# On Deontic Modality in Spanish
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**THE PROBLEM**: Bosque (1980) characterizes the Spanish example in (1) as an imperative. As Bosque notes, the infinitive form *haber* (have.Aux.Inf) in (1) is the most common version of the prescriptively accepted imperative form *habed* (have.Aux.Imp), which shows canonical imperative morphology. Bosque considers that examples like (1) are important because they refer to the past, and present a counterexample to the crosslinguistic generalization that imperatives are future oriented. Examples like (1) also present a problem for proposals claiming that imperatives in Spanish lack an Aspect projection (Biezma 2007). This paper shows that (1) is not an imperative, and offers a better analysis in terms of covert modality.

**BOSQUE'S ARGUMENTS**: Bosque provides several arguments in favor of characterizing (1) as an imperative: (a) it cannot be responded with "That is false" (does not have a truth value); (b) it may only have a second person addressee; and (c) it cannot be embedded, (2).

**AGAINST AN IMPERATIVE ANALYSIS**: It is worth noting that in the *Corpus of reference of Spanish* there isn't a single occurrence of the canonical imperative form *habed* used as an auxiliary. The claim that examples with infintival auxiliaries like (1) are truly imperatives has to be defended in the absence of canonical imperatives forms. **ARGUMENTS**: (i) The fact that one cannot answer (1) with "That is false", does not mean it is an imperative. A sentence like (3) cannot be answered that way either, but an analysis in terms of imperatives would not be desirable; (ii) contrary to what Bosque claims, the constructions in (1) can refer to $3^{rd}$ person, (4); (iii) constructions like (1) admit stative predicates, (5.a), impossible in regular imperatives, but, crucially, possible with modals, (5.b). However, to say that examples like (1) are not imperatives does not amount to saying that they are regular infinitival clauses. Regular infinitival clauses are either controlled or generic. But sentences like (1) are not: they always make reference to a $2^{nd}$ or $3^{rd}$ person agent provided by the context (the impossibility of embedding these clauses can be understood as a way of avoiding control). **QUANTIFICATIONAL FORCE**: Examples like (1) exhibit variation in terms of modal strength depending on context, (6) and (7). (6) encodes deontic necessity (paraphrased by *should*). (7) resembles deontic possibility (paraphrased by *could*, but the interpretation is a bit stronger). **PROPOSAL**: We have seen that a covert modal analysis of examples like (1) is preferable to an imperative one. But it is necessary to explain why the modal exhibits variation in quantificational force. The covert modal in examples like (1) behaves differently from overt modals in Spanish. However, it is similar to modals in St'át'imcets described by Matthewson et al. (2006). They propose an analysis in which quantificational force is determined by a choice function, (8). The modal in (8) has a contextually determined modal base, B, that matches the evaluation world $w$ with the set of possible worlds that are accessible from it. The novelty in (8) is the presence of a free choice function, f, that picks out a subset of B($w$) (Kratzer 1998). f is a free variable whose value is determined by context (Kratzer 1998). In (8), the force of the modal depends on the subset of B($w$) that f picks up, Q. If Q = B($w$), we get the strongest version of the modal. If Q is a proper subset of B($w$), the modals is weaker. This also allows us to get the middle ground between necessity and possibility modals described above, that modals with lexicalized quantificational force cannot capture.

**CONCLUSION**: Unlike Bosque (1980) I claim that data like (1) involve covert modality, and not imperative operators. A modal analysis provides a better explanation for the temporal properties of (1), it can account for the true generalizations noted by Bosque, and provides

a better explanation for variability in quantificational force.

(1) Haber      venido ayer.
   have.Aux.Inf come   yesterday

   'You should have come yesterday'    [Bosque 1980, ex. (1)]

(2) Creo      que *( deberías) haber   venido ayer.
   think.1.sg that    should   have.Inf come  yesterday

   'I think that you should have come'

(3) Hubieras        venido antes.
   have.Aux.2.sg.Subj come   earlier

(4) A:  'We will have to see what Félix thinks.' [*free translation*]
   B:  Félix no   piensa. No está. ¡ Haber      venido !
       Felix neg. thinks  neg is     have.Aux.Inf come

       'Felix does not think. He is not even here. He should have come!'  [RAE.CREA]

(5) a.¡ Haber   -lo     sabido antes ! / b. Deberías saber-lo antes.
      have.Inf cl.Acc known before       should   know-it earlier

(6) My son is complaining. He is not allowed to go out today because he is grounded for having arrived home late last night.

   a. Haber   venido antes.  Ahora estás castigado
      have.Inf come   before. Now   are   grounded

      'You should have come earlier. Now, you are grounded.'

(7) I am going to have a party this evening at my place. You are telling me that you just met the girl you have a crush on at the library an hour ago. I say to you:

   a. Haber   -la       invitado (a mí no  me     habría       importado)
      have.Inf cl.3$^{rd}$.Acc invited   (to me neg cl.1.Dat have.counterfac mind)

      'You could have invited her, It would have been wise. I wouln't have minded.'

(8) $[\![\text{MODAL}(f)(B)(\phi)]\!] = 1$ iff $\forall w' \in f(B(w)) : [\![\phi(w')]\!] = 1$

**References:** BIEZMA. 2007. "On the Consequences of Being Small: Imperatives in Spanish.", NELS 38. BOSQUE. 1980. "Retrospective Imperatives", *LI*. KARATZER. 1998. "Scope or Pseudoscope? Are there wide-scope indefinites?, in *Events in Grammar*. MATTHEWSON. 1999. "On the interpretation of wide scope indefinites. *NLS*. MATTHEWSON, Lisa, Hotze Rullmann and Henry Davis. 2006. (under review). "Evidentials as Epistemic Modals: Evidence from St'át'imcets". RAE: REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Data base (CREA). Corpus of reference of Spanish. http://www.rae.es