



***That's a construction for you/las construcciones es lo que tiene(n):
Grammaticalization via Subjectification in Attributive Clauses in
English and Spanish***

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with matrix copular inferentials of the type “That’s love for you” and “El amor es lo que tiene”. Specifically, it shows that these configurations exhibit an early stage of grammaticalization, characterized by an increase in pragmatic significance and subjective expressiveness. It also demonstrates that the semantico-pragmatic (including discourse-functional) properties of these constructions in English and Spanish lend further credence to the Traugottian context-based view of grammaticalization as involving two distinct yet related subtypes. The first one, pragmatic strengthening, is argued here to give rise to a shift from identifying attribution to characterizing attribution, thus expressing a positive or negative evaluation by the subject/speaker regarding the entity/person encoded in the lexical filler. The second one, at a textual level, results in these constructions functioning as summative discourse markers. Moreover, this paper offers a constructionist overview of the place of these inferential constructions within the family of focusing constructions.

KEYWORDS: Grammaticalization, subjectification, subjectivity, Construction Grammar, attribution, inferential, characterization, identification, modality, discourse marker

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out to provide an adequate account, on both descriptive and explanatory grounds, of the salient semantico-pragmatic hallmarks of English and Spanish configurations of the type in bold in (1)-(2) below:¹

- (1) Oh dear! She is stuck in an infinite loop and he is an idiot! Well, **that's love for you**
 (Example taken from <http://www.gotfuturama.com/Multimedia/EpisodeSounds/3ACV15/>)
- (2) *Est-aba vi-endo un-a serie en TV y*
 be-IMPPRET.1SG watch-GER INDF.F.SG show in TV and
me he levant-ado del sofá
 PRONOM.1SG AUXPFV.1SG get.up-PTCP out.of.DEF.M.SG sofa
para hac-er est-o en 2 segundo-s. Es
 PURP do-INF PROX-M.SG in two second-PL be.PRS.3SG
lo que tien-e ver la tele!
 DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG watch-INF DEF.FSG telly.F.SG
 (Example taken from <http://www.mondadientes.net/?p=389>)

‘I was watching a TV show and I have got out of the sofa to do this. That’s watching telly for you!’

Specifically, the focus of this paper is to argue for the centrality of subjectification (Brinton & Traugott, 2005; Stein & Wright, 1995; Traugott, 1995a, b; Traugott & Dasher, 2002) or subjectivity (Lyons, 1982; Scheibman, 2002), understood as the expression of the speaker’s subjective belief, psychological state and/or attitude toward the proposition (Lyons, 1982: 102; Scheibman, 2002: 1-16), as overall determinants of the semantico-pragmatic import and of the discourse functions of the constructions in (1)-(2) above.² The importance of these factors provides compelling evidence for the claim that the constructions in (1)-(2) qualify as a case of incipient grammaticalization (Brinton & Traugott, 2005; Hopper & Traugott, 1993: 68; Traugott, 1988, 1989, 1995a, b, 2003).

This paper is structured as follows: Section II addresses some important structural and semantico-pragmatic similarities between the configurations in (1)-(2) above and the so-called inferential constructions, most notably, the “it is that...” and *es que...* configurations in English and Spanish (Declerck, 1992; Delahunty, 1995; Delahunty & Gatzkiewicz, 2000; Fernández Leborans, 1992; Fuentes Rodríguez, 1997). It provides empirical evidence that the configurations in (1)-(2), albeit in varying degrees, can be aptly regarded as instances of copular matrix inferentials. Section III argues for the centrality of grammaticalization to explicate the synchronic behaviour of the configurations in (1)-(2) above, and then goes on to demonstrate that the cluster of structural and semantico-factors exhibited by these constructions fits nicely into the context-based Traugottian conception of grammaticalization (Brinton & Traugott, 2005; Bybee, 2003a, b; Heine, 2003; Traugott, 1988, 1989, 1995a,

1995b, 2003). In particular, it is argued that (i) decategorialization, (ii) pragmatic strengthening, (iii) subjectification and, to some extent, (iv) fusion and coalescence, are relevant to the Spanish construction, while only the last three parameters are operational in the case of its English counterpart. Section IV shows how the inherent semantico-pragmatic and discourse functions of these constructions at both a propositional and textual level can be aptly accounted for under a constructionist account (Bybee, 2003a, b, 2007; Bybee & Eddington, 2006, Goldberg, 1995, 2006, *inter alia*). More specifically, by placing the configurations in (1)-(2) within a family of embracing clefts constructions and other focusing constructions, the constructionist analysis presented here can account for a significant number of form and function regularities of these focusing configurations, while also capturing some unique properties of the constructions in (1)-(2) above. In particular, the constructionist proposal presented here can shed light on the restrictions impinging on the semantico-pragmatic profile of the nominal filler in the constructions in (1)-(2) in English and Spanish. Finally, section V summarizes the main findings of our analysis.

Before proceeding further, a brief digression is needed regarding the data and the methodology used here. The data on which this paper draws has been extracted by and large from the Google search engine. This strategy was chosen since no tokens of the English construction were found in the *British National Corpus* (BNC henceforth; see Burnard, 1995 for further details on this corpus) and no more than 15 tokens of the Spanish construction were found in the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA henceforth, see further the Real Academia Española website listed in the bibliographical section). The searches in Google were conducted during the months of March-April 2006 for the English and Spanish data. In the case of Spanish, the data was manually filtered out of the first 500 hits yielded for the *lo que tiene* and of the first 500 hits for the *lo que tienen* strings. As for its English counterpart, the searches were conducted for “is”, including the contracted form “’s”, and the data was manually filtered out of the first 1,000 hits yielded for the query in question. All in all, 45 tokens were attested for the Spanish construction and 37 for its English counterpart. Moreover, in order to meet the requirement of explanatory adequacy (Goldberg, 1996, 2003), on some occasions the examples extracted from the Google and the CREA Corpus have been slightly modified or contrasted with examples created for the sake of clearer argumentation. Finally, in the case of example of (24)(a), recourse was also made to a questionnaire with native informants (see Appendix).³ This additional source of information was considered necessary in view of the fact that, although the original example found in Google featured singular agreement for *tener* (‘have’), a number of native speakers of Spanish at the audience of the AELCO conference raised the point that the version with *tener* (‘have’) in the plural was somewhat more natural than its singular counterpart.

Thus, following the suggestion made by part of the audience at the AELCO conference that this point be examined in more detail taking into account acceptability judgements from native informants, a relatively short questionnaire was compiled (see Appendix). In this questionnaire, example (24)(a) was presented in two versions with the original third person plural present form of *tener* (‘have’) (*tienen*) and the third person singular present form (*tiene*) (‘has’). The same strategy was followed with two similar tokens

of the construction featuring plural fillers (i.e. *las navidades* ('Christmas') and *las rebajas* ('sales')). In addition, 6 further sentences were added as distractors, thus making up a total of 12 sentences in the questionnaire. The examples in the questionnaire were rated as (i) acceptable, (ii) marginally acceptable or (iii) unacceptable by a group of 30 Spanish university students aged between 21 and 22 at the University of Almería, Spain. Before the questionnaire was administered to the native informants, they were given the following instructions as to how to interpret the acceptability labels above. "Acceptable" ('Acceptable') was taken to mean "the sentence is possible in Spanish", while "no acceptable" ('unacceptable') was intended to reflect that "the sentence is impossible in Spanish". Moreover, the label "marginamente aceptable" ('marginally acceptable') was meant to capture the following acceptability judgements: (a) "the sentence is not altogether impossible but does not sound completely OK either" and/or (b) "I'm not quite sure about whether this sentence is acceptable or unacceptable".

