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Introduction

In this paper, I will examine how tag-questions function in English and test if they function in the same way in Spanish. Then, I will compare the differences between the two languages and propose a structure and method for forming tag-questions in each language. Also, I will examine how ellipsis functions in each language and how it supports the analysis of the tag-questions. Finally, I will show that a few of the apparent differences between the two languages are incorrect and I will give my proposed solution.

Before we begin the analysis of how tag-questions function in English, we should first start with a brief description of what a tag-question is. A tag-question can be explained as a question used in conjunction with a main statement with the goal of seeking confirmation of the main statement. They always appear after the main statement separated by a comma. Tag-questions are used to verify information that we believe to be true or to check information that we are unsure about.

We will start with some simple examples of tag-questions in English:

Section 1: Tag-Questions in English

Part 1:

What determines which verb will appear in the tag-questions?

(1) He can speak, can't he?
(2) She will be studying by the time I arrive, won't she?
(3) They haven't studied yet, have they?
(4) He should have spoken, shouldn't he?
(5) We couldn't have studied, could we?

The auxiliary verb is what determines which verb will appear in the tag-question. But, what happens when there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause?

Part 2:

Now, what determines which verb appears in the tag-question?

(6) He speaks, doesn't he?
(7) They study, don't they?
(8) She ran, didn't she?
(9) I eat, don't I?

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When there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause, we use a form of the auxiliary verb "DO." But, it is evident that not all sentences follow this rule:

Part 3:

In complex sentences, like those that follow, what determines which auxiliary verb appears in the tag-question?

(10) John hopes that Sue will come, doesn't he?
(11) *John hopes that Sue will come, won't she?

(12) John has decided that we can't come, hasn't he?
(13) *John has decided that we can't come, can we?

The auxiliary verb of the main clause will always be the verb that appears in the tag-question.

Part 4:

What happens when there is no auxiliary verb?

(14) She's tall, isn't she?
(15) She has money, doesn't she?
(16) She has money, hasn't she?

The verbs "BE" and "HAVE" possess a special capacity in English: they act as main verb, but they also behave like auxiliary verbs. In these cases, "is" and "has" are the verbs in the main clause, but they function as the auxiliary verb in the tag-question. Even though it is more common to say or hear (15) in the United States, (16) is nevertheless grammatical and is much more common in Great Britain.

Part 5:

Now we know how tag-questions are formed in respect to the verb, but what determines which pronoun will appear in the tag-question?

(17) He read the book, didn't he?
(18) *He read the book, didn't it?
(19) *He read they book, didn't we?

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(20) John should give the book to Sue, shouldn't he?
 (21) *John should give the book to Sue, shouldn't it?
(22) *John should give the book to Sue, shouldn't she?

(23) It's two o'clock, isn't it?
(24) *It's two o'clock, isn't they?
(25) *It's two o'clock, isn't she?

The subject of the sentence determines which pronoun will appear in the tag-question: they have to be the same.

Part 6:

Another interesting point in concerning English tag-questions is the polarity of the main clause and the polarity of the tag-question. What determines the polarity of the tag-question?

(26) John can't sing, can he?
(27) *John can't sing, can't he?

(28) John can sing, can't he?
(29) *John can sing, can he?

The principle sentence determines the polarity of the tag-question: they have to opposites. If the polarity of the main clause is negative, the polarity of the tag-question is positive, and the opposite occurs also.

_____

We now know how to form a tag-question, but what happens in the structure of the sentences? What does the tag-question eliminate? What does it leave behind?

We will examine the deep structures of the principle clause in order to answer these questions.

(1a) He can read.

```
                              INFLP
                  _____/    _____
                 /                            \
                NP                             I'
                |                         ____/  \____
                N'                       /            \
                |                        I             VP
                N                     [     ]          |
                |                                       V'
                He                      can             |
                                                        V
                                                        |
                                                      read.
```
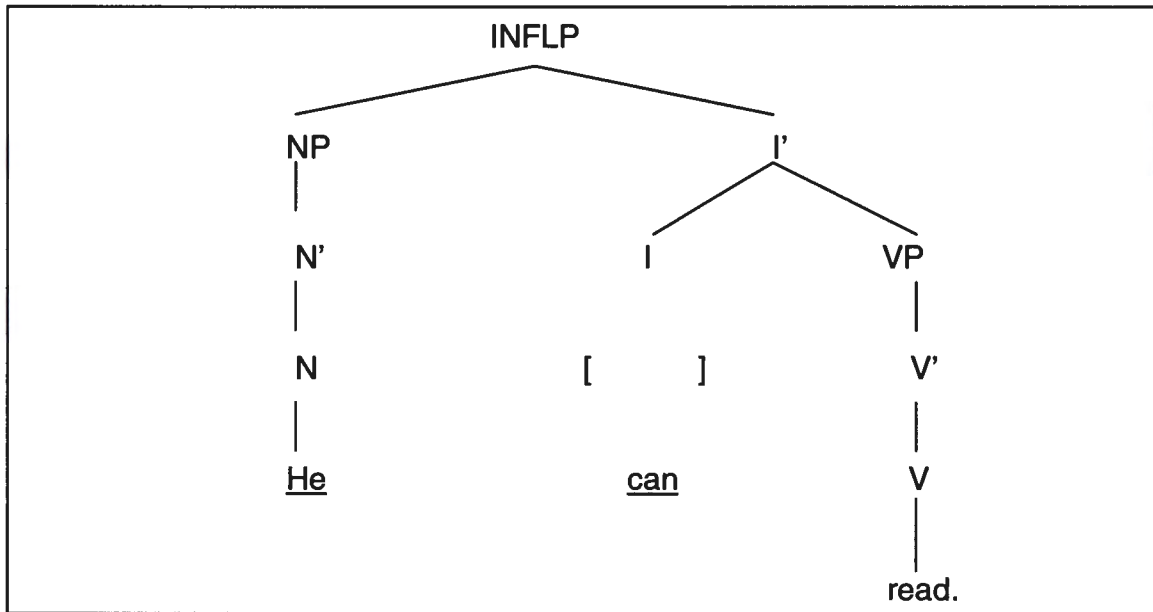
Upon adding the tag-question, we have:

He can read, can't he?

