

Introduction and acknowledgment

Rafael Núñez-Cedeño

Luis López

Richard Cameron

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A Romance Perspective on Language Knowledge and Use:

**Selected papers from the 31st Linguistic Symposium on
Romance Languages (LSRL), Chicago, 19–22 April 2001**

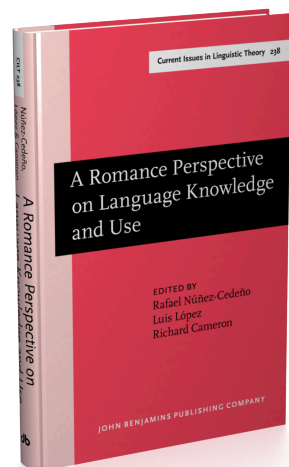
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Introduction and acknowledgment

Rafael Núñez-Cedeño, Luis López, and Richard Cameron
University of Illinois, Chicago

This book contains a collection of twenty-one articles presented at the 31st Linguistic Symposium on Romance Language which was hosted by the University of Illinois-Chicago on April 19–22 of 2001. The content has been organized thematically to cover a variety of theoretical issues ranging from phonology, morphology, and syntax to their contextual use in Romance linguistics as seen through pragmatics and sociolinguistics. We are thus capturing the essence of the sixty-one topics treated in the conference which are summarized next, ordered alphabetically by sections.

In the section on phonology and morphology, Julie Auger examines the morpho-phonological status of pronominal clitics in Picard French. She questions whether these elements are independent syntactic elements or morphological affixes, thus echoing a previous hypothesis in which she suggested that subject clitics in Picard have been reanalyzed as affixal agreement markers. While her evidence for agreement marking was strong, the affixal analysis in that essay was supported by fewer arguments. In this article, Auger provides additional evidence showing that the affixal analysis was indeed the correct one. A comparison of the behavior of vowel epenthesis at word boundaries, inside clitic + verb clusters, and inside words, confirms that clitic + verb clusters behave more like morphological words than like syntactic phrases.

While looking at the oftentimes researched topic of syllable-final /s/ in Spanish dialectology, Teresa Brown and Torres Cacoullos compare /s/ reduction in both initial and final word and syllable positions in data from northern Mexico. Contrary to the prevailing assumption that /s/ reduction diffuses from syllable final to syllable initial position, they find higher aspiration/deletion rates in syllable initial position (as in /e.se/) than in syllable final position (/es.te/) and, in contrast to well-studied Caribbean dialects, higher reduction rates in prepausal and prevocalic than in preconsonantal contexts. Variable rule analyses reveal that preceding phonological environment is more important syllable initially, while following environment

has a greater effect syllable finally. At the same time, lexical factors are involved in both syllable positions. The authors conclude that syllable initial aspiration will occur in those Spanish dialects in which syllable final /s/ reduction is favored more before a vowel than before a consonant and occurs at relatively low rates.

Moving from synchronic analyses of Romance languages to a diachronically focused research, Fernando Martínez-Gil studies various phonological mechanisms involved in the emergence of the so-called intrusive consonants in Old Spanish and Old French. The addition of consonants involves a type of epenthesis that breaks up heterosyllabic consonant-liquid clusters of raising sonority, a process commonly described in terms of syllable phonotactics as a repair strategy that targets bad syllable contacts. His Optimality theoretical account, based on the framework of Correspondence Theory, shows that a formal analysis of this type of consonantal epenthesis enjoys several important advantages over standard serial accounts of the process.

Also based on Optimality Theory is Mario Saltarelli's essay on raddoppiamento. He re-examines this phenomenon, which has been considered an independent phono-syntactic rule, and proposes instead that it is an effect of the interaction of general quantity restrictions regulating the duration of vowels and consonants in word peripheral and medial contexts. Saltarelli shows that visibility of lexical stress contrasts at phonetic interface requires durational enhancement of the syllable lengthening of the vowel medially and of the consonant peripherally (radoppiamento). The lengthening asymmetry is favored by the location of geminate consonant contrast to word medial position.

