On Postverbal Subjects, PF and the Copy Theory: The Spanish Case[1]

Iván Ortega-Santos
University of Maryland

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to show how the Copy Theory (Chomsky, 1995) together with Sentence Stress Assignment conditions (e.g., Zubizarreta, 1998, following Chomsky, 1970, Cinque, 1993 and Jackendoff, 1972) clarify the properties of postverbal subjects and, more generally, the syntax of new information focus in Spanish. New information consistently comes last in the sentence and bears sentence stress in Spanish, as seen in ((1)-(4)).

(1) Qué ocurre?
  What has happened?
  Pedro le dio un libro a MARIA   *Neutral word order*
  Pedro gave a book to María
(2) Quién le dio un libro a María?
  Who gave a book to María?
  Le dio un libro a María PEDRO.   *Subject: new information + sentence stress*
  Gave a book to María Pedro
(3) Qué le dio Pedro a María?
  What did Pedro give to María?
  Pedro le dio a María un LIBRO   *Acc. object: new info + sentence stress*
  Pedro gave to María a BOOK
(4) A quién le dio Pedro un libro?
  To whom did Pedro give a book?
  Pedro le dio un libro a MARIA.   *Dat. object: new info + sentence stress*
  Pedro gave a book to MARIA

This dynamic can be captured by positing that:
i. A correlation exists between new information and sentence (final) stress (e.g., Zubizarreta 1998 among others)
ii. All arguments and the verb vacate VP, arguably for Case checking purposes (Chomsky 1991, 1995)
iii. This correlation between new information and sentence stress influences which copy is pronounced:
  a. If an argument is focused, the lowest copy of that argument would be retained
  b. If an adverb is focused, the highest copies of the arguments would be retained in accordance to regular or unmarked copy deletion, leaving the adverb to be last or most embedded in the sentence
  Let's assume that a (ditransitive) sentence in Spanish looks like this prior to Spell-out:

(5) a. Pedro le dio un libro a María.
    Pedro gave a book to María

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b. [TP Pedro le dio [AgrS Pedro dio [AgrDO un libro dio [AgrIO a María
    dio [V1 Pedro dio [V2 un libro dio a María]]]]]]
    *[TP Pedro gave [AgrS Pedro gave [AgrDO a book gave [AgrIO to María
    gave [V1 Pedro gave [V2 a book gave to María]]]]]]*[2]

In the case of neutral information structure, the highest copies are retained resulting in the SVO order. In the case of marked information structure –sentences including focused elements– the following happens: Once the sentence is divided into presupposed material and new information, all the highest copies are pronounced except in the case of the focused element, whose lowest copy is retained as a way of satisfying the requirement that elements constituting new information carry sentence stress in sentence final position.

According to this view, these are the structures where the subject (VOS) and the direct object constitute new information, respectively:

(6) *Focused subject*
     [TP ~~Pedro~~ le dio [AgrS ~~Pedro dio~~ [AgrDO un libro ~~dio~~ [AgrIO a María ~~dio~~ [V1 Pedro ~~dio~~
     [V2 ~~un libro dio a María~~]]]]]]   +Focus
     *[TP ~~Pedro~~ gave [AgrS ~~Pedro gave~~ [AgrDO a book ~~gave~~ [AgrIO to María ~~gave~~-[V1 Pedro ~~gave~~
     [V2 ~~a book gave to María~~]]]]]]*   *+Focus*
(7) *Focused direct object*
     [TP Pedro le dio [AgrS ~~Pedro dio~~ [AgrDO ~~un libro dio~~ [AgrIO a María ~~dio~~ [V1 ~~Pedro dio~~
     [V2 un libro ~~dio a María~~]]]]]][3]
          +Focus

Note that the present approach gives us an insight into the syntax of postverbal subjects following case marked elements and adverbs. What about other contexts in which postverbal subjects might appear? This is the topic of the next section.

