

POLARITY FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS IN ITALIAN

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Abstract: *The article discusses the syntax and semantics of two Italian emphatic constructions, which I dub “Particle Initial Construction” (PIC) and “Particle Final Construction” (PFC). Interpretive evidence is presented that suggests that semantically they must be conceived of as involving polarity focus. Syntactically, a proposal that builds on Poletto (2008) is defended against a later alternative. The embedded distribution of the two construction is described and attempts are made to account for it. PFC is shown to display the distribution of most Main Clause Phenomena. PIC, on the other hand, is argued to have one further illocutionary component which bears some resemblances to the meaning of exclamatives.*

Keywords: *polarity focus, polarity particles, Main Clause Phenomena*

1. Two constructions

The following sentences exemplify two constructions of Italian. They can be regarded as expressing ‘emphatic’ forms of affirmation or denial¹:

(1) PARTICLE INITIAL CONSTRUCTION (PIC)

Hai visto Gianni ieri sera?
‘Did you see Gianni last night?’

- a. Sì che l’ho visto.
yes that him-have seen
‘I did see him.’
- b. No che non l’ho visto.
no that not him-have seen
‘I did NOT see him.’

(2) PARTICLE FINAL CONSTRUCTION (PFC)

Hai visto Gianni ieri sera?
‘Did you see Gianni last night?’

- a. L’ho visto sì.

¹ This article is a shortened and revised version of Chapter 3 from Servidio (2014), in which these constructions were discussed in the wider context of responding systems and in a broader comparative context. It does not include any discussion of more recent contributions, most importantly Garzonio and Poletto (2015). I thank the many people who contributed in improving this work: Adriana Belletti, Valentina Bianchi, Giuliano Bocci, Carlo Cecchetto, Liliane Haegeman, Luigi Rizzi. The tree diagrams were created with the packages *qtree* and *tree-dvips* for LaTeX2e.

- him-have seen yes
 'I did see him.'
- b. Non l'ho visto no.
 not him-have seen no
 'I did NOT see him.'

The declarative sentences in (1) display *sì* or *no* in initial position followed by the complementizer *che*. The sentences in (2), on the other hand, display the same particles in final position. Notice also that the complementizer *che* is absent. When we refer to both constructions, we will call them Particle Constructions (PCs).

As I said, the meaning of the constructions in (1) and (2) can be intuitively characterized as emphatic affirmation or denial. They are typically infelicitous when uttered out-of-the-blue. They are often used to reply to a statement to the contrary:²

- (3) Hai visto Gianni ieri sera.
 have seen Gianni yesterday night
 'You saw Gianni last night.'
- a. No che non l'ho visto.
 no that not him-have seen
 'I did NOT see him.'
- b. %Non l'ho visto no.
 not him-have seen no
 'I did NOT see him.'
- (4) Non hai visto Gianni ieri sera.
 not have seen Gianni yesterday night
 'You didn't see Gianni last night.'
- a. Sì che l'ho visto.
 yes that him-have seen

² As for the '%' sign below, it requires an explanation. I have designed and implemented a small quantitative study (7-point Likert scale task, fully counterbalanced) on 16 speakers (4 females, 12 males, aged between 22 and 35, 15 from Rome, 1 from Pisa). Eight experimental conditions were tested, for a total of 637 data points. They were the combinations of the following factors: polarity of the sentence (positive or negative), type of construction (PIC or PFC) and relative polarity (confirming or reversing). The subjects were presented with a short exchange in which a statement was countered by a PC, and were asked to rate the acceptability of the move. All combinations were rated fairly good, with a mean rating of 5.34 on a 7-point scale. No combination, then, should be regarded as straight out unacceptable. The Likert values were converted to z-scores and linear mixed models were studied, with the acceptability value as dependent variable and PC type, polarity and relative value as fixed effects. Using a likelihood ratio test, the null model with random effects only was compared to the full model with the three factors and the interactions thereof. The comparison was highly significant ($\chi^2(11)=141.25$, $p<0.001$). Reversing negative PFCs have the absolute lowest rating, at 4.71 (which motivates the '%' mark). There is a sizeable positive effect of the IP construction (1.09 ± 0.15 standard errors), which is almost exclusively due to reversing IP cases, which are rated especially high. It is worth noting that the standard deviation values for the random effects radically differ (subject = 0.84, item = 0.03), thus confirming the intuitive pattern that strong variation exists across subjects. In what follows these patterns will not be given a principled account.

- 'I DID see him.'
- b. L'ho visto sì.
him-have seen yes
'I did see him.'

The constructions can also be used to confirm a previous statement:

- (5) a. Hai visto Gianni.
You saw Gianni.
b. Sì che l'ho visto.
c. L'ho visto sì.
- (6) a. Non hai visto Gianni.
'You saw Gianni.'
b. No che non l'ho visto.
c. Non l'ho visto no.

Notice though that they can be used to emphatically answer a yes/no question:

- (7) a. Hai visto Gianni ieri sera?
'Did you see Gianni yesterday night?'
b. Sì che l'ho visto.
c. No che non l'ho visto.
d. L'ho visto sì.
e. Non l'ho visto no.

The choice of particle tightly correlates with the polarity of the sentence (positive vs negative). Mismatches give rise to unacceptability:

- (8) a. *No che l'ho visto.
b. *Sì che non l'ho visto.
c. *L'ho visto no.
d. *Non l'ho visto sì.

As for the emphatic nuance associated with PCs, a proviso is in order. The literature on Italian and other Romance languages (Poletto 2008; Hernanz 2006, 2007; Hernanz and Batllori 2013; Schwenter 2005; Martins 2006, 2013) concurs in labeling PCs as emphatic constructions.³ It is not obvious, though, that, in virtue of such an emphatic nature, a definite set of interpretive properties should be expected to distinguish PCs from simple responses including responding particles. Real differences between the two classes are not easy to pinpoint. Bernini (1993) presents PIC and PFC as synonymous and even as mere

³ Poletto (2008) also proposes a paraphrase of the intuitive meaning of PCs in terms of evidentiality, see note 16 below.

paraphrases of plain responses with *sì* and *no*.⁴ This fact must be borne in mind in considering arguments on the interpretation on PCs. One could take the conservative view that the relevant notion of emphasis should be seen as the result of a pragmatic inference triggered by the choice of a marked option (a PC) over an unmarked alternative (a mere responding particle). Even though I will not elaborate on this in detail, neo-Gricean frameworks such as Horn (1984) and Levinson (2000) could model this effect quite straightforwardly.⁵

Theoretical discussion and analysis of PCs have been presented in a series of works by Cecilia Poletto and Raffaella Zanuttini. A point-by-point comparison between these works is not viable, because their objects of study overlap only partially: Poletto (2008) deals with both PIC and PFC and, in addition, proposes an analysis of responding particles and polarity fragment answers.⁶ Poletto and Zanuttini (2013) focus solely on PIC.

Now, let me present the respective proposals in the most concise form. I will discuss arguments in support of each in later sections.

Poletto (2008) argues that PCs have *sì* and *no* in a left peripheral focus projection. PIC and PFC differ only minimally, in that (a) in PFC a clausal projection is moved to the specifier of a peripheral topic projection (GroundP) and (b) a certain feature in FinP can be checked either by merge of the complementizer *che* (PIC) or by the movement of a clausal projection to the specifier of FinP on its way to GroundP:⁷

- (9) a. [_{GroundP} Ground [_{FocP} NO [_{FinP} [*che*... [_{IP} non l'ho visto]]]]]
 b. [_{GroundP} [_{IP} non l'ho visto] [Ground [_{FocP} NO [_{FinP} ~~non l'ho visto~~]]]]

Poletto and Zanuttini (2013), on the other hand, analyze PIC as a biclausal structure. The complementizer *che* is taken to be merged in Force, just like its counterpart in embedded declaratives (Rizzi 1997). The whole ForceP is the complement of a PolP that hosts the particle. This PolP is included in a root ForceP.⁸ The particle, the authors

⁴ Interestingly, Bernini (1993) goes as far as to present the availability of PIC and PFC as a diagnostic for the status of responding particles (in his terms, *profrasi*, 'sentential proforms'). He also assimilates PCs to cleft structures. This intuition would in fact be reflected by an analysis of PIC along the lines of Poletto and Zanuttini (2013), in the light of the analysis of clefts proposed by Belletti (2009).

⁵ Namely, the inference could be triggered by Horn's Q-principle:

The use of a marked (relatively complex and/or prolix) expression when a corresponding unmarked (simpler, less effortful) alternate expression is available tends to be interpreted as conveying a marked message (one which the unmarked alternative would not or could not have conveyed).

Alternatively, consider Levinson's M-principle, especially the Recipient Corollary: "What is said in an abnormal way indicates an abnormal situation, or marked messages indicate marked situations...".

⁶ Poletto (2010b) is a revised version of Poletto (2008), but the differences are mostly expository, so every reference to Poletto (2008) in the main text can be safely meant to refer to Poletto (2010b) as well.

⁷ The moved clause is labeled IP for simplicity.

⁸ The authors also consider, as an alternative, the hypothesis that the particles might be hosted in a FocP in the higher clause. See below.

Questions Under Discussion (QUDs).¹⁰ The QUD stack is an ordered set of unanswered questions. Discourse participants resort to two basic types of moves, *assertion* and *question*. When someone asserts that p , if other discourse participants have no objections, p is added to the CG. When a question q is asked, if other discourse participants have no objections, q is added to the top of the QUD stack. The question on the top of the stack at a given time is the *immediate* QUD at that time (QUD for brevity). In order to be felicitous, moves in a dialogue must be *congruent* and *relevant*:

- (12) a. A move m is CONGRUENT to a QUD q iff its focal alternatives are the alternatives determined by q .
 b. A move m is RELEVANT to the immediate QUD q iff m either introduces an answer to q (m is an assertion) or is part of a strategy to answer q (m is a question).

In the tradition following Hamblin (1973), the denotation of a question q is a set of propositions, namely the set of possible answers to q . The meaning of the requirement in (12a) is now apparent: it dictates that the focus value of an assertion (a set of propositions) must be identical to the denotation of the QUD.¹¹ The relevance condition in (12b) further requires that an assertion (at least partially) answers the QUD. This predicts that the sentence in (11a) should be felicitous as an answer to (13a), but not as an answer to (13b):

- (13) a. Who did John invite?
 b. Who invited Mary?

Let us think of the denotation of (13a) and (13b) as the sets of propositions obtained by substituting individuals for the denotation of the *wh*-phrase (in object and subject position, respectively):

- (14) a. $\llbracket \text{Who did John invite?} \rrbracket = \{ \{w \mid \text{John invited Mary in } w\}, \{w \mid \text{John invited Herman in } w\}, \{w \mid \text{John invited Lucy in } w\}, \{w \mid \text{John invited Mark in } w\} \dots \}$.

¹⁰ The sketch that follows does not implement the dynamics affecting CG and QUDs in detail: the effects of moves on the dialogue structure are stated informally. It also does not take into account the differences between the models in the tradition.

¹¹ For simplicity, here I am following Roberts (1998, 2012). The two semantic objects are actually identical only if both are contextually restricted in the same way. Rooth (1992b, 1997) defines congruence as the condition that the ordinary meaning of a question must be a subset of the focus meaning of the answer. Notice also that the formulation of (12) is actually more general: it encompasses both assertions and questions. It thus predicts that (i) is felicitous as a follow-up to (ii):

- (i) Who did Mary_F invite?
 (ii) Who invited who?

