# Inverted Antecedents in Hidden Conditionals[*]

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In this paper I explore the interpretation of a Spanish construction consisting of an auxiliary verb in infinitival form, ***haber***, and a ***participle clause*** (HPC). The investigation of this structure provides us with interesting insights regarding the interaction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The example in (1) illustrates the use of an HPC.

(1)  You are about to make your first soufflé and you would like John (soufflé expert) to help you, but you think he will be away until next Tuesday. You decide not to wait and the result is a fiasco. You are now talking to Sarah, who is aware of all this.

   You:  The soufflé was a disaster.

   Sarah:  Haber        hecho el  soufflé el  martes   que viene.    [HPC]
            have.Aux.Inf made  the soufflé the Tuesday that comes

            'You should have made your soufflé next Tuesday'    (Bosque's (1980) paraphrase)

HPCs[1] have been previously investigated by Bosque (1980), who proposes an analysis of HPCs as imperatives in the past. In this analysis, HPCs are a counterexample to the crosslinguistic generalization that imperatives are future oriented.

In this paper I provide syntactic evidence that HPCs are not imperatives. Furthermore, I show that the meaning of HPCs cannot be straightforwardly derived from an imperative-like analysis. Amongst other characteristics, HPCs are always replies and lead to the inference that the consequences of the subordinate clause are desired. For example, HPC($\alpha$) (HPC(you do the soufflé next Tuesday)), indicates that the consequences of $\alpha$ being true are desired (e.g. *had you done your soufflé next Tuesday, your soufflé would have not been a disaster, as you desire*). An analysis of HPCs as imperatives needs to speculate that all the extra meanings borne by HPCs are conventionalized.

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[1]Notice that the verb morphology in HPCs is infinitival, and yet, it stands on its own. This is surprising because matrix clauses in Spanish require tense morphology. We will get back to this issue later.

I argue that HPCs should be characterized as hidden counterfactual conditionals (HPC($\alpha$) implies that $\alpha$ is false in the actual world). As we will see, this analysis can better account for the data and deliver the pragmatics for free. I show that independent factors of the syntax of Spanish, together with a standard semantics for conditionals, provide the necessary ingredients to derive the meaning of HPCs without appealing to conventions.

## 1.     Bosque's (1980) proposal: HPCs as *retrospective* imperatives

Bosque (1980) provides a first analysis of HPCs. Bosque's claim is that HPCs are deontic. Two alternative analysis could account for this: either (i) HPCs are deontic modal statements like *should* statements, or (ii) they are imperatives (but in the past). Bosque's strategy to argue in favor of an imperative-like account for HPCs is to compare HPCs with imperatives (sentences with so called *imperative* verb morphology in Spanish) and with regular deontic modal statements. According to Bosque, the result of this comparison reveals that HPCs behave like imperatives in Spanish and unlike deontic modal statements. Therefore, HPCs, according to Bosque, are imperatives.

### 1.1     Bosque's arguments

**Like imperatives, HPCs cannot be replied to with *that is false***
Bosque points out that HPCs cannot be replied to with that is false, (2).

(2)  John:  I am sorry I'm late
     Sam:  Haber    salido antes
            have.Inf left    earlier
     John:  # That is false

(3)  Sam:  Deberías haber    saido antes
            sould      have.Inf left   earlier
     John:  That is false $\sqrt{}$

(4)  Sam:  ¡ Sal             antes  !
            leave.Imp.2.sg earlier
            'Leave earlier!'
     John:  # That is false

HPCs, (2), behave like imperatives, (4), and unlike deontic modal statements, (3), in that they cannot be replied to with *that is false*.

**HPCs only refer to a 2$^{nd}$ person**
Bosque claims that imperatives can only refer to a second person,[2] and that the same happens with HPCs. Deontic modal statements, on the other hand, can refer to any of the 3 persons, either in singular or in plural. (5) illustrates the singular case.

(5)  Yo/Tú/Él   debería/s haber salido antes
     1$^{st}$/2$^{nd}$/3$^{rd}$ should    have   left    earlier

**HPCs cannot be embedded**
In (6a) we see an embedded regular sentence, and in (6b) we see that embedding of regular modal statements is also possible.

