

# Echo-syntax and metarepresentations<sup>☆</sup>

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## Abstract

So-called *echo-questions* are known for their particular behaviour. The aim of this paper is to prove that a systematic relationship can be established between their unique syntactic properties, their semantic import, their distribution in discourse and the range of possible interpretations they can receive. More specifically, I will try to show that they are meta-representations by virtue of their very syntactic structure. As such they constitute an instance of grammaticalisation of *interpretive use*: they are *interpretations of attributed representations*. My approach will be developed by assuming the guidelines of Chomsky's minimalist framework for syntax, and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory for semantics and the inferential construction of meaning. © 2002 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Interrogative syntax; Interpretive use; Metarepresentations

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## 1. Introduction

The distinction between *descriptive* and *interpretive use* is a well-established one in the framework of relevance theory.

Any representation with a propositional form, and in particular any utterance, can represent some state of affairs in virtue of its propositional form being true of that state of affairs; in this case we will say that the representation is a *description*, or that it is used *descriptively*. Or it can represent some other

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representation which also has a propositional form—a thought, for instance—in virtue of a resemblance between the two propositional forms; in this case we will say that the first representation is an *interpretation* of the second one, or that it is used *interpretively* (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995: 228–229).

It has proved to play a central role in the explanation of disparate phenomena such as quotations, summaries, translations, or irony, among others.

Any utterance can, in principle, be used as an interpretation. In most cases, this involves the hearer's ability to recover certain contextual assumptions about the situation or about the previous discourse. That is why interpretiveness is usually seen as a pragmatic phenomenon. However, languages can have special markers (mood, modality, or evidentials, among others) to indicate that an utterance is to be understood interpretively. These markers contribute to the relevance of the utterance by encoding overt restrictions on the range of possible interpretations, and can be seen as grammaticalisations of interpretive use (Blass, 1989). In the relevance-theoretic framework interrogative mood is seen as a particular case of grammaticalisation of interpretive use (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995: Section 4.10; Wilson and Sperber, 1988). According to this view, interrogatives are “interpretations of answers that the speaker would regard as relevant if true” (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 252).

The purpose of this paper is to present evidence for a case of grammaticalisation of *doubly* interpretive use. More specifically, what I want to show is that so called *echo-questions* are *interrogative* sequences with a specific set of formal properties due to a unique syntactic configuration; as a consequence, they are specialised as *interpretations of attributed representations*: they are interrogative interpretations of interpretations of somebody's thoughts, or, put in other words, they are *meta-representations*. On the descriptive side, this means that we will find some sequences that are understood as interpretations of attributed representations depending not on ‘external’ conditions (i.e., on the situation of utterance), but on their formal properties. From a more general point of view, this shows a new instance of interpretiveness not as a pragmatic phenomenon, but as a grammatical one—which further supports the view that echo-questions are indeed interrogative (see Blakemore, 1994).

I will approach the analysis of the data by combining a formal framework for grammar (namely, generative grammar) and the standard relevance-theoretic view of communication. Put in a wider perspective, this can be used to suggest that there is much to be gained from co-operation between them.

I will begin by considering two apparent anomalies in the syntactic behaviour of interrogatives (Section 2). Then, I will postulate a syntactic difference between two classes of interrogatives as the basis for an explanation (Section 3). Later on, the consequences of my proposal for semantics and pragmatics will be considered (Sections 4 and 5). After discussing some remaining issues (Section 6), I will conclude by drawing some consequences (Section 7). Though I will use Spanish examples to illustrate my point, what I will suggest, I think, easily extends to other languages as well, including English.

## 2. Two problems

In this section I want to present two apparently unrelated syntactic phenomena, which do not seem to fit in well with any of the current approaches to interrogatives. The first one has to do with some asymmetries in the licensing of *negative polarity items* (NPIs) in interrogative environments; the second one regards the co-occurrence of different mood markers in the same sentence. I will assume the guidelines of generative grammar as a syntactic framework. Briefly, in the minimalist programme (Chomsky, 1993, 1995, 1998) the language faculty is seen as consisting of

at least two components: a cognitive system that stores information, and performance systems that access that information and use it in various ways (Chomsky, 1995: 2).

Performance systems are assumed to fall into two types: articulatory-perceptual (A-P) and conceptual-intentional (C-I). The cognitive system, in turn, consists of two components: a lexicon specifying the available items and their properties, and a computational system generating derivations from those items. Any derivation involves a selection of items and a computational procedure. The result is mapped on a pair of representations  $(\pi, \lambda)$ , each conforming to the requirements of the two performance systems A-P and C-I and containing instructions for both of them.  $\pi$  is a representation of the properties that are relevant for the A-P systems (roughly, phonetic form, PF), and  $\lambda$  represents the information needed for the C-I systems (roughly, logical form, LF). The only significant levels of representation are, thus, interface levels. Any linguistic expression is a formal object  $(\pi, \lambda)$  satisfying the conditions of the interfaces; in addition, economy principles require the derivation generating any expression to be optimal.

### 2.1. Interrogatives and negative polarity items

As is well known, interrogative mood can act as a negative trigger, so the interrogative operator can license NPIs occurring in its domain (Bosque, 1980, 1994; Progovac, 1993a,b; Laka, 1994; Sánchez López, 1999, among others). English and Spanish are similar in this respect. Thus, the NPI *la menor idea* ('the slightest idea') is ruled out in an affirmative sentence, but it is allowed both in negative and interrogative structures, as shown in the examples in (1):

- (1) a. \*Tienes la menor idea de lo importante que era.  
       \* 'You have the slightest idea how important it was'
- b. No tienes la menor idea de lo importante que era.  
       'You don't have the slightest idea how important it was'
- c. ¿Tienes la menor idea de lo importante que era?  
       'Do you have the slightest idea how important it was?'

It is also well known that NPIs do not constitute a uniform class, so not all of them can be licensed in the same syntactic environments. Therefore, we will not expect that the interrogative operator could license just any NPI, but we definitely would expect that those that are allowed in interrogative structures should exhibit consistent syntactic behaviour.

However, this is not the case, as the contrasts in (2) and (3) show

- (2) a. ¿Ha movido Juan un dedo por ti?  
 Has moved Juan a finger for you?  
 ‘Has Juan lifted a finger for you?’
- b. \*¿Juan ha movido un dedo por ti?  
 Juan has moved a finger for you?
- (3) a. ¿Te he dicho yo nada?  
 To-you have said I nothing?  
 Have I said anything to you?
- b. \*¿Yo te he dicho nada?  
 I to-you have said nothing?

At a glance, the only syntactic difference between examples (a) and (b) has to do with the position of the subject, so, one could argue, it is not difficult to imagine that this must affect the licensing properties of the interrogative operator. In fact, a similar effect obtains in English as well. Consider the contrast between (4)a–b (taken from Progovac, 1993b):

- (4) a. Did Mary eat anything?  
 b. \*Mary ate anything?

Only the interrogative with inversion (4)a can license the NPI *anything*, whilst the one with SV order (4)b does not.

So, one would conclude, Spanish and English are alike, and only inverted interrogatives can license NPIs. And yet, according to the usual assumptions on the syntax of Spanish interrogatives (Fernández Ramírez, 1957–1959; Contreras, 1999; but see Escandell-Vidal, 1999), this is a totally unexpected result, since word order (and in particular, subject/verb order) is supposed to be a matter of no relevance at all to the syntax of Spanish *yes–no* questions—a matter in which Spanish would be different from English or French.

The contrast illustrated in (2) and (3) is certainly not an isolated one. The same effect obtains even in more complex cases. Consider the following one. Negation in the main clause can license an NPI in the subordinate clause only when the embedded verb appears in its subjunctive form (Bosque, 1990); hence the contrast in (5):

- (5) a. María no dijo que Pepe supiera<sub>SUBJ</sub> nada.  
 María not said that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing  
 María didnt say that Pepe knew anything
- b. \*María no dijo que Pepe sabía<sub>IND</sub> nada.

