

Like You Do
a bilingual perspective
on the indefinite second person

by

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Abstract

In a wide variety of scholarship, the indefinite second person construction *you* has been treated as the informal or colloquial counterpart to the generic pronoun *one* (Jespersen 1909, Laberge & Sankoff 1979, Huddleston 1984, Wales 1995). Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) set out to present a comprehensive account of indefinite pronouns in English, but using data gathered from a study of bilingual Spanish-English speakers I identify several important flaws in their analysis of *you*.

Kitagawa & Lehrer's account of the pragmatic subtypes of *you* are based on those Laberge & Sankoff (1979) developed to account for data from Canadian French speakers. I first demonstrate in this paper that there are considerable differences between English *you* and Spanish *tú* in their frequency, pragmatic distribution, and patterning with other discourse markers, which suggest that generalizations based on data developed to explain a French phenomenon must be approached cautiously and critically. I then go on to show that these pragmatic subtypes do in fact fail to accurately describe or account for the full range of English uses.

My data also contradicts elements of Kitagawa & Lehrer's analysis of the unique nature of *you*, demonstrating among other things that using *you* when referencing events with which the addressee has no experience is in fact felicitous in the population of speakers I interviewed. I apply terms from Goffman (1981) to explain *you* as a framing device used by speakers to animate the experiences described and invite the addressee's representational participation.

Kitagawa & Lehrer present the features of indefinite *you* without presenting insights into the variations in its use by different populations of speakers and across different contexts. I present a preliminary treatment of the variables of gender, level of intimacy between speaker and addressee, and discourse type, as well as a short examination of the influence of dialectal variations on the use of the construction, and find that all of these but discourse type show potential correlations with rates or patterns of usage in one of the two languages.

Finally, I present my own classification of indefinite *you* pragmatic types, which I show to be more successful than any previously proposed in accounting for the variety of English uses. I show that one of these types seems not to be productive in Spanish. I present hypotheses for possible sociolinguistic and historical linguistic explanations of this phenomenon and for the categorical differences between *you* and *tú*.

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1. Introduction

Speakers usually use personal pronouns like *I*, *you*, *she*, or *they*, to refer to specific individuals or groups of people. Personal pronouns of many languages, however, can take on a secondary function, losing their usual specific referential connotation and instead referring to a nonspecific or indefinite group or universal category. Consider the following pair of examples in English:

- (1) DEFINITE: I like the scarf *you*'re wearing.
- (2) INDEFINITE: *You* never know when it's going to rain.

In 1, the second person *you* refers deictically to the person whom the speaker is addressing, while in 2 the *you* is interpreted as referring to any member of a large but vaguely defined group of people: the speaker, the hearer, and anyone else in a similarly unpredictable climate. We can replace *you* in the second example with the generic pronoun *one* without changing the sentence's semantic interpretation, as in 3, but to do so for the first comes across as nonsensical.

- (3) *One* never knows when it's going to rain.
- (4) *I like the scarf *one*'s wearing.

The two original sentences are equally acceptable translated into Spanish:

- (5) (*Tú*) nunca *sabes* cuándo va a llover.
- (6) *Uno* nunca *sabe* cuándo va a llover.

There are clear semantic similarities between the indefinite *one/uno* and the indefinite second person *you/tú*, but scholars have identified structural, social, and pragmatic distinctions between the two constructions as they appear in English and Spanish, as well as in the closely related French. Why, then, do speakers utilize the indefinite second person to make generalizations in their speech, as opposed to *one/uno* or another indefinite construction? What, if any, unique pragmatic functions does it serve, and what other factors might determine its use? Are its uses in English and Spanish equivalent, and if not, why and in what way do they vary?

I designed the following pilot study to examine these questions. The study targeted linguistic and social variables that might influence *you/tú* usage and generated a varied pool of examples of the construction in context which I used to analyze its pragmatic functions. The informants were four male and four female bilingual Spanish-English speaking students or recent graduates of Yale College whom I interviewed in both of their languages. In each

language I asked a range of conversational-style questions about their background and then prompted them to complete a series of story-telling tasks. In this way I hoped to identify correlations between the variables of language, gender, discourse type, and level of intimacy with addressee, and patterns of impersonal *you/tú* usage, and to elicit the variety of examples I sought. Due to the limited nature of the pilot study, I did not hope to get statistically significant results, but rather to highlight potentially productive avenues for future research.

I found that of the variables consulted, the language spoken was the most indicative of how often a speaker would use the nonspecific second person; the construction was produced at lower rates in Spanish than in English by every informant. I present some of the possible explanations for this phenomenon; to identify a definitive reason will require extensive sociolinguistic and historical research. Of the other three variables, gender and level of intimacy each present intriguing but inconclusive patterns of variation that I propose as subjects for more detailed future investigation. I also present evidence that the Spanish dialect spoken might be determinative of rates of *tú* usage. I conclude that the study's treatment of discourse type was misguided, and suggest an alternative approach for future research.

In search of pragmatic differences between the constructions in English and Spanish, I identified three separate functions for the indefinite second person in English, and found that only two of them were utilized in Spanish by my informants. I propose two explanations for this discrepancy: first, that the third pragmatic function is filled by another or series of other indefinite constructions in Spanish, or second, that because the interaction is between two individuals whose shared experiences are primarily coded in English, the third pragmatic category is irrelevant to a conversation between them in Spanish.

In Section 2 I address the indefinite second person in the wider context of indefinite constructions in Spanish and English, contrasting it specifically with the nonspecific third person *one/uno*. Section 3 then presents three linguistic and social variables that have been correlated with variation in the usage of the second person in its nonspecific function, while section 4 provides a similar treatment of previously offered subcategorizations. In Section 5 I describe the study itself, its participants and methodology. The results of the study are divided between Sections 6 and 7, Section 6 containing my analysis of the variables tested

and Section 7 my categorization of the pragmatic functions of *you/tú*. Section 8 concludes, highlighting the results of the present study and suggesting paths for future research.

2. *You/Tú* in Context

The second person is one of a number of resources available to speakers making generalizations, and shares some properties with these other indefinite constructions. In any indefinite reference, a speaker avoids alluding to a specific person or persons. In Lavandera's terms, speakers use nonspecific pronouns as "indefinite agents" or to make "generalizations" (1981:106). Haverkate uses the term "defocalization", stating that a defocalizer's purpose is to "diminish or silence the importance of the role played by the person referenced to the described state of events" (1985:1).¹

The range of expressions capable of accomplishing this function is extensive in both languages: in English each of the six personal pronouns (*I, you, he, she, we, they*) has documented indefinite functions, as well as the indefinite *one* (Wales 1995). In Spanish, impersonal functions exist for the first person plural and second person singular constructions (*nosotros, tú/vos/usted*), the indefinite *uno*, the pro-drop ambiguous third person singular and plural, as well as a construction that has no equivalent in English, the impersonal particle *se* (Lavandera 1981, Haverkate 1985, Morales 1995). In both languages, agency can also be avoided through the use of the passive voice, the infinitive, the gerundive, and the existential construction. Of this pantheon, *you/tú* and *one/uno* are commonly compared; in the following I present the second person's unique properties.

Why would a speaker avoid referring explicitly to an agent or patient? Haverkate identifies three distinct contexts for potential uses of defocalizers: first, the speaker doesn't know the identity of the person or persons; second, the speaker knows who is being referenced but assumes the hearer does, too; or third, the speaker knows who is being referenced but chooses not to specify, even if he or she is not sure that the hearer is aware of the identity of the referenced party or parties. Uses of the indefinite second person all appear to fall into the third category, where the speaker is generalizing not out of necessity or convenience, but because he wants to make a generalization for some particular purpose.

¹ Translations of Lavandera 1981 and Haverkate 1985 are my own.

One reason a speaker might leave out reference to a known agent or patient is to justify actions taken or emotions experienced by the referenced individual(s) (Laberge & Sankoff 1979, Lavandera 1981, Haverkate 1985, Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990). Indefinite pronouns can do this by minimizing personal attachment to the experience described and/or by presenting it as shared by a wider community. When doing the first, the speaker effectively removes him- or herself from possible censure by the interlocutor. In the words of Laberge & Sankoff:

There is a great difference between the discursive effect of a sentence like “When I get drunk I wake up with a headache” and that of “When one gets drunk one wakes up with a headache”. [. . . T]he first can call forth a reaction of disapproval from one’s interlocutor, but he or she can do little more than disagree with the second. (1979:430)

The discursive effect of a sentence like “When *you* get drunk *you* wake up with a headache” is yet again distinct. In this case, although the speaker still succeeds in making a generalization, s/he does not get away as easily without incurring addressee disapproval. Where the sentence with *one* could be a report of something the speaker once heard, read, or was told, the sentence with *you* is much more readily interpreted as resulting from the speaker’s personal experience. For this reason, *you* is not preferred when a speaker wants to remove agency altogether—in those instances, speakers generally use the passive voice or one of the other non-pronominal constructions, or the actively dissociative *they*.²

You clauses justify actions not by excluding the speaker or original actor but by including other people. Take the following example:

(7) [A]ll of a sudden he began to get agitated, and he swung at me. *You react instinctively at a time like that.* I hit him back. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1990:749)

In the italicized portion of the example above, the speaker is justifying having hit the man back by claiming that any other person would have reacted in the same way, that it is human nature to respond instinctively when threatened.

