Word Order and Polarity in Spanish postnominal ALGUNO

Paola Cépeda
Stony Brook University
paola.cepeda@stonybrook.edu
Postnominal ALGUNO

- Spanish ALGUNO is an existential/indefinite quantifier which conveys information about the speaker’s epistemic state (lack of knowledge) (Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2013).
- When in postverbal position and co-occurring with higher negation, it has different interpretations (Bosque 1980; Sánchez López 2000):
  - Prenominally, as in (1a), it is interpreted outside the scope of negation.
  - Postnominally, as in (1b), it is interpreted under the scope of negation.

(1)

a. **Algún + noun**
(Creo que) no le gustó algún [\_ retrato].
believe.1SG.PRE that not 3SG.DAT please.3SG.PAST ALGUNO portrait

‘(I think) she didn’t like some portrait’
\[\exists x [\text{portrait}(x) \& \neg \text{like}(she, x)]\]

b. **Noun + ALGUNO**
(Creo que) no le gustó [\_ retrato] algún.
believe.1SG.PRE that not 3SG.DAT please.3SG.PAST portrait ALGUNO

‘(I think) she didn’t like any portrait’
\[\neg \exists x [\text{portrait}(x) \& \text{like}(she, x)]\]

- She claims that the sequence noun + ALGUNO is an NPI built in the syntax.
- ALGUNO is generated in Spec, NumP and is left behind when the noun cyclically moves to incorporate in the DP-internal Neg head.


‘No animal lives here’


\[ \text{animal}_1 \text{animal}_2 \text{animal}_3 \]
Further data from Spanish:

- Direct modifying adjectives (classificatory adjectives, thematic adjectives, non-predicative adjectives, in the sense of Cinque 2010, 2013) appear between the noun and ALGUNO, as shown in (3).

- Martins’s head-movement approach cannot explain this case.

(3) a. Noun + Direct Modifier + ALGUNO

No he visto [N comida] americana alguna.

‘I haven’t seen any American comedy’

b. *Noun + ALGUNO + Direct Modifier

*No he visto [N comida] alguna americana

not have.1SG.PRE seen comedy American ALGUNO.FEM
My proposal

- I propose a **phrase-movement analysis** for postnominal ALGUNO.
  - I claim that NP moves up to the specifier of a functional projection merged higher than the projection hosting ALGUNO.
  - If present, direct modifiers are pied-piped by the NP when it moves across ALGUNO.
  - The syntactic structure I propose is shown in (4):

\[
\begin{align*}
&[_{\text{NMP}} [_{\text{NEG}}] \text{NM} [_{\text{FP}}] \text{F} [_{\text{QP}} [\text{alguno}] \text{Q} [_{\text{ZP}}] \text{Z} [_{\text{YP}} [(\text{Red})\text{RC}] \text{Y} [_{\text{XP}} X [_{\text{WP}} [\text{AP}] W [\text{NP}]]]]]]
\end{align*}
\]
Roadmap

- I show the differences between postnominal ALGUNO and the n-word NINGUNO ‘no’, and conclude that the distribution of postnominal ALGUNO suggests the presence of a strong NPI.
- I propose a syntactic structure for postnominal ALGUNO involving phrasal movement of the NP. I claim that a functional head licensed by negation and selecting the projection hosting ALGUNO is responsible for the NPI reading.
- I add the adjectives into the syntactic structure to show that the phrase-movement I propose is on the correct track.
- I explore some generalizations of the phenomenon in other Romance languages.
NINGUNO vs. postnominal ALGUNO (1/3)

- In Spanish, a quantifier in object position and under the scope of negation is subject to Negative Concord, and surfaces as the n-word NINGUNO ‘no’.
- Note that NINGUNO appears prenominally as in (5a); it cannot appear postnominally, as in (5b).

(5)  

a. NINGÚN + noun  
No le  gustó  ningún [ₙ retrato].

Not 3SG.DAT please.3SG.PAST NINGUNO portrait  
‘She didn’t like any portrait’

¬∃x[portrait(x) & like(she, x)]

b. *Noun + NINGUNO  
*No le  gustó  [ₙ retrato] ninguno.

Not 3SG.DAT please.3SG.PAST portrait NINGUNO
NINGUNO vs. postnominal ALGUNO (2/3)

- Syntactically, postnominal ALGUNO needs to be c-commanded by a local negation; NINGUNO does not have such requirement.

(6)  
a. Preverbal NINGUNO
Ningún libro está en la mesa.
NINGUNO book be.3SG.PRE in the table
‘No book is on the table’

b. *Preverbal noun + ALGUNO
*Libro alguno está en la mesa.
book ALGUNO be.3SG.PRE in the table

(7)  
a. NINGUNO in fragmentary answers
–¿Compraste algún libro? –No, ningún libro
buy.2SG.PAST ALGUNO book not NINGUNO book
‘–Did you buy any book? –No, no books’

b. *Noun + ALGUNO in fragmentary answers
–¿Compraste algún libro? –*No, libro alguno
buy.2SG.PAST ALGUNO book not book ALGUNO
NINGUNO vs. postnominal ALGUNO (3/3)

- Semantically, postnominal ALGUNO expresses the endpoint of a scale; NINGUNO does not.