The same happens when the main clause is interrogative, so the NPI is licensed only when appearing in a subjunctive embedded clause, as shown in (6):

- (6) a. ¿Dijo María que Pepe supiera<sub>SUBJ</sub> nada?  
 Said María that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing?  
 Did María say that Pepe knew anything?
- b. \*¿Dijo María que Pepe sabía<sub>IND</sub> nada?

However, and again most surprisingly, SV word order in the main (interrogative) clause blocks the licensing of the NPI. In (7) there is an embedded subjunctive clause, but the interrogative operator is unable to license the NPI, and the result is ungrammatical:

- (7) \*¿María dijo que Pepe supiera<sub>SUBJ</sub> nada?  
 María said that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing?

Thus, the generalisation seems to be the following: whenever the surface order is SV the interrogative licensing of NPIs is impossible, as if the subject blocked the proper locality conditions under which licensing of NPIs takes place. But remember that word order (SV or VS) is not supposed to be relevant for Spanish *yes/no* interrogatives. This is the first mystery, one that calls for a solution in syntactic terms.

## 2.2. Mood clashes

The second puzzle I want to examine has to do with what I will call *mood clashes*. As is well known, current grammatical theory assumes that the features in C (in the Complementiser) are responsible for the mood of the sentence it heads.<sup>1</sup> If so, the immediate prediction is that a single root sentence should exhibit mood markers corresponding to a single mood.

However, consider the sequences in (8)–(10):

- (8) ¿Ven aquí inmediatamente?  
 Come<sub>IMPERAT</sub> here right-now?  
 ‘Come here right now?’

<sup>1</sup> Following Chomsky (1995: Section 4.5.4; 1998: 14), I assume that the features in C are responsible for mood and sentence type, so C projects in independent sentences as well. From those features illocutionary force is inferentially derived.

- (9)           ¿Qué           deprisa       va?  
               How           fast<sub>EXCLAMAT</sub> it-goes?  
               ‘It goes so fast?’
- (10)          ¿Ojalá           llueva?  
               PART           it-rains<sub>SUBJ</sub>?  
               ‘I wish it rained?’

The sequence in (8) contains an imperative (a morphologically distinct category in Spanish) co-occurring with an interrogative intonation. Exclamative syntax and interrogative syntax are sometimes different: cf. exclamative *¡Qué deprisa va!* (‘It goes so fast!’) vs. interrogative *¿Cómo de deprisa va?* (‘How fast does it go?’) (see Contreras, 1999: Section 31.3.1.1). Now, in (9), an exclamative syntax and an interrogative pattern appear together. As for the sequence in (10), it presents a desiderative particle with subjunctive mood PLUS an interrogative prosodic contour.

All these examples typically evoke a dialogue situation in which a speaker repeats an imperative, exclamative or desiderative utterance previously produced by a different speaker. This is why they are usually called *echo-questions*; however, as we will see later, these sequences can appear in other discourse environments as well (see Section 5 below).

Anyway, although they constitute marked cases and their distribution is heavily restricted by other contextual considerations, an explanation in syntactic terms is needed to account for the fact that markers involving imperative, exclamative or desiderative features in C—and sometimes involving even syntactic movement to a C position—could appear in an interrogative environment that requires its own C features. So this is the second mystery.

### 3. S-Interrogatives vs. MS-interrogatives: a syntactic proposal

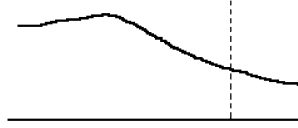
So far I have considered two apparently unrelated phenomena: some asymmetries in the licensing of NPIs in certain interrogative domains, and an unexpected co-occurrence of markers corresponding to various moods in the same sentence. Now I will try to put the pieces together and argue for an explanation that can make it possible to solve those two problems and accommodate them into the syntax of interrogatives.

#### 3.1. Standard interrogatives

As mentioned above, for Spanish it is commonly assumed that intonation is the only property that makes it possible to distinguish between declaratives and *yes-no* interrogatives. Relevant patterns are defined especially by the contours going from the last stressed syllable in the sentence to the end. While declaratives have a final

falling contour as in (11), *yes/no* interrogatives show a special fall–rise ending,<sup>2</sup> as in (12) (both examples from Escandell-Vidal, 1998):

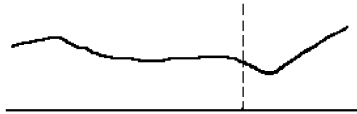
(11)



H a b í a m u c h a g e n t e .

‘There were many people’

(12)



¿H a b í a m u c h a g e n t e ?

‘Were there many people?’

Spanish is a *pro*-drop language with a relatively “free” word order—differences being usually related to the information structure of the sentence. Apparently SV and VS constructions are allowed both in declaratives and *yes/no* interrogatives,<sup>3</sup> as shown in the examples (13) and (14):

- (13) a. Vino Juan (VS order)  
Came Juan  
‘Juan came’

<sup>2</sup> This is so for European (Peninsular) Spanish: see Fernández Ramírez (1951: I, Section 44 ff.); RAE (1973: 111); Quilis (1993: Section 14). The patterns can be slightly different for other varieties: see Quilis (1985, 1993: Section 14); Sosa (1991); García Riverón (1996).

<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, it has to be noted that the case is different for *wh*-questions, since they typically involve the fronting of the *wh*-word and a mandatory VS order, as in (i) and (ii)—with the only exception of some Caribbean dialects (see, among others, Suñer, 1994):

- i. ¿Qué dijo Juan?  
‘What said Juan?’  
‘What did Juan say?’
- ii. \*¿Qué Juan dijo?  
‘What Juan said?’

- b. Juan vino (SV order)  
‘Juan came’
- (14) a. ¿Vino Juan? (VS order)  
Came Juan?  
‘Did Juan come?’
- b. ¿Juan vino? (SV order)  
Juan came?

The proposal that I want to put forward is that, contrary to the common assumption, in Spanish *yes–no* interrogatives the relative order of V and S is indeed relevant: more precisely, *standard interrogatives* do have mandatory inversion also in Spanish (so French, English and Spanish will no longer differ in this matter) and a fall–rise ending.

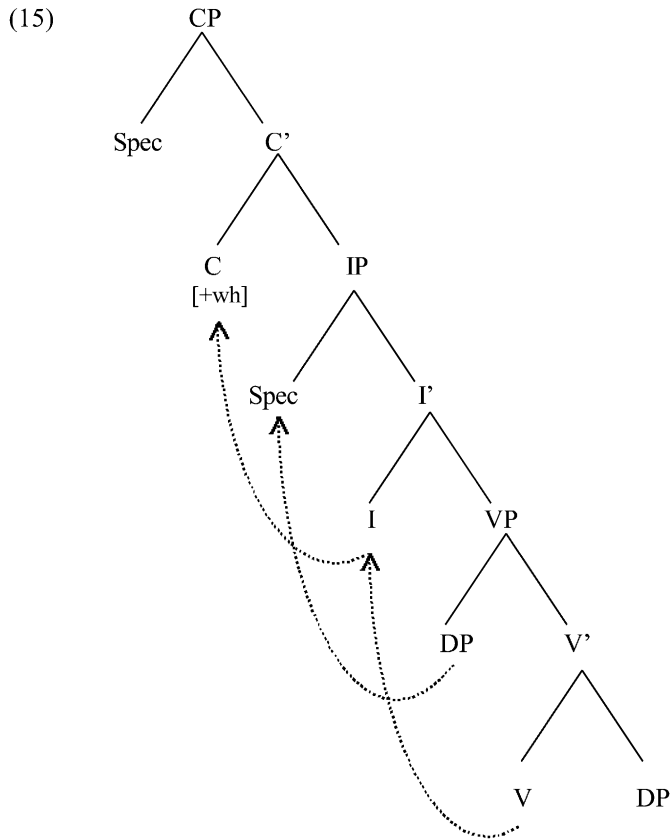
How is VS order explained? Given the usual assumptions about interrogative syntax, VS order is, in fact, what one should expect to find. Interrogative features [+wh] in C trigger the obligatory rising of the verb from I to C, as it is usually suggested for the rising of the auxiliary in English.<sup>4</sup> The structure is shown in the tree in (15):

As for the fall–rise contour, it can be seen as a phonological consequence of [+wh] syntactic inversion.

