

# **A UNIFICATION OF FOCUS**

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## Chapter 1



b. # Gianni mi ha *regalato* [un libro]<sub>F</sub>.<sup>1</sup>

‘Gianni gave me a book’.

Crucially, the Focus of (2b) is *regalato*, as shown by the full acceptability of the following exchange:

(3) a. Gianni ti ha venduto un libro?

‘Did Gianni sell you a book?’

b. No, Gianni mi ha [*regalato*]<sub>F</sub> un libro.

‘No, Gianni gave me a book’

As for (1b), main stress has to be on *libro*, which is in fact the Focus of that sentence.

In sum, a focused item is always associated with the sentence main stress in Italian (and in most European languages). Such a conclusion contributes to answer my question: Focus is not just a pragmatic phenomenon, as it is strictly related to the intonational contour of the sentence. The claim that, at least in most European languages, intonation and information structure are strictly related has been made by several studies in the literature: Chomsky (1971), Jackendoff (1972), Selkirk (1984, 1995), Cinque (1993), Reinhart (1995), Lambrecht (1994), Büring (1997), Zubizarreta (1998), Schwarzschild (1999), among many others.

Prosody is not the only part of the grammar that is affected by Focus. When an Italian sentence is pronounced ‘out of the blue’, it usually has the subject in preverbal position, and the object in postverbal one (Italian is an SVO language). However, such a word order can change depending on the pragmatic status of the arguments. When a subject is focused, for instance, it can occupy a postverbal position, as it has been noted by several authors (Calabrese 1992, Saccon 1993, Pinto 1997, Belletti and Shlonsky 1995, Belletti 1999, 2001, Tortora 2001, among others). An example is given in (4).

(4) a. Chi ti ha regalato quel libro?

‘Who gave you that book?’

b. Me l’ha regalato [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

to-me-CL it-CL has given Gianni

‘Gianni gave it to me’

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<sup>1</sup> The symbol # indicates that the sentence, although grammatical, is unacceptable in the relevant context.

When an object is focused, on the other hand, it can appear in a high position, as shown by the following example:

(5) [Il libro]<sub>F</sub> Gianni mi ha regalato, non il cd.

the book Gianni to-me-CL has given not the cd

‘S/he gave me the *book*, not the cd’

The focused object *il libro* can occupy a high, preverbal position, rather than the ‘usual’ postverbal one.

These facts also contribute to answer my question. Focus is not only related to the prosody of the sentence, but more importantly, to its syntax.

In conclusion, a pragmatic definition of Focus cannot be exhaustive: Focus is a complex phenomenon that involves different modules of the grammar. In this book, I intend to investigate how and to which extent Focus plays a role in the grammar.

### 1.2 One or two Foci?

The type of research I will pursue follows the formal approach of generative grammar. Within this approach, the study of Focus has gained more and more interest in recent years. As we will see in the first two Chapters, a branch of studies has concentrated on the relation between Focus and prosody (Selkirk 1984, 1995, Cinque 1993, Zubizarreta 1998, Reinhart 1995, Szendrői 2001, a.o.); another branch of studies tried to give an account for the syntactic position occupied by the focused item (Brody 1990, É. Kiss 1998, Belletti 1999, 2001, 2002, Rizzi 1997, a.o.).

Each approach can only account for certain aspects of Focus, leaving the others unaccounted. The difficulty of explaining all characteristics of Focus within the same approach has led many scholars to believe that Focus has in fact a twofold behaviour from a semantic, prosodic, and syntactic point of view.

From an interpretive point of view, it is commonly argued that a focused item in Italian can express either new information or contrast/correction. The former interpretation is found in an answer to a wh-question, the latter is found in a clause that contradicts what is asserted in a previous clause. The two cases are exemplified in (6) and (7) respectively:

(6) a. Chi ha visto tua sorella?

‘Who saw your sister?’

b. L’ha vista [Carlo]<sub>F</sub>.

her-CL has seen Carlo

‘*Carlo* saw her’

- (7) a. Quel ragazzo ha visto tua sorella?  
 ‘Is it that boy who saw your sister?’
- b. No, l’ha vista [Carlo]<sub>F</sub>.  
 no her-CL has seen Carlo  
 ‘No, *Carlo* saw her’

Focus in (6b) is called with different names in the literature: ‘information Focus’, ‘presentational Focus’, ‘neutral Focus’; Focus in (7b) is usually called ‘contrastive Focus’ or ‘identificational Focus’. Throughout this book, I will adopt the terms ‘information Focus’ to indicate Focus with the interpretation in (6b), and ‘contrastive Focus’ to indicate Focus with the interpretation in (7b).<sup>2</sup>

The general claim made by most studies, among which Zubizarreta (1998), É. Kiss (1998), Belletti (2002), is that the two interpretations in (6) and (7) are related to two different prosodies and two different syntactic structures.

The main prosodic difference that has been observed the fact that, while an information Focus bears the sentence main stress, a contrastive Focus bears a ‘special’ stress with a higher peak that can fall anywhere in the clause, even on a morpheme (Zubizarreta 1998, Donati and Nespor 2003, a.o.). The exchanges below show these differences:

- (8) a. Che cosa ha comprato Carlo?  
 ‘What did Carlo buy?’
- b. Che cosa c’è di nuovo?  
 ‘What’s new?’
- c. Carlo ha comprato una *casa*.  
 ‘Carlo bought a house’
- (9) a. Carlo è fascista?  
 ‘Is Carlo a fascist?’
- b. No, Carlo è *anti*-fascista.  
 ‘No, Carlo is anti-fascist’

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<sup>2</sup> As it will become clear in the second part of the book, I will use such names only as descriptive tools, rather than as labels identifying two distinct grammatical objects.

The main syntactic difference is that, while an information Focus is always low in the clause, a contrastive Focus can occupy a position that is not the lowest in the clause, and in particular, it can move to the left periphery.

(10) a. Chi ha visto tua sorella?

‘Who saw your sister?’

b. ?? [Carlo]<sub>F</sub> ha visto mia sorella.

Carlo has seen my sister

‘*Carlo* saw my sister’

(11) a. E’ quel ragazzo che ha visto tua sorella?

‘Is it that boy who saw your sister?’

b. No, [Carlo]<sub>F</sub> ha visto mia sorella.

no Carlo has seen my sister

‘No, *Carlo* saw my sister’

The main goal of this book will be to show that both the interface (interpretive and prosodic) and the syntactic differences that have been found in the literature between two Foci are only apparent. I will conclude that, at least in Italian, there aren’t two distinct objects in the grammar that correspond to the pragmatic phenomenon of Focus.

## 2 *The theoretical framework*

Within the generative framework, I will adopt a minimalist theoretical approach, as it is formulated by Chomsky (1995, 2000, 2001).<sup>3</sup>

Chomsky’s ‘Minimalist Program’ is based on the working hypothesis that language is an optimal object, based on simple and economical principles. This starting assumption leads him to revise the architecture of the grammar as formulated in the ‘Government-and-Binding’ framework.<sup>4</sup> He eliminates the two levels of representation called ‘S-structure’ and ‘D-structure’, and proposes that only levels of representation are legitimate that provide instructions to the performance systems. These levels are the two interfaces with the performance systems: the articulatory-perceptual interface (Phonetic Form) and the conceptual-intentional interface (Logical Form).

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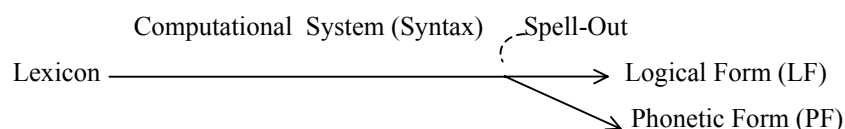
<sup>3</sup> For a critical summary of Chomsky’s minimalist theory, see Manzini (2001).

<sup>4</sup> See Chomsky (1981, 1982, 1986).



Chomsky's (1995) so-called 'T-model' of the grammar, representing such a proposal, is illustrated below:

(12) T-model of the grammar



Within this model, the process of sentence formation proceeds as follows. A number of items is picked up from the Lexicon. Together, they form a Numeration (N). Syntactic operations apply to lexical items of N forming syntactic objects, all the way to LF. At the point of Spell-Out, the derivation is uttered. Syntactic operations continue at LF, but since the Spell-Out point has been already crossed, they are 'covert', namely they are not phonetically audible. At PF, phonological rules apply.

A derivation yields a PF representation and an LF representation. When a representation consists of objects that can receive interpretation at one interface, the representation satisfies a condition of Full Interpretation (FI). A derivation 'converges' when both representations satisfy FI; otherwise, it 'crashes'.

A derivation can converge at one interface independently from the other interface. The hypothesis that Chomsky adopts is that "there are no PF-LF interactions relevant to convergence" (Chomsky 1995:220). This means that the computational system (trivially, the syntax) must always constitute a link between the two interfaces, as the T-model in (12) also makes clear. This is a very important point. If the computational system did not have any role in connecting the two interfaces, the very basic idea of generative grammar would be denied, namely that a specific language faculty exists in the mind/brain. As we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, a crucial issue in the study of Focus is precisely how (and if) interface properties of Focus are encoded in the computation.

### 2.1 The operations of the computation

A first operation of the computational component is 'Merge'. Merge combines lexical items together to form a syntactic object, as in (13).

(13) [DP the], [NP book] → [DP the [NP book]]

A second operation is 'Agree'. Agree is a relation at distance between a syntactic object and a 'feature'. A feature is a morphological property: it cannot be a property of a larger grammatical object. Chomsky (1995:225) states such an assumption in the following way: "Outputs consist of nothing beyond properties of items of the lexicon (lexical features) – in other words, [...] the interface levels consist of nothing more than arrangements of lexical features. To the extent that this is true,

the language meets a condition of *inclusiveness*". Features can be either interpretable or uninterpretable at the interfaces. Uninterpretable features must be checked and deleted before they reach the interface levels. Checking and deletion occurs via matching of uninterpretable features with identical features that are though interpretable (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

A third operation is 'Move'. This operation is more costly than the other two, because it is the combination of Merge and Agree. Move establishes an agreement relation between a syntactic object  $\alpha$  and a feature F, and merges P(F) to  $\alpha$ P, where P(F) is a phrase determined by F and  $\alpha$ P is a projection headed by  $\alpha$ . The lower copy of P(F) is then deleted (it is not uttered), as shown by the representation below.

(14) [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> the book] [<sub>I</sub> was [<sub>VP</sub> stolen [<sub>DP</sub> ~~the book~~]]]].

Move is triggered by uninterpretable 'EPP' features. The 'EPP' (Extended Projection Principle) was originally formulated as the requirement that every subject fill the specifier of IP (see Chomsky 1982). Chomsky (2000, 2001) proposes to make the EPP a generalized property: it can be present in any functional category (not only I) and it triggers the operation Move. The EPP feature somehow replaces the concept of 'strength' of features introduced in Chomsky (1995), and it is necessary to explain why feature-checking in some cases cannot be satisfied at distance by Agree, which is a less 'costly' operation than Move.

The operations of the computational system are in fact subject to restrictions of economy. First, they must satisfy a principle of *locality*, that is, an element  $\alpha$  is not legitimated to enter an Agree relation with or to move to a target K if there is an element  $\beta$  that c-commands  $\alpha$  that has the same properties as  $\alpha$ . Another constraint is the impossibility for the computation to look-ahead. This means that operations can apply only to items already introduced in the derivation. Finally, since Merge and Agree are less costly than Move, they are preferred to Move, whenever this is possible.

### 3 Organization of the book

In this book I will be mainly concerned with narrow Focus. By 'narrow Focus' I mean Focus that corresponds only to a part of the sentence. In particular, I will be concerned with DP subjects and DP direct objects, and I will mostly discuss data of Italian.

In the first part of the book I will discuss two approaches to Focus: one that views it as a phenomenon determined by prosodic rules (Chapter 2), and one that encodes Focus in the computation by means of a Focus feature and a specific syntactic position (Chapter 3). As we will see, either approach can explain only some aspects of the whole phenomenon, and both approaches incur both empirical and theoretical problems.

As I mentioned before, the different aspects of Focus highlighted by the two approaches led several scholars to make a distinction between two types of Focus. I will devote most part of this book to demonstrate that this way of explaining Focus is wrong, not only because it does not do justice to the properties that are clearly in common to all focused elements, but especially because empirical facts show that there is a fundamental uniformity of the properties of all focused elements both at the two interfaces and in the syntax.

In Chapter 4, on the basis of Italian data, I will demonstrate that Focus has always the same *interface* properties. In Chapter 5, I will show that also its *syntax* is uniform, namely, that both a contrastive Focus and an information Focus can either stay in situ or move to a left peripheral position. I will show that the (apparent) unacceptability of Focus movement in an answer to a wh-question is due to pragmatic factors related to conditions on ellipsis. Focus movement in an answer to a wh-question must always be followed by ellipsis of the remnant background material. Therefore, the moved focused item can never appear in the left periphery, but always in isolation. This explains why information Focus movement is believed not to occur. In Chapter 5 I will also provide arguments against the idea that information Focus and contrastive Focus move to *different* syntactic positions in the clause. I will eventually provide evidence that a low Focus occupies its base-generated position, contra Belletti's (2002) hypothesis of a low designated position for focused elements.

In the final Chapter I will suggest a syntactic analysis of Focus that is compatible with a unified account for Focus, and that is able to solve the theoretical and empirical problems arising with the two approaches presented in Chapters 2 and 3. I will tentatively propose that the intonational contour that is always associated with Focus is a lexical morpheme, and that the focused phrase is the complement of such a morpheme.

## Chapter 2

## Prosody-based accounts for Focus

### *1 Introduction*

In this Chapter I will discuss some issues concerning the relation between Focus and stress. In particular, I will discuss the relation between Focus and the main stress of a sentence, which is assigned by a prosodic rule.

Various papers of the early Seventies (Chomsky 1971, Jackendoff 1972) pointed out that there is a correspondence between the location of sentence Focus and the location of sentence stress in English. Both Focus and main stress are placed at the end of the clause. More precisely, it was proposed that the location of Focus depends on the prosodic rule that assigns main stress to the sentence.

As Reinhart (1995:55) observes in her state of the art summary on this issue, such an approach to Focus was abandoned in the following years in favour of an approach based on Chomsky's hypothesis that the position of Focus is determined by its semantics, more precisely, by the fact that Focus undergoes a Quantifier Raising operation (Chomsky 1976). Cinque (1993) is probably the first paper that goes back to the original idea of Focus as a prosody related phenomenon. His proposal has been refined by Reinhart (1995) and much other work.

In this Chapter, will present some studies belonging to this tradition. Cinque's (1993) proposal will be discussed in section 2, and in section 3 I will present Reinhart's refinement of it. In section 4, I will analyse (part of) Zubizarreta's (1998) account. The analysis of such works will lead me to conclude that the dependence of Focus on stress placement, although appealing especially as far as Italian is concerned, cannot be adopted without running into serious problems, both empirical and theoretical.

### *2 Cinque (1993): Focus and nuclear stress*

#### *2.1 The NSR*

In his 1993 paper, Cinque begins by re-considering the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR), i.e. the rule that assigns main stress to the sentence, as formulated by Halle e Vergnaud (1987).

Halle and Vergnaud's rule varies according to the parameter setting of each language. The parameters involved are:  $\pm$  *bound*, namely the possibility for a constituent to be bound at a certain level of the autosegmental representation;  $\pm$  *head terminal*, namely the possibility for the constituents to have or not a terminal head,

and, if  $\pm$  *head terminal* is set positively, the parameter concerning the position of the head, left or right. The rule is formalized for English in the following way:

(1) Halle and Vergnaud's Nuclear Stress Rule (English)

- a. Parameter settings on line N ( $N \geq 3$ ) are [-BND, +HT, right].
- b. Interpret boundaries of syntactic constituents composed of two or more stressed words as metrical boundaries.
- c. Locate the heads of line N constituents on line N + 1.

Cinque modifies the rule in such a way that it does not have to involve the parameters in (1a). As for the position of the head, he proposes that there is a relation between the direction of syntactic branching of a language and stress placement. He thus reformulates the rule as in (2):

(2) Cinque's 'Null Theory'

- a. Interpret boundaries of syntactic constituents as metrical boundaries.
- b. Locate the heads of line N constituents on line N + 1.
- c. Each rule applies to a maximal string containing no internal boundaries.
- d. An asterisk on line N must correspond to an asterisk on line N - 1.

Cinque eliminates point (1a) of Halle and Vergnaud's rule, and reformulates point (1b) by making the relation between metrical boundaries and syntactic constituents more strict. Point (2a) is important because, given the perfect matching between metrical constituents and syntactic constituents, the difference in stress assignment among languages depends solely on their syntactic structure.

Another crucial result of Cinque's rule is that stress is assigned to the most embedded position of the clause. See how the rule works. Given (2a) and (2c), the cycle of the rule starts on the innermost metrical (hence syntactic) constituent, which receives an asterisk in the metrical grid (see 3). Given (2b), the head of that constituent must be placed in the higher line on the next cycle, and given (2d), an asterisk must be placed on the same column as the asterisk at the lower level. The result is the following metrical grid (for a right branching language like Italian):

(3)

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      *
    ( . . * )
  ( ( . * ) )
(* (* ( * )))

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As Cinque observes, “in this fashion, stress prominence in a phrase is mere reflection of depth of embedding”.

### 2.1.1 Recursive side vs non-recursive side

Cinque’s reformulation of the NSR looks preferable than Halle and Vergnaud’s one for its greater simplicity. A problem however arises when we look at the following English expression, where main stress does not fall on the most embedded constituent (*Philadelphia*), but on the D head *hat*:

(4) [<sub>DP</sub> The [man [from [Philadelphia]]]]’s [<sub>D</sub> *hat*]

To explain this apparent counterexample, Cinque makes a distinction between the recursive side and the non-recursive side of a language. According to Cinque, the nodes of the recursive side create a major path of embedding, the nodes of the non-recursive side create a minor path of embedding. The two paths follow independent cycles of stress assignment, and only the major path is fully visible. The minor path counts as a single asterisk in the metrical grid.

In (4), the phrase *the man from Philadelphia’s* is the minor path of embedding because its first node is placed on the non recursive side of the tree. Therefore, for stress assignment purposes, the most embedded constituent of the clause is *hat*, not *Philadelphia*.

As we will see below in section 4, Zubizarreta (1998) proposes a modification of Cinque’s distinction, in order to account for German data.

## 2.2 Focus and stress

Cinque’s theory hasn’t said anything so far about the relation between stress and Focus. Cinque follows Chomsky (1971) and Jackendoff (1972) and proposes to relate the position of Focus to the nuclear stress position in the clause.

Cinque’s proposal about stress correctly predicts Italian data on Focus. Since this language is right branching, nuclear stress falls on the rightmost position of the sentence, which is the most embedded position. The prediction is that Focus will also fall on the rightmost position. This is born out by the example below, where the subject is focused. The ‘unmarked’ SVO order of Italian is not maintained, so that the subject can occupy the most embedded position:

(5) a. Chi è partito?

‘Who left?’

b. E’ partito *Gianni*.

is left Gianni

‘*Gianni* left’

If we look at English, some problems seem to arise with Cinque's theory. In a sentence like *John left*, the location of nuclear stress depends on which constituent is focused, as it is shown by the exchanges in (6) and (7) below:

(6) a. What did John do?

b. John *left*.

(7) a. Who left?

b. *John* left.

The relation between nuclear stress and Focus is maintained in both sentences, but stress on *John* in (7b) does not seem to follow the NSR, given that it does not fall on the most embedded position of the clause.

As Cinque himself points out, the problem in fact does not arise. If we assume that the relation between Focus and the NSR is formulated as in Jackendoff's principle in (8), Cinque's theory is not contradicted by the English data.

(8) If a phrase P is chosen as the Focus of a sentence S, the highest stress in S will be on the syllable of P that is assigned highest stress by the regular stress rules.

According to Jackendoff's principle, the focused constituent always receives the main sentence stress, just because it is focused. The NSR applies *within* the focused constituent, namely it only determines the position of stress within it, not within the *whole* clause. In (7b), then, the NSR correctly applies within the focused phrase *John*. Since the focused phrase is only made of the word *John*, the only option for stress is to fall on that word. To show more clearly that the NSR is respected in English, Cinque provides an example where the subject and the predicate are made of more than one constituent. Both in the phrase *our poor child* and in the phrase *is in bed with a flu*, in (9), nuclear stress falls on the most embedded position of the phrase itself:

(9) a. Who's in bed with a flu?

b. [<sub>DP</sub> Our [poor [**child**]]] [<sub>VP</sub> is [in [bed [with [a flu]]]]].

As for the main sentence stress, it falls on *child* (as indicated by boldface), because the phrase containing that word is focused. The NSR correctly determines which of the words contained by the focused DP has to be stressed. However, the NSR does not give any hint of which of the two phrases in (9b) has to contain stronger stress.

This is also valid for Italian. Consider the examples in (10b), (12b), and (14b). In (10b), a fully focused sentence is given. Stress must fall on the most embedded position of the focused phrase, which in this case is the whole clause (see 11). Thus, stress falls at the end of the clause.



(10) a. Che c'è di nuovo?

'What's new?'

b. [Gianni ha comprato una maglietta a righe]<sub>F</sub>.

Gianni has bought a T-shirt with stripes

(11) [<sub>IP</sub> Gianni [<sub>I</sub> ha [<sub>VP</sub> comprato [<sub>DP</sub> una maglietta [<sub>PP</sub> a righe]]]]]

In (12b), only the DP object is focused. Stress falls on the most embedded position of the DP, which is *righe*. Again, stress falls at the end of the clause, as the most embedded position of the focused phrase is the most embedded position of the whole clause (see 13).

(12) a. Che cosa ha comprato Gianni?

'What did Gianni buy?'

b. Gianni ha comprato [una maglietta a righe]<sub>F</sub>.

(13) [<sub>IP</sub> Gianni [<sub>I</sub> ha [<sub>VP</sub> comprato [<sub>DP</sub> una maglietta [<sub>PP</sub> a righe]]]]]

In (14b), Focus is still the DP object, but the object is placed in a position *different* than its argument position. Stress cannot be on the most embedded position of the clause, in this case, because Focus is not there. However, stress still falls on the most embedded position of the *focused* phrase, that is, on *righe* (see 15):

(14) a. La camicia, l'ha comprata Gianni?

'Did *Gianni* buy the shirt?'

b. No, [una maglietta a righe]<sub>F</sub> ha comprato Gianni.

no a T-shirt with stripes has bought Gianni

(15) [<sub>DP</sub> La maglietta [<sub>PP</sub> a righe]]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ha comprato Gianni t<sub>j</sub> ].

In conclusion, Cinque is right when he says that stress within a focused phrase always falls on the most embedded position of that phrase. The apparent problem of English data in (7) is not a problem at all for his theory, if we assume a relation between Focus and stress as formulated by Jackendoff in the principle in (8).

Note that such a conclusion does not lead us to say that Focus is dependent on prosodic rules. If a focused item can occur in any position of the clause, and the NSR has to be respected only within each single phrase, which phrase bears the main sentence stress depends on the position of Focus, not on the NSR. If Focus occupies the most embedded position of the clause (cf. 13), main stress will fall on the most embedded position of the clause; if Focus occupies a left peripheral position (cf. 15), main stress will fall on that position.

In sum, taken altogether, Cinque's theory does not really answer the question of the relation between Focus and stress. He rescues the NSR by showing that it applies correctly within the focused phrase, but he cannot really predict the way main stress and Focus are related. The NSR, as Cinque formulates it, plays no role in determining *which phrase* must bear the main prominence.

In order for the NSR to play a role in determining the position of stress within the whole clause, the rule should have to be modified. This is for instance what Rochemont (1986:15-18) does. Assuming as a starting point the hypothesis that in English stress falls on the rightmost position of a phrase, Rochemont formulates the NSR as in (16):

(16) Assign an accent to the rightmost lexical category *in a [+focus] constituent in S.*<sup>5</sup>

Within the same single rule, Rochemont states both that a focused phrase must be stressed, and which position stress must occupy within it.

I would rather keep apart the NSR (following Cinque, the rule that assigns stress to the most embedded element of a phrase) and the relation between Focus and stress. By doing that, an important theoretical point results clear: the position of stress within a focused phrase is *independent* from the fact that a focused phrase must carry the main stress of the sentence. In other words, the NSR does not play any role in Focus interpretation. Such a conclusion is crucial from a theoretical perspective for reasons I will discuss in details in section 6. In the last Chapter of this book, I will also give an explanation of why a focused phrase has to be stressed, by appealing to factors that are independent from prosodic rules.

### 2.3 *Destressing*

Another problem Cinque (1993) encounters in reformulating the NSR concerns destressed items, like the second *Mary* in the example below:

(17) I'd give the money to *Mary*, but I don't *trust* *Mary*.

According to the NSR, the nuclear stress of (17) should fall on the most embedded constituent of the focused phrase, that is on *Mary*:

(18) [<sub>IP</sub> I [<sub>I</sub> do [<sub>NegP</sub> not [<sub>VP</sub> *trust* [<sub>DP</sub> *Mary*]]]]]

Cinque notes that the second *Mary* in (17) is 'marginalized'. 'Marginalization', a phenomenon described by Antinucci and Cinque (1977), relegates all non-focused elements at the end of the clause, after the focused one. Cinque proposes that the syntactic position of a marginalized element is an adjunct position to some higher

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<sup>5</sup> Italics are mine.

node. Therefore, *Mary* in (17) is not in the most embedded position of the clause, and consequently, it does not have to bear main stress:<sup>6</sup>

(19) [IP I [I do [NegP not [VP trust t ]]] [IP [DP Mary]]

Another case of destressing is that of anaphoric pronouns, which, according to Cinque, are inherently old information, unless specially contrasted, as shown in the examples below:

- (20) a. I'd give the money to Mary, but I don't *trust* her.  
b. John insulted Mary, and then *she* insulted *him*.

Cinque argues that pronoun destressing does not contradict the NSR, because destressing is a different procedure of stress assignment. I will discuss destressing more in details when presenting Reinhart's account for Focus, which is a refinement of Cinque's account.

### 3 Reinhart (1995)

#### 3.1 'Focus set' and the concept of 'markedness'

In section 2.2 we have mentioned that Rochemont (1986) reformulates the NSR such that it accounts for the relation between Focus and stress. A more recent attempt to incorporate the relation between Focus and stress within the NSR is made by Reinhart (1995). Taking as a starting point Cinque's (1993) NSR, she proposes that the rule creates a *Focus set*, defined as in (21):

(21) The Focus set of IP contains any sequence of constituents of IP, which includes the main stress of IP.

For instance, the potential Foci of a sentence like (22a), with stress on *desk*, are the constituents in (22b).

- (22) a. [IP [DP My neighbour] [VP is building [DP a *desk*]]].  
b. Focus set: {[DP *desk*], [VP is building a *desk*], [IP my neighbour is building a *desk*]}

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<sup>6</sup> In effect, if we assume that the NSR applies only *within* the focused element, as discussed in the previous paragraph, it is irrelevant that the destressed element in a sentence like (17) is right adjoined to a higher node or it is in situ. If it is Focus that determines the location of stress, and not vice versa, Focus does not necessarily have to occupy the most embedded position of the clause.

The sentence is therefore allowed only in those contexts where Focus is one of those constituents. The appropriate Focus among those in (22b) is selected at the pragmatic interface. It will correspond to the DP, if the sentence answers a question like (23a); to the VP, if it answers a question like (23b), and to the entire IP, if it answers a question like (23c):

- (23) a. What is your neighbour building?  
 b. What is your neighbour doing?  
 c. What's happening?

The Focus set in (22b) does not include all possible Foci of (22a). How then to deal with a context where none of the Foci of the Focus set created by Cinque's rule is appropriate? For instance, how to deal with a sentence whose Focus is the preverbal subject? The subject in spec,IP cannot be a constituent of the Focus set created by Cinque's rule. In fact, it does not contain the main sentence stress. To account for such a context, Reinhart proposes that the Focus set defined by Cinque's rule is the *unmarked* Focus set. A different Focus set is obtained by applying a *more marked* rule that relocates stress on the constituent that needs to be focused. The marked rule is the following:

- (24) *Marked rule*: Relocate the main stress.

Since the rule is marked, Reinhart argues that it should be avoided whenever a language has the tools to do it. This happens with focused subjects in Italian. A subject in Italian can freely occur in various positions in the clause. For instance, it can stay in postverbal position, as we have already seen in (5). The unmarked Focus set can therefore be maintained with the subject in situ. In that position, according to Cinque's rule, the subject bears the main stress, so the Focus set created by the rule obligatorily contains the subject:

- (25) a. Chi ha costruito la cupola?  
 'Who built the dome?'  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> L'ha costruita [<sub>DP</sub> Brunelleschi]].  
 it has built Brunelleschi  
 'Brunelleschi built it'

- (26) Focus set: {[<sub>DP</sub> Brunelleschi] ; [<sub>IP</sub> L'ha costruita Brunelleschi]}

The syntax of English does not allow the subject to occupy different positions in the clause, apart from spec,IP. Then, when the subject has to be focused, we are forced to apply the marked rule in (24). The result is stress on the preverbal subject,

as in (27a). The marked rule creates the Focus set given in (27b). The matching between Focus and stress is now correct, because the Focus set includes the subject:

(27) a. [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> *My neighbour*]<sub>F</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> is building [<sub>DP</sub> a desk]]].

b. Focus set: {[<sub>DP</sub> *My neighbour*]; [<sub>IP</sub> *My neighbour is building a desk*]}.

What is crucial in Reinhart's proposal is that the marked rule only applies when the unmarked rule is not able to create the appropriate Focus set. Otherwise, the marked rule is not allowed to apply, for reasons of economy. In the following sections I am going to consider more in details the marked rule in (24).

### 3.2 'Stress strengthening' and 'anaphoric destressing'

We have seen in section 2.3 that Cinque suggests that pronoun destressing is a different procedure of stress assignment. However, he does not say anything more precise about that. Neeleman and Reinhart (1998) reconsider the issue of destressing more in details.

We have seen that Reinhart (1995) proposes two stress rules: an unmarked stress rule (Cinque's NSR), and a marked stress rule, repeated below.

(28) *Marked rule*: Relocate the main stress.

Neeleman and Reinhart (1998) claim that the marked rule is in fact two rules: *stress strengthening*, and *destressing*. According to them, it is crucial to distinguish the functions of the two rules, in order for Cinque/Reinhart's prosodic account for Focus to work, as we will see in short.

Neeleman and Reinhart say that stress strengthening is specifically used to change the Focus set of the sentence, while destressing always occurs whenever the item bearing stress is 'D(iscourse)-linked' to an accessible discourse entity.

The concept of D-linking has been proposed for the first time by Pesetsky (1987) for wh-phrases. Pesetsky says that a wh-phrase is D-linked if the possible referent for the wh-phrase is an individual selected from a closed set of known candidates. In other words, D-linking requires familiarity, givenness of the possible referents from which the referent for the wh-phrase is chosen. Generalizing the notion of D-linking to other elements, we can say that anaphoric material, like pronouns, is D-linked. In fact, destressing always applies to pronouns, as we have seen in (20a), and as it is shown by the following example:

(29) a. I *saw* it.

b. \* I *saw* *it*.

Stress strengthening, on the contrary, is an operation independent from the status of the word bearing stress. It is determined by pragmatic needs, and creates a new Focus in the clause. An example Neeleman and Reinhart give is (30).

(30) I think I have to *eat* something.

The object *something* is not anaphoric, so destressing is not involved here. However, an existential quantifier like *something* is devoid of any specific content, so it is semantically uninformative. As a consequence, it is not a proper Focus, and stress strengthening applies to *eat*, in order for the verb to be the Focus of the sentence.

Another example of stress strengthening that Neeleman and Reinhart report is Bolinger's (1972) example in (31a) below:

(31) a. I have a *point* to make.

b. I have a point to *emphasize*.

Also in this example, the word that should bear stress (*make*) is semantically 'light', so it cannot happily constitute the Focus of the sentence. The main stress is therefore carried by the immediately preceding word, *point*. As Bolinger points out, stress changes if the word at the end of the sentence is not semantically light, as in (31b).

In the next sections I will present the two arguments that Neeleman and Reinhart provide in favour of a distinction between a rule of destressing and a rule of stress strengthening. We will see that their distinction must be slightly revised.

### 3.2.1 Secondary stress and Focus projection

Neeleman and Reinhart (1998) present two main arguments in support of a distinction between a marked rule of destressing and a marked rule of stress strengthening.

The first argument concerns secondary stress. Neeleman and Reinhart say that stress strengthening does not take any stress away, it just adds a stronger stress on a different position, so that the original stress becomes a secondary one. Destressing, on the contrary, is simply a stress shift operation. With the following examples, Neeleman and Reinhart show that a secondary stress is still present when stress strengthening occurs.<sup>7</sup>

(32) a. Only **Max** can afford buying *cars*.

b. Only **Max** can afford *seeing* her.

Main stress resulting from the operation of stress strengthening is far away enough in the clause for secondary stress to be audible. In (32a), secondary stress falls on the most embedded constituent of the clause; in (32b), it undergoes a destressing operation, because the most embedded constituent is a pronoun.

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<sup>7</sup> Italics in boldface indicate the word bearing main stress, italics not in boldface indicate the word bearing secondary stress.

A second argument Neeleman and Reinhart (1998) present in support of the idea that stress strengthening and destressing are two different rules is ‘Focus projection’.

The phenomenon that Selkirk (1984, 1995) named ‘Focus projection’ was probably noticed for the first time by Chomsky (1971). Chomsky observed that the Focus of a sentence can extend to larger constituents than the one immediately containing the stressed word. The Focus of a sentence like (33) can be taken as any of the phrases in brackets:

(33) He was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [*shirt*]]]].

This is clear from the fact that the sentence in (33) can be contradicted by any of the sentences below:

(34) a. No, he was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [*tie*]]]].

b. No, he was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a *carnation*]].

c. No, he was warned to look out for [an *automobile* salesman].

d. No, he was warned [to expect a visit from the *FBI*].

e. No, he was [simply told to be more *cautious*].

In Neeleman and Reinhart’s terms, Focus projection corresponds to the fact that stress on a constituent allows larger constituents to be included within the Focus set, as defined by Reinhart (1995) (see 21).

According to Neeleman and Reinhart, Focus projection can occur with destressing but not with stress strengthening. While anaphoric destressing has no effect on Focus projection, stress strengthening does. In (35b), the Focus set created by pronoun destressing contains the VP and the IP. The VP and the IP are still possible Foci, because a sentence like (35b) can be pronounced ‘out of the blue’:

(35) a. Max likes *cars*

a’. Focus set: {IP, VP, Object}

b. Max *likes* her

b’. Focus set: {IP, VP, V}

When stress strengthening applies, instead, like in (36b), Focus projection is not allowed. In other words, the IP, although included in the Focus set of (36b), cannot be focused. In fact, (36b) cannot be pronounced out of the blue.

(36) a. Lucie passed the *exam*.

a’. Focus set: {IP, VP, Object}

b. *Lucie* passed the exam.

b'. Focus set: {IP, Subject}

The difference Neeleman and Reinhart highlight is crucial for them because it shows that one rule is independent from Focus, the other rule is subject to principles of economy and applies only when the Focus set must be changed. Since (36a') is the unmarked Focus set, and since the IP is included in *both* Focus sets, if the IP needs to be focused, (36a) is the only option, because the unmarked Focus set must be chosen.

Notice that Neeleman and Reinhart's argument is not valid for sentences like those seen above in (30) and (31a), and repeated below:

(37) a. I think I have to *eat* something.

b. I have a *point* to make.

They consider these sentences as subject to the stress strengthening rule. However, they can be pronounced out of the blue. In fact, they have something in common with a case of anaphoric destressing like (35b): in all the three cases, what causes destressing of the last word of the sentence is some property of the word itself (D-linking, semantic poverty). In (36b), instead, a change in the position of stress does not depend on the word that is destressed, but on a requirement that another word be stressed because focused. Therefore, it seems to me that anaphoric destressing and destressing of semantically poor items should be considered as the same type of phenomenon.

