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Object-oriented perception: towards a contrastive approach to evidentiality in media discourse[1]

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Abstract

This paper is a corpus-based study of the evidential realisations of object-oriented perception verbs in English and Spanish written and oral media discourse. The main aim of the study is to analyse and compare the different uses and complementation patterns taken by the English words *look* and *sound* and their Spanish counterparts *se ve* and *suena*. The procedure followed involves a contrastive analysis methodology: (i) description of data, (ii) juxtaposition and (iii) contrast. The data has been taken from oral and written media discourse corpora in English and Spanish. The study has revealed interesting similarities and differences in the uses and complementation patterns adopted by object-oriented perception verbs in both written and oral English and Spanish, thus making a contribution to a debate in which Spanish has been obviated to date.

Keywords: evidentiality, object-oriented perception, media discourse

Percepción orientada al objeto: hacia una aproximación contrastiva a la evidencialidad en el discurso mediático

Resumen

Este trabajo consiste en un análisis de corpus de las diferentes realizaciones de los verbos de percepción tipo "object-oriented" en el discurso periodístico oral y escrito en inglés y español. El objetivo fundamental es analizar y comparar los diferentes usos y patrones de complementación que adoptan *look* y *sound* y sus correspondientes formas españolas *se ve* y *suena*. El procedimiento seguido para tal fin está basado en una metodología

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contrastiva: (i) descripción de los datos, (ii) juxtaposición y (iii) comparación. Los datos han sido extraídos de corpora periodísticos orales y escritos en inglés y español. El estudio revela interesantes similitudes y diferencias en los usos y patrones de complementación seguidos por los verbos de percepción objeto de estudio tanto en inglés como en español, lo que implica una contribución significativa a un debate en el que el español no ha sido plenamente incorporado hasta la fecha.

Palabras clave: evidencialidad, verbos de percepción orientados al objeto, discurso periodístico

1 Introduction

See and *hear* occupy a leading position in the perception verb hierarchy and consequently they enjoy a great prominence not only in terms of their frequency of use but also in their ability to express polysemous meanings (Viberg 1983, 1984, 2001; Sweetser 1990; Schröder 1995; Harm 2000; Whitt 2010, 2011). The fact that certain verbs of perception can refer to other non-physical meanings has long been established in many etymological studies, for instance Bechtel (1879), Kurath (1921), and Buck (1949). Ibarretxe-Antunano (2002) provides extensive detailed information on the etymological origin of these verbs. Nevertheless, these studies fail to investigate the reasons why the meanings of perception verbs evolved as they did.

It is not until the end of the last century when Eve Sweetser (1990) – within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics by which metaphorical and metonymic projections of prototypical meanings originate new meaning formation and evolution (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Langacker 1987, 1991; Geeraerts 1997) – reanalyses some of the semantic extensions of perception verbs in English. In the last two decades, Sweetser (1990) and Harm (2000) have pointed out that even if the root meaning of perception verbs is physical in nature shades of non-physical internal perception are often present as well,[2] which supports the evidential uses of perception verbs.

[2] Eve Sweetser (1990) proposes a semantic link-up to account for this pervasive tendency in the Indo-European languages to borrow concepts and vocabulary from the more accessible physical and social world to refer to the less accessible worlds of reasoning, emotion and conversational structure; what she calls the "MIND-AS-BODY" metaphor. At the same time, scholars such as Lakoff & Johnson (1980) claim that a great deal of polysemy is due to metaphorical usage; this is how the conceptual, cognitive uses of *see* and *ver* and *hear* and *escuchar* are usually going to end up being framed by the metaphor MIND-AS-BODY (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, 1999; Lakoff 1987; Sweetser 1990).

Perception verbs form an obvious "means that speakers and writers have at their disposal for signalling evidential meaning" (Whitt 2011, 348). In line with Gamerschlag & Petersen (2012, 2), Whitt reveals that the inferential use is characteristic of a sub-class of perception verbs that he calls object-oriented perception verbs – *look*, *sound*, *smell*, *taste* and *feel* – and also known as Stimulus subject perception verbs (Levin 1993) and Phenomenon-based perception verbs (Viberg 2001). It must however be acknowledged that Whitt belongs to a recent and minor group of scholars (Gisborne 2010; Whitt 2009, 2010) who have argued that perception verbs constitute a possible lexical means of expressing evidentiality.[3] Aikhenvald (2003, 2004) had recently suggested a distinction between Direct (firsthand evidence) and Indirect (non-firsthand evidence), with the latter being divided into Inferred and Reported evidence. Within the category of inferential evidentiality, the author differentiates between perception-based inference (Squartini's (2001, 2008) 'circumstantials') and reasoning-based inference or assumptions (Squartini's (2001, 2008) 'generics' and 'conjectures'; also in Chafe & Nichols 1986; Willett 1988; Plungian 2001, or Diewald & Smirnova 2010, 63). Wiemer & Stathi (2010) likewise refer to this opposition as "perceptual" vs. "conceptual" or "cognitive" inference.

