

Obviation effects within Spanish pseudo-relative clauses

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Empirical Domain

Perception verbs in combination with an NP may receive different classes of embedded clauses:

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) | a. | Ana | vio | a | Juan | [cayendo al piso]. | Gerundial |
| | | Ana | saw | DOM | Juan | falling to.the ground | |
| | b. | Ana | vio | a | Juan | [caído en el piso]. | Participial |
| | | Ana | saw | DOM | Juan | fallen in the ground | |
| | c. | Ana | vio | a | Juan | [caer al piso]. | Infinitive |
| | | Ana | saw | DOM | Juan | to.fall to.the ground | |
| | d. | Ana | vio | a | Juan | [que caía al piso]. | Pseudo-relative |
| | | Ana | saw | DOM | Juan | that fell to.the ground | |

Empirical Domain

DO status of the PR antecedent

This NP “Juan” in (1) behaves as direct object:

- It bears the DOM (case) marker *a*
- It may be replaced by an accusative pronoun (2)

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|-----------------|
| (2) | a. | (A Juan,) Ana <i>lo</i> vio cayendo al piso. | Gerundial |
| | | DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw falling to.the ground | |
| | b. | (A Juan,) Ana <i>lo</i> vio caído en el piso. | Participial |
| | | DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw fallen to the ground | |
| | c. | (A Juan,) Ana <i>lo</i> vio caer al piso. | Infinitive |
| | | DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw to.fall to.the ground | |
| | d. | (A Juan,) Ana <i>lo</i> vio que caía al piso. | Pseudo-relative |
| | | DOM Juan Ana CL.ACC saw that fall to.the ground | |

However, pseudo-relatives, unlike the other kind of complements, are not compatible with passivization of that argument:

- (3) a. Juan fue visto cayendo al piso. Gerundial
 Juan was seen falling to.the ground
- b. Juan fue visto caído en el piso. Participial
 Juan was seen fallen to.the ground
- c. Juan fue visto caer al piso. Infinitive
 Juan was seen to.fall to.the ground
- d. *Juan fue visto que caía al piso. Pseudo-relative
 Juan was seen that fell to.the ground

Goal

In this presentation, we approach the following question:

- Why are pseudo-relatives in Spanish incompatible with passives?

Hypothesis

We aim at proving the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis

There is no special ban on passivization in sentences with pseudo-relatives. Ungrammaticality emerges as consequence of an **obviation effect**, which voids coreference between the subject of the main and the embedded clause in context of Spanish direct perception verbs.

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Crosslinguistic landscape of pseudo-relatives

- Pseudo-relatives are present in a number of languages, such as Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian, among others (see Rafel 2000, Aldama García 2018, i.a. for an overview).
- Incompatibility with passives, which is the property at play in our presentation, does not occur in all of them.
- For this reason, we will focus on Spanish. We leave open the possibility of extending our findings to languages such as Italian, where this ban is not met (see Cinque 1992).

Contexts for pseudo-relatives

- Pseudo-relatives are attested in different syntactic environments, apart from perception verbs (see Brucart 1999, Campos 1994, Casalicchio 2013 for more details).
- We will focus here on pseudo-relatives in the context of perception verbs, which is the most studied environment (Suñer 1984, Cinque 1992, Campos 1994, Rafel 2000, Casalicchio 2013, among others.).

Overall characterization of Pseudo-relatives

- Literature agrees that pseudo-relatives are in essence object control structures.
- This control may be established either with an embedded pro in subject, either with an embedded accusative or dative clitic, as far as certain conditions are met.

- (4) a. Ana vio [a Juan]_i que pro_i caía al piso. Subject
 Ana saw DOM Juan that pro fell to.the ground
 'Ana saw that Juan fell to the ground.'
- b. Vi [a Juan]_i que lo_i golpeaban sin piedad. Accusative clitic
 Saw DOM Juan that ACC.CL beat without mercy
 'I saw Juan being beaten without mercy'
- c. Vi [a Juan]_i que le_i pegaban sin piedad. Dative clitic
 Saw DOM Juan that DAT.CL beat without mercy

For the sake of simplicity, we will focus here on embedded subjects.

Direct perception interpretation for pseudo-relatives

An important property of pseudo-relatives is their mandatory direct perception interpretation. Spanish complement clauses to perception verbs are compatible both with direct perception and an epistemic reading (5a). In turn, pseudo-relative clauses only support direct perception interpretation (5b) (see Casalicchio 2013 and the references therein).

- (5) a. Vi que María estaba de regreso (dado que su auto estaba en el garage)
 Saw.1SG that María was back (given that her car was in the garage)
- b. Vi a María que estaba de regreso (*dado que su auto estaba en el
 Saw.1SG DOM María that was back (given that her car was in the
 garage).
 garage)

(Campos 1994: 214)

Many authors (see Suñer 1984, Cinque 1992, Campos 1994, Rafel 2000, among others) agree that pseudo-relatives are, despite their name, not relatives, but completives (i.e. CPs working in a similar way as nominal structures rather than as adjectives).
Next, we will address four arguments in favour of this position.

