

## Article

# C<sup>o</sup> realizations along the left edge across English and Spanish

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**Abstract:** This paper investigates the lexicalization of the complementizer *that/que* in English and Spanish varieties in different contexts along the left edge of the clause. This is performed through discussion of a range of constructions traditionally attributed to the CP domain/left periphery, primarily (but not only) in certain embedded clauses. The ubiquity of *that/que*, that is, the lexical realization of *that/que* in subordinating environments, exclamative clauses, interrogative contexts, and subjunctive clauses, amongst others, sheds light not only on the characterization of the relevant constructions but also on the make-up of the left edge of the clause. The fact that such realizations can be obligatory, optional, or, on occasion, impossible, sometimes depending on the variety in question, furthers our understanding of head lexicalizations while contributing to macro and microvariation studies in syntactic theory. In so doing, this paper paves the way for holistic investigations devoted to complementizer realization in the head position of different left-edge-related constructions and in different linguistic varieties.

**Keywords:** left periphery; head lexicalizations; subordination; interrogatives; exclamatives; dislocations; finiteness; dialectal variation



**Citation:** Villa-García, Julio. 2023. C<sup>o</sup> realizations along the left edge across English and Spanish. *Languages* 8: 268. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8040268>

Academic Editors: Anna Cardinaletti and Ana Ojea

Received: 21 June 2023

Revised: 28 September 2023

Accepted: 27 October 2023

Published: 14 November 2023



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## 1. Introduction

Complementizers offer a valuable window into the architecture of the leftmost part of clauses, the demarcation of the limits between the left edge (Complementizer Phrase, CP) and the inflectional/tense domain (IP/TP), and the analysis of a range of constructions traditionally attributed to the leftmost portion of the clause (i.e., the left periphery).

Beyond merely heralding an upcoming subordinate clause, as in *I think [that complementizers are mysteriously fascinating]*, recent research has unearthed naturalistic data pointing to the conclusion that complementizers in languages like English and Spanish can occupy a host of positions along the clausal left-peripheral spine, contingent on the specific constructions at issue, as well as on the root vs. embedded dichotomy, in different varieties of said languages. Radford (2018), for instance, shows through numerous examples from spontaneous speech that spoken English is replete with what seems like different instances of *that*, boldfaced examples of which appear in (1):

- (1) a. *I think **that** you are nice.*
- b. *They told me **that** given the current crisis, **that** the building will remain closed.*
- c. *Obviously **that** the Achilles was giving him a bit of a problem (Ian Chappell, BBC Radio 5, cited in Radford (2018, p. 162)).*
- d. *I am not sure what kind of ban **that** FIEA has in mind (Bert Millichip, BBC Radio 4, cited in Radford (2018, p. 159)).*
- e. *What a mine of useless information **that** I am! (Sir Terry Wogan, BBC Radio 2, cited in Radford (2018, p. 159)).*
- f. *Please, ensure **that** if your faculty commit to permitting candidates to attend their classes, **that** there be sufficient diversity of courses and **that** syllabi permit visitors to attend (Official university communication, Pennsylvania, 20 November 2013, cited in Villa-García (2015, p. 96)).*

In (1)a, we observe a classical example of subordinating *that*, which can typically remain silent in non-formal contexts. (1)b illustrates the double-*that* (cf. recomplementation) configuration involving a sandwiched element flanked by overt instances of the complementizer (Villa-García 2015, 2019; Radford 2018; Villa-García and Ott 2022, among others). (1)c displays an initial adverb followed by *that*. (1)d and (1)e, respectively, feature interrogative and exclamative phrases followed by an instance of *that*. Lastly, (1)f exemplifies an instance of a secondary *that* termed ‘jussive/optative’ *that* by Villa-García (2015). This complementizer, which shares much in common with the recomplementation *that* (cf. (1)b), as we shall see, is associated with the subjunctive mood. Note that in all the cases in (1), the different occurrences of *that* can in principle be silent for most speakers without obvious semantic consequences, an issue to which we return in due course.

Sentences featuring putatively different *ques* are indeed also attested in (certain varieties of) Spanish (see, for a subset of cases, Villa-García (2015)), as indicated by the data in (2). Note that not all sentences are attested in all varieties of the language.

- (2) a. Cree *que* llueve  
believes that rains.  
‘S/He believes (that) it’s raining.’
- b. Me contaron *que* a María, *que* no la llaman.  
cl. told that acc. Mary that not cl. call  
‘They told me that Mary, that they are not calling her.’
- c. Ahí sí *que* no voy.  
there yes that not go  
‘I’m certainly not going there.’
- d. ¿ Por qué *que* viniste? (Diego Gibanal Faro, pers. comm. 2023)  
for what that came  
‘Why did you come (here)?’
- e. ¡ Qué alto *que* eres!  
what tall that are  
‘How tall you are!’
- f. ¡ Vaya *que* si voy!  
vaya that if go  
‘Of course I am going!/How can you even wonder if I’m going?’
- g. ¡ A Madrid *que* me piro!  
to Madrid that cl. piro!  
‘I am off to Madrid!’
- h. Por supuesto *que* no me quedo.  
of course that not cl. stay  
‘Of course I am not staying!’
- i. ¡ Ojalá *que* ganemos Eurovisión!  
God-willing that winSubjunctive Eurovision  
‘I hope we win the Eurovision contest.’
- j. Gritó *que* a la fiesta, *que* vaya Marta.  
shouted that to the party that goSubjunctive Marta  
‘S/He demanded by shouting that Martha go to the party.’

The Spanish paradigm displays cases akin to the English ones, including the subordinating complementizer, (1)a and (2)a, recomplementation cases, (1)b and (2)b, interrogative and exclamative complementizers, (1)d,e and (2)d,e, adverbial cases, (1)c and (2)h, and ‘jussive/optative’ cases, (1)f and (2)j. Additionally, the Spanish paradigm also includes *sí (que)* ‘yes that’ cases, (2)c, investigated from the standpoint of microvariation by Villa-García and Rodríguez (2020); (2)f, which shows the exclamative particle *vaya* plus *que* plus *si* ‘if/whether’; (2)g, the emphatic construction involving a fronted constituent plus *que* plus sentence; and (2)i, which instantiates the desiderative/optative construction with *ojalá* (from the Hispanic Arabic expression *law šá lláh* ‘if God wants’) plus *que* plus a verb in the subjunctive.

Multiple-complementizer sentences like the ones in (1) and (2) raise several intriguing questions, such as:

- (i) Is *that/que* a mere overt manifestation of an otherwise null/silent head (i.e., [<sub>XP</sub> YP [<sub>X'</sub> *that/que* vs.  $\emptyset$  . . .]])? If so, is *that/que* always present but deleted in the phonology (PF), *that/que*, or else inserted when phonologically realized?
- (ii) Is the presence of *that/que* indicative of a more complex underlying structure instead?
- (iii) Whatever the case may be, what determines the (non-)realization of the complementizer in different positions? Is it dialect-based? If so, are some dialects more prone to lexicalizing complementizers in different positions than others? Is complementizer lexicalization processing-based? Are there any other factors that play a role in determining the presence or absence of the complementizer, such as formal vs. informal contexts?
- (iv) Does the presence vs. absence of *that/que* have a bearing on the semantics (LF)? Put another way, is complementizer realization just a PF matter, or are there LF reflexes as well?

Set against this background, the present paper aims to constitute a first step towards partially answering the questions in (i)–(iv), in the hope that future studies will further advance our understanding of the puzzle presented herein. In the course of the ensuing discussion, additional questions will be posed which are relevant to various ongoing debates in syntax. Similarly, old and new data will be provided throughout, and previously unnoticed dialectal contrasts will be brought to light. In this sense, therefore, this paper aims to contribute to the diatopic mapping of the relevant constructions. This paper is thus meant to make both a descriptive and a theoretical contribution.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents existing accounts of the clausal left edge within the transformational generative paradigm; Section 3, which constitutes the bulk of the paper, returns to the data above and discusses a subset of the constructions in turn, in both English and Spanish, though mention of other linguistic varieties will be made when appropriate. In this connection, I concentrate on four major types of complementizers shared by English and Spanish, namely high complementizers, topic-related complementizers (cf. recomplementation), focal complementizers (exclamatives and questions), and low complementizers ('jussive/optative' complementizers). A critical review of existing accounts of the particular constructions is provided for each case; Section 4 turns to general extant accounts of inter- and intra-linguistic variation in relation to the presence vs. absence of complementizers and makes new analytical suggestions; and Section 5 is the conclusion.

## 2. The Analysis of the Leftmost Part of Sentences in the Generative Tradition

A complementizer such as *that/que* is assumed in the Chomskyan tradition to be a (functional) head, as shown abstractly in (3). I will take this conception of complementizers as heads as my point of departure (though see Vincent (2019) and references therein for a skeptical view).

