

Superlative Movement in Puerto Rican Spanish and General Spanish^{*}

Marcos Rohena-Madrazo

1 Introduction

In some languages, such as English, there are separate morphemes to distinguish between comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, rendering pairs such as *more/most*, *faster/fastest*, *better/best*, etc.. In Spanish, as in other Romance languages, there is no morphological distinction between superlative and comparative forms. In adjectives the distinction is marked by adding a determiner to the comparative form to denote the superlative's uniqueness, for example:

(1) Ese carro es mejor.
That car is better.
That car is better.

(2) Ese carro es el mejor.
That car is the:M better
That car is the best.

This distribution of the determiner is also seen in English, despite the overt superlative morphology. In fact, superlatives are compatible mostly with definite determiners¹, which highlights the unique nature of what is being compared. However, disambiguation by means of a definite determiner is not available for superlative adverbs in Spanish, where a minimal pair like *John ran faster* vs. *John ran the fastest* is not possible, as seen in (3) and (4).

(3) Juan corre más rápido.

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¹ English allows constructions such as *That is a most interesting book*, where an indefinite article precedes the superlative element *most*; however, the adverb *most* here is an intensifier and does not express comparison any more than other intensifiers such as *very* (Huddleston 2002:1165).

Furthermore, some superlatives can also be compatible with possessive determiners in certain constructions such as (1) below.

(1) Éste es mi mejor carro.
This is my best car.
This is my best car.

However, possessive determiners are incompatible with most of the superlative raising that I will deal with in this paper; therefore, I will not discuss them further.

- Juan runs more fast
Juan runs faster.
- (4) *Juan corre el /lo más rápido.
Juan runs the:M /the:N² most fast
Juan runs the fastest.
- (5) Juan es el que corre más rápido.
Juan is the:M that runs most fast
Juan is the one who runs the fastest.

In order to express *John ran the fastest* the superlative needs to appear in a relative clause construction, as seen in (5). Similar constraints on superlatives seem to hold in French, (see Barbaud 1976), as well as in other Romance languages. I will focus the discussion mainly on relative clauses with these types of superlative elements.

Cross-linguistically, there is a tendency for superlatives to be able to move in ways that other elements cannot (Kayne 2004), and Spanish is no exception. Not only does Spanish exhibit movements in the syntax that are particular to superlatives, but there are also cross-dialectal variation and restrictions on the movement of different superlative elements.

In this paper, I will discuss different types of superlative quantifier phrase movements in General Spanish and Puerto Rican Spanish. I prefer not to use the term “Standard Spanish,” since there is no unambiguously standard variety of Spanish and each national variety may have its own standard. Instead of comparing Puerto Rican Spanish to one other national variety, I compare it to what is common among other varieties, i.e. General Spanish. By General Spanish I mean the set of grammatical constructions that are shared by all varieties of Spanish; therefore, all the constructions that are grammatical in General Spanish will also be grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish. A construction that is grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish is not necessarily grammatical in General Spanish, but a construction that is ungrammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish will also be ungrammatical in General Spanish.

The paper will be divided as follows. In Section 1, I will present some more background on relative clauses and the characteristics of superlatives. In Section 2, I will look at superlative movements in General Spanish and provide an account for preverbal superlative raising taking advantage of Rizzi’s (1997) finely articulated left periphery. In Section 3, I will present evidence from Puerto Rican Spanish of superlative preposing across the complementizer and discuss the distribution of preposed superlative QPs with other elements in the CP field. The analysis of Puerto Rican Spanish presented here has implications for the raising analysis of relative clauses, since the interaction exhibited between superlative QPs and relative heads suggests more flexibility in the landing site of relative head in relative clauses than what has been postulated in previous accounts (see Kayne 1994, Bianchi 1999). Finally, In Section 4, in the light of the superlative preposing data, I will propose alternative raising analyses to account for the fact that, at least in Puerto Rican Spanish, different relative heads appear to have different landing sites in the derivation.

² The Spanish determiner *lo* is unspecified for gender, which contrasts with *el* and *la*, the masculine and feminine determiners, respectively. I will mark it as neuter in the glosses; however, it may be the case that *lo* is not necessarily a neuter determiner but a default determiner.

1.1 Relative Clauses

Consider the following General Spanish sentence that contains a headed relative clause:

- (6) Juan es el niño que corre.
 Juan is the:M boy that runs
 Juan is the boy that runs.

According to Kayne's (1994) raising analysis, the head³ of the relative clause is an NP (in this case the NP *niño*), which is generated within the embedded clause and raises to the Spec of CP. Subsequently an external DP selects this CP, resulting in the relative clause. Assuming this analysis, the abbreviated derivation of (6) can be sketched as follows:

- (7) Juan es [DP el [CP [NP niño]_i [C' que [IP t_i corre]]]]

A problem that has been pointed out with this analysis of the raising relative head as an NP is that if it raises from within the embedded clause, it would presumably be an argument of the embedded V°; however, it has been argued that NPs cannot be arguments of the V°, they can only be arguments of D° (see Longobardi 1994: 620). Taking this into consideration, Bianchi (1999:170) proposes that the raising relative head is not an NP, but a DP, with a silent relative determiner. So according to Bianchi, the derivation of (6) would look like (8) below.

- (8) Juan es [DP_{ext} el [CP [DP D_{rel} [NP niño]]]_i [C' que [IP t_i corre]]]]

Since this silent relative determiner shares the same features as the external D°, it can be incorporated to the external determiner, resulting in the following derivation:

- (9) Juan es [DP_{ext} D_{rel}+el [CP [DP t_{Drel} [NP niño]]]_i [C' que [IP t_i corre]]]]

In Spanish the NP argument of the relative head can be unpronounced when the referent is evident from context, resulting in sentences like *Juan es el que corre*, seen in (10): (henceforth caps will be used to represent an unpronounced element⁴)

- (10) Juan es el NIÑO_i que t_i corre.
 John is the:M NIÑO that runs
 John is the one that runs.

- (11) María y Lisa son las NIÑAS_i que t_i corren.
 María and Lisa are the:F.PL NIÑAS that run:3PL
 María and Lisa are the ones that run.

³ In this paper refer to the element that is being relativized as the 'head of the relative clause' or 'relative head'. It should not be confused with the X-bar theory head (i.e. X°).

⁴ By "unpronounced element" I mean an element that is present in the derivation but is not phonologically realized in spellout (see Kayne 2005). I do not intend to propose an unpronounced element "NIÑO" per se, I use NIÑO, for convenience, to represent an unpronounced masculine singular NP. I use NIÑA to represent an unpronounced feminine singular NP.

Although the NP of the head of the relative clause is unpronounced in both (10) and (11), we see that the external determiners *el* and *las* still agree in number and gender features with their corresponding head. The relative head is either generated as an unpronounced element or is unpronounced at a point prior to its raising to the left of the complementizer. This point will be discussed further in section 4, when we see that unpronounced relative heads are allowed movements that overt heads are not.

Interestingly, while these *el que* relative clause constructions are disallowed in many Romance languages (e.g. French, Italian, Romanian), they are widespread in Spanish and can be found in other Iberian Romances⁵.

1.2 Types and Properties of Superlatives

Since in Spanish there is no morphological difference between the comparative and the superlative, the distinction needs to be made through other structural means. We have already seen that the determiner that the degree morpheme takes serves as a differentiator between superlatives and comparatives, since superlatives are compatible almost exclusively with a definite determiner (see Note 1). However, comparative morphemes can also take definite determiners, so we need a way to disambiguate between the two readings of the degree adverb. For this purpose, Bosque & Brucart (1991) make use of comparative and superlative codas, as seen in (12) and (13), respectively.

(12) el niño más rápido (que todos nosotros)
 the boy more fast (than all we)
 the boy faster than all of us

(13) el niño más rápido (de todos nosotros)
 the boy most fastest (of all we)
 the fastest boy out of all of us

⁵ Brucart (1999: 494) in his discussion of *el que* relatives suggests that the possibility of this construction in Spanish and not in other languages is due to the stronger anaphoric force of the Spanish article. According to Brucart, it is this feature of the determiner that allows constructions such as *el que te regalé*, *el de María*, *el nuevo*, seen below.

(2) el que te=regalé
 the that you.DAT.SG=gave:1SG
 the one that I gave to you

(3) el de María
 the of María
 María's (i.e. the one that belongs to María)

(4) el nuevo
 the new
 the new one

In the sentences above, *que todos nosotros* forces a comparative reading in (12), whereas the coda in (13), *de todos nosotros*, forces the superlative reading of the degree quantifier *más*. If no coda is included, *más rápido* is ambiguous between ‘faster’ and ‘fastest’.

