

Positive polarity in different languages: a synchronic and diachronic study

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1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to provide the state of the question in the study of emphatic polarity particles in different languages. Then, we are going to study these elements most importantly in Spanish and Catalan, but also in Portuguese, Italian and Celtic languages. We will focus our attention on them from a diachronic and a synchronic standpoint. Thus, we will show their evolution through time, and we will give a syntactic analysis for all of them.

Giving this state of the question allows the reader to have a wide view of the situation. That is, if each case is analysed separately, one cannot see that the same analysis is valid for all the polarity elements. On the contrary, with the present review what could seem an idiosyncratic characteristic of a particular language becomes a generalised phenomenon.

This paper is going to be divided in four sections. The first one is dedicated to the Spanish word order. It is necessary to understand the introductory notions provided in it in order to follow the explanations about the diachronic changes undergone by polarity particles. For example, several polarity particles, such as: *sí* 'yes', *bien* 'indeed', *ya* 'already', etc. go from their basic syntactic allocation in the VP to a prominent position in the left periphery of the clause. This process is similar to the focalisation phenomenon explained in this first section.

In the second part of this paper, we study the Spanish emphatic polarity particle *sí* 'yes', from both a diachronic and a synchronic point of view. Then, we analyse the evolution this element went through, and we offer a syntactic and a semantic analysis that is applicable to the majority of the particles studied in this work.

Thirdly, high and low polarity particles are distinguished. The former share characteristics and analysis with *sí* 'yes'. In contrast, low emphatic polarity particles are situated in a low syntactic position and are only able to modify the VP.

Finally, the last section introduces languages other than Spanish and Catalan. We analyse the Portuguese and Celtic way of expressing positive polarity. And two Italian

emphatic polarity particles are also analysed, namely: *ben* 'indeed' and *mica* 'not at all'.

We use different references in order to obtain all the information. In the first place, the first section is mainly based on Rodríguez Molina (2014) and Hualde (2012). Likewise, the information given in the second section has been obtained from the articles Batllori and Hernanz (2009) and (2013).

The third and fourth parts are grounded in the masters' thesis of Ares Llop, on the one hand, and in the following papers: Toyota (2009) and Martins (2013), on the other.

In conclusion, it is shown that there are two main patterns concerning emphatic polar answers in natural languages. Some –such as Latin, Portuguese or Celtic languages– display polar structures in which the verb is focused. Others –such as Catalan, Spanish or Italian– make use of polarity particles that are also emphasised. These particles have all undergone a grammaticalization itinerary from being VP modifiers to becoming polar particles.

2. An introduction to word order in Spanish

The word order in Spanish depends on three key elements and the interaction among them: informational content, prosodic phonology and syntax.

Firstly, we are going to analyse the effect that the informational content has on the word order of a sentence. The informational content is the distinction between new and old information in a sentence. There are different labels in order to express this distinction “background”, “focus”; “topic” and “comment”, etc. In the following sections we are going to present these concepts.

2.1. Informational content: Topic - Comment

The topic is the expression which gives an account of what the sentence is about, that is, the old information already known by the speakers; whereas the “comment” is the new information, what is being said about the “topic”.

In the following examples, we have different topics. It is important to notice that the subject of a sentence doesn't always have to be the topic. Indeed, in (1a) the topic is *Luis*: the subject. However, both (1b) and (1c) have the information that appears on the left of the sentence as their topics: in (1b) it is *el coche* ‘the car’ and in (1c) it is *lo que ganó Arnau* ‘what Arnau won’:

(1) a. Arnau ganó el coche

‘Arnau won the car’

b. El coche, lo ganó Arnau

‘The car, CL_{ACC} won Arnau’

“The car, Arnaw won”

c. Lo que ganó Arnau fue el coche

‘CL_{ACC} what won Arnau was the car’

“What Arnau won was the car”

2.2. Informational content: Background - Focus

There are two relevant components in this section: the “background” and the “focus”. The former is understood to be composed by all the assumptions that are interpreted as truthful and are shared by the participants of a conversation in a precise moment in time. In contrast, the latter is the new information, that is, the information given during the conversation.

The example in (3) illustrates how the information expressed in (2) is analysed:

(2) A: Marina llegó tarde a la fiesta

‘Marina arrived late at the party’

B: La que llegó tarde a la fiesta fue Marina

‘The (one) that arrived late at the party was Marina’

“Who arrived late at the party was Marina”

(3) A: *Marina*: background

(assumption: This individual is known by both the speaker and the listener,
Marina did something [x])

Llegó tarde a la fiesta: focus

‘Arrived late at the party’

B: *Llegó tarde a la fiesta*: background

(assumption: Someone [x]arrived late at the party)

Marina: focus

In these examples, we can see that the same sequence can be interpreted as known or new information depending on the context. In general, it is easy to identify the focus and the background because the information they convey is represented by the different parts of an implicit or explicit question.

The CP is associated with the focus: the gap of information that needs to be filled by the speaker. The rest is the background. (4a) would be the implicit question for (4b), and (5a) would be the implicit question for (5b). So we can see that the focus is *llegó tarde a la fiesta* 'arrived late at the party' in (4b) and *Marina* in (5b):

(4) a. ¿Qué hizo Marina?

'What did Marina?'

"What did Marina do?"

b. Marina llegó tarde a la fiesta

'Marina arrived late at the party'

(5) a. ¿Quién llegó tarde a la fiesta?

'Who arrived late at the party?'

"Who did arrive late at the party?"

b. Marina llegó tarde a la fiesta

'Marina arrived late at the party'

The concepts "focus" - "background" and "topic" - "comment" , and the relationship between them, respectively, can be clarified by using the analysis proposed by Vallduví (1992)

(6) Clause = focus + background

Comment = topic + coda

The "topic" always conveys known information. It is the element affected by the content of the "focus". Moreover, it is used as a discursive link. In a dialogue like (7), there is the following assumption: *Alba enseñó a conducir a x* 'Alba taught how to drive to x'. From this known information, *Alba* is the "topic", the discourse linked phrase that relates the semantic content of the question with the previous parts of the dialogue. In the answer, *su hermana* 'her sister' is the "focus".

(7) A: ¿Alba, a quién enseñó a conducir?

'Alba to whom taught to drive'

"Alba, who did she teach how to drive?"

B: A su hermana

'To her sister'

"Her sister"

Having defined the concepts related to the informational content, now we can establish their role in the word order of a sentence. Firstly, it is important to get the neutral unmarked word order of a declarative sentence. This can be obtained by an out-of-the-blue question due to the fact that the answer to a *wh*-question gives as a result new information.

In the following example, we can see that the answer to the question *¿Qué ocurrió ayer?* 'What happened yesterday?' doesn't have any background, it is all new information, which means that it can be discourse-initial and that it shows a neutral unmarked word order:

(8) A: ¿Qué ocurrió ayer?

'What happened yesterday?'

"What did happen yesterday?"

B: [_{New Info} Julia estudió literatura]

'Julia studied literature'

As we can see, the neutral unmarked order in Spanish is SVO. Furthermore, normally a sentence will be SVO with the subject containing the old information –topic–, and the object containing the new information –focus. This linguistic behaviour shows the tendency for languages to place the old information before the new one, as shown in the following examples:

(9) A: ¿Qué hizo Julia? Julia [_{New Info} estudió literatura]

‘What did Julia? Julia studied literature’

“What did Julia do? Julia studied literature”

B: ¿Qué estudió Julia? Julia estudió [_{New Info} literatura]

‘What studied Julia? Julia studied literature’

“What did Julia study? Julia studied literature”

However, the object does not always express new information, sometimes this information is conveyed by the subject. In those cases, as well as with the SVO ones, Spanish tends to place the new information at the end, as in (10):

(10) ¿Quién estudió literatura? Estudió literatura [_{New Info} Julia]

‘Who studied literature? Studied literature Julia’

“Who studied literature? Julia did”

This example shows the effect informational content can have on word order and how it can modify the unmarked order of a sentence. In this case, the unmarked order of the sentence has been altered because the subject is focused.

With other structures (for instance, when the subject is a bare noun, with psychological verbs, etc), the unmarked word order can be VS, where the subject occupies a postverbal position. Then, the derived focal order would be SV. We will analyse some of them in the following sections, now we will focus only in the first structure: bare-noun subjects.

A subject with this characteristic cannot occupy a preverbal position because a bare noun such as *niños* ‘kids’ can never be referential. As we have already shown, in the SVO structure the subject is interpreted as the topic, because it conveys old information; and old information is always referential because it is already known by the speakers.

This means that topics are incompatible with non-referential expressions such as bare nouns. Consequently, as it has been stated, it is not possible for a bare noun to be a preverbal subject. In the following example we can see how the unmarked order of the sentence has to be (a), while (b) is ungrammatical.

(11) a. Llegaron niños

‘Arrived kids’

“Some kids arrived”

b. A: ¿Quién llegó?

‘Who arrived?’

“Who did arrive”

B: *Niños llegaron

‘*Kids arrived’

2.3. Prosodic phonology

Another relevant element when talking about word order in Spanish is prosodic phonology. It has been argued that new information is normally located at the end of the sentence. This new information that we have defined as focus is generally given the clause neutral accent (we mark it with bold letters in (12) and (13)):

(12) A: ¿Qué hizo Daniel?

‘What did Daniel?’

