Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 137

Null Subjects

José A. Camacho

NULL SUBJECTS

JOSÉ A. CAMACHO
Rutgers University, New Jersey

常州大学山书馆
藏书章

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107034105

© José A. Camacho 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Camacho, José.
Null subjects / José A. Camacho, Rutgers University, New Jersey.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-107-03410-5 (Hardback)
1. Grammar, Comparative and general–Null subject. 2. Principles and parameters (Linguistics) I. Title.
P299.N85C36 2013
415–dc23

2013006187

ISBN 978-1-107-03410-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

NULL SUBJECTS

The null subject has always been central to linguistic theory, because it tells us a great deal about the underlying structure of language in the human brain, and about the interface between syntax and semantics. Null subjects exist in languages such as Italian, Chinese, Russian, and Greek where the subject of a sentence can be tacitly implied, and is understood from the context. In this systematic overview of null subjects, José A. Camacho reviews the key notions of null subject analyses over the past 30 years and encompasses the most recent findings and developments. He examines a balance of data on a range of languages with null subjects and also explores how adults and children acquire the properties of null subjects. This book provides an accessible and original account of null subject phenomena, ideal for graduate students and academic researchers interested in syntax, semantics, and language typology.

JOSÉ A. CAMACHO is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Rutgers University, New Jersey.

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN LINGUISTICS

General Editors: P. AUSTIN, J. BRESNAN, B. COMRIE, S. CRAIN, W. DRESSLER, C. J. EWEN, R. LASS, D. LIGHTFOOT, K. RICE, I. ROBERTS, S. ROMAINE, N. V. SMITH

Null Subjects

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

In this series

106 SHARON INKELAS AND CHERYL ZOLL: *Reduplication: doubling in morphology*
107 SUSAN EDWARDS: *Fluent aphasia*
108 BARBARA DANCYGIER AND EVE SWEETSER: *Mental spaces in grammar: conditional constructions*
109 HEW BAERMAN, DUNSTAN BROWN AND GREVILLE G. CORBETT: *The syntax–morphology interface: a study of syncretism*
110 MARCUS TOMALIN: *Linguistics and the formal sciences: the origins of generative grammar*
111 SAMUEL D. EPSTEIN AND T. DANIEL SEELY: *Derivations in minimalism*
112 PAUL DE LACY: *Markedness: reduction and preservation in phonology*
113 YEHUDA N. FALK: *Subjects and their properties*
114 P. H. MATTHEWS: *Syntactic relations: a critical survey*
115 MARK C. BAKER: *The syntax of agreement and concord*
116 GILLIAN CATRIONA RAMCHAND: *Verb meaning and the lexicon: a first phase syntax*
117 PIETER MUYSKEN: *Functional categories*
118 JUAN URIAGEREKA: *Syntactic anchors: on semantic structuring*
119 D. ROBERT LADD: *Intonational phonology, second edition*
120 LEONARD H. BABBY: *The syntax of argument structure*
121 B. ELAN DRESHER: *The contrastive hierarchy in phonology*
122 DAVID ADGER, DANIEL HARBOUR AND LAUREL J. WATKINS: *Mirrors and microparameters: phrase structure beyond free word order*
123 NIINA NING ZHANG: *Coordination in syntax*
124 NEIL SMITH: *Acquiring phonology*
125 NINA TOPINTZI: *Onsets: suprasegmental and prosodic behaviour*
126 CEDRIC BOECKX, NORBERT HORNSTEIN AND JAIRO NUNES: *Control as movement*
127 MICHAEL ISRAEL: *The grammar of polarity: pragmatics, sensitivity, and the logic of scales*
128 M. RITA MANZINI AND LEONARDO M. SAVOIA: *Grammatical categories: variation in romance languages*
129 BARBARA CITKO: *Symmetry in syntax: merge, move and labels*
130 RACHEL WALKER: *Vowel patterns in language*
131 MARY DALRYMPLE AND IRINA NIKOLAEVA: *Objects and information structure*
132 JERROLD M. SADOCK: *The modular architecture of grammar*
133 DUNSTAN BROWN AND ANDREW HIPPISLEY: *Network morphology: a defaults-based theory of word structure*
134 BETTELOU LOS, CORRIEN BLOM, GEERT BOOIJ, MARION ELENBAAS AND ANS VAN KEMENADE: *Morphosyntactic change: a comparative study of particles and prefixes*
135 STEPHEN CRAIN: *The emergence of meaning*
136 HUBERT HAIDER: *Symmetry breaking in syntax*
137 JOSÉ A. CAMACHO: *Null subjects*

