

# Doubling phenomena in Spanish: repeating propositions vs. repeating predicates

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## 1 Introduction

Spanish exhibits a syntactic construction involving the repetition of a whole sentence; we refer to this pattern as *clausal doubling* (CD), e.g., (1).

- (1) [<sub>CLAUSE 1</sub> Que compró vino], [<sub>CLAUSE 2</sub> compró vino].  
that bought wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'

This construction is similar to another doubling pattern attested in the language: *predicate doubling* (PD) (Vicente 2007, 2009, Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia 2022).

- (2) [<sub>PREDICATE 1</sub> Comprar vino], [<sub>PREDICATE 2</sub> compró vino].  
to.buy wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'

As we will see throughout this presentation, both doubling constructions share a number of non-trivial properties, but also display many intriguing differences.

### In this presentation

- We discuss some core grammatical properties of CD, especially in contrast to the better understood PD.
- We show that the crucial difference between both constructions is the “size” of the constituent that functions as a *contrastive topic* (Büring 2003) in each case.
- We derive from this informational factor a number of interpretative and formal differences between CD and PD.

## 2 Some basic properties of clausal doubling

There is no previous discussion of CD in the literature. We offer a succinct description of its properties before moving on to our analysis.

### 2.1 The doubling pattern

CLAUSE 1 is always headed by an overt complementizer. By default, this is the declarative complementizer *que* ‘that’, e.g., (1).<sup>1</sup>

If CLAUSE 2 is an interrogative sentence, the complementizer heading both clauses can be *si* ‘whether’. In these cases, CLAUSE 1 can still be headed by *que*.

- (3) a. Si llovió, no estoy seguro si llovió.  
whether rained not am.1SG sure whether rained  
'As for raining, I don't know whether it rained.'  
b. Que llovió, no estoy seguro si llovió.  
that rained not am.1SG sure whether rained  
'As for raining, I don't know whether it rained.'

All constituents within CLAUSE 2 must have a counterpart within CLAUSE 1, and vice versa. Typically, CLAUSE 2 contains anaphoric elements referring to parts of CLAUSE 1.

- (4) a. Que compré el auto, lo compré.  
that bought.1SG the car it bought.1SG  
'As for me buying the car, I DID buy it.'  
b. \*Que compré, compré el auto.  
that bought.1SG bought.1SG the car

This property explains the contrast in (5). Since null objects require an indefinite antecedent in Spanish, only (5a) contains a proper anaphoric element for the DO.

- (5) a. Que Cosmo<sub>j</sub> compró manzanas<sub>i</sub>, pro<sub>j</sub> compró  $\emptyset$ <sub>i</sub>.  
that Cosmo bought apples bought  
'As for Cosmo buying apples, he DID buy some.'  
b. \*Que Cosmo<sub>j</sub> compró las manzanas<sub>i</sub>, pro<sub>j</sub> compró  $\emptyset$ <sub>i</sub>.  
that Cosmo bought the apples bought

This suggests that CD is subject to a condition of *semantic parallelism*: CLAUSE 1 must express the same proposition as CLAUSE 2.

- (6) [<sub>CLAUSE 1</sub> ... ] ... [<sub>CLAUSE 2</sub> ... ]  
 $\underbrace{\hspace{1.5cm}}_p$   $\underbrace{\hspace{1.5cm}}_p$

Thus, CD exhibits a more “rigid” scheme than PD, as the left-dislocated element in the latter can be either a bare infinitive, e.g., (7), or an infinitival clause, e.g., (2).

- (7) [<sub>PREDICATE 1</sub> Comprar], [<sub>PREDICATE 2</sub> compró vino].  
to.buy bought wine  
'As for buying, she bought wine.'

<sup>1</sup>There seems to be some dialectal variation on the expression of CLAUSE 1. For instance, it is normal for Chilean Spanish speakers to produce doubling patterns in which the first clause starts with *de* ‘of’.

- (i) ¡De que tomamos cerveza, tomamos cerveza!  
of that drank.1PL beer drank.1PL beer  
'As for drinking beer, we DID drink beer!'

