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**The interjection *cheers* in British and American English:**

**Collocations, meanings and functions**

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# **The interjection *cheers* in British and American English:**

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### **Abstract**

Interjections are linguistic expressions that reflect the emotions and feelings of the speakers with an exclamative intonation. They are complete communicative messages; they constitute an open word-class, and they are present in all languages. There is little research on this field, an especially on individual interjections. This study focuses on the secondary interjection *cheers* used to toast and to express good wishes. *Cheers* also means ‘thank you’ and ‘goodbye’ in informal British English. By analysing results of the BNC and COCA corpora, this study aims to determine in a quantitative manner the frequency of the use of *cheers* in British and American English, as well as the main set of combinations with which *cheers* occurs, and to identify its main discursive-pragmatic functions. *Cheers* has different meanings and functions depending on the regional variety and it is a cheerful word that fills the discourse with positivity.

**Keywords:** interjections, *cheers*, British English, American English, BNC, COCA.

### **Resumen**

Las interjecciones son expresiones lingüísticas que reflejan las emociones y los sentimientos de los hablantes con una entonación exclamativa. Son mensajes comunicativos completos que constituyen una clase de palabra abierta y están presentes en todas las lenguas. Hay poca investigación en este campo, especialmente sobre las interjecciones individuales. Este estudio se centra en la interjección secundaria *cheers* la cual se utiliza para brindar y expresar buenos deseos. *Cheers* también significa ‘gracias’ y ‘adiós’ en el inglés británico informal. Mediante el análisis de los resultados de los corpus BNC y COCA, este estudio pretende determinar de forma cuantitativa la frecuencia de uso de *cheers* en inglés británico y americano, así como el principal conjunto de combinaciones con las que aparece, e identificar sus principales funciones discursivo-pragmáticas. *Cheers* tiene diferentes significados y funciones según la variedad regional y es una palabra alegre que llena de positividad el discurso.

**Palabras clave:** interjección, *cheers*, inglés británico, inglés americano, BNC, COCA.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, linguistic studies have been mainly focused on written language underestimating spoken language. Interjections are the least studied among the grammatical issues. “Grammarians from early modern times emphasised the emotional aspect of interjections, their asemantic nature and marginality to language, and their inferior status resulting from this position” (Stange, 2009, p. 18; as cited in Ehlich, 1986, p. 156). Interjections belong to spoken language and they have been scarcely studied despite their importance in conversations. Ameka, for instance, referred to them as “the universal yet neglected part of speech” (1992a, p. 101). In order to partly compensate the lack of interest in this area, this study wants to demonstrate the complexity and importance of interjections in discourse.

Interjections are short words that express emotions and feelings with an exclamatory intonation, they are “instinctive, involuntary or uncontrolled verbalisations, i.e., quasi-reflexes” (Padilla, 2017, p. 299; as cited in Nicoloff, 1990, p. 214). “Interjections can be utterances by themselves, and they are always separated by a pause from the other utterances with which they may co-occur. They always constitute an intonation unit by themselves” (Ameka, 1992a, p. 108). Furthermore, they are words with a high independence as they constitute a complete communicative message on their own, and they can be “fully intentionally in ostensive-inferential communication.” (Padilla, 2017, p. 299). Interjections reflect social aspects of the speakers and they exist in all languages of the world. “Apart from nouns and verbs, interjections - those little words, or ‘non-words’, which can constitute utterances by themselves - are another word-class found in all languages.” (Ameka, 1992a, p. 101). This word-class deserves to be studied as much as the rest of the grammatical issues as it is an open-ended word-class “at least in the sense that they readily gain new members” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 2). Consequently, interjections are continuously changing, evolving, and increasing. “New interjections and their functions always seem to be accepted by participants.” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 94).

Within interjections, this study focuses on *cheers* which has been analysed as a secondary interjection. *Cheers* has been characterised in some dictionaries as a friendly interjection used to toast to express good wishes. It has been classified as informal in the

British variety used to mean ‘thank you’ and ‘goodbye’ (cf. e.g., the *Macmillan Dictionary* and the *Cambridge Dictionary of English*). The connotation of this interjection is always positive, and this has aroused my interest in its study. It is a cheerful word used in different contexts and which has differing meanings as it is demonstrated throughout the study. In addition to the fact that interjections are a subject insufficiently studied, no specific investigation based on *cheers* has been found. Therefore, this study contributes to the area with something innovative, filling in this research gap. To this end, the following research questions have been addressed:

1. What is the frequency of use of the interjection *cheers* in British and American English<sup>1</sup>, through the analysis of the BNC and COCA corpora?
2. What are the sets of combinations appearing with *cheers*, i.e., which are the most recurrent collocations and phrases?
3. What are the primary meanings and discourse-pragmatic functions of *cheers*?

The outline of this study is as follows. First a theoretical background which purports to offer a definition of interjections. This section is followed in Section 3 by the choice of the interjection *cheers* and a brief note on its etymology, as well as the position of *cheers* in the classification of primary and secondary interjections. Next, in Section 4, the research procedure is presented in the methodology, in which a mixed-methods approach has been selected. In the results and discussion section, the results are presented quantitatively and statistically, assessing how many times *cheers* appears as an interjection. In addition, a qualitative perspective in which the study seeks to propose its different meanings and functions. Finally, the concluding section provides the findings and results and the pertinent discussion. Due to the length of this study, it has not been possible to incorporate other relevant and interesting aspects about interjections. Therefore, the study suggests some directions for future research questions in order to continue expanding the study of interjections so that they cease to be on the margins of linguistic studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, BrE and AmE, respectively.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Defining interjections**

An interjection is a short word or phrase with an exclamative intonation used to express spontaneous and sudden feelings and emotions, such as surprise, anger, pleasure, pain, or shock. “When using interjections, we express emotions and the hearer gets an impression of our state of mind, but we do not talk about it as such” (Stange, 2009, p. 33). They can be attention-getting signals or replace answers. Many times, interjections interrupt the act of speaking of another participant, because they are immediate reactions.

Interjections have an indexical nature; they are context dependent and they “can only be interpreted relative to the context in which they are produced” (Ameka, 1992a, p. 108). They can also be used ironically and to capture this connotation it is necessary to consider the context (Stange, 2009, p. 53). They are always directed “towards an element in the linguistic or extra-linguistic context” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 2).