Next we turn to the section of this collection in which we have grouped research that may be identified as Pragmatic or Sociolinguistic in method and content. Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics are generally regarded as two different fields of inquiry. However, they interface at many different points. Both fields share similar objects and methods. Researchers from both fields are interested in structural and functional elements of language. By and large, data comes from language in use and, as such, researchers may share interests in issues such as acts, actions, ideologies, or significant categories of social experience such as gender, ethnicity, and class. Both fields of study may borrow techniques from one another, such as the use of statistics to resolve issues of syntactic analysis or the use of Speech Act categories to say something about cultural difference. Likewise, both fields may build upon or within neighboring theoretical frameworks in pursuit of saying something insightful about the relation of context to form or of form to the construction of identity. Therefore, when planning the conference parasession, we elected to include Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics under one heading so as to emphasize their interconnectedness and to provide for cross-fertilization.

Having said this, we may now look briefly at various representatives of Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics. Beginning with the work of Claire Beyssade, Jean-

Marie Marandin and Annie Rialland, we find a clear example of research in pragmatics which builds on neighboring theoretical frameworks. Specifically, they argue that “the lack of a conceptual framework within which pragmatic notions are given precise definitions has resulted in much confusion and contradiction in the literature”. They propose to overcome this situation by providing clear, operational, definitions of focus, ground, given and discourse topic within an Illocutionary Semantics framework.

The work of Bonnie Fonseca-Greber and Linda Waugh is an illustration of cross-fertilization between sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Basing their work on tape-recorded conversations in everyday spoken Swiss French as well as on conversations, classroom discussions, and service encounters in Parisian French, the authors identify a complicated set of interrelated changes in progress which involve morphology, semantics, reference, and the syntax of pro-drop languages. These changes include the morphologization of first and second person clitics as inflectional prefixes with third person clitics lagging slightly behind. The indefinite *on* has replaced first person plural nouns as second person *tu* has come to replace indefinite *on* in the expression of indefinite or generic reference. Also, third person plural *elles* is being replaced by *ils*. As a result of the changes (and others which they also identify), two key points emerge. First, French is acquiring a sharp difference between spoken and written language. Second, unlike many other diachronic studies of pro-drop languages in which change appears to go from null to non-null subject status, their work indicates a change towards null subject status.

The work of Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach and Scott Schwenter turns to a topic more clearly aligned with pragmatics, the relation between form and scalar inferences. They note that although most Spanish negative polarity items (NPIs) belong to the class of n-words (*nada*, *nadie*, *ninguno*, etc.), there is a small class characterized by the property of having a full propositional form. The members of this class are mostly parenthetical expressions headed by the negative particle *ni* (*ni lo pienses*, *ni soñarlo*, etc.). Their contribution to the content of the sentence they attach to is to strengthen the associated denial. In this paper, they analyze another propositional NPI, *que digamos*, which exhibits clearly differential behavior with respect to the other propositional NPIs mentioned above. The essential pragmatic property of this NPI is its scalar nature, but, unlike other well-known NPIs (e.g. *en absoluto*), it does not signal an “extreme” point on a pragmatic scale. Rather, it invokes a pragmatic scale of expectations and indicates that the proposition it marks is less expected, or more unexpected, than some alternative proposition(s) located on the same scale. The resulting interpretation of the proposition marked by *que digamos* is an attenuated denial.

Michela Ippolito’s paper, like that of Gutiérrez-Rexach and Schwenter, investigates syntactic forms, the interpretation of which necessarily involves implicature.

Like the work of Beyssade, Marandin and Rialland, discussion of these forms also entails reference to semantics. She discusses the modal uses of the Italian Imperfect both in main and embedded clauses. In particular, she offers an account of peculiar properties of Imperfect Conditionals, which distinguish them from both indicative and subjunctive conditionals. She provides an account of the modal uses of the Imperfect in main clauses based on the claim that past tense may not be interpreted inside the proposition where it superficially occurs. Cross-linguistic evidence is considered. Turkish conditionals offer syntactic and morphological support for the theory presented in this paper.

