Negative Preposing in embedded domains: Is it a true root device?

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1. Goal. This talk explores the grammatical restrictions that a specific type of focus fronting, namely Negative Preposing (NP), seems to impose on the root vs. non-root contexts in which it can occur. Specifically, the analysis is concerned with embedding under factive and non-factive verbs (*sensu* Hooper & Thompson 1973, hereafter H&T). NP in root contexts is illustrated in (1a) for argument fronting and (1b) for adjunct fronting. In both cases NP triggers subject inversion:

(1)   a. A ningún compañero pudo María recurrir en busca de ayuda.
         'To no colleague could Mary turn in search of help.'
      b. Nunca antes ha podido María recurrir a ningún compañero en busca de ayuda.
         'Never before has Mary been able to turn to a colleague in search of help.'

It has been traditionally acknowledged that languages such as English show restrictions with respect to the root/non-root contexts which permit focus fronting, including NP (Emonds 2004; Hooper & Thompson 1973; Haegeman 2012; a.o.). In this paper I discuss the reasons why NP is licensed in both root and non-root contexts in a language such as Spanish.

2 Background and research question. Frascarelli (2010) argues that the [+foc] feature is only located in root clauses and a distinction should be assumed between root and non-root C-domains (cf. also Haegeman 2002; Jiménez-Fernández & Camacho-Taboada 2013). Nevertheless, languages like Sicilian, Hungarian and Basque show that (some type of) contrastive focus is allowed in embedded contexts (cf. Cruschina 2006, Ortiz de Urbina 1999). Negative Preposing is described as a subtype of focus which involves negative polarity (Haegeman 2012; Emonds 2004), triggers movement to the CP-area and constitutes a type of Main Clause Phenomena, being thereby restricted to root clauses or embedded clauses with root properties. I illustrate this constraint with data from English, in the contrast (2-3):

(2)   a.   To no other colleague could he turn to. (Radford 2009)
      b.   I found out that never before had he had to borrow money. (H&T 119)
(3)   a.   *He was surprised that [never in my life had I seen a hippopotamus]. (H&T 479)
      b.   *John regretted that never had he seen *Gone with the Wind*. (Authier 1992: 334)

This raises the interesting question of whether NP is uniformly constrained to those embedded clauses selected by non-factive verbs across languages. As part of the answer to this question, there is a puzzling effect in languages such as Spanish, where focus fronting in general seems to allowed in all embedding contexts, regardless of factivity:

(4)   Negaron que *a Jimena* vieran en la fiesta. (Jiménez-Fernández & Camacho 2013)
   'They denied that they saw Jimena at the party.'

NP is predicted then to be compatible with all types of verbs, factive and non-factive. This prediction is borne out in light of examples in (5), equivalent to the English sentences in (3):

(5)   a. Se sorprendió que nunca en mi vida hubiera visto yo un hipopótamo.
         'He was surprised that never in my life had I seen a hippopotamus.'
      b. Juan lamenta que nunca haya visto María "Lo que el viento se llevó".
   'John regrets that never in her life has Mary seen *Gone with the Wind*.'

The contrast between NP in English and Spanish is even more intriguing in light of semantic approaches such as Frascarelli (2010), according to which focus is licensed only in clauses endowed with illocutionary force. If this semantic characterization of root phenomena is correct, it predicts that in both English and Spanish factive clauses block NP. Given the Spanish data in (5), this prediction is not supported by facts.

