

# The pragmatics of person reference

## A comparative study of Catalan and Spanish parliamentary discourse

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In this article, we show through a contrastive analysis of person reference in Catalan and Spanish parliamentary discourse, that it is paramount to take into account not only syntactic but also pragmatic factors in order to adequately analyse the differences between two languages that have rather similar morphological paradigms. Thus, we will show that singular deictics are used more widely in Spanish parliamentary discourse, whereas plural forms are preferred in Catalan, which is possibly related to more general cultural features and to the political system as a whole. Furthermore, we will discuss differences in the use of the formal address forms. Finally, we will show that some differences in the use of vocatives may be due to the debating styles and history of the respective parliaments.

**Keywords:** person reference, deixis, parliamentary discourse, address forms, Catalan/Spanish

### 1. Introduction

Spanish and Catalan are both Romance languages, spoken in adjacent and partially overlapping territories. In view of their similar origin, the two languages share some features regarding person reference, such as their pro-drop character (viz. the presence of an explicit subject pronoun is not obligatory). Through a case study of reference to the participants in parliamentary debate, this paper will show that a combined study of formal features and the pragmatics of the two languages allows for a more fine-grained view of the similarities and differences between the two languages than a study which focuses on only one of these perspectives. In this study, we will be concerned with the European variety of Spanish, leaving aside the variation of person reference in other varieties of Spanish (but see e.g.

Fontanella de Weinberg, 1999, and Hummel et al., 2010 for an overview of diatopical variation).

We will first present our research aims (Section 2) and the corpora and methodology used for this paper (Section 3). We will then discuss the main features of parliamentary debates, in contrast with colloquial language (Section 4), as well as a general description of the person deictic system in Spanish and Catalan (Section 5). After presenting the global quantitative data (Section 6), we discuss the main similarities and, especially, differences, concerning speaker reference (Section 7) and hearer reference (Section 8) in parliamentary discourse, before presenting our final conclusions (Section 9).

## 2. Goals

This corpus-driven study mainly comprises a qualitative analysis, but some rough quantitative data are also provided. We analyse the distribution of speaker and hearer reference in the two languages,<sup>1</sup> as expressed through all their prototypical person deictic expressions: the null pronoun (1), the explicit subject pronoun (2),<sup>2</sup> the clitic object pronoun (3), the tonic pronoun (4), and the possessive determiner or pronoun (5).<sup>3</sup>

- (1) a. Mi generación tiene una obligación de gratitud que [Ø] *quiero expresar* hoy de una manera muy solemne. (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
 “My generation has an obligation of gratefulness that *I want to express* today in a very solemn way.”
- b. [Ø] *Ho faré* amb la discreció necessària per garantir-ne l’eficàcia. (Parlament 2005, Maragall)  
 “*I will do* it with the necessary discretion in order to guarantee its efficiency.”

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1. When the examples illustrate the two languages, *a* is always the Spanish utterance and *b*, the Catalan utterance. Translations are formulated so as to render the original structure and meaning. When the literal translation is very divergent from English, both a literal and a more idiomatic translation have been proposed.

2. When an explicit subject pronoun is used in the Spanish or Catalan example, it is underlined in the translation in order to show the difference between the null pronoun and the subject pronoun.

3. Both Spanish and Catalan have a possessive determiner and a possessive pronoun that are used autonomously.

- (2) a. Señor presidente, *yo estoy convencido* de que la paz no es un desfiladero.  
(Congreso 2005, Llamazares)  
“Mister President, *I am convinced* that peace is not a ravine.”
- b. *Jo confio* que els autors dels crims de l’11 de setembre s’asseuran en el banquet dels acusats en un tribunal internacional contra el terrorisme.  
(Parlament 2001, Pujol)  
“*I trust* that the perpetrators of the crimes of September 11th will sit on the dock in an international tribunal against terrorism.”
- (3) a. Ese sentimiento de responsabilidad es el que *me* llevó a proponer el pacto contra el terrorismo y por las libertades. (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
“That sense of responsibility is what led *me* to propose a pact against terrorism and in favour of the liberties.”
- b. *Em* poso a la seva pell i ho puc entendre perfectament.  
(Parlament 2005, Mas)  
“I put *myself* in your shoes [sing.] (lit.: in your skin) and I can understand it perfectly.”
- (4) a. Su señoría ha hecho una afirmación que *a mí* me parece de alguna manera, si me permite, desafortunada (...). (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
“Your Lordship [sing.] has made a statement which seems *to me* in some way, if you allow me, unfortunate (...).”
- b. Aquesta és *per mi* i pel Govern una preocupació cabdal.  
(Parlament 2005, Maragall)  
“This is *for me* and for the Government a capital preoccupation.”
- (5) a. Ese es *mi* compromiso fundamental hoy aquí. (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
“That is *my* fundamental commitment today here.”
- b. ...i, realment, podria afegir, a tot el que vaig estar dient ahir en *el meu* discurs, moltes i moltes coses. (Parlament 2001, Pujol)  
“...and, really, I could add, to all that I said yesterday in *my* discourse, lots and lots of things.”

Our first hypothesis is that, while Spanish and Catalan are two Romance languages that share a lot of characteristics concerning the deictic system, differences as to the use of these deictic markers and, more specifically, the expression of politeness, are to be expected. Our second, more quantitative hypothesis, is that the use of the Catalan explicit pronoun *vostè* (honorific ‘you’) is more limited than that of Spanish *usted* (honorific ‘you’). This hypothesis is based on the main references found in the literature on this subject (Coromines, 1971; Solà, 1999; Jané, 2001; Vallduví, 2002).

In some specific respects, Spanish and Catalan contrast structurally and pragmatically: this concerns mainly the possibility of a subject in immediately postverbal position, the honorific systems in general, and honorific vocatives. To analyse these aspects we adopt a functional and pragmatic approach.

### 3. Corpora and methodology

In order to test these hypotheses, we established two comparable corpora of parliamentary debates, one for Spanish and one for Catalan. We selected the 2001 and 2005 debates in order to achieve maximal comparability with regard to the interaction situation. Indeed, in these years, the political constellations of the Spanish and Catalan parliaments are very similar, and, between those two years, the parliaments experienced parallel shifts of opposition leaders becoming head of government. In 2001, both parliaments had a right-wing Prime Minister and a left-wing opposition, and by 2005, the 2001 left-wing opposition leaders had become Prime Ministers and the right-wing parties were in opposition. Thus, the parliamentary debates from these two years offer uniquely parallel situations, which allows us to exclude from the comparison the influence of variables such as different political constellations.

The Spanish data were taken from the 2001 and 2005 “Estado de la Nación” debates of the Spanish Parliament (Congreso 2001, 2005), and the Catalan data were taken from its equivalent in the Parlament de Catalunya, viz. “Debat sobre l’orientació política general del Consell Executiu” (Parlament 2001, 2005). These are parliamentary debates on a government leader’s speech on his/her general policy, which have taken place since 1983 in the Spanish parliament (Cortés Rodríguez, 2011: 12–13) and since 1980, from the very beginning of its renewed activity, in the Catalan Parliament. These debates are similar to a State of the Union or State of the State address in the United States, but they include the opposition’s response and further interaction in the same plenary session of the Parliament. We selected these particular debates since they are general debates, dealing with government policy as a whole. By doing so, we wished to reduce the influence of theme specificity in the data. The Spanish corpus contains 25,000 words and the Catalan one 20,000 words. A detailed overview of the composition of the corpora is given in the Appendix.

