Deletion of Higher Copies Voids Island Effects: Evidence from Valdôtain Patois

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1. Introduction

Starting with Chomsky & Lasnik (1977), linguists have distinguished between overt and covert movement: the former happens in narrow syntax, before Spell-Out, while the latter happens at Logical Form (LF), post Spell-Out. The Single Output model also known as T-model (Bobaljik 1995) eliminated the overt-covert distinction. In the T-model, all movement happens in narrow syntax; LF and Phonological Form (PF) then decide which copy in the chain to interpret (Bobaljik 1995, 2002; Bošković 2002; Amaechi & Georgi 2020). The traditional covert or LF movement becomes movement in narrow syntax with deletion of higher copies in the chain, often referred to as overt-covert movement (Bobaljik 1995; Amaechi & Georgi 2020; a.o.). Despite proposing a more principled approach to movement, overt-covert movement has scarce empirical support, especially on A'-movement, with the exceptions being Bošković (2002) and Amaechi & Georgi (2020), and the properties of overt-covert movement remain under-explored.

This paper discusses novel data on clause internal wh-phrases (CIwh-phrases) in Valdôtain Patois (Francoprovençal group; Glottolog code: vall1249), henceforth ValPa, (1), presenting strong evidence in support of overt-covert movement (Section 2). ValPa CIwh-phrases do not show island sensitivity (Section 3), despite having matrix scope, which looks prima facie contradictory with an overt-covert movement analysis. Data from interveners inside and above the island show that CIwh-phrases move out of the island and into the matrix CP, but deletion of higher copies in the chain voids island effects (Section 4).

2. Chain formation in ValPa

ValPa, has some degree of optionality in wh-fronting. Except *perqué* 'why', any wh-phrase, be it an argument or an adjunct, can occur fronted or clause-internally (1)-(2). This distribution is furthermore not limited to matrix contexts, (3-b), in contrast for example to French (Cheng & Rooryck 2000, Belletti 2006). As discussed in Seguin (in press, 2025a), CIwh-phrases differ intonationally, pragmatically, and structurally from echo questions, (1-c)-(2-c).

(1) a. **Dequé** te regal-e à Ivana?
what NOM.2SG gift-PRS.2SG to Ivana
'What will you give Ivana?'
b. Te regale **dequé** à Ivana?
c. Te regale à Ivana DEQUÉ?

(2) a. **Quan** vo part-ode pe l' Amerique?
when NOM.2PL leave-PRS.2PL for the America
'When are you leaving to the US?'
b. Vo partode **quan** pe l'Amerique?
c. Vo partode pe l'Amerique QUAN?

(3) a. **Yeui** t' on deut [que all-a-on]?
where NOM.3PL have.PRS.3PL say.PST.PTCP COMP go-PST-3PL
'Where did you say that they went?'
b. T'on deut [que allaon **yeui**]?

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The clause internal wh-phrases (CIwh-phrases) in (1-b)-(2-b) are not in situ: they are displaced to the edge of vP. This is confirmed by word order facts. The default ValPa argument order is DO>IO, (4), but in the interrogative (1-b), the word order is IOwh>DO. Similarly, in (5) the default word order is $PP_{locative}$>$ADV_{temporal}$, while in (2-b) it's the reverse: ADVwh>$PP_{locative}$.

(4) L' à regal-ò lo livro à Lino. **DO>IO**
NOM.3SG have.PRS.3SG gift-PST.PTCP the book to Lino
'(S)he gifted the book to Lino.'

(5) No part-en pe l' Amerique delon. **$PP_{locative}$>$ADV_{temporal}$**
NOM.1PL leave-PRS.1PL for the America Monday
'We leave for the US on Monday.'

Further evidence that CIwh-phrases are not in situ comes from parasitic gap (PG) licensing. PGs are gaps, contained in an adjunct clause, that are dependent on the existence of an overt A'-chain in the matrix clause, (6) (Engdahl 1983, Culicover 2001, Nunes 2004; and cf. Nissenbaum 2000 for a different approach). In ValPa, PGs are possible, (7-a): *tseidé* is not an object drop verb and in the absence of an A'-chain it is impossible to have a gap in the adjunct clause, (8).

