

Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2013

Selected papers from
'Going Romance'
Amsterdam 2013

edited by
Enoch O. Aboh
Jeannette C. Schaeffer
Petra Sleeman

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Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2013

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The yearly 'Going Romance' and 'Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages' meetings feature research in formal linguistics of Romance languages, mainly in the domains of morphology, syntax, and semantics, and, to a certain extent, phonology. Each volume brings together a peer-reviewed selection of papers that were presented at one of the meetings, aiming to provide a representation of the spread of topics at that conference, and of the variety of research carried out nowadays on Romance languages within theoretical linguistics.

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Volume 8

Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2013
Selected papers from 'Going Romance' Amsterdam 2013
Edited by Enoch O. Aboh, Jeannette C. Schaeffer and Petra Sleeman

Introduction

Enoch Aboh, Jeannette Schaeffer & Petra Sleeman

University of Amsterdam

This volume contains a selection of the papers that were presented at the 27th Going Romance conference. Going Romance is one of the leading European annual conferences on the theoretical analysis of Romance languages. While its organization used to rotate among the six Romance departments of the Dutch universities, this changed in 2009, when other European universities started joining this rotating organization of Going Romance.

The 27th Going Romance conference took place on 28–30 November, 2013, at the University of Amsterdam. The invited speakers were Alexandra Cornilescu, Giuseppe Longobardi, Andrew Nevins, and Philippe Prévost. The main two-day program contained a small selection of the papers that were submitted for oral or poster presentation. All abstracts were reviewed by three or four experts in Romance linguistics from all over the world. As usual, the areas of research varied from syntax and semantics to morphology and phonology, from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective to an acquisitional perspective. The third day of the conference was devoted to a workshop on language acquisition with the theme “Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory”.

All presenters and alternates were invited to submit their paper for publication. As is common practice in the publication of the Going Romance volumes, each submission was thoroughly peer-reviewed by two external reviewers, who judged the acceptability of the papers, and recommended revisions. The final decision was made by the volume editors.

Whereas previous volumes were part of the John Benjamins’ series *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, since 2009 the selected papers of Going Romance appear in the series *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory (RLLT)* published by John Benjamins. In 2014 it was decided that the selected proceedings of one of the major American conferences on the theoretical analysis of Romance linguistics, the *Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL)*, would also be published in the RLLT series, under the scientific responsibility of an American and European editorial board. The first LSRL volume in this series was published earlier this year.

Subjects typically associated with the study of Romance languages include clitics, word order, null subjects, negation, tense, aspect and mood, and the phoneme system. However, since the initiation of *Going Romance* in 1986, research on Romance linguistics has revealed interesting differences and similarities between the Romance languages themselves and between Romance languages and other language families with respect to many other phenomena. The search for new data, micro-parametric variation, the addition of other research fields such as contact linguistics or language acquisition, the refinement of theoretical insights, have greatly enhanced our knowledge of Romance linguistics. Conversely, since Chomsky's *Pisa Lectures* in 1979, Romance linguistics has shown to be a useful testing ground for linguistic theories. This volume reflects the current state-of-the-art concerning the theoretical analysis of a number of topics in a wide variety of Romance languages and dialects such as French, Italian, Latin, Castilian and Guatemalan Spanish, European and Brazilian Portuguese, Romanian, Old Sicilian and Old Sardinian. The papers revolve around three main themes: word order and its related pragmatic or semantic effects, the morphology and semantics of the verb and verb placement, and finally the morphosyntax and semantics of the DP and its relation to clause structure. The chapters are presented in the book following this thematic organization.

Word order and related pragmatic or semantic effects

Valentina Bianchi, Giuliano Bocci and Silvio Cruschina investigate the essential semantic and pragmatic features associated with Focus Fronting (FF) in Italian, with the ultimate aim of identifying the actual trigger of this syntactic operation. The results of their first (syntactic) experiment show that FF is possible in corrective and mirative contexts, but not in merely contrastive contexts. Contrary to claims that are dominant in the literature, it is proposed that contrast and/or givenness of the background are not necessary conditions for Italian FF. The second experiment highlights a systematic prosodic difference between the two focus types, showing that the corrective and mirative interpretations are grammatically distinct. The authors argue that these special interpretations associated with FF are syntactically encoded conventional implicatures triggering syntactic fronting.

Elena Ciutescu proposes a unified analysis of a word order pattern in causative constructions that is found both in Spanish and in Romanian, but not in, e.g., Italian, French or Catalan. In both languages the subject of the infinitive can precede the infinitive. Since in both languages the subject of the infinitive can also be differentially object marked, the author puts forth an analysis in which the

subject of the infinitive moves through object shift over the in situ subject of the causative verb to a spec,vP position, where it can be differentially object marked. The causative verb and its subject move from vP to a dominating TP, resulting in the order subject – causative verb – object – infinitive.

