A'-dependencies in Spanish and Basque

Dissertation Information

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Abstract: This dissertation offers a study of A'-dependencies in Spanish and Basque. More specifically, I analyze wh-movement, its interaction with Focus and Topic and the adjacency requirement between wh-phrases and the verb. In order to offer an analysis of these phenomena, I explore the following topics: in situ questions in Spanish, (multiple) question formation in Basque, and comparative subdeletion phenomena in Spanish. In chapter 2 I provide an account of the behavior of wh-in-situ questions in Spanish. The analysis pursued in the chapter reveals that the distribution of in situ wh-phrases is governed by phonological properties. More precisely, in situ wh-phrases in Spanish need to appear last within their intonational phrase. This generalization captures the behavior of all in situ wh-phrases in this language. In chapter 3 I discuss the strategies Basque employs to formulate a multiple wh-question. I show that in the in situ strategy no wh-phrase remains in situ in the structure: the postverbal wh-phrase raises overtly to check a topic feature. I offer an analysis for Multiple Wh-fronting structures in which the wh-phrase closer to the verb is focalized and the rest of the wh-phrases are topicalized. Under this analysis, all wh-phrases bearing focus or topic are moved to the front of the sentence. Furthermore, the highest wh-phrase must move first. The fact that only one wh-phrase is focalized follows from the adjacency requirement of a PF verbal affix. In chapter 4 I examine the role of contrastive focus in comparative subdeletion constructions in Spanish. Spanish allows Comparative Subdeletion under the two following circumstances: obligatory verb gapping and word order alteration of the elements in the comparative clause ("Inversion Strategy"). I capture the Spanish data by appealing to the claim that there is a strong focus feature requirement in the "Inversion Strategy". I claim that the NP containing the quantity term must undergo overt movement to check a strong focus feature. If the feature is not checked, the derivation can still be rescued by deleting the strong feature in PF.
Spanish, Portuguese, Basque, and Bulgar-/ian). TectoMT is a highly modular, struc We present HamleDT—a Harmonized Multi-Language Dependency Treebank. HamleDT is a compilation of existing dependency treebanks (or dependency conversions of other treebanks), transformed so that they all conform to the same annotation style. In the present article, we provide a thorough investigation and discussion of a number of phenomena that are comparable across languages, though their annotation in treebanks often differs. We claim that transformation procedures can be designed to automatically identify most such phenomena and convert them to a unified annotation style.