

Parenthetical Optatives (God keep them safe!) exist!

A parenthetical construction expresses a speech act that is dependent on another speech act (Subsidiary Discourse Act in Functional Discourse Grammar). Speech acts can have different illocutions, so it is likely that parenthetical optatives also exist. We don't follow the traditional and inaccurate definition of an optative as 'an expression of the wish of the speaker', but we define an optative as a construction in which the speaker expresses a favourable attitude towards the fulfillment of an unreal event whose execution does not depend either on the speaker themselves or on their interlocutor (cf. Núñez Pinero 2019).

We'll use a dataset of optative constructions from Classical Spanish, that we created using written sources, due to the impossibility of obtaining spoken linguistic data from the period under investigation (XVI-XVIIth century). As we expect that these optative constructions appear mostly in interaction, we chose written texts close to orality, in discourse genres that manifest features of communicative immediacy (cf. Koch and Oesterreicher 2007 [1997]). The corpus contains 1160 instances of optative constructions (and 479 edge cases), 109 of them are parentheticals.

Besides confirming the existence of optative parentheticals, we use our corpus to test the following double hypothesis:

1) Parentheticals are a general mechanism of languages, so it is possible that a parenthetical expresses the same function as prototypical independent speech acts of the same illocution. In the case of optative constructions, these are: to curse (example (a)), to express good wishes (and to give thanks, an automatization of the former), to avoid an evil or protect from it and to positively evaluate an impossible fact (prototypical function of counterfactual optative constructions).

(a) Señor, mi amo, **que mal siglo haya**, me los ha mandado poner ('Sir, my master, *bad life to him*, ordered me to put them up') (Avellaneda, *Don Quixote* XXIV, 542)

2) However, we hypothesize that there is a tendency for the parentheticals to be automatized in some contexts and express a specific function (as to mitigate the violation of a taboo in example (b)) that cannot be expressed with non-parenthetical constructions (and this automatization is usually reflected in a semantic and morphosyntactic fixation of the parentheticals):

(b) ...acordaos que vuestro padre, **que buen siglo haya**, no podía ver pintados los religiosos. ('...remember that your father, *may he rest in peace*, couldn't even bear to see pictures of monks') (Avellaneda, *Don Quixote* XV, 420)

However, these functions that the optative parentheticals show in the corpus are not the functions that the literature defines for them. In previous literature, parentheticals were defined on the basis of examples of declarative illocution: in this way, parentheticals are comments or specifications that express the opinion or the attitude of the speaker towards the content or part of the content of the matrix clause (cf., for example, Forget 2000: 18; Grenoble, 2004: 1954-1957).

We distinguish 27 kinds of speech acts for optative constructions in total. Among the 10 kinds of speech acts that occur in parenthetical constructions, shown in table 1, we observe that the factors *kind of speech act* and *parenthetical use* are not independent (Fisher's Exact Test $p = 0.0005$).

Specifically, by examining the Pearson residuals over table 1, we can distinguish two distinct groups of speech acts: those that only occur in parenthetical constructions, and

those that occur both in parenthetical and non-parenthetical constructions. The first group is of course more strongly associated with parentheticals than it would be if the factors were independent, and the second group is more strongly associated with non-parentheticals than if the factors were independent. We can therefore conclude that parentheticals express different speech acts than non-parentheticals.

Next, we also observe that, of all the parentheticals, most express speech acts that only appear in parenthetical constructions (60.6% of total, χ^2 goodness of fit = 4.8532, $p = 0.028$, compared to a 50% baseline).

This contradicts the pragmatic characterization from the literature: not only are the pragmatic functions of parenthetical optatives different from those of non-parentheticals (and it can be expected that the ones with other illocutions are also different), but they can express functions that are also expressed by independent speech acts. Our results show that, within the optative illocution, parentheticals more frequently express speech acts that are different than those of their non-parenthetical counterparts, and that there are functions that are only expressed by this kind of construction.

We conclude that any theory of parentheticals must account for the fact that this kind of construction can express (1) the same functions as non-parentheticals but in a secondary way or (2) specific functions that non-parentheticals cannot fulfil, and, in general, that the functions are dependent on the kind of illocution of the parenthetical, among other factors.

Kind of speech act	Par.	Nonpar.
To mitigate a request	14	0
To mitigate an assertion	9	0
To mitigate the violation of a taboo	36	0
To intensify a request	3	0
To intensify a good wish	4	0
To express good wishes	10	169
To curse	18	178
To avoid or protect from an evil	9	107
To positively evaluate an impossible fact	2	50
To give thanks	4	51

Table 1: Distribution of the relevant speech acts across parenthetical and non-parenthetical constructions in the corpus.

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