Using *you* sends the message “It’s not just me! It’s you, too, and everyone else!” The speaker can make use of this property in a variety of ways, depending on the context and

² My hypothesis that the use of the indefinite *you* is less successfully dissociative because the speaker is in fact using the second person pronoun to refer to him- or herself. Autistic children struggle with pronoun acquisition in English, and consistently use *you* to refer to themselves, as it is the pronoun always used by others to refer to them. Some normally developing children pass through a stage in which they do the same. (Wales 1995:52).

manner of delivery. A speaker can employ *you* in arguments, to present an experience as common or universal. He can use it to justify taking an extra long turn of speech in order to tell a story, by presenting the story not as personally indulgent but as universally relevant. But these functions can be filled by other indefinite constructions as well.

In scholarly literature, *you* is best known for its pragmatic quality of presuming, in some way, on the relationship between speaker and interlocutor. Earlier scholarship described this as a simple stylistic difference. Jespersen describes *you* as “distinctly colloquial in tone” (1909:153); Huddleston dubs it a “stylistically less formal variant” of *one* (Huddleston 1984:288). Laberge & Sankoff distinguish the indefinite second person *tu/vous* from the third person impersonal *on* in Canadian French only as the “more recent as well as the less ‘proper’ form” (1979:432). Wales cites a slew of authors making similar assumptions, criticizing them for “the implication that the two pronouns are thus in a kind of stylistic complementary distribution” (1995:81).

Scholars have documented structural, historical, and social differences between the distributions of *you/tú* and *one/uno*. Flores-Ferrán writes that syntactic and discursive constraints identified on the use of nonspecific *tú* are different from those she identifies that condition the use of *uno*, and that the second person can be used in discourse markers, while the indefinite third person cannot (Flores-Ferrán 2009:1811). Laberge & Sankoff (1979) found frozen forms in Canadian French: lexical or syntactic contexts in which one or another form was obligatory, or at least highly exclusive. They found that only the second person could be used with the past tense (426-7). Morales found similarly that in his corpus of Puerto Rican Spanish *uno* never co-occurred with the preterite, or simple past, while *tú* did, though seldom (1995: 151).³

Wales notes that repetitions of *one* are disfavored in English, eliciting an interpretation of pretension, a constraint that does not apply to *you*; she offers *one*'s more recent arrival on the English indefinite scene as a possible explanation; its complementary forms like *one* (obj.), *one's* and *oneself* are particularly new adaptations (1995:82). Laberge & Sankoff identify the opposite historical trend in French, with *tu/vous* only more recently

³ In English, we don't make a distinction between the simple past tense and the imperfect. We use the same verb form to describe punctual actions (The girls baked cakes yesterday at four) and habitual actions (In the nineteenth century, girls baked cakes). Although “In the nineteenth century, one baked cakes” is acceptable, “One baked cakes yesterday at four” is ridiculous.

taking on the indefinite functions of *on*, and for that reason appearing as less “proper”; they present data suggesting that the second person form is used more by younger and male speakers, populations (according to other research by the authors) less concerned with the properness of their speech (1979:432-433).

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the pragmatic differences between second person indefinite pronoun and others involve more than a difference in register (Lavandera 1981, Haverkate 1985, Kitagawa & Lehrer 1987, Wales 1995). While Kitagawa & Lehrer note that *you* and *one* can in most cases be interchanged “without affecting the informational content of the text” (741), they also acknowledge that “they are distinct from each other with respect to rhetorical force and pragmatic implications, mirroring their more normative ‘personal’ use” (752). Haverkate notes only that, because it refers to a participant in the discourse, the second person has a smaller defocalizing effect (1985:1), (a phenomenon noted above), but Kitagawa & Lehrer and Lavandera agree that the addressee’s involvement in the discourse through use of the second person pronoun has a more profound effect.

In their view, the use of the second person rather than the third in a generalized statement calls on the addressee to enact some sort of role or somehow take part, representationally, in the situation described: the speaker is requesting that “the interlocutor accept a hypothetical role, that s/he put him or herself in the place of the speaker” (Lavandera 1981:110). According to Kitagawa & Lehrer, this role-playing actively influences the relationship created between speaker and hearer:

A sense of informal camaraderie is often present with the use of impersonal *you* precisely because the speaker assigns a major ‘actor’ role to the addressee. In so doing, s/he is letting the hearer into the speaker’s world view, implying that the hearer also shares the same perspective. This can be considered as an act of camaraderie. (1990:752)

According to Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990), by asking the addressee to take on a role in the discourse, the speaker implies that the two share values or points of view. This role-playing quality invoked by *you/tú* can also be explained using the terms of “animator” and “replay” from Goffman 1981. According to his analysis, “speakers” and “interlocutors” take on variety of roles in discourse. The dramatic reliving quality evoked by the use of *you* is then the result of the speaker as “animator” replaying in her speech experiences or events from outside the context in which she is speaking. In this framework, we can identify *you* as one productive framing device marking a replay. The unique pragmatic nature of *you* lies in

its invitation to the interlocutor to participate in this drama, thus creating the sensation of camaraderie or informality already remarked upon.

In these terms, who the speaker intends as referent is left up to the addressee's interpretation based on the context of the utterance. The addressee must then be prepared to take on any number of roles: that of the speaker, that of a group of which she is a member, or a group of which she is not a member. This assumed interlocutor flexibility is what would then explain the 'presumptive', 'informal', or 'colloquial' tone created by *you*. The process of constantly shifting roles in the dialogue is in itself a mark of intimacy or informality—the more formal a relationship, the more rigid are the roles of each of its participants (Errington, personal communication).

3. Why *you*: variables influencing *you* use

So far, the indefinite second person has been treated as a single, consistent entity, across languages, speaking communities, and individual speakers. The current study, however, was inspired by evidence from a variety of sources indicating that the use of the nonspecific second person can vary widely in its functions within the languages in which it consistently appears. In this section I address some of the variables that have been shown to influence or at least correlate with variation in the use of the indefinite second person, which I examine in my study.

3.1 Language

The language used was the variable most heavily anticipated to correlate with different uses of nonspecific second person in my study. Authors who have built on each other's analyses of the construction in a variety of languages have also noted that these uses cannot be considered perfectly equivalent. Lavandera notes in a footnote that the impersonal second person in Argentine Spanish seems to have a different distribution than Canadian French in Laberge & Sankoff (1979), and that it does not refer exclusively to an entity distinct from the speaker, as Benveniste (1966) claimed of French (neither does English *you*: see Wales (1995:81) (1981:106, FN8). If these distinctions exist between Spanish and French, they are only more likely to occur between Spanish and English.

This is particularly probable when we note that Spanish has a broader range of indefinite or impersonal constructions than the American English spoken by the participants of the study. I'll highlight two constructions in particular. One is *uno*, the Spanish equivalent of the English indefinite pronoun *one*. Unlike *uno*, *one* is strongly marked for formality in the dialect of English spoken generally at Yale, and so is unavailable to most speakers except in academic or otherwise markedly formal contexts, a level of discourse into which these interviews almost never went (see Wales 1995:82). In my study, an *uno*⁴ from a prompted narrative first told in Spanish (8) was delivered as *you* when the story was repeated in English (9).

- (8) Cuando hay tanto *uno* no sabe ni que es arriba y que es abajo. (F3)
 'When there's so much *one* doesn't know what's up and what's down.'
 (9) *You* couldn't tell what was up and what was down. (F3)

The second construction is the Spanish indefinite reflexive particle *se*. This construction is extremely productive in Spanish, and according to Morales (1995) it is the original indefinite 'pronoun' of that language, and only recently has the increased use of nonspecific *tú* and *uno* contributed to its gradual decline in some communities of bilingual Spanish speakers. No equivalent exists in English, and it is variably translated using the passive voice or indefinite pronouns like *we* or *you*, as in the following series of examples and their translations from Morales (1995).

- (10) Como los estudiantes tienen tantos requisitos, no *se* les puede exigir que tengan muchos requisitos previos.
 'Since the students have so many requirements, *you* can't require the students [sic] to have so many previous requirements.' (150)
 (11) Son los únicos ejemplos del gótico, porque inmediatamente *se* comienza a construir en estilo de renacimiento
 'They were the only examples of gothic style [sic] *we* started to build in Renaissance style immediately.' (150)
 (12) Amasábamos pan, *se* hacía el pan y *se* metía al horno.
 'We mixed the bread, it *was* made and *put* in the oven.' (151)

In the present study, one token of *you* that appeared in a prompted narrative in English was then presented as a *se* construction when the story was retold in Spanish, and one clause with *se* later reappeared with *you* in English.

⁴ Unfortunately, from the thirty stories told both in English and Spanish, only seven tokens of indefinite constructions appeared in parallel phrases in the two languages and could be directly compared.

Morales' paper brings up another crucial point: we are likely to see differences in the distribution or frequency of the nonspecific second person not only between languages, but between dialects of languages. And dialectal or sociolectal divisions could be based on region, on age, on political affiliation, or socioeconomic background, among other factors. I therefore used bilingual speakers who were all current students or recent graduates of Yale for the current study. As bilingual speakers, informants are relating a single life history and background in two languages, and as students who have lived 1.5-2.5 years in the Yale community, their English dialectal differences are likely to have converged somewhat.

