BARESE UNMARKED CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE CASE OF PREVERBAL INTRANSITIVE SUBJECTS

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1. Introduction

The present paper surveys the unmarked word orders available in simple declarative main clauses in Barese, a dialect of the Upper-South of Italy spoken in the city of Bari. In particular, a specific pragmatico-semantic behaviour can be observed with a subset of intransitive predicates licensing the fronting of usually post-verbal PATIENT subjects.

1.1. *Information structure: (un)markedness*

The concept of (un)markedness relies on the pragmatic weight borne by the informative content of a sentence or a constituent within the context of the discourse. Essential here is a brief introduction of the concepts of Topic (of the utterance; cf. Lambrecht 1994: 117–127) and Focus (informative comment on the Topic; cf. Lambrecht: 206–218). Following Lambrecht (1994: 127), Topic expresses a "pragmatically construed sentence relation" whereby a referent is related to a proposition about the referent itself, being this entity a "matter of standing current interest" of the utterance (see further §3). Conversely, Focus represents the informational novelty of the semantic relation that a constituent creates with the presupposition in the realm of the discourse. Non-contrastive, i.e. informational Focus can be identified in the answer to a WH-question (Krifka 2007: 21), usually implicit, yet derivable from the context. On the basis of the scope exerted on syntactic constituents, informational Focus can be subdivided into three types (Lambrecht 1994: 222–223):

– *argument-focus structure*, designating the identification of a specific referent within the utterance, i.e. narrow focus:

(1) *cə* *(st' a)* *ccóʃə* *Colinə?* (*Colínə cóʃə*)
what stay to cook Nick Nick cooks
[FOCUS ***u ppánə***] (*Colínə cóʃə*)
the bread Nick cooks
'What is Nick baking?' 'Nick bakes **bread**'

– *predicate-focus structure*, which provides a comment on the topic of conversation:

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(2) *cə* *(st' a)* *ffàʃə* *Colinə?* (*Colínə*)
what stay to do Nick Nick
[FOCUS ***cóʃə*** ***u ppánə***] (*Colínə*)
cooks the bread Nick
'What is Nick doing?' 'Nick **bakes bread**'

– *sentence-focus structure*, in which all the constituents bear the same pragmatic prominence inasmuch as they are all rhematic, i.e. broad focus:

(3) *cə* *(st' a)* *ssəccédə?* [FOCUS ***Colínə*** ***cóʃə*** ***u ppánə***]
what stay to happen Nick cooks the bread
'What happens / is happening?' '**Nick bakes bread**'

Only the last focus structure, elicited as a response to the out-of-the-blue question „what happened?" (Krifka 2007: 23), is said to reveal the unmarked word order of constituents.

2. Barese unmarked constructions

2.1. *Transitive predicates*

Barese displays S(ubject)V(erb)O(bject) unmarked word order in declarative transitive main clauses on a par with most modern (Italo-)Romance varieties. The derivation of a transitive clause such as (4) is given in the structural representation in (5):

(4) Ciccìllə vènnə u ppànə
Frankie sells the bread
'Frankie sells bread'

(5) $[_{(CP)}\ [_{TP}\text{Ciccìllə}_i\ [_T\text{vènnə}_j]\ [_{vP}\text{~~Ciccìllə~~}_i\ [_{v'}\text{~~vènnə~~}_j\ ]\ [_{VP}\ [_{V'}\text{~~vènnə~~}_j]\ [_{DP}\ [_{D'}\text{u}_D\text{ppànə}_N]]]]]]$

As seen in (5), we will only consider the material contained within the 'core' of the Barese sentence, excluding those cases in which constituents have been dislocated to discourse-related (i.e. left-peripheral (CP)) fields of the sentence.

