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Beyond hypothetical manner: A functional typology of in subordinate *como si*-clauses

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Abstract

This article explores the phenomenon of in subordination through the analysis of independent clauses introduced by the conjunction *como si* ‘as if’ in Spanish. Drawing on present-day corpus data, it proposes a four-way functional typology of in subordinate *como si*-clauses. In line with previous studies on in subordination, we observe that in subordinate constructions allow speakers to move beyond the prototypical function of *como si*-clauses observed in subordinate structures, in which they express hypothetical manner. Specifically, we distinguish two types which meet the narrow definition of in subordination in that they combine syntactic with discursive independence, namely *denial of an assumption* and *scalar evaluation*, as well as two types that are discursively dependent, and hence instantiate dependency shift, namely *nuanced agreement* and *discursive elaboration or reformulation*. In terms of tense-aspect-mood marking, we find that three types consistently show past subjunctive marking, while one type, that of *scalar evaluation*, invariably shows present indicative verb forms. In terms of discourse-interactional features, we observe that *denial of an assumption* clauses stand out in favouring dialogic contexts, while the other three types tend to occur in monologic contexts. Within dialogic settings then, all four types are found to be uttered more frequently turn-initially than turn-medially.

Keywords: in subordination; dependency shift; Spanish; hypothetical manner

1 Introduction

This article investigates insubordinate *como si*-clauses in Spanish, i.e. clauses introduced by *como si* ‘as if’ but used without an accompanying main clause (cf. Evans 2007), as in (1), and uses corpus data to propose a four-way functional typology of such clauses.

- (1) “*Sexualidad, chicos... conoce sus puntos débiles.*”¹
¡Como si no lo sup-iéramos, de verdad!
 as if NEG it know-SBJV.PST.1PL of truth
 “‘Sexuality, boys... know their weaknesses.’ As if we didn’t know that, to be honest!”
 (Val.Es.Co)

¹ [The speaker is reading out loud a quote by someone else]

Constructions like (1) are examples of insubordinate clauses because they instantiate the “conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007: 369). The limits between the categories of SUBORDINATION and INSUBORDINATION are usually established in terms of dependency. On the one hand, subordinate clauses, like (2) and (3), are characterised by being dependent at the syntactic level (they serve a grammatical role with respect to a main clause structure), at the pragmatic level (they lack an illocutionary force of their own) and at the discourse level (they cannot be understood in isolation, as they only make sense in relation to a main clause or main clause element [cf. D’Hertefelt 2018]).

- (2) *Te abr-í l-a-s puerta-s de mi vida como si*
 you.DAT open-IND.PST.1SG the-F-PL door-PL of my life as if
fuér-as a quedar-te.
 be.SBJV.PST-2SG to stay-REFL
 ‘I opened my life’s doors for you as if you were to stay.’ (Twitter)
- (3) *Claro, entonces es como si no est-uviera asegurad-a.*
 of.course then is as if not be-SBJV.PST.3SG insured-F
 ‘Of course, it is then as if she wasn’t insured.’ (Val.Es.Co)

By contrast, insubordinate clauses, like (1), are characterised by being independent at those three levels: there is no accompanying clause in the surrounding discourse with respect to which they take up a grammatical role (even if they are formally introduced by a subordinating conjunction); they do have their own illocutionary force (in the case of (1), an exclamative one); and they are meaningful in isolation, as their semantic-pragmatic value can be fully understood without recourse to the surrounding discourse.

There is nevertheless disagreement in the literature about this delimitation of subordination and insubordination. Some authors accept some degree of discursive dependence for the latter (Gras and Sansiñena 2017; Kaltenböck 2016; Sansiñena 2019), considering every syntactically-independent clause that is introduced by a subordinating conjunction as insubordinate, even if it is possible to retrieve an understood main clause from the preceding discourse. Other authors (Debaisieux 2013, 2020; D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014; Mithun 2008), by contrast, claim that full discursive independence is needed for a clause to qualify as insubordinate, arguing that, when subordinate clauses shift their dependency scope from the syntactic level to the discourse level, this does not amount to insubordination. Thus, cases of elaboration like example (4) are divisive in this respect.

- (4) *Su coche no hac-e ningún ruido, como si*
 POS car not make-IND.PRS.3SG any noise as if
avanz-ara sobre mantequilla.
 move.forward-SBJV.PST.3SG over butter
 ‘Their car doesn’t make any noise, as if it was moving on butter.’ (Val.Es.Co)

In (4), the *como si*-clause cannot function as an optional adjunct of the main clause, because this interpretation does not make sense: ‘as if it was moving on butter’ does not specify the way in which ‘their car doesn’t make any noise’. (Note that in [2], by contrast, ‘as if you were to stay’ does specify the way in which ‘I opened my life’s doors for you’.) Rather, the *como si*-clause in (4) elaborates on the preceding clause without being syntactically dependent on it: ‘their car does not make any noise, and so it seems as if it is moving on butter’. This type of elaborative interpretation, as D’Hertefelt (2018: 160) explains, “only becomes clear in relation to the preceding discourse”. This means that, while being syntactically independent, clauses like (4) are nevertheless discursively dependent on their surrounding discourse. Hence, they do not correspond to the very definition of insubordination found in Evans (2009: 367), i.e. the conventionalized main-clause use of a formally-subordinate clause, as they lack discursive independence. This article will adopt an inclusive approach, in line with the position adopted by Gras and Sansiñena (2017) in that the proposed typology of insubordinate *como si*-clauses will subsume both cases of syntactic-only independence (4) and full (both syntactic and discursive) independence (1).

Functionally, *como si*-clauses have been found to prototypically serve the expression of hypothetical manner. As Olguín-Martínez (2021) points out (following both Fuchs’ [2014] and Treis’ [2018] classifications), hypothetical manner constructions are a subtype of qualitative comparative constructions to the extent that they “bring together the two terms of a comparison on the basis of similarity or likeness” (Fuchs [2014: 133], as cited in Olguín-Martínez [2021: 7]). More specifically, Dixon (2009: 35) explains that, while in real manner constructions “the action described by the Focal clause is done in the manner described by the Supporting clause”, in hypothetical manner constructions “[...] the Supporting clause may describe what it [i.e., the action] pretends to be or what it might be (but isn’t)”. This semantic value applies perfectly to subordinate clauses like example (2), where the *como si*-clause expresses how the action in the main clause is done – the speaker opens their life’s doors *as if* the other person were to stay. However, as many other language-specific approaches have attested (D’Hertefelt 2018; Gras and Sansiñena 2017; Lastres-López 2021; Verstraete et al. 2012), insubordinate constructions are generally found to convey meanings that differ from their subordinate counterpart’s semantic behaviour. Indeed, as we will see later in more detail (see Section 3), insubordinate *como si*-clauses are found to move beyond the prototypical expression of hypothetical manner (at least, at the representational level) by encompassing other semantic values (namely different speaker attitudes), in combination with a range of discourse functions (e.g. ‘elaboration’, ‘reformulation’ or ‘assumption-denying’).

