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Political (Im)politeness: Discourse Power and Political Power in Electoral Debates

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POLITICAL (IM)POLITENESS: DISCOURSE POWER AND POLITICAL POWER IN ELECTORAL DEBATES*

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the pragmatic-discursive function of perception-verb markers in electoral debates in Catalan. The analysis reveals that these elements play an important role as implicit argumentation resources. In this sense, they emphasize the confrontation of the participants, which is organized basically through counter-argumentation and attack to the addressee's face. This main function, related to the persistence of the imperative value of the verb forms, presents different degrees in the different markers analyzed: those markers coming from active perception (*miri* and even more *escolti*) structure a greater argumentative force. The extension of the theory about linguistic politeness from ordinary conversation to political discourse shows that the elements analyzed emphasize a peculiar kind of linguistic (im)politeness in political debates.

INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes the pragmatic-discursive function of perception-verb markers in political discourse. More specifically, this work studies the role played by the Catalan forms *aviam* and *a veure* (which derive from the passive visual perception verb *veure*, "to see"), *miri* (which comes from the active visual perception verb *mirar*, "to look"), and *escolti* (from the active auditory perception verb *escoltar*, "to listen") in electoral debates, and focusses on the argumentative force and relevance of these discourse markers to indicate power relationships among speakers.¹

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¹ We use the term discourse marker in the sense coined by Schiffrin: an element can be considered as a discourse marker if it is syntactically detachable from a sentence, it is commonly used in initial position of an utterance, it has a range of prosodic contours and phonological reduction and it is able to operate on different planes of discourse (328). In

Electoral debates are non-co-operative debates in which speakers do not intend to convince their direct addressees about their opinions nor reach any consensus. The purpose of such communicative events is to obtain the citizens' vote, i.e., indirect addressees but actual targets of the message. In this sense, the discourse markers analyzed in this work belong to the group of resources related to the dialog character of argumentative texts (Cuenca 1995), which structure implicit or secondary argumentation, as effective as the use of logical arguments and counter-arguments. This argumentative force is closely related to power and politeness relationships among the participants in electoral debates, since the resources analyzed here mainly introduce face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Brown and Levinson 1987), used by speakers to show superiority over their political opponents.

From this point of view, our work follows the framework developed by authors such as R. Lakoff (1989), Chilton (1990) or Harris (2001), who propose to extend Brown and Levinson's theory about politeness from ordinary conversation to other fields such as political discourse. In particular, Chilton considers that the approaches of such linguists is highly appropriate for the analysis of political discourse, and allows us to observe the microstructure of verbal interaction as a vehicle of power relationship (Chilton 204). In this way, the theoretical framework of politeness phenomena becomes a tool for critical discourse analysis following the research field started by Fowler *et al.* (1979) and developed by Van Dijk (1984, 1989, 1998, 2003), Wodak (1989, 2001) and Fairclough (1989, 1995).

The corpus of analysis consists of four electoral debates in Catalan with a total recording of 7 hours and 5 minutes. These four electoral debates were broadcasted by Televisió de Catalunya, two of them during autonomous elections (1992 and 1995) and the other two during general elections (1993 and 1996). Five politicians, that representat the main political parties, take part in each debate. The total number of discourse markers based on perception verbs found in the corpus is 212, distributed as follows: 12 cases of *aviam/viam*, 24 of *a venire/avere*, 85 of *miri* and 91 of *escolti/escolti'm*. With respect to the methodology used, after transcribing the debates and identifying the markers analyzed in this work, we processed them in the database MSAccess 2000, an elementary quantitative approach which, nonetheless, has provided valuable data for the conclusions reached in this study.

fact, the research presented in this paper is part of a more extensive research (Marín 2003, 2005) — within the framework of cognitive linguistics (G. Lakoff 1987, Langacker 1987) and the new studies on grammaticalization (Hopper 1987; Traugott 1989, 1995; Heine *et al.* 1991)— that demonstrates that perception-verb discourse markers present all the characteristics proposed by Schiffrin to be considered as prototype elements of this pragmatic class.

The elements studied, when used as discourse markers, in addition to corresponding to the same semantic field (sensorial perception), share some formal and functional features that allow us to analyze them as an homogeneous group from the semantic and morphosyntactic point of view as well as from the discursive point of view (Cuenca and Marín 1998; Marín 2003: chap. 5; Marín 2005: chap. 3):

- They derive from imperative verb forms or verb forms related to the imperative.

- They present a basic connative nature that relates them to the addressee.

- They express a conversational (factual) value related to conversation management and therefore are typical forms of the spoken language.

- Morphosyntactically, they present a parenthetical nature, they normally occur at the end of the sentence, have partially or totally lost their predicative nature as verbs, and are completely or partially fixed morphologically.

These features functionally separate such markers from the verbal class and place them in the boundaries of connection. However, not all forms present the same degree of grammaticalization, which conditions their discursive function in electoral debates.

In sum, the analysis focusses on the pragmatic-discursive function of discourse markers derived from perception verbs in electoral debates in Catalan. Firstly, we will analyze the role played by these markers as discourse organizers (Section 2) and then, as indicators of the relations of power and politeness between speakers (Section 3). Next, we will show the quantitative results obtained from the analysis of the corpus (Section 4) and the interpretation of the data (Section 5). Finally, we will summarize the most relevant conclusions of the analysis (Section 6).

PRAGMATIC-DISCURSIVE FUNCTION OF THE MARKERS: DISCOURSE ORGANIZERS

The discourse markers analyzed are grammaticalized forms which present as general pragmatic value their vocative or connative force, as a result of the nature of the imperative verb form from which they originate.² This feature, together with the factual value they have developed, give rise to the specific discourse functions analyzed in this

² All the elements studied have been established as imperative forms: *aviam* and its reduced variant *viam*, and (*anem*) *a veure* and its reduced form *avere*, in the first person plural; *mini* and *escolti* in the second discursive person of the singular (third morphological person) for formal address, even though we have also found the odd case of *minn*, place in the discursive second person plural (the morphologic third person plural) of polite usage. (Cuenca and Marín 1998, Marín 2003: chap. 5, Marín 2005: chap. 3).

work: on one hand, they play a structural role as discourse organizers; on the other hand, they are indicators of the relations between speakers.

