

AGREEMENT AND FOCUS IN GALICIAN INFLECTED INFINITIVES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Among the morpho-syntactic phenomena that characterize the Galician and Portuguese languages, the Inflected Infinitive (henceforth II) really stands out. In these languages IIs coexist with the 'invariable' infinitive, which is common to all the other Latin languages. An II is usually defined as [-T,+Agr] and contrasts with non-inflected infinitives, which are [-T,-Agr]. This paper addresses the two main problems that Galician IIs posit: (a) Nominative case assignment to the subject and (b) the three different positions that can occur in II clauses¹.

The fact that Galician (and also Portuguese) IIs have Nominative subjects creates a problem since Nominative case assignment and checking have usually been interpreted as connected with finiteness. In Galician II clauses we can get the subject in three different positions: postverbal, preverbal or at the very end of the clause. Accounting for the different subject positions in the sentence is not a simple matter. Previous studies (e.g. Longa 1994) fail to account for all three subject positions.

Section 2 introduces Galician data; it presents the different subject positions that we can get in Galician IIs. Section 3 deals with postverbal and dropped subjects. In section 4 I argue that the leftward movement of the subject in Galician II clauses is driven by a [+F] feature. Section 5 posits that post-sentential subjects are moved P-syntactically and gives evidence for the bifurcation between P-syntax and narrow syntax. Section 6 concludes and summarizes the paper; it also discusses remaining issues.

2. DATA

2.1 Galician infinitive forms

Table 1: Galician II forms (falar = to speak, comer = to eat, sentir = to feel)

Person	Personal Inflection	1 st conj.	2 nd conj.	3 rd conj.
Eu (I)	-Ø	fal-a-r-Ø	com-e-r-Ø	sent-i-r-Ø
Ti (You)	-es	fal-a-r-es	com-e-r-es	sent-i-r-es
El/ela(He/she)	-Ø	fal-a-r-Ø	com-e-r-Ø	sent-i-r-Ø
Nós (We)	-mos	fal-a-r-mos	com-e-r-mos	sent-i-r-mos
Vós (You)	-des	fal-a-r-des	com-e-r-des	sent-i-r-des
Eles (They)	-en	fal-a-r-en	com-e-r-en	sent-i-r-en

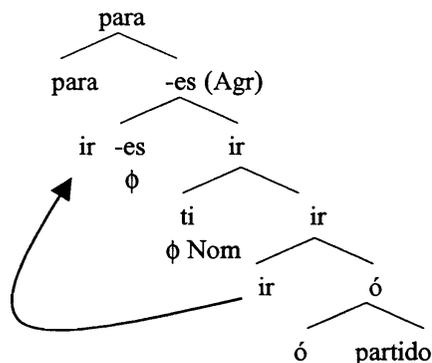
As we can see, the II is formed by simple suffixation of subject endings to the infinitive, the latter an invariable form consisting of the verb root, thematic vowel and a suffixal infinitival marker (-r), as witnessed by Table 1. The morphological structure of Galician verbs is: root + conjugation-vowel + mood and tense suffix + number and person suffix. For example:

- (1) **comeremos** (*we will eat*) = com (root) + -e- (2nd conjugation) + -re (future and indicative suffix) + mos (1st person plural suffix).

¹These positions are also possible in regular tensed clauses in Galician. However, since in tensed clauses the normal word order is SVO and not VSO (as in II clauses), the postverbal subject would be focused, as opposed to the preverbal subject.

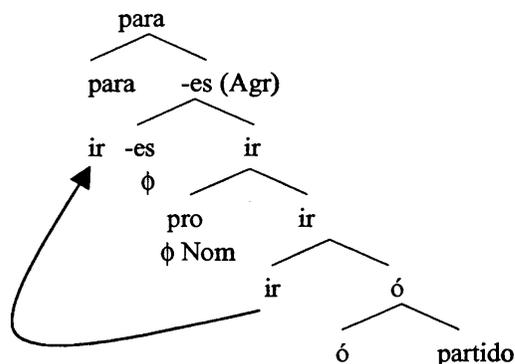
that every language has a neutral unmarked stress pattern, assigned by the nuclear stress rule (NSR). V(S)O (as in (4) and (7)) would be the unmarked stress pattern of Galician IIs clauses. Ladd (1978:78) mentioned that ‘normal stress is simply the accent placement that permits the broadest possible focus interpretation -focus on the whole sentence.’ According to Feng (2002:19) the term ‘normal stress’ implies that every sentence has a normal pronunciation and any special prosodic properties can be described as deviations from this form. The analysis would be the following:

- (4) Para ir-es ti ó partido.
 For go-2nd p.sg you to-the game.
For you to go to the game.