“What did Daniel do?”

B: Daniel [_[+FOCUS] llegó **tarde**]

‘Daniel arrived late’

(13) A: ¿Quién llegó tarde?

‘Who arrived late’

“Who did arrive late?”

B: Llegó tarde [_[+FOCUS] Daniel]

‘Arrived late Daniel’

“Daniel did”

Notice that if we change the order of the given constituents in the answers and we keep the clause neutral accent on the right hand side, the result is not acceptable as a reply for the preceding question:

(14) A: ¿Qué hizo Daniel?

‘What did Daniel?’

“What did Daniel do?”

B: #_[+FOCO]Llegó tarde] Daniel

‘Arrived late Daniel’

“Daniel arrived late”

(15) A: ¿Quién llegó tarde?

‘Who arrived late?’

“Who did arrive late?”

B: #_[+FOCO] Daniel] llegó tarde

‘Daniel arrived late’

Therefore, the previous examples show that the element marked as focus, that is, the one containing the new information, receives the clause neutral accent. Thus, even if the focus is not moved to the right hand side of the clause the hearer can still identify it by the placement of the neutral accent. For example, in (16) the new information is situated in the middle of the sentence and it receives the prosodic focus:

(16) A: ¿Qué hizo Pedro con su reloj? Pedro [_{NEW INFO} renovó] su reloj

‘What did Pedro with his watch? Pedro renewed his watch’

“What did Pedro do with his watch? Pedro renewed his watch”

2.4. Syntax

Finally, we are going to examine the third aspect that can affect the linearization of word order in Spanish: the syntax of verbs. The syntactic properties of verbs, and in particular their argument structure can impose certain conditions on the word order of some Spanish sentences.

As mentioned previously, there are some constructions that have the subject in a postverbal position as their unmarked order. Thus, they will always present the structure [V+S]. There is only one exception: when the subject is interpreted as the topic of the sentence, it can precede the verb. However, it needs to be introduced by a determinate article, due to the fact that the information conveyed by topics is old information; this is, already known by the speakers.

Firstly, unaccusative verbs, such as *entrar* ‘to enter’, or *llegar* ‘to arrive’ select subjects that behave as internal arguments –with a thematic role of a THEME). Therefore, it can occupy a postverbal position or a preverbal position. However, the latter will always be a derived position.

It is important to notice that the unmarked order established for this kind of verbs implies a postverbal subject, as in (17a). Then, (17b) is ungrammatical. In contrast, when the subject is the topic –i.e. old information– it can appear in a preverbal position, as in (17c). In this case, the subject must be referential, this is, it must be preceded by the definite article.

(17) a. Entraban conejos en la madriguera

‘Entered rabbits in the den’

“Rabbits entered into the den”

b. *Conejos entraban en la madriguera

*Rabbits entered in the den'

c. El conejo entraba en la madriguera

'The rabbit entered in the den'

"The rabbit entered into the den"

Secondly, existential verbs *-haber* 'there-be'– that also lack a DO behave in a similar way, because the subject is an internal argument and it has to be placed after the verb. Its thematic role is also THEME. In (18) we can see that only (18a) is possible.

(18) a. Hay [_{SUBJECT} juguetes divertidos] en esta tienda

'There are toys funny in this shop'

"There are funny toys in this shop"

b. * [_{SUBJECT} Juguetes divertidos] hay en esta tienda

*Toys funny there are in this shop'

Thirdly, we find the Spanish *se*-passive construction. In this case, the subject is actually the object of the active verb. As a consequence, and in parallel with the other verbs studied in this section, the subject can occupy a postverbal position (19a) or a derived preverbal position (19b), when it is the topic of the clause.

(19) a. Se compra madera de pino a buen precio

'CL buy wood of pine to good price'

"Pine wood is bought at a good price"

b. La madera de pino se compra a buen precio

'The wood of pine is bought to good price'

"Pine wood is bought at a good price"

Finally, psychological verbs select the following structure:

(20) [_{DATIVE} EXPERIENCER] + VERB + [_{NOMINATIVE} THEME]

Thus, the unmarked order of a sentence is going to be the one with the subject in a postverbal position. A preverbal subject is also possible but the order of the sentence is going to be marked, this is, a preverbal subject will only be possible if it carries information known by the speakers.

(21) a. A Carlota le encanta la primavera

‘To Carlota CL_{DAT} loves the spring’

“Carlota loves spring”

b. A Carlota la primavera le encanta

‘To Carlota the spring CL_{DAT} loves the spring’

“Carlota loves spring”

2.5. Emphasised word order in Spanish

Until now, we have provided a detailed account of the unmarked word order in Spanish. This is, when there is no emphasis on the sentence, when all the elements receive the same relevance. However, this order can be altered depending on the intentions of the speakers of a language. For example, they may want to highlight one part of the clause. Then, the structure that will be used is either the focus preposing, for new information, or one kind of topicalisation, for old information.

2.5.1. Focus preposing

As stated above, the focus of a sentence is the element that conveys new information and receives the prosodic stress of the sentence. This notion of focus does not have to be mixed up with that of contrastive emphasis. The latter is part of the focus preposing process, which consists of a movement of a constituent to a prominent peripheral position, where it receives the highest intonation peak, with a contrastive value.

(22) a. Alberto cree que los estudiantes de su clase van a sacar muy buenas notas

‘Alberto thinks that the students of his class will to get very good marks’

“Alberto thinks that the students of his class will get very good marks”

b. ESA IDEA tiene él. Yo no estoy en absoluto de acuerdo

‘This idea has he I not am in absolute agree’

“This is what he thinks. I don’t agree with him at all”

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the proposed focus has a contrastive interpretation. This is, it is used to deny a previous presupposition. That is why the structures with *no* ‘not’ or *y no* ‘and not’ are perfectly correct in these clauses. The following example implies the presupposition that she lives in a flat, but the meaning of the preposed focus phrase contradicts this information.

(23) EN ESA CASA vive, no en un piso

‘In that house lives, not in a flat’

“It is in that house where she lives, not in a flat”

This process triggers mandatory verb-subject inversion, except for the cases where the focalised element is the subject:

(24) a. Creo que la biblioteca está en el centro de la ciudad

‘I think that the library is in the centre of the city’

“I think that the library is in the city centre”

b. EN LAS AFUERAS está la biblioteca.

‘In the outskirts is the library’

“It is in the outskirts where the library is”

c. *EN LAS AFUERAS la biblioteca está

‘In the outskirts the library is’

There are no restrictions regarding the elements that can be focalised. Any X phrase can be moved to a prominent position (Determiner phrase, Adjective phrase, Prepositional phrase, etc.). The only exception is the verbal phrase (26).

(25) a. UNA PELOTA voy a comprarle a mi hermana

‘A ball will to buy to my sister’

“It is a ball what I’m buying for my sister”

b. MUY EMOCIONADA está Helena

‘Very excited is Helena’

“It is very excited how Helena feels”

c. HASTA LAS TRES podría yo aguantar, no más

‘Until the three could I stand, not more’

“It is untill three o’clock that I could stand, not any longer”

(26) *HABLAR CON ÉL no pudo

‘*Talk with him not could’

Furthermore, the focalised element mustn’t be co-referent with a clitic within the sentence:

(27) *MUY EMOCIONADA lo está Helena

‘*Very excited CL_{ACC} is Helena’

Also, recursion is not allowed. There can just be one focalised element:

(28) *EN SU CASA UN JARDÍN tiene Gabriel

‘*In his house a garden has Gabriel’

The focalised constituents cannot occur on the right edge of the sentence:

(29) *Compró Pedro, UNA PELOTA (no una muñeca)

‘*Bought Pedro, a ball (not a doll)’

Finally, this process can take place both in main clauses and in embedded clauses:

(30) Me parece que ESO EXACTAMENTE quiere él

‘CL_{DAT} seems that that this exactly wants him’

“It seems to me that this exactly is what he wants”

This process has a lot in common with wh-movement: it cannot be applied recursively, verb-subject inversion is mandatory; it can appear both in main or embedded clauses, etc. Also, Just as the strong feature [+wh], the moved phrase needs to be licensed in FocusP. So it seems relevant to establish that this process is the result of movement.

2.5.2. Topicalization

There are three types of topic constructions that express topicalisation: hanging topic, clitic left dislocation and clitic right dislocation structures. In the former cases, the “topic” appears in the left periphery of the clause and is unstressed, because, it is not marked with [+ focus] feature.

2.5.2.1 Hanging topics

This kind of topic introduces a new subject of discussion or changes the previous one. It is usually preceded by expressions, like the following: *cambiando de tema* ‘turning to’, *en lo relativo a* ‘as far as x is concerned’, *con respecto a* ‘with regard to’, *en cuanto a a* ‘as for’..., etc.

(31) a. Con respecto a mi carrera, tiene unas asignaturas muy interesantes

‘With respect to my degree, has subjects very interesting’

“With regard to my degree, its subjects are very interesting”

b. En lo reativo a nuestro viaje, las cosas no van bien

‘In CL related to our trip, the things not go well’

“As for our trip , things are not going very well”

The examples in (31) are only correct in a context where the main topic of the conversation had been different just before the speaker turned into a new subject or retook one that had already appeared in the conversation previously. However, this new theme must be known by all the speakers. The new information or focus, then, is

what is going to be said about this particular matter of conversation, but the matter *per se* is the topic.