A further piece of evidence for the idea that the explanation must be built in terms of V-to-C rising, rather than subject postposition, comes from the fact that if the subject is merely in final position and the verb remains in situ, the sentence will not have the usual licensing properties of an S-interrogative. Consider the contrast between (3)a–b (repeated here for convenience) and (16):

- (3) a. ¿Te he dicho yo nada?  
To-you have said I nothing?  
‘Have I said anything to you?’
- b. \*¿ Yo te he dicho nada?  
I to-you have said nothing?
- (16) \*¿ Te he dicho nada yo?  
To-you have said nothing I?

<sup>4</sup> For brevity, I will stick to using I (Inflection) and IP instead of a more articulated structure of functional categories. As for the verb rising, other possibilities might also be worth considering. See Vallduví (1992a–c); Goodall (1993); Suñer (1994); Uriagereka (1995); Zubizarreta (1998) for different proposals about positions lower than CP as the landing-site of *wh*-words, which has implications for the possibility that the verb rises to C.



Thus, only the examples in (1)c, (2)a, (3)a, (6)a, and (14)a (repeated here for convenience) are instances of standard interrogatives—hereinafter, *S-interrogatives*, where S stands for ‘standard’ ‘simple’ or ‘sentential’—with both mandatory inversion and fall–rise ending (represented by the symbol  $\checkmark$  after the question mark):

- (1) c. ¿Tienes la menor idea de lo importante que era? $\checkmark$ <sup>5</sup>  
Have-you the slightest idea about how important it-was?
- (2) a. ¿Ha movido Juan un dedo por ti? $\checkmark$   
Has moved Juan a finger for you?
- (3) a. ¿Te he dicho yo nada? $\checkmark$   
To-you have said I nothing?

<sup>5</sup> In (1)c, though no lexical subject is actually visible, I am assuming that the null pronoun occupies a post-verbal position, the fall–rise intonation being, therefore, the crucial indicator.

- (6) a. ¿Dijo María que Pepe supiera<sub>SUBJ</sub> nada?<sup>∇</sup>  
Said María that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing?
- (14) a. ¿Vino Juan?<sup>∇</sup>  
Came Juan?

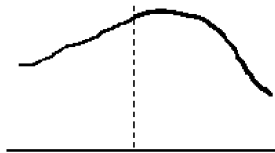
From a purely descriptive point of view, the proposal suggests a provisional line of explanation for the otherwise unexpected contrasts in (2)a and (2)b, (3)a and (3)b, and (5)a and (6). If only structures with V-to-C movement and a fall–rise ending qualify as S-interrogatives, then there is no reason to expect that sequences with SV order and rise–fall intonation should have the same syntactic behaviour. Thus, only *yes–no* interrogatives corresponding to the representation in (15) will consistently exhibit the usual licensing properties. SV sequences, on the other hand, must have a different structure, as I will try to show in the next section.

My proposal on S-interrogatives has some additional theoretical advantages: on the one hand, it provides a way to maintain well-established locality conditions governing the relationship between operators and variables—a keystone in syntactic theory; on the other, it precludes the otherwise unexpected differences between English and Spanish regarding interrogative syntax.

### 3.2. *Meta-sentential interrogatives*

What should one say, then, about sequences with SV order? Are they still to be considered interrogatives? As seen before, sentences like (14)b (also (2)b and (3)b) have different properties from a grammatical point of view: they exhibit both SV order and rise–fall intonation. The rise–fall contour happens to be the mirror image of fall–rise intonation.<sup>6</sup> Consider the pattern in (17) (from Escandell-Vidal, 1998):

(17)



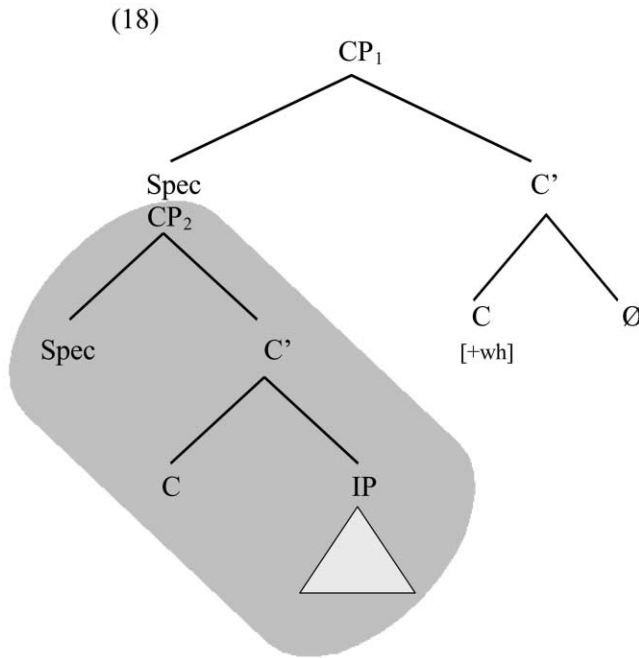
¿Trabaja mucho?

‘S/he works a lot?’

<sup>6</sup> This contour has usually been characterised as “conversational and affective” (see Fernández Ramírez, 1951, 1957–1959; Quilis, 1993). In Escandell Vidal (1998), it is proposed that this pattern is systematically related to attributed representations.

Any explanation of such structures must account for these differences in a principled and motivated way.

My second proposal is that non-inverted, rise–fall interrogatives (roughly, echo-questions) belong to a different syntactic class, its hallmark being the existence of two adjacent C projections. The structure of such sequences can be represented as in (18):



Structures like (18) involve two different CP projections,<sup>7</sup> to which I will refer as *root CP* (or  $CP_1$ ) and *'embedded' CP* (or  $CP_2$ ). The [Spec, CP] position of the root  $CP_1$  is occupied by the *'embedded'*  $CP_2$  (the shadowed zone). Only the latter has a lexically filled IP projection, while the root C has a null sister node.<sup>8</sup> To avoid the term *echo-question*, I will use the term *meta-sentence* for structures involving two adjacent CP projections, and will use the term *meta-sentential interrogative* (hereinafter, MS-interrogative) to refer to an interrogative structure like the one in (18).

<sup>7</sup> For other structures requiring two different, but adjacent CP projections, (see Plann, 1982; Dumitrescu, 1990; Suñer, 1991, 1993; Brucart, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> According to the current framework, it must be assumed that the root C selects a null complement, if one wants to have a Spec position. As for the actual import of the null complement, several possibilities are available, the most "natural" being that of assuming a null pro-IP (or pro-TP), the content of which is filled in by pragmatic inference (see Section 5). In any event, one has to keep in mind that this is a technical solution only, and does not mean that the null complement has to be syntactically present in order to be pragmatically interpreted; on the contrary, it is totally dispensable on pragmatic grounds, if relevance-theoretic views are assumed.

