

# Introduction

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## 1. Introduction

Language has always been a paramount object of study for philosophers and researchers. It was not, however, until the 19th century, with the emergence of the first comparative studies, that dialectology emerged as a linguistic discipline. Language – and languages – went from being considered static objects, meant to be studied in a

prescriptive way, to dynamic, changing and diverse objects whose variation also needed to be examined.

Today, languages are conceived as systems of considerable complexity made up of a set of not only geographical but also social and register varieties that can be explained as objects of the natural world and as cultural objects. From this perspective, Standard Spanish can be considered as a set of linguistic facts shared by the speakers of this language (common vocabulary and syntactic structures). In addition to this general Spanish, Spanish, like every other language, has non-shared linguistic uses that sets the boundaries between different dialectal areas.

Within the generativist theory, the study of dialectal varieties is considered another means of understanding the Faculty of Language. Both the theory of Principles and Parameters, either in terms of macroparameters (Baker, 2008) or microparameters (Kayne 2000), as well as the latest proposals of the minimalist theory (Chomsky 2021), offer tools that allow investigating syntactic variation in a rigorous way, including, recently, variation related to social dimensions (Adger, Jamieson & Smith to appear).

Within this framework, the first edition of the Workshop on Spanish Dialects (Spadisyn) was held in 2016, in which different works related to the study of the varieties of Spanish from a syntactic and formal perspective are presented. Since that first meeting, which was held at the Complutense University of Madrid, the workshop has travelled to several universities in Spain (University of Alcalá on two occasions, University of Castilla la Mancha, University of Extremadura and, once again, Complutense University of Madrid). Throughout every meeting, the growing interest in this discipline and the increase in the academic level of the research presented have been clearly palpable.

This monographic volume collects the selected papers of the 6th Spadisyn, which was held at the University of Alcalá on the 23rd and 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. The meeting had a total of 19 talks in addition to the excellent contributions of the Keynote Speakers, M. Victoria Pavón and Avel.lina Suñer, on the one hand, and Andrés Saab. During the meeting, different issues related to syntactic variation in Spanish were addressed, mainly from a formal perspective.

Following a blind peer-review process, seven articles were selected for this monograph. A summary of each of them is provided below.

Villa-García's paper, "Lessons from overtly-headed exclamatives in Spanish varieties: implications for the account of obligatory subject-verb inversion" deals with exclamative sentences headed by overt *que* in different varieties. The author shows that previous accounts of the phenomenon (e.g., T-to-C movement) fall short of explaining the facts in a non-stipulative way, and instead proposes an analysis which draws on the idea that Spec, TP is an A-bar position targeted by non-*que* exclamatives, much like interrogatives. When the complementizer occurs, however, there is a further step of movement of the wh-exclamative to a specifier in the left periphery, whose head is lexicalized by means of the explicit complementizer. Several predictions are borne out. All in all, this more succinct and economical proposal solves several issues raised by competing accounts.

The study by Andrés Saab, "Neither agreement nor pronouns. Clitic doubling and Weak Crossover in Rioplatense Spanish" focuses on dative and accusative clitic doubling in Rioplatense Spanish and argues that these doubling clitics are neither pronouns nor agreement markers, but probes for A-movement and predicate-makers

at LF. Baker & Kramer (2018) suggest that the different distribution that accusative and dative clitic doubling has in Spanish can be explained if accusative doubling clitics are pronouns, but dative doubling ones are agreement markers. Their argument is based on the observation that the more restricted distribution of accusative doubling is the byproduct of weak crossover, which bans, for instance, the doubling of accusative *wh*-phrases (e.g., \*¿A quién<sub>i</sub> lo<sub>i</sub> viste? ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did you see?’), but not of dative *wh*-phrases (e.g., ¿A quién<sub>i</sub> le<sub>i</sub> diste el libro? ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did you give the book?’). However, Saab shows that the proposal both over- and under-generates and that, in reality, both types of clitics behave as probes for A-movement. According to his view, the syntactic distribution each type of doubling has boils down to the formal makeup of direct and indirect objects. Thus, whereas accusative doubling is triggered by person features encoded in doubled direct objects, dative doubling is, instead, dependent on a [D]-category feature present in indirect objects.

The article by Ormazabal and Romero “The modularity of agreement variation” explores some of the consequences of their 2022 paper on *se* constructions. They first propose that Agree probes only encode the higher feature in the feature hierarchy,  $\phi$ . Therefore, as soon as it finds a goal, the relation is completed, independently of whether it has checked all the features needed for the morphological word. In the case of defective subjects, the incomplete feature matrix may be fixed in morphology by ergative (ERG --> ABS) or accusative displacement (ACC --> NOM), when there are ergative or accusative features available. Otherwise, the derivation reaches the extragrammatical components where values are assigned either by sociolinguistic default or by linear agreement.

Pavón and Suñer’s work “V-Doubling subordinates of immediate succession: a comparative approach between Classical Spanish & Atlantic Creoles” studies, from a syntactic and an interpretative perspective, a subordination strategy for expressing immediate succession present in Classical Spanish as a diachronic and diaphasic case of variation. As the authors point out, these constructions are found in Cultured Spanish narrative texts between the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> only in written Spanish (oral language used other strategies for constructing temporal subordinates). In the paper, Classical Spanish is compared with Atlantic creole languages and show that both types of languages share relevant properties and differ in some others.

Fernández-Soriano and Ordóñez’s paper “Possessives and spatial expressions in Spanish” aims to account for the behavior of a type of Spanish complex locative non-directional prepositional expressions taking a genitive complement like *Se sentó encima de Juan* > *Se le sentó encima* (“S/he sat on top on Juan”. Lit “S/he him(dat) sat on top”). After describing the properties of the construction, they analyze the dative version as a case of what they call Inaliable Location. The authors propose that the construction has a nominal nature, which accounts for the dative alternation and explains the presence of postnominal possessive adjectives (*Se sentó detrás mía* “Lit. S/he sat behind mine”). Finally, the paper analyzes dialectal variation regarding the gender of the possessive.

Escribano’s work, “Events and copulas. An approach to a phenomenon of variation across Spanish dialects”, deals with a phenomenon of variation in Spanish copulative structures with qualifying adjectives and eventive subjects (*El sismo estuvo terrible* ‘The seism was terrible’), by presenting data from different varieties and proposing a first formal approach to justify the differences detected with respect to

two dimensions of variation: the argument structure of adjectival predicates and the syntactic-semantic properties of *estar* itself.

Mare and Pato's article "On morphological alternation and late insertion. Spanish Analogical Strong Preterits under the microscope" deals with the analysis of the morphophonological variation in the Spanish inflectional system, which determines the choice between the form *dij-e-ron* ('they say') and the form *dij-o-n* ('they say') in the expression of the third person plural with the strong preterits. The authors ponder over two questions: on the one hand, why is the same concept ('saying' in this case) related to two distinct stems *dec-* (*decía* '(s)he said') and *dij-* (*dijo* '(s)he said')? On the other hand, why does the analogy between 3SG/3PL only occur with the strong preterits and not with the regular perfective forms in the variety under study? (*cantó* '(s)he sang' ~ *cantaron* 'they sang', but *dijo* '(s)he said' ~ *dijon* 'they said'). Within the framework of Distributed Morphology, their proposal is summarized by the Strong Preterits Rule which states that strong preterits are phonological exponents that materialize the Root ( $\sqrt{\text{ }}$ ) and the verbalizer (*v*) together when Tense is [PAST].

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