

# Introduction to the Barcelona Conference on Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology

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This issue brings together a selection of ten papers presented at the 15th Workshop on Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology (WoSSP), held at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, on June 28-29, 2018. WoSSP is a series of on-going workshops organized by PhD students for students who are working in any domain of generative linguistics, and which offers them a forum to share their work in progress. One of the main aims of the WoSSP conference is to provide a space where graduate students who wish to present their work may exchange ideas within different formal approaches to linguistic phenomena.

The conference was initially organized by PhD candidates from Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV/EHU) and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). The first conference was held in 2003 in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Basque Country), and in the beginning only included works on syntax and semantics (originally WoSS); phonology was added in 2014. In 2018 the WoSSP steering committee was formed by Maia Duguine (CNRS-IKER), Aritz Irurtzun (CNRS-IKER), Ángel J. Gallego (UAB) and Raquel González (Universidad de Castilla la Mancha), all of whom were former members and participants of WoSSP.

The conference has been growing year after year; for this fifteenth year we received an unexpectedly high number of submissions (more than fifty) of which only 16 talks and 7 poster presentations were accepted. The conference also featured three keynote speakers: Theresa Biberauer (University of Cambridge), Raquel Sánchez (Universidad de Castilla la Mancha) and Juan Uriagereka (University of Maryland).

We would like to emphasize that WoSSP aims to promote the establishment of bonds among this generation of young linguists, allowing them to receive valuable feedback from well-known linguists whose work has made a significant impact on different areas of generative grammar. With this volume we are delighted to present for the first time the proceedings of the 2018 WoSSP conference. It has been a long process, but thanks to the efforts of both authors and reviewers these proceedings will now see the light day.

The ten peer-reviewed contributions in this volume are a selection of papers presented at the conference. They explore a wide-range of topics in semantics, syntax, and morphology. The authors touch on core issues related to Case, agreement, binding, clitics, and the left periphery. The first paper is by one of the invited speakers, Raquel González, who presented “Negation with Participles and Inhibited Events,” a work she composed jointly with Antonio Fábregas. González & Fábregas explore the contrast between Spanish and Lithuanian regarding the impossibility of introducing a negative operator in a low structural position in contexts involving participles. In its place, they propose a formal approach following Ramchand’s theory (2018) to explain the asymmetries. The goal of their article is to better understand the nature of low negation in the clausal domain. The authors provide evidence to show that low negation has a reading of an “inhibited event,” which proves that the external argument is in a causative relation with a particular event essence. Unlike Lithuanian, however, in Spanish, the low negative operator is ruled out between the auxiliary and the participle. The authors propose that this contrast is due to the different structural position where participles are built up in both languages: that is, vP in Lithuanian, and above Asp in Spanish. The fact that Spanish participles are insensitive to voice supports this idea. Since the low negative operator is merged in a Polarity phrase immediately below AspP, this explains why low negation is unavailable in Spanish.

The second contributor is Josep Ausensi who analyses the *way*-construction in “Unaccusativity and the *way*-construction in English.” Ausensi shows that, despite being considered a reliable test for unaccusativity (Marantz 1992, Levin 1993, a.o.), the *way*-construction appears not only with unergative verbs—as expected—but also includes some unaccusative verbs: i.e., change of state and directed motion verbs. Thus, Ausensi claims that this construction is not sensitive to unaccusativity and he instead adopts a scalar approach: he shows that unaccusative verbs encoding a scalar change predicated on the entity denoted by their subject are those that are ruled out by the *way*-construction. The author proposes an approach to the One Scale per Entity Constraint—a reformulation of the Unique Path Constraint (Goldberg 1991)—that accounts for the fact that these two verbal classes may also appear in the *way*-construction.

In “Particles in Basque: A Neo-Performative Approach to *ba*”, Aitor Lizardi offers a semantic characterization and a formal approach—built on Wiltchsko’s neo-performative framework (Wiltchsko 2017)—to the Basque particle *ba*, in which he analyzes it as an outer particle. Lizardi presents novel data and shows that the *ba*-particle may appear in paren-

thetical position, with intonation breaks, as well as in both sentence-initial and sentence-final position, although these positions are subject to some restrictions. The author claims that *ba* does not have a truth-conditional meaning but a use-conditional meaning; in particular, he shows that *ba* has two uses: a response-marker, which appears in all clause-types except for imperatives, and command-insistence. Thus, Lizardi analyzes *ba* as a head that can be merged in two different syntactic positions: the former merges with the head of the speaker-oriented ResponseP, while the latter appears with the head of the Speaker-Oriented GroundP.