As discourse organizers, these elements structure and manage exchange, since they establish a break in the communication, attract the addressee's attention and indicate a change in the evolution of the conversation.³ From this point of view, we can say that they participate in the overall structure of interaction, either linking turns of talk or linking speech acts (within a turn). In addition, they organize discourse at two levels: turn-taking (in this case, they can indicate the distribution of the turns, endeavour to keep their speaking turn or to obtain other's speaking turn), and the development of the topic (they indicate introduction, progression or change of topic, as well as the introduction of arguments and counter-arguments).

General structural function

With respect to the general structural function, we may find these markers either linking speaking turns, such as in example (1), or linking speech acts, i.e., communicative units within a turn, as illustrated in example (2):

(1) <C Colom> [...] *i que el mal funcionament de serveis públics, així de clar, fa que el ciutadà hagi d'invertir en serveis privats, i penso que això és realment, punts de no funcionament del país [...]*

[...] and that the bad functioning of the public services, to say things clearly, leads citizens to invest in private services, and I think that these are actually points of non-functioning of the country [...]

<C Moderadora> *A veure, el senyor Vidal-Quadras volia dir [(alguna cosa)], [EA92, 0:30:05]*

'A veure, Mr Vidal-Quadras wanted to say [(something)],'⁴

³ In fact, some authors, like for example Pons (1998), have already related the factual value of Spanish forms such as *oye* (proceeding from the second person singular of the imperative of the verb *oír*, 'to hear') and *mira* (proceeding from the second person singular of the imperative of the verb *mirar*, 'to look') with the connective function they usually have, so that, sometimes, they become discourse organizers that act at the macrostructural level of the text and introduce, for example, a change of subject in the discourse.

⁴ We have considered it more appropriate to retain the original catalan form for markers in the translation of examples since, as idiomatic elements, they have no exact counterpart in English, given that they are dealing with a procedural meaning dependent on context of usage. However, in order to assist understanding of the text in our corpus we also offer a translation, albeit approximate, of the elements studied:

(*Anem*) *a veure/avere, aviam/viam* [literally, (We are going) to see]: "let's see"

Miri: "look"

Escolté: "listen"; *escolti'm*: "listen to me"

As far as the translation is concerned, we have followed straight-forward criteria, proper to orthographical, to facilitate reading.

- (2) <C Moderadora> *Angel Colom, un minut i mig els hi demano en cadascuna de les seves intervencions.*
 'Angel Colom, I ask you to spend one minute and a half for each of your interventions.'
- <C Colom> *El senyor Pujol, amb la seva habilitat, ja s'ha tornat a col·locar al centre de tothom, i ell ja es fa pal de paller. Escolti'm, senyor Pujol, n'hi poden haver altres de pals de paller, en aquest país. [...]* [EA92, 1:38:41]
 'Mr Pujol, with his personal ability, is again in the middle of everybody and he pretends to be the linchpin. *Escolti'm*, Mr Pujol, there can be other linchpins in this country. [...]

In (1), *a veure* links the turn of the moderator with the previous turn; however, in (2), Colom uses the marker *escolti'm* to advance in his discourse.

Distribution of the speaking turns

With respect to discourse orientation, as indicated above, the markers analyzed organize the speaking turns and the topic. Regarding speaking turns, the specific values of the markers in electoral debates are the following: distribution of speaking turns among speakers, endeavour to maintain their own turn, and endeavour to take the turn of someone else.

a) *Distribution of turns among speakers.* In debates, the function of distributing the speaking turn among the participants corresponds to the moderator, as shown in example (3):

- (3) <C Trias> *[[Però podré acabar?]]*
 '[(But can I finish?)]'
- <C Rahola> *[[(:zzzz?)]][Parlen tots alhora]*
 '[((:zzzz?)] [Everyone is talking at the same time]'
- <C Moderadora> *A veure, senyor_ [[El senyor Trias de Bes]].*
 'A veure, Mister_ [(Mr Trias de Bes)]'
- <C Trias> *[[És que no puc acabar]]*
 '[(I'm not able to finish)]'
- <C Moderadora> *...deu segons més a causa de les interrupcions que ha tingut [[(a l'hora:_ quan parlava)]]* [EG96, 1:11:31]
 '...ten more seconds for the interruptions you had [when:_ when your were talking)]'

In this case, the moderator tries to help Trias, the speaker with his turn speaking, so that he can finish his intervention without being interrupted again.

b) *Endeavour to keep one's turn speaking*. Another discourse function of these markers is to express endeavour to maintain one's own turn when another participant wants to take it (4):

- (4) <C Trias> [...] *Bé, el PP no té un programa anticatalà [(ni anti-autonomista. Escolti, se_ escolti, em deixa_ em deixa acabar? Jo li he escolt_ vol que l'hi ensenye?. Avere, un moment, miri [ha tret un programa del PP i l'ensenya], l'ocult, eh; és lo que vostès s'emporten a Suïssa, això sí que és ocult, això és un programa)]*
 '[...] Well, the PP does not have an anti-Catalan program [(nor anti-autonomist. *Escolti, mist_ escolti*, will you let me finish? I have liste_ do you want me to show it to you? *Avere*, one moment, *miri* [he has taken out a program and shows it], hidden, eh; what you take with you to Switzerland, that is hidden, that is a program)]'
- <C Serra> [(*Té una actuació, el seu programa no el sabem. No..., programa... no, no si el _ no el programa no ens l'ha ensenyat mai, lo que tenen és actuacions. Aquest_ aquest és l'ocult o és el de veritat?*)] [EG96, 1:09:53]
 '[(You have a performance, we do not know about your program. No..., program... no, no if the _ you have never shown the program, what you have is performances. Is this_ Is this the hidden program or the real one?)]'

Example (4) shows how Trias tries to keep his turn. First using the marker *escolti*, when Serra starts interrupting him, and then with *avere* and *miri*.

c) *Endeavour to take other's speaking turn*. Finally, the discourse markers from verbs of perception are also used to indicate endeavour to take someone else's turn. It thus consists of interrupting the speaker with the speaking turn and taking his turn, if possible. See example (5):

- (5) <C Serra> *...que_ i li recomano que llegeixi l'article pòstum de la darrera víctima d'ETA. [(Llegeixi's l'article que havia escrit, abans de que el mateixin, Paco Tomás y Valiente)].*
 '...that_ I suggest you read the posthumous article by the latest victim of ETA. [(reads the article written by Paco Tomás y Valiente before he was killed)].'
- <C Trias> [((¿zzzz?) *manipulador*)]
 '[((¿zzzz?) *manipulator*)].'
- <C Rahola> [(*Txxxs! Home, no! Escolti, miri*)], *...no signi_ per favor_ que_ com pot arribar a ser tan frívol? Home! No jugui amb això, carall. Ja he llegit Tomás y Valiente, [(ja l'he llegit)].* [EG96, 1:35:25]
 '[(*Txxxs!* Well, no! *Escolti, miri*)], ...please don't be_ that_ how can you be so frivolous? For goodness sake! Don't play

with this, dammit. I have already read Tomás y Valiente, [(I have al ready read him)]'.