## 2.2 Behavior regarding information structure

CD in Spanish expresses *polarity focus*, i.e., it emphasizes the positive polarity of its proposition. For instance, a predicate doubling sentence repeating the proposition  $p$  is a felicitous answer to either an assertion of  $\neg p$  or to a biased question  $?p$ .

- (8) A: María didn't buy wine / Did María really buy wine?  
B: Que compró vino, compró vino.  
that bought wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'

As Vicente (2007) observes, PD can also express polarity focus:

- (9) A: Did María really buy wine? / María did not buy wine.  
B: Comprar vino, compró vino.  
to.buy wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'

However, neither CD nor PD license *broad focus*: the sentences in (10B) and (11) are not felicitous answers to a question like *what happened?*

- (10) A: What happened?  
B: # Que compró vino, compró vino.  
that bought wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'
- (11) A: What happened?  
B: # Comprar vino, compró vino.  
to.buy wine bought wine  
'As for buying wine, she DID buy wine.'

Another similarity between CD and PD is that both trigger a *continuation effect*. Consider the following dialogue. The reply in (12B) fully addresses the question (12A).

- (12) A: ¿Leyó el libro Juan?  
read the book Juan  
'Did Juan read the book?'
- B: Lo leyó.  
it read  
'He read it.'

Stating the same answer with CD (13B) or PD (14B) further suggests a potential contrasting continuation.

- (13) A: ¿Leyó el libro Juan?  
read the book Juan  
'Did Juan read the book?'

- B: Que leyó el libro, lo leyó.  
that read the book it read  
'As for reading the book, he DID read it.'
- A: ¿Pero...?  
but  
'But...?'

- (14) A: ¿Leyó el libro Juan?  
read the book Juan  
'Did Juan read the book?'
- B: Leer el libro, lo leyó.  
to.read the book it read  
'As for reading the book, he DID read it.'
- A: ¿Pero...?  
but  
'But...?'

Potential follow-ups for both these dialogues go in the following lines:

- (15) a. ...but he didn't like it.  
b. ...but he misunderstood the plot.  
c. ...but he never wrote the report.  
d. etc.

Despite these similarities, both constructions exhibit an important difference regarding focus: only PD can license *narrow focus* marking on arguments or adjuncts within the clause.

- (16) Comprar, compró VINO (no cerveza).  
to.buy bought wine not beer  
'As for buying, she bought wine (not beer).'
- (17) \*Que compró (vino), compró VINO (no cerveza).  
that bought.3G wine bought wine not beer  
'As for buying, she bought wine (not beer).'

## 2.3 Genus-species splits

While in PD the dislocated predicate can contain a bare noun that is an hyperonym of its counterpart within the clause, e.g., (18), CD does not allow this sort of mismatch, e.g., (19).

- (18) Comer pescado, come ATÚN.  
to.eat fish eat tuna  
'As for eating fish, she eats tuna.'
- (19) \*Que come pescado, come ATÚN.  
that eat.3SG fish eat.3SG tuna  
'As for eating fish, she eats tuna.'

## 2.4 Polarity

In CD, both clauses must express the same polarity.

- (20) a. Que no trabajó, no trabajó.  
that not worked<sub>3SG</sub> not worked  
'As for not working, she did not work'.
- b. \*Que trabajó, no trabajó.  
that worked<sub>3SG</sub> not worked  
'As for working, she did not work'.
- c. \*Que no trabajó, trabajó.  
that not worked worked  
'As for not working, she did work.'

In PD, there is no such constraint, although negation cannot appear with the dislocated predicate.

- (21) a. Trabajar, (no) trabajó.  
to.work not worked  
'As for working, she did (not) work'.
- b. \*No trabajar, (no) trabajó.  
not to.work not worked  
'As for not working, she did (not) work'.

## 2.5 (Apparent) sensitivity to islands

PD is, at least in appearance, sensitive to island constraints (Vicente 2007, 2009, Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia 2022). The same observation applies to CD.

- (22) \*Que leyó el libro, vine [después de que lo leyó].  
that read.<sub>3SG</sub> the book came.<sub>1SG</sub> after of that it read.<sub>3SG</sub>  
'As for her reading the book, I came after she DID read it.'

