

The Puzzle of the Spanish Complementizer System

Julio Villa-García, *University of Connecticut*

This paper provides novel support for a TopicP analysis of Spanish *recomplementation* patterns. Spoken Modern Iberian Spanish displays recomplementation—the “double-*que*” construction (cf. 1)—, which is characterized by left-dislocated (LD) phrases sandwiched between homophonous complementizers, the second of which is typically optional (Campos 1992; Demonte & Fdez.-Soriano (D&FS) 2007, 2009; Escribano 1991; Etxepare 2010; Fontana 1993, 1997; López 2009; Uriagereka 1988, 1995; a.o.).

- (1) a. *Dijo que cuando lleguen, (que) me llaman* b. *Repitió que a mi prima (que) la echaron*
 said that when arrive that cl. call repeated that my cousin that cl. threw
 ‘S/he told me they’ll call me when they arrive.’ ‘S/he repeated that they fired my cousin.’

Existing accounts of the phenomenon of recomplementation in Romance include CP recursion (Fontana 1993, *i.a.*) and Uriagereka’s 1995 FP account, according to which secondary/recomplementation *que* heads FP, situated between CP and TP. Within the split-CP analysis of Rizzi 1997 *et seq.* (i.e., [ForceP (TopicP) (InterrogativeP) (FocusP) FinitenessP]), Broveto 2002, D&FS 2009, and López 2009 (*mutatis mutandis*), a.o., claim that secondary *que* in examples like (1) heads FinitenessP, the lowest left-peripheral projection in the split CP (cf. 2). Martín-Glez. 2002, for his part, argues that secondary *que* is located in (Doubled)ForceP, as illustrated in (3). Lastly, the account championed by Rodríguez-Ramalle 2003, a.o., assumes that secondary *que* heads TopicP, whose specifier is occupied by the sandwiched left-dislocated phrase, as shown in (4). It is this last analysis (cf. 4) that the current paper argues for.

- (2) SEC.-*QUE* IN FINITENESSP: ...[ForceP [Force' *que* [TopicP LD [Top' [FinitenessP [Fin' *que* [TP ...
- (3) SEC.-*QUE* IN (DOUBLED)FORCEP: ...[ForceP [Force' *que* [TopicP LD [Top' [(Doubled)ForceP [(Doubled)Force' *que* [FinitenessP [Fin' [TP ...
- (4) \Leftarrow SEC.-*QUE* IN TOPICP: ...[ForceP [Force' *que* [TopicP LD [Top' *que* [FinitenessP [Fin' [TP ...

The arguments I provide in favor of the TopicP analysis of recomplementation (cf. 4) include (i) the possibility of multiple lower complementizers and (ii) the option of placing left-dislocated material below secondary *que*, which follow from the recursive character of Rizzi’s 1997 *et seq.* TopicP; (iii) the observation that foci, (negative) quantified phrases, *wh*-items, and interrogative complementizers can follow but *not* precede secondary *que*; (iv) the close connection between secondary *que* and the sandwiched LD, on whose occurrence the appearance of secondary *que* is contingent; (v) the observation that secondary *que* and the sandwiched dislocate establish a Spec-Head-agreement relationship; and (vi) the different behavior of recomplementation *que* (i.e., secondary *que*) and the homophonous *que* which surfaces obligatorily in desiderative/exhortative clauses containing a verb marked for subjunctive.

Regarding (i), overt complementizers can separate multiple left-dislocated constituents (cf. 5), as argued, e.g., by Etxepare 2010, who acknowledges that examples like (5) pose a problem for (2) and for Uriagereka’s FP account, the reason being that it would be necessary to assume that FinitenessP and FP are recursive phrases. However, (5) is predicted by the account sketched in (4), given TopicP, which Rizzi 1997 has independently argued is recursive. Similarly, secondary *que* can be followed by dislocated material (cf. *ii*), in accordance with the judgments reported in Martín-González 2002 (cf. 6). Sentences like (6) are difficult to handle under (2), which places secondary *que* in FinitenessP, but they follow straightforwardly under (4), given recursive TopicP (with a null Topic head below *a tu padre* in (6)).

- (5) *Dijo que el dinero, que a Juan, que se lo mandaban por correo*
 said that the money that to John that cl. cl. were-sending for mail
 ‘S/he said they were sending John the money through the mail.’ [Escribano (1991:139)]
- (6) *Me dijeron que el billete que a tu padre no se lo van a dar*
 cl. told that the ticket that to your father not cl. cl. go to give
 ‘They told me that they are not giving your father the ticket.’

As is known, secondary complementizers can be followed, but *not* preceded, by *wh*-phrases, foci, and (negative) quantified phrases (cf. *iii*), as illustrated by the contrast between (7a) and (7b). The grammaticality contrast between (7a) and (7b) strongly argues for an analysis that places secondary *que* in a projection higher than FinitenessP, since the system in (2) falls short of capturing the data in (7), on the assumption that the phrases at issue (e.g., *wh*-items and foci) occupy FocusP. Analogously, unlike the account in (4), the FinitenessP analysis of secondary *que* in (2) cannot accommodate sentences like (8),

which shows that secondary *que* must precede the interrogative complementizer (in InterrogativeP, below TopP, in Rizzi 2001), since it is uncontroversial that *si* ‘if’ is a complementizer in the CP domain.

