

DP-Internal Ellipsis in Spanish

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I Introduction

- (1) Work on ellipsis often proposes that certain heads can be licensors
 - [E]-head licensed by focus (Merchant (2001), Corver and van Koppen (2007), Eguren (to appear a))
 - ‘Rich’ agreement/inflection (Bernstein (1993), Kester (1994, 1996), Kornfeld and Saab (2004), many others)
 - Other reasons (Contreras (1989), Sleeman (1996), Kester and Sleeman (2002))
- (2) Proposal: The peculiarities of Spanish DP-Internal Ellipsis (DPIE) can be accounted for by facts we already know about Spanish
 - Contrastive focus constructions require focalizable elements
 - The singular definite articles *el* and *la* are clitics
- (3) DPIE usually appears as [D [e]_N Mod], in contrastive contexts¹
 - a. *el pingüino alto y el [] bajo*
the penguin tall and the [] short
‘the tall penguin and the short (one)’
- (4) Ellipsis in the nominal domain goes under various names, each implying different analyses or coverage of data
 - Other names: NP-Ellipsis (NPE), N’-Ellipsis, DP-Ellipsis, N-Drop, N’-Drop
 - Often refers to only a subset of possible DP types (certain determiners, certain modifiers)

2 Generalizations

2.1 Possible modifiers

- (5) The *modifier* slot can be filled by an AP, RC, or PP headed by *de* ‘of’
- (6) Postnominal AP:
 - a. *el pato amarillo y el [] blanco*
the duck yellow and the [] white
‘The yellow duck and the white (one)’
- (7) Relative clause:

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¹I use conjoined DPs in most examples since they generally provide the requisite contrastive context. This is not the only environment in which DPIE is found, however

- a. el pingüino que vió Martín, y el [] que vió Marta
 the penguin that saw Martín, and the [] that saw Marta
 ‘The penguin that Martín saw, and the (one) that Marta saw’
- (8) PP headed by *de*:
- a. el pingüino de Antártida y el [] de Australia
 the penguin of Antarctica and the [] of Australia
 ‘The penguin from Antarctica and the (one) from Australia’
- (9) PP not headed by *de*:
- a. *el pingüino con gafas, y el [] con una bufanda
 the penguin with glasses, and the [] with a scarf
- b. *el pingüino para el zoológico, y el [] para el acuario
 the penguin for the zoo, and the [] for the aquarium

2.2 Determiner asymmetries

- (10) Determiners pattern into two groups with respect to DPIE
- *el* and *la*
 - Everything else (indefinites, plurals, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals)
- (11) *el* and *la* behave as in §2.1—they require a modifier, and PPs must be headed by *de*
- (12) Everything else: no need for a modifier, non-*de* PPs are licit immediately following the gap
- (13) No modifier:
- a. Compramos muchos libros, y tú compraste algunos [] ∅
 we.bought many books, and you bought some [] ∅
 ‘We bought many books, and you bought some (ones)’
- (14) Non-*de* PPs (compare with (9)):
- a. ese pingüino con gafas, y aquel [] con una bufanda
 this penguin with glasses, and that [] with a scarf
 ‘this penguin with glasses, and that (one) with a scarf’
- b. ese pingüino para el zoológico, y aquel [] para el acuario
 this penguin for the zoo, and that [] for the aquarium
 ‘this penguin for the zoo, and that (one) for the aquarium’

2.3 Prenominal adjectives are ‘poisonous’

- (15) Prenominal adjectives are not licit modifiers, even though postnominal adjectives are:
- a. *el gran general y el mero []
 the grand general and the mere []
- (16) In fact, when adjectives can go in either slot, only the postnominal reading is licit:
- a. el amigo peruano y el [] viejo
 the friend Peruvian and the [] old
 ‘the Peruvian friend and the old elderly/*long-time (one)’

- (17) Not only are prenominal adjectives illicit modifiers, they ‘poison’ otherwise valid instances of DPIE:
- a. el supuesto asesino alto, y el (*verdadero) [] bajo
 the alleged assassin tall, and the (*actual) [] short
 ‘the tall alleged assassin and the short (*actual) (one)’

