Dialects and diachronic syntax: free relatives in Old Spanish

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(Received 14 March 1986)

1. INTRODUCTION

In Rivero (1984), I argued that Old Spanish wh-items in non-interrogative constructions appear in A(rgument) position in surface structure as quantifier-like expressions, and may constitute the antecedent of a restrictive relative, as the quantos in (1); they can also be elements in non-A position (COMP) in headed, or free relatives, as in (2 a-b).

(1) [NP[NP quantos] [S'[COMP qei] [S t_i la udieron]]
   All-those that it they-heard

(2) (a) [NP[NP todos omnes] [S'[COMP quantosi] [S t_i esta carta vieren]]
   All men all-who this letter they-would-see

(b) [NP[NP e] [S'[COMP quantosi] [S t_i aqui sedemos]]]
   all-who here we-are

Then Old Spanish wh-words belong to the list of relative and question items, and, in addition, are included within the paradigm of quantifiers such as muchos ‘many’. Although dialects may differ as to the number of specific wh-items listed in their lexicons, I could see no variation in the lexical double categorization (i.e. relative and quantifier), once an element was listed. I

[1] This work has been partially subsidized by Research Grant 410-84-0370 from S.S.H.R.C.C. I thank Montserrat Morales for her enthusiastic help in gathering the data.

[2] I omit questions from the discussion. These are never of the wh-item + que type, and can be ‘non-matching’ when heading a subcategorized complement. Hybrid constructions such as Recuerda con los problemas (con) que se enfrenta ‘Remember which problems he faces’ are not part of the medieval system (see Hirschbühler & Rivero, 1983, for discussion). New compounds of the wh-type pattern syntactically as (1) and (2 b) in the 13th century, as we see in section 2, but fail to appear in questions. During this period questions seem to have the wh-item in COMP as in (5).

[3] Quantificational uses of ya + wh-item sequences, as in (i), survive until the 16th century:

(i) Diol Dios man e mano ya quanta memoria Alex 90 a (6)
   ‘God gave him enough memory directly.’
   For additional examples see Cuervo (1953:339), among others.
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proposed that Old Spanish restrictive relatives are uniformly of the type in (1–2), as in all present varieties: [\( \text{NP}_S \{\text{COMP } S}\)]. Under this analysis, differences between the medieval and later periods follow first from the specialization of \( \text{wh}\)-words to the relative (and question) paradigm, eliminating (1), and second from the emergence of principles prohibiting relatives in COMP, if their content is recoverable, eliminating (2a). There are no changes in phrase-structure; devices excluding empty and doubly-filled COMPs are in existence in all dialects and periods.

Rebecca Posner (1985) had made interesting comments on my proposal, indicating the need for further research. Here I will concentrate on only one of the important questions she raises, namely, dialect variation and replacement, because it has crucial consequences for the model of historical evolution I adopted. I will maintain my original proposal providing additional motivation for it, and outline the line of research which, in my view, can contribute fruitfully to the debate.

Posner points out that a considerable amount of evidence in support of (1–2b) in my paper comes from Aragonese, or texts arguably influenced by this dialect. However, it is the Castilian dialect that survives in later literary materials. If these two medieval dialects differ in the relevant respects, namely (a) phrase-structure, (b) conditions on the content of COMP, and (c) the double lexical classification of \( \text{wh}\)-items, then Old Castilian remains un-analysed. If this is correct, in contrasting medieval Aragonese with later Castilian, one could simply be studying the (literary) death of a dialect, as Posner indicates. Under the model of diachronic evolution with a psychological perspective I adopted, this conclusion would eliminate the possibility to hypothesize any historical change for Castilian, the surviving dialect, on the basis of my work. If I did not establish the output of the grammar of early generations of Castilian speakers, nothing can be proposed about the construction of a new system by later Castilians, and the ensuing differences. Within this approach, my analysis may be valid as a synchronic grammar of medieval Aragonese, and contributes to the study of the properties of UG. However, an Aragonese system which dies cannot be the basis for further diachronic research on later Castilian grammars removed both in space and time from contact with Aragonese. If there is dialect death, there are no changes to discuss for Castilian per se.