Language-specific studies on insubordinate hypothetical manner clauses are scarce. Notable exceptions include Brinton’s (2014) study on exclamatory *as if!* in English and Looji and Minnaert’s (2019) squib on Dutch *alsof*-clauses. Thus, this article aims to further fill this gap in the literature by analysing examples of insubordinate clauses introduced by *como si* in Spanish, like (1), from a functional, semasiological perspective. We aim to establish the different meanings *como si*-clauses can express and the discourse functions they can serve, also examining how these are reflected by morphosyntactic marking and investigating the

different discourse-interactional settings they appear in. In (1), for example, the speaker uses a *como si*-clause featuring a past subjunctive verb form to deny an assumption from the preceding discourse: ‘Of course we know boys’ weaknesses (so why this imperative?)’. By contrast, the *como si*-clause featuring a present indicative verb form in (5) sets up a scale and puts a hypothetical situation (‘calling me stupid’) at its extreme to express that, even if that extreme situation were the case, the speaker wouldn’t mind.

- (5) *Mientras imper-e el buen rollo, como si me*
 while prevail-SBJV.PRS.3SG the.M good.M vibe as if me
llam-as imbécil.
 call-IND.PRS.2SG stupid
 ‘As long as the good vibe prevails, you can (even) call me stupid for all I care’ (esTenTen18)

Our study is thus based on the analysis of an *ad hoc*, synchronic dataset of spoken and written instances of *como si*-clauses, which also includes examples of canonical subordinate uses of this conjunction, as in (2) and (3). In this way we will be able to investigate which linguistic features characterise the insubordinate uses in comparison with their subordinate counterparts.

We propose a four-way classification in which, in addition to Brinton’s (2014) *denial of an assumption* type described for English *as if*-clauses, we identify three types which have gone undocumented so far: *scalar evaluation*, *nuanced agreement*, and *discursive elaboration or reformulation*. We observe that (i) morphosyntactically, insubordinate *como si*-clauses show little variation (past subjunctive is the most frequent Tense-Aspect-Mood combination), except for a single functional type that is consistently constructed with present indicative verb forms; and (ii) different functional types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses tend to occur in specific discourse-interactional settings.

This article is structured as follows. In Section 2, we present the methodological design of the study, including the processes of data collection and basic sorting, as well as the features under investigation. Section 3 presents the results of our corpus study in the form of a functional typology, in which we link the semantic-pragmatic features of *como si*-clauses with morphosyntactic and interactional ones. Finally, Section 4 offers a further discussion of the results, leading to some concluding remarks.

2 Data and methodology

This section details how we collected the dataset underlying this article (Section 2.1), and how we manually pruned this dataset to retain only insubordinate *como si*-clauses (Section 2.2).

2.1 Data collection

In this study, we draw on data collected from spoken corpora, written corpora and social media, in two steps. We first conducted a pilot study based on a 17-hit exhaustive dataset from the *Valencia Español Coloquial* (Val.Es.Co, Pons-Bordería 2021) – a corpus of 72 face-to-face conversations of spontaneous, colloquial spoken Spanish recorded in Valencia (Spain), 16 of which were transcribed and prosodically annotated – and a random 100-hit sample from esTenTen18, a 17,000,000,000-word written corpus from the TenTen Family of corpora (Jakubíček et al. 2013), which is made up of texts collected from the Internet (mainly online journals, blogs and forums), covering a wide range of American and European varieties.

Beyond the exploration proper of the syntactic and semantic-pragmatic behaviour of *como si*-clauses, this pilot study revealed the recurrence of two strings comprising the conjunction under study: *por mí como si* ('for me as if') as in (6), which carries a 'scalar evaluation' discursive value (see Section 3.1.2); and *pero como si* ('but as if') as in (7), which has a 'nuanced agreement' discursive value (see Section 3.1.3).

(6) *Hermano, por mí como si es el día de l-os*
 brother for me as if be.IND.PRS.3SG the.M.SG day of the-M.PL
anarcardo-s de corral. Hoy no he tenido que madrugar y eso se celebra.
 cashew-PL of farmyard
 'Bro, it could be the day for farmyard cashews for all I care. I didn't have to get up early and that's something to celebrate.' (Twitter)

(7) *Entre l-o-s puro-s que se fum-a... Bueno,*
 between the-M-PL cigar-PL that REFL smoke-IND.PRS.3SG well
no son puro-s, pero como si lo fuer-an.
 NEG be.IND.PRS.3PL cigar-PL but as if it be-SBJV.PST-3PL
 'Considering the cigars s/he smokes... Well, those are not cigars, but as if they were'
 (Val.Es.Co)

These two recurring strings inspired a second round of data collection, in which we retrieved two random 100-hit samples from esTenTen18 through SketchEngine: one targeting *pero como si*-strings, and another one targeting *por mí como si*-strings. And, finally, in order to create a richer dataset, these examples were complemented with a random 200-hit sample from Twitter (now X), retrieved by targeting the conjunction *como si* only. Table 1 recaps the distribution of the 517 instances of *como si*-clauses collected.

Table 1. Distribution of the collected dataset

Mode	Discourse type	Corpus	Size _{words}	Dataset	Hits
spoken	conversation	Val.Es.Co	0.12M	exhaustive	17
written	web content	esTenTen18	17,000M	random	100
				random <i>pero como si</i>	100
				random <i>por mí como si</i>	100
	social media	Twitter (X)	*	random	200
Total					517

*As a constantly changing database, Twitter has no fixed word count.

2.2 Data sorting

Once the data were collected, we implemented different sorting tasks that allowed us to identify insubordinate *como si*-clauses among all the extracted datapoints. In a first step, we removed cases where the *como si* string did not actually correspond to the complex conjunction *como si*, as in (8).

(8) *Tienes que tener unos conocimientos de lo que sea, como si quieres de informática.*
 'You need to have some knowledge of whatever topic, like information technology if you want.' (Val.Es.Co)

(8') – relocation of *si*-clause

Tienes que tener unos conocimientos de lo que sea, como de informática si quieres

'You need to have some knowledge of whatever topic, like information technology if you want.'

In (8), the words *como* and *si* are adjacent by coincidence; they can also be teased apart, as presented in (8'). The semantic correspondence between (8') and (8) shows that *como* is used here as a preposition ('like, as, such as') taking in turn another prepositional phrase as its complement (*como de informática*), while *si* is used as a conjunction introducing a conditional subclause (*si quieres*). The words *como* and *si* thus do not form a single complex conjunction, and the structure introduced by them hence does not constitute a *como si*-clause. This is why (8) and similar examples were discarded.

