

Bueno: A Spanish Interactive Discourse Marker

Author(s): Catherine Travis

Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society: General Session and Parasession on Phonetics and Phonological Universals (1998), pp. 268-279

Please see “How to cite” in the online sidebar for full citation information.

Please contact BLS regarding any further use of this work. BLS retains copyright for both print and screen forms of the publication. BLS may be contacted via <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/bls/>.

The Annual Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society is published online via [eLanguage](#), the Linguistic Society of America's digital publishing platform.

Bueno: A Spanish Interactive Discourse Marker¹

Catherine Travis
La Trobe University, Australia

—*Vayase al carajo— balbuceó Trueba sin convicción.*

—*Bueno, por allá vamos. Usted viene conmigo.*

'Go to hell,' stammered Trueba without conviction.

'*Bueno*, that's where we're going. You're coming with me.'

(Isabel Allende. *The House of the Spirits*: 319)

1. Introduction

This paper presents a semantic analysis of the Spanish Discourse Marker (DM) *bueno* (something similar to 'well', 'OK', 'alright' in English). Using recordings of conversational Colombian Spanish, and drawing from two major works on this Marker (Bauhr 1994 and Fuentes 1993), four discourse functions of *bueno* will be identified and discussed. On the basis of these functions, it will be suggested that *bueno* is polysemous, and following the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, two definitions to account for its range of use will be proposed. It will be argued that these definitions reflect the way in which the meaning of the DM *bueno* is related to the adjective *bueno*, meaning 'good'. Finally, the role *bueno* may play in the communicative realization of the norms and values of the cultures in which it is used will be considered.

2. Natural Semantic Metalanguage Approach

The theoretical framework used here is the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, as developed by Wierzbicka (1972, 1980, 1996 and references therein), and colleagues, principally Goddard (1989, 1994). This approach is based on the notion of reductive paraphrase: the use of a limited set of maximally simple and maximally universal words, combined in accordance with a limited set of maximally simple and maximally universal syntactic patterns, to form a kind of script, outlining the meaning of the item under consideration. The lexicon of the Metalanguage numbers around 60 words and includes, for example, 'I', 'you', 'good', 'bad', 'think', 'know', 'say', 'want', 'this', 'something', 'same' etc. These words are combined to form sentences such as: 'you say something'; 'I think this is good'; 'I feel something bad'; 'I want you to know this', etc. These words and patterns are believed to be found in most, if not all, of the world's languages, and thus the definitions should be readily translatable cross-linguistically. Such definitions are of use for language-learning, for cross-linguistic studies, in that they enable apparently related items to be compared across languages, and for linguistic studies comparing related items within the one language. Comparative work will be left for further research, and this study will concentrate on just the one marker, *bueno*.

3. Data

The data on which this study is primarily based are recordings of conversational Spanish, made in Colombia in 1997. This comprises three hours and 36 minutes of conversation, and presents a total of 81 tokens of *bueno*. The majority of

examples given here are from this corpus, although examples will occasionally be drawn from other sources to support points made in the discussion. These include interviews conducted in Australia with Colombians in 1997, novels by Latin American authors, and other studies of *bueno*, which have focused on its use in Spain. The source of each example is indicated above it. Although there are differences in terms of frequency of occurrence of *bueno* in different dialects and genres, there is no apparent difference in the semantics of *bueno*, and the definitions proposed are intended to apply equally well to these other data.

The conversational data has been transcribed in accordance with the Du Bois et al. transcription method (1993). Each line of the transcription represents one intonation unit, defined as a string of words that occur under one coherent intonation contour (1993:47). The transcription conventions used are given in the appendix.

