The Possible Grammaticalization
of Spanish Discourse Marker *o sea*

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Abstract   The current study is based on the hypothesis that one of the most frequently used discourse markers in contemporary Spanish, *o sea*, exhibits the possible process of grammaticalization. Grammaticalization can be defined as a linguistic phenomenon in which a lexical item becomes a grammatical one, or an already grammatical item becomes an even more grammatical one along the process of language change. Through both diachronic and synchronic analyses of frequency of uses, it was shown that there had been a dramatic increase in the frequency of *o sea* specifically in oral contexts, which serves as a trigger for the beginning of grammaticalization (Bybee 2003). Based on this finding, a quantitative corpus analysis of various uses of *o sea* in authentic oral speeches was conducted. The results confirmed that the discourse marker in question revealed most of the characteristics of grammaticalization: 'desemantization' or 'semantic bleaching' shown by the change from a conjunction word to a discourse marker with its semantic meaning equivalent to *es decir* and *a saber*, and to an unmarked filler word with no semantic meaning; 'extension' demonstrated by the fact that *o sea* has gained various pragmatic functions over time; 'decategorization' reflected in some of the innovative ways of writing; and some subtle but noticeable 'phonemic reduction'.

I. Introduction

Language is not fixed; it is constantly changing. Grammaticalization studies have paid primary attention to revealing this language change process by which new linguistic features manifest. Much success is shown in these analyses, and there was a great development as well to find out the common characteristics between various languages through the phenomena shown in individual languages. Likewise, there have been many discussions about the characteristics of the grammaticalization of Spanish in general. However, it seems that few studies have analyzed the grammaticalization process of Spanish discourse markers so far. The present study aims to fill this gap by exploring one of the most commonly used Spanish discourse markers, *o sea*.

Grammaticalization can be defined as "part of the study of language change that is concerned with such questions as how lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions or how grammatical items develop new grammatical functions" (Hopper and Traugott 2003, 1). The present study which is based on this definition of grammaticalization attempts to analyze the process of the structure that already had grammatical functions but becomes even more grammaticalized within the context of the discourse that acquires a new grammatical function. For this purpose, this study discusses the phenomenon of the use of the structure *o sea* as a discourse marker, which has developed a new function from the viewpoint of grammaticalization.

First of all, *o sea* can be grouped with other discourse markers such as *es decir*, *esto es*, and *a saber* in terms of its textual function of 'equivalence', which indicates intra-discursive relationships (Casado Velarde 1991, 90-99), as in (1):

(1) a. Los madrileños, *es decir*, los naturales de Madrid.
     b. No son de Madrid, *esto es*, madrileños.
     c. Se desconoce el autor, *a saber*, quién lo ha hecho.
     d. Él afirma lo contrario, *o sea*, que tiene él la razón.

This study tries to study the expletive use of *o sea* by comparing the frequencies of uses of other discourse markers aforementioned. In addition, it will analyze how the semantic meaning of *o sea* is weakened as it continues its way to an expletive discourse marker. That is, in colloquial contexts *o sea* performs an even more grammatical function that "the phrase is used abusively with expletive value, as pure filler, or else with vague meanings alien to its own" (Seco 1986, cited in Casado Velarde 1991, 91), as shown in (2):

(2) El agua de la piscina estaba helada, *o sea*, y además con muchísimo cloro.

Seco also mentions the concern of Carnicer (1969) regarding this use of *o sea* "that it would appear 'in the mouths of thousands of speakers, without rhyme nor reason and as a filler formula, this fake *o sea*'". Example (2) dates back to 1986 but this non-standard use of *o sea* seems to have started before the 1970s as Seco points to "'*o sea* abuse" as a type of vulgarism in his 1970 work (cf. Seco 1970, cited in Casado Velarde 1991). The present study considers this 'abuse' or over-use of *o sea* as an expletive formula to be related to desemantization or semantic bleaching and focuses on studying the grammaticalization process that *o sea* has possibly gone through via a corpus-based quantitative analysis.

II. Discourse markers and grammaticalization

In order to clarify in what way the *o sea* form was grammaticalized,

the analysis of the grammaticalization of discourse markers, in general, must be preceded. The concept of grammaticalization has been defined as a phenomenon in which a content element that traditionally had a lexical meaning becomes more functional as it loses its lexical meaning. In addition, this concept has been extended, including not only the phenomena in which content elements change to functional elements but also the phenomena in which functional elements change to even more functional or grammatical elements (Heine and Narrog 2010).

