

## Answering strategies: New information subjects and the nature of clefts.

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### 0. Introduction

Different languages typically adopt different ways to answer the same question concerning the identification of the subject of the clause, when the answer is provided through a full clause. I will refer to these ways as different answering strategies.<sup>1</sup> Consider the following list in I. as an illustration:

#### I.

##### A.

a Chi è partito / ha parlato ?

Italian: VS (“free inversion”)

b E’ partito / ha parlato Gianni

##### B.

a Qui est parti/ a parlé?

French: ((reduced) Cleft)

b C’est Jean (qui est parti/ a parlé)

##### C.

a Who came/spoke?

English: SV/(*in situ* focalization)

b *John* came/spoke

c *John* did

The overwhelming preferred strategy in Italian has the new information focus subject located in the post-verbal position (often referred to as “free inversion” in the literature).<sup>2</sup> French speakers tend to typically adopt a reduced cleft sentence in their answers, while English speakers preserve the subject-verb order of declarative clauses; a special stress is attributed to the preverbal subject with a resulting prosody which is very different from that of simple declaratives, whose subject qualifies as the argument which the predicate is about.<sup>3</sup> I refer to this strategy as focalization *in situ*. A possible suggestion on the *in situ* strategy will be briefly sketched out. In this chapter, however, I will mainly concentrate on the discussion of the VS and (reduced) cleft strategies, the relation between them and the way in which it can be explicitly expressed through a cartographic analysis to be developed in detail. It will emerge that, despite their superficial difference, both strategies share a crucial property: they involve a post-verbal subject in the same position dedicated to new information focus in the vP periphery of the clause.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the material addressed in this chapter reconsiders the discussion in Belletti (2007) where more detailed attention is devoted to the acquisition issues raised by the existence of the answering strategies. (L2) acquisition data will only be briefly mentioned here serving as an independent illustration.

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the standard literature on the null subject parameter Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986). As the discussion in the text indicates inversion is not “free” at all in these cases, but discourse related: a new information subject is post-verbal in a null subject language like Italian. See chapters 6, 7, 8 for detailed discussion of this aspect.

<sup>3</sup> On the aboutness relation between a preverbal subject and the predicate of the clause see Rizzi (2006) and relevant references cited there. See also Cardinaletti (2004) for a cartography of preverbal subject positions.

SV is also the preferred order also utilized in a language like German, thus indicating that the relevant focalization strategy is preserved under V2.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 6 for the proposal on the low periphery of the clause, and chapter 8 for illustration of possible uses of the vP periphery.

## 1. More languages

If we look at more languages, also typologically different from each other and possibly diachronically unrelated, it emerges that the strategies identified in the list above are those typically adopted.

These answering strategies appear to essentially exhaust the available options. Thus, there are languages behaving like Italian - a.o.: European Portuguese, Romanian, Paduan ....-, languages behaving like French – a.o. Japanese, Norwegian, Malayalam ...-, languages behaving like English – a.o. German, Hungarian<sup>5</sup>, Basque, Gungbe ...-. The list of parallel exchanges in II. below illustrates with some of the languages mentioned:

## II.

European Portuguese:

Quem é que telefonou? ('Who called')

*Who is it that called*

Telefonou o Hans

*Called Hans*

Quem levou as flores? ('Who took the flowers away')

Levou (as flores) o João

*Took (the flowers) João*

Quem é que saiu (ontem)? ('Who left(yesterday)')

*Who is it that left (yesterday)*

(Ontem,) Saiu a Maria

*Yesterday left Maria*

Japanese

Dare-kara (denwa-ga kakatte kita no) ('Who called')

*Who-from phone-NOM being made came Q 'From whom was the phone made?'*

(Sore-wa) Hans-kara (desu)

*it -TOP -from is 'It is from Hans'*

Dare-ga hana-o motte itta no

*who -NOM flower-ACC taking went Q ('Who took the flowers away?')*

Okaasan-ga motte itta

*Mom -NOM taking went 'Mom took (it) away.'*

Kinoo dare-ga dete itta no

*yesterday who-NOM go out went Q ('Who left yesterday?')*

(Sore-wa) Mary (desu)

*it -TOP is Mary 'It's Mary.'*

Norwegian

Hvem var det som ringte? ('Who called')

*'who was it that called?'*

Det var Hans.

*'it was Hans'*

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<sup>5</sup> On the SV order in languages like Hungarian in contrast with English see the analysis in 2.4 in the context of the discussion of the possible parametrization of the location of the new information focus position.

Hvem er det som har tatt blomstene? (*'Who took the flowers away?'*)  
*'who is it that has taken flowers-the'* OR  
 Hvem har tatt blomstene?  
*'who has taken flowers-the'*  
 Det er moder'n.  
*'it is mum'*  
 Moder'n har tatt dem.  
*'Mum has taken them'*

Hvem var det som (dro igaar)? (*'Who left yesterday?'*)  
*'who was it that left yesterday?'*  
 Det var Marit.  
*'it was Marit'*

#### Hungarian

Ki telefonált? (*'Who called'*)  
 Hans telefonált.  
*Hans called*

Ki vitte el a virágot? (*'Who took the flowers away?'*)  
*Who took particle the flower*  
 Anyu vitte el a virágot.  
*Anyu took the flowers*

Ki ment el (tegnap)? (*'Who left yesterday?'*)  
*Who went away yesterday*  
 Mari ment el (tegnap)  
*Mari went away*

Two main descriptive comments are suggested by looking at the parallel question-answer pairs in II.: i. the way the question is formulated does not necessarily influence the kind of answer provided. This is illustrated in a specially interesting way by European Portuguese where the question is formulated through use of a cleft sentence – a very common questioning strategy across languages – but the answer has a post-verbal subject and no cleft. Conversely, as in the case of French seen in I., the answer can contain a (reduced) cleft even if the question does not; this pattern is reproduced in Norwegian and Japanese in the list in II. ii. the (reduced) cleft answering strategy appears to alternate somewhat with the SV order. This is revealed by the Norwegian examples in the list, but it should be reminded that English type SV is also adopted by French speakers, to some extent.<sup>6</sup> Thus, there must be some reason that puts together the (reduced) cleft strategy and the SV strategy (sections 2.2 and 3 for discussion).

## 2. The cartographic analysis of post-verbal subjects in the VS order and (reduced) clefts

As thoroughly discussed in chapter 6 and chapter 8, the cartographic analysis of the VS order with a new information focus post-verbal subject assumes that the post-verbal subject fills the Specifier of a low focus position, reserved to host new information constituents. Thus, a sentence like I.Ab in

<sup>6</sup> See Belletti (2007) and the discussion in terms of economy as the leading principle towards the adoption of the preferred strategy in different languages.

