

## Spanish Future in evaluative contexts: a case of mirativity?\*

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### 1. Introduction

Future has traditionally been considered a mark of tense in Spanish; that is, a grammatical realization of linguistic time (Comrie, 9). More precisely, whereas past (1) indicates anteriority and present (2) denotes simultaneity, future (3) expresses a relation of posteriority between the event and the moment of speech:

- (1) Juan vino<sub>Past</sub> ayer  
[Juan came yesterday]
- (2) María está<sub>Pres.</sub> en casa hoy  
[María is at home today]
- (3) El equipo jugará<sub>Fut.</sub> mañana  
[The team will play tomorrow]

However, both the existence of several rivals competing with simple future to express posteriority –present *pro* future, or the *ir a + infinitive* periphrastic future (Fleischman 1982)– and the great number of modal values associated with the synthetic form (Dahl) have destabilized its status as a temporal category. In fact, when future occurs with a non-agentive subject, it can exhibit a predictive value (4); by contrast, it can be understood as a promise if it appears with a first person (5), or as an order, when combined with the second person (6); furthermore, the presence of an undetermined subject related to a cyclical knowledge leads to interpret future as a universal truth (7) (RAE 2009, 1767-1768). Beyond modal values, future still locates the event after the now of the speech in all the examples below:

- (4) El próximo fin de semana *lloverá* en buena parte del país  
[It will rain in a large part of the country next weekend]
- (5) Mañana te *compraré* un helado  
[I will buy you an ice-cream tomorrow]
- (6) *Entregarás* el proyecto la semana que viene  
[You will hand in the paper next week]
- (7) Todos *moriremos* algún día  
[We all will die someday]

Nevertheless, this synthetic form can also be used in contexts which are not located in posteriority –(8)–, as Bello (236) already pointed out. These cases have been related both to inferential evidentiality, insofar as the speaker makes a calculation or expresses

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a conjecture, and to epistemic modality, since the speaker considers the proposition probable:

- (8) A: ¿Qué hora es?  
 [What time is it?]  
 B: Serán<sub>Fut.</sub> las cuatro  
 [It must be four]

When it seemed that the debate on future focused either on the primacy of the modal value over the temporal one –or vice versa– or on which tool –modality or evidentiality– could have a broader scope for the analysis of this verbal form, attention has now been deviated towards some other uses: the discursive ones.

- (9) Te digo que era encantadora, y, cuando me decían que era judía, le digo yo: ¡caray! pues *será*<sub>Fut.</sub> judía, pero parece que tiene más fe que los que no somos judíos, la verdad  
 [I'm telling you that she was lovely and, when I was told that she was Jewish, I said to her: oh, my! Well, she may be Jewish, but she seems to have more faith than those of us who are not Jewish, actually]  
 (RAE, *CREA*, Oral, sf)
- (10) Era la primera posibilidad que se daba a los periodistas para hacer cursos académicos. Entonces, *comprenderás*<sub>Fut.</sub> que no pude dejar ya el periodismo y tuve que hacerlo  
 [It was the first opportunity given to journalists so that they could attend academic courses. Then you have to understand that I was not able to leave journalism any more, and I had to do it]  
 (RAE, *CREA*, Oral, sf)
- (11) Y se había ido a escape a contárselo a ella, a su hermana Carmen: — ¡*Será*<sub>Fut.</sub> idiota el tonto que tengo por marido!  
 [And he had rushed out to tell her, her sister Carmen: — Such an idiot, the stupid that I have as a husband!]  
 (Francisco Blanes García, *El cura de Carboneras*. Entrelíneas Editores, 2009, p. 95).

These discursive values have sometimes been linked to a new parameter: Nuyt's intersubjectivity (Nuyts 2001a, 2001b, 2012; Cornillie); this is actually Squartini's (2012) analysis of concessive future –(9)–. Intersubjectivity *à la Nuyts* has to do with source reliability: one utterance is *subjective* if it occurs under the assessor's own responsibility –usually the speaker, but it could also be some other subject–; by contrast, an utterance is *intersubjective* when presented as being shared by a group of people –usually, but not necessarily, including the addressee.<sup>1</sup> From this perspective, an expression consequently appears to be more reliable if it is shared. According to Squartini (2012), concessive future in (9) shows an utterance *shared* by the speaker and the addressee, which justifies the concessive movement. In his view, what the example

<sup>1</sup> In his previous works, Nuyts (2001a –and also Cornillie–) drew a distinction between: the speaker's exclusive responsibility; shared responsibility; and someone else's exclusive responsibility. On some occasions, future's concessive value has been considered a *reportive* case from the point of view of evidentiality (Reyes; Hennemann). Cf. Rodríguez Rosique (2015) for a discussion of these proposals.

in (9) has in common with the examples where future seems to trigger a value related to surprise –as in (11)– is that they both refer to an intersubjectively shared source; it would therefore be necessary to explain the relationship between Nuyt’s intersubjectivity and mirativity.