This case does not concern us for the present purposes. The status of multiple *wh*-questions in Italian is controversial, and focus marking in interrogatives is a complex issue in its own right.

- b. $\llbracket \text{Who invited Mary?} \rrbracket = \{ \{ w \mid \text{Mark invited Mary in } w \}, \{ w \mid \text{Lucy invited Mary in } w \}, \{ w \mid \text{Herman invited Mary in } w \}, \{ w \mid \text{John invited Mary in } w \} \dots \}$.

The set in (14a) is the same set as the focus value in (11c), so (11a) satisfies the congruence requirement with respect to (13a). The set in (14b), by contrast, is different from the (11c), even though the two sets overlap (they share at least the element corresponding to the proposition expressed by *John invited Mary*).

I propose that in particle constructions a polarity value is focused. One can think of the focus value of such a sentence as the set that includes a proposition and its negation (a proposition p and its complement $\neg p$):

- (15) $\llbracket \text{Gianni non è andato no} \rrbracket^f = \{ \{ w \mid \text{Gianni is going in } w \}, \{ w \mid \text{Gianni is not going in } w \} \}$.

So a sentence with focus on polarity has the ordinary semantic value of the corresponding non-focus marked sentence (a proposition) and a focus value that is a set including two propositions, one that expresses the meaning of a positive sentence and one that expresses the meaning of its negated counterpart. This makes it necessary to think of a focus value obtained by abstracting over the actual polarity value of the sentence, and by defining a set of propositions by substituting alternative values of polarity for the actual value. In Italian sentence polarity is encoded in a functional projection at the top of the IP field (Zanuttini 1997). The denotation of the Pol head itself can be thought of as a function from propositions to propositions. Negative polarity takes a proposition and outputs its negation, positive polarity is the identity function:¹²

- (16) a. $\llbracket \text{POL}_{pos} \rrbracket = \lambda p.p$
 b. $\llbracket \text{POL}_{neg} \rrbracket = \lambda p.\neg p$

The complement of the Pol head denotes a proposition. The ordinary (non-focal) semantic value of the whole PolP is then a proposition. In sentences with focus on polarity, the position of the function undergoes abstraction:

- (17) $\llbracket \text{POL}_F(\text{Gianni non è andato}) \rrbracket = \{ f \llbracket \text{Gianni è andato} \rrbracket \text{ with } f \text{ in } \{ \lambda p.p, \lambda p.\neg p \} \} = \{ \{ w \mid \text{Gianni goes in } w \}, \{ w \mid \text{Gianni does not go in } w \} \}$

The relevant domain for focal alternatives includes only two objects, positive polarity and negative polarity. Substituting both functions for the function variable in turn gives the intended denotation, as exemplified in (15).

Thinking of polar particle constructions as having polarity in focus makes it possible to account for their basic patterns of use. The congruence condition requires that an asserted polarity focused sentence have as its focus value the same set of alternatives that constitutes the denotation of the immediate QUD. This predicts that polarity focused sentences should be felicitous as answers to polar questions whose denotation is identical to their focus

¹² The proposed denotations are borrowed from Krifka (2001), where they are meant to represent the meaning of responding particles.

value. This prediction is borne out. Imagine the following scenario. Speaker A and B are taking part in a huge party. They comment on who is there and who is not. Imagine A does not know whether Gianni is there. He asks B:

- (18) a. Gianni è venuto?
Gianni is come
'Did Gianni come?'.
b. i. Sì che è venuto.
yes that is come
ii. No che non è venuto.
no that not is come
iii. È venuto sì.
is come yes
iv. Non è venuto no.
not is come no

Speakers judge all the sentences in (18b) to be possible answers to the question in (18a), even though they sound somewhat marked with respect to answers that consist in just *sì* or *no*, alone or followed by other material.¹³ Notice that the question needs not be biased in any obvious way. One can safely assume that A genuinely ignores whether Gianni came, and asks B in order to get such information.

To see how polarity focus accounts for the pattern in (18), consider the focus value of the assertions in (18b), e.g.:

- (19) $[[\text{Gianni è venuto sì}]]^f = \{\{w \mid \text{Gianni has come in } w\}, \{w \mid \text{Gianni has not come in } w\}\}$.

Since the polarity value of the sentences in (18b) has been abstracted over, and is contrasted with its (only) alternative in the domain of polarities, all the sentences in (18b) have the same focus value. Such focus value is identical to the denotation of the question in (18a):

- (20) $[[\text{Gianni è venuto?}]] = \{\{w \mid \text{Gianni has come in } w\}, \{w \mid \text{Gianni has not come in } w\}\}$.

The congruence condition is thus met. Notice that the relevance condition is also met: all the sentences in (18b) are answers to (18a).

Given the congruence condition, the felicity of the exchanges in (18) is positive evidence for the analysis of particle constructions as polarity focal sentences. Negative evidence comes from the infelicity of the particle sentences as answers to questions that call for a focus other than a polarity focus in the answer. Consider a *wh*-question like (21a). For congruence to be met, it calls for an answer with a narrow focus on the subject (which must be postverbal in Italian, cf. Belletti 2004):

¹³ Cf. Bernini (1993) and see section 1 above.

- (21) a. Chi è venuto?
 ‘Who’s come?’
 b. È venuto GIANNI.
 ‘Gianni has come’.
 c. #È venuto GIANNI sì.
 d. #Sì che è venuto GIANNI.

Congruence requires the answers in (21b-d) to have a narrow focus on the subject (here, *Gianni*). While (21b) with no particles is fine, PCs are infelicitous. A uniqueness constraint on foci exists in Italian: only one focus per sentence is allowed. If the polarity is focused, it follows that no other focus is allowed, hence the problem with (21c-d).¹⁴

Particle constructions are not compatible with a broad focus (‘all-focus’) either. Compare a regular declarative with PCs as answers to a very general *wh*-question:

- (22) a. Che si dice?
 ‘What’s up?’.
 b. Gianni non è venuto.
 ‘Gianni hasn’t come’.
 c. È venuto Gianni.
 ‘Gianni has come’.
 d. #Non è venuto Gianni no.
 e. #È venuto Gianni sì.
 f. #No che non è venuto Gianni.
 g. #Sì che è venuto Gianni.

The particle constructions are infelicitous in this context, while regular declaratives like (22b-c) are felicitous. Under my analysis, this is because broad focus sentences are congruent and relevant with respect to a question like (22a), while particle sentences, which have a narrow focus on polarity, are not.

In sum, pragmatic data concerning answers to polar questions support the analysis of the particle constructions as having polarity in focus. We still have to account for other contexts of occurrence of the particle constructions, namely as emphatic replies (confirmations or denials) to statements. Both particle constructions can be used in denials, i.e. to contradict an immediately preceding statement:

- (23) a. Mario non è venuto.
 ‘Mario has not come’.
 b. i. Sì che è venuto. (È di là in cucina).
 ‘He has come. (He’s there, in the kitchen)’.
 ii. È venuto sì. (È di là in cucina).
- (24) a. Mario è venuto.
 ‘Mario has come’.

¹⁴ On the uniqueness of focus in Italian and its implementation, see Stoyanova (2008) and Bocci (2013). The latter, most relevantly, discusses the compatibility of the uniqueness constraint with the Alternative Semantics for focus.

- b. i. No che non è venuto. (Quel tizio è suo fratello).
'He has NOT come. (That guy is his brother)'.
- ii. Non è venuto no. (Quel tizio è suo fratello).
'He has NOT come. (That guy is his brother)'.

In the terms of the approach to dialogue adopted here, one can see the meaning of (23a) and (24a) as propositions the first speaker offer as candidates for addition to the CG (remember that an asserted proposition is added to the CG if and only if it is accepted). By asserting (23b) or (24b), the interlocutor rejects the move of the first speaker, actually by asserting the opposite proposition. Under my analysis of particle constructions as polarity focal, the congruence conditions requires sentences like (23b) or (24b) to be used only when the corresponding polar question (paraphrasable as *Did Mario come?*) is the immediate QUD. While this might possibly be true of the latter examples, depending on the discourse history, so far nothing ensures that the same is true in general. Take the following dialogue:

- (25) a. A: Chi ha mangiato il mio panino?
'Who ate my sandwich?'
- b. B: L'avrà mangiato Mario.
'Maybe Mario ate it'.
- c. A: Mario non l'ha mangiato no! È vegetariano.
'Mario did not eat it for sure! He's vegetarian'.
- d. B: Ah, ho capito.
'Oh, I see'.

Under my analysis, the felicitous use of (25c) requires the QUD *Did Mario eat the sandwich?* to be the immediate QUD. This does not seem to hold of the dialogue in (25), since the speakers are addressing the *wh*-question *Who ate the sandwich?*, which was added to the QUD stack by the question in (25a). How can (25c) be felicitous if it is not congruent to the immediate QUD? In fact, it can be safely assumed that the immediate QUD is just as required: Ginzburg (2012) argues that an assertion that *p* always raises the QUD *?p* (*whether p*). This assumption is meant to account for the fact that felicitous, intuitively 'well-formed', dialogues often involve discussion of an asserted proposition, sometimes leading to rejection. Once the question *?p* is raised, the hearer can felicitously make moves that settle the question e.g. she can accept it (ultimately adding it to the CG) or she can reject it. Notice that an assertion that *p* raises the polar QUD *?p* independently of the focus marking in the original assertion. All this is empirically confirmed by the common crosslinguistic fact that the same responding particles (e.g., *sì* and *no*) can be used in answers and replies.¹⁵

¹⁵ In this perspective, Inquisitive Semantics (Groenendijk and Roelofsen 2009; Roelofsen and Farkas 2015) is especially promising for its unified treatment of answers and replies: both questions and assertions are taken to introduce issues, which are then addressed by answers and replies. Issues, for our present purposes, can be regarded as equivalent to Questions Under Discussion. I will not attempt a description of PCs in terms of Inquisitive Semantics, both for the great number of technicalities involved, and for the lack of a widely accepted treatment of focus, which would make us lose a generalization (the analogy between polarity focus and other kinds).

As one can see in (28), the particle can be preceded but not immediately followed by a clitic-resumed topic.¹⁸ Notice though that a familiar topic (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007) can follow the sequence particle plus complementizer:¹⁹

(29) Sì che il libro l'ho letto.

The fact that left peripheral material can precede the sequence particle-plus-complementizer makes it clear that *che* cannot be located in the position attributed to declarative finite complementizers by Rizzi (1997) (the head of ForceP). In the construction at hand the complementizer must occur lower. Poletto suggests *che* should be located in Fin, the lowest head in the left periphery, as some authors have argued to happen in other cases (Belletti 2004 a.o.). One could reasonably propose that in PIC the complementizer actually occupies the head of the focus projection that hosts the particle. This would explain the fact that a topic can (for some speakers) occur after *che* but cannot occur between the particle and *che*. Thus, my proposal is that in PIC the polarity particle occupies the specifier of a left peripheral focus projection, whose head is lexicalized by the complementizer *che*. For concreteness, I follow Poletto in assuming that the relevant focus projection is the FocP of Rizzi (1997).²⁰

Poletto and Zanuttini (2013) also point out that sentences such as (29), which are accepted by some speakers, are incompatible with the hypothesis of *che* in Fin. They take it as evidence for their biclausal analysis, repeated and adapted in (30):

(30) [_{HTP} [~~non l'ho visto~~]_{TopP} [_{ForceP1} ... [_{PolP1} *no*_i [_{TP} [_{ForceP2} *OP*_i *che* [_{TopP} [_{FocP} [_{PolP2} *e*_i *non l'ho visto*]]]]]]]]]]

¹⁸ Clitic left dislocation, in which a left peripheral topic is doubled by a clitic pronoun, is to be distinguished from other kinds of fronting that do not involve clitic resumption, Hanging Topic (Benincà and Poletto 2004) and adverb fronting (Rizzi 2004) among others. Among clitic left dislocated topics, different classes can be distinguished: see Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007). A proviso is in order. Strictly speaking, I should follow Poletto and Zanuttini (2013) in giving examples with dislocated PPs, rather than DPs. The reason is that dislocated DPs can be either CLLD topics or Hanging Topics (Benincà at al. 1988; Benincà 2001), while PPs cannot be HTs. So, in order to ensure the CLLD nature of the examples, only PPs should be used. For naturalness, I will stick to DPs, but equivalent examples with PPs can be given:

- (i) Di libri, sì che ne ho letti.
of books yes that of-them have read
'Books, I HAVE read some'.
- (ii) *Sì di libri che ne ho letti.

