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“Ahora, por ejemplo”: ahora as a discursive deictic in Chilean Spanish

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Abstract:

Abstract: According to Silva-Corvalán (*Ahora* 67), the discourse marker *ahora* in Chilean Spanish has undergone a process of grammaticalization or subjectification, defined as a part of speech that changes away from objective description of the external situation and towards the expression of the speaker's *internal perspective or attitude* (Torres Cacoullos and Schwenter 347). However, according to Silva Corvalán (*Ahora* 72), a lack of diachronic data makes it difficult to evince a change of this type. The present paper provides evidence for her hypothesis through the analysis of four interview transcriptions of middle-upper class Chilean speakers from *El habla culta de Santiago de Chile*: one male and one female in their late 20s, and one male and one female in their mid-60s. These interviews were published in 1979, and through an analysis of the data from Silva-Corvalán's 1999 study as well as the use of *ahora* by these four speakers, I show that *ahora* may have already begun to undergo a process of subjectification at that time.

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General Interest

“Ahora, por ejemplo:” “*ahora*” as a discursive deictic in Chilean Spanish

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to Silva-Corvalán (“Ahora” 67), the discourse marker *ahora* in Chilean Spanish has undergone (or is undergoing) a process of grammaticalization or subjectification. In other words, where *ahora* had existed previously as a sentential adverb, in Silva-Corvalán’s work *ahora* has begun to resemble a conjunction (in her definition, “una forma no autónoma con posición fija” (*Sociolingüística* 219)). *Ahora* can therefore be used as a discourse marker to signal a border between parts of a text or discourse (*Sociolingüística* 219). However, according to Silva-Corvalán (“Ahora” 80), it has yet to be proven that *ahora* is actually undergoing a change due to a lack of diachronic data. Silva-Corvalán’s data consisted of a wide range of interviewees from the late 1990s, and to show that *ahora* has undergone a process of subjectification, I examine the uses of *ahora* from late 1970s Chilean Spanish.

In order to provide a comparable source of information to the data of Silva-Corvalán, I utilize a volume of *El habla culta de Santiago de Chile* (Rabanales and Contreras).¹ This volume contains transcripts of interviews carried out with current university students and university-educated older adults in Santiago, and is therefore similar to the conversation data collected by Silva-Corvalán. Following the categories delineated by Silva-Corvalán, I analyze one male and one female from the youngest and the oldest age groups cited in this study, for a total of 4 speakers. For each occurrence of *ahora* in the speech of these interviewees, I determine whether it is a temporal deictic (signifying “now,” as opposed to in the past) or a discourse deictic (a connector which may serve to introduce a new topic). This determination is based on Silva-Corvalán’s approach, which will be established in section 3. Following this analysis, I compare my findings to Silva-Corvalán’s data, attempting to determine whether or not this can be

considered a change in progress. Juola has shown through statistical analysis that language change can be measured, and can occur over centuries or in time periods as short as decades (77). Therefore, the lapse of twenty years between the data analyzed in this paper may represent a measurable linguistic change.

Though the discourse of only four speakers is analyzed here, Silva-Corvalán's hypothesis could be supported by the use of *ahora* as a discourse deictic simply by one speaker. Indeed, I find that the young male uses *ahora* in this way several times. Specifically, this speaker uses *ahora* to introduce speculative or argumentative discourse topics, to provide emphasis for a subsequent utterance, to convey his attitudes toward the content of his utterances and generally to guide his listener's inferences. These tokens provide diachronic data for the hypothesis put forth by Silva-Corvalán, and demonstrate that *ahora* had already begun to shift in meaning from a temporal to a discourse deictic during the late 1970s. Of course, further research should be done to confirm this preliminary assessment. However, using historical data in this way serves to provide initial evidence for this semantic shift.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Discourse markers, according to Portolés (25-26), can be defined as invariable linguistic units that do not exercise a syntactic function within the sentential predication, a definition in line with that of Schiffrin (237) who also adds that these markers can bracket units of talk. According to Schourup (230), this connective attribute is one of the three most important characteristics of discourse markers, as well as optionality and non-truth conditionality. By optionality, the author means syntactically optional: its absence does not alter the grammaticality of its host sentence. However, at the same time, a discourse marker cannot be seen as irrelevant or redundant, since, as Silva-Corvalán (*Sociolingüística* 214) and Portolés (26) state, these markers act as clues which guide the hearer in the inferences that he or she generates in a conversation. Typically, discourse markers are sentence—or utterance—initial, and can even appear in clusters of multiple markers. According to Schourup, this initial position relates to their 'superordinate' use to restrict the contextual interpretation of an utterance, again contributing to their 'guiding' function, restricting the hearer's possible inferences (233). The third characteristic of

discourse markers, non-truth-conditionality, distinguishes these markers from 'content' words such as manner adverbial uses of words such as 'sadly,' which, unlike the uses of *ahora* in this paper, do not possess a deictic reading.