Among the several proposals presented in this volume, there are some contributions devoted to information structure and to the left periphery which are approached from different angles. In “Sentence Topic Types in Italian Sign Language” Chiara Calderone offers a detailed description of “aboutness” and scene-setting topics in Italian Sign Language (LIS). She analyzes the syntactic, pragmatic, and prosodic properties of these structures, and thereby enriches the literature on information structure in sign languages. Calderone’s article sheds light on the communicative strategies used by signers to manage old information in LIS which is encoded as nominal, pronominal, or null referential expressions. The novel data collected by the author—involving spontaneous story-telling and semi-spontaneous monologues—reveal that syntax plays a crucial role in the prosodic and pragmatic aspects of communication. The results lead Calderone to conclude that topics are not mandatorily marked and that combinations of both manual and nonmanual markers are possible. In particular, her study shows that, among the nonmanuals mostly involved in the production of both topic types in LIS, there are raised eyebrows and squinted eyes; the latter occurs especially for scene-setting topics of location and “aboutness” topics realized as nominal expressions. The data collected by the author lead her to prove the assumption that “aboutness” topics are base-generated in the leftward periphery. Her study also confirms that LIS follows the syntactic distribution of topic types identified in both spoken and sign languages and substantiates the proposal by Benincà & Poletto (2004) about the existence of two macrodomains preceding the focus field within the CP layer: frame and theme.

In “Chinese anaphoric resolution and topic chains,” Yi Zheng examines Chinese null and overt pronouns, and inspired by Pu & Pu (2014), explores the interpretative preference for backward anaphora in Chinese under the topic chain theory. In particular, the author reanalyzes the structures discussed in Lust et al. (1996) and Zhao (2014), focusing on sentence initial temporal adverbial clauses with both the absence and presence of a preposition. The author proposes that there are two types of topics in Chinese: one is the head of a topic chain presented at the

discourse-pragmatic tier; and the other is the null operator within the CP domain of each sentence/clause and presented at the syntactic tier. Yi Zheng claims that the null subject can agree with the topic operator or be controlled by it via the Generalized Control Rule (Huang 1984); conversely, an overt pronoun may serve as the head of a topic chain. In the last part of the article, the author analyzes the asymmetry between forward and backward anaphora and shows that the interpretative contrast with overt pronouns is due to the fact that an overt pronoun can inherit the referential value of a previous topic referent, while an NP cannot.

The left periphery is also explored by Sebastià Salvà in “Si n’eren uns clítics de subjecte: Evidential Subject Clitics in Old Central Catalan.” Salvà examines the nature of the clitic *en* in Catalan in particular contexts, mainly story-telling texts or songs—in which it has been considered pleonastic by traditional grammarians and is attested in previous stages of the language (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries). The author provides evidence to prove that these structures cannot be considered instances of clitic doubling; e.g., it may appear with definite DP arguments, which should be expected to be doubled by a definite clitic, not by a partitive one. Salvà claims that this special use of the partitive clitic is a case of clitic recycling in which *en* is used as an evidential subject clitic (SCI) with mixed properties and which is the overt manifestation of an Agr<sub>Num</sub> head. The author notes that in all these structures the clitic is frequently preceded by an overt (or null) deictic operator realized as *si* and *ja*. Building on Bartra’s analysis (2011) of the recycling neuter pronouns *açò/això* in Medieval Catalan and Balearic Catalan, Salvà postulates that the deictic operator maintains an anaphoric relationship to a previous intervention in a discourse or even to an implicit context. To understand the nature of the *en* clitic as an evidential SCI, Salvà offers a cross-linguistic study by comparing them with SCI in some Northern Italo-Romance varieties (Poletto 2000), such as Borgomanerese (Tortora 2014), as well as the Galician “modal” SCI (Longa, Lorenzo & Rigau, 1996, 1998).

