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The History of *for example* and *for instance* as Markers of Exemplification, Selection and Argumentation (1600-1999)

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This article analyses the use of the example markers *for example* and *for instance* in exemplifying, selective and argumentative constructions. Of these three uses, exemplification—twofold sequences with a first general unit or hyperonym and a second more specific item or hyponym—has received recurrent attention in the literature, whereas selection—constructions where the first element is omitted—and argumentation—the use of example markers to connect whole chunks of discourse—have long been ignored. The present study, using data from ARCHER 3.2, shows that the three uses have coexisted since at least the second half of the seventeenth century and that argumentation prevails in both British and American English. Moreover, example markers are very productive in certain genres, such as science, sermons and advertising. Additionally, even though the primary function of example markers is to introduce their scope domain, they have developed different pragmatic values that bring them closer to the category of discourse markers. Thus, for example, their use as mitigators makes them an optimal tool for smoothing interaction and hence reducing the risk of offending our interlocutor.

Keywords: *for example*; *for instance*; example markers; exemplification; selection; argumentation

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Sobre la historia de *for example* y *for instance* como marcadores de ejemplificación, selección y argumentación (1600-1999)

Este artículo analiza el uso de los marcadores *for example* y *for instance* en construcciones ejemplificativas, selectivas y argumentativas. De estos tres usos, la ejemplificación— a saber, estructuras con una primera unidad más genérica o hiperónimo y un segundo elemento más específico o hipónimo— ha recibido una atención recurrente en la literatura, mientras que la selección— construcciones donde se omite el primer elemento genérico— y la argumentación— el uso de marcadores para conectar fragmentos completos de discurso— han sido ignoradas durante mucho tiempo. Este estudio, basado en datos de ARCHER 3.2, muestra que los tres usos coexisten desde al menos la segunda mitad del siglo diecisiete y que la argumentación prevalece tanto en inglés británico como americano. Además, estos marcadores son muy productivos en ciertos géneros, como la ciencia, los sermones y la publicidad. Por otro lado, aunque la función principal de *for example* y *for instance* es introducir ejemplos, ambos han desarrollado diferentes valores pragmáticos que los acercan a la categoría de marcadores del discurso. Así, por ejemplo, su uso como mitigadores los convierte en una herramienta óptima para suavizar la interacción y, por tanto, reducir el riesgo de ofender a nuestro interlocutor.

Palabras clave: *for example*; *for instance*; marcadores de ejemplificación; ejemplificación; selección; argumentación

I. INTRODUCTION

Exemplification has been traditionally described as a common discourse strategy used to clarify a statement by providing more specific information about it (Hyland 2007, 270). A prototypical exemplifying construction consists of two units: the first unit—general element (GE)—has a rather broad referent, while the second unit—exemplifying element (EE)—is more specific and its referent is included within the referent of the GE (Quirk et al. 1985, 1315; Meyer 1992, 77; see also Hyland 2007, 270). Therefore, a relation of partial coreferentiality holds between the two units. In (1) below, the GE—*traditional pets*—is semantically quite general. By adding the EE—*cats, dogs, rabbits and small rodents*—the general referent is narrowed down and becomes more accessible to the reader:

- (1) Only traditional pets are allowed in the hold, for example cats, dogs, rabbits and small rodents [...]. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 8)

The use of a link that indicates the inclusion of the EE within the GE is compulsory, although such inclusion can occasionally be signalled implicitly by means of a pause in speech or various punctuation marks—such as colons or brackets—in writing (Fernández-Bernárdez 1994-1995, 106; Hyland 2007, 270). Typically, this link—example marker (EM)—is one of the following: *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, *included*, *e.g.*, *like*, *say* or *such as* (Quirk et al. 1985, 1315-16; Meyer 1992, 77).¹

Exemplification has been approached from various perspectives. For example, the effects of exemplification on specific types of discourse, such as news reports, have been addressed in several studies (Gibson and Zillmann 1994; Zillmann et al. 1996; Perry and Gonzenbach 1997; Zillman 1999; Zillmann and Brosius 2000; Arpan 2009), while elsewhere the use of exemplifying strategies by learners of a foreign language has been explored (Paquot 2008), and more recently the different pragmatic functions of exemplification, especially its mitigating use, have been examined (Barotto 2018; Lo Baido 2018). However, little attention has thus far been devoted to the distinction between central cases of exemplification and other related constructions. In their monograph, Ekkehard Eggs and Dermot McElholm distinguish three different uses of EMs, namely exemplifying (1) above, selective (2) and argumentative (3) (2013):²

- (2) You shouldn't trust John because, for example, he never returns what he borrows. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 9)

¹ However, for Charles F. Meyer *including* and *included* are not EMs, but rather markers of particularisation (1992). Elsewhere I have examined the debatable character of these two markers (Rodríguez-Abruñeiras 2011, 2012).

² Eggs and McElholm's work (2013) discusses in further detail some of the problematic structures with *for example* and *for instance* identified by Bonnie Webber et al. (2003). These are also the focus of my article on present-day British and American English (Rodríguez-Abruñeiras 2020b).