We have already seen in the previous data that tag-questions are formed by using the auxiliary verb of the main clause (or in cases when there is no auxiliary verb, usually a form of "DO"), by using the pronoun that refers to the subject of the main clause, and changing the polarity of the sentence. The tag-question eliminates the VP (Verb Phrase) The tag-question does not eliminate the subject or the auxiliary verb.

(30) John hopes that Sue will come.
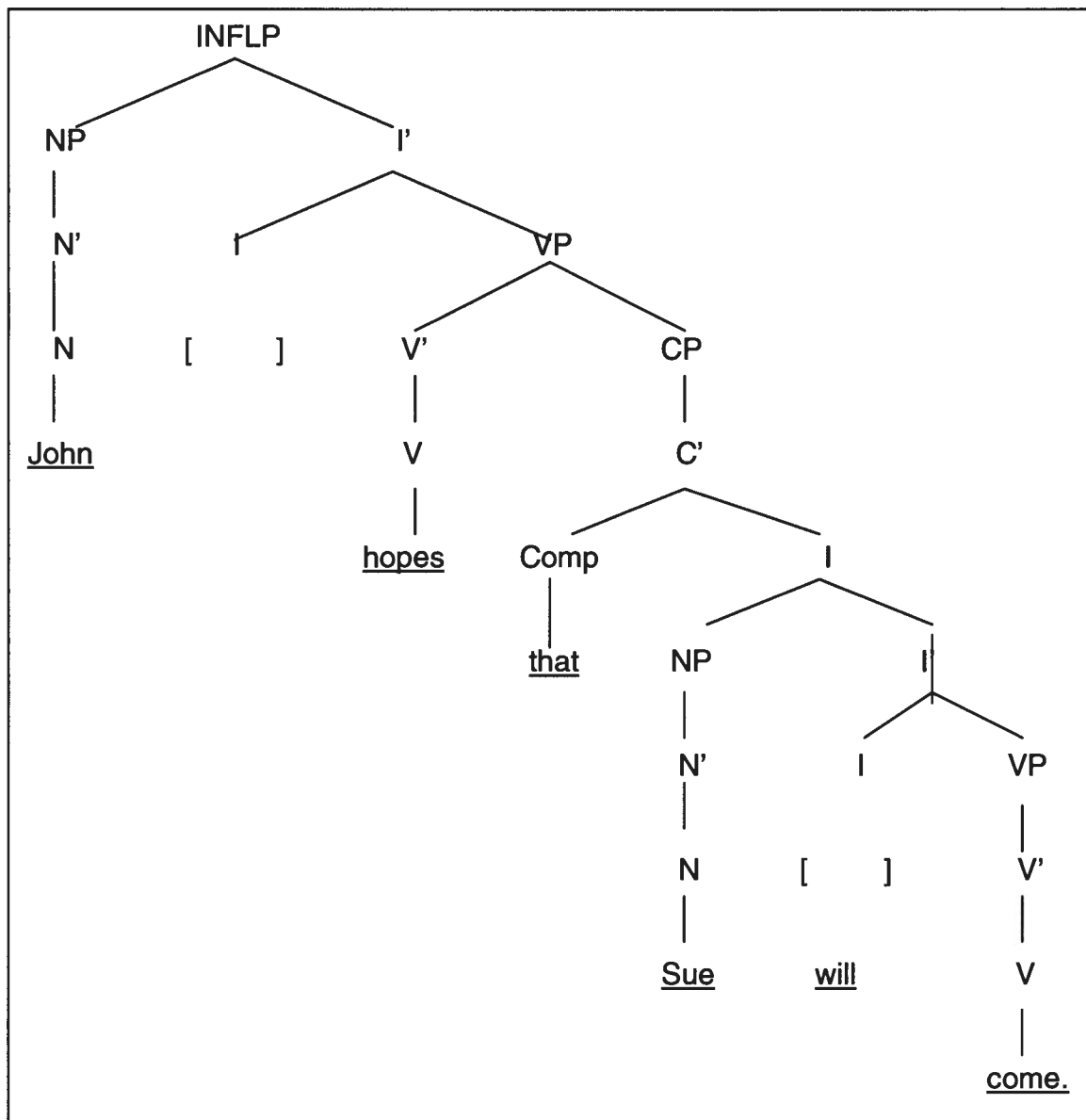
In this case the tag-question also eliminates the entire VP. The tag-question does not eliminate the subject nor the auxiliary verb (which is a form of "DO" in this case because there is no auxiliary verb in the principle clause).

Now, we will examine how tag-questions function in Spanish:

Section 2: Tag-Questions in Spanish

Part 1:

What determines which auxiliary verb will appear in the tag-question?

(31) Él puede hablar, ¿no?
(32) Ella estará estudiando cuando llegue, ¿no?
(33) Él debe haber hablado, ¿no?

It appears that Spanish tag-questions do not require an auxiliary verb even though it is present in the main clause.

Part 2:

What happens when there is no auxiliary verb in the main clause?

(34) Él habla, ¿no?
(35) Ellos estudian, ¿no?
(36) Ella corre, ¿no?
(37) Yo como, ¿no?

The auxiliary verb is still absent from the tag-question.