Furthermore, only Determiner Phrases can be topicalized, as it is shown in the following example:

(32) a. Hablando de su cumpleaños, aún no hemos preparado nada

‘Speaking of his birthday, yet not have prepared nothing’

“As regards his birthday, we haven’t prepared anything yet”

b. *Hablando de por su cumpleaños, aún no hemos preparado nada

‘*Speaking of for her birthday, yet not have prepared nothing’

The topic is related to an item within the clause, which is its co-referent. This item can be a predicative expression (33), a pronoun (34) or an element that maintains a part to whole relationship with the topic (35), as shown by the following example:

(33) En cuanto a mi primo, *el muy tonto*, le ha contado la noticia

‘In when to my cousin, the very fool, CL_{DAT} have explained the news’

“As for my cousin, the poor guy, he has told him the piece of news”

(34) Hablando del primer capítulo, ¿cómo *lo* has visto?

‘Talking of-the first chapter, what CL_{DAT} have seen’

“Talking about the first chapter, what did you think of it?”

(35) En cuanto a mi libreta, *la portada* está llena de dibujos

‘In when to my notebook, the cover is full of drawings’

“As for my notebook, the cover is full of drawings”

Finally, it is not possible to have a peripheral hanging topic in the right side of the clause:

(36) *No tolero a esa chica, Marta

‘*Not stand to that girl, Marta’

(37)* La portada está llena de dibujos, en cuanto a mi libreta

‘*The cover is full of drawings, as for my notebook’

2.5.2.2. Clitic left dislocation

Along with the hanging topics, in this structure the topic occurs in a peripheral position at the left. By this process, the speaker wants to give the topic certain prominence, though not as much as with hanging topics. Any phrase can be topicalised (DetP, PrepP, AdjP, etc.), as it is illustrated by the following examples

(38) Ilusionada, no puedo estarlo mucho

‘Excited, not can be CL_{ACC} much’

“Excited, I can’t feel much that way”

(39) Con Laura, me encanta ir de compras

‘With Laura, CL_{DAT} love go of shopping’

“With Laura, I love to go shopping”

In Spanish, this kind of topic is linked with a co-referent item within the main clause, which can be a weak pronoun when the topic is a direct or indirect object (40), or a zero pronoun (partitive or locative) when the topic is a prepositional complement (41), (42). In the latter, so as to show that there is a zero pronoun indeed, we can compare the Spanish examples with the Catalan ones given below.

(40) La maleta se *la* presté a Carlos

‘The bag CL_{DAT} CL_{ACC} lend to Carlos’

“The bag, I lend it to Carlos”

(41) a. De su actitud nadie (PRO_{PARTITIVE}) ha hablado todavía

‘Of his attitude no one has spoken yet’

“About his attitude, no one has spoken yet”

b. De la seva actitud ningú no *n'*ha parlat encara

‘Of his attitude no one not CL has spoken yet’

“About his attitude, no one has spoken yet”

(42) a. En el colegio los alumnos (*pro*_{LOCATIVE}) aprenden a respetar a los animales

‘In the school the students learn to respect to the animals’

“At school students learn to respect the animals”

b. A l’escola els alumnes hi aprenen a respectar els animals

‘In the school the students CL learn to respect to the animals’

“At school students learn to respect the animals”

Finally, it is worth considering that this dislocation process is recursive. You can have more than one clitic left dislocated topic in the same sentence:

(43) El regalo, a Raquel no se lo han dado todavía

‘The present, to Pepe not CL_{DAT} CL_{ACC} have given yet’

“They haven’t given the present to him yet”

2.5.2.3. Clitic right dislocations

These constructions have more or less the same characteristics as clitic left dislocations. Their basic differences are the following. Clitic right dislocation is considered an oral construction; also, the dislocated element appears in the right periphery of the sentence; and finally, there is a sharp intonational break between the sentence and the dislocated element that is orthographically marked by a coma.

(44) a. Lo comí ayer, el pastel

‘CL_{ACC} ate yesterday, the cake’

“I ate it yesterday, the cake”

b. Viajaremos el mes que viene, a Mallorca

‘Will travel the next that comes, to Mallorca’

“We will travel the following month, to Mallorca”

The syntactic analysis of the three processes does not involve any kind of movement. Instead, it is believed that the three kinds of topics are generated in the topic projection. Hanging topics and clitic left dislocations are generated above FinP and inside the fully-fledged CP –if we follow Rizzi’s *Theory of left periphery*.

Firstly, we will provide several reasons in favour of considering that this analysis can be applied to the hanging topics. On the one hand, we can see that the relationship between them and the rest of the sentence is weak. For this relationship not to be weak, when there is movement inside a clause it would be mandatory that the element moved and its trace share the same category.

This is not the case for hanging topics, instead the relationship between both elements is wide, it can be a noun linked with a pronoun, a noun linked with a pronominal expression, etc. On the other hand, the presence of expressions such as *turning to*, *as far as x is concerned*, *with regard to*, etc. couldn’t be explained with an analysis involving movement.

With regard to the clitic left dislocation structure there is no movement either. There are different reasons that support this statement. For instance, wh-movement is never recursive; it is not possible to move more than one wh-phrase to the CP, so one of them must rather remain *in situ*.

(45) a. *¿Quién qué dijo?

‘Who what said’

“Who did say what?”

b. ¿Quién dijo qué?

‘Who said what’

“Who said what?”

Furthermore, wh-movement triggers subject-verb inversion, whereas clitic left dislocation does not:

(46) a. ¿Qué quiere leer Isaac? vs. *¿Qué Isaac quiere leer?

‘What want read Isaac?’

‘What Isaac want read?’

“What did Isaac want to read?”

“What did Isaac want to read?”

b. Al perro, Juan lo quiere mucho vs. *Al perro, lo quiere mucho Juan

‘To-the dog, Juan CL_{ACC} loves much’

‘*To-the dog, CL_{ACC} loves much Juan’

“The dog, Juan loves him very much”

Finally, the wh-phrases that have undergone movement cannot be separated from the clause by a pause, whereas clitic left dislocated constituents can:

(47) a. *¿A quién, has enviado a recoger el paquete?

‘To whom have sent to pick up the package’

b. A Lucía, la he enviado a recoger el paquete

‘To Lucía CL_{ACC} have sent to pick up the package’

“Lucía, I have sent her to pick up the package”

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Spanish word order is determined by different factors and the interaction among them: informational content, prosodic phonology and syntax. We have observed that the basic word order is the one with the structure subject-verb-object, in which the subject expresses the old information and the object the new one.

However, this can be altered several previously mentioned factors. Also, the basic word order can be modified when the speaker wants to reinforce a particular part of the clause: the old information with a topicalisation, and the new one with the focus preposing.

3. Positive polarity particles

3.1. From Latin to modern Spanish

In this section we are going to describe the evolution of the affirmative marker *sí* 'yes' from a diachronic perspective. We will show that this evolution is, in fact, a focalisation process that allows the particle *sí* to be reanalysed as a polarity particle.

We will start by describing what the situation was like in Latin. This language did not have any specific particle for indicating the positive polarity of a sentence. The strategies used in order to answer to a total question where either repeating the central word of the question –normally the verb– (48), or using adverbs such as: *sane, omnio, certe, ita, sic*, etc. (49):

(48) *heus tu, Rufio ... cave sis mentiaris: Clodius insidias fecit Miloni? fecit*

'Look here, Rufio ... mind you don't tell lies! Did Clodius plot against Milo? He did'

[Cic. *Mil.*: 60; Pinkster (1990: 191, e.g. 4)]

(49) a. –Uenit? – *certe*

'– comes? – Certainly'

"– Is he coming? – Yes"

[Ter. *Hau.*: 431. *OLD*]

b. – illa maneat? – *sic*

'– she stays? – Thus'

"– ¿Is she staying? – Yes"

[Ter. *Ph.*: 813. *OLD*]

By contrast, in Latin we have the particle *non* in order to express the negative character of a sentence (50):

(50) non ego illi argentum redderem? *Non redderes*

‘not I them money give-back? Not give-back’

“Wouldn’t I give them the money back? Don’t give it back”

[Pl. Bassols de Climent (1992: 292)]

From this data, we can explain the reason why romance languages have different particles in order to express positive polarity: in Spanish, Catalan, Italian and Portuguese we have *sí, sí, sì* and *sim*, which come from SIC; in French we have *oui* that comes from *oīl* (<HOC, ILLE), Occitan and Old Catalan *oc* comes from HOC, in Rumanian there is the particle *da* with a Slavic origin, etc. However, they all use variants of the Latin *no* for the negative polarity.

As seen in the paragraph above, from Latin to Medieval Spanish there is the adoption of the modal adverb *sí* to express positive polarity. In Latin, we had the particle SIC ‘thus’ that was used to reinforce the positive character of a sentence. Eventually, in Medieval Spanish SIC evolved into *así*, which sometimes was shortened into *sí*.

Over time, *sí* ‘yes’ keeps its modal characteristic from Latin and continues complementing the verb, as we can see in (51) where in the same text the author uses *sí* ‘yes’ or *así* ‘thus’ equally, in the same contexts. According to Rodriguez Molina, it is not until the 16th century that we can clearly distinguish *sí* ‘yes’ from *así* ‘thus’, and that each particle is used with a different meaning.