Suppose, on the contrary, that Old Aragonese and Old Castilian are parallel in their treatment of relatives, even though they may differ in other areas of grammar. Then, texts from the two dialects represent the output of a common partial system, and provide positive evidence along similar lines for the development of later grammars, such as the one reflected in Castilian literary texts exclusively. Under this perspective, there is no harm in mixing early Castilian and Aragonese evidence in this area, when proposing a first system. Also, the death of Aragonese is immaterial for the changes seen in
the later Castilian grammar; those differences cannot be interpreted as already existing Castilian devices which remain constant through time.

In my earlier paper, I provided evidence that the two dialects were similar in analysing relatives as in (1) and (2). Without recapitulating, here I will consider two new areas of the grammar of the medieval vernaculars which motivate my proposal along independent lines: (1) the position of non-tonic pronouns, and (2) the syntax of wh-compounds. I will mention additional Castilian and Aragonese primary sources, but will not consider the necessary and important compilation task an end in itself. In my view, questions of dialect differences and replacement cannot be answered by providing lists of examples arranged by geographical origin, but by postulating partial grammars for the dialect(s) in question.

2. FREE RELATIVES AND THE POSITION OF NON-TONIC PRONOUNS

In Rivero (1984), I proposed that free relatives such as qui alli se morasse ‘who(ever) would live there’ (B. Milg. 12 d) should be analysed uniformly along the lines of (2b), within a structure that has remained constant up to the present. For this pattern, Posner (1985) outlines an analysis where wh-items appear in the head position followed by an empty COMP:

\[
\text{[NP _NP quantos [S' [COMP e] S]]}.\]

In my view, Old Castilian and Aragonese cannot differ in this respect, since the latter structure is not viable in either dialect; rather, in both cases this type of free relative is as in (2b), and disallows the empty COMP. The position of non-tonic or clitic pronouns during the medieval period leads to a common treatment of all relatives, eliminating the possibility of a null COMP systematically. It is well-known that non-tonic pronouns never stand in initial position in early Romance. This manifestation of Wackernagel’s law (1892) has been much debated in Romance linguistics (see Ramsden (1963: 1–24) for a summary of interpretations going back to Friedrich Diez). For 13th-century Spanish, I propose a restriction checking the location of the clitic in the syntactic surface structure in view of its phonological content:

(3) A non-tonic pronominal cannot be the initial syntactic constituent of the minimal S’ that contains it.

As a result, there is no obligatory requirement that the clitic be in second position (i.e. the second syntactic constituent within S’). Also, as far as Old Spanish is concerned, the phenomenon appears unrelated to a verb-second type constraint. I have studied the properties of clitics in more detail in Rivero (1985). Here, I concentrate on the effect of principle (3) on the analysis of relative clauses.

Under my proposal, the V in (4) is the first constituent in S’ containing phonological material, and the structure is well formed. In (5), the question
constituent located in COMP licenses the adjacent clitic as second constituent in S'.

(4) (a) Alzaronlo de tierra  B. Milg. 148a
    ‘They–raised–him from (the) ground’
(b) \[ S'_\text{COMP e} [ S\text{ alzaron lo…}] \]

(5) (a) Por qé me non recudes  B. Milg. 293a
    Why me not answer  ‘Why don’t you answer me?’
(b) \[ S'_\text{COMP Por qé} [ S\text{ me non recudes}] \]

In Left-dislocations, the overwhelming preference is for a postverbal clitic, if no material intervenes between the topic constituent and the V. The pattern appears in early materials, (6), and survives until the 15th century, (7).

(6) Mi cuerpo i mj alma acomjendolo a ti  SME 1325
    My body and my soul I-entrust-it to you

(7) En amar onbres de poca manera
    In to-love men of little manner
fazen lo esto por una de dos maneras
    they-do it this by one of two ways
‘They love men little in two different ways.

