

1                   **EXPRESSIVE APs AND EXPLETIVE NPs REVISITED:**

2           **REFINING THE EXTANT RELEVANCE-THEORETIC PROCEDURAL ACCOUNT**

3

4   **Abstract**

5   In the third stage in the development of the notion of procedural meaning, relevance  
6   theorists analysed expressive devices like intonation, interjections, expressive APs,  
7   expletive NPs, slurs and paralanguage. This paper revisits expressive APs and  
8   expletive NPs by arguing that the emotional-state descriptions they trigger only take  
9   within their scope a propositional constituent. Such shorter-ranging mental structure  
10   does not fit neatly in the definition of higher-level explicature, so two possible solutions  
11   are proposed in order to accommodate it within the relevance-theoretic notional  
12   apparatus, the second of which could involve a refinement of the distinction between  
13   lower- and higher-level explicatures. Moreover, that type of constituent-directed  
14   description is shown to be also enacted by other expressives and other linguistic  
15   expressions, and to be constructed in other communicative acts. Finally, since the  
16   words functioning as expressive APs and expletive NPs come from various lexical  
17   categories, an account of the lexical-pragmatic processes enabling their transfer is  
18   given.

19

20   **Keywords:** expressive APs, expletive NPs, procedural semantics, explicatures,  
21   proceduralisation, relevance theory

22

23   **1. Introduction**

24   Consider the following utterances in English and Spanish:

25 (1) The *fucking* lady was so lucky that she did not get stuck between the car and  
26 the wall!

27 (2) Peter has got the *damned* flashlight.

28 (3) ¡Déjame de una vez el *jodido* libro!

29 'Lend me the *fucking/blasted* book at once!'

30 (4) Llevo toda la tarde con la *dichosa* ponencia.

31 'I have been working on the *bleeding* presentation the whole afternoon'.

32 (5) Juan es un *puñetero* imbécil; se ha olvidado las entradas en su casa.

33 'John is a *fucking* idiot; he forgot the tickets at home'.

34 (6) No he visto al *puto* niño.

35 'I haven't seen the *bloody* bastard'.

36 In them, the head of a noun phrase seems to be modified by the italicised present and  
37 past participles 'fucking', 'damned' and 'jodido' (1-3), the adjectives 'dichosa' and  
38 'puñetero' (4-5), and the noun 'puto' (6). Despite their adnominal position, those words  
39 do not function as adjectives or generate adjectival phrases.

40 Like other content words, adjectives encode concepts consisting of a *logical entry*  
41 with information about their set of stable logical properties, a *lexical entry* with  
42 information about the natural-language words used to express them and their  
43 grammatical characteristics, and an *encyclopaedic entry* with their extension and/or  
44 denotation –states, qualities or properties connected with notions such as shape, taste,  
45 size, colour, judgement, etc. (Börjars and Burridge 2001: 62; Huddleston 1988: 108)–  
46 as well as varied, idiosyncratic information connected with them (Carston 2016: 155;  
47 Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 92-93)<sup>1</sup>. Clearly, none of the words above refer to  
48 stable qualities or scalar properties. Neither do they have heightening or lowering

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<sup>1</sup> These entries are what most atomic, unstructured concepts have, but others may lack one of them.

49 effects, nor do they fulfil a restrictive function. Impossibility to intensify or gradate the  
50 participles ‘fucking’ or ‘damned’ in (1-2) and to add prefixes to them further reveal that  
51 they are not adjectives<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, both in English and in Spanish, moving those  
52 words to predicative position or replacing them with defining relative clauses would  
53 involve illicit transformations that alter what speakers intend to communicate when  
54 those words appear in pre-nominal position (Börjars and Burridge 2001: 64-65; Collins  
55 and Hollo 2000: 80-81; Greenbaum and Quirk 1993: 142; Haegeman and Guéron  
56 1999: 56-57, 71-72; Huddleston 1988: 108-110):

57 (7) The lady *who/that was fucking* was so lucky that...

58 (8) Peter has got the flashlight *that is/was damned*.

59 (9) ¡Dame de una vez el libro *que está jodido!*

60 ‘Give me the book that is broken/busted at once!’

61 The words in question, which are transferred from various lexical categories, are no  
62 doubt the vehicle by means of which speakers voice something elusive and ineffable:  
63 attitudes, feelings and/or emotions (Blakemore 2011; Potts 2007a, 2007b). They are  
64 *expressives*, a label subsuming a wide array of (non-)linguistic elements like expletive  
65 and non-expletive nominal epithets (‘the bastard’, ‘el puto’), slurs (‘hori’, ‘chink’),  
66 primary and secondary interjections (‘wow’, ‘oh’, ‘shit’, ‘damn’), prosody or gestures, to  
67 name but a few (Blakemore 2011: 3537, 2015). This paper purports to develop an  
68 account of expressive APs and expletive NPs which answers the following questions:

69 (i) How are expressive APs and expletive NPs used to communicate?

70 (ii) What do they contribute to communication?

71 (iii) What made it possible for elements from diverse lexical categories to achieve  
72 expressive functions?

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<sup>2</sup> In Spanish, in contrast, some speakers could intensify or gradate the alleged participle ‘jodido/a’ in (3) and the alleged noun ‘puto’ in (6).

73 Despite their syntactic position, expressive APs and expletive NPs do not provide  
74 descriptive, truth-conditional information about the properties of the referents of the  
75 nouns they accompany, as Section 2 shows. Expressive APs and expletive NPs  
76 resemble interjections, intonation and gestures in that they provide direct evidence for  
77 speaker meaning, which is, however, difficult to paraphrase. Nevertheless, their  
78 specialisation to express certain emotions in specific, maybe repeated circumstances  
79 or by certain language users, might activate specific conceptual representations, even  
80 if vague or in need of subsequent fine-tuning. This would enable expressive APs and  
81 expletive NPs to communicate by also providing some indirect evidence for speaker  
82 meaning. Section 3 discusses the manner whereby they communicate on the basis of  
83 the *showing-meaning<sub>NN</sub>* distinction (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Grice 1957; Wharton  
84 2001, 2002, 2003, 2009).

85 The elusiveness of what expressive APs and expletive NPs communicate suggests  
86 that their contribution to communication calls for an alternative explanation. This paper  
87 endorses a *procedural* perspective, and treats expressive APs and expletive NPs as  
88 encoders of mental instructions or *procedures* (Blakemore 1987, 2002; Wilson and  
89 Sperber 1993, 2002, 2004). Like interjections, intonation or attitudinal adverbials  
90 (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Ifantidou 1992, 1993a; Wharton 2003, 2009, 2016; Wilson  
91 and Wharton 2006), expressive APs and expletive NPs are claimed in Section 4 to  
92 encode instructions targeting emotion-reading mechanisms (Sperber and Wilson  
93 1986/1995; Wilson and Sperber 2002, 2004). However, the procedural analysis this  
94 paper proposes differs from the initial one of interjections, intonation or attitudinal  
95 adverbials in some respects. The attitudinal or emotional descriptions that expressive  
96 APs and expletive NPs are argued to enact will be shown not to be about something

97 manifest in the speaker's *cognitive environment* or about a proposition that she<sup>3</sup>  
98 expresses, but to be confined to a constituent of a proposition: namely, the referent of  
99 a noun. In this respect, expressive APs and expletive NPs resemble slurs, which voice  
100 attitudes towards the referents that they denote (Blakemore 2015).

101 This procedural analysis, on the one hand, lends support to a non-unitary account  
102 of the broad group of expressives (Blakemore 2015). On the other hand, it might imply  
103 that the relevance-theoretic notional apparatus could be refined with a view to  
104 accommodating the shorter-ranging attitudinal descriptions illustrated here, as these  
105 differ significantly from higher-level explicatures. These constituent-focused  
106 descriptions will furthermore be shown to be the output of other linguistic expressions  
107 that do not necessarily fall within the category of expressive meaning, and to be  
108 constructed in the processing of various communicative acts.