The representation in (18) is intended to capture the similarities between fronted *wh*-words and the “embedded” CP<sub>2</sub>, by postulating that they occupy the same position, i.e., [Spec, CP]. As will be shown later, this has some welcome consequences on the semantic side (see Section 5). However, unlike the case of *wh*-fronting, the configuration in (18) also shows that the ‘embedded’ CP<sub>2</sub> does not occupy the [Spec, CP] position as a result of movement. Since there is no lexical or functional material under the root C from which the lower clause has been extracted, then there can be no movement and no trace left behind either. This should not be surprising, since movement is not the only possibility. *Merge* is a syntactic operation taking two previously formed categories  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  and forming a larger unit  $\gamma$  that inherits its properties from one of its constituents.<sup>9</sup> Thus in (18) CP<sub>2</sub> occupies the [Spec, CP] position as a result of an operation of *Merge*.<sup>10</sup> From this hypothesis a crucial consequence can be drawn: unlike *Move*, which operates on a category already present in the derivation, *Merge* requires an EXTERNAL category to be added to the derivation. Moreover, *Merge* requires the external category to be completely assembled before merging.

In addition, being a full CP, the constituent in [Spec, CP] position is a *phase*. According to current syntactic theory,

“a *phase* of a derivation is a syntactic object SO [“the closest syntactic counterpart to a proposition: either a verb phrase in which all theta roles are assigned or a full clause including tense and force.”] derived by cyclic choice of lexical items. Only CP and vP are phases: “A phase is CP or vP, but not TP or a verbal phrase headed by  $\bar{H}$  lacking N-features and therefore not entering into Case/agreement checking: neither finite TP nor unaccusative/passive verbal phrase is a phase” (Chomsky, 1998: 20).

Derivations proceed phase by phase; once a phase is completed, it spells-out and is no longer available for syntactic computation. In the present case this means that the ‘embedded’ CP<sub>2</sub> has to be totally assembled—and hence, it must be fully interpreted—before entering the [Spec, CP] position. The immediate prediction is that CP<sub>2</sub> will no longer be accessible to syntactic computation, so it will give rise to typical cyclicity effects, as happens to be the case. The island effects are not a result of CP<sub>2</sub> being in the higher [Spec, CP] position, but rather a result of CP being a

<sup>9</sup> “The operation *Merge* forms K from  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ . Minimally, K should consist only of  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , so  $K = \{\alpha, \beta\}$ . More information is needed about K, however: its category (its label) and the nature of the merger, either substitution or adjunction—the former at least not entering into narrow syntax, on the sparsest assumptions, but needed for the phonological component and LF-interpretation.(...) Given the asymmetry, it is natural to conclude that the adjoined element  $\alpha$  leaves the category type unchanged: the target  $\beta$  projects. Hence adjunction of  $\alpha$  to  $\beta$  forms  $K = \{G, \alpha, \beta\}$  where G is the label of  $\beta$ . Eliminating redundancy, the operation forms  $K = \alpha, \beta$ . (...) let us take the distinction between substitution and adjunction to be the (minimal) distinction between the set  $\{\alpha, \beta\}$  and the ordered pair  $\alpha, \beta$ ,  $\alpha$  adjoined to  $\beta$ ” (Chomsky, 1998: 50).

<sup>10</sup> As Olga Fernández Soriano (p.c.) has pointed out, this exemplifies *Merge* of a CP into a [Spec, CP] position, a case not previously attested in the literature, but nevertheless possible both on theoretical and conceptual grounds.

*phase*. This is a crucial point, since there is no need for any ad hoc stipulation about the ‘frozen’ status of the lower CP, as Sobin (1990) is compelled to suggest to account for the behaviour of echo-questions as syntactic islands. If my proposal is accepted, this behaviour follows in a natural way from the representation in (18).

From the representation in (18) a number of other significant properties can be derived. To begin with, it suggests a remarkable resemblance between a meta-sentence and a complex sentence, namely the fact that the structure has two CP projections. However, while in a complex sentence we find two CP projections and two IP projections, in (18) there are two CPs, but only one IP, the one corresponding to the ‘embedded’ CP<sub>2</sub>. Despite this difference, I will argue, the relationship between the two CP projections can be explained along the usual lines.

As is well known, in a complex sentence, the root CP is responsible for the mood of the whole construction and determines its phonological and semantic properties. The embedded CP, on the other hand, determines only the grammatical properties of the material falling under it. Consider, for example, the sentence in (19):

(19) [CP<sub>-wh</sub> I wonder [CP<sub>+wh</sub> how he did it]]

The root CP is declarative, while the embedded one is interrogative. As a result, the whole sequence is declarative, from a syntactic, phonological and semantic point of view, though it contains an interrogative as a constituent. The [+wh] features in the lower C are responsible for some of the properties of its IP sister node only (particularly the fronting of the *wh*-word *how*), but they cannot determine the grammatical status of the construction.

The same reasoning can be extended to the structure in (18). The whole sequence is interrogative, with an interrogative (abstract) meaning and a rise–fall intonation, both due to the [+wh] features in the root C. It is, however, CP<sub>2</sub> that determines other grammatical features of the sequence, namely the occurrence of other mood markers associated to the ‘embedded’ C, and the properties of the internal structure of its IP sister node, including word order.

The root CP<sub>1</sub>, of course, cannot be expected to determine the grammatical properties of the constituents under the embedded IP, since there is a different CP projection intervening between them. The fact that only the lower CP<sub>2</sub> dominates an IP node explains why all ‘visible’ syntactic properties are those of the embedded CP<sub>2</sub>, while the phonological features and the semantic meaning correspond, as usual, to those of the root CP<sub>1</sub>.

### 3.3. Testing the proposal

To summarise, in the previous sections I have put forward a proposal on the syntactic representation of interrogatives. I have claimed that a distinction should be established between *standard*, or *sentential*, and *meta-sentential* interrogatives. S-interrogatives exhibit mandatory V-to-C rising (which results in a surface VS order) and a fall–rise intonation, as represented in (15). The root C is responsible for the syntactic, semantic and phonological status of the whole construction. MS-inter-

rogatives, on the other hand, are complex structures involving two different CP projections: the root C is responsible for the interrogative semantic import of the sequence and for its phonological features (a rise–fall contour), whereas the ‘embedded’ CP<sub>2</sub> is responsible for the overt syntactic properties, as represented in (18).

With these syntactic differences in mind, a straightforward account of the problems posed by NPIs and mood clashes considered above seems now within reach.

### 3.3.1. *MS-interrogatives and mood clashes*

Consider again the case of apparent mood clashes in (8)–(10) (Hereinafter, I will use the symbol ^ after the question mark to indicate a rising–falling pattern):

- (8)           ¿Ven           aquí           inmediatamente?^  
 Come<sub>IMPERAT</sub> here           right-now?  
 ‘Come here right now?’
- (9)           ¿Qué           deprisa    va?^  
 How           fast<sub>EXCLAMAT</sub> it-goes?  
 ‘It goes so fast?’
- (10)          ¿Ojalá llueva?^  
 PART it-rains<sub>SUBJ</sub>?  
 ‘I wish it rained?’

If the structure in (18) is adopted, then we can easily explain the co-occurrence of markers corresponding to different sentence types. Under the present proposal, those examples are cases of imperative, exclamative and desiderative clauses occupying the [Spec, CP] position of a root interrogative CP<sub>1</sub>. As pointed out, the interrogative features in the root C are responsible for a special interrogative contour (the rise–fall pattern) and also for the interrogative import of the whole sequence—an issue to which I will come back later (Section 4). Other properties, such as word order or the occurrence of non-interrogative mood markers, depend on the features of the embedded CP<sub>2</sub>.

If this approach is on the right track, we would expect that not only imperative, exclamative or desiderative but also interrogative and declarative clauses should appear as ‘embedded’ sequences in MS-interrogatives. And this is, in fact, what happens, as illustrated in (20) and (21):

- (20) a.       ¿Si           me       parece bien?^  
 Whether to-me it-seems well?  
 ‘Is it all right with me?’
- b.       ¿Quién    me       lo dijo?^  
 Who       to-me it told?  
 ‘Who told me?’
- (21)        ¿Juan     no       sabía dónde estaba?^  
 John     not     knew where it-was?  
 ‘John didn’t know where it was?’

