

Is Chilean Spanish a Canonical pro-drop Variety? On Subjecthood in Chilean Spanish

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Abstract

The goal of this chapter is to unveil the main properties of syntactic subjects in Chilean Spanish by addressing the following research questions: (i) To what degree is Chilean Spanish similar/dissimilar to Caribbean Spanish?, (ii) Is Chilean Spanish a partial pro-drop variety? According to the Null Subject Parameter (NSP, Rizzi 1982), null subject languages have the following properties: (a) rich verbal morphology, (b) null subjects in finite clauses, (c) postverbal subjects (VS order), (c) loose locality effects (absence of that-trace effects). Caribbean dialects have received particular attention as they show both pro-drop and non-pro-drop properties. However, it remains an open question to what extent those properties are found in non-Caribbean Spanish and, most importantly, in other linguistic varieties within the so-called Bajeño dialectal area. Data from corpora as well as from acceptability judgments indicate that Chilean Spanish displays some non-trivial overlapping with Caribbean Spanish with respect to pro-drop properties, and that it does not fit the partial pro-drop pattern consistently. This conclusion provides support for recent proposals according to which partiality in pro-drop properties is a matter of degree.

1. Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to present the main properties of syntactic subjects in Chilean Spanish in comparison with better studied varieties of Spanish, such as Caribbean Spanish. Specifically, we will address the following research questions:

- (i) To what degree is Chilean Spanish similar/dissimilar to Caribbean Spanish?
- (ii) Is Chilean Spanish a canonical pro-drop variety?

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time these questions are formally asked. Evidence will be provided for the view that the Null Subject properties of

Chilean Spanish are not uniformly consistent with a positive specification of the Null Subject Parameter (Rizzi 1982).

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces the general background on the Chilean dialect. Section 3 focuses on the Null Subject properties of the dialect under consideration in comparison with other varieties of Spanish, with a particular interest in Caribbean Spanish. Whenever pertinent, our claims about Chilean Spanish are supported by both corpus data and acceptability judgments. Section 4 interprets the results from section 3, addressing the research questions raised above. Section 5 is dedicated to the conclusion.

A disclaimer is in order. The present research aims to set the stage for a broader dialectometric study of subjecthood across varieties of Spanish by pinpointing data points that can be gathered efficiently in existing corpora. The statistical analysis, which would add another piece to the picture we will present, is not included here. Also, wherever the discussion focuses on properties of Caribbean Spanish, microvariation within local varieties of Spanish (e.g., Dominican and Cuban Spanish) is left aside, unless relevant.

2. Background

Within Generative Grammar, studies of Spanish have devoted significant efforts to capture the properties of subjecthood (e.g., see Ordóñez 1997, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998, Goodall 2001, Sheehan 2006, Camacho 2016 or Ortega-Santos 2016, a.o.), with the literature suggesting either an active or an inactive EPP requirement with consequences for the position posited for preverbal subjects (Spec,TP or Spec,TopP); see (1a) and (1b), respectively:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| (1) | a. | [_{TP} | Pedro | lee | [_{VP} novelas] |
| | | | Pedro | reads | novels |
| | b. | [_{TopP} | Pedro | [_{TP} | lee novelas]] |

The analysis (1a) is standardly assumed for English or French, that is to say, non-pro-drop languages and, therefore, the tendency is to see (1b) championed to capture the distinct behavior of Spanish and Null Subject Languages in general. Specifically, Null Subject Languages (of the Romance kind, cf. section 4.1) have been argued to have the following properties (Rizzi 1982; see Saab 2021 for recent discussion), which for current purposes I will refer to as canonical pro-drop features: use of null subjects unless surface semantic effects are present (e.g., focus; see section 3.2), availability of postverbal subjects (in the case of Spanish, VSO and VOS), null expletives and lack of that-trace effects. These properties could be interpreted as evidence for the absence of an EPP requirement, (1b), (e.g., Ordóñez 1997, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 1998), though the literature includes a number of proposals compatible with (1a), (e.g., Goodall 2001, Sheehan 2006 and Ortega-Santos 2016; see the latter work for a recent overview of the debate).

Caribbean Spanish dialects have received particular attention as they show linguistic properties believed to justify a distinct analysis of their subjecthood properties, with evidence provided by generativists and variationists. In general, the following has been reported as properties of these dialects: (i) use of overt subject pronouns without any requirement of surface semantic effects (contrast, emphasis, etc.), as exemplified in (2), in contrast to canonical Null Subject varieties (see Lagunilla and Rebollo 1995: 235 and Zagana 2002: 25); (ii) availability of overt subject expletives (specific to Dominican Spanish), as shown in (3); (iii) availability of Subject-Verb order in interrogative matrix sentences with non-D-linked argumental wh-phrases, as in (4); and (iv) wide-spread availability of the SV order in adjunct infinitival clauses (see Pöll 2007 for recent discussion), as exemplified in (5).

- (2) Yo no lo vi, él estaba en
 I not cl.3sg.acc saw he was in
 Massachussetts acababa de llegar, pero muy
 Massachussetts had-just of arrive.inf but most
 probablemente para el domingo pasado, que
 likely for the Sunday last that
 fue Día de las Madres allá, él estaba
 was Day of the Mothers there, he was
 en Nueva York ... Él estaba donde Eugenia, y
 in New York ... He was at Eugenia's and
 yo creo que él se va a
 I believe that he refl.3sg will.3sg to
 quedar allá ...
 stay.inf there ...
 'I didn't see him, he was in Massachussetts, he had just arrived, but
 quite probably by last Sunday, which was Mother's Day there, he was
 in New York ... He was at Eugenia's, and I think that he is going to stay
 there ...'
 (Toribio, 2000: 319)
- (3) a. Ello llegan guaguas hasta allá.
 it arrive.3pl buses till there
 'There arrive buses there.'
 b. Ello había mucha gente en lay-a-way
 it was many people on stand-by
 'There were a lot of people on stand-by.' (Toribio, 2000: 321)
- (4) ¿Qué tú quieres?
 what you want.2sg
 'What do you want?'
- (5) Para tú venir, hace falta un milagro.
 for you come.inf is need a miracle

‘A miracle is necessary for you to come.’

These characteristics led Toribio (2000) to put forward an active EPP analysis for Caribbean Spanish, though the dialect shows a high degree of complexity. In particular, it shows both pro-drop and non-pro-drop properties, as null subjects are still attested. Thus, in Toribio’s analysis, speakers of Caribbean Spanish are considered bidialectal: they speak both an active EPP variety, (1a), as suggested by (2)-(5), and a non-active EPP variety, (1b), as suggested by the availability of null subjects (seen in (2) as well).

Subsequent work on Caribbean Spanish (Martínez Sanz 2011) and on Afro-Hispanic varieties (Sessarego 2021) has refined Toribio’s analysis arguing in favour of a view in which there is only one grammar, but two coexistent specifications of lexical items, giving raise to two different outputs, (1a) and (1b). This posited coexistence of the two variants within one grammar is in fact suggested by the language acquisition process and the resulting grammatical system, which includes cases of variable specification of linguistic features. It remains an open question, however, to what extent those properties are found in non-Caribbean Spanish and, most importantly, in other linguistic varieties within the so-called Bajeño dialectal area, which comprises both Caribbean and non-Caribbean Spanish, such as Chilean Spanish.