Earlier issues not listed are also available

This book is dedicated to Lucía, Yésica and Liliana

Acknowledgements

Several people have generously contributed to this book in many ways. First, I would like to thank Ursula Atkinson for help with Bavarian data, Pilar Barbosa for discussion of Portuguese data, Veneeta Dayal for Hindi data and discussion, Audrey Li for clarification on issues related to Chinese, Paco Ordóñez for discussion of Catalan data, Andrés Saab for illuminating discussion on null subjects, Vieri Samek-Lodovici for judgements and discussion of Italian data, Liliana Sánchez for help and discussion of the Quechua and Spanish data, Ur Shlonsky for discussion and comments on partial null subject languages, Luis Silva-Villar for discussion on expletives in Western Iberian dialects and Jacqueline Toribio for a generous supply of Dominican Spanish data and discussion of their meaning. Additionally, José Elías-Ulloa was instrumental in obtaining judgements to confirm patterns in Shipibo. I am very grateful to three anonymous reviewers, who provided useful feedback, and to Neil Smith, who carefully read the manuscript and suggested very insightful additions and changes to it. On the technical side, the Ling-Tex user group has been a vital source of wisdom to make things look they way I wanted them to look, in particular Alexis Dimitriadis and Alan Munn, who frequently and quickly responded to queries about LaTeX. Two of Alexis' macros have made the layout of this book much easier.

This book is the result of a general project on null subjects, parts of which have been presented at the University of Geneva, Romania Nova 2010 (Campos do Jordão), the University of Campinas, the University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I wish to thank Paco Ordóñez and Mary Kato for the wonderful opportunity to present at Romania Nova and Campinas, and Maria Eugênia Duarte and Marcus Maia, for the unforgettable invitation to visit and present at UFRJ.

Abbreviations

1	first person or class 1
2	second person or class 2
3	third person or class 3
ABS	absolutive case
ACC	accusative case
ADD	additive
ADDR	addressee
AGR	agreement
ASP	aspect
AUX	auxiliary
BP	Brazilian Portuguese
C	complementizer agreement
CAUS	causative
CCS	Central Colombian Spanish
CL	clitic
COND	conditional
CONTR	contrastive
COP	copula
CP	complementizer phrase
DAT	dative case
DEF	definite
DESID	desiderative
DIR	directional case
DS	Dominican Spanish
DSEC	Dominican Spanish from El Cibao
EP	European Portuguese
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclusive
EXP	expletive
EVID	evidential
FEM	feminine
FOC	focus
FORM	formal
FUT	future tense
FV	final vowel

GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
HRSAY	hearsay
IMP	imperfect tense
IMPER	imperative
IMPERF	imperfective aspect
INAN	inanimate
INC	incompletive aspect
INCL	inclusive
INE	inessive case
INTEN	intensifier
INTIM	intimate
IRR	irrealis mood
MAS	masculine
MIN	minimal
MOD	modal
NEG	negation
NEUT	neuter
NOM	nominative case
NON-FORM	non-formal
NSL	null subject language
OBJ	object
ONOM	onomatopoeia
OP	operator
OPC	Overt Pronoun Constraint
OPT	optative
P	person
PART	participant
PASS	passive
PERF	perfective aspect
ϕP	ϕ-feature phrase
PL	plural
PRED	predicative
PRES	present tense
PRIOR	prior
PROG	progressive aspect
PROPOS	propositive
Q	question marker
REFLEX	reflexive
RI	root infinitive
S	subject agreement
SG	singular
SPECIF	specific
SPKR	speaker
SS	same subject

SUBJ	subject
TEP	totally empty position
TNS	tense
TOP	topic
TR	transitive
ZG	Zurich German

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Contents

	Acknowledgements	*page* xi
	List of abbreviations	xii
1	**Introduction**	**1**
1.1	Variation and invariance in Generative Grammar	1
1.2	The Null Subject Parameter	2
1.3	Variation in the Minimalist Program	5
1.4	Macro- and micro-parameters	6
1.5	Organization of the book	8
	PART I WHAT IS THE NULL SUBJECT PARAMETER? A LITTLE HISTORY	11
2	**The Null Subject Parameter: introduction**	**13**
2.1	Syntactic properties associated with the Null Subject Parameter	13
2.2	Interpretive differences between null and overt subjects	26
2.3	Typology of Null Subject Languages	31
2.4	Chapter summary	38
3	**The core content of the Null Subject Parameter**	**39**
3.1	Introduction	39
3.2	Null thematic subjects and no null expletives	41
3.3	Subject inversion and no null expletives	50
3.4	*That*-trace effects and overt expletives	51
3.5	Free subject inversion and *that*-trace effect violations	52
3.6	Variation in logophoricity	62
3.7	Chapter summary	65
4	**The nature of the Extended Projection Principle and the Null Subject Parameter**	**67**
4.1	*Pro*	68

