of implicatures. An example is the utterance *I waved down a taxi* (cf. Lakoff 1987: 87), which stands for a situation in which the speaker waves his hand to stop a taxi, gets into it and asks the driver to take him to the destination. The activation of one part of a low-level situational model gives access to the whole model. At the level of illocution, metonymy acts in much the same way with the difference that it does so on the basis of high-level situational cognitive models, which are more generic, as mentioned above. For example, an utterance like *I am thirsty* may stand as a request in the context of a request scenario based on the cultural convention whereby when people make it manifest that they are affected by a negative situation, other people are expected to provide them with help. This cultural convention is specified in the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* (Ruiz de Mendoza & Baicchi 2007), which is a high-level cognitive model that stipulates that speakers are culturally bound to help other people if it is within their range of abilities. This is the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* as formulated by Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi (2007: 111–112):

(a) If it is manifest to A that a particular state of affairs is not beneficial to B, and if A has the capacity to change that state of affairs, then A should do so.
(b) If it is manifest to A that a potential state of affairs is not beneficial to B, then A is not expected to bring it about.
(c) If it is manifest to A that a potential state of affairs is beneficial to B, then A is expected to bring it about provided he has the capacity to do so.
(d) If it is manifest to A that it is not manifest to B that a potential state of affairs is (regarded as) beneficial for A, A is expected to make this manifest to B.
(e) If it is manifest to A that it is not manifest to B that a potential state of affairs is beneficial for B, A is expected to make this manifest to B.
(f) If it is manifest to A that a state of affairs is beneficial to B and B has brought it about, A should feel pleased about it and make this feeling manifest to B.
(g) If it is manifest to B that A has changed a state of affairs to B's benefit, B should feel grateful about A's action and make this feeling manifest to B.
(h) If it is manifest to A that A has not acted as directed by parts (a), (b), and (c) of the 'cost-benefit' model, A should feel regretful about this situation and make this feeling manifest to B.
(i) If it is manifest to B that A has not acted as directed by parts (a), (b), and (c) of the 'cost-benefit' model and A has made his regret manifest to B, B should feel forgiveness for A's inaction and make it manifest to A.
(j) If it is manifest to A and B that a particular state of affairs is not beneficial to B but A has no power to change it to B's benefit, A should still feel sympathy for B over the non-beneficial state of affairs and make this manifest to B.
(k) If it is manifest to A that A is responsible for a certain state of affairs to be to A's benefit, A may feel proud about this situation and make it manifest to B.

These cultural conventions are part of our high level knowledge about the world and because of this they are included in high-level models of interactional meaning. In effect, the stipulations of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* are regarded as underlying the semantic structure of high level situational cognitive models. Consider the utterance *I don't know what time it is*. For this utterance to be interpreted as a request, it must be clear from the context that the speaker wants to know the time. Contextual information thus contributes to the specialization of this expression, and allows us to derive the implicit request value by means of a metonymy on the basis of a condition-sequence reasoning schema of the following form: if the speaker does not know what time it is and he wants to find out, then he can ask the addressee to tell him. The condition part of the schema is supplied by the linguistic expression, but the consequence part has to be accessed metonymically. The inference is produced by affording metonymic access to the part of the high-level situational cognitive model (or generic structure) that is relevant for illocutionary interpretation. This part of the high level cognitive model of requesting is grounded in part (a) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, according to which people are expected to bring about any state of affairs that is beneficial to other people if they have the ability to do so. Following this schema, if it is manifest to us that someone else wants to know the time and we are able to give him this information, then we should do so. With frequent use, expressions originally involved in the selection of relevant points of access to a high-level situational cognitive model become conventionalized and give rise to fairly specified constructions. This is the case of the *Can You* X_{VP}*?* construction for the performance of requests. The request value of this sequence was initially inferred on the basis of the metonymy POTENTIALITY FOR ACTUALITY (Panther & Thornburg 1999), whereby the expression of potentiality stands for the actuality of the future action. The frequent use of this sequence in appropriate contexts resulted in the conventionalization of the request meaning.