The idea that informants would present influences of the same life history in both of their languages is problematic, however. Bilingual speakers, particularly students at Yale, are likely to have encoded dissimilar experiences in the two languages: the discourse contexts in which they are accustomed to use each language are most likely different, as are the levels of formality they are comfortable communicating in. They are even likely to bear markings of different socioeconomic communities in their two languages. It is possible that their backgrounds as bilinguals will make them more likely to have different patterns of use in Spanish and English, colored by their different associations with each of the languages, than monolingual speakers of the two languages who are used to managing their entire range of registers in one language. For this reason, the question of the influence of the variable of language can only be preliminarily explored in this study: more concrete conclusions will have to wait for larger-scale studies with the resources to control for many more factors.

3.2 Other variables: Gender, Discourse Type, Level of Intimacy

The variables of gender and discourse type also emerged as significant in previous research, and are treated in this study. The study of Laberge & Sankoff (1979), mentioned previously, found male speakers of Canadian French 48% more likely than female speakers to prefer the indefinite second person to the third person *on*. Laberge & Sankoff attribute the tendency in French not so much to a preference for the second person by men but rather a preference by women speakers for the more 'proper' third person. They argue that since the second person is a newcomer to indefinite function in French, it is disfavored by "more careful speakers" or those "for whom speaking 'well' pays off" (1979:433). The authors cite a previous article of theirs in claiming that those Quebecois most likely to be characterized

by speaking “well” are “women and those men whose socioeconomic life history has put a premium on proper, careful, normative speech.”

In my previous pilot study of Argentine Spanish speakers in Buenos Aires, the opposite pattern emerged, with women as the only users of the indefinite second person. In that instance, I attributed the latter difference not to a simple crossgender division but to the fact that the women interviewed were speaking to someone of the same gender, while the men were speaking to someone of the opposite gender. In the current study I again am the sole interviewer, and so the latter hypothesis cannot be conclusively tested. However, patterns of use in accordance with gender were tracked. In Section 6 I show that my data correlated with the pattern presented by Laberge & Sankoff (1979), although the small sample size and irregularities make the findings inconclusive.

In her study of the use of *uno* across different regional dialects of Spanish, Flores-Ferrán (2009) found that discourse type was a significant variable in predicting the appearance of *uno* in an interview. She found that *uno* was more likely to appear in psychotherapeutic motivational interviews than in narrative-elicitation tasks, offering the possible explanation that: “when speakers express UNO, they may want their hearer to acknowledge, act upon something, or become part of the proposition within the interview, while in recounting past events in narratives the speaker does not want the hearer to act upon the propositions” (2009:1822). I designed my study in such a way as to be able to test for similar patterns in the use of the indefinite second person, with separate narrative-elicitation and background interview tasks. I found no significant influence of discourse type on *tú* usage. *You* appeared in much higher rates in the non-narrative discourse, but only when including the data from one extreme outlier. When this outlier was removed from the data set, rates of *you* usage in the two discourse types were so close as to present no convincing pattern.

Level of intimacy with the interlocutor, although not discussed by any of the existing literature, seems like an important factor to consider when describing a construction that either implies or creates camaraderie, familiarity, or solidarity. Although none of the informants were intimate acquaintances of mine, my contact with them ranged from email exchanges to set up the interview to single previous meetings to repeated social interactions through mutual friends. I predicted, given the particular nature of the indefinite second

person as described in section 2, first that those with whom I had had more contact would use *you* and *tú* with me more readily, and second, that they would likely be influenced by the language of our previous interaction (which in all cases was English). This turned out to be wrong in the first hypothesis, but uncontradicted in the second, as I describe in Section 6. In fact, it appeared that those with whom I had previous contact used *you* in median rates, while those I had never met in person before produced *you* in extreme rates, either high or low. This pattern only appeared in English, allowing for the possibility that the pattern associated with previous interactions only affected the language in which those interactions took place. Due to the nature of the study, these results are not statistically significant, but they offer an interesting pattern to test in future investigation.

4. Multiple functions of *you*: previous approaches

I hypothesized that not only linguistic and social factors but pragmatic factors might distinguish the patterns of use of *you* and *tú*. In order to address this hypothesis, I sorted the tokens collected from my study into subtypes, which I describe in Section 7. I examine below pragmatic criteria previously offered to analyze indefinite *you*. When I present my own subtypes, I will demonstrate that none of the following systems as originally presented can accurately describe or satisfactorily explain the differences in the distribution of nonspecific second person usage present in my corpus.

4.1 Lavandera, Haverkate: organizing by level of specificity and referent

Some scholars have classified uses of *you* or other indefinite pronouns based on varying levels of referential specificity. Lapidus & Otheguy (2005) apply this treatment to the Spanish third-person plural *ellos*, identifying three different levels of specificity. Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) distinguish between impersonal and vague uses of *you* in English, identifying vague usage as picking out a specific group of unidentified individuals: groups like ‘you Americans’ or ‘you Yalies’ would fall into this category, where the second person pronoun functions as a determiner. Vague uses of the second person are excluded from the

present study. Kitagawa & Lehrer do not further subdivide the category of impersonal uses along the same lines, but Lavandera (1981) does in her analysis.

Lavandera distinguishes the pragmatic function of *vos/usted* when it appears alone and consistently throughout an utterance to its interpretation when it appears in alternation with the first person *yo*. The first is a simple attempt to extend the speaker's personal experience to his or her addressee, and thus, to the world at large; the second, however, by making explicit reference to the speaker, modifies the generalization to ground it more firmly in the personal experience, affirming the speaker's interpretation despite any doubt from his or her interlocutor (Lavandera 1981:118-119). In the following example, this shift is marked explicitly by the phrase "*por lo menos*", "at least":

- (13) La mayor profundidad te la dejan a **vos**, hacerla **vos**. Pero qué pasa, que no **te** da el tiempo, por lo menos *a mi* no me da el tiempo. (Lavandera 1981:118)
'The greatest depth they leave to **you**, for **you** to do. But what happens, that it doesn't give **you** the time, at least for *me* it doesn't give me the time.'

Haverkate bases his treatment of the indefinite second person not on the level of specificity but rather the identity of the interpreted referent. In its nonspecific use, the second person can in context refer explicitly to the speaker, as when it alternates with the first person as in example 13 above. It can also refer explicitly to the interlocutor, though this by nature tends to have an ambiguous reading. In the example below, the speaker is interjecting into an explanation by her listener about the latter's formation as a linguist, which started with the study of Latin:

- (14) Latin is a good background for something where you need to learn grammar. (F1)

In this case, although it seems that the speaker is using *you* to generalize her addressee's experience to a universal category, her statement can also be interpreted as being pertinent only to the addressee's personal experience.

Haverkate's final category consists of those cases in which the indefinite second person refers to neither the speaker nor hearer. In this category he puts assertions about realities outside either of the participants' experience, and calls them 'neutral'. I find this label misleading, because by giving them the label of 'neutral' he ignores the question "Why use the second person in these cases at all?" Using the second person here has a particular

effect that the nonspecific third person, which could felicitously replace the second person in Haverkate's example, reproduced below as 15a, does not provide.

(15a) En Alemania ganas mucho pero trabajas mucho también. (1985:12)

'In Germany you earn a lot but you work a lot too.'

(15b) En Alemania ganan mucho pero trabajan mucho también.

'In Germany they earn a lot but they work a lot too.'

4.2 Laberge & Sankoff: *Morals/ Truisms and Situational Insertion*

Laberge & Sankoff also acknowledge that *tu/vous* can variously refer to the speaker, the hearer, both, or neither, but they categorize its pragmatic functions based on different grounds. For them, generalizations made with nonspecific pronouns accomplish one or both of two kinds of justification or defense of the speaker, mentioned in Section 2: either the speaker is justifying her reported actions or experiences by emphasizing their universal quality and minimizing their personal involvement, or is justifying the relevance of her speech to the conversation at hand. These justifications are accomplished in two separate ways: some generalizing statements are based on what the speaker considers to be already existent "conventional wisdom", while the others, "attempt to elevate particular experiences and ideas to that status" (Laberge & Sankoff 1979:430). They refer to these two categories as "Morals or Truisms" and "Situational Insertion", respectively.

Laberge & Sankoff's distinction is insightful, but problematic in its application. Morals and Truisms are identified in context by a method the authors do not fully explicate. "A moral is understood as such essentially because of its particular relation to the discourse as a whole" (1979:430). It is unclear whether they mean the spoken discourse, or the general community of discourse, the big picture: when talking about "conventional wisdom", they seem to imply the latter. The authors make the argument that Morals/Truisms are more strongly evaluative than Situational Insertion ("Morals, then, are like situational insertion, only more so" (1979:430)), particularly due to their timeless and familiar nature when in the form of "a saying or proverb overtly borrowed from the oral tradition of the community", as in their first example, reproduced below.

(16) *Mon père disait tout le temps, "Bien, quand on est valet on est pas roi."*

'My father always used to say, "Well, when one is a jack, one is not a king."

(1979:420)

It is unclear how exactly we should interpret those Morals/Truisms that are not explicitly shared sayings of the community, or those that are part of the oral tradition of the speaker but

not the listener. How does the listener know that what the speaker is quoting has such evaluative power?

