

Book review: Lorenzo, Guillermo (ed.). 2022. *Sounds, Syntax and Contact in the Languages of Asturias*. John Benjamins.

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Sound, Syntax and Contact in the Languages of Asturias, edited by Guillermo Lorenzo and published by John Benjamins, is the 36th volume in the series *Issues in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*. The volume comprises 10 chapters that analyse data from the three languages of the autonomous community of Asturias (Spain), namely the local Spanish dialect(s), the local Galician variety and, in particular, Asturian. Their common framework is Chomskyan Generative Grammar.

The title, *Sound, Syntax and Contact in the Languages of Asturias*, reflects the main subfields explored in each chapter. *Syntax* is present in the analyses of clitics provided in a majority of the chapters (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and, to some extent, 8), some of which also involve semantics and/or pragmatics as well (e.g. chapters 3 and 8). The interface with phonology also features in this volume, e.g. chapter 2. *Sound* is especially present in chapter 9, which focuses on intonation patterns in one of the dialects of Asturian. *Contact* is loosely present throughout, particularly in chapter 8, due to the multilingual nature of the region. The data are collected in different ways (grammars, monographs, fieldwork, etc.), although at times the reader is left without clear information about the source of the examples.

The book opens with Lorenzo’s introductory **chapter 1** (“Northern soul. A brief guide to the linguistic diversity of Asturias”), which presents the linguistic situation of Asturias and comments on previous literature. It provides a unifying justification for the chapters in terms of methodology and languages studied.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide two accounts of clitic linearisation. **Chapter 2** (“Asturian and Asturian Spanish at the syntax-phonology interface”, by Villa García and Sánchez Llana) provides an account of pronominal clitic linearisation based on the Copy Theory of movement (Corver and Nunes 2007; a.o.). Consider the following typical example with the weak pronoun as enclitic, the unmarked option in Asturian (p. 23):

- (1) (Llucas) *rellambiose col arroz con llechi* (Asturian)
 Lucas *smacked+cl.REFL with+the rice with milk*
 ‘Lucas/he/she had the rice pudding and smacked his lips together’

The authors argue that there are copies of the clitic both above and below the verb (*rellamber*). In (1) the clitic is enclitic to the verb, as is common in Portuguese or Galician. However, with *wh*-questions, the clitic is enclitic to the *wh*-phrase (*cuándo*) (2) (p. 24):

- (2) ¿*Cuándo-y das paseos?* (Asturian)
 when+cl.DAT give walks
 (cf. *¿*Cuándo das-y paseos?*)
 ‘When do you give him/her walks?’

The authors contend that the enclisis to the *wh*-phrase is not due to it being attracted by the *wh*-category. The authors propose, rather, that there are always at least two copies of these clitics, one below and one above the verb. Their key hypothesis is that it is ultimate the PF component which will dictate which copy is pronounced and thus, the linearisation of clitics is a phonological rather than a syntactic issue. The authors provide further evidence with infinitival imperatives in Asturian Spanish postverbal subjects in *wh*-questions in Asturian to support their hypothesis.

The analysis relies on some theoretical assumptions. Firstly, it requires a Copy Theory of movement with the added condition that the higher copy will tend to be pronounced and the pronunciation of lower copies will remain a last resort; left unconstrained, this would overgenerate, as the authors note and discuss. Furthermore, this analysis requires a condition that would prevent multiple spell-out of copies in Asturian since other languages allow for it (e.g. the typical textbook example of German *wh*-clauses [Bošković and Nunes 2007; a.o.] or as Corr [2022] argues for old Ibero-Romance). Secondly, they require a parametric condition in place that accounts for the weak pronoun enclisis default in Asturian, similar to Portuguese but different from (standard) Spanish. Thirdly, the authors assume local economy of syntactic derivations (no *look ahead* or other forms of global economy; see Collins 1996 and subsequent literature on local economy), and leave any repairs to PF in order to ensure enclisis.

