SPECIAL INTERROGATIVES - LEFT PERIPHERY, 
WH-DOUBLING, AND (APPARENTLY) OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

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1. Introduction

Wh-interrogatives, as is well known, are not exclusively interpreted as ‘requests for information’, that is, as requests to specify the value(s) of the variable bound by the wh-quantifier. It is generally acknowledged that besides their interpretation as ‘standard’ (or ‘information’) questions, they can convey other meanings, although it remains largely unclear what ‘special’ question interpretations there are and where they have their sources. I argue that the syntactic structure, in particular the left sentence periphery, plays a crucial part.¹

Such an approach contrasts with largely shared views concerning interrogatives; thus, a common view is expressed by Siemund (2001) who sees rhetorical questions (like Who cares?) as (true) “interrogatives uttered in a context in which the answer to them is given”, a “non-canonical use”. I want to demonstrate that there are cases - including rhetorical questions - where particular structural properties can be shown to be correlated with particular meaning types. Such cases might be analyzable as bona fide pairings of grammatical form and functional meaning - i.e., sentence types, as (traditionally understood and) defined by Sadock and Zwicky (1985), among others.

Contrary to many well-studied languages, the Northeastern Italian dialect (NEID) Bellunese overtly distinguishes standard questions (with bare wh-phrases in noninitial position) and special questions (SpQs) (with bare wh-phrases in initial position). Obenauer (2004) (also see Munaro and Obenauer 2002) argued that there exist (at least) three types of special questions and that they activate higher layers of the left periphery: surprise-disapproval questions, rhetorical questions and Can’t-find-the-value-of-x questions.

Adopting this general context, I want to refine on my 2004 analysis and tackle the particular case of surprise-disapproval questions (SDQs). Two main reasons suggest this choice: first, the existence of the SDQ type is not yet generally acknowledged;

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second, certain properties of SpQs and the theoretical issues they shed light on can be demonstrated particularly clearly in SDQs.

Sections 2 and 3 give a short overview of the properties of standard questions and special questions, respectively. Section 4 introduces the general analytical framework developed for standard questions in the NEIDs on which this article builds for its analysis of special questions in Bellunese. Sections 5 and 6 analyze in detail the derivation and structure of SDQs. Section 7 summarizes the analysis and discusses some of its consequences.

2. Standard wh-questions in Bellunese/Pagotto

In the Northern Veneto dialects known as Bellunese, the wh-phrases of standard interrogatives do not show a uniform behavior. Nonbare wh-phrases appear in sentence initial position (cf. (1)):

(1) a. Che libro À-tu ledest? Quanti libri À-tu ledest?
   “What book / how many books have you read?”
   b. *À-tu ledest che libro / quanti libri?

Bare wh-phrases, on the contrary, appear sentence internally (cf. (2), (3)). The judgments are given for standard question (StQ) interpretation.

(2) a. À-tu incontrà chi?
   have-you met who
   “Who did you meet?”
   b. *Chi À-tu incontrà?

(3) a. Sié-o stadi andé?
   are-you been where
   “Where have you been?”
   b. *Andé sié-o stadi?

This paradigm includes che ‘what’:

(4) a. À-lo magnà che?
   has-he eaten what
   “What did he eat?”
   b. *Che À-lo magnà?

Following common practice, I use the terms ‘interrogatives’ and ‘questions’ interchangeably, despite their not being synonymous. In Obenauer (2004), I used the term ‘nonstandard’ questions for the question types called ‘special’ here. I choose the latter term because it avoids possible misinterpretations in terms of stylistic / register considerations.
The *wh*-phrase *cossa* ‘what’ alternates freely, in Bellunese, with *che*, but behaves as a nonbare element.³

(5)  a. *Cossa à-lo magnâ?* (*qua StQ in Pagotto*)
    what has-he eaten

   b. *Á-lo magnâ cossa?*

Pagotto, a dialect belonging to Bellunese, contrasts with the rest of Bellunese in not allowing *cossa* to introduce StQs (though it does have *cossa* in SpQs).

Abstracting away from some slightly more complex cases which I leave aside (see Munaro 1999, section 1.3), bare and nonbare *wh*-phrases thus have an inverse distribution; in particular, bare *wh*-elements occupy an apparent in-*situ* position. Their analysis by Poletto & Pollock (2002; 2005) will be seen below; for the time being it suffices to say that according to these authors, they are moved to a low left peripheral position and their overt final appearance results from later movements raising the rest of the sentence to their left.⁴

3. **Special wh-questions in Bellunese/Pagotto**

   Obenauer (2004) argues in detail that Bellunese provides reasons to distinguish three types of SpQs. As announced in the introduction, above, I will concentrate here on one of them, surprise-disapproval questions.

3.1. **Surprise-disapproval questions (SDQs)**

   This question type can be characterized intuitively as (obligatorily) expressing an attitude of the speaker towards the propositional content, an attitude of surprise with a negative orientation, i.e., combined with disapproval. Thus, (6) expresses the speaker’s surprise and disapproval concerning what is being eaten (the punctuation “?!” signals intended SDQ interpretation):

(6) *Cossa sé -tu drìo magnar?!*
    what are-you behind eat
    “What (on earth) are you eating?!”
    (cf. (8) of Munaro and Obenauer (1999), henceforth M&O)

In Pagotto, (6) can only be a SpQ (the StQ counterpart being *Sé-tu drìo magnar che?*); recall that in the rest of Bellunese, *cossa* can also introduce a StQ. Alongside the argumental usage of *cossa* as in (6), there is also a nonargumental one, as in (7):

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³ A property explainable on diachronic grounds; see Munaro 1999:25ff.
⁴ This general approach is already present in Munaro, Poletto & Pollock (2001). Poletto & Pollock (2002, 2005) develop the approach further.
Cossa zighe-lo?!

“Why on earth is he shouting?!”

The adjunct use of *cossa* seen in (7) is not easy to render in English, which has no analogous use of *what*. It is important to notice that the interpretation, close to ‘why’, obligatorily combines this meaning with the expression of surprise and disapproval, not very clearly rendered by *on earth*, which can also express other values.\(^5\) (7) contrasts with (8), where *cossa* is replaced by *parché* ‘why’ which, in its normal (i.e., StQ) usage (indicated by the punctuation ‘?’) has the neutral interpretation corresponding to normal usage of *why* in English.

Parché zighe-lo?

“Why is he shouting?”

