The Grammar of Mediation

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Aims and scope

- Hypothesis: popularisation $\subset$ specific grammatical features.
- Some of these features reflect the stance of the mediator in relation to the lay-person.
- Case-study: grammaticalised hedging in popularised and specialised discourse.

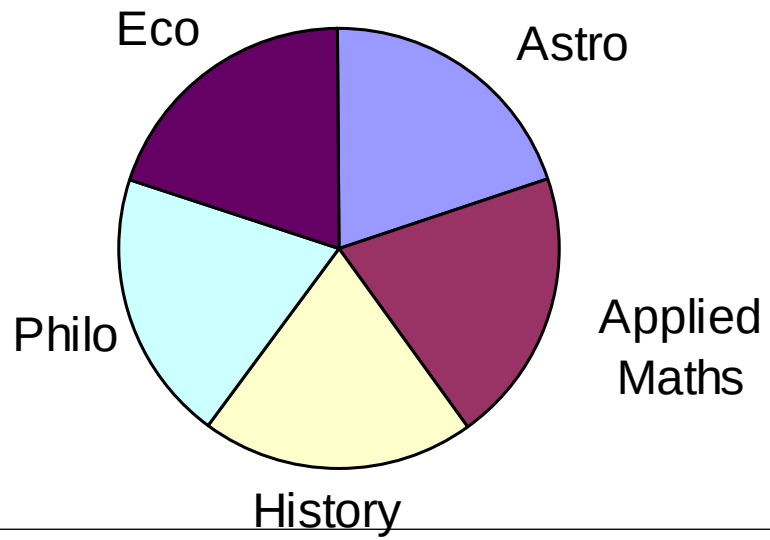
Outline

1. Methodology (corpus).
2. Towards a rhetorical characterisation of popularisation: Smith's Modes of Discourse.
3. Towards a grammatical characterisation of popularisation: the case of hedging.

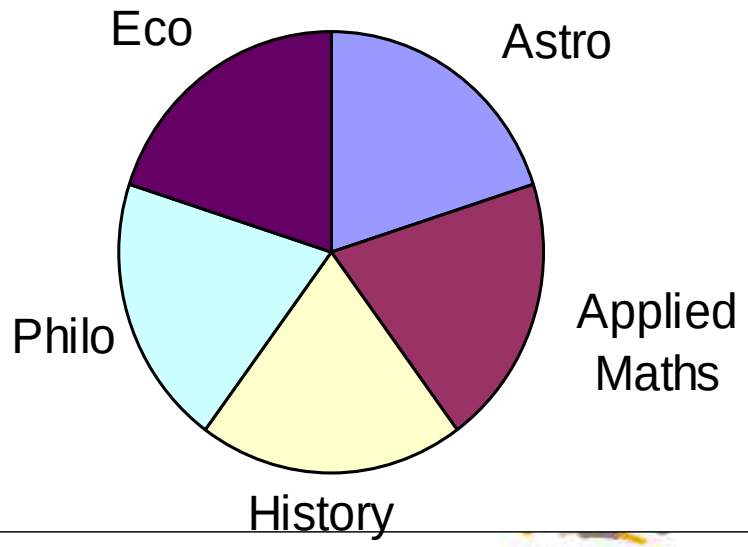
Composition of the corpus

Articles in **British English**, written between **2000 and 2012**.

Specialised subcorpus
500,000 words



Popularised subcorpus
500,000 words



Corpus: specialised sources

Peer-Reviewed Academic Journals.
Written *by* and *for* experts.

SOURCES:
The Historian
The Historical Journal
IMA Journal of Applied Mathematics
Journal of Logic & Analysis
Journal of the London Mathematical Society
Analysis
European Journal of Philosophy
Journal of Moral Philosophy
Metaphilosophy
Minerva - An Internet Journal of Philosophy
Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society
Cambridge Journal of Economics
Monthly Proceedings of the Royal Astronomical Society

Corpus: popularised sources

Popularisation articles written ***by experts*** for the general public:

*"*History Today *is a unique cultural institution, bringing the best in historical writing and research to a* ***wide audience****."*

SOURCES:

History Today
Plus Maths Magazine
Think
Economic Affairs
World Economics
Astronomy Now Magazine
Popular Astronomy

Towards a rhetorical characterisation of popularisation

- Texts: formally **heterogeneous**.
- Need for *formally* and *functionally* homogeneous **rhetorical sections**:
  - IMRAD, moves, etc.
  - But **specific to RAs**.
  - Popular discourse: more **varied**:

In August 1717 George had the symptoms of haemorrhoids, or swellings in the anal arteries. (…) The whole matter was kept from the English courtiers and only the trusted Mohammed was able to persuade the king to undergo a rectal examination. All proved well, although George was advised to avoid sitting on a saddle.