109 To conclude, Section 5 discusses why items initially belonging to distinct lexical  
110 categories might develop an expressive function. Although the development of such a  
111 function is explained as a result of *grammaticalisation* and *subjectification*, a proposal  
112 is made about the processes that might propel what this paper calls the  
113 *proceduralisation* of those lexical items. This proposal rests on current relevance-  
114 theoretic postulates on lexical pragmatics, as well as on some semantic processes  
115 frequent in children's speech.

116

## 117 **2. Expressive APs and expletive NPs, and the proposition expressed**

118 Content words encode concepts that become constituents of conceptual  
119 representations (Wilson and Sperber 1993: 16). Concepts may be "[...] brought to  
120 consciousness, reflected on and used in general inference" (Wilson 2016: 11).

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<sup>3</sup> Following a relevance-theoretic convention, reference to the speaker will be made through the feminine pronoun while reference to the hearer will be made through the masculine counterpart.

121 Although many concepts are verbalised by means of single words, concept-word  
122 correspondences are not always exhaustive: single concepts map onto different words  
123 or phrases, various concepts map onto the same word or some concepts are not  
124 expressible at all through words (Sperber and Wilson 1997; Wilson and Sperber 1993).

125 Decoded concepts become part of the *logical form* of an utterance (Carston 2016;  
126 Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), which must undergo various inferential processes to  
127 become truth-evaluable: reference assignment, disambiguation, recovery of  
128 unarticulated constituents and conceptual adjustment. Interaction with other concepts  
129 and contextual information adjust a lexically encoded concept, so that its denotation  
130 becomes more specific (*narrowed*) or more general (*broadened*): “[...] either a proper  
131 subset or a superset of [its original] denotation [...]”, although it may also be “[...] a  
132 combination, both extending the lexical denotation and excluding some part of it”  
133 (Carston 2016: 156). If the resulting concept is an occasion-specific one, it is an *ad*  
134 *hoc* concept (Carston 1997, 2002, 2013, 2016; Sperber and Wilson 2008;  
135 Wałaszewska 2015; Wilson 2004; Wilson and Carston 2006, 2007). The meaning of  
136 most words, therefore, is sometimes thought of as semantically underspecified and in  
137 need of modulating before it can provide some specific content; to put it differently,  
138 most words behave as if they encoded *pro-concepts* that need working out (Sperber  
139 and Wilson 1997).

140 The inferential operations mentioned above yield the lower-level explicature, which  
141 is a truth-evaluable proposition corresponding to ‘what is said’. Adjectival modifiers  
142 clearly contribute to lower-level explicatures and such contribution is relatively  
143 straightforward to check: elimination or replacement with another adjective or  
144 participial adjective, as well as intensification or gradation, alter the meaning of the  
145 proposition expressed and, therefore, its truth conditions (10). Additionally, movement

146 from the attributive to the predicative position does not alter the meaning of the  
147 resulting sentence (11):

148 (10) a. John cut down the [(very/extremely) tall/green] tree.

149 b. John attended a(n)[(very/most) interesting/boring] lecture.

150 (11) a. The green/tall tree = The tree is green/tall.

151 b. An interesting lecture = The lecture is interesting.

152 c. A worried man = The man is worried.

153 Participial adjectives may also be substituted by a defining relative clause without any  
154 effect on the proposition expressed:

155 (12) a. The lost property > The property that was/has been lost.

156 b. The escaped prisoner > The prisoner who (has/had) escaped.

157 Expressive APs and expletive NPs do not encode concepts denoting conditions or  
158 (scalar) properties describing nouns. In their case, adnominal position does not involve  
159 an adjectival meaning or function. What they encode in utterances like (1-6), if  
160 anything, does not seem to be part of the proposition expressed and, hence, does not  
161 have any impact on its truth conditions. If those words were eliminated, the resulting  
162 proposition would remain the same, although some indication of the speaker's feeling  
163 about or attitude to one of its constituents would obviously disappear:

164 (13) The lady was so lucky that she did not get stuck between the car and wall!

165 To some extent, expressive APs and expletive NPs behave like *attitudinal* adverbs  
166 such as 'unfortunately' and 'sadly', which indicate the speaker's attitude to an assertion  
167 (Ifantidou 1992, 1993a):

168 (14) a. *Unfortunately*, John has left the party.

169 b. *Sadly*, the beautiful princess has died.

170 Semantically external to the proposition expressed, the adverbials they give rise to  
171 modify the assertion without contributing to its truth conditions (Strawson 1973, quoted  
172 in Ifantidou 1992, 1993a; Urmson 1952). Embedding an utterance containing an  
173 attitudinal adverbial into a conditional structure shows that the adverbial does not affect  
174 its truth conditions because it is outside the scope of the conditional operator (Ifantidou  
175 1992, 1993a). Accordingly, if (14a) was slightly adapted as (15a) in order to prevent it  
176 from sounding odd when embedded into a conditional structure (15b), the speaker  
177 would not be saying that they will all leave in the event that (15c) was true, but in the  
178 event that (15d) was true:

- 179 (15) a. John has unfortunately left the party.  
180 b. If John has unfortunately left the party, we will all leave too.  
181 c. It is unfortunate that John has left the party.  
182 d. John has left the party.

183 Attitudinal adverbs, however, convey information that may be true or false in itself,  
184 which reveals their conceptual status. A speaker who employs a specific attitudinal  
185 adverb may be contradicted by someone who knows or discovers that what she says  
186 is false (16). Their conceptual status is additionally attested by the existence of  
187 synonymous manner-adverbial counterparts that determine the truth conditions of the  
188 utterances where they occur (17), the possibility to be intensified (18) or integration in  
189 more complex syntactic structures (19) (Ifantidou 1992: 207-208):

- 190 (16) It is not unfortunate! We are all happy that he left! He is so boring!  
191 (17) It is *unfortunately* true that John left the party.  
192 (18) *Quite/Very* unfortunately, John left the party.  
193 (19) *Quite unfortunately and very regrettably*, John left the party.



194 Lack of intensification, impossibility to be gradated, meaning shift when placed in  
195 predicative position or replaced by a corresponding defining relative clause all support  
196 the conclusion that the nouns, adjectives and participles functioning as expressive APs  
197 or expletive NPs have lost their original descriptive content. As with attitudinal adverbs,  
198 embedding an utterance containing an expressive AP or expletive NP into a conditional  
199 structure reveals that they do not fall within the scope of the conditional operator, so  
200 they do not affect the truth conditions of the utterance either. If (20a) was embedded  
201 into a conditional structure like (20b), the speaker would be understood to be  
202 recommending to take the lady to hospital provided (20c) was true, but not in the case  
203 that (20d) was true:

- 204 (20) a. That fucking lady has been hit by the lamp.  
205 b. If that fucking lady has been hit by the lamp, someone should take her to  
206 hospital.  
207 c. A particular lady has been hit by the lamp.  
208 d. A particular lady who was fucking has been hit by the lamp.

209 As opposed to attitudinal adverbs, the feeling or attitude that expressive APs and  
210 expletive NPs express cannot be denied, so a reaction like (21b) to a (21a) would  
211 sound odd, as it would not make much sense to challenge, reject or question what the  
212 speaker feels (Potts 2005: 158):

- 213 (21) a. That fucking lady was hit by a lamp!  
214 b. She is not a fucking lady.

215 Expressive APs and expletive NPs certainly display attitudes, feelings or emotions just  
216 as shrieks or interjections do. They do not amount to “[...] a proposition that can be  
217 cancelled, but [are] simply [...] means of displaying an emotion tied to the utterance in  
218 which [they are] used” (Blakemore 2015: 26). If any at all, a possible reaction to an

219 utterance containing an expressive AP or expletive NP would be a dissenting opinion  
220 to their usage, provided it were considered inappropriate or unfair. This might suggest  
221 that those words could nevertheless encode some content, even if vague or nebulous:

222 (22) a. That fucking lady was hit by a lamp!

