

Chapter ?

Nonstandard *wh*-questions and alternative checkers in Pagotto

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1. Introduction

The variety and importance of the descriptive and theoretical questions raised by the syntax of interrogative *wh*-constructions since the very beginnings of Generative Grammar has largely obscured the fact that besides interrogatives there exist other *wh*-structures which, while often quite similar, nonetheless display distinct properties that call for investigation. In what follows, I want to consider some of these constructions; more precisely, I will be concerned with what I will call “nonstandard” or “special” *wh*-questions.¹

Obviously, another reason of the fact that the existence of special questions has partly gone unnoticed is the absence, in many well-studied languages, of striking visible differences opposing them to standard questions.² The North-Eastern Italian dialect Pagotto, spoken in the Eastern Bellunese area of Northern Veneto, does exhibit such differences, and I will use them to demonstrate the existence of three different kinds of nonstandard *wh*-questions.

Among the reasons why such constructions are particularly interesting I want to stress the following two:

- first, I will argue that they involve layers of the left periphery different from the (Interrogative) Force layer activated by standard questions; their study, therefore, increases our knowledge of the structure and function of this outer domain of the sentence;

- second, the very fact that the “special” questions examined here are structurally different from standard questions shows that it is not possible to view them as standard questions provided with a nonstandard interpretation under particular conditions determined by linguistic context and extralinguistic situation. While it is plausible that such conditions may affect the interpretation of standard questions in certain cases, the Pagotto

data strongly suggest that more types of sentential force are structurally encoded than previously thought.

This article, which is concerned with the *syntax* of nonstandard questions, is in different ways a first exploration of these constructions in Pagotto. That nonstandard questions have a syntax of their own is not an entirely new claim, though more systematic explorations of their particular properties are rare. In earlier work (Obenauer 1994, chap. III), I studied two of the three types of nonstandard questions examined here, rhetorical questions and what are called below “Can’t-find-the-value” questions, across several languages and argued that they form a paradigm of properties (largely) shared, and which can be reduced to one. Within the “Principles and parameters” framework (Chomsky 1981 and later, “preminimalist” work), this property appeared to be “obligatory early movement” of the *wh*-phrase (as opposed, in particular, to LF movement), clearly visible in a language displaying, like French, the possibility of non-initial *wh* in standard questions. The present article is part of a larger attempt to show that it is interesting to reinterpret the paradigm of “obligatory early movement” to one and the same left peripheral specifier (“Spec,CP”) in terms of raising of the *wh*-phrase to individualized higher projections, belonging to what is called, after Rizzi (1997), Benincà (2000), Poletto (2000) and others, the “split CP field”. For reasons of space, I limit myself to nonembedded questions.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the phenomenon of selective *wh*-in-situ in Bellunese/Pagotto and summarizes the analysis proposed for it in Pollock, Munaro and Poletto (2002). Sections 3-5 introduce three different types of nonstandard questions which can be identified in Pagotto and discuss the phenomenon of alternative checking for each construction. Section 6 examines the question of the derivational relations between standard and nonstandard questions. Section 7 concludes the article.

2. Apparent *wh*-in-situ in Bellunese: standard questions in Munaro, Poletto and Pollock’s (2002) analysis³

In the Northern Veneto dialects known as Bellunese, the *wh*-phrases of standard interrogatives do not have a uniform behavior. Nonbare *wh*-phrases move to sentence initial position, in a way similar to cases familiar from languages like English:

- (1) *Che libro à-tu ledest?*
 ‘what book have-you read’
 “What book did you read?”
 **A’-tu ledest che libro?*
- (2) *Quanti libri à-tu ledest?*
 ‘how many books have-you read’
 “How many books did you read?”
 **A’-tu ledest quanti libri?*

Bare *wh*-phrases, on the contrary, appear in sentence-internal position;
 cf. (3), (4):

- (3) a. *À-tu incontrà chi?*
 ‘have-you met who’
 “Who did you meet?”
 b. **Chi à-tu incontrà?*
- (4) a. *Sié-o stadi andé?*
 ‘are-you been where’
 “Where have you been?”
 b. **Andé sié-o stadi?*

This paradigm includes *che* ‘what’:

- (5) a. *A’-lo magnà che?*
 ‘has-he eaten what’
 “What did he eat?”
 b. **Che à-lo magnà?*

The *wh*-phrase *cossa* ‘what’ alternates, in Bellunese, freely with *che*, but behaves as a nonbare element, a property explainable on diachronic grounds (see Munaro (1999, 25ff.):

- (6) a. *Cossa à-lo magnà?*
 ‘what has-he eaten’
 b. **A’-lo magnà cossa?*

Abstracting away from certain (apparently) slightly more complex cases, standard interrogatives in Bellunese distribute their bare vs. nonbare *wh*-phrases in opposite ways; bare *wh*-phrases appear, strikingly, in sentence internal position - “in-situ”.

Munaro, Poletto and Pollock (2002) analyze Bellunese *wh*-in-situ structures as follows. First, they motivate - for Bellunese as for other Romance languages - a Rizzi-style highly articulated relevant left periphery, namely, (7) (= their (12)):⁴

(7) Int(errog.)ForceP > G(round)P > Op(erator)P > Top(ic)P > IP

Second, the authors note that Bellunese shares with many other Northern Italian dialects (NIDs) the property of having two sets of subject clitics, nonassertive clitics and assertive ones. Nonassertive clitics appear in Yes-No questions and *wh*-questions, in optative and counterfactual as well as in disjunctive constructions;⁵ they are morphologically distinct from assertive subject clitics and appear as enclitics on the verb (while assertive clitics are proclitics). Munaro et alii argue that Bellunese nonassertive clitics have the function of expressing the “force” or “type” of the proposition in which they occur. Third, according to the authors, the noninitial occurrence of bare *wh*-phrases in Bellunese follows from the derivation in (8).

(8) *A'-lo magnà che?* (= (5))

Input : [IP [Infl° à] magnà che]

- a. merge *lo* and license *pro* in SpecTop
[TopP *pro* [Top° *lo*] [IP à magnà che]]
- b. I° to Top° to satisfy the affixal nature of *lo*
[TopP *pro* [Top° à_j +*lo*] [IP t_j magnà che]]
- c. *wh*-movement to OpP
[OpP [*che*]_i Op° [TopP *pro* [Top° à_j +*lo*] [IP t_j magnà t_i]]
- d. remnant IP to G(round), to check the G feature
[GroundP [IP t_j magnà t_i]_m G° [OpP [*che*]_i Op°] [TopP *pro* [Top° à_j +*lo*] t_m]]
- e. à+*lo* to IntForce° to check IntForce

$$[\text{IntForce}^\circ [\text{IntF}^\circ \text{àj+l0}]_k [\text{GP} [\text{IP } t_j \text{ magnà } t_i]_m \text{ G}^\circ [\text{OpP} [\text{che}]_i \text{ Op}^\circ [\text{TopP } \text{pro} [\text{Top}^\circ t_k] t_m]]]]$$
 (see Munaro, Poletto and Pollock's (37))

In this view, the bare *wh*-phrase does not remain unmoved, but it moves only once - to Spec,OpP -, followed by Remnant IP movement, while its sentence initial counterpart in French moves twice (i.e., again after remnant movement of IP). The reason is that the Bellunese nonassertive subject clitic, generated in Top°, attracts its verb host and raises to IntForce°, whose IntForce feature it checks, typing the sentence as an interrogative. Consequently, further movement of the *wh*-phrase is not needed, and for economy reasons (Chomsky 1995) not possible.

The obligatory sentence internal occurrence of bare *wh*-phrases⁶ is thus directly related to the role played by the nonassertive clitic. Given that the existence of the two sets of clitics is a pervasive phenomenon in the NIDs, it comes as a surprise that only few of these dialects display the (apparent) *wh*-in-situ. The authors, noting the point, answer it in line with the logic of their approach: the existence of a distinct set of nonassertive clitics in a dialect does not, as such, imply that they are able to type a sentence as an interrogative. Comparing Bellunese subject clitics with those of NIDs exhibiting sentence initial bare *wh*-phrases, they isolate important differences between the former and the latter; they show that the two types of nonassertive clitics differ in distribution in ways which are very plausibly tied to their (in)ability to act as Force checkers. I refer the reader to the article for details on this question and others.

The functioning of nonassertive subject clitics raises the question whether this “alternative checking”, as we may call it, is an isolated fact, or just one particular case of a more general phenomenon. Are there other cases where movement of a *wh*-phrase is unnecessary because of “alternative checking” by a different element? I will try to answer this question, among others, building on Munaro et alii's analysis and turn now to nonstandard questions in Pagotto.

3. Surprise/disapproval questions

3.1. Justification of this sentence type

The first type of “special question” I will consider is what I will call “surprise / disapproval questions”, or, for the sake of brevity, “surprise questions”. This type of question can be characterized intuitively by saying that it expresses the speaker’s attitude towards the propositional content. In fact, the only such attitude ever expressed in questions - at least in Pagotto/Bellunese - seems to be surprise with a tendency to negative orientation (disapproval). The surprise question type is not usually recognized as a type in its own right - be it syntactically, semantically or phonologically⁷ (contrary to the type “rhetorical question”, for example, recognized more commonly⁸). Munaro and Obenauer (1999) argue explicitly that such a type exists in Pagotto/ Bellunese. The main focus of their paper being on the *wh*-word *cossa* ‘what’ and its counterparts in French and German, they illustrate the surprise type by structures like (9).⁹

- (9) *Cossa sé-tu drìo magnar?!*
(cf. (8) of Munaro and Obenauer (1999))
what are-cl behind eat
‘What on earth are you eating?!’