Note that there are no labels in the tree diagram since elements combine properly under set merge using information independently required in the lexical array. This has been proposed by Collins (2002), who argues that category labels are not needed in syntactic theory. This case is pretty straightforward; case, person and number agree with the subject remaining in-situ and the verb moves up, triggered by the agreement in the inflectional ending. Parafita (2002) argues that Agr carries the ϕ features (not Tense) and that there is no T projection in Galician II clauses. In this type of construction, unmarked word order obtains when the subject is in postverbal position (VSO), unlike in tensed clauses where we get SVO order. VSO order is possible because there is no T, and therefore there is no EPP that can trigger the subject movement to a preverbal position. Thus, case undergoes Agree in situ. In this way we get the right word order for the II clause with a postverbal subject. In sentence (7), in which we drop the subject, we get the same analysis, only that the subject position would be filled by pro:

- (7) Para ir-es ó partido.
 For go-2nd p.sg to-the game
For you to go to the game.



Notice that in my analysis (contrary to Chomsky 1995) I posit that the node Agr exists since it can be interpretable at LF in the sentence, i.e., it has semantic content. It is Agr that carries the ϕ features and not Tense, as we have already seen.

Earlier approaches to Portuguese and Galician II clauses hypothesized that there is a T node. However, since IIs are [-T] I posit that the II clauses in Galician have an Agr node but no T. In Minimalist approaches to syntax, the status of Agreement as a functional head projected in syntax has become somewhat uncertain. Chomsky (1995 and later works) argues that Agreement has no specific semantic content and consequently should not project as a functional head. However, there is much morphological and syntactic indication in favor of agreement projections (Bródy 2000, Cinque 1999, Ritter and Rosen 2001). My deduction is that since in Galician II clauses Agr carries the ϕ features (not Tense), nominative case in the subject is obtained under Agree in situ.

4. PREVERBAL SUBJECTS: LEFTWARD FOCUS MOVEMENT

When the subject is in preverbal position it is focused and receives focal stress. I posit that we have a Focus Phrase that motivates the movement of the subject to a preverbal position. Focus can be defined as a conventionally encoded way of picking out a distinguished constituent (or constituents) in a sentence; this constituent plays a special role with respect to the immediate discourse context of the utterance (Roberts 1998:109). The literature presents a wide range of views on the issue of the grammatical representation of focus from a primarily syntactic perspective. Szendrői (2002:23) observes that ‘...the spectrum ranges from the functionalist sentence perspective (i.e. the Prague School) through the discourse theoretically motivated works (like Prince 1971, 1981; Reinhart 1981, 1995; Erteschik-Shir 1997) to the strict ‘encoding’ view of the GB-Minimalist literature.’ There are three kinds of information in the discourse: Topic (old information), Focus (new information) and perhaps “Neither/ Unmarked”. Any category (topic, focus) may be referred to by a language in order to encode information structure. But there are differences between (and even within) languages that indicate that we need a richer typology than that. Different studies provide us with distinctions like the following: identificational vs. informational focus, wide vs. narrow focus, \pm contrastive focus, \pm exhaustive focus, shifted vs. continuing topic, \pm contrastive topic, focus vs. presupposition, topic vs. ground, topic vs. tail vs. link, focus (rheme) vs. ground (theme). However, these notions have not been defined in a clear-cut manner and some questions arise: Do we need all these distinctions? What component of the grammar do the distinctions belong to? Syntax? Semantics? Pragmatics? To what extent do they overlap? As Roberts (1998:110) states: ‘...currently there is no consensus about either the role of Focus in universal grammar or its functional character.’ Uriagareka (1995:155) says that he has not found any conclusive evidence that there are separate functional categories to express matters of topic, focus, emphasis, contrast, etc. All of these have an aspect in common: they encode point of view of a speaker or some other subject, in a manner to be clarified immediately. Uriagareka therefore assumes that one category alone serves as an all-purpose device to encode a point of view. Uriagareka calls the category in question ‘F’. ‘All I mean is this: F encodes point of view’ (Uriagareka 1995:155). However, I think that Galician focus besides encoding point of view, also contains the main stress of the sentence. Accordingly, the stress-focus correspondence principle (Reinhart 1995) in (8) applies in Galician sentences like (5):

(8) Stress-focus correspondence principle: The focus of a clause is any syntactic constituent that contains the main stress of the intonational phrase corresponding to the clause.

