

NON-MATCHING SPLIT INTERROGATIVES AND FOCUS EXTENSION IN SPANISH

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In this paper, I will analyze the properties of a (special type of) split interrogatives in spoken standard Spanish. Split Interrogatives are formed by a *wh*-question followed by a tag, a phrase that constitutes a possible answer. The overall structure is interpreted as a *yes/no* question (as in *what did John bring, a book?*). In standard cases (Matching Split Interrogatives, MSI), the tag (marked as focus), matches the case and thematic features of the *wh*-element (1a). Nevertheless, in Peninsular Spanish the *wh*-element may not match the constituent in the tag; instead, it is the neuter form *qué* “what” that heads the *wh*-clause (1b,c). This is what we will call Non-Matching Split Interrogatives (NMSI), which will be the center of our study.

- (1) a. ¿Dónde vas, a tu casa?, ¿A quién se lo diste, a Juan?
 Where are you going, home? To whom did you give it, to Juan?
 b. ¿Qué vas, a tu casa? / ¿Qué se lo diste, a Juan?
 Lit: What are you going, home? /Lit. what CLCL you-gave, to Juan?
 c. ¿Qué se puso, a llover?
 Lit: What did it start, to rain?

This is a poorly studied phenomenon, also present in Catalan (Contreras & Roca, 2007) and in Basque (Irurtzun 2017). In the few studies on the subject, authors have proposed a monoclausal structure for NMSI. Matching Split Interrogatives (MSI), on the other hand, have been analyzed by authors like Arregi 2010 as biclausal. There are, nevertheless, strong reasons to propose a (modified) biclausal analysis for NMSI. In particular I will show that that a full clause appears in the tag of NMSI which undergoes focus preposing and an ellipsis process similar to the one taking place in fragment answers (Merchant 2004). In fact, except, of course, for case matching, NMSI pass all the relevant (connectivity) tests proposed for ellipsis (binding, scope, n-words, etc.). NMSI are different to MSI in that the two clauses are not independent but there is a selectional relation between them. The main reason for this claim is that, contrary to MSI, the equivalent to a NMSI without the tag is impossible, as seen in (1’):

- (1’) ¿Dónde vas, (a tu casa)? Vs ¿Qué vas, *(a tu casa)?

It will be shown that there is a selected Speech-Act-related functional projection (we will call it FP) containing the (full) clause where the tag appears.

To support this hypothesis, I will center my attention in a property that has gone unnoticed both in theoretical and descriptive studies: in NMIS there is a form-meaning mismatch. Concisely, in (Peninsular) Spanish, sentences like (1a,b) can be interpreted as having the focus in the whole VP or even in the whole sentence, and not just in the constituent in the tag. In other words, the appropriate interpretation of (1a,b) would be like in (2a,b) where the (wide) focus is underlined:

- (2) a. What (are you doing), you are going home? What (did you do), give it to Juan?
 b. What (is it), it started to rain?

An important property of NMSI is that they may involve idioms, which in general cannot be affected by movement processes. This is shown in (3). In all these cases (taken from real oral speech), the interpretation in which the focus does not extend to the whole VP (or above) is obviously impossible.

- (3) a. ¿Qué lo has mandado, a la mierda?
 What did you send him, to the shit? (“What (did you do), send him to hell?”)
 b. Y yo ¿qué me chupo, el dedo?
 And what do I suck, my finger? (“So what (do you think) I am, dump?”)

c. ¿Qué se le hace, la boca agua?

What does it turn, the mouth into water? (“What (happens), his mouth is watering?”)
We will claim that that the reconstruction process taking place after ellipsis allows the focus to be extended covertly. This process also explains the fact the idioms can be affected, since the construction would be “restored” after reconstruction.

As structure will be proposed where there is a discourse related Phrase (FP) containing a sentence whose focus moves to its Spec position and the complement (the IP) undergoes an ellipsis process. This Phrase is akin to the Focus Position above vP proposed, among others, by Jayaseelan (2001), for cases like Malayan and other languages where Wh words have to be obligatorily contiguous to V. We propose that this functional head has a full left peripheral sentence structure, as in (4), where the elided material is highlighted:

(4) [CP [Qué] ... [IP I ... [FP tag_j [F' Ø CP...[IP... [I' I [VP...t_j]]]]]]]]

It is important to note that ellipsis is not obligatory and the whole structure may be present, that is, sentences like *¿Qué va a ir, a casa vas a ir?* (cf. (2a)), *¿Qué lo has mandado, a la mierda lo has mandado?* (cf. (3a)) are perfectly possible.

After reconstruction of the focused XP (the tag) to its initial position, the focus propagates at LF and the “extended” interpretation is obtained.

In fact, with NMSI, all structures where the tag can extend up to (different) auxiliaries (situated in the head I), are perfectly possible (crucially with the same interpretation):

- (5) a. ¿Qué **vas a ir haciendo**, un pastel?
b. ¿Qué vas, **a ir haciendo** un pastel?
c. ¿Qué vas a ir haciendo, un pastel?

It is important to note now that, for the extended interpretation to obtain (and idioms to be “broken”), it is crucial that the Wh element in the main sentence is the neuter form *qué*. This fact, among others, suggest that a possible analysis of NMSI can be in terms of what have been called *Scope Marker Constructions* found in (WH questions) in German, Hungarian or Hindi (see Horvath (2000) and references therein). These are (complex) interrogative constructions with a minimal wh-word (corresponding to 'what') which functions as a scope marker, a wh-operator quantifying over propositions (or alternatively, a semantically inert A-bar expletive element, depending on the analysis) in the main clause, and the corresponding wh element introducing the embedded structure. The German example in (6) is taken from Lutz, Müller & von Stechow (2000) and is interpreted roughly as indicated in the gloss:

- (6) **Was** denkt sie [**wen** Fritz eingeladen hat ?
WH thinks she_{nom} whom_{acc} Fritz invited has
'What do you think,? who has Fritz invited?'

I will propose that NMIS are wh scope marker constructions, similar to (6), but involving yes/no questions with a focalized element (as opposed to a wh element) in Spec FP. NMSI can undergo a process of ellipsis and further reconstruction, accounting for their unexpected properties.

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