Huddleston (2002: 1167) divides superlatives into two types: incorporated and free superlatives.⁶ He defines incorporated superlatives as those that are within an NP, and free superlatives as those that are not contained within an NP. Adapting his terminology to our present purposes, incorporated superlatives are superlative quantifiers that are in the structure of a DP, as we can see in (14).

- (14) [IP [DP el niño [QP más rápido]] ganó]
 the boy most fast won
 the fastest boy won

The free superlatives are the superlative quantifiers that are not contained in a DP within their own clause. In Spanish, free superlatives need to appear in an embedded relative clause construction, as seen in examples (15)-(17).

- (15) [IP [DP_{ext} el [CP niño_i [Force' que [IP corrió [QP más rápido] t_i]]]] ganó]
 the boy that ran most fast won
 The boy that ran the fastest won.

- (16) Ella juega con la niña que habla más.
 She plays with the girl that speaks most
 She plays with the girl that speaks the most.

- (17) La persona que lea más libros gana la competencia.
 the person that reads most books wins the competition
 The person that reads the most books will win the competition.

All of the movement phenomena that I will be examining in this paper will have to do with superlative QPs in relative clauses; therefore, I will restrict my analysis to free superlatives.

2 Superlative Movement in General Spanish

2.1 Preverbal Superlative Raising

A peculiar characteristic of superlatives in Spanish is that they exhibit movements in the syntax that comparative quantifier phrases do not. In Spanish, free superlatives can appear in preverbal position:

⁶ Huddleston's incorporated and free superlatives correspond to Bosque & Bruca's (1991) D-Superlatives and C-Superlatives, respectively.

- (18) Juan es el niño que [QP más libros]_i leyó t_i.
 Juan is the boy that [most books] read
 Juan is the boy that read the most books.
- (19) Los jueces felicitaron al que [QP más rápido]_i corrió t_i.
 The judges congratulated to.the that [most fast] ran
 The judges congratulated the one who ran the fastest.
- (20) La niña que [QP peor]_i cantó t_i salió llorando.
 The girl that [worst] sang left crying
 The girl who sang the worst left crying.

However, all of the previous sentences are ungrammatical if a comparative coda is added.

- (21) Juan es el niño que [QP más libros]_i leyó t_i (de todos ellos /
 Juan is the boy that [most books] read (of all them /
 *que todos ellos).
 *than all them)
 Juan is the boy that read the most books (out of all of them / *than all of them)
- (22) Yo vi al que [QP más rápido]_i corrió t_i (de todos ellos /
 I saw to.the that [most fast] ran (of all them /
 *que todos ellos).
 *than all them)
 I saw the one that ran the fastest (out of all of them / *than all of them)
- (23) La niña que [QP peor]_i cantó t_i (de todos ellos / *que todos ellos)
 The girl that [worst] sang (of all them / *than all them)
 salió llorando.
 left crying
 The girl who sang the worst (out of all of them / *than all of them) left crying.

Further evidence that the degree morpheme that raises is a superlative and not a comparative can be seen from the incompatibility of this raising when the external determiner is indefinite, as seen in (24).

- (24) *Juan es un niño que [QP más libros]_i leyó t_i.
 Juan is a boy that [most books] read
- (25) Juan es un niño que leyó [QP más libros].
 Juan is a boy that read [more books]
 Juan is a boy that read more books

The sentence in (25) is grammatical with the QP in postverbal position; however, it cannot be interpreted as a superlative any longer, it necessarily has a comparative reading.

Some superlatives can have two types of readings: an absolute reading and a comparative (or relative) reading (see Szabolcsi 1986, Huddleston 2002: 1166). Take the sentences below:

(26) Juan es el que corrió [la carrera más larga] (de todas las
 Juan is the that ran [the race most long] (of all the
 carreras).
 races)
 Juan is the one that ran the longest race (out of all the races).

(27) Juan es el que corrió [la carrera más larga] (de todos ellos).
 Juan is the that ran [the race most long] (of all they)
 Juan is the one that ran the longest race (out of all of them).

The absolute reading, seen in (26), corresponds to a scenario where Juan ran the longest race out of all of the possible races in a set; whereas the comparative reading, seen in (27), corresponds to a scenario where there are several runners running different races in a set and Juan is the person who ran the race that was longer than the race that anybody else ran (which does not necessarily mean that the race that he ran was the longest in the set). In Spanish this ambiguity in readings seems to be characteristic of incorporated superlatives and can be resolved by adding the two superlative codas: *de todas las carreras* (out of all the races – absolute reading) and *de todos ellos* (out of all them – comparative reading). Free superlatives, at least the ones in the constructions that I will examine in this paper, do not exhibit the ambiguity. Sentences with free superlatives such as the ones in (28) and (29) can only have the comparative reading, i.e. the reading compatible with the coda *de todos ellos* (out of all them).

(28) Juan es el que corrió la carrera [más rápido] (*de todas las
 Juan is the that ran the race [most fast] (of all the
 carreras / de todos ellos)
 races / of all they)
 Juan is the one that ran the race the fastest (*out of all the races/out of all of them)

(29) Juan es el que [más rápido]_i corrió la carrera t_i (*de todas
 Juan is the that [most fast] ran the race (of all
 las carreras / de todos ellos)
 the races / of all they)
 Juan is the one that ran the race the fastest (*out of all the races/out of all of them)

The comparative reading is the only reading available for free superlatives, regardless of the position of the superlative QP: postverbal, preverbal, or preposed (as we will see in Section 3). Since superlative raising (and preposing) is not allowed with incorporated superlatives, such as *la carrera más larga* (the longest race), we cannot see from the superlative movements I examine in this paper whether the two superlative readings correlate with the movement possibilities of superlatives in Spanish.

2.2 Preverbal Superlative Raising – Split Comp

Previous analyses, such as Bosque & Brucart's (1991), analyze superlatives raising to a preverbal position as an instance of adjunction to IP. However, by assuming a more finely articulated left periphery one can account for the cases of preverbal superlative raising, such as (18)-(20), without resorting to adjunction. According to Rizzi's (1997) Split Comp Hypothesis, the complementizer system has the following articulated structure:

(30) [_{ForceP} Force° [_{TopP*} Top° [_{FocP} Foc° [_{TopP*} Top° [_{FinP} Fin° [_{IP} ...]]]]]]]

Rizzi proposes that Force° is the complementizer (Italian *che*, Spanish *que*, English *that*, etc.) that expresses the illocutionary force of the embedded clause (e.g. declarative, relative, etc.); whereas Fin° is the complementizer (Italian *di*, English *for*, etc.) that expresses the type of verb (e.g. finite, non-finite) that will be in the subordinate clause. He provides evidence that suggests that, while there can be several topicalized elements preceding and following the FocusP, there can only be one focalized element in a complementizer system. Furthermore, his evidence also suggests that the landing site for focalized elements and *wh*-operators is the Spec of Focus, while the landing site for relative pronouns is the Spec of ForceP, where they would not be able to co-occur with a pronounced Force° because of the Doubly Filled Comp filter, which prevents a Spec,CP and C° from both being lexically filled.

The data from the preverbal superlative QP raising in Spanish can be accounted for by adopting Rizzi's Split Comp hypothesis. The distribution of relative operators and *wh*-operators and their interaction with preverbal superlative elements can shed light on this proposal, as seen below (see Torrego 1984).

(31) quien trabaja más de todos nosotros
 who works most of all we
 who works most out of all of us

(32) quien más_i trabaja t_i de todos nosotros
 who most works of all we
 who works most out of all of us

(33) ¿Quién trabaja más de todos nosotros?
 who works most of all we
 who works most out of all of us?

(34) *¿Quién más_i trabaja t_i de todos nosotros?
 who most works of all we
 who works most out of all of us?