Evidence for the claim that SVO is the neutral word order in Barese can be found in the sole felicity of SVO in (6a) to the question *c'ha státə/ssəccíəssə* 'what happened?' to elicit sentential focus:

(6) [*c'hastatə* / *səcciəssə?*]
'What happened?'

a. *Ciccìllə ha vvənnùtə u səttànə* SVO
Frankie has sold the house
'Frankie sold his street-level house'
b. ≠ *Ciccìllə u səttànə ha vvənnùtə* SOV
c. ≠ *ha vvənnùtə Ciccìllə u səttànə* VSO
d. ≠ *ha vvənnùtə u səttànə Ciccìllə* VOS
e. ≠ *u səttànə Ciccìllə ha vvənnùtə* OSV
f. ≠ *u səttànə ha vvənnùtə Ciccìllə* OVS

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We may now turn our attention to the nature and status of Barese subjects, prior to surveying the remaining classes of predicates.

2.1.1. *Barese subjects*

Like other central-southern Italo-Romance varieties, Barese is a null-subject language. Hence, pronominal subjects in Barese caneither be covert or overt in accordance with emphatic informational content in the discourse.

As for subject positions, here I follow Cardinaletti (2004: 121) who proposes that the preverbal subject field be split into three different projections: SubjectP, hosting semantic subjects (e.g. lexical or pronominal DP), and AgrSP, hosting weak / non-referential subjects (e.g. *pro*), with an intermediate EPP projection. The subject-dedicated positions are schematised in (7), adapted from Cardinaletti (2004: 154):

(7) SpecSubjP (Spec$_{EPP}$P) SpecAgrSP* … SpecVP/V-Comp

In (8) and (9) we provide derivations for Barese subjects with transitive / unergative and unaccusative predicates respectively:

(8) a. [$_{SubjP}$ *Sisìnə*$_i$ [$_{AgrSP}$ ~~*Sisìnə*~~$_i$ *arrəggèttə*$_j$ [$_{v\text{-}VP}$ ~~*Sisìnə*~~$_i$ ~~*arrəggèttə*~~$_j$ (*la càsə*)]]]
Teresina tidies up the house

b. [$_{SubjP}$ [$_{AgrSP}$ *pro*$_i$ *arrəggèttə*$_j$ [$_{v\text{-}VP}$ ~~*pro*~~$_i$ ~~*arrəggèttə*~~$_j$ (*la càsə*)]]]
tidies up the house

'Teresina / Ø tidies up (the house)'

(9) [$_{SubjP}$ [$_{EPPP}$ Ø$_{LOC}$ [$_{AgrSP}$ *arrìvə*$_i$ [$_{v\text{-}VP}$ ~~*arrìvə*~~$_i$ *u wuastafèstə*]]]
comes the killjoy

'The killjoy is coming'

Let us now introduce Barese intransitive predicates observed in (8b) and (9).

2.2. ***Intransitive predicates: a brief overview***

Traditionally, intransitives can be divided into two main classes, namely unergatives and unaccusatives (Perlmutter 1978), whose underlying structure is represented below:

(10) a. unergative */ (transitive)* [S_A [$_{VP}$ V (*O*)]
'John sings (*a gospel*)'

b. unaccusative [$_{VP}$ V S_O]
'John arrives'

One of the main distinctive traits of these classes is that unaccusative subjects (S_O) are PATIENTS / THEMES, generated in object position, unlike the agentive preverbal subjects (S_A) of unergatives. However, a subset of both unergatives and unaccusatives, whose event implies change-of-state or directionality, are claimed to „lexicalise a particular deictic orientation for the motion" (Levin, Rappaport-Hovav 1995: 241), e.g. a source, a goal, a static location. This

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is reflected in their unmarked word order, permitting subject inversion, as in (11) for unergatives and (12) for unaccusatives:

(11) *ha telefonato* *il dottore* (Unergative: VS_A)
has telephoned the doctor
'The doctor called (here)'

(12) *è arrivata una* *lettera* (Unaccusative: VS_O)
is arrived a letter
'A letter arrived (here)'

We will return to the behaviour of these predicates in §2.2.2 and §2.2.3.