According to Schiffrin, *now* can be used as a temporal deictic in English in three distinct ways: it provides a temporal index in discourse time; it is ego-centered; and it may be evaluative (245).² As stated by Schourup, *now* and expressions like it (*you know, so, then, etc.*) "comprise a subset of those linguistic expressions thought not to affect the propositional content of utterances in which they occur" (227). *Now* is, in other words, a deictic: it may have a reference that is dependent on the immediate context of its utterance (cf. Horn 130), also known as indexicality (Cameron, "Aging" 210). Portolés provides a classification system of several different types of discourse markers, based on their potential pragmatic functions: information structures, connectors, reformulators, discursive operators, and contact control markers (135-146). As stated above, in this paper I will focus on the connector category, and more specifically, on the discourse marker *ahora* (*now*) in Chilean Spanish.

As a temporal deictic, *now* provides a temporal index for utterances within an emerging world of talk. In other words, *now* provides an index for the speaker's ideas, the orientation between speaker and hearer, and the footing established between them (Schiffrin 245). By ego-centered, Schiffrin means a space dominated by the producer of an utterance, and one that is focused on what the speaker him/herself is about to say. Additionally, Schiffrin proposes an evaluative element to *now*, claiming that speakers use *now* to introduce an evaluative statement within their utterance, highlighting "interpretive glosses for one's own talk which a speaker him/herself favors" (245).

However, Silva-Corvalán extends the definition of *ahora* in Spanish beyond that of a temporal deictic to that of a discourse deictic, claiming that it has undergone a process of subjectification. As cited in Torres Cacoullos and Schwenter, subjectification has been defined as a tendency for meanings to change from objective description of the external situation towards the expression of the speaker's *internal perspective or attitude* (348). Through this process, forms and constructions that initially express primarily *concrete, lexical* and *objective* meanings come to serve increasingly *abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal*, and *speaker-based* functions (348-9).

In her 1999 study, Silva-Corvalán analyzed approximately fifteen hours of recorded conversations with thirteen speakers from Santiago de Chile. These speakers ranged from 20-84 years old, and 6 were females and 7 males. Silva-Corvalán does not provide sociolinguistic correlates with her data, but does show that every speaker utilized *ahora* as a connector. Overall, she found that the temporal meaning of *ahora* was the most frequent in the data (604 of 770 tokens, 78.5%), followed by the pragmatic (or discourse) uses of *ahora* (148 of 770, 19.2%). The remaining tokens (18 of 770, 2%) she found to be indeterminate in terms of their interpretation.

As Silva-Corvalán states, this process of change (from propositional or textual meanings to expressive meanings) also connotes a conveyance of speakers' *attitudes* toward the content of their utterances ("Ahora" 68). She defines a temporal deictic use of *ahora* as one that includes the moment/immediate space of the utterance, has imprecise temporal limits, is opposed to *antes*, *entonces*, *luego* and *después*, and includes a sense of "opposition," which the author understands as opposition to the past (now vs. then/the past). We conceive of *ahora* as a contrastive discourse marker, as opposed to its use as a temporal adverb which modifies the sentential predicate ("Ahora" 70). A discourse deictic use of *ahora*, on the other hand, always appears in a sentence-initial position or is preceded by "y." Its contextual significance includes that of an introductory link between discourse content that is opposed to that of the previous utterance (*Sociolingüística* 225), or even as a connector between utterances "to meanings that are external to such utterance [*sic*]" ("Ahora" 70). As Tomioka states, this notion of opposition can appear in speech acts through the semantic notion of contrastiveness, often found in question-answer pairs, overtly contrasting statements ("not A but B"), correcting statements, clefts/ pseudo-clefts, and association with focus with adverbs like *only* and *always* (4). In other words, a temporal deictic situates an utterance in a particular space or time, whereas a discourse deictic connects (and even introduces) two utterances not necessarily related to each other, usually with some sort of evaluative element to its usage.

In this study, as the reader will note, each of the speakers employs a similar level of formality, thereby facilitating analysis. Labov has shown that the style in which a person speaks has an effect on their adherence to linguistic norms. As he indicates in his 1966 study, in

casual speech, women tend to employ the more advanced linguistic forms, but "conform to the norm much more than do men of the same social group when using the most formal style" ("Social Stratification" 311-312). Trudgill's study, though it does not take style into account, shows that women employ forms that more closely approximate the standard or that are more prestigious than those employed by men (*Sociolingüística* 95). However, Fontanella de Weinberg, in a study regarding Bahía Blanca, found that younger women with a low-medium level of education tend to employ the newer variety more often (87). As we can see from these conflicting results, women use both the standard and the innovative forms of a variety. The relevance of each of these definitions and explorations will be demonstrated in the following sections, beginning with the methodology of this study.

3. METHODOLOGY

The materials for this investigation consist of four interviews within Volume One of *El habla culta de Santiago de Chile*, each of which was recorded in Santiago in 1979. All of the interviews analyzed in this investigation come from the "diálogos dirigidos" section, in which the interviewer converses with one or two participants, stimulating the conversation. This section will provide several demographic details of the four interviewees. Following this brief presentation, the uses of *ahora* in each of the interviews will be presented, as well as a concise categorization of each usage as either a temporal or a discursive deictic. As in every type of analysis of discourse, it is necessary to contextualize the utterance in order to ensure its correct evaluation (cf. Goodwin and Heritage).

