




Analyzing The Reflexive Pronouns in The Panamanian Spanish Dialect: A Lexical Functional Grammar Analysis.

Análisis de los Pronombres Reflexivos en el Dialecto Español Panameño: Un Análisis De La Gramática Funcional Léxico.

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Abstract

Reflexivity in linguistics refers to the relationship between a subject and an object within a sentence, where the subject and object are the same entity. This phenomenon has significant implications in Romance languages like Spanish, as it can impact the meaning and structure of a sentence. This study aims to analyze the use of reflexive pronouns in the Panamanian Spanish dialect using a lexical functional grammar (LFG) approach. This research aims to observe and explain the morphosyntactical phenomena that firmly influence Panamanians' sentences of daily use and informal speech. The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with six native Panamanians aged between 50 and 20 years. The interviews were used to learn first-hand the types of reflective sentences that ordinary Panamanian citizens usually use. These were analyzed using the LFG approach to understanding in-depth sentence structure, especially the verb structure. It was found that Panamanians often use the pronoun 'te' and reflexive pronouns in their speech, possibly to convey a sense of closeness and affection within their society. In addition, a duplication was found, yet this phenomenon is not fully understood. Still, it may be due to the interpersonal relationships that Panamanians and Latin Americans tend to cultivate. **Keywords:** Generative Grammar, Linguistics, Latin American Spanish, Pronouns, Reflexive Expressions.

Resumen

La reflexividad en lingüística se refiere a la relación entre un sujeto y un objeto dentro de una oración, donde el sujeto y el objeto son la misma entidad. Este fenómeno tiene implicaciones importantes en lenguas romances como el español, ya que puede afectar el significado y la estructura de una oración. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el uso de pronombres reflexivos en el dialecto español panameño utilizando un enfoque de gramática léxica funcional (LFG). Esta investigación tiene como objetivo observar y explicar los fenómenos morfosintácticos que influyen firmemente en las oraciones de uso cotidiano y el habla informal de los panameños. Los datos para este estudio se recolectaron a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas con seis panameños nativos con edades entre 50 y 20 años. Las entrevistas sirvieron para conocer de primera mano los tipos de frases reflexivas que suelen utilizar los ciudadanos panameños comunes y corrientes. Estos se analizaron utilizando el enfoque LFG para comprender en profundidad la estructura de las oraciones, especialmente la estructura verbal. Se encontró que los panameños suelen utilizar el pronombre 'te' y pronombres reflexivos en su discurso, posiblemente para transmitir un sentido de cercanía y afecto dentro de su sociedad. Además, se encontró una duplicación, aunque este fenómeno no se comprende completamente. Aún así, puede deberse a las relaciones interpersonales que los panameños y los latinoamericanos tienden a cultivar. **Palabras claves:** Gramática generativa, Lingüística, Español latinoamericano, Pronombres, Expresiones reflexivas.

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Introduction

Language is a complex and ever-changing system that evolves through the interaction of various linguistic factors, cultural influences, and geographical contexts. Each language has its own structure and grammatical rules. This is the case of the Spanish language; however, this language presents modifications made by people when speaking in an informal way, especially the Spanish coming from Latin America. This linguistic phenomenon is present in the reflexive pronouns.

Reflexive pronouns complement reflexive verbs and indicate that it is the subject that receives the action of the verb; they can also become the subject of the sentence. Reflexivity and reciprocity in Spanish are typically expressed with clitic pronouns me 'myself,' te 'yourself,' se 'himself, herself, themselves,' nos 'ourselves,' os 'yourselves' (Clements, 2006, p. 237).

This research article explores the use and placement of reflexive pronouns within the specific context of dialectal Spanish spoken in Panama. Since limited studies have concerned the reflexiveness in Panamanian Spanish and the construction of the verb phrases (VP) in reflexive sentences of Latin American Spanish dialects, the research paper aims to analyze the structures of reflexive sentences commonly used in the Panamanian population's informal verbal communication.

The primary goal of this research is to offer a comprehensive analysis of reflexive pronoun usage and placement using Lexical-Functional Grammar as a theoretical framework. This grammatical framework provides a strong foundation for understanding reflexive sentences' complex structures and functions within the Panamanian Spanish dialect.



To achieve this goal, our study employs a qualitative methodology that includes interviews with a diverse group of native Panamanians across different age groups. These interviews serve as a valuable source of firsthand data, revealing the reflexive sentence patterns commonly used in everyday communication by Panamanian citizens.

Our findings shed light on the recurrent patterns and tendencies in reflexive pronoun usage and delve into the functional and constituent structures of reflexive sentences in Panamanian Spanish. We pay special attention to the role of reflexive sentences in conveying imperatives, which offers valuable insights into the pragmatic aspects of language use. Interestingly, our research uncovers that using reflexive pronouns in Panamanian Spanish is not solely a linguistic phenomenon but is deeply intertwined with cultural influences, underscoring the complex interplay between language and society.

The implications of this study extend beyond Panamanian Spanish, offering a broader perspective on linguistic variations within the Spanish language spoken across Latin America. By exploring reflexive pronoun usage in this dialect, we better understand how language evolves and adapts in diverse cultural and regional contexts. This research article will deeply analyze Panamanian Spanish's multipurpose reflexive pronoun usage, uncovering the interconnections between language, culture, and society. Through this exploration, we deepen our understanding of the dynamic nature of language and its role in shaping our communicative experiences, observe the different forms of these types of sentences provided by the interviewed, and explain how to recognize and conjugate reflexive verbs in Panamanian Spanish, where to place the reflexive



pronoun according to its functions, and what role these pronouns play in sentences.

Then, the researcher will explore the concepts related to this research: reflexive pronouns, reflexive phrases in American Spanish, and the LFG approach, along with the meaning and usage of reflexive pronouns in the Spanish language and other romance languages, as well as the theory and approaches developed to analyze these complex sentences in order to understand them to a morphosyntax level. The researcher aims to settle a strong foundation on in the topics to be addressed.