Chapter 3 (“Semantic anchoring. Evidence from Asturian clitic placement”, by Fernández Rubiera) focuses on clitics in Asturian in clausal subordination contexts such as the following (p. 46):

- (3) a. Xulia pensaba que dixéralo Mon (Asturian)
 Xulia thought-3SG that had.said-3SG-it-ACC Mon
 ‘Xulia thought that Mon had said it’
- b. Xulia pensaba que lo dixera Mon
 Xulia thought-3SG that it-ACC had.said-3SG Mon
 ‘Xulia thought that Mon had said it’
- c. Ana trai les bebides porque mandó-ylo Pin
 Ana brings the drinks because ordered-3SG-her-DAT-it-ACC Pin
 ‘Ana is bringing the drinks because Pin ordered her to’
- d. Ana trai les bebides porque-ylo mandó Pin
 Ana brings the drinks because-her-DAT-it-ACC ordered-3SG Pin
 ‘Ana is bringing the drinks because Pin ordered her to’

As opposed to chapter 2, Fernández Rubiera rejects a PF analysis as such analysis cannot account for the enclisis in (3a) and (3c) given that the complementiser *que* could be the host for the clitic and yet enclisis to the verb is obtained. The author adopts a split-CP analysis (Rizzi 1997, and subsequent work), with Finiteness carrying an edge feature. Such feature requires a category merging or moving there (e.g. negation); otherwise, T-to-Fin takes place.

Additionally, in line with Uriagereka (1995) and subsequent work, Fernández Rubiera states the difference between (3a,c) and (3b,d) is semantic: whereas (3a,c) entail a [+epistemic] interpretation of the content of the embedded clause –positive commitment to the truth of the content in the embedded clause–, (3b,d) do not. (3a) differs further from (3c) in the semantic anchoring of the subordinate clause: whereas in the complement clause (3a) the [+epistemic] interpretation is anchored to the subject of the matrix clause, in adjunct clauses such as (3c) the interpretation is anchored to the speaker.

Chapter 3 rests on some key theoretical assumptions. First, following Demonte and Fernández Soriano (2009), the author requires two different complementiser *que*. When *que1* merges in Force, enclisis to the verb obtains (3a); when *que2* merges in Fin, the result is (3b). In (3b), the complementiser already satisfies the edge feature, no T-to-Fin takes place and hence enclisis to the verb obtains. Second, the author notes that the epistemic discussion is limited to embedded clauses of particular types of predicates, namely assertive verbs. Therefore, only certain verbs such as *pensar* may select either ForceP or simply FinP, which is a non-trivial selection as it correlates with the position of the clitic. The same syntax and interpretive differences apply in adjunct clauses, namely *que* in Force or in Fin in *porque* clauses (p. 63) –categorially, P-CP clauses (Pavón Lucero 2003; a.o.) – (3c,d), but there is no account on how selection by the matrix predicate would operate here. The chapter raises some further interesting questions such as the categorial nature of *que* with other predicates; we may think that it should be a non-defined/non-split C (Force+Fin, as there is no evidence requiring the split CP) or it could just merge in Force (*que1*) but with no epistemic reading involved.

A second issue in the volume is the categorial nature of (pronominal) clitics. Chapters 4, 5 and 7 are particularly relevant here.

In **chapter 4** (“Are Asturian clitics distinctly distinct?”), Lorenzo focuses on third person clitic clusters in Asturian (4a), which, unlike other Romance languages, show no formal alterations (p. 74):

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------|
| (4) | a. compré-y lu
buy-PAST.1P.SING.-DAT.ACC.3P
‘I bought it for her/him’ | (Asturian) |
| | b. se lo he dicho
REFL ACC AUX.1P say-PART
‘I said it to her/him’ | (Spanish) |

Whereas in Spanish the cluster requires the use of *se* rather than *le* (4b), in Asturian the clitics are unaltered: *y + lu* (4a).

Lorenzo assumes a categorisation of clitics between Determiner-type clitics and Agreement-type clitics (Ormazabal and Romero 2007; a.o.). D-type clitics and Agr-type clitics (namely, datives) may cluster, but they must be sufficiently distinct to avoid a violation of Richards’s (2010) *Distinctness Condition*. While Asturian may not seem subject to such a violation (4a), Lorenzo argues otherwise by claiming that present-day dative clitic *y* includes a hidden locative layer –formalised as an extra PP layer under AgrP, based on Colomina [2020]– ultimately retained from the historical ambiguity/overlapping between dative and locative *y* (spelled *hi*, *hy*) in old Asturian. The formally but no longer semantically locative layer makes *y* sufficiently distinct to cluster with other clitics without causing a Distinctness violation.