223 b. Come on! Do not say she is a fucking lady!/Do not call her a fucking lady!

224 She is a loving and caring woman.

225 Occurrence in adnominal position and modification of nominal heads could initially  
226 lead to regard some nouns, adjectives and participles as adjectival, but the tests  
227 adduced prove that they clearly lack adjectival semantics and function. Such words  
228 are proper expressives and convey information about something ungraspable in  
229 precise conceptual and lexical terms (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Potts 2007a, 2007b).  
230 The ineffability of what they communicate suggests that a procedural analysis is better-  
231 suited to unravel their contribution to communication (Blakemore 1987, 2002, 2011,  
232 2015; Wilson and Sperber 1993). But a full account of expressive APs and expletive  
233 NPs must also elucidate if they communicate by simply providing direct evidence of  
234 meaning or if, on the contrary, they also do so in a conventionalised, codified manner.

235

### 236 **3. Expressive APs and expletive NPs, *showing and meaning*<sub>MN</sub>**

237 Ideally, communication would succeed if words encoded all that speakers intend to  
238 communicate. This would be fully *determinate meaning*, a case of *pure meaning* that  
239 would result in absolute explicitness and allow hearers to accurately paraphrase  
240 speakers' informative intention (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 135-136). However,  
241 languages often lack the devices to make meaning effable. Time availability, cognitive  
242 abilities or effort allocation may further prevent speakers from thinking of, finding out

243 or actually using the exact and appropriate expressions to convey their meaning  
244 (Mustajoki 2012; Sperber and Wilson 1995, 1997).

245 In most cases, coded elements endowed with conventional or *non-natural meaning*  
246 (*meaning<sub>NN</sub>*) are combined with more or less direct intentional evidence of what is  
247 meant: gestures (pointing, shrugging, etc.), facial expressions (smiles, grimaces,  
248 frowns, etc.), intonation, etc. These fall into the category of paralinguistic and  
249 somehow display or *show* what is meant (Wharton 2001, 2002, 2003). They differ from  
250 natural, spontaneous *signs* providing direct evidence for something and requiring  
251 inference to be interpreted (e.g. shivering) in their evolution, adaptation or refinement  
252 to carry or indicate some meaning by providing direct evidence for the intended  
253 message. Acquisition of communicative function turns them into *signals* that involve  
254 some encoding, even if their interpretation also requires some amount of inference  
255 (Wharton 2009: 114-115, 2016: 26).

256 Although (para)linguistic elements can be classified either as tokens of *meaning<sub>NN</sub>*  
257 or of *showing* (Grice 1957), there is a continuum between these poles, along which lie  
258 hybrid elements amounting to more or less direct evidence of meaning while  
259 simultaneously encoding that meaning, even if nebulously (Wharton 2009: 43-47,  
260 2016: 27-29). *Determinate showing* may also ideally facilitate the expression of  
261 meaning, above all when it is difficult to verbalise, for "*showing* often involves the  
262 sharing of experiences, or draws on experiential elements of the context" (Sasamoto  
263 and Jackson 2016: 42). Absence of coded elements, unfortunately, makes  
264 communication more liable to failure. If considerable effort is needed to paraphrase  
265 speaker meaning, it becomes *semi-determinate*; if speaker meaning cannot be  
266 paraphrased at all or more than one proposition is needed, it is *fully indeterminate*  
267 (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 123-124). Yet, despite the combination of elements

268 endowed with meaning<sub>NN</sub> and tokens of showing, on most occasions utterances only  
269 vaguely and approximately transmit what speakers mean (Jucker et al. 2003; Mustajoki  
270 2012)<sup>4</sup>.

271 Expressive APs and expletive NPs are means to communicate elusive and fuzzy  
272 things such as attitudes, feelings or emotions, which are hard to conceptualise and,  
273 therefore, to pin down in words (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Potts 2005, 2007a, 2007b). If  
274 expressible through lexical means at all, their nuances or the degree of intensity with  
275 which they are felt might yet escape speakers. Hence, what speakers cannot but do is  
276 expect and trust that hearers will be able to infer these on the grounds of the evidence  
277 they provide.

278 To some extent, expressive APs and expletive NPs are cases of showing insofar  
279 as, like interjections, intonation or gestures, they amount to relatively direct evidence  
280 for what speakers experience. However, this should not rule out the possibility that  
281 some of them achieve a conceptual status. The fact that the adequacy or fairness of  
282 their usage may be contradicted or dissented from could suggest that expressive APs  
283 and expletive NPs might encode concepts, even if broad or vague –pro-concepts, in  
284 Sperber and Wilson’s (1997) terms. If some of them did, they would be able to mean<sub>NN</sub>  
285 and thus have a hybrid nature, which would place them at distinct points along the  
286 showing-meaning<sub>NN</sub> cline. Were this possible, expletive NPs might be closer to the  
287 conceptual pole than expressive APs.

288 Relevance theorists have analysed intonation as a non-conceptual display of  
289 attitudes and emotions (Wharton 2009; Wilson and Wharton 2006). Interjections would

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<sup>4</sup> Searle’s (1969) *Principle of Expressibility* states that whatever can be meant can be said, but whatever is said is often not understood as intended. Since background and behavioural/cultural conventions vary, individuals may assign differing interpretations to specific utterances. This is basically why a *Principle of Expression Fallibility* would be needed, according to which “it is possible for [an] E[xpression] to mean something different from what S[peaker] means (intends to transmit or communicate) by uttering it” (Navarro Reyes 2009: 302).

290 behave somewhat similarly, although some could have a conceptual semantics  
291 (Wharton 2003, 2009, 2016). They make up a rather heterogeneous lexical category  
292 encompassing elements that only provide vague evidence for speaker meaning and  
293 require a considerable amount of inference, and elements offering less vague evidence  
294 because of their conventionalisation to express specific attitudes, feelings or emotions.  
295 For well-established interjections language users would store and access  
296 encyclopaedic assumptions about their usage and the (range of) attitudes, feelings or  
297 emotions that are normally expressed through them.

298 Interjections could activate broad concepts like EMOTION or POSITIVE/NEGATIVE  
299 EMOTION<sup>5</sup>—i.e. some kind of hypernym. Increase in their degree of conventionalisation  
300 or specialisation to express specific emotions could also facilitate the activation of more  
301 precise concepts. If the label ‘positive emotion’ subsumed emotions like, say,  
302 happiness, pleasure or satisfaction, repeated usage to express happiness, maybe in  
303 similar circumstances, could progressively specialise an interjection in expressing it  
304 and connect that interjection with the more specific concept HAPPINESS. Obviously, that  
305 concept would still need adjusting in order to determine whether what is expressed is  
306 a more intense type of happiness—say, euphoria— or a milder type—e.g. joy.  
307 Accordingly, repeated usage to express specific emotions could trigger a shift from  
308 activation of general concepts to activation of more specific ones and place some  
309 interjections closer to the meaning<sub>NN</sub> pole (Author 2009a, 2009b; Wharton 2016).  
310 Expressive APs and expletive NPs could also be portrayed as a heterogeneous group  
311 comprising items that only show emotions, items that may activate nebulous emotion-  
312 related conceptual representations and items likely to activate more precise emotion-  
313 related concepts as a consequence of repetition in similar situations and establishment

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<sup>5</sup> Following a relevance-theoretic convention, mental concepts are notated in small caps.

314 in a language, a variety or a community of practice. The capacity to activate relatively  
315 determinate concepts would enable some expressive APs and expletive NPs to  
316 mean<sub>NN</sub> and to express semi-determinate meanings (Sperber and Wilson 2015: 123-  
317 124).

