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# TopicPs and Relativised Minimality in Mòcheno left periphery

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In this work I will take into consideration the high left periphery of the Tyrolean dialect Mòcheno, showing that in this language, unexpectedly under the latest version of Relativised Minimality in terms of features (Rizzi 2004), Relativised Minimality effects are found between a topic and a focus, but not between a wh-element and a topic. In my work I will show that this asymmetry inside the Quantificational class is due to the structure of Mòcheno left periphery and should not be taken as evidence in favour of the need of a split inside the Quantificational class. Looking at the structure of the topic fields activated by operators in Mòcheno, I will propose that in this language Relativised Minimality effects between two XPs belonging to two different featural classes do not occur if two conditions are met: i) the two XPs belong to two different featural classes; ii) TopicPs dedicated to constituent categories (strictly ordered one with respect to the other) are available. In the last part of the work I will bring evidence in favour of the idea that also in Romance (Italian) TopicPs are strictly ordered, even if this is not immediately visible due to topic free order.

## 1. Introduction*

In this paper I will propose, taking into consideration the left periphery of the Tyrolean dialect Mòcheno, that Relativised Minimality (RM) effects cannot be captured only in terms of features (Rizzi 2004) or subfeatures (Friedmann, Belletti and Rizzi 2009), but that belonging of the XPs to two different featural classes has to co-occur with a condition on the structure, namely the availability of TopicPs dedicated to constituent categories. This condition can only be met if the structure allows for multiple Topics.

In Mòcheno RM violations are found between a focus and a topic but not between a wh-element and a topic, which is unexpected under Rizzi's (2004) latest version of RM, according to which RM effects can arise only among XPs belonging to the same featural class, listed in (1).

(1) a. **Argumental**: person, number, gender, case...
b. **Quantificational**: wh-, neg, measure, focus...
c. **Modifier**: evaluative, epistemic, Neg, frequentative...
d. **Topic**

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As we will see, the distribution of RM effects between Topics and XPs belonging to the Quantificational class is one property of a cluster distinguishing foci and wh- elements and involving: i) number of TopicPs available above the Operator; ii) specialization of TopicPs for constituent categories.

The article is organised as follows. In section 2., after a brief sketch of Mòcheno left periphery, I will introduce the relevant data concerning RM. In section 2.3. I will discuss the asymmetries concerning the distribution of RM proposing a refinement of the structure of Mòcheno left periphery; in particular I will propose that foci and wh-elements show up in two OperatorPs. In this way, no split inside the Quantificational class will be called for. In section 3, capitalizing on the findings of section 2, I will tackle the question of RM, analysing the different structural configurations activated by the two operators. I will show that in Mòcheno belonging to two different featural classes is not a sufficient condition in order for RM not to arise, but has to co-occur with the availability of TopicPs dedicated to constituent categories. In subsection 3.4, I will face the question of whether this structural requirement is found only in Mòcheno or could be valid also for Romance. In section 4. I will sum up the main results of the paper.

## 2. RM violation and OpPs in Mòcheno left periphery

In this section I will introduce the main data concerning RM between XPs belonging to different featural classes in Mòcheno. Before doing so, I will briefly sketch the main characteristics of Mòcheno left periphery.

Mòcheno is a V2 language of Old Romance type (Benincà 2006, Cognola 2009b); this means that more than one XP can precede the one triggering subject-verb inversion (2a,c). What is more, in Mòcheno subject-verb inversion seems to be optional (but see below) with NP subjects (2b), and obligatory only with pronouns (2d).

(2) a. *Gester vour de kirch van Nane hot der Mario klofft*
yesterday in front of the church of-the John has Mario spoken
b. *Gester vour de kirch der Mario van Nane hot klofft*
yesterday in front of-the church the Mario of-the John has spoken
'Yesterday in front of the church Mario spoke of John.'
c. *Gester vour de kirch van Nane hot-er klofft*
yesterday in front of the church of-the John has-SUBJ PRON spoken
d. **Gester vour de kirch van Nane er-hot klofft*
yesterday in front of the church of-the John SUBJ PRON-has spoken
'Yesterday in front of the church he spoke of John.'

