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ANAPHORA IN THE INTERLANGUAGE OF SPANISH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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1. INTRODUCTION

Following previous work on interlanguage grammar (cf. Chomsky, 1981; Yuan, 1994; Schachter, 1996) and, more specifically, on the role of Universal Grammar (henceforth UG) in the acquisition of the English reflexive by native speakers of other languages (cf. Bennet 1994 for Serbo-Croatian; Matsumura 1994, Thomas 1995 and Wakabayashi 1996 for Japanese), this paper describes how native speakers of a Romance language such as Spanish acquire the reflexive in a Germanic language such as English. The experiment I conducted shows that Manzini and Wexler's (1987) GOVERNING CATEGORY and PROPER ANTECEDENT PARAMETER are violated in the interlanguage of Spanish Learners of English. The frequently inconsistent responses obtained from Spanish Learners of English (SPLE for short), which radically depart from those obtained with Japanese Learners of English (JPLE) in Wakabayashi (1996), provide strong evidence that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is not always systematic. However, it seems impossible to determine the role of Universal Grammar in SLA from the study of the syntactic constraints in interlanguage. More specifically, while the interlanguage of Spanish Learners of English suggests that Manzini and Wexler's (1987) parameters concerning Principle A of the Binding Theory are not universal, the interlanguage of Japanese Learners of English seems to indicate that UG is indeed available in SLA.

As is well known, Principle A of the Binding Theory has traditionally been regarded as a universal constraint on the occurrence of reflexives. It states that they must be bound inside their local domain (cf. Chomsky,

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1986b). It is precisely the local domain of the reflexive that varies from one lexical item to another. Thus, Manzini and Wexler (1987) list the different domains that can be found cross-linguistically in their GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMATER, defined in (1) below. At the same time, they claim that there are reflexives that are subject-oriented while others are not, and this is shown in their PROPER ANTECEDENT PARAMETER, given in (2) below.

(1) GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMETER (Manzini and Wexler 1987: 53)

α is a GOVERNING CATEGORY (GC henceforth) for β iff α is the minimal category (syntactic domain) that contains β and

a) has a subject (as in [i] with English 'herself') , or

I. Alice(i) knew [GC that Mary(j) had looked at *herself*(*i/j) in the mirror]

b) has an inflection (as in (ii) with Italian 'sè', which can corefer both with a subject and with a possessor in a different PP), or

II. [GC Alice(i) guardò i rittratti di *sè* (i/j) di Mario(j)]
'Alice looked at Mario's portraits of REFLEXIVE'

c) has a TENSE (as in (iii) with Norwegian 'seg', which can be coreferential with an NP outside an infinitive clause), or

III. [GC Knut(i) ba Ola korrigere *seg*(i)]
'Knut asked Ola to correct REFLEXIVE'

d) has a REFERENTIAL (i.e. INDICATIVE) TENSE (as in (iv) with Icelandic 'sig', which is allowed to corefer with an NP out of a subjunctive clause), or

IV. [GC Jón(i) segir aδ Maria(j) elski *sig*(i/j)]
'Jon says that Mary loves (SUBJUNCTIVE) REFLEXIVE'

e) has a ROOT TENSE (as in (v) with Japanese 'zibun', which can take its antecedent from anywhere in the matrix clause.)

V. [GC John-wa(j) Bill-ga *zibun*-o(i/j) nikunde iru to omotte iru]
'John thinks that Bill hates REFLEXIVE'

(2) PROPER ANTECEDENT PARAMETER (Manzini and Wexler 1987: 64)

A proper antecedent for α is

a. A subject β (as in [vi]) or

VI. John-wa(i) Mary-ni(j) *zibun*-no(i/*j) syasin-o mise-ta
'John showed Mary pictures of REFLEXIVE.'

b. an[y] element β whatsoever

VII. Mario(i) chiese ad Alice(j) un rittratto di sè(i/j).
'Mario asked Alice for a portrait of REFLEXIVE.'

As far as the GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMETER (GCP henceforth) is concerned, it is worth mentioning that Spanish has two different parameters, depending on the anaphoric element used: (1a) for 'se' and 'sí mismo' and (1b) for 'él/ella mismo/a'. On the other hand, English 'himself' fits, in general, into parameter (1a). As far as the PROPER ANTECEDENT PARAMETER (hereafter PAP) is concerned, Spanish 'se' and 'sí mismo' fulfill parameter (2a), while Spanish 'él/ella mismo/a' and English 'himself' fulfill parameter (2b). This is shown in the following sentences.

