

<https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-46457>

EDN: KOEMIJ

Research article / Научная статья

## Spanish *bueno* in metadiscursive contexts: A constructional-pragmatic analysis

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### Abstract

This study examines the Spanish discourse marker (DM) *bueno* through a constructional-pragmatic approach that challenges traditional lexicocentric analyzes. Its aim is to prove that analyzing the pragmatic-discursive values of this DM as emerging from its participation in certain discourse patterns (DPs) enhances previous descriptions. Building on recent theoretical developments from Hispanic linguistics as well as from research on other languages that warn against lexicocentric semasiological approaches, the study adopts an onomasiological and constructional perspective that advocates for integrated characterizations that capture DMs' functioning within larger DPs. Through analysis of the Val.Es.Co. corpus of colloquial Spanish conversation (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002), we identify and formalize metadiscursive DPs involving *bueno*. These include prototypical metadiscursive functions such as topic resumption, topic shift, reformulation, and online planning support, as well as turn-taking and other functions characteristic of turn-initial position in both initiating and, especially, reactive turns, all of which are understood as metadiscursive. Our findings demonstrate that the diverse functional values traditionally attributed exclusively to *bueno* actually derive from the complete pragmatic-discursive patterns in which this DM participates. Formalized DPs offer practical applications for monolingual and crosslinguistic description, historical reconstruction of grammaticalization pathways, and applied domains such as L2 teaching and machine translation. Theoretically, our results show that the DPs approach resolves persistent contradictions in the literature, where researchers infer DMs' values from co-text while simultaneously abstracting from that same co-text in their descriptions. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates about constructions beyond sentential level by bridging Construction Grammar frameworks with discourse analysis.

**Keywords:** *discourse markers, constructional schemas, discourse patterns, metadiscursive functions, Spanish pragmatics, bueno*

**For citation:**

López Serena, Araceli & Santiago García-Jiménez. 2025. Spanish *bueno* in metadiscursive contexts: A constructional-pragmatic analysis. *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 29 (4). 886–913. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-46457>

## **Испанское *bueno* в метадискурсивном контексте: конструктивно-прагматический анализ**

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**Аннотация**

В данном исследовании испанский дискурсивный маркер (ДМ) *bueno* изучается с помощью конструкционно-прагматического подхода, бросающего вызов традиционному лексикоцентрическому анализу. Цель исследования — доказать, что анализ прагматико-дискурсивных значений этого ДМ, возникающих в результате его участия в определенных дискурсивных паттернах (ДП), дополняет предыдущие описания. Опираясь на недавние теоретические разработки в области испаноязычной лингвистики, а также на исследования других языков, критикующих лексикоцентрические семасиологические подходы, в исследовании используется ономасиологический и конструкционный подход, выступающий за комплексные характеристики, отражающие функционирование ДМ в рамках более крупных дискурсивных фрагментов. Анализируя корпус разговорной испанской речи Val.Es.Co. (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002), мы выявляем и формализуем метадискурсивные ДМ, содержащие *bueno*. К ним относятся прототипические метадискурсивные функции, такие как возобновление темы, смена темы, переформулирование и поддержка в онлайн коммуникации, а также очередность реплик и другие функции, характерные для начальной позиции как в иницирующих, так и особенно в ответных репликах, каждая из которых понимается как метадискурсивная. Полученные результаты показывают, что разнообразные функциональные значения, традиционно приписываемые исключительно *bueno*, вытекают из полных прагматико-дискурсивных моделей, в которых участвует этот дискурсивный маркер. Формализованные дискурсивные паттерны могут быть применены для монолингвистического и кросс-лингвистического описания, исторической реконструкции путей грамматикализации и прикладных областей, таких как обучение второму языку и машинный перевод. Теоретически наши результаты показывают, что подход, основанный на ДП, разрешает сохраняющиеся противоречия в литературе, где исследователи выводят значения ДМ из со-текста, одновременно абстрагируясь от него же в своих описаниях. Тем самым исследование вносит вклад в продолжающиеся дискуссии о конструкциях, выходящих за рамки сентенциального уровня, соединяя подходы грамматики конструкций с дискурсивным анализом.

**Ключевые слова:** *дискурсивные маркеры, конструктивные схемы, дискурсивные модели, метадискурсивные функции, испанская прагматика, bueno*

**Для цитирования:**

López Serena A., García-Jiménez S. Spanish *bueno* in metadiscursive contexts: A constructional-pragmatic analysis. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*. 2025. Vol. 29. № 4. P. 886–913. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-46457>

## **1. Introduction**

Drawing on the specific case of the Spanish discourse marker (DM) *bueno*, this paper intends to show that properly describing DMs necessarily involves identifying and formalizing the discourse patterns (DPs) in which DMs occur. The DM selected to illustrate this programmatic proposal has received extensive scholarly attention from specialists in colloquial Spanish (Beinhauer 1958, Steel 1985: 142–143, Vigara 1980: 77–78, 1992, Briz 1998, Pons 2008) and DMs experts (Fuentes 1990, 1993, Martín Zorraquino 1994, Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999), including studies of its prosody (Briz & Hidalgo 1998, Martín Butragueño 2006, Martínez Hernández 2016), grammaticalization process (Fuentes 1993, Ocampo 2006, Posio & Rosemeyer 2025), and positional variability (Pons 2003, 2008, Posio & Rosemeyer 2025). Research encompasses monographic works (Bauhr 1994, Martín Zorraquino 1994, Serrano 1999, Rosemeyer & Posio 2023), some crosslinguistic (García Vizcaíno & Martínez-Cabeza 2005), comparative analyzes with semantically similar (Fuentes 1993, Pons 2003, Serrano 2012) or dissimilar (Portolés 1998, Borreguero 2017, Raymond 2018) DMs, and lexicographic entries in general (Moliner 2007<sup>3</sup>) and specialized dictionaries (Santos Río 2003, Briz, Pons & Portolés coords. 2008, Fuentes 2009).

Recently, López Serena & Uceda (2024) have used *bueno* to assess DMs characterization through pragmatic-discursive schemas<sup>1</sup>, considering the immediate co-text from an illocutionary perspective. Building on Taranilla's (2015) notion of DP, López Serena & Uceda (2024) formulated *esquemas construccionales* ('constructional schemas') (CSs) to address limitations of analyzing DMs in isolation. Through analysis of *bueno* patterns in Pío Baroja's early twentieth-century trilogy *La lucha por la vida* (*The Struggle for Life*), they demonstrate that DPs as wholes elicit the different functional values typically attributed exclusively to the DMs. As a result of this approach, they provided CSs for two main uses of *bueno*: turn-initial acceptance in reactive moves (from agreement to reluctant compliance), and in three-part schemas to resume first-turn content after an intervening response. However, their exploration does not recover cases of *bueno* in turn-initial, reformulation, or online planning contexts, which are extremely rare in literary dialogue, and whose DPs remain unproposed. The current study aims to address this gap by examining *bueno*'s underexplored metadiscursive patterns in a

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<sup>1</sup> López Serena & Uceda (2024) use 'constructional schemas' for what Taranilla (2015) and Gras (2016) call 'discourse patterns.' We will also adopt the term 'discourse pattern', whose initials (DP) are easily interpretable. This choice helps to prevent potential confusion with the expression 'constructional schema', already used in literature on Role and Reference Grammar and certain versions of Construction Grammar.

corpus of colloquial conversation (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002), which better captures metadiscursive functions characteristic of maximum communicative immediacy (Koch & Oesterreicher 1990)—most of which were absent from López Serena & Uceda's (2024) literary corpus.

