

Spanish as an argument-indexing language. A view from the analysis of Colombian Andean Spanish

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Abstract

Spanish is considered a dependent-marking language in which argument realization is accomplished through the coding of lexical or referential phrases (RPs). This counter-proposal suggests that it is an argument-indexing language, one where the argument realization is carried out by means of person forms or indexes attached to the verbal word. To prove this, we show that in Standard Spanish (SS) subject and indirect object RPs are not coded in most cases, and that the verb plus the indexes can function as a complete clause. To further discuss these ideas, we analyze Colombian Andean Spanish (CAS), in which DO arguments are also mostly coded through clitic person forms, so CAS has a three index system. We propose that the argument features load is coded in a distributed fashion: the indexes are the syntactic expression of arguments, while the RPs manifest their semantic and pragmatic content.

Keywords: Spanish argument realization system; argument indexing languages; Spanish case flag system; cross-reference languages; conominal status in Spanish.

1. Introduction

Spanish (spa, Indo-European, Romance) is widely considered a dependent-marking language, in terms of the typological distinction first introduced by Nichols (1986).

This supposes that Spanish is a type of language in which argument realization is accomplished through lexical referential phrases (RPs),¹ and that the semantic and syntactic relations between the verbal predicate and the arguments is marked on those RPs, which are the dependents in relation to the predicate. The flagging on the RPs is usually done by means of case markers or by adpositional marking (analytical case marking).

In this paper, we follow Haspelmath (2013) in setting aside the dependent-marking vs. head-marking opposition and propose that the relevant distinction to explain argument realization systems is between languages in which the argument projection is accomplished by means of lexical referential phrases (RPs) and languages in which arguments are mainly coded through the presence of person forms or indexes in the verb. We also follow Haspelmath (2013) in assuming that the realization of arguments through person forms cannot be labeled as case-marking on the head, as the indexes themselves are the arguments and not a way of flagging the arguments.

In this context, we will show that the main formal means of argument realization in Spanish is not through the RPs, but through indexes in the verbal word. That is, we propose that Spanish is an argument-indexing language.

Despite the dependent-marking tag, it is widely known that Spanish shows what is called the pro-drop parameter, i.e., clauses without a lexical subject are possible, as in (1):

- (1) *Romp-ió* *el = vaso.*²
break-3PST ART = glass
'(He/She) broke the glass.'

The typical (non-explicit) analysis (Alcina & Blecua 1975; Seco 1989; García Miguel 1991, 1995; Bogard 1992, Alarcos Llorach 1994; Bosque & Demonte 1999; Company

¹ We use the term referring or referential phrase (RP) instead of noun phrase (NP). We follow Van Valin's proposal (2008) that the basic semantic and syntactic relations in the clause are those of referring expressions (RPs) and predicating expressions (the predicate, which is the nucleus of the clause). The RP function can be fulfilled by any type of lexical categories; hence, RPs do not need to have a specific type of head; so, although in many languages it is the case that NPs typically play that role, it does not need to be so.

² Examples without a source indication are elicited directly by the authors. They are provided in the understanding that they are non-controversial and that they are standard examples of Spanish in general.

1998, 2003; Di Tullio 2005; RAE 2009; among many others) assumes that the inflection on the verb is an agreement marker, and that the subject in this type of clauses is a non-coded RP. Haspelmath (2013, 2019) calls this analysis the virtual-agreement view. Following him, we argue that this analysis is misleading, and that the person features in the inflection are the formal manifestation of the argument.

In a similar fashion, some scholars (Heger 1967; Givón 1976; Silva-Corvalán 1981; Suñer 1988; García Miguel 1991; 1995; Bogard 1992; Company 1998, 2003; Belloro 2004, 2007; Kailuweit 2008; Van Valin 2013) have proposed that the Spanish accusative and dative clitics are also agreement markers, as in (2a), in contrast with (2b), where there are full RPs functioning as the arguments:

(2)

a. *Se = la = dio.*

3DAT = 3ACC = give.3PST

‘(He/She) gave it to him/her.’

b. *Rogelio dio la = noticia a = Pedro.*

Rogelio give.3PST ART = news PREP = Pedro

‘Rogelio gave the news to Pedro.’

Here we propose that the agreement analysis is also misleading when applied to the object clitics. Likewise, we consider that the treatment of these clitics as pronouns that substitute the RPs is also incorrect. We will show that the clitic indexes are the primary means for the realization of the indirect object (IO) argument, and also of the DO argument, but the latter only in some varieties, as in the Colombian Andean Spanish.

As it has also been widely discussed, Spanish shows what is called *clitic doubling*, where a RP appears along a dative person form, as in (3a), or an accusative clitic, as in (3b):

(3)

a. *Rogelio le = dio la = noticia a = Pedro.*

Rogelio 3DAT = give.3PST ART = news 3DAT = Pedro

‘Rogelio gave the news to Pedro.’

- b. Rogelio *la* = *vio* *a* *ella* *en la* *calle*.
 Rogelio 3ACC = see.3PST DOM her in the street
 ‘Rogelio saw her on the street.’

Interestingly, many authors (Kany 1945; Gili Gaya 1961; García Miguel 1991, 1995; Bogard 1992; Vázquez Rozas 1995; Company 1998, 2003; Belloro 2004, 2007; Di Tullio 2005; Kailuweit 2008; RAE/ASALE 2009, among others) consider that the clitics double the RPs and not the opposite.³ They treat the RPs as the arguments and the person forms as agreement markers. Here, we argue that the clitic person forms and the RPs jointly are the manifestation of the verbal arguments. This analysis does not imply a double coding of the same referent, but that a single argument information is distributed and coded simultaneously through two distinct forms, the index and the RP. Following Pensalfini (2004), we propose that the indexes only project the syntactic information, while the RPs stand for the semantic and referential information of the argument, so there is not a double instantiation of the same referent in the core of the clause, which in some frameworks (e.g., RRG, Van Valin 2005) operates as an important projection restriction.

Besides establishing the primary role of the indexes in the argument realization system, we will also show that, in contrastive terms, the Spanish flagging system is much more plain or basic, in the sense that it has less overt distinctions than those allowed by the index set. Subject RPs are always unmarked, so the dependent marking features assumed to be present in Spanish are the accusative and dative prepositions that introduce the object RPs, as in (4):

(4)

- a. *La* = *Inés* *cuid-ó* *al* = *guagua*.
 ART = Inés care-3PST DOM.ART = kid
 ‘Ines cared for the kid.’
- b. *Gerardo* *dio* *la* = *noticia* *a* = *Pedro*.
 Gerardo give.3PST ART = news 3DAT = Pedro
 ‘Gerardo gave the news to Pedro.’

³ Notable exception are Bogard (1992) and García Salido (2013), which treat the lexical phrase as the copy of the clitic.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by some scholars (Torrego Salcedo 1999; Delbecque 2002; Leonetti 2004; Iemmolo 2010; Melis 2018), the accusative *a* in (4a), is a differential object marker (DOM): it marks the animacy of the reference, and it does not really flag the relation between the RP and the predicate. So, two of the three core arguments in Spanish, subject and DO, are not flagged at all. Dative marking on the IO is the only true case flag (4b).

As said before, we propose that Spanish is better explained as a language in which the argument realization is mainly accomplished through the presence of indexes attached to the verb and not through RPs. However, we consider that this structural nature is not actually absolute or uniform, since the argument realization system is not completely or uniquely based on the indexes; to a certain extent it is a mixed system.

To demonstrate what we consider to be the direction the argument realization system is heading, we analyze some aspects of Colombian Andean Spanish (CAS),⁴ a dialect spoken in the Southwest part of Colombia, in the Ipiales-Nariño municipality. CAS has a strong index clitic system that “radicalizes” what is present in a more modest fashion in most Spanish varieties. We argue that CAS, as well as some other dialects, such as Rioplatense Spanish (Barrenechea & Orecchia 1970; Fontana 1994; Colantoni 2002; Di Tullio & Zdrojewski 2006; Belloro 2007, 2009, 2012; Di Tullio & Kailuweit 2011) and the Spanish spoken in Chiapas (in the Southeast of Mexico) (Chapa Barrios 2019), is ahead in showing the nature of the Spanish system of argument realization. To prove this, we elaborate on the following ideas:

- a) In most Spanish varieties, as well as in CAS, subject and object RPs are most frequently not coded. The verbal word functions by itself as the clause and the indexes constitute the basic system for the argument realization. The analysis where the arguments are absent RPs does not do justice to this fact.