Sentences involving an operator (focus or interrogative wh-element) are V2 as well (3).

(3) a. *A PUACH hot-er gem en Nane (ont net a penna)*
a book has-SUBJ PRON given to John (and not a pen)
b. **A PUACH er hot gem en Nane*
a book SUBJ PRON-has given to John (and not a pen)
'It was a book that he gave John, not a pen.'



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c. *Bos hot-er kaft en de boteig?*
what has-SUBJ CL bought in the shop
d.**Bos er-hot kaft en de boteig?*
what SUBJ CL-has bought in the shop
'What did he buy in the shop?'

Topicalised XPs have to show up before the Operator (4); resumption of topicalised arguments is obligatory (4b,d).

(4) a.**A PUACH de Maria$_j$ hot-sa$_j$ gem en Nane (ont net a penna)*
a book the Mary has-SUBJ CL given to John, and not a pen
b. *De Maria$_j$, A PUACH hot-*(sa$_j$) gem en Nane (ont net a penna)*
the Mary a book has-SUBJ CL given to John, and not a pen
'It was a book that Mary gave John, not a pen.'
c.**Gester benn der Nane$_j$ hot-er-en$_j$ pakemmt?*
when the John has-SUBJ CL-ACC CL met
d. *Gester der Nane$_j$, benn hot-er-*(en$_j$) pakemmt?*
yesterday the John when has-SUBJ CL-ACC CL met
'When did he meet John yesterday?'

We can summarise the data seen so far in the structure in (5), which are in line with the proposals made in the literature concerning the structure of the left periphery (among others Rizzi 1997, Benincà/Poletto 2004). The V2 constraint is triggered by an XP with Operator properties (either a contrastive focus or an interrogative wh-element, as in (4) or a new information focus, as in (3)) which moves into one position of the Focus field. Topicalised XPs precede.

(5) [$_{\text{TOPICFIELD}}$ [**XP**] [**XP**] [**XP**] [$_{\text{FOCUS-FIELD}}$ [$_{\text{FOCUSCONTRP}}$ **XP**][**V$_{+\text{fin}}$**]/[$_{\text{NEWINFOFOCUS}}$ **XP**][**V$_{+\text{fin}}$**] /[$_{\text{INTERRP}}$ **wh-**] [**V$_{+\text{fin}}$**]]]]

In what follows, I will present the data concerning RM violations, which are found between a focus and a topic, but not between a wh-element and a topic. These data will lead to reconsider the structure of Mòcheno left periphery given in (5) and to propose a refinement of it.

*2.1. RM violations between a topic and a focus*
Surprisingly under the definition of the conditions under which RM applies given in (1), RM violations arise between a Focus and a Topic. RM effects between a focused and a topicalised argument arise starting out from the reconstructed underlying order of arguments given in (6)[1]:

(6) [$_{\text{TOPIC}}$ [$_{\text{FOCUS}}$ [... [$_{\text{FP}}$ **SUBJ** [$_{\text{FP}}$ **IO** [$_{\text{FP}}$ **DO** ]]]]]]

As shown in (7a,b), a focused DO can be preceded by both topicalised arguments. The XP showing up in the position above highOpP has to be considered a Topic; evidence in this direction comes from both pragmatics, since the XP preceding a focus has to have already been introduced in the conversation and corresponds to an aboutness Topic (Reihnart 1981,

[1] This order does not correspond to the unmarked order of DO and IO in an unmarked sentence.



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Frascarelli/Hinterhölzl 2007) or a hanging Topic, and from syntax, since pronominal doubling is obligatory[2].

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

In the case it is the IO to be focalised, it can only be preceded by a topicalised subject (8a) and not by a DO (8b), as predicted by the underlying order of the arguments given above.

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

The last prediction made from the order of arguments given above is that a focused subject cannot be preceded by any topicalised argument; this prediction is borne out, as shown in (9).