4. Functions of *bueno*

The polyfunctionality of DMs has been widely noted in the literature (cf. Schiffrin 1987, Fraser 1990, Jucker 1993, Lenk 1998), and has been noted specifically for *bueno* in the work of Bauhr (1994) and Fuentes (1993). Applying the analyses of Bauhr and Fuentes to the Colombian conversational data, four basic functions that account for all the cases presented in these studies have been identified. These are used to mark: acceptance; a response (that is not pure acceptance); a reorientation (or topic change); and a correction. Although acceptance is clearly distinguishable from the other functions, the other functions are interrelated, and are not always mutually exclusive (cf. Bauhr 1994:79). That is, some cases of *bueno* marking a response, for example, could also be seen to be marking a reorientation, or a correction. It will be argued that these three functions share the same meaning. One definition will therefore be proposed to account for the use of *bueno* indicating acceptance, and another to account for that of marking a response, reorientation and correction.

The following table presents the frequencies of occurrence of *bueno* on the basis of function and meaning for the Colombian conversational data. It is interesting to note that each of the two different meanings to be proposed account for roughly the same number of tokens.

Functions	acceptance	response	reorien- tation	correction	TOTAL
Tokens	39 (48%)	14 (17%)	25 (31%)	3 (4%)	81 (100%)
		42 (52%)			

These functions will now each be considered individually, and meanings to account for them proposed.

4.1 Acceptance

Indicating acceptance is the most common use of *bueno* in the data, accounting for 39 of the 81 tokens, or 48%. *Bueno* can be used to mark acceptance of an

offer, or a proposal, or also information receipt, indicating that the speaker has understood and accepted what another has said. Some examples are given below.

In (1), Angela uses *bueno* to accept Sara's order for two pizzas.

- | | | |
|---------|---|--------------------|
| (1) | | 27: insurance (24) |
| SARA: | [<i>Yo encargo dos</i>]. ² | [I'll order two]. |
| | [2@@@2] ³ | [2@@@2] |
| ANGELA: | [2Ah, | [2Oh, |
| | bueno2]. | bueno2]. |
| | @@ | @@ |
| | <i>Listo.</i> | OK. |

In (2), *bueno* is used to indicate Santi's acceptance of what Angela has told him; namely that the tape recorder should be left to continue recording.

- | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (2) | | 3: almuerzo (10) |
| ANGELA: | .. <i>Tiene que seguir así.</i> | .. It has to keep going like that. |
| SANTI: | .. <i>Sí?</i> | .. It does? |
| ANGELA: | <i>Sí.</i> | Yes. |
| SANTI: | .. <i>Ah,</i> | .. Oh, |
| | bueno. | bueno. |
| | <i>chao.</i> | ciao. |
| | ((ANGELA LEAVES THE ROOM)) | |

Bueno can also be used to indicate acceptance of an offer, as shown in (3).

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| (3) | | (Bauhr: ONE71 UT:201) |
| H1 | —¿ <i>Quieres fumar?</i> | Do you want a smoke? |
| H2 | — Bueno. | Bueno. |

Bauhr and Fuentes claim that the use of *bueno* to mark acceptance encodes reluctance to comply, and some kind of concession on the part of the speaker (Bauhr 1994:92ff, Fuentes 1993:208ff). Both compare it with other markers such as *claro*, *por supuesto*, *seguro*, all meaning something like 'sure, of course' (Fuentes 1993:209), or even *con mucho gusto* 'with pleasure' (Bauhr 1994:93), which certainly are more enthusiastic ways of replying. This notion of reluctance can be seen in (4) below. This comes from a conversation between three participants, arranging to go somewhere that afternoon. Angela and Patricia (the third participant) both want to go at two, and Clara wants to go at 2.30. Here, Clara concedes to going at two.

- | | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------------|
| (4) | | 36: Colombo (31) |
| ANGELA: | <i>Por qué no vamos a las dos?</i> | Why don't we go at two? |
| | .. @@ | .. @@ |
| CLARA: | ... <i>Ay,</i> | ... Oh, |
| | <VOX <i>no puede ser a las dos y media?</i> | <VOX can't it be at two thirty? |
| | <i>Yo= quiero VOX> --</i> | I want VOX> -- |
| | ((AS THOUGH CRYING)) | |
| | ... Bueno , <i>a las dos pues.</i> | ... Bueno , at two then. |