(6) Which book did you try reading t [without opening *pg*]?

(7) a. **Dequé**$_k$ l' à medg-à t_k [sensa tseid-é *pg*]?
what CL.NOM.3SG have.PRS.1SG eat-PST.PTCP without warm.up-INF
'What did (s)he eat without warming up?'
b. L'à medgà **dequé** [sensa tseidé *pg*]?

(8) L' à medg-à-lo [sensa *(lo) tseid-é]?
CL.NOM.3SG have.PRS.1SG eat-PST.PTCP-CL.ACC.M.SG without CL.ACC.M.SG warm.up-INF
'(S)he ate it without warming it up.'

Only overt A'-movement licenses PGs (Nunes (2004) a.o.), therefore *dequé* in (7-b) cannot be in-situ: the wh-phrase must have moved to a clause internal position. Yet, CIwh-phrases must follow low manner adverbs, like *bien* 'well' (9), notoriously one of the lowest adverbs in Cinque's (1999) hierarchy and situated just above vP. Assuming, following Hewett (2023), that temporal clauses are adjuncts to vP, I argue that *dequé* in (9) has moved to a position at the edge of vP, (10). This is in line with what has been claimed for CIwh-phrases in other languages (Jayaseelan 1996, Kahnemuyipour 2001, Belletti 2006, Manetta 2010).

(9) T' aprist-e (bien) **dequé** (bien) avouë le loufi-e?
CL.NOM.2SG prepare.PRS-2SG well what with the blueberrie-PL
'What do you prepare well with the blueberries?

(10) $[_{TP}\ [_{whP}$ wh-phrase $[_{vP}\ [_{VP}$ ~~wh-phrase~~]]]]

CIwh-phrases also license PGs in structurally higher clauses, (11). In (11-a), *dequé* surfaces in the embedded clause, yet it licenses the PG in the temporal clause adjoined to the matrix clause, which I assume following Hewett (2023) a.o. to adjoined to the matrix vP. In order to license the PG, the wh-phrase must have moved out of the embedded clause and *at least* to the edge of the matrix vP. Furthermore, such movement must be overt, because covert movement does not license PGs. Since *dequé* in (11-a) has moved to the matrix clause, it is safe to claim that it has moved all the way to its scope position in matrix CP, just like its fronted counterpart in (11-b). The different word orders follow from the deletion of different copies. Spelling out the head of the chain results in the order in (11-b), while spelling out a lower copy leads to the order in (11-a). The latter is a case of over-covert movement.[1]

[1] This evidence also confirms Hewett's (2023) claim that long-distance A' dependencies license parasitic gaps at any vP edge position along their movement path.

(11) **Context:** You are venting to your mother about how last night your picky kid refused to eat the food you had warmed up for dinner. Curious about what food annoyed her grandson this time, your mother asks:

a. T' à compr-ei [que l' arie pò
NOM.2SG have.PRS.2SG understand-PST.PTCP COMP NOM.3SG have.COND.PRS.1SG NEG
medg-à **dequé**] [apré ai tzeid-ò *pg*]?
eat-PST.PTCP what after have.INF warm.up-PST.PTCP
'What did you understand he would not eat after having warmed up?'

b. **Dequé**$_k$ t'à compr-ei [que l'arie pò medg-à t_k] [apré ai tzeid-ò *pg*]?

Another property of overt movement is the ability to establish new binding configurations. In (12-a), the anaphor contained in the wh-phrase cannot be bound in base position, as there is no suitable antecedent in the embedded clause. But it gets bound by *nuns* on its way to the CP1, as it transits through CP2. On the other hand, LF movement does not give rise to new binding configurations (Pesetsky 2000, Kotek 2016). In-situ-wh, like in (12-b) in English undergoes covert movement at LF, yet this does not give rise to new binding configurations. The same happens with Quantifier Raising (QR), (12-c).

