

Reconstruction and Condition C in Spanish: A Non-structural Account

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1. Introduction

In Spanish, there is an important difference between *pro* and overt pronouns with respect to reconstruction. Whereas *pro* triggers Condition C reconstruction effects, overt pronouns do not, as illustrated in the following Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) examples:¹

- (1) a. * $[\text{El libro de Juan}_i]$, *pro*_i lo leyó *t* ayer.
[the book of Juan_i] *pro*_i CL read *t*_i yesterday
'Juan's_i book, he_i read yesterday.'
- b. $[\text{El libro de Juan}_i]$, lo leyó *el*_i *t* ayer.
[the book of Juan_i] CL read he_i *t*_i yesterday
'Juan's_i book, he_i read yesterday.'

In both examples, a DP containing a name is CLLD-ed from a position c-commanded by a subject pronoun that corefers with the name. As expected, this causes a Condition C reconstruction effect in (1a), where the subject pronoun is *pro*. Surprisingly, no effect arises if the subject pronoun is overt, as in (1b).²

Based on similar facts in Italian, Cecchetto (2000) proposes that the explanation of this contrast has to do with available reconstruction sites for CLLD and with structural differences in the positions available to overt and covert subject pronouns. I argue that this is not the right explanation, at least for Spanish. In particular, I show that the puzzle is an illusion: the contrast illustrated in (1) is not a contrast in reconstruction. In both types of sentences, reconstruction results in essentially the same structure, and any possible difference in the relative position of the subject pronoun is not a factor in accounting for the contrast. I propose that the difference is due to constraints on *Vehicle Change* (Fiengo and May 1994, Safir 1999). Specifically, whereas *Vehicle Change* can rescue a potential Condition C violation in sentences like (1b), it cannot in (1a). Reconstruction in both examples results in the following structure, which, under standard assumptions, should induce a Condition C violation:

- (2) [... Juan_i] *pro*_i/*he*_i ... [... Juan_i]

However, Safir proposes that a name in a lower (reconstructed) copy of a moved phrase can undergo *Vehicle Change*, which, in effect, makes it behave as a pronoun for the purposes of Binding Theory.

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¹Several authors, including Cinque (1990) and Iatridou (1995), have argued that CLLD does not involve movement from a clause-internal to an external (left peripheral) position. Following Zubizarreta 1993, 1998, Aoun and Benmamoun 1998 and Cecchetto 2000, I take the presence of reconstruction effects in this construction to be strong evidence for an analysis in terms of movement.

²I adopt the Copy Theory of movement (Chomsky 1993), which explains why reconstruction effects can arise. For ease of exposition, I use traces instead of full copies in most examples.

In some cases, this can result in rescuing the sentence for violating Condition C. Drawing on evidence from patterns of Condition C violations in ellipsis constructions, I propose that the properties of a c-commanding coreferring pronoun can have an effect the applicability of VC to a name. In particular, VC is possible if this pronoun is overt, but not if it is covert. This accounts for the contrast presented above, and for an intricate set of data to be discussed throughout the paper.

This paper is organized as follows. After a brief presentation of Cecchetto's analysis in section 2, section 3 provides arguments against adopting that analysis for the Spanish data by showing (i) that the specific position of the subject pronoun is not relevant, and (ii) that the contrast is not particular to CLLD. Section 4 presents further arguments having to do with certain contrasts between covert and overt pronouns. Based on these contrasts and on parallel effects in ellipsis constructions, a Vehicle Change analysis is provided in section 5. Finally, section 6 discusses other potential explanations for the facts, and section 7 concludes the paper with directions for future research.

2. Cecchetto 2000

According to Cecchetto (2000), a pro subject in Italian triggers a Condition C effect with respect to an R-expression contained in CLLD-ed phrase that is c-commanded by pro:³

- (3) * $[L'opera \text{ prima di uno scrittore}_i] \text{ pro}_i \text{ la scrive } t \text{ sempre (volenter)}_i$.
 $[\text{the-work first of a writer}_i] \text{ pro}_i \text{ CL writes } t \text{ always (with-pleasure)}$
 'The first work of a writer_i, he_i always writes with (with pleasure).'