Our focus on DPs is consistent with claims like those of Heine & Kuteva (2002: 2), who note that “since the development of grammatical forms is not independent of the constructions to which they belong, the study of grammaticalization is also concerned *with constructions and with even larger discourse segments*” (our italics). It also aligns with an established tradition within Hispanic linguistics that warns against exclusively semasiological approaches (Narbona 1989 & 1990, López Serena 2011, Borreguero & López Serena 2011) and lexicocentric bias in DMs research (López Serena 2011, Borreguero 2015: 165, Fernández Madrazo & López Serena 2022). This bias, which may stem from the widespread view that DMs “are semantically and syntactically independent from their environments” (Heine, Yang & Rhee 2024: 754), can be overcome by recognizing that DMs do not carry functional values in isolation but only deploy them as components of higher-order pragmatic-discursive units.

The article is organized as follows. After this introduction, Section 2 presents the theoretical and methodological foundations for interpreting DMs as members of DPs. Section 3 briefly outlines our data and analytical methodology. Section 4 reviews *bueno*'s functional values as found in the literature, some of which are then discussed in Section 5 on the basis of the constructional schemas proposed by López Serena & Uceda (2024). In Section 6, we describe *bueno*'s prototypical metadiscursive values and relate them to DPs identified in our corpus of colloquial conversation. Section 7 discusses the main findings, and Section 8 concludes by summarizing the study's main contributions and directions for future research.

## **2. Toward an integrated characterization of discourse markers in discourse patterns**

Within Hispanic linguistics<sup>2</sup>, treating DMs as components of broader structures stems from largely unnoticed considerations. Decades ago, Martín Zorraquino (1994: 405) already argued that DMs require contextual analysis of “either what precedes or what follows in the discourse”; Portolés (1998: 134–135) argued that complete descriptions of *bueno* and *pues* must account for relationships with conversational patterns; and Montolío (2011) emphasized analyzing weakening DMs like *por el momento* (‘for the moment’) and *en teoría* (‘in theory’) within two-part patterns where they appear in initial segments of weaker argumentative force, followed by stronger argumentative content. Drawing from such considerations, Taranilla (2015: 260) assumes that “discourse context provides valuable data for

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<sup>2</sup> Among other aims, this work intends to highlight this tradition's contribution to pragmatics and DMs studies, hence the predominantly Hispanic bibliography. All Spanish sources are cited in our English translations, prepared for this article, without further indication.

adequately characterizing DMs meaning” and defines a discourse pattern as a “recurring practice in the configuration of discourse which, without becoming established in a fixed form, constitutes a habitual routine for arranging informative materials and their relationships in textual production” (236). In a related vein, Gras (2016: 206) adopted a constructionist approach arguing that “the meaning of linguistic forms results from interaction between lexico-grammatical resources and schematic patterns”<sup>3</sup>.

In English-language literature, functionalist and cognitivist approaches have converged in describing linguistic units in non-atomistic terms, which, according to Fried (2007: 723), is the logical consequence of conceiving grammar as emerging from linguistic usage rather than independent of it. Three approaches illustrate this perspective.

First, interactional linguistics advocates analyzing linguistic units within oral dialogic sequences as the most frequent form of everyday communication. This has led to examine DMs — and other linguistics units — as elements integrated into larger discursive configurations. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2000) exemplify this in their study of concessive patterns, demonstrating how *though* acquires full meaning within broader structures through a tripartite: initial argument by one speaker (X), another participant’s acknowledgment of its validity (X’), then contrasting argument (Y).

Second, some Construction Grammar frameworks conceptualize DMs as constructions embedded within broader structural patterns that explain their meaning and function. Masini & Pietrandrea (2010) exemplify this approach analyzing Italian *magari* within topological patterns including lists, repetition of sequential syntactic structures, and chiasmic arrangements. Their study also draws upon Fried & Östman’s (2004, 2005) theoretical considerations for Construction Grammar’s future direction — advocating analysis of grammatical elements within their environments rather than in isolation. Fried (2007: 723) exemplifies this approach studying *se* through “detailed analysis of the full grammatical environments” rather than defining it in isolation, “as an abstract syntactic entity”, arguing forms must be treated as “having the status of a grammatical construction” (725–726).

Moreover, hybrid approaches combining interactional linguistics and Construction Grammar analyze DMs beyond isolated treatment. Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson (2008) distinguish between constructions — “grammatical abstractions that have emerged as more or less fixed templates, comprising some lexically open slots and some lexically fixed forms” (445) — and patterns — “recurrent interactional practice which has not become sedimented as a grammatical format,

<sup>3</sup> Although Gras’s article focuses on a linguistic unit (Sp. *que* in quotative uses) rarely classified as a DM, his approach has particularly inspired our own work. Like Gras (2016: 202), we “analyze which aspects of linguistic form or, crucially, discourse context give rise to [particular] interpretation[s]” and “highlight the function of discourse patterns” as “recurring contextual features” that activate “particular readings” (207).

but is instead a pragmatic routine for assessing a situation or event in a social interaction” (445). Thanks to this distinction they demonstrate how DMs such as *well* or *you know* acquire significant roles within conversational interaction frameworks.

Third, studies on discourse relations from other functionalist approaches have proposed broader conceptions of connectors form. Renkema’s (2009) theory of connectivity exemplifies this. He observes (Renkema 2009: 166–167) that *but* performs at least four distinct functions: contrast relation (i), concessive relation (ii), instead relation (iii), and mood indicator (iv):

- i. It is dry over here, *but* over there it is wet.
- ii. Pete is overweight, *but* he is strong as a bear.
- iii. Hey Mary, don’t stroll around *but* help John.
- iv. *But* I told you not to buy anything! (upon receiving a birthday present from a friend)

However, closer examination reveals that these are distinct variants: in (i), the contrastive relation hinges on the binary opposition *dry/wet*; in (ii), the concessive relation relies on casual understanding — *being overweight* does not preclude strength; in (iii), the substitutive relation is triggered by the negation in *stroll*; and in (iv), a relation appearing only sentence-initially in exclamatory constructions is observed.

### 3. Data and analytical methodology

Examples of the Spanish DM *bueno* used throughout this study — both for illustration in Sections 4 and 5 and for analysis in Section 6 — are drawn from the Val.Es.Co. corpus of colloquial Spanish conversation (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002). This corpus, available in transcription format, comprises oral colloquial conversations secretly recorded in spontaneous, informal situations in Valencia and its metropolitan area.

Methodologically, the formalization of the discourse patterns (DPs) of *bueno*’s metadiscursive uses identified in this corpus which will be conducted in Section 6 is partly inspired by positional analyses using categories such as dialogue, intervention, act, and subact<sup>4</sup>. Among other purposes, these categories help to describe position-function correlations in DMs more precisely (Pons 2008, Briz & Pons 2010). However, our approach is primarily indebted to López Serena & Uceda (2024) (Section 5), who propose describing *bueno*’s contexts of occurrence in Spanish by examining DPs that encompass the interventions/acts immediately

<sup>4</sup> The Val.Es.Co. research group defines these conversational units as follows: (1) *dialogue*: the maximal dialogic unit formed by the combination of successive exchanges; (2) *intervention*: one or more speaker actions within a given time frame (initiative or reactive); (3) *act*: the basic communicative unit bearing illocutionary force; (4) *subact*: minimal informational unit within an act, either substantive (propositional content) or adjacent (discourse-organizing, modalizing, or interpersonal functions) (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2003, Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2014).

surrounding *bueno* and by identifying adjacent interventions' illocutionary force and exchanges' preferred/dispreferred moves.