¹⁹ My intuitions diverge from Poletto's on this point: Cf. Poletto (2008, 186).

²⁰ A residual technical issue is how to implement the obligatory presence of *che* in PIC sentences. Unlike some other frameworks, mainstream generative syntactic theory denies any theoretical significance to the notion 'construction'. So the peculiar pattern of polarity particle plus *che* must be implemented in terms of the properties (features) of the two elements themselves. Notice though that this need is not unique to my proposal: analogous difficulties exist for analyses that locate *che* in Fin or anywhere else.

Topics can follow *che*, they argue, because *che* occupies Force. Topics preceding *che*, then, should be thought of as located in the higher clause. Notice though that my proposal (monoclausal structure, *che* in Foc), besides being more parsimonious, also predicts the fact that only familiar topics and not, say, contrastive or aboutness topics can follow *che*. The reason is that in the topic hierarchy articulated by Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) and Bianchi and Frascarelli (2007), topics that follow FocP must be familiar topics:²¹

- (31) [_{ShiftP} Aboutness-Topic [_{ContrP} Contrastive-Topic [_{FocP} Focus [_{FamP*} Familiar-Topic [_{FinP} [IP ...]]]]]]]

4. Particle final construction

In the last section, a syntactic analysis of PIC has been presented that closely follows Poletto (2008). As for the analysis of PFC, I will proceed in an orderly fashion, by considering all the hypotheses logically available. As commonly assumed in the cartographic framework, I assume left- and right-adjunction to be unavailable to Universal Grammar (Kayne 1994; Cinque 1999). Under this assumption, final particles cannot be thought of as being right-adjoined to some suitable projection in the clause structure. Three hypotheses can be made then. A first hypothesis is that the particle might be located in the CP area (the left periphery), postulating the movement of a large clausal constituent to its left. This is the original proposal by Poletto. I will present counterexamples to this analysis. A second conceivable hypothesis is for the particles to be located in the IP field, a portion of the clause that hosts a wide range of adverbs and related elements (Cinque 1999 a.o.). The surface order would result from the movement of the material generated in the vP to the left of the particle. This hypothesis would assimilate the polar particles under discussion to the modal particles discussed in Cardinaletti (2011). I will show that relative ordering restrictions on adverbs with respect to polarity particles cast doubts on this second analysis.

²¹As a side remark, I will add one further piece of information that, if anything, seems to support the claim that the positions of the particles in PCs are not devoted to polarity: the distribution of particles in PIC is analogous to other constructions in which modal adjectives (interpreted epistemically) are followed by *che*:

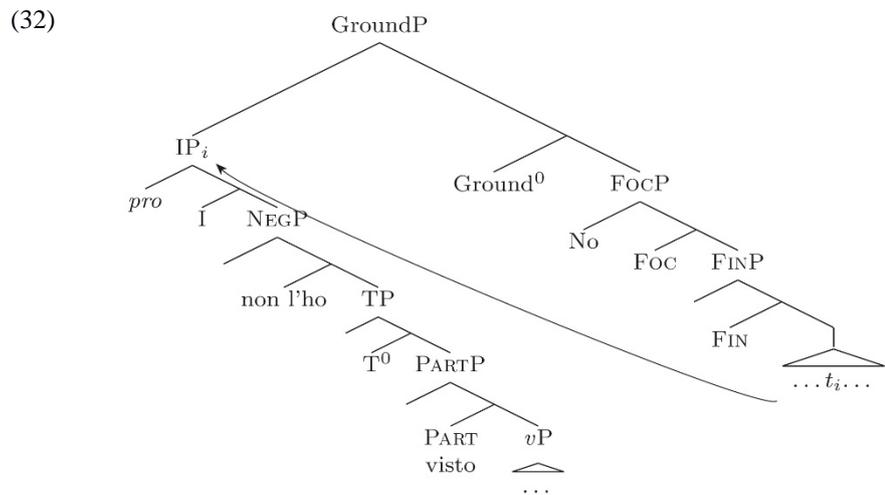
- (i) Magda è venuta alla festa?
 ‘Did Magda come to the party?’
 a. Certo che è venuta.
 certain that is come
 ‘Of course she did.’
 b. Probabile che sia venuta.
 likely that isSUBJ come
 ‘Most likely she did.’
 c. Possibile che sia venuta.
 possible that isSUBJ come
 ‘Perhaps she did.’

On the other hand, this pattern does not necessarily lends support to the claim that PCs are focal constructions. Poletto and Zanuttini (2013), who among various alternatives seem to favour the view of particles as propositional predicates, might well argue that the elements in (i) have adjectival morphology precisely because they are semantically predicates. I acknowledge this point. Cf. Hernanz and Batllori (2013) for discussion of Spanish and Catalan equivalents.

Finally, one could think of a much lower position. A reasonable candidate would be a functional projection just above the *vP* (Belletti 2004). I will argue for the latter hypothesis.

4.1 A left peripheral analysis

As for PFC, Poletto (2008) proposes a structure that differs from her analysis of PIC only minimally. The particle is located in the very same focus projection as in PIC, and the surface order is obtained by movement of a sentential projection (let us call it IP, for simplicity) to a left peripheral projection that she dubs GroundP, of a topic-like nature:



In what follows, I present some syntactic arguments against the left peripheral analysis of PFC. The first, almost trivial, argument is that the analysis *per se* leaves the distribution of the complementizer unexplained. Second, some data concerning clitic right dislocation and marginalization in PFC show that the position of the particles must be c-commanded by various elements located in the IP field, in contrast to what assumed in the left peripheral analysis.

The two PCs do not differ only in the respective position of the polarity particle. They further differ in that PIC includes the declarative complementizer *che* while PFC does not admit *che* in any position:

- (33) a. No *(che) non l'ho visto.
 b. (*che) non l'ho visto no (*che).

Without the complementizer, (33a) is unacceptable, at least without a clear prosodic break between the particle and the sentence, which would make it the Italian equivalent of *No, I didn't (see him)*. (33b) is unacceptable when preceded or followed by *che*.²² The

²² That a sentence final *che* is unacceptable should be almost obvious, given the typological properties of Italian, but I mention it because the string in (33b) might be the output of a derivation along the lines proposed by Poletto. Cf. analogous examples in Poletto (2010b).

(obligatory) presence vs absence of the complementizer in PCs must somehow be accounted for. Poletto postulates that FinP could be affected by a doubly filled Comp filter: the head position and the specifier position of FinP cannot be both occupied at the same time. According to Poletto, in PIC *che* occupies the head position of Fin. If the sentential constituent that moves in PFC moves to the Spec of FinP on its way to GroundP, it follows that *che* cannot be present in PFC sentences. In addition, one has to assume that Fin must be obligatorily spelled-out in PIC sentences, given the unacceptability of (33a). The analysis I will propose in section 4.3 has the advantage of not calling for the involvement of the left periphery in PFC sentences. So whatever factor forces the realization of *che* in PIC sentences, it is not expected to apply to PFC sentences. Other differences between the two PCs, especially the differences in the embedded distribution discussed in section 6, also call for different treatments.

Notice also that GroundP is interpretively similar to a familiar topic, in that it involves given material. But the topic hierarchy (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007; Bianchi and Frascarelli 2007) posits familiar topics (givenness topics) below, and not above, left peripheral foci.

Let us turn to the second problem. PCs are compatible with clitic left and right dislocation:²³

- (34) CLITIC LEFT DISLOCATION
- a. Gianni, no che non l'ho visto.
Gianni no that not cl3S-have seen
 - b. Gianni, non l'ho visto no.
Gianni not cl3S-have seen no
- (35) CLITIC RIGHT DISLOCATION
- a. No che non l'ho visto, Gianni.
no that not cl3S-have seen Gianni
 - b. Non l'ho visto no, Gianni.
not cl3S-have seen no Gianni

In the cartographic framework both clitic left dislocation (CLLD) and clitic right dislocation (CLRD) involve dedicated topic projections (after Rizzi 1997). Many issues of detail are controversial. More specifically, the current analyses of CLRD fall under one of two different approaches.²⁴

²³ As for CLLD, the same proviso applies as in note 18 above. Since my arguments here revolve around CLRD, once again I will not bother to choose PP topics over DPs.

²⁴ Examples like (34b) are real CLRD instances rather than so called afterthoughts. Evidence is the free ordering of dislocated elements, as opposed to the rigid ordering of afterthoughts (Cf. Bocci 2013):

- (i) Non gliel'ho dato no, il libro, a Gianni.
not to-him-it-have given no the book to Gianni
'I have NOT given the book to Gianni'.
- (ii) Non gliel'ho dato no, a Gianni, il libro.
not to-him-it-have given no to Gianni the book

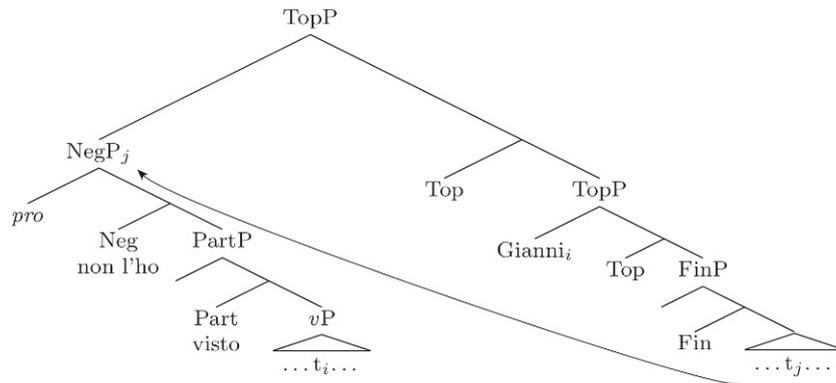
Clause internal analyses of CLRD, defended by Cecchetto (1999) and Belletti (2004), assume that dislocated topics (*Gianni* in 35) are hosted in dedicated topic projections in the low IP area, just above the *vP/VP* (this area is often called ‘verb phrase periphery’). Dislocated constituents are thought to be moved there, after leaving their base positions.²⁵ The simple CLRD sentence in (36) would then be analyzed as in (37):

- (36) Non l’ho visto, Gianni
 not him-have seen Gianni
 ‘I haven’t seen Gianni’.

- (37) [_{NegP} *pro* [non l’ho [_{PartP} [visto [_{TopP} Gianni [Top [_{vP} ... Gianni ...]]]]]]]]

