

Theory of Grammar – 4

The Criterial Approach to Scope-Discourse Constructions

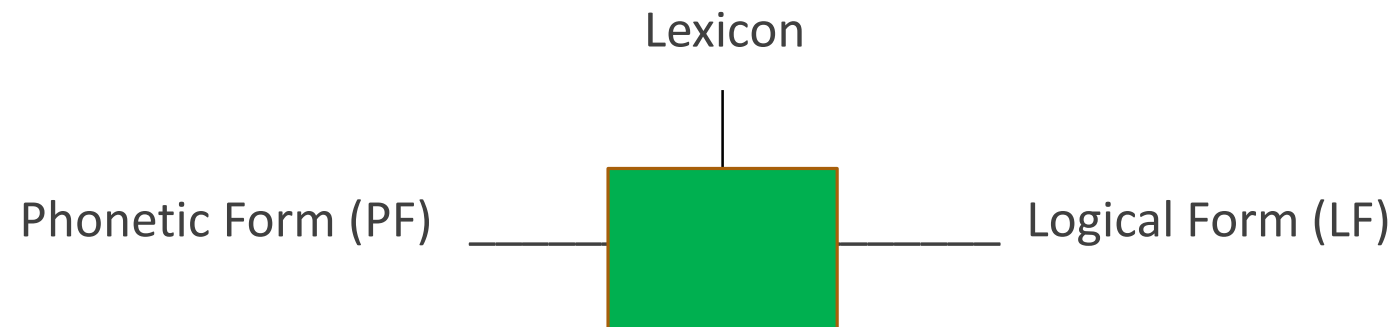
LUIGI RIZZI

2022-2023

The criterial approach to scope-discourse constructions

The LP is populated by a system of functional heads related to the expression of scope-discourse properties (Top, Foc, Q), which form a functional sequence and have a dual function:

- I. In syntax, they attract movement of a phrase with matching features.
- II. At the interfaces with sound and meaning they activate procedures for the assignment of the intonational contour (PF) and of the interpretation (LF), also determining conditions for appropriate use in discourse.



The criterial approach

- (1) a Which book should you read ___ ?
b This book, you should read ___ tomorrow
c THIS BOOK you should read ___ (, not that one)
- (2) a Which book **Q** should you read ___ ?
b This book, **Top** you should read ___ tomorrow
c THIS BOOK **Foc** you should read ___ (, not that one)

Explicit markers of Top and Foc: Gungbe

- (1)a *Un lìn [dɔ̀ [wémà éhè yà [à dɔ́-ná xía-è sò]]]*
1SG think that book DEM **TOP** 2SG have-to read-3SG tomorrow
'I think that this book, you should read tomorrow'
- b *Un lìn [dɔ̀ [wémà éhè wɛ̀ [à dɔ́-ná xía é má nyín Súru tòn]]]*
1SG think that book DEM **FOC** 2SG HAVE-TO read 3SG NEG COP Suru POSS
'I think that THIS BOOK you should read, not Suru's book.'
- c *Un lìn [dɔ̀ [wémà éhè yà Súru wɛ̀ [-- dɔ́-ná xía-è]]]*
1SG think that book DEM **TOP** Suru **FOC** have-to read-3SG
'I think that this book, SURU should read'

(Gungbe, E.O.Aboh, p.c. 22-5-2018)

Explicit Q markers

(1)a *Ik weet niet [wie of [Jan ___ gezien heeft]]*
'I don't know who Q Jan seen has'

(Dutch varieties, Haegeman 1994)

(2) *Qui est-ce que tu as vu ___ ?*
/esk/
'Who Q you saw?'

(Cheng and Rooryck 2000)

NB: /esk/ is plausibly derived from a cleft, as the written form suggests, but /esk/ questions do not involve the emphasis and special interpretations that questions derived from clefts typically have (*who is it that you saw? Chi è che hai visto?*). So /esk/ is plausibly reanalyzed synchronically as a simple Q marker (Cheng and Rooryck 2000; but see Pollock 2020).

/esk/ is distinct from questions derived from clefts in other languages

(17) Dove hai trovato questa informazione?

‘Where did you find this info?’

(18) Dov'è che hai trovato questa informazione?

‘Where is it that you found this info?’

Question (18) strongly invites an enriched interpretation like “This info is difficult to find, in fact I couldn't get hold of it: where did you manage to find it?”. This is akin to the “can't find the value” special interpretation discussed by Obenauer (2006), Obenauer & Poletto (2000) and related work.

No such enriched interpretation is necessarily evoked by /esk/ questions in French. Both (19) and (20) admit the neutral interpretation, so that (20) contrasts with Italian (18) in this respect: I don't have any reason to expect that finding the relevant info will be easy or hard, I just want to know where to find it.

(19) Où as-tu trouvé cette information ?
'Where did you find this info?'

(20) Où est-ce que tu as trouvé cette information
'Where /esk/ you found this info?'