As with the work of Fonseca-Greber and Waugh, in the article by Heloisa Maria Moreira Lima Salles and Maria Marta Pereira Scherre, we find the use of quantitative sociolinguistic methods in pursuit of a syntactic analysis. Specifically focusing on indirect objects variably headed by the prepositions *a* or *para*, the researchers find a clear effect of two pragmatic constraints: +/- (potentially) lightness of the verb and +/- referentiality of the DO nominal. Their statistical findings provide a basis for subsequent analysis of argument structure in general which leads to the discovery of a curious parallel with English dative constructions that do not permit dative alternation.

The next article, by Rosina Márquez Reiter, shows the interaction of a classic topic in Pragmatics, speech act theory, with a sociolinguistic theme of dialect difference. This article examines the results of a contrastive empirical study of conventionally indirect requests in two varieties of Spanish: Uruguayan and Peninsular Spanish. The results reveal both pragmatic similarities and differences in the realization of conventionally indirect requests in these two language varieties. Most of the pragmatic similarities were found at the level of the linguistic mapping of utterances, with both Uruguayan and Peninsular Spanish speakers showing a negative correlation between (in)directness and social distance. The less familiar the interlocutors are with each other, the more likely it is for their requests to be realized indirectly. On the other hand, differences were found in terms of the tentativeness conveyed by the requests. More specifically, Uruguayan Spanish requests were more tentative than those in Peninsular Spanish. This tentativeness was achieved by a more frequent and more varied use of external modifications of the downgrading type. It is argued that differences in the tentativeness conveyed by those requests might form the basis of generalized perceptions by which Spaniards are seen as more a direct than Uruguayans.

Dialect differences give way to a study of dialect formation in a context of language contact in the work of Ariana Mrak. Focusing on the Spanish spoken by the Mexican-American community in Houston, Texas, the researcher evokes arguments of simplification in attempting to determine if third person accusative clitics are undergoing a change in progress. If these accusative pronouns are progressively being lost from use, then a series of hypothesized consequences may follow. These

include reiteration of the NP, use of the pronoun *eso*, expansion of dative clitics into accusative slots, duplication, reassignment of gender and/or number, and finally, omission of the clitic. Results indicate that of these various possibilities only three appear in the data. The most frequent, aside from use of the accusative clitics, is repetition of the NP. In turn, speakers may also express clitics that do not agree in number or gender and, finally, speakers may also substitute, though infrequently, dative clitics for the accusatives.

Though also based in an extensive corpus of spoken language, the work of Francisco Ocampo on the expression of topic in the spoken Spanish of La Plata, Argentina, goes to a key topic in functional syntax: topic and word order. Evoking work on information status and the structure-building framework of the psycholinguist Morton Ann Gernsbacher, Ocampo provides a succinct analysis of the interaction of topic shift or continuity with information status, word order, and stress (primary, secondary, and tertiary). Yet, the correlations between these various elements prove to be strong statistical tendencies, not absolutes. Such a finding, of course, is very much in keeping with quantitative sociolinguistics which finds systematicity in statistical patterns of use.

The final article from Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics is the contribution of Ricardo Otheguy and Naomi Lapidus. Their work utilizes and explores such methods and topics as quantitative analysis, issues of reference, change in progress, and simplification in contexts of language contact. Briefly, they note that the notion of simplification has often been proposed as an explanation for contact-induced change, a topic we see in Mrak's work. In a modest but significant extension of the explanatory value of simplification, they suggest that contact-induced changes should additionally be understood in terms of the notion of adaptation. In turn, they apply the notion of adaptation to the study of that most common of all contact phenomena, namely cross-language loan lexical insertions. In this case these insertions are English nominal lexical insertions in the Spanish spoken in New York City. The use of adaptive reasoning permits tests of specific predictions regarding simplificatory changes involving these nouns. In particular, they focus on the nearly complete lack of applicability of the Spanish arbitrary gender system to this portion of their informants' vocabulary. The data come from 33 sociolinguistic interviews conducted in New York City with speakers from a variety of age groups and of Latin American national origins. These speakers also differ with respect to whether they were born in New York or, if born in Latin America, in the length of time they have lived in the City. The new facts which are revealed by these predictions may be seen as useful expansions of our empirical knowledge regarding Spanish in the United States, and as support for the idea that contact-induced change is adaptive.