The second sorting task responded to the need of differentiating truly insubordinate cases like (1) from cases like (9), which are seemingly independent but, in fact, are still syntactically dependent on the main clause of the preceding sentence. We used a clefting test for that purpose (Smessaert et al. 2005; Verstraete 2007: Ch. 7), in which we down-ranked the *como si*-clause into the nominal complement slot of an *it*-cleft and used the (main clause of the) preceding sentence in the cleft relative clause. Thus, if the test yields a well-formed sentence that semantically corresponds to the sentence under analysis, this means that the analysed clause is integrated in the main clause structure of the preceding sentence, and is hence a subordinate clause with a recycled main clause (9).

(9) *Nos han educado a conciencia y las utilizamos cada día, sin pensar en el significado o en sus consecuencias, pero como si fuésemos doctos en el lenguaje.*

'We have been educated on purpose and we use them [i.e. words] everyday, without thinking about the meaning or their consequences, but as if we were well versed in language.'
(esTenTen18)

(9') – clefting test

Es como si fuésemos doctos en el lenguaje que utilizamos las palabras cada día.

'It is as if we were well versed in language that we use the words every day.'

We see in (9') that the resulting sentence is grammatically well-formed, and also that the *como si*-clause expresses the manner in which words are used (i.e., the clause headed by *utilizamos* 'we use' is the main clause taking the *como si*-clause as an optional adjunct). By contrast, if the test results in a nonsensical sentence (i.e. clefting the complex sentence is impossible), we can conclude that the analysed clause is not integrated in the main clause structure of the preceding sentence and that we are dealing with a syntactically-independent *como si*-clause, as in (10).

(10) *Yo l-o-s vi de lejos, pero como si*
I it-M-PL see.IND.PST.ISG from far but as if
hub-iera est-ado com-iendo con ell-o-s.
have-SBJV.PST.ISG be-PTCP eat-GER with they-M-PL

'I saw them from a distance, but as if I had been eating with them.'
(esTenTen18)

(10') – clefting test

¿Fue como si hubiera estado comiendo con ellos que yo los vi.

'It was as if I had been eating with them that I saw them.'

We see in (10') that, while the resulting sentence is grammatically well-formed, it does not semantically correspond to the sentence in (10). That is, the *como si*-clause cannot be meaningfully downranked into the focal complement slot of the *it*-cleft, because it cannot be taken to modify the situation referred to in the main clause. It does not express the manner in which the speaker actually saw the people mentioned; it only describes the unexpected way in which this situation was perceived by the speaker. Moreover, there are cases like (11), in which the clefting test is simply impossible to carry out because there is no co-text from which a possible main clause could be recovered.

- (11) *Como si fuer-a tan fácil para mí olvidar-te.*
 as if be-SBJV.PST.3SG so easy for me forget.INF-you
 'As if it was so easy for me to forget you.' (Twitter)

Since, in the *it*-cleft resulting from this test, the cleft relative clause is always construed from linguistic material available in the surrounding discourse, the test cannot be applied in cases like (11), in which the surface structure exclusively consists of the *como si*-clause, which is neither syntactically nor discursively dependent on any other element.

The first sorting task carried out in the corpus material led to the exclusion of only one occurrence of *como si* included Table 1, viz. example (8), whereas the second sorting task allowed us to distinguish between subordinate and insubordinate uses. The share of insubordinate clauses in the different datasets is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the data in the datasets studied

Corpus	Dataset	<i>Como si</i> -clauses		Insubordinate cases	
		n	%	n	%
Val.Es.Co	exhaustive	16	3.1	8	50
esTenTen18 ₁	random	100	19.4	10	10
esTenTen18 ₂	random <i>pero como si</i>	100	19.4	27	27
esTenTen18 ₃	random <i>por mí como si</i>	100	19.4	100	100
Twitter	random	200	38.7	157	78.5
Total		516	100	302	58.5

Even if this distribution cannot be taken as fully representative of the real quantitative distribution of insubordinate *como si*-clauses in discourse (mainly because some of the random samples were the result of a targeted extraction, thus biasing representativeness), it can nevertheless give us a preliminary indication of how frequent these constructions are. As can be seen in Table 2, we observe that almost 60% of the *como si*-clauses collected fall under the broad definition of insubordination we have provided here (see Section 1). Across the different discourse types covered by the corpora used, insubordinate *como si*-clauses are particularly frequent in face-to-face conversations (50%) and in social media (78.5%), while they take up only 10% in contexts of web content like online journals, blogs and forums. The relatively high share of insubordinate structures in Table 2 is in line with earlier cross-linguistic findings. For example, we have previously observed that insubordination of hypothetical manner clauses is much more frequent in Spanish than in French, where insubordinate structures represent only 13% of the *comme si*-clauses studied (Royo Viñuales and Van linden 2022). Likewise, Lastres-López's (2021) results on conditional clauses indicate that insubordinate *si*-clauses are more frequent in Spanish (20%) than in French (2%) or English (4%). So, while the high ratio of insubordinate structures in Table 2 may be

partially due to the more specific queries used, especially the *por mí como si* string, this study is in line with earlier research showing that Spanish is exceptionally prone to insubordination.

3 Insubordinate *como si*-clauses

The analysis of our dataset reveals that we can identify four functional types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses, three of which go beyond Brinton’s findings (*denial of an assumption*) on *as if*-clauses in English (Brinton 2014). Table 3 details how these four types are distributed in our dataset.

Table 3. Quantitative instantiation of the four functional types across the datasets

Dataset	<i>denial of an assumption</i>		<i>scalar evaluation</i>		<i>nuanced agreement</i>		<i>discursive elaboration / reformulation</i>		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Val.Es.Co	1	12.5	1	12.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	8	100
esTenTen18 _{random}	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0	10	100
esTenTen18 _{pero como si}	0	0	0	0	23	85.2	4	14.8	27	100
esTenTen18 _{por mí como si}	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100	100
Twitter	126	80.2	9	5.8	0	0	22	14	157	100
Total	135	44.7	112	37.1	26	8.6	29	9.6	302	100

In the following sections, we will provide a detailed semantic-pragmatic characterisation of each functional type identified (3.1), which reveals an interesting interplay with two specific features that deserve to be further investigated: their behaviour in terms of Tense-Aspect-Mood (TAM) marking (3.2), and the discourse-interactional settings they appear in (3.3).

