On Locative Inversion and the EPP in Spanish

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within Generative Grammar, much effort has been devoted to understanding the mysterious nature of the Extended Projection Principle (EPP), a linguistic universal that entered the theory in Chomsky’s 1981 Lectures on Government and Binding and that still is the object of intense research. Informally speaking, the EPP can be defined as the necessity that clauses have subjects. Ever since Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou’s (1998) illustration of their parametric EPP proposal with Spanish, this language has become the textbook case of a language where the EPP has no effects. Therefore, understanding how Spanish works is an essential preliminary step towards understanding the EPP across languages. The purpose of this paper is to take Locative Inversion structures as a point of departure in order to focus on the broader picture of the EPP in this language. I will be providing different pieces of evidence for a treatment of the EPP as active in Spanish against the inactive/rich nominal agreement of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998).1

2. ON LOCATIVE INVERSION IN SPANISH

Spanish has ‘locative + V + S’ structures which are liable of a Locative Inversion (LI) analysis. Still, the fact that this language allows free inversion renders an LI analysis of such constructions unnecessary/dubious. In this paper, I will be arguing that Spanish indeed has LI.

1 A Research Training Grant awarded by the Department of Education, Universities and Research of the Basque Government supported this research. I would like to thank Norbert Hornstein for useful comments on earlier versions of this paper. All errors are my own.
First, I briefly introduce previous research on the topic. Then, I present my own analysis. Finally, I discuss the relevance of these findings to the debate on the EPP in Spanish.

2.1 Previous research. Different pieces of previous research are relevant to the present discussion. For instance, Torrego (1989) argues for particular patterns of syntactic behavior of unaccusative verbs due to the presence of hidden adverbial arguments in the structure. Additionally, certain unergatives show the same behavior when taking an overt adverbial. While Torrego does not use the term LI in her discussion, she notes the similarities between LI and the facts she focuses on (Torrego, 1989: 257 fn.7). In turn, Zubizarreta (1998) makes a closely-related observation originally due to work on Italian by Pinto (1994) and Adger (1996). Specifically, non-focused postverbal subjects of unaccusatives are possible only in cases where an adverbial, be it overt or null, satisfies the EPP. Finally, Kempchinsky (2001) and Masullo (1992) refer to Torregro's facts as LI, though they do not provide any argument for the use of this label on top of Torregro's discussion.

Paradoxically, apart from Torregro's analysis (which we will see in some detail) and Zubizarreta's observation, not much evidence is provided for the existence of LI in Spanish. In particular, a cross-linguistic comparison of Torregro's facts and LI in other languages seems to be missing from the literature. Additionally, as noted before, the fact that Spanish allows free inversion might render a Locative Inversion (LI) analysis of structures "loc + V + S" unnecessary. In the next section, I address such concerns providing evidence for the existence of LI in Spanish and discussing how it arises.

According to the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978), intransitive verbs are divided into unergatives and unaccusatives. The subject of unergative verbs behaves like the subject of a transitive verb. In contrast, the subject of the unaccusative verb behaves syntactically and semantically as the object of a transitive verb.

2.2 Evidence for LI in Spanish. According to Kempchinsky (2001) among others, English LI has the following features:

i. the adverb is argumental
ii. only unaccusatives accept LI; still unergative verbs might enter the unaccusative class due to LI.
iii. the locative satisfies the EPP

I will provide evidence that the syntax of Spanish unaccusatives and unergatives shows such phenomena.

2.2.1 Argumental adverbs. Movement of argumental wh-phrases, e.g., (1a), is known to be less restricted than movement of adjunct wh-phrases, e.g., (1b). In this sense, locatives in unaccusative constructions, (1c), behave like arguments in contrast to pure adjuncts as in (1b):

(1) a. Quién no sabes por qué no viene? 
Who don't you know why he doesn't come

b. *Dónde no sabes por qué compra cosas Pedro?
Where don't you know why buys things Peter?