Part 3:

Does the same occur in complex sentences?

(38) Juan espera que Susana venga, ¿no?
(39) Juan ha decidido que no podemos venir, ¿no?

Yes. There is no difference between simple and complex sentences. Spanish tag-questions do not require an auxiliary verb.

Part 4:

Do the auxiliaries "BE" and "HAVE" possess special capabilities in Spanish as they do in English?

(40) Ella es alta, ¿no?
(41) Ella tiene dinero, ¿no?

No, they do not function like their respective forms in the English language, nor is an auxiliary verb required in these cases.

Part 5:

What determines which pronoun will appear in the tag-question?

(42) Él lee el libro, ¿no?
(43) *Él lee el libro, ¿el no?
(44) *Él lee el libro, ¿ella no?

(45) Juan debe darle el libro a Susana, ¿no?
(46) *Juan debe darle el libro a Susana, ¿él no?
(47) *Juan debe darle el libro a Susana, ¿ella no?

(48) Son las dos, ¿no?
(49) Está lloviendo, ¿no?

Spanish tag-questions do not require a pronoun. Therefore, there is no determination of pronoun as there is in English.

Part 6:

What determines the polarity of the tag-question in Spanish?

(50) Juan no puede cantar, ¿no?
(51) Juan no puede cantar, ¿verdad?

(52) Juan puede cantar, ¿no?
(53) Juan puede cantar, ¿verdad?

The polarity of the main clause in Spanish does not affect the polarity of the tag-question as it does in English. It is possible to use "no" and "verdad" with all sentences regardless of the polarity of the main clause.

Now we know how to form a tag-question in Spanish, but an analysis of what happens in the deep structure of the sentence is required. What does the tag-question eliminate? What does it leave behind?

We will examine the deep structures of the main clauses in Spanish in order to answer these questions.

(1a) Él puede leer.
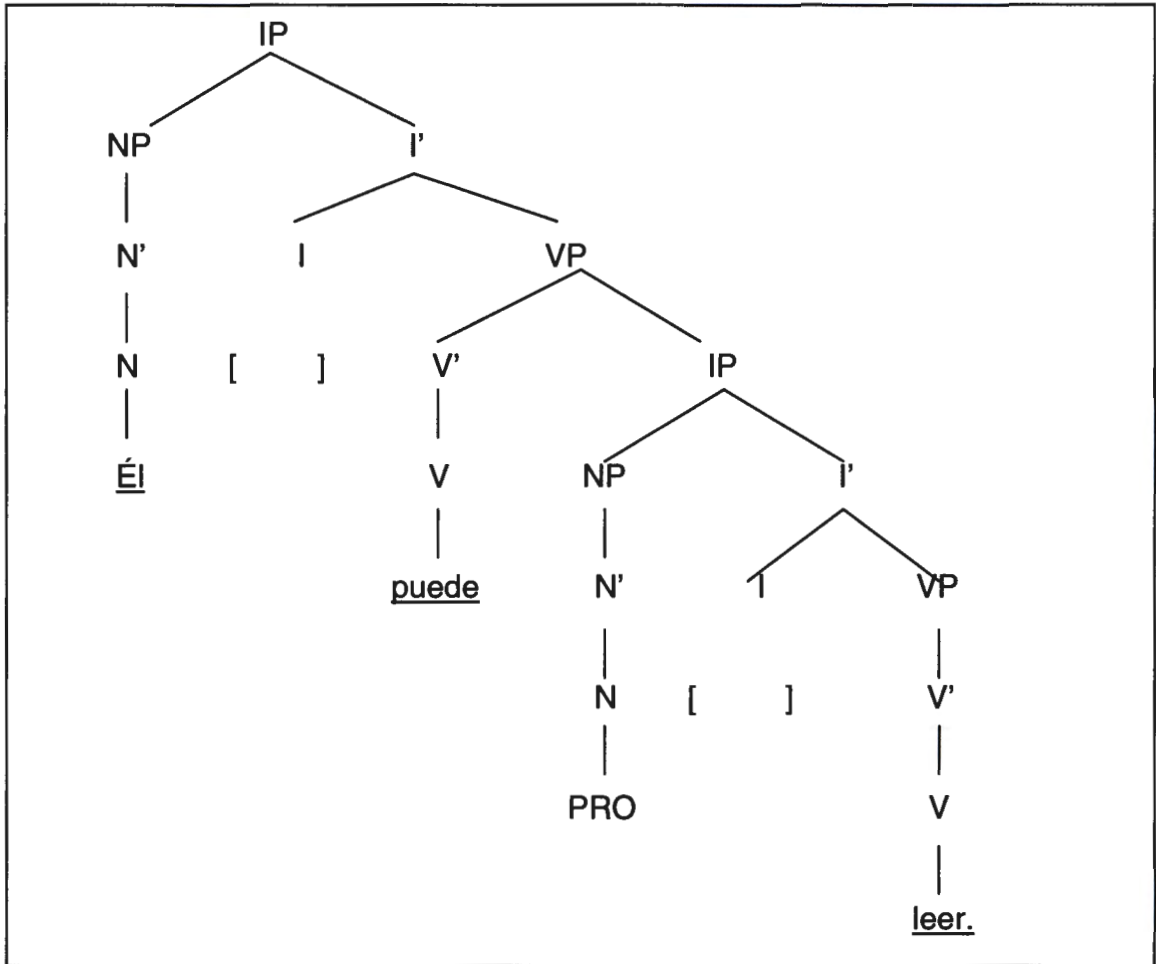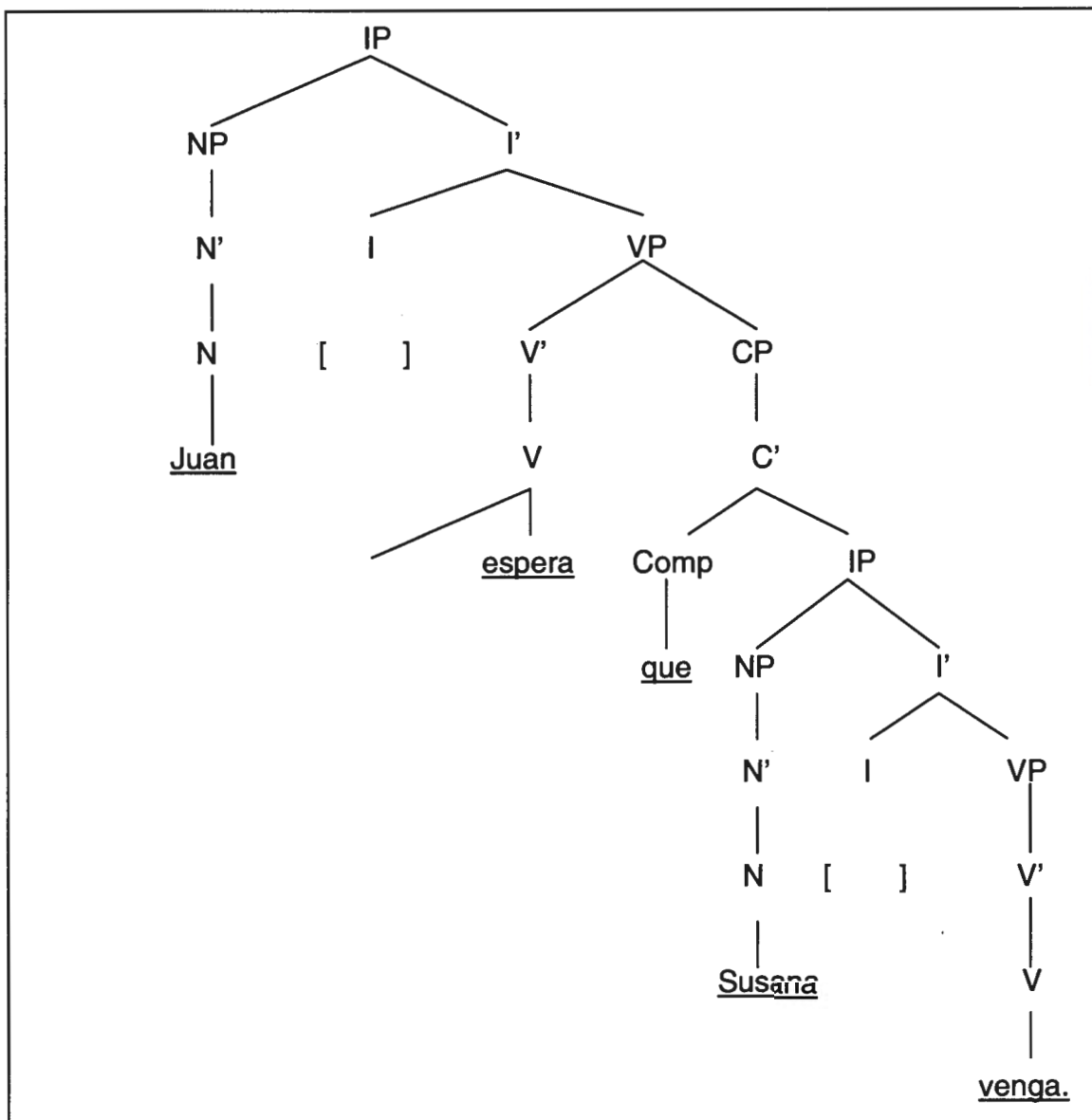