Interjections have an invariable form, they “do not receive inflectional or derivational affixes” (Padilla, 2017, p. 300). They mainly belong to the spoken discourse, so they are spontaneous and unconscious, strengthened by gestures, bodily and facial expressions. “Interjections are on the dividing line between verbal and non-verbal communication” (Ameka, 1992a, p. 112). If they are written, they reflect orality and instantaneity and they are generally followed by a comma to reflect the pause in the speech or by an exclamation mark to reveal their oral emphatic quality.

When an interjection is uttered, a complete statement is produced. Interjections are holophrastic, self-utterance elements since they represent complete communicative messages on their own. They are “the most reduced form an utterance can possibly take, unless one allows silence to constitute an utterance” (Wilkins, 1992, p. 129). Furthermore, interjections are persuasive, they assist the interlocutors to know where they should focus their attention on, and which part of the context is the most significant (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 3; as cited in Wharton, 2003, p. 43).

Interjections exist in all languages, they are language-specific, and they are “conventionalization and eventually institutionalization, as its usage spread to communities and became established as the norm” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 94). Thanks to their study it is possible to “reveal local values, norms and tacit rules of

communicative interaction” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 16). Interjections are required to understand social, human, and linguistic contact between speakers, revealing “social attitudes” and “cultural norms” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 16). Interjections are “the most characteristic peculiarities of individual cultures” (Wierzbicka, 1992, p. 160).

There are two positions concerning interjections: those who consider them to be a relevant and independent word-class and those who think that they do not deserve in-depth study. Linguists who consider that “interjections are among the least important of speech elements” (Sapir, 1921, p. 6) study them as backchannels or subcategories of discourse markers “in such cases where they express an emotional reaction to something that has been said” (Stange, 2009, p. 32). Some linguists believe that “they are never more, at best, than a decorative edging to the ample, complex fabric” (Sapir, 1921, p. 7). This is because some of the features of interjections are somewhat peculiar. For instance, they sometimes consist of an unusual set of sounds without vowels, such as, *Shh!* and there is not a strictly defined spelling for them (Cuenca, 2000, p. 34). This “has been one of the reasons why they have been considered marginal to language” (Stange, 2009, p. 42; as cited in Ehlich, 1986, p. 26). Their phonetics is not complex, they are simple and short words.

Moreover, interjections are not syntactically integrated and grammatically related to the rest of the sentence: “they do not form an integral part of a syntactic structure but are inserted rather freely in the text” (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999, p. 56). That is why Biber et al. named them “stand alone elements” (2005, p. 449). Interjections do not have grammatical value or syntactic properties, but they are equivalent to complete sentences. They can be introduced into sentences as kinetic or parenthetical comments, using pauses, commas, brackets, or dashes (Stange, 2009, p. 34; as cited in Nübling, 2004, p. 30). In fact, Cuenca prefers to study interjections as “peripheral instances of sentences, since they behave as maximal units of syntax but do not exhibit a subject plus predicate structure.” (2000, p. 29).

All this makes some linguists believe that interjections “are a very small and functionally insignificant proportion of the vocabulary of language” (Sapir, 1921, p. 7). Despite this critical assessment of interjections, it is necessary to consider that “one short interjection may be more powerful, more to the point, more eloquent than a long speech” (Müller, 1862, p. 368).

## 2.2. Main functions of interjections

Interjections are used as discourse markers<sup>2</sup> to organize the speech act, the turns of the participants and the topics. Furthermore, speakers used them as backchannels to show that they are involved in cognitive processes when they are thinking or hesitating. Nevertheless, interjections appear mainly in emotional processes, expressing “in a clear and brief manner what is going on in the speaker’s mind, and the listener can understand easily and without delay what is being expressed” (Stange, 2009, p. 25). Interjections express a broad range of emotions: from amazement and happiness to alleviation, puzzlement, and surprise, even to scorn and refusal, from panic to repugnance to pain and the sense of cold (Stange, 2009, p. 32; as cited in Nübling, 2004, p. 17). Interjections can be classified depending on the feeling they represent, for instance: admiration (*wow*), annoyance (*jeez*), disapproval (*tsk tsk*), disgust (*yuck*), disliking (*eww*), doubt (*hmm*), frustration (*damn*), irritation (*humph*), joy (*hurray*), pain (*ouch*), pity (*oh dear*), realization (*ah*), relief (*phew*), sentimental approval (*awwwww*), surprise (*oh*), understanding (*a-ha*). The length of the interjection affects its intensity, the shorter the interjection, the more emotion it conveys (Stange, 2009, p. 38). Interjections may attract the attention of someone (*hey*), convey fault or mistake (*Oops*, or the diminutive variations *oopsy /oppsie*). They are also used when one participant wants to know what another participant has just said (*eh?*).

## 3. THE INTERJECTION *CHEERS*

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *cheers*<sup>3</sup> as an interjection has three primary meanings. In BrE, it is an exclamation uttered immediately before drinking alcohol, but

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<sup>2</sup> “Discourse markers are inserts which tend to occur at the beginning of a turn or utterance, and to combine two roles: (a) to signal a transition in the evolving progress of the conversation, and (b) to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer, and message. Words and phrases which are discourse markers are often ambiguous, sharing the discourse marker function with an adverbial function”. (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1086).

<sup>3</sup> The phonological transcription of *cheers* in BrE is /tʃiəz/, and in AmE is /tʃɪrɪz/. Both varieties share the initial voiceless, palato-alveolar /tʃ/ and final voiced alveolar sibilant /z/ phonemes. While in BrE it contains the diphthong /iə/ (made of the combination of /i/ and the mid, central vowel /ə/, both vowel sounds are pronounced within the same syllable), in AmE the near-close front unrounded vowel /ɪ/ is followed by the consonantic voiced alveolar approximant /r/ and it is pronounced as /ɪr/.



it is also used to say ‘thank you’ and ‘goodbye’ in a parting salutation. On the other hand, in AmE, this expression is mainly articulated before a toast. By and large, *cheers* is an expression of approval and encouragement that reveals enthusiasm, gratitude and appreciation.