To shed some light on the evidential uses of object-oriented perception verbs through the incorporation of Spanish into a debate which has predominantly focused on English and German, a corpus-based investigation will be carried about in the following lines of the present paper. The ultimate goal is to explore the meanings, complementation patterns and frequency of distribution of the evidential uses of the top object-oriented perception verbs *look* and *sound* and their Spanish counterparts *se ve* and *suena* in written and oral media discourse. Similarities and differences in the uses and complementation patterns adopted by top object-oriented perception verbs in written and oral English and Spanish are expected to mean a contribution to a debate in which Spanish has been obviated to date.

Based on the preliminary distinction between subject and object-oriented perception verbs, Whitt's (2010) Typology of evidential perception verbs will be utilised to qualitatively

[3] Whitt's ideas go against most typological studies which have a focus on evidentiality encoded by grammatical markers, i.e. by verbal affixes or modal auxiliaries (Chafe & Nichols 1986; Willet 1988; de Haan 1999; Aikhenvald 2003, 2004, among many others). According to these studies, perception verbs may develop into evidential adverbs or (other kinds of) grammatical evidential expressions only when they occur with a propositional clause as their semantic scope. In these circumstances, some of Whitt's so-called complementation pattern types of evidentiality would have to be revisited, as claimed by Boye (2012, 212), if they in fact designate a state-of-affairs instead of a proposition. Expanding on this point, Boye states that "just as epistemic expressions cannot occur with a state-of-affairs designating complement as their semantic scope, complement-taking predicates which have a state-of-affairs designating complement cannot develop into adverbial (or other) grammatical epistemic expressions" (2012, 212).

classify the examples of the evidential uses of top object-oriented perception verbs retrieved from the corpora before their frequencies of distribution can be quantified. The polysemous meanings of the different instances of *look* and *se ve* and *sound* and *suena* located in the corpora will be identified with the help of the following dictionaries: *Diccionario de uso del español* (María Moliner 2007), *Diccionario de la real academia española* (Edición XXII 2001), and *Diccionario del español actual* (Manuel Seco 1999). *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* 2013 will be accessed for English. As further explained in the methodology section, the data considered for the analysis will be taken from written and oral media corpora in English and Spanish.

2 Theoretical framework

The existing relation between sight and the linguistic expression of knowledge has been extensively analysed in the past five decades (Dundes 1972; Manns 1983; Danesi 1985, 1990; Tyler 1984; Ong 1991; Gallup & Cameron 1992; Sjöström 1999; Yu 2004; Lien 2005; Hanegreefs 2008). During this time period, scholars have agreed on the fact that the vocabulary related to sight and hearing tends to extrapolate to the epistemic field of knowledge since sight and hearing are the most direct mode of access to an immediate and objective knowledge of reality.

In 1983, Willems distinguishes between direct and indirect physical perception, on the one hand, and cognitive perception, on the other; here, direct perception takes place when the perceiver experiences the perceived entity objectively either by sight, hearing, or by any other sense. According to the author, we can refer to direct physical perception when something is perceived with no need for a mental process to be involved, whereas indirect perception occurs when the perceived entity works as a source of deductions and inferences for the perceiver. Though equally based on direct perception, indirect physical perception requires a mental, intellectual process; the subject not only receives a certain stimulus through the senses but also interprets that stimulus following his/her encyclopedic knowledge of the world. Willems (1983) also states that deduction and intelligence are equally involved in cognitive perception and reliance on any form of external information is unnecessary.

Drawing on these lines of thought, and emphasising the supremacy of sight and hearing over the other sensory modalities, in 2010 Whitt states that verbs of visual and hearing perception are the primary carriers of evidential meaning among perception verbs; he highlights the polysemy characterising top perception verbs in order to claim that this polysemy can, indeed, transfer over into the evidential domain in that a related set of evidential meanings can be expressed by a single perception verb (2010, 25). Polysemy exists when perception verbs are used to signal evidential meaning (2010, 40). Grounded

in these theoretical bases, his typology of evidential perception verbs includes a total of seven complementation patterns and two construction types:

1. Type I: Perception Verb (PV)+Finite Complement Clause (FCC)
2. Type II: PV+WH-Complement Clause
3. Type III: PV+Direct Object (DO)+Non-Finite Verb (NFV)
4. Type IV: PV+Prepositional Phrase (PP)
5. Type V: PV+Adjective (ADJ)
6. Type VI: PV+Conjunction (CONJ) +Clause (C)
7. Type VII: PV+Infinitive Copula (IC)+ADJ or Noun (N) or ADJ+N
8. Type VIII: Parentheticals
9. Type IX: Perception Verb External to the Clause (Whitt 2010, 39)

Whitt (2009, 2010) likewise concludes that the inferential use is characteristic of a sub-class of perception verbs that he calls object-oriented perception verbs – *look*, *sound*, *smell*, *taste* and *feel* – also known as Stimulus subject perception verbs (Levin 1993) and Phenomenon-based perception verbs (Viberg 2001). To probe more deeply into this latter idea, Gamerschlag & Petersen (2012) dissect Viberg's tripartite classification of perception verbs as shown in Figure 1:

