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An Account of Polarity Emphasis in Catalan: The distribution of sí/no + que sentences

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**An Account of Polarity Emphasis in Catalan: The distribution
of *sí/no* + *que* sentences**

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Abstract

The present thesis takes on the topic of how polarity focus works in the Catalan language. It focuses on the sequences formed by a polarity element *sí* “yes” or *no* “no”, combined with *que* to introduce a clause, forming *sí que*, *sí que no* and *no que no* sentences. These sequences have been studied in the literature individually, but not a lot has been said in terms of comparison. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to compare and analyze the sentences introduced by these sequences, as well as their distribution based on their triggers and the context they appear in. The account given indicates various findings. Firstly, *sí/no* + *que* sequences can introduce answers to polarity questions, as well as respond to a previous utterance indicating polarity emphasis. Moreover, they can also be used in contrastive settings. However, the three sequences cannot always appear in the same contexts unrestrictedly. Case and point, it is argued that *sí que no* and *no que no* are not interchangeable, despite both of them seemingly denoting negative polarity emphasis.

Keywords: polarity emphasis, verum focus, Catalan syntax

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1. Introduction

The Catalan language, just like many of its peers, makes use of two polarity markers (*sí* “yes”, and *no* “no”) to answer a polarity question. These markers can be used as standalones, or can be followed by a clause reiterating the polarity of the answer, expressed within brackets in the answers (B1, B2) in example 1:

1.

A: Plou?

rains

“Is it raining?”

B1: *Sí*(, plou).

yes rains

“Yes(, it is raining).”

B2: No(, no plou).

no NEG rains

“No(, it isn’t raining).”

Moreover, the aforementioned polarity marker *sí* can also be used in a sequence with *que*, followed by a clause, to denote emphatic polarity, which denotes an emphasis on the truth value of a clause. In English, this corresponds to the use of emphatic do support, the adverb *indeed* or accented intonation, among other formulas. This type of sequence can introduce an answer to a polarity question, but it can also respond to other types of sentences, including declaratives and exclamatives, always denoting positive polarity. *Sí que* can also be used in a contrastive setting, with a topicalized element to its left, which receives emphasis:

2.

A: Vindrà a la festa en Marc?

come.FUT to the party the M.

“Will Marc come to the party?”

B1: *Sí* que hi vindrà.

yes that CL come.FUT

“He will come indeed.”

B2: No ho sé, però la Marta *sí* que hi vindrà.

NEG CL know but the M. yes that CL come.FUT

“I don’t know, but Marta will definitely come.”

As for negative polarity emphasis, we find that it can be achieved with the same construction *sí que*, but this time followed by the negative marker *no*, forming *sí que no*. Additionally, the sequence *no que no* is also found in certain dialectal areas of Catalan. They both obtain the same superficial reading in the following sentence, as a contrastive response to a polarity question: they emphasize the negative polarity of the clause in association to the topicalized element:

3.

A: Vindrà a la festa en Marc?
come.FUT to the party the M.
“Will Marc come to the party?”

B: La Marta *sí/* no que no vindrà, que té febre.
the M. yes no that NEG come.FUT that has fever
“Marta will definitely not come, she has a fever.”

While *sí que* and *sí que no* have been explored in previous literature (Pujol i Campeny, 2023; Batllori & Hernanz, 2013), and *no que no* has been mentioned as well (Arboleas et al., 2020), little to no work has been done on the matter of analysis and comparison between the different polarity emphasis structures. In this way, the aim of the present thesis is to fill that gap by analyzing these sequences of words and explaining the structural, distributional, and implicational differences, if there are any, between the polarity markers *sí* “yes” and *no* “no” when used in emphatic contexts together with the complementizer *que* in its different combinations (*sí que*, *sí que no* and *no que no*):

Research Question:

What is the distribution of emphatic polarity in Catalan using *sí que (no)/ no que no* and how do these sequences differ from each other?

The structure of this thesis is as follows. First, an overview of the previous literature, both on the usage of polarity markers in general and how they function in Romance languages and, more specifically, in Catalan. From there on, different data on the structure of *sí/no + que* is presented in the form of examples. Lastly, said data is analyzed and discussed to ascertain how this structure works and if there are any differences when using the two polarity markers.

2. Previous literature

2.1. Beyond polarity

Polarity and its overt expression through particles have been thoroughly studied. They have been at the center of numerous research initiatives, both on the subject of polarity in general (Chierchia 2013; Dimroth & Sudhoff 2018; Holmberg 2015; Hoeksema 2001; Krifka 2013), as well as in

specific languages (Charezinska 1984; Giannakidou & Yoon 2016; Kramer 2021; Kishimoto et al. 2024; Pasquereau 2020)

Answering a polarity question can be done in many ways, such as with particles, with verb echo, with a reissuing of sentence, etc. When it comes to answers using polarity particles (PP from now on), Holmberg (2015) proposes that yes/no questions have a projection called PolP (Polarity Phrase) in which the head Pol has a value for positive or negative polarity left open (+ -Pol). In the answer to such questions, the same PolP is found, this time with a valued feature in its head, either +Pol or -Pol, as well as the polarity particle *yes* or *no* in the specPolP position. In this way, the structure of a positive or negative answer is as follows (adapted from Wiltschko, 2017:244):

4. Positive and negative polarity answers:

- a. [_{FocP} yes [_{PolP} (+pol) [_{TP...}]]]
- b. [_{FocP} no [_{PolP} (-pol) [_{TP...}]]]

However, it is not the case that these polarity particles have the same distribution in all languages. Case and point, when it comes to answering negative questions, there is a distinction between languages which use an agree/disagree or truth-based system and positive/negative system (polarity-based) (Holmberg, 2015). A positive answer in the first one denotes agreement of the responder and the resondee about the negation obtaining [-pol], such is the case for Japanese (5), where a negative question is answered with a positive sentence to indicate agreement with said negative question. In the second one, which corresponds to English as well as Swedish (6), that same polarity value is obtained via a negative answer.

5. (Japanese, Holmberg 2015:139)

A: Kimi tukarete nai?

you tired NEG

“Are you not tired?”

B: Un (tukarete nai).

yes tired NEG

(Lit.) “Yes, I’m not tired.”

6. (Swedish, Holmberg 2015:139)

A: Är du inte trött?

are you not tired

“Are you not tired?”

B: Nej (jag är inte tröt).

no I am not tired

“No (I’m not tired).”

Building upon this idea of truth-based versus polarity-based, Wiltschko (2017) introduces the concept of (dis)agreement in the polarity particles *yes* and *no*. These particles are not limited to their use as an answer to polarity questions and can also be used as responses to other types of sentences. Mainly, they can respond to declaratives (assertions), *wh*-interrogatives (questions), imperatives (commands/requests) and exclamatives (exclamations). The main difference between *yes* and *no* used as answers and as response particles (ResPrt from now on) is their relation to what they respond to: in the case of the former, they assess the truth value of the previous utterance, but when it comes to the latter, they express agreement or disagreement with it. Examples of this (dis)agreement are shown in the responses of 7, for declaratives, and 8, for imperatives.