3.1 Functional typology

As we mentioned in Section 1, the study presented here adopts an inclusive approach, understanding insubordination in a broad sense (i.e. syntactic independence is the sufficient defining trait of insubordinate clauses) rather than following the narrowest definition (i.e. discursive independence is needed for a clause to qualify as insubordinate). In setting up our functional typology, however, we noted that the four types we distinguish fall into two classes: the types of *denial of an assumption* (see Section 3.1.1) and *scalar evaluation* (see Section 3.1.2) instantiate insubordination in its narrowest sense, whereas the types of *nuanced agreement* (see Section 3.1.3) and *discursive elaboration or reformulation* (see Section 3.1.4) only fit the broader definition. In terms of D’Hertefelt and Verstraete’s (2014) classification, then, the first two rate as ‘expressives’, while the latter two qualify as ‘elaboratives’.

3.1.1 Denial of an assumption

The first type to be discussed has already been identified in the literature by Brinton (2014), and corresponds to her description of English monoclausal *as if* constructions below.

Monoclausal *as if* constructions [...] have lost their conditional meaning, express negative epistemic stance, have the performative force of a denial/refutation, and express the speaker’s exclamatory/evaluative attitude. (Brinton 2014: 101-102)

In semantic-pragmatic terms, *como si*-clauses of this type indeed convey the speakers' denial of an assumption that is evoked in the preceding discourse or in the extralinguistic context, simultaneously asserting its opposite, as in (12).

- (12) A: *Cuidado con los NFT de Pokémon. ¡Son falsos!*
 B: **Como si l-os NFT de verdad no fue-sen**
 as if the-M.PL NFT of truth not be-SBJV.PST.3PL
un-a estafa.
 a-F scam
 A: 'Be careful about Pokémon NFTs. They are fake!'
 B: 'As if true NFTs weren't a scam.' (Twitter)

In example (12), speaker B understands, from speaker A's utterance, that A believes that only Pokémon NFTs are dangerous, as they are fake, but not NFTs in general. Speaker B then fully disagrees with that implicit assumption and uses the *como si*-clause to explicitly assert that even 'true' NFTs are dangerous because they are a scam in their nature. Since there is no potential main clause element in the surrounding discourse, the *como si*-clause in (12) cannot be analysed to modify any main clause, detailing the hypothetical manner in which the main action would be done. That is, there is no main clause to which the *como si*-clause relates semantically at the representational level (*to do X as if Y were true*; cf. Olguín Martínez 2021: 9). At the speech act level, however, we can reconstruct a potentially suitable main clause taking the form of 'YOU SAY THAT as if true NFTs weren't a scam', which would leave it to the hearer to infer the conclusion that 'true NFTs are a scam'.

What is thus characteristic of this type of clauses is that their functional behaviour involves polarity reversal ("reverse polarity" in Brinton's [2014: 101] terms), which allows the speaker to simultaneously deny an assumption and assert its opposite. Semantically, this strategy stems from the combination of two factors: (i) the basic non-factual (hypothetical) meaning coded in the conjunction *como si* 'as if', and (ii) the pragmatic use of the resulting reversed-polarity interpretation as the main point of the speaker's utterance (cf. Verstraete and D'Hertefelt 2014). Moreover, as noted by Verstraete and D'Hertefelt (2014) for Dutch counterparts of in subordinate *como si*-clauses, the reversal of polarity in denial uses is symmetrical. That is, there are cases "where an affirmative assumption is being denied and a negative asserted [...], but also cases where a negative assumption is being denied and a positive asserted" (Brinton 2014: 101). Example (12) above illustrates the latter option, namely positive assertion. Indeed, speaker B identifies a negative assumption ('NFTs are not dangerous in general') in speaker A's utterance. Speaker B then reproduces this negative value in a *como si*-clause that is marked for negative polarity ('as if true NFTs weren't a scam'), which ultimately results in a positive assertion of its content ('all NFTs are a scam'). Cases of negative assertion, like (13), in turn, work in the same way, just with the opposite polarity values (positive when negative and vice versa).

- (13) A: *Si tan harta estás, olvídate de mí.*
 B: **Como si fue-ra tan fácil.**
 as if be-SBJV.PST.3SG so easy
 A: 'If you're so fed up, forget about me.'
 B: 'As if it were that easy.' (Twitter)

In example (13), speaker B identifies a positive assumption ('forgetting about you is easy') in speaker A's utterance. Speaker B then reproduces this positive value in a *como si*-clause that is marked for positive polarity ('as if it were that easy'), which ultimately results in a negative assertion of its content ('it is not that easy').

As shown in Table 3, *denial of an assumption* is found to be the most frequent (44.7%) functional type of in subordinate *como si*-clauses. This is in line with previous findings on similar constructions: for Dutch, for instance, Looji and Minnaert (2019: 368) conclude that *alsof*-clauses expressing emotion and negation are more frequent than purely comparative ones. In terms of their quantitative distribution across the different corpora, we can observe that the overwhelming majority of instances of *denial of an assumption* come from social media (i.e. Twitter), with only eight examples out of 135 coming from the random esTenTen18 sample and one example from the spoken dataset retrieved from Val.Es.Co.

3.1.2 Scalar evaluation

The second functional type we distinguish can be labelled *scalar evaluation*. In subordinate *como si*-clauses of this type have likewise lost their hypothetical manner value and serve to express the speaker's attitude towards the surrounding discourse, specifically one of indifference. Indeed, these *como si*-clauses involve scalarity (Gast and Van der Auwera 2011; Verstraete et al. 2012): they set up a scale and put a hypothetical situation at its extreme to express that, even if that extreme situation were the case, the speaker would not care, as is the case in (14), or would not mind, as is the case in (15).

- (14) *Y la verdad es que, después de muert-o,*
 and the.F truth be-IND.PRS.3SG that after of dead-M
como si me tir-an por un acantilado.
 as if me throw-IND.PRS.3PL by a.M cliff
 'And the truth is, once I am dead, they can (even) throw me off a cliff for all I care'
 (esTenTen18)

In (14), the speaker uses a *como si*-clause to convey the attitudinal assessment that they do not care what will happen to them when they have died. One could think up several things that could be done to the dead body of a loved one, like being buried or being given to science, and often people indeed communicate these wishes to their relatives and friends. The speaker here uses the in subordinate *como si*-clause to set up a scale and place a hypothetical situation at the upper end of the scale to express that they do not have such wishes: even if the people the speaker left decided to throw them off a cliff, they would not care.

- (15) A: *¿Cuándo quer-éis hac-er el rodaje?*
 when want-IND.PRS.2PL do-INF the.M shooting
 B: *Si por mí fues-e, comenz-arí-amos mañana mismo.*
 if for me be-SBJV.PST.3SG start-COND-1PL tomorrow even
 C: *Lo mismo dig-o. Por mí, como si empez-amos*
 the same say-IND.PRS.1SG for me as if start-IND.PRS.1PL
est-a tarde.
 this-F afternoon
 A: 'When do you want to start shooting?'
 B: 'If I had my way, we would start tomorrow already.'
 C: 'Same here, we can (even) start this afternoon for all I care.' (esTenTen18)

In (15), speaker A asks speakers B and C when they would like to start shooting the movie at issue. Whereas speaker B replies with a specific moment in time, ‘tomorrow’, speaker C uses an insubordinate *como si*-clause to evoke a scale in which the hypothetical time slot of ‘this afternoon’ sits at the extreme end: ‘this afternoon’ is sooner than ‘tomorrow’. What speaker C wants to convey is that they would not mind if the shooting started as soon as this afternoon. Because of the scalarity involved, the interpretation of *como si*-clauses like (14) and (15) can be rendered with a scalar-additive particle like *even*, which we added between brackets in the free translations above.