Note that Clara encodes her reluctance here through voice quality, as she is pretending to be crying, and thus *bueno* alone is not carrying this implication. Also note that in (1) above, there is clearly no notion of reluctance or concession. Following *bueno*, Angela laughs, and agrees with *listo* 'OK', and thus this is quite an enthusiastic acceptance. It therefore cannot be the case that reluctance is inherent in the meaning of *bueno* itself. Rather, what seems to be the case is that *bueno* encodes a neutral or non-committal response, and it is this that allows for 'reluctance' as a possible interpretation. In accepting an offer, for example, with *bueno*, the speaker indicates that this is not something they have been eagerly awaiting or expecting (for example, in (3), that they be offered a cigarette), but something that, now proposed, is accepted. Its neutrality also means that prosodic and other features can be used to encode reluctance (or enthusiasm), in accordance with the pragmatics of the situation.

I propose the following semantic formula to represent the meaning of *bueno* as it is used to indicate acceptance, which will be called *bueno*1.

1. you say something (X)
2. I say: this (X) is good

The first component captures the fact that this refers to the use of *bueno* as a response to something someone else has said. ('I' and 'you' are used here to refer to the speaker, who accepts with *bueno*, and the interlocutor, respectively.) The second component captures the fact that *bueno* is a positive comment on what another person has said, and it is in this sense that it is related to the adjective 'good'. Note that this formula encodes nothing about the speaker's real (versus portrayed) attitude to the preceding discourse, as would need to be included in more (and less) enthusiastic responses. For example, something like *muy bien* 'very good' may encode a notion of 'I think this is good', and *con mucho gusto* 'with pleasure' may encode 'I feel something good about this', while no such notions are encoded in *bueno*. *Bueno* is a 'neutral' way of accepting something, by saying 'what you have said is good', without committing oneself further.

4.2 Prefacing a response

The use of *bueno* to preface a response is similar to that of indicating acceptance in that both respond to something someone else has said. These two functions differ in one immediately apparent way, however, in that in one function (that considered above), *bueno* itself forms the response, and in the other (that to be considered in this section), *bueno* is used to mark the response which follows.

Included under the heading of prefacing a response is the use of *bueno* to preface a response to a comment, and an answer to a question. In both (5) and (6), *bueno* is prefacing a response to a comment.

In (5), Milena is discussing the work done by environmental organizations in the small town where she lives, and is saying that in the light of all there is to be done, there isn't enough money. Rosario accepts this with *bueno*, but adds that even small projects, when timely, can make a difference.

(5)

53: contamination (36)

MILENA: .. *No es suficiente.*
 ROSARIO: *Sí.*
 ... **Bueno,**
pero a veces cosas
pequeñitas no?
Hay proyectos así=,
como=,
 .. *puntuales,*
 .. *No?*

.. It's not enough.
 Yes.
 ... **Bueno,**
 but sometimes little things don't you
 think?
 There are projects like that,
 kind of,
 .. timely,
 .. Don't you think?

The use of *bueno* here indicates that Rosario agrees with Milena, but that her agreement is only partial. This is similar to what has been seen for *bueno* encoding acceptance, in that, by agreeing, it marks acceptance of another's comment. Here, however, *bueno* indicates that some modification of that comment is needed. As was proposed for *bueno*1, this use also implies a positive evaluation, but in this case, it is not of what Milena has said, as clearly Rosario does not want to say that it's good that there isn't enough money. Rather, the positive evaluation seems to be of the fact that the speakers are in agreement.

In (6), Santi asks Angela if she knows how the age of trees is measured, and she replies with an answer he hadn't thought of.

(6)

14: restaurant (24)

SANTI: [*Sabes como le miden la*
*edad] a un arbol?
 ANGELA: *Con .. el carbono catorce?*
 SANTI: **Bueno,**
también.
*No me acordaba de eso.**

[Do you know how they measure the
 age] of a tree?
 With .. the carbon-14?
Bueno,
 that too.
 I didn't remember that.