- (3) [<sub>XP</sub> [<sub>X'</sub> *that/que*]]

Since the seminal work of *Barriers* (Chomsky 1986), complementizers have by and large been taken to occupy the head of CP, as follows:

- (4) [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> *that/que*]]

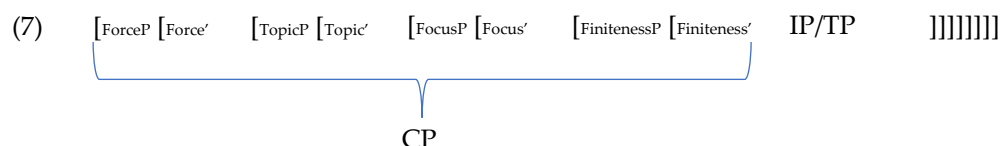
Data along the lines of some of the sentences in (1) and (2) clearly indicate that a single CP projection may not suffice, as multiple left-edge-related constructions may occur concurrently in a given sentence/clause simultaneously. This in fact led to the postulation of CP recursion, namely the ability of multiple CPs to occur in a given clause (cf. (5)).

- (5) [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> ]]]]]]]

Sentences displaying multiple instances of *that/que*, as in (1)b,f and (2)b,j appear to be ideal candidates for an analysis like that in (5), which is, in fact, the account pursued in Iatridou and Kroch (1992) for the English recomplementation case:

- (6) [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> *that/que* [<sub>CP</sub> XP [<sub>C'</sub> *that/que* ]]]]

The late 1990s witnessed the emergence of cartographic approaches to the leftmost portion of clauses: Rizzi (1997) made the highly influential claim that there is a fine structure of the left-periphery (referred to as a templatic structure by those arguing against it ever since), which in effect splits the old CP domain into dedicated projections, each of which is devoted to hosting different elements, which Rizzi argues display the relative order in (7) (note that in Rizzi's system, TopicP is recursive in that multiple TopicP projections are allowed in the left-peripheral spine, if required by the presence of multiple topical phrases):<sup>1</sup>



This type of account is rather appealing at first sight, and in fact has been assumed in much work into a broad array of languages since then. For instance, on this view, high complementizers spell out Force<sup>o</sup>; dislocated phrases (such as Clitic Left Dislocations, CLLDs) occupy the specifier of TopicP; wh-phrases and exclamative phrases (which are mutually exclusive) are the occupants of Spec, FocusP; low complementizers and elements related to mood and finiteness are associated with FinitenessP. For Rizzi (1997), TopicP and FocusP are only projected on an as-needed basis (that is, when topical or focal elements occur), and only the former is recursive, as noted. As Rizzi (2013, p. 200) observes, “the left periphery is populated by a system of functional heads dedicated to the expression of scope-discourse properties”, thus:

- |     |    |   |      |  |
|-----|----|---|------|--|
| (8) | a. | <i>Which car</i>                            | Q    | <i>should I purchase?</i>  |
|     | b. | <i>This promise of<br/>lifelong service</i> | TOP  | <i>I renew to all today</i> (King Charles III, cited in<br>Villa-Garcia (2023, p. 2)). |
|     | c. | <i>THIS BOOK</i>                            | FOC  | <i>you should buy</i> (, not that one).  |
|     | d. | <i>What an incredible week</i>              | EXCL | <i>we have had!</i>  |

Accordingly, an exclamatory sentence featuring an exclamative phrase such as (8)d would receive the following simplified analysis under Rizzi's approach (note that it is immaterial to the present discussion whether exclamatives target FocusP or a more specific ExclamativeP in the focus field):

- (9) 
$$[\text{ExclamativeP } \textit{what an incredible week} \text{ } [\text{Exclamative}' \text{ EXCL } [\text{IP/TP } \textit{we have had} ]]]$$

A logical extension of the account in (9) for cases of exclamatives with a low *that* (cf. (1)d) would be to hypothesize that the complementizer that is adjacent to the wh-phrase is the spellout of the Exclamative head since it co-occurs with the focal phrase:

- (10) 
$$[\text{ExclamativeP } \textit{what an incredible week} \text{ } [\text{Exclamative}' \text{ that } [\text{IP/TP } \textit{we have had} ]]]$$

A similar account can be adopted for the other types of heads (topic, Q, etc.), as we will see below. This will indeed be the null hypothesis adopted in what follows. In the remainder of this paper, I will try to determine whether a Rizzian analysis is tenable for (all) the cases under discussion (cf. (1)–(2)) and whether a unified account can be proposed for all the cases at hand, a non-trivial issue given the complex dataset this paper concerns itself with. We will then consider this type of account more generally in terms of inter- and intra-linguistic variation in Section 4.

### 3. Different Left-Edge-Related Constructions: To Spell *That/Que* or Not to Spell *That/Que*

The paradigm in (1) and (2) attests to the complexity of the left periphery of languages like English and Spanish, where different constructions can occur—and even co-occur—in the left portion of the clause, and on occasion these constituents may be accompanied by an overt instance of *that/que*. Below, I concentrate on a subset of those constructions, for the reasons discussed in the previous section. I follow the relative order claimed by a

left-peripheral analysis like Rizzi's (cf. (7)). I first look at the English case and then at the Spanish one. Different existing accounts are considered, and mention is made of micro- (i.e., dialectal) variation when appropriate. In Section 4, I return to overarching existing accounts of the type of variation observed. I begin by discussing high complementizers.

### 3.1. High That/Que

High complementizers (by assumption, the head of C° or Force°, as in (4)) constitute an area of the grammar where languages like English and Spanish stand in glaring contrast to one another.

English, for its part, typically allows the complementizer to remain silent, as shown in (11), a feature that spreads across dialects:

- (11) *I think Ø complementizers should not be taken for granted.*

The presence or absence of the overt complementizer in sentences like (11) does not have a semantic reflex, i.e., the truth-conditional meaning of the sentence remains intact. However, the presence of the complementizer is typically associated with academic or written registers. Certainly, using a complementizer facilitates reading and processing, and on occasion, it resolves potential ambiguities. This is shown by (12):

- (12) *Johan said yesterday he accepted ten papers.*

In (12), *yesterday* can modify either *said* or *accepted*. Realizing the complementizer does away with this potential confusion:

- (13) a. *Johan said that yesterday he accepted ten papers.*  
b. *Johan said yesterday that he accepted ten papers.*

The optionality of *that* is not always such. For instance, topicalized clauses require *that* (Bošković and Lasnik 2003, among others):

- (14) a. *\*Ø he accepted ten papers John believes.*  
b. *That he accepted ten papers John believes.*

As for the subjunctive, conservative English speakers tend to disfavor the omission of *that*, contrary to what we observe in Spanish (cf. see the discussion surrounding (23) below) (Radford 2016), as in (15):

- (15) *I demand that the children be here at ten.*

However, *that*-drop in subjunctives has also been documented in present-day English, even in writing, as shown by the below examples:

- (16) a. *Brexit Secretary David Davis was also able to meet business leaders demanding Ø the UK stay in the single market immediately after leaving the EU (The Independent, 10 July 2017, cited in Villa-García (2019, p. 26)).*  
b. *Following further evaluation this morning, The Queen's doctors are concerned for Her Majesty's health and have recommended Ø she remain under medical supervision (statement from Buckingham Palace, 8 September 2022).*  
c. *Díaz evoked Dorado again on Monday, demanding Ø Feijóo explain how he knew the man (politico.eu, 18 July 2023).*

Needless to say, other well-known cases, such as comp-t(race) effects, force the complementizer to be absent in most dialects of English:

- (17) a. *Who do you believe rocks?*  
b. *\*Who do you believe that rocks?*

Furthermore, certain predicates have been claimed to require an obligatory *that* (Hegarty 1992; Adger 2003; Franks 2005; Radford 2016; Llinàs-Grau and Bel 2019, among others). The list includes verbs like *whisper*, *quip*, *judge*, and *conjecture*.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, a simple Google search yields examples featuring such verbs and no overt complementizer, as illustrated for *quip* in (18):



- (18) *He correctly replied 14, then quipped  $\emptyset$  he wished it was 15* (*The Sun*, 2011, cited in [www.collinsdictionary.com](http://www.collinsdictionary.com)).

Early theoretical accounts of the overt/null contrast in complementizer lexicalization in languages like English in the Chomskyan tradition deemed the presence vs. absence of *that* a phonological phenomenon. More specifically, Chomsky and Lasnik (1977) advanced an analysis whereby *that* is deleted when absent (i.e., our null complementizer above would be the result of phonological deletion: ~~*that*~~). By contrast, Radford (2016) argues, on the grounds that the overt complementizer *that* and its null homolog  $\emptyset$  are not interchangeable in all contexts (e.g., (17)), that *that* and  $\emptyset$  are actually distinct lexical items exhibiting distinct properties (rather than a single item with two different spellouts, in the spirit of Chomsky and Lasnik (1977)).

According to Bošković and Lasnik (2003), null C (i.e., our  $\emptyset$  above) is a PF-affix that requires PF-adjacency with the verbal (or nominal) host. This requirement is fulfilled in (11) above, since the complement clause headed by C is PF adjacent to the V head, but not in (14)a, where the clausal complement has been fronted, which disrupts the necessary adjacency between the verbal head and C, rendering null C impossible and thus enforcing *that*, as in (14)b.

It is worth mentioning that a different line of analysis, adopted in the work of Pesetsky and Torrego (2001), takes *that*-less clauses to be the result of the subject moving to Spec, CP. In their view, *that* is the outcome of  $T^0$  moving to  $C^0$  for purposes of feature checking; this operation is satisfied if the subject moves to Spec, CP instead, resulting in *that*-less clauses. Put another way, for these authors, in *I think syntax is fascinating*, the subject *syntax* ends up in Spec, CP.

