

## Properties of the Extended Verb Phrase: Agreement, the Structure of INFL, and Subjects in Spanish

Julio Villa-García  
*University of Manchester*

### 1. Introduction

The Extended Verb Phrase (EVP) refers to those verb-related properties that go beyond the lexical features of verbs: the properties of functional categories above the VP. The following Spanish sentence illustrates major aspects of the EVP:

- (1) El congreso no le puede haber dado más satisfacción  
the symposium not cl. can have given more satisfaction  
'S/he could not have found the symposium more rewarding.'

First, (1) involves a finite, conjugated verb in the indicative mood, *puede*, which is a modal verb. This verb has morphological endings that indicate the tense of the sentence (present) alongside the subject agreement features –person and number features of the subject, *el congreso*. *Puede* is followed by an aspectual auxiliary (*haber*), which marks (grammatical) perfective aspect. (*Haber* in turn is followed by a participle, which is the main (i.e., lexical) verb of the sentence, followed by its direct object, *más satisfacción*). Besides the modal, auxiliary, and main verbs, the (preverbal) subject *el congreso* is also featured in the sentence, along with the negative particle *no* and the third-person singular dative weak pronoun (aka clitic) *le*, which precedes the finite verb and performs the indirect object function. In sum, (1) discloses several EVP-related pieces of information: the mood of the sentence (indicative), the subject and its agreement relationship with the finite verb in terms of person and number, a pronominal clitic, negation, modality, aspect, and tense. Some of these are manifested morphologically (e.g., mood, tense, person, and number) and some syntactically (e.g., modality, negation). Such EVP properties have attracted a great deal of attention in the history of grammar from different frameworks. In this chapter, I concentrate on the structure of inflection and subject-verb agreement (Section 2), as well as subjects in finite contexts in present-day Spanish (Section 3). The framework adopted here is Chomsky's generative paradigm.

### 2. Inflection and approaches to agreement in the generative tradition

Traditionally, verbs have been said to agree in person and number with subjects. In Spanish, subject-agreement features (aka  $\phi$ -features) include person and number. Spanish is said to display "rich" agreement and thus to license null subjects – grammatical subjects expressed through morphological suffixes on the verb root. Spanish also allows overt subjects, expressed as a phrase (usually a DP). The two types of subject are illustrated in (2), where the overt subject *los chicos* in the first sentence is third-person plural. The null subject is the subject of the second sentence and is also third-person plural, as indicated by the verbal form *estaban*.

- (2) Los chicos llegaron a las siete. Estaban agotados  
the guys arrived to the seven were exhausted  
'The guys arrived at 7. They were exhausted.'

A brief historical overview of the development of agreement in the generative paradigm is important to understand current versions of the theory (see D'Alessandro

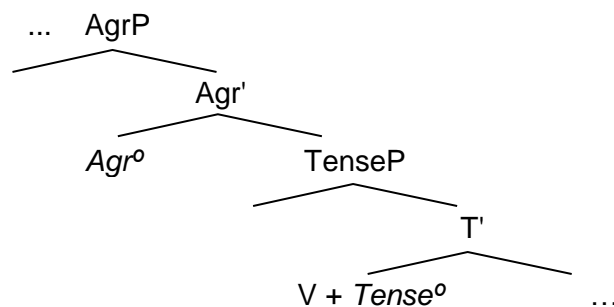
2016). The reader should bear in mind that in what follows I do not discuss the morphological structure of Spanish verbal forms –for this topic, see Ambadiang (2016), Pérez Saldanya (2012), and RAE & ASALE (2009: 49-93).

### 2.1. Inflection and agreement in Chomsky's generative grammar

The topic of syntactic agreement became prominent in research within Generative Grammar in the Government and Binding/Principles and Parameters (GB/P&P) framework (Chomsky 1981) (on the topic of generative grammar more generally, see Kempchinsky, this volume). In this work, INFL(ection) heralds the sentential projection IP (Inflectional Phrase), which is the abstract phrase that houses such operations as tense and the agreement relation. The values of INFL could be  $[\pm\text{Tense}]$ , depending on the (non-)finiteness of the sentence. A finite INFL has “the features person, gender and number; call this complex AGR (‘agreement’)” (Chomsky 1981: 52). Since this point, the issue of agreement has been intimately associated with Case in the syntactic literature, with AGR being the governing element assigning Case in INFL (i.e., on this view, if INFL contains AGR then it governs the subject, thus assigning nominative Case to it via the feature  $[\text{+INFL}]$ ). In the wake of this discussion, “subjects are nominative when they agree with the matrix verb –technically, with its inflection” (Chomsky 1981: 52). Under this analysis, syntactic Case is a structural notion. For instance, nominative Case is associated with the specifier position of INFL (i.e., Spec,INFL), which in turn is linked to the traditional subject function. Note the important role of Spec-Head (i.e.,  $[\text{XP} \text{ } [\text{x} \text{ }]]$ ) agreement relationships under this approach. The theory of empty categories developed within the GB/P&P framework was also crucial for the postulation of the null category *pro*, the non-overt subject of finite sentences in Spanish-style null (aka pro-drop) languages. On this view, *pro* is a non-overt element in Spec,INFL, with which AGR agrees.