2.4 English uses *one* pronominalization

- (18) In the contexts where DPIE is used in Spanish, *one* pronominalization is used in English
- a. *The yellow duck, and the white one*
 b. *The penguin from Antarctica and the one from Australia*
 c. *The penguin that Martin saw and the one that Maria saw*

3 Contrastive focus

- (19) Rooth’s (1992) Alternative Semantics: contrastive focus evokes alternatives by identifying a subset from a set of all possible interpretations obtained by replacing the focused element with possible equivalents
- (20) *John didn’t swallow a green pea, he swallowed a BLACK-EYED pea*
- Possible alternatives: {snow peas, snap peas, sweet peas, black-eyed peas}
 - Subset that’s focused: {black-eyed peas}
- (21) DPIE has a strong contrastive focus requirement (note that all the examples given are contrasting conjuncts)
- Contrastive Focus Requirement: The remnant constituent of DPIE must be contrastively focused
 - Similar proposals: Giannakidou and Stavrou (1999), Ntelitheos (2004), Corver and van Koppen (2005), Eguren (to appear b)

4 Clitics

- (22) A working definition of cliticization:
- Phonologically weak/dependent
 - Modifies a phrase rather than a single element
- (23) *el* and *la* need to cliticize to something nominal (Brucart and Gràcia 1986, Ticio 2005)
- (24) Most other determiners are not clitics
- Demonstratives, quantifiers, and numerals are also not phonologically dependent, and can generally bear stress

5 Possible modifiers

- (25) The set of possible modifiers falls out from the requirement for *el* and *la* to cliticize to a [+N]
- (26) See Brucart and Gràcia (1986) for a related category-based approach for AP and PP modifiers, and Ticio (2005) for a Phase-based approach to the *de*/non-*de* PP distinction

5.1 Adjectives

(27) Adjectives are [+N], and so *el/la* can cliticize to them

- (28) el pato amarillo y el [] blanco (=6a)
 the duck yellow and the [] white
 ‘The yellow duck and the white (one)’

5.2 Relative clauses

(29) CPs/relative clauses are nominal—c.f. their ability to serve as subjects—so *el/la* can cliticize to them as well

- (30) el pingüino que vió Martín, y el [] que vió Marta (=7a)
 the penguin that saw Martín, and the [] that saw Marta
 ‘The penguin that Martín saw, and the (one) that Marta saw’

5.3 *De* PPs

(31) PPs are [-N,-V], so *el/la* can’t cliticize to them

(32) What about *de* PPs?

(33) Following Ticio (2005), I assume that *de* is actually inserted at PF—this means that *de* PPs are no longer headed by a [-N] category

- *de* is semantically weaker than other Ps, and has a long history of being treated as ‘weak’, not ‘full’, ‘fake’, or ‘false’ (see, among others, Torrego 1987, Ormazabal 1991, Raposo 1999, Ticio 2003)
- If *de*-insertion occurs after clitics search for appropriate hosts, *el* and *la* will not see *de*, but rather its DP ([+N]) complement—a licit host for these clitics

6 ‘Poisonous’ prenominals and contrastive focus

(34) Recall that prenominal adjectives are not licit modifiers (15a) and in fact ‘poison’ DPIE (17a)

- a. *el gran general y el mero [] (=15a)
 the grand general and the mere []

- b. el verdadero asesino alto, y el (*supuesto) [] bajo (=17a)
 the actual assassin tall, and the (*alleged) [] short
 ‘the tall actual assassin and the short (*alleged) (one)’

(35) Prenominal adjectives, generally speaking, are non-intersective

- Non-intersective: the meaning does not entail the intersection of the adjective and the noun
- *A false prophet* is not a prophet; an *alleged murderer* is not necessarily a murderer; a *mere general* isn’t a general that is mere

(36) Contrastive focus is all about subsets, but prenominal non-intersective adjectives don’t create subsets of the noun by intersection, so they can’t be focused

- This line of reasoning is largely due to Eguren (to appear a, to appear b)