Laia Mayol provides a description and an analysis of “conditionally interpreted declaratives” in Spanish: a coordination of two declarative clauses which receives a conditional, and sometimes even a counterfactual reading. She proposes that such constructions contain a left-subordinating conjunction ‘and’, which (i) conveys a causal modal, and (ii) turns the first conjunct into the restrictor of the modal and the second one into the scope. The counterfactual interpretation is argued to be a pragmatic effect (i.e. it is defeasible) related to the common ground properties of the first conjunct.

Sam Wolfe argues that, whereas Old Sicilian is a V2 system, in accordance with what has been proposed for Old Romance in general, Old Sardinian is a V1 system. The central claim of the paper is that while both varieties have a uPhi feature on the C head in the matrix clause, they differ in the locus of this feature in embedded contexts, the position occupied by subjects, and the parametric make-up of the left periphery.

Stefano Rastelli and Arianna Zuanazzi test how syntactic knowledge, associative-lexical memory (AM) and working memory (WM) contribute to the processing of filler-gap dependencies (FGD) in L1 Chinese learners of L2 Italian. They report that efficient L2 processing of FGD correlates only with learners’ capacity of keeping the fronted element on hold as the sentence unfolds. Moreover, while AM scores correlate with the learners’ proficiency scores, WM scores do not.

Morphology and semantics of the verb and verb placement

Norma Schifano investigates the position of finite lexical verbs across Romance. Adopting a cartographic approach, she shows that Romance languages exhibit at least four different typologies of V-movement. The author further shows that the observed patterns result from a compensatory mechanism between syntax and morphology in the licensing of the Tense, Aspect, and Mood (TAM) specifications of the verb.

Bridget Copley and Isabelle Roy discuss how conventional implicatures may be related to grammaticalization of aspect by discussing French *être en train de* (*êtd*, lit. ‘be.INF in the midst of’), which can either have an expressive meaning with a negative connotation, or a neutral meaning. After rejecting a Gricean analysis of the expressive meaning and a two-lexical-entries analysis of *êtd*, the authors propose that, like ordinary progressives, *êtd* has a modal at-issue meaning with a

circumstantial modal base and a stereotypical ordering source. In addition, they argue that it has a modal conventional implicature with either a stereotypical or a bouletic ordering source.

Alexandra Cornilescu argues that, because of a strong dative morphology, Romanian has a more extended class of dative – nominative unaccusative psych constructions than other Romance languages. Besides ‘please’-like psych-verbs, Romanian has unaccusative verbs that can function as light verbs, followed by a psych or somatic noun or adjective. The dative is interpreted as Experiencer. The author shows that unaccusative datives contrast with datives in ditransitive constructions, because in the dative – nominative unaccusative psych constructions the dative clitic is required. Furthermore, these constructions cannot be nominalized, in contrast to ditransitive constructions. Alexandra Cornilescu analyzes the dative – nominative unaccusative construction as an applicative construction in which the dative clitic contributes to the valuation of the case feature of the Dative DP. She argues that nominalization of the dative – nominative construction is not possible, because the functional structure of the nominalization is not rich enough to accommodate the obligatory clitic.

Laura Migliori argues that the development of ‘have’ + past participle in Romance periphrastic perfect forms is not the consequence of a grammaticalization process, as has often been claimed in the literature, but of a split active vs. inactive system that was already present in Latin. Whereas Latin periphrastic perfect forms with the auxiliary ‘be’ targeted inactive forms, the use of the functional element ‘have’ was gradually expanded in periphrastic constructions as a marker of the active domain. The author also shows how this hypothesis can account for the development of the various auxiliation patterns in modern Romance languages and dialects.

Andrew Nevins investigates how lexical trends and morphophonological generalizations interact with productivity: to what extent do learners generalize an observed morphological trend beyond the static lexicon? The study involves four case studies over different morphological patterns (e.g., syncretism, defectivity, allomorphy) found within Portuguese derivational and inflectional morphology. It is shown that choices in the realization of morphological categories may depend on submorphemic (features) and supramorphemic (phrasal syntax) principles. Accordingly, morphology-internal and interface considerations appear to interact with productivity.

Florian Schäfer and Margot Vivanco argue that reflexively marked anticausative verbs in Romance are semantically reflexive. Their study supports standard semantics of the causative alternation, according to which anticausatives, whether reflexively marked or not, denote inchoative one-place predicates.

Morphosyntax of the DP and its relation to clause structure

Gianina Iordăchioia and Elena Soare investigate the nominal supine in Romanian. They argue that this type of nominalization results from the definite determiner in its function as a Down operator. Partial motivations for this analysis come from the fact that the nominal supine lacks a dedicated nominalizing affix, unlike other types of nominalization in the language, and its semantics correlates with kinds. The authors further demonstrate how the nominalizing function of the Down operator from Chierchia (1984) can be unified with its kind semantics in Chierchia (1998).