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

The data above (7 to 9) have shown that RM violations arise between two XPs belonging to two diffenent subclasses, even though they clearly bear different features. In the next subsection, I will take into consideration the co-occurrences of a topic and a wh-element, showing that in this case no RM violations arise.

*2.2 Lack of RM violations between a wh-element and a topic*

In this subsection I will show that no RM violations are found between an interrogative wh-element and a topic starting out from the same underlying order of arguments given above in (6) and repeated below in (10).

[2] In this work I will not consider the similarities between the highest TopicP and the hanging-topic position (see Cognola 2009a on this), since this matter is not central for the discussion here. Considering the highest TopicP the hanging-topicP would not help shed light on the RM facts, since both an analysis of hanging-topics in terms of base-generation (Cinque 1977) and in terms of movement (Belletti 2008) do not predict, on the basis of different arguments, that RM between the hanging-topic and an operator might take place.



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(10) [TOPIC [INTERRWH- [... [FP **SUBJ** [FP **IO** [FP **DO** ]]]]]]

A wh-element with DO theta role can be preceded by both topicalised arguments[3]; the same is found also with a wh-phrase[4].

(11) a. *Gester der Mario$_j$ ber hot-er$_j$ pakemmt?*
yesterday the Mario-SUBJ who-DO has-SUBJ PRON met
'Who did Mario meet yesterday?'
b. *Gester en de Maria$_j$ ber hot-er$_i$-en$_j$ vourstellt der Nane$_i$?*
yesterday to the Mary who-DO has-SUBJ PRON-DAT PRON introduced the John
'Who did John introduce to Mary yesterday?'
c. *Gester der Mario$_j$ s bail dierndel hot-er$_j$ pakemmt?*
yesterday the Mario the which girl-DO has-SUBJ PRON met
'Which girl did Mario meet yesterday?'
d. *Gester en de Maria$_j$, s bail dierndl hot-er$_i$-en$_j$ vourstellt der Nane$_i$?*
yesterday to the Mary the which girl-DO has-SUBJ PRON-DAT PRON introduced the John
'Which girl did John introduce to Mary yesterday?'

A wh-element (12a,b) or a wh-phrase (12c,d) with IO theta role can be preceded by both topicalised arguments.

(12) a. *Gester der Mario$_j$, en bem hot-er$_j$ vourstellt der Nane?*
yesterday the Mario to whom-IO has-SUBJ PRON introduced the John
'Who did Mario introduce John to yesterday?'
b. *Gester der pustin$_j$, en bem hoso-en$_j$ vourstellt?*
yesterday the postman to whom-IO have-SUBJ CL-ACCCL introduced
'Who did you introduce the postman to yesterday?'
c. *Gester der Mario$_j$, en s bail diernel hot-er$_j$ vourstellt der Nane?*
yesterday the Mario to the which girl-IO has-SUBJ PRON introduced the John
'Which girl did Mario introduce John to yesterday?'
d. *Gester der pustin$_j$, en s bail diernel hoso-en$_j$ vourstellt?*
yesterday the postman to the which girl-IO have-SUBJ CL-ACC CL introduced
'Which girl did you introduce the postman to yesterday?'

A wh-element (13a,b) or a wh-phrase (13c,d) with SUBJ theta role can be preceded by both topicalised arguments.

(13) a. *Gester der Mario$_j$, ber hot-en$_j$ zechen?*
yesterday the Mario, who-SUBJ has-ACC PRON seen
'Who saw Mario yesterday?'
b. *Gester en der pustin$_j$, ber hot-en$_j$ gem a puach?*
yesterday to the postman who-SUBJ has-DAT PRON given a book
'Who gave the postman a book yesterday?'

[3] I consider only sentences beginning with a scene setter in order to avoid the hanging topic.
[4] Wh-phrases are taken into consideration in order to check for RM violations due to subfeatures, as proposed by Friedmann, Belletti and Rizzi (2009).