Let us return to argumental *cossa* which, as shown above, ‘replaces’ *che* in SDQs for reasons which will be examined later. Since *cossa* is always sentence initial, its position in the SDQ (6) does not seem, at first sight, to be specifically related to the SD-interpretation. M&O (p. 217) suggest, however, that in view of much recent work on functional sentence structure, it is reasonable to assume that the position of *cossa* is not the same here as in StQs. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the following data, which show that the *wh*-words which can (and must) appear ‘in situ’ in StQs must raise to the left edge of the sentence in SDQs:\(^6\)

\[\begin{align*}
(a) & \text{ a. } \textit{Chi à-tu invidà?!} \\
& \quad \text{“Who(m) did you invite?!”} \\
& \text{b. } \textit{??À-tu invidà chi?!} \quad \text{(OK qua StQ)} \\
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
(a) & \text{ a. } \textit{Andé sié-o ‘ndadi?!} \\
& \quad \text{“Where have-you gone?!”} \\
& \text{b. } \textit{??Sié-o ‘ndadi andé?!} \quad \text{(OK qua StQ)}
\end{align*}\]

As noted by Munaro (2003), these examples must be distinguished from their exclamative counterparts, in which the complementizer *che* is obligatory; at the same

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\(^5\) There are, however, exact counterparts of ‘why’-like *cossa* in many different languages, which use their *wh*-phrase equivalent to ‘what’ in this way, among them Italian (*cosa*), German (*was*), Icelandic (*hvað*), Hungarian (*mit*), Japanese (*nani*). English *what* ... *for* can come close in meaning, but contrary to *cossa* and its counterparts, it is not obligatorily associated with the SD meaning.

\(^6\) Such sentences were considered as a particular type of exclamatives in Munaro (2003). I follow Obenauer’s (2004) argumentation to the effect that they form a syntactically and interpretively coherent paradigm with sentences like (6) and (7), namely, that of SDQs.
time, the subject is no longer inverted and appears in its ‘non-interrogative’ form, as shown in (11)-(13).

(11) *Chi che te à invidà!
    who that you have invited
(12) Andè che siè ‘ndadi!
    where that you-are gone
(13) Cossa che te sè drio magnar!
    what that cl are behind eat
    “What you are eating!”

Such sentences - including (13) containing cossa - are interpretively ‘neutral’, in Munaro’s terms; in particular, the attitude of the speaker can be anything in a spectrum reaching from strong appreciation to outright blame. SDQs and exclamatives, thus, differ both formally and interpretively from each other.

Since wh-phrases must raise to initial position in SDQs, let us ask if interrogative che also appears there. The answer is negative; only cossa is possible ((14)-(15a)). This gap in the paradigm will be examined in detail in section 6, as well as the fact that cossa can be ‘doubled’, in SDQs (but not in StQs), by ‘in situ’ che, as seen in the synonymous (15b):

(14) *Che avé-o magnà?!
(15) a. Cossa avé-o magnà?!
    b. Cossa avé-o magnà che?!
    “What have you eaten?!”

To summarize this section, SDQs
- have a specific semantic value which in fact weakens their status as requests for information;
- are clearly distinguished syntactically from standard interrogatives;
- are also formally and interpretively distinguished from exclamatives.

3.2. Other special questions: rhetorical questions, Can’t-find-the-value-of-x questions

Besides SDQs, Bellunese leads one to distinguish, for similar reasons, two other types of special questions (Obenauer 2004). Reasons of space exclude adequate discussion, but a short presentation is required in view of the analysis to be developed below for SDQs, which is in a number of respects representative of that of SpQs more generally.

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7 See Munaro (1999) on subject clitics in Bellunese.
8 The existence of particular syntactic properties of rhetorical and Can’t-find-the-value-of-x questions (“diable” questions’) in French and other languages was demonstrated and analyzed in detail, in the Principles-and-parameters framework, in Obenauer (1994).
The term ‘rhetorical question’ (RQ) is understood here as referring to those questions whose interpretation is taken to convey, rather than a request for the value(s) of a variable, the assertion that no corresponding value exists (more precisely, an assertion of opposite polarity; cf., for example, Quirk et al. 1985). Bellunese RQs display a behavior that is strikingly similar to that of SDQs, and at the same time, in one respect, significantly different.

The parallelisms with SDQs concern the fact that in RQs again, bare $\textit{wh}$-elements must raise to initial position (cf. (16)), $\textit{che}$ is excluded in this position and $\textit{cossa}$ appears instead (17), again optionally ‘doubled’ by $\textit{che}$:

(16) a. \textit{Chi à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?}
    “\textit{Who(m) has he helped in all these years?”}
  
  b. \textit{*À-lo iutà \textit{chi} in tuti sti ani?} \hspace{1cm} \textit{[qua RQ]}

(17) a. \textit{*Che à-lo fat par \textit{ti}?}
    “\textit{What has he done for you?”}
  
  b. \textit{Cossa à-lo fat par \textit{ti}?}

On the other hand, RQs allow a left-peripheral DP subject to appear to the right of their $\textit{wh}$-phrase, a possibility\(^9\) excluded in StQs as well as in SDQs:

(18) a. \textit{??CHI Mario à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?}
  b. \textit{?CHI MAI Mario à-lo iutà in tuti sti ani?}
    “\textit{Who(m) (ever) has Mario helped in all these years?”}
  
  c. \textit{QUANDO Mario à-lo magnà patate?}
    “\textit{When has Mario eaten potatoes?”}

These facts, which Bellunese shares with Italian, strongly suggest that in RQs the $\textit{wh}$-phrase raises higher than in StQs (and SDQs), an analysis developed for Italian by Obenauer & Poletto (to appear).

‘Can’t-find-the-value-of-$x$ questions’ (CfvQs), finally, is the term used in Obenauer (2004:367) for a type of question by which the speaker expresses that, though he has tried to do so, he is not able to find the value(s) of the variable bound by the $\textit{wh}$-operator. Again, bare $\textit{wh}$-elements must raise to initial position (cf. (19)), $\textit{che}$ is excluded in this position and $\textit{cossa}$ appears instead, again optionally ‘doubled’ by $\textit{che}$:

(19) a. \textit{Andé l’à-tu \textit{catà}?} \hspace{1cm} \textit{CfvQ}
    “\textit{Where (the hell) did you find it?”}
  
  b. \textit{L’à-tu \textit{catà andé}?} \hspace{1cm} \textit{StQ}

\(^9\) Which requires a particular stress in this case. While the nature of this requirement remains to be understood, analogous stress does not help in SDQs (nor in CfvQs; see below). Instead of the DP subject, a (CLLD-) topic is also possible.
The reader is referred to Obenauer (2004) for detailed discussion. An example involving *cossa* (… *che*) will appear in section 6, below.