4.2	The pronominal agreement hypothesis	76
4.3	Deletion	86
4.4	Is the Extended Projection Principle universal?	93
4.5	The revised Null Subject Parameter	105
4.6	Chapter summary	106
	PART II ON IDENTIFICATION	107
5	**Identification and morphology**	**109**
5.1	The minimal morphological threshold (MMT)	112
5.2	The structure of ϕ-features	115
5.3	Agree	120
5.4	Deriving null subjects in sample languages	124
5.5	Identification and locality	138
6	**Discourse identification**	**146**
6.1	Topics and *pro*	146
6.2	Typology of topics	149
6.3	Topic identification in an inflection-rich null subject language	151
6.4	Subject identification in discourse null subject languages	164
6.5	Chapter summary	173
7	**Null/overt subject contrasts**	**174**
7.1	*Pro* as a weak pronoun	175
7.2	On the difference between null and overt pronouns	177
7.3	Deriving expletives	186
7.4	Chapter summary	189
8	**The status of preverbal subjects in null subject languages**	**190**
8.1	Preverbal subjects as CLLD phrases	192
8.2	Against PS-as-CLLD	202
8.3	The status of preverbal subjects	208
8.4	Chapter summary	208
9	**Parametrization, learnability and acquisition**	**210**
9.1	L1 acquisition and the unmarked value of the Null Subject Parameter	211
9.2	Null subjects in early bilinguals and in L2 acquisition	220
9.3	Development of null subjects	225
9.4	General conclusions	227
	References	229
	Index	245

1 *Introduction*

1.1 Variation and invariance in Generative Grammar

Perhaps one of the most revolutionary tenets that Generative Grammar assumed from its outset was the idea that all languages share common underlying grammatical features, a belief that helped address the puzzling way in which children learn languages. In particular, as Chomsky has repeatedly observed (see Chomsky, 1975, 1988, for example), children learn grammatical rules and patterns for which they have little, confusing and sometimes contradictory evidence (the so-called poverty of stimulus or Plato's problem). Furthermore, they do not assume certain grammatical rules that could be generalized from the available data.[1] Chomsky has concluded from these observations that much of the grammatical knowledge we have must be innate, and that the grammars of languages are much closer to each other than it would seem at first sight. Both of these conclusions together suggest an explanation for why the acquisition process seems so effortless and on target: if children come with an innate predisposition for languages that contains fairly specific and delimited principles, then they can simply make sense of the linguistic input around them, guided by such innate principles. The tenet that languages are underlyingly close has led to important discoveries about similarities in apparently very different patterns across languages.

While languages may show surprisingly similar abstract patterns, we also observe obvious surface variation. For example, aspect plays a comparatively small role in the verbal morphology of English compared to the elaborate aspectual distinctions of the Russian paradigm. This tension between underlying similarity and surface variation has been formalized in many different ways over the years. In the 1980s framework of Generative Grammar, principles represented the invariant component of languages and parameters the variation dimension.

[1] Needless to say, the poverty-of-stimulus argument remains a controversial issue in the broader cognitive-science community.

To take a particular example of this approach, English or Spanish speakers usually ask questions by displacing the question-word to the beginning of the clause, whereas Chinese speakers leave those questions words in the same position as in a declarative, as we see in (1)–(2).

(1) ¿A quién piensa Pedro que viste? (Spanish)
to whom thinks Pedro that saw.2SG
'Who does Pedro think that you saw?'

(2) Zhangsan yiwei Lisi mai-le **shinwe** (Chinese)
Zhangsan thinks Lisi bought what?
'What does Zhangsan think Lisi bought?'

Closer examination of these languages suggested that both types have similar properties, and that the difference may be related to the stages of the derivation (see Huang, 1982): English and Spanish displace the question-word before the question is overtly pronounced, whereas Chinese does so after it is overtly pronounced, at the level of Logical Form (LF). Thus, an invariant principle (question-words must take scope over the clause) can be expressed in two ways: through overt or covert movement.[2] While the validity of the generalization proposed by Huang has subsequently been challenged, it exemplifies well the overall research strategy within the generative paradigm, as well as a specific formulation of how a common underlying principle can yield superficial variation through a parameter.

As noted, having a common underlying principle with a limited range of variation facilitates the process of L1 acquisition: if the child's knowledge includes the notion that question-words must take scope over the rest of the clause, determining whether they move overtly or covertly becomes a matter of processing the available input.