Pollock (1989) made a proposal to revise the claim that AGR is located in INFL. He contends that INFL is split into two major categories: Tense and Agr(eement). This structural division is partly motivated by the claim that inflected verbs are formed through head movement to collect affixes along the way, in an order primarily determined by the hierarchy of functional projections (cf. Baker's 1985 Mirror Principle). In relation to Spanish, a widely-accepted instantiation of this proposal is that Agr (the host of preverbal subjects under some accounts) dominates Tense, the landing site of verbs, which are standardly assumed to move up to the inflectional domain in the language (i.e., V-to-T movement; see 2.1.2), as shown schematically in (3). As suggested by the order Subject + Negation + (cl.+)V (cf. (1)), negation can optionally occur in-between Agr and Tense in NegP/ $\Sigma$ P (Laka 1990; Ortega-Santos, this volume; *i.a.*). An empirical motivation for the claim that AgrP is higher than TP is that agreement morphemes (e.g., *disfrutábamos*) are external with respect to tense morphemes (e.g., *disfrutábamos*) (Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 228).

(3)



## 2.2. INFL and agreement in the Minimalist Program

With the advent of the Minimalist Program for Linguistic Theory (Chomsky 1995 et seq.), a geometry of the inflectional domain along the lines of (3) was inherited, with specialized AgrSP (AgreementSubject Phrase) and TP (Tense Phrase) projections.

### 2.1.1. Features

A crucial aspect of the Minimalist Program is the prominent role attributed to FEATURES, which represent fine-grained grammatical information such as [person], [tense], and [Case]. Since Minimalism puts a premium on economy of derivations and representations, movement operations must be justified: all movement is determined by features. The system distinguishes three types of features: phonetic, semantic, and formal (grammatical/syntactic) (Chomsky 1965, López 2007, a.o.). The latter kind is crucial to drive movement in syntax under early Minimalist approaches. A further distinction within the category of formal features is that of interpretable and uninterpretable features:

- INTERPRETABLE FEATURES: the inherent features of a nominal (e.g., [person], [number], and [gender]) are interpretable at the LF (Logical Form) component.
- UNINTERPRETABLE FEATURES: morphosyntactic features (e.g., the [person] and [number] features of AgrS<sup>0</sup>) must be checked off against interpretable features before reaching Spell-Out (i.e., the point at which the derivation is handed over to the PF (Phonological Form) and LF components).

According to early versions of Minimalism (Chomsky 1995: Ch. 3), uninterpretable features must be deleted before Spell-Out, in accordance with the PRINCIPLE OF FULL INTERPRETATION (PFI), which states that every element of LF and PF must receive an appropriate interpretation; thus, unless uninterpretable features are dealt with before the derivation reaches the interfaces, the derivation is said to be non-convergent.

### 2.1.2. Features as the locus of parametric variation: V-to-T movement and the EPP

In the P&P approach, syntactic differences between languages were attributed to differences in the setting of the values of a parameter (e.g., the NULL SUBJECT PARAMETER; see Section 3). An advantage of the feature system is that features constitute the locus of parametric variation, i.e., crosslinguistic variation is restricted to the features of functional heads (cf. BORER-CHOMSKY CONJECTURE; 'lexical parameters'). In early Minimalism, uninterpretable features may be STRONG FEATURES, which are visible at PF and thus trigger overt movement, or WEAK FEATURES, which are invisible at PF and thus trigger non-overt/covert (i.e., LF-only) movement (Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 230-233). This version of Minimalism assumes a strongly lexicalist approach to morphology: lexical items enter the derivation fully inflected; morphemes do not undergo movement or incorporate in the syntax. The empirical advantages of the strong/weak features distinction include capturing cross-linguistic variation in V-to-I/T movement as well as the requirement to have a lexical subject in preverbal position –operative in languages like English, but not in Spanish. Consider first the contrast in (4).

- (4) a. \*Linguists read fast those books (cf. Linguists read those books fast)  
 b. Los lingüistas        leen        rápido    esos    libros  
     the linguists        read        fast      those   books

In English (cf. (4a)), the adverb cannot intervene between the verb and the direct object. This is not the case in Spanish, where that order is perfectly grammatical (see (4b)). Since the work of Emonds (1978) and Pollock (1989), the contrast in (4) has been taken to indicate that in languages like Spanish, the verb moves past the adverb to a position in the inflectional domain, whereas in English, the lexical verb stays lower. Under the strong/weak features approach, this parametric difference is understood thus: in Spanish, the features of Tense<sup>0</sup> are strong, which correlates under some accounts with the “rich” verbal morphology found in Spanish (see Koenenman & Zeijlstra 2014 for discussion of the controversial RICH AGREEMENT HYPOTHESIS and arguments for its rehabilitation universally). Thus, strong features cause the verb to move to Tense<sup>0</sup> overtly before Spell-Out. In English, on the other hand, due to the impoverished inflectional morphology exhibited by the verb, Tense features are weak, thus causing the verb to move only covertly after Spell-Out, with the result that the overt verb is pronounced in a lower position than in Spanish. Therefore, the strong/weak distinction offered an account for this well-known difference between languages such as English and Spanish (though see Camacho & Sánchez 2014 for a recent refinement, Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 233 for discussion of issues arising, and Richards 2016 for much-relevant general discussion on what triggers movement in syntax).

