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# Studies in Spanish Syntax

Edited by Laura Brugè

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*Studies in Spanish Syntax*

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## Preface

Scientific research within the area of Spanish linguistics has been giving for many years an important input to the development of current linguistic theory. It is to this contribution that the present volume is dedicated.

Each of the five papers in this compilation approaches a different aspect of Spanish syntax from the theoretical perspective of generative grammar, and the analyses proposed build on recent formal developments of this theory.

The papers focus on a series of topics that have been the object of linguistic research for many years: the dependencies and relationships which are realized between linguistic elements inside the DP and its functional structure; the role of tense and aspect in sentence structure and interpretation; and the structure and role of the left periphery of the sentence.

Of the five papers, three were presented at the second *Workshop on Spanish Syntax* which took place in Venice on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2003 at the Dipartimento di Scienze del Linguaggio of the Università Ca' Foscari Venezia.

Following is a brief description of each essay.

The contribution by Bartra and Villalba proposes an interesting analysis of one of those Spanish constructions headed by the so-called 'neuter determiner' *lo*, namely constructions such as *Me asusta lo peligroso de la empresa*, which accounts for their peculiar syntactic and interpretive behavior. The authors claim that the derivation of such constructions—i.e., *lo-de* constructions—cannot share the same analysis of constructions such as *Me gusta lo peligrosa que es la empresa*—i.e., *lo-que* constructions, criticizing, in this way, Gutiérrez-Rexach's (1999) idea of extending his analysis for *lo-que* constructions to *lo-de* constructions as well. As Bartra and Villalba argue, despite the common property concerning the interpretation of the adjective as a maximal degree adjective, *lo-de* constructions

can clearly be distinguished from *lo-que* constructions. In fact, among other different properties, *lo-de* constructions need to be selected by a predicate, which, furthermore, conveys an exclamative meaning; they have a clear nominal character and express a factive interpretation. In addition, the *f*-features of the adjective, which is the only category that may and must follow *lo*, does not agree with those of the noun of the DP introduced by *de*.

Moreover, Bartra and Villalba offer compelling evidence for the conclusion that *lo-de* constructions show remarkable similarities to DP-internal predicate-inversion constructions (DP-PIC)—i.e., *El idiota del alcalde*: besides sharing a quantificational interpretation, both constructions allow only referential nominal expressions inside the DP headed by *de*, and, among other common properties, they do not allow either the extraction of some constituent internal to the DP or the extraction of the *de*-DP, demonstrating, in this way, that *de* is not a true preposition and does not form a constituent with the DP itself. According to these properties, for *lo-de* constructions the authors suggest an analysis along the lines proposed by den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004) for the DP-PIC in English, with the crucial difference that, as they argue, in *lo-de* constructions the element that carries the focus interpretation is the inverted predicate, while the DP is interpreted as a topic: in fact, a DP requiring focus interpretation is not allowed in such constructions: \**Me sorprendió lo caro de sólo aquella casa*.

In the analysis Bartra and Villalba develop, the quantificational value of the construction is provided both by a maximal degree operator,  $OP_{MAX}$ , modifying the adjective, predicate of a small clause XP, and by the merging of a functional category F, which immediately dominates the small clause itself: *de* is realized in the head position of FP as the result of the incorporation of X to F and as the overt manifestation of the quantificational nature of the construction.

The predicate of the small clause, AP, is in turn dominated by a DegP, and  $OP_{MAX}$  raises from inside the AP to Spec.DegP in order to bind the degree variable of the gradable adjective. Such movement will later prevent the agreement between the adjective and the noun in the DP, which merges in the specifier position of the small clause XP (cf. Kayne, 1994).

As a further step, DegP moves to the specifier position of the FP projection giving rise to predicative inversion: such syntactic movement, as the authors argue, should be pragmatically motivated, namely focus-driven. With this proposal, Bartra and Villalba intend to extend the informational partition of the sentence to the DP projection as well.

As a final step, the merging of D above FP provides the construction with its nominal nature, and the obligatory raising of  $OP_{MAX}$  to Spec.DP, in order to check the MAX features, triggers the realization of the features in D as the ‘neuter determiner’ *lo*, through the Spec-Head agreement mechanism.



Bosque's contribution is of great relevance for the discussion underlying the issue of plurality inside coordination, since it illustrates how some coordinated constructions whose member are neither nouns nor pronouns can obtain plural features.