(51) a. Respondió el rey: – ¡*Sí* fago, *sí*-n’ salve Dios! [*Cid*, 3042]

‘Answered the king: – thus do, let-PRO save God!’

“The king answered – so do I, let God save them!”

b. *Assí* fagamos nós todos, justos e pecadores [*Cid*, 3728]

‘Thus do we all, honourables and sinners’

“Thus lets do we all, honourables and sinners”

Thus, *sí* is not yet a complete polarity adverb, at this stage *sí* is in the middle of a grammaticalization process. Rodríguez Molina points out that this particle still has several properties that characterise the adverbs located in the predicate.

In the first place, *sí* can appear next to the verb in the answer of a total question, as in (52). It will always be located in a preverbal position. Besides, it can also appear next to the verb when it reinforces a previous positive statement (53) or when it rejects a previous negative statement (54).

(52) E dixo: ¿es este el vuestro hermano el menor *que*-m dixiestes? E dixieron:
sí es [*Fazienda, 8va*]

‘And said: is this the your brother the youngest that me told? And said: yes is’

“And he said: ‘is this your youngest brother, the one that you told me about?’ And they said: ‘Yes, he is’”

(53) Dixieronle ellos: – Querriés tú seer tan amado de Dios. Diz Moisés: – *Sí* querría muy de grado [*GE1, 2.946*]

‘Said they: – Want you be very loved by God. Said Moisés: – Yes want very much’

“They said: – ‘Would you want to be loved by God indeed’: – Yes I would really want to”

(54) ALMANZOR Según eso, ¿no eres rey? SANCHO *Sí* soy, señor licenciado

[*Quirós, Hermano, 207*]

‘ALMANZOR According this, not be king? SANCHO Yes am, Mister Lawyer’

“ALMANZOR ‘According to this, aren’t you a king?’ SANCHO ‘Yes, I am your Honourable Attorney’”

Secondly, there is a big difference between Old Spanish and Modern Spanish in relation to the structure <*sí* - CL - V>. In Old Spanish, when the verb inside a question is transitive, there is not an object clitic in the answer, even if the direct object is a defined NP (55):

(55) – ¿Viste la Donzella de Denamarcha? – Sí vi [*Amadís*, 1.381]

‘– Saw the maid of Denamarcha? – Yes saw’

“– Did you see the Maid of Denmark? – Yes, I saw her”

By contrast, in Modern Spanish the sentences in (55) would be ungrammatical, because nowadays the presence of the clitic is mandatory (56):

(56) – ¿te has roto la pierna? – Sí me *la* he roto

‘– PRO have broken the leg? – Yes PRO PRO have broken’

“– Is your leg broken? – Yes, it is”

Finally, even if the most common answer to a total question is <*sí* + V>, we find some sentences where the structure is the same, but the verb is elliptic. We do not find many examples like that and they seem to be restricted to answers of indirect questions (57):

(57) E desde ovieron comido demandó Jetró que si querié morar con él, e respusol él que *sí* [*GE1*, 2.70]

‘And from when have eaten asked Jetró that if want stay with him, and answered him that yes’

“And when they had eaten, Jetró asked if he wanted to stay with him, and he answered that he did”

However, this particle ends up being a polarity adverb after a focalisation process. We have seen that in Medieval Spanish the adverb *así* ‘thus’ –or its phonetically reduced variant *sí*– is placed in front of the verb in structures like *sí fago* ‘thus I do’ or *sí quiero* ‘thus I want’ in order to answer total questions. This is the consequence of a syntactic movement; the adverb goes from inside the VP to the left periphery of the clause (58b).

Furthermore, *sí* ‘yes’ reinforces the positive character of the sentence where it is placed. This is why this particle goes to PolP (58c). In addition, this movement

represents a focalisation process, thus the adverb goes to FocusP to receive its emphatic character (58c).

Finally, this focalisation process causes a reanalysis on the constituents structure. So, *sí* is no longer limited to the VP, now it can modify the whole sentence (58d). At this point, we do no longer have movement. By contrast, *sí* is merged directly in PolP:

- (58) a. [_{FOCUSP} ... [_{PolP} ... [_{FinP} ... [_{VP} fago **así**]]]]
- b. [_{FOCUSP} ... [_{PolP} ... [_{FinP} **así/sí** [_{VP} fago t_i]]]]
- c. [_{FOCUSP} **así/sí** [_{PolP} t_i [_{FinP} t_i [_{VP} fago t_i]]]]
- d. [_{FOCUSP} ... [_{PolP} **sí** [_{FinP} ... [_{VP}]]]]

Until now we have seen that *sí* has evolved from being a modal adverb that is syntactically placed inside the VP into being a polarity particle. In Old Spanish, the only possibility was the one in which *sí* was a verb modifier and could reinforce the polarity of a sentence.

On the contrary, at present, *sí* can have two main uses. According to Rodríguez Molina it can represent the information of a whole sentence giving to it a positive content (59) or it can modify the verb (60), as we have seen that happened in Old Spanish.

In the former case, the particle is syntactically placed outside of the clause and is separated from it by a prosodic pause. In the latter case, *sí* modifies a VP (always with a finite verb), thus, we find it inside the clause. Furthermore, when it appears next to the verb, *sí* has a focal value, generally contrastive as we can see in (60), where it denies the preconceived idea of the speaker about a girl not having bought a gift.

(59) – ¿Has comprado el regalo? – Sí

‘– Have bought the gift? – Yes’

“– Have you bought the gift? – Yes, I have”

(60) – No ha comprado el regalo – Sí lo ha comprado

‘– No have bought the gift – Yes CL_{ACC} has been’

“– She hasn’t bought the gift – Indeed she has bought it”

3.2. Emphatic polarity particle: Modern Spanish

We have seen in the previous section that *sí* can have a contrastive value when it is part of the VP (60). Actually, in Modern Spanish we can have two different kinds of positive sentences: the emphatic and the unmarked. We can have a sentence like (61) that is equivalent to the negative clause (62): they are both unmarked

(61) Hoy ha cocinado

‘Today has cooked’

“Today he has cooked”

(62) Hoy no ha cocinado

‘Today not has cooked’

“Today she hasn’t cooked”

However, we can also find a sentence like (63), which has an emphatic value. There is a clear asymmetry between the positive and the negative polarity. The former does not need a visible mark, and when there is this mark the character of the clause becomes emphatic. Instead, with negative polarity the presence of a negative element is mandatory and does not convey emphasis.

(63) Hoy *sí* ha cocinado

‘Today yes has cooked’

“Today he has cooked indeed”

This example is not a simple counterpart of (61), this example presents different syntactic, semantic and discursive characteristics from a neutral sentence.

The main characteristic of an emphatic affirmation from a semantic and discursive point of view is its contrastive value. In (63) we can see that the speaker is denying a previous negation, such as: “Hoy no ha cocinado”, ‘today he hasn’t cooked’. In comparison, a neutral affirmation does not have this contrastive value.

With regard to the syntactic characteristics of an emphatic affirmation, they differ from those of a neutral one. On the first place, *sí* can only appear in main clauses. We can see that especially non-finite subordinate clauses become ungrammatical with this particle, whether they are nominal (64) or adverbial (65).

(64) Es difícil (**sí*) estar siempre en forma

'Is difficult (**yes*) be always fit'

"It is difficult (**yes*) to always be fit"

(65) (**Sí*) diciendo las verdades, pierdes las amistades

'(**Yes*) saying the truths, lose the friendships'

"(**Yes*) being completely frank may cost you friendships"

Furthermore, *sí* cannot appear in syntactic structures that imply a wh-movement either. The following examples show how this particle is incompatible with either interrogative (66) or exclamative (67) sentences.

(66) ¿Por qué (**sí*) ha cocinado?

'Why (**yes*) has cooked'

"Why (**yes*) has he cooked"

(67) ¡Qué bonita que (**sí*) es esta niña!

'How beautiful that (**yes*) is this girl'

"How beautiful this girl (**yes*) is"

Up to this point, we have seen that the adverb *sí* gives the sentence where it appears an emphatic character, which its neutral counterpart does not have. In addition, as shown in the previous section, the evolution of this particle, from Latin to Modern Spanish goes through a focalisation process.

In this section, we will show that contrastive focus and emphatic polarity can have a very similar semantic and syntactic analysis. The only difference between them is that the former focalises on a particular element of the sentence, such as the subject or the

object, whereas the latter focalises the polarity element of the clause. Hence, it makes sense to describe the evolution from *así* 'thus' to *sí* 'yes' as a focalisation process.

In order to remind the reader what has been explained in the introduction, a contrastive focus is a configuration in which a constituent that expresses new information has been moved into a prominent syntactic position in order to outline it.

(68) MACARRONES quiere comer Pablo (y no ensalada)

'MACARONI wants to eat Pablo (and not salad)'

"Pablo wants to eat MACARONI"

We will start by the semantic analysis, which is based on two arguments: a presupposition and an assertion. We can see in (69) the semantic analysis of (68), and in (70) the one of (63):

(69) Presupposition: Pablo quiere comer x

'Pablo wants to eat x'

Assertion: x son macarrones, no ensalada

'x are macaroni, not salad'

(70) Presupposition: Hoy Pol_x ha cocinado

'Today Pol_x he has cooked'

Assertion: x es afirmativo no negativo

'x is affirmative, not negative'

As regards the syntactic analysis, in both cases there is a movement of the emphasised element to the left periphery of the clause, namely to CP. According to Rizzi's representation of the left periphery, the CP domain is divided into different projections illustrated in (71):

(71) Force > Topic > Focus > Fin ...