Santi responds to Angela's answer with *bueno*, indicating that he agrees with her, while it is not what he had in mind. The use of *también* 'also' shows that there is another method he was thinking of, and he then admits that he had forgotten the method Angela has proposed.⁴ Thus, again, *bueno* is used to indicate that the speaker agrees with their interlocutor's comment, but only partially.

In (7), *bueno* is used to preface an answer to a question about an insurance policy the participants are discussing.

(7)

20: insurance (11)

ANGELA: *Y cuál es la diferencia,*
O sea,
en plata.
 @@
 SARA: .. **Bueno,**
 .. *Y entonces,*
Eso también es super
importante.

And what's the difference,
 I mean,
 in money.
 @@
 .. **Bueno,**
 .. And so,
 That too is very important.

In this excerpt, Angela asks about the difference in cost for the different options she has available to her. Before going on to answer this, Sara continues with what she

had been saying before Angela asked this question, outlining one very important element of the policy, and only then turns to answer Angela's question.⁵ Thus, the response immediately following the question does not in itself constitute an appropriate answer, although Sara does go on to answer Angela's question following this. *Bueno* is used in this context to acknowledge the validity of the question (and in this sense is similar to the notion of agreement seen above), and to indicate at the same time that it is not going to be answered without some further information being given.

One final example to illustrate this is the following.

- (8) (Bauhr: ONE71 UT:158)
 H1 —*Hay cosas más importantes que hacer. [...] (sic) ¿No crees?* —There are more important things to do. [...] (sic) Don't you think?
 H2 —*Bueno, depende* —*Bueno*, it depends.

Thus, in prefacing an answer to a question, *bueno* is used to acknowledge the validity of the question, but indicates that the answer is not a straightforward one, or cannot be given without some further information being presented first.

What is common to the use of *bueno* prefacing both responses and answers to a question is an implication of: agreement (cf. Bauhr 1994:92ff), either with the comment, or with the validity of the question; a positive evaluation of the fact that the interlocutors are in agreement; and that the agreement is only partial, and needs to be qualified in some way. Before presenting a definition to capture this use of *bueno*, its use prefacing a reorientation in the conversation will be considered.

4.3 Reorientation

The most common use of *bueno* in the data following that of acceptance, is to mark a reorientation in the conversation, which accounts for 25 of the 81 tokens, or 31%. Included under this heading are such uses as initiating a new topic, closing a topic, returning to an earlier topic following a digression, or other kinds of breaks in the flow of conversation (cf. Bauhr 1994:216, Fuentes 1993:216). Some examples are given below.

- (9) 49: contamination (7)
 OMAR: ... *No me acuerdo cómo se llama.* ... I don't remember what it's called.
 ROSARIO: ... *Bueno.* ... *Bueno.*
 ... *Una vez fuimos allá, cuando unos amigos alemanes?* ... We went there once, when some German friends had arrived?

Here, Rosario is telling a story about when she took some friends of hers to a beach which she can't remember the name of. None of her interlocutors can remember the name, but they all seem to know which beach she is talking about, and she goes ahead and tells the story. *Bueno* marks a reorientation from trying to remember the name of the beach (which is background information to her story), to the story itself. The meaning of *bueno* here is similar to what has been seen above: it marks the speaker's acceptance of the fact that nobody remembers the name of the

beach, and indicates that this doesn't matter, that she's going to go on and tell her story anyway.

(10)

ANGELA: *Mirá que,*
 .. *este señor,*
 ... (2.0) *Hm,*
Parece que tiene es como --
 .. *un problema,*
o yo no sé.
Bueno.
 ... *Estaba ahorita= --*
así como,
hablando .. solo?

15: restaurant (26)

Look,
 .. this man,
 ... (2.0) Hm,
 He seems to have kind of --
 .. a problem,
 or I don't know.
Bueno.
 ... Just now he was --
 kind of,
 talking .. to himself?

