Clausal cosubordination in Spanish

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This paper examines a set of structures containing finite clauses in Spanish that have been traditionally analyzed as coordinate (1-2) or juxtaposed (3). In contrast to conventional analyses, we will argue that the clauses underlined in examples (1)-(3) are cosubordinate (in accordance with Conti's 2018 work on *o… o* 'either… or'). To achieve this end, we will focus in particular on the patterns of grammatical dependency shown by these clauses:

(1)   *O no venía o llegaba tarde*.
        'Either (s)he wasn't coming or (s)he was arriving late'.
(2)   *Ni veía ni quería ver si contenía algo en su interior*.
        '(S)he neither saw nor wanted to see whether there was something inside it'.
(3)   *Íbamos al cine casi a diario, leíamos, paseábamos*.
        'We went to the movies almost every day, we read, we walked'.

Unlike coordinate clauses, cosubordinate clauses are not integrated (they are not part of the constituent they are joined to), but are grammatically dependent (Van Valin 1984: 546; Foley & Van Valin 1984: 242; Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 454; Van Valin 2005: 188; Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008: 157). More specifically, as Van Valin (2005: 187) points out, the property that distinguishes cosubordination from coordination is operator dependency. In contrast to coordinate clauses, cosubordinate clauses depend on the same matrix of operators, namely tense, status –epistemic modality, external negation–illocutionary force –the type of speech act– and evidentiality (Van Valin 2005: 9).

As this paper will show, the clauses underlined in examples (1)-(3) above, which are fully inflected, share several restrictions with respect to illocutionary force that point to their grammatical dependency. In contrast to coordinate clauses (4b, 5b, 6b), they reject illocutionary force asymmetries (4a), cannot express a command via the imperative mood (5a) and cannot be asserted independently (6a):

(4)   a.   **Luisa o se casó con Pedro ¿o se casó con Luis?*
                'Luisa either married Pedro… or did she marry Luis?'
        b.   *Luisa se casó con Pedro ¿o se casó con Luis?*
                'Luisa married Pedro, or did she marry Luis?'
(5)   a.   **O estudia o trabaja*.
                'Either study or work'.
        b.   *Estudia o trabaja*.
                'Study or work'.
(6)   a.   *Los prisioneros o enfermaron o murieron en el mar, ¿verdad?*
                'The prisoners either got sick or died at sea, didn't they?'
                —*Sí* 'yes' (the listener agrees with this assertion).
                —*No* 'no' (the listener disagrees with this assertion).
        b.   *Los prisioneros enfermaron o murieron en el mar, ¿verdad?*
                'The prisoners got sick or died at sea, didn't they?'
                —*Sí* 'yes' (Yes, they did).
                —*No* 'no' (The listener disagrees with this assertion or the listener disagrees just with one of the alternatives).

This paper will also show that the behavior of other clausal operators, such as tense and status, varies among these structures. The juxtaposed clauses in (3) seem to depend on the same tense and status operators (they cannot be negated independently and the tense must be the same in all of the clauses in the sentence), whereas clauses with *o… o* can show different tenses and can be negated independently. In structures with *ni… ni*, both clauses must be negated (they seem to depend on the same status operator), but they can show differences with respect to tense.

In sum, we will argue that the structures in (1)-(3) show patterns of operator dependency similar to those observed for cosubordinate clauses, in spite of the fact that the clauses being analyzed are finite and seemingly independent.

To this end, this paper will be structured as follows. First, we will summarize the existing literature on *o… o*, *ni… ni* and juxtaposed clauses. Next, we will present the sample used in our study, which comprises more than 200 examples from texts written in European Spanish (*Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI*, RAE 2013-present). Finally, we will analyze the features of grammatical dependency observed in the structures studied, paying particular attention to clause operators.

References

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