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CEILE: A Corpus of Free Indirect Style in Spanish—Structure, Development and Practical Application

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ABSTRACT

Free indirect style is grammatically defined as a type of discourse typically used in literary texts which combines features of both direct and indirect style. Deictic elements corresponding to the narrator and to the characters overlap in free indirect style, with no specification as to whether the transcribed words refer to the former or the latter. Its unique aspects have caused some specialists to raise controversial issues in terms of characterising this structure. Part of the limitations of previous studies stem from the fact that they have been based on examples taken from specific works and authors, while more objective results could have been obtained if the principles of corpus linguistics had been relied upon, as the methodology allows research hypotheses to be based on meaningful samples of real language. However, the annotation of the existing language corpora for the study of the Spanish language prevents researchers from automatically retrieving samples of free indirect style. In order to bridge this gap, it has been created a specific corpus of free indirect style called CEILE: *Corpus de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español* (Corpus of Free Indirect Style in Spanish). CEILE has undergone three stages of development before reaching its current online version. This article describes how it has evolved over time, shows some possible uses and provides initial results obtained from its implementation, which significantly facilitates the analysis of this grammatical structure and its study in contrast to other reported speech procedures.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics; Spanish Language; Grammar; Free Indirect Style; CEILE

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1. Introduction

Corpus linguistics^[1-5] has considerably facilitated the work of philologists in recent times. However, the language corpora that are usually used as a basis for synchronic studies of the written Spanish language (such as the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* and the *Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI* of the Real Academia Española^[6, 7], among many others that could be mentioned) employ an utterance retrieval system whose discursive nature does not fit into the search parameters, governed by strictly semantic and syntactic criteria. Therefore, it is not possible to extract fragments of discourse that feature a type of construction which cannot be intuitively searched for through morphological categories or fixed grammatical structures. These include, for example, utterances that are specific to the citation or reproduction of discourse, such as direct style, free direct style or free indirect style.

It therefore remains necessary to create new computerised language corpora that contain only these utterances and serve as a complement to the ones previously mentioned for the empirical study of the language. The *Corpus de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español (CEILE)* is an online resource that provides a set of examples of free indirect style from different representative late 20th and early 21st century novels in Spanish literature and was specifically created to fill this gap.

The conception of free indirect style as a type of discourse which combines features of direct and indirect style was used for identification and selection purposes. Free indirect style typically alternates deictic elements that point to the narrator and others that point to the characters in the narrative; thus, it is not determined whether the words transcribed correspond to one or the other^[8].

The following extract could represent a prototypical example:

Le había propuesto a Almudena pasar el verano en la casa de la playa, darían paseos en la barca y harían excursiones a lugares cercanos. Pero a Almudena sólo le interesaba tener a mano su ración de veneno, eso era lo que había buscado en ella, lo único que quería de ella, ¡qué fracaso! Y siempre igual. Doña Sofi se preguntaba por qué otras sí y ella no. (Marina Mayoral, *Recuerda, cuerpo.*)

As will be discussed in the following section, there are different interpretations of this general definition regarding the grammatical characterisation of the free indirect style construction and how its origin may be traced back to other forms of citation. In this context, the *CEILE* aims to provide empirical support for new research that may contribute to clarifying these and other questions related to free indirect style. This paper will therefore focus on demonstrating the relevance of the corpus as a resource and illustrate the different phases that were required for its development and optimisation, which have led to its latest version (in online format). Finally, the article will show the initial results from the exploitation of the corpus as an empirical basis for the analysis of the grammar of free indirect style.