Upon adding the tag-question, we have:

Él puede leer, ¿no?

It appears that Spanish tag-questions eliminate the entire IP because nothing of the main clause remains in the tag-question.

(54) Juan espera que Susana venga.

Upon adding the tag-question we have:

Juan espera que Susana venga, ¿no/?

This example also shows that, apparently, Spanish tag-questions eliminate the entire IP.

Section 3: Summary of Tag-question Data

English	Spanish
~The auxiliary verb of the main clause is always present in the tag-question.	~There is no verb present in the tag-question.
~ If there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause, a form of "DO" is usually present in the tag-question.	~There is no verb present in the tag-question.
~ The subject of the principle clause always appears in the tag-question.	~ There is no subject present in the tag-question.
~The main clause and the tag-question have opposing polarity.	~ The polarity of the main clause and the tag-question do not matter.
~ It eliminates the VP.	~ It eliminates the IP.

Section 4: VP Ellipsis

Now, I will analyze how ellipsis functions in each language. Then, I will use this information to support my proposition that not all of the apparent differences between tag-questions in each language are correct. I would like to demonstrate that there is in fact a subject present in Spanish tag-questions, that this subject must refer to the subject of the main clause, and that the tag-question only eliminates the Flex'.

First, a short description of what ellipsis is is necessary. Ellipsis is a syntactic construction in which one or more words are omitted. This analysis deals specifically with Verb Phrase Ellipsis (VPE).

Section 5: VP Ellipsis in English

We will start with very simple cases ellipsis in English and describe their various parts:

Part 1:

(55) John has left,   and   Sue has   [e],   too.
      Antecedent   *Coordinator*   *Remnant*   *Ellipsis*   *Polarity Word*

Definitions:

The antecedent is the original sentence.

The coordinator is the link between two sentences, in this case the antecedent and the remnant

A remnant is the part that is pronounced.

Ellipsis is the omitted part of the sentence.