3 Working hypothesis and methodology. In order to solve the aforementioned puzzle, my working hypothesis is that Spanish NP is more flexible because the syntactic position targeted by the preposed constituent is lower than the position used in other languages such as English. Methodologically, I have carried out an experiment in which a *systematic comparison* is made of equivalent sentences in English and Spanish, based on the grammaticality judgement of native speakers. The results from the two tests confirm that factivity constrains NP in English embedding whereas in Spanish it does not stand up as a discriminating factor. The sentences to be judged include preposing of arguments and adjuncts so as to test whether there is any asymmetry between the two types.
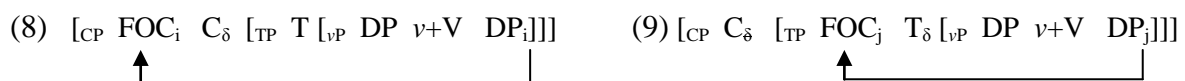
4. Analysis. Adopting the intervention account of Haegeman and Ürögdi's (2010) and Haegeman (2012), according to which a factive (or event) operator moving to Spec-CP intervenes with other types of movement, I account for the variation in the distribution of NP across English and Spanish by the options made possible by feature inheritance of discourse features (Jiménez-Fernández 2010; Jiménez–Fernández & Miyagawa 2014). In English discourse features remain in C, while in Spanish they are transmitted to T. As far as NP is concerned, in Spanish the focus feature (δ) may be inherited by T from C, so that NP targets Spec-TP, as in (6). This movement does not compete with the operator that has moved to Spec-CP, so no intervention effect arises.

(6) $[_{CP}$ OP$_i$ C$_{event+\delta}$ $[_{FP}$ t$_i$ $[_{TP}$ FOC$_j$ T$_\delta$ $[_{vP}$ DP v+V DP$_j$]]]$
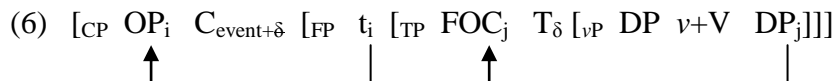
In contrast, the focus feature stays at C in English, so that NP competes with the operator movement to CP for the target position, as in (7).

(7) $[_{CP}$ OP$_i$ C$_{event+\delta}$ $\ldots$ $[_{FP}$ t_i $[_{TP}$ T $[_{vP}$ DP v+V DP]]]$
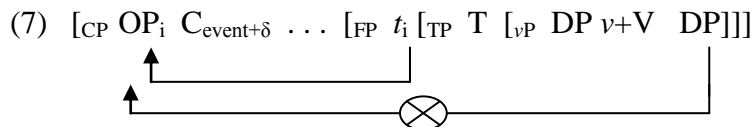
This competition triggers an intervention effect in the syntax of sentential complements of factive verbs where operator movement has occurred. What is common to English and Spanish is that in non-factive embedded clauses NP is allowed, given that there is no factive operator blocking NP. However, again the two languages differ in that in English NP targets Spec-CP to satisfy the focus feature in C (8), whereas in Spanish NP undergoes movement to Spec-TP after lowering of the focus feature onto T (9). Thus my working hypothesis is validated.

(8) $[_{CP}$ FOC$_i$ C$_\delta$ $[_{TP}$ T $[_{vP}$ DP v+V DP$_i$]]]$ (9) $[_{CP}$ C$_\delta$ $[_{TP}$ FOC$_j$ T$_\delta$ $[_{vP}$ DP v+V DP$_j$]]]$

Evidence for positing that some types of focus undergo movement to spec-TP in Spanish comes from the syntax of bare quantifiers, Binding effects and Montalbetti's effects.

Selected References: Emonds, J. 2004. Unspecified categories as the key to root constructions. In Adger et al. (eds.), *Peripheries*,75-121, Kluwer. **Frascarelli, M.** 2010. Narrow Focus, clefting and predicate inversion, *Lingua* 120, 2121-2147. **Haegeman, L.** 2012. *Adverbial clauses, main clause phenomena and composition of the left periphery*. CUP. **Haegeman, L. & B. Ürögdi**. 2010. Referential CPs and DPs: An operator movement account, *Theoretical Linguistics* 36: 111-152. **Hooper, J. & S. Thompson.** 1973. On the applicability of root transformations, *Linguistic Inquiry* 4, 465-97. **Jiménez-Fernández, Á.L. & S. Miyagawa**. 2014. A feature-inheritance approach to root phenomena and parametric variation. *Lingua* 145, 276-302.