(Reinhart 1995:62)

This means that focus is always marked by prosodic means, by main stress. In English, it is possible to put prominence on a particular word by putting heavy stress or pitch accent on it. Let’s look at the following example from (Szendrői 2002:11):

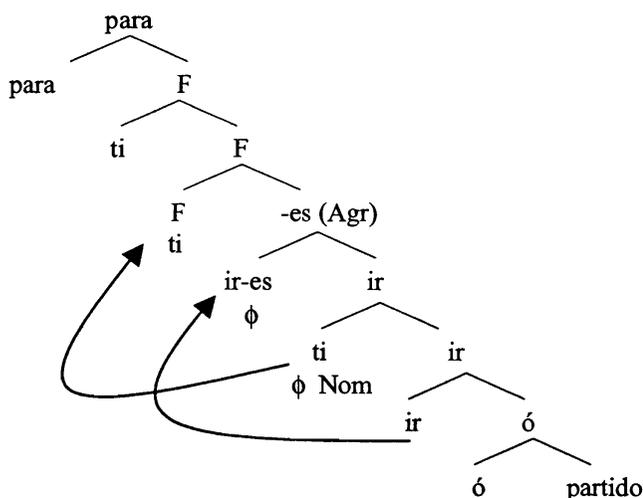
- (9) a. Who ate the pizza?
b. JOHN ate the pizza.

The question-answer pair indicates that the focus of the answer is on the subject DP. This is also true in Galician IIs. However, the main objective of this paper is to look at word order effects of information structure (i.e. the syntax of focus). Thus, we can say that in Galician focus is marked by prosodic means, by main stress, and also

by a special word order. Szendrői (2002:12) argues that there is no differentiation between these parameters and that focus is marked prosodically. This is true of Galician too since it does not mark focus by only special word order. If Galician focus movement is indeed triggered by the necessity to satisfy the Stress-focus correspondence principle, then we may acutely suspect that there exists a syntactic [+Focus]-feature in the grammar. As Szendrői (2002:13) noticed, although Reinhart's hypothesis states that grammars of all languages encode focus by prosodic means, this does not mean that there is no language variation to how the Stress-focus principle is satisfied. A special word order may be used to bring an element into the main stress position, and thus into focus. This is an available option in Galician.

I argue that the focus that we can observe in Galician II sentences like (2) or (3) is a case of contrastive focus (as in Meinunger 1998) which is used to single out and identify a specific set of entities, namely those and only those of which the presupposition holds (especially Rooth 1985). Choi (1996) defines contrastive focus as [+Prominent, +New], as opposed to mere Focus which would be defined as [-Prom, + New]. According to him, Topic would be [+Prom, -New]. In order to distinguish these notions of focus, several tests have been developed. The most successful ones are the exhaustivity tests by Szabolcsi (1981). She provides contexts and constructions that give different truth conditions for either focus. Campos and Zampini (1990:48) argue that in contrastive focus constructions the focused element is being emphasized as opposed to another element in the sentence. They say that normally the focus bears emphatic intonation, there is a pause between the focused element and the rest of the sentence, and subject/verb inversion is preferred, although not obligatory. Let us analyze the sentence in (5) according to what has been said. The account is based on the assumption that there is a syntactic [+Focus]-feature present in the grammar, so in this sense we can say that it is a feature-driven account.

- (5) Para ti ir-es ó partido.
 For you go-2nd p.sg to-the game.
For you to go to the game



Bródy (1990,1995) argues that Hungarian has a Focus projection on the left periphery of the sentence. Rizzi (1997) also argues that there is a Focus Phrase in the left periphery. Contrastively focused constituents, arguments and adjuncts alike, move to [Spec, FP] in order to check their +Focus feature. There they receive focal stress and contrastive interpretation. In a tensed sentence, this is accompanied by V movement to F, and the focused constituent and the V are adjacent². As far as preverbal focus is concerned, Frascarelli's analysis of Italian focus (1999:212) can support the analysis of Galician focus presented in this paper:

² But according to Szendrői (1999:549), motivation for focus movement is triggered by stress and not by the presence of a syntactic +Focus feature. We should also mention the Reinhartian stress-driven movement rule for Hungarian:

Stress-driven movement: In Hungarian, movement of the focused constituent to the left-periphery is triggered by the requirement that a focused constituent be stressed.

'...my proposal is to include the syntax of Focus within the feature-checking mechanism. Focus information is encoded in a feature, [+F], base-generated in F⁰. This feature is strong because, in the case of marked constituents, a specific formal requirement must be met: the assignment of the main prominence. Focus is encoded in a strong feature and it is checked by the verb, which head-to-head moves to F⁰. According to minimalism, lexical elements are inserted 'fully inflected', so we may assume that the [+F] feature is also part of the lexical 'informational packaging.' As [+F] is a strong feature, the XP containing the designated constituent must define a checking configuration with the verb (in F⁰) in order to obtain visibility at <PF, LF>.'