*Cheers* overlaps different functions since it could be integrated simultaneously in three categories. Expressive interjections are “used for manifesting feelings and includes most prototypical interjections”, conative interjections are “directed at an auditor” and phatic interjections are used “in the maintenance of social and communicative contact” (Cuenca, 2000, pp. 37-38; as cited in Ameka, 1992b, p. 245). *Cheers* is expressive since it communicates thankfulness, congratulation, encouragement, praise, or approval. “Interjections may be used to express one's own emotions, those of the person we are talking to, and even those of a person we are talking about.” (Stange, 2009, p. 37). *Cheers* is also conative because it is always addressed to another participant, and it is also phatic since it involves a purpose of social interaction. Another approach of classifying interjections is by adopting an interactional and conversational perspective. Wilkins divided interjections into three groups. On the one hand, solitary interjections, produced when the speaker is alone. On the other hand, passive interjections by means of which “the party speaks as suffering some mutation in himself”. Finally, active and social interjections which are applied in discourse (Stange, 2009, p. 19; as cited in Wilkins, 1988, p. 308 and Ehlich, 1986, p. 193)<sup>4</sup>.

Interjections can be directed at another participant who must provide a physical or verbal response or they may not be addressed to an interlocutor. “There is no need for a hearer for interjections such as *Whoops!*, *Ugh!*, etc. in their basic usage but *Oy!*, and *Shh!*, for instance, need to be addressed to someone” (Stange, 2009, p. 38). Thereby, *cheers* belongs to the second group in which interjections are always aimed at other interlocutors. On many occasions, *cheers* is part of an adjacency pair, “the ritual set pair is made up of interjections so that the addresser uses an interjection, and it is responded to with another interjection which could echo each other or not” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 10). For instance, see example 1.

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<sup>4</sup> Although this classification seems interesting, it is not possible to consider it in detail due to the length of this study.

- (1) (SP:PS1EA) Cheers. (SP:PS1E4) Cheers everybody. (SP: PS1E8) Cheers John.  
(BNC KC4 34)

### 3.1. A brief note on the etymology of *cheers*

*Cheer* as a noun dates to the year 1200 and it meant ‘countenance’. There was a metaphorical extension at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the word began to mean ‘temper’ and ‘mode’, since 1400 it was used for a positive state of happiness. Along the mid-fifteenth century the sentence *What chere be with you?* was used to greet and the word *chere* began to mean ‘positive mood’ or ‘attitude’. *Cheers* with the sense of a scream for support and encouragement was first recorded in 1720, and it belonged to the nautical jargon. *Cheer* as a verb dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and it meant ‘to console’ or ‘to humour’. In the following century, it meant ‘to entertain with food and drink’ or ‘to encourage and to support’. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it meant ‘shout and clap simultaneously’. Interjections can experience different derivational processes, for instance, there are interjections that have begun to be used as verbs and “some interjections evolve from imperative forms of verbs” (Ameka & Wilkins, 2006, p. 14). *Cheers* was first used as an interjection before drinking in the United Kingdom in 1919. Touching glasses before drinking was an exclusive tradition of the highest spheres during the Regency period. The interjection came from the plural of the word *cheer* which is related to the word *cheerio* which was a British cheerful and optimistic farewell exclamation, “an American comparable expression is *take care*”. (Algeo, 2006, 208).

### 3.2. Primary and secondary interjections

“At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wundt was the first one to divide interjections into primary and secondary ones, a suggestion which was picked up again by Ameka” (Stange, 2009, p. 19; as cited in Ameka 1992 and Ameka & Wilkins 2006). Primary interjections are short words or sounds that are exclusively used as interjections. Formation processes are not feasible in this category. These interjections constitute both an utterance and a discursive act by themselves. They cannot be part of other word-classes; therefore, they cannot have a different meaning from the interjectional one. “Their peculiar phonological layout places them outside the regular linguistic system.” (Padilla, 2017, p. 300). Some primary interjections are *wow*, *oops*, *er*, *hmm*, as can be seen, “primary interjections tend to be phonologically and morphologically anomalous” (Ameka, 1992a, p. 105).

Conversely, secondary interjections communicate emotions, they have an additional semantic meaning apart from the interjectional one, having a referential and a non-referential meaning. These interjections belong to other word-classes, and they allow inflexions when they are not used as interjections. For instance, interjections that warn of a danger or attract the attention like *Fire!* or *Help!*, taboo words *Damn!* and affective words, e. g., *Heavens!* The last instance has two different senses. The nominal meaning refers to an imaginary place full of enjoyment where the soul goes after death. In contrast, *heavens* as interjection is used to express surprise.

In line with Stange (2009, pp. 40-41) primary interjections are more common because they are easier to produce due to their brevity. By and large, interjections are short; primary interjections usually have one syllable, and secondary interjections, a maximum of three syllables. It is possible to conclude that *cheers* is a secondary interjection; it has an independent semantic meaning as a noun and as a verb apart from the non-referential and interjectional meaning during a toast, to express thankfulness or to bid somebody farewell. In example 2 *cheers* is a noun and in example 3, it is a verb.

- (2) He paused, and this was taken as a signal for a round of cheers and shouts.  
(BNC A0N 404)
- (3) The audience stamps and cheers. (BNC A6C 69)

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Two corpora will be used primarily for the development of this empirical study, the *British National Corpus*<sup>5</sup> (BNC) and the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*<sup>6</sup> (COCA). One of the major advantages of using corpora is that they contain authentic data, real recordings of spontaneous speech uttered by a wide variety of people. The purpose of this study is to determine statistically how many times the interjection *cheers* appears in these corpora. Biber et al. noticed that the occurrence and the types of interjections vary between Great Britain and the United States (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1097). Another objective is to detect the most frequent combinations that emerge with this interjection and what are its main meanings and functions. This study is a mixed-methods research.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>

Firstly, a quantification of data based on a numerical analysis will be conducted. After this, an interpretative analysis will be undertaken, resulting in a combination of quantitative research and qualitative research, i.e., mixed-methods research<sup>7</sup>. It is a hybrid study in which the results and discussion section merge in order to have a sole and more clarifying section.

