



SQUIB

Hanging Topic Left Dislocations in seemingly embedded contexts: An English–Spanish asymmetry

Julio Villa-García 

University of Oviedo & University of Manchester
Emails: villajulio@uniovi.es; julio.villa-garcia@manchester.ac.uk

Received: 11 April 2024; **Revised:** 02 January 2025; **Accepted:** 06 September 2024

Keywords: complementizers; embedding; hanging topics; late merge; left dislocations; null complementizers; parentheticals; restarts

Abstract

Hanging Topic Left Dislocations are widely deemed to constitute root phenomena, though they occasionally appear in embedded contexts. I submit that the apparent embeddability of left dislocations is merely illusory: they are in actuality matrix phenomena in disguise. A novel cross-linguistic contrast is brought to light: in English, subordinate hanging topics are broadly attested, and they can occur with or without a secondary complementizer. In Spanish, by contrast, embedded hanging topics that are not followed by a secondary complementizer are not part of the grammar, a pattern that extends to Dutch. Left-peripheral analyses assuming an elaborated left periphery fall short of capturing this contrast non-stipulatively. Nevertheless, the recent paratactic approach to recomplementation (i.e. double-complementizer) structures, which assumes that such constructions involve two matrix sentences linked paratactically and that the secondary complementizer flags a restart in discourse, provides a more satisfactory account of the English–Spanish asymmetry: the difference between the two languages ultimately reduces to the possibility of omitting subordinating complementizers in English but not in Spanish. On this view, embedded left dislocations are in fact undercover root constructions, in line with their generally accepted characterization as Main Clause Phenomena.

1. Introduction

Pedagogical and descriptive grammars have traditionally made the claim that Hanging Topic Left Dislocations (HTLDs), in addition to being a feature of colloquial speech, are root phenomena confined to matrix contexts, as in (1) (see, e.g. Cinque [(1983) 1997] and Zubizarreta [1999]):

- (1) (Attributed to Al Pacino)
Star Wars_k, yeah, that_k was my first big mistake.

However, different authors have shown that HTLDs are indeed possible in embedded contexts (see Chomsky [1977]):

- (2) a. (Ross 1967: 424)
I said that my father_k, he_k was tight as a hoot owl.
b. (Jon Driscoll, Sky Sports TV, cited in Radford [2018: 107])
You have to say that Higuain_k, normally he_k would have hit the target.

Once we bring Spanish into the picture, a previously unnoticed cross-linguistic contrast emerges. As shown in (1) and (2) above, HTLDs are attested in both main and embedded contexts in English. In Spanish, embedded HTLDs are impossible, as shown by (3a) (see, among others, Zubizarreta [1999]). Nonetheless, there is a context that does permit an allegedly embedded HTLD: double-*que* ‘that’ (cf. recomplementation) constructions, as in (3b) (Grohmann & Etxepare 2003; Rodríguez-Ramalle 2005; González i Planas 2011; Villa-García 2012, 2015). The account of this contrast, however, has hitherto remained shrouded in mystery.

- (3) a. **Dicen que Pablo_k... cuentan con ese imbécil_k.*
say that Paul count with that imbecile
b. *Dicen que Pablo_k... **que** cuentan con ese imbécil_k.*
say that Paul that count with that imbecile
‘They said that Paul, (that) they count on that idiot.’

Recomplementation is also available in English, as shown in (4), but the (boldfaced) doubled instance of *that* is not required (cf. (2) and (4)), in stark contrast to Spanish (cf. (3)):

- (4) They said that Kyle Quentin Wolf_k, (**that**) they don’t count on him_k.

Radford (2018) provides naturalistic data confirming that recomplementation in spoken English can occur with embedded HTLDs:

- (5) (Neil Ashton, Talk Sport Radio, cited in Radford [2018: 123])
Do you believe that Arsenal_k, **that** they_k’re that far short that they need 8 players?