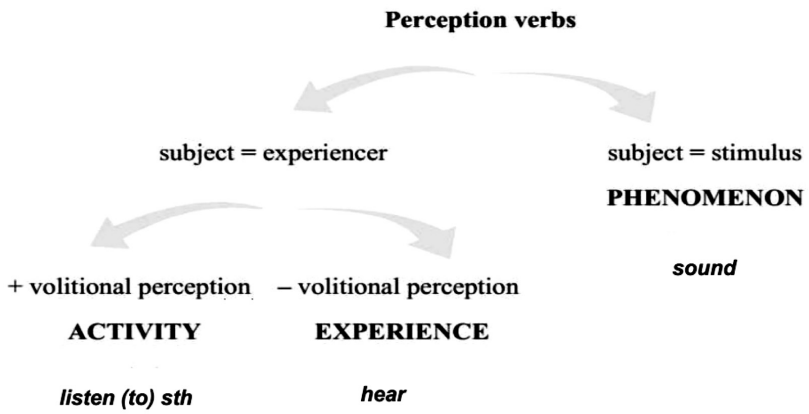

Figure 1. Types of perception verbs. Adapted from Viberg (1984, 2001)

On an initial level of analysis, Gamerschlag & Petersen (2012) explain that the Subject of perception verbs can be realised as either the Experiencer or the Stimulus. When the

Subject is realised as the Experiencer, further differences can be observed regarding volitionality: verbs of the Activity subtype refer to volitional perception – *look at*, *listen to* – while verbs of the Phenomenon subtype denote involuntary perception – *see*, *hear*. When the Subject is realised as the Stimulus, the Experiencer can remain unrealised – *look*, *sound*.[4] According to Gamerschlag & Petersen, these perception verbs focus on the Phenomenon and involve an "embedded proposition which consists in the subject referent and the embedded predicate", thus making them "particularly suitable for an evidential use" (2012, 3).

These theoretical premises made, and given the expected potential of object-oriented perception verbs to express inferential evidentiality, Whitt's typology will be drawn upon to classify English and Spanish evidential uses of *look* and *sound* and *se ve* and *suena* in written and oral media discourse. Results are expected to shed light on meaning, complementation patterns and frequency of distribution regarding the evidential uses of these perception verbs, which, especially in Spanish, have remained practically unexplored to date.

3 Corpus and methodology

3.1 Corpus

For the present analysis, the oral data has been taken from BNC and CREA – for English and Spanish, respectively – corpora subsections devoted to radio and TV broadcast discourse including news, debates, interviews, etc. Each of the selected subsections contains around 100,000 words. Alternatively the written data has been taken from a self-compiled corpus consisting of 100,000 words obtained from leading articles and opinion columns published in two English newspapers with different editorial lines – *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* – and two Spanish newspapers with different political orientations – *ABC* and *El País* – and consequently different genres and editorial lines are covered. Data was compiled during the academic year 2010–2011 as part of the larger project of creating a *Corpus of English and Spanish Journalistic Discourse* (CESJD). The quantitative data is calculated on the basis of this media corpus compiled for the occasion. Media discourse is representative of general language and therefore quantitative results may reflect specific journalistic conventions as well as general trends within the language.

[4] Bidirectionality and the related volitional-non-volitional distinction have been extensively discussed in the literature of perception verbs (Croft 1993; Kryk 1979; Leech 1971; Lehrer 1990; Palmer 1966; Schlesinger 1992; Rogers 1971, 1972; Usoniene 1999; Viberg 1984, 2001).

3.2 Methodology

In order to meet the research goals of this study, qualitative and quantitative analyses of all the most common object-oriented evidential uses of English *look* and *sound* and Spanish *se ve* and *suena* retrieved from the corpora will take place. An initial qualitative analysis will be conducted to identify and classify the different instances of *look* and *sound* and *se ve* and *suena* retrieved from the written and oral corpora, first according to the different meanings taken by each of them and, then, following their respective complementation patterns as stated in Whitt's Typology (2010). In the light of this initial analysis, normalised rates of frequency and distribution patterns will be obtained on a quantitative basis.

The identification of the polysemous meanings taken by the different instances of English *look* and *sound* and the Spanish *se ve* and *suena* located within the corpora will be carried out with the help of dictionaries such as *Diccionario de uso del español* (María Moliner 2007), *Diccionario de la real academia española* (Edición XXII 2001), and *Diccionario del español actual* (Manuel Seco 1999). For English, *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* 2013 will be utilised.

For methodological reasons, the two construction types identified by Whitt in his typology of evidential verbs of perception will remain unstudied.

4 Results and analysis

As pointed out in the preceding sections, the analysis proposed in this study involves a cross-linguistic English/Spanish approach and is aimed at (i) identifying and classifying the different evidential uses and distribution patterns of *look* and *sound* and *se ve* and *suena* in written and oral media discourse; (ii) quantifying these evidential uses and patterns of complementation according to Whitt's typology of evidential verbs of perception (2010); and (iii) juxtaposing and (iv) contrasting the results obtained. Hopefully, this will shed light on both the English and Spanish evidential uses of top object-oriented perception verbs.

The first part of the analysis consists of seven main phases: (1) *look* – WRITTEN, (2) *look* – ORAL, (3) *se ve* 'look'– WRITTEN/ORAL, (4) *sound* – WRITTEN, (5) *sound* – ORAL, (6) *suena* 'sound'– WRITTEN, and (7) *suena* 'sound'– ORAL.