### 3.3 Problems for a markedness approach

We have seen that, in Reinhart's proposal discussed in section 3.1, it is crucial that the marked rule of stress assignment is a last resort operation, namely it applies *only* when the language does not provide any device to place Focus in the position where it receives stress by the NSR. In other words, the marked rule and the NSR are in complementary distribution.

Such an assumption appears to be true if we consider English focused subjects. As we have seen in section 3.1, English cannot leave a focused subject in situ, so the language has no other possibility than to apply the marked rule to the preverbal subject.

Nevertheless, some problems arise if we look at Italian subjects. As we know, Italian has the possibility to leave the focused subject in situ, in the most embedded position of the clause, so stress can be assigned by the (unmarked) NSR:

(38) L'esame, l'ha passato *Lucia*.

the exam it-CL has passed Lucia



Now, given the availability of an unmarked construction, the marked one should not be allowed, because the marked option *only* occurs when the unmarked one is not available. On the contrary, (39) is also possible, where the rule of stress strengthening applies:

(39) *Lucia* ha passato l'esame.

Lucia has passed the exam

Furthermore, some problems also arise in English, if we look at cases of Focus on a different element than the subject. Consider the sentence below, with stress on the verb:

(40) I *passed* that exam.

This is a case of stress strengthening, since Focus cannot project (the sentence cannot answer a question like 'What happened?'). The availability of (40) should mean that the unmarked option is not available. On the contrary, an unmarked construction is available, via left dislocation of the object:

(41) That exam, I *passed* it.

The main stress in (41) falls on the most embedded position of the clause, so it satisfies the unmarked rule.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, even in English, both a marked option and an unmarked one are available, contra Reinhart's predictions. The same is true for the corresponding example in Italian. Both (42a) and (42b) are admitted:

(42) a. Gianni ha *passato* l'esame.

Gianni has passed the exam

b. Gianni l'esame l'ha *passato*.

Gianni the exam it-CL has passed

In conclusion, Reinhart's account in terms of markedness is not supported by either English or Italian data. The availability of a different word order does not prevent a focused constituent from occupying a position where it cannot receive stress via the NSR.

### 3.4 Prosodically-motivated syntactic configurations

It is important to highlight the fact that, within Reinhart's (1995) proposal, the relation between prosody and Focus is such that the position of Focus in the

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<sup>8</sup> The presence of the pronoun does not count, since its destressed status depends on the rule of destressing.

sentence *depends* on the NSR. It is in fact the NSR that creates a Focus set, from which a particular Focus is (pragmatically) chosen. In other words, according to Reinhart, Focus interpretation is (partially) *determined* by a PF rule.

Within the same line of reasoning, Reinhart (1995) also proposes an account for (Dutch) object scrambling. She views scrambling as triggered by the requirement that Focus occupies the position where NS is assigned. This means that the (syntactic) phenomenon of object scrambling is *prosodically motivated*.

Reinhart presents de Hoop's (1992) analysis of Dutch object scrambling. De Hoop observes that object scrambling is subject to the 'Definiteness Effect'. Only definite objects or indefinite objects with a specific, generic or partitive reading can scramble. De Hoop thus makes the following generalization:

(43) Only strong NPs can scramble,

where a strong NP is a definite NP or an indefinite NP with a specific, generic or partitive reading. De Hoop also observes that the strength of the NP is not a sufficient condition on scrambling, as it is shown by the following examples:

(44) a. \*...omdat ik een kat altijd *heb*.

because I a cat always have

b. ...omdat ik een kat altijd *liefheb*.

because I a cat always love

c. \*...dat ik een bus altijd *neem*

that I a bus always take

Therefore, she makes a further generalization:

(45) Object scrambling in Dutch yields the same semantic effect as contrastive predicates with stressed verbs in English.

The English translation of (44a-c) in fact is the following, where stress on the verb is allowed in the same case in which scrambling in Dutch is allowed:

(46) a. \*...because I always *have* a cat.

b. ...because I always *love* a cat.

c. \*... because I always *take* a bus.

Starting from the similarity observed by de Hoop in (45), Reinhart proposes that object scrambling is determined by the fact that a focused item must bear the main sentence stress. In a construction with scrambling, the object is not in complement position, but higher in the clause. This means that a scrambled object is not in the

most embedded position of the clause, and therefore, it does not bear the main stress. As a consequence, a scrambled object can never be the Focus of the sentence. In fact, as Reinhart observes, a scrambled object has properties of non-focused material, while the element that ends up in the most embedded position after scrambling has Focus properties.

Consider for instance the sentences in (44). The verbs ‘to have’ in (44a) and ‘to take’ in (44c), because of object scrambling, end up in a position where they receive the main stress, and therefore are focused. Those verbs, though, have a poor lexical content, so they are not good Foci. This explains why scrambling in (44a) and (44c) is unacceptable. In (44b), instead, the verb ‘to love’ can be new information, so no problems arise with scrambling in this case.

The fact that a scrambled object is subject to the Definiteness Effect leads Reinhart to the same pragmatic observations. Indefinites introduce a new entity in the discourse, so they are more naturally focused than definite NPs. Therefore, the fact that indefinites are less naturally scrambled is explained by the fact that the position of a scrambled object is not a Focus position. On the other hand, it is more common to find definite objects that are not focused, and therefore it is more common to find definite objects that are scrambled.

The semantic characteristics of the scrambled object are then a reflex of the fact that a scrambling position is not a Focus position, and it is not a Focus position because it is not the position where main stress is assigned. In sum, Reinhart relates object scrambling to the necessity to have focused constituents in the position where main stress falls.

Note that within this account, object scrambling is a means to avoid the marked operation of stress strengthening by allowing the focused constituent to occupy the most embedded position of the clause. This means that scrambling should always be preferable than stress strengthening. Wagner and Gajewski (2002) observe that such economy principle is not respected in German. In this language, it is fine not to scramble a definite DP, even if stress is on the verb, namely on a position that does not respect the NSR:

(47) Does Peter claim he read the book yesterday?

... dass er gestern das Buch *gekauft* hat.

that he yesterday the book bought has

Also, a scrambled definite DP does not have to be destressed, namely it can be the Focus of the sentence:

(48) What did the owner of the book sell yesterday?

... dass er das *Buch* gestern verkaufte.

that he the book yesterday sold

In conclusion, as Wagner and Gajewski observe, word order and stress do not seem to be so closely related as Reinhart's account would assume.

Moreover, within this view, scrambling is an operation triggered by prosodic needs, which means that the prosody 'feeds' the syntax, and not vice versa. Zubizarreta (1998) makes a similar proposal, which I am going to discuss in the following section. The theoretical problems of such a proposal will be discussed in details in section 6.

#### 4 Zubizarreta (1998)

The idea that prosodic rules determine certain syntactic configurations is also pursued by Zubizarreta in her 1998 book on Focus, prosody and word order. Let us see how her account works.

Like Cinque, Zubizarreta assumes that there is a correspondence principle between Focus and prosodic rules, *a la* Jackendoff (1972). She calls this principle *Focus Prominence Rule* (FPR). The FPR says that, given two sister categories, one focused and the other non-focused, the former must be more prominent than the latter. She also assumes that stress placement is governed by Halle and Vergnaud's (1987) NSR. However, she introduces some changes in the rule, in order to account for the differences among languages.

First, she considers Cinque's revision of the rule. She suggests to modify Cinque's distinction between minor paths and major paths of embedding (defined in terms of recursive side and non-recursive side, see section 2.1.1) and to reformulate it in terms of a distinction between complement node and non-complement node. In fact, as observed by Truckenbrodt (1993), Cinque's proposal cannot account for German data. In that language, the recursive side is on the left, but adjuncts, although on the left, do not attract main stress. Zubizarreta thus proposes that the major path of embedding is constituted by nodes dominated solely by the sister of a head, while the minor path of embedding is constituted by nodes dominated by a non-complement node. In other words, the distinction of paths of embedding depends on whether the phrase is an adjunct or an argument.

According to Zubizarreta, this modification is still not sufficient to account for all facts concerning Focus. She argues that a distinction must be done between languages as far as the application of the NSR is concerned. She says that in languages like English, German and French, defocalized and anaphoric constituents, as well as functional categories, are metrically invisible. This means that the NSR does not apply to those constituents, which are therefore 'skipped' by the rule. In other languages, like Italian and Spanish, all phonologically specified elements are 'metrically visible'.

Zubizarreta's proposal allows her to account for the massive presence of destressing in languages like English, and the absence of destressing in languages like Spanish or Italian.<sup>9</sup> As it is shown in the following examples, destressing in English usually corresponds to pronoun cliticization or DP dislocation in Italian:

(49) Max la *ama*.

Max her-CL loves

'Max loves her'

(50) a. Gianni la torta l'ha *divorata*.

Gianni the cake it-CL has eaten-up

b. Gianni l'ha *divorata*, la torta.<sup>10</sup>

Gianni it-CL has eaten-up the cake

'Gianni ate up the cake'

#### 4.1 The Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule

The concept of metrical visibility is used by Zubizarreta also to explain the difference between the two exchanges in (51) and (52).

(51) a. Who ate an apple?

b. *John* ate an apple.

(52) a. Chi ha mangiato una mela?

'Who ate an apple?'

b. # *Gianni* ha mangiato una mela.

John has eaten an apple

The unacceptability of (52b) depends on the fact that Italian does not have metrically invisible constituents. This causes a mismatch between the FPR and the NSR: while the latter assigns stress to the most embedded constituent of the clause,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ladd (1996).

<sup>10</sup> A right-dislocated element does not have to be metrically invisible. In fact, Zubizarreta says that a right-dislocated element, although it is pronounced with a reduced pitch range, is not destressed, but it is part of a distinct intonational grouping.

the former requires that stress and Focus match, but since the focused item is the preverbal subject, one rule can be fulfilled only if the other one is not.

I have already discussed sentences with preverbal Focus in Italian and I have considered them as grammatical. According to Zubizarreta (and many others, as we will see in the next Chapters) they are acceptable only if Focus has a contrastive interpretation. Zubizarreta then proposes that stress in such sentences is not assigned by the NSR, but by a special Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule, formulated as follows:

(53) Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule. A word with contrastive stress must be dominated by every focused constituent in the phrase.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I will demonstrate that a preverbal Focus in Italian does not have to be contrastive. In Chapter 4, I will also challenge the legitimacy of the E/CSR. I will show that, other than not motivated by interpretive differences between two Foci, such a rule assigns stress in the same way as the NSR, so it has no reason at all to exist.

#### 4.2 Prosodically-motivated movement

Zubizarreta says that the focused constituent in (52b) moves to the specifier of a syntactic dedicated position in the left periphery, Foc(us)P.<sup>11</sup> In order for both the FPR and the NSR to be satisfied, she proposes that the non-focused part of the clause must somehow be ‘removed’ from its position, so that the focused part can occupy the position where it bears main stress. Zubizarreta calls this movement ‘prosodically-motivated’ movement (p-movement), because it is triggered by prosodic needs. The movement removes the remnant TP<sup>12</sup> from the most embedded position, and adjoins it to FocP:

(54) [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [ha mangiato una mela]]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>FocP</sub> Gianni<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ]]]

From the point of view of a prosodic account for Focus, Zubizarreta’s analysis looks very redundant. First, a movement triggered by syntactic needs removes the focused item from the position where it bears the main stress; then, another movement, triggered by prosodic needs, re-replaces the focused item in a position where it can bear the main stress.

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<sup>11</sup> As I mentioned in Chapter 1, this kind of analysis for left peripheral Focus is given by an entire branch of studies, which proposes to encode Focus syntactically. I will talk about it in details in the next Chapter.

<sup>12</sup> TP is the Tense Phrase and is equivalent to IP.

Furthermore, because of the presence of both prosodic and syntactic triggers for movement, Zubizarreta's analysis has to face both the theoretical problems of prosody-based accounts that I am going to discuss in the following section, *and* the problems of syntax-based accounts that I will discuss in the next Chapter.

### *5 Prosodically non-motivated movement*

Horvath (2000) observes that, from the point of view of Focus, there are two types of movement in natural languages. One type of movement is compatible with prosody-based accounts for Focus, since it gives rise to a word order that favours the matching between Focus and stress, as assigned by the NSR. Another type of movement does not favour this matching.

Object scrambling is an example of the first type of movement. Reinhart (1995), in fact, describes it as a movement triggered by prosody/Focus needs. She observes that, on one hand, a scrambled object must have certain characteristics usually pertaining to non-focused items, like definiteness; on the other hand, the item that ends up in the most embedded position of the clause after object scrambling must have certain characteristics that make it a proper Focus. Therefore, she concludes, scrambling is an operation that allows the matching between Focus and stress, because it 'removes' a non-focused object from the position where the nuclear stress falls, and allows a focused element to fill that position.

Zubizarreta's (1998) p-movement is another example of movement of the first type. Zubizarreta, in fact, proposes that the remnant IP in (54) moves to a position higher than the moved Focus in order to let Focus occupy the most embedded position, where it receives nuclear stress as assigned by the NSR.

As we have seen in the previous sections, however, neither Reinhart's analysis of object scrambling in terms of prosody/Focus needs, nor Zubizarreta's p-movement analysis are totally plausible. Reinhart's analysis of object scrambling is contradicted by German data. As for Zubizarreta's p-movement, note that such a movement is not independently attested in the literature, as scrambling is. Moreover, it is a 'remnant' type of movement, that is, a movement of a phrase containing a trace of a previously extracted item (Focus, in this case). The legitimacy of this type of movement, though taken for granted by a large part of the literature since Kayne (1994), is dubious. As we will see later in this book, a movement of that type runs into serious theoretical problems, and as far as Focus is concerned, it does not even solve the problems for which it is used.

Let us consider now the other type of movement mentioned by Horvath (2000). Such a movement is even more problematic for prosody-based accounts, since it is not even compatible with the requirements of the NSR. It is present in certain languages like Hungarian, Albanian, Basque, Italian, and Spanish, among others. It

places a focused constituent in a left peripheral position. An Italian example is given below:


(55) [La *maglietta*]<sub>Fj</sub> ha vinto Gianni t<sub>j</sub>.

the T-shirt has won Gianni

‘Gianni won the *T-shirt*’

A prosodic account for Focus cannot explain movement of the object in a case like this. As pointed out by Horvath, the movement in (55) has no reason to occur from the point of view of the NSR. The focused constituent *la maglietta* is an object, thus, in its base-generated position, it would be the most embedded constituent of the clause, and it could bear the sentence stress. On the contrary, it moves to a position where it can only receive stress via a different rule. Why should movement to the left apply, if it is not triggered by the need that the focused constituent receives stress, and even worse, if it removes the focused constituent from a position *bearing* stress?

(56) — [IP ha [<sub>VP</sub> vinto [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni] [<sub>DP</sub> la maglietta]]]



As Horvath makes clear, this movement to the left periphery “cannot be justified by any interface economy consideration of conforming to the automatically given (unmarked) stress pattern and avoiding the marked stress-shift. [...]. In sum, it looks like these cases involve both unnecessary movement and marked stress shift”.

As I said in section 4.1, Zubizarreta (1998) proposes that a different stress rule assigns stress in an example like (55), namely the E/CSR (see 53). Nevertheless, movement in (56) is not motivated by this rule either, because the rule is fulfilled even when the focused item remains in situ, as it will become clearer in Chapter 4. In effect, Zubizarreta does not even claim that the focused item in (55) moves to the left periphery for prosodic reasons. In her analysis, the focused item moves to the left in order to check a syntactic [+focus] feature.

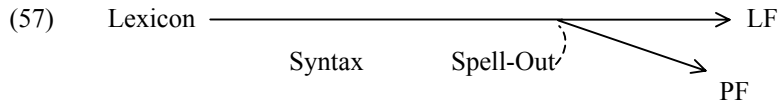
### 6 Theoretical problems within a prosody-based approach to Focus

The approach to Focus discussed so far, where Focus is viewed as a phenomenon determined by a prosodic rule, is highly problematic within a theoretical framework like the one outlined by Chomsky (1995). If syntactic operations are triggered by prosodic rules, it means that prosodic rules determine the syntactic structure, and not vice versa.

We have seen in the Introduction of this book that Chomsky (1995) proposes an architecture of the grammar where the only levels of representation are the two interfaces: the Phonetic Form (PF) and the Logical Form (LF). To recall, the former



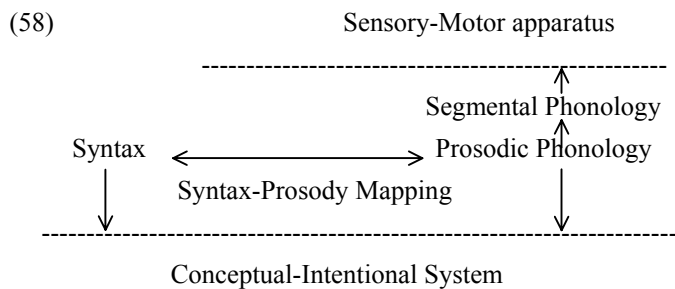
is the interface with the sensory-motor apparatus, the latter is the interface with the conceptual-intentional system. Chomsky's (1995) T-model is repeated below:



As I said in Chapter 1, there are no interactions between the two interfaces, PF and LF. If the computational system did not have any role in connecting the two interfaces, the very basic idea of generative grammar would be denied, namely that a specific language faculty exists in the mind/brain.

In prosody-based accounts for Focus, on the contrary, a property pertaining to PF, like stress, determines Focus interpretation of a constituent at LF. In other words, the two interfaces see each other after Spell-Out. The problems of such a hypothesis are made clear by Manzini and Savoia (in press a): “Indeed even if an algorithm based on stress predicts the location of the property traditionally designated as Focus at the PF interface, this does not explain how the other interface, that of LF, knows which element undergoes the Focus interpretive process, which presumably includes the creation of a variable structure of some sort (Chomsky 1976: 203-4, Rooth 1992). If such an interpretive process applies to phonological representations, then we establish a direct connection between the two interfaces which effectively negates the basic reason for the existence of a computational component, namely the need for PF and LF to be connected (Chomsky 1995)”.

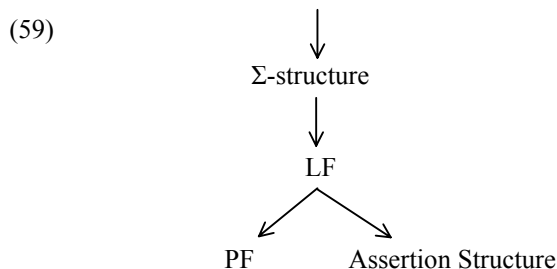
Reinhart does not explicitly modify the T-model, although she assumes that the Focus rule should apply at a <PF, LF> pair, in order to be visible at both interfaces. Szendrői (2001), who develops an account for Focus in Hungarian based on Reinhart's account, explicitly proposes a reformulation of the architecture of the grammar. The model she proposes is represented below:



Szendrői's model is representational: she assumes with Brody (1995) that syntax and prosody are two single representations, not a series of representations connected by a derivation. A correspondence between the two representations is established by

means of the principles of the syntax-prosody mapping. Prosody is not derived by syntax, but is subject to independent principles (along the lines of Nespors and Vogel 1986). More importantly, in Szendrői's model, prosody is available also at the conceptual-intentional interface. In other words, the conceptual-intentional interface can access both PF and LF. This assumption allows Szendrői to conclude that "there is no need to encode pragmatic and/or prosodic information in the syntactic representation" (Szendrői 2001:27).

As for Zubizarreta (1998), we have seen that she proposes the existence of a syntactic movement motivated by prosodic needs. The prosodic needs are on their hand related to the pragmatic interpretation of the sentence. Therefore, she also must assume a modification of the T-model of the grammar. She proposes that the LF/syntactic derivation and the PF interpretation accompany each other for a stretch, before Spell-Out. In that part of the derivation, stress rules and prosody-Focus correspondence rules apply. Zubizarreta's model is represented below:



At the level of  $\Sigma$ -structure, a unique phrase marker is present in the derivation. Prosodic rules and prosodic operations related to Focus like the NSR, or prosodically motivated movements, apply between the level of  $\Sigma$ -structure and LF. When the derivation reaches LF, the prosody of the sentence is already stated, so the interpretation of the sentence follows directly from it.

### 7 Conclusions: Focus is independent from prosody

The radical changes in the theory of the grammar that are necessary in order for a prosody-based account to work can only be accepted if there are strong empirical reasons that motivate them. On the contrary, we have seen that the position of Focus does not always coincide with the most embedded position of the clause, where the nuclear stress falls according to Cinque's NSR.

Cinque rescues the cases of mismatch by showing that stress respects the NSR within the focused phrase. Although this conclusion is correct, it though does not show any dependence of Focus on the position of the main sentence stress. In fact, the NSR determines the position of stress *within the focused phrase*, but the position of the *main* stress of the sentence depends on the position of Focus, not vice versa.

Reinhart accounts for cases of mismatch by postulating a marked rule which applies *only* when the unmarked NSR would give the wrong result. However, we have seen that both in English and in Italian there are cases in which both the unmarked and the marked construction are allowed, so a markedness approach is not fulfilled by the data.

Zubizarreta accounts for a different location of stress by proposing a different stress rule that governs the placement of a stress different from nuclear stress. The idea that a different rule of stress assignment exists is based on her assumption that a different type of Focus exists, a Focus expressing contrast. As I said, I will challenge such an assumption in Chapters 4 and 5, and show that, at least in Italian, only one type of Focus exists from a semantic, prosodic and syntactic point of view.

Finally, we have seen that the prosodic accounts analysed in this Chapter cannot explain why a focused constituent moves to a left peripheral position in the clause. It is precisely this type of movement to the left that suggests a different, syntax-based, account for Focus, like the one I am going to discuss in the next Chapter.

## Chapter 3

## The syntactic encoding of Focus

### *1 Introduction*

In the previous Chapter we have seen that an approach to Focus based on prosodic rules is both empirically and theoretically problematic.

The main empirical problem for that approach is to account for a sentence like the following:

(1) LA MAGLIETTA<sup>13</sup> ha vinto Gianni.

the T-shirt has won Gianni

‘Gianni won the *T-shirt*’

The main stress of this clause, which falls on the focused item (precisely on *maglietta*) does not fall on the most embedded position of the clause. Moreover, the focused item unaccountably moves to the left periphery, and abandons the most embedded position.

As for the main theoretical problem, we have seen that such an approach assumes that prosody determines the location of Focus. In other words, Focus interpretation depends on the prosodic characteristics of the sentence. This means that there must be a direct link between the two interfaces, PF and LF. Such a link, however, cannot possibly occur within a T-model of the grammar, which I assume to be correct.

The two problems just summarized are dispensed with by the approach to Focus I am going to discuss in the present Chapter. This approach is based on the assumption that Focus is a property encoded in the syntax, by means of a designated syntactic position. Unfortunately, as we will see in this Chapter, such an approach opens different but equally serious problems.

In section 2, I discuss the motivations for and the properties of a designated syntactic Focus position. In particular, I present Brody’s (1990) work on Hungarian and Rizzi’s (1997) parallel work on Italian. In section 3, I discuss the way these

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<sup>13</sup> All through this Chapter I indicate the focused constituent with capital letters. Stress is not indicated, but it is assumed to fall on the most embedded word within the focused constituent. Capital letters are often used in the literature to indicate contrastive Focus, and I will use them for that purpose in the next Chapter. In this Chapter, however, Focus interpretation is not relevant, so capital letters do not specify any particular interpretation.

studies account for the low position of Focus. In section 4, I present Frascarelli's (2000) work, which is similar for several respects to the former works, but differs from them in some interesting respects. Finally, in section 5, I present the main theoretical problems that a syntax-based approach for Focus has to face, and in section 6 I discuss some issues related to the interpretation of Focus that is assumed by these works. In section 7, general conclusions are drawn.

## 2 *FocP*

The idea of encoding Focus in the syntax comes from the observation of languages like Hungarian, Basque, Albanian, among others, where the focused item occupies a fixed, left-peripheral position in the sentence. The idea is that a dedicated head in the left periphery exists, which from now on I will call *Foc*<sup>14</sup>, whose specifier is filled by the focused constituent. One of the first studies of this type is Brody (1990). I will present his proposal in the following section.

### 2.1 *Brody (1990): Hungarian*

Brody (1990) analyses Focus in Hungarian. Hungarian is one of those languages that require that a focused constituent occupy a fixed, left peripheral position in the clause. By making a parallelism with *wh*-phrases, Brody proposes that in Hungarian a designated Focus position exists in the left periphery, whose specifier is filled by the focused item and whose head is filled by the verb. The verb moves to *Foc* in order to assign a Focus feature ([+Focus]<sup>15</sup>, indicating 'focushood') to the XP that occupies the specifier of *FocP*. Evidence for verb movement comes from the position of Verbal Modifiers (VM) present in some verbs in Hungarian. In Focus structures, a VM cannot stay in preverbal position, it can only stay in postverbal position:

(2) a. *Levittem a szemetet Janossal.*

VM-took-I the rubbish John-with

'I took down the rubbish with John'

b. \* *JANOSSAL levittem a szemetet.*

John-with VM-took-I the rubbish

---

<sup>14</sup> *Foc* is the name Rizzi (1997) gives to the Focus head. For sake of simplicity, I generalize this label to any analogous Focus position proposed in the literature.

<sup>15</sup> The Focus feature is labelled in various ways in the literature. For clearness, I will always use the label [+Focus].

c. JANOSSAL vittem **le** a szemetet.

John-with took-I VM the rubbish

Brody proposes that a phrase that receives a [+Focus] feature must satisfy the following two conditions:

(3) a. At S-structure and LF the spec of a FocP must contain a [+Focus] phrase.

b. At LF all [+Focus] phrases must be in a FocP.

While the first condition may or may not hold in a given language, the second condition holds in all languages.

In Hungarian, both conditions hold, so the focused element moves overtly to spec,FocP. Since Brody assumes that there is no separate I node in Hungarian, the structure he proposes for a sentence like (4a) is (4b):

(4) a. JANOSSAL vittemle a szemetet

John-with took-I VM the rubbish

'I took down the rubbish with *John*'

b. [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> JANOSSAL] [<sub>Foc</sub> vittem [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> le [<sub>DP</sub> a szemetet] t ] ]]

In English, only the second condition holds, so spec,FocP is filled only at LF. The relevant LF representation is presumably one like (5c):

(5) a. I took down the rubbish WITH JOHN.

b. LF: with John did I take down the rubbish

c. [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> WITH JOHN] [<sub>Foc</sub> did [<sub>IP</sub> I [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> take down [<sub>DP</sub> the rubbish] t ] ] ]]

Proposals similar to Brody's one have been made in several studies for different languages, such as Rizzi (1997) for Italian, Ortiz de Urbina (1999) for Basque, Tsimpli (1995) for Greek, etc. In the next section, I will discuss Rizzi's account for Italian left peripheral Focus.

## 2.2 Rizzi (1997): Italian

Consider again the example in (1), repeated below:

(6) LA MAGLIETTA ha vinto Gianni.

the T-shirt has won Gianni

Clearly, the focused object has moved to the left periphery. Rizzi (1997), like Brody (1990), proposes that the object moves to the specifier of a Focus head. Rizzi's proposal is conceived within his 'split-CP' hypothesis, namely the hypothesis that

the left periphery is made of several highly specified heads. The full left periphery proposed by Rizzi (1997) is given in (7).

- (7)  $\underbrace{[\text{ForceP} [\text{TopP}^* [\text{FocP} [\text{TopP}^* [\text{FinP} [\text{IP} \dots]]]]]}_{\text{split-CP}}$

FocP is surrounded by two functional projections dedicated to topicalized expressions (TopP), which can iterate, as the asterisk indicates. Rizzi follows Benincà et al. (1988:144) in the assumption that topicalized phrases can be an indefinite number in a clause, while a focused phrase is always a single one per each sentence. Rizzi's examples below exemplify his assumption:

- (8) a. Il libro, a Gianni, domani, glielo darò senz'altro.  
           the book to Gianni tomorrow to-him-CL-it-CL (I) will give for sure  
       b. \* A GIANNI IL LIBRO darò (non a Piero l'articolo).  
           to Gianni the book (I) will give not to Piero the article

As a matter of fact, the ungrammaticality of (8b) is questionable. The context in which the sentence may occur is rare, since the contrast is between two pairs; still, according to my judgements, it is possible. Rizzi argues that Focus cannot iterate because its interpretation does not allow it: the complement of Foc is the presupposition, the given information, so if two Foci could combine, the second Focus would represent at the same time the given information and the new one, and an interpretive clash would arise. Rizzi's observation, however, does not hold if we analyse the two focused constituents as a single Focus. I will talk about this possibility in Chapter 5, where it will be relevant to know whether Focus iterates or not.

Rizzi's left periphery is closed on top by a C head expressing the illocutionary force of the clause, Force, and at the bottom by a C head expressing the properties related to the finiteness of the verb, Fin. An example of an Italian sentence where all the Topic-Focus positions and one C position are filled is given below (still from Rizzi 1997):

- (9) a. Credo che a Gianni, QUESTO, domani, gli dovremmo dire.  
           (I) believe that to Gianni this tomorrow to-him-CL (we) should-say  
       b. Credo  $[\text{ForceP}$  che  $[\text{TopP}$  a Gianni  $[\text{FocP}$  QUESTO  $[\text{TopP}$  domani  $[\text{IP}$  gli dovremmo dire...

Rizzi assumes that a focused constituent must enter a spec/head relation with the Foc head before Spell-Out. He proposes that a 'Focus Criterion' exists that is analogous to the Wh-Criterion proposed by Rizzi (1996) for wh-phrases, and to the



Neg-Criterion proposed by Haegeman (1995) for Negation. The Wh-Criterion, as formulated by Rizzi (1996), says the following:

(10) Wh-Criterion

- a. A Wh-operator must be in a spec-head configuration with an  $X^{\circ}_{[+wh]}$
- b. An  $X^{\circ}_{[+wh]}$  must be in a spec-head configuration with a Wh-operator.

The corresponding Focus Criterion can be then formulated as below:

(11) Focus Criterion

- a. A focused phrase<sup>16</sup> must be in a spec-head configuration with an  $X^{\circ}_{[+Focus]}$
- b. An  $X^{\circ}_{[+Focus]}$  must be in a spec-head configuration with a focused phrase.

We have seen that in Brody's framework the [+Focus] feature must be assigned to the focused phrase by the verb. Rizzi's proposal comes after Chomsky's (1995, 2000, 2001) Minimalist Program, so his [+Focus] feature is a formal feature as defined in Chomsky's work. Within this framework, as we have already seen in Chapter 1, the feature is an inherent property of the focused item, and it must be checked by movement to a head endowed with the same feature.

*2.2.1 A syncretic position*

In Rizzi's (1997) framework, FocP is a syncretic position whose specifier can host elements of various types. In particular, it also hosts wh-phrases. Evidence comes from the fact that, while a wh-phrase is compatible with a left peripheral Topic, it is incompatible with a Focus, as shown by Rizzi's examples below:

(12) a. A Gianni, che cosa gli hai detto?

to Gianni what to-him-CL (you) have said

b. \* A GIANNI che cosa hai detto (, non a Piero)?

to Gianni what to-him-CL (you) have said not to Piero

However, Rizzi notes that a wh-phrase and a focused phrase differ in that the former doesn't admit a subject or a Topic before the verb, while the latter does, as shown in (13) and (14).

(13) a. \* Che cosa Gianni ti dirà?

what Gianni to-you-CL will-say

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<sup>16</sup> We could also say 'Focus Operator', in parallel fashion with the Wh-Operator, because Focus is in fact an Operator, in Rizzi's account. I will talk about this below, in section 2.3.

‘What will Gianni say to you?’

b. Che cosa ti dirà Gianni?

(14) QUESTO Gianni ti dirà (, non quello che pensavi)

‘This Gianni will say to you (, not what you thought)’

Rizzi’s account for the difference between (13a) and (14) is the following. He says that the Wh feature is generated under I, so I-to-C movement must apply to bring the Wh feature to the C system. Hence, the verb must be adjacent to the wh-phrase.

(15) [<sub>FocP</sub> Che cosa [<sub>Foc</sub> ti dirà ... [<sub>IP</sub> Gianni [<sub>I</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>sbj</sub> [<sub>V</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>wh</sub> ]]]]]...]]

The Focus feature, instead, is inherently possessed by Foc, so I-to-C movement is not required, and a subject or a Topic (*Gianni*, in this case) can be interposed between the Focus and the verb.

(16) [<sub>FocP</sub> Questo [<sub>Foc</sub> ... [<sub>IP</sub> Gianni [<sub>I</sub> ti dirà [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>sbj</sub> [<sub>V</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>wh</sub> ]]]]]...]]

As a matter of fact, the incompatibility of a wh-phrase with a Focus is not always true, as noted for instance by Benincà (2001) and Manzini and Savoia (forthcoming). Benincà’s counterexample is the following:

(17) Chi la fisica la sa bene?

‘Who knows physics well?’

Benincà argues that a question of this type must be a rhetorical question. Manzini and Savoia, instead, point out that an intervening element preferably occurs when the wh-phrase is D-linked:

(18) Chi di voi, Chomsky, l’ha mai sentito nominare?

‘Chomsky, who of you ever heard of him?’

Guglielmo Cinque (p.c.) observes that there is no incompatibility between wh-phrases and focused phrases in embedded wh-questions:

(19) Mi chiedo che cosa GIANNI abbia detto, non Paolo.

myself-CL (I) ask what Gianni have said not Paolo

‘I wonder what *Gianni* said, not Paolo’

Finally, Rizzi himself (see Rizzi 2001) acknowledges that FocP cannot be the only position for wh-phrases, and proposes a higher position, called ‘Int’ for *perché* ‘why’, in order to account the following grammatical word order:

(20) Perché QUESTO avremmo dovuto dirgli, e non qualcos’altro?

why this (we) should have had to-say-to-him-CL not something else

‘Why should have we told him *this*, not something else?’

At any event, it is definitely true that a wh-phrase and a focused phrase have some properties in common. As Rizzi (1997) observes, a focused phrase is a quantified expression binding a variable. We are going to see that in details in the next section.

### 2.3 A'-movement and the operator properties of left peripheral Focus

From what I have said so far, it is clear that Focus movement, targeting the C system both in Brody's analysis and in Rizzi's one, is taken to be an A'-movement. The following examples show that Focus movement, like wh-movement, is subject to island effects:

(21) Subject

\* DI TOMMASO mi hanno invitato i genitori t .  
of Tommaso to-me-CL have invited the parents

(22) Adjunct

\* I PANTALONI MIMETICI mi sono arrabbiata perché hai comprato t .  
the camouflaged pants REFL have got angry because (you) have bought

(23) Complex-NP

\* LA TUA PROF. DEL LICEO ricordo la volta che abbiamo incontrato t .  
the your teacher of the high school (I) remember the time that (we) have met

Following Lasnik and Stowell (1991), Rizzi (1997) distinguishes between quantificational A' relations and non-quantificational ones. The former involve a quantifier that binds a variable, the latter involve binding of a null constant. Rizzi argues that Focus involves quantificational A'-binding, while Topic involves non-quantificational A'-binding. The null constant that Topic binds is represented by the resumptive clitic in Italian. The clitic is absent in Focus structures, as it is shown by Rizzi's examples below:<sup>17</sup>

(24) a. Il tuo libro, lo ho comprato.

the your book it-CL (I) have bought

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<sup>17</sup> We will see though in Chapter 5 that things are more complicated than this, as far as resumptive clitics are concerned. By now, a more fine-grained description of the occurrences of resumptive clitics is not relevant.

