

The Syntactic and Information Structure of Spanish Predicative Verbless Clauses

Oscar Garcia Marchena
University Paris Diderot
oscar.garcia.marchena@gmail.com

Spanish Predicative verbless clauses are composed by a predicative head and an optional noun phrase or clause, like the segments indicated in bold in the following examples:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| (1) Quietas las manos . | 'Still the hands.' (Hands off.) |
| (2) Precioso el collar . | 'So beautiful the necklace.' |
| (3) Menos mal que no viniste . | 'Happily you didn't come.' |
| (4) Seguro que no viene nadie . | 'Sure no one will come.' |

Nevertheless, most of the works dealing with these structures do not seem to decide on the syntactic function of the NP or clause. This NP has been analysed as the subject of the predicative head or as a dislocated phrase or clause coreferent to an elliptic subject.

The aim of this presentation is to show the syntactic variety of Spanish predicative verbless clauses as well as their information structures. For this, we have firstly extracted all the predicative verbless clauses from the corpus CORLEC of contemporary oral Spanish, (Francisco Marín, 1992) and we have classified the diversity of types found on it. Secondly, we have classified each type according to the syntactic properties of the NP. Finally, we have applied some tests to check whether the NP shares its properties with subjects or with dislocated phrases.

The results of this analysis of the properties of examples taken from a corpus allow to draw two kinds of conclusions. Firstly, we find a significant regularity in the distribution of structures: some verbless clauses can realise their first argument as a subject and others as a dislocated phrase, as it can be seen in their distribution of some syntactic properties, like the mobility of the NP or the presence of associative anaphora. Secondly, each syntactic structure seem to correlate with a different informative structure: *focus – background*, *all focus* and *topic- comment*. It seems then that Spanish predicative verbless clauses can indeed have subjects, and some of them can also have dislocated NPs or even complements. This paper aims to present the mapping between syntactic and information structures of Spanish verbless clauses.