(12) a. [$_{CP1}$ [Which picture of themselves$_k$]$_j$ did the nuns$_k$ think [$_{CP2}$ t_j the thief$_i$ took t_j]]?
b. *[$_{CP1}$ Who$_i$ did the nuns$_k$ think [$_{CP2}$ t_i took which picture of themselves$_k$]]?
c. [$_{CP1}$ The thief$_i$ thought [$_{CP2}$ the nuns$_k$ stole every painting of themselves$_k$/*himself$_i$]].

In the ValPa declarative (13), there is no suitable antecedent to bind the reflexive in the embedded clause, as *Renata* is feminine. The quantifier phrase *tsaque fotografie de sè memo* at LF will undergo QR, yet this does not allow for the reflexive to be bound by *Lino*. On the other hand, (14-a) is felicitous: the reflexive gets bound by *Lino*, while the wh-phrase transits through CP2 on its way to CP1. (14-b) is also felicitous, with the reflexive being bound by *Lino*. The only way that the reflexive in (14-b) can be bound is if the CIwh-phrase at some point in the derivation moves -at least- to the CP of the embedded clause (14-c).

(13) *Lino$_i$ di [que Renata$_j$/ llam-e tsaque fotografie de **sè$_i$ memo**].
Lino say.PRS-3SG COMP Renata like.PRS-3SG every picture of REFL.M.SG
'Lino says that Renata likes every picture of himself.'

(14) a. [Quint-e fotografie de **sé$_i$ memo**]$_k$ L.$_i$ di [t_k que R.$_j$ llam-e t_k]?
which-F-PL pictures.PL of REFL.M.SG L. say.PRS-3SG COMP R. like.PRS-3SG
'Which pictures of himself does Lino say that Renata likes?'
b. Lino$_i$ di que Renata$_j$ llam-e quint-e fotografie de **sé$_i$ memo**?
c. Lino$_j$ di [que Renata llame quinta fotografie de **sé memo**$_j$?]

If we add another level of embedding, we see that any suitable antecedent between the surface position of the CIwh-phrase and its scope-taking position in the matrix CP, can bind the reflexive contained in the wh-phrase, (15-a), just like its fronted counterpart (15-b). This means that the CIwh-phrase moves successive-cyclically to the matrix CP, (15-c).[2]

(15) a. [$_{CP1}$ Lino$_j$ l' à deut [$_{CP2}$ que Gianni$_k$ so [$_{CP3}$ que
Lino NOM.3.SG have.PRS.3SG say.PST.PTCP COMP Gianni know.PRS.3SG COMP
Renata l' à atsitò quinta fotografia de **sé memo**$_{j/k}$]]] ?
Renata NOM.3.SG have.PRS.3SG buy.PST.PTCP which picture of himself
'Which picture of himself Lino said that Gianni knows that Renata bought?'

b. [$_{CP1}$ [Quinta fotografia de **sé memo**$_{j/k}$]$_i$ Lino$_j$ l' à deut [$_{CP2}$ que Gianni$_k$ so [$_{CP3}$ que Renata l' à atsitò t_i]]]?

c. [Lino$_j$ l'à deut [que G. so [que R. l'à atsitò quinta fotografie de **sé memo**$_j$?]]]

[2] One concern that might arise at this point is whether the binding relations in (14-a) and (15-a) are the consequence of a logophoric reading of the reflexive (Pollard & Sag1992 a.o.). However, if this were the case, (13) should be grammatical, contrary to facts. See Seguin (2025b) for a more elaborate discussion.

This binding data provides another piece of evidence in favor of overt-covert movement: CIwh-phrases move to their scope position in narrow syntax, with the deletion of higher copies in the chain. Therefore, (16-a) and (16-b) are derivationally equivalent and only differ in which copy gets spelled out, (17). Spelling out the head of the chain gives rise to the word order in (16-a), whereas spelling out a lower copy gives rise to the order in (16-b).

(16) a. **Dequé** te regal-e à Ivana?
what NOM.2SG gift-PRS.2SG to Ivana
'What will you give Ivana?'
b. Te regale **dequé** à Ivana?