- (7) a. *Preguntó que a él que cuándo lo llamaban* b. **Preguntó que cuándo que lo llamaban a él*
 asked that him that when cl. call asked that when that cl. call him
 ‘S/he asked when they were going to call him.’
- (8) a. *Me preguntó que a él que si lo llamaron* b. **Me preguntó que a él si que lo llamaron*
 cl. asked that him that if cl. called cl. asked that him if that cl. called
 ‘S/he asked me if they called him.’

Furthermore, secondary *que* can only occur in the presence of dislocated material (cf. *iv*; see D&FS 2007, 2009 and Paoli 2006). This fact raises a problem for the accounts in (2) and (3), where the LD and the secondary complementizer *que* are in separate, unrelated projections. The connection between the dislocate and secondary *que* is immediately captured, however, by the analysis in (4), whereby secondary *que* heads TopicP, which hosts the sandwiched left-dislocated phrase in its specifier. Additionally, Paoli 2006 has suggested that recomplementation in Romance involves Spec-Head agreement between the dislocate and secondary *que* (i.e., the two constituents are in the same projection). Paoli’s conclusion is based on (iv). In this connection, I provide a novel argument for a Spec-Head configuration in light of novel ellipsis facts (cf. *v*). Lobeck 1990 and Saito and Murasugi 1990, among many others, observe that functional heads can only license ellipsis of their complement when they undergo Spec-Head agreement (i.e., feature-checking). If secondary *que* and the sandwiched dislocate enter into a Spec-Head feature-checking relationship, then we predict that it should be possible to elide the complement of secondary *que*, provided that other requirements on ellipsis are met. This prediction is borne out by the data in (9), which supports the analysis in (4), to the detriment of the accounts outlined in (2) and (3), where no Spec-Head agreement relationship holds between secondary *que* and the sandwiched dislocate. Significantly, ellipsis is also possible if secondary *que* is absent, which follows under (4): it is either agreeing overt Top° (secondary *que*) or agreeing null Top° (∅) that licenses ellipsis in (9).

- (9) *Me dijeron que si llueve (que) se quedan aquí, y que si nieva (que) también* ... y [... Force° que
 cl. said that if rains that cl. stay here and that if snows that too → [TopicP *si nieva* [Top° *que/∅* se
 ‘They told me that they are going to stay here if it rains or snows.’ quedan aquí también]]] (4)

Note that the Spec-Head agreement relation between the LD and secondary *que* goes a long way to explain why phrases such as *wh*-items and foci cannot appear above secondary *que* (cf. iii/7b). I submit that there is a featural mismatch between the two entities. The features of secondary *que* only match those of left-dislocated phrases; hence its incompatibility with *wh*-phrases (see also Uriagereka 1995). This is consistent with analysis (4), which ties together the dislocate and secondary *que*, but remains unexplained under the accounts in (2) and (3). Finally, unlike the CP-recursion, FP, and FinitenessP (cf. 2) analyses, the account in (4) allows us to explain the previously unacknowledged differences between what in fact constitute two distinct complementizers, namely secondary *que* (cf. 1/5-9) and “exhortative” *que*, which is found in root and embedded exhortative sentences with subjunctive mood (cf. 10-13/*vi*). In the latter construction, *que* lexicalizes Finiteness°, the locus of mood features in Rizzi 1997 (D&FS 2009): *que* is mandatory, does not depend on the presence of an LD (cf. 10), must follow LDs (11a vs. 11b), and cannot license ellipsis (cf. 12). Crucially, secondary *que* and “exhortative” *que* can co-occur in the same clause (cf. 13). The analysis currently pursued (cf. 4) straightforwardly accounts for the different behavior and distribution of secondary *que* (Top°) and “exhortative” *que* (Fin°), which further substantiates (4).

- (10) *¡*(Que) se vaya!* (11) a. *¡Con ella, que cuenten!* b. *¡Que con ella cuenten!*
 that cl. go_{Subj.} with her that count_{Subj.} that with her count_{Subj.}
 ‘I demand that s/he go.’ ‘I demand that they count on her.’

- (12) *¡*Con ella, que no cuenten, y conmigo, que tampoco!* ... y [TopicP *conmigo* [Top° [FinP [Fin° *que* ~~no cuentan tampoco~~]]]]
 with her that not count and with-me that neither → (NB: “exhortative” *que* does not establish a Spec-Head agreement
 ‘I demand that they not count on either her or me.’ relationship; hence it fails to license ellipsis of its complement)

- (13) *Dicen que entonces, (que)_{secondary que (TopP)} si llama Marta, *(que)_{“exhortative” que (FinP)} se lo den*
 say that then that if calls Martha that cl. cl. give_{Subj.}
 ‘They demand that they then give it to him/her/them if Martha calls.’