The sequences in (20) show interrogative sentences with its own interrogative particle *si* ('whether'), as in (21)a, or a fronted *wh*-word in (20)b embedded under a root interrogative. In these cases both CPs have a [+wh] feature—a fact with interesting consequences to which I will return in the next section. The example in (21) has an embedded declarative. What these sequences show is that the full range of sentence types can appear as the lower CP<sub>2</sub> in an interrogative structure like (18).

The example in (21) also shows that what we usually call an SV interrogative is merely an SV declarative (i.e., a clause with a [-wh] feature in C and an SV order) merged into the Specifier position of a root [+wh] C. If so, SV order is not really a constitutive property of MS-interrogatives, but merely an indirect piece of evidence pointing to the fact that the structure consists of two different CP projections. Declarative syntax under interrogative intonation is just a special case of a much more general phenomenon.

In addition, since declaratives can also have a VS order—depending on a variety of factors, such as information structure or kind of predicate, among others—, one can also expect to find VS declaratives as the lower clause in the structure in (18). Thus, a VS sequence such as the one in (22):

- (22)       ¿Ha llegado Juan?  
              Has arrived Juan?

will be assigned the representation in (15) if uttered with a fall–rise ending, as in (23)a, but the representation in (18) if uttered with a rise–fall intonation, as in (23)b.

- (23) a.   ¿Ha llegado Juan?<sup>∨</sup>  
              Has arrived Juan?  
              'Did Juan arrive?'  
      b.   ¿Ha llegado Juan?<sup>^</sup>  
              Has arrived Juan?  
              'Juan has arrived?'

In (23)a the verb has raised to C as the result of interrogative V-to-C movement, and the structure corresponds to a S-interrogative; in (23)b, on the other hand, the verb remains in situ, and the structure is a MS-interrogative. As we will see later, the distribution and the interpretation of these two sequences supports the expectations.

### 3.3.2. *MS-interrogatives and NPI licensing*

The structure suggested in (18) seems to account for mood clashes appropriately. What about the asymmetries in NPI licensing?

Consider again the critical cases in (2) and (3). The sentences in (2)a and (3)a are S-interrogatives. The interrogative operator and the NPI are in the same syntactic domain (there is only one CP), and therefore the NPI is properly licensed in the domain of the operator. The situation is, however, different for (2)b and (3)b. There is again an interrogative operator AND an NPI, but being in an MS-interrogative, they are constituents of different syntactic domains: the operator is in the root CP,

and the NPI is a constituent of the ‘embedded’ CP; therefore, no local relationship can be established between them.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the embedded CP is a phase and has to be completely assembled before merging, so the reason for the ungrammaticality of (2)b and (3)b is simply the same that can be used to explain the ill-formedness of (1)a: the NPI is not licensed in the relevant syntactic domain (the embedded CP), so the structure is ungrammatical. The same holds for the lower CP in (2)b and (3)b. The NPI belongs to an affirmative CP where it cannot be properly licensed.

Now, if this account is correct, one should expect that the NPI in the lower clause would be properly licensed only if the embedded CP is itself interrogative—so it has its own [+wh] features. This prediction is in fact borne out, as the grammaticality of the sequences in (24) illustrates:

- (24) a. ¿Si Juan ha movido un dedo por ti?  
 Whether Juan has moved a finger for you?  
 Has Juan lifted a finger for you?
- b. ¿Si yo le he dicho nada?  
 Whether I to-him have said nothing?  
 Have I said anything to him?

In these examples, the occurrence of *si* (‘whether’) marks the lower CP as interrogative. In this environment, the NPIs *mover un dedo* (‘to lift a finger’) and *nada* (‘nothing’) are properly licensed and the result is grammatical. Notice that it is not the root CP—though it is interrogative as well—, but the ‘embedded’ one that licenses the NPI. So the contrast between (2)b–(3)b, on the one hand, and (24)a–(24)b, on the other, is due to the different status of the lower CP: only when it is interrogative can the NPI be licensed.

The hypothesis put forward in (18) about what I have been calling *MS-interrogatives* seems to solve the mystery of the strange behaviour of some interrogatives, at least on the syntactic side. But what are the semantic consequences of this proposal? And what does it have to do with interpretive use?

#### 4. MS-interrogatives as metarepresentations

What I want to suggest in this section is that the relevant generalisation on the semantics of MS-interrogatives is to be captured in terms of metarepresentations (Leslie, 1987, 1994; Sperber, 1994; Baron-Cohen, 1995; Carruthers and Smith, 1996; Wilson, 2000; Sperber, 2000) and interpretive use. More specifically, I will argue that, as a direct result of their syntactic properties, MS-interrogatives are specialised for (doubly-) interpretive use.

<sup>11</sup> As an anonymous *Lingua* reviewer points out, there are some syntactic environments in which an operator in the main clause can license an NPI in the embedded clause. This issue will be discussed with more detail in Section 6.

As is well known, interrogatives are propositional functions (or open propositions), since they contain a variable. They have a *focus/presupposition* articulation. The variable acts as the *focus* and falls under the scope of the interrogative operator; the content outside the operator's domain is the *presupposition*.

This twofold structure has a clear syntactic manifestation. Consider *wh*-interrogatives. The focus is the constituent occupying the [Spec, CP] position. It appears syntactically detached from the remainder of the sentence, and it is the ONLY constituent that falls under the scope of the interrogative operator. The material outside the scope of the operator is the presupposition.

As is also well known, in the relevance-theoretic framework interrogatives are seen as a case of grammaticalisation of interpretive use (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995: 228–229): they represent desirable thoughts, i.e., they are “interpretations of answers that the speaker would regard as relevant if true.” (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 252). The answer—the proposition evoked by the interrogative structure—is formed by providing a specific value for the variable, in accordance with the conditions imposed by the presupposition. In other words, the presupposition acts as a restrictor for the resolution of the variable. So, the interrogative *Who brought the apple pie?* calls for an answer in which a particular individual is identified that fulfils the condition of the presupposition, that is, the condition of ‘someone having brought the apple pie’. What you have, thus, is an assumption schema of the form ‘*x* bought the apple pie’ that stands for a propositional representation.

MS-interrogatives, on the other hand, exhibit a rather different set of properties. To begin with, in the representation in (18) the *focus/presupposition* distinction does not affect the clausal structure, in the sense that the clause is not split into these two logical parts. The only existing clause is located as a whole in the [Spec, CP] position—hence on the side of the focus—and no constituent appears as presupposed material (the null complement). This results in a configuration in which no overt (lexical) restrictions are posed on the resolution of the interrogative. In addition, the [Spec, CP] position (i.e., the position where the interrogative variable usually appears) is not occupied by a variable, but by a full sentential constituent.

These two facts might suggest that the sentences with the structure in (18) should behave in an obviously different way from other interrogatives. However, what I want to argue is that there is no need for any ad hoc semantic stipulation, and that the standard semantics for interrogatives can account for MS-interrogatives as well. Put in a straightforward way, MS-interrogatives ARE interrogatives, so they achieve their relevance as interpretations of desirable thoughts, in exactly the same way as S-interrogatives do.

In the relevance-theoretic framework, an interrogative is an interpretation of a representation that would be relevant if true. What is, then, the representation evoked by an MS-interrogative? The assumption schema yielded by a standard interrogative contains a variable and a presupposition, but in the present case we have neither.