Reflexive pronouns in the Spanish Language

Table 1: Spanish Pronouns and Reflexive Pronouns with English Equivalents (provided by the researcher)

Pronouns	English Equivalent	Reflexive pronoun	English Equivalent
Yo	I	<i>me</i>	myself
Tú/Usted	You	<i>te</i>	yourself
Él	He	<i>se</i>	himself
Ella	She	<i>se</i>	herself
Nosotros/Nosotras	We	<i>nos</i>	ourselves
Ustedes	You (plural)	<i>se</i>	yourselves
Ellos/Ellas	They	<i>se</i>	themselves

Reflections on Reflexive Sentences in Panamanian Spanish and Romance Languages



America is a vast land marked by diversity, with over twenty-five countries speaking Spanish as their official language. In many cases, the language is in contact with other pre-Colombian languages, such as the Quechua in Bolivia, the guaran in Paraguay, or the Naha -the Aztec language- in Mexico; or with the Portuguese -with Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Per, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay. Panama, situated at the crossroads of North and South America, has a rich linguistic heritage shaped by its history, culture, and regional diversity. López (1996, p. 19) has stated that Spanish, especially in Central America, is founded as a " dialectal mosaic."

Due to Panamá's unique geographical location, linguistic influences of varying magnitude have influenced the formation of what is now known as the Panamanian language. Furthermore, many Caribbean immigrants left their mark on the language during the twentieth century. Although Spanish is the official and most widely used language of Panama, it coexists with 19 indigenous languages such as buglé, ngäbe, emberá, wounaan, kuna, naso tjerdi, or bribri (recently recognized by the Panamanian government), as well as a strong presence of English and Caribbean English.

The contribution of languages such as French or different colonial languages like Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, and Hindi, among others, has not had a significant impact. Similarly, it should not be forgotten that the African presence in this country was extensive, beginning with the first colonial ships carrying enslaved Africans and impacting the language. With this mix of languages and linguistic influences from all over the world, the Panamanian language has several characteristics that set it



apart from others. Likewise, the Panamanian language followed the logical evolution of the languages whose root was Spanish. While it assimilates new words and phrases from other languages, it mainly "adapts" these new words by adhering to the grammatical rules of the Castellan language.

Panamanian Spanish has innumerable language variations, one of which is the reflexive sentences. Reflexive sentences are those in which the action of the main verb within the sentence falls directly on the subject. Then, the subject exercises an action, and it returns to itself in the predicate, and for that, personal pronouns are used. Reflexive sentences can be constituted with reflexive verbs (repent, dare, complain) or with verbs whose action is focused on the subject. Reflexive sentences have been investigated over the years in different romance languages; nevertheless, few investigations are related to reflexive sentences in Latin American Spanish. Studying reflexive pronouns in this context provides a unique opportunity to examine how linguistic phenomena adapt and manifest in distinct sociolinguistic settings.

We find dead languages no longer used within the Romance languages, such as medieval dialects or Vulgar Latin, and living and current languages. We find Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Catalan, Galician, and Romanian among the latter. Romance languages, also known as those derived from Vulgar Latin. The Romance languages are found within the Indo-European trunk, the world's most prominent family of languages. Thanks to the fact that they all come from the same root, these languages come to share similarities in their lexical and linguistic structure.



According to Cunha & Cintra (2001), in Portuguese, in the reflexive voice, the verb is accompanied by an oblique pronoun that serves as a direct object or, more rarely, as an indirect object and represents the same person as the subject. So:

- *Eu me lavo (ou lavo-me)* – [I wash myself.]
- *Ele se deu o trabalho de vir a minha casa (ou deu-se)* – [He took the trouble himself to come to my house.] (2001, p.421)

The reflexive verb can also indicate reciprocity, that is, a joint action of two or more subjects:

- *Pedro, Paulo e eu nos estimamos (estimamo-nos)* – [Pedro, Paulo, and I love each other.] (2001, p.421)

This reflexive structure is a distinctive characteristic of Spanish and Romance languages. Nevertheless, the Portuguese share a similar but different sentence structure. In reflexive and reciprocate expressions of the Spanish language, the reflexive pronouns are *me*, *te*, *se*, and *nos*. In the Spanish of Spain, the pronoun ‘*se*’ has been thoroughly studied.

Rafael Seco (1966) includes the group of active sentences, where the subject is the agent, and of passive sentences, where the subject is patient, and the so-called reflexive sentences, where the subject is the agent and patient at once.

Seco (1966 p. 183) added:

Hence the denomination of reflexive that these sentences and the verbs that form them: that the verbal action returns, like a ray of light in its mirror, on the origin from which it came: Yo



me lavo (I wash myself) is a prayer of this type, in which the subject I is also the object of the verbal action. However, sometimes the subject is not the object but the indirect term of the verbal action: the action returns to the subject as well, but indirectly. Thus, we have the second type of reflexive sentence: Yo me lavo la cara (I wash my face).

Regarding reflective sentences in general, Bello et al. (1960) stated that the same person is an agent and patient in the reflex proposition. However, there are species of constructions in which reflexivity does not go beyond the material of the form nor offers the spirit more than a weak and dark shadow.

There have been investigations with the pronoun 'se' as the primary focus. In addition, regarding the characterization of reflexive sentences with 'se,' Contreras (1966, p. 96) stated that:

Reflexive sentences, in which it is oneself who performs and receives the action expressed by the verb", sentences that are classified into two groups: direct reflexive sentences, in which the subject, from the ontic point of view, is both the direct object of the verb, e.g., Juan se lava (Juan washes himself), and indirect reflexive sentences, in which the subject, from the same point of view, is both the indirect object of the verb, e.g., Juan se lava las manos (Juan washes his hands).