Squartini’s proposal looks very attractive, since it refers to information which is “in the air” at the moment of speech, when it comes to explaining certain discursive uses of future. It raises some problems, though. On the one hand, the role of concessive future in (9) seems to consist in weakening the utterance so that it loses strength in the counter-argumentation process, which is why the speaker actually *distances* himself from it (Rodríguez Rosique 2015). On the other hand, the status of intersubjectivity is not too clear: Nuyts considered it part of evidentiality in his previous works (Nuyts 2001a, 2001b); but he has recently alluded to intersubjectivity as a new semantic category associated with the role of the assessor *vis-à-vis* other participants, which contributes to information management (Nuyts 2012). Understood in this way, intersubjectivity rather seems to play a role in the discursive uses of necessity –persuasive– future, as in (10), where the speaker urges the addressee to assume the instruction occurring in future as necessary from the information that he has just uttered (Rodríguez Rosique in press). Likewise, the value of surprise which future apparently triggers in examples such as (11) still requires an explanation.

Rivero has also recently dealt with future’s discursive uses, or, more specifically, concessive future, which she directly sees as a case of mirativity. For her, the use of future in (9) exhibits a relationship of continuity with inferential future –(8)–; in fact, both are analyzed as evidential modal operators contributing to propositional content. Whereas inferential future appears as a strong modal operator requiring the speaker’s assumption of responsibility with regard to the information, concessive future is a weak modal operator by means of which the speaker does not necessarily become responsible for the information –and he may even deny it.

Beyond the potential link existing between inferential future –(8)– and concessive future –(9)–, doubts arise about the extent to which the latter can be considered a case of mirativity and not just a mere adversative or contrastive structure; or, expressed differently, about the possible relationship between examples such as (9) and those which are clearly mirative –(11) being an example–, where the surprise or ‘unprepared mind’ value seems obvious.

This paper focuses on those cases where future occurs in evaluative contexts –(11)–, seeking to unravel the connections between future and mirativity in Spanish. More specifically, it is argued that the value of (11) arises when the meaning of future –distance forward– is projected upon the utterance. This happens when certain discursive circumstances are met; i.e. when the information expressed by future has just been activated. What examples such as (9), (10) and (11) share is precisely the projection of distance over the utterance when the information has just been activated (Rodríguez Rosique 2015). The peculiarity of cases such as (11) derives from the occurrence of future in evaluative environments, which triggers certain consequences related to surprise and an ‘unprepared mind.’ With a view to develop this proposal, the paper has been organized as follows: section 2 revises the concept of mirativity in order to highlight its most relevant aspects for the analysis of future; section 3 displays a distance-based unitary definition of future which can apply in all its uses; section 4 specifically analyzes the behavior of future in evaluative environments, relating it both to mirativity and to future’s general definition; and finally, section 5 summarizes the most important conclusions drawn from the study.

## 2. In search of mirativity

The first studies on mirativity were strongly connected to the typological analysis of evidentiality (cf. DeLancey 1997 or Peterson for a review of its origins). However, scholars very soon started to perceive that certain assertions which were different from an evidential point of view –denoting direct perception, inference or report– had something in common: all of them could convey a speaker’s surprise towards the information he had just acquired –the speaker’s *unprepared mind*, as it was called by Aksu & Slobin. Mirativity has progressively gained the status of an independent category from then on.<sup>2</sup>

According to DeLancey (1997, 2001), mirativity is a universal category which marks the status of a proposition with respect to the speaker’s general knowledge structure. More specifically, he claims that mirativity has to do with a natural trend for languages to draw a distinction between information that forms part of the speaker’s integrated picture about the world and new information which does not belong to that integrated picture. As a universal category, it appears in all languages, although they differ in the degree to which the distinction is coded within grammar. By way of example, mirativity is optional both in Hare and English, but the former expresses it morphologically; instead, it behaves as an obligatory grammatical category in a number of other languages.