Italian, answer to a question like I.Aa, is analyzed along the lines illustrated in (1)b, assuming the vP periphery in (1)a:

(1)

a. [CP .....[ TP .....[TopP ...[FocP Foc [TopP .....vP]]]]]


b. [CP ..[ TP *pro* ...è...partito/ha parlato [TopP [FocP Gianni [TopP [vP] .....]]]]]



A crucial feature of the analysis in (1)b is that the post-verbal subject moves to the vP peripheral focus position where it is interpreted, while, much as in traditional analyses of “free inversion”, a silent *pro* fills the preverbal subject position where, we may assume, an active EPP feature needs to be satisfied.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a post-verbal subject in this kind of inversion is only allowed if the language licences a silent *pro* in the preverbal subject position; in other words, if the language is a null subject language. It is natural to assume that, if the language is not a null subject language, a different computation must be implemented in order to exploit the new information focus position in the low periphery of the clause. The cleft strategy can precisely be the relevant structure. Let us illustrate the proposal with French. Assume the structure and derivation of the cleft answer in I.Bb along the lines in (2):

(2)

[TP<sub>Ce</sub> ... [ TopP [ FocP [TopP [vP être [<sub>sc</sub> Jean [ CP ~~qui a parlé~~ ] ] ] ] ] ] ]]



In (2) the copula *be* is inserted as a kind of dummy verb. In this function, *be* makes a vP periphery available in a way compatible with the non-null subject nature of French as the expletive like subject “*ce*” is also inserted in the preverbal subject position.<sup>8</sup> As in current analyses<sup>9</sup>, the copula takes a small clause (*sc*) as its complement. The small clause complement of the copula is a subject predicate structure, where the predicate is a (relative like) CP which gets deleted in the reduced version of the cleft answer, as illustrated in (2).<sup>10</sup>

(1)b and (2) share a crucial similarity: in both structures the new information focus subject fills the low focus position. This common feature expresses the reason why both structures can constitute two answering strategies to the same question concerning the identification of the subject of the clause: both strategies activate the same new information vP peripheral focus position. Note that while formal reasons exclude the possibility in French to directly activate this position in the way it gets activated in Italian, as French does not licence a null subject in the preverbal EPP position, no formal principle seems to exclude use of a (reduced) cleft answer in Italian. As mentioned in footnote 6 and discussed in some detail in the reference cited there, economy reasons may be at the source of the preference for the VS strategy in a null subject language like Italian, and in null

<sup>7</sup> On the possibly expletive or referential nature of the preverbal subject *pro* in structures like (1)b see the discussion in chapter 8 and section 3.

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion in Belletti (2007) on the nature of “*ce*” as, possibly, a predicate as well, based on Moro (1997), also related to Munaro & Pollock (2005) analysis of the fixed expression “*est-ce-que*”. I will not discuss this aspect any further here.

<sup>9</sup> From Stowell (1983), Burzio (1986), and especially Moro (1997)

<sup>10</sup> See also Amritavalli & Jayaseelan (2005) for a similar analysis of clefts. See also Belletti (2005, 2007) for previous discussion and Costa & Duarte (2007) for related discussion.

subject languages of the same kind in general (Spanish, European Portuguese, the languages cited above...). Interestingly enough however, a (reduced) cleft, normally disfavoured, is possible in Italian and may become the preferred option when either a cleft is contained in the question (3b) or else with agentive predicates expressing a somewhat negative presupposition (3d):

(3) a Chi è (stato) che ha rotto il vaso?

Who is it that broke the vase

b E' (stato) Gianni

it is (has been) Gianni

c Chi ha urlato?

Who screamed

d E' stato Gianni

it has been Gianni

I will not address the issue in further detail here. The reader is referred to Belletti (2007) for some discussion of the economy question which may arise, taken up in particular from the perspective of language acquisition<sup>11</sup>. The important point to be underscored here is that the subject in the (reduced) cleft should be considered a post-verbal subject in disguise. As no formal principle is violated in the use of a cleft, it is to be expected that it be used to some extent also in a language where the VS option is the preferred strategy. The examples in (3) are cases in point from Italian. As is pointed out in the literature on the semantics of clefts, a cleft provides a unique exhaustive identification of the clefted constituent.<sup>12</sup> In those cases where a cleft is used as an answer then, the answer is (implicitly) providing a unique exhaustive identification of the new information constituent; in the cases under discussion such a constituent is the subject of the clause. Thus, if the answer aims at uniquely and exhaustively identifying the subject, it is not surprising that a cleft answer may count as appropriate also in a language where a post-verbal subject would normally be the preferred option to express a new information subject. On the other hand, as formal reasons exclude direct use of the VS option in non null subject languages, it is to be expected that the only form of “inversion” in these languages be a disguised one, compatible with the nature of the language: the cleft structure serves precisely this purpose.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.1 SV answers

The English type SV answer is the other strategy adopted by non null subject languages which do not licence a *pro* in the preverbal EPP position. I would like to propose that in this case focalization of the preverbal subject is brought about by activation of a DP internal (new information) focus position. A clear sign of DP internal focalization is the special prosody associated with the *in situ* focalization. Indeed, this special prosody is the only sign that the preverbal subject is a new information focus subject and not the characteristic subject of simple declaratives with which the

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<sup>11</sup> Also addressed in Belletti, Bennati, Sorace (2007) in the frame of a wider discussion of properties of subjects in L2 acquisition. See also (11) and (12) below.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss (1998), Abel & Muriungi (2005) for discussion.

<sup>13</sup> It also automatically provides unique, exhaustive identification, which is probably not necessarily implied by the simple post-verbal subject. Cfr. the following exchange utilizing the “for example” test presented in Abel & Muriungi (2005), incompatible with exhaustiveness:

- i. a Chi ha parlato al congresso?  
Who talked at the conference?  
b Ha parlato Gianni, per esempio  
has spoken Gianni, for example

predicate determines an aboutness relation.<sup>14</sup> Note that the new information focus prosody of the preverbal subject is very different from the corrective/contrastive focalization illustrated in sentences like (4), which do not qualify as an appropriate answer of new information:

(4) JOHN came (not Bill)

As discussed in chapter 6, this kind of focalization corresponds to left peripheral focalization, where the active focus position is located in the articulated CP left periphery (Rizzi (1997)), as in cases of object corrective/contrastive focalization like the one in (5):

(5) JOHN I met (not Bill)

In the *in situ* focalization strategy, the low vP periphery is not activated, according to the proposal just sketched out. It is a DP internal focus position to be active in this case. However, much as in Italian type languages, in English type languages as well the cleft French type strategy can be resorted to in some cases, thus indicating that access to the low vP peripheral focus position is generally available across languages. (6)b is a possible example of cleft answering in English:

(6) a Who is it at the door?  
b It's John (at the door)

In conclusion, overtly (VS) or disguised (cleft) post-verbal subjects crucially involve the low discourse related focus position in the vP periphery of the clause. Preverbal new information subjects activate a DP internal focus position whose overt manifestation is a clear sign of prosodic nature. In section 2.4 the status of preverbal subjects as focus of new information will be devoted further attention and the analysis will be somewhat refined in the frame of the discussion of new information focus objects.

