

Contrastive focus in Yucatecan Spanish

Rodrigo Gutiérrez-Bravo (El Colegio de México),
Martín Sobrino Gómez (El Colegio de México),
Melanie Uth (University of Cologne)

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Contrastive focus in Yucatecan Spanish I

- Habitualness of fronted foci:

(1) *Yo originalmente* [_F A SU HIJO] *contraté.*
 I originally ACC his son hired
 'Originally, I hired [_F his son].' (SSC: IO)

- Cooccurrence with negation particle *no*:

(2) *No* [_F ESO] *la mancha,* [_F TÚ] *la manchas.*
 not that it stains, you it stain
 '[_F That] is not staining it, [_F you] stain it.' (SSC: JL)

Contrastive focus in Yucatecan Spanish II

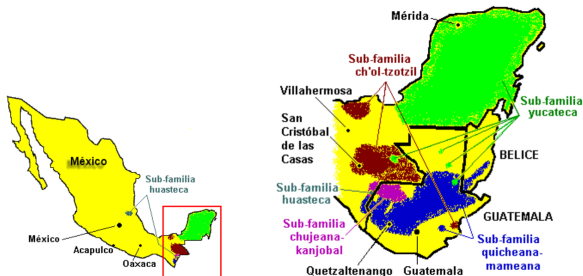
- Peculiar verb focus constructions:

(3) *Ellos*, [_F VENIR] *hicieron* *acá en Yucatán*.
 they come.INF do.PST.3PL here in Yucatán
 'They, they [_F came] here to Yucatán.' (SSC: RH)

(4) [_F TRAGADA] *hace* *su comida*.
 swallow.up.PST.PTCP do.PRS.3SG his food
 'He is [_F swallowing up] his food.' (Sobrino Gómez, 2010, 90)

Language contact between Spanish and Yucatec Maya

- Hypothesis: Peculiar contrastive focus constructions originate from language contact with Yucatec Maya
- Yucatec Maya in Mexico (<http://www.sil.org>):



= the Mayan language spoken in the Yucatán Peninsula by about 825.000 people (2010 census, INEGI)

Outline

- 1 Focus in Mexican Spanish
- 2 General characteristics of Yucatecan Spanish
- 3 Contrastive focus in Yucatecan Spanish:
 - Data and analysis
 - comparison with Yucatec Maya
 - comparison with standard varieties of Spanish
- 4 Conclusions and future research

Information Focus (IF) vs. Contrastive Focus (CF)

- IF: constituents are obligatorily placed in sentence final position in order to coincide with the ‘neutral nuclear stress’ (Zubizarreta, 1999, 4229), which obligatorily falls on the final constituent in Spanish:

(5) *Los discos los compró una muchacha.*

The discs, CL buy.PST.3SG a woman

‘A woman who bought the discs.’ (ibid.)

- CF: constituents are associated with the ‘contrastive/emphatic stress’, which “may fall on any accentuable morpheme” (ibid.), or syllable:

(6) *También se puede sacar CERO en la escuela.*

Also CL can.PST.3SG get ZERO in the school

‘Your grade at school can also be ZERO’ Gutiérrez-Bravo (2008)



Contrastive Focus in Standard Spanish I

- In Standard Spanish, CF may generally be realized by means of
 - ‘Contrastive/emphatic stress’:
 - (7) *También se puede sacar CERO en la escuela.*
 Also CL can.PST.3SG get zero in the school
 ‘Your grade at school can also be ZERO’ (Gutiérrez-Bravo, 2008)
 - Fronting to sentence initial position:
 - (8) *MANZANAS compró Pedro (y no peras).*
 Apples buy.PST.3SG Pedro and not pears
 ‘Pedro bought APPLES (not pears)’ (Zubizarreta, 1999, 4239)

Contrastive Focus in Standard Spanish II

- *p*-movement:

- (9) *Los discos los compró UNA MUCHACHA.*
 The discs, CL buy.PST.3SG a woman
 'It was a WOMAN who bought the discs.' (ibid.)