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c. *Gester der Mario$_j$, s bail dierndel hot-en$_j$ zechen?*
yesterday the Mario, the which girl-SUBJ has-ACC PRON seen
'Which girl saw Mario yesterday?'
d. *Gester en der pustin$_j$, s bail dierndel hot-en$_j$ gem a puach?*
yesterday to the postman the which girl-SUBJ has-DAT PRON given a book
'Which girl gave the postman a book yesterday?'

In this subsection I have shown that no RM violations are found between wh-elements and topics and that all combinations predicted from the structure in (10) are possible. This finding is unexpected both under the definition of RM given in (1) and from the structure of Mòcheno left periphery given in (6). In what follows I will propose a solution for this latter question, namely for the asymmetry inside the Quantificational class.

*2.3. On the position of Operators*

We saw in the previous two subsections that RM violations arise between a focus and a topic but not between a wh-element and a topic. I do not think that this has to be taken as a piece of evidence in favour of the necessity of a split inside the Quantificational class, but for the fact that in Mòcheno Operators show up in two different positions in the left periphery and build a different configuration with their topics. This idea is not new, since it has already been noticed (Poletto (2002) on the V2 Rhaetoromance dialect of S. Leonardo) that foci can trigger V2 in a different, namely higher, position than wh-elements. The claim that foci and wh-elements show up in different OperatorPs (OpPs) does not make sense of the distribution of RM effects in Mòcheno, but allows at least to get rid of one problem, namely the asymmetry inside the Quantificational class, and to better define the area of the structure involved in determining RM.

In order to support the claim that foci and wh-elements show up in two different OpPs in Mòcheno, I will bring two pieces of evidence. The first one is the possibility for Operators of co-occurring with several topics, which, according to the structure given in (10), should not be ruled out. As shown in (14), wh-elements can co-occur with several topics on their left.

(14) a. *[Gester][der Luca$_i$][en de Maria]* ***bos*** *hot-er$_i$ trog?*
yesterday the Luca to the Mary what has-SUBJ CL brought
'What did Luca bring Mary yesterday?'
b. *Gester der Luca$_j$ petn Nane bo hot-er$_j$ kaft s puach?*
yesterday the Luca with-the John where has-SUBJ CL bought the book
'Where did Luca buy the book with John yesterday?'

Foci, on the contrary, are grammatical with only one topicalised XP on their left (15).

(15) a.**[Gester][der Luca$_i$]* ***EN DE MARIA*** *hot-er$_i$ trog s puach, ont net en Nane*
yesterday the Luca to the Mary has-SUBJ CL brought the book and not to John
'It was to Mary that Luca brought the book yesterday, not to John.'



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b. *En de Maria Z PUACH hone-en trog, ont net de penna*
to the Mary a book have-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought, and not a pen
'It was a book that I brought Mary, not a pen.'

The second piece of evidence in favour of the idea that foci and wh-elements show up in two different OpPs comes from the syntactic behaviour of NP subjects. Only foci allow for an NP subject (without clitic doubler) to show up immediately after the finite verb (16a), even though this is not obligatory (16b)[5]; wh-elements on the other hand only allow for the dislocated[6] NP subject (16c,d).

(16) a. *EN DE MARIA hot der Nane kaft s puach ont net en Mario*
to the Mary has the John bought the book and not to Mario
b. *EN DE MARIA hot-er$_j$ kaft s puach der Nane$_j$ ont net en Mario*
to the Mary has-SUBJ PRON bought the book the John and not to Mario
'It was to Mary that John bought the book, and not to Mario.'
c. *En bem hot-er$_j$ kaft s puach der Nane$_j$?*
to whom has-SUBJ PRON bought the book the John
d. **En bem hot der Nane kaft s puach?*
to whom has the John bought the book
'Who did John buy the book for?'

I take the two arguments presented above, together with the asymmetries concerning RM, as evidence in favour of the claim that foci and wh-elements show up in two different positions; precisely the former in a higher OpP (highOpP) and the latter in a lower OpP (lowOpP)[7] separated by the topic field, as shown in (17).