In (31) and (33) we can see that the superlative QP *más* in post verbal position can co-occur with both relative and question operators; however, the same does not apply for (32) and (34). In (32) the superlative QP *más* can raise to a preverbal position, lower than the relative operator *quien*, while in (34) *más* cannot co-occur with the question operator *quién*. This seems to point to the fact that both the preverbal superlative QP and the question operator are contending for the same

landing spot, namely the Spec of FocusP. Given the analysis above, the phrase in (35) would have the abbreviated derivation shown in (36):

(35) el que más trabaja
 the that most works
 the one that works the most

(36) el [_{ForceP} [_{Force°} que [_{FocP} [_{QP} más]_i Foc° [_{IP} trabaja t_i]]]]

The preverbal superlative QP raises to the Spec of Focus, which would mean that, judging from these data, Spec of FocP in Spanish is available not just for focalized elements and wh-operators but for QPs with a superlative feature ([+suprl]) as well. Furthermore, we see that (35) is incompatible with another focalized element (focalization here is indicated by underlining):

(37) el que (*los lunes) más_i (*los lunes) trabaja t_i (los lunes)
 the that (the Mondays) most (the Mondays) works (the Mondays)
 the one that works the most on Mondays

The Split Comp analysis seems to work well with sentences with one preverbal superlative element. However, we had seen above that according to Rizzi's articulation of the complementizer system, there can only be one focalized element per CP. This would be problematic for cases like (38), where there are two preverbal superlative elements.

(38) el que [en menos tiempo] [más libros] lee⁷
 the that [in least time] [most books] reads
 the one that reads the most books in the least time

However, it should be noted that the superlative QPs in example (38) do not have the same status. The phrase *en menos tiempo* can be interpreted as a Topic, whereas *más libros* is the superlative element in Focus position.

(39) el [_{Force°} que [_{TopP} [_{QP} en menos tiempo]_j Top° [_{FocP} [_{QP} más libros]_i Foc° [_{IP} lee t_i t_j]]]]

The topic status of the preverbal superlative element in *en menos tiempo* is further supported by the fact that it can co-occur with question operators, as in example (40), whereas superlative QPs in Focus position cannot, as in (41):

(40) ¿En menos tiempo, quién lee [QP más libros] de todos nosotros?
 in least time who reads [most books] of all we

⁷ Bosque & Bruccart (1991) in their discussion of preverbal superlative raising present (38) as a case of multiple adjunction of the superlative QPs to IP. They would propose the following derivation for the embedded clause in (38):

(5) [_{CP} Op_i [_{C'} que [_{IP} [_{QP} en menos tiempo]_j [_{QP} más libros]_i [_{IP} pro_{expl.} [_{I'} lee t_i t_j]]]]]]

Since Bosque & Bruccart's analysis, the notion of free iteration of adjuncts has been challenged on various occasions (Cinque 1993; Kayne 1994). Under Kayne's (1994) definition of c-command, the possibility of adjunction is limited to only one adjunct per category, which would rule out Bosque & Bruccart's multiple adjunction analysis.

Who reads the most books out of all of us in the least amount of time?

- (41) *¿En menos tiempo, quién [QP más libros]_i lee t_i de todos nosotros?
 in least time who [most books] reads of all we
 Who reads the most books out of all of us in the least amount of time?

In most of the examples that I have examined thus far, the head of the relative clause has been the subject of the embedded clause. However, superlative QP raising over the verb is possible also when the head of the relative clause is not the subject of the embedded clause, for instance:

- (42) Éste es el lápiz que [QP más]_i uso t_i.
 This is the pencil that [most] I:use
 This is the pencil that I use the most.
- (43) Este niño es al que [QP más libros]_i le=compró Juan t_i.
 This boy is to.the that [most books] him=bought Juan
 This boy is the one for whom Juan bought the most books.
- (44) Esa muchacha es a la que [QP menos]_i miras t_i.
 That girl is to the that [least] you:watch
 That girl is the one who you look at the least.

In sentences like the ones above, the subject of the embedded clause can either be null (Spanish being a pro-drop language) or appear postverbally. In General Spanish, for sentences like (43), where the subject is 3rd person, the postverbal position is the non-marked option. However, in some instances the subject of the embedded clause can also appear in preverbal position.

- (45) Éste es el lápiz que [yo]_k [QP más]_i uso t_i t_k.
 This is the pencil that [I] [most] use.
 This is the pencil that I use the most.
- (46) Este niño es al que [Juan]_k [QP más libros] le compró t_k t_i.
 This boy is to-the that [Juan] [most books] him bought
 This boy is the one for whom Juan bought the most books.

When the subject raises to the left of the focalized superlative quantifier it is interpreted as a Topic. This is consistent with the structure of the complementizer field that Rizzi proposes (see (36)). When the topicalized subject is a quantificational element, the sentence is ungrammatical, which is also consistent with Rizzi's (1997: 290) observations.

- (47) Este lápiz es el que [*todos / *algunos]_k [QP más]_i usan t_i t_k.
 This pencil is the that [all / some] [most] use.
 This is the pencil that all/some use the most.

General Spanish generally does not seem to allow preverbal subjects lower than the raised superlative QP⁸, as evidenced by the following examples:

- (48) *Éste es el lápiz que [QP más]_i [*yo]_k uso t_i t_k.*
 This is the pencil that [most] [I] use.
 This is the pencil that I use the most.
- (49) *Este niño es al que [QP más libros] [*^{l?}Juan]_k le compró t_k t_i.*
 This boy is to.the that [most books] [Juan] him bought
 This boy is the one for whom Juan bought the most books.

This unacceptability of preverbal subjects to the right of the raised superlative QP may be related to the fact General Spanish, like other Romance languages, does not allow preverbal subjects in questions⁹, for example:

- (50) *¿Qué (*tú) quieres?*
 What you want
 What do you want?

In this section I have presented an analysis that, following Rizzi's Split Comp hypothesis, accounts for the distribution and interaction of the superlative QP raising in General Spanish, without resorting to adjunction. In the following section I will deal with another sort of superlative movement, where the superlative QP raises even higher than what we have seen thus far for General Spanish.

3 Superlative Preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish

In this section, and for the rest of the paper, I will examine superlative movements in Puerto Rican Spanish contrasting them to the superlative movements that are possible in General Spanish. It is important to remember that General Spanish is the set of grammatical constructions that are shared by all varieties of Spanish, including Puerto Rican Spanish. When I mark an

⁸ Bosque & Bruccart (1991) present an example where there is a subject positioned between the verb and the raised superlative QP, reproduced below :

- (6) *El coche con el que más veces Sainz ha ganado en Montecarlo.*
 The car with the that most times Sainz has won in Montecarlo
 The car with which Sainz has won in Montecarlo the most times. Bosque & Bruccart (1991:28)

The wellformedness of this sentence could indicate that the subject *Sainz* is occupying the Spec of lower TopicP, as Rizzi's CP structure suggests. However, the possibility of a Topic projection lower than FocP has been contested by Benincà & Poletto (2004). They propose that what appear to be lower Topic projections are actually focalized constituents lower in a Focus field. Benincà & Poletto (2004: 64) state that the reason why in some cases subjects in preverbal position are not totally excluded could be that post-focus subjects that appear to be in SpecAgr are in fact in an Informational Focus position, a lower focus projection used to introduce new information.

⁹It should be noted, though, that Caribbean varieties of Spanish permit preverbal subjects in questions as well as in sentences such as (48) and (49).

example sentence as General Spanish (GS) it means that it is grammatical in General Spanish; therefore, it will also be grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish. When I mark a sentence as Puerto Rican Spanish (PRS) only, it means that it is grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish and *necessarily* ungrammatical in General Spanish. When I mark a sentence as ungrammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish (*PRS) it means that it is ungrammatical in *both* Puerto Rican Spanish and General Spanish. Whenever I mark a sentence with both varieties (e.g. *GS/PRS) it is to highlight a particular contrast; however, the same conventions outlined above still apply. In other words, *GS/PRS is equivalent to PRS, GS/PRS is equivalent to GS, and *GS/*PRS is equivalent to *PRS.

3.1 Characteristics of Superlative Preposing

As we have observed in the previous section, superlative quantifier phrases can move in ways that other quantifier phrases cannot. Puerto Rican Spanish exhibits A' movement of the superlative QPs across the complementizer *que*, as seen below:

(51) Juan es el [QP más]_i que corre t_i. (PRS)
 Juan is the:M [most] that runs
 Juan is the one that runs the most.

(52) El juez descalificó a la [QP peor]_i que canta t_i. (PRS)
 The judge disqualified to the:F [worst] that sings.
 The judge disqualified the one that sings the worst.

(53) Jorge es el [QP menos]_i que lee t_i. (PRS)
 Jorge is the:M [least] that reads.
 Jorge is the one that reads the least.