318 This notwithstanding, the ineffability and vagueness of what expressive APs and  
319 expletive NPs encode, if anything at all, make them more amenable to a non-  
320 translational analysis. Indeed, lack of clear conceptual content often involves encoding  
321 of instructions steering comprehension (Blakemore 2002, 2011, 2015; Wharton 2003,  
322 2009, 2016). Like interjections or intonation, expressive APs and expletive NPs are  
323 also procedural elements, although there seem to be some differences.

324

#### 325 **4. Expressive APs and expletive NPs, and procedures**

326 The first stage in the development of the notion of procedural meaning (Carston 2016)  
327 analysed discourse markers as elements constraining the selection of a suitable  
328 interpretive context or the search space for conclusions and relevant interpretations,  
329 thus guiding inferences and reducing cognitive effort (Blakemore 1987, 2002; Hall  
330 2007; Jucker 1993; Rouchota 1995)<sup>6</sup>. The second stage directed attention to elements  
331 guiding the sort of inferences needed to determine propositional contents (Carston  
332 2016): personal pronouns, deictics or demonstratives, which facilitate reference  
333 assignment (Blakemore 1992; Scott 2011, 2013, 2016; Wilson 2016; Wilson and  
334 Sperber 1993)<sup>7</sup>, or inflections for tense and aspect, which delimit the temporal frame  
335 of a proposition (Amenós Pons 2011; de Saussure 2012; Escandell Vidal and Leonetti

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<sup>6</sup> See Moeschler (2016) for a different approach.

<sup>7</sup> Initially analysed as encoding procedures and some schematic conceptual content (Blakemore 1992; Wilson and Sperber 1993), pronouns have recently been treated as purely procedural elements that “trigger cognitive processes which constrain the set of potential referents” (Scott 2016: 76; see also Schröder 2016).

336 2011; Moeschler 2016)<sup>8</sup>. Additionally, procedural analyses were made of elements  
337 enabling inferences about the sort and amount of evidence for states of affairs alluded  
338 to or the speaker's degree of commitment to it: mood indicators, word order, evidential  
339 adverbs ('obviously', 'evidently', etc.), *hearsay* adverbs ('allegedly', 'reportedly', etc.),  
340 *hearsay* particles in some languages or parenthetical phrases ('I/they  
341 say/believe/claim', etc.) (Blass 1989, 1990; Ifantidou 1993b, 2001; Itani 1994; Unger  
342 2016; Wilson 2012, 2016; Wilson and Sperber 1993). These "[...] subtle variations in  
343 linguistic form [...] may be seen as contributing to inferential comprehension in ways  
344 that are hard to analyse in purely conceptual terms" (Sasamoto and Wilson 2016: 1).

345 The third stage extended procedural analysis to clusters of expressions assisting  
346 the modules responsible for the identification of emotions or attitudes (Carston 2016;  
347 Wilson 2012, 2016). Since the representation of emotional states is a byproduct of  
348 cognitive processes, linguistic and nonlinguistic devices must trigger procedures  
349 enabling such representation. Attitudinal adverbs like 'happily' or 'unfortunately'  
350 (Ifantidou 1992, 1993a), intonation, interjections, facial expressions or gestures  
351 (Blakemore 2011, 2015; Itani 1990; Wharton 2003, 2009, 2016; Wilson and Wharton  
352 2006) have been argued to guide the construction of schemas about the speaker's  
353 attitude to a proposition –higher-level explicatures– whose final format will  
354 nevertheless depend on contextual assumptions about the speaker, setting, recent  
355 events, objects or individuals alluded to, or accompanying paralinguistic<sup>9</sup>. Some of  
356 these expressions range along the showing-meaning<sub>NN</sub> continuum, although  
357 "Expressing emotion is more about showing than it is about meaning<sub>NN</sub>" (Wharton  
358 2016: 29).

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<sup>8</sup> Tense has also been treated as a both procedural and conceptual feature (Grisot and Moeschler 2014; Grisot et al. 2016).

<sup>9</sup> This explains why the procedure encoded by a particular element may result in distinct attitudinal descriptions (Blakemore 2011: 3542-3544; Wharton 2009, 2016).

359 The notion of procedural meaning has undeniably been a significant contribution to  
360 pragmatics (Author 2016; Sasamoto and Wilson 2016; Wilson 2016). Some linguistic  
361 elements encode instructions steering the modules and mechanisms mediating  
362 comprehension. Procedures are part of the causal structure of the cognitive system  
363 (Carston 2016; Escandell Vidal et al. 2011; Wilson and Sperber 1993) and must be  
364 analysed as dispositions (Bezuidenhout 2004): they “[...] are systematically linked to  
365 *states*” (Wilson 2011: 10) wherein language users perform specific operations at a sub-  
366 personal level. Since each operation “[...] points the hearer in a [particular] direction”  
367 (Wharton 2009: 61), “[...] procedural expressions act as ‘pointers’” (Wilson 2016: 11).  
368 Procedural meaning is *non-translational* because of its elusiveness and inaccessibility  
369 to consciousness (Carston 2016: 159; Wharton 2009: 61; Wilson 2016: 11; Wilson and  
370 Sperber 1993: 16). Furthermore, procedural expressions (i) do not tend to compose  
371 with each other –i.e. they are non-compositional– (ii) behave rigidly –i.e. their  
372 instructions usually prevail– (iii) do not have nonliteral uses, and (iv) are not  
373 polysemous (Carston 2016: 159-161).

374 Procedural expressions make up a rather heterogeneous group: some contribute to  
375 the proposition expressed; others constrain higher-level explicatures; others set  
376 relations among propositions or guide access to assumptions; still, others assist  
377 epistemic vigilance mechanisms in their decisions on reliability of information and  
378 informers (Carston 2016: 158-159; Wharton 2009: 65; Wilson 2012)<sup>10</sup>. Expressive APs  
379 and expletive NPs add to this heterogeneity. Although they enact the construction of  
380 descriptions of the speaker’s attitudes, feelings or emotions in a similar way to  
381 intonation, interjections or attitudinal adverbs and adverbials, the descriptions they give  
382 rise to are slightly different.

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<sup>10</sup> Carston (2016: 158-159) groups the various relevance-theoretic contributions on procedural meaning into four (evolutionary) stages in the development of the notion.



383

#### 384 **4.1. The procedural semantics of expressive APs and expletive NPs**

385 The procedures encoded by gestures, facial expressions, interjections and intonation  
386 activate conceptual schemas amounting to descriptions of the speaker's attitude to  
387 something manifest in her cognitive environment or to a whole proposition (Wharton  
388 2003, 2009, 2016; Wilson and Wharton 2006). In the latter case, they constrain higher-  
389 level explicatures by guiding the formation of a description of what the speaker may  
390 feel towards what she says. Attitudinal adverbs also facilitate the construction of  
391 descriptions like the following (Ifantidou 1992, 1993a):

392 (23) The speaker is happy/sad/furious that *p*.

393 The fact that the speaker's attitude is projected towards the whole proposition is  
394 evident from their various positions within the utterance –initial (24a), medial (24b) or  
395 final (24c)– and their separation from the other syntactic constituents by means of  
396 pauses, thus forming an independent tone unit or group:

397 (24) a. Happily, John came to the party.

398 b. John, happily, came to the party.

399 c. John came to the party, happily.

400 Occurrence in different positions and loose insertion in the syntax of the sentence also  
401 suggest that the attitudinal description triggered by interjections also affects the whole  
402 proposition:

403 (25) a. Wow, John came to the party!

404 b. John came to the party, wow!

405 The attitudinal descriptions facilitated by expressive APs and expletive NPs, in  
406 contrast, could not be said to affect the whole proposition expressed. Potts (2005,  
407 2007a, 2007b) considered that an expressive like that in (26a) could give rise to a 'non-

408 at-issue' proposition like (26b), where it is evident that the speaker has a particular  
409 attitude towards a certain event:

410 (26) a. I've lost my damn keys.

411 b. The speaker holds a derogatory attitude towards the fact that he has lost his  
412 keys.