To round off this section on the methodological preliminaries, a justification is in order for the use of the questionnaire as an additional tool of information. The primary purpose behind the compilation of this questionnaire was to assess whether the form *tener* ('have') was frozen with respect to number marking irrespective of the number properties of the nominal element filling in the construction (e.g. *las despedidas* 'farewells', as in example (24) below). The degree of fixation of the form of *tener* ('have') is not only interesting from a descriptive point of view, but is even more crucial for our purposes here in order to elucidate whether this construction qualifies as a case of early grammaticalization.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF COPULAR MATRIX INFERENTIALS

The constructions illustrated in (1)-(2) above –which, to my knowledge, have never been investigated in any detail– are at least in principle structurally similar to much-discussed inferential constructions of the type in (3)-(4) below:⁴

- (3) He had got past the stage of reason, even his power of mocking at himself was dead, or perhaps *it was that there seemed no longer anything that could be mocked at*
(Example taken from Delahunty, 1990: 12, emphasis added to the original)
- (4) *Es que est-aba busc-ando la-s*
be.PRS.3SG COMP IMPPRET-1SG search-GER DEF.F-PL
cera-s para la niñ-a
crayon-PL for DEF.F.SG girl-F.SG
'It's that I was looking for the crayons for the child'
(Example taken from Delahunty, 2001: 543; interlinear glosses mine)

The constructions in (1)-(2) and (3)-(4) above share a number of interesting lexicogrammatical similarities. Particularly interesting for our purposes here are the following: (i) the fact that they feature a copular matrix which must always occur in the third person

singular, and (ii) the fact that these inferentials may take a null subject in the case of Spanish or an expletive subject in the case of English, as illustrated in (5)-(6) below, respectively:

- (5) (a) That's/*these/*those *are love/*loves for you
 (b) *El amor/* Los amor-es es /*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG DEF.M.PL love-M.PL be.PRS.3SG
** son lo que tien-e*
 be.PRS.3PL DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 'That's love for you' / *'These are loves for you'
- (6) (a) **That's love for you** / * Is love for you
 (b) * *Es-o es lo que tien-e /*
 DIST-M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
Es lo que tien-e
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 *'That's that for you' / *'Is that for you'

Following Declerck (1992: 216) and Bearth (1999: 272-273), it is my contention that the constructions in (1)-(2) can be aptly regarded as instances of copular matrix inferentials on the following grounds: (i) the 'that's ... for you' string and the nominal relative clause *lo que tiene* express "what the speaker infers to be the correct explanation of a situation or speech act", and (ii) in the case of Spanish, when the construction selects a null subject (cf. (6)(b) above), the hearer also has to infer the variable about which the speaker provides his/own correct explanation. Therefore, the Spanish construction, unlike its English counterpart, can be taken to be inferential in two ways.

The foregoing discussion should not, however, be taken to imply that the copular matrix inferentials in (1)-(2) are identical on semantico-pragmatic grounds to the constructions in (3)-(4). At least two important asymmetries can be pinpointed: unlike the inferentials in (3)-(4), the constructions under investigation here cannot occur in negative (or interrogative) clauses and cannot be prefaced by any modal element encoding the idea of e.g. possibility or doubt (*podría ser que?/'could it be that?', quizás/'perhaps'*), as shown in (7)-(10) below:

- (7) *It was not that I didn't want to go.* It was only that I had no time
 (Example taken from Declerck, 1992: 213, emphasis added to the original)
- (8) *Deb-o agradec-er a Don Pedro Schwartz que*
 must-PRS.1SG thank-INF OBJ Mr Pedro Schwartz COMP
alud-iera repetidamente, en su columna
 allude-SUBJV.IMPPRET.3SG repeatedly in POSS.3SG column.F.SG
del sábado pasad-o, a mi libro
 of.DEF Saturday.SG last-M.SG to POSS.1SG book. M.SG

“El planeta american-o”. *No es que*
 DEF.M.SG planet.M.SG American-M.SG NEG be.PRS.3SG COMP
me trat-ara bien, sino que,
 ACC.1SG treat-SUBJV.IMPPRET.3SG well but COMP
precisamente por su vehemente
 precisely because.of POSS.3SG vehement.SG
desacuerdo y su-s amañ-ad-a-s
 disagreement.SG and POSS.3SG fiddle-PTCP-F-PL
interpretacion-es, dej-a su animadversión en
 interpretation-PL leave-PRS.3SG POSS.3SG animosity.F.SG in
el aire
 DEF.M.SG air.M.SG

(El País, 11/16/1996, example taken from Delahunty & Gatzkiewicz, 2000: 304)

‘I should thank Mr. Pedro Schwartz, who, in his column last Saturday, repeatedly alluded to my book “The American Planet.” It’s not that he treated me well, but rather that precisely because of his vehement disagreement and his manipulative interpretations, he allows his animosity to be made public’

(9) # Could it be that/perhaps **that’s love for you?**

(10) # ¿ *Podría ser que/ quizás el amor*
 can-COND.3SG be.INF COMP perhaps DEF.M.SG love.M.SG
es lo que tien-e?
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

‘Could it be that/perhaps that’s love for you?’

Specifically, the inferential constructions in (3)-(4) above have raised some points of controversy in the literature, which can for current purposes be summarized as follows:

- (i) some authors consider the inferential constructions in question as a type of cleft sentences (Delahunty, 1982, 1984, 2001), while others reject such a position (Collins, 1991; Heggie, 1988; Lambrecht, 2001).
- (ii) there is a lack of consensus as to whether these constructions should be treated as specificational (i.e. identifying: ‘x is y’) (Declerck, 1992) or not (i.e. characterizing: ‘a is an attribute or property of x’) (Delahunty, 1982, 1984, 2001).
- (iii) the difference between inferentials and non-inferentials is taken to be a semantic issue (Declerck, 1992) or a pragmatic one (Delahunty, 1982, 1984, 2001).

In the remainder of this section, I shall attempt to illustrate my own position on the second issue above in the light of the synchronic behaviour of the copular matrix inferentials exemplified in (1)-(2), namely, that these configurations are characterizing rather than identifying attributive clauses. Regarding the first issue, I shall argue in this paper that inferentials, including the constructions analyzed here, display a number of interesting semantico-pragmatic affinities with clefts. However, I defer until section IV a proper

discussion of this question, where the discourse-functional motivations of these constructions will be analyzed in some detail. As to the third issue, in line with the stance taken in Construction Grammar (Goldberg, 2003, 2006), no strict division will be posited here between semantics and pragmatics but rather a continuum, comprising of a relatively wide number of aspects which range from lexical semantics to discourse pragmatics and include textual and register considerations. In addition, much of the evidence presented in the next section for the incipient process of grammaticalization exhibited by these constructions will help to substantiate the claim that these configurations are semantically as well as pragmatically motivated.

The copular matrix inferentials investigated in this paper seem to be *prima facie* instances of identifying attributive clauses of the type illustrated in (11)-(12) below:

(11) That's the worst possible thing to do (BNC J1H 3817)

(12) *He* *sido* *muy* *afortunad-a* *en* *mis* *dos*
 AUXPFV.1SG be.PTCP very lucky-F.SG in POSS.1SG two
últim-a-s *película-s* *porque* *he* *ten-ido* *la*
 last-F-PL movie.F-PL because AUXPFV.1SG have-PTCP DEF.F.SG
idea, *la* *he* *escr-ito* *y* *la*
 idea.SG 3SG.ACC AUXPFV.1SG write-PTCP and 3SG.ACC
he *dirig-ido.* *Es-o* *es* *lo*
 AUXPFV.1SG direct-PTCP DIST-M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG
buen-o *que* *tien-e* *est-ar* *en* *Dinamarca,*
 good-N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG be-INF in Denmark
que *la* *distancia* *entre* *el*
 COMP DEF.F.SG distance.F.SG between DEF.M.SG
pensamiento *y* *la* *acción* *es* *cort-a*
 thought.M.SG and DEF.F.SG action.F.SG be.PRS.3SG short-F.SG
 (Example taken from

<http://golem.es/wilbursequieresuicidar/index.php?seccion=comienzo>)

'I have been very lucky with my last two movies because I have had the idea, I have written it down and I have directed it. That's the good thing about being in Denmark: the distance between thinking and action is short'

However, by virtue of the incipient grammaticalization process these configurations have gone through (see further section III), they can be more suitably described on semantico-pragmatic grounds as characterizing attributive clauses (see further Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 219-229; Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 741-743, *inter alios*, for the distinction between identifying and characterizing attribution). In the case of Spanish, the construction seems to have undergone a process of morphosyntactic compression, whose first stage may well have been an identifying attributive clause (as in (13)(a) below); as a result of the omission of lexical

material, the Spanish configuration acquires an inferential status in the two ways mentioned earlier (see (13)(d) below).