- ‘Your book, I bought it’
- b. \* Il tuo libro, ho comprato t .  
the your book (I) have bought
- c. \* IL TUO LIBRO lo ho comprato (non il suo)  
the your book it-CL (I) have bought not the (one) of-him/her
- d. IL TUO LIBRO ho comprato t (non il suo).  
the your book (I) have bought not the (one) of-him/her  
‘I bought your book, not his’

The main evidence that Focus is a quantificational element A’-binding a variable comes from the Weak Crossover test (WCO). WCO is a phenomenon that blocks co-reference between a pronoun and its antecedent if the antecedent is a quantified expression binding a variable, and the variable follows the pronoun. Rizzi shows that, while Topic is not subject to WCO, Focus is:

- (25) a. Gianni<sub>i</sub>, sua<sub>i</sub> madre lo<sub>i</sub> ha sempre apprezzato.  
Gianni his mother has always appreciated
- b. ?? GIANNI<sub>i</sub> sua<sub>i</sub> madre ha sempre apprezzato t<sub>i</sub> (non Piero).  
Gianni his mother has always appreciated not Piero

The quantificational nature of Focus is also shown by examples with quantificational elements like *nobody*, *all*, etc. While these elements cannot be topicalized, they can be focused, as the following examples from Rizzi (1997) show:

- (26) a. \* Nessuno, lo ho visto.  
nobody him-CL (I) have seen
- b. \* Tutto, lo ho fatto.  
everything it-CL (I) have done
- c. NESSUNO ho visto t .  
nobody (I) have seen
- d. TUTTO ho fatto.  
everything (I) have done

Since operator properties of Focus and its availability to occupy a left peripheral position are strictly related, some authors have claimed that a Focus in situ must be a

different grammatical object. This is for instance what É. Kiss (1998) says, as we will see in details in the next Chapter. Rizzi, however, takes the opposite point of view: he argues that the low Focus moves to the same left peripheral position as the high Focus at LF. I will discuss his proposal in the following section.

### 3 *Low Focus within a syntax-based approach*

A syntax-based approach for Focus, contrary to a prosody-based approach like the one presented in the previous Chapter, easily explains why a focused constituent in certain languages moves to the left periphery. Movement is triggered by the purely syntactic requirement that the focused phrase be in a spec-head relation with the Foc head, in order to satisfy a ‘Focus Criterion’ or, in more updated terms, in order to enter a feature-checking relation with the head.

What such an approach needs, however, is also to explain the *low* Focus position, as it would be useless to be able to account for the high Focus position, if an explanation for the low one were not available.

A straightforward account for a low Focus position in a syntax-based approach is LF movement, which is in fact proposed by the studies discussed above. The idea of LF Focus movement derives from Chomsky (1976). In that paper, Chomsky suggests a unified account, based on WCO, for three apparently unrelated phenomena: wh-movement, scope of universal quantifiers, and Focus.

A wh-element in English moves to the left leaving a variable in situ; thus, a pronoun that precedes the variable of the wh-phrase cannot co-refer with the wh-phrase, as shown by Chomsky’s example below:

(27) \* Who<sub>i</sub> did the woman he<sub>i</sub> loved betray t<sub>i</sub> ?

The person who loves the woman cannot be the same person who is betrayed by the woman. The same happens with a quantifier, which undergoes leftward movement at LF and introduces a variable at that level:<sup>18</sup>

(28) a. \* The woman he<sub>i</sub> loved betrayed someone<sub>i</sub>

b. LF: Someone<sub>i</sub> the woman he<sub>i</sub> loved betrayed t<sub>i</sub>

Crucially, Chomsky (1976) observes that, when the antecedent of the pronoun is focused, it also gives rise to a WCO effect, as shown in (29).

(29) \* The woman he<sub>i</sub> loved betrayed JOHN<sub>i</sub>.

The person who loves the woman cannot be John. From the ungrammaticality of (29), Chomsky deduces that “stress on John gives the word essentially the status of a

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Heim and Kratzer (1998).

bound variable”. Chomsky thus concludes that, at least at LF, the three sentences in (27)-(29) have the same structure, namely the one in (30), where ‘Q’ stays for a quantified expression, ‘pro’ stays for a pronoun, and ‘x’ stays for the variable bound by the moved Q:

(30)  $Q_i \dots \text{pro}_i \dots x_i$

As we have seen, Brody (1990) formulates the idea of LF movement in a different way. He proposes that condition (3a), which says that the specifier of a FocP must contain a [+Focus] phrase at S-structure, does not universally hold for all languages. In languages where it does not hold, like English, Focus movement takes place covertly.

Rizzi (1997) only briefly mentions the fact that Italian has also a low Focus. Assuming Chomsky’s (1976) observations about WCO, he accounts for it by saying that the focused item undergoes LF movement to the left. Thus, the representations of a high Focus and a low Focus in Italian, in Rizzi’s proposal, are the following:

(31) a. LA MAGLIETTA ha vinto Gianni.

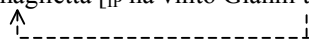
the T-shirt has won Gianni

b.  $[_{\text{FocP}} \text{La maglietta} [_{\text{IP}} \text{ha vinto Gianni } t ]]$ .

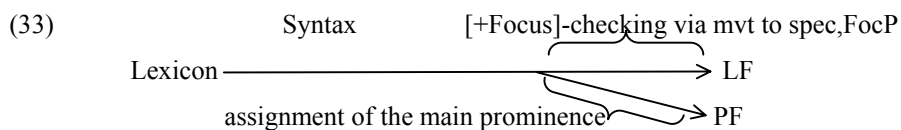
(32) a. Gianni ha vinto LA MAGLIETTA.

Gianni has won the T-shirt

b. LF:  $[_{\text{FocP}} \text{La maglietta} [_{\text{IP}} \text{ha vinto Gianni } t ]]$ .



Frascarelli (2000) observes that a theoretical problem arises with an LF-movement account for Focus in situ. Given the T-model, if Focus is interpreted only at LF, how can the main prominence be assigned to it, that is, how can PF operate on the relevant structure? As shown in (33), if the [+Focus] feature is checked in the LF branch, that is after Spell-Out, then it is not visible at the PF interface, because LF and PF can communicate only via the intermediation of syntax.



The problem is of the same type as the one seen in Chapter 2, section 6, regarding prosody-based accounts: the two interfaces must communicate directly, contra the assumed architecture of the grammar.

Consider however that the problem noticed by Frascarelli disappears if we follow the recent reformulations of the minimalist theory outlined in Chomsky

(2000, 2001). In these studies, Chomsky eliminates covert movement and replaces it with the operation Agree, which establishes a relation at distance between an element and a feature. While movement is feature-checking *plus* pied-piping of lexical material that is copied in a higher position, Agree is just feature-checking, so no movement of any sort is involved. Within this framework, Focus in situ does not move to the left covertly; rather, it checks its feature [+Focus] via Agree.

#### *4 Frascarelli (2000): feature-checking and the head-complement relation*

Let us consider Frascarelli's (2000) account for Focus more closely.

Frascarelli's account is based on an earlier version of the minimalist framework, the one outlined in Chomsky (1995), which still assumes LF movement. She proposes that the focused constituent is endowed with a [+Focus] feature that must be checked, and that is part of the lexical 'informational packaging' of a lexical item. She also assumes that the feature [+Focus] is 'strong', namely it must be checked before Spell-Out.

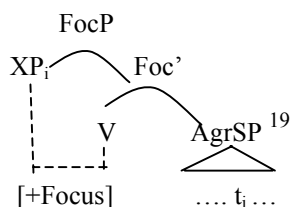
The concept of 'strength' of a feature is a peculiarity of the framework outlined by Chomsky in his 1995 book. In later work, Chomsky rejects the idea of such a property for features. 'Strength' is a meta-feature, in the sense that it is a feature of a feature, so it is not consistent with an approach that wants to be minimal. In later work, Chomsky proposes that movement can only be triggered by feature uninterpretability; in particular, by an uninterpretable generalized EPP feature, as we have already mentioned in Chapter 1.

##### *4.1 The role of the verb*

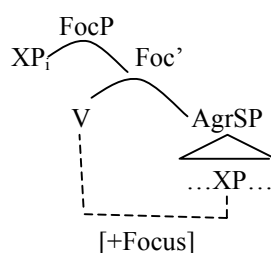
As I said, in the theoretical framework adopted by Frascarelli, LF movement is not a possible explanation for Focus in situ. In order to avoid such an operation, she therefore proposes that feature-checking is allowed not only when the focused constituent is in a spec-head relation with Foc, but also when it is in a head-complement relation with it.

The crucial point of Frascarelli's theory is the fact that the checking category for the feature [+Focus] is the verb, which must always move to Foc. It is movement of the verb that allows feature-checking: movement of the focused constituent is not an indispensable operation, and is subject to parametric variation. Languages can optionally have a structure like (34a), or one like (34b), or both:

(34) a. High Focus



b. Low Focus



In support of her hypothesis that the verb has a pivotal role in the feature-checking process, Frascarelli observes that the verb and the focused constituent are usually adjacent in natural languages, and in some languages, adjacency is even obligatory, either with a postverbal or with a preverbal Focus. Frascarelli calls these languages ‘Focus-prominent languages’.

The relation between Focus and the verb is also tight from a prosodic point of view. The Focus and the verb always form a unique prosodic phrase, namely there are no intonational breaks between the two, as it was already noted by Calabrese (1992) for Italian postverbal focused subjects.

#### 4.1.1 The spec-head relation

Frascarelli’s analysis has to face some problems concerning Italian data. Italian is not a Focus-prominent language, so it allows both structures in (34). Consider (34a). In Italian, it is possible to have lexical material between Focus and the verb, as in the example in (9a), repeated below:

(35) Credo che a Gianni QUESTO, domani, gli dovremmo dire.

(I) think that to Gianni this tomorrow (we) to-him-CL should say

The verb and the focused phrase are not in a spec-head relation, which would be necessary in order to check the [+Focus] feature. As we have seen in section 2.2.1, Rizzi explains a sentence like (35) by saying that the Focus feature is inherently

<sup>19</sup> Frascarelli assumes that AgrSP exists, unlike Chomsky (1995, Ch. 4), who eliminates the Agr heads. The presence of this head is not relevant for the analysis, though: the analysis would work in the same way even if the complement of Foc were TP.



possessed by Foc, thus I-to-C movement does not have to apply. Frascarelli must give a different explanation, because in her theory the verb must always stay in Foc, since it is the presence of the verb in Foc that allows feature-checking.

Given her assumptions, Frascarelli accounts for a sentence like (35) as follows. She proposes that a TopP is present in the left periphery, preceding FocP. *Domani*, in (35), occupies the specifier of that position. The word order in (35) is obtained by movement of the focused phrase from spec,FocP to a position higher than TopP. The structure is represented in (36).

(36) ... [<sub>WP</sub> QUESTO [<sub>TopP</sub> domani [<sub>FocP</sub> t<sub>questo</sub> [<sub>F</sub> gli dovremmo ...

In other words, since the verb cannot move, the only way in which Frascarelli can account for a sentence like (35) is to say that the focused phrase itself moves higher.

As for the landing site of such a movement, WP, Frascarelli does not define it. In a note, she acknowledges that the movement is not justifiable within a minimalist framework, because it does not meet any morphological requirement. Therefore, she considers it to be a “performance-related phenomenon, connected to spontaneous, oral speech” (Frascarelli 2000:180, fn.23).

#### 4.2 The head-complement relation

Let us consider now (34b). A crucial requirement for the focused phrase in that structure is that it must be the only phonetically realized constituent within the part of the structure dominated by AgrSP, in order for the [+Focus] feature to be checked. The presence of other XPs – Frascarelli says – would interfere with the feature-checking operation, which can occur only once. Thus, Frascarelli predicts that all non-focused post-verbal material is extraposed. This is consistent with the description of Italian data given by Antinucci and Cinque (1977) in terms of ‘marginalization’. As I already explained in Chapter 2, marginalization is a phenomenon that relegates all non-focused elements at the end of the clause, after the focused one. In Frascarelli’s account, marginalization is the result of the purely syntactic requirement that feature-checking occur only once, and therefore that only one focused constituent is in the position relevant for feature-checking.<sup>20</sup>

##### 4.2.1 Post-focal Topic with resumptive clitic

Since Frascarelli assumes that the focused phrase must be the only phonetically realized constituent within the part of the structure dominated by AgrSP (the complement of Foc), then a post-focal Topic, like the one in her example below, cannot stay under AgrSP together with the focused item:

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<sup>20</sup> As for initial Focus, Frascarelli (2000:88) says that “the exhaustive spec-head relation is guaranteed by the nonrecursivity of the specF[oc]P position”.

(37) A questo NON GLIEL'HO POTUTA DARE la sufficienza.<sup>21</sup>

to this (I) not to-him-CL-it-CL could to-give the pass-mark

'I couldn't give the pass mark to this boy'

Unlike Rizzi (1997), Frascarelli assumes that there is just *one* (iterating) TopP position in the clause, preceding FocP, as we have already seen in (32). She therefore claims that the post-focal Topic *la sufficienza* is generated in that position, and the rest of the sentence undergoes 'remnant movement' to a higher position, as represented in (38):

(38)  $[_{CP} [_{WP} [_{TopP} \text{a questo } [_{FocP} [_{IP} \text{non gliel'ho potuta dare}]]]_j] [_{TopP} \text{la sufficienza } t_j]]]$

Being the post-focal Topic in the left peripheral TopP node, it is not in a part of the structure dominated by AgrSP, so the problem is solved.

Nevertheless, this solution is not easy to accept. Why should movement in (38) apply? What is the trigger for it? In a footnote, Frascarelli suggests that the WP node might be an additional TopP node, since it can be freely recursive. But this hypothesis is not tenable: given that most of the moved phrase is focused (the whole IP), why should it occupy a Topic position? And if the remnant sentence in (38) does not occupy a Topic position, which position then does it occupy? This is a common problem for proposals based on remnant movement. Although it is taken for granted by a large part of the literature, remnant movement is anomalous, since a trigger for it is never evident. The fact that the landing site for such a movement is – in Frascarelli's work, as well as in others – usually represented by a non-identified WP node, is a sign that such a movement has no real motivation to occur. In (38), the reason why it is proposed seems to be just that it allows a unitary account for the right dislocated and the left dislocated object.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Post-focal Topic without resumptive clitic

Since the right-hand Topic and the left-hand Topic are in the same high TopP node, a problem for Frascarelli's account is that the right-hand Topic behaves differently from the left-hand Topic with respect to the obligatoriness of resumptive

<sup>21</sup> Frascarelli takes this sentence from the LIP (*Lessico di Italiano Parlato* 'Lexicon of Spoken Italian') corpus.

<sup>22</sup> See also the discussion in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.

clitic. While the object clitic is obligatory with left-hand Topics,<sup>23</sup> it is optional with right-hand ones, as shown by a sentence like (39), from Benincà et al. (1988):

(39) Porto DOMANI il dolce.

(I) bring tomorrow the cake

‘I’ll bring the cake tomorrow’

The presence of the resumptive clitic is crucial in Frascarelli’s account, because it is evidence of the sentence-external status of the topicalized constituent. Frascarelli thus proposes that in (39) the object *il dolce* is not a Topic, but a pragmatically non-specified element that fills a default Focus position. She proposes that it undergoes scrambling and is adjoined to VP. According to her, scrambling is a resort operation that allows the object to leave the Focus position and the preceding element (*domani*) to receive the feature [+Focus]:

(40) [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub> Porto<sub>v</sub> [<sub>AgrSP</sub> domani [<sub>AgrSP</sub> pro [<sub>AgrS</sub> t’<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> il dolce<sub>k</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>k</sub> ]]]]]]]]]



It is not clear what Frascarelli means by ‘default Focus position’. It presumably means a default position from a prosodic point of view, since she assumes a rule of stress assignment that assigns stress to the rightmost position in the clause. However, from a syntactic point of view, both *domani* and *il dolce* are Focus positions, in the sense that both are inside the part of the structure dominated by AgrSP, and both can potentially enter a feature-checking relation with the verb in Foc. The problem is rather that, in Frascarelli’s theory, a focused item must be the only element dominated by AgrS, and the feature [+Focus] can be checked only once. In (40), instead, both *domani* and *il dolce* are dominated by AgrS. The scrambling operation Frascarelli proposes does not solve this problem, since the adjoined element still remains in a structure dominated by AgrSP. The only way to account for such a problem would be to say that also the post-focal element *without* resumptive clitic is in a high, left peripheral position, or in another position out of the AgrS domain. However, this does not seem to be correct. As Cardinaletti (1998,

<sup>23</sup> In effect, it is not obligatory with Indirect Object (IO) Topics, as shown in the example below:

(i) A Luigi, (gli) parlerò domani.

to Luigi to-him-CL (I) will speak tomorrow

Frascarelli explains this difference in terms of licensing conditions of the empty element that replaces the clitic. Assuming Rizzi’s (1986) theory of *pro*, she argues that while a DO *pro* cannot be licensed by its governing head, which is the verb, an IO *pro* can be licensed by its head, which is the empty preposition selected by the verb.

2002) shows, there are several crucial differences between Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD) and a sentence like (39) that do not allow us to conclude that the two constructions are identical. I postpone a more detailed discussion on these to Chapter 5.

In order to justify the fact that the Topic material in (39) is not in the dedicated Topic position in the left periphery, Frascarelli argues that the scrambling operation is more costly than base-generation in *spec,TopP*. She notices that the construction without clitic doubling is quite rare in the LIP corpus she consulted. She also says that the construction is strongly constrained, because the focused element can only be an adverb or a subject. Moreover, the construction always involves a contrastive Focus.

Frascarelli's observations are not all true. It is not true, for instance, that only an adverb or a subject can be the focused element in that construction. This is shown by the examples below, where an indirect object (41a) and a verb (41b) precede the direct object respectively:

(41) a. Ho dato A MARIA il braccialetto.

(I) have given to Mary the bracelet

b. Maria ha PAGATO la bolletta.

Maria has paid the bill

Moreover, it is not true that Focus in these constructions can only be contrastive, as I will show in details in Chapter 5. As for the scarce presence of that construction in the LIP corpus, in Chapter 5 I will also explain how it does not depend on the construction itself, but on factors related to the pragmatic context in which that sentence can occur.

#### *4.2.3 Concluding remarks on the head-complement relation*

It does not seem to me that Frascarelli's constraint that in situ Focus must be the only constituent within the structure dominated by *AgrSP* is necessary for feature-checking purposes. In fact, if the focused element is endowed with a [+Focus] feature, it is clearly identified as the element that must enter a feature-checking relation with the verb. In Chomsky's (2000, 2001) terms, the feature-checking relation is *Agree*. The only constraint on that operation is a locality constraint. Thus, the only problem for a feature-checking operation in situ would be the presence of a third item between the verb and the focused item with the same [+Focus] feature to check. As far as an in situ feature-checking relation is allowed, and just one item is endowed with the feature [+Focus], it seems to me that no difficulties arise if more than one element stays within the structure dominated by *AgrSP*.

#### 4.3 Economy and the two checking positions for the focused item

Frascarelli's proposal that a focused item is checked either in situ or in the left periphery (cf. 34a,b) may be problematic for economy reasons.

Consider a case where the initial Numeration is made of two items, an object and a verb, and the object has a [+Focus] feature that must be checked:

(42) a. Chi inviterai?

‘Who will you invite?’

b. Inviterò MIO FRATELLO.

‘I'll invite my brother’

Let us assume for simplicity a tree where there is no AgrSP, so the complement of Foc is TP directly. The representation for (42b) is given below.

(43) [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub> inviterò [<sub>TP</sub> ~~inviterò~~ [<sub>VP</sub> ~~inviterò~~ [<sub>DP</sub> mio fratello]]]]]

When the verb reaches Foc, the [+Focus] feature of the object, which is the only phonetically realized item under TP, can be checked, so no other movement is necessary. Since all features have been checked, no other (more complex) derivation is possible, for economy reasons. In fact, if Focus movement (and movement in general) is feature-driven, as Frascarelli assumes, it can only occur if there are features to check. In particular, the object in (42b) should not be able to move to spec,FocP, because its [+Focus] feature is already checked in situ. On the contrary, a sentence with Focus in preverbal position is – as we know – possible:

(44) MIO FRATELLO inviterò t.

my brother (I) will-invite

Why should the focused item move to a higher position if its [+Focus] feature has already been checked? Frascarelli's account wrongly predicts that the focused item can never move to spec,FocP.

Note that this problem remains even if we assume that feature-checking in situ occurs via the operation Agree, rather than via Frascarelli's head-complement checking relation. Recall that, in Chomsky's (1995, 2000, 2001) model, Move is a costly operation. In Chomsky (2000, 2001), Move is described as the combination of two simpler operations: Agree and Merge. Agree is preferred over Move whenever possible. As a consequence, if feature-checking via Agree is possible in (42b), the prediction is that Move never applies, contrary to the data in (44).

#### 4.4 Operator movement at LF

Frascarelli says that movement to spec,FocP after Spell-Out must be retained. She claims that Focus shows operator-like properties both when it is high in the clause and when it is in situ.<sup>24</sup> She says that feature-checking is not a sufficient operation in order to make Focus interpretable at LF: it only creates the *conditions* for Focus to be interpreted as an operator at LF, but then (covert) movement must occur anyway. Thus, she has to maintain movement at LF.

Given that the Focus feature has already been checked, however, it is not clear how LF movement might occur. Within a minimalist framework there is no difference - apart from PF visibility, that is, phonetic realization - between operations applying before Spell-Out and those applying after Spell-Out. Thus, movement at LF is nothing more but movement of features without their lexical burden.

Thus, it is not possible to say that, after feature-checking, the focused item moves to spec,FocP at LF in order to be interpreted as an operator. No feature has to be checked with movement, so no movement at all can occur, and the focused item is interpreted as an operator in situ.

Frascarelli also points out that her LF movement analysis is different from other analyses, because LF ‘picks up’ the only in situ XP which is in a local relation with the verb in Foc at the moment of Spell-Out, while in other analyses it is not clear how selection takes place. But as we have already noticed, the focused XP does not have to be the only element within the complement of Foc, because its (checked) [+Focus] feature is sufficient to make it recognizable at LF.

#### 5 Theoretical problems with a syntactic encoding of Focus

We saw at the beginning of this Chapter that a syntactic account for Focus allows us to avoid a theoretical problem that arises within prosody-based accounts, namely the necessity that the two interfaces, PF and LF, communicate each other without the intervention of syntax. By encoding Focus within the computation through a [+Focus] feature and a dedicated Focus position (FocP) the problem does not arise, because the two interfaces now have a link in the computation, and do not need to see each other directly.

Nevertheless, a different theoretical problem arises from encoding a pragmatic category like Focus within the computation. The problem is the legitimacy of the

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<sup>24</sup> Frascarelli bears some evidence that Focus in situ is an Operator. I will present it in the next Chapter, together with several other arguments of mine in favour of a unified account for low Focus and high Focus.

formal feature [+Focus]. I am going to discuss this problem in the following sections.

### 5.1 Is [+Focus] a legitimate feature?

As we saw in Chapter 1, Chomsky (1995:225) argues that “outputs consist of nothing beyond properties of items of the lexicon (lexical features)” and therefore, that “the interface levels consist of nothing more than arrangements of lexical features” (Inclusiveness Condition). A different formulation of the same concept can be that a feature can only be a property of a terminal node.

Given Chomsky’s Inclusiveness Condition, consider now the [+Focus] feature. Since it has to be a property of an item of the lexicon, and since the focused phrase contains more than one lexical item, the feature is owned only by a certain item of the phrase at the beginning of the derivation. The rest of the phrase must receive the feature via ‘percolation’. Consider the sentence in (45b), which is fully focused:

- (45) a. Che cosa è successo?  
‘What happened?’  
b. E’ arrivata la sorella di Laura.  
is arrived the sister of Laura  
‘Laura’s sister arrived’

Let us assume that percolation occurs from the most embedded item of the phrase that has to be focused. The [+Focus] feature in (45b) is then carried by *Laura*, and percolates from there up to the whole clause. The question is: why should precisely be *Laura* that enters the derivation with that feature?<sup>25</sup> In fact, Focus interpretation

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<sup>25</sup> Selkirk (1984, 1995) assumes a different rule for Focus projection: she says that +F[ocus]-marking projects according to the argument structure of the sentence. She formulates two principles, given in (i):

- (i) Focus Projection  
a. F-marking of the head of a phrase licenses the F-marking of the phrase  
b. F-marking of an internal argument of a head licenses the F-marking of the head

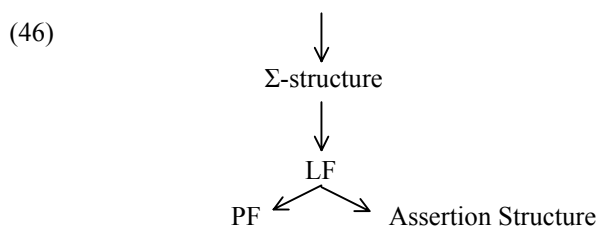
The first principle could perhaps support the idea that the feature [+Focus] pertains to a lexical item, while Focus interpretation pertains to the phrase containing it. In fact, the semantic content of a head can be considered as the main semantic content of its phrase, so there would be a relation between the F-marked head and the phrase. The second principle, however, does not support that idea at all, since the internal argument of a head does not constitute the main semantic content of the combination ‘argument + head’.

does not pertain just to *Laura*, but to a larger element. Besides, as Szendrői (2001) observes, it is counter-intuitive that in an out of the blue sentence - the most ‘neutral’ sentence, from a pragmatic point of view - the [+Focus] feature has to percolate up to the IP node, while if Focus is only on a DP, the feature does not have to percolate.

The general problem is the fact that the property of ‘focushood’ cannot be a property of a lexical item. It can involve a smaller element, or more frequently a larger one. Thus, the feature [+Focus] violates Chomsky’s Inclusiveness Condition. As Szendrői (2001:127) concludes, “[+Focus] is nothing more than a diacritic introduced into the computation to account for something that does not directly relate to the lexical item bearing [+Focus]”.

A way to escape this problem can be to modify the Inclusiveness Condition. This is what Zubizarreta (1998) does. We have seen in the previous Chapter (section 4.2), that Zubizarreta (1998) accounts for a preverbal Focus by postulating a syntactic position like the one discussed in this Chapter, and that she assumes that movement takes place in order to check a [+Focus] feature. Zubizarreta acknowledges that the idea of such a feature is inconsistent with Chomsky’s Inclusiveness Condition. According to her, [+Focus] must denote “a global relational property of the entire phrase marker”. In fact, “it corresponds to a semantic contrast between two classes of categories in the structure” (Zubizarreta 1998:30).<sup>26</sup>

In order to maintain her analysis, Zubizarreta proposes to weaken Chomsky’s Inclusiveness Condition, and claims that that condition requires that “the interface levels consist of nothing more than arrangements of lexical features *and interpretations of the arrangement of categories within the phrase marker in terms of the focus/nonfocus distinction*”. What does this modification mean? In Chapter 2 we have seen that Zubizarreta modifies the architecture of the grammar as in (42):



<sup>26</sup> The relational property of Focus highlighted by Zubizarreta reminds somewhat that of theta-roles. As Chomsky (1995) points out, theta-roles are not properties of lexical items, but relational properties. Following Hale and Keyser’s (1993) approach to theta-theory, Chomsky argues that theta-roles are properties assigned in a certain structural configuration. As a consequence, theta-roles cannot be morphological features.



The level of  $\Sigma$ -structure is the level where a unique phrase marker is present in the derivation. Prosodic rules and prosodic operations related to Focus like the NSR, or prosodically-motivated movements, apply between the level of  $\Sigma$ -structure and LF. Zubizarreta says that, at that level, the feature [+Focus] is assigned *to the entire phrase marker*. This means that no lexical item enters the derivation with the [+Focus] feature; the feature comes into play at a certain point of the derivation, when a unique phrase marker is formed.

Concluding, the feature [+Focus] cannot be considered as a lexical feature, so it violates Chomsky's Inclusiveness Condition. Therefore, a [+Focus] feature can be accepted only if we modify the Inclusiveness Condition (and the model of the grammar), as Zubizarreta (1998) for instance does.

### 5.2 *The [+Focus] feature and feature-checking*

The [+Focus] feature is problematic also from the point of view of the feature-checking operation. As we have seen in the Introduction to this book, the mechanism of feature-checking in Chomsky (2000, 2001) is based on the matching of uninterpretable features with interpretable features of the same type.

Uninterpretability of features has been conceived by Chomsky in order to account for the asymmetry that arises in subject-verb agreement between the interpretability of phi-features (person, number, gender, etc.) of the subject, and the uninterpretability of the same phi-features on the verb. It seems to me that an analogous empirical motivation for Chomsky's formalization is missing as far as A'-movements are concerned.

Consider wh-movement. Chomsky (2000) suggests that the wh-phrase has an uninterpretable [+Wh] feature to check and an interpretable [+Q] (Quantificational) feature "which matches the uninterpretable Q of a complementizer". The wh-phrase moves in order to check its uninterpretable [+Wh] feature; the target for movement (the 'probe', in Chomsky's terminology) checks its uninterpretable [+Q] feature by matching with the corresponding interpretable feature of the wh-phrase. While it is intuitive that the [+Q] feature of the probe is uninterpretable and that of the wh-phrase is interpretable, it is not clear to me why the [+Wh] feature of the wh-phrase should be uninterpretable. The reason for that seems to be only a theory internal one.

At any event, even if the mechanism of feature-checking that Chomsky proposes is accepted for wh-phrases, much harder is to consider it valid for other types of A'-movement. As Chomsky (2001) himself notices, wh-movement "is the easiest case of A'-movement, since there are grounds to believe that features of probe and goal are involved. In other cases (e.g. topicalization, VP-fronting), postulation of features is much more stipulative". It seems to me that one of the other cases Chomsky refers to is precisely Focus movement. The focused item should have an uninterpretable feature [+Focus], and the Foc head should have an uninterpretable feature, say

[+Q],<sup>27</sup> whose corresponding interpretable feature is carried by the focused item. Again, such a complex machinery does not originate from a clear intuition of an asymmetry, but it seems to be only the result of theory-internal needs.<sup>28</sup> This is another point in disfavour of the idea that a feature [+Focus] exists.

### 6 Contrast vs new-information

Rizzi (1997) assumes that the structural Focus position on the left periphery in Italian is restricted to Focus expressing contrast, and therefore a preverbal Focus is unacceptable as an answer to a wh-question. The low Focus position, instead, can host either a contrastive Focus or a non-contrastive one:

- (47) a. Che cosa ha vinto Gianni?  
‘What did Gianni win?’  
b. Gianni ha vinto LA MAGLIETTA.  
Gianni has won the T-shirt  
c. ?? LA MAGLIETTA ha vinto, Gianni.
- (48) a. La felpa, l’ha vinta Gianni.  
‘Gianni won the sweatshirt’  
b. No, Gianni ha vinto LA MAGLIETTA.  
c. No, LA MAGLIETTA ha vinto Gianni.

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<sup>27</sup> Recall that in Rizzi’s (1997) account a focused item and a wh-phrase reach the same position, spec,FocP.

<sup>28</sup> A radical criticism of Chomsky’s feature-checking mechanism based on uninterpretable features is given by Brody (1997, 1998) and Manzini and Savoia (2002, in press a, in press b, forthcoming). In their reformulations of the minimalist model, feature uninterpretable is totally excluded. Brody states a ‘radical interpretability’ condition that requires all syntactic elements to be semantically interpretable. In his proposal, a feature is present in the sentence in more than one lexical item. Since all features are interpretable, they are redundant at LF, where they must be interpreted as a single unit. Feature-checking thus occurs in order to eliminate these duplications at LF. Manzini and Savoia assume that “there are only categorical properties, systematically associated with an interpretation at the interface”. Their model excludes feature-checking tout court. As an example, in order to account for subject-verb agreement, they propose that verb inflection, subject clitic, and lexical subject are all manifestations of the same argument of the verb, in so far as they form a chain; each element of the chain has different (interpretable) properties that contribute the denotation of the argument at the interface.

How can this assumption concerning Focus interpretation fit into his proposal? In fact, it cannot. If a low Focus moves covertly to the same position as that of the high Focus, it should have the same properties as the high one. Instead, it can also carry plain new information, without involving any contrast.

Frascarelli (2000) says that, for reasons of economy, the option of Focus in situ is preferable than that of Focus in spec,FocP, because movement is a costly operation. According to Frascarelli, the cost of the operation explains why overt movement of the focused constituent to spec,FocP is more constrained than covert movement, namely is associated with a contrastive reading only. I have already pointed out in section 4.3 that, if feature-checking with Focus in situ successfully applies, then the derivation with Focus in spec,FocP shouldn't be available at all, because more costly.<sup>29</sup> A feature-checking account does not leave space to optionality: either a feature is checked, or it is not. Anyway, even accepting that derivation, it is not clear why the contrastive interpretation should be the only admitted interpretation. In fact, I have said that in Frascarelli's analysis Focus interpretation does not reflect any syntactic distinction. The two constructions in (34a) and (34b) are in principle available for any kind of Focus, and she brings convincing arguments<sup>30</sup> that Foci with different interpretations have the same syntactic properties. Thus, the restriction of 'new information' to low Focus is not clearly justified.

In sum, the difference between an in situ Focus that may have all kinds of interpretations and a moved Focus that can only have a contrastive interpretation causes several problems to the accounts analysed so far.

There are two possibilities at this point. One is to take seriously the difference between Focus expressing contrast and Focus expressing just new information; that is, we have to assume that 'contrast' and 'new information' are semantic differences that make the two Foci two distinct grammatical objects, and to propose two independent syntactic constructions for each object. The second possibility is to show that the differences between the two Foci are only apparent, and to demonstrate that their syntax is therefore the same.

The first path is taken for instance by Belletti (1999, 2001, 2002). She assumes that there are two distinct Foci in Italian, and proposes that the interpretive differences between the two are encoded in the syntax by means of two different structural positions, a high FocP and a low FocP. Her analysis will be discussed in

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<sup>29</sup> If contrast were a property available *only* in the left periphery, then that position could be justified. We could say that a different feature exists, say a [+contrastive] feature, which triggers overt movement. But contrast is a property available also when Focus is low: any interpretation is available when Focus is low. Thus, this explanation cannot be given.

<sup>30</sup> See next Chapter.

details in Chapter 5, where I will show that, other than not motivated by interface differences, the analysis is also not convincing from a purely syntactic point of view.

The path I will take in this book, on the contrary, is the other one. In the following Chapters, I will challenge the idea that there are two semantically different Foci in Italian, and I will show that their syntax is in fact the same; in particular, I will claim that also Focus that does not express contrast can move to a left peripheral position.<sup>31</sup>

### 7 Conclusions

In this Chapter I have analysed those works that encode Focus syntactically by means of a [+Focus] feature and of a Focus head (Foc), whose specifier hosts the focused element. I have shown that these works can account easily for Focus in the left periphery. In fact, Focus movement can be seen as a way to create a feature-checking configuration necessary to check a [+Focus] feature. Moreover, Focus has operator properties, so movement can be interpreted as movement of the Focus operator to its scope position, from where it binds a variable in situ, like other operators do (Wh-phrases, universal quantifiers, etc.).

Unfortunately, this analysis encounters a serious theoretical problem related to the legitimacy of a formal feature representing the property of Focus in syntax. Such a feature violates Chomsky's Inclusiveness Condition, which says that features are exclusively properties of lexical items. Focus cannot be a property of a lexical item, so a 'percolation' rule must be postulated that spreads the feature to the whole phrase interpreted as focused. Apart from that, the existence of a feature-checking operation for the property of Focus seems to have a theory-internal motivation only.

Finally, these analyses can be taken into account only if we solve the problem of the (apparently) different syntactic behaviour of Focus when it is in situ and when it is in the left periphery. Within a unified account for Focus as that given by the studies above, one should try to make sure that Focus is always the same from both an interpretive and a prosodic point of view. Frascarelli (2000) bears some arguments in favour of such a hypothesis, as we will see in the course of the next Chapter. However, I think that more detailed evidence needs to be given. I will provide it in the next Chapter. On the basis of Italian data, I will demonstrate that Focus behaves in the same way both from an interpretive and from a prosodic point of view.