There are the ForceP and the FinP that represent the illocutive force and the (non)finite nature of a sentence, respectively. Then, we have two nodes related with the informational content of a clause: TopicP and FocusP. They allocate the Topic or the Focus of a sentence, when they are present.

So, both the focus and the polarity particle are moved to FocusP to receive their emphatic value. This movement is perfectly clear in (68) where the DO *macarrones* 'macaroni' goes from its basic position inside the VP to a more prominent position at the beginning of the clause.

Moreover, it can be observed that this movement triggers subject-verb inversion, because the verb is moved into the head of the CP projection. We can contrast (72) with (68) to see that the inversion is mandatory, otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical:

(72) *MACARRONES Pablo quiere comer

'*MACARONI Pablo wants to eat'

Likewise, the presence of the emphatic polarity particle *sí* triggers an inversion of the subject and the verb (73):

(73) a. *Sí* ha comido María

'Yes has eaten María'

"María *has* eaten, indeed"

b. **Sí* María ha comido

'Yes María has eaten'

Another projection inside the CP is the PolP, where the polarity particles can license their polarity value. Thus, if we gather together what we have analysed until now, the syntactic analysis of *sí* would begin in PolP, where it leaves a trace and it goes to FocusP to be licensed as a focalised element:

(74) [_{CP} ... [_{FOCUSP} **sí**_i ... [_{POLP} *t*_i [_{FINP} ...]]]]

This analysis allows us to explain why the examples (66) and (67) are ungrammatical. The wh-elements, which also trigger subject-verb inversion, are moved from their position of DO to FocusP. As a consequence, we would have two particles competing for the same position as we can see in (75), this is the reason why a sentence with *sí* and a wh-element is ungrammatical.

(75) [_{CP} ... [_{FocusP} *{*qué*_{t_i}/*sí*_{t_j}} [_{FocusO}] [_{PolP} t_j [_{FinP} t_v t_i ...]]]]

Finally, we observe that *sí* behaves on several occasions as a wh-element. We have already seen in the previous paragraphs that it triggers the subject verb inversion: (73), and that it cannot appear together with a wh-element.

Moreover, when there is a topic in the clause both elements have to occur after it – wh-elements and the emphatic polarity particle *sí*. This is expressed in the *Theory of the Left Periphery* by Rizzi (1997), represented in (71), where the topic occupies a more prominent position than the focus. Then, a sentence like (76) displays this word order:

(76) [_{TOP} La luna] *sí* la ve Álex desde aquí

‘the moon indeed CL_{ACC} sees Álex from here’

“The moon, Álex sees it from here indeed”

Furthermore, *sí* must be adjacent to the left of the verb, as the example (77) shows:

(77) **Sí* María ha comido

‘*Indeed María has eaten’

3.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the semantic and syntactic analysis of a polarity particle like *sí* is the same as the analysis that we could apply to a contrastive focus. Hence, it is relevant to think that the evolution of the modal adverb *así* into a polarity particle is a consequence of a focalisation process, among other aspects.

4. Emphatic polarity particles

In the previous sections we have focused our attention on the emphatic polarity particle *sí*. We have analysed it from both a diachronic and a synchronic point of view. In this section, we are going to study other emphatic polarity particles in Catalan and Spanish, such as: *bien* 'well', *prou* 'enough' or *ya* 'already'.

From now on, the similarities of these emphatic polarity particles with *sí* will be pointed out. In Catalan and Spanish some manner, quantitative or time adverbs also go through a focalisation process and end up being able to modify the polarity of the sentence where they appear. According to Batllori and Hernanz (2009), it is plausible to think that the elements that have lexical characteristics in common and that share the same hierarchical distribution undergo a similar grammaticalization process.

Hence, this evolution is valid for many different particles, which present a general analysis. For a better understanding of the grammaticalization process of the different emphatic polarity particles it is crucial to study all of them together. In this way, what could seem a particularity of an element, can actually be described as a generalised phenomenon.

The analysis of all these emphatic polarity particles goes through a syntactic change over time. On the first place, they are first merged in a low syntactic position, inside the VP, from there, they move to PolP and FocusP. However, eventually, they abandon this original position, and they are directly merged in PolP, then they move to FocusP.

Furthermore, in this section, we will see that there are two kinds of polarity particles: the high and the low ones. And we will explain the differences between them.

4.1. High Polarity particles

Now we are going to introduce different kinds of Catalan and Spanish high emphatic polarity particles (see Batllori and Hernanz: 2013), such as: *bien* 'well', *ya* 'already', *prou* 'enough', etc.

4.1.1. Bien (Spanish)

In the case of *bien* 'well', we have the evolution of a word that had, in its origin, a manner value and could only modify the verb. However, through a focalisation process, the manner adverb (78a) becomes a polarity adverb (78b), capable of reinforcing the polarity of the whole sentence, namely: the positive polarity.

(78) a. Messi ha jugado *bien*

'Messi has played well'

b. *Bien* ha jugado Messi

'Indeed has played Messi'

"But Messi HAS played"

The meaning of (78b) has a contrastive value, characteristic of focalised constructions. So, this sentence denies the preconceived idea of the listener that 'Messi was not going to play'.

By contrast, an unmarked affirmation does not imply any previous message; the speaker does not need to contradict any former statement. The following example contrasts with (78b), because it is an unmarked declarative sentence. That is, it is not the reply to any expectations by the receiver:

(79) Messi ha jugado

'Messi has played'

4.1.2. Bé (Catalan)

As it happens in Spanish, the Catalan manner adverb *bé* 'well' is also reanalysed as an emphatic polarity particle after a focalisation process. When *bé* is moved from a post verbal position into the left periphery of the clause, it loses its semantic relationship with the verb and is able to modify the whole polarity value of the clause. The following examples show the contrast between the two words: *bé* as a manner adverb (80) and *bé* as a polarity particle (81).

(80) En Messi ha jugat *bé*

‘Messi has played well’

(81) *Bé* ha jugat en Messi

‘indeed has played Messi’

“Messi has played indeed”

4.1.3. Ya (Spanish)

Ya ‘already’ can be interpreted as a temporal adverb (82). However, *ya* can also be a completely different word; when it appears in the left periphery of the sentence, it strengthens its positive polarity (83), as it happens with *bien*.

(82) Marina *ya* ha escrito su primer libro

‘Marina already has written her first book’

“Marina has already written her first book”

(83) *Ya* podría Rosa haber puesto la mesa

‘Already could Rosa have put the table’

“But Rosa should have laid the table”

However, it is not as productive a particle as *bien* in Spanish.

4.1.4. Ja (Catalan)

In parallel to what happens in Spanish, the temporal adverb *ja* ‘already’ can also convey a polarity value when it appears in a prominent syntactic position, namely in the left periphery of the clause. In (84) *ja* has a temporal value, whereas in (85) it shows a polarity value:

(84) La Marina *ja* ha escrit el seu primer llibre

‘Marina already has written her first book’

“Marina has already written her first book”

(85) Bé, home, bé, ja m'agrada que vulguis venir amb nosaltres

'well, guy, well, already CLDAT pleases me that want to come with us'

"OK, guy, I really like that you want to come with us"

4.1.5. Prou (Catalan)

The emphatic polarity particle *prou* 'indeed' comes from the quantitative adverb *prou* 'enough', which, after its allocation in a prominent syntactic position to the left of the clause, loses its connection with the VP and strengthens the positive polarity of the whole sentence. We can compare the two uses of the word with the examples (86) and (87). In the former *prou* has a quantitative value, whereas in the latter it has a polarity value:

(86) Crec que ja hi ha *prou* llenya al foc

'Think that already there is enough firewood in the fire'

"I think that there is already enough firewood in the fire"

(87) *Prou* t'estimo jo

'Indeed CL_{ACC} love I'

"Indeed I love you"

Thus, this evolution is the consequence of a complete grammaticalization process.

4.1.6. Pla (Catalan)

This polarity particle is particularly used in the Catalan dialect spoken in the North Oriental part of Catalonia in order to reinforce the polarity of a sentence. *Pla* was originally a manner adverb linked with the VP meaning 'truly'.

However, it was eventually used to reinforce the polarity of a sentence. In the following section, we will display the different uses of *pla*, which can convey both a positive and a negative meaning.

We have to take into consideration the fact that *pla* can have different semantic possibilities as a polarity particle. In the first place, it can be used as an emphatic scalar quantifier (88) that allows for the ellipsis of the VP (89):

(88) ¡Tu *pla* enganyes a la gent!

‘You even-more lie to the people’

“You lie even more than I do”

(89) ¡Tu *pla*!

In this case, the meaning of *pla* is restricted to the modification of the VP. That is, in an example like (90B) *pla* modifies the predicate “en té de llibres” ‘has-got books’. So, it takes scope over the predicate *tenir llibres* ‘to have books’ (= X) adding the meaning that a specific subject has even more X than another.

(90) A: La Cristina té moltes amigues

‘The Cristina has-got a-lot-of friends’

“Cristina has got a lot of friends”

B: L’Arnau *pla* en té d’amics

‘The Arnau even-more CL has-got of friends’

“Arnau has got even more”

As a consequence, this use of *pla* is not relevant for the present work, as it is not part of the emphatic polarity particles that we are studying. *Pla* with a scalar value does not follow exactly the same analysis that we have applied to *sí* and that we will attribute to the other EPPA.