There are two major analyses of recomplementation constructions on the market: intrasentential approaches which assume that the doubled complementizer heads a projection in the left periphery (on which, see Villa-García [2012, 2015]; Radford [2018]; inter alia) and, most recently, bisentential/paratactic accounts whereby the second complementizer heralds the presence of a restart in discourse, i.e. recomplementation configurations in reality mask two underlying sentences joined paratactically, hence the splice/repair flavor of such configurations (Villa-García & Ott 2024). I submit that the novel contrast in (3) and (4) can be accounted for successfully under a paratactic approach, to the detriment of monosentential analyses of data like (3) and (4), which assume a complex left periphery (ForceP > TopicP > ... > Finiteness) or a recursive complementizer phrase (CP).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses previous accounts of HTLDs and of recomplementation; Section 3 presents a new analysis in the

light of new theoretical advancements alongside the predictions derived from this account; and Section 4 is the conclusion.

2. Prior analyses of HTLDs and of recomplementation constructions

Since the seminal work of Rizzi (1997 et seq.), the uppermost part of the clause, the traditional CP domain, has been split into several dedicated projections devoted to hosting different left-peripheral phenomena (i.e. Force > TopicP > FocusP > FinitenessP). For our purposes, the most relevant category is the TopicP projection (or topic field, if the periphery is further split, as in Benincà & Poletto 2004), responsible for hosting left-dislocated material, such as left dislocations (see, e.g. Radford [2018: Ch. 2] and references therein). Under this analysis, an embedded sentence containing an HTLD like (2a) would be analyzed thus:

(6) I said [_{ForceP} that [_{TopicP} my father_k, [_{FinitenessP} [_{TP} he_k was ...]]]]

An equivalent sentence displaying recomplementation would receive the following analysis à la Villa-García (2012, 2015) and Radford (2018), among many others:¹

(7) I said [_{ForceP} that [_{TopicP} my father_k, [_{Topic'} that [_{FinitenessP} [_{TP} he_k was ...]]]]]]

Appealing though this account appears to be at first sight, it faces a number of issues, especially in relation to the contrast between English and Spanish brought to light here (cf. (3) and (4)) and the status of HTLDs.

Recall that, as indicated by (3) and (4), embedded HTLDs require no double complementizer in English, but they do in Spanish. The impossibility of HTLDs in Spanish embedded environments is again highlighted by the following data:

(8) (Zubizarreta 1999: 4221)

**Estoy segura de que Bernardo_k, nadie confía en ese idiota_k.*
 am sure of that Bernard nobody trusts in that idiot
 'Bernard_k, I am pretty sure that nobody trusts that idiot_k'.

On the assumption that the secondary complementizer is the spellout of a Topic-like head (e.g. Topic⁰), it follows that the difference between the two languages in the relevant respects is related to the lexicalization possibilities of Topic⁰:²

(9) a. Spanish

... [_{ForceP} que [_{TopicP} HTLD, [_{Topic'} *Ø/que [_{FinitenessP} [_{TP} ...]]]]]] (cf. 3a, b))

(10) a. English

... [_{ForceP} that [_{TopicP} HTLD, [_{Topic'} Ø/that [_{FinitenessP} [_{TP} ...]]]]]] (cf. (4))

¹ Variants of this account include placing the secondary instance of the complementizer in the head position of FinitenessP. Similarly, as noted, HTLDs may occupy an even higher position in the topic field under this analysis, although this is immaterial to the discussion at hand.

² Adopting a CP-recursion analysis would not solve the problems raised in the main text either, as it would basically amount to replacing the different Rizzian categories with CP labels instead.

Villa-García (2015) has advanced an analysis of the obligatoriness of the complementizer in Spanish by appealing to the lack of movement of HTLDs: *que* is always present and is only deleted when movement operations cross it (in the spirit of the rescue-by-PF-deletion approach that started with the seminal work of Ross [1969]). Since HTLDs do not exhibit movement properties and are base-generated directly where they surface (though see below for a radically different view), no movement operation occurs past the low *que* in Topic^o; therefore, the complementizer is not PF-removed. As should be obvious, this analysis fails to explain the English case, since HTLDs in English do not move either; yet the secondary instance of *that* is not mandatory. Needless to say, such an account of the contrast in (3) and (4) would be, at best, stipulative.

What is more, a monosentential account like that in (9) and (10) would pose the question of why a topic head would have to be overt in one language (e.g. Spanish) but not in another (e.g. English). Likewise, it is not obvious why a topic marker would have to have the same shape as the higher complementizer (*que* – *que*; *that* – *that*).

