

I don't believe it! TP- versus CP-ellipsis in negated Spanish epistemic constructions

Sophie Harrington – *University of Toronto*

The current investigation explores the distribution of TP- versus CP-ellipsis in Spanish epistemic constructions. I establish that, contrary to standard assumptions, the dependent clause of a negated first person epistemic predicate can be indicative or subjunctive. Given this possibility, what then is the mood of the elided CP clause in the case of CP-ellipsis?

The size of elided clause depends on whether the negative element *no* stays within the embedded clause (1a), or whether it is raised via Neg-transportation to the matrix (1b):

- 1) a. *Creo* [CP que [SP *no* [TP *está embarazada*]]]
 Believe-PRS.IND.1SG that not be-PRS.IND.3SG pregnant
'I believe that she isn't pregnant.'
- b. *No creo* [CP *que* [TP *esté embarazada*]]]
 Not believe-PRS.IND.1SG that be-PRS.SBJV.3SG pregnant
'I don't believe that she is pregnant.'
- c. *No creo* [CP *que* [TP *está embarazada*]]]
 Not believe-PRS.IND.1SG that be-PRS.IND.3SG pregnant

The negated matrix *no creo* also allows for an indicative dependent (1c) headed by a non-defective C (Gallego & Uriagereka 2007) which, unlike its “pure subordinate” (Fábregas 2014) subjunctive counterpart, has been analyzed as standing in independent apposition to a null DP in the matrix clause (Torrego & Uriagereka 1993), giving rise to a pseudocleft interpretation (2):

- 2) *Yo no soy el que cree (eso)* [CP *que está embarazada*]
 I not be-PRS.IND.1SG the that believe-PRS.IND.3SG (that) that be-PRS.IND.3SG pregnant
'I am not the one who believes that she is pregnant' (Harrington & Pérez-Leroux 2016)

It has been argued that the proposition in (1c) must have already been put forward in the discourse, as opposed to (1a) where the proposition can only be interpreted as new or “non-referential” (de Cuba & Macdonald 2013). Therefore, it is predicted that CP-ellipsis will appear more frequently where the proposition of the elided dependent is pre-established in the discourse as anchored to the epistemic model of an individual *x*, where *x* is not the speaker; whereas TP-ellipsis will serve to communicate the speaker's as yet unknown epistemic stance on a previously undiscussed topic.

Method and Results: The investigation consisted of (i) a corpus study of *creer* involving 64 tokens extracted from the *Habla Culta* (Lope Blanch 1969) section of the *Corpus del Español* (Davies 2002), and (ii) a pilot elicitation task with 8 L1 Salvadorean Spanish-speakers to test a variety of predicates allowing both TP- and CP-ellipsis. The results of (i) are summarized below:
 Table 1: Referential function of elided clause following *no creo* versus *creo que no*

	<i>no creo</i> (CP-ellipsis)	<i>creo que no</i> (TP-ellipsis)	Totals
NON-REF	11 (39%)	28 (78%)	39
REF	17 (61%)	8 (22%)	25
	28	36	64

A chi-square test revealed a significant association between “Referentiality” – whether the proposition *is* (REF) or *is not* (NON-REF) pre-established in the discourse – and ellipsis site, with a chi-square statistic of 9.8034 and a *p*-value of .001742 (significant at *p* < .05). Meanwhile the pilot task (ii) showed a clear preference for CP-ellipsis with *parecer+DAT* at 57% versus approx. 25% for all other matrices.

Discussion: The results of both corpus study and elicitation task appear to confirm the initial prediction that CP-ellipsis is more frequent in contexts where the speaker rejects a pre-established independent proposition, similar to example (2), thereby adding weight to the idea that the elided clause is an indicative dependent or full CP.

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