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[2]See Biezma (2008b) for arguments against this view.

(6)  a.  Creo      que viniste                    c.  ∗ Creo      que ven
         think.1.sg that came.2.sg                       think.1.st that come.Imp.2.sg

     b.  Creo que deberías haber venido         d.  ∗ Creo      que haber   venido
         think that should   have  come              think.1.sg that have.Inf come

However, like imperatives, (6c), HPCs cannot be embedded, (6d).

## 1.2    Discussion

According to Bosque (1980), since HPCs seem to be deontic, and they behave like impera-
tives, HPCs are imperatives (in the past).[3] In this section I take a closer look at the data and
argue against an account in which HPCs are imperatives.

**No imperative morphology**
The first thing to notice is that a proposal arguing for an analysis in which HPCs are imper-
atives has to be maintained despite the absence of imperative morphology. Bosque claims
that HPCs usually have infinitival morphology, but that the imperative is still possible. How-
ever, a corpus search reveals that there are no HPCs with imperative morphology.

(7)  a.  Haber      salido antes              c.  ∗ Habed salido antes
         have.Aux.Inf left    earlier              have.Aux.Imp.2.pl left earlier


     b.  ∗ Ha salido antes                    d.  Habed paciencia      (CORDE)
         have.Aux.Imp.2.sg left earlier           have.Imp.2.pl patience

Speaker's intuitions regarding the impossibility of (7b) and (7c) are supported by the ab-
sence of instances of HPCs bearing that form. We do find imperative morphology in *haber*
('have') when this verb is a lexical verb, (7d).[4] However, the fact that HPCs only have
infinitival morphology wouldn't in principle suffice to claim that HPCs are not impera-
tives, since there are imperatives with infinitival morphology in Spanish. If we adopt Han's
(2000) proposal for imperatives,[5] the syntax of HPCs would look like (8b), in which the
imperative-like meaning is the result of an inference. According to Han, the directive
feature in C triggers movement of the verb to C. However, when there is negation, the
resulting configuration is ungrammatical (the reader is referred to Han (2000) for details).
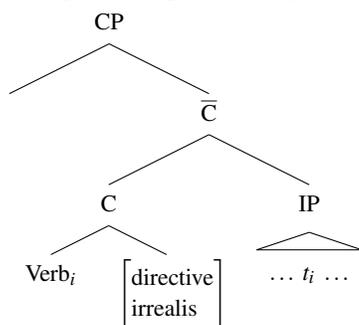
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[3]Let me point out that it is difficult to understand what it means to say that HPCs are imperatives
in the past. When one utters an imperative like *close the door!*, one is requesting the addressee to commit
to do something, i.e. to close the door. In Portner's (2007) terms, an imperative attempts to incorporate a
proposition into the addresse's TO-DO list. Imperatives are future oriented. However, HPC($\alpha$) would only
indicate that the addressee should have had $\alpha$ incorporated into his/her TO-DO list at the time (s)he did
something else. This is different from incorporating something into the TO-DO list. Furthermore, HPCs as
orders would be unusual in that HPCs are counterfactual, HPC($\alpha$) implies that $\alpha$ is false in the actual world.
If HPC($\alpha$) is an order, it would be an order that could never be fulfilled.

[4]Some speakers may consider (7c) not too bad. However, this is a case of hypercorrection. It is not
possible to have the $2^{nd}$ singular person of the imperative in the auxiliary, (7b).

[5]In Biezma (2008a) I propose that imperatives in Spanish lack tense and aspect, and that the imper-
ative morphology only reflects person and number agreement. However, this account of imperatives couldn't
be maintained if HPCs are also imperatives, since HPCs have aspect.

When negation is present the language has to settle for a different configuration in which the features is a subset of the features in (8a). In (8b) there is no movement, and the morphology realizing the irrealis feature is either infinitival or subjunctive. The imperative-like meaning is the result of an inference.

