June 26th-28th The syntactic variation of Catalan and Spanish dialects

Microvariation of dins in Catalan
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Goal:

To show that by means of a fine-grained structure it is possible to explain the microvariation in the use of apparently similar lexical items in different varieties.

We take as an example the case of dins in Catalan and Majorcan.

1. Introduction and data

- The use of dins presents certain differences across dialects of Catalan. We distinguish two varieties:

  a. Catalan:

    (1) En Joan és dins (de) l’habitació.

    \(\rightarrow\) En Joan és (*de) dins.

    ‘Joan is inside (of) (the room)’

  b. Majorcan:

    (2) En Joan està dins (*de) s’habitació

    \(\rightarrow\) En Joan està *(de)dins.

    ‘Joan is inside (of) (the room)’
2. General structure of spatial expressions

- Assuming a Path-Place structure (Jackendoff 1983) it is not possible to explain the contrasts between *dins* in Catalan and Majorcan:

\[
(3) \quad \text{PathP} \\
\quad \text{Path} \quad \text{PlaceP} \\
\qquad \text{Place} \quad (de)dins
\]

- *dins* would lexicalize *Place* in both cases. Where would *de* be?

- We assume a structure in line with Svenonius (2010):

\[
(4) \quad \text{RelP} \\
\quad \text{Figure} \quad \text{Rel’} \\
\quad \quad \text{Rel} \quad \text{AxPartP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \text{AxPart} \quad \text{RegP} \\
\quad \quad \quad \quad \text{Reg} \quad \text{DP}
\]

**DP:** it represents the entity that becomes the Ground of the spatial relationship

**Reg(ion):** it gives the points of space the entity (DP) occupies.

**Ax(ial)Part:** it gives a subpart of the Region.

**Rel(ation):** it gives a relationship between a Figure and a Ground \(\rightarrow\) *Place*
This structure allows to determine the exact part of the structure that lexical items spell out:

(5) 

→ In line with a *laissez-faire* approach (Starke 2004), not all the projections need to be present, but they have to appear in the same order.

3. The case of *bajo* in Spanish

-The lexical item *bajo* appears in contexts like the following in Spanish:

(6)  

a. La pelota está *bajo* la mesa.  
   ‘The ball is under the table.’  

b. La pelota está *debajo* de la mesa.  
   the ball is below of the table

There are three important differences between *debajo* and *bajo*:

1. The presence of *de* preceding the DP with *debajo*, unlike with *bajo*:

(7)  

a. La pelota está bajo (*de) la mesa.  

b. La pelota está debajo *(de) la mesa  
   the ball is under/below (of) the table
2. The possibility of omission. Only with *debajo* the Ground can be omitted.

(8) a. La pelota está bajo *(la mesa).
    b. La pelota está debajo (de la mesa).

    the ball is under/below (of the table)

3. The presence of *de-* preceding *bajo* in the case of *debajo*.

   - How do we explain this?

→ *debajo* lexicalizes *AxPart* (in line with Fábregas 2007), unlike *bajo*

→ The two first properties of *debajo* can be explained by the presence of *AxPart* (cf. Romeu, in preparation). The nominal origin of *AxPart* explains:

   - that elements that lexicalize *AxPart* can appear alone.

   - that a genitive marker is needed to combine it with a DP.

→ If *bajo* can lexicalize *AxPart* in cases like *debajo*, but it doesn’t lexicalize it always, as in the cases of *bajo*, its internal structure must be at least the following, according to the anchor condition (Abels and Muriungi 2008, Caha 2009, Pantcheva 2011):

(9) \[
\text{AxPartP} \\
\text{AxPart} \quad \text{XP} \\
\text{X}
\]
The Anchor Condition: In a lexical entry, the feature which is lowest in the functional sequence must be matched against the syntactic structure.

Caha (2009:89)

- According to the structure above, we assume that this $XP$ is $RegP$:

(11)

\[
\text{AxPartP} \\
\text{AxPart} \quad \text{RegP} \\
\text{RegP} \\
\]

So the maximal structure of $bajo$ is the one in (11):

(12)

\[
\text{AxPartP} \\
\text{AxPart} \quad \text{RegP} \\
\text{bajo} \quad \text{RegP} \\
\]

- By the superset principle (Caha 2009, Pantcheva 2011) it is possible to lexicalize only $Reg$, if there is no other lexical item that can lexicalize only $Reg$ (Elsewhere condition):

(13)

\[
\text{RegP} \\
\text{Reg} \quad \text{DP} \\
\text{bajo} \\
\]

The Superset Principle: A phonological exponent is inserted into a node if its lexical entry has a (sub-)constituent which matches that node.

Caha (2009:67)
- If *bajo* lexicalizes *AxPart* and *Reg*, *Rel* is empty in cases like *bajo*:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{RelP} \\
\text{Rel} & \text{RegP} \\
\emptyset & \text{Reg} \\
\text{bajo} & \text{DP} \\
\end{array}
\]

- *la mesa*

- One would expect that it could be occupied. This is what happens with elements like *de* or *a* in cases like *debajo* or *abajo*:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{RelP} \\
\text{Rel} \\
\text{de} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{AxPartP} \\
\text{AxPart} \\
\text{bajo} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Reg} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{de la mesa} \\
\end{array}
\end{array}
\end{array}
\]

- *By itself, *bajo* doesn’t lexicalize *Rel*, because of the anchor condition:

\[\rightarrow\text{If it lexicalizes *Reg*, it can’t lexicalize *Rel* unless it lexicalizes also *Axpart*}\]

**Main ideas:**

\[\rightarrow\text{The nominal origin of *AxPart* allows to omit the Ground:}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(17)} \\
a. \text{La pelota está bajo *(la mesa).*} \\
b. \text{La pelota está debajo (de la mesa).} \\
\text{‘The ball is under/ below (the table)’}
\end{array}
\]
The presence of *AxPart requires the presence of genitive case in the Ground:

(18) La pelota está debajo *(de) la mesa.

