

Going beyond address forms

Variation and style in the use of the second-person pronouns *tú* and *usted*

María José Serrano

Universidad de La Laguna, Tenerife

The cognitive properties of morphosyntactic choices are at the base of any usage, patterns and tendencies they could possibly reveal; thus, by means of the cognitive properties of salience and informativeness, variation in second-person *tú* and *usted* must be considered as inherently meaningful, implying that each form conveys a different meaning that is used to pursue concrete communicative goals in discursive interaction. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of *tú* and *usted* and their syntactic variants (preverbal, postverbal and omitted) reveals that these forms are unevenly distributed across different textual genres and socioprofessional affiliations of speakers. It may be concluded that *tú* and *usted* contribute toward shaping the different communicative styles on the basis of the cognitive dimensions of objectivity and subjectivity, respectively. Considering these pronouns as meaningful choices by themselves, this study attempts to go beyond the traditional approach that treats them as terms of address, delving into the discursive and cognitive traits which underlie such a variation.

Keywords: address forms, sociolinguistics, style, *tú*, *usted*, variation

1. Variation in the use of second-person singular pronouns *tú* and *usted*

As different ways to index interlocutors during discourse, the Spanish second-person singular pronouns *tú* and *usted* are a case of linguistic variation traditionally approached as terms of address with opposite ‘informal/formal’ or ‘impolite/polite’ meanings, respectively on the basis of some underlying notion of social distance.

However, some studies about these pronouns have tried to overcome the assumption that the most important function they achieve is their alleged correlation with the power and solidarity axis by the way of the relationships established

among speakers, or even with certain psychosocial features such as age, socio-professional status or sex/gender (e.g. Ardehali 1990; Kendall 1981; Martiny 1996; Spencer-Oatey 1996). *Tú* and *usted* are possibly powerful resources for shaping social identities and face (Duszak 2002; Mühlhäusler & Jarré 1990; Stewart 2003), which facilitate the management of the speaker and addressee images in a variable way (Serrano 2001: 265).

Notwithstanding, speakers' address behaviours are not only conditioned by elements such as social factors but they are also dependent on other linguistic functions and communicative goals (Martiny 1996: 772). The interpretation of terms of address is highly dependent on the particular contexts in which interaction takes place (Watts, Ide & Ehlich 1992) and would give rise to diverse or even contradictory solutions (Blas Arroyo 2005: 312).

The choice of any pronoun during a discourse constitutes a *membership categorization* (cf. Sacks 1972; Schegloff 2007) defined as "the way in which conversational interactants use social classifications to describe and provide an abbreviated form of reference for the social actors they invoke, as a kind of reification of sub-conscious observations made in their day-to-day activities" (Stirling & Manderson 2011: 1583). Hence, it can be easily inferred that rather than observing whether the speakers select either *tú* or *usted* according to the social status of the interlocutor, to consider a choice such as the one conditioned by the context or the communicative situation where each one seems more appropriate to be used, is more important (Hummel 2010: 110, 114–115).

Relevant as this topic may be in (socio)linguistics, it has been approached from diverse theoretical angles, e.g. the philological model of Lapesa, the traditional applications of solidarity vs. power dimensions (Brown & Gilman 1960), correlational stratifications considering *tú/usted* as contextual alternatives, and the most modern sociopragmatic and politeness theories (v. Medina Morales 2010: 25–44). Address terms may also be approached following the *indexical orders* proposed by Silverstein (2003: 193–194) that examine the contexts where the usage of a concrete form should be more or less appropriate or normative. *First-order indexicalities* are the observable patterns of use that can become encoded for more significant social meaningfulness (second-order indexicals) and even part of the metapragmatics of a culture (third-order indexicals). Williams and van Compernelle studied the use of the French second-person *tu* and *vous-singular* in electronic environments where social indexicality is usually reduced concluding that even though there is a general preference for the use of *tu* the rate of *vous singular* does not exhibit an important decrease (2009: 378). From that perspective, these forms have been also studied as address strategies in online personal ads (van Compernelle 2008). Moreover, analyses of the variation between *tú* and *usted* have taken advantage of the consideration of these pronouns as iconic or semiotic stylistic features used

by speakers to achieve concrete communicative goals, such as those performed in some advertising media texts with persuasive purposes (cf. Aijón Oliva 2009). Nonetheless, there is still a broader explanation that not only considers the different indexing possibilities of the second-person singular pronouns but also envisages differences at the cognitive level.

Although both *tú* and *usted* are interpreted as second-person singular pronouns, only the former is actually a *real* second person; *usted* resulted from the evolution of the noun phrase *vuestra merced* ('your mercy'), which was used in classic Spanish as a polite form of address with third-person grammatical agreement ('*Usted tiene*'/'*You frml. have*').

It can thus be hypothesized that rather than a simple case of formal variation, the second-person singular pronouns *tú* and *usted* constitute a matter of communicative choice with repercussions not only on the management of the image of the speaker or interlocutor but also on the meaning that is intended to be communicated. The inherent semantic nature of grammar entails that any change in a grammatical form involves a difference in its meaning (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 28–29; García 2009; Langacker 2009; Goldberg 1995: 67), and such an assumption would imply that syntactic constructions with either *tú* or *usted* will convey different ways of indexing the second person during discourse, the latter implying an increase in the iconic distance from the interlocutor which has the power to create meanings at a wide array of levels (Serrano 2006: 69–70). This is consistent with the traditional considerations of *usted* as an address form marked by a formal, polite or distancing function, but allows for the systematization of such a perception from a cognitive viewpoint and at the same time providing a more realistic understanding of its variation with *tú*, far from simple and descriptive social evaluations.

It is necessary to integrate the sociosemiotic level of address-form choices with their discursive-cognitive features to explain the notional grounds of linguistic variation. In this line, given that *tú* – *usted* variation is inherently meaningful, the present study departs from the idea that they may be used to pursue concrete communicative goals that contribute to shaping communicative styles on the basis of the cognitive dimensions of objectivity and subjectivity. Previous studies have proved that the variation of pronominal subjects contributes to developing communicative styles in discursive interaction (cf. Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013; Serrano 2011: 159–173).

The research questions to be answered in this study are as follows:

- a. Do the cognitive salience of the pronouns *tú* and *usted* give rise to different meanings in discursive interaction?
- b. Do the informativeness of the pronouns *tú* and *usted* give rise to different meanings in discursive interaction?

- c. Is there any demonstrable patterned connection between the choice of *tú* and *usted* and their variants across different textual genres and the various socio-professional affiliations of speakers?
- d. Is this variation contributing to creating different communicative styles?