4.1 *look* – WRITTEN

First, all written evidential instances of English *look* identified in the corpus have been organised according to their different meanings and their respective complementation

patterns. Most of the instances of evidential written *look* retrieved from the corpus take the meanings of 'seem' and 'seem/appear that'. These are primarily distributed according to Whitt's complementation Types IV, V and VI.

Complementation pattern Type IV (PV + PP (P+NP)) is thus adopted by written *look* to express the meaning 'seem, in a manner characteristic of", 'seem like':

(1) *This **looks like** a street-level Arab revolt, each uprising different in origin but all sharing the common denominator of youth and the inspiration of Tunis and Cairo relayed by text message and internet.*[5]

(2) *From a distance the issue **looks like** an unappealing mix of the technical and the intimate, so nobody wants to talk about it.*

This 'seem, in a manner characteristic of", 'seem like' meaning is also present under distribution pattern Type V (PV + ADJ):

(3) *The cuts always **looked** idiotic, and some of us said so at the time.*

(4) *Gaddafi **looks** and sounds mad, but it is unlikely that it is insanity that has kept him in power for 42 years.*

(5) *It **looks** precise, but it is really empty, since all the numbers are baloney.*

Although occurrences are significantly less frequent, Whitt's Type X (PV + NP) has been found to express this same 'seem' meaning as well:

(6) *Given the prejudice and drop in status we can expect as we grow older, widespread distress **looks** a rational response.*

As for 'seem/appear/that', it is evident that this use of written *look* mainly appears under distribution pattern VI (PV + CONJ + C), where *look* is followed by *as if* + C (7, 8) and *as though* + C (9):

(7) *When it began **to look as if** the vote was not going well for the Prime Minister.*

(8) *<...> it must **look as if** we are botanical aboriginals, still in thrall to the spirits of vegetation, <...>*

(9) *Some of the tougher decisions are harder to understand, however, and it **looks as though** the regional breakdown has penalised the south-west, where both the Northcott in Exeter and St George's concert hall in Bristol got nothing.*

[5] Unless otherwise indicated, all examples have been taken from the corpora described in the Corpus and Methodology section of this paper.

4.2 *look* – ORAL

Second, all oral evidential instances of English *look* identified in the corpus have been similarly collated according to their different meanings and their respective complementation patterns; these mainly appear under distribution patterns Type V (PV + ADJ) and Type VI (PV + CONJ + C).

Complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ) is used to express the meaning 'seem':

(10) *<…> also have window displays, several of Princes Risborough shops have taped up windows which* ***looks*** *quite extraordinary when you drive into the town. (SP:PS63K) People will wonder what on <…>*

(11) *<…> the Middle East, and especially with the central Palestine problem. (SP:PS6CU) Yitsak Shamir* ***looks*** *set to form Israel's next government; he's likely to take a hard <…>*

(12) *<…> well in an all blue tracksuit erm and erm obviously a club colour and they* ***look*** *very smart indeed, er but er the journalists don't like it and I <…>*

Meanwhile, distribution Type VI (PV + CONJ + C) is followed by oral *look* to express the meaning 'seem/appear that' with the variations *as if* + C (13, 14), *as if* + ADJ (15), and *as though* + C (16, 17):

(13) *This is the Berthold specimen book and it worries me, because everything* ***looks as if*** *it's supposed to sit in a line of eighteen point display, <…>*

(14) *<…> that's on and it looks, it's very realistic, it almost* ***looks as if*** *it is a fire glowing all the time cos there's a Rotary <…>*

(15) *<…> ferrets and dogs. And there were some rats in those days. Now they* ***look as if*** *lean and built a Where (-----) Pit was, (unclear) built built close <…>*

(16) *<…> think the players will agree with that, it's not as though, it* ***looks as though*** *we've got absolutely murdered again Saturday Mick, three nothing, as <…>*

(17) *And the third thing is when. Now erm reading er the back here it* ***looks as though*** *you are available like immediately. (SP:PS40S) Correct. (SP:PS40R) And that's <…>*

Other variations not found in the case of written *look* include *like* + C (18, 19, 20), *like* + FCC (21), and *like* + NFC (22, 23):

(i) *like* + C:

(18) *<…> long time? (SP:PS63L) It is a long time. I think for outsiders it* ***looks like*** *nothing has moved at all, but when you're involved in the strike <…>*

(19) *<…> of a publication or of a book publisher, that everybody works together so it* ***looks like*** *it's not all the same person doing everything. I mean it's <…>*

(20) *<…> two huge solar panels had to be unfurled. (SP:PS6CS) Houston to Discovery. It* ***looks like*** *motion's stopped with just about one panel showing. (SP:PS6CW) Two astronauts stood <…>*

(ii) *like* + FCC:

(21) *<…> government's plan will cause havoc if it's given the go-ahead. (SP:PS65F) It* ***looks like*** *that not really a great deal of account has been taken of the extra <…>*

(iii) *like* + NFC:

(22) *There'll be thicker cloud moving in from the south west. And that* ***looks like*** *bringing rain along for the afternoon. There won't be much wind but really, really young!*

(23) *And that to me (pause) looks like hatred, that* ***looks like*** *trying to destroy femininity, something that is beautiful. (SP:FL7PS000) Let's le – <…>*

4.3 *se ve* 'look' – WRITTEN/ORAL

Third, since no inferential, evidential instances of written *se ve* 'look' could be identified in the corpus, the oral evidential examples located have been similarly organised according to their different meanings and their respective complementation patterns.