To summarize, Bellunese, through the basic contrast between sentence final and initial position of its bare *wh*-elements, isolates question types which are not as obviously distinguished in other languages. The three types of SpQs differ together from StQs by the obligatory raising of their bare *wh*-phrases to initial position; at the same time, there is evidence strongly suggesting that they are also distinguished structurally from each other. With this background, let us now turn to the analysis of SpQs.

4. Standard questions in the NEIDs - the general framework of analysis

A central part of the analysis to be developed below is the hypothesis that surprise-disapproval questions (as well as the other SpQs) activate functional structure ‘above’ the structure derived in StQs. I will therefore briefly characterize the general background of assumptions that I adopt concerning the structure of StQs in the NEIDs.¹⁰

Benincà & Poletto (2005) have brought to light the essential role that *wh*-clitics play in the syntax of interrogatives in these dialects. The authors stress the crucial connection between *wh*-clitics and two other phenomena, *wh*-in-*situ* with Subject-Clitic Inversion (cf. (20d), (20f) below) and *wh*-doubling with Subject-Clitic Inversion (cf. (20a), (20b) below) and conclude that any adequate analysis of the *wh*-syntax of these dialects must be able to relate the three phenomena to each other.

Poletto & Pollock (2002; 2005) give these relations a formal expression via the hypothesis of *wh*-CliticPhrases (ClPs) - analogous to pronominal ClPs (Kayne 1991, Uriagereka 1995) - of the form *[ClP nonclitic form [Cl clitic]]. The *wh*-clitic must leave the ClP to cliticize inside a clitic projection high in IP. From this position to its final landing site (in a *wh*-related projection in CP), its movement is subject to the usual locality constraints (‘head movement’ or what subsumes it). The nonclitic *wh* moves on its own to the left periphery. The two constituents of the ClP are each associated with a binary parameter [+/-phonetically realized]. Using this parameterization, the *wh*-ClP hypothesis is able to account in a unified way for ‘lonely’ *wh*-clitics ((20c), (20e)), *wh*-in-*situ* ((20d), (20f)), and *wh*-doubling ((20a), (20b)), all seen as involving (overt or covert) doubling:¹¹

\[ (20) \text{ a. } Ch’ e-t fat què? \quad \text{Monno (Brescia)} \]

*what have-you done what*

“What have you done?”

¹⁰ Space limitations prevent me from doing full justice to these works; I refer the reader to the detailed analyses they develop.

¹¹ (20b, d, e, f), irrelevantly in this context, are cases of *fa*-support, comparable to *do*-support in English. On *fa*-support see Benincà & Poletto 2004.
b. Ngo fe-t majà ngont?
   where do-you eat where
   “Where do you eat?”

c. Ch’ e-t fà?
   what have-you done
   “What have you done?”

d. Fe-t fà què?
   do-you do what
   “What are you doing?”

e. Ngo fe-t majà?
   “Where do you eat?”
f. Fet majà ngont?
   do-you eat where
   “Where do you eat?”

The ClP of (20a) has the form \([\text{ClP} \ \text{què} \ [\text{Cl} \ ch’]]\), the ClP of (20c) is \([\text{ClP} \ \emptyset \ [\text{Cl} \ ch’]]\), the ClP of (20d) is \([\text{ClP} \ \text{què} \ [\text{Cl} \ \emptyset]]\), and so forth.

Poletto & Pollock further assume for interrogatives with Subject-Clitic Inversion the following structure of the left periphery:12

\[(21) \ [\text{Wh1P} \ \text{Wh1}^\circ \ [\text{ForceP} \ F^\circ \ [\text{G(round)P} \ G^\circ \ [\text{TopP} \ \text{Top}^\circ \ [\text{Wh2P} \ \text{Wh2}^\circ \ [\text{IP} \ldots \text{t} \ \text{m}]])])]\]

5. **Surprise-disapproval questions as an exemplary case of special questions: I - bare wh with a positive restriction**

As shown before, in Bellunese standard questions (StQs) a bare wh appears in final position, as in (22). In the spirit of Poletto & Pollock (2002; 2005), \(\text{ch’}\) is introduced in the numeration as \([\text{ClP} \ \text{ch’} \ [\text{cl} \ \emptyset]]\). The structure of (22), reduced to its essentials, is (23), where Remnant IP-movement to the Spec of ForceP has led to the sentence final appearance of \(\text{ch’}\):

\[(22) \ \text{À-lo invidà chi}?
   “Who(m) has he invited?”\]

\[(23) \ [\text{Wh1P} \ [\text{cl} \ \emptyset]] \ + \ \text{Wh1}^\circ \ [\text{ForceP} \ [\text{IP} \ .. \ t \ \text{t} \ .. \ ]] \text{m} \text{Force}^\circ \ [\text{Gp} \ \text{lo} \ G^\circ \ [\text{TopP} \ [\text{invidà} \ [\text{ClP} \ t \ t \ ]] \text{Top}^\circ \ [\text{Wh2P} \ \text{ch’i} \ \text{Wh2}^\circ \ [\text{IP} \ \text{t} \ \text{m} \ \text{m}]])]]\]

In special questions (SpQs), the visible operator raises to initial position, in order to check the feature of a higher functional head:

\[(24) \ \text{Chi à-lo invidà}?!\]

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12 The authors note that the two Wh-projections correspond to the two analogous projections assumed in Kayne & Pollock (2001).
Under the null hypothesis, *chi* in (24) is again part of the CIP [ *chi* [Ø]] and checks the feature of Wh2 before raising to the Spec of the high head. Where precisely is this functional projection located? Consider (25), which is further simplified from (23), as a schematical surface order of the StQ (22):

(25) [cl Ø] à lo invidà chi

From a linear point of view, *chi* could, after its raising from position *t* in Wh2P, be in either of the following two configurations:

(26) a. [cl Ø] chi à lo invidà *t*
    b. chi [cl Ø] à lo invidà *t*

Let us call the high projection hosting *chi* SDP (Surprise-DisapprovalP), for purely mnemonic reasons. According to (26a), SDP would be below Wh1P, a configuration which would require the clitic to move beyond an activated projection; the only possible option therefore is (26b). In other words, given the CIP-hypothesis, SDP must dominate Wh1P. Such a relation between the two projections seems natural if Wh1P and Wh2P together determine a domain of StQs in the tree structure and if SDQs include additional (peripheral) elements which are external to this domain.

Notice that a priori there is another candidate for raising to initial position, the empty clitic, which is also the more ‘local’ candidate (it c-commands *chi*). In (27), nothing should block raising of [cl Ø] to the head of SDP:

(27) SDP [cl Ø] à lo invidà *chi*

Visibly, the Ø-clitic cannot bear the relevant feature, a weakness - compared to *chi*’s raising - presumably related to its phonetically non-realized status.