The first step in this investigation will be to explore the cognitive properties (salience and informativeness) of the morphosyntactic variants of the second-person pronouns *tú* and *usted* (Section 2). The methodology employed will be described in Section 3. In the subsequent sections (4, 5 and 6) the distribution and frequencies of these pronouns as *absolute* and *relative* variables in different texts and socioprofessional affiliations of speakers will allow to determine the nature of the communicative style created through them.

2. Variation and meaning of pronominal subjects

2.1 Salience and informativeness during discourse

To adequately understand the formal variation of pronominal subjects in Spanish, it is necessary to put forward that any linguistic choice generates a meaning in conjunction with many other semantic and formal features.

Identifying the referent when a subject is omitted is possible thanks to verbal desinences, which act as disambiguating and deictic elements. Those of the first- and second-person pronouns are more prone to be recognized than the third-person just because they refer to the direct participants in interaction. The referent of an omitted subject is considered to be salient, accessible or activated in the context (Ariel 2001; Gundel & Fretheim 2009; Gundel, Hedberg & Zacharski 1993), and it presents known information that is normally placed at the beginning of the clause (Prince 1981: 230). Salience is a cognitive conceptualization based on the perceptual relevance that an entity achieves during discourse by means of language (Croft & Cruse 2004: 46–50) and it is grounded on the cognitive process of attention, understood as the activation of structures in the mind across communicative acts (Langacker 2009: 112). A great number of studies have confirmed the relationship between known information, accessibility and salience (Giora 2003).

The following excerpt shows that the continuity of the referent of the omitted subject – formulated previously (Adán) – is maintained through the verbal desinences and verbal clitics; therefore, it is not necessary to reformulate it.

- (1) La foto que tenemos de Adán es con la chaqueta enrollada debajo del brazo||tuve la suerte de *hacerle* oposición y eso significa oposición\en esos debates que teníamos Ø *se cogía* sus calenturas\por eso yo creo que *lo vamos a echar* de menos porque Ø *era* todo ideas\ (CCEC Med12 <ElEnv1010>)

‘The picture we have of Adán is one showing his jacket wrapped under his arm. I was lucky to *be* an opponent of *his*, and that means opposition indeed. In those debates we used to have [he] *would get* really angry. That’s why I think *we are going to miss him* a lot – [he] *was* full of ideas’.

On the other hand, an expressed subject conveys textual informativeness by itself and will imply a higher degree of unexpectability and cognitive processing of the referent of the subject, providing contrastive or new information during the utterance (Lambrecht 1994: 273). This would justify the usual perception of informative elements to be construed with some type of creativity (Beaugrande & Dressler 1997: 76). Informativeness denotes a cognitive stressing of linguistic elements that makes the more informative element become pragmatically focused or gives it an acquired pragmatic weight (Davidson 1996: 551).¹

- (2) A: *Tú* piensa en el que lo vaya a leer/*tú* escríbelo y ya luego lo corregimos\
 B: No sé por qué no me gusta la Navidad\
 A: *Tú* escribe ‘La Navidad’ (CCEC Conv<ElEn08>)
 ‘A: *You* think about the person who’s going to read it. *You* write it and then we’ll correct it.
 B: Well, I don’t know why I don’t like Christmas.
 A: *You* just write ‘Christmas’.

Salience and informativeness are gradual and inversely proportional cognitive dimensions. This means that those more activated linguistic elements in a discourse will not be informative, whereas those newly introduced will possess higher informativeness and lesser salience (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 32–34).

These notions may also be applied to the preverbal or postverbal placement of the subject. Prototypical declarative clauses in Spanish follow the unmarked subject – verb – object (SVO) order (Fried 2009) and information progresses from subject to object, thus the subject is considered to be more salient and the object more informative. For the same reason, it can be stated that a postverbal subject acquires notional features of the object in this syntactic position, its salience is reduced, the informativeness will increase and the referent of the pronoun will be focused (See 4.1.). The clause ‘dibujarían *ustedes*’ (‘you (postv.) would draw’) illustrates this in the following example.

1. Pragmatic weight is a “theoretical label which subsumes the notion of emphasis which may explain how to disambiguate epistemic parentheticals, trigger speech acts’ readings of certain verbs and increase their “stake” in whatever they are saying” (Davidson 1996: 551). Utterances with expressed subjects are considered as weightier and more invested with emotion than other types of utterances (1996: 555–556).

- (3) Antes de decirles adiós y agradecerles que hayan compartido con nosotros su tiempo sintonizando/ les pediríamos que nos dijeran cómo dibujarían *ustedes* este 2011\ (CCEC Med12<TePe2811)
 ‘Before saying to you goodbye and appreciating that you have shared your time with us, we should ask to tell us how *you* (postv.) would draw this year, 2011.’

Cognitive salience and informativeness have been revealed as very important tools to explain and analyze the expression and omission of pronominal subjects in Spanish (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 31–35). The figure below represents the placement of the three possible variants of pronominal subjects along the salience – informativeness continuum.

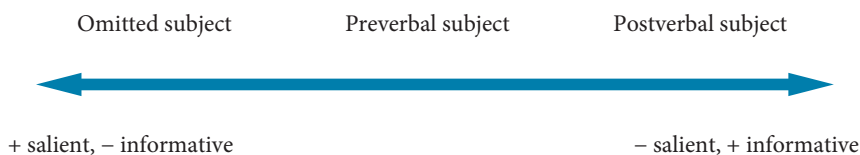


Figure 1. Gradation of the salience and informativeness of omitted, preverbal and postverbal subjects

Being gradual dimensions of cognitive meanings, each variant accounts for creating a variable orientation towards either the subjectivity or objectivity pole. A discourse based on participants or on subjects introducing the personal viewpoint of the speaker will tend to produce a subjective meaning style (cf. Finegan 1995: 1). Objectivity results from a discourse performed on objects by diminishing the salience of subjects. As a counterpart of subjectivity, it is the extent to which a linguistic entity is construed as the object versus the subject (Langacker 1994: 15–16) (v. Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 143–149). The omitted variants would tend to create objective styles, whereas expressed subjects would contribute to accomplish subjectivity.

Furthermore, a grammatical person may also be disposed alongside the subjectivity–objectivity continuum, as will be explained next.