Discourse Modes

(Smith 2003, Adam 1992)

- **“Building blocks” of discourse**:
  - Formal and pragmatic properties.
    - Ex: *Argument:* more subordination.
    - Ex: *Information:* bridging the knowledge gap.
  - DM distribution is genre-defining.
    - Ex: *Narration:* biography ≠ abstract.
- DM ∈ communicative competence
    - Ex: Intuition of changes of modes.

The 8 main discourse modes (1)

Narration = sequence of specific events and states.

Description = attribution of properties to a specific referent.

… the Town Hall (…) is oblong, raised from the ground on granite stilts (…).

Report = specific events/states anchored to Speech Time.

This month sees the release of Bryan Singer's new Hollywood movie Valkyrie,

Information = uncontroversial generic events/states.

Most men spent significant parts of their lives within homes. While men did spend more time in coffee houses, taverns, or steakhouses than women, (…).

Metadiscourse = author's (or other experts') approach/guidance.

In this paper, we revisit Lewis's argument.

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The 8 main discourse modes (2)

Argument = stance in relation to a fact or a proposition.

But when there are such correlations, we suggest, the invariance requirement loses its plausibility. Thus Lewis's argument against the desire-as-belief thesis appears to be valid only in cases in which it is unsound.

Instruction = process to reach a given goal.

Make a small fold half way up the right side of the paper. Make a crease connecting points A and C.

Dialogue = alternating speech turns with thematic cohesion.

PHILOSOPHER : Why are we calling off the attack?
GENERAL: Because the Germans know we are going to attack.
PHILOSOPHER: But the Germans don't know we are going to attack.
SPY: Yes they do, I heard them discussing it.

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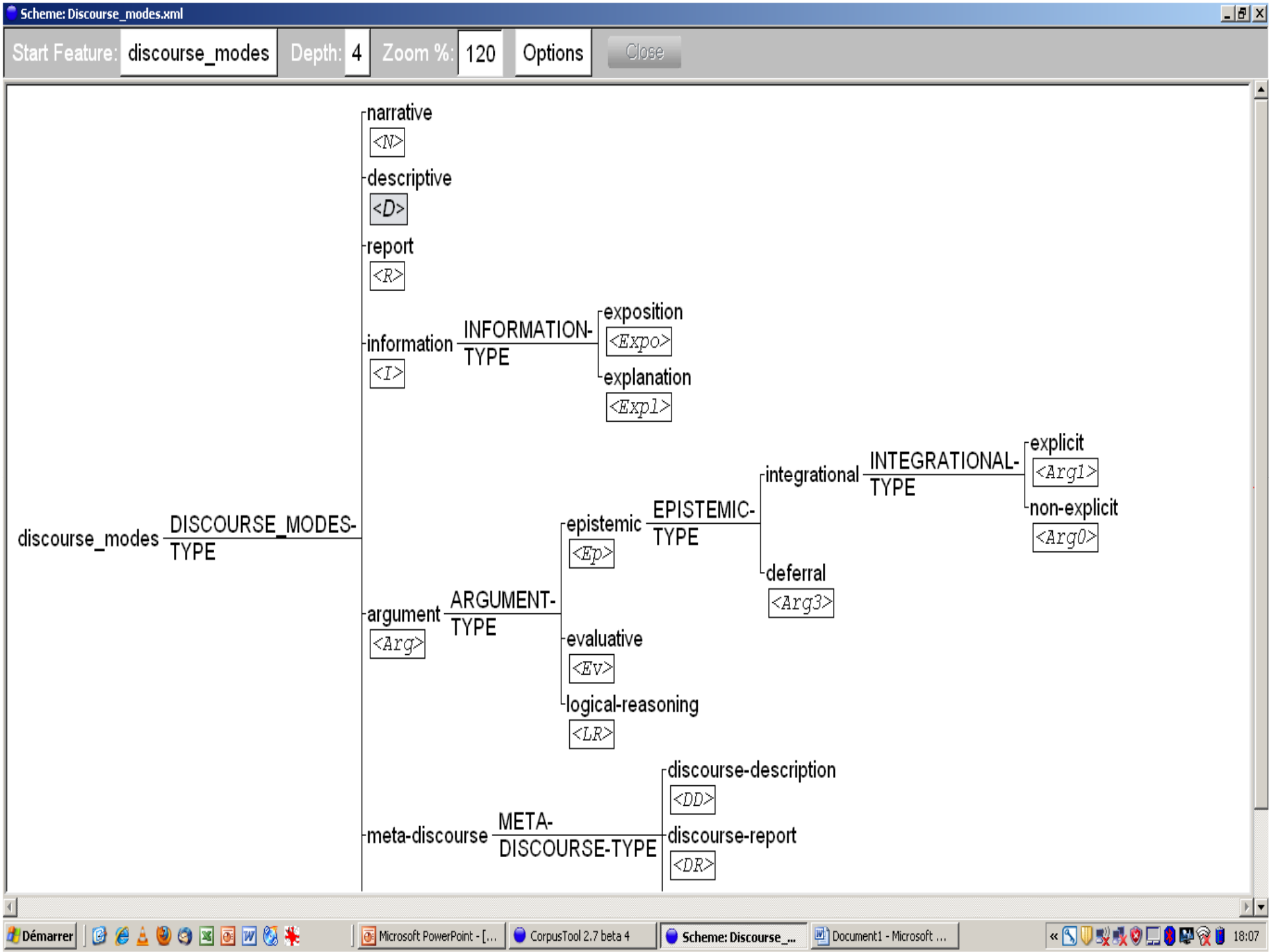
Discourse Modes: A typology