- (13) (a) *Es-o es lo buen-o que tiene*
 DIST-M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG good- N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
est-ar en Dinamarca
 be-INF in Denmark

‘That’s the good thing about being in Denmark’

- (b) *Es lo que tien-e est-ar en*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG be-INF in
Dinamarca
 Denmark

‘That’s being in Denmark for you’

- (c) *Es lo que tien-e Dinamarca*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG Denmark

‘That’s Denmark for you’

- (d) *Es lo que tien-e*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

‘That’s (the good) thing about it’

At least two compelling arguments can be raised in support of the claim that these configurations do not have the semantico-pragmatic import of identifying attributive clauses. First, these constructions do not allow the reversal of the subject and the attribute, which is taken to be a crucial property of identifying attributive clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 228; Moreno Cabrera, 1982: 232), as shown in the contrasts between (14) and (15) below:

- (14) (a) What you need is love :: Love is what you need
 (b) That’s love for you:: *Love for you is that

- (15) (a) *Lo que necesit-as es amor ::*
 DEF.N.SG REL need-PRS.2SG be.PRS.3SG love.M.SG
Amor es lo que necesit-as
 Love. M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL need-PRS.2SG

‘What you need is love’:: ‘Love is what you need’

- (b) *El amor es lo que tiene ::*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 * *Lo que tiene es el amor*
 DEF.N.SG REL need-PRS.3SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG love.M.SG

‘That’s love for you’:: * ‘For you that’s love’

Moreover, unlike identifying attributive clauses, the constructions under analysis here pattern syntactically with characterizing attributive clauses in two interesting respects. First, they allow for an overt comparison or simile through e.g. *como* ('as') between the subject of the clause with another theme. Second, they favour –or even require– an indefinite or zero article attribute (see further Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2372-2379 for a more detailed account of the choice of the article in relation to the distinction between characterizing and equative attribution). Thus, consider (16)-(17) below:

- (16) (a) *Juan es médic-o, como Pedro*
 Juan be.PRS.3SG doctor-M.SG like Pedro

'John is a doctor, like Pedro'

- (b) * *Juan es el médic-o, como Pedro*
 Juan be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG doctor-M.SG like Pedro

'John is the doctor, like Pedro'

(Examples and acceptability judgements taken from Moreno Cabrera, 1982: 232; cf. also Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2396)

- (17) (a) *La piratería es lo que tien-e,*
 DEF.F.SG piracy.F.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 [*como cualquier otr-o delito*]⁵
 like any.SG another-M.SG crime.M.SG

(Example adapted from: http://www.mangasverdes.es/2006/09/20/la_pirateria-es-lo-que-tiene)

'That's piracy for you, like any other crime'

- (b) **That's edutainment for you, [just like television]**

(Adapted from: <http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/19980422/11251084.html>)

Moreover, unlike identifying attributive clauses, no constituent in the copular matrix inferentials under examination can serve as a felicitous answer to a 'who' or 'what' question.

- (18) (a) The bank robber is John
 (b) Who is the bank robber? John

(Examples taken from Declerck, 1988: 6)

- (19) (a) *La piratería es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.F.SG piracy.F.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'That's piracy for you'

- (b) ¿ *Qué es lo que tien-e?*
 What be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'What's that for you?'

- # *La piratería*
 DEF.F.SG piracy.F.SG

‘Piracy’

- (c) ¿ *Qué es la piratería?* # *Lo que*
 What be.PRS.3SG DEF F.SG piracy.F.SG DEF.N.SG REL
tien-e
 have-PRS.3SG

‘What’s piracy? That for you’

- (20) (a) **That’s edutainment for you**
 (b) What’s edutainment for you? #That
 (c) What’s that? #Edutainment for you

Thus far we have presented arguments in favour of treating the constructions under analysis here as characterizing rather identifying attributive clauses. However, it must be emphasized that, by virtue of their incipient grammaticalization process, these configurations differ from non-grammaticalized characterizing attributive clauses in a number of interesting ways. It is with these idiosyncratic features that the next section is mainly concerned with in the light of the Traugottian conception of grammaticalization.

III. EVIDENCE FOR AN INCIPIENT GRAMMATICALIZATION PROCESS

III.1. Some preliminaries

Grammaticalization is generally understood to be the *process* whereby linguistic items (of a lexical, pragmatic or even phonetic nature) become grammatical or whereby already grammatical items achieve an even more grammatical status, changing their distribution and function in the process (cf. Bybee, 2003a: 146; Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer, 1991a; Hopper & Traugott, 1993: xv; Lehmann, 1982/1995, 2002: 10, *inter alios*). Specifically, Traugott (1982, 1995b, 2003) proposes the following two types of grammaticalization, which, according to Wischer (2000: 364), are “not at all contradictory processes”.⁶

- (i) **Type 1:** It operates on the level of the proposition and involves a change in the function of a given construction *via* pragmatic strengthening in discourse (Traugott, 1995b: 15).
 Syntax *via* pragmatic strengthening in discourse → syntax with a different function.
- (ii) **Type 2:** It involves the development of textual or discourse markers and, unlike subtype I, operates on *the textual or discourse level*, thus taking discourse to be the final stage in the process of grammaticalization (cf. Traugott, 1982: 256):
 proposition → text (i.e. the development of meanings signalling cohesion) → discourse

In the remainder of this section, I shall provide compelling evidence as to why the data on the synchronic behaviour of the copular matrix inferential constructions examined here fit in nicely with the Traugottian model of grammaticalization. The following four parameters are argued to play a role in explaining the structural and semantico-pragmatic (including the discourse-functional) properties of these configurations: (i) decategorialization, (ii) pragmatic strengthening, (iii) subjectification and, to some extent, (iv) fusion and coalescence (see further Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 25-31). In addition, some remarks will be made regarding the impact of frequency on these constructions.

III.2. Decategorialization

Decategorialization can be defined as “the shift from one category status to another, correlated with a shift from prototypical membership of a category to less prototypical membership, (...)” (Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 25). Thus, for instance, in the case of verbs, this category loses such verb-like attributes as the ability to show variation in tense, aspect, modality, and person-number marking (see further Heine *et al.*, 1991a; Hopper & Traugott, 1993: 105; also Hopper, 1991: 22). In the case of the inferential constructions discussed here, the matrix forms *es* (‘is’) and *is* are frozen with respect to variation in tense, aspect, modality and person-number marking. In other words, the matrix verb shows a high degree of fixedness regarding its tense-aspect-modality properties, as can be seen from the fact it must invariably appear in the third person singular present tense, as shown in (21) - (23) below).

