Restrictions on DP-Internal Ellipsis in Spanish

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1 Introduction

1.1 The basic construction

Aliases: NP-Ellipsis, DP-Ellipsis, N’-Ellipsis, N-Drop, NP-Drop

Basic formula: DETERMINER + GAP + MODIFIER

• Most commonly cited: (1) Det + gap + Adj
• Also: (2) Det + gap + RC, (3) Det + gap + dePP

(1) Det + gap + Adj
el pinguino alto y el [] bajo
the penguin tall and the [ ] short
‘the tall penguin and the short [one]’

(2) Det + gap + RC
el pinguino que vió Martín y el [] que vió Marta
the penguin that saw Martín and the [ ] that saw Marta
‘the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw’

(3) Det + gap + dePP
el pinguino de Antártida y el [] de Australia
the penguin of Antarctica and the [ ] of Australia
‘the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia’

1.2 Goals:

• Lay out the major restrictions on DP-Internal Ellipsis (DPIE) in Spanish
• Argue in favor of a clitic-based approach to these restrictions, in which the clitic nature of the Spanish definite articles predicts what sorts of modifiers are licit for DPIE

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‘Judgments reported in this paper come mainly from speakers of Peruvian Spanish. Most of these judgments appear to be robust across dialects, though some of the finer points, especially regarding prenominal adjectives, tend to vary.'
– Other approaches to similar constructions: licensing by focus (Merchant 2001, Corver and van Koppen 2007, Eguren 2009), licensing by ‘rich’ agreement, inflection (Bernstein 1993, Kester 1994, 1996, among others), licensing by other functional heads (Kester and Sleeman 2002), atomicity/partitivity (Valois and Royle to appear, Sleeman 1996)

• Propose and argue for a Clitic Host Selection Algorithm, which accounts for these restrictions

2 Restrictions on DPIE in Spanish

When the determiner in an elliptical DP is one of the definite articles el, la, los, las, several restrictions apply. We’ll talk about three today:

2.1 A modifier is necessary

When the determiner is a definite article, a modifier is necessary for DPIE to be licit:

(4) DA + gap + *(Adj) (cf. (1))

el pingüino alto y el [ ] *(bajo)
the penguin tall and the [ ] *(short)
‘the tall penguin and the short [one]’

(5) DA + gap + *(RC) (cf. (2))

el pingüino que vió Martín y el [ ] *(que vió Marta)
the penguin that saw Martín and the [ ] *(that saw Marta)
‘the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw’

(6) DA + gap + *(dePP) (cf. (3))

el pingüino de Antártida y el [ ] *(de Australia)
the penguin of Antarctica and the [ ] *(of Australia)
‘the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia’

2.2 Only de PPs are licit PP modifiers

PPs headed by P⁰’s other than de are not licit modifiers for DPIE:

(7) DA + gap + dePP (repeated from (3))

el pingüino de Antártida y el [ ] de Australia
the penguin of Antarctica and the [ ] of Australia
‘the penguin from Antarctica and the [one] from Australia’

(8) * DA + gap + paraPP

* el pingüino para el zoológico y el [ ] para el acuario
the penguin for the zoo and the [ ] for the aquarium
(9) * DA + gap + conPP
   * el pingüino con una bufanda y el [ ] con gafas
   the penguin with the scarf and the [ ] with glasses

2.3 Only que RCs are licit RC modifiers

Relative clauses are licit DPIE modifiers only when they are que-initial:

(10) DA + gap + queRC (repeated from (2))
   el pingüino que vió Martín y el [ ] que vió Marta
   the penguin that saw Martín and the [ ] that saw Marta
   ‘the penguin that Martín saw and the [one] that Marta saw’

(11) * DA + gap + dondeRC
   * el pueblo donde crecí yo y el [ ] donde vivo ahora
   the town where grew.up I and the [ ] where I.live now