Secondly, *pla* can be used as an emphatic affirmation with a contrastive value that denies a previous negative statement. The example in (91) illustrates the fact that a sentence with this type of *pla* would be a correct answer to a previous comment like: Segur que no vindreu ‘I am sure that you will not come’

(91) Bé saps que *pla* vindrem

‘Indeed know that indeed come’

“You know that we will come indeed”

Finally, *pla* can also reinforce the negative polarity of a sentence due to an ironic use of the particle. The example in (92) shows this negative value of the particle:

(92) Sí, tu *pla* vindràs a la festa

‘Yes, you NOT come to the party’

“No, you WILL NOT come to the party”

We can prove its negative value because it can co-appear with other negative elements, such as: *res* ‘nothing’, *mai* ‘never’ or *ningú* ‘nobody’:

(93) La Júlia *pla* menjarà res

‘The Júlia NOT will eat nothing’

“Júlia WON’t eat anything”

(94) A la seva consulta *pla* hi ha mai ningú

‘In the his office NOT there is never nobody’

“For sure there is never anybody in his office”

4.2. Low emphatic polarity particles

4.2.1. Ben (Catalan)

Besides, *bé* ‘indeed’, explained in section 4.1.2., in Catalan there is another polarity particle, *ben* ‘really’, that is closely related to the former in its original semantic value: both come from the manner adverb *bé* ‘well’.

However, *ben* is allocated in a lower syntactic position than *bé*. Compare the two sentences in (95) and (96). We can see that (96) is ungrammatical because *bé* needs to be allocated in the left periphery of the clause, not close to the verb. This is due to the fact that its meaning affects the whole sentence, not only the verb:

(95) La Carmen n'está ben farta de l'hivern

'The Carmen CL-is really sick of the winter'

"Carmen is really sick of winter"

(96) *La Carmen n'está bé farta de l'hivern

'*The Carmen CL-is indeed sick of the winter'

As a consequence of these differences in the syntactic distribution, the assertive value of *bé* is stronger than the one of *ben*, because the former reinforces the positive polarity of the whole sentence, whereas the latter can only modify one element of the clause: the verb.

Moreover, another difference between the two polarity particles is the following. Due to the fact that *ben* appears in a low syntactic position, namely next to the verb; and that it modifies it, *ben* can just appear with those verbs that can have different scalar values.

For example, *estar fart* 'be sick of' can have different degrees: one can be really sick of something or a bit sick of it; whereas with the verb *arribar* 'to arrive', one cannot arrive a lot or arrive a little bit. As a consequence, while (95) was perfectly right, (97) is ungrammatical:

(97) *La Carmen ha *ben* arribat tard

'The Carmen has really arrived late'

By contrast, *bé* is compatible with any kind of verb, because its scope of action is the whole sentence, not only the VP:

(98) *Bé* ha arribat tard la Carmen

'indeed has arrived late the Carmen'

"Carmen arrived late indeed"

4.2.2. No... pas (Catalan)

As it stands in the dictionary by Alcover and Moll, this polarity particle comes from the noun *pas* 'step' in constructions like (99):

(99) *No caminar pas*

'Not walk step'

"Not walk a step"

At first, and taking as examples sentences like (99), *pas* was used to reinforce the negative polarity of movement verbs, only. However, afterwards it started to appear with any kind of verb. Nowadays, it can reinforce the negative polarity of all verbs when it occurs together with the negative adverb *no* as (100) shows:

(100) *La Magalí no vol pas treballar aquí*

'The Magalí not want not-at-all work here'

"Magalí doesn't want to work here at all"

This element is specially used in the varieties spoken in Northern and Central Catalonia. Moreover, in the Roussillon *pas* is used as a negative marker; that is, without the negative marker *no* as we can see in (101):

(101) *T'ho diré pas*

'to-you-it will-tell not'

"I won't tell you"

4.2.3. Cap (Catalan)

This low emphatic polarity particle, studied by Ares Llop (2013), is used in a particular dialect of the Catalan language, namely Pallarès which is spoken in the north west of Catalonia. This element started being a nominal minimiser meaning 'piece, end of something' (102), but eventually it was used to reinforce the negative polarity of a clause.

(102) Agafa si us plau el cap de la corda

'Take please the end of the rope'

"Take the end of the rope please"

In this sentence *cap* is part of a Determiner Phrase (DP) with a Prepositional Phrase (PrepP) as a complement. From this structure, the minimiser *cap* goes through a grammaticalization process that makes it become a quantifier located in the INFL node, where the quantifiers are licensed.

Then, *cap* is reinterpreted from its original meaning into being a quantifier. This process can be understood by the following explanation. *Cap* means a small part of something, thus, in a sentence like (103) taken from Coromines, this original sense can be confused with 'nothing', that is (103) can also mean: eat none of a certain kind of food.

(103) En mai non deu hom *cap* menjar

'It never not have-to one nothing eat'

"One should never eat none of it"

From its sense as a quantifier, it is easy to understand how this particle became an EPPA capable of reinforcing the negative polarity of a clause. When an element conveys a negative meaning such as 'none of', it is somehow logical that eventually it can express the negative polarity of a sentence by itself –this is, without any other negative element.

For example, in (104) we can interpret both meanings, the quantifier meaning 'none of' and the negative polarity meaning 'at all':

(104) Li agraden molt les maduixes, però encara no n'ha menjat *cap*

'CL_{DAT} like a-lot the strawberries, but yet not CL+has eaten none'

"She likes strawberries a lot, but she hasn't eaten any yet"

At this stage, this element can appear without any complement, it is now an EPPA, capable of conveying the negative polarity value of the sentence by itself. Thus, in Pallarès, this EPPA can appear together with the negative marker *no* (105), or alone (106).

(105) No els veureu *cap*

‘Not CLACC see not-at-all’

“You are not going to see them at all”

(106) Vindré *cap*

‘Come not-at-all’

“I’m not going to come at all”

4.3. Syntactic analysis of high emphatic polarity particles (HEPPA)

As we have already discussed with *sí*, high emphatic polarity particles have a very similar analysis to contrastive focus items, both semantically and syntactically. The difference between emphatic polarity and contrastive focus lies in the fact that the focalised element is not the same one in each case.

In a statement with an EPPA, the focalised part of the sentence is the element that conveys polarity meaning: that is the EPPA. On the contrary, when there is contrastive focus, the focalised element can be any of the different constituents of the clause. In the example (107), it is the Direct Object, but it could also be the Subject, as (108) shows:

(107) MACARRONES quiere comer Pablo (y no ensalada)

‘MACARONI wants to eat Pablo (and not salad)’

“Pablo wants to eat MACARONI”

(108) PABLO quiere comer macarrones (y no Alba)

‘PABLO wants to eat macaroni (and not Alba)’

“PABLO wants to eat macaroni”

These examples provide the sentence where they appear with a contrastive value. In the first place, a clause like (107) declines the presupposition of the listener (i.e., that Pablo wants to eat salad). Secondly, (108) presupposes a previous comment, such as: “Alba quiere macarrones” ‘Alba wants macaroni’.

Similarly, all the high polarity particles studied in this work deny the presupposition of the hearer. And, at the same time, they reinforce the polarity of the sentence where they appear. So, they act like a contrastive focus in the sense that they have an element of the statement focalised: its polarity.

For example, a sentence with *bien* (109) denies the preconceived idea of the listener that Carmen has not slept seven hours:

(109) Carmen *bien* ha dormido siete horas

‘Carmen indeed has slept seven hours’

“Carmen HAS slept seven hours”

Then, following Holmberg (2001), semantically we can analyse both processes by having two different arguments: a presupposition and an assertion. In (110) and (111) we represent the semantic analysis of (108) and (109) respectively:

(110) Presupposition: Pablo quiere comer x

‘Pablo wants to eat x’

Assertion: x son macarrones, no ensalada

‘x are macaroni, not salad’

(111) Presupposition: Carmen Pol_x ha dormido siete horas

‘Carmen Pol_x has slept seven hours’

Assertion: x is affirmative, not negative

On the other hand, the syntactic analysis of these two elements –contrastive focus and polarity particles– implies a movement to FocusP in the left periphery of the clause.

This is very clear with contrastive focus. In (107), we can see that the component *macarrones* ‘macaroni’ goes from its basic position as a complement of the VP to a prominent position in the node Focus at the beginning of the sentence. This movement triggers subject verb inversion. Then, a sentence like (112) is ungrammatical because the inversion of the subject and the verb has not taken place:

(112) *MACARRONES Pablo quiere comer

‘*MACARONI Pablo wants to eat’

As for the polarity elements, they have two key characteristics: [+Polar] and [+Emphasis]. Thus, they merge in PolP, but they have to move to FocusP in order to license their emphatic value. Like this, using the analysis proposed by Rizzi (1997) for the left periphery and adding the node Polarity in terms of Haegeman (2000), we obtain the following analysis:

(113) [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} ... [_{FocusP} **High EPPA**_i [_{PolP} _{t_i} [_{FinP} ...]]]]]]

