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Variability in Spanish relative complementizers and its  
limits – first results

**Abstract:**

In this talk, we will present first results of our research project “Limits of variability in Spanish relative complementation” (project C09, CRC1287 – Limits of variability in language).

The project focuses on structural alternations in two particular constructions of relative complementation, which are classified as sub-standard or ungrammatical in reference grammars, but robustly attested, according to our research, in different varieties of Spanish: (1a) prepositional relative complementizers and (1b) complementizers in subject- and object clefts.

- (1) a. *Hay un lugar en Veracruz **que** [en el que] hablan con muchas groserías.*  
,There is a place in Veracruz **that** [in which] they speak in a vulgar manner.’
- b. *No, es Cantinflas **que** [el que] está fumando un cigarro.*  
‘No, it is Cantinflas **that** [who] is smoking a cigar.’

The project seeks to explore the limits of variability of relative complementation in Spanish by means of cross-linguistic comparisons of production data and acceptability judgement tasks with monolingual and bilingual speakers. The main aim of our talk is to discuss the first results of our cross-dialectal comparisons of complementizer preferences in clefts, a syntactic analysis of clefts using sub-standard *que*, complementizer preferences in locative vs. non-locative relative clauses as well as the influence of Yucatec Maya on the usage of locative relative complementizers in Yucatecan Spanish.