

The interaction between locality and the subject-gap restriction in Spanish questions

This talk provides a new account of the subject-gap restriction (Torrego 84, Goodall 04, Ausín & Martí 99) in Spanish WH-questions in dialects of Castilian Spanish. The analysis provides a uniform account of this phenomenon, including some exceptions regarding D-linked WH-phrases (Dwhs) and focusing effects. Further, it provides evidence for the view of locality defended in Grohmann (03).

(1) and (2) (first noted in Torrego (84)) show that a subject cannot intervene between a WH-phrase or a contrastively focused phrase and the verb. (3) shows that the adjacency between the verb and the WH-phrase holds for subjects, but not for adverbs (see also Suñer 94). The parallel behavior of WH-phrases and contrastively focused phrases can be accounted for by assuming that both WH-phrases and contrastively focused phrases target the same syntactic position (which I will assume is SpecFocP), a hypothesis which is corroborated by the ungrammaticality of (4). The contrast between (1b-2b) and (3) is accounted for by assuming Foc^0 is a null verbal affix that must merge with the verb under PF adjacency (note that the verb here stays within IP, see Suñer 94). Subjects then cannot intervene between the verb and the affix in (1b-2b) since this would block merger of Foc^0 and the verb. Adverbs can intervene since, as is well-known (Bobaljik 94, 02), adverbs do not disrupt affix hopping. Interestingly, the adjacency effect doesn't hold for Dwhs, but only if the subject is contrastively focused, which has gone unnoticed before (5). I argue Dwhs can be specified with a topic feature that enables them to move to SpecTopP, above SpecFocP. The contrastively focused interpretation of the subject follows from the hypothesis that the verb and the null verbal affix in Foc^0 must be PF adjacent for affix hopping to take place. As a consequence, the preverbal subject must be placed in a position above Foc^0 , which is SpecFocP (see (6)).

Ausín & Martí (99) note simple Dwhs are subject to the subject gap restriction (7). To account for (7), I make two rather natural assumptions: first, simple Dwhs are prosodically light; second, $FocP$ is mapped into its own intonational phrase (I-phrase) to the exclusion of TopP. (5) is then grammatical because the Dwh is heavy enough to form its own I-phrase in SpecTopP, while the simple Dwh is too light to form its own I-phrase in (7). This account parallels that of Bošković (01) with respect to Serbo-Croatian (SC) second position clitics. (8) illustrates that SC clitics typically occur in second position; (9) shows that SC clitic placement must sometimes be delayed, so that they occur in the third position. Bošković argues this follows if SC clitics must appear in second position of their own I-phrase. In (8) the whole clause is mapped into an I-phrase, hence the clitic must be second in the clause. In (9) the heavy fronted element forms its own I-phrase (following standard assumptions) and the clitic must appear in the second position of the next I-phrase. One new piece of evidence confirming the current approach is (10), where the contrastively stressed simple Dwh is not subject to the subject gap restriction. This follows if we assume contrastively stressed Dwhs form their own I-phrase, hence can target SpecTopP unproblematically. That contrastively stressed elements form their own I-phrase has in fact been argued for SC, where they delay clitic placement (see (11)), which means that contrastively stressed phrases form their own I-phrase.

The analysis also provides evidence for the locality theory defended in Grohmann (03). He assumes sentences are split into three different prolific domains: the discursive domain ($= \Omega\text{-D}$), the functional domain ($= \Phi\text{-D}$) and the thematic domain ($= \Theta\text{-D}$) as in (12); and that successive cyclic movement proceeds according to the interclausal movement generalization (13). Consider now the contrast in (14a)-(14b), where we see that a non-Dwh can be extracted from an embedded interrogative clause only if the embedded preverbal subject receives a contrastive focus interpretation. This indicates that there must be a $FocP$ in the embedded clause. (14b) is then grammatical because affix hopping can take place, the subject occupying SpecFocP; while (14a) is bad since the embedded subject blocks affix hopping. Why does $FocP$ have to be present? Assume that the complementizer *si* cannot license a Spec. The presence of the embedded Foc^0 then follows because in order for the WH-phrase to land in the matrix $\Omega\text{-D}$, it must first pass through the embedded one, given (13). The only way this can be done is if the embedded clause contains $FocP$. Evidence that the embedded $FocP$ is indeed required for successive cyclic movement is provided by the contrast between (14b), where Foc^0 has two Specs (see (15)) and (4), where Foc^0 can

have only one. Under Chomsky's (2001) approach to successive cyclic movement, an additional Spec can be added to Foc⁰ only if it's needed for successive cyclic movement to occur. An additional Spec can then be added in (14b) (as in (15)), but not in (4), where successive cyclic movement is not at stake.

- (1) a. ¿Qué compró Pedro en la tienda?
What bought Pedro in the shop?
'What did Pedro buy in the shop?'
b. *¿Qué Pedro compró en la tienda?
- (2) a. LOS LIBROS compró Juan ayer (no los cuadernos)
THE BOOKS bought Juan yesterday (capital letters indicate contrastive focus)
'Juan bought the books yesterday (not the notebooks)'
b. *LOS LIBROS Juan compró ayer
- (3) a. ¿Qué nunca había comprado Juan?
What never had bought Juan?
'What had Juan never bought?'
b. LOS LIBROS nunca había comprado Juan
- (4) ¿(*JUAN) Qué (*JUAN) compró ayer? (no Pedro)
(JUAN) What (JUAN) bought yesterday? (not Pedro)
'What did Juan buy yesterday?'
- (5) ¿Cuál de los libros (JUAN)/(*Juan) compró ayer? (no María)
Which of the books (JUAN)/(Juan) bought yesterday?
'Which of the books did Juan buy yesterday' (not María)
- (6) [TopP DWHP_k Top⁰ [FocP JUAN_i [Foc⁰_[+V] [TP t_i ... [compró T⁰] ... t_k ...]]]]
- (7) *¿Cuál, JUAN, le dio a su hermana? (no Pedro)
Which JUAN, her gave to his sister? (not Pedro)
'Which one did Juan give to his sister?'
- (8) a. *Petru on *će* prodati knjige (the clitic is in italics)
Petar.dat he will sell books
'To Petar, he will sell books'
b. Petru *će* on prodati knjige
- (9) a. Sa Petrom Petrovićem srela *se* samo Milena
With Petar Petrovićem met self only Milena
'With Petar Petrović, only Milena met'
b. *Sa Petrom Petrovićem *se* srela samo Milena
- (10) ¿CUÁL, Juan le dio a su hermana?
- (11) PETRU (**će*) on *će* prodati knjige
- (12) [CP Ω-D ... [TP Φ-D ... [VP Θ-D ...]]]
- (13) **Interclausal movement generalization:** Movement across clauses always targets a position within the same type of prolific domain in the next higher clause.
- (14) a. *¿Qué se preguntó Pedro si Juan compró ayer?
What wondered Pedro whether Juan bought yesterday?
'What did Pedro wonder whether Juan bought yesterday?'
b. ¿Qué se preguntó Pedro si JUAN compró ayer? (no María)
- (15) [FocP Ω-D qué_j... [CP Ω-D si [FocP JUAN_i [Foc⁰_{t_j} [Foc⁰]_{[+V], [+ISpec]] [TP Φ-D t_i ... [compró T⁰] ... t_j]]]]]]}

Selected references:

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