

**The University of Pittsburgh ~ Department of
Linguistics
Colloquium Series *Presents:***

“Against Verb Raising in Spanish”

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Since the postulation of parametric differences between the surface position occupied by finite verbs and auxiliaries in English and French (Emonds, 1978; Pollock, 1989), it has been generally assumed in the generative literature that Romance languages, including Spanish, are verb raising languages (Contreras, 1991, 2007; Suñer, 1994; Zubizarreta, 1998; Ordoñez, 1998, 2000; Zagona, 2002). The verb raising analysis implies that at the surface level finite verbs are adjoined to the head position of IP. This analysis has been important for the explanation of VOS and VSO orders in Spanish. Assuming the VP-internal Subject Hypothesis (Koopman & Sportiche, 1991), both orders have been explained as the result of verb raising (Contreras, 1991). Alternative analyses for VOS and VSO word orders (Zubizarreta, 1998; Ordoñez, 1998, 2000) also rely on the assumption of verb raising. The problem for these analyses is that there is no independent empirical evidence for the existence of verb raising in Spanish. We will show that empirical evidence concerning negation, floating quantifiers, and VP-adverb placement, as well as subject/verb inversion, do not support the claim that Spanish is a verb raising language. Since the existence of verb raising is unwarranted, VSO and VOS word orders need an alternative explanation. In this paper we claim that the distribution of post-verbal subjects can be explained as the result of free complement order within a head-initial flat VP. In this account, which can be described as partially non-configurational (Kiss, 1994), there is no structural asymmetry between post-verbal subjects and objects. The lack of post-verbal subject/object asymmetries in Spanish is confirmed by tests involving superiority, Principle C, *that*-trace, and weak-crossover effects.

Friday, April 11, 2008 at 3:00p.m.

Room 332 ~ Cathedral of Learning