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# Hanging Topic Left Dislocations as extrasentential constituents: toward a paratactic account. Evidence from English and Spanish

<https://doi.org/10.1515/tlr-2023-2003>

Published online May 3, 2023

Well, I know, after all, it is only juxtaposition, Juxtaposition, in short; and what is juxtaposition?

–Arthur Hugh Clough, English poet (1819–1861)

**Abstract:** The paper argues for a bisentential, paratactic account of Hanging Topic Left Dislocations wherein the syntactically unconnected hanging topic phrase is the remnant of an elliptical copulative sentence which is linearly juxtaposed to the second, host sentence. This proposal represents a natural extension of Ott’s system for Clitic Left Dislocations and predicative non-restrictive nominal appositives. By assuming that the hanging topic is structurally disconnected from the host sentence, the analysis constitutes a radical departure from integrated/monosentential approaches within cartography, which analyze hanging topics as intrasentential, albeit peripheral, constituents in the left spine of the clause. Using data from English and Spanish as well as from other linguistic varieties, the paratactic approach provides a principled account of various issues facing monosentential analyses of hanging topics, including anti-connectivity, coreference with the resumptive/epithetic correlate, comma intonation/pause potential, case, insensitivity to locality constraints, islandhood, and potential presence of interjections between hanging topic and host sentence, amongst others. The account is also successful in capturing orphaned topics, which are not linked to any constituent in the sentence they occur with, alongside ‘interrogative’ and hyperdetached hanging topics.

**Keywords:** bisententiality; coreference; default case; elliptical fragments; hanging topics; islands; juxtaposition; left dislocation; parataxis; resumption

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# 1 Introduction

Left dislocations came into focus in the generative tradition with the seminal work of Ross (1967). Since then, the literature has distinguished two major types of dislocations in the natural languages.<sup>1</sup> The first type, with which this paper concerns itself, is hanging topics (HTs), also known as the Hanging Topic Left Dislocation (HTLD) construction, illustrated for English and Spanish in (1).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. *Him<sub>acc</sub> and a couple of mates, they went to a casino at 4 in the morning.*  
(Tim Vickery, BBC Radio 5, cited in Radford [2018: 51])
- b. *Star Wars, yeah, that was my first big mistake.*  
(Attributed to Al Pacino)
- c. *Yo, las playas de Canarias me encantan.*  
I<sub>nom</sub> the beaches of Canary-islands cl<sub>dat</sub> charm  
'As for me, I love the beaches of the Canary Islands.'  
(Spontaneous speech, Spain, February 2022)
- d. *Esta mujer, me suena su cara.*  
this woman cl<sub>dat</sub> sounds her face  
'This woman, her face looks familiar to me.'  
(*Carta a Eva*, miniseries, Spanish Radio & Television Corporation, RTVE, 2013)

Prescriptively, and despite their high frequency in speech, HTs tend to be frowned upon (RAE-ASALE [2009: 2978]; see also Radford [2018]).

The second type is the topicalization construction (cf. (2)a, b), whose closest Romance counterpart is the Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) construction, illustrated below for Spanish (cf. (2)c) and Catalan (cf. (2)d).

- (2) a. *That promise of lifelong service I renew to all today.*  
(King Charles III, 9 September 2022)
- b. *I wanted to utter a word, but that word, I cannot remember.*  
(Mandelstam, Russian poet; translation cited in Aitchison [2012: 13])

<sup>1</sup> I discuss right dislocations in light of the analysis of HTLDs proposed herein in due course.

<sup>2</sup> Other denominations for HTLDs include simply left dislocation (van Riemsdijk and Zwarts 1974, among others), dislocated topic (Radford 2018, among others), and the Strong Pronoun Left Dislocation construction (Casielles-Suárez 2004). Needless to say, the names given to the relevant constructions are likely to cause confusion, since the general term dislocation is often used to encompass both HTLDs as well as topicalizations (and Clitic Left Dislocations, CLLDs), which Radford (2018) also refers to as fronted topics. In general, the very term DISLOCATION seems to imply repositioning of a constituent within a sentence, contrary to fact, as we shall see.

- c. *A mi prima no la soporta nadie.*  
 cl<sub>acc</sub> my cousin<sub>fem</sub> not cl<sub>acc</sub> bears nobody  
 ‘Nobody can stand my cousin.’
- d. *De l'examen ningú no n'ha parlat encara.*  
 of the+exam nobody not cl<sub>partitive</sub>+has talked yet  
 ‘Nobody has talked about the exam yet.’  
 (Catalan, from Casielles-Suárez [2004: 333])

Much research has been devoted to the Romance CLD construction in (2)c, d, whereas HTLDs, exemplified in (1), have received much less attention in the recent syntactic literature within the transformational generative framework (though see the collection of papers in Anagnostopoulou et al. 1997).

Regarding the interpretation of dislocates such as HTLDs, van Riemsdijk (1997: 4) notes that “in the most general terms, the clause ‘is about’ the left dislocated phrase.” I will return to this issue briefly in due course. With respect to their derivation, pragmatics-oriented works have championed extra-sentential proposals, whereas syntax/cartography-oriented works have assumed HTs to be intra-sentential, though left-peripheral, constituents. As part of his discussion of previous syntactic accounts, Radford (2018: Ch. 2) refers to HTLDs as R(esumptive)-linked topics and to cases of topicalization as G(ap)-linked topics, since the former are typically linked to a resumptive pronoun (in the broad sense, as we will see), as in (1)a, b and the latter to a gap, as in (2)a, b. One of the major questions regarding the syntactic analysis of such constructions in the last decades, especially considering the by-now longstanding move-versus-merge debate within the generative tradition, has been whether they are deployed by means of movement (in more recent terms, internal merge or re-merge) or by base generation (external, direct merge) in the left position of the clause where they surface. Focusing on HTLDs (cf. (1)), there is ample consensus that such constructions do not undergo movement to the front of the sentence and are instead inserted directly in their superficial position on the left of their clause (see Radford [2018: Ch. 2] and references therein), though movement accounts have been put forward for HTLDs (see, e.g., Contreras [1976] and Boeckx and Grohmann [2005]).

My proposal aligns more with the first, non-movement line of analysis, but it radically departs from both types of syntactic analysis (i.e., base-generation/movement), most of which are couched in cartography (Rizzi 1997 et seq.). A crucial assumption of the two kinds of syntactic account is that the HT is a host-sentence-internal constituent. By contrast, the analysis pursued herein assumes two (root) sentences which establish a paratactic relation with one another: the first one is elliptical (CP1), with the HTLDed phrase being a fragment/remnant of ellipsis, and the second one is the host sentence (CP2), a syntactically complete sentence that is

linearly juxtaposed to the first, elliptical one, as shown schematically in (3) for example (1)a above:

- (3) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS~~ *him and a couple of mates*,]  
 [<sub>CP2</sub> *they<sub>k</sub> went to a casino at 4 in the morning*]

On this sentential-juxtaposition-*cum*-ellipsis kind of analysis, therefore, HTs are not just external, but extra-sentential constituents, in the spirit of the work of a number of authors of diverse theoretical persuasions, such as Dik (1978, 1989); Cinque (1997 [1983]); Ziv (1994); Acuña-Fariña (1995); Valmala (2007); López (2009); Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010); Ott (2015); Fernández-Sánchez and Ott (2020), and Keizer (2020).

I show that an analysis along the lines of (3) accounts for the data successfully and solves a number of puzzles which arise in light of previous monosentential/integrated proposals that assume base-generation of the HTLDED constituent on the left edge of the sentences they precede (i.e., [<sub>XP</sub> HTLDED [... [<sub>IP/TP</sub> ...]]]). On the view pursued herein, the connection between the HTLDED in CP1 and its host sentence, CP2, is one of discourse grammar, not of sentence grammar, as first claimed in the transformational generative framework by Cinque (1997 [1983]: 98). As observed by Fernández-Sánchez and Ott (2020: 16), “[t]his was indeed the conclusion of Cinque (1983) (see also Shaer and Frey 2004), but it is commonly dismissed by cartographically oriented works.” In fact, as noted, a considerable body of work was devoted to HTs in the pre-cartographic era that began in the late 1990s (see, e.g., Anagnostopoulou et al. [1997]), but since then, work on HTLDEDs has been sparse (on which, see Radford 2018). Moreover, in addition to circumventing some problematic issues for monosentential accounts, the bisentential account makes several correct predictions concerning the syntactic behavior of HTLDEDs. At the same time, the paratactic proposal advocated here is compatible with the major interpretative properties attributed to HTs in the literature.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, general properties of HTs are presented, with special reference to English and Spanish, alongside a note on the interpretation of HTs; Section 3 sketches the bisentential account pursued here. The different subsections devoted to the consequences of this approach provide several (old and new) empirical arguments in favor of parataxis, some of which relate to anti-connectivity: absence of binding and bound variables (Section 3.1.1); lack of canonical agreement and issues related to pronouns (Section 3.1.2); case (Section 3.1.3); comma intonation/pause potential (Section 3.1.4); extra-sentential (not just external) nature, including complementizers, V3 phenomena, and clitic placement (Section 3.1.5); insensitivity to islands and islandhood (Section 3.1.6); intercalated interjections (Section 3.1.7); ‘interrogative’ HTs (Section 3.1.8); orphaned HTs (Section 3.1.9); no HTs in right-dislocated positions (Section 3.1.10); and hyper-detached HTs (Section 3.1.11). Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2 Hang in there! There's an alien at the beginning of that clause and it has peculiar properties

### 2.1 What does a HT look like?

Hanging topics, which are invariably of the DP/NP category (Cinque 1997 [1983]), can be associated with virtually any syntactic function in the sentence to which they are adjacent, as shown for Spanish in (4) (and for English by some of the English translations):

- (4) a. *Pedro, no saca nunca la cartera el muy tacaño.*  
 Peter not pulls-out never the wallet the very tight-fisted  
 'Peter is rather tight fisted. You never see his wallet out!'
- b. *Ángela la vecina, creo que a la tipa la contrataron en Harvard.*  
 Angela the neighbor, believe that acc the individual cl<sub>acc</sub>  
 hired in Harvard.  
 'My neighbor Angela, I believe that they hired that woman at Harvard.'
- c. *Yo, la verdad es que no me regalaron nunca nada.*  
 I<sub>nom</sub>, the truth is that not cl<sub>dat</sub> gave never nothing  
 'As far as I am concerned, I must admit that I was never given anything.'
- d. *Este, ya dijo muy claro que no contásemos con él.*  
 This, already said very clear that not count with him  
 'This one, he made it very clear that we shouldn't count on him.'
- e. *Chueca, ¡qué bien me lo pasaba allí de joven!*  
 Chueca what well cl<sub>refl</sub> cl passed there of young  
 'Chueca, I had so much fun there when I was younger.'
- f. *1992, en ese año me fui yo de turné a Sevilla y a Barcelona.*  
 1992, in that year cl<sub>refl</sub> went I of tour to Seville  
 and to Barcelona  
 '1992, I went on a tour to Seville and Barcelona that year.'

This set of examples also provides several pieces of relevant information about the behavior of hanging topics more generally. As is well known, hanging topics carry what for now I will call default case. In Spanish, this is nominative, as shown by pronominals, as in (4)c, despite the fact that the corresponding clause-internal argument is dative, and in English, accusative (cf. (1)a), even though the clause-internal subject is nominative. CLLDs, by contrast, bear structural case, as shown by (5)a, and may be of any category, as shown by (5)b, which contrasts starkly with (4)d:

- (5) a. *A mí no me regalaron nunca nada.*  
 dat me not cl<sub>dat</sub> gave never nothing  
 ‘They never gave anything to me.’
- b. *Con él no se puede contar.*  
 with him not cl<sub>imp</sub> can count  
 ‘We cannot count on him.’

Topicalization in English is also not confined to default (accusative) case, as indicated by (6), where \_\_\_ signals the gap associated with such structures. It must be noted in passing that, much like topicalizations in English examples like (5), CLDs in Romance also tend to perform a contrastive function, as in (5) (Arregi 2003; Kempchinsky 2013; López 2016; Ott 2014, 2015, among others) (I return to the meaning of HTLDs below):

- (6) A: After hearing the evidence against them, what do you think about John and Mary?  
 B: (i) He, I think \_\_\_ is guilty but she, I don’t think \_\_\_ is.  
 (Adapted from Radford [2018: 51])

Returning to the paradigm in (4), observe that a HTLD is itself compatible with a coreferential preverbal phrase in the same clause, as shown for accusative objects in (4)b and for dative CLDs in (7), a feature already noted explicitly by van Riemsdijk (1997):<sup>3</sup>

- (7) *Este<sub>k</sub> a él<sub>k</sub> no se le puede decir ni pío.*  
 this, dat him not cl<sub>imp</sub> cl<sub>dat</sub> can say nor cheep  
 ‘This one, you really cannot tell him anything.’

