

# Context-Anchoring and the Syntax of Spanish

Iván Ortega-Santos  
University of Memphis

## 1. Introduction

It has been argued in the literature that, in Spanish, focused phrases in the left periphery of the clause are interpreted as contrastive, whereas new information focus correlates with a rightmost position in the sentence (1), e.g., Zubizarreta (1998) and Domínguez (2004), a.o.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. A: Quién ha comprado un café hoy? B: Hoy ha comprado un café María.  
Who has bought a coffee today? Today has bought a coffee María.  
'Who bought a coffee today?' 'Today, María bought a coffee.'
- b. A: María quiere un café. B: Pero qué dices? UN TE quiere María, no un café.  
María wants a coffee. But what you-say? A TEA wants María, not a coffee.  
'María wants a coffee.' 'What did you say? María wants a TEA, not a coffee.'

Still a puzzle arises under the assumption that there is no such a thing as two kinds of focus, i.e., contrastive or new information focus, but only a unified notion of focus (e.g., Herburger 2000, Rooth 1985, Brunetti 2003 and Casielles-Suarez 2004), in that it is not clear why the difference in word order should exist. It is argued that this puzzle can be solved by positing *uniform movement of the focused XP to FocP* (e.g., Ordóñez 2000 and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2008) and *differential context-anchoring* understood within the framework of Raposo and Uriagereka (1995), henceforth R&U. This paper is structured as follows: First, a number of previous proposals in the literature are briefly presented. Afterwards, the framework of this research is introduced, namely, R&U's context-anchoring mechanism, a framework that accords well with the Neo-Davidsonian approach to focus (Herburger 2000). Finally, I present syntactic evidence in favor of the approach and discuss how some potential counterarguments can be overcome.

## 2. Previous approaches to focused-related word order variation

For the purpose of this discussion, focus refers to the new information that is being asserted in any given proposition. Strictly speaking, word order variation caused by focalization processes affects not only subjects but also other elements of the sentence. However, it is subjects that have captured more attention in the literature and, therefore, I pay particular attention to them. At least the following approaches to focused-related word order variation illustrated with the VOS order are found in the literature:

- (i) Right adjunction of the subject to some projection (Torrego 1984)  
(ii) Rightward movement of the subject at PF (Parafita Couto 2005)

---

\* I would like to thank J. Uriagereka, N. Hornstein, T. Bleam, A. Ince, H. Lasnik, R. Etxepare, M. C. Cuervo, F. Ordóñez, E. Treviño, M. Yoshida and two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. All errors are my own.

<sup>1</sup> In Spanish, an inverted question mark is used to begin interrogative sentences:

- i. ¿Qué ocurre?  
'What's going on?'

Throughout this work, I do not include such initial question marks to avoid that readers unfamiliar with this practice may get confused.



- b. Ha llegado Pedro. *Thetic reading of 'Pedro'*<sup>4</sup>  
has arrived Pedro

Within R&U's framework, context-anchoring is linked to a particular LF site. This particular aspect is not adopted in this research. There is a growing consensus in the literature that Internal Merge (IM) or syntactic movement adds expressive power to language (e.g., see Chomsky 2001 and subsequent work). Chomsky argues that the mapping between the Duality of Semantics and the Duality of Merge is systematic. In the words of Chomsky (2005: 7): 'To a large extent, EM yields generalized argument structure (theta roles, the "cartographic" hierarchies, (...) and similar properties); and IM yields discourse-related properties such as old information and specificity, along with scopal effects'. Uriagereka (2008) provides a rationale for this kind of view arguing for the idea that *mapping a more or less entangled syntax specifically to a semantics of comparable complexity* is realistic, both from a developmental (learnability) and, ultimately, an evolutionary (minimalistic) perspective. Thus one can maintain the insights of R&U's context-anchoring mechanism, without the need to resort to specialized projections. In what follows, labels as FocP or TopP are used for the sake of exposition.

In the next section it is shown how R&U's framework and the mapping of complex syntax onto complex semantics (Chomsky 2005 and Uriagereka 2008) provide a rationale for the word order variations caused by focalization processes in Spanish.

### 3.2. Word order variation, focus and remnant movement

In this section, I apply R&U's context-anchoring mechanism to the syntax of focus. In particular, I argue in favor of capturing the left-peripheral and right-peripheral position of focus phrases in Spanish in terms of uniform movement of the focused XP to the left periphery –resulting in the leftmost position of the focused XP–, followed by remnant movement of IP in a number of cases –resulting in the rightmost position of the focused XP (Ordóñez 2000 and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2008). This perspective entails that the syntax of new information and contrastive focus in Spanish are fairly similar, in keeping with the view that there is only one kind of focus (e.g., Brunetti 2003, Casielles-Suárez 2004 and Herburger 2000). Specifically, both left-periphery and rightmost focus show uniform movement of the focused XP to FP, but the topicalization of TP takes place covertly in the former case and overtly in the latter.<sup>5</sup>

