

UNACCUSATIVES BEYOND UNACCUSATIVES: NON-AGENTIVE BUT AFFECTED SUBJECTS IN OLD MAJORCAN AND NORTH-EASTERN CATALAN

This talk aims to shed light on the split auxiliary selection found in some dialects of Catalan, mainly in constructions that show the auxiliary verb *esser* ('be') with verbs generally considered as transitive, although we are going to claim that these are, in fact, unaccusative constructions, with non-volitional but affected subjects derived from a lower position (like [Spec, ProcP], [Spec, ResP], which possess some analogies with an Appl head).

We are going to focus on Old Majorcan Catalan, although a similar auxiliary selection is also attested in current Northern Catalan or *rossellonès* (MASSANELL in press), and in some variants of North-Eastern Central Catalan (Cerdanya, Empordà, Lluçanès, Plana de Vic, Pla de l'Estany, Garrotxa, Selva) (ALCOVER 1903, RIGAU 1998, *i. a.*).

In standard Catalan, the auxiliary verb for compound tenses is *haver* ('have'). However, in Majorca, *esser* ('be') can also be found among elder people from some villages in unaccusative, passive and reflexive constructions, with some peculiarities: on the one hand, *esser* is more frequent with 1st and 2nd persons (especially of the singular, and mainly in the present perfect tense of indicative); on the other hand, 3rd person (and 1st and 2nd in other tenses/moods) tends to select *haver* with unaccusatives, but *esser* can still be chosen with reflexive and passive constructions (probably because they possess an explicit morphological mark: either the clitic *se* or the passive auxiliary verb *esser* + a passive past participle) (1).

(1)

unerg./trans. verb (cantar, 'sing')	unaccusative verb (arribar, 'arrive')	reflexive construction (pentinar-se, 'comb one's hair')
He cantat	Som {arribat/arribada}	Me som {pentinat/pentinada}
Has cantat	Ets {arribat/arribada}	T'ets {pentinat/pentinada}
Ha cantat	Ha {arribat/arribada}	S'és {pentinat/pentinada}
Hem cantat	Hem {arribat/arribats/arribades}	Mos som {pentinats/pentinades/*pentinat}
	(?Som {arribats/arribades/*arribat})	
Heu cantat	Heu {arribat/arribats/arribades}	Vos sou {pentinats/pentinades/*pentinat}
	(?Sou {arribats/arribades/*arribat})	
Han cantat	Han {arribat/arribats/arribades}	Se són {pentinats/pentinades/*pentinat}

Furthermore, old Majorcan speakers sometimes use the auxiliary verb *esser* in *transitive* sentences:

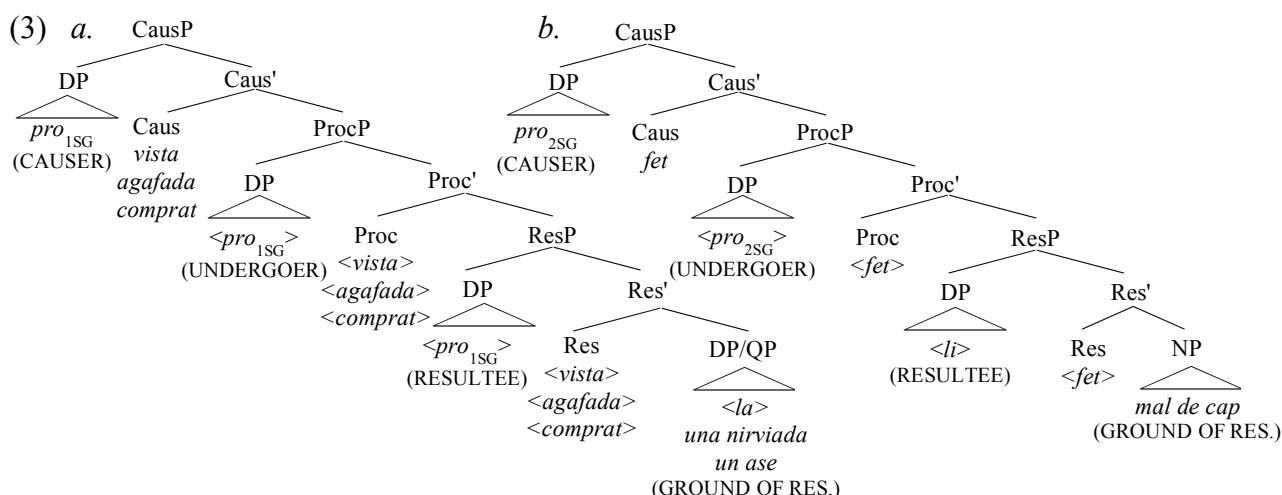
- (2)
- | | |
|---|--|
| a. La som vista.
CL.AC.3FEM.SG am seen.FEM.SG
'I've seen {her/it}'. | b. Som agafada una nirviada.
am taken.FEM.SG a nervousness.AUGM
'I've got so nervous'. |
| c. Des que som comprat un ase...
since that am bought a donkey
'Since I possess a donkey that I've bought...'. | |
| d. Li ets fet mal de cap, (a sa padrina).
CL.DAT.3SG are done headache MARK.DAT the grandmother
'You've given your grandmother a headache (unintentionally)'. | |
| e. Fosses remenats es dits.
be.PAST.SUBJ.2SG shaken.MAS.PL the fingers
'You should have shaken your fingers'. | f. Sa soca li ets danyada.
the trunk CL.DAT are damaged
'You've damaged its trunk (unint.)'. |