As the examples of HTLDs furnished so far illustrate, HTs are associated with a resumptive element (though see Section 3.1.9). HTs may be connected to a weak

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<sup>3</sup> The English topicalization homolog of such sentences is rare to find. As Radford (2018: 64) observes, gap-linked/topicalization structures are not common in British English. Yet, he provides the following naturally-occurring example:

- (i) *That failure to persevere with European football, that, I think \_\_\_ puts a huge question mark against his character.*  
 (Tim Vickery, BBC Radio 5)

In any case, it is important to mention that despite the parallelism between Romance CLDs and English topicalization, the Romance construction is far more frequent. Another difference that cannot be ignored is that despite leaving a gap left by movement according to many authors (see, e.g., López [2009]; Villa-García [2015, 2019], among others), CLD is typically associated with a resumptive personal pronoun of the weak type (i.e., a clitic) (see Villa-García and Ott [2023]).

(clitic-like) or strong pronoun/demonstrative, an epithetic correlate, a quantifier, or a full DP, as shown for English by the data in (8):<sup>4</sup>

- (8) a. *Chomsky, I have never read anything by him.*  
 b. *And going to work every day, that helped.*  
 (*Monster: Jeffrey Dahmer*, episode 5, Netflix 2022)  
 c. *But these excursions, they formed the backdrop to his first novel*, *The Sun Also Rises.*  
 (Simon Whistler, *simonwhistler.com*, Biographics, Ernest Hemingway, 2017)  
 d. *Her... that poor woman has suffered a lot.*  
 e. *Books, she doesn't read many.*  
 f. *What Mr Cameron has started, the EU need to continue that process.*  
 (Listener, BBC Radio 5, cited in Radford [2018: 53])

Spanish behaves in much the same way regarding resumption, which is further confirmed by the following spontaneous example from Iberian Spanish, where *Facebook* is interpreted as being coreferential with *eso* within the PP *de eso*:

- (9) *Facebook, yo de eso no tengo.*  
 Facebook I of that not have  
 'I don't use Facebook (or any other social media).'

The epithetic-correlate option is not generally available to CILDs (Villa-García 2019, *inter alia*), which, in contrast to HTLDs, can only be linked to a clitic (e.g., (5)a), as (10) shows:<sup>5</sup>

- (10) %*A Juan no lo contrataron al pobre en Microsoft.*  
 acc John not cl<sub>acc</sub> hired acc+the poor in Microsoft  
 'Microsoft didn't hire poor John.'

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4 Analogous structures are found in Anglo-Saxon, showing that the HT construction is not an innovation, or a feature only observed in speech, as the following example illustrates (see Stark [2022] on the diachrony of HTs in Romance):

- (i) *Europe hio ongind, swa ic ær cwæþ, of Danai þere ie.*  
 Europe she begins, as I earlier said, from Don that river  
 'Europe begins, as I said earlier, from the River Don.' (coorosiu,Or\_1:1.8.23.107)  
 (Old English, cited in Traugott [2007: 416])

5 The acceptability of such sentences improves dramatically if the epithetic correlate appears as right dislocated. Clearly, however, in such cases the righthand phrase is not in its canonical position:

- (i) *A Juan no lo contrataron en Microsoft, al pobre.*

At any rate, there seems to be dialectal variation regarding the availability of epithets with CILDs (see, e.g., Estigarribia [2020]). In this connection, RAE-ASALE (2009: 2978) notes that such cases of doubling with CILDs are found in highly informal colloquial registers.

HTLDed phrases are typically set off intonationally from the sentence with which they occur (see Feldhausen [2016] and references therein). The ‘comma intonation’ (or pause potential, à la Emonds [2004]) characteristic of HTs is usually represented by means of an orthographic comma, as in the preceding examples, though it is not surprising that given the occasional extra strength of this intonational break, some of my English-language and Spanish-language consultants intuitively re-wrote the sample sentences presented to them in writing using suspension points (as does RAE-ASALE [2009: 2975–2976], which in fact makes reference to the terminological variant ‘suspended topics’).<sup>6</sup>

- (11) *Juan... ¡qué alto está el chaval!*  
 John what tall is the boy  
 ‘John, that boy is so tall!’

The distinction between HTLDs and topicalizations in English is rather straightforward, as the former are Resumptive-linked, while the latter are Gap-linked (\_\_\_). In Spanish, by contrast, if the dislocate is non-human, the accusative marker (viz. Differential Object Marking) will be absent in CILDs featuring direct objects. Thus, as observed by López (2009) and Villa-García (2015), the following data are not helpful when it comes to teasing apart HTLDs and CILDs. In (12)a, it is not obvious whether the non-human dislocate *el libro* is a HTLDed phrase or a CILDed one (the only difference being possibly the potential comma that would more commonly accompany a HTLDed constituent in writing to represent the marked prosodic boundary that usually follows HTs; see also RAE-ASALE 2009: 2980). In (12)b, the problem vanishes, as the presence of the epithet *ese tostón* ‘that bore’ unequivocally points to the conclusion that *el libro* is a HT.

- (12) a. *El libro Juan no lo leyó.*  
 the book John not cl<sub>acc</sub> read  
 ‘The book, John didn’t read (it).’  
 b. *El libro, ese tostón Juan no lo leyó.*  
 the book that bore John not cl<sub>acc</sub> read  
 ‘The book, John didn’t read that bore.’

A similar problem arises in relation to Spanish subjects, which are nominative, much like HTs. Recall that Spanish is a null subject language. As a result, a sentence like (13)a does not help distinguish a *bona fide* subject from a dislocated one (López 2009;

<sup>6</sup> A note is in order regarding the consultants who have contributed to the current study: I have consulted twenty speakers (ten per language). Of the English consultants, 6 English speakers report to speak British English and 4 American English; out of the Spanish-speaking group, all speakers consulted except for one, from Peru, come from different areas of Spain. All the informants are in the 30–55 age range and hold university degrees.



Villa-García 2015, 2018). The underlying structure could be as in (13)b, with the pronominal subject in the canonical subject position, or as in (13)c; here, *yo* ‘I’ is a dislocated element, with the canonical subject position being filled by an empty category (by assumption, *pro*). Note further that it is not obvious whether *yo* in this instance would be a case of HTLD or of CLD:<sup>7</sup>

- (13) a. *Yo iré a la fiesta.*  
 I will-go to the party  
 ‘(As far as I am concerned), I will go to the party.’  
 b. *Yo iré a la fiesta.*  
 c. *Yo, pro iré a la fiesta.*

The intonation should help (*yo, ...*), but such cases are not as easy to tease apart, particularly in writing, where prescriptively a comma between the subject and the verb is strongly discouraged. Note that having both dislocated and non-dislocated overt subjects in the same sentence is not unusual:

- (14) *Yo... {yo} no me hipoteco {yo} ni en sueños {yo}.*  
 I I not cl<sub>refl</sub> mortgage not in dreams  
 ‘Me, I won’t ever take out a mortgage loan.’

As an additional diagnostic to distinguish HTLDed subjects from non-dislocated ones, Casielles-Suárez (2004) notes that only full DPs can occupy the canonical subject position, bare NPs being confined to HTLDed contexts, as the following contrast suggests:

- (15) a. *\*Niños no juegan en este parque.*  
 children not play in this park  
 ‘Children don’t play in this park.’

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7 Data of this kind inspired the influential claim that subjects in Spanish-style null-subject languages are always left-dislocated constituents situated in the left periphery of the sentence. However, see Villa-García (2015, 2018) for evidence that overt preverbal subjects in Spanish can –but need not be– left dislocated. It should be noted, however, that in non-full-null-subject varieties of Spanish spoken in areas such as the Caribbean, pronominal preverbal subjects linked to HTs are not rare, as in (i), as noted by Camacho (2008: 422), amongst others (see also the general Spanish example in (14)):

- (i) *María<sub>k</sub> ella<sub>k</sub> cocina muy bien.*  
 Mary, she cooks very well  
 ‘Mary, she cooks very well.’

At any rate, dislocated subjects align with HTs rather than with CLDs in that they routinely fail to exhibit reconstruction effects (López 2009, *inter alia*).

- b. *Niños, me dijo mi primo que no juegan*  
 children cl<sub>dat</sub> said my cousin that not play  
*muchos en este parque.*  
 many in this park  
 ‘As for kids, my cousin told me that not many play in this park.’

As should be evident from the preceding discussion, HTLDed subjects in English are not difficult to detect, as the HTLDed phrase is routinely marked as accusative, in spite of its frequent association with a clause-internal nominative subject:

- (16) *Me, I don't think I'll ever become department head.*

Another well-documented property of HTLDs is that they are not sensitive to locality-of-movement constraints, unlike topicalizations. This is illustrated in (17). The relevant configuration is an instantiation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint, which posits that extraction from one single conjunct results in ungrammaticality. As the contrast illustrates, HTLD is fine in this context (cf. (17)a), but topicalization is not (cf. (17)b):

- (17) a. *My father, I hardly ever see him and my mother when they are not glaring at each other.*  
 b. *\*My father, I hardly ever see \_\_\_ and my mother when they are not glaring at each other.*  
 (van Riemsdijk [1997: 1])

The same can be said of Spanish on the basis of the following data:

- (18) a. *Yo, el examen nos salió mal*  
 I the exam cl<sub>dat</sub> exited bad  
*a mí y a ella.*  
 dat mi and dat her  
 ‘As far as I am concerned, neither she nor I felt we did well in the test.’  
 b. *\*A mí el examen nos salió*  
 dat me the exam cl<sub>dat</sub> exited  
*mal \_\_\_ y a ella.*  
 bad and dat her

I will defer discussion of additional properties of HTLDs until the analysis presented in this paper has been introduced. For now, it will suffice to conclude this section by summing up the major properties of HTLDs observed so far (for English and Spanish):

- HTs are NPs/DPs.
- HTs bear (default) accusative (English) and nominative (Spanish) case.

- In the general case, HTs may be linked to virtually any syntactic function in the clause they are adjacent to.
- HTs are usually connected to a resumptive, be it a (weak/strong) pronoun (e.g., a clitic), an epithetic correlate, a quantifier, or a full DP (which may itself be dislocated).
- HTs are often set off intonationally from the clause with which they appear.
- HTs are island-insensitive.

As far as the theoretical treatment that HTs have received in the literature is concerned, with the advent of the cartographic approach, several analyses have been proposed that try to locate HTs in the left-peripheral spine. CILDs have been primarily analyzed as occupying the specifier position of TopicP under Rizzi's left-peripheral/cartographic approach, as in (19)b. Since HTs routinely precede CILDs, as indicated by (7) and (19)a, most works assume a higher, leftmost position for HTs along the clausal left edge (see, e.g., Krapova and Cinque 2008), as shown abstractly in (19)b, in some cases even above the highest split-CP projection (ForceP), which reflects their 'extremely external' character.

- (19) a. *Hemingway*<sub>HTLD</sub> *al* *pobre*<sub>CILD</sub> *le* *salía* *todo* *mal*.  
 Hemingway, dat+the poor cl<sub>dat</sub> exit all bad  
 'Hemingway, the poor thing was very unlucky.'
- b. [<sub>XP</sub> HTLDed phrase ... [<sub>TopicP</sub> CILDed phrase [<sub>FocusP</sub> [<sub>FinitenessP</sub> [<sub>IP/TP</sub> ... ]]]]]

Our XP projection in (19)b has been posited to be a Discourse Projection constituent (Emonds 2004); a DiscourseP above ForceP in Rizzi's system (Benincà 2001); ForceP, with the HT in its specifier (Faure and Oliviéri 2013); an HP projection whose nucleus is a discourse head (Cinque 2008; Giorgi 2014); a FrameP constituent, as argued by Haegeman and Greco (2016); and a high position in the frame subfield resulting from the split of the topic field postulated by Benincà and Poletto (2004). Whatever the case may be, the common denominator to said accounts is the assumption that, albeit external, HTLDed constituents are part of the sentence on whose edge they occur (hence the monosentential/integrated nature of this line of analysis). Moreover, as noted in Section 1, extant accounts have also focused on addressing the question of whether HTs are derived via movement to the specifier of the XP projection in (19)b or base-generation in that slot.

Before presenting the bisentential proposal put forward here, I turn to a brief outline of the main interpretive properties of HTs mentioned in the literature.