Narration **Report** **Description** **Information**

Meta-discourse **Instruction** **Dialogue**

Argument
- **Epistemic**
  - *Author* <Arg1>
  - *Other* <Arg3>
  - *Implicit* <Arg0>
- **Evaluative**
- **Demonstration**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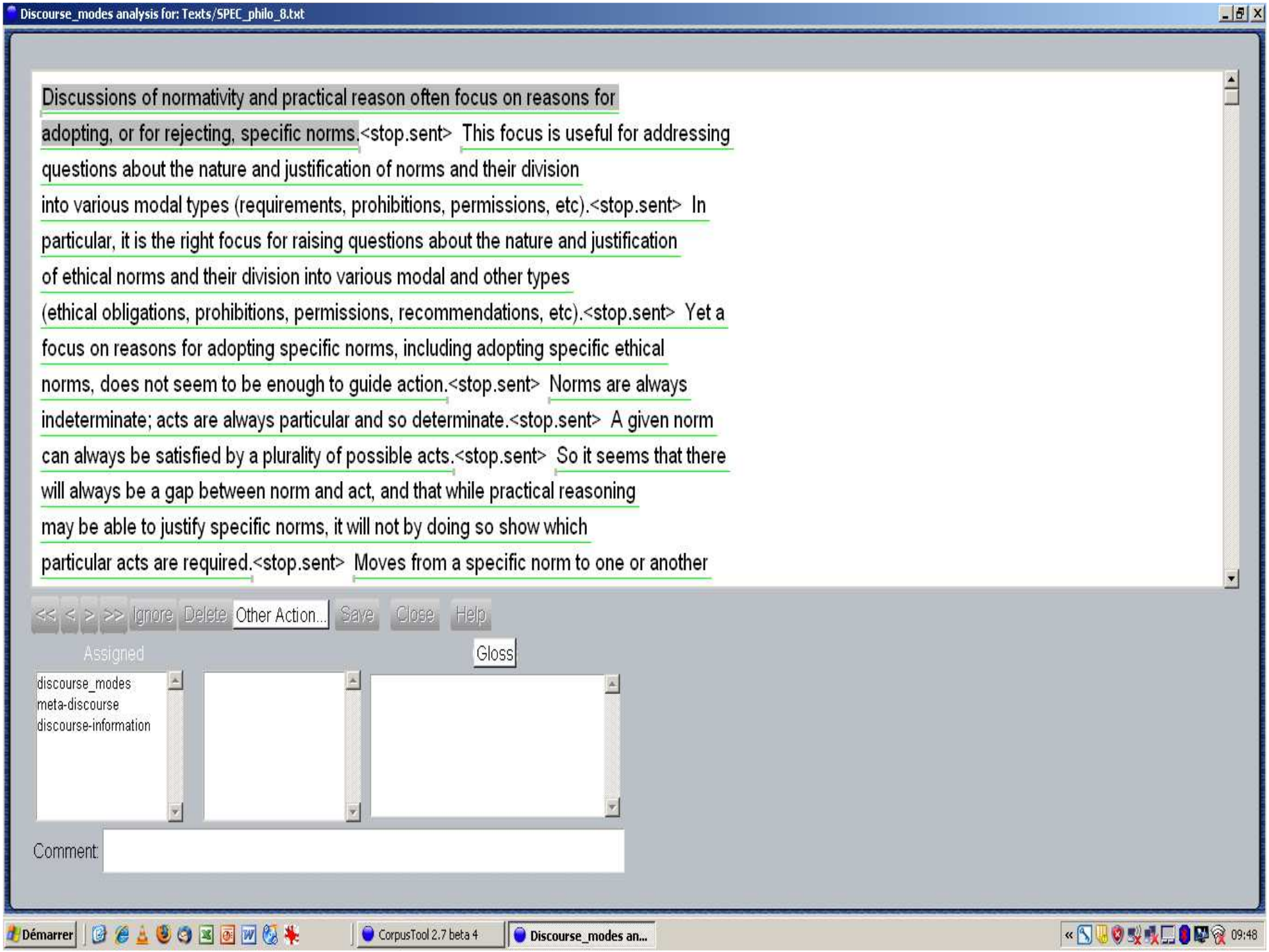
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Discussions of normativity and practical reason often focus on reasons for adopting, or for rejecting, specific norms.