

## LONG-DISTANCE AGREEMENT THROUGH PREPOSITIONS IN SPANISH DIALECTS

**1. GOAL.** This paper explores two patterns of (unexpected) long-distance number agreement across prepositions in Spanish dialects in SE sentences. The first one concerns  $\phi$ -agreement through functional prepositions (ACC *a* and PART *de*; Ordoñez & Treviño 2004, Treviño 2010), whereas the second one concerns lexical prepositions (directional *a*, comitative *con*, etc.) in a seemingly pseudopassive structure. We propose the first cases be dealt with by assuming that the preposition is a functional Case projection (K; Kayne 1994, López 2012). As for the second cases, we argue that they involve a process of P-V reanalysis that unshields the NP, granting long-distance number agreement.

**2. THE BASIC DATA.** Spanish displays both Impersonal and Passive SE sentences, the only difference being agreement with the internal argument. Typically, agreement is blocked in the presence of DOM (cf. López 2012, Mendikoetxea 1999, Torrego 1998): the Case-marker ‘shields’ the internal argument, which receives a non-nominative Case (be it Accusative or Dative; cf. Ordoñez & Treviño 2007).

- (1) Se {vendió / vendieron} los coches {impersonal / passive} SE (Spanish)  
 SE sell-3.sg sell-3.pl the cars  
 The cars were sold
- (2) Se {ayudó / \*ayudaron} a los estudiantes {impersonal / \*passive} SE (Spanish)  
 SE help-3.sg help-3.pl A the students  
 The students were helped

Though restricted (as (2) shows), the SE passive pattern is not impossible with DOM. Such “hybrid pattern” has been documented in both European and American Spanish (cf. Ordoñez & Treviño 2007). Abstracting away from details, such pattern is as depicted in (3):

- (3) [TP SE T [VP V . . . [ a XP ] ] ]  
           |                          ↑

The structure in (3) seems further convenient for the Mexican Spanish data discussed by Treviño (2010). As this author notes, this American dialect allows for partitive prepositions to be spelled-out (just like in French or Catalan), number agreement being possible. The pattern is systematically excluded in European varieties of Spanish.

- (4) a. Por aquí **pasaron** [ *de* [ esos aviones ] ] (Mexican Spanish)  
       by here passed-3.pl of those planes  
       Some of those planes passed by here
- b. Me **gustaron** [ *de* [ esos chocolates ] ] (Mexican Spanish)  
       to.me liked-3.pl of those chocolates  
       I liked some of those chocolates

The data in (4), together with the so-called “hybrid pattern” (passive SE in DOM contexts), could be accounted for in terms of long-distance agreement between T and a NP that is introduced by a functional preposition (the spell-out of a K head). Crucially, in dialects where both the “hybrid pattern” and partitive prepositions are impossible (largely, European Spanish), a parameter along the lines of (5) must be at stake, assuming functional Ps do not block agreement:

- (5) Is P a functional projection (K): Yes / No

**3. NEW (DIALECTAL) DATA.** Along with the data above, Spanish dialects seem to display a more radical pattern of agreement across prepositions. In these dialects, the relevant P is not functional, but rather lexical. Consider the following data, which are taken from corpora (Spanish CREA) and on-line searches (the label “Dialectal Spanish” is used just to indicate that it is not standard (either American or European) Spanish):

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- (6) a. Dijo que se **hablaron** con **las autoridades** (Dialectal Spanish)  
 say that SE talked-3.pl with the authorities  
 He said that the authorities were talked to
- b. Se **llegaron** a **los 74,3 millones de operaciones** (Dialectal Spanish)  
 SE arrived-3.pl to the 74,3 million of operations  
 74,3 million of operations were reached
- d. Nunca se **pensaron** en **las condiciones de riesgo** (Dialectal Spanish)  
 never SE thought-3.pl in the conditions of risk  
 Risk conditions were considered

The data above, which have not been documented before (not even in the recent RAE-ASALE 2009), are not isolated hits: The pattern is rather productive, even in formal texts, and seems to be slightly more productive in American Spanish.

**4. THE PROPOSAL: TWO TYPES OF PREPOSITIONS.** Although the data in (4) and (6) are descriptively identical (number agreement across P), we claim that they involve different analyses. Whereas DOM and partitive prepositions can readily be treated as functional projections (not *bona fide* projecting Ps), as already noted, the cases in (6) require a different account, since these prepositions have lexical content (they are typically selected by the verbal predicate). In particular, we assume that P is incorporated into V, making it possible for the  $\phi$ -Probe on T to agree with the NP in number. Therefore, we have the following scenarios:

- (7) a. [TP SE T [VP V . . . [ K XP ] ] ]                      b. [TP SE T [VP [V-P] . . . [ tp XP ] ] ]

That (7b) displays agreement with the NP and not a null  $pro_{arb}$  (cf. Suñer 1983) is shown by the fact that an overt counterpart, which is possible in other cases (where the non-referential reading is lost; cf. (8)), is rejected in the structures under consideration, as can be seen in (9).

- (8) En España, (ellos) se acuestan tarde                      (9) (\*Ellos) se hablaron de temas importantes  
 in Spain they SE go-to-bed late                                      they SE talked-3.pl of topics important  
 In Spain, (they / people) go to bed late                              Important topics were talked about

A long-distance agreement based approach is further reinforced by the fact that SE pseudopassives with a verb inflected in plural are impossible when the PP-internal NP is singular. Differently put, (10) is not found.

- (10) [TP SE T<sub>[number:plural]</sub> [VP V . . . [ P XP<sub>[number:singular]</sub> ] ] ]

One final important fact is that, although there are SE pseudopassives, there are no periphrastic pseudopassives (cf. (11a)), probably because of the participle. Interestingly, the “hybrid pattern” is not possible with periphrases either (cf. (11b)), which supports the key role of the participle:

- (11) a. \*Fueron hablados de temas importantes                      b. \*Se han ayudados a los estudiantes  
 were talked-3.pl of topics important                                      SE have-3.pl helped-3.pl to the students  
 Important topics were talked    The students have been helped

**5. CONCLUSIONS.** This paper has explored two patterns where number agreement takes place across a preposition in Spanish SE sentences. Whereas the first pattern involves functional prepositions (and is well documented), the second one has not even been reported. As we have seen, such unnoticed pattern can readily be analyzed in terms of long-distance agreement (not a null  $pro_{arb}$ ), which requires for the preposition not to shield the NPs through P-to-V incorporation.

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