3 Cross-linguistically, we find LI in the case of unaccusatives and, in addition, in the case of some unergatives. One might want to analyze such facts as indicating that LI is restricted to intransitive verbs (e.g. Levin and Rappaport (1995) among others). In turn, it could be argued that LI is restricted not to intransitive verbs but to unaccusative verbs. According to the latter point of view, unergatives accepting LI enter the unaccusative class (e.g. Collins (1997)). My discussion is not contingent on the exact analysis of such behavior and, therefore, I remain neutral on the exact analysis of such facts. The crucial point is the generalization in (ii.).
2.2.2. Unergatives and unaccusative verbs patterning together with respect to LI. Plural bare NPs in argumental positions can only appear in object position in Spanish, e.g., postverbal subjects of unaccusative verbs or ordinary objects (e.g., Torrego (1989) among others). This can be seen in the grammaticality of (2a) and (2b) as opposed to (2c) and (2d):

(2) a. Veo libros.
   ‘I see books’
   direct object

b. Llegaron libros.
   ‘Some books arrived’
   postverbal subject of an unaccusative

c. ??Anidan palomas.
   ‘Pigeons nest’
   postverbal subject of an unergative

c. ??Corren chicos.
   ‘Boys run’
   postverbal subject of transitive verb

d. *En esta película han matado mujeres al vendedor dentro de una tienda.
   ‘In this movie, (some) women have killed the salesman inside the store’
   postverbal subject of transitive verb

As a consequence of this distribution, one can use bare NPs as a diagnostic of the objecthood of subjects/unaccusativity of the verb.4

4 This discussion is valid for unmodified bare NPs. Modified bare NPs have a less restricted distribution and are, therefore, not a diagnostic of the objecthood of the subject or unaccusativity. Throughout this discussion, I restrict myself to distribution of bare NPs functioning as (non-focused and non-dislocated) subjects. The reader might consult Casielles (1996) for a broader view of the distribution of bare NPs. Additionally, it is interesting to point out that unaccusatives which do not include an adverbial in the structure do not license such bare NPs:

*Maduran peras.
   ‘Pears are ripening’

This means the Torrego’s facts are less general than this researcher argued for. In particular, not all unaccusatives allow bare NPs, but only those which include an adverbial in their argumental structure. Therefore, the distribution of bare NPs becomes not a diagnostic of objecthood but of the presence of adverbs in the structure, that is to say, a diagnostic of LI. This would be consistent with the fact that passives do not license bare NPs as subjects.

In turn, see Benedicto (1998) for a different view on the distribution of subject bare NPs which might illustrate some dialectal difference among speakers. In particular, Benedicto (1998: 27-28) argues against the object restriction of bare NPs giving the following examples:

i. La carrera de medicina la estudian mujeres desde hace treinta años.
   ‘Medicine has the property that there have been women studying it for thirty years’

ii. Estas cosas las han sabido mujeres desde siempre.
   ‘These things are such that there have been women knowing them forever’

The speakers of Peninsular Spanish I have consulted gave me mixed results for (i.), whereas they consistently rejected (ii.). I personally find a contrast between these instances and (2a) and (2b) and (3b). It is important to notice that certain areas of Spanish syntax which are relevant to the study of the EPP, e.g. the availability of the preverbal slot for subjects in interrogatives or in ‘preposition + infinitive’ structures are subject to dialectal variation. In particular, Peninsular Spanish showing more restrictions in such cases than at least certain varieties of Latinamerican Spanish. If Tor-
As far as the criterion in (ii) is concerned, as in English locative inversion, exemplified in (3a), in Spanish certain unergatives pattern with unaccusative verbs when taking a locative in preverbal position (Torrego 1989), e.g., (3b) and (3b'), as seen in the fact that bare NPs are licensed as subjects of such unergative verbs. 5

(3) a. In this office works the President’s personal secretary. (Kempchinsky 2001)

b. *(Aquí) anidan palomas.

here nest pidgeons

b.’ *(Aquí) corren chicos.

here run boys

‘Boys run here’

The felicity of such bare NPs is contingent on the presence of a locative in the structure.

In addition to the facts noted by Torrego, it is worth pointing out that the parallelism between English LI and the syntax of Spanish unaccusative/unergatives is further strengthened by the fact that in both English and Spanish, the postverbal subject of the unergatives which have shifted into the unaccusative class/pattern with unaccusatives is structurally a theme as shown by their incompatibility with agentive purpose clauses, as seen in (4a) and (4b) respectively.