This paper is devoted to analyzing subjecthood in Chilean Spanish, including but not limited to the properties exemplified in (2)-(5). It is argued that a mixed model including properties of both Caribbean dialects and non-Caribbean null subject dialects best captures the properties of Chilean Spanish, in keeping with recent views that there are degrees of partiality in pro-drop properties (see Ticio 2018 and Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández 2019). A critical discussion of the relevance of a number of criteria when determining pro-drop properties is provided.

2.1. Background on Chilean Spanish

Chilean Spanish is included in the Bajeño (Lowlands) dialectal area. As a dialect of Spanish, it is expected to be an SVO Null-Subject variety with flexible word order and rich verbal agreement morphology. This view, however, will be reassessed throughout the paper. This section presents very briefly an overview of introductory works to the study of Chilean Spanish. (The list is far from comprehensive, as can be expected.)

The following large-scale atlases have been developed: *Atlas lingüístico – etnográfico del Sur de Chile (ALESUCh)* (Araya, Wagner, Contreras, and Bernaldes 1973) and *Atlas Lingüístico y Etnográfico de Chile (ALECh) por regiones* (Wagner 1997). General introductions to the dialect including a summary of dialectal areas within the country, can be found in Lipski (1996), Wagner (1996) and Palacios (2016). In turn, for a bibliography on the Chilean dialect, see Valencia (1995). Regarding the issue of how the syntax of Chilean Spanish compares to other varieties of Spanish, that is to say, the dialect distance (or dialect convergence) between this dialect and other varieties, see Ortega-Santos (2021),

who studied the representativity and/or reliability of syntax journal data for Chilean Spanish, as well as the convergence rate between three dialects of the Bajeño dialectal area, namely, Chilean, Venezuelan and Puerto Rican Spanish. In particular, a random sample of Spanish syntax data extracted from *Probus* (2006-2017) was reassessed through an acceptability judgment task conducted in the three dialects under consideration. The results for Chilean Spanish diverged the most from the two other varieties and from the journal data underscoring, thus, the need for further research on this dialect. This outcome is also consistent with Moreno Fernández and Ueda's (2018) study of dialect cohesion in the Hispanic world, which focused mostly on non-syntactic features.

3. The pro-drop Properties of Chilean Spanish

As noted in section 2, according to the Null Subject Parameter (Rizzi 1982), Null Subject Languages prototypically license both null subjects in finite clauses (represented by *pro*) as well as postverbal subjects (VS order) while lacking *that*-trace effects. The descriptive generalization inherent in the Null Subject Parameter, namely, that those properties pattern together, has been challenged with crosslinguistic data. Gilligan (1987) shows a dissociation between lack of *that*-trace effects and the availability of null subjects, although an in-depth analysis of the potential counterexamples – controlling for potential interfering factors – is still missing. Moreover, a refinement of Parameter Theory in terms of hierarchically organized microparameters helps address empirical concerns (see Roberts and Holmberg 2010 for discussion of these two issues). While the debate on the Null Subject Parameter and parameters in general is still ongoing, establishing the exact properties of subjects in Chilean Spanish and determining its pro-drop properties is a goal in itself. Does it pattern with what is sometimes referred to as general Spanish, that is to say, Iberian and continental Latin American Spanish, which are well accepted as canonical Null Subject Varieties (though see Michnowicz 2015, Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández 2019 and Sessarego 2021 for relevant discussion on continental varieties)? Or does it pattern with Caribbean Spanish? Furthermore, this research helps fill a gap in our knowledge of microvariation and dialect distance within Spanish.

As noted, the pro-drop properties of Caribbean Spanish have figured prominently in the discussion of dialectal variation in subject properties Spanish. Thus, a good understanding of these varieties and how Chilean Spanish compares to them is essential to the current discussion. This section focuses on the following issues: morphological ambiguity and its alleged effect on subjecthood (3.1), overt pronouns and their surface semantic effects (3.2), inversion in *wh*-questions (3.3), overt subjects of infinitives (3.4) and the use of personal pronouns for inanimates and the use of generic *uno* 'one' (section 3.5) It is shown that Chilean Spanish displays a subset of the features associated with Caribbean varieties.¹

¹ That-trace effects arguably draw the line between pro-drop and non-pro-drop languages via the Empty Category Principle, ECP (Chomsky 1981). A long tradition assumes that subjects in pro-drop languages are less subject to locality constraints than in non-pro-drop languages. Support

3.1. Morphological Ambiguity in Verbal Agreement and Subject Properties²

As aforementioned, the Null Subject Parameter associates null subjects to rich agreement morphology (see Roberts and Holmberg 2010 and D'Alessandro 2015 for detailed discussion). In keeping with this line of thought, researchers have linked the relatively high rates of overt pronouns in Caribbean Spanish to impoverishment of verbal morphology, both variationist sociolinguists (see Hochberg's 1986 functional compensation hypothesis, see Flores Ferrán 2007, Martínez Sanz 2011 and Martínez-Lara, Guerrero and González Vergara 2021 for a critical review) as well as theoreticians (e.g., Suñer 1986). This being said, it has been noted that the issue is complex as languages without agreement also license pro-drop (so-called radical pro-drop or discourse pro-drop languages, e.g., Chinese or Japanese), and the uniformity in the agreement paradigm (rich agreement vs. zero agreement) has been taken as the decisive factor (Jaeggli and Safir 1989). For current purposes, it is arguably enough to notice that, at least in certain languages, overt agreement morphology is a requisite for null subject licensing (e.g., see D'Alessandro 2015). Chilean Spanish shows a prototypical Bajeño feature relevant in this context, namely the loss ([Ø]) or aspiration ([h]) of word final /s/ (e.g., Wagner 1996 and Lipski 1996). This may cause the ambiguity of 2nd person and 3rd person singular present tense, (6), and other tenses (preterite, imperfect, etc.), as *comes* in (6a) might be pronounced [komes], [komeh] or [kome]³:

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------|---------|--------|
| (6) | a. | Tú | comes | mucho. |
| | | you | eat.2sg | much |
| | | 'You eat a lot.' | | |
| | b. | Ella | come | mucho. |
| | | she | eats | much |
| | | 'He eats a lot.' | | |

for this view and the ECP is also found in the extraction of subjects out of wh-islands, which are arguably possible in pro-drop languages, but not in non-pro-drop languages. Unfortunately, experimental studies on the locality of wh-islands have revealed that this observation does not hold and that wh-islands ban extraction of wh-subjects in both kinds of languages (see Sprouse, Caponigro, Greco and Cechetto 2016 for Italian and Ortega-Santos, Reglero and Franco 2019 for Spanish, a.o.). Thus, I abstract away from the discussion of locality properties.

² For a state-of-the-art overview of the syntax of non-canonical pro-drop languages with an emphasis on Latin America, see Camacho (2016). As discussed by Camacho, for both Caribbean Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, the partial loss of rich agreement morphology played a role in the change from pro-drop to partial pro-drop; nonetheless, the overlap in the non-canonical pro-drop properties of these two varieties is not complete.