(12) * DA + gap + cuandoRC
   * la vez cuando conocí a Morrissey y la [ ] cuando conocí a Mick Jagger
   the time when I.met A Morrissey and the [ ] when I.met A Mick Jagger

3 In favor of clitic-based restrictions

3.1 Restrictions apply only to elliptical DPs with definite articles

All of these restrictions apply only when the determiner immediately preceding the gap is a definite article—they are lifted when a demonstrative is used instead:

(13) Dem + gap + Ø
   este pingüino alto y ese [ ] (bajo)
   this penguin tall and that [ ] (short)
   ‘this tall penguin and that (short) [one]’

(14) Dem + gap + paraPP
   este pingüino para el zoológico y ese [ ] para el acuario
   this penguin for the zoo and that [ ] for the aquarium
   ‘this penguin for the zoo and that [one] for the aquarium’

(15) Dem + gap + dondeRC
   este pueblo donde crecí yo y ese [ ] donde vivo ahora
   this town where grew.up I and that [ ] where I.live now
   ‘this town where I grew up, and that [one] where I live now’

This is consistent with a clitic-based analysis of DPIE, which inherently distinguishes between the clitic definite articles and other non-clitic determiners.
3.2 Strict adjacency matters

As Eguren (2009) points out, in DPIE there is always a strict adjacency between the definite article and a licit modifier.

If a licit modifier immediately follows the gap, the ellipsis is licit:

(16) el pingüino de Antártida para el zoológ y el [ ] de Australia para el acuario "the penguin from Antarctica for the zoo and the [ ] of Australia for the aquarium"

If anything intervenes between the definite article and the modifier, or if the licit modifier is removed, the ellipsis becomes illicit. This is the case even if no new material is introduced into the DP:

(18) * el pingüino de Antártida para el zoológ y el [ ] para el acuario "the penguin from Antarctica for the zoo and the [ ] for the aquarium"

(19) * la manzana roja para Marta y la [ ] para Martín "the red apple for Marta and the [ ] for Martín"

We can see, then, that one ungrammatical apple doesn’t spoil the whole barrel, as long as it doesn’t intervene between the definite article and a licit modifier—this is predicted under a view where a clitic is searching for the first linearly available host.

4 Selecting the clitic host

Several analyses of DPIE and DPIE-related phenomena posit that the Spanish definite articles are clitics, which must attach to a particular type of host (Brucart and Gràcia 1986, Raposo 1999, Kornfeld and Saab 2004, Ticio 2005).

Brucart and Gràcia (1986): the definite article clitics can attach to nominal elements

• More specifically: elements with a [+N] categorial feature

 Following Chomsky’s (1986) categorization, I take [+N] elements include N and A, and exclude V, P, and Adv.
Two major problems, if further refinements aren’t made:

- APs modified by adverbs ([−N]) are actually licit modifiers

  \[
  \text{(20) el coche amarillo y el [ ] verdaderamente amarillo} \\
  \quad \text{the car yellow and the [ ] truly yellow} \\
  \quad \text{the yellow car and the really yellow [one]}
  \]

- Relative clauses and PPs (as we saw in §1.1) are also licit modifiers
  - The leftmost element in a licit RC or PP modifier is either \textit{que} or \textit{de}—neither of which is nominal

\textbf{4.1 The Proposal}

My proposal: the Spanish definite article clitics are versatile—they can cliticize to either XPs or \(X^0\)’s under the right circumstances, as defined by the Clitic Host Selection Algorithm:

\[
\text{(21) The Clitic Host Selection Algorithm (CHSA)}
\]

  a. The Spanish definite articles cliticize to an XP iff:
    i. XP is headed by an \textit{overt} \([+N]\) head \(X^0\)
    ii. Any overt material that intervenes between the clitic and \(X^0\) must be contained within XP
  b. The Spanish definite articles cliticize to a head \(X^0\) iff:
    i. \(X^0\) is an overt complementizer head
    ii. No overt material intervenes between the clitic and \(X^0\)