Irrespective of whether (3) and (4) illustrate a shift into the unaccusative class or not, that is to say, irrespective of what the exact analysis of such data in English and Spanish turns out to be, it should be noted that the fact that the presence of a locative allows unaccusatives and unergatives to pattern together is one of the hallmarks of LI. 6

2.2.3 EPP and LI. With regard to (iii.), the condition that the locative satisfy the EPP in LI, that-trace effects in English suggest that in LI the locative moves through Spec,TP satisfying the EPP. In particular, both subjects and locatives in LI trigger that-trace effects, (5a) and (5b), respectively, as opposed to regular adjuncts, (5c):

6 For the sake of completeness, it is worth pointing out that in this use of unergatives, the adverb fulfills the LI feature of being quasi-argumental, i.e. of having more freedom of movement than regular adverbs. Compare (1b), repeated here as (i) with (ii). The difference is subtle, nonetheless.

i. *Donde no sabes por qué compra cosas Pedro? transitive; wh-locative where don’t you know why buys things Peter?

ii. ¿Dónde no sabes por qué anidan palomas? unacc./unerg.; wh-locative where don’t you know why nest pidgeons?

7 In technical terms, the EPP has developed from the original requirement that certain functional heads must have a Specifier to Chomsky’s (1995) strong D-feature of a functional head high in the clausal structure. Even though A and A make use of the latter definition, nothing in the present discussion is contingent on the exact technical definition of the EPP. It is worth noticing that Chomsky’s (2000) redefinition of the EPP as driving movement in general is irrelevant here.

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(4) a. ??Aquí anidan palomas para estar cerca de la comida.

here nest pidgeons in order to be next to the food

‘Pidgeons nest here in order to be next to the food’

b. *In this office works the President’s personal secretary to take notes on everything which is discussed. (Kempchinsky 2001)
a. Who do you think (*that) t1 left early? (Lasnik and Saito 1992)

b. It’s in the villages that we all believe (*that) can be found the best examples of this cuisine (Bresnan 1994)

c. Why do you think (that) he left early? (Lasnik and Saito 1992)

The fact that in cases as (3b) the preverbal adverb is obligatory is consistent with the claim that the adverb satisfies the EPP, as observed already in Torrego (1989).

To sum up, I have argued that there is Locative Inversion in Spanish. The evidence was provided by the argumental nature of adverbs, the patterning together of unaccusatives and unergative verbs and hints that the locatives satisfy the EPP in the structures under consideration.

After presenting the arguments for the existence of LI in Spanish, I briefly discuss how LI arises in this language.

2.3 Spanish LI vs. English LI. Casielles (1997) might provide an insight into how LI arises in the case of unergatives in Spanish and why bare NPs become so central to the discussion. Casielles (1997) explains different characteristics of the syntactic and semantic behavior of the argumental subject bare NPs under discussion by arguing that their NP nature prevents them from being DP-moved, that is to say, from being targeted by movement operations involving phi-features. This view might draw the line between English-like locative inversion, where the syntax of bare NPs plays no significant role, and LI in Spanish, where bare NPs are relevant when taking into account how unergatives come to pattern with unaccusatives.8

Next, I focus on the relevance that the present discussion might have for the debate on the EPP in Spanish, in particular for approaches claiming that the EPP is not active, e.g. Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998).

3. On the (inactive) EPP in Spanish

From a cross-linguistic point of view, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998), (hereafter A and A) argue that the EPP can be satisfied by move or merge of a head or a phrase. In the case of null subject languages like Spanish, the EPP would be satisfied by movement of the verb, in particular, by its rich (pro)nominai agreement. Under this analysis, the Spec of TP is not projected. The evidence they provide in the case of Spanish is the following:

First, preverbal subjects have A-bar properties, as shown by certain word order and scope facts. For instance, preverbal subjects compete with adverbs as nunca in the preverbal slot:

(6) a. Pedro nunca viene.
   Peter never comes.

b. *Nunca Pedro viene.
   Never Peter comes

Secondly, the lack of Definiteness Effects is used as an argument against the presence of expletives in the language.

verbs as in Masullo (1992)). The literature on the nature of Spec,TP in Spanish is vast (e.g., see Masullo (1992), Zubizarreta (1998), Goodall (2001) or Kempchinsky (2001) among many others). Focusing on the exact nature of Spec,TP is beyond the purpose of the present paper. Rather, my purpose is to argue that Spec,TP in Spanish is indeed subject to the EPP.
(7) a. There arrived a man/*the man/*every man.

b. Il est arrivé un homme/*l’homme.

