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Rhetorical strategies in discourses about language: the persuasive resources of ethos

Abstract

The aim of the paper consists in showing the relevance of ethos-based rhetorical strategies in a journalistic genre called Columns on language (CSLs) in the Spanish press. CSLs are authored by persons of recognized prestige who take position with regard to an issue, often related to correct language usage. The argumentative importance that the speaking subject reveals to have in these kinds of texts has actually led us to study the mechanisms able to construct his/her discursive image. These mechanisms, involved in shaping the author's ethos, are supposed to raise the readers' level of support. Four presentational columns belonging to different authors, years, and journals have been analyzed in order to explore the persuasive resources of ethos.

Key words

Rhetoric, Discourse Analysis, Linguistic Ideologies, Pragmatics, Spanish Linguistic Journalism

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Rhetorical strategies in discourses about language: the persuasive resources of ethos¹

1. Introduction

A significant part of the public debate about the language takes place in the periodical press through the so-called ‘*columnas sobre la lengua*’ (CSL), i.e., ‘columns on language.’ These are texts published on a regular basis and signed by the same author where a variety of issues related to language are presented with an informative approach (Grijelmo 2007: 1). Such texts serve to receive and reject, to question, to assess, to justify or stigmatize forms of expression – language usages – which eventually always entail adopting some kind of stance in relation to the dominant linguistic and social norm (Castillo Lluich 2001). The columnist signing the text is an expert “who has at his disposal a certain space – the column – in the newspaper where he can express his views about facts or events of importance from a journalistic point of view” (Fell and Martín Vivaldi 1967: 96-97, in: Mancera 2009: 39) which, in this case, have to do with an aspect of language usage. These are consequently texts in which the utterer has a high argumentative relevance and where the weight of his discursive presence appears as one of their main features.

The persuasive value of the discursive self was already highlighted since the very origins of classic Rhetoric; as a matter of fact, Aristotle himself established in his Rhetoric the figure of the speaker, i.e., *ethos*, as one of the three sources – along with *pathos* and *logos* – which can provide arguments to a cause. Ethos refers to the fact that the argumentative strength of discourse falls upon one of the participants in the communicative event, who would be ‘the one who speaks’ this time. Therefore, it has to do with the qualities of the speaking subject, whose voice not only guarantees the validity of tests but also refers to the set of discursive mechanisms which make possible ‘the staging of the self,’ as well as the creation

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of a ‘discursive image’ (Montero 2012: 224). Ever since then and until the present day, the different ways in which speaking subjects express themselves have been taken into consideration by the whole rhetorical-discursive tradition. The moral and attitudinal aspects of ethos have received special attention from fields such as Sociology and Communication Theory (see Amossy (1999); Bourdieu [1982] 1985; Goffman [1959] 1971; Swedberg and Agevall 2005), but it is enunciatively and pragmatically-oriented linguistics that brought to the foreground the study of the linguistic mechanisms through which speakers join the discourse, the expression of subjectivity, the voices in which they display themselves or their social image, amongst other things.² As for the genres studied, public discourse – associated with politics, the media or advertising – has aroused the greatest interest amongst researchers. Likewise, numerous works have dealt with the author’s presence in scientific and academic genres or the ways in which participants gain access, as well as on the image-related activities in different types of verbal interactions, e.g., commercial, spontaneous, etc. With regard to newspaper columns in Spanish, the works of López Pan (1996), Martín Vivaldi (1986), Martínez Albertos (2004), Hernando Cuadrado (2000) or Mancera Rueda (2009), to quote but a few, have outlined the characteristics of the genre in its thematic and compositional dimensions. Columns dedicated to the language have received much less attention. Despite the existence of a discursive tradition of article writers focused on the language in Spain,³ the bibliography about such articles is truly scarce. Some specific works have been published, such as those written by Lebsanft (1987 and 1993) in German, about the linguistic ideas in the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Spanish press; those of Martín Zorraquino (2001 and 2005) and Pano (2012) about Fernando Lázaro Carreter or that of Kailuweit (2006) “Linguistique populaire et chroniques de langage: Péninsule ibérique et Amérique Latine” dedicated above all to Iberian and Latin American linguistic policy issues. What has been mentioned – and what constitutes an invitation to genre study in an article signed by González Ruiz y Loureda (2005) referring to metalinguistic aspects – constitutes until now the exiguous volume of specific bibliography about the metalinguistic discourse which has come to be known as ‘*columnas sobre la lengua*’ in the Spanish press.

The present paper can be placed within the framework of Metapres project aimed to compile, systematize and characterize this genre in the Spanish press, and it is oriented towards the study of its rhetorical-discursive aspects. The aim

2. The bibliography about this topic is neverending, which is why only some foundational/seminal references are provided here: Bajtín ([1979] 1982); Benveniste (1977); Ducrot ([1984] 1986); Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1986).

3. The starting point is usually placed in Antonio de Valbuena who – under the pseudonym of Miguel Escalada – wrote a number of controversial and critical articles against the Royal Academy of Language in the newspaper *El Progreso* from 1883.

consists in showing the relevance of ethos-based persuasion rhetorical strategies in the journalistic genre, identified here through the Spanish initials: CSL. CSLs – a popular manifestation of linguistic article-writing – are authored by someone of recognized prestige who takes a position with regard to some issue – often related to correct language usage – in terms of criticism or praise, acceptance or rejection.