Additionally, Hernández (1966, p. 64-65) stated that the values of the pronoun 'se' can be classified as reflexive, reciprocal, reflex of interest, intrinsic reflex, passive reflex, and impersonal and that this evolution and advancement of the Spanish language would make the pronoun 'se' to be diffused and founded with the 'meaning and nature of the verb.'



Notably, F. Osuna (1979, p. 116-118) found that in cases such as *Juan se va/Juan se caído*, a 'se' appears that works as a sign of intensive medium construction, considering that the presence of the pronoun in these cases fundamentally insists that the predicative had occurred in the subject, regardless of whether it is an agent or no. The author gives the same value to constructions such as *salirse* or *estarse*. However, the problem arises when grouping all these uses in a general framework. As Herrero (1989, p.192) points out, this misnamed reflectiveness helps internalize the speaker's process. This tendency to enhance (emphasize) the Subject of the Enunciation is especially significant in spoken language and particularly in informal or spontaneous speech situations in the colloquial register since, as indicated in various works, the linguistic subjectivity and expressiveness reach their maximum degree in these communicative conditions. Such subjectivity and expressiveness determine, in many cases, the lexical-grammatical selection, one of whose manifestations is using the reflexive 'se' (or better, false reflexive»). Furthermore, the researcher's work should be seen as a descriptive approach in a field where studies on American Spanish are not very abundant, even nowadays.

According to Lapesa (1986, p. 589) in America:

Enfermarse (to get sick), soñarse (to dream), devolverse (to return to a place), and its synonym regresarse (to return) are constructed as reflexives, the last two, because of their use, transitive with another meaning: me regresaron los diez pesos pagados de más (they returned the ten pesos I paid more); There is a precedent for 'tardarse' 'delay' in the Emilian Glosses, (tardars'an by inplire).



On the other hand, apart from the typical constructions between Spain and America, there are typically Hispanic-American pronominal constructions that have become a norm in the New World. In this sense, they could be identified as syntactic or grammatical Americanisms. Zamora (1960, p. 435) observed that:

some intransitive verbs (reunir, bajar, buir, subir, aparecer, volver, tardar, sanar, etc...) are used in American Spanish in a reflexive way: me saludé con Fulano; me soñaba que hacía un viaje (to dream, reflective, is used in León and Extremadura); the tides are already rising, several cars overturned there, etc... Enfermarse, tardarse, robarse o dilatarse are very representative of American speech.

In a more recent study, Vergara and C. (2014) stated that reflexive sentences that are built with 'se' show this morpheme as a materialization of the lexical phenomenon of non-specification of the highest-ranking argument of the logical structure, in the same way as all the other constructions with 'se' in Spanish.

Lexical functional grammar

When we observe language from the point of view of the textual meta-function, we notice how speakers build and structure their messages and adapt them to the context of the communicative situation in which they develop. Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) is a constraint-based grammatical framework in theoretical linguistics.

It posits two different levels of syntactic structure: a phrase-structure grammatical representation of word order and electorate and a representation of grammatical functions as subject and object, similar to



dependency grammar. Joan Bresnan and Ronald Kaplan started the development of the theory in the 1970s as a reaction to the idea of transformational grammar that was present in the late 1970s. It focuses primarily on syntax, including its relationship to morphology and semantics.

The objective of the LFG consists of the elaboration of a highly formalized model of human language, a model of language that is computationally accurate, psychologically realistic, and with a lexical and functional linguistic orientation (Bresnan & Kaplan, 1982, p. 173-281). In the field of syntax, the LFG is characterized by maintaining that the syntactic structure must be represented at least on two levels: one corresponding to the constituent structure (usually represented by a tree diagram) and another corresponding to the functional structure. The constituent structure (called, in this model, "c-structure") is formally described by a context-independent phrase grammar and forms the basis of the phonological processing of the sentence. For its part, the functional structure (or «f-structure») represents in LFG the grammatical functions and other functionally based grammatical properties present in the sentence, such as agreement, tense, definiteness, control, or anaphora. The f-structure takes the form of an unordered matrix of features, where each feature is composed of a parameter or linguistic property and the value that said property adopts in the analyzed structure.

The features of f-structs can have simple or atomic values (such as PRED and TPO) and complex or recursive values (such as SUJ and OBJ), where the value is itself another feature matrix embedded in the larger one. As in other contemporary formalisms that use complex feature structures to



represent linguistic information, LFG f-structures are constructed and manipulated by the mathematical procedure of "unification." In LFG, the description of c-structures and f-structures is performed simultaneously, using phrase rules extended with functional descriptions that implicitly define the characteristics of f-structures. Lexical Functional Grammar also emphasizes analysis of certain phenomena in lexical and functional terms rather than purely in phrase structure configurations (and movement of elements from one configurational position to another).

Recent work in Functional Grammar suggests that identifying and property-assigning focus constructions can be represented through an extension of the framework, allowing for an analysis of certain lexical gaps and prepositionless relative clauses (Mackenzie & Hannay, 1982, p. 43-57).

Method

This study is descriptive, so it will collect qualitative data using the Lexical-functional grammar approach. In qualitative studies, researchers follow a flexible research design. According to Taylor & Bogdan (1996), qualitative research is inductive. The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. Díaz-Bravo et al. (2013, p.163) stated that:

“semi-structured interviews present greater flexibility than structured ones because they start from planned questions, which can be adjusted to the interviewees. Its advantage is the possibility of adapting to subjects with enormous possibilities to motivate the interlocutor, clarify terms, identify ambiguities, and reduce formalisms.



The objective of the research presented here is simple: aims to offer an approach to the genesis, evolution, and linguistic repercussion of a grammatical theory known as Lexical-Functional Grammar, seeks to establish the theoretical foundations of the morphosyntactic phenomena, and sets out to explain how the phenomena strongly influence sentences that Panamanians use daily. Consequently, the researcher will analyze the data collected by the subjects using the LFG approach.