Recent analyses of dislocations (Chomsky, 1977; Rivero, 1980, for Modern Spanish) place the topic constituent outside of S’. Applying the same treatment to the Old Spanish sentences in (6–7), as in (8), I conclude that V is the first constituent with phonological content in the S’-structure. A preverbal clitic in this type of structure would be S’-initial and in violation of the proposed restriction.

(8) (a) \[ S'_\text{TOP mi cuerpo i mj alma} [ S'_\text{COMP e} [ S\text{ acomjendo lo…}] ] \]
(b) \[ S'_\text{TOP en amar onbres de poca manera}\][\[ S'_\text{COMP e}[[fazen lo…]] \]]

A few dislocated constructions parallel to (6–7) in the relevant aspects have preverbal clitics, as in (9). I assume that en is the resumptive element coindexed with prior por la montanya.

(9) Por la montanya sen metio  SME 1414
    Through the mountain herself-there she-went
    ‘She went through the mountain.’

If it is assumed that Old Spanish has preposed phrases in Focus position (i.e. adjoined to S), in addition to topic nodes under S”, this less frequent order complies with the system as well, as in (10):

(10) \[ S'_\text{COMP e} [ S'_\text{FOC por la montanya} [ S\text{ sen metio}] ] \]
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In brief, I correlate the fluctuation in the position of the clitic in dislocated constructions with the different mode of attachment of the initial constituent (topic vs. focus).

Let us now turn to restrictive relatives from this perspective. As often noticed, an exceptionless word order pattern emerges: the non-tonic pronominal is preverbal in headed or free relatives alike. Then, the patterns in (11) and (12) are extremely frequent in all dialects.

(11) (a) Testigos qui lo oyeron...  
Witneses who it heard  

(b) Aquel qui la conpro...  
The-one who it bought

(12) (a) Qui laquisiere uender al monasterio...  
Who (ever) it wanted to-sell to-the monastery

(b) Non sea qui te ajude...  
Not there-be who you help  
‘Let there be no one to help you.’

The order seen in (11–12) follows from the hypothesis that the wh-item is within S’, i.e. in the COMP position, not from the assumption that it is outside of S’, i.e. in the NP in head position. The analysis for (12) must be as in (13a), and not as in (13b), in all dialects (traces are omitted):

(13) (a) [NP [NP e] [S’[COMP qui] [s te ajude]]]

(b)* [NP [NP qui] [S’[COMP e] [te ajude]]]

For our purposes, the structure in (13b) is parallel to (8a–b) and the preverbal clitic would be S’-initial if free relatives had the wh-item in antecedent position. Had one dialect analysed free relatives as in (13b), lacking the empty COMP restriction, the word order pattern would be qui ajude te, under the proposals I have given. Such order is unattested. If these assumptions are correct, the position of non-tonic pronominals in relative clauses is the type of positive evidence easily available to the medieval language learner to reach the conclusion that the COMP must be lexically filled, barring a possible departure from a common grammar of Castilian and Aragonese up to the Renaissance.

After 1450, the position of clitics begins to be morphologically rather than syntactically defined. This change coincides with a new treatment of clitics. In the Middle Ages they are syntactic constituents of the NP or PP type (see Rivero (1985) for discussion), and this is why a principle such as (3) can be formulated in terms of a phrase-marker. Later on, clitics become morphological dependents on the verb. Thus, before 1450, it is impossible to interpret the patterns in (12) along the lines of (13b). Then, if later Castilian is analysed as in (13a) too, we can conclude that the death of Aragonese for literary
purposes has no effect on our hypothesis that no syntactic change has occurred.

As usual, a principle such as (3) leads to select specific analyses in more complex structures. The clitics in (14a) must be located as in (14b).

\[(14) \hspace{2cm} \text{Por 47} \]

(a) El que la dezir quiere
He who it to-say wants
(b) \([S'_\text{COMP} \text{que}] [S \text{ la } [S'_\text{dezir} \text{ quiere}]\]

Assuming that *dezir* is the verb of the full sentential complement of *quiere*, if no restructuring or clause union has applied, *la* is not inside the infinitival clause, since it would be S'-initial. Rather, the clitic is in the matrix S, and its position is licensed by the material in COMP, as indicated.