Here Angela presents her opinion about a customer in the restaurant where this conversation was recorded (that he seems to have some kind of problem). Following *o yo no sé. Bueno.* ('or I don't know. *Bueno.*'), she gives an example of why she thinks that (because he was talking to himself). *Bueno* marks her reorientation from her opinion about the man, to the reason for why she has that opinion. It encodes acceptance of what precedes (that Angela doesn't really know if the man has a problem), and implies that she believes she and her interlocutor are in agreement (that neither really know), but that she has something more to say about it (that she has some reason for thinking that he may, because he was talking to himself).

In what has been coded as marking a reorientation, *bueno* can function as a response to an interlocutor's comment, as in (9), or as a response to the speaker's own speech, as in (10). It is, however, often impossible to say precisely whose talk it is responding to, as in the following example. Here, Sara is going through the options available in an insurance policy she is describing to Angela. One of the options is a daily 'allowance' if she were to be hospitalized, of 110,000 pesos.

(11)

SARA: [*Ciento diez*] .. *diarios.*
 ANGELA: .. *Ah,*
diarios!
 SARA: *Diarios.*
 ANGELA: ... *Bastante.*
 SARA: .. *Sí.*
 .. **Bueno.**
Cobertura para el cancer es
importante.

24: insurance (15)

[A hundred and ten] .. daily.
 .. Oh,
 daily!
 Daily.
 ... That's a lot.
 .. Yes.
 .. **Bueno.**
 Coverage for cancer is important.

Sara uses *bueno* to return to the list of options she is going through, following the digression regarding the generous daily allowance. *Bueno* here could be a response either to Angela's comment, *Bastante* 'That's a lot', or to her own expression of agreement with this, *Sí*, 'Yes.' Thus, it is important that the definition capture this notion: that although *bueno* is a response to prior discourse, it is not inherent in the meaning of *bueno* whose discourse it responds to.

The meaning of *bueno* in (11) is as we have seen above: it indicates positive evaluation of agreement between the interlocutors, and that there is more to be said about this, in this case, that there are other options of the policy to go through.

In the light of these examples, I propose the following definition to account for *bueno* as a marker of response and of reorientation.

1. someone says something
2. I say: I think the same as you
3. this is good
4. there is something more to say

Component one reflects the fact that this use of *bueno* is a response to something someone has said. (Note that this differs from what has been proposed for *bueno*₁, which has been defined specifically as a response to a comment by the interlocutor, with the component 'you say something'.) Component two reflects the fact that *bueno* is a comment by the speaker indicating assumed agreement between the interlocutors. Component three captures the positive evaluation of that agreement (which is a reflection of the relation between the DM and the adjective *bueno*, 'good'), and component four, the fact that what precedes is not 'the full story', and that something needs to be added.

One final main function of *bueno* will now be considered; that of prefacing a correction.

4.4 Correction

In the Colombian conversational data, there are just three examples of *bueno* used to mark a correction. One is given below.

(12)

50: contamination (22)

((OMAR IS REPORTING A
DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO
SPEAKERS,
LABELED S1 AND S2))

OMAR: <S1 ... Pero,
un= pinguino no mide
tanto S1>.

<S1 ... But,
a penguin isn't that tall S1>.

ROSARIO: [Mhm].

[Mhm].

OMAR: <S2 [**Bueno**],
qué sería,
uno cincuenta S2>.

<S2 [**Bueno**],
what would it be,
one fifty (cm) S2>.

Omar is telling a joke here, about a person (S2) who claims (prior to this excerpt) to have shot a penguin that was over 160 cm tall. (The joke is that what they have shot was not in fact a penguin, but a nun.) *Bueno* is used to mark correction of the height to 150 cm, in response to S1's comment that a penguin can't be that tall. As has been seen for its use as a preface to a response and a reorientation, *bueno* here encodes agreement with the interlocutor, but only partial agreement, as the prior discourse needs to be modified, or corrected.

The following is another example of *bueno* marking a correction, from an interview conducted in Australia with two Colombian males. Here, Alonso is reading a question regarding punctuality from a question/topic sheet he was given.

(13)

ALONSO: <READING Hay situaciones en las cuales, la puntualidad sea más importante que otras READING>?
Si es una cita para encontrarse con una niña.
Bueno,
quiero decir una mujer no?
No es una niña.
 ... **Bueno,**
nosotros decimos niña no?