Under current assumptions that EPP features responsible for syntactic movement, in general, are optionally assigned to yield a new outcome, the left periphery of the clause includes an EPP feature in FocP and, optionally, it may include an EPP feature in TopP. Depending on the presence or absence of an EPP feature in TopP, the presupposed information will or will not surface there, thus deriving rightmost and left-periphery focus, respectively.<sup>6, 7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Ortega-Santos (2008) for further elaboration of the categorical/thetic distinctions based on work by Casielles-Suarez (2004). A reviewer asks whether the thetic/categorical distinction is exemplified by the following data from Gallego (2007):

- i. a. Juan escribe.  
Juan writes  
'Juan is a writer'  
b. Escribe Juan.  
writes Juan  
'Juan is writing now / It is Juan who writes.'

I agree that this contrast is relevant in that it shows a clear difference in interpretation, but it is contingent on the semantics of the verb, cf. (2), and even the presence/absence of adverbial modification. In this sense, the thetic/categorical distinction is more general than this effect.

<sup>5</sup> Note that this framework allows for contrastively focused items to appear at the right edge. This order is indeed possible in Spanish.

<sup>6</sup> This analysis could be restated in phase-theoretic terms, assuming the optional assignment of EPP features in the C-domain. As one reviewer points out, one such approach to preverbal focus in phase-theoretic terms is found in López (2009). The present view differs crucially from López's approach in that rightmost new information focus is shown to involve movement as opposed to being in situ.

<sup>7</sup> This accords well with Herburger's (2000) Neo-Davidsonian approach to focus. According to Herburger (2000), focus affects quantificational structure. In particular, focus reshapes the quantificational structure of the tacit Neo-Davidsonian event quantifier after quantifier scope is assigned. As a consequence, all the nonfocused material in

### 3.2.1. On the leftmost/rightmost position of focalized elements

A number of scholars working on Italian have shown that the background material preceding focalized elements and the background material following these have rather different properties. In the words of Brunetti (2003: 158), ‘prefocal material has a “richer” set of functions’. In particular, Frascarelli (2000 and 2003; see also references therein) observes that a post-focal topic cannot be ‘contrastive’ as opposed to a preverbal topic. Under the view that IM adds expressive power to the system, that is to say, that complex syntax correlates with complex semantics/pragmatics, it is consistent to argue that these (richer) set of functions underlie the movement of presupposed material to the prefocal slot, thus determining the leftmost or rightmost position of the focused phrase. Further effects of this movement on interpretation would follow from R&U’s context-anchoring mechanism: prefocal topics set the context in which the focal XP is interpreted, whereas postfocal topics are interpreted within the context of the focused XP. Within this proposal, the topicalization of TP is not stipulated, but rather is driven by the way the speakers conceptualize events, their participants, corresponding predications and their contexts.<sup>8</sup>

With regard to new information focus, this view entails a remnant movement approach (Ordóñez 2000 and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2008) where, crucially, all steps are motivated.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the rightmost position of focused XP’s which constitute new information focus is consistent with default Sentence Stress Assignment conditions for new information focus in Spanish (cf. Zubizarreta 1998)

### 3.3. Evidence for the analysis

Evidence in favor of the remnant movement approach to focused elements at the right edge of the clause comes from the syntax of parasitic gaps, scope relations between negation and focused XPs, the island-properties of adjuncts and the syntax of overt subjects following an infinitive.

#### 3.3.1. Parasitic gaps

Parasitic gaps are known to be licensed under A-bar movement (see (3) and (4) for wh-movement and focus-movement, respectively), but not under A-movement or by in situ arguments (see (5)):

- (3) Qué (libros) tiraste sin haber leído/fotocopiado \_\_\_?  
 What (books) threw-you without to-have read/copied \_\_\_?  
 ‘What / Which books did you throw away without reading/copying?’
- (4) (Hasta) DON QUIJOTE Y LA COLMENA tiré sin haber leído/fotocopiado \_\_\_\_.  
 (Even) DON QUIJOTE AND LA COLMENA threw-I without to-have read/copied \_\_\_\_
- (5) \*Tiré Don Quijote y La Colmena sin haber leído/fotocopiado \_\_\_\_.  
 Threw-I Don Quijote and La Colmena without to-have read/copied \_\_\_\_  
 ‘I threw away Don Quixote and La colmena without reading/copying them.’

---

the scope of the event quantifier Q also restricts Q. Uriagereka (2005 and 2008) and Hornstein, Lasnik and Uriagereka (2007) suggest that a possible syntactic configuration to express these semantics can be attained by remnant movement, which has the effect of reprojection (Hornstein and Uriagereka 1999). Reprojection is a process whereby a phrase marker’s label changes in the course of the derivation. This process allows binary quantifiers to take scope (at LF). See Hornstein and Uriagereka (1999) for details. If right, this provides a rationale for the derivations I argue for. See also Irurtzun (2007) for a related proposal concerning the syntax of focus and reprojection.