On the other hand, an overt subject pronoun triggers Condition C reconstruction effects *only if it is in preverbal position*; no effect arises if the pronoun is postverbal:

- (4) a. $??[L'opera \text{ prima di uno scrittore}_i] \text{ lui}_i \text{ la scrive sempre } t \text{ (volenter)}_i$.
 $[\text{the-work first of a writer}_i] \text{ he}_i \text{ CL writes always } t \text{ (with-pleasure)}$
 'The first work of a writer_i, he_i always writes (with pleasure).'
- b. $[L'opera \text{ prima di uno scrittore}_i] \text{ la scrive sempre lui}_i \text{ } t$.
 $[\text{the-work first of a writer}_i] \text{ CL writes always he}_i \text{ } t$
 'The first work of a writer_i, he_i always writes.'

In Cecchetto's analysis, the contrast between preverbal and postverbal subjects is crucial, and he argues that this is part of a more general pattern by which CLLD-ed phrases display reconstruction effects with respect to preverbal subjects, but not with respect to postverbal subjects (see Zubizarreta 1993, 1998 and Aoun and Benmamoun 1998 for similar arguments from Spanish and Lebanese Arabic, respectively.)

Cecchetto's analysis of the Italian facts rests on the following proposals:

- CLLD-ed phrases reconstruct to a position between Agr_SP and VP, i.e. the position where the clitic is found on the surface. Specifically, adopting a version of Torrego's (1992) analysis of cliticization (see also Uriagereka 1995, Belletti 1999), he proposes that the CLLD-ed phrase XP and the clitic form a BigDP that is generated in an IP-internal (argumental) position. From this position, XP is moved to its left peripheral surface position, and BigDP, containing a lower copy of XP, moves to an intermediate position between Agr_SP and VP. Assuming the Copy Theory of movement, the resulting structure is:⁴

³In the Italian examples, Cecchetto uses indefinite DPs, rather than definites or names, as representatives for R-expressions. Nevertheless, he notes that judgments do not change if definites or names are used instead (see Cecchetto 2000:fn. 4.) It is not clear to me why this is necessary, since Condition C rules out *all* types of referential dependencies, including accidental coreference, between an R-expression and a c-commanding pronoun (see, e.g. Chomsky 1981, Reinhart 1983.) Accordingly, I will simply use names in the Spanish examples throughout the paper.

⁴For convenience, I enclose lower copies of chains in angled brackets ⟨...⟩, and, where relevant, distinguish

- (5) $XP_1 \dots [Agr_S \dots [BigDP \langle XP_2 \rangle CL] \dots [VP \langle [BigDP \langle XP_3 \rangle CL] \rangle \dots]]$

From both potential reconstruction sites for the CLLD-ed phrase, XP_2 and XP_3 , Cecchetto proposes that only XP_2 is an actual reconstruction site (see also Zubizarreta 1993, 1998 and Aoun and Benmamoun 1998.)

- As is standardly assumed, preverbal subjects are VP-external (in the specifier of Agr_{SP} .) and postverbal subjects are VP-internal.

Taken together, these two proposals derive the desired generalization. Since the only copy of the CLLD-ed phrase that is available for reconstruction is the one between Agr_{SP} and VP, reconstruction effects can only result from the interaction with a preverbal (VP-external) subject, not with a postverbal (VP-internal) subject. In particular, in (4), the R-expression in the reconstructed CLLD-ed phrase is c-commanded by the preverbal subject pronoun, but not by the postverbal one:

- (6) a. $*[Agr_S \text{ lui}_i \dots [BigDP \dots \text{uno scrittore}_i CL] VP]$
 $[Agr_S \text{ he}_i \dots [BigDP \dots \text{a writer}_i CL] VP]$
 b. $[Agr_S \dots [BigDP \dots \text{uno scrittore}_i CL] [VP \text{ lui}_i \dots]]$
 $[Agr_S \dots [BigDP \dots \text{a writer}_i CL] [VP \text{ he}_i \dots]]$

With respect to covert subject pronouns, Cecchetto (2000), following Guasti 1996 and Cardinaletti 1997, assumes that *pro* in Romance must always be in a VP-external position. This derives that *pro* behaves like preverbal subjects for the purposes of reconstruction of CLLD-ed phrases. In particular, it derives that the null subject in (3) c-commands the R-expression in the reconstructed CLLD-ed phrase, which causes a Condition C violation:

- (7) $*[Agr_S \text{ pro}_i \dots [BigDP \dots \text{uno scrittore}_i CL] VP]$
 $[Agr_S \text{ pro}_i \dots [BigDP \dots \text{a writer}_i CL] VP]$