As mentioned above, the evaluation involved in *como si*-clauses of this type is one of indifference, which has been rendered in (14) and (15) with the prepositional phrase (comprising a restrictive relative clause) FOR ALL I CARE. This is exactly the pragmatically enriched interpretation of the prepositional phrase *por mí* (literally ‘for me’), which often precedes the insubordinate *como si*-clauses. As indicated in Table 3 above, all the instances of insubordination found in the esTenTen18 *por mí como si* sample instantiate the *scalar evaluation* type indeed. Moreover, it should be noted that such prepositional phrases need not be restricted to first person singular contexts – *como si*-clauses of the *scalar evaluation* type may also be preceded by phrases like *por ella* ‘for her’, or *por ellos* ‘for them’. In such cases, the speaker attributes the attitudinal assessment of indifference to the referents of these pronouns. In our dataset, cases of *scalar evaluation* are the second most frequent (37.1%) type of insubordinate *como si*-clauses (see Table 3). However, this high ratio should not be treated as representative of the real distribution of this type; the targeted extraction of *por mí como si* ‘for me as if’ strings from esTenTen18 biases the overall dataset. Within the non-targeted searches, *scalar evaluation* clauses only amount to twelve examples: nine from Twitter, two from the random sample from esTenTen18 and one from Val.Es.Co.

3.1.3 Nuanced agreement

For the third type we coined the term *nuanced agreement*. Insubordinate *como si*-clauses of this type combine an attitudinal, epistemic semantic value and the discourse function of marking partial (dis)agreement with the preceding discourse. As was the case for the previous two types, *nuanced agreement* clauses move beyond the prototypical meaning of hypothetical manner at the representational level (*to do X as if Y were true*), but they express the speaker’s epistemic attitude on the basis of their interpretation of reality (*IT IS/IT SEEMS [to me] as if Y were true*), as in (16).

- (16) A: *Oye, que est-oy yo, eh. No quier-o*
 hey that be-IND.PRS.1SG I huh NEG want-IND.PRS.1SG
asist-ir a un-a ruptura matrimonial.
 witness-INF to a-F breakdown marital
- B: *No est-amos casado-s.*
 NEG be-IND.PRS.1PL married-PL
- A: *Como si lo est-uvierais. Tant-o tiempo junto-s...*
 as if it be-SBJV.PRS.2PL so.much-M time together-PL
- A: ‘Hey, I am here. I don’t want to witness a marital breakdown.’
 B: ‘We are not married.’
 A: ‘As if you were. After all this time together...’ (Val.Es.Co)

In (16), speaker B explicitly affirms that she is not married in reaction to speaker A’s use of the term ‘marital breakdown’ in their preceding turn. While agreeing with the very fact of her

interlocutor ‘not being married’, speaker A doesn’t consider that an accurate representation of reality and feels the need to nuance her agreement with speaker B, using a *como si*-clause. In speaker A’s interpretation of reality and socio-culturally expected implications, being a couple for a long time can be considered as equivalent to being married. Thus, speaker A’s *como si*-clause can be reformulated as ‘I agree that you aren’t married, BUT you have been a couple for such a long time, which is somehow equivalent to being married, and this is why I took the liberty of using the term ‘marital’ before’.

While in (16) the contrastive relation between the preceding discourse act (‘we are not married’) and the *como si*-clause (‘as if you were married’) is left implicit, this is often signalled overtly by the coordinating conjunction *pero* ‘but’, as in (17). Note that the positive polarity particle *sí* ‘yes’ in (17) realizes polar ellipsis: it presupposes all the features of the preceding clause uttered by speaker A, except its polarity. Speaker B uses this polarity particle to assert ‘I did talk to her’, and then continues their turn with a contrastive conjunction and an independent *como si*-clause.

- (17) A: *Pero has hablado con ella, ¿no?*
 B: *Sí, pero como si no lo hub-iera hecho.*
 but as if not it have-SBJV.PST.1SG do.PTCP
 A: ‘But you talked to her, didn’t you?’
 B: ‘Yes, but [it was] as if I hadn’t.’ (esTenTen18)

In (17), speaker A asks speaker B whether they talked to the referred *she*-person. Speaker B responds affirmatively but uses at the same time the *como si*-clause to express their doubts as to the effects of their action. Indeed, although speaker B acknowledges having talked to her, they cannot consider that an accurate representation of reality and they hence feel the need to nuance that. Speaker B thus compares the actual state of affairs (‘I did talk to her’) to a hypothetical opposite situation (‘I did not talk to her’) to signal that the act of talking to her did not have the effects speaker B had expected. What is generally characteristic of this functional type is that the situation referred to in the *como si*-clause (that is, its non-reversed polarity interpretation) is the opposite of what has been asserted in the preceding discourse, either in the form of a full clause, as in (16), or by a polarity particle, as in (17). Hence, unlike examples of the first type, instances of *como si*-clauses of this third type are pragmatically used by speakers to nuance their agreement with the preceding discourse. More precisely, instead of denying some implied assumption, the speaker feels the need to signal a perceived mismatch between the propositional content of the preceding discourse – normally uttered by a different speaker, but not always; see example (7) – and some expectations or implications that can be associated with it based on their knowledge/interpretation of reality.

With respect to the disagreement in the literature about the delimitation of insubordination (see Section 1), this type of *como si*-clauses clearly corresponds to the type of clauses some authors would consider as cases of ‘dependency shift’ (cf. D’Hertefelt 2018; D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014) or ‘extension of dependency’ (cf. Mithun 2008), i.e. syntactically-independent clauses that are nevertheless dependent on their surrounding discourse in order to be pragmatically understood. In (17), the ‘nuanced agreement’ interpretation (‘I did talk to her, but it was as if I hadn’t’) could not be understood in isolation, without the context provided by the preceding clause. That is, while cases of *como si*-clauses expressing *denial of an assumption* and *scalar evaluation* can appear isolated in discourse and speakers would still understand them as cases of that type, cases of *nuanced agreement*

cannot be understood in isolation as such, without knowing the preceding discourse, and the same goes for cases of the fourth type, *discursive elaboration or reformulation*, discussed below.¹ Thus, although clauses of these last two types do not fall into the narrow definition of insubordination referred to in Section 1, they can be considered insubordinate in a broad sense, as they show syntactic independence. In D’Hertefelt and Verstraete’s (2014) terms, the first two types rate as “expressives”, whereas the last two types instantiate “elaboratives”.

