

Complex subordination and 'Doubly filled COMP' phenomena in Acadian French

The morpheme *que / che*, a conflation of the Latin morphemes QUOD / QUIA, fulfills a wide array of functions in the Romance languages, namely that of an interrogative marker, a relative pronoun / particle and that of a subordinating device for complement clause formation, and these multifunctional or 'polyvalent' uses have always been a challenge for linguistic description. This paper will focus on the complementizer use of *que* in Acadian French, a non-standard variety of French spoken in Eastern Canada (Atlantic Provinces and Newfoundland) and in the US State of Louisiana.

It has been mentioned in previous studies on Acadian French (cf. Motapanyane 1997; Wiesmath 2002) that apart from the uses of *que* also found in European varieties and in Standard French, *que* appears frequently adjacent to subordinating morphemes which in European and Standard French do not require this complementizer. As Motapanyane (1997: 52) states, "*que* 'that' supplements other conjunctions such as interrogatives, [...] *si* 'if, whether' [...], relatives [...], conjunctions for expressing time [...], comparison [...], concession". The aim of this paper is to present an inventory of these 'supplementary' uses of *que* which yield complex subordination structures and resemble what has been called 'doubly-filled COMP' in formal theories of grammar.

The data comes from publicly available corpora of spoken Acadian French both from Canada and the US, and from own field data recorded in Maritime Canada. The data has been analyzed structurally and discourse-functionally, using qualitative context-interpretive methods. A quantitative analysis is pending.

Preliminary results of the data analysis show that complex subordinators such as *avant que* 'before' (see (1)) or *pour que* 'in order to' (2), formed with an adverbial or prepositional element and *que*, which have developed in French from the Middle French period on and have replaced, in several cases, older subordinating morphemes etymologically linked to Latin subordinators, are attested in Acadian French as they are in other European and Canadian varieties of the language and in the standard variety:

(1) *pis à la fin qu'on a resté deux ans chez nous avant que je bâtisse la maison ici* 'then we finally remained two years with the family before I built the house here'

(2) *après ça il allumaent des petits feux en/ de place en place là [...] pour que ça faise des flambes* 'after that they made small fires at different spots [...] so that flames came up'

Apart from these normative instances, more specific and controversial examples of complex subordination (controversial in normative terms) appear in the data where etymological subordinators are supplemented by *que*, such as the temporal subordinator *quand que* 'when' (3), the locative subordinator *(i)où que* 'where' (4) and the modal subordinator *comment que* 'how' (5):

(3) *quand que ça brasse trop j'ai le mal de mer* 'when the weather is too bad I feel sea-sick'

(4) *i avait sorti juste en face tu sais ioù ce que Philippe reste* 'he had gone out just in front of you know where Philippe lives'

(5) je sais pas comment ce que le reste des/ des Acadiens au Nouveau-Brunswick [...] prendraient ça
'I don't know how the rest of the Acadians in New-Brunswick [...] would accept this'

Supplementary *que* seems to be generalized with *quand*, as in (3), as it is with *si* in temporal and conditional clauses, as in (6):

(6) pis si que t'as fait un trou icitte pis que l'eau descend là là 'and if you have made a hole here then the water will go down there'

whereas with other conjunctive morphemes such as *quand*, *(i)où*, *combien* 'how much/many' and several others, the data shows some variation that will be detailed in the paper. Supplementary *que* is also found with subordinators that have been taken over into Acadian French from its contact language English, such as *whenever que* 'whenever' or *since que* 'since' (7):

(7) t'avais pas une licence dans l'automne euh [...]S/ SINCE que t'es pas un GAME WARDEN 'you didn't have a license for the fall since you are not a game-warden'

I will try to show that this tendency of Acadian French to supplement etymological subordinators and subordinators transferred from the contact language by *que* reflects a more general drift attested in the morphosyntax of spoken French to disentangle grammatical functions of plurifunctional morphemes and to distribute the functional load between different morphemes, a phenomenon that hitherto has been described mainly for relative clause formation with a non-inflected relative particle *que* and a resumptive pronoun. I will therefore argue for complex subordination patterns and 'doubly-filled COMP' phenomena in Acadian French to be an instance of this type of analytic (morpho)syntax characteristic for Spoken French in general.

References:

Motapanyane, Virginia (in coll. with David Jory) (1997): *Acadian French*. München / Newcastle: Lincom.

Wiesmath, Raphaële (2002): Présence et absence du relatif et conjonctif *que* dans le français acadien: tendances contradictoires ? In: Pusch, C. / Raible, W. (eds.): *Romanistische Korpuslinguistik: Korpora und gesprochene Sprache / Romance Corpus Linguistics: Corpora and Spoken Language*. Tübingen: Narr, 393-408.