

## EVENTIVE EXISTENTIALS IN CATALAN AND THE TOPIC-FOCUS ARTICULATION

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The role of codas in existential sentences and its relation to the definiteness effect (DE) has been a matter of much recent attention (Leonetti 2008, Francez 2009). (1) shows that English (and Spanish) but not Catalan shows DE (similar examples exist for French and Italian):

- (1) a. There is a/\*the boy at the garden/angry.  
b. Hi ha un/el nen al jardí/enfadat.

Leonetti (2008) argues, here we are dealing with a small clause which shows an aspectual restriction to stage-level predicates (originally pointed out by Milsark 1974):

- (2) Hi ha el Joan \*intel·ligent/malalt.  
LOC has the John intelligent/sick

Moreover, he argues that the structure following the existential predicate has propositional content, and a topic-focus articulation, where the DP acts like an internal topic and the predicate as focus. Both facts lead him to suggest that the availability of the definite article in case like (1b) and (2) should not count as evidence that Catalan existentials don't show DE.

In this communication we will challenge this line of analysis on the light of well-known evidence on the aspectual and informational properties of Romance small clauses. First, we will show that unlike existentials, non-verbal subject-predicate structures may or even must involve individual-level predicates (see Hu & Pan 2007 for i-level predicates in Chinese existentials codas):

- (3) a. Considero el noi intel·ligent/\*malalt.  
consider.1SG the boy intelligent/sick  
b. Magnífica/\*Cremada, la pel·lícula!  
great.FEM/burnt.FEM the.FEM movie

The second problem for Leonetti's proposal concerns the topic-like nature of the DP, for we find clearly unsuitable topics in this position (bare nominals, and inespecific indefinites), again in sharp contrast with small clauses in general:

- (3) a. Si hi ha metges al jardí, ja pots estar content.  
'If there are doctors in the garden, you can be satisfied.'  
b. Si hi hagués un metge que sapigués anglès al jardí, seria fantàstic.  
'If there were a doctor knowing English in the garden, it would be great.'
- (4) a. #Considero nois intel·ligents.  
consider.1SG boys intelligent.PL  
b. #Magnífica, una pel·lícula que estigues doblada al català!  
great.FEM a.FEM movie that be.SBJC.3SG dubbed to-the Catalan

Given this evidence, I will suggest a modification approach along the lines suggested by Francez (2010), but taking both the pivot and the coda as part of the assertion, as suggested by their articulation as part of the nuclear scope of adverbial quantifiers (5a), and retaking Rigau's (1988) original intuition that the topic is the locative, be it overt or null:

- (5) Habitualment, als col·legis hi ha un director enfadat.  
'Usually, at schools there is a principal angry.'  
a. "Usually, if there is somebody at schools, it is a principal angry."  
b. #"Usually, if there is somebody angry at schools, it is a principal."

### References

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