The other bare *wh*-elements except *che* behave like *chi*.

6. *Surprise-disapproval questions II - the bare *wh* with a default restriction: *che*

6.1. The two a priori options

As shown above, the paradigm of bare *wh*-elements in initial position of SpQs exhibits an asymmetry in the case of *che* (cf. (29) vs. (28)); *che* cannot raise to initial position, an incapacity presumably related to its deficient status (see Munaro and Obenauer 1999): bearing only a default restriction (perhaps [-animate]) *che* is the least specified *wh*-element. While not a clitic, it thus shares the handicap of Ø-clitics seen in the preceding section; neither of the two elements of the *che*-CIP [ *che* [Ø]], then, can raise to the Spec of SDP, and *cossa* is used, as in (30) and (31). How are *cossa* and *che* to be analyzed here?

(28) ̃À-lo fat *che*
     StQ
    “What has he done?”
At first sight, two intuitions seem plausible:
- a morphologically stronger form *cossa* might ‘replace’ *che*;
- *cossa* might be ‘added’ to StQ *che*.

The first possibility is suggested by ‘lonely’ *cossa* in (30); the *cossa ... che* configuration in (31) could then result from *che* optionally doubling the ‘strong form’.

The second possibility, motivated by (31), sees *cossa* as a sort of ‘helper’ added to the deficient *che*. In the worst case, both solutions might be required to account for the difference between (30) and (31), and thus coexist.

Let us try to be more precise. Two options can be distinguished according to the relation assumed between *cossa* and *che*. Consider first (31), with the supposed structure (32):

(32) \[ SDP \ cossa \ [Wh1P \ [cl \ O] \ à-lo \ fat \ [Wh2P \ che \ ... \]

I will call Option 1 the hypothesis that Bellunese has, besides the *che*-ClP, an element *cossa* which is syntactically independent from *che* and can be used to check SDP (i.e., SD°’s feature). If so, Wh2P, Wh1P and SDP are each checked by a different element. There is no derivational relation between *cossa*, on the one hand, and *che* and the Ø-clitic on the other, nor is there a relation between *cossa* and the thematic object position.

Alternatively, let Option 2 express a direct relation between *cossa* and *che* via the hypothesis that they form one phrase at the outset; in parallelism with the StQ ClP, which has the Ø-clitic as its head, the *cossaP(hrase)* in (33) has the nonclitic *cossa* as its head and leads to structure (34), with a derivational relation between *cossa* and the A-position in which it is first merged:

(33) \[ che \ [N° \ cossa]\]

(34) \[ SDP \ cossa_i \ [Wh1P \ ti \ à-lo \ fat \ [Wh2P \ che \ ... \]

As for (30), the case without *che*, either a QP *cossa* (whose relation with Options 1 and 2 is yet unclear) might check the three positions:

(35) \[ SDP \ cossa_i \ [Wh1P \ ti \ à-lo \ fat \ [Wh2P \ ti \ ... \]

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13 (33) has a look reminiscent of Italian *che cosa* ‘what’, which, however, has very different properties. On the one hand, contrary to *cossa*, *cosa* has kept the meaning ‘thing’ and can function as a common noun; on the other hand, the two components of *che cosa* cannot move separately from each other. Moreover, *cossa ... che* is excluded in StQs.
or (36), a counterpart of Option 2’s \([\text{cossa} \, \text{che} \, [\text{N}\text{o} \, \text{cossa}]]\) with silent che, could lead to structure (37):

(36) \([\emptyset \, \text{che} \, [\text{N}\text{o} \, \text{cossa}]]\)
(37) \([\text{SDP} \, \text{cossa}_i \, [\text{Wh}_{1\text{P}} \, \text{t}_i \, \text{à-lo fat} \, [\text{Wh}_{2\text{P}} \, \emptyset \, \text{che} \ldots]}\]

(33) and (36) together would express the idea that both in the che-ClP and the cossaP the Spec che may remain non-pronounced.

6.2. \(\text{StQ cossa and its relation with SpQ cossa - if any}\)

Given the initial options introduced in the preceding section, it is useful, in view of a first clarification of the relation between ‘lonely’ cossa and ‘doubled’ cossa, to return to the cossa of StQs. We saw earlier that in Bellunese (with the exception of Pagotto) StQs, cossa alternates with che in its argumental function; Pagotto has only che:

(38) À-lo fat che? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellun., Pagotto included)}\)
(39) Cossa à-lo fat? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellunese except Pagotto)}\)

There is one case in Pagotto where cossa is possible in direct StQs: in the particular function of quasi-argument (measure/amount phrase) selected by predicates like costar ‘cost’, pesar ‘weigh’, etc., where it again alternates with che (cf. (40), (41)); this ‘extended’ use as element selected by a predicate is not possible with ciamarse ‘be called’, which only selects che in StQs:\(^{14}\)

(40) Coste-lo che? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellun., Pag. incl.)}\)
(41) Pèze-lo che? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellun., Pag. incl.)}\)
(42) Cossa coste-lo? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellunese except Pagotto)}\)
(43) Cossa pèze-lo? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellunese except Pagotto)}\)

“What/How much does it cost/weigh?”

(42) Se ciàme-lo che? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellun., Pag. incl.)}\)
(43) *Cossa se ciàme-lo? \(\quad\) StQ \(\quad\) \(\text{(Bellunese except Pagotto)}\)

“What’s his name?”

(44) summarizes the data concerning StQ cossa in the two dialects:\(^{15}\)

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\(^{14}\) In this function, che alternates with comé ‘how’. Irrelevantly at this point, (43) is acceptable as cfvQ, meaning ‘What the hell is his name?’; see below.

\(^{15}\) Embedded questions impose less restrictions in Pagotto; here argumental cossa is possible (che in (iib) is the complementizer, obligatory in tensed subordinate clauses):
StQ cossa thus has - particularly in Pagotto, to a lesser extent in Bellunese except Pagotto - an incomplete distribution, in comparison with that of che. Turning to the comparison of StQ cossa with the cossa of SpQs, we note two important differences. First, the incomplete distribution of StQ cossa shows up again, here in contrast with that of SpQ cossa. Recall that argumental cossa is OK in SpQs in Pagotto (sections 3.1-3.3); anticipating slightly, we note that (41) and (43) qua SpQs are well-formed too, including in Pagotto (see section 6.3, below). Second, StQ cossa is incompatible with ‘doubling’ che: che cannot be added in the StQs (39), (41), ; i.e. ‘doubling’ che is limited to SpQs.