Contrary to Bellunese, Pagotto cannot use *cossa* in standard questions (this is the only difference between the two dialects which is relevant here). (9), as noted in Munaro and Obenauer (1999, 189) (henceforth, M&O), “can only be used to express the speaker’s opinion that the person referred to (i.e., the subject of the sentence) is eating some strange and unexpected thing”; in other words, it expresses “the speaker’s dismay or disapproval concerning what is being eaten”. (9) contrasts with the also possible (10), which can only have a standard question interpretation.

- (10) *Sé-tu drìo magnar che?*
are-cl behind eat what
‘What are you eating?’

Che ‘what’ and *cosa* ‘what’, then, are in complementary distribution in Pagotto;¹⁰ as in Bellunese more generally, *cosa* appears exclusively in sentence initial position.

Alongside its argumental usage in cases like (9), *cosa* is also used nonargumentally in surprise questions. The following two examples are drawn from M&O (see also Munaro 1999, 23); here, *cosa* has a meaning close to ‘why’, but the sentences are again interpreted as expressing the speaker’s surprise or annoyance with respect to the event referred to:¹¹

(11) *Cossa zighe-tu?! (cf. M&O’s (13a))*
 what shout-cl
 ‘Why are you shouting?!’

(12) a. *?Cossa compre-tu n’altro giornal?! (cf. M&O’s (14b, d))*
 what buy cl another newspaper
 b. *Cossa ocore-lo comprar/ che te-compre n’altro giornal?! (cf. M&O’s (14b, d))*
 what needs-cl buy / that cl-buy another newspaper
 ‘There is no need (for you) to buy another newspaper.’

(11) and (12) contrast with (13) and (14), where *cosa* is replaced by *parché* ‘why’.

(13) *Parché zighe-tu?*
 why shout-cl

(14) a. *Parché compre-tu n’altro giornal?*
 why buy cl another newspaper
 ‘Why are you buying another newspaper?’
 b. *?Parché ocore-lo comprar / che te-compre n’altro giornal?*
 why needs-cl buy / that cl-buy another newspaper
 ‘Why is it necessary (for you) to buy another newspaper?’

In normal usage, *parché* has a neutral interpretation analogous to normal usage of *why*, though (just as in English), depending on context and intonation, the hearer may in particular cases understand that the speaker is

surprised/angry. In the case of *cozza* as exemplified by (11)-(12), however, the surprise/disapproval interpretation is inseparable from the meaning ‘why’.¹²

Returning to argumental *cozza*, we have found that it “replaces” *che* in Pagotto surprise questions for reasons yet to be determined (see the text following example (24), below). As in Bellunese more generally, *cozza* appears in initial position, contrary to *che* (and other bare *wh*-elements). For this reason, nothing more can be concluded - at least at first sight - from the *che* - *cozza* contrast in (10) vs. (9), (11) and (12); the position *cozza* occupies does not seem, at first sight, to be specifically related to the surprise interpretation.

M&O (p. 217) suggest, however, that in view of recent work on the functional structure of the sentence, it is reasonable to assume that the position of *cozza* - both argumental and nonargumental - in the preceding examples cannot be the IntForce projection that plays a crucial role in standard (or “true”) *wh*-questions like those considered in section 2, above. A general working hypothesis that can be drawn from Rizzi (1997), Cinque (1999) and other work seems to be that interpretively relevant features are to be associated with individual functional heads/projections, and not “cumulated” on the same head / in the same projection. Given the clear semantic contrast between surprise questions and standard questions, M&O assume that *cozza* moves beyond Spec, IntForce to the specifier of a higher projection (itself located lower than the Spec that exclamative *wh*-phrases raise to). I adopt this hypothesis of a higher landing site for the surprise *wh*-phrase *cozza* also for an additional reason.

Indeed, Pagotto surprise (/disapproval) questions are not limited to structures containing *cozza*; beyond the cases examined by M&O, they can be “built around” other *wh*-words like *chi*, *comé*, *quando*, *andé*, to limit myself to bare *wh*-elements. Such examples provide clear evidence that Pagotto surprise questions differ structurally from standard questions; indeed, they require the bare *wh*-phrase in sentence initial position in all cases, not only in the case of *cozza*. By way of consequence, the *wh*-phrases that can (and must) appear “in situ” in standard questions must raise to the left edge of the sentence; cf. (15) vs. (16) and (17) vs. (18), with the surprise interpretation the intended one in all cases (as also indicated by the “?!” punctuation).

- (15) *Chi à-tu invidà?!*
whom have-cl invited

- (16) 'Whom did you invite?!'
 ??*A-tu invidà chi?*!
- (17) *Andé sié-o 'ndadi?*!
 where are-cl gone
 'Where have-you gone?!'
- (18) ??*Sié-o 'ndadi andé?*!

((16) and (18) would of course be well-formed standard questions).

Concerning their interpretation, Munaro (1998a; 1998b) considers sentences of this type as exclamatives of a particular kind. I want to reconsider this view, modifying it slightly. Consider Munaro's (1998) characterization of their meaning: in using such sentences the speaker "expresses a sort of reproachful dismay" about the event described; more specifically, (15) expresses an attitude of surprise at the choice of the invited person (the implication may even be that the person in question should not have been invited); (17) conveys surprise at the place chosen as destination. The particular semantic/pragmatic value of sentences like (17) and (18), then, appears to be precisely the same as that of (9), (11), (12), the sentences containing argumental and nonargumental *cozza* - they all convey surprise (or disapproval).¹³ To this semantic parallelism should be added the parallelism in syntactic structure: the *cozza*-sentences share with (15) and (17) the sentence initial position of the *wh*-word as well as the inversion of the clitic subject.

On the other hand, as noted by Munaro (1998a; b), there exist parallel exclamative structures without inversion, and containing the complementizer *che* (to be distinguished from the interrogative pronoun *che*) to the right of the *wh*-phrase:

- (19) *Chi che te à invidà!*
 who that you have invited
- (20) *Andé che sié 'ndadi!*
 where that have gone

Such examples are interpretively "neutral", in Munaro's terms, in the sense that they contain "no particular implication concerning the speaker's opinion about the event referred to, besides the fact that the event is worth

pointing out”. Again, there exist parallel exclamative examples with the *wh*-phrase *cossa* and the same “neutral” interpretation; cf. (21), which contrasts with (9) in that the speaker may as well have a positive as a negative opinion.¹⁴

- (21) *Cossa che te sé drìo magnar!*
what that cl-are behind eat
‘What you are eating!’

Munaro’s careful characterization of the sometimes subtle interpretive differences between the two constructions with sentence initial bare *wh*-phrases leads me to lump together (9), (11), (12), (15) and (17) (that is, the surprise questions), on the one hand, and the exclamatives (19), (20), and (21), on the other, a grouping corresponding at the same time to the respective structures of the two sentence types.¹⁵

There does exist, then, a type of question formally distinguished in clear ways from standard *wh*-questions as well as from *wh*-exclamatives, namely, surprise (/disapproval) questions. As to the structure of this sentence type, M&O’s conjecture concerning the position of *cossa* is supported in theory-internal ways. Let us consider how, returning for a moment to standard questions. Here, bare *wh*-phrases appear exclusively in sentence internal position - a consequence, I assume with Munaro, Poletto and Pollock (2002), of the fact that the feature of the interrogative force head (IntForce^o) is checked by the nonassertive subject clitic. Bare *wh*-phrases, therefore, stay in Spec, OpP. Given these assumptions, nothing excludes raising of bare *wh*-words beyond IntForce^o for independent reasons in other types of structures, that is, in structures where the checking requirements of the relevant functional head cannot be met by inflectional/enclitic elements (but, by hypothesis, by the *wh*-words). This is clearly what accounts for the obligatory raising of *chi*, *andé* in (15) and (17).

Let us assume that in (15) and (17) - as in standard questions - (*à-*)*tu* and (*sié-*)*o* occupy IntForce^o, where they check the (strong) interrogative force feature.¹⁶ It then follows - within the framework of Checking Theory - that *chi/andé* have not moved, in these sentences, to the Spec of IntForce^o, since once checked, the IntForce feature cannot attract another element (nor does the V+cl sequence in IntForce^o).

Therefore, the fact that *chi* (and the other bare *wh*-phrases) must occupy the initial position leads to the conclusion that they raise to a different,

higher projection to the left of IntForceP, thereby supporting M&O's earlier assumption concerning the higher location of the projection hosting *cossa*. Compared to the derivation of the standard question *A-tu invidà chi?*, the derivation of (15) *Chi à-tu invidà?!*, then, involves an additional step, leading from (22a) to (22b), where SurprP is the projection hosting the *wh*-phrase in surprise/disapproval questions (I use the label SurprP for purely mnemonic reasons).