2.2.1. *Unergative Predicates*

Unergatives share with transitives an identical underlying syntactic and thematic structure, i.e. SV(O), modulo the presence of an overt complement (Hale, Keyser 2002: 47). Consequently, the sole felicitous word order for sentential-focused unergatives is SV (13 / 14a), while VS (13 / 14b)yields argument focus on the S_A:

(13) [*c'ha statə* / *ssəcciəssə?*]
a. *Pasqualə ha* *ffadəgàtə* S_AV
Pasquale has worked
'Pasquale worked'
b. *≠ ha ffadəgàtə* *Pasqualə* VS_A
has worked Pasquale
'It is Pasquale who worked'

(14) [*c'ha statə* / *ssəcciəssə?*]
a. *La sróchə* *ha* *sparagnàtə* S_AV
the mother-in-law has saved
'The mother-in-law saved (money)'
b. *≠ ha sparagnàtə la sróchə* VS_A
has saved the mother-in-law
'It is the mother-in-law who saved (money)'

Below, however, we will observe that a limited set of null-LOC / TEMP unergative predicates allows VS in sentence-focus contexts.

2.2.2. *Unmarked VS word order: 'B-verbs'*

Prior to Levin (1993), Benincà (1988: 123–125) already noted that the interpretation of a subset of Italian unergatives (and unaccusatives) was semantically tied to the speaker's spatio-temporal coordinates, i.e. the 'here and now' (LOC / TEMP), causing subject inversion in sentence-focus contexts, as shown in (15) and (16):

(15) *ha telefonato* *Masiero* (LOC)VS_A (Benincà 2001: 138)
has phoned Masiero
'Masiero called (here/now)'

(16) *ha suonato* *il postino* (LOC)VS_A
has rung the mailman
'The mailman rung (here / now)'

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I will refer to this subset of null-LOC / TEMP predicates as 'Benincà verbs' (B-verbs henceforth). Following Benincà's intuition, Pinto (1997) suggests that the SV variants of (15) and (16) *Masiero ha telefonato* and *Il postino ha suonato* simply imply underspecification of time and place. Striking evidence in support of the claim that VS semantically entails a deictic reading is found in Borgomanerese, a Piedmontese dialect (Tortora 1997, 1998, 2001). In this dialect, the usually covert LOC argument (assumed for Italian in examples (15)–(16)) is overtly realised in the syntax:

(17)	*ngh*	*è rivà*	*-gghi*	*na fjola*	LOC1-V-LOC2-S_O
	LocSCl	is arrived	LocCl	a girl	
	'A girl arrived (here)'		(Tortora 2001: 317)		
(18)	*na fjola*	*l*	*è*	*rivà*	S_OV
	a girl	SCl	is	arrived	
	'A girl arrived'			(Tortora 2001: 318)	

Example (17) shows the VS order in which an overt LOC subject clitic (LocSCl) lexicalises the preverbal position and is doubled by the genuine LOC clitic (LocCl), encliticised onto the verb. By contrast, the SV configuration in (18) does not license the LOC clitic, which is replaced by the regular subject clitic (SCl).

In (19 / 20b) we see that sentence-focused Barese B-verbs license a covert LOC in VS configuration, beside the expected unergative SV orders in (19 / 20a):

(19)	[*c'hastatə / səccìəssə?*]					
	a.	*Giuwannə*	*ha ttələfonàtə*			S_AV
		John	has called			
		'John called'				
	b.	*(mo'/*	*ddó)*	*ha ttəlefonàtə*	*Giuwannə*	(LOC)VS_A
		now	here	has called	John	
		'John called (now / here)'				
(20)	[*c'hastatə* / *səccìəssə?*]					
	a.	*Gisèllə ha ttəzzuàtə*				S_AV
		Gisella has knocked				
		'Gisella knocked''				
	b.	(*mo'/*	*ddó*)	*ha ttəzzuàtə*	*Gisèllə*	(LOV)VS_A
		now	here	has knocked	Gisella	
		'Gisella knocked (now / here)'				

In §3, we shall see that Barese B-verbs in SV configurations do not merely convey loco-temporal under-specification of the event, but that they also contribute to the pragmatic saliency of the pre-verbal subject.

I conclude this survey with unmarked unaccusative predicates in Barese, the majority of which function as B-verbs.

