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Features in comp and syntactic variation: the case of ‘(de)queísmo’ in Spanish

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Abstract

In this paper, we analyze the alternation, known as ‘*dequeísmo*,’ which holds between *que* ‘that’ and *de que* ‘of that’ in head position of embedded tensed clauses in a wide variety of dialects of Spanish. To explain this phenomenon we concentrate on the features in COMP, their nature and arrangement and the structure of the so called left periphery of the subordinate clauses [Rizzi, L., *Elements of Grammar*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 1997, 281]. The basic proposal is that *de* in the dialects under study heads its own maximal projection, which is the spell out of the Mood/Evidentiality features [Cinque, G., *Adverbs and Functional Heads. A Cross Linguistic Perspective*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999], otherwise amalgamated in the complementizer *que* “that.” We evaluate some consequences of our hypothesis and incorporate “peculiar” uses of *que* in independent sentences. We also analyze the opposite phenomenon, that is, the absence of *de* before *que* in cases in which it is required (the so called ‘*queísmo*’).

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon to be addressed in this paper is a case of variation in Spanish grammar: the alternation holding between *que* ‘that’ and *de que* ‘of that’ in the head position of embedded tensed clauses (cf. (1)). This alternation, known as ‘*dequeísmo*’ by prescriptive grammarians, has been the object of many dialectological studies. The general aim of our work is to incorporate this topic into grammatical theory.

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- (1) Pienso **de que** los conozco poco. (Standard: Pienso que los conozco poco)
 I think of that CL_{3PIM} I know little
 ‘I don’t think I know them them enough.’ [MC-NLCH, LP-5, man, 39, TV manager]¹

In trying to explain this phenomenon we will concentrate on the features in COMP, their nature and arrangement and the structure of the so called left periphery of subordinate clauses (Rizzi, 1997). More specifically, we will try to show how different options in the distribution of such features can lead to the existence of two types of COMP in Spanish. Furthermore, the analysis presented here may shed some light on peculiar uses of *que* in independent sentences and on the presence versus absence of *de* before *que* in cases in which it is required (the so called ‘*queísmo*’), such as complement sentences of N/A, among other phenomena still to be studied.

The structure of this paper will be the following: first a syntactic analysis of ‘*dequeísta*’ sentences shall be given and motivated; the basic proposal being that *de* in the dialects under study heads its own maximal projection, which is the spell out of Mood/Evidentiality features (Cinque, 1999), otherwise amalgamated in the complementizer *que* “that.” The implications of this analysis shall then be briefly analyzed. In Section 1 the facts shall be presented and some previous accounts reviewed; in Section 3 our own hypothesis shall be developed; in Section 4 the feature composition of COMP shall be dealt with and in Sections 5 and 6 some implication of the proposal shall be elaborated on.

2. ‘*Dequeísmo*’ in Spanish: facts and previous accounts

Leaving aside *si* (“if,” “whether”), introducing indirect questions and conditional sentences, it can be asserted that in Spanish there is one single complementizer: *que* ‘that.’ *Que* occurs alone in subject and direct object sentences, cf. (2a) and (2b). Prepositions or other particles may precede *que* in adverbial sentences, (2c), forming a complex conjunction (*porque* ‘because,’ lit: ‘for-that’; *aunque* ‘although,’ lit: ‘still-that’). On the other hand, as can be seen in (2d) and (2e), in Spanish, contrary to other Romance languages and English, finite clausal complements of N/A are preceded by the same preposition *de* which introduces nominal complements. There are also verbs which select clauses (and NP’s) obligatorily introduced by *de*, (2f).

- (2) a. **Que** te quedarás sería estupendo.
 that you stay would be great.
 b. Dijo **que** venía.
 (He/she) said that (he/she) was coming
 c. Lo haré {**para que/aunque**} te quedas/**porque** te quedas.
 I will do it for that/although you stay_{SUBJ}/because you stay_{IND}
 ‘I will do it so that you stay/{because/although} you are staying’

¹ All the cases of ‘*dequeísmo*’ introduced in the text are attested examples and their source is indicated. Most of them come from CREA (*Corpus de referencia del español actual*. Real Academia Española), which includes the MC-NLCH (*Macrocorpus de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades hispánicas*).

- d. La idea **de que** te quedas me molesta.
The idea of that you stay bothers me
'The idea of you staying bothers me'
- e. Estoy orgullosa **de que** te quedas.
I am proud of that you are staying
- f. No se enteró **de que** te quedabas.
He did not realize of that you were staying

'Dequeísmo' consists precisely in the addition of *de* before *que* in certain dialects when it is not required by the matrix verb, as in (1). Another example is provided in (3).

- (3) ... sacó a la muchacha diciéndole **de que** era capaz de apalearla.
... took out the girl, telling her of that he was capable to smack her.
(standard: ... diciéndole que era capaz de apalearla.)²
'He took the girl out, telling her that he could smack her.'
[CREA, Burgos, E., *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú*, Guatemala, 1983]

A straightforward hypothesis for the presence of *de* in the above contexts is that it is due to the NP status of Spanish complement sentences, and hence to their need of Case. It has been assumed, in fact, that the preposition which appears before sentential N/A complements is a (structural) Case marker. The preposition which appears in cases like (2f) has also been analyzed as a realization of an inherent Case assigned to an NP complement by a verb which has absorbed accusative Case (Campos and Kempchinsky, 1991). This explanation might also be extended to 'dequeísta' cases. However, we believe that proposing a Case marker *de* does not account for the phenomenon of 'dequeísmo'. There are both empirical and theoretical reasons to disregard this explanation. Summarizing the main arguments, one important reason to disregard Case as an explanation for 'dequeísmo' is that this phenomenon also takes place in contexts in which Case is not assigned through a preposition, such as: (a) subject sentences when they occur both postverbally, (4) (Arjona, 1978), and preverbally, (5). (b) "ungoverned" contexts: predicate position of copulative sentences (cf. De Mello, 1995: 140; Quilis, 1986; Gómez Torrego, 1999), (6), and appositive sentences (cf. Gómez Torrego, 1999), (7). Furthermore, *de que* can also introduce adverbial consecutive clauses, such as those in (8).

