

## Focus structure and verbal doubling in Spanish

Carlos Muñoz Pérez  
Universidad de Buenos Aires & CONICET  
*cmunozperez@filo.uba.ar*

### 0. Outline (sort of)

Main ideas in this presentation:

#### Big question

- ✓ Are there non-transformational mechanisms that allow accounting for replicative processes in grammar?

#### Empirical domain

- ✓ Verbal doubling in Spanish

#### Answer

- ✓ The properties of certain type of verbal doubling in Spanish may be explained by appealing to informational structure, particularly, the distribution of given information and focus.

### 1. Predicate doubling as multiple copy pronunciation

I will focus on a verbal doubling construction in Spanish that I will call *predicate doubling*.

#### (1) Predicate doubling

**Compr**ar (un auto), puedo **compr**ar un auto.  
To.buy a car can.1SG to.buy a car  
'As for buying (a car), I can buy a car.'

#### Vicente (2007)

- ✓ The dislocated vP/V is generated through movement.
- ✓ Predicate doubling involves multiple copy pronunciation, i.e., not applying *Chain Reduction* (cf. Nunes 2004) to some chain members.

- (2) a. *Pronunciation of two links of a chain CH = {V, V}*  
[CP [v **Compr**ar] ... [TP puedo [vP [v **compr**ar] un auto]]]  
b. *Pronunciation of two links of a chain CH = {vP, vP}*  
[CP [vP **Compr**ar un auto] ... [TP puedo [vP **compr**ar un auto]]]

Putative evidence for this analysis: island effects.

#### (3) Extraction from an embedded complement clause

**Compr**ar, Juan dijo que María **compró** un libro.  
to.buy Juan said that María bought a book

#### (4) Extraction from a temporal adjunct

\***Compr**ar, fui al cine después de **compr**ar un libro.  
to.buy went to.the cinema after of to.buy a book

#### (5) Extraction from a relative clause

\***Compr**ar, vi al hombre que compró un libro.  
to.buy saw the man that bought a book

### 2. Predicate doubling vs. Capicúa doubling

There is a different type of verbal doubling in Rioplatense Spanish discussed by Saab (2008, 2010, 2016). Call it *capicúa doubling*. It involves a strict V+XP+V pattern with emphatic value.

#### (6) Capicúa doubling

- a. **Compré** el auto, **compré**.  
bought the car bought  
'I did but the car'.  
b. **Lo atamos** con alambre, **lo atamos**.  
CL tie.1PL with wires CL tie.2PL  
'We do tie it with wires'.

Saab's (2016) comparison of predicate doubling and capicúa doubling shows convincingly that only the latter may be analyzed by appealing to transformational means (i.e., Copy+Merge).

#### Isomorphism

- ✓ For two constituents to be copies, they must be isomorphic.

Capicúa doubling requires strict identity between both verbs, e.g., if a clitic is attached to one of them, the other verb must also have a clitic.

#### (7) Capicúa doubling

- a. \***Atamos** el coso con alambre, **lo atamos**.  
Tie.1PL the thingy with wires CL tie.2PL  
b. \***Lo atamos** con alambre, **atamos el coso**.  
CL tie.1PL with wires tie.1PL the thingy

However, vPs in predicate doubling constructions are not required to be isomorphic, as the second vP may carry anaphoric expressions referring to the corresponding argument in the first vP.

(8) *Predicate doubling with clitic*  
 Comprar un auto, puedo comprarlo.  
 to.buy a car can to.buy-CL  
 'As for buying a car, I can buy it'.

(9) *Predicate doubling with strong pronoun*  
 Hablar con Eliana, hablé con ella.  
 to.talk with Eliana talk.1SG with her  
 'As for talking to Eliana, I talked to her'.

(10) *Predicate doubling with epithets*  
 Hablar con Cosmo, hablé con el idiota/tipo/chabón.  
 to.talk with Cosmo talk.1sg with the idiot/guy/dude  
 'As for talking to Cosmo, I talked to the idiot/guy/dude'.

Moreover, Saab observes that clitic pronouns like the one in (8) behave exactly as if they were referring to a previously mentioned definite DP in a different sentence.

(11) Compré [el auto]<sup>i</sup>. Pude comprarlo<sup>i</sup> ayer.  
 bought.1SG the car could.1SG to.buy-CL yesterday  
 'I bought the car. I could buy it yesterday'.

Spanish allows the presence of null pronominal objects when their antecedent is indefinite.