## 2.2 (Reduced) clefts tend to alternate with SV

Recollecting judgments from native speakers the conclusion can be drawn that the cleft strategy tends to alternate with the SV strategy. Indeed, although there is a characteristic wide use of cleft answers of the type discussed, French speakers do not totally exclude SV answers of the English type:

(7) a Qui a parlé?  
b *Jean* a parlé

This fact is not surprising under the assumed analysis which interprets both the (reduced) cleft and the SV strategies as the ways in which new information subject answers are formulated in non null subject languages.<sup>15</sup> This point will be readdressed in section 3 in the context of the discussion of data from Brazilian Portuguese.

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<sup>14</sup> According to the proposal in the text, activation of the new information DP internal focus position is considered compatible with the aboutness interpretation of the preverbal subject. See the references in footnotes 1 and 11 for more detailed discussion on the DP internal focalization; see also Aboh (2004) for related proposal.

<sup>15</sup> With clefts also implying uniqueness and exhaustiveness. See above and footnote 12, 13.

### 2.3 No comparable strategies for answers to object questions

A natural question to ask at this point is what the status of non subject, i.e. object answers, is across languages. Can different answering strategies also be detected for object questions? Since a crucial aspect of the proposed account capitalizes on the status of the language with respect to the null subject option, the natural expectation is that no parallel different answering strategies should be expected for non subject questions. A first survey confirms this expectation. Indeed, all things being equal, Italian, French and English, our first sample languages, do not manifest any difference in the context of object questions, when answers are provided with a full clause. Consider the pairs in (8) in this respect:

(8) Italian

- a Che cosa hai comprato?  
What have you bought
- b Ho comprato un libro  
I bought a book

French

- a Qu'as-tu acheté /Qu'est-ce-que tu as acheté?
- b J'ai acheté un livre

English

- a What have you bought ?
- b I have bought a book

The natural assumption to make is that in all these cases the object fills the low focus position; as there is no interference with the higher part of the clause, the EPP subject position in particular, it is expected that no difference across the different languages should manifest itself. Thus, it is indeed in the realm of subject answers that different strategies show up and are to be expected across languages. This has been our assumption throughout the discussion so far.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In all focus sentences, presumably the whole verbal chunk fills the low focus position (assuming that further morphological checking of the verb inflections is allowed from this position; see chapter 6). Note that the subject is preferably post-verbal in all focus sentences like the following in Italian:

- i. a Che cosa è successo?  
What happened
- b Ha parlato Gianni/un ragazzo // E' arrivato un ragazzo/Gianni  
has spoken Gianni/a boy // Is arrive Gianni/ a boy

Should the subject be preverbal, some presupposition on it is necessarily implied. The post-verbal location of the subject in i.b may be obtained with a derivation where the lexical subject remains in the low focus position and the verb moves above it, exactly as in cases where the subject is itself the (narrow) focus of new information, discussed so far. However, the overall picture is more complex: if a further complement is present, the post-verbal location of the subject does not seem to be equally necessary. Note that the complement has to be a PP since VSO is excluded in Italian (recall the discussion from chapter 6; see also iii. below). In this case, the subject can either be preverbal or post-verbal Cfr.ii.:

- ii. a Che cosa è successo?
- b Un ragazzo ha parlato con Gianni//Gianni arrivato da Roma  
a boy has spoken with Gianni//Gianni is arrived from Roma
- c Ha parlato un ragazzo con Gianni//E' arrivato Gianni da Roma  
has spoken a boy with Gianni//Is arrived Gianni from Roma

If the predicate is transitive, as VSO is excluded in Italian, the subject is necessarily preverbal in these cases:

- iii. a Che cosa è successo?
- b Gianni/un ragazzo ha rotto un vaso  
Gianni/a boy has broken a vase
- c \*Ha rotto Gianni/un ragazzo un vaso

## 2.4 The parametrization of the new information focus position and the uniformity of subject and object answers

Some new information focus subject answers with the order SV are not of the English type. It seems that a parametrization is at work, according to whether the new information focus position active in a given language is the vP peripheral one, as in the VS or cleft examples discussed for Italian and French as main illustration, or else whether the new information focus position coincides with the left peripheral one, characteristically associated with contrast or correction in various languages, as was illustrated with the English example (5). An immediate expectation is created: if the new information focus position coincides with the left peripheral one, then not only SV answers should be the typical answer to a question on the identification of the subject, but OV answers should also be as typical as the answer to a question on the identification of the object. Two languages like Hungarian and Sicilian may precisely illustrate languages of this type. The pairs in (9) and (10) indicate that in both Hungarian and Sicilian SV and OV are the typical orders of answers to subject and object questions<sup>17</sup>:

- (9)  
Hungarian:           a       Hans telefonált                   (SV, answer to: “who called?”)  
                          b       Mit vett Mari?  
  What has Mary bought?  
                          c       Mari egy "pulóvert vett       (OV)  
  Mary a sweater bought
- (10)  
Sicilian:             a       Montalbano sono                 (SV, answer to: “who is on the phone?”)  
                          b       Chi scrivisti airi?  
  what did you write yesterday  
                          c       N’articulu scrissi               (OV)  
  an article I have written

Note that both Sicilian and Hungarian are SVO languages<sup>18</sup> and both are null subject languages. The first property excludes that the SV and OV order of the above examples be the simple reflex of the head parameter. The latter property allows us to better spell out an important feature of the proposed analysis: the null subject property is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to allow for answers containing a post-verbal subject, displaying the order VS. The implication is a one way implication. As the Sicilian and Hungarian cases confirm, the implication does not necessarily hold in the other direction: if the language is a null subject language, subject answers may contain a post-verbal subject and display the order VS, only if the new information focus position active in the language is the low vP peripheral one. If the new information focus position is the high left peripheral one, SV is expected. Crucially, however, OV is then expected as well.