Martin Elsig discusses a morphosyntactic aspect of Guatemalan Spanish: the co-occurrence of a possessive and an indefinite article in prenominal position as in *una mi hermana*. Since such co-occurrence between a prenominal possessive and determiners or demonstratives is excluded in most varieties of Spanish outside Latin America, the author proposes a grammaticalization scenario in which adjectival possessives are the diachronic precursors of possessive determiners. In this approach, Guatemalan Spanish appears to be more conservative and less grammaticalized than other varieties of Spanish.

Sangyoon Kim discusses Spanish possessive formation processes within a Distributed Morphology framework. He proposes that Spanish possessives consist of several morphemes forming an extended syntactic domain; they project from a contentless root taking a pronoun as its complement and are categorized as adjectives. The author also shows that post-syntactic conditions for root suppletion determine the eventual shape of Spanish possessives.

These short summaries reveal the wealth of topics, languages and theoretical approaches included in this volume and further show that our insights into Romance linguistics are still developing.

The editors of this volume would like to thank Aafke Hulk, Brechje van Osch and Irene Mistro for helping them to organize the 2013 edition of *Going Romance*. Financial support from the ACLC (the Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication), the Dutch Association for Applied Linguistics ANÉLA, John Benjamins Publishing Company, the department of Romance Languages and the department of Linguistics of the University of Amsterdam made this conference possible. We are grateful for that too. We are happy that so many linguists accepted to review abstracts and/or papers. We thank them for their serious judgments and their helpful comments. The quality of the papers in this volume is also due to them.

Table of contents

Introduction	VII
<i>Enoch Aboh, Jeannette Schaeffer & Petra Sleeman</i>	
PART I: Word order and related pragmatic or semantic effects	1
Focus fronting and its implicatures	3
<i>Valentina Bianchi, Giuliano Bocci & Silvio Cruschina</i>	
Romance causatives and object shift	21
<i>Elena Ciutescu</i>	
Conditionally interpreted declaratives in Spanish	39
<i>Laia Mayol</i>	
Microparametric variation in old Italo-Romance syntax: The view from Old Sicilian and Old Sardinian	51
<i>Sam Wolfe</i>	
Different effects of syntactic knowledge, associative memory and working memory in L2 processing of filler-gap dependencies: A cross-modal picture-sentence study on L2 Chinese learners of Italian	67
<i>Stefano Rastelli & Arianna Zuanazzi</i>	
PART II Morphology and semantics of the verb and verb placement	83
The <i>paradigmatic instantiation</i> of TAM: A novel approach to Romance verb-movement	85
<i>Norma Schifano</i>	
Deriving the readings of French <i>être en train de</i>	103
<i>Bridget Copley & Isabelle Roy</i>	
On the syntax of datives in unaccusative configurations	119
<i>Alexandra Cornilescu</i>	
The perfect between Latin and Romance: The rise of perfective periphrases and the active/inactive contrast	159
<i>Laura Migliori</i>	

Productivity and Portuguese morphology: How experiments enable hypothesis-testing	175
<i>Andrew Nevins</i>	
Reflexively marked anticausatives are not semantically reflexive	203
<i>Florian Schäfer & Margot Vivanco</i>	
PART III Morphosyntax of the DP and its relation to clause structure	221
Deverbal nominalization with the 'Down'-operator	223
<i>Gianina Iordăchioaia & Elena Soare</i>	
The (non-)grammaticalization of possession in Guatemalan Spanish	239
<i>Martin Elsig</i>	
On Spanish possessive formation: A DM-based account	261
<i>Sangyoon Kim</i>	
Language Index	277
Subject Index	279

PART I

**Word order and related pragmatic or
semantic effects**

Focus fronting and its implicatures*

Valentina Bianchi, Giuliano Bocci & Silvio Cruschina

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In this paper we investigate the essential semantic and pragmatic features associated with Focus Fronting (FF) in Italian, with the ultimate aim of identifying the actual trigger of this syntactic operation. After introducing the different contexts that could in principle be compatible with FF, we present the results of a syntactic experiment which show that FF is possible in *corrective* and *mirative* contexts, but not in *merely contrastive* contexts. This distribution proves that, contrary to claims that are dominant in the literature, contrast and/or givenness of the background are not necessary conditions for Italian FF. Our second experiment highlights a systematic prosodic difference between the two focus types, showing that the corrective and mirative interpretations are grammatically distinct. We claim that these special interpretations associated with FF are *conventional implicatures* which are syntactically encoded and which trigger syntactic fronting.