3. Analysis of *dins in Catalan and Majorcan

a. Catalan:

(19) En Joan és dins (de) l’habitació.

→ En Joan és *(de) dins.

‘Joan is inside (of) (the room)’

b. Majorcan:

(20) En Joan està dins (*de) s’habitació

→ En Joan està *(de) dins.

‘Joan is inside (of) (the room)’

Main differences:

- *dins can’t combine with genitive in Majorcan, unless it is preceded by *de
- the Ground can’t be omitted in Majorcan, unless *dins is preceded by *de

→ Does *dins lexicalize a different position in Catalan and Majorcan?

- Catalan

(21) a. En Joan és dins (de) l’habitació.
    b. En Joan és dins.
- To explain the two possibilities in (21)a, it is necessary to assume that dins can lexicalize AxPart or not.

→ Then it has to lexicalize Reg and can’t lexicalize Rel:

→ In Catalan dins, like bajo lexicalizes AxPart and Reg

(22)

```
AxPartP
   /
  / \AxPart
   \ RegP
     / \Reg
     \  
dins
```

Is it possible to have an element lexicalizing Rel?

→ This can be seen in Majorcan:

(23) dedins

- Majorcan

(24) a. En Joan està dins (*de) s’habitació
    b. En Joan està *(de)dins.

Here it seems that dins is used as Reg and AxPart

(25) En Joan està dins (*de) s’habitació

(26)

```
RelP
  /\Rel
   \  
    \Ø
RegP
  /\Reg
   \  
    \dins
      \  
       \  s’habitació
`
(27) En Joan està *(de)dins.

(28) \[
\text{RelP} \\
\text{Rel} \\
\text{de} \\
\text{dins} \\
\{ \\
\text{AxPart} \\
\text{Reg} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{Ø}
\}
\]

*it could be possible to think that *dedins is the form for AxPart+Reg and *dins the form for Reg only but then it wouldn’t be possible to explain cases like *dedins s’habitació or *dedins jo

*Open question:

Why isn’t *dins preceded by *de in Catalan?

→ It could be the case that the d- preceding –ins lexicalizes Rel

→ from Latin de ĭntus

- then it is necessary to assume that it always lexicalizes Rel and, thus, it always has to lexicalize AxPart.

→ In that case, *dins l’habitació has a non-pronounced *de: *dins de l’habitació.

Summary:

- Unlike Catalan, Majorcan needs *de preceding *dins when *dins lexicalizes AxPart

- In Majorcan *dins can lexicalize AxPart or not, but it always lexicalizes Region.

- This is the same in Catalan, unless we consider that d- lexicalizes Rel
4. Some predictions

- It should be possible to find a case in which *dins* is only *Reg* and there is an explicit element lexicalizing *Rel*:

  → Another possibility in Majorcan:

  (29) En Joan està (a) dedins (?de) s’habitació

(30) \[ \text{RelP} \]

\[ \text{Rel} \quad \text{de} \quad \text{RegP} \]

\[ \text{RegP} \quad \text{dins} \quad \text{DP} \]

\[ s’habitació \]

→ Other cases:

(31) embajo la tierra (Leonese dialect)

- If an element lexicalizes *AxPart* its complement can be omitted and there must be a genitive marker:

(32) a. debajo de mí

b. *debajo {yo/mí}*

*It should be possible to have *Reg* elements with nominative
This is actually possible in colloquial Majorcan:

(33) Tenc un sentiment d'ansietat (a) (de)dins jo que no aguant més.
‘I have a feeling of anxiety inside me that I can’t stand anymore.’

- If an element lexicalizes Reg it will always have spatial meaning. If not, it can appear in non-spatial contexts:

→ In Spanish, sobre, which only lexicalizes Rel, can be used in these cases:

(34) El libro trata sobre mí.
‘The book is about me.’

→ In Majorcan, they have damunt for spatial cases and sobre for non spatial. Only sobre can appear in these cases.

(35) a. Es llibre està {damunt/*sobre} meu.
‘The book is on me.’
b. Es llibre és {sobre/*damunt} mi.
‘The book is about me.’

- Interestingly, in these cases it is possible to have mi, unlike in the case of bajo or dins in Catalan and Majorcan:

(36) dins meu/*dins mi

- Elements that lexicalize Reg should be different from those that don’t:

→ bajo always has a spatial meaning, unlike sobre:

(37) Juan habló sobre historia.
‘Juan talked about history.’

→ It doesn’t combine with oblique case:

(38) a. La nube está sobre mí.
b. *La pelota está bajo mí.
‘The ball is over/under me.’
→ sobre lexicalizes only Rel:

(39) \[ \text{RelP} \quad \underbrace{}_{\text{Rel}} \]

- This could explain why sobre doesn’t appear as an AxPart:

(40) a. *desobre, *asobre \[ \text{\rightarrow encima, arriba (‘above, up’)} \]
b. debajo, abajo

**Conclusions**

→ By means of a fine-grained structure, it is possible to explain subtle properties of lexical items and compare them with similar lexical items across very close dialects.

→ It is also possible to predict other possibilities in different dialects.

→ By means of principles of lexicalization like the superset principle or the anchor condition it is possible to restrict the possibilities.

**References**


