

# The attitudinal meaning of preverbal markers in Gascon: Insights from the analysis of literary and spoken language data

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## 1. Introduction

Gascon, a variety of Occitan spoken in Southwestern France, has a peculiar class of preverbal markers traditionally called ‘enunciatives’ (*énonciatifs*) in linguistic literature. The number of particles belonging to the enunciative paradigm is still object of controversy, but the most frequent elements are preverbal *que* (generally considered a main clause enunciative) and *e* (referred to as a subordinate and interrogative enunciative). The following examples, taken from my corpus of spontaneous speech data, illustrate their use:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) *lo Napoleon qu' a hèit hòrt un bon ahar*  
the N. ENC hasmade strong a good affair  
*ad aqueth temps*  
at that time  
‘at that time Napoleon has made a pretty good deal’
- (2) *non sabi pas quant de centenats*  
not know.PRS.1S NEG how.manyof hundreds  
*e n' i avè*  
ENC of.them there had  
‘I dont know how many hundreds there were (of them)’

Gascon enunciatives have long puzzled specialists in Romance linguistics both because of their diachronic evolution and their synchronic function. Despite some recent proposals which describe them as purely syntactic devices, forming part of this dialect’s verbal inflexion as a sort of

agreement marker, most scholars who deal with these particles (often regarded as unique within the Romance languages) maintain that they have pragmatic functions. Three important contributions have been made by Wüest (1985), Field (1985) and Pilawa (1990) who all argue that the Gascon enunciative is (or has become) a system of markers of the speaker's attitude towards his proposition. This modality-centered interpretation is not really new, for as early as in Zauner's (1896) article preverbal *que* was considered to derive from conjunctive *que* after performative verbs or similar phrases expressing the speaker's belief or judgement. According to Bouzet (1951: 50), the enunciative elements "opposent en principe [...] l'affirmé au non-affirmé", *que* yielding an affirmative, *e* a non-affirmative, reading of the sentence.<sup>2</sup> This pragmatic analysis was probably determined by the distributional factor of preverbal *que* sometimes being replaced, in main clauses, by the adverbial intensifiers *be* (< Latin BENE) and *ja* (< IAM), both known to be widely used discourse markers in several Romance languages.<sup>3</sup> Bouzet argues that "ye [= ja; C.P.] sert à souligner une affirmation [...] parce qu'elle est jugée incontestable par le sujet parlant qui se porte garant du fait" (*op.cit.*: 52), whereas "la particule *be* [...] trahit chez le sujet parlant une sorte de réticence ou d'étonnement qui lui fait solliciter l'approbation de l'interlocuteur" (*op.cit.*: 53). Therefore the difference between the following pairs of examples is purely attitudinal, the (a) versions representing neutral affirmativity and the (b) versions expressing strong(er) assertive attitude (examples adapted from Bouzet 1951):

- (3) a. *que m' at pagaràs un dia*  
 ENC me it pay.FUT.2S one day  
 'I will pay you back one day'
- b. *ja m'at pagaràs un dia*  
 ADV  
 'I certainly will pay you back one day'
- (4) a. *que m' at averé podut díser*  
 ENC me it have.COND.3S be.able.PCP say.INF  
 'he could have told me about it'
- b. *be m'at averé podut díser*  
 ADV  
 'he could have told me about it (couldn't he?)'

Wüest (1985) takes up this pragmatic approach, adopting Ducrot's Polyphony Theory according to which the speaker, in performing an utterance (*énoncé*), expresses multiple speech acts represented by different *énonciateurs*. The

speaker may identify himself with or dissociate himself from these *énonciateurs* who represent the different logical-presuppositional and pragmatic readings of the utterance. Following Wüest, preverbal *que* expresses that “le locuteur s’identifie avec l’assertion positive faite par un premier énonciateur” (Wüest 1985: 295) whereas preverbal *e* marks “un énonciateur qui doute du contenu de l’énoncé, et avec lequel le locuteur s’identifie.” (*op.cit.*: 297) Let us consider one of his examples: Wüest explains the contrast between polar interrogative sentences which may be opened by both enunciative *que* or *e*, by advocating three speech acts (*e* = *énonciateur*): (e1) asserting that *p*; (e2) doubting that *p*; (e3) asking the hearer to decide between *p* and non-*p*. In (5a), then, the speaker identifies himself with e1, while in (5b) his commitment goes towards e2:

- (5) a. *que tribalhatz sol aci ?*  
 ENC work.PRS.2P alone here  
 ‘you are working alone (here), aren’t you?’
- b. *e tribalhatz sol aci ?*  
 ENC  
 ‘are you (really) working alone here?’