- (4) Entonces, resulta **de que** ... el ejecutivo que viene ...
So, it turns out of that ... the businessman who comes ...
[MC-NLCH, LP-5, man, 41, business manager]
- (5) **De que** todas esas niñas se vayan a enfermar es mucho más difícil.
Of that all those girls are going to get sick is much more difficult
[CREA, *Informe Semanal*, TV1, Spain, 02-11-96]

² The use of *de* before complement sentences is not optional for dequeísta speakers, as we will see below.

- (6) La idea es **de que** entraran los alumnos de la facultad . . .
 The idea is of that come in the students of the college
 ‘The idea is that undergraduate students could get in . . .’
 [MC-NLCH, ME-6, man, 40, psychiatrist].
- (7) . . . lo que estábamos hablando: **de que** nuestra vocación no es el éxito
 . . . what we were taking about: of that our ultimate goal is not success
 [Gómez Torrego, 1999: 2112]
- (8) Es tal la formación matemática [. . .] **de que** comienza a perder el sentir de la realidad.
 Is such the training mathematical . . . of that starts to lose feeling of reality.
 ‘His mathematical training is such that he is starting to lose contact with reality.’
 [Gómez Torrego, 1999: 2114]

From the theoretical point of view, within the minimalist framework (Chomsky, 1995) it has been argued (Picallo, 2001) that (complement) clauses, like any other selected complements, are subject to agreement with a functional category. Based on well attested empirical facts, Picallo (2001) claims that nominalized clauses and complement CP’s do have phi features, but with a negative specification. That is, CP’s are marked as [-person, -number, -gender].³ Another crucial assumption in this framework is that only [+P, +N, +G] arguments (i.e., nominals) are assigned Case. So sentences are caseless categories although they undergo the operation *Agree*.⁴ We will adopt the main idea of this framework and then conclude that *de* is not inserted for Case purposes.

In summary, there exist facts and theoretical assumptions which seem to indicate a more complex nature and structure of *de que* sentences and also rule out the possibility of considering *de* as a Case marker.

Before presenting the analysis we would like to defend, it is important to disregard another alternative hypothesis: one might argue that *de que* sentences are, in some way, related to “factivity,” that is, introduced by a (null) factive nominal such as [(*el hecho*) *de que*] ‘the fact that.’ We will not elaborate very much on this issue but rather evidence shall be provided which suggests that the factive analysis is not the correct one for the sentences in question.

The most important piece of evidence against such a view is that *de que* structures have been claimed not to appear at all with factive verbs (see, for example, del Moral, 2001). In our own search in the MC-NLCH we did not find any cases which could accurately be analyzed as ‘dequeísmo’ with any of the different factive constructions that were used in testing.⁵

³ See Iatridou and Embick (1997) for a different proposal.

⁴ Picallo argues against the view that CP’s do not have any feature specification. According to this author, “this proposal implies the necessity to impose a look-ahead requirement to syntactic operations” (pp. 72–73), in the sense that a derivation which contains a subject sentence with no feature specification would crash if T enter the numeration as phi-complete.

⁵ Such as *lamentar* ‘to regret’, *deplorar* ‘to deplore’, *sentir* ‘to be sorry’, *molestar* ‘to bother’, *sorprender* ‘to surprise’, *encantar* ‘to love’, *enojar* ‘to anger’, *ser* {*ridículo* / *triste* / *raro* / *natural*}, ‘to be ridiculous/sad/weird/natural’ *dar* {*asco* / *vergüenza*} ‘produce disgust/shame’.

A second argument is that, as noted by Picallo (2001), factive constructions headed by *el hecho* ‘the fact’—just like all DP’s—can be adequate antecedents for possessive pronouns like *su* (“his/her/its”), (9a). This is never the case for sentences (CP’s), as shown in (9b). If *de que* sentences were parallel to those headed by *el hecho*, we would expect them to qualify as antecedents for possessives, which is contrary to fact (see (10)):

- (9) a. El hecho de que hubieran desaparecido no parecía importante, pero **su** relevancia no escapó a la atención del inspector.
 b. *(El) que hubieran desaparecido no parecía importante, pero **su** relevancia no escapó a la atención del inspector. [Picallo, 2001]
- (10) *No parecía importante **de que** hubieran desaparecido, pero **su** relevancia no escapó a la atención del inspector.
 ‘(The fact) that they had disappeared did not seem to be important, but its relevance did not escape the inspector’s attention.’

Let us now turn to our analysis. Our hypothesis is that ‘*dequeísmo*’ is a phenomenon related to the nature of COMP, to its feature composition and to its internal structure. The properties of COMP to be discussed in what follows have crucial influence on the structure and properties of the left periphery of Spanish embedded sentences.

3. The hypothesis

In developing our proposal, we adopt two general assumptions: (a) it is possible to have a CP layered structure, and Spanish *de que* sentences provide direct evidence for this structure; (b) the features of the C head of embedded sentences may either appear together in one functional category (and one morphological word) or be distributed in two (or more) functional heads. We will then propose that *de* is a sort of prepositional complementizer which selects for a CP as its complement. In other words, in the dialects under study, subordinate clauses have a more complex structure, with an additional functional category headed by a preposition which spells out a subset of features otherwise amalgamated in C.