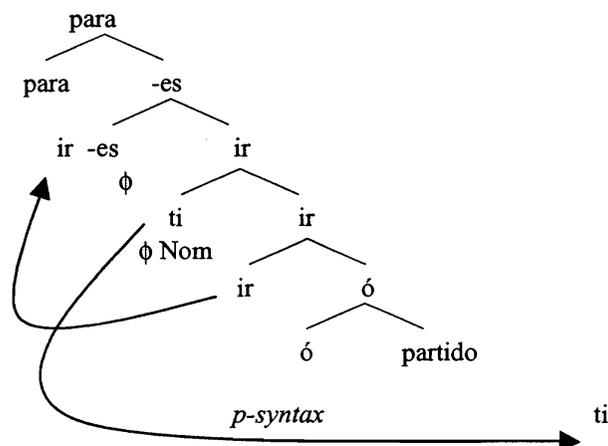
Thus, it seems that in Galician IIs there is a syntactic feature F which affects semantic interpretation and most importantly, can drive movement.

5. CLAUSE-FINAL FOCUS: P-SYNTACTIC MOVEMENT

When the subject is at the very end of the clause, I argue that the focus on the subject is even more prominent than when the subject is preverbal. What moves? Is it the subject that moves to the end of the sentence (rightward) or is it the complement (*ó partido*) that moves upwards as a constituent? According to Arregi (2001:18) '...given the standard assumption that there is no lowering, a given phrase XP cannot be focused by movement. Rather, other phrases more embedded than XP must move to a position higher than XP.' But what would be the motivation for this movement? There is nothing obvious that can cause the upward movement of the constituent or the movement of the subject to the right edge of the sentence. Moreover, if Kayne (1994) is correct, neither rightward movement nor rightward adjunction are a part of the grammar. Kayne (1994:71) concludes that 'no movement rule can adjoin anything to the right of anything' since rightward adjunction is generally prohibited in the theory. Ackema and Neeleman (1999) support this assumption from the perspective of language processing. They argue that the human parser cannot process certain instances of rightward movement because the introduction of an antecedent-trace relation leads to a conflict with information about the parse which is already stored in short-term memory before this relation can be established. Similar situations do not occur in cases of leftward movement. Therefore they conclude that a processing approach to limitations on rightward movement is more fruitful. There is also overwhelming evidence that an element cannot be moved to a position that is lower in the tree than the position it originates in (e.g. Van Riemsdijk & Williams 1986:202). The so-called antisymmetric theory (Kayne 1994) mentioned above implies that rightward movement cannot exist since it would imply downward movement in the tree. This means, in essence, that what looks like an element that has been moved rightward is either base-generated in its surface position, or it is actually moved leftward but all its surrounding materials have been moved leftward even further. We have explained already that this type of movement would be unmotivated and therefore not possible. The problem now is how to account for the position of the focused subject in sentences like (3).

Erteschik-Shir (2001:2) propounds a kind of Phonological movement: "Motivation for P-syntactical movement arises when the subject-predicate structure is misaligned with topic-focus structure. Lack of alignment is thus viewed as an imperfection, remedied by movement." And Erteschik-Shir and Strahov (2000:2) argue that F-structure features are checked at P-syntax by morphology, intonation and/or scrambling; which are all subject to characteristic nonconfigurational P-syntactic constraints such as Adjacency, Edge and Direction (Left/ Right). P-syntactic rules apply to F-structure, the output of narrow syntax to which TOP/FOC features have been assigned. I propose that since in (6) there is such a strong focus on the subject there must be some kind of P(honological)-movement that triggers the movement of the subject to the right of the sentence. As Zubizarreta (1998:124,134) says when she talks about Spanish: "I refer to the strategy employed by Spanish as p-movement (for prosodically motivated movement)...p-movement may also apply in the context of an emphatic constituent." Let us see this in sentence (6).

- (6) Para ir-es ó partido ti.
 For go-2nd p. sg. to-the game you.
 For you to go to the game.



Erteschick-Shir and Strahov (2000:11) state that "... the ability of overt case marking in a language seems then to be the parameter responsible for reordering processes such as topicalization, scrambling and object shift. Since overt case morphology becomes "visible" in the phonology, this parameter is best viewed as a parameter of P-syntax." However, they also remark that case marking is the trigger for movement since only topic marked DPs move, and so case and foci would have to be licensed in some other way. Furthermore, narrow syntax merges structures and movement in narrow syntax is triggered by the need for feature checking. So, it seems that Galician sentence-final focused subjects move to the right p-syntactically in order to pick up main stress.