Field (1985) arrives at similar conclusions within a modified speech-act framework. Field rejects the idea that preverbal Gascon markers should be in a direct relationship with speech acts or sentence-types,<sup>4</sup> and rightly points out evidence to the contrary. Using the distinction between “phrastic, tropic and neustic as the three basic elements involved in an illocutionary act” (Field 1985: 81), he claims that the enunciative particle “serves to lexicalize one dimension of illocutionary force in Gascon” (*op.cit.*, 77);<sup>5</sup> the enunciative expresses the degree of “subscription to propositional content” (*op.cit.*, 88) that the speaker is willing to make.<sup>6</sup>

It is mainly upon these basic assumptions proposed by Field that Pilawa (1990) builds his detailed study of enunciative particles in written Modern Gascon. Unfortunately his work has remained almost unnoticed. For this reason my contribution will focus more extensively on his results by contrasting Pilawa’s written language data with my own spoken language data. The latter comes from spontaneous and semi-spontaneous speech recordings, interviews and radio programs collected in Gascony, the transcriptions of which form a corpus of about four hours of spoken Gascon, organized in 13 texts on different levels of elaboration. The field work for this corpus (to be abridged as *Corpus Occitano-Gascon*, COG) was carried out in 1995/96.<sup>7</sup> Pilawa’s data, on the other hand, is taken from novels and short-stories by four

late 19th and 20th century writers from different parts of Gascony. The aim of my paper is to determine whether Pilawa's numerous findings suggesting attitude-induced distribution of enunciative markers are corroborated, or contravened, by spoken language use.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Enunciative distribution in subordinate clauses

As mentioned above, enunciative particles are restricted to affirmative sentences,<sup>9</sup> but are quite frequent there. Pilawa's work lacks absolute frequency figures. In the COG, which contains about 5500 utterances, 88 per cent of all affirmative declarative main clauses display a preverbal *que* as illustrated in (1), whereas 11 per cent do not contain any preverbal particle. According to grammarians, *e* is not used in declarative main clauses. Indeed, it does not surface in this sentence type, as far as Pilawa's data and my own are concerned. Adverbial *be* and *ja* are statistically insignificant in the COG (they occur in less than one per cent of declarative main clauses).<sup>10</sup> Thus preverbal *que* seems to be grammaticalized to a large extent in main clause environments.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, Pilawa analyzes what he considers to be attitude-induced distribution of enunciatives mainly in subordinate clauses.<sup>12</sup> As Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994) have shown, subordination is more conservative in terms of language change, and older stages of evolution, which may already have disappeared from main clauses, frequently tend to be preserved in subordinate clauses. This seems to hold true at least for modality and modal systems. Pilawa, however, limits his study to a purely synchronic perspective and therefore refrains from claiming that enunciative distribution in subordinate clauses represent an anterior state of evolution in Gascon modality marking.

According to traditional Gascon grammar, in subordinate clauses *que* is replaced by preverbal *e* but only if the verb does not follow immediately the conjunction or the complementizer and does not start with a vowel, which would lead to elision of *e*. A typical example of 'orthodox' use of enunciative *e* is given in (6), with a nominal preceding the subordinate verb (the speaker talks about a bear and the periods of the year when the animal is particularly dangerous):

- (6) *que n' ei tanben quan eths aulhèrs e*  
 ENC of.it is also when ART.M.P shepherd:P ENC  
*pujan tara montanha*  
 climb.PRS.3P to+ART.F mountain  
 'he also is like this when the shepherds move up to the mountains'

From a syntactic perspective, *e* functions in this case as an additional marker of subordination, which in Gascon verbal morphology – as in all Romance languages – could otherwise be marked by the subjunctive mood.<sup>13</sup> In pragmatic terms, this use of *e* instead of *que* may be elucidated by suggesting that a subordinate clause does not have an independent truth value, this being determined by the matrix clause. If such a stipulation is correct, a subordinate clause cannot be asserted in its own right, since this type of assertion is absorbed by the main clause. This probably corresponds to what Bouzet meant by claiming *e* to be a signal of “non-affirmé”. Field puts it like this: “The sentence itself has a degree of subscription marked in its matrix clause, and the subordinate clause normally shows either *e* or Ø.” (Field 1985: 89)