3.1. The structure of COMP in ‘*dequeísta*’ dialects

To begin, the type of information introduced by Spanish *de* in ‘*dequeísta*’ contexts shall be clarified. In so doing, we will assume Pesetsky and Torrego’s (2000) claim that English COMP is the spell-out of T-features (agreement and tense), whereas Spanish COMP is a “real” complementizer. Furthermore, it has been argued that COMP can also contain “extrasentential” information: force, factivity, credibility, and evidentiality (see Rizzi, 1997; Cinque, 1999). Our claim will be that these features may be split between *de* and *que*. More specifically, we propose that *de* is the locus of this information “facing the outside” (Rizzi, 1997). We will further elaborate on this issue below. We would like to formalize first the structure we propose for *de que* sentences.

Given the above assumptions, there are at least three logical possibilities: *de* appears as part of the COMP head, *de* is in Spec of CP, and *de* heads its own maximal projection. We will explore the three of them and finally adopt the third one.

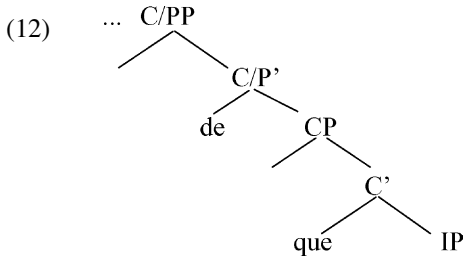
The first possibility we would like to dispense with is that *de que* constitutes a “complex complementizer,” that is, *de* appears in the head C, either forming a morphological word or head-adjoined to C. There are some facts which argue against such a hypothesis. The first one is concerned with the behavior of *de que* in coordinate structures. In coordinate structures *de* can appear in both conjuncts, (11a), may be omitted in the second conjunct, (11b), or can even appear exclusively in the second conjunct, (11c). This is never the case in regular complex conjunctions, like *aunque* and *porque*. Since parts of words cannot be erased, ellipsis is never possible in these cases (cf. (11d)):

- (11) a. debería prepararse . . . en un medio ambiente de manera **de que**
should get prepared . . . in an environment in a way of that
pueda tocar todos los medios ambientales, **de que** el Estado o la
he can touch all the environments, of that the state or a
empresa privada permita que el individuo . . .
private company allows that the individual [id.]
- b. debe estar claro **de que** el pueblo nicaragüense lo que quiere es
must be clear of that Nicaraguan people it that want is to
trabajar, y **que** rechaza cualquier tipo de asonada
work, and that rejects any type of riot
'It must be clear that what people from Nicaragua want is to work and that
they are against any kind of riots.' [CREA *La Prensa*, 25/06/1997. Nicaragua].
- c. No quiere decir **que** él iba a ganarle al medio ambiente . . . sino
It does not mean that he was going to defeat the environment . . . but
de que él iba a probar
of that he was going to try [id.].
- d. ***Porque** lo quieres y **que** insistes en ello, te lo daré.
Because you want it and that you are insisting on it, I will you it give.

Extraction data presented below also seem to argue against the complex complementizer hypothesis.

The second possibility we would like to discard is that the preposition *de* appears inside CP as its Spec. There are two ways to obtain this structure: either *de* moves from some position inside the clause to satisfy an EPP feature (internal merge) or it is selected by C (external merge). Both options pose several problems. With regard to the former, it must be noted that there is no obvious position inside IP where *de* can be generated and from which it can raise. The latter option poses similar difficulties, since it entails some theoretical and empirical problems. In this case, the nature of the complementizer would be different in ‘dequeísta’ dialects, since it would have a selection feature which requires a preposition in its Spec. This selection restriction would have to be optional, since *de* does not appear in all cases. Another problem for this approach is that a head would have to fill a Spec position. We will therefore disregard these possibilities and argue for a third one, which incorporates the fine grained structure of the left periphery of the sentence.

Our hypothesis is that in ‘dequeísta’ dialects subordinate clauses have the structure depicted in (12):



In this structure *de* heads its own maximal projection and selects a CP as its complement. We are not committed to the prepositional status of *de*. In fact, there is one piece of evidence which suggests that *de* is not a real preposition, heading a PP: if *de que* object sentences are left-dislocated a neuter clitic *lo* appears inside the main clause, (13a). Pseudo-cleft sentences of the type of (13b) seem to provide further evidence for this claim, since the fronted phrase also appears with no preposition:

- (13) a. **De que** impactó . . . en la vida de México, **lo** prueba el hecho de que
 Of that it had an impact upon the life in Mexico CL proves the fact of that
 fue retirada de su temporada teatral . . .
 it was taken away of its theater season
 ‘That it had an impact upon Mexican life is proved by the fact that it was
 taken out of the season.’ [CREA, *Proceso*, Mexico, 29-9-1996]
- b. **Lo primero que le diré es de que** no tengamos miedo.
 What I will tell him first is of that we are not afraid
 ‘The first thing I will tell him is that we should not be afraid.’

The occurrence of the “accusative” form of the clitic does not mean that the sentence is marked for (accusative) Case. The pronoun *lo* in this case might be correctly argued to be the neuter form of the pronoun which also stands for predicates such as *Guapo lo es*, ‘Handsome he CL is’. However, the fact remains that *lo* can never pronominalize a PP in Spanish. Consequently, *de que* sentences cannot be real PP’s. Since clauses (as opposed to PP’s) are doubled by *lo*, the category containing *de (que)* has to be headed by an element carrying clausal features, namely a (prepositional) complementizer. Let us note incidentally that this is not the case for “selected” *de que* structures such as the one in (2f). In such cases, the sentential complement cannot be pronominalized and (2’f) is therefore ungrammatical. It will be argued below that in (2’f) we do have a P head taking a CP as its complement:

(2’f) * (De que te quedabas) no se **lo** enteró.