(21) (a) We are also charged all the same charges as men, so that's no excuse in my eyes ... heading of this topic says "**That's men for you**" and the medical profession ...
(Example taken from: www.irishhealth.com/?level=4&id=3143)

(b) * **Those are men for you...**

(22) * *Es lo que tendría / pued-e ten-er /*
be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-COND.3SG can-PRS.3SG have-INF

tendr-á la-s despedida-s

have-FUT DEF.M-PL N.F-PL

*‘That’d/can be/will be be a farewell for you’

(23) ***That’d be/can be/will be/may have been men for you**

However, while the matrix verbs *ser* (‘be’) and “be” are completely fixed regarding their tense, aspect, modality, number, etc. possibilities, in the Spanish configuration the form *tener* (‘have’) may feature variation in number irrespective of the nominal element acting as filler of the construction. Thus, consider, by way of illustration, examples (24)(a)-(c) below:

(24) (a) *Es lo que tien-e la-s despedida-s*
be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG DEF.F-PL N.F-PL

(Example taken from <http://ipunkrock.com/diario/post/610/3580>)

‘That’s farewells for you’

(b) * *Son* *lo* *que* *tienen* *la-s* *despedida-s*
 be.PRS.3PL DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3PL DEF.F-PL N.F-PL

‘Those are farewells for you’

(c) *Es* *lo* *que* *tien-en* *las* *despedidas*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3PL DEF.F-PL N.F-PL

‘That’s farewells for you’

Interestingly, 75% of the native speakers who filled in our questionnaire preferred the plural verb form in contrast to the singular form in this configuration, which can be taken to show that the rigidizing of the syntax of the nominal relative clause in the Spanish configuration is still at an even more incipient stage than that of its English counterpart. However, by the same token, the fact that the combination with singular agreement (as in (24)(a) above) was acceptable to 25% of the speakers can be taken at least in principle to point to an incipient grammaticalization process for the *tener* (‘have’) form in this construction.^{vii}

Moreover, the lexical items that grammaticalize are typically what are known as “basic words” (Hopper & Traugott, 1993: 97). That is certainly the case of *ser* (‘be’) as well as *tener* (‘have’) in Spanish, and “be” in English. In the case of Spanish, *ser* (‘be’) is the eighth most frequent word and *tener* (‘have’) occupies the eighteenth position (Davies, 2006: 12). In the case of English, the form “is” appears among the top 100 words in a recent investigation based on 29,213,800 words from TV and movie scripts and transcripts (see further http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Frequency_lists).

III.3. Pragmatic strengthening

As will be recalled from section II, the constructions examined in this paper appear to be *prima facie* identifying attributive clauses. In fact, in the case of Spanish, these constructions may well have originated from identifying attributive clauses through a process of morphosyntactic compression (see example (13) above). However, from a synchronic viewpoint, the configurations in question appear to function on semantico-pragmatic grounds more like characterizing attributive clauses (cf. Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2366-2421; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 219-229; Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 741-743, *inter alios*).

Therefore, under the Traugottian model of grammaticalization, the semantico-pragmatic behaviour of these configurations on synchronic grounds can be accommodated as follows: these constructions are argued to be subject to a process of pragmatic strengthening whereby they acquire pragmatic meanings: (i) a shift from **identifying** (hence reversible) to **characterizing** (hence non-reversible) attribution, expressing a positive or negative attitudinal stance or characterization on the part of the subject/speaker regarding the entity/person encoded in the lexical filler, and (ii) the development of textual or discourse markers (Traugott, 1982: 256) but only at the expense of weakening part of its original content meaning (cf. Hopper & Traugott, 2003: 95-98; Traugott, 1988, 1995a, 1995b). Advancing the discussion to follow in the remainder of this paper, the inferential constructions examined

here can be argued to operate not only at a propositional but at a textual one, too. Regarding the latter meaning, these constructions function as summative discourse markers showing varying degrees of explicitness in English and Spanish (see further section IV.3.3. below). The synchronic behaviour of these constructions can be seen to be motivated in terms of a “unidirectional movement away from (its) original specific, concrete reference and toward increasingly general and abstract reference” (Pagliuca, 1994: ix). Therefore, the configurations examined in this paper appear to move along a cline (or, alternatively, a path) of **referential** > **non-referential** functions (see further Dasher, 1995). In much the same vein, Brinton and Traugott (2005: 69) contend that “fulfilling a need to express abstract domains of cognition in terms of concrete domains” is one of the arguments that can be posited in favour of unidirectionality in grammaticalization. For our purposes here, we may summarize this process as in (25) below:

(25) (DEICTIC) IDENTIFICATION > SUBJECTIVE CHARACTERIZATION

Moreover, by virtue of their incipient stage of grammaticalization, these configurations differ from their non-grammaticalized counterparts in a number of interesting ways. First, these are systematically non-reversible (cf. Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2379), even under the influence of focalization, as shown in (26) below (with capitals being intended to mark contrastive stress):

- (26) (a) *MUY INTELIGENTE es Juan*
 Very intelligent.SG be.PRS.3SG Juan
 (Example taken from Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2379)

‘Very intelligent is John’

(b) AFRAID you will be (Yoda, Empire Strikes Back, Film Script)

- (c) * *LO QUE TIEN-E es el*
 DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG
amor
 love.M.SG

‘For you that’s love’

(d) *EDUTAINMENT is that for you

Second, the *lo que tiene* string and the postverbal sequence “X for you” cannot be replaced with the corresponding pro-forms *lo* (lit. ‘it’) and “so”, respectively (cf. Fernández Leborans, 1999: 2361). Thus, consider the acceptability contrasts in (27) below:

- (27) (a) *El amor es complicad-o:: El*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG complicated-M.SG DEF.M.SG
amor lo es
 love.M.SG so be.PRS.3SG
 ‘Love is complicated’:: ‘Love is so’
 (b) *El amor es lo que tien-e::*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 # *El amor lo es*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG so be.PRS.3SG

‘That’s love for you’: ‘Love is so’

(c) Love is cruel:: Love is *so*

(d) **That’s love for you**:: *That’s *so*

Third, the postverbal strings cannot be elicited through *cómo* (“what’s like?”) or ‘what’s like?’, as shown in (28) and (29) respectively:

(28) (a) *El amor es complicad-o*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG complicated-M.SG

(b) *El amor es lo que tien-e*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

(c) *¿Cómo es el amor? Complicad-o /*

How be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG love.M.SG complicated-M.SG/

lo que tien-e

DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

‘What’s love like? Complicated/#That’s for you’

(29) (a) Love is complicated

(b) That’s love for you

(c) What’s love like? Complicated/#**That’s for you**

Fourth, the verb forms *es* (‘is’) and “is” cannot be replaced with any other current linking verb encoding characterizing attribution such as e.g. *parece* (‘appears’), *está* (‘is’), “seems”, “appears”, etc:

(30) (a) Christmas seems/appears (to be) stressful

(b) *That seems/appears (to be) Christmas for you

(c) *El amor parec-e/ est-á*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG seem-PRS.3SG be-PRS.3SG

complicad-o

complicated-M.SG

‘Love seems to be/is complicated’

(d) * *El amor parec-e/ est-á*

DEF.M.SG love.M.SG seem-PRS.3SG be-PRS.3SG

lo que tien-e

DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

* ‘That seems to be love for you’

III.4. Subjectification

This process can be defined as “the development of a grammatically identifiable expression of Speaker’s belief or Speaker’s attitude towards what is said” (Company, 2006: 375-376; Traugott, 1995a: 32; Traugott & Brinton, 2005: 108-109). Specifically, these constructions instantiate **covert subjectivity** (Scheibman, 2002: 166-167), insofar as they serve to convey the attribution by the speaker/writer of a positive or negative value to an implicit or explicit entity, understood to be the topic of discourse. In other words, the strings ‘that’s ... for you’ and *es lo que tiene* can be argued to be semantico-pragmatically equivalent to predicative adjectives (e.g. ‘good’, ‘wrong’) or nominal predicates encoding a judgemental stance on the subject/speaker (e.g. ‘something good’, ‘a letdown’), and can thus be treated as markers of covert subjectivity (Scheibman, 2002: 166-167). Consider examples (31)-(35) below:

- (31) *Reduc-ir a Verne a mer-o escritor de ciencia*
 Reduce-INF OBJ Verne to mere-M.SG writer.M.SG of science.F.SG
ficción, a mer-o visionari-o que no fue,
 fiction.F.SG to mere-M.SG visionary-M.SG REL NEG INDEFPRET.3SG
es un error de bulto. Es
 be.PRS.3SG INDF.M.SG mistake.M.SG of size.M.SG. be.PRS.3SG
lo que tien-e recuper-ar a tod-a costa
 DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG recover-INF at all-F.SG cost.F
los mito-s de la infancia
 DEF.M.PL myth.M-PL of DEF.F.SG childhood.F.SG
 (Example taken from <http://crisei.blogalia.com/historias/28390>)

‘Reducing Verne to a mere writer of science fiction, a mere visionary he was not, is a big mistake. That’s recovering the myths of childhood at all costs for you’

(Negative opinion: ‘Trying to recover the myths of childhood at all costs is just wrong/a mistake’)

- (32) *El tiempo, es lo que tien-e:*
 DEF.M.SG time.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
que suaviz-a y pon-e la-s cosa-s
 COMP soften-PRS.3SG and put-PRS.3SG DEF-PL thing-PL
en su sitio.
 in POSS.3SG place.M.SG
 (CREA Corpus, El Mundo, 13/04/1996: CONSUELO ÁLVAREZ DE TOLEDO:
 Abril sobre abril)

‘That’s time for you: it softens and puts things in their place’

(Positive opinion: ‘Time is fair’)

- (33) ah, names in the sand. i’ve done that. and initials in the
 condensation on bus windows. and in the margins of
 notebooks. and on the backs of your hands.

that's love for you: it gets everywhere.