## 2.2 What's in a HT?

Regarding the interpretation of HTs, it is generally assumed by most authors in the generative tradition that HTs are aboutness topics (see below for evidence that

certain topics akin to HTs are heralded by *speaking about*-type phrases). For instance, Cinque (1997 [1983]: 95) points out that “the lefthand phrase [i.e., the HT] is used to bring up or shift attention to a new or unexpected topic.” Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010: 15), for their part, claim that left dislocations in English constitute “a shift with respect to the aboutness topic of the previous sentence.” Put another way, HTs represent a change in what is being talked/written about. Different contexts may however trigger slightly different interpretations, as shown in (20):

- (20) *During his month’s recuperation, Ernest and Agnes explored the sights of Milan together. Hemingway, he became enamored with the dark-haired beauty who was seven years his senior. Her feelings, however, they were not so strong, despite agreeing to marry him at the war’s end.*  
(Simon Whistler, [simonwhistler.com](http://simonwhistler.com), Biographics, Ernest Hemingway, 2017)

The first HT in (20), *Hemingway*, appears to be a case of topic continuation (the biographic podcast to which this excerpt belongs is all about the famous American author) or even a contrastive topic (as opposed to Agnes), as argued by Geluykens (1992: 87). The second HT, *her feelings*, does however constitute a case in which there is a change in what is talked about: from talking about individuals, the conversation now moves on to their feelings (see also Stark [2022]).

More specifically, Givón (1983: 32) observes that HTs (which he calls left dislocations) are employed to return topics back to the register following a gap (cf. *Hemingway* in (20)) and deems HTs to be paragraph-initial devices related to major thematic breaks in thematic structure. In this connection, it should be noted that HTs tend to have a headline or section-title flavor to them: X, of which something is predicated (as in examples like *Girls, they wanna have fun*, which, needless to say, is part of the lyrics of the famous 1983 song by Cyndi Lauper, and *Maria, you’ve gotta see her*, by Blondie, 1999). This basically relates to the traditional theme-rheme/topic-comment partition. In the words of Tizón-Couto (2008: 251), “[HTs] establish a point of departure on which the subsequent message is grounded.” As Krapova and Cinque (2008: 259) contend, the connection between this sort of topic and the comment “is rather loose, i.e., a HT creates only a general context for the [c]omment.” Geluykens (1992) claims that HTs serve to introduce an “irrecoverable, i.e., [ ] discourse-new (but possibly inferable) referent and a proposition concerning it” (Traugott 2007: 408).

Prince (1997: 124) argues that there are different kinds of HTs attending to their meaning (see also Tizón-Couto [2008]). One sort

serves to simplify the discourse processing of Discourse-new entities by removing them from a syntactic position disfavored for Discourse-new entities and creating a separate processing unit for them. Once that unit is processed and they have become Discourse-old, they may comfortably occur in their positions within the clause as pronouns.

Another type of HT interpretation distinguished by Prince (1997) is that in which the HTLDED phrase belongs to a partially ordered set, as in (21), which may as well be deployed by means of topicalizations/CILDs instead (note that the English paraphrase shows that the same situation can be replicated in English):<sup>8</sup>

- (21) *Juan tiene varios tipos de animales en casa. Los ratones, a los pobres no les presta mucha atención. Los peces, sin embargo, a esos sí que no les falta cariño.*  
 John has various types of animals in home the mice dat the poor not cl<sub>dat</sub> lends much attention the fish without however dat those yes that not cl<sub>dat</sub> lack love  
 ‘John has several types of animals at home. Mice, he doesn’t pay much attention to the poor things; the fish, however, those do get much love.’

Be that as it may, despite differences arising from the different contexts in which they occur, HTLDs can be subsumed under the general, umbrella term ‘aboutness.’ In this sense, Ziv (1994: 633) concludes that the thread linking all characterizations of the functions of hanging topics is “basically introductory.” López (2009: 19) provides a summary of the interpretation of hanging topics by noting that a HT phrase can be “a shift-topic or it can be anaphoric, contrastive or not.”

In the next section, I sketch a bisentential, paratactic analysis of HTLDs, and in so doing, I discuss further properties of said structures, to be added to the list provided at the end of the preceding subsection. Although the focus is English and Spanish HTLD, mention of the construction in other languages will be made throughout when appropriate. I also draw comparisons with competing accounts (i.e., monosentential/integrated analyses) as the discussion unfolds.

### 3 ‘I’m hanging in a different sentence,’ said the HTLDED phrase: toward a bisentential account of HTLD

In glaring contrast to monosentential accounts (see Section 2.1), the bisentential, paratactic analysis proposed herein is rooted in Ott’s (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017) biclausal analysis of CILDs and also of predicative non-restrictive nominal appositives (e.g., *I came across Andrew Radford, [an old professor of mine], at the store*). Focusing first

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<sup>8</sup> As noted in the main text and as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, there may be some degree of overlap in terms of the functions of HTs on the one hand and topicalizations/CILDs on the other, an issue which deserves further attention.

on CLLDs, Ott's system constitutes a drastic departure from monosentential/integrated left-peripheral accounts of CLLDs whereby the dislocated phrase sits in the specifier of TopicP, a projection along the split CP of Rizzi (1997 et seq.), as shown abstractly and in simplified form again in (22) (see also (19)b):

(22) [<sub>ForceP</sub> [<sub>TopicP</sub> CLDded phrase [<sub>FocusP</sub> [<sub>FinitenessP</sub> [<sub>IP/TP</sub> cl V...]]]]]

An analysis of this ilk makes the claim that the CLDded constituent is part of the clause, albeit it is situated at the front of the clause (i.e., monosententiality). In the wake of integrated proposals, Ott (2015: 225) capitalizes on Cinque's (1990) Paradox, which contends that "dislocated XPs [e.g., CLLDs] are extra-sentential constituents akin to parentheticals while behaving in certain respects as having moved to their surface position from within the host clause, in apparent violation of the boundaries of 'sentence grammar' as typically defined."<sup>9</sup> Put another way, CLLDs display movement and non-movement properties alike. In order to resolve this paradox, Ott develops a system wherein dislocated XPs of the CLLD kind are elliptical fragments that are linearly juxtaposed to their host clause (so that dislocate and host are paratactically ordered but anaphorically related). On this view, a Spanish sentence with a CLDded phrase like (23)a would be analyzed as in (23)b:

(23) a. A mi amigo lo vilipendiaron.  
 acc my friend cl<sub>acc</sub> vilified  
 'My friend was vilified/My friend, they vilified.'  
 b. [<sub>CP1</sub> vilipendiaron a mi amigo] [<sub>CP2</sub> lo vilipendiaron]

Ellipsis resolution under this analysis can only occur once the postcedent (CP2) has been uttered, in much the same way as in regular cases of 'backward' ellipsis:

(24) *I don't know when ~~they will find the truth~~, but they will find the truth.*

As Ott (2015) notes, the type of ellipsis featured in such constructions is not construction-specific, but attested in other ellipsis-related constructions, such as sluicing and fragment answers; the latter type is illustrated in (25):

(25) A: ¿A quién vilipendiaron?  
 acc who vilified  
 'Who did they vilify?'  
 B: [~~vilipendiaron~~ a mi amigo]  
 acc my friend  
 'My friend.'

<sup>9</sup> As noted by an anonymous reviewer, however, parentheticals display a much wider distribution than dislocates more generally (see also Griffiths and de Vries [2013] and the references cited in that work for much related discussion).

An immediate advantage of this analysis, which I will not review here in detail given space limitations, is that it straightforwardly explains the otherwise mysterious presence of the attending clitic in CLDs and which in fact gives the name to the construction (cf. Clitic Left Dislocation, CLD): under bisententiality/parataxis, *lo* is in a different clause from the dislocate *a mi amigo*, in parallel fashion to what happens in (26), which unambiguously involves a sequence of two separate root sentences. Cross-sentential coreference between the relevant nominal phrases takes place in both (23)a and (26) without further ado.

- (26) *Conocieron a mi amigo. Lo vilipendiaron.*  
 met            acc   my   friend   cl<sub>acc</sub>   vilified  
 ‘They met my friend. They vilified him.’

In essence, the clitic *lo* refers back to its antecedent *a mi amigo* in a separate, preceding sentence both in CLD, as in (23)a, and in cases uncontroversially featuring two separate sentences, as in (26), precisely as expected under Ott’s bisentential analysis of CLDs.

Note that the second sentence needs to be syntactically complete, and this cannot be achieved in the absence of the clitic (viz. \**A mi amigo vilipendiaron vis-à-vis* (23)a and *Conocieron a mi amigo. \*Vilipendiaron vis-à-vis* (26)).

Similarly, the presence of the accusative marker *a* in the dislocate *a mi amigo* in (23)a is explained away under Ott’s analysis: this nominal receives case from the elided transitive verb *vilipendiaron* in a standard, head-to-complement fashion. The analysis also overcomes other issues faced by monosentential proposals, such as why no condition B effects are observed, given that in (22) the CLDed phrase c-commands the clitic pronoun *lo*. This potential issue is immediately sidestepped under parataxis, since pronoun and antecedent are in separate, albeit juxtaposed, sentences (i.e., CP1 and CP2 in (23)b).

Despite the evidence indicating that HTs, our focus here, are clearly ‘satellite’ constituents that are outside the sentence they accompany (Cinque 1997 [1983], among others), a bisentential analysis for HTLDs exactly like the one that Ott has pursued for CLDs is plainly untenable, as shown in (27). The HT bears nominative case and yet it is not the subject in (27)a, making an analysis identical to that of CLDs outlined above implausible (cf. (27)b):

- (27) a. *Yo, me vilipendiaron.*  
 I<sub>nom</sub>   cl<sub>acc</sub>   vilified  
 ‘(As for) me, I was vilified.’  
 b. \*<sub>[CP1 me vilipendiaron yo]</sub> [<sub>CP2 me vilipendiaron</sub>]

Whatever the case may be, if under Ott's analysis CLLDs are not part of the clause on whose left edge they seem to occur, this too surely must be the case of HTLDeDs, whose connectivity to the clause with which they appear is even more tenuous than in the case of CLLDs. Although (27)b is clearly not an option for HTLDeDs, my proposal draws on Ott's general line of research. More specifically, the analysis is loosely based on Ott's (2016) bisentential derivation of predicative non-restrictive appositives, exemplified in (28)a, which he argues should be analyzed as in (28)b:

- (28) a. *I met Noam Chomsky, the person who first uttered the epic sentence 'colorless green ideas sleep furiously,' at an event at Georgetown.*  
 b. [<sub>CP1</sub> *I met Noam Chomsky* ↑ [<sub>CP2</sub> ~~he is~~ [*the person who first uttered...* ] ]

Using evidence from English and German, Ott (2016) shows that these non-restrictive appositives function as predicative supplements, separate propositions expressing a predication. Note that a claim made by such a proposal is that non-restrictive appositives are syntactic disjuncts (extra-sentential expressions). In the words of Ott (2016: 39), a fragment like *the person who first uttered the epic sentence...* in (28)a is "linearly interpolated into the externalized form of the host clause in discourse as an interrupting speech act, rather than integrated syntactically."

Armed with the ingredients above, let us now see how an analysis of this ilk can be applied to the case of HTLDeDs.<sup>10</sup> My proposal is to analyze Hanging Topic Left Dislocations as genuinely 'external' constituents in a bisentential fashion. I will use an example like (29) to illustrate the account in what follows:

- (29) *His temper, it was volcanic.*  
 (Simon Whistler, [simonwhistler.com](http://simonwhistler.com), Biographics, Ernest Hemingway, 2017)

A sentence featuring a HTLDeD phrase like (29) consists of two underlying sentences under the view pursued here. Despite outward appearances, (29) contains two independently generated root sentences, one of which is elliptical. More concretely, the first sentence, CP1, is an elliptical sentence in which only the element that will end up being the HTLDeD phrase survives ellipsis.<sup>11</sup> An immediate question which arises is what the content of this elliptical sentence is. Given the 'aboutness' character of hanging topics, it is natural to assume an underlying sentence along the lines of the following copular constructions (see the discussion around (28) for Ott's [2016]

<sup>10</sup> At least for run-of-the-mill, root HTs, we will in the first instance appeal to juxtaposition, rather than interpolation, of the fragment (i.e., the HTLDeD phrase). In any case, both sorts of linear positioning (interpolation and juxtaposition) are possible under Ott's approach.