In 2001 the Partido Popular (PP, conservative, right-wing party) had the absolute majority in the Spanish Parliament, whereas in 2005 the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, social democrat party) was in government in Spain, without an absolute majority but with the support of the left-wing coalition Izquierda

Unida (IU). More specifically, José Rodríguez Zapatero was the opposition leader in the 2001 debate and Prime Minister in the 2005 debate. Other participants are José Maria Aznar (PP, Prime Minister in 2001), Gaspar Llamazares<sup>4</sup> (leader of IU, which acted as supportive opposition in 2005) and Mariano Rajoy (PP, opposition leader in 2005).<sup>5</sup>

In 2001 *Convergència i Unió* (CiU, center-right-wing party) was in government in Catalonia without an absolute majority but with the support of the *Partit Popular de Catalunya* (PPC, conservative, right-wing party). In 2005 a coalition of *Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya* (PSC-PSOE, Social Democrat party), *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC, left-wing republican and pro-independence party) and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (IC-V, green party and more leftist than PSC-PSOE and ERC) governed Catalonia. More specifically, Pasqual Maragall (PSC-PSOE) was the opposition leader in the 2001 debate and President of Catalonia in the 2005 debate. Other participants are Jordi Pujol (CiU, President in 2001 debate) and Artur Mas (CiU, opposition leader in 2005).

We discarded the interventions in the Spanish Parliament of speakers who are bilingual or who do not have Spanish as their mother tongue, in order to minimize interference of other languages, i.e. Catalan, Basque and Galician. Mariano Rajoy, in 2005 PP opposition leader, is of Galician origin but hardly ever speaks Galician; thus we did not discard him from the data. Conversely, we discarded the interventions in the Catalan Parliament of speakers who do not have Catalan as their mother tongue, or who had spent long periods in Spanish politics in Madrid, in order to minimize interferences of Spanish in the Catalan corpus. A detailed description of the interventions appears in the Appendix.

The data have been coded manually and then extracted by means of TextStat (a text analysis tool developed at the Freie Universität Berlin), and have also been compared to previous analyses of the ‘default’ register, namely informal interaction, and other registers (Nogué Serrano, 2008b on Catalan; De Cock 2009, 2010a, 2012, 2014a, b, on Spanish).<sup>6</sup> Chi-square tests have been applied to the quantitative data in order to test for statistical significance.

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4. See De-la-Mota and Puigvert (2012) for an analysis of Gaspar Llamazares’ discourse from a gestural and prosodic perspective.

5. Other studies of the use of person reference by (some of) the politicians included in our corpus may be found in e.g. Blas Arroyo (2011), Campos et al. (2004), Campos and Marín (2005), Gelabert (2004), Gelabert-Desnoyer (2006), Pujante and Morales-López (2008).

6. These analyses are based on Payrató and Alturo (eds.) (2002), the COC-UB corpus for Catalan, and on the informal interaction dataset from the CORLEC-corpus for Spanish (see references).

#### 4. Parliamentary vs. colloquial discourse

In this section, we want to point out the similarities and differences between parliamentary and colloquial discourse. Indeed, the latter is considered the basic spoken register shared by all languages. Moreover, we wish to place the results of our study in the context of general descriptions of spoken Catalan and Spanish, which are mainly based on colloquial discourse. In the two languages, parliamentary debate is a formal genre, subject to strict rules. Spontaneous turn-taking, for instance, is not licensed, since turns and replies have to be requested to, and granted by, the President of the Parliament. Furthermore, interventions may have been prepared in writing.

As a basis for the comparison of parliamentary discourse and colloquial language, we refer to Briz' (coord., 1995) description of colloquial language. This author distinguishes between primary colloquial features and further colloquializing features.

Primary colloquial features, without which there is no colloquiality at all, are the following: (a) lack of planning of discourse, (b) interpersonal or interactive aim, and (c) informality. Parliamentary discourse is planned (often written beforehand, cf. De Cock, 2006) and formal (strict rules apply, for example, to turn-taking, forms of address and even style), but parliamentary debates are interactive to the extent that participants react to each other's discourse. It thus presents only one of the main features of colloquial conversation, namely interactive aim. If the whole speech event is taken into account, with the TV, radio and Internet audience as hearers, in addition to the audience in the Parliament, parliamentary discourse is even more different from colloquial conversation, because interactivity is then lost.

In addition, Briz (ed., 1995) proposes the following colloquializing features, which make a conversation prototypically colloquial:<sup>7</sup> (d) relation of equality between interlocutors, (e) close life experiences, (f) familiar setting, and (g) non-specialized topic. In parliamentary debates, the relationship between participants can be considered of equality, but they do not share life experiences other than politics, and the setting is not familiar. Moreover, the Parliament is the workplace of the participants. There is a strong link between this public place and genre: parliamentary debate cannot take place elsewhere. Political debates can in addition be considered more specialized than colloquial conversations. So they have only one colloquializing feature (the relationship of equality) and are, thus, very different from prototypical colloquial conversation.

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7. We use the concepts *prototypical* and *periphrastic* according to the cognitive linguistics prototype theory (Geeraerts, 1988a; Geeraerts 1988b; Cuenca and Hilferty, 1999: 34–41). This also seems to be the use adopted by Briz (ed., 1995).

In summary, planning, formality, strict structure, turn length, and a certain degree of specialization make the parliamentary register more formal than colloquial conversations, and in that sense closer to written formal registers than to informal spoken language.<sup>8</sup> However, when looking at the distribution of person reference, there are also important resemblances with informal conversation, as will be shown in Section 6.

## 5. Person deixis in Spanish and Catalan: general description

In this section, we present the person deixis paradigm in Spanish and Catalan.<sup>9</sup> Spanish and Catalan are both pro-drop languages, viz. in the subject position the default form is the null pronoun (see examples in (1) above), and the information concerning the grammatical person can be deduced from the verb morphology. When the pronoun appears, it has a function generally described as establishing a new referent, expressing emphasis or contrast (for Spanish, see Fernández Soriano 1999; Luján, 1999; Silva-Corvalán, 2003; Posio, 2010; for Catalan, see López del Castillo, 1999; Wheeler et al., 1999) or, more generally, pragmatic weight (Davidson, 1996). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the Spanish subject pronoun appears in order to disambiguate homophonous verb forms in the first and the third person (Gili Gaya, 1943: 23–24), and between the third person used as formal addressee reference and the third person proper (Sánchez López, 1993: 271, 284). We will come back to this point in Section 8.1. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the pronominal person deictic systems in Spanish and Catalan. Henceforth, each of these systems as a whole will be referred to by means of the stressed subject pronoun form, except when otherwise stated.

As shown in these tables, the two languages have rather similar systems. However, we note two major differences. First, Spanish presents a gender distinction in the 1st person plural and the informal 2nd person plural form, opposing *nosotros/vosotros* (*we/you* plural) in the case of all-male or mixed groups and *nosotras/vosotras* in the case of all-female groups (Table 1). Such gender distinction is absent in standard Catalan (Table 2). However, this paradigmatic difference is not relevant for the present study since there were no occurrences of *nosotras/*

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8. Cuenca (2014) describes in detail the main features of parliamentary debate as a genre, as a basis for her analysis of demonstratives in Catalan parliamentary debates.

9. See Nogué Serrano (2015) on deixis in Catalan, and Nogué Serrano (2011) more specifically on person deixis in Catalan; and Fernández Soriano (1999: 1219 ff.) for a description of the Spanish paradigm.

Table 1. Pronominal person deictic forms in Spanish.

Person	Unstressed		Stressed	
	SG.	PL.	SG.	PL.
1st (speaker)	me	nos	yo ( <i>subject</i> ) mí ( <i>object</i> )	nosotros nosotras
2nd (addressed recipient, informal)	te	os	tú ( <i>subject</i> ) ti ( <i>object</i> )	vosotros vosotras
3rd (addressed recipient, polite)	lo/la/le/se	los/las/les/se	usted	ustedes

Table 2. Pronominal person deictic forms in Catalan.

