

## **On the contrasts between *sí* ‘yes’ and *sí que* ‘yes that’ in Spanish and the structure of the Complementizer Phrase domain**

**Abstract.** The paper aims to account for a host of syntactic contrasts between the emphatic polarity particle *sí* ‘yes’ and its putative counterpart with an instance of the complementizer *que* –*sí que* ‘yes that’ in Spanish. Even though the two constructions appear to be synonymous in certain contexts, closer inspection reveals that the two elements display a number of non-trivial asymmetries in their behavior and distribution and convey different meanings. We thus argue that the two elements should be treated differently. Building on Hernanz (2007 and subsequent work), we propose that *sí*, which marks focal positive polarity, i.e., verum focus, originates in  $\Sigma P$  and then moves to FocusP. By contrast, *sí que* is directly merged in a projection below TopicP but higher than FocusP in the left periphery, does not encode polarity and instead renders the meaning that the speaker is extremely confident about the propositional content, be it positive or negative. We argue that *sí que* involves more CP structure than *sí*, which makes a variety of correct empirical predictions. The paper also explores dialectal microvariation across the Spanish-speaking world in terms of the obligatoriness of *que* in *sí-que* contexts. In this connection, we argue that the account pursued herein can be extended to Latin American varieties where *que* in *sí que* is claimed to be syntactically present albeit unpronounced, although it can be overt as well. We also investigate the possibility that *que* in such environments also performs an echoic function, along the lines of Demonte & Fernández-Soriano (2014). More generally, the findings reported here have consequences for word order possibilities in Spanish and allow us to draw a more accurate mapping of the left periphery.

**Keywords:** positive polarity, verum focus, left periphery, complementizers, quotatives, dialectal variation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the emphatic positive polarity marker *sí* ‘yes’ (illustrated in (1)a) and the sequence *sí que* ‘yes that’ (exemplified in (1)b). These two constructions are extremely frequent in present-day Spanish and have on occasion been deemed interchangeable (Carbonero Cano 1980: 167; Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2009: 199; RAE-ASALE 2009: 3004, among others). This is suggested by (1), where the meaning of the two sentences appears to be almost the same at first sight, as shown by the English paraphrases.

- (1) a. *María sí vino.*  
       *María yes came*  
       ‘*María did come.*’
- b. *María sí que vino.*  
       *María yes that came*  
       ‘*María certainly came.*’

We submit that the apparent optionality of *que* in cases like (1)b disguises different syntactic structures, which correlate with both syntactic (i.e., distributional) and semantic differences. We argue that *que* is not optional, since its optionality would mean that *sí* and *sí que* should be equivalent in all contexts, contrary to fact. Put another way, the difference between the examples in (1) does not merely reduce to a superficial matter of P(honetic)F(orm) spellout. Our major claim is instead that the sentence in (1)b involves more syntactic structure, namely a more complex left periphery/CP domain. Our major proposal is outlined in (2).

- (2) a. [ForceP [TopicP [FocusP *sí* [ $\Sigma$ P ~~*sí*~~ [TP ... ]]]]] [Hernanz 2007: 144]

- b. [ForceP [TopicP [XP *sí* [X° *que* [TopicP [FocusP [ΣP [TP ... ]]]]]]]]

The different analyses proposed in this paper for *sí* on the one hand, (2)a, and *sí que* on the other, (2)b, account for a number of novel contrasts between the two configurations in a unified way. Building on previous investigations (Hernanz 2007; Batllori & Hernanz 2013), we provide a number of arguments to the effect that *sí* is an emphatic polarity marker (in FocusP), namely a verum focus marker, whereas *sí que* marks the speaker's strong commitment to the propositional content (Hernanz 2007; Batllori & Hernanz 2013: 27; Poletto & Zanutinni 2013). Thus, our claim is that whereas *sí* is intimately connected to the polarity of the clause, *sí que* is related instead to its propositional content (i.e., the speaker is convinced of the truth of the proposition). In light of a number of arguments, including the observation that *sí que* can co-occur with *sí* in the same clause, with *sí que* invariably preceding *sí*, we contend that *sí que* occupies a phrase higher than FocusP (the locus of *sí*) in the left periphery, and speculate on the nature of such a projection. Additionally, beyond Iberian Spanish, we explore dialectal variation in terms of the (non-)overtness of *que* in *sí-que* sequences in the Spanish-speaking world. Lastly, we investigate the role of the complementizer *que* in *sí-que* configurations and pursue the hypothesis that it may be an instance of echoic *que* (Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014). A more general result of this paper is that the constructions at issue enable us to further our understanding of the delineation of the Spanish left periphery, a topic of heated debate in the Romance literature in the last two decades.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 summarizes competing proposals, including the evidence adduced in the existing works; Section 3 outlines the account advocated here and investigates its syntactic consequences; Section 4 explores dialectal microvariation in the manifestation of *que* in *sí que*; Section 5 looks into the

complementizer *que* in *sí-que* sequences and draws a parallelism between this *que* and echoic *que*; Section 6 concludes the paper and offers directions for future research.

## 2. EXISTING ACCOUNTS OF THE CONTRAST

Before we present our proposal, we will outline a previous account for the structures in (1); in particular, the analysis in question is presented in Hernanz (2007) and Batllori & Hernanz (2008, 2013), where the authors similarly argue that the constructions in (1)a and (1)b are not equivalent and therefore propose a different syntactic structure for each.<sup>1</sup> These authors adopt the split-CP system proposed by Rizzi (1997 et seq.), whose basic structural geometry is furnished in (3) (\* indicates that the functional projection in question is recursive, i.e., it can be iterative):

- (3) ForceP > TopicP\* > FocusP > FinitenessP > TP...

Assuming this structure, Batllori & Hernanz (2013) propose that when the complementizer is absent, the polarity marker *sí* is (externally) merged in  $\Sigma$ /Sigma Phrase, the polarity-encoding projection proposed by Laka (1990), and then moves further up to Focus Phrase, as shown in (4)a. When the complementizer *que* follows *sí*, Batllori & Hernanz claim that both elements are merged in Force Phrase. According to these authors, *sí* occupies the specifier of this projection while the complementizer is located in its head position, as shown in (4)b.

- (4) a. [ForceP [TopicP [FocusP *sí* [ $\Sigma$ P ~~*sí*~~ [TP ... ]]]]]  
 b. [ForceP *sí* [Force° *que*] [TopicP [FocusP [ $\Sigma$ P [TP ... ]]]]]

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<sup>1</sup> See Rodríguez Molina (2014) and Batllori (2016) for a diachronic study of polarity particles in Spanish. Specifically, Rodríguez Molina (2014) argues that the *sí-que* construction arose in the syntax of Spanish after its *que*-less counterpart. According to this author, *sí que* is not attested in Spanish until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Martins (2013) studies emphatic polarity in Portuguese.

### 2.1. *Emphatic affirmative sí*

Batlloori & Hernanz offer a variety of arguments in favor of the structure in (4)a, that is, in support of the movement of *sí* from  $\Sigma P$  to FocusP (see also González Rodríguez 2007). The authors argue that this operation is related to the features encoded by the emphatic positive polarity marker *sí*: [+Polar] and [+Emphatic]. The second feature is responsible for the particle moving from  $\Sigma P$  (where it originates because of its [+Polar] feature) to FocusP. This analysis naturally accounts for several syntactic properties of the marker *sí*, such as the word order triggered by this particle, which displays operator/wh-/focus-like properties. By way of illustration, it is well-known that Spanish is a “free” word order language. Although there are syntactic-pragmatic differences, Spanish accepts, among others, the word orders in (5):

- (5) a. Juan compró la tarta. (SVO)  
       Juan bought the cake  
       b. Compró Juan la tarta. (VSO)  
           bought Juan the cake  
       c. Compró la tarta Juan. (VOS)  
           bought the cake Juan  
       All: ‘Juan bought the cake.’

However, these possibilities are restricted if a constituent receives a contrastive focus reading, and is fronted and stressed as a result, as shown in (6). In these examples, *LA TARTA* ‘the cake’ is focalised and occupies FocusP. The presence of this contrastively focused phrase forces subject-verb inversion and thus the subject must appear in a position below the verb, as indicated by the contrast in (6).

- (6) a. \*LA TARTA (y no el periódico) Juan compró.  
           the cake and not the newspaper Juan bought
- b. LA TARTA (y no el periódico) compró Juan.  
           the cake and not the newspaper bought Juan
- ‘Juan bought the cake, not the newspaper.’

The same behavior is displayed by the particle *sí*, as indicated by (7). This can easily be explained under Batllori & Hernanz’s account: given that *sí* is placed in FocusP, it forces subject-verb inversion in much the same way as uncontroversially focalised constituents do. The reader is also referred to Villa-García (2016) for a host of arguments that polarity particles like *sí* are focal.

- (7) a. \*Sí Juan compró la tarta.  
           yes Juan bought the cake
- b. Sí compró Juan la tarta.  
           yes bought Juan the cake
- c. Sí compró la tarta Juan.  
           yes bought the cake Juan
- ‘Juan did buy the cake.’

A (dislocated) subject can appear before the polarity marker *sí*, as shown by (8)a. It is important to note that this is by no means a counterexample to Batllori & Hernanz’s proposal. In fact, they convincingly argue that in these cases, the subject is not in the specifier of TP –the canonical subject position– but in TopicP, which is higher than FocusP (see (3)). Note that if the subject precedes *sí*, it cannot be a quantified DP such as *todos los padres* ‘all the parents/fathers,’ as in (8)b, since bare quantifiers and non-specific quantified DPs are not good candidates for topic-like positions (Rizzi 1986, 1997, et seq.;

Cinque 1990, among others). As noted, this does not hold for a non-quantified DP such as *Juan*, which is able to appear in a topical position, as shown in (8)a.

- (8) a. Juan      sí      compró    la      tarta.  
          Juan      yes    bought    the    cake  
          ‘Juan did buy the cake.’
- b. \*Todos    los    padres    sí    compraron    la    tarta.  
          all      the    parents    yes bought      the cake  
          ‘All the parents did buy the cake.’

Another argument in favor of the analysis of *sí* in FocusP comes from its incompatibility with wh-phrases and contrastive foci, as shown in (9). The ungrammaticality of these sentences is immediately accounted for under Batllori & Hernanz’s analysis. Since *sí* moves to FocusP, it occupies the same slot as wh-phrases and contrastive foci (see Bianchi 2017 for a dissenting view regarding the position occupied by foci). Therefore, these elements compete for the same syntactic position, on the assumption that in languages like Spanish, only one focal phrase can occur per clause (see Ortega-Santos 2016 for relevant discussion).

- (9) a. \*EN LA HABITACIÓN                      sí      leyó el libro.  
          in    the room                                      yes    read the book  
          Intended reading: ‘He did read the book IN THE ROOM.’
- b. \*¿Qué alto      sí      es!  
          how tall      yes    is  
          Intended reading: ‘How tall he is!’

For all these reasons, we adopt Batllori & Hernanz’s analysis of the marker *sí* when the complementizer is not present (see (4)a). As noted by an anonymous abstract reviewer,

a question arises as to why *sí* moves or, put differently, why *sí* cannot be base-generated in FocusP. As far as we can see, nothing hinges on *sí* moving or being directly merged in FocusP, a proposal that gains plausibility in light of the claim that a polarity focus-related projection may exist in the CP domain, usually dubbed Pol(arity)P, as opposed to a TP internal one, namely Laka's  $\Sigma$ P (see, for instance, Larrivée 2014 and references therein). For reasons of space, we will not delve into this issue further, and continue to maintain the assumption that is central to our analysis, namely that *sí* is situated in a focus-like projection such as FocusP. In fact, before we move on to *sí que* under Batllori & Hernanz's proposal, it is worth considering the actual type of focus that *sí* encodes.<sup>2</sup> This is the aim of the following subsection.