7. Declarative trigger:

A: She is a good driver

B1: Yes, she is. (Agreement w/ p)

B2: No, she isn't. (Disagreement w/ p)

8. Imperative trigger:

A: Play me a song

B1: Yes, gladly. (Agreement w/ request)

B2: No, I don't feel like it. (Disagreement w/ request)

To explain this difference in the syntax paradigm, Wiltschko proposes that to express (dis)agreement, the ResPrts value an unvalued feature *ucoin* found in the head of GroundP, which expresses the common ground, also called Speech Act Layer (Σ P) in some literature. This feature focuses on the coincidence of two arguments, mainly the trigger or antecedent and the response. The projection GroundP is found above the CP and its *ucoin* value, [+coin] or [-coin], is determined by the ResPrt found attached at the top. The speech act layer, therefore, takes the following structure (adapted from Wiltschko, 2017:264):

9. [_{GroundP} Ground-S _{Ground \circ} (*ucoin*) [_{CP...}]]

In this way, ResPrts can associate with the clausal spine in two different positions: above p-structure to indicate polarity when they answer a yes/no question, analyzed as Holmberg (2015) proposed, seen in 11. And they can also be above speech act structure when they mark agreement or disagreement with the trigger, as indicated by Wiltschko (2017), shown in 10.

10. (Dis)agreement:

[[_{GroundP} yes/no] [_{Ground \circ} (+/-coin) [_{CP-interrog...}]]]

11. Truth value:

[_{FocP} yes/no [_{PolP} (+/-pol) [_{TP...}]]]

This dual system use for response particles is not exclusive to English and can be found in other languages. Case and point, Wiltschko (2017) provides data indicating that the *ResPrt* in Upper Austrian German (UAG) can be used in different contexts to indicate polarity and (dis)agreement, distinctively. This is possible in spite of the fact that German and UAG's polarity answer system falls into the category of polarity-based: in the case of UAG, positive answers to negative questions are indicated by the use of *oh jo* instead of the usual *jo* "yes" and produce a reversal on the polarity of the negative question, turning it into a positive statement:

12. (Uper Austrian German, Wiltschko 2017:261)

- A: Trinkt da Hons net an Kaffee?
 drinks DET Hans NEG DET coffee
 "Does Hans not drink coffee?"
B1: *Jo. (= He does drink coffee.)
B2: Na. (= He doesn't drink coffee.)
B3: Oh jo. (= He does drink coffee.)

In this way, we see that polarity items can be used in other contexts where they do not ascertain the polarity of a question, such as in agreeing or disagreeing with other types of sentences. This notion will prove to be helpful in analyzing certain examples in the *sí que (no)/no que no* structures. Moreover, it has been also considered relevant in the literature for Catalan and other Romance languages, which we will proceed to show immediately.

2.2. Polarity emphasis in other Romance languages

Before we dive into polarity emphasis in Catalan, we shall look at how it shows up in its related languages, that is, Romance languages, and how it has been explained and analyzed. We will focus mainly on Italian and Spanish, since both languages have a similar structure: *sì che/no che* in Italian (Poletto & Zanuttini, 2013) and *sí (que)* in Spanish (Villa-García & González Rodríguez, 2020)¹. This will help us to shape the meaning and structure analysis of emphatic polarity, as well as serve as a means of comparison later on.

Poletto & Zanuttini (2013) explore the structure of Italian polarity emphasis in the form of *sì che/no che* sentences, exemplified in 13, and give an analysis which has been adopted by other works, for other languages (Batllori & Hernanz, 2013; Pujol i Campeny, 2023). This type of sentences cannot have any focused constituents, neither before the *sì/no*, nor after the *che* in

¹ Other languages, such as Portuguese and its echoic verb answers (Martins, 2006), and Romanian, with its reversal particle *ba* (Farkas, 2011), will not be taken into account for this thesis due to their structural differences in offering answers and emphasized polarity.

preverbal position, which means they cannot denote contrast. However, they can be used to respond to triggers that are not polarity questions, such as declaratives:

13. (Italian, Poletto & Zanuttini 2013:124)

- A: È poi arrivato Gianni?
is then arrived Gianni
“Did Gianni arrive in the end?”
- B1: Sì che è arrivato.
yes that is arrived
“Of course he arrived!”
- B2: No che non è arrivato.
no that NEG is arrived
“He did not!”

Si che/no che sentences do not follow the same structure or meaning like standard affirmation/negation, or *si/no* sentences, for that matter, as explained by the authors. Firstly, regular affirmation is unmarked, while negation is obtained by using the negator *non* in preverbal position, and when answering a question, these can be preceded by *sì*, and *no*, respectively. Secondly, *si che/no che* sentences can indicate a different truth value than that of their trigger sentence. Moreover, as opposed to *si/no* sentences, they cannot introduce new lexical material that is not in the trigger:

14. (Italian, adapted from Poletto & Zanuttini 2013:126)

- A: È poi arrivato?
is then arrived
“Did he arrive in the end?”
- B: *Sì che è arrivato alle tre.
yes that is arrived at three
“Of course he arrived at 3:00 o’clock!”

As observed in the examples, there is a polarity match in the sentences, mainly between the polarity item (*si/no*) and the polarity of the sentence itself. The fact that *non* appears in 13 B2 despite not usually appearing in sentences with higher negation elements aligns Poletto & Zanuttini’s proposal that these sentences are in fact bi-clausal, with the polarity particle merging into the structure by introduction of *che*. In this way, there is an operator in PolP in the lower clause, if the value of the sentence is positive, the head of the projection is null, if it is negative, it takes on the form of *non*, as observed in the following structure (Poletto & Zanuttini 2013:139):

15. [_{HTP} [_{HTP} ~~non è arrivato~~] [_{ForceP}... [_{PolP} no_i [_{TP}... [_{ForceP} OP_i] [_{Force0} che [_{PolP} e_i non è arrivato]]]]]]]]

In a similar sense, positive polarity emphasis can be introduced in Spanish via the use of the positive polarity particle *sí* “yes”, sometimes, but not necessarily, accompanied by *que*. These *sí* (*que*) sentences can have a topic to their left, which serves as a contrasted element. Batllori & Hernanz (2013) differentiate between *sí* sentences and *sí que* ones structurally as follows. In the former, the polarity element moves from PolP to FocusP, while for the latter type, they adapt a bi-clausal structure, similar to that of Poletto & Zanuttini for Italian, in which the polarity item moves to ForceP in the higher clause. One of the reasons why they take on said last structure is argued to be the fact that there can be more than one layer of polarity in the structure:

16. (Spanish)

A: Ha llegado Marta?
 has arrived Marta
 “Has Marta arrived?”

B1: Sí ha llegado.
 yes has arrived
 “She has arrived indeed!”

B2: Sí que ha llegado.
 yes that has arrived
 “She has arrived indeed!”

17. (Spanish, Batllori & Hernanz 2013:26)

Hoy sí que no ha llovido.
today yes that NEG has rained
“Today it hasn’t rained indeed.”

Alternatively, Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) argue for a distinction between the *sí* in *sí* sequences versus *sí que* ones. That is, *sí* in sentences like 16 B1 indicates verum focus, or focus in polarity (Romero, 2006), while *sí que* in 17 revolves around the respondee’s commitment to the truth of the propositional content and thus is not involved with polarity. Villa-García & González Rodríguez discard Batllori & Hernanz’ theory that *sí que* involves a bi-clausal structure in which *sí* moves to ForceP, and instead propose an additional projection between TopicP and FocusP, the specifier of which is *sí* and with its head spelled out as *que* (Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020:480):

18. [_{ForceP} [_{TopicP} [_{XP} *sí* [_{Xo} *que* [_{TopicP} [_{FocusP} [_{EP} [_{TP} ...]]]]]]]]]]]