The contrast between (9)c and (10)c on the one side and the English example in (8)b is especially significant and revealing. It indirectly but strongly suggests that the SV order is not uniform in

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These observations indicate that in all focus sentences the subject can leave the low focus position to reach the high subject EPP position. However, this possibility is limited to cases where the predicate contains a complement. No option is available in Italian if the lexical complement is a direct object: in this case the subject has to be preverbal and VSO is excluded. As I assume, in accord with cartographic guidelines, that optionality is only apparent when word order issues are at stake, the optionality in ii.b and c. should be no exception and be only apparent. Subtle interpretive differences must distinguish ii.b and ii.c.; a closer discussion is however left open for the time being, as it would take us too far a field. See Calabrese (1992) for relevant discussion.

<sup>17</sup> The Sicilian variety is the one described in Cruschina (2004) where the examples in (10) are given.

<sup>18</sup> See Cruschina (2004), Puskas (2000)



nature: it corresponds to what we labelled focalization *in situ* in the English case, but not in all cases in other languages, where left peripheral new information focalization may be involved.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Experimental data: Acquisition and language description

The very existence of the different answering strategies introduced at the outset can be revealed through different methods of data taking. At least the following two can be mentioned: the standard practice making reference to grammaticality judgements by native speakers; results from experimental controlled elicited production. The latter method may constitute an important integration to the former since, by providing a controlled pragmatics, the obtained results are both totally explicit of what the answer is exactly an answer to, and directly comparable if the same experimental design is applied to different languages. While so far the discussion has been grounded on data from grammaticality judgments obtained on the basis of a questionnaire distributed to native speakers of different languages, some of which have been illustrated in the examples in I. and II., this section is devoted to the presentation of relevant experimental results.

In Belletti & Leonini (2004) an experimental design was created aiming at eliciting the production of post-verbal subjects, focus of new information by non-advanced L2 speakers of Italian from various L1, in particular German and French. The same design has then been extended to text near native speakers of L2 Italian in the frame of a study on the syntax of subjects in near natives, conducted in Belletti, Bennati, Sorace (2007). Beside the intrinsic interests of these studies for the acquisition issues they address,<sup>20</sup> their relevance in the frame of the present discussion is to be recognized in the fact that they first indirectly revealed the very existence of the different answering strategies discussed here. Specifically, in Belletti & Leonini (2004), the French and German strategy clearly emerged through L2 Italian data, in Belletti, Bennati, Sorace (2007) the English strategy was confirmed at the near native level of L2 Italian. The experimental design consisted in showing a number of short videos to the experimental subjects, each ending with a question asking for the identification of the subject, who performed some action in the scene; more questions were then asked after each single video, some again concerning the identification of the subject plus a number of distractors.<sup>21</sup> While the groups of control native speakers of Italian systematically answered with a post-verbal subject, the English/German and the French groups answered differently: the former groups, even if their L2 Italian was at different levels (near native vs non advanced), answered with a preverbal subject realized with the prosody typical of their respective L1 in the vast majority of cases; the latter group overwhelmingly answered with a cleft. The relevant percentages are given in (11) and (12); for detailed discussion, see the references quoted.

(11)

L1	VS	SV	Cleft
<b>Italian (control)</b>	<b>98%</b>	1%	-
<b>French</b>	21%	9%	<b>69%</b>
<b>German</b>	27%	<b>68%</b>	-

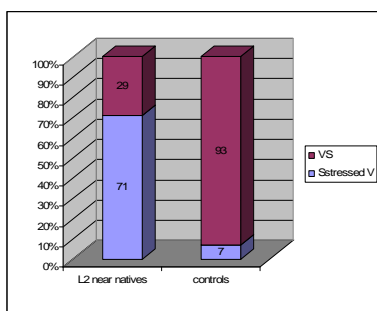
(Adapted from Belletti & Leonini (2004))

<sup>19</sup> It is a natural expectation, given the suggested parametrization, that there should be languages where both new information focus and contrastive/corrective focus be realized in the low periphery of the clause. Such languages would be the mirror image of Hungarian and Sicilian.

<sup>20</sup> The reader is directly referred to these studies for a closer discussion especially concentrating on the acquisition questions arising in this domain.

<sup>21</sup> The questions were of the type: “Who called?”, “Who took the flowers?”, “Who left?”, as in the examples in the lists I. and II. from the questionnaire. The questions were formulated with respect to the scene the experimental subjects had just seen in the video and contained transitive, intransitive and unaccusative verbs. See the references quoted for further details on the experimental setting.

(12)



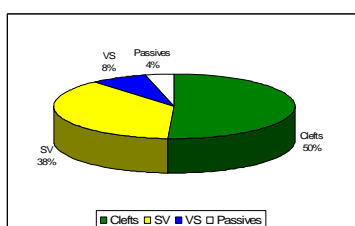
(From Belletti, Bennati, Sorace (2007))

The interest of these L2 Italian data is that they illustrate in a peculiar and original way the very existence of the different answering strategies. They do so in an indirect way, as the L2 productions reproduce the L1 strategy. They also provide direct evidence on the preferred answering strategy of Italian through the extremely stable behaviour of the Italian speakers acting as groups of control in the two experimental sessions (two different groups of Italian speakers in the two cases).

As noted, the same experimental design may also be utilized as a descriptive tool across languages. It suffices that it be realized in different languages. The advantage is that, in this way, the answers are provided by the speakers with respect to exactly the same pragmatic situation, thus keeping under reasonable control possible implicit presuppositions. By using the experimental design as a descriptive tool, the answering strategies adopted should emerge in different languages exactly as the Italian answering strategy did emerge in the behaviour of the control groups in the L2 experiments just reviewed.

A first realization of the experiment eliciting subjects of new information in the question-answer pairs of the experiment discussed has been produced in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) by Guesser (2007), who has first doubled the Belletti & Leonini (2004) experiment originally realized in Italian. Guesser (2007) has administered the BP version of the experiment to a group of 20 native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese. The emerging picture is quite interesting. It is summarized in the following figure from Guesser (2007):

(13)



(From Guesser (2007))

Let us comment on (13) in some detail. The most interesting feature of the results shown in (13) is that the preferred subject answers provided by Brazilian Portuguese speakers split in two fundamental types: SV and Clefts. The plural on clefts indicates that the cleft answers are of different kinds. The examples in (14) from Guesser's corpus illustrate the various types.

(14) (Question: Who spoke?)