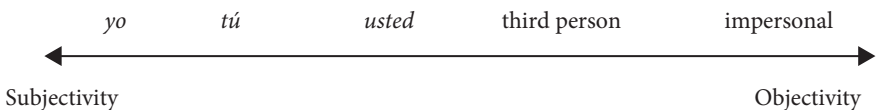
2.2 *Tú* and *usted* in the cognitive continuum

The cognitive approach involves an indissoluble relation between form and meaning presupposing that linguistic forms are choices by themselves. Thus, their status in the speaker’s perception and their possibilities of creating diverse meanings must be observed. Grammatical persons constitute an idoneous field to demonstrate that each form enacts a different perspective of the referent they indicate from a cognitive basis. The first-person singular *yo* (‘I’) represents the primary perspective of the speaker, whereas the plural *nosotros* (‘we’) widens such a perspective to a human group, albeit one whose specificity is very variable (Serrano 2011). The second

person detaches the discourse from the speaker's own sphere, and it may index to an interlocutor or rather to a non-specific or general referent, as is the case of the *objectivizing* second-person *tú* (Serrano & Aijón Oliva 2012, 2014).²

Regarding *usted*, its consideration as a simple formal or polite synonym of *tú* that has been supported not only by the intuition of most speakers but also has been set forth in many traditional grammars and handbooks of Spanish (e.g. Alarcos 1999: 76–77, Miñano López 2007: 171, among others). Its historical origin as a nominal phrase with polite meaning (*vuestra merced*) is analogous as other third persons still used nowadays (*su señoría, su excelencia*), and this reveals that *usted* should be considered as part of a third-person category, entailing an indirect way to index the interlocutor. The inherent third-person reference of *usted* bears a remarkable contrast with the perspective endowed by the second person. In fact, its extradisursive deixis is what has made it possible to add this pronoun to the second-person paradigm. Besides, its syntactic behaviour, such as its frequencies of expression vs. omission, is certainly closer to nominal phrases than the rest of the pronouns. On the basis of these particularities, García (2009: ch.1) has included this form in a category labelled '*II*', situated in between the second- and the third-person pronouns.

From the inherently variable perspective of the linguistic system, the first person of the paradigm, *yo* ('I'), represents the most subjective stance, whereas the third-person and the impersonal structures occupy the notional domain of objectivity. As for the second persons *tú* and *usted*, they are placed in the middle of the continuum, the latter being closer to the objectivity pole than the former. The diagram below illustrates the position of each pronoun along the subjectivity – objectivity scale.



This distribution is in line with the wider viewpoint of analyzing grammatical persons, as different communicative choices by which a speaker can index his/herself or the interlocutor/audience during a discourse. Furthermore, the meaning engendered by the choice of *tú* or *usted* is shaped by its expressed (preverbal or postverbal) and omitted variants. Any selected variant will concern not only the management of the image of both the speaker and hearer but it will also condition the interpretation of the utterance and even that of the discourse as a whole.

2. The choice of *objectivizing* the second person is promoted by an intention to dissociate the content of discourse from the particular circumstances, opinions or values of the speaker, suggesting instead that what is being said somehow affects or could affect the hearer as well: 'Cuando *llegas* a tener mucho dinero, no *sueles acordarte* de tus amigos' 'When [you] get to earn a lot of money, [you] don't usually remember your friends' (Serrano & Aijón Oliva 2014: 228).

3. Methodology

The analysis of *tú* – *usted* variation will be based on the materials from an oral corpus called *Corpus Conversacional del Español de Canarias*, which comprises two different sections: one of spontaneous face-to-face conversations (79,544 words) and another containing texts from different regional TV and radio programmes classified as *news programmes*, *informative-debates*, *talk shows* and *magazines* (171,258 words), on which the present research is focused. The characteristics of each category are as follows:

- *News programmes* (55,474 words). These informative programmes cover the usual kinds of subjects in media information (politics, sports, weather, etc.).
- *Informative-debates* (41,753 words). This genre combines news items and the discussion of different views, often opposing, on various subjects.
- *Talk shows* (12,685 words). This genre is devoted to commentary on current events, generally in a friendly, non-contentious fashion.
- *Magazines* (61,346 words). These combine a wide variety of information and entertainment materials.

The speakers have been divided into four categories labelled *socioprofessional affiliations* on the basis of the communicative function played in the mass media genre where they take part:

- a. *Journalists*. The professionals of mass-media communication.
- b. *Politicians*. Speakers presenting themselves as political-party representatives.
- c. *Public figures*. Professionals who participate in media texts as entrepreneurs, artists, sportspeople, advertisers, representatives for companies and associations, etc.
- d. *Private individuals*. A variety of speakers who take part circumstantially in media interactions.

This variety of texts and socioprofessional identities of speakers will allow us to observe and study the use of *tú* and *usted* in its proper contexts of use. This variation will first be measured by calculating the percentages of their expressed and omitted variants. They will also be approached as *absolute variables*, calculated as the number of occurrences of each form per 10,000 words of text within each genre or socioprofessional category. The treatment of linguistic phenomena as absolute variables is based on the assumption that any pairing of form and meaning is contextually chosen for its own value and not just as opposed to any other options (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 64–67).

This methodology will be aimed at demonstrating the extent to which this case of variation and the meaning created by each pronoun and its variants (on the basis of the cognitive properties described in 2.2.) is unevenly distributed in certain speech situations and by different speakers to accomplish concrete communicative goals.

4. The variable expression of *tú* and *usted*

A quantitative analysis of the overall expression and omission of the pronouns *tú* and *usted* indicates that the omitted variant is the most frequent, following the general tendency of the Spanish language (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013:76, Enríquez 1984; Silva-Corvalán 2001, among others). However, it is remarkable that the expression of *usted* is slightly higher than that of *tú*.

Table 1. Omission and expression of *tú* and *usted*

	Omission	Expression	Total
<i>Tú</i>	157 (69.2%)	70 (30.8%)	227
<i>Usted</i>	181 (62.4%)	109 (37.6%)	290

The tendency of using expressed *usted* may be explained on the basis of its formal and notional closeness to the third-person nominal phrases (v. supra). Entities formulated as third-person forms are less salient than direct participants; therefore, their deictics do not singularize them among other possible referents, and speakers should promptly clarify them during discourse. It can be hypothesized that less salient elements would be out of the speaker attention scope and tend to be formulated, expressed or even repeated. Although the grammatical nature of *usted* may explain its higher frequency of expression (Keniston 1937: 150; Rosengren 1974: 25; Serrano 2012: 17), some interactional factors exist that also favour its formulation. Most examples of the expression of *usted* seem to have not been necessary from the sole perspective of referent identification; instead, they reveal an interest of the speaker to stress the involvement of the interlocutor in the content, to attract his/her attention or even to request his/her cooperation. In example (4), it can be observed that the pronoun *usted* is expressed in the first clause and repeated unnecessarily in those that follow.