- (3) You shouldn't trust John. For example, he never returns what he borrows. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 9)

Only (1) has a clear twofold exemplifying structure. In turn, (2) lacks an explicit GE, whereas in (3) the EM connects whole sentences. Consequently, only (1) fits the definition of exemplification provided earlier in this section. It is in the light of examples like (2) and (3) that Eggs and McElholm distinguish new uses for the markers *for example* and *for instance*, noting that some of these functions have been largely ignored (2013, 9). The present article seeks to help fill this gap and shed new light on the various uses of EMs. The main research question is the following:

- RQ1 What is the distribution of *for example* and *for instance* in exemplifications, selections and argumentations?

A *Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER 3.2) (Biber et al. 2013) is used as a source of information since it allows for the study of any linguistic feature both in British (BrE) and American (AmE) English, from 1600 (BrE) or 1750 (AmE) to 1999. The corpus, which comprises 3.3 million words, includes texts from twelve different genres, ranging from fiction to science, among others (Yáñez-Bouza 2011). The temporal scope and text types included allow for the discussion of three additional related research questions:

- RQ2 What is the diachronic evolution of *for example* and *for instance* in each of the three functions?
- RQ3 Do BrE and AmE show any functional differences in their use of the markers under analysis?
- RQ4 Does text type influence the use of these two EMs?

The article is organised as follows. Section 2 considers the scant literature that has thus far addressed the use of EMs in exemplifying, selective and argumentative constructions. Section 3, the core of the article, provides a corpus-based analysis of the two selected forms. The focus here is on the identification of the earliest attestations of the markers, their use in the three types of constructions identified by Eggs and McElholm (2013) and their distribution in different genres. Finally, section 4 provides a summary of the main points discussed.

2. THE VARIOUS USES OF *FOR EXAMPLE* AND *FOR INSTANCE* IN THE LITERATURE

In the introduction, I noted the limitations of describing the constructions in which *for example* and *for instance* may appear as exclusively exemplifying. Thus, taking (4) to (6) below as cases in point, we see that whereas they all convey a similar propositional meaning, a closer reading reveals substantial differences.

- (4) Boyce Avenue has played shows with Secondhand Serenade in important venues, for example the Hammersmith Apollo. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 11)
- (5) a. Boyce Avenue has for example played shows with Secondhand Serenade in the Hammersmith Apollo. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 11)
 b. Boyce Avenue has played shows with for example Secondhand Serenade in the Hammersmith Apollo.
- (6) a. For example Boyce Avenue has played with Secondhand Serenade in the Hammersmith Apollo. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 11)
 b. Boyce Avenue for example has played with Secondhand Serenade in the Hammersmith Apollo.

Only (4) displays a clearly distinguishable exemplifying sequence with a GE—*important venues*—and an EE—*the Hammersmith Apollo*—linked by means of an EM—*for example*. Randolph Quirk et al. (1985, 1308) and Charles F. Meyer (1992, 77) classify such exemplifying constructions as a subtype of apposition. However, whereas prototypical cases of apposition entail a relation of full coreferentiality between two units—as in “*Anna, my best friend, was here last night*” (Quirk et al. 1985, 1301; italics in the original)—in exemplification, coreferentiality is only partial. Nonetheless, both Quirk et al. and Meyer always refer to the existence of two units. Examples (5a) and (5b), in turn, lack a GE: the unit introduced by *for example* does not refer anaphorically to any previously mentioned referent. Discussing instances of this kind, Eva Koktová claims that “many of the so-called appositive particles can occur in sentences even without an appositive context” (1986, 19). As a result, instances such as (5a) and (5b) do not show exemplification, but rather “selection of one of the possible alternatives given in this constellation” (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 14), which implies that other options are also possible. However, the meaning of (5a) is slightly different from that of (5b): in (5a), *for example* opens up a number of possibilities of things that Boyce Avenue has done, one of which is playing shows. On its part, in (5b) *for example* suggests that Boyce Avenue has played shows with various groups, Secondhand Serenade being just one of them.

An epiphenomenon of this selective use is, as noted by Eggs and McElholm, the generalising effect brought about by the EM (2013, 24). This becomes clear in (7) below, where the addition of *for example* enlarges the range of options available. In (5a) and (5b), this generalising effect is somewhat cancelled because the sentence refers to an event from the past: “once it is established that an event is actually happening this does not admit any alternatives” (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 24). In examples like (5a), (5b) and (7), the EM is parasitic on the item to its left (Webber et al. 2003, 566). In (5a), the EM is parasitic on the auxiliary verb *has*, whereas in (5b) it is dependent on the preposition *with*. In these instances, the EM precedes the unit that it introduces,

thus implying a prospective reading (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 20). However, EMs may also follow such a unit and force a retrospective reading, as shown in (8), where the EM appears after the phrase that it introduces but is still parasitic on the verb *buy*.