⁴ Colombian Andean Spanish has been identified as a proper variety by different authors (Flórez 1961; Montes 1985; Mora et al. 2004, among others). Specifically, we take Ruiz Vásquez’s (2020) proposal, which considers Andean Spanish as a super-dialect and distinguishes two Colombian sub-varieties: Highlands Colombian Andean Spanish and Lowlands Colombian Andean Spanish, both with different regional dialects. The data we present here corresponds to the Highlands variety, and inside this, to the Nariño dialect, specifically the one spoken in Ipiales-Nariño.

- b) Contrastively, there is not a “strong” case flagging system in Spanish. Dative IOs seem to count as the only true case-marked arguments. We will show that in CAS even these IOs are beginning to lose their *a* marking in some contexts.
- c) In CAS both dative and accusative indexes can “remain” coded in presence of RPs, so CAS has a set of indexes that distinguishes three arguments. It also is a “doubled object” variety. Following Siewierska (2004), we assume that it has a cross-indexing system. This is not really a doubling system, but one where the features of a single argument can be simultaneously distributed through both the indexes and the RPs.

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2 we deal with some structural aspects of Spanish, whose traditional analyses are misleading: the role of RPs in terms of their frequency coding, the status of the flagging system on the RPs, and the identity of the verbal indexes. In Section 3 we address some important features of CAS that show the role of indexes in argument realization in that variety. The data provided in this section is qualitative and not quantitative. In Section 4, we review some proposals in the literature about the status of RPs in head-marking languages and propose an alternative analysis. Finally, in Section 5 we offer some conclusions.

2. A re-thinking of some features of Standard Spanish

In this section, we briefly go through some important structural characteristics of Standard Spanish.⁵ The aspects discussed and questioned here are: a) the role of both subject and object RPs as the main device for the instantiation of the verbal arguments; b) the identity of object clitics as pronouns or as agreement markers; and finally, c) the importance and strength of the flagging system of the RPs. “Traditional” analyses⁶ of these topics are misleading, because they have their origin in the

⁵ We use the term *Standard Spanish* in a loose way to refer to what can also be called *general Spanish*, a version of the language that presumably can be recognized by speakers of most varieties, and that excludes controversial uses; something akin to the basic formal or academic version of Spanish, which is, more or less, an abstract supra-version of the language. So *standard* does not have any socio-cultural implications, and does not have linguistic implications, other than those that are directly implicated in this work in relation to the clitic system, the role of RPs and the status of the flagging system.

⁶ *Traditional analyses* here means most past and recent approaches to the structural nature of Spanish, which, to our knowledge, in an indirect non-explicit way assume that the main structural means for the coding of the semantic participants in the clause is by means of referential phrases.

imposition of grammatical views that come from the study of other Indo-European languages, such as Latin (lat; Italic) and Greek (ell; Greek), which do not have object clitics or affixes, though being also pro-drop languages. Most importantly, at least in recent times, these analyses have been reinforced by the direct or indirect influence of a general and prevalent theoretical-conceptual framework that has emerged mostly from the study of languages like German (deu; Indo-European, Germanic), English (eng; Indo-European, Germanic) and Russian (rus; Indo-European, Slavic), which have systems of argument coding based on RPs. In what follows, we review these grammatical features one by one.

2.1. *The role of RPs in argument realization*

In the Hispanic Linguistic tradition, Spanish RPs are assumed to be the clear manifestation of the verbal arguments in the clause; they are said to function like arguments in semantic and syntactic terms. Any time one looks for a clear example of a clause in this language, it is common to find an example of a clause with full lexical RPs. Nevertheless, in everyday communication RPs strongly tend to be not coded. The most frequent cases, at least in corpus data, are clauses like (5).

(5)

- a. *Qué bueno que ya = lleg-aste.*
 that.is good SUB PTL = arrive-2PST
 ‘Good, (you) have just arrived.’
- b. *Tom-a, agárr-a = lo.*
 take-2PRS.IMP hold-2PRS.IMP = 3ACC
 ‘(You) take (it), hold it.’
- c. *Ábr-e = me.*
 open-2PRS-IMP = 1DAT
 ‘(You) open (the door) for me.’
- d. *Se = lo = di ayer.*
 3DAT = 3ACC = give.1PST yesterday
 ‘(I) gave it to him/her yesterday.’

Here the RPs, or some of them, are “missing”, compared to what is expected in other languages, as English and German. However, RPs are not necessary as their referents can be recovered from the indexes or from the situational context, or from both.

The pervasive idea that the RPs are missing, that they are somewhere but have been not coded, clearly based on the model of languages with obligatory RPs (see Haspelmath 2013), has led to the pro-drop analysis and the assumption that the verbal inflection functions as an agreement marker, which agrees with a structurally present, although not explicitly coded, subject RP. This virtual agreement analysis has also been extended to the object clitics, at least the dative one. As mentioned before, this analysis is not convincing, in the first place, since agreement is a two-term syntactic relation established by the co-presence of a controller and a “controlee” or pivot (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). In other perspectives (Alcina & Blecua 1975; Seco 1989; Alarcos Llorach 1994; Bosque & Demonte 1999; Fernández Soriano 1999; RAE/ASALE 2009; among many others), the object clitics are considered pronouns: in the absence of the RPs, they substitute them and, hence, they function as the arguments; this has given rise to the “image” of a system of complementary distribution between the person forms and the RPs.

However, in corpus data, the verbal word frequently functions as the whole clause itself. Particularly, subject RPs are frequently absent; García Miguel (2015) mentions that in the ADESSE database,⁷ which contains syntactic and semantic analyses of almost 160,000 clauses that make up the texts of the Pan-Hispanic ARTHUS corpus,⁸ subject RPs appear in only 36% of the total cases; that is, in most of the analyzed clauses, 64% of the cases, the subject argument is directly recovered from the verbal inflection. Bogard (2010) reports even larger percentages for different varieties: in Mexican Spanish 73.4% of the cases appear without a lexical subject; in Colombian Spanish 69.8% of the clauses are in the same situation, and in Peninsular Spanish subjects are not explicitly coded in 66.8% of the clauses. It is necessary to take note that these data are based on the analysis of written discourse. To our knowledge, there are not studies that give a proper account of this type of phenomenon in oral discourse, particularly in dialogic interactions, but presumably, the percentages of cases without a subject RP are much higher, since oral communication is much more anchored to the situational and discourse contexts.

⁷ Base de datos Alternancias de diátesis y esquemas sintáctico-semánticos del español, (Universidad de Vigo: <http://adesse.uvigo.es/data/>).

⁸ Archivo de Textos Hispánicos de la Universidad de Santiago.

In sum, the subject RPs are most frequently not coded and, hence, the argument is directly instantiated by the verbal index. If one starts the analysis from this fact and not from preconceived ideas, it becomes clear that the subject argument information comes from the verbal index and not from RPs that are not present.

This is also true for the indirect object (IO) argument. Vázquez Rozas (1995) provides percentages that go from 91% cases of IOs coded through the clitic index (with or without RP) to only 9% of cases with a lexical IO and without the bound person form. In the same vein, García Miguel (2015) cites a 74.14% of cases of ditransitive constructions without a lexical IO-RP and the object manifested only through the clitic index. In Aranovich's data (2011), the presence of IO-RPs in ditransitive constructions accounts only for a 17% in written texts, although there are dialect differences: while Latin American variants have 29.30% of IO-RPs, the Peninsular dialect shows only 5.80% of similar cases. This last study does not differentiate between OI-RPs which are "doubled" by the clitic and those without the index.

Interestingly, despite the data, in most works of reference the dative clitic is still treated as a copy and the RP is assumed to be the argument, although it is not present in most of the cases. There are three different types of analyses: a) the clitic is assumed to be just a non-informative, redundant form: the "superfluous dative" (Kany 1945: 116; Gili Gaya 1961: 174; Academia Española 1973: Ch. 3.10.4); b) the clitic is assumed to be an agreement marker (Givón 1976; García Miguel 1991; Bogard 1992; Company 1998, 2003); and c) the index is considered a pronoun that substitutes the RP, as in complementary distribution (Alcina & Blecua 1975; Seco 1989; Alarcos Llorach 1994; Bosque & Demonte 1999; Fernández Soriano 1999; RAE/ASALE 2009, etc.), which supposes that the typical scenario is the presence of the RP and then, where it does not appear, the clitic enters as a substitute. Contrary to this, the most frequent case is the presence of the clitic by itself and only in some of these cases it is doubled by a RP. The fact that both the RP and the index can appear together, which is a more frequent scenario than that of clauses with the IO only realized as a RP, shows that the system does not, in fact, operate in complementary distribution.