1.2 On the Copy-Theory Approach and its relation to Case

Inasmuch as the present proposal piggybacks on Case, one prediction it makes is that sentence final postverbal subjects should only be possible following: (a) elements generated outside VP, say adjuncts; (b) the verb, that raises for independent reasons; (c) arguments that need to check Case outside VP. As a consequence, the present approach might seem to predict that (postverbal) subjects will not be able to follow complement clauses (finite or non-finite), small clauses or PP complements, contrary to the fact. Still, as far as complement clauses are concerned, it has been argued at least since Plann (1984) that clauses do check case, at least in Spanish (see Picallo 2002 for a recent perspective). In fact, the existence of postverbal subjects following infinitivals / infinitival clauses not only is consistent with the Case marking of infinitives or infinitival clauses but also with the Movement Theory of Control (Hornstein 1999).

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[2] One comment on this structure is in order: Following Chomsky (1991 and 1995) I take DPs to check their (structural) Case outside their theta domain. Furthermore, I include TP, AgrS and AgrO as in Chomsky (1991) for the sake of exposition, but one could keep this insight without positing the existence of Agreement heads (cf. Chomsky 1995). Furthermore, I follow Belletti (1999), Cardinaletti (1997), Ordóñez (2000), and, Zubizarreta (1994) in considering that Spanish has two different positions for the subject outside vP. Notice that nothing hinges on the relative ordering of TP and AgrS.

The reason why I posit the existence of such movements in clear opposition to recently developed technology as Long-Distance Agreement is the fact acknowledged in Chomsky (2005: 13) that evidence for Spec,Head relations based on overt Agreement patterns have been dealt with successfully under such a system. Given that Spanish is a rich agreement language, I remain agnostic on Long-Distance Agreement for the purposes of this paper. See also Guasti and Rizzi (1999)'s study of language acquisition for further evidence regarding the existence of Agreement projections.

[3] For the exact mechanism which allows low copies to be spelled-out, see Nunes (2004). In this work, the default retention of the highest copies follows from economy considerations. Such considerations are relevant in banning alternative ways to derive the relevant word orders under a copy theory approach. For instance, they prevent that the SVO order could be derived by having all the copies within VP be spelled-out. See Nunes (2004) for details.

With regard to small clauses, Koster's (1993) independently motivated approach of movement of such elements into a Predicate Phrase would be able to accommodate the facts. Lastly, as far as PP complements are concerned, Hornstein (1995) includes an independently motivated approach which involves movement of the PP object to the Spec position of a higher Agr node. If this view is indeed tenable, NP complements and PP complements would not differ from each other in terms of the predictions regarding the distribution of postverbal subjects. Given the above considerations, this approach would be able to predict the full range of the distribution of postverbal subjects in Spanish.[4]

Needless to say, in order for the present proposal to work, it is necessary that all arguments leave their base-generated position in VP, so that prosody can choose which copy to pronounce. This is the topic of the next section.

2. Evidence for the proposal

Under the approach advocated so far, at the point that the sentence is sent to PF, the material within VP should consist of copies. It should be possible, therefore, to find evidence that the relevant material can be spelled-out outside VP. This section focuses on objects, arguing that these arguments move out of VP for case checking purposes.[5] The fact that objects bind into adverbs shows that this is the case under the assumption that VP adverbs are generated higher than objects.

(8) *Binding into VP-adverbs*
    a. Pedro fotografió a diferentes terroristas$_i$ en las$_i$ actividades cotidianas.
       Pedro took pictures of different terrorists$_i$ in the$_i$ daily routine
       'Pedro took pictures of a number of terrorists in their daily routine'
    b. Pedro sacó fotografías a cada terrorista$_i$ en las$_i$/sus$_i$ actividades cotidianas"
       Pedro took pictures (to) every terrorist$_i$ in the$_i$/his$_i$ daily routine?
    c. Pedro/Quién sacó fotografías a quién$_i$ en las$_i$/sus$_i$ actividades cotidianas?
       Peter/who took pictures to whom$_i$ in the$_i$/his$_i$ daily routine?