While Batllori & Hernanz use the double polarity in 17 as an argument for their bi-clausal structure, Villa-García & González Rodríguez indicate that “*sí que*, unlike *sí*, does not by itself change the polarity of the proposition” (2020:14). Therefore, *sí que sí* and *sí que no* are available

for use. The idea that the polarity of these sentences is not established by *sí que* is further proved to be correct when testing them in stripping: the use of *también* “also” and *tampoco* “neither” depends on the polarity established after *que*, be it positive neutral, positive emphasized (*sí*) or negative (*no*):

19. (Spanish, Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020:463)

Ahora *sí que sí* te ayudaré
now yes that yes CL will.help
“Now I will really help you.”

20. (Spanish, Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020:466)

- a. (*No) llamaron a María y a Pedro también.
not called ACC M. and ACC P. too
- b. *(No) llamaron a María y a Pedro tampoco.
not called ACC M. and ACC P. neither
- c. A María *sí que* no la llamaron, y a Pedro {*tampoco*/**también*}.
ACC M. yes that not CL called and ACC P. neither too
“They certainly did not call María, and they didn’t call Pedro either.”

Moreover, they note that, whereas in Italian *sì che* is always attributed to positive polarity and *no che* to negative polarity, in Spanish *sí que* can be followed by both positive and negative polarity. In this way, Poletto & Zanuttini’s proposal for Italian cannot be reutilized for Spanish.

Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) argue in their paper that there is a difference in interpretation of *sí* and *sí que* in Spanish. Mainly, the former issues verum focus, while the latter asserts the speaker’s commitment to the statement that it follows. They go on to show several tests of distribution and usage which show that they are, indeed, not equal. These tests concern different elements, such as topic and foci, extra polarity particles, dislocated topic reconstruction, etc. We will mention them in the account to make a point about the nature of *sí que* in Catalan.

As we have seen, the emphatic polarity systems of Italian and Spanish are similar but not identical. Now, we turn our attention to Catalan, which also differs from these two.

2.3. Polarity particles and emphasis in Catalan

Similar to its Romance language peers and English, Catalan uses Polarity Particles when answering polarity questions: *sí* meaning “yes” and *no* meaning “no”, as shown in the answers in 21. These can also act as ResPrts to indicate (dis)agreement in the Wiltschko (2017) sense and respond to different types of triggers, such as declaratives, WH-questions and imperatives (Arboleas et al., 2020), this last one exemplified in 22.

21. Polarity question:

A: Vols una flor?
 want a flower
 “Do you want a flower?”

B1: Sí.
 yes
 “Yes.”

B2: No.
 no
 “No.”

22. Response to imperatives:

A: Fes els deures.
 do.IMP.2S the homework
 “Do your homework.”

B1: Sí, ara mateix els faig.
 yes now exactly CL do
 “Yes, I’ll do them right now.”

B2: No, no vull.
 no NEG want
 “No, I don’t want to.”

As for sentence polarity, the neutral unmarked polarity is by default positive. In this way, positive unmarked sentences do not include a polarity item. Unmarked negative polarity, on the other hand, is indicated by the use of the negative *no* in preverbal position. The canonical word order in Catalan is considered to be VOS (Vallduví, 1990), but SVO is also possible by means of having the subject as an oblique-adjunct (Busquets, 2006). In this way, Batllori & Hernanz (2013) propose a clause structure for Catalan (23) in which, following from the idea to group positive and negative polarity, a projection called PolP (Polarity Phrase) is found above TP. It is in the head of PolP that the polarity of the sentence is expressed, which in turn determines the linked polarity element that will appear (\emptyset for neutral polarity, *no* for negative polarity).

23. (Batllori & Hernanz, 2013:21)

[CP...[PolP[Pol' [Pol [TP...]]]]]

It is in expressing emphatic polarity where Catalan differs from Spanish and Italian. On the one hand, positive emphatic polarity is marked by the use of *sí que* (24a), as opposed to the already mentioned *sí* in Spanish, although the positive particle could be used as a standalone in Old Catalan (Pujol i Campeny, 2019). On the other, negative polarity emphasis is expressed in the form of *sí que*

no (24b), which is not available in Italian (Arboleas et al., 2020). However, another option, which is mainly used in the central dialect region of Catalan (Institut d'Estudis Catalans, *GIEC*), is *no que no* (24c), a parallel from the Italian structure. Moreover, *no... pas* also denotes emphatic negative polarity (24d).

24.

- a. L'Arnau *sí* que ha vingut a la festa.
the-A. yes that has come at the party
"Arnau has come to the party indeed."
- b. L'Arnau *sí que no* ha vingut a la festa.
the-A. yes that NEG has come at the party
"Arnau has not come to the party indeed."
- c. L'Arnau *no que no* ha vingut a la festa.
the-A. no that NEG has come at the party
"Arnau has not come to the party indeed."
- d. L'Arnau *no ha vingut pas* a la festa.
the-A. NEG has come pas at the party
"Arnau has not come to the party indeed."

For their analysis of emphatic polarity in both Catalan and Spanish, Batllori & Hernanz (2013), propose a double marking of polarity: one on the external clause, which takes on an emphatic role, and one in the internal one, shown in 25 and adapted from Hernanz (2007). This division helps to explain why *sí que no* is possible. Moreover, they argue that the focalized polarity particle is occupying the FocusP, which explains why no other focalized elements can appear in the sentence.

25. (Batllori & Hernanz, 2013:27)

[_{ForceP} Sí [_{Force'} [_{Force0} que] ... [_{FocusP} ... [_{PolP} [_{FinP}]]]]]

Building upon that, Pujol i Campeny (2023) proposes a bi-clausal analysis where *que* is found in ForceP, in a separate clause. *Sí* is base generated in PolP and then moves up to FocusP to express the reaction of the speaker to the proposition by assessing its truth value: it emphasizes the positive polarity by having *sí* in FocusP. This explains why *sí que* is incompatible with Foci to the left periphery. The idea is that the lower CP is taken as a complement of a silent truth predicate in the upper clause, which is why negative polarity markers can occur in the lower clause (*sí que no*), since their syntactic domains are not the same. The proposed structure is as follows (Pujol i Campeny 2023:23):

26. [_{ForceP} ... [_{FocusP} Sí_i [_{PolP} t_i... [truth predicate] [_{VP} [_{ForceP} que [_{FrameP} [_{TopicP} [_{FocusP} [_{PolP} ...

To conclude, the literature takes a bi-clausal approach in which the polarity of the inner clause is not dependent on the polarity item that precedes it. Nevertheless, the use of the combinations of the polarity items *sí* and *no* with the complementizer *que* are varied and restricted by both the context and the trigger. Thus, we will now introduce a variety of examples to help define how they work and what their distribution is.

3. *Sí/no* + *que*

Most of the data and examples in the following section have been created by the author, a native speaker of Catalan, and they have been checked with 7 different people, all of them also native speakers. Other examples that have been taken from Catalan corpuses are indicated as such.

3.1. *Sí que*

Firstly, we have the emphatic positive form *sí que*, which is followed by an unmarked neutral clause. It can be used as an answer to both positive and negative polarity questions. Moreover, it can also be used to respond to positive and negative declarative sentences. In the case of answering a positive question, *sí que* expresses positive polarity (p), as seen in 27. Similarly, when responding to a positive declarative, it expresses agreement with it (28).

27.

- A: Vols una flor?
 want a flower
 “Do you want a flower?” (p V ¬p)
- B: Sí que la vull.
 yes that CL want
 “I do want it.” (p)

28.

- A: En Jordi és molt llest.
 the J. is very smart
 “Jordi is very smart.” (p)
- B: Sí que ho és.
 yes that CL is
 “He is indeed.” (Agreement w/p)

Likewise, when answering negative polarity questions, such as that of 29 with *sí que*, the answer once again obtains a positive polarity reading (p). Lastly, if used as a response to a negative declarative, it states disagreement with the statement (disagreement w/¬p), as seen in 30.