(17)[$_{\text{TOPIC}}$ [**XP**][$_{\text{HIGH-OPP}}$ [**XP**$^{\textbf{+foc}}$] [**V**$_{\textbf{+fin}}$] [$_{\text{TOPICFIELD}}$ [**XP**] [**XP**] [**XP**][$_{\text{LOW-OPP}}$[**wh**] [**V**$_{\textbf{+fin}}$]]]]]

After showing that the distribution of RM effects is related to a structural difference between foci and wh-elements and not to a split inside the Quantificational class, in the next section I will take into examination the structure of the TopicPs activated by the two operators, in order to detect the differences relevant to the question of the distribution of RM effects.

## 3. On the properties of TopicPs

In order to examine the characteristics of the TopicPs activated by the two OpPs, I will start with lowOpP, which hosts wh-elements and where no RM are found (as in Romance). Then, I will examine the properties of the TopicP above highOpP and compare the two of them.

[5] Also in this latter case, the claim is that the focussed item shows up in highOpP; this claim is supported by the examples in (15), in which only one topicalised XP can precede the focus, even if the subject is pronominal.
[6] The NP subject could be either left- or right-dislocated, even if the latter option is judged more natural by speakers.
[7] Whether this OpPs correspond to positions identified in the literature (such as ForceP for highOpP) will not be pursued in this work.



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*3.1. Structure of the Topic field above wh-elements*

Topicalised items above wh-elements show up in a fixed order according to the constituent category they belong to. The higher positions are specialised for the frame: time and locative adverbials cannot be separated by a topicalised argument (18a,b) and an argument cannot precede them (18c,d)[8].

(18) a. *Gester vour de kirch der Mario$_i$ ber hot-er$_i$ zechen?*
yesterday in front of the church the Mario who has-SUBJ CL seen
b. **Gester der Mario$_i$ vour de kirch ber hot-er$_i$ zechen?*
yesterday the Mario in front of the church who has-SUBJ CL seen
'Who did Mario see yesterday infront of the church?'
c. *Gester vour de kirch en de Maria$_i$ ber hot-en$_i$ gem a puach?*
yesterday in front of the church to the Mary who has-DAT CL given a book
d. **En de Maria$_i$ gester vour de kirch ber hot-en$_i$ gem a puach?*
to the Mary yesterday in front of the church who has-DAT CL given a book
'Who gave Mary a book yesterday in front of the church?'

Arguments occupy a higher position in comparison to other XPs that can be topicalised above a wh-element, such as comitative PPs (19).

(19) a. *Gester der Mario$_i$ petn Luca abia hot-er$_i$ gahondelt der pustin?*
yesterday the Mario with-the Luca how has-SUBJ CL treated the postman
b. **Gester petn Luca der Mario$_i$ abia hot-er$_i$ gahondelt der pustin?*
yesterday with-the Luca the Mario how has-SUBJ CL treated the postman
'How did Mario with Luca treat the postman yesterday?'
c. *Verten de dai kamaroten$_i$ pet de dai muam bo hon-sa$_i$ pakemmt der Nane?*
last year the your friends with the your aunt where have-SUBJ CL met the John
d. **Verten pet de dai muam de dai kamaroten$_i$ bo hon-sa$_i$ pakemmt der Nane?*
last year with the your aunt the your friends where have-SUBJ CL met the John
'Where did your friends with your aunt meet John last year?'

The same pattern is found also with an instrumental PP (20). Notice that both comitative (19 above) and instrumental PPs do not need for a pronominal doubler.

(20) a. *Hait der papa$_j$ petn staupsauger benn hot-er$_j$ putzt s hauz?*
today the dad with-the hoover when has-SUBJ PRON cleaned the hause

[8] I give here examples beginning with a scene setter in order to avoid having a hanging topic in the left-most projection, which would be of course possible.



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b.**Hait petn staupsauger der papa$_j$ benn hot-er$_j$ putzt s hauz?*
today the dad with-the hoover when has-SUBJ PRON cleaned the hause
' When did dad clean the hause with the hoover today?'