Polarity Words are words that give negative or positive polarity to a sentence. Examples are *no, yes, right*, etc.

Part 2:

What does the sequence of verbs consist of in ellipsis?

(56) John has left, and Sue has, too.
(57) John has left, and Sue hasn't.

(58) John may leave, and Sue may, too.
(59) John may leave, and Sue may not.

The sequence of verbs consists in the auxiliary verb of the main clause.

Part 3:

What does the sequence of verbs consist of in a sentence with more than one auxiliary verb?

(60) John may have left, and Sue may have, too.
(61) John may have left, and Sue may, too.

(62) John may have decided, and Sue may have too.
(63) John may have decided, and Sue may, too.

The sequence of verbs consists of the auxiliary verb of the main clause, but this case is slightly different because the verb "Have" possesses a special capacity to act as the verb but to also behave as the auxiliary verb in English. Because of this capacity, both sentences are grammatically possible.

Part 4

What happens when there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause?

(64) John left, and Sue did, too.
(65) John left, and Sue didn't.

(66) John decided, and Sue did, too.
(67) John decided, and Sue didn't.

In English, when there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause, a form of "DO" usually appears in the sequence of verbs.

Part 5:

Why is the type of ellipsis in sentences (68) and (69) possible?

(68) John wanted to leave, and Sue wanted to, too.
(69) John wanted to leave, and Sue didn't want to.

(70) John wanted to leave, and Sue did, too.
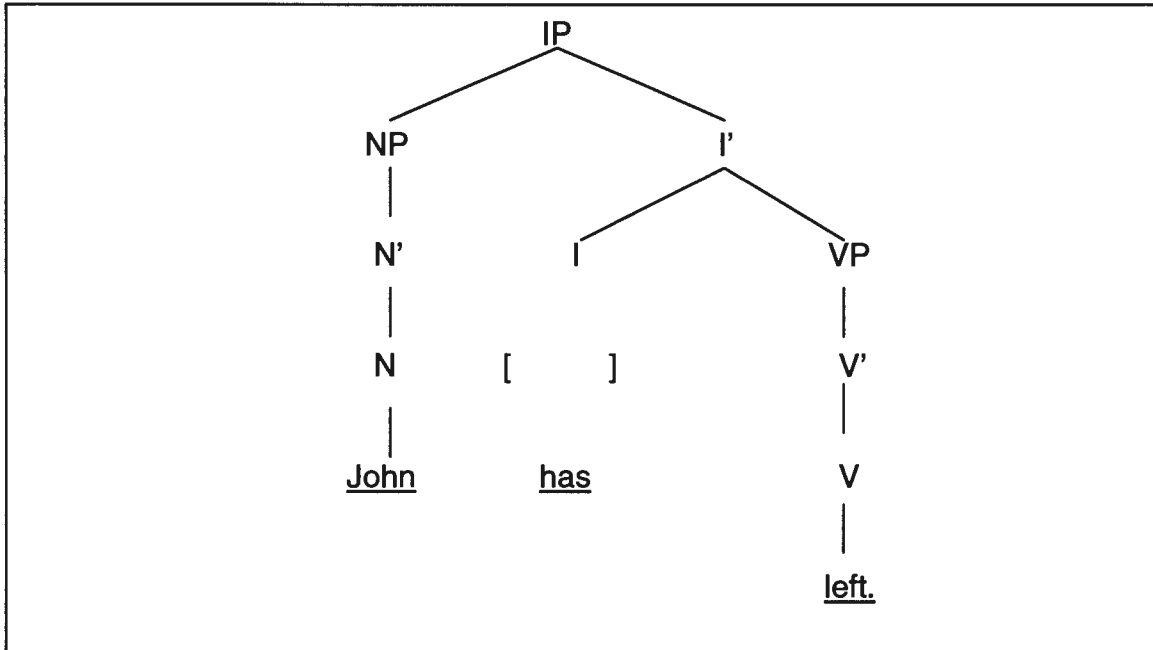(71) John wanted to leave, and Sue didn't.

Both sentences are possible because the deep structure of the sentence permits that we assign "to" to be in the position of the auxiliary verb or that the position of the auxiliary verb is empty. We have seen that when there is no auxiliary verb present in the principle clause, we use a form of the verb "DO."

The sequence of verbs in (68) represents "leave" and the sequence of verbs in (70) represents "wanted to leave."

Now, we know how ellipsis is formed in English, but what happens in the deep structures of the sentences? What does ellipsis eliminate? What does it leave behind?

We will examine the deep structures of the main clauses in order to answer these questions.

(72) John has left.

```
                          IP
                 ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                NP                   I'
                 │             ┌──────┴──────┐
                N'             I             VP
                 │                           │
                 N           [    ]          V'
                 │                           │
               John          has             V
                                             │
                                            left.
```

Upon adding the ellipsis we have:

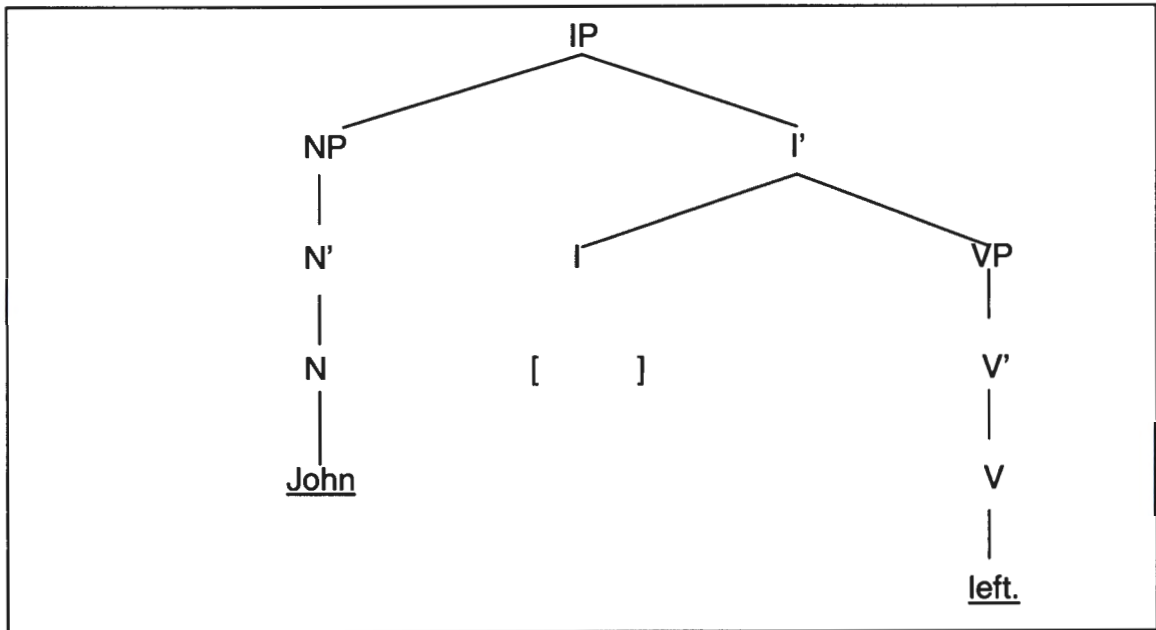John has left, and Sue has, too.

         or

John has left, and Sue hasn't.

The ellipsis eliminates the VP. The ellipsis leaves behind the subject (even though it has to change) and the auxiliary verb.

What happens in sentences that do no have auxiliary verbs? What does ellipsis eliminate? What does it leave behind?

(73) John left.

```
                              IP
                      _____/_____
                    NP                  I'
                    |                 __/\__
                    N'               I       VP
                    |               [   ]     |
                    N                         V'
                    |                         |
                  John                        V
                                              |
                                            left.
```

Upon adding the ellipsis we have:

John left, and Sue did, too.

         or

John left, and Sue didn't.

In English, the ellipsis eliminates the VP. It leaves behind the subject (even though it has to change). Because there is no auxiliary verb in the principle clause, we add a form of "DO."

Section 6: Summary of English Ellipsis and Tag-questions

Tag-questions	Ellipsis
~The auxiliary verb of the main clause is always present in the tag-question.	~The auxiliary verb of the main clause is always present in the remnant.
~ If there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause, a form of "DO" is usually present in the tag-question.	~ If there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause, a form of "DO" is usually present in remnant.
~ The subject of the main clause always appears in the tag-question.	~ The subject of the main clause always appears in the remnant.
~ It eliminates the VP.	~ It eliminates the VP.

Section 7: VP Ellipsis in Spanish

Now, we will examine how ellipsis functions in Spanish:

Part 1:

What does ellipsis consist of?

(74) Juan ha salido, y Susana también.
(75) Juan ha salido, y Susana no.
(76) Juan puede salir, y Susana también.
(77) Juan puede salir, y Susana no.

Ellipsis consists of a subject and the word "tambien" or "no."

Part 2:

Now, what does ellipsis consist of?

(78) Juan puede haber salido, y Susana también.
(79) Juan puede haber salido, y Susana no.

(80) Juan puede haber decidido, y Susana también.
(81 Juan puede haber decidido, y Susana no.

Ellipsis still consists of a subject and the word "también" o "no."

Part 3:

What happens when there is no auxiliary verb present in the main clause?

(82) Juan salió, y Susana también.
(83) Juan salió, y Susana no.

(84) Juan decidió, y Susana también.
(85) Juan decidió, y Susana no.

Nothing special happens when there is no auxiliary verb present in the principle clause. A subject and the word "también" o "no" still appear.

Part 4:

The question of which auxiliary verb should be used in ellipsis does not matter in Spanish because, as we have seen, the remnant can not include any verb. It only concerns us in English.

Now we know how to form ellipsis in Spanish, but what happens in the deep structures of the main clauses? What does ellipsis eliminate? What does it leave behind?

We will examine the deep structures of the principle clauses in order to answer theses questions.

(86) Juan ha salido.
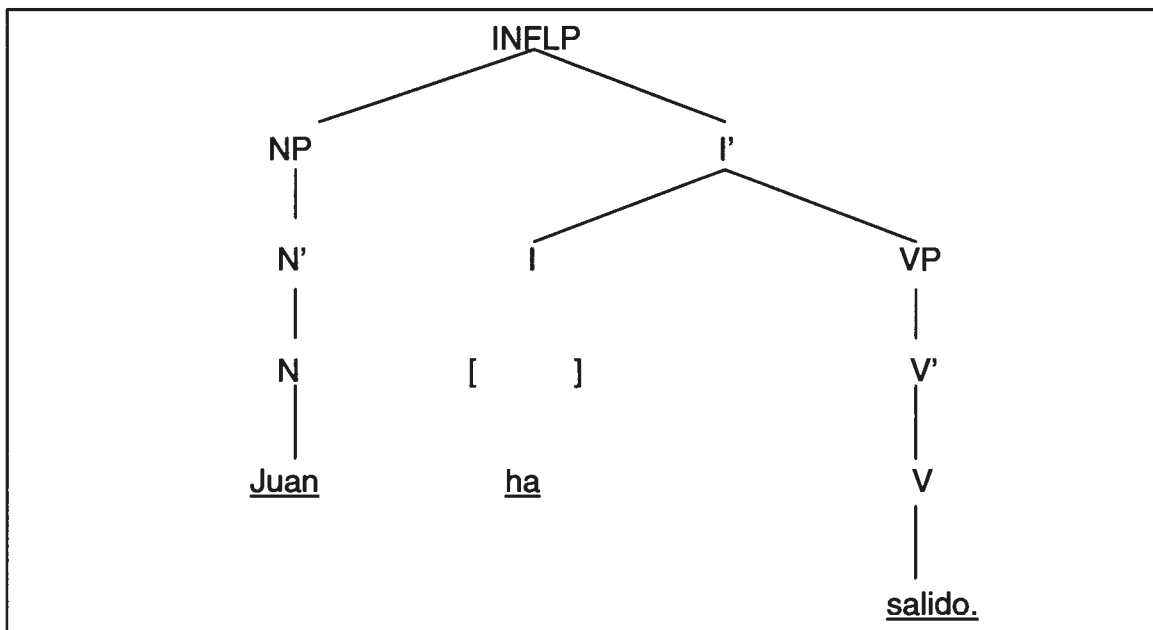
Upon adding the ellipsis we have:

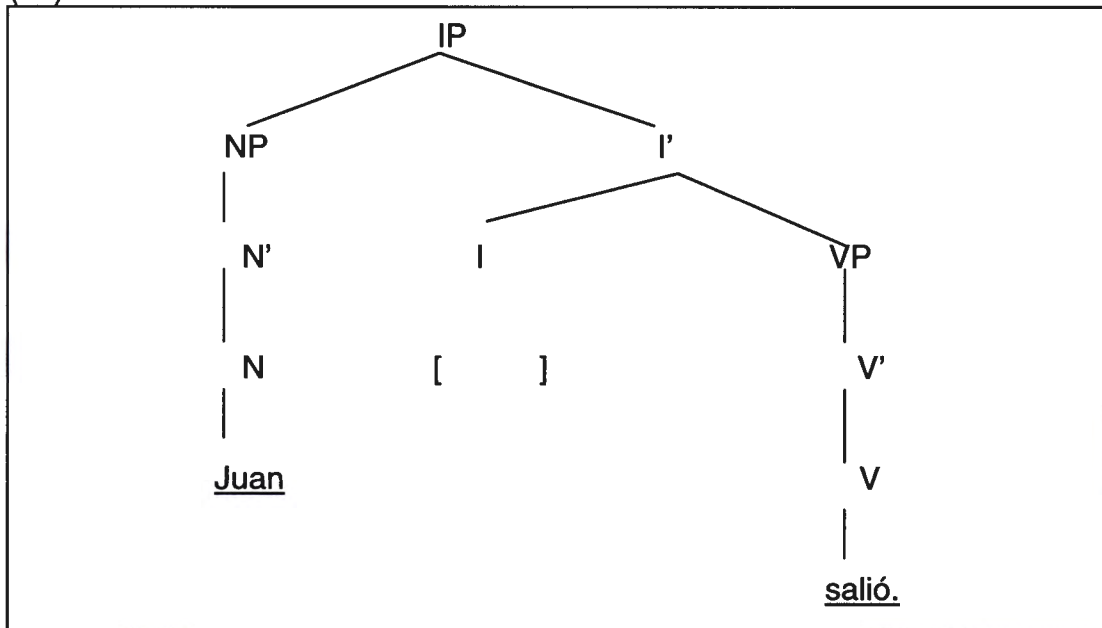Juan ha salido, y Susana también.

                or

Juan ha salido, y Susana no.

In Spanish, the ellipsis eliminates I'. Even though it appears to eliminate the entire sentence, we should keep in mind that the subject of sentence remains in the ellipsis. For this reason, the ellipsis only eliminates the I'.

What happens in sentences that do not have auxiliary verbs? What does ellipsis eliminate? What does it leave behind?

(87) Juan salió.

Upon adding the ellipsis we have:

Juan salió, y Susana también.

         or

Juan salió, y Susana no.

In this case the ellipsis eliminates all of I'.

Section 8: Summary of Spanish Tag-question and Ellipsis

Tag-questions	Ellipsis
~There is no verb present in the tag-question.	~There is no verb present in the remnant.
~ There is no subject present in the tag-question.	~ There is a subject present in the remnant.
~ The polarity of the main clause and the tag-question do not matter.	~ The polarity of the main clause and the ellipsis do not matter.
~ It eliminates the IP.	~ It eliminates the I'.

Section 9: Summary of Tag-Questions and Ellipsis Data

Now, in order to demonstrate that a few of the apparent differences between the two languages are simply general properties of each language, it is necessary to examine tag-questions and ellipsis together.

Tag-Questions in English	Tag-Questions in Spanish

~ John can't read,   can   he?
              (Auxiliary) (Subject)
	~ Juan no puede leer, ¿no?
	                    (no)

Ellipsis in English	**Ellipsis in Spanish**

~ John read, and   Sue   didn't.
            (Subject) (Auxiliary)
	~ Juan leyó, y Susana no.
	            (Subject) (no)

*Remember that only the examples of negation or of "no" concern us.

We see that in English tag-questions and ellipsis there is a subject and an auxiliary verb. And now, we see that in Spanish tag-questions and ellipsis there is a "no." But, there is no subject in Spanish tag-questions whereas there is in Spanish ellipsis. Why are the components of tag-questions and ellipsis different in Spanish, while they are exactly the same in English?

I will propose that the answer to this difference is that, in fact, there is a subject in tag-questions in Spanish and that it only eliminates the I'. (And in reality, the data from the English tag-question analysis support this proposition.)