Then, it appears reasonable to make the hypothesis that /esk/ is synchronically reanalyzed as a simple Q marker, as in Cheng & Rooryck (2000)

The Uniformity Principle

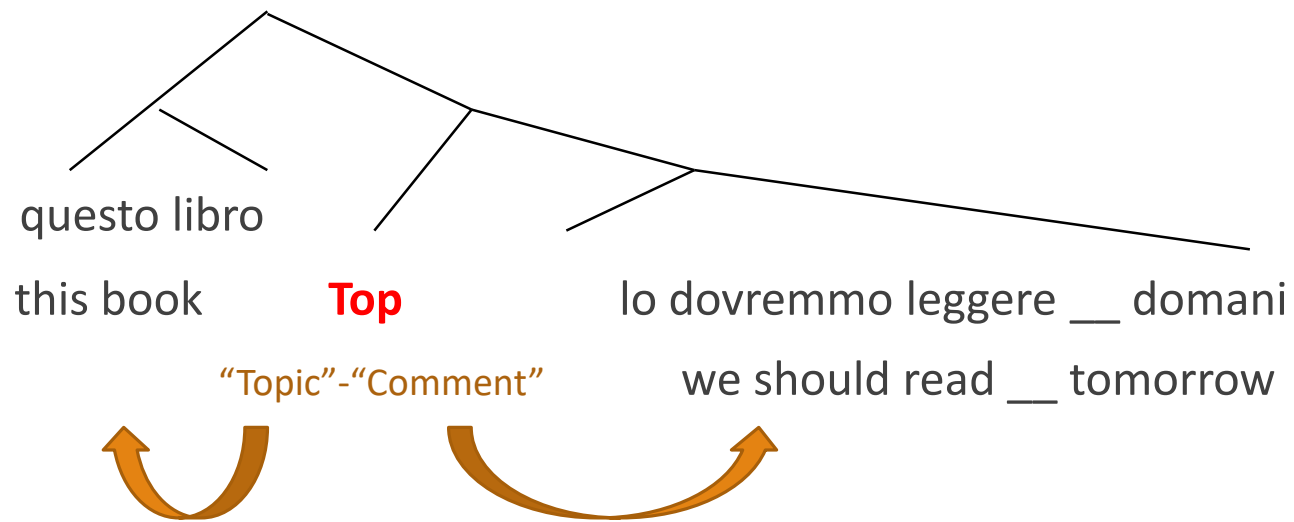
« In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary,
assume languages to be uniform,
with variety restricted to easily detectable properties of utterances ».

N. Chomsky (2001) Derivation by Phase, p.2

This guideline favors a transparent view of the syntax-discourse interface, in which discourse-relevant articulations are expressed by uniform **Spec – head – complement** schemata, with parametrisation restricted to the spell-out of the criterial head, over alternatives requiring language-specific catalogues of interpretive routines.

On the “syntacticization” of semantics-pragmatics of scope-discourse: Topic - Comment

- The configurations created by merge and move are interpreted at the LF interface following the instructions associated to the criterial heads (Cinque & Rizzi 2010, Rizzi & Cinque 2016). E.g., for topics,



For a typology of topics: Bianchi and Frascarelli (2011), Frascarelli and Hinterhoelzl (2007).

Interpretation of topics

The speaker attracts the attention of the interlocutor on a certain referent, the **topic**, and makes a **comment** about it.

The referent should be connected to the previous discourse (« discourse-linked »: Pesetsky 1987). An out of the blue context does not license the use of a topic-comment structure:

Q1: *Che cosa è successo?* (What happened?)

A: *Un camion ha tamponato un autobus* (A truck hit a bus)

A': # *Un autobus, un camion lo ha tamponato* (A bus, a truck hit)

Q2: *Che cosa è successo all'autobus per Roma? E a quello per Milano?*

(What happened to the bus for Rome, and to the one for Milan)

A: *L'autobus per Roma, lo ha tamponato un camion, l'autobus per Milano e' in orario*

(The bus for Rome, a truck hit it, the bus for Milan is on time)

Interpretations of topics

In a configuration like the following:

[Specifier [**Top** Complement]]
“Topic” “Comment”

- Interpret the specifier as the “topic”, an entity salient in previous discourse (D-linked)
- Interpret the complement as a “comment” about the topic.

Incompatibility with quantified expressions

(1)a *Non ho incontrato nessuno.*
'I met no one'