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<sup>2</sup> As noted by an anonymous abstract reviewer, further corroboration of the status of *sí* as a focus marker in a position higher than  $\Sigma$ P is that it does not display the same distribution as *no*. Due to space limitations, we will not review the contrasts here, but the reader is referred to González Rodríguez (2007) for ample evidence to this effect (i.e., unlike *no*, *sí* cannot appear in clauses with a defective periphery such as absolute clauses featuring infinitivals, participles and *-ing* forms, non-finite embedded clauses and independent infinitival clauses; *sí* cannot co-occur with focalized constituents, but *no* can in a number of cases). In addition, *no* differs from *sí* phonologically in that the latter is always stressed. The question is whether *no* can be focal. Villa-García (2016) investigates this issue with particular attention to TP-ellipsis cases with a polarity particle, and concludes that in some contexts, *no* can also be emphatic. Likewise, as noted by another anonymous abstract reviewer, *Peter NO baila* 'Peter does NOT dance,' with focus stress on *NO* is possible (for such cases, it would be reasonable to propose an analysis of focal negation akin to that proposed for *sí*). See González Rodríguez (2008, 2016) and Martins (2014) for an analysis of metalinguistic negation along the same lines as emphatic positive polarity.





contrastive focus (*MARY came, not Peter*).<sup>3</sup> However, the cases at stake in this paper, namely sentences containing the particle *sí*, do not instantiate either type of foci, since no constituent containing lexical information is targeted as the focus of the sentence, and no new information is sought or provided. As shown above, however, *sí* displays focus-like properties, notably subject-verb inversion and is interpreted as emphatic, which begs the question of which sort of focal construction *sí* instantiates.

The type of configuration exemplified by (10)c is an instance of the verum focus (or polarity focus) construction, where the focus of the sentence is the polarity value itself (i.e., the focus is on the polarity component of the sentence) (Han & Romero 2004, Romero 2006, Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2009, Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2009). The emphatic character of verum-focus configurations is the result of focus on sentence polarity. This type of structure is illustrated in (11), where *sí* and the fronted phrase *bastante trabajo* are responsible for the verum-focus reading. Note that Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal (2009) show that (11)b does not constitute a case of informational or contrastive focus, nor a case of left dislocation; the only reading available is that in which the speaker is emphatically affirming the sentence ‘I already have enough work [to do]’. This also applies to (11)a, where the speaker wants to underpin that Luis works. As shown in (12), these constructions are incompatible with negation, contrary to what happens with *sí que* (see Section 3.2). This follows if *sí* is a positive polarity marker, which is clearly also the case for *no*: the two items would in principle compete for the same base-generation position in the sentence (by hypothesis,  $\Sigma P$ ), and if occurring simultaneously they would also render contradictory polarity values (though see Section 4, which deals with diatopic syntactic variation

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<sup>3</sup> We leave aside what has occasionally been termed exclamative focus.

regarding the grammaticality of the *sí no* sequence in Latin American Spanish, but with a value for this *sí* akin to *sí que* in Iberian Spanish).

(11) a. Luis    *sí*        trabaja.

Luis    yes        works

‘Luis does work.’

b. Bastante    trabajo    tengo    ya.        [Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2009: 168]

enough        work        have    already

‘I already have enough work.’

(12) a. \*Luis        *sí*    no        trabaja.        [\* in Iberian Spanish; see Section 4]

Luis        yes not        works

Intended meaning: ‘Luis does not work.’

b. \*Bastante    trabajo    no    tengo    ya.    [Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2009: 198]

enough        work        not have    already

Intended meaning: ‘I don’t have enough work already.’

RAE-ASALE (2009: 3004) actually distinguishes two different types of focus interpretation for what is referred to in that work as the focal adverbial *sí*: informational or contrastive/refutative. The first interpretation for *sí*, considered archaic for many speakers, is illustrated in (13). As the English paraphrase indicates, the sentence has an emphatic flavor. In this case, no refutation is effected, although for some speakers there may be an implicit contrast of some sort (perhaps the person in question tends to be reluctant to go to the doctor); in any case, this somewhat contrastive interpretation is not enforced.

(13) Le    dije        que    fuera    al            médico. Respondió    que    *sí*        iría.

DAT said        that    go<sub>Subj.</sub> to+the        doctor    replied        that    yes    go<sub>Cond.</sub>

‘I told him/her to go to the doctor. S/he said that s/he would certainly go.’

The second and most common interpretation in present-day Spanish, the contrastive one, is exemplified in (14)a-B and (14)b-B, where a previously negative sentence is refuted, thus making *sí* dependent on a previous discourse, or at least on knowledge shared by the interlocutors.

- (14) a. A: No llueve.  
           not rains  
           ‘It is not raining.’  
       B: Sí llueve.  
           yes rains  
           ‘It IS raining.’
- b. A: Margarita no viene.  
       Margarita not comes  
       ‘Margarita is not coming.’  
       B: (Margarita) sí viene.  
           Margarita yes comes  
           ‘She (= Margarita) IS coming.’

*Sí* is also featured in contexts where the preceding XP, which can be any phrase able to be left-dislocated, provides the required contrastive information, as in (15), where *la Pepsi* contrasts with *la Coca-Cola*. Such XPs constitute instances of contrastive Clitic-Left Dislocation (CLLD) (see RAE-ASALE 2009 and Villa-García 2016).

- (15) Hugo no traga la Coca-Cola, pero la Pepsi sí le gusta.  
       Hugo not swallows the Coca-Cola, but the Pepsi yes DAT pleases  
       ‘Hugo can’t stand Coca-Cola, but he does like Pepsi.’



(see also López 2009 for the proposal that the *sí que* sequence actually provides a test for topichood, in that the material preceding *sí que* must be topical in nature; more specifically, the relevant XPs can constitute different types of topics, as will be seen. In these examples, the most natural interpretation of the dislocates is as contrastive topics. In (17)a, for instance, the speaker means that they work well with that guy as opposed to other people, presumably other workers in the company).

(17) a. Con ese chico sí que trabajan bien.

with that guy yes that work well

‘They certainly work well with that guy.’

b. En el jardín sí que fuman.

in the garden yes that smoke

‘They certainly smoke in the garden.’

That *sí que* can be preceded by topical material is further corroborated by quotative contexts and embedded contexts where topics can be followed by an instance of the recomplementation (i.e., double-*que*) construction, which Villa-García (2015, 2016, 2019) argues heralds TopicP. In these environments, *sí que* is also legitimate after the relevant (sandwiched) topics, as shown in (18).

(18) a. Que con ese chico (, que) sí que trabajan.

that with that guy that yes that work

‘I say/somebody says that they certainly work with that guy.’

b. Dice Conchi que en el jardín, (que) sí que fuman.

says Conchi that in the garden that yes that smoke

‘Conchi says that they certainly smoke in the garden.’

Note also that *sí que* can appear in embedded clauses without a preceding topic, as illustrated in (19)a, which is similar to the corpus examples reported in Batllori & Hernanz (2013) (see also (19)b).

(19) a. Dice que sí que llovió.

says that yes that rained

‘He says that it certainly rained.’

b. ... por considerar que sí que actuó como cómplice.

for consider that yes that acted as accomplice

‘Since X considers that s/he certainly participated as an accomplice.’

[*Telediario*, Spanish Radio and Television (RTVE), Spain, 5 November 2016]

If the complementizer that heads the embedded clause is placed in ForceP (more specifically, in Force<sup>o</sup>), then there is no available slot in this projection to introduce *sí que* under (4)b. Yet, Batllori & Hernanz point out that these examples are not a problem for their proposal. According to these authors, such examples involve a structure in which ForceP splits into two levels, as assumed in (20). However, as far as we can see, there is no independent reason to argue that ForceP can be recursive (and not FinitenessP, for instance) and therefore, such reduplication should be avoided.<sup>4</sup>

(20) [<sub>ForceP1</sub> que [<sub>ForceP2</sub> *sí que* ...]]

Furthermore, the proposal in (20) is at odds with the data in (18), which involve embedded dislocates/topics that can even co-occur with recomplementation *que*. Unless

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<sup>4</sup> Batllori & Hernanz (2013) argue that it has been noted in the literature that clauses embedded under assertive and semifactive verbs have a more complex structure than clauses embedded under factive verbs. However, as we will discuss in Section 3.7, this difference is not related to a recursive ForceP, but to the presence of projections placed above FocusP.

three ForcePs are invoked, which is not a desirable assumption, such data cast doubt on the validity of (20). An additional argument against a ForceP-analysis of *sí que* can be offered in relation to the observation (to be made in Section 3.5) that the *que* of *sí que* creates a locality-of-movement problem for many speakers. As is well known, Force° *que* is a complementizer through which extraction can freely occur. If the *que* of *sí que* also realizes Force°, then the barrierhood of *sí que* is unexpected (unless what is creating the locality issue is the full projection containing *sí* and *que*, not just the head).

Consequently, we refute this account and argue instead for an alternative analysis of *sí que* that captures the data above as well as the additional properties of this sequence that we investigate below. We discuss the contribution that *sí que* makes to the meaning of the sentence in due course, although we anticipate that we concur with the intuition reported in Hernanz (2007), Batllori & Hernanz (2013), and Poletto & Zanuttini (2013) that rather than focusing on the polarity of the sentence (cf. *sí*), *sí que* centers on the speaker's commitment to its truth value.

### 3. THE PROPOSAL

As noted, we adopt Batllori & Hernanz analysis of *sí* when this particle is not followed by *que*. Consequently, we assume that *sí* is merged in  $\Sigma P$ , since it is a positive polarity –verum focus– maker, and moves to FocusP in order to satisfy the [+Emphatic] feature, as in (21)a. However, we differ from these authors with respect to the structure of *sí que*, which they place in ForceP. We also propose that *sí que* occupies a higher position than *sí* in the architecture of the CP domain, but a modification of Batllori & Hernanz's analysis is in order so as to account for the possibility of having topics before the *sí que* sequence (as noted in the previous Section), as well as to accommodate the additional empirical evidence to be furnished. We contend that this sequence involves more syntactic structure, namely



a more complex left periphery/CP domain. We also submit that it is not just the position, but also the properties of *sí que* that call for a different analysis from the one put forward by Batllori & Hernanz. We will defend the view that *sí que* signals a commitment on the part of the speaker to the propositional content following it.<sup>5</sup> The interim account that we pursue for *sí que* is furnished in (21)b, where there is an additional projection below TopicP and above FocusP, whose specifier is filled by *sí* and whose head is spelled out as *que*. We will also provide empirical evidence that *que* is a (left-peripheral) head and will offer evidence suggesting that TopicP can actually also occur below XP.

(21) a. [ForceP [TopicP [FocusP *sí* [ΣP *sí* [TP ... ]]]]] [based on Hernanz 2007: 144]

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<sup>5</sup> Present-day standard Italian also allows the sequence *sì che*, as shown in (i), which carries a meaning comparable to that of its Spanish homolog, as shown by the English paraphrase:

- (i) Ugo sì che lo fa.  
       Hugo yes that ACC does  
       ‘Hugo surely does it.’

In contrast to Spanish, however, *no che* is also licit in Italian (Delia Bentley, p.c.; Simone De Cia, p.c.; Poletto 2016; Poletto & Zanuttini 2013). Note that Catalan also allows the sequence *no que*, as pointed out by Rigau (2012). In this case, Italian *no che* can only precede a negative proposition, as in (ii):

- (ii) Ugo no che \*(non) lo fa.  
       Hugo not that not ACC does  
       ‘Hugo surely doesn’t do it.’

Thus, it seems that standard Italian has two ways of emphasizing the proposition content, dependent on its polarity, with *sì che* reserved for positive clauses and *no che* for negative ones. As we will see, Spanish only possesses the form *sí que*, which can occur with both positive and negative sentences. Crosslinguistic plausibility to the distinction between *sí* and *sí que* in Spanish comes from the fact that, as observed by Luigi Rizzi (p.c.), Italian actually lacks the equivalent of *sí* in examples like (8)a and (15), but *sì che* is attested in this language, as shown in (i).

- b. [ForceP [TopicP [XP *sí* [X° *que* [TopicP [FocusP [ΣP [TP ... ]]]]]]]]

It must be highlighted that our main concern is not the label of the projection where *sí que* is placed but the necessity of postulating this projection. In this paper, we provide empirical motivation for the need to project this left-peripheral phrase. We will make preliminary suggestions as to the nature of such a projection toward the end of the paper.

In what follows, we provide empirical support for the claim that *sí* and *sí que* mask different syntactic structures and that *sí que* involves a more complex CP domain. The relevant empirical evidence comes from several correct predictions of the analysis outlined in (21).

### 3.1. *Topics, foci and sí/ sí que*

The first prediction made by our account is related to the possibility of introducing topics before the *sí que* sequence, as mentioned in Section 2. The structure in (21)b allows *sí que* to be preceded by a left-dislocated phrase, contrary to what happens under Battlori & Hernanz's proposal, which assumes that *sí que* is hosted in ForceP (see (4)b) (unless we stipulate that topics—not just hanging ones, but also CLLDs— can be external to ForceP,

as has been noted). As indicated by (17), repeated here as (22), this prediction is correct, which supports our account.<sup>6,7</sup>

(22) a. Con ese chico *sí* que trabajan.

with that guy yes that work

‘They certainly work with that guy.’

b. En el jardín *sí* que fuman.

in the garden yes that smoke

‘They certainly smoke in the garden.’