(8) a. ALMOST + NINGUNO + noun
No vino casi ningún profesor.
‘Almost no teacher came’

(9) a. NINGUNO + (OTHER) + noun + MORE
No quiero ninguna (otra) queja más.
‘I don’t want any other complaint’

b. *ALMOST + noun + ALGUNO
*No vino casi profesor alguno.

b. *(OTHER) + noun + ALGUNO + MORE
*No quiero (otra) queja alguna más.
Postnominal **ALGUNO**’s interpretation

- Postnominal **ALGUNO** needs to be strictly c-commanded by a local negation and expresses the endpoint of a scale. This suggests the presence of a strong Negative Polarity Item (NPI).
  - On NPIs:
    Kadmon & Landman (1993) argue that an NPI widens the denotation of its restriction or domain, and in doing so creates a stronger statement.
  - On strong NPIs:
    Krifka (1995) suggests that strong NPIs are emphatic, so they appear in extreme environments, such as the scope of an operator at a scalar endpoint (i.e. negation).
- Postnominal **ALGUNO** conveys an emphatic negation that is stronger than the use of the n-word **NINGUNO**.
Postnominal ALGUNO’s syntactic structure (1/2)

- I claim that the emphatic reading of postnominal ALGUNO is due to the presence of a functional head F projecting an FP licensed by negation.
- F seems to have a semantics that reminds that of SIQUIÉRA ‘even’ (i.e. expressing highly likelihood and focalizing a constituent).
- FP which selects an epistemic indefinite projection that hosts ALGUNO.
- F carries an interpretable unvalued feature (let us call it EVEN) and probes for NP, a focalized constituent carrying a value for EVEN. NP moves up to Spec,FP attracted by F’s EPP feature.
- Therefore, negation does not license movement; rather, it licenses the landing site for movement (à la Borroff 2006).
- Quantifier (Q) is an epistemic head (Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2013) compatible with indefinites and selecting a nominal projection. ALGUNO is generated in Spec,QP.

- Negative Marker (NM) is a local negative head responsible for constituent negation and NPI composition (Collins & Postal 2014). Neg is generated in Spec,NMP.

- NM selects FP, the projection of the NPI F. FP strictly selects an epistemic indefinite projection.

- F probes for the NP in order to check its unvalued feature EVEN. The NP is a focalized constituent that moves up to Spec,FP attracted by an EPP feature on F, and values F’s EVEN feature.
Adding the adjectives (1/2)

- There are two sources of adnominal adjectives associated with two distinct sets of interpretive properties (Larson 1995, 1998; Cinque 2010, 2013). Their distribution is different with respect to postnominal ALGUNO:
  - Direct modifiers (classificatory adjectives, thematic adjectives, non-predicative adjectives) appear between the noun and ALGUNO, as shown in (10).
  - Indirect modifiers (relative clauses, reduced relative clauses, prepositional phrases) consistently appear after ALGUNO, as shown in (11).

(10)  

a. **Noun + Direct Modifier + ALGUNO**  
No he visto **comedia americana alguna**. 
not have.1SG.PRE seen comedy American ALGUNO.FEM
‘I haven’t seen any American comedy’

b. **Noun + ALGUNO + Direct Modifier**  
*No he visto **comedia alguna americana**. 
*not have.1SG.PRE seen comedy ALGUNO.FEM American
‘I haven’t seen any American comedy’

(11)  

a. **Noun + ALGUNO + Indirect Modifier**  
No tengo **amigo alguno nacido en Uganda**. 
not have.1SG.PRE friend ALGUNO born in Uganda
‘I don’t have any friend born in Uganda’

b. **Noun + Indirect Modifier + ALGUNO**  
*No tengo **amigo nacido en Uganda alguno.** 
*not have.1SG.PRE friend born in Uganda some
‘I don’t have any friend born in Uganda’
I interpret the distribution of the two types of adjectives as suggesting that the quantificational projection that hosts *alguno* is merged higher than Red RC, in a structure that follows Cinque’s (2010, 2013) DP projection.
The phenomenon in Romance

Strict Negative Concord Languages
No possibility for ALGUNO-like behavior under negation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word order</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Catalan</th>
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<tr>
<td>noun &gt; ALGUNO</td>
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Non-Strict Negative Concord Languages
Possibility for ALGUNO-like behavior under negation

<table>
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<th>Italian</th>
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<th>EuPort</th>
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Conclusions

- **ALGUNO** is an epistemic indefinite that has narrow scope when in postverbal position and co-occurring with higher negation.

- Postnominal **ALGUNO**’s distribution and interpretation suggest the presence of a strong NPI.

- F, the head of FP, is a strong NPI with the semantics of **(NI)** SIQUIERA ‘even’. F is licensed by negation and is impossible without it. NP moves up to Spec,FP to value F features.

- If present, direct modifiers are pied-piped by the NP when it moves across **ALGUNO**.

- The phenomenon is present in other Romance languages with slightly different restrictions.
References


Many thanks to:

• Sonia Cyrino
• Richard Larson
• Francisco Ordóñez

• Daniela Galvez-Cepeda
• Robert Pasternak

for helpful discussion and comments on this presentation

Paola Cépeda
Department of Linguistics, Stony Brook University
paola.cepeda@stonybrook.edu