Left dislocations containing free relatives show the complex word order effects following from the simple principles I have assumed, as in (16), which is the analysis proposed for (15) (traces are omitted):

\[(15) \quad \text{quanta renda se levantare dista hered[at]} \]
\[
\text{whatever interest itself would-accrue from-this possession} \]
\[
dolo a... \quad \text{DLE 158 (1207)}
\]

(I)-give-it to...

‘Whatever interests accrue from this property, I will give them to…’

\[(16) \]

\[\text{S''} \]
\[\text{TOP} \]
\[\text{S'} \]
\[\text{NP} \]
\[\text{COMP} \]
\[\text{S} \]
\[\text{NP} \]
\[\text{e} \]
\[\text{COMP} \]
\[\text{S'} \]
\[\text{S} \]
\[\text{do lo a...} \]

\[\text{S'} e \]

\[\text{quanta renda} \]

\[\text{se levantare dista hered[at]} \]

*Se* is not initial in its minimal *S’, nor is *lo.*

To summarize, clitics are sensitive to Wackernagel’s law in Old Spanish, formulated as in (3). In free relatives, the initial *wh*-item behaves as the first syntactic constituent of the ‘sentence’ (i.e. *S’* or lower). If, as often assumed,
the COMP is reserved for phrases with a $wh$-feature, then in Old Spanish the relative item is in COMP: the structure is as in (2 b), regardless of dialect.

3. THE SYNTAX OF $wh$-COMPOUNDS

The new $wh$-compounds in all dialects of Old Spanish acquire the syntactic properties of the older $wh$-items, as they enter the language. They interrelate with clitic position in a way that indicates that they can fill the COMP.

In the 13th century, the paradigm of $wh$-compounds such as $qualqui\'er(e)$ 'whoever, whatever', $quantou\'i\'er(e)$ 'whatever', etc. coexists with the syntactic sequences $qual\ldots qui\'e(r)e$ 'what one-may-want' at their historical origin, as in the contrast in (17) (see also Gessner, 1895; Cuervo, 1953; Palomo, 1934; Lombard, 1937, 38; Lombard, 1947, 1948; Meier, 1950, in particular). I will use the symbol # to indicate word boundaries where relevant.

(17) (a) Sea significador daquel rey
Let-it-be indicative of-that king
por qual otra manera quier
in what other manner (one)-may-want

(b) Por fazer su prouecho en qual quier otra manera
To do his benefit in whatever other manner

Documents from the period fluctuate in the frequency of use of the two patterns. For instance, the Libro Conplido and the Libro de las Cruzes come from the court of Alphonse X, but the first prefers the older pattern in (17a), which I analyse as $[\text{NP}[e_{\text{NP}}][s_{COMP \# quali\# otra manera}][s_{qui\'e}]]$, while the second uses the innovative sequence in (17b) more often, revealing the Aragonese origin of its translator (see later): $[\text{NP}[Q_{\text{NP}} \# quali\# ] otra manera]$. Therefore, 13th-century speakers have added $qualqui\'er(e)$ to the medieval lexicon, but retain clear indications that it is compound formed on a $wh$-item also listed in the lexicon of relatives.

Older $wh$-items such as $qual$ have a double lexical classification in this period. When a lexical innovation enters the language, it acquires thelexico-syntactic properties present in the paradigm it joins. $Qualquier$ in (17 b) is identical to the quantifier which survives up to the present; in the 13th century, it also functions as a 'relative' much like $qual$ does, as in (18–19):

(18) (a) Quien quier llore o riya, el non a ninguna cuidado
Whoever cries or laughs, he not has any worry

