

Information-based “island effects” in Spanish clausal doubling

This paper advances an analysis of a syntactic phenomenon in Spanish that has not been previously addressed in the literature: *clausal doubling*. This construction displays a series of restrictions that are reminiscent of syntactic islands. Since an account in terms of movement is, in principle, untenable, we propose an information-based explanation for these “island-like” constraints. From a theoretical point of view, the paper offers further evidence to the claim that certain “island effects” are apparent and arise from non-syntactic factors.

THE PHENOMENON. Spanish exhibits a syntactic construction involving the repetition of a whole sentence; we (pretheoretically) refer to this pattern as *clausal doubling*, e.g., (1). For ease of presentation, we call the left and right duplicates CLAUSE 1 and CLAUSE 2, respectively.

The construction expresses *verum focus*, i.e., (1) emphasizes the positive polarity of its proposition. For instance, (1) is a felicitous answer to the assertion *she didn't read the book*, or to the question *did she (really) read the book?*. This answer also introduces a contrast with an alternative proposition *q*, e.g., (*but*) *she didn't understand the book*. This sort of interpretation has been attested with *predicate doubling* (aka *predicate cleft*) by Vicente (2007). However, unlike predicate doubling, clausal doubling does not license other types of focus.

Besides of its interpretation, clausal doubling resembles predicate doubling in that both phenomena are (seemingly) subject to island restrictions. That is, while CLAUSE 1 can double an object CP, e.g., (2), the pattern becomes unacceptable if CLAUSE 2 is within an island, e.g., an adjunct (3), a relative clause (4), a preverbal subject, or a coordinate structure.

Island effects could be straightforwardly accounted for under the assumption that CLAUSE 1 and CLAUSE 2 are related through syntactic movement, with each of them being overt copies within the same chain. Such an approach, however, faces serious complications. First, while the verb in both clauses needs to be the same (lexically and morphologically), the argumental DPs within CLAUSE 2 can be replaced with anaphoric expressions, e.g., (2). Second, the pattern is not subject to complex-NP islands, e.g., (5), which are domains that do constrain other types of movement in the language.

GENERAL ANALYSIS. We contend that CLAUSE 1 is an embedded full CP in the left periphery of a matrix sentence (usually CLAUSE 2). This is confirmed by the fact that both CPs can host their own left dislocated constituents, e.g., (6).

We argue that the CP CLAUSE 1 and the CP CLAUSE 2 are not related through movement, i.e., they are not copies. Instead, we propose that (i) the island restrictions attested in (3) and (4), and (ii) the (partial) identity between both clauses follow from the informational properties of the construction. We claim that CLAUSE 1 has a systematic interpretation as a *contrastive topic* in Büring's (2003) sense: it evokes a set of alternative questions (i.e., the *CT-Value*) that obtains from replacing the CT-marked constituent in the *Question Under Discussion* (QUD) with alternative elements. Furthermore, we take that a dislocated contrastive topic “announces” the immediate QUD answered by the rest of its sentence (Muñoz Pérez and Verdecchia To appear), i.e., the immediate QUD of the sentence must be “about” the contrastive topic.

Consider how this analysis applies to (1). The dislocated CP expresses the proposition $p =$ *she read the book*, and “announces” an immediate QUD $?p =$ *did she read the book?*; this is also the result of applying Büring's *CT-Value Formation* mechanism to obtain the QUD of (1). By replacing the CT-Marked material in the QUD (i.e., the whole proposition $p =$ *she read the book*), a set of alternative polar questions is obtained, e.g., *did she understand the book?*, *did she buy the magazine?*, etc. Potential answers to these alternative questions (e.g., $q =$ *she didn't understand the book*) are interpreted in contrast to p , which derives the meaning of (1).

