Intersubjective Impersonals in Context: A Multivariate Analysis of Spanish *Uno* and *Se* in Spoken Language*

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Abstract

This paper offers a multivariate analysis of the alternation between 2 Spanish constructions traditionally considered as impersonal, namely *uno* and *se*, in 3 different spoken language genres. The proposed analysis will show that, while the traditionally described syntactic factors related to this alternation and to the analysis of each of these forms account for part of the alternation, it is the much less studied pragmatic-discursive factors that offer a better explanation. Moreover, we will show the crucial role of genre variation and of differences as to intersubjective functioning for accounting for the alternation between these two constructions.

Keywords: impersonal; intersubjectivity; pragmatics; *se*; spoken language; *uno*

Resum. *Impersonals intersubjectius en context: una anàlisi multivariant de l'espanyol* uno *i* se *en la llengua oral*

Aquest article ofereix una anàlisi multivariant de l'alternança entre dues construccions espanyoles tradicionalment considerades com a impersonals, concretament, *uno* i *se*, en 3 gèneres diferents de llengua oral. L'anàlisi proposada demostrarà que, mentre que els factors sintàctics tradicionalment descrits relacionats amb aquesta alternança i amb l'anàlisi de cadascuna d'aquestes formes expliquen parcialment l'alternança, són els factors pragmaticodiscursius, molt menys estudiats, els que ofereixen una millor explicació. A més, mostrarem el paper crucial de la variació de gènere i de les diferències quant al funcionament intersubjectiu per donar compte de l'alternança entre aquestes dues construccions.

Paraules clau: impersonal; intersubjectivitat; pragmàtica; *se*; llengua oral; *uno*

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1. Introduction: (inter)subjectivity and impersonals?

Corpus-based research on subjectivity, intersubjectivity and stance has focused on some specific linguistic phenomena, such as epistemic stance (Kärkkäinen 2003, 2006), evaluation through adjectives and adverbs (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1997; Conrad & Biber 2000; Martin 2000; Martín Zorraquino 1994, 1999; Melendez Quero 2008) and 1st and 2nd person expressions (see among others Scheibman 2001, 2002, 2004; Vázquez-Rosas & García-Miguel 2006; Biber 1988; Marín Arrese 2007). Impersonal constructions, by contrast, have been analyzed to a much smaller extent from an (inter)subjective perspective, though they have long since attracted attention in (critical) discourse analysis as a means to create empathy (among others Gardin 1976; Guespin 1976; Lavandera 1985; De Fina 1995; Gelabert-Desnoyer 2008; Rasson 2017). Among the researchers who did establish a link between impersonals and (inter)subjectivity, Hidalgo Navarro (1996: 173) points at the importance of impersonals and the suppression of the identity of the agent as subjectivity phenomena from a theoretical perspective. Through a corpus-based analysis, Scheibman (2007) shows the importance of generalizations for expressing subjectivity and intersubjectivity in English, while Rasson (2017) shows that Spanish indefinite pronoun *uno* 'one' functions differently in genres with a clear intersubjective component vs. those that do not have a clear intersubjective element.

In line with Hunston (2007) concerning the use of corpora for stance analysis, I will adopt a combined quantitative and qualitative approach to two Spanish so-called 'impersonal' constructions, namely constructions with the indefinite pronoun *uno* 'one'[1] and depersonalizing constructions with *se* across spoken language genres. A corpus-driven approach by means of a multivariate analysis will shed light on the factors that favor the choice for either of the constructions involved, as well as their weight and their role in the expression of (inter)subjectivity. The multivariate analysis has the advantage that we cannot only see whether a factor influences the choice for one of both constructions, but also what the respective weight of the different factors compared to each other is. In addition, I will also look into the ways in which these constructions contribute to expressing (inter)subjectivity and interact with other (inter)subjective expressions. Thus, I will show how the choice for these strategies is linked to the expression of

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1.   A feminine equivalent *una* exists yet has an extremely low frequency. It is not included in this study for lack of occurrences in the corpus in which this analysis is based, but see De Cock (2014b) for a discussion of its use.

(inter)subjectivity and demonstrate that impersonals contribute to stancetaking in discourse (see Englebretson 2007 for a more detailed account of different theories concerning stance, as well as the relationship between stance and intersubjectivity).

Though the constructions with *uno* and *se* are formally very different, they share a crucial feature namely that they defocus the agent by non- or under-elaboration or demotion, which are crucial factors in an agent-centered approach of impersonality (Siewierska 2008: 121). In the case of the indefinite pronoun *uno* 'one', this defocussing is realized by under-elaboration, e.g. by designating a class (rather than an individual), by establishing a vague reference (De Cock 2014b), as in (1), leading to variety of possible interpretations (see Rasson 2016, 2017 for an overview). *Uno* may then be considered an R-impersonal (Siewierska 2011: 57-58) in that it "[has] the appearance of regular, personal constructions but [features] a subject which is human and non-referential". In the case of *se*, an originally reflexive pronoun has evolved into a marker of middle and passive voice (Cabañas Maya 2006), which is a typologically rather widespread phenomenon (Shibatani 1985). This *se*-construction has become the most frequent means to express a passive voice in Spanish (Cabañas Maya 2006).[2] The agent is entirely defocused (Shibatani 1985; Maldonado 1999, 2007) by demotion, and in most cases not expressed at all (Delbecque 2014). Thus, in example (2), it is not specified who earned more money in Africa.