This fact brings to the forefront not only the object that is spoken about – the language – but also the subject who takes the floor – the author – who appears in the text as the true defender of the opinions or points of view discussed therein. The speaking subject's argumentative relevance in these kinds of texts has actually led us to wonder which mechanisms make it possible to construct his/her discursive image. Such an image, in the words of Perelman ([1958] 2015: 487), “can create the context that influences the discursive effectiveness of words;” it may build a legitimizing identity (Maingueneau 2009: 92); in short, it is able to shape an ethos likely to raise the readers' level of support.

For the purpose of the analysis, and after briefly introducing the problems associated with their name in Spanish (*'columnas sobre la lengua'*), the CSLs will be firstly categorized as journalistic opinion texts of a metalinguistic nature. It is precisely their belonging to opinion genres that justifies their argumentativeness and provides CSLs with the features that characterize them (López Pan 1996; Mancera 2009; Yanes 2004): a polemical character; an evident author; a fun-didactic orientation; and an interactional nature. Furthermore, the fact that the content of these texts always has to do with the language places CSLs among the genres typical of metalinguistic discourse that González Ruiz and Loureda Lamas (2005: 355) define as “speech acts for which one person or another is responsible and which contain various considerations about language.”

Afterwards, both the classical tradition and the current proposals coming from the studies about argumentation will serve as the basis to specify a concept of ethos which allows analyzing its argumentative functionality and its linguistic-discursive specificity, particularly applied to the genre examined here – i.e., CSLs. It seems especially interesting for us to highlight the distinction drawn by several authors between prediscursive and discursive ethos (McCroskey 1993; Maingueneau 2002; Amossy 2010). The reason lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it permits to understand ethos as a conscious, constructive, and rational process and, on the other hand, it offers the possibility to approach ethos from the two complementary sides which are dealt with from the start: the one referred to the speaker's character, that is, the adoption of a moral and/or ideological stance; and that related to the use of inventive-elocutionary rhetorical strategies.

Our work materializes in the analysis of four presentational columns belonging to different authors, years, and media, presented in the Table 1.

AUTHOR	TITLE OF THE SECTION	TITLE OF THE FIRST COLUMN ANALYZED	NEWSPAPER	DATE
Fernando Lázaro Carreter	<i>El dardo en la palabra</i>	El dardo en la palabra	INFORMACIONES National	1975
Fernando Lázaro Carreter	<i>El nuevo dardo en la palabra</i>	Buenas madrugadas	EL PAÍS National	1999
Luis Calvo	<i>Diálogo de la lengua</i>	Empeño de todos	ABC National	1980
Humberto Hernández	<i>Una palabra ganada</i>	El efecto estupidez	El Día Provincial (Tenerife)	1998

Table 1. Presentation of the corpus.

These four texts were extracted from a corpus under construction which comprises all the columns about the language published in the Spanish press between 1940 and 2015. At present, the number of copies found and compiled amounts to 1,079 by 11 authors – a number that will foreseeably increase as research progresses. Even though most texts are in digital format, they have not been entered into the database yet, which is why, despite being accessible, they can hardly be managed as a study object. Hence, it is why the selection of our corpus required establishing a restrictive, consistent criterion that favored a type of research in which results could be – if not totally generalizable – sufficiently justified, not only to give validity to the proposal but also to lay the foundations for future studies.

Since the aim of the present work consists in identifying the rhetorical resources linked to ethos which are implemented in the columns on language, it is our conviction that those columns in which each author introduces himself before his readers might shape a group of texts where the discursive self would become obvious in a particularly clear and categorical way. However, our findings reveal that not all the earliest columns included a declaration of intent by the author; they often seemed to start *in medias res* – that is, treating a language case directly, without creating any previous connection with the readers. For this reason, our focus was confined to those columns which could be called ‘presentational’ or ‘programmatic’ insofar as the author introduces himself, interacts with his readers, expresses some intentions, and ultimately announces the point of view from which he will undertake the analysis – which is always the language, in this case. All four selected texts fulfil these requirements, and were thus considered suitable for the purposes of the present research study.

This paper is conceived as a theoretical and practical contribution to the context of rhetorical analyses focused on journalistic genres in Spanish, and especially on the metalinguistic discourse found in the Spanish press. Our rhetorical-discursive

and critical perspective utilizes both the proposals of the traditional rhetorical corpus and those provided by enunciatively and pragmatically-oriented linguistics, as well as concepts belonging to Communication Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. In short, the aim is to identify the nature of the rhetorical discourse which characterizes CSLs, what type of persuasion is inherent to them, which elocutionary resources are best suited to them and, above all, how much of it all falls upon the figure of ethos.

2. The Columns on Language in Spanish

The first problem to be faced is how to call this genre. French has the term *chronique de langage* but there is no name to define the genre in Spanish. Alex Grijelmo, in his speech at the IV Spanish Language International Congress, held in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) in 2007, referred to them as ‘Journalistic columns on language,’ and defined them as “cultural journalism which consists in disseminating the rules of our language with the skill focused on allowing the unaware reader to understand it” (Grijelmo 2007: 2). This call about the genre had its precedent in a short work of Hernández (2002) about what he then called the ‘Linguistic informative article’, defined as an “essay-newspaper genre [...]. Brief monographs [...] with a didactic capacity [...] that offers many opportunities to access the rich culture of our language” (Hernández 2002: 435). In 2013, Álvarez de Miranda published the article ‘Nobody is a purist’, in which he highlighted the defense of recalcitrant purism made in many of these articles, whose authors – as this linguist reminds us – were called ‘mistake hunters’ by Unamuno. All three works refer to the existence of a discursive tradition of columnists writing about the language in Spain, although not even the authors themselves agree on a word to describe their own activity: ‘Column’ (Luis Calvo), ‘Section’ (Fabián González Bachiller and J. Javier Mangado Martínez, Humberto Hernández, Fernando Lázaro Carreter), and “Little Section” (Amando de Miguel).