This chapter contributes a re-elaboration of the internal structure and categorial nature of 3rd person dative clitics in Asturian. One salient characteristic is its diachronic focus. Lorenzo assumes that certain synchronic idiosyncrasies of a language may be explained diachronically (see Fuß and Trips [2004]). Lorenzo highlights that Paduan speakers use the clitic *ghe* as both locative and dative. However, unlike their Paduan speakers, present-day Asturian speakers have no overt evidence of a locative so Lorenzo’s analysis requires accepting that a feature may be covertly retained (fossilised, maybe) and yet syntactically active throughout time. This raises an interesting question regarding the discontinuous nature of language and language change (see Joseph and Janda [2003]).

In **chapter 5** (“¿Qué che femos con el che? Some properties of the ethical dative ‘che’ in Asturian Galician”) Vares and Lorenzo examine the syntactic structure of ethical dative (ED) clitic *che* (5) (p. 95):

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------|
| (5) | Bolito súbete as escaleiras de dous en dous
grandpa climb-PRES.3P.SING-ED DET-FEM-SG stairs of two in two
‘Grandpa climbs (ED) the stairs two at a time’ | (Asturian Galician) |
|-----|--|---------------------|

The main theoretical contribution is the categorisation of ethical dative *che* as a different type of clitic (OTHER-type), neither a D-type nor especially an Agr-type, as subcategorised datives are. OTHER-type clitics are linearised before all other clitics (6) (p. 103):

- (6) El padre mercábacheye calzóis
 the-MASC.SING father buy-PAST.3P.SING-ED-3P.SING.DAT trousers
 ‘Her/his father used to buy her/him trousers’ (Asturian Galician)

In **chapter 7** (“Middle formation and inalienability in Asturian”), Suárez Palma examines the syntax of middle-passives in Asturian with non-subcategorised dative pronouns interpreted as inalienable possessors. Consider the following semantically anomalous example in Asturian (adapted from ex. 2c, p. 132):

- (7) A Guillermo, la #so lletra lléese-y fácil (Asturian)
 to Guillermo.DAT the his handwriting reads.REFL-3.DAT easy
 ‘Guillermo’s handwriting reads easily’

If the possessive *so*, the dative DP (*a Guillermo*) and the clitic *y* are coreferential, the example is rendered anomalous. The author argues for a PossessiveP analysis (Alexiadou et al. 2007; a.o.) and rejects an alternative one based on low applicatives (Cuervo 2003; a.o.). The key theoretical contribution relies on the categorisation of the clitic *y* as a Poss head. The category Poss may be spelled out as either a weak possessive (e.g. *so* in *la so lletra*) or as the clitic *y*, but not as both at the same time, hence the anomaly above.

Chapters 6 and 8 deal with two additional grammatical issues. In **chapter 6** (“Pluriactional perfects in Eonavian Spanish”), Jardón focuses on event plurality in two periphrastic constructions with verbs *tener* (‘to have’) and *llevar* (‘to carry’) in the Spanish dialect of the area where Asturian Galician is also spoken, using fieldwork data. Consider the following examples (pp. 110, 111):

- (8) a. A Roma tenemos ido alguna vez (Eonavian Spanish)
 to Rome tener.PRS.1P.PL go-PRF.PTCP some time
 ‘We have gone to Rome a few times’
 b. Celia lleva visto diez películas en lo que
 Celia llevar-PRS.3P.SING see-PRF.PTCP ten movies in ACC that
 va de festival
 go-PRS.3P.SING of festival
 ‘Celia has seen ten movies since the start of the festival’

Despite the resemblance with forms in Galician, Asturian and Portuguese (e.g. ‘*ter* + participle’), the Eonavian Spanish constructions differ in non-trivial ways. Both constructions, syntactically monoclausal, convey a perfect meaning and the iteration/plurality of the event. Both combine with transitive and intransitive verbs but the iterative/plurality requirement means that only dynamic predicates are grammatical; no states unless coerced into repeated events. Finally, the data reveal that subjects are limited to human experiencers. These periphrases are similar to other monoclausal periphrases that highlight the iteration of an event, such as *vivir*+ gerund in some American varieties of Spanish (Amaral 2013).