## 2.6 Interim conclusions

The following table summarizes the similarities and differences between CD and PD:

	Clausal doubling	Predicate doubling
Polarity focus	✓	✓
Broad focus	✗	✗
Continuation effect	✓	✓
(Apparent) sensitivity to islands	✓	✓
Narrow focus	✗	✓
Genus-specie splits	✗	✓
Different polarity	✗	✓
Negation within the dislocated constituent	✓	✗

## 3 Analysis

Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia (2022) argue that the dislocated constituent in PD is a contrastive topic. Here, we extend this analysis to CD with a caveat:

- ➔ In PD, the dislocated contrastive topic is a *v*P or a *v*P,
- ➔ while in CD the dislocated contrastive topic is a CP.

Thus, the contrastive topics in PD constructions such as (2) and (7) denote unsaturated predicates, as sketched in (23a) and (23b), respectively.

- (23) a.  $\llbracket \text{comprar vino} \rrbracket \approx \lambda x. x \text{ bought wine}$   
b.  $\llbracket \text{comprar} \rrbracket \approx \lambda y. \lambda x. x \text{ bought } y$

In contrast, contrastive topics in CD constructions are full propositions. For example, (1) denotes the proposition  $p = \textit{she bought wine}$ .

- (24)  $\llbracket \text{que compró vino} \rrbracket \approx \textit{she bought wine}$

### 3.1 Contrastive topics

Contrastive topics introduce the reading that there are other topics (with their corresponding comments) that are relevant in context. Consider the dialogue in (25):

- (25) A: What did you people eat?  
B: Well,  $[\text{Fred}]_{CT}$  ate  $[\text{the beans}]_F$ .

The answer (25B) suggests a continuation in which other people ate other stuff.

- (26) ...and Mary ate the eggplant, George ate the tuna, Elaine ate the carrots...

To capture this interpretation, we follow Büring (2003).

- ➔ Focus relates a declarative sentence to a set of alternative propositions, i.e., the *f-value*.
- ➔ A contrastive topic relates a sentence to a set of alternative questions, i.e., the *CT-value*.

To retrieve the *CT-value*, Büring advances the following algorithm.

- (27) CT-VALUE FORMATION (Büring 2003: 519)
- a. Replace the focus with a *wh*-word and front the latter; if focus marks the finite verb or negation, front the finite verb instead.
  - b. Form a set of questions from the result of (27a) by replacing the contrastive topic with some alternative to it.

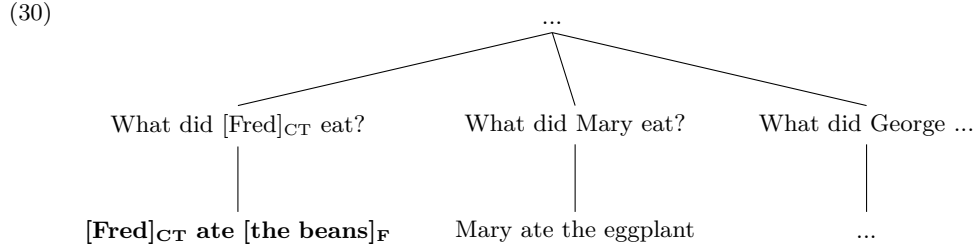
When applied to (25B), the subrule in (27a) yields its *immediate QUD* (iQUD) in (28), i.e., a question Q such that  $\llbracket Q \rrbracket = \llbracket (25B) \rrbracket^f$ .

- (28)  $\llbracket (25B) \rrbracket^f = \{[\text{Fred}]_{CT} \text{ ate } x \mid x \in D_e\} = \text{What did } [\text{Fred}]_{CT} \text{ eat?}$

The subrule in (27b) retrieves the *CT-value* of (25B), i.e., a set of questions.

$$(29) \quad \llbracket (25B) \rrbracket^{ct} = \{\{y \text{ ate } x \mid x \in D_e\} \mid y \in D_e\} = \{\textit{What did Fred eat?}, \textit{What did Mary eat?}, \textit{What did George eat?} \dots\}$$

This result can be summarized in a D(iscourse)-tree.



