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ON INDIRECT QUESTIONS,
COMMANDS, AND SPANISH
QUOTATIVE *QUE*

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The *que* 'that' preceding the embedded interrogative word in the Spanish example (1) has attracted much attention in the recent literature, and will also be the topic of this squib.

- (1) Dijo que qué querían.
said + 3s that what wanted + 3p
'He inquired what they wanted.'

However, it has gone unnoticed that this *que* is used with a class of imperative complements, not just with *wh*-complements. This use, I argue, has consequences for views on Spanish questions and selection versus subcategorization. I first review earlier proposals on the function of *que* and later turn to new data on imperatives and the implications for those proposals.

Traditional grammars mention *que* before interrogatives only with *preguntar* 'ask' and with *decir* 'say, inquire' used interrogatively, as in (1). Rivero (1980:381–382), however, notes that *que* occurs generally with interrogative complements of speech act Vs, such as *murmurar* 'murmur' in (2).

- (2) Murmuró que con quién podía ir.
murmured + 3s that with whom could + 3s go
'He asked with a murmur who he could go with.'

Plann (1982) argues that *que* precedes the interrogative if, as Lahiri (1991:77) states, "the structure obtained by substituting the direct question correlate for the embedded interrogative is well-formed." Thus, (1) and (2) are possible because they contain Vs that can be followed by a direct discourse, as (3) illustrates.

- (3) a. Dijo: "Qué quieren?"
said + 3s what want + 3s
'He said, "What do they want?"'
b. Murmuró: "Con quién puedo ir?"
murmured + 3s with whom could + 1s go
'He murmured, "Who could I go with?"'

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By contrast, Vs that take indirect questions, such as *saber* 'know' in (4a), but are not used in direct discourse, (4b), disallow *que* before the interrogative, as (4c) shows.

- (4) a. Sabía con quién podía ir.
 knew + 3s with whom could + 3s go
 'He knew who he could go with.'
 b. *Sabía: "Con quién puedo ir?"
 *'He knew, "Who could I go with?"'
 c. *Sabía que con quién podía ir.

Plann assigns a recursive CP-structure equivalent to (5) to *que* + *wh*-phrase complements.

- (5) Murmuró [_{CP}₂ que [_{CP}₁ con quién_i [_{IP} podía ir t_i]]].

Suñer (1992, 1993) offers a different solution. She argues that *que* + *wh*-phrase complements are genuine questions: that is, questions selected by a *wonder*-type predicate, in the sense of Groenendijk and Stokhof (1989). By contrast, *wh*-phrase complements are answers or semiquestions: that is, propositions selected by a *know*-type predicate. On this view, *que* converts the denotation of a proposition to the denotation of a question, and this requires a [+wh] syntactic feature independent of semantic type. To exemplify, for Suñer (1993:63–65), *decir* 'say' takes propositions, semiquestions, and questions as complements, because this V subcategorizes for a syntactic [wh] and selects for a semantic [QU], as shown in (6).

- (6) a. Dijo que iban. Proposition =
 said + 3s that went + 3P [- wh, - QU]
 'He said that they were going.'
 b. Dijo cuándo iban. Semiquestion =
 said + 3s when went + 3P [+ wh, - QU]
 'He said when they were going.'
 c. Dijo que cuándo iban. Question =
 said + 3s that when went + 3P [+ wh, + QU]
 'He inquired when they were going.'

On theoretical and empirical grounds, Lahiri (1991:75–97) proposes a return to the earlier approach to *que* + *wh*-complements. His objections to Suñer's views are as follows. First, on this account semantic selection must be supplemented by subcategorization, which is undesirable. Second, *investigar* 'investigate' semantically belongs to the *wonder*-type: it takes a question, as in (7a), but not a proposition, as in (7b). However, as (7c) shows, this V disallows *que* + *wh*-complements, which is unexpected under Suñer's analysis. By contrast, *investigar* is not a speech act V used in direct discourse, as (7d) shows.

As a result, Plann's generalization predicts the deviance of *que* + *wh*-complements with this V.

- (7) a. Investigaron {si, cómo} se puede curar el SIDA.
 'They investigated {whether, how} AIDS can be cured.'
- b. *Investigaron que se puede curar el SIDA.
 '*They investigated that AIDS can be cured.'
- c. *Investigaron que cómo se puede
 investigated + 3P that how REFL can
 curar el SIDA.
 cure the AIDS
- d. *Investigaron: Cómo se puede curar el SIDA?
 '*They investigated, "How can AIDS be cured?"'

In his argument, Lahiri mentions just *investigar*. Other Vs with similar properties include *examinar* 'examine', *inspeccionar* 'inspect', *sopesar* 'consider the pros and cons', and those meaning 'explore' such as *explorar*, *sondear*, and *tantear*. Third, with speech act Vs *wh*-exclamatives and not just questions are preceded by *que*. This is illustrated in (8), which contains a *qué* + Adjective sequence that cannot be used interrogatively.