413 Expressive APs and expletive NPs cannot be detached from the head noun with which  
414 they occur and moved to sentence-initial or final positions:

415 (27) a. \*Fucking, the lady was so lucky that...

416 b. \*The lady was so lucky that she did not get stuck between the car and the  
417 wall, fucking!

418 Expressive APs and expletive NPs are part of a phrasal constituent: a noun phrase.  
419 Therefore, they do not convey information about the speaker's attitude to the whole  
420 propositional content of an assertion or towards some fact or event, as Potts (2005,  
421 2007a, 2007b) claimed, but only to a fragment of an assertion: the referent of the noun  
422 that they accompany. Had the speaker intended to express a particular attitude  
423 towards the fact that the lady in (27) was so lucky that something extremely negative  
424 did not happen to her, the speaker would have had to use an interjection and/or the  
425 appropriate intonation and facial expressions:

426 (28) (Oh) Fuck!/Shit!/Wow! That lady was so lucky that she did not get stuck  
427 between the car and the wall!

428 Non-detachability of expressive APs and expletive NPs from a nominal head  
429 suggests that the attitudinal description they enact must be about it. Addition of  
430 attitudinal adverbials or interjections to an utterance containing an expressive AP or  
431 an expletive NP further indicates that the respective procedural semantics of these

432 expressions differ: while that of the former facilitates the construction of higher-level  
433 explicatures, that of the latter do not:

434 (29) a. Happily, that fucking lady did not get stuck between the car and the wall.

435 b. Wow, that fucking lady did not get stuck between the car and the wall!

436 The attitudinal adverbial and the interjection in these examples trigger a description of  
437 the speaker's happiness because the said lady was not stuck between the car and the  
438 wall. However, the expressive AP would give rise to a description of an attitude of  
439 disdain, scorn, criticism, etc., which the speaker projects towards the lady in question.  
440 In this sense, expressive APs and expletive NPs behave like slurs such as 'hori' or  
441 'chink', which target a disparaging attitude at a social group that is identified by their  
442 conceptual, descriptive content (Blakemore 2015)

443 In the examples above the attitudes expressed in relation to the proposition –  
444 positive– and to the said lady –negative– are opposed, but the same sort of attitude  
445 may simultaneously be expressed regarding both a proposition and one of its  
446 constituents:

447 (30) Shit!/Oh, fuck! That fucking lady did not get stuck between the car and the wall!

448 Despite differences in the outcomes of the instructions encoded by interjections and  
449 expressive APs and expletive NPs, their respective procedural semantics may interact  
450 and result in more precisely built higher-level explicatures and attitudinal descriptions  
451 about propositional constituents. In other words, occurrence of interjections and  
452 expressive APs or expletive NPs in the same utterance could provide more evidence  
453 for the construction of similar attitudinal descriptions about the whole proposition  
454 expressed and a constituent therein, respectively. Thus, those tokens of showing  
455 would mutually reinforce each other and lend support for the construction of similar  
456 emotional-state descriptions, even if with distinct scopes.

457 A similar interaction may arise with the procedural meaning of intonation, mood or  
458 word order, thus triggering attitudinal descriptions that might include information about  
459 the speaker's emotions or feelings, and/or the manner in which she performs an action.  
460 If imperative mood and word order (31a) give rise to a speech-act description like that  
461 in (31b), occurrence of an expressive AP (31c) could make the hearer develop the  
462 higher-level explicature in (31b) as in (31d):

- 463 (31) a. Give me that pen!  
464 b. The speaker tells the hearer to give her that pen<sub>x</sub>.  
465 c. Give me that fucking pen!  
466 d. The speaker (very) angrily tells the hearer to give her that pen<sub>x</sub>.

467 Likewise, if interrogative word order and intonation (32a) enact the higher-level  
468 explicature in (32b), addition of an expressive AP (32c) would yield a more complex  
469 higher-level explicature capturing nuances of the speaker's attitude (32d):

- 470 (32) a. Do you have that pen?  
471 b. The speaker asks/wonders whether the hearer has pen<sub>x</sub>.  
472 c. Do you have that fucking pen?  
473 d. The speaker angrily/anxiously asks/wonders whether the hearer has pen<sub>x</sub>.

474 Thus, expressive APs may emphasise imperative or interrogative force and add further  
475 overtones of irritation, anger, indignation, curiosity, anxiety or wrath, to name but a few.

476 An anonymous reviewer of this paper and Raeber and Wharton (2017) point out that  
477 the participles, adjectives and nouns that can be used as expressive APs or expletive  
478 NPs may sometimes have the intensifying function characteristic of adjectives like  
479 'sheer', as in the following examples:

- 480 (33) This gives me *sheer* enjoyment.  
481 (34) The cake is *fucking* delicious/*damn* good!

482 (35) a. John is a *fucking* idiot.

483 b. Curro es un *puto crack*.

484 'Curro is a fucking star'.

485 The expressive usage of those participles, adjectives and nouns must certainly be  
486 differentiated from their usage as intensifiers. When intensifying, they would definitely  
487 not trigger descriptions of the speaker's attitude towards the noun they co-occur with,  
488 so that procedure would be blocked or impeded. Rather, those participles, adjectives  
489 and nouns could give rise to the construction of ad hoc concepts. The head nouns and  
490 adjectives they intensify are scalar: there are degrees of enjoyment,  
491 deliciousness/goodness, idiocy or stardom. In their intensifying usage, those  
492 participles, adjectives and nouns would enact the construction of the occasion-specific  
493 concepts ENJOYMENT\*, GOOD\*/DELICIOUS\*, IDIOT\* and CRACK\*/STAR\*, which would  
494 idiosyncratically move something up alleged scales of enjoyment,  
495 deliciousness/goodness, idiocy or stardom.

496 Arguing that those participles, adjectives and nouns could also trigger a procedure  
497 that differs from the one they activate when used as proper expressives raises the  
498 following question: if procedural meaning is monosemic (Carston 2016: 159-161),  
499 which procedure would expressive APs and expletive NPs really encode? The answer  
500 to this question may be given on the basis of the notion of *meta-procedure*, or an  
501 instruction to activate a particular procedure from among a set of candidate ones  
502 (Wharton 2009; Wilson 2011, 2012, 2016). Accordingly, the procedural semantics of  
503 the participles, adjectives and nouns that may be used both as expressives and as  
504 intensifiers would not be restricted to any of the two procedures mentioned above, but  
505 would amount to a meta-procedure that forces, so to say, the selection of the  
506 appropriate procedure from a set comprising construction of an attitudinal description

507 about a constituent or construction of an ad hoc concept. Activation of the latter  
508 procedure may be favoured by the scalar nature of the noun or adjective they co-occur  
509 with and meta-linguistic or encyclopaedic knowledge concerning the interpretation of  
510 this lexical combination. Just as slurs give access to assumptions about the range of  
511 attitudes that their users may hold towards the group of individuals that they denote  
512 (Blakemore 2015: 31-34), individuals may access assumptions about the outputs of  
513 the participles, adjectives and nouns under analysis when occurring with diverse  
514 phrasal heads, which may bias the activation of one or the other procedure.  
515 Accordingly, the participles, adjectives and nouns preceding nominal or adjectival  
516 heads and lacking a clear descriptive content could put hearers in a state wherein they  
517 have to activate a particular procedure out of a set of two candidate ones. The head  
518 and encyclopaedic information about the specific element with which it combines may  
519 determine which procedure must be enacted.

520

#### 521 **4.2. Possible implications**

522 The more restricted scope of the attitudinal descriptions triggered by expressive APs,  
523 expletive NPs and slurs might prevent those descriptions from being neatly subsumed  
524 by the relevance-theoretic notion of higher-level explicature, provided this is to be  
525 strictly applied to conceptual schemas about attitudes or emotions that are solely  
526 projected towards whole propositions. As currently formulated, this notion does not  
527 seem to capture the fact that hearers also forge descriptions reflecting speakers'  
528 attitude(s) towards specific conceptual constituents of the propositions that they  
529 express, i.e. towards only a portion of what speakers say. Therefore, the distinction  
530 between lower- and higher-level explicatures could need refining in order to  
531 accommodate these attitudinal descriptions. Two solutions seem plausible, then.