In comparison with *denial of an assumption* and *scalar evaluation*, this third type appeared to be much less frequent in the data – only 8.6% of insubordinate *como si*-clauses identified belong to the *nuanced agreement* type (see Table 3). In terms of their quantitative distribution across the different datasets, the overwhelming majority of instances come from the *pero como si* ‘but as if’ sample extracted from esTenTen18 (88.5%) and only 3 examples come from the Val.Es.Co spoken data.

3.1.4 *Discursive elaboration or reformulation*

The last type we found is functionally close to the *nuanced agreement* type to the extent that it pragmatically marks agreement with the preceding discourse. However, in *discursive elaboration or reformulation* cases, the speaker of the *como si*-clause fully agrees with what has been said and implied before, feeling therefore only the need to reformulate it or add some new information to the interaction without contesting the preceding discourse in any way.

Out of the four types identified, this last type of insubordinate *como si*-clauses is semantically the most similar to its subordinate counterpart, as it is the only type that conveys hypothetical manner at the representational level (‘to do X as if Y were true’) and does not imply the expression of the speaker’s attitude. In (18), for instance, the preceding discourse is unreservedly compared to a hypothetical situation in the *como si*-clause, just like in subordinate examples (2) and (3).

- (18) *Tendrías que haber renunciado a la asignatura. Anularte la asignatura, o sea*
como si no te hub-ieras matricul-ado.
 as if not REFL have-SBJV.PST.2SG register-PTCP
 ‘You would need to drop the course. Cancelling the course, I mean, as if you had not registered.’ (Val.Es.Co)

In example (18), the speaker feels the need to reformulate what they have just said (‘cancelling the course’) and compares this to a hypothetical state of affairs (‘to do AS IF you had not registered’) that they judge to be equivalent.

The reversed-polarity interpretation is here again not at issue, as was the case for *nuanced agreement* clauses. It is not the main point of the speaker’s utterance, but it is merely evoked by the basic hypothetical meaning of the *como si* conjunction. Indeed, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* clauses, like (19), express the very comparative semantic value conveyed by the conjunction (see Section 1).

¹ More recent but yet unpublished research on prosodic features of (in)subordinate *como si*-clauses confirms that different prosodic patterns also play an important role in ensuring the understanding of *denial of an assumption* clauses in discursive isolation. While *discursive elaboration or reformulation* clauses are uttered with a falling tone (L* L%), which is typically associated in Spanish with declarative sentences and broad focus statements (Estebas-Vilaplana and Prieto 2010: 44), cases of *denial of an assumption* display instead a rising-falling tone (L + H* L%), which is widely associated with exclamative statements in Spanish (Estebas-Vilaplana and Prieto 2010: 44).

- (19) *Ya lo tenían todo, billete y todo. O sea, como si se fuer-an*
 as if REFL go-SBJV.PRS.3PL
el fin.de.semana que vien-e. Pues va mi
 the.M weekend that come-IND.PRS.3SG well go-IND.PRS.3SG my
abuela y se romp-e la cadera.
 grandma and REFL break-IND.PRS.3SG the.F hip
 ‘They already had everything, their tickets and everything. In other words, as if they were leaving next weekend. And then my grandma breaks her hip.’ (Val.Es.Co)

In example (19), the speaker finds the first part of their discourse (‘they already had their tickets and everything’) informationally poor and uses the *como si*-clause to add new information (‘[it was] AS IF they were leaving next weekend’) that enriches it for their interlocutor.

What the cases of *reformulation* (18) and *elaboration* (19) share is that they are both preceded by the discourse marker *o sea* (‘in other words’, ‘that is to say’), whose function is indeed to introduce reformulations. The difference between cases like (18) and (19) lies in whether the speaker of the *como si*-clause merely reformulates what has been said in their own words (18) or rather elaborates on the preceding discourse by adding some new information (19). In terms of interaction, for both subtypes the preceding discourse and the *como si*-clause can occur within a single speaker’s turn or in turns by different speakers. We will take a closer look at the discourse- interactional settings of the four types in Section 3.3.

Since in examples of this type, like (18) and (19), the *como si*-clause is closely tied to the preceding discourse and the speaker is not taking issue with it (i.e., there is no speaker attitude), the semantic-pragmatic value of this type of in subordinate *como si*-clauses cannot be understood in isolation, i.e. without a surrounding discourse context. Thus, as was the case for the previous type, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* clauses fall outside the stricter definition of in subordination proposed by some authors, and constitute instead instances of ‘dependency shift’ (cf. D’Hertefelt 2018).

In terms of frequency, cases of *discursive elaboration or reformulation* resemble *nuanced agreement* clauses in that they take up a small share within our dataset – only 9.6% of in subordinate *como si*-clauses belong to this fourth type (see Table 3). Taking a closer look at their quantitative distribution across the different datasets, we observe that about three quarters of *discursive elaboration or reformulation* cases are found in Twitter (75.9%), three examples come from Val.Es.Co and four examples from the esTenTen18 *pero como si* sample.

3.2 Tense-Aspect-Mood (TAM) marking

In Spanish *como si*-clauses, TAM marking does not relate to the temporal location of the state of affairs referred to in the *como si*-clause – as is the case in French *comme si*-clauses, for example (cf. Royo Viñuales and Van linden 2022) – but rather reflects their semantic-pragmatic features. In particular, *como si*-clauses show two possible TAM configurations. On the one hand, they can be marked by the prototypical combination of SUBJUNCTIVE mood and PAST tense, as exemplified in the subordinate *como si*-clause in (20) and the in subordinate one in (21).

(20) *Me miró y fue como si lo sup-iera.*
 as if it know-SBJV.PST.3SG
 ‘S/he looked at me and it was like he knew.’ (Twitter)

(21) *Como si lo que destru-imos tuv-iera un arreglo.*
 as if it that destroy-IND.PRS.3PL have-SBJV.PST.3SG a.M solution
 ‘As if what we destroy had a solution.’ (Twitter)

In these cases, the TAM configuration does not reflect any specific functional type of *como si*-clauses, as can be found in both *nuanced agreement*, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* and *denial of an assumption* clauses. The only commonality between those is the use of the subjunctive mood to code the hypothetical status of the situation, which is in turn signalled by the conjunction *como si* (‘as if’).

On the other hand, *como si*-clauses can be marked for INDICATIVE mood and PRESENT tense, and this combination is systematically and exclusively used in in subordinate *como si*-clauses of the *scalar evaluation* type, as in (22).