Person	Unstressed		Stressed	
	SG.	PL.	SG.	PL.
1st (speaker)	em/me/m'/m	ens/nos	jo ( <i>subject</i> ) / mi ( <i>object</i> )	nosaltres
2nd (addressed recipient, informal)	et/te/t'/t	us/vos	tu	vosaltres
2nd (addressed recipient, respectful)	us, vos	–	vós	–
3rd (addressed recipient, polite)	el/lo/la/l'/l/li	els, los, les	vostè	vostès

*vosotras* in the Spanish Parliament corpus.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, due to the composition of the Parliament as well as the linguistic selection of speakers, there were no female speakers in the data nor any all-female addressee group. Moreover, there are rarely parliamentary contexts in which it is possible to profile an all-female group. Second, the Catalan polite address form shows a ternary address system, whereas Spanish has a binary system. We will discuss this point further in Section 8.

## 6. Global quantitative data

Table 3 presents the global quantitative data concerning the parliamentary corpus. We present a first general comparison between the Spanish and Catalan data. Moreover, we also discuss in this section the comparison of the presence of speaker and hearer reference in previous studies on other genres. Sections 7 and 8 offer a more detailed analysis of speaker respectively hearer reference.

10. No occurrences were found either in the Spanish parliamentary corpora used by Gelabert (2004) and Gelabert-Desnoyer (2006).



In view of its written preparation, parliamentary debate seems to hold a special position within spoken language genres (see Section 4). However, according to our data, and taking as a reference the quantitative and qualitative analysis by Nogué Serrano (2008b), in Catalan the number of person deixis tokens in parliamentary debate (8% of the total number of words) is situated closer to the amounts obtained for informal conversation (9.5%) than to the amounts obtained for academic lectures (1.6%). This shows that, as for person deixis, the specific features of parliamentary register reflect its interactional component better than the formality inherent in the speech event. Indeed, if we look specifically at the reference to the addressed recipient, its amount in Catalan parliamentary discourse (3.1%) is the same as in informal conversation (3.1%), and much higher than in academic lectures (0.47%) (to our knowledge no studies on this topic are available for Spanish).

The global quantitative data in Table 3 also show a slightly higher presence of person deixis tokens in the Catalan Parliament than in the Spanish Parliament. Although bigger corpora would probably be necessary to confirm this tendency, contrastive analysis of Catalan, Spanish and English in academic genres (Campos, 2004) offers in this respect results that are consistent with ours, namely that a more distanced and impersonal way of presenting facts and data is used in Spanish than in Catalan.<sup>11</sup>

The distribution between singular and plural references also suggests interesting stylistic differences between the two corpora: singular references are more frequent in the Spanish corpus, while plural references appear more in the Catalan corpus. Moreover, the difference between singular and plural references is greater in the Spanish than in the Catalan corpus.<sup>12</sup> In this case, the contrast may be explained in two ways. First of all, the political system: the Spanish system is a two-party system, whereas the Catalan one is a multi-party system. The second reason, perhaps related to the first, may be that the Spanish style of government is more “presidentialist” than the Catalan one: as a tendency, in the Catalan Parliament politicians include themselves more frequently in a group, namely their own party, than in the Spanish Parliament; and, even more clearly, Catalan politicians prefer to focus the debate on parties or coalitions whereas Spanish politicians prefer to address the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition (or other individuals) directly (see Section 8.1 for a more detailed description). These differences in the political system may contribute to the fact that Catalan politicians show a higher use of plural references, since they have to work more from the perspective of a coalition than from the perspective of a single party which may be represented by a single leader.

11. See also Montolío and Santiago (2000) for a prescriptive approach to this subject.

12. This difference is significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 3.** Speaker and hearer reference in the 2001 and 2005 Spanish (Congreso) and Catalan (Parlament) parliamentary debates. The numbers include all morphological forms as specified in Section 2.

	Spanish			Catalan		
	Congreso 2001	Congreso 2005*	Total Congreso*	Parlament 2001	Parlament 2005	Total Parlament
1st sing.	221 (31.80%)	180 225 (26.10%)	401 446 (28.63%)	204 (26.46%)	241 (28.97%)	445 (27.76%)
2nd sing.	0 (0%)	0 0 (0%)	0 0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.12%)	1 (0.06%)
<i>usted/vostè</i>	97 (13.94%)	218.4 273 (31.67%)	315.4 370 (23.75%)	60 (7.78%)	229 (27.52%)	289 (18.03%)
Vocatives sing.	38 (5.46%)	30.4 38 (4.41%)	68.4 76 (4.88%)	16 (2.08%)	17 (2.04%)	33 (2.06%)
<i>su señoría</i>	26 (3.73%)	4 5 (0.58%)	30 31 (1.99%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total reference to the hearer</b>	160 (22.99%)	252.8 316 (36.66%)	412.8 477 (30.61)	76 (9.9%)	247 (29.69%)	323 (20.15%)
1st pl.	230 (33.05%)	203.2 254 (29.47%)	433.2 484 (31.07%)	329 (42.67%)	205 (24.64%)	534 (33.31%)
2nd pl.	0 (0%)	0 0 (0%)	0 0 (0%)	2 (0.26%)	1 (0.12%)	3 (0.19%)
<i>ustedes/vostès</i>	64 (9.20%)	31.2 39 (4.52%)	95.2 103 (6.61%)	155 (20.10%)	135 (16.23%)	290 (18.09%)
Vocatives pl.	18 2.59 (0.29%)	22.4 28 (3.25%)	40.4 46 (2.95%)	5 (0.65%)	3 (0.36%)	8 (0.50%)
<i>sus señorías</i>	2 (0.29%)	0 0 (0%)	2 2 (0.13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total reference to the hearers</b>	85 (12.21%)	53.6 67 (7.78%)	138.6 151 (9.69%)	162 (21.01%)	139 (16.71%)	301 (18.78%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>689.6 862</b>	<b>1,385.6 1558</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>1,603</b>

\* The black numbers give the normalized frequencies for a corpus of 20,000 words, so as to enhance comparability with the other corpora. The grey numbers in these two columns are the raw figures for the total corpus of 25,000 words.

## 7. Speaker reference

### 7.1 First person

Neither Spanish nor Catalan has a morphological distinction between inclusive and exclusive readings of first person plural forms. The inclusion or exclusion of the addressee in the 1st person plural reference is by consequence mainly triggered by contextual cues (Nogué Serrano, 2005: 252–256; 2008a: 144–149; 2011: 120–121). Yet, subject expression by means of a pronoun often seems to be related to an exclusive reading, because of its pragmatic weight and addresser-strengthening effect. In parliamentary debate, this leads to a contrastive effect which reflects the confrontation between the party in government and the opposition (see De Cock, 2010a: 187, for Spanish), taking for granted that, in parliamentary debates, politicians typically address the other parties' deputies (6).

- (6) a. *Nosotros* vamos a hacer una oposición útil, como la que estamos haciendo.  
(Congreso 2005, Llamazares)  
“We will be in the opposition in a useful way, like the way we are doing it.”
- b. *Nosaltres* som aquí avui per proposar tota una altra actitud. (Parlament 2001, Maragall)  
“We are here today to propose a completely different attitude.”

The coordination of explicit subject pronouns then has to be analysed in context. Whereas in (7), the negative predicate (‘do not contemplate the same reality...’) clearly shows that the coordination of *ustedes* and *nosotros* (‘you [pl.] and we’) is disjunctive in this case, utterance (8) shows that the coordination creates a truly inclusive group reading in the intervention by Llamazares.