An even more pressing issue is that HTLDs have been shown to be syntactically disconnected from the host sentence with which they occur, with different works by authors of different theoretical persuasions providing arguments in favor of the conclusion that HTs are not part of the left periphery of the clause they occur with (e.g. Dik 1978, 1989; Cinque [1983] 1997; Ziv 1994; Acuña Fariña 1995; Ott 2015; Fernández-Sánchez & Ott 2020; Villa-García 2023a). Though I will not review the vast body of evidence militating for this position, I will adopt the view that HTLDs neither move nor are base-generated where they surface: they are simply not part of the left periphery, and indeed the sentence in whose vicinity the HT occurs is syntactically complete without it.³ Thus, the fact that the HTLDed constituent is outside the sentence to which it is contiguous further undermines an intrasentential analysis wherein the HTLDed phrase is in a left-peripheral projection like TopicP, as claimed by intrasentential analyses like (6), (7), (9), and (10).

For all the above, I contend that the account of the novel contrast in (3) and (4) cannot be that in (9) and (10); hence, the explanation must be sought somewhere else.

3. **Recomplementation, bisententiality, and extrasentential HTLDs**

In glaring contrast to monosentential analyses of double-complementizer constructions in languages like English and Spanish, Villa-García & Ott (2024) have proposed that recomplementation actually masks two separate sentences linked paratactically. Recomplementation is exemplified again in (11):

(11) They knew that Diana_k, **that** Charles would never fall deeply in love with her_k.

³ I will not delve into the syntactic arguments for the extrasentential conception of HTLDs but merely note those provided recently by Villa-García (2023a): anticonnectivity, including absence of binding and bound variables; lack of canonical agreement and issues related to pronouns; case; prosodic independence and comma intonation/pause potential; extra-sentential nature, including complementizers, V3 phenomena in German, and clitic placement; insensitivity to islands and islandhood; intercalated interjections; and ‘interrogative’ HTLDs or, more generally, HTLDs with a different force specification from that of the host sentence; orphaned or unlinked HTLDs with no epithetic correlate; and hyperdetached (i.e. long-distance) HTLDs.

The authors provide a range of empirical arguments in favor of a bisentential account of data like (11), as follows (see the paper for evidence):⁴

- (12) [CP₁ they knew [that ... Diana ...]]
 [CP₂ ~~they knew~~ [that Charles would never fall deeply in love with her]]

This analysis assumes two complete CPs that are independently generated root clauses and invokes ellipsis à la Ott (2014, 2015).⁵ On this view, the (boldfaced) secondary occurrence of the complementizer constitutes a restart in discourse reprising CP₁.

Now, it was claimed in the previous subsection that HTLDs are extrasentential elements that are not generated on the left edge of their host clause. In this connection, Villa-García (2023a) has argued that HTLDs are also derived bisententially and furnishes an analysis that also assumes ellipsis, drawing on Ott's work:

- (13) a. *Nicolás_k no lo invitaron al pobre_k.*
 Nicholas not cl_{acc} invited acc+the poor
 'Nicholas, they didn't invite the poor thing.'
 b. [CP₁ ~~the topic/theme/it is~~ Nicolás_k] [CP₂ no lo invitaron al pobre_k]⁶

Analyzing HTLDs paratactically has a number of advantages, including an explanation for the absence of Principle B and C effects (*Nicolás* and *al pobre* are in different sentences in (13a) and thus no problem arises; see fn. 3), as well as the fact that hanging topics do not typically sit well in embedded contexts; they are indeed often classed as main-clause phenomena. I will then pursue the view that the embedded HTLDs this paper concerns itself with are inserted parenthetically, on the assumption that parentheticals are merged late in the derivation or that they exhibit transparency for purposes of selection (see, e.g. Ott [2015] and Radford [2018]).

To illustrate how this account works in practice, let us consider further examples of purportedly embedded HTLDs in Spanish, including both hanging topics with a resumptive pronoun/epithetic correlate and orphaned/unliked topics, as in (14d). Note that example (14c) features two restarts (on which, see Villa-García & Ott [2024]):

- (14) a. (Reporter, Madrid, 1973, featured in *El asesinato de Carrero Blanco*, Spanish Radio & Television Corporation, RTVE, 2014)
*Dice que un coche_k **que** le_k ha cogido la*
 says that a car that cl_{dat} has taken the
explosión de lleno.
 explosion of full
 'S/He says that a car, that the explosion has caught it in full.'