<stop.sent> This focus is useful for addressing questions about the nature and justification of norms and their division into various modal types (requirements, prohibitions, permissions, etc).<stop.sent> In particular, it is the right focus for raising questions about the nature and justification of ethical norms and their division into various modal and other types (ethical obligations, prohibitions, permissions, recommendations, etc).<stop.sent> Yet a focus on reasons for adopting specific norms, including adopting specific ethical norms, does not seem to be enough to guide action.<stop.sent> Norms are always indeterminate; acts are always particular and so determinate.<stop.sent> A given norm can always be satisfied by a plurality of possible acts.<stop.sent> So it seems that there will always be a gap between norm and act, and that while practical reasoning may be able to justify specific norms, it will not by doing so show which particular acts are required.<stop.sent> Moves from a specific norm to one or another
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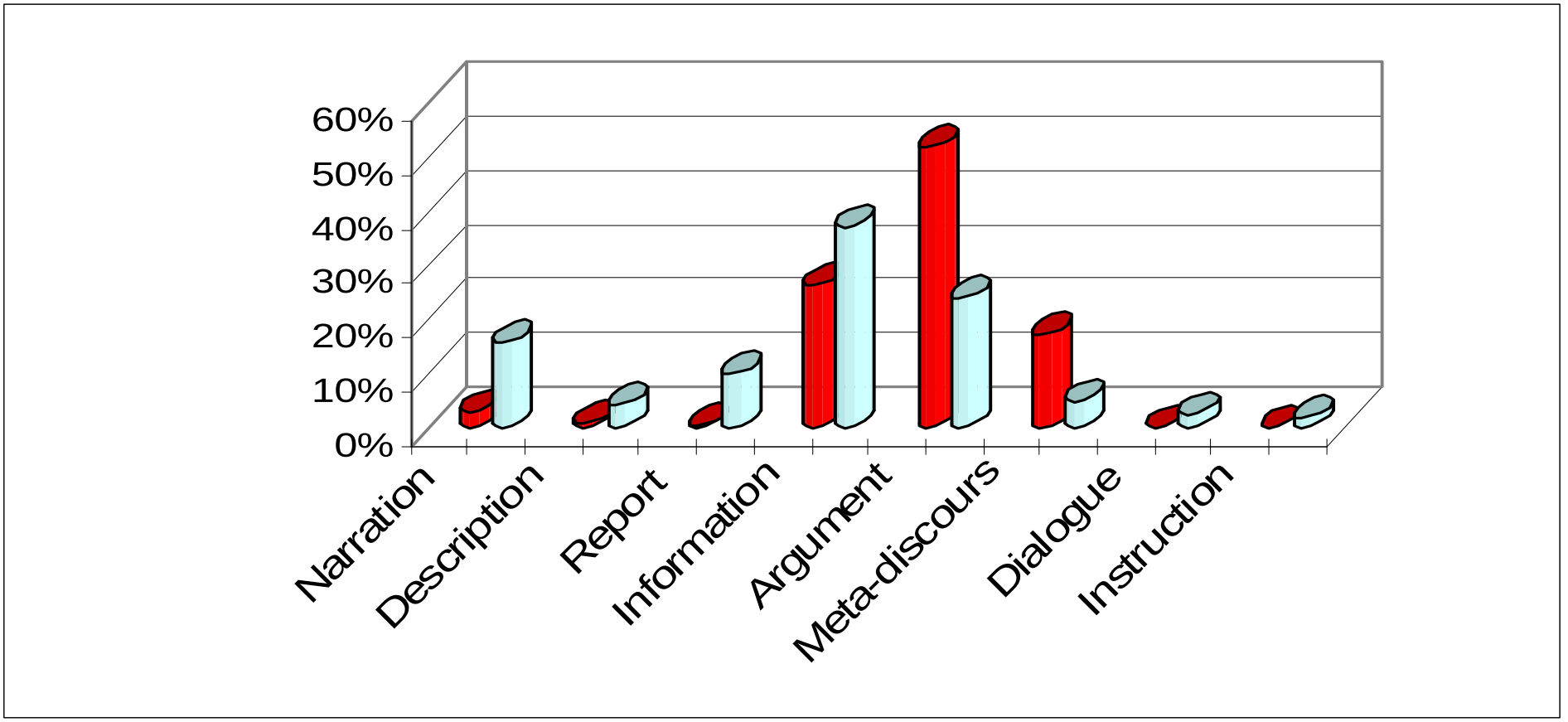
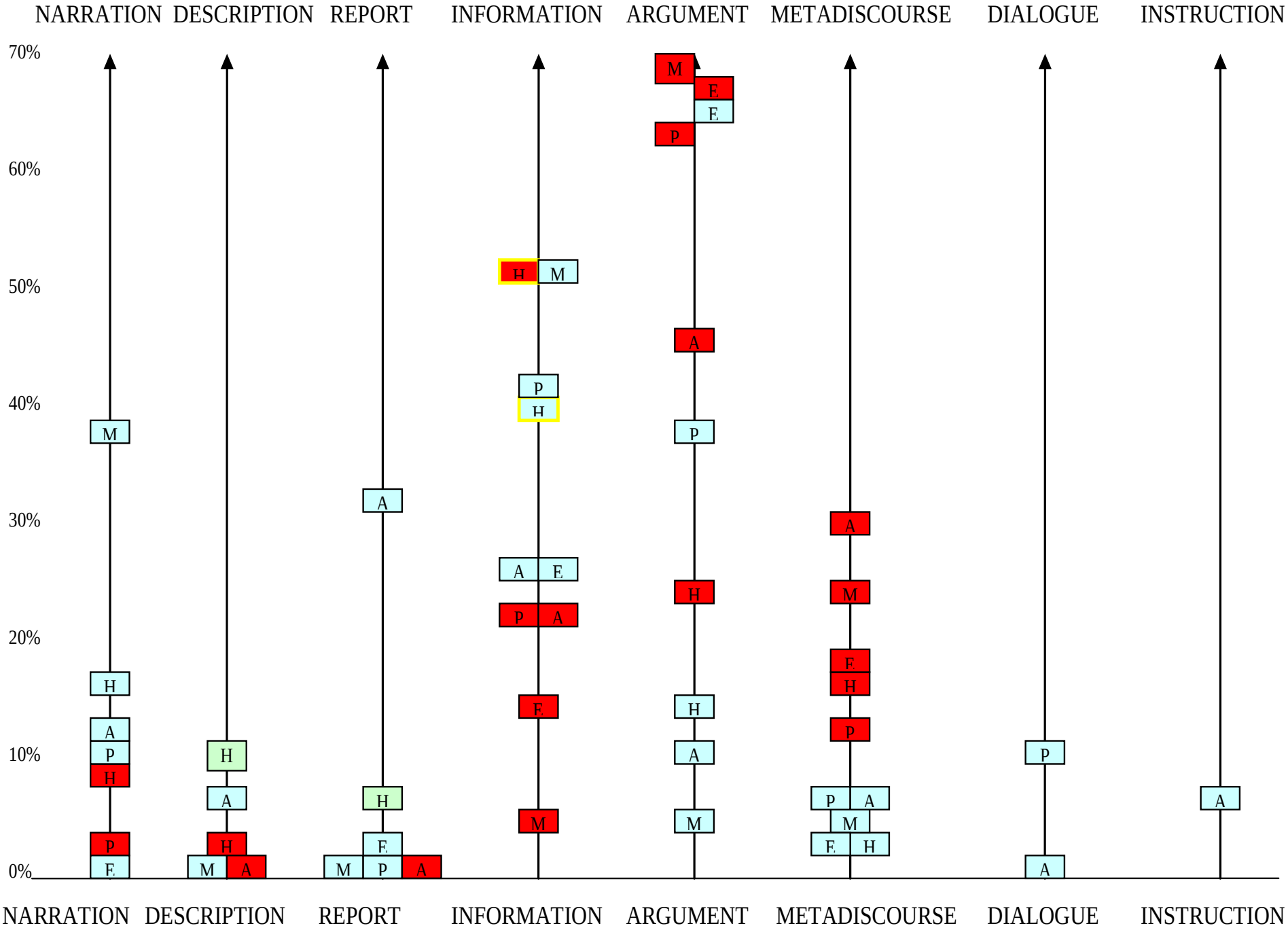
Relevance of DM for text analysis