29.

- A: No vols una flor?
NEG want a flower
“Don’t you want a flower?”
- B: Sí que la vull.
yes that CL want
“I do want it.” (p)

30.

- A: En Jordi no és gaire llest.
the J. NEG is barely smart
“Jordi isn’t very smart.” (¬p)
- B: Sí que ho és.
yes that CL is
“Yes, he is.” (Disagreement w/¬p)

Moreover, *sí que* can also be used in contrastive environments to emphasize positive polarity of a statement about a topicalized element in left dislocation, in contrast to others. As an example, in A in 31, the question asked makes reference to the timeframe *demà* “tomorrow”. The answer in 31 B topicalizes *avui* “today”, as opposed to tomorrow, and follows it with *sí que* to emphasize the contrast: they can come today but not tomorrow.

31.

- A: Podeu venir demà?
can come tomorrow
“Can you come tomorrow?”
- B: No, però avui sí que podem venir.
no but today yes that can come
“No, but we can definitely come today.”

3.2. *Sí que no*

If a negative operator *no* is added after *sí que*, *sí que no* is obtained. This type of structure, which uses both the positive and the negative polarity marker, is also very restricted in its use. Firstly, it cannot introduce an answer to a positive polarity yes-no question, as the example presented in 32 shows. Moreover, if used in response to a positive declarative, the interaction becomes inconceivable, much like in 33. Although its resulting reading is imbued in negative polarity, the use of the positive polarity marker *sí* indicates agreement, and thus, in these contexts, it results in an incorrect sentence.

32.

- A: Vols una flor?
want a flower
“Do you want a flower?” (p V ¬p)
- B: *Sí que no la vull.
yes that NEG CL want
Intended: “I do not want it at all.” (¬p)

33.

- A: En Jordi és molt llest.
the J. is very smart
“Jordi is very smart.” (p)
- B: *Sí que no ho és.
yes that NEG CL is
Intended: “He is not at all.” (Disagreement w/p)

As for how it behaves when combined with negative triggers, the results are barely improved. On the one hand, its use as a response to negative declaratives, understood as agreement with ¬p (34) is possible but not preferred by many speakers. It is not that it is syntactically wrong, but more so that other options, such as a short, reduplicated *no*, are more natural in that case. On the other hand, their use in answers to negative yes-no questions like the one exemplified in 35, is perceived as incorrect and forced by most speakers.

34.

- A: En Jordi no és gaire llest.
the J. NEG is barely smart
“Jordi isn’t very smart.” (¬p)
- B: ?Sí que no ho és.
yes that NEG CL is
“He isn’t indeed.” (Agreement w/¬p)

35.

- A: No vols una flor?
NEG want a flower
“Don’t you want a flower?”
- B: *Sí que no la vull.
yes that NEG CL want
Intended: “I do not want it indeed.” (¬p)

All the same, much like *sí que*, *sí que no* can be used in contrastive environments in which a topicalized left-dislocated element takes relevance in the discourse, opposing it to one of its peers. In this case, however, the polarity is reversed, indicating that the statement is not true about the topic, as opposed to not being true of other possible topics. In this way, *sí que no* in B in 36 indicates the negative polarity associated with the emphasized element *avui* “today”: they cannot come today, as opposed to not being able to come on other days.

36.

A: Quan podeu venir?
when can come
“When can you come?”

B: No ho sé, però avui sí que no podem venir.
NEG CL know but today yes that NEG can come
“I don’t know, but we definitely cannot come today.”

3.3. *No que no*

As stated before, *no que no* is observed in some central dialects of Catalan and is said to function akin to *sí que no* in that it denotes negative polarity. Although its use in modern speech is reduced, it can be found in many early literary texts, as demonstrated by the following examples, taken mostly from the Corpus Textual Informatitzat de la Llengua Catalana corpus (Institut d’Estudis Catalans, CTILC). *No que no* acts as the polar opposite from *sí que*. In this way, it can be used to answer neutral polarity questions, obtaining a negative polarity reading, as seen in 37. Likewise, it can be used to denote disagreement with the statement of a positive declarative sentence (38).

37. (Taken from *L’auca del senyor Esteve*, Santiago Rusiñol, 1917 in CTILC)

A: Que ets aigüadera?
that are abstainer
“Are you an abstainer?” (p V ¬p)

B: No que no ho sóc, però m’han avesat a beure aigua
no that NEG CL am but CL-have habituate to drink water
“Not at all, but they got me used to drinking water.” (¬p)

38. (Taken from *Dos com se negan*, Salvador Bonavia i Flores; Lluís Millà i Gàcio, 1909, in CTILC)

A: Jo ja’ls hi he dit que pescaba.
I already-CL CL have said that fished
“I’ve already told them you were fishing.” (p)

- B: No que no pesco.
no that NEG fish
“I am not fishing at all.” (Disagreement w/p)

And yet again, just like *sí que*, it can reinforce the negative polarity of its trigger. Thus, it can appear as the answer to a negative polarity question, in which it indicates negative polarity ($\neg p$), as seen in 39. Likewise, it can also be found in responses to negative declaratives, like the one in 40, in which it agrees with the negative statement from the trigger $\neg p$.

39. (Taken from *La febre d'or, III*, Narcís Oller, 1982, in CTILC)

- A: [...] ¿no té per ventura coneixement d'aquella operació?
NEG has by.chance knowledge of-that operation
By any chance, don't they have any information on that operation?"
- B: Nó que no'n té.
no that NEG-CL has
“Not at all.” ($\neg p$)

40. (Taken from *La guerra*, Josep d'Argullol, 1877, in CTILC)

- A: [...] Vosté no es carlista, mossen Pau.
you NEG are carlista father P.
“You are not *carlista*, father Pau.” ($\neg p$)
- B: No que no ho sò.
no that NEG CL am
“No I am not indeed.” (Agreement w/ $\neg p$)

Following from *sí que* and *sí que no*, it is not surprising that it can also appear in contrastive environments, like the one shown in 41. Here it achieves a similar effect as *sí que no*, in which the polarity of the negative statement regarding the topicalized element is emphasized. In this way, the meaning achieved is the following: Maria will most definitely not dance, as opposed to other possible participants who might or might not do it:

41.

- A: Qui ballarà?
who dance.FUT
“Who's going to dance?”
- B: La Maria no que no ballarà. S'ha trencat el peu.
the M. no that NEG dance.FUT REF-has broken the foot
“Maria definitely won't dance. She broke her foot.”

The structures introduced above are the possible instances of polarity focus introduced by *sí/no* + *que*. However, there are many other structures in which these two particles can appear side by side. Although not relevant to the present paper, introducing them will serve as a way to separate emphatic *sí que (no)/no que no* from its lookalikes.

3.4. Other *sí/no* + *que* not considered in this thesis

There are other uses of *sí/no* + *que* that are not considered for this paper, such as quotative uses, ellipses, and the use of *sí que sí* as a certainty adverb. Nevertheless, they are presented in this section, if anything, as a way to distinguish what is relevant and what is not in the topic of *emphatic polarity*.

Firstly, there is the quotative use. As its name proposes, this is understood as the use of the polarity item as a copy in reference to a previous utterance. In this way, the first *sí* in the final line of 42 is referring back to the *sí* in the second line. It is something akin to direct quotation: what I meant by “yes” is that (...). The use of *que* after it is for clause introduction purposes. The result is a structure reminiscing of emphatic *sí que*, if only at first glance.

42.