According to Wischer (2000, 356), Lehmann (1985) characterizes the grammaticalization process as one of the cyclic waves that go through the following levels:

(3)   discourse > syntax > morphology > morpho-phonemic > zero

Within this cycle, a linguistic element can be more or less grammaticalized. While this subtype of grammaticalization refers to the development of free to more restricted syntactic units that operate at the level of the proposition, the second subtype operates at the textual or discursive level. It refers to the development of textual or discursive markers:

(4)   proposition > text > discourse

As a representative example of the analysis of discourse markers, which can be included in the second subtype of grammaticalization in (4), one can refer to Schiffrin (1987). This author analyzes that some adverbs, interjections, and particles support the progress of discourse in English and names expressions belonging to such categories 'discourse markers', which are "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987, cited in Schwenter 1996). Specifically, Fraser (1999, 936) summarized the characteristics of discourse markers as a linguistic

expression that:

> (5)   a. has a central meaning that can be enriched by the context
>   b. indicates the relationship that the speaker intends between the expression that introduces the discourse marker and the previous statement

According to Schwenter (1996, 857) discourse markers are often used (i) to initiate discourse, (ii) to indicate topic turns, (iii) to hold turns of talk, (iv) to mark background and foreground information, and/or (v) to signal the relationship between propositions. As the author affirms citing Brinton (1990, 48), "any one marker may have a wide variety of meanings which overlap with the meanings of other markers" (Schwenter 1996, 857). As such, studies of discourse markers have analyzed the core meaning of each of them (Schourup 1999) and with these core meanings, the (sub)classification of the markers was attempted. The present study will try to analyze in which subcategory the discourse marker in question *o sea* can be included in the following chapter.

III. Explanatory markers: *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea*

The three discourse markers — *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea* —[1] can be grouped as one subtype of discourse markers according to their core meaning. The definition of the Real Academia Española (henceforth, RAE) of each one is as follows:

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1) Casado Verlarde (1991) groups *esto es* with the other three markers to this subcategory. However, the present study does not include this discourse marker due to the fact that (i) it does not exist as an individual entry in the dictionary, and (ii) it is difficult to differentiate it in the corpus with the structure where *esto* is used as a subject and *es* as a copulative verb: "*Pienso que esto es una inversión económica* […]" (CdE).

(6) a. *es decir*: Expresión usada para dar a entender que se va a explicar
mejor o de otro modo lo que ya se ha expresado.

b. *a saber*: 1. Se usa para indicar que a continuación se explica o se
precisa lo expuesto antes. *Cuatro son los puntos cardinales, a
saber: norte, sur, este y oeste*

c. *o sea*: Expresión. *es decir*.

All the discourse markers of this group have a common character: all of them are used to better explain the previous utterance. Furthermore, as can be seen from the definition of *o sea* in (6c), it is plausible to assume that *es decir* is the most central or least peripheral marker of this subtype which I dub the 'explanatory markers'. Although it cannot be verified that *o sea* became more expletive through the dictionary definition, it is at least possible to clarify that it did have a more semantic meaning before its development along the grammaticalization process.

To discover the possible grammaticalization process of *o sea*, the present study conducts analyses based on both diachronic and synchronic corpus using the *Corpus del Español* (henceforth, CdE). First of all, a considerable increase in the frequency of the use is believed to be the trigger for grammaticalization (cf. Bybee 2003). Therefore, it is important to demonstrate that there was an increase in the use of *o sea* to verify the possibility of grammaticalization. Secondly, as Casado Velarde (1991) mentions that the expletive use of *o sea* usually appears in the colloquial context, a comparison of the frequency in the written context versus the oral context in the 20th-century corpus will be conducted.