<sup>8</sup> Naturally, presupposed information will anchor new information (see Erteschik-Shir 1997 and Kiss 2002) and, consequently, the new information will come to be last. If anything, these pragmatic requirements are soft constraints, in keeping with a certain degree of variability found in the judgments of the leftmost / rightmost position that focused XP’s take.

<sup>9</sup> There is no claim that this is the only way of deriving focused postverbal subjects, but rather that remnant movement derivations to focused subjects do exist. See Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2008) for evidence that *on top of the remnant movement approach* to focused postverbal subjects other mechanisms are also available.

Since subjects do not license c-commanded parasitic gaps, one cannot test whether they do so when relevantly focused. Still, the properties of objects directly support the view that elements which constitute new information focus have moved to the A-bar layer. In particular, if an object at the right edge of the clause constitutes new information focus, the remnant movement approach predicts that the parasitic gap should be licensed, as by hypothesis the (sentence final) object would be the result of movement, going through an intermediate stage analogous to (4). This prediction is fulfilled, as B's utterance in (6) shows (compared to (5)).

- (6) A: Qué (libros) tiraste sin haber leído/fotocopiado \_\_\_?  
 What (books) threw-you without to-have read/copied \_\_\_?  
 'What / Which books did you throw away without reading/copying?'  
 B: Tiré sin haber leído/fotocopiado *DON QUIJOTE Y LA COLMENA*.  
 threw-I without to-have read/copied *DON QUIJOTE AND LA COLMENA*.  
 'I threw away *Don Quixote* and *La colmena* without reading/copying them.'

Inasmuch as new information focus, with its rightmost requirement, is not restricted to objects but extends to subjects as well, it seems coherent to conclude that (at least a subset of) postverbal subjects are also the result of A-bar movement, and, concretely, remnant movement as discussed above.

### 3.3.2. Scope relations between focused XPs and negation

Ortiz de Urbina (2002), when discussing a similar analysis of Basque rightmost focus, shows that both leftmost and rightmost focused items take scope over negation, in spite of the fact that the latter linearly follows negation. This indicates that the focused XP in the rightmost position is higher than the linear order suggests, in keeping with the remnant movement analysis. The argument is straightforwardly applicable to Spanish, in that the focused element has scope over negation irrespective of the leftmost or rightmost position it occupies (7)a/b, in clear contrast to non-focused XPs linearly following negation (7)c:

- (7) a. A ANDONI no le traje el vino  
 to Andoni not him bring the wine  
 'It is to Andoni that I did not bring the wine.'  
 b. No le traje el vino a ANDONI.  
 not him-brought the wine to Andoni  
 'It is to Andoni that I did not bring the wine.'  
 c. No le traje el vino a Andoni  
 not him bring the wine to Andoni  
 'It is not the case that I brought wine to Andoni.'

These scope facts can be explained if topicalized material is reconstructed in its original position (Ortiz de Urbina 2002). This reconstruction is independently attested (Suñer 2003: 350, her data; see also Zubizarreta 1998: 116):

- (8) \*La primera obra de un escritor<sub>i</sub>, pro<sub>i</sub> siempre la escribe con placer.  
 The first work of a writer<sub>i</sub>, pro<sub>i</sub> always it writes with pleasure

In this example the ungrammaticality is due to a Principle C violation. Crucially, this entails that the dislocated object reconstructs into its base position. A unified analysis of leftmost and rightmost focus in terms of movement to the left-periphery of the clause, (followed by movement of the remnant IP past the focused XP in the case of rightmost focus), captures these interpretation facts.

### 3.3.3. Adjuncts

Note that the subject of a main clause may follow an embedded clause when focused as predicted by the remnant movement account:

- (9) A: Quién dijo que hacía calor?  
 who said that it-was hot?  
 ‘Who said that it was hot?’  
 B: Dijo que hacía calor PEDRO.  
 said that it-was hot PEDRO  
 ‘PEDRO said that it was hot.’

In contrast, if the originating clause of the focused XP at the right edge of the clause is an island, e.g., an adjunct, the result is ungrammatical (see Ortiz de Urbina 2002 for Basque), a fact that can be interpreted as evidence that rightmost focalization involves movement:

- (10) Cuando Pedro compró ese libro, nos fuimos.  
 when Pedro bought that book, we-reflexive left.  
 ‘Once Pedro bought that book, we left.’  
 (11) \*Cuando compró ese libro, nos fuimos PEDRO.  
 when bought that book, we-reflexive left PEDRO.