532 The first, and simpler one, is modifying the definition of higher-level explicature so  
533 that it is not solely restricted to attitudinal descriptions about whole propositions, but  
534 also includes the shorter-ranging attitudinal descriptions that expressive APs, expletive  
535 NPs and slurs trigger. This more parsimonious solution does not contravene Occam's  
536 razor principle and would involve loosening the term 'higher-level explicature' so as to  
537 encompass any attitudinal description constructed regardless of whether it is about a  
538 whole proposition or a constituent or portion of a proposition.

539 The second solution amounts to coining a new label as a way of differentiating an  
540 additional type of attitudinal description that only takes within its scope a propositional  
541 constituent: *intermediate-level* explicature. In relevance-theoretic terms, a lower-level  
542 explicature is the truth-evaluable propositional form resulting from the pragmatic  
543 enrichment of a decoded logical form, while a higher-level explicature is the conceptual  
544 schema referring to the speaker's emotions, feelings or attitudes, which is inferentially  
545 constructed upon perception of some manifest fact, object, event or propositional  
546 content and subsequent activation of some attitude- or emotion-related concept  
547 (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Wilson and Sperber 2002, 2004). Metaphorically, a  
548 lower-level explicature could be portrayed as a Meccano block containing smaller  
549 pieces –concepts and pragmatically enriched variables. That whole block may be  
550 inserted inside another larger block corresponding to the higher-level explicature –the  
551 block would be like some sort of subordinate structure, while the larger block within  
552 which it is inserted would be like some sort of superordinate structure. However, the  
553 pieces corresponding to concepts may in turn be inserted into bigger pieces or blocks  
554 that would still fit in the lower-level explicature block. One such bigger piece or block  
555 would be an intermediate-level explicature. Graphically, an intermediate-level  
556 explicature could be represented as follows:

557 *(Insert Figure 1 here)*

558 The term ‘intermediate-level explicature’ would capture the idea that some attitudinal  
559 descriptions need not subsume a whole proposition, but a smaller fragment or a portion  
560 of it. To put it differently, this term would capture the intuitions that speakers express  
561 emotional states –i.e. perform expressive acts– about propositions and their  
562 constituents and that hearers may forge some mental structures to somehow portray  
563 those acts. Were this second solution actually plausible, an intermediate-level  
564 explicature could be defined as an emotional-state description constructed as a  
565 consequence of a procedure activated by elements like expressive APs, expletive NPs  
566 and slurs. That description would consist of attitude- or emotion-related concepts, and  
567 would only take within its scope any phrasal constituent of a proposition, so it need not  
568 be restricted to a particular syntactic constituent like the subject or the direct object,  
569 but could affect the head of any propositional constituent. Accordingly, the  
570 ‘explicatural’ structure of an utterance like (36) could be glossed as in figure 2:

571 (36) Wow, that fucking lady was hit by the lamp!

572 *(Insert Figure 2 here)*

573 Higher-level explicatures are mental conceptual schemas that somehow reflect the  
574 attitude expressed towards a proposition, or, in other words, an expressive act whose  
575 sincerity is normally presupposed –it would make little sense to say that someone who  
576 shrieks in pain is not feeling pain, for instance. Moreover, higher-level explicatures do  
577 not affect the truth-conditions of the proposition that they take within their scope (see  
578 the tests in Section 2). Inasmuch as an intermediate-level explicature also captures  
579 another expressive act, even if this only affects a constituent of a proposition, it is also  
580 non-truth-evaluable and has no impact on the truth-conditional content of that  
581 proposition. Although such an act is connected with the proposition as long as it



582 consists of the expression of some emotional state caused by or felt about one of its  
583 constituents, intermediate-level explicatures are independent of lower-level  
584 explicatures and do not contribute to them. While lower-level explicatures are  
585 constructed after a decoded logical form is pragmatically enriched through  
586 disambiguation, conceptual adjustment, reference assignment and recovery of  
587 unarticulated constituents, intermediate-level explicatures are constructed once  
588 emotions are, so to say, 'read' on the basis of perceptible cues –i.e. paralanguage,  
589 interjections, intonation, expressives, etc.– and a conceptual schema portraying them  
590 is generated.

591 The appropriateness of the term 'explicature' to label this additional attitudinal  
592 description has been questioned by another anonymous reviewer. 'Explicature' is used  
593 here following the definition and characterisation of the two types of mental structures  
594 –i.e. the pragmatically enriched logical form, or lower-level explicature, and the  
595 conceptual schema portraying feelings, emotions or attitudes, or higher-level  
596 explicature– making up the explicit content of utterances given by Sperber and Wilson  
597 (1986/1995). Both structures are built on the basis of elements encoding conceptual  
598 meaning, procedural meaning or a combination of both; in other words, explicatures  
599 result from decoding and inference upon perception of certain intentionally produced  
600 (para)linguistic elements, and this is precisely why they are part of the explicit content  
601 of utterances. Explicatures are not the result of accessing and relating implicated  
602 premises in order to derive implicated conclusions.

603 Lower- and higher-level explicatures may be *strong* or *weak* depending on the  
604 reliance on decoding or the amount of inference needed for their construction. The  
605 more reliance on encoded material, the stronger the explicatures; the more inferential  
606 work needed, the weaker they are (Wilson and Sperber 2002, 2004). Accordingly,

607 'explicature' is used here to label the emotional-state descriptions described because  
608 their construction rests either on pure tokens of showing activating procedures for  
609 reading emotions or on tokens combining showing and meaning<sub>NN</sub> which are,  
610 therefore, amenable to both inference and decoding. To put it differently, the shorter-  
611 ranging attitudinal descriptions described in this paper are explicatures because they  
612 are inferentially built as a consequence of the procedural meaning encoded by  
613 expressive APs or expletive NPs, or require decoding and some amount of inferential  
614 work. If the expressives giving rise to those descriptions completely lacked conceptual  
615 meaning and their construction required a considerable amount of inference,  
616 intermediate-level explicatures would be weak. In contrast, if those expressive  
617 elements encoded some conceptual content, even if vague, the intermediate-level  
618 explicature would be stronger.

619 Whether the constituent-focused attitudinal descriptions discussed in this paper are  
620 exclusively triggered by expressive APs, expletive NPs and slurs is another issue  
621 raised by the second anonymous reviewer of this paper. Relevance theorists have  
622 shown that in metalinguistic negation speakers metarepresent a whole linguistic  
623 expression, part of it or some of its characteristics –e.g. the way it is pronounced– and  
624 express an attitude of rejection towards the metarepresented content. In other words,  
625 speakers make an echo in order to object to the truth-conditional properties of an  
626 expression, the very usage of that expression or any of its constituent elements –e.g.  
627 specific lexical items (Carston 1994, 2002; Carston and Noh 1995). Similarly, with irony  
628 speakers echo utterances, unarticulated thoughts or norms attributable to (an)other  
629 individual(s), and express a dissociative attitude (Sperber and Wilson 1998; Wilson  
630 2006, 2009, 2013; Wilson and Sperber 2007, 2012). Also, by means of intonation,  
631 sentence stress or some gestures, fragments of utterances may be highlighted as a

632 way to set contrasts, focalise them or convey diverse attitudes towards their  
633 constituents and achieve diverse affective effects (Scott 2017; Wharton 2012).