- (7) You should confess this to, for example, your parish priest. (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 24)
- (8) Why don't you *buy* a Tablet PC, for instance? (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 18; emphasis added)

To return to (6a) and (6b) above, these examples are of a different nature in that they illustrate argumentation. In argumentation, the proposition introduced by the EM should be understood as further evidence of a previous claim. More specifically, in argumentation EMs may “be used in *abductions* where the host sentence functions as a premise for the statement made in the left sentence, or they occur in *deductions*, [...] where they mark the conclusion” (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 85; italics in the original). These uses are exemplified in (9) and (10) below. To these, Eggs and McElholm add the *inductive* use of EMs, which occurs when “the host sentence includes at least one individual case on the basis of which the validity of a previously posited general thesis is illustrated” (11), or when “inferences are made analogically from one element of equal rank to another” (12) (85):

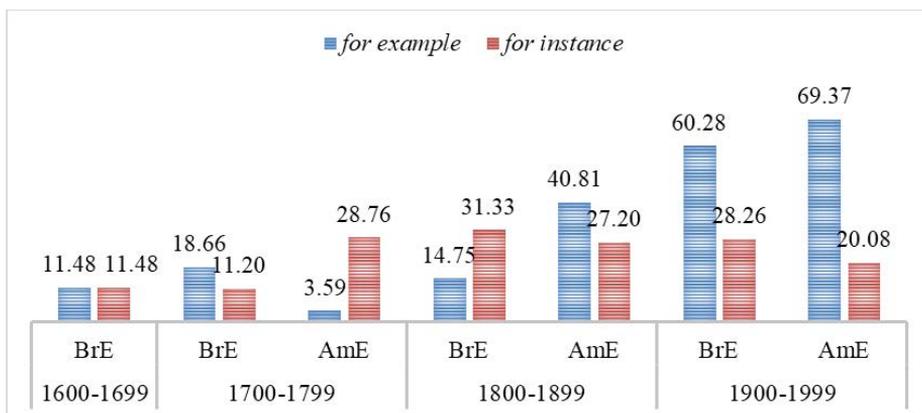
- (9) Peter is a real sportsman: thus, for example, he congratulated his opponent John on his victory.
- (10) Peter is a real sportsman: thus, for example, he is likely to congratulate his opponent John on his victory.
- (11) Many people experience considerable harm or suffering caused by other individuals, without defining themselves as victims. For example, Elizabeth, who is very religious, has long been a victim of domestic violence, but she still considers herself responsible.
- (12) We need God's protection just as, for example, a sheep needs the protection of the shepherd from the dangers that surround it.

To summarise, the EMs *for example* and *for instance* can be used in three different types of sequences, namely exemplification, selection and argumentation. Nonetheless, exemplification and selection can be included within the umbrella term *descriptive uses*, as “they both operate on the level of the *sentence* and are thus to be understood as *complete* communicative units. The argumentative uses, in contrast, are *transprastic*, since they refer to preceding sentences together with which they form a type of text or genre, namely *argumentation*” (Eggs and McElholm 2013, 12; italics in the original).

3. EXEMPLIFYING, SELECTIVE AND ARGUMENTATIVE USES OF *FOR EXAMPLE* AND *FOR INSTANCE* IN ARCHER 3.2

ARCHER 3.2 retrieved a total of 189 instances of *for example* and *for instance* as EMs, a rather reduced number that makes it difficult to pinpoint any developments precisely. Figure 1 presents the diachronic development of the two markers in normalised frequencies (n.f.) per million words, given the imbalance in the number of words per period.

FIGURE 1. Diachronic frequency of *for example* and *for instance* in ARCHER 3.2 (n.f.)



As can be seen, *for example* has always been more common than *for instance*, except in the eighteenth century in AmE and the nineteenth century in BrE, when *for instance* takes the lead. As a matter of fact, *for example* shows an overall upwards trend regardless of the English variety, whereas *for instance* recedes slightly. The distribution of the data in figure 1 is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ ($\chi^2 = 1455.206$), which means that the differences in the diachronic distribution of these two EMs is not due to chance but to the peculiarities of the different subperiods under scrutiny (see also Rodríguez-Abruñeiras 2020b). The remainder of this section presents the functional analysis of *for example* and *for instance* as shown in ARCHER 3.2. In section 3.1 the exemplifying, selective and argumentative uses of the two forms in the corpus material are discussed taking period and variety into consideration. Section 3.2 brings text types to the fore, together with different pragmatic meanings derived from the use of the markers under study.

3.1. Exemplification, Selection and Argumentation across Time and Variety

In this section, the examples retrieved from the corpus are analysed in relation to the theoretical framework provided by Eggs and McElholm (2013).³ By and large,

³ Some of the examples included in this section are also discussed in Rodríguez-Abruñeiras (2015).

the distinction between the three functions is clear and straightforward: structures with no GE have been classified as selection; when the structure at issue is twofold, it has been classified as either argumentation—when it consists of full sentences—or exemplification—when smaller units such as phrases or clauses are involved. Overall, argumentation is the most common use for both *for example* and *for instance*, regardless of the English variety, whereas exemplification and selection show a much lower frequency. As the examples below indicate, the three uses discussed are attested in the corpus from the 1660s to the 1680s with both markers. Figures 2 and 3 compare their use over time:

FIGURE 2. Exemplifying, selective and argumentative uses of *for example* in ARCHER 3.2 (n.f.)