(12) A: ¿Compraste cerveza?<sup>i</sup>  
 buy.2SG beer  
 B: Si, compré Ø<sup>i</sup> ayer.  
 Yes, bought.1SG yesterday

The same pattern is attested in predicate doubling constructions.

(13) Comprar cerveza<sup>i</sup>, compré Ø<sup>i</sup> ayer.  
 to.buy beer bought yesterday

Indefinite null objects may carry certain types of modifiers, e.g., adjectives (cf. (14)), quantification (cf. (15)).

(14) A: ¿Preferís cerveza<sup>i</sup> belga o irlandesa?  
 prefer.2SG beer Belgian or Irish  
 'Would you prefer Belgian or Irish beer?'  
 B: Prefiero Ø<sup>i</sup> belga.  
 Prefer.1SG Belgian  
 'I prefer Belgian (beer)'.

(15) A: ¿Comes pescado<sup>i</sup>?  
 Eat.2SG fish  
 'Do you eat fish?'  
 B: Como poco Ø<sup>i</sup>.  
 eat.1SG few  
 'I eat a little'.

Once again, predicate doubling replicates the anaphoric pattern.

(16) *Predicate doubling*  
 a. Tomar cerveza<sup>i</sup>, tomo Ø<sup>i</sup> belga.  
 to.drink beer drink.1SG Belgian  
 b. Comer pescado<sup>i</sup>, como poco Ø<sup>i</sup>.  
 to.eat fish eat.1SG few

But capicúa doubling seems to reject null indefinite objects as it does not accept their modifiers.

(17) *Capicúa doubling*  
 a. Tomo cerveza, tomo (\*belga).  
 drink.1SG beer, drink.1SG Belgian  
 b. Como pescado, como (\*poco).  
 eat.1SG fish eat.1SG few

*Conclusions (see Saab 2016 for further discussion)*

- ✓ Verbs in capicúa doubling are necessarily isomorphic; *they are copies*.
- ✓ Verbal arguments in predicate doubling constructions (i) are not isomorphic and (ii) may be anaphorically related; *vPs in this case are not copies*.

(18) *Structure for predicate doubling*  
 [CP **vP**<sup>i</sup> [TP ... **vP**<sup>j</sup>]], where vP<sup>i</sup> and vP<sup>j</sup> are not transformationally related

But...

(19) [<sub>VP</sub> Comer pescado]<sup>i</sup>, puedo [<sub>VP</sub> comprar el auto]<sup>j</sup>.  
 to.eat fish can.1SG to.buy the car

### 3. Focus interpretation in predicate doubling

According to Vicente (2007), predicate doubling constructions have a non-contradictory *verum focus* interpretation (cf. Lipták 2003), i.e., they emphasize the positive polarity of the proposition in contrast to a different proposition. (In each case, capital letters indicate the syllable on which pitch accent falls).

(20) Cosmo [<sub>F</sub> SÍ] compró el auto, pero perdió el registro.  
 Cosmo yes bought the car but lost the license  
 'Cosmo DID buy the car, but he lost his license'.

- (21) Comprar el auto, lo [F comPRÉ], pero perdí el registro.  
 to.buy the car CL bought but lost the license  
*'As for buying the car, I DID buy it, but I lost my license'.*

This type of interpretation, however, is not a defining property of the construction. While (21) has a verum focus interpretation, predicate doubling also allows focalizing components other than the polarity of the proposition.

- (22) a. Comprar, compré [F el AUto], no la moto.  
 to.buy bought the car not the motorcycle  
*'As for buying, I bought the CAR, not the motorcycle'.*  
 b. Hablar, hablé [F con COSmo], no con Eliana.  
 to.talk talked with Cosmo not with Eliana  
*'As for talking, I talked to COSMO, not to Eliana.'*  
 c. Comprar, compré [F COSmo] el asado, no yo.  
 to.buy, bought Cosmo the meat not I  
*'As for buying, COSMO bought the meat, not me'.*

Pitch accent and Focus are in a complementary distribution with given information (e.g., Selkirk 1995, Schwarzschild 1999, Büring 2013). While this correlation in Spanish is not as strong as in English (cf. Ladd 2008, Hualde 2004), the generalization seems to be correct at least for cases of wide focus.

Compare (23) and (24). (Underlined constituents are given).