These are texts characterized by: appearing on a regular basis in some written media during a more or less long period of time, being signed by a person of recognized prestige, and expressing rigorous judgments about the language uses made by their contemporaries. Since they are published in mass media, their audience is supposed to be heterogeneous and with various levels of education, but sharing, as Grijelmo (2007: 1) puts it, an interest “to know more about the essence of their thinking: language. And, especially, to learn about something that people love: words.”

2.1. CSLs as a metalinguistic journalistic discourse

Since they belong to the context of journalism – they are transmitted through

the written press – CSLs can be placed within what is known as ‘opinion genres.’ CSL thus appear as a form of expression for argumentative discourses. Indeed, arguing is “a characteristic inherent to language itself understood as a verbal communication capability” (Fuentes and Alcaide 2007: 11), a cognitive and verbal activity which, the same as describing, explaining or narrating, is carried out by speakers every day (Adam 1992: 104). In this sense, arguing discursively and textually feeds above all genres such as those typical of politics, advertising and, of course, mass media, amongst which can be found – as mentioned above – the opinion journalistic genres. Within the latter, the column is considered a particular type which has as its distinctive characteristic “the periodicity and fixedness of its appearance in the newspaper” (Martín Vivaldi 1986: 96). Martínez Vallvey (1996: 12) defines it as a written document where someone “analyzes, discusses, assesses, explains, and interprets a fact, or simply tells the readers something of interest.” It is consequently a text dealing with social or political current news, but shown from the personal point of view of a specific author. The journalistic tradition classifies these columns into two groups according to their orientation (Mancera 2009: 44): the interpretative or analytical column; and the personal column. The first group would be dedicated to the analysis of political, economic and social events by specialists. CSLs would belong to the second group, that of the ‘personal column’ which has entertainment as its essential aim. As Yanes (2004: 6) points out, “their main objective was not an informative one, since their mission was to provide a personal view about a current event”; hence, it is why formal and thematic freedom arise as some of their distinguishing features. Another characteristic should be added to all these, namely, the fact of belonging to what Mancera (2008: 16) has called ‘oralized columns’, those which imitate the enunciation forms that are typical of communicative immediacy discourses and are interactional as well as dialogical.

In turn, CSL still belong to the more restricted subgroup of specialized columns, insofar as they always deal with language in any of its aspects. The definition of this genre suggested by the ChroQué⁴ database, constituted by ‘chroniques de langue québécoises,’ seems to us quite accurate:

a set of relatively short and uniform texts produced by the same person (individual or corporate) recognized for its expertise in language, disseminated periodically in the press and concerning language, especially on the good and bad uses of the speakers. (Remysen 2005: 271)⁵

In other words, they are metalinguistic discourses, i.e., texts closely linked to what

4. *ChroQué*. Base de données textuelles de chroniques québécoises de langage. <http://catfran.flsh.usherbrooke.ca/chroque/>

5. “un ensemble de textes relativement brefs et homogènes, produits par une même personne (physique ou morale) reconnue pour sa compétence en matière de langue, diffusés périodiquement dans la presse et portant sur la langue, plus spécialement sur les bons et les mauvais usages qu’on en fait.” (Remysen 2005: 271).

Casado and Loureda call ‘saying about language.’ According to these authors, “they constitute metalinguistic propositions: judgments for which the responsibility is assumed by a subject whose discourse refers to an object (the language) by means of language itself. [...]” (González Ruiz and Loureda Lamas 2005: 355-356). The presence of a first-person enunciating subject taking a stance before a language event becomes in itself an argumentative fact which places speech acts and the expression of judgment as privileged linguistic mechanisms when it comes to making ethos visible in the discourse.

It will be checked below that it is far from easy to identify the specific discursive strategies which have an exact correspondence with ethos or what part of the textual organization assumes the argumentative weight derived from the former. Nevertheless, the argumentative and metalinguistic nature of CSLs has brought to the foreground at least two sets of resources: a) those which have to do with the way in which the speakers join the discourse, with their verbal anchoring, on one side; and b) those related to their attitude before the enunciation act that they perform. The first case refers to linguistic resources that build the interlocutors’ discursive identity, such as deictics or the definition of enunciative roles. Instead, the second one has to do with the emission of speech acts which highlight the speaker’s attitude with regard to the enunciation, as well as with the judgment values which clearly show the subject’s views about language, about usage, or about the speakers. The next step consists in establishing a concept of ethos which can give sense to all these resources.

3. Ethos as a persuasion strategy

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* draws a distinction between three types of artistic tests – prepared in accordance with the principles of art of rhetoric – from the three elements involved in persuasion: the person who speaks (ethos); the topic which is spoken about (logos); and the person to whom one speaks (pathos). As for the speaker’s argumentative force, Aristotle makes it clear that the ‘character’ of the person speaking constitutes a determining factor for persuasion, particularly when the topic treated in the discourse is arguable or the problem raised does not have a clear answer:

Well, persuasion is achieved through character when the discourse is uttered in such a way as to make the speaker credible. Because we believe honest people more and faster, as a general rule and in everything but, of course, completely, in those where accuracy cannot possibly exist, since they lend themselves to doubt. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a 5-15)

This first excerpt already specifies one of the virtues that speakers need to own for their action to have some argumentative value: honesty. However, it is in

Book II of *Rhetoric* where the philosopher refers to passions and identifies the three values which make speakers persuasive, namely: *phrónesis* (intelligence); *areté* (morality); and *eúnoia* (tolerance; see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378a 5-10). What Aristotle actually means is that, in case of doubt, we trust more easily an intelligent, honest, and respectful person than someone who does not have such qualities:

Therefore, the claim of some writers according to whom the honesty of speakers adds nothing to make what they say sound more convincing in the context of art turns out to be untrue; instead, it is the personal character, so to speak, that practically becomes the strongest means of persuasion. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a 5-15)

Nonetheless, the Stagirite is also aware of the fact that, in spite of the speaker's character, the discourse as such plays a fundamental role in achieving the final goal of persuading the audience: "although it is also necessary for this [persuasion] to happen as a result of the discourse, and not for having prejudged how the speaker is" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1356a 5-15). This Aristotelian text is of paramount importance, since it puts forward an essential issue for the theory about ethos: the difference between the empirical subject and the discursive subject, along with the persuasive validity of both. As Amossy (2010: 19) points out, despite the weight that he assigns to the speaker's personal virtues, Aristotle was fully aware of the fact that ethos, the same as logos "is an effect of the use of speech in context. It is a verbal construction which aims to ensure effective communication" [my own translation].

The modern rhetoric-based Communication Theory has assumed this twofold nature of ethos by distinguishing between a prediscursive or initial *ethos* and a discursive or procedural one. The former refers to the empirical subject, to the personal and curricular values owned by the speaker before the discourse that should help him before the defense of a specific matter. The three Aristotelian virtues, which Latin Rhetoric called *ingenium* (ability), *iudicium* (discernment), and *consilium* (prudence) have been currently reconceptualized as moral qualities, values, competence, authority, truthfulness, sociability, etc. (Eggs 1999: 41; McCroskey 1993: 80-81). In any case, this has to do with the argumentative contribution of the speaking subject's real – i.e., social – identity and with the weight that it may have in the possible discourse interpretation made by the audience.

Discourse argumentative validity is defended by discourse analysts such as Maingueneau, in whose opinion, even a written discourse "is always sustained by a voice, that of a subject beyond the text" (Maingueneau 2009: 87). In turn, McCroskey (1993: 79-80) stresses the fact that the speaker does not own that ethos; it must be perceived by the recipient instead. In other words, the initial ethos does not constitute a stable variable, but a reception attitude which is likely

to change depending on the experiences that the speaker may have with the speaking subject. This orientation of ethos towards the audience, equally highlighted by Perelman ([1958] 2015: 61-65), proves essential and is perfectly in tune with the classical rhetorical theory, where the listener appears as the axis around which the whole discourse revolves and as the person in charge of guiding the argumentation process in its entirety.

In fact, the conviction that persuasion success depends on the subject's ability to perceive the public and on the need for everything in the discourse to focus on winning their favor led Latin rhetoric to associate the implementation of persuasive mechanisms with a specific form of persuasion as well as with a group of verbal resources. Thus, Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 12, 10, 59) explains how the speaker – after having assessed the characteristics of the cause to be defended – will have to choose the discursive means that will allow him to persuade a specific audience, it is the *ad persuadendum accomodate dicere*, the basis and principle of rhetorical discourse. The first step to achieve this aim consists in establishing the right persuasion degree or intensity for the issue in question and choosing how to draw the path of persuasion: appealing to the intellect (through the *docere*), trying to arouse the audience's sympathy (by means of the *delectare*) or triggering an affective commotion (the *movere*).

For Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* 6, 2, 8), *ethos* is associated with persuasion through the *delectare* or, expressed differently, when the aim sought consists in winning the public's favor for the cause through the creation of an affection and sympathy link, the speaker's character plays an essential role. However, the more or less virtuous personality of a speaker does not suffice to create that link, which actually needs to be supported and expressed through the discursive personality of a self that can attract the public and orient them in favor of the speaker's cause from beginning to end. This is the most strictly discursive side of ethos, the one which has to do “with the staging of the self” (Montero 2012: 224), with the image “that every discourse constructs of who is the signatory and responsible” (Amossy 2009: 22) [my own translation]. This immerses us fully in the context of discursive ethos (McCroskey 1993: 82); in the words of Bokobza Kahan (2009: 32) defined “as a discursive construction, ethos originally establishes a clear distinction between the man and his image in the speech” [my own translation]. Now converted into a discursive person, the enunciating subject's voice – different from that of the real subject – becomes responsible for the creation of an image which can establish a binding as well as convincing link with the interlocutors:

[The ethos] first nature is to determine the success of the speaker in his persuasive business: this is why the ethos is considered a major component of the art of persuasion. (Bokobza Kahan 2009: 32)⁶

Argumentation through ethos thus relies upon social and verbal events; it is expressed through words backed by the echo of a real individual, but transmitted by a strictly discursive self. It builds a discursive instance that supports the enunciation and, in turn, produces an allocutory, an “intralocutor” with whom a communication space can be established:

It refers to how the text guarantor designated by a proper name built its authority and credibility with the potential reader. By sketching a picture of who assumes the responsibility to say, it shows how it allows the text to establish some kind of relation to the addressee. (Amossy 2009: 22)⁷

The next section focuses on analyzing the argumentative value of ethos in the programmatic or presentational columns selected for our paper from this twofold perspective. The prediscursive ethos of each column will firstly be identified for the purpose of assessing the role played by the real author’s name and affiliation. Our starting point is the hypothesis according to which prediscursive ethos should play an important role, at least as a decoy used by the newspaper to ensure that the true addressees decide to read the column. An analysis will subsequently be performed about the way in which ethos becomes visible in each text from the characterization of CSLs as an opinion journalistic genre with a metalinguistic content made in Section 2.1 above. Attention will be focused on those strategies which especially affect the construction of the self and which have to do with its presentation and its first discursive access: the use of linguistic resources which enable the subject to have a discursive identity, as well as the emission of speech acts that stress the speaker’s attitude towards the enunciation and the expression of value judgments which reveal the subject’s opinion about language, about usage or about the speakers.