According to the LCM, the expression of illocution is often based on specific constructional patterns. Illocutionary constructions are considered linguistic mechanisms with fixed and modifiable elements capable of providing relevant points of access to high-level situational cognitive models. The nature of illocutionary constructions ranges from full codification to different degrees of conventionalization. Codified constructions activate all the essential features of an illocutionary category. For instance, explicit performative constructions are capable of activating the full high-level situational cognitive model of a speech act type by making explicit use of the performative verb. Non-conventional constructions are those which are not capable by themselves of instantiating the high-level model corresponding to an illocutionary category. In these cases, illocutionary interpretation relies on contextual information or shared background

knowledge. An example is the *Will You X_{VP}?* construction for the expression of requests. Through the activation of part (a) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, which constitutes the background for the high-level model of requesting, the speaker enquires about the addressee's willingness to help. The request value of the construction relies on the realization of the variable elements of the construction (i.e. the X_{VP} element is realized by a verb which denotes some kind of benefit to the addressee). In cases where the verb points to the addressee as the beneficiary of the action (cf. *Will you turn the music off?*), contextual information would make the interpretation of the construction as a request fairly straightforward. In contrast, if the verb does not involve any benefit to the addressee (cf. *Will you divorce your husband?*) the request value of the construction is automatically cancelled out. Thus, in the approach to illocution propounded by the LCM, conventionalization processes are compatible with inferential activity.

The present article takes sides with the notion of illocutionary constructions posited by the LCM and with the description of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, both of which will serve as major theoretical elements of our analysis. The study of constructions in the next section will explore the theoretical implications of the account of illocution provided by the LCM on the basis of a wide range of instances of orders.

3. The semantic structure of orders

An order is an instruction given to people to make them act in the way other people want them to. The two conventions of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model* that apply in the interpretation of orders read as follows (Ruiz de Mendoza & Baicchi 2007: 111):

> *If it is manifest to A that a particular state of affairs is not beneficial to B, and if A has the capacity to change that state of affairs, then A should do so.*
>
> *If it is manifest to A that a potential state of affairs is not beneficial to B, then A is not expected to bring it about.*

These two conventions also provide the background for the understanding of other directive acts such as requests. However, what is crucial about orders is the fact that the speaker has authority over the addressee. The speaker's power is linguistically realized through formal mechanisms like bare imperatives and falling intonation. The kind of authority the speaker is endowed with allows him to perform an order and reduces the addressee's options to refuse to act. The generic structure of orders generalizes over multiple everyday cases of social interaction where people attempt to get something done by other people. The following may be examples of low-level cognitive models for orders:

(1) A person has authority over someone else. The first person wants this other person to do something. Through an utterance, the first person makes this wish manifest to the other person. The other person, who is the addressee, acts as commanded.
(2) A person has authority over someone else. The first person wants this other person to do something. Through an utterance, the first person makes this other person aware of his obligation to act. The other person, who is the addressee, acts as commanded.
(3) A person in a position of authority knows that a course of action would be beneficial to someone else. This person appeals to the addressee's willingness to act. The addressee acts as commanded.
(4) A person in a position of authority over someone else wants this person to join him in a course of action that is beneficial for both. This other person, who is the addressee, acts as commanded.

These low-level models of ordering share common elements which make up their generic structure:

(5) A person has authority over someone else. The first person wants this other person to do something. Through an utterance, the first person makes this other person aware of his wish. The addressee is under the obligation to act as commanded. The addressee is expected to act as commanded.

This generic structure can be realized by means of specific constructions each of which, through contrast with others, acquires a given instantiation potential which is ultimately based on the way it exploits the generic structure. Some constructional realizations of the generic structure of orders are exemplified in the utterances below:

(6) I want you to leave me alone! (BNC)
(7) Shut up and sit down! (BNC)
(8) You are to hold this line (COCA 2008)
(9) You will finish this planet for us (COCA 2004)
(10) Jones, I order you to clean your boots (BNC)

All the above realizations, which instantiate relevant parts of the generic structure of orders, represent fairly explicit means for their expression. Utterance (6) spells out the part of the generic structure that relates to the speaker's wish to get an action carried out by the addressee. Utterance (7) instantiates the part of the generic structure in which the speaker gives an instruction for the performance of an action. The harsh use of a falling intonation in these two utterances underscores a further component of orders, which is the fact that the speaker has authority over the addressee. In turn, utterance (8) instantiates the part of the generic structure that presents the addressee as the agent of the action that is the object of the

speaker's wishes. The speaker's authority and the addressee's lack of optionality contribute to making the speaker's intended act of ordering explicit. The same meaning conditions are expressed in utterance (9). Finally, utterance (10), which displays the highest degree of codification for orders, manages to activate the full generic structure by making use of the performative verb. As will be made apparent in the next section, the use of these constructional realizations for ordering displays some peculiarities motivated by differences in the context of situation.