⁴ The authors provide data involving phrases other than HTs in both English and Spanish to illustrate their analysis, with a more complex structure in the embedded clause of CP₁. I leave the structure of the CP₁ with HTs open for now, although a particular analysis of HTs will be adopted below.

⁵ The two sentences/CPs can be linked to one another by appealing to an idea akin to zero coordination, opaque to relations such as c-command (i.e. [CP₁ [_{HT} [CP₂]]]) (see also Villa-García [2023a] for a similar suggestion).

⁶ New evidence for Villa-García's (2023a) proposal comes from sentences like the following, where the HT occurs with an explicit copula:

(i) It's Diana_k; she_k's been in a car accident in Paris. (Mr. Blair to Mrs. Blair upon hearing the tragic news of Diana's passing over the phone, *The Queen*, movie, UK, 2006)

b. (Grohmann & Etxepare 2003: 211)

Me dijo que el baloncesto_k, que ese deporte_k le encanta.
 cl_{dat} said that the basketball that that sport cl_{dat} charms
 ‘S/he said that as far as basketball goes, s/he loves that sport.’

c. (Spontaneous speech, Spain, March 2023)

Dijo que los estatutos_k, que bueno, que eso_k era complicado.
 says that the bylaws that well that that was complicated
 ‘S/he said that the bylaws, that well, that that was complicated.’

d. (Spontaneous speech, Spain, November 2023)

Ya le comenté que la política... que no me gusta
 already cl_{dat} commented that the politics that not cl_{dat} pleases
nada la corrupción que hay.
 nothing the corruption that there-is
 ‘I already mentioned to him/her that politics, that I really don’t like the existing corruption.’

Under Villa-García & Ott’s bisentential proposal for double-complementizer clauses, an example like (14a) would involve CP1 and CP2, on a par with the parenthetically inserted/late-merged HTLD (I adopt a simplified version of Villa-García’s analysis in CP3 without making a commitment to its technical implementation):

- (15) [CP₁ dice [que ---]] [CP₃ --- un coche]
 [CP₂ ~~dice~~ [que le ha cogido la explosión de lleno]]

In (15), the actual complement clause in CP1 restarts in the embedded site of CP2. In fact, Villa-García & Ott (2024) contend that the secondary instance of *que* serves to signal the restart explicitly. Under this approach, CP1 and CP2 are parallel to each other, which is why the same complementizer surfaces in both cases (*que – que*; see below for additional evidence from interrogative sentences to this effect). The HTLDED phrase *un coche* is merged parenthetically (i.e. it is not selected as the complement of *decir*; indeed, the presence of the high *que* indicates that it is a subordinate clause that follows). The fact that (subordinate) HTs are often perceived as anacolutha, or – especially intonationally – as planned sequences with interpolated material, is therefore not surprising.⁷ Consequently, for CP2 to properly resume CP1 (recall that under this account, CP2 is a mere restart), the complementizer needs to be lexical, as it serves to overtly signpost the presence of the

⁷ Data featuring embedded fragments like the following confirm that an HTLD cannot serve as the complement of a verb like *decir* plus *que*:

- (i) A: *¿Con quién viene María?*
 with whom comes María
 ‘Who is Mary coming with?’
 B: *Dice que *Juan / con Juan.*
 says that John with John

As noted by an anonymous reviewer, an embedded HTLD fragment fails to provide an answer in (i) for reasons related to what functions as a proper embedded answer (Simons 2007).

sentential complement of *decir* ‘to say,’ a null complementizer is ungrammatical in Spanish in this context (cf. (3a)).⁸

At this juncture, the question arises as to why embedded HTLDs do not require *that* in English, as shown again by (16) (see also (2) and (4) above):

(16) She said that Mary_k, (that) they no longer rely on that ungracious dictator_k.