4. Analysis and results: The persuasive strategies of ethos in CSLs

4.1. Prediscursive ethos

It was already mentioned above that the real author’s personality becomes essential in opinion-article-writing. The fact that the topic treated in these types of

6. “Sa nature première [de l’ethos] est de déterminer la réussite du locuteur dans son entreprise de persuasion: c’est pour cette raison que l’ethos est considéré comme une composante majeure de l’art de la persuasion.” (Bokobza Kahan 2009: 32)

7. “Il désigne la façon dont le garant du texte désigné par un nom propre construit son autorité et sa crédibilité aux yeux du lecteur potentiel. En esbossant une image de celui qui assume la responsabilité du dire, il montre comment elle permet au texte de nouer un certain type de rapport à l’allocutaire” (Amossy 2009: 22).

texts “is not exact” – as highlighted by Aristotle – demands, to start with, a reliable ethos on which to ground the views which are about to be expressed. In the case of CSLs which additionally incorporate a specialization component – they try to solve a problem associated with the language – one of the pillars on which ethos has to be supported is competence in the matter (see Table 2).

AUTHOR	TITLE	DATE	NEWSPAPER	PSEUDONYM	SOCIAL STATUS
Fernando Lázaro Carreter	<i>El dardo en la palabra</i>	1975	INFORMACIONES National	NO	Professor and Language Academician
Fernando Lázaro Carreter	<i>El nuevo dardo en la palabra</i>	1999	EL PAÍS National	NO	Professor and Language Academician
Luis Calvo	<i>Diálogo de la lengua</i>	1980	ABC National	YES	Journalist
Humberto Hernández	<i>Una palabra ganada</i>	1998	EL DÍA Provincial (Tenerife)	NO	University Professor

Table 2. Prediscursive ethos of the three authors.

Indeed, as shown in Table 2, the three authors are linked in different degrees to the exercise of the word, as university professors in the case of Carreter and Hernández, as a journalist of the newspaper where he writes, of which Luis Calvo was the director too, and as a language academician – and director of the Institution from 1992 to 1998 – in the case of Lázaro Carreter. Despite the recognized prestige that all three of them have in the field of knowledge about which they are going to write, i.e., they ‘have’ ethos: not all of them will use it.

This happens with Luis Calvo, who decides to write under the pseudonym of ‘El Brocense’ and hide his true identity, somehow wasting his initial ethos. The columnist actually performs the act of consciously and deliberately assuming an enunciative personality; he creates a discursive being, a Locutor (Fuentes 2004: 126), to whom he gives the floor and under whose mask he hides. The ‘avatar’ choice did not take place by chance at all, though. He was a sixteenth-century Spanish grammarian, Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, El Brocense, a representative of grammatical rationalism and a forerunner of Port Royal grammar. In other words, an enunciating profile seems to be sought with highly specific connotative values: tradition, prestige, rigor, and authority. It can therefore be said that, in this case, the initial ethos is discursively created by the empirical subject who completely disappears from the enunciative scene so that referentiality can be assumed by a historical subject conceived as a persuasive agent.

Acting within a recognized environment appears as an element that clearly enhances the persuasive effect of initial ethos (McCroskey 1993: 84). This requirement is perfectly fulfilled in the case of Lázaro Carreter and Calvo due to the reliability of the media for which they write: three national newspapers – *Informaciones*, *ABC*, and *El País* – published in the capital of Spain, Madrid.

In turn, Hernández writes for a provincial newspaper – *El Día* of Tenerife – but the fact that he teaches at the local university gives him value in front of his audience, the readers from that same province. In its case, the initial ethos will depend on the perception that readers may have rather on that provided by the discursive context.

2.2. Discursive ethos

However, beyond the signature and from the very first line of the column, the real author moves to the background. Ever since then, a new subject takes the floor, starts to define himself and make himself visible, acquires corporeity through discourse and begins to shape a personality which is no longer social, but verbal. On this first column, each author introduces himself as the discursive being that, week after week, will gradually build an image, consolidating a profile which is the only thing that readers are going to know, and which has to become the familiar and empathetic voice supporting each one of that author's arguments. As for readers, they have no other way to create an image of the characters than through their words, the attitudes reflected by those words, the way in which comments are oriented, their vocabulary, the nature of their judgments, and their explanatory rigor.

Seeking to make our analysis easier, a decision was made to prepare a table with examples of the indicators selected according to the journalistic and metalinguistic nature of CSLs (see Table 3). This format allows us not only to visualize the resources utilized in each one of the columns examined but also to compare their use in each case.