In (5), Rahola, with the help of the markers *escolti* and *miri* manages to get Serra's speaking turn and to introduce his comments.

Development of the topic

With regard to the topic, the organizing function of these discourse elements can be divided into different subfunctions. We have distinguished five functions that can be grouped into two groups: one group includes the more neutral or objective forms (introduction, progression and change of topic) and the other group contains the more argumentative or subjective forms (introduction of arguments and counter-arguments).

a) *Introduction of the topic*. The marker introduces the topic when it opens an intervention which normally covers one of the topics proposed by the moderator from the set of issues agreed before the debate (6):

(6) <C Moderador> *Senyor Milián.*

'Mister Milián.'

<C Milián> *Aviam: nosaltres en aquest tema estem fent un plantejament crec que bastant novedós i nou (¿zzzz?) per la política del Partit Popular. Es basa en dos principis fo_ bàsics: primer, el fet de que assumim completament l'administració única [...]; i segon, nosaltres no volem renunciar a lo que es va fer, jo crec que molt ben fet per part del Partit Popular i el Partit Socialista, i que va ser arribar a un, eh, a un acord autonòmic amb un principi de cooperació [...]* [EG93, 0:30:36]

'*Aviam*: I think our approach of this issue is quite new (¿zzzz?) for the policy of the Popular Party. It is based on two funda_basic principles: first, the fact that we assume completely single administration [...]; and secondly, we don't want to reject what has been done, I think quite well by the Popular Party and the Socialist Party, which was to reach an, eh, an agreement at the autonomous level with a principle of cooperation [...]'

In this example, Milián uses the marker *aviam* to introduce the topic about autonomous financing that has already been formulated to all the candidates.

b) *Progression of the topic*. Once the topic has been introduced, the analyzed markers can be used to deepen in the topic and thus indicate

progression. The development of the topic can highlight some particular aspects or introduce some subtopics (7):

- (7) <C Rahola> *Sí, el senyor Serra diu que han muntat l'estat del benestar [...] Miri, escolti'm, senyor Serra, vostès tenen un frau absolutament descontrolat, primer punt. [...] sobretot hi ha un frau enorme en el que són els grans processos especulatius, les grans fortunes, i, en canvi, són capaços d'arribar amb la lupa al pobre aturat que està fent la seva, la seva "d'aixons" de renda. El frau, primer, per tant, l'estat del benestar, per aquesta banda, se'ls escapa per totes bandes. Segona, duplicitat (<pronúncia emfàtica>) d'administracions. Vostès que: van fer i van muntar allò del "café para todos" i que sort que els hi va anar malament en la LOHAPA. Miri, desgraciadament, va ser el senyor Tomás y Valiente, i m'agradaria recordar-lo avui aquí, els qui els hi va aturar en el Tribunal Constitucional la LOHAPA [...] [EG96, 0:21:33]*

'Yes, Mr Serra says they have set up the Welfare State [...] Look, listen, Mr Serra, with you fraud is absolutely out of control, first point. [...] Especially, there is an enormous fraud in large speculative processes, huge fortunes, and, however, they dare to put unemployed people on the spot who are filling out their, their 'whatsit' return. The first fraud, therefore, is the Welfare State, through this, they lose control of the rest. Second, duplicity (<stressed pronunciation>) of administrations. You that, started and organized all that about "café para todos" [literally, 'coffee for everyone' in Spanish] and luckily it didn't turn out so well in the LOHAPA. *Miri*, unfortunately, it was Mr Tomás y Valiente, and I would like to remind here those who halted the LOHAPA at the Constitutional court [...]

As shown in example (7), Rahola uses the marker *miri* to introduce a subtopic—the assassination of Tomás y Valiente and his role in the Constitutional court in the LOHAPA (*Llei Orgànica per a a l'Harmonització del Procés Autonomíic*, 'Law for the Harmonization of Autonomous Development')—, within the general topic, —economy and welfare—.

c) *Change of topic*. The elements analyzed can also indicate a change of discourse topic (8):

- (8) <C Trias> [...] *Durant aquest debat hi hauran cent vint treballadors més a l'atur. Vostès han atxecat el dèficit públic de forma que en aquests moments ens és difícil arribar a les condicions de Maastricht. Miri, els únics que podem garantir l'estat de les pensions, que els pensionistes estiguin tranquils, som els homes i les dones del Partit Popular. Perquè, aplicant una política absolutament*

diferent, una política econòmica sanejada podrem fer créixer el país [...] [EG96, 0:10:18]

'[...] During the time of these debates there will be one hundred and twenty unemployed people more. You have increased the public deficit so that now it is difficult for us to reach to the conditions of Maastricht. *Miri*, the only ones who can ensure the conditions of pensions, so that pensioners can relax, are the men and women of the Popular Party. Because, through a completely different policy, a sound economic policy we will be able to make the country grow [...]'

As indicated in example (8), Trias uses the marker *miri* to introduce a change of topic in his intervention and to insert, as common practice in electoral debates, electoral propaganda in favour of his party.

d) *Introduction of an argument.* These markers are often used to introduce arguments that support the ideas that the speaker is defending (9):

(9) <C Espasa> *[[No, no, no, si em sembla bé que hi hagi l'AVE. No critico l'AVE, critico la oportunitat]] del primer trajecte a fer [...]*
 '[(No, no, no, I think the high speed train is good. I'm not criticizing the train, I'm criticizing the opportunity)] of the first journey [...]'