2. Problems and Areas of Interest in the Study of the Grammar of Free Indirect Style

Free indirect style has been studied almost exclusively from a literary point of view. It is a practically forgotten subject in grammar studies, where it is usually only discussed in comparison with other forms of reproduced discourse (mainly indirect style and direct style). This is compounded by the difficulty in reaching consensus among scholars on some key aspects, such as the nomenclature to be applied to this structure and its origin (which has been said to derive from direct style, indirect style, both or neither). Moreover, as will be seen below, the research published to date has some limitations, including its focus on specific works^[9, 10] and its failure to cover a wide range of examples from various sources^[11, 12]. This may be partly due to the corpus linguistics limitations noted in the introduction: the impossibility of retrieving examples in free indirect style from existing corpora and the non-existence of specific corpora of free indirect style.

Around the 1970s, several linguists approached the study of free indirect style as a grammatical construction and attempted to portray it syntactically based on its degree of proximity to the classic forms of reproduction of discourse (direct style and indirect style). Thus, Verdín Díaz described it as the incorporation of dialogue into a narrative^[13], with syntax identical to indirect style, but without connectors or introductory verbs that cause its subordination or dependence.

In his opinion, although free indirect style has some characteristics which emanate from direct and indirect styles, some of its unique traits (such as the absence of a reporting verb to introduce the reproduction of the characters' thoughts in a discourse) place it far apart from these other styles. However, Verdín Díaz did recognise the existence of cases in which a verbal form appears in an immediate context that guides the reading and informs the meaning of the sequences in free indirect style. He called these elements 'false introducers' and believed that they resemble the introductory forms used in direct style, insofar as they can also be placed in any position, as they can precede, follow or be interposed in the midst of the reproduced utterance. A clear example is the one reproduced in the introduction section to illustrate the prototypical direct style, where the verb form *se preguntaba* acts as a false introducer that announces the introduction of a character's thought.

In contrast, Hernadi emphasised the separation of free indirect style from direct and indirect styles^[14], mainly because of the absence of the *verbum dicendi* inherent to the former and of a subordinating conjunction (inherent to indirect style), which gives reported speech the appearance of a narrated act. Thus, Hernadi considered that the meaning and contextual signs of citation in free indirect style reflect the latency of two minds: the one that emits the original discourse, which is responsible for content, and the one that reproduces that discourse, which is responsible for form.

For his part, Domínguez defined free indirect style as a 'direct reproduction without an introducer' because^[12], while there is a grammatical shift of pronouns, modes and verb tenses in this style (as is typically found in indirect style), they are syntactically distant from each other. The same occurs when it is contrasted with direct style, with which it shares intonational features and the presence of different levels of language and characteristic forms of speech, but from which it differs in syntax. Thus, for Domínguez, free indirect style is a completely different construction from the other two.

Rojas described free indirect style through its distinctive markers^[15]: it is neither semantically subordinated to a verb in the narrator's discourse nor syntactically linked through a subordinating conjunction, and it has been grammatically shifted from the narrator's discourse. However, Rojas warned that there is no full grammatical shift; rather, there are gaps through which the signals of the character's

discourse appear. For this reason, following Dolezel^[11], he ultimately considered free indirect style to be a form of transitional discourse; while it has certain distinctive markers that differentiate it as a construction, it is conditioned by a wide spectrum of options between two poles: one that is compact (which includes a concentration of the character's discourse marks that make it possible to distinguish a speech act different from that of the narrator), and one that is diffuse (with minimal presence of the character's illocutionary features, which produces ambiguous textual sequences where it is difficult to distinguish between the character's voice and the narrator's voice).

One of the most important works on the polyphony of voices in discourse was produced by Reyes in the 1980s^[16]. This author analysed citation in literary narrative at length and argued that, in free indirect style, there is a confluence of two discourses and two points of view, resulting in a mixed form of narration and literal reproduction of discourse which shares some of the features of direct and indirect styles, namely: their mimetic character, the absence of syntactic signs and their appearance in literary contexts (exclusively in the case of free indirect style). She argued that, in contrast to the so-called *oratio quasi obliqua*, in free indirect style the narrator assumes another's categories of time and space, thus placing the reader within the immediacy of the character. In both free indirect style and *oratio quasi obliqua*, the propositions corresponding to reported speech originate in a subjective realm different from that of the speaker. The difference lies in the fact that in free indirect style, the voice of the character is introduced with minimal intervention by the narrator whereas in *oratio quasi obliqua*, the narrator assumes another's reference system (although the two systems may even merge and become indistinguishable).