Pilawa partly adopts this point of view and considers *e* to be a marker of reduced subscription to the asserted information, and to be a sign of the speaker’s not taking over full communicative responsibility for the proposition expressed in the embedded clause. At the same time, Pilawa pays particular attention to linguistic evidence that has been mentioned for the first time in Ronjat’s syntactic description of Modern Occitan (cf. Ronjat 1913), but which has been ignored by most normative grammars: not only is enunciative *e* sometimes left out where according to the syntactic environment it ought to appear (marked as Ø as in (7)), but quite often it is driven out by the ‘main clause enunciative’ *que* (as in (8); both examples are taken from a radio program):

- (7) *qu' ei l' article prumèr quan òm Ø vòu hèr teatre*  
 ENC is ART article first when man wants make.INF theatre  
 ‘it is the basic principle when someone wants to stage’
- (8) *que deishi a T\* benlhèu eth darrèr mot*  
 ENC let.PRS.1S for perhaps ART.M last word  
*per'mor qu' eth temps que passa*  
 because COMP ART.M time ENC passes.by  
 ‘I let T\* have the last word because time passes by’

That enunciative distribution in embedded sentences is indeed significantly floating is shown by the following counts from my COG data where about 1150 subordinate clauses have been examined. In absolute figures, *que* occurs almost three times as often as *e* in such clauses. It is necessary, however, to take into consideration that the majority of embedded sentences do not allow for enunciative introduction because the verb follows the complementizer, and that restrictions are higher for *e* (due to pre-vowel elision) than for *que*. Where structural prerequisites would be met to allow for enunciatives, 54 per cent of

the embedded sentences in my data actually contain one of them. Preverbal *e* appears in 23 per cent of the cases where its appearance is theoretically possible; preverbal *que* occurs in 40 per cent of the possible cases (possible with regard to sentence structure and phonotactics, but not according to linguistic norm).

*Que* 'intrusion' into embedded syntactic contexts has been studied extensively by Hetzron (1977), whose analysis is based on literary data. Having examined different types of embedded clauses, he concludes that *que* would be the predominant marker in predicate complement clauses and causal adverbial clauses, whereas it never appears in other adverbial clauses or in relative clauses. Though Hetzron suggests a high degree of grammaticalization of *que* in complement clauses, he maintains nonetheless a pragmatic distinction, based on functional sentence perspective rather than on speaker's assertive attitude, to account for the distribution.<sup>14</sup> Field rejects this theme-rheme oriented distinction and advocates his attitude-based account, drawing on "a contrast between the assertive *que* and the nonassertive *e*" (Field 1985: 88). Pilawa argues in the same way and points to the importance of the significant absence of enunciative particles, attributed to the speaker's expressing that he does not want to take a stand with respect to the truth value of the embedded proposition.

If, following Field and Pilawa, enunciative distribution in embedded sentences is to be accounted for in terms of assertiveness, than the before-mentioned view of these embedded clauses as subordinate to the matrix clauses' assertion or truth values has to be modified. That this generalization is too simplistic has indeed been shown by various studies, an early and important one of which is Hooper and Thompson (1973). The hypotheses of this contribution were worked out further in Hooper (1975) and applied to Spanish by Terrell (1977). Hooper and Thompson examined the possibility of marked ("emphatic") structures, including word order modification such as different kinds of dislocations, or tag question formation, in (English) embedded clauses. They showed, contrary to some contemporary transformational hypotheses at the time, that these marked structures (for which the authors use the term "root transformations") are precluded from some, but not all subordinate clauses: "these transformations operate only on S[entence]s that are asserted." (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 495)<sup>15</sup> As shown by their numerous examples, the various types of embedded sentences allow 'main clause phenomena'<sup>16</sup> to different degrees. Relative clauses, when restrictive, do not permit marked structure modification, but nonrestrictive relative clauses do and are therefore asserted. Adverbial clauses are almost always presupposed and assertion-related structures therefore do not apply. A

notable exception is causal adverbial clauses, which may take what Hooper and Thompson call a nonrestrictive reading, as in (9) (taken from *op.cit.*: 492), in which case they are asserted (cf. (8) for a Gascon equivalent):

- (9) Sam is going out for dinner, because I just talked to his wife.

With assertion-related structures the most differentiated behaviour is to be observed in sentential complement clauses. Hooper and Thompson's analysis suggests that these embedded clauses are not asserted when functioning as noun complements. Whenever they form verbal complements, their acceptability or non-acceptability with marked structures depends on the semantics of the matrix verb, for which the authors propose five classes; of these, four are followed frequently by complement clauses that behave like asserted (main) clauses.