(8)    a.  Regular imperative syntax              b.  Infinitive imperative syntax
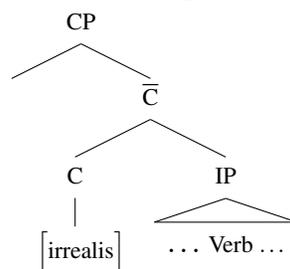
If the directive can be inferred when negation is present, it could be also inferred when negation is not present, thus explaining why (9c) can be understood as an imperative.[6]

(9)    a.  ¡ No cerrar    la  puerta !          c.  ¡ Cerrar    la  puerta !
              neg close.Inf the door                 close.Inf the door

       b.  ¡ No cerréis         la  puerta !
              neg close.2.pl.Subj the door

Adopting Han's (2000) account, HPCs would have the syntax in (9c). However, notice that (9c) still relies on the possible alternation between imperative and infinitival morphology, an alternation that is not possible with HPCs. Below we will see yet more arguments against an analysis of HPCs as imperatives.

**Imperatives are not the only construction that cannot be replied to with *that is false***
The fact that HPCs cannot be replied to with *that is false* is not enough to equate them with imperatives. Modal constructions in which the modal is used performatively cannot be replied to with that is false either, (10).

(10)   A: You may take a pear
             ... at least according to what the guy in the uniform said
       B:  √ That is false
             ... but I won't allow you to take an apple
       B': # That is false                                (Schwager forthcoming, ex.4)

The second instance of *may* cannot be replied to with *that is false* because *may* is used performatively. One could claim that HPCs involve a modal used performatively, and thus they cannot be replied to with *that is false*. This fact alone is not enough to claim that HPCs are not imperatives, since there are proposals in which imperatives are deontic modal

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[6]Notice that Han's account assumes that imperatives with imperative morphology and imperatives with infinitival morphology do not differ in anything regardless of the different morphology. See Biezma (2008b) for a different view.

statements used performatively. However, this fact, added to the other differences between imperatives and HPCs argues against an account of HPCs as imperatives.

### 3$^{rd}$ Person HPCs

Bosque (1980) claimed that HPCs could only refer to a 2$^{nd}$ person. However, a closer look at the data brings up examples like (11), from CRAE, which indicate otherwise.

(11)   A:  'We will have to see what Félix thinks.'                         [*free translation*]

   B:  Félix no   piensa. No está. ¡ Haber        venido !
        Felix neg. thinks   neg is        have.Aux.Inf come
        'Felix does not think. He is not even here. He should have come!'

The HPC in (11) refers to Félix, not present in the discourse context. Félix is the person who, according to A, should be there: the HPC in (11) refers to a (specific) 3$^{rd}$ person.[7]

### Stative predicates

There are differences regarding the acceptability of stative predicates in HPCs.[8]

(12)   a. ¡ Haber-lo   sabido antes !              b. *! Sábe-lo      antes !
         have.Inf-it known earlier                      know.Imp-it earlier

Some stative predicates, like *saber*, are possible in HPCs but not in imperatives.[9]

### Weird orders

There are HPCs that are perfectly fine, but would make very strange orders, (13).

(13)   John:  I have so much work to do and nobody helps me, my boss is very demand-
                ing..., life is so hard!

   Izaskun:  ¡ Haber    nacido patata !
               have.Inf born    potato
               'Had you been born a potato, (you wouldn't have to deal with life)'

### HPCs are always replies

As noticed in Bosque (1980), HPCs are always replies. Recall the scenario in (1), slightly modified here.

(14)   You are about to make your first soufflé and you would like John (soufflé expert) to help you, but you think he will be away until next Tuesday. You decide not to wait

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[7]In Biezma (2008b) I argued that imperatives in Spanish with infinitival morphology can refer to a 3$^{rd}$ person. However, in the case of imperatives, unlike HPCs, this 3$^{rd}$ person is non-specific.

[8]This difference between HPCs and imperatives regarding stative predicates deserves more attention than I can pay to it in a short paper. It is possible to utter imperatives like *sé paciente!* ('be patient'), in which an stative predicate seems to be used in an imperative. However, notice that in this case there is a shift in the interpretation. In this case the predicate is used inchoatively. Also, as Luis Vicente points out to me, we have biblical uses of stative predicates in imperatives, as in *amaos los unos a los otros* ('love one another'). Much more should be said here regarding what happens with these predicates. However, the difference between imperatives and HPCs illustrated in (12) argues against an account of HPCs as imperatives.