Participants and instrument

To collect native sentences from the dialectal Panamanian Spanish, the researcher six native Panamanians aged between 50 and 20 years. The interviews were used to learn first-hand the types of reflective sentences that ordinary Panamanian citizens usually use. The interviews kept the following structure and parameters:

The analysis of interviews carried out with six Panamanian citizens, three women and three men in an age range of 20 to 50 years, is described here. It was necessary to introduce the interviewees to reflexive sentences and their purpose and use. To offer greater detail, only one question from the interview will be analyzed under the assumption that the other questions could be analyzed in the same way. The question was: What reflexive sentence do you use daily?

The population interviewed was the following:

Participant 1	Participant 2
Identification data of the person interviewed:	Identification data of the person interviewed:
Age: 44	Age: 20
Gender: female	Gender: female
Birthplace: Aguadulce, Cocle, Panama	Birthplace: Aguadulce, Cocle,



<p>Current residence: Aguadulce, Panama Interview day: November 18, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive sentence provided: <i>Isa, levantese</i></p>	<p>Panama Current residence: Panama City, Panama Interview day: November 19, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive sentence provided: <i>Tú te bañaste.</i></p>
<p>Participant 3 Identification data of the person interviewed: Age: 20 Gender: female Birthplace: Aguadulce, Cocle, Panama Current residence: Panama City, Panama Interview day: November 21, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive sentence provided: <i>Los estudiantes se duermen en clase.</i></p>	<p>Participant 4 Identification data of the person interviewed: Age: 21 Gender: male Birthplace: Aguadulce, Cocle, Panama Current residence: Panama City, Panama Interview day: November 22, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive sentence provided: <i>Tú te lavaste los pies</i></p>
<p>Participant 5 Identification data of the person interviewed: Age: 35 Gender: male Birthplace: La Arena, Chitre, Panama Current residence: La Arena, Chitre, Panama Interview day: November 24, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive sentence provided: <i>peinate.</i></p>	<p>Participant 6 Identification data of the person interviewed: Age: 50 Gender: male Birthplace: Aguadulce, Cocle, Panama Current residence: Aguadulce, Panama Interview day: November 25, 2022 Interview duration: 10 minutes Reflexive</p>

It is important to note that the subjects in this research were chosen randomly. All were interviewed in the town of Aguadulce, Cocle province. However, one subject came from another province, Azuero province.



Findings and Discussion

The researcher will break down the sentences the interviewees gave to explain the grammatical structure of reflexive sentences that are common in daily Panamanian speech. We shall begin with those commonly used to express various emotions or states of the soul and in which the verb is active and accepts accusative obliques. The topic refers to animated beings or our representations of ourselves as such, whether singular or plural, and in the first, second, or third person.

Structure variation in reflective sentences.

There are several types of reflective sentences in Panamanian Spanish. There are generally two types of reflexive expressions. The first group includes any verb with a direct object; this verb can be expressed in a non-reflexive or reflexive sentence. Being a "reflexive" sentence means that the subject acts "to itself" and that the subject and the object refer to the same entity. So, the reflexive pronoun absorbs the role of the direct object; whether it is a non-reflexive or a reflexive sentence, the verb's meaning does not change. In addition, the reflexive pronoun can act as an indirect object. Hence, the researcher will present and analyze some examples to show this variation:

Repetition of the reflexive 'te' pronouns

- a) *Tú te bañaste.*
You yourself washed



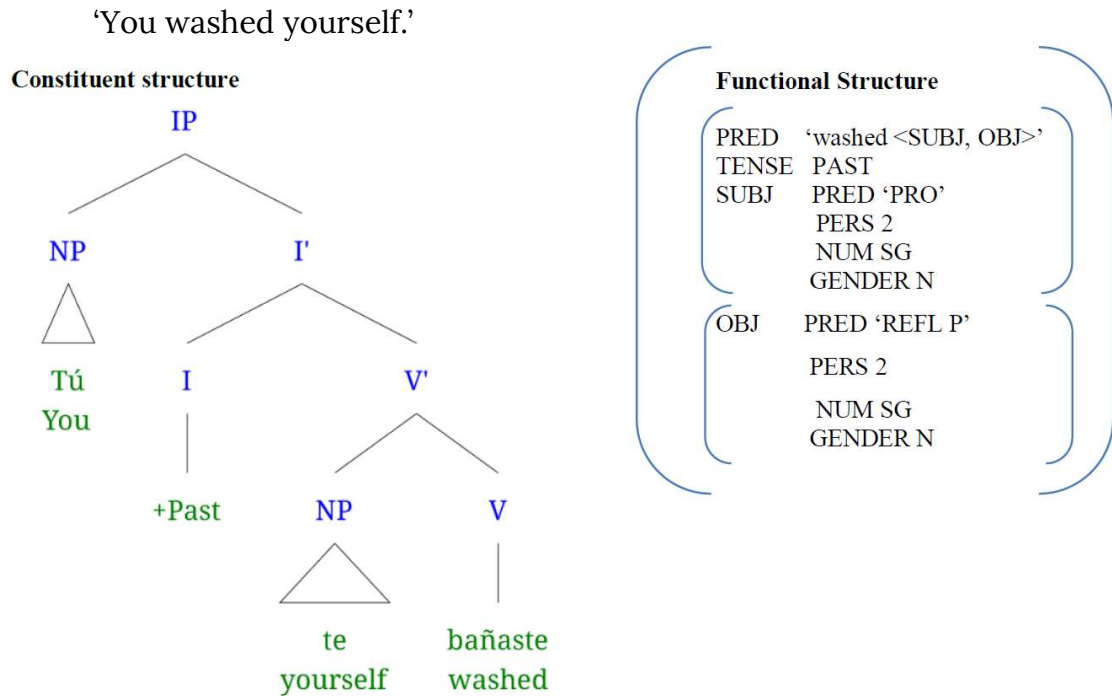


Figure 1: LFG analysis of sentence a.