(22) A: *Ibai sólo reacciona a canciones de Bizarrap.*
 B: *Como si se quier-e pon-er a cant-ar.*
 as if REFL want-IND.PRS.3SG put-INF to sing-INF
 A: ‘Ibai only reacts to Bizarrap songs.’
 B: ‘He could start singing for all I care.’ (Twitter)

Interestingly, the TAM marking in (22) does not temporally locate the situation of the *como si*-clause in the present (as taking place at the moment of speaking), nor does it code the factual epistemic status of the situation (generally associated with indicative mood). Rather, this TAM configuration is simply the specific morphosyntactic marking used for *scalar evaluation* clauses by convention.

3.3 Discourse-interactional settings

While investigating the functional types of in subordinate *como si*-clauses above, we observed that *discursive elaboration or reformulation* clauses occur both within a single speaker’s turn or in turns by different speakers. In order to build a solid characterisation of in subordinate *como si*-clauses, this section extends the exploration of the discourse-interactional settings in which these constructions appear to all the functional types described in Section 3.1.

In a first step, we look at the very local textual environment of each *como si*-clause, distinguishing between monologic settings (i.e. there is no local interaction between the speaker of the *como si*-clause and an interlocutor) and dialogic ones (i.e. different speakers locally interacting), irrespective of the corpus it was extracted from. As shown in Table 4, *como si*-clauses in general appear more frequently in monologic settings (73.3%) than in dialogic ones (26.7%). This preference is even more pronounced in the case of subordinate clauses only (93.9% monologic vs. 6.1 % dialogic), while it is very weak for in subordinate ones (58.6% monologic vs. 41.4% dialogic).

However, this weak preference for monologic settings is not evenly distributed across the different datasets investigated, as can be expected from the different nature of the corpora consulted.

Table 4. Interactional distribution of *como si* clause-combining categories

Category	monologic		dialogic		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
subordinate	201	93.9	13	6.1	214	100
insubordinate	177	58.6	125	41.4	302	100
<i>Total</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>73.3</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>516</i>	<i>100</i>

As shown in Table 5, insubordinate *como si*-clauses predominantly occur in dialogic settings in Val.Es.Co, which consists of colloquial interaction (87.5%) and on the social platform Twitter (63.7%). By contrast, in the esTenTen18 corpus, which contains online journals, blogs and forums, the insubordinate *como si*-clauses mainly come from monologues (86.9%).

Table 5. Interactional distribution of insubordinate *como si*-clauses across datasets

Dataset	monologic		dialogic		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Val.Es.Co	1	12.5	7	87.5	8	100
esTenTen18	119	86.86	18	13.14	137	100
Twitter	57	36.3	100	63.7	157	100
<i>Total</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>58.6</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>41.4</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 6, in turn, presents the frequency of each of the four functional types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses in monologic and dialogic contexts.

Table 6. Interactional distribution of insubordinate *como si*-clauses functional types

Type	monologic		dialogic		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. <i>denial of an assumption</i>	43	31.9	92	68.1	135	100
2. <i>scalar evaluation</i>	88	78.6	24	21.3	112	100
3. <i>nuanced agreement</i>	22	84.6	4	15.4	26	100
4. <i>discursive elab. or reform.</i>	24	82.6	5	17.4	29	100
<i>Total</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>58.6</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>41.4</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>100</i>

While monologues are the preferred discourse-interactive setting for clauses conveying *nuanced agreement* (84.6%), *discursive elaboration or reformulation* (82.6%) and *scalar evaluation* (78.6%), *denial of an assumption* clauses are found to be more frequent in dialogues (68.1%). This can be explained in semantic-pragmatic terms. Since cases of *denial of an assumption* express full disagreement with the preceding discourse (i.e. they convey a ‘challenging’ meaning; cf. Cruttenden 1997), the most obvious context is that of a speaker contesting what their interlocutor just uttered. And whenever they are found in monologues, it is because (i) the preceding discourse constitutes reported speech, as in example (1), repeated as (23) for convenience, or because (ii) the speaker responds to a generic, virtual interlocutor, as in example (21), repeated here as (24).

(23) “Sexualidad, chicos... conoce sus puntos débiles.”¹

¡Como si no lo sup-iéramos, de verdad!
as if NEG it know-SBJV.PST.1PL of truth

“Sexuality, boys... know their weaknesses.” As if we didn’t know that, to be honest!
(Val.Es.Co)

¹ [The speaker is reading out loud a quote by someone else]

(24) Como si lo que destru-imos tuv-iera un arreglo.
as if it that destroy-IND.PRS.3PL have-SBJV.PST.3SG a.M solution
‘As if what we destroy had a solution.’ (Twitter)

In (24), the speaker does not respond to anyone in particular, but rather utters a generic statement expressing a general truth. The reversed-polarity interpretation (‘what we destroy does not have a solution’) is pragmatically so strong in such examples that the speaker can get their message across without any surrounding discourse. In contrast to cases of *denial of an assumption*, the other three types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses do not require the interaction with another (specific or generic) speaker, since one can easily express ‘partial (dis)agreement’, ‘elaboration/reformulation’ and ‘scalar evaluation’ with respect to one’s own discourse. This circumstance indeed justifies the high share of monologic settings for these three types in Table 6.

In a second step, we home in on *como si*-clauses in dialogic settings, and we investigate how they behave with respect to turn distribution. That is, we look at whether the analysed clause and the immediately preceding discourse belong to different speakers (i.e. the *como si*-clause occupies a turn-initial position) or, on the contrary, both occur within a single speaker’s turn (i.e. the *como si*-clause occupies a turn-medial position). Our findings are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Turn distribution of *como si*-clauses and their preceding discourse (*sub* vs. *insub*)

Category	turn-initial		turn-medial		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
subordinate	4	30.8	9	69.2	13	100
insubordinate	90	72	35	28	125	100
Total	94	68.1	44	31.9	138	100

As can be seen in Table 7, subordinate *como si*-clauses appear most often in turn-medial position (69.2%), but there are nevertheless a good deal of examples that occur in turn-initial position, as in (25).

(25) A: Me han quitado el aparato y ahora me siento muy extraña.

B: Como si est-uvieses desnuda, ¿no?
as if be-SBJV.PST.2SG naked.F no

A: ‘They took my braces out and that feels very weird now.’

B: ‘As if you were naked, right?’ (Twitter)

Examples like (25) correspond to what in the literature has been called *dyadically dependent clauses*, i.e. clauses introduced by a subordinating conjunction that “lack an explicit matrix, but can be construed as dependent on a matrix from the previous turn” (Sansiñena et al. 2015: 3). In example (25), the *como si*-clause by speaker B is syntactically anchored to the matrix

provided by the verb *sentir* ‘feel’ in the previous turn, which belongs to speaker A. Thus, it could be reconstructed as ‘[you feel] AS IF you were naked, right?’. Insubordinate *como si*-clauses, by contrast, show the opposite interactional behaviour in dialogic settings: they appear more often turn- initially (72%) than turn-medially (28%).