In this regard, *sí* does not differ from *sí que*, as shown in (23). This naturally follows from our proposal, since *sí* is placed in FocusP and TopicP is higher in the structure (see also (3) and (8)a).

(23) a. Con ese chico *sí* trabajan.

with that guy yes work

‘They do work with that guy.’

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<sup>6</sup> Hanging topics (HTs/HTLDs) can also be featured above *sí que*, as shown in (i), which contains an epithet that constitutes the real clause-internal accusative object of the verb *invitar* ‘to invite,’ a hallmark of HTLD. Poletto (2016) observes a contrast with the Italian counterpart *sì che*, which cannot be preceded by instances of HTs.

(i) Tu prima, *sí que* no la pienso invitar a la muy mezquina

your cousin yes that not ACC think invite ACC the very petty

‘As for your cousin, there is no way I will invite her (since she is so petty).’

<sup>7</sup> See Villa-García (2019) and references there for the claim that PPs can be cases of CLLDs, despite the non-existence of (overt) PP clitics in Spanish.

b. En el jardín sí fuman.

in the garden yes smoke

‘They do smoke in the garden.’

Similarly, if *sí que* can only be preceded by *bona fide* topics (cf. López’s 2009 contention that *sí que* offers a topichood diagnostic), then the prediction is that focal phrases should not be able to precede it. This is corroborated by the following data, kindly provided by an anonymous abstract reviewer:

(24) a. \*Todos los padres sí que compraron la tarta.

all the parents yes that bought the cake

‘All parents certainly bought the cake.’

b. \*Ningún refugiado sí que deja su país voluntariamente.

no refugee yes that leaves his/her country voluntarily

‘No refugee leaves his/her country voluntarily.’

In (24), two quantified phrases, which generally do not sit in topic positions, appear above *sí que*, yielding an ill-formed outcome. This should come as no surprise, given that these phrases have been standardly analyzed as foci, rather than topics. Since *sí que* is in a high projection above FocusP, it follows that focal constituents should not be eligible to occupy the position above *sí que*. As shown above, this position tends to be topical, which excludes foci from occurring there. (As we will see below, an additional reason why foci cannot appear above *sí que* is locality of movement: *que* creates an island/barrier, impeding moving phrases from crossing the complementizer. Since foci are standardly assumed to be derived by movement, rather than base-generation in surface position, then focal constituents cannot appear higher than *sí que*.)

Uncontroversial foci are also not able to appear above *sí*, as shown in (9) above. In this case, the reason is different from that of *sí que*: *sí* is an emphatic positive polarity marker that occupies FocusP, therefore competing with any other foci for this position, as has been noted. This explains the incompatibility of *sí* with preverbal foci in the same clause (see the examples in (9)).

In sum, both *sí* and *sí que* behave symmetrically when it comes to the ability of topical elements to precede them. Having looked at the phrases that can potentially occur above *sí/sí que*, let us now consider the type of constituents that can follow them.

According to (21), *sí que* and *sí* should differ regarding the elements that can appear after them. In fact, *sí que*, unlike *sí*, should in principle be able to be followed by CP-related phenomena including topics and focalised constituents alongside preverbal subjects (see Campos 1992). This is actually what happens, as illustrated in (25). First, the example in (25)a shows that *sí que* can be followed by preverbal phrases including left-dislocated topics, as noted by Batllori & Hernanz (2013: 28). The corpus sentence in (25)b manifests a preverbal subject after *sí que* and the metalinguistic example from Hualde et al. (2010: 288) in (25)c features two dislocated adverbials between *sí que* and the finite verb.

(25) a. Pedro *sí que* al final lo va a llamar.

Pedro yes that at.the end ACC goes to call

‘Pedro will eventually call him.’

b. Ahora *sí que* sus lágrimas corrían.

now yes that his/her tears ran

‘Now s/he was truly crying.’

[CREA, Jesús Fernández Santos, *Extramuros*, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1994]

- c. Aquí sí que aún hoy, en la medida en que se conserva la  
 here yes that even today in the measure in that IMP conserves the  
 forma tradicional de hablar, podemos...  
 form traditional of speak can  
 ‘Here, even today, to the extent that the traditional way of speaking is preserved,  
 we can...’

[Hualde et al., *Introducción a la lingüística hispánica*, Cambridge, CUP, 2010]

In contrast, as noted above (see the discussion around (7)), *sí* displays focus-like properties (such as triggering subject-verb inversion) and therefore cannot be followed by any overt material apart from the (clitic+)verb in Iberian Spanish (RAE 2009), as shown again by examples like (26).

- (26) \*Pedro sí al final lo va a llamar.

Pedro yes at.the end ACC goes to call

Intended meaning: ‘Pedro will eventually call him.’

The contrast in (27) below illustrates that a similar situation is found with respect to focalised constituents. As pointed out by Batllori & Hernanz, *sí* is not compatible with this type of constituents, as shown in (27)b, which is due to the fact that the focal phrase and *sí* compete for the same structural position –FocusP. As shown by (27)a, however, *sí que* does not obey this restriction: there is a clear contrast between (27)a and (27)b, suggesting that *sí que* occupies a higher position, precisely as claimed by our proposal in (21)b (see the following subsection for further evidence).

- (27) a. ?En agosto sí que SOLO TRES PERSONAS viven en esa casa.

in August yes that only three persons live in that house

‘In August, ONLY THREE PEOPLE certainly live in that house.’

- b. \*En agosto sí SOLO TRES PERSONAS viven en esa casa.  
 in August yes only three persons live in that house  
 ‘In August, ONLY THREE PEOPLE live in that house.’

In the next subsection, we show that our proposal makes correct predictions regarding the compatibility between *sí que* and polarity particles.

### 3.2 *Sí que + polarity particles*

As shown above, topics and foci can in principle follow *sí que*. The example in (27)a is an instance of contrastive focus. In Section 2.1.1 we argued that *sí* is a focal polarity/verum focus marker. This begs the question of whether such foci can be embedded under *sí que*, as by assumption they occupy FocusP. The answer to this question turns out to be positive, as shown by the novel data in (28).

- (28) a. Ahora sí que sí.  
 now yes that yes  
 b. No acostumbro a compartir estas cosas, pero hoy sí que sí.  
 not tend to share these things but today yes that yes  
 ‘I don’t usually share these things, but today I am certainly sharing this [post]’  
 [Facebook post, Principality of Asturias, Spain, November 2016]  
 c. Tú sí que sí.  
 you yes that yes  
 ‘You are certainly able to do X.’

[TV show name, laSexta TV, Spain, 2017]

The facts in (28) are predicted under our analysis, shown abstractly in (29). Since *sí que* does not mark polarity, it should in principle be compatible with a genuine polarity

element like *sí* below it. Recall that we have analyzed bare *sí* as originating under the polarity projection  $\Sigma P$  and then rising to FocusP.

(29) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *sí* [<sub>X°</sub> *que* [<sub>FocusP</sub> *sí* [ <sub>$\Sigma P$</sub>  ~~*sí*~~ [<sub>TP</sub> ... ]]]]]]]]

The grammaticality of the data in (28) have important consequences for the characterization of the differences between *sí* and *sí que*. For one thing, the data confirm the ordering assumed under the analysis in (29): *sí que* is structurally higher than *sí*, which predicts that if they are to co-occur, as in (28), *sí que* will be located above *sí*. This is corroborated by (30), which follows naturally under the account in (29); the order *sí* > *sí que* is correctly predicted to be ill-formed.

(30) \**Sí sí que voy.*

yes yes that go

Intended meaning: ‘It is certainly the case that I am going.’

If the analysis proposed here is on the right track, then *sí-sí* sequences should be ungrammatical, as in this case two polarity particles would be generated simultaneously in  $\Sigma P$ . As shown by (31), this is actually the case in Iberian Spanish.

(31) \**Ahora sí sí.*

now yes yes

‘Now it is truly the case.’

Similarly, although the sequence *sí que sí* is possible, the second instance of *sí* cannot be followed by *que*, as indicated by the contrast in (32). This shows that *sí* in *sí-que* sequences and *sí* when it occurs alone are in different positions (i.e., the difference between the two constructions is not just a matter of the complementizer being present or absent).



(32) a. Ahora sí que sí te ayudaré.

now yes that yes ACC will.help

‘Now I will really help you.’

b. \*Ahora sí que sí que te ayudaré.

now yes that yes that ACC will.help

If verum focus can appear below *sí que*, as has been shown, then other verum focus constructions in addition to those signalled by *sí* should be able to occur below *sí que* as well. Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal (2009) argue that examples such as (11)b also instantiate polarity focus. They also argue that negative preposing too might fall under this category. If such elements pattern with *sí*, then they should be legitimate under *sí que*, a prediction confirmed by the sentences in (33).

(33) a. A este sí que poco le debe importar.

DAT this yes that little DAT must matter

‘It is the case that this one probably cares little about it.’

b. En esa boda sí que ni de coña me vais a ver.

in that wedding yes that not of joke ACC go to see

‘At that wedding, in no way will you be seeing me.’

Overall, the verum focus phrases below *sí que* just reviewed are naturally accounted for under the analysis in (29), where FocusP is projected below the position hosting the familiar *sí-que* sequence.

In addition to the *sí que* + *sí* word-order, our proposal also accounts for the compatibility between *sí que* and unambiguous polarity particles. Polarity elements such as *sí* belong to an inventory of polarity elements which includes particles such as *también* ‘too’/ *tampoco* ‘(n)either’/ *no* ‘not’. Our analysis predicts that such elements should be able

to appear below *sí que*, along the lines of *sí*, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. This expectation is fulfilled, as indicated by the examples in (34), kindly noted by an anonymous abstract reviewer (the pattern illustrated by (34)c is reported in RAE-ASALE 2009: 3006 and Batllori & Hernanz 2013).<sup>8</sup>

(34) a. *Sí que también sabemos que ahora es más fácil de diagnosticar.*

yes that too know that now is more easy of diagnose

‘Now it is the case that we also know that it is easier to diagnose.’

[Carlos Casabona, <https://aprendemosjuntos.elpais.com/especial/como-ensenar-a-tus-hijos-a-comer-sano-carlos-casabona/>]

b. *Ahí sí que tampoco quiere volver.*

there yes that neither wants return

‘S/he certainly does not want to go back there either.’

---

<sup>8</sup> Aritz Irurtzun (p.c.) points out that a further argument in favor of treating *sí* and *sí que* as different constructions comes from the behavior of *ya* (lit. ‘already’) in varieties such as present-day Basque Spanish. This particle has acquired the ability to signal verum focus (i.e., emphasizing the polarity of the sentence), as shown in (i) (see Camus Bergareche 2012 for the behavior of *ya* in Basque Spanish and Leonetti and Escandell-Vidal 2009 for an analysis of verum focus in Spanish). However, for Basque-Spanish speakers, *ya* cannot be followed by *que* under this interpretation.

(i) En casa ya fuman

in house smoke

‘They do smoke at home.’

Daniel Vergara (p.c.) further points out that Spanish Basque *ya* can actually occur under *sí que*, as in (ii).

(ii) En Bilbao *sí que ya* llueve

in Bilbao yes that rains

‘In Bilbao, it certainly does rain.’

c. A      María   sí   que   no   la   llamaron.

ACC   María   yes   that   not   ACC   called

‘They certainly did not call María.’

(34)b and (34)c show that *sí que* is compatible with a negative particle. This would be surprising if *sí que* were a positive polarity marker, since positive and negative particles are incompatible, as shown in (35), which is ungrammatical in Iberian Spanish.

(35) a. \*Ahí      sí   tampoco   quiere   volver.

there   yes   neither   wants   return

‘S/he certainly does not want to go back there either.’

b. \*A      María   sí   no   la   llamaron.

ACC   María   yes   not   ACC   called

‘They certainly did not call María.’