In stark contrast to what we observe for English, the high complementizer is generally mandatory in present-day Spanish, as shown by (19), a well-known cross-linguistic difference (Torrego 1983; Etxepare 1996; Brovetti 2002; Antonelli 2013; Cerrudo-Aguilar 2014; and Rodríguez-Riccelli 2018).

- (19) *Creo que/\* $\emptyset$  los complementantes no se pueden dar por sentados.*  
believe that the complementizers not cl. can give for seated  
'I believe that complementizers cannot be taken for granted.'

On the other hand, diachronic and synchronic dialectal evidence suggests that the high complementizer is not obligatory at all times. For one thing, classical Spanish from the 17th century displayed null complementizers with certain predicates:

- (20) *Les dijo  $\emptyset$  tenía nuevas de que en el cielo*  
cl. said had news of that in the heaven  
*se había muerto el arcángel san Gabriel*  
cl. had died the archangel St. Gabriel  
'S/He said to them that s/he had news that the archangel St. Gabriel had died in heaven' (Abarca de Bolea, *Vigilia*, 17th century, cited in RAE-ASALE (2009, p. 3232)).

As far as diatopic variation at present is concerned, varieties that include Mexican Spanish have been reported to omit the complementizer with thinking and judgment predicates (Silva-Corvalán 1994 et seq.; Rodríguez-Riccelli 2018), as in (21).

- (21) *Creo  $\emptyset$  llamará.*  
believe will-call  
'I believe s/he will call' (RAE-ASALE 2009, p. 3232).

Using Tweeter data from Mexican and Los Angeles Spanish, Rodríguez-Riccelli (2018) concludes that verb modality and embedded subject position are the strongest predictors of *que*-drop in these varieties. Moreover, Rodríguez-Riccelli (2018) reports a higher percentage of *que*-drop in Mexico City (12.5%) than in Los Angeles (10%), suggesting that a contact-induced language change (from English) is not apparent. English contact, however, may allow the broadening of the contexts in which the omission of the complementizer occurs (e.g., stative verbs).

However, deletion can occur more generally across varieties under certain conditions. For instance, deletion of subordinating *que* occurs across Spanish varieties in formal-register contexts in cases where a mark of subordination (e.g., another *que*, an expression which includes *que*, such as *porque* ‘because,’ etc.) appears (Subirats-Rüggeberg 1987, pp. 170–71; Etxepare 1996; RAE-ASALE 2009):<sup>3</sup>

- (22) *Recurrirán la sentencia, porque dicen Ø no*  
 contest the sentence because say not  
*es ajustada.*  
 is fit  
 ‘They will contest the sentence, as they claim it is not appropriate.’ (Telediario 2, RTVE, Spain, 16 April 2018)

In fact, across Spanish we find that subjunctive cases involving verbs such as *rogar* ‘beg’ tend to appear in formal and written contexts without *que* (the *que* counterpart of (23) being grammatical but less formal):

- (23) *Rogamos Ø nos envíen el certificado a la mayor brevedad.*  
 beg cl. send<sub>subjunctive</sub> the certificate at the bigger brevity  
 ‘We would like to ask you to send the certificate to us at your earliest convenience.’

At this juncture, two questions arise in light of data like (23):

- (i) Are such cases instances of Force<sup>o</sup> (high complementizers) or Finiteness<sup>o</sup> (low complementizers), since they are related to mood (associated under Rizzi’s proposal with FinitenessP)?
- (ii) Is complementizer deletion the result of the verb moving all the way to C<sup>o</sup> (Force<sup>o</sup> or Finiteness<sup>o</sup>, under Rizzi’s assumptions)? (See, in this connection, the related claim noted above by Pesetsky and Torrego that *that*-less clauses in English arise from subject movement to CP).

A relevant question is also whether the non-appearance of *que* points to the absence of a left periphery altogether (so that such clauses are analyzed as bare IPs/TPs), a claim that would also extend in principle to English *that*-less clauses (Bošković 1997; Brovetto 2002; Antonelli 2013).<sup>4</sup> Antonelli (2013) argues that the left periphery of Spanish is present even in the absence of *que*, but that in cases like (23), the verb moves to a syncretic ForceP/FinitenessP projection, thus rendering the complementizer impossible. One problem with this type of account is that clitics show up preverbally (cl.+V—*les rogamos*, as in (23)), while in imperatives, which are standardly assumed to involve T<sup>o</sup>-to-C<sup>o</sup> movement, clitics show up postverbally (V+cl.—*ruégales* ‘beg<sub>imperative</sub> them’). The answers to (i) and (ii) await further research.

In sum, we observe that English and Spanish high complementizers behave quite differently, with the Spanish high-complementizer drop being much more restricted than its English counterpart.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, a (diachronic and synchronic) dialectal split emerges from our discussion surrounding Spanish: in Old Spanish, *que* could be dropped with verbs like *decir* ‘say’; in present-day Spanish, *que* can only be absent in a very limited set of contexts (e.g., subjunctives with verbs like *rogar* ‘beg’); in varieties such as Mexican or Los Angeles Spanish, *que*-less examples are confined to certain thinking and judgment predicates. Moreover, from an analytical perspective, the debate as to the analysis of complementizer-less sentences remains alive at present. We now turn our attention to what has widely been regarded so far as instantiations of non-high complementizers.

### 3.2. Recomplementation That/Que

The phenomenon of double-complementizer sentences, also known as recomplementation, illustrated again for English and Spanish in (24), has been subject to much debate in the recent literature (Escribano 1991; Iatridou and Kroch 1992; Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2009; Villa-García 2012, 2015, 2019; Radford 2018; Villa-García and Ott 2022, amongst many others).

- (24) a. *Note that if you have already taught in Semester 1, that you are not required to resubmit paperwork to HR Services* (official university communication, UK, January 2019, cited in [Villa-García \(2019, p. 2\)](#)).
- b. *Dice que si llueve, que se quedan encamados*  
 says that if rains that cl. stay bedded  
 ‘S/He says that if it rains, that they will stay in bed.’

As regards syntactic microcomparison in the realm of recomplementation, no noteworthy differences are reported in the existing works in relation to English; the data provided in the literature come from both American and British English ([Radford 2018](#); [Villa-García 2019](#)), but little or no attention has been paid to whether there exists dialectal variation in English recomplementation, a gap in the literature at present.

As for Spanish, whereas [Demonte and Fernández-Soriano \(2009\)](#) note that recomplementation is found across Spanish varieties, [Martínez-Vera \(2019\)](#) claims that recomplementation is absent in American Spanish (its counterpart being a prolonged intonational break); however, [Frank \(2020\)](#) provides experimental evidence from Colombian and bilingual heritage US Spanish indicating that recomplementation is not impossible in such varieties. Similarly, linguists such as Andrés Saab and Carlos Echeverría (pers. comm. 2022), who are speakers of Argentinean and Chilean Spanish, respectively, use and accept recomplemented structures. [Fontana \(1993\)](#) and [Echeverría and López Seoane \(2019\)](#), for their part, observe, based on written evidence, that Old Spanish frequently featured recomplementation, the sandwiched elements being typically long *if*-clauses. Needless to say, the foregoing discussion strongly suggests that the dialectal map of recomplementation in Spanish is likewise in dire need of further research.

Be that as it may, early proposals (e.g., [Iatridou and Kroch 1992](#)) assumed that the different *that* complementizers featured in what looks like a single sentence whose embedded clause displays a complex left periphery are instances of  $C^{\circ}$  in a recursive CP, as in (25) (see also (6) above):

- (25) [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>C'</sub> *that/que* [<sub>CP</sub> XP [<sub>C'</sub> *that/que* ]]]]

In the wake of the Rizian approach, the question soon arose as to which head is spelled out by doubled, secondary complementizers. A myriad of proposals arose (on which see [Villa-García \(2015\)](#)); I will concentrate on two here for the sake of illustration. Authors like [Demonte and Fernández-Soriano \(2009\)](#), [López \(2009\)](#), and [Antonelli \(2013\)](#) have advanced the hypothesis that the high and the low complementizers delimit the beginning and the end of the left-peripheral space, hence populating Force<sup>o</sup> and Finiteness<sup>o</sup>, respectively:

- (26) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>Force'</sub> *that/que* [<sub>TopicP</sub> XP [<sub>Finiteness'</sub> *that/que* ]]]]

However, such an analysis runs into a number of empirical problems, as argued by [Villa-García \(2012, 2015, 2019\)](#). Instead, this author proposes to treat the second instance of *that/que* as a topic marker, hence the head of TopicP (see also [Rodríguez-Ramalle \(2003\)](#); see [Ledgeway \(2005\)](#) for an analysis of this type which assumes that the different complementizers are separate realizations of a complementizer that starts in Finiteness<sup>o</sup> and moves up to Force<sup>o</sup> in a head-to-head fashion):

- (27) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>Force'</sub> *that/que* [<sub>TopicP</sub> XP [<sub>Topic'</sub> *that/que* [<sub>FinitenessP</sub> [<sub>Finiteness'</sub> ]]]]]]

This analysis is *prima facie* appealing both on empirical and theoretical grounds (it accounts for why it is typically topical phrases that appear in a sandwiched position, and it assumes that the different left-peripheral heads proposed by [Rizzi \(1997\)](#) can be spelled out).