The structure of the Topic field activated by wh-elements is summarised in (21):

(21) [$_{\text{FRAME}}$ [**Scene setter**] [**loc.PP**] [$_{\text{TOPIC-ARG}}$ [**XP**] [**XP**] [$_{\text{TOPIC-ADJ}}$ [**com.PP**]/ [**inst.PP**] [$_{\text{OPP}}$ [**wh**]]]]]

What we have seen in this subsection is that the lack of RM effects between a wh-element and a topic correlates with two other properties, namely i) the availability of multiple topics above lowOpP and ii) the strict order of the TopicPs above lowOpP according to constituent category.

In the next subsection, I will examine the characteristics of the TopicP above highOpP and compare them with those discussed here for lowOpP.

*3.2. Properties of the TopicP above high OperatorP*

First of all, it has to be noticed that the TopicP above highOpP is not selective with respect to constituent categories. As shown in (22), in fact, this TopicP can host verb arguments (22a), comitative PPs (22c) and scene setters (22e); the only ban is on the number of topics (22b,d,f)[9].

(22) a. *En de Maria A PUACH hone-en kaft gester, ont net a penna*
to the Mary a book have-SUBJ CL-DAT CL bought yesterday and not a pen
b.*(*Gester) en de Maria (gester) A PUACH hone-en kaft, ont net a penna*
yesterday to the Mary a book have-SUBJ CL-DAT CL bought and not a pen
'It was a book that I bought Mary yesterday, and not a pen.'
c. *Petn Luca A PUACH hone kaft gester pet im, ont net a penna*
with-the Luca a book have-SUBJ CL bought yesterday with him and not a pen
d.*(*Gester) petn Luca (gester) A PUACH hone kaft pet im, ont net a penna*
yesterday with-the Luca a book have-SUBJ CL bought with him and not a pen
'It was a book that I bought with Luca yesterday and not a pen.'
e. *Gester A PUACH hone kaft petn Luca, ont net a penna*
yesterday a book have-SUBJ CL bought with-the Luca and not a pen
f.*(*Petn Luca) gester (petn Luca) A PUACH hone kaft, ont net a penna*
with-the Luca yesterday a book have-SUBJ CL bough and not a pen
'It was a book that I bought yesterday with Luca, and not a pen.'

The second asymmetry with respect to the properties TopicPs available before lowOpP concerns doubling of the topicalised item. We saw above that in Mòcheno all topicalised arguments need to be doubled by a pronoun, but topicalised semiargumental PPs do not need to in the case of lowOpP, see (19)

[9] I deliberately illustrate the lack of specification for constituent category with the same focussed constituent.



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and (20) above. Now, in the case of a sentence involving highOpP, a topicalised comitative PP has to obligatory be doubled by a pronominal form[10], as shown in (23).

(23) a. *Petn Luca$_i$ A PUACH hone kaft *(pet im$_i$), ont net a penna*
with-the Luca a book have-SUBJ CL bought with him
'With Luca I bought a book and not a pen.'

What is more, an instrumental PP cannot show up in the highest TopicP, even though it is doubled by a pronominal form.

(24) a.**Petn staupsauger$_i$ Z HAUZ hone putzt (ont net der auto)*
with-the hoover the house have-SUBJ CL cleaned (and not the car)
b.**Petn staupsauger$_i$ Z HAUZ hone putzt pet im$_i$ (ont net der auto)*
with-the hoover the house have-SUBJ CL cleaned with it (and not the car)
'It was the house that I cleaned with the hoover and not the car.'

The possibility of having a pronominal doubling seems to be the only requirement on XPs for showing up above a focus. As shown in (25), in fact, also a locative PP is incompatible with a focus (25a); even if a pronominal resumption as "there" were inserted, the sentence would not be acceptable (25b,c,d).

(25) a.**Vour de kirch A PUACH hone trog en de Maria ont net a penna*
in front of the church a book have-SUBJ CL brought to the Mary and not a pen
b.**Vour de kirch$_i$ A PUACH hone trog zem$_i$ (ont net a penna)*
in front of the church a book have-SUBJ CL brought there (and not a pen)
c.**Vour de kirch$_i$ zem$_i$ A PUACH hone trog*
in front of the church a book there have-SUBJ CL brought
d.**Vour de kirch$_i$ A PUACH hone zem$_i$ trog*
in front of the church a book have-SUBJ CL there brought
'It was a book that I brough in front of the church, not a pen.'

