

Federica Cognola, phd student
University of Padova (Italy)

TopicPs and Relativized Minimality in Mòcheno left periphery

1. Introduction. In the latest version of relativised minimality (RM) Rizzi (2004) it is assumed that local structural relations are better captured in a system that assumes the presence of few featural natural classes and that RM effects can arise only between elements of the same featural class. This allows us to make sense of the lack of RM in A' dependencies involving for example topics and operators. The featural classes relevant here are given in (1).

(1) a. **Quantificational:** Wh, Neg, measure, focus; b. **Topic**

In my talk I will take into consideration the left periphery of a V2 Tyrolean dialect called Mòcheno, showing that in this language, unexpectedly under (1), RM effects arise between topics and foci, but not between topics and wh-elements. These data will be shown not to be an instance in favour of a split inside the Quantificational class, but for a more precise definition of the conditions under which no RM effects arise between a topic and a Quantificational XP. It will be shown that belonging to the Topic featural class is not a sufficient condition but it has to cooccur with the presence of TopicPs specialised for the category of the constituent to be topicalised; availability of TopicPs for all categories is possible only in a recursive Topic field. In Mòcheno both requirements are satisfied when possible, that is with wh-elements (which all allow for recursive TopicPs), but not with foci, which allow for only one TopicP. These data have strong implications for Italian (and languages allowing for a split CP in general) where the interplay of these two factors cannot be seen. I will show that also in Italian TopicPs dedicated to specific categories of constituents are to be detected and that they are ordered: the free order of topics will be shown to be the result of the availability of more TopicPs (see also Benincà/Poletto 2004, p.69-70).

2. RM violations. I will illustrate RM effects between topics and foci using verb arguments, even though they take place also with other categories. RM arise starting from the order of merge of verb arguments sketched in (2).

(2) [TOPIC [FOCUS [... [FP SUBJ [FP IO [FP DO]]]]]]

A focused direct object (DO), being the lowest argument in the structure, allows for both a topicalised subject (SUBJ) and a topicalised indirect object (IO) (3a,b: the XP preceding focus is a topic both from the syntactic (resumption) and the pragmatic point of view):

- (3) a. *En de Maria A PUACH hot-*(en) der Nane kaft (ont net a penna)*
to the Maria-IO a book-DO has-DAT CL the John-SUBJ bought (and not a pen)
b. *Der Nane A PUACH hot-*(er) kaft en de Maria (ont net a penna)*
the John-SUBJ a book-DO has-SUBJ CL bought to the Mary and not a pen
'It was a book that John bought Mary, not a pen'

A focused IO admits only a topicalised SUBJ above it (4a) and not a DO (4b).

- (4) a. *Der Nane EN DE MARIA hot-*(er) kaft s puach (ont net en Luca)*
the John-SUBJ to the Mary-IO has-SUBJ CL bought the book (and not to Luca)
b. **A puach EN DE MARIA hot-z der Nane kaft (ont net en Luca)*
a book-DO to the Mary-IO has ACC CL the John-SUBJ bought (and not to Luca)
'It was for Mary that John bought a book, and not for Luca'

A focused SUBJ does not admit any argument as its topic, since it is the highest argument (5).

- (5) a. **Z puach DER MARIO hot-z kaft (ont net der Nane)*
the book-DO the Mario-SUBJ has-ACC CL bought (and not the John)
b. **En de Maria DER MARIO hot-en kaft a puach (ont net der Nane)*
to the Mary-IO the Mario-SUBJ has-DAT CL bought a book (and not the John)
'It was Mario who bought Mary a book, and not Luca'

3. Asymmetries between foci and wh-elements. The first asymmetry concerns RM: no RM

violations arise between wh-elements and topics (differently from foci and topics, see (5) above).

- (6) *Gester s puach en Nane ber hot-*(z) kaft?*
yesterday the book-DO to John-IO who-SUBJ has-ACC CL bought
'Who bought the book for John yesterday?'

The second asymmetry concerns TopicP recursion: (6) above shows that TopicP recursion is possible with a wh-element but (7) below shows that it is ruled out with a focus.

- (7) **Der Mario en Nane A PUACH hot-er-en kaft (ont net a penna)*
the Mario-SUBJ to John-IO a book has-SUBJ CL-DAT CL bought (and not a pen)

Following Poletto (2002) I assume that the asymmetry concerning TopicP recursion – not expected in the structure of the left periphery (Rizzi 1997, Beninca/Poletto 2004) – has to be made sense of assuming that wh-elements show up in the Focus field, whereas foci have to move higher up to ForceP. The last asymmetry concerns the nature of TopicPs. In (8) I show that TopicPs above wh-elements are specialised according to the category of the topicalised XP: a locative PP has to follow the scene setter and precede verb arguments (8a,b), whereas a comitative PP has to follow the verb arguments (8c,d).

- (8) a. *Gester **vour de kirch** der Mario en Nane bos hot-*(er-en) trog?*
yesterday infront the church the Mario to John what has-SUBJCL-DATCL brought
b. **Gester der Mario en Nane **vour de kirch** bos hot-er-en trog?*
'What did Mario bring John yesterday infront of the church?'
c. *Gester der Mario en Nane **pet de sai muam** bos hot-*(er-en) trog?*
yesterday the Mario to John with the his aunt what has-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought
d. **Gester **pet de sai muam** der Mario en Nane bos hot-er-en trog?*
'What did Mario buy John with his aunt yesterday'

I will show that it is possible to derive a one-to-one correlation between the linear order of TopicPs and the constituents to be hosted in them: the highest two TopicPs can host only two XPs related to the Frame of the event, the in-between two are specialised for verb arguments with dedicated positions and the lowest ones are for adjuncts, as sketched in (9).

- (9)_{[FRAME [Scene setter] [loc.PP] [TOPIC-ARG [SUBJ] [IO] [TOPIC-ADJ [com.PP] [OpP [wh-DO]]]]]}

The TopicP above foci, on the contrary, is not dedicated to any category but can host verb arguments (see above), scene setters (10a) and comitative PPs (10b): the only restriction is on the number of topics not on their categorial status.

- (10) a. *Gester A PUACH hone kaft (ont net a penna)*
yesterday a book have-SUBJ CL bought (and not a pen)
b. *Petn Luca A PUACH hone kaft pet im (ont net a penna)*
with-the Luca a book have-SUBJ CL bought with him (and not a pen)
'It was a book that I bought with Luca, not a pen'

I take the previous discussion and (9) and (10) as evidence in favour of the idea that the lack of RM effects between topics and Quantificational XPs is subject to two conditions: a) a condition on the XP to be topicalised, that has to belong to the Topic featural class as in (1) and b) a condition on the structure, that is, in CP there must be at least one TopicP specialised for the category of the constituent to be topicalised. Italian data will be discussed in the light of these and other findings of Mòcheno left periphery that hint at the fact that in Italian several positions for each category are available, which gives rise to apparent free order.

References

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