Furthermore, binding / scope possibilities are determined by the following configuration, where the subject c-commands the objects and the objects c-command into the subject (and each other), irrespective of which copy/ies end up being pronounced:[6]

(9) [TP subject verb [AgrS subject verb [AgrDO object verb [V1 subject verb [V2 object verb]]]]]

This entails that the present approach is testable. Specifically, it predicts that a sentence should show the same binding possibilities (determined by (9)) irrespective of its realization of word order. This is indeed the case. E.g., Zubizarreta (1998: 143) points out that the SVO, VSO and VOS order do not differ in terms of binding/scope properties in Spanish, as seen in the following data:

(10) Binding Tests
    a.   El primer día de escuela, su MADRE deberá acompañar a cada niño. SVO
    a.' El primer día de escuela, acompañará su MADRE a cada niño.   VSO
    a.'' El primer día de escuela, acompañará a cada niño su MADRE.   VOS
       The first day of class, her mother should accompany every child
          [Binding: OK] (Zubizarreta, 1998)
(11) a. El primer día de escuela, cada madre acompañará a su hijo.   SVO
    a.' El primer día de escuela acompañará cada madre a su hijo.   VSO
    a.'' El primer día de escuela acompañará a su hijo cada madre.   VOS
       The first day of class, each mother should accompany her child
          [Binding: ok]

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[4] See also Stjepanovic (1999: ch.3) for related discussion.
[5] In the case of subjects and verbs, this is uncontroversial, as shown by adverb placement facts (Emonds, 1978 and Pollock, 1989). Such facts indicate that main verbs raise in French and Spanish but not in English. If the main verb raises in Spanish, it follows that preverbal subjects are out of VP, too.
[6] This would be the case under an approach to Quantifier binding as determined by A-chains (Hornstein 1995), which I adopt.

With regard to the data that Zubizarreta uses, this researcher claims that in the VOS order the subject is focused. Therefore, a proper comparison between these three word order possibilities should have the subject focused in the other two patterns, that is to say, SVO and VSO. Given the properties of focus in Spanish, for that to be the case in the VOS instance we would be dealing (most likely) with new information focus, whereas in the SVO and VSO orders we would be dealing with contrastive focus instead.

In contrast, Ordóñez (2000) claims that there are scope asymmetries between the SVO, VSO and VOS. The asymmetries are the following:

(12) a. *Su$_i$ amigo le regaló un libro [a cada niño]$_i$.
    his friend cl-dat gave this book to every child
  b. *Este libro se lo regalo su$_i$ amigo [a cada niño]$_i$.
    this book cl-dat cl-acc gave his friend to every child
  c. Este libro se lo regalo [a cada niño]$_i$ su$_i$ amigo.
    this book cl-dat cl-acc gave to every child his friend
    'His friend gave a book to every child'

Still, in such data the focus factor is not controlled. Notice that a plausible alternative to the claims made by Zubizarreta could be to argue that the judgments in (12) are indeed representative whereas the judgments in (10) and (11) are only an artifact of focus. Indeed, Villalba (1999) considers the Zubizarreta facts constitute a case of illusive scope (cf. Fox and Sauerland 1996), which arguably arises from the fact that the QP is in the relevant cases is not presupposed, the generic context and the modality (use of *should*). Such factors would conspire to force a reading of the pronoun as an E-type pronoun. Nonetheless, as Winkler and Göbbel (2002: 1229) argue convincingly, some other factor must be at play. Specifically, the following data from Romanian fulfill all the factors that Villalba lists as crucial for the binding illusion to take place and, nonetheless, no binding obtains:

(13) A: As vrea sa stiu cine îl va duce pe fiecare copil la scoala.
   'I would like to know who will accompany each child to school.'
  B: MAMA   LUI îl   va duce pe   fiecare copil la scoala.
    mother.the his CL.ACC will take ACC each   child to school
   'HIS MOTHER will accompany each child to school.'

