

Syntactic Variation in Spanish: Non-standard Imperatives in Two Dialects

Julio Villa-García
Villanova University
16 December 2013

ILLA-CCHS-Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas

By presenting comparative dialect data from two varieties of present-day Iberian Spanish, namely (Lower) Andalusian and (Central) Asturian Spanish, this paper investigates a novel syntactic contrast regarding the placement of clitics in negative root infinitival sentences with imperative illocutionary force. More specifically, I provide And(alusian) and Astur(ian) Sp(anish) data that show a contrast in clitic directionality in second-person plural imperatives displaying infinitival verb forms: whereas positive imperatives involve postverbal clitics (i.e. enclitics) in both dialects (cf. (1a)), negative imperatives involve enclisis in AndSp (cf. (1b)) and proclisis in AsturSp (cf. (1c)).

- (1) a. ¡Seguirme! [AndSp, AsturSp, spoken Spanish]
follow_{inf.-2.PL-cl.}
'Follow_{2.PL} me!'
- b. ¡No seguirme! [AndSp]
not follow_{inf.-2.PL-cl.}
'Don't_{2.PL} follow me!'
- c. ¡No me seguir! [AsturSp]
not cl. follow_{inf.-2.PL}
'Don't_{2.PL} follow me!'

I argue for a PF-merger+copy-and-delete approach *à la* Miyoshi (2002) and Bošković (2001 *et seq.*), *inter alia*, whereby imperatives involve a null F head which is an affix that must merge with an appropriate host under adjacency in P(honological)F(orm). One of the major advantages of this analysis is that it allows for a unified syntactic treatment of the relevant construction in the two dialects, the difference between the two varieties reducing to PF considerations, on the assumption that PF considerations are allowed to affect word order but without actual PF movement (i.e., though the pronunciation of the relevant copies of moved elements). Another welcome result is that the analysis proposed in this talk makes use of the same theoretical machinery used to account for the notorious ban on negative imperatives found in languages like Spanish.