Clause external analyses (Frascarelli 2000; Cardinaletti 2002) also assume that dislocated elements are in dedicated topic projections, but these projections are supposed to be in the CP periphery. Ideally, these TopPs would be the same involved in CLLD.²⁶ The surface word order (*non l’ho visto, Gianni* instead of *Gianni, non l’ho visto*) would be obtained by moving a large clausal constituent to a second, higher topic projection. This is why this approach is sometimes called ‘double topicalization approach’. The sentence in (37) would then be analyzed as follows:²⁷

- (38)



The choice of one analysis of CLRD over the other has serious consequences for the tractability of (35b). A clause external analysis of CLRD is obviously congenial to the left

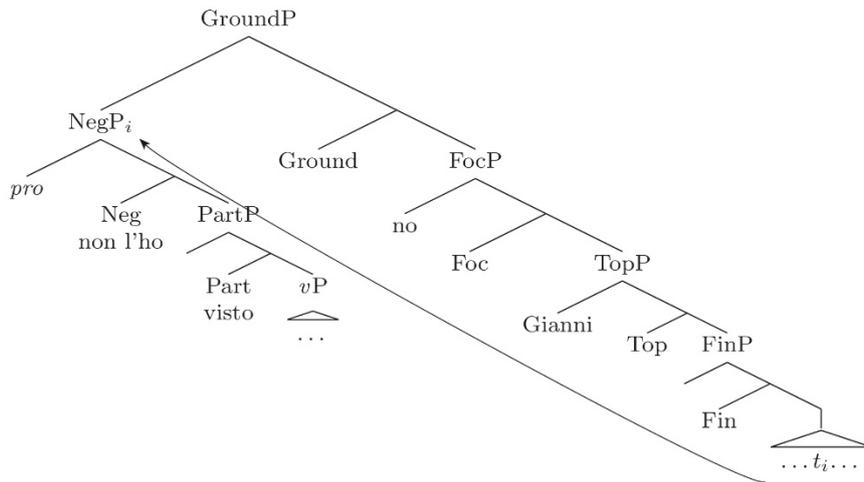
²⁵ For brevity, I disregard the Big DP which is integral to the analysis. See the original articles for details.

²⁶ More accurately, the same projections involved in a subclass of CLLD instances. Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl (2007) show that while CLLD topics exemplify different sorts of topic (contrastive topic, aboutness topic, familiar topic), CLRD topics always belong to the familiar class.

²⁷ For the sake of generality, in the tree *Gianni* is shown to have moved from a VP internal object position. It must be stressed, though, that Frascarelli (2000, 2004) argues that clitic dislocated topic are base generated in left peripheral positions.

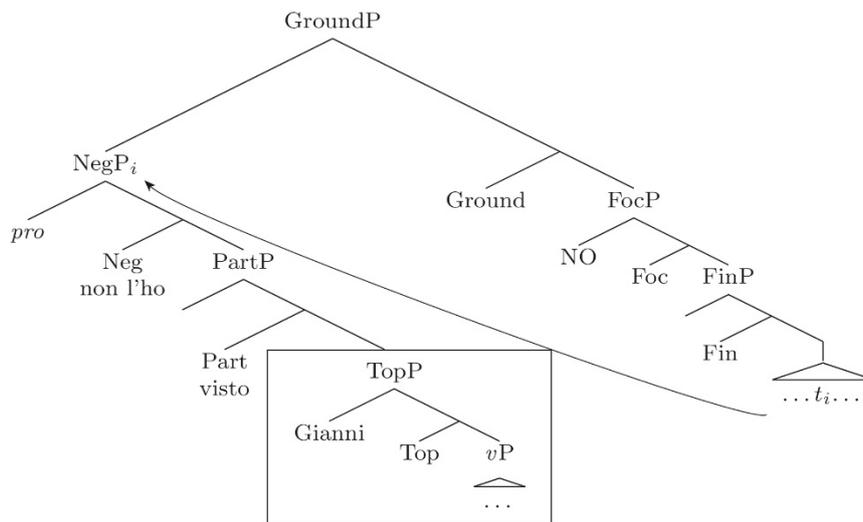
peripheral analysis of PFC. If the topic projection that hosts the dislocated constituent is structurally lower than the focus projection that hosts the particle, the surface word order of (35b) is obtained:

(39)



By contrast, a clause internal analysis of CLRD is incompatible with a left peripheral analysis of PFC. No clausal constituent can be moved to the left of the focus while stranding the right dislocated *Gianni* in a post-focal position (the *vP* peripheral topic projection is squared):

(40)



Principle C effects in CLRD sentences are often discussed in support of a clause internal analysis of CLRD.²⁸ The relevant effects can be replicated in PC sentences. Take the following contrast:²⁹

- (41) a. La notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato, lui_i non l'ha saputa no.
 the news that Gianni will-be fired he not it-has known no
 'The news that Gianni will be fired, he does NOT know'.
 b. *Lui_i non l'ha saputa no, la notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato.
 he not it-has known no the news that Gianni will-be fired

According to the current analyses of CLLD, in (41a) the dislocated topic is hosted in a left peripheral topic projection. Since the topic includes a DP coindexed with the subject, if the subject c-commands the topic a Condition C violation would result. The acceptability of (41a) is thus evidence that the subject pronoun *lui* does not c-command the left dislocated DP. By contrast, the unacceptability of (41b) can be explained if the right dislocated topic is c-commanded by the subject. If one compares the structures in (37) and (38) it is apparent that the subject pronoun does c-command the dislocated topic under the clause internal analysis but it does not c-command it under the clause external analysis. This argues for the adoption of a clause internal analysis of CLRD and, as a consequence, against a left peripheral analysis of PFC, given the incompatibility shown in (40).³⁰

²⁸ For these and other arguments, see Cecchetto (1999), Bocci (2013). Cf. Villalba (1999) on Catalan CLRD. An argument from acquisition data is presented by van der Linden and Sleeman (2007).

²⁹ Cecchetto's corresponding examples have a null *pro* as subject instead of the third person pronoun *lui*. As pointed out by Luigi Rizzi (p.c.), this is potentially troublesome, since in many examples *pro* turns out to be unavailable in CLLD sentences as well:

- (i) ?*La notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato, pro_i non l'ha saputa no.
 the news that Gianni will-be fired SUBJ not it-has known no
 'The news that Gianni will be fired, he does NOT know'.

This might be due to pragmatic requirements on the identification of *pro*, such as a high degree of saliency of the referent, which are not ensured. To avoid complications, in the main text I give sentences with the overt pronoun *lui*. A further difference is the choice of the proper name *Gianni* instead of the indefinite descriptions preferred by Cecchetto. See Cecchetto (1999) for in depth discussion.

³⁰ This is true under the standard definition of c-command (A c-commands its sister B and whatever B dominates). Proponents of the clause external analysis of CLRD could take advantage of the alternative definition of c-command proposed by Kayne (1994) (e.g. Frascarelli 2004). This definition allows a specifier (here, the subject) to c-command out of its projection. This way, *lui* in (41b) would actually c-command *Gianni*, thus explaining the Condition C effect. To prevent this, Cecchetto (1999) exemplifies Condition C effects in sentences with the co-indexed expression in a more embedded position. I will not borrow his examples, since they end up being slightly cumbersome. To this effect, consider the following contrast:

- (i) La notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato, non gli_i-ela ho data no.
 the news that Gianni will-be fired not him-it have given no
 'The news that Gianni will be fired, I have NOT told him'.
 (ii) *Non gli_i-ela ho data no, la notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato.
 not him-it have given no the news that Gianni will-be fired

These binding facts play against the left peripheral analysis of PFC: one cannot derive the surface word order and the relevant c-command configuration at the same time. The same point can be made by resorting to N-words. Like in other Romance languages, in Italian postverbal N-words have to be c-commanded by a high negative element in order to be licensed (Zanuttini 1997; Giannakidou 2005). This requirement can thus be used as a structural diagnostic test (Cardinaletti 2001). Consider the following exchange:

- (42) a. (Non) hai visto nessuno?
 not have seen anybody
 ‘Have you seen anybody?’.
 b. %Non ho visto no, nessuno.
 not have seen no anybody
 ‘I have NOT seen anybody’.

As an answer to (42a), the most natural instance of PFC would be the following:

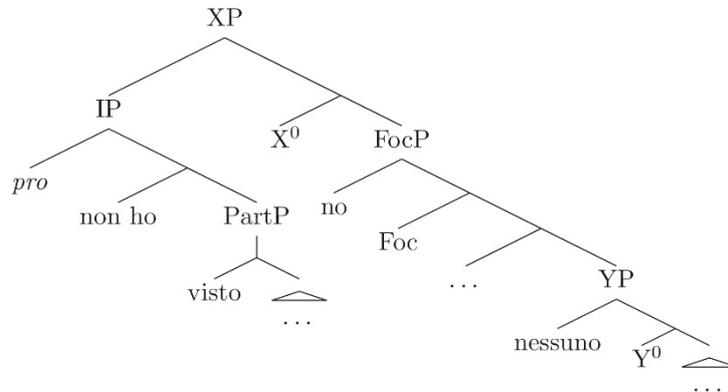
- (43) Non ho visto nessuno no.

To some, (42b) is acceptable too, but other speakers find it marginal. Let us try to account for the acceptability of (42b) (to some speakers). In a derivation along Poletto’s lines, the movement of the main body of the sentence to the left periphery would destroy the c-command of the marginalized *nessuno*, regardless of the position assumed for the N-word.³¹ Let us assume, for the sake of the argument, that *nessuno* is located in a projection higher than the moved IP projection and lower than the FocP that hosts *no*, so that the correct word order is obtained:

Here the offending element (the pronoun coindexed to *Gianni*) is not in subject position, but it is a clitic pronoun that incorporates onto the inflected auxiliary. In both sentences the dislocated topic is the DP *la notizia che Gianni sarà licenziato*, which is doubled by the accusative clitic *lo*. The dative clitic *gli* is a genuine argument of the ditransitive verb *dare* (to give), which happens to be coreferential with *Gianni*.

³¹ Actually, if (42b) is an instance of marginalization and marginalized objects are distressed *in situ* or structurally very low (Cardinaletti 2001, 2002), (42b) is also underivable, for the same reason why (35b) is underivable under a clause internal analysis of CLRD: See above.

(44)



The sentential negative marker *non* would not c-command *nessuno*. Licensing though is still necessary, as witnessed by the fact that omitting *non* yields an unacceptable result:

(45) *Ho visto no, nessuno.
have seen no anybody

To the extent that (42b) is acceptable, the point holds independently of the taxonomy of right edge phenomena (marginalization, right dislocation, afterthoughts), which is a controversial issue in itself.³²

4.2 Polarity particles and the IP field

In addition to the negative phrase that I have assumed thus far (henceforth, NEG1), Zanuttini (1997) and Cinque (1999) posit three more negative phrases interspersed in the IP area. Because of their positions, these lower NegPs are natural candidates for hosting the final particles. NEG2 is thought to host French *pas* and the so called presuppositional negation *mica* in Italian. The NEG2 projection is located just above the temporal-aspectual projection that hosts *già* ('already'), as witnessed by the following example (I take the position of the past participle to be immaterial to the point at issue):

(46) Non è mica già finita.
not is mica already finished
'It is not over yet'.

By contrast, the polar particle must follow *già*:

(47) a. Non è già finita no.
not is already finished no
'It is NOT over yet'.