The distinction Laberge & Sankoff draw between already shared wisdom and presentation of personal opinion as if it were shared wisdom does prove to be significant, however, in my analysis. In Section 7, I describe English tokens collected in this study that present what is assumed to be common conventional wisdom distinguished from those that present the speaker's own opinion *as if it were* conventional wisdom by patterns of discourse markers. Even so, Laberge & Sankoff's description of all indefinite pronoun generalizations as highly evaluative fails to account for the full range of examples of *you* in my corpus.

4.3 Kitagawa & Lehrer: Structural Knowledge & Life Dramas

Kitagawa & Lehrer expand on Laberge & Sankoff's dichotomy as the basis for their own pragmatic categorization of the indefinite second person in English, introducing a new semantic binary into the conversation: the "structural vs. phenomenal knowledge" distinction of Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger (1982). Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger set out to describe the semantics of the progressive in English, typifying its "metaphysical" function in opposition to the simple present tense to contrast two different kinds of knowledge about how the world functions: "one may describe the world in either of two ways: by describing what things happen in the world, or by describing how the world is made that such things may happen in it" (Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger 1982:80). That is, we can describe events as they occur (using the present progressive), or describe how a repeatable event 'works' or 'goes', describe the "functions, occupations, or responsibilities" associated with a person or entity, or the principles by which a phenomenon works, by describing its relevant components in the simple present. Consider the following pair of sentences taken from their paper:

- (17) The engine isn't smoking anymore.
- (18) The engine doesn't smoke anymore. (Goldsmith & Woisetschlaeger 1982:81)

While the first might be spoken by any person sitting in the car or observing it from the outside, as soon as they notice that the engine has stopped smoking, the latter would only be appropriate when following some proof that a material change has occurred: either repair has been undertaken, or the engine has been used enough times without it smoking to convince the speaker that something has taken place that has stopped the engine from smoking and

will continue to prevent it from doing so. The speaker in 18 must in some way be more informed than the speaker of 17 is required to be, must have some inside knowledge either of the repair or of the long-range repeated functioning of the vehicle.

Kitagawa & Lehrer are insightful in bringing this distinction into the conversation about the second person indefinite construction, as in my corpus I will show that expressing structural knowledge is in fact an important defining characteristic of two of the functions of nonspecific *you* (corresponding somewhat to Laberge & Sankoff's Morals vs. Situational Insertion categories). Kitagawa & Lehrer correctly conclude that both Laberge & Sankoff subtypes can communicate types of structural knowledge, but their categorization of the two subtypes exclusively as such turns out to be overly limiting.

Crucially, Kitagawa & Lehrer also identify some uses of nonspecific *you* that are not limited to the communication of structural knowledge, which this study confirms. In this case, unfortunately, the authors explicitly limit their description of this subtype with an overly specific structural definition. The "Life Drama" subtype's occurrence "is limited to the 'scene setting' portion of a mini-tale [in the progressive mode] whose 'resolution' is presented in the present tense" (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1987:740). They give the example reproduced here as 19:

- (19) *You* are in Egypt admiring the pyramids and feeling that *you* have really left *your* own world and time behind when suddenly *you* meet *your* next-door neighbor from home. (Kitagawa & Lehrer 1987:740)

The "Life Drama" subtype proves to be insightful at least in its nomenclature. As mentioned in section 2, both Kitagawa & Lehrer and Lavandera comment on the "invitational role-playing" effect that the use of the indefinite second person has in discourse. In the corpus I gathered, this "dramaticalization" function is very prominent, and appears to be distinctive of the indefinite *you/tú*. I will show in Section 7, however, exactly how limited a description the "Life Drama" is, and that the three subtypes presented by Kitagawa & Lehrer fail to describe the full range of nonspecific *you* usage demonstrated by the examples I gathered in the study described below.

5. The study

This study was designed to test the variables described in section 3 and to generate a wide variety of examples of uses of *you/tú* in order to challenge the subcategorizations set out in section 4. It is guided by the following questions:

1. What, if any, unique pragmatic functions does *you/tú* fulfill?
2. What other factors might determine its use?
3. Are its uses in English and Spanish equivalent?
4. If not, why and in what way do they vary?

5.1 Participants

Over the course of the first four months of 2010, I conducted interviews with eight current undergraduates or recent graduates of Yale College. All were self-identified bilingual speakers of Spanish and English between the ages of 20 and 25, four female and four male. Seven of the eight have two native Spanish-speaking parents. Five were born in Spanish speaking countries: three in Columbia, one in Peru, and one in the Dominican Republic. Of these, one came to live in the U.S. before age 5, two between the ages of five and ten, and two after completing high school. Two participants were born in Los Angeles, CA to Mexican-born parents. One participant, born in Portland, OR, has a Spanish-speaking parent from Bolivia and an English-speaking parent from Oregon.

Four of the participants were raised in exclusively Spanish-speaking homes, two others in homes in which they spoke Spanish to their parents and English to their siblings. One grew up in an originally monolingual Spanish home that gradually became bilingual as the children learned English in school, and the last one in a bilingual home in which both parents spoke both languages to their children. In the interviews, two of the participants spoke perfectly grammatical but slightly accented English and native-sounding Spanish, two spoke grammatical but sometimes hesitant and slightly accented Spanish and native-sounding English. Four could be taken for monolingual speakers in either language context, except for the presence of more borrowed English words when speaking in Spanish.

None of the participants were my intimate acquaintances; I had previously had social contact with three and met one on a single occasion, and had only corresponded with the last four by email before meeting them in person. Three were contacted on the recommendation of one of the other interview subjects, and one responded to an email sent by a potential informant to the Mexican-American student group (MEChA) panlist.

Subjects are referred to by pseudonym or, when cited, by shorthand: F1-4 and M1-4 representing the four female and four male informants, in the order they were interviewed.

5.2 Methodology

Interviews were conducted over a three-month period, in the participants' residences or common spaces on or near Yale campus. The interviews were made up of four parts: first, questions about the speaker's socioeconomic and linguistic background were posed to both elicit information about potentially pertinent variables and lead to conversation; then the interviewer provided prompts to elicit personal narratives, following up with questions to encourage conversation about the topics of the narratives. These two activities were then repeated in the language not originally used, but with adjustments. This time, in the conversational portion I followed up on any details or themes of particular interest or relevance that had come up in the first section; during the narrative elicitation task I asked both for new stories and for stories from the first half to be retold in the new language. [Interview questions and narrative elicitation prompts are included as Appendices to this study.] Half of the interviews were initiated in English and half in Spanish, to control for variation caused by order of interview language. Gender of speaker was evenly split between the two language orderings. Wherever possible, interaction while arranging the interview was conducted in the same language in which the interview began.

Interviews were recorded onto a Mac computer under the participants' pseudonyms, and pertinent sections were coded and transcribed: clearly non-specific uses of the second person, plus the majority of other non-specific pronominal constructions (one, we, they and their equivalents in Spanish *uno*/ third person singular, *nosotros*/ first person plural, and *ellos*/ third person plural), together with other non-specific constructions (people/*gente*, someone/*alguien*, anyone, everyone/*todo el mundo*, it's/*es*, the existential there's/*hay* and the Spanish impersonal reflexive construction using *se*). Interviewer's use of such constructions were marked as well to track possible priming. Tokens of *you/tú* were coded for specificity and reference (speaker, hearer, both, neither), discourse context (non-narrative discourse, prompted narratives, spontaneous narratives), verb tense and any shift from the dominant verbal tense of the discourse.

5.3 Envelope of variation

For the quantitative analysis, only those uses of unambiguously non-specific *you/tú* were included. Any use of *you/tú* which could have been interpreted as referring specifically to the interviewer were discarded, although they will be referred to in the discussion. Additionally, any Spanish constructions that combined pro-drop and /s/ drop were not included in the present analysis, because the interpretation of their grammatical subject is up to the contextual interpretation of the hearer. In order to maintain consistency between the pro-drop Spanish and lexical subject English, tokens were counted based on number of verbs—for this reason, although all appearances of the impersonal second person were noted and counted, only those in subject and object position were included in the quantitative analyses in Section 6, while possessive forms were left out of the tabulations. An example of a Spanish series including pro-drop is included below as 20. Of the four verbs conjugated in the second person and translated into English using *you*, only the last one is accompanied by an overt pronominal subject (here presented in bold). If any of the others had an imperceptible final /s/, they would be indistinguishable from the third person *está* and *da*.

- (20) Todo el tiempo pasa. Por ejemplo, cuando *estás* ordenando algo en un coffeeshop, y *te das* cuento de que la persona habla español pero no- pues, *estás* ordenando en ingles y y de repente, por ejemplo, le suena el teléfono y empieza a hablar con la mamá entonces ***tu dices***, ‘o, habla el español’. (M2)
‘It happens all the time. For example, when *you’re* ordering something in a coffeeshop, and *you* realize that the person is speaking Spanish, but (you) don’t- like, *you’re* ordering in English and and suddenly, for example, his phone rings and he starts to speak with his mom so *you* say, ‘Oh, he speaks Spanish.’”