The problem with all these approaches is that they start from a misconception of the phenomenon. They take for granted the argument realization as a RP. However, if one takes the actual distribution, what comes out clear is that the IO is systematically coded through the index, and then, in some specific cases, it can be

doubled by a RP, most probably for pragmatic reasons (Belloro 2012).⁹In sum, if we start from the consideration of the empirical facts, the main means for the realization of the subject and the IO arguments is by means of bound indexes in the verbal predicate and not through the presence of RPs.

Things are somewhat different, at least in most Spanish varieties, in the case of the accusative or direct object (DO) argument. This is more frequently coded as a RP. For example, Vázquez Rozas (1995) presents a percentage of 75% of lexical realization of that argument, against only a 25% of coding through the clitic index. As has been noted in the literature (Comrie 1981), this is because the DO is usually focal, in information structural terms. This means that its referent represents new information, and it must be explicitly coded through lexical phrases. So, it is possible to say that most Spanish varieties present a mixed system where the subject and IO arguments are typically realized as indexes in the verbal form and the DO is projected as a full RP. Interestingly, as we show in the next subsection, this DO-RP is usually not flagged at all.

2.2. The Spanish case marking system

As mentioned before, Spanish has a mixed system for the argument realization. It has a very strong set of argument indexes and it also has a complementary system of flagging in the RPs, when these do appear coded. This system does not include flags for every possible case distinction, so it is relatively basic in comparison to the robust set of indexes that in some Spanish varieties overtly marks the three major type of arguments, and in comparison to languages with a robust set of case distinctions. In this sense, it is not accurate to characterize Spanish as a dependent marking language. In the first place, as it is well known, full lexical subject arguments are not flagged at all, as the examples in (6) show:

(6)

- a. *Enrique jueg-a fútbol todos los = días.*
Enrique play-3PRS soccer every ART.PL = day
'Enrique plays soccer every day.'

⁹ There is also what Haspelmath (2013) calls the dual-nature view (Bresnan & Mchombo 1987; Siewierska 2004; Van Valin 2005), which considers that when the RP is present, the clitic is an agreement marker, and when the RP is absent, the index is the argument. We will discuss this approach in Section 4.

- b. *La = niña toc-a el = piano por = las = mañanas.*
 ART = girl play-3PRS ART = piano PREP = ART.PL = mornings
 ‘The girl plays the piano in the mornings.’
- c. *Guillermo trabaj-a hasta tarde.*
 Guillermo work-3PRS PREP late
 ‘William works late.’
- d. *La = tienda qued-a lejos.*
 ART = store be-3PRS far
 ‘The store is far.’

As can be seen, both animate, (6a), (6b) and (6c), and inanimate (6d) RPs are not marked; similarly, RPs with proper names, (6a) and (6c), or common names, (6b) and (6d), are not flagged; and equally, both subjects of transitive, (6a) and (6b), and intransitive, (6c) and (6d), predicates are unmarked. Of course, there are many languages where one case marker, usually the nominative or the absolutive (Turkish and Chechen¹⁰, respectively), lacks formal realization and is assumed to be a null or zero morpheme. But this typically happens in languages where the rest of the paradigm has overt coding.

The unmarked or prototypical case of DO argument with an inanimate referent (Comrie 1981), as in (6a) and (6b) above, is not flagged. In Vázquez Rozas (1995) data, almost 81% of the DO are inanimate and they come without a case flag. So, again, if one starts only from the empirical data, it is the case that the two most important arguments of the Spanish clause are not flagged when instantiated as lexical RPs. This is not to say that the semantic and syntactic identity of the arguments cannot be established. This, of course, proceeds through the two other major mechanisms of argument identification: word order and semantic denotation. But this is not the same as saying that the arguments are case-marked. There are three types of evidence that have been adduced to argue that RPs are indeed flagged in Spanish.¹¹ The first one comes from examples like (7a) and (7b):

¹⁰ tur, Turkic, Oghuz; che, Nakh-Daghestanian, Nakh.

¹¹ The classification of Spanish as a dependent marking language implies the fact that there is a system of case marking on the dependents, and although most works in the bibliography accept the idea that the Latin case distinctions only survived in Spanish through the free and clitic pronoun systems, very often terms as nominative and accusative are used “freely” to refer to the syntactic function of the RPs, as synonymous of subject and direct object. In this same direction, the substitution of RPs by the clitics often results in that the substituted RPs are identified as nominative, accusative or dative.

(7)

- a. *Pepe bes-ó a = Lulú.*
 Pepe kiss-3PST DOM = Lulu
 ‘Pepe kissed Lulu.’
- b. *Lulú golpe-ó a = Pepe.*
 Lulu hit-3PST DOM = Pepe
 ‘Lulu hit Pepe.’
- c. **Luisa quem-ó a = la = casa.*
 Luisa burn.down-3PST DOM = ART = house
 ‘Luisa burned down the house.’
- d. **Ramón romp-ió a = el = vaso.*
 Ramón broke-3PST DOM = ART = glass
 ‘Ramon broke the glass.’

In these clauses, the DO arguments appear introduced by the form *a*. But as can be seen from the ungrammaticality of (7c) and (7d), this only happens with animate RPs and very rarely with inanimate ones. The *a* form, then, is not really a device used for marking the functional relation between the argument and the predicate, as true flags are (Haspelmath 2013); rather, it is a differential object marker (DOM) — a device for signaling that the referent is not of the expected semantic type (inanimate). Hence, in a strict sense, the *a* form is not part of a flagging or case marking system.¹²

The second argument usually posited to show the presence of a case system in Spanish is the existence of two sets of independent pronouns: one for the A argument and one for the P argument:

(8)

- a. *Tú (A) me = salud-aste a = mi (P).*
 2PRON 1ACC = greet-2PST DOM = 1PRON
 ‘You greeted me.’
- b. *Yo (A) te = empuj-é a = ti (P).*
 1PRON 2ACC = push-1PST DOM = 2PRON
 ‘I push you.’

¹² As noted in the relevant bibliography (Torrego Salcedo 1999; Delbecque 2002; Leonetti 2004; Iemmolo 2010; Melis 2018), there is considerable dialect variation in the use of *a* as DOM, but Standard or Formal-Academic Spanish does maintain a clear-cut distinction between animate and inanimate.

- c. **Él** (A) *nos = salud-ó* **a = nosotros** (P).
 3PRON 3PL.ACC = greet-3PST DOM = 1PRON.PL
 ‘He greeted us.’
- d. **Nosotros** (A) *lo = salud-amos* **a = él** (P).
 1PRON.PL 3ACC = greet-1PL.PST DOM = 3PRON
 ‘We greeted him.’
- e. **Ella** (A) *los = felicitó* **a = ustedes** (P).
 3PRON 3PL.ACC = congratulate DOM = 2PRON.PL
 ‘She congratulated you.’
- f. **Ustedes** (A) *la = regañ-aron* **a = ella** (P).
 2PL.PRON 3ACC = scold-2PL.PST DOM = 3PRON
 ‘You scolded her.’

As can be seen in (8a) and (8b), the pronouns for the A argument, *tú*, “2sg.nom” and *yo* “1sg.nom”, are clearly different from the respective P pronouns *ti* and *mi*. However, this difference is not that systematic, as it only appears between the first and second singular person units (Fernández Soriano 1999). There is no difference between the plurals of the first – (8d) and (8c) – and second persons – (8f) and (8e) – in their use as A or P arguments. And there is no formal distinction between third persons, neither in the singular nor in the plural. The only difference in all these person forms is the presence of the *a* marker. This one appears, again, as a DOM with P animate arguments. 3rd person inanimate referents, therefore, have one syncretic pronoun only for both singular and plural. So, in general terms, we can state that the case distinctions of the free pronouns system are minimal.

The third proof of the supposed existence of the Spanish case-marking system comes from the substitution of the object RPs with the set of the so-called clitic pronouns, which makes evident the difference between accusative and dative RPs and between them and the subject RP:

(9)

- a. *Mercedes dio el = dinero a = su = hermana.*
 Mercedes give.3PST ART = money PREP = 3POSS = sister
 ‘Mercedes gave the money to his sister.’
- b. *Ella se = lo = dio.*
 3PRON 3DAT = 3ACC = give.3PRS
 ‘She gave it to her.’