- You can't take the intersection of *murderers* and *alleged* and come out with *alleged murderers* (because *alleged murderers* aren't all a subset of *murderers*)
 - Additional evidence: prenominals can't be focused in vanilla DPs ²
- (37) If the prenominal in a DP of the form [_{DP}D AP [e] _N] can't be focused, this DP runs afoul of the Contrastive Focus Requirement
- So, prenominals are illicit as modifiers since they would violate the Contrastive Focus Requirement—the prenominal would be a remnant that's not focused (and in fact, can't be focused)
- (38) What about when there is a licit modifier in addition to the prenominal adjective (the 'poisoning' cases)?
- The Contrastive Focus Requirement necessitates that the *entire* remnant is contrastively focusable
- (39) *el verdadero asesino alto, y el supuesto [] bajo (=17a)
 the actual assassin tall, and the alleged [] short
 'the tall actual assassin and the short (*alleged) (one)'
- The intersection of *alleged* and *short assassins* is not *short alleged assassins*—the intersection leaves out the wrongly accused



- Since *alleged* does not take a subset of *short assassin* by intersection, and the mechanism of contrastive focus is the subset relation, it cannot be contrastively focused—this violating the Contrastive Focus Requirement, and rendering 'poisoned' any instance of DPIE with prenominal adjectives in the remnant

²Prenominals *can* be metalinguistically focused, but I assume this is a different process from contrastive focus. Note that even functional categories and affixes can be metalinguistically focused.

7 Other determiners

- (40) *el* and *la* are the only clitic determiners in Spanish—other determiners are not clitics, and therefore do not need a modifier to attach to
- a. Compramos muchos libros, y tú compraste algunos [] ∅ (=13a)
 we.bought many books, and you bought some [] ∅
 ‘We bought many books, and you bought some (ones)’
- (41) We can also derive the lack of PP asymmetry with these determiners: since they don’t need to cliticize to anything, there are no effect based on whether the P⁰ is visible at the point of clitic attachment
- a. ese pingüino con gafas, y aquel [] con una bufanda (=14a)
 this penguin with glasses, and that [] with a scarf
 ‘this penguin with glasses, and that (one) with a scarf’
- b. ese pingüino para el zoológico, y aquel [] para el acuario (=14b)
 this penguin for the zoo, and that [] for the aquarium
 ‘this penguin for the zoo, and that (one) for the aquarium’
- (42) Some determiners come in ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ flavors: *un*~*uno* (INDEF.MASC.SG)
- a. un pingüino alto y *un / uno [] bajo
 a penguin tall and *a / a [] short
 ‘a tall penguin and a short one’
- (43) *un* is clitic-like—it is phonologically dependent—unlike *uno*
- When there is no suitable host for the clitic, the phonologically independent *uno* is inserted instead
 - Remaining question: why does Spanish not use *un* in all the ellipsis contexts where *el* and *la* are licit? Some ideas:
 - *un*, has more strict requirements on its possible hosts (Eguren (to appear b) hints at Spanish clitics being picky about their host)
 - Cliticization of a determiner to a non-noun is ‘costly’—it’s possible (c.f. *el* and *la*), but substitute a standalone form if you can

8 English

- (44) One way to think of contrastive focus: highlight differences between old and new information
- Focus new material, defocalize old material
- (45) Spanish defocalizes nominal elements by eliding them; English defocalizes nominal elements by *one*-pronominalization
- (46) Spanish doesn’t have a *one*-pronoun and so can’t use that strategy to defocalize

9 Conclusion

- (47) DPIE in Spanish can be accounted for with two main principles:
- Contrastive Focus Requirement on DPIE

- *el* and *la* must cliticize to nominal elements
- (48) *de* PPs behave differently from other PPs because *el* and *la* can cliticize to *de* PPs before *de* is inserted at PF
- (49) The DPIE determiner asymmetries follow from the fact that some determiners are clitics and others are not
- (50) Prenominal adjectives are illicit modifiers and ‘poison’ DPIE because their non-intersective semantics prevents them from being contrastively focused

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