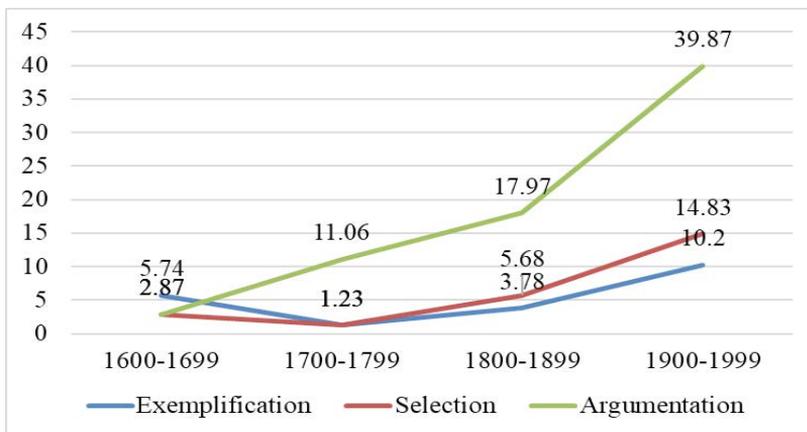
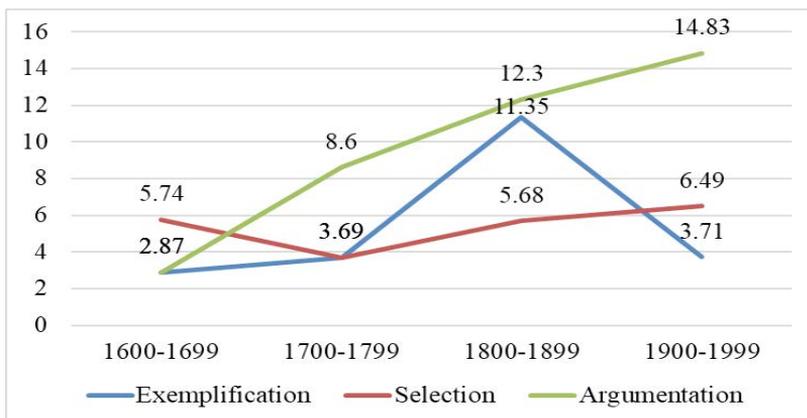


FIGURE 3. Exemplifying, selective and argumentative uses of *for instance* in ARCHER 3.2 (n.f.)



The two figures show not only that argumentation has been the most common use for both *for example* and *for instance* since the eighteenth century, but also that its frequency is always on the increase. This is in line with Irma Taavitsainen and Gerold Schneider's claim that argumentation is an essential stylistic feature of science that gains importance over time (2019, 204–205, 210).⁴ As for exemplification and selection, their use fluctuates from one period to the next and shows no definite tendency.

Let us now consider these three uses separately. (13) and (14) are the earliest attestations of *for example* and *for instance* in exemplification in the corpus data:

- (13) This place in former time was very populous in such fort, that they were forced to fend their people abroad into Foreign Plantations, of which they had, and have still some considerable, for example, Milford-land, Fulwoods Rents, Baldwins-Garden, Great St. Bartholomews, the Fryers, Mountague-close, with divers others. (ARCHER, 1673head.f2b)
- (14) By the common law such powers could not be granted; and if I make a common law conveyance at this day, as for instance a feoffment to A. and his heirs, to the use of him an his heirs; or a lease for one thousand years, which needs not any limitation of use, with a proviso that it shall be lawful for me to revoke at my will and pleasure, or that I may limit a jointure, make leases, &c. they are void powers. (ARCHER, 1665gran.l2b)

These instances represent clear exemplifying sequences: in (13), the EE—*Milford-land, Fulwoods Rents, Baldwins-Garden, Great St. Bartholomews, the Fryers, Mountague-close, with divers others*—is introduced by *for example*, and its GE is “some considerable,” which refers back to *foreign plantations*; (14) consists of the GE *a common law conveyance* and the EE *a feoffment to A. and his heirs*, which are linked by means of *for instance*.⁵ In both cases, the units in the exemplification are noun phrases, the most common type of syntactic form for exemplifying sequences in the data analysed—32 out of 38 cases of exemplification. However, other syntactic forms such as prepositional phrases (15) or clauses (16) are also possible:

- (15) [M]en of common stock, in places where men are plenty and cheap (as, for example, in Central Africa), may be purchased for the price of a rusty musket or a piece of cotton cloth. (ARCHER, 1897vand.h6a)
- (16) And in a preceding page, 200, he lays it down, that “when a part of the cargo is shipped over into lighters or the long boat, in order to extricate the ship and cargo from

⁴ It should be noted, however, that they focus on argumentation with *because*.

⁵ “Feoffment, in English law, the granting of a free inheritance of land—fee simple—to a man and his heirs. The delivery of possession—livery of seisin—was done on the site of the land and was made by the feoffor to the feoffee in the presence of witnesses. Written conveyances were often customary and, after 1677, mandatory” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2020).

a perilous situation, as for instance, to set a stranded vessel afloat, or to lighten a leaky one, and bring her into the harbor, the charges of such a measure as well as the damages sustained by the goods in consequence of it, undoubtedly belong to general average. (ARCHER, 1838beva.15a)

As for the position of the EM within the exemplifying sequence, this tends to precede the unit that it introduces, as in (13) to (16) above—66% of cases in the data. However, postposition of the EM is also quite common—32% of cases—as in (17) to (19):