Most importantly. binding can take place even when the factors that Villalba (1999) lists are controlled for. Specifically, in (14) and (15), we find that the QP is focused as opposed to the pronoun, the context is not generic and there is no modality issue. Note, moreover, that none of the chosen QPs is compatible with E-type pronouns, which are crucial in Villalba's analysis:

(14) a. A la cita de ayer, no trajo nadie$_i$ su$_i$ muestra de orina.
    to the appointment yesterday, not brought nobody$_i$ his$_i$ urine
  b. A la cita de ayer, no trajo su$_i$ muestra de orina nadie$_i$.
    to the appointment yesterday, not brought his$_i$ urine nobody$_i$
(15) a. Ayer me pagaron pocos afiliados$_i$ su$_i$ cuota.
    yesterday to-me paid few affiliates$_i$ his$_i$ fees
  b. Ayer me pagaron su$_i$ cuota pocos afiliados$_i$.
    yesterday to-me paid his$_i$ fees few affiliates$_i$

If these remarks on the right track, the binding predictions made by the current approach would be fulfilled, a fact not properly acknowledged in the literature.[7]

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[7] One wonders how the facts in (12) obtain. It should be taken in to account that just in terms of processing surface interpretations are favored (e.g., Anderson 2004), a fact that biases the hypothetical judgments. Furthermore, some speakers feel the tests with *cada* in Spanish are slightly odd. The prediction would be that when other expressions are used and the context is manipulated to make the intended interpretations salient, these would obtain, as we see in (14) and (15), irrespective of the surface word order.

Similarly, the subject can bind into the object irrespective of their precedence relation:

(16) Cuándo hablaron [tus hermanas]$_j$ [de sí mimas]$_j$? (Ordóñez 2000)
   when talked your sisters about themselves
   Cuándo hablaron [de sí mismas]$_j$ [tus hermanas]$_j$?
   when talked about themselves your sisters

Next, I discuss some possible counterexamples to the copy-theory approach to postverbal subjects, among them Principle C effects or the distribution of Negative Polarity Items in Spanish.

3. On some challenges to the copy-theory approach

Ordóñez (2002)'s seminal research on the syntax of postverbal subjects in Spanish presents a couple of challenges to the present approach. Specifically, this researcher offers some pieces of evidence in favor of the scrambling analysis of postverbal subjects. Spanish would pattern with scrambling languages in terms of scope (already discussed above), PPLE C effects, the distribution of wh-elements and pronouns, and the interpretation of indefinites.

As far as PPLE C effects are concerned, this researcher shows an asymmetry between the VSO and the VOS order with regard to Principle C Effects:

(17) a. El libro, se lo compraron los hermanos de Eva$_i$ a ella$_i$.
       the book   bought   the brothers   of Eva$_i$ to her$_i$
   b. *El libro, se lo compraron a ella$_i$ los hermanos de Eva$_i$.
       the book   bought   to her$_i$ the brothers of Eva$_i$

Nonetheless, it might well be the case that PPLE C is not be reducible to c-command relationships but factors as pragmatics might well play a part (cf. Heim 1998 among others).[8] For instance, Feigenbaum (2004: 47) notes the following contrast in English, which is independent of c-command relationships and which translates straightforwardly into Spanish:

(18) a. John $_i$'s father was suprised that the poor man$_i$ lost.
   b.   ??The poor man$_i$'s father was surprised that John$_i$ lost.
(19) a. El padre de Pedro$_i$ estaba sorprendido de que el pobre hombre$_i$ hubiera perdido.
       the father of Pedro$_i$ was surprised   of that the poor man$_i$ had   lost
   b. ??El padre del pobre hombre$_i$ estaba sorprendido de que Pedro$_i$ hubiera perdido.
         the father of the poor man$_i$ was   surprised   of that Pedro$_i$ had   lost

In fact, speakers find certain sentences where a pronoun corefers with an NP it precedes but does not c-command somewhat degraded:
(20) El secuestrador de ella$_{x/??i}$ quiere que Eva$_i$ se vaya.
    the kidnaper of her $_{x/??i}$ wants that Eva$_i$ leaves.
Hence, I am led to conclude that the PPLE C facts that Ordóñez discusses, though relevant, might not settle the question.