2.2.3. *Unaccusative predicates*

On a par with unergative B-verbs, Barese unaccusatives allow both word-order combinations with sentential focus. In Romance, unaccusatives generally display the neutral VS_O order, whereas in Barese the opposite S_OV order also proves felicitous in unmarked contexts. This is shown in (21)-(22), accompanied by a context description.

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(*Two ladies, A and B, are both busy knitting on the streets. Suddenly, A stops and lifts her head up; B asks*)

(21) [*pərcétə sì affərmàtə,* *c'ha statə* / *ssəccìəssə?*]
'Why did you stop, what happened?'

a. *Marìjə ha 'rrəvàtə* S_OV
Mary has arrived

b. *ha 'rrəvàtə Marìjə* VS_O
has arrived Mary
'Mary arrived'

(*A mother goes to visit her daughter to tell her some news about the American side of the family, whom the daughter has never met. The mother sits and starts to cry. The daughter asks*)

(22) [*pərcé st'acchiàngə,* *c'ha statə / ssəccìəssə?*]
'Why are you crying, what happened?'

a. *U ddziànə ha mmuèrtə* S_OV
the uncle has died

b. *Ha mmuèrtə u ddziànə* VS_O
has died the uncle
'The uncle died'

Both word orders are felicitous. However, The S_OV word order in (21a) and (22a) requires an in-depth discussion, which is undertaken in §3. As expected, the answers in (21b) and (22b) respectively convey a deictic locative and temporal reading (Pinto 1997: 24), which readily patterns with the general prediction for B-verbs VS_O configuration.

Benincà (2001: 139) claims that this silent deictic argument assumes the function of given theme, thereby satisfying the EPP-feature. This derives the post-verbal surface position of the subject which does not receive a narrow focus reading, but constitutes part of the sentence focus. Consequently, the utterance is still unmarked from a pragmatic point of view, despite effectively displaying syntactic markedness.

2.2.3.1. *B-verb's null-LOC / TEMPs as multiple-feature instantiations*

Analysing Ibero-Romance inversion structures, Corr (2012) identifies the fine-grained features involved in null-LOC / TEMP constructions, which are in turn coded by dedicated syntactic projections in a multi-layered PP structure. These projections are: SourceP (e.g. 'to exit', 'to go away'), DeixisP (e.g. 'to come', 'to call'), GoalP (e.g. 'to enter', 'to die') and LocationP (e.g. 'to cry', 'to shout'):

Type of P	Projections / Features	Verbs
SourceP	Source, Deixis, Goal, Location	*salir / sair; irse*
DeixisP	Deixis, Goal, Location	*venire / vir; llamar / ligar*
GoalP	Goal, Location	*entrar; morir / morrir / morrer*
LocationP	Location	*llorar; gritar; dimitir*

(Corr 2012: 40)

To convey one of these speaker-oriented loco-temporal readings, B-verbs c-select a subtype of LOC / TEMP feature, restricting subject movement. In Barese, on the other hand,

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we see the availability of all such projections (i.e. SourceP, DeixisP, GoalP and LocationP), thus presenting the full range of possibilities for loco-temporal VS inversions shown in(23)-(26):

(23) SourceP:
ha ‘ssutə *Pəppìnə* (LOC)VS_O
has left / gone out Giuseppe
‘Giuseppe left (now / from here)’

(24) DeixisP:
ha vvənùtə zìttə-mə (LOC)VS_O
has come girlfriend-my
‘My girlfriend arrived (now / here)’

(25) GoalP:
ha ttrasùtə u professórə (LOC)VS_O
has entered the professor
‘The professor came in (now / here)’

(26) LocationP (unergative):
ha ʃkamàtə u pəsciarùlə (LOC)VS_A
has shouted the fishmonger
‘The fishmonger shouted (now / here)’

Let us now focus on the case of preverbal subjects of B-verbs in sentential focus.