The strong/weak feature dichotomy also accounted for a long-noted contrast between English and Spanish. Whereas in English an overt subject must occur preverbally in all clauses, as in (5) (with well-documented exceptions such as imperative and diary-drop sentences), word order in Spanish is much freer and subjects may occur postverbally (cf. (6b)).

- (5) a. My sister has arrived  
b. \*Has arrived my sister
- (6) a. Mi hermana ha llegado  
my sister has arrived  
b. Ha llegado mi hermana  
has arrived my sister

As noted, the canonical subject position in the generative tradition is Spec,INFL-IP/TenseP (or Spec,AgrSP, assuming the split of INFL). In English, the subject is standardly assumed to occupy this position. Under the early Minimalist approach sketched above, the [person] feature of Tense is strong in this language, consequently requiring overt movement of the subject to the specifier of Tense. However, in Spanish this feature need not be strong, thus allowing the subject to stay in a lower position overtly (cf. (6b)).

### 2.1.3. Agree

In early late Minimalism (Chomsky 2000, 2001), just as the link between movement and agreement (i.e., Spec-Head configurations) is at least partly abandoned, so is the strength metaphor. The operation of AGREE, which Chomsky defines as “the erasure of uninterpretable features of probe and goal” (2000: 37), allows for agreement at a distance. This move leads Chomsky (2000: 122) to postulate  $\phi$ -features alongside the EPP, the feature counterpart of the traditional Extended Projection Principle, which can informally be defined as the principle ensuring that all sentences have a subject. More technically, assuming the VP-Internal Subject Hypothesis which proposes that the subject originates within the VP, the EPP is needed to force movement of the subject to its preverbal position –Spec,TP. For example in the English sentence *Peter*

*arrived at the stadium*, the subject *Peter* starts within the VP and is moved to Spec,TP by the EPP.

Under the *Agree* system of Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004, 2008),  $T^0$  has a set of uninterpretable agreement  $\phi$ -features, which are unvalued. The operation of *Agree* “establishes a relation (agreement, Case checking) between an LI [lexical item]  $\alpha$  and a feature  $F$ ” (Chomsky 2000: 101). These are morphosyntactic features which are not interpretable at LF. Chomsky has also suggested that these features are often not realized visibly at PF, in apparent violation of the aforementioned PRINCIPLE OF FULL INTERPRETATION (PFI), which posits that “the language faculty, including lexical items, operates exclusively with features that are interpretable at the interfaces” (Chomsky 2000: 27). Uninterpretable features (associated with inflectional morphology) must then be deleted in the course of the derivation. On this view, an active probe (i.e., one that contains an uninterpretable feature, e.g.,  $T^0$ ) can agree with an active goal (i.e., one comprising an uninterpretable feature, e.g., a noun, whose uninterpretable feature is Case) provided that both probe and goal are *related*, which requires that a *matching* condition be met, with matching being understood as feature identity (Chomsky 2001: 4).<sup>i</sup> As Chomsky (2000: 39) emphasizes, feature identity must be understood as “choice of feature, not of value.” Thus, an interpretable feature [3Person] is identical to an uninterpretable/unvalued feature [ $u$ Person]. On the basis of Chomsky’s (2000) discussion of interpretable and uninterpretable features of verbs and nouns, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Agreement ( $\phi$ -) features of nominals are interpretable at LF
- Agreement ( $\phi$ -) features of verbs are uninterpretable at LF
- Inherent Case features of nominals are interpretable at LF
- Structural Case features of nominals are uninterpretable at LF

In this paper I do not explore the issue of Case in any systematic fashion, the focus being on  $\phi$ -features, although both agreement and Case are closely related in the *Agree* framework. To illustrate the operation of *Agree*, consider the sentence in (7).

- (7) El sol se pone  
the sun cl. sets<sub>3.SG</sub>.  
'The sun sets.'

In this example, when  $T^0$  –the probe- enters the derivation (i.e., when it is merged), it carries the uninterpretable  $\phi$ -features [ $u$ Person] and [ $u$ Number], making it active for searching and agreeing with a goal. The nominal *el sol*, for its part, contains an unvalued structural Case feature [ $u$ Case] (or [ $u$ K]), making it active (i.e., searchable by a probe), alongside two interpretable features: [3Person] and [SgNumber].<sup>ii</sup> Because the features of the goal match the pertinent features of the probe  $T^0$ , *el sol* is an appropriate goal. The operation *Agree* *values* the uninterpretable features of both probe and goal and *deletes* them. One innovation of the *Agree* system is the concept of feature valuation. For Chomsky, uninterpretable features are unvalued, and they get valued by means of *Agree*. Uninterpretable features are not just checked, as in previous versions of the theory; they need to acquire a value. This is accompanied by the assumption that such features are then deleted. Thus, *Agree* for the pair (*el sol*,  $T^0$ ) is represented schematically in (8).

- (8) *Agree* (el sol,  $T^0$ ) = (el sol,  $T^0$ )  
[SgNumber] [ $u$ Number] [SgNumber] [~~SgNumber~~]  
[3Person] [ $u$ Person] [3Person] [~~3Person~~]  
[ $u$ Case] [NomCase] [~~NomCase~~] [NomCase]

The Agree system exemplified in (8) is fully compatible with postverbal subjects (cf. (6b)) in languages like Spanish, since this operation does not require a Spec-Head configuration (i.e., the probe searches for a suitable goal that is structurally lower). By way of illustration, in a sentence like (9), an agreement relationship is established between the elements  $T^0$  and *el sol* (i.e.,  $T^0$ , *el sol*), much like in (8).