- (17) [...] and this motion or rather Bodys in motion are subject to the following laws. 1st two bodys of different velocitys or swiftnesses, but aequal masses which motion is subject to Certain laws which he explained, and I have forgot. But thus much I remember, that the motion, produced by gravity, was universally in right lines, from the body acted upon by gravity, to the Center of gravity, *as* the Center of the earth, for instance, or *the like*. (ARCHER, 175xjadm.y4a; emphasis added)
- (18) “Ah! I may mention without indiscretion, I hope, that I noticed the colour of your dressing-gown on the way from Aleppo to Stamboul. A pale mauve, I believe.”
 “Yes, that is right.”
 “Have you any other dressing-gown, Mademoiselle? A scarlet dressing-gown, for example?”
 “No, that is not mine.”
 Poirot leant forward. He was like a cat pouncing on a mouse.
 “Whose, then?”
 The girl drew back a little, startled. “I don’t know. What do you mean?”
 “You do not say, ‘No, I have no such thing.’ You say, ‘That is not mine.’ Meaning that such a thing does belong to someone else.” (ARCHER, 1934chri.f7b)
- (19) ITEM. Come, my pretty Joanna, let us sit down a little, and talk over your affairs. They sit. I have a great deal to say to you, though, i’faith, when I look in thy pretty eyes, it seems all to run out of my head.
 JOANNA. With simplicity. You had better look the other way then, sir.
 ITEM. But I can’t, I can’t; they are the loadstone, and my heart is the needle. I dare swear, now, you have had plenty of lovers.
 JOANNA. Lovers, sir!
 ITEM. Aye, young whipper-snappers, that did not know their own minds. But, be careful of them; they don’t know what they’re at. There’s no dependence upon them; no, no, you must look to those who are a little older, who are grown steady, and know what they are about. A man about my age, for instance. (ARCHER, 1819beaz.d5b)

According to Eggs and McElholm, the use of EMs in postposition implies that the forms function as discourse markers that may convey different pragmatic meanings,

rather than acting as pure linking devices (2013, 36). (17) is highly enlightening in this regard. Here, the writer—John Adams—is taking notes in his diary. He wants to provide an example of a centre of gravity—the GE—so he uses the EM *as* to introduce the EE. Therefore, *as* appears in the left periphery and connects adjacent units. However, in order to emphasise the idea of noneuxhaustiveness, the writer then adds a second EM, namely *for instance*—almost as an afterthought—which, in turn, is followed by the general extender *or the like*. Both elements appear in the right periphery, thus mitigating the illocutionary force of the previous segment and making it clear for the reader that other centres of gravity might be adduced. In (18) and (19), the pragmatic implications derived from the use of an EM in final position are different. In (18), the addition of *for example* after a question might be interpreted as having a mitigating function, but on closer inspection it actually seems to somehow intensify the question (Rodríguez-Abrunheiras 2020a, 631). In the extract—an excerpt from Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express*—Poirot asks Miss Debenham if she has a scarlet dressing gown. The question is very specific, and he is asking about that particular item of clothing because he had seen a suspect wearing such a dressing gown. By adding the marker *for example*, the speaker seems to pretend that he is making his words less assertive, probably in an attempt to gain his interlocutor’s trust, but he is in fact wittily trying to obtain information from her. When Miss Debenham claims that the dressing gown is not hers—“No, that is not mine”—Poirot immediately infers that she knows precisely which dressing gown he is referring to. Therefore, if she is not the murderer, she must at least have been a witness. Along similar lines, in (19) *for instance* is added for the message to sound less direct, but this again conceals the speaker’s real intentions: Item is trying to flirt with Joanna, so he adds the marker in an attempt to weaken the strength of a statement that might be too intrusive for her, although he is in fact telling her that they should be together.

Finally, (20) and (21) exemplify selection. The earliest attestations of both markers in selective structures in my data date from 1675:

(20) For it is well known to all that sayl Northward, that most of those Northern coasts are frozen up to many leagues; though in the open Sea it is not so; no nor under the Pole it self, unless by accident, as when, for example, upon the approach of the Summer, the frost breaketh, and the Ice, which was congealed near forty or fifty leagues to the shoar, breaks off from the land and floats up and down in the Sea. (ARCHER, 1675anon.s2b)

(21) This Hydrostatical Principle may be evidently proved from what has been demonstrated in a Mathematical way [...]. Whence I concluded, that I might safely infer, that the floating Instrument abovementioned would be made to sink deeper by an ounce, for instance of Gold hanging at it under water, then by an ounce of Brass or any other metal, which by reason of its greater bulk than Gold, loosing more of its weight by the

immersion, must needs retain less, and so have less power to depress the Instrument
'twas fastned to (ARCHER, 1675ai.s2b)