Types of clefts answering:

- a. Foi um rapaz que falou  
it was a boy who spoke
- b. Foi um rapaz  
it was a boy
- c. Um rapaz que falou  
a boy who/that spoke
- d. Quem falou foi um rapaz  
who spoke was a boy

All of the answers in (14) can be amenable to an analysis which makes explicit one essential feature that they all share: the fact of containing a new information subject in the vP periphery of the clause. The hypothesis is that they are different types of clefts, with different sorts of reductions; (14)d is a pseudocleft. The derivations are illustrated in (15). For ease of reference, I give a different name to each type, following Guesser (2007).

(15)

a. Cleft:

[TP *pro*(expl) Foi ..[Top [ Foc *um rapaz* [Top [vP - [SC ] [CP que falou]]]]]]

b. Reduced Cleft

[TP *pro*(expl) Foi ... [Top [ Foc *um rapaz* [Top [vP - [SC - [CPque falou]]]]]]]]

c. Truncated Cleft

~~[TP *pro*(expl) Foi ... [Top [ Foc *um rapaz* [Top [vP- [SC ] [CP que falou]]]]]]~~

d. Pseudocleft

[TP [CP quem falou] foi ... [Top [Foc *um rapaz* [Top [vP - [SC - - ]]]]]]]

(15)a is a full cleft analyzed along the lines discussed in (2); (15)b is a cleft where the CP predicate of the small clause complement of the copula is reduced, as in the typical French answer. According to the analysis outlined in (15)c, in this case as well a reduction of the structure takes place, but of a different kind. Here, the matrix clause structure is reduced. In order to differentiate this case from (15)b, we can label the kind of reduction occurring here as “Truncation”, adopting the same term and analysis proposed for early stages in acquisition where the option of utilizing smaller portions

of the clause seems readily available to the child.<sup>22</sup> In the context of a question-answer pair, a reduced answer may be somehow favoured by the speakers to speed up the exchange and possibly avoid (partial) redundancy. (15)b illustrates a possible way to implement a reduced answer through a reduced cleft. The proposal in (15)c is that Truncation may constitute a suitable further form of reduction.<sup>23</sup> As for (15)d, the analysis proposed suggests that this is an instance of a pseudocleft derived through raising of the CP predicate into the subject position of the clause. In the final structural position, which is further away from the position of the subject of predication in the small clause, the relative predicate is realized as a free-relative, thus accounting for the change of the shape of the complementizer into the form “quem”.<sup>24</sup> The raising of the predicate in (15)d implements the same kind of derivation discussed in Moro (1997), where the predicate *there* of the small clause complement of the copula is raised in existential *there* constructions in English. I assume that this kind of derivation is fairly widespread and is characteristically involved in pseudoclefts. In summary, all the structures in (15) share some fundamental features: the same first merge of the different constituents; closely related derivations, possibly involving different kinds of reduction; and, crucially, the new information subject in the very same low focus position in all cases.

The fact that the answers given by the native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese are split into the two basic types of SV and (kinds of) clefts is coherent with the expectation of the analysis of new information subject answers proposed here. As noted, these two strategies are those typically adopted by non-null subject languages. Several works on BP (Kato (2000), Duarte (2000)) have reached the conclusion that this language has undergone a diachronic change over the last century, whereby the value of the null subject parameter has shifted. BP used to be a null subject language much as its ancestor European Portuguese, but it is basically now a non null subject language. The only kind of null subject rather freely admitted in BP is a null expletive (references quoted, and Figueredo (1996)).<sup>25</sup> Indeed, it is precisely a null expletive *pro* which is assumed in the structures in (15) to be the null subject of the cleft sentence whose main verb is the copula. Thus, the structures in (15) are exactly as the one assumed for the French clefts, modulo the possibility of a null expletive in the main subject position in BP but not in French. As discussed, in the latter language the overt expletive (like) *ce* fills the subject position. Interestingly, BP appears to admit post-verbal subjects in a way similar to Italian only with unaccusative verbs. The percentage of VS answers in Figure (13) refers precisely to examples involving an unaccusative verb. In (almost all) these examples it is also the case that the subject is an indefinite subject. It is natural to assume that these cases are treated as all focus sentences by the speakers, thereby leaving the post-verbal subject in the merge position inside the VP. As discussed in chapter 7 such a VP internal argument is typically reserved to indefinite noun phrases.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Rizzi (1993/94, 2006). See also Friedmann (2002) for a closely related proposal in the domain of language pathology.

<sup>23</sup> Resort to Truncation rather than to reduction of the CP predicate in the cleft structure seems fairly widespread in BP. More so than, e.g., in French, according to the data collected so far. However, corpus data might turn out to be revealing in this domain. I leave this aspect for further study.

<sup>24</sup> This is not a peculiarity of BP, but a general property of pseudoclefts; the following pair illustrates with Italian:

i. Cleft: E' Maria *che* ha parlato (it is Maria *that* (who) spoke)  
Pseudocleft: *Chi* ha parlato è Maria (*who* spoke is Maria)

<sup>25</sup> See Guesser (2007a) and references cited there for the analysis of the limited possibility of referential null subjects in embedded contexts in BP.

<sup>26</sup> The reference here is to the so called Definiteness Effect (DE), on which see Belletti (1988), Milsark (1977), and some discussion in chapter 7. The few cases of VS with non unaccusative verbs in the BP data are all VOS examples, which Guesser (2007) treats as instances of topicalization of the [VO] verbal portion in the low periphery and focalization of the new information subject in the same area, as in the derivation discussed in chapter 6 for the same word order in Italian. The few cases of definite post-verbal subject with an unaccusative verb are analyzed as instances of the classical exception to DE giving rise to the so called “uniqueness” interpretation, compatible with the low focus position. See Guesser (2007) for detailed discussion of all few cases of VS found in her corpus.



- (19) E' con Gianni [ che Maria ha parlato - ]  
 it is with Gianni that Matia has spoken -

This section is devoted to a more refined analysis of the small clause complement and to the sketch out of a proposal. The following subsection 4.1 is concentrated on subject clefts of the kind in (17) first. In 4.2. the outline of an analysis of non-subject clefts, as those in (18) and (19) will be proposed (making abstraction from the possible account of the different Case-agreement patterns mentioned in footnote 28). The analysis will be developed by mainly considering data from Italian.

#### 4.1 Subject clefts. General outline of the analysis.

The main question left open is a more precise analysis of the small clause complement of the copula. Let us assume the following statement in a.:

- a. Assume the *sc* complement of the copula to be a CP.

Given an articulated CP *à la* Rizzi (1997) and subsequent work, let us further propose that the articulated CP complement of the copula has the special property in b.:

- b. Assume the (articulated) CP to have an EPP feature to be satisfied.

