

notables, y que se echa de menos en libros de esta especie con mayor frecuencia de lo que sería deseable, consiste en ofrecer, paralelamente al estudio de la literatura norteamericana, un capítulo sobre la teoría y crítica literarias nacidas y desarrolladas en el seno de aquélla. De esta manera, Cándido Pérez Gállego nos ofrece en las últimas páginas de su obra un poético conjunto de reflexiones ceñidas a los principales teóricos de la literatura de nuestro siglo, grupo que incluye pensadores tan variados como Francis O. Matthiessen, Murray Krieger, Harold Bloom y Harry Levin.

En estas últimas líneas quisiéramos hacer algunas precisiones que aluden a la construcción general de la obra. En primer lugar, destacaremos la desigualdad en el espacio dedicado a cada autor. Es obvio que no todas las figuras de la literatura norteamericana han brillado con la misma intensidad; pero incluso entre las que lo han hecho con pareja fuerza la distribución y profundidad de los análisis muestran notables desequilibrios. Las inevitables preferencias llevan al autor a dedicar un esfuerzo, espacio y minuciosidad mayores, entre otros, a Melville, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Hemingway, Updike y Bellow, en detrimento, por ejemplo, de James, Steinbeck, Faulkner, Kerouac, Ashbery, Olson y Barth. Esto no quiere decir necesariamente que la obra quede coja en ciertos planos, pero tampoco ayuda a suplir el ya tradicional olvido crítico, cuando no descuido consciente, hacia determinados autores (Anderson, como ejemplo paradigmático). Por otra parte, este desequilibrio entre unos autores y otros lleva en ocasiones a resumir casi de un plumazo la obra de determinados literatos. Poe, Anderson, Duncan y Ashbery —entre otros— cuentan con una página escasa cada uno. Djuna Barnes y Robert Creeley, menos afortunados, cuentan con tan sólo dos líneas (una para cada uno; pp. 303 y 272, respectivamente), que no aportan nada sobre sus lugares e importancia dentro de la historia de la literatura norteamericana.

En segundo lugar, nos parece que el tono íntimamente personal e impresionista en que está escrita esta *Literatura norteamericana* (una inclinación de escritura hoy tan de moda entre numerosos estudiosos e investigadores) puede, sin embargo, resultar excesivamente difícil para el lector común en numerosos momentos. Las peculiarísimas asociaciones intertextuales y psicológicas que se exponen a lo largo de toda la obra, y que sin duda confieren una amplitud y riqueza inusuales en los estudios literarios, pueden al mismo tiempo ser un obstáculo en la comprensión del texto.

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Michael S. Rochemont and Peter W. Culicover. *English Focus Constructions and the Theory of Grammar*. Cambridge Studies in Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. VII + 210.

When one comes across any title written by either Rochemont or Culicover, or by both, one feels that the product is likely to be brilliant. If, in addition, the series to which the volume under discussion belongs is the Cambridge Studies in Linguistics, that surmise amounts to almost complete certainty. This time Rochemont (University of British Columbia) and Culicover (The Ohio State University) explore the possibility of treating

some constructions that traditionally have been labelled 'stylistic' as purely syntactic devices that the theory of grammar must incorporate. Their framework is Transformational Generative Grammar, more specifically Government and Binding Theory, with which every reader of the book must be conversant.

Let us first of all put forward the four types of construction with which the book is concerned:

- (1) a. Extraposition (EX) from the subject (SX): *A man came into the room with blond hair.*
- b. EX from the object (OX): *Mary was talking to a man at the party that she went to school with.*
- c. Extraposed *so*-result clauses (RX): *So many people came to the party that we left.*
- d. Phrase-level comparative EX: *More people came to the party than John invited.*
- e. Sentence-level comparative EX: *More people came to the party than I expected.*
- (2) a. Directional Inversion: *Into the room walked John.*
- b. Locative Inversion: *At the head of the table sat Bill.*
- (3) Preposing around *be* (PAB): *At the entrance to the park was an old statue.*
- (4) a. Heavy NP Shift (HNPS): *John invited to the party his closest friends.*
- b. Presentational *there* Insertion (PTI): *There walked into the room a tall man with blond hair.*