We thus take *de* to be the head of a functional category (C/P), such as the one proposed by Kayne (1994). In this sense, it is analogous to English *for*, which appears with

infinitival clauses.⁶ The fact that *for* never appears in English before the complementizer *that* could be explained following Pesetsky and Torrego's hypothesis (Pesetsky and Torrego, 2000), according to which English *that*, as opposed to Spanish *que*, is not a complementizer but a spell out of I to C movement. In what follows we will give some evidence for our proposal.

According to Chomsky (1999) and subsequent work, languages select a subset F' of features from the set F available by UG. Elements of F' are assembled into a lexicon (Chomsky, 1999: 13). Languages thus have the possibility for some array of features of F' to appear as a single lexical item or in independent lexical items. In this line of reasoning, we would like to assume that *de* is the realization of an array of features otherwise amalgamated in C (*que*).⁷ In this sense, *de* is a "particle" which, once it is projected, will converge at LF and at every stage of the derivation to LF (Chomsky, 1999: 8).

3.2. Evidence for the structure in (12)

The structure we have proposed is supported by extraction data.⁸ It appears that 'dequeísmo' creates opaque structures and that the presence of *de* triggers (strong) island effects and no constituent, not even an argument (see (14a)), can be extracted out of the embedded sentence introduced by *de que*.⁹

- (14) a. *¿Qué cosa me dijiste **de que** habías comprado t?
What thing did you tell me of that you had bought?
(vs. ¿Qué cosa me dijiste que habías comprado?)
- b. *¿Dónde sabes **de que** vive t?
Where do you know (of) that he lives?
(vs. ¿Dónde sabes que vive?)
- c. *¿De qué modo dijiste **de que** resolvió el problema t?
Which way did you say that s/he solved the problem?

The structure proposed in (12) can, in our opinion, account for this fact in a straightforward manner, since the CP/PP would create a minimality effect and prevent the Wh element from raising to the matrix COMP.¹⁰ The reason for the ungrammaticality of (14) is

⁶ Alternatively, one could propose that *de* in the cases under study is the head of a dyadic structure (in the sense of Hale and Keyser, 1998) taking CP headed by *que* as its complement. Its Specifier could be a (null) neuter pronoun (similar to *lo* or *eso*, "that") matching the -P, -N, -G features of the sentence. We will not develop this possibility here. We would like to note though that data in (12) (for factive structures) also indicate that the structures under study are not any kind of (null) NP's with PP complement. If there is a null pronoun it would appear as the Spec of the C/P category.

⁷ Chomsky (1999: fn. 4) notes that T and C are "cover terms for a richer array of functional categories."

⁸ Data from coordinate structures also appear to favor the hypothesis that there is an additional COMP node headed by *de*. Cf. Demonte and Fernández Soriano (2001) on this issue.

⁹ The authors of this paper are not 'dequeísta' speakers, so to elicit and evaluate negative data we have interviewed 'dequeístas' speakers. Although there is a clear prescriptive pressure, the negative judgments were very clear and consistent, in contrast with other sentences containing *de que*, which some times were just considered "vulgar."

¹⁰ The option of generating *de* in Spec CP would also account for extraction data. The problems mentioned above would remain, however.

also related to the (more general) incompatibility between (features of) *de* and a Wh feature, which makes ‘dequeísmo’ impossible in interrogatives.

Another fact that seems to support the idea that *de* is a head of a constituent above CP is that this preposition is not found in Wh-structures such as comparatives (we do not have examples like **Es más alto de que yo*, ‘he is taller of than I’) or interrogatives (15a). Also, *de* never precedes the interrogative complementizer *si* (“whether”), (15b), that is, we have *de que* but not *de si* structures. The ungrammaticality of ‘dequeísta’ wh-contexts indicates that *de* appears only when a head *que* is explicitly present, and that it is related to the declarative value of the sentence.

- (15) a. Me pregunto (*de) qué ha hecho.
I wonder of what he has done.
b. No me dijo (*de) si lo sabía o no.
He didn’t tell me of whether he knew it or not.

These sentences again contrast sharply with those which contain a selected *de*, such as the one in (2f) and those below. In these cases, interrogatives are perfectly possible, as demonstrated by (15c):

- (15) c. No me informó de si lo sabía o no.
He did not inform me of whether he knew it or not

Our claim is that *de* in ‘dequeísta’ dialects selects a CP with a “declarative” complementizer. However, more details are required. We will now concentrate on the feature composition of this complex COMP.

4. The feature composition of COMP

4.1. *De* as an evidential

In the previous sections we have tried to show that *de* + *que* is not a morphological unit (Boretti de Macchia, 1989) and that *de* heads a maximal projection, which is the explicit manifestation of some features of COMP. As for the precise nature of those features, we will make crucial use of the structure of the left periphery of the sentence proposed by Rizzi (1997) and Cinque (1999) among others. Rizzi (1997) claims that COMP is the interface between the “propositional content”, expressed by IP, and the “superordinate structure”, related to the higher clause and discourse articulation. That is, COMP contains information “facing the inside” (*finiteness*) and “facing the outside” (*force*). This force/finiteness system can be split across two (or more) heads or expressed by a single item. Cinque (1999) further shows that the force projection is usually closely related to modality. One sub-type of this feature is “evidential” modality. We will assume that the semantic feature “evidentiality” is encoded in the projection headed by *de* in the dialects under consideration.