3. The case of preverbal subjects in Barese B-verbs

From my survey, we have seen that both pre- and post-verbal subjects of Barese B-verbs are felicitous in the scope of sentence focus. This is directly linked to two different pragmatico-semantic readings of the context. In this respect, let us reconsider the example in (27):

(*A mother goes to visit her daughter to tell her news about the American side of the family, whom the daughter has never met. The mother sits down and starts to cry, and the daughter asks*)

(27) [*pərcé st’a cchiàngə,* *c’ha statə / ssəccìəssə?*]
‘Why are you crying, what happened?’

a. *u ddziànə ha mmuèrtə* S_OV
the uncle has died
‘The uncle died’

b. *ha mmuèrtə* *u ddziànə* (LOC)VS_O
has died the uncle
‘The uncle died (recently in time)’

In the case of VS word order, Barese patterns with a wide range of Romance languages, implying a null-LOC / TEMP argument responsible for the deictic reading of the utterance. By contrast, SV obtains whenever the subject is mentally accessible (i.e. part of the common ground) to the interlocutors involved in the speech act. Here I argue that unmarked SV is licensed by the presence of a pragmatico-semantic feature encoded in these subjects: their overt pre-verbal position is determined on pragmatic grounds which activate a non-canonical subject position for Barese B-verbs within the core of the sentence. Further evidence for the

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unmarked nature of SVc an be found in the sentence-focal prosodic stress placed on the whole utterance, and in the fact that no topicalised or other constituents (cf. 28a) can interrupt the adjacency between the preverbal subject and its finite verb. The only exceptions to this are clitics (28b), negation and intervening adverbs (28c):

(28) [*c'ha statə* / *ssəccìəssə?*]

a. *≠U dziànə* ***de təmórə*** *ha mmuèrtə*
the uncle of tumour has died
[< *Ccom'jé cch'ha mmuèrtə u ddziànə?*]
how is that has died the uncle
'The uncle died of tumour' 'How did the uncle die?'

b. *u ddziànə ngə* *ha mmuèrtə* *(a Ccolìnə)*
the uncle to him.DAT.CL has died to Nicola
'Nicola's uncle died'

c. *màmətə* *angórə* *nònn'* *ha 'rrəvàtə*
Mum-yours yet not has arrived
'Your mother hasn't arrived yet'

Given these facts, I argue that such preverbal subjects lexicalise an A-position, namely Cardinaletti's (2004) position for semantic subjects (SpecSubjP), instead of a A'-position. In fact, the evidence of (28a) excludes the possibility of a left-peripheral dislocation of the subject in the lowest topic projection of the CP domain, as described by Frascarelli, Hinterhöltzl (2004: 4): the "familiarity topic", given and accessible (cf. Chafe 1987). Despite the deep conceptual similarities shared between the two types of topical information, these Barese subjects are exclusively fronted in the case of thetic sentences[1], revealing no signs of pragmatic markedness.

3.1. *A type of topic within a sentential focus*

This pre-verbal position in examples such as (27a) is activated on the basis of the availability of the referent of the subject within the interlocutors' common ground. Conversely, the subject will prove infelicitous in pre-verbal position whenever one interlocutor is not able to trace any cognitive relationship of "givenness", "familiarity" or "referentiality" with the referent of the subject.

These pre-verbal subjects can be considered topical instantiations, despite their occurrence in the scope of sentential focus. Nonetheless, the type of topic dealt with here differs from the Clitic Left-Dislocation structures found in Barese or other Romance varieties (cf. Cinque 1990).

3.2. *The 'Topic Acceptability Scale'*

Lambrecht (1994: 165) individuates a "Topic Acceptability Scale", reproduced in (29), representing the different levels of acceptability for the computation of the topical information in the interlocutor's minds:

(29) Active (Most acceptable)
Accessible

[1] This assumption does not exclude the correlation between the two adjacent positions, which is left open for further research.

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Unused
Brand-new anchored
Brand-new unanchored (Least acceptable)

The levels of acceptability in the scale are directly proportional to the effort of the hearer to process / access / retrieve the topical information: if the topic is still active in the interlocutors' information 'storage', it will rank as most acceptable, and vice-versa.

The aim of the next section is to provide a range of suitable referents for each level of acceptability and see which ones allow the topical subjects of Barese B-verbs to appear in preverbal position.