- (7) Probablemente *ustedes y nosotros* no contemplamos la misma realidad o quizá tenemos que acostumbrarnos a su peculiar manera de llamar a las cosas, como cuando dice, por ejemplo, que tenemos un rey republicano o que la multiplicación de las lenguas se ha hecho para entenderse. (Congreso 2005, Rajoy)  
“Probably you [pl.] and we do not contemplate the same reality or maybe we have to get used to your [pl.] peculiar way of giving things a name, such as when you [pl.] say, for example, that we have a republican king or that the multiplication of languages has occurred to understand each other.”
- (8) *Ustedes y nosotros* hemos coincidido en que esa ley vulnera derechos fundamentales de los inmigrantes. (Congreso 2005, Llamazares)  
“You [pl.] and we have agreed on the fact that this law harms the fundamental rights of the immigrants.”

Both the coordination of subject pronouns in (7–8) and the honorific address form *S.S.* (*Su Señoría* ‘his/her Lordship’) in (9) imply an explicit addressee reference, but do not necessarily imply affiliation or alliance: speaker and interlocutor agree in (8) and (9) but not in (7).

- (9) Bien, señoría, para tener tanta prepotencia, para tener tanta arrogancia, hay que reconvenir que *S.S.* *y yo* hemos acordado algunas cosas de cierta importancia.  
(Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
“Well, Lordship, to have so much prepotency, to have so much arrogance, it is necessary to agree that *Your Lordship and I* have agreed upon some things of a certain importance.”

In our Catalan corpus there are no examples equivalent to (7) and (8), although the structure is possible in this language. Instead, in (10) disjunction is expressed through a structure where one of the two grammatical persons is the subject and the other is part of the predicate.

- (10) *Nosaltres* teníem un pacte amb *vostès*. (Parlament 2001, Pujol)  
“*We* had a pact with *you* [pl.]”

For the inclusive interpretation of the 1st person plural, the Catalan corpus also provides examples of other strategies to make explicit the referent of the 1st person plural, as in (11), which are lacking in the Spanish corpus although they are grammatically possible and pragmatically adequate in that language.

- (11) En aquest moment és més fiable, més raonable i més prudent anunciar el *nostre* projecte de país, *com a catalans* – no estic parlant del *nostre* projecte *com a socialistes*, estic parlant de la proposta catalana... (Parlament 2001, Maragall)  
“In this moment it is more reliable, more reasonable and more prudent to announce *our* project for the country, *as Catalans* – I am not talking of our project *as socialists*, I am talking of the Catalan proposal...”

Another strategy, with a full NP subject, allows the speaker to underline affiliation to a group to which the addressee may or may not belong, and to simultaneously give a clear, not merely deictic, definition of the group, as can be seen in (12).

- (12) a. Un gobierno que necesita que den permiso para todo y que, cuando se lo niegan, hace que *todos los españoles* paguemos tributo al señor Carod-Rovira.  
(Congreso 2005, Rajoy)  
“A government that needs that they give it permission for everything and that, when they don’t give it, makes *us, all the Spaniards*, pay tribute to mister Carod-Rovira.”

- b. *Ni les administracions ni el mercat estem posant encara a l'abast de les famílies recursos i mecanismes suficients per aconseguir la conciliació real.* (Parlament 2005, Maragall)  
 “Neither as administrations, nor as market we are putting sufficient means and mechanisms in support of families to achieve a real reconciliation. (lit.: Nor the administrations, nor the market, are (1pl.) putting sufficient means and mechanisms in support of families to achieve a real reconciliation.)”

According to Bhat's typological study (2004: 100), Spanish and Catalan are the only two languages with this particular structure (see De Cock, 2010b: 179; Martínez, 1999: 2764 for Spanish; Nogué Serrano, 2005: 308–310; 2008a: 184–186; 2015: 224 for Catalan and structural contrasts with Italian and English; Lyons, 1998: 598 for a comparison between Romance languages).<sup>13</sup> However, according to Alibèrt (1935: 282), this structure is also found in Occitan.<sup>14</sup> The prototypical version of this construction involves the use of a plural NP denoting humans, as in (12a), but more abstract nouns may also occur as subject NP, as in (12b). In those cases, the prototypical human collective reading is projected onto the abstract nouns through the use of deictic person reference in the VP. As a result, the abstract subject NP (i.e. *administracions* and *mercat*) acquires a humanized collective reading (see De Cock, 2010b: 185–187).<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the interpretation of the 1st person plural (or 2nd person plural) can be triggered by an adjunct in initial position as in (13) (see De Cock, 2005: 292 for Spanish; Nogué Serrano, 2005: 265–266 and 2008a: 151–152 for Catalan). Thus, a variety of strategies including subject pronoun, full NP subject and adjunct orient the interpretation of the 1st person plural form.

- (13) a. *En España seguimos estando a la cola del gasto social.*  
 (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
 “In Spain we are still lagging behind on social expenditure.”

13. Similar structures, mainly combining a pronominal form and a full NP, are widespread, however (Nogué Serrano 2005: 310 n. 22 and 2008a: 185–186 n. 74): for example, in Italian (*Voi italiani siete molto gentili*) and English (*You Italians are very friendly*).

14. We are grateful to Xavier Lamuela (Universitat de Girona) for providing us with this information.

15. This strategy is also possible in the 2nd person plural (informal) (see De Cock 2010b for Spanish and Nogué Serrano 2005: 308–310 and 2008a: 184–186 for Catalan), but it is not found in our corpora, because the 2nd person plural (informal) is not used at all in this register.

- b. ...*en aquest país hem anat endavant* no a base de jugar a la rifa, ni de jugar a les “quinieles”, no a base d’esperar, diguem-ne, que ens ho donin tot fet, no a base, en fi, de parar la mà, sinó a base de l’esforç...

(Parlament 2001, Pujol)

“...*in this country we have moved forward* not by playing the lottery or the pools, not by expecting, let’s say, everything to be done for us, in short, not by begging, but by means of effort...”

## 7.2 Third person

A second special strategy for speaker reference is the use of a full singular NP, which expresses the (institutional) role fulfilled by the speaker, with a 3rd person verb form. The pragmatic effect is distancing and emphasizing the role and the institution of the speaker, as in Catalan example (14). Notably, in (14) the speaker uses the prototypical form, 1st person singular, when he refers to himself within a predicate that hedges or nuances a segment of his discourse (underlined in the example) (see De Cock, 2014a: 42–50; Nogué Serrano, 2005: 343–354; 2008a: 212–221).

- (14) La tàctica era separar *el president* del partit, quasi *diria* dels partits, però, sobretot, del partit al qual *pertany* i que també *presideix*.

(Parlament 2005, Maragall)

“The tactic was to separate *the president* from the party, *I would almost say* from the parties, but, most of all, from the party *he belongs to* and *he is president of*.”

Though grammatically possible, we did not find any Spanish examples of this in our corpus. In spite of its low frequency, this strategy shows the utmost importance of institutional roles in parliamentary discourse and how they can be used to express distance between them and the person who assumes them (Nogué Serrano, 2005: 343–354; 2008a: 212–221; 2011: 124–127).

## 8. Addressee reference: structural and pragmatic differences

The major paradigmatic difference between Spanish and Catalan person deixis is the honorific system for the expression of hearer reference, and more specifically of the addressed recipient, in Goffman’s (1981) terms. As shown in Table 4, European Spanish has a binary system (informal-formal) for this kind of reference, whereas Catalan has a ternary system (informal-respectful-maximally formal) (see also Section 5).