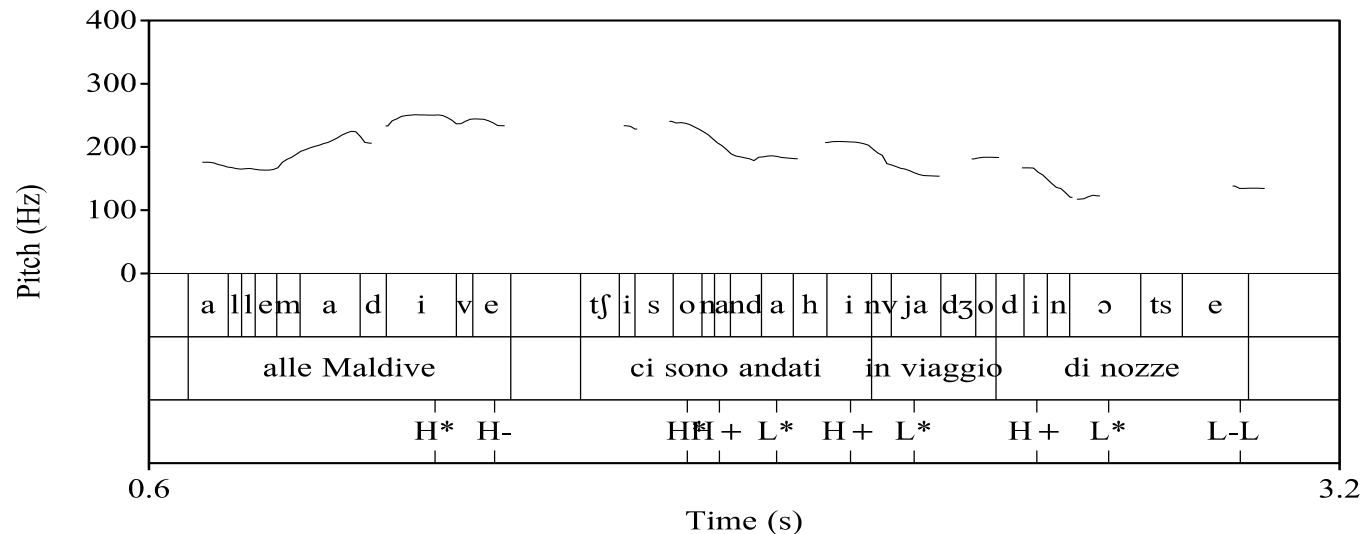
b * *Nessuno, lo ho incontrato.*
'No one, I met'

(2)? *Nessuno di questi uomini politici lo conosco bene.*
'No one of these politicians, I know well.'

Topic-comment: prosodic properties (Italian)

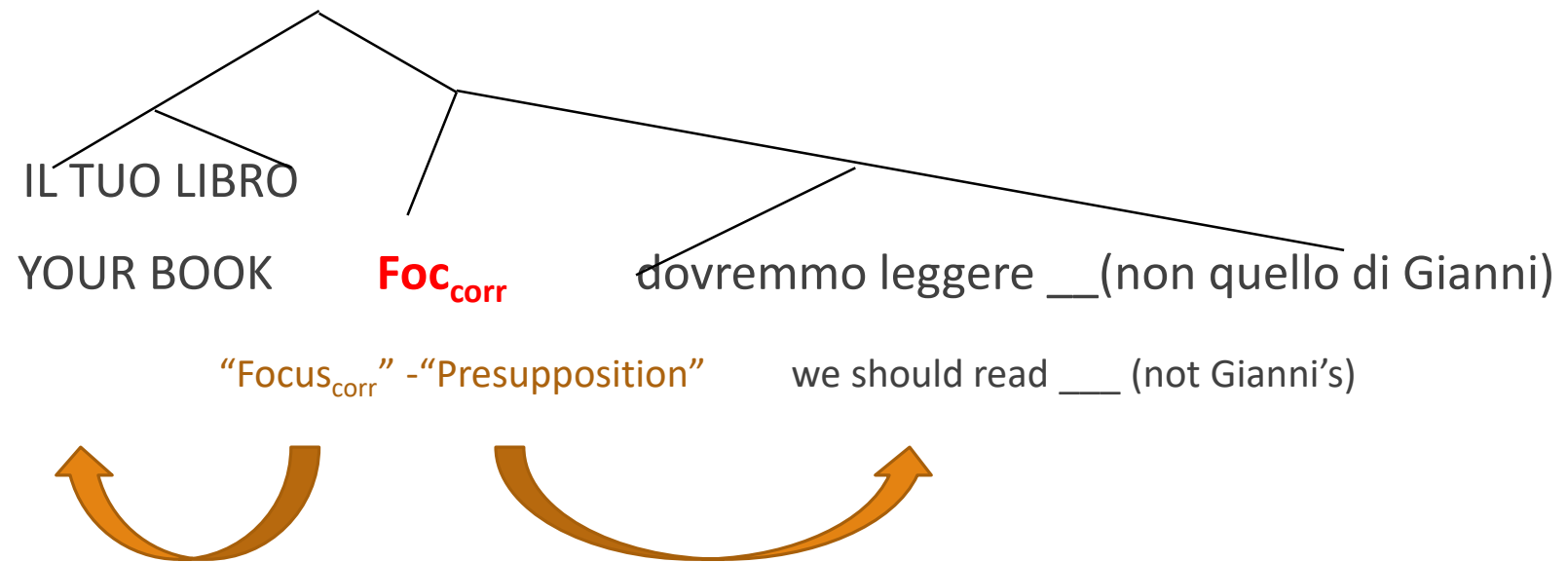
Bianchi, Bocci, Cruschina (2016) 'Focus fronting, unexpectedness, and evaluative implicatures. *Semantics and Pragmatics*. Vol. 9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3765/sp.9.3> Early access: <http://semprag.org/article/view/sp.9.3/pdf>

- (1) A: Secondo me non avranno mai il coraggio di partire da soli per le Maldive...
'According to me, they will never have the courage of traveling alone to the Maldives...'
- B: Beh, alle Maldive, ci sono andati in viaggio di nozze.
'Well, to the Maldives, they went (there) on honeymoon.'



On the “syntacticization” of scope-discourse semantics-pragmatics: Focus_{corrective} - Presupposition

NB: on the different types of peripheral focus: Belletti 2009, Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2016)



Context of corrective focus

A: Dovreste leggere il libro di Gianni...

‘You should read Gianni’s book...’