COLUMN	Personal deixis	Strategies that reveal the speaker's attitude towards his own role	CITATIONS AND VOICES	Interlocutors' identity	Speech Acts	Evaluative judgments
Fernando Lázaro Carreter, <i>El dardo en la palabra</i>	<i>This task turns out to be modest only because of me; but it is important and it is everyone's task; I have been entrusted; it is an honor for me; I am going to give my section the title, the mistakes that I will surely make, I will try to, I will avoid Our communication, For us to announce, We will request, we understand each other, our</i>	<i>Is it worthwhile? In the name of what? Will we not be interpreted?</i>	<i>Verba volant; à la page, fashionable; in the English manner "remains unaltered" "Le purisme est toujOurs pauvre" Voltaire Those who have that opinion "seriously deceive themselves..." Stalin Informaciones</i>	<i>"to be read between underground stops"</i>	Informative <i>I am going to give...the title; they will not be too learned</i> Directive <i>A sincere request for help; is it worthwhile? is it licit? in the name of what? what can be done...? what class do they belong to?</i> Commissive <i>"Only a higher degree of good sense would be required when adopting; and we will ask for it"</i> <i>"I will endeavor to keep my comments short, at any rate I will prevent them from smelling of casticismo [traditionalism]"</i> Expressive <i>From now, sorry about the mistakes that I will surely make</i>	<i>Pompous newsreader Neat efficient executives People who only repeat what others have said Talking mass Lacking idiomatic common sense They reveal rashness Trivial errors Ignorant lo-opholes Silly invention Purism impoverishes the language; idiomatic free trade favors it Ancien régime Unpleasant class attribute</i>
Fernando Lázaro Carreter, <i>El nuevo dardo en la palabra</i>	<i>My idleness in this, of nearly three years; because I don't feel less unskilled at all; the word is my profession; I find it disturbing; I remember; it discouraged me Our language We are addresses</i>	<i>"I insist: should I say listen?"; "Or better, not to wish anything" because it is nothing but a piece of the night like the one that precedes (or, already, of the morning, if you like) [Hesitations, doubts, explanatory periphrases] "was it necessary to greet...? No, of course [feigned orality]</i>	<i>A little crying girl calls: on arriving home... An incognito comes to her question: she found mum... Some broadcasts gradually say goodbye to their audience wishing them Good (late) night! This last thing will be said Someone who does not urgently need some sleep will be heard telling...</i>	<i>"to my readers" "my readers know it"</i>	Informative <i>My idleness has not caused it; the word is my profession; I remember when I felt discouraged</i> Directive <i>Say anything but that; Leave the microphone to amateurs</i> Commissive Expressive	<i>Idiomatic anemia Anomia in speakers Recent freak expression [good (late) night] Wonderful creatures [dedivorce]</i>

<p>Luis Calvo, <i>Diálogo de la lengua</i></p>	<p><i>I would like to inform myself; I will ask; I press the right key; my profession; I take the liberty; separate myself; my corrector workshop; we go with; it surprises me; I was not aware; I do not reproach anybody; I say to myself Our language Our writers Our old language And now we go on with...</i></p>	<p><i>At this present hour, there is need for the greatest zeal and the strongest solidarity in this effort to defend our millenarian language” [intensification] And I say to myself: what did this character of mine mean? [feigned orality]</i></p>	<p><i>A gentleman... formed a clause which began like this: “The role of hosts that we Spaniards play in this Congress.” It used to be said in Spain that to detain is to retain</i></p>	<p><i>To the readers I make them Of you Please forgive me</i></p>	<p>Informative <i>And I take the liberty to call myself El Brocense</i> Directive <i>The language needs to be cleaned, corrected and kept straight</i> Commissive <i>I will apologize, if I make a mistake; but no praise if I press the right key; bring to this column; in good faith I would like to inform myself with those who are wise and convince those who are not so wise</i> Expressive <i>Please forgive the exordium</i></p>	<p><i>Besieged from the sides in a situation of deterioration, decay and expiry (the language) It lies inert, exposed to side-real imminences (the language) Universal pedantry and narcissism, politicians (the most harmful), Gang of uneducated speakers of the language Magnificent language of all Spaniards Our millenarian language Funny, useful and irreplaceable noun</i></p>
<p>Humberto Hernández, <i>Una palabra ganada</i></p>	<p><i>I usually talk to my Faculty colleagues; they encouraged me; it was not my intention; they share with me; I recommend; I come back; to recover; I heard someone say Our own apathy and lack of concern; we are extremely lazy; Our most valuable heritage; Our exotic effects</i></p>		<p><i>Lingua franca The educational authorities allow The newspaper management has accepted “Calle Castillo,” I heard someone say</i></p>	<p><i>Anybody with a basic grammatical training knows.</i></p>	<p>Informative <i>I usually talk; I come back</i> Directive <i>I recommend; will this not be the origin...?</i> Commissive Expressive</p>	<p><i>The numerous problems Our own apathy and lack of concern; we are extremely lazy; Our most valuable heritage; Excesses and outrages are made with the language The scholarly institution The magnificent “The dart on the word”</i></p>

Table 3: Discursive ethos of the three authors.

The first three columns of the Table 3 are groups of linguistic resources associated with the construction of the subject’s discursive identity; a set of strategies – such as intensification or attenuation – which reveal the speakers’ attitude towards their own role; the utilization of citations and discursive voices; as well as the specification of their interlocutors’ identity, including dialogical expressions. The following columns classify speech acts, which highlight the speaker’s attitude with regard to enunciation and value judgments, which show the subject’s opinion about language, about usage, or about the speakers.⁸

8. Other persuasive resources of undoubted interest, but not strictly related to the speaker’s access to the discourse remain outside this analysis as is the case of: argumentative structure and typology, use of figurative language, humor, connectors, etc. For a thorough study of persuasive mechanisms, see Fuentes Rodríguez and Alcaide Lara (2002).