(3) a. Mary(i) told Jane(j) about *herself* (i/j).
b. Mary(i) le contó a Jane(j) sobre *sí misma* (i/*j).
c. Mary(i) le contó a Jane(j) sobre *ella misma* (i/j).

Anyhow, since Spanish has two different parameters for the binding domain of reflexives, while English only has one, a great deal of inconsistency might be expected in the responses given to Types 2, 3, 4 below. Thus, some SPLE may set the value at (1a) and some other may set it at (1b). Since Spanish has both a subject-oriented anaphora ('sí mismo/a)', and an anaphora ('él/ella mismo/a') that allows subjects and objects as its antecedents, the same degree of inconsistency might also be expected in the responses to Type 5 below. Consequently, it is to be expected that some SPLE will allow 'himself' to corefer with a subject and a non-subject, while others will allow only subjects as antecedents for 'himself'.

2. EXPERIMENT

In order to find out if there is anything that could be considered 'knowledge' of UG in students whose L1 is Spanish and L2 is English, I conducted an experiment that resembles the one in Wakabayashi (1996) with Japanese learners of English. The subjects chosen for the experiment were forty Spanish students who started learning English at the age of twelve. By the time the experiment was carried out, they had all been learning English for six years, three in primary school and three in high school. The aim, then, was to examine the extent to which UG is present in the interlanguage of Spanish Learners of English when acquiring the reflexives.

The experiment was designed as follows: the SPLE were given five sets of sentences to read, one for each different syntactic structure, to read. At the end of each set, I included a question to check the informants' understanding of reflexive relations in English. Below each question, a list of all potential NP antecedents was also included, so that they could number these NPs according to their preferences.

The data, taken from Wakabayashi (1996), are given in (4) through (8) below. Type 1 consists of three examples in which the 'self' form only has an overt clause-mate antecedent; in Type 2, the 'self' form is inside a subordinate clause and there is an embedded and a main subject whose features match those of the reflexive; in Type 3, the 'self' form is inside an inflection (i.e. simple) clause and there is also a main subject and an embedded subject (which is also the object of the main verb); in Type 4, the 'self' form is embedded in a PP complement of a complex NP, whose specifier could count as one plausible antecedent for the reflexive. The other could, presumably, be the subject of the main clause.

Type 1

(4) a. Tom likes himself.
b. Mary likes herself.
c. Sam hates himself.

Question: Who does 'himself/herself' refer to in (4a-c)?

Possible answers:
1. Local NP
2. Other NP

Type 2

(5) a. Tom said that Sam liked himself.
b. Mary thinks Jane hates herself.
c. Mary told Jane to look at herself.

Question: Who does 'himself/herself' refer to in (5a-c)?

Possible answers:
0. Missing data
1. Long-distance NP
2. Local NP
3. External NP
4. Long-distance NP and local NP
5. Long-distance NP and external NP
6. Local and external NP

Type 3

(6) a. Sam told Tom to support himself.
b. Tom told Sam to protect himself.
c. Mary told Jane to look at herself.

Question: Who does 'himself/herself' refer to in (6a-c)?

Possible answers:
0. Missing data
1. Long-distance NP
2. Local NP
3. External NP
4. Long-distance NP and local NP
5. Long-distance NP and external NP
6. Local and external NP

Type 4

(7) a. Tom read Sam's criticism about herself.
b. Jane read Mary's report about herself.
c. Jane heard Mary's opinion about herself.

Question: Who does 'herself' refer to in (7a-c)?

Possible answers:
0. Missing data
1. Long-distance NP
2. Local NP
3. External NP
4. Long-distance NP and local NP
5. Long-distance NP and external NP
6. Local and external NP

Type 5

(8) a. Jane showed Mary a photograph of herself.
b. Sam told Tom a story of himself.
c. Tom showed Sam a drawing of himself.

Question: Who does 'himself'/'herself' refer to in (8a-c)?

Possible answers:
1. Subject NP
2. Non-subject NP
3. External NP
4. Subject NP and non-subject NP
5. Subject NP and external NP
6. Non-subject NP and external NP

As I have mentioned above, the goal of this task was twofold. It was designed to examine (i) the presence of the GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMETER (Manzini and Wexler 1987) in interlanguage and (ii) their acceptance of subjects versus non subjects as antecedents for the anaphoras in their interlanguage.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

First, I will provide the collective percentage of responses for each sentence type, as has been traditionally done in previous analyses (Hirakawa, 1990; Matsumura 1994; Thomas 1995; Cook 1996). However, I fully agree with Wakabashi (1996: 275) that this is not the best way of analyzing the linguistic knowledge of L2 learners. As she claims, not all learners of a second language have a uniform level of proficiency, even when they belong to the same age group. Further, it may be the case that a learner has reset a parameter while another has not.

