

BOOK REVIEW

Review of *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 12. Selected Papers from the 45th Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL), Campinas, Brazil*, edited by Ruth E. V. Lopes, Juanito Ornelas de Avelar and Sonia M. L. Cyrino (2017). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company

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This volume comprises sixteen peer-reviewed selected papers presented at the 45th *Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL)*, that took place on May 6–9, 2015, at the University of Campinas, Brazil. United by a common goal – the formal analysis of Romance languages –, these papers focus on a wide range of topics in different areas of grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, plus interfaces), and in different research domains (L1 grammar, L2 acquisition, variation and change, bilingualism and language contact, code-switching). The Romance languages represented in this volume include Peninsular and American Spanish; European, Brazilian and Mozambican (Maputo) Portuguese; French; Italian and Italian dialects (especially Borgomanerese); and Palenquero, a Spanish-based creole. Most papers assume a comparative approach to the discussed topics. Overall, the papers present new data and new approaches to familiar structures, as well as new developments for less known phenomena.

Keywords: Romance languages; L1 grammar; L2 acquisition; variation; language contact; code-switching

The papers in the volume, arranged in alphabetical order of author, are briefly summarized below.

The volume begins with an Introduction by the editors, stating the main goals of the Symposium and the procedures for selecting the papers. A summary of the contents is presented, providing the reader with a very comprehensive and cohesive overview of the volume.

The first chapter, “Modality, presupposition and discourse: The meaning of European Portuguese *afinal* and Italian *alla fine*”, by Patrícia Amaral and Fabio Del Prete, contains a comparative analysis of the two epistemic modal particles in the two languages. Considering the notion of *truth unpersistence*, the authors analyze these particles as propositional operators that interact with the presuppositions of the participants in a conversation, thus bringing together epistemic modality, presupposition and discourse.

In “Exempt anaphors and logophoricity in French”, Isabelle Charnavel addresses a very interesting issue that has not been sufficiently studied in the literature – anaphors that appear to be exempt from Condition A, such as French *son propre* ‘his own’ and *lui-même* ‘≈ himself’. The author presents an accurate definition of logophoricity, a notion that is not very well-established in the literature, and proposes specific tests to characterize two

logophoric centers that are crucial to account for exempt anaphors – attitude holders and empathy loci. The main proposal is that silent syntactically represented logophoric operators can locally bind the so-called exempt anaphors, which makes them identical to anaphors obeying Condition A, except for the properties of the binder.

The third paper deals with a topic at the syntax-semantics-discourse interface. In “*What’s up with dative experiencers?*”, António Fábregas, Ángel L. Jiménez-Fernández and Mercedes Tubino analyze the argument structure of Spanish psych verbs that select either an accusative or a dative argument, exhibiting case-marking alternations. The authors show that the alternation is strongly tied to word order (in unmarkedthetic interpretations, dative is OVS; accusative is SVO) and claim that any rearrangement of these patterns is the result of information structure (“only dative experiencers allow an experiencer-first ordering in all-focus interpretation”, p. 31). The proposed analysis dispenses with discourse-specific features such as [focus] and [topic] in the syntactic structure and places them at the interfaces, a proposal that is in line with recent discussions on the properties of functional heads in syntax.

In a paper entitled “*Aktionsart and event modification in Spanish adjectival passives*”, Alfredo García-Pardo discusses the contrast between telic and stative causative (StC) verbs regarding the availability of adjectival passives. Departing from classical analyses, the author associates two different temporal structures to telic and StCs VPs, claiming that the EV-T argument of the former is introduced externally, in EvP, whereas the ST-T argument of the latter is introduced internally. This difference explains why Spanish adjectival passives derived from telic verbs cannot be modified by event-related modifiers: since adjectivization of telic VPs occurs before EvP projects, event-related and spatio-temporal modification of the underlying event is blocked.

In chapter 5, “*Revising the canon: Social and stylistic variation of coda (– r) in Buenos Aires Spanish*”, Madeline B. Gilbert and Marcos Rohena-Madrado analyze new productions of that coda, not yet documented in earlier studies. Inspired by Labovian sociolinguistic studies, the authors conducted experimental research involving younger and older native speakers born and raised in Buenos Aires, who performed three different tasks. Data from an acoustic analysis of the production tasks lead the authors to propose that frequency and socio-stylistic context must be taken into account for an accurate description of coda (– r), thus challenging the canonical status of this coda.

The next chapter, “*Hiatus resolution in L1 and L2 Spanish: An optimality account*”, by Carolina González and Christine Weissglass, investigates the acquisition of vowel-vowel sequences at word boundaries in L2 Spanish (L1 English). The main goal is to determine the developmental stages in the acquisition of these sequences within the framework of Optimality Theory. Elaborating on a previous study by the same authors, which provides the experimental design, this paper is concerned with the strategies subjects resort to when faced with hiatus. The acoustic analysis of the data shows that out of three possible grammars, resulting from dialectal differences, two appear to have been acquired by the L2 Spanish subjects.