(22) a. $[_{\text{IForceP}} [\hat{a}_n + [_{\text{IForce}} \text{tu}]] [_{\text{GP}} [_{\text{IP}} \text{t}_n \text{invidà t}_k]]_m \text{G}^\circ [_{\text{OpP}} \text{chi}_k \text{Op}^\circ [_{\text{TopP}} \text{pro}_i \text{Top}^\circ \text{t}_m]]]]$

wh-movement to SurprP:

b. $[_{\text{SurprP}} \text{chi}_k \text{Surpr}^\circ [_{\text{IForceP}} [\hat{a}_n + [_{\text{IForce}} \text{tu}]] [_{\text{GP}} [_{\text{IP}} \text{t}_n \text{invidà t}_k]]_m \text{G}^\circ [_{\text{OpP}} \text{t}_k \text{Op}^\circ [_{\text{TopP}} \text{pro}_i \text{Top}^\circ \text{t}_m]]]]]]$

The “attracting” feature, then, as well as its checking counterpart on the *wh*-phrase, is a feature that relates to differentiating the “surprise/disapproval” interpretation from the standard question interpretation. In other words, I take it to correspond to a component element of the “special”, i.e., more complex, interpretation associated with surprise questions. Informally, we may assume for now that the interpretive equivalent of this feature is “added” as the “surprise component” to the standard question meaning (I will come back to this question below).

Examples like (15) and (17) at once raise a question which did not arise in the immediate context of (9) and (10): since bare *wh*-phrases like *chi* and *andé* are able to, and must, raise in Pagotto surprise questions (and exclamatives), can this raising also be observed in the case of interrogative *che*? In other words, alongside the examples containing *cossa*, do there exist counterparts with initial *che* in the place of *cossa*? The answer is negative; only *cossa* is possible here:

(23) **Che avé-o magnà?!?*
what have-cl eaten

(24) *Cossa avé-o magnà?!?*
what have-cl eaten
'What have you eaten?!'

Though *che* and the other bare *wh*-elements display a uniform behavior in standard interrogatives, there is a split with respect to their ability to raise in surprise questions. Visibly, *che* is “replaced” by *cozza* because it cannot raise to the higher position required in surprise questions, an inability expressed naturally within Checking Theory by the assumption that *che* cannot bear the feature responsible for “attraction” to the higher Spec, while *cozza* can bear the feature and raise correspondingly (see M&O for discussion of the *che* - *cozza* contrast), just as *chi* and *andé* can bear the feature, and raise. Notice that *che* seems not to be incompatible as such with the surprise type interpretation, since it can appear in *wh*-doubling constructions (cf. notes 9 and 11, above).

Another relevant feature of surprise questions is illustrated in the following example:

- (25) *Cossa va-tu a comprar n'altro giornal?!*
 what go-cl to buy another newspaper
 ‘There is no need for you to buy another newspaper.’

(25) shares the interpretation of its close counterpart (12a) *?Cossa compratu n'altro giornal?!*, though it differs from (12a) in that it contains the verbal form *va* (infinitive *'ndar* ‘go’). This verb is used here in a modal-like function, viz., as a modal auxiliary not having the motion reading (a use also present in other dialects, among which Paduan; cf. M&O, note 8). *Va/'ndar* can appear in surprise questions without contributing a particular meaning; see the following section for further discussion.¹⁷

To summarize, the Pagotto surprise questions examined so far represent a sentence type of their own. They convey a specific semantic value which in fact weakens their status as requests for information; at the same time they are clearly distinguished syntactically from standard interrogatives by having their bare *wh*-phrase obligatorily in initial position, in fact, in the Spec of a specialized functional projection higher than IntForceP which, for mnemonic reasons, I call SurprP.¹⁸ Surprise questions are also formally distinguished from *wh*-exclamatives in that they do not contain a complementizer, and exhibit enclitic pronominal subjects.

3.2. Alternative checking in surprise questions

The preceding section established that Pagotto surprise questions have a distinctive structural property: a specific projection in the left periphery higher than (i.e. to the left of) IntForceP, the force projection of standard interrogatives, must be activated. In the examples considered above, this projection, SurprP, is activated by a *wh*-phrase (which can also be, irrelevantly to this discussion, a nonbare *wh*-phrase). However, this is not the only way SurprP can be activated in Pagotto.

In M&O, it is noted as “interesting” that the surprise reading can be facilitated, in certain cases, by the insertion of modal-like predicates such as ‘need’ or ‘go’ (examples of this type were seen above, in (12b) and (25), respectively), and that such predicates might be connected in some way to the head of the projection I call SurprP here. More strikingly, the following example is noted as being able to have a surprise question interpretation:

- (26) *Va-lo a invidar chi?! (= M&O’s (57b))*
VA-cl to invite whom
‘Whom on earth does he (intend to) invite?!’

According to M&O, “[26] expresses the speaker’s disapproval towards the subject’s decision/intention to invite a specific person”. In fact, if the “?!” punctuation is disregarded, the sentence is ambiguous between a surprise reading like that indicated in (26) and a standard question interpretation; crucially, under the surprise reading, *va* has no movement interpretation (i.e., it functions in modal-like fashion), while under the true question interpretation, *va* contributes a movement reading: ‘Who are you going to invite?’ (with ‘go’ interpreted in the literal movement sense).¹⁹ The (surprise) interpretation of (26) is the same as that of (27).

- (27) *Chi invide-lo?!*
who invites-cl
‘Who does he invite?!’

An analogous example is given in (28), and its analog with the *wh*-phrase in initial position in (29). As in (18), I use *VA* in the gloss to signal the presence of the modal auxiliary, as opposed to the homophonous verb of motion; like in the case of (26), the true question with movement

interpretation has the same form (notice that initial *come* has no accent on its second syllable).

(28) *Va-lo a vestirse comé?!
 VA-cl to dress-refl how
 ‘How on earth is he dressing?!’*

(29) *Come se vestise-lo?!
 how refl dress-cl*

The striking fact in (26) and (28), then, is that the surprise reading can be available with the *wh*-phrase occupying a low position, i.e. [Spec, OpP]. The V *‘ndàr* in its modal use - and only in this use - can license this type of interpretation; it also seems to be the only element with this ability.

The phenomenon illustrated in (26) and (28), then, turns out to be parallel, at the SurprP level, to the one discussed by Pollock, Munaro and Poletto at the IntForceP level. Moreover, its existence suggests that the function of (different types of) *wh*-movement can be taken over by certain other elements perhaps even more generally than shown until now.²⁰ In the minimalist framework of Checking Theory, it is adequate to call such elements “alternative checkers”, since they substitute for *wh*-phrases with respect to their checking function.

For the sake of concreteness, let us assume for (26) the partial derivation in (30), where (30f) illustrates the process of alternative checking.

- (30) input: [IP *va a invidar chi*]
- a. merge *lo* and license *pro* in SpecTop:
 [TopP *pro* [Top° *lo*] [IP *va a invidar chi*]]
 - b. I° to Top°:
 [TopP *pro* [Top° *va_p lo*] [IP *t_p a invidar chi*]]
 - c. *wh*-movement to OpP:
 [OpP *chi_k* Op° [TopP *pro_i* [Top° *va_p lo*] [IP *t_p a invidar t_k*]]]
 - d. remnant IP movement to GP:
 [GP [IP *t_p a invidar t_k*]_m G° [OpP *chi_k* Op° [TopP *pro_i* [Top° *va_p lo*] *t_m*]]]
 - e. (*va+*) *lo* to IForce° :

$$[\text{IForceP } [\text{IForce}^\circ [\text{va}_p + \text{lo}]_q] [\text{GP } [\text{IP } t_p \text{ a invidar } t_k]_m \text{ G}^\circ [\text{OpP } \text{chi}_k \text{ Op}^\circ [\text{TopP } \text{pro}_i [\text{Top}^\circ t_q] t_m]]]]$$

f. *va (+lo)* to Surpr° :

$$[\text{SurprP}^\circ [\text{IForce}^\circ [\text{va}_p + \text{lo}]_q]_o [\text{IForceP } t_o [\text{GP } [\text{IP } t_p \text{ a invidar } t_k]_m \text{ G}^\circ [\text{OpP } \text{chi}_k \text{ Op}^\circ [\text{TopP } \text{pro}_i [\text{Top}^\circ t_q] t_m]]]]$$

To summarize, there is a variant of the lexical verb *'ndàr*, with an impoverished semantics, that can bear the surprise feature, contrary to the full lexical verb *'ndàr*, and thus check the corresponding feature of the functional head Surpr° . In order to do so, this variant *'ndàr* must “win the competition” with the *wh*-phrase present in $[\text{Spec}, \text{OpP}]$, which is also a potential checker of the surprise feature; indeed, as shown in (30e), *va* c-commands the *wh*-phrase and therefore satisfies locality and raises to Surpr° .²¹

The alternative checker *va* seen in (26) and (28) is a “specialized”, or one-purpose, element, in the sense that it takes on the role of the *wh*-phrase with respect to one particular step of the derivation, namely, attraction by and checking of the feature of Surpr° (the *wh*-phrase, in comparison, is a multi-purpose element, for being able, in principle, of taking charge of more than one step). The alternative checker of Surpr° is a verbal form, while the alternative checker of IntForce° is a (pro-)nominal form.