As can be seen in (9b), the DO of (9a), *el dinero* ‘the money’ is substituted by the bound person form *lo*, considered as an accusative pronoun, and the IO *a su hermana* ‘to her sister’ is substituted by the clitic *se*,¹³ which is labeled as dative. The non-marked subject RP *Mercedes* of (9a) is substituted in (9b) by a syncretic (in terms of case) free pronoun. It is mostly due to this methodological procedure, substitution, that linguists talk about case distinctions in Spanish. As argued above, this procedure is inadequate as it starts from the view that the RPs are the main structural way in which arguments are projected. What the facts indicate is that the system of indexes is the main grammatical means for argument coding and for this, it is independent of the RP flagging system. Again, this is not to say that there is not a way of distinguishing the RPs when they appear coded (word order also plays an important role), but to emphasize that the instantiation and identity of each argument is mostly guaranteed by the bound person forms.

It seems then that the only one true case flag in Spanish is the dative *a* form of the IO. Its presence is mandatory in all semantic contexts: before animates – as in (10a) and (10b) – and inanimate referents, as in (10c), as well as in all syntactic contexts: postverbal – (10a) and (10c) – and in dislocated preverbal positions (10b); and before or after DOs – (10a) vs. (10c).

(10)

- a. *Fidel le = prest-ó *(a) = Pedro un = poco = de = dinero.*
 Fidel 3DAT = lend-3PST DAT = Pedro ART = some = PREP = money
 ‘Fidel lent Pedro some money.’
- b. **(A) = Pedro le = prest-ó dinero Herminio.*
 DAT = Pedro 3DAT = lend-3PST money Herminio
 ‘Herminio lent Pedro money.’
- c. *Patricia les = pus-o cortinas *(a) = las = ventanas.*
 Patricia 3DAT.PL = put-3PST curtains DAT = ART.PL = windows
 ‘Patricia put curtains on the windows.’

In this scenario, Standard Spanish should be classified as a mixed language with a robust set of verbal indexes and a not so robust flagging system (specifically, for the indirect or dative object).

¹³ Dative *se* appears in the co-presence of the DO clitic forms and it is in complementary distribution with the more frequent *le* (3sg) and *les* (3pl) forms, which appear when there is no DO clitic attached to the verbal predicate.

2.3. Person forms are neither agreement markers nor pronouns

As stated in Haspelmath (2013), there are three ways in which indexes and RPs (or conominals in his terminology) can co-exist: 1) indexes with obligatory conominal, as in German, Russian and English, where the subject RP always appears simultaneously with the presence of a person index in the verbal inflection. This is what must be identified as agreement proper, a two-term syntactic relation; 2) indexes with impossible conominals, where the index stands in the place of the RP and acts as a true pro-nominal. When coded, the RP itself appears without a correspondent index, so, this type of system operates in complementary distribution; and 3) indexes with optional conominals, which is the most frequent kind of system in the world's languages; it is usually labeled in the literature as a cross-reference system (Bloomfield 1933; Hockett 1958; Sierwierska 2004).

In terms of what we have said until now, the Spanish argument realization system is a cross-reference or cross-indexing system. More precisely, it is a system where the most basic and frequent case is the one where the arguments (at least subject and IO) are coded through indexes and then, these can optionally be accompanied by the correspondent RPs. The indexes are the arguments in both scenarios. We discuss the status of the conominals in Section 4.

In this context, we consider that the indexes are not agreement markers. The typical (non-explicit) analysis, common to all the Hispanic Linguistics tradition, assumes that, in particular, the subject in pro-drop clauses is a non-coded RP and that the inflection on the verb is an agreement marker (Heger 1967; Alcina & Blecua 1975; Silva-Corvalán 1981; Suñer 1988; Seco 1989; García Miguel 1991, 1995; Bogard 1992, Alarcos Llorach 1994; Bosque & Demonte 1999; Company 1998, 2003; Belloro 2004, 2007; Di Tullio 2005; Kailuweit 2008; RAE/ASALE 2009; among many others).¹⁴ We argue that this analysis is misleading for the following reasons: a) agreement is a two-term syntactic relation that implies the simultaneous presence of a controller and a controlee; b) in Spanish there is a strong tendency for subject RPs to be absent or not-coded; and c) there is not always an anaphoric antecedent in the discursive context; the verbal inflection can be pointing out to a referent in the situational context and not to a discursive antecedent, as in *Está sola* '(she) is alone' (the speaker is looking

¹⁴ This non-explicit analysis comes straight from the fact that in all the cited works it is assumed that the subject agrees with the verbal inflection, whether there is a lexical subject or not. This implies that the agreement controller can be coded or not.

at a woman). In this example neither the verbal inflection nor the gender of the adjective *sola* can be said to be controlled, as a referent in the world cannot be a linguistic controller. There is referential matching, but there is no syntactic control.

This analysis can be extended to the case of the clitic indexes, at least to the dative one for most varieties. It cannot be an agreement marker since it is the formal instantiation of the IO argument. As seen before, IO RPs are usually not coded. So, it cannot be the case that absent RPs are the controllers of the verbal indexes. At the same time, the indexes are not pronouns substituting the RPs (Van Valin 2013). They do not substitute anything as they are typically present (subject person forms are obligatory, as well as the dative ones in many Spanish varieties). Also, they do not necessarily have to be linked to an antecedent in the discourse context. Besides, first and second person forms, the most common ones, never substitute anything, since they are deictic forms.

Another indication that the bound person forms are not pronouns comes from the fact that they can be doubled by free pronouns, as in (11a), the same way they can be doubled by RPs.¹⁵ In contrast, free pronouns cannot be doubled by RPs, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (11b). This means that the RPs and pronouns behaves similarly and differently from indexes, which are not pronouns nor nominals.

(11)

- a. *La = vi* *a = ella.*
 3ACC = see.1PST DOM = 3PRON
 ‘I saw her.’
- b. **Vi* *a = ella* *María.*
 see.1PST DOM = 3PRON *María*
 ‘I saw her (Mary).’

¹⁵ The traditional analysis starts from the consideration that it is the clitic which obligatorily has to appear doubling the free pronoun. In our analysis, it is the pronoun which doubles the clitic, just like the RPs do. In topicality contexts, the clitic must appear, and by definition, pronouns always constitute topical information. So, since the referent in turn is topical, the clitic must be coded *La vi en el cine* ‘I saw her at the movies’. Consequently, given certain pragmatic needs (to emphasize or to contrast), the speaker can add the pronoun *La vi a ella en el cine* ‘I saw her at the movies’. So, in contexts where the pronoun can appear, the clitic is always present. This gives the impression that it is the pronoun which requires to be doubled by the clitic.

One last proof that the Spanish verbal indexes are not pronouns comes from the fact that they can signal indefinite (12a) and generic elements (12b), as well as propositions (12c). As Van Valin (2013) notes, true pronouns should only be able to cross-reference definite RPs, since pronouns are themselves definite (Austin & Bresnan 1996).

(12)

- a. *¿Lo = vi-ste, a = un = señor que = pas-ó por = ahí?*
 3ACC = see-2PST DOM = ART = man REL = pass-3PST by = over.there
 ‘Did you see him, a man who passed by.’
- b. *Quier-en a = alguien = que sí pued-a hacer el = trabajo.*
 want-3PL.PRS DOM = someone = REL AFF can-3PRS do ART = job
Lo = contratar-ían de = inmediato.
 3ACC = hire-3PL.FUT PREP = immediately
 ‘They want someone who can actually do the job. They would hire him immediately.’
- c. *Consider-o = que no deb-erías ir. Realmente lo = creo.*
 consider-1PST = SUB NEG should-2FUT go really 3ACC = think
 ‘I think you shouldn’t go. I really think so.’

In Section 3, we will present some further arguments on the nature of the indexes in Colombian Andean Spanish (CAS), which cannot be considered as pronouns or as agreement markers. For example, in oral communication the dative clitics can lose their plural number feature. Similarly, accusative clitics can lose both gender and number features. So, they do not instantiate referents (they are not pronouns) and do not agree with the correspondent RPs.

3. The argument realization system in CAS

In this section, we analyze some aspects of the clitic system of Colombian Andean Spanish (CAS), specifically from the variety spoken in Ipiales-Nariño, a city in southwestern Colombia, near the border with Ecuador. The data come from two main sources: a sample of occurrences in natural discourse, i.e., in real communicative interactions between men and women of different ages, in different types of formal and informal contexts, and from metalinguistic interviews with a group of informants, made with the aim of verifying issues related to the morphosyntax of the indexes. The

informants are around 80 speakers that belong to an extended network of family and friends in Ipiales, most of them are middle class, with high and middle levels of schooling. The analysis is of qualitative nature, and it is not based on quantitative data.