The author observes that in Spanish, coordinated expressions composed of singular relational adjectives give rise to a plural expression enabled to agree with the plural noun they modify, as in *Los embajadores mexicano y argentino*. At first sight, such constructions represent a strong counterexample to the general hypothesis that number features are interpretable only in nouns and pronouns. At the same time, such constructions constitute counterexamples to the hypothesis formalized by Bosque, and inspired by the idea that number features in a coordination are obtained through a computational process, according to which plural features of a coordinated expression can be made of two or more singular expressions only if their respective number features are interpretable. In addition to the above mentioned property which characterizes coordinated singular relational adjectives, Bosque presents compelling evidence that these particular constructions provide the cardinality value of the plural DP they belong to and allow the identification of individuals: *Los embajadores mexicano y argentino* refers to two ambassadors. The author then claims that all these morphosyntactic and interpretive properties can be derived syntactically.

The syntactic configuration that Bosque suggests to account for these coordinated expressions allows the general hypotheses expressed above to be maintained. Following Kayne's (1994) proposal for genitive PPs, the author argues that a null nominal *pro* qualifies as the subject of a C/P projection hosting abstract grammatical content (cf. Halle and Marantz, 1993) that can be matched by relational adjectives, among other categories. *Pro*, being an argument, is provided with interpretable f-features, and consequently, interpretable number features. When *pro* is provided with singular number features in this configuration, then a singular relational adjective can be inserted in C/P, since this adjective can match *pro<sub>sing</sub>*. The projection C/P in turn establishes a complement relation with a null head D which agrees with the subject *pro* and builds its maximal projection: DP. Therefore, according to this syntactic configuration, each member of the coordinated phrase &P is a DP and not an Adjective, as apparently it might seem. The &P projection is in turn analyzed as the subject of a small clause, PredP, which is the complement of the higher D; while the noun of the nominal expression—i.e., *embajadores*—qualifies as the predicate of the same construction. Being a predicate, the noun will be characterized by non-interpretable f-features, and must move to Spec.PredP where it can inherit the interpretable f-features from the subject of the PredP itself—i.e., &P. Therefore, in the higher D the definite article with plural features—i.e., *los*—is realized, since it agrees

with the nominal moved to Spec.PredP, even though the cardinality value of the whole DP—i.e., *Los embajadores mexicano y argentino*—comes from the DPs which are contained in the &P projection.

According to this syntactic analysis which Bosque extends to coordinated genitive PPs and other coordinated modifiers of the noun (i.e., postnominal possessives and ordinals), the plural interpretable features of the &P comes from the “sum” of the singular interpretable features of each coordinated null nominal *pro*, and not from the relational adjectives, predicates of these null nominals: in Bosque’s proposal, the relational adjectives are conceived as “part of the subject of the small clause PredP”.

García Fernández’s essay constitutes an important contribution to the discussion of some problematic issues concerning the temporal-aspectual field in Spanish.

According to Moreno Cabrera’s (2003) theory on subevent structure, which claims that all events are made up of states, García Fernández comes to a lexical-aspectual classification, different from Vendler’s (1957), which distinguishes between: *states*, made up of state events (i.e., *estar enfermo*); *activities*, made up of relationships between states—either temporally or non-temporally related to each other—(i.e., *caminar*); *accomplishments*, made up of relationships between states in which the final state is a goal-state (i.e., *construir una casa*); *achievements*, made up of an origin-state and a goal-state (i.e., *morir*); and *punctual atelics*, made up of transitions between states lacking in a goal-state (i.e., *estornudar*). In this classification, furthermore, *stativity*, *durativity* and *telicity* are not considered primitive features but, as the author shows, properties that can be derived both by the number of states underlying each lexical-aspectual class and by the characteristics of the states themselves: *telicity*, for example, depends on the presence of a goal-state.

As a subsequent step, García Fernández applies this lexical-aspectual model to the Spanish temporal-aspectual field since, as he argues, it offers solutions to some theoretical problems concerning, among others, the properties of the progressive periphrasis, the granularity of the event, the difference between Resultative and Experiential Perfects in relation to lexical-aspectual classes, and the possibility of quantifying the goal-state in some aspectual varieties different from the Resultative.

As for the progressive periphrasis, García Fernández shows that the lexical-aspectual model he adopts can explain why in certain cases such as *Juan está siendo inteligente* the construction behaves syntactically like a stative predicate but it is interpreted as dynamic, giving an answer to the so-called progressive paradox (see Dik (1987) and Bertinetto (1994) among others). In fact, in cases like these, the syntactic behavior is determined by

the fact that the progressive focuses on a single state of those that make up the event. The dynamic interpretation, on the other hand, comes from the temporal relationships between the states that make up the event: those predicates that permit the sequentialisation of the event are compatible with the progressive periphrasis; on the contrary, those that do not permit this sequentialisation give rise to ungrammatical sentences, as in \**Juan está siendo en Cuenca*.