3.2.1. *Active information*

Lambrecht (1994) describes "active" topics as present, effortlessly retrievable, immediately accessible and relevant in their propositional domain shared by the participants of the conversation. He points out that the concept of activation implies the speaker's judgement in relation to what s/he expects to be active in the hearer's mind. Understandably, a set of entities cannot stay constantly active: the moment in which another item becomes activated, the former will pass its status onto the new activated item. Active topics are prone to pronominalisation or phonologically null realisation, as shown in (30), where an 'active' topic in Barese is realised by means of a null *pro*:

(30) *so'* *ccangiàtə u vìdrə* *e* *Ø*
am changed the glass and *pro*
s'ha *ʃcattàtə arrétə*
self=has destroyed again
'I replaced the glass and it broke again'

3.2.2. *Accessible information*

One level down the Topic Acceptability Scale, we find the more complex concept of "accessibility" (or "semi-activeness" in Chafe's terms), which thus excludes the genuine "active" state of a given item. Lambrecht (1994: 100) further distinguishes, in turn, three different subclasses of 'accessible topics', for which I provide relevant examples in Barese:

– *Textually accessible*: a referent whose state has recently been deactivated in the discourse:

(31) A: *Marìjə s'avévə mìəsə'nzìəmə a Ccolìnə…*
'Mary got together with Nick…'
B: *e c'ha səccìəssə?*
'What happened then?'
A: *Marìjə* *ha sparəsciùtə* S_OV
Mary has disappeared
'Mary disappeared'

The subject *Marìjə* abandons its "activation status" once the new informationally focused item *Colìnə* is introduced and thus activated. In the answer *Marìjə ha sparəsciùtə*, 'Mary disappeared', the recently deactivated subject is still textually accessible and the sentence-focused utterance will therefore be felicitous with a preverbal subject.

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– *Inferentially accessible*: a referent which is accessible through inference from some other active or accessible material in the discourse (both linguistic and extra-linguistic context):

(32) A: *c'ha seccìəssə? Sə n'ha ʃutə la lùʃə a ccàssətə?*
'What happened? A black-out in your place?'
B: *la lambadinə s'* *ha ʃcattàtə* S_OV
the light bulb self= has exploded
'The light bulb exploded'

In the case of (32), the previously unmentioned referent 'light bulb' becomes accessible to the hearer once the information 'black-out' (literally: 'electricity has left') is first activated, which renders the event of a 'light bulb exploding' accessible through deduction. Moreover, the pitch darkness in which the addressee finds himself / herself makes the *light bulb* an active / accessible referent.

– *Situationally accessible*: a referent which is present in the text-external world:

(33) (*There's a car accident: a car with a French registration has crashed and the driver is lying on the ground without moving. Both A and B paid attention to both these details while driving in the other direction*)
A: *mado', c'ha seccìəssə?*
'Oh my God, what happened?'
B: *nu frangésə* *ha mmuertə* S_OV
afrenchman has died
'A Frenchman died'

Morphologically, we would expect a non-topical subject such as "a Frenchman", indefinite and 'unanchored' to any focal determiner, to be inactive and therefore barely acceptable whenever occurring in a thetic answer. However, in this case the „Frenchman" does have a referent in both interlocutors' minds since they were both eyewitnesses, as part of text-external world, to the fact that such a Frenchman died in a car accident.

Consider now the case in which only the driver (34B) realises that the car registration is foreign and the passenger (34A) only notices a person lying dead on the ground but not his geographical provenance:

(34) A: *c'ha stàtə?*
'What happened?'
B: *nu crəstiànə* / *≠nu fərəstìərə* *ha mmuertə* S_OV
A person a foreigner has died
'A person / a foreigner died'

The only felicitous preverbal subject turns out to be *nu crəstiànə* 'a person', being the only easily-accessible referent activated in the hearer's mind through text-external information, i.e. eye-witnessing of the event. In the reply with *nu fərəstìərə* 'a foreigner', the hearer would not be able to individuate the referent in question, as s/he does not share the sufficient amount of extra-linguistic information, i.e. [+foreigner], to be able correctly qualify the person who died in the car accident. Thus, the answer *nu fərəstìərə* 'a foreigner' is not be

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sufficient for the hearer to substantiate theadditional inaccessible information, unlike the more readily "situationally accessible" *nu crəstiànə* 'a person': the former is contained in the superset of 'people', and if this semantic property [+foreigner] is no longer shared by both interlocutors, it will produce an identifiable referent in the mind of the hearer.