<C Borrell> *[[Si vol parlem d'aquest tema]], si vol parlem d'aquest tema monogràficament. La millor explicació que hi ha sobre aquest tema l'ha donat un català, diguent que_ *Miri*, parli amb qualsevol enginyer ferroviari, amb qualsevol expert en transport, i li dirà que a l'any vuitanta-sis, vuitanta-set, vuitanta-vuit la inversió ferroviària prioritària a Espanya era Despeñaperros, cent vint per cent d'ocupació, tots els ports del sud passant per un coll de botella, no hi havia cap dubte que el tren que es tenia que fer era el Madrid-Sevilla. [[Com fer-lo?]].* [EG93, 0:13:44]

'[[If you want to talk about this issue]], if you wish we can talk about this issue exclusively. The best explanation on this topic has been provided by a Catalan citizen, saying that_ *Miri*, talk to any train engineer, with any expert in transportation, and they will say that the priority investment in Spain in nineteen eighty-six, eighty seven and eighty-eight was Despeñaperros, one hundred and twenty percent occupation, all the passes in the South passing through a bottleneck, there was no doubt that the railway to implement was Madrid-Seville. [[How could this be done?]].'

This case shows how Borrell uses the marker *miri* to emphasize that any expert in the topic would agree with his comments.

e) *Introduction of a counter-argument*. Similarly, in many cases, the function of the markers is to present a counter-argument that refutes the statements or proposals of another participant in the debate:

- (9) <C Colom> *Si, només per precisar. El candidat senyor Pujol ha parlat, sempre ens té acostumats a dir que Catalunya va bé, que va millor. Escolti'm, expliqui'ls, si us plau, als pagesos del sector lleter de tot Catalunya com està anant... o als pagesos del sector de la fruita seca [...] o expliqui-ho també... a aquests set-cents cinquanta mil ciutadans que, segons un estudi recent, viuen, que viuen a Catalunya, que cobren a l'any menys de cinc-centes mil pessetes d'ingressos, és el límit que la Comunitat Europea considera de pobresa relativa, més d'un dotze per cent de la població.* [EA92, 0:42:03]

Yes, just for the sake of specification. Candidate Pujol has talked, he usually says Catalonia is doing well, is doing better. *Escolti'm*, why don't you explain, please, to the farmers of the dairy sector of all Catalunya how things are going... or to farmers of the dried fruit sector [...] or explain also ... to the seven hundred and fifty thousand citizens who, according to a recent study, live, who live in Catalonia, and have an annual income lower than five hundred thousand pesetas, the limit of what the EU considers relative poverty, more than twelve per cent of the population.'

In example (10), *escolti'm* clearly marks the beginning of Colom's counter-argument to Pujol.

PRAGMATIC-DISCURSIVE FUNCTION OF THE MARKERS: INDICATORS OF POWER AND POLITENESS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPEAKERS

Once presented the role of the markers as discourse organizers, in this section we will analyze their function as indicators of the power relationship among the participants in electoral debates. We have already mentioned that this function is closely related to linguistic politeness, since the elements analyzed are characterized by introducing acts that threaten the interlocutor's face.

More specifically, these markers may precede: FTAs affecting the addressee's positive face, i.e., acts that put in jeopardy the image that each individual possesses of himself and wants to be acknowledged and reinforced by the other members of the community (in our corpus there are accusations, criticisms and refutations); FTAs affecting the addressee's negative face, i.e., acts against the individual's will of avoiding his actions from being stopped by the others (in the debates analyzed we have found commands and warnings); and neutral acts

from the point of view of politeness, i.e., acts that do not involve a threat for the addressee's face (either because they are acts that describe facts, acts that do not threaten the addressee's face but the speaker's, face-enhancing acts or acts potentially impolite that incorporate some kind of mitigating strategy that prevents the impoliteness).

Introducers of FTAs affecting the addressee's positive face

The most aggressive speech acts as regards the addressee's face are those acts that threaten their positive face, since they are impolite acts that explicitly manifest a negative attitude of the speaker towards the addressee (Haverkate 1994: 78). In our corpus, among the impolite acts introduced by the markers analyzed we have found mainly accusations, criticisms and refutations, although sometimes the limits of this kind of acts are not clearly defined. Observe the following examples:

- (11) <C Rahola> [...] *I senyor Trias de Bes, vostè no s'ha llegit el Pacte d'Ajuria Enea: sortida dialogada, reinserció, unitat de plantejaments. Escolti'm, ho estant vulnerant tot, tot, de manera que, com a mínim, mmm, que li passin el Pacte d'Ajuria Enea i el Pacte de Madrid i [(venrà fins a quin punt)].* [EG96, 1:33:31]

'[...]and Mr Trias de Bes, you have not read the Pact of Ajuria Enea: solution through dialogue, reinsertion, unity of approaches. *Escolti'm*, you are damaging everything, everything so that, at least, mmm, the Pact of Ajuria Enea and the Pact of Madrid were passed [(you'll see to what extent)].'

In (11), Rahola introduces by means of the marker *escolti'm* the accusation against Trias party (*Partit Popular*) of breaking the anti-terrorist pacts. On the other hand, example (12) shows how Serra uses *miri* to structure his criticism:

- (12) <C Serra> *En el senyor Molins li diré que ells volen ser la clau, però no saben quina porta volen obrir, la del poder del PP, ja ho donen per fet. Miri, eh; senyor Molins, quan es negocia rendir sense lluitar, el preu que és l'únic que estan pensant, quin seria el preu del suport, es negocia a la baixa.* [EG96, 1:50:11]

'To Mr: Molins I'll say that they want to be the key, but they don't know which door they want to open, that of PP's power, they already take for granted. *Miri, eh;* Mr Molins, when one negotiates surrender without a fight, the price that is the only thing you are thinking about, which would be the price of support, you're negotiating from a position of weakness.'

Finally, *escolti*, in (13), preceded by the conjunction *però* ('but'), introduces a refutation by Pujol against a previous utterance by Vidal-Quadras:

- (13) <C Vidal-Q.> ... *onze mil vuit-cents* [(*són les xifres que*)]
 '...eleven thousand eight -hundred [(those are the figures that)]'
 <C Pujol> [(*No, no, escolti, un moment, miri, doncs vostè*)] *segurament l'han informat malament...*
 [(No, no, *escolti*, one moment, *miri*, then] you probably you have been misinformed ...'
 <C Vidal-Q.> *Sí, sí.*
 'Yes, yes.'
 <C Pujol> ... *o la persona que l'ha ensenyat o vostè mateix no sap llegir el pressupost. Però escolti, les dades són clares, cinquanta-un mil milions de pessetes és el pressupost de medi ambient.* [EA92, 0:50:50].
 '...or the person who has shown them to you or you can't read the budget. But *escolti*, the figures are clear, fifty one million pesetas is the budget for environment.'