In order to see how the current account explains the Spanish–English contrast under consideration, let us look at the analysis of an example like (16) with overt secondary *that* under parataxis:

(17) [CP₁ she said [that ---]] [CP₃ --- Mary]
 [CP₂ ~~she said~~ [that they no longer rely on that ungracious dictator]]

As they stand, there is in principle no difference between Spanish (15) and English (17). However, it is important to draw attention to one of the most obvious and well-known (but poorly understood) differences between English and Spanish: complementizer optionality in regular, non-recomplementation contexts, as shown by the contrast in (18):

(18) a. *Dicen que/*Ø la sintaxis es difícil, pero para eso tenemos los libros de texto de Radford.*
 b. They say *that/Ø* syntax is difficult, but that’s why we have Radford’s textbooks.

If Villa-García & Ott are correct in their characterization of recomplementation configurations as restarts (i.e. CP₂ basically reprises CP₁), then it follows that the Spanish restart in cases like (15) will require the presence of *que*, since the complementizer cannot be absent in general in this language. This is not the case in English, however, where the complementizer is often dropped:

(19) a. Spanish
 [CP₁ dice [que ---]] [CP₃ ... HTLD] [CP₂ ~~dice~~ [que/*Ø ...]]
 b. English
 [CP₁ ... says [that ---]] [CP₃ ... HTLD] [CP₂ ---says [that/Ø ...]]

All in all, the difference between the Spanish and the English case regarding the (non-)obligatoriness of the secondary complementizer in embedded HTLDs boils down to the possibility of omitting the complementizer in English, but not in Spanish, in the regular case (cf. (18)), since the sentential constituent heralded by the second instance of *que/that* (CP₂) is basically an overt marker of the restart of – and thus identical to – the initial sentence (CP₁), as assumed in (19).

An immediate question posed by this state of affairs is what happens to the high complementizer in English, which should in principle be optional as well (since in fact

⁸ Note that if a high quotative complementizer (Villa-García 2023a) occurs, it is indeed possible to overtly realize the embedding verb in CP₂, as expected under the current account (see Villa-García & Ott [2024]):

(i) *Que Mendívil_k, dicen que podemos contar con él_k.*
 that Mendívil say that can count with him
 ‘Somebody mentioned or I heard that Mendívil, we can count on him.’

the high and the low complementizer are one and the same element in two different, juxtaposed sentences). Data from spoken English bear out this prediction and indicate that there are different options, which by the way contravenes traditional claims made in the literature that embedded left-peripheral material forces the lexicalization of the high *that* (on which see, among many others, Grimshaw [1997]):

- (20) a. (John Cross, Talksport Radio, cited in Radford [2018: 133])
I think \emptyset Arsenal_k, honestly, **that** they_k are gonna fall behind if they don't sign a striker.
- b. (*New York Times*, cited in Radford [2018: 111])
'I think \emptyset the general physics community_k, \emptyset they_k're a little bored with the equation,' he said.

The situation in (20) adds to the examples furnished so far and shows exactly what the restart/paratactic proposal predicts, since the higher and lower complementizers behave alike. The four logical possibilities obtain:⁹

- (21) a. *that*_{CP1} – *that*_{CP2} (cf. (11))
b. *that*_{CP1} – \emptyset _{CP2} (cf. (2))
c. \emptyset _{CP1} – *that*_{CP2} (cf. 20a)
d. \emptyset _{CP1} – \emptyset _{CP2} (cf. 20b)

By contrast, Spanish does not tolerate sentences akin to those in (20), which is what we expect, given how rigid Spanish is in terms of complementizer omission (cf. (18a)):

- (22) a. **Me* *dijeron* \emptyset *Marina*_k, **que** *no* *vienen* *sin* *ella*_k.
cl_{dat} said Marina that not come without her
- b. **Me* *dijeron* \emptyset *Marina*_k, \emptyset *no* *vienen* *sin* *ella*_k.
cl_{dat} said Marina not come without her
- Intended: 'They told me that they won't come here without Marina.'¹⁰

⁹ Parallelism considerations may force one option over the other as well as economy (and, likely, prescriptive pressures). Note also that secondary complementizers have been claimed to aid processing by pointing to a continuation of the *that*-clause (see Radford [2018] and references therein).