**Table 4.** Address system in European Spanish and Catalan.

European Spanish system	Catalan traditional system
<i>tú/vosotros</i> (informal)	<i>tu/vosaltres</i> (informal)
<i>usted/ustedes</i> (formal)	<i>vós</i> (respect but less distance; only singular) <i>vostè/vostès</i> (most formal)

In the last decades of the 20th century, the traditional Catalan address system began to undergo significant changes as to the degree of distance, formality and respect expressed by *vós* and *vostè(s)*: as a consequence of the use of *vós* in administrative written discourse, *vós* is increasingly perceived as a more formal address than *vostè(s)*, especially among youngsters in urban areas (Nogué Serrano, 2005: 361–364; 2008a: 226–229; 2011: 134–135).

In both Spanish and Catalan parliamentary discourse, the informal address forms are entirely absent. The formal address forms *usted(es)* (Spanish) and *vostè(s)* (Catalan) (15–16) are widely used.<sup>16</sup> In addition, vocatives are used in both languages, and, only in Spanish, a specific structure with *su(s) señoría(s)/señoría(s)*, in the 3rd person (17a) and as a vocative (17b) (see further Section 8.2).

- (15) a. *Usted ha hecho un comentario de pasada.* (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
“You [sing.] mentioned it in passing.”
- b. *I vostè es va entestar a no canviar de política ni d’aliats.*  
(Parlament 2001, Maragall)  
“And you [sing.] insisted in not changing your policy or allies.”
- (16) a. *Es verdad que *ustedes* – quizá con poco entusiasmo – han apoyado la estabilidad presupuestaria.* (Congreso 2005, Zapatero)  
“It is true that you [pl.] – perhaps with little enthusiasm – have supported the reformed fiscal stability.”
- b. *Ara *els* correspon a *vostès* assumir quina d’aquestes solucions és la que *vostès* pensen tirar endavant.* (Parlament 2005, Mas)  
“Now it is your [pl.] job to decide which of these solutions is the one that you [pl.] want to privilege.”
- (17) a. *Su señoría ha hecho una afirmación que a mí me parece de alguna manera, si me permite, desafortunada.* (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
“*Your Lordship* has made an affirmation that seems to me in some way, if you allow me, unfortunate.”

16. In Catalan, the *vós* form of address was used during the sessions of the Catalan Parliament (1932–38) in the Spanish Second Republic (1931–1939).

- b. *Señorías*, el sistema autonómico acoge con holgura la pluralidad de nuestro país. (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
 “*Lordships*, the system of the autonomous regions amply accommodates the plurality of our country.”

### 8.1 Usted(es) vs. vostè(s)

As pointed out in Section 5, both Spanish and Catalan are pro-drop languages, sharing the possible alternation between an unmarked use (the absence of a tonic subject pronoun) and a marked use (the appearance of a tonic subject pronoun). From a strictly informative point of view, the speaker and the addressees are part of the deictic context and, as a result, are known by all the interaction participants. Consequently, the presence of the subject pronoun must be explained by means of semantic and other pragmatic factors.

The literature has traditionally considered that this use can be explained by the need to disambiguate homophonous 1st and 3rd person singular forms in some tenses and moods, viz. by a semantic factor.<sup>17</sup> But recent studies show that this need is not as crucial for the appearance of the subject pronoun as suggested before (for a state-of-the-art discussion of Spanish, see Fernández Soriano, 1999: 1236, and for studies questioning the importance of homophony, see Enríquez, 1984; Bentivoglio, 1987: 45; Luján, 1999: 1282; Travis, 2007; Posio, 2010; De Cock, 2010a: 49, 198; 2014a: 30, 140).

However, the explicit subject pronouns *usted(es)* and *vostè(s)* may be used to resolve another kind of ambiguity. These forms of address are in the 3rd person, which is not prototypically deictic, but anaphoric; the explicit pronoun could be a structural strategy to mark the change from the anaphoric value to the deictic one in contexts where the speaker needs to do so, according to the general structural features of each language (see for Catalan, Solà, 1999: 155–159 and Wheeler et al., 1999: 164).

Several pragmatic factors also explain the presence of the pronoun in the two languages. In addition to various factors that are frequently mentioned in the literature, such as expressing emphasis, contrast, clarification or discursive focus (see Luján, 1999: 1277–1282 for Spanish; Wheeler et al., 1999: ch. 11 for Catalan), also the expression of politeness may be taken into account. At least in Spanish,

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17. Such homophony is present in the same parts of the verbal paradigm for Spanish and Catalan, namely indicative imperfect (e.g. *decía* ‘I used to say, he/she used to say’) and past perfect (e.g. *había dicho* ‘I had said, he/she had said’), conditional (*diría* ‘I’d say, he/she’d say’), and subjunctive present (e.g. *diga* ‘I say, he/she says’) and imperfect (*hubiera dicho* ‘I would’ve said, he/she would’ve said’).



the selection of more polite and formal forms of address has been argued to be reinforced by the presence of the subject pronoun (Posio, 2012). As pointed out by Blas Arroyo (2002, 2003, 2005, 2011), some politeness strategies are defined by the Parliament's rules (such as the use of formal address), yet impolite strategies are part of the conversational contract for political debate as well. Parliamentary debate qualifies as a circumstance in which "it is not in a participant's interests to maintain the other's face" (Culpeper, 1996: 354). Indeed, personalizing an attack through the use of pronouns is a negative impoliteness strategy (ibid. 358). Thus, pronoun use may be linked to politeness (as far as the choice of an address form is concerned) and impoliteness strategies (when looking into the personalization of an attack).<sup>18</sup>

Several differences can be pointed out regarding the use of the polite address forms *usted(es)* and *vostè(s)*. First, the Catalan literature on this topic argues that the appearance of the explicit pronouns is avoided when not necessary in the context (see Coromines, 1980–91, vol. IX, s.v. *vós*, which includes information concerning *vostè(s)*), as opposed to the more frequent use of the pronoun in Spanish (Nogué Serrano, 2005: 370–371; 2008a: 233–234). However, our corpora show more frequent use of the explicit pronoun in Catalan than in Spanish (see Table 5): thus, here, the pragmatic purpose of expressing emphasis and contrast, together with the (im)politeness factors mentioned above, overrides the structural preference for subject elision. Not only the general dialogic character of political debates, but also the dialectic conflict between government and opposition in a tense political period, can explain these apparently unexpected findings.

Second, in Catalan the explicit subject pronoun appears in preverbal position (Solà 1999: 155–159 and Vallduví 2002: § 4.4.2.1, n. 19), both in declarative (18) and interrogative utterances (19).<sup>19</sup>

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18. In her analysis of a Spanish electoral debate, Castillo Lluch (2014: 289) considers that the repeated use of this pronominal form of address [*usted*] strongly involves the interlocutor in the discourse and may be perceived as – if the context allows for it – irritating or aggressive) (our translation).

19. In Catalan, the presence of the explicit pronoun with imperatives is structurally possible but quite infrequent and marked: *Faci-ho, vostè!* (lit. "Do it, you [sing.]"). In Spanish, by contrast, it is quite common (Alonso-Cortés, 1999: 4037; De Cock, 2014a: 144 for quantitative data): *Coja usted su ticket, por favor* ("Take your ticket, please", lit. "Take you [sing.] your ticket, please"). Our corpora did not contain examples of this use, which is probably related to the very low frequency of imperatives in parliamentary debates overall.

