

OVERT vs. NULL SUBJECTS
IN NONFINITE CONSTRUCTIONS OF COLOMBIAN SPANISH

Kryzzya Gómez (*Kryzzgomez09@gmail.com*)
University of Nantes, France

As in the Caribbean varieties of Spanish, in Colombian Spanish (CS) overt subjects tend to appear in preverbal position in non-finite constructions. The aim of this presentation is to discuss non-finite clauses where the subject is not overt.

According to the standard theory (Chomsky 1981, 1982; Rizzi 1982, 1986; and Lasnik & Uriagereka 1988, Miller 2002 and references therein), overt subjects are licensed by finite INFL/T, while controlled PRO is licensed in the absence of finite INFL/T.

There are three descriptive claims underlying the type of approaches (See Szabolcsi 2009, Rigau 1995):

- a) Infinitival complements cannot hold overt (nominative) subjects.
- b) In control constructions controlled overt pronouns are not licensed.
- c) No null referentially free subjects in infinitives.

Counter-evidence for these claims has been already observed in the literature (cf. Duguine 2013, Livitz 2011, Hornstein 1999, 2001). Here I show that the overt and null subjects in CS infinitival adjunct clauses exemplify three systematic patterns of exceptions to these generalizations. I have established this classification based on a set of tests distinguishing Obligatory Control (OC) vs. Non Obligatory Control (NOC) (cf. Hornstein 1999, Landau 2013 and Sichel 2010).

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| <p>(1) María_i dejó de trabajar [sin [Rosa_k/ ella_{i/k}/ <i>pro</i>_{i/k}] decir nada].
Maria stopped of to.work without Rosa/ she/ <i>pro</i> to.say nothing
'Maria stopped working without (Rosa/her) saying anything.'</p> <p>(2) Juan_i sería feliz [al [José_k/ él_{i/k}/ PRO_{i/*k}] dejar la casa].
Juan be-_{COND} happy in.the José/ él / PRO to.leave the house
'Juan would be happy when he left/ leaving the house.'</p> <p>(3) Juan_i se fue [para [él_{i/*k}/PRO_{i/*k}/*María] estar feliz].
Juan _{CLIT 3p}.left for him / PRO/ María to.be happy
'Juan left in order for him to be happy.'</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">Sin-infinitives
<i>NOC overt subject/ NOC null subject</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Al-infinitives
<i>NOC overt subject/OC null subject</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Para-infinitives
<i>OC null subject / OC 'overt PRO'</i></p> |
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The purpose of this study is to provide a conceptual and theoretical characterization of the overt and null subjects of the three types of infinitives. In so doing, we adopt Duguine's (2013) analysis of pro-drop according to which Spanish null arguments (NA) are elided DPs, like in Japanese-type languages (Saito 2007, Takahashi 2014). In her analysis, Duguine posits that a NA can yield not only pronominal but also anaphoric readings which cannot be explained in terms of *pro*, but with DP ellipsis. I show that a similar phenomenon occurs in **Sin-infinitives** (e.g. *María_i dejó de trabajar sin [su_i jefe]_j decirle nada. Y Rosa_k también dejó de trabajar sin [e] decirle nada. And Rosa also stopped working without her (own) boss saying nothing to her'). Moreover, this interpretation can be also displayed by the NA of **Para-infinitives**. My proposal is to extend this analysis to all null arguments of CS nonfinite constructions. More specifically, I want to investigate if we can get rid of both primitives *pro* and PRO through DP ellipsis.*

I argue that the alternation of overt and null subjects in **Sin-infinitives** can be reduced to a single argument which shares the same **NOC** interpretative properties but differ phonologically. I propose that the **OC** arguments in **Para-infinitives** be analyzed in the same fashion (See McFadden & Sundaresan 2018 for a similar discussion). Conversely, **Al-infinitives** should be analyzed differently, since both arguments differ not only phonologically but also semantically.

To conclude, DP ellipsis automatically accounts for the NA of the infinitival **Sin** and **Para**, but cannot directly explain **Al-infinitives**. I will close the talk with a discussion of the possible solutions for the latter case.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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