The most recent literature on free indirect style in narrative was an exhaustive study by Rivarola & Reisz which recognised substantial syntactic modifications in the construction^[17], such as the use of the character's name, the introduction of vocatives, the insertion of annotations relating to the events narrated that help to recreate the communicative scene or their use as attributive discourse to represent dialogues by introducing the character's name. In this way, free indirect style is not restricted to the representation of the character's interiority, but can also represent their conversations. For Rivarola & Reisz, the main difference with respect

to direct and indirect style is that they both presuppose that the narrator has heard the speech being reproduced, but there is no assurance to that effect; whereas in free indirect style, the narrator simultaneously hears and reproduces speech.

Still within the narrative literary context, Li explained free indirect style as a product of the development of direct and indirect style constructions motivated by authors' desire for innovation and for breaking away from the usual procedures of discourse reproduction^[18].

Lozano, Peña-Marín & Abril^[19], for their part, considered that the difference between indirect and free indirect style is not dichotomous but gradual. Thus, in their view, free indirect style is a type of indirect style in which a speaker reproduces someone else's speech and transfers it to their communicative situation, but direct style also emerges when the character speaks with their own words, voice and deictic system. According to these authors, free indirect style is not only intended to reproduce the meaning but also the form of the original discourse. From this point of view, they agree with Fillmore that it is considerably closer to interior monologue^[20].

In an analysis of the discourse referred to in medieval literature, Girón identified a typology of utterances that are the origin of modern free indirect discourse^[9]: epic free indirect discourse; free indirect discourse introduced by the verb *mandar* followed by an infinitive; the reproduction of news, letters and agreements in free indirect discourse; the reproduction of interior monologue; and complex uniform utterances of free indirect discourse. In a later work, Girón qualified free indirect style as a form of mixed discourse^[10], a product of the mixed syntactic relationship between frame and discourse, where subordination signals are intermingled with juxtaposition ones. Even so, according to the author, the distinctive features of indirect style predominate in free indirect style, just as the distinctive features of direct style predominate in free direct style. According to his classification, there are five types of free indirect discourse: those which use direct style as a framework; those which form part of a narrative discourse; those which are the development of an indirect discourse; those which are the development of free direct discourse; and those which occur in a performative utterance. In addition, he made apt and interesting observations about the so-called 'demarcation signs' (equivalent to the 'false introducers' alluded to by Verdín)^[13], and

stated that their role is to announce the introduction of reproduced discourse and they are necessary to be able to interpret it as such in the text as a whole.

In the 1990s, Abril^[21] turned to journalistic discourse and recalled the distinction between free indirect style and *oratio quasi obliqua* formulated by Reyes^[16]. Abril highlighted the authority of the press editor to reformulate others' discourse when transcribing it. At this point he suggested that it is impossible to delimit how far the sources' responsibility for this discourse extends and where the editor's begins.

More recently, Estévez-Rionegro suggested that there is a proximity between free indirect style and the direct style that is based on the identification of a type of utterance which she called 'atypical direct style'^[22]. The author proposed carrying out contrastive studies between these two types of reported speech in order to support her hypothesis and outlined a possible analysis based on corpus linguistics, which will be discussed in the results section of this paper.

3. Methods

The *CEILE* corpus is an online resource that contains free indirect style utterances from representative narrative works of contemporary Spanish peninsular literature from the last decade of the 20th century and the early part of the 21st century. This is not a closed list, but aims to gradually include new works to increase the number of utterances.

The latest version of the corpus contains six hundred and five annotated examples, taken from seven novels published between 1991 and 2002. Have been selected those literary works that stand out for their abundant use of the free indirect style, and it has been tried to maintain parity between male and female authors. The **Table 1** below lists their titles, author and publishing details, together with the key that was assigned to identify them in the corpus.