In this sentence (a), the reflexive verb is ‘te,’ which is designated for the second person singular. According to the functional structure, we can observe that the reflexive pronoun in this sentence represents the direct object. It can also be seen that the reflexive pronoun is repeated twice in the VP structure. Even though the verb is already conjugated with the ‘te’ reflexive pronoun, in Panama’s daily conversations, it is expected the action of adding another reflexive pronoun before the verb, as we can see in this example. In other words, the number and person of the subject are expressed in the reflexive pronoun attached to the infinitive; the same reflexive pronoun is duplicated before the verb.

Here we can observe another example:

b) *Tú te lavaste los pies.*



You yourself washed the feet.

'You washed the feet yourself.'

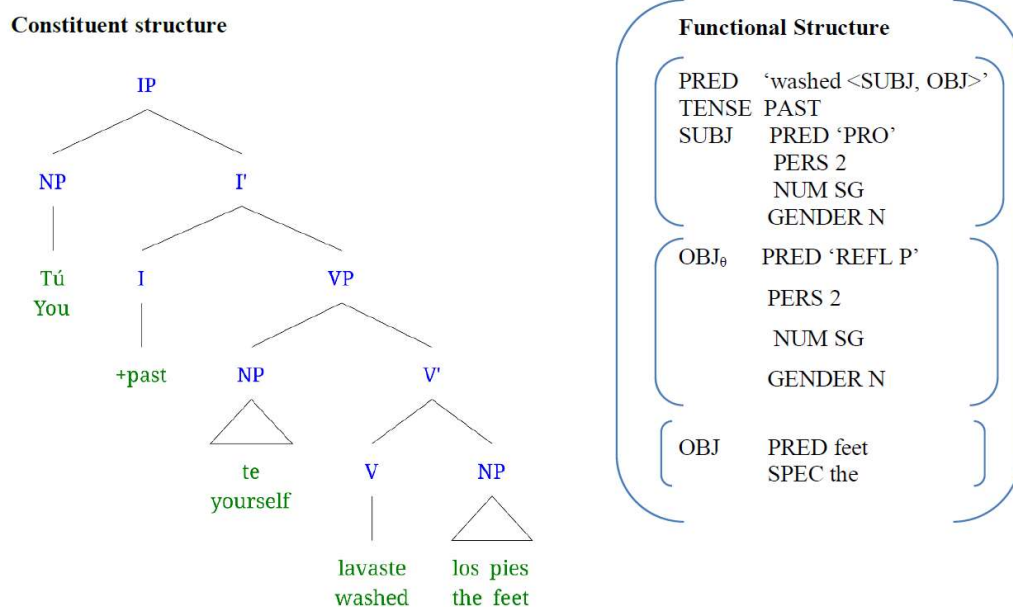


Figure 2: LFG analysis of sentence b

Let us analyze. We can compare this sentence with the (a) sentence. In this sentence structure, we can observe a similar structure as (a); the 'te' reflexive pronoun is placed before the reflexive verb, the verb is conjugated with a reflexive pronoun, the reflexive pronoun 'te' is repeated in this sentence to do the function of the indirect object, and finally, there is a direct object (the hands). It is important to note that this variation can only happen in sentences that denote a past indefinite/past simple.

Expressing imperativeness

- c) *Isa, levantese.*
Isa, get up yourself.
'Isa, get yourself up.'



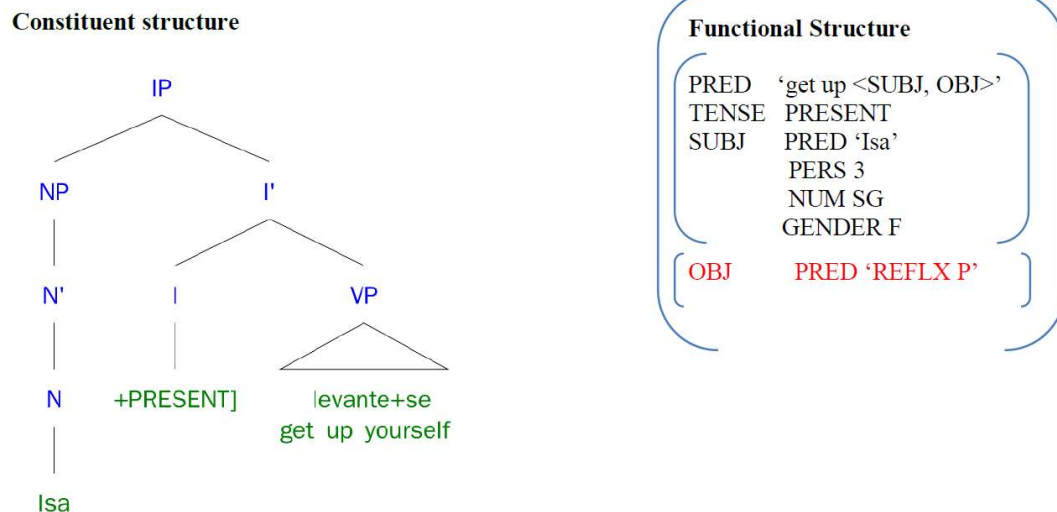


Figure 3: LFG analysis of sentence c

In sentence (b), the number and person of the subject are expressed in the reflexive pronoun attached to the infinitive. The reflexive pronoun 'se,' translated as yourself, also works as the direct object. The type of reflexive sentence is frequently used when people want to express commands and orders. In general, these words tend to give order in a gentle and even affectionate manner depending on the context of the sentence since these sentences can only be used with personal names or the pronoun 'usted,' which denotes more respect than 'Tú.' It would be incorrect to say 'Tú, levantese.' so that it has a more natural meaning; you could instead say 'Usted, levantese.'