Aikhenvald (2012) has recently carried out a review of all the meanings which may fall under the label of mirativity, which led her to list the following ones: sudden discovery, sudden revelation or realization; surprise; unprepared mind; counterexpectation; and new information. She argues that these values can be attributed to the speaker, to the addressee –or the audience–, or to the main character of a story.<sup>3</sup> Despite making this catalog of senses, Aikhenvald recognizes that the core meaning of mirativity revolves around surprise and unprepared mind, in keeping with its etymology.<sup>4</sup> Similar to what she does in relation to evidentiality, she distinguishes essentially mirative categories from mirativity strategies (2004, 195-216; 2012), the latter being consequently defined as extensions from essentially non-mirative categories –such as tense, aspect, reality status, evidentiality, person-marking systems or interrogatives– which can express mirative senses in certain contexts. Furthermore, Aikhenvald adds that surprise can also be conveyed using exclamative constructions or by lexical means.

Peterson has also claimed that the core meaning of mirativity is surprise. He specifically outlines two basic ingredients inside this category: new information –a necessary but not sufficient feature, since there may be new information which is not surprising–, and surprise. The latter is defined as a unique event within a chain of events that produces a discrepancy between the speaker’s current knowledge and the new event or state (15-16): it happens when the speaker encounters new information for which he is not prepared. According to Peterson, this represents one of the core human emotions

<sup>2</sup> However, in a relatively early moment, some scholars –for instance, Lazard– argue that the grammatical coding of mirativity is typologically very rare, and also that it merges with some other categories in most languages. Thus, he uses the term *mediativity* to describe the possibility for several languages, such as Turkish, to interpose an abstract reference to the information source, which triggers the creation of a distance between the speaker and his speech. According to Lazard, this mechanism is neither specifically evidential nor mirative; in fact, it can include both values. Along the same lines, Hill has recently called into question the status of mirativity as a separate category.

<sup>3</sup> Hengeveld and Olbertz also argue that mirativity could be understood as new information for the speaker (in most cases) or as new information for the addressee.

<sup>4</sup> Aikhenvald (2012, 457) claims that *mirativity* ultimately comes from Latin *mīror* [‘to wonder, to be astonished; to admire, to look in admiration’].

from a psychological and cognitive point of view, along with happiness, sadness, fear or anger. In fact, surprise triggers certain reactions the expression and recognition of which can be considered typologically similar. Concerning the expression of mirativity across languages, this author draws a distinction between two types of mirativity: parasitic and non-parasitic. Peterson places in the former type cases such as the mirative value that certain evidential or control marking systems can acquire, or exclamative constructions, whereas in the latter type he differentiates languages exhibiting non-parasitic mirativity in grammar by means of prefixes, suffixes or auxiliaries –as it happens in Nepali, Chechen, or Setswana, respectively– from others, such as English, which show non-parasitic mirativity using other categories: intonation, verbs of surprise, illocutionary words (*wow*), or illocutionary force modifiers (*surprisingly*), amongst others.

Certain values and structures associated with exclamativity have often been mentioned in the current debate on mirativity (Rett). However, some scholars insist on treating them as separate phenomena. In particular, Hengeveld and Olbertz (Olbertz; Hengeveld and Olbertz) argue that exclamativity is an illocutionary concept which serves to express the speaker's assessment about a presupposed propositional content –exclamativity manifests itself as a sentence type in its grammaticalized form. By contrast, in their opinion, mirativity is a modal distinction not necessarily linked to the speaker which does not constitute a specific sentence type, but rather can occur in different sentence types.

The distinction between exclamation and exclamative structures also seems relevant when talking about exclamativity (Alonso Cortés; Castroviejo Miró 2008, 2010). Exclamation is a subtype of expressive speech acts through which the speaker expresses a non-neutral attitude towards the propositional content. This non-neutral attitude comprises mental states such as surprise, admiration, enthusiasm, perplexity, confusion, etc. Exclamations are likely to include assertions such as *¡He aprobado!* [I passed!], which shows an exclamative interpretation due to intonation. In those cases, the speaker performs an assertion as a primary function –which provides information–, and expresses a non-neutral attitude towards it as a secondary function. However, a sentence type exists which has exclamation as its primary function, namely: *wh*- exclamatives. These structures may respond to stimuli but cannot act as answers to questions, since they are non-asserted constructions (Castroviejo Miró 2008). More specifically, they convey two kinds of meaning –though neither of them is asserted. On the one hand, exclamative structures express a descriptive content which, according to Castroviejo Miró (2008), is a presupposition in the sense described by Atlas; in other words, it contains *non-controversial* information which can be accommodated if the addressee does not previously know it. Such descriptive content refers to a gradable property, and thus contains a set of propositions which maintain a relationship of natural order or inclusion between them (Castroviejo Miró 2010). On the other hand, exclamative structures express an implicated meaning identified with the speaker's attitude and generated as a conventional implicature *à la* Potts due to its evaluative intonation (Michaelis; Castroviejo Miró 2008, 2010; Rett). Therefore, for Castroviejo Miró (2010, 10-11), the evaluative intonation of exclamative structures takes under its scope a set of propositions showing a relationship of inclusion that she divides into three groups: the strongest true proposition; the set of weak true propositions; and the false propositions. Hence, the exclamative structure highlights a proposition which, despite being true, does not appear amongst the set of expected propositions.