(17) a. [$_{whP}$ **wh-phrase** [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ [$_{vP}$ ~~wh-phrase~~ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh-phrase~~]]]]] **Fronted**
b. [$_{whP}$ ~~wh-phrase~~ [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ **wh-phrase** [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh-phrase~~]]]]] **CIwh**

3. The island puzzle

The evidence from PGs and binding strongly supports the claim that VlaPa CIwh-phrases move to their scope position in narrow syntax, which predicts that CIwh-phrases should display island sensitivity. This is, however, not the case. For instance, in (18-a), *dequé* has matrix scope, yet it is felicitous in the relative clause, from which extraction is banned, (18-b).

(18) **Context**: A friend of yours is a vintage Vespa collector, and every year he goes to a Vespa fair in Tuscany and buys an old Vespa model that he then fixes to add to his collection. A week after the fair, you meet him at the bar and ask:
a. Adon, ci coup t' à atsit-ò [[an Vespa que cout-e
so, DEM.M.SG hit NOM.2SG have.PRS.2SG buy-PST.PTCP a Vespa COMP cost.PRS-3SG
veu]] ?
how.much
'So, for which x such that x is an amount this time you bought a Vespa that costs x?'
b. *Adon, ci coup **veu**$_k$ t'à atsitò [[an Vespa que coute t$_k$]]?

Adjunct wh-phrases are also felicitous inside RCs, (19-a), while their extraction is ruled out, suggesting that RCs are strong islands in ValPa: nothing can be overtly extracted from them (Ross 1967, Szabolcsi & den Dikken 2006). The same patterns are witnessed with complex noun phrases, (20)-(21), and *perqué* 'why' adjunct clauses, (22)-(23).

(19) **Context**: A friend of yours is a vintage Vespa collector. Every year he goes to a Vespa fair in Tuscany and buys an old Vespa model to fix and add to his collection, but it always takes weeks to receive the Vespa, which annoys him immensely. A week later, you meet him and ask:
a. Adon, ci coup t' à atsit-ò [[an Vespa que
so, DEM.M.SG hit NOM.2SG have.PRS.2SG buy-PST.PTCP a Vespa COMP
t'aru-e **quan**]] ?
DAT.2SG-arrive.PRS-3SG when
'So, for which x such as x is a time this time you bought a Vespa that you will receive x?'
b. *Adon, ci coup **quan**$_k$ t'à atsitò [[an Vespa que t'arue t$_k$]]?

(20) a. T' à sent-u [[la conta que l' an
NOM.2SG have.PRS.2SG hear-PST.PTCP the story COMP NOM.3PL have.PRS.3PL
baill-à la meizon **à qui**]]?
give-PST.PTCP the house to who
'For which x you heard the story that they gave the house to x?'
b. ***À qui**$_k$ t'à sentu [[la conta que l'an baillà la meizon t$_k$]]?

(21) a. T' à sent-u [[la conta que son part-i en
NOM.2SG have.PRS.2SG hear-PST.PTCP the story COMP be.PRS.3PL leave-PST.PTCP.PL on
vacanse **avouë qui**]]?
holiday with who
'For which x you heard the story that they went on holidays x?'

b. *__Avouë qui__$_k$ t'à sentu [[la conta que son parti en vacanse t_k]]?

(22) a. Papa s' è enmaleuch-à [[perqué t'à medg-à **dequé**]]?
dad REFL.3 be.PRS.3SG get.angry.PST.PTCP because NOM.2SG eat.PRS.3SG what
'For which x dad got mad because you ate x?'

b. *__Dequé__$_k$ papa s'è enmaleuchà [[perqué t'à medgà t_k]]?

(23) a. Papa s' è enmaleuch-à [[perqué t'à copp-ò lo
dad REFL.3 be.PRS.3SG get.angry.PST.PTCP because NOM.2SG-have.PRS.3SG cut-INF the
pan **avuoë dequé**]]?
bread with what
'For which x dad got mad because you cut the bread with x?'

b. *__Avouë dequé__$_k$ papa s'è enmaleuchà [[perqué t'à coppò lo pan t_k]]?