Nevertheless, in marked contrast to monoclausal proposals like the ones just reviewed, recent research has convincingly argued that recomplementation is not bound to occur only with topical phrases and that in fact what doubled complementizers mask is two separate sentences that superficially look like one, rather than an elaborate clausal left edge (see, especially, [Villa-García and Ott \(2022\)](#) on this biclausal line of analysis), thus arguing against monoclausal accounts like those in (26) and (27). For these authors, the clausal



portion headed by the second instance of *that/que* represents a restart in discourse (i.e., a new sentence, CP2, reprising the first one, CP1, begins), as shown abstractly in (28):

- (28) [CP1 subject V [*that/que* ... XP]] [CP2 subject V [*that/que* ...]]

This move accounts for issues including why the second sentence must be a syntactically complete sentence (i.e., [*that he/\*Ø hates seafood*] in (29)a), why a non-topical phrase (e.g., a discourse marker, as in (29)b), can occur in between overt complementizers, and why even a focal phrase can appear in between *thats/ques* (cf. (29)c):

- (29) a. *He told me that Peter, that he/\*Ø hates seafood.*  
 b. *Dice que bueno, que no vienen.*  
     says that well that not come  
     ‘S/He says that well, that they are not coming.’  
 c. *Me dijo que jamás, que jamás se casará con nadie.*  
     cl. says that never that never cl. will-marry with nobody  
     ‘S/He says that never ever, that never will s/he marry anyone.’

For Villa-García and Ott (2022), therefore, the second instance of the complementizer is a restart that mirrors what we see in the first clause (i.e., *dice que/says that*... — *dice que/says that*...), hence a repeated high complementizer, but not the realization of a left-peripheral head such as Topic° (or Finiteness°, for that matter), as assumed in (26) and (27). This actually goes a long way to explaining why we also find reduplicative complementizers other than declarative *that/que* (i.e., *he asked me whether*... — ~~*he asked me whether*~~...):

- (30) *He asked me whether, given the current assessment boycott, whether we are getting a salary raise.*

In light of data like (29) and (30), the prospect that recomplementation *que* is the overt or null spellout of Topic° under monoclausality (*that/que* vs. ~~*that/que*~~) loses plausibility, which casts doubt on the claim that Topic° can be occupied by an overt realization of the complementizer *that/que*. On the bisentential account, therefore, recomplementation *that/que* would be an instance of high *that/que* in disguise. Technically, then, *that/que* is the same high element in the two occurrences (in CP1 and CP2), in spite of outward appearances. In the next two subsections, I turn to the exclamative and interrogative *that/que*.

### 3.3. Exclamative That/Que

Exclamative wh-phrases that come in the company of *that* have customarily been attributed to Irish English (Zwicky 2002). However, Radford (2018) provides a large set of data suggesting that other varieties permit the co-occurrence of wh-phrases with an instance of *that* below them as well, as shown again in (31):

- (31) a. *How gorgeous that you look!* ([www.abbieeandeveline.com](http://www.abbieeandeveline.com), cited in Radford (2018, p. 160)).  
 b. *How quickly that people forget!* (web, cited in Radford (2018, p. 159)).  
 c. *What a job that he's done so far!* (Sam Matterface, Talksport Radio, cited in Radford (2018, p. 159)).

Of course, the *that*-less counterparts of the examples in (31) would be the canonical versions of the relevant sentences, which shows that *that* is once again not mandatory. Radford (2018) pursues an account in the spirit of Rizzi (1997) and Rizzi and Bocci (2017) wherein the wh-phrase in the specifier of ExclamativeP (or FocusP) licenses the head *that*:

- (32) [ForceP [Force' [ExclamativeP XP [Exclamative' *that* ]]]

An issue that any analysis needs to tackle concerns the rare occurrence of wh-items (or wh-words) in this context. For the most part, it is almost always a full wh-phrase that appears immediately above *that* in exclamatives in English. Authors like Bayer (2014) and Radford (2018) have argued that unlike wh-phrases, which move to the specifier, wh-words move to the head position of the wh-operator projection (e.g., FocusP), thus preventing a complementizer from occurring in such a position (i.e., wh-phrase + *that* vs. \*wh-word + *that*).

Structures like those in (31) call into question longstanding claims in the generative literature, including the Doubly-Filled Comp Filter, which bans the simultaneous occurrence of a *wh*-element and an overt complementizer in CP, a prohibition observed in standard English (i.e., \*[<sub>CP</sub> *wh*-element [<sub>C</sub> *that* ... ]]). In his discussion of similar examples of exclamative + *che* ‘that’ examples in Italian, Rizzi (2013, p. 2009) actually refers to this configuration as “the only case of legitimate ‘[D]oubly[-]filled Comp’ in Standard Italian” (see also Bayer and Dasgupta (2016)). Rizzi goes on to note that “[c]learly, (the equivalent of) *that* is an unmarked, versatile complementizer form, capable of occurring in the highest C position, and also, in cross-linguistically variable manners, in lower positions”, as in (32).

Moving from root to embedded contexts, Radford (2018) provides data indicating that it is not impossible to have a *wh*-exclamative below an instance of what appears to be a high (Force<sup>o</sup>) complementizer (a well-known property of Spanish, as we shall see):

- (33) *He realized, I think, that how big this thing was* (Film critic, BBC Radio 5, cited in Radford (2018, p. 114)).

Radford (2018) does not give any examples of embedded *wh*-exclamatives plus *that*, but such examples sound fine to his native ear:

- (34) *He realized that how big that this thing was* (Andrew Radford, pers. comm. 2023).

Spanish exclamatives behave similarly to their English counterparts reviewed above in most respects, with interesting dialectal differences. In many varieties of Spanish, a pleonastic complementizer immediately adjacent to the *wh*-phrase is not unusual (speakers notice that the *que* version is more emphatic):

- (35) a. *¡ Qué guapa que está tu niña!*  
           what beautiful that is your daughter  
           ‘Your daughter looks so good!’  
       b. *¡ Qué rápido que conducen aquí!*  
           what fast that drive here  
           ‘They drive so fast here!’

A notable difference with present-day English is that exclamatives in (non-Caribbean) Spanish trigger obligatory S-V inversion regardless of the presence vs. absence of *que* (see Villa-García (2018, in preparation) and Villalba (2019) for recent discussion; as noted by an anonymous reviewer, Italo-Romance varieties follow a similar pattern):<sup>6</sup>

- (36) \**¡ Qué guapa que tu niña está!*  
           what beautiful that your daughter is  
           Intended: ‘Your daughter looks so good!’

Certain dialects (e.g., Asturian Spanish) disallow the presence of *que* with *qué* phrases (Villa-García 2018, in preparation). By contrast, the popular Spanish of Asturias allows *que* with the exclamative determiner *vaya* (on *vaya* more generally, see, e.g., Espinal et al. (2022)). According to Bosque (2017, pp. 18–19), *vaya* in Asturian Spanish (and in areas of León) can combine not just with nouns (which is what happens in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world), but also with adjectives and adverbs:

- (37) a. *¡ Vaya casa que tiene!*  
           what house that have  
           ‘What a house s/he has!’  
       b. *¡ Vaya sano que está!*  
           what healthy that is  
           ‘How healthy he is!’  
       c. *¡ Vaya mal que lo hiciste!*  
           what bad that cl. did  
           ‘You did it so badly!’

In Spanish, cases like (37)a involving nouns can optionally have *que* (RAE-ASALE 2009). Asturian Spanish, though, exhibits a more nuanced contrast with respect to *vaya* exclama-

tives, irrespective of the category of the word following *vaya*. In areas such as Avilés and Gijón, the *que* version is the norm, with the non-*que* version being deemed incomplete or even unacceptable. However, in Oviedo and the surrounding hamlets, the *que*-less version prevails (perhaps due to influence from the Asturian language). To summarize, in Asturias, *qué* + phrase + *que* is not an option; only the *que*-less version is used. When it comes to *vaya* + N/A/Adv, however, we find subdialects that require *que* and others that dispense with it. In other words, the form of the exclamative particle determines the possibility of having an accompanying *que* below the exclamative phrase in these varieties.

The evidence furthermore shows that there is a dependence between the presence vs. absence of *que* and the type of phrase in the specifier (Villa-García, in preparation): *que* is sensitive to the sort of exclamative element to its left, which confirms that the two stand in a spec-head configuration, exactly as predicted by accounts like (32) above, which invoke FocusP/ExclamativeP. This analysis is substantiated by the obligatory inversion displayed by exclamatives, which is characteristic of focal phrases in (non-Caribbean) Spanish (on this issue, however, see Villa-García, in preparation). Thus, I will adopt the account in (32) for Spanish as well, as in (38):<sup>7</sup>

- (38) [ForceP [Force' [ExclamativeP XP [Exclamative' *que* ]]]]

Beyond Peninsular Spanish, according to RAE-ASALE (2009, p. 3206), in Latin American Spanish, the presence of *que* with *qué* exclamatives is more restricted than in Spain, although examples occur in the River Plate area and less frequently in the Caribbean (see also Casas (2004, p. 268) for examples from Mexican Spanish).

As far as embedded clauses are concerned, pleonastic *que* is also acceptable in non-matrix contexts:<sup>8</sup>

- (39) *Mira qué guapo que es ese podcaster.*  
look what good-looking that is that podcaster  
'Look at how good-looking that podcaster is' (Antonio Cañas García, Raquel González Rodríguez, and Isabel Pérez-Jiménez, pers. comm. 2023).