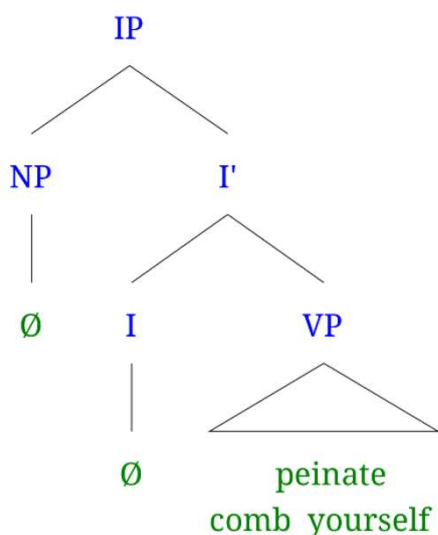
d) *Peinate.*

Comb yourself.

'Comb your hair.'



Constituent structure



Functional Structure

PRED 'comb <SUBJ, OBJ>
TENSE PRESENT

SUBJ PRED 'REFLX P'

OBJ PRED 'REFLX P'

Figure 4: LFG analysis of sentence d

In addition, there is also the possibility of using the pronoun 'te' shown in sentence (d). This sentence lacks a subject and complement since, in Spanish, it is tacitly understood that 1) it is about the second person singular since it uses the reflexive pronoun 'te' and 2) it is about combing your hair. In this type of sentence, there can be confusion for someone who is beginning to learn English since the subjects of the sentences are frequently omitted in Panama and other Latin countries. Compared to sentence (c), this sentence denotes a more substantial and colder command. The researcher can state that even though both sentences (e) and (d) lack either subject or object in the constituent structure, the functional structure shows the omitted subject and object sections.



Double reflexive pronoun

- e) *Tú te me caíste de mis brazos.*
 You yourself myself fell from my arms.
 'You fell from my arms.'

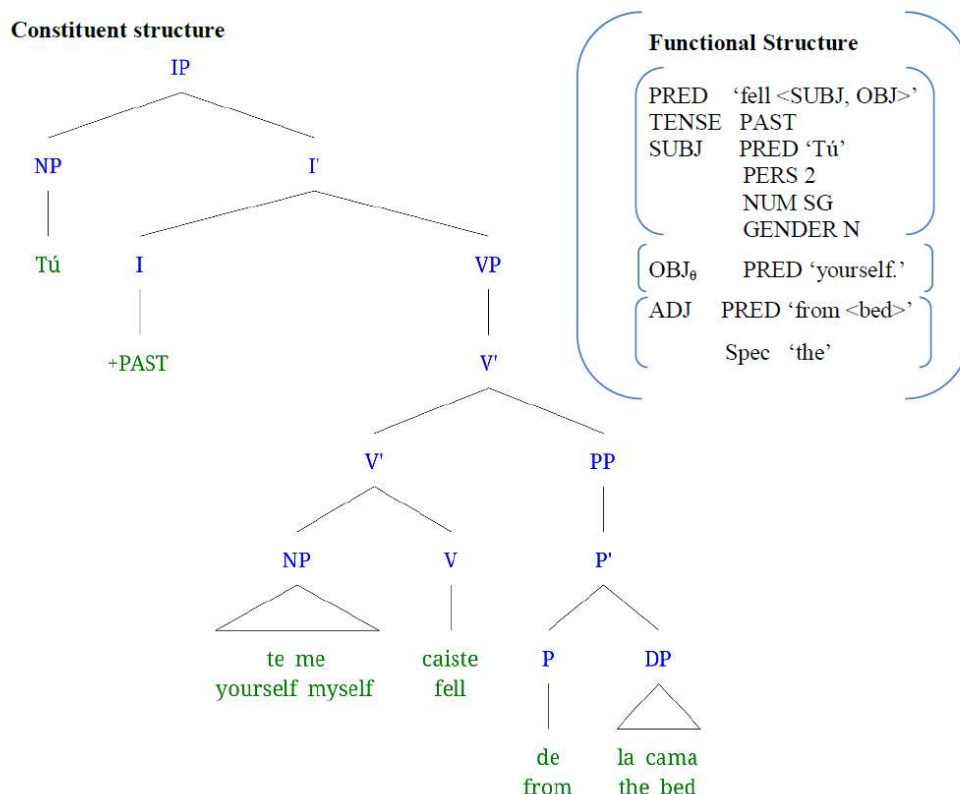


Figure 5: LFG analysis of sentence e

In sentence (e), we can observe that in the VP, there are two reflexive pronouns, 'te' and 'me,' before the conjugated verb. The sentence implies that two subjects are being referred to. We can observe that the pronoun 'me' is postponed to a reflexive pronoun. Even though this pronoun equals a reflexive pronoun, the pronoun 'me' contains an expressive and expletive value. This means that it is superfluous, so a sentence without it does not affect its meaning. It should be noted that this is an intransitive



sentence, so it does not need to take a direct object. The verb provides a complete sense to the sentence and, therefore, can form a verbal predicate by itself or be accompanied by other sentence complements. Nevertheless, in this case, the reflexive pronoun 'te' takes the position of the direct object.

Lexically "reflexive."

The last category of reflexive expressions in Spanish is those whose reflexivity does not imply an action on oneself. Still, instead, the reflexive pronoun is included in the lexical meaning of the verb. In this case, the pronoun cannot be analyzed as a separate entity from the verb (i.e., object) but instead forms part of the verbal expression. Therefore, the non-reflexive versions of the verbs have a different meaning or at least apply in contexts with different interpretations.

Let us observe constituents' structures of similar reflexive and non-reflexive sentences:

- f) *Los estudiantes duermen en clases.* – Students sleep in classes.
(Sentence provided by the researcher).