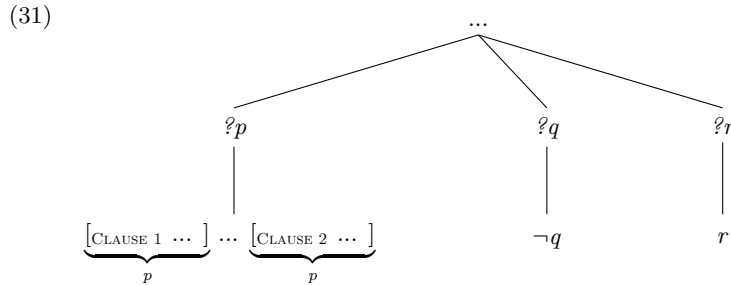
This representation shows that an utterance containing a *contrastive topic*:

- ➔ completely answers its *immediate QUD*,
- ➔ and also evokes a set of alternative questions that altogether address a “bigger” question, e.g., *who ate what?*.

The need to address these questions explains the *continuation effect* detected in (26).

### 3.2 Back to doubling

We contend that CD (i) expresses a proposition  $p$  twice, (ii) answers an *immediate QUD*  $?p$ , and (iii) evokes questions about other propositions. Schematically:



Take the example (1) repeated for convenience in (32). We propose it involves a focused polarity head  $\text{Pol}^0$  scoping over proposition (Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020, Goodhue 2018).

$$(32) \quad [\textit{Que compró vino}]_{CT}, [\text{Pol}^0]_F [\textit{clause compró vino}].$$

that bought wine                      bought wine

We take that  $\text{Pol}^0$  receives phonological realization in instances of polarity focus such as (33).

$$(33) \quad [\text{Pol}^0]_F \textit{Sí} [\text{SC que compró vino}]$$

yes            that bought.3SG wine

‘She DID buy wine.’

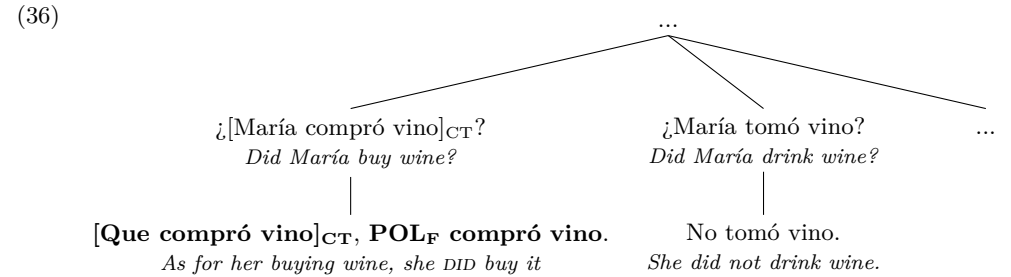
The iQUD for the sentence in (32) obtains from replacing  $\text{Pol}^0$  for a variable  $POL$  ranging over elements of the domain of polarities  $D_{+/-}$ .

$$(34) \quad \llbracket (32) \rrbracket^f \approx \{POL(\textit{she bought wine}) \mid POL \in D_{\{+/-\}}\} \approx \llbracket \textit{did [she buy wine]}_{CT} \rrbracket$$

The result is a polar question  $?p$ , see (32b). By replacing the contrastive topic  $p$  for alternative propositions, a set of alternative polar questions obtains.

$$(35) \quad \llbracket (32) \rrbracket^{ct} \approx \{POL(p) \mid p \in D_t\} \approx \{\textit{did she buy wine?}, \textit{did she drink water?}, \dots\}$$

The result can be schematized in the following discourse tree. Again, the fact that the CT evokes these alternative questions accounts for the *continuation effect* observed before.



**This is basically the same analysis that Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia (2022) advance for PD. The only difference is that the dislocated element in CD denotes a proposition.**

In PD constructions, the sentence answers an iQUD about the dislocated predicate, and evokes alternative questions based on other predicates.