(1)   Las casas de nuestro Bogotá antiguo eran magistrales en los aleros, porque **uno podía caminar** por las aceras sin temor a la lluvia. (ALFAL Bogotá)
      'The houses of our old Bogotá are magisterial because of the eaves, because **one could walk** on the sidewalks without fearing the rain.'

(2)   En África **se cobraba** el cincuenta por ciento más. (CORLEC, conversation)
      'In Africa fifty percent more **was earned**.'

Their shared agent-defocussing allows for considering both constructions as functioning in partially similar ways from a pragmatic-discursive perspective. Such a broader approach to impersonals is also adopted in Kärde (1966) and Devís Márquez (2003) for Spanish, and, in the typological literature among others by Siewierska (2008, 2011) and Gast & van der Auwera (2013). In the absence of a specific agent, both constructions then allow for an impersonal interpretation (in the sense that no specific person reference is established), which may give rise to a generic interpretation (Hidalgo Navarro 1996).[3] By doing so, they occupy a specific position in the expression of intersubjectivity, as will be fleshed out below. The methodology and corpora will be presented in section 2. Whereas section 3 will focus on the importance of tense and aspect for the alternation between *uno* and

2.   The periphrastic passive is more frequent in some very specific genres, though, such as juridical texts (De Cock & Maturana 2015, 2018).
3.   As pointed out by among others Scheibman (2007: 118-119), the distinction between generics, generality of meanings and generalization is not always easily established. In view of the large tradition to discuss the use of *uno* and *se* in terms of genericity, I will use this term.

se, section 4 will focus on the impact of pragmatic and discursive factors. Section 5 will be dedicated specifically to genre, before formulating the conclusions in section 6.

2. Methodology

The data for this study are taken from various spoken language corpora. I distinguish between conversations (consisting of informal interactions and sociolinguistic interviews), TV-debates and professional interaction types (e.g. political debate, judicial interaction). More detailed subcategories of interaction types (e.g. different professional interaction types) would undoubtedly be interesting for the analysis (see among others Hunston 2007 and Gries 2013), yet this is not possible due to the sparseness of data concerning *uno* in some of the interaction types (e.g. judicial interaction). Though this sparseness is important information as such, maintaining separate subcorpora with very low frequencies would have resulted in statistically uninformative data (but see De Cock 2014ab, 2016 on the analysis of low frequency pragmatic strategies). Other studies have already suggested that genre differences may be crucial for one specific form or construction: Rasson's 2016 & 2017 comparison of *uno* in conversations, academic writing and internet fora shows clear differences between discourse genres, while Pierre (in press) shows differences as to the use of *se* between informal and formal spoken language. This study will analyse the specific contrast between the functioning of *uno* and *se* in three different spoken genres. The conversational data are taken from the CORLEC-corpus (*Corpus del Español centro-peninsular*) and from the Macrocorpus-ALFAL (*Macrocorpus de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades del mundo hispánico*). The TV-debates are taken from the CORLEC-corpus as well. The professional interaction types are taken from the CORLEC-corpus as well as from a previously established corpus of parliamentary debates (see De Cock 2010a, 2014a). Two equal samples of 275 tokens were established. However, it is noteworthy that *se* is much more frequent than the construction with *uno* in most genres (De Cock 2011, 2014a). Indeed, over time, *se* has become the most frequent passive construction in Spanish (Cabañas Maya 2006), with some exceptions for very specific written discourse types (De Cock & Michaud Maturana 2015). While different uses of *se* are being distinguished with varying terminology according to the author, such as middle, mediopassive, passive, impersonal (Martín Zorraquino 1979; Devís Márquez 2003; Maldonado 1999; Gómez Torrego 1992; Mendikoetxea 1999ab), I will not analyze these differences in detail. Most importantly, all these specific subtypes of *se* share in my view, in line with Maldonado's proposal (1999), that they defocus the agent and can be placed on a continuum of varying degrees of presence and specificity of the "inductive" force of the action (Maldonado 1999: 351). Their agent-defocussing uses will then be the basis for this study of the alternation between *uno* and *se.* The mere fact that the constructions with *uno* and *se* can alternate in the same genre and register, is illustrated by the fact that they may occur jointly in the same turn, as in (3).