Distribution Type V (PV + ADJ) is preferred in relation to oral *se ve* 'look' to express the meaning 'seem'. This can be appreciated in example 24, whilst examples 25 and 26 reveal a variation of this Type V in which the adverb *como* 'like' works to attenuate the speaker's degree of certainty:

(24) *<…> cierta clase de guerras. Y, hoy día, la juventud* ***se ve*** *falta de ideales. ¿Tú crees que el movimiento <…>* 'youth looks short of aspirations'

(25) *<…> ni nada, ¿no? y dices: "Pues, bueno, ¿qué?",* ***se ve como*** *un poco forzado, ¿no?, lo que es el tema <…>* 'it looks like a bit contrived'

(26) *<…>, mecanismos, tecnicismos, etcétera, y de repente* ***se ve como*** *como como como tirado contra la pared y y <…>* 'it looks like lying back against the wall'

Contrary to expectations, a new distribution pattern Type I (PV + FCC) has also been found to express the meaning 'seem/appear that' that replaces Type VI (PV + CONJ + C) in order to express the meaning of oral *se ve* 'look':

(27) <...> *ce o veinte desaparece. Desaparece. Porque ya* ***se ve que*** *no tiene nada que ver con la realidad. No* <...> 'it can be seen / one can see that it has nothing to do with reality'

(28) <...> *pues en el mismo cromosoma veintiuno, que es un ,* ***se ve que*** *hay un gen que es el que regula la hipotonía* <...> 'it can be seen/one can see there is a gen'

(29) <...> *n hoy día que se habra de tantos trasplantes, que* ***se ve que*** *en este caso la Medicina cada vez va va ava* **<…>** 'it can be seen/one can see that Medicine in this sense is'

The main difference between English and Spanish lies in the lack of instances of evidential uses of written Spanish *se ve* 'look', whereas written English *look* is distributed among Types IV, V and X. This is probably due to the lower degree of formality of *se ve* 'look' in Spanish. In the case of oral *look* and *se ve*, it is also worth noting that, even if both languages present cases of pattern Type V (PV + ADJ), Spanish replaces pattern Type VI (PV + CONJ + C) with pattern Type I (PV + FCC) to express the same meaning ('seem/ appear that').

4.4 *sound* – WRITTEN

Written instances of the evidential uses of English *sound* have been also classified according to meaning and distribution type.

To express the meaning 'seem/in a manner characteristic of', the qualitative analysis reveals that Type IV (PV + PP (P + NP)) is preferred for written *sound*:

(30) *It* ***sounds like*** *student politics, but Dr Cable is showing a sounder grasp of his party's predicament than some of his frontbench colleagues.*

(31) *That* ***sounds like*** *an eminently respectable body – until you look at its record.*

(32) *This* ***sounds like*** *– and can be – a way of dodging the consequences of cuts.*

Type V (PV + ADJ) is also adopted by written *sound* to express the meaning 'seem':

(33) *No wonder he* ***sounded*** *miserable.*

(34) *He pointed out, accurately, that Barclays had handed £2bn to the Revenue last year, a figure that* ***sounds*** *respectable enough in the context of pre-tax profits of £6.1bn for 2010.*

(35) *It* ***sounds*** *unlikely but, with its sideways sloping roof above a pair of upstairs windows and central front door, one little end-of-terrace house in Swansea looks like no one else.*

4.5 *sound* – ORAL

The use of English *sound* seems to be much more frequent in oral discourse in comparison with written discourse and a wider variety of uses and distribution patterns are evident. These patterns equate to Whitt's Types IV (PV + PP), V (PV + ADJ), and VI (PV + CONJ + C).

More specifically, it can be stated that Type IV is generally adopted by oral *sound* to express the meaning 'seem / in a manner characteristic of', as shown in examples (36, 37):

(36) *<…> to Newport didn't he? (SP:PS1MX) Yeah (SP:PS1MY) To school every day (SP:PS1MW) It* ***sounds like*** *a long way? (SP:PS1MY) Well it's, it is quite a long <…>*

(37) *I didn't know that actually (laugh) but er fine yes I mean er that* ***sounds like*** *a very good idea. (laugh) Yeah. When did that happen then?*

Oral *sound* also takes the meaning 'seem' under complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ):

(38) *<…> did was this, sounds stupid, Slippery Elm stick. I mean it it* ***sounds*** *stupid, but a person I knew, she was about as stupid as i <…>*

(39) *<…> word is now, er it's called (-----) Walk, now (laugh)2. (laughing) (unclear)* ***sounds*** *terr-- er terrible to me, because (-----) Pad was the way to (-----) Colliery <…>*

(40) *<…> he keeps riding on the pavement at you know, with no lights, it* ***sounds*** *minor, but the old age pensioner who keeps nearly getting missed, it's <…>*

As expected, Type VI (PV + CONJ + C) is adopted to convey the meaning 'seem/appear that' with the variations *as if* + C and *as though* + C, which can be seen in examples (41, 42) and (43, 44), respectively:

(41) *I was younger then but you never heard of such things (SP:PS22G) But yo-- it* ***sounds as if*** *you were a very independent person. (SP:PS22H) Oh I was. (SP:PS22G)*