3.1. A three-index robust system

As discussed above, the more frequent and basic way in which subject and IO arguments are realized in Standard Spanish and in other varieties of Spanish is through the bound person forms in the verbal word: the dative clitic, in the case of the IO, and the person features in verbal inflection, in the case of the subject. The situation is different for the DO arguments since the basic way of coding these is through RPs. But this is not the case in CAS: in this dialect, similarly to a few other varieties, such as the Rioplatense Argentinian Spanish (RAS) and the Spanish from Chiapas (México), the basic means for the syntactic realization of DO arguments is also as a clitic index as in (13).

(13)

- a. *Mir-a, la = Flor me = los = dio.* (Showing some candies in her hand)
look-2PRS ART = Flor 1DAT = 3PL.ACC = give.3PST
'Look, Flor gave them to me.'
- b. *Pél-a = las, por = favor-cito.* (Pointing to a sack of potatoes).
Peel-2PRS = 3ACC PREP = please-DIM
'Peel them please.'
- c. *¿Dónde lo = compr-aste el = vestido?*
where 3ACC = buy-2pst ART = dress
'Where did you buy the dress?'
- d. *Pás-a = me = lo el = vaso = de = agua.*
pass-2PRS = 1DAT = 3ACC ART = glass = PREP = water
'Pass me the glass of water.'

(13a) and (13b) show the common cases where the DO clitic appears without a RP and without any discourse antecedent, like in any other Spanish dialect. The referent is directly recovered from the speech situation, so the clitic functions as a deictic form, i.e. as an index. In contrast, examples (13c) and (13d), in which a coreferential RP, a conominal, is present along with the clitic, are more pragmatically restricted in

other varieties of Spanish. There are not, to our knowledge, data-based accounts of how frequent this double accusative construction appears in CAS. But it seems, in terms of the Ipiales speakers' perception, that it is common, or 'the natural way of saying it'.

In general terms, in CAS, the accusative index is coded in the presence or absence of the coreferential RP. As a consequence, the index is the argument and the RP, when it appears, should be considered as a duplication.

It is important to note that the accusative doubling is present in most Spanish varieties (Belloro 2012), and it is a grammatical feature of the language. Its presence, however, depends on how restricted it is in pragmatic terms.¹⁶

Our elicited data from CAS seem to suggest that the doubled accusative construction is unrestricted in most pragmatic contexts, as much as it is in the other important accusative doubling dialect: the Rioplatense Argentinian Spanish (RAS) (Barrenechea & Orecchia 1970, 1977; Blears 2000; Di Tullio & Zdrojewski 2006; Estigarribia 2006; Belloro 2012; Sánchez & Zdrojewski 2013). Both CAS and RAS clearly contrast with Standard Spanish, in which the double construction is much more pragmatically restricted:

(14) While listening to an LP

- a. ??*Prést-a = me = lo* *el = disco,* *est-á* *muy = bueno.* (Topical DO)
 lend-2PRS = 1DAT = 3ACC ART = album be-3PRS very = good
 'Lend me it (the album) is very good.'
- a'. *Prést-a = me = lo* *el = disco,* *est-á* *muy = bueno.* (Topical DO)
 lend-2PRS = 1DAT = 3ACC ART = album be-3PRS very = good
 'Lend me it (the album) is very good.'
- b. *Prést-a = me = lo,* *est-á* *muy = bueno.*
 lend-2PRS = 1DAT = 3ACC be-3PRS very = good
 'Lend me it. It's very good.'
- c. *Prést-a = me* *el = disco,* *est-á* *muy = bueno.*
 lend-2PRS = 1DAT ART = album be-3PRS very = good
 'Lend me the album, it is very good.'

On the one hand, example (14a) shows that in Standard Spanish the double accusative is not favored in contexts where the DO referent is topical. On the other hand,

¹⁶ See Belloro (2012) for a neat account of the phenomenon in Peninsular, Mexican and Argentinian varieties.

according to all our informants, in CAS, in this same context, the double construction in (14a') is very natural. In both varieties, the examples where the DO is realized only as a clitic (14b) or only as a RP (14c) are well-formed and natural.

In the case of new but anchored DOs, the double accusative, as in (15a), is odd and very unusual in Standard Spanish, but this is not so in CAS, where the construction is natural (15a'). Again, the alternative options with the DO as a clitic (15b) or as a RP (15c) are equally possible both in Standard Spanish and in CAS.

(15)

a. ??*Aprovech-é* *y* *las = compr-é* (New, anchored DO)

take.advantage.of-1PST CONJ 3PL.ACC = buy-1PST

las = papas *en = el = mercado.*

ART.PL = potatoes PREP = ART = market

'I took advantage and bought the potatoes in the market.'

a'. *Aprovech-é* *y* *las = compré* (New, anchored DO)

take.advantage.of-1PST CONJ 3PL.ACC = buy-1PST

las papas *en = el = mercado.*

ART.PL = potatoes PREP = ART = market

'I took advantage and bought the potatoes in the market.'

b. *Aprovech-é* *y* *las = compr-é* *en = el = mercado.*

take.advantage.of-1PST CONJ 3PL.ACC = buy-1PST PREP = ART = market

'I took advantage and bought them in the market.'

c. *Aprovech-é* *y* *compr-é* *papás* *en = el = mercado.*

take.advantage.of-1PST CONJ buy-1PST potatoes PREP = ART = market

'I took advantage and bought potatoes in the market.'

When the DO is new and non-anchored in Standard Spanish, as in (16a), or it has a generic or *irrealis* interpretation, as in (17a), the accusative doubling is ungrammatical. This is not the case for CAS, as (16a') and (17a') show. As expected, in the cases of a new DO (16b) or a generic DO (17b), the RP is obligatorily needed, both in Standard Spanish and in CAS. On the other side, (16c) and (17c) confirm that a lexical DO makes these constructions viable.

(16)

a. ***La** = *vi* *una = bicicleta* *que = est-aba* (New, non-anchored DO)

3ACC = see.1PST ART = bicycle REL = be-3COP

en = la = puerta.

PREP = ART = door

‘I saw a bicycle that was at the door.’

a’. **La** = *vi* *una = bicicleta* *que = est-aba* (New, non-anchored DO)

3ACC = see.1PST ART = bicycle REL = be-3COP

en = la = puerta.

PREP = ART = door

‘I saw a bicycle that was at the door.’

b. ***La** = *vi*

3ACC = see.1PST

‘I saw her.’

c. *Vi* *una = bicicleta* *que = est-aba* *en = la = puerta.*

see.1PST ART = bicycle REL = be-3COP PREP = ART = door

‘I saw a bicycle that was at the door.’

(17)

a. ***Lo** = *contrat-arían* *a = alguien* *que = sí* *pud-iera* (Generic DO)

3ACC = hire-3PL.COND DOM = someone REL = AFF could-3.PSB

hacer ese = trabajo.

do DEM = job

‘They would hire someone who could do that job.’

a’. **Lo** = *contrat-arían* *a = alguien* *que = sí* *pud-iera* (Generic DO)

3ACC = hire-3PL.COND DOM = someone REL = AFF could-3.PSB

hacer ese = trabajo.

do DEM = job

‘They would hire someone who could do that job.’

b. ***Lo** = *contrat-arían.*

3ACC = hire-3PL.COND

‘They would hire him.’

c. *Contrat-arían* *a = alguien* *que = sí* *pud-iera*

hire-3PL.COND DOM = someone REL = AFF could-3.PSB

hacer ese = trabajo.

do DEM = job

‘They would hire someone who could do that job.’

In summary, the examples above show that in CAS the accusative doubling is possible in all pragmatic contexts, as in the case of topical or situationally anchored referents, and new and generic DOs, whereas the double accusative construction is highly restricted in almost all contexts in Standard Spanish.

Table 1 below summarizes the accessibility of double accusative in the relevant pragmatic contexts in Standard Spanish and CAS.