Following are the variables tracked in my analysis:

The dependent variable: *you/tú*

The independent linguistic variables:

1. Language used: English, Spanish
2. Discourse type: prompted & spontaneous oral narratives, non-narrative interview
3. Referent: speaker, hearer, other
4. Verb tense
5. Interview language order: English first, Spanish first

The independent social variables:

1. Speaker gender
2. Speaker & family country of origin (Colombia, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia/US, Mexico/US)
3. Speaker's history of linguistic communities
4. Speaker Spanish and English interaction norms
5. Speaker familiarity with interviewer

6. Results: Variables influencing *you* use

The most consistent and conclusive pattern in the data I collected was that the usage of the indefinite second person in Spanish was different than in English. Every one of my participants had lower rates of *tú* use than of *you* use, whether their interview began or ended in Spanish. Not only were all the rates lower, but speakers also formed different patterns in English than in Spanish: half of the participants had higher than average rates of use in one and lower than average rates in the other, represented in the table below with the drastic shifters indicated.

Table 1

Rates of usage: lowest to highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ENGLISH	Andrés	<i>Lilia</i>	Juan	Delia	<u>Beatriz</u>	Mana	Josué	Dro
SPANISH	<u>Beatriz</u>	Juan	Mana	Delia	Andrés	<i>Lilia</i>	Dro	Josué

This discrepancy suggests that different variables are affecting the speakers in the two languages. I discuss the variables tracked in this study below, noting that although both languages seem to respond to the variable of gender in the same way, they respond differently to the level of intimacy between the speaker and interlocutor. I then suggest that the dialect of Spanish spoken might better explain the pattern created by the subjects' use of the indefinite second person in Spanish. Finally, I conclude that my analysis of the variable of discourse type was misguided, and I make suggestions for more pertinent ways to approach it in future investigation.

6.1 English and Spanish Unified: Gender

When comparing total rates of indefinite second person usage, the composite rate of the male subjects is more than twice as high as that of female subjects. As you can see in Table 2, in Spanish the difference is even more pronounced: men used nonspecific *you* more than three times as often as women.

Table 2: Gender

Gender	Women		Men	
<i>You/tú</i> per min	0.27		0.58	
Language	ENGLISH		SPANISH	
Gender	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>You/tú</i> per min	0.47	0.86	0.09	0.28

The pattern is not consistent for all the speakers, however, and with such a small sample size it is impossible to consider it statistically significant. An example of the internal variation: one of the male subjects had the lowest rate of *you* usage of any participant, while another male subject used *you* at the unusual rate of more than two times a minute, more than twice as often as the next most prolific *you*-user. A much more extensive study would have to be conducted to see whether male preference for use of the indefinite second person in fact holds for any particular subset of English and Spanish speakers.

If the pattern did hold, it would contradict my hypothesis in Rubenstein (2009) that speakers will use the construction more often with someone of the same gender. In this case, the interviewer was female, but it was her male interviewees who used the indefinite second person more. Also possible is that a confirmed male preference for the indefinite second person among Yale students might present evidence that differences between the cultures of gender relations at Yale University and in Buenos Aires cause the variable of gender to have different effects on uses of the indefinite second person.

Such a discovery would, on the other hand, parallel the findings of Laberge & Sankoff (1979) mentioned in Section 3.2. In the context of this study, it is challenging to come up with a potential explanation for *why* male speakers would use the construction more than female speakers. Laberge & Sankoff attribute the tendency in French not so much to a preference for the second person by men but rather a preference by women speakers for the more ‘proper’ third person.

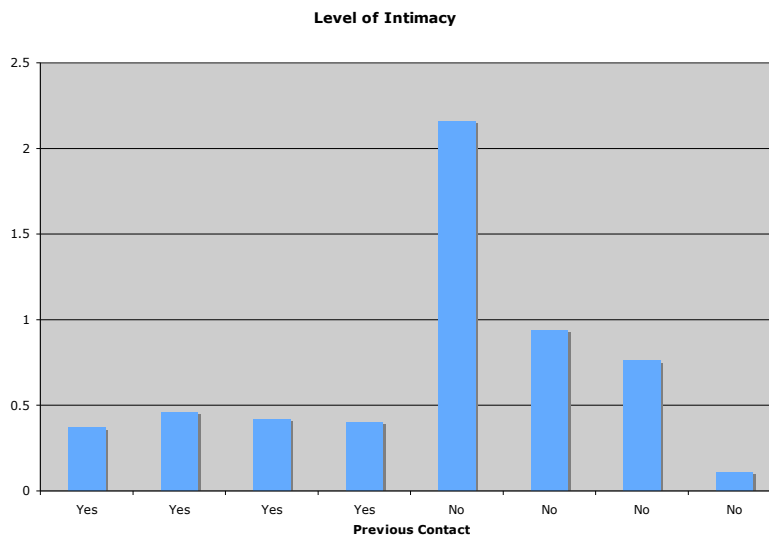
Evaluating possible parallels is outside the scope of the present study, which lacks the corresponding data concerning gender attachments to “proper” speech and the relative “properness” associated with the indefinite second person in the dialects of English and Spanish studied. It is, however, informative to note that the only participant to use the indefinite *one* was female, as were the informants responsible for 78% of all tokens of *uno* documented. In fact, three out of four female participants preferred *uno* to *tú*, but all four male participants preferred *tú*. As mentioned, the sample sizes are so small (two of those

speakers' 'preferences' are the difference between one and zero tokens) that the data is inconclusive, but it appears to be a worthwhile subject for future study.

6.2 English and Spanish Divided: Level of Intimacy, Dialect

Unlike gender, I found that the amount of social contact the speaker and interlocutor had had correlated with a pattern only in the English data. In English, those speakers I had met and interacted with in person before our interview (even if only once) produced *you* in rates that clustered close to the median rate of 0.44, i.e., within 0.07 tokens per minute. Those with whom I had only interacted by phone and email in order to arrange the interview, on the contrary, all produced *you* at extreme rates, whether low or high: with between 0.32 to 1.72 tokens per minute differences from the median.

Graph 1: Level of Intimacy



Given the small number of informants and the quantity of uncontrolled variables, it is impossible to conclude whether this relationship is a determinative one or simply the result of coincidental correlation. In order to test this variable in a more controlled context, a researcher would have to interview the same people both before having social contact with them and then after. If the pattern held true, then in the second round of interviews the extreme rates would begin to converge on the median.

If this does prove to be a determinative relationship, the explanation might lie in the level of confidence speakers have that their addressee shares their world-view. Having met an addressee before in a group of friends or through an activity, a speaker can presume a certain level of shared outlook. Never having met them, a speaker could choose one of two

routes: he or she could try to establish a sense of common values, employing the indefinite second person at unusually high rates; or alternately the speaker could avoid presuming shared experience, employing *you* at unusually low rates like the last speaker represented in the graph above.

No clear parallel pattern is evident in the Spanish data. Although the small sample size makes statistical significance impossible, this disparity could be due to the fact that all of the previous contact I had with interviewees was in English, and in English-speaking contexts. For that reason, it is possible that the ‘level of intimacy’ difference was only encoded in English, and had not impact on the patterns of speech in Spanish. This would be a surprising but telling result: that previous interactions might only change the way a bilingual speaker relates to another person in one of his languages and not the other. It would correspond to the experience of bilingual speakers who begin romantic relationships with monolingual speakers in one language and then feel strange when their partners begin to learn their other language and want to converse with them in it. This might only apply to the situation in which one partner is clearly a non-native speaker of one of the languages, which is also true of these interviews (I am a native speaker of English but a perceptibly non-native speaker of Spanish).

Noting the extreme range of English data and the lack of a pattern in Spanish, I identified one variable I had not tested for which could have a strong influence on rates of usage of the indefinite second person: personality type. Without attempting to classify the speakers into codified types, I present the following case study to demonstrate the importance of personality differences to this research.

The two informants with the most disparate rates of *you* usage were in fact the two with the most similar linguistic and socio-cultural background. They are both males, ages nineteen and twenty, native Americans raised in Los Angeles by Mexican-born parents. Both grew up in heavily Hispanic neighborhoods but spoke mostly English to their friends. At home, both would speak to their parents only in Spanish but to their siblings exclusively in English. Yet one used *you* at rates four times that of the median, the other at one fourth the median.

The two informants’ personalities, both as I observed them and as they described themselves, were vastly different in ways that perfectly mirrored their *you* usage. The

frequent *you* user came across as extremely outgoing: enthusiastic and loud, highly participatory whenever I would speak (lots of affirmational interjections like “yeah” “uh-huh” and “totally”). He participates as a leader in social activities like the Freshmen Outdoor Orientation Trips and intramural sports. At one point he said to me “in case you haven’t noticed, I like to make connections with people” (M3). The infrequent user was slower and more hesitant to speak, and quieter. He has been involved in MEChA, the Mexican students’ association, but only very recently has begun to take on any leadership, which has been a big deal for him. When asked if he speaks in Spanish to Spanish-speaking waiters in restaurants, he said that he does not, that he feels that sometimes it’s risky to ‘put yourself forward’ in that way: “a veces eso es un riesgo adelantarte” (M4). And when asked to tell a story about a time when he laughed hysterically, he asked for a different prompt, saying: “I’m not very—um, a type of like, emotionally outward person, so if I laugh, like . . . I don’t think I can recall a time when I was just like, you know, hysterical” (M4, 25:05).

With data like these, we may be misguided to try and find correlations between patterns of *you* usage and overarching socio-cultural groupings like gender or class. It may be more worthwhile to look at speakers for their individual tendencies or discourse goals and try to categorize their indefinite second person usage that way.