The readings of (51)-(53) above are the same as their counterparts with the preverbal superlative QP raising (i.e. when the superlative QP appears somewhere between the complementizer *que* and the verb of the embedded clause, such as the structures seen in examples (18)-(20)). So in Puerto Rican Spanish, the sentences that result from the three possible positions for the superlative QP all share the same reading, as we see below:

(54) Juan es el (más) que (más) corre (más) de todos nosotros. (PRS)
 Juan is the:M (most) that (most) runs (most) of all we
 Juan is the one who runs the most out of all of us.

This type of A' preposing is available not just for monomorphemic adverbial quantifiers, but also for other superlative QPs, even the ones that raise with pied-piped nouns, adverbs or adjectives:

(55) Juan es el [QP menos libros]_i que lee t_i. (PRS)
 Juan is the:M [least books] that reads.
 Juan is the one that reads the least books.

- (56) María es la [QP más rápido]¹⁰_i que corre t_i. (PRS)
 María is the:F [most fast] that runs.
 María is the one that runs the fastest
- (57) Escoge los [QP más maduros]_i que estén t_i. (PRS)
 Choose the:M.PL [most ripe-M.PL] that are.
 Choose the ones that are the ripest.

All the sentences in (51)-(53) and (55)-(57) are ungrammatical in General Spanish; however they are all grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish¹¹.

This type of A' preposing is apparently only available to superlative QPs, since the sentence becomes ungrammatical without the superlative quantifier, as in (58). Also, relative clauses with preposed QPs are ungrammatical with comparative codas, as seen in (59).

- (58) *Juan es el [libros]_i que lee t_i. (*PRS)
 Juan is the:M [books] that reads
- (59) Juan es el [QP más libros] que lee (de todos nosotros /
 John is the:M [most books] that reads (of all we /
 *que todos nosotros) (PRS)
 *than all we)
 John is the one that reads the most books (out of all of us / *than all of us)

There seem to be quantifier phrases that cannot prepose across the complementizer. Consider the following examples:

- (60) el que [QP más libros] lee en menos tiempo (GS/PRS)
 the:M that [most books] reads in least time
 the one that reads the most books in the least time
- (61) el que [QP en menos tiempo] lee más libros (GS/PRS)
 the:M that [in least time] reads most books
 the one that reads the most books in the least time
- (62) el [QP más libros] que lee en menos tiempo (*GS/PRS)
 the:M [most books] that reads in least time
 the one that reads the most books in the least time

¹⁰ Note that here *rápido* is not an adjective but an adverb, evidenced by the lack of agreement in gender. This preposed position disallows adverbs in *-mente*, regardless of their interpretation as superlatives: **María es la más rápidamente que corre*. This may be correlated with the tendency in Puerto Rican Spanish to disfavor most adverbs in *-mente* in oral registers, since superlative preposing is mainly (though not exclusively) found in oral registers.

¹¹ Examples similar to (51)-(53) have been attested by Kany (1963) in Argentina and Chile; however, all of my informants from these countries rejected these sentences and reported never to have heard similar constructions. Perhaps in Argentina and Chile their use is regionally restricted or has become increasingly rare. Bosque & Bruccart report that the type of A' superlative preposing with pied-piped elements exhibited in examples (55)-(57) has only been attested in the Canary Islands, mainly in the dialect of La Palma; however, it should be noted that all of these constructions are widely extended in Puerto Rican Spanish as well.

- (63) *el [QP *en menos tiempo*] que lee más libros (*GS/*PRS)
 the:M [in least time] that reads most books

In Puerto Rican Spanish the only sentence above that is ungrammatical is (63). This clearly shows that [QP *en menos tiempo*] and [QP *más libros*] do not behave the same way in terms of superlative preposing. Apparently, in Puerto Rican Spanish prepositions that take a superlative QPs as a complement are not allowed to prepose across the complementizer. This generalization holds even for argument PPs such as in (64) below.

- (64) *Juan es el [con más lingüistas]_i que habla t_i (PRS)
 Juan is the:M [with most linguists] that speaks
 Juan is the one who speaks with the most linguists.

Superlative preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish can take place in relative clause constructions that contain other ForcePs within them; however, the preposing appears to be clause bound, (i.e. it cannot raise across two overt complementizers). Consider the following examples:

- (65) a. María es la que más pensaban que leería (GS/PRS)
 María is the:F that most they.thought that would.read
 María is the one who they most thought would read.
- b. María es la [más]_i que t_i pensaban que leería. (*GS/PRS)
 María is the:F [most] that they.thought that would.read
 María is the one who they most thought would read.
- (66) a. María es la que pensaban que más leería. (GS/PRS)
 María is the:F that they.thought that most would.read
 María is the one who they thought would read the most.
- b. #María es la [más]_i que pensaban que t_i leería. (#GS/#PRS)
 María is the:F [most] that they.thought that would.read
 Intended: María is the one who they thought would read the most.

Both sentences in (65) have the same reading: the superlative quantifier has scope over ‘think’. The only structural difference between (65)a and (65)b is that the superlative has raised across the head of its ForceP *que* in (65)b. In (66)b however, the superlative QP cannot raise from the lower embedded clause and still be interpreted as having scope over ‘read’¹². The only possible

¹² Bosque & Bruccart (1991) report that in Canariense Spanish the following sentence is grammatical:

- (7) Es el más libros raros que dicen que lee.
 He/She-is the most strange books that the say that reads.
 ‘He/She is who they say that reads the most strange books’ Bosque & Bruccart (1991:41)

In the sentence above the superlative QP *más libros raros* moves across two complementizers. However, in Puerto Rican Spanish this sentence is ungrammatical, so it seems that this type of movement is not allowed. Setting aside

reading of (66)b is the reading shown for (65)b, where the superlative quantifier scopes over ‘think’. Considering these data, it seems that the superlative doing the raising and its landing spot need to be clausemates, i.e. they must originate within the same ForceP. The precise location of this landing spot is what I attempt to determine in the following section.

3.2 Superlative Preposing – Spec of ForceP

In section 1.1, I mentioned that in all varieties of Spanish the head of a relative clause can either be pronounced or unpronounced. However, one important restriction on superlative preposing is that it can only take place when the head of the relative clause is unpronounced. As seen in (68), the preposed superlative cannot appear before or after the raised relative head, it is allowed only in structures such as (69).

(67) María habla con el niño que más lee. (GS/PRS)
 María speaks with the boy that most reads
 María speaks to the boy that reads the most.

(68) María habla con el (*más) niño (*más) que lee. (GS/PRS)
 María speaks with the (most) boy (most) that reads

(69) María habla con el más que lee. (*GS/PRS)
 María speaks with the most that reads
 María speaks to the one that reads the most.

Another environment where superlative preposing is disallowed is in relative clauses headed by relative pronouns (e.g. *quien*), as seen in the examples below.

(70) María habla con quien más lee. (GS/PRS)
 María speaks with who most reads
 María speaks with the one who reads the most.

(71) María habla con (*más) quien lee. (GS/PRS)
 María speaks with (most) who reads
 María speaks with the one who reads the most.

One thing that the relative head and the relative pronouns have in common is their landing spot. According to Rizzi’s (1997) articulation of the left periphery, the relative pronouns raise to the highest Spec position: Spec of Force. At this highest edge of the CP is where Kayne (1994) and Bianchi (1999) postulate the landing site of the head of the relative clause¹³. Rizzi states that the complementizer *que* is the head of ForceP, the highest CP projection; in Puerto Rican Spanish

this difference of clause boundedness, superlative preposing seems to behave similarly in both Puerto Rican Spanish and Canariense Spanish.

¹³ Since Kayne’s (1994) proposal for the raising analysis is prior to Rizzi’s (1997) Split Comp theory, the highest Spec of the complementizer system is the Spec of CP, which in Rizzi’s (1997) and Bianchi (1999) corresponds to Spec of ForceP.

the preposed superlative QP raises to the left of *que*. The fact that superlative preposing occurs when the relative pronoun or the overt relative head are absent, seems to point towards a landing site conflict between the preposed superlative and the relative head. I would postulate that they are competing for the same spot: Spec of ForceP.

In General Spanish, as well as in other Romance languages, relative pronouns do co-occur with relative heads in PP constructions, such as (72) below.

- (72) Ése es el niño con quien hablé. (GS)
 That is the boy with who I:spoke
 That is the boy with whom I spoke.