### 3.3.4. *On Postverbal subjects and infinitives in Spanish*

Further evidence for the remnant movement approach to postverbal subjects in Spanish comes from the distribution of postverbal subjects following governed infinitivals. Subsection 1 discusses the licensing of overt subjects following governed infinitivals. It is argued that those subjects are arguments of the main verb in spite of what linear order may seem to suggest at first. Subsection 2 discusses further properties of these kinds of subjects, in particular c-command relationships between the subject and the object of the infinitive (Ordóñez 2000), showing that these relationships provide evidence in favor of the remnant movement approach.

#### 3.3.4.1. *Overt subjects following governed infinitivals*

In Spanish, infinitives show no tense and agreement and are predicted not to license overt subjects. Governed infinitives have been claimed to be well-behaved in this respect, (12), in contrast to ungoverned infinitives, (13), which license overt subjects (see Ortega-Santos 2002 for a reinterpretation of this asymmetry in terms of L-marking). A number of approaches have been developed accordingly (Fernández Lagunilla 1987, Rigau 1995 and Torrego 1998, a.o.).

- (12) a. Pedro lamentó no haber ido.  
 Pedro regretted not to-have gone  
 ‘Peter regretted that he did not go’  
 b. (Ayer) lamentó no haber (\*Pedro) ido (\*Pedro).<sup>10</sup>  
 (yesterday) regretted not to-have (\*Pedro) gone (\*Pedro)  
 (13) a. Al entrar Juan, todos salieron.  
 at to-enter Juan, everybody left.  
 ‘When Juan entered, everybody left’  
 b. ¿Regalarles yo mi coche?  
 to-give-them I my car?  
 ‘I would never give them my car’

Still, Spanish allows for sentences, where a governed infinitive is followed by a focused subject:

- (14) (Ayer) lamentó no haber ido PEDRO.  
 (yesterday) regretted not to-have gone PEDRO.

<sup>10</sup> This judgment corresponds to the interpretation where ‘Pedro’ is not focused.

It is argued that the overt subject in (14) is the subject of the main clause. The discussion is exemplified with *lamentar* ‘lament’, because its incompatibility with clitic climbing shows that we have a biclausal structure (see Gómez Torrego 1999), a factor we need to control for. The evidence is the following: under extraposition of the infinitival clause, the subject cannot be included in the extraposed clause, but rather it has to remain in the main clause. If the overt subject was part of the infinitival clause, this behavior would remain unexplained:

- (15) No haber (\*PEDRO/\*Pedro) ido (\*PEDRO/\*Pedro) es lo que (PEDRO/Pedro) lamentó  
 not to-have (\*PEDRO/Pedro) went (\*PEDRO/Pedro) is the what (PEDRO/Pedro) regretted  
 (PEDRO/Pedro) con amargura (PEDRO).  
 (PEDRO/Pedro) with bitterness (PEDRO).  
 ‘The fact that Peter did not go is what he regretted bitterly’

Furthermore, focus fronting is available in embedded clauses, (16)a. If the overt subject is part of the infinitival clause in these structures, it should be able to front to the beginning of the embedded clause when focused, contrary to the fact, (16)b.

- (16)a. Lamenté con amargura que PEDRO no hubiera ido.  
 Regretted-I with bitterness that PEDRO not had gone  
 ‘I regretted bitterly that PEDRO did not go.’  
 b. Lamentó con amargura (\*PEDRO/EL) no haber ido.<sup>11</sup>  
 regretted with bitterness (\*PEDRO/HE) not to-have gone

This constitutes evidence that the overt subject is an argument of the main verb. This result provides support for the traditional distinction between governed and ungoverned infinitives with respect to subject licensing in Spanish. Next, I show how this result provides an argument for the remnant movement approach.

### 3.3.4.2. On overt subject of infinitives and remnant movement

Evidence in favor of the remnant movement approach can be found in the c-command relationships between the object and the subject in the VOS order. In particular, Ordóñez (2000) argues that in the VOS order the object c-commands the subject, as shown by Principle C effects:

- (17)a. El libro, los hermanos de Eva<sub>i</sub> se lo compraron a ella<sub>i</sub>.      *SVO order*  
 the book, the brothers of Eva<sub>i</sub> her-it-bought to her<sub>i</sub>  
 ‘As for the book, Eva’s brothers bought it for her.’  
 b. \*El libro, se lo compraron a ella<sub>i</sub> los hermanos de Eva<sub>i</sub>.      *VOS order*  
 the book her-it-bought to her<sub>i</sub> the brothers of Eva<sub>i</sub>

Crucially, Principle C asymmetries are also found in the case of overt subjects following a governed infinitival:

<sup>11</sup> The presence of the adverb shows that there is no adjacency requirement between the main verb and the infinitive. Notice that for the subject to be focused as part of the infinitival clause, there should be no intonational break after it, rather it forms an intonational unit with the infinitival clause. Moreover, though overt subjects tend to follow the infinitive, preverbal subjects are also attested (see also Torrego 1998: 207, n. 3):