There is such a strong divide in the Spanish data, however, that some overarching variable does seem to be influencing my informants’ usage of the construction in Spanish. As visible in table three, for half of my informants the second person does not appear to be a productive indefinite construction, once or never used over the course of, at shortest, twenty minutes of conversation and narration. The other half used it with considerably greater frequency, from 5 to 24 tokens produced at rates of 0.15 to 0.58 tokens per minute.

Table 3: Spanish

Gender	Level of Intimacy	Origin	Total <i>tú</i>	<i>tú</i> per min
F	Previous Contact	Colombia	0	0.00
M	Previous Contact	Dominican Republic	1	0.03
F	No Prev Contact	Colombia	1	0.04
F	Previous Contact	Bolivia/US	1	0.05
M	No Prev Contact	Chicano (LA)	5	0.15
M	No Prev Contact	Chicano (LA)	8	0.22
F	Previous Contact	Peru	9	0.23
M	No Prev Contact	Colombia	24	0.58

Neither gender, level of intimacy, nor country of origin distinguishes these two groups. Colombians, for example, take both top and the bottom; on the other hand, as they come from parts of the country fairly distant from one another, their being Colombian does not guarantee that they speak closely related dialects of Spanish. The only two subjects we can assume speak closely related dialects are the two Mexican-American males raised in Los Angeles. These do, in fact, fall next to each other in the table, with similar rates of *tú* usage.

Dialectal difference is a good candidate for explaining why the indefinite second person would not be an accessible or productive construction for some Spanish speakers. Morales (1995) notes that indefinite *tú* is beginning to replace the particle *se* at different rates in different linguistic communities, particularly bilingual ones. The two Colombians in the non-*tú* group speak Spanish mostly with other monolingual Spanish speakers, in a monolingual Spanish environment (neither are allowed to speak English at home). The other two from that group now speak primarily English at home, and don't often speak Spanish outside the home. The two Mexican-Americans, however, speak both Spanish and English regularly at home (Spanish with parents and English with siblings) and grew up in vibrant bilingual communities. The two informants with the highest rates of *tú* usage grew up in monolingual homes in South America, and so would at first glance seem to belong with the two Colombians mentioned above. Unlike those two, however, these speakers spent two years at community college in Miami, where they were constantly speaking Spanish with bilingual speakers, so much so that one said she got through without leaning much more English and the other that he felt his English actually suffered. It's possible, then, that the bilingual communities of Los Angeles and Miami regularly use *tú* as an indefinite resource, while the Spanish dialects of my other informants generally do not. This is another worthwhile subject for further exploration.

Some of the discrepancy between general rates of indefinite second person usage in English and Spanish may therefore be due to the unproductive nature of *tú* in the Spanish dialects spoken by some informants. Even when we remove the four informants for whom *tú* is not productive from the data, however, rates of use of *tú* remain consistently lower than those for *you*. In Section 7 I explore the possibility that there is a pragmatic category that *you* fulfills and *tú* does not, to account further for the discrepancy, but first I address the problematic analysis of discourse type.

6.3 Problematic: Discourse Type

The content of the interviews was divided into two general types of discourse: narrative and non-narrative. I used Labov & Waletzky (1967)'s definition of a narrative as guidance for separating the two. The narratives referred to in this section are descriptions of series of events related in the order in which they occurred, and any evaluative or descriptive clauses that are used to introduce, evaluate, or reflect on the events before the narrative is resolved. In some cases, after a story was told I would react to it or ask a question about it; the evaluative clauses that followed these interventions are not, in the present description, considered to be narrative discourse. Non-narrative discourse, in addition to these post-narrative conversations, includes everything else: answers to interview questions I posed (see Appendix A), in addition to any conversations that spontaneously arose over the course of the interview (which were not uncommon).

I found that non-narrative discourse elicited the indefinite second person in greater numbers and at a higher rate than narrative discourse over all, 191 tokens at 0.50 tokens per minute as opposed to 52 tokens at 0.30. Looking at English and Spanish separately, however, the distinction in Spanish all but disappears. Table 4 shows that, in Spanish, the percentage of tokens elicited from each type of discourse very closely matches the percentage of time spent in that activity, so that rates come to within two hundredths of a token per minute. The English data, on the other hand, shows an even more drastic disparity, with rates almost four tenths of a token apart.

Table 4: Discourse Type, by language

	ENGLISH		SPANISH	
	Non-Narrative	Narratives	Non-Narrative	Narratives
Tokens, of Total Tokens	81%	18%	65%	35%
Time, of Total time	71%	29%	67%	33%
Rate (token/min)	0.77	0.40	0.18	0.20

The drastic differences disappear in English as well when the subject with extreme rates mentioned in previous sections is removed. With this small number of informants it is impossible to judge whether he is truly an outlier; without him, however, the rate for *you* usage in non-narrative and narrative contexts comes to 0.50 and 0.49 tokens per minute, respectively. The data here is inconclusive, but it seems probable that the distinction between

narrative and non-narrative discourse, at least as defined here, is insignificant in determining the use of the indefinite second person.

I also compared the rates of narratives that were prompted during the narrative elicitation task to those of narratives that arose spontaneously over the course of the interview. There is evidence that spontaneously occurring narratives have different properties than those that are elicited explicitly (Küntay & Ervin-Tripp 1997), so it seemed possible that the two kinds of narratives would exhibit different patterns of use in English and Spanish. My data did show a consistent difference: in both languages, rates of *you/tú* usage were higher in the spontaneous narratives than in the prompted ones—in English, more than a third again as high, and in Spanish, more than twice as high. The data were very sparse, however, and must be viewed very skeptically. Only five of the eight participants produced spontaneous narratives in English, and only three in Spanish; of those only two produced tokens of *you* and only one *tú*. Furthermore, when we examine how many of the narratives of each type were elicited, we discover a perplexing disjunction: tokens are in fact more likely to appear in any given prompted narrative than a spontaneous one. Yet they are produced with greater frequency per minute in the latter.

Table 5: Spontaneous vs. Prompted Narratives

Type of Narrative	ENGLISH		SPANISH	
	Spontaneous	Prompted	Spontaneous	Prompted
Rate (token/min)	0.55	0.36	0.47	0.17
% of Narratives in which token appeared	17%	28%	22%	27%

The quantification process for this section was problematic, as interviews were fairly inconsistent. Not only did numbers of spontaneous stories differ; informants told different numbers of prompted stories, spent different amounts of time in the narrative and interview tasks, responded to different subsets of the ten narrative prompts used, and interspersed narratives with conversation to differing degrees. The amount of time taken by interviewer speech was also not consistent and not fully controlled for; although any extended interviewer turns of speech were removed from the times used for calculations, short interjections and the posing of questions were included. Finally, it was unclear that the strict definition of narrative as ending when addressee participation began allowed me to capture the full picture; for example, one of the two informants who never used *you* in a narrative did

use it immediately afterward and in reference to the events of the narrative in three out of five cases.

I have come to the conclusion that my original division of discourse types was misguided. Whether the construction appears more in non-narratives than narratives was the wrong question to pose : it appears in both, and even finding that it appears somewhat more in one than the other does not offer us much new information about the nature of the indefinite *you/tú*. More pertinent is the question of where, within each type of discourse, the construction is used: what categorizes the clauses in which the indefinite second person appears? In order to address this question further research will have to track variables like presentative heads, subordination, verb mood, voice, aspect, and tense, all but the last of which fell outside the scope of this study. With these variables in mind, a researcher could place the indefinite second person within a system of clause types for non-narrative discourse similar to the system of narrative and evaluative clauses set out in Labov (1997) for narrative discourse. That type of analysis, however, is outside the scope of the current study.

7. Results: Multiple functions of *you*, revisited

I turn now to the pragmatic subtypes of the indefinite second person into which I classified my examples, with the idea that I might identify a function covered by the English *you* and not by *tú*. Classifying my tokens into functional categories demonstrated that aspects of each previous analysis discussed in Section 4 were important, but that none was able to account for all the data collected.

There were, as Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) described, many examples that clearly demonstrated structural knowledge. A number of these I began to refer to as “how-to” examples, because they seemed to have no other dominant function than the presentation of structural knowledge, that is, the description of how something works or goes or functions. In these, the speaker would explain how a party game was structured, as in example 21, or what life or society was like in their home or native country. They often appeared in the orientation of a narrative or in answer to a question asking for clarification: “What do you mean by that?” These examples did not seem to fall easily into any of Kitagawa & Lehrer’s subtypes; they lack the strong moral judgment of the Moral/Truism, the personal, unique qualities of the Situational Insertion, and the structural requirements of the Life Drama.

- (21) Which is: *you* write down names of famous people and then *you* put them on your forehead and *you* ask yes or no questions and see if *you* can figure out who *you* are. (F1)

In most of these “how-to” examples, speakers used the second person construction to refer to experiences uniquely theirs or expressly excluded from the experience of their listener, directly contradicting the predictions of Kitagawa & Lehrer’s claim that “if the speaker, but not the addressee, is familiar with what is being described, a sense of presumption results presumably because the addressee is forced to play a role which is not apparent to him” (1980:753). There were also a large number of classic Laberge & Sankoff (1979) Moral/Truism-like examples, based on accessible public or universal “wisdom” of the Yale College student. These included references to the disadvantages of being a nerd in high school, or getting through a break-up. This juxtaposition of contexts in which the addressee has access to the experiences referenced and those in which she does not recalls the distinction Laberge & Sankoff (1979) make between conventional, shared wisdom, and generalized personal experience.