Our proposal is that in ‘dequeísta’ dialects the features carried by *que* in Standard Spanish are split in two functional categories both belonging to the COMP system. In order

to determine the particular features carried by *de*, we will assume that Spanish complementizers have a feature composition similar to the one given in (16), which is an extension of the one proposed by Pesetsky and Torrego (2000) for COMP. We propose that Spanish complementizer can further encode the feature Ev/Mood:

(16) [C, *uWh*, *iDecl*, *iMood/Ev*]¹¹

This array of features can appear as one single lexical item (*que*) and one functional projection (C). This is the case of standard Spanish, where only *que* occurs. For ‘dequeísta’ dialects, our proposal is that *de* is the realization of a subset of those features. In Chomsky (1999: 6) it is assumed that C is “complete”, in the sense that it always has a full array of phi features to legitimize its relation with T. We will assume that P (*de*) also has (negatively marked) phi features, plus selectional features and the interpretable feature Ev. C (*que*) has the feature “declarative” and selects a fully fledged T (a T with a complete set of phi features, in minimalist terminology).

Reinterpreting Cinque’s proposal concerning adverbial Mood/Evidential, what we are assuming is basically that *de* is a spell out of Mood/EvP.

In Rooryck’s (2001) thorough review of the notion and grammatical import of evidentiality, evidential markers are defined as such grammatical categories “which indicate how and to what extent speakers stand for the truth of the statements they make” (p. 125). Furthermore, Evidentials usually indicate source of information and reliability (the degree of truth of the sentence can be verified) and they are mostly characteristic of the oral register of languages. In fact, this author states that evidentials measure the information status of the sentence “on a scale whose type varies: the sentence is measured with respect to reliability, probability, expectation or desirability” (p. 162). Syntactically, they can be heads or specifiers. In the case of Spanish *de*, it appears that this head adds a flavor of reliability.

Evidentials are usually derived from other categories such as verbs or (personal) pronouns. This is also the case for sentential complementizers, which are derived across languages from verbs or saying and from pronouns. As Rooryck (2001) again points out, “this observation predicts that complementizers will to some extent carry evidential information” (p. 163). In particular, it has been observed that infinitival complementizers equivalent to *de* “of” usually carry evidential information.¹² We will adopt this idea here and claim that *de* in ‘dequeísta’ dialects is the head of a node EvP. As previously stated, we are taking this as a label for some additional (modal) meaning of subordinate sentences: *de* appears to reflect speaker’s judgement of low reliability of the embedded sentence, even if both, matrix and embedded sentence, share the source of information.

This last observation would explain the lack of the particle *de* before factive sentences: “with verbs of saying and believing, the degree of reliability co-varies with the reliability of matrix subject, but with factive verbs, the degree of reliability of the sentential complement is entirely independent of the reliability of the matrix subject, and is presented as a fact” (Rooryck, 2001: 161).

¹¹ Where *Decl* stands for “declarative” and *Ev* stands for “evidentiality”. The *u* and the *i* preceding these features indicate “uninterpretable” and “interpretable,” respectively.

¹² See Van Craenenbroeck (2002) for a study of the complementizer *van* “of” in some varieties of Dutch. See also Rooryck (2001) and references therein.

With regard to interrogatives, one has to note that the feature Ev is only compatible with declarative C. In this framework, this is derived from the fact that C in *de que* structures does not carry the feature [+Wh]. This would explain its incompatibility with Wh-sentences and sentences headed by *si* (“whether”).

In this sense, (15c) might constitute evidence for such a feature in *de*. If this is a correct analysis, sentences introduced by *de* should be semantically incompatible with an *if* (or any interrogative) clause, which excludes epistemic commitment (see Adger and Quer, 2001 for a detailed analysis of the semantics of *if* clauses).

Our proposal about the feature content of *de* has antecedents in the literature. Some authors, from different perspectives, have tried to relate the presence of Spanish *de* with evidentiality. Schwenter (1999) seems to suggest that by using *de* the speaker is less committed to the content of the subordinate clause.¹³ According to del Moral (2001), native speakers’ judgments on the possible readings of *de que* sentences show that the meaning of *de* is an extension of its original use as a spatial marker of source, and in certain cases it adds a flavor of uncertainty when appearing with epistemic verbs.¹⁴ Although we can discover clear tendencies in the line just mentioned, careful examination of the data reveals some degree of inconsistency among speakers, probably due to strong normative pressures. What is important to us is that the feature Ev, taken as a grammatical feature not a pragmatic device, is only compatible with C’s that introduce propositional information, whence their incompatibility with verbs whose sentential complements are not assertive.

4.2. Impossibility of ‘de’ in certain complement sentences with evidential adverbs

An interesting test for our proposal can be provided by the possibility (or impossibility) of interaction between ‘*de que*’ sentences and evidential adverbs in structures that we will label “root complement sentences to modal/evidential adverbs.”¹⁵ In sentences similar to those in (17) (speaker-oriented) epistemic evidential adverbs like: *ciertamente* “certainly,” *efectivamente* “indeed,” *realmente* “really,” *evidentemente* “obviously,” *indudablemente* “undoubtedly,” *innegablemente* “undeniably” appear to be predicates taking an explicit or a concealed complement sentence:

- (17) a. {Evidentemente/Indudablemente} que todo irá a peor.
Obviously/Undoubtedly that everything will get worse
- b. - ¿Es esto una novela?
Is this a a novel?
- {Evidentemente/Ciertamente/Indudablemente} que no.
Obviously/Undoubtedly that not.

¹³ Actually, this author shows that there is a statistical correlation between occurrence of *de* and increase in number of third person predicates and in use of past tense, among other things. If we interpret Schwenter correctly, *de que* complement sentences would be declarative sentences on which the speaker’s assertion relies on a “source of information” (Schwenter, 1999: 74).