4. The realization of orders

The expression of orders has traditionally been associated with imperative sentences. Recent studies on the imperative sentence type, however, contradict such a belief (Stefanowistch & Gries 2003; Pérez & Ruiz de Mendoza 2010). Such studies give evidence that the imperative mood is prototypically used to direct attention with a low degree of imposition. These findings are in line with Pérez's (2001) research on illocution, which shows the imperative sentence type as largely unspecified and compatible with the performance of most directive speech acts. Thus, not only orders, but also all other directive speech acts can be performed by means of an imperative. Furthermore, orders can also be expressed through the use of declarative and interrogative sentences. In the next section, it is our objective to deal with the most common constructional realizations that activate the meaning conditions of the generic structure of ordering.

4.1. *Imperative order constructions*

The preference for the use of the imperative sentence type in the performance of orders is certainly not gratuitous. The imposing nature of imperative sentences makes them excellent foundations for the expression of orders. Imperative constructions are capable of conveying the imposition that is characteristic of orders:

(11) $X_{VP\text{-}IMP}$
Get me that iron quickly (BNC)

The use of an isolated imperative is capable in itself of producing explicit orders. The lack of overt mitigation enhances the degree of codification of the imperative as an order. The interpretation of an imperative is, however, dependent on contextual information to a large extent. Lower degrees of authority of the speaker over the addressee motivate an interpretation of a speech act which is closer to a request than to an order. In contrast, if the speaker has authority over the addressee, the interpretation of the imperative as an order is very straightforward. In utterance

(11) above, the speaker's authority is communicated by means of an expression of immediateness (i.e. *quickly*). The use of this type of expressions requires powerful speakers and is fairly specified for the realization of orders. As observed in the example, the combination of an imperative sentence and an expression of immediateness endow the order with a forceful meaning impact. Consider now example (12):

(12) *Please* $X_{VP\text{-}IMP}$
Please keep quiet (COCA 1998)

When used with the falling intonation that characterizes orders, *please* functions as a mitigator. The concept of mitigation has been traditionally associated with acts that involve optionality on the part of the speaker, like requests. In requests, mitigators are used to persuade the addressee into compliance by appealing to his willingness to help the speaker. In orders, mitigating devices may be seen as an irrelevant issue. The use of the adverb *please* in constructional realizations for ordering proves this intuition wrong. It is true that the lack of mitigation motivates more clear examples of ordering. However, highly codified orders may use some mitigating devices that may respond to a need to decrease the force of the act thus minimizing the cost that the specified action involves for the addressee. Examples (13) and (14) below illustrate this:

(13) Please take me straight back to London (BNC)
(14) When you are in your seats, *please* keep your belts fastened (COCA 1991)

The use of *please* reduces the imposition of the order in the two utterances. In utterance (13), the use of *please* offsets the urgency conveyed by the falling intonation and the inflexibility of the adverb. In (14), the adverb *please* reminds the addressees that they are compelled to obey regulations for their own safety. Both orders are uttered by powerful speakers. It may be the case that the power of the speaker is not enough to force the addressee into compliance. It may also be the case that the speaker does not want to make use of his power to achieve his goal. On these occasions, the mitigating effect of the construction has to do with the speaker's desire to reduce the force of the order. In other cases, the speaker may prefer to reinforce the imperative tone of the order by making explicit its illocutionary value. This is achieved through the use of an explicit performative construction:

(15) X_{VP} *It Is An Order*
Hurry up, Arthur! Go faster! It's an order! (COCA 2003)

The explicitation of the ordering value manages to instantiate the full generic structure of ordering. The meaning conveyed by the construction, however, changes depending on whether it is the speaker or a third party that issues the command.