- (8) Dijo que qué bonito era Madrid.
 said + 3s that how pretty was Madrid
 'He said how pretty Madrid was.'

Lahiri does not discuss the semantic type of exclamatives. On intuitive grounds, however, they resemble answers or propositions, as in *He said that Madrid was very pretty*, and not questions. In my view, this similarity may pose an additional problem for Suárez's account. If the complement in (8) combines the [+wh] feature of *que* and the [-QU] semantic type, as intuition suggests, then *que* does not convert a proposition into a question and must have another function. For Lahiri, *que* is a quotative marker and indicates a report, or the object of a speech act, as opposed to a question or a proposition. From this perspective, the complements in (1), (2), and (6c) are semantic reports and not questions, and (8) is also a report. Lahiri's proposal obviates the need for syntactic subcategorization. In addition, I will now argue that it can accommodate the use of quotative *que* with certain commands that have gone unnoticed in the existing literature.

Spanish sequences formed by the prepositions *a* 'to' and *sin* 'without' and a V in the infinitive are used as direct commands, as in (9).

- (9) a. A correr!
 to run + INF
 'Let's run!', 'Run!'

- b. Sin empujar!
 without push + INF
 'Let's not push!', 'Do not push!'

Since infinitives lack person and number, the sentences in (9) serve for all persons associated with commands, as the English glosses indicate. Infinitives not preceded by prepositions can also be used as commands, as in (10).

- (10) Correr!
 'Run!'

However, the P + infinitive sequences in (9) and the bare infinitive in (10) used as a command differ. First, as traditional grammars state, bare infinitives used as commands are vernacular and may be absent in some registers. However, the P + infinitive commands are standard. Second, and more important, the P + infinitive sequences in (9) are intrinsic commands. By contrast, interpreting the bare infinitive in (10) as a command depends not only on intonation, but also on context. On the one hand, *Vivir en Madrid!* with a bare infinitive is more likely to be interpreted as expressing a wish than a command, as in 'To live in Madrid!'. On the other hand, *A vivir en Madrid!* with P + infinitive must be interpreted as a command and means 'Let's live in Madrid!' or 'Live in Madrid!'. When a P + infinitive sentence receives a question intonation, it becomes a command over which the speaker expresses doubt or surprise, as in *What do you mean? Are you telling me to live in Madrid?*; in this sense, this sentence could be considered an "echo" command, resembling the more familiar "echo" questions.

P + infinitive sequences have the intrinsic force of a command. With regard to syntax, however, they share the formal properties of infinitival clauses discussed in more detail in Rivero 1993. First, in the P + infinitive command, V can be negated, whereas in the command with V inflected with imperative morphology, negation is excluded. This is because a V with imperative morphology must reach C to be licensed and cannot cross the Neg that stands in the raising path. By contrast, a V with infinitive morphology remains lower than Neg in the syntactic tree. Second, in P + infinitive commands, V precedes clitic pronouns, which is never the case when V has finite morphology. This is because infinitive Vs raise beyond the clitics in I (Kayne 1991), whereas Vs with finite morphology remain in I. In view of this, I propose that the structure of the P + infinitive command in (11a) is (11b), irrelevant details omitted.

- (11) a. A no molestar-le!
 P not bother + INF-him
 'Do not bother him!'
 b. [CP a [NegP no [IP molestar-le]]]

The aspect of (11b) that is important for the purposes of this squib is that P occupies the CP level and is the constituent indicating force (I. Bosque suggests to me that P is in Spec CP). From this perspective, the sentences in (9) and (11) are direct commands in the same sense that (12a) is a direct question. That is, P encodes illocutionary force in infinitival commands just as the *wh*-word moved to the CP level does in infinitival questions.

- (12) a. Por qué no molestar-le?
 why not bother + INF-him
 ‘Why not bother him?’
 b. [_{CP} por qué_i [_{NegP} no [_{IP} molestar-le t_i]]]

Direct P + infinitive commands share a second property with questions. (13a) illustrates the embedding of a question under a speech act V. (13b) and (14a) illustrate the same situation with commands.¹

- (13) a. Dijo que por qué no molestarle.
 ‘He said, “Why not bother him?”’
 b. Dijo que a no molestar-le.
 said + 3s that P not bother + INF-him
 ‘He said not to bother him.’
 c. Dijo: “A no molestarme!”
 ‘He said, “Do not bother me!”’
 (14) a. Murmuró que sin empujar.
 murmured + 3s that without push + INF
 ‘He said with a murmur not to push.’
 b. Murmuró: “Sin empujar!”
 ‘He murmured, “Do not push!”’

Like *que* + *wh*-complements, *que* + P + infinitive complements can be analyzed as containing a recursive CP, as in (15) for (14a), which should be compared with (5).

- (15) Murmuró [_{CP₂} que [_{CP₁} sin [_{IP} empujar]]].