¹⁰ A non-trivial question which arises at this point is whether predicates that do not generally allow complementizer omission in English force the repeat of the complementizer in the context of interest and, conversely, whether the complementizer can be omitted below embedded HTs in Spanish in those restricted cases in which C-omission is permitted in this language. For instance, regarding English, Llinàs-Grau & Bel (2019) note that certain verbs do not omit the complementizer, including *whisper*, *quip*, *judge*, and *conjecture*. However, Villa-García (2023b: 6) observes that a simple Google search indicates that nowadays, such verbs appear without a complementizer:

- (i) He correctly replied 14, then quipped \emptyset he wished it was 15 (*The Sun*, 2011, cited in www.collinsdictionary.com).

As for Spanish, Villa-García (2023b) (see also the references cited there) provides a summary of data of C-drop across diachronic and synchronic varieties. The problem once we try to test the prediction that C-omission should be possible in the relevant context is twofold: on the one hand, C-omission occurs in highly formal contexts, typically featuring formulaic expressions, as in (iia) (and hence generally incompatible

It is of note that complementizer doubling is also attested with interrogative complementizers (Haegeman 2012; Villa-García 2015; Radford 2018), as shown by the following examples:

- (23) a. My mum was asking me **if**, the scandals portrayed in *The Crown*_k, **if** they_k touched my a raw royal nerve!
 b. I wonder **whether** Kyle Quentin Wolf_k, **whether** we can count on him_k/that bastard_k.

Three native speakers, two from American English and one from Canadian English, observe that examples along the lines of (23b), with the reduplicative interrogative complementizer, feel much more natural than their counterparts without it (cf. ^{??}*I wonder whether Kyle Quentin Wolf_k, Ø we can count on him_k/that bastard_k*), which is wholly compatible with the analysis pursued here. Moreover, Haegeman (2012: 85) provides a real, written example of multiple (and in fact distinct) [+interrogative] complementizers in embedded indirect questions, which the author herself claims ‘decidedly deserves further study.’ Note that this example features an adverbial in sandwiched position, not a genuine HT, though:

- (24) I wondered **if**, given the same circumstances, **whether** a man such as Bird would have gone on a similar rampage 60 years ago. (*Observer*, June 6, 2010: 25, col. 3)

Although the ‘repeated’ complementizers are semantically equivalent, they differ from one another (*if* – *whether*), which further reinforces the restart nature of the construction (Villa-García & Ott 2024): [_{CP1} I wondered [if ...]] ... [_{CP2} I wondered [whether ...]].¹¹

Lastly, cross-linguistic evidence from languages such as spoken Dutch, which behaves like Spanish in the relevant respects, further substantiates the analysis proposed here. As noted by an anonymous reviewer and as indicated by (25), allegedly subordinate hanging topics in

with HTs) and, furthermore, any preverbal constituent (including the subject) triggers complementizer realization, as in (iib):

- (ii) a. *Rogamos nos envíen su petición.*
 beg cl_{dat} send_{Subjunctive} your request
 ‘We would like to ask you to please send us your request.’
 b. *Rogamos *(que) sus hijos vengan con bañador.*
 beg that your children come_{Subjunctive} with swimsuit
 ‘We ask that your children bring swimsuits.’

¹¹ Unsurprisingly, cases of compulsory interrogative complementizer doubling also occur in Spanish with subordinate HTs (see also Mascarenhas [2015: 7] for a similar European Portuguese example):

- (i) *Me pregunta si Corugedo el catedrático, *(si) podemos ver a ese hombre.*
 cl_{dat} asks if Corugedo the professor if can see acc that man
 ‘S/he is asking me if Corugedo, the full professor, if we can see that man.’

Radford (2018) claims that doubled interrogative complementizers can be accommodated under monoclausality by appealing to the notion of reprojection (i.e. two InterrogativePs, one for each occurrence of the interrogative complementizer).

Dutch also require double *dat* ‘that’, which cannot be left out in non-recomplementation contexts, in much the same way as its Spanish counterpart:

- (25) *Ze zegt dat Peter_k, *(dat) hij_k niet komt.*
 she says that Peter that he not come
 ‘She says that Peter_k, that he_k’s not coming.’