(Examples taken from <http://www.krishna.com/main.php?id=285>)

(Positive opinion: 'Love is (something) powerful')

- (34) **That's love for you.** The whole world is blowing trumpets about it. Poets are praising it, minstrels singing of it, psychologists getting deep about it, boys and girls dreaming of it. Billboards selling it, industries built on it, kings and queens and streetsweepers hot in its pursuit. And finally what is it? A letdown

(Example taken from <http://www.krishna.com/main.php?id=285>)

(Negative opinion: 'Love is negative/frustrating/a letdown')

Thus far we have been concerned with the semantico-pragmatic implications of subjectification. However, this process has also been argued to have an impact on syntax. Specifically, Company (2004: 22; 2006: 382) contends that subjectification involves the cancellation of syntax. In her own words, “[a] subjective expression undergoes syntactic isolation and syntactic rigidizing, because the referential descriptive syntactic aspects of the expression are unnecessary and, in consequence, forms usually restrict, or even cancel, their distributional and relational capacities in subjectification.” (Company, 2006: 382).

Building on the evidence for syntactic rigidizing illustrated in examples (5)-(6) and (28)-(30) above, it can be further added that the verb form *tiene* ('has') in the Spanish configuration cannot be replaced with any other verb of possession. Nor can the phrase “for you” be substituted for any other recipient/beneficiary other than “you”. Thus consider (35) below:

- (35) (a) *El amor es lo que tien-e/*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
**pose-e*
 possess-PRS.3SG
 'That's love for you'
 (b) **That's love for you/*him/*me/*them**

While acknowledging that these constructions exhibit a considerable degree of syntactic rigidizing, two important observations must nonetheless be made. First, the constructions in question are entirely fixed with the exception of a nominal element (i.e. either an NP or a nominal clause) sandwiched between “that's” and “for you” in the English construction or likely to occur either before or after the *lo que tiene* string in Spanish. This nominal element functions as a slot-filler in these lexically-filled constructions. However, the felicitous occurrence of specific nominal fillers is subject to discourse-functional constraints, as will be detailed in section IV below.

Second, it should be noted that the syntax of both constructions is still relatively transparent. In the case of Spanish in particular, the copular matrix inferential construction

may exhibit ambiguity between a characterizing and an identifying attributive clause, especially if followed by a nominal element (*Coronita* in examples (36)-(38) below):

- (36) *El verano es lo que tien-e:*
 DEF.M.SG summer.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
Coronita
 Coronita[NAME]
 (Los 40 Principales, 17/06/2006)
 ‘That’s summer for you: Coronita’

- (37) *Lo (único) buen-o del verano es*
 DEF.N.SG only good-N.SG of.DEF.M.SG summer.M.SG be.PRS.3SG
Coronita
 Coronita[NAME]
 ‘What’s good about the summer is Coronita’

- (38) *Coronita es tan refrescante como el*
 Coronita[NAME] be.PRS.3SG as refreshing.SG as DEF.M.SG
verano
 summer.M.SG
 ‘Coronita is as just as refreshing as summer’

The examples in (36)-(38) above lend further credence to Brinton and Traugott’s (2005: 109) observation that “[a]n ambiguous bridging context, in which both the old and the new meaning can occur, is a prerequisite for grammaticalization”.

III.5. Coalescence and fusion

It should be noted that these constructions show greater dependency on adjacent constituents than their non-grammaticalized counterparts. Evidence in support for this claim arises from the fact that no material can felicitously intervene within any of the construction constituents (Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 27-28; Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca, 1994). Consider, by way of illustration, the acceptability contrasts reproduced in (39) below:

- (39) (a) That is, I think, right
 (b) *Es-o es, en mi opinión,*
 DIST-N.SG be.PRS.3SG in POSS.1SG opinion.F.SG
correct-o
 correct-N.SG
 (c) * *El amor es, en mi opinión,*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG in POSS.1SG opinion.SG
lo que tien-e
 DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 (d) ***That’s, I think, love for you**

III.6. Frequency

It has been argued that a grammaticalized item increases in frequency (Bybee, 2003a: 147, 2003b: 603, 2005: 14; Heine, 2003: 587; Wischer, 2000: 357). However, the constructions investigated in this paper are not by any means as frequent as attributive constructions. Thus, for instance, no token of the English construction was found in the BNC and, as a result, the 32 tokens of this construction were found in Google, mainly in blogs (98% of the tokens). In the case of Spanish, only 4 tokens of the construction were found in the CREA Corpus (all of them in narrative texts). The remaining 41 tokens used in our sample were taken from Google, and were also found in blogs (99% of the tokens).⁷ Furthermore, our data appear to confirm the idea that these constructions tend to occur in unplanned written texts and are thus associated with a considerable degree of informality in both languages.

With these data in mind, the scarcity of these constructions can be perhaps best understood in terms of the lack of frequency of copular matrix inferentials in general (see fn. viii), coupled with the fact that these configurations appear to be still at a very early stage of grammaticalization. This appears to hold true especially in the case of the Spanish configuration, which displays a lesser degree of fixation than its English counterpart, as shown in (24)(a) and (24)(c) above (see also fn. iii and vii), while also retaining some transparency in its syntax (cf. (36)-(38) above).

IV. TOWARDS A CONSTRUCTIONIST ACCOUNT OF THE *X ES LO QUE TIENE* AND *THAT'S X FOR YOU* CONSTRUCTIONS

IV.1. Some preliminaries

This section is concerned with a constructionist account of the semantico-pragmatic (including discourse-functional) properties of the copular matrix inferential constructions analyzed here. Two important observations must be made before proceeding further. First, while subscribing to the Goldbergian definition of a construction as a learned pairing of form with semantic or discourse function (Goldberg, 2006: 5), it will be argued here that the structural and semantico-pragmatic hallmarks of these configurations lend further credence to the more 'local' version of constructions as fragments, articulated by Bybee, Thompson and colleagues (Bybee, 2003a, 2005, 2007; Thompson, 2002).⁸ It must be emphasized that, far from being contradictory, these two definitions are complementary. As Bybee and Eddington (2006: 328) have recently put it: "Constructions contain fixed units, that is, particular words or morphemes that characterize the construction, and, in addition, they may also contain variables or open slots that take a class of items. The meaning of the construction is determined by the component parts and by the contexts in which the construction has been used."

Second, as Brinton and Traugott (2005: 24) make abundantly clear, discourse and constructions have been of paramount importance to research into grammaticalization, mainly because "grammaticalization does not merely size a word or a morpheme...but instead the whole construction formed by the syntagmatic relations of the element in question"

(Lehmann, 1992: 406; see also Lehmann, 1993; Traugott, 2003; cited in Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 24).

This section is structured as follows. First, some relevant semantico-pragmatic hallmarks of these configurations will be outlined against the background of what appears to be a family of focusing constructions, including cleft constructions. Next, I shall take a look at the discourse functions of these inferential constructions at the level of the proposition as well as at a textual level.