³ A recurrent topic in the literature on the lenition of the *s* across dialects is whether the loss of this sound correlates with a change in the preceding vowel, thus reducing the potential for ambiguity in a context like (6). For Chilean Spanish, see Bolyanatz (2018).

This elision of the /s/ is precisely the main feature responsible for high verbal morphology ambiguity in Caribbean Spanish. Still, in Chilean Spanish the present tense includes a distinct 2nd person morphology corresponding to *voseo*, an informal treatment that is being increasingly adopted across the social spectrum. This morphology is sometimes combined with the *tú* [‘you’] pronoun (e.g., Lipski 1996, a.o.); *usted* is also used as a polite form of address, but may not be combined with the more colloquial *voseo* verbal morphology; *usted* is glossed as *you_{USTED}* and *vos* as *you_{VOS}* in the chapter):

- (7) a. Vos comí mucho.
 you_{VOS} eat much
 ‘You eat a lot.’
 b. Tú comí mucho.
 you eat much
 ‘You eat a lot.’

With regard to the more formal variety of Chilean Spanish, as expected from a Latin American variety, it does not make use of the *vosotros* [‘you’] 2nd person plural pronoun typical of Iberian Spanish; *ustedes* is used instead, resulting, thus, in a reduction of the pronominal/verbal paradigm when compared to Iberian Spanish.

As a consequence, the Chilean dialect shows more ambiguity in its verbal paradigm than, say, standard Iberian Spanish, whose pronunciation leaves no room for ambiguity in (6), but less than Dominican Spanish, where there is no *voseo* verbal morphology, and the loss of the -s may cause (6) to be ambiguous (Toribio 2000).

3.2 Overt Subject Pronouns and Their Surface Semantic Effects

High/low frequencies of usage of a certain syntactic feature cannot be equated with acceptable/unacceptable, as frequency and acceptability are different in nature (see Cornips and Gegersen 2016 and Newmeyer 2013 for relevant discussion). Still, Caribbean Spanish has been associated to a relatively high use of overt pronouns, sometimes referred to as ‘overuse’ of overt pronouns, as opposed to Iberian Spanish. Thus, frequency might provide a hint as to the status of a dialect, whether it is consistent, canonical pro-drop (Iberian Spanish) or non-canonical (Caribbean Spanish). With respect to this, Chilean Spanish seems closer to Iberian and mainland Spanish than to Caribbean Spanish. In Orozco and Hurtado’s (2020) meta-analysis of the data reported on the literature, the average rate of overt subject pronouns in the Caribbean across dialects is 38% as compared to 24% for mainland Latin American varieties (e.g., Lima, Mexico City, etc.) and 21% for Spain (see also Mayol’s 2011 overview of overt subject rates across dialects). For Chilean Spanish, Martínez-Lara, Silvana Guerrero González and González Vergara (2021) found a 25.3% of explicit subject pronouns in the PRESSEA corpus of Santiago de Chile in the contexts of finite verbs. This, in principle, suggests that Chilean

Spanish is a canonical Null Subject language, though, of course, whether the data taken into account by theoretical linguistics – which go beyond frequency of use – support this conclusion is an open question to be addressed next. In turn, Cifuentes’ (1980-1981) corpus analysis of interviews with educated speakers from Santiago de Chile reveals 35,95% of pronominal use; this being said, Cifuentes analyzed the use of overt pronouns corefering with a previous pronoun; this restriction is not necessarily present in other studies, which may focus on corefentiality irrespective of the overt pronoun or full DP status of the previous subject). This interfering factor makes it difficult to interpret the results in the context of the cited studies, as priming might have played a role in Cifuentes’ results. Specifically, variationist studies of overt/null pronoun alternation have revealed that, when controlling for interfering factors, overt subject pronouns prime the use of another overt pronoun (e.g., Orozco and Hurtado 2021; see Mayol 2012 for discussion on priming across varieties of Spanish and its effect on canonical and non-canonical pro-dropness)⁴. Generative studies, based on acceptability judgments, have pointed out that overt subject pronouns in canonical null subject languages are acceptable but, arguably, they correlate with surface semantic effects such as contrast, focus or emphasis or other semantic properties (see Chomsky’s 1981 Avoid Pronoun Principle), as illustrated in (8)-(10)⁵.

- (8) a. Ella piensa que (??ella) es buena
 she thinks that she is good
 persona.
 person
 ‘She believes she is a good person.’
 b. Ella piensa que ELLA es buena
 she thinks that she is good
 persona, no él.
 person not him
 ‘She believes she is a good person, not him.’
- (9) [Context: coming from school, a child calls from the door so that someone opens it for him]
 A: ¿Quién es?
 who is
 ‘Who is it?’

⁴ Sedano and Bentivoglio’s (2014) analysis of subjecthood in 11 cities (ranging from Santiago to Havana and Madrid) using data from the PRESEEA project, specifically, the speech of one female and one male per city, reveals fairly similar percentages across cities with regard to the percentage of null subjects (but for the male from Madrid and the female from Mexico) as well as a strong tendency towards the use of preverbal pronouns across varieties. Still, a sample of only two speakers per city appears to be too small to reach reliable conclusions. In turn, see Frascarelli and Jiménez (2019) for comparison of experimental results across various dialects (though not Chilean Spanish).

⁵ For recent discussion on the Avoid Pronoun Principle in Caribbean Spanish, see Camacho (2016), Ticio (2018) and Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández (2019), a.o.

(10) Ella estaba en la fiesta, pero *^(él) no
 she was in the party but he not
 vino. (Flores-Ferrán 2007: 628)
 came
 ‘She was at the party, but he did not come.’

A qualitative analysis of the materials available online in the *PRESEEA Santiago de Chile* corpus reveals the use of overt subject pronouns in semantically neutral contexts, indicating that this dialect behaves similarly to Caribbean Spanish (irrespective of the overt pronoun rate discussed above). Specifically, coreferent overt first-person singular pronouns without surface semantics are found in subject position of embedded clauses, (11a), in conjoined clauses, (11b), and in adjunct clauses (ranging from *if*-clauses, (12), to relative clauses); the relevant subject pronoun appears in italics in the corresponding examples. In turn, the examples in (13)–(15) illustrate the use of third person pronouns in semantically neutral context: Across sentences ((13) and (14)), in embedded contexts and under coordination (15) (for discussion of the asymmetries between first and second person pronouns vs. third person pronouns in the licensing of null subjects, see, for instance, Frascarelli 2018; it is the latter that are particularly relevant for the discussion of pro-drop properties)⁶. [NB: The transcriptions of the corpus have been simplified by erasing clarifications regarding lexical items or simultaneous speech to increase readability; the original spelling, hesitations and repetitions are maintained; the interview number of each example is included throughout.]