Introducers of FTAs affecting the addressee's negative face

Among the threats to the addressee's negative face, orders and appeals are considered prototypical acts (Haverkate 21). They are non-polite acts, though not necessarily impolite, typical of situations in which the speakers seem annoyed. Orders (14), and to a lesser extent warnings (15), are the only threatening acts to the addressee's negative face preceded by the elements analyzed:

- (14) <C Espasa> *Digui'm sí o no, desapareix o no?* [(*Desapareix la N-II com a nacional?*)]
 'Say yes or no, does it disappear or not? [(Does the N-II disappear as a national road?)]'
 <C Borrell> [(*No, no desapareix la N-II*)]. *No, naturalment que no desapareix. I miri, agafi un mapa (¿zzzz?) i ho mirarà.*
 [(No, THE N₂ does not disappear)]. No., of course it does not disappear. And *miri*, take a map (¿zzzz?) and you will see it.'
 <C Espasa> *Com pot ser que no desapareixi si s'està construint una autopista.* [EG93, 0:21:48]
 'How can it be that it does not disappear if a motorway is being built there.'
 (15) <C Trias> *És que Catalunya és de Convergència? Catalunya és molt més important que Convergència, Catalunya és de tots, senyor Molins.* [(1)]
 'Does Catalonia belong to Convergència? Catalonia is much

more important than *Convergència*, Catalonia belongs to everybody, Mr Molins. [(And)]

<C Molins> [(*Mm, mm, sí*)]
 '[(*Mm, mm, yeah*)]

<C Trias>... *i nosaltres la defensarem* [(*aferrissadament. I, escolti'm, senyor Molins, deixi'm acabar*)] (<*gest alçant la mà per intentar aturar Molins i poder parlar*>). [EG96, 1:02:53]
 '... and we will defend it [(above all. And, *escolti'm*, Mr Molins, let me finish)] (<raising his hand to stop Molins and to be able to speak >).'

In example (14), Borrell gives an order, introduced by the marker *miri*, to his addressee. On the other hand, in (15) we find the marker *escolti'm* that introduces a warning by Trias to Molins to let him go on speaking.

Introducers of neutral acts form the point of view of politeness

In addition to the speech acts that threaten the addressee's positive or negative face, the markers from perception verbs may also precede utterances that we have considered as neutral from the point of view of politeness. In this sense, our intention has not been to defend the idea that there are absolutely neutral speech acts, but to affirm that, from the point of view under analysis, they are speech acts that do not involve any threat for the addressee's face.

From this viewpoint, among the neutral speech acts we can distinguish different types: those acts that describe facts or through which the speakers organize their discourse; speech acts that do not threaten the addressee's but the speaker's own face; speech acts that Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) calls face-enhancing acts; and, finally, mitigating threatening acts to the addressee's face, used mainly by the debate moderators.

In example (16) we can observe the marker introducing a speech act that describes the facts, whereas in (17) the marker precedes an utterance with which the participant organizes his discourse:

(16) <C Molins> *Gràcies. Bé, nosaltres, vostè ho deia, no?, que ara explicarem això del "café para todos". Viam, quan es fa la Constitució es parla de nacionalitats, regions. Però resulta que comença, amb la UCD, immediatament després del 20f, curiosament, i amb el recolzament del Partit Socialista, l'aplicació del "café para todos".* [EG96, 0:48:28]

'Thank you. Well, we, you said that, didn't you? now we will explain that of "*café para todos*" [literally, 'coffee for everyone' in Spanish]. *Viam*, when the Constitution appears, it considers nationalities, regions. But then it starts, with the UCD party, just

after February 20, funny enough, and with the support of the socialist Party, the application of “*café para todos*.”

- (17) <C Molins> *Viam, simplement dos minuts per lo_ lo_ mig minut per lo de bons col·laboradors del_ del govern socialista. Miri, senyor Serra, mai, fins que Convergència ha arribat, vostès han fet la política que s'ha fet al llarg d'aquests dos anys i mig. Miri, en tota la història democràtica, des de l'any 77 mai havien conseguit una cosa tan senzilla com que quadrés el pressupost.* [EG96, 0:29:24]

‘*Viam*, just two minutes for that_ for that_.... half a minute for that of good collaborators with_ with the socialist government. *Miri*, Mr Serra, never, until Convergència arrived, did you achieve the policy which has been enacted over the last two years and a half. *Miri*, throughout the democratic history, since 1977 never had we managed such a simple thing as tallying the budget.

In example (16), Molins uses *viam* to introduce a short description of a specific point of the Constitution. In (17), Molins uses the same marker to outline the details of his intervention in front of the other participants in the debate.

With respect to the speech acts considered as neutral because they do not threaten the addressee’s face but that of the speaker, they are acts that involve commitment and, therefore, endanger the negative face of the person who issues them (18):

- (18) <C Serra> [...]*I ara quan vostè ha dit, eh; la culpa la tenen...perquè tenen una esclera oberta a la negociació, [...] Miri, [(estem en el Pacte d'Ajuria Enea)],*

‘[...] And now when you have said, eh; it’s their fault... because you have a breach in the negotiation, [...] *Miri*, [(we are in the Pact of Ajuria Enea)],’

- <C Moderadora> [(*Senyor Serra*)]_

‘[(Mr Serra)]_’

- <C Serra> *...el Pacte de Madrid i no negociarem mai perquè estem vigilats per ells (<assenyala la resta de participants amb el dit>) mentre no deixin de matar, i això ho farem tots els demòcrates que estem en el Pacte d'Ajuria Enea i de Madrid.* [EG96, 1:36:40]

‘...the Pact of Madrid and we will never negotiate because we are being observed by them (<points to the other participants with his finger >) while they do not stop killing, and all the democrats who are in the Pact of Ajuria Enea and of Madrid will do that.’

Example (18) shows how Serra uses marker *miri* to confirm his commitment of no pact with ETA terrorists, mortgaging, in this sense, his freedom of action.

With respect to face-enhancing acts, like for example congratulations and acknowledgements, in electoral debates such acts can be used to enhance the speaker's face and party, like in example (19), or in general enhancing acts, which in our corpus mainly refer to all the Catalan people (20):

(19) <C Moderador> *D'acord. Senyor Borrell.*

Right, Mr Borrell.'