[9]The imperative form of this verb does not exist, but following the verb paradigm, it would be *sabe*. Notice that *saberse* ('learn') does have imperative forms, but this is not stative.

and the result is a fiasco. Sarah, who knows all this, comes into the kitchen and sees the obviously unsuccessful soufflé. She tells you

*Sarah:*   # Haber            hecho el   soufflé el   martes   que viene.
           have.Aux.Inf made  the soufflé the Tuesday that comes
           'You should have made your soufflé next Tuesday'

Sarah's utterance in (14) is infelicitous because there is no previous utterance licensing her utterance. However, if before Sarah's utterance you say something like *Oh my! The soufflé was a disaster*, as in (1), Sarah's utterance of the HPC would be fine. HPCs need a *cue*,[10] which is not necessary in the case of imperatives.

**HPCs are tied to desires**

Let us consider the scenario in (1) again. Let's now imagine that you really just wanted to learn how to make soufflé and learn by experience. Yes, you wish your soufflé was perfect, but if a fiasco is what it takes to learn, you rather have a fiasco than help from anyone else. In any case, John's help is not wanted. If Sarah knows this, she could never utter the HPC in (1) with the assumption that if you had waited till Tuesday, John would have helped you. Another example illustrating the same point is in (15).

(15)   You and me are preparing the appetizers for a party tonight. We are talking about María, who you have a crush on:

       You:  Yesterday I met María in the library.

       Me:  Haber-la              invitado a  la  fiesta. A mí no me hubiera importado.
            have.Aux.Inf-cl.Acc invited   to the party  I wouldn't have minded.

Someone listening to the dialogue in (15), without any priviledged information regarding who has a crush on whom, would infer at least one of two things: either you want María to come to the party, or I want María to come myself (maybe both!). Certainly, one thing is clear after the dialogue in (15), María's coming to the party is desired.[11] However, imperatives can be uttered even if they go against the utterer and the addressee's desires.

**Settling for the weakest**

For HPC($\alpha$) to be felicitous, $\alpha$ has to be the weakest alternative that would have made X's desires true, (16).

(16)   There are many taxi companies in the city, and they only differ with respect to the color of their cars (they all have the same speed/eficiency record). You did not take a taxi, and you are late for a meeting. You are now apologizing to John.

       You:  I am sorry I am late

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[10]A lot needs to be said regarding the nature of the *cue* licensing an HPC. There is no need for the *cue* to be linguistic. If Sarah comes into the kitchen and you look at her with a sad face and somehow make her understand that you are sad because the soufflé was a disaster, Sarah's utterance in (14) is fine.

[11]Notice that here the *cue*, *I met María at the library*, does not explicitly indicate any desire. The HPC in (15) is uttered with the obvious assumption that had you invited her, María would have come. For the HPC in (15) to be felicitous it has to be the case of Maria's coming be desired.

| John: | Haber | tomado | un | taxi | | John': | # Haber | tomado | un | taxi | rojo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | have.Inf | taken | a | cab | | | have.Inf | taken | a | cab | red |

The HPC that restricts the kind of taxis suggested, i.e. only red cabs, is not felicitous. Imagine now that you are going to a meeting, and that you are at risk of being late. In that situation, John can advice you with an imperative like *toma un taxi!* ('take a cab') or *toma un taxi rojo, los rojos son mucho más bonitos* ('take a red cab, but make sure it's red, those are cooler'). If HPCs are imperatives, we cannot explain why the more restricted HPC is not felicitous, whereas the more restricted imperative would be.