When taking a closer look at the turn distribution across the four functional types identified, we notice a converging tendency for insubordinate *como si*-clauses of all four types, as can be gathered from Table 8.

Table 8. Turn distribution of insubordinate *como si*-clauses across the four functional types

Type	turn-initial		turn-medial		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. <i>denial of an assumption</i>	66	71.7	26	28.3	92	100
2. <i>scalar evaluation</i>	18	75	6	25	24	100
3. <i>nuanced agreement</i>	3	75	1	25	4	100
4. <i>discursive elab. or reform.</i>	3	60	2	40	5	100
<i>total</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>100</i>

While the three ‘non-challenging’ functional types (viz., *nuanced agreement*, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* and *scalar evaluation*) were found to be more frequent in monologic settings (cf. Table 6), the results in Table 8 show that, in dialogic settings, all four functional types are preferably uttered turn-initially in response to their interlocutor’s previous turn.

4 Concluding discussion

In this article, we have investigated the phenomenon of insubordination through the analysis of clauses introduced by *como si* ‘as if’ in Spanish, which have been understudied in the literature so far.

We have first observed that, in terms of quantitative instantiation in the corpus data examined, insubordinate *como si*-clauses are highly frequent in Spanish. Although this finding should be further investigated by systematic cross-linguistic comparison, it is consistent with earlier findings. Both in our own research (Royo Viñuales and Van linden 2022) and in Lastres-López’s (2021) study of conditional constructions, insubordinate clauses were found to be more frequently used in Spanish than, for example, in French or English.

Secondly, by investigating in more detail the functional behaviour of insubordinate clauses introduced by *como si* in discourse, we went beyond previous findings on similar constructions (e.g. Brinton 2014; Looji and Minnaert 2019) and proposed a four-way functional typology. In line with earlier observations on insubordination in general (D’Hertefelt 2018; Gras and Sansiñena 2017; Lastres-López 2021; Van linden and Van de Velde 2014), insubordinate *como si*-clauses also proved to generally extend beyond the prototypical semantic expression of hypothetical manner by encompassing other meanings, and serving distinct discourse functions. The combination of these parameters allowed us to provide a fine-grained functional account of these constructions.

On the one hand, we identified two functional types of *como si*-clauses that fall within the narrowest definition of insubordination (i.e. they show both syntactic and discursive independence): *denial of an assumption* and *scalar evaluation*. Beyond the specific semantic-pragmatic features their discrimination is based on (‘assumption-denying’ vs ‘evaluation’), the main difference between these two types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses lies in how they relate to ‘hypothetical manner’. While *denial of an assumption* clauses still convey this

semantic value at a speech act level (e.g. ‘YOU SAY THAT *as if* X’), there is no trace of it in cases of *scalar evaluation*, which express the speaker’s attitude of indifference with respect to the situation at issue, and feature an implied ‘scalar-additive’ semantic value.

On the other hand, the other two functional types of *como si*-clauses identified (i.e. *nuanced agreement* and *discursive elaboration or reformulation*) do not fit the narrowest definition of insubordination, for they are not discursively independent and thus show what in the literature has been called ‘dependency shift’, i.e. “a mechanism that serves to analyse cases in which subordinating conjunctions shift away from under the scope of their main clause” (D’Hertefelt 2018: 160–161).² Indeed, such syntactically-independent uses of *como si*-clauses “come to express dependencies on the discursive level” (D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014: 97). The two types of broadly- insubordinate *como si*-clauses were further told apart from each other on the basis of their more specific semantic-pragmatic features. While *nuanced agreement* clauses relegate the expression of hypothetical manner to an attitudinal level (i.e. concerning the speaker’s perception-interpretation of reality) by pragmatically conveying ‘partial (dis) agreement’ with the preceding discourse, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* clauses are semantically closer to the prototypical subordinate clauses in that they convey an expression of hypothetical manner at a representational level, without coding any speaker attitude. Instead, the speaker of the *como si*-clause fully agrees with what has been said and implied before, feeling therefore only the need to reformulate it or add some new information to the interaction without contesting the preceding discourse.

In terms of morphosyntactic properties, insubordinate *como si*-clauses were found to share the same TAM marking with their subordinate counterparts in that they all display subjunctive past marking. The only exception to that regularity is attested within a single functional type, that of *scalar evaluation*, which is consistently marked for indicative mood and present tense.

Let us now turn to the quantitative distribution of the four functional types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses across the different datasets. The two strictly-insubordinate types or “expressives” (D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014) are the most frequent ones in the samples analysed; 44.7% of insubordinate *como si*-clauses instantiate the *denial of an assumption* type and 37.1% the *scalar evaluation* type. The two discursively dependent types or “elaboratives” (D’Hertefelt and Verstraete 2014), in turn, together represent only 18.2% of the examples, which breaks down into 8.6% for *nuanced agreement* and 9.6% for *discursive elaboration or reformulation*.

Finally, we also studied the discourse-interactional settings of *como si*-clauses, and for those occurring in dialogic settings we examined the turn distribution conditions. Insubordinate *como si*-clauses proved to be predominantly used in monologic local environments (58.6%), and subordinate ones even more so (93.9%). However, when looking at the distinct functional types of insubordinate *como si*-clauses, we noted that this overall preference for monologic contexts in fact resulted from the individual preferences of the three ‘non-challenging’ functional types only, viz. *nuanced agreement*, *discursive elaboration or reformulation* and *scalar evaluation*, whereas the type of denial of an assumption in fact favours dialogic contexts (68.1%). In a second step, we focused on dialogic contexts, and found that insubordinate *como si*-clauses – across the four functional types – tend to be uttered turn-initially (72%) rather than turn-medially (28%).

² See also Debaisieux (2013, 2020) for similar hypotheses concerning French.

This study has presented a first corpus-based analysis of insubordinate clauses introduced by *como si* ‘as if’ in Spanish, but at the same time it also opens up new avenues of research. For one, such constructions could be further investigated in terms of their prosodic behaviour in spoken discourse. Another issue left for future research is their diachrony. While the origins of the *denial of an assumption* type can arguably be traced back to Archaic and Classical Latin, featuring the conjunction *quasi* rather than *como si* (la Roi 2022: 40–41), the subsequent developmental pathway of this type, as well as the origins and further development of the other three types, still needs to be examined.

Abbreviations

1	1 st person	GER	gerund	POS	positive
2	2 nd person	IMP	imperative	PRS	present
3	3 rd person	IND	indicative	PST	past
ART	article	INF	infinitive	PTCP	past participle
COND	conditional	NEG	negation	REFL	reflexive
DAT	dative	M	masculine	SBJV	subjunctive
F	feminine	PL	plural	SG	singular

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