An analysis of the diachronic frequency of use of the three discourse markers is summarized below:
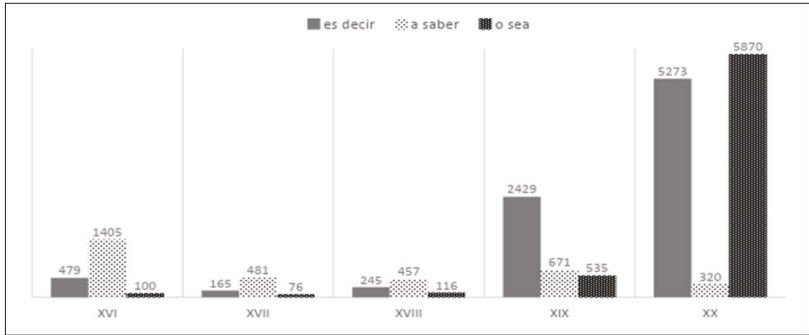
<Figure 1> Diachronic frequency analysis of *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea* (CdE)

As can be seen in Figure 1, *a saber* was the most frequently used form during the 16th to 18th centuries. Since the 19th century, *es decir* started to be the most dominant marker (2,429 times) and it is still appearing quite frequently with the number of 5,273 times in the last century. *O sea*, on the other hand, only appeared less than 150 times until the 18th century and 535 times in the following century, but its frequency increased markedly in the 20th century, surpassing the use of *es decir* (5,870 times). The dramatic increase in the frequency of *o sea* observed in this diachronic corpus analysis can verify one of the main characteristics of grammaticalization (cf. Bybee 2003).
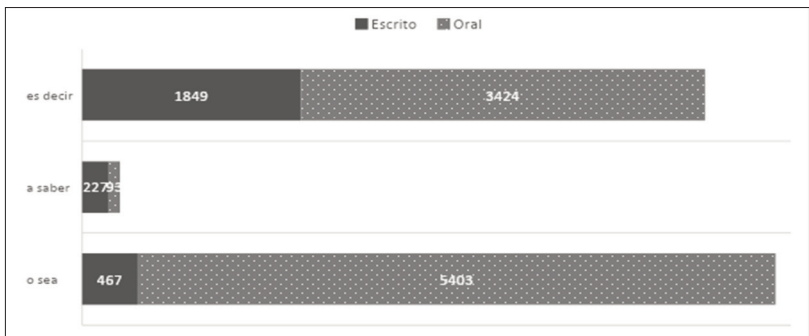
<Figure 2> Synchronic frequency analysis of *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea* in the 20th century (CdE)

Through the comparative analysis of the frequency of use of the three markers in question, it can be confirmed that *a saber* is no longer used very frequently. It had 320 tokens where only 93 were used in the oral context and the rest, 227 tokens in the written context. In the case of *es decir*, within 5,273 tokens, 1,849 tokens are from the written context while the other 3,424 examples are from the oral context. Although its oral use is shown with some frequency, the comparison with *o sea* reflects that *es decir* is still preferred to the other in the written register. The exhaustive use of *o sea* in the oral context — 5,403 tokens out of 5,870 tokens in total — may function as a proof of the second stage of its grammaticalization process, the development of the grammatical structure to an even more grammatical one.

Through the diachronic and synchronic analysis of the explanatory markers *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea*, it can be confirmed that the frequency of use of *o sea* increased dramatically in the 20th century and speakers use *o sea* much more frequently in the oral context than in the written context. The present study assumes that these two factors — the dramatic increase in the frequency of use and the exhaustive use in the oral context — function as the trigger for the grammaticalization of *o sea*.

If the aforementioned hypothesis is on the right track, *o sea* can be expected to display some or all of the features of grammaticalization that Heine (2003, 579) explains:

(7) a. Desemanticization, or "bleaching", semantic reduction: loss in meaning content
b. Extension or context generalization: use in new contexts
c. Decategorialization: loss in morphosyntactic properties characteristic of the source forms, including the loss of independent word status (cliticization, affixation)
d. Erosion, or "phonetic reduction": loss in phonetic substance

Each of these characteristics will be discussed in the following section with the corpus data analyzed for the purpose of the current study.

IV. The expletive marker: *o sea*

1. Previous studies

Schwenter (1996) categorized the uses of *o sea* into (i) connective, (ii) epistemic, and (iii) both connective and epistemic at the same time. Connective usage guides listeners to the correct semantic interpretation between propositions, which equals to the term 'explanatory' usage dubbed in the present work. On the other hand, the epistemic use shows the degree of commitment of the speakers to what they say, increasing the modal content of their utterances. Schwenter relates these two uses to English markers: the first (connective/explanatory) with *that is* or *so*, and the second (epistemic) with *maybe* or *I guess*. Schwenter asserts that *o sea* displays many of the characteristics of grammaticalization and that it retains specific elements of its propositional meaning even when extended to conjunctive, metalinguistic, or epistemic functions. Therefore, it allows us a polysemic perspective that can relate the uses of *o sea* as an expletive discourse marker with those of its original semantic meaning.