The lack of overt presupposed material represents no difficulty. When the presupposition is not lexically expressed, it must be inferentially reconstructed to obtain a fully propositional representation. The lack of a variable could seem more problematic, since this might appear to be a natural requirement for any operator. But

what an operator needs is a properly identified domain, and the focus does the job. The explanation goes as follows. Any constituent characterised as focus falls immediately under the scope of sentential operators, such as negation. Unless otherwise indicated by special prosodic features or other grammatical means, adjuncts and lower arguments (according to the thematic hierarchy) are treated as focalised constituents by default. That is why the interpretation of (25)a can be paraphrased as in (25)b or maybe (25)c, depending on other contextual assumptions:

- (25) a. You are not going there alone  
 b. You are going there, but not alone  
 c. You are going alone, but not there

This explanation also applies to interrogatives, and accounts for the fact that the preferred interpretation of (26) is (27)a or even (27)b, but not (27)c or (27)d:

- (26) Are you going there alone?
- (27) a. Is it alone that you are going there?  
 b. Is it there that you are going alone?  
 c. #Are you going (or not)?  
 d. #Is it you the one who is going there alone?

The interpretation of structures containing focalised constituents gives rise to a cleft construction that detaches the focus from the remaining of the constituents. Thus, it is only the focus that falls under the scope of the operator, while the other constituents escape from its domain and are treated as presupposed material.

- |      |       |  |
|------|-------|--|
| (28) | ALONE | You are going there <i>in some way</i> |
|      | THERE | You are going alone <i>somewhere</i>   |
|      | FOCUS | Presupposition                         |

The same happens, I would like to argue, in the case of MS-interrogatives. The only possible interpretation is that of posing a question on the whole focalised representation, that is, on the whole embedded CP. The presupposition, which corresponds to the null complement in (18), is not expressed and hence must be inferentially worked out. In this sense, MS-interrogatives behave exactly like fragments,<sup>12</sup> in the sense that they express the focus only, and require that its corresponding presupposition be inferentially supplied. It is not difficult to guess that, in a normal situation, the interrogative fragment in (29)a, which contains focus material only, will be inferentially completed with the presupposition in (29)b, yielding the interpretation in (29)c:

<sup>12</sup> I am very grateful to Ignacio Bosque (p.c.) for pointing out this fact. See Escandell-Vidal (2000) for a more detailed account.

- (29) a. Coffee?  
 b. Is it [*coffee*] that you would like?  
 c. Would you like some coffee?

Thus, an MS-interrogative can always be paraphrased by a cleft formula like the one in (30):

- (30) Is it [CP] that *P*?

where [CP] stands for the ‘embedded’ CP<sub>2</sub>, and *P* stands for the remainder of the presupposition. As pointed out before, the exact content of the presupposition must be inferentially gathered from other contextual assumptions.

If this proposal is correct, then an answer has been found for the question about the status of the representation evoked by an MS-interrogative: it is always a *metarepresentation* (i.e., a representation of a representation) taking the representation corresponding to the embedded CP as its object. In fact, presuppositions have always a propositional form and, since the focus (the ‘embedded’ CP) is propositional in itself, what is obtained is a proposition on a proposition. The material in the [Spec, CP] is simply a constituent—though a fully clausal one—that must be inserted in a wider structure in order to obtain a basic explicature.

As for the semantic import of MS-interrogatives, it follows as a natural consequence from the usual procedural instruction associated with the interrogative operator and from their syntactic properties. Thus, a motivated explanation can be offered that makes it possible to account for their grammatical properties and semantic interpretation by invoking usual mechanisms only.

In this way, a unified semantics can be suggested for both S-interrogatives and MS-interrogatives: they all stand for a proposition (i.e., the answer) that would be relevant if true, the main difference being that S-interrogatives evoke a simple propositional form, whereas MS-interrogatives are always metarepresentations (i.e., they stand for a proposition on a proposition). This difference is captured in terms of syntactic structure in the trees in (15) and (18).

## 5. The attribution of thoughts: repeating and anticipating representations

As for the pragmatics of MS-interrogatives, a number of questions come to mind that concern their interpretation, their status as attributed representations, and their occurrence in discourse.

### 5.1. *The inferential development of the presupposition*

I argued that the interpretation of MS-interrogatives includes the inferential reconstruction of the presupposition under which the non-interrogative CP is embedded. To see how this proposal works, consider the following dialogue:

- (31) A: —Ya tenemos los resultados. Han aprobado Pedro, María y Juan.  
 ‘We already have the results. Pedro, María and Juan passed.’  
 B: —¿Juan ha aprobado?^  
 ‘Juan passed?’

B’s reply is an MS-interrogative that echoes the utterance *Juan passed* communicated by A in his<sup>13</sup> previous turn—hence the usual term *echo-question*. In the situation evoked by this dialogue, (32)a is a natural paraphrase of B’s reply in (31). Then, what the MS-interrogative conveys is that the representation in (32)b would be desirable if true:

- (32) a. Is it [*Juan passed*] that you said?  
 b. You {said/did not say} that [*Juan passed*]

Notice that the proposition [*Juan passed*] is only a constituent of the basic explication. And notice also that the inferential enrichment concerns all aspects of the presupposition, including the kind of predicate, but also the time of reference and the identity of the speaker to whom the representation [*Juan passed*] is attributed. It is the fact that this has been previously uttered that explains why the presupposition has been inferentially developed as *You said something*, where *something* corresponds to the focalised constituent (the focalised CP), as shown in (33):

- (33) CP            You said *something*  
 FOCUS        Presupposition

In the present case, B’s reply quotes A’s utterance and probably also conveys B’s attitude towards it: mistrust, surprise, astonishment... But notice that the same structure could achieve its relevance as a request for repetition of not clearly heard words. In both cases, the interrogative bears on a fully sentential representation.

## 5.2. Quotations and attributions

As for the distribution of MS-interrogatives, a superficial examination of the linguistic and situational environments in which they occur might suggest that they are just echo-questions [i.e., sequences repeating (parts of) a previous utterance], as in the exchanges in (34) and (35):

- (34) A: —... cogimos un taxi. El conductor no sabía dónde estaba.  
 ‘we took a taxi. The driver didn’t know where it was.’  
 B: —¿El conductor no sabía dónde estaba?  
 ‘The driver didn’t know where it was?’

<sup>13</sup> For convenience, I will refer to the Speaker as *she*, and to the Hearer as *he*.

- (35) A: —¿Te gusta?  
 ‘Do you like it?’  
 B: —¿*Si me gusta?* ¡Me ENCANTA!  
 ‘Do I like it? I love it!’

These examples might suggest that the explanation for the use of this kind of sequences has to do with the fact that they are adjacent copies or repetitions of a previous utterance (and in fact, they are). And the enrichment suggested for B’s reply in (30) above, in which the presupposition inferentially recovered consists of a verb of saying, might lead to the same conclusion. (For a more detailed account of different uses, see Dumitrescu, 1994, 1998; Escandell-Vidal, 1999; see also Blake-more, 1994; Noh, 1995; Escandell-Vidal, 1998, 2000 for an account in relevance-theoretic terms).

But this account happens to be too narrow. There are a large number of utterances that are not limited to strict, quotative adjacency and still show the syntactic properties of MS-interrogatives. Consider the dialogues in (36)–(38):

- (36) ...y siempre trabajaré por ustedes. ¿*Si me presentaré como candidato?*  
 Si ustedes creen que necesitan, sí.  
 ‘...and I’ll always work for you. *Will I be a candidate?* If you think you need me, I will’
- (37) ¿Y qué vas a decirme ahora? ¿*Hazlo tú solo*, que ya eres mayorcito?  
 ‘And what are you going to tell me? *Do it by yourself*, since you are already grown-up?’
- (38) A: —Yo sacaré la basura. . .  
 I’ll take out the garbage. . .  
 B: —¿*Y yo limpiaré los platos?* Ni hablar  
 ‘*And I will do the dishes?* No way’

In (36) the MS-interrogative contains another interrogative: ¿*Si me presentaré como candidato?*. As a structure, it is identical to the one in the example (31); however, in this latter case there is no repetition of previous words. In (36) the speaker attributes to another speaker—most probably to her interlocutor—a question that he could have posed; and the speaker herself provides an answer to it, everything happening in the same conversational turn. In (37) there is again a fictitious dialogue, but in the opposite sense. The MS-interrogative represents not a question (as in the former case), but an answer: FIRST the speaker asks a question, and THEN provides the answer she imagines her interlocutor could have provided. In (38), the speaker B anticipates the words she supposes the other participant could have uttered as a continuation to his turn (see Escandell-Vidal, 1999, 2000 for a more detailed account).