Still, exclamative clauses selected by predicates other than pseudo-interjections like *mira* 'look!' cannot be construed with *que*, a poorly understood phenomenon to date (Ignacio Bosque, pers. comm. 2023):

- (40) *Es increíble qué cosas (\*que) dice.*  
is incredible what things that says  
Intended: 'The things s/he says are incredible' (Bosque 1984, p. 287).

Villa-García (2015) furnishes embedded data with *vaya* under verbs of saying in Asturian Spanish, along the lines of (41):

- (41) *Dice mi prima que vaya rápido que conduce tu padre.*  
says my cousin that what fast that drives your father  
'My cousin says that your father drives so fast.'

*Qué*-exclamatives plus *que* are also licit under *decir* 'say'-like predicates. Note that English exhibits this pattern as well (cf. (33) and (34)):

- (42) *Dice que qué guapa que es esa niña.*  
says that what beautiful that is that girl  
'S/He exclaimed that that girl is so beautiful' (Raquel González Rodríguez and Isabel Pérez-Jiménez, pers. comm. 2023).

All in all, the English and Spanish evidence adduced here points to the conclusion that the exclamative phrase and *que* co-exist in the same projection. Nonetheless, dialect data from Spanish point out that the exclamative *que* is not really optional at all times. While in many areas of Spain exclamatives with *qué* and *vaya* seem to optionally co-occur with the pleonastic *que*, *qué*-exclamatives in Asturian Spanish occur without *que*; their *vaya* homologs require *que* in some parts of Asturias, but not in others. The data crucially corroborate that the licensing of *que* is sensitive to the nature of the wh-phrase in its specifier, which supports

a spec-head analysis along the lines of (38). This account indeed gains cross-linguistic plausibility from the English data discussed above, which are not confined to Irish varieties of English, as used to be widely thought. Lastly, the evidence also reveals a high degree of variation across Spanish varieties, which further studies should certainly investigate in more depth. The facts are also relevant to non-trivial theoretical questions, including whether the cases at hand are compatible with a relative-clause analysis (on which see fn. 7). I now turn to wh-interrogatives with *that/que*.

### 3.4. Interrogative That/Que

Wh-interrogatives followed by *that* used to be believed to be a feature of regional varieties like Irish English, as in the Belfast English example in (43) (with some Belfast speakers accepting only wh-phrases –not wh-items– above *that*, much like in the wh-exclamative cases discussed above):

- (43) *I don't know when that he's going* (Henry 1995, p. 88).

Radford (2018) shows, by contrast, that wh-interrogative + *that* configurations transcend Irish varieties, as the data in (44) demonstrate:

- (44) a. *Definitions vary as to which of these types of criteria that are used* (Member of the English Department, University of Göteborg, cited in Radford (2018, p. 137)).  
 b. *I hadn't realized just how many people that were there* (Maxx Faulkner on WCBE, cited in Radford (2018, p. 138)).  
 c. *This heat map shows just how active that Trippier was* (Jermaine Jenas, BBC1 TV, cited in Radford (2018, p. 139)).

Radford (2018, p. 142) submits that the above data are amenable to a Rizian account according to which the wh-interrogative is housed in the specifier of a WHP (or FocusP) below ForceP, with *that* in the head position of WHP/FocusP:

- (45) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>Force'</sub> [<sub>WHP</sub> wh-interrogative [<sub>WH'</sub> *that* ... ]]]]

One advantage of this account is that it can easily accommodate cases of embedded wh-interrogatives below a quotative element, reported in Radford (2018, p. 116), and which are used “to embed quoted speech into a matrix clause, with the quoted speech essentially being unmodified”, as in (46).

- (46) a. *He protested that how could he have known that his office was bugged?* (Radford 2018, p. 113).  
 b. [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>Force'</sub> *that* [<sub>WHP</sub> wh-interrogative [<sub>WH'</sub> ... ]]]]

With verbs that intrinsically select a question as their complement, the secondary *that* is legitimate, but not the high *that*, as the below example, kindly provided by Andrew Radford (pers. comm. 2023), illustrates. This is a non-trivial dissimilarity between English and Spanish, where embedded interrogatives can be heralded by an instance of reportative *que* preceding either interrogative phrases or the interrogative complementizer (on which see Plann (1982) and much subsequent work; cf. (48)b).

- (47) *I wonder (\*that) what kind of party (that) he has in mind.*

As far as Spanish is concerned, the literature notes an important paradigm gap owing to the non-existence of the low *que* with wh-interrogatives either in root or in embedded contexts, in sharp contrast to English and to what we observe in the case of Spanish exclamatives in the preceding subsection:

- (48) a. ¿ Cuántas casas (\* que) se ha comprado?  
           how-many houses that cl. has purchased  
           ‘How many houses has s/he bought?’  
 b. Preguntaron (que) cuántos kilómetros (\* que) había recorrido.  
           asked that how-many kilometers that had travelled  
           ‘They asked how many kilometers I/s/he had travelled.’

The lack of *que* with wh-interrogatives in Spanish is widely considered to be the only formal mark distinguishing interrogatives from exclamatives as far as their structure is concerned (RAE-ASALE 2009, among others).<sup>9</sup> As we shall see momentarily, however, there are dialectal data indicating that, on occasion, *que* surfaces in certain interrogative contexts, which refutes the widely held generalization that *que* never co-occurs with wh-interrogatives in Spanish.

Before we delve into the dialectal data in question, it is important to note there is a well-documented interrogative phrase that occurs with *que* in all dialects of Spanish, however. This is the *cómo que* ‘how come’ (lit. ‘how that’) construction. But unlike regular interrogatives, this one is a formulaic construction that triggers no inversion:

- (49) *¿Cómo que al final no vienes al bodorrio?*  
 how that at+the end not come to+the wedding  
 ‘How come you are finally not coming to the wedding party?’

Importantly, some varieties of Latin American Spanish permit certain interrogatives to occur with a low instance of *que*, *contra* standard contentions regarding the impossibility of having *que* immediately after a wh-phrase across Spanish, as in (48). The following data from CORPES XXI, generously furnished by an anonymous reviewer, show that this is in fact the case (see also Villa-García, *in preparation*):

- (50) a. *¿Desde cuándo que no lo ven?*  
 since when that not cl. see  
 ‘When did you last see it/him?’ (Chile).  
 b. *¿Cuándo fue y dónde que ocurrió ese descubrimiento?*  
 when was and where that occurred that discovery  
 ‘When was it and where was that discovery made?’ (Uruguay).  
 c. *¿De dónde que alguna vez en otra vida lejana, había pretendido y creído ser escritor?*  
 of where that sometime in other life far had intended and believed be writer  
 ‘Where did you learn that, some other time, in a different, distant life, he had intended to be and believed himself to be a writer?’ (Cuba).  
 d. *¿Por qué que no fuiste a rescatarnos?*  
 x for what that not went to rescue-cl.  
 ‘Why did you not go to rescue us?’ (Colombia).  
 e. *¿Y por qué que no me arriesgaría a algo así?*  
 and for what that not cl. risk to something thus  
 ‘And why wouldn’t I risk doing something like that?’ (Chile).

The wh-phrase-plus-*que* data just reviewed raise various questions, such as whether this pattern can be found with other wh-items or is confined to adjuncts, whether the interpretation of the sentences displaying *que* is different from that of their *que*-less homologs, and whether they can occur in subordinate environments. This pattern is actually well documented in other Romance languages like Brazilian Portuguese, Canadian French, and the Northern Italian dialect of Lamonat (Simone De Cia, pers. comm. 2023), as shown by the following example from Brazilian Portuguese:

- (51) *Onde que você mora?*  
 where that you live  
 ‘Where do you live?’ (Oushiro 2011, p. 145).

Overall, we do find a subset of varieties of Spanish where the wh-interrogative + *que* configuration is legitimate. An analysis along the lines of that for English can therefore be advanced for these cases, as in (52). The question of course still remains as to why the presence of *que* below interrogatives in Spanish is so highly restricted.

- (52) [ForceP [Force’ [WHP wh-interrogative [WH’ *que* ]]]]



Having discussed exclamatives and interrogatives, we now turn our attention to what has been assumed to be the lowest complementizer along the leftmost part of clauses: ‘jussive/optative’ *that/que*.

### 3.5. Low Complementizers: ‘Jussive/Optative’ That/Que

A final phenomenon that I will consider here is the so-called ‘jussive/optative’ complementizer (Villa-García 2012, 2015; Radford 2018), which I touched upon in passing in Section 3.1. This phenomenon is illustrated again for English below:

- (53) *I am writing to ask **that** if you have not yet completed this training in this academic year **that** you do so as soon as possible and by the end of 14 July 2023 at the latest* (Official university communication, United Kingdom, 30 June 2023).

*That* in these cases is deemed to be the lexical realization of the subjunctive. As noted, conservative speakers do not drop *that* in this context, as illustrated once more in (54), but present-day English allows *that*-omission (cf. (16)).