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<sup>31</sup> In the following Chapter, I will not only consider Focus interpretation, but also its prosody, and I will bear evidence that, contrary to what is assumed, Focus is unique even from a prosodic point of view. It will turn out that the distinction between the two Foci is not justified at *either* interface.

## Chapter 4

## Unification of Focus: the interfaces

### *1 Introduction*

In the previous Chapters we have seen that most analyses of Focus in Italian and in other languages assume that, while a low Focus can express either contrast or plain, new information, a left peripheral Focus can only have a contrastive interpretation. The impossibility for a high Focus to express new information is purportedly shown by the fact that it cannot answer a wh-question. The examples below show the difference between the behaviour of Focus in a Wh-Question-Answer (WhQA) pair and in a contrastive context:<sup>32</sup>

- (1) a. Che cosa ha vinto Gianni?  
‘What did Gianni win?’  
b. Gianni ha vinto **la maglietta**.  
Gianni has won the T-shirt  
c.?? **La maglietta** ha vinto Gianni.  
the T-shirt has won Gianni
- (2) a. La felpa, l’ha vinta Gianni.  
‘Gianni won the sweatshirt’  
b. No, Gianni ha vinto **LA MAGLIETTA**.  
no Gianni has won the T-shirt  
c. No, **LA MAGLIETTA** ha vinto Gianni.  
no the T-shirt has won Gianni

At the end of the previous Chapter, I have pointed out that the different behaviour of Focus in the two positions can be accounted for in two opposite ways. Either we assume that this difference reflects a syntactic one, as Belletti (1999, 2001, 2002) does, or, if we make the hypothesis that the two Foci have the same

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<sup>32</sup> All through this Chapter, I indicate information Focus with boldface, and contrastive Focus with capital letters.

syntax, we demonstrate that the interpretive differences they display are only apparent. The latter is the way I intend to take now.

The most exhaustive analysis of the properties of Focus in (1) and (2), and the most explicit proposal that there are two different grammatical objects called ‘Focus’, is given by É. Kiss (1998) in her paper on ‘Identificational Focus’ vs ‘Information Focus’. In section 3, I will discuss É. Kiss’s arguments in favour of an interpretive distinction between the two Foci. I will demonstrate that, at least for Italian, her arguments do not hold.

The authors who claim that two different Foci exist in the grammar do not consider only the LF interface: they also highlight the differences at PF. In particular, it is commonly believed that a contrastive Focus and an information Focus carry different stresses (Zubizarreta 1998, Donati and Nespor 2003, Belletti 2002, etc.). In section 4 of this Chapter, I will provide evidence that also from a prosodic point of view no relevant differences exist between two Foci, at least in Italian. The conclusions I will draw in section 5 are that there are no *interface* differences between the two Foci in (1) and (2).

## 2 ‘Identificational Focus’ vs ‘Information Focus’

É. Kiss (1998) proposes that two distinct grammatical objects lay behind the phenomenon of Focus in natural languages. She calls these two objects ‘Identificational Focus’ and ‘Information Focus’. She bases her claim mainly on data from Hungarian and English, but suggests that the distinction holds for other languages as well, among which Italian. According to her, Identificational Focus in Italian is expressed by Focus in (2).

É. Kiss’s arguments in favour of the existence of two distinct Foci are listed below:

(3) a. The Identificational Focus expresses exhaustive identification; the Information Focus merely conveys non-presupposed information.

b. Universal quantifiers, *also*-phrases, *even*-phrases, *some*-phrases cannot function as Identificational Focus; the type of constituents that can function as Information Focus is not restricted.

c. The Identificational Focus does, the Information Focus does not, take scope.

d. The Identificational Focus involves movement, the Information Focus does not.

e. An Identificational Focus must be an XP available for movement, an Information Focus can be either smaller or larger.

f. An Identificational Focus can be iterated; an Information Focus can project.<sup>33</sup>

The former three points are about Focus interpretation. I am going to discuss them in the following sections, and check whether they are consistent with Italian data. The latter three points are about the syntactic differences between the two Foci. I will discuss them in the next Chapter. As for Focus projection (second statement of point 3f), I will discuss it in section 4, where I will consider the prosodic differences between the two Foci. In fact, restrictions on Focus projection are usually ascribed to the properties of the assigned stress.

### 3 Interpretive differences

The interpretive property that distinguishes the two Foci according to É. Kiss (1998) is that of ‘exhaustive identification’ (see 3a). A focused constituent expresses exhaustive identification when it identifies *a unique referent* from the context to be interpreted as Focus. According to É. Kiss, this property pertains to Identificational Focus only, while Information Focus simply expresses new, non-presupposed information.

É. Kiss provides three pieces of evidence that an Identificational Focus expresses exhaustive identification, and an Information Focus does not. They are presented in the following three sections.

#### 3.1 Exhaustive identification

The first piece of evidence É. Kiss gives that Identificational Focus expresses exhaustive identification and Information Focus does not is the comparison of the two Foci in dialogues where the first sentence contains a Focus and the second one denies the uniqueness of the referent identified by that Focus. The dialogue is inappropriate if Focus in the first sentence does not express exhaustive identification. One of É. Kiss’s examples is reported in (4) and (5):

(4) a. Mari EGY KALAPOT nézett ki magának.

Mary a hat-acc picked out herself-acc

‘It was a hat that Mary picked for herself’

b. Nem, egy kabátot is ki nézett.

no a coat too out picked

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<sup>33</sup> A view similar to É. Kiss’s one is taken by Tsimpli (1995) for Greek. But see Gryllia (2003) for some arguments against Tsimpli’s analysis.



‘No, she picked a coat, too’

(5) a. Mari ki nézett magának **egy kalapot**.

Mary out picked herself a hat

‘Mary picked herself a hat’

b. # Nem, egy kabátot is ki nézett.

# ‘No, she picked a coat, too’

In (4), the identificationaly focused object represents the only thing Mary picked for herself; in (5), where the object is informationally focused, ‘a hat’ is just one of the possible things that she could have picked for herself. The b sentences deny that Mary picked only one thing, therefore, they are appropriate only if they follow a sentence that asserts that Mary picked only one thing. In English, É. Kiss argues, the same results are obtained when the sentence is a cleft (see the translations of 4 and 5).

Consider now the Italian example corresponding to (4):

(6) a. UN CAPPELLO ha comprato Maria.

a hat has bought Maria

‘It is a hat that Maria bought’

b. # No, ha comprato anche un cappotto.

no has bought too a hat

‘No, she bought a coat too’

(6a) cannot be followed by a sentence like (6b). Therefore, *il cappello* in (6a) does not express exhaustive identification.<sup>34</sup>

The unacceptability of the exchange in (6) is even clearer if we compare it with an exchange where the first sentence contains a Focus associated with *solo* ‘only’. *Only*-phrases inherently express exhaustive identification, so the exchange should be perfect in this case. This is in fact born out by the example below:

(7) a. Maria ha comprato solo un cappello.

Maria has bought only a hat

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<sup>34</sup> See Gryllia (2003) for an application of this test to Greek sentences. Gryllia’s data show that a focused item in Greek can be exhaustive even when it occupies a low position in the clause. On the other hand, Gryllia also shows that a focused item in the left periphery, if inserted in an appropriate context, can be interpreted as non-exhaustive.

‘Maria bought only a hat’

b. No, ha comprato anche un cappotto.

no (she) has bought also a coat

‘No, she bought a coat too’

The exchange in (7) is as good as the Hungarian one in (4). In fact, the sentence in (7a) excludes that Mary bought something else apart from a hat.

Another example É. Kiss reports is the following:

(8) a. Hol jártál a nyáron?

‘Where did you go in the summer?’

b. Jártam **Olaszországban**.

went-I Italy-to

‘I went to Italy [among other places]’.

c. **OLASZORSZÁGBAN** jártam.

Italy-to went-I

‘It was Italy where I went’

É. Kiss says that the meaning of sentence (8b) is that Italy isn’t the only place where the speaker went in the summer. Sentence (8c) means that the speaker went to Italy and didn’t go to any other place.<sup>35</sup>

In the corresponding Italian example, no difference in meaning is found between an answer with a low Focus and an answer with a high Focus:

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<sup>35</sup> Szendrői (2001) suggests that the differences between (8b) and (8c) are not between two types of Focus, but between a DP Focus and a VP Focus. When the VP is focused, stress in Hungarian falls both on the verb and on the complement. The verb in (8), though, is semantically empty, therefore it never bears stress. Szendrői argues that if a different verb is chosen, like in (i) below, an answer without Focus movement becomes marginal, showing that it does not have a DP Focus, but a wider Focus on the VP.

(i) a. Hol nyaraltál a nyáron?

‘Where did you have holidays in the summer?’

b. ?\* Nyaraltam Olaszországban.

had-holidays-I Italy-in

If Szendrői’s observation is correct, then also the distinction proposed by É. Kiss for Hungarian loses its strength.

- (9) a. Dove sei andata quest'estate?  
 'Where did you go last summer?'
- b. Sono andata **in Francia**.  
 (I) have gone in France  
 'I went to France'
- c. ?? IN FRANCIA sono andata.  
 in France (I) have gone  
 'It was France where I went'

The only difference is that (9c) is marginal as an answer to a wh-question. This fact though does not mean that there is a semantic difference between a preverbal Focus and a postverbal Focus. No constraint exists for Focus with exhaustive interpretation that prevents Focus from answering a wh-question, as it is confirmed by the Hungarian example in (8c), which is fully grammatical. In any case, to the extent that (9c) is acceptable, it does not mean that I went only to France: I could have been in other places as well.

In a parallel fashion to (7) above, if we add the adverb *solo* 'only' to Focus in (9), the sentence expresses exclusion:

- (10) a. Dove sei andata quest'estate?  
 'Where did you go last summer?'
- b. Sono andata solo in Francia.  
 (I) have gone only in France  
 'I went only to France'

The sentence in (10b) means that I went to France and I didn't go to any other place, like the Hungarian sentence in (8c).

### 3.2 *Lexical restrictions*

The second piece of evidence É. Kiss provides in favour of the hypothesis that Identificational Focus expresses exhaustive identification is the fact that an Identificational Focus cannot be a universal quantifier, an *also-* or *even-*phrase and an existential quantifier. These lexical restrictions are absent with Information Focus.

Since the Identificational Focus expresses exhaustiveness, it performs a semantic operation characterized as ‘exclusion by identification’.<sup>36</sup> The expressions mentioned above, instead, perform identification *without* exclusion. Therefore – É. Kiss argues – their meaning is incompatible with the meaning of Identificational Focus. That explains why they cannot occur in an Identificational Focus position.

Putting aside existential quantifiers for the moment, consider the other cases, in É. Kiss’s examples below:

(11) Universal quantifiers

\* Mari MINDEN KALAPOT nézett ki magának.

Mary every hat picked out herself-DAT

\* ‘It was every hat that Mary picked for herself’

(12) *Also*-phrases

\* Mari EGY KALAPOT IS nézett ki magának.

Mary a hat also picked out herself-DAT

? ‘It was also a hat that Mary picked for herself’

(13) *Even*-phrases

\* Mari MÉG EGY KALAPOT IS nézett ki magának.

Mary even a hat also picked out herself-DAT

\* ‘It was even a hat that Mary picked for herself’

Both in Hungarian and in English sentences in (11)-(13) are ungrammatical.

In Italian, the same expressions can function as preverbal contrastive Foci. Sentences in (14a-c) are fully grammatical.<sup>37</sup>

(14) a. OGNI PROPOSTA ho preso in considerazione.

every proposal (I) have taken into account

‘It is every proposal that I took into account’

b. Anche UN CAPPELLO gli ha comprato Maria.

<sup>36</sup> É. Kiss borrows this definition from Kenesei (1986).

<sup>37</sup> See Gryllia (2003) for an application of this test to Greek sentences. Gryllia’s data show that, like Italian Focus, Greek Focus can associate with *also* and *even* in preverbal position (e.g.: Και σοκολάτα τρώει ‘Also *chocolate* (he/she) eats’).

also a hat                    to-him-CL has bought Maria

‘It is also a hat that Maria bought him’

c. Persino UN CAPPELLO gli ha comprato Maria.

even    a hat                    to-him-CL has bought Maria

‘It was even a hat that Maria bought him’

As expected, the corresponding sentences with *only*-phrases are ungrammatical:

(15) a. \* Ho preso in considerazione solo ogni proposta.

(I) have taken into account only every proposal

b. \* Maria gli ha comprato solo anche un cappello.

Maria to-him<sub>ci</sub> has bought only also a hat

c. \* Maria gli ha comprato solo persino un cappello.

Maria to-him-CL has bought only even a hat

As for existential quantifiers, É. Kiss herself observes that in Hungarian an existential quantifier is bad also when it functions as Information Focus. The same happens in Italian:

(16) a. Chi stai aspettando?

‘Who are you waiting for?’

b. # Sto aspettando **qualcuno**.

‘I am waiting for someone’

Therefore, the incompatibility of an existential quantifier with focus doesn’t say anything about the difference between two types of focus.

I think that the problem with an existential quantifier is its poor informative content, which doesn’t make it a good candidate to represent the Focus of the sentence. This is confirmed by the fact that the quantifier is accepted as Focus if it can be informative enough, like in the following context:

(17) a. Stai aspettando l’autobus?

‘Are you waiting for the bus?’

b. No, sto aspettando QUALCUNO.

‘No, I am waiting for someone’

The quantifier is informative because it indicates that I am waiting for a person, not for a bus. Otherwise, the quantifier can be sufficiently informative if it is included in a wider focus, so that it is not the only informative part of the sentence, as in (18b) below.<sup>38</sup>

(18) a. Che cosa stai facendo?

‘What are you doing?’

b. **Sto aspettando qualcuno.**

‘I am waiting for someone’

### 3.3 Scope

In point (3c), É. Kiss says that only Identificational Focus takes scope. This property is relevant for the claim that Identificational Focus expresses exhaustive identification and Information Focus doesn't. In fact, exhaustive identification is a property of *only*-phrases, and it is a well known fact that *only*-phrases take scope.<sup>39</sup> Besides, É. Kiss points out that it is precisely the property of exhaustive identification that interacts with the property of other scope-taking elements. This is clear by looking at her example in (19), where an Identificational Focus interacts with the scope of a universal quantifier:

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<sup>38</sup> An anonymous reviewer of Brunetti (submitted) points out that the incompatibility of an existential quantifier with a Focus position might be due to the incompatibility between an existential quantifier and *referentiality* (cf. Cinque 1990) induced by the preceding sentence. If the sentence is a question like (16a), *chi* ‘who’ presumes a referential argument in the answer; if the preceding sentence is in contrast with the following one, the existential quantifier must refer to some specific individual to be contrasted with the individual of the preceding sentence. Evidence comes from the example the reviewer gives, reported below, where the context does not induce referentiality, and the existential quantifier can, in fact, be focused:

(i) a. Tutti i tuoi amici si sono sposati. E tu? Cosa aspetti?

‘Your friends all got married. And you? What are you waiting for?’

b. Aspetto qualcuno!

‘I’m waiting for someone!’

Of course, if the unacceptability of an existential quantifier as Focus is due to referentiality, my claim remains valid that that unacceptability does not bear any argument in favour of a distinction between two types of Focus.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. Longobardi (1992) for Italian.

- (19) a. Minden fiú MARIVAL akart táncolni.  $\forall \gg$  Exhaustive identification  
 every boy Mary-with wanted to-dance  
 ‘For every boy, it was Mary (of the relevant persons) that he wanted to dance with’
- b. MARIVAL akart táncolni minden fiú. Exhaustive identification  $\gg \forall$   
 Mary-with wanted to-dance every boy  
 ‘It was Mary (of the relevant persons) that every boy wanted to dance with’

According to what É. Kiss says, the meaning of (19a) is that every boy wanted to dance with one of the girls present in the ballroom, and did not want to dance with any other girl (universal quantification takes scope over exhaustive identification). The meaning of (19b), instead, is that Mary is the only girl in the ballroom that was asked to dance by all the boys; the other girls may have been asked to dance by smaller subsets of boys (exhaustive identification takes scope over universal quantification).

In (20), É. Kiss’s example with Information Focus is given. Here, the universal quantifier takes scope over the whole sentence. The example may be true in any situation in which some or all the boys wanted to dance with more than one person:<sup>40</sup>

- (20) a. Kikkel akartak táncolni a fiúk?  
 who-with wanted to-dance the boys  
 ‘Who did the boys want to-dance with?’
- b. Minden fiú táncolni akart **a szépségkirálynővel**.  
 every boy to-dance wanted the beauty-queen-with  
 ‘Every boy wanted to dance with they beauty queen’

Consider now the Italian example in (21), corresponding to the Hungarian one in (19):

- (21) a. Ogni ragazzo CON MARIA voleva ballare.  
 every boy with Maria wanted to-dance

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<sup>40</sup> It is not clear to me though how É. Kiss can show that this Focus does not take scope, given that she does not compare (20b) with a sentence with the opposite order of the two scope-taking elements, namely with the focused item occupying a position higher than that of the universal quantifier.

‘For every boy it was Maria that he wanted to dance with’

b. CON MARIA voleva ballare ogni ragazzo.

with Maria wanted to-dance every boy

‘It was with Maria that every boy wanted to dance with’

The truth value of each sentence is the same. Both (21a) and (21b) mean that all the boys wanted to dance with one person, and that this person is Mary; neither sentence excludes that some boy wanted to dance also with other girls. In fact, since the focused item has a meaning that does not entail exclusion, no property of exhaustive identification can interact with the property of universal quantification. The proper name behaves like any other definite DP, so it does not take scope.

In the corresponding sentences with *only*-phrases, instead, scope differences again are evident, since the property of exhaustive identification is given by *solo* ‘only’:

(22) a. Ogni ragazzo, solo con Maria voleva ballare.  $\forall \gg$  Exhaustive identification  
every boy only with Maria wanted to-dance

b. Solo con Maria, voleva ballare ogni ragazzo. Exhaustive identification  $\gg \forall$   
only with Maria wanted to-dance every boy

The meaning of (22a) and (22b) is the same as that of the corresponding Hungarian sentences in (19a) and (19b) respectively.

### 3.3.1 Operator vs non-operator

É. Kiss says that, if Identificational Focus takes scope and Information Focus does not, then only the former must be an operator.

In order to prove that, she considers WCO effects. Hungarian does not display WCO effects, so she looks at the corresponding English examples in (23):

(23) a. ?? It was TO A BOY<sub>i</sub> that his<sub>i</sub> mother spoke t<sub>i</sub>.

b. ?? His<sub>i</sub> mother spoke **to a boy**<sub>i</sub>.

The sentence in (23a) displays a WCO effect, as expected, because Focus within a cleft in English is Identificational. As for (23b), according to É. Kiss its unacceptability is not due to WCO, but to the fact that “the referent of a boy is first referred to by the unstressed pronoun as an individual already present in the domain of discourse, and then it is introduced by the information focus as new information” (É. Kiss 1998:255). As a piece of evidence for that, she notes that in Hungarian, although WCO effects are absent, the example corresponding to (23b) with Information Focus has the same degree of ungrammaticality:



- (24) a. EGY FIÚ<sub>t</sub><sub>i</sub> szólított meg t<sub>i</sub> az *pro*<sub>i</sub> anyja.  
 a boy-ACC spoke PERF the mother
- b. ?? Meg szólított az *pro*<sub>i</sub> anyja egy fiú<sub>t</sub><sub>i</sub>.  
 PERF spoke the mother a boy-ACC

Nevertheless, in a footnote É. Kiss observes that if in (24b) we replace the indefinite *egy fiút* with a proper name, the sentence is grammatical, whereas the corresponding English one is still ungrammatical:

- (25) a. Hallom, hogy Péterrel beszélt az anyja. És beszélt az *pro*<sub>i</sub> anyja **Jánossal**<sub>i</sub>!  
 hear-I that Péter-with spoke his mother and spoke his mother John-with
- b. ?? His<sub>i</sub> mother spoke **to John**<sub>i</sub>.

As É. Kiss herself acknowledges, this could mean that the unacceptability of (24b) with Information Focus is due to WCO.

That seems in fact to be the case as far as Italian is concerned. In Chapter 3, section 2.3, we have seen that an Italian left peripheral Focus is subject to WCO effects. Rizzi's relevant example was the following:

- (26) ?? GIANNI<sub>i</sub> sua<sub>i</sub> madre ha sempre apprezzato t<sub>i</sub> (non Piero).  
 Gianni his mother has always appreciated not Piero

In that Chapter, I also mentioned that Frascarelli (2000) bears some pieces of evidence for the claim that both a moved Focus and a Focus in situ have operator-like properties. I am going to present her evidence now.

Frascarelli shows that WCO effects are present with an in situ information Focus. Her example is given below. The person whose parents saw Luigi cannot be Luigi.

- (27) a. \* Chi<sub>i</sub> hanno visto i suoi<sub>i</sub> genitori?  
 'Who did his parents see?'
- b. \* I suoi<sub>i</sub> genitori hanno visto **Luigi**<sub>i</sub>.  
 the his parents have seen Luigi

The second piece of evidence Frascarelli provides is Parasitic Gap (PG) licensing. A PG is a null element whose antecedent is identical to that of a second null element occurring in the same sentence, and which is licensed by that second null element. Frascarelli shows that a Focus in Italian licenses a PG not only when it is in a preverbal position (and therefore it has moved and left a trace, cf. 28), but also when it stays in situ, as in (29b).

(28) UN LIBRO DI STATISTICA<sub>i</sub> ho buttato via t<sub>i</sub> senza leggere t<sub>i</sub>.

a book of statistics (I) have thrown away without to-read

(29) a. Che cosa<sub>i</sub> hai buttato via t<sub>i</sub> senza leggere t<sub>i</sub> ?

‘What did you throw away without reading?’

b. Ho buttato via t<sub>i</sub> senza leggere t<sub>i</sub> **un libro di statistica**<sub>i</sub>.

(I) have thrown away without to-read a book of statistics

‘I threw away without reading a book about statistics’

In conclusion, a focused item in Italian displays operator-like properties both when it moves to the left periphery and when it stays in situ, and both when it triggers contrast and when it expresses new information. Therefore, É. Kiss’s distinction between operator Focus and non-operator Focus does not seem to hold in Italian.

### 3.4 A parenthesis on clefts

We have seen that, according to É. Kiss (1998), Identificational Focus in English is represented by a cleft. Given that, in Italian, Focus never expresses exhaustive identification, one might ask whether also in this language it is Focus in clefts that expresses exhaustive identification. The answer seems to be no, although the data are not clearly defined in this respect.

Consider the sentence below, which corresponds to the example with preverbal Focus in (6a).

(30) a. E’ UN CAPPELLO che ha comprato Maria.

‘It is a hat that Maria bought’

b. # No, ha comprato anche un cappotto.

‘No, she bought the coat too’

The sentence in (30b) is not a good continuation of that in (30a); therefore, as I said in section 3.1, the focused constituent in (30a) does not express exhaustive identification.

When a focused item is a quantifier, according to Benincà et al. (1988:219), clefts are completely ungrammatical, while sentences with Focus on the left are perfectly fine. Their examples are the following:

(31) a. \* E’ QUALCUNO che sto aspettando.

(it) is someone that (I) am waiting for

- b. \* E' TUTTO che è caduto.  
(it) is everything that is fallen
- c. \* E' NESSUNO che (non) ho incontrato.  
(it) is nobody that (I) (not) have met
- d. \* E' NIENTE che (non) mi hanno dato da mangiare.  
(it) is nothing that (they) (not) to-me-CL have given to eat
- (32) a. QUALCUNO sto aspettando.  
somebody (I) am waiting for
- b. TUTTO è caduto.  
everything is fallen
- c. NESSUNO (\* non)<sup>41</sup> ho incontrato.  
nobody (I) (not) have met
- d. NIENTE (\* non) mi hanno dato da mangiare.  
nothing (they) (not) to-me-CL have given to eat

We have already seen that (32a) in effect is fine if an appropriate context is given (cf. section 3.2). I argue that this is also the case for an existential quantifier in a cleft: it is acceptable only if the same appropriate context is given. This is shown by the grammaticality of the example below:

- (33) a. Stai aspettando l'autobus?  
'Are you waiting for the bus?'
- b. No, è QUALCUNO che sto aspettando.  
'No, it is someone that I am waiting for'

As for *tutto* 'everything', the exchange below shows that it is allowed in a cleft, contrary to Benincà et al. (1988):

- (34) a. Questa casa ha la cucina molto vecchia.  
this house has the kitchen very old

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<sup>41</sup> Benincà et al. (1988) consider the sentence grammatical either with or without the negative operator *non*. According to my judgements, instead, the presence of the operator is totally unacceptable.

‘This house has a very old kitchen’

- b. Non solo la cucina: è TUTTO qui che crolla a pezzi!

‘Not only the kitchen: it’s everything here that falls into pieces’

As for negative quantifiers, they are acceptable if the negative operator *non* is in the copula sentence of the cleft, not in the subordinate (as it is in Benincà et al.’s examples in 32c,d). Consider my examples below:

- (35) a. Sei preoccupata per qualcosa?

‘Are you worried about something?’

- b. No, no; non è NIENTE che mi preoccupa. Sono solo molto stanca.

‘No, no; it is nothing that I am worried about. I am just very tired’

- (36) a. Qualcuno ti ha detto il mio segreto!

‘Somebody told you my secret!’

- b. Non è NESSUNO che me l’ha detto. L’ho solo intuito.

‘It is nobody that told me that. I just guessed it’

There is just one case in which clefts behave differently from sentences with preverbal Focus. It is very hard to accept a cleft where the focused element is accompanied by an adverb like *anche* ‘also’ or *persino* ‘even’ (cf. 14b,c):

- (37) \*? E’ anche / persino il CAPPELLO che ha comprato Maria.

(it) is also even the hat that has bought Maria

‘It was also / even the hat that Maria bought’

The reason for such a difference remains unclear to me.

We must note, however, that even if it turned out that the interpretation of clefts in Italian is exhaustive, this would not necessarily mean that two different Foci exist in that language. É. Kiss assumes that a cleft construction in English is an Identificational Focus construction, namely it is the same construction as the one she assumes for left peripheral Focus in Hungarian: the cleft constituent (the Focus) occupies the spec of FocP, and the Foc head is occupied by the copula (which then moves further to a higher I position).

One though might also propose an analysis that goes towards the opposite direction, namely that considers both a cleft in English (and perhaps, in Italian) and Focus movement in Hungarian as constructions that are *independent* from Focus. More precisely, one might say that a focused element is always the same, but it gets an additional exhaustive interpretation when it is in the copular sentence of a cleft

or, in languages like Hungarian, when it moves to a certain position in the left periphery. Then, the exhaustiveness of left peripheral Focus would not be an inherent property of Focus, but rather, it would be a property of the position in the clause where the focused element *happens* to occur.

A proposal of this kind is precisely made by Horvath (2000) for Hungarian. Horvath claims that only one kind of Focus exists in Hungarian. The difference in interpretation between an in situ Focus and a left peripheral Focus comes from the fact that Focus can be the argument of an operator of ‘exhaustive identification’. The focused element is associated with such an operator by movement, in the same way as it is associated with operators like ‘only’, ‘also’. Therefore, the exhaustive interpretation of Focus in the left periphery comes from the exhaustive operator, not from Focus itself.

### 3.5 Contrast

From what I have said so far, I can conclude that the semantic property that according to É. Kiss differentiates Identificational Focus from Information Focus, namely the property of exhaustiveness, is never present in Italian Focus.

Nevertheless, one might wonder whether it is the effect of ‘contrast’ that has to be considered as the property that distinguishes the semantics of an Identificational Focus from that of an Information Focus in Italian. In effect, in the Italian examples I gave so far, Focus is interpreted either as contrastive or as non-contrastive. Thus, we should perhaps look at this property, rather than to exhaustive identification, to understand whether there are two semantically distinct Foci.

In order for contrast to represent a semantic distinction between two Foci, though, contrast *has to be* a semantic property. According to several scholars, however, it is not. A first observation many linguists make (for instance Irene Heim, Rita Manzini, pp.cc.) is that Focus is *always* contrastive. When I say *I ate ravioli* and *ravioli* is focused, I contrast *ravioli* with any other possible type of pasta or food or edible object I could eat. Since I state that I ate ravioli, I state that I ate them and not something else. What else I didn’t eat depends on the discourse context in which the sentence is uttered. If the sentence is preceded by *You ate spaghetti, didn’t you?*, namely by a sentence that asserts that I ate something different from *ravioli*, Focus will be explicitly contrastive; if it is preceded by a question like *What did you eat for Christmas?*, where no alternatives to *ravioli* are made explicit, it will not be explicitly contrastive. As Lambrecht (1994:290) says, “the impression of contrast which we receive [...] arises from particular inferences which we draw on the basis of given conversational contexts”.

This kind of observation is formally expressed by Rooth (1992) in his semantic theory of Focus. I will briefly present it in the following section.

### 3.5.1 Rooth (1992)

Rooth analyses several contexts in which Focus occurs: sentences with focusing adverbs, scales, Question-Answer pairs and contrasting sentences. He proposes a unified account for Focus occurring in all those cases.

First, Rooth assumes that a focused phrase has a 'Focus semantic value'. He indicates it with the notation  $[ ]^f$ , to distinguish it from the ordinary semantic value  $[ ]^\circ$ . He defines a Focus semantic value as "a set of propositions obtainable from the ordinary semantic value by making a substitution in the position corresponding to the focused phrase" (Rooth 1992:76). For instance, the Focus semantic value of a sentence like (38a) is a set of propositions of the form 'I gave x to John', like those in (38b).

(38) a. I gave [a book]<sub>F</sub> to John.

b. I gave a book to John, I gave a cd to John, I gave a watch to John, I gave a kiss to John, I gave an advice to John, etc., etc.

Second, Rooth states that:

(39) a. Focus interpretation at the level of  $\alpha$  introduces a free variable  $\gamma$ , restricted by the formula  $\gamma \varepsilon [\alpha]^f$

b. The semantic value of any phrase  $\beta$  is a discourse object, available as an antecedent for free variables

c. If  $[\beta]^\circ \varepsilon [\alpha]^f$ , the semantic value of a phrase  $\beta$  can serve as the antecedent for the variable introduced by Focus interpretation at the level of the phrase  $\alpha$

In a sentence where a focused phrase  $\alpha$  is construed as in contrast with a phrase  $\beta$ , the semantic value of  $\beta$  constitutes the antecedent for the variable  $\gamma$  introduced by  $\alpha$ . The crucial point is that the effect of contrast is not given by the Focus, whose semantics does not change, but by the semantic object available as antecedent for the variable introduced by the focused phrase. In other words, the effect of contrast depends on what *precedes* the sentence containing the Focus, not on the Focus itself.

### 3.5.2 Conclusions on contrast

From what I have said above I can conclude that, both in a contrastive context and in a non-contrastive one, what Focus undoubtedly expresses in any possible context is new information. In semantic terms, Focus always identifies a referent for a variable. Any interpretive effect that is not strictly related to this property - such as

contrast - is not a matter of Focus, but it is the result of the discourse context in which Focus occurs.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.5.3 Italian Focus and the [+contrastive] feature in É. Kiss (1998)

É. Kiss says that languages differ with respect to the relevant property of their Identificational Focus. She argues that an Identificational Focus is characterized by two features: [±exhaustive] and [±contrastive], and that languages vary in the value of these two features. She assumes that an Identificational Focus is [+contrastive] “if it operates on a closed set of entities whose members are known to the participants of the discourse” (É. Kiss 1998:267). É. Kiss suggests that Italian Identificational Focus is [+contrastive], namely it is possible only if the domain of identification is a closed set of individuals known to the participants of the discourse.

In order to show that, she considers D-linked wh-questions. Since a D(iscourse)-linked wh-phrase requires the speaker to select an individual from a closed set of known candidates, a question with a D-linked wh-phrase requires an answer with an Identificational Focus. Therefore, Italian Identificational Focus will be recognized as the one that can answer a D-linked wh-question. É. Kiss’s examples below bear evidence for such a claim:

- (40) a. Chi ha rotto il vaso?  
‘Who broke the vase?’  
b. Il vaso, l’ha rotto **Maria**.  
the vase it-CL has broken Maria  
c. # **MARIA** ha rotto il vaso.

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<sup>42</sup> Rochemont (1986) rejects the idea of a single account for Focus because of the following example:

- (i) John hit Mary, and then SHE hit HIM.

The pronouns refer to individuals already mentioned in the discourse, so they shouldn’t be focused (although, intuitively, it is clear that the sentence as a whole *does* say something new with respect to the preceding one). Although I am aware of the fact that a better explanation of Focus needs to be given in order to account for Foci like those in (i), I would like to point out that (i) does not say much about ‘contrast’. The following example (from Schwarzschild 1999) shows that a pronoun referring to somebody just mentioned in the discourse can also be an *information* Focus:

- (ii) a. Who did John’s mother praise? b. She praised **him**.

In other words, (i) cannot be taken as evidence that contrastive Focus and information Focus are semantically different.

Maria has broken the vase

(41) a. Chi di voi due ha rotto il vaso?

‘Who of you two broke the vase?’

b. MARIA ha rotto il vaso.

Maria has broken the vase

In (40), an answer with a preverbal (that is Identificational) Focus is not allowed, because the *wh*-phrase of the question is not D-linked; in (41), the answer with preverbal Focus is possible, because the D-linked *wh*-phrase *chi di voi due* ‘who of you two’ requires that the referent for the answer be selected from a closed set of known candidates, and such a requirement is satisfied by the Identificational Focus.

I will account for É. Kiss’s examples in the next Chapter, where I will also explain the unacceptability of preverbal Focus as an answer to a *wh*-question. My explanation will not make reference to any semantic distinction between the two Foci. The difference between (40) and (41) will not be problematic for my account; rather, it will support it.

#### 4 Prosodic differences

In the preceding sections I have presented several arguments against the idea that there are two semantically different Foci in Italian. The arguments provided by É. Kiss (1998) in favour of that distinction do not work for Italian. Through the analysis of the data, Focus turned out to have a unique interpretation, namely it always expresses new information. Exhaustive identification is not a property present in Italian Focus. Contrast can be present, but it is an effect of the context, not a property of Focus itself.

What remains to see now is whether Focus is a uniform phenomenon also at the other interface, PF. I will do it in the following sections.

##### 4.1 Donati and Nespors (2003): prominence and the Focus domain

Donati and Nespors (2003) claim that there are two types of prominence for Focus, emphatic and non emphatic, and two different corresponding Focus interpretations.

More specifically, Donati and Nespors make two claims. The first is that Focus with an emphatic (contrastive) prominence cannot project. This is basically the same claim É. Kiss (1998) makes about Focus projection (see 3f). The other claim is that ‘neutral’ prominence (non-contrastive one) is associated to a Focus that cannot be smaller than a word.



In the following sections I am going to show that both claims are empirically not correct.

#### 4.1.1 Focus projection and 'contrastive' prominence

We have already mentioned Focus projection in Chapter 2. To recall, this phenomenon allows Focus to be a larger constituent than the one containing the main stress. Chomsky's (1971) famous example showing Focus projection is repeated in (42). The Focus of (42) can be taken as any of the bracketed phrases, as the sentence can be followed by any of those in (43), depending on the context.

(42) He was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [*shirt*]]]].

(43) a. No, he was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a red [*tie*]]]].

b. No, he was warned to look out for [an ex-convict [with [a *carnation*]].

c. No, he was warned to look out for [an *automobile* salesman].

d. No, he was warned [to expect a visit from the *FBI*].

e. No, he was [simply told to be more *cautious*].

Donati and Nespor say that a contrastive Focus not only cannot project, but also cannot be larger than a word. Their examples are given in (44).

(44) a. I always thought John was [ANTI]<sub>F</sub>-communist.

b. I always thought John was [WELSH]<sub>F</sub>.

c. I always thought John was \*[A YOUNG JOURNALIST]<sub>F</sub>.