The corpus was developed in three phases (which correspond to its three versions). These are detailed below.

3.1. Phase One: The Corpus Informatizado de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español (the Computerised Corpus of Free Indirect Speech in Spanish)

The first phase consisted of reading the works listed in **Table 1** and manually inputting them into an Access sheet.

Table 1. List of works that make up the corpus.

Author	Title	Year	Publisher	Key
Chirbes, R.	<i>La larga marcha</i>	1996	Anagrama	MARCHA
Freire, E.	<i>Melocotones helados</i>	1999	Planeta	MELOCOTONES
Grandes, A.	<i>Los aires difíciles</i>	2002	Tusquets	AIRES
Mas, J.	<i>El lenguaje de las fuentes</i>	1993	Cátedra	FUENTES
Mayoral, M.	<i>Recuerda, cuerpo</i>	1998	Alfaguara	CUERPO
Muñoz, A.	<i>El jinete polaco</i>	1991	RBA	JINETE
Puértolas, S.	<i>Queda la noche</i>	1989	Bibliotex	NOCHE

Access was chosen because it is a database that allows an unlimited number of characters to be entered, a requirement demanded by the length of free indirect style examples, which tend to be large fragments of text.

In addition to the examples, useful information was input to ensure that the examples could be located and identified (identifier number, novel key and page number of the edition used). In this way, the data were organised into five blocks:

- (i) Example identifier: order number within the corpus as a whole.
- (ii) Key of the narrative work: name under which the work was recorded (*vid.* **Table 1**).
- (iii) Page on which the example is found in the edition used.
- (iv) Example: free indirect speech. Where necessary for interpretation, the context before and/or after the free indirect style utterance was enclosed in square brackets.
- (v) Demarcation sign^[8]: verb that announces the introduction of the reproduced discourse. It should be mentioned at this point that, although there are other types of demarcation signs, only those that correspond to verb forms have been noted, as they are the ones of interest to this study.

This first version was registered as *CIEILE: Corpus Informatizado de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español* in .acddb file format (**Figure 1**)^[23].

This is an unpublished database that serves to structure and organize the information and it is the basis for the second version of the corpus, which is presented in the following section.

3.2. Second Phase: The Corpus de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español (the Corpus of Free Indirect Speech in Spanish)

The second phase involved optimising the annotation in the body of the utterances. To do so, the data were ex-

ported from Access to a Word document. This enabled the field data to be transferred to the cells of a table, where the complete examples could be displayed. Above the text of the examples, the delimitation of the context and the demarcation signs were highlighted in red so that they could be visually easier to identify.

ID	CLAVE	PÁG.	EJEMPLO	VERBO PPAL
2	JINETE	10	Se incorporó para buscar un cigarrillo en la mesa de noche y sólo entonces se dio cuenta de lo tarde que era al ver la hora en el despertador. Calcular	Calcular
3	JINETE	12	Quién es, se preguntó de nuevo, hacia dónde cabalga, desde cuándo, durante cuántos años y en cuántos lugares miró el comandante Galaz ese grabado oscuro del jinete con el gorro tártaro y el carcaj y el arco sujetos a la grupa, con la mano derecha casi vanidosamente apoyada en la cintura mientras la izquierda sostenía la brida del caballo, mirando no hacia el camino que apenas se distinguía en la noche sino más allá de los ojos del espectador, desafiándolo a averiguar su misterio y su nombre. Preguntarse	Preguntarse
4	JINETE	30	Más lejos todavía, más allá de su doble memoria personal, confundida, insuficiente, todavía dispersa, en un tiempo al que difícilmente llega la imaginación y del que ni siquiera hay testimonio en el archivo de Ramiro Retrartista, pero en el que anidan las raíces más antiguas del azar que tardaría un siglo, calcular, en engendrarlos y reunirlos, tan lejos que casi todas las voces que han transmitido lo que ahora sabrán o deducen hace mucho que se extinguieron, igual que las vidas de la mayor parte de los testigos y las víctimas y que la ciudad donde esperan encontrarse de nuevo. Mágina, que se llama igual que entonces pero que tal vez no reconocerían si pudieran verla tal como la vio el médico joven y recién llegado a quien secuestraron unos desconocidos en la medianoche de un martes de carnaval. Calcular	Calcular

Figure 1. Image as displayed the first version. Source: Estévez-Rionegro (2016).