García Fernández also argues that the lexical-aspectual model he adopts provides the possibility of explaining the problems that *activities* pose with respect to the concept of granularity, exemplified by cases such as: *Aquí mis padres están bailando un tango*. In his theory, the question of identifying which interval of an event can be sufficient to be considered a portion of an activity no longer subsists: since *activities* are relationships or transitions between states, dividing an activity up into instants the result are states. Therefore, through this analysis, granularity seems to depend, as the author suggests, on our knowledge of the world and not on grammar.

As for the Perfect Aspect, García Fernández shows that the difference in interpretation between Resultative and Experiential Perfects that affects the different lexical-aspectual classes can be ascribed, in his theory, to the presence or absence of the goal-state in the subevent structure of the event itself, given that Resultative Perfects focus on the goal-state. In this way, constructions such as *Ya he estado en París / Ya he bailado tangos* are interpreted only as Experiential because of the absence of a goal-state in *states* and *activities*; the presence of the goal-state with *accomplishments* and *achievements*, on the other hand, accounts for the immediate interpretation as resultative of constructions such as *Ya han construido el nuevo hotel / Ya han muerto*.

Finally, as García Fernández argues, the analysis he defends enables him to account for the quantification of the goal-state of the subevent structure of the events also in constructions such as *Me dormí (durante) una hora*, an example of Aorist Perfect. In cases like these, in fact, the possibility of quantifying the resulting state—i.e., *estar dormido*—can be determined by the subevent structure of this type of *achievements* (cf. Bertinetto, 1986) which, unlike the other type—i.e., *llegar*, includes an origin-state that follows the goal-state.

Hernanz's contribution is of particular interest for the discussion concerning the main interpretive and syntactic conditions for the activation of the left periphery of the sentence. The analysis the author advances clearly shows that some emphatic affirmative elements involve the left periphery of the sentence and, moreover, that the crucial properties which characterize negative sentences may extend, in a natural way, to affirmative sentences as well.

Hernanz observes that the particle *bien* that appears in constructions such as *Bien ha comido Pepito* is used to emphasize the positive value of the sentence, indicating that the event denoted really took place; *bien*, in fact, cannot appear in negative sentences: *\*Bien no ha comido Pepito*. These peculiarities, together with the impossibility for *bien* to co-occur with the affirmative marker *sí*—i.e., *\*Bien sí ha comido Pepito*, leads Hernanz to suggest that *bien*, like *sí*, merges in Spec.Pol(arity)P when the head of this position, which is immediately above IP, takes the positive value, following Laka's (1990) proposal that a single abstract category subsumes the positive and the negative polarity of the sentence. Moreover, the author presents evidence supporting the idea that the distinct interpretations that *bien* and *sí* provide to the sentence is due to their different illocutionary force, and she suggests that in Spanish, affirmative polarity can be expressed in three ways: through a null affirmation marker—i.e., *Ha llovido en Barcelona*, through an affirmative emphatic marker—i.e., *Sí ha llovido en Barcelona*—and through a presuppositional affirmative emphatic marker—i.e., *Bien ha llovido en Barcelona*.

Exploring the behavior of *bien* in depth, Hernanz observes that in Spanish this element can appear in different positions: in front of a constituent, as in *La habitación estaba bien sucia*; in preverbal position, as in *Bien come pasta Pepito*; and followed by the complementizer *que*, as in *Bien que come pasta Pepito*. Comparing these constructions from a syntactic and interpretive point of view, the author comes to the conclusion that in all these cases *bien* should be analyzed as the same element, i.e., the emphatic positive marker, which may be realized in a low position, namely in a Spec.DegP position, as a degree modifier; in a high position, the pre-verbal position; and in a higher position, preceding *que*. In this way, the different semantic interpretations these sentences receive depend on the different scope properties of *bien* according to its position in the sentence: in the low position it takes scope over a single constituent; in the high position, focusing on the event denoted in the proposition, it takes scope over the sentence; in the highest position, *bien* followed by *que* expresses an *echoic* value (see Cormack and Smith (1998)) and, for this reason, the sequence takes scope over the main assertion of the sentence.