Consider as an example the sentence in (7), repeated for convenience in (37).

$$(37) \quad [\textit{Comprar}]_{CT}, [\textit{clause compró [vino]}]_F.$$

The first step of CT-Value Formation in (27) retrieves the iQUD of (37).

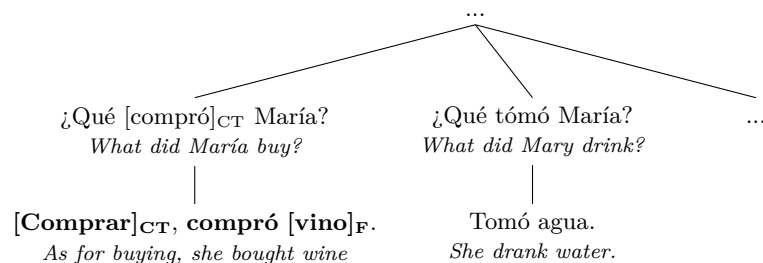
$$(38) \quad \llbracket (37a) \rrbracket^f \approx \{\textit{she bought } x \mid x \in D_e\} \approx \llbracket \textit{what did she [buy]}_{CT} \rrbracket$$

The second step retrieves a set of alternative questions by replacing the contrastive topic for other predicates.

$$(39) \quad \llbracket (37a) \rrbracket^{ct} \approx \{\textit{she } R \textit{ } x \mid R \in D_{e,ct}\} \approx \{\textit{what did she buy?}, \textit{what did she sell?}, \dots\}$$

As before, the implicit answers to these questions explain the continuation effect.

(40)



### 3.3 Deriving the differences between PD and CD

The proposed analyses capture all the relevant differences between PD and CD.

#### 3.3.1 Narrow focus

As seen before, only PD allows narrow focus marking on constituents within the clause:

- (41) Comprar, compró VINO (no cerveza).  
to.buy bought wine not beer  
'As for buying, she bought wine (not beer).'
- (42) \*Que compró (vino), compró VINO (no cerveza).  
that bought.3G wine bought wine not beer  
'As for buying, she bought wine (not beer).'

We argue that this asymmetry is due to the *syntactic-semantic nature of the dislocated material* in each construction.

As for CD, since the contrastive topic is a complete proposition *p*, the prediction is that focus can only target elements outside *p*.

- (43) a. Proposition expressed by (42): she bought wine  
b. Contrastive topic in (42): she bought wine  
c. Positions available for focus in (42): only functional categories above the proposition

This explains why CD can only express focus on (high) Pol<sup>0</sup> and on modals, e.g., (44).

- (44) Que Cosmo vino, [seguro]<sub>F</sub> que vino.  
that Cosmo came sure that came  
'As for Cosmo coming, for sure he came.'

In PD, the contrastive topic is a predicate. Thus, it can assign narrow focus on any other constituent within the clause.

- (45) a. Proposition expressed by (41): she bought wine  
b. Contrastive topic in (41): λy. λx. x bought y  
c. Positions available for focus in (41): any constituent except the predicate.

The only element that cannot be focused in PD is the doubled predicate itself.

- (46) \*Comprar, he COMPRADO un libro (no vendido).  
to.buy have.1SG bought a book not sold  
'As for buying, I have BOUGHT a book (not sold).'

#### 3.3.2 Genus-species splits

Unlike CD, PD can exhibit genus-species effects:

- (47) Comer pescado, come ATÚN.  
to.eat fish eat tuna  
'As for eating fish, she eats tuna.'
- (48) \*Que come pescado, come ATÚN.  
that eat.3SG fish eat.3SG tuna  
'As for eating fish, she eats tuna.'

Following Cann (2011: 459), we understand hyponymy as an *inclusion relation*:

- (49) HYPONYMY  
X is a hyponym of Y if it is the case that anything is such that it has the properties expressed by X then it also has the properties expressed by Y

Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia (2022) argue that genus species splits involve *narrow focus* on the semantic properties defining the hyponym as a specific type of individual within the kind denoted by the hyperonym.