As a preliminary result, the double contrast between the cossa of StQs and that of SpQs makes it highly unlikely that SpQ cossa might be identified with StQ cossa - rather, their striking difference will have to be expressed. I will take up this topic later, and turn directly to the question: how is SpQ cossa to be analyzed, and what relation is there between its ‘lonely’ and its ‘doubled’ instantiation?

6.3. The case for (a version of) Option 1 - first part

Let us begin with the ‘doubling’ case. Section 6.1 noted that the combined presence of cossa and che in a SDQ like (45) may suggest a view according to which cossa is ‘added’ in this case to the che of StQs; the section then introduced the two initial options which suggest themselves in view of a formal expression of this idea:

(45) Cossa à-lo fat che?!
“What on earth has he done?!”

According to Option 1, cossa and che are not derivationally related; che is in fact the CIP [che [C] Ø ], one of the elements composing the set of the bare wh like chi, comé, …. According to Option 2, cossa originates as a co-constituent, along with che, of a cossaP(hrase) of the form [cossaP che [cossa] ]; che and cossa then move separately to their respective surface positions.

Under Option 1, in a SDQ like (45), cossa has the specific function of checking the feature of the highest head, SD° (which, as noted, che is unable to do); on the other hand, che checks Wh2° and the Ø-clitic checks Wh1°, just as in StQs with che. It is

(i) a. No so cossa far.
   ‘I don’t know what to do.’
   b. No so cossa che l’abbia magnà.
   ‘I don’t know what he has eaten.’
precisely this parallel appearance of the *che*-ClP in SpQs and StQs that derives two important generalizations, (46) and (47):

(46) *Generalization 1*

*cosa* ‘doubled’ by *che* in SpQs appears in Bellunese/Pagotto with the variety of functions found in StQs with *che*.

(47) *Generalization 2*

*cosa* ‘doubled’ by *che* in SpQs does not suffer from the distributional restrictions affecting the *cosa* of StQs.

Indeed, under Option 1, the argumental element bearing the theta-role is the ClP [*che* [*Cl* Ø]], not *cosa*; under the null hypothesis this ClP has the same properties in SpQs as in StQs. In other words, Option 1 explains why the SDQ (45) and the CfvQ (48):

(48) *Cossa se ciàme-lo che?*

COSSA REFL calls-he what
“What (the hell) is his name?”

are as acceptable as the RQ (49):

(49) *Cossa ghe coste-lo che iutàrli?*

COSSA to-him costs-it what to-help-them
“What does it cost him to help them?” (“Nothing”)

These three sentences have indeed StQ counterparts with *che*:

(50) *À-lo fat che?*
(51) *Se ciàme-lo che?*
(52) *Ghe coste-lo che?*

“What does it cost him?”

but only (49) has a standard interrogative counterpart with *cosa* (and without *che*, of course) in Pagotto. This limitation is absent from the *cosa* ... *che* paradigm (cf. Generalization. 2) instantiated by (45), (48), (49), which parallels (50), (51), (52). The contrast can be highlighted by opposing the functional distribution of StQ *cosa* given under (44) and repeated here, and that of *cosa* ... *che* - identical to that of StQ *che* -, shown in (53).

(44) functional distribution of StQ *cosa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>them.</th>
<th>argum.</th>
<th>sel. by costar</th>
<th>sel. by ciamarse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pagotto</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell. except Pag.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that in the perspective of Option 1, *cossa* is not really doubled by *che*; rather, *che* (more precisely, the ClP) is the *wh*-phrase and *cossa* lexicalizes the higher projection of each type of SpQ, normally checked by the ‘true’ *wh*-word (*chi*, etc.) raised to the specifier of that projection (SDP, RP or CfvP). Strictly speaking, *cossa* is introduced in the numeration as an auxiliary high checker which makes up for *che*’s inability to perform the checking itself. This clarification being made, I will continue to use occasionally the term ‘‘doubled’ *cossa*’ as a handy short term for ‘combined presence of *cossa* and *che*’.

Option 1 thus derives Generalizations 1 and 2 by reducing the distribution of *cossa* cooccurring with *che* to the distribution of StQ *che*. How can Option 2 deal with the distributional facts? In other words, how can Option 2 explain that the hypothetical *cossalP [che [cossa]]* has the distribution of the StQ ClP [*che [Cl Θ]'], and not of StQ *cossa*? I see no way of achieving this goal except by stipulating the desired parallelism. The *cossalP*, then, is the SpQ version of the *che*-ClP, which Option 2 declares limited to StQs (contrary to Option 1). Option 2 shares with Option 1 the assumption that StQ *cossa* and SpQ *cossa* are quite different elements; Option 2, however, is incapable of explaining the functional distribution of ‘‘doubled’ *cossa*’. This weakness of Option 2, in comparison with Option 1, will turn out not to be the only one; another is related to the fact that under Option 2, *cossa* originates in argument position within the phrase [*cossalP che [cossa]]*: it thus must check Wh1° and the highest head, that is, it must move (stepwise) to the initial position, a requirement which will prove crucial for the choice between the two options.

Let us return now to *cossa* not accompanied by *che*, as in (54).

(54) *Cossa à-lo fat?!* (= (30))

At first sight, Option 1, seeing *cossa* as an element independent of *che*, must interpret ‘lonely’ SpQ *cossa* as an argumental *wh*-phrase checking Wh2°, Wh1° and the high sentence initial head; ‘lonely’ *cossa* would thus differ sharply from ‘doubled’ *cossa*, under Option 1. It would also differ crucially from StQ *cossa* since, as anticipated at the end of section 6.2, their respective functional distributions are not the same.

As a result, considering ‘lonely’ SpQ *cossa* as an argumental element forces one to consider it as a third type of *cossa* in addition to StQ *cossa* and *cossa* ‘doubled’ by *che*. This dubious status\(^\text{16}\) is aggravated by the fact that the functional distribution of

\(^{16}\text{An additional problem for this assumption is the following: assuming this ‘third type’ *cossa*, which is argumental and can check the three heads indicated, why should Bellunese/Pagotto have in addition - to assume the same functions - *che*, in need of resorting to ‘checker’ *cossa*?}
‘lonely’ SpQ cossa, for the range of data examined so far, is exactly the same as that of its ‘doubled’ counterpart.

We arrive, indeed, at Generalization 3, illustrated by (54), (56) and (57):

(55) **Generalization 3**

In SpQs, cossa ‘non doubled’ by che appears with the same syntactic functions as cossa ‘doubled’ by che.

(The formulation will be qualified below, in ways which do not affect its validity; see (58a).)