<C Borrell> *Miri; el tema de la coresponsabilitat fiscal, si alguna possibilitat té de tirar endavant, és gràcies als socialistes catalans, no s'arribarà a bon port si no és gràcies a nosaltres, gràcies als diputats socialistes de Catalunya, i gràcies al plantejament polític que hem fet, fem i farem els socialistes de Catalunya.*
[EG93, 0:34:27]

'*Miri*, the topic of fiscal co-responsibility, if any possibility of going on it is thanks to the Catalan socialists; it won't come to any good end were it not for us, thanks to the socialist deputies from Catalonia, and thanks to the political ideas we have formulated, formulate and will formulate.'

(20) <C Pujol> *[(No, no_ no, d'acord, d'acord, era p_)] exacte. Mirin, primer punt, i em complan de: d'afegir-me en això, òbviament, òbviament i afortunadament, eh; aquest és un país que el tirem endavant entre tots. Això queda clar.* [EA95, 0:14:41]

'[(No, no_ no, right, right, it was p_)] right. *Mirin*, first point, and I'm pleased to join in that, obviously, obviously and fortunately, eh; this is a country that advances thanks to everybody. That is clear.'

Example (19) shows how *miri* introduces a face-enhancing act by Borrell towards his party, the PSC (*Partit Socialista de Catalunya*). However in (20), the face-enhancing act that Pujol introduces with the marker *mirin* is not only addressed to him and his political party, but it includes the speaker and the addressees, both the direct addressees and their parties and the real target, the voters and all Catalanian people.

All in all the mainstay of the acts introduced by markers we have classified as neutral are speech acts that could represent an attack on the addressee's face but that appear accompanied by mitigating strategies that smooth or even cancel out their threatening effect. These mitigating strategies may range from apologizing or thanking to the use of verb forms like the first person in the plural or the conditional (21):

(21) <C Pujol> *[...] i és una falsetat, perdoni, és una_ dispensi, eh? És una falsetat,*

'[...] and it is false, sorry, it is_ sorry, eh? It is false.'

- <C Vidal-Q.> *No he dit que fos de publicitat, senyor Pujol. [(Ecolti els altres candidats)]*
 'I have not said that it was publicity, Mr Pujol. [(Listen to the other candidates)]'
- <C Pujol> *[(dues falsedats la del medi ambient)]...*
 '[(two lies, that of the environment)] ...'
- <C Moderadora> *[(Aviam, sisplau, un moment, un moment, per ordre de)]*
peticions, havia estat el senyor Ribó i, en qualsevol cas, després
seria Teresa Sandoval i acabaríem aquesta primera ronda
perquè hauríem de fer una pausa per donar pas a l'avanç
informatiu. Senyor Ribó. [EG96, 0:46:09] [(Aviam, please, one
moment, one moment, one moment, in turn)] requests, there
 was Mr Ribó and, in any case, then it would be Teresa Sandoval
 and we should finish this first turn because we should have a
 break for the news headlines, Mr Ribó.'

Example (21) shows the marker *aviam* which introduces an interruption followed by an order by the moderator mitigating by *sisplau* ("please") and by the use of the conditional tense.

In fact, in our corpus, the moderators are the participants in the debate who make a greater use of these threatening acts with compensatory strategies.

RESULTS

In this section we present the quantitative results obtained from the analysis of the corpus relative to the pragmatic-discursive functions of the markers analyzed.

Discourse organizers

As discourse organizers and, in particular, in relation to discourse structure, Table 1 shows specific data of the general structural function of these markers in our corpus:⁵

⁵ Table 1 also includes cases that can be considered as peripheral, "to join turns/acts," that is, examples where it is difficult to establish if the marker's function is to join turns or acts, or if they rather fulfill a double function in this sense.

TABLE 1
GENERAL STRUCTURAL FUNCTION

	<i>Aviam</i>	<i>A veure</i>	<i>Miri</i>	<i>Escolti</i>	Total markers
Joins turns	7 (58.4%)	17 (70.8%)	19 (22.3%)	25 (27.5%)	68 (32.1%)
Joins acts	5 (41.6%)	5 (20.8%)	65 (76.5%)	62 (68.2%)	137 (64.6%)
Joins t/a	—	2 (8.4%)	1 (1.2%)	4 (4.3%)	7 (3.3%)
Total ^a	12 (100%)	24 (100%)	85 (100%)	91 (100%)	212 (100%)

The main function of these markers in electoral debates is that of linking speech acts within someone's turn of talk (almost 65%, i.e., 137 out of 212 cases). This superiority in linking speech acts is directly related to the fact that, as we will see, the markers analyzed develop functions relative to the discourse topic and, more specifically, to the arguments that each speaker introduces within his/her speaking turn (table 2):

TABLE 2
DISCOURSE ORGANIZERS

	<i>Aviam</i>	<i>A veure</i>	<i>Miri</i>	<i>Escolti</i>	Total
Turn distribution	1 (8.3%)	13 (54.2%)	—	1 (1.2%)	15 (7.2%)
Keeping turn	—	2 (8.3%)	1 (1.2%)	9 (9.9%)	15 (7.2%)
Endeavour to take other's turn	—	2 (8.3%)	—	9 (9.9%)	11 (5.2%)
TURN	1 (8.3%)	17 (70.8%)	1 (1.2%)	19 (21%)	38 (17.9%)
Introduction of topic	5 (41.7%)	5 (21%)	17 (20%)	2 (2.2%)	29 (13.8%)
Progression of topic	2 (16.7%)	—	14 (16.5)	7 (7.7%)	23 (10.9%)
Change of topic	1 (8.3%)	—	(12.9%)	6 (6.5%)	18 (8.5%)
Argument	2 (16.7%)	1 (4.1%)	16 (18.8%)	12 (13.2%)	31 (14.7%)
Counter-argument	1 (8.3%)	1 (4.1%)	26 (30.6%)	45 (49.4%)	73 (34.4%)
TOPIC	11 (91.7%)	7 (29.2%)	84 (98.8%)	72 (79%)	174 (82.1%)
TOTAL ORGANIZING FUNCTION	12 (100%)	24 (100%)	85 (100%)	91 (100%)	212 (100%)

Table 2 indicates that, in this genre, the markers analyzed perform basically organizing functions relative to the topic, 82.1% of the cases,

whereas the functions relative to speaking turn do not exceed 17.9%. With respect to the sub-functions, the most important function is the introduction of counter-arguments (ca. 35% of the total of cases), followed by the introduction of arguments (ca. 15%).