As I discussed above Rizzi (1997) postulates that the relative pronouns raise to the highest edge of the complementizer field and Kayne (1994) postulates that the relative head's landing site is also the highest edge of the complementizer field. In a sentence like (72) we see both the relative pronoun and the relative head realized, which would pose a problem in determining their landing site, given Rizzi's and Kayne's proposals. Bianchi (1999) proposes an account for this phenomenon. She postulates that the relative pronouns are in fact relative determiners that take the relative head NP as their complement. It is this relative DP that raises to the Spec of ForceP the usual landing spot for relative heads. Subsequently, the relative head raises to the Spec of PP in order to be in the direct domain of the external determiner. The derivation of (72) can be seen in (73):

- (73) Ése es [DP_{ext} el [ForceP [PP [NP niño]_k] [P' con [DP_{rel} quien t_k]]]_i] C° [IP hablé t_i]] (GS)
 that:M is the boy with who I.spoke
 That is the boy with whom I spoke.

Assuming this analysis, the sentences like (72) present no landing site conflict for relative pronouns and relative heads. However, they do present a landing site conflict for preposed superlative QPs, as we will see in Section 4.2.

As mentioned before, sentences in Puerto Rican Spanish where the superlative QP along with a pied-piped adverb preposes across the complementizer *que*, as seen in (74), are saliently ungrammatical in General Spanish.

- (74) María es la [QP más rápido]_i que corre t_i. (*GS/PRS)
 María is the:F most fast that runs.
 María is the one that runs the fastest

The General Spanish equivalent of (74) would be the sentence shown in (75), where the superlative QP along with a pied-piped adverb has raised to a position lower than the complementizer.

- (75) María es la que [QP más rápido]_i corre t_i. (GS/PRS)
 María is the:F that most fast runs.
 María is the one that runs the fastest

However, General Spanish exhibits constructions where something similar to superlative preposing seems to take place. Consider the following examples:

(76) Esto es lo más rápido que ha corrido. (GS)
 this:N is the:N most fast that have:3SG run.
 This is the fastest that s/he's run.

(77) Esto es lo más lento que han reaccionado. (GS)
 this:N is the:N most slow that they.have reacted
 This is the slowest that they have reacted.

These sentences with raised superlatives and pied-piped adverbs present no grammaticality problems for any Spanish speaker and, judging from the glosses, they are even possible in English. In fact, in English the ability to function as relative head is a distinct property of superlatives, as opposed to comparative and plain adverbs and adjectives (Huddleston 2002: 1169). The sentences in (76) and (77) are perfectly acceptable in Puerto Rican Spanish as well, since, as I mentioned in Section 1, every construction that is grammatical in General Spanish will also be grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish. Why then are these constructions in (76) and (77) allowed in General Spanish while sentences like (74), with Puerto Rican Spanish superlative preposing, rejected in General Spanish?

On the surface these examples in (76) and (77) look very similar to the superlative preposing we have examined so far; however, there is an important difference between the structure of (76) and that of (74): in (76) the superlative QP that raises across the complementizer *que* cannot appear in any position in the embedded clause. This is evidenced by the different characteristics of the minimal trios seen in (78) and (79) (note that (78)a and (79)a are merely repetitions of the sentences seen in (78) and (79), respectively):

(78) Esto es lo **más rápido** que ha corrido. (GS/PRS)
 this:N is the:N most fast that have:3SG run
 This is the fastest that s/he has run.

- a. Esto es lo **más rápido** que ha corrido (GS/PRS)
- b. * Esto es lo que **más rápido** ha corrido. (*GS/*PRS)
- c. * Esto es lo que ha corrido **más rápido**. (*GS/*PRS)

(79) María es la **más rápido** que ha corrido. (*GS/PRS)
 María is the:F most fast that have:3SG run
 María is the one that ran the fastest.

- a. María es la **más rápido** que ha corrido. (*GS/PRS)
- b. María es la que **más rápido** ha corrido. (*GS/PRS)
- c. María es la que ha corrido **más rápido**. (*GS/PRS)

The example of Puerto Rican Spanish superlative preposing in (79) allows for variants (79)a-c to have the same superlative reading as shown in (79). In other words, in the cases of PRS superlative preposing, the raising superlative QP *más rápido* can appear in pre-complementizer,

pre-verbal, and post-verbal position with the exactly the same reading. On the other hand, for cases of apparent superlative preposing in General Spanish such as in (78), the superlative QP can only appear in pre-complementizer position, as seen in (78)a. Sentences (78)b, with the QP in pre-verbal position, and (78)c, with the QP in post-verbal position, are ungrammatical for the reading presented in (78). In sentences like (78) the superlative QP cannot appear in the embedded clause, while in superlative preposing constructions such as (79) they can reappear in the embedded clause. This would be evidence of (78) and (79) having two different structures in spite of their superficial similarities. Sentences such as (78) pattern with headed relative clauses in general, which do not allow the reintroduction of the relative head back into the embedded clause, as seen below:

- (80) a. The boy that reads.
b. *The that boy reads.

What the movement possibilities in (79)a-c show is that the superlative QP is not the head of the relative clause, whereas in (78) the superlative QP is the head of the relative clause, evidenced by the unavailability of reintroduction of the QP back into the embedded clause.

The gender of the determiner can also shed light on the structural differences between the apparent superlative preposing in General Spanish and the Puerto Rican Spanish preposing. Consider again examples (78) and (79). In section 1.1, we had seen that the determiner needs to agree in gender and number with the head of the relative clause, even if the head is unpronounced. In (78), the head of the relative clause is the adverbial QP *más rápido*. Since adverbs are not specified for gender, the determiner that surfaces is the neuter/default determiner *lo*. However, in (79) the determiner that surfaces is feminine determiner *la* does not agree with the gender-neutral adverbial QP. This evidence shows that the head of the relative clause cannot be the superlative QP *más rápido* but some feminine NP instead, which is not phonetically realized.

Given the evidence from the reintroduction of the QP into the embedded clause and the non-default gender of the external determiner, what seems to be occurring is that a non-head superlative QP raises to the highest specifier position of the complementizer field, which is landing spot for the head of the relative clause in the raising analysis. The raising of the superlative QP to the position that should be for the relative head results in a ‘traffic problem,’ which accounts for the fact that preposed superlative QPs and overtly pronounced relative heads are incompatible, since they cannot both occupy the Spec of ForceP at the same time.

A possible counterexample for the incompatibility of relative heads and preposed superlative QPs could be the sentence seen here in (81), which is grammatical in General Spanish, and therefore, grammatical in Puerto Rican Spanish as well.

- (81) *Éstos son los GUINEOS/guineos más maduros que hay. (GS/PRS)*
 These are the BANANAS/bananas most ripe that have-EXISTENTIAL
 These are the ripest ones/bananas there are.

In (81) the superlative QP *más maduros* can appear with or without the pronounced relative head *guineos*, in a position higher than the complementizer *que*. The difference between this case and the cases of preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish we have seen thus far is that the QP *más maduros*

is a constituent of the relative head, which is actually *guineos más maduros*. This can be seen if we look at the embedded clause without relativization:

- (82) Hay [guineos más maduros] (GS/PRS)
 have-EXISTENTIAL bananas more ripe¹⁴
 There are riper bananas

In (82) the whole phrase *guineos más maduros* is the direct object of the inflected impersonal existential verb *hay*¹⁵. In (81), this whole phrase raises as the head of the relative clause, and the NP *guineos* within it can be unpronounced, in the same way that in Spanish Det + N + Adj structures, the N can generally be unpronounced when the referent is evident from context (Alarcos Llorach 1999), (see also Note 5).

Now, consider the following example from Puerto Rican Spanish:

- (83) Éstos son los GUINEOS/*guineos más maduros que están. (PRS)
 These are the BANANAS/*bananas most ripe that are
 These are the ones/*bananas that are the ripest.

In Puerto Rican Spanish only the alternative with the unpronounced relative head is grammatical. Although the example in (83) appears to be very similar to the one in (81), sentence (83) is ungrammatical in General Spanish, i.e. neither of the pronunciation options for the relative head are allowed. The cause of this ungrammaticality in General Spanish can be seen in the structure of the unrelativized embedded clause:

- (84) [los guineos] están [más maduros] (GS/PRS)
 the bananas are more ripe
 the bananas are riper

The relative head *guineos* and the QP *más maduros* are two elements joined by the inflected stative copula *están*; therefore, they cannot be constituents. The rule for General Spanish appears to be that a superlative QP can appear together with the relative head in the Spec of Force as long as it is a constituent of the relative head, as in (81). However, in (83) we see that Puerto Rican Spanish allows for the superlative to prepose alone to Spec ForceP without the relative head. Why would this be?