Donati and Nespor's claim is easily challenged by the following example:

(45) a. Maria ha incontrato il Prof. Rossi.

'Maria met Prof. Rossi'

b. No, ha incontrato [<sub>DP</sub> IL MAESTRO [<sub>PP</sub> DELLA FIGLIA [<sub>PP</sub> DI *PIETRO*]]].

no (she) has met the teacher of the daughter of Pietro

'No, she met *Peter*'s daughter's teacher'

Obviously, stress in (45b) is on (the stressed syllable of) *Pietro* only, since stress must fall on a syllable, not on a larger element. Focus interpretation, however, clearly involves the whole DP, since it is the whole DP object that conveys a new piece of information in the sentence. Focus clearly expresses contrast, because the sentence contradicts what is said in the previous one.

No difference in stress placement is found between Focus in (45b) and Focus in (46b), which answers a wh-question and therefore expresses plain new information.

(46) a. Chi ha incontrato tua sorella?

‘Who did your sister meet?’

b. Ha incontrato [<sub>DP</sub> **il maestro** [<sub>PP</sub> **della figlia** [<sub>PP</sub> **di Pietro**]]].

‘She met Peter’s daughter’s teacher’

Note that Focus projection can also occur if the focused phrase has moved to the left, as in (47).<sup>43</sup>

(47) a. Tua sorella ha incontrato il Prof. Rossi?

‘Did your sister meet Prof. Rossi?’

b. No, [<sub>DP</sub> **IL MAESTRO** [<sub>PP</sub> **DELLA FIGLIA** [<sub>PP</sub> **DI PIETRO**]]] ha incontrato.

no the teacher of the daughter of Peter (she) has met

‘No, it was Peter’s daughter’s teacher that she met’

Further evidence for contrastive Focus projection comes from the examples below. They show that a contrastive interpretation of Focus does not prevent it from extending its domain to the whole clause:

(48) a. Hanno bussato alla porta?

‘Did someone knock the door?’

b. No, [STANNO [PIANTANDO [UN *CHIODO*]]].

‘No, they are driving a nail’

(49) a. Gianni è ingrassato perché ha mangiato molti muffins?

‘Did Gianni get fat because he ate many muffins?’

b. No, perché [HA [BEVUTO [MOLTE [*BIRRE*]]]].

‘No, because he drank many beers’

Both sentences in (48b) and (49b) are fully focused and they are clearly in contrast with what is asserted in the preceding sentence. Therefore, Focus on a whole sentence can express contrast.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Focus in (47b) cannot project to the whole sentence. But this is obvious: if Focus were the whole sentence, stress would not fall in that position, because it is not the most embedded position of the focused phrase (see Chapter 2).

<sup>44</sup> Such a claim has been made also by Rochemont (1986:67-69). He provides evidence against Ladd’s (1980) conception that there is a correlation between narrow Focus and

Summarizing, Focus projection is not restricted to Focus expressing plain new information: any focused constituent can be larger than a word, and even as large as the whole clause, if the context requires it.

#### 4.1.2 The domain of information Focus

Donati and Nespor (2003) also argue that a ‘neutral’ (= non-contrastive) prominence cannot be associated to a Focus smaller than a word. They say that a part of a compound, like *black* in the example below, can never be the information Focus of a sentence:

(50) [John [just bought [a \*[*black*]<sub>F</sub>bird]<sub>F</sub>]<sub>F</sub>].

I claim that this restriction does not depend on the type of Focus, but on purely pragmatic factors. A wh-QA pair is the more natural environment in which a focused constituent that does not express contrast can occur. Now, an answer strictly depends on its question. I think that it is such a dependence that makes certain Focus domains unacceptable in wh-QA contexts.

Consider (50). It is not possible to find a question whose answer is *black*. *Black* is part of the word *blackbird*, so its semantic content is not independent from the rest of the word. The only case in which it can bring new information by itself is one where the information given is metalinguistic. The context question for an answer with Focus expressing metalinguistic information has to be an echo question where all the background part is pronounced, and the missing part, the part I am asking about, is the one that must be focused in the answer.

A question of that type is for instance (51a) for an answer like (51b), whose Focus is just the syllable *leo*:

(51) a. Hai visto un ‘cosa’-pardo?

(you) have seen a what pard

b. Ho visto un **leopardo**.

(I) have seen a leopard

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contrast. One of his examples is given below. The sentence in (i) can be an appropriate retort to any of the sentences in (ii):

(i) Laurie followed Ralph into the *bedroom*.

(ii) a. Laurie followed Ralph into the *house*.

b. Laurie followed Ralph to *Africa*.

c. Laurie *left*.

d. Ralph went out in to the *garden*.

Note that the same kind of metalinguistic information is given by Focus in a contrastive context, as it is shown in (52). However, this context is easier to construct, since it does not have to be a wh-question

(52) a. Quel turista ha visto un ghepardo.

that tourist has seen a cheetah

b. No, ha visto un **leopardo**.

no (he) has seen a leopard

The more natural status of (52) does not challenge my claim, because again it is the context that makes Focus in (52) available, not the meaning of Focus itself. The context provides the background in which the Focus *leo-* must occur, namely *quel turista ha visto un x-pardo*. This kind of background is harder to obtain if the sentence is a wh-question; consequently, the corresponding Focus contained in the answer to the wh-question is also hard to obtain.

A similar problem related to the context regards a sentence like (53).

(53) Gianni ha comprato **un cappello** rosso.

Gianni has bought a hat red

‘Gianni bought a red hat’

Which discourse context admits a sentence where the Focus *un cappello* is not contrastive? The relevant context must be a question asking what kind of red object Gianni bought:

(54) a. Che cosa ha comprato Gianni, di rosso?

what has bought Gianni of red

‘What red object did Gianni buy?’

b. Gianni ha comprato **un cappello** rosso.

The problem with such an exchange is that the question is very specific: a context where it is plausible that somebody asks such a question is rare. The conversation must be one in which red objects are relevant, and the information missing is what kind of objects they are. As we have seen above for Focus that is a part of a word, it is easier to construct a contrastive context for this kind of Focus. In fact, a sentence where Focus expresses contrast *corrects* what is asserted in the previous sentence, so the context sentence does not have to be a wh-question.

#### 4.2 Zubizarreta (1998): the Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule

In Chapter 2, we have seen that also Zubizarreta (1998) claims that there are two different focal stresses, one that is assigned by the NSR, and one that is assigned by a different rule, called Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule (E/CSR). The formulation of the E/CSR is repeated below:

(55) Emphatic/Contrastive Stress Rule (E/CSR): A word with contrastive stress must be dominated by every focused constituent in the phrase.

According to Zubizarreta, Spanish and Italian do not have metrically invisible constituents, namely constituents that are ‘skipped’ by the NSR.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the correct matching between Focus and stress is always obtained in the most embedded position of the clause, where the NSR assigns stress. If, in these languages, a focused element appears in a different position than the NS position, the corresponding stress is not assigned by the NSR, but by the E/CSR. A Focus receiving stress via this rule has a different interpretation: it can only express contrast or emphasis.

Consider Zubizarreta’s Spanish example in (56a), with main stress on the preverbal subject *Juan*. In Zubizarreta’s account, such a sentence can only be accepted in a contrastive or emphatic context, and stress on *Juan* can only be assigned by the E/CSR. The same holds for a corresponding Italian sentence, such as the one in (56b).

(56) a. *Juan* llamó por teléfono (no Pedro).

‘Juan phoned (not Pedro)’

b. *Gianni* ha telefonato (non Pietro).

‘Gianni phoned (not Pietro)’

In the next Chapter I will show that a Focus in that position (and in any position that does not correspond to the NS position) *can* express new information. If we assume that information Focus can occupy a high position in the clause, then the rule in (55) loses its peculiarity, and merges into the NSR. Consider how.

The rule in (55) says that any focused part of a sentence must dominate the word that bears stress. To show that, Zubizarreta reports the Spanish examples in (57) and (58). If stress falls on *rojo*, the contrastive Focus can be either the adjective alone, or a larger element, up to the whole DP subject; if stress falls on *gato*, the contrastive Focus can only be *el gato*, it cannot be any larger constituent.

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 2, section 4.

(57) a. El gato de sombrero *ROJO* escribió un libro sobre ratones (no el de sombrero azul).

the cat of hat red wrote a book about rats not the-one of hat blue

‘The cat with a red hat wrote a book about rats (not the one with a blue hat)’

b. EL GATO DE SOMBRERO *ROJO* escribió un libro sobre ratones (no el perro de chaqueta verde).

the cat of hat red wrote a book about rats not the dog of jacket green

‘The cat with a red hat wrote a book about rats (not the dog with a green jacket)’

(58) a. EL *GATO* de sombrero rojo escribió un libro sobre ratones (no el perro de sombrero rojo).

the cat of hat red wrote a book about rats not the dog of hat red

‘The cat with a red hat wrote a book about rats (not the dog with a red hat)’

b. \* EL *GATO* DE SOMBRERO ROJO escribió un libro sobre ratones (no el perro de chaqueta verde).

the cat of hat red wrote a book about rats not the dog of jacket green

‘The cat with a red hat wrote a book about rats (not the dog with a green jacket)’

As it is clear from these examples, according to the rule in (55), then, stress must fall on the *most embedded constituent* of the focused phrase. In fact, from that position, stress is dominated by all phrases that are focused.

As a consequence, the difference between the two rules, for Zubizarreta, seems to be just that nuclear stress must fall *on the most embedded position of the clause* (unless the language allows metrically invisible constituents), while the emphatic/contrastive stress must fall *on the most embedded constituent of the focused phrase*.

If you recall, though, in Chapter 2 we concluded that stress indicating Focus does not have to fall on the most embedded position of the clause: it can fall anywhere in the clause, as long as it occupies the most embedded position *of the focused phrase*. If we take such an assumption, then, the two rules proposed by Zubizarreta end up giving the same result: stress indicating Focus must fall on the most embedded position of the focused phrase, wherever the focused phrase is placed in the clause.

In conclusion, it seems to me that Zubizarreta’s E/CSR is superfluous, because it does not account for a situation different from the one we have with information

Focus, as long as we assume that also an information Focus can stay in a position that is not the most embedded one in the clause. As I said, evidence that such an assumption is true will be extensively given in the next Chapter.

The fact that Zubizarreta's proposal of two distinct rules is wrong and that the two rules can be merged into one strongly supports the claim made in previous sections, namely that differences in interpretation between the two Foci are superficial and not substantial.

#### 4.2.1 Further observations on the E/CSR

I would like to mention another problematic aspect of the E/CSR within Zubizarreta's theory. Such a rule comes into conflict with the p(rosodically-motivated)-movement account for low Focus already discussed in Chapter 2.

If you recall section 4.2 of that Chapter, Zubizarreta says that Focus moves to a preverbal position, FocP, and that the matching of NS and Focus is obtained via remnant p-movement of the non-focused part of the sentence to an even higher position, in order to allow Focus to occupy the most embedded position of the clause, where the main stress falls.

A Focus in that low position can also be contrastive, as illustrated in (59).

(59) Ha telefonato GIANNI (non Pietro).

has phoned Gianni (not Pietro)

Being contrastive, Focus in (59) must receive stress via the E/CSR. The E/CSR, however, could have also assigned stress to Focus in *preverbal* position. Therefore, there is no need that the focused item occupies the most embedded position, in this case. Given the E/CSR, the reason for p-movement in (59) is completely lost. In other words, the existence of the E/CSR allows us to dispense with an operation like p-movement.

If one wanted to preserve the legitimacy of p-movement, one could say that the relevant stress rule in (59) is the NSR. But this would give even worse predictions for Zubizarreta's theory: it would mean that the E/CSR does not always apply to contrastive Focus. But then, the reason itself for the existence of such a rule would be lost.

In sum, in a sentence like (59), either we lose the motivation for the existence of p-movement, or we lose the motivation for the existence of the E/CSR. This shows that the neither operation correctly captures the data for which it was originally proposed.

### 4.3 Further evidence for a unified prosody of Focus

#### 4.3.1 Frascarelli (2000): The Focus Restructuring Rule

Further evidence that Focus in Italian does not have two different prosodies is given by Frascarelli (2000) from a different perspective. Frascarelli does not take into account stress, but the intonational grouping of sentences.

Following Kenesei and Vogel (1990), Frascarelli claims that in Italian the Phonological Phrase containing the focused constituent is incorporated into the left-adjacent Phonological Phrase. Evidence comes from two word-juncture rules that apply within the  $\Phi$ -domain: ‘Raddoppiamento Sintattico’ (RS) and ‘Rhythm Rule’ (RR).

RS is a rule of central and southern varieties of Italian. It applies between two words and has the effect of lengthening the initial consonant of the second word if the first word ends with a stressed vowel.

(60) a. Tornerà sabato.

‘He will come back on Saturday’

b. [tornerà s:ábato]

RR is a rule of northern varieties of Italian. It is a repair strategy triggered by a clash between two adjacent stresses. In a sequence of two words, where the former bears stress on the last syllable and the latter bears stress on the first syllable, stress of the first word is shifted back at the beginning of the word.

(61) a. Tornerà sabato.

b. [tórnera sábito]

In the following example from Frascarelli (2000), neither rule can apply between *tornerà* and *sabato*, because the two words are not in the same  $\Phi$ -domain:

(62) [Luigi] <sub>$\Phi$</sub>  [tornerà] <sub>$\Phi$</sub>  [sabato sera] <sub>$\Phi$</sub>

‘Luigi will come back on Saturday evening’

If *sabato* is focused, though, the rules apply. This means that the Focus Restructuring rule is correct, namely that there are no  $\Phi$ -boundaries between a focused constituent and the lexical material preceding it. The crucial point is that the rules apply both when Focus expresses contrast and when it expresses new information, that is, both in a context like the one in (63) and in a context like the one in (64) (adapted from Frascarelli 2000):

(63) a. Luigi tornerà domenica?

‘Will Luigi come back on Sunday?’



b. No, Luigi tornerà *SABATO*.

‘No, Luigi will come back on Saturday’

(64) a. Quando tornerà Luigi?

‘When will Luigi come back?’

b. Luigi tornerà *sabato*.

Therefore, from the point of view of intonational phrasing, the two Foci cause the same incorporation effect.<sup>46, 47</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Peaks

It is often claimed in the (syntactic) literature (e.g. Belletti 2002) that a contrastive Focus has a higher peak than that of an information Focus. The question though is whether the difference is grammatical or just stylistic, or caused by other non-grammatical factors. In fact, phonetic differences are not automatically grammatical differences; rather, they can be due to purely physiological factors.

It is important then to note, at first, that phonetic studies on Focus peaks (cf. Avesani and Vayra 1999, D’Imperio 1997, Grice et al. in press, etc.) do not usually distinguish between contrastive Focus and information Focus, but always between broad Focus and narrow Focus, that is, between Focus on the whole sentence and Focus on a part of it (usually, a DP or a PP).

The confusion is, I believe, due to the fact that it is easier to find contexts in which a broad Focus has a non-contrastive interpretation, and contexts where a narrow Focus has a contrastive interpretation.<sup>48</sup> I think that this fact has led many linguists to mistake prosodic differences between Foci with two different domains for prosodic differences between Foci with two different interpretations.

Moreover, a Focus in preverbal position usually has a higher peak than a postverbal one. But as Mara Frascarelli (p.c.) points out, this fact can be explained

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<sup>46</sup> Frascarelli observes that the rules do not apply to left peripheral Focus. But she says that this difference can be explained by the fact that what precedes a preverbal Focus can only be a Topic, namely an extrasentential constituent, and in her analysis this means that an I(ntonational) boundary must be present between the two items.

<sup>47</sup> Frascarelli points out that the word-juncture rules do not apply to sentences with broad Focus. This is not surprising. If we look at phonetic studies on Focus (cf. Avesani and Vayra 1999, D’Imperio 1997, a.o.) we see that they always find phonetic differences between narrow Focus and broad Focus. See also the following section.

<sup>48</sup> See the discussion above in sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

as a consequence of the physiological fact that an initial sound is uttered with more acoustic energy than following sounds.

Empirical support to these considerations is given by Frascarelli (in press). She provides acoustic evidence that the peak characterizing a narrow Focus is the same both with a contrastive and with a non-contrastive interpretation. Frascarelli's results are in line with previous ones, such as Avesani and Vayra (1999), Grice (1995), D'Imperio (1997), etc. While broad Focus has a descending intonation with a final H(igh) tone on the pre-tonic syllable, immediately followed by a L(ow) tone on the tonic syllable (H+L\*), narrow Focus is characterized by a H tone on the tonic syllable (H\*). Crucially, Frascarelli's data provide the further specification that the H tone on the tonic syllable characterizing narrow Focus is present both when Focus is contrastive and when it is not, a distinction that was not clearly drawn by the other studies.<sup>49</sup>

## 5 Conclusions

In this Chapter I have discussed the interface properties of Focus and I have challenged the idea that there are two different Foci from both an interpretive and a prosodic point of view.

First, I have considered Focus interpretation. I have challenged É. Kiss's (1998) claim that there are two semantically different Foci, one that expresses exhaustive identification and one that expresses new information. All tests É. Kiss uses in order to show this difference do not work for Italian, so at least for this language it is not possible to conclude that there are two semantically different Foci. Italian Focus never expresses exhaustive identification.

Although Focus in Italian *can* express contrast, this property cannot be considered as a semantic distinction between two Foci. In fact, I have followed a branch of studies, among which Rooth (1992), that claim that contrast is *not* a semantic property, but rather, it is an effect of the discourse context in which Focus occurs.

In the second part of this Chapter, I have challenged the idea that there are prosodic differences between two Foci. I have shown that Donati and Nespor (2003) are wrong when they claim that a contrastive stress and a non-contrastive one determine different domains of Focus interpretation. Italian data show that Focus projection up to the whole clause can occur also when Focus is contrastive. As for the claim that a non-contrastive Focus cannot be smaller than a word, I have argued that it depends on the fact that it is very difficult (although not impossible) to

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<sup>49</sup> The H tone of narrow Focus can be followed by a L one, both when Focus is contrastive and when it is not. As Frascarelli highlights, this option does not seem to be related to any phonological nor syntactic factor.

formulate a wh-question on a part of a word; consequently, it is also difficult to have the corresponding answer with information Focus.

I have further shown that, to a closer analysis, Zubizarreta's E/CSR is not different from the NSR. With both rules, stress on a focused phrase is assigned to the most embedded constituent of the phrase. This conclusion is dependent on the assumption that an information Focus can occupy a position different from the most embedded one in the clause. Such an assumption will receive support from what I say in the next Chapter.

The conclusion I draw in this Chapter is that there are no interface differences between two Foci in Italian. I therefore predict that also the syntax of Focus is uniform, namely that both a contrastive Focus and an information Focus can occupy either a low and a high position in the clause. In the following Chapter, this prediction will be born out.

## Chapter 5

## Unification of Focus: syntax

### *1. Introduction*

In Chapter 4 I have demonstrated that there are no interface (semantic and prosodic) differences between two Foci in Italian. In this Chapter, I am going to show that a uniform behaviour in syntax corresponds to the uniform behaviour at the interfaces.

If we recall Chapter 4, section 2, É. Kiss (1998) presents some syntactic arguments in favour of the idea that there are two distinct Foci. They are repeated below:

- (1) a. The Identificational Focus involves movement, the Information Focus does not;
- b. An Identificational Focus must be an XP available for movement, an Information Focus can be either smaller or larger;
- c. An Identificational Focus can be iterated.

The last two points are strictly related to the first one, namely the fact that only Identificational Focus can undergo syntactic movement. É. Kiss says that the Identificational Focus moves to the specifier of a Focus head. Information Focus, on the contrary, is not syntactically characterized, so no movement is associated with it.

The issue concerning movement will be extensively treated in sections 2 and following. I will show that also Focus that does not express contrast can move to the left periphery of the clause. Before doing that, however, I will consider the other two points of É. Kiss's, namely Focus extension (section 1.1) and Focus iteration (section 1.2).

#### *1.1 Focus extension*

É. Kiss says that, if Identificational Focus moves, it must be a major XP that does not violate subadjacency. In other words, É. Kiss rejects the possibility that Identificational Focus might be just a part of the moved phrase, with pied-piping of the rest of the phrase in order to allow movement. She says that Identificational Focus is always the whole moved XP, while the stressed item within that XP represents Information Focus, because it is the non-presupposed part of the sentence.

Her belief derives from the example in (2). Although stress in the question is on *János*, the answer is appropriate only if we consider the whole phrase, *a János autója*, as focused:

(2) a. [A *János* autója] volt a leggyorsabb?

the John's car was the fastest

'Was it *John's* car that was the fastest?'

b. Nem, a Porsche.

no the Porsche

'No, it was the Porsche'

É. Kiss argues that, although the non-presupposed part of the question is *János*, the person asking (2a) "wants the exhaustive identification operation performed on a set of cars, instead of a set of persons, *as indicated by the possibility of answering (2a) by (2b)*" (italics are mine).

Notice that É. Kiss presents the possibility of answering (2a) by (2b) as evidence that the Identificational Focus is represented by the whole moved phrase. It must be mentioned, however, that in Hungarian stress is assigned to the left edge of the focused constituent. Therefore, the moved phrase in (2a), with stress on its left edge, can be interpreted as focused in its entirety, and the question is about any possible moving entity that was fast (Janos's car, Peter's bike, that horse, my motor, etc.). If though stress falls on the right edge of the moved phrase, i.e. on *autója*, then Focus can only be narrow, namely, the question can only be about the set of Janos's vehicles, as the example in (3) shows (from Aniko Csirmaz, p.c.):

(3) a. [A *János* *autója*] volt a leggyorsabb ?

the John's car was the fastest

'Was it John's *car* that was the fastest?'

b. # Nem, a Porsche.

no the Porsche

'No, it was the Porsche'

c. Nem, a motorja.

no the motor-his

'No, it was his motor'

Example (3) indicates that evidence that the whole phrase expresses exhaustive identification cannot be given by the possibility of answering (2a) by (2b), as É. Kiss believes. If the relevant piece of evidence were what the question is about, then, in order for É. Kiss's claim to be correct, the exchange in (3a,b) should also be correct. On the contrary, it is not, and that is because Focus in (3a) is *autoja* only, as indicated by stress on the right edge of the moved phrase.

É. Kiss says that what changes when stress is in a different position is the alternative set of relevant entities, while the entity that is *exhaustively identified* remains the same. É. Kiss then should provide some evidence that the whole moved phrase has an exhaustive interpretation. As I said, such a piece of evidence is not given by the fact that the question in (2a) is about the whole phrase.

The well formedness of the following Italian exchange does not provide such a piece of evidence either:

(4) a. [L'auto di *Gianni*] era la più veloce?

the car of Gianni was the more fast

'Gianni's car was the fastest?'

b. No, la Porsche.

no the Porsche

'No, it was the Porsche'

The only difference with respect to Hungarian is that in Italian, when the whole phrase is focused, stress must fall on its *right* edge, because it must fall on the most embedded constituent of the focused phrase, as extensively shown in previous Chapters. Therefore, if stress is on *Gianni*, the question can be about the whole moved phrase, rather than about *Gianni* alone, because Focus can be interpreted as the whole moved phrase. If stress is on *auto*, however, the question requires an answer like (5c), which means that Focus in the question can only be *l'auto* alone:

(5) a. [L'*auto* di Gianni] era la più veloce?

the car of Gianni was the more fast

'Was it Gianni's *car* that was the fastest?'

b. # No, la Porsche.

no the Porsche

'No, it was the Porsche'

c. No, la moto(, di Gianni).

no the motor of Gianni

‘No, it was (Gianni’s) motor’

Like in the Hungarian examples, whether the moved phrase as a whole (*l’auto di Gianni*) is exhaustively identified or not is not given by the fact that (4b) is a correct answer to (4a). As far as Italian is concerned, we have already seen in Chapter 4 that Focus *never* expresses exhaustive identification, so the question about the domain of exhaustive interpretation is not relevant for this language.

As for Hungarian, it might be the case, as É. Kiss claims, that the whole moved phrase is interpreted exhaustively, whatever the position of stress within the phrase. This fact though could suggest a different conclusion about Hungarian, rather than É. Kiss’s one based on two different Foci. The fact that the exhaustive identification concerns the whole phrase, while the non-presupposed part does not necessarily concern the whole phrase, may suggest that the exhaustive interpretation of Focus in the left periphery is the result of ‘Association with Focus’ (AwF) of an exhaustive operator, as proposed by Horvath (2000).<sup>50</sup> The scope of such an operator would have to be the whole moved phrase, while the Focus it associates with could just be part of the moved phrase, in the same way as *only* has a scope that can be different from the Focus it associates with.

### 1.2 Focus iteration

According to É. Kiss, Identificational Focus can iterate, while Information Focus can project. We have already seen in the previous Chapter that Focus projection is possible with both Focus interpretations. As for iteration, É. Kiss bears evidence for it by taking into account *only*-phrases in Hungarian. She argues that *only*-phrases have an inherent Identificational Focus feature, which must be checked via movement to the specifier of FocP, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (6a) and the grammaticality of (6b).

(6) a. \* Két filmet meg néztek csak hárman

two film PERF saw only three

b. [<sub>FocP</sub> Csak hárman] [<sub>Foc</sub> néztek meg [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> két filmet]]]].

only three saw PERF two film

‘Only three persons saw two films’

When there is more than one *only*-phrase in the sentence, like in (7), É. Kiss proposes that the lower phrase moves to a lower FocP, below the verb:

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<sup>50</sup> Recall Chapter 4, section 3.4.



(7) [<sub>FocP</sub> Csak két filmet]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub> láttak [<sub>FocP</sub> csak hárman]<sub>i</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub>]]  
 only two film saw only three

‘It was only two films that only three persons saw’

That the lower *only*-phrase is not in situ (as proposed for instance by Brody 1990) is excluded by É. Kiss on the basis of scope considerations. In a sentence like (7), the first *only* takes scope over the lower one, and scope is reversed if the two phrases have the opposite order. If LF adjunction took place, the two phrases would have identical scope.

If we now look at Italian, we see that multiple *only*-phrases are possible (although they do not have to move overtly to a fixed position).

(8) Solo Gianni ha visto solo un film.

only Gianni has seen only one movie

However, (8) does not prove that Italian Focus can iterate. In fact, we have seen that Italian *only*-phrases express exhaustive identification, while focused items never do. Thus, it is useless to look at *only*-phrases, at least in this language, to understand the differences between the two Foci.

Let us consider free Focus instead. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Rizzi (1997) argues that Focus iteration is not possible in Italian. Rizzi’s example is repeated below:

(9) [A Gianni il libro]<sub>F</sub> darò (non a Piero l’articolo).

to Gianni the book (I) will give not to Pietro the article

In Chapter 3, I pointed out that an example like (9), according to my judgments, is grammatical, although the context in which it occurs may be rare. As I said, according to Rizzi, Focus cannot iterate because of its interpretation: Focus is always combined with a presupposition<sup>51</sup>, so if a Focus is followed by another Focus, the second Focus is at the same time presupposition and new information, and an interpretive clash arises. I think that this problem can be avoided if we

<sup>51</sup> In fact, this very assumption is questionable, as claimed for instance by Rochemont (1986), and more recently by Swartzschild (1999), among many others. In order to define Focus as the non-presupposed part of the sentence, one should have a definition of presupposition that is broad enough to cover non-sentential constituents. Moreover, one should also explain the grammaticality of a sentence like (i) (from Daniel Büring, p.c.):

(i) a. What does John regret? b. He regrets [that Sheena is a werewolf]<sub>F</sub>

For further arguments against Focus as the non-presupposed part of the sentence, see also Büring’s (forthcoming) commentary on Geurts and van der Sandt (forthcoming).

assume an account for multiple Foci similar to the one proposed by Higginbotham and May (1981) and May (1985) for multiple wh-phrases: the so-called ‘absorption’ mechanism. Pesetsky (1982) extends this mechanism to Focus in ‘gapping’ constructions.<sup>52</sup>

Gapping is ellipsis of the verb in coordination, as in the example below:

(10) John bought the book, and Mary the record.

Pesetsky proposes that the correspondents in each conjunct in (10) move to C at LF, as sketched in the representation below:<sup>53</sup>

(11) [<sub>CP</sub> John the book] [<sub>IP</sub> \_ bought \_ ] and [<sub>CP</sub> Mary the record] [<sub>IP</sub> \_ bought \_ ]

Via absorption, the two Foci are considered as a single one, in the sense that the two phrases represent two variables bound by a single operator. The same procedure can be assumed for the two Foci in (9), with the only difference that, in Rizzi’s Italian example, movement occurs overtly.

At any event, what is crucial for our purposes is not just whether Focus iterates or not, but whether Focus behaves uniformly or not. Consider then the example below, where multiple Foci are given in a context where the Foci are non-contrastive:

(12) a. Che cosa darai a chi?<sup>54</sup>

‘What will you give to whom?’

b. Darò [il libro a Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

‘I will give the book to Gianni’

(12b) is as grammatical as it is (9), in a specific context where the new information has to be what I gave to somebody and who is this somebody. Although there is no

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<sup>52</sup> Pesetsky follows a suggestion by Sag (1976).

<sup>53</sup> I translate Pesetsky’s (1982) labelling into a more updated one.

<sup>54</sup> The question is acceptable as an echo-question. The question is also accepted if the speaker entails two sets of entities, A and B, and wants to know which pairs match, where each pair is made of one entity from set A and one entity from set B. The answer in (12b), in that case, must be followed by parallel sentences where other pairs are given, as below:

(i) a. Che cosa darai a chi?

b. Darò il libro a Gianni, il cd a Maria, la borsa a Silvia, etc.

‘I will give the book to Gianni, the cd to Maria, the bag to Silvia, etc.’

movement of the two focused items to the left, we may suppose that operator binding occurs in situ.

Concluding, examples (9) and (12) show that iteration does not constitute a property that distinguishes two Foci in Italian. Focus can iterate both when it expresses new information and when it expresses contrast.

## 2 *Information Focus movement*

Let us now consider the main syntactic argument provided by É. Kiss (1998) in favour of a distinction between two Foci, namely the claim that only Identificational Focus undergoes syntactic movement to the left periphery. In the preceding Chapters I have often mentioned the fact that a preverbal Focus in Italian is acceptable in a contrastive exchange, but it is not acceptable as an answer to a *wh*-question:

(13) a. Che cosa ha vinto Gianni?

‘What did Gianni win?’

b. ?? [La maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni.

the T-shirt has won Gianni

(14) a. La felpa, l’ha vinta Gianni.

‘Gianni won the T-shirt’

b. No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni.

no the T-shirt has won Gianni

Thus, Italian seems to support É. Kiss’s claim: if Focus in (13b) cannot move to the left and Focus in (14b) can, then the two Foci have different syntactic properties.

My present goal is then to show that an information Focus *can* move to the left periphery. The next goal will be to explain *why* the sentence in (13b) is marginal, if Focus movement is possible. The first goal is pursued in sections 2.1-2.4.2, the second one in section 3.

### 2.1 *Focus movement and ellipsis*

First of all, if we assume that the *wh*-phrase of a question corresponds to the focused part of the question, and that, following Rizzi (1997), a focused phrase and a *wh*-phrase move to the same position in the left periphery<sup>55</sup>, then *wh*-movement may already constitute a piece of evidence of information Focus movement.

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<sup>55</sup> With the exceptions discussed in section 2.2.1 of Chapter 3. See also Chapter 6, section 4.

Nevertheless, I would like to go further and show that even an information Focus element that is *not* a wh-phrase can move to the left periphery. In order to do that, consider again (13b). Such a sentence is not ungrammatical, and since it gives a proper answer to the question, it is not even pragmatically incongruent. Nonetheless, it sounds redundant. In fact, a short answer with the focused item alone would be much preferable, as illustrated by the exchange below:

(15) a. Che cosa ha vinto Gianni?

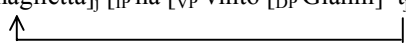
‘What did Gianni win?’

b. [La maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

‘The T-shirt’

The proposal I make is to derive the answer in (15b) from (13b). The focused constituent moves to the left periphery to a position higher than the IP, and then ellipsis of the background part of the sentence applies, as represented in (16):

(16) [<sub>DP</sub> La maglietta]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ha [<sub>VP</sub> vinto [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni] t<sub>j</sub> ]]



Note that, since I assume that only constituents can be deleted,<sup>56</sup> Focus movement is a crucial step in order for ellipsis to apply. In fact, if the focused constituent remained in situ, it would be embedded in a larger constituent containing also the non-focused part. Therefore, ellipsis would be forced to apply to a *chunk* of that constituent:

(17) \* [<sub>IP</sub> ha [<sub>VP</sub> vinto [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni] [<sub>DP</sub> la maglietta]]]

In sections 2.2 and 2.3, I will present some proposals that are similar to mine, and in section 2.4, I will report evidence for a movement-and-ellipsis analysis of short (or ‘fragment’) answers.

## 2.2 Negative fragment answers

A proposal similar to mine in (16) has been made for negative fragment answers in Greek by Giannakidou (2000) and for negative fragment answers in Italian and Spanish by Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni (forthcoming).

<sup>56</sup> In this assumption, I follow Merchant (2001, forthcoming), among many others. Not everybody in the literature agrees to the idea that an elided element must be a constituent, specially among less recent studies (see for example Morgan 1973, Hankamer 1979). It has to be noted, however, that ellipsis is one of the tests that are traditionally used to identify a constituent (see for example Graffi 1994).

In some languages, such as Italian, Spanish, and Greek (although with some differences among them that are not relevant here) n(egative)-words are ambiguous: in certain syntactic positions, they have a negative meaning, and in some other positions, they need to be licensed by a negative marker (that is, they behave like Negative Polarity Items). Consider the Italian examples below. When the n-word is in post-verbal position, it must be licensed by an above negation:

(18) Non ho visto nessuno.

(I) not have seen nobody

‘I didn’t see anyone’

When the n-word stays in preverbal position, no negative marker is needed for licensing:

(19) Nessuno ho visto.

nobody (I) have seen

‘I saw nobody’

The same absence of negative marking is found in n-word fragment answers, like the following:

(20) a. Chi hai visto?

‘Who did you see?’

b. [Nessuno]<sub>F</sub>.

‘Nobody’

The fact that an n-word can occur in isolation has been considered as the main argument in favour of an inherent negative semantics for n-words (cf. Zanuttini 1991). Both Giannakidou (2000) and Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni (forthcoming), on the contrary, claim that n-words are always NPIs, and propose a solution for (21) that is based on a movement-and-ellipsis analysis of the fragment.

Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni’s account is particularly interesting from the point of view of my proposal. They propose that Italian n-words are different from other NPIs in that they carry a negative feature (due to their negative morphology) that must be checked. In (18), the negative feature is checked by the negative marker *non*. In (19), instead, Feature-checking takes place via movement to the specifier of

Rizzi's (1997) FocP, where the n-word is licensed by an abstract negation.<sup>57</sup> The representation of (19) is therefore as in (21).

(21) [<sub>FocP</sub> Nessuno<sub>+neg</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub>  $\emptyset$ <sub>+neg</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ho visto t]]]

In (20b), the same movement takes place for checking purposes, and then 'bare argument ellipsis' applies, as shown in (22).

(22) [<sub>FocP</sub> Nessuno<sub>j</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub>  $\emptyset$ <sub>+neg</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ~~ho visto t<sub>j</sub>~~]]]

The representation in (22) can account also for cases like the one below:

(23) Voglio vedere te o nessuno.

'I want to see you or nobody'

The n-word moves to FocP, and then deletion of the rest of the sentence applies:

(24) Voglio vedere te o [<sub>FocP</sub> nessuno<sub>i</sub> [<sub>Foc</sub>  $\emptyset$ <sub>+neg</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ~~voglio vedere t<sub>i</sub>~~]]]

Evidence that the n-word in (20b) and in (23) has moved to the left and it is licensed by movement comes from the ungrammaticality of (25a) and (25b) below, where the n-word is clearly in situ.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> That a Focus head can check a Negative feature is not implausible, since it is well known that negation and focalization have many properties in common. An account for negation where the negative element moves to spec,FocP is also given by Frascarelli (2000).