Thus, the grammaticality of the examples in (34) strongly confirms that *sí que* is not a polarity marker, which is consonant with the syntactic analysis put forward here, since *sí que*, unlike *sí*, *tampoco*, *también* and *no*, is not merged in  $\Sigma P$ . As noted in Section 1, *sí que* marks the speaker’s strong commitment with respect to the propositional content following it, regardless of whether it is a positive sentence or a negative sentence (Hernanz 2007; see also Poletto & Zanutinni 2013). More specifically, the negative polarity particle contributes to the propositional meaning of the sentences in (34)b and (34)c, since it denotes that the event did not take place; in other words, it is responsible for the sentence being negative. The sequence *sí que* therefore does not determine the polarity value of the construction –it is not a polarity marker like *sí*– but instead modifies the whole proposition expressing the speaker’s commitment to the propositional content (e.g., in (34)c, *sí que* conveys the meaning that the speaker is really certain that the event of calling María did not take place).

Before describing more precisely the interpretation of *sí que*, we will now show by means of formal mechanisms that the polarity value of (34)b and (34)c is established by the negative marker, and not by *sí que*. In cases of coordination with agreeing polarity values, the polarity particle *también* ‘too’ and *tampoco* ‘(n)either’ are used, contingent on the polarity of the first conjunct clause. This is shown by the contrast in (36). In (36)a, which bears positive polarity, *también* ‘too’ needs to be employed; in (36)b, where the polarity is negative, *tampoco* ‘(n)either’ must be used (Brucart 1999). If we take (34)c and coordinate it with another sentence involving TP-ellipsis, as in (37), the only possible option is the one where *tampoco* ‘(n)either’ appears, which confirms that the polarity of (34)c is in fact negative, in spite of the appearance of *sí que* in the sentence.

(36) a. (\*No) llamaron a            María y            a            Pedro también.

not called    ACC            María and    ACC            Pedro too

b. \*(No) llamaron a    María y            a            Pedro tampoco.

not    called    ACC María and    ACC Pedro neither

(37) A    María sí            que no    la            llamaron, y            a            Pedro {tampoco/ \*también}.

ACC María yes            that not    ACC called            and ACC    Pedro neither            too

‘They certainly did not call María, and they didn’t call Pedro either.’

The situation in (38) below mirrors that in (37), the only difference being that the polarity value of the sentence is positive in this case and is established by the emphatic particle *sí* or by the null polarity operator involved in neutral positive polarity sentences in Spanish (represented as  $\emptyset$ ). Not surprisingly, such patterns require *también* rather than *tampoco*. *Sí que*, much like in (37), modifies the whole proposition and is unrelated to polarity.

(38) A    María   sí    que {sí/ Ø} la    llamaron (y    a    Pedro también/\*tampoco).

ACC María yes that yes ACC called and ACC Pedro too / neither

‘They certainly {did call/ called} María (and Pedro too).’

Further evidence that the polarity of the sentence introduced by *sí que* is not necessarily positive, as would be the case if *sí que* were a polarity marker —given that this sequence contains the word *sí*— comes from sentences like (39), which include an emphatic polarity marker at the end, preceded by a prosodic boundary (i.e., an intonational break).

(39) a. A    María   sí    que    la    llamaron,   sí/\*no.

ACC    María   yes    that    ACC   called    yes/not

‘They certainly did call María.’

b. A    María   sí    que    no la    llamaron,    no/\*sí.

ACC    María   yes    that    not ACC   called    not/yes

‘They certainly did not call María.’

As the data in (39) illustrate, the choice between *sí* or *no* ‘yes/no(t)’ at the end of the relevant sentence is parasitic on the polarity of the clause. This emphatic element placed at the end must bear the same polarity value as that of the sentence. In (39)a, the neutral positive polarity marked by Ø can only co-occur with a positive sentence-last emphatic marker —*sí*; in (39)b, however, which includes the negative polarity marker *no*, only a final *no* can occur. This again confirms that the polarity value of the proposition introduced by *sí que* can be either positive or negative. Furthermore, the data substantiate the claim made here that *sí que* does not mark polarity in Spanish.

Once we have shown the *sí que* is not a polarity marker, we will devote some paragraphs to the semantic contribution of *sí que*. Since the goal of this paper is not to develop a formal semantic analysis of this construction, we will provide only a description

—an intuitive characterization— of the main interpretative characteristics of *sí que* (the echoic flavor of *sí que* will be discussed in Section 5).

### 3.3. *Sí que as a marker of the speaker's commitment to the content of the proposition*

The data provided above indicates that *sí que* and *sí* are not equivalent, despite the fact that they are interchangeable in a context like (40), where B's response can –but need not– include the complementizer.

(40) A: No llamó a María.

no called ACC María

‘S/he did not call to María.’

B: Sí llamó a María / Sí que Ø llamó a María.

yes called ACC María yes that called ACC María

‘S/he did call María.’ / ‘S/he certainly called María.’

When the complementizer is not present, *sí* functions as the polarity operator of the sentence, that is, it determines its emphatic affirmative value (and tends to be translated into English by using an emphatic form of the auxiliary *do*). The emphatic flavor is due to the fact that *sí* refutes a previous negation; it changes the polarity value of the sentence (Hernanz 2007; González Rodríguez 2009, 2016). Thus, when *sí* is present, the focus of the sentence is the polarity value and as a result we obtain a verum focus construction (see Section 2.1.1).

In contrast, when *sí* is followed by *que*, this sequence tends to co-occur with the null affirmative polarity operator ( $\emptyset$ ), which is responsible for the positive value of the sentence (see Section 2.1.1). As mentioned above, *sí que* indicates the speaker's strong commitment to the propositional content, which explains, on the one hand, why *sí que*, in analogous

fashion to *sí*, has an emphatic flavor (viz. the use of *certainly* in the relevant English paraphrase) and, on the other hand, why *sí que*, unlike *sí*, does not by itself change the polarity of the proposition. What the version with *sí que* does in (40) is to assert the proposition that s/he called María. Poletto & Zanuttini (2013: 126) claim that the Italian equivalent of the relevant sentence “reverses the scale of truth values: the truth value to be associated with the proposition is the opposite than the one attributed to it in the assertion.” However, it should be noted that whereas in Italian *sì che* is always associated with positive polarity (*no che* + neg. would be the construction used in negative sentences), *sí que* can be followed both by positive and negative polarity, a matter that we turn to immediately.

So far, as shown in (40), *sí* and *sí que* can appear in a context where the polarity value of a previous construction is reversed. Nonetheless, there are contexts in which *sí que* cannot be replaced by *sí* (Hernanz 2007), which corroborates that *sí que* and *sí* also mask semantic differences. Consider, for example, the context in (41), which involves sentences that bear positive polarity values. In this case, B can employ *sí que* but not *sí*. The reason is that *sí* does not change the polarity value of the sentence in A (in opposition to what happens in (40)), so it is infelicitous in this context. Speaker B expresses a strong commitment to the propositional content introduced by A (in this case, a confirmation); accordingly, the sequence *sí que* is the only felicitous option. In the words of Hernanz (2007), *sí que*, unlike *sí*, is crucially also legitimate in non-denying contexts.

(41) A: Está lloviendo mucho.

is raining heavily

‘It is raining heavily.’

B: #Sí está lloviendo mucho / Sí que está lloviendo mucho.

yes is raining heavily yes that is raining heavily

‘It IS RAINING heavily.’ / ‘It is certainly raining heavily.’

[Data from a WhatsApp conversation, Principality of Asturias, Spain, November 2016]

Another context in which *sí que* and *sí* are not interchangeable is the one illustrated in (42) and (43), where *sí que* is preceded by a contrastive topic. Notice that here the polarity value of the previous utterance is not reversed. Speaker B does not establish a contrast in terms of the polarity value of the previous utterance, but in terms of the city — expressed by means of a contrastive topic PP— in which the event of raining heavily takes place, as in (42), or does not take place, as in (43). In other words, the speaker establishes a contrast between two cities, Madrid and Avilés, and expresses his/her certainty about the fact that the raining event is currently taking place (cf. (42)) or is not currently taking place in Avilés (cf. (43)).

(42) A: En Madrid está lloviendo.

in Madrid is raining

‘It is raining in Madrid.’

B: #En Avilés sí está lloviendo / En Avilés sí que está lloviendo.

in Avilés yes is raining in Avilés yes that is raining

‘It IS RAINING in Avilés.’ / ‘It is certainly raining in Avilés.’

(43) A: En Madrid no está lloviendo.

in Madrid not is raining

‘It is not raining in Madrid.’



B: \*En Avilés *sí* no está lloviendo<sup>9</sup> / En Avilés *sí* que no está lloviendo.

in Avilés yes not is raining in Avilés yes that not is raining

‘It IS RAINING in Avilés.’ / ‘It is certainly raining in Avilés.’

Throughout this section and the previous one, we have shown that *sí que* does not determine the polarity value of the sentence and that it can in fact be followed by uncontroversial polarity markers. What *sí que* does is to scope over the main assertion of the sentence, giving rise to “an interpretation where the truth value of the sentence is stressed” (Batllori & Hernanz 2013: 27). Put another way, by way of *sí que*, the speaker is signalling his/her commitment to the truth of the proposition (e.g., in (43)B, the speaker is convinced that it is not raining in Avilés).<sup>10</sup> Our syntactic analysis is compatible with these facts. *Sí que* is placed in a phrase higher than  $\Sigma$ P and FocusP whereas polarity particles are merged in  $\Sigma$ P and, if the particle in question happens to be emphatic, as is invariably the case with *sí*, it moves to FocusP, as in (44). This structure accounts for the compatibility between *sí que* and lower polarity particles, but also for the fact that *sí que* does not establish the polarity value of the sentence, since its locus is not a polarity-encoding projection (which is the case for *sí*, initially merged in  $\Sigma$ P) under this analysis.

(44) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *sí* [<sub>X°</sub> *que* [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub> *sí* [ <sub>$\Sigma$ P</sub> *sí*/ *no*/  $\emptyset$  [<sub>TP</sub> ... ]]]]]]]]]

We now turn to syntactic contexts where *sí* and *sí que* differ from each other distributionally.

<sup>9</sup> As noted, *sí* and *no* actually cannot co-exist in the same clause in Iberian Spanish.

<sup>10</sup> Poletto & Zanuttini (2013) employ the terms “feeling quite sure,” “being extremely confident,” and “being convinced of the truth of the proposition” when characterizing the semantic contribution of Italian *sì che*.

### 3.4 *Sí and sí que in other syntactic environments*

So far, the examples of *sí* and *sí que* sentences furnished throughout feature propositions. RAE-ASALE (2009: 3006) points to the possibility of *sí* taking scope not over a full sentence or verbal phrase, but over a constituent. This is exemplified in (45), where *sí* is linked to the PP *en Cádiz*, which contrasts with *en Zamora*.

- (45) No quiere pasar tiempo en Zamora, pero sí en Cádiz.  
 not wants pass time in Zamora, but yes in Cádiz  
 ‘S/he doesn’t want to spend time in Zamora, but s/he does in Cádiz.’

A sentence like (45) cannot contain *que* after *sí*, as shown in (46).

- (46) \*No quiere pasar tiempo en Zamora, pero sí que en Cádiz.  
 not wants pass time in Zamora, but yes that in Cádiz  
 ‘S/he doesn’t want to spend time in Zamora, but s/he does in Cádiz.’

The analysis of sentences such as that in (45) remains a point of contention in the literature, with accounts that hypothesize that *sí* forms a constituent with the phrase that it takes scope over (i.e., [*sí* [XP]]) (Bosque 1984; Brucart 1987, 1999; RAE-ASALE 2009: 3007) and alternative accounts which assume ellipsis/deletion of the material not present in the second conjunct (i.e., ...*pero sí* [~~*quiere pasar tiempo*~~] *en Cádiz*), as argued by Depiante (2004: 65). Whatever the right analysis turns out to be, the data clearly point to a further asymmetry between *sí* and *sí que*, since the latter is illicit in such contexts.

For one thing, under the first type of account, the data can be taken to indicate that whereas *sí* is not confined to the left periphery of the clause, *sí que* is. This is not surprising. On the one hand, we have made the proposal, in line with previous works on *sí-que* sequences, that *sí que* modifies a *proposition* denoting the commitment of the speaker with respect to it. Similarly, the presence of *que* signals the presence of a C head, which may

simultaneously discharge several functions (Rizzi 1997 et seq.; Villa-García 2015, 2019), one of them being that of marking finiteness. This would explain why *sí que* can only take a proposition with a conjugated verb, as shown by the contrast in (47), which reveals the incompatibility of *sí que* with infinitivals.

- (47) Les dijo    que no    podrían    comer fuera,    pues llovía demasiado,    pero  
       DAT said    that not    could    eat    outside as    rained too-much    but  
       sí    /    \*sí    que    quedarse    dentro    y...  
       yes        yes    that    stay        inside    and...

