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22nd Colloquium on Generative Grammar

The Lexicalization of Location in Spanish

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0. Preliminary questions and goals

Goal: To explore the internal structure of locative constructions in order to explain the differences between Spanish lexical items like *a/en* (\approx ‘at, in’), *abajo/debajo* (\approx ‘down, under’) or *aquí, allí / acá, allá* (\approx ‘here, there’).

- Main questions:

a) *a* in locative constructions:

Why can *a*, which is generally used for directional cases in Spanish, appear in certain locative constructions?

- (1)
- a. El vaso está **en** la mesa
 - b. *El vaso está **a** la mesa
‘The glass is on the table’

 - c. El vaso está **en** el borde de la mesa
 - d. El vaso está **al** borde de la mesa
‘The glass is at the table’s edge’

→ *a* lexicalizes *Terminal*

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b) *en* in directional constructions:

Why can't *en* combine with directional Vs like *ir* ('to go')?

- (2) a. Juan fue **a** la biblioteca
b. *Juan fue **en** la biblioteca
'Juan went to the library'

→ *en* doesn't lexicalize *Terminal*

c) *abajo* (≈ 'down') and *debajo* (≈ 'under')

What are the differences between elements like *abajo* and elements like *debajo* due to?

- (3) a. La caja está debajo (de la mesa)
'The box is under the table'
b. La caja está abajo (*de la mesa)
'The box is down there'

- (4) La caja está más {abajo/*debajo}
'The box is further down'

→ *abajo* lexicalizes *Terminal* vs. *debajo*, although both lexicalize *AxPart*.

d) *allí/allá* ('there')

- (5) La caja está más {allá/*allí}
'The box is further'

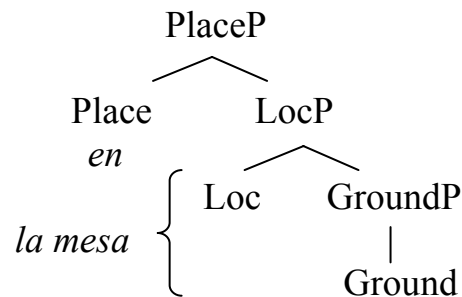
→ *allá* lexicalizes *Terminal* vs. *allí*

→ There is a feature *Terminal* that can explain the main differences between these elements.

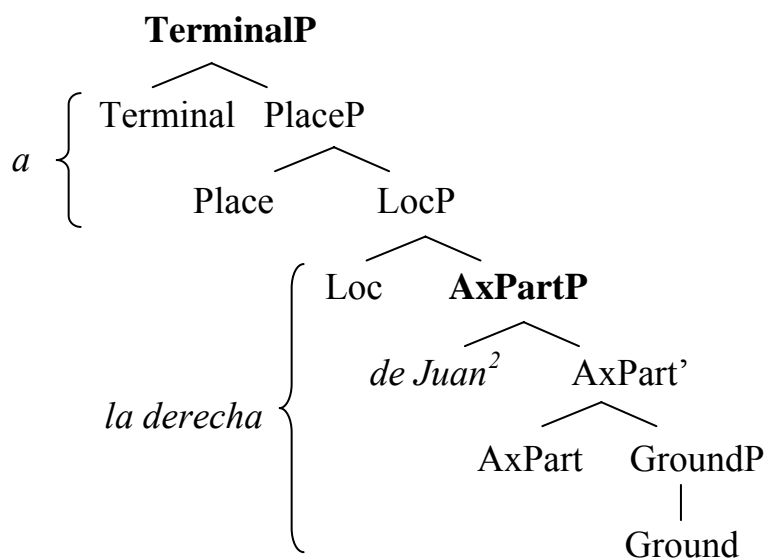
→ *Terminal* takes a point in the space and makes it possible to connect it to other in a single event

1. Introduction: The structure of location

(6) *en la mesa*



(7) *a la derecha de Juan* ('to the right of Juan')



2. A and en

(8) a. El vaso está {**en/*a**} la mesa
 'The glass is on the table'

b. El vaso está {**en/a**} el borde de la mesa
 'The glass is at the table's edge'

² I assume that this is the position of these complements for reasons that I will not explain here. Lexicalization of these elements takes place by a process called 'slipping'.

2.1. Terminal

*Terminal*³: it takes a point in the space and makes it possible to connect it to other in a single event



- It appears generally in directional constructions:

(10) John went (from Madrid) to Barcelona

- How is it possible to have two locations in a single event in locative constructions?

→ By means of a) *AxParts*, b) Scales and c) other (pragmatic) factors

a) *AxParts* → *al borde de la mesa*

Other locative cases in which *a* is possible:

(11) lado ‘side’, límite ‘limit’, margen ‘margin’, fondo ‘end, bottom’, término ‘terminal’, vera ‘side of a river’, entrada ‘entrance’, salida ‘exit’, frente ‘front’, norte ‘north’, derecha ‘right’...