In example (15), it is the speaker who gives the order and its communicative purpose is to get the addressee to carry out an action. In this scenario, it is evident that the speaker is in a position of authority over the addressee. This use of the construction, together with the falling intonation, conveys the implication that the speaker's decision is definite and gives the addressee little freedom to refuse. In contrast, when the construction is used in a context where the order comes from a third party and the speaker only reports on it, the meaning changes. Consider the example below:

(16) Your presence is required. This is not a request, Ross, it's an order (COCA 1994)

In the case of (16), the speaker is not giving the order, but simply pondering on the fact that orders have to be complied with. This use of the construction responds to the speaker's wish not to appear responsible for the obligation that is imposed over the addressee. Whoever the command comes from, nevertheless, the construction is uttered by speakers in a position of authority who believe the addressee is not willing to act as required. Higher degrees of willingness on the part of the addressee may motivate the use of more polite forms.

Another construction is exemplified in (17):

(17) *Let's* X_{VP}
Come on, guys. Let's clean up the mess (COCA 1994)

The plural imperative form *let's* is generally associated with acts of suggesting that involve both the speaker and the addressee. The "order" reading of this construction is largely dependent on contextual variables. In example (17), for instance, the speaker has enough power to impose on the addressee, but since the addressee is willing to carry out the action, the speaker does not need to perform a strict order and prefers a softer form. In these cases, this constructional form represents a much more appropriate means for the expression of the order.

4.2. Declarative order constructions

Declarative sentences are in principle compatible with the nature of orders since these involve the presentation of a future state of affairs. This property, however, is shared by the whole range of directive speech acts. As a result, the same factor that makes declarative sentences appropriate for the performance of orders makes them also suitable for expressing other directive categories. It becomes necessary to consider the relevance of other grammatical and lexical means which, used in conjunction with the declarative sentence type, result in a higher degree of codification of declaratives for the expression of orders. The constructions that we will examine below illustrate the way in which the use of different linguistic

mechanisms contributes to increasing the degree of specification of a declarative as an order. Consider (18):

(18) *You Have Got To* X_{VP}
Quiet, you've got to be quiet now, you've got to be quiet! (COCA 2010)

Highly codified orders can be produced by specifying declarative sentences by means of modality markers. Objective modality expresses the speaker's evaluation of the likelihood of occurrence of a state of affairs. Modality markers are capable of activating the parameter of the generic structure that points to the obligation that is imposed on the addressee. This type of obligation arises from the observance of the principles of interaction stipulated in the cultural conventions underlying the conceptual grounding of orders. Thus, through the activation of part (a) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, the addressee should bring about a state of affairs that is beneficial to the speaker provided that he has the ability to do so. Since the addressee has not brought about such a state of affairs, the speaker reminds him of his obligation to do so. Through a metonymic inferential schema, this construction gives easy access to the generic structure and has thus become highly conventionalized for the expression of orders. We have a similar situation in (19):

(19) *You Must* X_{VP}
You must write in a clear and lucid style (BNC)

The metonymic operation specified above is the same for this construction, with the difference that the use of the modal verb *must* makes the obligation imposed on the addressee more explicit. In the previous case, the modal verb implicated that the carrying out of the specified action should come as a personal decision made by the addressee. Self-imposed obligation acts, in this connection, as a source of authority. In the case of (19), the modal verb expresses an obligation imposed by a source that is external to the addressee, either the speaker or a third party. This type of obligation thus indicates higher degrees of imposition and is much more appropriate to express orders. Consider now:

(20) *You Are Going To* X_{VP}
You are going to play in the competition (BNC)

This construction expresses the same meaning of imposition as the previous ones. Again, through the application of part (a) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, the speaker reminds the addressee that he is under the obligation to bring about a certain state of affairs. The speaker then specifies the state of affairs that is expected to be brought about by the addressee. By expressing certainty about the carrying out of the action that is the object of the speaker's wishes, this realization presents the addressee as lacking optionality under the speaker's authority. Furthermore, the expression of certainty about the addressee's future course of action points to

the position of authority held by the speaker. The activation of these properties functions as a hint to interpret the construction as an order. Nevertheless, there is one parameter of the generic structure that is not overtly instantiated by this type of realization, namely, the speaker's interest in getting the action carried out. This parameter can be made explicit by means of using another declarative sentence expressing the speaker's wishes (cf. *You are going to play in the competition because I want you to*). This type of instances of the construction may display higher degrees of achievement as they activate a higher number of parameters of the generic structure of ordering. A slightly different situation is provided by (22):