3.3. *Che* in surprise questions

Alternative checking of the surprise feature by the modal auxiliary *va*, then, allows Pagotto to dispense with the particular type of movement typically required for bare *wh*-phrases in surprise questions. This seems to warrant the expectation that, like the bare *wh*-elements *chi*, *comé* appearing in (26), (28), *che* as well can appear in surprise questions introduced by *va*. Indeed, the only requirement for bare *wh*-phrases in such environments seems to be that they raise to OpP which, as shown by (10), is indeed a suitable position for *che*.

For the sake of discussion, let us suppose, for the moment, that *che* cannot appear in this environment. This would be captured by the descriptive generalization that the split observed in (23) vs. (15) and (17), between *che* on the one hand and the remaining bare *wh*-elements on the other, concerns not only their respective raising possibilities, but extends to the appearance in surprise questions introduced by the alternative checker

va / *'ndar*. One would be led then to look for a common source of this double contrast. Above I suggested that *che* cannot raise in surprise questions because it is unable to bear the relevant [+surpr] feature; such a property should plausibly be related to the internal morphological structure of *che*, which should lack some element present in *chi* and *andé*. On the other hand, absence of the feature would not seem, as such, to account for nonoccurrence of *che* in *va*-introduced surprise questions if, as I assume, the modal auxiliary functions as checker of the Surpr^o head: *va* bears the [+surpr] feature which represents the surprise component and might be expected to “combine with” *che* as it does with *chi*, for example.

Che might, in such a case, not only be unable to raise to [Spec, SurprP], but be incompatible, in some way, with the surprise interpretation type.²² Another possibility is that *che* is in fact potentially compatible with this type of interpretation, and that contrary to the case of *cossa*, *chi*, *andé*, etc., *va* cannot compensate the structural weakness of *che*.

Let us consider, now, the relevant data. The surprise question in (31) is the alternative checker version of (32); both are equally acceptable with the meaning that the speaker, who is hearing a conversation between speakers A and B, expresses his disapproval concerning what A is telling B.

- (31) *Va-tu a contarghe che?!
va-cl to tell-him what
'What are you telling him?!'*
- (32) *Cossa ghe conti-tu?!
what him tell-cl
'What are you telling him?!'*

(If the punctuation is disregarded, (31) can alternatively be interpreted as standard question, with a movement reading of *va*). While data like (31) suggest that the alternative checking strategy applies as successfully with *che* as with other bare *wh*-phrases, this is not generally the case, as shown by (33), which should be synonymous with (34).

- (33) *??Va-lo a magnar che?!
'What does he eat?!'*
- (34) *Cossa magne-lo?!
'What does he eat?!'*

I presently ignore the reasons why (31) and (33) contrast in this way. Nicola Munaro points out (personal communication) that (33) is fully acceptable only with the movement (nonmodal) interpretation of *va*, contrary to (35), where *va* can have one or the other interpretation.

(35) *Cossa va-lo a magnar?!*

It seems, then, that in a certain number of cases involving argumental *che*, the movement interpretation is the only one fully available, due to some factor yet to be discovered, and which I will leave aside in what follows.

The question whether the alternative checker *va* can license the appearance of *che* also arises with respect to the nonargumental use of ‘what’. There exist clear cases of grammatical analogues of surprise questions containing ‘why’-like *cossa*; (36) is the synonymous counterpart of (12a) *?Cossa compre-tu n’altro giornal?!*²³

(36) *Va-tu a comprar n’altro giornal che?!*
go-cl to buy another newspaper what
‘Why do you buy another newspaper?!’

In principle, then, the defective element *che* participates, like the other bare *wh*-phrases, in the construction of surprise questions containing the alternative checker *ndar*, which demonstrates that *che* is compatible with the surprise interpretation.²⁴

3.4. The construal of interpretation in surprise questions

Surprise (/disapproval) questions, I have shown, are “special” questions in that their interpretation is more complex than that of standard questions. The strategy of alternative checking in such structures is particularly revealing with respect to the construal of this interpretation.

Cases like (15) and (17), with “high *wh*-movement” to [Spec, SurprP], are noteworthy from the point of view of Pagotto interrogative syntax, in that they show a formal difference with standard interrogative structures; they are not particular from the point of view of languages where *wh*-movement to a sentence initial position is a regular part of standard question formation. Structures with alternative checking, however, allow a more direct understanding of the way the interpretation of such “special

questions” is construed, since they seem to let us observe directly its complex character. The interpretation of surprise questions containing an alternative checker, it turns out, is arrived at compositionally through the combination of the following elements, syntactically dissociable from each other (see section 6, last but one paragraph, below, concerning the notion “interrogative force”):

- (a) the *wh*-meaning (quantifier and restriction in [Spec, OpP]);
- (b) interrogative force (by means of the [-assertive] clitic);
- (c) the surprise “modality” (by means of the modal-like verb’s checking the surprise feature).

In other words, what is intuitively felt to be a more complex reading of (the *wh*-phrase in) a surprise question is shown to indeed involve a more complex derivation in syntax, in fact a step-by-step procedure adding together different individually “visible” semantic elements that contribute to making up the complex reading. The case of the alternative checker allows us to “see” this process in a way the more canonical case of the raising *wh*-phrase does not.

On the other hand, in the “standard” case of surprise questions - cf. *Chi à-tu invidà?!*, *Cossa sé-tu drìo magnar?!*, the *wh*-element supplies (c) as well as (a), that is, it performs two functions which are carried out by separate elements in the alternative checking case (cf. the characterization of the *wh*-phrase as a “multi-purpose” element in section 3.2, above). The fact that a higher, specialized position is involved is more clearly visible in surprise questions with an initial *wh*-phrase, on the basis of the contrast with standard questions.

To summarize this section, Pagotto syntactically distinguishes a particular type of questions, namely, surprise questions, from standard questions, a case which demonstrates a special meaning not “simply added” to standard questions by linguistic context or/and extralinguistic situation, but encoded - in ways which remain to be understood precisely - in terms of the hierarchic structure of the left periphery.

4. Rhetorical questions in Pagotto

4.1. General properties

Let us turn now to another type of “special” interrogative, namely, “rhetorical” questions. The term is understood here in a narrow sense, that is, as referring to those questions whose interpretation is taken to convey, rather than a request for the value(s) of a variable, a sort of assertion that no corresponding value exists (a characterization of rhetorical questions along these lines is suggested in, for example, Quirk et alii (1985)). Consider the following example in English, a language with almost exceptionless obligatory *wh*-movement to initial position.²⁵ A sentence like (37) is ambiguous between the two readings just mentioned.

(37) Who can you trust, nowadays?

- (38) a. what x , x a human [you can trust x , nowadays]
b. no x , x a human [you can trust x , nowadays]

(38a) is an intuitive characterization of the “true question” interpretation of (37), and (38b), of its rhetorical question interpretation.

As noted in the Introduction, above, this construction is one of those shown in Obenauer (1994) to display particular syntactic behaviour in terms of “obligatory early movement” in French (and in terms of the associated restrictions on Pied-Piping, also visible in English, for example). As also mentioned above, “obligatory early movement” is naturally reinterpreted as movement to a landing site higher than that of (“in-situ” and) standard interrogatives.

In this perspective - and putting aside, momentarily, the question of the precise landing site of the *wh*-phrase -, we can formulate, a priori, certain expectations about rhetorical questions in Pagotto. Plausibly, the correlation between “special” interpretation and higher movement imposed by the obligatory checking of a higher feature should hold here too, if it is indeed generally valid at least in the Romance languages (and English and German). Consequently, the paradigm of rhetorical questions in Pagotto should be parallel to that of surprise/disapproval questions in at least the following two respects:

- (a) bare *wh*-phrases should be excluded from sentence internal position, and obligatorily occur in initial position;
- (b) *che* should be excluded from rhetorical questions and obligatorily replaced by *cossa*, on the grounds that *che* cannot raise beyond [Spec,OpP].²⁶

(I will return to the question of alternative checking below). Both expectations are borne out, as I will show in what follows.

Let us begin with the *che* - *cossa* alternation. (39) shows the occurrence of *cossa* in a well-formed rhetorical question (from now on, RQ); (40a) shows the impossibility of rhetorical interpretation when the *wh*-phrase is in sentence internal position, and (40b) *che*'s inability to raise to initial position.

(39) *Cossa à-lo fat par ti?*
 what has-cl done for you
 'What has he done for you?'

(40) a. **A'-lo fat che par ti?* [qua RQ]
 has-cl done what for you
 b. **Che à-lo fat par ti?*

(40a) would, of course, be acceptable as a standard question. An analogous contrast can be observed in the case of *che* interpreted as selected complement of verbs like *costar* 'cost'; (41) and (42) are taken from M&O (1999).²⁷

(41) *(Ghe) coste-lo che?*
 to-him costs-cl what
 'What / how much does it cost (him) ?'

(42) *Cossa ghe coste-lo iutàrli?*
 'What does it cost him to help them?'