The final section includes a selection of papers on syntax, semantics and their interfaces, as well as a paper on the acquisition of syntax. Each of them presents a significant contribution to current debates in linguistic theory.

Tonia Bleam enters an old controversy from a Minimalist perspective: the structure of verbs that take two complements. Following intuitions that hark back to Juan Uriagereka's dissertation, Bleam presents new arguments that a double-object type of structure obtains in Spanish when the indirect object is doubled by a dative clitic. Differences between English and Spanish double object constructions are explained by independent features of these languages.

Alicia Cipria's paper centers on the formal semantics of "sequence of tense", which in the Spanish literature has been discussed mostly within the context of subjunctive complements. Perception verbs take indicative complements, yet the tense combinations (of main and complement) have certain restrictions, whose import is not as simple as previously claimed. The interaction of aspect/aktionsart and pragmatics with the lexical requirement of the main verb plays a role in the resultant temporal interpretations. Past tense complements are particularly interesting due to the different interpretations they receive when embedded under perception verbs.

Advancing the theoretical underpinnings of Optimality Theory, Lisa Davidson and Géraldine Légendre compare acquisition of the Catalan and French verbs, departing from the observation that while children acquiring French exhibit an "optional infinitive" stage (see the earlier work of Amy Pierce and Ken Wexler) Catalan learners do not (as reported by J. Grinstead). An examination of 3 French and 3 Catalan learners revealed further differences: (1) Catalan children use 3rd singular present forms as defaults, not NRFs. (2) Catalan children develop AGR first, whereas French children exhibit TNS first. (3) While Catalan children show a linear increase in the acquisition of both TNS and AGR, French children exhibit a stage where there is competition for the realization of functional morphemes. Furthermore, both Catalan and French children show a gradual decrease in NRFs/defaults, which cannot be accounted for by traditional OT analyses. Such variation can be captured by an Optimality Theoretic account in which "floating" constraints prohibiting functional structure are balanced against constraints requiring faithfulness to inputs with TNS and AGR.

Viviane Déprez's article explores the syntax/semantics interface. She investigates the interpretations of bare nouns in several Creole languages. In earlier work, she argued that a *Plural Parameter* distinguishes two broad sets of languages according to whether or not their nominal projections necessarily contain a Num projection with a counter. In the present article she argues that this parameter, coupled with the observation that languages may have overt or covert determiners, provides an adequate account of the range of variation found among the bare nouns of Creole languages.

Jon Franco and Alazne Landa's contribution discusses definite null objects, which have been documented in two Spanish contact varieties: Andean and Basque Spanish. After arguing that Liliana Sánchez' earlier analysis for Andean Spanish cannot be imported into Basque Spanish, Jon Franco and Alazne Landa propose an analysis that suggests that Basque Spanish is a topic-oriented language, similar in some respects to Chinese, as analyzed by James Huang.

Kate Paesani's article proposes an analysis of auxiliary choice (*avoir* or *être*) in pronominal verb constructions in the French *passé surcomposé*. She hypothesizes that three key factors determine the Spell-Out form of the auxiliary compound in all syntactic contexts: (1) the presence or absence of an abstract D/P⁰ head in the syntax; (2) participial AGR; and (3) the *have* for *be* parameter. A distinct advantage of this analysis is that dialectal forms of the *passé surcomposé* auxiliary compound are accounted for by a minor parametric variation of a type already motivated for Romance: Richard Kayne's *have* for *be* parameter.