¹⁴ Camacho (2002) also proposes an evidential feature in COMP for other types of (dialectal) Spanish constructions.

¹⁵ Actually, this question was posed by an anonymous reviewer. We thank him/her very much for leading us to this interesting point.

Sentences like those in (17a) and (17b) appear only in root contexts. The adverbs which introduce them may be paraphrased by copular sentences with adjective predicates such as: *evidente, innegable, indudable*, etc.: *Es evidente que si te callas todo será mucho peor* ‘it is obvious that, if you don’t say anything, everything will be much worse.’

Interesting to our concerns in this work is the fact that *de* preceding *que* is not permitted in this type of sentences. Gómez Torrego (1999) makes the following remark: “Llama la atención que ningún tratadista haya recogido dequeísmos con los adverbios [...] de modalidad que introducen oraciones subordinadas con la conjunción *que*. Así, nadie ha registrado [...] secuencias como *ciertamente de que, desde luego de que, evidentemente de que, indudablemente de que* [...] *por supuesto de que* [...]” (p. 2114).¹⁶

The impossibility of *de* co-occurring with epistemic evidential adverbs is predicted by our approach. We may claim that evidential adverbs are generated in the CP area of the left periphery; more strictly, they will target a specialized head situated in the higher part of the CP field. Given the facts in (17), it appears that they are above CP, the same position in which *de* occurs (recall (12)). If so, the adverb in (17), with the representation in (18), will check the evidential feature in EvP and it will not be possible for another constituent with evidential import to appear in this sentence:

(18) [EvP [evidentemente] [EvP' [Ev0] [CP [CP' que [IP todo irá a peor]]]]

5. Further implications of our analysis: defective ‘que’

There are some consequences that our analysis might have. One of them is that in Spanish we would expect to find some instances of what could be called a “defective” *que* without *de*, that is, a Comp which has only part of the features usually carried by complementizers. There are in fact some constructions in standard Spanish in which this element appears, either in unselected contexts or selected by a special type of head. We analyze some of them in what follows.

One possible instance of this defective *que* in unselected contexts might be the one which appears (optionally) in wh-exclamatives.¹⁷ In Spanish, contrary to English, an exclamative phrase may be followed by *que*, that is, both options of sentences in (19) are possible:

¹⁶ “It is striking that no author has reported “dequeísmo” with modality adverbs before *que* subordinate sentences. So no one has ever registered sequences like *ciertamente de que, desde luego de que, evidentemente de que, indudablemente de que* [...] *por supuesto de que*.”

¹⁷ For an insightful analysis of the various types of exclamative sentences in Spanish and their various structures and meanings, see Gutiérrez Rexach (2001).

- (19) ¡Qué guapo (que) es Juan!¹⁸
 What handsome that is John
 ‘How handsome is John!’

We might think that this *que* is related to some of the syntactic/semantic properties of exclamatives,¹⁹ which make them different from interrogative sentences. According to Zanuttini and Portner’s (2003) analysis of Paduan structures similar to Spanish (19), factive exclamative sentences have a two layer CP with a factive operator in the most embedded one (op. cit. p. 64). Our hypothesis about this particular type of *que* is that it only carries some of the features usually present in complementizers. In particular, it does not have the features we have claimed are present in *de* in ‘dequeísta’ structures, so it lacks phi- features and selects for an IP. Its optionality is thus due to the fact that it does not participate in any checking process and does not interfere the legitimization of the exclamative phrase because this is licensed by other means.²⁰ Recall that exclamatives, as opposed to interrogatives, are factive sentences (Grimshaw, 1979), their propositional content is presupposed and the degree of a given property is asserted. This is the reason why they are not incompatible with a declarative *que*.

Etxepare (2002) analyzes another instance of *que* which does not appear in languages like English or in other Romance languages. This *que* introduces main clauses and according to this author, “contributes the additional meaning that the utterance [...] constitutes a report of [something that] has been said” (Etxepare, 2002: 1). We give in (20) some examples taken from Etxepare (2002), (20a) is an ordinary assertion, (20b) is a reported speech

- (20) a. Oye, (que) dice María que subáis a cenar.
 Listen, (that) says Mary that you go up for dinner
 b. Si viene mi madre, (que) el tabaco es tuyo
 If comes my mother, that the cigarettes are yours.

Etxepare claims that this *que* appears with verbs which select for a quotative dependent which is interpreted as a “speech event”. The only semantic contribution of this complementizer is that the sentence is interpreted as an explicit speech event. As the author claims, this *que* has to be kept separated from clause typing phenomena, in the sense that it does not mark the sentence as declarative nor does it *make* the sentence

¹⁸ As an anonymous reviewer points out, this is not the same *que* which appears in so called “Determiner Exclamatives” (see Gutiérrez Rexach, 2001) such as (i)

- (i) Los libros*(que) tiene.
 The books that he has
 How many books he’s got!.

In this case *que* is not optional and must probably be analyzed as a relative pronoun rather than a complementizer (see Bosque, 1984).

¹⁹ Zanuttini and Portner (2000: 124) assert that these properties are factivity, scalar implicature and question/answer relations.

²⁰ It might be the case that this XP in Spec of CP carries a focus feature and this is the reason why it raises.

declarative. It also has to be distinguished from evidentiality phenomena such as hearsay particles (which, Etxepare claims would be odd in these contexts where “the assertion force is not in question”). The generalization is that these structures are grammatical with the same kind of verbs which allow for interrogatives with a doubly filled COMP (“true questions” in the sense of Suñer, 1991) which involve speech events or direct quotations, such as (21):

- (21) a. Me preguntó que qué quería.
He asked that what I wanted
b. Dijo que por qué lo habíamos hecho.
He said that why we had done it

Leaving aside the many syntactic properties of these sentences, what is important in the present discussion is that the complementizer that we find in sentences like the ones above is purely declarative. In our view they constitute a very explicit realization of the declarative feature which we claim to be located exclusively in *que*.

