

Doubly Filled COMP in embedded polar interrogatives

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The phenomenon of Doubly Filled COMP is well-known from embedded constituent questions and relative clauses, and it refers to a structure in which a left-peripheral operator in [Spec,CP] co-occurs with a complementiser located in the C head. In West Germanic languages, such configurations are ruled out from the standard varieties. The lack of the co-occurrence of an overt operator with an overt complementiser originally led to the postulation of the so-called Doubly Filled COMP Filter (DFCF), which is thought to be responsible for the ban on the overtness of the C head if the specifier of the same CP is filled. In the non-standard varieties of West Germanic languages, however, such co-occurrences are attested, which raises the question what their relation is to the DFCF, and whether the DFCF should be maintained at all. I will argue that, strictly speaking, there is no DFCF. The lack of Doubly Field COMP in the standard dialects follows the economy of derivation, in that only a minimal number of clause-typing elements is actually inserted into CP. In non-standard-dialects, the insertion of an overt element into C follows from a requirement on filling C, which results in doubling if there is an operator in the specifier already. I will show that there is considerable variation concerning the exact element filling the C head, apart from the classical configuration with elements corresponding to *that*: present-day South German dialects provide evidence that the *wh*-element may move to C under certain conditions. Based on contemporary and historical data, I claim that the tendency to fill the C head in embedded interrogatives is related to similar requirements in main clause (V2 in German and Dutch, interrogative T-to-C in English), and as such the peculiarities of West-Germanic Doubly Filled COMP effects are related to a more general property of the respective languages, that is, the filling of C with a non-complementiser element.

In my talk, I will concentrate on the special case of embedded polar questions, where doubling effects have not been extensively examined in the relevant literature. Polar questions also contain a *wh*-operator corresponding to *whether* (yes-no operator): as opposed to constituent questions, this operator is not moved to the CP from a lower position in the clause but is inserted there directly, and unlike ordinary *wh*-operators, it is not a focussed constituent and can thus remain covert. Doubling of the form *whether that* is attested in Old English and Old Saxon. In addition, verb movement to C with an overt yes-no operator in [Spec,CP] was possible in Old High German, even though V2 is a main clause property in West Germanic, and the doubling of *whether* in [Spec,CP] and a lexical verb or *do* in C is attested in earlier stages of English. I argue that all of these cases follow from the requirement to fill the C head with overt material, and the overtness of the operator is due to the fact that it marks [wh]; doubling is likely to disappear as soon as an element grammaticalises as a polar [wh] C element. The data from West Germanic polar questions show that the insertion of *that* in Doubly Filled COMP patterns is related to the requirement to adjoin phonologically overt material to a null C head (or to insert a non-null C head).

In addition, I will briefly examine doubling patterns in Hungarian embedded polar questions, where the overt marker of [wh] is the element *-e*, located on a lower functional periphery (as a head of an FP, functional projection). In Modern Hungarian, there is no doubling since the finite subordinator *hogy* 'that' is located higher (in the CP), hence this is rather an instance of functional splitting. In Old Hungarian, *-e* was absent from embedded clauses and the complementiser *ha* 'if' marked the [wh] property of the clause. The doubling of *ha* (in C) and *-e* (in F) is attested in Middle Hungarian, yet this is doubling distributed over two distinct peripheries and no Doubly Filled COMP. In modern non-standard varieties, however, *-e* occupies a higher position in the FP-domain and it co-occurs with a polarity operator in the specifier of the same FP: I argue that this is due to the reanalysis of the features associate with *-e* and the relevant elements in the specifier, a development that started in Middle Hungarian.