Before examining *bueno*'s metadiscursive values (Section 6), we review functional values from the literature (Section 4), emphasizing those with existing constructional schemas (Section 5). Our exclusively qualitative analysis drew on native speaker intuition and rational explanation (Itkonen 2003) of speech acts and discourse structuring to identify the DPs underlying *bueno*'s previously described values, formalized in Sections 5 and 6. This identification had two main goals: first, to determine whether the DPs for *bueno* proposed by López Serena & Uceda (2024) from literary data matched those found in our colloquial conversation corpus; and second, to identify DPs associated with metadiscursive functions not attested in their literary corpus.

#### 4. The functional values of the DM *bueno*

*Bueno* stands among Spanish's most versatile DMs, exhibiting remarkable functional range alongside considerable positional and prosodic flexibility (Martín Zorraquino 1994: 405, Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999: 4163, Martín Butragueño 2006: 17, Posio & Rosemeyer 2025: 1145). In their review of the different discourse values attributed to *bueno* in Spanish literature López Serena & Uceda (2024) identify the following 13 values, for each of which we will provide an example drawn from the corpus underlying this study<sup>5</sup>:

- (i) Expression of full agreement with the precedence utterance<sup>6</sup>:

G: [...] y él decía *si bueno/pues soy marica ¿y qué?* <'and he would say yeah **BUENO**/ well I'm gay, so what?'><sup>7</sup>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 101, transcript lines 812–813)<sup>8</sup>

- (ii) Turn acknowledgment, possibly indicating understanding:

E: = ¿qué rubio? <E: = what blond guy?

L: ¿uno rubio con los ojos azules (( ))? <L: a blond one with blue eyes (( ))?>

E: ¡ah! ¿uno con barba? (RISAS) ese es el morenito <E: ah! one with a beard? (LAUGHTER) that's the dark-haired one>

L: ¡ah! **bueno**

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 88, transcript lines 252–257)

- (iii) Expression of reluctant agreement with the preceding utterance:

– ¿Te parece bien así? <– Does that seem okay to you?>

– **Bueno**, vamos a ver qué pasa) <– **BUENO**, let's see what happens>

(Santos Río 2003, s. v. *bueno*)

<sup>5</sup> When this is not possible, we employ the same examples as López Serena & Uceda (2024).

<sup>6</sup> This *bueno* can be substituted with *de acuerdo* ('agreed'), *está bien* ('all right'), or *vale* ('okay').

<sup>7</sup> To avoid confusion with parentheses (indicating unclear audio in Val.Es.Co. notation) and square brackets (indicating speaker overlaps), example translations will be provided in angle brackets.

<sup>8</sup> In all English translations of examples, *bueno* remains in Spanish and appears in small capitals.

(iv) Mitigation of disagreement or counter-argumentation:

M: es que es demasiao <M: it's just too much>

[...]

A: pero es quee- ees otros tiempos <A: but it's that- it's different times>

M: ya/ **bueno** bien / otros tiempos / pero es que es demasiao/ demasiao demasiao <M: yeah/**BUENO** okay / different times / but it's just too much/ too too much>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 123, transcript lines 1, 5–7)

(v) Expression of resigned acceptance

E: [...] ((si me mira)) el tío ↑ pues te animas oye ↓ antes a lo mejor lo- no se trata de ir por ahí a ver- a la caza del rollo ↓ entonces ya ↑ si es que es una vez dices **bueno** <E: [...] ((if he looks at me)) the guy ↑ well you get encouraged you know ↓ before maybe it- it's not about going around to see- hunting for action ↓ so then ↑ if it's just once you say **BUENO**>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 94, transcript lines 510–513)

(vi) Turn initiation:

A: [pero] no/ no/ el problema soy yo y ya está↓ [es que no tiene explicación] <A: [but] no/ no/ I'm the problem and that's it↓ [it just doesn't have an explanation]>

B: [**bueno**↓ escúchame un momento↓] escúchame un momento/ escúchame <B: [**BUENO** ↓listen to me for a second↓] listen to me for a second/ listen>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 75, transcript lines 95–99)

(vii) Topic resumption:

G: puees el chaval↑/ o sea→/ estaba estudiando Egebé pero era pues/ muy malo para estudiar [¿no?]= <G: so this guy↑/ like →/he was attending primary school but he was just/ really bad at studying [right?]=>

E: [(sí)] <E: [(yeah)]>

G: = ceporro/ además que es un ANIMAL/ es muy BASTO yy§ <G: stupid/ plus he's a complete IDIOT/ he's so ROUGH and and§>

E: §y seguro que a la primera§ <: §and I bet on the first try§>

G: §no [no no no es que] <G: §no [no no no the thing is]>

E: [¿te acuerdas- el chico] que te dije de Alacuás? <E: [do you remember- the guy] I told you about from Alacuás?>

G: sí (RISAS) <G: yeah (LAUGHTER)>

[...] (the topic shifts momentarily)

G: Pues **bueno** pues [a lo que iba=] <G: So **BUENO** so [what I was getting at=]>

L: [pues ¡vaya tela!] <E: That's crazy!>

G: = el chaval este/ o sea→/ pues/ una día↑ un día ↑ ¿no? Decidió apuntarse a la autoescuela [...] <G: = this guy/ like→/ well/ one day↑one day↑you know? He decided to join a driving school [...]>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 112, transcript lines 1249–1276)

(viii) Topic shift

M: pues sí señor oye/ de verdad// a mí también me gusta pasármelo bien/ oye/// pero yo lo/ reconozco↑/ que- que ¡hija mía!/ el otro día empezaba/ el jueves↑ y digo/ entonces/ es ya/ jueves ↑/ viernes sábado y domingo ¿cuatro días de salir por la noche?/ esto es demasiaoo/// después a- el lunes estás/oye ↑/ estás- estás torrá(da) el lunes está torrá/ y a(d)emás estaba hasta ahora durmiendo/ (ahora voy a despertarla a ver qué dice)/// que me ayude aa limpiar un poquito/// **bueno** ee ayer↑/ (me llamó Roberto ¿se ha enterado de lo del ascensor?)

<M: well yeah right listen/ honestly// I like to have fun too/ hey/// but I admit it↑/ that- that Jesus!/ the other day she started/ on Thursday↑ and I'm like/ so/ it's already Thursday ↑/ Friday Saturday and Sunday four days of going out at night?/ this is too much///then on- Monday you're/you know ↑/ you're-you're wasted Monday she's wasted/ and besides she was sleeping till now/ (now I'll wake her up to see what she says)/// to help me clean up a bit/// **BUENO**↑ uh Roberto called me yesterday/ did you hear about the elevator situation?)>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 125, transcript lines 79–87)

(ix) Closure<sup>9</sup>

E: **bueno** chicas/ me subo <E: **BUENO** girls/ I'm going upstairs>

A: **bueno** pos yo también me vooy↑ <A: **BUENO** then I'm off too↑>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 274, transcript lines 635–636)

(x) Reformulation

A: BRR/// yo estuve viendo For Bravo↑/// gran película <A: BRR/// I was watching Fort Bravo /// great movie>

D: ¿For [Bravo? sí] <D: Fort [Bravo? yeah]>

A: [y una tía muy buena§ <A: [and a really hot chick§>

B: § ¿eh?/ Eléanor Párquer está buenísima↓ tío// **bueno**↓ estaba <B: § huh?/ Eleanor Parker is so hot↓ dude//**BUENO**↓ she was>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 66, transcript lines 649–653)

(xi) Support in discourse formulation processes:

G: hombre↓ yo al llegar aquí y noo/// **bueno**↓ no encontrar a nadie/ o s(e)a/// tía↓ he llegao y he llamado all- ahí al- al veinticinco no- no abría nadie ¿no? al veinticinco

<G: hey↓when I arrived here and not///**BUENO**↓ not finding anybody/ well /// honey↓ I got here and I called at- over there at- at apartment twenty-five no-nobody answered you know? at twenty-five>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 83, transcript lines 40–42)

<sup>9</sup> While the literature on Spanish *bueno* differentiates between topic-shifting and closing functions, in our opinion these constitute the same function operating in distinct DPs: topic shift in non-final versus final dialogue positions.