- (23) a. Cosmo compró el libro ayer y Jorge compró el libro ayer.  
 b. #Cosmo compró el libro ayer y Jorge compró [F el LIbro] ayer.  
*'Cosmo bought the book yesterday and Jorge bought the book yesterday'.*  
 (24) Cosmo compró el libro ayer y Jorge compró [F la reVISta] ayer.  
*'Cosmo bought the book yesterday and Jorge bought the MAGAZINE yesterday'.*

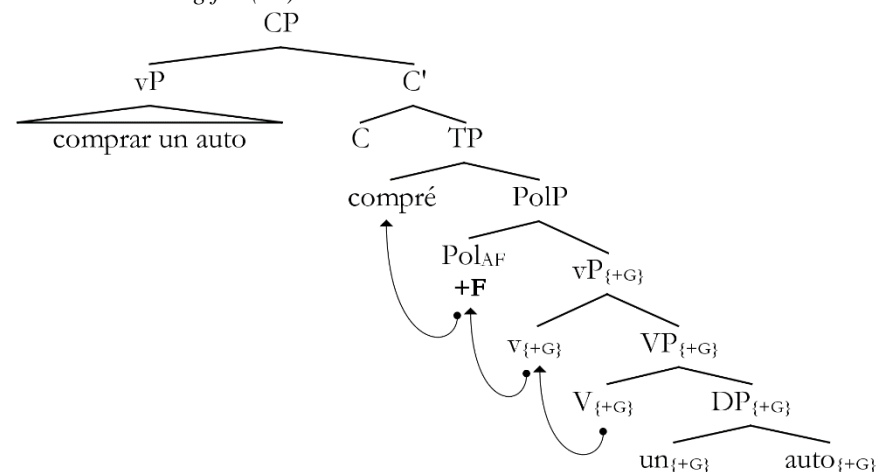
#### Proposal

- ✓ The vP in the left periphery has the function of marking as given different elements in the lower vP.

Consider the following sentence.

- (25) Comprar un auto, compré un auto.  
 to.buy a car bought.1SG a car

- (26) Givenness-marking for (25)



- (27) a. Comprar un auto, **comPRÉ** un auto.  
 b. #Comprar un auto, compré un **AUto**.

A similar analysis applies for cases where an anaphoric element appears in the vP inside the clause. Anaphoric elements are given, therefore they cannot carry the pitch accent.

- (28) Comprar el auto, lo **comPRÉ**.  
 to.buy the car CL bought  
*'As for buying the car, I DID buy it'.*

Consider the case where a bare verb appears in the left periphery.

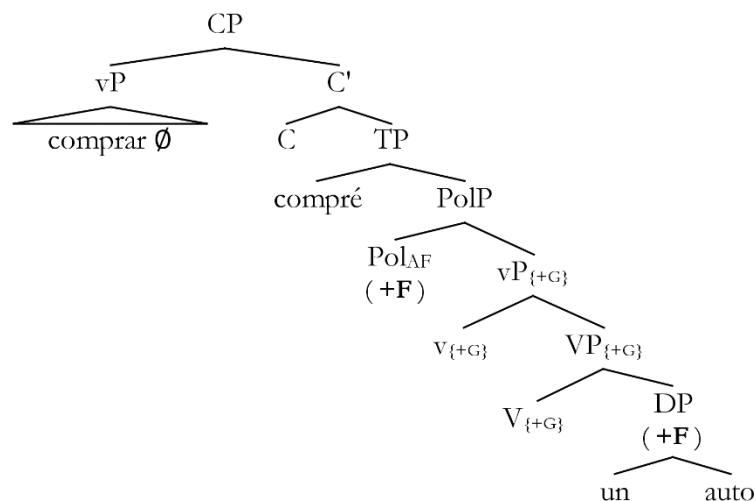
- (29) Comprar, compré el auto.

For explicitness, it is assumed that the complement of the verb in the left periphery is a null argument  $\emptyset$  similar to the one appearing in (30).

- (30) Voy a [sv comprar  $\emptyset$ ].  
 Go.1SG to buy  
*'I will buy (something)'.*

In this case, neither the Pol<sub>AF</sub> head nor the internal argument are given, therefore any of them may be interpreted as a focus and carry the pitch accent.

(31)



- (32) a. Comprar, **comPRÉ** el auto (pero perdí el registro).  
To.buy bought the car but lost the license  
'As for buying, I DID buy the car (but I lost my license)'.  
b. Comprar, compré el AUto (y no la moto).  
To.buy bought the car and not the motorcycle  
'As for buying, I bought the CAR (and not the motorcycle)'.