**Table 5.** Quantitative data concerning the presence of addressee reference form *usted(es)/vostè(s)*.

	Congreso 2001	Congreso 2005*	Congreso total*	Parlament 2001	Parlament 2005	Parlament Total
<i>usted/vostè</i>						
verb morphology	39	96 (120)	135 (159)	26	108	134
subject pronoun	9	47.2 (59)	56.2 (68)	8	54	62
% explicit subjects	23.08	49.17	42.7	30.77	50	46.26
<i>ustedes/vostès</i>						
verb morphology	35	16 (20)	51 (55)	75	67	142
subject pronoun	8	9.6 (12)	17.6 (20)	32	30	62
% explicit subjects	22.86	60	36.36	42.67	44.78	43.66

\* The black numbers are the normalized numbers for a corpus of 20,000 words, so as to enhance comparability with the other corpora. The numbers between brackets in these two columns give the raw figures for the total corpus of 25,000 words.

- (18) En primer lloc, senyor president, el seu Govern ha perdut credibilitat, i, en segon lloc, *vostès no han aconseguit* per a Catalunya ni més poder ni més diners.  
(Parlament 2001, Maragall)

“In the first place, Mister President, your government has lost credibility, and, in the second place, *you [pl.] did not obtain* more power or more money for Catalonia.”

- (19) *Vostès en són conscients?* (Parlament 2005, Mas)  
“Are *you [pl.]* (lit. you are) conscious of this?”

Spanish, by contrast, frequently alternates the preverbal position (20) with the immediately postverbal position, either following the verb (21), or between modal and periphrastic forms and the main verb (22) (De Cock, 2014a: 139).<sup>20</sup>

- (20) *Y usted entraba en una contradicción en su intervención.* (Congreso 2005, Llamazares)  
“And *you [sing.]* entered into a contradiction in your [sing.] intervention.”

20. In Catalan, subject *vostè(s)* is also topicalized by means of pronoun right-dislocation: *Creu que vindran, vostè?* (“Do you [sing.] think they will come?”, lit. “Think they will come, you [sing.]”) (Jané, 2001: 35; Nogué Serrano, 2005: 370–371; 2008a: 233–234). This phenomenon is probably more frequent in colloquial language than in more formal registers. Such right-dislocation is less frequent in our Spanish data. In any case, our corpus contained only one example of this construction in a partial interrogative utterance in Catalan, where right-dislocation of subjects is the unmarked structure: *Per tant, a on ens convida a anar, vostè, senyor Maragall?* (Parlament 2001, Pujol) (“So, where do you [sing.] invite us to go, mister Maragall?” (lit.: “So, where invite us to go, you, mister Maragall?”)).

- (21) Simplemente *ha dicho usted* una cosa que yo no comparto y, además, no es cierta (...)  
 (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
 “Simply *you* [sing.] have said (lit. have said you) something that I don’t agree with and that, moreover, isn’t certain (...)”
- (22) Esta es una bomba que nos puede estallar en las manos y *están ustedes jugando* peligrosamente con ella.  
 (Congreso 2005, Rajoy)  
 “This is a bomb that can explode in our hands and *you* [pl.] are playing (lit. are you playing) dangerously with it.”

According to Posio (2012), Spanish subject *usted(es)* postposition attenuates the effect obtained by the presence of the explicit pronoun, to the verge of considering the postverbal position as alternating with pronoun omission, rather than with a preverbal subject pronoun. Serrano (2012) claims that postposition implies reduced agentivity and a more objectivity-oriented conceptualization. In our view, it is rather the case that there exists an informative hierarchy between the three options; subject pronoun omission is then the unmarked structure, without pragmatic effects added to the simple appearance of formal address; the presence of the postposed pronoun would entail an attenuated pragmatic effect of address reinforcement; and finally, its preverbal appearance would represent the most intense reinforcement.

Our corpus analysis clearly confirms the different distribution of the position of *usted/vostè* in Spanish and Catalan. Whereas in Spanish 38% of the occurrences of *usted* are immediately postverbal as illustrated above, such uses are virtually absent in Catalan.<sup>21</sup>

This postposed use of subject *usted(es)*, which is not found in Catalan, contrasts with another one, in rhematic position, after the whole predicate (23). We find this use both in Spanish and Catalan, also with other NPs, related to the purpose of giving the subject a discursive focus value.

- (23) a. Llevábamos 25 años muy tranquilos en este aspecto, pero ha tenido que llegar *usted* para recordarnos que existe el resentimiento. (Congreso 2005, Rajoy)  
 “The last 25 years were very quiet in this respect, but *you* [sing.] had to come to remind us that resentment exists (lit. “but had to come you”).”

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21. Some isolated occurrences of *vostè(s)* in immediately postverbal position are found out of our Catalan parliamentary debate corpus. These utterances are produced by members of parliament who either have both Catalan and Spanish as first language, or have been members of the Spanish parliament or secretaries/ministers in the central government and, as a result, have had intense contact with Spanish parliamentary discourse. These factors may account for these uses in the Catalan parliamentary discourse of these persons. Vallduví (2002/2008: § 4.4.2.1, n. 19), Solà (1999: § 50) and Jané (2001: 35) attribute, more generally, the expansion of pronoun postposition in Catalan to the influence of Spanish.

- b. Aquest cop no hi ha excusa, perquè l'embolic l'havia creat *vostè sol*.  
 (Parlament 2005, Mas)  
 "This time there is no excuse, because *you alone* [sing.] have created the mess" (lit. "because the mess it had created you alone").

Thus, while there are similarities in the pragmatic functioning of person deixis in the Spanish and Catalan systems, there are also important differences, especially as to the position of the subject pronoun in the utterance.

## 8.2 Vocatives

After the analysis of addressee subject pronouns, this section deals with another form of address, namely vocatives. A first crucial observation is that, in our data, vocatives rarely precede utterances with 3rd person honorific verb forms without an explicit subject (as is the case in (24a) and (24b)). It seems clear, then, that the vocative's main function is not to give information about an implicit subject; rather its discursive functions are related to politeness and text structure (see also Cuenca, 2004). The vocative frequently expresses politeness and takes up a position at the beginning of the speech turn where it (re)activates the addressee's attention (25), rather than identifying null subjects or disambiguating 3rd person singular or plural verb morphology.

- (24) a. *Señoría*, ha mencionado un asunto y con esto termino esta parte en el cual ha dicho que nosotros no hemos querido un acuerdo: el asunto de la inmigración.  
 (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
 "Your Lordship, you [sing.] have mentioned an issue and by this I end this part, about which you have said that we did not want an agreement: the issue of immigration."
- b. Ahir, *senyor president*, ens va dir que aquest era el millor Govern de l'última dècada.  
 (Parlament 2005, Mas)  
 "Yesterday, *Mister President*, you [sing.] told us that this was the best Government of the last decade."
- (25) a. *Señor presidente, señoras y señores diputados*, hace un año y casi un mes obtuve el respaldo de la Cámara como presidente del Gobierno.  
 (Congreso 2005, Zapatero)  
 "*Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members of the Parliament* (lit.: *ladies and sirs deputies*), almost a year and one month ago I obtained the support of the House as Chairman of the Government."

- b. *Molt Honorable Senyor President, senyores i senyors diputats...*, els vull parlar, després d'una introducció, de les prioritats i orientacions que em semblen fonamentals per a la bona marxa d'aquest Govern.