Hitherto we have seen how the analysis presented here accounts for all different subject positions in the II construction: postverbal (straight in-situ checking), preverbal (by means of a Focus Phrase) and sentence final (by means of P-syntactic movement). We have also seen how the various positions of the subject in Galician II clauses provide further support for a bifurcation of the syntax into narrow syntax and p-syntax. We know that in narrow syntax movement is triggered by the need for syntactic feature checking and that merger of structures is typical of this type of syntax. The latter level (p-syntax) has also been proposed by Embick and Noyer (2001: 555) who state that 'not all structures and strings are the result of operations that occur exclusively in the syntactic component of the grammar'. They say that syntax generates and moves terminals according to its own principles and is oblivious to morphophonological concerns. PF takes the output of syntax and resolves morphophonological dependencies according to its own principles. Since P-syntax is part of the phonology, it is sensitive to TOP/FOC features and has no recourse to syntactic hierarchical structure. The availability of P-syntax directs us to doubt whether some features are checked in P-syntax and to the problem of how to decide which features are checked where. In view of the fact that P-syntax has no recourse to syntactic hierarchical structure (only the edges of f-structure and merge-MAX are required for sure), we suspect that movement to edge locations might best be accounted for in P-syntax. (Erteschick-Shir and Strahov 2000:12). Other authors support the idea of p(rosodic) syntax. Guimarães (1999:1) says that... 'phonological processes are blind to syntactic structure. There is a mapping procedure that 'interprets' syntactic structure and generates the prosodic structure.' Abney (in Fach 1999) argues for a modification of the standard approaches to phrase structure in order to achieve a much closer correspondence with the units of prosodic structure. The units resulting from these modifications are called 'chunks'. Chunks are defined as tree fragments in which so-called 'problematic' segments are left unattached.

6. CONCLUSION AND REMAINING ISSUES

I provided a solution to the two main problems that Galician II clauses present: nominative case assignment to the subject and the three different subject positions that can occur in II clauses. I showed that the most common unmarked word order obtains when the subject is either in postverbal position or dropped (Galician is a pro-drop language). I argued that the other two positions are reserved for the subject in focus. My analysis accounted for all different subject positions in the inflected infinitive construction: postverbal (straight in-situ checking), preverbal (by means of a Focus Phrase) and sentence final (by means of P-syntactic movement). The

various positions of the subject in Galician IIs provided further support for a bifurcation of the syntax into narrow syntax and p-syntax.

Over the last several years, a significant amount of linguistic research has been directed towards understanding the interface conditions between the computational (narrow syntax) system and other systems involved in language knowledge and use. Some of the linguistic phenomena that were previously viewed as purely syntactic appear now to have a better explanation in terms of conditions and interfaces. Most generative linguists today will agree that the expressions (structures) generated by the computational system at the heart of the human faculty of language must be legible to systems that access these objects at LF and PF, the interfaces between syntax and semantics/phonology. However, it is not always clear whether a phenomenon is best described as an effect of syntax or rather as an LF phenomenon or a PF phenomenon. So, is sentence-final focus in Galician p-syntactic? Why not consider preverbal focus as p-syntactic focus too? Why not consider pre-verbal focus as narrow syntactic focus? The answers to these questions are:

- Preverbal focus takes place in the narrow syntax : movement motivated by feature checking and the landing site is not the edge of the clause (there is a complementizer preceding)
 - (2) Para **ti** ires ó partido.
 - For you to go to-the game.
- Sentence final focus shows typical characteristics of p-syntax (movement is to the edge of the clause)
 - (3) Para ires ó partido **ti**.
 - For go to-the game you
- Leftward movement is A'-movement since it is triggered by A' feature-checking (a focus feature), it is not movement for case and it shows reconstruction effects. However, this is not the case with rightward movement since this type of movement is not triggered by feature-checking. As is well-known, in a minimalist approach movement is exclusively triggered by the checking of features. This takes place in functional projections whose heads and specifiers are located on the left. Given this line of thinking, rightward movement simply cannot be triggered since it cannot exist (Beerman, LeBlanc and Riemsdijk 1997).

Taking all these facts into consideration, the Galician data presented should make us inquisitive about whether it is possible (or even necessary) to supply a unified explanation for the behaviour of elements at the right and left peripheries of the clause and also about whether these peripheral positions are available at early stages of first and second language acquisition.

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