(Fábregas 2007)

→ What all these elements have in common is that they can lexicalize *Ax(ial) Part*

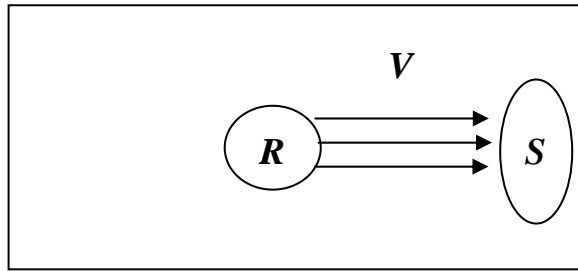
Axial Part: it gives a location related to other by means of vectors

Svenonius (2010:132): “a function from eigenplaces to subparts of them”

→ *Axial Part* (Svenonius 2006, based on Jackendoff 1996 and Marr 1982)

³ I take the name and the idea that is necessary to distinguish between central and terminal coincidence in spatial constructions from Hale (1986).

(12)



R= Reference point

S= Subpart

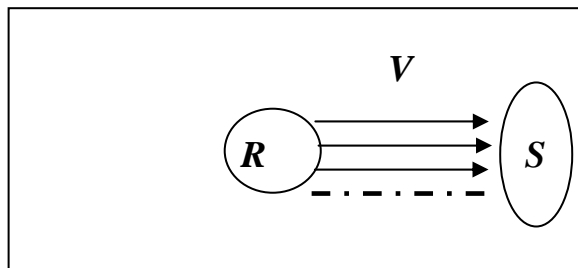
V= Vectors

- Cinque (2010): “[AxParts] define a place by projecting vectors onto one of the possible axes that depart from the object that provide the reference point”.

AxPart implies two locations (*R* and *S*) and *Terminal* needs two locations.

→ *Terminal* can be present in the structure when there is an *AxPart* in locative constructions

(13)



- *a* vs. *en* in Fábregas (2007:178):

(14) Locative *en* expresses a place relationship where the figure is contained in the ground or supported by it.

(15) Locative *a* denotes a place relationship where the figure is in contact with (at least) one point of the **boundary** of the ground.

→ **Our claim:** Locative *a* denotes a place relationship where the Figure is in a point of the space which is connected to a reference point. A *Terminal* projection is present.

- **Advantages** of a *Terminal* analysis:

→ Non-boundary cases:

- (16) a. La biblioteca está **a** la vuelta de mi casa.
‘The library is around my house’
- b. La iglesia está **a** mitad de camino.
‘The church is half-way’

→ Measure:

- (17) El vaso está 5 cm. más {a/*en}el borde
‘The glass is 5 cm. more to the edge’

- If *el borde* is the boundary, it shouldn't be possible to measure the location as in
**Juan fue 5 metros más a su casa* (‘Juan went 5 meters more to his house’).

→ Cases in which boundaries are independent grounds:

- (18) El vaso está en el borde de la mesa
‘The glass is on the table’s edge’

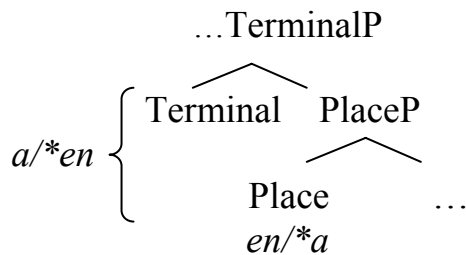
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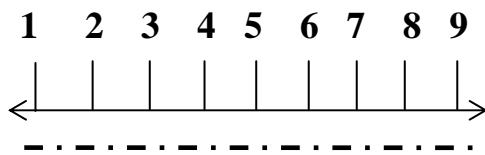
- (20) María está {en/*a} el peligroso borde de la piscina.
‘Mary is on the dangerous edge of the swimming-pool’

- (21) La mesa está {en/*a} la parte derecha de la habitación.
‘The desk is on the right side of the room’

(22)



b) Scales



(23) El agua está a 5 grados.
'The water is 5 degrees'

- each point of a scale is connected to the others → *Terminal* is possible

- Others:

(24) máximo 'maximum', mínimo 'minimum', principio 'beginning', final 'end',
mitad 'middle' (Fábregas 2007:179)

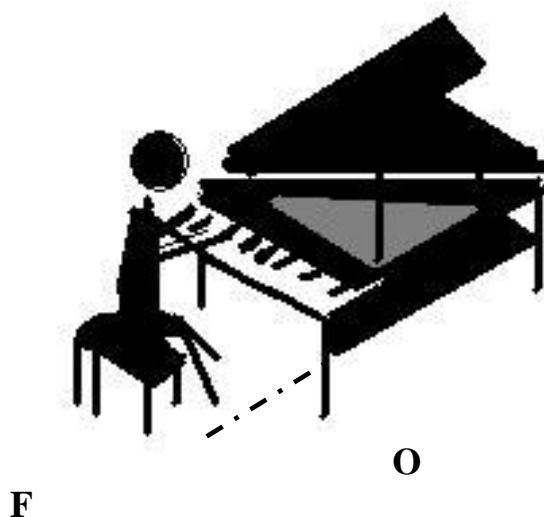
c) Others (by means of pragmatics?)