To summarize this section, Cecchetto takes the particular pattern of Condition C effects found in Italian CLLD to be part of a more general asymmetry between preverbal and postverbal subjects with respect to reconstruction effects. His analysis of this general pattern, which rests on fairly standard assumptions, derives the Condition C facts discussed above in a natural way. In the following section, I argue that this analysis of the Condition C facts cannot be correct, at least for Spanish.⁵

3. Movement and Condition C in Spanish

The first clue that the analysis presented above is not right for Spanish is the fact that there is no asymmetry between preverbal and postverbal subject pronouns. Neither triggers a Condition C violation:

- (8) a. $[\text{El libro de Juan}_i]$, el_i $\text{lo leyó } t$ *ayer*.
 $[\text{the book of Juan}_i]$ he_i CL read t yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_{*i*} book, he_{*i*} read yesterday.’
 b. $[\text{El libro de Juan}_i]$, lo leyó el_i t *ayer*.
 $[\text{the book of Juan}_i]$ CL read he_i t yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_{*i*} book, he_{*i*} read yesterday.’

among copies of a chain by using subindices.

⁵The evidence to be presented in the following section shows that in Spanish, there is no preverbal/postverbal subject asymmetry with respect to Condition C reconstruction effects. However, this evidence does not contradict Cecchetto’s claims about other types of reconstruction asymmetries between preverbal and postverbal subjects (see, in particular, Zubizarreta 1993, 1998, for similar data in Spanish.) This type of analysis does seem to be correct for these other asymmetries.

Nevertheless, a null subject does trigger a Condition C violation:

- (9) *[El libro de Juan_i], *pro*_i lo leyó *t* ayer.
 [the book of Juan_i] *pro*_i CL read *t* yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i read yesterday.’

This implies that in Spanish, there is a genuine contrast between overt and covert pronouns with respect to Condition C reconstruction effects, and that this contrast is not related to possible differences in the structural position of the subject.

Further evidence that the structural position of the subject is not relevant comes from more complex cases. In the following example, the CLLD-ed phrase originates in an embedded clause, and as expected, the null subject in the matrix clause triggers a Condition C effect:

- (10) *[El libro de Juan_i], *pro*_i cree [que Pedro lo leyó *t* ayer]
 [the book of Juan_i] *pro*_i thinks [that Pedro CL read *t* yesterday]
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i thinks Pedro read yesterday.’

However, no Condition C effect arises if the matrix subject is overt, regardless of its position:

- (11) a. [El libro de Juan_i], el_i cree [que Pedro lo leyó *t* ayer]
 [the book of Juan_i] he_i thinks [that Pedro CL read *t* yesterday]
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i thinks Pedro read yesterday.’
 b. [El libro de Juan_i], cree el_i [que Pedro lo leyó *t* ayer]
 [the book of Juan_i] thinks he_i [that Pedro CL read *t* yesterday]
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i thinks Pedro read yesterday.’

Since the reconstructed copy of the CLLD-ed phrase is in the embedded clause, the name contained in it is c-commanded by both the preverbal and the postverbal overt subject pronoun (and by *pro*), so we would expect both to trigger a Condition C violation, contrary to fact. In other words, by making the CLLD-ed phrase originate in an embedded clause, we ensure that the difference in structural position between preverbal and postverbal subjects is irrelevant. Even in this case, overt subject pronouns, as opposed to *pro*, do not trigger a Condition C violation.

Another piece of evidence against Cecchetto’s (2000) analysis comes from the fact that the same asymmetry arises in other types of \bar{A} -constructions. In particular, in both *wh*-questions and relativization, a covert subject triggers a Condition C violation with respect to a name in the moved phrase, but an overt preverbal or postverbal subject does not:

- (12) No sé ...
 not I-know ...
 a. *[qué libro de Juan_i] *pro*_i leyó *t* ayer.
 [what book of Juan_i] *pro*_i read *t* yesterday
 b. [qué libro de Juan_i] el_i leyó *t* ayer.
 [what book of Juan_i] he_i read *t* yesterday
 c. [qué libro de Juan_i] leyó el_i *t* ayer.
 [what book of Juan_i] read he_i *t* yesterday
 ‘I don’t know which book of Juan’s_i he_i read yesterday.’
- (13) a. *el [libro de Juan_i] que *pro*_i leyó *t* ayer.
 the [book of Juan_i] that *pro*_i read *t* yesterday
 ‘the book of Juan’s_i that he_i read yesterday’
 b. el [libro de Juan_i] que el_i leyó *t* ayer.
 the [book of Juan_i] that he_i read *t* yesterday
 ‘the book of Juan’s_i that he_i read yesterday’

- c. el [libro de Juan_i] que leyó el_i *t* ayer.
 the [book of Juan_i] that read he_i *t* yesterday
 ‘the book of Juan’s_i that he_i read yesterday’

This is exactly the same pattern that is found in CLLD. Since Cecchetto’s analysis is particular to CLLD (in particular, it relies crucially on the syntax of cliticization), it does not extend straightforwardly to other \bar{A} -constructions.