Future in Spanish may be related to the values of surprise and unprepared mind which constitute the semantic core of mirativity. This becomes especially evident in evaluative contexts. However, the mirative sense is not an essential feature for future; in

fact, it only appears within certain environments –thus emerging as what Aikhenvald (2004, 2012) calls a ‘mirativity strategy.’ Furthermore, future can alternate in those contexts with exclamative structures and some other exclamations, though with a number of differences which are actually explained by the meaning of future (see Section 4). In any case, before coming down to the analysis of evaluative cases, and in order to place them within a general description of future in Spanish, the question arises as to whether a single definition of future exists which brings together all its uses.

### 3. Back to the future

One of the major problems posed by the analysis of future lies in finding a general definition within which all its uses can be subsumed. Several scholars continue to defend an essentially temporal explanation, even for clearly inferential cases –(8)–, as suggested by De Saussure in his perspectival interpretation. According to De Saussure, future still provides a temporal deictic instruction in inferential examples, although it moves from indicating *p* to indicating *verification of p*. This happens because the state of affairs is represented by a third voice *located in the future* that can effectively assert the truth of the proposition, from which it follows that the speaker cannot assert the proposition in the present, and that his epistemic attitude towards the proposition is stronger than mere possibility. A number of other authors (Giannakidou & Mari) advocate a definition of future in modal terms, though, claiming that future behaves as an epistemic necessity modal (similar to *must*) in the absence of any other temporal information; it is precisely the presence of a temporal adverb that actually gives future its temporal flavor –thus considered a value which derives from the modal one.

Escandell (2010, 2013) has recently argued from a more specific perspective that future in Spanish is neither essentially temporal nor essentially modal, but evidential; expressed differently, it behaves as a grammatical evidential (Aikhenvald 2004) and, particularly, as an inferential. In Escandell’s view, future always indicates that the source of knowledge for the event stems from a speaker’s inner process, either because the event is located in some other time or because it happens elsewhere.

The connection with modality, not only of future but also of tenses in general, has also been stressed from broader perspectives. Thus, according to Jaszczolt (32-96) and her philosophical approach, future is modal because time is modal. As a matter of fact, she argues that the concepts of present, past and future belong to inner or psychological time –where present occupies a privileged position. From there, time fluctuates from the possibilities of future to the certainty of present and from the certainty of present to the fragmented image of past. Moreover, a cognitive approach (Langacker 1999, 2011; Brisard) regards tenses as *grounding predications*; that is, as a particular kind of deixis which links the proposition to the situation of speech through an essentially epistemic relationship, since the speaker’s interest focuses especially on the knowledge status assigned to the proposition.

As mentioned in the introduction above, most approaches to future defend either an essentially temporal explanation or an essentially modal one, and they have recently even shown the pertinence of an exclusively evidential analysis too. Nevertheless, a survey of future’s discursive values seems difficult from those perspectives at first sight. Almost all the approaches agree on attributing a *deictic*, *schematic* or *procedural* value to tenses in general and to future in particular, though.

Future always invokes in all its uses a deictic instruction which can be defined as ‘distance forward’<sup>5</sup> (Fleischman 1989). This instruction may be projected over a subjectivity axle (Traugott 1989, 2010) which moves across the different levels of meaning established by Sweetser through successive scope widening processes (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca, 227). Interpersonal roles can be played by future at the higher levels (Pérez Saldanya).

Thus, future operates inside the proposition at the content level: the deictic instruction is projected over the event –and is consequently understood in terms of posteriority.