\textbf{4.2 Applying the CHSA}

\textbf{4.2.1 Non-elliptical DPs}

The CHSA applies to the definite articles regardless of the elliptical or non-elliptical nature of a given DP—hence it must be shown that the CHSA permits the definite article to cliticize properly in non-elliptical DPs.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{3}Raposo (1999), Kornfeld and Saab (2004), and Ticio (2005) offer such refinements. Raposo and Ticio, for example, both argue that cliticization cannot occur across a PP-phase, thus generating the PP restrictions. Kornfeld and Saab argue that \textit{de}, due to its phonological weakness, is also a clitic. Under their view, \textit{de} procliticizes to following material, then the definite article cliticizes to this whole complex.
Consider the simplest case—a DP with an overt N:

(22)  \( \text{el coche} \) ‘the car’

(23)

\[
\text{DP}^4 \\
\text{D} \quad \text{FP} \\
\text{el} \quad \text{N} \quad \text{NP} \\
\quad [+N] \quad \text{coche}_i \\
\quad \text{t}_i
\]

4.2.2 Elliptical DPs with unmodified postnominal adjectives

In elliptical DPs with unmodified postnominal adjectives, the definite article cliticizes to the AP:

(24)  \( \ldots \text{y el [ ] amarillo} \) ‘and the yellow [one]’

(25)

\[
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} \quad \text{FP} \\
\text{el} \quad \text{N} \quad \text{NP} \\
\quad [+N] \\
\quad \emptyset_i \\
\quad \text{AP} \quad \text{NP} \\
\quad \text{A} \quad [+N] \\
\quad \text{amarillo} \\
\quad \text{t}_i
\]

\[\text{This structure and those throughout are simplified for clarity of presentation. The simplifications do not affect the proposal being made here. See the appendix for a more fully articulated structure.}\]
4.2.3 Elliptical DPs with modified postnominal adjectives

In elliptical DPs with modified postnominal adjectives, the definite article again cliticizes to the A—even if the modifier (here an adverb) is [-N]:

(26) ...y el [ ] verdaderamente amarillo ‘and the truly yellow [one]’

(27) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} & \text{FP} \\
\text{el} & \text{N} \\
[+N] & \text{NP} \\
\emptyset_i & \text{AP} \\
\text{AdvP} & \text{A} \\
\text{Adv} & \text{amarillo} \\
\text{verdaderamente} \\
\end{array}
\]

4.2.4 Relative clause modifiers

Following Kayne (1976, 1994), I assume that que ‘that’ is a complementizer head in C\(^0\), while other relative clause-initial elements are XP relative pronouns in SpecCP. In elliptical DPs with que relative clause modifiers, the definite article clitic cliticizes to the C\(^0\) que:

(28) ...y el [ ] que... ‘and the [one] that...’

(29) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} & \text{FP} \\
\text{el} & \text{N} \\
[+N] & \text{NP} \\
\emptyset_i & \text{NP} \\
& \text{CP} \\
& \text{C}^0 \\
& \text{TP} \\
\text{que} & \cdots \\
\end{array}
\]
In elliptical DPs with non-*que* relative clause modifiers, the definite article has nowhere to cliticize—the C⁰ is covert, and overt material (namely, the relative pronoun in SpecCP) intervenes before any other potential host:

(30) *...y el [ ] cuándo...... ‘and the [one] when...’

(31) *DP

```
D  FP
  el
N  [+[N]]
  Øᵢ   NP
    XP  C⁰  TP
      cuando  Ø ...
```

### 4.2.5 Prepositional phrase modifiers

As with relative clauses, I follow Kayne in determining the categorial status of phrase heads. In particular, I assume that *de* is a complementizer head (marked here as de⁰/C⁰) heading a deP/CP. I assume other prepositions are P⁰s.