- Clefting:

- (10) *Fue EN EL PARQUE que lo encontraron.*
 be.PST.3SG in the park that it findPST.3PL
 'It was IN THE PARK that they found him.' (ibid.)

Focus fronting I: Lack of conclusive evidence

- No conclusive evidence in favor ‘foco antepuesto’ in Standard Spanish, cf. Gabriel (2007):
 - No fronted foci in production data
 - Dubitative/inquiring intonation or topic-comment intonation in reading experiment/grammaticality judgments
 - Introduction of resumptive pronoun (one speaker):

(11) [*El diario_i*] *se lo_i dio* *a su hermano.*
 the newspaper CL CL give.PST.3SG to her brother

‘As for the newspaper, she gave it to her brother.’ (ibid.: 286)

(Instead of *El DIARIO le dio a su hermano.*, ‘It was the newspaper that she gave to him.’)

Focus fronting II: Mexican Spanish

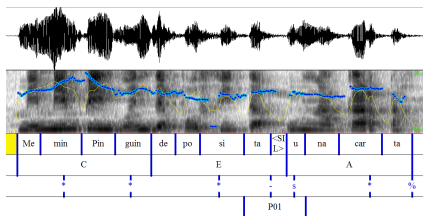
- Fronted foci are subject to dialectal variation
- In Mexican Spanish they are downright ungrammatical (Gutiérrez-Bravo, 2006, 171):

(12) * [*EL PERIÓDICO*] *compró* *Pedro*.
 the newspaper buy.PST.3SG Pedro
 'It was the newspaper that Pedro bought.' (ibid.: 286)

(13) * [*MANZANAS*] *compró* *Pedro (y no peras)*.
 Apples buy.PST.3SG Pedro and not pears
 'Pedro bought APPLES (not pears)'

Phonetic influence from Yucatec Maya

- Labialization of word final alveolar nasals, e.g. [ˈagwa de li.ˈmõm] (Pfeiler, 1992; Michnowicz, 2007)
- Aspiration of voiceless plosives, e.g. [a.ˈpʰar.te], [su.ˈpʰe.lo] (Lope Blanch, 1987, 82-84)
- Glottalization of vowels and consonants, e.g. (Colazo-Simón, 2007; Lope Blanch, 1987), Uth (submitted):



Lexical borrowings from Yucatec Maya

- Mayan words borrowed by Yucatecan Spanish add up to a large list, e.g. *colis*, 'bald', *mulix*, 'curly', *chan*, 'little', *soch*, 'owl' etc.
- Some lexical items are integrated into the Spanish sentence structure together with their Yucatec Maya subcategorization frames:

(14) *Me hach gusta ese traje.*
 CL.DAT.1SG very like.PRS.3SG that suit
 ('I like this suit very much.')

(Suárez Molina, 1996, 107)

- In other cases, they are utilized in analogy to the Spanish grammar:

(15) *Está muy kuch tu sombrero.*
 be.PRS.3SG very tacky your hat
 ('Your hat is very tacky.')

(Suárez Molina, 1996, 101)

Assurative constructions

- Yucatec Maya has an assurative particle *je'el* which Yucatecan Spanish has adopted as the assurative particle *á* (Sobrino Gómez, 2010, 85):

(16) *Je'el in taasik teech sáamale'.*
 ASSU ERG.1SG come.CAUS-IND-ABS.3SG 2sg tomorrow.CL
 'I will certainly bring it for you tomorrow.'

(17) *Á te lo traigo mañana.*
 sure CL CL bring.PRS.1SG tomorrow
 'I will certainly bring it for you tomorrow.'

Syntactic particularities

- **Passive constructions:**

(18) *Se lo quitaron* *por su papá.*
 CL it take.away.PST.3PL by his Dad
 'It was taken away from him by his Dad.' (Barrera Vásquez, 1977, 344)

(19) *Luk's-a'ab-ij* *ti'-∅* *tumen u* *yuum.*
 take.away-PAS.CP-ABS.3SG PREP-ABS.3SG by ERG.3SG lord
 'It was taken away from him by his father.' (ibid.)

