Types of Topicalization & the Role of Reconstruction

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1 Types of Topicalization

When we think of non-focal movement to the Left Periphery, we generally think of Clitic–Left Dislocation (CLLD, Cinque 1990):

(1) A casa, i la ga...

*The house, they it(cl) have*1

(Trevigiano)

In fact, there are several other types of movement operations which front non-focal constituents:

Simple Preposing (SP):

(2) Dije que terminaría el libro, y el libro he terminado. (Spanish)

*I–said that I–would–finish the book, and the book I–have finished*.2

(Leonetti & Escandel–Vidall 2009: 157)

Quantifier Fronting (QF) (Cinque 1990, Arregi 2003, Giurgea 2015):

(3) “...ragazzi che qualcosa sanno fare, chi più chi meno”

“...kids that something they–can do, who more and who less”

(Italian, Paisà corpus)

1 This is part of an actual dialogue which was recorded for an independent project on subject topics in Northern Italian dialects.

2 This type of movement is referred to as «Verum Focus Fronting» in Leonetti & Escandel–Vidall (2009). The term “verum focus” however suggests that the polarity focus is always emphatic, which it need not be.
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Bare Neg Fronting (BNF):

(4) Mi scuso per la domanda cretina che poi tanto cretina non è!
    I apologize for the question stupid, which very stupid not it-is
    (Italian, Paisà corpus)

Main Features:

CLLD requires mandatory clitic resumption of any fronted DP. PPs may not
be clitic-resumed (but they must in Sardinian, Spanish and Catalan, see
Cruschina 2010).

SP requires strict identity between the clause where the fronting occurs
(parasitic), and a preceding clause (host). The host always features a
non-finite clausal complement (usually the complement of a volitional/modal
verb), which is rendered finite (perfective) in the parasitic SP structure.
This results in the expression of a contrast in veridicality. Clitic-doubling is
impossible in SP:

(5) Volevo mangiare quella torta, e quella torta ho mangiato
    I-wanted to-eat that cake, and that cake I-have eaten
(6) Volevo mangiare quella torta, e quella torta l’ho mangiata
    *I-wanted to-eat that cake, and that cake it(cl)-I-have eaten.FEM

BNF fronts DPs or APs to the left periphery of a negated sentence, often
giving rise to a litotes reading (Horn 1989, 1991; van der Wouden 1995)
(see 4 and 7), but not necessarily (see 8):

(7) Il paese fa 13.000 abitanti. Quindi tanto piccolo non è
    This town has 13.000 inhabitants. So very small not it-is
(8) Trattarlo con un farmaco lo etichetta come malato anche se malato
    non è.
    Treating him with drugs labels him as ill, even though ill not he-is.
    (both from Paisà corpus)

3 Unless otherwise indicated, all examples are from Standard Italian.
Clitic resumption is absent, but may be possible in at least some cases (more on this in section 4).

**QF** can be used in litotes environments (9), or take an *existential* function (10). In the latter case, it only fronts existential quantifiers like *someone/somebody*:

(9) A: Luisa ha mangiato poco  
    A: *Luisa has eaten little*  
    B: Tanto non ha mangiato di certo  
    B: *A-lot not she–has eaten for sure*

(10) A: Luisa non ha mangiato nulla  
    A: *Luisa not has eaten nothing*  
    B: Qualcosa ha mangiato, dai  
    B: *Something she–has eaten, come–on*  
    = it definitely is the case Luisa ate *at least something*

In **QF** environments, clitic resumption is generally barred:

(11) *?Tanto non lo ha mangiato di certo  
     *?Much not it(cl) she–has eaten for sure*

**Goals:**
- To determine what triggers these types of fronting.
- To gain a clearer picture of what determines whether a non–focal constituent is going to be clitic–resolved or not.

### 2 Reconstruction & The Locality of Movement

Reconstruction possibilities are going to be crucial in section 4 when formulating an analysis for the different types of non–focal fronting.