³² Cf. for instance Cardinaletti (2001) vs Cardinaletti (2002) on whether marginalization of subjects is possible at all. To factor this issue out, a direct object is used in the main text.

- b. *Non è no già finita.

NEG3 hosts the Piedmontese unmarked negative morpheme *nen*, among others. This projection is located just above a series of aspectual projections. Let us take the one hosting the adverb *sempre* (*always*):³³

- (48) A l'ha nen sempre dine tut. [Piedmontese]
 s.cl. s.cl'has neg always told-us everything
 He hasn't always told us everything.

The polar particle must follow *sempre*:

- (49) a. Non è sempre finita no.
 not is always finished no
 'It is NOT always over'.
 b. *Non è no sempre finita.

NEG4 is the lowest projection discussed in Zanuttini (1997). It is especially relevant to me, since it hosts a negative marker *no* in Milanese and other varieties. Milanese *no* precedes the lowest portion of Cinque's adverbial hierarchy.³⁴ But the Italian low particle must follow even lower adverbs such as *bene* ('well'):

- (50) a. Non è finita bene no.
 not is finished well no
 'It did NOT end well'.
 b. *Non è finita NO bene.

(50) shows that the polarity particle in PFC follows even the lowest adverbs in the IP area. This excludes that the polarity particle is located in the middle-low portion of the IP field (the lowest half of Cinque's hierarchy). The surface order is compatible either with a very low position of the particle (in the so called *vP*-periphery) or with a position in the highest portion of the IP field or higher. As for a very high, i.e., left peripheral position, see section 4.1. The objections I have discussed there extend to the hypothesis of a high IP position, with one notable exception. Cardinaletti (2011) discusses some modal or epistemic particles and, most relevantly, some particles that can occur sentence-finally. It is the case of *poi*, which occurs in initial or medial position in declaratives but can occur sentence-finally in interrogatives.³⁵

³³ The example is Zanuttini's.

³⁴ Arguments for the fine localization of Milanese and Pavese *no* are given in Zanuttini (1997), pp.87-8 and 93, respectively: NEG4 is shown to be lower than the projection hosting Italian *sempre* ('always') and higher than the projection hosting *tutto* ('all').

³⁵ Of course, this sets it apart from the particles in PFC, which is only exemplified in declaratives and to some extent in imperatives. This is immaterial though: it is at least conceivable that an analysis along the same lines could apply to PFC sentences.

- (51) a. Ha poi comprato la casa.
 have poi bought the house
 ‘Did he buy the house?’
 b. L’ha comprata la casa poi?
 c. L’ha comprata poi, la casa?

In (51b) *poi* is thought to be in its merge position, in a high IP projection. The sentence-final position in (51b) is derived through movement of the complement of the projection that hosts *poi* to the specifier of a projection immediately dominating it:

- (52) $[_{XP} [_{ZP} L'ha comprata la casa] [X [_{YP} poi Y [_{ZP} L'ha comprata la casa]]]]]$

As seen in (51c), the particle can be followed by a clitic right dislocated constituent. Unlike the left peripheral analysis I have discussed in section 4.1, Cardinaletti’s analysis is able to derive the correct word order while adopting a clause external analysis of CLRD. Suppose the right dislocated *la casa* is hosted in a left peripheral topic position and the particle is located lower, in the high IP field. The correct word order can be derived in two steps. First, the lowest portion of the IP moves to a projection that immediately dominates the particle, just like in (52). Then the whole structure moves to a left peripheral position higher than *la casa*:

- (53) $[_{TopP} [_{XP} L'ha comprata poi] Top [_{TopP} [DP la casa] Top [_{XP} [_{ZP} L'ha comprata] [X [_{YP} poi Y [_{ZP} L'ha comprata la casa]]]]]]]$

An analysis of PFC along these lines does not seem viable though. First of all, notice that in the resulting structure the material included in the constituent labeled as XP does not c-command the right dislocated element, so the binding effects exemplified in (41) above would still be unexplained. Second, and most important, Cardinaletti’s analysis of *poi* and other modal particles builds on evidence that is not available for PFC: namely, the sentence-medial occurrence of *poi* shown in (51a), confirmed by the relative order of *poi* and a number of adverbs (see Cardinaletti 2011 for details). PFC never has the particle in that position:³⁶

- (54) *Non l’ho no visto.

To sum up, two out of three structural hypotheses that I introduced at the beginning of section 4 have been discarded. On the one hand, there are arguments to the effect that in PFC particles are located neither in the high portion nor in the low portion of the IP field. On the other hand, I have argued in section 4.1 that the particles are not in the left periphery either. The last hypothesis available is for the final particle to be located in the *vP*-periphery.

³⁶ Notice though that the positive particle *sì* is acceptable in that position, with a different, concessive reading.

4.3 A right-peripheral analysis

I propose that particles in PFC sentences are located in a low focus projection, in the ν P periphery (Cf. Belletti 2004 on Italian and Jayaseelan 2001 on Malayalam). Assume that the polarity particles *sì* and *no* enter the derivation endowed with a focus feature that must be checked in a Spec-Head configuration with a focus projection (Rizzi 2004; Aboh 2010). I will also assume that in PIC and PFC the particles are merged directly in the specifier of the left-peripheral and the ν P-peripheral Focus projections respectively, where they check their focus features.³⁷ In addition to this privative focus feature, a polarity feature must be postulated, in order to account for the obligatory matching in polarity between the particle and the clause that hosts it (see section 5 below).

Now consider the facts discussed in the previous subsections. First, take the ordering facts in section 4.2. The ν P-peripheral analysis accounts for the fact that polarity particles follow IP-internal adverbs: unlike the projections that host Zanuttini's negative markers or Cardinaletti's modal particles, the functional projections of the ν P periphery are lower than the functional projections of Cinque's hierarchy. Consider now the problems for a left peripheral analysis. The absence of the complementizer *che* in PFC is not unexpected anymore. Regardless of the technical reasons that force the presence of *che* in PIC, these would not apply to PFC.

In section 4.1, Principle C effects showed that in PFC sentences a right-dislocated DP is c-commanded by preverbal subjects and other IP-internal elements (proclitic pronouns). Under the present proposal, the relation does hold (the relevant examples are repeated here):

- (55) a. *[_{XP} Lui_i [non l'ha [_{PartP} saputa [_{FocP} no [_{TopP} la notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato.]]]]]
 b. *[_{XP} *pro* [Non gli_i-elo ho [_{PartP} data [_{FocP} no [_{TopP} la notizia che Gianni_i sarà licenziato.]]]]]

Assuming a clause-internal analysis of CLRD, the dislocated phrase is in a topic position in the ν P periphery, lower than the focus projections that hosts the particle. Both the subject in (55a) and the dative clitic in (55b) c-commands the dislocated phrase.

Let us turn to the N-word pattern. If one takes the marginalized N-word object to be structurally lower than the FocP that hosts the particle (it is in situ according to Cardinaletti 2002), the sentential negation c-commands it:

- (56) [_{XP} Non ho [_{PartP} visto [_{FocP} no [_{ν P} ~~visto~~ nessuno]]]]

Before I move on, some clarification is in order about the typology of focus. Up to this point, I have treated the foci involved in the two PCs as semantically and pragmatically identical, even though the relative functional projections are located in different layers of clause structure. In a way, this is unexpected. An information focus projection has been argued to exist in the Italian ν P periphery (Belletti 2004), but much literature agrees on the

³⁷ As far as I can see, given that polarity particles are non argumental and unselected, nothing prevents them from being merged directly in an A' projection. In support, see the analysis of *sì* as an expletive focal element in Old Italian in Poletto (2010a).

point that left peripheral foci in Italian have one or more interpretive property that mere foci do not necessarily have. The identification of such properties, though, is far from trivial. The canonical examples of left peripheral foci from Rizzi (1997), usually dubbed ‘contrastive’, are corrective in nature (Bianchi 2013; Bianchi and Bocci 2012).³⁸ Other candidate properties are noteworthiness and unexpectedness (Bianchi et al. 2014). One can reasonably ask oneself how PCs are to be classified in terms of focus typology. Clearly, neither PIC nor PFC are bound to express corrective moves. While both of them can be used to express a correction, they can also be used to answer a (genuine, information-seeking) polar question, which is a paradigmatic example of a non-corrective move. On the other hand, it is not obvious that PCs have to be considered examples of information focus (‘mere’ focus). The reason is that many additional constraints often postulated for more specific subtypes of focus are trivially satisfied by polarity focus. Polarity values are only two, always the same and, presumably, made salient by the very raising of a polar QUD. So, polarity focus is trivially contrastive. Polarity values are mutually exclusive, so an statement that expresses polarity focus always satisfies exhaustivity, which is often attributed to some natural language focal constructions, such as Hungarian left peripheral focus (Kiss 1998) and clefts (Belletti 2009 a.o.).³⁹ Prudentially, I will leave the matter unsettled.

To sum up, a VP-peripheral analysis of PFC accounts for the basic patterns discussed in the previous sections. It also stays faithful to the original intuition by Poletto (2008) that PFC is a focal construction: only, the proposed cartography of focus is different.

5. Polarity features

As shown in (8), repeated here as (57), in PCs polarity particles must share the value of polarity (positive or negative) of the clause:

- (57) a. *No che l’ho visto.
 b. *Sì che non l’ho visto.
 c. *L’ho visto no.
 d. *Non l’ho visto sì.

In Italian the polarity of a clause is thought to be encoded in a functional projection in the highest portion of the IP field (Zanuttini 1997). Some sort of relation should be enforced between the content of this projection and the polarity particles in order to ensure that the respective values match.

³⁸ The terminology of focus and information structure in general is complicated and often inconsistent (Erteschik 2007). Contrastive foci are often meant to be foci such that the focused element is contrasted with a contextually salient set of alternatives, which is nothing beyond Rooth’s definition of focus *tout court* (see section 2).

³⁹ Plausibly, polarity focus is also expected to trigger an existential presupposition (often attributed at least to some kinds of focus, see Rooth 1997): every sentence radical that expresses p must have a polarity value, since it is always the case that either p is true or $\neg p$ is true. Readers interested in philosophy might object to the realist and bivalent notion of truth assumed here. I think that it is fair to suppose that such view captures essential aspects of everyday linguistic use, which is not to say that it is the best *per se*.

I would like to pursue an analogy between this polarity matching pattern in PCs and negative concord (NC). In Italian a postverbal N-word must be licensed by a negative-like element that c-commands it. In the simplest case, and the only one that I will address here, the licenser is the sentential negation *non*:

- (58) a. Non è venuto nessuno.
 not is come nobody/anybody
 ‘Nobody came’.
 b. *È venuto nessuno.
 is come nobody/anybody

N-words, as their name suggests, are morphologically marked as negative, but in (58) a single negation is interpreted. In this respect, the examples in (58) are similar to negative PCs.

Various theoretical approaches exist to NC phenomena. I would like to draw the reader’s attention to the so-called syntactic approach to NC, which takes NC to be the result of a syntactic relation between formal features of the licenser and the licensee. In the literature, this relation is taken to be an instance of the minimalist operation Agree (Haegeman and Lohndal 2010; Zeijlstra 2008; Moscati 2010).⁴⁰ The theories of Agree differ along two dimensions at least. First, the dynamics of the operation: whether the probe must c-command the goal (Chomsky 2001; Pesetsky and Torrego 2007), or vice versa (Zeijlstra 2008), or rather both configurations are allowed (Haegeman and Lohndal 2010). Second, whether the relevant properties of the feature on the probe is uninterpretable or lack of value,⁴¹ and whether these property are always to be identified (Chomsky 2001; Haegeman and Lohndal 2010; Zeijlstra 2008) or not (Pesetsky and Torrego 2007).