The lack of island sensitivity displayed by CIwh-phrases suggests that they do not move out of the island, clashing with the PG and binding data, which clearly show that CIwh-phrases move to their scope-taking position in narrow syntax. This clash is potentially problematic for the overt-covert movement analysis sketched at the end of the previous section.

I propose three hypotheses to explain the lack of island sensitivity of CIwh-phrases. In Hypothesis 1 and 2, the wh-phrase remains inside the island, thus never triggering an island violation. The scope of the wh-phrase is then calculated via Focus Alternatives (Hamblin 1973, Rooth 1985, Kotek 2016). In Hypothesis 1, (24-a), the CIwh-phrase moves to the island's vP edge and remains there, whereas in Hypothesis 2, (24-b), from the island's vP edge, the wh-phrase moves to the island's CP (I will assume that it scrambles to a non-interrogative position for interpretative reasons, pace Kotek 2016). Under Hypothesis 3 (24-c), on the other hand, the wh-phrase moves out of the island to its scope-taking position, matrix CP, but higher copies in the chain are deleted and the island effect voided.[3] In the following section, I will resort to intervention effects inside and above the island to diagnose the movement path of wh-phrases.

(24) a. **Hypothesis 1**: the CIwh-phrase moves to the edge of the island's vP and remains 'frozen' there. Scope is calculated via Focus Alternatives
$[_{CPmatrix}$ Q $[_{TP}$ ... $[_{CPisland}$ $[_{TP}$ $[_{whP}$ wh $[_{vP}$ $[_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]

b. **Hypothesis 2**: the CIwh-phrase scrambles to the island's CP. Scope is calculated via Focus Alternatives
$[_{CPmatrix}$ Q $[_{TP}$ ... $[_{CPisland}$ ~~wh~~ $[_{TP}$ $[_{whP}$ wh $[_{vP}$ $[_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]

c. **Hypothesis 3**: the CIwh-phrase overtly moves to the matrix CP, with deletion of higher copies in the chain
$[_{CPmatrix}$ ~~wh~~ $[_{TP}$ ... $[_{whP}$ ~~wh~~ $[_{vP}$ $[_{CPisland}$ $[_{TP}$ $[_{whP}$ wh $[_{vP}$ $[_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]]

4. Intervention Effects and Islands

Before moving to the ValPa data, a brief introduction to intervention effects (IEs) in island constructions in English is in order. In English superiority-violating questions, only the single-pair reading is available, while the pair-list reading is impossible (marked ^{*PL}), (25-a). As Pesetsky (2000) and Kotek (2016) show, this happens because the subject wh-phrase stays in-situ at LF, hence remaining in the scope of the negation, which gives rise to IEs. Since *which student* remains in-situ throughout the whole derivation, Kotek (2016) concludes that its scope must be calculated via Focus Alternatives (Hamblin

[3] Note that in this hypothesis it is not necessary to postulate that the wh-phrase first scrambles to the island's CP, as the wh-phrase moves to the matrix CP and from that position can scope over interveners anywhere.

1973, Rooth 1985), a mechanism which is sensitive to IEs; hence the lack of the pair-list reading in (25-a). On the other hand, in superiority-obeying questions, both readings are available (marked ^{OK}), as at LF the in-situ-wh moves over the negation.

(25) a. ^{*PL}Which book did**n't** which student read t? Superiority-violating
b. ^{OK}Which student did**n't** t read which book ? Superiority-obeying

Given these observations, Kotek (2016) resorts to the interaction of IEs to diagnose the movement path of wh-in-situ in English islands. She shows that in situ wh-phrases (underlined) are not sensitive to IEs to an intervener (in bold) inside the island. In (26), the pair-list reading is available, as *which philosopher* covertly scrambles to the edge of the island, moving out of the scope of the negation, (27).