<sup>58</sup> In Giannakidou's (2000) account, the elided part contains the negative operator, as shown by her Greek example below:

- (i) a. Ti idhes?                      b. TIPOTA {~~chen idha~~}.  
'What did you see?'            nothing (I) not saw

Therefore, Giannakidou does not relate movement of the NPI to its licensing, as Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni do, because the moved NPI in (i) has already been licensed by the elided negation. However, in her account, the background of the question and that of the answer (the elided part) are not the same, because the elided part contains the negation. As we will see below, this is not possible within my account for ellipsis in fragments. Moreover, Giannakidou's account cannot explain why an NPI like *anybody* cannot be licensed as a fragment answer:

- (ii) a. Who did you see?            b. \*Anybody.

If the elided part of the answer contained the negation, the NPI should be licensed. In a footnote, Giannakidou suggests that the reason may be that *any* obeys a 'linear order c-command constraint', namely the negation must precede it at S-structure. This problem, however, does not arise at all in Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni's account: *any* does not have a negative feature, so it cannot move, and therefore it cannot even be licensed. This straightforwardly explains the unacceptability of the answer in (ii).

(25) a. \* Ho visto nessuno.

(I) have seen nobody

b. \* Voglio ballare con nessuno o (al più) con te.

(I) want to dance with nobody or (at best) with you

Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni's proposal is very similar to mine. The main difference is that, in my proposal, movement to the left occurs in all cases, not only with n-words, so movement is not related to the negative morphology of the moved item, but to the fact that the n-word is focused.

Another difference is the landing site for movement. Alonso-Ovalle and Guerzoni assume that the n-word moves to Rizzi's (1997) FocP. In the structure I give in (16), I do not specify the position where the focused item moves. The issue of the position of Focus in the left periphery is an important one and I will discuss it in the last Chapter. For the purposes of this Chapter, though, this issue is not relevant, so I will put it aside for the moment.

### 2.3 Focus movement and ellipsis in coordination: Donati (2000a)

Another study that proposes that Focus movement and ellipsis are related is Donati (2000a) for ellipsis in coordinate sentences in Italian.

Donati compares English and Italian. She considers English coordinate sentences first. Her example is the following:

(26) Bill eats, and Paul does, too.

The presence of the auxiliary *do* in the elided sentence clearly shows that VP-ellipsis is at stake here.<sup>59</sup> It is a well known conclusion of generative theorizing<sup>60</sup> that in English the verb does not overtly move to I, but remains in V, so the verb occupies an autonomous projection with respect to the subject, which is in spec,IP. As a

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<sup>59</sup> Some English speakers accept also a structure without the auxiliary, namely a literal translation of the Italian counterpart: *Bill eats, and Paul, too*. One could derive this sentence in the same way as the Italian one, by movement of the subjects out of spec,IP, and then IP-ellipsis of the remnant sentence (see below in the text). Note, however, that the two languages behave differently when the construction is embedded. As Tim Stowell (p.c.) observes, the English construction is definitely out in embedded sentences: *The fact that Paul eats beef and (that) Bill \*(does) too surprised Sue*. In Italian, on the contrary, the structure is fine even if embedded: *Il fatto che Paolo mangi carne e Bill anche ha sorpreso molto Susy* ('The fact that Paolo eats meat and Bill too surprised Susy a lot').

<sup>60</sup> See Pollock (1989).

consequence, VP-ellipsis deletes the verb but leaves the subject untouched. The structure is represented below:

(27) [<sub>IP</sub> Bill [<sub>VP</sub> t eats]] [and [<sub>IP</sub> Paul [<sub>I</sub> does [<sub>VP</sub> t eat]]]].

Consider now the Italian counterpart:

(28) Bill mangia, e Paolo anche.

Bill eats and Paul too

In Italian, the verb overtly moves to I. Therefore, the verb is not in an autonomous projection with respect to the subject, and ellipsis cannot apply to the constituent containing the verb without deleting also the subject. Donati's proposal for (28) is therefore the following. She says that the subject must move higher than spec,IP in order for ellipsis of the whole IP to apply. She suggests that the subject moves to a Focus position in the left periphery – presumably, Rizzi's (1997) spec,FocP. Then, Ellipsis of the whole IP applies, as shown in the representation given below:

(29) [<sub>FocP</sub> Bill [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]] [e [<sub>FocP</sub> Paolo [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]]].

Donati's proposal is not totally correct: with a 'normal' intonation, namely with stress falling on the verb in the first sentence and on *anche* in the second sentence, Focus in each sentence cannot be the subject, but rather the verb or the whole sentence. However, a movement and ellipsis approach can be maintained: the only change we must make is that the subject does not move to a Focus position, but rather to a Topic one, given the well known Topic properties of preverbal subjects.

(30) [<sub>TopP</sub> Bill [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]] [e [<sub>TopP</sub> Paolo [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]]].

As a matter of fact, in Donati's construction Focus *is* involved, but not in the way Donati proposes. We will see how in Chapter 6, after I give my own syntactic account for Focus.

#### 2.4 Evidence for a movement-and-ellipsis analysis of short answers

Another account where fragments are treated in terms of movement and ellipsis is Merchant (forthcoming). Merchant remains agnostic on the position filled by the fragment; however, he suspects that it is to be identified with Rizzi's (1997) FocP.

As Merchant points out, not everybody agrees with the 'ellipsis approach' to fragments. Other authors, among which Jackendoff (2002), Barton (1990), Stainton (1998), deny that fragments derive from full IPs, and claim that non-sentential syntactic objects can be used to make assertions, even if they do not denote propositions. Merchant calls this approach the 'direct interpretation approach'.



Along the lines of Hankamer (1979), Morgan (1973), and others, Merchant presents several pieces of evidence in favour of an ellipsis approach to fragments. I will report the main ones in the following two sections.

#### 2.4.1 Correspondences between the fragment form and the fully sentential form

A first observation Merchant does is that in languages with morphological Case there is matching between the Case of the fragment DP (or PP) and the corresponding DP (or PP) in the full sentence. He brings evidence from several languages (Greek, German, Korean, English, Hebrew, Russian, Urdu). I only report his Greek example.

(31) a. Pjos idhe tin Maria?

‘Who saw Maria?’

b. O Giannis. / \*Ton Gianni.

the-NOM Giannis / the-ACC Giannis

c. O Giannis idhe tin Maria / \*Ton Gianni idhe tin Maria

the-NOM Giannis saw the Maria / the-ACC Giannis saw the Maria

(32) a. Pjon idhe i Maria?

‘Who did Maria see?’

b. \* O Giannis. / Ton Giannis.

c. \* I Maria idhe o Giannis. / I Maria idhe ton Gianni.

the Maria saw the-NOM Giannis / the Maria saw the-ACC Giannis

Italian data are in line with Merchant’s. In Italian, only personal pronouns display morphological Case. In (33), the first person pronoun is nominative both in the fragment answer and in the full sentence; in (34), the reflexive pronoun is accusative in both cases.

(33) a. Chi è andato alla manifestazione?

‘Who went to the demonstration?’

b. Io. / \* Me.

I / me

c. Io sono andata alla manifestazione. / \* Me sono andata alla manifestazione.

I have gone to the demonstration            me have gone to the demonstration

(34) a. Chi vedi allo specchio?

‘Who do you see in the mirror?’

- b. \*Io stessa / Me stessa.
- c. \*Allo specchio vedo io stessa / Allo specchio vedo me stessa.  
at the mirror (I) see I self / at the mirror (I) see me self

Merchant also observes that Binding Theory is respected in fragment answers. Example (35) concerns principle C effects. Principle C requires that an epithet (*the bastard*, in 35) do not co-refer with the name that c-commands it.

- (35) a. What does John<sub>i</sub> think?
- b. \*That the bastard<sub>i</sub> is being spied on.
- c. \* John<sub>i</sub> thinks that the bastard<sub>i</sub> is being spied on.

Example (36) concerns principle B effects. Principle B requires that a pronoun be not co-indexed with a noun within in the same clause:

- (36) a. Who did John<sub>i</sub> try to shave?
- b. \* Him<sub>i</sub>.
- c. \* John<sub>i</sub> tried to shave him<sub>i</sub>.

Finally, example (37) shows that also principle A holds in fragment answers. Principle A says that a reflexive cannot be co-indexed with a noun that is *not* in the same sentence:

- (37) a. Who does John think Sue will invite?
- b. ??Himself.
- c. ??John thinks Sue will invite himself.

The same results given by Merchant for English are obtained with Italian data. Examples (38)-(40) show principle C, B and A effects respectively:

- (38) a. Che cosa pensa Gianni?
- ‘What does Gianni<sub>i</sub> think?’
- b. \* Che lo scemo<sub>i</sub> sia spiato.  
‘That the idiot<sub>i</sub> is being spied on’
- c. \* Gianni<sub>i</sub> pensa che lo scemo<sub>i</sub> sia spiato.  
‘Gianni<sub>i</sub> thinks that the idiot<sub>i</sub> is being spied on’

- (39) a. Chi ha cercato di radere, Gianni?

‘Who did John<sub>i</sub> try to shave?’

b. \* Lui<sub>i</sub>

him<sub>i</sub>.

c. \*Gianni<sub>i</sub> ha cercato di radere lui<sub>i</sub>.

‘John<sub>i</sub> tried to shave him<sub>i</sub>.’

(40) a. Chi crede Gigi<sub>i</sub> che Laura inviterà?

‘Who does Gigi believe Laura will invite?’

b. \* Se stesso<sub>i</sub>.

himself

c. \* Gigi<sub>i</sub> crede che Laura inviterà se stesso<sub>i</sub>.

‘Gigi believes Laura will invite himself.’

Concluding, Merchant (forthcoming) provides several pieces of evidence that the fragment answer and the corresponding element in the full answer have the same properties, and Italian data support Merchant’s ones.

#### 2.4.2 Evidence for movement in fragments

Merchant (forthcoming) also provides some pieces of evidence for movement in fragment answers.

A first piece of evidence is that, in languages that admit preposition stranding, the fragment answer is made of a ‘bare’ DP, while in languages that do not admit preposition stranding, the fragment answer includes the preposition. Merchant provides examples from several languages (English and other Germanic languages, Greek, some Slavic languages, Yiddish, Hebrew). Below, I report his data from English, which admits preposition stranding (41), and from Greek, which does not admit it (42).

(41) a. Who was Peter talking with?

b. Mary.

(42) a. Me pjon milise i Anna?

with whom spoke the Anna

b. Me ton Kosta

with the Kostas

c. \* Ton Kosta.

Example (43) shows that Italian, which does not admit preposition stranding, requires the preposition in the fragment answer.<sup>61</sup>

- (43) a. Con chi ha parlato Anna?  
with whom has spoken Anna  
b. Con Carlo.  
with Carlo  
c. ?? Carlo.

Another piece of evidence for movement in fragment answers given by Merchant is island sensitivity. Island sensitivity in an answer to a wh-question is difficult to test, because the corresponding wh-question is also subject to island constraints. In order to avoid this problem, Merchant adopts two strategies. One is to consider multiple wh-questions where one wh-element is within the island (cf. 44); the other one is to ask yes/no questions with stress on a certain constituent, like those in (45) and (46): the question becomes an implicit wh-question where the wh-phrase replaces the stressed constituent. Since the constituent does not move to the left, the question is not subject to island effects.

- (44) a. Which committee member wants to hire someone who speaks which language?  
b. Abby wants to hire someone who speaks Greek and Ben wants to hire someone who speaks Albanian.  
c. \*Abby Greek, and Ben Albanian.
- (45) a. Does Abby speak the same Balkan language that *Ben* speaks?  
b. No, she speaks the same Balkan language that *Charlie* speaks.

---

<sup>61</sup> Prosodically ‘heavier’ prepositions such as the bi-syllabic *contro* ‘against’ are more easily omitted in answers, although they still cannot be stranded in questions:

- (i) a. Contro chi ha votato Gianni?  
against who has voted Gianni  
b. \* Chi ha votato Gianni contro?  
‘Who did Gianni vote against?’  
c. ? (Contro) Berlusconi.

Such a preposition can also be interpreted intransitively, as in *Gianni ha votato contro*. For similar data in French, see Zribi-Hertz (1984).

c. \*No, Charlie.

(46) a. Did Ben leave the party because *Abby* wouldn't dance with him?

b. No, he left the party because *Beth* wouldn't dance with him.

c. \*No, Beth.

The ungrammaticality of short answers in (44c), (45c) and (46c) is expected if the second fragments in (44c) (*Greek* and *Albanian*) and the fragments *Charlie* in (45c) and *Beth* in (46c) have moved to the left prior to ellipsis. In fact, if the fragments derive from the full sentences in (44b), (45b) and (46b), it is evident that their movement occurred across islands.

Both strategies give the same results in Italian. A multiple wh-question, however, is ungrammatical,<sup>62</sup> so the problem of having island violations in the context question cannot be avoided.<sup>63</sup>

(47) a. \*Quale professore vuole assumere qualcuno che parla quale lingua?

which professor wants to hire someone that speaks which language

b. Guglielmo (vuole assumere) qualcuno che parla francese, e Luigi qualcuno che parla spagnolo.

Guglielmo (wants to hire) someone that speaks French, and Luigi someone that speaks Spanish.

---

<sup>62</sup> The question is ungrammatical even if interpreted as an echo-question. The problem is the island, not the presence of more than one wh-phrase. A multiple echo-question is possible in Italian, as it is shown for example in (12) (see also footnote 5).

<sup>63</sup> Both in English and in Italian, the fragment answer is acceptable if the question is a (non-multiple) in situ wh-question (with the wh-phrase within an island):

(i) a. Tim vuole assumere qualcuno che parla quale lingua?

'Tim wants to hire someone who speaks which language?'

b. Francese.

'French'

Note, however, that both in English and in Italian (ia) is an echo-question. A possible explanation of these data then might be the following: echo-questions are not full questions, they are declarative sentences repeating a previously uttered declarative sentence, and the actual question is just the wh-phrase (e.g. 'Which language?' in i). The answer to such a question would then be a 'real', non-sentential fragment (not a full IP after deletion). This would explain the grammaticality of 'French' in (ib).

- c. \*Guglielmo francese, e Luigi spagnolo.  
Guglielmo French, and Luigi Spanish

The second strategy adopted by Merchant also gives the expected results in Italian, as it is shown by the two examples below:

- (48) a. Melissa parla la stessa lingua balcanica che parla Tina?  
'Does Melissa speak the same Balkan language that *Tina* speaks?'  
b. No, parla la stessa lingua balcanica che parla Vito.  
no (she) speaks the same language Balkan that speaks Vito  
c. \* No, Vito.
- (49) a. Gianni ha lasciato la festa perché Maria non voleva ballare con lui?  
'Did Gianni leave the party because *Maria* didn't want to dance with him?'  
b. No, ha lasciato la festa perché *Laura* non voleva ballare con lui.  
no (he) has left the party because Laura not wanted to-dance with him  
c. \* No, Laura.

Similar data concerning island effects with fragments had already been given in the literature, for instance by Pesetsky (1987), Nishigauchi (1990), Drubig (1994). The example given by Pesetsky (1987), for instance, is the following Japanese exchange:

- (50) a. Mary-wa [[John-ni nani-o ageta] hito-ni] atta-no?  
Mary-TOPIC John-DAT what-ACC gave man-DAT met-Q  
'What<sub>i</sub> did Mary meet [the man [who gave to John t<sub>i</sub> ]]'?  
b. \*/?? Konpyunta desu.  
(it's) a computer  
c. [Konpyunta-o ageta] hito desu.  
(it's) the man who gave (him) a computer

The example shows that in Japanese, which has in-situ wh-questions, a wh-phrase embedded in a complex NP requires (at least according to most speakers) an answer which corresponds to the entire island, analogously to Merchant's English data above.

### 3 Ellipsis

In the preceding sections we have seen that there is strong evidence for a movement and ellipsis approach to fragment answers. Consequently, we have evidence for movement to the left of information Focus. The problem with this kind of movement is that it is usually hidden by ellipsis, so the moved focused element always appears in isolation, not in the left periphery. That explains why it is usually not believed that such a movement exists.

Nevertheless, this is not the end of the story. It remains to explain why a sentence like (51b) is marginal.

(51) a. Che cosa ha vinto Gianni?

‘What did Gianni win?’

b. ?? [La maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni.

the T-shirt has won Gianni

Marginality seems to be related to lack of ellipsis, since we have seen that the corresponding short sentence is fully acceptable. Why should ellipsis be necessary, in order to make the sentence fully acceptable? Before I give an explanation for that, I would like to consider a different phenomenon, namely pre-verbal subject omission.

#### 3.1 Subject omission

Lambrecht (1994) observes that the occurrence of a subject pronoun in a coordinate clause in English depends on the information structure of the two clauses. His examples are the following:

(52) John married *Rosa*, but didn’t really *love* her.

(53) a. Who married Rosa?

b. *John* married her, but he didn’t really *love* her.

c. \*? *John* married her, but didn’t really *love* her.

In (52), where the subject of the first clause, *John*, is not focused, omission of *he* in the second clause is possible; in (53), where *John* is focused, the pronoun cannot be omitted. Lambrecht says that the contrast between (52) and (53c) is explained “if we make the functionally reasonable assumption that for an argument to appear in

phonologically null form in English the referent of the argument must have been established as a topic in previous discourse” (Lambrecht 1994:136).<sup>64</sup>

Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici (1998) make analogous observations as concerns Italian subjects. They show that null subjects in Italian occur whenever they have a Topic as antecedent in the discourse. Their examples are given below:

(54) a. Questa mattina, la mostra è stata visitata da Gianni<sub>i</sub>.

this morning the exhibition was visited by John

‘This morning, the exhibition was visited by John’

b. Più tardi, \*e<sub>i</sub> / ?egli<sub>i</sub> / lui<sub>i</sub> ha visitato l’università.

more late (he) / he has visited the university

‘Later on, he visited the university’

(55) a. Questa mattina, Gianni<sub>i</sub> ha visitato la mostra.

‘This morning, John visited the exhibition’

b. Più tardi, e<sub>i</sub> / ?egli<sub>i</sub> / ??lui<sub>i</sub> ha visitato l’università.

When the first sentence has an active form (cf. 55), the antecedent for the subject of the second sentence is a preverbal, topicalized subject, and omission of the subject in the second sentence is the preferred option. When the first sentence has a passive form (cf. 54), the antecedent for the subject of the second sentence is a (focused) *by*-phrase, and the subject in the second sentence is preferably not omitted.

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<sup>64</sup> Jason Merchant (p.c.) notes that, since English does not have null subjects, (52) should be analysed as VP-coordination, where the subject is extracted from both conjunct and moved to spec,IP:

(i) [<sub>IP</sub> John [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> married Rosa] [but [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> didn’t really love her]]]

The ungrammaticality of (53c) would be due to the fact that Focus in the second conjunct does not have an alternative antecedent to contrast with, since the other conjunct is not focused, and the focused subject is in a phrase that contains the conjunct (an ‘antecedent containment’ problem). That omission of the subject is due to VP-coordination would also be proved by the impossibility to omit the subject in the example below, which is not a case of VP-coordination:

(ii) John married Rosa, though \*(he) didn’t really want to.

If Merchant’s reasoning is right, then the parallelism I intend to make between subject omission and ellipsis of background material (see next section) cannot be maintained, and the two phenomena must be kept distinct.



In conclusion, Lambrecht (1994) and Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici (1998) show that the absence of a preverbal subject in a sentence depends on the presence of a Topic antecedent for the omitted subject.

### 3.2 *Ellipsis of background material*

Preverbal subjects in a sentence with a normal intonation have Topic properties. Therefore, the generalization made by Lambrecht and by Grimshaw and Samek-Lodovici can be reformulated by saying that a subject Topic is omitted whenever it has an antecedent that is also a Topic.

I would like to extend such a generalization to background material in general. Assuming that ellipsis is an instance of anaphora, and therefore elided material must have an antecedent (cf. Williams 1997), I propose the following:

(56) Ellipsis of background material in a sentence applies if the elided material has an antecedent which is also background material.

Such a generalization can explain why a short answer is preferable than a full answer with preverbal Focus. We are going to see how in the following sections.

#### 3.2.1 *Wh-Question-Answer pairs*

Consider wh-QA pairs. I assume that the wh-phrase of a question, which corresponds to the focused constituent in the answer,<sup>65</sup> is the Focus of the question.<sup>66</sup> This means that a wh-question and its answer have corresponding Foci. Then, also the *background* part of the wh-question will correspond to that of the answer. Given the generalization in (56), this means that the background part of the answer can be elided, because it has an antecedent in the question with the same discourse status.<sup>67</sup> This is shown in (57) below.

- (57) a. [Che cosa]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni?  
          ‘What did Gianni win?’  
      b. [La maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ~~ha vinto Gianni~~.  
          the T-shirt has won Gianni

---

<sup>65</sup> For a formalization of this correspondence, see Tancredi (1992).

<sup>66</sup> Although it does not bear the main sentence stress. Main stress in a wh-question does not fall on the wh-phrase, but at the end of the clause. I assume that the matching between Focus and stress is not required when the focused phrase is a wh-phrase in a question. For more details on Focus in wh-questions, see Rochemont (1986), Zubizarreta (1998).

<sup>67</sup> But see the discussion about D-linked wh-phrases in section 3.5.

The background part of (57a) and (57b) is the same, namely the predicate, made of the verb and the subject. The background part of (57b) then has an antecedent in (57a), and consequently, given the generalization in (56), it is elided.

### 3.2.2 Contrastive exchanges

Consider now contrastive exchanges. The informational partition of a contrasting sentence can be either the same or different from that of the preceding sentence. If the background part of the contrasting sentence has no antecedent in the preceding sentence, then ellipsis is not allowed. This is shown in (58).

(58) a. La felpa, l'ha vinta [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.<sup>68</sup>

‘Gianni won the sweatshirt’

b. # No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

c. No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni.

no the T-shirt has won Gianni

While in a wh-QA context the short answer is preferred, and movement to the left is not visible, in this context the short answer is excluded, so movement to the left can be overtly seen.

Note that the absence of the predicate in (58b) is *totally* unacceptable. This is because the fragment is ambiguous. The elided background clearly cannot be the same as that of the previous sentence, so the hearer does not have any clue to recover it, and s/he can only grab it intuitively, from the general sense of the conversation.

It is also possible that the background part of a contrasting sentence *has* an antecedent with the same discourse status. In such a case, given the generalization (56), the prediction is that ellipsis preferably applies, like in wh-QA pairs. This is born out by the example below, where the background part of the first sentence is the same as that of the second sentence.

(59) a. Gianni ha vinto [la felpa]<sub>F</sub>.

‘Gianni won the *sweatshirt*’

b. No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

---

<sup>68</sup> The object is left-dislocated, since the VOS order with Focus on the subject (see i), is highly disfavoured in Italian.

(i) \*? Ha vinto la felpa [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

has won the sweatshirt Gianni

c. ?? No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni.

The difference between a wh-QA context and a contrastive context is then in the fact that the former always favours ellipsis, while the latter can either favour ellipsis or not.

In conclusion, both an information Focus and a contrastive Focus can move to the left. However, movement of information Focus is generally accompanied by ellipsis of the non-focused part of the sentence, because of the conditions on ellipsis stated by the generalization in (56). This makes movement not overtly visible. Movement of contrastive Focus, instead, is not always accompanied by ellipsis, so it is sometimes visible. This gives the impression that only a contrastive Focus can move to the left.

### 3.2.3 Further examples

The difference between wh-QA pairs and contrastive exchanges like (59) on one side, and contrastive exchanges like (58) on the other side, holds also in exchanges where it is the subject, rather than the object, that is focused. This is shown by the examples below.

(60) a. Chi ha vinto la felpa?

‘Who won the sweatshirt?’

b. [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

c. ??[Gianni]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto la felpa.

Gianni has won the sweatshirt

(61) a. Paolo ha vinto [la felpa]<sub>F</sub>.

‘Paolo won the *sweatshirt*’

b. # No, [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

c. No, [Gianni]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto la felpa.

(62) a. La felpa, l’ha vinta [Paolo]<sub>F</sub>.

‘*Paolo* won the sweatshirt’

b. No, [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

c. ?? No, [Gianni]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto la felpa.

When the elided predicate is not made of a verb and its argument, but of a verb alone, the contrast between sentences with ellipsis and sentences without ellipsis in contexts where ellipsis is preferable is less evident. This is consistent with my proposal. In fact, the burden of the background part is smaller in these sentences,

and the redundancy effect is weaker. See the following examples, where the subject is null:

(63) a. [Che cosa]<sub>F</sub> hai vinto alla gara?

‘What did you win at the race?’

b. [La maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

c. ?[La maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ho vinto.

the T-shirt (I) have won

(64) a. [La felpa]<sub>F</sub> hai vinto, vero?

‘You won the *sweatshirt*, right?’

b. No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

c. ? No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ho vinto.

no the T-shirt (I) have won

Note however that, in a contrastive context where ellipsis would make the sentence ambiguous, the sentence with ellipsis is still very marginal, as it is in (58) and in (61).

(65) a. La felpa, almeno, [l’hai vinta]<sub>F</sub>!

‘At least, you *won* the sweatshirt!’

b. # No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

c. No, [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub> ho vinto.

### 3.2.4 English

English data support the claim that conditions on ellipsis are related to discourse factors. Consider sentences with focused subjects in (66)-(68). Most of my informants gave judgements that pattern with the corresponding Italian ones. They prefer to elide in wh-QA pairs and in contexts where the contrasting sentence and the previous one have corresponding information structures, and not to elide in contexts where the two sentences have non-corresponding information structures:

(66) a. [Who]<sub>F</sub> won the T-shirt?

b. [John]<sub>F</sub> did.

c. ?? [John]<sub>F</sub> won the T-shirt.

(67) a. Did [Peter]<sub>F</sub> win the T-shirt?

- b. No, [John]<sub>F</sub> did.
  - c. ?? No, [John]<sub>F</sub> won the T-shirt.
- (68) a. Did Peter win [the T-shirt]<sub>F</sub>?
- b. ?? No, [John]<sub>F</sub> did.
  - c. No, [John]<sub>F</sub> won the T-shirt.

The only difference between English and Italian is that English short answers require the auxiliary *do*. In fact, we have seen in section 2.3 that English does VP-ellipsis, while Italian does IP-ellipsis.

Consider now focused objects. The fragments are fine in the contexts predicted by the generalization in (56), that is, in (69) and in (70).

- (69) a. [What]<sub>F</sub> did John win?
- b. [The T-shirt]<sub>F</sub>.
  - c. \*[The T-shirt]<sub>F</sub> John won t<sub>obj</sub>.
- (70) a. Did John win [the sweatshirt]<sub>F</sub>?
- b. No, [the T-shirt]<sub>F</sub>.
  - c. \*No, [the T-shirt]<sub>F</sub> John won t<sub>obj</sub>.
- (71) a. Did [John]<sub>F</sub> win the sweatshirt?
- b. # No, [the T-shirt]<sub>F</sub>.
  - c. \*No, [the T-shirt]<sub>F</sub> John won t<sub>obj</sub>.

I propose that the object in English moves to the left like in Italian. This means that IP-ellipsis occurs, and in fact, the elided sentences are not accompanied by the auxiliary *do*.

- (72) [<sub>DP</sub> The T-shirt]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ~~John~~ [<sub>VP</sub> ~~won t<sub>j</sub>~~]].

Notice, however, that the full sentences in (69)-(70) are *all* ungrammatical. English does not allow object Focus movement. This is unexpected, given the fact that movement is possible before ellipsis. The reason for the ungrammaticality of the full sentences remains unclear to me. I only would like to point out that a difference between the elided construction and the full sentence occurs also with other types of ellipsis, such as ‘pseudogapping’ and ‘sluicing’. Many authors have accounted for such a difference by viewing ellipsis as a repair phenomenon (see for instance

Lasnik 1995, Kennedy and Merchant 2000, Merchant 2001, Kennedy and Lidz 2001, among many others).<sup>69</sup>

In conclusion, although English is different from Italian in some respects, the pragmatic conditions that determine the presence or absence of background material seem to be the same in both languages.

### 3.3 *In situ Focus*

A full sentence with an *in situ Focus* is acceptable in contexts which would require ellipsis, such as those in (73) and (74):

(73) a. [Che cosa]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni?

‘What did Gianni win?’

b. Gianni ha vinto [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

Gianni has won the T-shirt

(74) a. Gianni ha vinto [la felpa]<sub>F</sub>.

‘Gianni won the *sweatshirt*’

b. No, Gianni ha vinto [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

Why should the background material be acceptable when Focus stays *in situ*?

If you recall, in section 2.1 I have assumed that ellipsis is not allowed if the focused item remains *in situ*, because it would be forced to apply to a chunk of a constituent (see 75). I argue that the impossibility of having ellipsis makes the material preceding Focus tolerable.

(75) \* [<sub>IP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni] [<sub>F</sub> ha vinto] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> la maglietta]]]

Note, however, that the subject in (73b) and (74b) *can* be omitted, because Italian is a null-subject language:<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Consider for instance pseudogapping. Pseudogapping is ellipsis of the verb, but unlike gapping, the context in which it occurs is not necessarily coordination. Lasnik (1995) describes this phenomenon as movement of the object out of the VP (to an Agr position) followed by remnant VP-ellipsis (an analysis similar to the one I give in 72 for fragment objects). The full sentence after movement of the DP is ungrammatical:

(i) If you don't believe me, you will the weatherman (\*believe).

According to Lasnik, the ungrammaticality is due to the fact that the verb *believe* should move to a higher V (within a VP-shell hypothesis), because of an EPP feature that needs to be checked. PF-deletion of the verb would rescue the lack of verb movement. Note that the same account cannot be given for (72), because the object moves higher than the IP, so the verb is not prevented from moving to a higher V position.

(76) a. [Che cosa]<sub>F</sub> ha vinto Gianni?

b. Ha vinto [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

(77) a. Gianni ha vinto [la felpa]<sub>F</sub>.

b. No, ha vinto [la maglietta]<sub>F</sub>.

Omission of the subject in these examples improves the acceptability of the sentence, as expected within my proposal, and given what I said in section 3.1.

### 3.4 *Summing up*

In conclusion, if we assume a movement-and-ellipsis analysis of fragment answers, the idea that only contrastive Focus can move to the left ends up being just an illusion caused by ellipsis. While in contrastive contexts it *can* be the case that Focus movement is not accompanied by ellipsis of non-focused material, in wh-QA pairs, on the contrary, ellipsis generally occurs. Since information Focus is always exemplified by the answer to a wh-question, then a moved information Focus will never be visible in a high position, but always in isolation. Therefore, the impression is that an information Focus never moves to the left.

In the following sections I am going to present two apparently contradictory cases, which in the end further support my analysis. In section 3.5, I consider again É. Kiss's Italian examples presented in Chapter 4, and give an explanation for them in terms of the above proposal. In section 3.6, I present a case of information Focus in a context that is *not* a wh-QA pair.

### 3.5 *Answers to D-linked wh-questions*

If you recall Chapter 4, section 3.5.3, É. Kiss (1998) presents certain Italian data that according to her bring evidence for the existence of two semantically different Foci in that language. She argues that in Italian “the use of an Identificational Focus is possible only if the domain of identification is a closed set of individuals known to the participants of the discourse” (É. Kiss 1998: 268). She provides evidence for that by showing that a D-linked wh-question requires an answer with an Identificational Focus. Her examples, already mentioned in Chapter 4, are repeated below:

(78) a. Chi ha rotto il vaso?

‘Who broke the vase?’

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<sup>70</sup> I do not think it is ellipsis (PF-deletion), but just a derivation that does not include the lexical subject.

b. Il vaso, l'ha rotto [Maria]<sub>F</sub>.  
the vase it-CL has broken Maria

c. # [Maria]<sub>F</sub> ha rotto il vaso.  
Maria has broken the vase

(79) a. Chi di voi due ha rotto il vaso?

'Who of you two broke the vase?'

b. [Maria]<sub>F</sub> ha rotto il vaso.

First of all, I have to say that the difference in acceptability between the two exchanges above is not very strong. I think that the omission of *ha rotto il vaso* is still preferable even in (79), although less strongly preferable than in the other example.

Furthermore, I argue that the slight difference between wh-questions and D-linked wh-questions can be explained without assuming the existence of two distinct Foci.

In section 3.2.1 I have assumed that a wh-question has always the same informational partition as its answer, that is, the wh-phrase corresponds to the focused part, and the rest of the question corresponds to the background part of its answer. I suggest that this informational partition changes if the wh-phrase of the question is D-linked. D-linking requires familiarity, givenness of the possible referents from which an answer is chosen. These properties are typical properties of background material, not of Focus. If this is true, then it is no surprise that an answer where post-focal material is not elided is given to a question with a D-linked wh-phrase. The informational partition of the question is reversed in this case, which means that it is different from that of its answer, as it is clear by looking at (80).

(80) a. Chi di voi due [ha rotto il vaso]<sub>F</sub>?

b. [Maria]<sub>F</sub> ha rotto il vaso.

Since the background part of the answer does not have a discourse antecedent in the question, given the generalization in (56), ellipsis does not apply, in accordance with the data.

### 3.6 Information Focus movement without ellipsis

I have shown that the unavailability of information Focus movement in Italian is not due to the fact that Focus expresses new information, but to the fact that information Focus occurs in the answer to a wh-question. Thus, if we found a different context, which does not provide an antecedent for the background,



information Focus movement should be visible. I believe that the following sentences occur in such a context:

(81) Sai, l'ho scoperto: [uno studente]<sub>F</sub> aveva rubato quel libro.

(you) know it-CL (I) have found-out a student had stolen that book

'You know, I found it out: a *student* stole that book'

(82) Ora ricordo: [una sciarpa rossa]<sub>F</sub> mi ha regalato Luigi per Natale.

now (I) remember a scarf red to-me-CL has given Luigi for Christmas

'Now I remember: Luigi gave me a red *scarf* for Christmas'

Both sentences are pronounced 'out of the blue'. This is clear in (81), which begins with *Sai...* 'You know...'. Nevertheless, these sentences do not have broad Focus, but narrow Focus on *uno studente* and on *una sciarpa rossa* respectively. Consider for instance (82). That Luigi gave me a present for Christmas was uttered in a discourse event that took place in a relatively recent past, and is recalled to attention by the speaker of (82). The speaker utters that sentence as a continuation of that prior discourse event.<sup>71</sup> Since the background in (82) does not have an antecedent that is immediately recoverable from the current discourse context, then, given the generalization in (56), ellipsis does not apply. The moved Focus expresses new information and does not entail any contrast.

#### 4 How many landing sites for Focus?

In the previous sections I have shown that both an information Focus and a contrastive Focus can move to the left periphery. This fact does not totally prove that the two Foci have the same syntax. The two Foci could move to two different positions in the left periphery, each one specialized for each type of Focus. In that case, their syntax would be different.

Such a claim has been made for instance by Benincà and Poletto (1999). Benincà and Poletto propose that information Focus moves to the specifier of a position in the left periphery that is lower than the position assigned to contrastive Focus. In the next section, I will present their main arguments. In section 4.2, I will show the problems their proposal present, and will conclude that their claim is wrong.

##### 4.1 Benincà and Poletto's (1999) arguments

Benincà and Poletto's starting point is the example below in (83). They claim that the post-focal PP *a Gianni* 'to Gianni', which is in a Topic position in Rizzi's

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<sup>71</sup> See Rochemont (1986:47-48). See also below, section 5.3.5.