To summarise: in the examples in (36)–(38) the MS-interrogatives do not repeat previous words; what they do is attribute a possible representation to an individual.

Representations can be both public (*utterances*) and private (*thoughts*) (see Wilson, 2000). MS-interrogatives can attribute any kind of representation, whatever its syntactic form might be, to any individual—including the speaker herself. The attributed representation is an interrogative in (36), an imperative in (37), and a statement in (38). What is at stake here is not merely a matter of *echoing actual words*, but of *attributing possible utterances or thoughts*. This is not just a matter of repetition, but it is real relevance-theoretic interpretive use.

Thus, in my proposal it is crucial that MS-interrogatives can also be used to attribute possible representations (that is, not actually produced, but anticipated ones). How does the interpretation proceed in these cases? Consider the example in (39):

- (39) A: —y, como Juan ahora está trabajando...  
 ‘and, since Juan is now working...  
 B: —Entonces ¿Juan aprobó? ^  
 ‘So, Juan passed?’  
 A: —Al final, sí. ¿No lo sabías?  
 ‘Finally, yes. Didn’t you know?’

Intuitively, what is under question is the fact that the representation [*Juan passed*] is a plausible one. Then, (40) is a natural paraphrase of B’s reply in (39):

- (40) Is it [*Juan passed*] that you think?

The paraphrase has the same structure as the one in (31), but a different kind of predicate has been used. This difference, however, is not to be related to any semantic aspect of the interpretation; on the contrary, it depends on the retrospective or prospective status of the representation. It is the fact that the representation has or has not been actually produced that determines the inferential reconstruction of a presupposition with verb of saying or of belief.

In any case, those are inferred aspects of the identification of the basic explication, so they are never a part of the semantics of the interrogatives themselves. Since the interrogative lacks presupposed material, an inferential reconstruction is needed for a number of parameters, including the status (as an actual utterance or as a thought) of the attributed representation.

## 6. Further discussion

Since my account differs from some previous analysis in several respects, some points can still raise a number of questions. In this section I will discuss them in more detail.

1. To begin with, my account crucially depends on a new proposal: that, contrary to the common assumption, inversion (V-to-C) is mandatory in Spanish S-interrogatives. One could ask why people have in the past assumed that inversion was optional.<sup>14</sup> In fact, what one should expect is exactly the opposite, the null hypothesis being that

Spanish interrogatives should behave in this matter as other languages do. However, several reasons can be identified that explain the tendency to undervalue word order, some having a syntactic basis, some resulting from the status of intonation in grammatical theory, some deriving from the very nature of the data under discussion.

The first reason is that in Spanish, as in any so-called “free” word order language, differences such as SV or VS usually do not give rise to strong grammatical contrasts. Obviously, there is a difference between the two possibilities, but it is better captured in terms of information structure, rather than of bare (un)grammaticality. This explains why word order has been an issue traditionally neglected by grammarians. On the other hand, as in any *pro*-drop language, the relative ordering between subject and verb is often invisible, so when a null subject appears it is difficult to assess its actual position. For example, as mentioned earlier, it is difficult to decide whether an interrogative like (41), in written form, has VS or SV order:

- (41)       ¿Ha aprobado?  
           Has passed?  
           ‘Did s/he pass?’

When speaking, the difference between the two interpretations can be clear from the intonation (fall–rise or rise–fall), but the fact that differences in intonation are not reflected in writing does not favour taking them into account either. In the case of *yes–no* interrogatives a further reason must be added: the possibility of topicalising the subject (see Contreras, 1999: Section 31.2.1) gives rise to sequences with an apparent SV order in standard interrogatives:

- (42)       Juan ¿llegó a tiempo?<sup>v</sup>  
           Juan arrived in time?  
           ‘As for Juan, did he arrive in time?’

In careless writing these kinds of sequences tend to be rendered as a single unit (i.e., *¿Juan llegó a tiempo?*), ignoring the topicalised item. To sum up, the fact that both SV and VS orders produce grammatical sentences, the existence of null subjects and the possibility of topicalising the subject hinder syntactic generalisations based on word order.

As for intonation, if it had been taken into consideration in grammatical descriptions, the contrasts between SV and VS interrogatives would have been noted easily. But though grammarians usually include references to various intonation patterns, the search for systematic relationships between grammatical properties (especially, word order and intonation) has not been undertaken before; nor has the relationship between formal properties (again, intonation and word order) on the one hand, and the whole range of possible interpretations (questions, polite requests, rhetorical questions, . . .)

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<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous *Lingua* reviewer for raising this issue.

on the other been pursued—with perhaps the only exception of an early attempt by Fernández Ramírez, (1951, 1957–1959) (see Escandell-Vidal, 1999, 2000).

Finally, as far as I know, the data I have been discussing here are new to Spanish grammar. The contrasts between SV and VS in interrogatives containing NPIs have not been described before; nor have the mood clashes. However, they represent strong intuitions, consistent for all the speakers I tested, so they call for an account in syntactic terms.

2. I have also suggested that two different CP projections are needed. Now, one might wonder whether it could be possible to dispense with the root CP projection. One could argue that the only relevant structure is the ‘embedded’ CP, since it is, after all, the one that determines the ‘visible’ syntactic features of the sequence, such as word order or mood markers. The special interpretive reading could be seen as a pragmatic effect resulting from the search for relevance.

Yet, I think that in the current framework, there is a principled motivation for interrogative features to receive an overt syntactic representation. The motivation is the following: interrogative features are absolutely required by interface levels. In fact, we do not merely achieve a different overall interpretation—a fact for which an explanation could be easily forwarded in pragmatic terms—, but we also find overt, perceptible differences in the form of the linguistic stimulus: MS-interrogative have a distinctive rise–fall pattern (Escandell-Vidal, 1998). If prosodic contours are to be given a phonological status—and for a number of cases, including interrogative intonation, this seems uncontroversial—, then the representation at the PF interface requires this feature to be syntactically present. The same holds for the semantic import of the [+wh] feature. These facts are captured under the generalisation that functional categories C, D and T “...have Interpretable features providing ‘instructions’ at either or both interface levels” (Chomsky, 1995: 349; see Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti, 1999 for a proposal about the relationship between functional categories and procedural meaning).

3. Now, one could ask, as an anonymous *Lingua* reviewer does, why the NPI in the [Spec, CP] position of the interrogative C cannot be licensed by these interrogative features, given that it is possible for an NPI in an embedded clause to be licensed by negative or interrogative features in a higher clause, as in the following contrasts:

- (43) a. \*He claimed that anyone was qualified  
 b. He didn’t claim that anyone was qualified  
 c. Did he claim that anyone was qualified?

Throughout this paper, following Bosque (1990, 1994), Progovac (1993a,b), Laka (1994), Sánchez López (1999), among others, I have assumed that the licensing of NPIs is subject to strict locality conditions requiring that both the relevant operator and the NPI occur in the same complete functional domain (i.e., the sentence for clausal negation). Thus, the default case is one in which both the negative operator and the NPI are in the same sentence. If so, what one should expect is that the interrogative features in the root C could not license the NPI in the lower CP across the non-negative, non-interrogative embedded C, which acts as an intervening potential licenser and creates a minimality barrier.