### Duh!

HPCs are pretty rude. HPCs carry a sense of obviousness that can be paraphrased in English by *duh!*. This, certainly, is not an inherent characteristic of regular imperatives. An account of HPCs as imperatives would need to appeal to conventionalization to explain this extra meaning of HPCs.
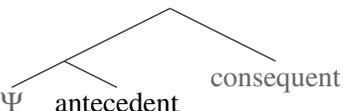
## 1.3 Summary

In this section I have reviewed Bosque's (1980) arguments in favor of an account of HPCs as retrospective imperatives, and I have presented arguments against such an account. Even if we could arrive to an understanding of what it means for something to be an imperative in the past (see discussion in footnote 3), HPCs carry extra meanings that cannot be explained in an account in which they are imperatives. An account of HPCs as imperatives in the past cannot easily explain why there is no imperative morphology in HPCs, why HPCs can refer to a (specific) $3^{rd}$ person, or why they behave differently with respect to stative predicates. Also, we have seen that there are good HPCs that do not make sense as an order, orders are not obligatorily replies, nor do they necessarily involve desires, and, certainly, imperatives do not need to settle for the weakest alternative. Furthermore, HPCs carry a sense of obviousness that can be paraphrased in English by *duh!*, that is not explained by an account in which HPCs are imperatives. Maintaining an account of HPCs as imperatives would amount to saying that all these extra properties are mere conventionalizations, and would require a fair amount of speculation.

## 2.  HPCs are conditionals

In this section I present arguments in favor of HPCs having a conditional structure in which only the antecedent is spelled out. For reasons of simplicity, I make use of a very simplified syntax of conditionals in which a silent modal, $\Psi$, takes as its first argument the antecedent.[12]

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[12]The syntax of conditionals is a complex matter, the main problem being how to link the *if*-clause to the main clause, (see Bhatt and Pancheva (2006), Rawlins (2008) for an overview). However, what I have to say here does not discriminate between the different proposals, since in this paper I am only concerned with the antecedent clause.

(17)    a. Haber   salido antes      [HPC]        b.
           have.Inf left    earlier

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                                             consequent
                                   Ψ    antecedent
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In this account, the HPC in (17a) is a conditional in which only the antecedent is spelled out. Since the consequent is never spelled out,[13] the modal is not realized either, since in Spanish the modal is realized in the verb morphology of the consequent.[14]

**Replies**
The fact that the consequent cannot spelled out explains why HPCs are replies: HPCs can only be spelled out when the context is rich enough to retrieve the consequent. There are several ways of retrieving the consequent, which depends on the nature of the *cue*. The *cue* may indicated a regret or a complaint, signaling what the desires of (one of) the participants are (see (1, 11, 13, 16) ), or may trigger the disclosure of background information that together with the alternative spelled out in the HPC bring about an inference regarding the desires (see (15)).[15]

**Free choice items**
If HPCs are conditionals, they should behave like conditionals. Arguments illustrating similar behavior can come from free choice items with episodic readings.

(18)    a. * Hablaste   con  *cualquier* estudiante
              you talked with any          student

        b. Si hubieras hablado con  *cualquier* estudiante, te hubieras enterado
           if  you had  talked   with any          student     you would have found out

        c. Haber    hablado con *cualquier* estudiante    [HPC]
           have.Inf talked   with any          student

In matrix clauses with episodic readings, free choice items are not possible, (18a). However, they are possible in antecedents of episodic conditionals, (18b) and, crucially, also in HPCs, (18c).

**(Inverted) antecedents**
The proposal in this paper is that HPCs are conditionals spelling out only the antecedent.

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[13]The consequent in HPCs is not spelled out because HPCs are tenseless, and Spanish does not allow tenseless matrix clauses. In Spanish, it is only possible to utter a tenseless clause in a context in which it can be understood as an embedded clause:

(1)   You:  ¿Qué vas a hacer? (What are you going to do?)

      Me:  Ducharme y   ver       la tele
           shower.Inf and watch.Inf the TV
           'I am going to have a shower and watch TV'

Evidence for the lack of tense in HPCs are found in the lack of tense morphology in HPCs. Taking into account that tense morphology in the antecedent of counterfactuals reflects the tense in the matrix clause (Arregui 2004, 2007, 2009), the lack of tense in the antecedent reflects the lack of tense in the entire conditional.

[14]I won't be able to discuss here the nature of the modal Ψ. See Biezma (in progress) for arguments regarding the possibility of Ψ being *would*.

[15]A more detailed discussion of recoverability is the topic of future research (see Biezma in progress).

However, HPCs do not simply spell out antecedents. I show that they actually spell out inverted antecedents. The argumentation for this claims comes in two steps. I first claim that there are conditionals with inverted antecedents in Spanish, and then I show that HPCs behave like them with respect to the distribution of pronouns and focus adverbs.