Distribution of DMs

in specialised (in red) and popularised (in blue) discourses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NARRATION
DESCRIPTION
REPORT
INFORMATION
ARGUMENT
METADISCOURSE
DIALOGUE
INSTRUCTION

Case-study: hedging (1)

- Semantic definition: forms expressing less than full membership to a category (= gap between world and language).
- 3 semantic categories:
  - **Epistemic modality** = qualifies the truth of a proposition.

  Epistemic modals, epistemic/evidential adverbs and verbs: *may, might, perhaps, possibly, seem, appear, assume* …
  - **Approximators** = predicate doesn't fully apply to referent.

  Adv / adj: *about, approximately, kind of, somewhat, around*…
  - **Deontic modality** = presents the prop as desirable but not (yet) true.

  Deontic modals: *should, must*.

Case-study: hedging (2)

- Motivations for Hedges (Salager-Meyer 1994):
  - **Uncertainty: w*/* Facts** (situations in the physical world)(van Dijk 1998)

Ex*: Perhaps these <u>are the waste gases</u> given off by hardy bacteria…*

  - **Tentativeness: w*/* Evaluations** = beliefs “that presuppose a value, and that involve a judgement about somebody or something”.

Ex*: This is a very good result for statistics! But perhaps <u>a bit lucky.</u>*

- 2 views on **hedges** in **popularisation** :
  - **Fewer** hedges in pop: no need to be cautious / desire to appear in the know. (Fahnestock 1986, Crismore & Farnsworth 1990).
  - **As many or more** in pop, depending on hedge-types, disciplines and rhetorical sections. (Cf. Varttala 2001).

➔Hedges not used for the same reasons in POP and SPE.

Results in corpus for hedging

- Differences in hedging **between disciplines**.
- But **no** quantitative difference between SPE and POP:

HEDGES	SPE	POP
Relative frequency	2%	2%

Epistemic Adverbs	9%	8%
Modals	66%	66%
Epistemic verbs	23%	19%
Approximators	3%	6%

- FACT / EV: + FACTS in POP (63%) than in SPE (54%).