(A and A 1998:512)

c. Vino un niño / el niño / Pedro.

Arrived a kid / the kid / Peter

Since the subject is postverbal in (7c), if there is no expletive in the structure, the EPP would not be satisfied. This fact together with the A-bar status of preverbal subjects is interpreted by A and A as evidence that Spec,TP is not projected. In contrast to languages as French or English, in Spanish nominal agreement satisfies the EPP.

Nonetheless, A and A provide no direct evidence for the pronominal nature of agreement in this language. Ordóñez and Treviño (1999), in a closely-related research on contrastive subjects argue that the fact that binding is crucially determined by subject agreement would support the idea that agreement is pronominal (e.g. Taraldsen 1992) in Spanish, as illustrated in (8) (their example):

(8) [Los estudiantes]x salimos de la reunión después de que nos /*losx acusaran.

The studentsx left-1PL the meeting after they accused us, /*themx.

“We students left the meeting after they accused us”

Such view that the EPP is not standardly active is at odds with the analysis of unaccusatives/LI I have argued for and also with the syntax of impersonals and psych-verbs (e.g., see Soriano (1999) and Masullo (1992) for arguments that the EPP holds in the syntax of impersonal Vs and psych-verbs, respectively). One logical question to ask is whether

\(9\) Degree of Readiness to agree with (postverbal) subjects transitive/unergatives >> unaccusatives/psych verbs >> impersonals

Transitives and unergatives obligatorily agree with both preverbal and postverbal subjects. In turn, unaccusatives and psych verbs obligatorily agree with preverbal subjects but do not have to do so with postverbal subjects. Finally, impersonal verbs do not have to agree with either preverbal or postverbal subjects. This is exemplified in (10):

(10) a. Transitive V – preverbal subject → obligatory agreement

Aquí el pan y la leche tienen/*tiene excelentes propiedades.

Here the bread and the milk have-3pL/have-3SG excellent properties

‘The bread and the milk have excellent properties here’

\(^{10}\) Interestingly, psych verbs and the impersonal Vs discussed by Soriano (1999) can be consider to be unaccusatives. Therefore, one could explore the possibility that this peculiarity of agreement might be related to the objecthood of the subjects of unaccusatives in general.
a. Transitive V – postverbal subject → obligatory agreement
   Aquí tienen/tiene el pan y la leche excelentes propiedades.
   Here have-3pL/have-3sG the bread and the milk excellent properties.

b. Unaccusative V – preverbal subject → obligatory agreement
   El pan y la leche llegan/llega aquí todos los días.
   The bread and the milk arrive-3pL/arrive-3sG everyday
   ‘Bread and milk are brought here everyday’

c. Psych V – preverbal subject → obligatory agreement
   El pan y la leche me gustan/gusta.
   The bread and the milk me please-3pL/please-3sG
   ‘Milk and bread please me’

d. Impersonal V – preverbal subject → optional agreement
   En este lugar sobra/sobran.” (Soriano 1999)
   In this place is/are-extra the bread and milk.

According to this view, agreement seems to have idiosyncratic properties in the contexts where the EPP is active, that is to say, in the syntax of impersonals/unaccusatives. Such facts might constitute the basis of an analysis reconciling the evidence that the EPP is active in the case of unaccusative verbs (as argued above) or in the case of impersonal and psych verbs (e.g., Fernández Soriano (1999) and Masullo (1992), respectively). While this might lead to a plausible analysis, I would like to suggest another alternative. In particular, certain inconsistencies in the proposal of Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) open the door to considering that the EPP is indeed active in Spanish.

5. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE: THE EPP IS ACTIVE IN SPANISH

With regard to Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998), the following points are worth making:

First, any evidence that preverbal subjects have A-bar properties is a priori compatible with an active EPP if Spec,TP is an A’bar position in Spanish (e.g. Zubizarreta (1998) or Masullo (1992)). In fact, a view of preverbal subjects as non-argumental predicts that such subjects and preverbal objects should pattern together, contrary to the fact (e.g., see Goodall (2001) for arguments based on information structure).