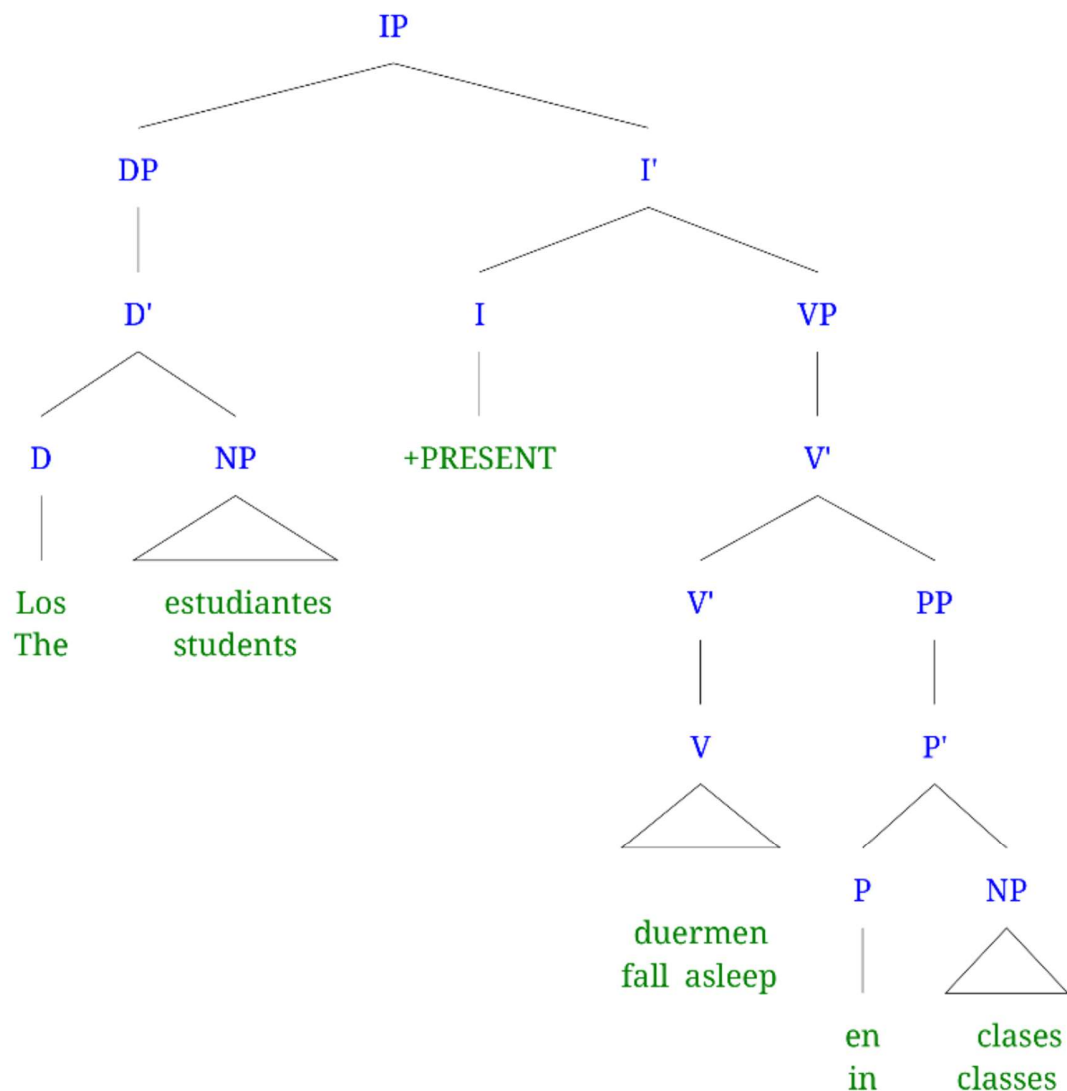


Figure i: LFG analysis of sentence f

g) *Los alumnos se duermen en clases.* – The students fall asleep in class. (Sentence provided by the researcher).