I would like to propose that it is this feature which is responsible for the establishment of the typical *predication* relation obtaining within the small clause complement. Indeed, viewing the proposal in a more general perspective, it can be claimed that any category can have an EPP feature, and that a small clause is precisely a category with an EPP feature, different from a TP. Note that this view is very much in the spirit of Stowell's Subjects across categories original idea for small clauses. It can actually be seen as an update of Stowell (1983) analysis. The formal approach in terms of presence of an EPP feature, allows us to explicitly express the fact that also a CP can be a small clause and that a CP can thus be "small" in the relevant sense. In the structure (16), the informal label *sc* then equals CP.<sup>29</sup>

A CP with an EPP feature can be considered a defective CP (Chomsky (2001)); in this sense it is a CP small clause, or a small CP, as we may call it. This small CP is a kind of hybrid category: at the same time a CP (categorically) and a clause where a predication relation is normally established between the subject and the predicate (as in TP's). Given its defective nature, the EPP subject position of a small CP has a somewhat special status. In particular, assume that it is not (necessarily) a criterial position in Rizzi's (2006) sense. In general, a subject cannot be moved from the EPP position of full clauses as this position is a criterial position where a criterion such as the Subject criterion is satisfied.<sup>30</sup> However, defective TP complements allow for movement from their subject position. One instance is movement from the embedded subject position of the infinitival complement of raising verbs. The EPP subject position of the CP small clause can be considered of

- 
- b        it is the boys that Maria has met  
 Sono io che Maria ha incontrato  
 (I) am that Maria met  
 b'       E' me che Maria ha incontrato  
 it is me that Maria has met

<sup>29</sup> In Starke (1995) the proposal is formulated that a CP level is always present in all types of small clauses (also assumed in chapter 2, this volume, for the analysis of past participial small clauses). The proposal presented here is that a CP can count as a small clause if an EPP feature is present at the level of CP, as discussed in the text.

<sup>30</sup> Rizzi & Shlonsky (2007) for further detail on the proposal.

the same type, given the assumed defective nature of the CP. According to this analysis, the subject of a CP small clause can thus be moved from the EPP position. The proposal is that one instance of this movement occurs in cleft sentences. Specifically, the subject of the CP small clause complement of the copula in cleft structures raises to the vP-peripheral focus position of the matrix clause containing the copula, yielding the new information focus interpretation discussed.<sup>31</sup>

If a proposal along these lines is on the right track, it essentially assimilates, in important respects, subject cleft sentences like (17) to so called *pseudorelatives*, complement of perception verbs. Indeed, the analysis is very much in the spirit of Guasti's (1994) analysis of *pseudorelatives*. Guasti (1994) analyzes *pseudorelatives* in Italian as indicated in (20) for the essential aspects relevant here:

- (20) Ho visto [<sub>CP</sub> Maria ....[che [ *pro* parlava con Gianni]]]  
 I have seen Maria that - was speaking with Gianni

Guasti (1994) argues that a predication relation is established between *Maria* and the relative (like) CP. This is precisely what we have argued for the relation between the subject in the EPP position and the CP predicate in the small CP complement of the copula in cleft sentences. Extending the proposal above, thus updating Guasti's original analysis, the establishment of the predication relation can be attributed to the presence of an active EPP feature in the CP (small clause) complement of the class of perception verbs, as in the case of the copula.

The copula seems to require focalization of the small clause subject (Moro (1997)). We have seen in detail that in cleft sentences this is implemented in the low periphery of the main clause containing the copula. The perception verb does not seem to impose an analogous requirement. Rather, either the subject of the small clause or the whole CP complement can constitute the focus of new information, as witnessed by the following exchanges:

- (21) Q. Chi hai visto?  
 Whom have you seen  
 A. Ho visto Maria che parlava con Gianni  
 I have seen Maria that was speaking to Gianni  
 (22) Q. Che cosa hai visto?  
 What have you seen  
 A. Ho visto Maria che parlava con Gianni

In both cases in (21)A and (22)A there is direct perception of *Maria* (Guasti (1994), Rizzi (2000)). However, in (21)A the focus of new information is the small clause subject "Maria" which answers the question in (21)Q on the identification of the subject; while in (22)A the focus of new information is the whole CP small clause as the sentence is an answer to question (22)Q asking on the perception of the whole event. Following Guasti's discussion, this is very different from what happens in the epistemic reading of the same verb *vedere* which takes a full CP as a complement. Consider the contrast in the following exchange in (23) and the ungrammaticality of (24)A as an answer to (24)Q which makes the difference explicit and in minimal contrast with (21), (22):

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<sup>31</sup> The proposal is compatible with a derivation where the subject of the small clause in the EPP (predication) position is raised to this position from inside the relative clause predicate, as in the raising analysis of relatives (Bianchi (1999); Kayne (1994) for the relation between clefts and relatives). I leave this aspect of the analysis open. Alternatively, a silent *pro* may fill the subject position of the (relative) predicate as in the analysis of *pseudorelatives* reviewed in (20) below.

- (23) Q. Che cosa hai visto?  
 What have you seen  
 A. Ho visto che Maria parlava con Gianni  
 I have seen that Maria was speaking with Gianni
- (24) Q. Chi hai visto?  
 Whom have you seen  
 A. \*Ho visto che Maria parlava con Gianni

The perception verb *vedere* in the epistemic reading takes a full CP as its complement. Hence, in (23)A the full CP is the focus of new information which answers the question in (23)Q on the identification of the whole event. As the epistemic reading does not imply direct perception of the subject of the clausal complement, (24)A cannot be a felicitous answer to question (24)Q which precisely asks about the identification of the subject.

In conclusion, the small clause complement of the copula in subject cleft sentences can be analyzed as a CP small clause containing an active EPP feature. The rest of the CP introduced by the complementizer *che* functions as the predicate of the small clause. The whole CP is thus an articulated CP; it is not a small constituent in terms of its overall size. In general, then, the term “small clause” is just a metaphoric shortcut, which stands for any constituent, of variable size, with an active EPP feature.