(3) Bueno, ahora ve usted a un obrero vestido igual que un señor, exactamente
     lo mismo; **no se distingue nada, no se distingue**. Porque antes, cuando los
     obreros eran los domingos se ponían sus corbatas y su chaqueta y todo, iban
     bien vestidos y los **diferenciaba uno** de un señor. Ahora **no se diferencia**.
     Un chico joven no sabes si es un obrero, o si es un estudiante**; no se sabe** lo
     que es; porque van todos iguales. (ALFAL Madrid)
     'Well, now you see a laborer dressed the same way as a gentleman, exactly
     the same way; **you don't distinguish them at all, you don't distinguish**.
     Because before, when the laborers were Sundays they put on their ties and
     their jacket and all, they were well dressed and **one distinguished** them from
     a man. Nowadays **one does not distinguish**. You don't know whether a young
     man is a laborer, or whether he is a student**; one does not know** what he is;
     because they all dress the same way.'

     In some specific situations, however, no alternation is possible; these examples
are excluded from the data. This is the case for uses of *se* as reflexive or reciprocal
(since the agent is not defocused but coreferential with the subject) and construc-
tions where no agent can be imagined at all, such as *oxidarse* 'to oxidize' in (4).
Indeed, as pointed out by Maldonado, in such cases the energy is entirely spontane-
ous (Maldonado 1999: 350).

(4) Pues Sancho, encuentra una barca y va ahí remando, a buscarle porque **se le
     había oxidado la armadura** y va… va a ayudarle (…) (CORLEC conversation)
     'Well Sancho, find a boat and go rowing over there, to find him because **his
     framework had oxidized** and go… go help him (…)'

     Furthermore, uses of *uno* with a reflexive form (5) were excluded, since they
do not allow for alternation. Indeed, verbs or constructions with which *se* has
grammaticalized, such as *darse cuenta* 'to realize', cannot obtain a generic read-
ing through the addition of a second *se*. In those cases, the use of *uno* is the only
possibility to create an agent-defocussing reading.

(5) a. **Uno se da cuenta** de que entendió, de que tiene cierta capacidad intelec-
         tual. (ALFAL México)
         '**One realizes** that one understood, that one has some intellectual capacity.'

     b. *Se se da cuenta de que entendió, de que tiene cierta capacidad intelectual.

     After having selected the examples, each example was coded for a series of
parameters. A multivariate analysis was applied by means of the program R. On
the one hand, I look into various syntactic factors that are frequently related to the
use of both constructions in the literature, and which are often linked to genericity,
such as aspect and tense, and the presence of tense and place adverbials (section
3). On the other hand, I also include a series of pragmatic and discursive aspects,
based on elements from the linguistic context (section 4). The influence of these
factors is rarely included in corpus-based studies and only occasionally hinted at

in the literature (cf. Mendikoetxea 1999b: 1648), which focuses on formal factors. However, in line with work on deictic person reference (De Cock 2010a, 2014a), I will analyze to which extent the broader (linguistic) context plays a role in the choice for *uno* and *se*, and their intersubjective positioning. Also Rasson (2017) and Pierre (in press) have shown that the interpretation of respectively *uno* and *se* can be influenced by other person reference forms appearing in their context, suggesting that this factor is crucial to understand the functioning of these forms and their alternation. A third factor that will be taken into account is the genre in which the token is uttered (section 5). Given the diversity of corpora and the importance of a more granular approach to genre differences in corpus analysis (see Gries 2013), genre was taken up as a variable in every logistic regression. Previous research on person reference has also shown that person reference may occur or function differently according to genre (Vázquez Rozas & García-Miguel 2006; De Cock 2009, 2010a, 2012, 2014a) (section 2 on methodology)[4]. Thus there is reason to assume that this also holds for impersonals.

Finally, I will show that the analysis of impersonals plays an important – and often ignored – role in the analysis of the (inter)subjectivity of the genre as such and that *uno* and *se* function differently in this respect. While the link between genre and subjectivity or intersubjectivity has been amply discussed (Biber 1988; Chafe & Danielewicz 1987; Dahl 2000; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980; Lyons 1994; Scheibman 2002; Vázquez-Rozas & García-Miguel 2006; De Cock 2009, 2010a, 2012, 2015), the focus in the abovementioned research is mainly on the presence of person deixis (as far as person-related features are used for the study of subjectivity), with the notable exception of Scheibman (2007) on generalizations and Rasson (2017) on *uno*. For this study, I will understand subjectivity and intersubjectivity in line with Benveniste's work (1966), further developed by Lyons (1982) and Traugott (2003). Thus, "the term subjectivity refers to the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent's *expression of himself and his own attitudes and beliefs*" (Lyons 1982: 105, based on Benveniste 1966). Correspondingly, intersubjectivity refers to linguistic expressions of the attention to the interlocutor's attitudes and beliefs (Traugott 2003: 128). Of course, both concepts are interrelated (see among others Traugott 2003).

3. Tense and aspect

Let us first focus on syntactic factors that may influence the choice between *uno* and *se*. In Spanish, the imperfective aspect has frequently been linked to these impersonals, especially to the possibility of a generic reading (cf. Hernanz 1990; de Miguel Aparicio 1992; Lavandera 1984; Devís Márquez 2003; NGLE 2010) (6-7). It is from this perspective that the use of tense and aspect is taken into account in the analysis of *uno* and *se*. Similarly for English, Scheibman (2007: 119) points at

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4. It is beyond the realm of this study to focus on the diatopic variation of the frequency of *uno*, but see among others Guirado (2011).

the importance of the progressive aspect and the habitual present for the expression of generalization.