Following Schwenter's (1996) analysis of English discourse markers in equivalent relation to *o sea*, it would be possible to relate *like* regarding their expletive uses. According to Meehan (1991, 37) "some of the meanings associated with the word *like* reflect developments in the language and suggest that the lexical aspects of the word are changing in the direction of more grammatical function". Meehan states that *like* is in the first stage of grammaticalization, because its various lexical meaning, which has survived over time, still coexist with newer forms in the most generalized

way. That is, the historical meaning of *like*, 'similar to', appears in the oldest documents and is probably the source from which new interpretations such as *approximately*, *as if*, and *for example*, developed. Also, the focusing function (e.g. *She like covered the mirror* (Meehan 1991, 44)); and the quotative (e.g. *I'm like 'What's going on here?'* (Meehan 1991, 46)), which can be considered as expletive uses, are on the way to a more grammatical element in the trajectory of grammaticalization proposed by the author.

Assuming that the grammaticalization process of *o sea* is 'explanatory marker > marker with various functions, especially with expletive value', it would be necessary to analyze the subclasses of the functions that *o sea* has gained over time. The subclassification that follows is based on previous studies and the examples of each subclass are extracted from the data analyzed in the present study:

(8)   a. *o sea* used in the initial position of speech:
– Turn-taking (Schwenter 1996): <u>*o seaaa*</u>, *tío*, *sabes es que sino las matan*
– Offering more information: *de las nueve y cinco*, <u>*o sea*</u>, *las nueve menos uno*
b. *o sea* used in the final position of speech:
– Commenting (Fung and Carter 2007): *calla, calla, que yo llevo desde noviembre,* <u>*o sea*</u>
– Turn-offering (Félix-Brasdefer 2006): *cuando dejas espalda, ¿sabes?,* <u>*o sea*</u>
c. *o sea* used in the medial position of speech:
– Conjunction: *Dame cincuentaaa* <u>*o sea*</u> *ochentaa* <u>*o sea*</u> *cien gramos de patatas*
– Explanatory: *pero lo había grabado todo mal,* <u>*o sea*</u>, *todo estaba en blanco*
– Reinitiating (Félix-Brasdefer 2006): *¿cuáles,* <u>*o sea*</u>, *de qué de estos…?*
– Mitigator (Schwenter 1996): *Sí, sí, pero, pero, un momento, yo sé que contigo no voy a tener NADA* <u>*o sea*</u> *que tú no me vas a quereeer*
– Expletive (Schwenter 1996): *no, a ver, no, es que … es así …* <u>*o sea*</u>, *te lo dijimos* […]

In the initial position, the two functions stand out: turn-taking and offering more information. Schwenter (1996) explains that the function of turn-taking usually entails overlapping speech since the listener tries to stop the speech of their interlocutor and intervenes within their speech. Regarding the function of offering more information, *o sea* is used to correct the previous speech or give more correct information about what the interlocutor has said. The given example shows a situation where the listener corrects the wrong information (e.g. *de las nueve y cinco*) by offering the correct one (e.g. *o sea, las nueve menos uno*).

In the final position, the commenting function and the turn-offering function are found. According to Fung and Carter (2007, 413), discourse markers in the final position "are understood as comments, clarifications or as a posterior reflection". The present paper includes these three functions under the subclass, i.e. the commenting function. On the other hand, *o sea* in the final position can also function to offer the listener a turn. As Félix-Brasdefer (2006, 202) states, in this case, it is important that the speaker's ending is not interrupted by the interlocutor, but rather, *o sea* is used politely to invite the listener to take the next turn to speak.

Lastly, in the medial position, there are the subclasses of conjunction, explanatory, reinitiating, mitigator, and expletive functions. The conjunction subclass is the one that maintains the most semantic value of *o*, which is used "to denote difference, separation or alternative between two or more people, things or ideas; generally, before each of two or more opposing terms; to denote equivalence, meaning *o sea, o lo que es lo mismo*" (RAE). The second subclass that continues to express its semantic value is that of explanatory value, as already mentioned in the previous sections.