- A: No vens a sopar?
NEG come to have.dinner
- B: Sí.
yes
- A: Sí què?
yes what
- B: Sí que sí que vinc a sopar.
yes that yes that come to have.dinner
- A: “Are you not coming for dinner?”
- B: “Yes.”
- A: “‘Yes’ meaning...?”
- B: “‘Yes’ meaning that I am coming for dinner.”

However, one difference that tells them apart is that, since it is a quotation, the polarity of the first element does not affect that of the embedded clause, nor does it affect the focus position. That is why it is possible to obtain an interaction like that of 43, in which a quotative *no* introduces a *sí que* sentence in the last line. The grammaticality (or lack thereof) of *no que sí* and other such sequences of words in an emphatic polarity setting is not affected by these since they are completely different structures.

43. [Two friends are talking about where to go for dinner.]

A: Al restaurant de la cantonada no hi podem anar. Tanca dilluns.
at.the restaurant of the corner NEG CL can go closes Mondays

B: No.

no

A: No què?

no what

B: No que sí que hi podem anar. Avui és dimarts.

no that yes that CL can go today is Tuesday

A: “We can’t go to the restaurant by the corner. It’s closed on Mondays.”

B: “No.”

A: “‘No’ meaning...?”

B: “‘No’ meaning we can go. Today is Tuesday.”

Secondly, we have *sí que sí* as an adverbial conjunct. In these cases, as shown in 44, it obtains an epistemic meaning, denoting something akin to *definitely* or *surely*. This usage differs from positive polarity in the structure in that it can appear in different positions in the sentence: inserted (B1), followed by a *que*-clause (B2) or in final position, separate from the verb (B3). Regardless of its position, however, its meaning stays the same.

44.

A: Quan començaràs a anar al gimnàs?

when start.FUT to go to.the gym

“When will you start going to the gym?”

B1: Avui, sí que sí, hi aniré.

today yes that yes CL go.FUT

B2: Avui sí que sí que hi aniré.

today yes that yes that CL go.FUT

B3: Avui hi aniré sí que sí.

today CL go.FUT yes that yes

“I will definitely/surely go there today.”

Next, we have ellipsis in verbal contrastive settings. In certain contrastive structures, *no que (no)* can appear, however they are rather a sentence with an elided element between the polarity item and *que*. In that way, in example 45a, a full reconstruction would be: *vull que cantis, no vull que ballis*. Reversing the order of the sentences also obtains a similar result, as seen in 45b. The same can be observed with negative subordinate clauses, as those of 45c and 45d. The fact that *no* and

que can be separated indicates that we are not in front of a regular *no que* (*no*) polarity emphasis structure, but rather an ellipsis-induced one.

45.

- a. Vull que cantis, no que ballis.
want that sing.SUBJ NEG that dance.SUBJ
“I want you to sing, not to dance.”
- b. No vull que ballis, vull que cantis.
NEG want that dance.SUBJ want that sing.SUBJ
“I don’t want you to dance, I want you to dance.”
- c. Vull que no cantis, no que no ballis.
want that NEG sing.SUBJ NEG that NEG dance.SUBJ
“I want you not to sing, instead of not to dance.”
- d. No vull que no ballis, vull que no cantis.
NEG want that NEG dance.SUBJ want that NEG sing.SUBJ
“I don’t want you not to dance, I want you not to sing.”

Lastly, we mention exclamation marks. Among the various strategies to produce an exclamative sentence in Catalan, one of them clearly resembles *sí que*, if anything, phonetically. Such a sequence is *si que*, where *si* is understood as an exclamative quantifier (Institut d’Estudis Catalans, GIEC). In its use, *si que* exclamatives are reminiscent of *how* exclamatives in that they indicate an exalted degree of its action/state. Thus, *sí que plou* and *si que plou* in 46 differ in that the former indicates that it is very much so raining, while the latter mentions that it is raining a lot.

46. Si que plou. Necessitarem un paraigües.
si that rains need.FUT a umbrella
“How it rains! We will need an umbrella.”

All in all, the data presented in this section will serve as the basis to further analyze the nature and meaning of *sí/no* + *que*. We will now move onto the discussion, which offers an overview of the distribution of the sequence of words at hand, a comparison between *sí que no* and *no que no*, and an in-depth look at *sí que* as a polarity emphasize.

4. Account

4.1. Distribution

After looking at the data presented above, we reach several conclusions regarding the distribution of *sí/no* + *que* in their emphatic meaning. Firstly, we will look at the polarity combinations between the first layer (before *que*) and the second layer (after *que*). After that, we will turn to their usage

according to the trigger they are responding to, as well as focus on how they differ in their use in contrastive environments.

Starting with *sí que*, we can see that it can appear with a neutral unmarked (positive) polarity in its second layer, portrayed by examples 27-31. However, when the positive polarity becomes overt, by the use of *sí* after *que*, it renders an ungrammatical sentence. This is explained by the fact that in Catalan, differently from Spanish, *sí* cannot be immediately followed by a verb (47 B3), but rather it must be attached to *que*. In turn, the same is not true for negative polarity markers. Unmarked negation in Catalan is achieved by means of a preverbal *no*, without any need of a *que* following after it. Since, *sí que* already emphasizes the polarity of the clause, said clause has to have unmarked polarity. Therefore, it is plausible that *sí que no* may be grammatical but *sí que sí* is not: the former has unmarked (negative) polarity in the inner clause, which is emphasized by *sí que*, while the latter intends to mark positive polarity by means of the marker *sí* in the inner clause.

47.

A: Ha vingut a comprar la Sara?
has come to buy the S.

“Has Sara come to buy?”

B1: **Sí que sí* ha vingut.
yes that yes has come

B2: #*Sí que sí que* ha vingut.
yes that yes that has come

“She has come indeed.”

B3: **Sí* ha vingut.
yes has come

(Intended) “She has come indeed.”

As for the use of *no que*, it cannot be followed by positive polarity, be it unmarked or overt (*sí*), as presented in the responses in 48. Regarding the latter, as stated above, *sí* cannot be followed by a verb without *que*. While these might appear to have the same structure as that of the echoic contexts presented in the data, a quick test can reveal that that is not the case, since *no* and *que* can be separated. For example, in 49a, *no que* is formed through ellipsis: the first main clause and the second main clause share the same verb and so it is elided. In this second clause, the negative marker *no* acts as a negator of the main clause, while *que* serves as a complementizer in the lower clause *que ballis*, introduced by the elided verb *vull*. This can be proven by inverting the order of the clauses and situating the negative one in first position, as seen in 49b, where *no* and *que* are no longer next to each other, as there is no ellipsis.

48.

A: Vols una flor?
want a flower
“Do you want a flower?”

B1: *No que la vull.
no that CL want

B2: *No que sí que la vull
no that yes that CL want

49.

a. Vull que cantis, no que ballis
want that sing.SUBJ NEG that dance.SUBJ
“I want you to sing, not to dance.”

b. No vull que ballis, sinó que cantis
NEG want that dance.SUBJ sinó that sing.SUBJ
“I don’t want you to dance, but to sing.”

Lastly, the sequence *no que no*, while restricted in use, is available and indicates negative polarity, as shown in the examples in the data (37-41), despite presenting two negative polarity markers.