(25) piano 'piano', teléfono 'telephone', sol 'sun', volante 'steering wheel'...
(Fábregas 2007:179-180)

(26) Juan está al piano.
'Juan is playing the piano'

- In these cases, although there may be contact, there are two points: the place where the object (O) is and the place where the Figure (F) is.

(27)



2.2. stative-possessive → *pertenecer a* ('to belong to')

- (28) Este libro pertenece a la Biblioteca Nacional.
'This book belongs to the National Library'



2.3. Directional constructions:

- (29) Juan fue {**a**/***en**} la biblioteca
'Juan went to the library'

→ Verbs like *ir* obligatorily need two locations.

- (30) Juan entró {**a/en**} la biblioteca
'Juan went into the library'

→ Verbs like *entrar* can combine with *en* because they imply the second location. In the case with *a*, *entrar* is just interpreted as moving from an outer to an inner part and there is no *res*⁴.

- Then, is *a* locative or directional?

- Locative: Fábregas (2007), Real Puigdollers (2010)⁵
- Directional: Demonte (2011)

→ **Our claim:** it is neither locative nor directional. It lexicalizes *Terminal*, which is generally related to directionality.

→ *a* (obligatorily) lexicalizes *Terminal* in Spanish, vs. other Romance languages as Catalan, French or Italian⁶.

→ *en* can't lexicalize *Terminal* in Spanish.

⁴ locative Ps with directional Vs are locative modifiers in *res* (see Ramchand 2008, Pantcheva 2007)

⁵ See also the *Structural Ambiguity Hypothesis* in Gehrke (2008)

⁶ See Bruccart (2010) for the possibility that *a* is used in other languages in normal locative contexts because of the absence of a verb like *estar* in Spanish, which can lexicalize *Terminal* by itself.

3. Debajo and abajo

debajo/abajo ≈ *under, down, below...*

Other pairs (see Fábregas 2006): *dentro/adentro* (≈ ‘inside’); *delante/a(de)lante* (≈ ‘in front’); *detrás/atrás* (≈ ‘behind’); *encima/arriba* (≈ ‘on (top of)’); *fuera/afuera* (≈ ‘outside’)

- Complement?

- (31) a. La caja está debajo (de la mesa)
‘The box is under the table’
b. La caja está abajo (*de la mesa)
‘The box is down there’

- Quantification and Measure:

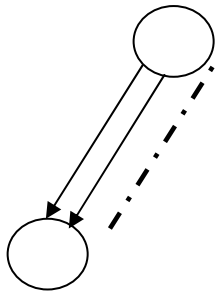
- (32) La caja está más {abajo/*debajo}
‘The box is further down’

- In directional contexts:

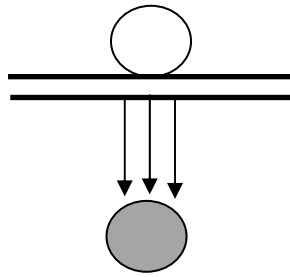
- (33) Los niños fueron {abajo/#debajo}
‘The kids went {down/under}’
- (34) a. Los niños corrieron hasta {abajo/#debajo}
‘The kids ran all the way to the bottom’
b. Los niños corrieron {hacia/para} {abajo/#debajo}
‘The kids ran towards the bottom’
- (35) Juan se metió {debajo/*abajo}
‘Juan got under’
- (36) Juan miró {abajo/debajo}
‘Juan looked {down/under}’
- (37) Los niños corrieron montaña {abajo/*debajo}
‘The kids ran down the mountain’

→ Although both of them lexicalize *AxPart* only *abajo* allows *Terminal*.