9

- (11) a. Yo me sentí muy indefenso /
 en I refl felt.1sg very defenseless in
 ese sentido en decir como yo
 that sense in say.infl how I
 demuestro que yo no tenía nada
 demonstrate that I not had.1sg anything
 que ver (SCHI_H23_085)
 to do.inf
 ‘I felt vulnerable in the sense. How could I proof that I had nothing to do with that?’
- b. Sí yo les conté parece y yo
 yes I cl.3pl.dat told seems and I
 les dije / y no / y yo soñé
 cl.3pl.dat told and not and I dreamt
 así como que yo veía la nota
 this-way as-if that I saw the grade
 y veía que me iba muy bien
 and saw that to-me went very well
 ‘Yes, it seems I told them, I told it to them and no, and I dreamt like I saw the grade and I saw that I did pretty good.’
 (SCHI_M13_079)
- (12) a. Ya yo en la mañana me levanté
 already I in the morning refl.1sg got.up
 bien / me levanté bien // pero cuando
 well refl.1sg got.up well but when
 yo ya salí a la calle / yo salí
 I already went.out to the street I went.out
 mareada total (SCHI_M32_067)
 dizzy completely
 ‘Already in the morning I woke up ok, I woke up ok, but when I left for the street, I was totally dizzy.’
- b. Si yo quisiera saber yo podría ir a la
 if I wanted to-know I could go.inf to
 the
 posta porque yo tengo mi ficha
 urgent.care.center because I have my record
 ahí (SCHI_M32_067)
 there
 ‘If I wanted to know, I could go to the urgent care center, since my file is there.’
- (13) Ellos las fondas de ellos
 they the pop-up restaurant of them

están en sus casas / ellos hacen sus
 are in their houses they cook their
 asaditos ellos pasan sus días
 barbecues they they spend.3sg their days
 ahí con sus familias (SCHI_M32_067)
 there with their families
 ‘Their taverns are in their houses. They cook their barbecues. They
 spend their days there with their families.’

- (14) El automóvil bueno lo facilitó ehh lo
 the car well it lent.3sg hm it
 facilitó // mi padrino mi padrino
 lent my godfather my godfather
 él tenía auto entonces lo facilitó pero él
 he had.3sg car so it lent but he
 sufrió un descuido / él usaba mucho el
 suffered a distraction he used.3sg much the
 el automóvil (SCHI_H32_061)
 the car
 ‘The car, well, my godfather lent it to us. My godfather, my godfather,
 he had a car, so he lent it to us, but he had a problem. He used to use
 the the car a lot.’

- (15) Él me ha hecho entender de que
 he cl.1sg.dat has made understand.inf of that
 él nada juzga él sí que es de
 he nothing judges he yes that is of
 verdad / no es de cartón / él es
 truth not is of cardboard he is
 verdad sí / pues me ha visto
 truth yes since cl.1sg.acc has seen
 en tantas paradas distintas y él nunca
 in many situations different and he never
 me ha dicho oye / cómo se te
 cl.1sg.dat has said hey how cl cl.2sg.dat
 ocurre (SCHI_M11_007)
 occurs
 ‘He has made me realize that he is not judgmental. He really is
 genuine, not a fake. He is honest, since he has seen me in different
 situations and he has never told me ‘hey, how did you even think
 about that?’

Thus, with regard to this criterion, Chilean Spanish has non-canonical pro-drop
 grammar, as overt subjects appear in contexts where null subjects are expected to

be found. Still, the overt pronominal subject rate of this variety is low when compared to Caribbean Spanish (see the discussion in this section)⁷.

3.3. Inversion in *Wh*-questions

As shown in (4) above, repeated here as (16), the SV order in interrogatives without the *wh*-element being D-linked or an adjunct is a feature of Caribbean Spanish. This property is relevant in that it has been interpreted as an SVO/EPP requirement (see Brown and Rivas 2011 for relevant discussion), that is to say, the kind of word order enforced in English (though *do*-support may obscure this tendency in *wh*-questions). The *Wh S V* order, however, is not particularly felicitous in Chilean Spanish, according to speakers I consulted⁸:

- (16) ¿Qué tú quieres? Caribbean Sp./*Chilean Sp.
 what you want.2sg
 ‘What do you want?’

While there is some controversy in the literature on Caribbean Spanish as to whether full DPs may intervene between the *wh*-phrase and the verb (see Ordóñez and Olarrea 2006 and Comínguez 2018 for an overview), Toribio (2000: 322-323) provides examples like (17), all of which are degraded in Chilean Spanish.

- (17) a. ¿Qué ese letrero dice?
 what that sign says
 ‘What does that sign say?’ Dominican Sp./*Chilean Sp.
 b. ¿Qué yo les voy a mandar a
 what I cl.3pl.dat will.1sg to send to
 esos muchachos?
 those boys
 ‘What am I going to send to those boys?’
 c. ¿Cuánto un médico gana?
 how much a physician earns
 ‘How much does a doctor earn?’ Dominican Sp./? *Chilean Sp.
 d. ¿Y con quién Fredi está allá?
 and with who Fredi is there
 ‘And with who is Fredi there?’ Dominican Sp./? *Chilean Sp.

⁷ Cases of binding of a subject pronoun, whether null or overt, by quantifier functioning as the main subject are not attested in the corpus, thus hinting at the potential limits of corpora when studying highly specific or infrequent structures. These cases are relevant for the study of the Avoid Pronoun Principle as well.

⁸ Acceptability judgments of Chilean Spanish data throughout the paper were tested with 3 naïve native speakers.

As (18) and even (11a) indicate, non-inverted structures can be found in the PRESSEA corpus, but none of them contains non-D-linked *wh*-arguments:

- (18) Para qué yo voy a decir
for what I will.1sg to say.inf
que no (SCHI_M32_067)
that not
'Why would I say no?'

In a similar vein, Lipski (1977: 62) points out that the loss of verbal agreement morphology does not correlate with the Wh S V order in Spanish varieties. Andalusian Spanish and Chilean Spanish are explicitly mentioned by the author as examples of lack of correlation.

This difference between Caribbean Spanish and Chilean Spanish was corroborated in a search for questions with the sequence [*qué tú*] in the corpora *CREA* and *Corpus del Español NOW*. This sequence was chosen because *tú* is arguably the most frequent and/or widely accepted pronoun used in this context (see Ordóñez and Olarrea 2006; see also Pöll 2015 and Orozco 2020, a.o.). The order [*qué tú*] seems relatively absent in the Chilean data (only one case in the first corpus, none in the second one). Puerto Rico and Cuba provide a number of cases often combined with the verb *creer* ['think'] or *decir* ['say'] (e.g. *¿Qué tú crees/dices (...)?* ['What are you thinking/saying?']), with or without an overt clausal complement, but cases without a complement could potentially be analyzed as fixed expressions and, thus, might not be as relevant⁹. Clearly this kind of search gives us only a limited insight into the data, but it helps highlight the fact that the distribution of subject pronouns in Caribbean and Chilean Spanish is different. Summing up, the Wh S V order is attested to a limited extent in Chilean Spanish, but its absence with non-D-linked wh-arguments implies that this dialect does not pattern with Caribbean Spanish, as seen in the absence of the [*que tú*] sequence in two different corpora.