A not-excessively-exposed first person predominates in the first text by Lázaro Carreter. Deictics correspond to object pronouns or possessives – *me, mi* – instead of first-person verbal forms – *voy a, procuraré, evitaré*. This expressive shyness is accompanied by a number of rhetorical questions scattered across the text which seem to reveal a hesitant and insecure attitude: “¿vale la pena? ¿no seremos interpretados...? ¿es lícito...? ¿qué hacer...? [Is it worthwhile? Will we not be interpreted..? Is it licit..? What can be done...?].” Nevertheless, discursive caution is compensated for by the use of authority citations – Voltaire, Stalin – as well as expressions in French and English that make up for the first impression and show a cultivated, cosmopolitan voice. The fact that doubts appear in the form of a question causes an immediate effect: they introduce the reader in the discourse, making him feel questioned and involved in the dilemmas posed by the speaker. The utilization of another directive speech act: “*pedir ayuda*” [ask for help], of the first person plural, in addition to other compromising and expressive speech acts contribute to build a shared space between locutor and reader as well as to establish an emotional bridge which can generate sympathy and interest. It is worth highlighting that this column does not mention the readers, but an image is skillfully constructed that thousands of them can identify with: his texts are meant to “be read between underground stops,” an allusion to everyday life, a ‘wink’ (hidden message) to his newspaper readers, and yet another value to win the public’s favor. Concerning the expression of evaluative judgments, as it tends to happen in these types of texts, they fall either upon speakers who make mistakes – usually professional groups – or upon the type of mistake. In the first case, the use of set phrases – *hablar por boca de ganso* [People who only repeat what others have said] – of irony – *pulcros ejecutivos eficientes* [Neat efficient executives] – as well as of somewhat hyperbolic adjectives incline the expression of assessment towards the soft character, thus introducing the touch of humor that will become inherent to this columnist. Familiar and relatively harmless expressions are used to categorize mistakes: *falta de sentido común idiomático, trivial, irreflexión* [Lacking idiomatic common sense, trivial, rashness]. Taking a stance before purism – described by Lázaro Carreter as impoverishing in contrast to more flexible language usage – offers an image of tolerance that allows a self-selection of the potential reading audience. In our opinion, ethos is implemented in this text with the aim of appealing to readers by means of a straightforward, direct, entertaining and kind discourse, anchored on daily reality, a learned but simultaneously close ethos capable of persuading a group of readers who followed him faithfully until 1996.

As for the second text written by Lázaro Carreter, it shows a different image of the discursive subject. The text constitutes a return to activity after an absence of several years, which is why this column can be described as a reunion with his

readers rather than a declaration of intent. This last aspect becomes visible through the utilization of phrases such as “*a mis lectores*” [to my readers] or “*lo saben mis lectores*” [my readers know it]. Regarding the use of personal deixis, it becomes more forceful now, with personal pronouns and possessives, but also with verbs that show actions and emotion in first person – *recuerdo, me siento, me resulta...* [I remember, I feel, I find it...]. The same applies to strictly directive speech acts – *dígase, déjese* [say, leave]. The attitude continues to be doubtful and hesitant, though, as shown by the use of reformulators – *o mejor* [or better] – or alternatives – *o* [or], but it also establishes a closer connection with the speaker, who is once again asked, and to whom he gives an answer using a feigned orality that provides the discourse with more liveliness and realism. The authority citations of the 1975 column have disappeared, giving way to a succession of diaphonies so that the narration progresses almost entirely based on the reproduction of previous voices: *una muchachita, un incognito* [a little girl, an incognito]. The discourse has now become heteroglossic, full of citations coming from a radio program that serve to illustrate his argumentation. Judgments are still moderate, with humorous nuances – *espantajo* [freak expression], and plays on words – *anomia* and *anemia* to refer to the reason for the mistakes made by speakers. Discursive ethos now rests upon an already-conquered trust with the reader. An image of freshness and security – *la palabra es mi oficio* [the word is my profession], of genre mastery and creative freedom is projected, but without ever falling into an arrogant style. It is the quintessence of the *delectare*.

The text authored by Luis Calvo constitutes a unique case amongst the columnists dealing with language in Spain. Concealed behind a pseudonym, he builds a “*présentation de soi*” nearer to the strategies typical of pathos and to the *movere* than to those associated with ethos and the *delectare*. The utilization of personal deictics is truly awkward, with the use of first-person verbal forms – *quisiera, doy en la tecla, me tomo la libertad* [I would like to, I press the right key, I take the liberty], and the first-person subject pronoun “*yo*” [I] – *yo no reprocho, yo me digo* [I do not reproach, I say to myself], in addition to the remaining pronouns and possessives. This exposure becomes intensified through the utilization of commissive speech acts – *pediré disculpas, traer, quisiera* [I will apologize, bring to, I would like to] which allow him to develop a strong tie with the potential readers that he also addresses directly – *ustedes, a los lectores* [of you, to the readers]. As for the directive speech act “*hay que limpiar el idioma, enderezarlo y enrodrigarlo*” [the language needs to be deaned, corrected and kept straight], the deontic modality turns it into a command directed at readers who are supposed to share the writer’s point of view.

In any case, the most striking feature of this text is the utilization of hyperbolic

intensifiers that confer a dramatic and catastrophic tone upon the text. The pleonastic time deictic “*en la hora de ahora*” [at this present hour] starts a ‘harangue’ to the reader focused on defending the language. In my opinion, we are no longer in the field of ethos, but in that of pathos; the persuasive strategy no longer finds its support on the creation of an image that can stimulate affections, but on the authority of a discursive voice that seeks adherences. The value judgments made about the language with the use of war metaphors – *asediada, yace inerte* [besieged, it lies inert], along with the contempt towards those who mistreat it – *prevaricadores de la lengua, la pedantería y el narcisismo...* [speakers prevaricators pedantry and narcissism], and the utilization of an archaic, unusual and pompous vocabulary – *garulla de sanchopanzas* [gang of uneducated] help raise the tone and make it become a true proclamation in defense of the Spanish language. Discursive ethos in this text is an authority voice that builds an intense, committed, hyper-learned character who seeks emotional commotion rather than peaceful affection as the path to persuasion, support for the cause rather than sympathy towards his figure. It is, anyhow, a character, an image created *ad hoc* to accomplish a task: defending the language from modernity – mass media appear as the worst enemy – and keep it protected within the space of tradition and etymological purity.