B: No, IL TUO LIBRO dovremmo leggere, non quello di Gianni

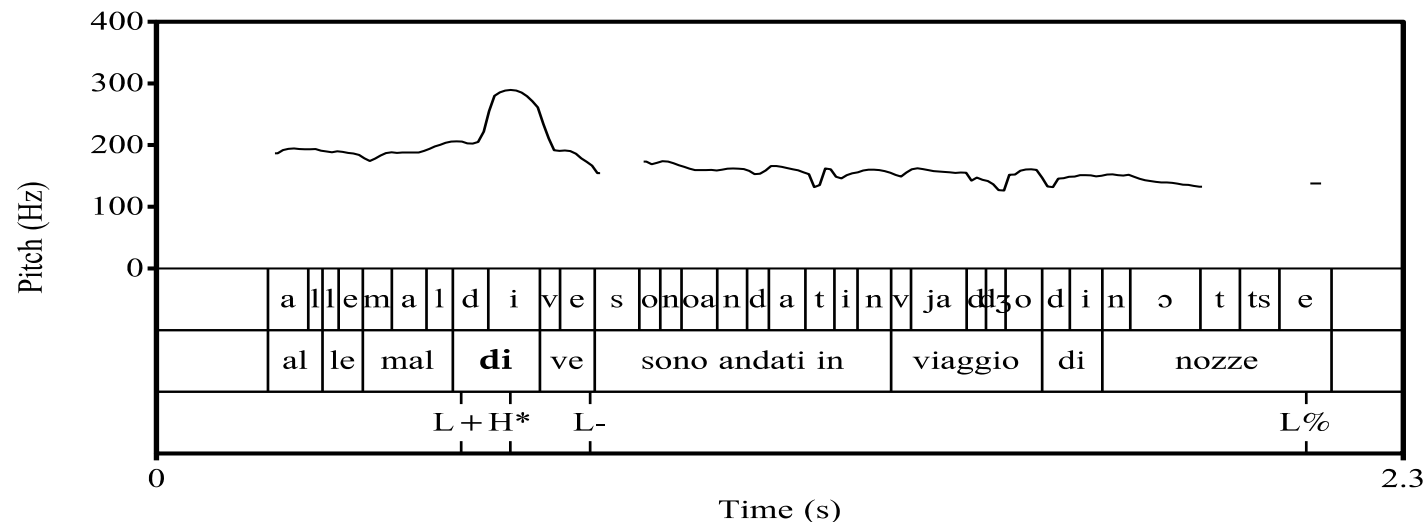
‘No, YOUR BOOK we should read, not Gianni’s book

A speaker says something. The interlocutor expresses agreement with a part of the speaker’s statement (the presupposition, here the fact that we should read something), and disagreement with another part (the corrective focus, here the particular book that we should read)

Focus_{corrective} – Presupposition (Italian)

Bianchi, Bocci, Cruschina (2016) 'Focus fronting, unexpectedness, and evaluative implicatures. *Semantics and Pragmatics*. Vol. 9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3765/sp.9.3> Early access: <http://semprag.org/article/view/sp.9.3/pdf>

- (2) A: Se ho capito bene, sono andati alle isole Vergini.
'If I understood correctly, they went to the Virgin Islands.'
- B: Ti sbagli! ALLE MALDIVE sono andati in viaggio di nozze!
'You are wrong! TO THE MALDIVES they went on honeymoon!'



Another kind of left-peripheral focus in Italian: Mirative focus (Cruschina 2012)

(1) ...E io che credevo che fossero dei poveracci! Figurati un po'...