Within the Principles and Parameters version of the 1980s, the Null Subject Parameter (NSP) was one of the most studied and formalized instances of invariance~variation. This parameter tried to account for the fact that subjects are obligatorily overt in some languages but not in others.

1.2 The Null Subject Parameter

The NSP attempts to provide a unified analysis for the observation that clauses require obligatorily overt subjects in some languages like French and English but not in others (Spanish, Irish, Italian, Chinese), as illustrated in (3)–(4).

[2] In more recent theoretical approaches, the difference can be cast in terms of where the copy of the question-word surfaces overtly.

(3) a. We left.
b. * Left

(4) a. Chuirfeadh Eoghan isteach ar an phost sin. (Irish)
put.COND. Owen in on that job
'Owen would apply for that job.'
(from McCloskey and Hale, 1984, 490, ex. 4)
b. Chuirfidís isteach ar an phost sin. (Irish)
put.3.PL.COND in on that job
'They would put in on that job.'

One could simply propose a typological description of this difference along the lines of (5). While this is a reasonable statement of the facts, it raises some questions, such as why speakers interpret *chuirfeadh* 'would put' in (3b) as having the same type of subject (agent, theme) as in (3a), regardless of whether the actual subject is present or absent.

(5) Languages of the world vary among those that have obligatory subjects and those that have optional subjects.

An alternative approach is to assume that clauses in all languages have subjects and the variation comes from whether the overt expression of that subject is obligatory or not. The explicit formalization of this proposal was initially formulated as the **Projection Principle** (Chomsky, 1981, 38), a principle that suggests that the lexical properties of the words determine the shape of a clause throughout its derivation. For example, a transitive verb like *eat* is marked in the lexicon as assigning two theta roles, so it will require two syntactic arguments (subject and object) to realize those theta roles and those arguments must be realized at all times. In other words, if a given head is lexically specified as assigning a theta role, that role must be assigned to a syntactically realized constituent, and this constituent must be present at all levels of representation.

The Projection Principle makes thematic subjects obligatory in all clauses in all languages because a verb like *chuirfeadh* 'would put' in (4) assigns a theta role, hence it must have a syntactic argument to bear that role, regardless of whether it is overt or null, otherwise the Projection Principle will be violated.[3]

This formulation does not account for why syntactic subjects seem to be obligatory in languages like English even when the subject is semantically vacuous, as in (6)–(7). Since *seem* in (6a) does not assign an interpretation

[3] The Projection Principle does not directly derive the requirement that the subject appear in Spec, IP. In the Principles and Parameters framework, this is a by-product of the fact that nominative case was assigned in Spec, IP.

(i.e. a theta role) to its subject, the Projection Principle does not require an overt argument; however, the absence of the expletive *it* renders the example ungrammatical, as seen in (6b).

(6) a. It seems to be raining.
b. * Seems to be raining.

The situation is slightly different for the expletive in (7a): the verb *surprise* does assign two theta roles, one of them to the indirect object *me*, the other to the clause *that you couldn't finish your meal*, but the expletive in the preverbal subject position arguably does not receive a separate theta role. In fact, when the clausal subject appears initially, as in (7b), the expletive is no longer possible. This suggests that the clause is the thematic subject both in (7a) and (7b), and that the expletive is somehow doubling that subject in (7a). Likewise, it shows that the presence of the expletive in (7a) is not related to the Projection Principle, since the subject theta role is assigned to the clause.

(7) a. It surprised me [that you couldn't finish your meal].
b. [That you couldn't finish your meal] surprised me.

The facts just described regarding expletives led to the principle in (8), which essentially captures the fact that even non-theta-assigning verbs require an overt expletive subject in English and other languages. The qualification that the subject must be in Spec, IP is meant to derive the difference between (7a) and (7b). In the first case, the clausal subject is not in Spec, IP, therefore an expletive is required.

(8) All clauses must have a subject (in Spec, IP).

The Projection Principle (the requirement that thematic arguments be present throughout the derivation) and the requirement that clauses have subjects constitute the **Extended Projection Principle** (EPP) (see Chomsky, 1986, 116 and Svenonius, 2002, 9 for a summary), although EPP is frequently used with the more restricted meaning that clauses require subjects.

Once one assumes a principle like the EPP, it follows that languages are much more similar than what (5) would suggest, and it also follows that clauses don't really ever lack a subject, they simply have ones that are syntactically present but not overtly realized. In this way, the examples in (4a–b) and (3a) above have similar underlying representations, perhaps along the lines of (9). In (9a), *pro* represents a null subject in Irish, and it appears in the position where overt subjects usually appear in that language.

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com