In this section, I have shown that Cecchetto’s analysis cannot account for the Spanish facts. As can be seen in the examples above, there is no asymmetry between preverbal and postverbal subjects in Condition C reconstruction effects. Rather, the asymmetry holds between overt and covert subject pronouns.

4. Reconstruction with covert and overt pronouns

The facts presented in the previous section lead us to question the validity of the assumption that the contrast between overt and covert pronouns is due to properties of the syntax of reconstruction. In this section, I provide evidence that, indeed, the facts cannot be analyzed purely in terms of reconstruction.

The argument is presented as follows. First, relying on well-known properties of the syntax of reconstruction, I argue that lack of coreference in the sentences with *pro* is indeed the result of reconstruction. Second, as we will see, the possibility of coreference with overt pronouns remains even in cases in which reconstruction is forced for other reasons. Taken together, these two sets of facts make us conclude that there is some factor other than reconstruction that enables overt pronouns, but not covert ones, to corefer with the name contained in the moved phrase.

As is well-known, Condition C reconstruction effects are absent if the name is contained in an adjunct in the moved phrase (see van Riemsdijk and Williams 1981, Freidin 1986, Lebeaux 1988, Chomsky 1993).⁶ In the following English example, a *wh*-phrase containing a name in a relative clause (RC) is moved across an intervening pronoun; coreference between the pronoun and the name is possible:

- (14) [Which book [_{RC} that John_i wrote]] does he_i like *t* best?

Following Lebeaux 1988 and Chomsky 1993, I take this to show that an adjunct in a moved phrase need not be present in lower copies of the phrase. In (14), the RC containing the name need not be present in the lower copy of the *wh*-phrase. As a consequence, the subject pronoun *c*-commanding the lower copy does not force a Condition C violation.

In Spanish sentences with covert pronouns, the facts are the same:

- (15) ¿[Qué carta [_{RC} que le envié a Juan_i]] crees que *pro_i* recibió *t* ayer?
 [what letter [_{RC} that CL I.sent to Juan_i]] you-think that *pro_i* received *t* yesterday
 ‘Which letter that I sent to Juan_i do you think he_i received yesterday?’

As in the English example, the RC need not be present in the lower copy of the *wh*-phrase, so *pro* does not force a Condition C violation with respect to the name contained in the RC. On the other hand, a Condition C violation reappears if reconstruction is forced due to some other factor. This can occur if the RC also contains a pronoun that is interpreted as bound by a QP that intervenes between the two copies of the moved phrase (Lebeaux 1990):

⁶I follow Freidin 1986, Lebeaux 1988 and Chomsky 1993 in assuming that what is crucial for the absence of a Condition C reconstruction effect in (14) is that the name is contained in an adjunct in the moved phrase. If it is contained in an argument in the moved phrase, there is a reconstruction effect. This generalization has been shown to be problematic in several works, including Kuno 1997, McCawley 1998, Safir 1999 and Lasnik 2003:ch. 9, where it is shown that reconstruction effects with arguments are not always obligatory. As discussed in the next section, following Safir 1999, I assume that there is an argument/adjunct asymmetry, and that the absence of reconstruction effects with arguments in some cases is due to Vehicle Change.

- (16) *_i[Qué carta [RC que María_i le_j envió]] *pro*_i cree que [cada estudiante]_j recibió ayer?
 [what letter [RC that María_i CL_j sent]] *pro*_i think that [each student]_j received yesterday
 ‘Which letter that María_i sent to him_j does she_i think each student_j received yesterday?’

As represented schematically below, binding of the clitic pronoun *le* in the RC by the QP *cada estudiante* ‘each student’ forces reconstruction of the RC to a position below the QP. As a result, the name in the reconstructed RC is c-commanded by the coreferring *pro*, which causes a Condition C violation:

- (17) *... *pro*_i ... [each student]_j ... [RC ... María_i CL_j ...]
 Binding forces reconstruction of RC
 Reconstruction of RC triggers *Cond C

These data show that sentences containing *pro* behave as expected. In cases in which reconstruction is optional, as in (15), there is no Condition C violation. In cases in which reconstruction is forced, as in (16) and all examples in previous sections, Condition C is violated.