With regard to the distribution of wh-elements and pronouns, Ordóñez shows that the former cannot be scrambled (cf. the behavior of German wh-phrases), whereas the latter have to be obligatorily scrambled (cf. Scandinavian Object Shift):

(21) Distribution of wh-elements (Ordóñez 2000)
   a. Qué compró quién?
      what bought who?
   b. Qué le compró quién a quién?
      what bought who to whom?
   c. *?Qué le compró a quién quién?
      what bought to whom who

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[8] Not to mention the fact that there is crosslinguistic variation in the (structural) contexts where PPLE C effects are found (e.g., Lasnik 1986: 153).

(22) *Distribution of pronouns in questions (Ordóñez 2000)*
    a. Qué les compró él a sus hermanos?
     what   bought he to his brothers?
    b. ??Qué les compró a sus hermanos él?
     what   bought to his brothers he?

Notice that, a priori, it is not clear whether questions enter into the same dynamics of information structure as statements. Therefore, the fact that questions and statements pattern differently is not inconsistent with the present analysis. Support for this interpretation, for instance, comes from the fact that the distribution of pronouns does not show such constraints in statements:

(23) Hoy compró un libro él.
     today bought a book he

As far as the interpretation of indefinites is concerned, Ordóñez claims that scrambled indefinite objects become specific (cf. (iv) a and b), again one of the hallmarks of scrambling languages.

(24) *Interpretation of indefinites (Ordóñez 2000)*
    a. Estos libros, se los dieron todos los estudiantes a un profesor.
     these books   gave   all   the students   to a teacher
    b. Estos libros, se los dieron a un profesor todos los estudiantes.
     these books   gave to a teacher   all   the students

Still, this is not always the case:

(25) Todos los días compran un libro todos los estudiantes.
     all the days   buy   a book   all   the   students

Given this observation, the facts in (25) might result from the fact that presupposed elements (e.g. the object in VOS order) have a tendency to be definite.[9]

    In sum, since the evidence in favor of the scrambling / remnant movement account either comes from sentences that do not enter into the dynamics of new information focus (e.g., questions) or else is questionable or liable to a different account (i.e., the interpretation of indefinites or PPLE C effects, respectively), I favor the copy-theory approach as it captures the phenomena under discussion by means of independently motivated machinery and feature checking operations.

       The purpose of the next section is to focus on the syntax of preverbal subjects. refining the analysis made so far by recasting the discussion in terms of Phase Theory.

4. Where does the Copy-Theory approach apply? On Surface Semantics, Phases and Spell-out

    The present approach stresses the similarities between the SVO, VSO and VOS order at the level of syntax. Still, it is well-known that the Negative Polarity items show an asymmetry depending on their preverbal/postverbal distribution:

(26) *Negative Polarity Items*
    a. Ayer, nadie llegó.
     yesterday, nobody arrived
    b. Ayer no llegó nadie.
     yesterday no arrived nobody
     'Nobody arrived yesterday'

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[9] A reviewer notes that under the present approach all objects (followed by a subject) would have to raise out of VP regardless of factors such as specificity or aspectual interpretation. This is indeed the case. I leave this issue for future research noting that it may pose a difficulty for the present approach.

One possible way of reconciling such facts with the copy-theory approach is to consider preverbal subjects to be generated in situ in accordance the analysis of previous researchers (e.g., Olarrea 1995 among others). If such analyses are on the right track, this would draw the line between the VSO and VOS order (where the copy-theory approach applies) and the SVO (where the copy-theory approach would not apply). Still, a number of arguments against the base-generation of preverbal subjects have been put forward (e.g. Goodall 2001). For this reason, the purpose of this section is to provide an alternative to the base-generation hypothesis. It will be argued that the above behavior is indeed expected within a derivational model of grammar. In particular, it follows from the following set of independently motivated assumptions:

i. Surface Semantics arise at Phase Edges (Chomsky, 2000 & 2001a)

ii. TP is a phase in Spanish (Uriagereka, 1999 and Gallego, 2004)

I present these assumptions in detail first. Afterwards, I show how they can explain the data.