1. Introduction: The trigger of Focus Fronting

In most Romance languages the information structure of an utterance may trigger overt syntactic operations that determine the order of the constituents in the sentence. One such operation drives the focus constituent of the sentence, which bears the main prosodic prominence (indicated in bold in the examples), to a clause-initial position. We call this Focus Fronting (FF):

- (1) [**Marco**]_{FOCUS} *abbiamo visto*. (Italian)
Mark have.1PL seen
'It was Mark that we saw.'

* We are indebted to two anonymous reviewers for their detailed and insightful comments. Giuliano Bocci's work was supported by a fellowship associated with the *International Research Chair Blaise Pascal* funded by the French State and Ile-de-France Region.

Not all types of focus allow FF. Rather, the presence or absence of this special grammatical marking seems to depend on additional or concomitant requirements, leading to a wide range of analyses which adopt different views on the (syntactic, prosodic or pragmatic) nature of the triggering factor. According to the cartographic analysis first proposed in Rizzi (1997), the focus constituent (i.e. *Marco* in (1)) bears a (contrastive) focus feature and moves to the specifier of a dedicated focus projection within the left periphery of the clause to satisfy the Focus Criterion (see also Rizzi 2006).

A completely different analysis is put forward in Samek-Lodovici (2006): the contrastive focus constituent in Italian is always in the final rightmost position of the clause (i.e. the same position as non-contrastive foci); the appearance of fronting results from the fact that the rest of the clause, being discourse-given, has been right-dislocated. Crucially, the initial trigger of the derivational steps that lead to the FF configuration is the givenness of the superficially postfocal material.

In order to test the pragmatic conditions that license FF in Italian, and with the intent of developing an accurate analysis of the actual trigger of FF, we set out the present study with a distinction of the contexts that could in principle allow FF. Moving along this empirical line of inquiry, and on the basis of the syntactic and prosodic evidence gathered through scrupulously designed experiments, we show that, as a matter of fact, neither contrast on the focus constituent nor givenness of the background material is a necessary condition for FF. We claim instead that the special interpretations associated with FF are the result of conventional implicatures (CIs) that are encoded in the syntactic structure. Our search for the trigger of FF ultimately turns into a quest for the trigger of the CIs associated with FF, which we take to be a syntactic feature that projects its own phrase in the left periphery of the sentence.

2. The syntactic experiment: Distributional evidence

We conducted a syntactic experiment on the acceptability of FF in Italian in three different contexts: *corrective*, *mirative* and *merely contrastive* contexts.¹ These contexts differ with respect to the status of the focus constituent (contrastive vs.

1. In Italian, the possibility of fronting the narrow information focus in answers to wh-questions is controversial (cf. Brunetti 2004; cf. Cruschina 2012 for an overview). An additional problem is that it is not always easy to exclude an unexpectedness interpretation of the answer with FF, which would fall under the case of mirative contexts (see below). For these reasons, we decided to leave this type of focus aside.

non-contrastive), as well as with regard to the status of the background material (given vs. non-given).

2.1 Corrective, mirative and merely contrastive contexts

We define corrective contexts as those contexts in which a reply containing the focus element corrects part of a previous assertion (Bianchi & Bocci 2012; Bianchi 2013). This conversational move corresponds to a specific use of contrastive focus, which can be characterized as contrast across utterances: the background of the fronted focus repeats verbatim the background of the corrected assertion (underlined in (2)), and cannot contain additional material (Bianchi 2013).

- (2) A: Hanno invitato Marina.
 have.3PL invited Marina
 ‘They invited Marina.’
- B: Giulia hanno invitato (, non Marina).
 Julie have.3PL invited not Marina
 ‘They invited Julie (, not Marina).’
- B’: Hanno invitato Giulia (, non Marina).
 have.3PL invited Julie not Marina
 ‘They invited Julie (, not Marina).’

Since it repeats part of the previous assertion, here the non-focal material is necessarily given. The corrective focus contrasts with the focus alternative expressed by the corrected assertion: the proposition ‘they invited Julie’ corrects the alternative proposition ‘they invited Marina’. Thus, in corrective contexts there is precisely one salient alternative that is active in the discourse: corrective foci are therefore contrastive.²

In mirative contexts, the fronted focus element is unexpected or surprising. This label is inspired by DeLancey’s (1997) definition of the category of mirativity, whereby the speaker expresses that the information she is asserting has been very recently acquired and is not yet integrated in her system of beliefs (Cruschina 2012, 117 ff.):

2. Although the introduction of a set of alternatives is common to all instances of focus (Rooth 1992), we maintain that contrastive foci differ from information foci in that the former, but not the latter, requires one other member of the set of alternatives to be salient in the context (see also Krifka 2007).