

# I-implicatures and the manner/result complementarity hypothesis

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**1. The manner/result complementarity hypothesis (MRCH).** Rappaport Hovav and Levin (RH&L) (2010) formulate the hypothesis that cross-linguistically (verb) roots can lexicalize either a manner or a result component, but not both. The hypothesis underscores the distinction between lexicalized meanings and non-lexicalized meanings, which vary across contexts.

**2. (Potential) counterexamples to the MRCH.** The verbs *cut*, *climb*, and the class of manner-of-killing verbs have been presented as counterexamples to the MRCH, as they seem to encode a manner and a result component (see e.g. Beavers and Koontz-Garboden (B&KG) 2012, B&KG 2017). The Spanish counterparts of these verbs – *cortar* ‘to cut’, *escalar* ‘to climb’, *trepar* ‘to climb’, *ahogar(se)* ‘to drown’, *ahorcar(se)* ‘to hang (oneself)’, *guillotinar* ‘to guillotine’, and *electrocutar(se)* ‘to electrocute’ – also seem to violate the MRCH. Based on experimental evidence, I maintain that these verbs conform to the MRCH. The verbs do not encode a manner and a result meaning. Rather, they only lexicalize one of these meanings; the other meaning is a contextual inference, which does not arise if the contextual premises of the utterance change. The contextual inference is an I-inference in Levinson’s (2000) sense.

**3. The experiment.** Using Prolific Academic, 30 native speakers of Spanish were recruited. Participants were asked to judge on a 7-point Likert scale how consistent a series of sentences were. The target sentences consisted of an affirmative clause whose verb was one of the verbs under study, followed by a clause introduced by *pero* ‘but’ in which, depending on the verb, either the manner or the result meaning was denied. The aim of the study was to test whether the denied meaning was lexically encoded by the verb or was a contextual inference, and as such cancellable when the contextual premises are modified. Each item was presented to participants in one of three possible ways: (i) on its own, without any preceding context (1a); (ii) preceded by a sentence which cancelled the contextual assumptions usually present when using these verbs (supernatural context) (1b); (iii) preceded by a sentence which did not modify the contextual assumptions associated with the verb (natural context) (1c).

- (1) a. Lucía cortó el pan, pero no usó ningún instrumento para ello. ‘Lucia cut the bread, but did not use any instrument for that.’
- b. Lucía tiene el superpoder de cortar cosas con solo mirarlas. ‘Lucia has the superpower of cutting things just by staring at them.’  
Lucía cortó el pan, pero no usó ningún instrumento para ello. ‘Lucia cut the bread, but did not use any instrument for that.’
- c. Lucía trabaja como cocinera en un restaurante francés. ‘Lucia works as a cook in a French restaurant.’  
Lucía cortó el pan, pero no usó ningún instrumento para ello. ‘Lucia cut the bread, but did not use any instrument for that.’

A linear regression model was fitted for each of these verbs. With the exception of *escalar* and *trepar* (see §4), the regression analyses of these verbs show that the sentences preceded by a supernatural context were judged as more consistent than the sentences preceded by no context or by a natural context. These results suggest that the meaning denied in the *pero* clause of the target items – the manner meaning ‘use of an instrument’ in (1) – is not lexically encoded by the verb, but is a contextual inference: when changing the context, the meaning can be denied without leading to a contradiction. The verbs conform to the MRCH.

**4. The case of *escalar* and *trepar*.** These verbs appear to encode a result meaning, upward direction, and a manner meaning, exertion of force against an opposing force (L&RH 2013). The latter meaning is not limited to uses of these verbs with non-abstract themes; abstract themes, e.g. prices, also involve (figurative) resistance (B&KG 2017: 860-866). Given that resistance is ubiquitous in our world, negating this meaning in sentences with *escalar* or *trepar* is inconsistent, regardless of the type of preceding context. One could argue that, because the resistance meaning is always computable from context, *escalar* and *trepar* do not bother to lexicalize that meaning, in which case these verbs would conform to the MRCH. Alternatively, one could say that the contextual inference is so often computed that it has become lexicalized by the verb. Were that the case, the verbs *escalar* and *trepar* would constitute true counterexamples to the MRCH. This is still an open question in my research.

## References

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