On that account, we see that the polarity markers *sí* and *no* pattern differently when combined with *que* in emphatic environments depending on the polarity of the clause they introduce. Firstly, *sí que* can introduce a neutral (unmarked positive) clause, but *no que* cannot. Secondly, the use of the particle *sí* to denote overt positive polarity in the inner clause is ungrammatical, regardless of the structure that precedes it. Lastly, if the inner clause has negative polarity, indicated by the use of the preverbal negator *no*, both *sí que* and *no que* can introduce it. If we assume the double clause proposal by the authors presented in the literature overview above, this leaves us with the following table regarding the polarity in the inner clause in *sí que* and *no que*:

Table 1: Polarity distribution

SYNTACTIC COMBINATIONS	POSSIBLE COMBINATIONS	
	<i>Sí + que</i>	<i>No + que</i>
Neutral unmarked polarity in inner clause	<i>Sí que</i>	* <i>No que</i>
Overt positive polarity in inner clause	* <i>Sí que sí</i>	* <i>No que sí</i>
Negative polarity in inner clause	<i>Sí que no</i>	<i>No que no</i>

We will now take a look at the types of sentences these sequences (*sí que*, *sí que no* and *no que no*) can be used in reply to, following Wiltschko's analysis (2017). Firstly, we will recover the data already presented for polarity questions and declaratives and draw conclusions. Then we will move onto imperatives, exclamatives and WH-questions. Lastly, we will focus on contrastive emphasis.

As observed in the data section, both *sí que* (examples 27-30) and *no que no* (examples 37-40) can appear answering polarity questions and declaratives, unmarked affirmative or negative. On the one hand, *sí que* indicates a positive truth value (p) when answering neutral and negative polarity questions, and agreement with p and disagreement with \neg p (therefore agreement with p) when responding to positive and negative declaratives respectively. On the other hand, usage of *no que no* results in the opposite: negative polarity (\neg p) when answering neutral and negative polarity questions, disagreement with p (therefore agreement with \neg p) when responding to positive declaratives, and agreement with \neg p when the trigger is a negative declarative. However, *sí que no* has a highly restricted use in these contexts. It cannot appear as an answer to a polarity question, be it positive or negative, or as a response to a positive statement. Moreover, its use as a response to a negative declarative (34) is accepted but not natural, as speakers' judgements of it range from acceptable to downright awkward.

When responding to imperative sentences, a clear distinction is observed between *sí que (no)* and *no que no*. As example 50 shows, using *sí que* (B1) or *sí que no* (B2), representing agreement and disagreement respectively with the command, results in an incorrect response. However, the opposite is true for *no que no* (B3), despite expressing disagreement just like *sí que no*. Such example further proves that these two structures are not interchangeable.

50.

A: Endreça la teva habitació ara mateix!
clean.imp the own room now same
"Clean up you room right now!"

B1: **Sí que* l'endregaré. Ara mateix ho faig.
yes that CL-clean.FUT now same CL do
Intended: "I will indeed clean it. I will do it right now."

B2: **Sí que no* l'endregaré. He quedat amb els amics.
yes that NEG CL-clean.FUT have met.up with the friends
Intended: "I will not clean it at all. I am meeting up with my friends."

B3: *No que no* l'endregaré. He quedat amb els amics.

no that NEG CL-clean.FUT have meet.up with the friends
“I will not clean it at all. I am meeting up with my friends.”

Following from that, in the case of responses to exclamatives, we find a significant difference. Both *sí que*, implying agreement with *p*, and *no que no*, as a way to show disagreement with *p*, are available, but *sí que no* is not. This is shown in examples 51 and 52, the second one being for *no que no* from real use found in the corpus (CTILC), compared to *sí que no* in reply to the same trigger.

51.

A: Que bé que ho han fet!
that good that CL have done
“How well they have done!”

B1: Sí que ho han fet bé.
yes that CL have done well
“They have done well indeed.”

B2: *Sí que no ho han fet bé.
yes that NEG CL have done well
Intended: “They haven’t done well at all.”

B3: No que no ho han fet bé.
no that NEG CL have done well
“They haven’t done well at all.”

52. (Adapted from CTILC)

A: Ai criatura, que hi vius d’enganyada!
oh creature that CL live of-cheated
“Oh, child, how wrong you are!”

B1: No que no hi visc enganyada.
no that NEG CL live cheated
“I am not wrong at all.”

B2: *Sí que no hi visc enganyada.
yes that NEG CL live cheated

Similarly to the case of imperatives, in responses to *wh*-questions, such as the one shown in 53, *no que no* can be used to introduce the sentence (B3), but *sí que* and *sí que no* are not correct, as seen in B1 and B2, respectively. Despite indicating the same negative polarity and meaning as *no que no*, *sí que no* cannot be used, which builds upon the idea that they are not interchangeable.

53.

A: Quants anys tens?

how.many years have

“How old are you?”

B1: **Sí que t’ho dire.* En tinc 24

yes that CL say.FUT CL have 24

Intended: “I will tell you indeed, I am 24.”

B2: **Sí que no t’ho dire.* No et conec de res.

yes that NEG CL say.FUT NEG CL know of nothing

Intended: “I will not tell you at all. I don’t know you at all.”

B3: *No que no t’ho diré.* No et conec de res.

no that NEG CL say.FUT NEG CL know of nothing

“I will not tell you at all. I don’t know you at all.”

Lastly, let us take a look at how these structures behave when used in a contrastive setting, that is, with a topicalized element to the left. As presented in the data, all three polarity emphasis sequences can appear in such an environment, regardless of the sentence type of the trigger. Usually, the topic in the response should be different from that in the trigger, as shown in 54, with *avui* “today” opposing *demà* “tomorrow”. This is also seen in the case of responses to WH-questions:

54.

A: Qui vindrà al sopar?

who come.FUT to.the dinner

“Who is coming to the supper?”

B1: En Jordi *sí que* vindrà.

the J. yes that come.FUT

“Jordi will definitely come.” (as opposed to other people who might not go)

B2: En Jordi *sí que no* vindrà.

the J. yes that NEG come.FUT

“Jordi will definitely not come.” (as opposed to other people who will go)

B3: En Jordi *no que no* vindrà.

the J. no that NEG come.FUT

“Jordi will not come at all.”

However, it is interesting to look at the distribution when they share the same topic as a declarative trigger. In the example below (55) we see that a positive declarative cannot be the trigger of a *sí que* (*no*) sentence with the same topic, but it can be of a *no que no* one. Contrastingly, if the declarative is negative (56), both *no que no* (B3) and *sí que no* (B2) are unavailable, but *sí que* is

available (B1). In the disagreeing responses (*no que no* to a positive declarative and *sí que* to a negative one), the repetition of the topic is used to further emphasize the disagreement.

55.

- A: En Jordi ha vingut a sopar.
the J. has come to have.dinner
"Jordi has come to dinner."
- B1: *En Jordi *sí que* ha vingut.
the J. yes that has come
Intended: "Jordi has come indeed."
- B2: *En Jordi *sí que no* ha vingut.
the J. yes that NEG has come
Intended: "Jordi has not come indeed."
- B3: En Jordi *no que no* ha vingut.
the J. no that NEG has come
"Jordi has not come at all."

56.

- A: En Jordi *no* ha vingut a sopar.
the J. NEG has come to have.dinner
"Jordi hasn't come to dinner."
- B1: En Jordi *sí que* ha vingut.
the J. yes that has come
"Jordi *has* come to dinner."
- B2: *En Jordi *sí que no* ha vingut.
the J. yes that NEG has come
Intended: "Jordi hasn't come to dinner indeed."
- B3 *En Jordi *no que no* ha vingut.
the J. no that NEG has come
Intended: "Jordi hasn't come to dinner at all."

The general overview of the distribution is presented here. As observed, there is a clear distinction between *sí que (no)* and *no que no* as sentence starters, and the same structures with a topicalized element with a contrastive meaning. Moreover, *sí que no* is an outlier, only being judged as totally correct in contrastive environments. This is summarized in the following table 2. We will now move on to try and explain these differences.