‘S/he told them that they could not eat outside, as it was raining heavily, but they could stay inside and...’

[based on Maeve Binchy, *Noches de lluvia y estrellas*, Penguin Random House, 2013]

Second, under the alternative analysis which assumes ellipsis of material between *sí* and the relevant constituent, *sí* functions as an ellipsis licenser. The fact that *sí* is responsible for licensing ellipsis but *sí que* is not (cf. (45)/(47) without *que* vs. (46)/(47) with *que*) confirms the standard view that polarity is crucially involved in the licensing of this type of ellipsis in Spanish (Brucart 1999, Brucart & MacDonald 2012, Depiante 2004, Villa-García 2016, *inter alia*). If this analysis is correct, then the facts above actually substantiate our claim that *sí que* does not encode polarity in Spanish, but *sí* does; hence, *sí* can license ellipsis of its complement, in contrast to *sí que* (see also the examples in (28),

which feature *sí que* + an emphatic polarity particle + ellipsis of the complement of said particle).<sup>11</sup>

Be that as it may, the data just reviewed point to a further divergence between the *sí* construction and the *sí-que* construction in Spanish. In the next subsections, we pose the question of how the dislocated phrases preceding *sí* and *sí que* are derived, which reveals yet another asymmetry between the two constructions at stake.

### 3.5 *The dislocate/topic above sí/sí que and reconstruction effects*

Villa-García (2015) has argued that low *ques* in contexts such as recomplementation (i.e., multiple-complementizer configurations) constitute islands/barriers for extraction. If this property is exhibited by low *ques* more generally, our analysis makes predictions regarding the possibilities of reconstruction effects in the context of *sí que* and *sí*.<sup>12</sup> Let us first briefly summarize Villa-García's hypothesis for clarity. This author focuses on non-high *ques*; in particular, he deals with recomplementation *que* (see (18)/(48)). This secondary *que*

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<sup>11</sup> The data in this paper can therefore make a contribution to the account of elliptical constructions. However, since exploring this matter in detail would take us too far afield, we leave it for future research, noting its importance.

<sup>12</sup> It is not our intention in the main text to present the islandhood of *que* in *sí que* to be a categorical fact, and indeed it would not be surprising to find variation in terms of the operativity of his locality condition. English *that-t* effects, for instance, have been reported to exhibit a certain degree of variation (see Kandybowicz 2006 and references therein). We will thus present the judgments of our consultants and our own, leaving an in-depth investigation of the issue in question for future research. However, the reader should note that since our main focus is to characterize the distinction between *sí* and *sí que* in terms of distribution and semantic contribution, our analysis in principle remains the same independently of the barrierhood of *que*.

appears (optionally) after left-dislocated constituents in embedded clauses, most commonly with communication verbs in the indicative mood.

(48) Digo que, como está nevando, (*que*) viene ahora.

say that since is snowing that comes now

‘I say that s/he’s coming now, since it’s snowing.’

[Villa-García 2015: 6]

This author claims that elements preceding this non-high complementizer are base-generated in their surface position, since such secondary complementizers induce an island/barrier for extraction; thus, the position flanked between overt *ques* is a merger site, rather than a landing site: moving constituents cannot land in that position and only those phrases that can be directly merged where they surface can occur there. The arguments provided in favor of his proposal come from the lack reconstruction effects of flanked dislocates, unlike their counterparts without a secondary *que* (see also Villa-García 2019 and Martínez-Vera 2017, 2019).

Assuming Villa-García’s hypothesis and extending it to low *que* complementizers in general, our analysis predicts that dislocated elements appearing before *sí* should (not) show reconstruction effects depending on whether *que* appears below *sí* or not. If *que* is present, then we should only be able to interpret the left-dislocated element in its surface position (on the assumption that low *que* complementizers in Spanish display island-creating properties), while both interpretations should obtain when *sí* appears without *que*. (The reader should note that, as argued throughout, this is not to claim that the difference between *sí* and *sí que* is a matter of (non-)overtness of *que*). Let us begin by focusing on *sí* cases. As predicted, a sentence such as (49) can in principle be assigned two readings: in the former, which is paraphrased in (49)a, the CLLD is interpreted in its derived position,

TopicP, and as a result, it takes scope over the universal quantifier. In the latter, we have the inverse scope relation, for the CLLD is interpreted in the position in which it is externally/directly merged. The fact that this element displays reconstruction effects explains why it can have narrow scope with respect to the universal quantifier (see (49)b), which contrasts with the surface order in which the existential quantifier is higher than the universal one (see (49)a).

(49) (Dijo que) a dos o tres mujeres *sí* las sacaron de todos

said that ACC two or three women yes ACC exited of all

los edificios.

the buildings

‘(They said that) two or three women were taken out of all the buildings.’

a. ‘There are two or three women that were taken out of all the buildings.’

$\exists > \forall$

b. ‘For every building there are two or three women that were taken out of them.’

$\forall > \exists$

Bound variable data also confirm this prediction, as shown in (50).

(50) Dicen que en su hijo *sí* confía todo el mundo.

say that in his/her son yes trusts all the world

‘They say that everybody trusts his/her/their child.’

In (50), *en su hijo* can be bound by the quantified expression *todo el mundo*, in such a way that the interpretation wherein each person trusts their own child is possible here. Thus, we observe reconstruction effects, which are compatible with *en su hijo* undergoing movement from a VP-internal position to a topic position above *sí*.

By contrast, when *que* follows *sí*, the only available reading is the one in which the dislocated element (the existential quantifier) has wide scope over the universal quantifier. The alternative scope is not available, as in (51)b, which is now explained by the inability of the dislocated phrase to reconstruct in (51).

- (51) (Dijo que) a dos o tres mujeres *sí que* las sacaron de  
 said that ACC two or three women yes that ACC exited of  
 todos los edificios.  
 all the buildings

‘(They said that) two or three women were taken out of all the buildings.’

- a. ‘There are two or three women that were taken out of all the buildings.’

$\exists > \forall$

- b. ‘For every building there are two or three women that were taken out of them.’

$\exists^* \forall > \exists$

As far as bound readings are concerned, (52) tests whether they are possible in the presence of *sí que*.

- (52) Dicen que en su hijo *sí que* confía todo el mundo.  
 say that in his/her son yes that trusts all the world

‘They say that everybody certainly trusts his/her/their child.’

In much the same way as with scope readings, in (52) the only possible interpretation is that in which *en su hijo* is not bound by the quantified expression; therefore, (52) can only be understood as involving just one child. The impossibility of the bound variable interpretation here is explained by assuming that *en su hijo* is directly merged in its

superficial position, which means that there is no low position below *todo el mundo* in which *en su hijo* could be interpreted in the L(ogical)F(orm) component.

Therefore, although *sí que* and *sí* can both be preceded by a (contrastive) dislocated element, as has been seen, this phrase exhibits a different behavior regarding reconstruction effects in each case; reconstruction effects are only observed with the version without *que*. We take these data to imply that movement about *sí que* cannot proceed, and therefore only phrases which can be directly merged above *sí que* can occur in this position (see Martínez-Vera 2017, 2019 and references therein for further details of the availability of such derivations for CLLDs in Spanish).

Villa-García's proposal that low complementizers are island-inducing makes a further prediction regarding long-distance movement, a matter to which we turn in the following subsection.

### 3.6 *Movement possibilities across sí and sí que*

The proposal developed by Villa-García (2015) also allows us to make another prediction concerning the behavior of *sí* and *sí que* in those varieties where crossing *que* induces a locality problem. The author argues that non-high (i.e., non-Force<sup>o</sup>) complementizers block movement across them, as shown by the contrast in (53) (see also the examples in the previous subsection). Long-distance extraction of *qué* 'what' is allowed in (53)a, where recomplementation *que* does not appear, but is impossible in (53)b, which contains recomplementation *que*.

- (53) a. ¿Qué dice que a Pedro le dio ~~qué~~?  
           what says that DAT Pedro DAT gave  
           'What does s/he say that he did give Pedro?'  
       b. \*¿Qué dice que a Pedro, que le dio qué?



what    says    that    DAT    Pedro    that    DAT    gave

Since under our analysis, *que* in the sequence *sí que* is a non-high complementizer, movement across this sequence should also be banned, in much the same way as dislocated phrases cannot move to pre-*que* position, as shown in the previous section. As shown by (24) above, focal phrases cannot appear above *sí que*. Two reasons appear to conspire to yield this result. On the one hand, we showed that topical phrases can readily occur above *sí que*, which constitutes an argument for analyzing *sí que* as occupying a projection below TopicP. We also showed that foci can in principle follow *sí que*, which suggests that *sí que* sits in between TopicP and FocusP. Thus, it follows from this that focal phrases should be disallowed above *sí que*, which is corroborated by examples including (24), which include quantifiers that are assumed to be focal and that do not sit well in topic-related positions. On the other hand, since foci are standardly assumed to be the result of movement (rather than base-generation), the inability of foci to occur above *sí que* is also triggered by the fact that movement across *que* cannot be effected. In addition, data like (54) show that long-distance extraction across *sí* is out when *que* is present, but it improves when *que* is not present, as expected, since *que* creates a locality violation (Note that this is tested by using CLLDed phrases, which López 2009 argues are derived by movement; hanging-topic NPs have not been used, since such constituents are standardly assumed to be derived by direct merge in their surface position).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding (54)a, note that although this sentence may be slightly degraded due to the intervention effect caused by movement of the wh-item across a focal element in the embedded clause (i.e., *sí*), it is much more acceptable than the corresponding sentence where the landing site of both the wh-item and *sí* are hosted in the same periphery (e.g., (55)). This contrast could be attributed to the fact that passing through an

(54) a. ¿Qué dice que a Pedro sí le dio ~~qué~~?

what says that DAT Pedro yes DAT gave

‘What does s/he say that s/he did give Pedro?’

b. ?\*¿Qué dice que a Pedro sí que le dio ~~qué~~?

what says that DAT Pedro yes that DAT gave

Now, as the careful reader will note, the analysis defended here (cf. (21)) makes two predictions regarding wh-questions in the same clause as *sí/sí que*. On the one hand, *bona fide* questions should be incompatible with *sí*, as both items are focal. This is corroborated by (55) (which concurs with the judgments reported in Batllori & Hernanz 2013; see also Villa-García 2016; see additional examples of the incompatibility of *sí* with foci in Section 2.1):

(55) \*¿Cuándo sí viene?

when yes comes

Intended meaning: ‘When is s/he really coming?’

As for *sí que*, the prediction is that such questions should also be ungrammatical, even if *sí que* is not an element in FocusP and the two items do not compete for the same focal slot, as claimed by our proposal. This is shown in (56). In this case, the reason for the ungrammaticality of such sequences is that the low *que* induces a barrier/island for movement, as has been noted. Incidentally, since XP, the locus of *sí que*, is situated between TopicP and FocusP, in (56) there is actually no focus-appropriate position above *sí que* to host a focal constituent.

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intermediate position is different from undergoing feature-checking in intermediate positions or satisfying some criterial feature (see Bošković 2008 for much relevant discussion).

(56) \*¿Cuándo sí que viene?

when yes that comes

‘When is s/he really coming?’

Interestingly, if a question such as (56) carries a rhetorical or echoic interpretation, its status improves (e.g., (56) would be possible in a context in which the interlocutors are talking about a third person who never shows up at meetings; in this scenario, if somebody says that X did not come to a given meeting, one of the interlocutors could utter (56), which would reinforce the idea that X never attends meetings). This comes as no surprise, since under such readings, the relevant sentences do not contain genuine questions and therefore the *wh*-items may not involve (focus) movement and they may be located in a position higher than FocusP. This is likewise suggested by the following naturally occurring sentence:

(57) ¡Ves cómo ahí sí que hay que ir!

see how there yes that has that go

‘You see how one certainly needs to go there!’

In (57), the interrogative particle *cómo* is followed not just by *sí que*, but also by a topical (locative adverbial) phrase preceding *sí que*, indicating that its behavior is rather different from run-of-the-mill *wh*-items featured in genuine constituent questions.