The search has been limited to spoken discourse for two reasons. The first is that interjections belong primarily to spoken discourse. The second is to be able to work with an appropriate amount of information. For BrE, the BNC offers 162 results for the spoken context. The rest of the contexts offered have been rejected: fiction, magazine, newspaper, non-academic, academic, and miscellaneous. For AmE, the COCA has been employed, and the search has been limited to spoken contexts. The rest of contexts offered which have been rejected are: TV/ movies, blog, web-general, spoken fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic issues. In this case the corpus offers 1144 recordings, considering the disparity in the volume of words, only the first 162 will be analysed in order to be able to manage the quantity of information and particularly to make an equitable comparison with the British variety.

Therefore, this study will focus on 324 examples in total. With this quantity of examples, it is feasible to estimate the frequency of *cheers* as an interjection in both varieties and to recognise its main collocations and functions in spoken contexts. To this end, the results will be examined in different steps. Firstly, the results will be categorised depending on whether *cheers* appears as a noun, as a verb or as an interjection. After the quantitative analysis of these results, the study will focus exclusively on those results in which *cheers* is an interjection. Then, the results of *cheers* as an interjection will be quantitatively classified into five groups in order to know its main collocations. The five categories are the following: when *cheers* is a self-standing element, when it is succeeded by a vocative, when it is followed by the prepositional phrase *to*, when it is accompanied by discourse markers and finally when it occurs with other recurrent words. The last step is to determine qualitatively the discourse-pragmatic functions of *cheers*.

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<sup>7</sup> “Quantitative research generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out.” Conversely, “Qualitative studies, on the other hand, generally are not set up as experiments; the data cannot be easily quantified [...] and the analysis is interpretive rather than statistical.” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 2).

It will also be observed whether the chosen interjection appears in any of the sixty real oral conversations offered by the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English<sup>8</sup>. The reason why this corpus has been introduced is that none of the 162 first results provided by the COCA belongs to spontaneous conversations, but they occur in television studios. Although they also reflect spoken language, the COCA will be completed with the conversations of this corpus. Most of the results provided by this corpus are face-to-face conversations. Additionally, it offers other types of everyday life contexts. For instance, telephone conversations (SBC028 *Hey Cutie Pie*), card games (SBC024 *Risk*), food preparation (SBC031 *Tastes Very Special*), on-the-job talk (SBC014 *Bank Products*), classroom lectures (SBC012 *American Democracy is Dying*), sermons (SBC020 *God's Love*), storytelling (SBC054 *'That's Good', Said Tiger*), town hall meetings (SBC026 *Hundred Million Dollars*) or tour-guide spiels (SBC040 *Beaten on a Regular Basis*). All the conversations are preceded by a description of the context and each complete dialogue is transcribed and has a digital audio file.

The methodological limitation that this study has confronted is that when classifying the recordings in subsequent independent searches of the interjection, the numbers of hits did not agree all the time. In order to solve the problem, the recordings were copied and pasted into a separate document so as not to be dependent on the corpora and not to be subject to possible changes and errors due to working online.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following table the number of results and the percentage of *cheers* usage in BrE and AmE are presented. *Cheers* appears in both corpora as an interjection, as a noun and as a verb.

	BNC		COCA	
Interjection	154	95.05%	101	62.34%
Noun	3	1.85%	57	35.20%
Verb	5	3.10%	4	2.46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 1.** Frequency of use of *cheers* in BrE and AmE

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/research/santa-barbara-corpus>

A first search of these two corpora have produced the following results. The BNC provides 162 hits for *cheers* in a spoken context. The samples occurred in diverse contexts within the spoken section: conversations, meetings, classrooms, social science lectures, consults, broadcast news, tutorials, broadcast discussions, unscripted speeches and 6 unclassified results. Table 1 shows that the main use of *cheers* in a spoken context in BrE is the interjection with a total of 154 hits (95.05%), followed by *cheers* as a verb with 5 examples (3.10%) and finally *cheers* as a noun with merely 3 occurrences (1.85%). In contrast, the COCA presents 1144 results for *cheers* in a spoken context. As mentioned in the methodology (cf. Section 4), the samples provided by this corpus occurred on television sets in different programmes<sup>9</sup>, most of them informative. Only the first 162 examples of the 1144 results have been selected in order to be able to make an equitable comparison with the instances provided by the BNC. It can be inferred from these 162 samples analysed that the main use of *cheers* is as an interjection with 101 cases (62.34%), followed by the usage of *cheers* as a noun with 57 results (35.2%) and finally as a verb with only 4 exemplars (2.46%). This first analysis allows us to notice the substantial difference in the number of results; the BNC provides 162 examples, while the COCA presents 1144, a difference of 982 instances.

In both varieties the main use of *cheers* is as an interjection with 154 (95.05%) and 101 results (62.34%) for BrE and AmE, respectively. The results for *cheers* as a noun display a considerable difference; there are only 3 (1.85%) instances for BrE, whereas 57 (35.20%) cases are found for AmE. Finally, *cheers* as a verb is rare in both varieties; the BNC offers 5 hits (3.10%) and the COCA, 4 (2.46%). Therefore, the order of the functions of *cheers* from highest to lowest is as follows: in BrE, first the interjection, then the verb and finally the noun; in AmE, first the interjection, later the noun and lastly the verb. Another pertinent aspect to compare is the context in which *cheers* has been uttered. The BNC provides more varied and spontaneous scenarios; most of the examples arise in conversations. By contrast, the first 162 results from the COCA occur on television sets.

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<sup>9</sup> ABC GMA, ABC Nightline, CBS Morning, CBS: 60 Minutes, CBS: Face The Nation, CBS: This Morning, CNN Burnett, CNN Burnett, Fox Baier, Fox Carlson, Fox Five, Fox MacCallum, Fox: First 100 Days, Fox: Fox Hannity, Fox: O'Reilly Factor, Fox: The Five, Fox: Tucker Carlson Tonight, NBC MeetPress, NBC Today, NBC: Today Show, NBC: Today Show, NPR ATC, NPR FresAir, NPR Morning, NPR Saturday, NPR Sunday, PBS Newshour, The Journal Editor Report.