In turn, the deictic instruction is projected over the proposition at the epistemic level; and it can therefore be interpreted either in modal or in evidential terms.<sup>6</sup> This can only happen if certain circumstances concur: future must be *dislocated* (Rojo & Veiga); or, expressed differently, it must be extracted from the context of posteriority. As far as the modal perspective is concerned and, unlike what happens with modal values of past tenses, the distance forward conveyed by future is interpreted positively; that is, it points to an intermediate space between hypotheticality and certainty (Akatsuka; Schwenter; Cornillie; Rodríguez Rosique 2011; De Saussure). From an evidential perspective, the speaker expresses an event as the result of an inference, calculation or conjecture. The distance forward may thus be justified because the event is subject to a *subsequent corroboration* (Pérez Saldanya; De Saussure); and it can additionally find a justification in the fact that a deduction is always *subsequent* to its evidence (Langacker 2011; Martines).<sup>7</sup>

Finally, distance is projected over the speech act at the utterance level. In such cases, future can participate in several discourse categories and contribute to certain strategies such as evaluation, for instance. A requirement needs to be fulfilled in the information structure so that the ‘distance forward’ instruction can be projected over the utterance, namely: the proposition occurring in future must have been previously activated.

The distinction between activated and non-activated information arises in an orthogonal way to the dichotomy between new and old information (Chafe; Prince; Dik; Lambrecht; Dryer). Activated information is the one that the speaker assumes to be

<sup>5</sup> For a more in-depth review of the different explanations about future and for a detailed analysis of this tense in terms of the projection that the ‘distance forward’ deictic instruction has across different levels of meaning, cf. Rodríguez Rosique (2015).

<sup>6</sup> Inferentiality is a controversial field concerning the links between epistemic modality and evidentiality. According to some scholars, this is precisely the point where both categories collapse (Van der Auwera & Plungian); according to others (Squartini 2008; Cornillie), though, a difference still exists between them. More specifically, Squartini argues that inferential future in Italian can occur both with weak epistemic adverbs (*Forse sarà il postino* [Perhaps it is the postman]) and with strong epistemic adverbs (*Sicuramente sarà il postino* [It is certainly the postman]), which shows the independence of both categories –evidentiality and modality– even inside the field of inferentiality. In the case of Spanish, the usual situation shows inferential future occurring with adverbs such as *probablemente* [‘probably’] or *seguramente* [‘probably’], which are almost synonyms –they denote high probability but not certainty (Kovacci). Future can also occur with doubt adverbs, such as *quizás* [‘perhaps’], although this is much less common. Finally, it only appears with strong commitment adverbs such as *necesariamente* [‘necessarily’] in conditional or strongly implicative structures, where the reasoning process is reinforced by the construction (Rodríguez Rosique in press). When it does not occur with adverbs, it tends to be interpreted in terms of probability.

<sup>7</sup> According to Martines, this line of reasoning could question the idea that inferential future has to do with the uncertain nature of future time. In his analysis, Martines goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century to review the origin of inferential future in Catalan, which he usually finds in implicative structures. Furthermore, his analysis probably casts doubts over the assumption that inferential future in Catalan is a case of language contact –French or Spanish–, and not an original value of Catalan language.

profiled in the addressee's mind, and which may have been contextually or discursively activated (Dryer). Activated information does not have to be real, since activation does not imply an epistemic judgment. One of the advantages in Dryer's proposal lies in the fact that he not only takes into account entities but also propositions for the analysis of information structure. It is therefore possible to trace an activation continuum which has the *focus of attention*, or the information to which we pay special attention, at one end; *semideactivated* information, or the one that has been previously activated but progressively loses prominence, also lies there; and *accessible* information, or the one which has not been activated as such but may be inferred from information that has just been activated through semantic frames, is placed along this continuum as well. By contrast, *non-activated* information is located at the opposite end of them all.

The uses of future in evaluative contexts are explained because the speaker *distances* himself from the utterance, and this can happen because the information has been previously activated. The discursive consequences of this distanced assessment are detailed in the following section.

#### 4. Distance, information structure and evaluation in future

Future in Spanish is likely to occur in evaluative contexts, where it seems to display the values of surprise and unprepared mind associated with mirativity, as observed in (11), now repeated in (12), and also in some other examples, such as (13) and (14):<sup>8</sup>

- (12) Y se había ido a escape a contárselo a ella, a su hermana Carmen: — ¡Será<sub>Fut.</sub> idiota el tonto que tengo por marido!

[And he had rushed out to tell her, her sister Carmen: —Such an idiot, the stupid that I have as a husband!]

(F. Blanes García, *El cura de Carboneras*. Entrelíneas Editores, 2009, p. 95).

- (13) Aquel día, pese a que era tarde, me pareció ver a dos cigüeñas. Pero eso era imposible. Los ojos debían de haberme engañado, pues una de ellas no podía volar. Entré en casa, cogí la linterna y comprobé que la cigüeña herida seguía en su sitio. No se la había llevado su compañero en el pico. Corrí hacia el bar e iluminé el nido. ¡Allí había dos cigüeñas!