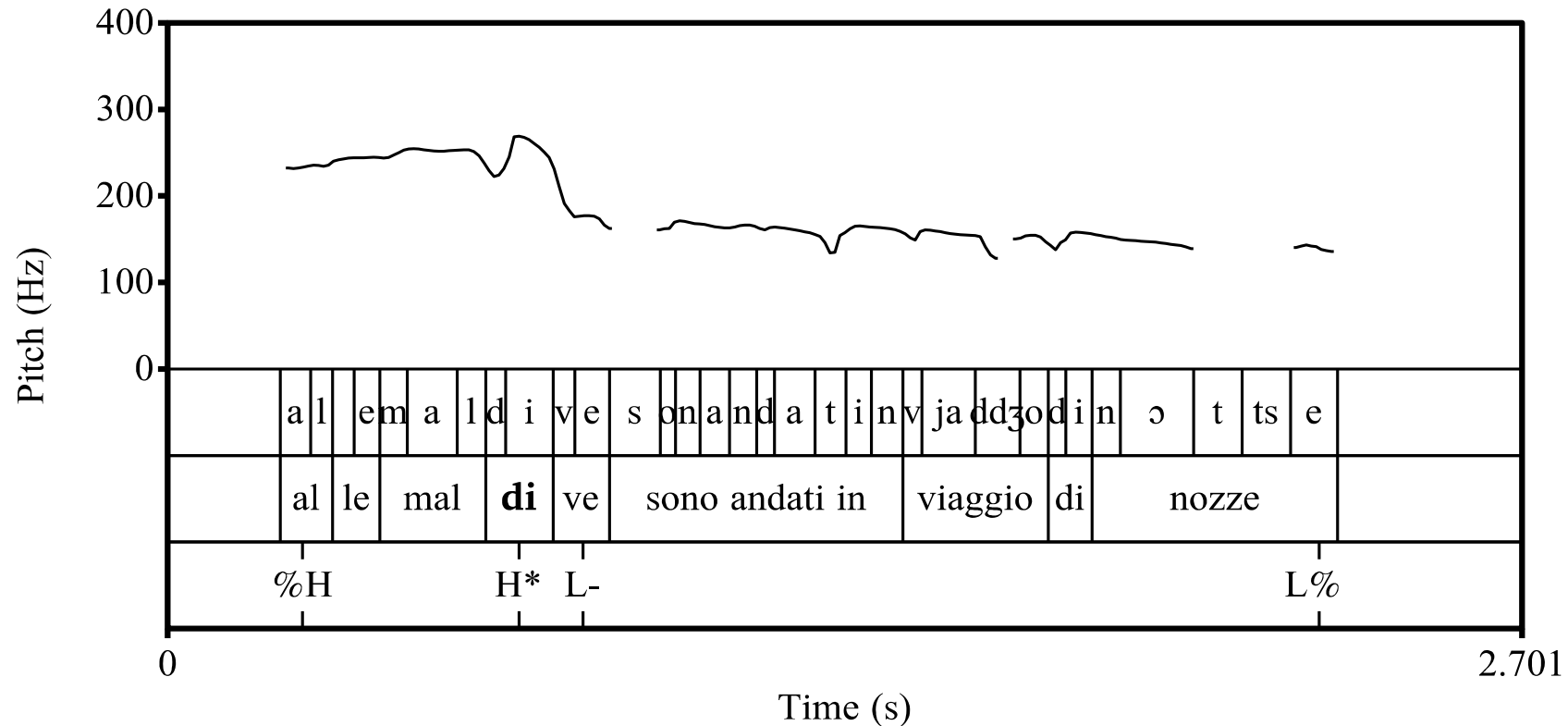
'...and I believed they were poor people! Can you imagine...

ALLE MALDIVE sono andati in viaggio di nozze!

'TO THE MALDIVES they went on honeymoon!

Here the value of the focus variable falls outside natural expectations given the speaker's previous beliefs.

Mirative focus (Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2016)



Interpretation of focus

[Specifier [Foc_x Complement]]
“Focus_x” “Presupposition”

New information focus does not target the LP in Italian

New information focus does not allow movement to the LP in standard Italian (and many regional varieties), unless it can be contextually salvaged as a corrective or mirative focus:

(1)Q Che libro hai comprato?
'What book did you buy?'

A Ho comprato il libro di Gianni
'I bought Gianni's book'

A' # Il libro di Gianni, ho comprato
'Gianni's book, I bought'

Belletti (2001, 2004): new information focus targets a low focus position in the vP periphery in standard Italian (but it may target a LP position in regional varieties such as Sicilian and Sardinian: Cruschina 2012).

...but it does in certain regional varieties

The Sicilian dialect (and the regional variety of Italian spoken in Sicily and other southern regions) uses a clause initial position also for new information focus:

(1) Q: Chi scrivisti? (Sicilian)

'What did you write?'

B: N'articulu scrissi

'An article I wrote'

Cruschina (2012) argues that Sicilian specifies a left peripheral new information focus position distinct from and lower than the left peripheral contrastive focus position, which is prosodically more marked and does not require T to C movement.

A salient difference between topic and focus: clitic resumption with topic, no clitic resumption with focus

(1) Il tuo libro, lo leggerò __ domani

‘Your book, (I) it-will-read tomorrow’

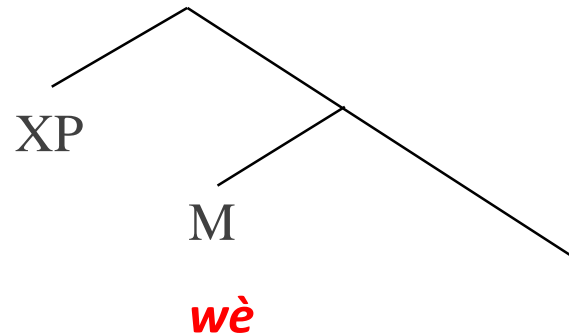
(2) IL TUO LIBRO leggerò __ (non quello di Gianni)

‘YOUR BOOK (I) will-read, not Gianni’s book’

Two hypotheses on scope-discourse markers

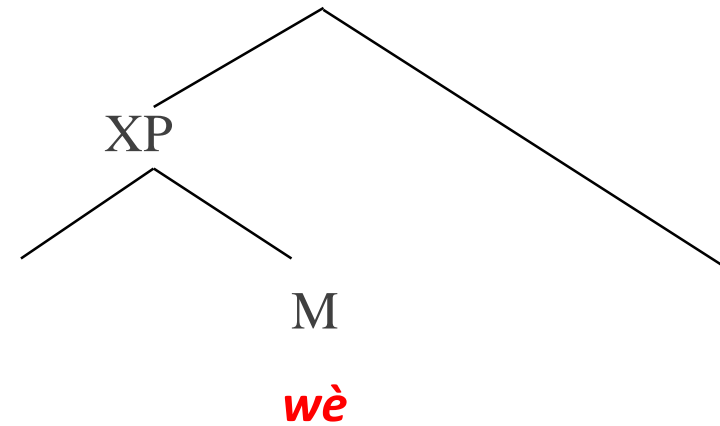
(discussions with K. Abels, cartographic workshops Oslo, Nov 2017, Barcelona, May 2018)

A



The marker M is part of the clausal spine, in a Spec-head relation with XP

B



The marker M is a case-like specification attached to XP, not part of the clausal spine

Does a marker appears only in the LP element, or also on the *in situ* element?