(42) *<…> perhaps erm our friends in the Community could learn a bit from them. It* ***sounds as if*** *we could learn a great deal from Germany and Holland about, in <…>*

(43) *<…> as though y-- you you weren't heavily managed as a pop singer. It* ***sounds as though*** *you did the things you wanted to do. (SP:KGHPSUNK) Yeah well I <…>*

(44) *<…> a whole bureaucratic erm apparatus saying no that information isn't available. (SP:PS2TW) It* ***sounds as though*** *it's going to go on forever then. (SP:PS2U1) It could well <…>*

Alternate variations also include *like* + C:

(45) *<…> with yourself Sharon? (SP:PS316) Oh knitting (unclear) sewing. (SP:PS312) Are you? It* ***sounds like*** *there's a lot going on where you are. (SP:PS316) Oh yes.*

(46) *<…> er who may have had a recurrence of the same problem. (SP:PS2A3) Well it* ***sounds like*** *the procedures were quite formal, quite highly formal. (SP:PS2A2) Well they were <…>*

4.6 *suena* 'sound' – WRITTEN

The only instances of written *suena* retrieved from the corpus take the meaning 'seem' and present a complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ):

(47) *Por eso* ***suena*** *bien, y nada más, que recogiera el guante lanzado por Rajoy, aunque la experiencia obliga a no esperar una reconversión milagrosa del presidente del Gobierno para el diálogo con el PP* 'it sounds good'

(48) *Lo del "biopic"* ***suena*** *cursi, pero es que los cursis sufren el trastorno obsesivo compulsivo de ver fascistas como los afectados por un sentimiento de culpa padecen el trastorno obsesivo <…>* 'it sounds cheesy'

4.7 *suena* 'sound' – ORAL

In line with English *sound*, the use of Spanish *suena* seems to be much more frequent in oral discourse than it is in written discourse and once again there is a wider variety of uses and complementation patterns. As in the case of English, these patterns correspond to Whitt's Types IV (PV + PP), V (PV + ADJ), and VI (PV + CONJ +C).

More specifically, it can be stated that Type IV (PV + PP) is generally adopted by oral *sound* to express the meaning 'seem/in a manner characteristic of':

(49) <...>*sin perder el punto de rigor, aunque a mí esto* ***me suena*** *siempre muy* ***a*** *tópico, el rigor, la* <...> 'this sounds to me like a cliché'

(50) <...>*enza una nueva etapa, el término de histórico* ***nos suena a*** *conocido, a viejo. Las promesas electorales d* <...> 'the term historic sounds to us like known, old'

(51) *La primera vez que me llamaron don Chicho, que* ***suena a*** *Mafia italiana Eso sí que es espantoso, es p* <...> 'The first time I was called Mr. Chicho, which sounds like Italian mafia…'

As has already been established with regards to English oral *sound*, Spanish oral *suena* takes the meaning 'seem' under complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ):

(52) <...>*el público le gusta referirse a nosotros porque* ***suena*** *más emocionante. Les podemos llamar agentes d* <...> 'it sounds exciting'

(53) *Y luego, una tarta del arrándanos del queso. ,* ***suena*** *perfecto. Pero falta una cosita. ¿El qué? Ten* <...> 'it sounds perfect'

(54) <...> *tu frase: "que el médico no debe matar", a mí* ***me suena*** *un poco abstracta, porque claro, no deja de s* <...> 'it sounds a bit abstract'

Example 55 shows a variation of Type V with the adverb *como* 'like' working to attenuate the degree of certainty. This is also apparent in uses of oral Spanish *se ve* 'look'(examples 24–26):

(55) *¿Pero sabe lo que pasa? Que earlo a prevenirlos, ¿no?, porque de alguna manera* ***suena como*** *muy como muy grave el que antes de los sei* <...> 'it seems like it is really serious'

Moreover, Type VI (PV + CONJ + C) is adopted to convey the meaning 'seem that/ appear' with the variation *como si* + C:

(56) <...> *or ahí de dando sus vueltas y dijeron: ¡qué raro,* ***suena como si*** *estuviera Chavela aquí!. Y sí estaba Ch* <...> 'it seems like Chavela is here'

Oral evidential uses of *sound* and *suena* are more common than their written counterparts in English and Spanish. This was also the case of oral English *look* and Spanish *se ve*, with no instances of written Spanish *se ve* retrieved from the corpus. The tendency seems to be that evidential uses of object perception verbs *look* and *sound* and *se ve* and *suena* are characteristic of the oral media discourse, which could go in hand with a lower degree of formality and a higher degree of improvisation.