Taking into account the decreased relation with the lexical semantic meaning of *o sea*, the other three subclasses — reinitiating, mitigator, and expletive —, it is plausible to consider them as the functions generated as

results of grammaticalization of *o sea*. According to Félix-Brasdefer (2006, 200), *o sea* can establish a textual relationship of coherence when the speaker introduces a portion of the speech that they do not complete because they feel the need to redirect the speech in a different direction or to reinitiate the speech with another linguistic element that seems most appropriate on the part of the speaker. The subclass of mitigators is what Schwenter (1996, 861) explains as an interpersonal function to give politeness to an utterance. In the given example, the speaker uses *o sea* to soften the negative polarity word, *nada*, and mitigate the negative condition expressed previously. The last subclass, the expletive, is the least semantic or the most grammatical as already discussed in the previous sections. In fact, the medial position is the one in which the grammaticalization process of *o sea* can be confirmed with the subclasses showing their more or less semantic and grammatical values.

2. Methodology

In order to analyze the grammaticalization of *o sea*, an analysis was conducted with the *Corpus Oral de Lenguaje Adolescente* (henceforth, COLA), which offers data on the oral speech of Spanish-speaking adolescents from 13 to 19 years of age. The present study only focused on the subcorpus of adolescent speech in Madrid, based on its larger amount of data compared to other subcorpora. The analysis was based on the hypothesis that *o sea* became a more grammatical element, gaining several functions that are not or less related to its original semantic meaning.

Of 77 dialogues analyzed (out of 145 dialogues offered by COLA in total), 634 tokens of *o sea* were found. First of all, the tokens were grouped according to their position within the statement — initial, middle, and final — and then subclassified based on their pragmatic function, as shown in (8). Pragmatic functions were coded taking into account the context of

the dialogues. That is, the speech before and after the statement containing *o sea* were analyzed together to verify its pragmatic function more clearly.

3. Data analysis

As mentioned before, the original function of the *o sea* or its use before the grammaticalization is to better explain what has already been said in the speech. Accordingly, it can be structured as follows:

(9)   A, *es decir / a saber / **o sea***, A'

Therefore, if *o sea* only kept its original semantic function and was not grammaticalized at all, the uses in the initial and final position could be almost inexistent since it needs an antecedent speech that needs more explanation (i.e. A in (9)) or a subsequent speech that provides an additional explanation (i.e. A' in (9)).
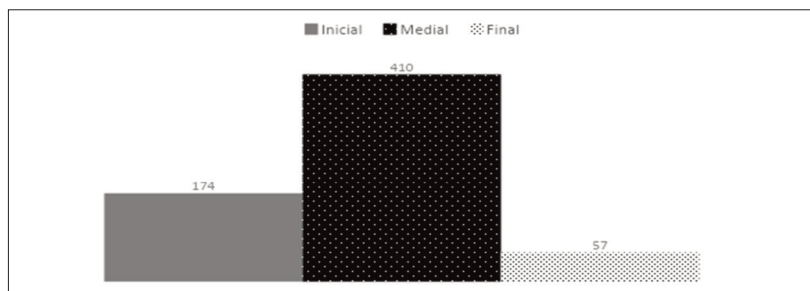
<Figure 3> The use of *o sea* in oral speech (extracted from COLA)

However, as can be seen in Figure 3, there are quite a few tokens in both the initial position and the final position: 174 tokens and 57 tokens, respectively. For that reason, it can be said that the possibility is shown that *o sea* has passed a certain stage(s) of grammaticalization. Furthermore, although most of the uses appeared in the medial position with the number

of 410 tokens, it does not necessarily reflect that *o sea* has not been grammaticalized considerably, because generally the expletive value is most expressed in the medial position. In other words, the reason why the medial position shows the highest frequency is the expletive use, which is the most grammaticalized structure as a result of the possible grammaticalization process that the present paper assumes *o sea* has gone through.

What the following tables demonstrate is the relationship between the position where *o sea* appears within the discourse and its pragmatic functions.