- (50)  $\underbrace{\text{comer pescado}_{[+A][+B]}}_{\text{PREDICATE 1}} \quad [\text{CLAUSE } \dots \quad \underbrace{\text{come atún}_{[+A][+B]}}_{\text{PREDICATE 2}} \quad \underbrace{[+C]}_{\text{focus}}]$  *cf. (47)*

Under this account, the contrast between (47) and (48) is explained straightforwardly:

- ➔ CD does not allow genus-species splits since it cannot assign narrow focus at the propositional level.
- ➔ In contrast, PD allows genus-species splits as another instance of narrow focus marking.

#### 3.3.3 Polarity

Finally, as seen above, in CD both clauses must have the same polarity.

- (51) a. Que no trabajó, no trabajó.  
that not worked3SG not worked  
'As for not working, she did not work'.
- b. \*Que trabajó, no trabajó.  
that worked3SG not worked  
'As for working, she did not work'.

- c. \*Que no trabajó, trabajó.  
that not worked worked  
'As for not working, she did work.'

This also follows from the “size” of the dislocated constituent. We claim that *no* ‘not’ is the spell-out of a “low” negation head somewhere between CP and vP (Zeijlstra 2013: 804).

(52) [CP C ... [NegP *no* ... [vP ...

This type of negation is internal to the proposition. Since CLAUSE 1 and CLAUSE 2 are CPs expressing the same proposition, their sentential polarity must be the same.

We also saw that PD does not obey the same restriction and that, in fact, it does not allow *no* to appear in the first predicate.

- (53) a. Trabajar, (no) trabajó.  
to.work not worked  
'As for working, she did (not) work'.  
b. \*No trabajar, (no) trabajó.  
not to.work not worked  
'As for not working, she did (not) work'.

This follows straightforwardly from the assumption in Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia (2022) that the dislocated predicate is a vP, a constituent below NegP.

### 3.3.4 (Apparent) sensitivity to islands

Both PD and CD display restrictions that are analogous to island effects.

We contend these are *phantom islands* in the terminology of Verdecchia (Forthcoming), i.e., instances of unacceptability that look like island effects, but are due to semantico-pragmatic factors.

- ➔ “Island effects” in PD and CD involve constituents marked as contrastive topics that are *incongruent* with the rest of the sentence.<sup>2</sup>

In the CD construction in (54), the contrastive topic expresses the proposition  $p = \textit{she read the book}$ . However, the rest of the sentence is not about  $p$ .

- (54) \*Que leyó el libro, vine [después de que lo leyó].  
that read.3SG the book came.1SG after of that it read.3SG  
'As for her reading the book, I came after she DID read it.'

This claim is supported by the fact that the non-dislocated material does not address  $?p$ .

- (55) A: Did Elaine read the book?  
B: #Vine después de que lo leyó.  
came.1SG after of that it read.3SG  
'I came after she read it.'

<sup>2</sup>See Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia (2022) for a more elaborated definition of congruence for doubling constructions.

This follows from the observation by Ambridge & Goldberg (2008) that the propositional content of islands is *presupposed*, i.e., it is not under discussion. Contrastive topics, by definition, need to be under discussion (Büring 2003).

## 4 Concluding remarks

In this presentation...

- ➔ We described some basic properties of a novel doubling pattern in Spanish, i.e., *Clausal Doubling*.
- ➔ We discussed a number of unnoticed informational differences with respect to another well-studied doubling construction, i.e., *Predicate Doubling*.
- ➔ We argued that both constructions have, in essence, the same structure: PD and CD involve a dislocated *contrastive topic* in the left periphery.
- ➔ We proposed that the key factor distinguishing these doubling patterns is the syntactico-semantic nature of the contrastive topic:
  - in PD, it is a verb or verb phrase (*v/vP*) denoting a *predicate*.
  - in CD, it is a sentence (CP) denoting a *full proposition*
- ➔ We derived from this factor all the interpretative differences between CD and PD:
  - the possibility of narrow focus marking,
  - the availability of genus-specie splits,
  - the distribution of polarity.
- ➔ From a broader perspective, we extended Muñoz Pérez & Verdecchia’s (2022) analysis for PD to CD, showing that both doubling patterns in Spanish seem to form a natural class.

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