

CAUSAL/DENIAL “CÓMO”, FACTIVITY AND EVALUATION

1. GOAL. To distinguish causal/denial “cómo” (Tsai 2008) from manner “cómo” and to provide an analysis of “cómo es que” (‘how come’).

2. THE DATA. In different languages (Tsai 2008), the interrogative element for manners, “how”, can also have a causal meaning (with a distinctive intonation) and convey mirativity (i.e. surprise or unexpectedness; DeLancey 2012).

- (1) A: —¿Cómo la dirección le dice estas cosas?
how the direction to.him says these things?
B: —Porque están muy enfadados. / #—Tranquilamente.
because are_{3PI} very upset quietly

This is relatable to the behavior of “what” equivalents in different languages (Munaro & Obenauer (1999)), which can have, e.g., a causal value: it is desirable to treat all the “what” and all the “cómo” not as different words, but in a unified manner.

The syntax of causal/denial “cómo” makes it different from typical interrogative elements and similar to some “why” equivalents —subj.-V inversion is not necessary, (1), and there is perfect compatibility with negation: (2) is possible with manner “how” only if it is rhetorical or the manners/answers are presupposed.

- (2) ¿Cómo no se lo ha dicho?
how not to.him that has said?

Causal/denial “cómo” is arguably part of “cómo es que”, a structure equivalent to some apparently disparate ones in other languages, (3).

- (3) “how come” (English), “come mai” (Italian), “wieso” (German), “com així” (Balearic Catalan), “cómo así (que)” (American Spanish)

“Cómo es que” (and Catalan “com és que”) seems different from all of them: it appears to incorporate a V (“es”, V “ser” ‘to be’), i.e. a sentence. Indeed, it is possible to use in it the V “ser” ‘to be’ in other tenses (even if, then, the interpretation tends to be non-mirative; i.e. manner “how” is used).

3. THE ANALYSIS. Assuming the cartographic project, (4), it is here proposed that the Int projection (Rizzi 2001, Rizzi & Bocci 2015) is that where causal/denial “cómo” is generated.

- (4) Force > Top > Int > Top > Foc > Top > Mod > Top > QEmb > Fin (> IP)

The cartographic project (also Rizzi (2004)) contemplates the existence of a Mod projection, which has been decomposed in different related projections (Evaluative/Factive > Evidential > Epistemic) considering the adverbs with these meanings and, as for Evaluative/Factive, some exclamative elements (González i Planas 2010, 2014). The activation of this projection with causal/denial “cómo” is coherent with the mirative semantic that it conveys (and causal “what” equivalents, in fact). It is also coherent with the fact that causal/denial “cómo” implies factivity (and this is also true for causal “what” equivalents; it is suggested that these causal “what” have scope over this projection).

“Cómo es que” generates factivity, too (the “syntactization” of factivity for “how come” was suggested by Fitzpatrick (2005), and developed by Conroy (2006). In this proposal, “es” in “cómo es que” is interpreted as being no longer a V (i.e. it is grammaticalized),

but as the equivalent to “come” (which also used to be a V), “mai”, “so”, “així” and “así” in (3): it appears in the specifier of the Evaluative/Factive projection and it conveys a meaning akin to ‘be real’. “Que” ‘that’, if any, is the head of Evaluative/Factive. (If “cómo es que” incorporates a real V, “ser” ‘to be’, it has an eventive meaning and its combination of this V with causal/denial “cómo” still provides the relevant semantics, as in “cómo puede ser que”, lit. ‘how can_{3Sing} be that’.)

Crucial evidence for this analysis of “cómo es que” is found in Ripacurtian Catalan “com {é/és} que”: “é” is the normal form of “ser” ‘to be’ (Present of Indicative, 3rd pers. sing.), with all the semantic values for this V, while “és” appears in constructions in which it is at the Evaluative/Factive projection —it is grammaticalized:

- (6) a. La verdat {é/és} que no ho havia vist
 the truth {is/is} that not that.thing_{clitic} had_{3Sing} seen
 b. Que no ho havia vist {é/*és} la verdat
 that not that.thing_{clitic} had_{3Sing} seen {is/is} the truth

This favors the analysis according to which the elements equivalent to Ripacurtian Catalan “és” are situated in a specific projection in the sentential left periphery.

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