

Karen Lahousse, Aspirant van het F.W.O.-Vlaanderen
 K.U. Leuven, Belgium
 Departement Linguïstiek
 Blijde-Inkomststraat 21
 B-3000 Leuven
Karen.Lahousse@arts.kuleuven.ac.be

Replacing expletive pro by verb movement in Romance languages
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0. INTRODUCTION

This talk concerns expletive pro as it is alleged to appear in the subject position of sentences with a realized postverbal subject as the Italian (1a) and its Spanish counterpart (1b).

(1a) I: Pro_{expl} ha mangiato Gianni.
 has eaten John

(1b) S: Pro_{expl} ha comido Juan.

The aim of this talk is to show that the Chomsky 98 account is not suited for dealing with expletive pro and that another account is needed. I will present an alternative hypothesis where expletive pro is replaced by a mechanism that involves verb movement. This analysis allows to incorporate the empirical facts of several Romance languages.

1. CHOMSKY 98 AND (C)OVERT EXPLETIVES

à In Chomsky 98, EPP is strong, and can be dealt with in three ways:

(a) by merge of an expletive, with T-associate agreement and the definiteness effect:

(2a) E: There arrives a man

(2b) F: Il arrive un homme

(b) by merge of the associate, with agreement of the 'associate' and the verb:

(3a) E: A man arrives

(3b) F: Un homme arrive

(c) by merge of α closer to T than the associate. We will not be concerned by the c-case here, as it doesn't occur in Romance languages.

à In structures with a postverbal subject, expletive pro always has to appear to satisfy the strong EPP feature on the verb, while the associate satisfies the phi-features on the verb:

(4) I: *Pro_{expl} ha mangiato_{EPP/phi} Gianni_{phi}.*
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2. EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE CHOMSKY 98 ACCOUNT OF EMPTY EXPLETIVES

2.1. Wrong prediction for Trentino and French

By analogy with the presence of expletive pro in (4), Chomsky 98 predicts the appearance of a realized expletive to satisfy the strong EPP-feature on T in the Trentino example (5a) and in the French example (6a).

(5a) T: Magna el Mario
 eats the Mario

(6a) F: Quand arrive l' t , il est temps de penser aux vacances.
 when arrives the summer, it is time to think on the holidays

However, this is not the case, as is shown by the ungrammaticality of Trentino (5b) and French (6b).

(5b) T: * **El** magna el Mario

(6b) F: * Quand **il** arrive l' t , É

2.2. Counterexamples to (a) case of the Chomsky 98 EPP account

In Spanish, Italian and French, there are empirical counterexamples to the (a)-case of the EPP account of Chomsky: EPP can be satisfied by merge of an expletive, with T-associate agreement and the definiteness effect.

2.2.1. Following Chomsky 98, an expletive pro is merged in Italian (7a) and Spanish (7b) free inversion examples:

(7a) I: pro_[there] sono entrati gli uomini
 there have arrived the men

(7b) S: pro_[there] han llegado los hombres

So, these cases should fall under case a, and there is T-associate agreement, BUT there is no definiteness effect.

2.2.2. As Chomsky points out himself, there are serious problems with the expletive *il* construction (8) in French:

(8) *il est arriv* trois hommes
there have arrived three men

The merge of an expletive indicates that this example should belong to the (a)-case, and the definiteness effect is also observed. BUT: there is no agreement between T and the associate.

2.2.3. Intermediate conclusion: the Chomsky 98 EPP cases are not suited for dealing with Romance data

3. CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS WITH EXPLETIVE PRO

3.1. An analysis with strong EPP and with both argumental and expletive pro: empirical problems (cf Chomsky 98).

3.2. A modification of such an analysis (without feature movement), in which EPP is weak, is not possible: pro cannot exist in such a framework.

3.3. Intermediate conclusion: another explanation is needed

4. MY HYPOTHESIS

4.1. Background hypotheses

4.1.1. EPP exists!

EPP exists, and, by definition, every (Romance) verb needs to have a subject in Romance languages. I will consider the EPP as a formal characteristic of (Romance) verbs.

4.1.2. EPP is strong!

Given that a) argumental pro and expletive pro cannot exist in a framework with weak EPP and without feature movement and b) there are independent (binding) reasons for the existence of argumental pro, it follows that EPP cannot be weak and has to be strong.

4.1.3. Expletive pro does not exist!

Expletive pro does not exist, given the conceptual problems its existence entails.

4.2. Modification of the Chomsky 98 (a) and (b) cases

Strong EPP can be satisfied by:

(a) merge of an overt expletive, with the definiteness effect and the agreement of T depends on the type of expletive that is merged; it is the case of the examples (2b) and (8):

(2b) F: *Il arrive un homme*
there arrives a man

(8) F: *il est arriv* trois hommes
there have arrived three men

(b) subject raising, without definiteness effect and with agreement between T and the subject.

(9) F: *Un homme arrive*
A man arrives

(10) I: *Gianni e Pietro hanno mangiato*
John and Peter have eaten

(11) S: *Juan y Pedro han comido*
John and Peter have eaten

(12) T: *El Mario el magna*
The Mario he eats

My (a) and (b) cases allow to incorporate all Romance examples with lexical or expletive preverbal subjects.

4.3. What about postverbal subjects?

4.3.1. An additional mechanism is needed to explain cases like (1a), (1b), (5a) and (6a):

(1a) I: *Pro_{expl} ha mangiato Gianni.*
has eaten John

(1b) S: *Pro_{expl} ha comido Juan.*

(5a) T: *Magna el Mario*
eats the Mario

(6a) F: *Quand arrive l' t , il est temps de penser aux vacances.*
when arrives the summer, it is time to think on the holidays

These examples should fall under my case (b): there is agreement between the verb and the subject and there is no definiteness effect. The inverted word order can then be accommodated for by assuming a complementary verb movement.

4.3.2. In fact, on the basis of evidence found in a corpus of Spanish journal (*El Pa s*) articles, I will argue that in inversion structures, the verb moves to a projection between CP and TP thereby creating a Verb-Subject order which serves specific discourse functions. By hypothesis, then, there is no free inversion.

4.3.3. My prediction will be that in Italian (1a) and in Trentino (5a) inversion and in French stylistic inversion (6a), the verb moves up to the same projection as it does in Spanish inversion structures.

5. CONCLUSIONS

→ Chomsky 98 is not suited for dealing with inversion structures

à expletive pro does not exist

→ no free inversion in Romance

à verb movement

REFERENCES

CHOMSKY, N. 1998. æMinimalist Inquiries: The Frameworkî. *MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics*. 15.