- (9) Se pone el sol  
 cl. sets<sub>3.SG</sub> the sun  
 'The sun sets.'

I discuss the non-trivial issue of the EPP in Spanish and the directionality of agreement below.

#### 2.1.3.1. *Recent developments and issues for the Agree system*

As suggested by the discussion in the preceding sections, the theory of agreement has been the subject of intensive research for several decades. Different versions of the theory proposed to date have been subject to modification, both on empirical (see the following section) and theoretical grounds. A number of questions have been raised, including the suitability of the EPP and whether movement has to be driven by a feature of the moving element, rather than a feature of the target (Bošković 2007 and references therein). The issue of the locality of *Agree* has also been a point of contention: is *Agree* impervious to phases? (Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2005, Bošković 2007). Another question is whether elements that are potential goals can intervene between a probe and a goal (which can be accounted for through Relativized Minimality, as in Rizzi 1990, or through Defective Intervention, as proposed by Chomsky 2000, 2001). Similarly, the link between uninterpretability and valuation has been subject to scrutiny (Pesetsky & Torrego 2001 et seq.). The directionality of agreement has also been a matter of controversy, with authors such as Chomsky (2000, 2001) claiming that agreement occurs downwards (probe > goal) and others arguing for upwards agreement (goal > probe) (Zeijlstra 2012) or both (Béjar & Rezac 2009). Research on agreement has also posed the question of what happens when matching failures occur: a crash, finding an alternative (Béjar & Rezac 2009), or fail and carry on (Preminger 2014)? Other questions include whether probes can simultaneously have more than one goal (Hiraiwa 2001, a.o.). Specifically with regard to null-subject languages like Spanish, Barbosa (2009), drawing on Holmberg (2005), has advocated the hypothesis that the agreement features of  $T^0$  in Spanish are interpretable (dispensing with the need to postulate the existence of *pro*) (see Section 3 for the syntax of subjects).

#### 2.1.4. *Non-canonical agreement in Spanish*

Alongside sentences like (7) and (9), which exhibit canonical agreement, Spanish –like many of the world's languages– presents some interesting puzzles for theories of agreement. For reasons of space, the list of cases of non-canonically agreeing nominals presented below is by no means exhaustive; instead, I concentrate on some of the most significant discussions here (see Martínez 1999 and RAE & ASALE 2009: 646-652 for data manifesting various agreement patterns in Spanish). For instance, Spanish exhibits discordant subjects (Olarrea 1996, Ordóñez 1997, Saab 2007, Torrego 2014, Torrego & Laka 2015, Villa-García 2010, a.o.), as in (10). Villa-García (2010: fn. 2) entertains Corbett's (2006) claim that the DP *los lingüistas* need not be third-person. This intuition has been implemented syntactically by Sauerland (2004),

who assumes that the DP has a Phi/ $\Phi$  Phrase layer on top of it, responsible for agreeing with T<sup>0</sup>. For Torrego (2014) and Torrego & Laka (2015), the DP *los lingüistas* is linked to a null subject pronoun with its own, potentially different, set of phi-features (see also Saab 2007). According to Torrego (2014) and Villa-García (2010), only null-subject languages license examples such as (10).

- (10) Los lingüistas disfrutan / disfrutamos / disfrutáis con una coma  
 the linguists enjoy<sub>3.PL</sub> enjoy<sub>1.PL</sub> enjoy<sub>2.PL</sub> with a comma  
 'We/you/ $\emptyset$  linguists enjoy a comma.'

In certain dialects of Spanish, such as Argentinean Spanish, examples of what have been referred to as comitative agreement constructions can be found, as shown in (11). Such configurations involve two participants (akin to coordination cases), although one of them is preceded by the preposition *con* 'with.' However, the verb displays first-person plural agreement. For the properties and existing analyses of this construction in Spanish, see Camacho (2000) and Mare (2012).

- (11) Vamos a ir con Marina al cine  
 go<sub>1.PL</sub> to go with Marina to+the movies  
 'Marina and I are going to the movies.'  
 (cf. standard interpretation: 'We are going to the movies with Marina.')

In Latin American Spanish (and in varieties of Spanish that are in contact with Catalan), existential constructions exhibit singular/plural agreement, along the lines of English, as shown by the alternation in (12a) and (12b). This contrasts with the existential configuration that we find in most European varieties of Spanish, where the existential verb *haber* is invariably third-person singular regardless of the number of the nominal, as in (12c) (see Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007 for further exemplification and an *Agree*-based analysis).

- (12) a. Hubo una tormenta  
 there-was a storm  
 'There was a storm.'  
 b. Hubieron varias tormentas  
 there-were various storms  
 'There were several storms.'  
 c. Hubo una/varias tormenta(s)  
 there-was one/several storm(s)

Finally, as noted by López (2009), interpretable features are assumed in the *Agree* system to translate directly into the semantics (i.e., LF), but this assumption does not hold for all lexical items, as shown by (13). Although the word *gente* 'people' in Spanish is syntactically singular, it is semantically plural (López 2007: 81-85). The second sentence of (13), which features a null subject, contains a verb in the plural, and the referent of *pro* is *mucha gente*, from the previous sentence. In other words, in discourse, López (2009: 15) argues, "a pronoun that refers back to *gente* will show up in plural form."