- i. Se fueron sin tú enterarte (Hernanz 1999: 2305)  
 cl-left without you to-notice  
 ‘You did not notice it when they left.’  
 ii. (Nosotros) no sabemos cuántos ir. (cf. Bosque and Moreno 1984)  
 (We) not know-2PL how-many to-go  
 ‘We do not know how many of us should go’

- (18) a. El libro, los hermanos de Eva<sub>i</sub> lamentaron habérselo comprado a ella<sub>i</sub>. *SVO order*  
 the book, the brothers of Eva<sub>i</sub> regretted having-it-her bought to her<sub>i</sub>  
 ‘As for the book, Eva’s brothers regretted having bought it for her.’  
 b. \*El libro, lamentaron habérselo comprado a ella<sub>i</sub>; los hermanos de Eva<sub>i</sub>. *VOS order*  
 the book, regretted having-it-her bought yo her<sub>i</sub>; the brothers of Eva<sub>i</sub>

If the overt subject is the main clause subject as I argued before, it is not clear how the object of the infinitival comes to c-command it while following the infinitive in linear order, particularly so, because we are dealing with a biclausal structure. These c-command relationships together with the claim that the overt subject originates as an argument of the main verb can be reconciled in a remnant movement account: First the focused subject moves to FocP, then the object moves to the left periphery where it c-commands the subject and, finally, the whole TP moves past these two elements. As baroque as this derivation sounds, it has been proposed for Romance simple clauses already (Ordóñez 2000) and this research provides further support for this view. Note that, a priori, it is not clear how other approaches to postverbal subjects mentioned in section 2 could deal with these facts. If this view is on the right track, it provides support for a remnant movement approach to (at least a subset of) postverbal subjects bearing focus in Romance.

To sum up, a number of arguments in favor of the remnant movement approach to new information focus have been presented. Parasitic gaps, scope relations between negation and focused XPs, the island-properties of adjuncts and the syntax of overt subjects following an infinitive provide support for this analysis.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.4. On some possible counterarguments against the remnant movement approach

The purpose of this section is to address some potential counterarguments to the remnant movement approach. The issues to be discussed are the following: (a) whether TP/VP can be targeted by movement operations, (b) the distribution of floating quantifiers, (c) the interaction between wh-movement and postverbal subjects, (d) the distribution of negative polarity items, and (e) the distribution of objects.

#### 3.4.1. TP/VP as a target of movement

A remnant movement analysis takes for granted that TP/VP can be targeted by movement operations. Whereas there seems to be some evidence of such movement in the case of Portuguese simple verb forms, in the case of complex verb forms (e.g., verb forms involving auxiliaries) the evidence is not so compelling (Costa 2002: 72-73).<sup>13</sup> The behavior of Spanish, in any case, shows that TP/VP can be targeted syntactic operations, such as deletion processes, (19) (see Merchant 2004) or movement operations, (20) (cf. Etxepare 2000 for related claims):

- (19) A: Que ha leído Juan?  
 what has read Juan?  
 ‘What has Juan read?’

B: Un libro [TP ~~Juan ha leído~~].  
 a book [TP ~~Juan has read~~]  
 ‘A book.’

- (20) Regalarle libros a María, Juan suele hacer eso. (Lipták and Vicente 2009: 667)<sup>14</sup>  
 give-CL books to María Juan HABIT do-INF that  
 ‘To give books to María, Juan usually does that.’

<sup>12</sup> See also Uribe-Etxebarria (2002) for arguments in favor of a remnant movement approach to wh-elements at the right edge of the clause in Spanish. In particular, she claims that pied-piping and right-dislocation facts provide evidence in favor of remnant movement analysis. As far as I can tell, her arguments can be straightforwardly applied to focused elements.

<sup>13</sup> It is beyond the scope of this research to explain this particular behavior of Portuguese, though a priori the fact that in this language the subject can constitute new information in the VSO order (Ambar 1992: 55), in clear opposition to Spanish, suggest that each language may use different focalization mechanisms.

<sup>14</sup> See Lipták and Vicente (2009) for evidence that these VP topicalisation structures involve movement.

### 3.4.2. *On the distribution of floating quantifiers*

With regard to the syntax of floating quantifiers, Costa (2002) argues that under the assumption that these may appear in the positions where a trace/copy of the subject is found (Koopman and Sportiche 1991), the remnant movement analysis predicts that the IP moved past the subject may contain a floating quantifier. This is indeed the case as Valmala (2008: 846) shows, in spite of Costa's claim to the contrary:

- (21) Han conseguido todos beca los estudiantes de física.  
 Have got all scholarship the students of physics  
 'The students of physics are the ones who have all got scholarships.'

The distribution of floating quantifiers, therefore, provides further evidence in favor of the remnant movement account.

### 3.4.3. *The interaction between wh-movement and preverbal subjects*

Still another point that Costa makes comes from the interaction between wh-movement and postverbal subjects. If postverbal subjects are necessarily focused, it is predicted that they should be in complementary distribution with wh-elements (e.g., both kinds of elements compete for the same position, see Rizzi 1997), contrary to the fact:

- (22) Qué le regaló a María Pedro?  
 What her-give to María Pedro?  
 'What did Pedro give to María?'