In the same spirit, note that the grammaticality of (58)a does not constitute a problem for our proposal, despite the presence of a *wh*-phrase above *sí que*. The reason is that the *wh*-phrase featured here is D(iscourse)-linked and as a result, it may not move from its base position to FocusP and it may actually occupy a different structural position in the CP domain (Buesa-García 2008, among others; see Rizzi 2001 on the ability of *por qué* ‘why’

to be base-generated where it surfaces<sup>14</sup>). In this context, the *wh*-phrase may involve a different derivation from canonical (i.e., quantificational) *wh*-items (i.e., D-linked phrases may be directly merged in the CP domain and they may occupy a different slot from that filled by canonical *wh*-items. D-linked *wh*-phrases constitute a sort of topical constituent. This is not arbitrary, since in D-linked contexts, the answer is old information in the sense that it must be picked from an existing set: if (58)a were not D-linked, then the only possible felicitous answer would include the set of all persons who are able to drive. Thus, D-linking is associated with a pre-existing set known to the interlocutors. It is therefore in this sense that they behave like topics). Note that if the *wh*-phrase is non-D-linked and therefore, it is uncontroversially focal, the outcome is ungrammatical, as expected. This is illustrated in (58)b, where *demonios* ‘demons’ forces an aggressively non-D-linked reading:

- (58) a. ¿Quién *sí* que sabe conducir?  
           who   yes that know   to.drive  
           ‘Who does certainly know how to drive?’

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<sup>14</sup> Given our claim that *sí* competes with *wh*-items such as *qué*, the question arises as to whether *sí* can co-occur with *por qué* ‘why,’ which has been treated as a special *wh*-item in that it can be base-generated in the left periphery, and therefore it does not behave like a real quantificational operator. If this hypothesis is correct, then *por qué* and *sí* should be able to occur in the same left periphery. That this is correct is shown by (i):

- (i)     A Madrid no, pero ¿a Barcelona *por qué*   *sí* vais a ir?  
           to Madrid not but to Barcelona for what   yes go to go  
           ‘You are not going to Madrid, but why are you going to Barcelona?’

b. \*¿Quién demonios sí que sabe conducir?

who demons yes that know to.drive

‘Who the hell does certainly know how to drive?’

It must be noted that the grammaticality of (58)a is not incompatible with the fact the *sí que* is related to the commitment of the speaker with respect to the propositional content. (58)a does not ask about the truth of the predicate but about a person from a given set who is able to drive. As Vera Hohaus (p.c.) observes, in a sentence like (58)a, repeated in (59), *sí que* focuses on the fact that somebody knows how to drive; the speaker is committed to the truth of “somebody knowing how to drive;” what is at issue is which member of the set shared by speaker and hearer has the ability to drive (hence the D-linked status of *quién*).

(59) ¿Quién sí que [sabe conducir]?

who yes that know to.drive

‘Who does certainly know how to drive?’

If this reasoning is on the right track, then the prediction is that a sentence that questions the main event, as in (60), should be ungrammatical, since what is being questioned here is an event that *sí que* assumes is true (an additional factor conspiring to render (60) ill-formed is the fact that *qué* ‘what’ may only be interpreted as a genuine wh-item in FocusP, thus illicit above *sí que*).

(60) \*¿Qué sí que hizo?

what yes that did

‘What did s/he certainly do?’

Not surprisingly, *sí que* is incompatible with polar (i.e., *yes/no*) questions, which ask about the truth of the proposition. This is shown in (61). This is wholly consistent with

the findings of Poletto & Zanuttini (2013), who claim that *sì che* and *no che* are confined to declarative sentences in Italian.

(61) a. <sup>??</sup>¿Sí que leíste esa novela?

yes that read that novel

‘Did you certainly read that novel?’

b. \*Preguntó si sí que leíste esa novela.

asked if yes that read that novel

‘S/he asked if you certainly read that novel.’

The analysis pursued here, wherein *sí que* precedes FocusP, appears to make an interesting prediction again concerning wh-phrases. If wh-words such as *cuándo* ‘when’ target FocusP, as originally proposed by Rizzi (1997), then such items should in principle be able to occur under *sí que*. The following piece of spontaneous data seems to corroborate this prediction:

(62) ¿Y yo sí que cuándo podré viajar?

and I yes that when can travel

‘And as for me, when will I definitely be able to travel?’

Although sentences like (62) are admittedly uncommon, one possible way of making sense of this sentence (beyond the English paraphrase given) would be to assume that the speaker is willing to express an idea along the lines of “when will it truly be the case that I will manage to travel?” Further research is needed in this respect, but the existence of data like (62) is compatible with the account pursued in this paper. And as expected, the *sí* homolog of (62), provided in (63), is ill-formed.

(63) \*¿Y yo sí cuándo podré viajar?

and I yes when can travel

Lastly, the fact that no movement operation can cross the *que* that appears below *sí* for many speakers is fully coherent with the claim made here (cf. (21)/(62)) that *sí que* is base-generated in XP. Note that movement of *sí* from a low position to the specifier of the projection headed by *que* would be impeded by the barrierhood of *que*. In fact, as shown in Section 3.2, there can actually be a genuine polarity marker *sí* below *sí que*, which may undergo movement from  $\Sigma P$  to FocusP below the locus of *sí que*, namely XP. Thus, a derivation of *sí que* wherein *sí* undergoes movement to the specifier of *que* from below is ruled out.

We now turn to the issue of which predicates can select for an embedded clause with a periphery that is able to host *sí/sí que*.

### 3.7 CPs with a deficient left periphery and *sí/sí que*

The currently-pursued analysis, repeated here in (62), makes the claim that *sí que* involves a richer left periphery, unlike *sí*.

- (64) a. [ForceP [TopicP [FocusP *sí* [ $\Sigma P$  ~~*sí*~~ [TP ... ]]]]] [based on Hernanz 2007: 144]  
 b. [ForceP [TopicP [XP *sí* [X° *que* [TopicP [FocusP [ $\Sigma P$  [TP ... ]]]]]]]]]

Therefore, our analysis begs the question of whether *sí que* can occur under verbs that take a deficient (i.e., truncated) left periphery. We show that, as expected, the answer to this question turns out to be negative, although a note of caution is in order, as selection has been shown to be subject to a high degree of inter-speaker variation (Radford 2018, Villa-García 2019).

Demonte & Fernández-Soriano (2009) and de Cuba & MacDonald (2013) show that the complement of certain verbs has a more limited CP layer. In this connection, de Cuba and MacDonald distinguish between two semantic types of embedded clauses: referential CPs and non-referential *c*Ps. Their definition is the following:

(65) Types of CPs

- a. Referential CP: denotes an accepted (pre-established or resolved) proposition in the existing discourse/common ground (shared by the speakers), which has no illocutionary force.
- b. Non-referential cP: denotes a speech act, which introduces a new proposition (or an open question) that is not yet accepted (or pre-established) in the existing discourse. [based on Cuba & MacDonald 2013: 314]

De Cuba and MacDonald furnish the context in (64) in order to illustrate these two types of complements. In this situation, a teacher and a parent discuss the illegal appropriation of lunch money at school on the part of the child.

- (66) a. Teacher: Your son stole the lunch money.
- b. Parent: I regret that my son stole the lunch money.

The parent's response to the educator includes the factive verb *regret*, whose complement is a referential CP referring back to a resolved proposition that is part of the existing discourse. Suppose, however, that the parent responds to the teacher using (65), instead of (64)b.

- (67) Parent: #I think that my son stole the lunch money.

This response is infelicitous, since non-factive *think* embeds a non-referential cP; therefore, it cannot refer back to the teacher's proposition. The oddity of (65) in this specific discourse context stems from the fact that the parent is introducing a proposition as unresolved when in fact it is already established as part of the common ground shared by the parent and the teacher.

As noted by de Cuba & MacDonald (2013: 130–131), the inverse patterns of felicity are found in out-of-the-blue contexts. Consequently, in a context where the teacher does



not know anything about the theft, it is awkward for the parent to walk up to the teacher and utter (66).

(68) Parent to teacher: #I regret that my son stole the lunch money.

Given that the proposition *my son stole the lunch money* is not part of the common ground shared by parent and teacher, no reference can be made to a resolved proposition. This contrasts with the complement of *regret*, which is referential. However, in an out-of-the-blue context, (67) would be appropriate.

(69) Parent to teacher: I think that my son stole the lunch money.

Since the (non-referential) complement of *think* is not referring back to any pre-established proposition (in fact the parent is introducing this proposition in the common ground for the first time), no infelicity problem arises.

Crucially, de Cuba & MacDonald (2013) argue that the referential status of sentential complements correlates with a structural difference: referential CPs have less structure than non-referential cPs. As shown in (68), they propose that non-referential cPs have a rich left-peripheral structure whereas referential CPs lack ForceP and TopicP:

(70) a. Non-referential cPs

[ForceP [TopicP [FocusP [FinitenessP]]]]

b. Referential CPs

[FocusP [FinitenessP]]

[based on Villa-García 2015: 39-40]

The authors argue that their system accounts for a number of syntactic differences between referential and non-referential clausal complements; for example, they point out that their proposal naturally explains why factive verbs cannot take recomplementation structures, as in (69) (Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2009; Villa-García 2015, 2019;

though see the latter work for evidence that some speakers accept recomplementation with factives both in English and in Spanish). The embedded clause of *lamentar* ‘to regret’ lacks TopicP, and this is precisely the projection in which recomplementation *que* is placed.<sup>15</sup>

(71) Lamento    que    en    esa    tienda    (\*que)    no    compren    discos.

regret        that    in    that shop        that    not    buy<sub>Subj.</sub>        records

‘I regret that they don’t buy records in that shop.’

Assuming de Cuba & MacDonald’s account and our analysis of *sí que* (cf. (62)), it is expected that this sequence should be impossible under verbs that take a referential CP. If the sequence *sí que* is located in a projection above FocusP, (68)b predicts that it should not appear in clauses that lack projections above FocusP, as is the case with embedded clauses of factive verbs (i.e., with referential CPs). The particle *sí*, for its part, should not show such a restriction, since there is no point in the derivation in which it occupies a higher position than FocusP, as shown in (62). These predictions are borne out, as shown by the contrast in (70)a and (70)b (see also (70)c-d).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Recomplementation-less topics are possible, but here the position of topics may be TP-related (see Villagarcía 2015 for much relevant discussion).

<sup>16</sup> An anonymous abstract reviewer notes that s/he finds a sentence like (i) acceptable. This may be indicative of the variation alluded to at the outset of this section, which further work will have to take into account. For our current purposes, it is sufficient to note that at least some speakers may select a full-fledged CP layer even with factives, which calls for a refinement of de Cuba & MacDonald’s proposal in order to account for inter-speaker variation.

- (i)        Pensé    que    era    mentira    que    Pedro tuviera un tumor. Lamento    que    sí    que lo    tuviera.  
           thought that    was lie            that    Peter had<sub>Subj.</sub> a    tumor lament    that yes that ACC had<sub>Subj.</sub>  
           ‘I thought that it was a lie that Peter had a tumor. I am sad that he certainly had it.’

- (72) a. Lamentó que *sí* estuviera enfermo.  
 regretted that yes be<sub>Subj.</sub> sick  
 ‘He regretted that he WAS sick.’
- b. \*Lamento que *sí* que estuviera enfermo.  
 regretted that yes that be<sub>Subj.</sub> sick
- c. No comprendo el hecho de que *sí* nevara ayer  
 not understand the fact of that yes snowed<sub>Subj.</sub> yesterday  
 ‘I don’t get the fact that it did snow yesterday.’
- d. \*No comprendo el hecho de que *sí* que nevara ayer  
 not understand the facts of that yes that snowed<sub>Subj.</sub> yest.

Now, consider the examples in (71). These sentences show that the contrast above does not arise if the main verb selects a non-referential *cP* and consequently, the embedded clause displays a rich left-peripheral structure capable of hosting *sí que*, as claimed by (68)a.

- (73) a. Creo que *sí* está enfermo.  
 think that yes is sick  
 ‘I think that he IS sick.’
- b. Creo que *sí* que está enfermo.  
 think that yes that is sick  
 ‘I think that he is certainly sick.’

The different distributional possibilities exhibited by *sí* and *sí que* in embedded contexts depending on the selecting predicate demonstrate that *sí que* involves a more

elaborated left-peripheral structure, which lends further support to the account pursued here (cf. (62)).