(xii) Expression of surprise:

–¡**Bueno!** No nos faltaba más que esto!  
 <**BUENO!** That's the last thing we needed!>

(Moliner 2007<sup>3</sup>, s. v. *bueno*).

(xiii) Expression of confusion or perplexity:

M: [((vea usted)) yo] (( ))/los días por ejemplo↑/ que pasa la música↑ / me los  
 veo acostaos↑// digo ¡**bueno!**§

<M: [((you know)) I] (( ))/like on days↑ / when the music goes by↑/ I see them  
 just lying there↑// I say **BUENO!**§

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 121, transcript lines 23–25)

Most of these values derive from earlier studies, whereas recent functional descriptions increasingly reduce *bueno*'s functional repertoire. For instance, while Beinhauer's pioneering study (1958) distinguished seven functions corresponding to values (i), (ii), (iv), (vii), (ix), (x), and (xi), contemporary works postulate fewer more abstract functional values. The highly recommended study by Ocampo (2006) exemplifies this trend, considering only two core values: 'acceptance' and 'boundary facilitating a subsequent discursive action'<sup>10</sup>. Between these extremes, Fuentes (1990) maintained Beinhauer's seven functions<sup>11</sup>, replacing only the last type with ¡*bueno!* bearing rising intonation and having emotive value (values [xii] and [xiii]), possibly inspired by Moliner's (2007, s. v. *bueno*) description of *bueno* expressing resignation, unpleasant surprise, or confusion/perplexity. Moliner's dictionary also identifies two values not referred to by Beinhauer (1958): acknowledging having received an order/instruction without necessarily expressing agreement (value [ii])<sup>12</sup>, and initiating discourse (value [vi]).

Continuing this reductive trend, Martín Zorraquino & Portolés (1999) subsume *bueno*'s diverse functions into three macro-categories designed to capture all conversational DMs: deontic-volitional modality expression, interlocutor focus, and conversational structuring<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, Briz, Pons & Portolés (coords., 2008,

<sup>10</sup> Ocampo (2006) identifies *bueno*'s 'boundary facilitating subsequent discursive action' value in concessive, topic-shift, discourse planning, and turn-taking contexts. This boundary function derives through discursivization from the original 'acceptance' value of adjectival *bueno* 'good', emerging through conventionalizing the inference that acceptance limits further elaboration. His proposal, which aligns with Foolen's (1989) intermediate level (ii) in his three-level framework — (i) very abstract level for both DM and non-DM functions; (ii) intermediate level for exclusively DM values; and (iii) concrete level for discourse-specific meanings — represents the closest attempt to establish constant semantic value across all non-adjectival uses of *bueno*.

<sup>11</sup> Later Fuentes (2009, s. v. *bueno*) reduced to five functions with some types encompassing multiple values, such as values (iv) and (viii) corresponding to Fuentes' *bueno* 1 and values (xi) and (vii) to her *bueno* 4.

<sup>12</sup> A value echoed by Martín Zorraquino & Portolés (1999: 4163).

<sup>13</sup> They associate acceptance *bueno* (value [i]) with deontic-volitional modality expression, message reception/information processing *bueno* (value [ii]) with conversational structuring (metadiscursive

s. v. *bueno*) reduce *bueno*'s behavior to three functions: (i) presenting discourse segments as continuations of previous content (value [vii]); (ii) indicating total or partial agreement with prior statements or implications (values [i], [iii]); and (iii) signaling disagreement through emphatic pronunciation (values [xii], [xiii]).

Likewise, Pons (2003) proposes a tripartite classification: formulating function, including reformulation (values [x], [xi]); agreement expression, including disagreement mitigation (values [i], [iii], [iv]); and disagreement expression (values [xii], [xiii]).

Recently, Borreguero (2017) proposed an additional quotative function for *bueno* — signaling transitions to reported speech — which Rosemeyer & Posio (2023) adopt<sup>14</sup>. They incorporate this alongside three core values from prior research: (i) agreement expression, potentially with hedges or propositional modifications; (ii) disagreement expression with face-saving mitigation; and (iii) metadiscursive uses including topic management (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999), reformulation (Pons 2003), and discourse continuation (Briz, Pons & Portolés 2008).

This review yields several conclusions. Linguistic studies attribute multiple diverse values to *bueno*, catalogued heterogeneously, showing progressive reduction tendencies. Bibliographical discrepancies reveal that: (1) authors do not report identical values, and convergence does not guarantee matching interpretations — the same example receives different analyzes; (2) studies operate with functional labels at varying abstraction levels: employing macrofunctions (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999) or microfunctions without consistent macro/microfunctional relationships across authors. In this respect, Pons (2003) and Fuentes (2009) link agreement/disagreement and emotional uses to modality, while Rosemeyer & Posio (2023) and Borreguero (2015) associate attenuation and emotional uses with interaction. Similarly, concessive *bueno* is classified as alterity-focusing (Martín Zorraquino & Portolés 1999) versus discourse connection (Pons 2003), and topic management as formulative (Pons 2003), metadiscursive (López Serena & Borreguero 2010), or interactive (Posio & Rosemeyer 2025). Furthermore, in most cases these correlations are merely asserted rather than justified. Finally, according to our main concern in this paper, *bueno* is frequently attributed functions it cannot convey exclusively. Rosemeyer & Posio (2023) exemplify this: while a conversational contribution may express 'mitigated disagreement protecting the speaker's positive face', this entire illocutionary force will hardly rest exclusively on *bueno* — as they seem to maintain — but rather on the complete pragmatic-discursive schema or DP.

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function), and disagreement-mitigating *bueno* that reinforces speaker image (value [iv]) with alterity focusing.

<sup>14</sup> Change to Posio & Rosemeyer (2025: 1158) propose another value, *admission of another perspective*, that will not be considered here as their examples represent established functions; reformulation (example 17) and reluctant acceptance via *pero bueno* (example 18), which Fuentes (1990: 155–156) defines as equivalent to 'all right, agreed, what can we do about it' (see also Fuentes 1993: 209: "to accept something unwillingly").

5. Acceptance discourse patterns involving *bueno*

Building on §4’s discursive values of *bueno*, López Serena & Uceda (2024: 479) posit that “distinct to discourse patterns can be identified and described for each value”. This yields DPs for five *bueno* types and their variants: interactional acceptance after directive acts; acknowledgment; acceptance of assertions; topic continuation in tripartite dialogic structures, and topic-shift *bueno*.