Then there was the example in 22, which matches some but not all elements of Laberge & Sankoff (1979)’s description of Situational Insertion. It is embedded in a larger narrative, and refers to the speaker’s experience while generalizing it. Its past tense construction disqualifies it as structural knowledge, however. This suggests that Kitagawa & Lehrer (1990) were mistaken to suggest that uses of Situational Insertion are exclusively structural knowledge. The past tense also minimizes the true “generalizing” effect of *you*. The speaker is not trying to elevate her statement to the level of conventional wisdom or make a generalization about scuba diving; she’s describing the particular experience that she and a few other scuba divers had one time:

- (22) But when we went with my sister—she was . . . twelve I think, thirteen—um and it was really sandy, *you* couldn't see anything: it was just gross. *You* couldn't tell what was up and what was down. *You* couldn't see your buddy over here, except maybe if he was wearing a bright flipper or sometimes the flashlight, but *you* . . . it was just really difficult to see anyone. It was a lot of communicating with noise. (F3)

In this example, the terms of Goffman (1981) are most successful in explaining the function of *you*. Rather than generalizing her experience, by using *you* this speaker seems to be **animating** it. By inviting the interlocutor to “take a role” in her story, she moves from

simply recounting the events to vividly, verbally, reenacting them. The addressee is invited to put herself in the speaker's place, see through her eyes.

Goffman's approach is equally successful in describing the example in 23, where *you* is used to refer to experiences that neither speaker nor hearer have any claim to call theirs. Haverkate (1985) mentioned this case but offered no explanation for why a speaker would choose to *you* rather than *they*. Applying the principles of footing, using *you* instead of *they* transforms the utterance from a **description** of the other to an **enactment** of the other. Rather than separating themselves from the Peruvian people's experience, both speaker and interlocutor are putting themselves in their shoes, imagining what it is like to be in their situation.

- (23) Also, the other thing is, in Peru people have the mentality of survival, I feel, like *you* have to work hard and *you* have to put your head down and just, you know, make it in life and try to be okay. And I think, you know, I never really had that either. I never, like- I always knew that I wanted- that I could do in my life whatever I wanted. (F4)

Applying the concepts of animator and replay to the indefinite second person could potentially void the necessity for further subdivision; *you* acts as a framing device for a reenactment of past speech or action, inviting the interlocutor to take on a hypothetical role which can be interpreted based on context. That, however, offers no insight into potential differences between the function of the construction in English and Spanish that would explain its less frequent distribution in the latter. I was interested, therefore, in examining the contexts of the utterances for what elements might signal to the addressee the kind of role they are taking in the framed discourse.

Following the examples of Lavandera (1981) and Laberge & Sankoff (1979), I looked for discourse markers that would frame the utterance and inform the listener as to what kind of information or experience the speaker is presenting. I found that in the English data collected, when speakers voiced knowledge they assumed to be shared or universal they consistently introduced or marked it with an explicit appeal to its shared or universal nature: the discourse marker 'you know' or an adverbial construction like 'of course', 'obviously', or the more subtle 'I mean' and 'c'mon'. These examples form a natural class, similar to the Laberge & Sankoff category of Morals/ Truisms: they mark some sort of structural knowledge, are voiced in simple present tense, and present information which the speaker

could reasonably assume the addressee might also know or would agree to. Examples 24-26 are examples of this type of second person use.

- (24) And I was really frustrated with some of my classmates, because **of course** being the kid who loves school and loves talking to *your* teachers is not the best thing to be in middle school. (F1)
- (25) I learned English and simultaneously learned how to read and write in Spanish,
which isn't—but, but **I mean** when *you're* six years old it's like, absorption. (F1)
- (26) He was actually trying to help me, like, go over it, go through it, but **of course** *your* ex boyfriend can't help *you* get over himself so [. . .] that was a mistake. (F4)

As you can see in the examples above, these statements would not be categorized as 'sayings' from our culture's oral tradition. Yet they are building on principles that in our culture would be considered "conventional wisdom": that being a nerd is tough in grade school, middle school especially; that young children learn languages easily, a capacity that diminishes as we get older; and that after breaking up with someone it is a bad idea to depend on that person for emotional support. In order to avoid misinterpretation of loaded terms like 'morals', I refer to this category as 'presentation of shared structural knowledge', or briefly 'shared knowledge'.

In this category, the sense of dramatization, or 'replay', is not very strong. Rather than being caught up in the moment, we are asked to take a step back and examine the reported events with a wider perspective, and understand their significance in this broader context. This has the effect, as noted in much of the literature, of minimizing the emphasis on the personal experience of the *you's* referent (in many but not all cases the speaker). From a footing or framing perspective, it is as if the discourse marker frames the utterance so that the *you* is interpreted in this defocalizing and universalizing manner, or in other words, so that the addressee is prepared to take on the role of 'representative of the universal nerd' or whatever other universal type is invoked.

Of those examples not framed by these universalizing markings, a second category encompasses all the instances in which a speaker is taking on the task of explaining to the addressee something the addressee does not know or has not experienced but of which the speaker is an informed party. These examples often follow an addressee's verbal statement of ignorance, shake of the head, or quizzical look. Sometimes they are introduced by explicative

heads like “which is . . .” (27) or “what you do is . . .”. Sometimes the speaker is contradicting something the addressee said or offering an alternative interpretation (28). In all cases, there is a clear sense of explanation communicated. Like the first group, all present structural knowledge and are framed in the simple present tense; I refer to examples in this group as ‘presentation of exclusive structural knowledge’, or simply ‘exclusive knowledge’.

Using the indefinite second person in these cases has the effect of helping or trying to help the interlocutor understand what is being described by inviting her to put herself or imagine herself in the situation described. These examples tend to have a low to medium emotional significance for the speaker. In this category fall a number of direct responses to interview questions and any examples from the orientation section of narratives, including example 21 above (reproduced here as 27) and 28 below.

- (27) Which is: *you* write down names of famous people and then *you* put them on your forehead and *you* ask yes or no questions and see if *you* can figure out who *you* are. (F1)
- (28) That doesn't happen in- well, I- my experience is from Miami and Colombia, so that doesn't really happen there; it's not like that at all actually. Like, conversations don't have to do with how stressful *YOUR* life is. So then conversations can go into other places. (M2)

Using *you* in the category described above has an additional effect: it gives the impression that the speaker assumes the addressee shares enough of his world-view that she **would** understand his point of view if she **were** in the situation described, or alternatively that their relationship is both flexible and strong enough that he can ask her to take on a role with which she might not be familiar without it being threatening or presumptive. The sense of replay is stronger here, as both speaker and addressee have to expend more mental effort for the addressee to accept her role.

This effect becomes even more pronounced in the final category of indefinite second person function. In this last context, information is not presented in relationship to whether it is new or already obvious to the addressee; rather the experiences are presented and marked for the significance they have for the speaker. It does not matter whether or not the interlocutor has had similar experiences; she must understand their unique importance to the speaker. These are the most highly evaluated, most emotional or personally significant instances. They can be phrased as structural knowledge, but do not have to be. In this category fall all the examples from narratives that are not scene setting, but rather caught up

in the complicating action or most highly evaluated moment of the story. Like the excerpt about scuba diving in 22 above, many of them are marked by explicit evaluations: “it was awful” (30), “it’s good,” “it was just gross” (22), and, like 29 and 31, with other evaluative markers such as reported speech.

(29) And this is sort of where- where *you* kind of find out who *you* are. So *you're* like, ‘Oh my god I'm being dragged out in the middle of a tropical storm.’
(M1)

(30) So it was awful. The first two years were like the darkest of my life. And then- - and then *you* move on. (F4)

(31) It does like- once in a while like it makes *you* feel, like, closer to someone . . . or it makes *you* feel like- like, 'oh, I'm in a- I'm in a circle' or something. (F2)

In these examples the sense of dramatization and replay is strongest. The explicit evaluations act like a stage setting, preparing the addressee for the drama to come—they provide the mood music and lighting, as it were. Here the use of *you* is most strongly self-referential; the addressee has the sensation of being invited to partake in an internal, rather than external, dialogue, increasing the intimacy communicated. Additionally, by framing these replays with *you* instead of *I*, the speaker presents his or her experience as a moment in the great human drama, which provides a powerful “so-what” justification: taking the extra long turn to tell the addressee this personal story is not simply indulgent; it’s important because it provides insight into the human experience. I refer to this category simply as ‘replay’.

The primary purpose for specifying these sub-types of *you* was to identify any that might be categorically untreated by *tú*, and, adhering to the descriptions above, I found one. Although the Spanish examples slot fairly neatly into the latter two categories, not one is a strict adherent to the ‘presentation of shared experience’ type. Some tokens appear in contexts that could reasonably be generalizable to the addressee’s experience, but without any discourse marker clearly marking them as such. In one example, included as 33 below, a speaker flags an utterance with the phrase ‘*si me entiendes*’ ‘if you understand me’, but the effect of this marker seems to be checking in on the process of transfer of knowledge, rather than assuming it to be shared, crucially different from ‘you know’ (which does have a common Spanish equivalent, ‘*sabes*’).