(26) **Context**: The linguists at the conference are very suspicious of rumors. However, each of them believed the rumor that we failed to invite one philosopher to the conference party. What I want to know is:
A: Which linguist believed the rumor [that we **didn't** invite which philosopher]?
B: Chomsky believed the rumor that we didn't invite Quine; Kayne believed the rumor that we didn't invite Lewis, Labov believed the rumor that we didn't invite Russell, ...
(Kotek 2016: p. 7)

(27) **Intervener inside island → no intervention**
^{ok}[$_{CPmatrix}$ Which linguist [$_{TP}$ t ...[$_{CPisland}$ which philosopher [$_{TP}$ ... **NEG** ... ... t]]]

On the other hand, when the intervener is above the island, in the matrix clause, the pair-list reading is impossible, (28). This is because, despite covertly moving to the edge of the island, *which philosopher* remains in the scope of the negation in the matrix clause and is thus subject to IEs (29). The only possible reading is single-pair. The same pattern is reported for Japanese (Morita 2018).

(28) **Context**: The linguists at the conference are very gullible and believe lots of rumors. However, each of them is suspicious of one rumor about a philosopher that we supposedly invited to the conference party. What I want to know is:
A: Which linguist **didn't** believe the rumor [that we invited which philosopher]?
B: ^{*PL}Chomsky didn't believe the rumor that we invited Quine; Kayne didn't believe the rumor that we invited Lewis; Labov didn't believe the rumor that we invited Russell, ...
(Kotek 2016: p. 7)

(29) **Intervener outside island → intervention effects**
^{*PL}[$_{CPmatrix}$ Which linguist [$_{TP}$ t ... **NEG** ... [$_{CPisland}$ which philosopher [$_{TP}$ ... ... t]]]

ValPa does not allow multiple wh-questions. Therefore, we cannot replicate Kotek's exact paradigm, but we can still place interveners inside and above island boundaries to diagnose the movement path of ValPa CIwh-phrases. Note that CIwh-phrases are not subject to IEs in non-island structures, (30), which is expected given that CIwh-phrases move to the matrix CP and hence higher than the negation, which is situated just below C (Zanuttini 1997).

(30) a. Dequé l' à **pò** deut [que t' ari-e
what CL.NOM.3SG have.PRS.2SG NEG say-PST.PTCP COMP CL.NOM.3PL have.COND-3PL
atsit-ò]?
buy-PST.PTCP
'What didn't he tell that they would buy?'
b. L'à **pò** deut [que l'arion atsitò dequé]?

The hypotheses discussed in the previous section make the following predictions. Since the negation *pò* is situated below T, Hypothesis 1 (CIwh-phrase in island's vP edge) entails that CIwh-phrases are subject

to IEs both when the intervener is inside and above the island, (31), whereas under Hypothesis 2 (CIwh-phrase moves to island's CP) CIwh-phrases should be subject to IEs when the intervener is above the island, but not when it's inside the island, (32), just like in English (Kotek 2016). Hypothesis 3 (movement to matrix CP) makes the prediction that CIwh-phrases should never be subject to IEs, regardless of the position of the intervener, (33), unlike English.

(31) Hypothesis 1 predictions

a. **Intervener inside the island → intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ Q [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{CPisland}$ [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]

b. **Intervener above the island → intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ Q [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{CPisland}$ [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]

(32) Hypothesis 2 predictions

a. **Intervener inside the island → no intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ Q [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{CPisland}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]

b. **Intervener above the island → intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ Q [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{CPisland}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]

(33) Hypothesis 3 predictions

a. **Intervener inside the island → no intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{whP}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{vP}$ [$_{CPisland}$ [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]]]

b. **Intervener above the island → no intervention effects**:
[$_{CPmatrix}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{whP}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{vP}$ [$_{CPisland}$ [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]]]

Let's first look at cases where the intervener is inside the island. In (34), we see that the presence of negation inside the island does not cause any IEs. Thus, the wh-phrase must have moved *at least* to the island's CP, (35), which disproves Hypothesis 1. This finding is in line with what Kotek argues for English.

(34) **Context**: The math teacher, Mr. J., recently started making kids fix broken items around the school. If they fail to do so he gives them detention. One afternoon you walk by the detention classroom and see a few students in there, so you approach Mr. J. and ask:

a. Ci coup t' à pun-ì le meinou [perqué l'
this hit CL.NOM.2 have.PRS.2SG punish-PST.PTCP the kid.PL because CL.NOM.3
on **pò** sistem-ò dequé] ?
have.PRS.3PL NEG fix-PST.PTCP what
'What x is such that this time you punished the kids because they did not fix x?'