3.4. Infinitival Subjects

Overt preverbal pronominal subjects in adjunct infinitival clauses are more widespread in Caribbean varieties (see (5)) than in Iberian Spanish (Toribio 2000, Flores-Ferrán 2007, and Ortiz-López, Dauphinais and Aponte Alequín 2018 and references therein). As in the case the Wh S V order, this property has been argued to illustrate the SVO/EPP property of the dialect. Chilean Spanish also allows for overt preverbal subjects in adjunct clauses in cases where Iberian Spanish rejects them, as shown by a preliminary search in the PRESSEA corpus and a review of

⁹ Interestingly, the Dominican Republic provided only one case in the CREA as opposed to the Corpus del Español NOW, thus hinting at a bias in that corpus.

the literature. The following instances of overt preverbal pronouns in adjunct infinitival clauses were located in the corpus:¹⁰

- (19) No me gusta que me tuteen
not to-me please that to-me address.as.tú
tiene que ser mucho para yo
has that be much for I
aceptar a una persona (SCHI_M32_067)
accept.inf to a person
'I don't like other to address me informally, I need to really know a
person to accept him/her.'
- (20) Me acuerdo que para yo no
refl.1sg remember.1sg that for I not
ver a la novia me tuve que
see.inf to the fiancée refl had.1sg that
arrendar una casa cercana a la
rent.inf a house close to the
casa
house (SCHI_H23_085)
'I remember that I had to rent a house nearby to avoid seeing my
fiancée before the wedding.'
- (21) Una vez por yo no saber
one time for I not know.inf
'One time, since I did not know....' (SCHI_H22_049)

Because of the low frequency of this structure, a search was also conducted in the *Corpus del Español NOW*, including the sequence *de yo* ['of + I']. The choice of the preposition *de* ['of'] is motivated by the fact that conservative dialects of the Iberian kind reject overt preverbal subjects in this context, as opposed to contexts with the preposition *sin* ['without'], which allows overt preverbal subjects across dialects (see Mensching 2000). In turn, the choice of the first-person pronoun is motivated by the fact that sociolinguistic studies on the overt/null alternation have revealed that this is the pronoun that tends to be used more often overtly across varieties (see Flores Ferrán 2007 and references therein). Examples from the Caribbean and Chile are frequently present in the corpus, whereas those from Spain were rare in comparison. Chile is the middle scale with the Caribbean and Spain at the extremes. The cases in (22)-(24), from Chilean Spanish, were found in the *Corpus del Español NOW*.

¹⁰ Since these are non-finite contexts, *a priori*, the licensing of an overt subject calls for an explanation. One of the hypotheses explored in the literature is that these infinitival have abstract agreement, just like personal infinitives in Portuguese. Still, the absent of overt agreement morphology renders this proposal *ad hoc* (see Pöll 2007 for discussion).

- (22) Estoy aburrido de yo tener que
 am.1sg bored of I have.inf that
 venir sin que él sepa. (18-06-2018 La Tercera)
 come.inf without that he knows
 'I am tired of having to come here without him knowing.'
- (23) Me lo sugirió al momento
 cl.1sg.dat cl.3sg.acc suggested.3sg at-the time
 de yo asumir el cargo. (29-09-2016 El Dínamo)
 of I assume.inf the position
 'He suggested it to me at the time I assumed the position.'
- (24) Al momento de yo querer empezar
 at.the time of I want.inf start.inf
 a arreglarme para amamantar a mi
 to prepare.inf.refl to breastfeed.inf to my
 hijo, el administrador me
 son the manager cl.1sg.dat
 dijo que...
 told that
 'At the time I wanted to start preparing to breastfeed the baby, the
 manager told me that...' (13-03-2014 La Nación)

Furthermore, the examples below exemplify preverbal subjects in infinitival clauses ((25) from Vidal (1980-1981: 947) and (26) from Contreras (1978:177)):

- (25) Se hizo fuerte [...] con estos dineros,
 refl became strong with these funds
 no para usarlos personalmente,
 not to use.inf.cl.3pl.acc personally
 pero queriendo que fueran usados en
 but wanting that were used in
 este congreso por el hecho de él
 this symposium for the fact that he
 haber sido eliminado de la
 have.inf been eliminated of the
 presidencia.
 presidency
 'He/she became strong thanks to these funds, not to use them
 himself/herself, but in an attempt to have them spent in this
 symposium, just because he/she was not the president anymore.'
- (26) Me mostraba su memoria para yo
 cl.1sg.dat showed.3sg his/her report for I
 comenzar a leerla.

start.inf to read.inf.cl.3sg.acc
 ‘He/She showed me his/her report for me to start reading it.’

In turn, Lipski (1996) classic work on Latin-American Spanish notes the availability of preverbal subjects in infinitival clauses in the Antilles (Caribbean islands), Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina, whereas NGLE (§26.7i) adds Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay and other Latin-American dialects. It is worth noting that Lipski (1996:239) explicitly notes, while discussing the presence of these subjects in both Colombian highlands and lowlands, that this crossdialectal distribution challenges the idea that preverbal subjects emerged in the Caribbean, hand in hand with other syntactic properties typical of Caribbean Spanish. Therefore, while this criterion seemed to be pertinent to determine partial pro-drop properties, understood as the adoption of an SVO order, it should be considered carefully. In any case, this feature is relevant for the study of convergence and divergence among dialects, being able to reveal the diversity attested within the Bajeño area, giving us an idea of how similar Chilean and Caribbean Spanish are.

3.5. Use of Personal Pronouns for Inanimates and the Use of Generic *Uno* ‘One’

Toribio (2000: 320) argues in favor of ‘paradigmatic pressure or parametric shift in accounting for the preponderance of subject pronouns’ in Dominican Spanish, because this preponderance is found with all verbal forms, even with 1st person singular verb forms which are not affected by phonetic processes leading to morphological impoverishment. The author offers the following evidence in favor of her analysis: “use of the thematic pronoun even for inanimate subjects, as in [(27)], where in normative speech only a null pronoun is felicitous, and in the over-use of *uno* ‘one’ with first person singular reference, and with impersonal reference alongside the neutral pronouns *tú* and *usted* [‘you’] [(28)], where other dialects may employ a null non-specific plural pronoun or an impersonal *se* construction”.

(27) *Overt subject pronoun with non-human reference* (Toribio 2000: 320)

- a. [Referent: river] Él tiene poca agua.
 it has little water
 ‘It has little water.’
- b. [Referent: buses] Ellas se saben devolver
 they REFL know.3pl return
 en Villa.
 in Villa
 ‘They often turn around in Villa.’

(28) *Personal and impersonal pronouns* (Toribio 2000: 321)

- | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| <i>Uno</i> | <i>se</i> | <i>da cuenta</i> | <i>que</i> | <i>uno</i> | <i>es</i> | <i>adulto</i> | <i>ya:</i> |
| one | refl.3sg | realizes | that | one | is | adult | already |

nadie	te	controla,	nadie	va	a
nobody	cl.2sg.acc	controls	nobody	goes	to
ver	tus	notas,	nadie	te	
see.inf	your	grades	nobody	cl.2sg.dat	
dice si	tú	vas	o no	vas.	Tú
tells if	you	goe.2sg	or not	goe.2sg	you
haces lo	que	tú	te	propones	a
do.2sg the	that	you	refl.2sg	decide	to
hacer.					
do.inf					

‘You realize that you are an adult: nobody controls you, nobody’s going to see your grades, nobody tells you if you can go or not. You do what you set out to do.’