Foc marking in Gungbe:

(1) a. fíté **wè** é yì?

‘Where Foc he went?’

b. é yì fíté (***wè**)?

Echo questions

‘he went where (foc)?’

NB: wh-elements when in LP position systematically occur with the Foc marker *wè*. So *wè* expresses both Q and Foc.

Does the markers appear once or twice in coordinations of topics or foci?

(1) John and Bill **M**

(2) John **M** and Bill **M**

Approach A (clausal spine) predicts only (1) to be possible.

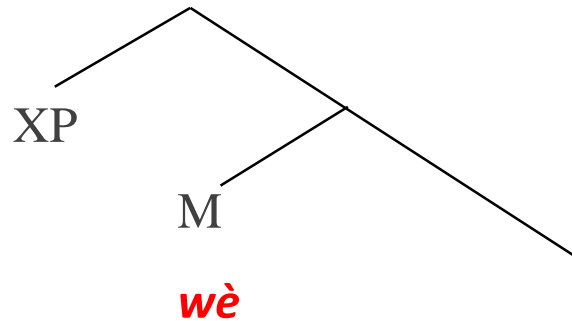
Approach B (DP-internal) is consistent with both (1) and (2)

(See also the “clausal spine” view of wa-marking and (double) ga-marking in Japanese: Paul & Whitman 2017)

Two hypotheses on scope-discourse markers

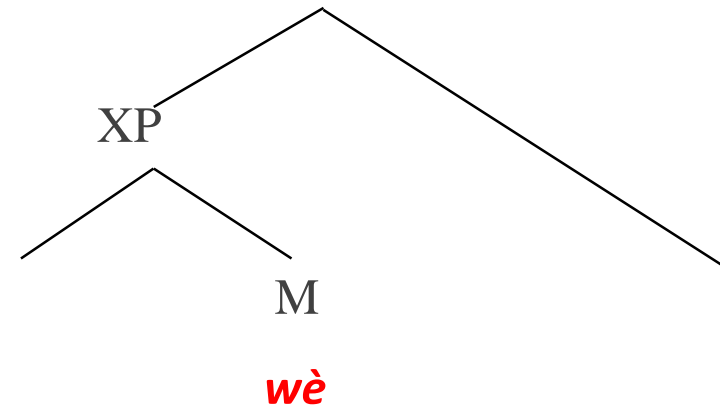
(discussions with K. Abels, cartographic workshops Oslo, Nov 2017, Barcelona, May 2018)

A



The marker M is part of the clausal spine, in a Spec-head relation with XP. So, if the XP is conjoined (XP and XP), the marker should be external

B



The marker M is a case-like specification attached to XP, not part of the clausal spine. So, if the XP is conjoined (XP and XP), the marker could occur in each conjunct

Focus marker in coordinate structures in Gungbe

(thanks to Enoch Aboh)

(1) [xwé kpó mótò kpó] **wÈ** Súrù x̀

house COORD car coord FOC Suru buy

‘Suru bought A HOUSE AND A CAR’.

(2) * [xwé **wÈ** kpó mótò **wÈ** kpó] Súrù x̀

house FOC COORD car FOC COORD Suru buy

(3) * [xwé `kpó **wÈ** mótò `kpó **wÈ**] Súrù x̀

house COORD FOC car coord FOC Suru buy

Topic marker in a coordinate structure in Gungbe

(thanks to Enoch Aboh)

(1) [xwé ló kpó mótò ló kpó] **yà** Súrù xò yè
house DET COORD car DET COORD TOP Suru buy 3PL

‘As for the house and the car, Suru bought them’.

(2) *[xwé **yà** kpó mótò **yà** kpó] Súrù xò yé
house TOP COORD car TOP COORD Suru buy 3PL

-ra marking in Persian (thanks to Bahareh Samimi)

(1) [maqale o ketab]-**o** xund-am.
article and book RA read-1SG

- 'I read the article and the book.'

(2) ?? [maqala]-**ro** o [ketab]-**o** xund-am.
article RA and book RA read-1SG

'I read the article and the book.'

Che marking exclamatives in Italian

(1) Che macchina (**che**) hai comprato!

‘What a car (that) you bought!’

(2) Quante ragazze (***che**) e quanti ragazzi (**che**) sono venuti alla festa!

‘How many girls and how many boys (that) came to the party!’

NB: this instance of **che** could be an Excl marker, or a lower Fin marker: in both cases it is part of the clausal spine, hence the unique occurrence is expected. On the other hand, the first che of (1) is a DP-internal exclamative operator, hence it occurs twice in coordination:

(3) **Che** macchina e **che** moto (**che**) hai comprato!

‘What a car and what a motorcycle that you bought!’