5.1. Acceptance discourse patterns in which *bueno* follows directive, commissive, or assertive acts

Conformity/agreement in reactive interventions — typically accepting orders, offers, suggestions, requests, commitments, or assertions expecting agreement as preferred responses — represents an appropriate value for a DM derived from an adjective meaning ‘good’. López Serena & Uceda (2024: 480) proposed a DP for this value, originally analysing directive/commissive and assertive acts separately, which we reformulate in Figure 1a<sup>15</sup>, where, following Val.Es.Co. Group (2014) notation, “iI” refers to initiative intervention and “rI” to reactive intervention.

|                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|
| iI: directive, commissive or assertive act            |
| rI: #( <i>pues</i> ) <i>bueno</i> (vocative)# (#...#) |

Figure 1a. Agreement DP in which *bueno* follows directive/commissive/assertive acts, functioning as independent act or intervention

According to López Serena & Uceda (2024), in contexts of acceptance *bueno* can constitute an intervention alone or with a vocative, or form the initial act of an intervention followed by additional acts. Figure 1a — exemplified here by (1) and (2) from the Val.Es.Co. corpus — represents these possibilities using hashes (#) to segment acts and braces ({} ) to mark act/subact boundaries. Parentheses indicate optional elements. Thus, #(*pues*) *bueno* (vocative)# (#...#) reads: *bueno* constitutes an act alone, optionally preceded by *pues*, and optionally followed by a vocative; this act may form a complete intervention or be followed by optional additional acts within the same intervention.

- (1) C: [...] *es de aquí de RADIOVALENCIA// la llamamos ↑/ le vamos a hacer una pregunta/ si en cinco segundos/ usted nos responde ↑/ gana cinco mil pesetas/ claro ↓ yo digo **pues bueno** [...]*  
<[...] this is from *RADIOVALENCIA* here// we’re calling you ↑// we’re going to ask you a question/ if within five seconds/ you answer us ↑// you win five thousand pesetas/ of course ↓ I/ say **PUES BUENO**/ [...]
- (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 235, transcript lines 101–106)

<sup>15</sup> Since the value of *bueno* appears largely unchanged whether the preceding initiating move is directive/commissive or assertive, our reformulation encompasses all possible illocutionary forces in the first pair part.

- (2) G: [...] y él decía *sí **bueno**/ pues soy marica ¿y qué?* <‘and he would say yeah **BUENO**/ well I’m gay, so what?’>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 101, transcript lines 812–813)

López Serena & Uceda (2024) argue that the DP of Figure 1a must have evolved from an earlier stage shown in Figure 1b<sup>16</sup>. Here, following a directive initiating move, *bueno* begins a reactive move where it precedes explicit acceptance (see ex. 3):

|                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ¡l: directive/commissive act<br>¡l: # <i>bueno</i> # + #explicit acceptance reinforcing/stemming from the acceptance idea# |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 1b. Agreement DP in which *bueno* follows a directive/commissive act and is followed by explicit acceptance (after López Serena & Uceda 2024: 481)

- (3) – Que si hay algún periodista de esos que vienen a recoger noticias aquí, le diga usted que yo soy cajista en el periódico *El Mundo* y que me han metido preso.  
–#**Bueno**#, #se dirá#  
<–If there’s any of those journalists that come around here looking for news, you tell them I’m a typesetter at *El Mundo* newspaper and they’ve locked me up.  
–#**BUENO**#, #will do#>

(*Mala hierba* [*Bad Weed*], ch. 8, Part II)

After a commissive act, our corpus offers another example (4) that also appears in reported discourse:

- (4) L: [...] yo creía que era una persona muy seria ¿no? Y luego en el tren me di cuenta que no era tan seria ¿no? se metía con// el revisor tal↓ *que está MUY BUENO*/ con este- con no sé cuántos↓ y yo decía *pues bueno*- me decía la gente→/ *ya te enterarás de cómo es ¿no?* y yo decía ***bueno** ya me enteraré*↓ [...]  
<L: [...] I thought she was a really serious person you know? And then on the train I realized she wasn’t that serious you know? she was messing around with// the ticket collector↓ like *he is REALLY HOT/ with this- with I don’t know how many*↓ and I was like *PUES BUENO*- people were telling me/ *you’ll find out what she’s like you know? and I was like **BUENO** I’ll find out*>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 95, transcript lines 573–578)

Sometimes, following a directive initiating move, the reactive turn headed by *bueno* expresses uncertainty about whether the required action will be carried out. This yields the DP in Figure 1c, illustrated in (5), where substituting *bueno* with *de acuerdo* (‘agreed’), *está bien* (‘alright’) or *vale* (‘okay’) is impossible, which

<sup>16</sup> Our reformulation of their Figure 1b shows that the initiating move preceding the *bueno*-headed turn need not be exclusively directive but may also be commissive, as in (4).

suggests that the function of this DP, together with those handled in §4.2 below, should be considered metadiscursive rather than related to acceptance (see Section 6).

|                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>¡l: directive act<br/>¡l: #{<i>bueno</i>} + expression of doubt about performing the required action #</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 1c. DP of mitigated distancing from expected agreement, involving *bueno* after a directive act (after López Serena & Uceda 2024: 482)

- (5) –*Na* –añadió Vidal, después de un momento de silencio, dirigiéndose a Manuel–, tú has de venir con nosotros; formaremos una cuadrilla.  
–Eso es –tartamudeó el Bizco.  
–#{**Bueno**}; {ya veré}# –dijo Manuel de mala gana  
<*Well*–added Vidal, after a moment of silence, addressing Manuel–, you have to come with us; we’ll form a gang.  
–That’s right –stammered el Bizco.  
–#{**BUENO**}; {I’ll see}# –said Manuel reluctantly>  
(*La busca* [*The Quest*], ch. 1, Part III)

However, substitution is possible when *bueno* + *pero* precede counter-oriented arguments in argumentative contexts (post-assertive moves). The DP for these cases, which we consider bridging contexts between the expression of acceptance and metadiscursive uses such as the one represented by Figure 1c, is illustrated in (6) and formalized in Figure 1d

|                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>¡l: assertive act<br/>¡l: #<i>bueno</i># + #<i>pero</i> + counter-oriented argument#</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 1d. DP for expressing counter-oriented arguments regarding the previous move, involving *bueno* + *pero* (after López Serena & Uceda 2024: 486)

- (6) L: pero en los grandes almacenes [síi=] <L: but in department stores [they usually do=]>  
S: [claro] <S:[of course]>  
L: = que suelen haber [se refieren a bañadores] <L: = have [referring to swimsuits]>  
A: **bueno**↓ hay/ pero de esos de natación// [...] pero yo no me voy a gastar cuatro mil ni cinco mil pesetas [...] <A: **BUENO**↓ there are/ but those swimming ones// [...] / but I’m not going to spend four or five thousand pesetas [...]>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 151, transcript lines 328–333)

## 5.2. Acknowledgment discourse patterns involving *bueno*

Within the acceptance domain, as illustrated in Figure 1c and example (5) in §5.1, when agreement values weaken, conformity expressions can become acknowledgment expressions (Moliner 2007). *Bueno* as mere acknowledgment often occurs when followed by expressions preventing an acceptance interpretation.

López Serena & Uceda (2024: 482) argue that in these contexts (Figure 2) *bueno* cannot accept the illocutionary act's content or the act itself, but simply acknowledges *that such an act has taken place*. Like *bueno* in schema 1c, substitution with *de acuerdo* ('agreed'), *está bien* ('alright') or *vale* ('okay') is impossible (see ex. 7).