Discourse modes and hedging

- Relation DM-hedging: in SPE and POP, most hedges occur in ARG and INFO…

SPE		POP	
ARG	**INFO**	**ARG**	**INFO**
64%	22%	34%	27%

Distribution of hedges according to discourse modes

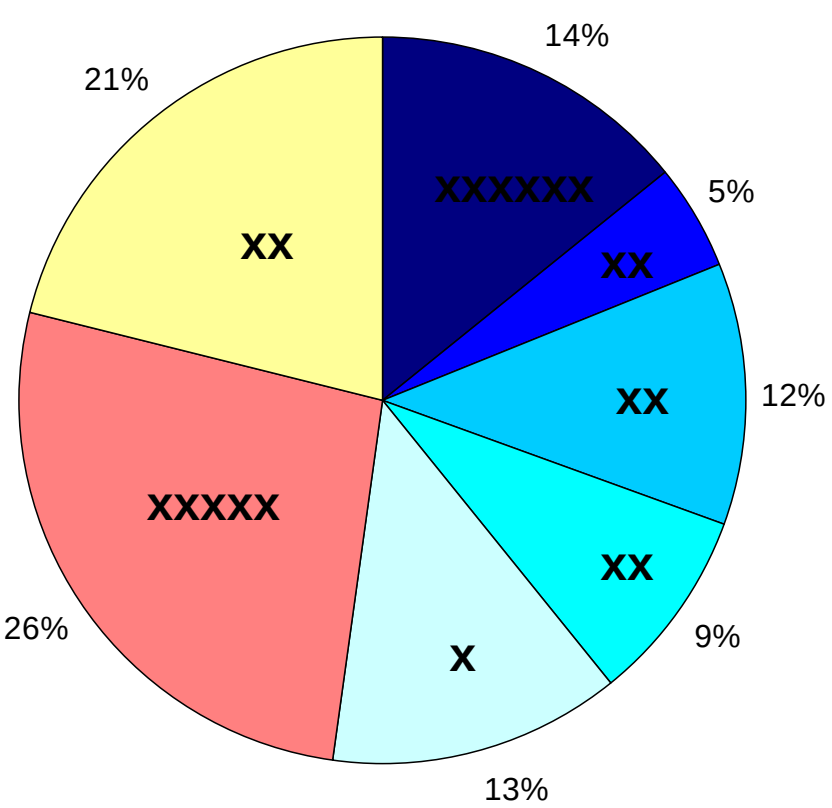
… but in **different proportions**.

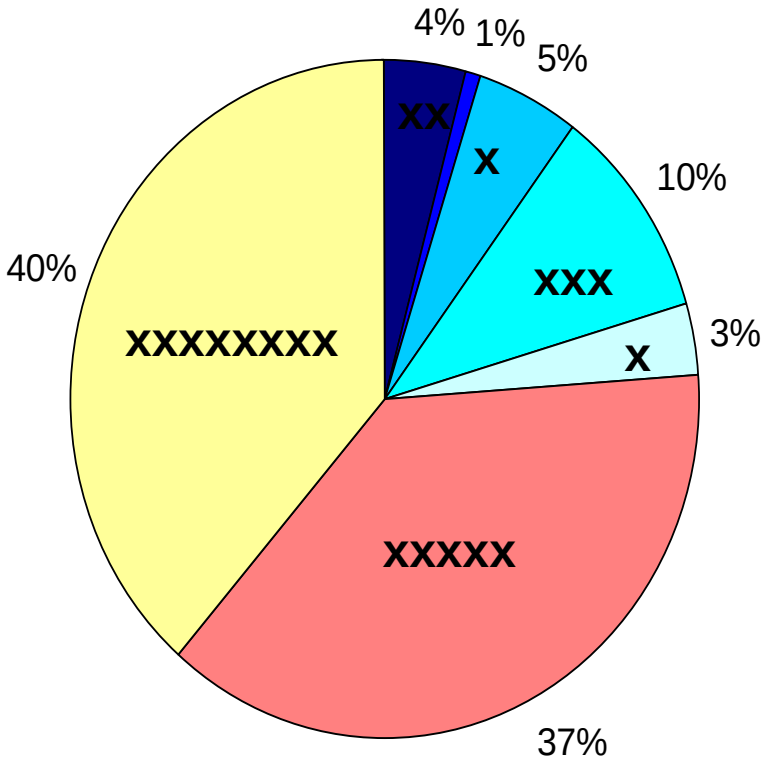
- Relation DM-Fact/Ev distribution:

INFO mode: 73% Fact

ARG mode: 50% Fact - 50% Ev

DISTRIBUTION OF HEDGES





SPE

POP

Focus on Evaluation Mode

Focus on the Argument Mode

- "Density" of hedges in ARG **POP >** ARG **SPE**:
  10 hedges in ARG POP for 8 hedges in ARG SPE
- How to account for this?

HEDGES	SPE	POP
Arg 0	1%	0,9%
Arg 1	0,3%	0,1%
Arg 3	0,5%	0,5%
Evaluation	0,3%	1%
Demonstration	0,2%	0,4%

Relative frequency of hedges in ARG sub-modes

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Focus on Evaluation Mode

- Evaluative submode = same proportion in SPE and POP (about 10%).*
- But more hedges in EV POP ➔ massive presence of **deontic modals:**
  - 6% of all hedges in POP are deontics (3,5% in SPE).
  - 85% of those occur in EV (29% in SPE).

