

Romance evaluative *que/che* sentences like inverted optatives

The proposal. This paper provides a semantic and syntactic analysis of main Romance sentences introduced by the conjunction *que/che* ‘that’ which express the negative evaluation of a proposition. The existence of this kind of statements has been noted in the literature (Benincà 1998; Duarte 2003; Evans 2007), although a formal analysis of them has not been accomplished until now. After describing the data, I propose that Romance *que/che* evaluative sentences can be analyzed like inverted optative sentences, that is, optative sentences that are interpreted with respect to an inverted bouletic scale. The main formal properties (related to mood and tense restrictions) and semantic properties (related to the presupposition of factivity and the negative evaluation of the proposition) of these sentences can be naturally derived from the analysis.

The data. Romance main sentences introduced by the conjunction *que/che* ‘that’ plus a subjunctive verbal form can receive an evaluative meaning, and express the speaker’s displeasure, unease or discontent about the propositional content. The evaluative meaning can be reconstructed by predicates such as ‘I am amazed’, ‘I am shocked’, or ‘I would not have expected’, like the glosses in (1) show. However, the utterances are root sentences and no elision process must be assumed. Crucially, *que/che* evaluative sentences express only a part of the wide range of evaluative attitudes that can be expressed by the speaker, since the propositional content is always evaluated negatively.

- (1) a. *Sp.* ¡Que tenga un sobrino tan salvaje!
that have_{1sg} a nephew so savage
‘That I have
- b. *It.* Che se ne sia andato da solo! (Benincà 1998: 133)
that REFL PART i_{Ssubj} left of alone
‘I am amazed and shocked that he left alone’
- c. *Fr.* Qu’il boive beaucoup! (CAMUS, *Peste; Trésor s.v. que*)
that he drinks so much
‘I am amazed that he drinks so much!’
- d. *Por.* Que ele passe a vida a zangar-se conosco (é o cúmulo)! (Duarte 2003)
that he spends the life to miff with us is too much
‘That he spends his life getting hungry with us! That’s too much’

Romance main sentences introduced by *que/che* ‘that’ plus a subjunctive verb can also have an optative reading, and express the speaker’s vivid wish about the propositional content. The evaluative sentences in (1) differ from optatives in two semantic properties: a) evaluatives often convey the presupposition that the proposition about which the speaker expresses an evaluation is a fact and b) they express that the actual situation is contrary to the expectations of the speaker. Intonation often makes the difference between the optative and the evaluative reading. In addition, the presence of some modal elements, like deontic auxiliaries, favors the evaluative reading, so that the sentences in (2), contrarily to the ones in (1) are not ambiguous and only the evaluative reading is available:

- (2) a. *It.* Che Mario debba comportarsi così! (Benincà 1998: 133)
that Mario has behave this way
‘I am amazed and shocked that Mario behaves this way’
- b. *Sp.* ¡Que haya yo de soportar a ese idiota!
that have_{subj} I of stand that idiot
‘I am amazed that I have to stand that idiot’

Analysis. I propose that the sentences in (1) are inverted optative sentences, that is, optative sentences that are interpreted with respect to an inverted bouletic scale.

Consequently, the sentence means that the speaker evaluates the proposition like the less desirable situation according to his own scale of preferences.

This analysis is based in the hypothesis that optatives are expressive sentences that convey the speaker's emotion about a proposition and contain an *EX* operator, as proposed for optatives by Grozs (2011) and for exclamatives by Gutiérrez Rexach (1996, 2001), Castroviejo (2006), Jónsson (2010). *EX* selects a proposition *p* and a scale *S* and quantifies over scalar alternatives to *p*. In optatives, *S* is ordered according to the speaker's preferences, so that optatives are modalized propositions anchored to the world of the speaker's desires. According to my analysis, *que/che* evaluative sentences differ from optatives in the orientation of the bouletic scale: evaluative sentences are inverted scale optatives that order the proposition and its alternatives with respect to the criterion 'to be the less desirable situation'. This analysis explains the following facts.

First, it explains that evaluative sentences select subjunctive verbs in despite of the fact that the evaluated proposition is presupposed to be a fact. I assume Villalta's (2007, 2008) analysis for subjunctive selection, according to which predicates that require the subjunctive mood introduce an ordering relation between propositions by comparing the proposition to its contextually available alternatives; the realization of subjunctive features in Mood ensures that the evaluation of alternatives happens at the right place in the tree. I propose that Villalta's analysis can be extended to the selection of mood in main clauses: *EX* ensures an ordering relation between *p* and the salient alternatives, according to a scale anchored to the speaker. Optative-*EX* orders *p* and its alternatives according to the speaker's preferences and the evaluation must take place at the level of the proposition in MoodP.

(2) [ForceP *EX* [Force' [Force *que*] [FinP [MoodP [Mood' [Mood° subj [TP ...]]]]

Secondly, it explains that evaluative sentences in (1) have the same strong temporal restrictions than *que/che*-optatives. The verb must be in present tense or in present perfect tense; however, past tenses (imperfect and pluperfect) are excluded (3a). *Que-che* optatives differ from other optatives like *si/se*-optatives (3b,c) and Spanish *ojalá*-optatives (ed), which admit past subjunctive tenses:

- (3) a. *Sp.* * ¡Que {tuviera / hubiera tenido} yo un sobrino tan salvaje!
 that had_{subj} had_{subj} had I a nephew so savage
- b. *Port.* Se ela não passasse a vida a armar estrilho!
 If she not spent_{subj} the life to make noise
 'If only she did not spend her life making noise!
- c. *It.* Se gli uomini si accontentassero più facilmente!
 If the man REFL contented_{subj} more easily
 'If only the man contented more easily!'
- d. *Sp.* ¡Ojalá lloviera un poco más!
 OJALA rained a little more
 'If only it rained a bit more!'

Following Laca (2010:198), I assume that present and present perfect subjunctive are deictic tenses, always anchored with regard to Utt-time, which provide a modal base no completely realistic (Iatridou 2000), that is, a domain that contains w_0 in addition to other possible worlds. This would explain that *que/che* evaluative sentences are not incompatible with the presupposition that the less desired situation is a fact.

Finally, the presence of some deontic modal elements in *que/che* evaluative sentences (cf. (2)) follows from the interaction between desirability and obligation: the evaluation of a situation like a no desirable one makes sense when the speaker cannot avoid such a situation because he is obliged by some external force.