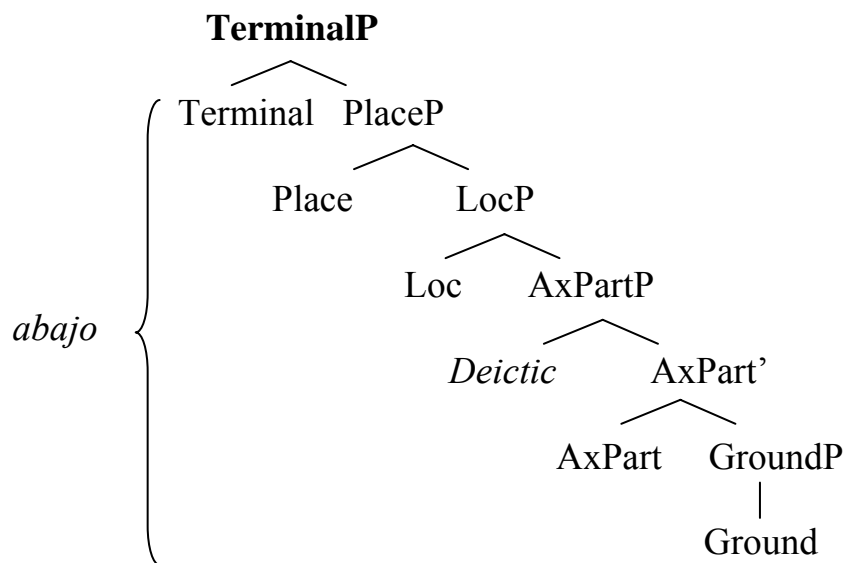
(38) *abajo*:



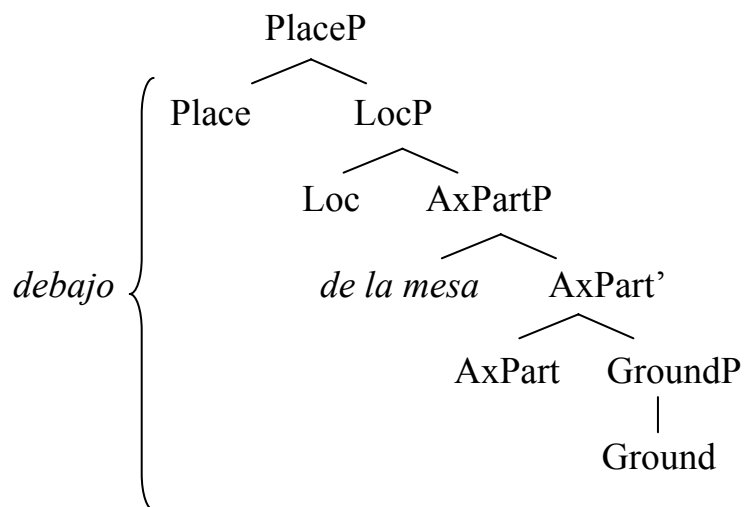
*debajo*⁷:



(39)



(40) *debajo de la mesa*:



⁷ It could be useful to look at the origin of *debajo*. The prefix *de-* can mean separation or dissociation: *delimitar*.

→ Elements like *debajo* correspond to isolated areas, defined by means of vectors.
→ Elements like *abajo* correspond to areas connected to a referential one and, hence, it is possible for them to lexicalize *Terminal*.

4. *aquí/allí; acá/allá*

- (41) a. La casa está más {allá/*allí}
‘The house is further’
- (42) a. Juan fue hasta {allá/allí}
‘Juan went all the way to there’
b. Juan fue {hacia/para} {allá/#allí}
‘Juan went towards there’
- (43) Juan se metió {allí/*allá}
‘Juan got inside there’

→ *Allí* corresponds to an isolated area, related but not connected to another.
→ *Allá* corresponds to an area connected to other. *Terminal* is, thus, possible.

5. Open questions and conclusions

1. Are there signs of *Terminal* in other languages?
 - Illative in North Sámi used for locations of change of state (Svenonius 2011)⁸:

(44) Nieida bissánii Romssii
girl remained Tromsø.ILL
‘the girl remained in Tromsø Svenonius (2011:6)
 - koo in Hindi-Urdu (Son 2007, Ahmed 2006)?
 - English use of *to* in locative constructions: *to the left* and *to the right*
 - Other G-Locations (see Cresswell 1978, Svenonius 2010)?

⁸ Something similar seems to happen in Finnish (see Svenonius 2011 and Fong 1997)

2. D in AxParts: *la derecha, el borde...* vs *in front of*:
 - Svenonius (2006) claims that *AxParts* are very similar to nouns so they can share certain properties, one of which is the presence of articles.
 - With phrasal spell-out this is not a problem.
 - There is no **a derecha*

3. The place of complements: *a la derecha de Juan – a su derecha*

Conclusions

→ A cartographic approach is useful to capture minimal semantic components within the syntactic structure.

→ It is necessary to establish a *Terminal* projection in the syntactic structure that makes possible for a place to be connected to other one in a single event.

→ *Terminal* can explain some minimal differences in the properties of lexical items related to location in Spanish:

- *a, abajo* and *acá/allá* lexicalize *Terminal*.
- *en, debajo* and *aquí/allí* don't lexicalize *Terminal*.

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