Object Drop in Spanish Recipes

19th Annual Workshop in General Linguistics (*WiGL 19*)

Carlos Martínez-García

Referential *null objects* (NO) are said to be licensed when linked to indefinite, non-specific antecedents in Spanish (Campos 1986), as in (1a). By contrast, clitics must be used to refer to definite antecedents, as in (1b). In a nutshell, NOs occur where clitics cannot appear (Dimitriadis 1994).

(1) a. A: — ¿Compraste [libros]? B: — Sí, compré Ø.
'Did you buy books?' 'Yes, I bought some.'

b. A: — ¿Compraste [el libro]$_i$? B: — Sí, *(lo$_i$) compré.
'Did you buy the book?' 'Yes, I bought it.' (Campos 1986: 354)

However, NOs referring to definite antecedents can be found in *Spanish recipes* (SR). Specifically, the NOs in (2) bear definite readings (Leonetti 2006), refer to definite antecedents, and occur within directive utterances (Ruda 2014). In this talk, we show 30 SRs from Cocina Abierta, Le Cordon Bleu, and Masterchef, three well-known Spanish recipe websites.

(2) Agrega [el huevo]$_i$ y cuécelo$_i$. Retira Ø$_i$, refresca Ø$_i$, pela Ø$_i$ y reserva Ø$_i$.
'Add the egg and boil it. Remove it, refresh it, peel it, and reserve it.' (Cocina Abierta)

In some contexts, clitics occur instead of NOs (e.g., *cuécelo*), not implying different meanings. This 'alternation' and the definite interpretation of NOs suggest that NOs are represented as null clitics in (2). Thus, a crucial question emerges: if the NOs in (2) are represented as null clitics, what is the difference between using NOs or clitics? Is it only related to stylistic factors?

The conditions that allow for NOs in SRs follow:

1. The NO is interpreted as definite, linked to a definite antecedent.
2. The NO represents an argument that can occur as a definite clitic, with the same interpretation.
3. The NO must occur within a directive utterance (not restricted to 'canonical' imperatives).

Interestingly, NOs can be used without a 'linguistically represented' antecedent in SRs. Specifically, the NO of *reservar* in (3) is interpreted as the (new) ingredient obtained by having crushed the basil and the kaffir leaf. This interpretation is also obtained when using the neuter clitic *lo* (e.g., *reservarlo*).

(3) Quitar la albahaca y la hoja de kaffir y triturar Ø. Reservar Ø tibio.
'Remove the basil and the kaffir leaf and crush it. Reserve it warm.' (Le Cordon Bleu)

Hence, we propose that the NO of *reservar* in (3) displays a pronominal behavior. Concretely, it is represented as a neuter clitic. This proposal has crucial advantages. If the NO of *reservar* in (3) retrieved *la albahaca y la hoja de kaffir*, the depictive *tibio* would display feminine gender. However, *tibio* shows non-marked gender. This can be accounted for by representing the NO of *reservar* in (3) as a neuter clitic.

References: **Campos, H.** (1986). Indefinite object drop. *Linguistic Inquiry* 17, 354-359. **Dimitriadis, A.** (1994). Clitics and Island-Insensitive Object Drop. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 24, 1-15. **Leonetti, M.** (2006). Clitics do not Encode Specificity. In Kaiser & Leonetti (eds.), 111-139. **Ruda, M.** (2014). Missing objects in special registers: The syntax of null objects in English. *CJL* 59, 339-372.