(35) **ValPa: Intervener inside island → no intervention**
ok[$_{CPmatrix}$ Q [$_{TP}$ ... [$_{CPisland}$ ~~wh~~ [$_{NegP}$ **NEG** [$_{TP}$ [$_{whP}$ wh [$_{vP}$ [$_{VP}$ ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]

Yet, an intervener in the matrix clause does not trigger IEs either, (36). The lack of IEs means that the wh-phrase has moved out of the island and to the matrix CP, from where it can take scope over the matrix negation *pò*, as sketched in (36). I only report the examples of adjunct clauses with *perqué*, but the pattern is the same across all types of island discussed in Section 3, see Seguin (2025a) for the full paradigm.

(36) **Context**: Your colleague Mr. J., the math teacher, is very strict and is always punishing students for misbehaving, but recently started giving them a choice between fixing broken items around the school or spending an afternoon in detention. At 1 pm, you see a group of notoriously mischievous students whom you know have just crossed Mr. J. that morning, leave the school. So you turn to Mr. J. and ask:

a. Ci coup te les à **pò** pun-ì **[** perqué l'
this hit CL.NOM.2 CL.ACC.3PL have.PRS.2SG NEG punish-PST.PTCP because CL.NOM.3
on sistem-ò dequé **]** ?
have.PRS.3PL fix-PST.PTCP what
'What x is such that this time you didn't punish them because they fixed x?'

(37) **ValPa: Intervener above island → no intervention**
ok[CPmatrix ~~wh~~ [NegP **NEG** [TP ... [whP ~~wh~~ [vP **[**CPisland [TP [whP wh [vP [VP ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]]

These data points prove Hypothesis 3 to be correct: wh-phrases move out of the island to the matrix CP. This result is consistent with the analysis proposed at the end of Section 2: wh-phrases move to their scope position in narrow syntax, with the deletion of higher copies in the chain.

5. Discussion

In this paper, I have presented evidence from PG licensing and binding that in ValPa CIwh-phrases move to their scope position in narrow syntax. The different word orders observed, (38), result from the deletion of different copies in the chain.

(38) a. [whP **wh-phrase** [TP [whP [vP ~~wh-phrase~~ [VP ~~wh-phrase~~]]]]] **Fronted**
b. [whP ~~wh-phrase~~ [TP [whP **wh-phrase** [vP [VP ~~wh-phrase~~]]]]] **CIwh**

The felicity of CI-wh phrases inside islands, which at first sight appeared to be counterevidence for an overt-covert movement analysis, is also a consequence of deletion of higher copies in the chain. The structures discussed in the previous section - relative clauses, complex noun phrases, and *perqué* adjunct clauses - are strong islands, meaning that extraction is typically disallowed, see (18-b) and (19-b). However, in ValPa, deletion of higher copies in the chain voids island effects, (39). The most famous case of island-effect amelioration, known as 'salvation by deletion', is witnessed in sluicing constructions (Ross 1967, Lobeck 1995, Merchant 2001). As Merchant (1999, 2008) a.o. pointed out, deletion of a TP that contains an island voids the island effect, (40). In ValPa, sluicing also ameliorates island effects, (41).

(39) [CPmatrix ~~wh~~ [TP ... [whP ~~wh~~ [vP **[**CPisland [TP [whP wh [vP [VP ~~wh~~]]]]]]]]]

(40) a. He got mad because Linda spoke with one of the students but I don't know **which one** ~~he got mad [because Linda spoke with t]~~ .
b. ***Which one** did he get mad **[**because Linda spoke with t **]** ?

(41) S' è emmaleuich-à perqué Clara l' à predg-à
REFL.3 be.PRS.3SG get.mad-PST.PTCP because Clara CL.NOM.3SG have.PRS.3SG speak-PST.PTCP
avouë eun rago de La Sala ma dze si pò avouë quin.
with a boy of La Salle but NOM.1SG know.PRS.1SG NEG with which
'He got mad because Clara spoke with a boy from La Salle but I don't know which one.'

