P-stranding effects in clausal ellipsis in Spanish: evidence for isomorphic sources.

1. P-stranding effects in clausal ellipsis in Spanish: An apparent counterexample to the Preposition Stranding Generalization

Spanish allows P-stranding in sluicing (1a) (Rodrigues et al. 2009), but it doesn’t allow P-stranding in non-elliptical wh-questions (1b):

(1) a. Juan habló con una chica, pero no sé (con) cuál. John talked with a girl but I don’t know which.
   b. *Cual chica habló Juan con*

which girl talked John with

This seems to be a counterexample to the Preposition Stranding Generalization:

(2) Form-identity generalization II: Preposition-stranding

A language 1 will allow preposition stranding under sluicing iff 1a) allows preposition stranding under wh-movement. (Merchán, 2001, p. 93)

2. P-less remnants allow non-exhaustive readings

In sluicing the pivot entails exhaustivity (Merchant 2001):

a. it only allows a ‘mention-all’ interpretation, and

b. it’s incompatible with modifiers which require a ‘mention-some’ interpretation

Prediction: if P-less remnants arise from a cleft sources, they can’t combine with non-exhaustive modifiers. This prediction is not borne out.

2.1 Mention-some Modification

P-less remnants in Spanish are compatible with por ejemplo for example:

(A) ¿Ishould talk with someone about your financial problems?
   B: (Con) quien, por ejemplo? with whom or for example
   ‘Who, for example?’

Wh-questions can combine with this modifier (5a); cleft/copular questions cannot (5b):

(5) a. Con quien debería hablar, por ejemplo? with whom should I talk for example?
   b. Quién es la persona con la que debería hablar, *(por ejemplo)?* who is the person with whom I should talk for example

2.2 Elide Modification

P-less remnants are compatible with elide modification (5b); copular sources are not (6b):

(6) a. I heard Maurice talked about several interesting topics
   B: Sí, (sobre) astronomía seguimos, pero no sé (sobre) cuál más.

yes about astronomy for sure but I don’t know about which else
   ‘Yes, (s)he talked about astronomy for sure, but I don’t know which else.’

b. *no sé (sobre) tema más es el tema sobre el que hablé*

not I know which topic else is the topic about which he talked

Interim Conclusion

✓ P-less remnants allow non-exhaustive readings.
✓ Accounts that propose non-isomorphic sources (i.e. copular/cleft sources) make the wrong predictions with respect to exhaustive readings.

4. Evidence & Predictions: P-less remnants are only allowed if the correlate remains in-situ

4.1 Sluicing & Fragment answers

P-less remnants are possible in sluicing (9) but not in fragment answers (10):

(9) Juan habló con alguien, pero no sé (con) quién.
   John talked with someone but I don’t know who.
   a. [Con quien] habló [con alguien] ... [la mujer habló [con alguien]]
   who ‘John talked with someone but I don’t know who.’

(10) A: ¿Con quién habló Juan? – B: (Con) María.

with who talked John with
   ‘Who did John talk with?’

4.2 Two types of contrast sluicing

Some cases of contrast sluicing allow P-omission but others don’t: when the correlate is in-situ (11) we predict optional P-omission; when the correlate moves we predict P-omission to be banned (12):

(11) Juan habló con cinco chicas pero no sé (con) quién chicas.

John talked with five girls but I don’t know who
   a. [Con quién] habló [con chicas] ... [las chicas hablaron [con chicas]]
   b. [Con quién] habló [con chicas] ... [las chicas hablaron [con chicas]]

(12) Sí con cuántas chicas habló Juan, pero no sé (con) quién chicas.

I know with how many girls John talked but I don’t know with how many girls
   a. [Con cuántas chicas] habló [con chicas] ... [las chicas hablaron [con chicas]]
   b. [Con cuántas chicas] habló [con chicas] ... [las chicas hablaron [con chicas]]

Novel Generalization: P-less remnants in clausal ellipsis are only allowed if the correlate in the antecedent remains in-situ: P-less remnants are not allowed if the correlate in the antecedent moves.

4.3 Split questions

Split questions are structures that contain a wh-question part followed by a tag (Arregui 2010). The correlate moves, so we predict P-omission to be impossible:

(13) a. ¿Con quién habló Juan, *con* María? who talked John with with
   ‘Who did John talk with, Mary?’
   b. [Con quien] habló [con] Juan ... [la mujer habló [con] María]

4.5 Sprouting

P-less remnants are ungrammatical in sprouting even in P-stranding languages (e.g. English):

(14) Juan se casó pero no sé (con) quién.

John got married but I don’t know who
   a. [Con quien] se casó ... [la mujer se casó [con quien]]
   b. *[Con quien] se casó ... [la mujer se casó [con quien]]

4.4 Stripping vs. Pseudostripping

Stripping allows P-less remnants:

(15) Juan habló con SUSANA, *no* (con) ELENA.

John talked with Susan not with Elena
   a. [Con quien] habló [con Susana] ... [la mujer habló [con Elena]]
   b. *[Con quien] habló [con Susana] ... [la mujer habló [con Elena]]

Pseudostripping, a case of stripping in which the remnant precedes the negation, is derived via movement of the
remnant followed by deletion Depiante (2000). It doesn’t allow P-omission:

(16) Juan habló con SUSANA, *ELENA* no.

John talked with Susan with Elena not
   a. [Con quien] habló [con Susana] ... [la mujer habló [con Elena]]
   no *[Con quien] habló [con Susana] ... [la mujer habló [con Elena]]
   b. [Con quien] habló [con Susana] ... [*ELENA, no] [la mujer habló [con Elena]]

The problem here is that (16b) would involve P-stranding, and that’s banned in Spanish.

5. Conclusions: An uniform account for clausal ellipsis in Spanish based on syntactic isomorphism

✓ Clef-source analyses make the wrong predictions:

  i) non-exhaustive readings are allowed;
  ii) there is no correlation between the availability of clef/copular sources and P-omission (see hankout).

✓ Novel generalization: P-less remnants are only allowed if the correlate in the antecedent doesn’t move but not if it moves (at least in Spanish).

✓ This analysis correctly predicts that the generalization holds uniformly across all types of clausal ellipsis, without the need for construction-specific constraints.

Laura Stigliano
laurarastigliano@uchicago.edu