IV.2. Copular matrix inferentials within a family of focusing constructions

It was advanced in section II that some authors propose that inferentials be subsumed under the general umbrella of cleft constructions (Delahunty, 1982, 1984, 2001). In the case of Spanish, in addition to clefts, the copular matrix inferentials seem to pattern fairly well with a relatively wide range of focusing constructions, as illustrated in (40) below.^x

- (40) (a) *El amor es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.M.SG love.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 'That's love for you'
- (b) *Es el amor*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG love.SG
 'That's love'
- (c) *Son la-s cosa-s del amor*
 be.PRS.3PL DEF.F-PL thing-PL of.DEF.M.SG love.M.SG
 'That's love'
- (d) *Es que el amor...*
 be.PRS.3SG COMP DEF.M.SG love.M.SG
 'The thing is that love ...'
- (e) *Es el amor lo que da sentido a la vida*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG love.M.SG DEF.N.SG REL give.PRS.3SG
 sense to DEF.F.SG life.F.SG
 'It is love that makes life meaningful'
- (f) *¡Lo que es el amor!*
 DEF.N.SG COMP be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG love.M.SG
 'Such is love'
- (g) *Es lo que pas-a*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL happen-PRS.3SG
 'That's the way it goes'
- (h) *Es lo que toc-a*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL correspond-PRS.3SG
 'That's just what happens' (that's just the way it is?)
- (i) *Es lo que hay*
 be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL there.be.PRS

have-PRS.3SG

'That's any director for you'

Unlike ungrammaticalized characterizing attributive clauses, the EIF must be communicatively relevant to the current topic of discourse, which explains why general nouns or specific nouns which cannot be construed as a pertinent topic to the speaker/writer's interpretation of the local context are invariably infelicitous in this construction:

(44) (a) # *La cosa es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.F.SG thing.F.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'That's the stuff for you'

(b) # *El aire es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.M.SG air.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'That's the air for you'

In much the same vein, pronominal elements of all kinds with anaphoric or cataphoric reference yield an unacceptable result in the EIF slot:

(45) (a) # *Todo es-o es lo que tien-e*
 All-N.SG DIST N.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'That's all that for you'

(b) # *Lo siguiente es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.N.SG following.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL
 have-PRS.3SG

'That's the following for you'

(c) # *Ella es lo que tien-e*
 3SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG

'That's her for you'

Crucially, the above-noted semantico-pragmatic restrictions on the EIF are not observable in the subject slot of ungrammaticalized attributive clauses, whether identifying or characterizing, as shown in the acceptability contrasts reproduced in (45) above and (46) below:

(46) (a) *Un director es el que hac-e posible un-a película/ comprensiv-o*
 INDF.M.SG director.M.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.M.SG REL
 make-PRS.3SG possible INDF-F.SG movie.SG understanding-M.SG

'A director is the one that makes a movie possible/ understanding'

(b) *Cualquier director ser-ía sensible a es-o / ser el ganador de un can-PRS.3SG be-INF DEF.M.SG winner.M.SG of INDF.M.SG*
 Any.SG director.M.SG be-COND.3SG sensitive to DIST-M.SG
 can-PRS.3SG be-INF DEF.M.SG winner.M.SG of INDF.M.SG

Goya

Goya [NAME]

‘Any director would be sensitive to that/ can be the winner of a Goya’

(c) *La cosa es complicad-a / es*
 DEF.F.SG thing.F.SG be.PRS.3SG complicated-F.SG be.PRS.3SG
que no recuerd-o nada
 COMP NEG remember-PRS.1SG nothing

‘The matter is complicated/ The thing is that I don’t remember anything’

(d) *El aire vien-e caliente /es lo*
 DEF.M.SG air.M.SG come-PRS.3SG hot. SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG *que hac-e*
que se muev-an
 REL make-PRS.3SG COMP PRONOM.3PL move-SBJVPRS.3PL
la-s hoja-s de los árbol-es
 DEF.F-PL leave-PL of DEF-M-PL tree-M-PL

‘The air blows hot’/ ‘It is the air that makes the leaves of the trees shake’

(e) *Tod-o es-o es lo que deb-es*
 all-N.SG DIST-N.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL must-PRS.3SG *ten-er*
en cuenta / fundamental
 have-INF in account fundamental.SG

‘All that is what you must take into account/ fundamental’

(f) *Lo siguiente es lo que*
 DEF.N.SG following.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL
explic-a todo / relevante
 explain-PRS.3SG all.N.SG relevant.SG

‘The following is what explains everything/ relevant’

(g) *Ella es la que tien-e la*
 She be.PRS.3SG DEF.F.SG REL have-PRS.3SG DEF.F.SG
solución a tus problema-s / incapaz de
 solution.SG to POSS.2SG problem.M-PL incapable.SG of
entend-er es-o
 understand-INF DIST-N.SG

‘She’s the one who has the solution to your problems/ incapable of understanding that’

By way of illustration, representative examples of EIFs in these constructions attested in the data used in this paper in English and Spanish include the following:

(i) “love”, “gratitude”, “men”, “edutainment”, “television”, “a Scandinavian”, “ghosts”, “freedom”, etc.

(ii) *Agosto* (‘August’), *la navidad* (‘Christmas’), *el verano* (‘summer’), *el amor* (‘love’), *las despedidas* (‘a farewell’), *Internet* (‘internet’), *la televisión* (‘television’), *hacer el tonto* (‘to act like a fool’), etc.

In addition, the acceptability differences captured in (42)-(45) above underscore the fact that subjectivity is crucial to “the kinds of things human beings talk about and the way

they choose to structure their communications” (Bybee, 2003b: 622; see also Scheibman, 2002).

IV.3. The discourse functions of the *X es lo que tiene* and ‘That’s X for you’ constructions

IV.3.1. Some preliminaries

The first issue that needs to be addressed before proceeding further is what motivates the occurrence of inferentials in discourse. According to Bearth (1999), inferentials occur after the gap they are intended to repair. However, this contention is *prima facie* at odds with the fact that inferentials in general may occur discourse-initially in Spanish (see example (4) above) and with the tendency for the constructions under scrutiny here to be found quite frequently in discourse-initial contexts, such as e.g. headlines (see examples (49), (50) and (53) below). The words ‘*prima facie*’ are emphasized here because it is true that when inferentials occur discourse-initially, the missing variable can be usually inferred from the context that follows. However, Delahunty and Gatzkiewicz (2000) propose the following alternative account for the occurrence of inferentials in discourse. Specifically, they claim that “(...) inferentials occur when a speaker believes (or at least wishes to act as if s/he believed) that an addressee might process the mental representation of an utterance or of a situation in a context of assumptions other than those intended by the speaker. That is, whenever the potential implicate or the representation itself are other than the speaker wishes to endorse.” (Delahunty & Gatzkiewicz, 2000: 320-321).

This alternative account of inferentials, I would contend, is more robust on both descriptive and explanatory grounds, among other things, because it fits in nicely with the prominent role that (covert) subjectivity and subjectification (understood as the expression of a judgemental stance on the part of the subject/speaker), has been shown to play in the incipient grammaticalization process undergone by the constructions in question. In other words, the proposal put forward by Delahunty and Gatzkiewicz highlights the crucial role played by the subject/speaker in providing a correct interpretation of the local context for the hearer.

A second important preliminary issue concerns the range of the interpretations of inferentials in general. Thus, Declerck (1992: 220) claims that inferentials convey causes and reasons. An even more restrictive formulation is proposed in Bearth (1999), who contends that inferentials communicate only explanations. By contrast, Delahunty (1990, 1995, 1997, 2001) submits that although inferentials normally express a reason for something, they “may communicate a lot of notions, such as explanations, causes, reasons, interpretations, reformulations, results, and consequences, as well as evidence (at least in Japanese)” (Delahunty, 2001: 529). As will be seen in the remainder of this paper, a wider-ranging characterization like the one proposed by Delahunty is needed to account for the interpretations which the constructions under analysis here are likely to receive in a given discourse context. Finally, it must be borne in mind, as Delahunty (2001: 522) reminds us,

that, when tackling the discourse motivations of inferentials in discourse, “it is not always possible to identify a unique interpretation of the form in context”.