Copy deletion is another, less commonly discussed, mechanism that voids island violations, as argued by Bošković (2002) for Romanian. Romanian requires fronting of all wh-phrases, even in echo questions, yet it is possible to spell out a lower copy in the chain to avoid the violation of a PF constraint, such as the ban on sequences of homophonous wh-phrases (42). Bošković argues that 'low' wh-phrases, like the second *ce* in (42), are not in situ strictly speaking, as they license PGs, (43). These are cases of overt-covert movement. Furthermore, Romanian allows to spell out a lower copy in the chain to avoid island violations, as in (44) (Bošković 2002, Franks 2017).

(42) a. ***Ce ce** precede? **Romanian**
what what precedes
'What precedes what?'
b. **Ce** precede **ce**? (Bošković 2002: p. 365)

(43) **Ce** precede **ce** fără să influențeze *pg*?
what precedes what without SUBJ.PART influences
'What precedes what without influencing it?' (Bošković 2002: p. 374)

(44) a. Ion a ausit **[**zvonul că Petru a cumpărat CE **]** ?
Ion has heard the-rumor tha Petru has bought what
'Ion has heard the rumor that Petru has bought what?'
b. *CE Ion a ausit **[**zvonul că Petru a cumpărat**]** ? (Bošković 2002: p. 374)

ValPa offers further empirical support for Bošković's claim that deletion of higher copies in the chain voids island effects. The parallel between Romanian and ValPa supports the role of overt-covert movement in circumventing syntactic constraints across languages. However, there is a key difference between Romanian and ValPa. In Romanian, spelling out a lower copy in the chain serves as a rescue mechanism, employed to avoid PF violations. In contrast, in ValPa, even though the head of the chain remains the default copy to pronounce, a lower copy can be pronounced instead. Importantly, this mechanism is also available in island structures. Consequently, the island amelioration effects observed in ValPa follow from the language's independent property of spelling out a lower copy in the chain.

These observations in ValPa provide further evidence for the relationship between copy deletion and island amelioration. It suggests that the mechanisms underlying 'salvation by deletion' in sluicing may be more broadly applicable to other constructions. Yet, it is not clear at this point *how* exactly the island effect is voided. The analysis depends on the theory of islands adopted. For instance, one possibility is to argue that island violations are a PF phenomenon and thus influenced by PF processes, such as copy deletion and chain realization (Merchant 1999; Merchant 2008; Fox 2003; a.o.). Another possibility is to argue that successive-cyclic movement is a requirement of linearization and hence enforced post Spell-Out (Fox & Pesetsky 2005). In this case, the choice to spell out the lower copy in the chain by itself lifts the successive-cyclic requirement for the wh-phrase to stop at the edge of the island and hence the island violation never arises. ValPa might offer the perfect testing ground to investigate these fundamental questions about the nature of islands, which need to be addressed in future research.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented evidence from parasitic gap licensing and binding showing that ValPa CI-wh phrases undergo movement to their scope-taking position in narrow syntax. The different word orders (fronted wh-phrase vs. CIwh-phrase) result from the deletion of different copies in the chain. CIwh-phrase are, thus, an instance of overt-covert movement. Furthermore, CIwh-phrases are felicitous inside strong islands, which at first sight, appeared to be counterevidence for the analysis proposed here. To investigate the movement path of wh-phrases in island constructions in ValPa, I replicated Kotek's (2016) design and resorted to the placement of interveners inside and above the island boundary. The results show that CIwh-phrases are not subject to IEs, both when the intervener is inside the island and when it's above it. This suggests that CIwh-phrases move out of the island to the matrix CP, where they take wide scope. These results align with the PG licensing and binding facts observed earlier and, taken together, indicate that wh-phrases move *overtly* to their scope position, and different copies in the chain can be pronounced. Crucially, deletion of higher copies in the chain voids island effects. In conclusion, the ValPa data discussed in this paper contributes new evidence in favor of overt-covert movement and the T-model (Bobaljik 1995), as well as the under-explored kind of salvation by (copy) deletion.

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