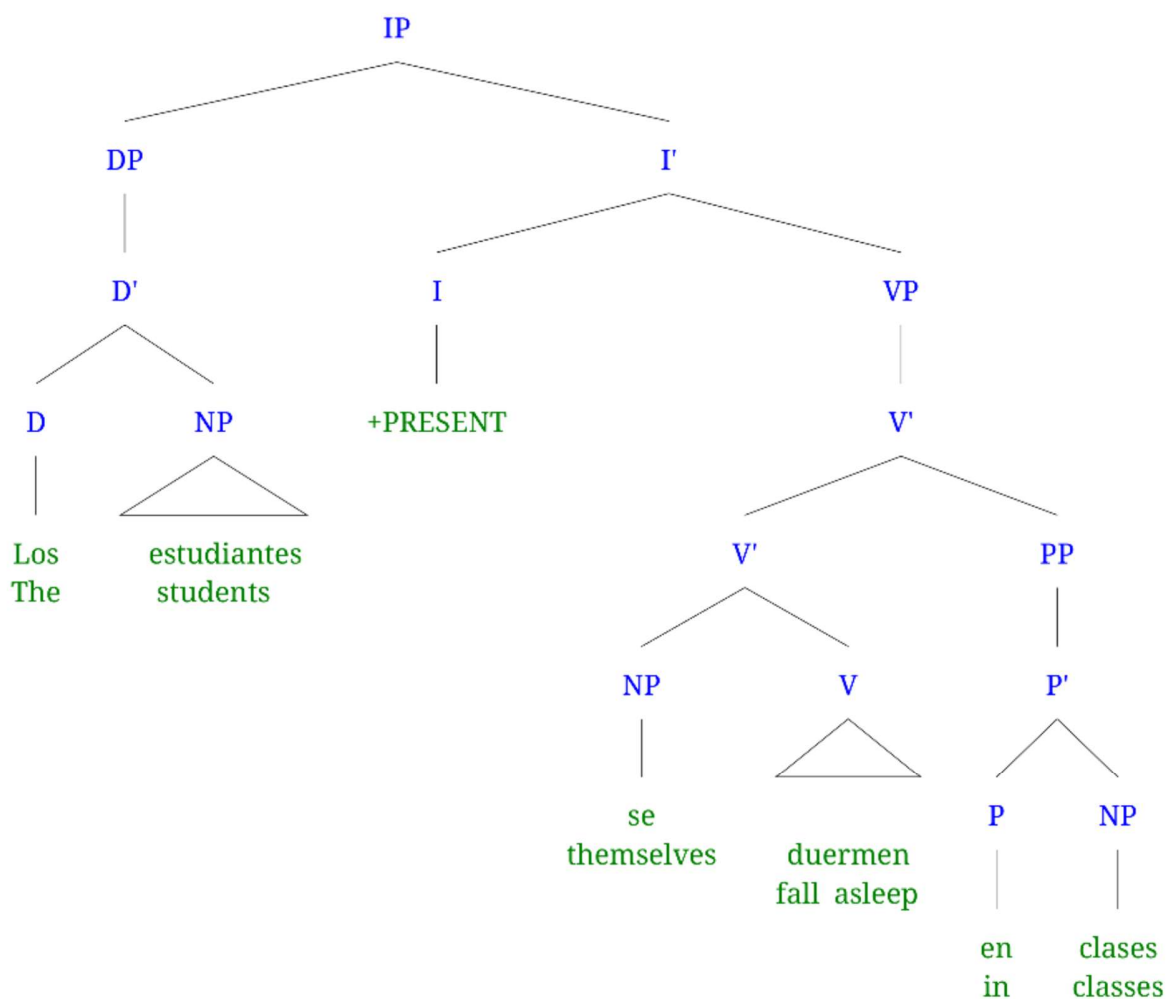


Figure ii: LFG analysis of sentence g

As well as these sentences, many others use reflexive pronouns to change the meaning of some words. For example:

Nos vamos de este lugar. (We are leaving this place.)	Vamos de vacaciones a Canadá. (Let's go on vacation to Canada.)
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Conclusion

In this paper, we had the opportunity to behold and discover the sentence structure of the reflexive sentences in dialectical Panama Spanish. These sentences are often used in spoken and written conversations (primarily for young adults), so these sentences may seem grammatically incorrect. However, the researcher believes this analysis was possible thanks to the LFG approach since it makes it possible to understand language as a phenomenon of the culture and mentality of a people. Knowing the grammatical possibilities of structuring the language and, above all, the reality expressed through it is essential. As we saw previously, in previous investigations, only the reflexive pronoun 'se' is mentioned since it is the most repeated since it is used for various personal pronouns. However, Panamanians presented a constant use of the pronoun 'te' and the different use of this pronoun. We also observe that Panamanians generally tend to use reflexive pronouns. The reason for this duplication is unknown, but the researcher can argue that due to the general interpersonal closeness that Panamanian society and Latin Americans have, these pronouns are usually added, trying to soften the sentences and give them a touch of affection and represent closeness between themselves. Finally, the researcher hopes this research will be the basis for future research on the dialectal Spanish of Panama and other Latin American countries.

This research offers a significant contribution to the field of linguistics as it provides an approach to the genesis, evolution, and linguistic repercussion of a grammatical theory known as Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) (Bresnan, 2001, p. 1). The study explores the matters of



reflexive pronoun usage in the Panamanian Spanish dialect, providing insights into the unique characteristics of Panamanian-American Spanish. The study uses a descriptive research methodology to collect qualitative data through semi-structured interviews (Dixon, 2003, p. 87). Semi-structured interviews are a flexible and effective tool for gathering qualitative data (Bernard, 2011, p. 188). Unlike structured interviews, which limit participants' responses to a predetermined set of questions, semi-structured interviews allow participants to express themselves in their own words, providing researchers with rich and nuanced data to analyze (Patton, 2015, p. 232). Furthermore, the balance between structure and flexibility in semi-structured interviews makes them an ideal option for capturing in-depth qualitative information (Seidman, 2013, p. 38).

The research article embarks on a journey through Panamanian Spanish's multifaceted world of reflexive pronoun usage, illuminating the intricate interconnections between language, culture, and society (Woolford, 2006, p. 162). Through this exploration, we deepen our understanding of the evolving role of the Spanish language in Panamanian society and informal speech. Although there has been previous research on this linguistic phenomenon, all of it has been focused on the different uses of 'se' in Spanish, as in the works of Contreras (1966) and Vergara, C. G. (2014); however, it is fascinating to look in depth at the structure of the verbal phase and to find other different pronouns like 'te,' and 'me.' It is worth noting that this article is the first to investigate reflexivity in Panama using the LFG approach. By observing the article in detail, we hope other researchers will be encouraged to conduct further research in Panama and other Latin American countries.



The present investigation provides novel insights into using reflexive pronouns in the Panamanian Spanish dialect, which differs significantly from previous studies. The study's findings reveal that reflexive pronouns are utilized distinctively in Panamanian American Spanish, in contrast to other Latin American Spanish dialects or other romance languages. The study's findings also indicate that cultural and regional factors influence the usage of reflexive pronouns in Panamanian Spanish. These findings have significant implications for language teaching and learning, as they provide insights into the idiosyncratic characteristics of Panamanian American Spanish.

Additionally, the study's implications extend to future research in the field of linguistics. The study's implementation of the Lexical-Functional Grammar approach provides a new perspective on the analysis of reflexive pronouns in Spanish, which can be employed in other areas of linguistics, such as the analysis of lexical gaps and preposition-less relative clauses. The study also contributes to the ongoing debate on the role of culture and society in shaping language use and evolution.

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