Uriagereka (1999a and 1999b) and Chomsky (2000, 2001a and 2001b) put forward closely-related approaches to phases and Spell-Out. Uriagereka (1999a) advocates an approach in terms of Multiple Spell-out, deduced from a stream-lined version of the *Linear Correspondence Axiom* (Kayne 1994). Within this theory of dynamic syntax, certain chunks of structure are sent to PF, resulting in multiple instantiations of spell-out. Moreover, for reasons that I will not go into now, Uriagereka (1999b) argues that the presence of heavy agreement –as the one licensing pro-drop in Romance– also results in TP being a spell-out domain (see also Gallego 2004, following Uriagereka). In turn, Chomsky (2000, 2001a and 2001b) proposes a theory of phases built from sub-numerations. Each phase, defined as 'propositional', is spelled-out/transferred separately. In this case, the motivation behind the proposal is the desire to reduce computational complexity, in the sense that such transfer would free up operational memory space. In Chomsky's terms, phrases escape phases by checking an EPP feature, whose presence is optional. Such optional EPP assignment can apply only when necessary to yield a new outcome (Chomsky (2001a: 34), in the sense of Reinhart (1997) and Fox (1995, 2000). Finally, according to Chomsky, both $v*P$ and CP constitute phases, inasmuch as they are 'propositional'.

Within Chomsky's approach it is not exactly clear what would preclude TP from being a phase. If TP were a phase in pro-drop / heavy agreement languages as postulated by Uriagereka, one possible prediction is that surface effects should correspond to subjects sitting at the border of the TP phase, in line with Chomsky's system (Gallego 2004). This is indeed the case. Specifally, Uriagereka (2002) shows that (27)a is a categorical judgment about a given individual, whereas b) is a thetic judgment expressing a mere event:

(27) a. El rey ha muerto.
   the king has died
   b. Ha muerto el rey.
   has died   the king

According to Gallego (2004), the categorical nature of (27)a be is case of 'surface semantics' that arises at the edge of the TP phase. Be it as it may, as Gallego (2006) points out, the surface semantics of Spec,TP are not only restricted to the thetic/categorical alternation. These surface effects seem to comprise a diverse number of effects ranging from some sort of privileged information structure status to peculiar behavior in terms of scope (e.g., Uribe-etxeberria 1992, Ordóñez 1997, Goodall 2001 among many others).[10]

Within Chomsky's system, EPP features at phase edges are only assigned if they make a difference at the interfaces. If this logic is right, having a copy of the subject in Spec TP should be incompatible with new information focus on the subject. Why? If the subject is focused, a low copy of the subject would be pronounced and the EPP assignment would have made no difference, a possibility banned by economy considerations. This would draw the line between a subject chain with the highest copy sitting at a phase edge where surface semantics are assigned (TP in Spanish under the present

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[10] In turn, vP would not qualify as a phase in Spanish, as argued independently by Uriagereka (2002) and Gallego (2004). See Gallego (2006) for relevant discussion of phases in null subject languages.

approach), and a non-trivial subject chain not involving the Spec TP (e.g., a chain formed by a subject in Spec,AgrS and Spec,VP). The copy-theory approach to postverbal subjects would only apply to the latter chain.

That is to say, if as already noted we assume that Spanish provides three different positions for subjects, i.e. TP-AgrS-VP, the copy-theory approach would not be able to apply to any chain that involves Spec TP/surface semantics, as opposed to chains that do not involve any such surface semantics (e.g., a chain involving AgrS and Spec,VP). In keeping with this idea, in cases of VSO (or VOS) as (26)b, we have a derivation where the subject would only have moved up to AgrS.