Prescriptively, this use of *esser* has been considered «very curious» and «weird», and hence, «abusive» and «absolutely inadmissible» by traditional grammars. Descriptively (and focusing on North-Eastern varieties of Catalan), very few authors notice that this use is limited to a reduced number of verbs (*e. g.*, *veure*, 'see'). By contrast, many linguists point out that it seems that these dialects possess *person-driven auxiliary selection* «with all kind of verbs» and independently of the event/argument structure. Nevertheless, if we look carefully at the sentences in (2), we can realise that a common pattern can be established: the grammatical subject of these sentences is *non-agentive* and can be considered as *affected* (it is an experiencer or a possessor). A simple and elegant way of analysing this in more technical terms is appealing to RAMCHAND's (2008) event structure, with a head Process (between

Initiation and Result) that introduces the neo-Davidsonian event argument and whose specifier is interpreted as UNDERGOER (as it undergoes or suffers the process of the event).

Take, for instance, (2.a): According to JAQUE (2014), *veure* ('see') is a level-2 (or high) pure (or Kimian) stative verb, with the configuration of an InitP (and that is all). However, in some contexts (as present perfect), it can unfold a whole event structure (that is: also ProcP and ResP), as it behaves as an achievement. If we now take into consideration that we need a non-agentive sentence, we can appeal to PYLKKÄNEN's (2008) proposal and distinguish Caus(ation) (that introduces a non-volitional argument) from Init(iation) (or Voice, that introduces an agentive argument). A similar analysis can be applied for (2.b-c), as in (3.a).

In (2.d) it is not so obvious that the subject be affected, but indeed it is, as it maintains an inalienable possession relationship with the dative *li* ('your grandmother') (3.b). A more clear case would be the one in (2.e), where the subject is the possessor of a part of his own body.



The most problematic case is (2.f): Following CUERVO (2008), here we already have an *affected* or *middle Appl* over ResP: [MidApplP *a s'arbre* ('DAT.MARK the tree') [MidAppl' *li* [ResP *sa soca* [Res' *danyada*]]]]. But this is not an obstacle for the subject (in [Spec, ProcP] and in [Spec, CauseP]) be also considered affected, as a kind of *quirky ethic/interest dative*; so a parallelism between Proc and HighAppl could be established.

In this system, in order for the auxiliary *esser* to appear, [Spec, InitP] must not be present in the structure and, instead, [Spec, CausP] must form a chain with (at least) [Spec, ProcP].

It would be interesting to compare this system with CAMPANINI & SCHÄFER's (2011) analysis of the optional aspectual *se* with consumption verbs (*menjar-se* 'eat', *beure's* 'drink'). They propose that *se* is merged as indirect argument in [Spec, LowApp], where it is interpreted as the *internaliser* (a kind of inalienable possessor) of the theme-object.

This way, we can conclude that the Old Majorcan system in (1)-(2) is mixed: *both event-driven and person-driven*. For a minimalist explanation for the latter factor, v. D'ALESSANDRO & ROBERTS (2010). It could be that the split system of Eastern Abruzzese, with just person-driven auxiliary selection, be the historical next step of a mixed system like the one outlined here; and, perhaps, some Northern Catalan subdialects have already moved on too.

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