<sup>11</sup> The null hypothesis must indeed be that the HT is contained in a sentence, on the assumption that we juxtapose and coordinate like constituents. I would like to thank an anonymous abstract reviewer for pointing this out.



bisentential analysis of predicative non-restrictive appositives involving an elliptical copulative sentence): ‘the topic/theme is X,’ ‘the topic of the upcoming sentence is X,’ ‘the topic of conversation is X,’ ‘what the upcoming discourse/sentence is about is X,’ or ‘the upcoming topic is X.’ For the sake of illustration, I will choose the following:

(30) [CP<sub>1</sub> THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS *his temper*]

The ‘aboutness’ and upcoming-topic-of-conversation character of HTLDs is indeed corroborated by the observation that some topics are commonly introduced by *speaking about*-type phrases (Rubio Alcalá 2014: 107):<sup>12</sup>

- (31) a. *Speaking of Chomsky, I was told that he doesn't write about linguistics anymore.*  
 b. *Hablando de Chomsky, me dijeron que ya no escribe speaking of Chomsky cl<sub>dat</sub> said that already not writes sobre lingüística. about linguistics*

CP<sub>1</sub> is then juxtaposed to CP<sub>2</sub>, which is an independent and syntactically complete sentence:

(32) [CP<sub>2</sub> *it was volcanic*]

Indeed, English provides evidence for the syntactic completeness of CP<sub>2</sub>/the host sentence, in whose vicinity the HT occurs. In their discussion of double-*that* sentences (cf. recomplementation), Villa-García and Ott (2023) show that the sentence heralded by the second instance of the complementizer needs to be syntactically complete, as the secondary *that* signals a restart in discourse. What this means in practice is that when it comes to embedded topicalizations (as in (33)a) and hanging topics (as in (33)b), only the latter are possible in the context of recomplementation, as the following contrast from Villa-García (2019) highlights (see Section 3.1.5 for comparable Spanish data):

- (33) a. *\*They told me that Peter, [that they don't like \_\_\_].*  
 b. *They told me that Peter, [that they don't like him].*

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<sup>12</sup> See Section 3.1.3 for the claim that topics introduced by topic-presenting phrases are not the same as HTs without said phrases. For the avoidance of confusion, it is important to note that I am not claiming that *speaking-of* phrases should be analyzed as involving ellipsis, much like the regular HTs this paper concerns itself with. *Speaking-of* constituents seem to be syntactically dependent from what I have called CP<sub>2</sub>. Whatever the case may be, such phrases constitute a different category from nominal HTs (see Section 3.1.3 for further details). I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this issue to my attention.

The [second sentence] must be complete from point of view of syntax; this requirement is not met in (33)a, which is ungrammatical, but is fulfilled in (33)b, where the resumptive pronoun associated with the sandwiched HT fills in the host-sentence-internal object position, thus making the second sentence syntactically complete.

The HT in CP1 and its syntactically complete host in CP2 are therefore paratactically ordered but anaphorically related. Note that the claim is not that such examples involve hypotaxis in any sense; CP1 and CP2 are the outputs of two independent derivations (i.e., they are neither transformationally related nor subordinated to each other):

- (34) [CP1 ~~THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS~~ *his temper*]  
 [CP2 *it was volcanic*]

Three questions immediately arise in light of the bisentential, paratactic proposal outlined in (34). The first issue concerns the operation of ellipsis, since parallelism of CP1 and CP2 does not obtain in (34). The second one concerns the coreference established between the HTLDed constituent and its correlate in CP2 (e.g., [*His temper*<sub>k</sub>], *it*<sub>k/\*j</sub> *was volcanic*). The third question is related to the potential co-occurrence of HTs and CILDs (in that order) under the approach pursued here. I will address each of them in turn.

As for ellipsis, the sentences containing HTLDs under the account currently pursued (CP1) are not reformulations but reduced copular clauses à la Ott (2016). This type of ellipsis involving copular-clause reduction is independently attested in the natural languages. Merchant (2004b) and Ott (2016) refer to this kind of ellipsis operation as limited ellipsis, which is licensed contextually and thus requires no antecedent (or postcedent) for purposes of recoverability. According to Merchant (2004b: 723), the first part of the copulative sentence, including the subject and the copula itself, can be elided “given the appropriate discourse context, which will be almost any context where the speaker can make a deictic gesture, and where the existence predicate [e.g., *be*] can be taken for granted.” Ott (2016: 11) takes this sort of elliptical construction to apply more broadly (i.e., to predicative non-restrictive appositives, as noted above). The operation in question is illustrated by examples like (35):

- (35) *pointing at a picture of a person on a smartphone:*  
 a. *Me / him / Hemingway.* (= [CP ~~that is/he is~~ *me/him/Hemingway*])  
 b. *Yo / él / Hemingway.* (= [CP ~~es/soy~~ *yo/él/Hemingway*])  
     I    he    Hemingway           is/am I   he Hemingway

I thus take HTLDs to be the result of a process akin to limited ellipsis, as in (34), along the lines of Ott (2016) for predicative non-restrictive appositives. In support of this

hypothesis, it should be noted that on occasion, the elided part of (35) remains visible in PF (i.e., it does not undergo ellipsis). This is actually the case with HTs as well, as the following piece of data, kindly provided by an anonymous reviewer, suggests:

- (36) *Bueno, el tema/problema/caso es tu hija; no hay*  
 well the topic/problem/case is your daughter not there-is  
*quien la aguante.*  
 who cl. bears  
 ‘Well, the problem is your daughter; nobody can stand her.’

As regards (mandatory) coreference between HT and correlate, this too cannot be enforced by parallelism between the two underlying CPs. Following Ott’s (2014, 2015, 2016) lead, I propose instead that coreference arises because of the rhetorical relation between CP1 and CP2. To illustrate this, consider (37)a vis-à-vis (37)b:

- (37) a. *I met Hemingway at [his mansion]<sub>j</sub>. I will now talk about [his writing]<sub>k</sub>; it<sub>k/</sub>  
<sub>\*j/\*i</sub> was impressive.*  
 b. *[His writing]<sub>k</sub> it<sub>k/\*j/\*i</sub> was impressive.*

In (37)a, once *his writing* is introduced into the picture, the only possible referent for the pronoun *it* in the last sentence contained in (37)a is *his writing*, not *his mansion*. If the (sub) topic of conversation (*his writing*) had not been introduced, nothing would preclude *it* from referring to *his mansion* despite the presence of an intervening sentence:

- (38) *I met Hemingway at [his mansion]<sub>j</sub>. That was back in the States. It<sub>j</sub> was  
 impressive.*

As we see in (37)b for HTs, coreference between *it* and *his writing* is obligatory. This is not surprising, as the HT must be present in CP1 for the HTLD construction to be deployed and thus the HT phrase is the only potential discourse referent, salient antecedent for the pronoun *it* in CP2. Even if there is a potential antecedent right before the HT, coreference between that element and the pronoun is not possible:

- (39) *I met Hemingway at [his mansion]<sub>j</sub>. [His writing]<sub>k</sub> it<sub>k/\*j/\*i</sub> was impressive.*

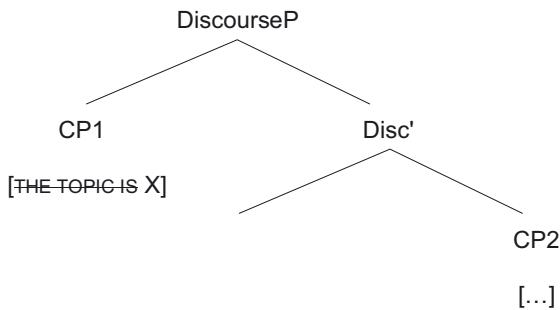
In other words, obligatory coreference between the HTLDed phrase in CP1 and its correlate in CP2 is enforced “not grammatically, but by text/discourse coherence” (Ott 2016: 17), which resonates with Cinque’s (1997 [1983]: 98) claim that “the ‘connection’ [between HT and correlate] is not a sentence grammar rule but a principle of discourse grammar.” Put another way, as Zubizarreta (1999: 4224) observes, the relationship between the HT and the sentence it occurs with is not syntactically restricted: the relationship is merely (co-)referential. What is more, no syntactic dependency is established between HT and host sentence, Zubizarreta contends, an aspect upon which I elaborate below. López (2009: 19), for his part,

characterizes this relationship as one established “by means of a loose discourse connection (as that between a name and a pronoun).”<sup>13</sup>

Although the sentence that follows the HT is syntactically complete (i.e., the HT is not required as far as syntax is concerned), part of the meaning of the host sentence results from the association established with the HT. In this connection, the HTLDed construction occurs next to an open sentence, a sentence that typically contains “a pronominal position lacking independent reference” which, as Cinque (1997 [1983]: 99) notes, must be “anaphorically linked to the NP in the sentence peripheral position” –the HTLDed constituent.

As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, a note is in order regarding the association between CP1 and CP2. The work of Ott makes the claim that the pragmatic connection between CP1 and CP2 is not syntactically determined but enforced by text/discourse coherence, a notion that can be deemed to be obscure. Therefore, I will now adumbrate an alternative that circumvents this objection. According to this reviewer, a more transparent syntactic implementation of the relationship between CP1 and CP2 would be to postulate, following a long tradition (see, e.g., Bianchi and Frascarelli [2010] and references therein), a discourse-related head linking both CP1 and CP2. An immediate advantage of this move would be to dispense with hazy and potentially problematic implications of notions such as ‘discourse grammar’ or ‘text coherence,’ which are nonetheless assumed without further ado in different works, as shown in the preceding paragraph. The suggested alternative analysis would look thus:

(40)



In any case, due to space limitations, I will leave a more thorough investigation of the consequences of adopting the account in (40) for future research.

The third question posed by the analysis advocated here relates to HTLDs vis-à-vis CLDs under the overall approach to left dislocations pursued here, which draws heavily

<sup>13</sup> This coheres well with Radford’s (2018: 103–104) more general contention that sometimes the links between constituents are pragmatic rather than syntactic, showing that syntax is not the only way of connecting constituents.

on the work of Ott (2014, 2015). It is well known that HTs precede CLDed phrases, as shown in (19)a, repeated here for convenience as part of the following contrast:

- (41) a. *Hemingway*<sub>HTLD</sub> *al* *pobre*<sub>CILD</sub> *le* *salía* *todo* *mal*.  
 Hemingway, dat+the poor cl<sub>dat</sub> exit all bad  
 ‘Hemingway, the poor thing was very unlucky.’  
 b. \**Al pobre*<sub>CILD</sub>, *Hemingway*<sub>HTLD</sub>, *le* *salía* *todo* *mal*.

Recall that for Ott, CILD is derived in a bisentential fashion, with the CLDed phrase being the remnant of an ellipsis operation along the lines of (42):

- (42) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~*le salía todo mal*~~ *al pobre*] [<sub>CP2</sub> *le salía todo mal*]

My proposal for HTLDs is that the type of ellipsis involved requires no parallelism with CP2 (cf. limited ellipsis; see (35)/(34)), in contrast to what happens with CILDs (cf. (42)), which do require parallelism with the host clause. Consequently, HTLDed phrases are even more detached from the host sentence than CLDed phrases, hence the restrictive ordering effect observed (cf. (41), where HTLD > CILD). Moreover, the CP1 hosting the HT basically introduces the general topic of the upcoming sentence (i.e., the host sentence), which accounts for why we typically have only one HT (though see Radford 2018), as opposed to CILDs, which can be iterative (Rizzi 1997; Ott 2015). Under the approach adopted herein, a sentence involving both a HT and a CILD concurrently would be analyzed thus:

- (43) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~EL TEMA ES~~ *Hemingway*] [<sub>CP2</sub> ~~*le salía todo mal*~~ *al pobre*] [<sub>CP3</sub> *le salía todo mal*]

In the following subsections, I explore the (mainly syntactic) consequences of the bisentential, paratactic treatment of HTLDs advanced here.

### 3.1 Consequences of treating HTLD as a bisentential phenomenon: theoretical predictions

#### 3.1.1 Binding and bound variables

As noted, HTLDs that have a clause-internal corresponding element establish a coreference relation with said element, as suggested again by the following sentences:

- (44) a. *That man*<sub>k</sub>, *we gave the book to him*<sub>k</sub> *yesterday*.  
 (Dik [1978: 391])  
 b. *Hugo*<sub>k</sub>, *Vane* *cuenta con él*<sub>k</sub>.  
 Hugo, Vanessa counts with him  
 ‘Hugo, Vanessa counts on him.’