On the other hand, parallel data with overt pronouns show that they do not behave as expected with respect to Condition C in reconstruction contexts. Consider first a sentence in which reconstruction below an overt pronoun is forced for the purposes of variable binding:

- (18) No sé ...
 not I-know ...
 [qué carta [RC que Juan le_j envió]] ella cree que [cada estudiante]_j recibió *t* ayer.
 [what letter [RC that Juan CL_j sent]] she thinks that [each student]_j received *t* yesterday
 ‘I don’t know which letter that Juan sent to him_j she thinks each student_j received yesterday.’

Condition C is not relevant in this case. The clitic pronoun *le* in the RC is interpreted as bound by the QP *cada estudiante* ‘each student’, which forces reconstruction of the RC. As expected, the bound reading is possible, which shows that reconstruction below the overt matrix subject pronoun is possible.⁷ However, if we complicate the example so that reconstruction should result in a Condition C violation, the result is surprising:

- (19) No sé ...
 not I-know ...
 [qué carta que María_i le_j envió] ella_i cree que [cada estudiante]_j recibió *t* ayer.
 [what letter that María_i CL_j sent] she_i thinks that [each student]_j received *t* yesterday
 ‘I don’t know which letter that María_i sent to him_j she_i thinks each student_j received yesterday.’
 Binding forces reconstruction of RC below *she*
- (20) ... she_i ... [each student]_j ... [RC ... María_i CL_j ...]
 No Cond C violation!!!

As in the previous example, reconstruction of the RC is forced in order to obtain a bound interpretation for the clitic. Reconstruction places the name *María* in a position c-commanded by the coreferring pronoun *ella* ‘she’. We would thus expect coreference to be impossible. However, the sentence is perfectly grammatical under this interpretation: the sentence is acceptable in a situation in which *ella* ‘she’ refers to *María* and the clitic is bound by the QP.

To conclude this section, sentences with covert pronouns behave just as expected with respect to reconstruction effects. However, overt pronouns do not. In particular, they do not trigger a Condition C

⁷This example is evidence against a hypothetical analysis in which overt pronouns would somehow block reconstruction of moved phrases. Although that would correctly describe all the facts pertaining to the lack of Condition C effects, it would not explain why binding is possible in (18).

violation, even in cases where we make sure that there is reconstruction of the name to a position lower than the pronoun.

5. Toward a solution: Vehicle Change

The conclusion drawn in the previous section suggests that there is some factor not considered so far that enables sentences with overt pronouns to circumvent Condition C reconstruction effects, but which does not in sentences where the offending pronoun is covert. I propose that this other factor is the mechanism of Vehicle Change.

Another context where expected Condition C violations are absent is ellipsis, as illustrated in the following Spanish sluicing example:

- (21) a. Ayer, alguien habló de Juan_i, pero él_i no sabe quién.
 yesterday someone talked of Juan_i but he_i not knows who
 ‘Yesterday, someone talked about Juan_i, but he_i doesn’t know who.’
 b. ... él_i no sabe quién [TP habló de Juan_i]
 ... he_i not knows who [TP talked of Juan_i]

As schematized in (21b), the elided TP in (21a) contains a name that is c-commanded by a coreferring (overt) pronoun outside the ellipsis site. However, there seems to be no Condition C violation, since coreference is possible. Fiengo and May (1994) propose that this is due to a principle they dub *Vehicle Change* (VC), according to which nominals can be treated as nondistinct with respect to their pronominal status under ellipsis. In effect, this entails that names can behave as pronouns with respect to Binding Theory in elided phrases. In (21), there is no Condition C violation because *Juan* in the elided TP is treated as a pronoun.

Safir (1999) extends the operation of VC to movement chains (see also Henderson 2005.) Adopting the Copy Theory of movement, he proposes that elided (lower) copies of moved phrases can also be affected by VC, subject to constraints that are, at the moment, ill-understood (see Kuno 1997, McCawley 1998, Lasnik 2003:ch. 9 and Safir 1999 for discussion.) He uses VC in order to account for why in some cases, Condition C reconstruction effects can be avoided in English:

- (22) a. *[Which claim [that Mary had offended John_i]] did he_i repeat *t*?
 b. [Whose allegation [that Lee_i was less than truthful]] did he_i refute *t* vehemently?

