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

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**Abstract**

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

## 1. Introduction

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

(1) (Attributed to Al Pacino)
Star Wars$_k$, yeah, that$_k$ was my first big mistake.

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

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

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

(3) a. **Dicen que Pablo$_k$... cuentan con ese imbécil$_k$.*
say that Paul count with that imbecile
b. *Dicen que Pablo$_k$... **que** cuentan con ese imbécil$_k$.*
say that Paul that count with that imbecile
'They said that Paul, (that) they count on that idiot.'

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

(4) They said that Kyle Quentin Wolf$_k$, (**that**) they don't count on him$_k$.

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

(5) (Neil Ashton, Talk Sport Radio, cited in Radford [2018: 123])
Do you believe that Arsenal$_k$, **that** they$_k$'re that far short that they need 8 players?

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

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

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

## 2. Prior analyses of HTLDs and of recomplementation constructions

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

(6) I said [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ that [$_{\text{TopicP}}$ my father$_k$, [$_{\text{FinitenessP}}$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ he$_k$ was …]]]]

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

(7) I said [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ that [$_{\text{TopicP}}$ my father$_k$, [$_{\text{Topic'}}$ that [$_{\text{FinitenessP}}$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ he$_k$ was …]]]]]

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

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

(8) (Zubizarreta 1999: 4221)
*Estoy segura de que Bernardo$_k$, nadie confía en ese idiota$_k$.*
am sure of that Bernard nobody trusts in that idiot
'Bernard$_k$, I am pretty sure that nobody trusts that idiot$_k$'.

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

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

(10) a. English
… [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ that [$_{\text{TopicP}}$ HTLD, [$_{\text{Topic'}}$ Ø/that [$_{\text{FinitenessP}}$ [$_{\text{TP}}$ … ]]]]] (cf. (4))

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 3. Recomplementation, bisententiality, and extrasentential HTLDs

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

(11) They knew that Diana$_k$, **that** Charles would never fall deeply in love with her$_k$.

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

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

(12) [$_{CP1}$ they knew [that … Diana …]]
[$_{CP2}$ ~~they knew~~ [**that** Charles would never fall deeply in love with her]]

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

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

(13) a. *Nicolás$_k$*, *no* *lo* *invitaron* *al* *pobre$_k$*.
Nicholas not cl$_{acc}$ invited acc+the poor
'Nicholas, they didn't invite the poor thing.'
b. [$_{CP1}$ ~~the topic/theme/it is~~ Nicolás$_k$] [$_{CP2}$ no lo invitaron al pobre$_k$][6]

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

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

(14) a. (Reporter, Madrid, 1973, featured in *El asesinato de Carrero Blanco*, Spanish Radio & Television Corporation, RTVE, 2014)

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Dice* | *que* | *un* | *coche$_k$*, | ***que*** | *le$_k$* | *ha* | *cogido* | *la* |
| says | that | a | car | that | cl$_{dat}$ | has | taken | the |
| *explosión* | *de* | *lleno.* | | | | | | |
| explosion | of | full | | | | | | |

'S/He says that a car, that the explosion has caught it in full.'

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

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

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

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

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b. (Grohmann & Etxepare 2003: 211)
*Me dijo que el baloncesto$_k$, **que** ese deporte$_k$ le encanta.*
cl$_{dat}$ said that the basketball that that sport cl$_{dat}$ charms
'S/he said that as far as basketball goes, s/he loves that sport.'

c. (Spontaneous speech, Spain, March 2023)
*Dijo que los estatutos$_k$, que bueno, **que** eso$_k$ era complicao.*
says that the bylaws that well that that was complicated
'S/he said that the bylaws, that well, that that was complicated.'

d. (Spontaneous speech, Spain, November 2023)
*Ya le comenté que la política… **que** no me gusta nada la corrupción que hay.*
already cl$_{dat}$ commented that the politics that not cl$_{dat}$ pleases nothing the corruption that there-is
'I already mentioned to him/her that politics, that I really don't like the existing corruption.'

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

(15) [$_{CP1}$ dice [que ~~…~~]] [$_{CP3}$ ~~…~~ un coche]
[$_{CP2}$ ~~dice~~ [**que** le ha cogido la explosión de lleno]]

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

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

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

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

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sentential complement of *decir* 'to say;' a null complementizer is ungrammatical in Spanish in this context (cf. (3a)).[8]

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

(16) She said that Mary$_k$, (that) they no longer rely on that ungracious dictator$_k$.

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

(17) [$_{CP1}$ she said [that ~~…~~]] [$_{CP3}$ ~~…~~ Mary]
[$_{CP2}$ ~~she said~~ [**that** they no longer rely on that ungracious dictator]]

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

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

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

(19) a. Spanish
[$_{CP1}$ dice [que ~~…~~]] [$_{CP3}$ … HTLD] [$_{CP2}$ ~~dice~~ [**que/*Ø** …]]
b. English
[$_{CP1}$ … says [that ~~…~~]] [$_{CP3}$ … HTLD] [$_{CP2}$ ~~… says~~ [**that/Ø** …]]

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

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

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

(i) *Que* *Mendívil$_k$,* *dicen* *que* *podemos* *contar* *con* *él$_k$.*
that Mendívil say that can count with him
'Somebody mentioned or I heard that Mendívil, we can count on him.'

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

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

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

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

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

(22) a. **Me* *dijeron* Ø *Marina*$_k$, ***que*** *no* *vienen* *sin* *ella*$_k$.
cl$_{dat}$ said Marina that not come without her
b. **Me* *dijeron* Ø *Marina*$_k$, Ø *no* *vienen* *sin* *ella*$_k$.
cl$_{dat}$ said Marina not come without her
Intended: 'They told me that they won't come here without Marina.'[10]

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

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

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

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

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

(23) a. My mum was asking me **if**, the scandals portrayed in The Crown$_k$, **if** they$_k$ touched many a raw royal nerve!
b. I wonder **whether** Kyle Quentin Wolf$_k$, **whether** we can count on him$_k$/that bastard$_k$.

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

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

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

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

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

(ii) a. *Rogamos* *nos* *envíen* *su* *petición.*
beg cl$_{dat}$ send$_{Subjunctive}$ your request
'We would like to ask you to please send us your request.'
b. *Rogamos *(que)* *sus* *hijos* *vengan* *con* *bañador.*
beg that your children come$_{Subjunctive}$ with swimsuit
'We ask that your children bring swimsuits.'

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

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

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

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

(25) *Ze zegt dat Peter$_k$, *(dat) hij$_k$ niet komt.*
she says that Peter that he not come
'She says that Peter$_k$, that he$_k$'s not coming.'

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

## 4. Conclusion

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

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

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

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

(i) *Sie sagt, Peter$_k$, (d)er$_k$ kommt nicht.*
she said Peter he came$_{V2}$ not
'She said that Peter, he didn't come'

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

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

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

(i) a. *Diz que la mi prima$_k$, dan-y$_k$ chucherías a la probe$_k$.*
says that the my cousin give-dat candy dat the poor-thing
b. *Diz que la mi prima$_k$, que-y$_k$ dan chucherías a la probe$_k$.*
'S/He says that my female cousin, they give the poor thing candy.'

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