In short, the display was optimised and the corpus adapted for open digital publication, renamed *CEILE: Corpus de Estilo Indirecto Libre en Español* and converted into a downloadable reading document in PDF format (**Figure 2**)^[24].

ID	CLAVE	PÁG.	EJEMPLO	SEÑAL
1.	[JINETE]	10	[Se incorporó para buscar un cigarrillo en la mesa de noche y sólo entonces se dio cuenta de lo tarde que era al ver la hora en el despertador, y calculó instintivamente la hora que sería en Mágina.] Ya habría amanecido, su padre estaría en el mercado ordenando la hortaliza húmeda y brillante sobre el mostrador de mármol, y tal vez se preguntaría de vez en cuando dónde estaba él, a cuál de esas ciudades a las que quería irse en la adolescencia lo habría llevado su oficio errabundo de intérprete. Calcular	Calcular
2.	[JINETE]	12	Quién es, se preguntó de nuevo, hacia dónde cabalga, desde cuándo, durante cuántos años y en cuántos lugares miró el comandante Galaz ese grabado oscuro del jinete con el gorro tártaro y el carcaj y el arco sujetos a la grupa, con la mano derecha casi vanidosamente apoyada en la cintura mientras la izquierda sostenía la brida del caballo, mirando no hacia el camino que apenas se distinguía en la noche sino más allá de los ojos del espectador, desafiándolo a averiguar su misterio y su nombre. Preguntarse	Preguntarse
3.	[JINETE]	30	Más lejos todavía, más allá de su doble memoria personal, confundida, insuficiente, todavía dispersa, en un tiempo al que difícilmente llega la imaginación y del que ni siquiera hay testimonio en el archivo de Ramiro Retrartista, pero en el que anidan las raíces más antiguas del azar que tardaría un siglo, calcular, en engendrarlos y reunirlos, tan lejos que casi todas las voces que han transmitido lo que ahora sabrán o deducen hace mucho que se extinguieron, igual que las vidas de la mayor parte de los testigos y las víctimas y que la ciudad donde esperan encontrarse de nuevo. Mágina, que se llama igual que entonces pero que tal vez no reconocerían si pudieran verla tal como la vio el médico joven y recién llegado a quien secuestraron unos desconocidos en la medianoche de un martes de carnaval. Calcular	Calcular

Figure 2. Image as displayed in the second version. Source: Estévez-Rionegro (2020).

This version of the corpus is presented in summary form in the work of Estévez-Rionegro^[25], where it is disseminated for the first time and some brief lines of exploitation are offered, which advocate the use of the corpus for comparative studies with citation procedures found in other linguistic corpora, such as direct style or indirect style.

3.3. Third Phase: The CEILE Online Application

The freely accessible online application CEILE (available at <http://sing-group.org/ceile/>) was developed from the second version onwards (Figure 3). This was done using the Bootstrap and Jquery web development frameworks, together with AJAX technology, which helped to make the webpage more dynamic.