This section analyzes these linguistic features in Chilean Spanish to establish whether the purported paradigmatic pressure could potentially have applied in that variety as well. Overt personal pronouns with non-human reference are not used productively in the dialect, at least for the speakers I consulted, which were highly educated. This being said, some naturalistic examples could be found, e.g., one in the literacy app *Bartolo*, which was used by the Chilean government throughout the pandemic and one in PRESSEA, where the latter reveals the use of *él* [‘him’] for a vehicle, though not in subject function and, thus, is less relevant for current purposes¹¹.

(29) Tú,	Nico,	recorrerás	el	mundo	de
you	Nico	travel.fut.2sg	the	world	of
las	palabras	y	descubrirás		la
the	words	and	discover.fut.2sg		the
magia	que	ellas	esconden	(Bartolo app)	
magic	that	they	hide.3pl		

¹¹ Possessives might be used with non-human reference:

- i. Vamos a comer un asado con su carnecita,
will.1pl to eat.inf a barbeque with its meat.dim,
sus papitas...
its potatoes.dim
‘We will have a barbeque with tasty meat, potatoes...’

Still another case of use of personal pronouns for horses is attested in the PRESSEA corpus:

- ii. Al caballo primero se le muestra donde va a
to.the horse first SE.arb cl.3sg.dat show where will.3SG to
caminar / ehh donde va a vivir / donde él
walk hm where will.3SG to live where he
va a comer (SCHI_H21_013)
will.3SG to eat will.3SG

‘First, we show the horse where he will walk, where he will live, where he will it.’

(ii) is relevant in that other varieties may not use a personal pronoun in this context. This being said, horses are animates and, thus, the paradigm shift analysis is only partially supported.

‘You, Nico, will travel around the world of the words and you will discover the magic they hide.’

- (30) Cuando trabajé con mi furgón / era
 when worked.1sg with my truck was
 diferente / igual gané plata y todo /
 different anyway made.1sg money and all
 pero yo quería / que el furgón me
 but I wanted.1sg that the truck cl.1sg.dat
 diera / que yo a él lo
 gave that I to him cl.3sg.acc
 podía meter en una empresa buena /
 could.1sg put.infl in a business good
 pero nunca lo pude hacer
 but never cl.3sg.acc could.1SG do
 ‘When I worked with my truck, it was different. I made money and
 all that, but I wanted the truck to help me earn a lot. I could have
 work for a good firm with that truck, but I did not succeed.’
 (SCHI_H12_037)

Again, absence of a certain structure in a corpus is not strong evidence that it is unacceptable. It might just be infrequent or there might be a bias in the data present in the corpus. The examples in (29)-(30) suggest that use of personal pronouns for inanimates is part of the dialect and, to a certain extent, the idea that a paradigm shift à la Toribio may have taken place in the dialect finds support.

Uno [‘one’] with first person singular reference, and with impersonal reference is also found in the PRESEEA corpus. In particular, *uno* with first person singular reference is attested fairly frequently, due to the format of the PRESEEA, namely, interviews about a range of issues, including personal experiences, (31)-(33).

- (31) Antes veía teleseries porque uno
 before watched.1sg TV.series because one
 era chico y no lo dejaban
 was little and not cl.3sg.dat let.3pl
 salir cuando llovía / a uno lo
 go.out.infl when raining to one cl.3sg.acc
 dejaban ahí / pegado al televisor
 left.3pl there in front of.the television
 ‘Before, I used to watch TV series, because I was little and my
 parents did not allow me to go out when it was raining. They just
 had me watch TV.’
 (SCHI_H21_013)
- (32) Si de repente pasa otra mina por delante /
 if suddenly walks another woman in front
 mío igual uno <ininteligible> una mirada
 of-me maybe one unintelligible a look

pero /	no	me	gusta	que	después
but	not	cl.1s.dat	please	that	afterwards
te	haga	show	ni nada (...)		porque
cl.2sg.dat	make	scene	not anything		because
uno	está con	ella	pues		(SCHI_H12_037)
one	is with	her	after all		

‘If a woman walks in front of me, I look at her, but I don’t like my wife to make a scene, because I am with her after all.’

- (33) La verdad que que esta gente está
the truth that that these people is
para sacarse el sombrero / o sea
to take-off.inf.refl the hat or be.subj
uno justifica plenamente lo que uno
one justifies completely the that one
ve como expresión de cariño
sees like expression of affection
hacia los carabineros porque realmente /
towards the policemen because really
están al servicio de la comunidad
are at.the service of the community
‘The truth is that these people are really great. That is to say, one justifies completely what one sees as a sign of affection towards the police, because they really serve the community.’ (SCHI_H23_085)

In turn, the example in (34), illustrates the use of *usted* as generic pronoun, referring to people in general, including both the speaker and the addressee, in keeping with Toribio’s (2000:320) claim about paradigmatic pressure that together with *uno*, *usted* and *tú* may tend to be used as generics, instead of “a null non-specific plural pronoun or an impersonal *se* construction.”

- (34) Las micros andaban por todos lados / o
the buses were everywhere or
sea *usted* sabía que si salía de
be.subj youUSTED knew that if left.3sg of
su casa / *usted* decía ya aquí a
your house youUSTED said.3SG ok here to
la esquina / pasa mi micro (SCHI_M32_067)
the corner stops my bus
‘The buses were everywhere. That is to say, you knew that if you went out, you could say, ok, here at the corner is the bus line.’

Variationist research on the use of pronouns with impersonal reference, a.k.a. as nonspecificity of reference, has also noted that Chilean Spanish patterns with Caribbean Spanish as opposed to Iberian Spanish in a number of respects: According to Cameron’s (1997: 55-56) survey of existing research, nonspecificity

of reference in second person *tú* favors pronominal insertion in San Juan (Puerto Rico), in Buenos Aires (Argentina) and in Santiago (Chile), while disfavoring pronominal expression, relative to specific *tú*, in Madrid and Seville. For nonspecific *uno*, the same effect of nonspecificity is found in San Juan and Santiago, though the tendency is stronger in San Juan in comparison to Madrid¹². The idea that a paradigm shift may have taken place in this dialect is, thus, supported, if the parallelism between Chilean and Puerto Rican Spanish is taken as evidence in this regard. However, this is an indirect piece of evidence concerning the null subject properties of Chilean Spanish. Hence, it is important to ponder on the value of the data presented here for an analysis of a pro-drop variety. In turn, the use of personal pronouns for inanimates is English-like, where one may refer to, say, a ship as ‘she.’ Partial pro-drop behavior or non-canonical pro-drop behavior is, to a certain degree, English-like as noted in section 2 (though see section 4.1 for further discussion). This being said, it is unclear that this feature draws the line between a canonical and a non-canonical null subject variety. As noted by Posio (2013: 259; see references therein) this feature is present in European Portuguese, but significantly less so in Madrid Spanish, although both varieties are considered pro-drop varieties.