Natália Brambatti Guzzo presents a study on Brazilian Portuguese (BP) compounds in chapter 7: “*Recursion in Brazilian Portuguese complex compounds*”. Focusing on word-word compounds with a left or a right prosodic adjunct, the author claims that these complex compounds are prosodized as recursive composite groups in BP, and are phonologically distinguishable from regular words and coordinate compounds. The acoustic analysis of the data collected through a production task supports not only the hypothesis of prosodic recursion but also the idea that an additional prosodic domain needs to be introduced. The fact that these two processes are concomitant challenges earlier studies on prosodic configuration in the framework of Prosodic Phonology, which claim that they are mutually exclusive.

In “Locality constraints on θ -theory: Evidence from Spanish ditransitives”, Sonia Kaminszczik and Andrés Saab focus on the impossibility of *se*-reflexivization in ditransitive contexts whenever a dative clitic occurs, an understudied pattern in the literature. The analysis is developed in two steps: (i) the need for a long-distance approach to θ -assignment, departing from classical approaches that only allow it under Merge; (ii) the characterization of reflexive *se* as an edge marker (not as a residue of A-movement), which corresponds to a PF reflex of an unsaturated [D] feature on v that would crash at that interface level if the clitic were not inserted as a repair strategy. This analysis not only accounts for reflexive *se* but also allows to distinguish it from impersonal structures that also resort to the clitic *se*.

The acquisition of a second language by L1 Spanish speakers is the general topic of “Does gender agreement carry a production cost? Spanish gender vs. Palenquero”, by John M. Lipski. The author focuses on L2 acquisition of Palenquero, an Afro-Colombian creole that lacks inflection marking for nominal gender/number and for verbal person/number, which results in the absence of adjective-noun and subject-verb agreement. The main research question – seldom explored in the literature – is to know whether a functional category of the L1 (in the case, agreement in Spanish) can be suppressed in the path of the acquisition of a less complex L2 (in this case, Palenquero). The results of two experiments show differences among speakers with different levels of proficiency in L2 Palenquero, but in neither case is the “wrong” grammar acquired, that is, a grammar with fully integrated feminine gender agreement instead of the invariant masculine. The author relates the persistence of some L1 gender agreement in L2 acquisition to the fact that L1 syntactic structure does not interfere with the basic syntactic patterns of L2 Palenquero.

Gabriela Matos is the author of chapter 10, “TP ellipsis with polarity particles”. The analysis builds on the observation that, in EP, island effects in TP-ellipsis occur not only in contexts of long movement of the remnant but also when the remnant does not cross any island. Consequently, the author shows that: (i) TP-ellipsis requires parallel configurations, namely, the sentences in which the elliptical TP and its antecedent occur are related by parataxis (either coordination or juxtaposition); (ii) in non-island contexts, TP-ellipsis with a non-local antecedent is sensitive to finiteness, that is, the elided TP and its antecedent share the value of [finiteness], a new finding in the literature on ellipsis. In order to account for the EP data, the author claims that, for scope reasons, TP-ellipsis involves the movement of the null-T head in the elided TP to the CP domain that connects the remnant and its antecedent, and that, furthermore, the formation of this T-chain is a requirement for the identification of the elliptical TP.

The next paper, “Circumventing φ -minimality: On some unorthodox cases of A-movement in Brazilian Portuguese”, Jairo Nunes revisits his analysis of hyper-raising in BP and broadens it to locative agreement and possessor raising, offering a new approach to already known data. The author claims that the three structures configure instances of unorthodox A-movement that can be subsumed under the same analysis, by considering inherent Case assignment as a way to circumvent φ -minimality. The main idea is that a potential intervener marked for inherent Case becomes inert for A-relations, which explains the possibility of subject hyper-raising, as well as locative agreement and possessor raising. Nunes also extends his analysis to “extralong” cases of possessor raising and to contexts involving possessor raising out of locative configurations. Finally, the role of EPP in circumventing minimality is also discussed, and the author hypothesizes that “it is the θ -related property of inherent Case that makes it transparent for φ -relations” (p. 180).

In “Epistemic uses of the verb *decir* in La Paz Spanish: *Digamos* and *dice*”, Geraldine Quartararo provides a semantic-pragmatic analysis of these two forms as evidential markers. While the use of *dice* as a reported evidential form is already described for

a few varieties of Bolivian Spanish, the author asserts that *digamos* is unattested as an inferential evidential form. The author conducted experimental research with Spanish-Aymara bilingual speakers and concludes that: (i) *dice* is rarely used in an epistemic sense and, as an evidential marker, it indicates reported evidence; (ii) *digamos* is used both as a metadiscourse marker and as an inferential evidential form, introducing elements for which speakers have no clear evidence. The author also presents the correlation between the two forms and syntactic structure, showing that the evidential form *dice* occurs in final sentence position, with scope over the whole sentence it reports to, whereas *digamos* may precede or follow the subject, the predicate and its objects.