¡: directive act or conditional expression

¡: #{(ah) *bueno*} + {expression explicitly stating future action opposing acceptance}# (#...#)

Figure 2. Acknowledgment DP involving *bueno* after a directive act

- (7) –Ya ves lo que has conseguido: ya no puedes estar aquí– dijo la Petra a su hijo.  
–#{**Bueno**}. {Ese morral me las pagará}# –replicó el muchacho apretándose los chinchones de la frente–. [...]  
<–You see what you've achieved: you can't stay here anymore — said Petra to her son.  
–#{**BUENO**}. {That bastard will pay for this}# –replied the boy, pressing the bumps on his forehead–. [...]>  
(*La busca* [*The Quest*], ch. 4, Part I).

With this type of value, the Val.Es.Co. corpus provides several examples (see 8) where *bueno* — sometimes *pues/pos bueno* — is preceded by *ah*, and where the acknowledgment value is enriched with indication that, beyond attending to what the speaker said, it has also been understood.

- (8) S: §que no m'ha gustado nunca llenar el cenicero ((ni nada))/ (en)to(n)ces→ <S: I've never liked filling up the ashtray ((or anything))/ so then →>  
J: tee- te metes ahí los§ <J: you- you put in there the§>  
D: §lo limpié bien/ y / lo he llenao de caramelos/ y ya-y está siempre lleno de caramelos/ de bolitas de anís <D: §I cleaned it well/ and / I filled it with candies/ and now it's always full of candies/ anise balls>  
J: o sea que hay que pasar por tu coche ¿no? paraa <J: so you have to go by your car, right? to>  
S: (¿sí?) <S: (huh?)>  
J: para picar unos- unos caramelos de anís§ <J: to grab some- some anise candies§>  
S: § ¡**ah bueno!** eso sí <S: § ¡**AH BUENO!** that's right>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 160, transcript lines 723–731)

### 5.3. Continuative three-part discourse patterns involving *bueno*

In some cases *bueno* does not appear in the second part of an adjacent pair (whose second turn is reactive), but initiates the third turn in a tripartite dialogical structure that, as shown in Figure 3, typically follows the pattern <question + answer + assertive/directive act headed by *bueno*> or structure <proposal + acceptance of proposal + directive act> (López Serena & Uceda 2024: 489). In these

authors’ corpus, the most frequent examples of this DP contain a directive act in the third turn (9):

|                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ¡I generally interrogative<br>¡I response<br>r-¡I headed by <i>bueno</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 3. *Bueno* in three-part dialogical DPs (after López Serena & Uceda 2024: 487)

- (9) –¿Por qué se cierra la puerta ahora? – preguntó a Manuel.  
– Para que no entre nadie.  
– #**{Bueno}**; {dadme una llave a mí}#.  
<–Why is the door being closed now? – he asked Manuel.  
–So that no one comes in.  
–#**{BUENO}**; {give me a key}#.

(*Aura roja* [*Red Dawn*], ch. 5, Part II)

López Serena & Uceda (2024) also document cases where the second turn consists of silence and others where the entire DP occurs within a single polyphonic turn. In these contexts, *bueno* loses its semantic value and functions metadiscursively once again (Section 6), acting “as a hinge for the reactive-initiative movement carried out in the third turn of the tripartite dialogical structure” (López Serena & Uceda 2024: 489).

## 6. Metadiscursive discourse patterns involving *bueno*

When we link the thirteen microfunctions of *bueno* listed in Section 4 with the three macrofunctions proposed by López Serena & Borreguero (2010) and Borreguero (2015), we discover that microfunctions (i)–(vi) relate prima facie to the interactional macrofunction, defined as indicating conversational moves of the interlocutors (López Serena & Borreguero 2010: 440): turn-taking, turn-holding, reception control, addressee appeal, turn-yielding, signaling readiness to listen, and reacting to utterances through agreement, disagreement, or requests for clarification. Conversely, microfunctions (vii)–(xi) appear to be purely metadiscursive<sup>17</sup>. This is unsurprising, given that resuming discourse threads, signaling topic shifts and topic or dialogue closure, reformulating, and facilitating online planning — as well as signaling transitions to reported speech (Borreguero 2017) — are inherently formulative and discourse-structuring tasks. However, as already anticipated for the DP represented in Figure 1c (Section 5.1) and for the DPs discussed in Section 5.2, many of *bueno*’s interactional functions — acknowledgment, turn-taking, mitigating dispreferred responses — also have an

<sup>17</sup> The remaining microfunctions (xii)–(xiv), not addressed here, belong to López Serena & Borreguero’s (2010) third macrofunction: the logical-cognitive macrofunction, encompassing modality-related resources.

underlying metadiscursive dimension, since they equally contribute to discourse formulation and structuring<sup>18</sup>.

As López Serena & Uceda (2024) have already outlined specific DPs for some of these borderline cases (see §5.1 and 5.2), this section will focus exclusively on purely metadiscursive tasks such as topic resumption (§6.1), topic shift (§6.2), reformulation (§6.3), and discourse formulation support (§6.4).

**6.1. Topic resumption discourse patterns involving bueno**

The DP for topic resumption involving *bueno* requires that a conversational topic or illocutionary project has been previously activated and needs continuation. In the example provided in Section 4, *bueno* goes back to a topic that the speaker identified as G had initiated several turns earlier — the story of a boy enrolling in driving school — which E and L had interrupted. This example shows that *bueno* does not resume topics by itself but functions within a DP combining (i) a previously interrupted topic and (ii) a resumptive signal (*a lo que iba*), formalised in Figure 4. We therefore characterize this as a DP of topic resumption *involving bueno*, rather than *of bueno* as topic resumption. In Figure 4, T<sub>1</sub>/A<sub>1</sub> represents the initial topic/illocutionary act from a previous intervention (pI); T<sub>2</sub>/A<sub>2</sub> represents interrupting topics/acts in digressive interventions (dI). As in the preceding figures, hashtags indicate that the resumption intervention (rtI) contains at least one act, comprising both *bueno* and resumptive verbalizations, where *bueno* alone constitutes neither an act nor intervention.



Figure 4. Topic/illocutionary resumption DPs involving *bueno*

Let us consider another example. In (10), *bueno* marks the boundary between reproduced direct speech and narrative resumption in A’s anecdote about having found a watch and taken it to a watchmaker to confirm its value. This represents a resumptive DP — not because a topic or illocutionary act is resumed, but because a sequence type (narrative) is resumed<sup>19</sup>. Accordingly, we extend Figure 4 to Figure 4<sup>r</sup>, integrating the sequential term:

- (10) A: [...] EN TOTAL↓ quee yo digo ¿pero vaa↑ el reloj va? y el hombre dice sí↓ el reloj va <A: [...] SO ANYWAY↓ I go but does↑ does the watch work? and the man goes yes↓ the watch works>

<sup>18</sup> The difficulty in separating these dimensions is well illustrated by Serrano (2012: 227), who identifies two major function types but tellingly labels them ‘predominantly textual’ and ‘predominantly interactive’ (emphasis ours), implicitly acknowledging their overlapping nature.

<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, this *bueno* could signal intensified surprise, similar to Briz & Hidalgo’s (1998: 131) high-pitched intensifying accent. This intensification enables interpretation as a focusing device for informational structuring, marking the narrative climax: that the found watch was expensive.