—¡Será<sub>Fut.</sub> sinvergüenza! —exclamé.

[That day, although it was late, it seemed to me that I had seen two storks. But that was impossible. My eyes must have deceived me, since one of them could not fly. I went into the house, took the torch and checked that the injured stork had not moved (from where I had left her). Her partner had not taken her away in his beak. I ran to the bar and lit the nest. There were two storks there!

—Such a bastard! —I exclaimed.]

(RAE, CREA, J. Pardo de Santayana, *El beso del chimpancé. Divertidas e insólitas historias de la vida cotidiana en un zoo*, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Most examples of mirative future analyzed here are taken from the corpus CREA, which has been compiled by RAE and is available online. This is a heterogeneous corpus which contains both oral and written texts, and thus reflects different types of register. The written texts are obtained from books, papers, journals or magazines; concerning the oral ones, they are taken from daily conversations or from television and radio programs. It is significant that the examples of mirative future usually appear in texts corresponding to an informal register: they occur either in direct interaction situations or in cases in which a colloquial flavor is pretended.

- (14) Compartimos casa y gastos y le dejo que “disfrute” si es que puede, de los hijos, aunque creo que lo que realmente le interesa es aquello del remanso del hogar, y eso sí, la política. En sus discursos, pretende transmitir que es un hombre más, demócrata desde la médula, simplemente solidario; ¡tendrá<sub>Fut.</sub> cara el tío!  
 [We share home and expenses, and I let him ‘enjoy’ –if he can, that is– the children, even though I think that what really matters to him is that thing about the haven of home and, of course, politics. In his speeches, he tries to transmit the idea that he is a man like any other, a full-fledged democrat, simply supportive; such a shameless guy!]  
 (RAE, CREA, Á. Enríquez Soriano, *Estrés. Cómo aprender en la encrucijada*. 1997).

In cases like these, two alternative constructions may have appeared instead of the structure with future: a *wh*-exclamative –the features of which were described in Section 2– as illustrated in (15a), (16a) and (17a); or an attributive construction with *ser* plus the determinant *un* used for an emphatic purpose (Portolés 1993; Fernández Leborans; Suñer), as seen in (15b), (16b) and (17b):

- (15) a. ¡Qué idiota [el tonto que tengo por marido]!  
 [What an idiot (the stupid that I have as a husband)!]  
 b. ¡Es un idiota [el tonto que tengo por marido]!  
 [He is an idiot! (the stupid that I have as a husband)]
- (16) a. ¡Qué sinvergüenza!  
 [What a bastard!]  
 b. ¡Es un sinvergüenza!  
 [He is a bastard!]
- (17) a. ¡Qué cara tiene el tío!  
 [What a shameless guy!]  
 b. ¡Es un caradura el tío!  
 [He is so shameless, the guy!]

The parallelism between structures with future and attributive constructions with the emphatic-flavor determinant *un* becomes particularly obvious when the former also contain a copular verb, as (15b) and (16b) show; note, however, that, in (17b), it would be necessary to employ an adjective –a nominalized adjective (*caradura*)– coming from the same semantic field as the original unit *tener cara* of the structure with future. As for attributive constructions with the emphatic *un*, they are closely related to the situation of speech and serve to highlight a quality –or a set of qualities– of a subject, who is then isolated as a representative example of a class. These structures may include extremely positive adjectives, but they most often occur with negative adjectives that convey a depreciatory value. Their empathic character turns them into extremely powerful arguments for any conclusion which is likely to follow from the speech context.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> They consequently determine the argumentative potential of the utterance where they appear; this happens even when they occur with apparently neutral nouns, but which are able to denote a set of culturally-determined properties (Portolés 1993).

Evaluative future constructions, emphatic attributive constructions and exclamative constructions have something in common, namely: that they are degree expressions. They all three denote properties, and the entities of which the property is predicated supposedly exhibit it to a great extent. All three of them can occur with adjectives denoting the possession of human competences or predispositions at a high level (Demonte, 81),<sup>10</sup> or with nouns used metonymically to highlight a property or a set of properties.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the structure with future differs from the other two in at least two aspects which are precisely related to the value of this verb form when distance is projected over the utterance.