(22) *You Are To* X_{VP}
You are not to call out. You are to raise your hand (COCA 2006)

The rationale behind this construction is the same as above but the modality marker used in this case places more emphasis on the addressee and his obligation to carry out the action expressed in the predication. This meaning implication manages to produce fairly codified instances of ordering.

Consider now:

(23) *I Order You To* X_{VP}
You people are trespassing. I order you off. Now (COCA 1990)

The explicitation of the order meaning of the construction can be made by using a performative verb.[2] The interpretation of performative constructions like the one exemplified above is to a large extent cued (i.e. linguistically guided) by the explicit use of the performative verb. The example in (23) succeeds in activating the full generic structure of the cognitive model in question thereby leading the addressee to the ordering value almost effortlessly. The high degrees of imposition conveyed by performative constructions of this kind makes them adequate in contexts in which the speaker wants to reinforce his authority over the addressee. As expected, the variable element of the construction must denote a speaker-controllable activity in order to inhibit an "order" reading. The constituent element can be interchanged with other verbs of command. See how the meaning implications of this realization do not change with the use of one or another verb:

(24) I command you to stay with me forever! (BNC)

(25) I instruct you to make a formal application (COCA 1990)

These realizations carry the same meaning entailments and because of this they may be regarded as mere constructional variants making use of different performative verbs. In any case, the use of a performative verb has the consequence of producing forceful orders.

Let us not consider (26):

(26) *I Want You To* X_{VP}
I want you to follow a woman (BNC)

This construction points to the parameter of the generic structure that presents the speaker as wanting the addressee to carry out an action. This is the motivating factor for orders, but its activation is not in itself capable of instantiating the complete generic structure. The "order" reading is thus dependent on contextual information pointing to the speaker as holding a position of authority over the addressee. In orders, such authority would be enough to bring about the compliance of the addressee and the order meaning of the construction would be simple to grasp. In contexts in which the relationship between participants is on equal terms, the use of the construction would count as an instance of a request.

4.3. Interrogative order constructions

Interrogative sentences are the least codified means for the performance of orders. This is due to the fact that the openness of the interrogative sentence type clashes with the imposition conveyed by orders. However, it is possible to reduce the characteristic openness of an interrogative sentence by means of certain linguistic mechanisms like expressions of immediateness and falling intonation, supported by gesturing. In so doing, the speaker will be able to activate the lack of optionality element that is typical of orders thus making the act more explicit. Let us concentrate on how these mechanisms are used to increase the degree of codification of interrogative constructions for the realization of orders:

(27) *Can you* X_{VP}*?*
Can you shut up for a minute? (COCA 2006)

This is fundamentally a request construction, but its request meaning can be overridden through pragmatic inference. The fact that the speaker questions the addressee about his capacity to carry out an action to satisfy the wishes of an authoritative speaker produces a collapse of logic that can only be re-established if the utterance is understood as an order. The interpretation of this realization as an order thus arises from the instantiation of part (a) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*, which binds people to act to the benefit of others provided that they have the capacity to do so. Questioning someone over whom we have authority about his capacity to carry out an action to our benefit functions as a means of persuasion to obtain his compliance. Since the addressee should have acted as specified without being asked to do so, the use of this construction straightforwardly applies to cases in which the speaker wants to impose his authority to get the action carried out by the addressee.

It is precisely the speaker's latent authority that enables the "order" interpretation; otherwise the utterance would be understood as a request. Compare now:

(27) *Can You Please X_{VP}?*
Can you please stop interrupting? These are ridiculous objections. (COCA 1997)

This construction applies the same rationale as *Can You X_{VP}?*, with the difference that in this case the use of the adverb *please* urges the addressee to perform the action thus endowing the order with a more forceful meaning impact. The impositive use of the adverb derives from the fact that the addressee has not acted as expected by the speaker and therefore the speaker feels compelled to appeal to his willingness to do something which in principle should have been unnecessary.