Table 2: Trigger/sentence type distribution

	ANSWER TO POLARITY QUESTION		RESPONSE TO DECLARATIVE		WITH CONTRASTIVE TOPIC
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	
<i>Sí que</i>	✓ (p)	✓ (p)	✓ (agr w/p)	✓ (disagr w/¬p)	✓ (p)
<i>Sí que no</i>	✗	✗	✗	? (agr w/¬p)	✓ (¬p)
<i>No que no</i>	✓ (¬p)	✓ (¬p)	✓ (disagr w/p)	✓ (agr w/¬p)	✓ (¬p)

4.2. Agreement between polarity layers and the case of *sí que no*

This section focuses on the differences that separate *sí que no* from *sí que* and, especially, *no que no*. Firstly, we take a look at the concept of polarity agreement and how it applies to Catalan emphatic polarity. Later, we move on to comparing the usage and nuances of *sí que no* and *no que no* in different contexts.

For the sake of explaining how polarity emphasis is expressed, let us ignore *sí que no* for a moment. Following the proposal of Poletto & Zanuttini (2013), we could argue that the fact that *sì che* and *no che non* are grammatical but *no che sì* and *sì che non* are not indicates that there is agreement between the polarity in the higher layer and the one in the lower layer. In this way, there is a polarity item, mainly *sì* or *no*, whose polarity matches with that of the main clause.

Therefore, in Catalan, in such a sentence, a positive polarity marker *sí* would have to agree with a positive polarity sentence, which is unmarked. This prediction is borne out as we have already observed in the data. In the same way, a negative polarity marker *no* accompanied by *que* should be followed by a negative sentence, which is denoted by the use of the preverbal negator *no*. This, too, is on accord with the examples we have shown so far.

Moreover, this polarity dependency serves to explain the truth value or (dis)agreement value (in the Wiltschko sense) of the response in relation to its trigger. That is, the *sí* in *sí que*, backed up by the neutral (positive) polarity of the clause it introduces, obtains a truth value of p when answering polarity questions, and agreement with p/disagreement with ¬p when responding to positive and negative declaratives, respectively. Likewise, the polarity of a negative sentence is reinforced by the use of the negative marker *no*, followed by *que*, before the actual negative operator *no* appears in preverbal position. This results in ¬p as an answer to polarity questions, and disagreement with p/agreement with ¬p when presented with positive or negative declaratives.

This is a sound proposal. However, as we have seen, Catalan does have a possible structure which shows an apparent polarity mismatch between the two layers (*sí que no*), something that Italian does not, as far as the data presented by Poletto & Zanuttini is concerned. Despite its restrictions, the *sí que no* structure seems to indicate that polarity agreement might not be all there is to it. We will now turn to what it supposes, in terms of truth value, as well as meaning.

We have already established that *sí que no* only appears in contrastive environments. Even then, its use is restricted depending on the sentence type and the polarity of the trigger. Building upon that, despite expressing the same truth value as *no que no*, that is, $\neg p$, they are not interchangeable in all contexts. Take a look at the following minimal pairs example:

57. (Adapted from CTILC)

- a. Tothom hi va, ara. Abans no que no hi anava ningú.
 everyone CL goes now before no that NEG CL went nobody
 “Everybody goes there now. Before, no one used to go there at all.”
- b. #Tothom hi va, ara. Abans *sí que no* hi anava ningú.
 everyone CL goes now before yes that NEG CL went nobody
 “Everybody goes there now. It was before, that no one went there.” (and not now)

In the first sentence (57a), *no que no* focuses on the negative polarity. It establishes that, definitely, no one went there in the past, as opposed to the present, when many people go there. In opposition, *sí que no* in 57b focuses instead on the clause itself, rather than the contrasted element. It says “this (negative) statement is true about the contrasted element, as opposed to being true about the elements it is contrasted against”. That is why, despite being syntactically sound, it is hard to get a sound reading. For *sí que no* to make sense, there has to be an instance in the discourse in which the clause following it has been claimed for the element that the topic is being contrasted to.

Moreover, *sí que no* and *no que no* also differ when used in explicit adversatives. In example 58a, the use of *no que no* has the implication that it is the mother that does not understand the issue, but does not make the assumption that she is the only one that does not. It just indicates that, as far as the topicalized element is concerned, the negative statement applies to it. If we switch out *no que no* for *sí que no* in that same sentence, we get a discourse-flawed one (58b). It would seem as if *sí que no* and *sí que* cannot appear in adversative distribution due to a clash in polarity. We will come back to the topic of adversatives and ellipsis in the following section.

58. (Adapted from CTILC)

- a. La mare no que no ho pesca; però la Lola Xica estic segur que sí.
 the mother no that NEG CL fish but the L. X. am sure that yes

“Mother really does not get it at all, but I’m sure Lola Xica does.”

- b. #La mare *sí que no* ho pesca; però la Lola Xica estic segur que *sí*.
the mother yes that NEG CL fish but the L. X. am sure that yes

One last difference to be pointed out is found in negative concord, which is fairly common in Catalan (Tubau et al., 2024). In these cases, a negative item, such as *ningú* “nobody” or *mai* “never”, can be moved to the starting position of a sentence and then followed by an optional negative operator *no*. In the context of the contrastive structures presented, we find the differences shown in the examples below. A negative item like *mai* can appear in *sí que no* structures, between the *que* and the *no* (59a), as well as function as the negator in a *sí que* sentence (60a). However, it cannot separate *no que no* (59b), nor substitute the negator *no* (60b). This is further proof that *no que no* acts more as a grammaticalized negative emphasis conjunct, while *sí que no* is actually composed of *sí que*, which emphasizes the validity of the negative clause it introduces.

59. (Adapted from CTILC)

- a. A tu *sí que mai no* t’he fet por, granoteta.
to you yes that never NEG CL-have done fear froggie
“I have never frightened you at all, froggie.”
- b. *A tu no que mai no t’he fet por, granoteta.
to you no that never NEG CL-have done fear Froggie

60. (Adapted from CTILC)

- a. Això *sí que mai* ho hauria dit!
this yes that never CL have said
“This I would have never said at all!”
- b. *Això no que mai ho hauria dit!
this no that never CL have said

All in all, the data and explanations presented in this section point us into the following direction: *no que no* is a compact sequence that focuses on the emphasis of negative polarity, it cannot be split, nor can the second *no* be replaced by another negative element. Meanwhile, *sí que no* functions more like *sí que* followed by a negative clause: in this case, *no* can be elided in favor of other negative elements, or even have them above in the projection, splitting the sequence, like *mai* in 59a. With that in mind, we now focus on *sí que* and try to explore its usage.

4.3. *Sí que* as a speaker commitment marker vs *sí que* as a verum focus marker

As presented in the literature section, Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) propose an analysis of Spanish polarity emphasis that divides *sí* and *sí que* into verum focus and speaker commitment, respectively. This idea has also been adapted by Catalan literature (Batllori &

Hernanz, 2013). In this way, Catalan *sí que* would be considered a sequence that denotes a commitment of the speaker to the veracity of the clause. However, in this section, we will take a look at certain groups of examples that do not quite comply with that proposal, some of which come from applying Villa-García & González Rodríguez's tests to Catalan.

Firstly, we go to the topic of VP-ellipsis. In Catalan, as is true in many languages, answering WH-questions can be done by means of eliding the already established information, in this case, the verbal domain. In this way, to indicate the speaker's (varying) commitment to the answer, it can be introduced by sequences such as *crec* "I believe", *segur* "surely" and *pot ser* "it can be", followed by *que*, and then the actual new content. This *que* is not omissible and eliminating it results in an ungrammatical sentence:

61.