Under the standard view of Condition C reconstruction effects (Lebeaux 1988 Chomsky 1993), this contrast is unexpected. Since, in both sentences, the name is contained in a complement clause, and complement clauses must appear in all copies of the moved phrase, a Condition C violation is expected in both sentences. According to Safir, VC can, in many cases, avoid a Condition C violation. Although, at present, it is not known why VC is possible in (22b) but not in (22a), it seems that this analysis is the only one that has the chance of explaining the facts.

I propose that overt pronouns in Spanish do not trigger Condition C violations under reconstruction because of VC. Consider, for instance, example (1b), repeated here:

- (23) [El libro de Juan_i], lo leyó él_i *t* ayer.
 [the book of Juan_i] CL read he_i *t* yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i read yesterday.’

The name *Juan_i* in the lower (covert) copy of the CLLD-ed phrase behaves as a pronoun because of VC. Thus, Condition C is not violated. On the other hand, we must stipulate that this is not possible if the name is c-commanded by a coreferring covert pronoun. This is crucial in order to correctly describe the main asymmetry discussed in this paper:

- (24) *[El libro de Juan_i], *pro*_i lo leyó *t* ayer.
 [the book of Juan_i] *pro*_i CL read *t* yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i read yesterday.’

Since, by hypothesis, VC is not available when the name is c-commanded by a coreferring covert pronoun, the name in the reconstructed copy in this example is treated as a name for the purposes of Binding Theory, which results in a Condition C violation.

Clearly, this condition on the application of VC is theoretically problematic, especially because of its complexity: VC affects a given DP, and this condition depends on the presence of a separate coreferring DP that c-commands it. Nevertheless, this condition is supported by additional data. In particular, the same contrast seems to arise in ellipsis constructions. Whereas Condition C violations in Spanish sluicing can be circumvented when the elided name is c-commanded by an overt pronoun, as in (21), this is not possible if the pronoun is covert:

- (25) a. *Ayer, alguien habló de Juan_i, pero *pro*_i no sabe quién.
 yesterday someone talked of Juan_i but *pro*_i not knows who
 ‘Yesterday, someone talked about Juan_i, but he_i doesn’t know who.’
 b. *... *pro*_i no sabe quién [TP ~~habló de Juan_i~~]
 ... *pro*_i not knows who [TP ~~talked of Juan_i~~]

The parallel between the paradigms in (21, 25) and (23, 24) is striking. In both (21, 23), a name that is part of a deleted phrase does not trigger a Condition C violation in spite of being c-commanded by a coreferring overt pronoun. In both (25, 24), a name in the same type of configuration triggers a Condition C violation due to the c-commanding covert pronoun.

The parallelisms between movement and ellipsis strongly suggests a unified analysis. The proposed condition on VC, despite being stipulative, seems to be the only available explanation for the contrast between overt and covert pronouns in both movement and ellipsis constructions. In fact, it seems that the proposed condition on VC must be complicated somewhat. (25) contrasts sharply with the following similar example:

- (26) a. Ayer, Juan_i habló con alguien, pero me han dicho que ...
 yesterday Juan_i talked with someone, but me they.have told that ...
*pro*_i no recuerda con quién.
*pro*_i not remembers with who
 ‘Yesterday, Juan_i talked to someone, but I’ve been told that he_i doesn’t remember who.’
 b. ... *pro*_i no recuerda con quién [TP ~~Juan_i habló~~]
 ... *pro*_i not remembers with who [TP ~~Juan_i talked~~]

Although (26) would seem to be the same as (25) in all relevant aspects, it is clearly not. For some reason, VC is possible in (26), even though the elided name is c-commanded by a coreferring *pro*. The only relevant difference between the two sentences seems to be that the name is in object position in (25), but in subject position in (26). Although I do not have an explanation for this fact, the same kind of contrast can be duplicated in movement constructions:

- (27) a. *[La noticia de [que alguien había despedido a Juan_i]], *pro*_i no la quiso divulgar *t*.
 [the news of [that someone had fired to Juan_i]] *pro*_i not CL wanted disclose *t*
 ‘The news that someone had fired Juan_i, he_i didn’t want to disclose.’
 b. [La noticia de [que Juan_i había despedido a alguien]], *pro*_i no la quiso divulgar *t*.
 [the news of [that Juan_i had fired to someone]] *pro*_i not CL wanted disclose *t*
 ‘The news that Juan_i had fired someone, he_i didn’t want to disclose.’