In (20), the writer is explaining how the ocean can become frozen along the coast but not in the open sea or under the pole, but he then mentions one of the conditions under which one can find ice in the open sea. Such a condition is introduced by means of the EM *for example*, which is parasitic on the conjunction *when*. In (21), in an attempt to demonstrate the hydrostatic principle, the writer explains how by attaching an ounce of a material—in this case gold—to a floating instrument, that instrument will sink deeper in the water. It should be noted, however, that the position of the EM in this example is not the expected one. According to Eggs and McElholm, selective EMs tend to follow the preposition when they occur in a prepositional phrase (2013, 36). They call this unmarked and natural clausal slot *interposition*. Nonetheless, in this example *for instance* does not follow the preposition as expected—*an ounce of, for instance, gold*—but precedes it—*an ounce, for instance, of gold*. Further, Eggs and McElholm claim that in selection, EMs are discourse markers—hence their label *selective discourse markers* (19)—since they open up the number of possibilities that they may introduce. But other pragmatic meanings of the markers are possible in selection. Thus, for example, in (22) below, *for instance* does not seem to open up a wide range of options but rather to focus the addressee's attention on one particular fact, namely that the speaker—Iris—is wearing her hair in a specific style because she is fond of her interlocutor—Sid. As for the types of unit that selective discourse markers introduce in the material analysed, these tend to take the form of clauses (22), but noun phrases are also quite common (23). Although the EMs in most cases precede their scope domain, there are seven instances in which they follow the unit that they introduce, thus forcing a retrospective reading. This is shown in (23), where *for example* appears at the end of the sentence but is parasitic on the preposition *into*.

(22) I've changed on you, haven't I, Sid? [...] The things you don't know about me! A little laugh. Did you know, for instance, that you're the reason I wear it [my hair] like this in the first place? (ARCHER, 1964hans.d8a)

(23) A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or bulk from a large knitting-needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. (ARCHER, 1845poe.f5a)

Finally, argumentation is exemplified in (24) and (25), the earliest occurrences of the markers with this function in ARCHER 3.2:

(24) "Cuckoldry is a very great mystery, and every man understands it not, for true it is, that though you be at Gran Cairo, and your Wife be in any part of the Land of Brittain, yet at that very moment of time that she admitteth a stranger to copulate with her,

shall the invisible Horn find shelter under the thicket of your Foretop.” “That” quoth Sr. Lambert “full hardly can I believe, for that you may as well make me believe the Moon is made of green Cheese.” “Certes” replied Sr. Vane, “you are very ignorant, for the thing by which you seek to prove the impossibility of what I averre, is the greatest Argument of the truth thereof.” [...] “Know yee then right well Sr. Lambert, that in Metaphysicks the Notional difference makes a clear distinction, as falling into an incapacitated sence of the objected medium. As *for example*, I say the Moon is made of green Cheese; For green metaphysically distinguished is white, by reason of the objected Medium which is the blew Air [...]” (ARCHER, 1661flat.f2b)

- (25) Moreoever, the following Experiments upon this [anomalous, unknown] matter, do seem to give proof of its being rather of the ordinary Stony Constitution, than of that which is proper to Animal Concretions. *For Instance*, we first of all poured upon it ordinary Vinegar, and it presently wrought upon it with a hissing noise, as it did on the petrified Water when powder’d. We poured on it Spirit of Vitriol, and that also wrought up on it and dissolved it, but let it fall again, as Aqua-fortis does Tin when it has corroded it. (ARCHER, 1685slar.m2b)

(24) requires a broad context to be understood. Two knights, Sr. Lambert and Sr. Vane, are talking about unfaithfulness in marriage. Sr. Vane explains how a wife’s adultery would affect her husband, but Sr. Lambert does not believe him and compares his allegories to an impossible fact, that of the moon being made of green cheese. In (25), the writer—Frederick Slare—in his work *A Short Examen of the Stones Sent* describes how he was trying to identify an unknown substance through different experiments. In both cases, the text that comes before the EM introduces a general thesis, which is then justified or supported argumentatively in retrospect by means of a sentence containing one individual case—this is the inductive use of EMs presented in section 2. In these two instances, whole chunks of discourse are connected by means of *for example* and *for instance*. Therefore, they do not refer back to a clear GE—as in exemplification—and neither are they parasitic on a previous linguistic unit. In 65% of the examples in my data, the argumentative markers are in sentence-initial position (25), whereas in 35% the marker appears in the middle of the unit it introduces, which tends to be either a time or place adjunct (26) or a subject. By separating a part of the example, that segment is foregrounded.

- (26) The most important factor bearing upon the birth rate is the age at which marriage is contracted. While data bearing upon this subject in this country are scarce, still such data as are available show clearly that the average age at which marriage is contracted is constantly advancing. In Massachusetts, *for example*, the average age of women marrying for the first time has increased during fifteen years from 23.4, in 1872, to 24.4, in 1887. (ARCHER, 1891holl.s6a)

3.2. Exemplification, Selection and Argumentation in Different Genres

This section discusses the use of *for example* and *for instance* from the standpoint of textual variation. Let us start by comparing the overall use of these two forms in the eleven text types under analysis.⁶

TABLE 1. Distribution of *for example* and *for instance* in the different genres in ARCHER 3.2

	BrE		AmE	
	<i>for example</i>	<i>for instance</i>	<i>for example</i>	<i>for instance</i>
Advertising	4	2	4	3
Diaries	2	6	4	3
Drama	0	3	3	5
Fiction	6	4	8	3
Journals	4	3	0	0
Legal	2	3	4	8
Letters	2	2	0	3
Medicine	5	1	2	3
News	1	2	4	1
Science	20	8	27	4
Sermons	8	8	4	0

Table 1 does not reveal any clear distribution pattern for the two EMs under analysis. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, “*for instance* is slightly less formal than *for example* and is used more in spoken English” (Procter [1978] 2009, 583; italics added), which is why a distribution of the two EMs in the different text types on the basis of different degrees of formality was expected. However, possibly due to the low number of examples retrieved from the corpus, no such distinction can be made. Thus, whereas one of the most formal text types—science—clearly favours the use of *for example*, in another formal type of text—legal—*for instance* slightly outnumbers *for example*. A third formal text type—medicine—shows different tendencies in BrE and AmE: *for example* is more common in the former and *for instance* in the latter. Likewise, more informal text types display mixed tendencies as well. For example, nonacademic/more personal texts—diaries and letters—do not show any clear distribution either, while in two literary text types—fiction and drama—opposing trends can be observed.