Another instance of this root *que* might be the one found in commands such as:

- (22) a. (Que) así sea.
That so it be
'Let it be so.'
b. (Que) no se mueva nadie.
That nobody moves
'Nobody move!'

Another relevant case of impoverished *que* is exemplified by so called “conjunctive” *que*, which is equivalent to the conjunction *y* (“and”).

- (23) Me paso el día [trabaja que trabaja].
'I spend all day working and working.'

All the above mentioned cases have two properties in common: one is that the presence of *que* is optional; the other is that it can never be preceded by *de* in ‘dequeísta’ dialects. It is important to remark that this type of sentences—to our knowledge—are not possible in languages which do not have “complex complementizers”. In summary, our claim is that these are instances of purely declarative *que*, with no phi features or evidentiality feature.

6. Evidence for two ‘de’. Some thoughts about ‘queísmo’

A parallel phenomenon of Spanish dialectal variation, usually studied together with ‘dequeísmo’, is ‘queísmo’ which consists in dropping the preposition *de* required before some sentential complements (see also (2) above). Descriptive studies have established the

following contexts for this phenomenon (see Gómez Torrego, 1999; Bentivoglio and Galué, 1998–1999):

(a) with some specific pronominal verbs like *acordarse* and *convencerse*:

- (24) ... te acuerdas **que** ... están unas piedras enormes...
 Remember that ... are some stones enormous...
 ‘Do you remember that ... there are these huge stones?’
 [Bentivoglio, 1975: 2] (Standard: ... te acuerdas **de que** ...)

(b) before sentential complements of N’s like *afirmación* ‘claim’ or *necesidad* ‘need’ or adjectives such as *consciente* ‘conscious’, *orgulloso* ‘proud’:

- (25) la afirmación **que** la llegada de la democracia no ha descubierto ...
 the claim that the arrival of democracy has not brought to light ...
 [CREA, *El País*, Spain, 02-03-1980]

(c) with ‘light’ verbs like *dar* ‘give’, *tener* ‘have’, *hacer* ‘do’ ... plus NP:

- (26) Me di cuenta **que** era tal la transformación que tenía que sufrir ...
 I gave account that was such the transformation (I) had to suffer ...
 ‘I realized that the transformation I had to undergo was such ...’
 [TVE1, ‘Informe semanal’, 6-4-2002]
- (27) Tuve la suerte **que**, ..., no había puesto para los estudiantes.
 I had the luck that ..., there was no position for the students
 ‘I was lucky that ... there were no positions for the students.’
 [Bentivoglio and Galué, 1998–1999: 145]

In these sentences the sequence *que/de que* seem to alternate. However, all these cases are not equivalent: they do not have the same analysis and their empirical coverage is different. In fact, our claim, is that cases like (a) are instances of alternation between *de que* and *que* CP’s, although not identical to the alternation studied in the preceding section. In the case of (b), our claim is that we are dealing with a *de* which heads a genitive PP (not a CP); this is the reason why its omission in this context is really very restricted. (c) is an ambiguous structure. We will briefly analyze the three cases.

6.1. Another instance of a preposition ‘de’ before a CP

Let us start by pronominal verbs in (a). These verbs, in standard Spanish, in contrast with English and other romance languages, require a dummy preposition before the complementizer when taking a sentential complement. This preposition has been analyzed as a realization of an inherent Case assigned to a complement by a verb which has absorbed accusative Case (Campos and Kempchinsky, 1991). Actually, when this complement is a DP, the preposition is obligatory (*Me acuerdo *(de) mi hermana*, ‘I remember of my sister’).

There are some facts to be pointed out as to the properties of the *de* under consideration. First, that *de* in these cases is a pure preposition and, obviously, not an Evidentiality marker. There are various reasons for this proposal. One is that most of the verbs occurring in contexts like (22) are factive, which, as we saw above, are incompatible with this feature. Another relevant fact is that extraction out of such *de que* complements is perfectly possible, in clear contrast with ‘*dequeísta*’ structures (cf. (14)). In fact, examples such as (28) are fully grammatical:

- (28) ¿A quién no te acordabas de que habías visto?
Who didn’t you remember of that you had seen?

We assume that in these cases of “selected” *de* there is no further structure above CP and thus no intervening elements and no semantic incompatibility. The accurate way to describe the alternation found in this ‘*queísta*’ context, then, is by saying that what happens in these structures is that *de* may simply be omitted. The reason for the drop of the preposition, we suggest, is that some pronominal verbs are reanalyzed as transitive ones. There are two pieces of evidence for this assertion. First, in some dialects (in which (24) is accepted) the complement of these verbs can be marked as accusative:

- (29) Me lo acuerdo.
Me_{DT} it_{AC} remember

The interesting property of this sentence is that it is only possible if the complement is interpreted as propositional, that is if the accusative pronoun *lo* stands for a sentence, not an NP. In other words, (29) can be an answer to a question like (30a) but not to (30b):

- (30) a. ¿Te acuerdas de que tienes una cita?
Lit. Do you remember of that you have an appointment?
b. ¿Te acuerdas de papá?
Lit. Do you remember of dad?