The only exception to this state of affairs is found with scene setters, which are always compatible with a focussed XP, as shown in (26).

(26) a.*Gester A PUACH hone trog en de Maria ont net a penna*
yesterday a book have-SUBJ CL brought to the Mary and not a pen
'Yesterday I brought Mary a book and not a pen.'
b. *Gester EN DE MARIA hone trog a puach ont net en Nane*
yesterday to the Mary have-SUBJ CL brought a book and not to John
'It was to Mary that I brought a book yesterday, and not to John.'

What we have seen in this subsection is that the TopicP found above highOpP has two main characteristics: i) it can host XPs belonging to different

[10] Mòcheno cannot use a clitic here.



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categories, that is arguments, comitative PPs (semiarguments) and scene setters; ii) only XPs allowing for pronominal doubling can show up in the prefocal topic position.

*3.3. Partial conclusions*

In the previous subsections we saw that operators showing up in lowOpP activate a topic field hosting i) multiple TopicPs ii) strictly ordered according to the constituent category of the topicalised XP; iii) no RM effects between wh-elements and topics are found. The TopicP above highOpP i) lacks specification for constituent category and ii) can host XPs with pronominal doubling; iii) RM violations between topic and focus arise.

I think that the main difference between the two configurations activated by wh-elements and foci is to be found in the nature of TopicPs, namely in their being dedicated to a category of constituents. I do not consider relevant of the RM facts the obligatory doubling in the TopicP above highOpP, especially because all topicalised arguments are resumed also with wh-elements.

The availability of TopicPs for constituent categories is the relevant condition for RM violations between a topic and an XP from the Quantificational class not to arise. In (27) I summarise these conditions, which in Mòcheno are only met in the topic field activated by wh-elements.

(27) a. the two XPs have to belong to two different featural classes (1);
b. the topicalised XP needs a dedicated position for the constituent category it belongs to;
c. the dedicated position is made visible by hierarchical relations between topics.

In the next subsection I will take a look at Romance and see if the proposal made in (27) can be considered universal and be applied also to Romance.

*3.4. A note on Romance*

There are two important differences to mention between Romance (Rizzi 1997, 2004; Benincà/Poletto 2004) and Mòcheno: i) in Romance no split concerning OpPs is found: all operators show up in the lowest part of the left periphery; ii) topics show up in free order.

The first characteristic of Romance is responsible for the lack of RM violations between a focus and a topic: if both foci and wh-elements show up in the lower portion of the left periphery and are preceded by multiple topics, condition b. in (27) is immediately met. Only in a topic field composed by multiple TopicPs can, in fact, dedicated TopicPs be found.

The second characteristic is more problematic, since condition c. in (27) says that TopicPs are strictly ordered according to constituent category. In order to solve this problem, I would like to claim, capitalising on an idea originally proposed by Benincà/Poletto 2004, that also in Italian TopicPs are ordered, even though this is not immediately visible.

In order to bring evidence for this, I will look at the occurrences in Mòcheno of wh-elements bearing different theta roles with topics, showing that: i) wh-elements with different theta roles show up in different OpPs (see also Munaro 1997 and Aboch/Pfau 2008 on a similar idea); ii) these OpPs are presumably ordered, just like in Slavic languages allowing for multiple wh-fronting



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(Krapova/Cinque 2008); iii) OpPs hosting wh-elements are ordered with their topic fields. This is summarised in (28).

(28)[$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$ [**XP**][$_{\text{OP}}$**WHERE**]/[$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$ [**XP**][**XP**][$_{\text{OP}}$**WH-SUBJ**]/
[$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$[**SUBJ**] [**IO**][$_{\text{OP}}$ **WH-DO**]]]]]

If we assume that in Italian only one OpP is available, namely the lowest one identified for Mòcheno, and that all TopicPs are present, we end up with a detailed map of several dedicated TopicPs. Free order is then to be considered a consequence of the availability of several dedicated positions to which topics can move, and not the result of recursion.

