

## Verbal complexes and the *pro-drop* parameter in Spanish and German

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**Background:** The fact that some nonfinite complements are transparent to extraction phenomena has traditionally been accounted for in biclausal approaches by the application of restructuring (Rizzi 1982). One standard diagnostic is the possibility of *Clitic Climbing* (CC):

- (1) a. Quiero hacerlo bien. b. **Lo** quiero hacer bien. (Luján 1980: 383)  
(I)want make-CL(it) well CL(it) (I)want make well

Kayne (1989) links CC to the character of AGR in *pro-drop* languages: INFL is ‘strong’ in finite as well as non-finite clauses and, thus, removes the barrier status of its VP complement, allowing extraction of clitics. Some evidence for the relation between CC and *pro-drop* comes from French where CC is blocked in restructuring contexts (see Kayne 1989):

- (2) \*Jean **les** veut voir. (French; *ibid.* 239)  
Jean CL(them) wants.3SG see.INF

However, one problem for relating restructuring phenomena to the null subject property comes from West Germanic languages like German and Dutch, where extraction phenomena out of restructured infinitives obtain (see e.g. Wurmbrand 2001, Haider 2010), even though these languages do not license referential null subjects (if not topic-dropped):

- (3) ...dass ihn<sub>i</sub> Maria [t<sub>i</sub> zu füttern versuchte]. (German long scrambling)  
that him Mary to feed tried  
(4) ...dass \*(er) die Maria besucht hat. (\*German null subjects)  
that (he) the Mary visited has

This indicates that restructuring phenomena are not directly related to the possibility of referential null subjects. However, German/Spanish have some property in common that differentiates them from French/English which allows them to form verbal complexes.

### Verbal complexes and restructuring in German and Spanish:

In German restructuring, verbs cluster together in clause-final position (cf. Haider 2010):

- (5) a. ...dass er das Buch [<sub>VC</sub> zu-lesen-versuchte]. (clustering)  
that he the book to-read-tried  
b. ...dass er versuchte [<sub>CP</sub> PRO das Buch zu lesen]. (non-clustering)

Evidence that the verbs form a cluster in (5.a) comes from the observation that no intervening material is allowed (see *ibid.*):

- (6) ...dass er das Buch (oft/nicht) [zu lesen (\*oft/\*nicht) versucht].  
that he the book often/not to read often/not tried

Also for Spanish, it has been assumed that restructuring is subject to intervention effects. Thus, Luján (1980) shows that adverbs and negation may not intervene in CC:

- (7) a. (\***Te**) quisiera no ver(**te**) más. b. (\***La**) deseaba mucho ver(**la**).  
CL(you) wanted not see.CL(you) more CL(her)desired much see-CL(her) (*ibid.*)

However, even though verbal complex formation could be assumed to apply in Spanish as well as German, there are differences: first, German, in contrast to Spanish/Italian, has an *obligatory* restructuring class of verbs (see Haider 2010: 352f):

- (8) ...dass er die Arbeit machen wollte. / \*...dass er die Arbeit wollte machen.  
That he the work make wanted that he the work wanted make

Furthermore, while verbal complexes can be nominalized in German (see Haider 2010), this is impossible in Spanish:

- (9) a. Das [machen müssen] der Hausaufgaben ist langweilig.  
b. \* El [tener que hacer] de los deberes es un rollo.  
the have-to make of the homework is boring

From a comparative perspective, the following questions arise: (i) which parametric option is responsible for the possibilities of verbal complex formation in Spanish/German vs. French/English and (ii) what is responsible for the differences between Spanish and German.

**Towards an analysis:** Even though German does not allow referential *pro*, it allows expletives to be dropped and has been characterized as a *semi-pro-drop* language (see e.g. Rizzi 1982, Biberauer 2010). In fact, several contexts require omission of expletives in German: ((10) taken from Haider 2010: 21)

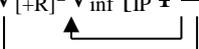
(10) Oft wurde (\*es) telephoniert. / Es wurde oft telephoniert.  
 often was (\*it) telephoned it was often telephoned

Haider (2010) argues that German does not have an obligatory structural subject (EPP) position in that it fully lacks a TP projection. This way, in the (partially) OV language German, V-movement can only be triggered by V2-related requirements, i.e. by C. Spanish has also been argued to lack obligatory EPP-effects; not because it lacks TP, but because T is 'lexical' (see Barbosa 1995), triggering overt v-to-T movement (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998). This leads to the following assumption:

(11) 'Non-lexical' INFL blocks verbal complex formation.

(11) derives from general locality constraints. Restructuring infinitives are reduced TPs in Romance (cf. Gonçalves 1999) and verbal complex formation is triggered by lexical selectional properties of the selecting predicate (cf. e.g. Sabel's 1995 [+R]). If lexical selection is strictly local (i.e. head-complement), verbal complex formation can only apply after overt v-to-T movement in the infinitival clause, bringing the embedded verb into a local relationship to the matrix verb. While French nonfinite, lexical verbs do not move further than Agr<sup>0</sup> (Pollock's 1989), they move to I<sup>0</sup> or higher in Romance *pro-drop* (Kayne 1991):

(12) a.  $V_{[+R]} [IP I^0 [AgrP AgrP-V_{inf} [VP v-V_{inf} [VP V_{inf}]]]]$  (French)  
 b.  $V_{[+R]}-V_{inf} [IP I^0-V_{inf} [AgrP AgrP-V_{inf} [VP v-V_{inf} [VP V_{inf}]]]]$  (Spanish)



Blocking effects on restructuring (Neg and Adv) in Romance thus derive from the nature of verbal complex formation as head movement (see Roberts 1997). What unifies Spanish and German is the lack of intervention of non-finite T – in the former because T is 'lexical', triggering V-incorporation (A&A 1998) and in the latter because T is not merged (see Haider 2010). The observed differences, on the other hand, derive from the derivational point at which a verbal complex is formed: in Spanish, it is created by Internal Merge (incorporation) while in German, it is formed by External Merge via direct head-to-head merger (see Haider 2010) given that no functional layer is projected in between the two verbal elements:

(13)  $[CP C [VP \dots [V^0-V^0]]]$  (German)

The existence of *obligatory* clustering in German but not in Spanish thus derives from the optionality of Internal Merge vs. obligatory External Merge.

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