The markers interfere with other processes like V2

(1) a. Ik weet niet [wie (**of**) [Jan gezien heeft]]

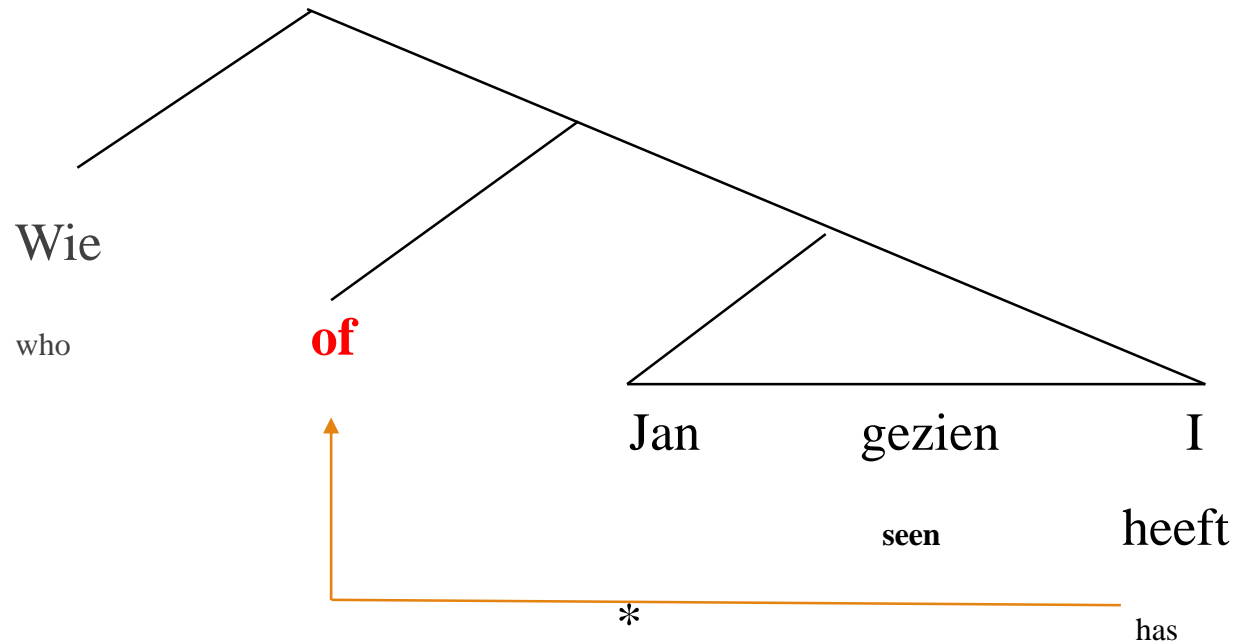
‘I know not who Q Jan seen has’

b. Wie (***of**) heeft Jan gezien?

‘Who has Jan seen?’

criterial markers and V2

Under an approach to V2 like Samo (2019), the inflected verb moves to create a Spec-head configuration with the relevant criterial phrase. So, it competes with a criterial particle:



/esk/ is incompatible with inversion in French

(1) Qui a-t-il vu?

‘Who has he seen?’

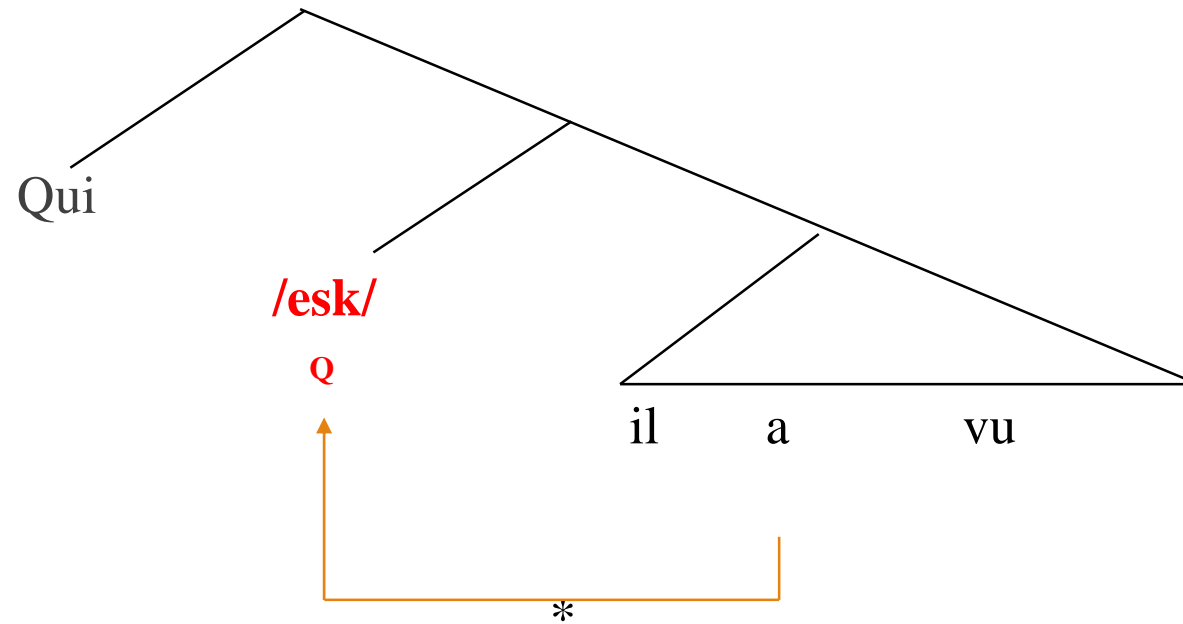
(2) Qui /esk/ il a vu?

