

**THE SPANISH LEFT PERIPHERY:
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

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ABSTRACT

Based on the seminal work of Rizzi (1997) and others, this dissertation explores the left periphery of Spanish sentences, with particular attention to interrogative structures and their replies.

The central claim of this work is that a sentence used as an answer has a syntactic structure specific to this function. Not every declarative sentence can be used felicitously as a reply to a question. This dissertation provides a syntax-based account of the possible structures allowed as answers to particular questions. I have argued for the differentiation of answers from identificational focus, on the grounds of the non-contrastive character of answers (including fragment answers) and their different positions in the sentence. This differentiation not only allows us to better understand the structure of answers, but also provides a new perspective for the study of the Focus layer and the left periphery as a whole.

An additional element introduced in the discussion is the Confirmation Phrase, presented here as an extended projection of the phrase requiring confirmation, which is

visible through a wh-morpheme (*qué* in Spanish). This projection allows for some syntax-based fine-tuning of the expression of the meaning of questions, distinguishing information questions from confirmation ones.

The proposal put forward in this work is that the Focus layer in the left periphery of the sentence hosts functional projections that host separate features, of which one, [+answer], hosted in Answer Phrase (AnsP), determines the character of answer of a sentence, and another, [+wh], hosted in WhP, triggers wh-movement. These features can additionally combine with a Force feature [+Q] to produce complex interrogative structures. This structure gives a unified account of regular wh-questions and split questions (interrogative structures including a proposed answer that appears as a tag linked to the question by a particular intonation). It also links split questions to the structure of sentences used as answers, by virtue of the presence of an Answer Phrase and a [+answer] feature in both structures. These elements of the analysis, together with the confirmation feature hosted in ConfP, provide tools to start a comparative analysis of the semantics of different types of questions.