Under monosententiality, it is not clear how to void the Condition B effect that would arise if the HTLDED phrases (*that man* and *Hugo*) c-commanded the pronouns with which they corefer, contravening Condition B of the Binding Theory:

(45) [<sub>XP</sub> *that man/Hugo* ... [<sub>IP/TP</sub> ... [<sub>VP</sub> ... [<sub>PP</sub> *him/él* ... ]]]]

The HTLDED phrase may be base-generated in the specifier of a projection like XP in (45), but this does not preclude it from c-commanding the pronoun in the VP phrase, not matter how far down in the syntactic tree the pronoun occurs. Therefore, it is not at all obvious how to prevent a Condition B violation in such cases under an integrated analysis along the lines of (45). Note that such effects certainly ensue in sentences with the subject higher than the pronominal:

- (46) a. *That man<sub>k</sub> gave the book to him<sub>\*k/i</sub> yesterday.*  
 b. *Hugo<sub>k</sub> cuenta con él<sub>\*k/i</sub>.*  
 Hugo counts with him  
 ‘Hugo counts on him.’

The same situation holds for Condition C effects, as referential expressions should be free in the overall structure (i.e., sentence) containing them, as indicated by the contrasts in (47):

- (47) a. *Peter<sub>j/\*k</sub>/he<sub>j/\*k</sub> likes Peter<sub>k</sub>.*  
 b. *Peter<sub>j/\*k</sub>/he<sub>j/\*k</sub> thinks that Peter<sub>k</sub> gorges on pizza.*  
 c. *I met Peter<sub>k</sub> in Notting Hill last week by chance. By the way, I was told that your mate Susan finds Peter<sub>k</sub> gorgeous.*

Again, monosententiality provides no convincing answer to why Condition C is not violated in the case of HTs and their correlates, as shown by (48).

- (48) a. *John<sub>k</sub> I don't know anybody who likes John<sub>k</sub> a whole lot.*  
 (Ziv [1994: 631])  
 b. *Patrick<sub>k</sub> where is Patrick<sub>k</sub>?*  
 (*The Man with the Answers*, 2021 movie, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy)  
 c. *Este<sub>k</sub> el pobre chaval<sub>k</sub> está fatal.*  
 this the poor guy is terrible  
 ‘This one, the poor guy is not doing well.’  
 d. *El dinero<sub>k</sub> ya me había olvidado del dinero<sub>k</sub>.*  
 the money already cl<sub>refl</sub> had forgotten of+the money  
 ‘The money, I had already forgotten about the money.’  
 (Spontaneous speech, Spain, May 2022)

Note in passing that examples (48)a, b, d actually feature cases where the HT and the correlate are the same element, the DP *John/Patrick/el dinero*, exactly as expected if

the second sentence is an independent, syntactically complete sentence (much like what we observe in relation to unambiguously independent sentences, as in (47)c); however, this state of affairs is rather problematic under unisentential accounts.

For reasons like this and others to be explored below, in this paper, I take the characterization of HTs as ‘extra-sentential’ constituents seriously (Dik 1978, 1989; Cinque 1997 [1983]; Ziv 1994; Acuña Fariña 1995; Ott 2015; Keizer 2020, among others). In fact, my major theoretical claim is that HTs belong to a preceding, elliptical sentence juxtaposed to the host sentence, as outlined in the preceding section:

- (49) [CP<sub>1</sub> THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS *that man/Hugo*]  
 [CP<sub>2</sub> *we gave the book to him yesterday/Vane cuenta con él*] (= (44)a, b)

Under bisententiality, the coreference between HT and resumptive is not established grammatically at the level of the sentence, but at the rhetorical level, in discourse grammar (see Section 3 for further details).<sup>14</sup> Hence, no Condition B or C violations arise. Therefore, once analyzed as extra-sentential elements, the relevant examples do not contravene either of the principles of Binding Theory (see also Ziv [1994: 631]). The same is found, unsurprisingly, in parallel cases of unambiguously separate sentences, as in (47)c/(50), which are analogous to (49), *modulo* the ellipsis assumed in CP<sub>1</sub> in (49).

- (50) a. *We met that man<sub>k</sub> a while ago; we gave the book to that man<sub>k}/him<sub>k</sub> yesterday.</sub>*  
 b. *Este es Hugo<sub>k</sub>; Vane cuenta con Hugo<sub>k}/él<sub>k</sub>.</sub>*  
 this is Hugo Vanessa counts with Hugo/him  
 ‘This is Hugo; Vanessa counts on Hugo/him.’

All in all, under the two-sentence proposal, the potential problem of what look like anomalously coreferring nominals posed by monoclausality ceases to exist. What is more, the need for HT and resumptive to be coreferential follows from the assumptions laid out at the beginning of Section 3 without further ado.

Lastly, HTLDs stand in stark contrast with CLDs and topicalizations in not being able to feature anaphors or reciprocals, as shown by (51):

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<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Ziv (1994: 644) for a pragmatic account of the expression of coreferentiality evident in HTs; this account “derives the various distributional patterns of the coreferential pronouns from the interaction of the discourse-organizational functions of the constructions in question and the varying capacities of the different referring expressions to retrieve and activate distinct discourse referents.” Put another way, Ziv advocates analyzing such referring expressions in terms of discourse rather than strictly sentential anaphora, fully consonant with the proposal developed here (see also the references mentioned at the start of Section 3).

- (51) a. \**Himself*, he would never pass him over.  
(Radford [2018: 48])
- b. \**Él mismo*, *Juan se manda emails a él mismo*.  
he same John cl<sub>dat</sub> send emails dat he himself  
Intended: \*‘Himself, John sends emails to himself.’

This state of affairs follows naturally under bisententiality, since the anaphor is in an elliptical copular sentence in which it fails to be bound by a suitable antecedent:

- (52) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS~~ *himself/él mismo*]  
[<sub>CP2</sub> *he would never pass him over/Juan se manda emails a él mismo*]

The same can be said of the unavailability of the bound-variable interpretation with HTLDED constituents (for Spanish, see, especially, López 2009 and references therein):

- (53) a. *His supervisor*<sub>K/\*i</sub> [*every student*]<sub>i</sub> admires him.  
(Radford [2018: 50])
- b. *Su perro*<sub>K/\*i</sub>, [*todo quisqui*]<sub>i</sub> *lo acaricia diariamente*.  
his/her dog all everyone cl<sub>acc</sub> pet daily  
‘His/her dog, everybody pets him/her/it every day.’

The data just reviewed are fully consistent with the bisentential, paratactic analysis of HTs proposed here (as the operator, e.g., *every student/todo quisqui*, does not c-command the possessive pronoun, namely *his/su*, since operator and pronoun belong to two different sentences, CP2 and CP1, respectively, much as in the case of anaphors in (52) above).

Overall, the anti-connectivity displayed by HTs can straightforwardly be accounted for by assuming that the HT and its correlate belong to two separate sentences (CP1 and CP2), linked to one another paratactically.<sup>15</sup> Needless to say, the evidence adduced here strongly militates against a movement analysis of HTs in a monosentential setting under integrated approaches (cf. (19)b); the binding and variable-binding evidence is at best marginally compatible with base-generation of the HT in a high position in the left periphery, although both derivations run up against non-trivial problems.

### 3.1.2 Agreement and pronouns

Another aspect that underscores the anti-connectivity evinced by HTs is agreement. If hanging topics are extra-sentential elements that are juxtaposed to the host sentence, one would expect a certain degree of agreement mismatches between the HT

<sup>15</sup> For reasons of space, I will not include other arguments to the same effect (e.g., scope and idioms), on which see Radford (2018: Ch. 2).



and the element associated with it inside the sentence to which it is adjacent, since the (pragmatic) connection between the two is rather loose and in no case intrasentential. Examples like (54) confirm that lack of full agreement is sometimes the case:

- (54) a. *Full details and latest transfer news, it's all on the website.*  
(Ian Abrahams, Talksport Radio, cited in Radford [2018: 53])  
b. *My last boyfriend in Chicago, we were together forever.*  
(*Emily in Paris*, episode 9, season 3, Netflix 2022)

Spanish also displays such mismatches:

- (55) *Claro, las colchas es distinto.*  
clear the duvets is different  
'Of course, duvets, that's different.'  
(Marcos Marín, corpus example, cited in [Hidalgo 2002: 7])<sup>16</sup>

These data argue strongly against a movement analysis under monosentential/integrated accounts (Radford 2018; van Riemsdijk and Zwarts 1974); clearly, the HT cannot be a mere copy of the second NP arising via movement (e.g., *full details and latest transfer news – it*).<sup>17</sup>

Further, agreement facts in relation to collective nouns like *gente* 'people' in Spanish provide additional support for the claim being put forth here that the HT occurs in a sentence that paratactically precedes the host. Despite making reference to a group of individuals, *gente* is syntactically singular and feminine:

- (56) a. *La gente está enferma.*  
the people is ill<sub>sg, fem</sub>  
'People are not doing well.'  
b. *Vi a la gente del pueblo cabizbaja.*  
saw acc the people of+the village dejected<sub>sg, fem</sub>  
'I saw the people from the town dejected.'  
c. *Esta es gente con la que no cuento.*  
this<sub>sg, fem</sub> is people with the<sub>sg, fem</sub> that not count  
'These are people on who(m) I don't count.'

<sup>16</sup> I maintain the original spelling without a comma, though my native-speaker consultants report an intonational break between *las colchas* and the copula *es*. Without a pause, plural agreement would normally be triggered, according to my consultants' intuitions.

<sup>17</sup> See van Riemsdijk (1997) for the intuition that absence of agreement typically correlates with a more pronounced intonation break between the HT and the rest of the sentence (i.e., the host sentence, in our terms).

By contrast, López (2007: 81–85) notes that despite being syntactically singular, a word like *gente* is semantically plural. Thus, in discourse, López (2009: 15) argues, “a pronoun that refers back to *gente* will show up in plural form.” Note that in this case, gender is also default masculine. This is shown by (57):<sup>18</sup>

- (57) *La gente llegó tarde. Estaban/\*estaba agotados/*  
 the people arrived late were was exhausted<sub>pl, masc</sub>  
*\*agotada.*  
 exhausted<sub>pl, fem</sub>  
 ‘People arrived very late. They were exhausted.’

This situation makes a very clear prediction regarding HTs. If HTs are in a different sentence from the host and the relationship between HT and host is discursive, rather than purely syntactic, then HTs should be related to a plural entity in the host sentence. In other words, we should observe a pattern of behavior akin to that manifested across sentences, as in (57), rather than inside sentences, as in (56). This prediction is borne out, as speakers manifest a strong preference for a masculine-plural correlate of the HT containing *la gente*:<sup>19</sup>

- (58) a. *La gente de mi pueblo... ¡Cómo me insultaban*  
 the people of my village how cl<sub>acc</sub> insulted<sub>pl</sub>  
*los muy sinvergüenzas!*  
 the<sub>pl, masc</sub> very shameless<sub>plural</sub>  
 ‘The people of my village, the bastards really bullied me.’
- b. *?\*La gente de mi pueblo... ¡Cómo me insultaba*  
 the people of my village how cl<sub>acc</sub> insulted<sub>sg</sub>  
*la muy sinvergüenza!*  
 the<sub>sg, fem</sub> very shameless<sub>sg</sub>
- c. *La gente de nuestra clase... ya no me*  
 the people of our class already not cl<sub>refl</sub>  
*hablo con ellos / los muy tercos.*  
 talk with them<sub>pl, masc</sub> the<sub>pl, masc</sub> very stubborn  
 ‘Our classmates, I don’t talk to them/those stubborn individuals anymore.’
- d. *?\*La gente de nuestra clase... ya no me*  
 the people of our class already not cl<sub>refl</sub>

<sup>18</sup> Although plural agreement is the default and preferred option with the null-subject, some speakers appear to be able to use the singular-feminine form and still get *la gente* as the extra-sentential antecedent of the non-overt pronominal. The fact that agreement data are always subject to a high degree of inter-speaker variation is well known in the literature.

<sup>19</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out that this is clearly the case of Italian *la gente* as well.

- hablo con ella / la muy terca.*  
 talk with her<sub>sg, fem</sub> the<sub>sg, fem</sub> very stubborn<sub>sg, fem</sub>
- e. *Esa gente, dios, esos mierdas me jodieron viva.*  
 that people god those crappers<sub>pl</sub> cl<sub>acc</sub> screwed<sub>pl</sub> alive  
 ‘Those people, gosh, the bastards screwed me up bigtime.’
- f. *?\*Esa gente, dios, esa mierda me jodió viva.*  
 that people god that crapper<sub>sg, fem</sub> cl<sub>acc</sub> screwed<sub>sg</sub> alive

The agreement facts just presented corroborate the extra-sentential character of HTs, exactly as predicted under parataxis (i.e., [<sub>CP1</sub> ... HT] [<sub>CP2</sub> host sentence]).