Indicators of relations between speakers

With respect to the role of the perception-verb markers as indicators of the relations between the speakers, Table 3 shows that most of the elements from the corpus are used to introduce FTAs affecting the addressee's positive face:⁶

TABLE 3
INDICATORS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPEAKERS

	<i>Aviam</i>	<i>A veure</i>	<i>Miri</i>	<i>Escolti</i>	Total
FTAs to addressee's positive face	3 (25%)	9 (37.5%)	52 (61.2%)	71 (78%)	135 (63.7%)
FTAs to addressee's negative face		1 (4.1%)	7 (8.2%)	13 (14.3%)	21 (9.9%)
Neutral acts	9 (75%)	13 (54.1%)	23 (27%)	7 (7.7%)	52 (24.5%)
Truncations	—	1 (4.1%)	3 (3.5%)	—	4 (1.9%)
TOTAL	12 (100%)	24 (100%)	85 (100%)	91 (100%)	212 (100%)

In particular, 135 out of the 212 elements analyzed fulfill this function, that is, 63.7%. The other two functions cannot be compared in importance, although the introduction of neutral acts is also remarkable reaching 24.5% of the markers studied. It should be noted that, even though the information does not appear itemized in the table, among the neutral acts, almost half of them (25 cases) correspond to mitigated threatening acts, mainly interruptions and orders with mitigating strategies by the moderators. Finally, the numbers show that less than 10% of the total of analyzed markers are used in our corpus to introduce threatening act to the negative face of the addressee.

⁶ The cell in Table 3 labelled "truncation" indicates the cases where the sentence starting by the marker is not finished by the speaker, therefore we cannot know which type of act they would introduce.

Therefore, with these data from the quantitative analysis, we can state that the most relevant pragmatic-discursive functions of perception-verb markers in the electoral debates studied are used:

- to join acts within a turn of talk;
- to introduce arguments and, mainly, counter-arguments in the participants' interventions;
- to precede threatening acts to the positive face of the addressee, impolite acts.

Upon identifying these especially significant functional characteristics, we consider appropriate to assign a relative value to the percentages obtained by the markers in each feature, which has allowed us to observe the degree of manifestation of these characteristics in each one of the elements analyzed. In particular, we have applied the following proportional valuation:

- 0, if the feature does not appear at all
- 1, if it appears from 1% to 25%
- 2, if it appears from 26% to 50%
- 3, if it appears from 51% to 75%
- 4, if it appears from 76% to 99%
- 5, if it appears always

Table 4 shows the data obtained when assigning these relative values:

TABLE 4
FUNCTIONAL FEATURES OF MARKERS

	<i>Aviam</i>	<i>A Veure</i>	<i>Miri</i>	<i>Escolti</i>
Join ACTS	2 (41.6%)	1 (20.8%)	4 (76.4%)	3 (68.2%)
Show argumentative and counter-argumentative nature	1 (25%)	1 (8.2%)	2 (49.4%)	3 (62.6%)
Introduce FTAs to addressee's positive face	1 (25%)	2 (37.5%)	3 (61.2%)	4 (78%)
TOTAL	1.3	1.3	3	3.33

These data show a clear difference between *aviam* and *a veure*, on one hand, and *miri* and *escolti*, on the other. In fact, these markers,

from active perception verbs, display much higher values in the main functions, that is, they show a greater argumentative and counter-argumentative force and more impoliteness and aggressiveness towards the addressee, than the markers from passive perception verbs. On the other hand, *escolti* and *miri* are also the most numerous elements in our corpus, as shown in Table 5, where we can see that, jointly, they exceed 80% of the total of occurrences of markers:

TABLE 5
GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF MARKERS

	<i>Aviam</i>	<i>A Veure</i>	<i>Miri</i>	<i>Escolti</i>	Total
Occurrences	12	24	85	91	212
Percentage	5.6%	11.3%	40.1%	43%	100%

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA: IMPLICIT ARGUMENTATION
AND POLITICAL (IM)POLITENESS

As we have already mentioned, the dominance of linking-turn markers is related to the development of the topic, in particular to argumentation and counter-argumentation within the speaker's turn of talk. In fact, in electoral debates, the order and duration of the interventions are agreed between the political parties and the television channel before the debate and depending on the parliamentary representation of each party. In this way, the structural rigidity of the event compels the participants to long turns or speech moves.

The fact that the greatest number of the markers analyzed is used in electoral debates to introduce arguments and, above all, counter-arguments defines another characteristic of this discursive genre: electoral debates are non-cooperative debates. Therefore, the participants do not try to convince their opponents about the suitability of their proposals, but to manifest dialectic superiority over their opponents as a metaphor of their political superiority and governing capability.

The argumentative superstructure underlying the dialog in electoral debates intends, through discourse, to get a given response from the addressee (Perelman & Olbretchts-Tyteca 1958), and, in this political genre, to obtain the citizens' vote. From this point of view, the logical arguments and counter-arguments are often insufficient to seduce the voter and then certain linguistic resources related to the dialogic nature of the debate become essential.

According to Cuenca (1995: 25), we can distinguish two groups of linguistic and discourse resources related to argumentation:

- a) resources related to the rhetorical and logical structure (confrontation of arguments and counter-arguments to reach a conclusion), like, for example, the use of logical connectors or contrastive lexical cohesion;
- b) resources related to the dialog character of argumentation (relationship between speaker and addressee), among which are the deictic personal references, forms of address or marks of sentence modality.

And in the second group, among the resources related to the dialectic relationship between speaker and addressee, is where we can include the markers based on perception verbs that, as characteristic elements of conversation, appear in multi-managed oral argumentations, like in the case of debates. In addition, the distinction presented by Cuenca allows us to define an implicit or secondary argumentation, i.e., that structured by the dialogic resources, and in this case by the markers analyzed in this work; in the political-discursive arena, this type of argumentation gains special relevance as it contributes to create a feeling of confidence and superiority over the opponent and control of the situation that the politician wants to project over the citizen.⁷

If we observe the following examples from this point of view, we can see the force of these elements on the speech act:

- (22) <C Rahola> ...*Deu n'hi do, com s'assemblen en determinades coses, per exemple, pel que fa al model d'Espanya. Miri, escolti'm, no ens vinguin ara: amb fer actes de fe de catalanitat. Jo no dubto de la seva catalanitat, m; que_ que quedi molt clar, estem parlant [assenyala Serra] de projectes polítics, però el seu partit_ ... escolti'm el seu partit ha condemnat a la reserva d'indis d'un dia de català al Senat la nostra llengua nacional, per exemple.* [EG96, 1:12:17]