(6) En el decursar (…) de los años, **uno va conociendo** (…) el aparato (…) de inteligencia para el cual está trabajando o con el cual está trabajando y lo va comparando con otros que conoce y con el propio (…) (CORLEC debate)
'As years go by, **one gets to know** the intelligence machinery for which one is working or with which one is working, and one starts to compare it with others one knows and with one's own (…)'

(7) No **se bebe** cerveza, **se bebe** mucho y ron. (CORLEC conversation)
'No beer **is being drunk**, **one drinks** a lot, and rum.'

Counterexamples of the link between genericity and aspect may of course be found, as in (8), where the generic reading of *uno* is maintained in spite of the perfective tense use (*ha tenido* 'has had').

(8) (…) cuando los padres deseen proyectar a los hijos hacia un futuro mejor que el que **uno** ha tenido. (ALFAL México)
'(…) when the parents want to project the children to a better future than the one one has had.'

A logistic regression was carried out, with the following response variables: tense-future, aspect-imperfect, genre-conversation, in order to analyze the relative weight of the syntactic factors related to generic readings (tense and aspect). In line with the idea that genre should be included for a more detailed description of linguistic phenomena, also genre was included in the regression.

Table 1. Logistic regression with syntactic and genre factors

	Estimate	Std.Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	1.4200	0.7296	1.946	0.05163
Tense-past	-1.3421	0.7799	-1.721	0.08530
Tense-present	-0.7608	0.7305	-1.041	0.29765
Aspect-perfect	-1.7024	0.3877	-4.391	1.13e-05 ***
Genre-professional	-1.1430	0.3855	-2.965	0.00303 **
Genre-tv	-1.3591	0.2095	-6.489	8.65e-11 ***
R^2=0.197	C = 0.701			

The Nagelkerke coefficient R^2 is of 0.197 and the C value of 0.701. This shows that the model proposed is a stable model, even though the R^2 is not very high (I will come back to this point later on). The multivariate analysis shows a highly significant correlation ($p < .001$) between perfective aspect and the *se*-construction

and, conversely, between imperfective aspect and *uno*. (The imperfective aspect was used as response variable in the results shown above. When using the perfective aspect as response variable, the correlation between imperfective aspect and *uno* is confirmed.) It is not surprising that the perfective aspect correlates with *se* and the imperfective aspect with *uno*. Whereas *uno* implies seeking the extension of an experience to the audience and other persons and thus always has a certain generalizing effect, the agent-defocussing use of *se*-constructions may lead to a generic reading but not necessarily does so. In that respect, the correlation of the imperfective aspect with the generic form *uno* confirms research on genericity and aspect.

As to tense, the results show only a low significance for the use of a past tense with the *se*-construction and no significant correlation at all for the present tense. Thus, tense is not a very good predictor for the choice between *uno* and *se*. The link that is sometimes established between tense and generic readings (see a discussion in Hernanz 1990) is probably due to the confusion between the concepts of tense and aspect.[5] Indeed, the terminology that commonly refers to different verb inflexions is based on tense differences, even though also aspectual differences are being expressed through the morphological inflexions. This may have led to an oversimplification, including the incorrect link between tense and genericity.

The results of a multivariate analysis including tense, aspect and genre, are then that aspect correlates significantly with the distribution between *uno* and *se*, whereas tense does not. Thus, the importance of the main syntactic feature discussed in the literature, namely aspect, is confirmed. As to genre, we see that professional language and TV-debates significantly correlate with the use of *se*-constructions, also when taking aspect and tense into account. I will develop the link with genre further in section 5.

4. Pragmatic and discursive factors

I will now show that, in addition to aspect, more pragmatic and discursive factors are as crucial – or even more so – for the choice for *uno* or *se*. I therefore look into the contextual information surrounding the token, which has so far been woefully ignored in the literature, with the exception of the impact of time restrictions on the possibility of a generic reading (see Hernanz 1990). Though also non-verbal elements, such as gaze, may be interesting factors, it is not possible to include these in the analysis, due to the fact that the data are only available as audio files and transcriptions. This analysis is limited to the linguistic context only, focusing more concretely on restrictions of the domain and the expression of person reference in context, the latter being related to the expression of intersubjectivity as well.

In the first place, the domain concerned by the impersonal construction may be restricted in context by means of spacebuilders (Fauconnier 1984). This is argued for among others by de Miguel Aparicio (1992, based on Hernanz 1990) and

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5. Another element is the use of temporal restrictions, which will be discussed in section 4 on pragmatic and discursive factors.

Langacker (2009), though the latter in a discussion of a different type of impersonal, namely the English *it*-construction. Also Rasson (2017) has shown the impact of spacebuilders on the interpretation of *uno* (though spatiotemporal restriction did not vary significantly according to different subtypes of *uno*).