- (54) *The University has ordered **that** a town be built in the premises.*

The question which arises is whether ‘jussive/optative’ cases lexicalize Force<sup>o</sup> or rather Finiteness<sup>o</sup>, which is connected to mood under Rizzi’s (1997, et seq.) system. One possibility, entertained by authors like Rizzi (1997), Villa-García (2012, 2015), Antonelli (2013), and Radford (2018), is that in the absence of sandwiched material, a conflated ForceFinitenessP is projected. In this context, we are no longer dealing with high or low *that*, since a unique realization would do the job under ForceFiniteness<sup>o</sup> (which is, in effect, equivalent to a C<sup>o</sup> analysis like that in (4)):

- (55) [ForceFinitenessP [ForceFiniteness’ *that* ]]

By contrast, when left-peripheral constituents occur, which is when multiple instances of *que* surface (i.e., *that* ... XP ... *that*), a split of the CP field is triggered (Rizzi 1997; Villa-García 2015; Radford 2018, among many others). Analytically, it is conceivable that this instance of low *that* may be a lexicalization of Finiteness<sup>o</sup>, as follows:

- (56) [ForceP [Force’ *that* [TopicP XP [Topic’ [FinitenessP [Finiteness’ *that* ]]]]]]

This proposal receives empirical support from other linguistic varieties. For instance, Ledgeway (2005, p. 365) capitalizes on languages like Romanian, which exhibits a distinct (low) complementizer (*să*) in subjunctive clauses that appears to be a very low element in the left-peripheral spine, as witnessed by its mandatory proximity to the verb and any clitics that may come with the verb (that is, any left-peripheral phrase must precede *să*). Romanian (57) illustrates (as observed by an anonymous reviewer, other Balkan languages make the same point):

- (57) *Vreau (ca) MÂINE să mergă.*  
want that tomorrow that go<sub>Subjunctive</sub>  
‘I want him to go TOMORROW’ (Watanabe 1996, p. 44).

Such examples are ideal candidates for an analysis in the spirit of (56) above:

- (58) [ForceP [Force’ *ca* [FocusP MÂINE [Focus’ [FinitenessP [Finiteness’ *să* ]]]]]]

Villa-García (2012, 2015, 2019) has made the contention that Spanish also possesses a Finiteness<sup>o</sup> complementizer lexicalized as *que*, which he dubs ‘jussive/optative’ *que*, exemplified by the following data:

- (59) a. Juan Carlos también le dijo a su hijo que si tuvo el coraje de casarse con ella  
 Juan Carlos also cl. told dat his son that if had the courage of marry-cl with her  
 desobedeciendo el deseo de sus padres que tuviera el carácter  
 disobeying the wish of his parents that hadSubjunctive the temper  
 para ponerla en su sitio.  
 for put-cl. in her place  
 ‘King Juan Carlos I also demanded that if his son had the courage to marry her, despite his parents’ wishes, that he  
 muster the strength to put her in her place.’  
 (paraphrase of Jaime Peñafiel’s words, *Lecturas*, [www.lecturas.com](http://www.lecturas.com), 8 April 2018)
- b. Que si vas a salir con ella, que vayas en serio.  
 that if go to go-out with her that goSubjunctive in serious  
 ‘I’m saying that if you are going out with her, you should get serious’ (RTVE, *Servir y proteger*, TV series, 4 April 2018).

Villa-García (2018) reports emphatic examples from naturalistic speech where indeed the two *ques* actually co-occur (which can arguably be analyzed as simultaneous realizations of Force<sup>o</sup> and Finiteness<sup>o</sup> under Rizzi’s system):

- (60) a. Que te ha dicho que que te pires.  
 that cl. has said that that cl. goSubjunctive  
 ‘I’m telling you s/he told you to go away.’
- b. Así que que te den.  
 so that that te giveSubjunctive  
 ‘So go fuck yourself.’

An immediate question begged by the subjunctive data reviewed so far is whether this instance of low *que* is compulsorily overt or not, vis-à-vis recomplementation *que* in Section 3.2, which is optional (see Villa-García (2015) and Echeverría (2020) for much relevant discussion). A preliminary survey suggests that speakers prefer the realization of this low *que*, but not all speakers fully reject the *que*-less counterparts (a claim that can be extended to apply to the English cases above). Thus, when it comes to ‘jussive/optative’ cases in subordinate contexts, we are dealing with a matter of preference, rather than obligatoriness. Echeverría (2020, p. 48, fn. 24) furnishes the following example, which he attributes to the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, indicating that ‘jussive/optative’ *que* can be silent:<sup>10</sup>

- (61) Dile que cuando termine venga a rendir cuentas.  
 say that when finishes comeSubjunctive to accounts accounts  
 ‘Tell him/her to come (here) to give us an explanation when s/he’s done.’

There may be factors such as tense (present vs. past), the presence of negation, intrinsically subjunctive selecting predicates (*pedir* ‘request’) vs. communication verbs (*decir* ‘say’), or even diatopic variation at play here. In fact, speakers of Spanish in contact with Catalan seem more permissive in terms of low *que*-omission (Villa-García 2018). Echeverría (2020, p. 48, fn. 24) arrives at the conclusion that “[i]f Spanish optative and jussive sentences are overall more likely to include an extra complementizer, this might well be explained by the more general, historically increasing tendency to use *que* before verbs in the subjunctive”. Actually, this type of *que* also occurs in root clauses (Villa-García 2015, amongst others), in which case *que* is unquestionably compulsory:

- (62) ¡Que venga a verme tu hija!  
 that comeSubjunctive to see-cl. your daughter  
 ‘I demand that your daughter come to see me.’

Returning to the embedded cases in (59) displaying a doubled *que*, whether obligatory or not, the evidence is symptomatic that there exists a low subjunctive complementizer in languages like Spanish.

Nevertheless, an open question not addressed by Villa-García and Ott (2022) is whether ‘jussive/optative’ sentences in English and Spanish can also be reanalyzed as restarts, much like their recomplementation homologs. An analysis of this guise for the cases at stake would assume the following preliminary structure for subordinate ‘jussive/optative’ sentences:

- (63) [CP<sub>1</sub> subject V [that/que ... XP ]] [CP<sub>2</sub> subject V [that/que V<sub>subjunctive</sub> ]]

This move would easily account for why the subjunctive *que* is more likely to be realized in this environment: the second occurrence would be a repeat of the same element in a restart configuration, with complementizers heralding subjunctive clauses being less

omittable, as has been noted (see Section 3.2 for more details of this analysis when applied to recomplementation *que*). If this analysis ends up being the right account of reduplicative cases featuring “jussive/optative” *that/que* as well, then what I have referred to as medial (recomplementation) and low complementizers (‘jussive/optative’ *que*) would be underlying instantiations of a high *que* (see above on whether we are dealing with Force°, Finiteness° or even a conflated ForceFiniteness° projection when no overt left-peripheral material occurs).

Having discussed a major subset of the putatively different positions in which complementizers can be realized in English and in Spanish, the following section explores the more general and crucial issue of parameterizing the various lexicalization possibilities observed hitherto.

#### 4. Inter- and Intra-Linguistic Variation: (Micro-)Parameterizing the Presence vs. Absence of Complementizers

The preceding discussion has made it clear that the seemingly ubiquitous *that* and *que* complementizers in English and Spanish constitute a gold mine for the study of the geometry of the clausal left edge as well as for variation, including macro- and micro-variation. In the following subsections, I turn to potential accounts of the general variation observed, based on recent proposals in the generative tradition. I will divide the discussion into spell-out accounts and feature-driven accounts, with a final note on a potential consideration regarding the detectability of projections that may help explain the different realizations found. A more general question raised by the discussion so far to which we will return towards the end of the paper is in fact whether a unitary account is attainable.

##### 4.1. PF Accounts

The work of Rizzi and his collaborators has advocated a Spell-Out (i.e., pronunciation) Parameter analysis to account for the (non)-overtness of left-peripheral heads. In the words of Rizzi (2013, pp. 201–2), we are dealing with “a spell-out parameter, a familiar and widely attested kind of low[-]level parameterization”. According to Rizzi and Bocci (2017, p. 13), the different left-peripheral criterial heads (Force°, Topic°, etc.) may be “null. . . , but their presence may be detected indirectly”. The authors go on to say that “. . . the same relevant criterial [CP] heads are phonetically null, a familiar (and trivial) parametric difference”. I propose that this type of parameter could be extended to apply across varieties of the same language, effectively making it a micro-parameter (see also Villa-García and Rodríguez (2020) on *sí (que)* ‘yes that’, exemplified in (2)c, across Spanish). An abstract visual representation of this binary parameter would be as follows, where ~~strikethrough~~ indicates PF deletion (note that the bracketings in (64) are highly simplified by only focusing on those projections that this work has specifically concentrated upon):

- (64)
- |    |              |         |                 |         |          |                            |         |         |                            |              |
|----|--------------|---------|-----------------|---------|----------|----------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|--------------|
| a. | [ForceP      | [Force' | <i>that/que</i> | [TopicP | [Topic'  | <i>that/que</i>            | [FocusP | [Focus' | <i>that/que</i>            | [FinitenessP |
|    | [Finiteness' |         | <i>that/que</i> | IP/TP   | ]]]]]]]] |                            |         |         |                            |              |
| b. | [ForceP      | [Force' | <i>that/que</i> | [TopicP | [Topic'  | <del><i>that/que</i></del> | [FocusP | [Focus' | <del><i>that/que</i></del> | [FinitenessP |
|    | [Finiteness' |         | <i>that/que</i> | IP/TP   | ]]]]]]]] |                            |         |         |                            |              |

Analogously, on the basis of English data akin to those in (1) in the introduction, Radford (2018, p. 170) puts forth the following conditions for complementizer realization in English (note that % signposts inter-speaker variation):

- (65) *Complementizer spellout conditions* (English)  
 In a finite clause, a non-verbal peripheral head can be spelled out as *that*  
 (i) if it is the first word in an embedded clause  
 or (ii) if it (%) is in an embedded clause and) has an adjacent superordinate (% edgemate) (% non-wh) licenser

It is of note that this author uses the modal *can*, which reflects the optionality of *that* in English across the board, although it is important to recall that in some contexts, high *that* must be pronounced (Bošković and Lasnik 2003, *inter alia*; see Section 3.1).