*de* PPs, headed by de⁰/C⁰, are structurally quite similar to *que* relative clauses:

(32) ...y el [ ] de Australia ‘and the [one] from Australia’

(33) DP

```
D  FP
  el
N  [+[N]]
  Øᵢ   NP   deP/CP
    tᵢ  de⁰/C⁰  DP
      de  Australia
```

PPs headed by anything other than *de*, though, are illicit modifiers. The definite article has no licit host:
4.3 Demonstratives and other Determiners

Other determiners and demonstratives do not have the restrictions on DPIE outlined here. This is because they are not clitics, and so are not affected by the CHSA.

The structure of the gap and the modifier remains the same, but the demonstrative does not need to attach to anything—this results in grammatical ellipsis regardless of the modifier:

(36)  *... y este [] para el acuario ‘and this [one] for the aquarium’

\[\text{DP} \quad \text{DemP} \quad \text{este} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{FP} \quad \emptyset \quad \text{N} \quad [+N] \quad \emptyset_i \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{PP} \quad \text{ti} \quad \text{P} \quad \text{DP} \quad \text{para} \quad \text{el acuario}\]

---

5 The singular masculine indefinite article *un* does not behave like either the definite articles or the other determiners. When followed by a gap, *un* alternates with *uno*. This alternation may be susceptible to an OT-flavored analysis in which switching forms is preferred to cliticization due to a highly-ranked constraint that disfavors the sequence *un* \(\emptyset\).


5 Conclusion

The restrictions on DPIE in Spanish can be derived from the clitic nature of the definite articles. This explains the asymmetry between elliptical DPs with the definite article and those with other determiners.

The CHSA allows the definite articles to cliticize to either an XP or an $X^0$, but only under tightly-controlled conditions. This predicts that modified phrases, like APs with adverbial modifiers, may serve as licit DPIE modifiers.

Additionally, the CHSA correctly predicts the restricted set of licit relative clause and PP modifiers in DPIE.

Appendix

The (more) fully articulated structure

Prenominal adjectives

Prenominal adjectives are predicted by the CHSA to be licit hosts for the definite article clitics. However, DPIE is not licit with a prenominal adjective:

(38) ...y el (*supuesto) [ ] bajo ‘and the (*supposed) [one] that’s short’
Note that in this tree, the prenominal AP is a licit host for the clitic—it is headed by an overt [+N] element, and there is no material intervening between it and the definite article clitic.

I assume a modified version of Eguren’s (to appear) condition on contrastive focus in nominal ellipsis:

(40)  Condition on Contrastive Focus in DPIE (modified from Eguren (to appear))
Contrastive focus identifies a subset in a set of contextually or situationally given alternatives, and the focused constituent(s) in the modifier cannot be (semantically) identical to the corresponding part(s) in the antecedent phrase. All elements in the modifier must be able to be contrastively focused under this definition. The focused constituent(s) must also have an intersective semantics.

Prenominal adjectives are largely excluded by this principle, due to their having a non-intersective semantics, or not identifying a subset of the contextually given alternatives. Thus, prenominal adjectives are not sufficiently contrastive to meet this condition.

**Complement PPs**

The examples of PPs throughout—and the structures shown in §4.2.5 specifically—are non-complement PPs. Cliticization to complement dePPs, and the inability of cliticization to non-de PPs, works quite similarly to non-complement PPs.

In (41), for example, the definite article cannot cliticize to XP, since its head is covert. The de0, however, provides a licit host—it is a complementizer head, and no overt material intervenes between it and the definite article clitic.
(41) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{el} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{[+N]} \\
\text{Ø} \\
\text{F} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{deP/CP} \\
\text{deP/CP} \\
\text{de}_0/C_0 \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{sintaxis}
\end{array}
\]

References


Corver, Norbert and van Koppen, Marjo (2007). *Let’s Focus on Noun Phrase Ellipsis*. Ms. University of Utrecht, UitL-OTS.