A: On vol anar?
 where want go
 "Where do they want to go?"

B1: Crec que a Delft.
 believe that at D.
 "I think Delft."

B2: Segur que a Delft.
 sure that at D.
 "Surely Delft."

B3: Pot ser que a Delft.
 can be that at D.
 "Maybe Delft."

B4: *Crec a Delft.
 believe at D.

However, in the case of the example below (62), we find that *sí que* does not function in the same way. That is, the *que* cannot appear before the *sí*, which makes it stand alone before the element it is emphasizing. If a reconstruction of the elided VP is done, *que* would appear again: *No vol anar a Barcelona, però sí que vol anar a Delft*. In turn, the usage of *sí que* in such contrastive contexts renders an ungrammatical sentence, as observed in (62b). A sentence like that of 62a gets a reading of emphasized polarity of the truth value of the contrasted clause.

62.

a. No vol anar a Barcelona, però sí a Delft.
 NEG want go at B. but yes at D.

“They don’t want to go to Barcelona, but they do want to go Delft.”

- b. *No vol anar a Barcelona, però sí que a Delft.
NEG want go at B. but yes that at D.

Moreover, if we observe it in a conjunctive construction, we can see that its polarity is marked by *sí*. When combining two sentences with the positive conjunctive *i* “and”, the polarity of the two clauses is usually determined by the polarity of the present one. In this way, the negator *no* in 63a determines the polarity of both clauses. However, if you take that same example and introduce a *sí* in front of the contrastive, the polarity of said clause is interpreted as positive. This is observed in 63b. In these cases, we observe that *sí*, separated from *que*, can provide polarity emphasis, much like *sí* does in Spanish, and not just speaker commitment.

63.

- a. No vol anar a Barcelona i a Delft.
NEG want go at B. and at D.
“They don’t want to go to Barcelona and Delft.”
- b. No vol anar a Barcelona i sí a Delft.
NEG want go at B. and yes at D.
“They don’t want to go to Barcelona, and they do want to go to Delft.”

Secondly, as opposed to what Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) argue for Spanish², in Catalan shows that the use of *sí que* does not restrict the scope reading of dislocated readings. The sentence in example 64 can be interpreted as the parents being those of the person being quoted, in which *els seus pares* “their parents” is not linked to *tothom* “everyone”. However, another reading

² Using *sí que* in Spanish results in a restriction in scope reading of dislocated topics. Supposedly, if *que* is present, only the surface position of the dislocated element is defined as scope. Therefore, in (ia), since *sí* as a polarity emphasis element is used, both readings are available, but in (ib), only the one where the higher element (*su hijo*) scopes over the other (*todo el mundo*). This results in yet another difference between *sí* and *sí que*, explained through structural theory.

- i. (Spanish, Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020:472-473)
- a. Dicen que en su hijo sí confía todo el mundo.
say that in his/her son yes trusts all the world
“They say that everybody trusts his/her/their child.”
- b. Dicen que en su hijo sí que confía todo el mundo.
say that in his/her son yes that trusts all the world
“They say that everybody certainly trusts his/her/their child.”

is also possible, that is, one where the possessive in *els seus pares* is indexed to *tothom*, meaning everyone trust their own parents. The fact that both readings are possible further decimates the possibility of Catalan *sí que* functioning like Spanish *sí que* and, therefore, only offering something akin to speaker commitment.

64. Diuen que en els seus_{j/i} pares *sí* que hi confia tothom_j.
say that in the own parents yes that CL trusts everyone

Reading 1: "They say that everyone does trust his/her/their parents."

Reading 2: "They say that everyone does trust their own parents."

Lastly, we have the case of *sí que* in its interaction with referential/non-referential CPs and factive/non-factive verbs. Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) argue that, in line with MacDonald & de Cuba's (2013) proposal, *sí que* should not be available for use if introduced by a factive verb, that is, one that takes a referential CP. That is explained through the proposed structure: the referential CPs that factive verbs take as embedded clauses have no more projections after FocusP. Since *sí que* is considered to take its place in a projection right after FocusP, the lack of spacing renders an ungrammatical sentence. On the other hand, *sí* is not bound to that projection so it can appear without any issues. This explains why 65a is considered grammatical but 65b is not.

65. (Spanish, Villa-García & González Rodríguez 2020:479)

- a. Lamentó que *sí* estuviera enfermo.
regretted that yes be.SUBJ sick
"He regretted that he was sick."
- b. *Lamentó que *sí que* estuviera enfermo.
regretted that yes that be.SUBJ sick

However, Catalan *sí que*, once again, does not behave in the same way. As observed in the following real use examples taken from the CTILC corpus, factive verbs such as *reconèixer* "recognize", *saber* "know" and *adonar-se* "notice" can be followed by *sí que* without any ungrammaticality. In 66a, the embedded clause is referential: the subject of knowing something about the demonstration has been brought up before in the discourse, and the verb *va reconèixer* reintroduces it. The same holds up for the other two examples. In mentioning that the subject knows something by means of the verb *saber* (66b), or notices something, through *adonar-se* (66c), those somethings has to have been stated previously. Once more, this just shows that Catalan *sí que* cannot be considered equal to Spanish *sí que*.

66. (Adapted from CTILC)

- a. Va reconèixer que *sí que* sabien alguna cosa de la concentració.

did recognize that yes that knew any thing of the demonstration

“They recognized that they did know something about the demonstration.”

b. Vosaltres sabeu que *sí* que n’hi ha, de diferències.

you know that yes that there-are of differences

“You know that there are differences indeed.”

c. Potser ni ell mateix no s’adonava que *sí* que la necessitava.

maybe not.even him same NEG realize that yes that CL needed

“Maybe not even him could realize that he did need her.”

What this leaves us with is the following: the Catalan structure *sí que* can be used to introduce a clause with which the speaker agrees and the truth of which the speaker commits to. In this way, it relates to the Spanish *sí que*. However, they are not virtually equivalent. The fact that *sí que* behaves differently from its *adv + que* peers, as well as the structural disconnections pointed above seem to hint that it is also possible that the use of *sí que* can signal an emphasis in positive polarity, similarly to how *sí* does it in Spanish.

5. Conclusion

All in all, the information and analysis presented in this thesis leave us with some conclusions. Firstly, regarding the distribution of *sí que*, *sí que no* and *no que no*, we see that they cannot be used in the same contexts. When it comes to *sí que* and *no que no*, they can introduce answers or responses to polarity questions and declaratives (positive or negative), respectively, as well as appear in contrastive environments. However, *sí que no* has a more restricted use, and is usually reduced to only appearing to denote contrast and emphasize a topicalized element.

In this way, *sí que no* and *no que no* are not interchangeable. The latter seems to be a case of polarity agreement (polarity item *no* agrees with the negative clause after *que*, introduced by the negative marker *no*), on par with *sí que* (*sí* denotes positive polarity + the clause after *que* is unmarked, therefore positive). This idea is attested for by the Italian literature (Poletto & Zanuttini, 2013). As for *sí que no*, which clearly shows polarity mismatch, and can only be used in certain contrastive sentences, it appears to be a very different sequence that may altogether not show verum focus, but actually speaker commitment, just like Villa-García & González Rodríguez (2020) propose for Spanish *sí que*. Following from that, it also seems like Catalan *sí que* could introduce both speaker commitment and verum focus.

Finally, this is but a short account of polarity emphasis in the Catalan language, mainly focused on ascertaining the combinations and distribution differences in *sí/no + que*. It would be good to follow on this thesis with more in-depth analysis of both the context of use and the structure of these types of sentences.

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