It is remarkable that Hooper and Thompson observe the occurrence of 'main clause phenomena' in the same types of embedded clauses in English as where Hetzron finds occurrences of the 'main clause enunciative' *que* in Gascon.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, and again similar to Hooper and Thompson, Hetzron's analysis suggests that complement clauses are a domain of much variation. Not surprisingly, then, it is this type of embedded clauses that Pilawa examines most thoroughly. In his written language data, 52 per cent of the complement clauses have enunciative *que*, whereas 29,5 per cent show *e* and 18,5 per cent have a zero morpheme.<sup>18</sup> In my spoken language sample, *que* appears in 51,5 per cent and *e* in 11 per cent of the cases, while the remainder lack enunciative occurrences.<sup>19</sup> Thus both types of data show the same general tendency.

If enunciatives in complement clauses are to signal the degree of assertion of the embedded sentence, then one would expect *que* always to appear in clauses that follow matrix verbs which by their semantic content already emphasize that the speaker is convinced of what he says. Pilawa examines the so-called 'verbs of knowing and believing' from this angle; they correspond for the most part to Hooper and Thompson's nonfactive-verb classes A and B, which are typically either "verbs of saying", or verbs which "describe a mental process" (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 477) related to an attitude towards a proposition. The authors claim that these verb classes are ambiguous, allowing for two readings. In one, it is the subordinate clause "whose truth is at stake in the discourse" (*op.cit.*: 475); in this case they display main clause behaviour. Pilawa does not quantify the distribution of the various enunciatives after such matrix verbs but points out that after affirmative verbs of knowing (like *saber*, their prototypical exponent), he always finds *que*, as in (10) (quoted from Pilawa 1990: 107), whereas negated verbs of knowing, according to Pilawa's analysis, are always followed by *e*:

- (10) *que sabetz que los tres qu' avem*  
 ENC know.PRS.2P COMP ART.M.3P three ENC have.PRS.1P  
*lo cap leugèr de çò*  
 ART.M.3S head light of that  
 'you know that we three have nothing to do with it'

The same tendency appears in my spoken data: After affirmative *verba dicendi*, *sapiendi* and *credendi*, *que* appears in 79,5 per cent of the examples; after negative occurrences of these matrix verbs, *e* is found exclusively.<sup>20</sup> The following examples come from spontaneous speech:

- (11) *que cresi que benlhèu qu' ei ua chança finalament*  
 ENC think.PRS.1S COMP perhaps ENC is a chance finally  
 'I think that this is perhaps a chance after all'
- (12) *ne podi pas díser si n' i avè /*  
 not can.1S NEG say.INF if of.it there had.3S  
*quant de centenats e n' i avè*  
 how.muchof hundred:P ENC of.it there had.3S  
 'I cannot say if there was / how many hundreds there were'

Among the matrix verb classes followed by complement clauses, Hooper and Thompson's factive Class D verbs which "express some emotion or subjective attitude about a presupposed complement" (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 479) stand out as the class that most obviously does not permit assertion-related marked structures in the embedded clause. Hooper and Thompson mention *resent*, *regret* or *be interesting (that...)* as English examples. Unfortunately, I cannot relate my Gascon data to Hooper and Thompson's claim about such factives, since my (and seemingly also Pilawa's) data surprisingly lacks occurrences of constructions with this kind of matrix verbs. A slightly different example like (13), which Pilawa (1990: 106) mentions in another context, suggests that *que* is avoided in complement clauses after matrix verbs expressing emotional states:

- (13) *qu' aven paur que los patacaires*  
 ENC have.PRS.3P fear COMP ART.M.P blow:P  
*e tornassen dab mei d' ajuda*  
 ENC come.back.SBJ.3P with moreof help  
 'they feared that the blows would recommence even harder'

This type of sentence may be compared with complement clauses after verbs like *caler* 'be necessary' and *valer* 'be worth', which are frequently used to express the speaker's evaluative attitude towards a statement. In my spoken

corpus, there is no occurrence of *que* in the subsequent complement clause. Speakers either insert *e* (as in (14), of particular interest because both the enunciative in the matrix clause and the complementizer are dropped) or leave out the particle:

- (14)    Ø    *cau*                    Ø    *eths mainats e tribalhen*  
 ENC is.necessary COMP ART.M.P children ENC work.SBJ.3P  
 ‘it is necessary (that) the children work’