(b) E qualquiere casa d'ellas fuere flaca
And whatever house of them was weak
The previous examples show *wh*-compounds relating to the subject (18), or the object (19), of a relative clause which appears in A-position (18b–19b) or non-A position (18a–19a). In Modern Spanish the pattern is ungrammatical because it lacks a *que* ‘that’ next to the right bracket of the constituent containing the compound. The present-day version of (18a) is *Quienquiera que llore o ría*. Within the medieval system, (18–19) show the expected relative use of *wh*-items, with *quienquier* in COMP: \[ S' \left[ \text{NP [NPe]} \left[ S'' \left[ \text{TOP} \right] \right] \right] \]

The pattern in (18–19) is not unusual in 13th-century materials. In the *Libro Conplido*, it is found repeatedly (17B, 53B, 87A, 142A, 199A, 201A, 256A). In Aragonese documents it abounds too, as we shall later see. The modern

\[ (i) \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
S'' \\
\text{TOP} \\
S' \\
\text{COMP} \\
[\text{[quienquier logar d'estos sobredichos]},] \\
\text{S} \\
\text{judga}.... \\
\text{fallares t_i} \\
\end{array} \]

\[ (a) \]

E cualquier logar d'estos sobredichos
And whatever place of these above-mentioned
fallares fortunado, iudga...

\[ (b) \]

Pierda [el matador] quanto quier oviere
Lose [the killer] whatever he-would-have

\footnote{The examples in (18a–19a) are completely equivalent to the ‘conditional’ free relatives mentioned by Posner (1985:197). Their interpretation should perhaps correlate with a syntactic analysis where they are S'-structures with a - *wh* (i.e. non-question) rather than a + *wh* (question) in COMP, and no antecedent NP-structure, as in (i); the conditional free relative is in TOP.}
reader is inclined to think that the copyists were adamant in omitting *que*’s, but it seems to me that we are observing a syntactic construction which has not survived, and not a series of systematic scribal errors. Cuervo (1953) has noticed that the omissions of *que* in relative constructions are extremely infrequent in the history of Spanish. This observation remains valid for the 13th century under the present analysis for (18–19), since these relatives require no *que*. In later periods, the pattern in (18–19) disappears, but this is not due to a syntactic change. Rather, when *wh-*items lose their double role in the lexicon, *wh-*compounds survive as quantifiers exclusively, while non-compounds are restricted to a relative use. Then the former must appear in the NP-head, not the COMP, of a relative, a *que* or another *wh-*item must necessarily follow them, and the pattern in (18–19) becomes ungrammatical at that point. Thus, Cuervo’s observation is valid for all periods, even though older materials would seem to contradict it at first sight. The position of clitics in examples such as (20) indicates that the *wh-*compound is the first constituent within the S’-structure, as before. In other words, (18) and (19) should not be analysed as having an empty COMP.

(20) (a) E assi d’esta manera segundo esta orden
And so of this manner according-to this order
iudgaras en qual quiere logar
you-will-judge in whatever place
lo fallares de las otras casas
it you-would-find of the other houses

Lib con 87A

(b) [S[COMP en # qual quiere # logar][S lo fallares...]]

The *wh-*compound *qualsequier* often found in Aragonese documents mirrors the properties of the syntax still at work, providing additional evidence for my proposals. Two patterns fluctuate in the 13th century, with (21 a) the older one, and (21 b) the innovative sequence.

(21) (a) E dierone a don Fernando Pedrez, la meatad de
And gave-to-him to Mr Fernando Pedrez, the half of
casas, . . . por qual guisa sequier que sea
houses, . . . for what manner itself-wants that it be

DLE 266 (1206)

(b) quai se quiere color que tiene de cerca
whatever colour that he-has of near
tornase ella en tal
turn-herself she in such
‘She acquires whatever colour she has near.’

The quantifier *qualsequier* in (21 n) originates in a syntactic structure with a *wh-*item followed by the non-tonic reflexive and the verb *quiere(e). For the reanalysis to have been possible, it must be the case that earlier periods
analysed the relevant sequence as $[ S' \{ \text{COMP qual} \} \{ S' \text{se quier}\}]$, and not as $[ \text{NP} \{ \text{NP qual} \} \{ S' \{ \text{COMP e} \} \{ S' \text{se quier}\}]$, in view of the position of se within the compound. If the latter analysis had been postulated, the expected result would be qualquierese, which is unattested.