ID	CLAVE	PÁG	EJEMPLO	SEÑAL
11.	[JINETE]	122	[El inspector no lo oía,] prefería no oírlo para no sentirse radicalmente imbécil, [fumaba examinando las caras mal afeitadas y pálidas de hambre...]	Oír
12.	[JINETE]	126	[Juró que el secreto nunca saldría de sus labios, que él no tenía nada que ver con los siniestros chivatos de la perrera.] si de vez en cuando trabajaba para el inspector Florencio Pérez era porque no tenía más remedio, para ganarse la vida en esos tiempos en los que si a nadie le quedaban ganas de mirarse a la cara a quién iba a ocurrírsele el deseo de perpetuarla en una fotografía	Jurar
13.	[JINETE]	129	[«Leyendas», dijo con desprecio, escupiéndole la palabra con su pequeña lengua rosada, «novelas por entregas»:] un conde viejo y misántropo que vivía en la Casa de las Torres tan aislado como en un castillo medieval, casado con una mujer mucho más joven que él, asistido perpetuamente en sus devociones por un capellán que casi era también su ayuda de cámara, tal vez un pariente suyo de una rama empobrecida a quien él le costó los estudios eclesiásticos	Decir

Figure 3. Image as displayed in the third version. Source: <http://sing-group.org/ceile/>.

Different HTML page design patterns were used in order to obtain a better positioning in the different search engines (SEO). To this end, the HTML5 microdata specification was included, which added semantic information (in IT terminology) to the webpage. These microdata provide a better definition and structure of web pages, because they allow specifying personalized elements in them by tagging the meaning and context of the content.

Finally, a high-performance lightweight server called Nginx was chosen to host the information online, together with Google PageSpeed technology, which improved performance when loading the webpage.

4. Results

The improvements made to the first versions of the corpus, which led to the CEILE online application, bringing undeniable advantages for users.

On the one hand, unlike previous versions, the online version allows users to sort (by key, demarcation sign, identifier, etc.) and search the corpus (by any character, letter, number or punctuation mark contained in the texts). Moreover, it offers the opportunity of downloading the whole corpus, as well as keeping the annotations, in different formats: CSV, Excel, PDF, Word and JSON.

Ultimately, the application expedites the task of retrieving information and facilitates empirical research on free indirect style. An example of a study based on the CEILE is that carried out by Estévez-Rionegro which consists of a contrastive analysis of these constructions versus the atypical direct style constructions identified by the author in previous research^[22]. Although the study was based on the first version of the corpus, it can be considered the initial (and so far, the only) results of the CEILE's exploitation for research on the grammar of free indirect style, which are sufficient to show the validity and usefulness of the tool.

5. Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated the need to further the grammatical study of free indirect style as a procedure for reproducing another's speech, given the existing debates among specialists on the subject: its origin in other forms of discourse reproduction, its characterization as a grammatical construction or the configuration of its formal structure. Moreover, a gap has been detected in computerised language corpora which prevents retrieving free indirect style utterances and urges the creation of new resources to enable empirical study.

The CEILE corpus has been developed to address these issues. Thus, this article aimed to showcase its relevance, not only in terms of its design and structure, but also in terms of its exploitation, which allows different types of analysis to be carried out on the basis of meaningful samples of real language.

The CEILE corpus significantly contributes to empirical research and understanding of free indirect style in contemporary Spanish peninsular literature, because it is a tool

that (i) offers a general overview of the use of the free indirect style, (ii) stores and organizes a wide set of examples from different novels and authors, (iii) allows the automatic retrieval of sentences and their context, and (iv) favors contrastive studies with other procedures of indirect speech.

Nevertheless, this work presents some limitations that must be solved in the future. On the one hand, it is necessary to continue increasing the number of examples by incorporating new literary works to the corpus (trying to cover a wider time period and also including Latin American literature). On the other hand, it is essential to continue exploiting the corpus by carrying out studies that show its validity and promote its use among researchers interested in the question of the free indirect style. These two questions constitute the future lines of work of the research initiated and it is hoped that in the near future we will be able to disseminate its results.

In conclusion, the *CEILE* corpus enables various types of analysis based on meaningful samples of real language, thereby providing a valuable tool for empirical study and contributing significantly to the field of linguistics.

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Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

Information about CEILE data and materials is available at <http://sing-group.org/ceile/>.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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