   While the agent or experiencer remains defocussed, allowing for a possibly generic interpretation, the extension of the reference of the action expressed by means of *uno* or *se* is nevertheless restricted. I distinguish restriction in time (9), space (including metaphorical spaces) (10), a miscellaneous category and no restriction. The miscellaneous category includes references to (groups of) people and to languages, e.g. *entre el resto de los agentes* 'among the rest of the agents', *en inglés* 'in English'.

(9)   **En ese momento**, o sea, uno podía ya mirar cierta como tendencia, ¿no cierto? (ALFAL Santiago de Chile)
      '**In that moment**, well, one could observe already some kind of tendency, isn't it?'

(10) **Aquí** se han hecho seminarios con la OMS. (CORLEC debate)
      '**Here** is where the seminars with the WHO have been held.'

   In the second place, I look into the importance of a person reference form in context. More concretely, I label whether a 1st, 2nd or 3rd person singular or plural form is present in the linguistic context. This may be within the same utterance (but not as object of the *uno* or *se*-construction) or in the preceding or following utterance. In the literature, *uno* is regularly associated to the 1st person singular form, *uno* being considered a generic form which necessarily implies the speaker (among others Kärde 1943: 35, Fernández Ramírez 1987; Martínez 1989: 60; Mendikoetxea 1999; Flores-Ferrán 2009). It is thus traditionally situated rather in the domain of addresser-stance and subjectivity. In general, it is not uncommon for impersonal forms to be interpreted as referring to the interaction participant (Helasvuo & Vilkuna 2008: 18), which may be linked to the 'egocentric' nature of language (Kecskes & Mey 2008). However, counterexamples may be found, such as (11), where it is clear from the wider context that nor the speaker nor the hearer is one of the indigenous people who has lost their property (the speaker runs an antique shop in the capital La Paz, the hearer is the researcher conducting the interview). *Uno* then does not include the speaker (or hearer) in this example. Though these cases are not highly frequent, they are by no means hapaxes since this type is also documented by Rasson (2016: 254, 2017: 138). The use of *uno* in such cases can be explained by a desire to express empathy and/or to save the face of the person to whom is being referred.

(11) Ahora, Bolivia es un país de sesenta o setenta por ciento indígena; entonces, nosotros tenemos que contar con los indígenas porque son ellos los que traen las cosas del campo. Desde el cincuenta y dos, con la reforma agraria, la gente no ha podido llegar a sus haciendas. Naturalmente hay… hay la amenaza… y

después que la ley es terminante. **Uno ha perdido** una finca y la ha perdido con todo adentro… (ALFAL La Paz)

'Now, Bolivia is a country of sixty to seventy percent indigenous [sic]; thus, we have to rely on the indigenous people, because it's them who bring the things from the field. Since fifty-two, with the agricultural reform, the people have not been able to reach their farms. Naturally, there is… there is the menace, and after that, that the law is categorical. **One has lost** a farm and has lost it with everything in it…'

From a qualitative perspective, the VP with which this person reference is constructed can establish two different relationships with the VP of the *uno*- or *se*-construction. Either, as in (12), the agent-defocussing construction is subordinated to a construction with a concrete person reference, often a stance expression (*insisto* 'I insist'*, me parece mal* 'I think it's bad'). In those cases, there is often no direct semantic link between both verbs. On the other hand, it is quite frequent to find an utterance in the near discourse context which uses the same verb as the one used with *uno* or *se*, in a 1st person singular form. Another variant is the use of a different verb, yet within the same semantic domain or script, allowing for a link to the VP used with *uno* (De Cock 2010a: 311, 2014a: 219). In (13), *he estado en* São Paulo and *el lugar donde uno vaya* both narrate parts of a travelling experience. Thus, the semantic and/or hypotactic link between the VPs contributes to establishing a (partial) coreference between a person reference form and the construction with *uno* or *se.*

(12) **Insisto** que no me parece mal que se cometan errores. (CORLEC debate)
    '**I insist** that it doesn't seem bad to me that errors are being made.'

(13) **He estado** en São Paulo, y en São Paulo o en el lugar donde uno vaya, siempre está vinculado con los bolivianos residentes. (ALFAL La Paz)
    '**I've been** in São Paulo, and in São Paulo or in the place where one goes, one is always linked with the Bolivians who live there.'

The interaction with a 1st person singular form in the context (i.c. even the same utterance) does not necessarily invalidate the egocentricity argument, but rather shows that the interpretation of *uno* as speaker-referring may be co-constructed by explicit mentions of the 1st person singular in the context, as was also shown in Rasson's data (2017: 325). The logistic regression analyzes the weight of these contextual factors, again in combination with the factor genre.