Each of the four participants qualify as "cultos," or middle-class and higher in Chilean terms during the late 1970s. The first two participants belong to the youngest age group (25-35 years old). Participant one, Jimena, is a female, 27 years of age, a specialist in political and administrative sciences. Her interview took approximately 45 minutes. The second participant, Mauricio, is a 27-year-old chemist, whose interview took approximately 43 minutes. The second two participants belong to the oldest age group (56-75 years old). Participant three, Gladys, is a 62-year-old woman, whose interview took approximately 39 minutes. Gladys is a social worker and retired French teacher. Participant 4, Julio, is a 64-year-old doctor, whose interview took approximately 46 minutes.

Silva-Corvalán's study provides several guidelines for the analysis of *ahora* within the corpus of the *Habla culta de Santiago de Chile* volume ("Ahora" 73-74). The interviews are coded using the following guidelines:

- (1) Temporal deictic:
 - a. Basic meaning: "present perspective of the speaker"
 - b. Contextual meaning: "present perspective of the speaker + opposition"
- (2) Discourse deictic:

Contextual meaning: "present perspective of the discourse + connector introducing discourse content slightly opposed to that of the preceding utterances"

In other words, a temporal deictic *ahora* is one that situates an utterance in a particular space and time, usually in opposition to an earlier mention of time. A discourse deictic use of *ahora* always appears in a sentence-initial position (or after γ), and connects two utterances not necessarily related to each other temporally.

This paper will attempt to provide answers to the following research questions:

- (1) a. Is *ahora* present in the 1979 data as a discursive deictic, or only as a temporal deictic?
 - b. If *ahora* is present as a discursive deictic, how is it used specifically?
 - c. If *ahora* is present as a discursive deictic, is there a distinction between the ages of the speakers who utilize *ahora* as a discursive deictic?
 - d. Is there a difference in the way males and females use *ahora*?

The corresponding hypotheses are the following:

- (2) a. Yes. *Ahora* as a discursive deictic will be present in the 1979 data.
 - b. *Ahora* will be used in similar ways as it is in Silva-Corvalán's data, but perhaps in less broad ways. In other words, speakers will use *ahora* as a discursive deictic with a more limited range of functions than those used in the 1999 study.
 - c. Yes. The younger speakers will use *ahora* as a discursive deictic more than the older speakers.
 - d. Yes. As with many different types of language change, women tend to be the originators (such as Fontanella de Weinberg 90,

Sociolingüística 249). Therefore, such will be the case in this situation: women will use *ahora* as a discursive deictic more often than men.

It is important that the preliminary nature of this study is kept in mind. Only four speakers are studied, but as mentioned above, this initial assessment provides evidence for Silva-Corvalán's previously unattested hypothesis. The data of these speakers and their corresponding analyses will be presented in the next section.

4. DATA AND ANALYSIS

The first speaker, Jimena, utilized *ahora* a total of eleven times during her interview. The stated topics of her interview were "varios," but consist of a discussion of her job in Prison Services, her workplace environment, and women in the workplace. In (3), the interviewer asks Jimena about her current work situation, and Jimena responds, telling the interviewer about the freedom allotted in her office versus other departments at her place of work. The use of *ahora* as a temporal deictic is exemplified. In lines 5-6 Jimena discusses what will happen in the future: specifically that there will not be as many problems at her place of work because there will be more staff. This temporal contrast between "now" and "the future" is represented through the use of the subjunctive mood (*una vez que se cree*). In this way, we can see that Jimena uses *ahora* in this utterance as a temporal discourse marker.

- (3) 1 Somos responsables de cumplir la labor que él me encarga a mí, pero si él la
 2 aprueba, es cosa de él. Entonces, no es como los otros departamentos, que
 3 tienen que cumplir tal labor porque está estipulada y deben cumplir
 4 forzosamente. Nosotros no; somos más libres. Y una vez que se cree la
 5 oficina, ya no va a haber tanto problema, porque vamos a ser más personas.
 6 Ahora soy yo sola, y una persona sola no puede hacer todo, es una cosa tan
 7 amplia.

In (4) and (5), the interviewer asks Jimena about her school situation, specifically the examination experience. Also, (4) and (5) are representations of *ahora* as a temporal deictic. In both of these examples, the speaker uses *ahora* to contrast with a verb in the past tense (*estaba* and *tuve* respectively), switching her reference from the past to the present.

- (4) 1 Es bien bonita la carrera. Nosotros nos podemos especializar—bueno, hasta
 2 cuando estaba yo, porque ahora está con un plan nuevo, renovado, la escuela,
 3 así que ya no es lo mismo que cuando yo estudiaba.
- (5) 1 Mira, la verdad es que definiciones hay varias y yo las supe todas cuando tuve
 2 que dar mi examen de Personal, pero ahora yo no me acuerdo de ninguna
 3 que te la pudiera recitar así, es decir . . .

(6) is similar to (4) and (5), with a morphological switch of temporality (*era, estaba* to present tense *se desempeña*). In addition, the temporal adverb *antes* is used in line 1, which also contrasts with the present ‘now.’ In this way, *ahora* is exemplified as a temporal deictic.