As for Humberto Hernández, the most outstanding feature of his text is the interest in showing proximity between his social and discursive personalities. In fact, the text begins with the sentence “*Suelo hablar con mis compañeros de Facultad*” [I usually talk to my Faculty colleagues] which is a real activity of the empirical subject. This action can actually be considered a discursive reinforcement of prediscursive ethos, perhaps because the latter is little known and therefore needs to be highlighted as a guarantor of his argumentation. The predominance of first-person-plural personal deixis to describe what speakers do with the language allows him to place himself within the collectivity of Spanish speakers; and the pronominal deictics used to mention his colleagues’ support once again serve to reinforce him as the member of a specific group: university professors. The citations referred to the educational system, together with the nature of his arguments, which could not be reflected here but which include a strictly grammatical sort of explanation, give the final touches to outline a specialist ethos.

If Luis Calvo’s column was said to have opted for persuasion by means of *pathos*, and those written by Lázaro Carreter were a model of the *delectare*, it can now be stated that Humberto Hernández almost totally places himself in the context of persuasion through the *docere* with this last column. Unlike the other three, where the figure of the discursive subject acquires undoubted prominence, this is a text with very few concessions to the personal, emotional or humorous side, and no references whatsoever to the readers, except when he speaks about

“*cualquier persona con una formación básica...*” [anybody with a basic grammatical training] . The evaluative lexis is basically denotative, with the exception of a metaphor about the language – *se cometen atropellos y desmanes* [excesses and outrages are made with the language], and referentiality: a case of intertextuality appears when *El dardo en la palabra* is mentioned, and it strictly belongs to the linguistic context – *La Academia, las autoridades educativas...* [The Academy, the educational authorities]. It is consequently the text where ethos has the least weight and, most probably, the one that will have more difficulty in connecting with an audience that hardly seems to be outlined.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to show the relevance of ethos-based persuasion rhetorical strategies in the Columns on Language. The analysis of four programmatic columns allowed us to describe how in these texts, using different verbal resources, the real authors build a discursive image of the subject – an ethos – that shows (Maingueneau 2009: 92) “a way to become a part of the world” and, therefore, “makes it possible to constitute an imaginary linguistic community” to which the recipient is expected to adhere. This is the purpose of the discursive ethos. As argumentative strategy, the construction of ethos means to shift the responsibility for what was said into the speaking subject. It leads to the capture of “public sympathy towards the speaker and to the cause” (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6, 8, 2).

The texts analyzed show three prestigious personalities who present themselves as guarantors of the matter treated, which is none other than the language itself. In each programmatic column, understood as a great *exordium* that precedes all the speeches that will follow, the strategies related to the ethos appear as a first order resource to stand before the matter and the public and to select, from the first sentence, who and why will be their followers. To achieve this persuasive effect, each of the columnists has resorted to different rhetorical-discursive modes.

Lazaro Carreter, in his two columns, 1975 and 1999, prefers the “soft affections” of *delectare*. His texts seek the benevolence of the public towards the object, i.e., language, because using language properly, he says, “is not a matter of aesthetics and ornaments: it affects the very roots of social life” (*The dart in the word*). The benevolence of the public is sought also towards himself as author. He obtains it, as we have seen, introducing himself with modesty and commitment, avoiding censorship, aggressiveness and authoritarianism. Lazaro Carreter applies the “modest concealment of eloquence” that connects him to a public, from which he seeks the benevolence and which, in 1975, ventured into a new social and political period that was beginning in Spain. Statements of epistemic charge as

“Time is not for proscriptions” (line 8) and the rhetorical questions “Is it lawful to shorten freedom in one of its wider land? On what grounds, further cut so scarce?” manifest an explicit commitment to the language and society, expressed through a discursive ethos that foregrounds the *iudicium* and *consilium*.

At the other end, the two columnists – Luis Calvo and Humberto Hernández – may be found. The first one uses all the resources of *iudicem attentum parare* through the deployment of resources directed to the emotions: apostrophes, repetitions, tropes, deictics, directive speech acts, exacerbation of self... This builds a discursive ethos which corresponds to the *genus sublime*, whose approach to the matter – the language – and to the public certainly corresponds to *movere*. Only the readers which were furious and able to feel the urgency of regenerating a language presented as corrupt and abused could be counted among Luis Calvo’s ideal readers. Historically, he publishes his texts in the Eighties, when Spain falls squarely in a social and verbal modernity that not everyone willingly accepted.

On the other side, Humberto Hernández in his column focuses on the task of *docere*. His column has a clear pedagogical intent in relation to language; therefore, the ethos proemial formulation functions as a discursive resource for the presentation of self through professional qualifications and interest in the object. Without any ornamental resources, focusing on clarity and practicality, Humberto Hernández immediately undertakes the explanatory task for an audience, in our view, equally knowledgeable and interested in the proper use of language.

As we have seen, every columnist chose a different way to present himself to the respective potential readers and this choice does not seem arbitrary at all. If, as Maingueneau (2002: 16) points out, “*chaque conjuncture historique se caractérise par un regime spécifique des éthe*” the study of the ways in which ethos is expressed will prove highly revealing, allowing us to know how certain discursive practices are organized, which power relationships arise between interlocutors, what is considered expert knowledge about the language, and who owns legitimacy to deal with the latter in the public space that mass media represent.

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