It should be taken into account, then, that the group (or aggregated) data given below show the general tendency in the acquisition of English reflexives by native speakers of Spanish. In other words, it only gives an incomplete description of interlanguage grammar.

a. *Aggregated data concerning CGP*

In Table I below, I include the figures of the percentages of the responses as first choices for Types 1, 2, 3 and 4. In Table II, I include all possible NP antecedents. 'Local NP' refers to an NP inside the governing category of the reflexive; 'Long-distance NP' refers to an NP outside the governing category but in the sentence; NC means native control group.

	Type 1		Type 2		Type 3		Type 4	
Subjects	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC
Local NP	100	100	86	100	65	91	49	54
LD NP	—	—	11	0	13	2	33	22
Local + LD NP	—	—	3	0	7	8	17	24
Others	—	0	0	0	4	0	1	0

Table I. Percentages of responses as first choices for Types 1, 2, 3, 4.

	Type 1		Type 2		Type 3		Type 4	
Subjects	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC
Local NP	100	100	65	100	54	89	27	44
LD NP	—	—	9	0	13	2	2	19
Local + LD NP	—	—	22	0	28	9	50	37
Others	—	—	2	0	4	0	1	0

Table II. Percentages of responses as all possible NP antecedents for Types 1, 2, 3, 4.

As for the first choices, it is noticeable that Spanish learners of English always choose the local NPs in Type 1 as antecedents for the anaphora, just like native speakers do. As the questions get harder, it can be seen that the percentages go down in Types 2, 3, and 4. The first descent is not very significant (9% for Type 2) but then Type 3 drops to 65%, and Type 4 to 42%. A comparison of these figures with those obtained with native speakers of English shows clear differences with regard to Types 2 and 3. What these figures seem to suggest is that the higher degree of difficulty makes the Spanish learners of English hesitate about the possibility of local NP antecedents. In contrast, a higher percentage of native speakers seem to prefer local NPs for all sentence types.

As for all possible answers, all SPLE coincide in assigning the local NP as the only possible antecedent for the English reflexive in Type 1. Interestingly, this figure goes down to 65% in Type 2, 54% in Type 3, and 27% in Type 4 (as compared to 30%, 30%, 5% and 44% obtained with native speakers of English). If this decrease were explained in terms of the higher degree of difficulty each sentence type involves, no SPLE should be able to answer satisfactorily to Type 4 while failing to do so in Type 2 (or 3 or 1). As I will show when dealing with individual responses, there are some L2 learners who have, in fact, acquired the constraint in Type 4 but not in Type 2. This provides good evidence that the GCP (and, by extension, UG) is violated in interlanguage grammar. I will come back to this later.

b. Aggregated data concerning PAP

In this section, I will compare the SPLE responses to the sentences in Type 5 with those obtained from native speakers of English. The figures for responses as first choices and all possible antecedents are examined, respectively, in Tables III and IV below.

In Table III, it can be observed that not only the Spanish learners of English but also the native speakers of this language mostly prefer subjects as their first choices, even though native speakers of English allow both subjects and nonsubjects as antecedents in a slightly higher percentage. The reason why SPLE pick up subjects as their first option may be due to the fact that in their L1 there are two anaphoras, i.e. 'sí mismo' and 'él/ella mismo/a' that can be subject-oriented. Recall that 'sí mismo/a' is subject oriented but 'él/ella mismo/a' may just optionally be so. Since both anaphoras can refer to a subject, this choice seems the most natural among SPLE. In connection with this, only 6% of the responses by SPLE indicate that they understand the reflexive to be coreferential both with subject NPs and non subject NPs as their first choice. This result contrasts with the higher 25% by native speakers of English that allow both as antecedents for the reflexive.

Subjects	SPLE	NC
Subject NP only	77	68
Non-subject NP only	8	6
Subject + Non-subject NP	13	25
Other responses	1	0

Table III. Percentages of responses as first choice antecedents in Type 5.

Subjects	SPLE	NC
Subject NP only	51	54
Non-subject NP	5	3
Subject + Non-subject NP	39	43
Other responses	1	0

Table IV. Percentages of responses as all possible antecedents in Type 5.