Standard Spanish system	CAS system
1 V + DO clitic + 0 (situationally anchored)	V + DO clitic + 0 (Situationally anchored)
2 V + DO clitic + 0 (topical)	V + DO clitic + 0 (topical)
3 V + DO clitic + Pron (topical)	V + DO clitic + Pron (topical)
4 *V + 0 + Pron (topical)	*V + 0 + Pron (topical)
5 ??V + DO clitic + RP (Topical)	V + DO clitic + RP (Topical)
6 V + 0 + RP (New)	V + 0 + RP (New)
7 *V + DO clitic + RP (New)	V + DO clitic + RP (New-indefinite)
8 *V + DO clitic + 0 (New, non anchored)	*V + DO clitic + 0 (New, non anchored)
9 V + 0 + RP (Generic)	V + 0 + RP (Generic)
10 *V + DO clitic + RP (Generic)	V + DO clitic + RP (Generic)

Table 1: *Distribution of the accusative doubling construction in Standard Spanish and in CAS.*¹⁷

As can be seen, the main behavioral differences are found in the following contexts (in bold in Table 1): a) in the case of a topical DO, in which the construction is possible and common in CAS but unusual in Standard Spanish; b) in the presence of a new, non-anchored or indefinite DO, in which the accusative doubling is not possible in

¹⁷ The constructional schemes in Table 1 must be read as follows: subjects are omitted; V stands for verb; DO-clitic stands for the direct object clitic; 0 or RP in third position stand for the absence or presence of a DO-RP; 0 in second position stands for an absent direct object clitic, and Pron stands for free pronoun. The information in brackets is relative to the pragmatic value of the referent of the coded or absent RP. The ordering of the acronyms is not as the actual ordering of the lexical and morphological elements in real clauses. In this way, the schema in 1, for example, represent a construction such as *Las compré*, in which a DO-RP is not coded, and the referent of the clitic (*las*) is recoverable from the situational context, for example *las papas* (‘the potatoes’).

Standard Spanish, but is perfectly natural in CAS; and c) in the case of a generic DO, which allows the double construction in CAS, but not in Standard Spanish.

The pragmatic neutrality of the construction in CAS, especially in the cases of new and generic DO contexts, is very important, since it allows the construction to be very natural in many contexts in colloquial communication (as reported by our informants). If we consider that in most languages the typical DO is inanimate and represents new information (Comrie 1981), what we have in CAS is a “natural” increase of the possibilities for the syntactic realization of the DO as a clitic index in doubled constructions.

In this sense, object arguments in CAS, in almost all contexts, can be encoded by bound person forms in the verbal nucleus, both in the cases of IOs, which is a feature CAS has in common with Standard Spanish, and in the case of DOs, which is a pragmatically restricted feature in Standard Spanish and in most dialects, although it is present in all of them.

The “naturalness” of double accusative in CAS is also supported by the fact it can appear in the context of marked constructions as impersonal ones, as in (18a) and (18b),¹⁸ and in relative clauses, as in (18c) and (18d).

(18) CAS

- a. *Y ahí se = los = qued-arán esos = dineros.*
 CONJ over.there 3DAT = 3PL.ACC = keep-3FUT DEM.PL = money
 ‘And there they will keep that money.’
- b. *Las = ventas = de = hervido y licor se = lo = har-á*
 ART.PL = sales = PREP = boiled.fruits CONJ liquor 3DAT = 3ACC = do-3FUT
en = la = calle.
 PREP = ART = street
 ‘The sales of boiled and liquor will be done on the street.’
- c. *Un = negocio = de = nadie, una = cosa que = la = tien-en*
 ART = business = PREP = nobody ART = thing REL = 3ACC = have-3PL.PRS

¹⁸ As pointed out by a reviewer, example (18a) can have an interpretation with a third person plural subject, but the general context of the discourse indicates that the speaker is talking about people in general and there is not a specific referent for whoever is going to keep the money. Third person plural inflection is also a well-known mechanism for impersonal constructions. This impersonal interpretation is strengthened by the presence of the locative deictic form *ahí* ‘there’ which, alternatively with *aquí* ‘here’, usually appears instead of a specific referent in impersonal contexts.

como abandonada.

as abandoned

‘A nobody’s business, a thing that they have abandoned.’

d. *Estos carros que = los = mir-amos aquí.*

these cars REL = 3PL.ACC = look-1PL.PRS here

‘These cars that we look at here.’

As seen in the examples, the presence of the clitic is pervasive across different syntactic constructions, as well as in different pragmatic contexts.

Another significant feature, common to both the accusative and the dative clitic, is the fact that they do not necessarily agree with the conominals that double them, as can be seen in (19) for the accusative clitic, and in (20) for the dative one:

(19) CAS

a. *Los = baños y el = cuarto = de = aseo lo = arrend-aron.*

ART.PL = bathrooms CONJ ART = room = PREP = cleaning 3ACC = rent-3PL.PST

‘The restrooms and the room where the cleaning supplies are kept were rented.’

b. *Usted déj-e = me decir = lo la = oportunidad*

2PRON let-2PRS = 1ACC tell = 3ACC ART.FEM = opportunity

que = nos = brind-a.

REL = 1PL.DAT = give-2PRS

‘You let me tell you the opportunity you give us.’

c. *Lo = traj_eron los = bultos a = la = casa.*

3ACC = bring-3PL.PST ART.PL = packages PREP = ART = house

‘They brought the packages to the house.’

(20) CAS

a. *Luego = de = escuchar lo.que le = hab-ían dicho*

after = PREP = hear REL 3DAT = have-3PL.COP tell.PRT

a = los = ecuatorianos.

DAT = ART = Ecuadorians

‘After hearing what they had told the Ecuadorians.’

b. *De pronto le = vend-en a = otras personas también que = no*

suddenly 3DAT = sell-3PL.PRS DAT = other people also REL = NEG

labor-aron nunca.

work-3PL.PST never

‘Suddenly they sell to other people who have never worked.’

c. *Se = le = est-á dando la = autonomía*

IMP = 3DAT = be-3PRS give.GDO ART = autonomy

a = los = funcionarios.

DAT = ART.PL = public.workers

‘Public workers are being given autonomy.’

In (19a) and (19c) a plural RP appears doubling the third person singular masculine form *lo*; in (19b) the same masculine form is cross-referred by a feminine RP. This shows that there is no need for agreement of number or gender features. In fact, in (19b) above, there is a simultaneous absence of both person and gender agreement. In this sense, *lo* functions as neuter person form. Similarly, in the three examples of (20), the third person singular form *le* is doubled by plural RPs.¹⁹

This process of bleaching of number and gender features is common to most Spanish varieties (Company 1998, 2003), but it seems to be much more advanced in CAS. Even more important is to notice this behavior as an indication that the clitics are not functioning as pronouns nor as agreement markers. As said before, they do not show referential features (beyond person) and they do not agree with the RPs. In Section 4, we argue that the indexes are a purely formal or syntactic manifestation of the verbal arguments, as has been partially proposed for head-marking languages in Pensalfini (2004) and Koenig & Michelson (2012).

In essence, CAS is a RP-doubling language (as opposed to clitic-doubling) or, more accurately, a cross-indexing language. This means that the three major direct arguments receive indexing coding on the verb and can optionally be accompanied by a RP or a conominal.

3.2. The case flagging system in CAS

We now have established that CAS, in a similar way to the Rioplatense Argentinian dialect, has a more “robust” system of argument indexes than Standard Spanish, as the three major direct arguments are indexed on the verb. It is also the case that in CAS the flagging system for the RPs is, contrastively, slightly “weaker” than in Standard Spanish.

¹⁹ Dative clitics do not have gender features.

We have attested two notorious syntactic behaviors that demonstrate this: 1) the dative marker *a* of the IO can be dropped in some contexts, and 2) dative RPs can be substituted by oblique RPs, when doubling the correspondent clitic.

As mentioned before, the strongest evidence of a flagging system in Spanish is the dative *a* marker of the IO. In Standard Spanish it is obligatory, both in postverbal position (21a) and in dislocated constructions (21c), as the ungrammaticality of (21b) and (21d), respectively, shows.

(21) Standard Spanish

- a. *Alicia le = regal-ó un = disco a = Javier.*
Alicia 3DAT = give-3PST ART = record DAT = Javier
'Alicia gave a record to Javier.'
- b. **Alicia le = regal-ó un = disco Javier.*
Alicia 3DAT = give-3PST ART = record Javier
'Alicia gave a record (to) Javier.'
- c. *A = Javier le = regal-ó un = disco Alicia.*
DAT = Javier 3DAT = give-3PST ART = record Alicia
'Alicia gave a record to Javier.'
- d. **Javier le = regal-ó un = disco Alicia.*
Javier 3DAT = give-3PST ART = record Alicia
'Alicia gave a record (to) Javier.'