'...For goodness sake, how alike you are in certain things, for example, regarding the model of Spain. *Miri, escolti'm*, don't come now with acts of faith of Catalanity. I have no doubts about your Catalanity, m; that_ that must be clear, we are talking [points at Serra] about political projects, but your

⁷ Our study in Campos *et al.* (2004) on first person marks shows that they are also implicit argumentation mechanisms with a high influence on the electoral debate, as they emphasize the differences between participants. In fact, the most frequently used marks are *I* (to highlight individual differences) and *exclusive we* (to emphasize differences between political groups).

party_ ...*escolti'm* your party has condemned our national language to the Indian reservation of one day of Catalan at the Senate, for example.¹

- (23) <C Rahola> ...*Deu n'hi do com s'assemblen en determinades coses, per exemple, pel que fa al model d'Espanya. Ø no ens vinguin ara: amb fer actes de fe de catalanitat. Jo no dubto de la seva catalanitat, m.; que_ que quedi molt clar, estem parlant [assenyala Serra] de projectes polítics, però el seu partit_ ... Ø el seu partit ha condemnat a la reserva d'indis d'un dia de català al Senat la nostra llengua nacional, per exemple.*

'...For goodness sake, how alike you are in certain things, for example, regarding the model of Spain. Ø don't come now with acts of faith of Catalinity. I have no doubts about your Catalinity, m.; that_ that must be clear, we are talking [points at Serra] about political projects, but your party_... Ø your party has condemned our national language to the Indian reservation of one day of Catalan at the Senate, for example.'²

These examples show how the argumentative force that emphasizes the speech acts introduced by the markers in (22), becomes diluted in (23), in which we have removed the markers of the original example.

All these reflections related to electoral debates as a non-cooperative exchange lead us to the last function of the perception-verb markers in this political genre: the introduction of threatening acts to the addressee's positive face. In fact, arguing against is attacking, in one way or another, the addressee's face, which takes us to the power and politeness relationships between the speakers.

In this sense, our work has shown that, as Chilton (1990) states, the application of the studies about politeness to discourse analysis can provide significant results. This author considers that the concept of face (Goffman 1967), used by Brown and Levinson, introduces us, at least implicitly, in this field and the two types of face "have political and ethical implications:" the positive face can be related to identity and consensus; the negative face can include, for example, territorial security and freedom of action (Chilton 204). The high occurrence of threatening acts to the addressee's positive face in our study confirms this point of view, since it emphasizes the desire of the politicians that participate in the debate to mark the differences with the other participants. On the other hand, the abundance of such clearly impolite acts, which tend to be avoided in most social situations, shows the convenience that the studies about politeness overcome the limits of ordinary conversation and reveals the need to widen the concept of interlocutors so that it can include multiple audiences, incorporated with a protagonist role by the mass media to political discourse (Chilton 201).

We should not forget that disagreement also plays a role in the conventions of this genre, and it is even essential, since TV viewers/voters rely on the fact that their leaders will manifest their differences with the other politicians (and parties) and will criticize all the things that they, as citizens, consider reprehensible. Without this “co-operative impoliteness,” according to Martín Rojo (2000), it would not be possible the performance of such political-mediatic events. In the same line, Harris points out that in parliamentary debates the lack of politeness is not only accepted but also acknowledged, according to what the participants expect in the process of political confrontation (451).

Some authors like García Pastor relate this reinterpretation of politeness to the potential of domination that this resource implies in the political discourse (17). From this point of view, political (im)politeness would constitute a strategy to show power over the opponent with the intention of gaining the vote of the real target of the message. This means that the attacks to the opponent politicians would get recorded on the citizen’s mind as a sign of interest and concern about their needs and thus, not only justified but positively valued.

It then seems that with respect to the basic strategies of ideological discourse identified by Van Dijk: “to emphasize our positive aspects, to emphasize their negative aspects, to minimize our negative aspects, to minimize their positive aspects,” (57), electoral debates follow those strategies that focus on “the Others.” It consists, then, in emphasizing the negative aspects of the opponents and minimizing their positive aspects, rather than emphasizing our positive aspects. This would explain the low occurrence, among those neutral cases, *dels* face-enhancing acts (much more relevant in other political genres like, for example, in meetings); they are however, strategically distributed along the confrontation and form part of the peculiar political politeness.

Finally, in electoral debates, it is not profitable to attack the negative face of the opponent, since the prohibitions and orders are not meaningful in the context of debates, where they are only allowed to the moderator. In addition, the moderator conditions his/her interventions with mitigating strategies as a sign of respect towards the participants, so that they become neutral acts from the point of view of politeness, which, although important, are far from the relevance of the threatening acts to the addressee’s positive face since moderators participate much less than the politicians.

With respect to the results of the most relevant functions of each marker and their distribution in the corpus: *escolti* and *miri*, the markers from active perception verbs and grammaticalized in the second person in the singular, present more aggressive and discourteous values addressed to the addressee, a fact that evidences

the persistence of the imperative and connative meaning of this markers. In this sense, they present an argumentative functioning more marked than the elements coming from passive perception verbs, *aviam* and *a veure*, which, fixed in the first person in the plural, present more neutral functional features. This means that the fact that 83% of the cases analyzed in our corpus correspond to *escolti* and *miri* is another example of the style that characterizes electoral debates in which counter-argumentation and attack to the politicians become key points.

CONCLUSIONS

The most important conclusions of the analysis presented can be summarized as follows:

- 1) From the point of view of discourse analysis with a critical view, certain oral linguistic elements traditionally forgotten in linguistic studies can provide relevant information.
- 2) The analysis of discourse markers from perception verbs in electoral debates reveals that these elements play an important role as implicit argumentation resources. In this sense, they emphasize the confrontation of the participants, which is organized basically through counter-argumentation and attack to the addressee's face.
- 3) This main function, related to the persistence of the imperative value of the verb forms, presents different degrees in the different markers analyzed: those markers coming from active perception (*miri* and even more *escolti*) structure a greater argumentative force.
- 4) The extension of the theory about linguistic politeness from ordinary conversation to other fields becomes a suitable framework for the analysis of certain types of discourse that, like political discourse, demand a critical perspective. In the case of electoral debates, the constant attack to the addressee's positive face shows the will of politicians of establishing differences.
- 5) The elements studied emphasize a peculiar kind of linguistic (im)politeness that can form part of the ideological characteristics of politicians as professional group and contribute to describe the contextual pattern underlying electoral debates.

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