(28) [TP Aquí no llegó [AgrS nadie ~~llegó~~ [V1 ~~nadie llegó~~ [V2 ~~llegó nadie~~]]]][11]

Notice that the resulting system makes the right predictions as far as the distribution of Negative Polarity items is concerned: this system incorporates the advantages of the copy-theory approach while allowing the existence of an asymmetry between the SVO order, on the one hand, and the VSO and VOS orders, on the other hand. Most importantly, such an outcome follows from independently motivated proposals within research on dynamic syntax.

For the sake of completeness, I show how this system would apply to a sentence in the different word orders, SVO, VSO and VOS:

(29) a. Pedro le dio un libro a María.   *SVO*
   Pedro gave a book to María
   b. [TP Pedro le dio [AgrS ~~Pedro dio~~ [AgrDO un libro ~~dio~~ [AgrIO a María ~~dio~~ [V1 ~~Pedro dio~~ [V2 ~~un libro dio a María~~]]]]]]
   [TP Pedro gave [AgrS ~~Pedro gave~~ [AgrDO a book ~~gave~~ [AgrIO to María ~~gave~~ [V1 ~~Pedro gave~~ [V2 ~~a book gave to María~~]]]]]]

(30) a. UN LIBRO le dio Pedro a María.   *DO-V-S-IO*
   A BOOK gave Pedro to María
   b. [TP UN LIBRO le dio [AgrS Pedro ~~dio~~ [AgrDO ~~un libro dio~~ [AgrIO a María ~~dio~~ [V1 ~~Pedro dio~~ [V2 ~~un libro dio a María~~]]]]]]
   [TP A BOOK gave [AgrS Pedro ~~gave~~ [AgrDO ~~a book gave~~ [AgrIO to María ~~gave~~ [V1 ~~Pedro gave~~ [V2 ~~a book gave to María~~]]]]]]

(31) a. El libro se lo dio a María Pedro.   *DO-V-IO-S*
   the book gave Pedro to María
   b. [TP El libro se lo dio [AgrS ~~Pedro dio~~ [AgrDO ~~el libro dio~~ [AgrIO a María ~~dio~~ [V1 Pedro ~~dio~~ [V2 ~~un libro dio a María~~]]]]]]
   [TP the book gave [AgrS Pedro ~~gave~~ [AgrDO ~~the book gave~~ [AgrIO to María ~~gave~~ [V1 ~~Pedro gave~~ [V2 ~~the book gave to María~~]]]]]][12]

5. Evaluation of the Alternatives to the Copy-theory Approach

I would now like to briefly comment on some alternatives to the analysis just discussed, to evaluate whether they can match its virtues. The preverbal/postverbal (SVO/VOS) distribution of subjects in what may be thought as 'topic-driven' or free word order languages is captured by positing:
i.   Regular movement of the subject to TP vs. right adjunction to some projection (Torrego, 1984)

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[11] For the sake of simplicity, I abstract away from the movements that the adverb undergoes in the structure.

[12] This would be a case of Clitic-Left Dislocations. As such, there is some controversy as to whether Citic-Left-Dislocated elements are generated in situ or moved to their final landing position. The origin of the controversy seems to lie in the fact that whereas such elements are insensitive to weak islands (e.g. wh-islands), they have been argued to be sensitive to strong islands (e.g., relative clauses; cf. Cinque 1993). For instance, see Olarrea (1995) and Zubizarreta (1998), the former arguing that they are generated in situ, whereas Zubizarreta considers them to be the result of movement. I remain neutral on this issue, pointing out the possibility that such elements satisfy the EPP, as argued in Zubizarreta 1998.

ii.   Regular movement of the subject to TP vs. remnant movement (Kayne and Pollock 1999 for French and Ordóñez (2000) for Spanish) or object scrambling past an insitu subject (Ordóñez 2000)

iii.   Regular movement of the subject to TP vs. licensing in discourse-related projections at the VP periphery (Belletti 1999)

iv.   Regular movement of the subject to TP vs. p(rosodic)-movement out of focus position past the subject (Zubizarreta, 1998)