(41) is (exclusively) interpretable as a true question; the RQ reading of (42) - according to which the person referred to easily could, but does not, help 'them' - is only possible under raising of the *wh*-phrase to initial position, which requires *cossa*, as expected.²⁸

Raising to initial position is also required for the other bare *wh*-phrases:

(43) *Chi à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?*

- who has-cl helped in all these years
 ‘Who(m) has he helped in all these years?’
 (44) **A’-lo iutà chi in tuti sti ani?* [qua RQ]
 has-cl helped who in all these years

Similarly, (45) has a rhetorical interpretation implying that ‘he’ has never eaten potatoes.

- (45) *Quando à-lo magnà patate?*
 when has-cl eaten potatoes
 ‘When has he eaten potatoes?’

4.2. Rhetorical ‘want’ as an embedding predicate

A well-known phenomenon found across the Romance area brings into play the equivalent of the English verb *want* (Italian *volere*, Spanish *querer*, Catalan *voler*, etc.). Let us consider this phenomenon in Pagotto and examine it from the viewpoint of the present article.

A sentence like (46), with the Pagotto equivalent of ‘want’, *oler*, can be interpreted literally, namely, as a standard question (notice that the *wh*-phrase *che* appears in sentence internal position, as usual, but here originates in an embedded sentence; hence it raises to Spec,OpP of the matrix sentence, and this movement is followed by Remnant IP movement).

- (46) *U-tu che fae che?*
 want-cl that do_{subjunctive} what
 ‘What do you want me to do?’

This case, largely parallel to English if one disregards the position of the *wh*-phrase, is irrelevant to what follows, and I will not come back to it. What interests me, however, is the “Romance phenomenon”, namely the fact that *oler*, as a matrix predicate, is very commonly used to signal a rhetorical meaning of *wh*-questions. As a case in point, consider (47).²⁹

- (47) *?Cossa u-tu che fae?*
 what want-cl that do_{subjunctive}

It is difficult to give an English translation of (47) (while the literal translation into any Romance language is perfect). Contrary to the case of the TQ in (46), *oler/u* no longer has the volition meaning. An approximate paraphrase is ‘I can’t do anything (even if you think different)’, or possibly (rhetorical) ‘How can I help it?’ (this equivalent is suggested by Grand Harrap (1972, 14th printing 1986) for the French version *Que veux-tu que j’y fasse?* what want-you that I to-it do_{subjunctive}).

(47) is, in fact, ambiguous; its second - again rhetorical - interpretation, typically available in contexts where the RQ is uttered as a reply to a preceding TQ, conveys the idea that the value of the variable, instead of being inexistent, is obvious, which, in turn, entails that the question does not make sense: this meaning, then, denies the appropriateness of the question. Let us keep to the following two paraphrases for (47):

- (48) a. There is nothing I can do (contrary to what you seem to be thinking).
 b. What I do is obvious (and your question has no *raison d’être*).

I will skip the interesting question how the two meanings are obtained (and how they are related to each other), and concentrate on a formal property of the verb *oler*. The property in question is strikingly reminiscent of that of *ndar* as illustrated above in, among other examples, (31), repeated here as (49).

- (49) *Va-tu a contarghe che?!*
 ‘What are you telling him?!’

In this surprise/disapproval question, a synonym of *Cossa ghe conti-tu?!* (= (32), above), *va* was seen to function as an alternative checker allowing the sentence-internal occurrence of *che*, otherwise excluded in this type of sentence. As for *oler*, it can likewise function as an alternative checker (AC), allowing the analogous occurrence of *che* in the AC counterpart of (47):³⁰

- (50) *U-tu che fae che?*
 want-cl that do_{subjunctive} what

AC might be lacking by accident or for principled reasons. I have presently no answer to this question.

4.3. The position of rhetorical elements in the left periphery

Let us now raise the question of the landing site of “rhetorical” *wh*-elements. A reasoning analogous to that of section 4, above, leads to the conclusion that their movement, in contrast with the “in situ” occurrence observed in standard questions, must be due to the presence of a feature which cannot be checked by the [-assertive] subject clitic. As in the case of surprise questions, I will assume that the initial position in which a *wh*-phrase appears in a RQ is different from [Spec,IntForceP] (and from [Spec,SurprP]). As pointed out above, in the case of surprise questions, the argument was theory internal, namely, related to the theory of feature distribution in FPs. Interestingly, in the case of RQs, there is, in addition, direct evidence showing that the *wh*-phrase occupies a position “of its own”, different from both the other positions. The data involve the preverbal subject DP which, in rhetorical questions, can - to a certain extent - occur in a position between the initial *wh*-phrase and the tensed verb; cf. (55), (56). It must be noted that in the presence of a subject DP, the *wh*-phrase needs to be stressed; the judgments for (55) and (56) presuppose this stress.³³

- (55) a. ??*Chi Mario à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?*
 b. ?*Chi mai Mario à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?*
 ‘Who(m) (ever) has Mario helped in all these years?’
- (56) *Quando Mario à-lo magnà patate?*
 ‘When has Mario eaten potatoes?’

Pagotto shares the possibility of the intervening subject DP with standard Italian, where, as shown in Obenauer and Poletto (to appear), rhetorical *wh*-phrases containing *mai* raise to a higher projection/Spec; they “land” to the left of the preverbal subject (among other elements), while the *wh*-phrases of standard questions land to its right. Such data suggest that “special” *wh*-phrases indeed move to different FPs, as expected under the theory of feature distribution on FPs assumed here; the theory is supported

since it offers a principled reason for the observed raising beyond IntForceP.

As anticipated above, surprise questions do not exhibit the property shown in the rhetorical questions (55) and (56), even with stress on the *wh*-phrase:

- (57) **Chi Mario à-lo invidà?!?*
'Who(m) has Mario invited?!'
(58) **Come Mario se vestise-lo?!?*
'How does Mario dress?!'

While the nature of the stress requirement remains to be understood, the contrast between the two question types is clear. It follows that the position of the *wh*-phrase in RQs is located higher in the structure than the position of the *wh*-phrase in surprise/disapproval questions, structurally distinguishing the two types from each other.

One would like, then, to find direct evidence of a kind comparable to (55), (56) showing SurprP to be indeed located higher than IntForceP; as already mentioned, I have not found so far an element able to intervene to the right of the *wh*-phrase in this construction, which obviously does not go against the analysis.

Given the interpretive similarity of the *wh*-phrases in “simple” RQs and in the “rhetorical” ‘want’-construction, the null hypothesis leads me to assuming that the *wh*-phrase raises in both constructions to the same level; I will call this level, again for mnemonic reasons, [Spec,RhetP]. In ways analogous to *va/ndar* in surprise questions, “devolitized” *u/oler* can raise to the head Rhet^o to check the feature I will call [+rhet].

5. “I-can’t-find-the-value-of-x” questions

There is another type of “special question” which so far has not been generally recognized as such. This type corresponds closely to *diable* interrogatives in French as discussed in Obenauer (1994); on the same grounds as in the case of rhetorical questions (*diable* interrogatives exhibit “obligatory early movement”, among other things), we are led to expect that in Pagotto, this construction exhibits the typical paradigm associated with “higher raising” of the *wh*-phrase, namely:

- (a) bare *wh*-phrases should obligatorily occur in initial position;

(b) *che* should be excluded from rhetorical questions and “replaced” by *cozza*.

Furthermore, examining the Pagotto data will lead me to distinguishing two subtypes which, to the best of my knowledge, have not been mentioned so far in the literature on *wh*-interrogatives.

I will illustrate the construction by comparing it to standard questions. Consider the standard question (59) and the parallel “I-can’t-find-the-value-of-*x*” question (60).

(59) *L’ à- tu catà andé?*
cl have-cl found where
‘Where did you find it?’

(60) *Andé l’ à- tu catà?*
where cl have-cl found
‘Where (the hell) did you find it?’

While (59) is a standard request for information (i.e., for the value(s) of the variable), typically addressed to a hearer, (60), with the *wh*-phrase in initial position, is a similar request by which, in addition, the speaker expresses the fact that despite his attempt to do so, he cannot think of a place where the object in question could have been found by his interlocutor. In other words, the speaker expresses that he is unable to come up with a (plausible, acceptable) value, though he has tried to find one (or more). The added element in the English translation of (60), *the hell*, must accordingly be taken with this precise reading (since it also allows other readings; cf. note 7, above); the Italian equivalent of (60) uses *diavolo* ‘(the) devil’: *Dove diavolo l’hai trovato?* The particular interpretation of (60) is excluded for (59), with *andé* in [Spec,Op]. Similarly, (62) adds to the request for information present in the standard question (61) the information that the speaker has tried in vain to imagine the addressee’s way of acting.

(61) *A’- tu fat comé?*
have-cl done how
‘How did you do it?’

(62) *Come à-tu fat?*
how have-cl done

‘How (the hell) did you do it?’

Consider now the equivalents of (60) and (62) with third person subjects, namely, (63) and (64).

(63) *Andé l’-lo catà?*
‘Where (the hell) did he find it?’

(64) *Come -lo fat?*
‘How (the hell) did he do it?’