C: ((¡ay! [pues bueno]) <C: ((oh! [well then])>  
A: [lo que pasa] es que sin la saeta// y dice es que no tiene segundero d'esos/ y digo sí digo ya lo sé↓ y él dice así no se nota si va o no va/ **bueno**↓ empezó el tío allí a darle vueltas↑ [...] <A: [the thing is] it's missing the hand// and he says it doesn't have one of those second hands/ and I go yes I go I already know↓ and he goes you can't tell if it's working or not like this/ **BUENO**↓ the man started messing around with it there↑ [...]>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 226, transcript lines 91–96)

p!: T<sub>1</sub>/A<sub>1</sub>  
d!: T<sub>2</sub>/A<sub>2</sub>  
rt!: #(…) bueno (…) T<sub>1</sub>/A<sub>1</sub>#

Figure 4'. Thematic/illocutionary/sequential resumption DPs involving *bueno*

6.2. Topic shift discourse patterns involving *bueno*

A topic shift DP involving *bueno* necessarily requires three elements: topic 1 (T<sub>1</sub>), topic 2 (T<sub>2</sub>), and a topic-shift move containing *bueno*. Figure 5 formalizes this pattern. The parenthetical reactive-initiative intervention (r-iI) indicates that topic shift may occur within a single intervention (making r-iI optional) or within an exchange, typically at the reactive-initiative intervention marking the transition between exchange elements. If desired, Figure 5 could be generalized for all topic-shift DPs regardless of *buenos*'s presence by placing *bueno* in parentheses.

i!: T<sub>1</sub>  
(r-iI:) *bueno* T<sub>2</sub>

Figure 5. Topic shift DP involving *bueno*

The examples of topic shift involving *bueno* provided by our corpus are both monologic<sup>20</sup> and dialogic (11):

- (11) B: ¿esto es un parque natural↑ nano?§ <B: is this a natural park↑ dude?§>  
?: §¡no [te jode!] <?: §no [shit!]>  
C: [nos tenían que haber] puesto↑ algunas mesas por aquí§ <C: [they should have] put↑ some tables around here§>  
D: §aquí↑ pa nosotros/// (( )) <D: §here↑ for us/// (( ))>  
A: yo soy un caballero <A: I'm a gentleman>  
D: un caballo <D: a horse<sup>21</sup>>  
C: ahí <C: there>  
A: **bueno**↓ entonces Antonio↑ ¿qué?// [¿cómo te va=] <A: **BUENO**↓ Antonio↑ so what?// [how's it going=]>  
(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 51, transcript lines 60–68)

<sup>20</sup> See the example provided in Section 4.

<sup>21</sup> In the English translation, the wordplay between *caballero* and *caballo*, which share the same root in Spanish, is lost.

While perhaps obvious, it bears emphasizing that topic shift recognition in these examples depends on actual topic change: in the example already provided in Section 4, the topic moves from discussing the daughter's consecutive party nights to Roberto's phone call about elevator installation; in (11) the conversation transitions from joking about gentlemen deserving tables in the natural park to A asking how someone is doing. Since *bueno* is optional in these shifts, we cannot assign 'topic shift' as an inherent value of the DM itself. Instead, the entire DP must be considered, with *bueno* functioning merely as a boundary marker (Ocampo 2006) without specifying its exact nature — paralleling its non-obligatory role in topic resumption DPs.

That *bueno* does not itself signal topic shift becomes even clearer in examples like (12), where the speaker explicitly marks the topic change with *hablando de otro tema* ('changing topics'):

- (12) G: pues MIRAA/ yy después dicen de los estudiantes↓ tíaa <G: well LOOK/ and then they talk about students↓ girl>  
 E: sí↓ sí↓ los estudiantes [no te creas] <E: yeah↓ yeah↓ students [don't even get me started]>  
 G: [tú sabes-] mira↓ yo tengo un vecino que **bueno** o sea// (hablando de otro tema↓ que te he cortao otra vez)§ <G: [you know-] look↓ I have this neighbor who BUENO I mean// (changing topics↓ I cut you off again)§>  
 E: § yaa/ tranquilo§ <E: § yeaah/ don't worry§>  
 (Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 111, transcript lines 1243–1248)

### 6.3. Reformulation discourse patterns involving bueno

For reformulation DPs to occur, functionally equivalent elements must be identified that, though concatenated syntagmatically, function as paradigmatic alternatives — with the second potentially correcting the first. This was illustrated in Section 4's example where speaker B states actress Eleanor Parker *está buenísima* ('is very attractive'), then reformulates to *estaba* ('was').

In contrast, example (13) demonstrates a reformulation of utterance meaning. Initially, the speaker emphasizes someone's arrival in Valencia, but then shifts focus to highlight that this arrival occurred after completing COU (the one-year program that marked the completion of secondary education in Spain before university studies):

- (13) E: sí↓ pero desde pequeñito él ha estado en Montesinos/ interno <E: yeah↓ but he's been in Montesinos since he was little/ as a boarder>  
 L: ah  
 E: luego cuando vino a Valencia↑/ **bueno**↓ cuando acabó el Cou/// [...] <E: then when he came to Valencia↑/ BUENO↓ when he finished secondary///>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 84, transcript lines 80–82)

These possibilities can be formalized within a single DP — where *bueno* may or may not appear and, when present, may be replaced by *o sea* — as shown in Figure 6. Here,  $\text{¡E}$  represents the initial emission and  $\text{¡E}$  its reformulation. The figure accounts for reformulations produced by a single speaker within one intervention unit, as well as those produced by different speakers; hence, the symbol representing possible reactive-initiative hetero-reformulation interventions appears in parentheses.

|                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| $\text{¡E}$<br>( $\text{¡E}$ ) ( <i>bueno</i> ) $\text{¡E}$ |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 6. Reformulation DP involving *bueno*

#### 6.4. Online planning discourse patterns involving *bueno*

The key distinction between reformulation DPs and online planning DPs involving *bueno* — both replaceable by *o sea* — is that the latter lack a clearly identifiable  $\text{¡E}$  reformulating  $\text{¡E}$ . Instead, we find  $\text{¡E}$  repetitions, as shown in Section 4's discourse formulation support example.

In these online planning contexts, *bueno* may be preceded by *y*, with (14) or without (15) vowel lengthening (*yyy*), and followed by *pues* (14) (and) *no sé* (15), forming clusters that function as discourse-formulation supports.

- (14) G: *sí/ yo sabía que eraa↑/ este piso↑// yy bueno pues// por lo que me acuerdo yo de orientación y tal/ sabía que más o menos era// aquí ¿no?*  
<G: *yes/ I knew it was↑/ this apartment↑// and BUENO I mean// from what I remember from orientation and so on/ I knew that more or less it was// here, right?*>

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 83, transcript lines 45–46)

- (15) E: *yo es que personalmente no conozco a ninguno/ yo conozco a (( )) de vista// un día que fui// pero hace poco tuve una cena↑/ hizo una- una cena de- de universidad// y bueno pues/ no sé (( ))// y la gente una pinta toda/ conn ell traje chaqueta/ [...] <E: it's just that personally I don't know anyone/ I know (( )) by sight// one day I went// but recently I had a dinner↑/ there was a- a university dinner// and BUENO I mean/ I don't know (( ))// and people all looked/ with their suits and ties/ [...]>*

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 84, transcript lines 93–96)

On other occasions, the online planning process in which *bueno* functions as a support resource becomes evident in hesitations such as those in (16),

- (16) E: *§ya/ no yo a(de)más yo estabaa/ yo eraa bueno/ la re- la rebelde del cole↑ <§yeah/ no I also/ I wasss/ I wasss BUENO/ the re- the rebel of the school↑>*