3.2.3. *'Unused' information*

Let us now test the 'unused' topical information: these types of referent are still – remotely – identifiable in the mental imagery of the interlocutors, but they are not active.

(35) (*The nephew notices that his grandfather, a fan of Mina (Italian singer of the '60s), is sad for some reason*)

A: *c'ha statə?*
'What's the matter?'

B: *Mina ha sparəʃùtə* S_OV
Mina has disappeared
'Mina disappeared (i.e. is missing)'

The preverbal subject *Mina*, completely inactive and stored distantly somewhere in the memory of the nephew, can felicitously occur in sentence-initial position only because the nephew knows who the grandfather's favourite singer is, and thus access the unused topical information his grandfather is referring to. Were the grandfather referring to the disappearance of one of his long-forgotten school friends, the nephew would encounter difficulties in recognising the referent in question and would need to ask for further clarification to individuate her, i.e. the sentence in (35B) would be infelicitous.

As a final example of non-accessibility of a preverbal subject, consider the bizarre context in which 'the light bulb' in (36B), were to be introduced out of the blue, during a mountain hike: one interlocutor is pensive, then suddenly stops walking and the other one asks:

(36) A: *c'ha statə?*
'What's the matter?'

B: *≠na/la l ambadinə s'ha ʃcattàtə* S_OV
a / the light bulb self=has exploded
'A / the light bulb exploded'

Speaker A can by no means have the referent 'light bulb' active or accessible in his mind and the utterance in B would in fact be contextually nonsensical to speaker A.

3.3. ***The Syntax of Barese preverbal subjects of B-verbs***

So far, we have seen that only those (active, accessible and unused) topical subjects will be able to surface in preverbal position, in contrast to the more common prediction of post-verbal subject placement with B-verbs. Here I argue that Barese preverbal subject position is activated due to the [+accessible] feature encoded in the subject: this feature is the main driving force for the subject to be pied-piped to the specifier of 'subject-of-the-predication' projection.

Semantic features determine the interpretation of certain semantic properties encoded in the elements of the discourse and are usually triggers for movement (e.g. 'specificity' in the

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case of prepositional accusative: Torrego (1998) for Spanish; Ledgeway (2000) for Neapolitan; Andriani (2011) for Barese *inter alia*). Likewise, the [±accessible] feature encodes a pragmatico-semantic function which determines the processing of accessible information in the interlocutors' minds, more specifically in their shared common ground of the conversation. Conceptually, the [+accessible] subject is assumed by both interlocutor to pertain to the intersecting set, the common ground, of their encyclopaedic knowledge: this intersection will contain the common information accessible by both speakers, who will be able to identify unambiguously the referent, be it unique (one precise item of the intersection set) or exhaustive (an entire class / collection of items within the intersection set).

Intuitively, accessibility entails "referentiality" and "specificity", though it relates to the discourse-external world rather than being confined to the text-internal domain. Cardinaletti (2004: 121) suggests that "referentiality" be encoded in the semantics of the preverbal highest subject position (SpecSubjP), where 'strong' semantic subjects are attracted. On the basis of these intuitions, I claim that the semantic prominence, i.e. [accessibility], of the subjects of B-verbs is structurally reflected / marked in Barese syntax by subject raising to a dedicated semantic-related preverbal position. I argue that the head responsible for [+accessible] feature checking is Subj°, which heads the SubjP projection in (37).The fact that the syntax of Barese B-verbs overtly encodes the accessibility of subjects via raising could be extended to all strong subjects of other verb classes raising to SpecSubjP.