Like their counterparts (60) and (62), (63) and (64) can be interpreted as requests for the value(s) of the variable, again with the cfv interpretation, but a different use is also possible, that is, as a way of “thinking aloud” and putting the question to oneself rather than to an interlocutor. In this use, obviously incompatible with a second person sentential subject (unless the addressee is only imagined), the future perfect is, however, strongly preferred to the perfect (that is, a -realis tense is preferred to a +realis one);³⁴ (65) and (66) are the perfectly acceptable self-addressed analogues of (63)-(64):

(65) *Andé l’avarà- lo catà?*
where cl-will-have-cl found
(66) *Come avarà- lo fat?*
how will-have-cl done

The second expected property of I-can’t-find-the-value-of-x questions also shows up as expected: sentence internal *che* is “replaced” by initial *cossa*:

(67) *A’-lo fat che, par meritarse sto onor?*
has-cl done what for deserve this honor
‘What has he done to deserve such honors?’
(68) *Cossa -lo fat, par meritarse sto onor?*
‘What (the hell) has he done to deserve such honors?’
(addressed to another person)
(69) *Cossa avarà-lo fat, par meritarse sto onor?*
(analogous self-addressed question)

Instead of via the use of a -realis form, self-addressed questions can alternatively be marked as such by the particle-like element *ti* (etymologically the second person singular tonic pronoun), as in (70).

- (70) a. *Andé l' à-lo catà, ti?* (synonymous with (65))
 b. *Come à-lo fat, ti?* (synonymous with (66))
 c. *Cossa à-lo fat, ti, par meritarse sto onor?*
 (synonymous with (69))

While *ti* suffices to mark sentences as self-addressed questions, it is compatible with the presence of a -realis form, i.e., (65), (66), (69) could have *ti*.

Summarizing so far, “I-can’t-find-the-value-of-x” questions (cfvQs, from now on), used by the speaker to express that he has tried in vain to answer his question, can be addressed to another person - as a variety of “true questions” - or to oneself. A question of this type cannot be used “out of the blue”; the speaker has already checked the domain and, in case he came upon a possible value, rejected it as inadequate (Obenauer 1994, 305; 310).³⁵

Contrary to the picture given so far, and abstracting away from *ti*, self-addressed questions are not uniformly marked by the future (perfect), and thus formally opposed to cfv-questions addressed to a hearer. There exist self-addressed questions which have a +realis tense - the present, for example. This is the case in (71),³⁶ which has the standard question counterpart (72):

- (71) *Cossa se ciàme-lo?*
 what refl calls-cl
 ‘What (the hell) is his name?’
 (72) *Se ciàme-lo che?*
 ‘What’s his name?’

(71) expresses “the fact that, despite his efforts, [the speaker] does not manage to remember the name of the person referred to” (M&O 1999, 199). What opposes (71) to (65), (66), (69) seems to be the speaker’s view of the question situation: in the case of (71), given his - for the moment inaccessible - knowledge, the speaker is sure about the values of the variable he rejects and tries to retrieve the “good” one(s), while there is an uncertainty inherent in the other cases. In slightly different terms, the

speaker tries to reestablish what to him is a fact in the case of (71), while in (65), (66), (69) he must choose among possibilities on the grounds of their respective plausibility. The modal value of the -realis verb form expresses this uncertainty.

Does there also exist an alternative checker for cfvQs, allowing the bare *wh*-phrase to appear “in situ”? There is indeed such an element, though the case is partially different from that of surprise questions and rhetorical questions. The element *ti*, already found in (70), where it cooccurs with initial *wh*-phrases, can also license their sentence internal appearance in cfvQs, as in (73) and (74).

- (73) a. *L'â-lo catà andé, ti?* (synonymous with (70a))
L'avarâ-lo catà andé, ti? (synonymous with (70a))
 b. *A'-lo fat comé, ti?* (synonymous with (70b))
Avarâ-lo fat comé, ti? (synonymous with (70b))
- (74) *Se ciâme-lo che, ti?* (synonymous with (71))

I am thus led to assuming that the presence of *ti* results in checking the feature of the high projection - let me call it cfvP - activated in cfvQs. Since linearly, contrary to the other ACs, *ti* is not in initial position, the most direct way of obtaining this result is (first or second) merging of the particle in cfvP, followed by movement to the left of the material preceding *ti*. I will assume this to be the correct approach³⁷ and leave aside here the question of the precise derivation.

While *ti* is compatible with both “uncertainty” and “forgotten knowledge” cfvQs - i.e. with all self-addressed cfvQs (cf. (73) and (74)), it is banned from cfvQs requesting information from an interlocutor, as shown by (75).³⁸ This strongly suggests that “self-addressed” is an appropriate characterization of a subtype of cfvQs.

- (75) a. **L'â-tu catà andé, ti?*
 b. **A-tu fat comé, ti?*

On the other hand, the use of *diable/diavolo* (less ambiguous than *the hell* – see note 7) in both subtypes in French and Italian supports the idea that cfvQs represent one type of special question.

Let us turn to the question of the relative height of cfvP in the left periphery. The same test as in the case of surprise and rhetorical questions - appearance of a DP subject to the right of the *wh*-phrase - leads to

unacceptability in (76b), even with stress on the *wh*-phrase as in the analogous RQ example (56).

- (76) a. *Quando l'è- lo scrit?*
when cl has it written
'When did he write it? I can't remember.'
- b. **Quando Mario l'è-lo scrit?*
'When did Mario write it? I can't remember.'

The contrast between (76) and (56) indicates that in cfvQs, like in SDQs, the *wh*-phrase raises to a lower Spec position than in RQs.³⁹ I have found so far no evidence discriminating the landing site from that of surprise/disapproval questions, and must leave open the question which is higher; the fact that cfvQs are still genuine questions suggests that cfvP may be closer to IntForceP, and thus lower than SurprP.

To summarize, under the analysis developed above, the three types of special questions I have identified in sections 3, 4 and this section are derivationally different from standard questions. They also differ from each other, namely, with respect to (at least)⁴⁰ their respective highest projection, i.e., the one hosting the *wh*-phrase (in the absence of an AC) or the AC. It follows that *wh*-in-situ, in the special question types which display it,⁴¹ is not (entirely) the same phenomenon as in standard questions. Strictly speaking, there are four different cases of *wh*-in-situ, involving different features (that is, top projections) and ACs.

According to my analysis, the derivation of special questions also involves a part they have in common with standard questions, and which includes checking of the level here called IntForceP. While explicitly present in the proposed derivations, this claim has so far been motivated only implicitly by "simplicity" in a mechanical sense - it seems convenient to add the higher landing sites "on top of" the structures derived in standard questions. I will, however, return to this claim in the following section and motivate it more strongly.

6. The relation between standard and special questions in the light of microvariation in Romance

Given that the rhetorical ‘want’-construction is also used in other Romance languages and that, more specifically, there is no semantic difference between (77) and (78):

- (77) *U-tu che 'l sia 'ndat andé?* (= (52))(Pagotto)
want-cl that cl be_{subjunctive} gone where
‘He couldn’t have gone anywhere.’ [“no x” reading]
‘There can be no doubt where he has gone.’ [“obvious x” reading]
- (78) *Dove vuoi che sia andato?* (Italian)

I will assume that *volere* in the Italian construction is semantically bleached in the same way as Pagotto *oler* in (77). Assuming further that this bleaching (hence, modal-like behaviour) and functioning as an alternative checker are tightly related, it is plausible that *volere* is a potential AC just like *oler*, although the direct counterpart of (77) in Italian, (79), is not possible:

- (79) **Vuoi che sia andato dove?*

Analogously, **¿Quieres que haya ido adónde?*, with *querer* presumably a (potential) AC is impossible in Spanish (vs. OK *¿Adónde quieres que haya ido?*), and the same holds for the Catalan counterparts containing *voler*. How can these contrasts be explained?

I will call “Strong Identity Hypothesis” the assumption that the different instances of devolitized ‘want’ in these languages are not only semantically identical, but also with respect to their checking ability. Given the Strong Identity Hypothesis, a descriptive generalization concerning contrasts like those between (77) and (79) can be formulated as in (80):

- (80) “Devolitized” ‘want’ functions as an AC if (and only if) there exists an AC for standard interrogatives in the language.

Assuming (80), the contrast between Pagotto and the other Romance languages exemplified in (79) vs. (77) has nothing to do with devolitized ‘want’, which is a shared property and a (potential) AC in all of them;

rather, the contrast is part of the phenomenology linked to the existence of [-assertive] subject clitics of the Pagotto/ Bellunese type⁴² and reduces to their presence vs. the absence of analogous ACs in the languages considered.⁴³

Let us consider, for a moment, the possibility that the Strong Identity Hypothesis might be too strong, and envisage a weaker version. Under this weaker version, devolitized ‘want’ is, again, semantically the same across the languages in question, but it varies syntactically; in other words, the semantic bleaching of ‘want’ and its ability to check the RQ feature are (partially) disconnected from each other (thus, while an AC in Pagotto, ‘want’ might not be an AC in Italian and/or other languages).⁴⁴

I consider that this “weak version” must be rejected. Indeed, it imposes the assumption that it is by accident that devolitized ‘want’ is an AC precisely in Pagotto, which (also) displays an AC for standard questions, and that it is an AC only in this dialect, not in Spanish, Catalan, or Italian, for example. While an accident of this kind is not to be excluded in principle, it has little likelihood. I will come back to the question below and show further reasons that go against the “weak version”.