The structure of the remainder of this section runs as follows: In concert with the two types of grammaticalization discerned within the Traugottian conception in section III above, the functions of this construction at the level of the proposition (Traugott’s grammaticalization type 1) are analyzed first. Then, the textual function of these constructions is outlined (Traugott’s grammaticalization type 2). This section closes with a proposal as to how to capture the structural, semantico-pragmatic (including the discourse functional) hallmarks of these expressions in the form of a constructional meaning characterization.

IV.3.2. At the level of the proposition

At the level of the proposition, these constructions can be used to furnish an explanation, argument, interpretation, etc, on the part of the speaker/writer. Specifically, two functions can be pinpointed for the English and Spanish constructions discussed in this paper (see further Fuentes, 1997 for a similar argument about the *es que...* (‘it is that...’) construction in Spanish):

(i) a **modal** function, whereby the argument, explanation or interpretation encoded in the configuration is presented on the part of the speaker/writer in a categorical (i.e. forceful) way, thus being functionally equivalent to *la verdad es que* (‘the truth is that’), *lo cierto es que* (‘the truth is that’), etc, as exemplified in (47)-(48) below:

(47) - *Nos* *hemos* *salv-ado* *a dúo.*
 PRONOM.1SG PFV.AUX.1PL save-PTCP at one.and.the.same.time
 ‘We have saved ourselves at one and the same time’

- *Es* *que* *hac-emos* *buen-a* *pareja.*
 be.PRS.3SG COMP do-PRS.1PL good- F.SG couple.F.SG
 ‘It is that we make a good couple’

-[*Sí,*] *El* *tándem* *es* *lo* *que*
 yes DEF.M.SG team.of.two be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL

tien-e

have-PRS.3SG

[#*pero realmente no cre-o* *que* *el* *tándem*

But really NEG think-PRS.1SG COMP DEF.M.SG team.of.two

sea *buen-o]*

SUBJV.PRS.3SG good-N.SG

(CREA Corpus, Lola Beccaria, 2001, *La luna en Jorge*, Novela; material in brackets mine)

‘That’s a team of two for you [# but I personally do not think a team of two is a good idea]’

(The subject/speaker provides an explanation in the form of a categorical assertion as to why everything came to a good end: The truth is that we make a good team)

- (48) I'm talkin' pure devotion
 A won't-be-denied emotion
 Deeper than the ocean
 Well that's love for you
 It's unbelievable it's invincible indivisible
 Well you know that it's true
That's love for you
 (Example taken from
<http://www.amazon.ca/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00005QK3W/ref%3Dpd%5Fsim%5Fdp%5F3/702-0221624-1626402>)
 ('The truth is that love is unbelievable, invincible, indivisible')

(ii) a **focusing** function, whereby the speaker/writer can provide a categorical, assertive justification, explanation or even an excuse for the state(s) of affairs/event(s) being talked about in the preceding or following stretch of discourse. The uses of these constructions can be paraphrased as follows: *lo único es que* ('the only thing is that...'), *lo que pasa es que* ('what happens is just that...'), etc. Unlike the modal function in (i), this focusing use of the constructions is likely to have the mitigating force of a downtoner that may serve to encode an apology or excuse, thus functioning as a kind of politeness device. Thus consider (49)-(50) below:

- (49) *El verano es lo que tien-e*
 DEF.M.SG summer.SG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG
 (Mangas Verdes)
 Mangas verdes [NAME]

'That's summer for you'

Insert Fig. 1 around here

No sé si el helado es
 NEG know.PRS.1SG if DEF.M.SG ice-cream.M.SG be.PRS.3SG
un-a m... o es que est-á
 INDF-F.SG p(iece.of.shit) or be.PRS.3SG COMP be.PRS.3SG *que te*
c... Lo único ciert-o
 COMP PRONOM.2SG s(hit).PRS.1SG DEF.N.SG only true-N.SG
es que el tema result-a
 be.PRS.3SG COMP DEF.M.SG topic.M.SG turn.out-PRS.1SG
algo más que escatológic-o. Y es que
 something more than scatological-M.SG And be.PRS.3SG COMP *el*
calor caus-a estragos all over
 DEF.M.SG heat.M.SG cause-PRS.3SG havoc
the world.

(Example taken from

http://www.thehouseofblogs.com/MANGASVE/20057/El_verano_es_lo_que_tiene.html)

‘I don’t know whether the icecream is a [piece of shit] or whether it is damn good. The only truth about it is that the topic is something more than scatological. The thing is that the summer ruins things all over the world’

(An apology intended by the writer as a kind of hedge to protect the “negative” image of the person who took that picture: ‘What happens is just that the summer ruins things all over the world’)

(50) ‘I was addicted to Britney. But **that’s love for you**’. Justin Timberlake

(Example taken from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3250689.stm>)

(An apologetical confession of love by the subject/speaker intended to protect his image from any potential detractor of Britney Spears: ‘what happens is that love is so blind that it makes you fall in love with somebody like Britney Spears’)

IV.3.3. At a textual level

As will be recalled from section II, the configurations under analysis here display varying degrees of explicitness. The most explicit versions of the configurations in question are illustrated in (51)-(52) below, where the hearer/reader only has to infer the variable to which the speaker/writer’s evaluation is attributed (i.e. the nominal filler acting as the EIF).

(51) *La navidad es lo que tiene, que* DEF.F.SG
 Christmas be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG COMP
a tod-o el mundo le da por
 DAT all-M.SG DEF.M.SG world.SG DAT.3SG give.PRS.3SG for
engalan-ar lo que son su-s curro-s, su-s festoon-INF
 DEF.N.SG REL be.PRS.3PL POSS-3PL work.place-PL POSS-PL
casa-s o incluso ático-s (nosotr-a-s mism-a-s, y
 house-PL or even attic.flat-PL 1PL-F-PL same-F-PL and
sin ir más lejos, est-amos sac-ando la
 without go-INF more far AUX-1PL take.out-GER DEF.F.SG
caja con la-s bola-s de navidad y los
 box with DEF.F-PL ball-F-PL of Christmas and DEF.M.PL
calcetin-es del Papá Noel) con más o
 stocking-M.PL of.DEF.M.SG Father Noel with more or
menos arte
 less art.M.SG

(Example taken from

http://www.carmonaycaballero.net/blog/2004_12_01_archivo.html)

'That's Christmas for you, everybody's got into decorating their work places, their homes and even their attic flats (we, for instance, are also taking out the box with the Christmas decorations and Santa Claus stockings) in a more or less skilful way'

(52) ah, names in the sand. i've done that. and initials in the
condensation on bus windows. and in the margins of
notebooks. and on the backs of your hands.

that's love for you: it gets everywhere.

(Example taken from
<http://www.cs.bilkent.edu.tr/~david/derya/poems10/poem16326.htm>)

The cohesion-building potential of the constructions is two-fold: they can occur as an inferential construction (Declerck, 1992; Delahunty, 2001), or more specifically, a reduced specifying attributive construction, in which the hearer has to infer the evaluative attribution being provided by the speaker/writer for the proposition in question, as in (1)-(2) above.