Although these instances also reflect spoken language, they belong to a more specific context, not so spontaneous but with more established language patterns and rules.

### 5.1. Observations on *cheers* as a verb

In the results for the British variety, 4 out of 5 examples have the phrasal verb *cheer up* which means “to become less sad, or to make someone feel less sad” (cf. the *Macmillan Dictionary*). Therefore, the verb is not *to cheer*, but *to cheer up* conjugated in present simple tense, third person singular. The preposition *up* is directly preceded by the verb *cheer* in 2 examples (see example 4). On the contrary, the direct object is between the verb and the preposition in the other 2 cases (see example 5). However, the only relevant instance to this study since it is the only one that actually demonstrates that *cheers* can be a verb is example 6.

- (4) When the weather cheers up ah mate? (BNC KD3 62)
- (5) I don't think the prospect cheers Jane up particularly. (BNC KCH 52)
- (6) Cheers a happy pig. (BNC KCD 51)

In example 6, *cheers* means ‘to greet’. A similar situation is found for the American variety; 2 of the 4 examples belong to the phrasal verb *cheer up* (see example 7). The other 2 results are the verb *to cheer* meaning ‘to encourage’ (see example 8).

- (7) And you just look at his beady eyes and it just cheers up your day. (COCA SPOK 40)
- (8) Carlos, there is a virus in part of the Republican Party that cheers this. (COCA SPOK 14)

### 5.2. Observations on *cheers* as a noun

The BNC has just provided 3 results for *cheers* as a noun. In examples 9 and 11 *cheers* means ‘ovation’ and ‘acclamation’. However, example 10 would belong to the category of problematic cases since the meaning of *cheers* is not really clear, but its function as a noun is obvious because of the capital letter.

- (9) It was cheers all round in the winners' enclosure. (BNC KRM 99)
- (10) (SP:PS55H) What's name does. (SP:PS55G) Who? (SP:PS55H) Sam, out of Cheers. (BNC KPG 135)

- (11) No applause, no cheers, you know that's made to feel here. (BNC JK8 158)

Unlike the BNC, the COCA offers 57 results for *cheers* as a noun. Its predominant meaning is ‘applauses’, ‘ovations’, and ‘shouts’ (see example 12). However, the meaning changes in some of the results. 24 out of the 57 results are parenthetical comments (*cheers and applauses*) which explain how the audience reacted on the television sets. In addition, *cheers* can be a proper noun as in example 13. To conclude, example 14 refers to the American sitcom premiered in 1982 *Cheers*, set in a Boston bar where a group of customers went to drink and chat. Both the name of the bar and the name of the series was *Cheers*.

- (12) You hear all these cheers, you talk about nice crowd, everybody's cheering for you. (COCA SPOK 45)
- (13) It seems like this is, like, your local Cheers. (COCA SPOK 125)
- (14) Who wouldn't want to be in the same conversation as Cheers, which is, like, the best show of all time? (COCA SPOK 29)

### 5.3. *Cheers* as an interjection

#### 5.3.1. ‘*Cheers*’: Collocations and phrases

In this section, the use of *cheers* as an interjection will be discussed. A number of collocations and recurrent phrases accompanying *cheers* has been found in both corpora. The number of results and the percentage of each collocation can be observed in Table 2. It has to be considered that the number of results for *cheers* as an interjection varies. While the BNC provides 154 hits, the COCA presents 101, also frequent, but to a lesser extent.

	BNC		COCA	
Self-standing <i>cheers</i>	69	44.80%	61	60.40%
Followed by vocative	32	20.78%	8	7.92%
Followed by the prepositional phrase <i>to</i>	1	0.65%	21	20.97%
In combination with discourse markers	15	9.74%	3	2.97%
Other fixed words	37	24.03%	8	7.92%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2.** *Cheers*: Collocations and phrases



#### 5.3.1.1. *Self-standing 'cheers'*

This first subgroup is characterised by examples in which *cheers* appears as a single element in the turn or integrated in a sentence between full stops or pauses. *Cheers* is “loosely attached to the rest of the constituents of a sentence.” (Padilla, 2017, p. 300). This is the most recurrent category in both corpora. There are 69 examples (44.80%) in the BNC and 61 results (60.40%) in the COCA. Thus, *cheers* as a single element is the most regular way of using this interjection in both varieties. *Cheers* can constitute a turn itself. Free standing interjections “serve as complete utterances and form complete turns, i.e. they constitute all a speaker says in response to another speaker, or before someone else speaks.” (Nordgren, 2015, pp. 48-49). This can be appreciated in example 15. Additionally, it can appear separated from the rest of the clause by a full stop, as in example 16, or separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause, as can be seen in example 17. In these three instances, *cheers* behaves as a sentence, it conforms a communicative unit (utterance) which is syntactically self-contained and intonationally and semantically complete. (Cuenca, 2000, p. 32).

- (15) Oh yes. Got nothing to worry about. (SP:PS04G) Cheers. (BNC KBE 14)
- (16) Happy twenty-one, Joe Rhodes. WILLIE: Cheers. Congratulations. (COCA SPOK 2)
- (17) Eight, five and three. (pause) Cheers! (BNC KCP 53)

#### 5.3.1.2. *Followed by a vocative*

According to the Macmillan Dictionary, a vocative is “the form of a noun that is used for showing that a particular person or thing is being spoken to”. *Cheers* is followed by vocatives in 32 examples (20.78%) in the BNC, in the COCA *cheers* has a lower frequency with only 8 hits (7.92%). These results allow us to deduce that the use of vocatives differs greatly depending on the variety. It is very usual to find *cheers* accompanied by the name of the person addressed in BrE. “Vocatives are important in defining and maintaining social relationships between participants in conversation” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1108). In both corpora, it has been feasible to find different types of vocatives accompanying *cheers* which can be classified depending on the speakers’ relationships and following the classification of Biber et al. 1999.