(WR:2.2.2)

<READING Are there situations in which, punctuality would be more important than in others READING>?

If it's with a date to meet up with a girl.

Bueno,
 I mean a woman don't I?
 It's not a girl.

Bueno,
 we say girl don't we?

The speaker corrects himself twice here; the first time from *niña* 'girl' to *mujer* 'woman', and the second time to correct his statement *No es una niña* 'It's not a girl', because to a Colombian, it is in fact *una niña* 'a girl'; that is, that's what Colombians call women. Note that in this example, as in (12), some kind of acceptance of what is to be corrected is implied, and thus, just as has been seen above, *bueno* is marking a partial modification.

In these examples, *bueno* can be seen to have the same meaning as evident in its use to mark a response and a reorientation. It indicates an assumption that the speakers are in agreement ('we think the same') (thus in (13), for example, 'we all know that I don't mean girl'), a positive evaluation of this ('this is good'), and a qualification, which is the correction ('there is something more to say').

5. Conclusion

The four functions listed above of marking acceptance, prefacing a response, indicating a reorientation in the conversation, or a correction, can be accounted for under the two formulae proposed, reproduced below.

*bueno*1

1. you say something
2. I say: this is good

*bueno*2

1. someone says something
2. I say: I think the same as you
3. this is good
4. there is something more to say

Definition (1) captures the meaning of *bueno* used to mark acceptance be that of an offer, a suggestion, or of information. It implies that what the interlocutor has said is accepted without qualification. This is reflected in component two, which states that *bueno* in this use makes a positive comment on something someone else

has said, without encoding anything more about the speaker's attitude to that proposition.

Definition (2) accounts for the use of *bueno* as a marker of response, reorientation or correction. This use of *bueno* functions as a comment on a prior utterance or stretch of discourse; it indicates that the speaker assumes agreement between their interlocutors, that they view this agreement positively, but that the agreement is only partial, and some modification is needed.

These two meanings are related, in that both are a response to prior discourse, encoding a positive evaluation. The main difference between them is that *bueno2* encodes only partial acceptance, indicating that there is something more to be said. It may be the case that the notion of 'reluctance' discussed in the literature in the use of *bueno* indicating acceptance (see section 4.1 above) is related to, or even has its basis in, this notion of 'something more to say', evident in *bueno2*.⁶ As this notion is not always encoded, however, it cannot be attributed to the meaning of *bueno*, and for this reason, I have posited polysemy.⁷

In closing, I would like to consider what role, if any, *bueno* may play in enacting the norms and values of the cultures in which it is used. The literature on Latin American culture characterizes it as a culture in which the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relations, the avoidance of personal conflict and the recognition of similarity with others are of central importance (Diaz-Guerrero and Szalay 1991, Fitch 1989, Markus and Kitayama 1991, Triandis et al. 1984). From the analysis presented here, *bueno* can perhaps be seen to be one way in which these cultural values are realized communicatively. It is a Marker which can be used to minimize conflict in conversation, in that, by first indicating acceptance of what another has said, an upcoming qualification is mitigated, or softened. It is also a way of stressing shared ground between the interlocutors, by acknowledging the validity of others' contributions, before outlining potential differences of opinion. Although a study of just one DM is of course very limited in terms of the kinds of cultural insights it can offer, this brief account suggests that, as has been argued by Wierzbicka (1994), a detailed study of a range of DMs in a given language may prove to be a valuable resource for tapping into cultural values, and how they are realized in conversation.