ACCOUNTING FOR “ISLAND EFFECTS”. The key property distinguishing the acceptable sentence in (1) from the unacceptable (3) and (4) is *question-answer congruence*, i.e., $[[\text{QUESTION}]] \subseteq [[\text{ANSWER}]]'$ (e.g., Rooth 1992, Beaver & Clark 2008). As discussed, the dislocated CP in (1) points to the immediate QUD *did she read the book?*, which can be answered by the non-dislocated part of the sentence *leyó el libro* ‘she read the book’. In (3) and (4), however, this congruency does not exist. In (3), for instance, the dislocated CP also indicates the immediate QUD *did Juan read the book?*, but in this case the rest of the sentence cannot answer this question, i.e., *Juan cenó después de que lo leyó* ‘Juan had dinner after reading it’ provides an infelicitous answer for it. An analogous explanation accounts for the unacceptability of (4). Thus, apparent “island effects” concerning clausal doubling are just the byproduct of a systematic mismatch between the contrastive topic and the non-dislocated material in the sentence.

This approach allows to explain why clausal doubling can occur in (certain) cases in which CLAUSE 2 appears within a complex-NP island, e.g., (5). We argue that in (5) the matrix predicate *escuché el rumor* ‘I heard the rumor’ can receive a *parenthetical interpretation* (Simons 2007). This means that the “main point” of the utterance is contained in the embedded clause (i.e., CLAUSE 2), while the matrix predicate functions as an evidential of sorts, signaling the source and reliability of the information in its complement. Therefore, the grammaticality of the doubling pattern in (5) is correctly predicted: the contrastive topic “announces” the polar QUD *did she read the book?* while the rest of the sentence, i.e., *escuché el rumor (de) que lo leyó* ‘I heard the rumor that she did read it’, serves as a proper answer for that question. Similar considerations account for the acceptability of (2): as known, cognitive factives like *saber* ‘to know’ can be interpreted parenthetically (Hooper & Thompson 1973, Simons 2007); therefore, (2) also exhibits congruence between the question “announced” by the dislocated CP, i.e., *did she read the book?*, and the non-dislocated material *sé que no lo leyó* ‘I know that she didn’t read it’.

Our prediction is that apparent island effects arise in the clausal doubling construction whenever CLAUSE 2 is embedded under a predicate that cannot be interpreted parenthetically.

IDENTITY BETWEEN THE CPS. The fact that CLAUSE 1 and CLAUSE 2 need to express the same proposition also follows from the congruence requirement. That is, the sentence in (7a) is unacceptable because the immediate QUD announced by its contrastive topic is not congruent with the rest of the sentence, i.e., $[[\text{did he buy the magazine?}] \subseteq [[\Sigma_F \text{ he read the book}]]^f$. This approach also accounts for cases in which the clauses contain synonyms and, therefore, do not seem to differ in their propositions, e.g., (7b). As noticed by Pullum & Rawlins (2007) and Muñoz Pérez and Verdecchia (To appear), any pair of synonyms within the same utterance trigger the speaker to posit a distinction between their denotations. Sentences such as (7b) are unacceptable due to this effect, i.e., $[[\text{did he get mad}_1?] \not\subseteq [[\Sigma_F \text{ he got mad}_2]]^f$.

- (1) [_{CLAUSE 1} Que leyó el libro], [_{CLAUSE 2} LEYÓ el libro].
that read.3SG the book read.3sg the book
‘As for her reading the book, she did read the book.’
- (2) Que leyó el libro, sé que lo leyó.
that read.3SG the book know.1SG that it read.3sg
‘As for him reading the book, I know that he did read it.’
- (3) *Que leyó el libro, Juan cenó después de que lo leyó.
that read.3SG the book Juan had.dinner.3G after of that it read.3SG
‘As for him reading the book, Juan had dinner after he did read it.’
- (4) *Que compró el libro, vi a la mujer que lo compró.
that bought.3SG the book saw.1SG DOM the woman that it bought.3SG
‘As for buying the book, I saw the woman who did buy it.’
- (5) Que leyó el libro, escuché el rumor (de) que lo leyó.
that read.3SG the book heard.1SG the rumor of that it read.3SG
‘As for her reading the book, I heard the rumor that she did read it.’
- (6) Que el libro lo leyó, el libro lo leyó.
that the book it read.3SG, the book it read.3SG
‘As for him reading the book, he did read the book.’
- (7) a. *Que compró la revista, leyó el libro.
that bought.3SG the magazine read.3SG the book
‘As for him buying the magazine, he did read the book.’
b. *Que Juan se enojó, se enfadó.
that Juan se got.mad.3SG se got.mad.3SG
‘As for Juan getting mad, he did get mad.’

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