(32) . . . todo depende de la cultura también, porque- porque *puedes* [unclear] ir a china y nunca *te* va a parecer chistosa, porque ellos no son chistosos! Son de- (risas) ellos no entienden el concepto de humor, no lo entienden. Entonces (risas) es nuestra- nuestra manera de verlo, pero pues, **si me entiendes**, es es

es es difícil, y es muy- es muy rico cuando *tu llegas* a ese punto de que *puedes- puedes* entender los chistes en otras culturas. (M2)
' . . . everything depends on the culture also, because- because *you* can [unclear] go to china and it's never going to seem funny to *you*, because they aren't funny! They're- (addressee laughs) they don't understand the concept of humor, they don't understand it. So- (addressee laughs) it's our- our manner of seeing it, but well, **if you understand me**, it's it's it's it's difficult, and it's really- it's really rewarding⁵ when *you* get to the point where *you* can- *you* can understand the jokes in other cultures.'

How, then, to explain this disparity? This study provides no concrete answers to the question, but I offer three hypotheses for further exploration. First, that in Spanish the indefinite *uno* and particle *se* described in Section 4.1—or some other indefinite construction(s)—have a monopoly on the ‘presentation of shared experience’ function. This makes logical sense; for the broadest generalizations, the least personal examples, speakers would favor the least referential indefinite options. Additionally, the prior presence of these other productive constructions is the most likely explanation for the fact that, even taking into consideration the differences between different Spanish dialects, the rates of *tú* usage in the ‘exclusive knowledge’ and ‘replay’ functions are still lower than those of *you*. This last claim is supported by the few examples in my corpus of retellings in which indefinite pronouns appear in both English and Spanish communicating the same idea. The clauses do not match up perfectly, but we can identify two instances of *you* replaced by *se*, one by *uno*, two by the first person referential *yo*, and only one single indefinite *tú*.

⁵ *rico*: great, sweet—literally “rich”

SPANISH	TRANSLATION	ENGLISH
Y eso so- la- el tipo de cosa que <u>solo se puede quitar</u> en la tienda, porque tenemos la maquinita de quitarselo.	‘And it was- the- the type of thing that <u>can only be removed</u> in the store, because we have the little machine to remove it.’	So at Nordstroms, you know, the jeans and the dresses have the little sensors, and <u>you have to take them off</u> when you're packing it up for the customer.
Esa noche bajamos, y había mucha harena, <u>no se veía al fondo</u> . Y- uno siempre va con un compañero pero ya <u>no podía ver a mi compañero</u> ; solo a veces las aletas brillantes de este color. Así no veía a nadie, yo no la veía a ella, u uno- cuando hay tanto <u>uno no sabe ni que es arriba y que es abajo</u> . [. . .] <u>Tienes</u> que como poner la luz así . . .	‘That night we went down, and there was a lot of sand, (you) couldn't see to the <u>bottom</u> . And- one always goes with a buddy but at that point <u>I couldn't see my buddy</u> ; only sometimes his bright flippers, this color. So <u>I couldn't see anyone</u> , I couldn't see her, uh one- when there's so much <u>one doesn't know which is up and which is down</u> . [. . .] <u>You</u> have to like shine the light like this . . .’	But when we went with my sister—she was . . . twelve I think, thirteen—um and it was really sandy, <u>you couldn't see anything</u> . It was just gross. <u>You couldn't tell what was up and what was down</u> . <u>You . . . couldn't see your buddy</u> over here except maybe if he was wearing a bright flipper, or . . . sometimes the flashlight . . .

The hypothesis that *uno* and *se* are covering the ‘shared experience’ function is not, on the other hand, similarly supported by the current literature or available data. Morales notes that it is in the category of generalizations, and not reported actions, that *tú* and *uno* are taking over from *se* (1995:151). The distribution of indefinite pronouns he presents is different than that of my data, but still my data does not provide any evidence that *uno* and *se* are filling the ‘shared experience’ role. Unfortunately, the thirty narratives in my corpus that were told both in Spanish and English provided only three episodes with direct translations of indefinite constructions, and all three of them belonged to the ‘exclusive experience’ or ‘replay’ category.⁶

Another possible explanation is that the ‘shared knowledge’ type does not require or invite explicit marking in Spanish as it does in English. In the examples below, the knowledge presented could easily be considered “conventional wisdom”, but they have no ‘you know’, ‘obviously’, or ‘of course’ equivalent. It would be informative to examine the

⁶ In example 27, although the first clause in the English version has a ‘you know’, I argue that this refers only to the first clause, that the jeans and dresses have sensors, but not to the second, that as a salesclerk a person has to remove them. This I consider in the context to be exclusive knowledge of the speaker.

use of discourse markers generally in Spanish and English to see if an explanation for the absence of the discourse markers in 33 and 34 could be found there.

- (33) pero pero yo creo que si- yo creo que para entender los chistes *tienes* que entender la cultura.
'but but I believe that if- I believe that in order to understand the jokes *you* have to understand the culture.'
- (34) Uno como que tiene que hacerlo, y y y va y lo hace, y como que ya *te acostumbres* y ya y ya- una cuando no *sabes* un idioma em- ya lo *tienes* que hacer.
'One, since one has to do it, and and and goes and does it, and like since you already get used to it and already and already- one when you don't know a language um- now you just have to do it.'

As a potential third account, I propose that in conversation with other monolingual Spanish speakers, these last examples **would** in fact be consistently tagged with discourse markers of universality or 'obvious'ness as they are in English. According to this hypothesis, because the speakers are speaking to their addressee in Spanish, *and she is not a native Spanish speaker*, even knowledge that could be interpreted as shared is presented as if it were the exclusive knowledge of the speaker. This would imply that the addressee's imperfections in the language used cause speakers to treat her as more generally uninformed. This certainly tends to be the case when native speakers of a language interact with someone who speaks their language very poorly—speaker will tend not only to talk very slowly, but to explain things very carefully as if the addressee were not just linguistically but mentally impaired. It seems improbable that the slight differences between a native speaker and a fluent but imperfect non-native would elicit a similar categorical shift. I did not find a way to accurately evaluate how fluent or native my Spanish seemed to my informants, to be able to judge the likelihood that imperfections in my Spanish affected how they related to me. Like the other two proposed hypotheses, this is worthy of further investigation.

8. Conclusion

Due to the limited nature of the study described here, I present no scientifically significant results. Rather, I have focused my attention on this linguistic phenomenon in

order to identify problems or inconsistencies in the existing literature, formulate informed hypotheses, and identify promising avenues for further exploration.

The existing scholarship on this subject is diverse, but divided. Many of the articles I read had reference lists that failed almost completely to overlap with each other. In part this is because the topic has such broad implications, touching on subfields as diverse as syntax, pragmatics, contact linguistics, historical linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

Yet when the authors do read each others' articles, they tend to generalize too broadly, accepting principles set out in one language as applicable to their own subject of study without sufficient skepticism. I call for a more critical and concrete examination of the indefinite second person in its social and discursive contexts. This study is meant to serve as a jumping-off point for that investigation.

In this paper I presented striking evidence of categorical differences between Spanish and English usages of the indefinite second person. I identified the variables of gender, level of intimacy and dialect as promising subjects of further study, and suggested that research explore variables on the micro-level like personality traits and clause types, as well as macro-level forces such as linguistic and dialectic shift. Finally, I proposed a new classification of indefinite second person subtypes that accounts for the first time for the full variety and subtlety of this intriguing construction.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

When and where were you born?

Where were your parents from?

When did you/your parents come to the United States?

How did your parents meet?

What do your parents do?

When did you first start learning English?

Did you speak only Spanish at home? Spanish and English?

What language do you speak to your siblings at home?

In the neighborhood where you grew up, were most people Spanish speakers?

Did you speak Spanish at all in school as a kid?

What were your interests in school? (How did you make your way to Yale?)

What are you involved in at Yale?

What percentage of your friends would you say speak Spanish?

Is it important for you to date someone who speaks Spanish?

If you had to rate your comfort in English and Spanish each on a scale of one to five, five being entirely confident, how would you rate yourself?

How does it feel when you realize that someone you're speaking to or that you've met speaks Spanish?

Do you switch languages a lot?

When you go into a store or café and realize that your server speaks Spanish, do you speak to them in Spanish?

Appendix B: Narrative Prompts

A time you can remember laughing hysterically.

7 Stories: 3 English (0 *you*), 4 Spanish (1 *tú*, 2 *uno*)

Your most embarrassing moment.

7 Stories: 4 English (0 *you*), 3 Spanish (0 *tú*, 1 *uno*)

A bad experience you had with a relative stranger.

7 Stories: 4 English (1 *you*), 3 Spanish (1 *tú*, 2 *uno*)

A bad experience you had with someone close to you.

4 Stories: 2 English (1 *you*), 2 Spanish (0 *tú*, 0 *uno*)

A time you got out of a tight situation.

4 Stories: 4 English (1 *you*)

A time you were afraid.

3 Stories: 1 English (1 *you*), 2 Spanish (2 *tú*, 1 *uno*)

A memory of your family.

2 Stories: 2 Spanish (0 *tú*, 0 *uno*)

A happy moment.

1 Story: 1 Spanish (1 *tú*, 0 *uno*)

Any story you like.

1 Story: 1 English (1 *you*)

Retell me the story you told me about . . .

14 Stories: 6 English (2 *you*), 8 Spanish (0 *tú*, 1 *se*)

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