(19)     a. (Sólo) Si (tú) hubieras salido antes, habrías      llegado a  tiempo
              only if  you had       left    earlier would-have arrived on time

            'If you had left earlier, you would have arrived on time'

        b. (*Sólo) (*tú) Hubieras salido antes, habrías        llegado a  tiempo
              only    you had      left   earlier you would-have arrived on time

The constructions in (19a) and (19b)[16] are conditionals. One could imagine that the presence/absence of *si* in conditionals in Spanish is optional and the structures are the same. However, if that were the case, we would not expect any difference regarding the distribution of pronouns and focus adverbs[17] between (19a) and (19b). The same pattern with respect to focus adverbs and conditionals without *if* has been observed for English inverted conditionals. Iatridou and Embick (1993) argue that inverted antecedents like *had you left earlier* involve movement of the auxiliary from T to C, blocking the presence of *if* and changing the facts regarding the distribution of pronouns. I claim that the same is happening in (19b).[18] The conditional structure in (19b) involves an inverted antecedent.

      Crucially, the restrictions observed in inverted antecedents is Spanish are also observed in HPCs. In (20) we see that the same pattern regarding the distribution of pronouns and focus adverbs is observed with HPCs.

(20)   (*Sólo) (*tú) haber     salido antes
        only     you have.Inf left    earlier

HPCs are conditionals with inverted antecedents. Further evidence supporting this claim concerns the interpretation of inversion.

      Inversion is an optional syntactic operation and, when performed, it carries a meaning. The meaning of inverted structures differ from the meaning of non-inverted ones.

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[16]There is some dialectal variation regarding (19b). A survey shows that they are perfectly common in rural areas in Castile (like Toledo, Cuenca, Albacete, Ciudad Real, Valladolid, Segovia and Burgos), but less used in urban areas, although speakers of urban areas also recognized the construction as part of a rural dialect. A natural example from Toledo would be *¡Ay bola! Te hubieras quedado en cama, ahora estarías curada* ('you moron! had you stayed in bed, you would be cured now').

[17]Notice that it is possible to find focus adverbs in constructions like (1).

(1)  Sólo con  que hubieras salido antes, habrías     llegado a  tiempo
      only with that had      left  earlier would have arrived on time

However, (1) is different from (19b). The construction in (1) involves a prepositional phrase with an embedded CP, which has a different analysis from (1).

[18]Let me point out that there is a difference between English and Spanish inverted antecedents. Whereas in English we found the pronouns between the auxiliary and the lexical verb (*had you left earlier...*), the presence of a pronoun in that position in Spanish is impossible. This might be due to constraints in Spanish prohibiting the insertion of any material between the auxiliary and the lexical verb.

The claim I make here is that inverted conditionals in Spanish signals that the proposition embedded in the antecedent is already part of the Common Ground. This can be either because it has already been raised in the previous discourse, or because it is part of the assumed world knowledge:

(21)   A message in your computer pops up. Part of the system is crashing and you have to do something or it will be fatal. You don't know anything about computers, you do nothing, and the computer crashes. You are now telling the story to your friend Mr. Jobs.

   **You:**   Oh my! My computer is dead! What am I going to do?

   **Mr. Jobs (a):**   # Hubieras introducido el   comando  #111##3998 en el   sistema,
              had          input        the command                in the system
           tu    ordenador no habría       muerto
           your computer  no would have died

   **Mr. Jobs (b):**   # Haber    introducido el   comando  #111##3998 en el   sistema
              have.Inf input         the command               in  the system

   **Mr. Jobs (c):**   Si hubieras introducido el   comando  #111##3998 en el   sistema,
              if  had.2.sg input         the command                in the system,
           tu    ordenador no  hubiera muerto
           your computer  neg had      died

Jobs' (a, b) utterances are infelicitous because they assume that you knew that inserting the *#111##3998* code in the system would have delivered the desired outcome, i.e. that your computer would have not died, but you knew nothing about this (presupposition failure). However, this inference is not, by default, carried by regular conditionals, thus Jobs' (c) utterance is good. HPCs are only felicitous when $\alpha$ was epistemically available to the addressee at the time when something other than $\alpha$ happened or, at the very least, can be easily accomodated that that's the case. These facts partially explain the *obviousness* meaning carried by HPCs. HPCs are counterfactual, i.e. HPC($\alpha$) implies that $\alpha$ is false. HPC($\alpha$) indicates that $\alpha$ would have brought about your desires. Inversion already carries the meaning that $\alpha$ was epistemically available at the time something other than $\alpha$ happened, and yet you did not perform $\alpha$. The obviousness meaning of HPCs (*duh!*), and the fact that they are stereotypically reproaches, can be partially explained with the meaning of inversion.