I propose that in Puerto Rican Spanish, the head of ForceP, aside from having a [+relative] feature, it can also support a strong [+suprl] feature, a characteristic which General Spanish lacks. In General Spanish the [+suprl] would be supported by the head of FocP, as was discussed earlier in Section 2.2. These additional features would be analogous to Bianchi's (1999) proposal that in English the Spec of TopicP also supports a [+relative] feature, which then accounts for the possibility of *that* deletion in English. In Puerto Rican Spanish the superlative QP raises to Spec of ForceP in order to check this strong [+suprl] feature, thus entering into the

¹⁴ Because of definiteness effects, existential constructions with *haber* are incompatible with definite determiners. Since a definite determiner is disallowed, the QP *más maduros* here is necessarily interpreted as comparative. Once it preposes and is in the domain of the external determiner, then the QP can be interpreted as a superlative.

¹⁵ In Spanish constructions with the impersonal existential verb *haber*, the entity whose existence is being asserted is the grammatical direct object of the verb *haber*.

domain of the external definite determiner, in a manner similar to superlative adjectives, as we saw before in Section 1.¹⁶

Earlier we had seen that in the raising analysis, the head of the relative clause, raises out of the embedded clause and into the Spec of CP, more specifically Spec of ForceP. Rendering the structure in (85)b for the sentence in (85)a, where NIÑA¹⁷ is the unpronounced relative head.

- (85) a. María es la que corre más rápido. (GS/PRS)
 María is the:F that runs most fast
 María is the one that runs the fastest.
- b. María es [DP la [ForceP [NIÑA]_i que [IP t_i corre [QP más rápido]]]]

Here is where a conflict arises. In the Puerto Rican Spanish sentence in (86)a, whose structure appears in (86)b, we see that the superlative element raises to the Spec of ForceP. However, since the Spec of ForceP is already occupied by the superlative QP, the silent NP that is head of the relative clause is unable to that position, as seen here in (86)b:

- (86) a. María es la más rápido que corre. (PRS)
 María is the:F most fast that runs
 María is the one that runs the fastest.
- b. María es [DP la [ForceP [QP más rápido]_k que [IP [NIÑA] corre t_k]]] (PRS)
~~X~~ _____

The impossibility of the simultaneous realization of the pronounced relative head and the preposed superlative QP can be taken as evidence for the fact that they have the same landing spot: Spec of ForceP. However, if the Spec of ForceP is already occupied and the unpronounced noun cannot raise to the head of the relative clause, how is it that in Puerto Rican Spanish the same reading can be available for (85) and (86)? If the preposed superlative QP is indeed occupying the Spec of ForceP, it presents a problem for the head raising analysis of relative clauses. In the next section I will propose possible alternative accounts that modify the head raising hypothesis in order to resolve this apparent “traffic” problem.

¹⁶ The strong [+suprl] feature seems to be a characteristic of free superlatives, since incorporated superlatives, like *más rápido* in example (8) cannot prepose to the left of the complementizer, as shown in (9).

- (8) Sé que vi el carro más rápido del mundo. (GS)
 I.know that I.saw the car most fast of.the world
 I know that I saw the fastest car in the world.
- (9) *Sé [más rápido]_i que vi el carro t_i del mundo. (*GS/*PRS)
 I.know [most fast] that I.saw the car of.the world
 Intended: I told him that I saw the fastest car in the world.

The inability of incorporated superlatives to undergo superlative preposing might be do to the fact that incorporated superlatives serve an adjectival function within the DP; whereas the free superlatives, which only occur in relative clauses serve an more of an adverbial function on the clause level.

¹⁷For convenience I use NIÑA to represent an unpronounced feminine singular NP.

4 Alternative Head Raising Analyses

4.1 NP Head to Spec of DP

One proposal that could possibly shed light on the apparent “traffic” problem in Puerto Rican Spanish of the incompatibility of the relative head and the preposed superlative QP, is Kayne’s (2004) claim about the ‘missing’ nouns in the following French and Italian interrogative phrases.

(87) Lequel as-tu vu? (French)
 the:which have-you seen
 Which have you seen?

(88) Quale hai visto? (Italian)
 Which you.have seen
 Which have you seen?

He proposes a determiner precedes not just the French *wh*-words *quel*, but also the Italian counterpart *quale*, only in Italian it is unpronounced. The unpronounced noun following these *wh*-words raises to the Spec of DP, rendering the following structures:

(89) N_i le quel t_i ... (French)

(90) N_i D quale t_i ... (Italian) (Kayne 2004: 9)

Relating this evidence to the Puerto Rican Spanish data, I would propose that the silent head of the relative clause raises to the Spec of DP. Therefore, the derivation of (79) (repeated here as (91)) would then look something like (92):

(91) María es la **más rápido** que ha corrido. (PRS)
 María is the:F most fast that has run
 María is the one that ran the fastest.

(92) María es [_{DP} [_{NP}]_i la [_{ForceP} [_{QP} más rápido]_k que [_{XP} ...ha corrido ... t_k ... t_i]] (PRS)

The superlative QP raises to the Spec of ForceP and the already unpronounced head of the relative clause raises to the Spec of DP. Being in the Spec of DP, the silent NP enters into a Spec/Head relation with the external determiner, agreeing in gender and number features; thus identifying it as the head of the relative clause. With this modification of the head raising analysis, the superlative QP in Puerto Rican Spanish can check its strong [+suprl] feature without affecting the interpretation of the head of the relative clause, thus allowing (85) and (86) (as well as trio in (79)) to share the same superlative reading.

There is a discrepancy, however, between Kayne's data and superlative QP preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish. Kayne's (2004) account of the raising of N to the Spec of DP would predict that the determiner, in whose Spec N has just raised, would be unpronounced in Spanish, since according to him "a definite D with a filled Spec can and must be unpronounced" (2004: 7). This is indeed true for cases of Spanish *cuál*, which pattern with Italian; however, it would not be true for the superlative pre-posing, where Puerto Rican Spanish patterns with French. This discrepancy may prove problematic for the proposed modified head raising analysis; however, the exact correspondence of determiner rules in Puerto Rican Spanish to those in French is still unclear. It may be the case that the nature of the agreement relation which the determiner and the head of the relative clause enter into somehow blocks the determiner from being unpronounced.¹⁸

Another factor that we need to keep in mind is Bianchi's (1999) proposal that the head of the relative clause cannot be a bare NP, but must be at least a DP. In fact, some evidence suggests that the unpronounced head can raise with more than just a DP. The analysis discussed above accounts for the cases of superlative QP preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish such as the one in (92); however, this cannot be the complete analysis, because Puerto Rican Spanish allows sentences with raised prepositions, which apparently raise from the embedded clause, as seen in (93) and (94). From the example in (94) we see that in the cases of pied-piped PPs, the relative head is compatible with the preposed superlative. In the next section I will propose a more comprehensive account for these data.

(93) María es con la más que hablo. (PRS)
 María is with the:F most that I.speak
 María is the one that I speak with the most.

(94) Enseñame la película de la más que te acuerdes. (PRS)
 Show-me the:F movie of the:F most that CL.2SG you-remember
 Show me the movie that you remember the most.

4.2 Agreement through Highest Spec Condition

In Bianchi's (1999) revision of Kayne's raising analysis, she proposes that the head of the relative clause is not just an NP but actually part of a DP, where the relative determiner can be unpronounced. This relative DP raises to the Spec of ForceP in order to construct the relative clause. The external determiner and the relative determiner agree in phi-features and the external determiner incorporates the relative determiner. This would result in the derivation in (95)b for the relative clause construction in (95) below.

¹⁸ Recently Kayne (2006) has proposed that elements are unpronounced when they reach the Spec of a phasal head. Presumably, SpecDP is a phasal edge, which would account for the non-pronunciation of the relative heads. However, SpecCP/SpecForce is also considered to be a phasal edge that would license non-pronunciation, which would be incompatible not just with superlative preposing, but also with the raising analysis of relative clauses. Since Kayne (2006) does not provide an alternative analysis of relative clauses, for the time being, I will continue to adopt the raising analysis (Kayne 1994, Bianchi 1999). For the purposes of this paper, I will leave the investigation of the relative clause structure under Kayne's (2006) analysis open for further research.