634 In all these cases hearers would construct attitudinal descriptions limited to  
635 sentential constituents. When the usage of a word, phrase or pronunciation is objected  
636 to in metalinguistic negation, the metarepresented content would be embedded into a  
637 conceptual schema capturing the attitude of rejection expressed towards it. Likewise,  
638 in those cases in which speakers echo (an) element(s) of a proffered proposition or  
639 attributed thought, and express a dissociative attitude towards it/them, that/those  
640 element(s) would fall within the scope of a similar attitudinal description. Finally, if  
641 specific words are given prosodic prominence or signalled by means of gestures as a  
642 way to achieve some affective effects, hearers would also construct an emotional-state  
643 description restricted to those words.

644 Still, diminutives –e.g. ‘doggie’, ‘dearie’– could also have similar effects. Upon using  
645 them, speakers do not express an attitude or emotion towards a whole proposition, but  
646 towards the individual, animal or object mentioned. Therefore, diminutives could also  
647 be argued to trigger emotional-state descriptions taking within their scope a referent  
648 named, which features as a propositional constituent.

649 Further elements likely to trigger a shorter-ranging attitudinal description could be,  
650 according to said reviewer, *hearsay* particles (Blass 1989, 1990; Itani 1994, 1998).  
651 Together with illocutionary adverbials (‘frankly’, ‘seriously’, etc.), evidential adverbials  
652 (‘obviously’, ‘clearly’, etc.), hearsay adverbials (‘allegedly’, ‘reportedly’, etc.) and  
653 parenthetical expressions (‘they say’, ‘I hear’, etc.), such particles belong to the rich  
654 group of *evidentials*, which indicate the sort of evidence on which speakers rely when  
655 making assertions or claims, or their degree of commitment to what they say (Ifantidou  
656 1993a, 1993b, 2001; Wilson 1999; Wilson and Sperber 1993):

657 (37) a. Reportedly, the man only sent two parcels.

658 b. The man only sent two parcels, they say.

659 Although evidentials are currently analysed as devices contributing to the activation  
660 of the mechanisms assessing the reliability and credibility of information and informers  
661 (Wilson 2012, 2016), they also express attitudes of (un)certainty, doubt or scepticism  
662 towards what is said. However, those attitudes are projected to whole propositions, as  
663 indicated by their loose insertion into the syntax of the utterances where they occur, so  
664 they would not enact attitudinal descriptions like those discussed in this paper. Were  
665 there a type of evidentials giving rise to conceptual schemas reflecting similar attitudes  
666 and only affecting a sentential constituent, it would be that of participial adjectives like  
667 'suspected', 'alleged' or 'presumed' preceding nominal heads. In addition to alerting  
668 the mechanisms determining trust-allocation, those participles would transmit the said  
669 attitudes towards the referent of the noun they pre-modify, thus indicating that a  
670 property or condition denoted by that noun should not yet be attributed to its referent  
671 at the time of speaking (Author, forthcoming):

672 (38) Suspected/Alleged murderer imprisoned.

673 Expressive APs and expletive NPs pose a further problem: the words functioning in  
674 this way come from various lexical categories whose elements initially contained  
675 conceptual content. Their varied provenance prevents them from constituting a natural  
676 class on the basis of their (new) function. A holistic analysis of expressive APs and  
677 expletive NPs, however, must also delve into the processes enabling the elements of  
678 distinct categories to acquire an expressive function. Those processes are of a lexical  
679 nature and are addressed in the following Section, which shows that the relevance-  
680 theoretic ideas and claims about lexical pragmatics can be applied to account for  
681 semantic and functional change (Clark 2016).

682

## 683 **5. On the development of expressive functions**

684 Morphologically, expressive APs and expletive NPs are transferred from the categories  
685 of nouns, adjectives or verbs, whose elements are conceptual. However, these  
686 expressives do not share the morphosyntactic features characteristic of prototypical  
687 nouns, adjectives and verbs –i.e. intensification, gradation, etc. Their usage as  
688 expressives could have been due to a process of grammaticalisation that progressively  
689 endowed them with a new morphosyntactic status and a new function (Hopper 1991;  
690 Hopper and Traugott 1993; Oppermann-Marsaux 2008; Traugott 1989, 1995). Such  
691 grammaticalisation may also be seen as a process of *subjectification* that deprived  
692 words contributing to the proposition expressed and its truth conditions of their initial  
693 conceptual semantics –i.e. *deconceptualisation*– and provided them with a procedural  
694 semantics –i.e. *proceduralisation* (Traugott 1992, 1995). But what triggered that  
695 deconceptualisation or how did it take place? An answer may be attempted on the  
696 grounds of some lexical phenomena and processes frequent in children’s speech.

697 Conceptual meaning is mutable and amenable to inferential operations resulting in  
698 occasion-specific meanings (Carston 1997, 2002, 2013, 2016; Sperber and Wilson  
699 2008; Wałaszewska 2015; Wilson 2004; Wilson and Carston 2006, 2007). *Narrowing*  
700 restricts encoded concepts to more specific senses or denotations (Wilson 2004: 344),  
701 thus making words denote just a portion of those concepts (Carston and Powell 2005:  
702 283). Words preserve their literal meaning because the logical entry of their lexicalised  
703 concepts is not altered or lost (Hall 2011: 2; Wałaszewska 2011: 317), but one or some  
704 components of their encyclopaedic entry is/are given prominence and achieve(s) a  
705 content-constitutive status (Carston 2002: 339). In contrast, *broadening* loosens or  
706 expands the linguistically encoded denotation so that words convey more general

707 senses (Wilson and Carston 2007: 234). Words do not preserve their literal meaning  
708 because one or more of the logical properties of their encoded concepts is/are  
709 eliminated (Hall 2011: 4; Wałaszewska 2011: 318).

710 The grammaticalisation of lexical items as expressive APs or expletive NPs might  
711 have been due to a progressive broadening that expanded their denotation well  
712 beyond their initial limits and diluted it. The encyclopaedic entries of the concepts  
713 initially encoded by those words could have contained information about stereotypical  
714 characteristics of the individuals, objects, actions or properties to which they were  
715 normally applied (Gehweiler 2008), as well as information about attitudes, feelings or  
716 emotions which those individuals, objects, actions or properties would recurrently  
717 (have) cause(d), the range and variety of which might have varied across individuals  
718 as a result of personal experience (Kecskes 2004, 2008). For instance, the  
719 encyclopaedic entry of the concept PUTO of the initial noun 'puto' ('male prostitute') in  
720 some speakers could have stored information regarding feelings of repulsion,  
721 revulsion, censure, despise, etc., caused by the sort of person denoted by that noun,  
722 while the initial concept FUCK encoded by the verb 'fuck' could have comprised  
723 encyclopaedic information about a range of positive feelings like pleasure, delight,  
724 happiness, etc., and negative ones like bother, pain, discomfort, nuisance, annoyance,  
725 etc. As those concepts were broadened, the words encoding them could progressively  
726 start to point to the emotions, feelings or attitudes caused by the entities or actions  
727 they initially denoted. This extension of the denotation of some words to refer to  
728 emotional states to some extent resembles what children often do when acquiring their  
729 mother tongue (Wałaszewska 2011).

730 Children often extend or overextend the meaning of words to refer to other entities  
731 or actions sharing some perceptible properties (Anglinn 1977; Clark 1973, 1993;

732 Thomson and Chapman 1977). Overextensions are frequent when children miss or  
733 cannot retrieve words at the time of speaking, so they replace them with others  
734 (Fremgen and Fay 1980; Gottfield 1992; Huttenlocher 1974; Thomson and Chapman  
735 1977). Their limited expressive abilities –i.e. lexical gaps or failure to use vocabulary–  
736 are responsible for the apparent misuse of vocabulary. In the case of the words giving  
737 rise to expressive APs and expletive NPs, it would be hard to establish connections  
738 between their initial referents and specific emotional states on the grounds of  
739 perceptual resemblance. Rather, lack of precise terms, urgency, pressure or haste  
740 when speaking could in part have prompted their usage to express them. The problem  
741 is why those words were selected and not others.