(Parlament 2005, Maragall)

*“Very Honorable Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen Members of the Parliament (lit.: ladies and sirs deputies), I want to talk you, after an introduction, of the priorities and orientations I consider essential for the good functioning of this Government.”*

In our corpora, vocatives are more frequent in Spanish than in Catalan parliamentary discourse (see Figures 1 and 2). As we will show, this difference may be due to both cultural and more specifically linguistic factors. A cultural motivation is the fact that a large proportion of the vocatives in the Spanish data are occurrences of *señoría(s)*, *su(s) señoría(s)* ‘your Lordship’, or the corresponding written abbreviations S.S., SS.SS. This is an older form, only found in the Spanish corpus, which is nowadays strongly event-bound, since its use is virtually restricted to the parliament and courtrooms.<sup>22</sup> The Catalan Parliament resumed its functions in 1980 after the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the Franco dictatorship (1939–75), and the desire then was to renew and modernize the parliamentary style. That is why the form of address *Senyor/Senyors/Senyora/Senyores* is privileged there.<sup>23</sup> The current use of *senyoria* in Catalan courtrooms is probably related to the influence of the Spanish use of the form. Catalan is rarely used in courtrooms and therefore the linguistic customs of Spanish spoken jurisdiction may transpire in Catalan jurisdiction. Also, the perception of Parliament as being less formal than courtrooms may explain the low usage of *senyoria* in the Catalan corpus.<sup>24</sup>

22. Our data do not confirm Gelabert's (2004) findings, according to which *señoría* is used almost exclusively by members of the Partido Popular. More recently (2014), European Parliament Member *Pablo Iglesias* of left-wing party Podemos addressed the European Parliament by means of *señorías* in his bid for the Parliament's presidency.

23. In the Catalan Parliament sessions held from 1932 till 1938, during the Spanish Second Republic (1931–1939), the forms *Senyoria* and (*la*) *Vostra Senyoria* were still used. The written version of the debates (the *Diari de Sessions*) often uses the abbreviated forms S. (*Senyoria*) and V. S. (*Vostra Senyoria*), together with other formulaic forms, such as *Senyor(s) Diputat(s)*, *Honorable Senyor President*, *Honorables Diputats* and *senyor* followed by the name (along with a more frequent use of initial capitals in honorifics). On the other hand, the form (*la*) *Vostra Senyoria* combines the honorific form *Senyoria* with the *vós* address form in the possessive.

24. We are very grateful to Agustí Pou, language consultant at Barcelona's justice courts, for his highly valuable information on this specific topic.

In addition to *señoría* vocatives in the Spanish corpus, more modern forms of address are found in both parliaments, e.g. *Señor/Señores/Señora/Señoras – Senyor/Senyors/Senyora/Senyores*, often followed by the addressee's last name (26) or function (*president of the Parliament, Prime Minister, Minister, deputy*) (27).<sup>25</sup>

- (26) a. La situación no es de hoy, *señor Aznar*, y su Gobierno puede tener alguna [...] responsabilidad. (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
 “The situation is not new, *mister Aznar*, and your Government may have some [...] responsibility.”
- b. *Senyor Mas*, li agraeixo el to de la seva intervenció. (Parlament 2005, Maragall)  
 “*Mister Mas*, I am very grateful to you for the tone of your intervention.”
- (27) a. *Señor presidente*, el caso del modelo ambiental es muy curioso. (Congreso 2005, Llamazares)  
 “*Mister president*, the case of the environmental model is very curious.”
- b. La discreció, *senyor president*, no està renyida amb la mínima informació que la situació mereix. (Parlament 2001, Maragall)  
 “Discretion, *Mister President*, is not incompatible with the minimum information that the situation deserves.”

In Catalan, the latter strategy sometimes appears in combination with specific honorific forms, especially to address the Prime Minister or, in the majority of the cases, the President of the Parliament. Their honorific title is *Molt Honorable*, ‘Very Honorable’, and its use as a vocative is found basically at the beginning of a speech turn, as a highly ritualized greeting (28).

- (28) *Molt Honorable Senyor President*, senyores i senyors diputats... senyor Mas, li agraeixo el to de la seva intervenció. (Parlament 2005, Maragall)  
 “*Very Honorable Mister President*, Ladies and Sirs Deputies... Mister Mas, I am very grateful to you for the tone of your intervention.”

We also found rare examples of a strategy that can be considered the least polite of them all, because it is the least elaborate: namely, mentioning only the interlocutor's function (29).<sup>26</sup>

25. Castillo Lluch (2014: 295) shows that in French, by contrast, the form *madame/monsieur* without last name is found both in customer service phone calls and political TV debates.

26. In recent years, this strategy has become increasingly frequent in the Parliament of Catalonia.

- (29) De fet, *president*, mai no hem sentit cap manifestació autocrítica davant de fets com aquests. (Parlament 2001, Maragall)  
 “In fact, *president*, we have never heard any self-criticism in the face of events like these.”

Let us now turn to the other factors accounting for the distribution of vocatives observed in our data. In the first place, we will refer to the discourse structuring function that vocatives can have. Secondly, we will relate the lower presence of vocatives in the Catalan corpus to the higher presence of addressee subject pronouns (*vostè(s)*). Then, we will comment on the frequency of singular vocatives, reflecting the more “presidentialist” style in Spanish parliamentary discourse, discussed above. Finally, we will discuss the use of plural vocatives, possibly linked to the morphological gender invariability of *señorías*.

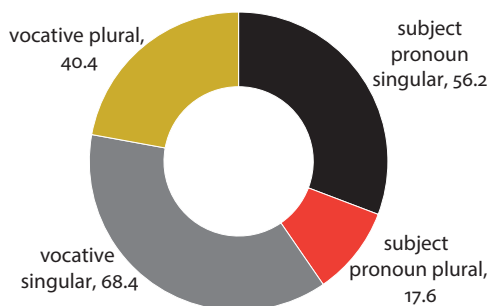
An important discursive motivation for the presence of vocatives in parliamentary discourse, beyond its interactive structure, is the fact that vocatives seem to be used as a discourse-structuring device (De Cock, 2010a: 242–245). Indeed, they often appear in paragraph-initial position, introducing a new element of the argumentation (Cortés Rodríguez, 2011: 30). However, since the transcription practices of the parliamentary services may influence the subdivision in paragraphs, this evidence is not conclusive, viz. transcribers may spontaneously start a new paragraph when they hear *señoría* even though the speaker perhaps did not intend this.<sup>27</sup>

Looking at addressee reference as a whole, the use of vocatives is clearly complementary to the use of the polite subject pronoun *usted(es)-vostè(s)*, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. The productivity of *señoría* in Spanish clearly compensates the higher presence of *vostè(s)* (as subject pronoun) in the Catalan corpus. This suggests that similar pragmatic and interactional effects, such as addressee activation, are achieved differently in Spanish and in Catalan: more frequently through vocatives in Spanish and through subject pronouns in Catalan.

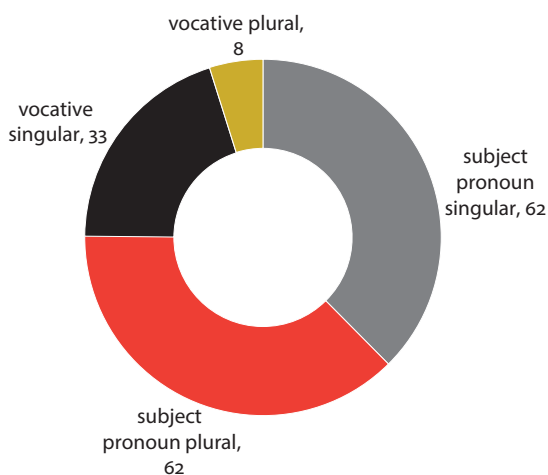
We will now look into the differences in the use of vocatives in more detail. The higher presence of vocatives in the Spanish parliamentary discourse is in line with the overall higher frequency of singular addressee reference in the Spanish data commented on in Section 6 and seems to confirm our hypothesis of a more ‘presidentialist’ style in the Spanish Parliament. The political structure of two opposing parties, with a clear leader, favours addressing one singular addressee,

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27. Castillo Lluch (2014: 285) also mentions this function of vocatives (labelled *formes nominales d'adrese* ‘nominal address forms’) in her analysis of an electoral TV debate in Spain: more specifically, she refers to reformulative, conclusive, turn-taking, turn-management, and topic-change functions. Given the strict regulation of turn-taking in parliamentary debates, it is not possible to analyse vocatives in parliamentary debates in terms of turn-taking/-management.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of the expression of address through subject pronouns and vocatives in the Spanish parliament data. (Normalized frequencies per 20,000 words.)