- (13) Llegó mucha gente al hotel; *pro* estaban agotados  
 arrived<sub>3.SG</sub> much people to+the hotel were<sub>3.PL</sub> exhausted<sub>3.PL</sub>  
 'Many people arrived at the hotel; they were exhausted.'

In the following section, I turn to the discussion of the syntax of subjects in Spanish beyond agreement.

### 3. Subjects in Spanish

Our illustrative derivation in (8) deliberately leaves out the EPP, since its status in languages like Spanish is far from clear. A longstanding question in the syntax of Spanish is actually whether the EPP (be it a principle or a feature, as in the system outlined in Section 2) is active in Spanish. Ortega-Santos (2016) and Ortega-Santos & Villa-García (in preparation) provide relevant discussion. The reader is referred to Bošković (2007) and references therein for the desideratum that the EPP be eliminated from the theory of grammar. In recent work, Richards (2016) advocates a novel account of why Spanish does not display English-like EPP effects. According to his proposal, the Spanish T affix is reliably preceded by a metrical boundary, as in *cantábamos* ‘we sang’, which confirms Oltra-Massuet’s (1999, 2000) generalization that stress typically appears on the vowel that precedes the Tense morpheme in Spanish-style languages. Consequently, this avoids movement operations (of elements such as pronouns or expletives) driven by the need to support the T affix, as would be the case in English. Ojea (in preparation) provides an alternative view of EPP-satisfaction (and word order) in Spanish-type languages that is based on discourse considerations.

As is well-known, Spanish subjects may appear in different sentence positions, as shown by the postverbal subject in (6b) above. Thus, the question arises as to whether preverbal subjects (cf. (6a)/(7)) are derived via movement to Spec,TP/Spec,AgrSP, and, if so, whether this movement is EPP-driven, or whether they occur preverbally for other reasons (e.g., topicality) (see Ordóñez 2016). The analysis of the syntactic derivation of null subjects and postverbal subjects is an active area of research. For these reasons, the account of subjects in paradigmatic null-subject languages like Spanish has spawned much discussion in a vast body of research that spans several decades. This has been particularly so since the beginning of the GB/P&P framework in the early 1980s (Chomsky 1981), and at present remains the object of continuous inquiry.

As has been discussed, Romance languages including Spanish display tacitly implied, null (i.e., phonologically unrealized) subjects in finite clauses (cf. (14a,b)). It has been claimed that this property correlates with the availability of preverbal (SV) and postverbal (VS) subjects (Chomsky 1981, *i.a.*), illustrated in (14c) and (14d), respectively.<sup>iii</sup> It has been argued that another attending characteristic of null-subject languages is the property of obligatorily null expletives (pro<sup>expl.</sup>), as in (14b).

The NULL SUBJECT PARAMETER (NSP) (aka PRO-DROP PARAMETER) was postulated in order to account for the clustering of these syntactic properties. Languages like English are said to be non-pro-drop and languages like Spanish are pro-drop (Barbosa 2009, Chomsky 1981, Rizzi 1982, *i.a.*). The reader is referred to Camacho (2013), however, for the view that the link between the properties typically associated with the NSP is not as direct as has traditionally been assumed.

- |      |    |   |                        |         |         |                             |
|------|----|---|------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| (14) | a. | ∅ | Te                     | ha      | llamado | [Null subject]              |
|      |    |   | cl.                    | has     | called  |                             |
|      |    |   | ‘S/he has called you.’ |         |         |                             |
|      | b. | ∅ | Está                   | nevando |         | [Null “dummy” or expletive] |
|      |    |   | is                     | snowing |         |                             |
|      |    |   | ‘It’s snowing.’        |         |         |                             |



- c. *Luis*      *te*    *ha*      *llamado*                      [Preverbal subject]  
      *Lewis*    *cl.* *has*    *called*  
      ‘Lewis has called you.’
- d. *Te*    *ha*    *llamado*    *Luis*                      [Postverbal subject]  
      *cl.*    *has*    *called*      *Lewis*  
      ‘Lewis has called you.’

I discuss major properties of the analyses of the three types of subjects found in Spanish in order.

### 3.1. Null subjects

Null subjects in Spanish occur in contexts where they are mandatory, such as with atmospheric predicates (cf. (14b)), or when the referent of the subject is clear from the preceding discourse, as in (15). This example contains a null subject in the second sentence. Here, the subject is associated with third-person singular agreement, is salient, and carries the [-topic shift] pragmatic feature (i.e., it is a case of topic continuity); hence, a null subject ( $\emptyset$ /*pro*) is favored.

- (15) *Montero y yo*    *estuvimos*    *en Budapest.*    ¡ $\emptyset$  *Nos impresionó!*  
      *Montero and I*    *were*            *in Budapest*            *cl.*    *impressed*<sub>3.SG</sub>  
      ‘Montero and I were in Budapest. It impressed us!’