So far, my spoken data as documented in the COG has matched Pilawa’s insights based on literary data, though sometimes upon a very limited number of tokens which do not allow for generalizations. There is one case, however, where no parallels can be established; namely adverbial clauses. As Hooper and Thompson have shown, some English adverbial clauses (e.g., temporal ones introduced by *when*, *before*, *after*, etc.) are always presupposed and thus do not permit main clause phenomena. Some adverbial clauses, on the other hand, “may be ambiguous between presupposed and nonpresupposed interpretation” (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 494) and do permit these phenomena, an already mentioned and frequent case being causal adverbial clauses. Hetzron confirms this finding for Gascon, arguing in terms of information structure: “On se sert de *qué* dans une proposition causale quand elle contribue un élément nouveau à la communication, et *qué* est absent quand elle ne fait que rappeler des faits déjà connus.” (Hetzron 1977: 187) Indeed, the COG data shows the highest degree of *que* marking in such causal clauses, with a share of around 85 per cent of all potential occurrences. What contradicts the expectations is the overall frequency of *que*: 45 per cent of all adverbial clauses contain this particle (as (15), where the speaker expresses his disgust with sweet wine), only 16 per cent have *e* (as in (16); cf. also (6)), the rest lacking an enunciative marker.<sup>21</sup>

- (15)    *qu' ei traficat aqueth tandis que lo sec*  
 ENC is manipulated that.one while COMP ART.M dry  
*qu' ei bon*  
 ENC is good  
 ‘that one is manipulated whereas the dry (wine) is good’

- (16)    *quan eras oelhas eth ser [...]*  
 when ART.F.P sheep ART.M evening  
*e s' ahronçan qu' eijà tròp tard*  
 ENC REFL crowd.PRS.3P ENC is already too late  
 ‘when the sheep in the evening crowd together it is already too late’

One is inclined to adopt Hetzron's hypothesis of ongoing generalization of *que* in subordinate clauses that affects not only complement and causal clauses (as Hetzron believes) but also other semantic types of adverbial clauses. Such a process of morpho-syntactic generalization obviously reduces the pragmatic significance of enunciative insertion, since the latter is no longer determined by the speaker's attitude towards the truth of the statement, but by syntactic features such as the presence of a lexical item between the conjunction and the verb.

To sum up, literary and oral usage of Gascon enunciative particles in subordinate clauses parallels to a high degree the usage of 'main clause phenomena' in English as analyzed by Hooper and Thompson. The authors attributed this behaviour to assertion, i.e. they considered it as instances of morphological coding of the speaker's positive attitude towards the truthfulness of his proposition. Pilawa, though on different theoretical grounds, comes to the same conclusion. If Gascon and English show parallels in what concerns embedded clauses, it is tempting to search for further parallels in main clause environments. Obviously, such parallels do exist.

### 3. Distribution of enunciatives in main clauses

It is generally assumed that out of the basic sentence types, corresponding to three fundamental types of speech acts, only declarative sentences are asserted, whereas interrogative and imperative sentences are 'manipulative' (cf. Givón 1990: 806ss) and therefore normally lack assertion. Examples (5a) and (5b) suggest, however, that this generalization is not completely correct, as Gascon Occitan – and some other languages, though with different means – allows for differential assertion marking in question formation, using the same *que* vs *e* vs  $\emptyset$  alternation as in subordinate clauses. While normative grammars suggest *e* to be the generalized marker of interrogative sentences,<sup>22</sup> language data shows considerable variation in the use of enunciatives in this sentence type. Again, Pilawa lacks detailed figures. In the COG spoken data, out of all *wh*- and polar questions that might contain a (normatively correct) enunciative particle, 37 per cent take *que*, 10,5 per cent take *e*, 7 per cent an allomorph *se* restricted to Southeastern subdialects of Gascon, and the rest contain no enunciative morpheme at all. Adapting the hypothesis proposed for embedded sentences, one could interpret *que* questions to be somehow 'conductive', directing the addressee towards an affirmative reply; *e* questions, on the other hand, would be sincere requests for information.<sup>23</sup>

Imperatives, which are most directive or manipulative, entirely lack enunciative particles. I could not find any counter-example in spoken discourse, and seemingly Pilawa did not find any either. Thus, though affirmative main clauses represent a less powerful argument for attitude-induced distribution of enunciative particles (mainly due to less variation and a heavy bias towards *que* in affirmative declarative sentences), they do not seem to contradict such an analysis of the phenomenon.