However, it is not clear that the subject *Pedro* is focused in such cases. As a consequence, there is nothing in the remnant movement account to focus to predict that the postverbal subject should move out of VP and/or compete with the wh-element and the issue that Costa points out does not arise. Furthermore, it is well-known that under multiple wh-questions only one of the wh-elements moves and the rest remain in situ – just like a focused postverbal subject would in such context. The question though, is how the subject comes to surface at the right edge. If object scrambling is available in the system (see Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2008 for claims that both remnant movement and object scrambling are part of the syntax of Spanish), the rightmost position of the subject in such data would not be problematic.

### 3.4.4. *The distribution of so-called n-words*

Postverbal n-words are assumed to be licensed by negation under c-command, whereas preverbal n-words do not have this requirement. Under the remnant movement approach, it is predicted that a focused subject at the right edge of the sentence patterns with preverbal n-words, contrary to the fact (Belletti 1999):

- (23) a. A: Quién viene?  
 Who comes?  
 'Who is coming?'  
 B: No viene nadie.  
 no comes n-body  
 'Nobody is coming.'
- b. Nadie viene.  
 n-body comes  
 'Nobody is coming.'

Herburger (2000: 24-25), following Zanuttini (1991) and Herburger (1998) shows that under certain circumstances it is possible to find postverbal n-words that are not c-commanded by any negative element. This is possible when the n-word is interpreted as a negative quantifier that takes narrow scope with respect to the event described by the verb:

- (24) *María se fue con nada.*  
 María left with nothing  
 ‘María left without taking anything with her.’

Related facts are found with postverbal n-words functioning as subjects (J. Uriagereka, p.c.):

- (25) *Sabes quién ganó el Tour? Pues mira, después de que descalificaran a todo dios, ¡lo ganó*  
 you-know who won the Tour? Well look, after of that they-disqualified to all god, it won  
 NADIE!  
 NOBODY!  
 ‘Do you know who won the Tour? Look, after the y disqualified everybody, NOBODY won!’

Even though further research on the syntax of n-words and its relation to the remnant movement approach is needed, such data show that a remnant movement approach may apply even in this context.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.4.5. *The distribution of objects*

Last but not least, Costa notes that the properties of the object play a role in Germanic scrambling languages: Only definite objects can scramble past the subject (de Hoop 1991). A similar effect is found in Portuguese, a fact that argues in favor of an object scrambling analysis in contrast to the remnant movement analysis, which does not predict that kind of interaction:

- (26) a. *?Viu um gato o Paulo.*  
 saw a cat the Paulo  
 b. *??Leu algo o Paulo.*  
 Read something the Paulo

Inasmuch as this effect is absent in Spanish, this supports a remnant movement analysis:

- (27) a. A: *Quién vio un gato?*  
 who saw a cat?  
 ‘Who saw a cat?’  
 B: *Vio un gato Pedro.*  
 saw a cat Pedro  
 ‘PEDRO saw a cat.’  
 b. A: *Quién leyó algo?*  
 who read something?  
 B: *Leyó algo Pedro.*<sup>16</sup>  
 read something Pedro  
 ‘PEDRO read something.’

<sup>15</sup> As discussed in the introduction to section 3, I follow Brunetti (2003), Casielles-Suárez (2004) and Herburger (2000) in their claims that there is only one kind of focus in Spanish. Therefore, the contrastive nature of the example does not undermine the relevance of the evidence for the current approach to rightmost focus.

<sup>16</sup> Costa (2002) provides other pieces of evidence against a remnant movement analysis in Portuguese based on i. the unjustified assumption that in the remnant movement treatment of postverbal subjects the subject is topicalized and not focused, ii. adverb placement facts, iii. language particular properties of Portuguese. I abstract away from the discussion around (i.). With regard to the adverb placement facts, Costa points out that certain adverbs may precede or follow the object in transitive clauses. In the latter case, the adverb is focused. In the VOS order, the adverb may immediately precede or immediately follow the object – without being focalized. According to Costa, the possibility for the adverb to follow the object without being focused calls for an explanation. Note that not

To summarize, a number of counterarguments to the remnant movement account have been answered. In particular, the following issues have been shown not to pose a serious threat for the remnant movement approach: (a) whether TP/VP can be targeted by movement operations, (b) the distribution of floating quantifiers, (c) the interaction between wh-movement and postverbal subjects, (d) the distribution of negative polarity items, and (d) the distribution of objects. Inasmuch as all these areas of the syntax of Spanish are shown to be compatible with the present analysis, this account gains further strength.