The multivariate analysis of these contextual factors offers the following results. First and foremost, the overall values for this model are higher than for the model involving tense and aspect, namely $R^2 = 0.320$ (as opposed to 0.197) and C is 0.785. This means that the model using contextual factors and genre is more stable and offers a better explanation for the distribution of *uno* and *se*, than the one using syntactic factors and genre. This offers evidence for the fact that pragmatic-discursive factors play an important role in the choice for *uno* and *se*,

Table 2. Logistic regression with pragmatic and genre factors

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	-1.14756	0.36788	-3.119	0.001812
Genre-conversation	1.12105	0.39265	2.855	0.004302 **
Genre-tv debate	0.09205	0.41244	0.223	0.823401
1sg in context	2.08284	0.28449	7.321	2.46e-13 ***
1pl in context	1.70382	0.48371	3.522	0.000428 ***
2sg in context	0.43906	0.36216	1.212	0.225385
2pl in context	2.20662	1.20696	1.828	0.067513
3sg in context	0.71948	0.55763	1.290	0.196962
3pl in context	-0.35151	0.73428	-0.479	0.632137
Restriction miscellaneous	-1.80473	0.53899	-3.348	0.000813 ***
Restriction time	-0.74845	0.38474	-1.945	0.051735
Restriction space	-0.12482	0.35205	-0.355	0.722922
R^2 = 0.320	C=0.785	C=0.785		

and thus merit (more) attention in (multivariate) analyses. Let us now look at the concrete correlations of each contextual factor.

The restriction of the domain correlates with the construction with *se*. This correlation is not significant for space restrictions, yet significant for time restrictions ($p < .1$) and, most importantly, for the miscellaneous restriction category ($p < .001$). Thus, the vagueness that may be caused by the lack of an agent or experiencer in *se*-constructions seems partially compensated by the presence of other information that restricts the scope of the construction. Especially the non-significance of space restrictions is striking since it is this feature which has been most frequently linked with impersonals in the literature (see Meulleman & Roegiest 2012 for an overview, and De Cock 2018). This does not mean that these restrictions do not intervene at all in our interpretation of the utterance, only that they are not significant in explaining the alternation between *uno* and *se*. Recall that Rasson (2017) similarly found that space restrictions are not significant for explaining the differences between different uses of *uno*.

In (14), taken from a debate on customer protection, *se solventará* 'it will be paid' is restricted by *entre el resto de los agentes que intervienen* 'among the rest of the partners that intervene', which can even be considered a non-prototypical agent (Delbecque 2014). The use of an agent-defocussing strategy is motivated by the fact that the focus of the message is on the need for a quick compensation for the customers, for which the customer should not get lost in legal procedures concerning who of various companies involved in the construction of a house is responsible. Thus, the agent of *se solventará* should be of no concern for the cus-

tomers involved, which explains its defocussing. The syntagm *entre el resto de los agentes que intervienen*, however, makes the defocused agent explicit and considerably restricts the interpretation of *se solventará* to the business parties involved.

(14) Pero, por supuesto, es imprescindible ampliar este régimen de garantías, dotarle de más flexibilidad, de forma que el usuario pueda, en el momento en el que se produzca el problema, dentro de unos plazos de esta garantía que se establezcan el exigir una indemnización y una reparación inmediata, que luego **se solventará entre el resto de los agentes** que intervienen quién es el responsable (…) (CORLEC debate)
'But, of course, it is indispensable to amplify this system of guarantees, to give it more flexibility, so that the user can, in the moment that the problem occurs, within some delays of this guarantee which are establish, demand a compensation and an immediate redress, which later on **will be settled among the rest of the agents** who intervene who is responsible (…)'

Let us now look into the importance of the presence of a concrete person reference in the context. The presence of a 1st person singular or plural form, as well as of a 2nd person plural form in context, significantly correlates with the use of *uno* (p < .001 for 1st singular and plural, and p < .1 for 2nd person plural). On the one hand, this result offers data-based confirmation of the privileged relation between *uno* and the 1st person singular that was often pointed at in the literature. On the other hand, these results add two crucial points to the more traditional analyses of *uno*. In the first place, the link with the speaker – but also with the hearer – is not necessarily inherently present in the semantics of *uno*, as has been suggested in the literature (Gómez Torrego 1992)[6], but is also established or reinforced in context. Indeed, counterexamples concerning the inclusion of the speaker in *uno* exist, as shown above in (11). In the second place, not only the 1st person singular, traditionally associated with *uno*, but various deictic person references, significantly correlate with the use of *uno*. Lavandera (1984: 107) was the first to suggest that the importance of the presence of the 1st person singular form in the preceding or following utterances also holds for 2nd and 3rd person forms. While the impact of person reference forms in the context of *uno* on its interpretation has been shown by Rasson (2017), our data show only deictic forms correlate with the choice for *uno* in the alternation *uno-se*. Deictic person reference in general has been associated with the expression of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Scheibman 2002; Lyons 1982; Langacker 2002). Thus, the intersubjective nature of *uno* seems to be established through the interaction with other intersubjective expressions, linked to the interaction participants. In (15), *uno* is taken up by 1st person plural form *sabemos* 'we know'. The speaker then first establishes a generalization by means of *uno*, narrating the unfortunate experience of being the victim of a pickpocket. By then switching to a generalizing 1st person

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6. See De Cock (2014b) for a more elaborate analysis of this link and the importance of egocentricity in language.

plural (viz. without a specific reference), the speaker creates a group including himself and his interlocutors (and even persons outside the interaction situation), thus linking the experience expressed by means of *uno* to himself and extending it to his interlocutors as well. The intersubjectivity of *uno* is then co-constructed through an inclusive 1st person plural form.