Compatibility with proper nouns and personal pronouns

- (Intersective) relatives, cannot appear with proper nouns or with pronouns (i.e., type e expressions).

- (6) a. Mariana compró el **libro** [que le recomendé].
 Mariana bought the book that CL.DAT recommended.
- b. *Mariana compró **Ficciones** [que le recomendé].
 Mariana bought *Ficciones* that CL.DAT recommended.
- c. *Mariana la saludó a **ella** [que vive en Tucumán].
 Mariana CL.ACC.FEM greet.PERF DOM her that lives in Tucumán.

Compatibility with proper nouns and personal pronouns

- Pseudo-relatives, in contrast, are allowed with proper nouns and pronouns:

(7) a. Mariana vio a **Pedro** [que lloraba].

Mariana saw DOM Pedro that cried.

b. Mariana **lo** vio [que lloraba].

Mariana CL.ACC saw that cried.

Argument II: Pronominalization

- Antecedents of pseudo-relatives (9), as opposed to antecedents of relatives (8), may be pronominalized independently

(8) a. Conozco **al** **muchacho** [que habla con su novia]
 know.1SG DOM.the boy that talks with his girlfriend

b. ***Lo** conozco [que habla con su novia].
 CL.ACC.MASC.SG know.1SG that talks with his girlfriend.

(9) a. Vi **a** **José** [que hablaba con su novia].
 saw.1.SG DOM José that talked with his girlfriend

b. **Lo** vi [que hablaba con su novia].
 CL.ACC.MASC.SG saw.1.SG that talked with his girlfriend.

Argument III: Tense defectivity

- As many authors observe (see Rafel 2000: 71, Campos 1994: 212), pseudo-relatives (10a), in contrast to relative clauses (10b) or to finite complements (10c), are not able to express temporal values independent of the matrix clause.

- (10) a. Imaginé a Juan [que {leyó / leía / *lee / *leerá} un libro].
 Imagined DOM Juan that {read.PERF / read.IMP / read.PRES / read.FUT} a book
- b. Imaginé/vi a la persona [que {leyó / leía / lee / leerá}
 Imagined/saw DOM the person that {read.PERF / read.IMP / read.PRES / read.FUT}
 mis cartas].
 my letters.
- c. Imaginé [que Juan {leyó / leía / lee / leerá} un libro].
 Imagined that Juan {read.PERF / read.IMP / read.PRES / read.FUT} a book

Argument IV: Mood defectivity

- As far as we know, it has not been acknowledged in the literature that pseudo-relatives may appear with indirect interrogative complementizer *si* or with interrogative pronouns, as far as the force of the embedded clause agrees with the force of the main clause.

- (11) a. Vi al bebé [**que** mojó el pañal]. Declarative mood
 Saw.1SG DOM.the baby that wet the diaper?
- b. *¿Viste al bebé [**que** mojó el pañal]?
 Saw.2SG DOM.the baby that wet the diaper?
- (12) a. *Vi al bebé [**si** mojó el pañal]. Interrogative mood
 Saw.1SG DOM.the baby whether wet the diaper
 Did you see if the baby wet the diaper?
- b. ¿Viste al bebé [**si** mojó el pañal]?
 saw.2SG DOM.the baby whether wet the diaper?

Argument IV: Mood defectivity

Si is not a possible introducer for relatives in Spanish. This is particularly problematic for proposals such as Brucart (1999), which states that pseudo-relatives are predicative relatives. If that were the case, it is totally unexpected why they can present a non-relative complementizer.

Pseudo-relatives defectivity

From arguments III and IV, it follows that pseudo-relatives are in some way defective CPs.

Let's remember our starting problem: why passives are incompatible with pseudo-relatives.

- (13) *Juan fue visto que caía al piso.
 Juan was seen that fell to.the ground

In this section, we show that this ban is due to an obviation effect

Argument I: Valence changing operations

- A first piece of evidence that an obviation effect is at play is the fact that valence changing operations lead to ungrammaticality when applied to pseudo-relatives in such a way that they would trigger coreferentiality between the subject of both main and embedded clause.

- (14) a. ***Juan_i** fue visto que **pro_i** leía un libro. Passive
 Juan was seen that **pro** read a book
- b. ***Juan_i** **se_i** vio (a **sí mismo_i**) que **pro_i** leía un libro. Reflexive
 Juan SE saw.3SG (himself) that pro read a book
- c. *Se escucharon **abogados_i** que **pro_i** protestaban en el juzgado. Passive se
 SE hear.3PL lawyers that pro protested.3PL in the court

Argument I: Valence changing operations

The same holds for pseudo-relatives where embedded objects are the coreferent argument:

- (15) a. ***Juan** fue visto que **lo** golpearon. Passive
 Juan was seen that CL.ACC beat
- b. ***Juan** se vio (a **sí mismo**) que **lo** golpearon. Reflexive *se*
 Juan SE saw to himself that CL.ACC beat

Argument I: Valence changing operations

The ungrammaticality of PRs with passive, reflexive *se* and passive *se* can be explained if it is assumed that pseudo-relative clauses can trigger *obviation effects*. Notice that if *se* doesn't affect the transitive structure, no obviation effect is triggered.