At this point the reader may wonder why a volume entitled *English Focus Constructions* should fail to examine various other devices also leading to the focusing of constituents, aside from the structures in (1) to (4). I am alluding, in particular, to clefts and pseudo-clefts, left dislocation, topicalization, or even the type of focus attraction shown by items such as *even, merely, truly, simply, hardly, utterly, virtually, only, just*, negators or *wh*-phrases. In fact the choice of title has not been very fortunate, as the only—but difficult—aim of the authors is to prevent the structures in (1) to (4) from being included in the stylistic component of the grammar, as Rochemont (1978) pretended, and to explain them instead by purely syntactic procedures and compulsory “freezing” with respect to further transformations.¹

Five chapters follow the introduction: the first containing the versions of the concepts that will be used in the book; chapters 2 to 4 are devoted to EX, Directional/Locative Inversion (D/L) and PAB, HNPS and PTI respectively, and the final chapter deals with questions which affect focus constructions in general. Excellent and comprehensive references to transformational studies and a useful index of names complete the volume.

In Chapter one, we find the X-bar analysis which the authors follow, as well as their “versions” of Move α , Subjacency and Empty Category Principle (ECP). The final section of this chapter, entitled “The Theory of Focus,” deals with the relationship between focus, stress, *c*-construability (Rochemont 1976), and the difference between pairs such as, on the one hand, structural and simple, and, on the other, unmarked and contrastive foci.

Chapter 2 is centred on EX. It is the “Complement Principle” that allows Rochemont and Culicover to reach the conclusion that EX is base-generated, i.e., the EX phrase

appears at D-structure in its actual position, and no operation of Move α is thus needed. CP, which in principle operates in S-structure, states that the extraposed phrase must be a potential complement of the one on which it 'depends' and both have to be in a government relation. As a consequence, the possible locations for SX are either IP or VP, and just VP for OX.

The contents of Chapter 3 are D/L and PAB. Both constructions are explained in the same way, as instances of a certain type of topicalization.

HNPS and PTI are dealt with together in Chapter 4, both considered as cases of rightward Move α , the former to a position adjoined to VP, the latter to one adjoined to IP, in order to satisfy ECP and Subjacency. As far as PTI is concerned, a further, compulsory, insertion of *there* is postulated so that the trace resulting from movement can be lexically governed. In HNPS *there*-insertion is obligatorily absent.

With the goal of the book thus seemingly accomplished, Rochemont and Culicover introduce in Chapter 5 further consideration of the ECP, Subjacency and other scholars' proposals for PTI or D/L, which in my opinion should not be there. The Focus Effect, already commented upon in Chapter 1, is seen as a consequence of the syntactic configurations shown in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, that is, of EX, D/L, PAB, HNPS and PTI. These structures interact "with a principle of UG [Universal Grammar] from which it follows that these constructions must exhibit the FE [Focus Effect] with respect to a specific phrase" (p. 149). In other words, the theory of grammar will mark as focal extraposed phrases, topicalized segments in D/L and PAB, or the rightwards moved constituent in HNPS and PTI. This, in my view, is doubtlessly the weakest proposal in the volume. Despite the fact that Rochemont and Culicover's is not a functional framework, it is not coherent to assert that *after* the operation of certain syntactic devices, some segment within the utterance is focused, i.e. not c-construable. On the contrary, I think that somewhere in D-structure a constituent is marked as focal and thus it requires transformations or special base-ordering so that it will be overtly marked as communicatively focused. I do not in the least deny the syntactic character of the derivation of, say, focal procedures from D-structure to actual speech, which makes Rochemont and Culicover's study a compulsory source of research.

Note

1. Two main reasons had been argued to the fact that EX, Directional/Locative Inversion (D/L), PAB, HNPS or PTI had to be explained by stylistic rules: (i) these rules just apply to S-structures, blocking for instance *wh*-movement after EX: "*What colour hair did a man walk into the room with?" and (ii) there are no differences as far as truth-conditions are concerned, but just differences of focus. See Culicover (1980) and Guéron (1980) for counter-examples to the aforementioned claim.

Other Works Cited

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