What the pronunciation accounts outlined above share is the assumption that left-peripheral heads (for us, the complementizers *that/que*) are always optional, their realization boiling down to a superficial parameter that decides whether the relevant head positions are PF realized (i.e., lexicalized) or not. In spite of the fact that such accounts are a priori

theoretically appealing owing to their elegance and simplicity, they fall short of accounting for the facts in a satisfactory manner. For one thing, certain *that* realizations are more likely than others are (e.g., subjunctive *that* for conservative speakers) or even compulsory in some contexts (initial *that* in clause-fronting cases like (14)b). Similarly, once Spanish is brought into the picture, the wide range of variation brought to light herein demonstrates that limiting all variation to a mere (discretionary) pronunciation decision appears to be, at best, oversimplistic.

A broader issue concerns the conception of parameters as binary choices (Chomsky 1981). If truly a parameter, then  $[\pm\text{spellout}]$  should be set to one value (e.g.,  $[\text{+spellout}]$  or  $[\text{-spellout}]$ ) for a specific construction in one particular language/dialect, not to either option (i.e., a particular CP-related head would bear a specific value for the relevant feature in charge of parametric variation in this regard, but not varying values/settings; see below on the prospect of lexical parameters). Put another way, optionality should in principle be excluded, contrary to fact. Assuming that *that/que* may be null/overt when optional based on a parametric difference would be akin to saying that a given language can have the positive and the negative setting of the Null-Subject Parameter at the same time, on an optional basis. Unless ancillary stipulations are made, it is not at all clear how the Spell-Out Parameter option would work in practice for the cases at issue.

#### 4.2. Feature-Based Accounts

In the wake of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995), features acquired a prominent role in syntactic theory. Early works already hinted at the possibility of explaining differences in terms of complementizer lexicalization by means of features. For instance, in an attempt to rule out *wh*-interrogatives plus *que* in languages like Spanish (see Section 3.4), Uriagereka (1995, p. 160) observed that “although *que* can occupy the head. . . , in these languages [i.e., in Romance varieties such as Galician and Spanish, JVG] it does not have the appropriate features to agree with a focused phrase in its spec—much like *that* is not compatible with *Wh*-phrases [in standard English, JVG]” (see also Brucart (1993, p. 76) on a similar claim regarding exclamation marks).

This is consonant with the prevalent idea that parametric variation is connected to features of functional heads (cf. the Borer-Chomsky conjecture; “lexical parameters”). In other words, this type of approach locates the relevant dimensions of (micro)variation in the properties of individual functional heads. As Ledgeway (2020, p. 31) puts it, “the locus of parametric variation lies in the lexicon, and in particular, in the (PF-)lexicalization of specific formal feature values of individual functional heads”. The Minimalist Program, therefore, paved the way to recast parametric variation as different featural configurations encoded in lexical heads, in such a way that distinct featural make-ups yield the differences noted.

With particular reference to microvariation, a number of studies (e.g., Smith and Adger 2005 et seq.; Thoms et al. 2019) have shown that the Minimalist Program is particularly well suited to deal with such micro-variation (see Green (2007) for an overview of approaches to syntactic (micro-)variation). For example, Smith and Adger (2005) note that the feature system allows for variable phonetic (i.e., audible) outputs with the same interpretation (by virtue of a particular head containing one additional formal feature, with visible phonetic/PF consequences but not semantic/LF ones). This move clearly accounts for those cases where an element can be present or absent without meaning consequences. Critically, the feature-driven approach can also capture those cases where the meaning may change, such as exclamation marks with *que* in Spanish, where most speakers report added emphasis in the presence of the overt *que*. Under this feature-based-type of analysis, such arguably semantic differences would be owing to different semantic features in the relevant head. Thus, my proposal would be that all of the C-related heads share some feature (possibly C), which is responsible for the phonological uniformity of the realization (*that/que*), but that various dialects allow deletion/non-realization depending on the other features of the head, in the spirit of Smith and Adger (2005).

### 4.3. Projection Detectability

Beyond spellout conditions and features, Spanish complementizer realization may show sensitivity to whether a projection has or lacks an overt specifier (with ForceP and FinitenessP being excellent candidates for the latter type). It seems that in those projections lacking a specifier, the head is generally less omissible across dialects (i.e., high and low *que*), in keeping with the generalization that languages disallow XPs to be headed by silent heads and specs (Koopman 1997) or, more generally, that a phrase is only projected when overtly manifested (Roberts and Roussou 2003; An 2007; Bošković 2016, *inter alia*). By contrast, when a specifier (e.g., Topic, Exclamative) is present (in apparent violation of the Doubly-Comp Filled Filter, as noted above in passing), the head can more easily remain null across dialects. The co-occurrence of an overt specifier with an overt head then leads to a reinforced/even more emphatic construction (cf. the emphasis contrast in *qué*-exclamatives with and without *que*, with *que* adding emphasis according to my native-speaker consultants).

This move goes against a superficial pronunciation or spell-out parameter (see Section 4.1); nevertheless, it is also challenged by a number of non-trivial questions: why is *que* obligatory with *vaya* for a subset of Asturian Spanish speakers (see Section 3.3)? What about the English case, where spec-less Force<sup>o</sup> can remain silent (see Section 3.1)?<sup>11</sup> These and other questions strongly indicate that the ultimate account of the (non-)realization of left-peripheral heads in the form of *that/que* awaits and merits further investigation.

## 5. Conclusions

Since Rizzi's (1997) split-CP hypothesis, the investigation of the mapping of the left periphery has commanded the attention of numerous researchers working in a vast number of languages. Much care has been taken to study the different constructions (topics, exclamatives, interrogatives, etc.) that are housed in the CP domain of the clause. Complementizers have generally not constituted the focus of attention, but their existence and importance in establishing the limits of the left-peripheral layer cannot be denied. Indeed, the data from English and Spanish investigated in this paper show that complementizers like *that* and *que* are ubiquitous, and they can in fact co-occur with virtually all the left-peripheral constructions investigated in the literature so far. Of course, not all speakers from all dialects (of English or Spanish) accept the presence/absence of *that/que* with every CP-related phenomenon, and it is precisely that high degree of variation that the present paper has tried to draw attention to. Importantly, the foregoing discussion has revealed that, on occasion, it is not even clear that a non-high complementizer necessarily evinces the presence of a medial left-peripheral head (e.g., recomplementation as a TopicP phenomenon or as a biclausal phenomenon; see Section 3.2). If the seemingly medial (recomplementation) *that/que* and low ('jussive/optative') *that/que* turn out to be repeats of the high *that/que* in a bisentential/restart configuration (à la Villa-García and Ott 2022), then the total number of distinct complementizer realizations would actually be significantly reduced in both languages, despite superficial appearances.

Throughout our discussion, we have seen cases where the complementizer can by and large remain silent (e.g., high *that* in English, as discussed in Section 3.1), configurations in which both the complementizer and the left-peripheral phrase are realized concurrently (e.g., exclamatives with *vaya* plus *que* in certain varieties of Asturian Spanish, on which see Section 3.3), and patterns where only the left-peripheral constituent can be realized (namely wh-interrogatives in Peninsular Spanish; Section 3.4). In short, there are cases in which the presence of the complementizer is (i) optional, (ii) obligatory, or (iii) impossible. This state of affairs raises four major questions, presented in the introduction and repeated here. These questions now receive partial answers, pending further investigation of the constructions studied herein (and others):

- (i) Is *that/que* a mere overt manifestation of an otherwise null/silent head (i.e., [<sub>XP</sub> YP [<sub>X'</sub> *that/que* vs. Ø . . .]])? If so, is *that/que* always present but deleted in the phonology (PF), *that/que*, or else inserted when phonologically realized?