742 Possessing the adequate words does not prevent children from mislabeling objects,  
743 individuals or animals not only because of perceptual similarity, but also because of  
744 some shared property or common encyclopaedic information. This unveils early “[...]”  
745 metaphorical ability” and “[...] linguistic flexibility” (Wałaszewska 2011: 320).  
746 Metaphorical usage could explain the grammaticalisation of some nouns, adjectives or  
747 verbs as expressives: nouns and verbs are often used metaphorically, and even  
748 hyperbolically, in order to denote a situation, event, object or entity on the basis of  
749 some contingent or emergent property, or because those nouns or verbs somehow  
750 evoke them, as in the following examples:

751 (39) This is *hell/shit/heaven!*

752 (40) a. The teacher *fucked* me on the exam.

753 b. Me *han follado* en el examen.

754 (41) ¡Esto es la *hostia!*

755 These utterances do not literally assert that something or a situation is ‘hell’, ‘shit’ or  
756 ‘heaven’ (39); that a teacher had sexual intercourse with the speaker (40), or that

757 something is the 'holy host' (41). Rather, a wide array of assumptions would be  
758 manifest to speakers regarding, for instance, and respectively, suffering, penance,  
759 torture, etc.; pleasure, delight, joy, etc.; superiority, supremacy, etc., or failure, ruin,  
760 etc., which they would associate with the employed noun or verb. Such association  
761 might further be possible because the encyclopaedic entries of their encoded concepts  
762 could contain information about attitudes, feelings or emotions usually caused by the  
763 denoted referents, which would be similar to the positive or negative ones that the  
764 speakers intended to express at the moment of speaking. Reiteration of such  
765 connections could broaden the conceptual content of those words and lead them to  
766 progressively allude to something with which they share some properties or which is  
767 evoked by them. A similar broadening extending the concepts encoded by certain  
768 nouns, adjectives and verbs to more peripheral properties as a result of metaphorical  
769 or hyperbolic usages might also in part underlie their expressive usage.

770 Children's overextensions fall into two types (Wałaszewska 2011: 321-322):

771 a) *Over-inclusion* or *categorical/classic overextension* (Clark 1973, 1993; Rescorla  
772 1980), whereby words are applied to members of other categories within the  
773 same or an adjacent conceptual domain (Wałaszewska 2011: 321). For example,  
774 'doggie' may also refer to cats, cows or horses owing to perceptual similarities –  
775 four legs– and conceptual contiguity –being animals.

776 b) *Analogical (over)extension* (Clark 1993; Rescorla 1980), whereby words  
777 belonging to a particular conceptual domain are applied to other objects with  
778 which they only share some resemblance. For instance, the roundness of cookies  
779 and the moon leads some children to refer to the latter as a 'cookie'.

780 The proceduralisation of content words as expressives cannot be accounted for as  
781 a result of analogical extension because of a lack of perceptual resemblance between



782 their initial denotation and emotional states. Despite clearly perceivable reflexes,  
783 emotions are ineffable, internal and personal. Over-inclusion seems a better candidate,  
784 then: the encyclopaedic entry of their encoded concepts could include information  
785 about properties of the referents, reactions or emotions they may cause, or common  
786 attitudes towards them, which may resemble, be applicable to, evoke or be evoked by  
787 certain emotional states. Repeated access to this information could create a link in the  
788 logical entry of the concepts initially encoded with new, non-lexicalised concepts  
789 referring to emotional states. Thus, the information of the logical entry of the initially  
790 encoded concepts –e.g. that such words denote individuals, actions or conditions–  
791 would be ignored and those words could activate concepts like POSITIVE/NEGATIVE  
792 EMOTION or more specific ones like HAPPINESS, SADNESS, PAIN, NUISANCE, etc.  
793 Accordingly, an encoded concept like FUCK could be broadened to FUCK\* and allude to  
794 some emotion, even if that broadened concept would still need adjusting as  
795 POSITIVE/NEGATIVE EMOTION or even as HAPPINESS, SURPRISE, WRATH or HATRED. In turn,  
796 DAMN could be broadened to the emotion-related concept DAMN\* and be subsequently  
797 adjusted as PAIN or NUISANCE. The output of such adjustment will depend on  
798 paralanguage, assumptions about the speaker, setting, recent events, objects or  
799 individuals alluded to, which explains why a particular expressive may result in various,  
800 distinct attitudinal descriptions (Blakemore 2011: 3542-3544; Wharton 2009, 2016).

801 A broadened concept would somehow capture the emotional state that the speaker  
802 needs to express, while inferential adjustment would yield a more specific concept  
803 capturing actual nuances of the emotional state in question, such as the specific type  
804 of emotion or the intensity with which it is experienced. Although the broadening of the  
805 conceptual content of the words giving rise to expressive APs and expletive NPs may  
806 be seen as a case of over-inclusion triggered by the need to allude to something

807 elusive like feelings or emotions, the existence of secondary interjections such as  
808 'fuck!' or 'damn!', which have already stabilised as expressives in their own right in a  
809 language or language variety, could also enact or facilitate that broadening. Indeed,  
810 the expressive functions and meaning of many secondary interjections –which, like  
811 expressive APs and expletive NPs, are words coming from various lexical categories–  
812 may be due to an extreme broadening that enables them to refer to emotional states  
813 (Author 2017). Once the process whereby the words giving rise to those interjections  
814 is spread and stabilises in a language or variety, it would be relatively easy to repeat  
815 and apply it to other words in order to get new expressive devices.

816 The concepts initially encoded by the words giving rise to expressive APs and  
817 expletive NPs, then, would be broadened and get their denotation over-extended in  
818 such a way that those words would become associated with emotional states. The  
819 generalisation of that broadening among language users would favour its stabilisation  
820 in communities of practice or geographical groups, and specialise those words for  
821 expressive functions. The interpretation of those expressives would in some cases  
822 require the construction of occasion-specific attitudinal descriptions, for which  
823 activated emotion-related concepts would have to be adjusted; in other cases, the  
824 stabilisation of a broadening would restrict the range of possible attitudinal descriptions  
825 amenable to construction, as the resulting expressives would be associated with more  
826 specific emotion-related concepts in a more stable manner.

827

## 828 **6. Conclusion**

829 Expressive APs and expletive NPs partake in the procedural semantics of expressives  
830 in general, but differ from some of them as regards their output. Like slurs, they enact  
831 attitudinal descriptions that only affect a propositional constituent. Accommodation of

832 these shorter-ranging mental schemas in the relevance-theoretic notional apparatus  
833 may be done in two ways. One of them would involve refining the distinction between  
834 lower- and higher-level explicatures by introducing a new label for them. These  
835 descriptions have also been shown not to be solely triggered by the expressive devices  
836 discussed in this paper, but also by metalinguistic negation, irony, prosody, diminutives  
837 or some evidentials.

838 Terms of endearment or affection often used as vocatives in order to refer to the  
839 addressee –e.g. ‘honey’, ‘darling’– could analogously be thought to give rise to similar  
840 emotional-state descriptions. However, the format and place where those descriptions  
841 are constructed within the mental representation of utterances are issues that still  
842 deserve more detailed consideration and onto which future research could probably  
843 shed some light. Arguably, if vocatives refer to the addressee, and reference to him is  
844 normally made in the higher-level explicature, the emotional-state description that  
845 vocatives result in would not take within its scope a propositional constituent, but a  
846 constituent of the higher-level explicature. Therefore, that sort of conceptual schema  
847 could not be subsumed by the label proposed in this paper, provided it was accepted,  
848 and would require a new one reflecting this peculiarity.

849 Finally, the development of expressive functions by items from distinct lexical  
850 categories has been suggested to result from a broadening affecting their semantics.  
851 More specifically, that broadening has been argued to resemble an over-extension of  
852 their initially encoded concepts similar to those children often do. Thus, this paper has  
853 additionally provided support for the applicability of the relevance-theoretic postulates  
854 on lexical pragmatic processes (Clark 2016).

855

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