Let us have a look at negated sentences. These were neither explicitly analyzed nor documented by Pilawa. As far as attitudinal status is concerned, they are less clear cases. Negation is used to indicate the speaker's conviction of the falsity of a positive statement that is presupposed by the interlocutor or a third person. As such, negation itself is an assertion-marking device. As alluded to above, Gascon enunciatives are said to be compatible with affirmative sentences only. Bouzet (1975), however, notes examples of negative sentences including enunciative *que* which he attributes to 'emphasis'.<sup>24</sup> He claims that negated verbs with preverbal *que* always exclude the post-verbal negation marker *pas* whose insertion is marked usage in Gascon, contrary to other Occitan varieties and to French; therefore, if enunciative *que* occurs with negated verbs, this would have the same (or an even stronger) emphatic value as the postverbal negation marker *pas* (examples adapted from Bouzet 1975: 67):

- (17) a. *qu' at sap mes que non at vòu díser*  
 ENC it(OBJ) knows but ENC not it wants say.INF  
 'he knows it but he does not want to tell it'
- b. *qu' at sap mes non at vòu pas díser*  
 ENC NEG  
 'he knows it but he does not want to tell it'

This suggestion by Bouzet seems to be a stylistic advice rather than an empirical finding, as neither literary nor spoken language exhibit significant correlation of negative propositions with preverbal *que* and without postverbal negation marker *pas*. On the contrary, the oral occurrences of negated sentences with enunciative *que* also contain a postverbal negation marker, which is *pas* in about 85 per cent of all cases. Although the notion of emphasis may well lead to some satisfactory explanation for these cases, the particular contribution of the enunciative *que* (which, notably, appears in less than 5 per cent of all negated declarative main clauses in the COG texts) remains unclear. Consider for instance (18) which is a particularly puzzling example of *que* insertion between two negation markers:

- (18) (*er'ors que sent eras oelhas*) *e arren que non l' aurrestal*  
 and nothing ENC not him  
*que non l' arresta*  
 ENC not him stops  
 '(the bear scents the sheep) and nothing holds him back'

There is a final instance of main clauses without generalized enunciative insertion which is worth to be considered: Among the five special types of main-clause verbs that are most often not preceded by any enunciative particle, Field (1985: 84) mentions verbal-based parenthesis-like "phatic utterances", such as the following one taken from spontaneous speech:

- (19) *lo sec qu' a pres Ø sabetz lo sec qu' a pres*  
 ART.M dry ENC has taken know.2P ENC  
 'the dry (wine) has increased you know the dry has increased'

According to Field (*ibid.*), "speaker subscription is not really relevant" in such parenthesis-like clauses, which can be granted main-clause status only on purely formal grounds. Therefore, the author concludes that the absence of enunciatives should be expected with these clauses. Pilawa's and my data confirm this finding. In the COG texts, addressee-oriented phatic parentheses (as in (19)) with second person forms of *saber* 'know' or *veder* 'see' occur without any enunciative in 100 per cent of the cases, while speaker-oriented, phatically used *verba credendi*, e.g. *pensar* 'think / believe' mostly lack enunciatives. This seems to have led to a kind of further 'contamination' inducing enunciative loss with these verbs even when they are used as main verbs within fully asserted matrix clauses; this is particularly obvious with the first person singular form of *pensar* which, as an affirmative matrix verb, is not preceded by *que* (or by other particles) in 45 per cent of the cases. Cf. the following COG example:

- (20) *que' s va caler Ø pensi*  
 ENC REFL goes be.necessary.INF think.PRS.1S  
*que parlaram tots anglés*  
 COMP speak.FUT.1P all:P English  
 'it will be necessary I think that all of us will speak English'

#### 4. Conclusion

By and large, spoken data seems to confirm by and large Pilawa's analysis of attitude-induced choice of enunciative particles in Gascon Occitan, an analysis

that draws on Bouzet's, Field's and Wüest's earlier proposals. However, speakers of Gascon make a somewhat reduced use of the modal capacities of the enunciative paradigm. They tend to transfer the main clause patterns – which are characterized by a high degree of generalization of *que* in affirmative environments – to certain embedded sentences such as verbal complement clauses. This may be interpreted as a typical instance of grammaticalization, by which speaker-oriented devices become subject to syntactical constraints and thereby lose their pragmatic impact.