On one side, the construction with future requires that the information be previously activated. More specifically, it constitutes *accessible* information (Dryer); in other words, using future directly connects the proposition to some previous discursive information, usually through semantic frames or behavior patterns culturally linked to the adjective. This feature probably explains why, when the proposition in future does not represent previously activated information, the assessment trigger is preceded by the subordinating –and informationally defocalizing– conjunction *que*, as shown in (18) and (19), which are paraphrases of (12) and (13), respectively:

(18) *Será* idiota, que se había ido a escape a contárselo a ella  
[Such an idiot that he had rushed out to tell her]

(19) *Será* sinvergüenza, que mientras su compañera estaba enferma se había ido con otra<sup>12</sup>  
[Such a bastard that, while her partner was ill, he had gone with another (woman)]

By contrast, despite being closely related to the speech situation (Fernández Leborans), attributive constructions with emphatic *un* can introduce information which has not been previously activated. Concerning exclamative structures, as mentioned in section 2 above, the descriptive content that they convey is presupposed information which the addressee can *accommodate* if he does not previously know, since it has to do with *non-controversial* information. These structures thus keep a less subsidiary relationship with the previous discourse or the speech situation than the ones which use future.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> On other occasions, as it happens with *tener cara* or with the fixed expression *será posible*, a scalar value seems to be alluded to, despite the fact that, for instance, *posible* –vs. *probable*– is not a gradable property in the latter case. The same as in exclamative structures (Castroviejo Miró 2008), these cases apparently denote a standard of comparison which is surpassed by the situation.

<sup>11</sup> Note that these nouns metonymically denote a property because they own it in a high degree (i.e. *burro*).

<sup>12</sup> Note that, even though the assessment has a pair of birds as a target, the speaker refers to their behavior patterns using human stereotypes.

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, however, all three of them allow subject postposition –as observed in (12) and in (15a) and (15b)–, although with different degrees of obligation; whereas postposition is compulsory both in exclamatives and in future structures, it becomes optional in attributive constructions with emphatic *un*. Nevertheless, subject postposition may be related to the role that the *entity* plays in the information structure, while future's subsidiarity is likely to be justified with respect to the –*propositional*– information that triggers the evaluation. Leonetti has recently analyzed the possibilities of word order for *ser* and *estar* constructions, although with the aim of delimiting the differences between these two copulas. Despite the fact that structures occurring in evaluative future are not exclusively attributive constructions, they are actually quite frequent, which would justify a new path for the analysis. From a broader perspective, the interaction between these three constructions –exclamative structures, evaluative

On the other side, the evaluative value of future's structures is always depreciatory; exclamative constructions, instead, occur either with positive qualities or with negative ones (*¡Qué guapa es!* [How pretty she is!] / *¡Qué bobo es!* [How stupid he is!]). In the case of attributive structures with emphatic *un*, they usually occur with negative qualities (*Es un imbécil* [He is a moron]), but they also appear with exceptionally positive ones (*Es un sabio* [He is a wise man]) sometimes. However, future in evaluative contexts always combines with negative qualities. Note that this value appears even when future occurs alone, in suspended structures:<sup>14</sup>

- (20) -¿Con quién querrías ligar tú de los políticos?  
 [Which one of the politicians would you like to have an affair with?]  
 -¿De los políticos?  
 [Of the politicians?]  
 -Sí.  
 [Yes]  
 -Con nadie, porque, así..., el único que... que dice la gente que está bien es el Verstrynge, y a mí me parece un poco enjuto, y no me gusta.  
 [Nobody, because, I mean... the only one who... who people say that he looks nice is Verstrynge and, to me, he looks kind of skinny, and I don't like him]  
 -¿No te gusta Verstrynge?  
 [Don't you like Verstrynge?]  
 -No, para nada.  
 [No, not at all]  
 -¿Como político o como hombre?  
 [As a politician or as a man?]  
 -Como hombre estamos hablando ¿no?  
 [As a man we're talking, aren't we?]  
 -¿Y yo?  
 [And me?]  
 -Tú tampoco.  
 [I don't like you either]  
 -Pero... *será*... Pero, ¡por Dios!, me voy a retirar.  
 [But... (you're) such a... But, for God's sake! I'm going to retire]  
 (RAE, *CREA*, Oral, 25/10/1983)

These two features (high subsidiarity with respect to previous information and depreciatory value) coincide with the characterization of future when its distance forward deictic value is projected over the utterance: the speaker can express distance towards his utterance when this information has just been activated. In evaluative contexts, the speaker's distance towards his utterance is specified as an evaluative distance, in the sense that it expresses censure, criticism or rejection of the activated situation; in other words, his mind –or his value scale– is not prepared to assume that information.