Overall, the paratactic approach to recomplementation adopted here sheds new light on several properties of double-complementizer constructions and, crucially, offers a less-*ad hoc*-than-competing-proposals account of the obligatoriness of secondary *que* and the optionality of secondary *that* with embedded HTLDs in Spanish and English, respectively.¹²

4. Conclusion

The intriguing discrepancy exposed herein concerning putatively embedded HTLDs in English and Spanish (cf. (3) and (4)) cannot straightforwardly be accounted for under traditional analyses adopting the split left periphery/CP recursion. In English, albeit typically frowned upon, embedded HTLDs are possible with and without a secondary instance of *that*, but Spanish generally requires a second instance of overt *que* in that same context.

Set against this background, the paratactic account of double-complementizer constructions pursued in recent work (e.g. Villa-García & Ott 2024), which posits the assembly of fully fledged CPs, has been shown to account for the facts with ease, in a far more principled fashion, subsequently undermining extant left-peripheral proposals. The relevant difference between the two languages ultimately reduces to the availability of null complementizers in English in the regular case, as opposed to the absence of null complementizers in Spanish. Moreover, the account receives inter-linguistic support from languages such as Dutch, which behaves like Spanish. An important conclusion is that subordinate HTs are only apparently subordinate: what looks like an embedded HT is a root phenomenon in disguise (i.e. an element sandwiched between two matrix clauses). Put another way, HTLDs in seemingly embedded contexts are in actuality main-clause phenomena, which is fully in sync with the broadly held conception of HTs as Root Transformations/Main Clause Phenomena/Embedded Root Phenomena.¹³

¹² I leave open whether complementizer realization is a matter of PF deletion or whether a null counterpart of the complementizer (\emptyset) is present in the initial numeration. Thus, the claim is not that the complementizer is deleted or retained as part of the ellipsis mechanism involved in the paratactic account of Villa-García & Ott (2024).

¹³ It should come as no surprise that subordinate HTs in languages like German trigger V2 orders with absent *dass* ‘that’, as in (i):

- (i) *Sie sagt, Peter_k, (d)er_k kommt nicht.*
 she said Peter he came_{v2} not
 ‘She said that Peter, he didn’t come’

This is in line with the main-clause nature of (embedded) HTs advocated here (viz. quotations/direct discourse). As noted by one reviewer, though, there seem to be dialectal differences in relation to different possibilities regarding complementizer doubling in German varieties.

The West Iberian Romance language Asturian appears to be, at least partly, like German, in that a free restart (without an elided embedding verb) is possible in the presence of what looks like an embedded hanging topic, in which case enclisis obtains (which is precisely the order found in matrix clauses), as in (iia), an issue

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank three anonymous *Journal of Linguistics* reviewers as well as five abstract reviewers for their comments and observations. I am also grateful to the audiences at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the University of Connecticut-Storrs, the Autonomous University of Madrid, the University of Manchester, the University of Cambridge, the Pablo de Olavide University in Seville, and the National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei. More specifically, I am thankful to the following individuals for their valuable data and/or observations: Marián Alves Castro, Delia Bentley, Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, Jonathan Bobaljik, Željko Bošković, Martina Faller, Francisco Fernández-Rubiera, Patricia Fernández Martín, Gerardo Fernández-Salgueiro, Daniel García Velasco, Santiago I. González y Fernández-Corugedo, Miao-Ling Hsieh, Vera Hohaus, James Huang, Ángel Jiménez-Fernández, Adam Ledgeway, Audrie Li, Diane Lillo-Martin, Gabriel Martínez-Vera, Nina Ning Zhang, Ana Ojea, Isabel Oltra Massuet, Dennis Ott, the late Andrew Radford, Ian Roberts, Eva Schultze-Berndt, Michelle Sheehan, John Charles Smith, Imanol Suárez-Palma, Susagna Tubau, Apolo Valdés, Nigel Vincent, and Susi Wurmbrand. I would also like to acknowledge the support provided by a María Zambrano International Talent Attraction Grant (MU-21-UP2021-030 71880965), awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Universities, with funding from the European Union (#NextGenerationEU, NGEU), and by the Spanish-Government-funded project INFOSTARS II (PID2022-137233NB-I00). This paper is dedicated to the loving memory of the best syntax teacher –and recomplementation lover– I ever met: Andrew Radford (1945–2024).