(1997) periphery,<sup>72</sup> is in fact an information Focus, and occupies a designated Focus position:

(83) a. [<sub>FocP</sub> *Questo* [<sub>TopP</sub> a Gianni [<sub>CIP</sub> gli [<sub>IP</sub> dovremmo dire.

b. [<sub>FocP<sub>cntr</sub></sub> *Questo* [<sub>FocP<sub>inf</sub></sub> a Gianni [<sub>CIP</sub> gli [<sub>IP</sub> dovremmo dire.

this to Gianni to-him-CL (we) should say

‘We should say *this* to Gianni’

The first argument that Benincà and Poletto provide in favour of their claim concerns the resumptive clitic. We have seen in Chapter 3, section 2.3, that a resumptive clitic occurs with a Topic, but never with a Focus. Benincà and Poletto argue that the presence of the object clitic in (83) does not prove that the PP is a Topic. They point out that it is not impossible to find a resumptive clitic in Focus structures. In colloquial Italian, a dative clitic can occur with a focused indirect object:

(84) Gliel’ho detto [a Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

to-him-CL-it-CL (I) have told to Gianni

‘I told this to Gianni’

They therefore conclude that the dative clitic in (83) is not strong evidence of topichood of the PP.

A second argument they provide concerns intonation. They argue that the presence of stress is not crucial to determine the information status of an element. According to them, *il divano* in (85b) is not focused, but rather left-dislocated, as the resumptive clitic would demonstrate:

(85) a. Mi ha detto che il tappeto, lo compra l’anno prossimo.

‘He told me that the carpet, he will buy it next year’

b. No, ti sbagli, [il divano]<sub>F</sub> lo compra l’anno prossimo.

no (you) REFL mistake the sofa (he) it-CL buys the year next

‘No, you are wrong, the *sofa*, he will buy it next year’

A final argument they provide is Weak Crossover. As you may recall (Chapter 3, section 2.3), Rizzi (1997) shows that focused items are sensitive to WCO, while topicalized items are not. Benincà and Poletto argue that an item following a preverbal Focus is sensitive to WCO, as shown by the following data:

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Chapter 3, section 2.2.

- (86) \* [A Maria]<sub>F</sub> Giorgio<sub>i</sub>, sua<sub>i</sub> madre presenterà  
 to Maria Giorgio his mother will-introduce  
 ‘His mother will introduce Giorgio to Maria’

Benincà and Poletto conclude that the post-focal element that in Rizzi (1997) is a Topic is in fact an information Focus, which occupies a designated position right below the contrastive Focus position.

#### 4.2 Problems with Benincà and Poletto’s arguments

First of all, we must note that Benincà and Poletto’s first argument - the presence of a resumptive clitic for a focused constituent - invalidates the second - the fact that intonation is not related to Focus. Why should (85b) represent a Topic with a Focus intonation? The sentence can rather be a case of Focus with resumptive clitic, given the fact that the first argument of Benincà and Poletto is the availability of resumptive clitics in Focus constructions. This is confirmed by the fact that, from the point of view of interpretation, the object in (85b) is clearly new information, as it is the part of the sentence that is not already present in the discourse. Therefore, the example in (85) shows that a focused constituent can have a resumptive clitic, but does not bear any evidence that intonation is not relevant to determine Focus.

As for (86), while according to Benincà and Poletto’s judgments the sentence is still bad with a resumptive object clitic, according to my judgments, the clitic consistently improves the grammaticality of the sentence:

- (87) ? [A Maria]<sub>F</sub>, Giorgio<sub>i</sub>, sua<sub>i</sub> madre lo<sub>i</sub> presenterà.  
 to Maria Giorgio his mother him-CL will-introduce

The following sentence is perhaps even more acceptable:

- (88) [A Maria]<sub>F</sub>, quel ragazzo<sub>i</sub>, sua<sub>i</sub> madre lo<sub>i</sub> ha presentato.  
 to Maria that boy his mother him-CL has introduced

In sum, it seems to me that Benincà and Poletto do not bring convincing arguments that a post-focal element is in fact an information Focus.

Furthermore, if we look again at (83), we notice that the post-focal (non-stressed) PP *a Gianni* could have been previously mentioned in the discourse. This means that it is part of the background of the sentence:

- (89) a. Pensi che a Gianni dobbiamo raccontare tutto?  
 ‘Do you think we should tell Gianni everything?’

b. Niente affatto. Secondo me solo [questo]<sub>F</sub> a Gianni (gli) dovremmo dire: che stiamo bene e che ci divertiamo.

‘Not at all. I think we should tell Gianni only *this*: that we are fine and we are having a good time’

This is further confirmed by the fact that, if a multiple (echo) wh-question is asked on both the DO and the IO, an answer like (83) is not appropriate, as illustrated below:

(90) a. Che cosa dovremmo dire a chi?

‘What should we say to whom?’

b. # [Questo]<sub>F</sub> a Gianni dovremmo dire: che stiamo bene e che ci divertiamo.

‘We should say *this* to Gianni: that we are fine and that we are having a good time’

Concluding, the post-focal element in (83) is not another Focus, but it is part of the background. Therefore, there is no evidence that a Focus expressing new information moves to a different position than a Focus expressing contrast.

### 5 Against two FocPs

As I mentioned in previous Chapters, Belletti (1999, 2001, 2002) proposes that there are two positions dedicated to Focus in the clause, a structurally low one and a structurally high one. She bases her proposal on the fact that the low Focus and the high Focus have different interface properties. But we have seen in the previous Chapter that there isn’t real evidence for interface differences between the two Foci in Italian. Therefore, Belletti’s proposal is incompatible with what I said so far.

Assuming that what I said is correct, namely that Focus can express both contrast and new information in both a low and a high position, Belletti’s proposal might be acceptable only if the two FocPs were conceived as two identical heads. But this is not what Belletti proposes. Belletti aims at showing that the two FocPs are different, namely that the structurally low FocP is restricted to information Focus, and that the low *contrastive* Focus in fact fills the spec of the high FocP.

In the following sections, I will show that what Belletti proposes is wrong: a low Focus does not fill any specific position, but rather it stays in situ, either when it expresses new information and when it expresses contrast.

#### 5.1. Belletti’s general idea

Belletti assumes Rizzi’s left periphery (repeated below in 91). She also assumes that FocP in (91) can be filled by a contrastive Focus only.

(91) [ForceP [ TopP\* [ **FocP** [ TopP\* [ FinP [ IP...

She places another FocP in the low IP area, right above the VP. Her idea is that the right periphery is symmetric to the left periphery as concerns Focus and Topic heads. In other words, her working hypothesis is that, not only there is a low FocP, but also two low TopPs that surround it.

It is well known, since the work by Calabrese (1992), that a postverbal subject in Italian, if in the same intonational contour as the verb, is focused.<sup>73</sup> Belletti argues that the spec of the low FocP is the landing site for a postverbal focused subject, as the structure in (92) shows:

(92) ... [I Verb [TopP [FocP Subj [TopP [VP t<sub>subj</sub>

A Focus that occupies the low FocP can only be an information Focus. As for a low *contrastive* Focus, she proposes that it moves overtly to the spec of the high FocP, and then the remnant IP moves to the specifier of a higher TopP, so that the Focus ends up occupying a postverbal position. This is shown in (93):

(93) [TopP [IP Verb [VP t<sub>subj</sub> ] ] [FocP Subj t<sub>IP</sub>

In the following section, I will challenge Belletti's claim that a low information Focus is not in situ. In section 5.3 I will challenge her claim that a low contrastive Focus occupies the high FocP.

## 5.2 Low information Focus

### 5.2.1 The unaccusative/unergative hypothesis

First of all, updating the unaccusative/unergative hypothesis, namely the idea that postverbal subjects of unaccusative verbs are VP internal, while postverbal subjects of unergative verbs are VP external,<sup>74</sup> Belletti (1999, 2001) claims that spec,FocP is occupied by subjects of unergative verbs and by definite subjects of unaccusative verbs, *but not* by indefinite subjects of unaccusative verbs, which stay in argument position.

In order to provide evidence for that, Belletti observes that definite subjects of unaccusatives and both definite and indefinite subjects of unergatives are slightly marginal in postverbal position, if they are followed by another complement and have a 'neutral' descending intonation, that is, if stress falls on the most embedded element of the clause:

<sup>73</sup> See also Chapter 1, section 1.1.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986), Belletti (1988).

(94) ?E' entrato Mario dalla finestra.  
has come-in Mario from-the window  
'Mario came in from the window'

(95) a. (?) Ha telefonato Maria al giornale.  
has phoned Maria to-the newspaper  
'Maria phoned the newspaper'  
b. (?) Ha telefonato uno studente al giornale.  
has phoned a student to-the newspaper  
'A student phoned the newspaper'

Belletti suggests that the marginal status of those sentences is due to the fact that the subject, which stays in spec,FocP, does not occupy the most embedded position of the clause, where the sentence stress falls. The mismatch between stress and Focus would produce the slight marginality. The grammaticality of (96), where the subject is in the most embedded position, would support her idea as concerns definite subjects of unaccusatives:

(96) E' entrato Mario.  
has come-in Mario

Indefinite subjects of unaccusative verbs, instead, are fine in a non-final position:

(97) E' entrato un ladro dalla finestra.  
has come-in a thief from-the window  
'A thief came in from the window'

Belletti's explanation for the difference between (94)-(95a,b) and (97) seems to be based on the assumption that, if a subject does not fill the spec,FocP position, it is not interpreted as focused. In fact, the mismatch between Focus interpretation and stress, according to her data, arises in (94) and (95a,b) but not in (97).<sup>75</sup>

I don't see any interpretive difference between the subject in (94), (95a,b) and that in (97). If we ask a question on the subject, namely, if we expect that only the subject in the answer is focused, then *all* examples above, without difference

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<sup>75</sup> Or perhaps Belletti assumes that the mismatch concerns stress and a certain syntactic position, rather than stress and a certain interpretation. But then the marginality of (99c), where the subject does *not* occupy the spec of FocP, is not explained

between indefinites and definites of unaccusatives, are totally inappropriate answers (assuming a descending intonation with stress at the end):

(98) a. Chi è entrato dalla finestra?

‘Who came in from the window?’

b. # E’ entrato Mario dalla *finestra*.

c. # E’ entrato un ladro dalla *finestra*.

(99) a. Chi ha telefonato al giornale?

‘Who phoned to the newspaper?’

b. # Ha telefonato Maria al *giornale*.

c. # Ha telefonato uno studente al *giornale*.

This happens for the reasons Belletti suggests, namely the mismatch between the position of Focus (the subject) and that of stress. But the mismatch clearly affects also the acceptability of (99c).

If sentences above have instead to be considered as entirely focused, then they are all fine. The marginal status of (94) and of (95a,b) is not due to the position of the subject, but to the context in which these sentences occur, as I am going to show right away.

Consider (94) first. Its grammaticality is evident if we place the sentence in the following context. Some people, living in an apartment whose door locks automatically, go out of the apartment and forget the keys inside. Luckily, a window is open, so one of them, Mario, comes into the house through the window, and opens the door. The day after, one of these people tells the misadventure to a friend. The friend asks:

(100) a. E alla fine, come avete fatto ad aprire la porta? Avete chiamato i pompieri?

‘And in the end, how did you open the door? Did you call the firemen?’

b. No, è entrato Mario dalla finestra.

‘No, Mario came in from the window’

Another counterexample is provided by Pinto (1997). She notices the minimal pair in (101), where both subjects are definite:

(101) a. ? E’ entrato l’uomo dalla finestra.

has come-in the man from-the window

b. E’ entrato il cane dalla finestra.

has come-in the dog from-the window

She claims that the difference concerns the unique meaning of *il cane*, which is the salient dog in that specific context of interpretation, and the non-unique meaning of *l'uomo*, which requires additional information from the context in order for its referent to be identified. In other words, (101a) is fine only if we imagine a particular context in which the referent for *l'uomo* can be easily identified (for instance, we are talking about a man and a woman). As Pinto points out, “an analysis in strict morpho-syntactic terms, as Belletti suggests, cannot account for the differences in felicity observed in these sentences, since, formally speaking, they are exactly identical”.

Consider now (95a). Such a sentence is also fully acceptable, if placed in the appropriate context, as the example below illustrates:

(102) a. Come siete venuti a conoscenza del fatto?

‘How did you know about the event?’

b. Ha telefonato Maria al giornale.

‘Maria phoned the newspaper’

Finally, the full grammaticality of a postverbal indefinite subject with an unergative verb (cf. 95b) is shown by the example below:

(103) Ha telefonato un signore al giornale; voleva sapere se oggi siamo in sciopero.

‘A man phoned to the newspaper; he wanted to know if we are on strike today’

The reason why it is not necessary to look for a particular context in order to make (97) acceptable is simply the fact that a context for such a sentence is straightforwardly available to the hearer. It is easy to imagine a situation in which a thief entered a house from the window. Consider though a sentence like (104). Although the verb is unaccusative and the subject is indefinite, the sentence is not as acceptable as the one in (97). This is because the context in which that sentence may occur is much less straightforwardly predictable.

(104) ? E' uscito un uomo dalla stanza.

is come-out a man from-the room

‘A man came out of the room’

Concluding, the examples above do not prove that postverbal subjects of unergative verbs and postverbal definite subjects of unaccusative verbs occupy a position (spec,FocP) different from the position of postverbal indefinite subjects of unaccusative verbs (the argument position). The (apparent) difference in



grammaticality simply depends on a major or minor difficulty in recovering an appropriate context for the sentence.

### 5.2.2 Extraction domain

Belletti (2002) provides another argument to support the idea that a postverbal subject moves to a low FocP. She says that the position of the subject is not a felicitous extraction domain, thus it cannot be an argument position. The examples she gives involve *ne*-cliticization and *wh*-extraction.

In (105), some examples from Belletti (2002) are given, showing the marginality of extraction from a postverbal subject of an unergative verb.

(105) a. Ha telefonato il direttore del giornale al presidente.

has phoned the director of-the newspaper to-the president

‘The director of the newspaper phoned the president’

b. ?? Il giornale di cui ha telefonato il direttore al presidente.

the newspaper of which has phoned the director to-the president

c. ?? Ne ha telefonato il direttore al presidente.

of-it-CL has phoned the director to the president

d. ?? Ne hanno telefonato molti al presidente

of-them-CL have phoned many to the president

Consider *ne*-extraction. First of all, we must distinguish between genitive *ne* and partitive *ne*. The former (exemplified in 105c) is harder to accept even when extraction occurs from an object of a transitive verb (which is a regular extraction domain), or an indefinite subject of an unaccusative verb. According to my judgements, the b sentences below are better if *ne* is omitted (with the sentence having the same meaning as if *ne* were present)<sup>76</sup>:

(106) a. Ho presentato il direttore del giornale al presidente.

have introduced the director of-the newspaper to-the president

‘I introduced the director of the newspaper to the president’

b. (?Ne) ho presentato il direttore al presidente.

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<sup>76</sup> This is also true for a sentence with an unergative verb, like (105c), repeated below:

(i) a. Ha telefonato il direttore del giornale al presidente.

c. (??Ne) ha telefonato il direttore al presidente.

of-it have introduced the director to-the president

(107) a. E' arrivato un giornalista della *Repubblica*.

is arrived a journalist of the *Repubblica*

'A journalist of *Repubblica* arrived'

b. (?Ne) è arrivato un giornalista.

of-it is arrived a journalist

It seems to be the case then that the marginality of genitive *ne*-extraction does not depend on the domain of extraction, but on a general ban on genitive *ne*-extraction.

As for partitive *ne*, its acceptability from a postverbal subject of unergative verbs has been already pointed out by several authors. Saccon (1993), for instance, reports several counterexamples:

(108) a. Ne telefonano, (di tifosi,) la domenica!<sup>77</sup>

of-them phone of fans on Sundays

'(Lots) of fans phone on Sundays'

b. Ne cammina tanta, (di gente,) su quei marciapiedi.

of-them walk many of people on those sidewalks

'Lots of people walk on those sidewalks'

c. Ne funzionano solo due (di orologi).

of-them work only two (of the watches)

'Only two of them work'

Saccon claims that there is no difference between the syntactic position of postverbal subjects of unaccusative verbs and that of unergative verbs. She proposes that, in all monadic verbs, the subject occupies the complement position of the verb.

As for *wh*-extraction, note that if the tense of the verb is not present perfect but simple present, the acceptability improves, as it has been observed also for *ne*-extraction by Saccon (1993), among others (see examples in 108 above):

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<sup>77</sup> In this sentence, the quantifier is omitted, but the sentence can be considered as equivalent to the others. In fact, by saying *ne telefonano* 'of them call' (with a certain intonation) the speaker intends to say *ne telefonano molti* 'many of them call'. In other words, the meaning of the sentence is not just that fans call on Sunday, but that *many* fans call on Sunday.

(109) Il giornale di cui<sup>78</sup> ci telefona sempre il direttore / un redattore è l'*Atracittà*.

the newspaper of which to-us-CL calls always the director / a writer is the *Altracittà*

‘The newspaper whose director / writer always calls us is *Altracittà*’

As noted by Lonzi (1985), the problem is not tense, but the aspect related to different tenses. This is proved by the fact that, if the verb is in the imperfect, which is a past tense, the sentence is as good as the one with present tense.

(110) Il giornale di cui ci telefonava sempre il direttore...

the newspaper of which us-CL called-IMPF always the director...

This is because both simple present and imperfect in Italian, unlike present perfect, have imperfective aspect.

We can conclude that the acceptability of wh-extraction varies according to parameters that are independent from the extraction site.

### 5.2.3 A different analysis

As I already said in section 5.2.1, the restrictions Belletti finds on postverbal subjects with certain predicates have to be ascribed to semantic-pragmatic factors related to the context in which the sentence occurs, rather than to the syntactic position of the postverbal subject, which is always its argument position.

Along the lines of Calabrese (1992), Saccon (1993), Pinto (1997), Tortora (2001), and others, I suggest that a crucial role for the acceptability of a postverbal subject is played by the presence of a ‘location’ of the event expressed by the sentence. To understand what this means, consider the examples below:

(111) a. ??Ha dormito il bambino

has slept the child

b. Ha telefonato Gianni

has telephoned Gianni

Example (111b) is fully acceptable if the interpretation is ‘Gianni called us’, not if the interpretation is that Gianni made a telephone call to someone, no matter who. In other words, the sentence in (111b) is acceptable because the event is implicitly

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<sup>78</sup> As Guglielmo Cinque (p.c.) observes, extracted *di cui* must not be confused with a base-generated *di cui*, as in *La squadra, di cui conosco solo Gianni, Paolo e Mario...* (‘The team, of which I know only Gianni, Paolo and Mario...’).

interpreted as happening ‘here’ with respect to the speakers.<sup>79</sup> The sentence in (111a) lacks such an interpretation, so it is good only if an overt location is given, as in (112):

(112) In questo letto ha dormito il bambino.

In this bed has slept the child.

Compare also the following sentences, with two transitive verbs:

(113) a. ?? Ha dipinto un quadro Sandro

has painted a picture Sandro

b. Ha scritto una lettera la nonna

has written a letter the grandmother

The sentence in (113b) is more acceptable than (113a) if an interpretation is given of the type: ‘Grandmother sent us a letter’, namely if the event is speaker-oriented.<sup>80</sup> Such an interpretation is not available in (113a), so the sentence lacks a ‘location’ for the event it describes. If the location is made explicit, then the sentence becomes acceptable:

(114) In questo atelier ha dipinto un quadro Sandro.

in this studio has painted a picture Sandro

The core idea of the studies mentioned above is that a sentence with a postverbal subject is a predication that lacks its *subject*. A preverbal (grammatical) subject is usually what a sentence predicates about (a ‘Topic’ in the sense of Reinhart 1981). If the subject stays inside the VP, it becomes *part* of the predication itself. Therefore, it cannot be the subject of predication, and the sentence must predicate on something else. What these studies propose, on the basis of data like those given above, is that the sentence must predicate on a location.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> ‘Here’ but not ‘now’, since the event can occur in the past with respect to the speakers’ conversation, as in fact it does in (111b).

<sup>80</sup> As noted by Calabrese (1992) and others, the sentence is grammatical also if a dative clitic is added, such as *mi* ‘to me’: *Mi ha scritto una lettera la nonna*. The clitic, in fact, can be considered as a sort of explicit ‘location’ of the event.

<sup>81</sup> According to Calabrese (1992), the location the sentence predicates about is an external event argument that can be null (along the lines of Kratzer 1988). This idea is followed with minor differences also by Saccon (1993), Pinto (1997), Tortora (2001).

From what I have said so far, I can draw the following conclusions. There is no difference in the syntactic position of focused postverbal subjects; the difference in acceptability that we find among sentences with postverbal subjects is due exclusively to semantic/pragmatic factors. In particular, the location of the event expressed by a sentence with a postverbal subject must be made explicit, or it must be speaker-oriented, and so implicitly recoverable.

### 5.3 *Low contrastive Focus*

Consider now postverbal contrastive Focus. As mentioned above, Belletti (2002) says that it moves overtly to the specifier of the high FocP, with remnant movement of the rest of the sentence to a higher position.

First of all, I would like to argue against the legitimacy of the operation of remnant movement; then, I will discuss Belletti's arguments in support of her proposal.

#### 5.3.1 *Remnant movement*

I have already mentioned my scepticism with respect to remnant movement in Chapter 3, while analysing the derivation proposed by Frascarelli (2000) for a right-dislocated Topic (see section 4.2.1 of that Chapter). I noticed that a remnant movement operation is inhomogeneous to the classical generative conception of movement in that the trigger for it is never clear. This is also the case for Belletti's derivation in (115b).

(115) a. Ha telefonato [Maria]<sub>F</sub> (, non Piero).

has telephoned Maria not Piero

b. [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> Ha telefonato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> ]]] [<sub>FocP</sub> Maria t<sub>IP</sub>

Belletti proposes that the landing site for IP movement is a TopP. Unlike Frascarelli's derivation, in this case the hypothesis is plausible, because the remnant sentence is in fact background material. Nevertheless, some problems arise also with Belletti's derivation.

If the remnant IP moves to TopP in (115b), why is it not the case that, in a sentence like (116) below, the IP occupies a TopP position? Its pragmatic status is the same as that of the remnant IP in (115b), namely, it is the background.

(116) [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Maria]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ha telefonato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ]]] .

One might assume that the IP in (116) is not in situ, but it also has moved to the specifier of a TopP, the one lower than FocP in Rizzi's (1997) left periphery:

(117) [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Maria]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ha telefonato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ]]] t<sub>IP</sub>.

But if the motivation for remnant movement is that the topicalized phrase must fill a spec,TopP position, then remnant movement should be generalized to all cases of remnant topicalized material. This means that, in all cases in which a sentence has narrow Focus, and Focus moves, a construction similar to either the one in (115b) or to the one in (117) should be present. Although in principle possible, such a conclusion seems to be very unnatural, at least from a classical generative perspective, and would require stronger syntactic evidence.

In conclusion, whenever we look for a trigger for remnant movement, it becomes very difficult to justify such an operation. I therefore conclude that its introduction in a derivation is definitely more problematic than helpful.

### 5.3.2 CIVS, O vs VSO

Belletti's claim that the low contrastive Focus occupies the spec of the high FocP is based on the minimal pair below, taken from Cardinaletti (1998, 2002):

(118) a. Chi ha comprato il giornale ?

‘Who bought the newspaper ?’

b. L’ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>, il giornale.

it-CL has bought Maria the newspaper

‘As for the newspaper, Maria bought it’

c. # Ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub> il giornale.

has bought Maria the newspaper

‘Maria bought the newspaper’

Cardinaletti argues that the unacceptability of (118c) in the context given by (118a) is due to the fact that the lack of object clitic is only possible if Focus is contrastive. Belletti agrees with Cardinaletti and proposes an analysis of (118b) and (118c) that accounts for the relation between contrastive Focus and the absence of object clitic, and between information Focus and the presence of it.

Consider the construction with the clitic. Belletti argues that the clitic moves to a Case-assigning position to receive accusative Case. The lexical object can then fill a non-Case-assigning, low position. The postverbal subject is lower than the clitic; therefore, it must fill the specifier of the *low* FocP.

(119) [<sub>CIP</sub> L’] [<sub>IP</sub> ha comprato [<sub>FocP</sub> Maria [<sub>TopP</sub> il giornale [<sub>VP</sub>

In the construction where the clitic is not present, the lexical object must move to a Case-assigning position. Since the lexical object follows the postverbal subject, the latter must be even higher, namely it must fill the specifier of the *high* FocP. This explains why (118c) cannot be non-contrastive.

(120) [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> Ha comprato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>obj</sub>]] [<sub>FocP</sub> Maria [il giornale t<sub>IP</sub>

Belletti's analysis can be dispensed with if we do not assume that the object has to move in order to check its Case, namely if we assume a Case Theory like the one proposed by Chomsky (2000, 2001), where Case can be checked in situ.

Consider (121), where a syntactic representation is given that conforms to Chomsky's framework. T corresponds to I, and the VP-shell is made of two categories, V and *v*. Spec,*v*P is where the subject merges, and where the object moves after scrambling (see Chomsky 1995).

(121) [<sub>T</sub> Ha comprato [<sub>vP</sub> Maria <sub>+nom</sub> [<sub>v</sub> t<sub>verb</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> t<sub>verb</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> il giornale <sub>+acc</sub> ]]]].

Following Chomsky (2000, 2001), the derivation proceeds as follows. When *v* is merged in the derivation, it looks for a DP whose phi-features match its uninterpretable phi-features. Since there is no DP intervening between *v* and the object, the object is a perfect candidate to enter a feature-checking relation with *v*. During the same feature-matching, the uninterpretable accusative Case feature of the DP is checked. Then, the subject is merged in spec,*v*P. Its nominative Case is checked in parallel fashion by the verb in T.

In sum, within this account, the object in (121) does not have to move to check its Case. Consequently, there is no evidence that the focused subject is in a high position.

A final consideration to make about Belletti's analysis is the following. If it were true that Case checking forces movement of the topicalized object, then the same should also hold for the postverbal focused subject.

Belletti (1999) addresses the issue of Case-checking of the postverbal subject. Assuming that "there is no Case assignor for S[subject] in the lower portion of the clause", she concludes that "S moves to Focus in order to be licensed by a different feature from Case, namely Focus". In other words, she proposes that Case-checking and Focus-checking are interchangeable operations. However, she does not explain why there should be a mutual exclusion of Case-checking and Focus-checking. As Belletti herself points out in her 2002 paper, it is not obvious "what Case and Focus should have in common which would allow them to play an essentially equivalent role". Therefore, Belletti (2002) adopts a different solution: she follows Chomsky's recent proposal that Case can be checked at a distance, and proposes that the case of the focused subject is checked in situ. It is natural then to ask why the same Case-checking operation at distance she assumes for Focus cannot be available also for Accusative Case of a low *topicalized* object, in the way I have described above.

In conclusion, the idea that the object in (118c) has to move to a Case assigning position is not tenable, and consequently, there is no evidence that the subject has to fill a high position.

### 5.3.3 Object position in *clVSO* and *VSO* structures

If the position of Focus is not different in (118b) and (118c), how then to explain the different behaviour of the two sentences?

First of all, I follow Cardinaletti (1998, 2002) and assume that the two structures differ with respect to the position of the post-focal object. In this section I reproduce Cardinaletti's arguments in favour of two different positions for the object in (118b) and in (118c). In the next section, I propose an account for the difference between (118b) and (118c) in *wh*-QA pairs that does not assume any interpretive and/or syntactic difference between the two Foci.

Cardinaletti (1998, 2002) shows that the post-focal object with resumptive clitic and that without resumptive clitic display a different behaviour with respect to several phenomena, and proposes that this is due to the fact that they occupy two different syntactic positions. She calls the structure with resumptive clitic 'right-dislocation' (122), and the structure without clitic 'marginalization' (123).<sup>82</sup>

(122) a. L'abbiamo invitato noi, Gianni.

          him-CL have invited we Gianni

      b. Abbiamo invitato noi, Gianni

          have invited we Gianni

Cardinaletti follows Kayne's (1994:78) analysis and proposes that the right-dislocated object is in the complement position of a head whose specifier is occupied by the rest of the sentence, as represented in the structure below:

(123) [<sub>XP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> L'abbiamo invitato noi] [<sub>X</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni]]]

The marginalized object, instead, stays in situ.<sup>83</sup>

(124) [<sub>IP</sub> Abbiamo [<sub>AspP</sub> invitato [<sub>VP</sub> noi [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Gianni]]]]]

A first difference that supports Cardinaletti's hypothesis is the availability of the preposition *a* when the object is [+human].<sup>84</sup> The preposition can be present in right dislocation, but not in marginalization:

(125) a. L'abbiamo invitato noi, a Gianni.

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2.3, and Chapter 3, section 4.2.

<sup>83</sup> Cardinaletti assumes with Cinque (1999) that the past participle occupies an aspectual head, Asp.

<sup>84</sup> This option is though restricted to (some varieties of) colloquial Italian.



him-CL have invited we to Gianni

b. \* Abbiamo invitato noi, a Gianni

‘We invited Gianni’

Cardinaletti parallels the unavailability of the preposition in (125b) with the unavailability of the preposition in a simple sentence, which shows that also in (125b) the object stays in situ:

(126) \* Abbiamo invitato a Gianni.

we have invited to Gianni

Another piece of evidence Cardinaletti provides is argument order: while various right-dislocated objects can have any order in a sentence, marginalized objects must follow the order provided by the syntax, as in simple sentences.

(127) a. Ce l’ha nascosto il bambino, il libro, sotto il letto.

there-CL it-CL has hidden the child the book under the bed

b. Ce l’ha nascosto il bambino, sotto il letto, il libro.

(128) a. Ha nascosto il bambino, il libro sotto il letto.

has hidden the child the book under the bed

b. \* Ha nascosto il bambino, sotto il letto il libro.

(129) a. Il bambino ha nascosto il libro sotto il letto.

the child has hidden the book under the bed

b. \* Il bambino ha nascosto sotto il letto il libro.<sup>85</sup>

A third difference that Cardinaletti observes concerns objects co-occurring with infinitival complements, as in (130):

(130) a. Che cosa l’hai convinto a fare, Mario?

what him<sub>cl</sub> (you) have convinced to do Mario

b. \* Che cosa hai convinto a fare, Mario?<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> To me, the difference between (128a) and (128b) and between (129a) and (129b) is not so sharp (the b sentences are slightly less natural than the a sentences). However, the distinction remains, and the b sentences in the two examples have the same degree of ungrammaticality.

The ungrammaticality of (130b) is due to the fact that the position of *Mario* after the infinitival clause cannot be in its in situ position.

Finally, as I said already, Cardinaletti observes that a marginalized object can only be accompanied by a focused subject expressing contrast, while a right-dislocated object is not subjected to that restriction. In the following section, I am going to show that, assuming Cardinaletti's representations in (123) and (124), this last difference can be explained in terms of my generalization about ellipsis, rather than by proposing that there are two different syntactic positions for Focus, as Belletti does.

#### 5.3.4 Ellipsis again

Consider again the minimal pair below:

- (131) a. L'ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>, il giornale.  
           it-CL has bought Maria the newspaper  
       b. # Ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>, il giornale.

While the sentence with resumptive clitic is perfectly fine when the lexical object is omitted, the sentence without the clitic is not:

- (132) a. L'ha comprato Maria.  
       b. \* Ha comprato Maria.

If we compare (132a) and (131b) as answers to a wh-question, we see that the preference goes to the former, where the object is omitted:

- (133) a. [Chi]<sub>F</sub> ha comprato il giornale?  
           'Who bought the newspaper?'  
       b. L'ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>.  
       c. ?? Ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub> il giornale.

This is consistent with my generalization in (56), because the object is part of the background both in the question and in the answer, so it is preferably omitted. In contrastive exchanges, as expected, there are two possibilities, as illustrated in (134) and (135).

- (134) a. Gianni ha comprato [il giornale]<sub>F</sub>.  
           'Gianni bought the *newspaper*'

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<sup>86</sup> According to my judgments, the ungrammaticality of the sentence is not \*, but ?. However, cf. the full grammaticality of *Che cosa hai convinto Mario a fare?*.

- b. ? No, l'ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>.
  - c. No, ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub> il giornale.
- (135) a. Il giornale, l'ha comprato [Gianni]<sub>F</sub>.

'Gianni bought the newspaper'

- b. No, l'ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub>.
- c. ? No, ha comprato [Maria]<sub>F</sub> il giornale.

As for the possibility of having an answer with both the clitic and the object, as in (131a), I argue that it does not have to do with conditions on ellipsis. Assuming Kayne's structure in (123), and interpreting it as two clauses in coordination where X is the coordinating head, the right dislocated object turns out to be in a different clause than the IP containing the Focus. Thus, its presence is not due to lack of ellipsis in the IP containing the Focus, but it can be interpreted as an afterthought, a purely stylistic redundancy.<sup>87</sup>

### 5.3.5 Evidence of information Focus in VSO constructions

I finally present an example of post-verbal Focus followed by a post-focal object (without resumptive clitic) in which the presence of post-focal material is not redundant, and the Focus is not contrastive:

- (136) Allora è deciso: contatterà [Gianni]<sub>F</sub> il sindaco.

then is decided will-contact John the major

'Then we are decided: *John* will contact the major'

The context is similar to the one of the examples with preverbal Focus that we have seen in section 3.6. The sentence is pronounced 'out of the blue', but the speaker implies that the hearer knows that it was necessary to get in touch with the major, and that somebody had to be chosen to do that. In other words, *il sindaco* is background material. At the moment of the utterance, *il sindaco* is not present in the discourse context, so its pronunciation is appropriate, given the generalization in (56). Importantly, no contrast is entailed between *Gianni* and other possible candidates.

This example, in which the background has been uttered in a previous discourse event, is very similar to an example given by Rochemont (1986:47-48). Rochemont imagines the following situation: "A is telling B one day about a neighbor's plans to send his three daughters away to finishing school, two in Switzerland and one in

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<sup>87</sup> See also Frascarelli (2000).

Spain. But A can't remember which of the daughters is going to Spain. Finally the subject is dropped, after some speculations. Later that same day, B encounters A and greets A with the sentence [(137)].

[(137)] (By the way,) John is sending *Rose* to Spain.

In [(137)], that John is sending one of his daughters to Spain is taken to be 'under discussion' (...) and hence not focused." More precisely, Rochemont says that the background in (137) has been uttered in a separate discourse event that has taken place in a recent past and is being recalled to attention by the speaker, who begins the current discourse as a continuation of this prior discourse event. Importantly, even in Rochemont's example, Focus does not express any contrast.

## 6 Conclusions

In this Chapter I have shown that there are no syntactic differences between a contrastive Focus and an information Focus in Italian. I have provided evidence that information Focus movement is possible, but it is usually not overtly visible, because ellipsis of post-focal material generally applies.

I have proposed a generalization for ellipsis which says that ellipsis applies whenever the elided background has an antecedent with the same discourse status. Since in wh-QA pairs background material of the answer has an antecedent in the question with the same discourse status, ellipsis in the answer preferably applies. In contrastive pairs, the informational partition of the two sentences can either be the same or different, so it can either favour ellipsis or not.

Thus, although both an information Focus and a contrastive Focus can move to the left periphery, movement of the former is generally accompanied by ellipsis of the non-focused part of the sentence, and this makes the movement not overtly visible. Movement of contrastive Focus, instead, is not always accompanied by ellipsis, so it is sometimes visible. This gives the impression that only a contrastive Focus can move to the left.

In this Chapter, I have also challenged the hypothesis, formulated by Benincà and Poletto (1999), that the two Foci move to two different syntactic positions. Benincà and Poletto try to show that the post-focal Topic in Rizzi's (1997) left periphery is in fact an information Focus filling a lower FocP. I have shown that their arguments are not tenable, and that the post-focal element displays properties of givenness, not of newness.

Finally, I have shown that Belletti's (2002) arguments in favour of a low FocP for information Focus and a high FocP for both a high and a low contrastive Focus are not convincing. It is not true that the position of a low Focus is never a felicitous extraction domain. Moreover, Belletti's arguments based on Case in favour of the idea that a low contrastive Focus occupies the high FocP, with remnant movement

of the rest of the sentence to a higher position, are neither empirically nor theoretically valid.