Examples in (22) show that in CAS the dative marker is not mandatory in these two contexts. This indicates that the argument system does not rely on RP flagging, but on verbal indexes. At the present time, we do not know how frequent this kind of phenomenon is, but at least it does not seem rare to our informants.²⁰ This again shows the relative fragility of the marking system on RPs and the main role that indexes play.

(22) CAS

- a. *Le = pag-a sus = trabajadores.*
3DAT = pay-3PRS 3PL.POSS = workers
'(He/She) pays his/her workers.'

²⁰In fact, as one reviewer points out, this is a behavior that can be found in other Spanish varieties.

- b. *También cómpr-a = le guagua.*
 also buy-2PRS = 3DAT child
 ‘(you) buy for the child too.’
- c. *Usted le = voy a = operar la = car-ita.*
 2PRON 2DAT = go.1PRS PREP = operate ART = face-DIM
 ‘I’m going to operate on your face.’
- d. *Porque ellos les = alcanz-a a = dar más barato.*
 Because3PL.PRON 3PL.DAT = can-3PRS PREP = give more cheap
 ‘Because (they) are able to sell (to) them cheaper.’

Another indication of the status of the flagging system in CAS is that the dative marking, which counts as a type of direct case marking, can be substituted by prepositional marking, as in (23a) and (23c):

(23)

- a. CAS
Ya no nos = da espacios para nosotros.
 AlreadyNEG 1PL.DAT = give.3PRS spaces for 1PL.PRON
 ‘(He/She) no longer gives us spaces.’
- b. Standard Spanish
Ya no nos = da espacios a = nosotros.
 already NEG 1PL.DAT = give.3PRS spaces DAT = 1PL.PRON
 ‘No longer it gives us spaces.’
- c. CAS
Para ellos les = va a = salir más costoso.
 for 3PL.PRON 3PL.DAT = go.3PRS PREP = become more expensive
 ‘It will be more expensive for them.’
- d. Standard Spanish
A = ellos les = va a = salir más costoso.
 DAT = 3PL.PRON 3PL.DAT = go.3PRS PREP = become more expensive
 ‘It will be more expensive for them.’

As can be seen, the dative clitic can be coreferential with a complement introduced by *para*, which is a preposition with greater semantic content than *a*. This highlights two very important facts: 1) the argument marking system does not necessarily rely on a non-

predicative type of case flagging, and therefore it allows the syntactic projection of semantic arguments introduced by predicative prepositions, and 2) the same argument can be simultaneously projected by two distinct units, with different grammatical statuses. In this way, on the one hand, the argument is morpho-syntactically realized by the verbal index and, on the other hand, the argument is semantically and referentially coded through the RP introduced by the preposition. In Section 4, we argue that the cross-reference constructions of CAS can be considered as cases of distributed coding of the same argument and are not doubled constructions, as they have been so far considered. They are not cases of repetition or double coding of the same referent.

The dative clitic can also be cross-referenced by an oblique RP introduced by the genitive case preposition *de*; see examples (24a) and (24c):

(24)

a. CAS

Se = le = ha *dado* *el = cumplimiento* *adecuado* *de = esto*
 IMP = 3DAT = have.3PRS give.PRT ART = compliance proper PREP = DEM
 ‘Proper compliance has been given to this.’

b. Standard Spanish

Se = le = ha *dado* *el = cumplimiento* *adecuado*
 IMP = 3DAT = have.3PRS give.PRT ART = compliance proper
a = esto.

DAT = DEM

‘Proper compliance has been given to this.’

c. CAS

Que le = dé *el = funcionamiento* *de = la = plaza*
 that 3DAT = give.3PRS ART = functioning PREP = ART = square
de = mercado *como* *deb-e* *de = ser*
 PREP = market like should.3PRS PREP = be

‘(He/She) should give proper functioning to the market-place as it should be.’

d. Standard Spanish

Que le = dé *el = funcionamiento* ***a = la = plaza***
 that 3DAT = give.3PRS ART = functioning DAT = ART = square
de = mercado *como* *deb-e* *de = ser*

PREP = market like should.3PRS PREP = be

‘(He/She) should give proper functioning to the market-place as it should be.’

This also indicates the distributed projection of the same argument as holding two distinct identities, one as a syntactic argument through the verbal index, and another identity as a semantic argument through an oblique RP.

3.3. Another head-marking characteristic of CAS: Applicative constructions

As Yasugi (2012: 7) states, applicative constructions seem to be a characteristic strategy of head-marking languages, or argument-indexing languages, as we call them here. And indeed, the verbal indexation of the applied participant seems to be an important feature of applicative constructions. It is through such indexation that the applied participant is promoted to object status. In this sense, it is noteworthy to see that CAS has developed an applicative marker through the grammaticalization of the verbal form *dar* ‘give’ in the context of an applicative periphrastic construction (Ibáñez Cerda et al. 2022), as shown in the examples in (25).

(25)

- a. *Adela le = dio cocin-ando un = pastel a = su = mamá.*
 Adela 3DAT = give.3PST cook-GDO ART = cake DAT = 3POSS = mother
 ‘Adela cooked a cake instead of her mother.’
- b. *Da = me habla-ndo con = el = patrón.*
 give.2PRS = 1DAT speak-GDO PREP = ART = boss
 ‘Talk to the boss instead of me.’

In these clauses, *dar* ‘give’ appears along with another verb, *cocinando* ‘cooking’ in (25a), and *hablando* ‘talking’ in (25b), which is a non-finite form (a gerund), but that functions as the main predicate in semantic terms. The *dar* form is inflected and acts as an auxiliary. The construction is a periphrastic one. As proposed in Ibáñez Cerda et al. (2022), the applicative function of *dar* comes from the fact that, besides having no predicative meaning, it is its presence which allows the coding of a deputative beneficiary (Van Valin & LaPolla 1997), a semantically non-required participant, as an object through the presence of the dative index attached to it. In (25a) the clitic *le* (3sg) is cross-referred by the dative RP *a su mamá*; in (25b) the form *me* (1sg) indexes the speaker as the deputative beneficiary.

The construction is mostly used as an attenuation expression in directive/request speech acts, where the speaker, very politely, asks his addressee to do something instead of him, as in *Dame abriendo la puerta, por favor* ‘Please, open the door for me’.

This functional aspect is behind the fact that the most common applied participant is a deputative beneficiary and not the most typical recipient beneficiary.²¹

4. The Status of the RPs in Spanish

So far, we have posited that the argument realization system of Standard Spanish, and particularly that of CAS, is a cross-referencing or cross-indexing system. More precisely, at least in CAS, it is a system where the most basic case is the one where the three basic arguments are coded through indexes, and then, these can optionally be accompanied by RPs.

As Haspelmath (2013) states, there are three ways in which cross-reference systems, as in CAS, are traditionally analyzed, in terms of the status of the indexes and of the RPs or conominals. Here we briefly recapitulate each of these types of analysis, including a fourth one coming from Van Valin (2013), and finally we present our own alternative proposal.

1) The virtual agreement view. In this, the indexes are considered agreement markers, while the absent or empty RPs are the controlling arguments. This is the non-explicit analysis on which the whole Hispanic Linguistics tradition has been built up, but in terms of the notorious function of the index system and the equally notorious absence of RPs in everyday communication, it seems that there is no reason for such analysis, other than to emulate perspectives coming from other traditions. As Haspelmath (2013: 222) puts it:

It is very likely that this degree of abstractness was widely accepted only because of the influence of well-known European languages like German, English and (somewhat less clearly) Russian, which have gramm-indexing of the subject on the verb, where the conominal is obligatory. From the perspective of these languages, it

²¹ This periphrastic construction has also been reported in the Andean Zone or Highlands of Ecuador (Haboud 1994, 1998; Bruil 2008; Creissels 2010), and it is seen as a type of calque from the surrounding and neighboring Quichua languages, which are polysynthetic and head-marking languages, and have applicative constructions. Independently of this possible substrate, what arises from the consideration of Spanish as an argument-indexing language, as we propose here, is its inherent structural inclination for developing such construction.

looks as if something is missing in unconominated cross-indexing patterns, so the notion of ‘pro-drop’ may seem natural (Haspelmath 2013: 222).

But now, knowing that languages with “real” agreement (i.e., where the copresence of the index and the conominal is obligatory) are rare (Siewierska 2004), and that cross-reference languages, such as Spanish, are more common, there is no reason to import an analysis that accounts for the former type, but not for the second one. So, this pro-drop analysis can be discarded.