(Briz & Grupo Val.Es.Co. 2002: 92, transcript lines 421–422)

Thus, the online formulation DP involving *bueno* as a support element can be represented as proposed in Figure 7, where parentheses indicate that formulation

may involve *bueno* alone, planning traces alone, or their combination (with *bueno* or *o sea*) before, after, or around *bueno*:

|                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| (planning traces) ( <i>bueno</i> ) (planning traces) |
|------------------------------------------------------|

Figure 7. Online planning DP involving *bueno* as a planning-support marker

## 7. Discussion

Our analysis of *bueno* through a constructional-pragmatic lens has yielded several key findings. First, we have demonstrated that the diverse functional values traditionally attributed exclusively to *bueno* actually emerge from the complete DPs in which this DM participates. In taking this position, we have built on proposals that sought to overcome the semasiological and lexicocentric bias in DMs research — proposals that recognize DMs’ collaborative operation with syntactic and prosodic mechanisms and adopt a functional onomasiological perspective. In this respect, we advocate abandoning the contradictory practice of inferring DMs’ values from co-text while erasing that same co-text from descriptions. To address this contradiction, we propose DPs that generate meaning values typically attributed exclusively to individual DMs, highlighting the fact that DMs invariably function within larger constructional patterns. Importantly, this pattern-level (rather than item-level) approach applies not only to *bueno* but to all DMs.

The formalized DPs presented in Sections 5 and 6 reveal that *bueno*’s interpretation depends not merely on its presence, prosody, or position, but on the entire DP that integrates it. This reconceptualization directly motivates our formula ‘Value X’s DP involving *bueno*’ in Sections 5 and 6, as well as our insistence that, in many of the DPs outlined, *bueno* can be omitted.

In prioritizing *bueno*’s metadiscursive uses in our analysis, we align ourselves with López Serena (2017) and López Serena & Loureda (2013), who argue that speakers must first ‘do discourses with words’ before ‘doing things with words’ — an overlooked aspect despite universal acceptance of the latter. This focus on metadiscursive DPs has revealed that many of *bueno*’s supposedly distinct metadiscursive functions — such as topic resumption, topic shift, reformulation, and online planning support — can be understood as instantiations of broader DPs rather than as discrete, lexically-determined values. This finding challenges the traditional practice of multiplying functional labels without attending to the underlying DPs that generate these interpretations.

At the same time, we have shown that the recent tendency to minimize *bueno*’s functional repertoire (§4) hinders identification of the multiple meaning values emerging from different DPs. While high-level functional abstractions have their place, exclusive reliance on them ignores the utility of formalized DPs for monolingual and crosslinguistic description, historical reconstruction of grammaticalization pathways, and applied domains like L2 teaching or machine translation. Nonetheless, we also oppose unnecessary functional multiplication. For this reason, we question distinctions between topic-shift and closure *bueno*, and

challenge proposals for admission-of-another-perspective *bueno* (Change to Posio & Rosemeyer 2025) or reported speech *bueno* (Borreguero 2017, Change to Rosemeyer & Posio 2023) as distinct from continuation, turn-initial, surprise/resignation, acceptance, or disagreement-mitigation patterns. Our analysis directly addresses this issue by eliminating functional multiplications attributable not to *bueno* itself but to underlying DPs that analysts conflate with the DM.

Additionally, our approach has revealed significant overlap between interactional and metadiscursive functions. As anticipated in our discussion of the DP in Figure 1c (Section 5.1) and the DPs addressed in Section 5.2, many of *bueno*'s interactional functions — acknowledgment, turn-taking, and mitigating dispreferred responses — also involve an underlying metadiscursive dimension, as they contribute to discourse formulation and structuring. This functional overlap explains persistent difficulties in the literature when attempting to categorize *bueno*'s uses into discrete functional types.

However, while our study makes significant contributions to understanding *bueno*'s pragmatic-discursive functioning, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, our analysis is based exclusively on the Val.Es.Co. corpus of colloquial Spanish conversation, which represents peninsular spoken Spanish in informal contexts. This focus, while appropriate for examining *bueno* in its most frequent discursive environment, limits the generalizability of our findings to other registers and varieties of Spanish.

Second, due to space constraints and the study's scope, we have focused primarily on metadiscursive DPs, leaving a comprehensive delineation of DPs for all thirteen microfunctions identified in Section 4 for future research. As noted in Section 6, we have not formalized DPs for the borderline values between interactional and metadiscursive domains, nor have we addressed the logical-cognitive macrofunction in detail. A complete constructional account of *bueno* would require systematic formalization of DPs across all functional domains.

Finally, our study has prioritized synchronic analysis over diachronic development. While we acknowledge the potential of the DP approach for historical reconstruction of grammaticalization pathways, we have not systematically traced the historical evolution of the patterns we identify. Future research adopting a diachronic perspective could illuminate how these DPs emerged and evolved over time.

## 8. Conclusions and directions for future research

Research on *bueno* and other Spanish DMs will continue to expand<sup>22</sup>, and future studies may, like this one, adopt theoretical rather than merely descriptive approaches. Building on this theoretical foundation, perhaps some will be

<sup>22</sup> Two useful overviews of research on DMs in Spanish – the first, written in Spanish, being more extensive and comprehensive; the second, written in English, being more concise and recent – are Loureda & Acín (eds.) (2010) and Llopis & Pons (2020).

encouraged to follow the considerations advanced by Martín Zorraquino (1994), Portolés (1998), Masini & Pietrandrea (2010), Montolío (2011), Taranilla (2015), and Gras (2016) in Spanish/Romance pragmatic research (discussed in §4), which demonstrate that procedural meaning — typically viewed as consisting of pragmatic-discursive functions and often attributed exclusively to specific DMs — should instead be conceived as meaning derived from the DPs of which DMs form part.

The findings and limitations of this study (Section 7) point to several promising avenues for future research. First, extending the DP approach to other Spanish DMs beyond *bueno* would test the generalizability of our constructional-pragmatic framework and could reveal systematic patterns across the DM system. Comparative studies examining how different DMs participate in similar or overlapping DPs would be particularly valuable.

Second, crosslinguistic research applying the DP framework to functional equivalents of *bueno* in other languages (e.g., Italian *bene*, French *bon*, English *well*, *okay*) could illuminate both language-specific and universal aspects of discourse organization. Such studies would benefit from the formalized schemas we propose, which provide a *tertium comparationis* for crosslinguistic analysis.

Third, comprehensive delineation of DPs for all values associated with *bueno* — including those in the logical-cognitive domain and additional borderline cases — remains necessary. This would provide a complete constructional profile of *bueno* and serve as a model for similarly exhaustive analyses of other DMs.

Fourth, diachronic studies tracing the historical development of the DPs we have identified could contribute to grammaticalization theory by showing how DPs emerge, stabilize, and change over time. The DP approach offers particular promise for understanding the co-evolution of DMs with the larger constructional contexts in which they function.

Fifth, applied research exploring the pedagogical implications of the DP approach for L2 Spanish teaching could demonstrate practical benefits of our theoretical framework. Similarly, studies investigating how formalized DPs might improve machine translation or natural language processing of DMs would have significant practical value.

Finally, further theoretical refinement of macrofunction definitions, informed by additional empirical research on multiple DMs, could help resolve persistent discrepancies in the literature regarding the correlation between micro- and macrofunctions. Only through such precision can the field move toward greater consensus on fundamental categorizations of DM functions.

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#### Article history:

Received: 16 October 2025

Accepted: 15 November 2025

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