Again, we expect qualsequier to adopt the syntactic properties of wh-items and show a 'relative' use. In documents where it appears frequently, this is indeed the case, as seen in (22):

\[(22) \begin{align*}
(a) & \quad \text{Alguna otra justicia, qual se quiere sea} \quad F. \text{ de Ar. 110} \\
& \quad \text{Some other justice, whatever it is} \\
(b) & \quad [\text{NP} \{ \text{NP e} \} \{ S' \{ \text{COMP # qual se quiere #} \} \{ S' \text{sea}\}] 
\end{align*} \]

The compound qualque offers similar characteristics. As I pointed out in Rivero (1984), it is often assumed that this lexical item is Occitan or Aragonese in origin in its later uses as a quantifier. Within the medieval system, there is reason to believe that it had a syntactic (internal) source $[\text{NP qual} \{ \text{COMP que} \} \{ S\}]$ as other compounds do; this would account for its appearance in early Castilian documents with no literary value, and geographically remote from Aragonese. However, even if it was borrowed, in medieval times it positions itself in COMP and licences a perverbal clitic. Thus it enters the system, and does not change it:

\[(23) \begin{align*}
(a) & \quad \text{Et en qualque manera los ganare} \quad F. \text{ de Ar. 126} \\
& \quad \text{And in whatever manner them he-would-win} \\
(b) & \quad [S' \{ \text{COMP en # qualque # manerai}\} \{ S' \text{los ganare}\}] 
\end{align*} \]

Within a common syntactic system, and a shared mechanism of lexical classification, dialects may differ by developing a larger or smaller lexicon for a given paradigm. This, I submit, is what separates Old Castilian and Aragonese in relation to free relatives. Aragonese is richer in wh-compounds, employs them earlier, prefers innovative patterns of type (17b), compound paradigms along the lines of qualsequier in (21b), and uses quale to a greater extent than Castilian. Consider the compound qualquequiere formed on the reanalysis of qual plus que plus quiere, or alternatively, quale plus quiere, within the proposed syntactic structures. This sequence is not found in Castilian documents in a way that would unambiguously motivate the assumption that it has entered the lexicon as a word. However, the same does not apply to Aragonese in view of examples such as (24) where qualquequier is a prenominal quantifier in a non-relative use.\footnote{The examples with this type of compound as an unequivocal word in the Fuero Juzgo cited by Gessner (1895) and Cuervo (1953) must then be attributed to Aragonese influence.}
(24) ... dreytos y pertinenças que alas dictas casas
rights and possessions that to-the mentioned houses
portaynen... por qual que quiere manera
pertain in whatever manner DLA 26 (1276)

If *qualquequier* and the related paradigm are Aragonese words, they
nevertheless acquire the properties of the common system shared by the two
dialects, as we see in the contrast between (24) and (25):

(25) (a) quanta que quier sea la demanda,  F. de Ar. 134
    whatever is the demand
(b) [$_s$' [COMP # quantaquequier #]  [$_s$ sea la demanda]].

If the Aragonese dialect had continued while Castilian disappeared from the
literary documents (and if my proposals are correct), we would observe a
greater variety of *wh*-compounds surviving as quantifiers in later periods, but
the same syntax we see in later Castilian.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the qualitative and the quantitative evidence for the proposed
system of relatives in the medieval period grows very rich as a larger
perspective of the overall grammar is developed. Different principles conspire
to lead the learner to select one analysis over several alternatives, and to add
apparently unrelated data to the stock of positive information relevant to
relatives. Here I have concentrated on the contribution of clitics, and the
lexical innovations of the *wh*-compound type. As this additional information
is studied, the regular pattern of alternation *quanto* vs. *quanto que* first
discussed in Rivero (1984) becomes pervasive, and affects Castilian and
Aragonese in parallel ways.

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