As far as Table IV is concerned, it is worth mentioning that the aggregated figures obtained with Spanish learners of English for all possible antecedents are about the same as those representing the intuitions of native speakers of the language. In other words, when SPLE and native speakers of English rethink the data, 26% of the informants become aware of the possibility of non-subject NPs to corefer with the reflexive too. Therefore, it is clear that the strikingly different figures given in Table III and Table IV above illustrate the danger of running tests where only first choices, and not all possible antecedents along with individual responses, are analyzed. More specifically, the ratio of responses which successfully indicate that a reflexive in English is allowed by SPLE (and also by native speakers) to corefer to

both subject NPs and non-subject NPs has increased considerably in Table IV.

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5
Subject 1	111	222	222	222	111
Subject 2	111	222	222	222	111
Subject 3	111	222	222	222	111
Subject 4	111	222	222	222	111
Subject 5	111	222	222	221	111
Subject 6	111	111	222	221	111
Subject 7	111	222	444	224	111
Subject 8	111	222	222	444	411
Subject 9	111	222	222	444	421
Subject 10	111	222	222	444	414
Subject 11	111	222	444	444	444
Subject 12	111	222	444	444	444
Subject 13	111	222	224	444	444
Subject 14	111	222	224	444	444
Subject 15	111	222	222	244	444
Subject 16	111	222	444	444	444
Subject 17	111	222	444	224	444
Subject 18	111	222	144	222	444
Subject 19	111	222	244	444	444
Subject 20	111	222	222	244	444
Subject 21	111	222	222	411	411
Subject 22	111	222	424	144	441
Subject 23	111	222	444	444	114
Subject 24	111	244	411	211	142
Subject 25	111	121	221	444	242
Subject 26	111	121	222	121	111
Subject 27	111	112	212	212	121
Subject 28	111	112	666	222	111
Subject 29	111	444	244	411	111
Subject 30	111	444	422	444	444
Subject 31	111	444	444	144	414
Subject 32	111	444	444	444	444
Subject 33	111	444	444	444	114
Subject 34	111	444	442	444	111
Subject 35	111	111	144	444	111
Subject 36	111	442	222	111	114
Subject 37	111	111	144	444	111
Subject 38	111	652	211	112	621
Subject 39	111	111	233	331	311
Subject 40	111	442	111	244	444

Table V. Individual responses concerning the GCP.

Notes to Table V:
For Type 1: 1-local NP.
For Type 2, 3 and 4: 0-missing data; 1-long-distance NP; 2-local NP, 3-external NP; 4- long-distance NP and local NP; 5-long-distance NP and external NP; 6-local and external NP.
For Type 5: 1-subject NP; 2-non-subject NP; 3-external NP; 4-subject NP and non-subject NP; 5-subject NP and external NP; 6-non-subject NP and external NP.

From Tables III and IV, the conclusion can be drawn that SPLE interpret reflexives as referring either to subject NPs or to both subject and nonsubject NPs, since more than 80% of the responses identifying possible antecedents exhibit one of these patterns.

a. Individual data concerning the GCP

Table V contains the individual responses obtained with respect to the GCP and the PAP.

Following Wakabayashi (1996: 283), I will only consider to be 'consistent' those L2 learners who give the same answer to all sentences in one sentence type. In contrast to JPLE, SPLE show a pattern of great inconsistency in their responses, as can be seen in Table VI below:

	Type 1		Type 2		Type 3		Type 4	
Subjects	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC
Local NP	100	100	70	100	45	86	30	10
LD NP	—	—	2	0	10	0	15	0
Local + LD NP	—	—	0	0	0	5	12	5
NC interpret.	0	0	18	0	45	10	43	86

Table VI. Percentages of the subjects with consistent responses as the first choices concerning GCP.

	Type 1		Type 2		Type 3		Type 4	
Subjects	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC	SPLE	NC
Local NP	100	100	57	100	40	81	12	10
LD NP	—	—	5	0	5	0	5	0
Local + LD NP	—	—	17	0	15	5	37	24
NC interpret.	0	0	20	0	37	14	45	67

Table VII. Percentages of the subjects with consistent responses as all possible antecedents concerning GCP.

In Tables VI and VII above, it may be noted that there is an increase in inconsistency, presumably due to the fact that when the subjects' interlanguage grammar permits more than one antecedent for the reflexive, it is very difficult to indicate all possible antecedents in all three sentences of each type. In this respect, the experiment fails to reveal the learner's competence. What inconsistent responses clearly show, though, is that the binding coreference is not constrained to local NPs, since there are some children who allow long-distance NPs, especially for Types 3 and 4. The exact figures are 2%, 10% and 15% for Types 2, 3 and 4, respectively, in first choice responses, and 5% in all possible antecedents responses.