Finally, consider a case like (33), where both vPs are totally distinct.

- (33) Comer pescado, compré el auto.  
to.eat fish bought the car

Given that the vP *comer pescado* 'to eat fish' cannot mark as given the clause-internal vP *compré el auto* 'I bought the car', the former does not perform any particular function, and therefore violates the principle of Full Interpretation at LF.

- (34) *Full Interpretation*  
There can be no superfluous symbols in representations.

Besides of explaining the pattern, this analysis allows to account for two more properties of the predicate doubling construction.

#### Consequence I

- ✓ Island effects attested in predicate doubling may follow from givenness-marking.

- (35) **Comprar**, Juan dijo que María **compró** un libro.  
to.buy Juan said that María bought a book

- (36) \***Comprar**, fui al cine después de **comprar** un libro.  
to.buy went to.the cinema after of to.buy a book

- (37) \***Comprar**, vi al hombre que compró un libro.  
to.buy saw the man that bought a book

Compare these three cases with the following ones.

- (38) Cosmo<sup>i</sup> compró el libro, pero Jorge dijo que *pro*<sup>i</sup> compró [<sub>F</sub> la reVISTA].  
'Cosmo<sup>i</sup> bought the book, but Jorge said that he<sup>i</sup> bouth the MAGAZINE'.

- (39) #Cosmo compró el libro porque Jorge se quejó cuando *pro*<sup>i</sup> compró [<sub>F</sub> la reVISTA].  
'Cosmo<sup>i</sup> bought the book because Jorge complained when he<sup>i</sup> bought the MAGAZINE'.

- (40) #Cosmo compró el libro, y Jorge conoció a la persona que compró [<sub>F</sub> la reVISTA].  
'Cosmo bought the book, and Jorge met the person who bought the MAGAZINE'.

In (39) and (40) the DP *la revista* 'the magazine' cannot carry the pitch accent and be interpreted as a contrastive focus. Assume this follows because the previous sentences cannot mark as given the syntactic context of *la revista*. If this is the case, the unacceptability of (36) and (37) also follows: in these sentences, the verb in the left periphery fails at marking as given the verb inside the clause, so the former becomes superfluous and violates (34).

#### Consequence II

- ✓ Genus-species interpretations are expected.

Vicente (2007) reports that there is variation regarding the acceptability of genus-species patterns as the ones in (41).

- (41) a. %Cocinar, Juan ha asado un pollo  
cook.INF J has roasted a chicken  
'As for cooking, Juan has roasted a chicken'.  
b. %Leer un libro, Juan ha leído Akira  
read.INF a book J has read A  
'As for reading a book, Juan has read Akira'.

Notice that the acceptability of this type of pattern improve if we use (i) bare nouns and (ii) more prototypical hyperonym-hyponym pairs.

- (42) a. %Comer          pescado, como      aTÚN.  
          to.eat          fish          eat          tuna  
          ‘*As for eating fish, I eat TUNA.*
- b. %Leer          libros, leo          noVElas.  
          to.readbooks      read          novels  
          *As for reading books, I read NOVELS.*

This kind of variation is somehow expected under the present approach (and not under an analysis based on multiple copy pronunciation), as it depends on lexical semantics and categorization.

- (43) (I want to learn the violin,) because I LIKE string instruments

- (44) *Givenness* (Büring 2013: 875)

An expression E is given in a context C if there is a synonym or hyponym A to E s.t. the meaning of A is salient in C.

- (45) Hyponym → givenness-marking → **hyperonym**<sub>{+G}</sub>

The acceptability of these patterns improves even more if focalizing elements as *solo* ‘only’ are added

- (46) a. Comer          pescado,          como      sólo      aTÚN.  
          to.eat          fish          eat      only      tuna  
          ‘*As for eating fish, I eat only TUNA.*
- b. Leer          libros, leo      sólo      noVElas.  
          to.read          books      read      only      novels  
          *As for reading books, I read only NOVELS.*

The amelioration effect introduced by *sólo* can only be explained under the proposed approach to predicate doubling.

#### 4. Conclusions

An approach to predicate doubling based on *givenness* and *focus* allows to:

- ✓ Explain the distribution of focalized constituents in the construction.
- ✓ Explain the presence of anaphoric elements in the second vP.
- ✓ Offer an alternative account for island effects.
- ✓ Make sense of the genus-focus interpretation attested in the construction.

Thank you.