<Table 1> *o sea* used in the initial and final position of the speech

	Initial			Final	
	n	%		*n*	%
Turn-taking	137	78.74%	Turn-offering	8	14.04%
Offering info.	37	21.26%	Commenting	49	85.96%
TOTAL	174	100%	TOTAL	57	100%

In the initial position, the function of turn-taking is shown in most cases, compared to that of responding by offering more information. On the other hand, in the final position, the function of commenting appears much more frequently and there are only eight tokens of turn-offering. When the use of turn-taking in the initial position and turn-offering in the final position are compared, it can be assumed that *o sea* is used more by the speaker with an intent to continue their own speech.

<Table 2> *o sea* used in the medial position of the speech

	Medial	
	n	%
Conjunction	22	5.36%
Explanatory	94	22.93%
Reinitiaing	31	7.56%
Mitigator	43	10.49%
Expletive	220	53.66%
TOTAL	410	100%

In the medial position, where there is the greatest amount of both frequency and subclass, the expletive use exceeds the sum of the other four functions. The order from least to most frequent of the five subclasses is: conjunction > reinitiating > mitigator > explanatory > expletive. In summary, although its original function of explanatory value is still preserved to a certain extent, it can be assumed that *o sea* is already on its way to developing from a grammatical element to an even more grammatical one.

Regarding the conjunction and explanatory functions, it is possible to infer that *o sea* still maintains its semantic value. That being the case, *o sea* seems to have passed two stages of grammaticalization: the first, from a lexical item to a discourse marker, which is a grammatical item; and the second, from the discourse marker with the semantic meaning of the explanatory value to one with multiple values, especially with an expletive value that serves as an unmarked filler word.
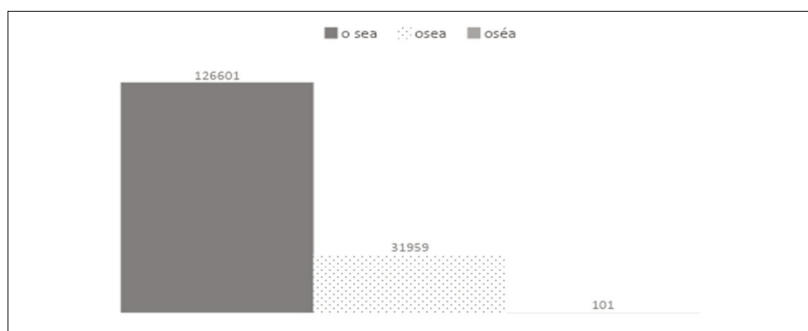
4. General discussion

The diachronic and synchronic analyses of *es decir*, *a saber*, and *o sea*, which are the explanatory markers, show the dramatic increase in the frequency of *o sea* and its exhaustive use in the oral context. It can be said that these two results are evidence of the possible grammaticalization of *o sea* since they function as the trigger for grammaticalization.

Regarding Heine's (2003) characteristics of grammaticalization, it is plausible to relate each of the characteristics to the contemporary use of *o sea*. First of all, the expletive value that lacks the semantic meaning of *o sea* shows desemantization or semantic bleaching. That is, the path from the conjunction and explanatory functions to the expletive function shows that *o sea* is gradually losing its semantic content.

Furthermore, with the fact that *o sea* has gained various pragmatic functions over time, the second characteristic of grammaticalization, extension, can be verified. Contemporary use of *o sea* shows several examples that cannot be substituted for *es decir* or *a saber* that have the same semantic meaning but lack the new uses of *o sea* in given contexts.

The third characteristic, decategorization, means the loss of the morphosyntactic properties. Since *o sea* can appear in all positions within the discourse without any syntactic limitation, it can be affirmed that there is a certain level of decategorization in its use. If it is possible to include a variety of forms as a subtype of decategorization, taking a look at other ways of writing the same discourse marker can give us some insight on the possible decategorization of *o sea*. In fact, various forms of *o sea*, written by native speakers of Spanish can be found quite easily: *o sea*, *osea*, *oséa*, etc. To find out how often Spanish speakers use each of the written forms, a short analysis with CdE was conducted:

<Figure 4> Comparative analysis of the way of writing: *o sea*, *osea*, and *oséa*

In the analysis of the *Web/Dialects* section of CdE, 126,601 tokens of *o sea*, 31,959 tokens of *osea*, and only 101 tokens of *oséa* are shown. Although *o sea* far outranks the two other forms, the second most frequent form *osea* also shows quite a several examples that should not be neglected. In

addition, in the analysis of the *Genre/Historical* section of CdE, it has been found that *oséa* does not have any occurrences throughout the entire time while *osea* only appears in the 20th century for the first time. If speakers opt for *osea* instead of *o sea* for convenience or preference based on the concept of economy of not putting a space between two parts, *o* and *sea*, it is possible to consider the reduction of the form *o sea* > *osea* as another aspect of grammaticalization.