Table 2 summarises the exemplifying, selective and argumentative uses of *for example* and *for instance* in the different text types, with data given in normalised frequencies.

⁶ Although ARCHER 3.2 contains twelve text types, no examples of our markers are attested in early prose, which is why it is not included in the table.

TABLE 2. Argumentative, exemplifying and selective uses of EMs in the different genres of ARCHER 3.2 (n. f.)

	Exemplification	Selection	Argumentation
Advertising	4.28	17.13	34.25
Diaries	15.44	11.58	30.89
Drama	6.90	9.21	9.21
Fiction	7.46	11.20	20.53
Journals	3.78	3.78	18.89
Legal	15.79	9.48	28.43
Letters	8.11	0.00	20.28
Medicine	9.20	9.20	32.21
News	7.01	3.51	17.53
Science	50.35	54.22	123.93
Sermons	4.68	18.71	70.17

Let us focus on those text types which show a higher frequency of the markers selected. The most straightforward conclusion that can be drawn from an assessment of the data is the high prevalence of the markers under study in science texts, especially in the form of argumentation, where they are notably frequent—n.f. 123.93.⁷ Again, we can conclude that this distribution is not due to chance since it is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ $x^2 = 162.737$). The nature and ultimate purpose of arguments accounts for the prevalence of argumentation in this text type: “an argument is a spoken discourse or written text whose author—the arguer—seeks to persuade an intended audience or readership—the Other or the Others—to accept a thesis by producing reasons in support of it” (Hitchcock, 2002, 289; see also Johnson 2000 and Rodríguez-Abreuñeiras 2020b, 36). In a conversation, an argument may be constructed during an interaction in which the speaker defends a standpoint and the addressee challenges it. As claimed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst,

A standpoint only requires defense if not everybody fully agrees with it. It may have become clear that this lack of agreement is the case, but it is also sufficient if there is a suspicion that this might be the case. In principle, a discursive text [i.e., an argument] can always be regarded as part of a discussion, real or imagined by the arguer, in which the arguer reacts to criticism that has been or might be leveled against his point of view. It is characteristic of

⁷ Medicine also scores rather highly—n.f. 32.21. The reasons adduced for scientific texts would also account for such a recurrent use of arguments in medicine as, in fact, medicine is a type of scientific text, though with some special characteristics: “Medicine has a special position among sciences as it includes both theory and practice” (Taavitsainen 2011, 78). The data on science and medicine are here provided separately in accordance with the textual categorisation of ARCHER.

a discussion of this type that a difference of opinion is made the issue of a dispute and that the language users who are involved in resolving this dispute attempt to do so by means of argumentation. (2016, n.p.)

However, in a written channel, writer and reader do not share space and, sometimes, not even chronology. Therefore, arguments are a useful tool to defend the writer's theses in front of any potential audience, be it their fellow scientists or lay readers. Let us consider (26) above in more detail. This example, taken from a publication by the American Statistical Association on the "Rate of Natural Increase of Population in United States," published in 1891, is part of a highly argumentative discussion and refutation of criticism concerning the accuracy of a particular census.⁸ The author—the American inventor Herman Hollerith—was working for the US Census Bureau at the time and was concerned to defend the accuracy of the census against its critics. It is evident, therefore, that Hollerith in this instance—or indeed any scientist who has to defend themselves against critics—is compelled to argue, refute or put forward claims or theses that they must be able to defend argumentatively. In (26), the author puts forward a general thesis—*such data as are available show clearly that the average age at which marriage is contracted is constantly advancing*—which he backs up inductively in the final sentence by means of an example—*In Massachusetts*.

The use of examples in science contributes to orienting the readers by helping to convey a unique and unequivocal message:

Plain and straightforward formulations of science have been valued since the time of Francis Bacon in the sixteenth century and in the period afterwards, during which the Royal Society was formed in England (in 1660), setting the standard for scientific discourse and investigation in Europe. [...] The development of a straightforward standard of scientific writing made it possible to reproduce experiments, to verify or disprove results and hypotheses, and to crystallize the substance of any piece of scientific writing. (Rabinowitz and Vogel 2009, 8)

As for the use of EMs in selection, Eggs and McElholm claim that expressions that convey alternative reasons are common in scientific prose (2013, 44)—(20) and (21) above. The relatively high frequency of *for example* and *for instance* in legal and medical texts can also thus be understood: the complex, abstract explanations in those specialised genres are broken down for the audience by means of more specific, relatable examples.