Subject pronouns in English-type non-null subject languages perform the grammatical function of representing overt person and number markers. The morphological endings of the verb in pro-drop languages like Spanish seem to perform this function instead. Thus, overt pronominals in [+NSP] languages like Spanish are restricted to focal (i.e., emphatic and contrastive) contexts and to cases where they are needed to identify the referent. It is in this way that overt pronouns in languages like Spanish are not truly optional; they serve a discursive function (see Posio, this volume).

The syntactic analysis of covert pronominal subjects in null-subject languages has been a major topic of inquiry in the Romance literature for more than three decades. Pioneering work in GB/P&P (Rizzi 1982) underscored the need for the null category *pro* to be both licensed (i.e., legitimized in the structure) and identified (i.e., the referent of *pro* should be determined on the basis of both the discourse context and the person and number agreement markers).

According to Contreras (1991), the subject *pro* occupies Spec,INFL (i.e., Spec,AgrSP/TP) and is, by hypothesis, a preverbal element. One of the questions raised in the literature has been whether *pro* is always present in Spec,INFL/TP, independently of whether the subject is null, postverbal, or preverbal. (Preverbal subjects may occupy a left-peripheral position, under several accounts). Proposals to dispense with *pro* have been made. On the one hand, authors including Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1998), Ordóñez & Treviño (1999), Taraldsen (1992), and Ticio (2004), a.o., have proposed to eliminate *pro* altogether by claiming that “rich” subject-verb agreement morphology licenses null subjects and receives Case (and a thematic role, under some accounts). On the other hand, Barbosa (2010), Saab (2009), and Tomioka (2003) have claimed that null subjects in Spanish are subjects under ellipsis – a view that is challenged by the distinct behaviour of non-overt subjects in comparison with their overt counterparts. The reader is referred to Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2009: 344-359), Camacho (2013), and Sheehan (2016) for recent overviews of the existing debates.

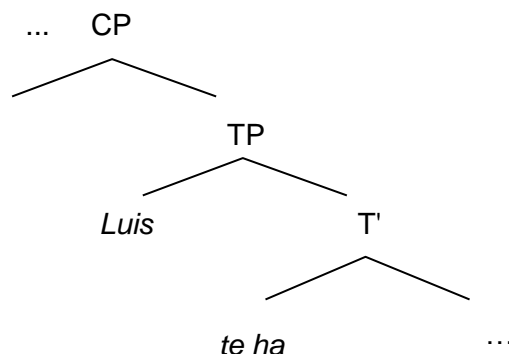
### 3.2. Overt subjects

In addition to null subjects, much controversy has centered on the analysis of (overt) preverbal (cf. (14c)) and postverbal (cf. (14d)) subjects. In what follows I present the main analyses of overt subjects and the major variants derived from these; the reader is referred to the works cited for arguments in favor of each position.

#### 3.2.1. Preverbal subjects

The contexts where subjects occur preverbally in Spanish include sentences featuring transitive verbs in neutral, out-of-the-blue contexts with the SVO word order, topic-shift and topic-continuity environments (although the latter tend to favor null subjects, as noted above), and categorical statements in which something is predicated of the subject. Two major approaches have been developed for the analysis of preverbal subjects: the traditional IP/TP-EPP account and the CP account. The TP-EPP analysis assumes that overt preverbal subjects in Spanish occupy Spec,AgrSP/TP, in much the same way as subjects in English (cf. (16)).

#### (16) Subjects in Spec,AgrSP/TP



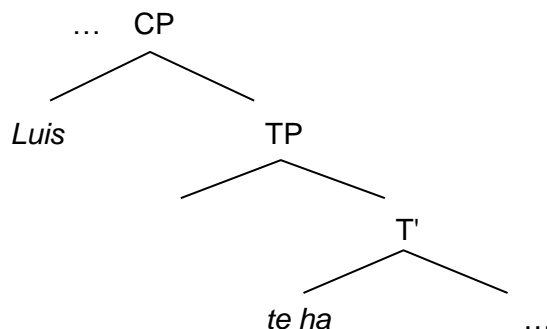
This analysis was pioneered by Rizzi (1982) and developed in the work of Cardinaletti (1996), Hill (1991), and Torrego (1984). Recent proponents of this analysis for the Spanish case include Burga (2008), Goodall (2001), Gupton (2014), Ortega-Santos (2005 et seq.), and Suñer (2003). Based on the Split-INFL Hypothesis, different TP-related preverbal subject positions have been identified, including Spec,AgrSP and Spec,TP (see, *mutatis mutandis*, Cardinaletti 2004 and Zubizarreta 1999).<sup>iv</sup> This approach claims that the syntax of overt subjects in Spanish has much in common with the syntax of subjects in English, although preverbal subjects co-exist with null and postverbal subjects in Spanish. A piece of evidence that has repeatedly been adduced in favor of this proposal is that a “*what-happened*” question tends to be answered with an SVO structure, as in (17).

- (17) A: ¿Qué ha pasado?  
           what has happened  
           ‘What happened?’  
       B: *Juanito* ha encontrado pareja  
           John has found partner  
           ‘John has found a partner.’