#### 4.1.1 An aside on French.

As discussed, a (reduced) cleft can be, and fairly typically is, the answer to a question on the identification of the subject in French:

- (25) Q. Qui a parlé?  
 Who has spoken  
 A. C'est Jean (qui a parlé)  
 It is Jean (who has spoken)

Suppose now that the subject of the small clause be itself modified by a relative clause. A reduced cleft answer would then take the shape of a sentence like (26)A, answer to (26)Q in the following exchange. The exchange is presented in Rialland, Doetjes & Rebuschi (2002) who discuss it in similar terms :

- (26) Q. Qu'est-ce qui se passe?  
 What happens  
 A. C'est le petit qui est tombé dans l'escalier (qui se passe)  
 It is the kid who has fallen on the stairs (that happens)

The analysis suggested assumes that the relative clause present in (26)A is not the predicate of the CP small clause, which is reduced/deleted much as in (25)A. Rather, the relative clause of (26)A modifies and predicates a property of the subject of a reduced CP small clause.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Rialland, Doetjes & Rebuschi (2002) also discuss sentences like the following in French:

- i. a C'est il y a quelque mois seulement que les galibis ont adopté un alphabet  
 it is just a few months that the gabilis have adopted an alphabet
- b C'est avec plaisir que je vous reçois  
 it is with pleasure that I receive you
- c C'est ma sœur qui va rigoler!  
 It is my sister that is going to laugh

Interestingly, the authors claim that these sentences have a different prosodic pattern than "regular" clefts and are "...not used to answer questions", thus implicitly recognizing that clefts are indeed used as answering strategies in



#### 4.2. On non-subject clefts. Analysis and open questions.

The similarity between clefts and *pseudorelatives* seems to end when the possibility of non-subject clefts as in (18), (19) is compared with the ungrammaticality of (27), (28):

(27)\*Ho visto Maria che Gianni abbracciava  
I have seen Maria that Gianni kissed

(vs: E' Maria che Gianni abbracciava = (18))  
It is Maria that Gianni kissed

(28)\*Ho visto con Gianni che Maria parlava  
I have seen with Gianni that Maria spoke

(vs: E' con Gianni che Maria parlava = (19))  
It is with Gianni that Maria spoke

Let us outline the following lines towards an explanation of the contrast above, which may turn out to be ultimately only apparent. Suppose that the active EPP feature of the assumed defective CP complement of both the copula (for clefts) and the perception verb can only be satisfied by the subject of the (relative-like) predicate, corresponding to the rest of the CP small clause introduced by the complementizer. In terms of the A/A' distinction, this amounts to claiming that the EPP position in the CP small clause complement is an A/type position. Indeed, this assumption is once again very much in the spirit of Guasti (1994) original analysis where the position of the DP head of the *pseudorelative* complement of the perception verb is treated as a SpecAgr position within the CP, as such an A position. If this assumption is made, the ungrammaticality of (27), (28) is expected and the sentences may be directly ruled out as a *Relativized Minimality* (RM) violation induced by the intervention of the embedded subject on the path of the direct object or PP complement to the higher EPP position in the CP.

Since we have assimilated in essential respects the CP small clause complement of the copula to the CP small complement of perception verbs, the obvious question arises as to how the contrast between the ungrammaticality of (27), (28) and the perfect status of (18), (19) can be accounted for, which is precisely the starting point of the discussion of this section. Suppose that the contrast is in fact only apparent. More specifically, suppose that the possibility of (18),(19) is only apparently in conflict with the ungrammaticality of (27), (28) as (18),(19) may be taken to involve a different kind of focalization than the one assumed so far for clefts: in the case of (18),(19) it is not focalization in the low vP periphery of the copula. Assume that it is instead left peripheral contrastive/corrective focalization within a full CP complement of the copula. Thus, no RM occurs in this case, as the object or the PP do not move to an A-type position of the CP complement, across the intervening subject. They move to the focus position in the left periphery, an A' position. The crucial steps in this proposal are: i. the idea that the copula may also take a full CP as a complement, not just the defective CP small clause containing the EPP feature assumed so far; ii. the idea that left peripheral focalization is allowed in the embedded CP complement of the copula. While the first possibility is not peculiar to the copula, as e.g. also a perception verb may take either a CP small clause or a full CP complement in its *epistemic* reading (see the examples in (23), (24)

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French, as claimed here. According to the authors, these sentences are broad focus sentences. Thus, in the frame of our analysis, it can be proposed that they are instances where the whole CP small clause complement of the copula is in the low focus position. The sentences in i. could be the analogue of the answer in (22)A where the CP *pseudorelative* complement of the perception verb *vedere* is involved. The proposal is left here at the stage of a suggestion, open to further investigation.

above), the latter property is indeed a peculiarity of the copula. In general, left peripheral focalization is not felicitous in an embedded CP complement. The examples in (29) illustrate this impossibility with respect to a declarative CP and the full CP complement of a perception verb taken in its epistemic reading:

- (29) a                    \*Ho detto GIANNI che Maria ha salutato  
                               I have said G. that M. has greeted
- b                    \*Ho visto GIANNI che Maria ha salutato  
                               I have seen G. that M. has greeted

The ungrammaticality of the examples in (29) is directly accounted for assuming Rizzi (1997) left peripheral map whereby a complementizer like Italian *che* expresses the (declarative) Force of the clause and, as such, realizes the highest head position of the articulated CP. Hence, the left peripheral (contrastive/corrective) focus is hierarchically lower than the complementizer and it cannot linearly precede it. Assume now that the CP complement of the copula, also in cases where it is not a defective small clause with an EPP feature, is nevertheless more reduced - truncated in the sense referred to in section 3 - than a declarative full CP. In particular, assume that the complementizer *che* does not express the (declarative) Force of the CP complement. As such, it should sit in a lower head of the articulated CP. If this complementizer head is lower than the left peripheral focus position, a left peripheral (contrastive/corrective) focus should precede it. I would like to propose that (18), (19) are precisely examples of this kind.<sup>33</sup> It may be argued that a semantic correlate of this analysis is that the CP complement of the copula, be it defective or not in the technical sense suggested, does not express an independent (declarative) Force. This could in turn be related to the nature of the copula as a dummy verb (many languages do not have a copula, as is well known); the declarative force is thus expressed by the whole sentence containing the copula, not just by its complement. This speculation is left at this stage here, just adding that it may lead to the conclusion that there is no real semantic difference between sentences like (18), (19), repeated in (30) a, b, and (30)c, d, where the crucial distinction between the two pairs is that the latter instantiates left peripheral (contrastive/corrective) focalization in a root clause with no overt copula:

- (30) a                    E' MARIA che Gianni abbracciava  
                               It is Maria that Gianni kissed
- b                    E' con GIANNI che Maria parlava  
                               It is with Gianni that Maria spoke
- c                    MARIA Gianni abbracciava  
                               Maria Gianni kissed
- d                    Con GIANNI Maria parlava  
                               with Gianni Maria spoke

<sup>33</sup> The possible existence of more than one position, beside the Force head, hosting a complementizer in the articulated CP, exploited in various languages, is argued for in Benincà & Poletto (2004). The possibility is also exploited in BP, as Mioto (2003) discusses, illustrating instances of both left peripheral focalization and *wh* questions where the focussed element or the *wh* phrase is linearly followed by the complementizer (hence, it is hierarchically higher; examples from Mioto (2003):

- i.                    a                    [F O João] que a Maria disse que encontrou no cinema  
                               The J.    that the M. said    that – met at the movie theatre
- b                    [F Aquele carro] que o João comprou  
                               what car    that the J. bought

i.a thus contrasts with the truncated subject cleft in (14)/(15)c in BP.