Following this initial part of the analysis, normalised frequencies have been obtained. In order to help disaggregate data, four different tables are provided. While the first

two juxtapose normalised frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns obtained for written and oral evidential uses of *look* and *se ve*, the second two tables are aimed at the juxtaposition of normalised frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns obtained for written and oral *sound* and *suena*:

MEANING	PV + PP		PV + ADJ		PV + CONJ + C		PV + FCC		TOTAL	
ENGLISH *look*										
WRITTEN										
seem	3 (P+NP)	25%	9	75%	0	0%	0	0%	12	80%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	1 *as though* 2 *as if*/3	100%	0	0%	3	20%
EN-TOTAL	**3**	**20%**	**9**	**60%**	**3**	**20%**	**0**	**0%**	**15**	**100%**
SPANISH *se ve* 'look'										
WRITTEN										
seem	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SP-TOTAL	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
TOTAL	**3**	**20%**	**9**	**60%**	**3**	**20%**	**0**	**0%**	**15**	**100%**

Table 1. Frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns for written *look* and *se ve*

MEANING	PV + PP		PV + ADJ		PV + CONJ + C		PV + FCC		TOTAL	
ENGLISH *look*										
ORAL										
seem	0	0%	26	100%	0	0%	0	0%	26	61.9%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	3 *as though* + C 5 (P + C) 1 (P + FCC) + 2 (P + NFC) 5 *as if* + C /16	100%	0	0%	16	38.1%
EN-TOTAL	**0**	**0%**	**26**	**61.9%**	**16**	**38.1%**	**0**	**0%**	**42**	**100%**
SPANISH *se ve* 'look'										
ORAL										
seem	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3	23%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%	10	77%
SP-TOTAL	**0**	**0%**	**3**	**23%**	**0**	**0%**	**10**	**77%**	**13**	**100%**
TOTAL	**0**	**0%**	**29**	**52.7%**	**16**	**29%**	**10**	**18.3%**	**55**	**100%**

Table 2. Frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns for oral *look* and *se ve*

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ) is preferred for evidential uses of the object-oriented perception verb *look* with the meaning 'seem' in English written and oral media discourse, with 75% and 100% of the total evidential uses, respectively. Nevertheless, the total number of instances retrieved from the oral corpus triples the number of examples located in the written corpus, with only a total of nine instances in the case of written discourse against the 26 examples found in the oral corpus. The meaning 'seem', under complementation pattern Type IV, is only expressed by 25% of the total examples in the written journalistic discourse, with no representativeness in the case of oral English.

The fact that results for Spanish *se ve* have been found only in the case of oral media discourse, predominantly using complementation pattern Type I (PV + FCC) to express the meaning 'seem that', which amounts to a 76.9% of the total, could be due to the tendency in Peninsular Spanish to use *parece* 'seem' rather than the perception expression *se ve* 'look' to express the meaning 'seem'. This seems to be especially the case in more formal written journalistic discourse in Spanish. Thus, written *parece* 'seem' takes complementation pattern Type V (PV + ADJ) to express the meaning 'seem' (57–59), which is also expressed through *parece + Noun Phrase* 'it seems + Noun Phrase' (60–62):

(57) ***Parece*** *necesario hacer política.* 'It seems necessary to enter politics'

(58) *Así, su horizonte se complica día a día rumbo a una importante derrota socialista en las elecciones autonómicas y municipales que* ***parece*** *ya inevitable* 'An important socialist defeat in the local and regional elections seems inevitable now'

(59) *Las dos opciones* ***parecen*** *imprudentes e improbables ahora* 'The two options seem imprudent and unlikely now'

(60) *Decirle a los candidatos municipales que den prioridad al empleo* ***parece*** *un sarcasmo o una provocación en su boca* 'It seems a sarcasm or a provocation in her mouth'

(61) *La pretensión de las víctimas de que la nueva norma recoja por escrito que será ilegal negociar con ETA* ***parece*** *un escollo insalvable para el Grupo Socialista* 'It seems an insurmountable obstacle to the Socialist group'

(62) *el avance de la secularización es inferior al de otras naciones europeas y en todo caso* ***parece*** *consecuencia de ese relativismo general de los valores que preocupa al Papa Benedicto XVI* 'It seems a consequence of this general relativism of values which concerns Pope Benedict XVI'

As in the case of *se ve* 'look', *parece* 'seem' primarily assumes complementation pattern Type I (PV + FCC) to express the meaning 'seem/appear that' with the following variations:

(i) *Parece que* 'it seems/appears that'

(63) *te, rodilla izquierda, en la casilla. Se retira y* ***parece que*** *es importante. En seguida estamos allí. C* 'He withdraws and seems to be important'

(64) *tancia de la madre circunstancia de la madre, que* ***parece que*** *nos quieren hacer abuelos por segunda vez,* 'It seems they want us to grandparents for the second time,'

(65) *or de petróleo, que es Irak, que invade otro, que* ***parece que*** *ni siquiera era un país sino que era un siit* 'It seems that was not even a country, but it was a s'

(ii) *Parece ser que* 'it seems to be/appears to be that'

(66) *ectadores eligen, eligen ese programa, puesto que* ***parece ser que*** *es lo que lo que quieren. Yo no* 'it seems that is what they want'

(67) *er verdad, tal vez. bueno, entonces el mito ese,* ***parece ser que*** *no ha existido nunca, creo que muy poc* 'it seems that has never existed , I think very'

(68) *recorte presupuestario en Estados Unidos, pero* ***parece ser que*** *Clinton, que acaba de tomar posesión* 'it seems that Clinton, who just took possession'

(iii) *Parece + ADJ + que* 'it seems + ADJ + that'

(69) *nión esa última carta del Ministerio de Economía,* ***parece*** *difícil* ***que*** *vaya a aparecer durante los próxim* 'it seems unlikely that s/he will appear during'

(70) *Sí, unos dieciséis años tenía, sí. Bueno Coque,* ***parece*** *bastante increíble* ***que*** *a los dieciséis añs se* 'It seems quite incredible that at sixteen'

Returning to *sound* and *suena*, tables 3 and 4 reveal that oral evidential uses of object-oriented English *sound* are much more frequent than their written counterparts in English and Spanish.