In “Comprehension of Relative Clauses and Binding Principles in Huntington’s Disease” (HD), Angela Nuzzi explores the syntactic impairment that occurs with object relative clauses and with the application of principle C of the Binding Theory in persons who have been diagnosed with Huntington’s Disease. Her findings are consistent during the disease progression and in accord with the theoretical assumptions of the Featural Relativized Minimality and intervention locality. In order to study R-expression repetitions in c-commanding and non-c-commanding configurations, Nuzzi, following Balaban et al. (2016), adopts a disentangling approach by bridging syntactic and psychological perspectives. Nuzzi analyzes the “Go Lighter” discourse principle—i.e., the preference

for using pronouns instead of full referential expressions (Balaban et al. 2016: 2-3)—to explain the difficulty in avoiding noun repetitions for patients experiencing impairment of the Theory of Mind but not syntax. The author presents the results obtained in an experimental study conducted with Italian-speaking patients who have been diagnosed to be in early and moderate-advanced stages of HD. In the first part of the study Nuzzi evaluated the comprehension of different types of relative clauses; in the second part she tested the comprehension of Binding Principles and the Go Lighter principle. The preliminary results obtained lead Nuzzi to conclude that syntactic difficulties and Theory of Mind could be seen as potential biomarkers of the disease onset.

Relative clauses are also the object of the article by Adnana Boioc, “Linguistic Interference in a Romanian-Russian Bilingual Context: Issues in the Grammar of Relative Clauses.” Boioc analyses a language-contact phenomenon, the use of *cine* ‘who’ in headed relative clauses—instead of *care* as in Standard Romanian—and with plural agreement on the embedded verb when the antecedent is plural, which is attested in the Lipovan variety of Romanian. The author analyzes novel data collected in her fieldwork research that was conducted in villages from the Dobrudja area, in Tulcea county, located in South-Eastern Romania. Boioc also analyzes Old Romanian data (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century) from a variety of sources. The analysis of both diachronic and synchronic data reveal that the Romanian variety spoken by the Lipovan Russians from Dobrudja presents a feature that was attested in Old Romanian; this leads the author to formulate the hypothesis that this language contact phenomenon could not be due to contact with Russian speakers alone but should be seen as a case of an old feature resurfacing.

The two papers that close this volume delve into the architecture of language. In “Music Also has Prosodic and Syntactic Structure: Structural Duality as a Reflection of the Formal Design of Language on Music,” Oriol Quintana explores the parallelisms between language and music. The author provides a review of the previous literature on the architecture of language and music (Patel 2008, Jackendoff 2009, Katz and Pesetsky 2011, a.o), including Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s (1983) *Generative Theory of Tonal Music*. The author extends the duality of patterning, one of the main design features of human language (Hockett 1960), to the human faculty of music. In particular, Quintana argues that tonal music is divided into: a) the rhythmic-melodic structure, which follows principles of weight-balance based on stress periodicity and intonational viability that creates symmetric structures which are built up from meaningless units; thus, it is comparable to the prosodic domain; and b) the tonal-harmonic structure, which is formed by meaningful units and follows

principles of head-complement relations based on categorical projections that create asymmetric structures. This second domain also permits the unbounded recursive extension of the hierarchical spine of tonal functions; hence, it is comparable to the syntactic domain.

The last contribution is by one of our invited speakers, Juan Uriagereka, who presents “Categories, Features, Interactions: Methodological Reflections.” The author explores the tension between linguistic formal entities and their interactions. He reflects on the nature of systematicities observed in languages and how they are systematized. He examines the interaction between categories, as well as the role and organization of features. Throughout his article, Uriagereka advocates the search for the connections between natural language and algebra. One of the main questions analyzed in this article is whether a real property should be characterized computationally or should be considered conventionally algebraic. Or maybe it is a reflection of something else? Uriagereka also dedicates a part of his contribution to exploring whether there are some desirable core properties of computation, i.e., finitism, systematicity, productivity, and transparency. All in all, this last paper brings to a conclusion the path explored in this volume: i.e., the improvement of our understanding of the Faculty of language.

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