‘FEATURES AND INTERFACES IN ROMANCE: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF HELES CONTRERAS’ BY JULIA HERSHEYSONH, ENRIQUE MALLÉN AND KAREN ZAGONA (EDS.)

Book notice
02/09/02

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This collection of essays in honor of Heles Contreras contains eighteen contributions. The volume begins with Xabier Artiagotia’s paper ‘Seemingly ergative and ergatively seeming’. In this article, it is argued that certain verbs in Basque are not transitive despite the fact that their subjects bear ergative case. In ‘On the weight of light predicates’, Ignacio Bosque shows that light categories have more semantic content than previously thought. ‘On the interpretation of focus Features’ by José Camacho argues that clefts contain a focus feature that is attracted by a probe on the copular verb while in other kinds of focus (e.g. always, only) the focus feature is not deleted. Violeta Demonte and Olga Fernández Soriano (‘“Dequeísmo” in Spanish and the structure and features of CP’) argue that the idiosyncratic use of Spanish de que is a result of the parametric option of spreading CP-features across two functional heads: CP, and a higher head. Next, a syntactic account of evaluative suffixation in Spanish that is consistent with antisymmetry in syntax is developed in ‘Evaluative suffixation in Spanish and the syntax of derivational processes’ by Luis Eguren. Entitled ‘The lower operator position with parasitic gaps’, Joe Emonds’ contribution to the volume argues that the null operator in PG constructions moves to (non-casemarked) Spec-IP (and sometimes Spec-DP) rather than to Spec-CP as is traditionally assumed. DPs surface again in Javier Gutierrez-Rexach and Enrique Mallén’s article ‘NP movement and adjective
position in the DP phase’. On the basis of optional adjectival placement, they propose that DP may express two separate phases: a predicative D phase, and a separate ‘propositional’ D phase. The latter is activated by the presence of Topic, Focus, and Force features in the DP. Next, JAMES HARRIS discusses Spanish rhotics. His ‘Reflections on A phonological grammar of Spanish’ argues that Saporta and Contreras’ work on the subject remains the most elegant analysis on the subject so far. ELLEN M. KAISSE’S ‘The long fall: An intonational melody of Argentinian Spanish’ is a corpus study which concentrates on an unexplored intonational pattern of Argentinian Spanish. PAULA KEMPCHINSKY (‘On the position of preposed PPs in English and Spanish’) argues that, contrary to English, Spec-IP in Spanish is a position in which Topic and Focus features can be checked. The argument is that whereas in English the EPP is achieved via traditional means, in Spanish it is satisfied by head movement of D/Agr. JURGEN KLAUSENBURGER’S ‘The morphologization and grammaticalization of French liaison’ argues that the prefixation of liaison consonants to the vocalic initial stem is the optimal account for the phenomenon under review. Next, CONXITA LLEÓ in ‘Determining the acquisition of determiners: On the innateness of functional categories’ gives very convincing arguments for the innatist view of language acquisition. In ‘Sonority as a primitive phonological feature: Evidence from Spanish complex onset phonotactics’ FERNANDO MARTÍNEZ-GIL shows that the notion of sonority must be a phonological primitive, not a phenomenon derived from binary features. FRANCISCO ORDOÑEZ and ANTXON OLARREA (‘Weak subject pronouns in Caribbean Spanish and XP pied-piping’) argue that subject pronouns that appear preverbally in interrogatives are weak pronouns. They also motivate an account according to which interrogative movement involves, not head movement, but remnant XP movement of the verb. ‘The realization of number in
Italian and Spanish’ by MARIO SALTARELLI is an OT account of number in Latin and its daughter languages. LILIANA SÁNCHEZ’s ‘Discourse topic constraints on left dislocated subjects and CLLD Structures’ provides an account as to why subjects are often topics in discourse. MARGARITA SUÑER (‘The Puzzle of restrictive relative clauses with conjoined DP antecedents’) proposes that the obligatory deletion in the first conjunct of restrictive relative clauses with coordinated antecedents is conditioned by the relation that holds between the structure of the relevant sentences and the function that they perform. The final contribution is by CHRISTINE TELLIER. Entitled ‘Definite determiners in French and Spanish: Features and extraction’, her paper suggests that the apparent lack of specificity effects with extraction from definite DPs in French and Spanish is due to the dual nature of the ‘definite’ determiner in these languages: it can be either a lexical or an expletive determiner.

This volume is a major contribution to the topic of features and interface strategies in Romance languages. It not only integrates recent findings from minimalist syntax, but also manages to provide very informative views on Romance in general. [ERIC MATHIEU, University College London.]