A different interpretive path is taken by the following construction:

(29) *Why Don't You X_{VP}?*
Why don't you just be quiet for a while? (BNC)

Again this construction conventionally conveys a suggestion. This meaning can be nonetheless overridden through inference in a context in which the speaker is evidently irritated. In such a context, the speaker is not likely to be making a suggestion, so the addressee has to look for a different interpretation. The "order" interpretation of the construction thus presupposes that the addressee is behaving improperly and not acting as the speaker wants. This realization calls the addressee's attention to the ongoing state of affairs that affects the speaker and should be changed to his benefit, as stipulated in part (b) of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*. The activation of this generalization gives easy access to the part of the generic structure in which the addressee is required to act as the speaker wants, which gives rise to the order value of the construction. In utterance (29), the imposing falling intonation, together with the use of a time adverb contribute to making the act of ordering more explicit. The use of falling intonation decreases the openness of the interrogative sentence type and functions as a reminder of the speaker's authority. The time adverb *for a while* has the function of urging the addressee to act as required by the speaker. As should be expected, the use of these mechanisms increases the degree of codification of the resulting order.

5. Concluding remarks

The present contribution represents a first attempt to develop the illocutionary component in the LCM. This study makes use of an explanatorily adequate framework to understand the semantic and pragmatic behavior of illocutionary constructions that makes it possible to account for how illocution imposes different degrees of codification on its production and interpretation. The LCM adopts a

constructional account of non-pragmatic illocutionary phenomena capable of explaining the cognitive motivation and constraints of speech act meaning. In the LCM, illocutionary meaning is conveyed by means of conventionalized strings made up of parametrizable –and thus modifiable– and non-parametrizable or fixed elements. The LCM regards illocutionary constructions as the result of the interplay between cognitive construal operations and general principles of interaction formulated in the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*. This model lies at the root of both conventional and non-conventional linguistic structures expressing all kinds of illocutionary meaning. Non-conventional expressions require inferential activity to produce illocutionary meaning, which is regulated through metonymic access to abstract cognitive models that are ultimately based on the generalizations of the *Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model*. Conventional expressions become entrenched as inferential shortcuts through frequent use. The approach adopted by the LCM thus considers both inference and codification. Our analysis has explored the theoretical implications of the LCM based on a wide range of instances of ordering drawn from electronic corpora. After defining the cognitive model underlying the speech act of ordering, we have described the illocutionary constructions that activate the parameters of the cognitive model. We have explored the way in which these constructions are used in the performance of orders depending on their degree of instantiation potential for each of the parameters that make up the cognitive model. Then we have shown that the nature of these constructions ranges from codification to different levels of conventionalization. Imperative constructions are the most explicit means of expressing orders. Declarative constructions only partially activate the cognitive model and their interpretation as orders is largely dependent on their use of specific linguistic mechanisms such as oblique modal verbs, expressions of immediateness or intonation patterns. At the end of the codification scale, interrogative constructions are the least specified means for the expression of orders due to their low instantiation potential. These facts evidence the need to account for illocution from a constructional perspective, although future research is needed to develop further the LCM's description of illocutionary constructions. The present study may thus add to the increasingly larger pool of proposals that lead in the direction of a cognitive account of illocutionary phenomena.

Notes

[1]. Center for Research in the Applications of Language (CRAL) (www.cilap.es). Financial support for this research has been provided by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation; grant number FFI2010-17610/FILO.

[2]. The notion of performative utterances is introduced by Austin (1962) to define those speech acts making explicit the act they are performing. The Functional Grammar (FG) account of illocution (Dik, 1989, 1997) is fully compatible with Austin's

description of explicit performatives. According to FG, the illocutionary meaning of explicit performative utterances is obtained derivationally where the starting point is the basic sentence type (e.g. the promise verb in *I promise I will buy you a car* transforms the statement into a promise). In contrast to FG account, the constructional perspective adopted by the LCM argues that certain explicit illocutionary values are not predictable from grammatical form and puts forward the idea that illocutionary meaning is obtained through the activation of high-level situational cognitive models, which are specifications of the Cost-Benefit Cognitive Model.

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