How do the different types of topicalization behave with respect to reconstruction?
SP reconstructs for both binding and scope:

**Binding**

(12) Leo voleva riscoprire se stesso, e se stesso, Leo, ha riscoperto.

*Leo, wanted to-rediscover him self, and him self, Leo, has rediscovered.*

**Scope**

(13) Lucia voleva presentare ad ogni ragazzo il suo professore, e ad ogni ragazzo il suo professore Lucia ha presentato.

*Lucy wanted to introduce to each boy the POSS. professor, and to each boy the POSS. professor Lucia has introduced*

(a) ✓ “the POSS. professor” is bound by “Lucia”

(b) ✓ “the POSS. professor” is bound by “each boy”

BNF reconstructs for both binding and scope:

**Binding**

(14) Se stesso, Luigi, non ha visto di certo

*Himself, Luigi, not has seen for sure*

**Scope**

For at least some cases of litotes fronting, it can be shown that the fronted quantifier must obligatorily reconstruct for scope. One such case is (15):

(15) A: Non ha mangiato nulla

*A: Not he–has eaten nothing (=he ate nothing)*

B: Tutto non ha mangiato di certo

*B: Everything not he–has eaten for sure*

Why reconstruction?

Reconstructed vs. non-reconstructed scope in (15):

(16) ¬ > ∀ = it is not the case that he ate *everything* (hence: he ate a little, or he ate a lot, ..)

(17) ∀ > ¬ = Everything was not eaten = He ate nothing

- If we follow Giurgea (2015) in assuming that the fronted quantifier functions like a CT, then the non-reconstructed version would violate Büring’s (1999) generalization on the usage of CTs (*S-Topics*): at
least one of the questions in the topic value muts remain open after the utterance.

- The non-reconstructed version is literally a restatement of what stated by A, so it is a violation of both the maxim of relevance and that of manner.

Note that BNF is very local:

(18) Vuole essere gentile, ma gentile non è  
*He-wants to-be kind, but kind not he-is

(19) *Vuole essere gentile, ma gentile non credo che sia  
*He-wants to-be kind, but kind not I-believe that he-is(subj)

(20) Vuole essere gentile, ma gentile non credo che lo sia  
He-wants to-be kind, but kind not I-believe that it(cl) he-is(subj)

Does CLLD reconstruct? Two discordant analyses:


Cecchetto (2001): CLLD of a DP is always accompanied by reconstruction for binding, and can or can not be accompanied by reconstruction for scope.

→ CLLD is indeed compatible with both a surface and an inverse reading, at least with some types of quantifiers (existentials). It also seems to be the case that the surface reading is only available (but see section 5) when clitic resumption applies.

(21) Qualcuno lo amano tutti  
Someone him(cl) love everyone = Everyone loves someone
✓ ∀ > ∃ (everybody loves someone different)
✓ ∃ > ∀ (someone specific is loved by everyone)

(22) A: Nessuno ama nessuno  
A: Nobody loves nobody

B: Qualcuno amano tutti!  
B: Someone love everyone!
3 A Prosodic Trigger

Following a tradition started by Valduvi & Engdahl (1996), Zubizarreta (1998) (see also Hamlaoui & Szendrői (2015), Szendrői (2002, 2003, 2017), Samek-Lodovici (2005, 2006, 2015)), I argue that the (initial) trigger behind topicalization is prosodic. For the local types of topicalization, prosody seems to be all there is to it.

The size and location of the material in focus has an effect on whether topicalization takes place, and what constituent(s) this targets. Consider the following structures:

(23) Una gonna rossa ce l’ho, sì. (CLLD)
     A red skirt, locative(cl) it(cl)–I–have, yes.

(24) Volevo andare piano, e piano sono andato (SP)
     l–wanted to–go slowly, and slowly l–have gone

(25) Brutto non è, quello è sicuro. (BNF)
     Ugly he–is not, that is for–sure

At first sight, (23–25) have nothing in common: not the type of constituent fronted, not the polarity of the sentence, not the presence/absence of clitic resumption. What they do have in common is the fact that (i) they are all verb–final, (ii) they all feature a polarity focus:

(26) A red skirt I DO have, yes.