*3.4.1. On the presence of dedicated OpPs for wh-elements*

Due to reasons of space I will limit myself to a few examples involving only topicalised arguments (more in Cognola 2009a), from which it is though clear that in Mòcheno wh-elements occupy different OpPs according to their thematic role and activate a dedicate topic field.

In (29) I show that a wh-element with DO theta role can be preceded by two topicalised arguments, whose order can only be SUBJ-DO.

(29) a. *Gester der Mario$_j$ en Nane$_i$ bos hot-er$_j$-en$_i$ trog?*
yesterday the Mario-SUBJ to John-IO what-DO has-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought
b.**Gester en Nane$_i$ der Mario$_j$ bos hot-er$_j$-en$_i$ trog?*
yesterday to John-IO the Mario-SUBJ what-DO has-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought
'What did Mario bring John yesterday?'

A wh- with SUBJ theta role allows for the two topicalised arguments in both orders, as shown in (30).

(30) a. *Gester s puach$_j$ en Nane$_i$ ber hot-z$_j$-en$_i$ trog?*
yesterday the book-DO to John-IO who-SUBJ has-DO CL-DAT CL brought
b. *Gester en Nane$_i$ s puach$_j$ ber hot-z$_j$-en$_i$ trog?*
yesterday to John-IO the book-DO who-SOGG has-DO CL-DAT CL brought
'Who bough John the book yesterday?'

Finally, a wh-element with temporal theta role only allows for one topicalised argument on its left, as in (31).

(31) a. *Vour de kirch en Mario$_j$ benn hoso-en$_j$ trog s puach?*
infront of the church to Mario-IO when have-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought the book
b.**Vour de kirch en Mario$_j$ s puach$_i$ benn hoso-z$_i$-en$_j$ trog?*
in front of the church to Mario the book when have-SUBJ CL-ACC-CL-DAT CL brought
'When did you bring Mario the book in front of the church?'



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c. *Vour de kirch der Mario$_j$ benn hot-er$_j$ trog s puach?*
in front of the church Mario when has-SUBJ CL-DAT CL brought the book
'When did Mario bring the book in front of the church?'

I think that the data are extremely clear in showing that i) wh-elements do not show up in the same OpP (otherwise they would allow for the same type and number of topicalised arguments) and ii) each wh-element activates its own dedicated topic field. If we assume that in Italian only one OpP, namely the lowest one of Mòcheno, is available, we have a detailed map of TopicPs dedicated to topicalised arguments, as sketched in (32).

(32)[$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$ [**XP**][$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$ [**XP**][**XP**][$_{\text{TOPIC+ARG}}$[**SUBJ**] [**IO**][$_{\text{OP}}$ **WH-**]]]]]

Topic free order in Italian is the result of the availability of all TopicPs in all sentences, whereas in Mocheno only a portion of the Topic field is "visible", namely the one activated by operators.

## 4. Conclusions

In this work I brought evidence in favour of the idea that the distribution of RM effects cannot be accounted for only in terms of features (Rizzi 2004; Friedmann, Belletti, Rizzi 2009), but that also a condition on the structure has to co-occur together with the featural make-up of the constituents involved. Main evidence in this direction was provided looking at the distribution of RM effects between foci and topics in Mòcheno, which arise even though the two XPs clearly belong to two featural classes. The lack of RM effects between wh-elements and topics and the asymmetries in the position of operators in Mòcheno left periphery allowed to detect the relevant structural conditions under which RM do not arise. RM violations are blocked if TopicPs dedicated to constituent categories are available: this can take place only iff i) there are multiple topics and ii) they are strictly ordered.

In the last part of the work I tried to show that the same structural condition for RM can be assumed also for Romance and Italian in particular, for which I sketched, following ideas by Benincà/Poletto (2004) and basing on Mòcheno, a preliminary cartography of the topic field. Under this prospective, topic free order would be the consequence of the presence of several dedicated TopicPs and only one OpP.

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