- (6) 1 Bueno, yo lo encuentro magnífico, porque la mujer antes era tan tontona,
 2 pues, oye, que toda la vida estaba, o en las labores de casa o en un trabajo
 3 totalmente sencillo; pero ahora la mujer se desempeña a la par que el
 4 hombre, pues.

(7) through (10) each proceed from the same section of the interview, in which Jimena and the interviewer discuss the role of women in the workplace and specifically among her female colleagues and peers. The use of *ahora* in (7) and (8) could be replaced by another temporal adverb such as “currently,” which exemplifies Jimena’s use of *ahora* as contrasted with the past. (9) and (10) also represent the use of *ahora* as a temporal discourse marker, contrasting a past time period (represented by the verbal past-tense morphology) with the present situation in which her female colleagues find themselves (specifically, with children). In addition, (10) includes a citation within a citation, in which Jimena quotes a third speaker (the non-specific *tú*), in order to insert a commentary about the particular situation (cf. Labov “Transformation” 383-385).

- (7) 1 No sé, ahora, en estos últimos meses, pero hasta hace poco tiempo sucedía, y
 2 ¿sabes dónde? más que nada, en ENDESA.
- (8) 1 En ENDESA . . . eh . . . el profesional, para ellos, era hombre. Pero ahora último,
 2 hará cosa de unos seis meses atrás, han entrado bastantes compañeras de
 3 nosotros . . .
- (9) 1 Yo tengo compañeras, se casaron e . . . en mitad de la carrera y terminaron por
 2 el hecho de terminarla, pero ahora están con sus guaguas y no han trabajado
 3 más.

- (10) 1 Y luego se aclimata, y después, si tú dejas pasar el tiempo y te dedicas
 2 después que tienes tus niños grandes y dices: "ahora me voy a buscar un
 3 trabajo," ¿dónde vas a trabajar si la experiencia la has perdido, no tienes
 4 nada?

Though (11) does not provide a contrast to an earlier utterance, since it appears in between an overt subject and its verb rather than in sentence-initial position, we can categorize it as a temporal adverb which modifies the verb 'live' (*vivo*). Similarly, the use of *ahora* in (12) coincides with the specific 'in May,' illustrating a temporal use of the marker.

- (11) 1 Claro, mientras tanto uno no tiene ni un problema. Uno . . . yo ahora vivo con
 2 mis papás, tengo todo, no me falta; es de esperar que casada tampoco.
- (12) 1 . . . estuvo bailando casi toda la noche conmigo; después hicimos una cuantas
 2 salidas en grupo juntos, y él siempre conmigo, y hasta que al final salimos
 3 pololeando. Ya vamos . . . llevamos dos años ya casi. Ahora los enteramos en
 4 mayo.

In sum, each of Jimena's uses of *ahora* represents a temporal deictic, contrasting a past or future referent with one in the present. Zero uses of *ahora* as discourse deictics appear in this particular interview.

The second speaker, Mauricio, the young male participant, utilizes *ahora* a total of eight times, both as a temporal and a discursive deictic. The subject of this guided interview is "actividades profesionales del informante." Each of these first three uses of *ahora* by Mauricio exemplifies a discursive deictic use. The uses of *ahora* in ((13), line 4) and ((14), line 2) both serve to mark information that adds to a prior collection of items (cf. Schiffrin 237). As Silva-Corvalán stipulates, each of the uses of *ahora* appear in sentence-initial position, and function as an "introductory link" between sets of discourse that are unrelated—or even opposed to one another—(*Sociolingüística* 225). The use of *ahora* in (15), line 3 on the other hand, branches into a subtopic that had been previously introduced, and Mauricio uses *ahora* here to guide his hearer to a change in subject.

- (13) 1 Aquí en Chile tenemos una vegetación muy rica en flores principalmente,
 2 plantas que son totalmente desconocidas desde el punto de vista químico, ya
 3 que los . . . eh . . . por ejemplo, ¿cómo explicarte? . . . eh . . . los olores que tienen
 4 . . . se . . . provienen de ciertos componentes químicos bien específicos. Ahora . . .
 5 eh . . . por ejemplo, el . . . eh . . . boldo, el agua de boldo, que aquí es tan
 6 conocida, tiene ciertos componentes químicos . . .

- (14) 1 . . . Tiene ciertos componentes químicos . . . que actúan farmacológicamente
 2 sobre ciertos . . . eh . . . malestares del organismo. Ahora, la . . . el aislamiento de
 3 estos compuestos, ya sea . . . eh . . . de tipo colorantes, de tipo aromático . . .
 4 puede conducir a que Chile se convierta potencialmente en un exportador de estos
 5 principios activos . . .
- (15) 1 La gente no . . . no mira hacia los lados. Está o demasiado preocupada de sus
 2 problemas personales o demasiado preocupada de su trabajo, pero no se
 3 preocupa por el resto del mundo. Ahora . . . eh . . . me gustaría si tú me puedes
 4 explicar más qué concepto te interesa que . . . que desarrolle, porque esto es . . .

Though he does not categorize *now* as a contrastive marker, Fraser defines these markers as signaling that the following utterance is in some way a denial or a contrast of some proposition associated with the preceding discourse, which I claim is an element of Mauricio's discourse uses of *ahora* (987).

