

Stages of grammaticalization of the assertion structure in Spanish varieties.
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This paper examines the specificational pseudo-cleft (*PCleft*) in *standard Spanish (StSp)* and in *spoken Peninsular Spanish (SPSp)*, as well as the focus copular structure (*FocCop*) in *Caribbean Spanish (CSp)*, and argues that these reveal different stages of the grammaticalization of the bi-clausal *Assertion Structure* of the sentence (i.e the presupposition/assertion divide). A biclausal-qua-ellipsis analysis is shown to readily capture the grammatical properties and the historical connection between the *P-cleft* and the *FocCop* structure. It is furthermore suggested that “focusing via marked word ordering” in SSp is best analyzed as a case of reduplication of vPs-qua-ellipsis, and it is proposed that this case constitutes the ultimate grammaticalization of the AS, where the presupposition and assertion parts share the same T(ense), but branch out into two distinct vPs. The focused phrase is identified as the constituent in the asserted clause that is adjacent to the left-edge of the CP or vP phase at PF (Molnar & Winkler 2010).

Alongside PClefts introduced by a wh-phrase (as in English), StSp also has PClefts introduced by a relative pronoun, composed of a definite weak pronominal element plus the complementizer *que*. These can be analyzed as a structure with an operator-variable in the pre-copular clause (the presupposition) and a post-copular clause (the assertion). Forward ellipsis deletes all but the focused constituent in the assertion (Ross 1972, Schlenker 1998, 2003, Den Dikken et al. 2000).

- (1) a. *De la que te hablé fué de María.* **(StSp)**
of Fem.Sg. that (I) to you.spoke was of María.
b. [CP [de la que]_i te hablé e_i] [fué [CP te hablé de María]]]

Of particular interest is the case of the neuter *lo* in (2a) bound to the complement of *hacer*, which cannot be anything else than an event-denoting DP; cf. (2b) and (2c). Thus, (2a) shows that in a PCleft, where the op-vbl relation is formed via movement, it is the semantic content (not the syntactic form) of the variable that must match that of the focus phrase.

- (2) a. *Lo que debes hacer es comprar un coche nuevo.* **(StSp)**
Neut.3Sg. that must.2PSg. do is buy a new car.
‘What you must do is buy a new car.’
b. *Debes hacer ésto: comprar un coche nuevo.*
Must.2PSg do this: buy a new car.
c. **Debes hacer comprar un coche nuevo*
Must.2PSg. do buy a car new

PClefts in SPSp, first described by Fernandez-Soriano 2009, have the peculiarity that part of the assertion is elided in the post-copular rather than in the expected pre-copular part. This “ellipsis mismatch” so to speak, is particularly conspicuous in cases of idioms (3).

- (3) *Lo que no puedes meter es la pata hasta el punto de que te echen.* **(SPSp, F-S 2009)**
3PSg.Neut. (you) cannot put is your foot in it until (they) you-fire
‘What you cannot do is put your foot in it until you get fired.’

The difference between the two varieties can be described as follows. In StSp, the presuppositional variable is created before spell-out, while in SPSp, it can be created after spell-out via LF ellipsis. More precisely, in SPSp, *both backward and forward deletion applies at LF* (as in PF), opening up the possibility for an ellipsis mismatch between what is deleted at PF and what

is deleted at LF. (The mismatch appears to be constrained to the V head and its associated functional categories, subject to similar constraints as noun head ellipsis).

(4) PF: [Lo_i que [Neg no [T puedes [VP meter la pata] es [CP[Neg no- [T puedes [VP meter la pata]]]]]

LF: [Lo_i que [Neg no [T puedes [VP_i .meter la pata]]] es [CP[Neg no- [T puedes [VP meter la pata]]]]]

The FocCop, documented in different varieties of Venezuela (Sedano 1998, 1990, 2003, Bosque) and Colombia (Camacho 2006, Mendez-Vallejo 2009), has evolved from the pseudo-cleft. It lost the overt relative pronoun, bringing about a loss of the existential presupposition characteristic of definite pronouns; cf. (5a) vs. (5b).

(5) a. No comió fué *nada*. (CSp)

neg. eat.3Sg.Past be.3Sg.Pret.potatoes ‘He did not eat anything’

b. *Lo que *no* comió fué *nada*. (StSp)

The loss of the overt relative pronoun leads to a major restructuring of the clause structure: the pre-copular part becomes the main clause. The post-copular part becomes a vP, sister to a reanalyzed copula with a defective T (temporally bound to the minimally c-commanding Tense); copula + vP is *adjoined to matrix vP* (Camacho 2006). This restructuring will be argued to account for the fact (among many others to be discussed) that the Neg in the pre-copular part can formally license the NPI in the post-copular part of the clause (5a).

In the FocCop structure, the op-variable structure is created at LF (as in SPSP PCleft), via (backward) deletion and *null operator* insertion. This accounts for the contrast between CSp (6) and StSp (2a): variables created via ellipsis at LF (unlike those created via overt movement) require both syntactic and semantic identity.

(6) * Debes hacer es comprar un coche nuevo. (CSp, compare with StSp (2a))

Must.2S. do.inf is buy a car new

The FocCop structure in the Andean variety of Colombian Spanish (described by Mendez-Vallejo 2009) provides a further argument in favor of the ellipsis-based analysis. In this dialect, the “given” part of the VP may surface either in the pre-copular part (via PF forward deletion) or post-copular part (via PF backward deletion).

(7) Clara le trajo <a Armando> fué GALLETAS <a Armando> (CSp, Andean variety)

Clara Dat Cl.bring. <to Armando> be.3Sg.Pret. cookies <to Armando>

‘It was cookies that Clara brought for Armando’

The case of “focusing via marked word ordering” in StSp (Zubizarreta 1998) represents the ultimate grammaticalization stage, with a reduplicated VP (8). This construction will be shown to be akin to the CSp FocCop, but crucially with no copula-bearing Tense.

(8) Me regaló un libro Maria ‘it was Maria who gave me a book’ (StSp)

PF: [TP me regaló_v [VP [VP María v el libro]] [[VP María regaló_V el libro]]]

LF: [Op_k [TP me regaló_v [Ev-T [VP [VP DP_k v el libro]] [VP [DP_k María] regaló_V el libro]]]

To summarize, assuming an ellipsis-based analysis, the *PCleft in SPSP* (with an overt rel. pron but covert op-vbl formation), the *FocCop in CSp* (with no overt rel. pron. and covert op-vbl formation), and the “*focusing via marked word-order*” in *StSp* (with covert op-vbl formation and no copula) can be seen as different stages of an incremental grammaticalization of the bi-clausal *Assertion Structure* of the sentence.