Ex: *One **must** not forget that Stauffenberg was in many ways the archetypal German nationalist.*

Ex: *Roland, it **should** be remembered, was also the patron saint of Bremen.*

- Differences not in forms but in **meanings** of forms.

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An illustration: MAY

- > in SPE (2.3‰) than in POP (1.3 ‰) but not in the same DMs:
- SPE : Rare in INF (3% of hedges in INF) but the most common hedge in ARG (15%)
  - Mainly **conjectural** with scope over **evaluations**.

Ex: *It is, again, one that <u>modern developments suggest</u>* ***may be of more than historical interest****.*

- POP: + frequent in INF (10%) and less in ARG (7%)
  - Bears on **facts** and **root** meaning predominant.

Ex: *a small dieselpowered car containing two people* ***may return*** *120 passenger-miles per gallon.*

⇒ SPE: need to qualify one's evaluations but evidential basis.

⇒ POP: actualized possibilities=> generic + uncontroversial (= INF)

Conclusion

- Popularisation can be characterised via DMs.
- There seems to be a grammar of mediation (deontics, meanings of MAY…)
- Other grammatical features currently under study confirm this (THIS, tenses…)

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Smith's modes of discourse

Temporal Modes	**Narrative**	Situations	**Specific events and states**
		Temporality	Dynamic, located in Time
		Progression	Advancement in **narrative time**
	Description	Situations	**Specific events and states, ongoing events**
		Temporality	Static, located in Time
		Progression	**Spatial advancement** through scene or object
	Report	Situations	**States, Events, General Statives**
		Temporality	Dynamic, located in Time
		Progression	Advancement anchored to **Speech Time**
Atemporal Modes	**Information**	Situations	**General Statives**
		Temporality	Atemporal
		Progression	**Metaphorical motion** through text domain
	Argument	Situations	**Facts and propositions, General Statives**
		Temporality	Atemporal
		Progression	**Metaphorical motion** through text domain

List of hedges

EPISTEMIC AND EVIDENTIAL ADVERBS: APPARENTLY, CERTAINLY, CLEARLY, EVIDENTLY, MAYBE, NECESSARILY, OBVIOUSLY, PERHAPS, POSSIBLY, PRESUMABLY, PROBABLY, PURPORTEDLY, SEEMINGLY, SUPPOSEDLY, SURELY.

MODAL AUXILIARIES: MUST, MAY, MIGHT, CAN/CANNOT, COULD, SHALL, SHOULD, WILL, WOULD.

EVIDENTIAL VERBS: SEEM, APPEAR.

EPISTEMIC PREDICATES: ARGUE, ASSUME, BELIEVE, CLAIM, CONTEND, EXPECT, FEEL, IMAGINE, POSTULATE, PRESUME, PROPOSE, RECKON, SUGGEST, SUPPOSE, (UN)SURE, (UN)CERTAIN, SUSPECT, THINK, VIEW.

APPROXIMATORS: ABOUT, SORT OF, APPROXIMATELY, AROUND, KIND OF, ROUGH(LY), SOMEHOW, SOMEWHAT.

Distribution of hedges according to DMs

FORMES	SPE Total INF	Total ARG	TOTAL	% INF	%ARG
TOTAL ADV	**12**	**41**	**57**	**21%**	**72%**
TOTAL AUX	**104**	**267**	**437**	**24%**	**61%**
Total Ep. Pred.	**22**	**109**	**151**	**15%**	**72%**
Total Approx.	**6**	**10**	**21**	**29%**	**48%**
TOTAL	**144**	**427**	**666**	**22%**	**64%**
				86%	

FORMES	VULG Total INF	Total ARG	TOTAL	% INF	% ARG
TOTAL ADV	**18**	**19**	**47**	**38%**	**40%**
TOTAL AUX	**113**	**129**	**370**	**31%**	**35%**
Total Ep. Pred.	**10**	**39**	**105**	**10%**	**37%**
Total Approx.	**8**	**4**	**36**	**22%**	**11%**
TOTAL	**149**	**191**	**558**	**27%**	**34%**
				61%	

Distribution of DMs in SPE and POP*