(15) **Uno** está en la cola de un banco y le roban el bolso, bueno, pues mala suerte y, en fin, ya **sabemos** que hay rateros que roban los bolsos. (CORLEC debate)
'If **one** is in the queue of a bank and they steal his bag, well, then bad luck and, anyway, we already know that there are thieves that steals the bags.'

In (16), the intersubjectivity is realized in the opposite way. The speaker first addresses the interlocutors through the use of a full NP with a 2nd person plural form (see De Cock 2010b for a more detailed analysis of this construction), narrating the difficult challenge young artists have to face. This is a markedly intersubjective expression, seeking addressee involvement. He then switches to *uno* when he concretizes the challenge (*reto muy duro* 'a very hard challenge') by saying that one has to be polyfacetic (*se pide a uno que sea polifacético* 'one is asked to be polyfacetic'). Through the generalization, he moves away from the interlocutors and becomes involved as well, thus creating an intersubjective effect through which the young artists are no longer represented as facing their challenge alone, yet they are in larger company, possibly including the speaker.

(16) **Los jóvenes artistas**, hoy en día **tenéis** un reto muy duro, porque se pide a **uno** que sea polifacético, y eso conlleva mucho aprendizaje, ¿no? (ALFAL, interview)
'**You, the young artists**, these days **you have** a very hard challenge, because **one** is asked to be polifacetic, and that implies a lot of learning, isn't it?'

The fact that 3rd person singular and plural forms do not correlate significantly with *uno* or *se* does not seem illogical since those persons remain outside the interaction dyad.[7] While they then do not impact on the alternation between *uno* and *se*, Pierrre (in press) shows that the person reference forms present in the context of *se* do influence in the interpretation of the persons included in the action expressed by the *se*-form, whereas Rasson (2017) also shows that person reference forms in the context of *uno* significantly impact the interpretation.

The non-correlation of *uno* with the 2nd person singular, however, does stand out, since it is the only deictic person form to not significantly correlate with *uno*. Further research is needed to clarify this but I would hypothesize that the tension between purely deictic and generic readings of the 2nd person singular plays a role in this result (Kluge 2010; De Cock 2016; and Rasson 2017: 170 ff on the interaction between *uno* and generic 2nd person singular). As the relation with the 2nd per-

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7. Of course, this does not prevent that, when a 3rd person form occurs in the vicinity of the *uno*-construction, it may influence the interpretation of the *uno.*

son singular was not the main topic of this study, the data concerning the subtypes of 2nd person singular forms are too sparse to draw further conclusions. However, it is possible that strictly deictic readings of the 2nd person singular correlate with *uno*, similar to the other person deictic forms, whereas the generic readings show a different behavior.

5. Genre

It was already clear in the multivariate analyses I have proposed so far that there is a significant correlation between specific discursive genres and the constructions with respectively *uno* and *se*. Moreover, in the literature, various claims concerning the use of *uno* and *se* in specific genres have been issued. Typically, *se* has been associated with more distancing discourse genres, such as academic discourse (Jisa & Tolchinsky 2009) and the use of *uno* has also been shown to be genre-dependent, with a much higher use in online discussion fora (Rasson 2017: 250 ff). I will now further develop this correlation.

In my data, TV-debates and professional discourse genres correlate significantly with *se*, whereas conversations correlate significantly with *uno*. The correlation between *se* and professional discourse genres seems in line with previous accounts of the use of *se* in more specialized and distancing discourse genres. The logistic regression visualized in this plot allows for a more detailed analysis of the behavior
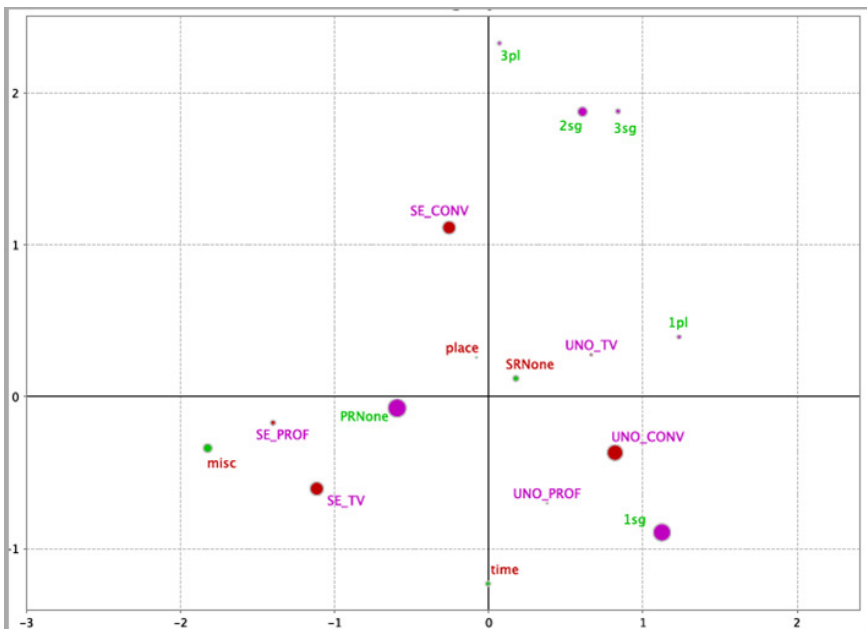

Figure 1. Plot visualizing the weight of all factors

of *uno* and *se* per genre and their interaction with the other factors discussed. The size of the dots informs us about the weight of the data.