Ever since Heles Contreras suggested that pre-verbal subjects in null-subject languages are in an A'-position, a rich literature has emerged with arguments pro and against this proposal. Margarita Suñer's Minimalist article argues that, at least in Spanish, the evidence indicates that preverbal subjects can be found in an A-position, specifically Spec,T. She uses distributional, interpretational and binding sources of evidence to make her argument. She further argues that Spanish does not resemble Greek, as described by Artemis Alexiadou and Elena Anagnostopoulou, in this respect.

María Luisa Zubizarreta's contribution focuses on wh-in-situ in French. Cedric Boeckx has recently identified three properties of wh-in-situ in French (for some speakers): exhaustivity, intervention effects and locality. Zubizarreta discusses the first two and adds a fourth: lack of pair-list readings. She argues that the intervention effects cannot be considered a syntactic, minimality type, phenomenon. Instead, they lie in the syntax/semantics interface. Additionally, she relates intervention with exhaustivity and the absence of pair-list readings. Her analysis hinges on her approach to contrastive focus, based on a 'A-not-A' operator.

The essays summarized above continue the tradition of offering a snapshot presentation in a book format of all talks given at LSRL conferences. It was difficult to make a selection for the present volume from among the many fine essays submitted. Nonetheless, to help us in that endeavor we counted on Marc Authier, Robert Bayley, Barbara Bullock, Iona Chitoran, Clancy Clements, Sylvie DuBois, Joseph Fontana, Jorge M. Guitart, Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach, José I. Hualde, Paula Kempchinsky, Knud Lambrecht, Fernando Martínez-Gil, Silvina Montrul, Naomi Nagy, Francisco Ordóñez, Ana T. Pérez-Leroux, Cecilia Poletto, Shana Poplack, Lisa Reed, Lori Repetti, María Isabel Romero, Mario Saltarelli, Liliana Sánchez, Gillian Sankoff, Christina Shmitt, Margarita Suñer, Dieter Wanner, and Karen Zagana. We thank them for contributing their expertise to the selection process.

Highlighting the conference were the feature presentations given by Ricardo Otheguy (City University of New York), María Luisa Zubizarreta (University of Southern California), and W. Leo Wetzels (Free University of Amsterdam), to whom we are indebted for their challenging expositions.

To organize a conference that attempts to approximate the success attained by previous LSRLs was no small task. It requires unbound commitment, sheer belief in the discipline and goals, and lots of sacrifice from many to bring it to successful completion. All of this is exemplified by the many contributors, session chairs, and participants that made LSRL31 a reality and, therefore, the printing of this book.

Thus, we would like to thank Lucía Elías-Olivares, the former head of Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese, without whose initial thrust and support this anthology would have remained a chimeric project. Christopher Maurer, the current department head, worked extremely hard to secure financial resources from the department and other institutions, among which are: the Institute for the Humanities, departments of German Studies, Classics, and English, Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services, Rafael Cintrón Latino Cultural Center, Latin American Studies, and the Graduate College. Stanley Fish, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, gave us crucial financial support when needed. We are grateful to all.

We were fortunate to count on Kim Potowski's generous help, unbound enthusiasm, and good will in planning the conference and steering it (and us!) in good directions. Mark Overstreet quietly put us in the map, sorting out details to make the webpage operational. Maria Ripa, the Department's business manager, stands out for handling the complex details of recording assets and disbursing funds. Not less can be said of the department's undergraduate and graduate secretaries, Carla Plambeck, Sharon Carrillo, and Rocío García. Each of them gave valuable time to the Organizing Committee's planning efforts. We also want to express our singular appreciation to the other members of the Organizing Committee, James Compton, Graciela Reyes, and Bill Van Patten. Their help in adding their wisdom to the final selection process was invaluable. Sean Morris, Claudia Fernández, and Dinorah Scott, graduate students in our program, graciously gave their time to the Organizing Committee. A special recognition goes to Elisa Baena, Marta Lacorte, and Danila Miranda, also graduate students, who responded timely to our call for help and worked diligently.

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