(27) I wanted to drive slowly, and so I DID

(28) Ugly he is definitely NOT, that’s for sure.
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Cross-linguistically, the to-go strategy to mark (at least some types) of polarity focus is to assign main stress to the finite verb:

(29) A: Ja ne sčitaju Yurija Solomina talantlivym aktiorom (Russian)
    A: I not consider Yurija Solomina talented.INSTR actor.INSTR
    B: Net, on BYL talantlivym aktiorom
    B: No, he WAS talented.INSTR actor.INSTR
    (Pereltsvaig 2007:100-101)

(30) A: Karl har ikke matet hunden (Norwegian)
    A: Karl has not fed the dog
    B: Han HAR gjort det!
    B: He HAS done that!

Languages differ on whether they allow the type of stress shift in (29–30):

- Norwegian, Russian, English: stress shift is possible, resulting in in situ focalized finite verbs.
- Hungarian (Hamlaoûi & Szendrői 2015; Szendrői 2017): stress shift is available for some constituents which cannot be interpreted exhaustively, such as universal quantifiers.
- Italian, Spanish: these are stress–rigid languages (Samek–Lodovici 2005, 2006, 2015; Szendrői 2017; Ortega–Santos 2016). The application of stress shift is limited.

→ In languages like Italian, the (initial) trigger of topicalization is the necessity to remove a non–focal constituent from a main stress position, which explains why all the fronting structures in (23–25) have an identical focus value ([-p, p]).

4 Other strategies consist in stressing specific discourse particles (as in Dutch, see Hogeweg 2009), the complementizer (German and Norwegian, see Hetland 1992, Lohnstein 2016), clitics (Slovenian, Jasinskaja 2015), or in adding specific adverbials (alright in English, quidem in Latin, see Danckaert 2014).
How does the polarity focus reading arise? Consider a standard SP construction like (31):

(31) Había que leerse el Quijote, y el Quijote se leyó. (Spanish)
    \((S)he\text{-}had \text{ to read the Quijote, and the Quijote she\text{-}read}\)

\((Leonetti & Escandel-Vidall 2009: 171)\)

The strict SP identity requirement means that every constituent (verb included) in the parasitic SP sentence is old information, and thus, in a sense, topical. The only bit of truly new information is the tense specification on the parasitic verb: \([-\text{finite}]\) in the host, and \([+\text{finite}]\) in the parasitic clause. It is this finite tense specification which triggers the stressing of the verb, and hence the movement of whatever constituent follows it.

Why polarity focus? The finite tense specification on the parasitic sentence’s verb signals how whatever activity was described in the host has taken place. Polarity focus stresses whether a given proposition is true or false. The tense specification does something equivalent: it marks the action as finite, thereby marking it as true.

Note that a stress-shift language like Norwegian can realize structures like those in (31) without necessarily resorting to fronting:

(32) Atle ville spise brunost, og han **SPISTE** brunost (Norwegian)
    \(Atle \text{ wants to-eat brunost, and he ATE brunost}\)
(33) Atle ville spise brunost, og spise/spiste brunost, det gjorde han.
    \(Atle \text{ wants to-eat brunost, and eat/ate brunost, that did he.}\)

4 Why Different Types of Topicalization?

Why is only CLLD accompanied by mandatory clitic-resumption?

Some previous accounts which will not work (at least not all the way):
(i) Cinque (1990): the fronted bare quantifier in QF structures, being an operator, exploits the same operator–variable mechanism exploited by wh–movement and focalization, hence no clitic is necessary.

⇒ *SP can front constituents which are not operators (see 2, 5, 31)*

(ii) Arregi (2003): CLLD is a contrastive operation, hence only contrastive topics can be clitic–resumed.