In (16), we see a morphological contrast: in lines 1-3, Mauricio is discussing the situation at the university from the past year. In line 4, *ahora* can be seen as a temporal deictic due to the switch in tense (from past to present). However, *ahora* in sentence-initial position in this utterance also serves to introduce a new topic: academic publications. As stated above, Mauricio contrasts lines 4-6 with 1-3, introducing a new but related topic, and for this reason, I categorize this particular use as a discourse deictic.

- (16) 1 El año pasado, de la Facultad, casi el diez por ciento, me atrevería a decir, de
 2 los profesionales que aquí trabajan normalmente, es decir, docentes, se
 3 encontraban en el extranjero haciendo estudios de perfeccionamiento.
 4 Ahora . . . eh . . . en cuanto a publicaciones, eh . . . porque ésa es otra . . . otro de
 5 los factores que se . . . los cuales se cataloga a un . . . a un equipo, a un
 6 establecimiento de trabajo, en la Universidad.

In contrast, the use of *ahora* in (17) exemplifies a temporal deictic. Mauricio utilizes this marker to differentiate the past (in which many of his colleagues did not make it through his major program), from the present (in which the recent reforms to the education system may allow for more opportunities for students).

- (17) 1 Del total, de esos veinticinco, creo que se irán a recibir unos ocho o nueve. El
 2 resto, o desertó porque no le gustó, o no se . . . o no fue capaz, sencillamente,
 3 porque, como te decía anteriormente, el de . . . el sistema de . . . de estudios es

- 4 demasiado intensivo. Ahora con . . . con la reforma se pretende cambiar un
- 5 poco el sistema y darle al alumno más posibilidades . . .

In (18) we see *ahora* used as a discourse deictic yet again. Mauricio utilizes *ahora* as a transition to a new (but related) thought; he does not change from past to present tense or make other references to time.

- (18) 1 ... este tema es porque conocía al . . . a la persona que en este momento
- 2 trabajaba con esa línea de . . . de ideas y me agradó la forma en que esta
- 3 persona podía dirigir a la gente. Ahora, me dirigí . . . eh . . . me . . . me entusiasmé
- 4 por este trabajo porque podría realizarlo . . .

Mauricio begins (19) by discussing his current job situation, in which he is involved in a project that he does not particularly like. However, in line 2, he reverts back to the preterit imperfect (e.g. *decía*), and then uses *ahora* to temporally contrast his utterances.

- (19) 1 En este momento he trabajado aquí. Pretendo en lo posible darle un corte
- 2 final a esto, sacar una publicación y cambiar de tema. Como te decía, me
- 3 gustaría cambiar ahora hacia algo . . . a . . . de tipo aplicado. Esto de los
- 4 microorganismos también es aplicado . . .

(20) is another use of *ahora* as a discourse deictic. Mauricio begins this utterance by discussing employment, and uses the present tense (lines 1-3). In line 3, Mauricio uses *ahora* as a transition between independent utterances, introducing the topic that he will address from lines 3-5, 'brain drain' in Chile. In addition, due to the verb clause 'returning to the professional that escapes/ leaves Chile' (*volviendo al profesional que se fuga de Chile*) in lines 3-4, we can see that he is returning to a previously introduced topic. We do not see any morphological or lexical use that would suggest a contrast of time.

- (20) 1 Existen miles de otros trabajos, tantos y cuanto más productivos y más
- 2 beneficiosos para nosotros, y que, en ningún grado . . . eh . . . de ninguna
- 3 manera, lo denigran. Ahora, en . . . en cuanto al universitario, volviendo al
- 4 profesional que se fuga de Chile, yo personalmente también soy partidario de
- 5 que si no puedo desarrollarme como químico aquí . . .

As the reader will note, Mauricio uses *ahora* as a discursive deictic several times. Each of these uses is analyzed further in the next section, in order to provide stronger evidence for the hypothesis of Silva-Corvalán.

The discussion of the third participant introduces a second age group. At 62 years of age, Gladys falls into the upper age category put forth by Silva-Corvalán. Her interview was conducted regarding the topics of pedagogical experiences and travel. The participant, a French teacher, recalls her experience as a student of Latin, and throughout her interview uses *ahora* only to express a temporal contrast. In (21), Gladys uses past-tense verb morphology and the phrase ‘in that time’ (*en ese tiempo*) to signify that she is talking about events situated in the past; specifically, how her Latin teacher treated her and her classmates. In line 3, Gladys uses *ahora* to contrast previous, past-situated utterances with present-situated ones. Since she is retired, she does not know how Latin classes function in the current school system, but supposes that they occur in a certain way. In line 4, Gladys uses *ahora* a second time within the same utterance, and once again contrasts the previous utterances of lines 1-3 with what she will say next: that she assumes that currently (when this interview took place) pedagogy is more intimate, more like a dialogue between a teacher and a student.

- (21) 1 Así que no . . . no porque me tocó a mí en la clase pasada ya . . . ya voy a dejar
 2 pasar a la otra semana mi turno; no; teníamos que estar . . . porque nos pillaba.
 3 Nos interrogaba; era bien guapo, bien estricto. Ahora no sé cómo serán las
 4 clases; creo que ahora más es conversación así como íntima, un diálogo entre
 5 maestro y alumno; allá no; en ese tiempo siempre estaba la categoría del
 6 maestro en su tarima enseñando, y los alumnos tomando apuntes o . . . o
 7 estudiando, aprendiendo de otra manera.