**The modal in HPCs, counterfactuality and desires**
HPCs are counterfactual conditionals (HPC($\alpha$) implies that $\alpha$ is not true in the actual world). An obvious question is whether the modal in HPCs, which I have kept calling $\Psi$, is equivalent to 'would'. There are properties of HPCs that might discourage us from thinking that $\Psi$ is *would*: *desirability*. HPCs are tied to desires, but counterfactuals are not. Let us consider (22), and imagine it is true in (15), scenario in which you want to be with María.

(22)   Si la   hubieras invitado te      habría        dicho que no
       if her had you  invited   to you would have her said   that no

If (22) is true in (15), we would never utter the HPC *haberla invitado* (have invited her), because the consequences of inviting her are not desired. We can utter counterfactuals with bad consequents, but HPCs require always a desired consequent. Does this mean that $\Psi$ is not *would* and we have to encode desirability in the semantics of $\Psi$? It turns out that the fact that HPCs are tied to desires does not mean that the modal cannot be *would*. There are *would*-counterfactuals in which the consequent is necessarily desired: *optatives*.

(23)  If only I had invited her, she would have come / # she wouldn't have come

Optatives have many similarities with HPCs. For one, in optatives the consequent is not necessarily overt, indeed, speakers prefer for the consequent not to be overt (further discussion of optatives is not possible for reasons of space).[19]

**Weird orders**
If HPCs are conditionals, HPCs like *haber nacido patata* ('had you been born a potato...'), (13) do not need a special explanation. Those are perfectly acceptable as conditionals.

*# That is false*
We know that HPCs cannot be replied to with *that is false*. We speculated that maybe the explanation was that in HPCs there is a modal used performatively. However, a better explanation for this fact could relay on the semantic form. Let's look at (24) and (25).

(24)  Me:  If only I were taller       (25)  Me:  If only I were taller, I would have
                                                        played in the NBA

      You:  # That is false                  You:  $\sqrt{}$ That is false

When the consequent is not present in optatives, (24), optatives cannot be replied to with *that is false*, but such a reply is possible when the consequent is present, (25). The proposal is that the reason why we cannot reply to (24) with that is false is that, unlike (25), (24) does not denote a proposition. In (24) we have an abstraction over a pronoun ranging over propositions (the consequent), not a proposition, thus we cannot replied to it with *that is false*. In (25) there is a proposition, and the reply is fine.

      Examples like (26), in which we try to make an assertion, support the claim.

(26)  You:  Who on Earth wants to wear that dress?
      Me:  # That is false.

Even though we may utter the question in (26) with the intention of making an assertion, i.e. that you have to be crazy to wear that dress, it is not possible to reply to it with *that is false*. The reason for this is that the form we chose to make the assertion is a question, and a question does not denote a proposition. The case of HPCs is simillar to (24). HPCs are abstractions over propositions and, as optatives without consequents, they cannot be replied to with *that is false*.

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[19]In Biezma (in progress) I propose that desirability is derived in the same way in optatives and in HPCs.

## 3.     Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that HPCs are not imperatives (in the past). HPCs behave differently from imperatives in many respects and, furthermore, an analysis of HPCs as imperatives does not explain the extra meanings carried by this construction. I have argued that HPCs are conditionals. I have shown that an account of HPCs as conditionals can better account for the data and provides us with a lot of explanatory power to account for the extra meanings carried by this construction. Any other account of HPCs, either as imperatives in the past (such as Bosque's (1980)) or as a regular modal statement, would be in need of high level of speculation to explain all those facts, whose explanation comes for free here.

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