Non-embedded infinitives in heritage speakers of Spanish

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This paper analyzes non-embedded infinitives (NEI) such as (1a) in a corpus produced by a Guatemalan heritage Spanish speaker (HS), Osmin, who moved to the United States at age 9, and returned to live in Guatemala at 25 in 2015 (cf. the corpus from Radio Ambulante and two Youtube interviews). Osmin produced 335 verbs, 66 (19.7%) NEI, (1)-(2), compared to his father, who produced 0. Of the NEI verbs, 50 (76%) involved overt subjects, as in (1b). NEIs include root infinitives, non-selected adjuncts, correlatives (1b) and relative clauses (2), all impossible in monolingual Spanish.

NEIs can appear in relative clauses (cf. (2)), making them different from child L1 infinitives (Pierce 1989 a.o) and they also differ from root infinitives in monolingual Spanish (cf. (3), Hernanz 1999, Grohmann & Etxepare 2003, 2005), which are non-assertoric and require a coda.

(1) a. Y eso día fui normal: **levanta-r**, estuve feliz, estuve jugando.
and that day was normal: get.up-INF was happy, was playing
"And that day was normal: to get up, I was happy, I was playing."

b. Y como **él** **prometer** que yo voy a regresar más tarde…
and since he promise-INF that I go to return-INF later…
"And since he to promise that I was going to return later..."

(2) Entonces, ese nombre que yo **acostumbra-r**. **(Relative clause)**
then that name that I get.used.to-INF
"So that was the name I got used to."

(3) Y yo dije: ¿Queda-r-me aquí? No, yo me voy a una pensión. (**monoling. Sp**)
and I said remain-INF-CL here no, I CL go to a boarding-house
"And I said: me, remain here? No, I am going to a boarding house."

Prévost & White (2000) (P&W) describe similar root infinitives in the L2 acquisition of French and German, and propose that non-finite forms are underspecified with respect to finiteness (their Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis). P&W propose an underspecification rule [-FIN] → [αFIN].

Following this analysis, in (1)a a non-finite and a finite T head are conjoined and interpreted as past tense. Assuming that coordination involves conjunct parallelism (cf. Pullum & Zwicky 1986, Camacho 2003), I suggest that NEIs correspond to a fully specified syntactic T head as in (4) (cf. Lipski 1991, Rigau 1995, Torrego 1998, Lardiere & Schwartz 1997, P&W, a.o). Given this representation, we expect referential null subjects (pro) without a controller to be possible, as attested.

Within Distributed Morphology (DM, Halle & Marantz 1993), I propose the impoverishment rule (5) (cf. Embick & Noyer 2007) that eliminates the [–FIN] feature in the context where phi-features are present.

(4) Syntactic representation for T: $T_{[Tns, Pers, Num]}$
(5) Impoverishment/deletion rule: [-FIN] → ∅ / [PERSON, NUMBER, TENSE]

The HS Spanish grammar would have two alternative outputs, as illustrated in (6), if the rule doesn't apply, T is specified as [-FIN]. A sample vocabulary insertion rule is presented in (7). Since DM's Subset Principle requires a vocabulary item to include a

subset of the morphosyntactic features, when [-FIN] disappears, only the infinitive can be inserted, as in (7)b.

(6) **Heritage Spanish grammar**

Morphosyntactic input	Deletion rule application	Morphosyntactic output
T[1P, SG, PRES, -FIN] →	NO →	T[1P, SG, PRES, -FIN]
	YES →	T[1P, SG, PRES]

(7) **Vocabulary Insertion** (1st person, singular, present)

a. T[1P, SG, PRES, -FIN] ←→ *-o* (i.e. *canto* 'I sing')

b. T ←→ *-r* (i.e. *cantar* 'sing')

Finally, I suggest that the deletion rule applies as a way to facilitate bilingual processing. On the one hand, bilingual grammars are simultaneously activated (Loebell & Bock 2003, a.o.) with one of them inhibited in production/reception. One productive way to resolve this cognitive interaction of activation and inhibition is to simplify spell out (cf. Camacho 2018, Camacho & Kirova 2018), in this particular case through an impoverishment rule that eliminates the feature [-FIN] and triggers (7)b.

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