- (4) Presenta *usted* una nueva denuncia con su sentencia\|||insistir en que se ejecute la sentencia\;en el año 2000 fue?/en el año que puso *usted* la denuncia\pues esa sentencia que tiene *usted* del 2003 Ø intente que se ejecute por todos los medios posibles\ (CCEC Med12<ElEnv1011>)
 ‘You (postv.) have to file a new lawsuit based on the sentence ... Was it in 2000 that you (postv.) filed your lawsuit? Then that sentence you’ve (postv.) had since 2003, [you] must try to get it carried out’

4.1 The variable placement of *tú* and *usted*

As for the preverbal or postverbal placement, *tú* and *usted* display strong yet different tendencies. The frequencies of *tú* ('you') indicate that it commonly tends to be placed in the preverbal position, whereas the frequency of the postposition of *usted* is considerably higher than that of *tú* (33.1% vs. 7.1%). *Usted* has shown a noticeably distinct syntactic behaviour from that of first- and second-person pronouns (Sánchez López 1993: 262) and exhibits a notable tendency to be placed after the verb.

Table 2. Preverbal and postverbal placement of *tú* and *usted*

	Preverbal	Postverbal	Total
<i>Tú</i>	65 (92.9%)	5 (7.1%)	70
<i>Usted</i>	73 (66.9%)	36 (33.1%)	109

The variation in the prototypical order of constituents would reveal pragmatic values (Geluykens 1992: 83–96; Hidalgo Downing 2003: 12). On the basis of this logic, the higher salience of the second-person *tú* is related to its tendency to appear in preverbal position, following the non-marked prototypical order SV. The subject initiates an energy flow ending in the patient (Langacker 1991); then, direct participants in the discourse (such as *tú*) and human and agentive elements are expected to be codified as subjects, and tend to occupy the preverbal position (Branigan et al. 2008). On the contrary, the lesser salience of *usted*, its notional characteristics (assimilated as noun phrases) and the increasing informativeness it conveys could promote its codification as an object, which would explain its tendency to appear in postverbal position. This facilitates interpreting the pronoun as contrastive, unexpected or pragmatically focused. These pragmatic values can be observed in examples (5), (6) and (7), where *usted* is formulated after the verb.

- (5) Buenas noches\ dice *usted* que ha habido consenso\pues Dios le guarde ese consenso\eso ha sido idea suya\yo ya le he dicho que el consenso es el pleno\
(CCEC Med12 <ElEnv2611>)
'Good night, *you've* (postv.) said that it was a consensus, but may God save such a consensus, this was your idea, I only said that the consensus is the plenary.'
- (6) Ø Tiene inquietudes en el mundo de la música\Ø siempre las ha tenido\ en el campo de cantautor presenta *usted*\tanto aquí como en Madrid una especie de formato nuevo\Canarias pueblo Canarias canción\y Ø también toca otras especialidades\por llamarlo así\fue la época de los cantautores ¿qué recuerdos tiene Ø de esa época?/
(CCEC Med12 <DiTag99>)

'[You]'re interested in music – [you]'ve always been. As a singer – songwriter *you* (postv.) are introducing, here as well as in Madrid, some kind of new format ... and [you] also tackle other areas. We can say that was the singer – songwriter period. What memories do [you] keep from those days?'

- (7) Y por la mañana\además de este excepcional programa\tienen *ustedes* la compañía\de una mujer\excepcional también\no vean la de cosas que tiene que contarnos\escuchen\escuchen\;Ø lo apuntaron\no\

(CCEC Med 12<Vimige212>)

'In the morning, together with this exceptional program, *you* (postv.) can count on the company of an equally exceptional woman. Just imagine how many things she has to say. Listen, listen. Did [you] write everything down?'

Even though expressed subjects generally promote a meaning based on informativeness and thus lead to subjectivity, such meaning will be conditioned by the placement of the subject in the clause; preverbal pronouns are more salient and less informative, whereas postverbal pronouns are more informative and less salient, this position being farther from the prototypical SV order in Spanish (See Figure 1). The cognitive – discursive features of the expressed (preverbal and postverbal) and omitted variants of *tú* and *usted* will serve to create meanings in different communicative situations and by different social groups.

5. The sociosituational variation of *tú* and *usted* and the construction of communicative styles

Most studies related to the choice of *tú* or *usted* have considered it an issue merely correlated with extralinguistic factors (*cf.* Almeida *et al.* 2006; Nowikow 2010; v. Medina Morales 2010: 27–31). This research attempts to go beyond such a view by delving into the discursive and cognitive traits that underlie this variation. We depart from the idea that speakers not only select one or another form on the basis of possible conditioning external factors but most importantly, they choose the *meaning* they consider to be more appropriate for the accomplishment of their communicative goals. Thus, far from explanatory traditional notions such as *power* or *solidarity*, this analysis will pursue a more realistic view of communicative processes by way of the study of the forms as used in several mass media genres and by the participants who take part in them. In this line, Morford (1997) has contributed to overcome such an approach by applying a new framework to the study of address terms in French based on social indexicality (Silverstein 2003) that will be useful for explaining some results of the present research.

Tú and *usted* are analyzed as absolute variables (see Section 2). The calculation of the normalized frequencies (calculated as the number of occurrences per 10,000 words of text) across genres and socioprofessional affiliations provides a representation of the capacity for each form to communicate something by itself and not only through the so-called opposition between them. I depart from the assumption that speakers do not only choose address terms according to their supposedly predetermined meaning but also actively participate in the construction of such a meaning (van Compernelle 2011: 87).

5.1 Textual genre

The distribution of *tú* and *usted* by textual genre reveals that there is unequal usage across them. To begin with, *tú* is most commonly used in magazines and talk shows. The frequency of *usted* usage shows that it is more likely to occur in informative-debates.

Table 3. Absolute frequency of *tú* and *usted* by textual genre

	<i>Tú</i>		<i>Usted</i>	
	Occurrences	Frequency	Occurrences	Frequency
News programmes (55,474 words)	24	4.3	44	7.9
Informative-debates (41,753 words)	35	8.3	145	34.7
Talk shows (12,685 words)	16	12.6	15	11.8
Magazines (61,346 words)	152	24.7	86	14

Magazines are interactive oral genres in which a variety of topics are dealt with, normally regarding present-day matters and usually developed in a friendly manner. This should require a firsthand relationship between participants that facilitates the communicative exchange. Therefore, the most suitable option to index the interlocutor in these situations is the prototypical second-person *tú*.