Finally, a related point can be made on the basis of Brazilian Portuguese pronouns, which I will illustrate through the sequence *a gente* ‘lit. in the people.’ Brazilian Portuguese is a language that has been reported to display only a partial-null-subject system. Moreover, at present, *a gente* is used instead of the first-person plural form *nós* ‘we.’ However, *a gente* agrees with a third-person singular verb form:

- (59) *A gente vai à Feira de São Cristóvão.*  
 the people go<sub>sg</sub> to fair of saint Christopher  
 ‘We go to St. Christopher’s Fair.’

If a second, embedded clause appears, then a null subject can occur (Jairo Nunes, pers. comm.), as shown by (60); I use *pro* for expository reasons, without making a commitment to the theoretical status of the coreferential null subject:

- (60) *A gente<sub>k</sub> acha que pro<sub>k</sub> ganhou na lotto.*  
 the people believe<sub>sg</sub> that won<sub>sg</sub> in lottery  
 ‘We think that we won the lottery.’

Nonetheless, across sentences, a null subject is not possible: the pronoun (e.g., *a gente*) must be repeated:

- (61) *A gente<sub>k</sub> fala muito; a gente<sub>k</sub> falou tudo.*  
 the people speak<sub>sg</sub> much a gente spoke<sub>sg</sub> all  
 ‘We speak a lot; we said it all.’

When HTs are brought into the picture, their pattern of behavior aligns not with what we observe in (60) for elements across dependent clauses within the same sentence, but with what we see across independent sentences, as in (61). The pronoun must be repeated:

- (62) *A gente<sub>k</sub>, a gente<sub>k</sub> falou tudo.*  
 the people the people spoke<sub>sg</sub> all  
 ‘Us, we said it all.’

Parataxis provides a clear answer to the pattern observed: a null subject is not possible across independent sentences in Brazilian Portuguese, and the second sentence (CP2, the host) must be syntactically complete in (62) irrespective of the

occurrence of a HT. Since Brazilian Portuguese in such contexts behaves like a non-null-subject language (we are dealing with a root sentence here, not with an embedded one, as in (60)), the second occurrence of the pronoun (*a gente*) must be present so as to satisfy the requirement to employ an overt preverbal subject operative in this language – a null subject is not licensed (i.e., without an overt preverbal subject, CP2 would be incomplete from the syntactic point of view). Consequently, HT examples featuring pronominals like *a gente* in Brazilian Portuguese indicate that HTs mask two underlying root sentences juxtaposed paratactically, much like in the case of unequivocally separate sentences (cf. (61)).

### 3.1.3 Case

The anti-connectivity of hanging topics is substantiated by the fact that HTs across the world's languages have been reported to appear in absolute form (without case-marking) (Hidalgo 2002), or to bear either default case (accusative case in English, as shown again in (63)a, and nominative in Spanish, as in (63)b) or, more traditionally, *casus pendens* ('hanging case'):

- (63) a. \**I/me, they don't trust me.*  
 b. *Yo/\*mí, no confían en mí.*  
 I me not rely on me  
 'Me, they don't trust me.'

The question which arises in relation to the case borne by HTs is how such nominals come to bear accusative or nominative case, depending on the language. Radford (2018) observes that this may be (i) default case (Schütze 2001), as the HT is outside the scope of any potential case-assigner (though see Merchant [2004a] against the notion of default case); (ii) the result of an abstract spec-head agreement relationship with a (null) topic head; or else (iii) the product of being preceded by an abstract (null) transitive topic-introducing preposition of the *as-for* type (e.g., *as for me, they don't trust me*). The plausibility of such an account for the Spanish case is called into question by data like the following, indicating that topic-introducing expressions in Spanish typically assign accusative case (see also (31)b above):

- (64) *En cuanto a mí/\*yo, no confían en mí.*  
 as-for to me I not rely on me  
 'As for me, they don't trust me.'

There is one topic-introducing sequence, however, compatible with nominative case (albeit less common than *en cuanto a*):

- (65) *Lo que es yo/\*mí, no confían en mí.*  
 the that is I me not rely on me  
 'As for me, they don't trust me.'

Attractive as this account may seem, it is not clear that crosslinguistically all *as-for* constructions (or topic-introducing constructions more generally) constitute genuine HTs (on this issue, see, among others, Acuña-Fariña [1995]; Villalba [2000]; Krapova and Cinque [2008], and Stark [2022], among others). Moreover, an implicit assumption in some of the options suggested by Radford (2018) in (i)-(iii) is of course monoclausality, as the HT is regarded as an intra-sentential element, albeit left-peripheral.

Recall that the currently-pursued proposal constitutes a drastic departure from the above in that the HT belongs to an underlying copula sentence that has undergone ellipsis and which is juxtaposed to the host clause. The HTs are predicates in those copular clauses and as such receive the relevant case in each language: accusative in English (cf. (66)) and nominative in Spanish (cf. (67)) (see Ott [2016] for a similar approach to nominative case assignment in predicative non-restrictive nominal appositives in languages like German, illustrated for English above in (28)):

(66) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IS~~ *me/\*I*]  
 [<sub>CP2</sub> *I didn't say anything*]

(67) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~EL TEMA DE CONVERSACIÓN SOY~~ *\*mi/yo*]  
 the topic of conversation am me/I  
 [<sub>CP2</sub> *yo no dije nada*]  
 I not said nothing

Consequently, the bisentential account of HTs dispenses with the need to invoke ad hoc case-marking mechanisms for hanging topics; the case of such nominals is determined in CP1 in a standard, local fashion: they receive predicative accusative (English)/nominative (Spanish) case. Other languages follow this pattern too. For instance, Sigurðsson and van de Weijer (2021) show that the case exhibited in copular sentences in Swedish is nominative, in parallel fashion to Spanish. HTs likewise bear nominative case in Swedish, as expected:<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> An interesting prediction of this proposal is that in varieties where the case of HTs may be changing (e.g., from nominative to accusative/oblique), the same should be observed in predicative environments (and in traditionally nominative contexts more generally). This prediction is in fact borne out by regional varieties of Italian, as shown by the HT data in (i)a, kindly provided by an anonymous reviewer, as well as by the predicative data in (i)b, from Fiorentino (2021), with *te/me* instead of the canonical nominative pronouns *tu/io*:

- (i) a. *Te/ me, non ti/ mi hanno spedito niente.*  
 you<sub>acc/obl</sub> me<sub>acc/obl</sub> not you<sub>dat</sub>/ me<sub>dat</sub> have sent nothing  
 'You/me, they haven't sent us anything.'
- b. *Io non sono te.*  
 I not am you<sub>acc/obl</sub>  
 'I am not you.'

- (68) *Jag/\*mig, jag gillar bönor.*  
 I/ me, I like beans  
 ‘Me, I like beans.’

(Sigurðsson and van de Weijer [2021: 198])

The account put forth here can also go a long way to explain why it is only DPs/NPs that can be featured as HTs. A PP, for instance, would not be possible in predicative position:<sup>21</sup>

- (69) [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~EL TEMA DE CONVERSACIÓN~~ ~~ES/SON~~ \**de mí*]  
 the topic of conversation is/am of me  
 [<sub>CP2</sub> *dijeron cosas de mí*]  
 said things of me

Intended: ‘Me, they said things about me.’

A bare NP, such as *niños* in (15)b above, is also tolerated in the predicative position in CP1 (i.e., [<sub>CP1</sub> ~~EL TEMA ES/SON~~ *niños*] ...), which is consistent with the observation that such phrases sit well as HTs.

Having discussed anti-connectivity in terms of binding, agreement, and case, we now turn to other properties of HTs easily accommodated under bisententiality, and which further allow us to tease apart competing proposals.

### 3.1.4 Comma intonation/pause potential

As noted in Section 2, one of the distinguishing features of HThood is that the HT is more often than not separated from the sentence it accompanies by a salient intonational boundary (Acuña-Fariña 1995; van Riemsdijk 1997; Emonds 2004; Feldhausen 2016, among others). This is often rendered in spelling by a comma or by suspension points, as has been noted.

This is wholly compatible with the claim made here that the relation between the fragment HT (CP1) and its host sentence (CP2) is paratactic, each sentence forming a separate intonational phrase (cf. Nespor and Vogel 1986):

- (70) (<sub>IntonP</sub> HT)<sub>CP1</sub> (<sub>IntonP</sub> ...)<sub>CP2</sub>

Fragment and host thus typically exhibit ‘comma intonation’ (intonational isolation), exactly as expected if the sequence is composed of linearly juxtaposed root clauses in a paratactic rather than intrasentential arrangement. In Section 3.1.8, this claim is further substantiated by HTs whose illocutionary force differs from that of the host

<sup>21</sup> Cinque (1997 [1983]) notes that NPs are autonomous units of discourse, while PPs are sub-categorized by an appropriate prepositional-complement-selecting verb, and thus such phrases do not qualify as good HTs.

sentence, such as ‘interrogative’ HTs, which display their own interrogative intonation, unlike the falling intonation contour displayed by the non-interrogative sentence to which they are contiguous.

### 3.1.5 Really external, or rather, extra-sentential: complementizers, V3, and clitic directionality

Spanish provides a syntactic context which strongly confirms the outside-the-host-sentence character of HTLDs. In Spanish, the answer to a *what-is-going-on* or *what-happened-to-you* kind of question is typically heralded by the complementizer *que* ‘that.’ The data are inspired by those in Villa-García (2015):

(71) seeing that B has a sad face

A: *¿Qué te pasa?*  
 what cl<sub>dat</sub> happens  
 ‘What happens?’

B: *Que depende todo el mundo de mi madre.*  
 that depends all the world of my mother  
 ‘(That) everybody depends on my mother.’

Now, if we try to promote the PP *de mi madre* to the very front, the resulting utterance is ungrammatical:

(72) seeing that B has a sad face

A: *¿Qué te pasa?*  
 what cl<sub>dat</sub> happens  
 ‘What happens?’

B: *\*De mi madre, que depende todo el mundo.*  
 of my mother that depends all the world  
 ‘Everybody depends on my mother.’

By contrast, if the element preceding *que* is a genuine HTLD (not a PP), the sentence becomes fully acceptable:

(73) seeing that B has a sad face

A: *¿Qué te pasa?*  
 what cl<sub>dat</sub> happens  
 ‘What happens?’

B: *Mi madre, que depende todo el mundo de ella.*  
 my mother that depends all the world of her  
 ‘My mother, everybody depends on her.’

That a HTLDed phrase (cf. (73)), but not a CILDed PP (cf. (72)), can occur in pre-complementizer position confirms that the HTLDed phrase is truly external to the clause with which it appears.<sup>22</sup> Incidentally, a HT would be impossible in the immediate post-*que* position:

(74) seeing that B has a sad face

A: *¿Qué te pasa?*  
 what cl<sub>dat</sub> happens  
 ‘What happens?’

B: *\*Que mi madre, depende todo el mundo de ella.*  
 that my mother depends all the world of her  
 ‘My mother, everybody depends on her.’

Not surprisingly, a true CILDed constituent can sit well in the position immediately following *que*:

(75) seeing that B has a sad face

A: *¿Qué te pasa?*  
 what cl<sub>dat</sub> happens  
 ‘What happens?’

B: *Que de mi madre depende todo el mundo.*  
 that of my mother depends all the world  
 ‘Everybody depends on my mother.’

Summarizing, we have the following possibilities in *what-happened* contexts in Spanish (though see fn. 22):

- (76) a. \*CILD *que* ... (cf. (72))  
 b. HTLD *que* ... (cf. (73))  
 c. \**que* HTLD ... (cf. (74))  
 d. *que* CILD ... (cf. (75))

Importantly for our purposes, only a true HTLDed phrase can occur in the pre-*que* position in the context at issue (cf. (76)b), which corroborates the claim made here

22 Campos (1992) offers examples suggesting that case-marked phrases (i.e., CILDs) can occur in pre-*que* position in similar contexts for some speakers, as in (i). This indicates that there may be dialectal variation in this regard, as the 10 Spanish speakers consulted reject such sentences (in much the same way as they do not accept CILDed PPs in this environment). Note that the existence of such data is compatible with Ott’s account of CILDs, which are also analysed as extra-sentential elements.