‘Who /esk/ he has seen?’

(3) * Qui /esk/ a-t-il vu?

‘Who /esk/ has he seen?’

Criterial marker and V2: French /esk/



The XP-internal options is motivated in some cases

For instance, Durrleman argues that the topic marker in JC is expressed by the particle *de* (there), and that it is DP internal.

- (18) [da bwaai **de**], mi laik im
that boy [Top] I like him
'A for that boy, I like him'

And in fact, in this case, the marker is replicated with conjoined topics:

- (19) Da pikni **de**, da buk **de**, dem piipl **de**, mi no wahn ha notn muo fi du wid dem!
'As for that child, that book and those people, I don't want to have anything more to do with them!'

In conclusion, one should look at the language internal evidence to adjudicate between the two options, head of the clausal spine or DP-internal marker.

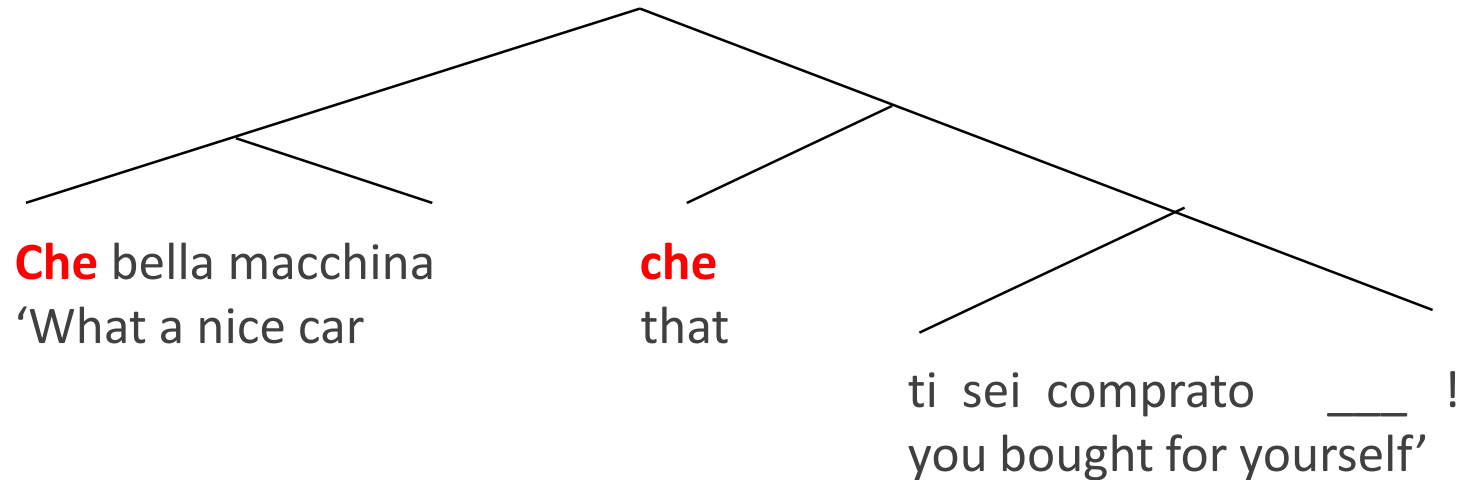
Conclusion

We have seen numerous cases in which the criterial marker Top, Foc, Q belongs to the clausal spine, the functional sequence of the sentence, and takes the XP as its Spec. This is shown by several types of empirical evidence: occurrence only on the displaced element (not in insitu constructions), unique occurrence in coordination, interference with other processes, like V2.

It is conceivable that in other cases the morphological marker of topic, focus, etc. may be phrase internal (e.g., in Durreleman's (2008) analysis of *de* in Jamaican Creole)

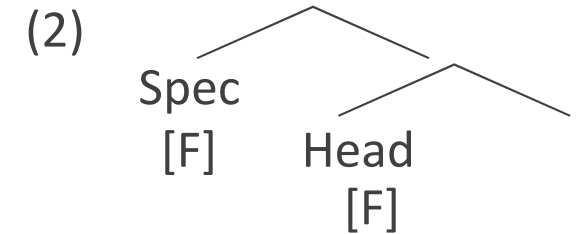
Conclusion

Other cases may be plausibly analyzed as involving an overt marker of the criterial construction both on the phrase and on the head, for instance in Italian exclamatives:



Conclusion: on the morphological expression of the criterial feature

(1) On the Spec	On the head	
+	+	Exclamatives in Italian
+	-	Topics in Jamaican
-	+	Topic/Focus in Gungbe
-	-	Topic/Focus in English/Romance



Where F = Top, Foc,
Rel. Excl,...

Under uniformity guidelines, this naturally leads to

1. a principle stating that criterial properties are abstractly expressed by a phrase and a head sharing the criterial feature in a local Specifier – Head configuration, as in (2);
2. a low-level parametrization involving the overt morphological realization of the criterial feature on the specifier and on the head, as in table (1)