- (16) a. Se ve a Juan_i que pro_i lee un libro. Impersonal se
SE saw.3SG DOM Juan that pro read a book
- b. ?Se ve Juan que lo golpean. Impersonal se
SE saw.3SG Juan that CL.ACC beat

Argument II: Obviation in perception verbs

- Another piece of evidence is that perception verbs in their direct perception interpretation trigger obviation effects when combined with a complement CP:

(17) Juan_i vio que pro_{k/*i} golpeó a Pedro.
 Juan saw that pro hit DOM Pedro

- An interesting property of (17) is that it shows some kind of suspension of Montalbetti (1984)'s effect, namely the opposition between explicit and null subjects of embedded clauses with regard to the possibility of being coreferential with the matrix subject. Compare (17) with (18)

(18) Juan_i piensa/dijo/sabe que pro_i/él_{*i} insultó a Pedro.
 Juan thinks/said/knows that pro/he hit DOM Pedro

Argument III: behaviour with quantifiers

Montalbetti (1984, 84) noticed that explicit subjects of embedded clauses cannot be bound by quantifiers:

- (19)
- a. Algunos estudiantes_i creen que pro_i/ellos_{*i} son inteligentes.
 some.PL students believe that pro/them are intelligent
 - b. Siete estudiantes_i dijeron que pro_i/ellos_{*i} irán al cine.
 seven students said that pro/them go.FUT to the
 - c. No más de siete estudiantes_i pensaron que pro_i/ellos_{*i} ganaron la carrera.
 not more of seven students thought that pro/them won the race

This follows from the general impossibility of matrix subjects to bind overt embedded subjects.

Argument III: behaviour with quantifiers

pseudo-relative clauses extend this restriction as follows:

- Quantified matrix direct objects cannot bind embedded null subjects of PRs.

- (20)
- *Vio a [todo profesor]_i que pro_i corregía los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM every professor that pro graded the exams
 - *Vio a [cada profesor]_i que pro_i corregía los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM each professor that pro graded the exams
 - *Vio a [todos los profesores]_i que pro_i corregían los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM all the professors that pro graded the exams
 - *Vio a [algunos profesores]_i que pro_i corregían los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM some professors that pro graded the exams
 - *Vio a [cinco profesores]_i que pro_i que corregían los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM five professor that pro graded the exams
 - *Vio a [no más de tres profesores]_i que pro_i corregían los parciales.
saw.3SG DOM no more than three professors that pro graded the exams

Argument III: behaviour with quantifiers

That is, pseudorelatives behave, regarding quantification, in the same way as explicit subjects of embedded clauses in null subject languages, which is known to be a context in which obviation arises.

Argument IV: Pseudo-relatives and (Object) Control

It is well known in the literature that when a control verb takes a subjunctive clause, subject obviation effects arise:

- (21) a. Pedro_i quiere [PRO_{i/*k} leer un libro].
 Pedro wants PRO read.INF a book
- b. Pedro_i quiere [que pro_{*i/k} lea un libro].
 Pedro wants that pro read.SBJV a book.
- (22) a. Pedro_i forzó a Juan_k [a PRO_{*i/k} leer un libro].
 Pedro forced DOM Juan to PRO read.INF a book
- b. Pedro_i forzó a Juan_k [a que pro_{*1/k} lea un libro].
 Pedro forced DOM Juan to that pro read.SBJV a book

Argument IV: Pseudo-relatives and (Object) Control

These cases are also ungrammatical whenever the periphrastic passive, reflexive *se* or passive *se* applies. In turn, no problem arises with the impersonal *se*.

- (23) a. *Juan_i fue forzado [a que pro_i lea un libro]. Periphrastic Passive
 Juan was forced to that pro read.SBJV a book.
- b. *Juan_i se_i forzó (a sí mismo)_i [a que pro_i lea un libro]. Reflexive *Se*
 Juan SE forced himself to that pro read.SBJV a book
- c. *Se forzaron abogados_i [a que pro_i protesten en el juzgado]. Passive *Se*
 SE forced.3PL lawyers to that pro protest.SBJV in the court
- d. Se forzó a Juan_i [a que pro_i lea un libro]. Impersonal *Se*

Argument IV: Pseudo-relatives and (Object) Control

This similarity with (Object) control configuration suggests, again, that obviation is at play in pseudo-relatives.

Final Remarks

- In this presentation we observed that pseudo-relatives do not support passivization
- We defended the view that this incompatibility is due to an obviation effect triggered by the combination of direct perception verbs with finite clauses.
- This effect extends also to the impossibility of reflexivization and passive but, crucially, not to impersonal *se*
- In this respect, the salient argument of pseudo-relatives behaves as explicit subjects of propositional complements and subjects of subjunctive object control finite clauses.
- If our observations are on the right track, these data may shed some light on other contexts that have been described in the literature as triggering obviation effects, such as subjunctive clauses (see, for example Kempchinsky 2009) and imperatives (Stegovec 2019).

Thank you very much!

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