- (95) a. Juan es el niño que habla más. (GS)
 Juan is the:M boy that speaks most
 Juan is the boy that speaks the most.
- b. Juan es [_{DP_{ext}} D_{rel}+el [_{ForceP} [_{DP} t_{Drel} [_{NP} niño]]]_i [_{Force'} que [_{IP} habla más t_i]]]] (GS)

We see that Bianchi's analysis accounts for this example of a relative clause with an overt head, in this case *niño*. However, we have just seen that unpronounced relative heads in *el que* constructions raise even higher in the derivation, presumably to the Spec of the external determiner, as seen in (96)b.

- (96) a. Juan es el más que habla. (PRS)
 Juan is the:M most that speaks
 Juan is the one that speaks the most.
- b. Juan es [_{DP_{ext}} [NIÑO]_i el [_{ForceP} [QP más]_k que [_{XP} ...habla ... t_k ... t_i]]] (PRS)

In this position incorporation is not available, since the relative determiner is not in the direct domain of the of the D_{ext}, and the agreement in gender and number features must be reached by means other than by being governed by the external determiner.

Taking from Bianchi's relative determiner revisions, I would propose an analysis of relativization and superlative preposing, based on agreement through the Highest Spec Condition. This condition is stated in (97) below:

- (97) Highest Spec Condition: in the Spec of the external DP, the relative head needs to raise to the highest Spec position of the phrase in which it is A' raising, in order to trigger agreement with the external determiner in gender and number features.

The Highest Spec Condition has two requirements that it must fulfill if the phrase is to be grammatical:

1. If the relative head is pronounced, it must not be bare. It needs to be governed by a determiner.
2. The morpho-phonological sequence *D°D° is disallowed. The repeated determiner that has been stranded must be deleted at PF.¹⁹

These two requirements seem sensible given that they appear to hold in Spanish throughout. Unlike English, Spanish bare NPs need to be governed by a lexical or functional head in most positions (see Chierchia (1998) for a more detailed analysis of bare NPs).

- (98) *(Los) niños corren rápido (GS)
 (the:M.PL) boys run fast
 Boys run fast.

¹⁹ It is uncertain to what extent incorporation à la Bianchi can be applied in these cases of repeated determiners, since the relative determiner is not in the direct domain of the external determiner.

Also, Spanish does not permit sequences of two consecutive identical determiners.²⁰

(99) (*El) el niño corre rápido (GS)
 (the:M) the boy runs fast
 The boy runs fast.

(100) Él compró (*un) un libro. (GS)
 he bought (a:M) a:M book
 He bought a book.

These requirements play an important part in accounting for the grammaticality of the superlative preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish. Consider the sentence in (101).

(101) el (más)_i que habla t_i (PRS)
 the:M (most) that speaks
 the one that speaks the most

As I have established thus far, a superlative QP, such as *más*, undergoes A' preposing to the usual landing site of the relative head: Spec of ForceP. The derivation of (101) must account for the fact that superlative preposing is always an option in these types of constructions in Puerto Rican Spanish (expressed in the derivations by parentheses). Given the Highest Spec Condition, we can propose these two structures for (101):

(102) a. *_{[DP_{ext} [DP_{rel} [NP niño]_k [D'_{rel} D_{rel} t_k]]_j [D'_{ext} el [ForceP ([QP más]_i) [Force' que [IP habla t_i t_j]]]]]}

b. _{[DP_{ext} [DP_{rel} [NP NIÑO]_k [D'_{rel} D_{rel} t_k]]_j [D'_{ext} el [ForceP ([QP más]_i) [Force' que [IP habla t_i t_j]]]]]}

In both the derivations the relative head raises to the highest Spec in its phrase in order to trigger agreement with D_{ext}. The derivation in (102)a is ungrammatical, because the pronounced relative head raises bare. There is no determiner governing the relative head NP, so it violates Requirement #1, which states that if the relative head is pronounced it must not be bare. The derivation in (102)b, on the other hand, does not violate requirement #1, because the head of the relative clause was unpronounced before it reached that position. Since the relative determiner is also silent, there is no violation of Requirement #2 either.

Towards the end of section 4.1, we had seen that the raising of just the NP head of the relative clause to the Spec of the external DP was problematic, because there are cases in Puerto Rican Spanish of superlative preposing with prepositions, such as in (103) and (104):

(103) María es la niña con la (más) que hablo. (PRS)

²⁰ Some dialects of Spanish, as do other Romance languages, allow sequences of different determiners, such as definite and possessive:

(10) la mi casa
 the my house
 my house

However, neither General Spanish nor Puerto Rican Spanish allow this construction, so I will not discuss it in this paper.

María is the:F girl with the:F (most) that I.speak
 María is the girl I speak with (the most).

- (104) María es con la (más) que hablo. (PRS)
 María is with the:F (most) that I.speak
 María is the one I speak with (the most).

Here the preposition *con* is not part of the matrix clause *María es*, since the prepositional phrase is an argument of the embedded verb *hablo*. This would mean that the preposition is generated within the embedded clause and subsequently raises to a position to the left of the determiner, presumably, Spec of DP. However, the relative head must also be raising along with it, because we see that the head still manages to agree in gender with the external determiner. This can be resolved by assuming that the relative DP raises to the Spec of the external DP, pied-piping along the PP which governs it (as we will see below). Furthermore, Webelhuth (1992: 117) has stated that the position preceding the determiner, i.e. the Spec of DP, attracts pied piped phrases. Perhaps these characteristics of the Spec of the external determiner are what allow it to attract the relative head along with its pied-piped constituents.

According to Bianchi (1999:170) the relative determiner in that-relative clauses will need to be pronounced whenever it is in the minimal domain of a preposition. A pronounced variant of this relative determiner in the domain of a preposition can have the form of a definite determiner.²¹ In (106) we have two options for the derivation of (103) (repeated here as (105)):

- (105) María es la niña con la (más) que hablo. (PRS)
 María is the:F girl with the:F (most) that I.speak
 María is the girl I speak with (the most).

- (106) a.* María es [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{NP} niña]_k [_{P'} con [_{DP_{rel}} la t_k]]]_j [_{D'}_{ext} la [_{ForceP} ([_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} hablo t_j t_i]]]]]]

b. María es [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{DP_{rel}} la [_{NP} niña]_k [_{P'} con t_k]]]_j [_{D'}_{ext} la [_{ForceP} ([_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} hablo t_j t_i]]]]]]

In (106)a. the pronounced relative head *niña* raises to the Spec of PP to trigger agreement; however, it incurs a violation of Requirement #1, since the head ends up bare. If the NP relative head raises alone, the result is an ungrammatical bare noun as seen in (107).

- (107) *María es niña con la más que hablo. (PRS)
 María is girl with the most that I.speak

²¹ Arregi (1998) presents evidence from Peninsular Spanish where the relative determiner can surface as a definite determiner.

- (11) No sé en la casa que vive.
 Not I-know in the house that lives
 I do not know in which house he lives. (Arregi 1998:22)

In order to avoid a violation of Requirement#1 the overt relative head needs to pied pipe along its relative determiner to Spec of PP, as seen in (106)b, where the correct spellout of (105) is attained.

Now let us look at example (104) (repeated here as (108)) and two of its possible derivations in (109)a and (109)b.

- (108) María es con la (más) que hablo. (PRS)
 María is with the:F (most) that I.speak
 María is the one I speak with (the most).

- (109) a. *María es [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{NP} NIÑA]_k [_{P'} con [_{DP_{rel}} la t_k]]]_j [_{D'}_{ext} la [_{ForceP} ([_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} hablo t_j t_i]]]]]]

- b. María es [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{NP} NIÑA]_k [_{P'} con [_{DP_{rel}} ~~la~~ t_k]]]_j [_{D'}_{ext} la [_{ForceP} ([_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} hablo t_j t_i]]]]]]

In both options in (109), the head of the relative clause is unpronounced, so Requirement #1 does not apply, since it applies to pronounced heads. Because the relative head is unpronounced, it does not need to pied-pipe its relative DP to the Spec of PP to avoid being a bare NP. However, in (109)a the covert relative head leaves behind its determiner resulting in a D°D° sequence, which violates Requirement #2. The derivation in (109)b would produce the following ungrammatical result:

- (110) *María es NIÑA con la la más que hablo (PRS)
 María is NIÑA with the:F the:F most that I.speak

In (109)b we are also left with an identical determiner sequence after the relative head raising. However in this derivation the stranded D_{rel} is deleted at PF, thus satisfying Requirement #2 and obtaining the grammatical spellout for (108).