As for the possibility illustrated in the above examples, the notion of *phase* can provide an answer. Phases are assumed to satisfy a strong cyclicity condition: the “Phase Impenetrability Condition”

Given  $HP = [\alpha [H \beta]]$ , take  $\beta$  to be the *domain* of H and  $\alpha$  (a hierarchy of one or more SPECS) to be its *edge*. The thesis under consideration is (21):

- (21) In phase  $\alpha$  with head H, the domain of H is not accessible to operations outside  $\alpha$ , but only H and its edge.

The cycle is so strict that operations cannot “look into” a phase below its head H. H itself must be visible for selection and head-movement, hence its SPECS as well. Condition (21) yields a strong form of subadjacency. (Chomsky, 1998: 22).

If so, only the head and the edge of a selected CP can be accessible for computation. But in MS-interrogatives the lower CP is not selected by the root C, but adjoined, or *pair-merged*: “The asymmetrical operation pair-Merge [ $\approx$ adjunction] has no selector and is optional; the symmetrical operation set-Merge [ $\approx$ substitution] has a selector (typically unique) and is obligatory” (Chomsky, 1998: 51). Thus, distance licensing of NPIs, as in (43), is restricted to selected domains, so the immediate prediction is that it will not be allowed in the case of the unselected, lower CP in a MS-interrogative.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> In addition, it should be noted that the requirements for distance licensing are not only configurational, but also heavily dependent on other conditions, such as the class of the governing predicate and the mood of the embedded clause. Thus, for Spanish only some classes of predicates (including opinion, intention, assertion and perception; see Bosque, 1990 for further details) with a subjunctive clause complement allow it; factive predicates, on the other hand, systematically exclude this possibility, even though they select a subjunctive clause complement:

- i. No dije que Pepe {<sup>OK</sup>supiera/ \*sabía} nada  
Not I-said that Pepe {<sup>OK</sup>knew<sub>SUBJ</sub>/ \*knew<sub>IND</sub>} nothing  
'I didn't say that Pepe knew anything'
- ii. \*No lamenté que Pepe supiera nada  
Not I-regretted that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing  
'I didn't regret that Pepe knew anything'
- iii. ¿Dije yo que Pepe {supiera/ \*sabía} nada?  
Said I that Pepe {knew<sub>SUBJ</sub>/ \*knew<sub>IND</sub>} nothing?  
Did I say that Pepe knew anything?
- iv. \*¿Lamenté yo que Pepe supiera nada?  
Regretted I that Pepe knew<sub>SUBJ</sub> nothing?  
'Did I regret that Pepe knew anything?'

Thus, not surprisingly, the syntactic environments in which the distance licensing of the NPI is possible are reminiscent of those allowing *wh*-extraction from the embedded clause. Cf. *¿Quién dijiste que sabía algo?* vs *\*¿Quién lamentaste que supiera algo?* (see Sánchez López, 1999 for further details and references).

4. The proposal I made for Spanish can be extended to English as well, since both languages seem to behave in a similar way in many respects. However, there are also striking differences between them. For instance, a question that calls for an answer is why examples like *¿Si me presentaré como candidato?* ('Whether I will present myself as a candidate?') do not occur in English.<sup>16</sup>

The "odd" thing about this kind of sequences is the occurrence of a subordination marker (*si*, 'whether') heading an independent clause. This is a construction totally excluded in English. It is not, however, an isolated case in Spanish; declarative complementiser *que* ('that') can also occur in sentence initial position:

- (44) Acabo de encontrarme con el jefe. *Que* vayas.  
 I-just met the boss. That you-(should)-go  
 'I've just met the boss. You're to go.'
- (45) Es la misma canción de siempre: *que* no le hacemos caso;  
*que* es un cero a la izquierda; *que* no contamos con él. . .  
 It-is the same song of always: that we don't pay attention to him;  
 that he is a zero on the left; that we don't count on him. . .  
 'Always the same old story: we don't pay any attention to him;  
 he's a nobody; we leave him out. . .'
- (46) ¡*Que* no quiero ir!  
 That not I-want go  
 'I don't want to go!'

Though it clearly deserves a more detailed elaboration, a tentative answer can be suggested along the following lines. Suppose, as Chomsky (1995: Section 4.5.4) does, that every sentence contains a CP projection, no matter its actual status as independent or embedded clause. Assume that what we usually call *subordinating conjunctions* are the phonetic (overt) realisation of the features in C: a declarative C yields *that*, and interrogative C yields *whether* and so on. We can further think of the overt or covert rendering of such C features as being subject to other syntactic requirements. For example, one can suppose that the overt representation is only allowed in embedded clauses. It would make sense, too, to suppose that such restrictions can vary depending on the class of the Complementiser itself, and also that languages can differ with respect to the exact import of those restrictions. If so, the differences between English and Spanish can be described by assuming that English imposes more severe conditions on the overt realisation of C than Spanish does.

Of course, the occurrence of overt complementisers in sentence initial positions in Spanish is not totally unrestricted. Interestingly enough, all the examples in

<sup>16</sup> An anonymous *Lingua* reviewer raised this question.

(44)–(46) are to be interpreted as representing meta-sentences, in which the speaker is rendering attributed (or attributable) utterances, both to other speakers, as in (44) and (45), and to herself, as in (46). If this is true, then this phenomenon is amenable to the same conditions that determine the use of MS-interrogatives—an issue that I cannot address here, but that no doubt would deserve further research.

5. A *Lingua* reviewer also points out that, according to my data, MS-interrogatives seem to be commoner in Spanish than they are in English and s/he asks why this should be so. I definitely do not have an answer for this. If the difference is simply a matter of frequency, then it is possibly due to external, discourse conventions, to be related to cultural discrepancies regarding style of interaction—an issue I am not willing to address here. If this were the case, it should not represent a serious difficulty for the extension of my analysis.

## 7. Conclusion

It is time to conclude. In Escandell-Vidal (1998) I tried to draw attention to the fact that a special intonation characterised a class of interrogatives that were systematically interpreted as attributed representations. In this paper I have tried to show that there is also a syntactic basis for it, so differences in intonation point to deeper structural differences. I have argued that there are two different kinds of interrogatives in Spanish: S-interrogatives, with mandatory inversion and a fall–rise ending, and MS-interrogatives, which involve two different CP projections and have a rise–fall contour. This proposal makes it possible to capture a number of apparent syntactic asymmetries in a unified framework, regarding the licensing of NPIs and the co-occurrence of markers corresponding to different sentence types. I have tried to prove that MS-interrogatives—so-called echo-questions—ARE interrogatives (Blakemore, 1994), and that the semantic aspects of their interpretation can be explained along the usual lines. I have also tried to show that a systematic relationship can be established between a specific syntax (echo-syntax) and meta-representation. The fact that the basic explicature of a MS-interrogative is always a metarepresentation results directly from its syntactic, structural properties, though the actual content of the metarepresentation is a matter of inferential gathering. In addition, I have tried to show that working with both a formal syntactic framework and the model developed in relevance theory can yield, hopefully, positive results, and that this is likely to be a research strategy worth considering.

There are other related topics that I have not explored here. For instance, *wh*-interrogatives and interrogative fragments (see Brucart, 1987) can also give rise to structures with meta-sentential properties: I am convinced that the analysis I suggested can be easily extended to cover those cases as well. Nothing has been said either about the consequences of extending this hypothesis to the analysis of some cases of metalinguistic negation (see Escandell-Vidal, 2000). The issue of the relationship between attributed representation and opacity (see Richards, 1986) is a classical issue that also deserves a closer examination. All these topics can be the subject of further research.

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