- a) *Endearments*: Cheers my dear. (BNC KB7 2), Cheers honey. (BNC KP5 129)
- b) *Family terms*: Cheers dad. (BNC KBF 16), Cheers mum! (BNC KBR 18)
- c) *Familiarizers*: Cheers mate! (BNC KBD 10), Cheers man! (BNC KD9 75), Cheers, my friend. (COCA SPOK 5), Cheers, guys. (COCA SPOK 82)
- d) *Familiarized first names (shortened and/or with the pet suffix -y)*: Okay, cheers Nicky (BNC KD8 71), Okay, cheers Geoff. (BNC HMD 146), Cheers, Scotty. (COCA SPOK 16), Cheers, Matt. (COCA SPOK 157)
- e) *First names in full*: Cheers Heidi. (BNC KC3 29), Cheers, Mark. (COCA SPOK 161)
- f) *Others*: Cheers girls. (BNC KC7 47), Cheers skanky (BNC KDA 102), Cheers, everybody. (COCA SPOK 155)

#### 5.3.1.3. Followed by the prepositional phrase 'to'

*Cheers* followed by the prepositional phrase *to* is another structure that is repeated. The number of results for this category differs considerably. There are 21 hits (20.97%) out of 101 in the COCA, while there is only 1 result (0.65%) out of 154 in the BNC. In BrE, it is more common to use vocatives to refer to other participants. Alternatively, speakers of AmE opt for the prepositional phrase *to*, as in example 18.

- (18) It must be absolutely gorgeous, and cheers to you my darling. (BNC KC4 35)

Within this category, different constructions which emerge after the preposition *to* have been found such as: demonstrative pronouns, “cheers to that.” (COCA SPOK 1), personal pronouns, “cheers to you, kids.” (COCA SPOK 3), noun phrases, “cheers to this young lady” (COCA SPOK 17) or verbal phrases, “cheers to not messing up your kids.” (COCA SPOK 66).

#### 5.3.1.4. In combination with discourse markers

In this category *cheers* is preceded by discourse markers. The reason why *cheers* appears together with discourse markers is because the conversation is coming to an end or because one of the speakers wants to end a topic and introduce a new one. This happens mainly in BrE, see example 19. The results in Table 2 show that this is not a common structure in any of the two varieties. In BNC there are only 15 examples (9.74%) and in COCA just 3 (2.97%).

(19) Right, cheers. See you next week or before then. (BNC G4V 145)

#### 5.3.1.5. Other recurrent words with 'cheers'

This last category has been created for all those structures that have been repeated, but not enough to create a separate section. In BNC, 37 examples (24.03%) have been included in this section and in COCA only 8 (7.92%).

In the BNC, the most recurring structure is *cheers* followed by the adverb *then* which appears in 8 results. In the second place, *cheers* is preceded by the interjection *oh* on 7 occasions. "Some secondary interjections are made up of a primary interjection plus a word which can also be found in other usages, e.g., *Oh dear! Oh god!*" (Stange, 2009, p. 44). In this case, *cheers* is a secondary interjection which is not a stand-alone element but forms an "interjectional phrase" (Ameka, 1992a, p. 111) when it is attached to *oh*, which is the most common primary interjection in English. Another subcategory is *cheers* accompanied by the farewell insert *bye* 5 times, then *cheers* preceded by the response *yes* and its variant *yeah* in 4 occasions. In 3 hits, *cheers* is accompanied by the response *okay* and only on 2 occasions by the adverb *alright*. In the remaining cases, only one example has been found for each of the following structures: *thanks*, the backchannel *mm*, the hesitator *er*, the adjective *lovely*, as a response to a question, included in a verbal phrase, preceded by a number and by the prepositional phrase *for now*. On the other hand, the results obtained in the COCA can be summarised as follows. *Cheers* is the object of the verb *say* on 3 occasions as a part of the sequence *say cheers*. Only one example has been found for the rest of recurrent words or structures: *cheers* as a metalinguistic use of the word, speaking about the interjection itself, *cheers* as an answer to a question, *cheers* following the response *yes* and preceding an adverbial and a prepositional phrase.

#### 5.3.1.6. Interim summary

By looking at the samples analysed, it could be admitted that this interjection appears mostly as a self-standing element in both varieties. The data analysed also reveal that *cheers* is not accompanied by discourse markers very often. In BrE, the use of other recurrent words is much more common. The aspect in which both varieties differ most is how to refer to other participants. Vocatives are used in BrE, whereas the prepositional phrase *to* in AmE.

### 5.3.2. 'Cheers': Semantic meanings and discourse/pragmatic functions

After having analysed the examples in the data, the main hypothesis has been confirmed. *Cheers* has three meanings: to toast, to thank or to say 'goodbye'. However, the meaning changes depending on the variety. BrE and AmE share the feature that in both this interjection is mostly used to express good wishes and to celebrate something while holding a glass, usually of alcohol, just before drinking in the company of friends or family. However, BrE has two more meanings when used in informal registers: *cheers* as a colloquial synonym for 'thanks' and 'bye'. As it is known, *cheers* is also an informal way of saying 'thank you' in Australia and New Zealand. These last two meanings are more recent uses of the word, while *cheers* for a toast has a former origin. In the following examples, *cheers* can be appreciated respectively as a toast (20), as a way of saying 'thank you' (21) and 'goodbye' (22).

- (20) Dana: As we toast you and say cheers. What are we drinking?  
Michelle: Mm.  
Jonathan: So, this is a Spritz from Rome.  
Michelle: Mm.  
Jonathan: that features blood orange juice.  
Dana: It's beautiful.  
Michelle: I'm loving it.  
Dana: Cheers.  
Jonathan: Cheers. (COCA SPOK 11)
- (21) (SP:PS03W) Can you bring me a (pause) pint of lime and lemon (pause) with some i-- lots of ice? (SP:PS043) Yeah, course I can. (SP:PS03W) Cheers, thanks. (BNC KBD 9)
- (22) (SP:KE1PSUNK) Bye guys. (SP:PS0TU) Cheerio<sup>10</sup>. (SP:KE1PSUNK) See you. (SP:KE1PSUNK) Bye. (SP:KE1PSUNK) Cheers. (SP:PS0TU) Yo. (SP:KE1PSUNK) See you. (BNC KE1 111)

There are many intriguing aspects which could not be discussed due to the length of this paper. For example, knowing the frequency of *cheers* used as 'thank you' and 'bye' in BrE and noticing if these uses have begun to be used in AmE and if so, what is the frequency.