In the next excerpt, the interviewer asks Gladys if she misses teaching/pedagogy. Though she does not explicitly contrast the proposition of *ahora* with anything in the past (i.e. lines 2-4) the hearer can infer that when she taught years ago, in her view, the situation was dissimilar. Since this utterance refers to the same subject of dialogue as (21)—teaching and pedagogy when Gladys was a teacher contrasted with the present-day—we can attribute a temporally contrastive meaning to her use of *ahora*.

- (22) 1 No; no echo nada de menos. Cuando veo estas cosas que están pasando
 2 ¡menos! Fíjese que me han dicho que ahora las alumnas tienen miedo de ir . . .
 3 de esas niñas seguramente tímidas y que no comparten con los muchachos
 4 su . . . sus actitudes así, prepotentes, nada de eso.

In addition, (23) belongs to the same speech run (i.e. not interrupted by the interviewer) as (22), in which Gladys continues discussing the differences between when she was a teacher and the current situation of language learning. Again, in this last use of *ahora* by Gladys within her interview, we read a sense of opposition between how things were in the past, as compared to how they are (or must be) now (in the present). Lines 1-7 consist almost entirely of preterit imperfect verb conjugations, signifying a past-situated narrative. In line 8, Gladys supposes through the use of the temporally motivated discourse marker that things must be different now than in her day.

- (23) 1 . . . les habían dicho más bien que les iban a dar facilidades para levantar su
 2 población, entonces ellos se habían tomado la escuela, y las alumnas tenían
 3 que presentar toda suerte de credenciales para poder entrar a clases, y dice
 4 que era . . . las caras medios patibularias de los individuos, bien entonados y
 5 bien puestos en su línea, que no aceptaban cualquier cosa, y las echaban; a
 6 muchas no las querían aceptar porque no traían to [sic] . . . los permisos
 7 condicionados, permisos tales y cuales que ellos tenían que revisar. Yo creo
 8 que debe [sic] ser bien difícil ahora las cosas.

In sum, Gladys uses *ahora* only as a temporal deictic, not a discourse deictic, similar to the fourth and final interview in this series with a male from the oldest age group. Julio, a 64-year-old doctor in Santiago, was questioned on the topic of *questiones médicas*. Within six lines of discourse, we see a temporal opposition: in line 2, the speaker states that he cannot remember the name of something "in this moment," but then interrupts himself in line 5 to say that 'now' he remembers. This reasoning leads the author to categorize this use of *ahora* as a temporal deictic.

- (24) 1 Posteriormente, aparecieron otras reacciones, como la reacción de un sapo,
 2 un sapo cuyo nombre no me recuerdo en este momento (las características
 3 del sapo) y que se llama la "reacción de Galli Mainini" . . . eh . . . argentino. La
 4 otra . . . un . . . era autor alemán, médico alemán, y antes de eso . . . antes de eso
 5 . . . antes de la reacción de Friedman ya se practicaba—ahora me acuerdo—se
 6 practicaba la "reacción de Aschheim-Zondel."

The second and final use of *ahora* by this speaker is found toward the middle of the interview, while the interviewer and the participant are discussing immunizations:

- (25) 1 Los virus se cultivan en huevo, en fin; tienen dificultades, y estas técnicas no

- 2 están en mi . . . en mi conocimiento del problema. Eso tal vez lo prepara el
 3 Bacterólogo [sic], ¿ah? Pero generalmente el período viral . . . y ahora vienen
 4 todas estas vacunas que se dan en gotas también ¿no? pa' los niños.

This use of *ahora* is correlated with an utterance several lines before, due to the fact that the subject matter of both (25) and (26) is immunizations. Neither of these utterances is in opposition to previous statements, or prior uses of the past tense. However, the listener/reader is also able to infer that vaccinations did not always exist in droplet form, but do in the present (the immediate space of the utterance), categorizing this as a temporal use of the phrase.

- (26) 1 Pa' mí, yo considero que hoy día la vacuna oral es superior a cualquiera de
 2 los . . . de los métodos de antibióticos que existen.

Table 1 represents graphically each of the uses of *ahora* by each of the participants.

TABLE 1. Uses of *ahora* by each participant

Participant	Uses of <i>ahora</i> as a temporal deictic	Uses of <i>ahora</i> as a discourse deictic	Total <i>n</i> :
Jimena	11	0	11
Mauricio	2	6	8
Gladys	4	0	4
Julio	2	0	2

As the reader will note, the youngest speaker (Jimena) utilized *ahora* at the greatest rate (11 uses in approximately 40 minutes of conversation). Her male counterpart in the younger age group, Mauricio, utilized *ahora* at the second greatest rate (8 uses in approximately the same amount of time). The older speakers Gladys and Julio used *ahora* less often, four and two times, respectively. Of a total of 25 uses of *ahora*, 19 of them (76%) were used as temporal deictics, while the remaining 6 uses of *ahora* (24%) represent discourse deictics.

