

VERB STRESS IN SPANISH

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ABSTRACT

In this study, extrametricality is put forward and the hierarchy of stress markedness is precisely identified among verbal forms in the Thematic Vowel (TV) affix, keeping the stress rules parameters in a pancategorical sense, in order to avoid some incoherences which we shall refer to in the solution of J.W.Harris, the most solid and best directed proposal.

The hypothesis in connection with the morphological determination of the verbal stress in Spanish is in a state of crisis. What is mentioned in [4], page 84, that "Segmental phonological representation and morphological identification are jointly necessary and sufficient to determine placement of word stress for all verbforms" is nowadays considered to be a challenge which needs to be and can be overcome: [5], [7] and [8] point in this direction.

1. EXTRAMETRICALITY OF THE FINAL METRIC ELEMENT.

1.1. Established generalisations.

The generalisations in connection with the stress in Spanish words which I consider to be established are the following:

First. Spanish words, as far as the accent is concerned, are hierarchically divided into three classes: on the one hand, a wide selection of words with regular stress on the penult syllable, or type A (*sa'banas, ex'tensas, bal'cones, a'zules*); on the other hand, a collection of words with irregular stressing, divided into two subsets: one consisting of words with the stress on the antepenult syllable,

or Type B (*'sabanas, 'comicas, 'arboles, 'uiles*), and the other of words with the stress on the last syllable, or Type C (*fara'laes, ca'fes, hu'ries, marro'quies, domi'nos, ban'tues*). The roots or affixes of type B are marked in the lexicon with a responsible diacritic feature that expresses the markedness of the stress in Type B words. The unmarked lexical entries will be of Type A/C.

Second. All morphological words, of whatever category, fall in with the so-called window of three syllables restriction (WTS) which makes the existence of words *(X'---) with the stress on one syllable further back than the third from the end impossible in Spanish.

Third. The Spanish stress is sensitive to quantity (Braching Condition of [4]). An stress of Type B is not possible if the penult syllable has a branching rhyme: *(X'-VC-), *(X'-VG-), *(X'-GV-). Nor is a Type B stress possible in words ending in a final rhyme GV, *(X'--GV) (*'continua, con'tinua, conti'nua). Unther these circumstances the window for stress is reduced to the last two syllables.

Fourth. The domain of stress assignment is the morphological word. The rules or parameters for the assignation of the stress explore the whole word (theme and non-cyclic or inflectional affixes) and establish the stress in accordance with the foregoing conditions.

The hypothesis of the word as the domain of the stress rules presupposes that the parameters explore lexical forms in a derivative stratum in which the non-cyclic affix constituents (word markers and paradigmatic constituents: $\pi\Gamma^2$, $\pi\Gamma N^2$,

$\pi\Gamma MA$ and $\pi\Gamma PN$) are specified.

Fifth. The representation of the stress is placed within the framework of the theoretical model developed in [3].

1.2. Harris's stress rules.

The stress rules in [7] to generate the stress grids of Spanish words are collected in (1) and illustrated in (2) where, for simplicity's sake, only line O of the stress grid is shown.

(1) *1. Stressable elements are syllable nuclei (rhyme heads).*

2. The rightmost stressable element is extrametrical iff word-final or followed by an inflectional consonant.

3. Form constituent(s) on line O and mark head(s) on line I;

Parameter settings:

a. unbounded, right-headed (general case).

b. binary, left-headed, right-to-left (special case).

4. Form constituent(s) on line I and mark head(s) on line 2;

Parameter settings:

unbounded, right-headed.

5. Conflate lines 1 and 2 (=remove asterisks in columns that have no line-2 asterisks).

(2).

con.tes.tas con.tes.ta.mos
(. *)<*> (. . *)<*>

con.tes.ta.bas con.tes.ta.BA.mos
(. . *)<*> (* .) (* .)<*>

1.3. Limits and drawbacks to Harris's hypothesis.

In the manner in which extrametricality is formulated in (1.2), the distinction is maintained between words of Type A (*bal'cones, a'zules*) and of Type C (*domi'nos, ban'tues*) and these last remain pending an exceptional explanation (cfr. [7]: 257 and n. 4). Among the verb forms the final resolution of the oxiton forms of the "weak preterite" and of the "future" also remains outstanding. (cfr. [7]: 257).

Furthermore, it is obvious that the difficulty in generating the infinitive itself *contes'tar* by reason of the incoherence deriving from calling the final segment a derivative. In addition, if the paradigmatic morphemes -BA-, -RA/SE-, -RE- and -STE- are considered as being Type B to

explain the accent on forms such as *contes'ta.BA.<mos/is>*, how can the stress of *contes'ta.<BA(s/n)>* be explained? In the same way as occurs in *contes'ta.STE.<is>* as against *contes'ta.<STE>*.

2. EXTRAMETRICALITY OF FLEXIBLE METRICAL ELEMENTS.

2.1. Hierarchy of markedness in verb forms.

I suggest that it is the outermost cyclic affix of the verb forms, the various forms of TV which carry the diacritic of markedness. The morpheme TV (a, i, i) of the Theme of the Preterite (cfr. [1] and [2]) will be of the type A: weak preterite, imperfect indicative, imperfect and future subjunctive, gerund and participle. The morpheme TV (A, E, E) of the Theme of the Present will be of type B: present indicative, present subjunctive and imperative. And the morpheme TV (a, e, i) of the Theme of the Future will be of Type C: future indicative and conditional.