- **Verb focus:**

(20) *Sólo pasear* *haces.*
 only take.a.walk.INF do.PRS.2SG
 'The only thing you are doing is to walk around.' (Sobrinó Gómez, 2010, 90)

Methodology

- 7 monolingual speakers of Yucatecan Spanish from Mérida (3 speakers) and Motul (4 speakers), corpus = AJ, (acceptability judgements)
- Questionnaire in order to elicitate grammaticality judgments
- 37 constructions, rating wrt. grammaticality or acceptability
- + compilation of examples of spontaneous speech data (corpus = SCC)

Locations of data collection



Negation of fronted constituents

- Fronted foci may be preceded by negation particle:

(21) *No* [_F YO] *se lo conté*, [_F ALEXIS] *se lo contó*. (SSC)
 not I him it tell.PST.1SG, Alexis him it tell.PST.3SG
 'It was not [_F me] who told it to him, [_F Alexis] did.'

- Case of constituent negation:

(22) * *No* [_F ÉL] *convenció* *a nadie*. (AJ)
 not he convince.PST.3SG ACC no.one
 'It was not [_F him] who did not convince anyone.'

(23) [*No* [_F JUGO]]; *dijo* *Abu* [_{CP} que vamos a tomar t_i],
 not juice say.PST.3SG Abu that go.PRS.1PL to drink
 aугa. (SSC)
 water

'Abu didn't say that we were going to drink [_F juice], [_F water] he said.'

Verb focus constructions

- Fronting of main verb + dummy *hacer*:

(24) *Puro* [_F LLORAR] *hizo*. (SSC)
 only cry.INF do.PST.3SG
 'The only thing he did was to [_F cry].'

- Occurrence in matrix or subordinate clauses:

(25) ... *con todos esos* [_{CP} *que puro* [_F TOMAR] *hacían*]. (SSC)
 ...with all those that just drink do.PST.3PL
 '...with all those guys that were just [_F drinking].'

- Negation of fronted main verbs:

(26) *No* [_F JALADO] *se hace*.
 not pull.PST.PTCP CL do.PRS.3SG
 'It's not meant to be [_F pulled].'

Restrictions wrt. verb class

- All speakers accepted focused intransitive verbs or verbs that clearly imply a high degree of affectedness of the patient:

(27) ✓ *Tú sólo* [_F PASEAR] *haces.* (AJ)
 You only walk.around.INF do.PRS.2SG
 'The only thing you do is to [_F walk around].'

(28) ✓ *Sólo* [_F COMER] *hace.* (AJ)
 only eat.INF do.PRS.3SG
 'The only thing he does is to [_F eat].'

- But only some speakers accept focused psych verbs (Motul > Mérida):

(29) % *Sólo* [_F PERDONAR] *hizo.* (AJ)
 only forgive.INF do.PST.3SG
 'The only thing he did was to [_F forgive].'

Restrictions wrt. object clitics

- High variability of acceptability judgements in case of cooccurrence of the focused verb with direct object clitics:

(30) % *Sólo* [_F COMERLO] *hace*. (AJ)
 only eat.INF=it do.PRS.3SG
 'The only thing he is doing is to [_F eat it].'

(31) % *Sólo* [_F VENDERLO] *hace*. (AJ)
 only eat.INF=it do.PRS.3SG
 'The only thing he is doing is to [_F sell it].'

- Speakers from Motul mostly reject both, (30) and (31)
- Speakers from Mérida accept (30) but uniformly reject (31)

Verb focus constructions with participles

- Fronting of participle generally accepted with verbs of displacement:

(32) *No* [_F EMPUJADO] *se hace.* (AJ)
 not push.PST.PTCP CL do.PRS.3SG
 'It's not meant to be [_F pushed].'

- Extension to other verb classes accepted by speakers from Motul only:

(33) % *Yo* [_F COMPRADO] *lo hice.*
 I buy.PST.PTCP it do.PRS.1SG
 'What I did was to [_F buy] it.'

(34) % *No* [_F ROBADO] *lo hice.*
 not steal.PST.PTCP it do.PRS.1SG
 'I did not [_F steal] it.'