In the analysis given in (113) we can see that high emphatic polarity particles can share some characteristics with wh-operators due to the fact that they occupy the same node FocusP. We have already explained that the movement of the EPPA to the left periphery of the clause triggers subject-verb inversion, as it happens with the wh-elements. In (114), for instance we do not have an unmarked Spanish word order (that is, the subject followed by the Verb).

(114) ¿Qué hará Alicia mañana?

‘What will do Alicia tomorrow’

“What will Alicia do tomorrow”

Moreover, and as we have considered in section 3, it can be observed that when there is a topic in the clause both the emphatic polarity particle and the wh-element have to appear after it. This is due to the fact that the Topic node precedes the Focus one, as it shows the *Theory of the Left Periphery* by Rizzi (1997), who distributes the different constituents of the left periphery in the following way (115):

(115) Force > Topic > Focus > Fin ...

Then, a sentence such as (116) follows this word order, as (117) does:

(116) [_{TOP}El teléfono] *bien* se lo compró Ramón

‘The phone indeed CL CL_{ACC} buy Ramón’

“The phone, Ramon bought it indeed”

(117) [El teléfono] ¿Dónde lo has puesto?

‘The phone where CL_{ACC} have put’

“The phone, where have you put it?”

Finally, an EPPA and a *wh*-operator cannot co-occur in the same sentence, because they need to occupy the same position. Thus, the language speakers cannot process a sentence with both elements:

(118) *¿Por qué *bien* has venido?

‘*Why indeed have come?’

4.4. Syntactic analysis of low emphatic polarity particles (LEPPA)

After having examined the analysis of high polarity particles, when we observe low polarity particles, we can see that they occur in a lower syntactic position. This is easy to prove because *ben* or *pas* cannot appear in a preverbal position:

(119) a. *La Carmen *ben* n’està farta de l’hivern

‘The Carmen really CL+is sick of the witer’

b. *La Rosa *pas* vindrà

‘The Rosa not(-at-all) will-come’

Moreover, they do not trigger the subject-verb inversion characteristic of high EPPA, as we have seen in the examples (95) and (100), and this means that there is no movement to the left periphery of the clause.

Then, the correct allocation for this kind of particle would be in a functional projection FP between FinP and VP:

(120) [_{ForceP} ... [_{FocusP} **high EPPA**_i [_{PolP} t_i [_{FinP} ... [_{FP} **low EPPA** [_{VP} ...]]]]]]]

4.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this section we have seen that there can be two kinds of emphatic polarity particles: high and low. Also, we can say that they belong to two different groups because they follow different analysis. The former, are situated in a higher syntactic position in the left periphery of the clause, whereas the latter are merged in a functional projection just above the VP and underneath FinP.

5. Polarity structures in other languages

In this section we are going to see different ways of expressing positive and negative polarity across languages.

5.1. Portuguese

Portuguese still maintains the Latin polarity pattern to express positive polarity. That is, when they wanted to give an affirmative answer to a total question, they can answer with the main verb.

In section two, we have seen that in Latin there is no specific element to mark positive polarity –such as Spanish *sí*. Hence, speakers could either repeat the central part of the question –normally the verb– (121), or they could use different adverbs with an assertive value, for example: *sane, omnino, certe, ita*, etc (122).

(121) *heus tu, Rufio ... cave sis mentiaris: Clodius insidias fecit Miloni? fecit*

‘Look here, Rufio ... mind you don’t tell lies! Did Clodius plot against Milo? He did’

[Cic. *Mil.*: 60; Pinkster (1990: 191, e.g. 4)]

(122) *numquid uis? – etiam: ut actutum advenias*

‘Do you want anything? Yes, I want that you arrive as soon as possible’

Taking into account that Portuguese is a Romance language that comes from Latin, it is worth considering the fact that, in Portuguese we can have different possibilities when giving an answer to a yes/no question, depending on whether the answer is emphatic or not (Martins, 2006).

5.1.1. Affirmative emphatic answers

When we have an emphatic answer such as (123a) or (123b), the clause has a contrastive value, as it refuses a preconceived idea of the interlocutor. In (123) the speaker thinks that João bought the car, but this is not true.

In this case, the answer can contain either the main verb of the question repeated two times (123b), or the verb together with the adverb *sim* ‘yes’ (123c):

(123) A: a. O João não comprou o carro, comprou?

‘The João not bought the car bought’

“João didn’t buy the car, did he?”

B: b. Comprou, comprou

‘Bought, bought’

“Yes, he (certainly) did”

c. Comprou sim

‘Bought yes’

“Yes, he (certainly) did”

5.1.1.1. Syntactic analysis

The analysis of this answer is the same as the one that we have offered for Spanish EPPAs. Thus, following Rizzi (1997) and Haegeman (2000), the left periphery of the clause would be the place to license the two key characteristics of this kind of answer: [+Polar] and [+Emphasis].

Thus, in the following example, we can see that *comprou* merges in the node PolP, where it receives its polarity value. Then, it moves into FocusP in order to have its emphatic feature (124).

(124) [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} [_{FocusP} **comprou**_i [_{PolP} **comprou**_i [_{FinP} [_{VP} t_i]]]]]]

The only difference between what happens in Portuguese and in Spanish is that in the former language the nodes FocusP and PolP are weak, which means that they do not need a phonetic realisation. On the contrary, in Portuguese they are strong; hence, they do need an explicit element in order to be fulfilled. This is why the verb appears twice.

However, at this point, we could wonder about the contrast between Portuguese, on the one hand, and Spanish and Catalan answers, on the other. The most striking thing is that in the latter two languages we can also have the same structure as in Portuguese, with FocusP and PolP phonetically realised, as (125) shows.

(125) A: ¿Estudió Juan para el examen?

‘Studied Juan for the exam’

“Did Joan study for the exam?”

B: Estudió, studio

‘Studied, studied’

“Yes, he (certainly) did”

C: Estudió, sí

‘Studied, yes’

“Yes, he (certainly) did”

As for the example (123c), the analysis of Portuguese answers of this type would be exactly the same. However, in this case, *sim* occupies the position of PolP, and the verb provides the answer with the emphatic value that is licensed in FocusP.

(126) [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} ... [_{FocusP} **comprou**_i [_{PolP} **sim** [_{FinP} ... [_{VP} t_i]]]]]]]

Notice, that these aspects are still under study by researchers who devote their investigation to the comparison of the Romance language structures used to give a polar answer (Martins, among them). Therefore, these similarities and their implications are left aside, because they go beyond the scope of this work.

5.1.2. Affirmative unmarked answers

In Portuguese, there is also the possibility to have a question that does not involve an emphatic answer, such as (127a). In this case, the possible answers are the same as in the previous section, but without the emphatic value given by either the repetition of the main verb of the question (123b), or its presence followed by *sim* (123c):

(127) A: a. O João comprou um carro?

'The João bought a car'

"Did João buy a car?"

B: b. Comprou

'Bought'

"Yes (, he did)"

c. Sim

'Yes'

d. Sim, comprou

'Yes, bought'

"Yes, he did"

5.1.2.1. Syntactic analysis

The syntactic analysis of this kind of answer has as a main feature in PolP; this is the only characteristic that needs to be licensed in the representation of the clause. In the first place, both (127b) and (127c) would be represented as (128):

(128) [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} ... [_{FocusP} [_{PolP} **comprou**_i/ **sim** [_{FinP} ... [_{VP} *t*_i]]]]]]]

By contrast, (127d) has two possible answers. On the one hand, we can analyse *sim* like in (127c). And, on the other, we have a different clause with an elliptic subject. There is only the verb because the object can be inferred by the context. The sentence would be the following: He bought it.

5.2. Celtic languages

Celtic languages, such as Irish or Welsh, do not have the words *yes* and *no*. This is why when their speakers have to answer a total question they repeat the main verb of this question with some variations so as to express positive or negative polarity. In

Portuguese it happens something similar, as it has been studied in the previous section, but only with positive answers.

Thus, in Irish there are examples like (129b) or (129c), taken from Toyota (2009), that convey positive and negative polarity, respectively.

(129) A: a. An chuigh tu go attí an offig na posta?

‘Q go you to the office the post?’

“Are you going to the post office?”

B: b. Cuigh me

‘go I’

“Yes”

c: Ní chuigh

‘NEG go’

“No”

The main verb of the question is *chuigh* ‘go’, and speakers of Irish use it with the glottal stop /k/ to express positive polarity, whereas they keep the same form of the question with the glottal fricative /h/ to say *no*.

Toyota also adds that nowadays Celtic languages have incorporated words for saying *yes* and *no* as a consequence of the influence of other languages, namely English. This is why; the answer in (129c) contains the word *Ní* ‘no’.

Moreover, in the following example, the speaker replies by using the main verb together with the particle *is*, which means ‘yes’.

(130) A: Is maith leat an leabhar seo?

‘POSITIVE good with-you the book this?’

“Do you like this book?”

B: Is maith

'POSITIVE good'

"Yes"

5.2.1. Syntactic analysis

The answers of (129) are not emphatic; then, we can apply the same scheme as the one in section 4.1.2.1. In this case, Irish and Portuguese can be analysed in the same way:

(131) [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} ... [_{FocusP} [_{PolP} **Cuigh/Chuigh**_i [_{FinP} ... [_{VP} t_i]]]]]]]

5.3. Italian

In this section we will analyse some Italian Low Emphatic Polarity Particles that can reinforce either the positive or the negative polarity of the sentence where they are found. We can establish a parallelism between these elements and Catalan *ben* or *pas*.