(56) Cossa se ciàme-lo? (like (48))
(57) Cossa ghe coste-lo iutàrli? (like (49))

(54), (56) and (57) are again the SpQ counterparts - here without che - of the StQs (50), (51), (52).

I take this identical distribution as a central fact opposing (the two instantiations of) SpQ cossa to StQ cossa, and which calls for a common analysis of the former. Recall that Option 1 reduces the distribution of cossa ... che to that of StQ che, via the hypothesis that cossa is simply the checker of the sentence initial F°’s feature, che being the wh-phrase (CIP) also occurring in StQs. Since the functional distribution of ‘lonely’ cossa is the same, it too, then, should be reduced to the distribution of che.

An apparent obstacle on this way is the very fact that ‘lonely’ cossa is not accompanied by che, which seems to make reference to this element impossible. A more articulate approach, however, consists in assuming that che’s absence is only superficial; in other words, che - i.e. the che-CIP - is (again) structurally present, but in the case of ‘lonely’ cossa, its two components - che as well as the clitic head - are phonetically nonrealized, ‘silent’. Consequently, cossa’s distribution is derived as in the case of cossa ... che, as it should be; as for checking, Wh2° is checked by silent che, Wh1° by the silent clitic, and F° by cossa, in total parallelism with the case of ‘doubled’ cossa.

Alternatively, under Option 2, the cossaP might in analogous (but still quite different ways) be assumed to have a phonetically nonrealized che in its Spec, with a functioning analogous to that assumed for ‘doubled’ cossa, and the same absence of an explanation of the distributional facts.

Two observations are in order at this point. First, contrary to the initial impression that ‘lonely’ and ‘doubled’ cossa might necessitate different solutions (‘replacement’ of vs. ‘adding’ to che), Option 1 turns out to provide a uniform, simple, and explanatory analysis for both elements, provided we accept the structural presence of silent che in the case of ‘lonely’ cossa. This silent status of che is in fact strongly motivated by the need for a parallel explanation of the distributional facts.

We want of course to prevent proliferation of different instances of seemingly identical elements. I come back later to the question why two ‘different’ instances of cossa are acceptable.
The second observation supports this conclusion by noticing that the idea of a silent che is nothing surprising. Recall that the Northern Italian dialects show clearly that - even non realized phonetically - either of the components of the CIP can bear the feature corresponding to Wh2° and Wh1°, respectively (cf. (20c-f)). The hypothesis of the silent CIP, then, is very natural in the general context of the use of wh-CIPs (I will come back below to the question of the silent status of both components at the same time).

Examining the distributional facts has left us with a strongly preferred analysis - the one in terms of (the ‘articulate’ version of) Option 1, assuming the combined presence of StQ che, phonetically realized or not within its CIP, and the ‘high’ checker cossa - and a less satisfying alternative analysis, in terms of Option 2. Leaving the distributional aspect, I now turn to independent evidence which will lead to a clear choice between the two options, in favor of the first, the ‘omnipresence hypothesis’ of che.

6.4. The case for Option 1 - second part: independent evidence

The comparison of StQ cossa and SpQ cossa has shown the following surface properties for the latter:
- SpQ cossa is associated with a regular (nonrestricted) paradigm;\(^\text{17}\)
- SpQ cossa is associated with an ‘optional’ che.

Option 1, the favorite at this point, explains the former property by the hypothesis that the (argumental\(^\text{18}\)) CIP [ che [Cl \(\varnothing \) ] ] is present alongside cossa, and the latter by the hypothesis that che can be overtly realized in the CIP or not.

Since this ‘articulate’ version of Option 1 assumes the presence of the CIP, it has as corollaries two other claims concerning properties of cossa:
- SpQ cossa does not move; it is merged directly in the highest projection;
- SpQ cossa is nonargumental, since even silent, the CIP is the argument.
(Notice that these two properties again oppose SpQ cossa and StQ cossa.)

Showing that these claims about properties of cossa are correct would constitute independent evidence in favor of Option 1. I will give two decisive arguments to this effect in what follows.

6.4.1. The long-movement argument

The first relevant case is wh-movement from a subordinate, as in (58).

(58) a. ??Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat \(\varnothing \) ?!
b. Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat che ?!
    cossa think-you C° have done (what)
    “(But) what do you think you have done?!”

\(^{17}\) Aside from the exception concerning ‘lonely’ cossa announced in (55).

\(^{18}\) Except for ‘why-like’ cossa (cf. (7), above).
In its acceptable version, (58) expresses the speaker’s disapproval with respect to what his interlocutor thinks he has done.

In this case of an embedded wh-object the parallelism between cossa ... che and ‘lonely’ cossa is broken; the sentence requires the overt presence of che.19 What does this contrast show concerning Options 1 and 2? If cossa were merged qua DP/QP in (58a) as object of fat, it should raise to the matrix sentence, check Wh2°, Wh1° and SD° and allow the intended interpretation, unless structural reasons block this raising. The perfect acceptability of the parallel structure (58b) shows that there are no such reasons (as expected with a bridge verb like pensar), since che raises to [Spec, Wh2] of the matrix sentence and the Ø-clitic adjoins to matrix Wh1°,20 cossa being merged as last step. Nothing, then, can prevent a hypothetical object cossa in (58a) to raise analogously, and the unacceptability of (58a) forces the conclusion that SpQ cossa cannot function as an argument and does not move.

As an immediate consequence, the briefly considered hypothesis of an argumental DP/QP cossa in SDQs (the ‘third type’ of cossa) is definitely refuted. More importantly, Option 2 is also shown untenable since the unmovability of SDQ cossa is incompatible with the movement requirement that is part of the option. At the same time, obviously, Option 1 in its articulate version gets strong independent support.

According to this option, which from now on I adopt as the definitive analysis, (58b) Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat che?! is derived as in (59); only the elements necessary for understanding the steps are given.

(59) derivation of the SDQ (58b) Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat che?! (traces represented as t for better readability)

a. subordinate CP
   [CP de [IP PRO aver fat [CIP che [cl Ø]]]]

b. wh-movement of the CIP in the subordinate clause
   [CP [CIP che [cl Ø]] de aver fat tCIP ]

c. merge of matrix V and v, raising of the CIP to [Spec,v]
   [VP [CIP che [cl Ø]] v [VP pensi [CP tCIP de aver fat tCIP ]]]

19 The same contrast as in (58a, b) appears with a tensed sentential complement:

(i) a. ??Cossa pensi-tu che i sia drío far?!
   b. Cossa pensi-tu che i sia drío far che?!
   “What (the hell) do you think they are doing?!!”