From the examples above we can see that the proposed Highest Spec Condition (along with Requirements #1 and #2) can account for all the superlative preposing examples seen so far, both with and without prepositions.

All of the grammatical derivations above must have space available for the optionality of superlative preposing. It would be possible to analyze *el que* relatives with overt prepositional relative heads, like (103), as Bianchi treats relative pronoun constructions in Italian. In (111) we see the structure of a prepositional clause with a relative pronoun à la Bianchi ((111)a presents the sentence and (111)b presents the derivation.):

- (111) a. María es la niña con quien hablo. (GS)
 María is the:F girl with who I.speak
 María is the girl with whom I speak.

- b. María es [_{DP_{ext}} la [_{ForceP} [_{PP} [_{NP} niña]_k [_{P'} con [_{DP_{rel}} quien t_k]]]_i C° [_{IP} hablo t_i]]]

In (112) below we see the structure adapted to the *el que* relative ((112)a presents the sentence and (112)b presents the derivation):

- (112) a. María es la niña con la que hablo. (GS)
 María is the:F girl with the:F that I.speak
 María is the girl that I speak with.

- b. María es [DP_{ext} la [ForceP [PP [NP niña]_k] [P' con [DP_{rel} la t_k]]]_i] [Force' que [IP hablo t_i]]]

Setting aside the difference in complementizer realization, the readings of the phrases in (111) and (112) are very similar. However, if we adopt the Bianchi-style derivation in (112)b, we would not be able to account for the possibility of superlative preposing in this type of constructions in Puerto Rican Spanish, because the Spec of ForceP is already occupied by the pied-piped PP. In fact, sentences like (111) never permit superlative preposing. The impossibility of superlative preposing in relative pronoun structures such as (111) follows from the fact that the relative pronoun PP occupies the Spec of ForceP, which I propose as the landing spot for preposed superlatives where they can check their strong [+suprl] feature. This is evidence for the proposal that the heads in prepositional *el que* relative constructions raise to a higher position in the derivation, i.e. Spec DP, pied piping its PP and thus leaving space available for the superlative QP to prepose to the Spec of ForceP. The derivation that I propose for the sentence in (112)a can be seen in (113) below.

- (113) María es [DP_{ext} [PP [DP_{rel} la [NP niña]]]_k] [P' con t_k]]_j [D'ext la [ForceP ([QP más]_i) [Force' que [IP hablo t_j t_i]]]]]

The proposal presented here under the Highest Spec Condition can straightforwardly account for all the cases of superlative preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish. Although General Spanish does not allow superlative preposing, the structures I present under the Highest Spec Condition are applicable to both General Spanish and Puerto Rican Spanish. The only difference would be that Force° in General Spanish lacks the strong [+suprl] feature, so a superlative QP would not be able to prepose to the Spec of ForceP, at least not overtly. Given the movements that are presented in this analysis, the raising analysis of Spanish relative clauses would need to be modified in order to account for the alternative landing site of the relative head in the Spec of DP. The distribution of the relative head positions would be the following: pronounced relative heads and relative pronoun PPs raise to the Spec of ForceP; whereas unpronounced relative heads and heads with pied piped PPs raise to a higher position in the Spec of the external DP.

4.3 Frozen PP Head Raising – An apparent exception

Consider the following sentence with what I will call “frozen PP head raising,” because the NP relative head does not raise to the highest position in its pied piped phrase:

- (114) Con la persona que más hablo es (con) mi
 with the:F person that most I.speak is (with) my

hermana. (GS)
 sister
 The person I speak with the most is my sister.

Sentences such as (114) are grammatical not only in Puerto Rican Spanish, but in General Spanish as well. In these constructions the DP that is the non-relativized element of the copular sentence can appear with or without a preceding preposition. What is not allowed in Puerto Rican Spanish, however, is superlative preposing in these constructions, as seen in (115) below.

(115) Con la (*más) persona (*más) que hablo es (con) mi
 with the:F (most) person (most) that I.speak is (with) my
 hermana. (PRS)
 sister
 The person I speak with the most is my sister.

This is a very interesting fact, given that preposing is possible in structures like (116) with the same interpretation.

(116) La persona con la más que hablo es (con) mi
 the:F person with the:F most that I.speak is (with) my
 hermana. (PRS)
 sister
 The person I speak with the most is my sister.

The counterparts of (114) in other Romance languages are sharply ungrammatical:

(117) *Avec la personne que je parle le plus c'est ma sœur.
 with the:F person that I speak the most it.is my:F sister
 (French)

(118) *Con la persona che parlo di più è la mia
 with the:F person that I.speak of most is the:F my:F
 sorella. (Italian)
 sister

(119) *Com a pessoa que eu falo mais é a minha irmã
 with the:F person that I speak most is the:F my:F sister
 (Brazilian Portuguese)

However, Spanish is not alone among the Romance languages that accept such construction; a sentence similar to (114) is grammatical in Catalan, as seen in (120) below.

(120) Amb la persona que més parlo és (amb) ma
 with the:F person that most I.speak is (with) my
 germana. (Catalan)
 sister

The person I speak with the most is my sister.

A difference between (114) and (116) is that there is one pronounced definite determiner in (114), whereas in (116) there are two. Looking at the derivations may clarify the discrepancy in determiners. Assuming the Highest Spec Condition, the abbreviated derivation of the relative clause with superlative preposing in (116) is presented in (121). The derivation of (114) with frozen PP head raising is shown in (122), assuming that the PP raises to Spec of the external DP.

(121) [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{DP_{rel}} la [_{NP} persona]]_k [_{P'} con t_k]]_j [_{D'_{ext}} la [_{ForceP} ([_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} t_i hablo t_j]]]]]]

(122) [_{DP_{ext}} [_{PP} [_{P'} con [_{DP_{rel}} la [_{NP} persona]]]]]_j [_{D'_{ext}} D° [_{ForceP} (*[_{QP} más]_i) [_{Force'} que [_{IP} más hablo t_j t_i]]]]]

Assuming that these derivations are on the right track, there appears to be a connection between the application of the Highest Spec Condition and the pronunciation of the external determiner. If the Highest Spec Condition is satisfied, then the external determiner is pronounced; and if the Condition is not satisfied the external determiner is unpronounced.

One could say that the superlative QP needs the overt determiner to establish some sort of superlativity index; however, this probably not the right answer, because it would entail that the superlative QP would have to look ahead in the derivation towards posterior movements that will determine the pronunciation of the external D°.

Another possibility is that Frozen PPs need to pass through the Spec of ForceP on their way to the Spec of the external determiner. This would inhibit the superlative QP from preposing, since its landing place in Spec of ForceP is occupied. It is not clear however, why the PP in (122) would have to pass through the Spec of ForceP, while the PP in (121) does not. This may indicate that despite the similar readings, these two constructions might actually have different structures.

These frozen PP heads present quite a puzzle not just for the analyses presented in this paper, but for the raising analysis in general. Unfortunately, I cannot present a complete analysis of these constructions here, so I will set this issue aside for further investigation.

5 Conclusion

In this paper I have presented evidence from Spanish to further support the claim that superlative elements can move in ways that other elements cannot. Moreover, the conditions and restrictions of these superlative movements are subject to dialectal variation.

For the case of preverbal superlative raising in General Spanish, by assuming a more articulated complementizer system, I was able to determine the traits and restrictions that preverbal superlative quantifier phrases share with focalized elements and wh-operators. The data suggest that the landing site for preverbal superlative raising is the Spec of FocusP.

I have also presented evidence for the phenomenon of superlative preposing in Puerto Rican Spanish. Having examined superlative movements in both General Spanish and in Puerto Rican Spanish I conclude that the head of ForceP in Puerto Rican Spanish can support a strong [+suprl] feature, which it checks by preposing of superlative QPs to the Spec of ForceP, the

assumed landing site in the head raising analysis. This movement that the strong [+suprl] feature allows is unavailable in General Spanish and most other varieties of Spanish. The interaction between the relative head and the preposed superlative QPs in Puerto Rican Spanish suggests that different relative heads raise to different positions in the derivation. In light of this interaction, I propose a modified version of the raising analysis of headed relative clauses in Spanish, where, while the landing site for plain overt heads and relative pronouns is Spec of ForceP, the Spec of the external DP is available for the unpronounced and prepositional relative heads.

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NYU Linguistics
719 Broadway, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10003
<http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mrm359/>
mrm359@nyu.edu