Interestingly, these ratios are approximately similar to those of Silva-Corvalán's study conducted 20 years later (19.2% of the uses of *ahora* manifested in her work were discourse deictic). Nonetheless, as opposed to Silva-Corvalán's study, the only participant that utilized *ahora* as a discourse deictic was Mauricio, the male from the younger demographic. Silva-Corvalán does not define which speakers used which types of deictics in her study, but she does specify that "*ahora* as a connector [was] attested in the speech of *all* the speakers studied"

("Ahora" 70; she uses "connector" as another term for discourse deictic). Therefore, we can see that the use of *ahora* as a discourse marker (and not simply a sentential, temporal adverb) may have been extended in the twenty years between the studies.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Below are the research questions as presented in (1), restated as (27):

- (27) a. Is *ahora* present in the 1979 data as a discursive deictic, or only as a temporal deictic?
b. If *ahora* is present as a discursive deictic, how is it used specifically?
c. Again, if *ahora* is present as a discursive deictic, is there a distinction between the ages of the speakers who utilize *ahora* as a discursive deictic?
d. Is there a difference in the way males and females use *ahora*?

First, we find that *ahora* as a discursive deictic is indeed present in the 1979 data, confirming Hypothesis 1. Second, we find that *ahora* as a discursive deictic is used to contrast a previous utterance, to call attention or emphasize, to mark information that adds to a prior collection of items, and overall to guide the hearer's inferences. The specific uses of *ahora* as a discursive deictic as used by Mauricio will be discussed further in this section. Regarding research question three, we find our hypothesis to be supported: the only speaker who used *ahora* as a discourse deictic belonged to the younger age group. However, in this same vein, hypothesis four was not supported: instead of the younger female using *ahora* as a discourse deictic as anticipated, the only speaker who used it was the younger male, Mauricio.

However, the finding that the participants did in fact use *ahora* as a discourse deictic in the late 1970s supports Silva-Corvalán's work only in part. In order to support Silva-Corvalán's theory that *ahora* has undergone a process of grammaticalization, the next step is to examine each of Mauricio's uses of *ahora* as a discourse deictic. According to Silva-Corvalán, the use of *ahora* as a connector is "strongly motivated, or at least favored, by speculative or argumentative discourse topics, and that when used as a connector it is not necessarily separated by a pause (or prosodic break) from the following utterance" ("Ahora" 70).³ In addition, as previously stated,

ahora may also have an emphatic function; that is, emphasizing or calling attention to the content of the discourse (Lamíquiz 12). Let us examine Mauricio's six uses of *ahora* as a discourse deictic for each of these features.

In (28), Mauricio speaks about the vegetation in Chile, and after the use of the discourse marker, seems to speak to something about which he is an expert: chemistry. It is possible that this use of *ahora* has an emphatic function (Lamíquiz 13), but the author prefers not to speculate further about this particular example.

- (28) 1 Aquí en Chile tenemos una vegetación muy rica en flores principalmente,
 2 plantas que son totalmente desconocidas desde el punto de vista químico, ya
 3 que los . . . eh . . . por ejemplo, ¿cómo explicarte? . . . eh . . . los olores que
 4 tienen . . . se... provienen de ciertos componentes químicos bien específicos.
 5 Ahora . . . eh . . . por ejemplo, el . . . eh . . . **boldo**, el **agua de boldo**, que aquí es
 6 tan conocida, tiene ciertos componentes químicos . . .

In (29), we see a use of *ahora* potentially motivated by the introduction of a topic about which the speaker is speculating or hypothesizing (cf. Silva-Corvalán "Ahora" 70).

- (29) 1 . . . Tiene ciertos componentes químicos... que actúan farmacológicamente
 2 sobre ciertos . . . eh . . . malestares del organismo. Ahora, la . . . el aislamiento de
 3 estos compuestos, ya sea . . . eh . . . de tipo colorantes, de tipo aromático . . .
 4 puede conducir a que Chile se convierta potencialmente en un exportador de estos
 5 principios activos. . . .

(30) is one of the only occasions on which we see the speaker approach an argumentative style; he seems to be reaching a point of irritation with the vagueness of the interviewer. Here, we see an obvious change in attitude introduced by *ahora*.

- (30) 1 La gente no . . . no mira hacia los lados. Está o demasiado preocupada de sus
 2 problemas personales o demasiado preocupada de su trabajo, pero no se
 3 preocupa por el resto del mundo. Ahora . . . eh . . . me gustaría si tú me puedes
 4 explicar más qué concepto te interesa que . . . que desarrolle, porque esto es . . .

(31) is another example in which it seems as though the speaker wishes to call attention to his utterance, or the actual shift in topic.

- (31) 1 El año pasado, de la Facultad, casi el diez por ciento, me atrevería a decir, de 2
 los profesionales que aquí trabajan normalmente, es decir, docentes, se
 3 encontraban en el extranjero haciendo estudios de perfeccionamiento.

- 4 Ahora . . . eh . . . en cuanto a publicaciones, eh . . . porque ésa es otra . . . otro de
 5 los factores que se . . . los cuales se cataloga a un . . . a un equipo, a un
 6 establecimiento de trabajo, en la Universidad.