Portuguese spoken in Maputo is the focus of “Oral Portuguese in Maputo from a diachronic perspective: Diffusion of linguistic innovations in a language shift scenario”, by Torun Reite and Anna Jon-And. The authors rely on two corpora recorded in different periods (1993/94 and 2007) in order to provide a quantitative account of linguistic innovations in the Maputo variety at lexical, lexico-syntactic, syntactic and morpho-syntactic levels. The main goal is to show the diffusion, the distribution and the direction of change in a variety that, according to the authors, is shaped by language contact with Bantu languages. The quantitative results of the comparative analysis of the two corpora lead to the conclusion that the set of innovations is overall the same in 2007 as in 1993/94, the most frequent groups of innovations being coincident. However, an increase in the total number of occurrences at all levels of linguistic innovations is attested in the 2007 corpus. The authors claim that the results “point to a process in which an L2 or simultaneous bilingual acquisition of Portuguese triggers or enforces transfer from Bantu languages as well as more general SLA effects.” (p. 211).

Chapter 14, “Structural approaches to code-switching: Research then and now”, by Almeida Jacqueline Toribio, considers the competing disciplinary, ideological and methodological tensions in the research on bilingual code-switching. The main goal is to prove that research on code-switching and other bilingual phenomena highly benefits from corpus methods and computational techniques, aiming at gathering, processing and annotating speech data. In order to achieve this goal, the author presents the state of the art in code-switching research, including her own work, and argues for the need to consider bigger accessible and usable data, a task which is facilitated by using computational tools. The proposals Toribio presents in this paper are an important contribution yielding reliable and replicable findings, attested across language pairings and speech communities.

In a paper entitled “When a piece of phonology becomes a piece of syntax: The case of subject clitics”, Christina Tortora accounts for a kind of subject clitics (SCLs) that occur with auxiliary verbs beginning in a vowel, attested in Northern Italian dialects. While classical analyses rely on phonological explanations to account for the distribution of these SCLs, the author argues that they are purely syntactic entities. Providing a detailed description of Borgomanerese, a dialect spoken in the Piedmont region of Northern Italy, the author claims that auxiliary SCLs occupy a functional head position, F, whose phonological content is /CONS/. Thus: (i) if the auxiliary verb begins with a vowel, F is instantiated by a default consonant (/l/ in most dialects); (ii) if the auxiliary does not begin with a vowel, the consonant etymologically belonging to the auxiliary becomes an independent syntactic entity and instantiates the F head. The analysis proposed in this paper has two important consequences: first, it allows to keep the idea that the distribution of clitics in Romance is governed by syntactic factors; secondly, it unifies the auxiliary SCL phenomenon with other structures in other languages in which epenthetic (default) phonological material also fills the content of a syntactic head.

The last paper focuses on a phonological topic in a variety of American Spanish – Texas Spanish (specifically, the variety from the El Paso metropolitan area). Authored by Adriano Trovato, the paper “Presence of the voiced labiodental fricative segment [v] in Texas Spanish” provides the results of an auditory and acoustic analysis of a collection of recordings that are part of *The Spanish in Texas Corpus Project* (available at <http://www.spanishintexas.org>). Although labiodentalization of /b/ has been attested in other varieties of American Spanish (e.g. New Mexican and Paraguayan dialects), empirical evidence is scarce, as the author acknowledges. The results of fine-grained auditory and acoustic analyses show that speakers of the El Paso Spanish variety produce an auditorily and visually perceptible distinction as well as an acoustically measurable distinction between [v] and [β]/[b] that corresponds to the perception of different categories. The author also shows that the main factors involved in the production of the labiodental segment are orthography, the language of formal education and gender. He concludes that this production cannot be simply an archaic feature preserved in the El Paso Spanish variety, but instead reveals an effect of language contact with English.

This brief summary of the chapters included in this volume attests to the diversity of topics, investigated languages and methodological approaches. But, more than diversity, I would like to highlight the quality of the papers and their relevance for those who work in different fields of Linguistics. The process of selection resulted in a balanced volume concerning the languages analyzed and the research topics, making a significant empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of Romance languages. The authors present either new approaches to well-known data or new data from less-studied languages/varieties; these two facts are a notorious strength of the book.

In sum, the papers presented in this volume represent a remarkable effort to provide a more comprehensive description and analysis of Romance languages. As is expected from such a volume, it will be useful to students and researchers working on different topics in different areas of grammar and in different domains.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.


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