The name in the moved phrase in both examples is contained in a complement clause, so a copy of it must be present in the reconstructed clause-internal position. Since this lower copy of the name is c-commanded by a coreferring covert pronoun, both sentences are potential violations of Condition C.

However, only (27a) is ungrammatical. Note that the difference between (27a) and (27b) is that the name is in object position in the former, and in subject position in the latter. This was exactly the difference that we found in the parallel ellipsis examples in (25) and (26). The fact that the patterns of Condition C violations in movement constructions reproduce the patterns found in ellipsis provide further evidence for the claim that VC is the crucial factor in explaining the difference between overt and covert pronouns.

6. Other differences between overt and covert pronouns

In the previous section, it was argued that differences in Condition C reconstruction effects between sentences with overt and covert pronouns are to be explained in terms of the availability of VC: a c-commanding overt pronoun licenses VC of a name, but a covert pronoun does not. In this section, I argue that other well-known differences between overt and covert pronouns cannot account for the Condition C facts discussed in this work.

A well-established difference between the two types of pronouns is that *pro* cannot be focused. This is illustrated in the following question/answer pair. Whereas (28a), with focus on the overt pronoun, is a felicitous answer to question (28), (28b), with focus on *pro*, is not.⁸

- (28) ¿Quién escribió esta carta, tú o Juan?
 who wrote this letter you or Juan
 ‘Who wrote this letter, you or Juan?’
 a. EL la escribió.
 HE CL wrote.
 ‘HE wrote it.’
 b. #*pro* la escribió
pro CL wrote.

Furthermore, as shown in Reinhart 1983 (see also Heim 1998), there are certain contexts in which Condition C can be circumvented. The following Spanish example illustrates one such context:

- (29) Todo el mundo odia a Juan. Susana odia a Juan, María odia a Juan, Cristina odia a Juan
 all the world hates to Juan. Susana hates to Juan, María hates to Juan, Cristina hates to Juan
 ... hasta EL_{*i*} odia a Juan_{*i*}.
 ... even HE_{*i*} hates to Juan_{*i*}
 ‘Everybody hates Juan. Susana hates Juan, María hates Juan, Cristina hates Juan ... even HE_{*i*} hates Juan_{*i*}.’

In the last sentence in this example, the name *Juan* is coreferent with a c-commanding pronoun, but the sentence is grammatical. Furthermore, focus on the pronoun (and the presence of the associated focus-sensitive adverbial *even*) is crucial. For reasons given in Reinhart 1983 and Heim 1998, there is no Condition C violation in examples of this sort.⁹

To summarize so far, (i) only overt pronouns can be focused, and (ii) focus on a pronoun can be used to avoid a Condition C violation. This might provide an account of the contrasts in reconstruction discussed in previous sections, where it was shown that overt pronouns do not trigger Condition C effects with respect to names in elided copies of movement. However, it is hard to see how this can provide a correct account of the facts. First, as noted above, a focused pronoun can circumvent a Condition C violation only in certain special contexts, such as the one exemplified in (29). Otherwise, focused pronouns do trigger Condition C violations, just like unfocused overt pronouns and *pro*:

⁸In the following examples, upper case letters are used to indicate focus.

⁹More specifically, Reinhart and Heim argue that Condition C is not a principle of grammar, and that Reinhart’s Rule I provides a better explanation for obviation effects standardly attributed to Condition C. Sentences of the type illustrated in (29) are accounted for by the Rule I approach, but not by the Condition C approach.

- (30) *EL_i/él_i/pro_i leyó el libro de Juan_i ayer.
 HE_i/he_i/pro_i read the book of Juan_i yesterday.
 ‘HE_i/he_i read Juan’s book yesterday.’

However, no special context is required in the reconstruction contexts discussed in previous sections. For instance, coreference between the name and the c-commanding overt pronoun in (8a), repeated here, is not dependent on any of the special contexts reported in Reinhart 1983 and Heim 1998.

- (31) [El libro de Juan_i], el_i lo leyó *t* ayer.
 [the book of Juan_i] he_i CL read *t* yesterday
 ‘Juan’s_i book, he_i read yesterday.’

Furthermore, (31), and similar examples discussed in previous sections, do not even require focus on the overt subject pronoun. To conclude, the explanation based on the impossibility of focusing pro cannot account for the contrasts in Condition C reconstruction effects between overt and covert pronouns discussed in this paper.