(i) A mi hermana, que la vi triste.  
 acc my sister that cl<sub>acc</sub> saw sad  
 ‘I’ve seen my sister sad.’



that HTLDs belong in a separate sentence and are therefore even more external than CLLDs, which may be subject to more stringent proximity requirements with respect to the host sentence (i.e., they require parallelism with CP2). Under monoclausality, an external position above the highest element in the left periphery (presumably above ForceP) would have to be invoked for HTs. Alternatively, it could be claimed that the head whose specifier is occupied by the HTLDed phrase would be lexicalized as *que*. However, it is not evident how this last option would be implemented, as *que* can occur (and normally occurs) independently of the HTLDed constituent, as indicated by (71), which severs the HTLDed element from the complementizer occurring to its right in cases like (73). Such stipulations are not necessary under bisententiality, and hence this theoretical option is to be preferred.<sup>23</sup>

Still within the realm of complementizers, it is important to discuss a well-known but poorly understood asymmetry in Spanish regarding the (im)possibility of embedded HTLDs. Several authors, including Zubizarreta (1999), have shown that HTs are confined to root contexts, examples like the following being illicit:

- (77) \**Estoy segura de que Bernardo, nadie confía en ese idiota.*  
 am sure of that Bernard nobody trusts in that idiot  
 ‘Bernard, I am pretty sure that nobody trusts that idiot’.  
 (Zubizarreta [1999: 4221])

However, authors like Grohmann and Etxepare (2003), González i Planas (2011), and Villa-García (2015) have provided data to the effect that if a second *que* complementizer occurs after the (embedded) HT, then the HT becomes far more acceptable:

- (78) a. *Me dijo que el baloncesto, que ese deporte mola.*  
 cl<sub>dat</sub> said that the basketball that that sport rocks  
 ‘S/He told me that basketball, that that sport is fun.’  
 b. *Dice que un coche, que le ha cogido la*  
 says that a car that cl<sub>dat</sub> has taken the  
*explosión de lleno.*  
 explosion of full  
 ‘S/He says that a car, that the explosion has caught it in full.’  
 (Reporter, Madrid, 1973, featured in *El asesinato de Carrero Blanco*,  
 Spanish Radio & Television Corporation, RTVE, 2014)

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<sup>23</sup> Benincà (2001) concludes that topics that precede a complementizer in Italian can only be of the HT-type, as in (i) (see also Bianchi and Frascarelli [2010] for corpus data to this effect). This resonates with the main claim of the present paper.

- (i) *Penso questo libro che lo leggerò.*  
 think this book that cl<sub>acc</sub> will-read  
 ‘This book, I think that I will read it.’

The obligatoriness of the second *que* in examples of embedded HTs like those in (78) has been shrouded in mystery to date (see Villa-García [2015] for much relevant discussion). Nevertheless, recent research has shown that secondary complementizers constitute restarts in discourse, signaling a new sentence that resumes the first one (Villa-García 2019; Villa-García and Ott 2023). If the second *que* marks the beginning of another sentence, as claimed by, e.g., Villa-García and Ott (2023), then the external nature of HTs (even in what appear to be cases of embedding) is not surprising: the HT is not part of the embedded clause, but outside it, much like in the cases reviewed above (cf. (71)–(75)):

- (79) [CP<sub>1</sub> *dice que...*] [CP<sub>2</sub> *EL TEMA DE CONVERSACIÓN ES un coche*]  
 says that the topic of conversation is a car  
 [CP<sub>3</sub> ... *que le ha cogido la explosión de lleno*] (= (78)b)  
 that cl has taken the explosion of full

Since the HT in the elided CP<sub>2</sub> is not syntactically part of the sentence heralded by *dice que* ‘says that’ (cf. CP<sub>1</sub>), the restart (CP<sub>3</sub>) needs to resume CP<sub>1</sub> by means of repeating the complementizer in (79), which accounts for its mandatory occurrence in such cases.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, note that (78)b would be syntactically complete without the (seemingly embedded) HT:

- (80) *Dice que le ha cogido la explosión de lleno.*  
 says that cl<sub>dat</sub> has taken the explosion of full  
 ‘S/He says that the explosion has caught it in full.’

Moving away from English and Spanish momentarily, as an additional, cross-linguistic piece of evidence symptomatic of the external or, more precisely, extra-sentential nature of HTLDs, it is important to mention the well-known fact that in German, a prototypical example of a V2 language, HTs lead to apparent V3 orders (Ziv 1994; Ott 2015, among others):

<sup>24</sup> See the discussion surrounding (33) in Section 3 for comparable English data. In work in progress, I show that alleged embedded HTs in English do not require the second instance of *that*. Under Villa-García and Ott’s (2023) account, this follows naturally from the assumption that the second complementizer in recomplementation patterns signals a restart in discourse, and as such is identical to the first instance of the complementizer (i.e., ... [*digo/I say* [CP<sub>1</sub> *que/that* ...]] [*digo/I say* [CP<sub>2</sub> *que/that*...]]). Since the complementizer can generally be absent in English but not in Spanish, the secondary complementizer too can be absent in English but not in Spanish; the secondary complementizer is in reality the same complementizer that appears in CP<sub>1</sub> and hence shows the same omission possibilities.

- (81) *Der Professor, sie lobten ihn.*  
 the<sub>nom</sub> professor they praised him<sub>acc</sub>  
 ‘The professor, they praised him.’  
 (German, from Ziv [1994: 632, fn. 6])

Under the two-sentence analysis pursued here, this is explained away: in the host sentence/CP2, the verb is canonically in the second position, as expected in German (i.e., ... [<sub>CP2</sub> *sie lobten ihn*]). The seeming V3 position of the verb in (81) is just illusory; it stems from the fact that *der Professor* is part of CP1, an independent elliptical copular sentence, juxtaposed to CP2.

Lastly, Bulgarian cliticization facts further support this conclusion. Bulgarian is a language which normally displays enclitics (postverbal clitics), (82)a, unless a preverbal element occurs that supports the clitic, yielding proclisis (preverbal clitics), (82)c. In other words, Bulgarian obeys Wakarnegel’s law, forcing unstressed pronouns to occur in syntactic second position.

- (82) a. *Vidjax ja.*  
 saw cl<sub>acc</sub>  
 ‘I saw her.’  
 b. \**Ja vidjax.*  
 cl<sub>acc</sub> saw  
 c. *Otnovo ja vidjax.*  
 again cl<sub>acc</sub> saw  
 ‘I saw her again.’  
 (Bulgarian, from Avgustinova [1994])

Crucially, a HT is not sufficient to support the clitic, that is, a HT does not qualify as the first syntactic element in the sentence, leading to enclisis in such cases (*contra* the judgments reported in Krapova and Cinque 2008):

- (83) *Az, pokanixa me ošte včera na sreštata.*  
 I<sub>nom</sub> invited cl<sub>acc</sub> already yesterday to the reunion  
 ‘Me, they invited me yesterday (already) to the reunion.’  
 (Bulgarian, Roumyana Slabakova, pers. comm.)

This follows naturally from the paratactic account advocated here: the pronominal HT *az* is in a separate sentence (CP1), and therefore the clitic *me* cannot be the first element in CP2; it needs to occur postverbally, in second position in CP2. Superficially, however, in an example like (83) the clitic seemingly occurs in third position, but in reality, it is the second element in its own sentence (CP2) (i.e., ... [<sub>CP2</sub> *pokanixa me* ...]). Under monosentential proposals, locating the HT in a high, left-peripheral

CP-related projection would lead to the expectation that the HT should serve to support the clitic, contrary to fact.<sup>25</sup>

Overall, the evidence regarding complementizers, V3 configurations, as well as clitic placement point to the conclusion that HTLDs are extra-sentential elements, exactly as argued under the bisentential analysis.

### 3.1.6 Insensitivity to islands and islanhood

As noted in Section 2 in relation to examples like (17) and (18), one of the hallmarks of HTLDs is the well-documented fact that they do not obey islands. The examples therein focused on the coordinate structure constraint. That HTs are not sensitive to islands is shown again for [adjunct islands] in (84):

(84) *Me<sub>k</sub>, my ex didn't go to London [because I<sub>k</sub> live there].*

Given that islands are opaque domains for extraction, any account that assumes movement of *me* from the [bracketed structure] in cases like (84) would predict that the HT would be marooned within the island, contrary to fact. The paratactic account handles such cases in a straightforward fashion: *me* is never part of the island (or of the clause preceding the island, for that matter); it is in a different sentence, and thus it can coexist with an island occurring inside the host sentence. What is more, the HT is coreferential with an element within the island. There is no movement or attempted extraction at any point; the HT establishes no syntactic dependency with the host sentence. In effect, this is analogous to what happens in a sequence of unambiguously independent root clauses where coreference also obtains despite the presence of the island, just as predicted under parataxis:

(85) *They met me<sub>i}/Kyle<sub>i</sub> but I really think they don't like me<sub>i}/him<sub>i</sub>. In fact, they didn't go to London [because I<sub>i}/he<sub>i</sub> live(s) there].</sub></sub></sub>*

Moreover, it has been noted in the literature that HTs themselves exhibit island-creating properties (Ziv 1994: 131; Cinque and Rizzi 2010, among others); that is, no movement operations can cross HTs.<sup>26</sup> (86) illustrates:

<sup>25</sup> A similar situation occurs in the Western Iberian Romance language Asturian, which typically displays enclisis in finite contexts, except when preverbal focused phrases occur, triggering proclisis instead. Much like in Bulgarian, a HT triggers enclisis:

(i) *Yo, paezme a mí que no. (cf. \*Yo, me paez a mí que no)*  
 I seems-cl<sub>dat</sub> dat me that no  
 'Me, it seems to me that it is not the case.'

<sup>26</sup> Cinque and Rizzi (2010) note that if a position manifests island-creating properties, as is the case of HTs, then it must be higher structurally than other positions filled by movement.

- (86) \*¿A cuál de ellas yo, me van a asignar?  
 dat which of them I<sub>nom</sub> cl<sub>acc</sub> go to assign  
 Intended: ‘As for me, which of them am I going to be assigned to?’

Parataxis offers a direct solution to this issue while dispensing with the need to appeal to movement versus base-generation and to relative positions in the left-peripheral spine: under parataxis, the attempted extraction in (86) is cross-sentential. In traditional monosentential analyses, *a cuál de ellas* moves from the indirect object position of the predicate *asignar* to the front of the clause; however, in (86), *yo* is in its own (elliptical) sentence. *A cuál de ellas* cannot be extracted across another sentence, which results in strong ungrammaticality. If HTs are independent root sentences, movement dependencies crossing the HT boundary simply cannot be computed. More generally, this type of extraction is now ruled out on principled and general grounds as illicit extraction across *sentences*, on which see, e.g., Villa-García and Ott (2023). In other words, extraction can occur across clauses, under hypotaxis, but not across sentences, under parataxis, as is the case in (86).

### 3.1.7 Intercalated interjections

Hanging topics contrast with their topicalization homologs in being compatible with an intercalated interjection such as *man* and *well* (see also Al Pacino’s example featuring *yeah* in (1)a):

- (87) a. *John, man, Mary really loves him.*  
 b. \**John, man, Mary really loves \_\_\_.*  
 (Greenberg [1984: 285])  
 c. *Your daughter, well, she failed the test.*  
 d. \**Your daughter, well, \_\_\_ failed the test.*

Interjections are common across sentences, but not within sentences, as the following pair illustrates:

- (88) a. *I met your daughter. Man! I like her a lot.*  
 b. *??I bought, man! a Rolls-Royce.*

The fact that an interjection like *man* can freely occur between a hanging topic and the (syntactically complete) sentence it precedes, as in (87)a, c, lends further support to the paratactic account wherein the HT is in a separate root clause, juxtaposed to the host clause, much like what happens in (88)a. Under monosentential/integrated analyses, we would have to postulate that the high position hosting HTs can be followed by a position able to host interjections (which in fact display extrasentential properties themselves). These in turn would have to be higher than the position responsible for topicalized phrases and focal phrases, which are not possible

above *man*, as in (87)b, d. Nothing of the sort needs to be stipulated under parataxis, which handles the intruding-interjection facts with ease.

### 3.1.8 ‘Interrogative’ hanging topics

RAE-ASALE (2009: 2979) furnishes examples where the topical element constitutes an interrogative segment followed by a non-interrogative sentence:

- (89) a. *¿Tus lentes? No sé dónde están.*  
           your glasses not know where are  
           ‘Your glasses? I don’t know where they are.’
- b. *¿Yo? Jamás me regalaron nada en la vida.*  
           I<sub>nom</sub> never cl<sub>dat</sub> gave nothing in the life  
           ‘Me? I was never given anything in life.’