The last two uses of *ahora* introduce utterances that convey a particular attitude of the speaker. In (32), Mauricio uses *ahora* to introduce his opinion and emotion regarding a particular subject: a job that he realized he was capable of doing. In (33), *ahora* reintroduces a topic that he had already discussed with his interlocutor, and then Mauricio continues to express a particular opinion on the subject, sharing his attitudes with the interviewer. As the reader will note, each of Mauricio's six uses of *ahora* comes after a prosodic pause (communicated orthographically through a period).

- (32) 1 . . . este tema es porque conocía al . . . a la persona que en este momento
 2 trabajaba con esa línea de . . . de ideas y me agradó la forma en que esta
 3 persona podía dirigir a la gente. Ahora, me dirigí . . . eh . . . me . . . me entusiasmé
 4 por este trabajo porque podría realizarlo. . .
- (33) 1 Existen miles de otros trabajos, tantos y cuanto más productivos y más
 2 beneficiosos para nosotros, y que, en ningún grado . . . eh . . . de ninguna
 3 manera, lo denigran. Ahora, en . . . en cuanto al universitario, volviendo al
 4 profesional que se fuga de Chile, yo personalmente también soy partidario de
 5 que si no puedo desarrollarme como químico aquí. . .

Now that we have discussed Mauricio's uses of *ahora* as a discursive deictic, it is also necessary to thoroughly examine the results of Silva-Corvalán's study, which are presented in 1999, twenty years later. The results of Silva-Corvalán's study include frequent uses of *ahora* in what she calls "modal" speech acts, or qualification, condition and hypothesis ("Ahora" 79). It is due to these uses, she states, that most strongly support the hypothesis that this form is undergoing a change. In her data, there were frequent associations between *ahora* and a type of discourse that "invites the expression of the speaker's subjective attitudes, thus leading to the association of *ahora* with modality, a process that may be appropriately described as 'subjectifying' grammaticalization" ("Ahora" 79).

In addition, according to Silva-Corvalán, the development of a new modality for *ahora* does not mean that its old modality as a temporal deictic will be lost. Rather, as Heine et al. states (20), "semantic layering" may occur: "older meanings are not discarded but remain

and coexist with the new meanings; different discourse contexts are compatible with one or another meaning of the form, and in turn promote the development of innovative interpretations” (“Ahora” 79).

Several issues with the present study must be taken into account. First, as shown, *ahora* appeared more in the discourse of one of the younger speakers than of the older speakers, though neither group utilized the marker to a great extent. Since it was a guided interview in a formal style, it is possible that the participants did not have the opportunity to approach a more narrative style (cf. Labov, “Social Stratification” 308-311) or provide evaluation of their utterances. It is also possible that the younger speakers simply happened to present contexts of language use in which *ahora* was useful or required.

In summary, through the excerpts of interviews transcribed in 1979 in Santiago, we see that *ahora* had already begun to undergo the process of subjectification in late 1979, shifting its meaning from that of a temporal deictic to a discursive deictic. Evidently, it is possible that this change had begun earlier. However, further research that utilizes even earlier sources will need to be undertaken in order to confirm this possibility. Specifically, Mauricio’s six uses of *ahora* as a discursive deictic exemplify this shift. His uses of *ahora*, as stated by the literature, are motivated by speculative or argumentative discourse topics, may function to provide emphasis for the subsequent utterance, convey his attitudes toward the content of his utterances and overall, guide his listener’s inferences.

That these uses of the innovative meaning of *ahora* are found in the younger age group aligns with the literature on language change (Cameron “Aging” 210, Rissel 279, Fontanella de Weinberg 57, Moreno de Alba 369, Labov 311-312, Lavandera 10). The fact that there is a difference in the uses of *ahora* across the age groups between these diachronic studies may suggest that there is a change in progress. However, as with any study on language shift, these results must be evaluated with a critical eye. As Rissel shows, the effect of gender is not necessarily uniform across a community (279-282). Additionally, Cameron (“Language” 288) and Silva-Corvalán (*Sociolingüística* 101-103) highlight the issues of age-gradation, in which throughout life, people grow, mature and pass through various stages of life. The apparent language change presented in these two studies could perhaps be simply a function of individual linguistic change.

In addition, Cameron ("Language" 290) cautions against diagnosing language change based on only one social or stylistic pattern. It would be necessary to examine several variables at once, in order to make this determination. This preliminary study is based on four speakers, all from the same socioeconomic stratum, speaking in a similarly formal style. In order to provide more conclusive evidence of a change in progress, the speech of many more participants would have to be evaluated. These analyses would need to take into account age, gender, socioeconomic status, style and, of course, context of speech.

Notes

1. This volume is part of a project that collects and transcribes the speech of upper class, educated speakers from the capital cities in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. This project was spearheaded by the late Juan M. Lope Blanch of the Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México.

2. The uses and analyses of now/*ahora* may or may not be the same in both English and Spanish. However, such a discussion is outside of the scope of the present paper.

3. The reader may notice that several uses of *ahora* in Mauricio's speech are followed by pauses (for example, in (28) and (30)). However, due to the presence and ubiquity of the pauses in the rest of his discourse, I have chosen not to take these pauses into account when determining the functions of his uses of *ahora*.

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