A remaining question has to do with the relationship between *concessive* and *mirative* values; or, expressed differently, with whether the former might be considered a case of the latter. Concerning this issue, it seems relevant to mention that future's

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future structures, and emphatic structures– and their respective connection with information structure seems to deserve more in-depth research.

<sup>14</sup> In this regard, future in Spanish behaves differently from future in Italian, which can also occur with positive qualities (Squartini 2012).

evaluative value may occur preceded by *pero* –(21)– or by *si* with an exclusive contrastive sense (Schwenter, 175-225) –(22)–:

- (21) -No puedo soportar tus sarcasmos. Eres como Ramón.  
 [I can't put up with your sarcasm. You are like Ramón]  
 -Por eso me elegiste.  
 [That's why you chose me]  
 -¿Que yo te elegí? *Pero* ¿tendrás<sub>Fut.</sub> morro?<sup>15</sup>  
 [That I chose you? You've got a real nerve, haven't you?]  
 -Bueno, en realidad fui yo, pero tú pusiste mucho de tu parte  
 [Well, it was actually me, but you largely contributed to it]  
 (RAE, CREA, L. Beccaria, *La luna en Jorge*, 2001)
- (22) Además, el alcalde de Tumbes ha talado los árboles de la plaza de armas de su población, para “remodelarla.” ¡En un lugar con tanto calor, talar árboles que dan sombra! ¡*Si* será<sub>Fut.</sub> bestia!  
 [Furthermore, the mayor of Tumbes has felled the trees of his town's main square, in order to 'remodel' it. In such a hot place, to cut down trees which provide shade! Such a brute!]  
 (RAE, CREA, *Caretas*, 21/12/1995)

Note, however, that future still preserves the surprise, unprepared mind value even if these conjunctions disappear:

- (23) ¿Que yo te elegí? ¡Tendrás morro!  
 [That I chose you? You've got a real nerve, haven't you?]
- (24) ¡En un lugar con tanto calor, talar árboles que dan sombra! ¡*Será* bestia!  
 [In such a hot place, to cut down trees which provide shade! Such a brute!]

Nevertheless, these evaluative examples seem to differ from concessive ones in several aspects.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, both types –evaluative and concessive– have as shared features that the distance forward conveyed by future is projected over the utterance and that the information occurring in future must have been previously activated; however, whereas concessive future refers to information which constitutes the *focus of attention* in the previous discourse, information is *accessible* from another previously activated information in the case of evaluative future.

On the other hand, the concessive use shows future occurring in the weak member and participating in the counter-argumentation strategy, as a result of which an attenuating value is provided to the argument where future appears. In the evaluative use, however, future can be *reinforced* by *pero*, but the conjunction is optional –as

<sup>15</sup> Note that the author transcribes the example with question marks. Although evaluative future can occur in interrogative structures (¿*No serás tú quien ha dejado solo a Lope de Aguirre?*, RAE, CREA), the question mark does not seem appropriate in this context; an exclamation mark would definitely be better. In any case, the mirative use in interrogative structures deserves further investigation.

<sup>16</sup> Beyond its contrastive character, the value of *pero* in both cases is justified because of its *sufficiency* (Portolés 1998); in other words, *pero* always introduces the member that triumphs: either to highlight the conclusion imposed in the counter-argumentation process or to outline the speaker's surprise, rejection, or unprepared mind in cases of assessment.

explained above. In this latter case, the distance with respect to the utterance expressed by future becomes an evaluative distance to the previously activated information, which triggers a negative, depreciatory perception of the situation; in other words, the speaker is unwilling to assume it. In fact, the difference between future's concessive and evaluative uses probably has to do with the distinction that Malchukov or Rett draw between adversative structures and mirative ones: whereas the latter member contrasts with the former one in adversative structures, the latter member indicates surprise regardless of the former in mirative structures. Concessive future and evaluative future consequently play two distinct discourse functions: counter-argumentative and expressive, respectively (Pérez Saldanya). Nevertheless, both of them share the distance towards the utterance, which contains previously activated information.

## 5. Conclusions

Future in Spanish can play a mirative value –related to surprise and unprepared mind– when the distance forward deictic value is projected over the utterance; this happens if the information occurring in future has been previously activated. When future is projected over the utterance, it performs an attenuating or a persuasive function within discourse categories such as counter-argumentation or information management, respectively; or it may also play an evaluative role related to the category of mirativity. In fact, the ultimate relationship between these discourse-scope categories and their impact on the analysis of verb forms opens a new, attractive path for research.

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