Appendix

Transcription Conventions (Du Bois et al. 1993:88ff)

.	final intonation contour	...(N)	long pause
,	continuing intonation contour	...	medium pause (> 0.7 secs)
?	appeal intonation contour	..	short pause (about 0.5 secs)
!	emphasis	@	one syllable of laughter
--	truncated intonation contour	((WORDS))	researcher's comment
-	truncated word	<VOX word VOX>	word pronounced with a certain voice quality
=	lengthened syllable	<S1 word S1>	speaker attribution in reported speech
[]	speech overlap	<READING word READING>	speaker is reading aloud
[2 2]	(used to distinguish consecutive overlaps)		

Notes

¹ I would like to thank Alan Baxter, Hilary Chappell, Tim Curnow, Carmen Fought, Barbara Kelly and Ivo Sanchez for help with this paper, in its final and earlier versions, and Sandy Thompson for advice on issues concerned with the treatment of Discourse Markers. I would also like to thank the audience at the presentations of this paper at UCSB, and BLS 24, for their valuable comments. And I would like to thank my research assistants in Colombia, Maria Elena Rendon and Marianne Dieck, for the data they collected, and for help with the transcriptions.

² The brackets here indicate that this Intonation Unit overlaps with a prior one, not reproduced here as it is not relevant to the discussion.

³ Numbered brackets are used when overlaps occur over consecutive Intonation Units, to indicate what overlaps with what. Thus, this laughter overlaps with Angela's *Ah, bueno* 'Oh, *bueno*'.

⁴ Presumably Santi was thinking of something along the lines of looking at the number of rings a tree has (they have just been talking about how large trees get as they get old), although precisely at this point, his mobile phone rings, and the conversation ends.

⁵ *Eso* 'that' here refers to another element of the policy that Sara had been describing, when Angela asked her about the cost, and not to the cost itself.

⁶ A study of the grammaticalization of this Marker could help establish whether this is the case.

⁷ The polysemy seems to be reflected in the prosody, but this remains to be looked at in detail

References

- Allende, Isabel. 1985. *La casa de los espíritus* ('The house of the spirits'). Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana.
- Bauhr, Gerhard. 1994. Funciones discursivas de *bueno* en Español moderno ('Discourse functions of *bueno* in modern Spanish'). *Lingüística Española Actual* 16.1:79–124.
- Diaz-Guerrero and Lorand B. Szalay. 1991. *Understanding Mexicans and Americans: Cultural perspectives in conflict*. Cognition and Language Series. New York: Plenum Press.
- Du Bois, John, Stephan Schuetze-Coburn, Susanna Cumming, Danae Paolino. 1993. Outline of discourse transcription. In: Jane A. Edwards, Martin D. Lampert, eds. *Talking data: Transcription and coding in discourse*, 45–89. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.
- Fitch, Kristine. 1989. *Communicative enactment of interpersonal ideology: Personal address in urban Colombian society*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Washington.
- Fraser, Bruce. 1990. An approach to discourse markers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14:383–395.
- Fuentes, Catalina Rodriguez. 1993. Comportamiento discursivo de *bueno, bien, pues bien* ('Discourse behavior of *bueno, bien, pues bien*'). *Estudios de Lingüística, Universidad de Alicante* 9:205–221.
- Goddard, Cliff. 1989. Issues in Natural Semantic Metalanguage. *Quaderni di Semantica* 10.1:51–64.

- Goddard, Cliff. 1994. Semantic theory and lexical universals. In Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, eds. *Semantic and lexical universals*, 7–29. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jucker, Andreas. 1993. The discourse marker well: A relevance theory account. *Journal of Pragmatics* 19:435–452.
- Lenk, Uta. 1998. *Marking discourse coherence: functions of discourse markers in spoken English*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Markus Hazel and Shinobu Kitayama. 1991. Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion and motivation. *Psychological Review* 98.2:224–253.
- Schiffrin, Deborah. 1987. *Discourse markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Triandis, Harry, Gerardo Marín, Judith Lisansky and Hector Betancourt. 1984. *Simpatía* as a cultural script of Hispanics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 47.6:1363–1375.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1972. *Semantic primitives*. Frankfurt: Athenäum.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1980. *Lingua mentalis: The semantics of natural language*. Sydney: Academic Press.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1994. 'Cultural scripts': A new approach to the study of cross-cultural communication. In: Martin Pütz, ed. *Language contact and language conflict*, 69–87. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1996. *Semantics: Primes and universals*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.