5.3.1. Ben

On the one hand, Italian has the Polarity Particle *ben* that evolved from the manner adverb *bene* 'well'.

(132) Gianni ha risposto *bene*

'Gianni has answered well'

Then, *bene* went through a grammaticalization process and became an EPPA able to stress the positive character of its clause. This new particle is syntactically allocated in a low hierarchical position next to the verb, either before (133) or after (134) it. It is the same position where we can find Catalan *ben*.

(133) Gianni *a ben* risposto

'Gianni has indeed answered'

"Gianni has answered indeed"

(134) *Maria parlava ben di lui*

'Maria spoke indeed of him'

"Maria spoke about him indeed"

Furthermore, this low syntactic position becomes obvious when we realise that the scope of action of the EPPA is the VP, not the entire clause; as it would be the case of a high EPPA allocated in a prominent syntactic position.

5.3.2. Mica

In Italian the negative polarity particle *mica* can also be found. In fact, it would be the equivalent to Catalan *pas* and Pallarès or Occidental Catalan *cap* when it is situated in a low syntactic position. Thus, it can have two possible uses: as a high and as a low emphatic polarity particle.

The origin of this EPPA is very similar to the one of *cap*, studied in the section 3.2.3. In this case, *mica* is also a minimiser; this is, a noun used to indicate a very small part of something. In the example of (135) we can see this use of the word:

(135) *Maria non a mangiato mica pane*

'Maria not has eaten a-bit-of bread'

"Maria has not even eaten a little bit of bread"

It can be observed that if we say that Maria did not even eat a little bit of bread; then, we imply that she ate none of it. From this new negative meaning, it is easy for a word like *mica* to acquire its current use as an EPPA, able to reinforce the negative polarity of the clause.

In (135) *mica* is a NP with the complement *pane* 'bread'. The original use of the EPPA, always needs this kind of structure to give rise to the grammaticalization, because the meaning is very close to a negative expression. At the beginning, *mica* means 'a little bit' and the listener always needs to know the complement, that is: a little bit of what element.

However, after the grammaticalization process, *mica* can licence the negative value of the sentence either with *non* or by itself, so it does not need any complement. Now, it does no longer have the sense of ‘a little bit’, but a negative meaning similar to the one of the adverb *no*.

(136) Maria non ha *mica* mangiato

‘Maria not has not-at-all eaten’

“Maria hasn’t eaten at all”

5.3.2.1 Low emphatic polarity particle

This Emphatic Polarity Particle, equally to *ben*, is situated in a low hierarchical syntactic position. We can see that it appears either before (136) or after the past participle (137), but not at the beginning of the sentence, in the left periphery of the clause:

(137) Maria non ha mangiato *mica*

‘Maria not has eaten not-at-all’

“Maria hasn’t eaten at all”

5.3.2.2. High emphatic polarity particle

However, as mentioned previously, *mica* has an additional use as a high emphatic polarity particle, equivalent to Catalan negative *pla* ‘not’ explained in 4.1.5. Then, after a focalisation process, *mica* is moved from a low syntactic position to the left periphery of the clause.

In this case, the element appears in a preverbal position, and conveys the negative meaning of the whole sentence by itself, as (138) shows:

(138) *Mica* ho detto questo io

‘Not have said this I’

“I haven’t said this”

5.3.3. Analysis

5.3.3.1. Low emphatic polarity particle

The analysis of *ben* and *mica* –when it is a low emphatic polarity particle– is the same as the one of Catalan *ben* ‘indeed’, *pas* ‘not at all’ and Pallarès or Occidental Catalan *cap* ‘not at all’. As it has been introduced in the previous sections, all these particles occur in a low hierarchical position, we can place the low EPPA in a functional projection between the node FinP and the VP:

(139) [_{ForceP} ... [_{FocusP} [_{PolP} ... [_{FinP} ... [_{FP} **ben/mica** [_{VP} ...]]]]]]]

We can demonstrate that these particles are indeed in a low syntactic position because their presence does not trigger subject-verb inversion due to the fact that there is no movement to the CP domain. Thus, an example such as (140) is ungrammatical:

(140) *É Maria non mica arrabiatta

‘*Is Maria no at-all angry’

5.3.3.2. High emphatic polarity particle

On the other hand, when *mica* ‘no’ is a high emphatic polarity particle, the analysis is equivalent to the one for Spanish *sí* ‘yes’, or *bien* ‘indeed’.

(141) [_{CP} ... [_{ForceP}... [_{TopicP} ... [_{FocusP} **Mica**_i [_{PolP} _{t_i} [_{FinP} ...]]]]]]]

There is movement to FocusP, in the left periphery of the clause, this is why there is subject-verb inversion. Thus, (142) is ungrammatical:

(142) *Mica Maria ha detto questo

‘Not Maria has said this’

5.5. Conclusion

Finally, in this section we have analysed different polarity strategies used in different languages: Portuguese, Celtic languages and Italian. When one observes each language by itself it can seem as if they all behave differently. However, we have been able to demonstrate that they can all be analysed in the same way.

6. Final conclusions

This work collects different articles that show the state of the question in the study of positive and negative polarity in different languages: mainly Spanish and Catalan, but also Portuguese, Italian and Celtic languages. We have displayed both a diachronic and a synchronic view in order to show the evolution of the constituents examined and their up to date semantic and syntactic analysis.

A general look like the one offered in this study, allows the reader to understand that a phenomenon that could seem specific for a particular language is, in fact, applicable to many different ones. Then, we are talking about a syntactic analysis proposal that can be used to analyse both positive and negative polarity elements of different languages and dialects around the world.

In the first place, we needed to introduce several key elements about word order in Spanish that are relevant when talking about the grammaticalization process undergone by the Spanish polarity particles examined in this article.

Thus, emphatic polarity particles such as *sí* ‘yes’ or *bien* ‘indeed’ go through a grammaticalization process that is the result of focus preposing. This is, the given element goes from its basic position in the VP into a prominent position at the left periphery of the clause under FocusP. Then, its interpretation changes from being one of a modal adverb –with a scope of action restricted to VP–, into being a polarity adverb –capable of reinforcing the polarity of the whole sentence.

Like that, the diachronic process undergone by emphatic polarity particles could be represented by the following analysis based on Batllori and Hernanz (2009):

- (143) a. [_{FOCUSP} ... [_{POIP} ... [_{FINP} ... [_{VP} fago **así**]]]]]
- b. [_{FOCUSP} ... [_{POIP} ... [_{FINP} **así/sí** [_{VP} fago t_i]]]]]
- c. [_{FOCUSP} **así/sí** [_{POIP} t_i [_{FINP} t_i [_{VP} fago t_i]]]]]
- d. [_{FOCUSP} **sí** [_{POIP} t_i [_{FINP} ... [_{VP}]]]]]

It can be seen that *así* ‘thus’ is focalised in (143c), at this point the polarity element is still related with the VP but it has been moved from its original position into PolP and FocusP in order to license its characteristics: [+Polar] and [+Emphasis]. Eventually, this movement is no longer taking place: in (143d) *sí* is directly merged in PolP, and from there it goes to FocusP.

Next, in section three, two types of polarity particles have been presented. On the one hand, there are the high emphatic polarity particles, which follow the syntactic analysis of (143d). We have several examples of them in this work: *bien* ‘indeed’ or *prou* ‘indeed’.

On the other hand, there are the low emphatic polarity particles –i.e. *ben* ‘really’ or *no... pas* ‘not at all’. They are allocated in a low syntactical position, just above the VP and under FinP. Their scope of action, then, is restricted to the modification of the VP. (144) shows the precise position of both high and low EPPA and is taken from Batllori and Hernanz (2013):

(144) [_{ForceP} [_{FocusP} **high EPPA**_i [_{PolP} *t*_i [_{FinP} ... [_{FP} **low EPPA** [_{VP} ...]]]]]]]

Finally, we have introduced some other ways of expressing polarity; they are used in languages such as Portuguese or different Celtic languages, including Irish and Welsh. The speakers of these languages give a positive answer to a total question by repeating the main verb of the question, as it used to be in Latin.

This procedure may seem very different to what happens in Spanish or Catalan. However, the syntactic analysis used is almost the same one as for the high emphatic polarity particles (144). So, in Portuguese, when we want to give an emphatic answer to a question such as the following: “John didn’t buy the car, did he?”, we can just answer by saying: “comprou, comprou” ‘bought, bought’; that is, ‘yes, he (certainly) did’. Hence, the analysis would be (145):

(145) [_{ForceP} [_{FocusP} **comprou**_i [_{PolP} **comprou**_i [_{FinP} ... [_{FP} [_{VP} *t*_i]]]]]]]

In conclusion, we observe two patterns when expressing polarity: on the one hand, there are languages, for example Spanish, Catalan or Italian that emphasise polarity particles so as to convey either a positive or a negative meaning.

On the other hand, there is another pattern represented in our work by Portuguese and Celtic languages that focalises the main verb of the question in order to answer emphatically.

However, in both cases, the syntactic analysis is very similar. Then, the reader can observe that there is a pattern that languages tend to follow when expressing polarity. Further research should be done on this field, checking other languages and their formula in order to express polarity. Also, it should be tested whether this formula fits in the analysis proposed in this work, or not.

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