As shown by the paraphrases and by the following example, English hanging topics are also possible in this context:

- (90) *Her? Of course, she will want to visit you in Barcelona once your Erasmus year is over.*

These data are important for several reasons. First and foremost, only the HT is interrogative, which indicates that the force of the elliptical sentence it belongs to must be +Q. On the assumption that a C-type head bears the relevant interrogative features, *¿tus lentes?*, *¿yo?* and *her?* in the above examples must be in an (elliptical) interrogative sentence; under standard generative assumptions, the nominal cannot be interrogative on its own. Since the host sentences these +Q HTs superficially occur with are -Q, then there must be a preceding underlying interrogative source where they are generated.<sup>27</sup>

These facts are highly problematic for monosentential, integrated analyses, which are forced to tolerate an initial left-peripheral +Q segment in a non-interrogative sentence. Since the CP layer/left periphery is responsible for marking

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<sup>27</sup> Independently of whether the HT is interrogative or not, the host sentence can have any force specification in addition to declarative; for instance, it can also be imperative (i)a and exclamative (i) b, as shown by the Spanish data in (i) (and by the corresponding English translations):

- (i) a. *Tu hijo/ ¿Tu hijo? Invítalo a la boda.*  
           your son your son invite+cl<sub>acc</sub> to the wedding  
           ‘Your son/your son? Invite him to the wedding party.’
- b. *Tu hijo/ ¿Tu hijo? ¡Qué alto está!*  
           your son your son how tall is  
           ‘Your son/your son? He’s so tall!’

the interrogative force of the sentence, it is not easy to see how to reconcile the two force types (i.e., interrogative and declarative) manifested in (89) and (90) under monosententiality. Both movement and base-generation analyses fall short of explaining the divergent force specifications displayed by different elements in what at first sight look like monosentential structures.

Under parataxis, by contrast, this is not only unproblematic, but also predicted, as shown schematically in (91) for RAE-ASALE's Spanish example in (89)a:

- (91) [<sub>CP1</sub> – +Q ¿~~EL TEMA DE CONVERSACIÓN SON~~ *tus lentes?*]  
 [<sub>CP2</sub> – -Q *no sé dónde están*]

¿*Tus lentes?* survives ellipsis in a +Q sentence, which is juxtaposed to the non-interrogative (i.e., -Q) CP2, yielding (89)a (see also (90)). Again, this is exactly what we observe in two root sentences that are uncontroversially linked just by juxtaposition:

- (92) ¿*Hablamos de tus lentes? No sé dónde están.*  
 talk of your glasses not know where are  
 'Are we talking about your glasses? I am not sure where they are.'

Similarly, an account like that in (91) easily captures the rising intonation with which the HT is uttered in these examples, suggesting that we are dealing with an underlying *yes/no* question in CP1, as claimed by (91). Accordingly, the host sentence (CP2) displays the falling intonation typically manifested by declarative sentences. Again, this is rather challenging for monosentential, integrated accounts of HTs.

Finally, it is of note that the HT may also be exclamative (i.e., +Excl CP1), which should come as no surprise given the preceding discussion. This is shown by (93):

- (93) *Chomsky! You met Noam Chomsky...*

More generally, therefore, HTs may bear a different force specification from that of their host sentence, which is in effect what the overall paratactic account adopted here predicts.

The next subsection presents HTs exhibiting no resumptive element in the host clause.

### 3.1.9 Orphaned hanging topics

There is a subtype of HTs that occurs with no correlate in the host clause. Radford (2018) refers to this kind of HTs as P(ragmatically)-linked topics or, more metaphorically, as orphaned topics (see Lambrecht [1994: 193] for the denomination 'unlinked' topics). Radford goes on to note that such HTs are looked down on prescriptively. This is perhaps due, in part, to the fact that they are widely regarded as

anacolutha. The examples in (94) illustrate this phenomenon in English and in Spanish:<sup>28</sup>

- (94) a. *Cars like this, the performance is not about the figures.*  
(James May, BBC2, cited in Radford [2018: 42])
- b. *The Crown, I cry every time I think of poor Lady Di.*
- c. *Sevilla, ¡qué Expo más bonita tuvimos en 1992!*  
Seville what exposition so beautiful had in 1992  
'Seville, what a beautiful Expo we had in 1992!'
- d. *Boris Johnson, odio hablar de política, la verdad.*  
Boris Johnson hate talk of politics the truth  
'Boris Johnson, in fairness I hate talking about politics.'

The connection between HTs and the host sentences with which they appear in the examples just provided is rather tenuous: the HT and the sentence are just thematically related. In fact, as far as syntax is concerned, the HT does not even have a correlate (never mind a corresponding gap) in the sentence. This immediately rules out a movement analysis which derives the HT as moving from a sentence-internal position; even for base-generation analyses under monosententiality, how to derive cases like those in (94) is not evident: why would the structurally unconnected HT be in the initial numeration in the first place? The connection with the sentence is purely pragmatic, which raises the question of why the syntax would care about the HT in the first place. Note that this applies not only to orphaned HTs, but to all HTs discussed throughout, although the case of orphaned HTs highlights this issue even more evidently. Under parataxis, these questions are not even raised, as would be the case in a sequence of uncontroversially independent root clauses, exactly as expected:

- (95) *I've been binge-watching The Crown. I cry every time I think of poor Lady Di.*

Under parataxis, therefore, the existence of orphaned topics constitutes a natural empirical expectation of the account.

### 3.1.10 No right-dislocated hanging topics

Authors including Rodman (1997 [1974]: 47–51), Samek-Lodovici (2009: 354) and Fernández-Sánchez and Ott (2020: 16) point out that there is no Clitic Right Dislocated (CIRDeD) counterpart of HTs. This is shown by the unacceptability of the following examples:

<sup>28</sup> Authors including Stark (2022) contend that orphaned topics may be syntactically similar to HTs, but they differ from ordinary HTs in their interpretation. Note also that there is considerable crosslinguistic variation in terms of the availability of orphaned topics, with languages like Dutch lacking them, according to van Riemsdijk (1997).



- (96) a. *\*They didn't count on me for the project, me.*  
 b. *\*Me ha tocado la lotería, yo.*  
      $cl_{dat}$  has touched the lottery I  
     Intended: 'Me, I've won the lottery.'

If HTs are presentational elements about which the upcoming sentence predicates something, then it follows that they should precede, but not follow, the relevant sentence. In other words, if HTs constitute a formal way of signaling the theme in the theme-rheme dichotomy, then presenting the theme after the rheme, as in the examples in (96), would be anomalous, to say the least. This is wholly consistent with the paratactic proposal advocated here, since the elliptical copular sentence (CP1) where the HT is generated introduces the topic of conversation and hence naturally precedes the host sentence (CP2). Nothing else needs to be said.

### 3.1.11 Hyperdetached hanging topics

As a final argument, I discuss what I will term long-distance, hyperdetached HTLDs:

- (97) *Peter<sub>k</sub>, believe it or not, as I was strolling along Venice beach the other day, I came across a group of people giving out leaflets and stuff, and there he<sub>k</sub> was with this look of mission in his eyes...*  
 (Acuña-Fariña [1995: 10])

That a HT need not be immediately adjacent to the sentence containing the correlate is a natural consequence of the paratactic account, and as a result provides additional empirical support for the overall proposal put forth in this paper. Such cases are in reality not different from orphaned topics (see Section 3.1.9); the current cases just happen to involve a resumptive/correlate which occurs in a sentence which is linearly far away from the sentence immediately contiguous to the hanging topic. Put another way, the correlate need not be in the linearly adjacent, host sentence: it can be further downstream.

Spanish also provides examples of hyperdetached HTs:

- (98) *Mi amiga Marimé<sub>k</sub>, el otro día estuve con Juanín en la*  
 my friend Marimé the other day was with Juanín in the  
*Suburbia. Y nada, resulta que llegamos con el coche y*  
 Suburbia and nothing results that arrived with the car and  
*había un vecino de ella<sub>k</sub> cruzando como un loco*  
 there-was a neighbor of her crossing as a madman  
*por aquella carretera general tan peligrosa.*  
 for that road general so dangerous

'My friend Marimé<sub>k</sub>, the other day I was with Juanín in the Suburbia. And well, it turns out that we got there with the car and there was a neighbor of hers<sub>k</sub> crossing that dangerous main road recklessly.'

Additionally, data like the above further undermine integrated analyses in which HTs are sentence-internal constituents on the clausal left edge.

## 4 Conclusions

Hanging topics spawned a considerable amount of research in the transformational generative framework before the advent of the cartographic enterprise, which occurred in the late 1990s. Early works led to rather detailed descriptions of the behavior of HTs across the world's languages. In more recent years, the focus has been shifted to whether such phrases are derived by movement or base-generation, with most works leaning towards the latter. Similarly, CLDs have attracted most of the attention in cartographically oriented works. However, several pre-cartographic works provided evidence to the effect that HTs are in actuality sentence outcasts. In this paper, I have indeed capitalized on the original claim made by Cinque (1997 [1983]) that HTs are truly extra-sentential constituents, a contention that has been revived most prominently in recent years in the work of Ott and his collaborators (e.g., Fernández-Sánchez and Ott 2020; Ott 2014, 2015). The evidence adduced throughout overwhelmingly points in this direction.

Thus, in contrast to monosentential/integrated proposals, I have put forward a paratactic account in the spirit of Ott's work for CLDs and predicative non-restrictive nominal appositives whereby the HT is part of a reduced copular sentence juxtaposed to the host sentence. As noted by an anonymous reviewer, this poses some intriguing questions, such as whether there are any relevant differences between English and Spanish copular sentences beyond case that may have an impact on what HTs look like. Additionally, the relationship between sentences that appear to be linked paratactically needs to be investigated in more detail: in the case at hand, are the relevant sentences (the sentence containing the HT and the alleged host) just syntactically detached from each other? Do these sentences stand in any structural relationship with each other (e.g., under DiscourseP, as hinted at above)? Future research should tackle these and other open questions resulting from the proposal laid out here.

Most crucially, the analysis presented in this paper assumes that the HT belongs to a different sentence from the host (i.e., [<sub>CP1</sub> ... HT] [<sub>CP2</sub> host sentence]), in keeping with the extra-sentential nature of HTs. In cases other than orphaned HTs, which display no correlate in the host sentence, the referential relationship between HT and correlate is in fact the relationship established between nominals across sentences. Whatever the correct architecture of the left periphery/CP layer turns out to be, HTLDs are not part of that domain; in a technical sense, then, HTs are not left-

peripheral constituents: in light of the vast body of crosslinguistic evidence available, HTs only qualify as extrasentential constituents.

A version of Ott's system paves the way for a reconciliation between pragmatic and syntactic accounts: after all, previous proposals which assume that HTs are outside the sentence are by and large pragmatic in nature, whereas syntactic proposals that are typically couched in cartographic terms take the HT to be intrasentential, albeit left-peripheral. I have shown that the paratactic approach provides a natural explanation for a host of old and new properties of hanging topics crosslinguistically in a principled fashion, without further stipulation, which provides a strong argument in its favor. At the same time, the bisentential account of HTLD enables us to dispense with the need to pose the by-now perennial question of whether HTs are moved to or directly merged in the position where they surface that arises under integrated syntactic accounts.

All in all, *hanging topics, yeah, they are sentence outsiders*.

**Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank two anonymous *TLR* reviewers for their useful and thorough comments and observations, as well as my English and Spanish consultants. I am also grateful to the conference abstract reviewers and/or the audiences at the *Jornada de Gramática Española* (Complutense University of Madrid), *Hispanic Linguistics Symposium 2022* (Arizona State University), *XL Xornaes Internacionales d'Estudi*, Academia de la Llingua Asturiana, *ALLA* (Academy of the Asturian Language, Principality of Asturias, Spain), *45th AEDEAN Conference* (University of Extremadura), and the *Romance Linguistics Circle – RoLinC* (University of Cambridge and Newcastle University). More specifically, I would like to thank the following individuals for their valuable observations: Marian Alves Castro, Delia Bentley, Ana Cano, Sara Cardullo, Simone De Cia, Francisco Fernández-Rubiera, Olga Fernández-Soriano, Luis García Fernández, Serafina García García, Daniel Á. García Velasco, Xosé Antón González Riaño, Raquel González Rodríguez, Xosé Ramón Iglesias Cueva, Ángel Jiménez-Fernández, Adam Ledgeway, Guillermo Lorenzo, Rafael Marín, Louise McNally, Francisco Martín Miguel, Nicola Munaro, Jairo Nunes, Ana Ojea, Cecilia Poletto, Andrew Radford, Eva-Maria Remberger, Juan Romero, Michelle Sheehan, Roumyana Slabakova, Imanol Suárez-Palma, Iván Teomiro, and Susagna Tubau. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge the support provided by a María Zambrano International Talent Attraction Grant (MU-21-UP2021-030 71880965), awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Universities, with funding from the European Union (#NextGenerationEU, NGEU), and by the Spanish-Government-funded project INFOSTARS (PGC2018-093774-B-I00). Thanks are also due to the University of Manchester for financially supporting the OA publication of this paper. Special thanks to Harry van de Hulst for his impeccable editorial work.

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