It is worth noting that only a few instances of English written *sound* have been located in the corpus. Still, this triples the number of *suena* 'sound' examples retrieved from the written Spanish corpus. In both cases, however, the meaning conveyed is 'seem', even if English *sound* is almost evenly distributed between Type V (56%) and Type IV (44%) and all instances of Spanish written *suena* 'sound' belong to complementation pattern Type V.

In both languages, the meaning expressed by the wide majority of examples retrieved from the oral corpus is 'seem'. Nevertheless, while 86.95% of the oral English cases belong to Type V, 63.15% of the oral Spanish examples of *suena* correspond to Type IV; curiously enough, the exact opposite occurred in the case of the written discourse.

MEANING	PV + PP		PV + ADJ		PV + CONJ + C		PV + FCC		TOTAL	
ENGLISH *sound*										
WRITTEN										
seem	4 (P + NP)	44.44%	5	55.56%	0	0%	0	0%	9	100%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
EN-TOTAL	**4**	**44.44%**	**5**	**55.56%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**9**	**100%**
SPANISH *suena* 'sound'										
WRITTEN										
seem	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SP-TOTAL	**0**	**0%**	**2**	**100%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**2**	**100%**
TOTAL	**4**	**36.36%**	**7**	**63.64%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**11**	**100%**

Table 3. Frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns for written *sound* and *suena*

MEANING	PV+PP		PV+ADJ		PV+CONJ+C		PV+FCC		TOTAL	
ENGLISH *sound*										
ORAL										
seem	3	13.05%	20	86.95%	0	0%	0	0%	23	62.16%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	6 *as though* + C + *like* 2 6 *as if* + C /14	100%	0	0%	14	37.83%
EN-TOTAL	**3**	**8.1%**	**20**	**54.07%**	**14**	**37.83%**	**0**	**0%**	**37**	**100%**
SPANISH *suena* 'sound'										
ORAL										
seem	12	63.15%	7	36.85%	0	0%	0	0%	19	95%
seem that	0	0%	0	0%	1 *como si* 'as if'/1	100%	0	0%	1	5%
SP-TOTAL	**12**	**60%**	**7**	**35%**	**1**	**5%**	**0**	**0%**	**20**	**100%**
TOTAL	**15**	**26.32%**	**27**	**47.36%**	**15**	**26.32%**	**0**	**0%**	**57**	**100%**

Table 4. Frequencies of meanings and distribution patterns for oral *sound* and *suena*

Moreover, the meaning 'seem that' is much more frequent in English (37.83%) than it is in Spanish (5%).

5 Conclusion

The analysis of the results has shed some light on the meaning, complementation patterns and frequency of distribution in relation to the evidential uses of object-oriented

perception verbs in English and Spanish look and sound, *se ve* and *suena*. These tend to express the meanings 'seem' and 'seem that' under Richard J. Whitt's distribution patterns IV, V and VI. The higher frequencies of general use observed in the oral corpora compared to written instances are common in both languages. These differences can however be considered to be especially significant in the case of written Spanish, which shows no representativeness of *se ve* 'look' and only two examples of *suena* 'sound'.

In addition, a further analysis of the oral corpora reveals important differences between English and Spanish *look* and *se ve* with regards to meaning and distribution patterns: while only 38.1% of the evidential uses of oral *look* take the meaning 'seem that', this amounts to 76.9% of the examples for oral Spanish *se ve* 'look'. Moreover, Spanish *se ve* follows distribution Type I instead of the English Type VI for 'seem that'. However, these results are not shared by English and Spanish *sound* and *suena*. Contrary to expectations, differences are mostly observed in the expression of the evidential meaning 'seem' in this case: while 86.95% of the English cases of 'seem' belong to Type V, 63.15% of the Spanish examples of 'seem' correspond to Type IV.

In this context, further research will be carried out to shed extra light on these preliminary results towards a more solid interpretation; to this end, the corpora will be extended so as to include more general uses of the language beyond media discourse. The aim is to distinguish between possible characteristics of media discourse and the general characteristics of the two languages under study.

List of abbreviations

ADJ	Adjective
BNC	The British National Corpus.
C	Clause
CESJD	Corpus of English and Spanish Journalistic Discourse
CONJ	Conjunction
CREA	Corpus de Referencia del español actual.
DO	Direct object
EN	English
FCC	Finite complement clause
IC	Infinitive Copula
N	Noun
NFV	Non-finite verb
PP	Prepositional phrase
PV	Perception verb
SP	Spanish

Data sources

BNC The British National Corpus. Davies, M. 2004–. BYU–BNC. Available at: http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc

CESJD Corpus of English and Spanish Journalistic Discourse (CESJD-JMA) (Juana I. Marín Arrese) Leading articles, Opinion Columns & News reports. 100,000 words.

CREA Corpus de Referencia del español actual. Available at: http://corpus.rae.es/creanet.html

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