Following science, the selective and argumentative uses of *for example* and *for instance* are also very common in sermons—n.f. 18.71 and 70.17, respectively. The recurrent

⁸ The text opens with the following reference to past criticism: "Many criticisms of the accuracy of the enumeration of the Eleventh Census have appeared during the past, month, based upon the fact that this enumeration, when compared with those of 1860 and of 1880, would indicate a very marked falling off in our rate of natural increase" (ARCHER, 1891holl.s6a).

presence of these markers in religious texts may be accounted for by referring to the genre of *exemplum*. Medieval *exempla* were short moralising stories inserted within sermons that became popular as a means of spreading the message of Christianity (Le Goff 1985, 78).⁹ Therefore, the argumentative use of the two markers seems to fit this function perfectly, as shown in (27), where the writer is trying to convince people not to commit murder by illustrating the possible consequences of such a terrible action:

- (27) The keen agony may gradually pass into a dull, dead pain; and after a time, the sensibility of the soul may seem to be wholly lost; but a man can never be sure that the horror will not return. The real nature of this experience is best seen when it has been occasioned by the grosser and more violent forms of crime. Men who have committed murder, *for example*, have been driven almost insane by the memory of their evil deed. (ARCHER, 18xxdale.h6b)

The third text type in which the selective and argumentative uses of *for example* and *for instance* are recurrent is advertising—n.f. 17.13 and 34.25, respectively. In this genre, the markers introduce specific cases in point that add colour and vividness to the story in order to attract the public's attention (Arpan 2009, 249-50). As a matter of fact, the use of examples may affect personal preferences (252), which makes them a perfect tool for advertising. Consider in this regard (28), where the aim is to publicise all-inclusive resorts, which is why up to three different—very appealing—destinations are mentioned:

- (28) The low all-in prices include air travel from London and return. You can, *for example*, have a fortnight in Italy for as little as £44; in Spain for £45; in Switzerland for £42. (ARCHER, 1965expr.a8b)

Exemplification and argumentation are also rather common in legal texts, where the examples either refer to past cases (29) or present a hypothetical situation, which is why the EM frequently comes after the conjunction *if*, as in (30). As was the case with science, legal texts also need to present theses supported by means of specific—either real or hypothetical—evidence.

- (29) Pennsylvania cases reveal that there may be some validity to this criticism. *For example*, in one case it was held that a person who might be affected by the decree was indispensable; while in another case this court held that in spite of the fact that absentees would be affected, they were not indispensable. (ARCHER, 1981acti.l8a)

⁹ ARCHER 3.2 does not include Middle English data, but the rather recurrent use of examples in religious texts in the period under study in this article may derive from this medieval genre.

- (30) But we will always keep the cause under our control, for the purposes of substantial justice, and never suffer either party to be entrapped. *If, for instance*, notice is served on an attorney, whose client lives at a great distance, this will always be deemed a sufficient reason to postpone the trial. (ARCHER, 1795para.14a; my emphasis)

4. CONCLUSIONS

This article has discussed the use of *for example* and *for instance* from the seventeenth to the twentieth century in BrE and AmE, focusing on their use in exemplification, selection and argumentation. It has been shown that not all the sequences in which these two markers appear are exemplifying—that is, not all of them open with a GE followed by an EE. When the markers introduce a sequence that does not refer back to a previous unit—i.e., the GE is omitted—the sequence illustrates selection. In turn, when the markers link whole chunks of discourse, they operate at the textual level and their use is argumentative.

The corpus material has shown that *for example* is more common than *for instance*—although the latter was more frequent in the eighteenth century in AmE and in the nineteenth century in BrE. The two varieties display the same diachronic trend (RQ3): *for example* increases in frequency over time, whereas the use of *for instance* is more stable diachronically, though it recedes slightly in the twentieth century. The corpus examples have also shown that not only exemplifying uses but also selective and argumentative uses with these two EMs seem to have been well established and standardised in English by the seventeenth century (RQ2). Out of the three uses examined in this article, argumentation is by far the most favoured: overall it constitutes half the uses of these markers, regardless of English variety. On their part, exemplification and selection show a very similar frequency in ARCHER—between 18 and 29% of all examples (RQ1).

As for the use of the markers in different text types, science takes the lead. Exemplification and selection are very common, while argumentation is especially—and notably—high in this genre. This can be accounted for by the nature of the texts themselves: the general explanations that characterise scientific texts need to be well supported by experimental evidence and cases in point that buttress the writer's thesis or standpoint, and to that end examples are a convenient tool. Argumentation is also very common in sermons—argumentative constructions here resemble the medieval *exempla*—and in advertising—where it is used as a persuasion tool for sales purposes. However, no clear tendency has been identified for the use of each EM in the text types of ARCHER (RQ4). Factors such as the formality of the text type, among others, were expected to attract one EM over the other, but no clear pattern has emerged in either BrE or AmE. This, however, might be due to the low number of examples provided by the corpus.

This article has also shown that, although their primary or unmarked function is that of introducing their scope domain and connecting it to a previous GE, *for example* and *for instance* may also perform an array of interpersonal and pragmatic functions.

Thus, they may be used to modify the illocutionary force of a speech act, sometimes even in opposite directions: the EM may be used for mitigating purposes indicating that the example provided does not exhaust the list of potential cases in point from the previous unit, but it may also be used to emphasise the example adduced.¹⁰

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