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<sup>10</sup> Optimistic farewell exclamation.

Looking at the behaviour of *cheers* in the data, it can be presumed that it is a very interesting interjection to analyse since it has a range of differing discursive and pragmatic functions. “In everyday talk interjections routinely function as pragmatic markers, initiating utterances and relating them to the foregoing interaction.” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 94; as cited in Norrick 2009). It is an interactive interjection which needs at least two interlocutors. “The to-and-fro movement of conversation between speaker and hearer is evident in the occurrence of utterances which by their nature either form a response or elicit a response. In conversational analysis, these utterance-response sequences, known as adjacency pairs.” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1045). Example 23 reveals the symmetrical nature of *cheers* as an adjacency pair in which interjections echo each other.

- (23) Fair enough. Just thought you might be hungry. (SP:PS02H) Cheers my dear. (SP:PS02G) Cheers. (BNC KB7 2)

Furthermore, this instance demonstrates how *cheers* “represents a dialogic reaction of the speaker to something the hearer has said, adopting an interactive role in the turn taking of the conversation.” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 106). Many interjections are monological and express the speakers’ emotions regardless of the other participants. However, *cheers* “has proved to mainly function ‘dialogically’, as pragmatic markers do, linking, in some way, the speaker and the hearer, the ‘I’ and the ‘you’”. (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 108).

What is more, *cheers* with any of the three semantic meanings has an evaluative connotation. When it is an emotive interjection that conveys “emotional involvement: the speaker uses it to express his/her concern and emotional attachment to what is being said” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 102). The connotation is always positive and is often reinforced by an exclamatory intonation (see example 24). This interjection is an immediate reaction to a stimulus in the linguistic context, to something that has been said previously (see example 25). Goddard would classify *cheers* as a cognitive interjection, one of those that “deliver more cognition-oriented messages, typically related to information state, that is, to what one knows, comes to know, etc.” (2014, p. 54). Alternatively, it can be a reaction to the extra-linguistic context, as in example 26, in which the speaker is saying ‘thank you’ because the other person has given him or her a cup of tea.

- (24) Watters: Let me get a bite of that.  
 Guilfoyle: Cheers! (COCA SPOK 80)
- (25) (SP:KPRPSUNK) Andy, do you want a cup of tea? (SP:PS57M) Er er, yeah. Cheers. (BNC KPR 136)
- (26) (SP:PS57L) There you go. (SP:PS57N) Cheers. Is that my tea? (BNC KPR 137)

In addition, *cheers* has discourse functions in order “(a) to signal a transition in the evolving progress of the conversation, and (b) to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer and message” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1086). It has been noticed that in most cases in which *cheers* has a discursive function, it appears in final position (see the discussion in Section 5.3.1.4). “The possible positions of interjections in the clause: initial, interjected and final. If the interjection does not constitute a complete utterance, as a free-standing interjection, it will hold one of these three positions.” (Nordgren, 2015, p. 44). It organises the discourse structure of the oral speech and is used to end the conversation or to change the topic. In the following example (27), the teacher wants to begin a new topic.

- (27) I beg your pardon, let's continue with chi-- sorry are y-- oh never mind, okay right cheers right. Erm okay let's let's keep rolling along with erm with child abuse. (BNC KGW 93)

Furthermore, *cheers* can be considered a speech act. *Cheers* can be analysed as performing expressive speech act, it seems “to fit the speech-act framework, in that there appears to be an attitude, emotional or otherwise, being conveyed toward the proposition expressed.” (Wharton, 2003, p. 55). When the interjection is uttered, the speaker is actually wishing good luck, saying ‘goodbye’ or thanking at the same time. “Interjections have an expressive function, ‘rather than the representational or symbolic function characteristic of ordinary words and sentences’: interjections show rather than say.” (Downing & Martínez Caro, 2019, p. 88; as cited in Goddard 2014, p. 54). It would be interesting to discuss this aspect in more detail because here we can see two approaches to it: “Wilkins (1992) argues that interjections are speech acts. [...] Wierzbicka (1992a) on the other hand, contends that interjections do not have an illocutionary force. She asserts that they do not have any illocutionary components such as a dictum or an illocutionary purpose in their meaning. As such, she argues, they are not speech acts”. (Ameka, 1992b, p. 247). This study supports Wilkins’ position and contemplates *cheers* as a speech act. In 28 it

can be noticed that what the speaker is actually doing when *cheers* is uttered is thanking other people, celebrating life experiences and wishing good luck for what is to come.

- (28) Cheers to all who have been part of this journey, cheers to the past for the incredible memories, and a huge cheers to the uncertainty of what is next.  
(COCA SPOK 31)

Finally, *cheers* can be a minimal vocalisation with discursive function, i.e., behaving as a backchannel. The role of backchannels is “signalling feedback to the speaker that the message is being understood and accepted. Given the interactive nature of conversation, backchannels are important in indicating that speaker and hearer are keeping in touch with one another, and that communication is still in progress” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1091). When *cheers* has this function, it is often accompanied by inserts, such as discourse markers or other backchannels, forming a grouping with these elements, as in example 29.

- (29) Okay right cheers mhm. (BNC KGW 94)

As Downing and Martínez Caro stated for the interjection *gosh*, it is not advisable to categorise functions, in this case *cheers*, as belonging exclusively to one group or another (2019, p. 101). *Cheers* can have various discursive and pragmatic functions interrelated. For example, it can be a speech act when saying ‘goodbye’ to another interlocutor and simultaneously be a discourse marker since it organises the structure of the conversation by indicating that it is coming to an end (see example 30).

- (30) Er, about two o'clock? Magic! Cheers now. Bye. (BNC KB9 7)

#### **5.4. Some marginal notes on the results from the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English**

As discussed in the methodology, the aim of using the Santa Barbara Corpus is to complement the COCA. Although the 60 conversations differ greatly in the participants’ characteristics, contexts, and settings, the word *cheers* only appears in two conversations: conversation number 21 (SBC021 *Fear*) and conversation number 51 (SBC051 *New Yorkers Anonymous*). The reason for the scarcity of conversations in which *cheers* appears would be an interesting topic if this study is extended and continued. *Cheers* exhibits remarkably differing functions in both conversations. In conversation 21 (31),

*cheers* is a noun appearing as a kinetic commentary. Therefore, *cheers* is not part of the oral discourse but the researchers have employed this word to describe the reactions of the sermon attendees by means of parentheticals<sup>11</sup>.