Preverbal contrastive foci in Yucatec Maya I

- Robust use of preverbal foci:

(35) [_F LETI'] *k'in-s-ej-Ø*.
 3SG die-CAUS-IRR-ABS.3SG
 '[_F He] killed him.'

- Cooccurrence with negation particle:

(36) *To'on-e', ma'* [_F LETI'] *kaan-s-a'an-Ø* *to'on=i'*.
 1PL-TOP NEG 3SG learn-CAUS-PART-ABS.3SG 1PL=NEG
 'To us, it was not [_F that] what was taught to us.' (MDG-B:266)

Preverbal contrastive foci in Yucatec Maya II

- Verb focus construction with dummy verb:

(37) [_F OKOL-BIL] *u* *beet-ik-∅* *wale*’.
 steal-NFP ERG.3SG do-IND-ABS.3SG perhaps
 ‘Maybe he used to [_F steal] it.’ (Gutiérrez-Bravo, 2012)

⇒ **All syntactic peculiarities mentioned for Yucatecan Spanish are salient properties of the syntax of Yucatec Maya.**

Impossibility of negative concord

- Yucatec Maya = negative concord language:

(38) *Le máak=o' ma' t-u man-aj-∅ mixba'al=i'.*
 DET person=CL NEG CP-ERG.3SG buy-PRF-ABS.3SG nothing=NEG
 'The man did not buy anything.'

- But: no sentential negation with negated fronted foci:

(39) * *Ma' [F LETI'] ts'on-∅ mixba'al=i'.*
 NEG 3.SG shoot-ABS.3SG nothing=NEG
 'It was not [F him] who did not shoot anything.'

⇒ **Negation of fronted constituents = constituent negation,
 just as in Yucatecan Spanish**

Impossibility of agreement on fronted verbs

- Yucatec Maya inflected verb forms normally cross-reference to their arguments:

(40) *Ka taa-k-∅ ch'a'a-bil-en ...*
 SUBJ come-IRR-ABS.3SG take-NFP-ABS.1SG
 'That he come pick me up ...'

- But: no object agreement/clitics with fronted verbs:

(41) * [_F P'UCH-BIL-O'ON] *a beet-ik-∅.*
 beat-NFP-ABS.1PL ERG.2SG do-IND-ABS.3SG
 'What you did was [_F beating us up].'

⇒ **Restriction as concerns agreement on fronted verbs, similar to Yucatecan Spanish**

Preverbal foci in Standard Spanish

- ...are not allowed to cooccur with preverbal subject DPs:

(42) *_F [LAS ESPINACAS] *Pedro trajo* (y no las papas).
 the spinach Pedro bring.PST.3SG (and not the potatoes)
 'Pedro brought [_F the spinach] (and not the potatoes).'

- ...nor with a *Wh*-pronoun:

(43) * *A dónde* [_F A MARÍA] *quieres invitar* (y no a
 To where ACC María want.PRS.2SG invite.INF (and not ACC
Marta)?
 Marta)
 'Where do you want to invite [_F María] (and not Marta)?'

(according to Zubizarreta 1998: 103ff)

Yucatecan Spanish

- In Yucatecan Spanish, preverbal foci are not allowed to cooccur with preverbal verb-adjacent subject DPs or *Wh*-pronouns either:

(44) * *Sólo* [_F PASEAR] *tú* *haces*. (AJ)
 only walk.around.INF you do.PRS.2SG
 ‘The only thing you do is to [_F walk around].’

(45) * *Quién* [_F ESO] *manchó?* (AJ)
 who that stain.PST.3SG
 ‘Who stained [_F this].’

(46) * *Dónde* [_F PASEAR] *hace?* (AJ)
 where walk.around.INF do.PRS.3SG
 ‘Where is he [_F walking around]?’

Prefocal constituents

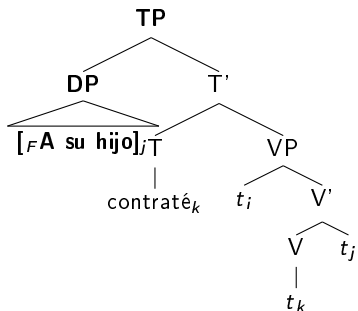
- The only possible placement for preverbal constituents cooccurring with fronted foci is in prefocal position:

(47) *Tú sólo* [_F PASEAR] *haces.* (AJ)
 You only walk.around.INF do.PRS.2SG
 'The only thing you do is [_F walking around].'