## Chapter 6

## Conclusions

### *1 Focus properties*

In this thesis I have shown that Focus is a single phenomenon.

From an interpretive point of view, I have concluded that it always expresses new information. It never expresses exhaustive identification (unless it is accompanied by ‘only’), and it expresses contrast depending on the context, not on its intrinsic properties. From a prosodic point of view, I have observed that Focus is always signalled in the sentence by stress. Stress always falls on the most embedded position of the focused phrase. In this sense, focal stress is subject to the NSR as reformulated by Cinque (1993). From a syntactic point of view, I have shown that Focus can either stay in situ or move to a left-peripheral position, no matter if it entails contrast or not.

In the light of these results, I will now briefly reconsider the two types of approach I have presented in Chapters 2 and 3, i.e. the prosody-based approach and the syntax-based approach.

#### *1.1 Single Focus and the prosody-based approach*

We have seen that a prosody-based approach to Focus cannot account for an important phenomenon: Focus movement to the left periphery. For this reason, that approach favours the idea that there are two different phenomena called ‘Focus’: a prosodic phenomenon, and a syntactic phenomenon. A prosody-based approach is only able to explain information Focus, so contrastive Focus has to be explained in a different way, which takes into account syntactic movement. The main problem for a *single* account for Focus within a prosody-based approach, therefore, is the fact that such an approach cannot explain Focus movement.

In the previous Chapters, we have seen that a focused phrase receives stress in the same way both when it is in situ and when it is in the left periphery. Starting from this assumption, Horvath (2000) tries to rescue a prosody-based account for Hungarian Focus.<sup>88</sup> Horvath claims that movement of the focused item is a factor independent from Focus itself. Given that Focus on the left in Hungarian expresses exhaustive identification (as we have extensively seen in Chapter 4) she proposes that Focus is not an operator, but it is the *argument* of an operator of ‘exhaustive

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<sup>88</sup> See also Chapter 4, section 3.4, and Chapter 5, section 1.1.

identification'. The focused element associates with the Exhaustive Identification operator by movement, in the same way as it associates with operators like 'only'.

This proposal allows Horvath to separate the properties of Focus (which are uniform at both peripheries) from the property of exhaustive identification, which holds only when the focused item is in the left periphery. It is the operator that adds the focused item the property of exhaustive identification, causing the interpretive differences noted by É. Kiss (1998) between preverbal Focus and postverbal Focus.

Although I am sympathetic with Horvath's analysis, because it recognizes the uniform properties of Focus in both peripheries, some aspects of it cannot be accepted. She is right when she says that the prosody of Focus is uniform: in Chapter 2, I have concluded that a focused phrase always receives focal stress on its most embedded element, whatever position the phrase occupies in the clause. However, as I have often pointed out in this book, this fact cannot mean that Focus is prosodically determined, because in that case we would have to assume a PF-LF direct link, contra the T-model of the grammar. Therefore, the uniform prosodic behaviour of Focus cannot be explained in terms of a prosody-based approach, as Horvath does. In this Chapter, I will propose a different explanation for the matching between Focus and stress.

Furthermore, if we look at Italian, Horvath's proposal cannot be accepted also as far as the trigger for movement is concerned. Exhaustive identification cannot be a trigger for movement in Italian. As I have extensively shown in Chapter 4, such a property does not pertain to Focus in that language. Therefore, a different motivation for Focus movement must be searched. At the end of this Chapter, I will make a tentative proposal that starts from the assumption that Italian Focus behaves in the same way in different syntactic positions.

### *1.2 Single Focus and the syntax-based approach*

Let us consider now the syntax-based approach presented in Chapter 3. If you recall, in section 6 of that Chapter I wrote that the apparent differences between low and high Focus constitute a problem for that approach. More precisely, such an approach cannot account for the fact that a low Focus can have various interpretations, while a high Focus can only have a contrastive interpretation. If both low Focus and high Focus are accounted for in terms of the relation between a Focus head and a [+Focus] feature, the difference in interpretation between the two remains unexplained. Unlike a prosody-based approach, then, a syntax-based one is favoured by the fact that Focus is a single phenomenon.

Nevertheless, such an approach still remains highly problematic, because it needs to postulate a formal feature [+Focus] that triggers movement. The existence of such a feature constitutes a theoretical problem, since Focus is not a property of a lexical item, but of a phrase in relation with the rest of the sentence. Thus, it violates



the Inclusiveness Condition. Besides, in Chapter 3 I observed that feature-checking for Focus, unlike checking of phi-features, has a theory-internal motivation only.

In this Chapter, I will suggest an alternative proposal that can escape from the necessity to postulate a formal feature [+Focus]. Before doing that, though, I want to make some further comments on that feature.

## *2 Further observations on the feature [+Focus]*

Szendrői (2001) proposes a prosody-based approach for Focus in Hungarian along the lines of Reinhart's (1995) theory discussed in Chapter 2. In order to show that a feature-based account for Focus is less adequate than her prosody-based account, she checks whether a feature [+Focus] can make better predictions as far as the relation between Focus and stress is concerned.

She starts from the following principles of [+Focus] assignment and percolation (Szendrői 2001:113):

- (1) a. Assign [+Focus] to a lexical item.
- b. Allow the percolation of [+Focus] from a node to a dominating node.

She assumes that the interpretation of the feature at LF is determined by the following principle:

- (2) Interpret the largest node marked [+Focus] as Focus.

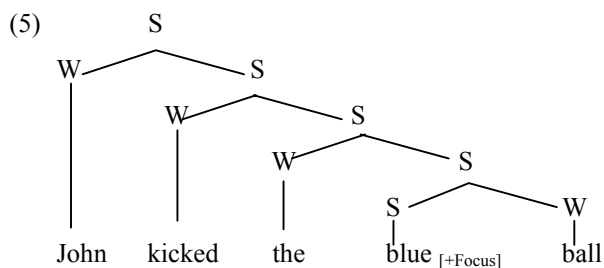
At PF, she assumes “a tree-based metrical system where Strong and Weak (S/W) labels are assigned to the binary branching structure and where main stress is on the node that bears S and that is only dominated by nodes bearing S” (Szendrői 2001:111), and she argues that the interpretation of the [+Focus] feature is determined by the following principle:

- (3) Assign S to the largest node marked [+Focus] and to any dominating node.

Szendrői checks the validity of this account with respect to PF and LF interpretation. She considers the sentence in (4), with the feature [+Focus] assigned to the adjective *blue*.

- (4) John kicked the *blue*<sub>[+Focus]</sub> ball.

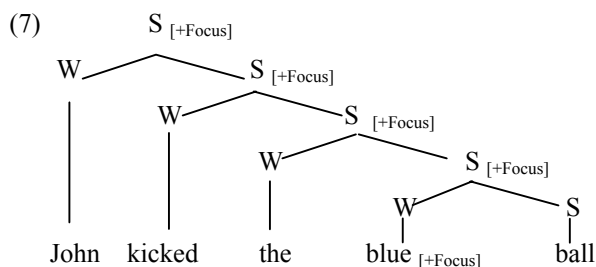
Given (2), Focus is interpreted at LF as the largest node marked [+Focus], that is *blue*, and given (3), the label S(trong) goes to the largest node marked [+Focus], that is *blue*, and to any dominating node, as shown in (5):



The approach correctly accounts for the fact that the sentence can answer a question on the modifier (cf. 6a), but not on any other question that would require a Focus wider than *blue* (cf. 6b,c,d):

- (6) a. Which ball did John kick?  
 b. # What did John kick?  
 c. # What did John do?  
 d. # What happened?

When the feature percolates up to higher nodes, both PF and LF interpretation involve the whole sentence, as in (7). Given (3), stress then falls on *ball*, not on *blue*, in accordance with the data.



Therefore, a feature-based approach correctly predicts that if the feature in *blue* percolates up to the whole sentence, stress cannot be assigned to *blue*, but it has to be assigned to *ball*.

Nevertheless, as Szendrői observes, (7) presents a problem. A feature [+Focus] can be assigned to an item that does not bear stress and that is not interpreted as Focus (it is only part of the whole Focus). In other words, the feature [+Focus] in (7) does not have any interpretive effect on the terminal node that enters the derivation endowed with it. Thus, Szendrői concludes, the assumption of the existence of that feature is an unfalsifiable statement.

The problem is that, given the principle in (2) and (3), both PF and LF interpretation occur at the phrase level, not at the level of the word endowed with the [+Focus] feature. Szendrői tries to solve this problem by modifying the PF interpretation principle in (3) as in (8):

(8) Assign S to the *terminal* node marked [+Focus] and to any dominating node.

With this modification, the feature [+Focus] on the terminal node has always an interpretative effect: it must bear stress at PF. Unfortunately – Szendrői notes – this new principle overgenerates. If *blue* bears the feature [+Focus], S is assigned to it and to any dominating node. The prediction is then that LF interpretation can involve the whole sentence; on the contrary, only *blue* can be interpreted as Focus. Thus, Szendrői concludes that it is better to keep the former principle for PF interpretation, the one in (3), and add the following filter:

(9) \* if a terminal node bearing [+Focus] is dominated by a Weak node.

With such a constraint, the unacceptability of (7) is predicted, and at the same time, a terminal node bearing [+Focus] is prevented from being uninterpretable, because it must always bear stress.

As Szendrői points out, such an account is not very elegant, since it has to assume two principles for PF interpretation, instead of one. She therefore concludes that her stress-based approach, which can account for the data with a single principle, is preferable.

### 2.1 The matching between [+Focus] and stress

I think that a feature-based account, as Szendrői describes it, can be (partially) rescued by means of a restriction on the principle of feature percolation. We simply have to assume that percolation of the [+Focus] feature starting from a node in the left branch is prevented from continuing up to the right branch. In other words, the percolation rule must be constrained in terms of the direction of branching, along the lines of Kayne's (1984) *Connectedness Condition*.

The Connectedness Condition is formulated by Kayne to account for Parasitic Gaps and other similar phenomena. The core idea is that a path must be formed between an element that has to be bound and its binder. The path is defined using non-minimalist notions such as government, which are of no interest here. The crucial result of this principle is that a path cannot extend to the whole tree if it starts in a left branch. More simply, this principle states that specifiers cannot project.

Extending the constraint on projection imposed by this principle to feature percolation, we have the following results for Szendrői's sentence in (4). If the feature [+Focus] is on *blue*, which is a left branch, it cannot percolate up to the nodes of the right branch that are higher than the adjective. For the feature to reach that part of the sentence, it must be in a node on the right branch from where it can

form a path that goes up to the whole tree. This is confirmed by the fact that, if the feature is on *ball*, which is on a right branch, projection is allowed.

With such a constraint on feature percolation, the PF principle in (8) can be maintained without the problem of overgeneration at the level of LF interpretation Szendrői talks about.

On the phonological side, analogously, Focus projection from a stress position is dependent on the direction of branching. When stress falls on a left branch, Focus projection can only occur up to the left branch, but not further. Therefore, [+Focus] assignment rules and stress assignment rules give the same results.

Nevertheless, there is a difference between the feature [+Focus] and stress. Stress, for purely phonetic reasons, can only fall on a single syllable. As a consequence, there is a mismatch between the domain of Focus interpretation and the domain of stress placement. However, since stress does not have to determine Focus interpretation, but simply to reflect it, the mismatch is not problematic. What is a problem is the mismatch between Focus interpretation and the assignment of the feature [+Focus]. The feature [+Focus] represents an interpretive property, that of ‘focushood’, so there shouldn’t be any mismatch between the domain of the feature and the domain of Focus interpretation. But in a minimalist framework, a formal feature cannot be a property of a phrase, it must always be a property of a lexical item, because of the Inclusiveness Condition.

Of course, one can assume feature percolation, as Szendrői does above. But feature percolation is problematic. A lexical item that is not endowed with a certain feature cannot receive it in the course of the computation; otherwise, the Inclusiveness Condition is again violated. Moreover, feature percolation is an operation that cannot be reduced to any operation of the computation (Merge, Agree, Move), so its presence would make the theory conspicuously more complex.

In conclusion, Szendrői’s argumentation against a feature-based account for Focus remains valid. It is highly problematic to represent the property of Focus and its prosodic corresponding properties by means of a formal feature as defined in minimalism. In the following section, I tentatively propose a different analysis, where the link between Focus and stress is maintained without having to assume any formal feature for Focus encoding in the syntax.

### *3 Focus intonation as a morpheme*

In order to solve the problem concerning the feature [+Focus], and at the same time to account for the matching between stress and Focus, I will make the following proposal: the intonational contour that always accompanies Focus is a morpheme present in the lexicon as an independent lexical entry.

The idea of considering a certain intonational contour as a lexical morpheme is not implausible. Tone languages make an extensive use of suprasegmental features

to express morphological differences.<sup>89</sup> Although less evident, intonational morphemes have been claimed to exist in non-tone languages as well, such as European ones. Giannakidou (2000), for instance, proposes that the ‘emphatic’ accent present on Greek n-words is a morpheme that characterizes such words as Negative Polarity Items.

Cheng and Rooryck (2000) also propose the existence of an intonational morpheme in a non-tone language, French, in order to account for wh-in-situ questions. The in-situ wh-phrase is licensed in English by a moved wh-phrase, and in Chinese and Japanese by a Q morpheme in C. In French, the in-situ wh-phrase does not seem to be licensed by anything. Cheng and Rooryck propose that it is licensed by a Q morpheme represented by the particular intonational contour of the wh-in-situ question. That intonational contour is the same as the one occurring in yes/no questions (an ascending intonation). Cheng and Rooryck then propose that the intonational morpheme is underspecified: it can either license wh-questions, or yes/no questions. The typological differentiation of wh-in-situ licensing among different languages, according to Cheng and Rooryck’s proposal, is summarized below:

- (10) a. English: Wh.....Wh  
 b. Chinese/Japanese: Q.....Wh  
 c. French: Q<sub>int</sub> .....Wh  
 d. French: Q<sub>int</sub> .....y/n

Going back to Focus, the idea that such a phenomenon is represented by an intonational morpheme is theoretically very advantageous. We have seen that prosody-based accounts are forced to assume a direct link between PF and LF, in order to account for the correspondence between stress placement and Focus interpretation. Since, in my proposal, Focus is encoded in the computation under the form of an intonational morpheme, the matching between focal stress and Focus interpretation is driven by a syntactic cue before Spell-Out.

The identification of Focus as a morpheme is theoretically advantageous also from another point of view. Such an analysis can dispense with a formal feature [+Focus], because the property of focushood in the syntax is identified by the intonational morpheme, which inherently possesses it. The morpheme encodes the property of focushood directly when it enters the computation. As for the focused phrase, its Focus properties are identified by the fact that it is the *complement* of the Focus morpheme. I am going to explain this more in details in the following section.

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<sup>89</sup> See Giannakidou (2000:466) for some examples.

### 3.1 The focused phrase as the complement of the Focus morpheme

I propose that the intonational morpheme occupies a Complementizer position. The focused element is the complement of such a position. When the whole IP is focused, the structure is of the following type:

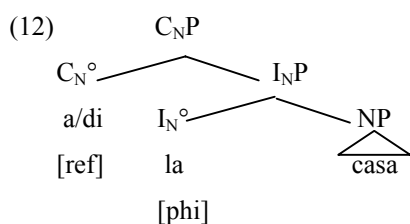
(11) a. Che cosa è successo? [E' partito il treno]<sub>F</sub>.

‘What happened?’ ‘The train left’

b. [<sub>CP</sub> Focus [<sub>IP</sub> è [<sub>VP</sub> partito [<sub>DP</sub> il treno]

Although the intonational morpheme is placed in the C head, and the focused phrase is therefore to its right, the morpheme is phonetically realized on the stressed syllable of the most embedded item of the focused phrase. This is because the intonational morpheme at PF is subject to PF rules; in particular, it is subject to the NSR, so it associates with the most embedded item of the focused phrase. The focused phrase is thus limited at its right by stress. At its left, it is limited by the C head, hosting the Focus morpheme. Therefore, the position of stress and the Complementizer give the exact domain of extension of the focused phrase.

What structure do we get, when the focused phrase is a DP or a PP? I assume that a C functional projection can have a complement that is not an IP. Various studies in the literature propose that the structure of the noun phrase is organized as the structure of the sentence. See, among others, Abney (1987), Szabolcsi (1994), Cardinaletti and Starke (1999), Manzini and Savoia (in press a). Cardinaletti and Starke (1999), for instance, on the basis of the fact that the D-node contains at least two sets of features (phi-features and referential features), propose that a PP like *alla casa* ‘to the house’ or *della casa* ‘of the house’ is represented as a CP-IP-LexP structure like the one below:



In support of their proposal, Cardinaletti and Starke note that *a* and *di* introducing an infinitival phrase in Romance have been claimed to be Complementizers (e.g. by Kayne 1984 and Rizzi 1982).

Within such a perspective, the intonational Focus morpheme can stay on a head of the left periphery of the DP, as illustrated below.<sup>90</sup>

(13) a. Che cosa è arrivato?

‘What arrived?’

b. [<sub>IP</sub> E’ [<sub>VP</sub> arrivato [<sub>CP</sub> Focus [<sub>DP</sub> l’Intercity]]]]

is arrived Focus-morph. the Intercity (train)

### 3.2 Empirical evidence for Focus as a morpheme

Evidence that a Focus morpheme exists and that it occupies a head whose complement is the focused phrase is provided for instance by Donati’s (2000a) Italian coordinate sentence discussed in Chapter 5. Donati’s example is repeated below:

(14) Bill mangia, e Paolo anche.

Bill eats and Paul too

If you recall, Donati gives an account for (14) such that the part of the sentence that is not elided moves to a Focus position, and the remnant constituent is deleted:

(15) [<sub>FocP</sub> Bill [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]] [e [<sub>FocP</sub> Paolo [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ]]]]].

In the light of my proposal above, I am going to give a slightly different representation of (14), which includes the adverb *anche* ‘too’, which Donati does not take into account.

First of all, in Chapter 5 I pointed out that the subjects in (14) are not Foci, but Topics. Therefore the subjects in (14) are left dislocated to a position where they can be interpreted as Topics. The focused part of each sentence is instead the predicate. In the second sentence, though, the predicate is elided.

(16) [<sub>DP</sub> Bill]<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>verb</sub> ]]] [e [<sub>DP</sub> Paolo]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> [<sub>I</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> t<sub>verb</sub> ]]]]].

<sup>90</sup> As for Focus on a head, it might perhaps be accounted for by assuming a theory of word formation such as Halle and Marantz’s (1993, 1994) ‘Distributed Morphology’ or, even better for our purposes, Manzini and Savoia’s (2002, in press a, b, forthcoming) model. The idea of these studies is that there is a syntactic-like hierarchical structure within the morphological component. While in Halle and Marantz’s theory the structure representing the syntactic component and that representing the morphological component are made of different categories, in Manzini and Savoia’s theory the set of categories in the two components are exactly the same.

The verb is replaced by the particle *anche* ‘too’, which bears stress, and whose absence would make the sentence ungrammatical, as shown in (17).

(17) \* Bill mangia, e Paolo.

I propose that *anche* is the realization of the Focus morpheme. Deletion of the predicate (the IP) does not imply deletion of the Focus morpheme. The final structure for (14) is therefore the following:

(18) [<sub>DP</sub> Bill]<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>v</sub>]] [e [<sub>DP</sub> Paolo]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> anche [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> mangia [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> t<sub>v</sub>]]]]].

In sum, Donati’s example shows how the Focus morpheme in Italian can be lexicalized.<sup>91</sup>

Another possible example of lexicalization of the Focus morpheme is ‘vacuous negation’ in comparative sentences. Consider the sentence in (19), from Donati (2000b):

(19) Maria ha mangiato più biscotti che (non) Paolo.

Maria has eaten more cookies than not Paolo

The negative marker *non* does not express any negative force. Donati (2000b) provides arguments against an account in terms of vacuous negation, and observes that the second term of the comparison must be focused, in order for the comparison to be grammatical. This is shown by the two sentences below: in (20a), which is ungrammatical, the preverbal subject *Piero*, given a normal intonation, is not focused; in (20b), which is grammatical, the postverbal subject, which bears stress, is focused.

(20) a. \* Maria mangia più biscotti di quanti Paolo ne mangi.

Maria eats more cookies of how many Paolo of-them<sub>cl</sub> eats

b. Maria mangia più biscotti di quanti ne mangi *Paolo*.

Donati concludes that *non* is (the scope marker of) a Focus operator. This conclusion fits well with my proposal, since *non* can be seen as another realization of the Focus morpheme located on the C head, and whose complement is the focused phrase. My representation of (19) is therefore the following:

(21) Maria ha mangiato più biscotti che [<sub>CP</sub> non [<sub>DP</sub> Paolo]] [<sub>IP</sub> ha mangiato etc.].

<sup>91</sup> The example in (14) seems to show that the constraint on the occurrence of ellipsis that I have proposed in Chapter 5, section 3.2, also holds if the antecedent and the elided element are both Foci, rather than both background material. However, the elided Focus must be ‘signalled’ by some overt lexical material (such as *anche*); otherwise, ellipsis makes the sentence ungrammatical (see 17).



#### 4 Focus movement

##### 4.1 The position of the moved Focus

In section 3 I have concluded that a theory where Focus is encoded in the syntax in the form of an intonational morpheme allows us to dispense with a feature [+Focus]. I have also said that the focused phrase occupies the complement of the C head hosting such a morpheme. It is clear that, within this proposal, Focus movement cannot be triggered by the necessity to establish a feature-checking relation between a focused phrase in specifier position and the corresponding head.

In support of this claim, I would like to point out that the very existence of a spec-head configuration is empirically questionable, as Koopman (1996) originally noticed. Her generalization, known as the ‘Doubly Filled Comp Filter’, says that spec-head configurations never arise. Such a generalization is naturally predicted by recent theories of phrase structure such as Starke’s (2001) and Manzini and Savoia’s (2002, in press a, b, forthcoming). These studies propose that “each merger of new lexical material, whether a lexical item or a phrase, does project its own label” (Manzini and Savoia in press b:1).

Compelling empirical evidence supports their claim. As I already mentioned in Chapter 3, section 2.2.1, Manzini and Savoia (forthcoming) observe that a wh-phrase and the verb are not always adjacent. A D-linked wh-phrase easily admits a subject or a Topic before the verb. Manzini and Savoia provide evidence from both standard Italian and dialects. Some of their data are given below:

(22) Standard Italian

Chi di voi Chomsky lo ha mai sentito nominare?  
who of you Chomsky him-CL has ever heard to-name?  
‘Chomsky, who of you ever heard about him?’

(23) Corte dialect

Kel de kis Mario ljezara-lo?  
which of those Mario will read he-CL  
‘Which of those will Mario read?’

(24) Ro Ferrarese dialect

Kwal at kwisti Mario vol-al?  
which of these Mario wants he-CL  
‘Which of these does Mario want?’

(25) Martignana dialect

Ke amik ad to surela lor a i vest?

which friend of your sister they have they-CL seen

‘Which friend of your sister did they see?’

Manzini and Savoia’s data contradict Rizzi’s (1996) Wh-Criterion, repeated in (26).

(26) Wh-Criterion

a. A Wh-operator must be in a spec-head configuration with an  $X^{\circ}_{[+wh]}$

b. An  $X^{\circ}_{[+wh]}$  must be in a spec-head configuration with a Wh-operator.

Note that this Criterion is very similar to the condition that a spec-head configuration is established for feature-checking purposes. Rizzi (1997) – which extends the Criterion to Focus and Topic phrases<sup>92</sup> – assumes precisely that the relevant features ([+Focus], [+Topic], etc.) are checked by means of the spec-head configuration required by the Criterion.

Therefore, if we exclude a spec-head configuration for Focus, as I do above, the legitimacy of a feature-checking relation between a head and the focused phrase also turns out to be weakened. The legitimacy of feature-checking for Focus had already been challenged in Chapter 3, where I noticed that such a mechanism for Focus does not seem to have justifications, apart from purely theory-internal ones.

Given a theory of phrase structure of the type proposed by Manzini and Savoia (2002, etc.) and by Starke (2001), we will say that, when the Focus morpheme is merged in the derivation, it projects its own position in the syntactic tree. Consequently, when a focused item moves to the left periphery, no specialized Focus head must be postulated whose specifier hosts the focused item. The representation of Focus in the left periphery is then the one given in (27b).

(27) a.  $[L'Intercity]_F$  è arrivato.

the Intercity (train) is arrived

‘The Intercity train arrived’

b.  $[_{CP} \text{Focus } [_{DP} L'Intercity]]_j$   $[_{IP} \text{è } [_{VP} \text{arrivato } t_j ]]$

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<sup>92</sup> See Chapter 3, section 2.2.

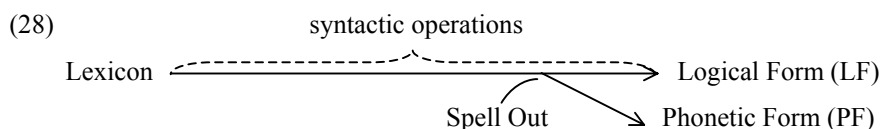
#### 4.1 The optionality problem

We can take Focus movement as movement of the Focus operator to its scope position. But why does movement in Italian occur in certain derivations, and not in others? Since there are no interpretive differences between a derivation with a preverbal Focus and one with an in situ Focus, then movement to the left turns out to be an optional operation. But optionality is not admitted in a minimalist framework, since it is clearly a violation of principles of economy.

The problem does not concern only Focus, but also *wh*-questions. There are languages like French in which both *wh*-movement and *wh*-in-situ are allowed, with no apparent interpretive difference between the two derivations. In the following section, I will discuss the work by Cole and Hermon (1998), where a minimalist account is given for the (apparent) optionality of *wh*-movement in Malay.

##### 4.1.1 Optionality in *wh*-questions

First of all, Cole and Hermon (1998) take the minimalist assumption that, if there are no island effects, there is no movement either. Within Chomsky's revision of the model of the grammar (repeated below), syntactic operations remain the same all the way to LF, without changing their characteristics after Spell-Out.



Therefore, it cannot be the case that LF movement is not subject to island effects. If island effects are not present, it means that there is no movement at all. In Malay, in-situ *wh*-questions do not display island effects. Therefore, according to Cole and Hermon, they must not involve LF movement either.

Another piece of evidence that Cole and Hermon present for the absence of LF movement is the following. In Malay, the verbal prefix *meng* is deleted when the prefix stays between a moved element and its trace. With an in situ *wh*-phrase, deletion does not occur. Therefore, there must be no movement of the *wh*-phrase to its scope position:

(29) a. Apa<sub>j</sub> Ali (\*mem)-beri t<sub>j</sub> pada Fatimah?

what Ali meng-gave to Fatimah

‘What did Ali give to Fatimah?’

b. Ali (mem)-beri Fatimah apa?

Ali meng-give Fatimah what

‘What did Ali give Fatimah?’

Cole and Hermon account for wh in situ in terms of *unselective binding*. Unselective binding has been originally proposed by Pesetsky (1987) and Nishigauchi (1986). The idea is that the in-situ wh-phrase is treated as a free variable, like indefinites in Heim’s (1982) theory, and therefore it is bound by a Q operator that unselectively binds all free variables in situ. In particular, Cole and Hermon follow Reinhart (1998), who reformulates this proposal by appealing to the semantic notion of *choice function*. The details of her analysis are not relevant here. What is important is that, within that analysis, the wh-phrase is licensed without being forced to move to the left.

Since, in minimalism, parameters are not syntactic, but only lexical, namely the differences among languages do not sit in phrase structure, but in the lexicon, Cole and Hermon make the hypothesis that in Malay wh-questions the difference between the two derivations - one with wh-movement and one without - is lexical. They propose that languages can have two types of lexical entries for the wh-word. One entry is the combination of a null operator and the wh-word. The wh-word functions as the variable the operator binds. Another entry is the wh-word by itself, and the operator is an independent lexical entry. In the first case, operator movement forces pied-piping of the wh-word; in the second case, the operator is base-generated in its scope position, so the wh-word can remain in situ, from where it is unselectively bound. According to Cole and Hermon, Malay has both such lexical entries. This means that the two wh-constructions start with two different numerations, and therefore, are not competing derivations.

#### 4.1.2 Two lexical entries for Focus?

Within a morphological approach to Focus like the one I am pursuing here, the optionality of Focus movement could be accounted for in similar lexical terms. It would be possible to postulate the existence of two different Focus morphemes: one that is just a variable; the other that is the combination of a variable plus a null operator. In the first case, the null operator is a lexical entry by itself, so the focused phrase is unselectively bound in situ by the operator; in the second case, the intonational morpheme is a unit together with the null operator, so it moves to the scope position of the operator with it.

The problem with this hypothesis is that, while trying to be minimalist, it turns out to be very complex.

First of all, we have to assume two lexical entries for Focus: one that functions as a variable, and one that is the combination of a variable and a null operator. All through this book, I have tried to show that Focus is a uniform grammatical object; therefore, this proposal would be in total contradiction with all I have said so far.

Secondly, the difference between the two lexical entries is based uniquely on the presence or absence of a null element: the null operator. However, null elements require strong arguments to be motivated. Manzini and Savoia (in press b, forthcoming) highlight the weakness of a theory based on null elements. If null elements existed in the lexicon – they observe – “then there is no reason why the lexicon should not consist of them entirely (or even in a substantial subset of cases), which is evidently not true”.

As a final observation, Focus in situ in my account cannot be just a variable, it must always be an operator. I have assumed that the focused phrase is always the complement of a C head hosting the Focus morpheme; therefore, the operator is always part of it.

#### 4.1.3 A general problem

It is important to point out that the problem of optionality of movement is not specific of my proposal; rather, it arises in most of the literature on Focus in Italian. Let us review quickly the accounts for Focus discussed in this book, from the point of view of the optionality problem.

The studies that propose LF movement for Focus in situ (e.g. Rizzi 1997) do not give any explanation at all for the fact that there is both overt and covert movement within the same language. As for Frascarelli’s (2000) proposal based on feature-checking in situ, I have already pointed out that, if feature-checking can take place in situ, no other more complex operation, that is Focus movement, should be possible, for economy reasons. The same observations hold if one assumes that a low Focus is checked via Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) operation Agree. It is not clear why in some cases the relevant operation, instead of Agree, should be Move, which is more complex.

As for the studies assuming a syntactic difference between two Foci, such as Belletti (2002), they argue for a corresponding *interpretive* difference. Depending on its syntactic position, Focus either expresses new information or contrast. Thus, movement is not optional, since it places each type of Focus to its specific syntactic position in the tree. However, as we saw in previous Chapters, the hypothesis of the correspondence between a certain syntactic position and a certain interpretation is not so easy to demonstrate. Unlike Hungarian, where interpretive properties of the moved Focus are clearly different from those of the in situ Focus, in Italian the distinction is not so sharp. It is not the case that an information Focus only fills a low position, while a contrastive Focus only fills a high one. Even putting aside what I have said in Chapter 5, namely that an information Focus can stay in a high position, it is clear that a *contrastive* Focus *can* stay in a low position.

In order to save the correspondence between a contrastive interpretation and the high syntactic position, Belletti (2002), among others, proposes that a low contrastive Focus moves to the high FocP, and then remnant movement of the IP

applies to an even higher position, as we have seen in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1. The problem with this analysis is that optionality comes again into play, since it is not clear at all why a certain derivation needs remnant IP-movement after Focus movement, and another derivation does not, given that Focus is contrastive in both cases.

- (30) a. [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> Ha telefonato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>subj</sub> ]]] [<sub>FocP</sub> Maria t<sub>IP</sub>  
 b. [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> Maria]<sub>j</sub>] [<sub>TopP</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ha telefonato [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>j</sub> ]]] t<sub>IP</sub>

In conclusion, on one hand we have an analysis like Belletti's, which assumes non-optional Focus movement and a remnant IP-movement that turns out to be optional; on the other hand, we have an analysis like the one I have proposed in this book, where Focus either remains in situ or moves to the left periphery. Given the fact that the former analysis does not solve the problem of optionality, but simply shifts it, my analysis, which involves a smaller number of operations and does not involve a theoretically problematic operation such as remnant movement, must be considered as highly preferable.

#### 4.1.4 A tentative explanation

Although I won't be able to give a clear account for the reasons of Focus movement in the present book, I would like to make at least some speculations about it.

Several studies pointed out that background material preceding Focus and background material following Focus have different properties. Benincà et al. (1988), Benincà and Poletto (1999), Frascarelli (2000, 2003) observe that a post-focal Topic cannot be 'contrastive'<sup>93</sup>. This is shown by the ungrammaticality of the example in (31b) (from Frascarelli 2000):

- (31) a. Io ho due fratelli: Luigi, lo vedo spesso, mentre Mario, non lo vedo mai.  
 I have two brothers Luigi him-CL (I) see often while Mario not him-CL see ever  
 b. \* Io ho due fratelli: lo vedo spesso, Luigi, mentre non lo vedo mai, Mario.

A detailed account of the data concerning non-focal material has no space in this book. Nonetheless, we can make the general observation that pre-focal material has a 'richer' set of functions. This is reasonable, given the fact that it has to introduce the new piece of information the sentence is going to provide. In other words, it seems to me that the real 'background' role is played by pre-focal material only. Post-focal material has a minor role, because the new information expressed by the

<sup>93</sup> For a definition of Contrastive Topic, see Büring (1999), Lee (2003).

sentence has already been given. Post-focal material seems to have only a resumptive role, and this is in line with the fact that, when Focus occupies a high position in the clause, it is elided in most cases.<sup>94</sup>

In sum, a high position of Focus could have at least a pragmatic effect, depending on the different properties of post-focal and pre-focal background material, rather than on the different properties of Focus itself. As such, Focus movement would not be vacuous at the interpretive interface, solving the problem of optionality. The position of Focus conditions the pragmatic characteristics of the remnant background, so the two sentences – one with preverbal Focus and one with Focus in situ – are not identical.

It might be observed that these considerations can represent an argument in favour of the remnant movement analysis discussed above. Remnant movement of the non-focused part of the sentence would have a reason to apply, because pre-focal material is different from the post-focal one.

However, note that such an account is still less preferable than an account that does not make reference to remnant movement. Within a remnant movement account, a sentence with a preverbal Focus is the result of Focus movement, and a sentence with a low Focus is the result of Focus movement plus remnant IP-movement (remnant movement necessarily implies Focus movement). In an analysis without remnant movement, instead, a sentence with a preverbal Focus is the result of Focus movement, but a sentence with a postverbal Focus is the result of *no movement at all*. Therefore, the latter analysis turns out to be simpler, and more elegant.

Note, finally, that those who assume remnant movement usually also assume a specific position that hosts background material (TopP).<sup>95</sup> As I said in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1, if all background material had to occupy a specific position, then movement to a TopP of the remnant IP would also be required in a sentence with preverbal Focus. The remnant IP should move to a TopP lower than FocP, with different properties than the TopP that is higher. As I already noticed, the result would be that all sentences have a structure made of a TopP and a FocP in either order. It seems to me that, within a classical generative conception of the syntactic structure of the sentence, this result is unacceptable, and it does not lead to a real understanding of the syntax of Focus and Topic, but simply gives a superficial description of the informational partition of the sentence.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Similar observations are made by Frascarelli (2000:162).

<sup>95</sup> For some arguments against a designated Topic position, see Szendrői (2001).

<sup>96</sup> Frascarelli (2000) claims that the semantic-pragmatic differences between left-hand and right-hand Topic cannot be accounted for simply by positing a lower TopP node in the

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tree. She states that the difference is rather in terms of scope: left-hand Topic takes scope over the sentence, right-hand Topic *is in* the scope of the sentence. Frascarelli's position is very close to mine, if it weren't for the crucial assumption she makes that a specialized Topic head exists for topicalized constituents. It is such an assumption that forces her to adopt a remnant movement analysis for right-hand Topic, with the consequent problems I have discussed in Chapter 3 and 5, and mentioned again here. I think that the idea that topicalized material is not associated with any specific head, but simply is the part of the clause *not* specified as focused, allows us to capture facts in a simpler and more elegant way.



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