(8) [Magazine]

Tú bien sabes que un telescopio no es solo una cúpula y espejos/ sino que están los instrumentos que lo forman\ (CCEC Med12<GalyCent 310>)

‘You know full well that a telescope is not only a dome and a sphere but that there are also the instruments that form it’

(9) [Magazine]

Precisamente hoy nos hemos venido aquí al muelle de Corralejo\ Andrés/tú eres el patrón de este velero\dinos cómo se activarían las alarmas en caso de emergencia\ (CCEC Med12 <CanDi 141>)

'We have just precisely come here to the Corralejo dock, Andrew *you* are the captain of that sailing boat, tell us how the alarms would be activated in an emergency situation'

In a similar way, the absolute score of *tú* obtained in talk shows reflects that the speaker needs to be closer to the interlocutor or audience according to the dialogical and interactive nature of this genre, and this would explain the tendency of speakers to choose this pronoun. Moreover, the nature of these interactions promoting the choice of *tú* would be considered as a first-order indexicality as it indexes pragmatic aspects of this kind of communicative situations that contribute to entail the meaning created (Morford 1997: 16).

(10) [Talk show]

A. Pero *tú* crees que el árbitro estuvo prepotente\pero\ ¿por qué crees que estuvo prepotente?/ ¿pero *tú* le insultaste?/

B. No lo pude evitar/cuando se acabó la lucha... (*lucha canaria*)

A. ¿*Tú* crees que vas a ser sancionado?/

B. Yo espero que no\ (CCEC Med12 <LaRev2910>)

A. 'But, do *you* think that the referee was conceited but, why do *you* think he was conceited? Did *you* insult him?

B. I couldn't avoid it, when the fight ended (*Canarian fighting*)

A. Do *you* think you are going to be penalized?

B. I do not expect that'

In both types of text, the notable frequency of *tú* indicates that the meaning of the second-person pronoun chosen in these texts implies the performance of a more subjective communicative style than other options, as its relative position on the continuum indicates (See fig. 1). The cognitive properties of this pronoun entail a higher degree of subjectivity than *usted* and generate a meaning on the basis of the direct allusion to the interlocutor, associating the textual content with his/her own personal circumstances.

However, it must be noted that the frequencies of *tú* and *usted* in talk shows are very close (12.6 for *tú* and 11.8 for *usted*), which would indicate that there is no striking preference for using one or the other form in that genre, probably because of the variety of topics addressed and the wider range of speakers who participate in it. In fact, the changes in the features of texts and communicative situations are of a gradual nature (cf. Biber & Conrad 2009). As sets of more or less

commonly shared linguistic features, genres are of a gradual nature, have no clear boundaries and there would be a kind of intertextuality or genre mixing among them (Theodoropoulou 2014: 7–13, 97).

Besides, *usted* is used more in the informative – debate programmes, which combine news information with subsequent commentary and discussion. The exposition of speakers' own ideas and opinions in a trusting way is consistent with the indexation of the interlocutor by the pronoun *usted*, which promotes a higher degree of objectivity than *tú*, as we have argued. The iconic cognitive distance from the interlocutor inherent to *usted* enables the exposition of arguments including those that might be controversial, from an objective perspective.

(11) [Informative-debate]

Podemos decir que después de un año de receta electrónica/podemos decir que esto no está implantado\si yo tengo 16 cápsulas de amoxicilina y *usted* me dice a mí que yo tengo que darle esas cápsulas\dígame *usted* a mí\

(CCEC Med12<RoyCo222>)

'After one year period of electronic prescriptions, we can say that it is not really instituted, if I have 16 amoxiciline capsules and *you* say to me that I have to give him/her those capsules, *you* (postv.), tell me'

(12) [Informative-debate]

Teniendo en cuenta que *usted* ha sido concejal de tráfico me gustaría saber qué opina sobre el cuerpo de Policía de La Laguna\

(CCEC Med12<ElEnv172>)

'Taking into account that *you* have been the city councillor for traffic, I would like to know your opinion about the Police Department of La Laguna'

Thus, far from the traditional association with power, formality or polite dimensions, the usage of *usted* in these texts can be explained by the specific communicative goal required to be performed by speakers; they can boldly present their arguments – some of which may not be shared by the audience – by addressing the interlocutor with the most indirect second-person pronoun, providing a kind of distance that prompts the interpretation of arguments in a more objective fashion. This would be the case with the indexation of the interlocutor *usted* in the following example.

(13) [Informative-debate]

La reforma que se propone en el sistema educativo no va a triunfar\no va a eliminar los actuales problemas\diga *usted* a quién beneficia que los chicos tengan que venir un año más\

(CCEC CanDi<212>)

‘The proposed reform of the educational system will not be successful, it is not going to eliminate the existing problems\say *you* (postv.) who benefits from the fact that children must attend school one more year’

5.2 Socioprofessional affiliation of speakers

As the textual genre analysis showed, the social functions played by speakers in interactions reflect that *tú* and *usted* are distinctly used because of the meanings that each form draws. In the multimodal framework of variation analysis adopted in this research, a conjoined action of factors is considered, thus the second-person indexation across the participants’ socioprofessional affiliations is related to the textual genres in which they most often participate. Table 4 displays the distribution of both pronominal choices in every category.

Table 4. Absolute frequency of *tú* and *usted* by socioprofessional affiliation of speakers

	<i>Tú</i>		<i>Usted</i>	
	Occurrences	Frequency	Occurrences	Frequency
Journalists (63,739 words)	105	16.4	181	28.4
Public figures (46,661 words)	29	6.2	11	2.3
Politicians (38,340 words)	36	9.3	87	22.6
Private individuals (22,518 words)	57	25.3	11	4.9

Here, we can see that there are remarkable differences in indexation among socio-professional affiliations of speakers. Private individuals show a higher frequency of indexation through the pronoun *tú*. These speakers are usually requested by the presenter of the program to contribute with their opinions or experiences about the topics dealt with. Given that this pronoun tends to enhance the subjective style, it is comprehensible for this group of speakers to use the pronoun *tú* more often to accomplish a communicative goal of this type. Moreover, they do not have the responsibility of offering an image of themselves in mass media communication, as other socioprofessional groups do; hence, this explains the disinclination of private individuals to use the objectivization resource offered by the alternating pronoun *usted*.

In the following dialogue during a radio program between a journalist and a private individual, the journalist initiates the conversation employing the omitted

pronoun *usted* (¿De dónde Ø llama amigo? ‘Where are *you* calling from?’); however, he switches to *tú* upon noticing that his interlocutor has used this pronoun.