#### 4. Conclusion

Following Herburger (2000) a.o., it has been claimed that there is no such division of focus into contrastive and new information focus. This view argues for a unified syntactic approach to left-periphery and rightmost focus in Spanish, (cf. also Ordóñez 2000 and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria 2008), where word order differences (e.g., the left-periphrastic or rightmost position) follow from differential context-anchoring within the framework of Raposo and Uriagereka (1995). Evidence is provided by the syntax of parasitic gaps, scope relations between the focused XP and negation, the island-behavior of adjuncts, and the syntax of overt subjects following an infinitive. In turn, possible counterarguments to the remnant movement approach have been shown not to constitute a serious threat.

#### References

- Ambar, Maria Manuela. 1992. *Para uma sintaxe da inversão sujeito-verbo em português*. Lisbon: Colibri.
- Barbosa, Pilar. 2000. Clitics: A window into the null subject property. J. Costa, ed., *Portuguese Syntax New Comparative Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 31-93.
- Belletti, Adriana. 1999. 'Inversion' as Focalization and related questions. *CatWPL*, 7: 9-45.
- Bosque, Ignacio, and Juan-Carlos Moreno. 1984. A condition on quantifiers in Logical Form. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 15: 164-167.
- Brunetti, Lisa. 2003. *A unification of Focus*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Università di Firenze.
- Casielles-Suarez, Eugenia. 2004. *The Syntax-Information Structure Interface*. London: Routledge.
- Costa, João. 2002. VOS in Portuguese: Arguments against an analysis in terms of remnant movement. A. Alexiadou, E. Anagnostopoulou, S. Barbiers and H.-M. Gaertner, eds., *Dimensions of Movement: from Features to Remnants*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 69-89.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by phase. M. Kenstowicz, ed., *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1-52.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2005. *On Phases*. Ms. MIT.
- de Hoop, Helen. 1991. Case configuration and NP interpretation. Ph.D. Diss., University of Groningen.
- Domínguez, Laura. 2004. *Mapping Focus: The Syntax and Prosody of Focus in Spanish*. Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University.
- Erteschik-Shir. Nomi. 1997. *The Dynamics of Focus Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Etxepare, Ricardo. 2000. Complementizer initial clauses in Spanish. Talk at *Going Romance 2000*, Utrecht.
- Etxepare, Ricardo, and Myriam Uribe-Etxebarria. 2008. On negation and focus in Spanish and Basque. Xabier Arriagoitia Beaskoetxea, Joseba Lakarra Andrinua, eds., *Gramatika jaietan: Patxi Goenagaren omenez*. Donostia: Supplements of ASJU. 287-310.
- Fernández Lagunilla, Marina. 1987. Los infinitivos con sujetos léxicos en español. Violeta Demonte and Marina Fernández Lagunilla, eds., *Sintaxis de las lenguas románicas*. Madrid: Arquer, 125-147.
- Frascarelli, Mara. 2000. *The Syntax-Phonology Interface in Focus and Topic Constructions in Italian*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Gallego, Ángel. 2007. Phase Theory and parametric variation. Ph.D. Diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

---

only focus may rearrange constituents, but in the spirit of R&U, an adverb may anchor the object or the other way round. As far as (iii) is concerned, Costa uses the interaction between clitic placement and the elements hosted in the C-domain to test whether subjects at the right edge of the sentence actually are hosted in the left periphery. It is beyond the scope of this paper to account for the clitic placement facts in Portuguese, though Costa's n. 5 mentions a plausible explanation in terms of prosodic properties as opposed to syntactic properties (Barbosa 2000). That kind of treatment would be compatible with the remnant movement account.