- (31) Walt: [Good mor][ning].  
 Many: (CHEERS\_WHISTLES\_APPLAUSE)  
 Walt: [Amen].  
 Walt: Also, next Saturday,  
 we have the women's day.  
 Amen?  
 Many: (AMENS\_[CHEERS]\_APPLAUSE)  
 Walt: Were you afraid of that closet?  
 Aud: X  
 Walt: Yeah he was [too].  
 Many: (LAUGHTER\_CHEERS\_APPLAUSE)

In conversation 51 (32), *cheers* appears six times in four turns. Unlike the previous conversation, *cheers* is used now as an interjection. It is uttered simultaneously producing overlapping and it is repeated consecutively in Alice's and Fran's turns.

- (32) Bernard: Cheers everybody.  
 [here's] [to]  
 Alice: [Cheers] [ch][eers].  
 Fran: [Ch][ee]rs.  
 chee[r]s.  
 Bernard: [Cheers].

## 6. CONCLUSION

After having conducted this study, it has been ascertained that, although interjections are complex words full of meaning and frequently used, they have always remained on the margins of language. "Nowadays spoken language is also taken into account, whereas in

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<sup>11</sup> "Parenthetical elements are used particularly in writing to give additional information which is related to, but not part of, the main message of the clause. They are marked typographically by parentheses, dashes, or some other typographic device. Very often they take the form of noun phrases or numeral phrases." (Biber et al., 1999, p. 137).



the past written language was predominantly of interest, as it was considered superior to spoken language” (Stange, 2009, p. 20). They are inserts that express spontaneous and sudden emotions in an intensified manner with an exclamatory intonation. Interjections are an open word-class, present in all languages and established by convention. Moreover, they are independent words that convey a complete statement. They are “syntactically independent, that is, they can stand on their own as utterances. Therefore, they are not sentence constituents, but sentence equivalents.” (Cuenca, 2000 p. 31). The interjection of this study, *cheers*, has been classified as secondary. This is because it belongs to another word-class and has additional semantic meanings, as described in Section 3.2. Depending on the context and the regional variety, *cheers* has different meanings. *Cheers* has an indexical nature and can only be interpreted considering the context.

The sample analysed of both corpora has allowed us to establish the frequency of use of *cheers* (see Research Question no. 1). In so doing, it was identified that *cheers* is primarily used as an interjection in both BrE and AmE. In BrE, the percentage constitutes almost the total number of uses (95.05%) and in AmE, it exceeds half of them (62.34%). By contrast, *cheers* as a verb is highly rare in both varieties. Moreover, the use of this word as a noun is unusual in BrE but frequent in AmE. Within the utilization of *cheers* as an interjection, establishing the most recurrent sets of combination has been achievable (see Research Question no. 2). In both varieties, *cheers* appears as a stand-alone element in most cases, either as a single word in the turn or separated from the rest of the clause by full stops or pauses. The next two categories differ greatly depending on the variety. When the speaker uses *cheers* and wants to address another person, the use of a vocative is most frequent in BrE and the use of the prepositional phrase *to* is clearly predominant in AmE. The difference in these two categories is the most notable feature and where the frequency differs the most. Regarding the combination of this interjection with discourse markers, it has been proved that it is not a common practice in any of the varieties, especially in AmE. When this is the case, *cheers* usually occurs in final position in the flow of speech. Finally, the combination of *cheers* with other recurrent words (cf. Section 5.3.1.1) is the second most frequent combination in BrE. By contrast, it represents a very low percentage in AmE, being the penultimate combination together with *cheers* followed by a vocative.

This study enables us to accept the hypothesis that *cheers* has different meanings and functions as an interjection (see Research Question no. 3). As previously mentioned,

*cheers* has three variety-dependent meanings as explained in Section 5.3.2. The most frequent meaning in both varieties is *cheers* as a toast to wish luck or to celebrate an event (*Because tomorrow, we celebrate Katie's sixtieth birthday. Cheers. Salute*). When *cheers* is used to toast it implies enthusiasm, congratulation, encouragement and praise. It often reveals admiration for something said or done. However, the other two meanings are specific to the British variety. The first use is to say 'thank you' in an informal way when there is a close relationship with the other participant or when it is an informal situation (*A: That should be no problem at all. B: Okay cheers, thanks a lot for your help*). In this case gratitude and thankfulness are communicated. Consequently, "interjections have an illocutionary force since they have a communicative purpose." (Ameka, 1992b, p. 255). The second meaning is an informal way of saying 'goodbye' in a parting salutation (*Seems like it. Bye bye then. Cheers*). Therefore, *cheers* is always addressed to another participant. Moreover, *cheers* is an expressive interjection "which is used for manifesting feelings" (Cuenca, 2000, p. 37). Additionally, it is conative because it is always "directed at an auditor" (Ameka, 1992b, p. 245). Finally, it is phatic because it is "used in the maintenance of social and communicative contact" (Ameka, 1992b, p. 245). Consequently, it is not advisable to establish rigid boundaries for *cheers* or any other interjection between the different classifications considering that there are various usages which are often combined together.

As I have tried to show in this study, it would be necessary to start considering interjections as fundamental elements of language as it is done with other classes of words. Their value and importance have been underestimated; for this reason, they have been poorly observed in the basic grammars of English. Henceforth, future studies should continue analysing these small expressions that fill the discourse with expressiveness and connotation. It is relevant to understand interjections, know their meaning and how to use them. Due to the limited scope of this study, there are many aspects which have not been addressed but which would be interesting and relevant in order to increase and broaden the knowledge of this field. Among them, certain grammatical, discursive, and pragmatic issues such as the following: How do interjections arise? How are they acquired and lost? Can they be borrowed? How do they evolve and change over time? Does gender influence the use of interjections? How do they differ among languages and cultures? How has the interjection *cheers* evolved over the years? To what extent can *cheers* be a discourse marker?

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