- (14) [A: Journalist; B: Private individual]
- A. ¿De dónde Ø llama amigo?
 B. Del Puerto de la Cruz
 A. ¿Y *usted* se llama...?
 B. Pedro\yo quería decir que eso de las matronas\yo tengo edad para saber qué son las matronas\porque *tú* sabes que antes las matronas iban a las casas
 A. ¿*Tú* sabes lo que son las matronas?
 B. No lo viví\pero sí que lo sé (CCEC Med12<LaAlp212>)
 A. ‘Where are *you* calling from?’
 B. From Puerto de la Cruz
 A. And... what is your name?
 B. Pedro, I want to talk about midwives, I’m old enough to know what midwives are because *you* know that earlier the midwives went to homes
 A. But, do *you* know what midwives are?
 B. I did not experience it but I do know what they are’

Notwithstanding, it would also be possible for the pronoun used by the journalist to condition the one used by the interlocutor; in the following dialogue, the private individual participating in this conversation has answered the questions using *tú*, the same pronoun the journalist made the request with.

- (15) [A: Journalist; B: Private individual]
- A. ¿Estás ahora mismo cerca del Belén?/
 B. Sí/dime Ø qué quieres saber/
 A. Yo tengo un problema/porque me identifico con dos figuritas del Belén/
 B. ¿Con qué figuritas te identificas *tú*?/ (CCEC Med12 <LaAlp212>)
 A. Are you right now close to the nativity scene?
 B. Yes, tell me what you want to know
 A. I have a problem, because I identify with two of the nativity scene’s statues
 B. With what statue do *you* identify with?

Conversely, journalists and politicians clearly show the strongest rates of *usted*. Albeit turning out a resource to index the interlocutor in a more objective fashion, a different motivation for this choice can be predicted for each group. The frequency of *usted* among politicians is in concordance with the same frequencies obtained in informative-debates, a genre in which they often participate. Politicians and informative-debates are professional and situational circumstances where argumentative discourse is expected to arise. Whether this choice reflects the

contextual status acquired by these social categories, it would be the result of a second-order indexicality (Morford 1997: 16). Therefore, the ‘oriented-to-objectivity’ meaning performed by this pronoun produces results suitable to them, as it presents arguments iconically distant from the interlocutor or audience, given that they would be subject to controversy or would not always be expected to be shared by them (See examples 16 and 17).

(16) [Politician]

Se lo diré muy brevemente\usted dice que vienen años muy difíciles\usted dice/pero yo no veo que se esté haciendo algo con los bancos\

(CCEC Med12<EIEEnv272>)

‘I will say to you briefly, *you* say that difficult years are to come and *you* say... but I do not notice that anything is going to be done with banks’

(17) [Politician]

Ø Ha criticado/lo que *usted* antes decía/ que está fuera/con un partido casi marginal;/¿usted cree que se puede seguir y gobernar con esa actitud?/

(CCEC Med12<EIEEnv212>)

‘[*You*]’ve criticized what *you* yourself said before: the fact of being in an almost marginal party. Do *you* really think it is possible to stay in office with such an attitude?’

In addition, the recurrent use of *usted* among politicians supports the general idea that this is the most acceptable pronoun employed by this socioprofessional affiliation. The occasional shift to *tú* in the discourse of a politician may cause negative and rather blameworthy reactions among interlocutors or the audience (Medina López 2009: 82)³ probably because the content of the speech of a politician is expected to be performed as objectively as possible. Some important findings have shown that pronominal choices in political discourse are usually made to

3. During the 2007 Spanish electoral campaign, President Zapatero participated in a TV debate. In his speech, he was alternating between the use of *usted* and *tú* in some sentences like ‘Le agradezco que me *hagas* estas preguntas’/ ‘I must express [you. frml] my gratitude for [you] to put those questions to me’. Such pronoun shifting brought on many negative reactions in newspapers and social networks; the use of *tú* instead of *usted* was labelled as ‘too close’, ‘too colloquial’, ‘backscratching’, ‘non-respectful’, etc. (cf. Medina López 2009: 82–83). The perspective assumed in the present research would explain such a choice of *tú* in this context as a feature of style that subjectivizes the content. Although this is worthy of deeper analysis, it should be hypothesized that in the course of his speech the President was choosing either *tú* or *usted* on the basis of the nature of the topics or questions being posed by the audience, thus the most personal or subjective inquiries would be answered with *tú*, whereas the more institutional ones and therefore expectably more objective (as those about the future political tasks he was expected to perform) would be replied with *usted*.

accept or reject responsibilities (Beard 2000; Blas Arroyo 2000; Fairclough 1989; Pennycook 1994; Wilson 1990; Zupnik 1994) and tend to configure a particular style of participant. It has been demonstrated that *usted* (and its plural *ustedes*) is the most expectable second-person pronoun in political discourse, its basic communicative function being to criticize the interlocutor in political debates or ‘to refer critically to the subjects of certain actions’ (Blas Arroyo 2000: 10–13). Thus, by indexing an interlocutor or audience with this choice, politicians would be avoiding the subjectivity attached to *tú*, and this will help in the construction of a discourse primarily oriented toward objectivity.

On the other hand, the preference showed by journalists to choose the objective meaning of *usted* might be interpreted as a way to shape a self-image of credibility and seriousness, suggesting neutrality towards the contents exposed, since one of their communicative goals should be the construction of a particular kind of professional identity of objectivity. The tendency of journalists to create objective styles has been corroborated in some other studies about syntactic choices (cf. Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 191). The following excerpts instantiate some inquiries made by journalists with the pronoun *usted*.

(18) [Journalist]

¿*Usted*, qué consejos le daría al partido socialista?/¿*Usted* cree que será capaz de sacar el país adelante? (CCEC Med12<Re71012>)

‘What advice would you give to the socialist party? Do *you* think it will be capable of getting this country ahead?’

(19) [Journalist]

Díganos *usted* cómo negocia el precio que le dice el proveedor/*usted* ve el precio que le dan y ya negocia /¿es así? (CCEC Med12<Re71012>)

‘Tell *you* (postv.) us how do you negotiate the price with the seller, *you* see the price they give you and negotiate, right?’

6. Sociosituational variation of the expression and omission of *tú* and *usted*

Notably, the tendency of *tú* and *usted* to create styles on the basis of the dimensions of subjectivity or objectivity will be gradual, which is based on the possibility of these pronouns to appear as expressed (preverbal or postverbal) or omitted.⁴ As

4. Previous research has concluded that politicians as a socioprofessional affiliation tend to create a subjective style based on their tendency to express pronominal subjects (Aijón Oliva & Serrano 2013: 204–205).

shown in Section 2.1, the properties of salience and informativeness of the omitted, preverbal and postverbal subjects are gradually applied according to the continuum where they are placed.

A relative analysis by percentages of the second-person singular *tú* and *usted* (See Section 2) will help to specify their capacity to perform different communicative styles.

6.1 Expression and omission of *tú*

As would be expected, the omitted variant of *tú* is the most frequent in all genres. The preverbal placement occurrences are higher than the postverbal, which did not result in being representative at all.