In English, the pronoun that appears in the tag-question must refer to the subject of the main clause. For example:

(88) John can't read, can he?
(89) *John can't read, can she?
(90) *John can't read, can they

The subject of the tag-questions has to be the same as the subject of the main clause. This explains why examples (1b) and (1c) are ungrammatical since the subject of the tag-question does not agree in gender or number with the subject of the main clause.

Let's see how this works in Spanish:

(91) *Juan no puede leer, ¿él no?
(92) *Juan no puede leer, ¿ella no?
(93) *Juan no puede leer, ¿ellos no?

The previous statements are all ungrammatical for a number of reasons. First, we have already learned that the subject of tag-questions must be the same as the subject of the main clause. Based on this criterion, we immediately consider (92) and (93) ungrammatical for the same reason that (89) and (90) are ungrammatical: the subject of the tag-question does not agree in gender or number with the subject of the main clause. However, this would lead us to initially believe that (91) is grammatical since it respects this criterion. But, the Spanish language possesses and additional property that explains why (91) is ungrammatical.

Consider the following English example:

(94) John thinks that he is intelligent. (Where he = John or another male)

We see that in (94), "he" can refer to another male, but it can also refer to John. The later example is an example of an anaphoric pronoun because it can refer to some other sentence constituent (Crystal, 1991).

We will see that this is not the case in the parallel Spanish examples.

(95) Juan piensa que él es inteligente. (Where él ≠ Juan)
(96) Juan piensa que [Ø] es inteligente. (Where él = Juan or another male)

Unlike in English where the pronoun can refer back to either the subject of the main clause or another person, in (95), the pronoun always refers to a different person. The reason for this is that in Spanish overt subject pronouns can not be anaphoric. Thus, the only way to refer back to the subject of the main clause is to use a null subject ([Ø]) as in (96).

Therefore, what I propose is that in Spanish in place of the subject in the tag-question there is a Null Subject that refers back to the subject of the main clause. The concept of Null Subjects helps to prove this proposal. Therefore, the final summary of the tag-question and ellipsis data is as follows:

New Summary of the Tag-Questions and Ellipsis Data

Tag-Questions in English	Tag-Questions in Spanish
~ John can't read, can he? **(Auxiliary) (Subject)**	~ Juan no puede leer, ¿ [Ø] no? **(Subject)(Polarity)**
Ellipsis in English	**Ellipsis in Spanish**
~ John read, and Sue didn't. **(Subject) (Auxiliary)**	~ Juan leyó, y Susana no. **(Subject) (Polarity)**

While it visually appears that there is still one difference between the analysis of each language--the English analysis have Subject and Auxiliary whereas the Spanish analysis have Subject and Polarity Words--research conducted by Luis López in 1999 suggests that this difference simply reflects a difference in the general properties of each language.

López's research on this subject begins with the premise that in English it is possible to get an emphatic affirmative meaning from an auxiliary (1999, p. 273). An example is as follows:

(97) John has not seen the movie, but I HAVE seen it.

The emphasis is placed on "*have*" which gives the sentence an affirmative polarity [aff].

In Spanish however, this is not possible. For example:

(98) *Juan no ha visto la película, pero yo la HE visto.
(99) Juan no ha visto la película, pero yo SÍ la he visto.

For López, this example suggests that the Spanish auxiliary "*he*" can not give the sentence an emphatic affirmative meaning. Following Laka (1990), Lopez assumes that *both* affirmative and negative features are contained within the Sigma Feature ($[\Sigma]$). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that whereas English Auxiliaries have affirmative and negative features, i.e. Σ Feature, Spanish Auxiliaries do not. López continues this research by suggesting that in Spanish it

is actually the Polarity Words that contain the $\sum$ Feature, as seen in example (99).

Another test can be used to further prove that English Auxiliaries possess the affirmative and negative features and that Spanish Auxiliaries do not is as follows:

(100) Have you seen the movie?
       I have.
       I haven't.

In English it is perfectly acceptable to answer this question using an Auxiliary. In Spanish however, this is not the case. Consider the following example:

(101) ¿Has visto la película?
       *He.
       *No he.
       Sí.
       No.

This further proves that Spanish Auxiliaries do not possess the $\sum$ Feature. A $\sum$ Feature is the functional projection that carries the polarity (affirmative or negative) of a sentence. $\sum$ is phonetically realized in different ways in each language. This is the basis of López's analysis: in English, $\sum$ is realized by the Auxiliary; in Spanish, $\sum$ is realized by the Polarity Word.

At the beginning of section 8, it appeared that there were still some differences between Spanish tag-questions and ellipsis, mainly that tag-questions do not have a subject whereas ellipsis does and also that tag-questions eliminate the IP whereas ellipsis only eliminates the I'. I have accounted for the difference in subjects by proving that there is in fact a subject in the tag-question: the Null Subject ([Ø]). Also, because we assume that there is in fact a subject in the tag-question (the Null Subject), we can assume that only the I' is eliminated in tag-questions. Therefore the analysis of Spanish tag-questions and ellipsis appears to be exactly the same.

Section 10: Conclusion

This paper has separately examined the functions and properties of tag-questions and ellipsis in the Spanish and English languages. Although there initially appeared to be differences in each constructions of each language, further research and analysis has accounted for these differences. I have shown that these two constructions have basically the same properties: English ellipsis and tag-questions contain a subject and an auxiliary verb; Spanish ellipsis and

tag-questions contain a subject (a Null Subject [Ø] in the case of tag-questions) and a polarity word. Research conducted by López shows that Spanish polarity words possess the Σ Feature just as English auxiliary verbs do, and thus the two elements function in the same way in their respective languages.

This examination could be continued by researching the mechanics of the ellipsis in tag-questions. Murguía (2004) offers a preliminary introduction to this subject. Further research on Kitagawa (1991) could offer an in-depth explanation.

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