Secondly, with regard to the lack of Definiteness Effects (DE) in Spanish, it is worth mentioning that there is no link between expletives and DE in different languages. Therefore, the argument that no expletive satisfied the EPP in (7c), that is to say, the argument that the EPP is not satisfied in such structures is not consistent. Consequently, I conclude that the evidence provided by A and A (1998) for their analysis is not compelling.

The exact A/A-bar properties of preverbal subjects are a controversial issue. My proposal is not contingent on what the right analysis turns out to be. Rather, my point is more general: even if it were the case that preverbal subjects in Spanish have A-bar properties, this does not necessarily imply the EPP is not active in this language. In particular, an understanding of Spec,TP as an A-bar position (e.g. Masullo (1992) and Zubizarreta (1998) among others) would allow us to maintain an active EPP. Therefore, the discussion provided by A and A regarding the status of preverbal subjects is not decisive. Needless to say that if preverbal subjects have A-properties as argued by (Goodall 2001) versus A and A, this would be in keeping with an active EPP.

11 E.g., see Longa et al. (1998) for Catalan.
With regard to the evidence provided by Ordoñez and Treviño (1999) for the pronominal nature of agreement, their analysis would predict that the contrastive subjects they discuss are not to be found in the contexts where the EPP is active, that is to say, in the contexts where we find Locative Inversion (or in the impersonal constructions studied by Fernández Soriano (1999). Still, the prediction is not fulfilled.

(11) Aquí sobramos/faltamos/llegamos los anarquistas.
Here is-extra-1PL/is-missing-1PL/arrive-1PL the anarchists
‘We anarchists are extra/are missing/are arriving’

Therefore, whatever the right analysis of the contrastive agreement facts turns out to be, it seems that such facts do not bear on the debate on the EPP in Spanish as approached in this paper.  

6. CONCLUSION

There is Locative Inversion in Spanish, as shown by evidence that (i.) adverbs are argumental in such contexts; (ii.) both unaccusatives and certain unergatives pattern together (Torrego 1989), a hallmark of LI; (iii.) adverbs satisfy the EPP.

Such a view is at odds with claims that EPP is not standardly active Spanish. In particular, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) and Ordoñez and Treviño (1999) argue that Agreement is pronominal and satisfies the EPP. If we assume that agreement is exceptional in the constructions where the EPP is active, we might reconcile approaches as Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998) and Ordoñez and Treviño (1999) with the Locative Inversion facts in this language. Still, the lack of compelling evidence for the satisfaction of the EPP by agreement hints to a simpler analysis where the EPP is active in Spanish, (e.g., Zubizarreta (1998) and Goodall (2001) among others).

7. BIBLIOGRAFÍA


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See Kempchinsky (2001) for an analysis of pronominal agreement compatible with the projection of Spec,TP as an A-bar position.
Elipsis nominal en castellano

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0. INTRODUCCIÓN

Este estudio tiene como objetivo fundamental el proponer un análisis sintáctico de los contextos en los que podemos tener elipsis nominal en castellano. Con este fin en mente, el trabajo se ha estructurado en cuatro apartados: el apartado 1 está dedicado a la presentación descriptiva de los contextos en los que podemos tener elipsis nominal en castellano. Seguidamente, en el apartado 2, se incluye una breve revisión crítica de algunos análisis propuestos hasta el momento para explicar los datos descritos en el apartado 1. En el apartado 3 se propone un análisis alternativo para estas construcciones, el cual pretende superar los obstáculos propios de los análisis anteriores. El análisis que propongo se basa en la estructura para las expresiones nominales propuesta en Ticio (2003) y en la hipótesis que defiende la naturaleza fonológica de los procesos de elipsis. Finalmente, el estudio se cierra con un apartado en el que se detallan las conclusiones más importantes del trabajo.

1. DATOS BÁSICOS

Desde un punto de vista descriptivo se asume que el castellano permite la elipsis nominal. Esta propiedad del castellano es la que hace posible la omisión de ciertos elementos del Sintagma Nominal (de ahora en adelante, SN) en oraciones como (1a). La única restricción a este tipo de elisión nominal es la que se ilustra en (1b). En este caso, la elipsis nominal total se aplica a una expresión nominal introducida por el artículo definido y la oración resultante es agramatical.