In VS construction, by contrast, the [+accessible] feature is not present and cannot trigger subject fronting due to the overriding presence of the null-LOC / TEMP occupying the preverbal subject position. However, the null-LOC / TEMP configuration does not necessarily entail the inaccessibility of the subject. Here is the syntactic structure of the example (37):

(37) $[_{\text{SubjP}}\ [_{\text{EPPP}}\ \text{Ø}_{\text{LOC}}\ [_{\text{AgrSP}}\ \textit{ha mmuèrtə}_{\text{i}}\ [_{v\text{-VP}}\ \sout{\textit{mmuèrtə}}_{\text{i}}\ \textit{u ddziànə}]]]$
has died the uncle
'The uncle died (in recent times)'

Whenever the LOC / TEMP argument is not selected, the EPP-feature will require checking. Therefore, the [+accessible] subject will act as the satisfier of the EPP as it raises to check [+accessible] and [+subject of predication] features on Subj°, after which it will be 'frozen in place' (SpecSubjP) for its criterion is met (Rizzi 2004).

The lack of a loco-temporal reading does not entail the underspecification of direction of motion (a rather poor option as far as semantic content is concerned), but, rather, the semantic property of the subject being interpreted as accessible to the interlocutors.

The two main driving forces that cause these Barese subjects to be pied-piped from the V-complement position are the need to check an [+EPP] feature (for structural reasons) and a [+accessible] feature (due to pragmatico-semantic informational factors) on EPP° and Subj°, respectively. At the same time, nominative will be assigned by means of long-distance agreement by AgrS°, whose specifier will be the very first landing site of the subject outside the *v*-VP-domain. The derivation of (38), given in (39), captures the movement of the subject:

(38) *u ddziànə ha mmuèrtə*
the uncle has died
'The uncle died'

(39) $[_{\text{SubjP}}\ \textit{u ddziànə}_{\text{i [+ accessible]}}\ [_{\text{EPPP}}\ \sout{\textit{u ddziànə}}_{\text{i}}\ [_{\text{AgrSP}}\ \sout{\textit{u ddziànə}}_{\text{i}}\ \textit{ha mmuèrtə}_{\text{j}}\ [_{v\text{-VP}}\ \sout{\textit{u ddziànə}}_{\text{i}}\ \sout{\textit{mmuèrtə}}_{\text{j}}]]]$

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We conclude by noting that Barese syntactically encodes the semantic feature of [±accessibility] of referents by means of overt subject raising to a preverbal position: once the subject is attracted to preverbal position, it will be interpreted as accessible. In this respect, it is striking to note how Barese differs from other Romance varieties, such as Italian and Spanish, in which the [accessible] feature in such contexts is systematically overridden by the LOC / TEMP reading, without being accessible to the narrow syntax as a single, individual feature. These facts lead us to consider Barese as more inclined to discourse-configurationality (Topic-oriented) than other Romance varieties: we have seen that SubjP, normally left unused in most Romance varieties with a specific subset of intransitive predicates, in Barese serves as an alternative to host subjects receiving a particular pragmatico-semantic reading indicating accessibility in the interlocutor's knowledge.

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BARESE UNMARKED CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE CASE OF PREVERBAL INTRANSITIVE SUBJECTS

(*Abstract*)

In the survey of pragmatically unmarked sentential word orders of Barese, a dialect of the Upper-South of Italy, we come across a pragmatico-semantic phenomenon involving the fronting of a subset of intransitive subjects, which generally surface post-verbally in many (Italo-)Romance varieties. I argue that the availability of both pre- and post-verbal intransitive subject positions in Barese responds to two different semantic requirements: the ability to access the relevant information by both interlocutors, which triggers subject-fronting, and the covert presence of a pre-verbal loco-temporal deictic argument, which blocks subject-fronting. The latter situation is extensively discussed in the literature, whereas the former has always gone unnoticed. I discuss the fine-grained semantics of such fronted subject by means of Lambrecht's (1994) 'Topic Acceptability Scale', in order to capture the pragmatico-semantic mechanism that determines the fronting of 'accessible' information to both interlocutors.

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