Given the perfectly acceptable status of analogous nonembedded cases - cf. Cossa à-lo fat?!, Cossa sé-tu drío magnar?! (= (6)) - I treat the very marginal (58a) and (ia) as though they were excluded. Why they are not entirely unacceptable is not clear to me at present.

20 Just as in the parallel StQ Pensì-tu de aver fat che? “What do you think you have done?”
d. raising of matrix V to I, raising of the Ø-cl to its cliticization position, merge of subject tu

\[ [\text{IP} \text{tu} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}] \text{pensi} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]]] \]

e. merge Wh2 and IP, attract che to [Spec,Wh2]

\[ [\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} [\text{IP} \text{tu} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}] \text{pensi} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]]]] \]

f. merge Top and Wh2P, attract the complement of Vfin, AspP (containing the subordinate clause) to [Spec,Top]

\[ [\text{TopP} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]]] \text{Top}^\circ \\
[\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} [\text{IP} \text{tu} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}] \text{pensi} \text{tAspP}]]] \]

g. merge G and TopP, attract tu to [Spec,G]

\[ [\text{GP} \text{tu} \text{G}^\circ [\text{TopP} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]] ] \text{Top}^\circ [\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} \text{tIP}]]] \]

h. merge Force and GP, attract the remnant IP to [Spec,Force]

\[ [\text{ForceP} [\text{IP} \text{tu} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}] \text{pensi} \text{tAspP} ] \text{Force}^\circ [\text{GP} \text{tu} \text{G}^\circ [\text{TopP} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]] ] \text{Top}^\circ [\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} \text{tIP}]]] \]

i. merge Wh1 and ForceP, attract the Ø-clitic to Wh1

\[ [\text{Wh1P} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}]+\text{Wh1}^\circ [\text{ForceP} [\text{IP} \text{tu} \text{tcl} \text{pensi} \text{tAspP} ] \text{Force}^\circ [\text{GP} \text{tu} \text{G}^\circ [\text{TopP} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]] ] \text{Top}^\circ [\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} \text{tIP}]]]]] \]

j. merge SD and Wh1P, merge cossa in [Spec,SD]

\[ [\text{SDP} \text{cossa} \text{SD}^\circ [\text{Wh1P} [\text{cl} \text{Ø}]+\text{Wh1}^\circ [\text{ForceP} [\text{IP} \text{tu} \text{tcl} \text{pensi} \text{tAspP} ] \text{Force}^\circ [\text{GP} \text{tu} \text{G}^\circ [\text{TopP} [\text{AspP} \text{vP} [\text{ClP} \text{che} \text{tcl} ] \text{tensi} [\text{CP} \text{tClP} \text{de aver fat} \text{tClP}]] ] \text{Top}^\circ [\text{Wh2P} \text{che} \text{Wh2}\text{Ø} \text{tIP}]]]]]] \]

The following comments are in order. Only step j. pertains to the specific syntax of SDQs. Steps a.-d. assemble the initial IP; the derivation of the matrix periphery is shown in steps e.-j.

The wh-CIP raises successive-cyclically via the embedded vP (step not shown here) to the subordinate left periphery (b.) and to the matrix vP (c.); see Chomsky (2001) for vP as edge position imposed for general reasons,\(^{21}\) and Poletto & Pollock (2005) for the derivation of the clitic head of the CIP, which is independently in need of an ‘escape hatch’ within IP.

\(^{21}\) Chomsky (2001) considers two definitions of ‘phase’, which differ with respect to the possibility of putting in relation or not the internal domain of a phase with an element belonging to the (strong) higher phase. In the clause where it originates, the more ‘permissive’ definition a priori allows the wh-clitic to raise directly to its position high in IP without ‘stopping’ in [Spec,vP]; depending on certain assumptions che too could skip that position on pure locality grounds on its way to the left periphery. Nonetheless, the CIP needs to get Case, which prevents its constituents from raising directly.
From this position, the (silent) clitic and che move separately; che raises to [Spec,Wh2], its final position (e.), while the clitic moves to its cliticisation position in between the subject and the verb (d.), before being displaced within the remnant IP to [Spec,Force] (h.), from where it adjoins to Wh1° (i.).

6.4.2. The argument from simple SDQs

The long movement paradigm confirmed that SDQ cossa is nonargumental and directly merged with SD°.22 Prepositional arguments lead to the same conclusion even in simple sentences.

Thus, the SDQ (61) contrasts with (60) and even more strikingly with its StQ counterparts, unembedded and embedded, (62), (63).

(60) Cossa à-lo fat?! (= (54))

(61) ??De cossa parle-li?! of what talk-they (= they should not be talking of that)

(62) De cossa parle-li? StQ (Bellunese except Pagotto)

“What are they talking about?”

(63) Me domande de cossa che i à parlà. StQ (Bellun. including Pagotto)

“I wonder what they have been talking about.”

(Recall the obligatory presence of the complementizer in tensed subordinates.) The very marginal status of (61) is not due to a general prohibition against prepositions in SDQs, as shown by the full acceptability of (64):

(64) Con chi à-li parlà?!

“What (the hell) did they talk with!?”

The contrast between (62) and (63), on the one hand, and the SDQ (61), on the other, is precisely of the type expected between an argumental element merged as such (in its theta-position) and a nonargumental element merged directly in the left periphery. (61) is excluded if SDQ cossa can never appear in a theta-position, as claimed by Option 1.23

22 The relevance of the long movement paradigm was pointed out in Munaro & Obenauer (1999), who also noted the case of prepositional objects examined below. In a different analytical framework, the article drew the same conclusion concerning cossa accompanied by che while considering ‘lonely’ cossa as an argumental element.

23 Kayne (2000; 2001) argues against the traditional idea that arguments of the verb can be PPs in VP; according to him, the argument is merged with its predicate without the preposition, which is introduced outside of VP and associated with the argument without creating at any point a consituent of the form [P NP].

The acceptable counterpart of (61), (i), which uses the preposition de and the CIP [che [Ø]], raises questions concerning the movement of the clitic and the way che combines with the preposition which I will not treat here; Kayne’s (2000; 2001) propositions could be relevant.
Summarizing, both the long-movement case (58a) "Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat?" and (61) are now reduced to SpQ cossa’s particular status. SpQ cossa contrasts in regular ways with the cossa of StQs: it is a ‘simple’ checker of the initial head’s feature. Correlatively, the presence of the CIP in the structure has been independently confirmed.

6.5. **On licensing the silent CIP**

With the checker status of SpQ cossa definitely established, let us come back to the relation between cossa and the silent che-CIP. It remains to account for the contrast between the long movement case (58a) "Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat?" and its simple-CP counterpart (65). In both cases, the CIP [che ∅ [+∅]] is the argumental wh-phrase, and cossa checks SD°.