Finally, according to Félix-Brasdefer (2006, 193), *o sea* "is reduced phonologically and shows a range of prosodic contours (e.g. *o sa*, *sa*, *o sea*:)". Through COLA, it was possible to witness the lengthening of the final vowel /a/, because COLA's transcription reflected it in the writing as in *o sea**aaa***. Out of 643 tokens analyzed, only 12 contained the /a/ lengthening in the transcript. Of these 12 tokens, 5 were in the initial position; 3 in the medial position; and 4 in the final position. As these results do not show a significant difference, a future study is needed with this fourth characteristic of grammaticalization, phonemic reduction.

V. Conclusion and future directions

One of the most frequently used discourse markers in contemporary Spanish, *o sea*, shows the possible process of grammaticalization. First of all, it was possible to confirm the reason or trigger for the beginning of grammaticalization: the dramatic rise in use in the oral context. During the first stage of its grammaticalization, *o sea* developed through the process of desemantization from a conjunction word with its basic lexical meaning to a discourse marker with its semantic meaning that is equivalent to *es decir* and *a saber*. Later, with the process of extension, decategorization, and phonemic reduction, it became an even more grammatical marker that has various pragmatic functions, including the expletive value or a

filler with no semantic meaning. Thus, although *o sea* is still used with its semantic meaning or pre-grammaticalization value quite frequently, the increased use with its post-grammaticalization value without its original lexical meaning shows that it is indeed possible to consider the case of *o sea* as an example of grammaticalization. Accordingly, it is also possible to predict the next phase of its grammaticalization process, for example, the reduction in the written form and/or the reduction in the phonemic form.

Possible future studies can be based on more examples, perhaps with an analysis of the corpus of other Spanish-speaking regions, especially in areas such as Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, etc., which COLA already offers. With these data, it would be possible to conduct a comparative analysis related to dialectal variation. In addition, if the recordings of the dialogues in good condition can be made accessible for the researcher, one can attempt a phonetic-phonological analysis that will help to understand the process of phonemic reduction of *o sea* in further detail. Also, as it is considered that young women are most affected by similar linguistic phenomena such as the exhaustive use of *like* in English, a comparative study with other demographic data including gender and age would be worth researching in future works.

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La posible gramaticalización del marcador del discurso español *o sea*

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Resumen　El presente estudio se parte de la hipótesis de que uno de los marcadores del discurso más utilizados en el español contemporáneo, *o sea*, exhibe el posible proceso de gramaticalización. La gramaticalización se puede definir como un fenómeno lingüístico en el que un elemento léxico se convierte en uno gramatical, o un elemento ya gramatical se convierte en uno aún más gramatical a lo largo del proceso de cambio lingüístico. A través de análisis tanto diacrónico como sincrónico de frecuencia de usos, se demostró que ha habido un aumento dramático en el uso de *o sea* específicamente en contextos orales, lo que sirve como un factor desencadenante para el comienzo de la gramaticalización. Con base en este hallazgo, se realizó un análisis de corpus cuantitativo de varios usos de *o sea* en discursos orales auténticos. Los resultados confirmaron que *o sea* revelaba la mayoría de las características de la gramaticalización: 'desemantización' o 'blanqueamiento semántico' que muestra el cambio de una conjunción a un marcador del discurso con su significado semántico equivalente a *es decir* y *a saber*, y luego a una muletilla no marcada sin valor semántico; 'extensión' demostrada por el hecho de que *o sea* ha ganado varias funciones pragmáticas a lo largo del tiempo; 'descategorización' reflejada en algunas de las formas innovadoras de escribir; y alguna 'reducción fonémica' sutil pero notable.

Palabras clave　Gramaticalización, Cambio lingüístico, Marcador del discurso, Muletilla, Análisis de corpus