- The evidence adduced throughout suggests that merely reducing the presence/absence of *that/que* to a pronunciation parameter is rather simplistic. This would actually imply complete absence or obligatoriness in all contexts (assuming that the parameter is set to a particular value, not to either), contrary to fact, as amply demonstrated throughout. Put another way, the prospect of a unitary analysis that relies on PF realization seems untenable.
- (ii) Is the presence of *that/que* indicative of more complex underlying structure instead?
- At least for cases including recomplementation, which have been convincingly analyzed recently as restarts in discourse camouflaging two underlying sentences, the answer to this question appears to be positive: multiple *thats/ques* are symptomatic of a more intricate syntactic configuration behind the scenes (see also [Villa-García, in preparation](#), for the claim that exclamatives with *que* likewise involve a more elaborated structure behind the scenes than their *que*-less homologs).
- (iii) Whatever the case may be, what determines the (non-)realization of the complementizer in different positions? Is it dialect-based? If so, are some dialects more prone to lexicalizing complementizers in different positions than others? Is complementizer lexicalization processing-based? Are there any other factors that play a role in determining the presence or absence of the complementizer, such as formal vs. informal contexts?
- In some cases, as we have seen, the complementizer is optional in some contexts, obligatory in certain environments, and mandatorily absent in others. This sometimes depends on the actual dialect in question. At this stage, it cannot be ascertained that a dialect omits complementizers more often than other dialects across left-peripheral constructions in either language. Regarding processing, the restart analysis of recomplementation (which, I argue, can be extended to subordinate ‘jussive/optative’ contexts) is compatible with this view, inasmuch as the restart contributes to facilitating the processing of the sentence. And lastly, factors such as formal vs. informal contexts do play a role in complementizer manifestation: for instance, omission of *that* in embedded declaratives in English has traditionally been attributed to colloquial registers; conversely, omitting *que* in requests is a feature characteristic of formal, written discourse in Spanish.
- (iv) Does the presence vs. absence of *that/que* have a bearing on the semantics (LF)? Put another way, is complementizer realization just a PF matter, or are there LF reflexes as well?
- If we put aside processing, emphasis, and the formal vs. informal distinction, the cases explored herein do not seem to manifest meaning differences (regarding, e.g., the truth conditions of the sentences in question) depending on the presence/absence of *that/que*.

Further investigations into the constructions at issue will hopefully provide fuller answers to the major questions posed in this paper.

Be that as it may, the paper has tried to parameterize (and micro-parameterize) the different left-peripheral head realizations observed across English and Spanish. The major proposals in the literature to account for microvariation rely either on superficial PF realization or on features, and in addition to extant accounts, I have adumbrated an account that capitalizes on whether the specifier positions of the relevant maximal projections are filled overtly.

At present, however, a unified account of the facts across the board appears to be far from reachable. Many questions remain at this point regarding both the diatopic extent of the variation observed in relation to head realizations (especially in English, but also in Spanish) alongside the analysis of such variation in English and Spanish. It is my sincere hope that the data, dialectal contrasts, and lines of analysis gathered in this paper will contribute to this important enterprise.

**Funding:** This research was funded by by a María Zambrano International Talent Attraction Grant (MU-21-UP2021-030 71880965) at the LINGUO group of the University of Oviedo, awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Universities, with funding from the European Union (#NextGenerationEU, NGEU). Similarly, this project has benefited from the Spanish-Government-funded project INFOS-TARS (PGC2018-093774-B-I00).

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** Not applicable.

**Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank three anonymous reviewers and the special editor, Ana Ojea, for their useful and thorough comments. I am also grateful to the English and Spanish consultants who helped me gather the relevant acceptability judgments. I would also like to express my gratitude to the conference abstract reviewers and/or the audiences at Ciudad Real (Castilla-La Mancha), Manchester, Bucharest, Geneva, Leiden, and Wake Forest (North Carolina). More specifically, I would like to thank the following individuals for their valuable observations: David Adger, Luigi Andriani, Delia Bentley, Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, Giuliano Bocci, Željko Bošković, Ignacio Bosque, Simone De Cia, Antonio Cañas, Carlos Echeverría, Francisco Fernández-Rubiera, Daniel Á. García Velasco, Diego Gibanal Faro, Raquel González Rodríguez, Edita Gutiérrez, Vera Hohaus, Ángel Jiménez-Fernández, Bárbara Marqueta, Alexandru Nicolae, Isabel Pérez-Jiménez, Andrew Radford, Luigi Rizzi, Andrés Saab, Giuseppe Samo, Michelle Sheehan, Imanol Suárez-Palma, and Sam Wolfe.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See also Uriagereka's (1995) FP system wherein FP is above CP.
- <sup>2</sup> Conversely, Linàs-Grau and Bel (2019) reflect on corpus-based investigations whose results indicate that verbs such as *tell* and *hope* typically take a null-complementizer clausal complement, as opposed to *think*, *say*, and *know*.
- <sup>3</sup> The range of structures allowing this pattern, which is attested in formal varieties across dialects, is an open question that future research should care to address. For instance, the particular example in (22) appears to be a parenthetical use of *dicen*, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer. As noted by a different anonymous reviewer, a revealing contrast in this regard would involve a sentence with subordination (e.g., a relative clause) and one without it, in which case omitting *que* would not be an option:
 

a.	<i>El</i>	<i>alumno</i>	<i>que</i>	<i>sabía</i>	<i>(que)</i>	<i>era</i>	<i>brillante.</i>
	the	student	that	knew	that	was	bright
	'The student who knew he was bright.'						
b.	<i>*El</i>	<i>alumno</i>	<i>sabía</i>	<i>era</i>	<i>brillante.</i>		
	the	student	knew	was	bright		
	'The student knew he was bright.'						
- <sup>4</sup> An empirical problem with an analysis of *that*-less clauses as IPs/TPs is that there are data indicating that left-edge-related material can occur even in the absence of complementizers, as the following example demonstrates:
 

(i)	<i>'I think ∅ the general physics community, ∅ they're a little bored with the equation,' he said</i> (New York Times, cited in Radford (2018, p. 111)).
-----	--
- <sup>5</sup> For the sake of completeness, Spanish possesses a quotative marker (Etxepare 2010) in the shape of *que*:
 

(i)	<i>Que</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>convocado</i>	<i>elecciones</i>	<i>anticipadas.</i>
	that	cl.	have	summoned	elections	anticipated
	'Somebody/I said that a snap election has been called.'					

This element behaves syntactically like a high *que*, for it precedes wh-phrases, dislocations, and doubled complementizers (see Section 3.2) (Villa-García 2015). English lacks a quotative marker of this type, but does manifest *that* at the beginning of an utterance in clausal fragments, which for some speakers can be omitted in (ii)B:

(ii)	A:	<i>What did he say?</i>
	B:	<i>That you shouldn't count on him.</i>
- <sup>6</sup> In work in progress, I show that this is rather relevant to the analysis of inversion in Romance languages like Spanish. What the data indicate is that it is the full phrase containing the wh-exclamative and *que* that triggers inversion, not just the exclamative specifier. This leads us to conclude that even in the absence of the physical complementizer, the exclamative head is occupied by a null counterpart of *que*, since inversion occurs regardless of the presence of *que* (though see Villa-García, in preparation, for a dissenting view). Under some analyses (e.g., T<sup>0</sup>-to-C<sup>0</sup>), inversion is accounted for by assuming that the verb moves all the way to the head whose specifier hosts the exclamative phrase. However, the *que* data render this type of account implausible, since the head of the projection hosting the exclamative is occupied by the complementizer (unless additional projections are postulated).

In much the same way as in the case of recomplementation, different accounts of exclamatives have been proposed in the literature: CP (Bosque 1984; Brucart 1993, among others); FocusP (Hernanz and Rigau 2006); FocusP for the exclamative phrase and Finiteness<sup>o</sup> for *que* (Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2009); ExclamativeP (Rizzi and Bocci 2017); the wh-exclamative is in a high CP and *que* in a lower CP (Zanuttini and Portner 2003; Tirado 2016; see also Benincà 1996); *qué* in ForceP, with the exclamative element in FocusP, and the low *que* in a lower-than-FocusP Topic<sup>o</sup> (Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001); the *qué*-exclamative phrase moves from FocusP to ForceP, whose head is occupied by the complementizer, and the verb moves to Focus<sup>o</sup>, accounting for inversion (Villalba 2019). Note, however, that inversion does not necessarily imply verb movement to the CP domain (viz. C<sup>o</sup> as a null affix that needs adjacency with the verb, in the spirit of Buesa-García (2008)). In this sense, an anonymous reviewer poses the question of where the verb sits under the analysis in (38), since it is usually assumed that it moves all the way to the phrase whose specifier contains the exclamative constituent (see Villa-García, in preparation, for much relevant discussion).

Additionally, RAE-ASALE (2009) mentions the ongoing debate over whether such instances of *que* resemble relatives, an open question at present. The optionality of these complementizers seems to contravene the claim that they may be relatives, as *que* in Spanish relatives is mandatorily overt. RAE-ASALE notes that such exclamatives lack pied-piping, an expectation of the relative-clause analysis. Yet, sentences like the following, with the pied-pied preposition, are acceptable, suggesting that the issue is far from settled:

- (i) *i Vaya líos en los que te metes!*  
 'You (always) get involved in doggy stuff!'

Masullo (2017, p. 113) gives an example from Argentinean Spanish under *mirar* 'look' which contains *que* in brackets, pointing to the acceptability of this element in embedded contexts also in varieties other than in those varieties of Peninsular Spanish where pleonastic *que* is licit with *qué*-exclamatives:

- (i) *i Mirá qué bello (que) es el Nahuel Huapi!*  
 'Look at how beautiful Nahuel Huapi is!'

However, two properties that further tease apart interrogatives and exclamatives is that interrogatives, but not exclamatives, can appear in long-distance configurations and can likewise occur in-situ.

A potential issue for this type of apparent counterexample is that *cuando termine* could be analyzed as an adjunct, which Villa-García (2015) shows can occur below FinitenessP.

Note in this connection the suggestion mentioned in Section 3.1 that *that*-less clauses may actually lack a CP altogether, which amounts to saying that clauses without *that* are not CPs (they are IPs/TPs) and therefore null *that* does not exist: the absence of *that* simply heralds the lack of the CP domain.

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