The observation that the overt pronoun in (31) does not need to be focused is clearly in conflict with the claim put forth in Larson and Luján 1989 that overt pronouns in Spanish (and *pro-drop* languages in general) must be understood as focused.¹⁰ That this is not the case is shown by the fact that, in Spanish, just as in non-*pro-drop* languages, an overt pronoun is interpreted as focused only if it has nuclear stress. Consider, for instance, the question in (28) above, which requires focus on the subject in the answer. Answer (28a), which contains an overt subject pronoun, is only felicitous if the pronoun has nuclear stress. The same sentence without nuclear stress on the pronoun is grammatical, but is not felicitous as an answer to (28).¹¹

Another potential source for the contrasts in Condition C reconstruction effects comes from differences between overt and covert pronouns in their preferences in anaphora resolution. In particular, Carminati 2002 proposes the *Position of Antecedent Hypothesis* (PAH), which states that, in Italian, pro prefers to link to antecedents in preverbal subject position more than its phonetically overt counterpart does.¹² Alonso-Ovalle et al. (2002) report on several experiments that confirm this hypothesis for Spanish.¹³ These facts do not seem directly relevant to the facts discussed in this paper, since these authors crucially discuss cases in which the pronoun does not c-command a coreferring name (or even a name contained in an elided copy.) However, the preference of pro to link to antecedents in subject position might be related to the subject/object asymmetry noted at the end of the previous section. As shown

¹⁰More specifically, they claim that this is true in contexts where both pro and overt pronouns can appear.

¹¹Larson and Luján (1989) provide the following crucial example to support their hypothesis (Larson and Lujan’s (28)):

- (i) a. ¿Qué cree Juan que obtendrá en ese concurso?
 what thinks Juan that will.obtain in that contest
 ‘What does John think he will get in that contest?’
 b. Juan cree que pro/el ganará EL PREMIO.
 Juan thinks that pro/he will.win THE PRIZE
 ‘Juan thinks that he will win THE PRIZE

The question in (ia) requires focus on the embedded object in the answer in (ib), which implies that the embedded subject pronoun in the answer must not be focused. The judgment they report is that the answer is only felicitous if the embedded subject pronoun is covert. However, the judgment of native speakers I have consulted is that the overt pronoun *is* felicitous (as long as it does not have nuclear stress.) At least for these speakers, overt pronouns are not necessarily focused. Nevertheless, as explained above, even if it were true for all speakers that overt pronouns must be focused, this fact alone would not explain the contrasts in Condition C effects discussed in this paper.

¹²More specifically, Carminati’s proposal is that pro prefers to link to antecedents in prominent positions, where “prominent position” refers to the highest Spec of IP.

¹³Alonso-Ovalle et al. (2002) argue convincingly that the PAH provides a better explanation for the binding facts covered by Montalbetti’s (1984) Overt Pronoun Constraint.

there, in both movement and ellipsis contexts, pro does not trigger a Condition C effect with respect to a name in the elided material if the name is in subject position (see (26, 27b).) If the name is in object position, a Condition C effect arises (see (25, 27a).) This contrast might be related to the general preference that pro has to link to subjects over objects, a consequence of the PAH.

To conclude this section, the contrasts in Condition C effects discussed in this paper add to the growing body of work that shows that there are important differences in the referential properties of overt and covert pronouns in pro-drop languages (see Montalbetti 1984, Larson and Luján 1989 and Alonso-Ovalle et al. 2002.) However, at this point, there seems to be no unified account for all these differences, and there is no plausible account in terms of the discourse (focus) properties of these two types of pronouns. Therefore, the account in terms of VC proposed in the previous section seems to be the best available one for the contrasts in Condition C effects in both reconstruction and ellipsis contexts.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, the data presented in this paper provide evidence that, despite differences in Condition C effects, overt and covert pronouns are the same with respect to the syntax of reconstruction. The Condition C differences between overt and covert pronouns can be explained in terms of VC, as can be seen in the surprising parallels found with ellipsis constructions.

However, the analysis, as developed so far, contains certain stipulations about the workings of VC that call for further explanation. In particular, it is not clear why the application of VC to a given DP should depend on the overt/covert distinction in a c-commanding pronoun, or on the specific position of the DP within the ellipsis site or the reconstructed copy. Furthermore, it would be desirable to find a unified analysis for these and all the other differences between overt and covert pronouns discussed in the previous section. These are matters in need of further research.

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