References

- Acuña Fariña, Juan Carlos. 1995. Left-dislocation revisited. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 8, 7–23.
- Benincà, Paola & Cecilia Poletto. 2004. Topic, focus and V2. In Luigi Rizzi (ed.), *The structure of CP and IP: The cartography of syntactic structures*, 52–76. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1977. On Wh-movement. In Peter W. Culicover, Thomas Wasow & Adrian Akmajian (eds.), *Formal syntax*, 157–196. New York: Academic Press.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. [1983] 1997. Topic constructions in some European languages and connectedness. *Tilburg Studies in Language and Literature* 4: 7–41. Reprinted in Anagnostopoulou, Elena, Henk van Riemsdijk & Frans Zwarts. 1997. *Materials on Left Dislocation*, 93–118. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Dik, Simon C. 1978. *Functional grammar*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Dik, Simon C. 1989. *The theory of functional grammar. Part I. The structure of the clause*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Fernández-Sánchez, Javier & Dennis Ott. 2020. Dislocations. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 14.9, 1–39.
- González i Planas, Francesc. 2011. *La duplicació del complementador en les llengües iberoromàniques*. Ms., University of Girona.
- Grimshaw, Jane. 1997. Projection, heads, and optimality. *Linguistic Inquiry* 28.3, 373–422.
- Grohmann, Kleanthes K. & Ricardo Etxepare. 2003. Root infinitives: A comparative view. *Probus* 15, 201–236.
- Haegeman, Liliane. 2012. *Adverbial clauses, main clause phenomena and the composition of the left periphery: the cartography of syntactic structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Llinàs-Grau, Mireia & Aurora Bel. 2019. On the acceptance of the null *That* by bilingual Catalan/Spanish L2 learners of English. *Languages* 4.30, 1–16.
- Mascarenhas, Salvador. 2015. *Complementizer doubling in European Portuguese*. Ms., Oxford University.
- Ott, Dennis. 2014. An ellipsis approach to contrastive left-dislocation. *Linguistic Inquiry* 45.2, 269–303.
- Ott, Dennis. 2015. Connectivity in left-dislocation and the composition of the left periphery. *Linguistic Variation* 15.2, 225–290.
- Radford, Andrew. 2018. *Colloquial English: Structure and variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rizzi, Luigi. 1997. The fine structure of the left periphery. In Liliane Haegeman (ed.), *Elements of grammar*, 281–337. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

that merits further attention. If double *que* is used instead, much like in Spanish, then proclitic is obligatory, (iib), as expected. Note in passing that the high *que* occurs in the examples at hand, unlike in German examples like (i):

- (i) a. *Diz que la mi prima_k dan-y_k chucherías a la probe_k.*
 says that the my cousin give-dat candy dat the poor-thing
 b. *Diz que la mi prima_k que-y_k dan chucherías a la probe_k.*
 ‘S/He says that my female cousin, they give the poor thing candy.’

- Rodríguez-Ramalle, Teresa. 2005. *Manual de sintaxis del español*. Madrid: Castalia.
- Ross, John Robert. 1969. Guess who? In Robert I. Binnick, Alice Davison, Georgia M. Green & Jerry L. Morgan (eds.), *Papers from the Fifth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, 252–286. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Simons, Mandy. 2007. Observations on embedding verbs, evidentiality and presupposition. *Lingua* 117.6, 1034–1056.
- Villa-García, Julio. 2012. Recompensation and locality of movement in Spanish. *Probus* 24.2, 257–314.
- Villa-García, Julio. 2015. *The syntax of multiple-que sentences in Spanish: Along the left periphery*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Villa-García, Julio. 2023a. Hanging Topic Left Dislocations as extrasentential constituents: toward a paratactic account. Evidence from English and Spanish. *The Linguistic Review* 40.2, 265–310.
- Villa-García, Julio. 2023b. C° realizations along the left edge across English and Spanish. *Languages* 8.4, 268, 1–23.
- Villa-García, Julio & Dennis Ott. 2024. Recompensation as a paratactic phenomenon: evidence from Spanish and English. *Journal of Linguistics* 60, 213–244.
- Ziv, Yael. 1994. Left and right dislocations: Discourse functions and anaphora. *Journal of Pragmatics* 22, 629–645.
- Zubizarreta, María Luisa. 1999. Las funciones informativas: tema y foco. In Ignacio Bosque & Violeta Demonte (eds.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, vol. 3, 4215–4244. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.