### 3.8 Interim (schematic) summary

The following table summarizes our findings so far:

*Table 1. Syntactic (a)symmetries between *sí* and *sí que**

	<i>Sí</i>	<i>Sí que</i>
focus-like properties (e.g., obligatory S-V inversion)	✓	✗
(related to previous) can be followed by left-peripheral material such as topics and foci alongside preverbal subjects	✗	✓
can be preceded by (e.g., contrastive) topics/dislocates	✓	✓
possibility of a co-occurring polarity marker in a lower projection	✗	✓
(related to previous) compatibility with a proposition with a variable polarity value	✗	✓
ellipsis-licensing properties/scope over non-sentential constituents	✓	✗
island-creating properties (i.e., lack of reconstruction effects of the preceding topic and impossibility of long-distance extraction)	✗	✓
can occur in deficient CPs (e.g., those selected by factives)	✓	% ✗

Recall that in the course of our syntactic characterization of the differences between *sí* and *sí que* in Spanish, we have also noted differences between the two constructions in terms of their semantic contribution, with *sí* marking emphatic affirmative polarity and *sí que* signalling the speaker's commitment to the proposition appearing below *sí que*. Therefore, our syntactic proposal (cf. (62)) also captures the fact that there are semantic correlates of the structures proposed: it is not just the distribution of *sí* and *sí que*, but also their meaning that helps us tease apart the two constructions.

Having explored a number of existing and novel empirical arguments militating in favor of a different characterization of *sí* and *sí-que* sequences in Spanish (see Table 1), we now turn to dialectal microvariation in the expression of *que*. In Section 5 we further investigate the contribution of *sí que*.

#### 4. DIALECTAL MICROVARIATION

Moving away from Iberian Spanish, in certain varieties of Spanish, the form *sí que* is in free variation with the bare form *sí*. This occurs in contexts where, given our previous discussion, focused mostly on Iberian Spanish data, we would expect *que* to occur. In other words, in some varieties, *sí* is frequently used in the place of *sí que* (i.e., not as an emphatic polarity element, but as formal marker of the speaker's commitment to the proposition). For instance, the following sentences suggest that *que* does not need to occur below *sí* in dialects including Colombian, Mexican, and Peruvian Spanish (see also the data in Campos 1992: 332).<sup>17</sup> Recall that the meaning of *sí* in (72) is conveyed by means of *sí que* in Iberian Spanish.

- (74) a. A eso *sí* no puedo acostumbrarme, al chocolate malo.  
           to that yes no can get-used-REF to+the chocolate bad  
           'I certainly cannot get used to that, to bad chocolate.'

[Rafael Delgado, *Angelina*, Mexican Spanish, 1983]

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<sup>17</sup> Such sentences are also attested, though much less frequently, in the speech of Iberian speakers. We leave a comprehensive study of diatopic variation for future work.

b. Eso *sí* *no* sé.

that yes no know.

‘I certainly do not know that.’

[Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *El ruido de las cosas al caer*, Colombian Spanish, 2011]

As shown by the English paraphrases, the sentences in (72) carry an assertive meaning wherein the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition, much like its counterparts with *sí que* in Iberian Spanish. By way of illustration, in a sentence like (72)a, the speaker is expressing an idea paraphrasable in abstract terms as “it is truly the case that *p*,” where the proposition *p* can be replaced by “I cannot get used to bad chocolate.”

That bare *sí* in such sentences is not a focal polarity marker is confirmed by the fact that the sentences in (72) carry a negative polarity value (as shown in the English paraphrases). Furthermore, if we added to the sentences in question another clause including the polarity element *también* ‘too’ or *tampoco* ‘(n)either,’ the negative element *tampoco* would be required, as expected if the examples in (72) are negative, despite the presence of *sí* (see Section 3.2). This is shown in (73).

(75) a. A eso *sí* *no* puedo acostumbrarme, al chocolate  
 to that yes no can get-used-REFL to+the chocolate  
 malo y al amargo \*también/ tampoco.  
 bad and to+the bitter too/ (n)either

‘I certainly cannot get used to that, to bad chocolate, nor can I get used to bitter chocolate either.’

b. Eso *sí* *no* sé, y esto \*también/ tampoco.  
 that yes no know and this too/ (n)either.

‘I certainly don’t know that, and I don’t certainly know this either.’

The possibility of having the sequence *sí no* in Mexican and Colombian Spanish is supported by data from the CREA (*Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*) corpus, which contains examples such as the ones in (74).

(76) a. Pero de pestilencia *sí no* te escapas.

but of stench yes no REFL escape

‘But you certainly will not escape from stench.’

[Wilebaldo, López, *Vine, vi... y mejor me fui*, Mexican Spanish, 1988, CREA]

b. Ahí *sí no* se tendrá en cuenta el proceso de apertura.

there yes not IMP will.take into account the process of opening

‘The process of opening will certainly not be taken into account there.’

[*El Tiempo*, Colombian Spanish, 01/12/1991, CREA]

*Prima facie*, the *sí no* combination is in principle amenable to an analysis whereby *sí* occupies FocusP (presumably it would have to be base-generated there) and *no* is located in  $\Sigma$ P, by virtue of the fact that it marks the negative polarity of the clause. This possibility is schematized in (75):

(77) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> XP [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub> *SÍ* [ $\Sigma$ P *NO* [TP ... ]]]]]]]

Therefore, the two may be able to co-occur in the same clause. This would assume that *sí* does not signal a commitment on the part of the speaker to the truth of the proposition—perhaps it is just an emphatic marker, *contra* the judgments of the speakers consulted.

On syntactic grounds, this alternative account of the *sí no* sequence is also called into question by the fact that *sí* can be followed by an unambiguous adverb stressing that the truth value of the proposition that follows it, as in (76). Similarly, this piece of data crucially

indicates that *sí* in this context is indeed not a focal marker, since it does not require adjacency with the verb (see (7)).

- (78) A la fiesta *sí* ciertamente/desde luego no voy a ir.  
 to the party yes certainly/ of course not go to go  
 ‘I will certainly not go to that party.’

Moreover, the CREA corpus does not contain any instance of the *no sí* combination, which we would expect if the facts reduced to a matter of focal polarity particle + polarity particle. This fact, coupled with the introspective judgments of our native-speaker consultants, suggests that this sequence is fully ungrammatical, as (77) and (78) demonstrate. It is of note that speakers not only find these sentences syntactically ill-formed, but they also fail to assign them a plausible interpretation.

- (79) a. \*A eso *no sí* puedo acostumbrarme, al chocolate malo.  
 to that no yes can get-used to+the chocolate bad  
 b. \*Eso *no sí* sé.  
 that no sí know.
- (80) a. \*Pero de pestilencia *no sí* te escapabas.  
 but of stench no yes REFL escape.  
 b. \*Ahí *no sí* se tendrá en cuenta el proceso de apertura.  
 there not yes IMP will.take into account the process of opening.

This is scarcely surprising if *sí* in the relevant Latin American Spanish examples does not really mark polarity, as proposed for its *sí-que* equivalents in Iberian Spanish. In contrast, *no* in Spanish can only mark negative polarity, and thus the presence of *sí* creates a contradiction. More generally, the ungrammaticality of (77) and (78) is due to syntactic and semantic reasons: on the one hand, *sí* and *no* compete for the same base-generated



position, since both are polarity particles initially merged directly in  $\Sigma P$ ; on the other hand, the two polarity particles cannot co-occur because a clause cannot bear contradictory polarity values simultaneously. Thus, the data above rule out an analysis along the lines of (75) wherein both *sí* and *no* in (77) and (78) are polarity markers. The alternative order, *sí no*, is possible in the relevant varieties because the high element *sí* is not a polarity marker, but the *sí* of *sí que* in XP, whilst *no* is a polarity marker located in  $\Sigma P$ . Thus, we propose that the sentences in (72), (74), and (76) are variants of the *sí que no* sequence. The difference between Iberian Spanish and varieties such as Colombian, Mexican, and Peruvian Spanish is that whereas in the former variety the complementizer must be overt, in the relevant Latin American varieties *que* can be covert. Thus, the analysis proposed for *sí que* cases can be maintained for their *que*-less counterparts, as in (79).

(81) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *sí* [<sub>X°</sub> *que/Ø* ([<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub>] [ <sub>$\Sigma P$</sub>  *no* [<sub>TP</sub> ... ]])]([<sub>TP</sub> ... ]])]([<sub>TP</sub> ... ]])]

Given that the *sí que/ sí* alternation seems to be in free variation in varieties such as Mexican and Colombian Spanish, a natural way of analyzing the relevant cases would be to assume that *que* can remain silent or, put differently, that the head of XP—under the analysis currently pursued—does not have to be spelled out under normal circumstances. Since the semantic contribution of high *sí* in such varieties is the same as that in Iberian Spanish, it follows that the two elements should be analyzed similarly, precisely as assumed by (79).

That the overtness or non-overtness of *que* in the *sí-que* sequence has to do with PF realization of the complementizer is supported by the following facts. First of all, the optional presence of *que* has no semantic effect in the Latin American varieties at issue, which is wholly compatible with its realization being reducible to PF considerations. Additionally, remember that in Iberian Spanish, *sí que* can in principle be followed by a

clause that contains an emphatic positive polarity marker, thus making the sequence *sí que sí* legitimate (see (28) above). If certain varieties of Latin American Spanish permit the omission of *que*, as we have just seen, then the prediction would be that such varieties should in theory allow *sí-sí* sequences. The reason is that the first instance of *sí* would be in Spec,XP and the second instance would be a focal polarity marker located in Spec,FocusP, making the two compatible in principle. However, the corpus CREA does not contain any examples of *sí sí* in Mexican Spanish. The same result holds for Colombian Spanish. This fact leads us to suggest that the prediction that the combination *sí+sí* should in theory be possible is not borne out, as shown by (80), which coheres well with the judgments of our native-speaker consultants, who reject such sentences.

- (82) \*Ahora            sí        sí.  
           now            yes        yes  
           ‘Now it is truly the case.’

This may seem like a counterexample to the analysis proposed here, but in fact it constitutes evidence in its favor: in such contexts, *que* has to surface obligatorily for speakers of the aforementioned varieties, who find *que* non-compulsory (and in fact tend to omit it more often than not) in other contexts. Thus, the grammatical counterpart of (80) is identical to the Iberian Spanish version, as in (81).

- (83) Ahora            sí    que    sí.  
           now            yes that    yes  
           ‘Now it is truly the case...’

The fact that *que* needs to be overt in *sí-sí* contexts but not in *sí-no* contexts (cf. (72)) confirms that we are dealing here with an instance of the *sí-que* construction. One natural explanation for the contrast between *sí no* and \**sí sí* would be to assume that whereas *que*

can remain unrealized phonologically in the first case, it cannot in the second, possibly due to a constraint against adjacent homophonous forms (i.e., haplology). This is in keeping with the judgments of our consultants, who intuitively deem *sí-sí* sentences overly cacophonous. Consequently, *que* must be PF realized in order for the illicit *sí-sí* sequence to be disrupted. In this sense, this would be comparable to cases in Spanish where an expletive *no* is inserted to avoid contiguous homophonous forms, as in (82).

(84) Venir es mejor que (no) que te quedes.

come is better than not that REFL stay

‘For you to come (here) is better than staying.’

Albeit optional, *no* is usually employed in order to avoid the (stylistically dispreferred) adjacent realization of two homophonous complementizers (RAE-ASALE 2009).

Lastly, that *sí-sí* sequences are ruled out on phonological grounds and not because *sí*  $\emptyset$  is incompatible with a focal polarity particle immediately below it is corroborated by the data in (83), which show the particle *tampoco* after *sí*. The existence of such examples strengthens the parallelism with Iberian Spanish *sí-que* patterns, which can also be followed by emphatic polarity-encoding elements like *tampoco* and *también*, as shown in (34). Put differently, while the presence of the emphatic affirmative polarity *sí* requires *que* to surface to avoid contiguous *sí sí* forms, other polarity particles causing no haplology issue do not trigger the overt realization of the complementizer in between items.

(85) Ponerse uno contento de que lo mataran, eso sí tampoco.

becoming-REFL one happy of that ACC killed that yes neither

‘...getting happy because they killed him, that cannot be the case either.’

[Miguel Torres, *El incendio de abril*, Alfaguara, Colombia, 2012]

The facts just reviewed lend plausibility to an account wherein *que* is in principle optional in the *sí que* sequence in Latin American varieties such as Mexican and Colombian Spanish, thus reducing its presence or absence to a PF matter. Furthermore, the data suggest that the alternation *sí (que)* in said Latin American varieties may be a phonological one. In the remainder of the paper, we investigate an additional contribution of *sí-que* sequences.

#### 5. THE COMPLEMENTIZER *QUE* IN *SÍ-QUE* SEQUENCES AND ITS ECHOIC FUNCTION

The literature has related the sequence *sí que* to echoic constructions. This connection tends to be based on two facts. First, the sequence *sí que* is not readily uttered in out-of-the-blue contexts (Etxepare 1997, 2010; Hernanz 2007). By way of illustration, (84) cannot be used in a context where nobody has spoken about María helping a particular person or where this information is not presupposed by the interlocutors. (See also Poletto & Zanuttini 2013 for evidence that in Italian, *sì-che/non-che* sequences must also be anchored to the preceding discourse).