I suggest furthermore, that extrametricality be understood in terms of (3):

(3) Extrametricality (replaces (1.2))
A stressable element is extrametrical iff it matches an inflectional constituent.

The formulation of (3) does not have a higher theoretical cost than (1.2): "It is perfectly straightforward to distinguish between «inflectional» and «non-inflectional» morphemes in Spanish... the set of «inflectional» morphemes contains exactly class markers and the plural morphemes in non-verbs plus tense/mood/aspect and person/number suffixes in verbs... the set of «inflectional» morphemes corresponds exactly to the noncyclic affixes in the Halle-Vergnaud theory of phonological organization". (cfr. [7]: 253).

If (1.2) is a pancategorical formulation, so is (3); but (1.2) has to treat as exceptions words of Class C, which is not necessary with the formulation of (3): words which lack flecional constituents will not have extrametrical elements (cfr. in [6]: 38, the analysis of *ale'man* and *'huesped*, lacking word marker or inflectional elements and therefore extrametrical elements).

Now, given the formulation of (3), if it

is postulated that the domain scanned by the stress rules (1.3-5) is the derivative theme (according to [8] p. 11, "The domain of Spanish stress is the lexical word. Clearly, the TMA and PN verbal suffixes are inflectional, and thus not included in the domain of the lexical word") and not the word, it would be possible to do without (3). But the arguments of [7] are strong enough. Syllabification must precede the stress for this to show its sensitivity to WTS and the syllabic quantity (cfr. [7] p. 28). The inflectional elements, when they increase the number of syllables in the word, affect the placing of the stress by virtue of the WTS restriction (*re'gimenes*, *averi'guamos*, *averi'güemos*) and the quantity sensitivity of the Spanish stress (*averi'guais*, *averi'güeis*) (cfr. [6] p. 29-30). The class of inflectional elements is a closed class and by extension perfectly identifiable as well as by its non-cyclic nature, while the derivative themes make up an open class of elements which, in some cases, is difficult or impossible to establish: in the metalinguistic uses of prepositions, conjunctions and proclitics; in fragments (*pros*, *contras*); in acronyms and abbreviations (*talgo*, *ONU*, *UNESCO*); and in apocoristics and formations by reduction or shortening, (*Emi*, *Santi*, *cole*, *repe*, *porfa*), which form words with regular systematic stress, Type A, or which tend to become regularised with use, (*radar* > *ra'dar*).

Therefore, it is necessary to retain the morphological word as a sequence scanned by the stress rules and a principle of extrametricality (3) specific to Spanish, albeit of little theoretical value, because it is established in generic terms. The concept of extrametricality in [8], p. 21, "The 'desinence' is extrametrical", although apparently similar to (3) is very different, according to [8] itself, p. 12 which explains: "Desinences in nonverbals are excluded by extrametricality, while in verbals both clitics and inflectional endings simply fall outside the domain". Roca's stress rules do not scan the extrametrical elements. Extrametricality, as defined by Roca, is redundant with his domain proposal (cfr. [8] p. 11).

I therefore suggest that (3) be understood in the sense of [6], p. 38, "the

class marker is within the domain of scansion of the stress rules, but extrametrical". The difference between the stress domain hypothesis and the extrametricality hypothesis may be subtle but it is crucial, as Harris himself observes because the arguments previously put forward make the first hypothesis untenable but do not affect the second. The rules scan all the metric elements of the word but only the non extrametrical elements count.

Thus, the analysis of the examples in (2) would now be that of (5) where the forms of the Theme of the Future would be exceptional to (3) in which the element immediate to the Theme is not declared extrametrical.

(5)a. *General stress, Type A.*

con.tes.t+a.#bas con.tes.t+a#ba.mos
(. . *) <*> (. . *) <*><*>

b. *Marked stress, Type B.*

con.tes.t+A.#-/e+s
(* .) <*>

con.tes.t+A.#.mos
(* .) <*><*>

WTS: --> *)

con.tes.t+A.#. is
(* .) <*><*>

WTS: --> *)

con.tes.t+A.#e. mos
(* .) <*><*>

WTS: --> *)

TV# : --> - *)

con.tes.t+A.#e: is
(* .) <*><*>

WTS: --> *)

TV# : --> - *)

c. *Special stress, Type C:
exception to (3)*

con.tes.t+a.re.(mos/is)
(. . . *) <*>
con.tes.t+a.ra(s/n)
(. . . . *)

2.2. *Outstanding questions.*

In this analysis the oxiton forms of the

weak preterite (*contes'te*, *contes'to*; *compren'di*, *compren'dio*) remain outstanding where there has to be a special solution parallel to those concerning the strong preterites (*an'duve*, *an'duvo*; *con'duje*, *con'dujo*).

The case of the infinitive may be more complicated, although not for the reasons put forward in [6] p. 50-51. The problem rests in establishing the TV affix Theme of the forms of the infinitive. By reason of the stress, it could be considered as the Theme of the Preterite. On the other hand, by virtue of the TV form, it should be considered as the Theme of the Future or as the Theme of the Present; but then, how would the stress be explained?

3. REFERENCES

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