Second, it seems to be the case that only a restricted set of pronominal verbs allows for *de* to be omitted. As noted by Bentivoglio and Galué (1998–1999: 142), the omission is attested by the verbs *acordarse*, “to remember,” *convencerse* “to get convinced,” *enterarse*, “to understand” and *olvidarse* “to forget” but not with such verbs like *admirarse/impresionarse*, “be admired/impressed,” *ocuparse*, “take charge,” *preocuparse* “to be worried” and *quejarse* “to complain.” This suggests that the presence versus absence of this *de* is lexically constrained.

6.2. The genitive preposition ‘*de*’: sentential complements to N

We will now consider the cases under (b): sentential complements of N which occur with deverbal nouns like *afirmación* “assertion,” *explicación*, “explanation” *causa* “cause,” event/result nouns like *rumor* “rumor,” or “picture-like” nouns like *idea* “idea,” *teoría* “theory.”

We will not enter into the possible subclasses of these nouns²¹ but will assume that all of them can s-select for genitive complements which are part of their (inherited) argument structure (Grimshaw, 1990). Our claim, once again, is that when the internal argument is sentential it maintains the genitive preposition. So a sentence like (31a) will appear, within a PP, in a structure similar to the one assigned to a construction like (31b):

- (31) a. la afirmación de que llovía
the claim of that it was raining
b. el libro de matemáticas
the book of mathematics

As expected, in these cases the preposition *de* is never or rarely omitted. In fact, we have found only a reduced set of examples of ‘queísmo’ with independent N’s (compared to the ones with $V_{\text{light}} + N + de$). The examples of ‘queísmo,’ (32), we hypothesize, might be analyzed not as argument sentences but as appositions—i.e., the sentential complements identify the denotation of the nouns—as can be seen by the glosses (see also (26) above):

- (32) a. ... esa afirmación que hace su esposa, **que** él se identificó con
that claim that makes his wife, that he identified himself with
ese mensaje, **que** sintió que ...
that message, that he felt that. . . [CREA, oral, 1992, Costa Rica]
b. corrió el rumor **que** las tropas del enemigo [. . .] marcharían
ran the rumor that the troops of the enemy would march
‘the rumor spread that the enemy troops would march’
[Mexico, oral, 04-2002]

Observe that all the examples in (32) would be grammatical, with the relevant readings, with *que* pronounced with a comma intonation, or after a semicolon.

6.3. Ambiguous *V + N* structures

Certain nouns which do not regularly accept omission of *de* allow for the alternation *quel de que* when occurring in a sequence with a “support” light verb, as in the following examples:

²¹ See Leonetti (1993) and Delbecque (1998) on this regard. Leonetti (1993)—based on Grimshaw, 1990—claims that sentential complements to N may be projected into two different configurations: as complements to N or as appositions to it, and that certain specific nouns select for one of the two structures while others are ambiguous. Delbecque argues against such an analysis on the basis of the unclear results of the tests proposed to distinguish between the two structures. In this paper we uphold the idea that sentential complements to nouns merge in two places, but we will claim that “all” nouns taking sentential complements can have both types of complements. However, a reduced set of them (*necesidad* ‘need,’ *razón* ‘reason,’ *culpa* ‘blame,’ *circunstancia* ‘circumstance’), those which appear to have more restrictions to accept appositions, are awkward without *de*. In contrast with them, nouns as *noticia* and *rumor*, which may only take appositions give a major frequency of “queístas” sentences.

- (33) a. ¿Quién *tiene la culpa* **que** nos eliminen del Mundial?
Who has the blame that they eliminate us from the World cup
'Whose fault is it that we are eliminated from the World Cup?' [Peru, 09-01]
- b. La culpa de que se derritan es de los países desarrollados.
The guilt that they melt is of the countries developed
'It is the developed countries' fault that they are melting.'
- (34) a. En este contexto, *tenemos la intención* **que** nuestra página web
In this context we have the intention that our web page
presente una panorámica continuamente actualizada [...] [*present a view continuously updated*]
- b. Preguntado sobre la intención de que algún país quisiera enviar
Asked about the intention of that some country may want to send
observadores [...], el presidente [...] respondió.
observers the president answered [Spain, 'El País', 06-97]

As is well known, a standard property of light verbs is that they display two syntactic structures (Bosque, 2001: 26 and the references therein). In (35a) the NP complement of *hizo* behaves as a regular direct object; however (35b) shows that lexically the verb is not a standard transitive verb. Moreover, (35c) indicates that when the complement sentence alone is focalized, the presence of the genitive preposition renders the structure grammatical, suggesting that this sentence is simply a complement of a complex “dicendi verb” formed from the union of the light predicate with the N:

- (35) a. La afirmación que hizo de que echaría a la secretaria molestó
the claim that he made of that he'd fire the secretary bothered
(cf. *Hizo la afirmación de que echaría a la secretaria*).
- b. *La afirmación de que echaría a la secretaria fue lo que hizo
the claim of that he'd fire the secretary was what he made
(cf. *La noticia de que llovería fue lo que difundió*, from: *Difundió la noticia de que llovería*).
- c. (*De) Que echaría a la secretaria fue la afirmación que hizo
Of that he'd fire the secretary was the claim that he made
(cf. (**De que llovería*) fue la noticia que difundió).

The contrast between *que/de que* sequences in this structure is thus expected.

To summarize, in this paper we have proposed an analysis of the ‘dequeísta’ sentences found in certain dialects of Spanish. We claim that this variation leads to a new and alternative analysis of COMP in Spanish which can be seen as a split constituent made up of two successive heads. The articulation of the hypothesis of a split CP relies crucially on the theory of feature distribution and checking proposed in Chomsky (1999). Moreover, once the properties of the constructions in this putative microparameter are established, it is possible to distinguish ‘dequeísta’ sentences from others in which a preposition is simply omitted or where *de* is a marker of genitive case.

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