In contrast to the TP proposal, the CP account of preverbal subjects in Spanish argues that overt preverbal subjects are discourse-sensitive  $\bar{A}$ -constituents (i.e.,

constituents in positions other than those reserved for arguments or agreeing/binding elements, such as the landing site of *wh*-movement). On this view, the appearance and distribution of subjects is regulated by discourse notions such as topic and focus (see Domínguez, this volume). Under this approach, preverbal subjects are instances of topics or Clitic-Left Dislocated (CLLDed) phrases in a specifier in the CP field (cf. (18)); assuming Rizzi's (1997 et seq.) split-CP analysis, such subjects would occupy Spec,TopicP.<sup>v</sup>

(18) *Subjects in Spec,CP*



This analysis has gained favor since the 1990s and has been adopted by authors including Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1998), Barbosa (2009), Contreras (1991), Holmberg (2005), Olarrea (1996), Ordóñez (1997), Ordóñez and Treviño (1999), and Ticio (2004). This approach typically assumes that Spanish lacks the EPP, or that in Spanish the EPP can be satisfied in an alternative way (e.g., via head movement of the verb and its “rich” agreement morphemes to T<sup>0</sup>, as argued by Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998; see the beginning of Section 3 for discussion of recent proposals). Under this account, lexical subjects in Spanish do not have to be in Spec,TP, since this position might not be projected, or ultimately it may be occupied by the empty category *pro* (see Section 3.1.). The aforementioned works develop various lines of argumentation for this position. I provide one piece of evidence here. It is uncontroversial that Spanish subjects may appear in CP-related positions, as shown by the sentences in (19). The data in (19) indicate that overt subjects in Spanish are able to be left-dislocated (López 2009, Villa-García 2015, *i.a.*).

- (19) a. *Susana, ¿qué compró?*  
       Susan     what   bought  
       ‘As for Susan, what did she buy?’  
       b. *Ya le dije que yo, que no voy*  
           already cl. said that I that not go  
           ‘I have already told him/her I am not going.’ [Villa-García 2015: 28]  
       c. *A la fiesta, la niña, con tu prima no quiere ir*  
           to the party the girl with your cousin not wants go  
           ‘The girl doesn’t feel like going to the party with your cousin.’

Several authors have pursued accounts alternative to the TP and CP analyses. Authors such as Barbosa (2001), Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa (2014), Masullo (1992), and Zubizarreta (1998, 1999) have suggested that Spec,TP in languages like Spanish has  $\bar{A}$ -properties and can host  $\bar{A}$ -moved elements such as topics and *wh*-items (see Gallego 2007 for discussion). According to Barbosa (2001), this move accounts for the impossibility of subjects to intervene between *wh*-items and verbs in constituent questions: the *wh*-item and the subject would compete for the preverbal slot

(i.e., Spec,TP), forcing the subject to stay low, as in (20). This would in principle account for their incompatibility in *wh*-questions. This line of analysis remains the object of research (see, e.g., Villa-García 2015: Ch. 3).

- (20) ¿Cuándo    llegan    las rebajas?  
           when        arrive    the sales  
           ‘When do the sales start?’

Within the Spec,TP-as-an- $\bar{A}$ -position approach to preverbal subjects, while some proposals explicitly allow Spec,TP to be occupied by non-subjects such as topics, others argue that Spec,TP is an  $\bar{A}$  position that is still reserved for subjects (e.g., Uribe-Etxebarria 1991; for further details, see Villa-García 2015: Ch. 3).

An additional analysis is pursued by authors such as Camacho (2006, 2013), Casielles (2001), López (2009), Richards (2016), and Villa-García (2015), who have argued that preverbal subjects in Spanish may occupy a position in the CP domain or the TP domain, as shown in (21). In other words, preverbal subjects in Spanish may be CP- or TP-related elements.

- (21) a. [<sub>CP</sub> Subject [C'    [<sub>TP</sub>            [T' ... ]]]]  
       b. [<sub>CP</sub>            [C'    [<sub>TP</sub> Subject [T' ... ]]]]

An argument for this position comes from Casielles (2001) (see also Zubizarreta 1998). As shown by (22a), bare nominals are disallowed in Spec,TP –possibly due to a condition to the effect that a nominal in this position must be a full DP in Spanish (cf. (22b)). This is a noteworthy –yet poorly understood- contrast with English, where the sentence *Kids were playing on the beach* is grammatical, as shown by the English paraphrase of (22a) (see Ojea, in preparation, for discussion). In contrast, preverbal bare NPs are possible as subjects in Spanish provided that they are *bona fide* left dislocated, as in (22c), which is a hanging topic construction. The contrast in (22) supports the claim that preverbal subjects in Spanish can occupy different preverbal positions –Spec,TP and Spec,CP/TopicP.

- (22) a. \*Niños        jugaban    en        la        playa  
           kids        played    in        the       beach  
           ‘Kids were playing on the beach.’  
       b. Los niños jugaban    en        la        playa  
           the kids    played    in        the       beach  
           ‘The kids were playing on the beach.’  
       c. Niños, no creo        que        jueguen    muchos    en        la        playa  
           kids    not believe    that       play        many    in        the       beach  
           ‘As for children, I don’t believe many play on the beach.’