With regard to impersonals, the link to pro-drop is slightly indirect. Pro-drop can be associated with SE impersonal constructions (see MacDonald and Maddox 2020). Thus, partial pro-drop varieties shift away from this construction and, allegedly explore alternative ways of expressing impersonal meanings to varying degrees, (though a partial pro-drop variety may still use SE impersonals in certain contexts; again, see section 4.1). The behavior of Caribbean and Chilean Spanish might be a case in point. Thus, the data in this section are relevant for the discussion of the pro-drop properties of the dialect, but their relevance should be taken with a grain of salt.

4. Chilean Spanish as non-canonical pro-drop language

Table 1 summarizes the linguistic properties unveiled so far. Iberian Spanish is included for comparison, Chilean Spanish being in the middle of a hypothetical scale, sharing properties with both Caribbean and Iberian Spanish.

¹² For discussion on generic/impersonal pronouns in the Chilean variety of Valdivia, see Hurtado Cubillos (2009).

Table 1. Summary of subject-related properties included in the literature on pro-drop for Caribbean, Chilean and Iberian Spanish. +/- means that there is conflicting evidence, e.g., the property is attested, but it is not particularly frequent or widespread.

	Caribbean Sp.	Chilean Sp.	Iberian Sp.
Overt pron. without surface semantics	+	+	-
Wh _{non-D-linked} S V	+	+/-	-
Preposition S infinitive	+	+	-
Use of personal pronouns for inanimates	+	+/-	-
Use of <i>uno</i> ‘one’ with first person reference	+	+	-

Given the results in Table 1, it is now possible to answer the research questions, repeated here for the sake of exposition: (i) To what degree is Chilean Spanish similar/dissimilar to Caribbean Spanish? (ii) Is Chilean Spanish a canonical pro-drop?

Regarding the issue of surface semantic effects and overt pronouns, overt subject pronouns are used without a topic change, contrast or focus. In turn, the use of preverbal subjects in prepositional infinitival clauses is allowed. Expletive *ello* is not attested (as expected, since this is a privative feature of Dominican Spanish)¹³. There is some fairly limited use of personal pronouns with inanimate reference and *uno* is used relatively frequently with first person reference. All together these properties show that Chilean Spanish patterns with Caribbean Spanish rather than Iberian Spanish. Still, out of these criteria, only the use of overt pronouns without surface semantics stands out as particularly strong evidence in favor of the non-canonical pro-drop analysis. By that we mean that is unexpected for a canonical pro-drop analysis, suggesting that either the variety at hand is non-canonical pro-drop or else the relation between the Avoid Pronoun Principle and pro-drop needs to be reconsidered.

Moreover, verb-subject inversion in interrogatives with argumental non D-linked wh-phrases is not attested, in contrast to Caribbean Spanish. In particular, the absence of the [*qué tú*] sequence, contrasts with Caribbean Spanish. Given the various features that both varieties share, this difference calls for an explanation. Ordóñez and Olarrea (2006) provide empirical evidence that subjects in the Wh S V order tend to be pronominal as opposed to full DPs. This led them to argue that pronouns in Caribbean Spanish are weak in the sense of Cardinaletti (1997) and Cardinaletti and Starke (1999). Details aside, the weak/strong pronoun distinction arguably captures the difference between Caribbean and non-Caribbean dialects, where the latter have strong pronouns in their grammar – as opposed to weak

¹³ This being said, the status of *ello* as an expletive sitting in Spec,TP as part of the loss of pro-drop properties in Caribbean Spanish has been contested (see Gupton and Lowman 2013 and Camacho 2016 and references therein).

pronouns¹⁴. If this is right, it is possible to conclude that pronominal subject in Chilean Spanish are not weak pronouns in contrast to in Caribbean Spanish. Yet, other non-canonical pro-drop features are attested in the dialect¹⁵.

To conclude, thus, the present research adds Chilean Spanish to the growing number of Spanish non-canonical pro-drop varieties (see Sessarego 2021 for Latin-American Afrohispanic varieties, and Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández 2019).¹⁶

4.1. Chilean Spanish vs. Partial Null Subject Languages

Null Subject Languages are divided into various categories (see Roberts and Holmberg 2010, a.o., for details):

- Canonical or consistent null subject languages.
- Expletive null subject or semi pro-drop languages, which allow for expletive null subjects, but not argumental ones, e.g., German and various creole languages.
- Discourse or radical pro-drop languages. That is, pro-drop with zero verbal morphology, e.g., Chinese and Japanese.
- Partial null-subject languages, where null subjects are restricted by syntactic and morphological conditions, e.g., Finnish and Brazilian Portuguese.

This section will briefly discuss whether Chilean Spanish is a partial pro-drop variety or not. First, asymmetries in licensing of null subjects determined by

¹⁴ Ordóñez and Olarrea (2006) argue that TP remnant movement takes place in wh-questions across dialects. Since weak pronouns appear in a low position in the clause, this movement does not change the surface word order in Caribbean Spanish. Since strong pronouns are higher in the clause, the surface word order changes giving raise to inversion in non-Caribbean Spanish.

¹⁵ Ordóñez and Olarrea (2006) provide evidence that light and morphologically simple pronouns, (e.g., *tú*), are more likely to appear in the Wh SV order than *nosotros* and other heavier pronouns. Such tendencies are found elsewhere in Caribbean Spanish as the following results on word order in Cuban Spanish by Ortiz-López, Dauphinais and Aponte Alequín (2018: 113) point out: ‘Explicit pronouns (*yo/I*, *tú/you* (+/- Spec, *uno/one* (-Spec)) appear almost categorically in preverbal position, independent of the type of clause [+/- fin],’ as opposed to more complex or heavier subjects. This suggests that a performance factor, namely, the tendency for complex or heavier phrases to appear at the end of the clause might affect the distribution of overt subjects (see Ortiz-López, Dauphinais and Aponte Alequín 2018 and references therein for discussion), potentially leading to the grammaticalization of these tendencies causing the grammar to make a difference between *yo/tú/uno* and other subjects. Note that the analysis of the difference between Chilean and Caribbean Spanish only addresses the behavior of pronouns. Still, see Comínguez (2018) for evidence that preverbal DPs may also be allowed in this context in Caribbean Spanish as well as an explanation that does not rely on the weak/strong pronoun distinction across dialects.

¹⁶ Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández argue in favor of degrees of partiality in that the same dialect may show partial null subject properties in a certain syntactic context but not in others. The following dialects show a certain degree of partiality: Andalusian, Castilian, Catalanian, Extremaduran, Caribbean, Mexican and River Plate Spanish.

combinations of number or person features, while attested, for instance, in a partial null subject languages like Finnish (Roberts and Holmberg 2010), are, to the best of my knowledge, absent (though there are differences in the overt use of pronouns depending on these factors; see fn. 6 for relevant discussion). Thus, I will focus on two other defining properties of partial null subject languages: the distribution of null generic subject pronouns equivalent to English *one* and locality effects in antecedent-pronoun coreference.