On synchronic grounds, Pilawa's approach looks convincing. There remain, however, some questions which his illocutionary approach cannot answer adequately. Let us mention just one of them without detailing it fully here for reasons of space; namely the origin of enunciative *que* and *e*. It is obvious that differential assertion-marking by means of these two morphemes has to be regarded as a secondary effect, for neither *que* – the grammatical morpheme *par excellence* in Romance – nor *e* (of obscure etymological origin)<sup>25</sup> carry any intrinsic pragmatic value, contrary to adverbial elements such as *be* and *ja* in their literal or epistemic reading. It is well known that in Standard European languages, apart from mood and explicit (performative) matrix verbs, such adverbial particles are a widespread means of expressing the speaker's attitude to his statement and may constitute enunciative-like paradigms.<sup>26</sup> One should therefore recover a source construction which accounts for the Gascon sentence structure and the preverbal but post-subject position of the enunciative slot. By virtue of a primary pragmatic use of this construction, the source construction should also explain the epistemic reading of *que* which would be its formal remnant. As I have argued elsewhere, a focal or cohesive cleft sentence seems to be an appropriate candidate for such an evolution.<sup>27</sup> Though cleft constructions are far from being functionally unambiguous, all their uses serve to highlight relevant and asserted pieces of information and overtly separate them from backgrounded and (mostly) presupposed ones. Though the focus-background level should be analytically distinguished from the level of the expression of propositional attitude, as it depends on discourse-related factors such as linguistic context, the two domains tend to interfere with each other. A cleft-based interpretation of the enunciative particle *que* may account for an example like (18), which according to normative grammar is ill-formed and which represents a problematic case for the pragmatic approaches that were mentioned previously.

It has to be admitted, finally, that any dia- or panchronic account of Gascon enunciatives inevitably remains conjectural, since we lack sufficient textual data from earlier stages of this Occitan variety.

## Acknowledgements

The research project ‘Enunciatives in Romance and other languages’, part of which is the study presented herein, has been made possible by different grants from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), Bonn. My initial field-work in Gascony was further sponsored by the F.V.S. Foundation, Hamburg. My gratitude goes to Wolfgang Raible, head of the research project, and, of course, to my Gascon informants for expressing themselves in front of a stranger’s microphone. I am indebted to John Nassichuk (St Cloud / Calgary) for having checked my English.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> If not mentioned otherwise, examples come from my *Corpus Occitano-Gascon* presented below. Abbreviations used for morphological coding read as follows: ADV = adverb; ART = article; COMP = complementizer; COND = conditional mood; ENC = enunciative; F = feminine; FUT = future tense; INF = infinitive; M = masculine; NEG = negation morpheme; OBJ = object; P = plural; PCP = participle; PRS = present tense; REFL = reflexive pronoun; REL = relative particle; 1S = 1<sup>st</sup> person singular etc.; SBJ = subjunctive mood. ‘/’ indicates instances of self-repair.
- <sup>2</sup> More precisely, assertive vs non-assertive reading; this will become clear later in this paper.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. Koike (1996) for an analysis of *ya* in Spanish discourse.
- <sup>4</sup> This is claimed in the GB-oriented contributions such as Campos (1992) and Joseph (1992).
- <sup>5</sup> Field takes up this distinction from Hare and paraphrases it in the following way: “The phrastic is the propositional content of the sentence. The tropic represents the ‘mood’ [...] or characteristic illocutionary point of the utterance, and the neustic is [...] the commitment the speaker attaches to the content of the illocutionary act.” (Field 1985: 81)
- <sup>6</sup> It should have become clear that, although neither the present paper nor any of the studies which it is based upon explicitly work within a Relevance Theory framework, the Gascon enunciatives fit nicely into the category of ‘attitudinal’ discourse particles, that D. Wilson and D. Sperber consider to function as “procedural constraints” on “higher-level explicatures” (Wilson and Sperber 1993: 23).
- <sup>7</sup> For a detailed description of this corpus, cf. Pusch (1998b: 49-63).