As a further step, Hernanz concentrates on the syntactic behavior of *bien* in pre-verbal position and of the sequence *bien+que*. As for *bien* in pre-verbal position, she presents compelling evidence for the hypothesis that this affirmative marker moves from its Spec.PolP position to Spec.FocusP position, in order to check off the interpretable feature [EMPH(atic)], in this way activating the left periphery of the sentence. As Hernanz shows, this syntactic movement of *bien*, required by the FOCUS-criterion (see Rizzi (1997)), is motivated both by the fact that it behaves differently from

negative markers—it is restricted to main clauses and cannot appear in Root Infinitive constructions—and by the fact that *bien* behaves similarly to a *wh*-word—it triggers V-to-COMP movement and subject inversion, may freely occur preceded by left dislocated constituents and cannot appear in *wh*-movement constructions.

Finally, moving on to *bien+que*, Hernanz defends the analysis that this sequence, being compatible with negative markers, is obtained by merging *bien* in ForceP, the projection that expresses assertion, and, therefore, the appropriate locus for the echoic interpretation. Comparing the interpretive and syntactic similarities between *bien+que*, *of course*-type adverbs and evidential adverbs followed by the complementizer *que*, Hernanz proposes that *que*, which is associated with the echoic meaning that the sentence expresses, merges in the head of ForceP, while *bien* merges in SpecForceP. In this way, the scope properties and the peculiar interpretation of the sequence *bien+que* are described in a principled way.

The contribution by Martínez-Atienza deals with another issue concerning the syntax and semantics of tense and aspect. The author examines the different aspectual properties of the Present Perfect in English and Spanish from a comparative perspective and provides an interesting account for the intrinsic value of temporal adjuncts, introduced respectively by *since* in English and by *desde* in Spanish, which allows their different syntactic behavior to be determined.

To account for contrasts such as *Juan ha salido a las cuatro* and *\*John has left at four* (see Giorgi and Pianesi (1997)), which show that in English the Present Perfect does not allow punctual temporal adjuncts, Martínez-Atienza adopts a hypothesis proposed by García Fernández (2000). According to this hypothesis, in Spanish two different underlying temporal structures correspond to the Present Perfect: a Present temporal structure, aspectually interpreted as Perfect, and an “Antepresent” temporal structure, aspectually interpreted as Aorist. The Present Perfect in English, on the other hand, has only the underlying temporal structure of Present. This basic difference between the two languages, besides predicting the above mentioned contrasts, can also account, as Martínez-Atienza observes, for the different interpretation and syntactic behavior of the Present Perfect combined with temporal adjuncts introduced by *since* and *desde* in English and Spanish, respectively. Following the proposal suggested by Iatridou *et al.* (2001) for the Present Perfect in English, Martínez-Atienza points out that in the durational interpretation the Present Perfect plus [<sub>SP</sub> *since/desde* DP] can have, the English construction always expresses the aspectual variety of Continuative Perfect—i.e., the event is still occurring at the utterance time, while the Spanish corresponding construction expresses the

aspectual property of Aorist—i.e., the final point of the event coincides with the utterance time, as the following contrasts show: *\*She has always lived here but she doesn't anymore* vs. *Ha vivido siempre aquí, pero ya no vive*.

Then, as a final step, Martínez-Atienza focuses on the intrinsic properties of the temporal adjunct [<sub>SP</sub> *since/desde* DP] and argues, adopting Iatridou *et al.*'s (2001) terminology, that in Spanish, the temporal adjunct introduced by *desde* cannot be considered to be an adjunct of “Perfect-level”, contrary to the corresponding temporal adjunct introduced by *since* in English. The evidence that she adduces for her analysis comes from the fact that in Spanish the temporal adjunct headed by *desde* does not require verbal morphology expressing Perfect Aspect—cf. *Estoy enfermo desde ayer* vs. *\*I am sick since yesterday*, can appear with a predicate in Simple Past—cf. *Estuve enfermo desde 1990* vs. *\*I was sick since 1990*, and can form a temporal correlation with another adjunct expressing the right temporal limit—cf. *Juan ha estado enfermo desde 1990 hasta 1995* vs. *\*John has been sick since 1990 to 1995*.

The editor wishes to express her gratitude to the contributors not only for the relevance of the data and analyses discussed in their papers but also for the fact that all the papers show an intrinsic comparative spirit which makes this compilation of interest not only to researchers and scholars in Spanish syntax but also to those interested in the syntax of Romance and Germanic languages.

Laura Brugè