With regard to the right adjunction analysis of postverbal subjects, it is worth noticing that even if we allow right adjunction into the system (against Kayne, 1994), it is not clear what would drive this operation or, more generally, what would determine the choice between right and left adjunction. Norbert Hornstein (p.c.) suggests a consistent interaction between new information focus and right adjunction, a link that would avoid such criticisms. Still, I find problems with such a view: The Nuclear Stress Rule (Zubizarreta, 1998), which is responsible for sentential stress, is sensitive to c-command, i.e., the node lower in the syntactic asymmetric c-command ordering is more prominent / the focused one. Or to put it in a different way: the 'rightmost' requirement of the Sentence Stress Assignment Conditions and Kayne's LCA would conspire to bar this possibility. This is the case because right adjunction does not does not alter the c-command relationships of the phrase structure tree and, therefore, does not generate the right word order (where focused elements appear sentence finally).

An approach in terms of remnant movement (e.g., Kayne and Pollock, 1999 for French and Ordóñez, 2000 for Spanish), or object scrambling (Ordóñez, 2000) clearly faces the problem of what motivates the necessary movements to derive the postverbal subject position, an issue that does not arise under the present approach.

The Minimalist or economical nature of the present account also stands out when compared to an approximation in terms of clause internal topic / focus projections at the VP-periphery (Belletti 1999).

With regard to Zubizarreta (1998)'s framework -where the focused elements come to be last as a consequence of prosodically-motivated movement that scrambles non-focused elements past the focused element if necessary, so that new information focus and sentence final stress converge, it is worth mentioning that within the present proposal the addition of such a mechanism to the grammar is unnecessary (see Kahnemuyipour (2004) for related criticisms). This is the case because the movements that allow us to derive the above word order have been independently motivated, e.g. as movement for Case checking purposes. In addition, the machinery used at PF, Copy Erasure and retention of low copies under conflicting PF requirements, is independently motivated as well. Lastly, the present analysis allows us to keep movement as a feature-checking operation.

To sum up, previous analyses of postverbal subjects present certain shortcomings either because they do not give us an understanding of their syntactic properties and, more generally, of the syntax of new information focus that postverbal subjects are part of, or else because of the very nature of the technical implementation. In contrast, my proposal overcomes such problems. Given these considerations, it is reasonable to adopt a Copy-Theory approach to postverbal subjects and new information structure in Spanish.

6. Conclusion

This paper has addressed the challenge that topic-driven languages posit to syntactic theory. From the descriptive point of view, new information consistently comes last in the sentence and bears sentence stress in Spanish. Following the analysis of Stjepanovic (1999) for Serbo-Croatian, I have presented an approach to postverbal subjects and new information focus in Spanish that relies on the Copy Theory (Chomsky, 1995) together with Sentence Stress Assignment conditions (e.g., Zubizarreta 1998, following work by Chomsky, 1971, Cinque, 1993 and Jackendoff, 1972). Different pieces of research suggest that there is a preference for the retention of the highest copies. Nonetheless, under conflicting PF requirements a lower copy may be pronounced (Groat & O'Neil, 1996 and Bobaljik 1995 among others). The way this perspective is implemented is the following: Assuming that in Spanish all arguments (and the verb) vacate VP –an assumption consistent with certain facts of the language– the default retention of the high copy applies to all the arguments but the focused one, resulting in its final position in the sentence. This approach is appealing because: i. It helps integrate the prosodic and

information-structure characteristics of postverbal subjects, going beyond a mere coding; ii. It incorporates the syntax of postverbal subjects into the syntax of new information focus in general (e.g., the same mechanism can be applied to derive objects which constitute new information); iii. It makes use of independently motivated technology ('Copy Erasure' and feature checking operations). If the present analysis is on the right track, it provides evidence for the overarching Copy Theory of Movement, in the sense first thoroughly explored in Chomsky (1995) and for a derivational theory of syntax.

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