Furthermore, the construction may perform a summative function in both languages, which renders it fit to function as a headline (45% of the English tokens; 55% of the Spanish tokens), as illustrated in (53)-(54) below:

(53) Sociable, stylish, fun – **that's net users for you**

(Example taken from
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/business/story/0,6903,335961,00.html>)

Thus, in the above example, the summative function of the construction is reinforced by the overt listing of some of the positive qualities that net users presumably have. In the Spanish construction, the cohesion potential is more prominent, given that Spanish, unlike English, allows for subjectless configurations, as in (54) below, in which case the hearer/reader also has to identify the variable to which the speaker/writer's evaluation is attributed (i.e. the EIF). As Delahunty (2001: 524) rightly observes, "by choosing the inferential instead of a more explicit form, the speaker leaves it up to the hearer to decide just how to integrate the inferential with its context". Thus consider (54) below:

(54) *Es lo que tien-e, pero me mol-a*
be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL have-PRS.3SG but DAT.1SG like-PRS.3SG
demasiado el no-pag-ar, vamos, que me
too.much DEF.M.SG NEG-pay-INF go.PRS.1PL COMP DAT.1SG
he compr-ado el Guild Wars hac-iendo
PFV.AUX.1SG buy-PTCP DEF.M.SG Guild Wars do-GER
un exceso, deb-o llev-ar 10 año-s
INDF.M.SG excess.M.SG must-PRS.1SG take-INF ten year-PL
sin pag-ar por un juego, (...)
without pay-INF for INDF.M.SG game.M.SG

(Example taken from http://www.lik-sang.com/info.php?category=312&products_id=6242&)

‘I’m sorry but I love to skip buying original items, in fact, I have bought the Guild Wars game making a big effort, I haven’t paid for a game for 10 years’

In the above example, the speaker/writer makes a categorical assertion with the flavour of an apology for having made an illegal copy of a game instead of having purchased it, and then goes on to list the reasons that have led him to follow that course of action. But for the hearer to be able to understand the message provided by the speaker/writer, both the variable and the writer’s interpretation of the local context have to be inferred from the following piece of discourse. Interestingly enough, this example also shows that the propositional (i.e. a mitigating focusing device) and textual (i.e. summative) functions of the construction may co-exist in the speaker/writer’s interpretation of the local context. Last but not least, it should also be noted that the summative uses of this configuration are even more ‘subjective’ than their focusing or modal counterparts, insofar as they express the speaker’s attitude towards some element in the discourse flow (cf. Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 632; Traugott, 1995a: 40, *inter alios*), viz. the EIF.

The constructional meaning of the *X es lo que tiene* and ‘That’s X for you’ copular matrix inferential constructions can be aptly represented as follows: The speaker/writer provides a positive or negative categorical assertion (i.e. argument, explanation, consequence, etc.) involving an Element in Focus (i.e. the nominal filler). From a semantico-pragmatic and discourse-functional viewpoint, such an Element in Focus needs to be construed as a felicitous topic enabling the hearer/reader to arrive at a correct interpretation of the local context.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

All in all, the evidence reproduced in the previous pages regarding the synchronic behaviour of the *X es lo que tiene* and “that’s X for you” constructions lends further credence to the following Traugottian characterization of grammaticalization (Traugott, 2003: 645): “the process whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts is assigned grammatical function, and once grammatical, is assigned increasingly grammatical, operator-like function.” (see also Brinton & Traugott, 2005: 99; Traugott, 1995b: 15).

In other words, the present account of grammaticalization can accommodate the progression from the uses of these constructions as modal or focusing devices at the level of the proposition, to summative discourse connectors at a textual level, in the light of subjectification and (covert) subjectivity as the overall determining factors (see also González-García, 2006).

The Spanish configuration *X es lo que tiene* in (2) above instantiates an early stage of grammaticalization involving a cluster of structural and semantico-pragmatic factors, such as: (i) decategorialization, (ii) pragmatic strengthening or increase in pragmatic function, (iii)

subjectification and, to some extent (iv) fusion or coalescence, while its English counterpart (i.e. the “That’s X for you” construction) only exhibits the last three features.

The synchronic evidence regarding the semantico-pragmatic behaviour of (1)-(2) above lends further credence to the context-view of grammaticalization in general and the notion of construction in particular (Bybee, 2003a, b, 2005; Heine, 2003; Traugott, 2003). Specifically, it shows that “grammaticalization of lexical items takes place within particular constructions and [...] that grammaticalization is the creation of new constructions.” (Bybee, 2003a: 146; 2003b: 602; Diewald, 2006).

The *X es lo que tiene* and “That’s X for you” configurations qualify as instances of lexically-filled constructions (Goldberg, 1995, 2006) or fragments (Bybee, 2005; Thompson, 2002), whose core constructional meaning is the expression by the speaker/writer of a positive or negative categorical assertion of a discourse relevant entity (a thing or a person), implicitly or explicitly understood by the speaker/writer to be pragmatically relevant, with the goal of furnishing a correct interpretation of the local context for the hearer.

The range of interpretations manifested by the constructions investigated here are practically the same as those manifested by English and Spanish inferentials (e.g. *es que...*, ‘it is that...’), at least at the level of the proposition. Differences exist, however, between the two languages, regarding the morphosyntactic realization of the nominal element encoded in the slot filler (X). Thus, in its phrasal realizations, Spanish more likely than not disallows indefinite NPs, while these are perfectly acceptable in its English counterpart, with the proviso that they can receive a generic rather than specific construal. Moreover, at a textual level, the Spanish construction achieves a higher cohesion-building potential in so far as it allows for a higher degree of morphosyntactic compression after the omission of the filler (i.e. *es lo que tiene*), in which case the hearer also has to infer the element being evaluated by the speaker/writer, thus being an inferential construction in two ways.

NOTES:

¹ From now on, interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses will be supplied for the Spanish examples following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (see <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/LGR04.09.21.pdf>). The following two additional abbreviations will be used in this paper: PRONOM (pronominal clitic), and COND (conditional or potential verb tense).

² An important clarification is in order here regarding subjectification and subjectivity. As Company (2006: 375, fnt. 2) rightly observes, “subjectification seems to refer to the diachronic process whereby an expression over time acquires subjective meanings, whereas subjectivity seems to be a synchronic term, referring to the resultant subjective expression.”

³ I am most grateful to the audience at the 5th International AELCO/SCOLA Conference for bringing to my attention the fact that an alternative singular form for *tener* (‘have’) is not only acceptable for this example but perhaps also preferred over the plural form.

⁴ Delahunty (2001: 517) refers to inferential constructions as sentential-focus clefts.

⁵ The material in brackets has been added by the author for the sake of clearer argumentation.

⁶ An alternative characterization of grammaticalization is presented in Lehmann (1995[1982]; 2002).

⁶ⁱ Similar percentages were yielded in the case of the other two tokens of the constructions (e.g. “las navidades” ‘Christmas’ and “las rebajas” ‘sales’). Thus, the native speakers preferred the singular form of “tener” (‘have’) in 78% and 85% of the cases, respectively.

⁶ⁱⁱ A similar observation is made in Delahunty (1995: 341), who only collected 85 examples of the inferential ‘it is that...’ construction in English.

^{ix} The reader is referred to González-García and Butler (2006) for further information on the different definitions of construction within functional-cognitive space.

^x Interestingly enough, these focusing constructions qualify as matrix copular inferentials and display a number of striking similarities with the configurations analyzed in this paper. However, obvious limitations of space preclude a detailed comparative study of these focusing constructions here.

^{xi} The fact that copular matrix inferentials of the type examined here may occur discourse-initially provides in turn an argument *contra* Declerck (1992: 212) that inferentials are identifying (specificational in his terminology).

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APPENDIX

Por favor, indique si las siguientes oraciones le resultan aceptables, no aceptables o marginalmente aceptables. Sírvese de utilizar la hoja adjunta para hacer constar cualquier comentario adicional que pudiese condicionar su juicio de aceptabilidad de dichas oraciones.

1. Las navidades es lo que tienen

2. Es dolor de muelas lo que tiene

3. Las despedidas es lo que tiene

4. Los niños tienen hambre

5. Las rebajas es lo que tienen

6. Es la una de la tarde

7. Las despedidas es lo que tienen

8. Son las tres de la tarde

9. Las navidades es lo que tiene

10. Es que tiene mucho trabajo que hacer hoy

11. Las rebajas es lo que tiene

12. Lo que pasa es que no tiene ganas de ir hoy a clase