**Figure 2.** Distribution of the expression of address through subject pronouns and vocatives in the Catalan parliament data. (Normalized frequencies per 20,000 words.)

whereas the tradition of coalitions in the Catalan Parliament seems to favor plural addressee reference. Moreover, also the strong regional identity of Catalonia may contribute to a higher use of plural forms.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, within the Spanish data, we observe clear differences concerning the use of the register-specific address form *señoría*. The singular form (*su*) *señoría* is used more or less frequently than *señor* according to the year in which the debate

28. We are grateful to Min Reuchamps and Jérémy Dodeigne (Université catholique de Louvain) for their suggestions concerning this topic.



took place (probably linked to the different configuration of speakers, e.g. *señoría* is used by all speakers in our corpus, though Zapatero uses *señor/señora* more easily). Plural (*sus*) *señorías*, by contrast, is consistently used much more frequently than *señoras y señores*, and seems less specifically linked to one speaker (all speakers use it at some point of their discourse).

In our view, a crucial factor is the fact that plural *señorías* allows for a very concise way of referring to all members of parliament. On the one hand, there is no need to explicitly mention different genders, as in *señoras y señores*, due to the fact that *señorías* has no gender morphological variation (the grammatical gender of *señoría* is feminine. Since this is due to its reference to an abstract function, the person referred to need not be female. In fact, for a long time, only men could occupy the functions for which *señoría* is used). On the other hand, *señoría* has a much more restricted use and automatically refers to a function in Parliament (or in court). As a result, *señorías* is a much shorter plural vocative than *señoras y señores diputados*. In line with the economy principle (Brown and Yule, 1983), this conciseness may explain why it is much more frequent than *señoras y señores diputados*, and why plural *señorías* is also much more frequent as a vocative than singular *señoría* is. Indeed, the difference in length between *señor diputado/señora diputada* and *señoría* is less important than between *señorías* and its counterpart *señores y señoras diputadas*. Finally, discursive-syntactic factors, probably related to conciseness, play a role. Whereas *señoras y señores diputados* is used exclusively in utterance-initial position (30), the conciseness of *señorías* allows for a much greater mobility. Indeed, this form appears in utterance-initial (31), utterance-final (32) and parenthetical position, e.g. (33).

- (30) *Señoras y señores diputados*, solo el terrorismo perturba nuestras libertades y nuestra convivencia. (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
 “*Ladies and sirs deputies*, only terrorism perturbs our liberties and our living together.”
- (31) *Señorías*, contamos con una experiencia de más de veinte años de sistema autonómico (Congreso 2001, Aznar)  
 “*Lordships*, we have an experience of more than twenty years of the system of autonomous regions.”
- (32) Esa es la oposición útil, *señorías*. (Congreso 2001, Zapatero)  
 “This is the useful opposition, *Lordships*.”
- (33) Los resultados, *señorías*, están a la vista. (Congreso 2005, Zapatero)  
 “The results, *Lordships*, can be clearly seen.”

In the latter case, the vocative separates the topic of the utterance from the focal information in the rest of the utterance. A longer vocative, such as *señoras y señores diputados*, would imply a longer distance between the topic and the focus of the utterance. While this is grammatical, it may hamper the production and comprehension.

As shown above, Catalan *senyoria* is no longer part of Catalan parliamentary discourse. Thus, Catalan members of parliament must always use more elaborate structures, such as *senyores i senyors (diputats)* (*Ladies and gentlemen (deputies)*), as plural vocatives. In our data, the utterance-initial and -final positions are clearly the preferred positions of this vocative, confirming its lower flexibility compared to the more concise Spanish *señorías*.<sup>29</sup> The relative inconvenience of such elaborate structures may partly explain the lower frequency of plural vocatives in the Catalan Parliament (if compared with the Spanish Parliament), together with the combination with the subject pronoun *vostè(s)*, discussed above.

## 9. Conclusions

We first presented the main features of parliamentary debates, in contrast with colloquial language, as well as a general description of the person deictic system in Spanish and Catalan. We then showed the main similarities and, especially, differences, between these two languages as to the use of person deixis in parliamentary discourse.

Spanish and Catalan share many features in their person deixis systems: beyond their relatively similar morphological paradigms (they are both pro-drop Romance languages), they have the following features in common: (1) the absence of a morphological distinction between the inclusive and the exclusive use of the first person plural; (2) the use of the first person plural in the verb inflection with a subject in the third person plural (a structure only shared, to our knowledge, with Occitan); (3) the absence of the informal form of the honorifics system for addressee reference (*tú/tu*) in Parliamentary debate (as in other parliamentary traditions), and the use of the formal form (*usted(es)- vostè(s)*) instead; and (4) the use of the explicit pronoun (*usted(es)- vostè(s)*) as a marked strategy.

But the use of person deixis in Spanish and Catalan parliamentary debate also differs in some particularly relevant aspects, namely: (1) the higher use of person deictics in the Catalan Parliament than in the Spanish Parliament; (2) the preference for singular deictic expressions in Spanish and for plural in Catalan

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29. On-going research by Neus Nogué Serrano and Lluís Payrató concerning the reference to participants in Catalan parliamentary debate (1932–2013) confirms this tendency.

(including vocatives); (3) the use of the explicit pronoun (*usted(es)*) as a subject immediately after the verb in Spanish; (4) the use of the old-fashioned vocative *señoría(s)* in the Spanish Parliament, which compensates for the lower use of the pronoun (*usted(es)- vostè(s)*) in subject position; and (5) a slight preference for less polite address forms in the Catalan Parliament than in the Spanish Parliament, probably due to the recovery of the Catalan political institutions at the end of the 20th century and, in particular, the desire to renew and modernize the parliamentary style.

As for the use of the explicit pronoun *usted(es)/vostè(s)*, our study also shows how pragmatic factors, such as contrast, emphasis and (im)politeness, can clearly compensate for structural differences between languages.

Thus, this article demonstrates the importance of a qualitative analysis of pragmatic features in order to shed light on the differences between two closely related languages. Furthermore, this analysis shows how pragmatics contributes to explaining phenomena that are not accounted for in traditional grammatical descriptions.

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## Software

TextSTAT. <http://neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/textstat/>

**Appendix.** Description of the interventions

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<b>Spanish Parliament 2001</b>	<b>10,041 words</b>	
José María Aznar (initial turn)		3,399
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero		3,310
José María Aznar (reply turn)		3,332
<b>Spanish Parliament 2005</b>	<b>15,019 words</b>	
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (initial turn)		3,446
Gaspar Llamazares Trigo		3,955
Mariano Rajoy Brey		3,242
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (reply turn)		2,555
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (other reply turn)		1,821
<b>Catalan Parliament 2001</b>	<b>9,990 words</b>	
Jordi Pujol (initial turn)		3,320
Pasqual Maragall		3,325
Jordi Pujol (reply turn)		2,932
Jordi Pujol (other reply turn)		3,413
<b>Catalan Parliament 2005</b>	<b>9,997 words</b>	
Pasqual Maragall (initial turn)		3,339
Artur Mas		3,317
Pasqual Maragall (reply turn)		3,341

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