- Gómez Torrego, Leonardo. 1999. Los verbos auxiliares. Las perífrasis verbales de infinitivo. Ignacio Bosque y Violeta Demonte, eds., *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española (Volumen tres)*. 2197-2356. Madrid: Espasa.
- Herburger, Elena. 1998. Spanish n-words: Ambivalent behavior or ambivalent nature? *MITWPL* 25: 87-102.
- Herburger, Elena. 2000. *What Counts: Focus and Quantification*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hernanz, María Luisa. 1999. El infinitivo. Ignacio Bosque y Violeta Demonte, eds., *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española (Volumen tres)*. Madrid: Espasa. 2197-2356.
- Hornstein, Norbert, Howard Lasnik and Juan Uriagereka. 2007. Islands and Linearization. Proposal for NSF grant BCS-0722648, University of Maryland.
- Hornstein, Norbert. and Juan Uriagereka. 1999. Labels and Projections: A Note on the Syntax of Quantifiers. *University of Maryland Working Papers in Linguistics* 8: 249- 270.
- Irurtzun, Aritz. 2007. The Grammar of Focus at the Interfaces. Ph.D. Diss., University of the Basque Country.
- Kayne, Richard S. and Jean-Yves Pollock. 1999. New Thoughts on Stylistic Inversion. Ms., New York University and UPR 9075 CNRS, Lyon, France.
- Kiss, Katalin É. 2002. *The Syntax of Hungarian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Koopman, Hilda, and Dominique Sportiche. 1991. The position of subjects. *Lingua* 85: 211-258.
- López, Luis. 2009. *A Derivational Syntax for Information Structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lipták, Anikó and Luis Vicente. 2009. Pronominal doubling under predicate topicalization. *Lingua* 119: 650–686.
- Merchant, Jason. 2004. Fragments and Ellipsis. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27: 661-738.
- Ordóñez, Francisco. 2000. *The Clausal Structure of Spanish : a Comparative Study*. New York: Garland Pub.
- Ortega-Santos, Iván. 2003. Los sujetos léxicos de los infinitivos en castellano: Concordancia abstracta y el Principio de la Proyección Extendida. M.A. Thesis, University of Arizona.
- Ortega-Santos, Iván. 2006a On postverbal subjects, PF and the Copy Theory: The Spanish case. N. Sagarra and A. J. Toribio, eds., *Selected Proceedings of the 9th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla University Press. 55-66.
- Ortega-Santos, Iván. 2006b. On New Information Focus, Sentence Stress Assignment Conditions and the Copy Theory: A Spanish conspiracy. *University of Maryland Working Papers in Linguistics* 14: 188-212.
- Ortega-Santos, Iván. 2008. Projecting Subjects in Spanish and English. Ph.D. Diss., University of Maryland, College Park.
- Ortiz de Urbina, Jon. Focus of correction and remnant movement in Basque. Ms. University of Deusto.
- Parafita Couto, M Carmen. 2005. Focus at the Interface. Ph.D. Diss., University of Kansas.
- Raposo, Eduardo and Juan Uriagereka. 1995. Two Types of Small Clauses. A. Cardinaletti and M. T. Guasti, eds., *Small Clauses*. New York: Academic Press. 179-206.
- Rigau, Gemma. 1995. The properties of the temporal infinitive constructions in Catalan and Spanish. *Probus*, 7: 279-301.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1997. The Fine Structure of the Left Periphery. L. Haegeman, ed., *Elements of Grammar*. Dordrecht: Kluwer. 281-337.
- Rooth, Mats. 1985. *Association with focus*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Stjepanovic, Sandra. 1999. *What do second position cliticization, scrambling and multiple wh-fronting have in common?* Ph.D. Diss., University of Connecticut, Storrs.
- Suñer, Margarita. 2003. The Lexical Preverbal Subject in a Romance Null Subject Language: Where Art Thou? R. Nuñez-Cedeño, L. López, and R. Cameron, eds., *A Romance Perspective in Language Knowledge and Use: Selected Papers from the 31st Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 341-357.
- Torrego, Esther. 1984. On Inversion in Spanish and Some of Its Effects. *Linguistic Inquiry* 15: 103-129.
- Torrego, Esther. 1998. Nominative subjects and pro-drop INFL. *Syntax* 1: 206-219.
- Uriagereka, Juan. 2005. Spell-out questions. Talk at the University of Rhodes.
- Uriagereka, Juan. 2008. *Syntactic Anchors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Uribe-Etxebarria, Myriam. 2002. In situ questions and masked movement. P. Pica and J. Rooryck, eds., *Linguistic Variation Yearbook*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 259-303.
- Valmala, Vidal. 2008. Topic, Focus and Quantifier Float. Xabier Artiagoitia Beaskoetxea, Joseba Lakarra Andrinua, eds., *Gramatika jaietan: Patxi Goenagaren omenez*. Donostia: Supplements of ASJU. 837-857.
- Zanutini, Raffaella. 1991. Syntactic properties of sentential negation: A comparative study of Romance languages. Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Zubizarreta, Maria Luisa. 1998. *Prosody, Focus and Word Order*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

# Selected Proceedings of the 12th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium

edited by Claudia Borgonovo,  
Manuel Español-Echevarría,  
and Philippe Prévost

Cascadilla Proceedings Project Somerville, MA 2010

## Copyright information

Selected Proceedings of the 12th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium  
© 2010 Cascadilla Proceedings Project, Somerville, MA. All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-57473-440-9 library binding

A copyright notice for each paper is located at the bottom of the first page of the paper.  
Reprints for course packs can be authorized by Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

## Ordering information

Orders for the library binding edition are handled by Cascadilla Press.  
To place an order, go to [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com) or contact:

Cascadilla Press, P.O. Box 440355, Somerville, MA 02144, USA  
phone: 1-617-776-2370, fax: 1-617-776-2271, e-mail: [sales@cascadilla.com](mailto:sales@cascadilla.com)

## Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com). Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

Ortega-Santos, Iván. 2010. Context-Anchoring and the Syntax of Spanish. In *Selected Proceedings of the 12th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. Claudia Borgonovo, Manuel Español-Echevarría, and Philippe Prévost, 63-74. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. [www.lingref.com](http://www.lingref.com), document #2406.