- <sup>8</sup> Pilawa's study is actually twofold in that he analyzes Gascon enunciatives as a device for assertion-marking and for establishing text-connectedness. The latter function seems to hold mainly for main clauses in narrative contexts. I do not comment much on this cohesive function of enunciatives, as Pilawa's respective findings are not confirmed by spoken language usage.
- <sup>9</sup> For empirical counter-examples, cf. *infra*.
- <sup>10</sup> The frequency of *ja* as a substitute for enunciative *que* seems to be object of dialectal variation, because in another corpus of spoken Gascon, collected in the southeastern edge of the variety's domain (*Couserans* region; Wüest and Kristol 1993), *ja* replaces *que* in about 10 per cent of all affirmative declarative main clauses.
- <sup>11</sup> The claim that enunciative *que* is a grammaticalized preverbal marker is made by many authors but generally without any specific theoretical background and without referring to the parameters of grammaticalization processes as outlined by contemporary Grammaticalization theory; cf. Pusch (1998b: 131-134) for a critical survey. Among the parameters proposed by Lehmann (1995: 121-160) reduced transparadigmatic variability (i.e., high 'obligatorification' [*op.cit.*: 139]) and reduced syntagmatic variability (i.e., fixation to a specific preverbal slot) are most relevant to describe the status of enunciative *que* as grammaticalized. Unfortunately, Grammaticalization theory is hard put at describing adequately the parameters involved in the development of linguistic elements which already have an exclusively grammatical value at the moment of entering the 'grammaticalization' process. However, it is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss this delicate point.
- <sup>12</sup> As mentioned in note 8, Pilawa uses a theme-rheme related parameter of topic-continuity marking to account for the *que* /  $\emptyset$  distribution in main clauses, though it remains unclear if he considers these two analytical parameters to be functionally or diachronically related.
- <sup>13</sup> Concerning subjunctive vs indicative distribution in subordinate clauses, Gascon is nearer to Iberoromance than French patterns, allowing for subjunctive e.g. in protasis and certain temporal adverbial clauses. – Interestingly, the modality marking by means of enunciatives does not seem to interfere with this morpho-syntactic device of subordination and reduced assertion: subjunctive mood and enunciatives are perfectly compatible. It should be admitted, however, that in Pilawa's data, subordinate clauses with subjunctive forms are biased towards *e* insertion

(45 per cent), whereas *que* appears in 34 per cent of the cases. The (small number of) examples from my spoken data, finally, tend not to have any enunciative at all.

- 14 “*qué* est présent quand cette proposition contient une information nouvelle, mais il est absent quand il ne s’agit que du rappel d’un fait déjà connu ou d’un événement éventuel.” (Hetzron 1977: 197)
- 15 As a test for assertion vs presupposition of embedded clauses, Hooper and Thompson use for instance negation and its effects on the semantic interpretation of the matrix clause. A general test for assertion is mentioned by Raible (1992): Generally speaking, a clause which may be challenged by a reply like “This is not true” is asserted.
- 16 This expression, not used by Hooper and Thompson themselves, is quoted from a subsequent article (and critical evaluation of Hooper and Thompson 1973) by Green (1976).
- 17 Hetzron does not analyze restrictive vs non-restrictive relative clauses separately and claims that they never occur with enunciative *que*.
- 18 Though Pilawa is not explicit about this, these figures probably refer to the cases where enunciative insertion is (normatively) possible; otherwise the proportion of  $\emptyset$  should be much higher.
- 19 Probably more valid than these percentages, which refer to the total number of complement clauses, are those indicating the proportion of potential vs effective occurrences of the two enunciatives; for *que* this quota also arrives at 53 per cent, whereas for *e* it amounts to 17,5 per cent. Pilawa does not calculate these proportions.
- 20 But there are very low token rates for this case; I only found three cases of negated verbs of this class in my data.
- 21 Expressed in relation to normatively expected (‘correct’) occurrences, these values differ slightly and attain 45 per cent for *que* and 28,5 per cent for *e*.
- 22 Again with the same syntactic restrictions and phonological juncture restrictions as in embedded clauses, i.e. exclusion from immediate post-*wh*-word position and elision before vowel-opened verb forms.
- 23 But in this case, it remains unclear in which way *e* and  $\emptyset$ -marked interrogative sentences differ. Zero-marked questions have gone unnoticed, so far, by both normative grammars and descriptive contributions.
- 24 By doing this, Bouzet weakens his former proposal that negation morphemes ought to be classified as enunciatives. It is generally agreed

- that the enunciative particles do not cluster before the verb. The idea of integrating negators into the enunciative paradigm, though shared by other linguists as e.g. Joly (1977), does not seem very convincing.
- <sup>25</sup> Pusch (in prep.), taking up an idea from Haase (1997), advocates *e* to be a mere prosthetic vowel which appeared before enclitics in preverbal position.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. Fernandez (1994) for a survey of enunciatives of this kind in different European and extra-European languages.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. Pusch (1998a) for a proposal of a cleft-based genesis of the enunciative *que*.

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