⇒ *Not all CLLD topics must be contrastive:*

(34) A and B have a friend, Paola, who is supposed to come by to borrow one of A’s cocktail dresses to wear for the inauguration of her art gallery. Before he leaves to go to work, A tells B she should lend Paola her blue dress, or perhaps the pink one, as those are the prettiest she possesses. When A comes home after work, B tells him:

“A proposito, a Paola alla fine le ho dato il vestito rosa. Quello blu non le stava”

“By the way, to Paola in-the end to–her(cl) I–have given the dress pink. That blue not to–her fit”

(iii) Constituents which are semantically of type e (individuals) should be clitic–resumed.

⇒ *SP can front constituents of type e (see again 5, 31)*

Concerning the property of ranging over individuals: 54 examples of BNF in the Paisà corpus. Half of them could potentially be turned into CLLD structures, half of them could not. The latter half mostly consists of mass nouns/non–atomic entities:

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5 This solution is explored in Arregi (2003), but later rejected on the basis of universal quantifiers, which are of type (et)t but can still be clitic–resumed. Arregi (2003) thus concludes that it is the clitic itself which is interpreted as ranging over individuals, which cannot be correct either given the grammaticality of the reconstructed reading in (21).

6 Note that the grammaticality of (5) also excludes an explanation in terms of the referentiality of the fronted DP. Referentiality seems however to be a factor in Greek, where only referential topics can undergo CLLD (Alexopoulou and Kolliakou 2002; Alexopoulou and Folli 2010)
“(...) l’abissale ignoranza (...) di chi evoca premesse "filosofiche" e scientifiche per una disciplina come la medicina che SCIENZA NON E’!!”

“(…) The abysmal ignorance (…) of those who resort to "philosophical" and scientific premises to describe a discipline like medicine that SCIENCE NOT IT–IS !!

... *che scienza non lo è!!!
... *that science not it(cl) it–is!!!

This talk: BNF and SP exhibit total reconstruction (Saito 1989). The trigger behind the displacement is arguably prosodic (which explains cross-linguistic differences and identical focus values contexts).

⇒ Both types of movement can be captured in terms of PF movement (Sauerland & Elbourn 2002). Movement of the fronted element takes place at PF, which explains the lack of semantic/syntactic effects.

Supporting evidence 1: locality (as seen in BNF). Unlike CLLD (Cinque 1990, Abels 2012), the fronted constituent in BNF environments will only go as far as it takes to be outside of a main stress sposition.

Supporting evidence 2: the extreme variation characterizing the target of SP fronting. SP can front nominal constituents, APs, adverbials, and in fact it may target pretty large constituents:

(36) Volevo mettermi a scrivere in soggiorno, e a scrivere in soggiorno mi sono messa.
    I–wanted to–start to write in–the living room, and to write in–the living room I have started
5 Non-Reconstructed QF: a Fourth Type of Topicalization

From section 2: clitic-less movement reconstructs. Consider however existential QF:

(37)  
A: Mario ha mangiato tutto  
A: *Mario has eaten everything*  
B: Qualcosa non ha mangiato  
B: *Something not he-has eaten*  
\[ \neg \exists > \exists \]
\[ \exists > \neg \]

Why no reconstruction?

“Qualcosa” is a PPI, hence it cannot appear in downward entailing environments.

This appears to be a fourth type of topicalization:

i. CLLD with no reconstruction  
ii. CLLD with reconstruction (possible with fronted existentials)  
iii. PF movement (SP and BNF)  
iv. Existential QF (no clitic resumption but no reconstruction)

6 Conclusions

- The (initial) trigger of topicalization is prosodically motivated.  
- A prosodic analysis of topicalization explains why structures like SP come with a polarity focus.  
- SP and BNF are examples of total reconstruction. BNF can also be shown to be very local. The properties of both structures follow from a PF movement analysis.  
- If we analyze topicalization in terms of reconstruction, we find there are four types of topicalization: CLLD without reconstruction, CLLD
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with reconstruction (restricted), cliticless fronting with reconstruction, cliticless fronting without reconstruction (restricted).

7 References