### 4.2.1 Focalization in non subject clefts is not new information focalization

One crucial feature of the analysis developed in the previous section 4.2 is that, contrary to subject clefts, the focalization expressed by non subject clefts does not involve the new information low focus position in the vP periphery of the copula, but rather the left peripheral focus position in the (full, but reduced/truncated) CP complement of the copula. Left peripheral focalization is typically linked to a contrastive/corrective interpretation, as noted (2.1; 4.2). An immediate prediction of this analysis is that a non subject cleft should be impossible as an answer to a question of information even in a language where (possibly reduced) clefts are typically used in these contexts. One relevant language to look at in this respect is French. Coherently with our expectation, a sharp contrast emerges in French in the domain of answering strategies in this connection. While, as discussed above, a (reduced) subject cleft is a characteristic answer for questions on the identification of the subject in French, a (reduced or not) non subject cleft is not a possible answer for questions on the identification of non subject constituents. This is indeed important evidence in favour of the distinction between the focalization involved in subject clefts vs non subject clefts. The perfect status of the Question-Answer pair in (25) and the impossibility of the French pairs in (31) clearly illustrate the sharp distinction<sup>34</sup>:

- (31) Q Qu'est-ce-que t'as acheté?  
What have you bought  
A \*C'est un livre  
It is a book  
(Belletti (2007))  
Q Avec qui es-tu sorti?  
With whom did you get out  
A \*C'est avec Jean  
It is with Jean

If in non subject clefts the focalized constituent fills the focus position in the left periphery of the (full, but reduced/truncated) CP complement of the copula and not the new information focus position in the vP periphery of the copula, the impossibility of the answers in (31)A is directly accounted for.

### 4.3 Clefts as contrastive/corrective focalization

As often noted in the literature (Kiss (1998)), the relation between clefting and contrastive/corrective focalization can be very tight. This is clear in a language like Italian where clefts are most typically, almost exclusively, used contrastively. This holds for both subject and non subject clefts, since new information subject answers typically involve a straight post-verbal subject

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<sup>34</sup> Recall that the ill formed answers in (31) could not be obtained through focalization in the vP periphery of the copula moving from the EPP position of the defective CP complement as this derivation would violate RM. See the discussion in the text surrounding the examples (27), (28).

Similarly, an embedded subject behaves as the object in (31): it is equally impossible in new information (reduced) clefts in French, for the same locality reason. Thanks to Kensuke Takita for noticing the prediction and to Dominique Sportiche for the relevant judgements on French:

- i. Q. Qui crois-tu qui est venu  
Who do you think came  
A. a \* C'est Jean (=C'est Jean (que je crois qui est venu))  
b Je crois que c'est Jean

and not a (reduced) cleft in Italian, differently from French, as discussed<sup>35</sup>. Consider the cleft sentences in (32) as an illustration:

- (32) a. E' MARIA che ha parlato con Gianni (non Francesca)  
 It is Maria that has spoken with Gianni (not Francesca)  
 b. E' MARIA che Gianni abbracciava (non Francesca)  
 It is Maria that Gianni kissed (not Francesca)  
 c. E' CON GIANNI che Maria ha parlato (non con Piero)  
 It is with Gianni that Maria has spoken (not with Peter)

(32)a is a subject cleft, where the subject is contrastively/correctively focalized. It is linearly identical to the (reduced) French cleft in (25). However, while the latter has the subject in the vP periphery of the copula, according to the proposed analysis (32)a has it in the left periphery of the (full, but reduced/truncated) CP complement of the copula. (33) schematically illustrates the analysis<sup>36</sup>:

- (33) E' [CP [FocMARIA] ...[che [ *pro* ha parlato - con Gianni]]
- 

(34) a, b schematically illustrate the derivation of (32)b, c, which follows the same pattern:

- (34) a E' [CP [FocMARIA] ...[che [ *Gianni* abbracciava - ]]]
- 
- b E' [CP [Foc con GIANNI] ...[che [ *Maria* ha parlato - ]]]
- 

#### 4.4. Conclusion of section 4 and general concluding remarks.

In conclusion, the proposal developed in section 4 assumes that contrastive/corrective clefts crucially involve the left peripheral focus position of the (full, but reduced-truncated) CP complement of the copula, while new information clefts involve the low new information focus position in the vP periphery of the copula. While the former kind of clefts is typically found across languages and may affect all kinds of arguments, subject and non subjects, the latter kind is more constrained, as it only affects subjects. Locality reasons are at the source of its more constrained nature as only subjects may fill the EPP position of the CP small clause complement of the copula, in analogy with what happens in *pseudorelatives*.

The different CPs assumed, small, full, full but reduced-truncated, are summarized in the schemas in (35) with their related derivations:

<sup>35</sup> Recall the limited instances in (3) in Italian.

<sup>36</sup> I assume in (33) that the subject moves to the high focus position from a postverbal position, as in the traditional analysis of subject extraction in Rizzi (1982). See Rizzi & Shlonsky (2007) for more recent discussion. On the possible referential or expletive status of *pro* in these structures, see the discussion in the references quoted and in chapter 8. The issue is tangential for the argument developed here.



Appendix: A related structure.

Cleft structures may manifest themselves in various different shapes, a number of which have been discussed in this chapter. The typology of different kinds of clefts, however, is not exhausted by the kinds that have been presented here. The examples in (1) below illustrate a related structure.

- (1) a. Il bello è [[che Maria non ha capito] - ]  
The funny thing is that Maria has not understood  
b. E' [ [che Maria non ha capito] - ]  
It is that Maria has not understood

It can be proposed that sentences like those (1), should be analyzed as inverse copular sentences à la Moro (1997), where a DP/AP small clause complement of the copula has a (CP) clause as its subject of predication. It is then the predicate DP/AP that is either raised to the subject position (a), or possibly remains silent in the form of an expletive-like pronominal *pro* (b), if the language is a null subject language. If the language is not a null subject language, an overt pronominal expletive appears, as indicated by the English glosses.

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