The 1st person singular is strongly correlated to the use of *uno* in conversations and professional discourse. Especially the latter may seem surprising, since professional discourse is often considered more distanced and, hence, less intersubjective. However, a qualitative analysis of the data shows that *uno* in professional discourse occurs when speakers narrate individual professional experiences, in order to seek audience involvement and/or to show the more general validity of their experiences. Thus, in (17), the speaker generalizes his experience as a lawyer.

(17) Porque el testimonio de dos policías hará prueba plena, en el artículo treinta y siete de… <fático=duda> la ley se determina, y **tendrá uno que desmontar** ese testimonio (CORLEC professional discourse)
'Because the testimony of two policemen will be full proof, in the article thirty-seven of … the law it is determined, and **one will have to pick** this testimony apart.'

By contrast, in the upper half of the plot, the 3rd person forms and the 2nd person singular are associated to the use of *se* in conversations. The results concerning 3rd person forms point in the same direction as Pierre (in press)'s results on other spoken genres. As pointed out in the previous section, the deviant behavior of the 2nd person singular may be due to its allowing for both a strictly deictic and a generic reading, and merits further exploration.

The restriction in time, positioned precisely on the axis, is equally associated with *se* in TV and professional discourse, and with *uno* in conversation and professional discourse. This may seem at first sight a rather incoherent amalgam: whereas the relation between time restrictions and *se* was accounted for in section 3, the relation with the use of *uno* in conversations and professional discourse is more surprising. However, the qualitative analysis shows that the time restrictions with *uno* are used in two very specific ways. Either they explicitly create the idea of frequency and repetitiveness, thus contributing to a generic reading of *uno*, e.g. *muchas veces* 'often' in (18). Either they refer to the current era, e.g. *hoy día* 'nowadays' (19), often in contrast with another era. The time restrictions with *uno* then seem to be much less varied than with *se*-constructions.

(18) Siempre da un poco de pena y además es… es cierto que muchas veces **uno no sabe** por dónde, eh, eh… en el caso de no saber por dónde hay dos soluciones. (CORLEC conversation)
'It's always a bit painful and moreover it's… it's sure that often **one does not know** where, eh, eh,… in the case of not knowing where there are two solutions.'

(19) Había muchas personas a disposición de una señora, y hoy día **no encuentra uno** quién le ayude (…) (ALFAL Bogotá)
'There were a lot of person at the disposal of a lady, and nowadays **one doesn't find** someone to help one (…)'

The restriction through miscellaneous strategies, however, is clearly associated with *se* (and not with *uno*) and mainly with *se* in TV-debates and professional discourse. Where conversations privilege more personalized constructions, the TV-debates and professional discourse rely more on a generic formulation – albeit somewhat restricted.

6. Conclusions

I have shown that the alternation between the Spanish agent defocussing constructions with *uno* and *se* significantly relies on the traditionally described syntactic factor of aspect, but more crucially on genre and on pragmatic-discursive factors, namely the restriction of the domain and the presence of a person reference form in the linguistic context. I have then also shown that the higher subjectivity of *uno* if compared to *se* is also constructed in context through the interaction with deictic person reference forms and does not merely rely on *uno* itself. For the construction of *se,* it is striking that it is often construed with some sort of restrictions, which reduce its potential genericity. Genre turned out to be a crucial factor for the functioning of *uno* and *se*, thus confirming the need to take into account more fine-grained genre variation in corpus analyses. Whereas the general tendency that links *se* to more formal genres seems to be confirmed, I have shown that, on the one hand, also *uno* may appear in formal genres, in those cases where intersubjectivity is at stake and that, on the other hand, *se* is also an important strategy in informal conversation.

From a methodological point of view, I have shown that the combination of a qualitative analysis with a multivariate analysis allows for providing a detailed analysis of the ways in which agent-defocussing constructions function and for a solid empirical underpinning of the claims concerning factors that influence on the choice for *uno* or *se*. Conversely, the qualitative analysis of concrete examples allows for explaining seemingly odd correlations and giving an in-depth explanation of the quantitative results.

Corpora

CORLEC, Corpus del Español centro-peninsular, directed by Professor Francisco Marcos Marín in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid with the support of the Agencia Nacional para el Desarrollo de Programas del V Centenario (1990-1993)

Macrocorpus-ALFAL. *Macrocorpus de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades del mundo hispánico (MC-NLCH)*. Preparado por José Antonio Samper Padilla, Clara Eugenia Hernández Cabrera y Magnolia Troya Déniz. Edición en CD-ROM. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1998.

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