(65) *Cossa à-lo fat*?!  
(= (60))

Assuming, alongside cossa, the presence of a silent CIP in (58a) as well as in (65), Option 1, so far, has nothing to say about the contrast; it would seem that both sentences should be acceptable, as are their counterparts with a pronounced che (45) "Cossa à-lo fat che?!" and (58b) "Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat che?!"

I have already noted that the silent-CIP hypothesis is entirely in line with the principles governing bare wh-elements in the NEIDs, in realizing one of the possible combinations of the parameter choices argued for by Poletto & Pollock (2005). Recall that according to the authors, the two components of a CIP are each associated with a binary parameter [±pronounced]. Thus, the four a priori possible combinations of parameter choices are those shown in (66).

(66) nonclitic in [Spec,CIP]  clitic head of CIP
   a. +   +
   b. +   –
   c. –   +
   d. –   –

« + » = phonetically realized, « – » = silent

Example (i) compares with its StQ counterpart (ii):

(i) *Cossa parle-li de che ?!’*

COSSA  speak-they  of what

Example (i) compares with its StQ counterpart (ii):

(ii) *Parle-li de che?*

speak-they  of what

The fact that (ii) has a SpQ counterpart introduced by cossa supports Generalization (1) (= (46)) and is explained if, like (ii), (i) brings into play a CIP, as claimed by Option 1, cossa being the checker of the highest head’s feature.
The NEIDs always realize phonetically one of the two components of the CIP (sometimes both - à la (66a) -, case of the Monno dialect). The parameter choice for the Bellunese/Pagotto bare wh - chi, andê, etc. - corresponds to case (66b). As I have shown in detail, there exists one case in which the CIP can be entirely silent - à la (66d) -, namely, the case of che. Crucially, this ‘exception’ can be found only in SpQs, when they contain cossa; in other words, it is conditioned by the presence of cossa. The silent CIP is illegitimate in (67), the StQ counterpart of (65):

\[(67) \ *À-lo fat [che Θ [cl Θ]] ?\]

Thus, non-pronunciation of che, while possible depending on parameter choice, does not come for free, but requires licensing, a fact reminiscent of certain phenomena discussed in Kayne (2005). It follows that SpQ cossa is more than a mere checker of SD°: it is also a licensor for the silent che-CIP.

This licensing is expected to be a local process involving a notion of distance governed by general constraints. I will assume that the contrast between the successful licensing of (65) Cossa à-lo fat?! and the impossible licensing of (58a) ??Cossa pensi-tu de aver fat?! is due to the fact that in the long-movement case, the locality requirement is not respected.

The licensing process itself - though it raises intriguing questions - is not the subject of this article. It brings into play a range of additional phenomena which are also relevant for the notion of distance at stake with che, and which are outside the scope of this article and cannot be dealt with here. I limit myself to the preceding considerations concerning the general nature of the contrast between the legitimate cases of silent che and those which are not.

7. **Summary and consequences of the analysis of SDQs**

Building on the analytical framework developed for StQs by Benincà, Poletto & Pollock, I have shown that Bellunese SpQs - in particular, SDQs - have a syntax of their own and argued that it derives from the fact that they use functional structure ‘on top of’ the structure activated in StQs. The typical sentence initial appearance of bare wh-elements (sentence final in StQs) results from the activation of a dedicated projection, SDP, a projection belonging to the ‘split CP’ in Rizzi’s (1997) sense.

24 Case (66c) was illustrated in (20c, e), above.
25 Even if che, as assumed here, bears only a default restriction. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for help in sharpening this aspect.
26 Under the analysis developed above, in both (65) and (58a) - as shown for che by the parallel sentences with overt che - the silent clitic and the silent che end up in the same positions (i.e., in the root sentence, adjoined to Wh1° and in Spec,Wh2, respectively). Therefore, the fact that (65) and (58a) contrast as they do shows that cossa cannot license the silent che in its peripheral position, nor can this be done ‘via’ the silent clitic adjacent to cossa. Consequently, the licensing must involve lower instances of (the) che CIP. I leave this and other questions to work in progress.
27 Recall that the label SDP is a purely mnemonic one.
While the behavior of wh-elements with a positive restriction is quite straightforward, the syntax associated with the che-ClP turned out to be more complex. I have argued that two hypotheses - the ‘omnipresence hypothesis’ for the che-ClP and the ‘high checker hypothesis’ for SpQ cossa - provide a revealing analysis of these facts. Modulo these hypotheses, the pattern of distinctive properties of SpQs/SDQs - besides initial wh-elements the absence of initial che, the appearance of cossa, ‘doubled’ or not by sentence final che - has been reduced to the need for checking of SD\(^0\). In this, the analysis is maximally simple, since it resorts to a single hypothesis belonging to the construction, the existence of this head (and its projection).

Let us turn to some consequences of this analysis. First, the presence of cossa is the particular case allowing the silent parametric options for both constituents of the ClP at the same time, a possibility predicted in principle by the Benincà/Poletto/Pollock framework, but realized only in SpQs, since it depends for its realization on a licensor of the silent elements.

A second consequence concerns the respective properties of the two cossa isolated by the analysis. The StQ cossa has an incomplete paradigm, is never accompanied by che, is argumental and moves; the SDQ cossa is in all these points the exact opposite. (68) and (69) visualize the contrast.

(68) StQ cossa  
- incomplete paradigm  
- never ‘doubled’ by che  
- argumental  
- raises from its A-position, i.e., moves

(69) SDQ cossa  
- regular paradigm (in fact, that of che)  
- always ‘doubled’ by che (silent or not)  
- nonargumental  
- first merged with SD\(^0\), i.e., does not move

The two cossa are maximally different from each other; there is no ‘intermediate’ instance of cossa (like the ‘third type’ of (the discarded) Option 2). This result is reminiscent of the well-known crosslinguistic opposition between argumental and ‘expletive’ what, and may thus express another very general - rather than idiosyncratic - property of cossa.

Third, the alternation between the surface forms cossa ... and cossa ... che is not a case of optional presence of an element in the numeration/computation; it is a simple fact of PF. The phenomenon, thus, does not support the idea of optionality in narrow syntax.

Fourth and finally, the analysis of SDQs in Bellunese suggests that, at least in closely related languages and dialects, SpQs are structurally parallel to their Bellunese counterparts. In other words, where the initial position of wh-elements is obligatory in StQs, it ‘masks’ positional differences in the left periphery (recall that even StQs resort

REFERENCES