To model the polarity matching in PCs I resort to the definition of Agree in Haegeman and Lohndal (2010), together with the feature format proposed by Pesetsky and Torrego (2007). The definition of Agree is the following:

- (59) AGREE
 α Agrees with β if α c-commands β , α and β both have a feature F, and there is no γ with the feature F such that α c-commands γ and γ c-commands β .

As one can see, no mention is made of the respective interpretability/valuation of the probe and the goal. In principle, this allows for an interpretable instance of a feature to c-command an uninterpretable instance, but also vice versa.⁴²

⁴⁰ Notice though that there could be reasons to use theoretical tools other than Agree to account for NC. For clarity, I want to make clear that I am not even necessarily advocating a syntactic approach to NC: rather, I am borrowing elements of such family of analyses of NC to describe my current object of research, i.e., PCs.

⁴¹ On the format of features in the minimalist program, see Adger and Svenonius (2010).

⁴² The definition also allows for Agree between two uninterpretable instances of a feature. In my treatment of PFC, that would be the case of PC sentences with postverbal N-words e.g. *Non ho visto nessuno no*.

As for the format of features, Haegeman and Lohndal (2010) use privative features specified for interpretability. I adopt the format of Pesetsky and Torrego (2007): features are attribute-value pairs. Interpretability and valuation are independent properties, so four combinations are admitted (valued interpretable, valued uninterpretable, unvalued interpretable, unvalued uninterpretable). Two further ingredients of this approach are the notion of Feature sharing and the Thesis of Radical Interpretability. The authors propose that the application of Agree results in Feature sharing, understood as token-identity of features. Two agreeing features are one and the same (complex) syntactic object, composed of two instances of the same feature. This is notated by assigning them an arbitrary numeric index. The Thesis of Radical Interpretability (RI) dictates that each feature must receive a semantic interpretation in some syntactic location. Occurrences of uninterpretable features are illegible to interfaces, but the application of Agree results in complex occurrences in which one feature may be interpretable in one location and uninterpretable in another. This satisfies RI.

To account for the matching facts in (57), I propose that the attribute Polarity can be valued as either positive or negative. Like N-words, the polarity particles *sì* and *no* have an uninterpretable polarity feature, positive and negative respectively. RI requires one occurrence of such features to enter Agree with an interpretable occurrence of a polarity feature of the same value. The relevant interpretable occurrence is the one encoded in the polarity projection in the IP field: let us call it PolP. Under the definition of Agree in (59), the interpretable feature can either c-command the uninterpretable feature or be c-commanded by it. This would be the case in PFC and PIC respectively. The result of the application of Agree is the following:⁴³

- (60) a. $\text{Non}_{i\text{POL:Neg}[5]}$ l'ho visto $\text{no}_{u\text{POL:Neg}[5]}$.
 b. $\text{No}_{u\text{POL:Neg}[7]}$ che $\text{non}_{i\text{POL:Neg}[7]}$ l'ho visto.

The positive counterparts should be analyzed in the same way. I take the positive PolP to be projected by a phonologically null head, specified in the lexicon as $i\text{POL:Pos}$:

- (61) a. $\text{pol}_{i\text{POL:Pos}[9]}$ l'ho visto $\text{sì}_{u\text{POL:Pos}[9]}$.
 b. $\text{Sì}_{u\text{POL:Pos}[8]}$ che $\text{pol}_{i\text{POL:Pos}[8]}$ l'ho visto.

In section 2, I have introduced the hypothesis that PCs are interpreted as having the polarity value of the clause in focus. The syntactic locus of the encoding of polarity is PolP (notated as NegP in the tree diagrams above). Notice though that in a PC sentence it is the particle that is located in a focus projection and is prosodically realized as focused, rather than the element expressing PolP (namely, *non*). I have proposed that the particles are endowed with a focus feature that must be checked in a focus projection. How can the focal feature be 'passed' on the interpretable locus of polarity that interface operations abstract over to get the required semantic object? The key is the notion of feature sharing introduced here. After Agree applies, the particle and the head of PolP come to share a token-identical feature. One and the same object becomes the value of both feature instances. Since the instance on the particle is, by assumption, uninterpretable, the interpretable instance on

⁴³ Notice the (arbitrary) indexes that are meant to express the fact that the agreeing features are now instances of the same token of the feature POL:Neg.

PolP is interpreted instead. One could think that, since the particle is a mere polarity marker, the focus interpretation rule applies to the syntactic object that shares the token-identical polarity value of the particle itself. The implementation would require some work, but I will leave it to further research.

One last topic of interest are the various kinds of elements that do not seem to be acceptable in PCs. Quantifiers cannot occur preverbally in negative PIC or PFC:⁴⁴

- (62) Qualcuno non sta bene?
 ‘Is anybody not feeling well?’
 a. *No che qualcuno non sta bene.
 no that somebody not is well
 b. *Qualcuno non sta bene no.
 somebody not is well no
- (63) Tre ragazzi non stanno bene?
 ‘Are three kids not feeling well?’
 a. *No che tre ragazzi non stanno bene.
 no that three kids not are well
 b. *Tre ragazzi non stanno bene no.
 three kids not are well no
- (64) Ti ha contattato ciascuno dei membri della giuria?
 you has contacted each-of-the members-of-the jury
 ‘Did each of the members of the jury contact you?’
 a. *No che ciascuno dei membri della giuria non mi ha contattato.

⁴⁴ In evaluating examples of PCs with quantifiers and N-words it must be taken into account that, in general, alternations induced by negation, such as quantifier duality or the N-word vs indefinite pattern, make for infelicitous uses of PCs, especially PIC:

- (i) a. Sono venuti tutti?
 are come all
 ‘Did everybody come?’
 b. No, qualcuno non è venuto.
 no somebody not is come
 ‘No, somebody didn’t come.’
 c. #No che qualcuno non è venuto.
 no that somebody not is come
- (ii) a. È venuto qualcuno?
 is come somebody
 ‘Did anybody come?’
 b. No, non è venuto nessuno.
 no not is come nobody
 ‘No, nobody came.’
 c. #No che non è venuto nessuno.
 no that not is come nobody

I will not deal with this fact. Suffice it to say that this might be evidence for the ‘echoic’ character that Hernanz (2007) postulates for a Spanish construction *prima facie* similar to Italian PIC.

- no that each of-the members of-the jury not me has contacted
 b. *Ciascuno dei membri della giuria non mi ha contattato no.
 each of-the members of-the jury not me has contacted no

The same holds of preverbal N-words, which are interpreted as negative quantifiers:

- (65) Nessuno è venuto alla festa
 nobody is come at-the party
 ‘Nobody came at the party.’
 a. *No che nessuno (non) è venuto.
 no that nobody not is come
 b. *Nessuno (non) è venuto no.
 nobody not is come no

The result is once again unacceptable. Notice, also, that this holds regardless of the presence or absence of the sentential negation *non*, with a proviso: relative scope seems to play a role. Some quantifiers are acceptable preverbally in PCs to the extent that they can be interpreted with inverted scope with respect to the sentential negation:

- (66) a. %No che tutti non sono venuti (ne saranno venuti la metà.)
 no that all not are come
 ‘All of them did not come (maybe half of them did.)’
 b. %Nessuno non è venuto (molti invitati li ho visti con miei occhi.)
 nobody not is come
 ‘I wouldn’t say that nobody came (I’ve seen many guests with my own eyes.)’

Notice that the following hybrid PIC, with a positive particle and a negative clause, if marginal, is comparatively more acceptable than the examples in (62):

- (67) Qualcuno non sta bene?
 ‘Is anybody not feeling well?’
 a. ??Sì che qualcuno non sta bene.

In the light of the approach adopted in this section, the relevant intervention effect can be to a good extent assimilated to the well-known Immediate Scope Constraint on the licensing of NPIs and similar words: Linebarger (1987) shows that the NPI licensing is disrupted by the intervention of a scope-bearing element between the licenser and the licensee. In my treatment, the licensees are the particles. Since I am assuming that the direction of the licensing can be either upward or downward, both configurations in (68) and (69) must in principle be relevant, with OP a scope bearing element:⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Positive polarity (if syntactically represented at all) is given the identity function as denotation. Notice, on the other hand, that the identity function could apply in principle either below or above another operator, so even though the output is the same in either case, it could still be the case that an operator vacuously interacts with positive polarity in terms of scope. That the scope constraint does not affect positive polarity is suggested by the fact that positive PCs with preverbal non-specific quantified subjects are sometimes better than their negative counterparts:

(68) $\text{non}_{i\text{POL:Neg}} \dots \text{OP} \dots \text{no}_{i\text{POL:Neg}}$

(69) $\text{No}_{i\text{POL:Neg}} \dots \text{OP} \dots \text{non}_{i\text{POL:Neg}}$

The particle *no* needs licensing from an interpretable negative Pol, and this relation cannot hold with the intervention of a scope bearing element. As for PIC, one can assume that the Agree relation between the particles and Pol is disrupted by the presence of the quantified subject, (the relevant configuration being (69)). The marginal acceptability of (67a) would then be a Last Resort measure: the Merge of a second Pol, bound by *sì*. The analogous unacceptability of PFC calls for a minimally different explanation. If an intervention effect must be hypothesized, one can assume that the crucial Agree application in PFC occurs between the PolP that hosts *non* and a higher instance of Pol that is located on Force (Moscati 2010), and which must be present for clause typing reasons. This gives rise to a configuration in (70):

(70) $\text{Force}_{i\text{POL:Neg}} \dots \text{OP} \dots \text{non}_{i\text{POL:Neg}} \dots \text{no}_{i\text{POL:Neg}}$

Incidentally, feature intervention might also be key in accounting for the clause-boundedness of the constructions. Consider the following:

(71) Magda ha detto che Luca sarebbe venuto, vero?
 Magda has said that Luca would come right
 ‘Magda said that Luca would come, right?’

-
- (i) Non so chi, ma penso che qualcuno verrà.
 not know who but think that somebody will-come
 ‘I don’t know who, but I think somebody is going to come.’
 a. Sì che qualcuno verrà.
 yes that somebody will-come
- (ii) Non so chi, ma penso che qualcuno non verrà.
 not know who but think that somebody not will-come
 a. *No che qualcuno non verrà
 no that somebody not will-come

Another problem is that PCs differ from instances of NPI licensing in one major way. Take the following contrast:

- (iii) a. *Nessuno è venuto no.
 nobody is come no
 b. Nessuno ha comprato niente.
 nobody has bought nothing
 ‘Nobody bought anything.’

In the light of the fact that preverbal N-words seem (at least *prima facie*) to be interpretably negative, one would expect that they should be able to license a postverbal N-word, which on the other hand needs licensing. Why does this not hold of *no*? Descriptively, I can only take notice that for some reason in PCs the only suitable licenser is the sentential negation *non*: other interpretable negative operators, even if semantically analogous, are no good. This does not follow from my analysis as such: there seems to be a constructional residue in PCs that is left unanalyzed.