The availability of null generic 3rd person singular pronouns has been claimed to be a significant property of partial pro-drop languages (Roberts and Holmberg 2010 and Holmberg and Sheehan 2010; see these works for proposals able to capture the divide between partial and canonical pro-drop languages with respect to this feature), and can be illustrated with examples like (35) from Brazilian Portuguese (data from Rodrigues 2004, quoted in Barbosa 2019):

- (35) É assim que faz o doce.
 is.3sg so that make.3SG the desert
 ‘This is how one makes the desert.’

In particular, the embedded null subject is interpreted as ‘people in general, including speaker and addressee’ (Barbosa 2019: 490). Still, this reading is absent in Caribbean and Chilean Spanish (as well as non-Caribbean Spanish)¹⁷. According to Barbosa (2019), null generic 3rd person singular pronouns correlate with bare NP licensing. Inasmuch as (i) non-dislocated bare NPs are independently banned from preverbal subject positions (and postverbal position too, but for the subject of unaccusatives); (ii) this property, allegedly, has not changed in the Caribbean and Chilean pro-drop varieties of Spanish (as opposed to certain varieties/idioms of US Spanish), this might explain the absence of the said generic pronouns in Spanish. This is illustrated in (36) for the various dialects under discussion:

- (36) a. *(Los) perros ladran. *General, Caribbean & Chilean Sp.*
 the dogs bark
 ‘Dogs bark.’
 b. *(El) café es muy sano.
 the coffee is very healthy.
 ‘Coffee is very healthy.’ *General, Caribbean & Chilean Sp.*

In contrast, the distribution of bare nouns varies from European to Brazilian Portuguese, where Brazilian Portuguese allows them in subject and object position as opposed to European Portuguese, which has a more restricted distribution (see Barbosa 2019 and references therein). This being said, the relevance of the presence/absence of a D-feature in T and its consequences for the distribution of

¹⁷ Generic *uno* might be null when it corefers with an overt impersonal *uno* (see Maddox 2016). Note that the generic meaning is conveyed with a SE clitic in Spanish and European Portuguese (see section 3.5).

It is worth noting that impersonal 3rd person plural null subjects differ in partial and consistent null subject languages in that only the former can have an inclusive reading – if the construction is indeed available – as opposed to the latter, whose reading excludes speaker and addressee (original European Portuguese example from Barbosa 2019, translated into Spanish):

- Partial pro-drop languages as Brazilian Portuguese, Finnish or Hebrew are also known for showing locality effects in the licensing of 3rd person null pronouns, meaning that the relationship between a null subject pronoun and its antecedent is local, whereas coreference with overt subject pronouns can be non-local (Rodrigues 2004, a.o.)¹⁸. Most cases of overt subject pronouns in Chilean Spanish were found in non-local environment (coordination, (11) and (15), or adjunct clauses, (12)) as opposed to embedded clauses; the latter environment was comparatively less present in the corpus and in many cases the main verb was a quotation verb, as illustrated in (38):

- In other words, it seems as if null subjects tend to be used in local environments, a fact that merits further research. This being said, null subjects in Chilean Spanish

24

do not need to be bound by the closest local antecedent according to my informants, in contrast to Brazilian Portuguese or Finnish (e.g., see Barbosa 2019: 513 and Holmberg and Sheehan 2010):

- (39) Juan dice que María piensa que ganó la
 Juan says that Mary thinks that won
 the
 lotería.
 lottery
 ‘Juan₁ says that Mary₂ thinks that he₁/she₂ won the lottery.’

A priori, the data in this section suggests that Chilean Spanish is not a partial pro-drop variety, though the tendency to include overt pronouns in non-local environments needs to be explored. Thus, questions arise as to whether the results from this section can be reconciled with the results summarized in Table 1. One important contribution found in recent literature is that partiality in pro-drop properties is a matter of degrees (see Ticio 2018 and Frascarelli and Jiménez-Fernández 2019) and the data unveiled in this chapter can be interpreted in this light: The ‘overuse’ of personal subject pronouns suggests that the Avoid Pronoun Principle is not as active in Chilean Spanish as one would think. This is not just a fact about 1st person singular pronoun, rather the 3rd person singular is affected as well. However, the most widely accepted partial pro-drop features – reviewed in this section – are not part of the grammar of this dialect.

4.2 Other Issues and Future Research

The syntactic features of Caribbean Spanish have been argued to be the result of language contact with English or African languages or African-based creoles and/or the corresponding demographics, but these are controversial theories (see Toribio 2000, Mayol 2012 and Pöll 2015 for discussion) as the distribution of the linguistic features that characterize these dialects does not necessarily correlate with historical language contact. Chilean Spanish instantiates one such case of dissociation between syntactic features and the said factors, arguing, thus, in favor of a more general approach. See Martínez Sanz (2011) and Sessarego (2021) for approaches based on language acquisition; see also Brown and Rivas (2011), Mayol (2012) and Camacho (2016) for an explicit discussion on how the change from null subject language to partial pro-drop may have taken place.

While various features of Chilean Spanish have been unveiled, the exact association of those features with sociolinguistic variables, such as level of education, age, is left for future research (see section 2.2 for some relevant references). Also, potential variation within Chile has been left aside; the discussion has been exemplified with the PRESEEA Santiago de Chile data. Moreover, questions arise regarding the behavior of other Latin American varieties, particularly from the Bajeno area.

It worth noting that the present research – which sets the stage for a wider dialect distance analysis of subject properties in Spanish – has relied mostly on corpus data. Still, other sources of data (e.g., grammaticality judgment tasks) are needed to control for independent factor and analyze highly specific infrequent structures (e.g., see Ticio 2018 for various data points relevant to the canonical/non-canonical pro-drop status; for the relation between corpora and generative grammar, see Cornips and Gegersen 2016 and Newmeyer 2013).

5. Conclusion

The content of the present chapter has furthered our knowledge of crossdialectal differences in subjecthood within Spanish as part of an ongoing dialectometric program focused on the syntax of Spanish. Specifically, the present study constitutes the first detailed characterization of the pro-drop properties of Chilean Spanish in light of the Null Subject Parameter (Rizzi 1982 and related discussions by Roberts and Holmberg 2010 and Barbosa 2019). It has been shown that Chilean Spanish patterns with Caribbean Spanish as opposed to Iberian Spanish in various respects, providing evidence that Chilean Spanish behaves as a non-canonical pro drop language – though not as a partial pro-drop variety – with respect to syntactic distribution of over subject pronouns. Furthermore, the pertinence of various data points for the study of pro-dropness has been evaluated.

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CORPORA

Corpus del Español NOW

CREA= Real Academia Española, Corpus de Rerefencia del Español Actual

PRESEEA = Corpus del Proyecto para el estudio sociolingüístico del español de España y de América.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Cilene Rodrigues and Andrés Saab for inviting me to participate in this volume and for their comments and suggestions. Marcela Hurtado and the audience of the Spanish Dialect Meeting V (Spadysin V), organized by the Universidad de Extremadura, Spain, also provided valuable feedback. All errors remain my own.