(48) *Yo originalmente* [_F A SU HIJO] *contraté.* (SSC: IO)
 I originally ACC his son hired
 'Originally, I hired [_F his son].'

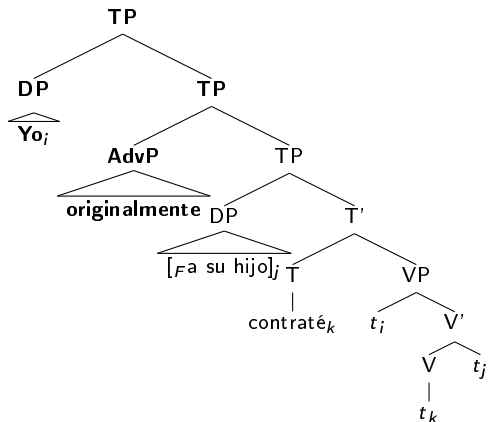
Structural analysis I: Generalized SpecTP

- SpecTP as landing site for unmarked preverbal subjects, *Wh*-operators as well as fronted foci (Zubizarreta, 1998; Gutiérrez-Bravo, 2006; Gutiérrez Bravo, 2007)



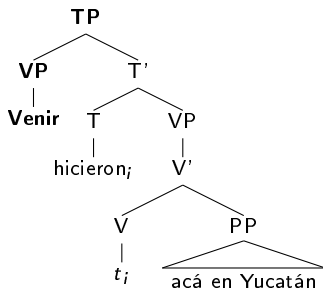
Structural analysis II: Lefthand adjunction

- Prefocal constituents are to be analyzed as lefthand adjunction to TP:



Structural analysis III: Verb focus construction

- Hypothesis: Fronted verbs are base generated in SpecTP:



- Focus operators such as *sólo*, *puro* adjoined to the VP occupying SpecTP ([_{TP} [_{VP} Sólo [_{VP} comer]] hace)]
- Instances of VP focus such as *Puro* [_F comer carne] *hice*.

Future research

- (1) Semantic differences between fronted participles and fronted infinitives:
 - Participles probably introduce manner meaning component
 - Fronted infinitives might imply cumulative aspectual values
- (2) Variability of speaker judgments concerning (i) fronting with verbs from different verb classes, and (ii) cooccurrence of fronted focused constituents with object clitics:
 - High variability of speaker judgments might suggest gradual grammatical influence of adstrat language
 - Probable relation of clitic realization and verb class restrictions to aspectual and modal components of fronted infinitives and participles
- (3) Detailed structural analysis of constituent negation, verb focus constructions etc.

Conclusions

- (1) Focus fronting in Yucatecan Spanish is habitual and idiosyncratic
- (2) Analogies to Yucatec Maya:
 - Habitualness of constructions
 - Focus verb construction
 - Impossibility of negative concord \Rightarrow constituent negation
 - Restrictions concerning cooccurrence of fronted verbs with object clitics

\Rightarrow Idiosyncrasies of Yucatecan Spanish in the realm of fronted focus constructions are very likely to be traced back to syntactic transfer from the Mayan adstrat
- (3) SpecTP as general surface position for fronted focused constituents
- (4) Prefocal constituents due to TP-adjunction

Thank you for your attention!

ABS	Accusative	IRR	Irrealis
ACC	Accusative	NEG	Negation
Adv.	Adverb	NFP	Non-finite passive
Adj.	Adjective	PART	Partitive
CAUS	Causative	PAS	Passive
CL	Clitic	PL	Plural
CP	Completive	PREP	Preposition
DET	Determiner	PRF	Perfect
ERG	Accusative	PRS	Presens
FOC	(narrow) Focus	PST	Past
IMPERS	Impersonal	PTCP	Participle
IND	Indicative	SG	Singular
INF	Infinitive	YS	Yucatecan Spanish

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