- a. Magda non l'ha detto no, (che Luca sarebbe venuto.)
Magda not it-has said no that Luca would come
'Magda did NOT say it.'
- b. ?*Magda non ha detto che Luca sarebbe venuto no.
Magda not has said that Luca would come no

(71b) would have a positive Pol head in the embedded clause, which would intervene between *non* and the final particle:

- (72) ?*Magda non_{iPOL:Neg} ha detto che Luca Pol_{POL:Pos} sarebbe venuto no_{iPOL:Neg}.

6. Embedded distribution

Neither PC is generally available embedded (for brevity, only the negative constructions are exemplified):⁴⁶

- (73) a. *Se no che non viene, faremo a meno di lui.
if no that not comes do1PL.FUT at less of him
'If he is NOT coming, we'll do without him'.
- b. *Se non viene no, faremo a meno di lui.
if not comes no do1PL.FUT at less of him
'If he is NOT coming, we'll do without him'.

⁴⁶ More precisely, they are limited to root declaratives. They are always unacceptable in interrogative sentences:

- (i) *No che non è venuto?
no that not is come
- (ii) *Non è venuto no?
not is come no

(ii) is not to be confused with sentences with the interrogative tag *no?*, which are prosodically very different.

Notice also that PFC is allowed in imperatives:

- (iii) Non venire no!
not come no
- (iv) *No che non venire
no that not come

Since a suppletive infinitive form substitutes for the negative imperative in Italian, the unacceptability of (iv) might conceivably be a trivial consequence of the fact that PIC requires a finite verb. As for the positive counterparts (e.g. *sì che vieni!*, 'DO come!'), it is hard to tell whether they are actually imperative instances of PIC or rather indicative root declaratives used to express commands or requests: imperatives and second person indicative forms of most verbs are homophonous in Italian. I thank Valentina Bianchi for suggesting *mangiare* ('to eat'), which has distinct forms for second person singular indicative (*mangi*) and for singular imperative (*mangia*). The imperative form in fact does not admit PIC:

- (v) a. Mangia sì!
'Do eat!'
- b. *Sì che mangia!

- c. *Mi dispiace che no che non venga.
to-me displeases that no that not come3SG.SUBJ
'I am sorry that he is NOT coming'.
- d. *Mi dispiace che non venga no.
to-me displeases that not come3SG.SUBJ no
'I am sorry that he is NOT coming'.
- e. *Il tizio che non viene no non ci mancherà.
the guy that not comes no not to-us miss3SG.FUT
'We won't miss the guy who's NOT coming'.
- f. *Il tizio che no che non viene non ci mancherà.
the guy that no that not comes not to-us miss3SG.FUT
'We won't miss the guy who's NOT coming'.

In (73) one can see that PCs cannot be embedded under conditionals, factive verbs and restrictive relatives.

As for adverbial clauses, PFC seems to distinguish between central and peripheral adverbial clauses (in the sense of Haegeman 2006 and later works by the same author), but PIC clearly does not:

- (74) Mario non è venuto?
'Did Mario not come?'
- a. *Poiché no che Mario non è venuto, faremo a meno di lui.
because no that Mario not is come do1PL.FUT at less of him
- b. *Poiché Mario non è venuto no, faremo a meno di lui.
because Mario not is come no do1PL.FUT at less of him
- (75) Mario non è venuto?
'Did Mario not come?'
- a. *Faremo a meno di lui, perché no che non è venuto.
do1PL.FUT at less of him because no that not is come
- b. %Faremo a meno di lui, perché non è venuto no.
do1PL.FUT at less of him because not is come no

Let us turn to complements of *dire* ('to tell') and *credere* ('to think'):

- (76) a. *Credo che no che non venga.
believe that no that not come
- b. Credo che non venga no.
believe that not come no
'I think he's NOT coming'.
- c. *Mi hanno detto che no che non viene.
to-me have told that no that not comes
- d. Mi hanno detto che non viene no.
to-me have told that not comes no
'I've been told that he's NOT coming'.

A PFC clausal complement is acceptable, a PIC clausal complement is not. Notice that clausal complements of non-factive verbs are known to have left peripheral topic and focus

projections available (Haegeman 2006b), so an approach entirely based on the left peripheral position of the particle in PIC does not seem viable.⁴⁷

On the other hand, even though PFC sentences can be embedded under verbs of saying or verbs of attitude, their availability under verbs of thinking is restricted, as pointed out by Poletto (2008, 2010). She reports that only first person forms (singular or plural) of *credere* are compatible with a PFC complement, while second and third person forms are incompatible:

- (77) a. *Crede che non venga no.
believes that not comeSUBJ no
b. *Credi che non venga no.
believe2SG that not comeSUBJ no
c. Crediamo che non venga no.
believe that not comeSUBJ no
'We think that he's NOT coming'

She argues that this constraint is due to the evidential nature of the construction at hand. I think the pattern is real and interesting, but could be reduced to other causes. A constraint seems to exist to the effect that an embedded PFC is felicitous if the embedded clause expresses the so-called Main Point of the Utterance (MPU, after Simons 2007). In Simons' words, the main point of an Utterance *U* of a sentence *S* is the proposition *p*, communicated by *U*, which renders *U* relevant. In the terms of Roberts (1998, 2012), one can say that the main point of an utterance is content that addresses the question under discussion. Verbs of attitudes, Simons shows, can be divided in those that always express the main point (factives), and those that do not necessarily do so (non-factives, also known as parenthetical verbs), and can take complements that express the main point instead. Consider the following examples:

⁴⁷ A reasonable hypothesis would be to invoke a ban on a *che ... che* sequence in declaratives: but the relevant contrast can be reproduced even with this factored out. The verb *credere* licenses complementizer deletion in Italian (Giorgi and Pianesi 2004). So the following example is acceptable both with and without *che*:

- (i) Credo (che) Gianni non venga.
believe (that) Gianni not comesSUBJ
'I think he's not coming.'

This is true also in the presence of a left peripheral contrastive focus:

- (ii) Credo (che) GIANNI non venga. (Mario viene).
believe (that) Gianni not comeSUBJ Mario comes
'I think GIANNI is not coming. Mario is coming.'

Crucially, though, the two PCs still contrast in this respect:

- (iii) a. *Credo (che) no che non venga.
believe (that) no that not come
b. Credo (che) non venga no.
believe (that) not comeSUBJ no
'I think he's NOT coming.'

- (78) a. Mario viene?
Mario comes
'Is Mario coming?'
- b. Gianni dice che non viene no.
Gianni says that not comes no
'Gianni says that he is NOT coming'.
- c. Credo che non venga no.
think that not comes no
'I think that he is NOT coming'.
- (79) a. Credi che Mario venga?
think that Mario comes
'Do you think Mario is coming?'
- b. Credo che non venga no.
- (80) a. Gianni dice che Mario viene?
Gianni says that Mario comes
'Is Gianni saying that Mario is coming?'
- b. Gianni dice che non viene no.

In Italian, asserting a sentence introduced by *credo* can be thought of a (polite, indirect) way to assert the complement of *credo*. The case of *dire* is less obvious. In typical cases, asserting a sentence with a verb of saying obviously does not assert its complement. Rather, it asserts that the subject of *dire* has said something along the lines of the embedded sentence. On the other hand, (80b) obviously does not express a speech report. In a way, it offers *Mario is not coming* as an answer to the last QUD, while at the same time making clear that Gianni is the source of the information.

This discourse-dynamic explanation also predicts that in contexts such that the complement of *credere* can plausibly be construed as the MPU, the embedded PFC should be fine. This seems to be borne out:

- (81) a. Mario viene?
'Is Mario coming?'
- b. Gianni crede che non venga no.
'Gianni thinks that he is NOT coming.'

The speaker of (81b) is not merely ascribing to Gianni the belief that Mario is coming. He is rather answering the question raised by (81a), by suggesting that Mario is not coming, and at the same time it is indicating Gianni as the source of the information. In this context an embedded PFC becomes fine. So non-first person forms of *credere* align with first person forms and with *dire*, even though a suitable context might be less readily available.

I am not able to address properly the important issue of whence the MPU constraint comes. Whatever the explanation and syntactic implementation might be, it is worth pointing out that the property of being MPU has also been correlated to the availability of embedded V2 in the Scandinavian languages (Wiklund et al. 2009). Similar notions have been invoked to explain *that*-omission in English, inversion in embedded interrogatives in Irish English (Dayal and Grimshaw 2009), and the availability of Aboutness Topics in English and Italian (Bianchi and Frascarelli 2010). PFC, then, seems to be one further

example and, interestingly, it does not differ in this respect from bare responding particles *sì* and *no* (see Sailor 2012 and Servidio 2014 for discussion).

The MPU constraint, however is to be explained, also seems to correlate with the Main Clause Phenomenon (MCP) nature of PFC: antecedents of conditionals, factive complements and relative clauses, known to disallow so called Main Clause Phenomena, are not able to express the MPU.⁴⁸ The recent syntactic treatment of MCP proposed by Haegeman invokes a syntactic intervention effect to account for the unavailability of MCP in some clause types.⁴⁹ I will not flesh out an account of the MCP behaviour of PFC: suffice it to say that a Haegeman approach would be feasible, provided that one is willing to postulate a left peripheral operator which would interact with other operator movements to the left periphery. Here, it is only worth pointing out that PFC is a well-behaved MCP, and should be analyzed as such.

On the other hand, it seems fair to state that PIC is strictly unembeddable, i.e., that it is unavailable in all syntactically embedded environments. This is unusual even for well-known MCPs.⁵⁰ Poletto and Zanuttini (2013) propose a syntactic explanation that exploits the unembeddability of Hanging Topics (Benincà et al. 1988). PIC should be regarded as including a phonetically null Hanging Topic constituent, whose content is a copy of the ‘triggering utterance’, i.e., the linguistic antecedent:⁵¹

- (82) a. Marco è arrivato?
 b. [_{HTP} [~~non è arrivato~~] [_{ForceP1} ... [_{PolP1} *no*_i] [_{TP} [_{ForceP2} *OP*_i *che* [_{TopP} [_{FocP} [_{PolP2} *e_i* *non è arrivato*]]]]]]]]]]

The presence of this HT, the authors write, would explain three properties of PIC, unembeddability being one. Another is the following: PIC sentences cannot contain material that was not present in the utterance to which they are responding. The reason is that the null HT is a copy of the antecedent, and presumably (the authors are not explicit on this point) it also constrains the content of the complement of the particle to be identical in meaning to the antecedent. A relevant contrast is the following:

- (83) a. Martina è venuta alla festa?
 ‘Did Martina come to the party?’

⁴⁸ Notice that the property of expressing the MPU does not coincide with the property of being asserted. Non-restrictive relatives, not exemplified above, according to Potts 2005, are in fact asserted, but they express secondary, not-at-issue assertions (hence, cannot express the MPU). PFC, as expected, is unavailable in such clauses.

⁴⁹ If an operator (null, in some cases) is moved to the specifier of ForceP (Rizzi 1997) or another high functional projection in the left periphery, the presence of (some kinds of) left peripheral material would result in an intervention effect. Arguments for a movement derivation of central adverbial clauses, conditionals, and factive complements are presented in Haegeman (2010a,b) and Haegeman and Ürögdi (2011), respectively.

⁵⁰ Notice, e.g., that the root phenomena investigated by Miyagawa (2012), that unlike mere MCP are assumed to involve Speech Act projections, are claimed to be available in complements of verbs of saying. Italian PIC, on the other hand, is unavailable in such contexts.

⁵¹ Actually, judging from their examples, a range of mismatches are allowed: besides the obvious indexical changes, the polarity can also be reversed.

