Postverbal subjects in Romance as *non*-topics and not foci: insights from Camuno

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Overview. Postverbal subjects (PS) in Romance intransitive structures have been analyzed as foci (Belletti, 2004) or marginalized topics (Cardinaletti, 2018). New data from Camuno (Gallo-Italic), shows instead that PS do not raise to T to prevent a wrong interpretation as contrastive topic.

Pattern. Nuclear stress (NS) in Camuno falls on the right edge of the sentence or, in focus structure, on the immediately postverbal constituent. NS is associated with focus (Arregi, 2016, *i.a.*), so in a suitable context, any postverbal and sentence-final constituent can be interpreted as focus. Like for Spanish (Leonetti, 2018), many PS are not associated with a focus reading (1): $[\sigma = \text{NS}]$

(1) a. gier   l'   a   ciamat   [(a)la ho mama]σ
         yesterday CL.3SG have.3SG.PRS call.PRT the   his mum
         'Yesterday his mother called.'
     b. l'   a   ciamat   [(a)la ho mama]σ gier
         CL.3SG have.3SG.PRS call.PRT the   his mum   yesterday
         'It was yesterday that his mother called.'

Only (1-b) is interpreted as a (corrective) focus, regardless of the context, since the stress falling on the PS is not in sentence-final position, i.e., it has a marked distribution.

A preverbal subject of an intransitive predicate is interpreted as a contrastive topic (Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl, 2007), (2). This is particularly evident in (2-c), which contains an indefinite subject that can only be interpreted as "a kid part of a defined group," i.e., a contrastive topic:

(2) a. i pì i   è   riatch
         the kids CL.3PL be.3PL.PRS arrived.PRT
         'As for the kids, they arrived'
     b. al ho pì (a)l'   a   majat kè?
         the his kid CL.3SG have.3SG.PRS eat.PRT what
         'What about his kid? What did s/he eat?'
     c. #an pì l'   è   riat
         a   kid CL.3SG be.3SG.PRS arrived.PRT
         intended: 'It arrived a kid'

Analysis. There is no evidence for a focus reading of (1-a) whose subject, however, does not move to T. Differently from most works on the interface syntax-information structure in Italian and Italic varieties (e.g., Cruschina, 2022; Bianchi et al., 2016), I take this as supporting an analysis in terms of (PF-) interface phenomenon (see also Reinhart, 2006; and Szendrői, 2017): subjects are linearized postverbally to avoid an interpretation as contrastive topic in intransitive structures.

Conclusion. PS in Romance may form a less homogeneous group than previously thought. In Camuno, a language with postverbal focalization, the position of PS in intransitive structure is due to a restriction of movement preventing them from being interpreted as contrastive topics.

If on the right track, the proposal can add some evidence for the role of the interfaces in the linearization of syntactic material (Arregi, 2002; Reinhart, 2006; Samek-Lodovici, 2017 *i.a.*) and offers a new viewpoint to discuss PS in Romance languages. Further investigation will discuss the prosodic properties of Romance languages more in-depth to identify the possible extra syntactic factors responsible for ordering variations (e.g., Larrivée, 2022).

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