

Evidentiality and the left periphery: Invariable *qué*-questions in Spanish

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Focus of this paper: Invariable *Qué*-Questions (IQQs) in Spanish:

- (1) *Qué vas, a Barcelona?*
what go.2SG to Barcelona
'(I guess) you are going to Barcelona?'
- (2) *Qué llegaremos, sobre las 5?*
what will arrive.1PL about the 5
'(I guess) we will arrive around 5?'

We show that IQQs are indirect evidentials which have their evidential meaning encoded in the left periphery and lexicalized by the morpheme *que*. For Romance linguistics, we add to the typology of evidentials in Spanish that also have *que* as their locus. For general linguistic theory, we provide further support that evidentiality is syntactically articulated.

IQQs are not Split Questions (SQs): SQs are superficially identical to IQQs, *modulo* the wh-phrase, which would be *dónde* ('where') and *cuándo* ('when') respectively in (1) and (2). Even though a unified account has been pursued by Fernández-Soriano (2020), the two constructions are subject to important asymmetries which, in our view, thwart such an analysis. Most of these asymmetries are syntactic (Fernández-Sánchez and García-Pardo 2020, Jiménez-Fernández and Turbino 2020). In this paper, we claim that SQs and IQQs are also different wrt their semantic/pragmatic import.

IQQs are indirect evidentials: An utterance like (1) sounds natural in a context where the speaker finds out that the addressee is travelling somewhere and s/he makes the inference that the addressee may be going to Barcelona based on the evidence available to him/her (e.g. s/he knows that the addressee has family there or that the addressee is going on vacation to Spain, and s/he is aware that Barcelona is currently the most popular destination in Spain). The following evidentiality-sensitive contexts would be pragmatically odd with (1):

Direct evidence context: Speaker runs into the addressee while boarding a plane to Barcelona.

Hearsay context: Speaker is told by a third person that the addressee is going to Barcelona and seeks confirmation from addressee.

Irony: IQQs are great irony triggers. This isn't surprising, given the connection between irony and evidentiality, both in Spanish (Rodríguez-Ramalle 2019) and beyond (Aikhenvald 2004). Crucially, we will show that SQs are not felicitous in these contexts.

- (3) Context: two people are going to a posh place. They meet and one of them is wearing shorts, sandals and a straw hat. The other one says:
 - a. *Qué vas, a la playa?*
what go.2SG to the beach
'Are you going to the beach or what?'
 - b. *Dónde vas, a la playa?*
where go.2SG to the beach
'Where are you going, to the beach?'

The analysis: Following Cinque (1999) and Speas (2004), we assume that there is a syntactic string right above TP, represented in (4), that derives evidentiality. Each of these projections has an implicit subject whose roles are described in Table 1.

- (4) Speech Act (SA) > Eval(uation) > Evid(ence) > Epis(temological)

Table 1: Pragmatic roles in Speas (2004:265)

POSITION	MNEMONIC NAME	ROLE DESCRIPTION
Spec, Speech Act Phrase	Speaker	the utterer of the sentence
Spec, Evaluative Phrase	Evaluator	the one responsible for judgements of quality or value of the situation
Spec, Evidential Phrase	Witness	the one who has the evidence regarding the truth of the proposition
Spec, Epistemological Phrase	Perceiver	the one whose degree of experience with the event determines how likely the proposition is to be true

In indirect evidentials, the Speaker is also the Evaluator of the assertion, but is neither a Witness nor a Perceiver. We propose that *que* is not a wh-phrase, but rather a complementizer that lexicalizes these projections in a span. This *que* has a lexical entry as in (5), where the subscripts specify the coindexing relations of the implicit subjects of each of those projections.

- (5) Lexical entry of our IQQ *que*: [SA_i, Eval_i, Evid_j, Epis_j]

The syntax is as in (6), where the tag moves to the specifier of a low FocusP between TP and VP. In addition to the evidential meaning of IQQs, this proposal also explains the morphosemantic mismatch between *que* and the tag—given that they are not in an operator-variable relation—and the strict adjacency between *que*, the inflected verb and the tag—given the syntactic sequence we propose.

- (6) The indirect evidential syntax of IQQs (cf. (1))
 [SAP *pro*_i [EvalP *pro*_i [EvidP *pro*_j [EpisP *pro*_j [TP *pro*_j [T' vas [FocP a Barcelona]]]]]]]]

Possible extensions: We will finally consider another kind of invariable *qué*-question, which we refer to as **verbless IQQ**:

- (7) Qué, de cháchara?
 what of chitchat
 ‘Chitchatting or what?’

A key difference between IQQs and their verbless counterpart is that the latter is a direct evidential and mostly exclusively ironic: 7 is clearly not a question; the speaker is asserting that the hearers are indeed chitchatting, and that this somehow annoys the speaker. Incidentally, the existence of these ironic strings challenges de traditional, (neo)-Gricean approaches to irony based on the idea of opposition, and favor Wilson and Sperber (1992)’s relevance-theoretic approach.

Selected References: Cinque, G. 1999. *Adverbs and Functional Heads: A Cross-linguistic Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press • Fernández-Sánchez, J. and A. García-Pardo (2020). “The syntax of invariable ‘qué’ questions in Spanish”. *Language patterns in Spanish and beyond*, ed. J. Colomina-Almiñana and S. Sessarego. New York: Routledge. • Fernández-Soriano, O. 2020. *The structure and interpretation of non-matching split interrogatives in Spanish*, Unpublished, UAM. • Speas, Margaret. 2004. Evidentiality, logophoricity and the syntactic representation of pragmatic features. *Lingua* 114(3): 255-276. • Rodríguez-Ramalle, T. (2019) En torno a los valores pragmáticos de la evidencialidad. *Revista de Investigación Lingüística* 22:157-182.