2) The bound-argument view. From this perspective, the indexes are considered to function as pronouns, or nominal-like participants, and fully instantiate the verbal arguments. In this analysis, when the conominals are present, the bound person forms are still viewed as the arguments. In this case, RPs are considered a kind of adjunct or apposition outside of the core of the clause (Jelinek 1984; Nichols 1986). This type of analysis is common to some generative approaches, such as Jelinek (1984) and Baker (1996). As Siewierska (2001) and Van Valin (2013) argue, there is no solid proof for considering the RPs as adjuncts or appositions since they do not necessarily behave differently from arguments or RPs in other non-indexing languages. Most importantly, they do not behave like adjuncts (Van Valin 2013), which are peripheral, non-semantically required participants, and in that sense, they are opposed to arguments.

This also holds true for Spanish. There is no evidence of the non-argument status of the RPs nor of their placement in the periphery, or any other pragmatically motivated positions. So, it seems that this bound-argument view is not the best analytical route to follow.

3) The dual-nature view. In this analysis, the indexes are regarded as both agreement markers and pronouns depending on the circumstances: When the RPs are present, they are the arguments and the indexes are agreement markers; in a complementary fashion, when the conominals are not present, the bound person forms are pronouns and as such they are the arguments. This type of analysis was first proposed by Bresnan & Mchombo (1987) for Bantu languages. Van Valin (2013: 119) also proposes this dual-nature analysis for pro-drop subject languages like Croatian, which is considered a basic dependent marking language. A similar type of analysis has also been proposed for Spanish by García Miguel (1991, 1995), Belloro (2004, 2007) and Kailuweit (2008).

In our perspective, this analysis also does not suit Standard Spanish nor CAS. As we have proposed here, their grammatical structure is basically argument-indexing. As a consequence, if there is an analysis that does start from this consideration and does not force a dual nature for the indexes as agreement markers in the presence of RPs, then such an analysis would be preferable.

4) The Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) view. Van Valin (2005, 2013) presents an alternative analysis for basic head-marking languages. In this view, the bound person forms are neither agreement markers nor pronouns. They are the arguments in the core of the clause.²² In RRG there is an important projection principle that restricts the instantiation of the same argument twice in the core. This supposes that the cross-referred RPs, when they are coded, cannot be in the core along with the indexes. As mentioned above, Van Valin (2013) states, in the same vein of Siewierska (2001), that the conominals are not adjuncts and do not behave like them, so they cannot be in the clause periphery.²³ In this context, he proposes that the RPs should be placed in what he terms the Extra-Core Slot (ECS), a clause internal but core external position. In this way, he avoids placing the RPs in the periphery, where adjuncts are, and avoids the RRG constraint that precludes the instantiation of the referent of an argument more than once per core. The problem with this approach is that there is no indication of what the behavioral properties of RPs in the ECS are. Are they different from RPs in the core? How are they different? Cross-referred RPs in Spanish, both in the Standard varieties and in CAS, seem to behave as standard argument RPs in other languages.

²² Or more appropriately, in the core of the word, which, in turn, is integrated as part of the core of the clause (Van Valin 2013).

²³ Van Valin (2013) also shows that conominals can neither be in other pragmatically motivated positions out of the core, like those that are recognized in RRG as part of the layered structure of the clause: the Pre-Detached and Post-Detached positions (PrDP and PoDP) and the Pre-Core and Post-Core Slots (PrCS and PoCS). First, PrDP and PoDP imply dislocated elements with the presence of intonation breaks; besides, WH expressions cannot occur in these positions. Standard RPs which appear cross-referring verbal indexes in head-marking languages are not preceded by intonation breaks - and hence, they are not dislocated -, and can be substituted by WH words, so they must be clause-internal. Second, the other core-external, but clause-internal, positions, the PrCS and PoCS, are ruled out as hosts of the conominals, because, among other reasons, there can only be one element in only one of these positions per clause, and in cross-reference languages two or three RPs, depending on the language, can simultaneously appear doubling the argument indexes on the verb.

None of these proposals is completely accurate for explaining the argument realization system of Spanish. Here, then, we propose a fifth type of analysis for cross-reference systems, which picks up some aspects of Pensalfini (2004), Haspelmath (2013) and Van Valin (2013).

5) A new proposal. We first consider, as in Van Valin (2013), that in CAS, as a clear argument-indexing variety, the bound person forms are the arguments in the core of the clause; they are neither pronouns nor agreement markers. When the optional RPs appear coded, the indexes are still the arguments. Next, following Haspelmath's consideration (2013: 224) that there is nothing against the distributed expression of meaning, we propose that indeed in cross-reference languages arguments are expressed simultaneously in two different forms, the indexes and the RPs. This does not need to imply a double instantiation of the same referent. Following Pensalfini's (2004) and Koenig & Michelson's claim (2015) that all major word classes have two components, a formal and an encyclopedic one, we posit that the indexes in cross-reference constructions are the projection of the formal or syntactic component, whereas the RPs are the instantiation of the semantic and referential (or encyclopedic) identity of the arguments.

In this scenario, we propose that the indexes, as purely syntactic forms, do occupy the core of the clause. Then, as they do not have referential information, there is nothing against the instantiation in the same core of another linguistic form carrying the semantic and referential load. This means that in cross-reference constructions the RPs can occupy the core of the clause without violating the constraint on the instantiation of referents no more than once per core, as some frameworks prevent.

This proposal overcomes all other available: first, it eliminates the need for the "fallacy" of the omnipresent, non-explicit, pro-drop analysis: virtual RPs cannot be the syntactic controlling arguments of the verbal indexes. Second, it eludes positing adjunct status for the RPs, for which there is no evidence at all, as Siewierska (2001) and Van Valin (2013) exhibit. Third, it avoids the double nature analysis, as in Bresnan & Mchombo (1987), which is partially based in the pro-drop analysis. And finally, it refrains from positing the existence of framework-based positions, as the extra-core slot (ECS) of the RRG proposal (Van Valin 2013). As mentioned before, RPs in Spanish, both in the Standard varieties and in CAS seem to behave as arguments in semantic and referential terms. The analysis we propose here neatly captures this fact, and at the same time, gives the indexes the syntactic prominence they have in the argument realization system.

5. Conclusions

Most of the Hispanic Linguistic tradition literature, as well as typologically-oriented studies, consider that Spanish is basically a dependent-marking language, and for that, they assume that it is a kind of language in which argument realization is accomplished by means of RPs. Here, we have exhibited a different structural reality: 1) RPs are most frequently not coded, and arguments are instantiated directly by verbal indexes at least in the case of subject and IO arguments; 2) The distinction between arguments basically relies on the set of indexes. In this sense, we have provided proofs that Standard Spanish is basically an argument indexing language. We also have determined that this language has a cross-indexing system, where RPs can optionally accompany the indexes.

To present our proposal more clearly, we have analyzed some facts relative to the clitic system of Colombian Andean Spanish (CAS). In this dialect, DO arguments are also basically coded as clitic indexes in most pragmatic contexts, so CAS has a three-argument system consisting in person forms attached to the verbal word.

Finally, after examining some of the most relevant types of analyses about the status of RPs in cross-indexing systems, we have offered an alternative proposal: In cases where the indexes appear accompanied by the correspondent RPs, both are the simultaneous instantiation of the argument features load; the indexes stand for the syntactic or formal realization of the argument, and RPs manifest its referential and encyclopedic content. As such, both can occupy the core of the clause, without violating any type of restriction about the double coding of referents in the core of the clause. This type of cross-indexing construction, hence, is not a doubled construction, as it has been considered so far.

Abbreviations

1 = First person	DO = Direct Object	PRON = Pronoun
2 = Second person	DOM = Diferential object marker	PRS = Present
3 = Third person	FEM = Feminine	PRT = Participle
ACC = Accusative	FUT = Future	PSB = Possibility
AFF = Affirmative	GDO = Gerund	PST = Past
ART = Article	IMP = Imperative	PTL = Punctual
COND = Conditional	NEG = Negation	REL = Relative

CONJ = Conjunction	PL = Plural	RP = Referential Phrases
COP = Copula	POSS = Possessive	SUB = Subordinate
DAT = Dative	PODP = Post-Detached Position	V = Verb
DEM = Demonstrative	PREP = Preposition	
DIM = Diminutive	PRDP = Pre-Detached Position	

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