Table 5. Expression vs. omission of *tú* by textual genre

	Preverbal	Postverbal	Omitted	Total
News programmes	7 (29.1%)	1 (4.2%)	16 (66.7%)	24
Informative-debates	16 (45.7%)	0	19 (54.3%)	35
Talk shows	7 (43.8%)	0	9 (56.2%)	16
Magazines	35 (23.1%)	4 (2.6%)	113 (74.3%)	152

However, the higher occurrence of the omitted variant in news programmes and magazines can be explained as the latter being the genre where *tú* is most used (See Table 3). Its interactional and dialogical nature implies that the referent of the subject is salient; hence, there is no need to formulate it. In the following example, the journalist is speaking with someone who is participating in the programme, thus the pronoun can be omitted because its referent is already accessible or cognitively salient.

(20) [Magazine]

Decía si Ø estás en tu despacho porque seguro que Ø tienes una minicadena donde Ø oyes Roscas y Cotufas (CCEC Med12<RoyCo308>)

‘I was saying that *you* are in your office because *you* surely have a mini hi-fi to listen Roscas y Cotufas’

On the other hand, the incidence of omission in news programmes genre is due to the scarce participation of people in real time just because its communicative purpose is oriented to expose information, normally about recent news. The second-person indexation is normally referred to as an imaginary hearer who is not present, as observed in (21).

- (21) [News programme]
 Ø Has acertado\ Ø ya sabes dónde encontrarnos\en Canarias Radio la
 Autónoma\ (CCEC Med12<CanDi2211>)
 ‘[You] are right, [you] just know where to find us, at Canarias Radio la Autónoma’

For its part, the higher score of preverbal expression in informative-debates and talk shows is consistent with their argumentative goals: indexing the second person – normally present in these interactions – by the expressed pronoun stresses the content on the referent, loading it as a protagonist of the utterance. See example (22).

- (22) [Informative-debate]
 Vamos a hablar de esa muerte repentina en la que *tú* como bien dijiste ha
 llegado un poco pronto\ (CCEC Med12<ElEnv2211>)
 ‘Let’s talk about that sudden death, which as *you* have said, has come too
 rapidly’

The socioprofessional affiliations of speakers also reveal that omission is the variant preferred by all categories, but it is remarkable that public figures and private individuals make more use of them than the other groups. The preverbal variant percentages indicate that politicians, followed by journalists, primarily use it. Again, the results show that postverbal position is not significant.

Table 6. Expression vs. omission of *tú* by socioprofessional affiliation of speakers

	Preverbal	Postverbal	Omitted	Total
Journalists	32 (30.5%)	2 (1.9%)	71 (67.6%)	105
Public figures	4 (13.8%)	0	25 (86.2%)	29
Politicians	15 (41.7%)	1 (2.8%)	20 (55.5%)	36
Private individuals	14 (24.5%)	2 (3.5%)	41 (72%)	57

There is a notable frequency of the preverbal variant of *tú* in those genres whose communicative goals are oriented to a more personal or argumentative fashion, such as informative-debates and talk shows. Given that *tú* promotes a meaning based on + salience and – informativeness (See Figure 1), it would lend support to the idea that its usage in these texts and by those socioprofessional affiliations contributes to the shaping of a communicative style based on subjectivity. Moreover, its relevant presence in the speech of politicians and journalists may be explained on the basis of the textual genres where they usually participate: politicians make use of the expressed variant to perform their argumentative contents. In example (23), a politician intends to answer someone who intended to get information about something by indexing him with the expressed preverbal pronoun *tú*.

(23) [Politician]

Siempre hemos reivindicado el tema de protecciones en las vallas*tú* me querías preguntar cuál sería la solución para evitar esas muertes\

(CCEC Med12<CanDi2211>)

‘We have always claimed the matter of protecting fences, *you* wanted to ask me what would be the solution to avoid these deaths’

Journalists may index the interlocutor by means of the expressed preverbal variant to pursue concrete goals, such as obtaining more information on a concrete subject, similar to that about the weather, as in (24).

(24) [Journalist]

Lo que sí se ve es que vamos a tener una semana con tiempo del este\yo no sé si *tú* recuerdas un invierno tan seco\ (CCEC Med12<BDC91>)

‘It is clearly observed that we are going to have an east weather week, I do not know if *you* remember a winter as dry as this’.

The distribution of the expression and omission of the variants of *tú* indicates that although the omitted pronoun is the prevailing variant, the preverbal placement of this pronoun is somehow frequent in those communicative situations that may require a slight increase of subjectivity, as in informative-debates and talk shows. Similarly, politicians and journalists make use of this variant when they find it necessary to accomplish more subjectively guided communicative goals.

6.2 Expression and omission of *usted*

Regarding the variation of *usted*, it can also be observed that the omitted variant is strongly used in all genres. Similar to those obtained for *tú*, higher scores were found for *usted* in magazines, closely followed by talk shows.

Table 7. Expression vs. omission of *usted* by textual genre

	Preverbal	Postverbal	Omitted	Total
News programmes	15 (34%)	7 (16%)	22 (50%)	44
Informative-debates	63 (43.5%)	29 (20%)	53 (36.5%)	145
Talk shows	3 (20%)	2 (13.3%)	10 (66.7%)	15
Magazines	20 (23.2%)	8 (9.3%)	58 (67.5%)	86

The accessibility or salience of the referents would again be the primary reason for these interactional genres to not show considerable frequencies of the formulation of the pronoun *usted*.

- (25) [Magazine]
 Consejera/ ¿Ha podido Ø ver los carteles de los ganadores?/después le voy a preguntar por ello\ (CCECMed12<LaAlp212>)
 ‘Minister, have *you* seen the winner’s posters? I am going to ask *you* about it later’

As suggested, the obtained rate of expressed (preverbal and postverbal) *usted* in all the genres is noticeable, especially in informative-debates and news programmes. Given that the meaning of this pronoun promotes objectivity by its inherent properties, the expressed preverbal variant would constitute just a slight downplaying of this objectivity justified by some concrete goals of these texts, as indexing the interlocutor to make him responsible for the content. See examples (26) and (27).

- (26) [Informative-debate]
Usted ha leído la información de empresas que no sobrevivirán\pero es que la reforma laboral no se ha hecho bien\ (CCECMed12<BDC132>)
 ‘*You* have read the information about businesses that will not last, but the labour reform has not been done well’.
- (27) [Informative-debate]
Usted ha hablado que se aumente la subvención para las potabilizadoras\ (CCECMed12<BDC132>)
 ‘*You* have talked about increasing the subsidy for water-treatment plants’

Usted shows a greater tendency than other pronouns to be placed after the verb (Serrano 2012: 116). In this position, the formulated pronoun *usted* increases the pragmatic underlining of its referent, which is particularly noticeable in questions (See 28). Through its cognitive properties (– salient, + informative, see Figure 1), this option is considered not to promote an objective style as the omitted variant would do.