- b. Sì, insieme a Lucia.
‘Yes, with Lucia.’
- (84) a. Martina è venuta alla festa?
‘Did Martina come to the party?’
b. *Sì che è venuta insieme a Lucia.

The pattern is very clear and solid, but I think it could be derived by the congruence condition on polarity focus plus the availability of ellipsis in simple answers (Cf. Poletto 2008, 2010b; Holmberg 2013; Servidio 2014). Simple answers with further material with respect to the linguistic antecedent should be thought of as composite structures made out of an elliptical sentence (congruent to the antecedent), followed by independent material that provide further information. Thus, the structure of (83b) should be taken to be as follows:⁵²

- (85) [_{FocP} sì [Foc [_{TP} è venuta]]], [_{XP} insieme a Lucia [X [_{TP} è venuta]]]

But in this respect, PCs are not any different. The following, where the PP belongs in an independent sentence, is in fact acceptable:

- (86) a. Sì che è venuta: insieme a Lucia.
b. [_{FocP} sì [che [_{TP} è venuta]]], [_{XP} insieme a Lucia [X [_{TP} è venuta]]]

In this perspective, (83) is a consequence of the fact that the TP structure introduced by *sì* can be deleted under the relevant identity condition, the further material *insieme a Lucia* belonging in an independent sentence. The structure in (84b), on the other hand, is unacceptable because the PIC *sì che è venuta (alla festa) insieme a Lucia* is not congruent to the QUD. Information about Lucia can only be added by one further move of the ‘elaboration’ kind, separated from the direct answer.

The last property to be explained by a null HT is the restricted co-occurrence of PIC with Hanging Topics, which is expected by the well-known fact that HTs are unique (Benincà et al. 1988). The generalization, though, is less neat than one would hope for. The authors elicit HTs by using the *quanto a DP* (‘as for DP’) phrase. Their examples are the following:

- (87) a. Ti piacciono i fiori?
you like the flowers
‘Do you like flowers?’
b. *(Quanto ai) fiori, sì che mi piacciono le camelie.
(as to-the) flowers yes that me please the camelias
‘As for flowers, I sure like camelias.’
- (88) a. Bevi il caffè?

⁵² For the sake of the argument, I am sketching an analysis of the extra fragment that assumes, with Merchant (2004), that only constituents can be deleted: so, the PP *insieme a Lucia* must be assumed to be moved out of the deleted TP. I am not concerned with the details.

- drink the coffee
 ‘Do you drink coffee?’
 b. ?? Quanto al caffè, sì che lo bevo!
 as to-the coffee yes that it drink
 ‘As for coffee, of course I drink it.’

(87) exemplifies a kind of HT construction in which the HT does not corefer with an argument in the sentence, but rather is in a looser semantic connection (here, hyperonymy) with it. Such examples, the authors argue, could be out just in virtue of the constraint they argue for that no material absent from the linguistic antecedent should be introduced in a PIC sentence. The bad status of (88), which exemplifies a case in which a HT is coreferent with a direct object, cannot be accounted for in the same way: this is evidence for a null HT, and given the uniqueness constraint on HTs, no explicit HT is expected to be acceptable. The picture, though, is made complicated by the wider class of HT constructions. While *quanto a DP* indeed seems to be marginal in PIC, consider the following:

- (89) Hai fatto un regalo a Gianni?
 ‘Did you buy a present for Gianni?’
 a. Gianni, no che non gli ho fatto un regalo.
 ‘Gianni, I did NOT buy a present for him.’
 b. ?*Gianni, no che non ho fatto un regalo a lui.
 c. Gianni, a lui no che non ho fatto un regalo.

(89a) must be regarded as a case of HT, since the dislocated indirect object is preposition-less (Benincà et al. 1988; Benincà and Poletto 2004). The result sounds quite acceptable. Pretty marginal in comparison is the counterpart with the strong pronoun in (89b): this, I suggest, might also result from the fact that (non-dislocated) strong pronouns, as opposed to clitics, are used when focused, as in:

- (90) Chi hai visto ieri, (Marta o Giovanni)?
 ‘Who did you meet yesterday, (Marta or Giovanni)?’
 a. Ho visto lui.
 ‘I met him.’
 b. #L’ho visto.
 him-have seen

Under my claim that PIC is, in spite of further complications, a focal construction, it is expected that the uniqueness constraint on focus should make sentence like (89b) unacceptable. So, while the distribution of HTs indeed turns out to be restricted in PIC, it does not seem to be the case that all kinds of HTs are excluded in PIC.

In support of their thesis, the authors also claim that the null HT can, optionally, be pronounced, giving (91):

- (91) [_{HT} Non è arrivato], no che non è arrivato.

Not all speakers accept (91), but that some do can be taken to be evidence for their approach.⁵³ This, though, would set the null HT apart from run-of-the-mill Italian HTs: it does not seem the case, in general, that a HT can be resumed by a literal copy (as opposed to, e.g., a demonstrative or an epithet):

- (92) a. ??Mario, non ho mai fatto un regalo a Mario.
 Mario not have ever done a present to Mario
 b. Mario, non ho mai fatto un regalo a quella carogna.
 Mario not have ever done a present to that scoundrel
 c. Mario, non ho mai fatto un regalo a quello lì.
 Mario not have ever done a present to that one

This, of course, is not a fatal difficulty. One can assume that the relevant HT is a null, unstructured element, which is anaphoric for its content on its antecedent.⁵⁴

That a covert HT could be responsible for the strict unembeddability of PIC is, then, a viable hypothesis. I would like to sketch an alternative that builds on one further property that distinguish PIC from PFC. Unlike PFC, PIC has surface identical counterparts with properties that resemble exclamatives. Consider the following:

- (93) Sì che mi piace quel libro.
 yes that to-me pleases this book
 'I really like this book.'

As we know, PIC is not felicitous out-of-the-blue. The reason, I surmise, is that a polar question must be under discussion for the narrow focus on polarity to be congruent and relevant. The following, minimally different sentence can on the other hand be uttered out-of-the blue:

⁵³ Belletti (p.c.) points out the acceptability of a slightly, but significantly different sequence:

- (i) Non è arrivato no, che non è arrivato.

The difference, as hinted by the position of the commas, is in the pitch accent on *no* and the prosodic phrasing.

⁵⁴ Interestingly, infinitive fronting (Benincà et al. 1988) seems to display most of the properties of the null HT but, crucially, it can be embedded:

- (i) Venire, è venuto. (Ma è andato via subito).
 to-come is come but is gone away immediately
 'As for coming, he came. (But he left immediately.)'
 (ii) Venire, sì che è venuto. (Ma è andato via subito).
 to-come yes that is come but is gone away immediately
 (iii) Mi hanno detto che venire, è venuto. (Ma è andato via subito).
 to-me have told that to-come is come but is gone away immediately
 'I've been told that as for coming, he came. (But he left immediately.)'
 (iv) *Mi hanno detto che venire, sì che è venuto. (Ma è andato via subito).
 to-me have told that to-come yes that is come but is gone away immediately

- (94) Quel libro sì che mi piace!
 that book yes that to-me pleases
 ‘That book, I like it (a lot)!’

For convenience, I will dub this construction PIC_{Ex} . This construction can, and typically does, receive a scalar interpretation that various theories agree on attributing to exclamatives (Zanuttini and Portner 2003; Rett 2011). (94) can be paraphrased as expressing⁵⁵ that the speaker likes the book to an unusual degree, or to the extreme degree on a relevant scale. Mere PIC lacks this component, as it is made clear by the continuations in (95):

- (95) a. Sì che mi piace quel libro, ma preferisco il film.
 yes that to-me pleases that book but prefer the film
 ‘I do like that book, but I prefer the film.’
 b. ??Quel libro sì che mi piace! Ma preferisco il film.
 that book yes that to-me pleases but prefer the film

In Rett (2011)’s taxonomy, (94) most closely resembles sentential exclamation with gradable foci. This construction is not, strictly speaking, exclamative, but it differs from the stock case of sentence exclamations (which have the syntax of unmarked declarative but an exclamative interpretation) in sharing the degree interpretation which is peculiar of exclamatives proper.

Rett’s view of the semantics of exclamatives is that it is made out of two different components: one is a measure operator, which I assume to be present in PIC_{Ex} and contributes the covert degree variable, and the other one is an illocutionary operator. The latter, Rett proposes, is shared by sentence exclamations, which have the syntax of unmarked declarative but an exclamative interpretation. PIC and PIC_{Ex} , I propose, could differ from one another much as Rett’s sentence exclamations differ from exclamatives. The illocutionary component, I surmise, would be responsible for the unembeddability, and would be shared by PIC and PIC_{Ex} . In addition, PIC_{Ex} has an operator that applies to a gradable property that must be provided by the verb phrase. (Things being so, I assume, PIC_{Ex} should not even count as polarity focal.)⁵⁶

One caveat, though, is in order. Unexpectedness/surprise (which for Rett is involved in the illocutionary exclamative operator) does not seem to be a necessary feature of PIC_{Ex} , let

⁵⁵Not necessarily asserting: see Rett (2011) for arguments that exclamatives involve the expressive dimension in a two-dimensional semantics.

⁵⁶It might seem that the degree interpretation is not a necessary feature of PIC_{Ex} because seemingly non-gradable predicates are often acceptable:

- (i) Il dottor Rossi sì che è un medico!
 the doctor Rossi yes that is a doctor
 ‘Dr. Rossi, he is a real doctor!’

This objection, though, must be taken with a grain of salt: in the relevant contexts the relational predicate are in fact coerced into a gradable reading: Rossi (as opposed to a fellow doctor) exemplifies a high degree the qualities a good doctor should have (he is knowledgeable, mild-mannered etc.).

alone PIC. Rett (2008) acknowledges that for an exclamative to be felicitous the speaker must not necessarily be surprised herself at the content of the exclamative, but only find it ‘surprising in some capacity’. In this weaker sense it seems that while PIC_{Ex} can express some feeling of noteworthiness, PIC typically does not.⁵⁷ For this reason, Rett’s analysis of sentence exclamations and exclamatives cannot be extended to PIC as it is. If my suggestion of an illocutive component in PIC is to be maintained, then, the interpretive contribution of the illocutive operator must lie somewhere else.⁵⁸

7. Summary

This article has, first and foremost, tried to reaffirm a point which looks, in retrospective, somewhat conservative: PCs, which Poletto (2008) argued to be focal constructions, are in fact focal constructions. More specifically, they are constructions for polarity focus, which in a way make them similar to other grammatical means for the expression of so called Verum Focus (see Breitbart et al. 2013 for crosslinguistic generalizations). On the other hand, I have tried to argue, this do not exhaust their nature. PFC might, with some caution, taken to be nothing more than a polarity focal construction (and to a large extent, interchangeable with mere responding particles *sì* and *no*), but this clearly does not hold of PIC. The latter construction seems to involve an illocutionary force that bears a certain similarity to exclamatives. Regardless of whether my proposals are on the right track or not, much is still to be done.

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⁵⁷ Rather, in Poletto (2008)’s description, PIC even expresses the feeling that the content should be obvious (i.e., the opposite of noteworthy). Poletto, on the other hand, claims that a surprise component is present in the meaning of PCs, namely, surprise at the attitudes of the interlocutor.

⁵⁸ One candidate would be the use-conditional Verum operator introduced by Gutzmann and Castroviejo-Miró (2011), which in a multidimensional semantics introduce a request for downdating the current QUD. I leave the investigation of the feasibility of such analysis to further research.

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