### 3.2.2. Postverbal subjects

In parallel fashion to the analysis of preverbal subjects in Spanish, that of postverbal subjects has been rigorously debated. Villa-García & Suárez Palma (2016) provide the following data, which exemplify the major contexts in which postverbal subjects are used in Spanish (see also Ojea, in preparation, and Ordóñez 2016). These include new-information focus/contrastively focused subjects (Ortega-Santos 2016), as in (23a), subjects of unaccusatives, as in (23b), subjects of psychological predicates, as in (23c), subjects in locative-inversion environments, as in (23d), subjects inthetic contexts expressing mere events as in (23e) (as opposed to their categorical counterparts, in which case the subject would be preverbal), subjects that function as

sentences, as in (23f), in obligatory subject-verb inversion patterns with *wh*-questions, as in (23g), and in stylistic-inversion contexts featuring direct quotations, as in (23h).

- (23) a. *¿Quién compró la carne? Me preguntó quién había comprado la carne y le dije que la había comprado Juan.*  
 who bought the meat cl. asked who had bought the meat and cl. said that cl.  
 had bought John  
 'Who bought the meat? S/he asked me who had bought the meat and I told them that John bought it.'
- b. *Llegó un hombre.*  
 arrived a man  
 'A man got (here).'
- c. *Me gusta Ottawa.*  
 cl. pleases Ottawa  
 'I like Ottawa.'
- d. *Aquí anidan gavilanes.*  
 here nest sparrowhawks  
 'Sparrowhawks nest here.'
- e. *Ha muerto Franco.*  
 has died Franco  
 'Franco has died.'
- f. *Es bueno que se estudie sintaxis.*  
 is good that cl. studies syntax  
 'It's good that syntax is studied.'
- g. *¿Qué compró Susana?*  
 what bought Susan  
 'What did Susan buy?'
- h. *"Nunca saldremos de la crisis", aseguró el presidente.*  
 never exit of the crisis assured the president  
 'Never will we get out of the economic crisis,' warned the president.'

Given the diversity of constructions which allow postverbal subjects, it is not surprising that there are multiple analyses of postverbal subjects in the literature (see Ortega-Santos, 2016: 84-85, for a detailed discussion of existing accounts).<sup>vi</sup> According to several analyses, postverbal subjects are in-situ elements in their base position (e.g., for transitives, Spec,vP), with the remaining material moved past the subject (Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria 2008, López 2009, Ordóñez 2000, Zubizarreta 1998, a.o.). For other authors, including Parafita Couto (2005), Torrego (1984), and Zubizarreta (1999), postverbal subjects sit in a rightward specifier/adjunct position. Another strand of research contends that both the postverbal subject and the remaining sentence material undergo complex operations. For instance, the subject may move to a VP or CP focus position, while the rest of the clause rises to a Topic-like position in the periphery (Belletti 1999, Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria 2008, Ordóñez 2000, and Ortega-Santos 2016, a.o.). Alternatively, the subject may actually move to Spec,TP, but assuming the Copy Theory of Movement of Chomsky (1995), a copy is pronounced in a lower position due to PF considerations, such as the generalization that focus in Spanish comes last in the sentence (viz. Sentence Stress Assignment conditions), as argued by Ortega-Santos (2006), Stjepanović (1999), and Villa-García (2015: Ch. 5). For discussion of the VSO word order found in Spanish, see Ordóñez (2005) and Zubizarreta (1999).

#### 4. Conclusion

The Extended Verb Phrase, also known as the inflectional domain, can be characterized as a multifaceted workspace where many of the logistic operations underlying a sentence are assumed to occur. This paper has explored the basic structure of INFL/TP in Spanish, with a (historical) focus on existing theories of subject-verb agreement within Chomsky's generative paradigm, as well as V-to-T movement and the lack of English-style EPP effects in Spanish. I then discussed the much-debated analysis of the syntactic derivation of subjects in Spanish. I provided an overview of the contrasting approaches to this issue, which have sought to analyze null, preverbal, and postverbal subjects, whose distribution is contingent on factors that go beyond purely grammatical considerations. These areas constitute central topics in the field of Spanish syntax, and will assuredly remain the topic of intensive research for years to come.

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<sup>i</sup> In this version of the theory, a conflated TP (missing AgrSP projection) returns, with TP encoding the relevant tense and agreement features (Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009: 240;

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see also Chomsky 1995: Ch. 4). For languages including Spanish, however, the tendency is to assume that both projections are projected (see, e.g., Cardinaletti 2004).

<sup>ii</sup> There have been arguments that nominative case is actually not uninterpretable, which challenges the view outlined here. There have also been proposals that nominative case in languages such as Spanish is the default case and is therefore not assigned by INFL/Tense (see Bošković 2007 and the references cited therein).

<sup>iii</sup> Caribbean dialects of Spanish display a higher rate of overt preverbal subjects, suggesting a change in their *pro*-drop status, an issue which I will not discuss here (see, among many others, Ticio 2004).

<sup>iv</sup> Ordóñez (2005) argues that Spec,AgrSP is the position reserved for preverbal subjects, with Spec,TP being a position for postverbal subjects with the VSO word order; in this case, the verb would move to AgrS<sup>0</sup>.

<sup>v</sup> The accounts cited in the text differ from each other as to the precise left-peripheral position occupied by the preverbal subject and its nature (e.g., specifier or adjunct).

<sup>vi</sup> For instance, the postverbal subject of a transitive verb behaves differently from the postverbal subject of an unaccusative verb, whose syntactic behavior mirrors that of the object of a transitive verb (Ordóñez 2016: 102-103).