- (28) [News programmes]
 Por lo que nos cuenta\es un éxito rotundo la huelga en la refinería\¿cree *usted* que el gobierno tomará nota?/ (CCECMed12<BDC293>)
 ‘As you have told us, it is a definitive success the refinery strike, do *you* [postv.] believe that the government will take note of it?’

Regarding the distribution of *usted* by socioprofessional groups, they all prefer using its omitted variant. However, politicians and journalists reach significant scores of the expressed preverbal variant, and there is a notable increase of the use of the postverbal variant, especially among politicians.

These results corroborate the idea that this pronoun is used most by journalists and politicians, although for different reasons (See 6.2). By analyzing this pronoun as a relative variable, these groups can be inferred to take advantage of

Table 8. Expression vs. omission of *usted* by socioprofessional affiliation of speakers

	Preverbal	Postverbal	Omitted	Total
Journalists	65 (36%)	28 (15.4%)	88 (48.6%)	181
Public figures	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	7 (63.6%)	11
Politicians	38 (43.6%)	26 (29.8%)	23 (36.4%)	87
Private individuals	1 (9%)	1 (9%)	9 (82%)	11

the meaningful potential offered by *usted*. By means of the objective meaning portrayed by this form, journalists may construct a self-image of seriousness and professionalism, primarily required to develop their communicative tasks. Besides, using the preverbal and postverbal placement of this pronoun allows them to modulate the meaning that is intended to be communicated in particular utterances. For example, in the following dialogue between a journalist and a politician about the possibility of becoming the Prime Minister, the journalist uses the preverbal variant of *usted* to introduce information presupposed by him directly concerning the politician. The use of this variant diminishes the objectivity normally conveyed by this pronoun as shown in (29).

(29) [A: Politician; B: Journalist]

A. Mucha gente creía que yo aspiraba a presidenta del gobierno\y he dicho que sí\

B. Pero algunos dicen que *usted* va por el camino de castigar\

A. No\yo de momento voy premiada\el partido quiere que vaya\

(CCEC Med12<ElEn103>)

‘A. So many people believed that I was aspiring to be Prime Minister and I have said “yes”

B. Yes, but some people say that *you* go in the direction of punishment

A. No, at the moment I go awarded, the party wants me to go.’

On the other hand, the argumentative discourse usually performed by politicians explains the fairly equal use of the three variants of *usted* among them. However, the slight downplaying of objectivity promoted by the preverbal expression may also serve to enhance the positive or dignifying image of the referent. Note this implication in (30).

(30) [Politician]

El pueblo herreño que ha sido muy responsable\estará muy pendiente hoy de lo que *usted* les pueda decir\desde la Restinga y también aquellos que fueron evacuados de El Golfo\

(CCEC Med12<ETT26111>)

‘The El Hierro people – who have been very responsible – will be watching for what you can say to them, from La Restinga and also those who were evacuated.’

The postverbal position, being closer to objectivity than the preverbal, stresses the referent in a more conspicuous way, displaying meanings that can be interpreted in that way. In (31), by means of the postposition of the pronoun *usted*, the politician makes his interlocutor responsible for a meeting that was troublesome.

- (31) [Politician]
 El gabinete ha parado las negociaciones tras la reunión que mantuvo *usted*
 con representantes de cultura\ (CCECMed12<LaAlp212>)
 ‘The cabinet has stopped the negotiations after the meeting *you* [postv.] held
 with culture’s representatives’

In (32), the question posed by the politician to another politician is focusing on the referent of the pronoun (Mr. Soria) to inquire about renting a car when arriving at the airport as a reproachable attitude.

- (32) [Politician]
 Sr. Soria cuando llega usted al aeropuerto de Madrid Barajas¿qué le parece a
usted coger un coche en el aeropuerto? (CCECMed12<LaAlp212>)
 ‘Mr. Soria, when you arrive at Madrid-Barajas airport, what do *you* [postv.]
 think about renting a car at the airport?’

In both examples, the postposed pronoun involves repercussions in the meaning of the utterance by signalling the pronoun’s referent as affected by the verbal lexeme, reinforcing and stressing it, which may indeed be interpreted as a resource to objectivize the utterance content.

7. Conclusion

This study has attempted to demonstrate that variation existing between the second-person pronouns *tú* and *usted* can be explained not simply as address pronouns but, more accurately, as linguistic forms conveying different meanings that are used as communicative resources to either subjectivize or objectivize the communicative content. This approach to syntactic variation as simultaneously formal and meaningful choice challenges the idea that linguistic forms are quite often the carriers of social values that may be indexical. When speakers choose one of the variants of the pronouns under study (expressed preverbal, expressed postverbal or omitted) they are also selecting the meaning considered to be more suitable to accomplish the concrete communicative goals pursued on the basis of the contextual situation and/or the socioprofessional functions displayed by them. The analysis of the normalized frequencies of this variation in diverse textual genres reveals that *tú* is more frequent in the most interactional ones such

as talk shows and magazines, and this is due to the topics dealt with, where both the speaker and the interlocutor tend to subjectivize the content and need to feel closer to each other to better develop their conversational tasks.

However, the overall frequencies of *usted* indicate that it is more commonly used in informative-debates, primarily devoted to argumentation and discussing breaking news. The distribution of socioprofessional affiliations of speakers are tightly connected with these results: private individuals tend to use *tú*, not only as a consequence of the mass-media situations in which they participate, most tending to subjectivity, but also owing to the absence of any need to present a self-image in such communicative situations. The opposite is found in journalists and politicians, these being the groups that prefer the use of *usted*, taking advantage of this choice as a way to objectivize their utterances, as well as to develop particular speaker images in the discourse. These tendencies are also confirmed by the analysis of each pronoun as relative variables. Although the omitted variant remains the most frequent, the variation between the expressed preverbal and postverbal variants gives rise to a slight increase or downplaying of the subjectivity and objectivity inherently performed by *tú* and *usted*, respectively. These frequencies entail a parallel social-indexicality pointing to the speaker and the communicative situation in a wider social and communicative order.

To sum up, the sociocommunicative distribution of the variation of *tú* and *usted* has enabled us to sketch the existence of patterned and situated communicative styles by means of their different inherent cognitive meanings, which have been proved to be at the disposal of speakers to achieve their communicative goals in discursive interaction.

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