In **chapter 8** (“Negation in Asturian. Pragmatic differences at the syntax-phonology interface”), San Segundo Cachero provides a novel analysis of previously neglected differences between two negators in Asturian, *non* and *nun*. *Non* is always a

metalinguistic negator used, for instance, to provide a negative answer to a question (9) (adapted from ex. 44, p. 165):

- (9) A: ¿Tienes fame? (Asturian)
 have.2SG hunger?
 B. Non
 Not
 ‘Are you hungry?’, ‘No’

Nun may also be used as metalinguistic negation but there are clear differences between both (p. 154):

- (10) a. Xuan nun tien tres fíos ↑, (tien cuatro) (Asturian)
 Xuan not has three children-M.PL, (has four)
 ‘Xuan doesn’t have three children, he has four’
 b. Xuan tien tres fíos non, (tien cuatro)
 Xuan has three children-M.PL not, (has four)
 ‘It’s not the case that Xuan have three children, he has four’

Metalinguistic *nun* merges inside the CP and requires ascending intonation (a), whereas *non* is placed outside of the CP with no ascending intonation (b).

Nun occupies Σ (Martins 1994; a.o.) and, being inside the CP, interacts with clitics as the proclisis to the verb in (11) shows (p. 154):

- (11) Xuan nun la compró (Asturian)
 Xuan not ACC.3SG.FEM= buy-PST.3SG
 ‘Xuan didn’t buy it’

The final two chapters focus on phonology and bi/multilingualism. **Chapter 9** (“Intonational form and speaker belief in Mieres Asturian polar questions”) analyses intonational patterns and their role in conveying degree of commitment in polar questions in a dialect of Asturian. García Fernández finds three different intonational contours in polarity questions in this dialect, based on data provided by seven participants. H+L* L% is the most common one and is found not to mark any degree of commitment to the content of the question. The pattern H*L% tends to appear in contexts with a positive bias towards the content of the question (speaker’s belief), regardless of the actual source for the positive bias. The last contour, L* L%, is specially used for counter-expectations (disbelief). In this chapter the author focuses on phonological evidence for microvariation in Asturian.

Chapter 10 (“Minority language bilingualism and its role in L3 lexical acquisition”) closes the volume. Turrero García explores the effects of working memory and lexical recollection or retrieval in Spanish-Asturian-English trilinguals compared to Spanish monolinguals and Spanish-English bilinguals. Fifteen participants for each group, recruited using social media and via personal interviews, collaborated in the experiment, which included a Luck and Vogel task for working memory and lexical fluency task in which the informants had to provide as many words as possible starting with a particular letter in a minute. The author finds that trilinguals have faster reaction times and that there is a small advantage for bilinguals

compared to trilinguals in lexical retrieval possibly because the latter must manage more lexical options than the former.

Further to the interest raised by each individual contribution, this volume will attract a wide readership for many reasons. First, the focus on the rich language variety of Asturias conveys a clear message to the research community that minoritised languages are as equally worthy of attention as bigger languages. In Spain we can add Aragonese to the list. Both Asturian and Aragonese still lack the same level of legal protections –and projection– granted to other languages in other bi/multilingual autonomous communities in the country, as Lorenzo reminds the reader in his introductory chapter. There is no doubt that linguistic research has long benefited from the detailed formal analyses of the many varieties spoken throughout Italy, as evidenced by specific publications such as D’Alessandro, Ledgeway and Roberts (2010) and by the very productive research program of cartographic studies (Rizzi and Samo 2022; a.o.). Álvarez (2019: 107), writing on Galician, states that “[i]t is obvious that Galician linguistics does not have the dimension, in quantitative terms, of Spanish or Portuguese linguistics, but this does not in itself put it in a situation of dependence. We therefore demand a proper place that is well identified and which does not imply isolation in any way”. This volume contributes to the extension of Álvarez’s call for action to Asturian and Asturian Galician.

Second, this volume aligns with current research projects on formal studies of dialect syntax. Gallego (2019: 12) is clear in calling on more attention to dialects, since “[c]urrent syntactic theory can ... fill the gap between traditional and contemporary approaches, and in so doing set the scene for a fruitful, long-lasting, and ambitious new wave of formal dialectal studies on the syntax of Spanish”. This volume focuses on the varieties of Asturian and the local dialects of Spanish and Galician.

Finally, this book comes out at a time of increasing interest in the research of that part of the Iberian Peninsula, as evidenced by the very recent publication of Torre (2022). Such volume is the result of an international conference on western Iberian languages, whose second meeting will take place at the Universidad de Oviedo (Spain) in late 2022 (*II Simposio Internacional Aspectos Lingüísticos del Noroeste Ibérico*).

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