Plann’s and Lahiri’s proposals easily extend to the patterns in (13b) and (14a). That is, *que* + P + infinitive complements are reports in that the structure obtained by substituting the direct command for the embedded command is well formed. However, Suñer’s views on *que* cannot cover this case, because commands are neither questions nor answers. In other words, it is not the case that *que* in (13b) and (14a) is an indication that what follows is to be interpreted as a question rather than an

¹ Verbs with imperative morphology cannot be embedded (see Rivero 1993 for discussion). Embedded commands are infinitives, as in the text, or subjunctives, as in *Dijo que fueran* ‘He ordered them to go’, a frame to be added to those for *decir* in (6).

answer. Instead, *que* shows that what follows is the object of a speech act, or a so-called semantic report.²

Direct commands are excluded as complements of Vs that are not used in direct discourse and thus do not select reports. This is true of *saber* 'know', which selects questions, as already shown in (4), and propositions, as in (16a). This V does not belong to the speech act class, as shown in (4b) for a question, and (16b) for a command. Therefore, it disallows quotative *que*, as in (4c) for a question, and (16c) for a command.

- (16) a. Sabía que corría.
knew + 3s that run + 3s
'He knew that he was running.'
- b. *Sabía: "A correr!"
knew + 3s P run + INF
- c. *Sabía que a correr.
knew + 3s that P run + INF

² A reviewer mentions that Suñer offers arguments based on coordination that could undermine Lahiri's position. Following Groenendijk and Stokhof (1989), Suñer suggests that the conjoining of *wh*- and *that*-complements is proof of their syntactic and semantic homogeneity, as in (i).

- (i) María dijo [que estaba enfadada] y [a quiénes no quería invitar].
'Mary said [that she was angry] and [who she did not want to invite].'

I do not find this argument persuasive. To my ear, *that*-complements can also be conjoined with reports of exclamations, as in (iia), commands, as in (iib), and questions, as in (iic). By the logic of the approach, this would make all complements homogeneous.

- (ii) a. María dijo [que estaba cansada] y [que qué difícil era su trabajo].
'Mary said [that she was tired] and [how difficult her work was].'
- b. María dijo [que estaba cansada] y [que a callarnos].
'Mary said [that she was tired] and [(ordered) us to shut up].'
- c. María dijo [que estaba cansada] y [que cuándo se iban los invitados].
'Mary said [that she was tired] and [(asked) when the guests were leaving].'

Suñer finds coordinations like (iic) semantically odd. The conditions making them appropriate need study, but I find (iic) felicitous to report the following discourse of an exasperated Mary: "Boy, am I tired! When are these people leaving?" A problem may be to distinguish whether the first conjunct in (i)–(ii) counts as an indirect assertion, or a report of an assertion, if the dichotomy proves pertinent. Structures with two adjacent *que*'s are ungrammatical, so the distinction cannot be established on syntactic grounds: **María dijo que que estaba cansada*. This problem extends to indirect commands versus reports of commands with *que*-subjunctive complements, as in footnote 1. That is, *María dijo que nos calláramos* 'Mary ordered us to shut up' also lacks a grammatical counterpart with two *que*'s.

Creer 'believe' selects propositions and not questions. As a verb of control, it takes infinitival complements, as in (17b). Because this V is not of the speech act class, as (17c) shows, it too disallows infinitival commands as complements, as in (17d).³

- (17) a. Creía que corría.
believed + 3s that run + 3s
'He believed that he was running.'
- b. Creía correr.
believed + 3s run + INF
'He believed that he was running.'
- c. *Creía: "A correr!"
'He believed, "Run!"'
- d. *Creía que a correr.

In conclusion, I have shown how P + infinitive commands imply a wider range of uses for the Spanish marker *que* than previously discussed. I have also argued that the properties of these commands provide additional motivation for the view that semantic selection for questions, propositions, and reports accounts for Spanish complements involving quotative *que*, without appeal to syntactic subcategorization.

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³ A reviewer mentions that my argument would be further strengthened by the existence of a V that functions as a counterpart of *investigar*: it takes embedded command complements but, because it is not a speech act verb, it disallows the extra *que*. This could be *pedir* 'request', perhaps the only V of command inappropriate for direct discourse. As shown in (ia) and (ib), *pedir* takes embedded subjunctive and infinitive commands. To my ear, this V sounds odd in direct discourse, as in (ic), whether with imperatives or with P + infinitive. The same status holds with quotative *que*, as in (id), which I already mentioned in Rivero 1993, without drawing the appropriate conclusion. By contrast, I find *ordenar* 'order' grammatical in all four contexts, which means that it is a speech act V.

- (i) a. Pidió a los niños que le escucharan.
requested + 3s of the children that to-him listen + 3P
'He requested of the children that they listen to him.'
- b. Pidió a los niños escucharle.
(same as (ia))
- c. ??Pidió a los niños:
requested of the children
'"Escuchad-me!" / "A escuchar-me!"'
listen + IMP-to + me/P listen + INF-to + me
- d. ??Pidió que a escuchar-le.
requested that P listen + INF-to + him

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