On the other hand, the Strong Identity Hypothesis, in fact the null hypothesis, is the kind of restrictive hypothesis that should be adopted, and which at the same time is in principle easily refutable: it could be shown wrong by any dialect/language which is like Pagotto in having an AC for IntForce (and thus, *wh*-in-situ in standard questions), but in which ‘want’-RQs require the *wh*-phrase in initial position. I will therefore keep to the hypothesis that Romance devolitized ‘want’ is uniformly an AC.

Let us return to (80) and note that the generalization provides a strong argument to the effect that a type of special questions - namely, ‘want’-RQs - requires checking of (the feature born by the head of) the projection here called IntForceP.⁴⁵ In fact, the generalization follows directly from the derivation I chose above - which is thereby strongly motivated - and the one-function property of ACs: IntForce^o must be checked, which cannot be carried out by the AC ‘want’, but by the nonassertive subject, after which ‘want’ checks Rhet^o. The first of the two steps is unavailable in languages like Italian, which prevents the *wh*-phrase from staying in the low position.

Notice now that an analog of the “Strong Identity Hypothesis” for the different instances of rhetorical ‘want’ can be formulated with respect to ‘go’, which is similarly used in Romance languages and dialects in SDQs. Again, only in Pagotto can ‘go’ function as an AC, enhancing the unlikelihood of a “weak version”, and leading to the conclusion, in ways

parallel to the case of ‘want’-RQs, that in SDQs IntForce must be activated. Very plausibly, in the case of the AC *ti* for cfvQs, an analogous conclusion can be reached, though this AC is not as generally present as the other two in Romance; but the relevant contrasts, involving Pagotto and other Northern Italian dialects, exist.

The last step of the argument consists in noting that since the [-assertive] clitic is also present in special questions not introduced by an AC, all special questions activate IntForceP in Pagotto and presumably in other languages too. IntForceP, then, probably is a name which is too restrictive (though, as said above, purely mnemonic) for a projection whose precise role remains to be determined within the compositional functioning of the sentence.

The result of this section, then, is twofold:

- a) the projection IntForce is used not only in standard, but also in special questions; in other words, the derivation of nonstandard questions “extends” that of standard questions;
- b) a unique parametric opposition accounts for the contrasts opposing three different special question constructions in Pagotto on the one hand and languages like Italian, Catalan and Spanish on the other, namely, the opposition anyhow required for the contrast involving standard questions, that is, the presence vs. absence of an AC of the type [-assertive] subject clitics.

7. Conclusion

Pagotto (and, largely, Bellunese more generally) have been shown to offer a remarkable window into the syntax of nonstandard *wh*-questions. The very visible contrasts between standard and special *wh*-questions lead to the conclusion that there exists syntactic encoding of nonstandard question meaning, i.e., that UG makes structural means available to this effect. This structural encoding uses individualized higher projections (in the sense “higher than the *wh*-landing site in standard questions”) as topmost functional layers of the syntactic representations.

While thus distinct, standard and nonstandard questions share an important part of their derivations, including the checking – and therefore, the presence – of the level “IntForce”. In other words, the derivation of nonstandard questions extends that of standard questions (string vacuously

in (simple cases in) languages with sentence initial *wh* in standard questions).

Pagotto displays another property hard to “see” in closely related languages, namely, the existence of alternative checkers, taking over the checking of certain features standardly checked by *wh*-phrases. Again, this is not an “exotic” property of the dialect; if my argumentation is correct, the Pagotto ACs have counterparts in other Romance languages, though they cannot have visible effects there due to the absence of the AC for “IntForce”. Furthermore, ACs should exist in other domains than those discussed here, an expectation which is confirmed.⁴⁶

On a more general level, the fact as such that UG syntactically distinguishes standard from nonstandard questions is already remarkable, since it might be imagined that nonstandard question interpretation is simply the result of the influence of context and/or situation (in the spirit of indirect speech act analysis). I have shown furthermore that the structural differences observed do not correspond to a simple, that is, binary, opposition between standard and nonstandard questions (though one might imagine such a system signalling “information questions” on the one hand and “everything else in the matter of questions” on the other). Rather, I have argued that there exist three types (at least) of nonstandard questions - surprise/ disapproval questions, rhetorical, and can’t-find-the-value questions, distinguished from standard questions, but also from each other.

As for the detailed structural encoding of nonstandard question meaning, its exploration is still at its beginnings. What seems to emerge at present is that the high landing sites argued for above do not represent the whole set of the projections used by UG to this effect; rather, depending on the type of nonstandard question, lower projections of the left periphery and possibly projections belonging to IP may also play a role in the compositional construal of this meaning.

Notes

1. This article has its origin in work conducted jointly with Nicola Munaro within the Joint Research Project No. 5337/8528 CNRS-CNR “Minimal elements of linguistic variation”, and reported below. A small part of the Pagotto data in the text are borrowed from published work and marked as such; as for the rest, I am grateful to Nicola Munaro for having accepted to be my informant for Pagotto over the last years (not a small task, of which the “new” data give a very incomplete picture), for his patience and generous help in different ways, including his subtle and careful comments about the data. I am indebted to Paola Benincà, Cassian Braconnier, Cecilia Poletto, Pino Longobardi, and Jean-Yves Pollock for discussion of different aspects of the article. Any errors are mine.
2. Following common practice, I will use the terms “interrogatives” and “questions” interchangeably, despite their not being synonymous. I use the term “standard questions” for what are also called “information questions”, that is, interrogatives having a reading requesting the value(s) of the variable bound by the *wh*-operator.
3. Recent research into the left peripheral structure of interrogatives in Romance has led to more detailed, though partially conflicting proposals as to the presence of certain projections, their respective ordering etc. I am building here on a framework of assumptions proposed - in part specifically in the light of data concerning Bellunese interrogatives - in Munaro, Poletto and Pollock 2002 (which the authors have modified in certain respects, in work in progress), for it allows what I consider a coherent first approach of the facts and questions to be discussed below.
4. In fact, Munaro et alii identify what I call OpP with Benincà and Poletto’s (forthcoming) NIP (New Information FocusP).
5. See Poletto (2000, chap. 5) and Munaro (2002) for analysis of the microvariation of these constructions in a number of Northern Italian dialects, with verb raising in the left periphery playing an important role.
6. Munaro, Poletto and Pollock assume that nonbare *wh*-phrases are banned from the “low” (sentence internal) position because it is a possible scope position only for bare *wh*-phrases.
7. Though it is noted sometimes that elements like *the hell* can express surprise (cf. Pesetsky (1987, 111), Lee (1996)). *The hell* is also compatible with other interpretations than surprise, like, for example, the rhetorical question interpretation of *Who the hell cares?* or the “value-not-found” interpretation of *Where the hell did I leave my keys?*

While not using the term “surprise”, Poletto (2000, 65) mentions an interpretation type that seems quite similar, namely, a (weakly) rhetorical one “not requir[ing] a true answer” and “convey[ing] the meaning of a reproach, an order, or the disappointment of the speaker to an action of the hearer”. More generally, Poletto explicitly proposes that different interpretation types of questions are correlated with different peripheral (i.e., CP) projections.

8. Though (strongly) rhetorical questions are sometimes set apart on semantic grounds only. In fact, they also have specific syntactic properties; cf. Obenauer (1994, ch. III), Lee (1996), Obenauer and Poletto (to appear), and section 4, below.
9. See also Munaro (1999, 24). As noted in Munaro and Obenauer (1999), in addition to appearing alone in the sentence, *cozza* can also “double” *che*; (i) is synonymous with the sentence in the text.

(i) *Cossa sé-tu drio magnar che?!*
 what are-cl behind eat what
 ‘What on earth are you eating?!’

While noting the cases of possible *wh*-doubling in the constructions examined here, I will leave the analysis of these sentences to further study.

10. A complementary distribution in the absolute sense in cases like (9) vs. (10), and in a more restricted sense (that is, with respect to position in the sentence) in *wh*-doubling cases like the one mentioned in the preceding note.
11. As in the case of argumental *cozza*, “*wh*-doubling” is possible, again with *che* in the sentence internal position; cf. (i)-(iii):
 - (i) *Cossa zighe-tu che?!*
 - (ii) *Cossa compre-tu n’altro giornal che?!*
 - (iii) *Cossa ocore-lo comprar / che te-compre n’altro giornal che?!*
12. The usage of (the analogue of) *what* with a ‘why’-like interpretation of the surprise type is not an isolated property of Pagotto, but pervasive in languages of widely different origin and type (though excluded in English, for example). Languages exhibiting ‘why’-like ‘what’ include German and French (for which see Munaro and Obenauer 1999), Russian, Japanese and Chinese. What determines the (un)availability of ‘why’-like ‘what’ in a given language is yet an open question.
13. M&O suggest that the “degree” of surprise / disapproval conveyed is correlated with intonation.
14. There is no exclamative counterpart of ‘why’-like *cozza*, and therefore no exclamative structures corresponding to the surprise questions in (11), (12).
15. In fact, with respect to the presence vs. absence of inversion; the two types of *wh*-initial structures differ insofar as the respective height of the *wh*-phrases is concerned; cf. Munaro and Obenauer (1999).
16. I will come back below to the nature of this feature and show that it should not be considered as interrogative force feature, but as a feature corresponding

to a weaker “force” (see the last but one paragraph of section 6). For now, nothing hinges on this modification.