To close this section, I provide a table with the different patterns of responses with respect to the GCP (Table 8). This table illustrates the lack of systematicity in the SPLE's responses. Every possible combination of responses is found: Group 1 represents the thirteen subjects (out of forty) who answered consistently to the twelve sentences concerning the GCP; Group 2 consists of eight subjects who failed in their responses to Type 4; Group 3 consists of three subjects who acquired the GC for Types 1 and 2 but not for Types 3 and 4; Group 4 consists of three subjects who acquired Type 1 but not the others; Group 5 consists of eight subjects who consistently interpret Types 1, 2 and 4 correctly, but fail in Type 3; Group 6 consists of two subjects who fail in Type 2 and not in the others; Group 7 consists of two subjects who fail in Types 2 and 4 but not in Types 1 and 3; and finally Group 8 consists of a single subject who is only inconsistent in Types 2 and 3.

Groups	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
1 (32%; n =13)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 (20%; n = 8)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3 (7%; n = 3)	Yes	Yes	No	No
4 (7%; n = 3)	Yes	No	No	No
5 (20%; n = 8)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
6 (5%; n = 2)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
7 (5%; n = 2)	Yes	No	Yes	No
8 (2%; n = 1)	Yes	No	No	Yes

Table VIII. Patterns of interlanguage grammar of SPLE (GCP)

Note:
'Yes' indicates that SPLE answer consistently (correctly or not); 'no' indicates that SPLE have no consistent interpretation.

b. *Data of PAP by individual subjects*

Examining the interlanguage grammar concerning the Proper Antecedent Parameter (PAP) in the same way as was done with the data concerning the Governing Category Parameter (GCP), it becomes clear that only three different sets of responses are obtained. First, there are thirteen subjects who consistently interpret reflexives as coreferential with subject NPs (cf. Group 1). Second, there are eleven subjects who consistently interpret both subjects and non subjects as antecedents for the reflexive (cf. Group 2). Finally, there are sixteen subjects who have no consistent interpretation as to the syntactic role of the antecedent (cf. Group 3). The figures in this table are about the same for each of the three groups. Inconsistency is also quite significant in this case. The fact that only 32% of the Spanish learners of English allow subject NPs as the only possible antecedents for the English reflexive, in comparison with 40% of inconsistent responses, leads us to the conclusion that Manzini and Wexler's (1987) PAP value (b) has not been acquired by SPLE.

Group	Antecedents
1 (32%; n = 13)	Subject NPs only
2 (30%; n = 11)	Any NPs (in the sentence)
3 (40%; n = 16)	Non consistent interpretation

Table IX. Patterns of interlanguage grammar of SPLE (PAP)

The results from these tables suggest that Spanish learners of English, unlike the Japanese ones (cf. Wakabayashi, 1996), are very inconsistent in their responses. This presumably means one of the following: (i) they are guessing randomly, as proposed in Schachter (1996: 75); (ii) they are transferring their L1 into their interlanguage, as proposed in Yuan (1994: 544). Recall that there is a significant percentage that allow long-distance reflexives in English where Spanish also allows this type of binding, namely in the case of 'él/ella mismo/a'; and (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii). Anyhow, it is not only this inconsistency that leads me to suggest that SPLE's interlanguage grammar is not under the sanction of Manzini and Wexler's (1987) GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMETER, but also the fact that Spanish learners of English show some patterns that are not explained by any parameter value. In other words, there are some L2 learners who successfully constrain, for instance, the local domain of reflexives in Type 1 and Type 3 but not in Type 2 and Type 4. This could never happen if they were transferring their L1 binding parameters into English.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion to be drawn from this paper is that the analysis of interlanguage leads to contradictory results as to what should be regarded as innate in Principle A of the Binding Theory. As I have mentioned earlier, the experiments carried out on the interlanguage of Japanese and Serbo-Croatian students apparently indicate that Manzini and Wexler's (1987) GOVERNING CATEGORY PARAMETER and PROPER ANTECEDENT PARAMETER are part of Universal Grammar. However, the results obtained with Spanish learners of English, which show a clear pattern of inconsistency, give support to the claim that Universal Grammar is not available in Second Language

Acquisition. A further line of research that suggests itself would be the conducting of the same kind of experiment discussed in this paper with native speakers of other languages, with a view to finding out (or, at least, getting a better grasp of) what, if anything at all, is to be regarded as universal in anaphoric binding. It might be the case that the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 are, in some way, related to the surprising patterns obtained for Serbo-Croatian and Japanese learners of English, on the one hand, and Spanish learners of English, on the other.

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