(86) María      sí    que      te      ayudó.

María      yes that      ACC    helped

‘María did certainly help you.’

Second, Etxepare (2010) and Demonte & Fernández-Soriano (2014) note that Spanish, like other languages, displays root complementizers that encode an echoic meaning, as in (85).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Etxepare treats these structures as quotative constructions, while Demonte & Fernández-Soriano distinguish between reportative *que* and echoic *que*.

- (87) a. Que no tiene hambre.  
           that not has hunger  
           ‘Somebody says/said/I said that s/he is not hungry.’
- b. Que qué guapo es.  
           that how handsome is  
           ‘Somebody exclaims/exclaimed/I exclaim(ed) that he is so good-looking.’
- c. Que si me ayudas.  
           that if ACC help  
           ‘I ask(ed) you whether you could help me.’

In what follows, we explore the nature of *que* in the sequence *sí que*; in particular, we entertain the idea that this complementizer performs a function akin to that attested in echoic structures such as the ones illustrated in (85). In fact, Etxepare and Demonte & Fernández-Soriano incidentally include among their examples the structure *sí que*. This is not surprising, since *que* in *sí que* shares (at least some of) the properties of echoic *que*. Neither *que* in *sí que* nor echoic *que* can appear in out-of-the-blue contexts, as noted before. Another characteristic of echoic *que* is that it can have the speaker or the hearer as the source of the statement, as shown in (86). As illustrated by some of the examples offered in Demonte & Fernández-Soriano, this property also applies to *que* in *sí-que* combinations, as shown in (87).

- (88) a. Moment A:  
           - Viene el autobús.  
           comes the bus  
           ‘The bus is coming.’

Moment B:

- Que viene el autobús (¿no me oyes?)  
 that comes the bus not ACC you-hear  
 ‘I said that the bus is coming (can’t you hear me?)’

b. Speaker A:

He votado al PP. / María es estupenda.  
 I-have voted to.the PP María is great  
 ‘I voted for the Popular Party.’ ‘María is great.’

Speaker B (scornfully / angrily):

¡¡Que has votado al PP!! / ¿Que María es estupenda?  
 that you.have voted to.the PP that María is great  
 ‘¡How come you voted for the Popular Party (PP).’/ ‘María great?’

[Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014: 239]

(89) Speaker A:

- No te irás nunca  
 not REFL will.leave never  
 ‘You’ll never leave.’

Speaker B:

- Sí/ naturalmente que me iré.  
 yes naturally that REFL will.leave  
 ‘Of course/Naturally I will leave.’

[Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014: 239]

Moreover, echoic *que* can be preceded by adverbs such as *francamente* ‘frankly,’ as in (88) (Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014). The complementizer that follows *sí* in *sí-*

*que* environments patterns again with echoic *que*; it also follows the relevant adverbial, as illustrated in (89).

- (90) {Francamente/ honestamente}, que no tengo hambre.  
 frankly honestly that not have hunger  
 ‘Frankly, I told you/am telling you that I am not hungry.’

- (91) Francamente, sí que tengo hambre.  
 frankly yes that have hunger  
 ‘Frankly, it is the case that I am hungry.’

Despite the similarities just described, *que* in *sí-que* sequences differs from echoic *que* with respect to the ability of echoic *que* to precede fragments, foreign words, and onomatopoeias. As shown by the contrast between (90) and (91), echoic *que* can precede this type of sequences, whereas *que* in *sí que* cannot.

- (92) Que mañana / que post- / que *oui* / que ja.  
 that tomorrow that *post-* that *oui* that ha

[Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014: 245]

- (93) \*Sí que {mañana/ post- / ja.}  
 yes that tomorrow post- ha

However, we would like to point out that this asymmetry is due to the semantic requirements of *sí que* and as a result, it does not pose a threat to our claim that *que* can be echoic. Given that *sí que* is an indication of the commitment of the speaker to the proposition, it must precede a proposition (i.e., a sequence whose truth can be stressed).

And this requirement is not satisfied in (91), which contains fragments, rather than propositions.<sup>19</sup>

One possibility is to assume that if the *que* that follows *sí* performs the same function as *que* in echoic constructions, then they should be in the same syntactic position. Demonte & Fernández-Soriano contend that echoic *que* is in ForceP (recall that the same idea appears in Hernanz 2007 and Batllori & Hernanz 2013, with specific reference to *sí que*):

(94) [<sub>ForceP</sub> *que* [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub> [... ]]]]

Nevertheless, this proposal does not fit in with the structure proposed and argued for in this paper (cf. (93)), wherein *sí que* is lower than ForceP.

(95) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> *sí* [<sub>X°</sub> *que* [<sub>TopicP</sub> [<sub>FocusP</sub> [<sub>ΣP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> ... ]]]]]]]]

We take the data in (94) and (88), repeated here in (95), to lend credence to our syntactic analysis (cf. (93)) and to argue against the proposal in (92). The contrast in (94) shows that *francamente* ‘frankly’ cannot precede a high complementizer placed in ForceP. The possibility of introducing this adverb before echoic *que* (cf. (95)), by contrast, provides

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<sup>19</sup> Under a Merchant-style approach to ellipsis, these sentences may actually involve a full-fledged sentence that has undergone ellipsis. An example like (91) improves significantly if *mañana* is focal and contrastive and a preceding antecedent sentence occurs, as in (i), suggesting that we are dealing with a genuine elliptical construction, rather than with a fragment.

- (i)       ?Hoy   no van a   operarlo    al       final, pero yo creo    que sí   que MAÑANA.  
           today not go to operate-ACC at+the   end   but I   believe that yes that tomorrow  
           ‘Today they won’t operate on him, but I believe that tomorrow, they will.’

This is fully in line with our proposal, since ellipsed sentences are propositions that lack phonological content, rather than fragments.



evidence against the structure in (92) (i.e., echoic *que* cannot be the head of ForceP), while is compatible with that in (93).

(96) a. Juan dice que francamente, no tiene hambre.

Juan says that frankly not has hunger

‘Juan says that, frankly, he is not hungry.’

b. #Juan dice francamente que no tiene hambre.<sup>20</sup>

Juan says frankly that not has hunger

(97) {Francamente/ honestamente}, que no tengo hambre.

frankly honestly that not have hunger

‘Frankly, I told you/am telling you that I am not hungry.’

Yet another argument against placing echoic *que* in ForceP comes from the possibility of having a topic before this *que*, which is illustrated in (96).

(98) a. Este, que si está cansado, que si no quiere comer.

this that if is tired that if not want eat

‘This one, always saying he’s tired, he doesn’t want to eat...’

b. A mi madre, mañana, que no hemos tenido clase.

DAT my mother tomorrow that not have had class

‘We will tell my mother tomorrow that we didn’t have class.’

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<sup>20</sup> This sentence is grammatical if *francamente* modifies the main verb, but this reading is not relevant to the discussion at hand.

In light of the above, it seems plausible to propose that the *que* that follows *sí* is echoic *que* (which has been suggested by Hernanz 2007 and Batllori & Hernanz 2013) and that this kind of *que* is placed in XP, not in ForceP, contra Batllori & Hernanz's analysis.

However, fully assimilating echoic *que* with the *que* that occurs in the *sí-que* construction may turn out to be over-simplistic. The reason is that although *que* in *sí que* may certainly be echoic, it can actually co-occur with an unambiguous quotative complementizer, as indicated by the evidence furnished in (97).

(99) A. Este sí que estudia bien.

this yes that studies well

'This one is certainly a good student.'

B. ¿Qué? ¿Qué has dicho?

what what have said

'Sorry? What did you say?'

A. Que este sí que estudia bien.

that this yes that studies well

'I said that this one is a really good student.'

This exchange shows that a quotative *que* can actually co-exist with *sí que* in the same left periphery, which suggests that they are not exactly the same item in the same syntactic position. Nevertheless, this does not imply that *sí que* does not display echoic properties. González i Planas (2014), for instance, claims that the *que* that occurs in recomplementation is a quotative marker. As shown by the examples presented in this paper (cf. (18)a), however, recomplementation can occur below quotative *que*. Consequently, there may be more than one left-peripheral position able to host echoic elements. In fact, Rizzi (2013) and Villa-García (2015, 2019) have argued that

dependencies are established between different left-peripheral heads, in the spirit of feature “circulation” across the left periphery, in the sense that featural specifications can circulate within the C-system (Rizzi 2013). That *sí que* can actually perform various functions simultaneously is congruent with the prospect that *que* complementizers can be polyvalent elements (Rizzi 1997 et seq.; Villa-García 2015, 2019), as noted in passing in Section 3.4. For reasons of space, we will not explore the connection between echoic *que* and *sí que* further, hoping that future research will look into this issue in more depth.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

This paper took as its point of departure sentences involving the positive polarity marker *sí* and their counterparts with an instance of *que* (the *sí-que* sequence) in Iberian Spanish. Despite the fact that these high-frequency constructions are superficially similar in contexts such as (1), we have shown that the two constructions display radically different behavior. Building upon the initial evidence provided in Hernanz (2007) and Batllori & Hernanz (2008, 2013) and upon novel data brought to light in this paper, we have provided a number of empirical arguments (summarized in Table 1 in Section 3.8) that *sí* and *sí que* should be treated differently in the syntax. We thus proposed the following left-peripheral structures for each element:

- (100) a. [ForceP [TopicP [FocusP *sí* [ΣP ~~*sí*~~ [TP ... ]]]]] [Hernanz 2007: 144]  
 b. [ForceP [TopicP [XP *sí* [X° *que* [TopicP [FocusP [ΣP [TP ... ]]]]]]]]]

We have shown that (98) makes various correct predictions regarding the syntax of *sí* and *sí que* in Spanish, and the analysis in (98)b actually opened the way to an exploration of the semantic behavior of the *sí-que* construction. As shown, *sí* marks verum focus (i.e., it emphasizes the positive polarity value of the sentence), but *sí que* expresses instead that the speaker is extremely confident about the propositional content. This resonates well with

the analysis in (98)b, which places *sí que* in a phrase that is placed between TopicP and FocusP, and argues against proposals that locate *sí que* in the highest left-peripheral projection, namely ForceP. Our characterization in semantic terms has only been intuitive, and a detailed formal semantic analysis of *sí que* is certainly an important issue that we leave for future research. We also took into account dialectal variation in terms of the expression of *que* in assertive contexts, noting that there are Latin American varieties where *que* is only optionally realized overtly, unless its lexicalization is forced by phonological considerations.

We then went on to explore the nature of the complementizer *que* in *sí que* cases and drew a preliminary comparison between *que* in *sí que* contexts and echoic *que* (Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2014). Our claim, in line with previous proposals in the literature, is that *sí que* can also perform an echoic function.

In characterizing the differences between *sí* and *sí que*, this paper has likewise contributed to the mapping of the much-debated Spanish/Romance left periphery.

Although we hope to have provided sufficient evidence to grant the postulation of a projection responsible for hosting *sí que*, an important question that we have not tackled so far is the label of the relevant projection. On the basis of the location and major semantic contribution of *sí que*, we speculate that this position —our XP projection in (98)b— could be AssertiveP, a projection independently proposed by Ambar (2002). According to a suggestion in Martins (2014), this position is the locus of some metalinguistic negative particles. Ambar provides arguments that this projection is located between TopicP and FocusP, which is wholly compatible with the foregoing empirical evidence from Spanish *sí-que* configurations. Similarly, Ambar (2009: 29) has argued that AssertiveP actually involves an echoic flavour, which fits in well with our claim that the *que* of *sí que* can fulfil

an echoic function. An alternative theoretical option would be to consider our XP as a ModalP, since *sí que* denotes the speaker's commitment to the propositional content, along the lines of expressions such as *desde luego* ('of course') or *ciertamente* ('certainly'). However, in order to argue for one of the options sketched here, it would be necessary to formulate a detailed semantic analysis of these constructions, as noted above.

Despite the fact that we have only briefly touched on variation outside Spanish, one natural extension of the findings of this paper would be to further test the behavior of the equivalent of *sí* and *sí que* in those linguistic varieties where the two exist, a task that will determine if the conclusions of this paper hold crosslinguistically, and will surely shed new light on the intriguing contrasts between *sí* and *sí-que* constructions.

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