17. Wh-doubling is possible in the presence of “modal” *va*, as shown in (i).
(i) *Cossa va-tu a comprà n’altro giornàl che?!*
18. The higher location of SurprP could be demonstrated directly if it could be shown that certain types of lexical material can be inserted between the *wh*-phrase and the V-clitic complex in surprise questions, but not in standard questions. For the time being, I am not aware of such a possibility. See, however, a case of possible insertion in another type of question, below.
19. Nicola Munaro informs me (personal communication) that, while he finds (26) acceptable, he in fact prefers its analog with the past form of *va*, which he judges more natural; cf. (i); the same remark applies to (28).

(i) *E-lo ‘ndat a invidàr chi?!*
is-cl VA+past participle to invite who
‘Who on earth has he invited?!’
20. It will be seen below that this conjecture is actually borne out.
21. The well-formedness of (i) in note 19 raises a problem for the formulation of the alternative checking account adopted here, in that the “true checker” of the surprise feature is the modal auxiliary, which raises to Surpr^o in (26) and (28), while the participial form ‘*ndat*’ does not so in (i); here, it seems to be the complex head aspectual auxiliary + [-assertive] clitic that raises to Surpr^o and does the checking, in contradiction with the hypothesis of the role of the modal auxiliary ‘*ndar*’. It seems clear, however, that the crucial element is ‘*ndar*’, and that ‘*é(-lo)*’ is not by itself a plausible checker of the surprise feature. I leave this question open.
22. A dubious assumption, as noted above, given the well-formed examples with *wh*-doubling shown in notes 9, 11, and 17, above. These examples are particularly interesting: while they show that *che* is not incompatible with surprise questions, they underscore, at the same time, another facet of the special status of *che*: *wh*-doubling is possible only with *che*, presumably because *che* has weaker feature specifications than *chi*, *andé*, etc.
23. Unexpectedly, at first sight, the alternative checker version of (11) *Cossa zighe-tu?!*, (i), is not acceptable. In work in preparation, I argue that *va* is a pure (alternative) checker, while ‘why’-like *cozza* can be richer in content, which is required in (i).
(i) **Va-tu a zigar che?!*
24. Recall that it is assumed here that *che* bears the *wh*-feature, but cannot bear the [+surpr] feature; it will be seen below that this inability extends to other features of the “higher” type.
25. Concerning English nonecho questions with “*wh*-in-situ”, see Obenauer 1994, 323-330.

26. In fact, I have only shown that *che* cannot raise to [Spec,SurprP]. Strictly speaking, this allows, a priori, for the following situation:
 (i) The landing site of *wh*-phrases in rhetorical questions is lower than the corresponding site in surprise questions;
 (ii) *che* can raise to this lower landing site, but not higher.
 It will be shown, however, that (i) is not fulfilled; possibility (ii), therefore, is irrelevant, and expectation (b) in the text is justified a posteriori.
27. Irrelevantly for my purposes here, this instance of *cozza* has exceptional properties among which the following: as mentioned in M&O, this is the only case where *cozza* can introduce a direct standard question in Pagotto: *Cossa coste-lo?* can be synonymous with *Coste-lo che?* ‘How much does it cost?’.
28. As in surprise/disapproval questions, *wh*-doubling is possible with *cozza* in RQs; cf. (i), (ii).
 (i) *Cossa à-lo fat che, par ti?*
 (ii) *Cossa ghe coste-lo che, iutàrli?*
 Doubling is limited to “special” question use of *cozza*, that is, (ii) cannot be interpreted as a standard question.
29. I leave aside here the question of the nonoptimal acceptability status of (47). Again, a parallel *wh*-doubling structure is well-formed:
 (i) *Cossa u-tu che fae che?*
30. A ‘why’-like reading of *cozza* is not available in RQs, probably because the surprise/disapproval value is an obligatory component of that reading.
31. This is one case where *wh*-doubling is not acceptable:
 (i) *..., *cozza u-tu che*, ...
32. In fact, the yet obscure restriction on the occurrence of argumental *che* with the AC ‘*ndar*, noted in connection with the contrast (31) vs. (33), is absent in rhetorical *u-tu* questions, which therefore display an entirely regular paradigm with respect to alternative checking.
33. As the slight contrast between the (a) and (b) examples shows, the presence of *mai* improves the sentence, though the contrast with surprise questions (see M&O) is clear even in the absence of *mai*.
Cossa cannot occur to the left of the preverbal subject, a fact attributable to its deficient status (see below); *mai* again improves its status:
 (i) a. **Cossa Mario à-lo fat par ti?*
 b. ?*Cossa mai Mario à-lo fat par ti?*
 ‘What ‘ever’ has Mario done for you?’
34. Poletto (2000, 70) notes that in standard Italian as well as in a number of dialects, future and future perfect contribute a “modal meaning of possibility” in (standard) questions. The self-addressed “I-can’t-find-the-value” questions (65) and (66) (and (69), below), then, resort to a device independently available. Poletto also notes that the North-Eastern dialects use the subjunctive, rather than the future.

35. Notice that the domain the speaker has checked is limited in a particular way: it is that subpart Δ of the domain as such (defined by the restriction expressed in the *wh*-phrase) that the speaker can “see”, or think of. “I-can’t-find-the-value-of-*x*” questions thus differ from standard (“true”) questions also in that their domain is “anchored” with respect to the speaker (Obenauer 1994, 311), while a standard question is not, in principle, subject to this limitation; cf. *Where did you find it?* and the cfvQ interpretation of *Where the hell did you find it?* In a certain sense, then, this type of question is “speaker-oriented”. It is the domain “seen” by the speaker that is, furthermore, said not to contain any appropriate value of the variable (the “empty set” of Obenauer 1994).
36. *Wh*-doubling is possible in cfvQs, as it was seen to be in SDQs and RQs:
 - (i) *Cossa se ciàme-lo che?*
37. As suggested by ordering phenomena in more complex cfvQs which I must leave aside for reasons of space.
38. The counterparts of (75a,b) with initial *wh* are also unacceptable. The particle is also, as expected, excluded from surprise questions (cf. (i)) and RQs (cf. (ii)).
 - (i) *Chi invade-lo (*, ti) ?!* (cf. (19), without *ti*)
 - (ii) *Cossa ghe coste-lo (*, ti) ?!* (cf. (42))
39. Similarly, Obenauer and Poletto (to appear) argue, on the basis of Italian data, that the hierarchical order for RQs and cfvQs is $RQ > cfvQ$.
40. See Obenauer and Poletto (to appear), where it is argued that RQs involve additional projections in CP as well as in IP; cfvQs and SDQs might as well resort to additional projections. See Poletto (2000, 65-68) for a similar claim involving a lower CP projection in SDQs.
41. Recall that ACs exist for SDQs, ‘want’-RQs, and self-addressed cfvQs, respectively (though not for “simple” RQs and the second subtype of cfvQs).
42. Cf. the text following example (8), above, on the subject of the differences between [-assertive] subject clitics in the different NIDs.
43. *Wh*-in-situ is excluded in Spanish, Catalan, and Italian standard questions. For the quite particular interpretation of *in-situ* questions in Spanish, see Uribe-Etxebarria (2000) and Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2002). I put aside the case of French (Obenauer 1994) and Portuguese (Ambar, Obenauer, Pereira, Tapazdi, and Veloso 1998; Ambar and Veloso 2001) *in-situ* questions, which - in spite of less directly visible semantic contrasts - have also been argued to display particular interpretations. See Obenauer (1994); Obenauer and Poletto (to appear), who argue that, in spite of appearances, French *in-situ* questions like *Ça prouve quoi?* ‘That proves what?’ are not syntactically RQs.
44. Another way of phrasing this would be to say that the grammaticalization process involving ‘want’ is more advanced in Pagotto than elsewhere.
45. (80) allows for an interpretation according to which it is not IntForceP, but another functional projection that is checked by the [-assertive] subject clitic

in these RQs. The alternative, however, can only be a FP in the same configurational relation - in between GP and RQP. In the absence of evidence in favor of such a difference, I assume that the relevant FP is IntForceP.

46. A case in point is Zanuttini's (1997, 42ff.) discussion of the impossibility of subject clitic inversion in Paduan negative yes-no questions (as opposed to positive ones), involving the contrast (ia) vs. (ib).

- (i) a. *No ve-to via?
neg go-scl away
b. No te ve via?
neg scl go away
'Aren't you going away?'

Zanuttini argues convincingly that in (ib), the preverbal negative marker *no* raises to C°, checking ("in place of" the finite verb, which it c-commands) the operator feature and thus preventing the verb from its (in positive yes-no questions) "normal" raising under subject clitic inversion. Though Zanuttini does not use the term "alternative checking", the case displays the typical properties of the phenomenon – in particular, locality and economy – as analyzed above in the text.

For discussion of other relevant cases see Cocchi and Poletto (2002), who adopt the term AC from an earlier, unpublished version of this paper.

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