ON THETIC BROAD FOCUS*

DELIA BENTLEY

The University of Manchester
Delia.Bentley@manchester.ac.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present contribution aims to enhance the current understanding of thetic broad focus. In previous work (Bentley & Cruschina 2018) we characterized thetic broad focus as a subject inversion construction in which the verb and a postverbal, vP internal, DP encode an event that is predicated of a silent Subject of Predication (henceforth SoP). We claimed that, in Italian, the silent SoP takes Cardinaletti's (2004) SubjP position, thus satisfying Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion. Depending on the argument structure properties of the verb, the silent SoP can be a locative goal argument of the verb itself or, alternatively, a situational argument, which arises with the utterance. Only some verb classes are compatible with the situational SoP. Other verbs require an overt or understood aboutness topic to occur in broad focus, thus being confined to the construction which, in the cited work, we called non-thetic broad focus.

In this paper I analyse in further detail the verb classes which are admitted in thetic broad focus in Italian and I propose an account of the relevant verb class restrictions which relies on the lexical encoding of scalar change (Beavers 2008, 2011, 2013, Rappaport Hovav 2008) and the depth of semantic embedding of the postverbal DP. I consider transitive predications and I claim that, differently from their passive counterparts, they can only occur in non-thetic broad focus. I capture the compatibility of passives with thetic broad focus adopting Kiparsky's (2013) demotion analysis. The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I introduce and illustrate thetic broad focus. In section 3 I discuss the relevant verb class

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restrictions in terms of the lexicalization of scalar change. In section 4, I propose an account of the rationale of the said restrictions. I then consider transitives and their passive counterparts, contrasting thetic and non-thetic broad focus (§5). Finally, I draw some conclusions (§6).

2. THETIC BROAD FOCUS IN ITALIAN

Ever since Benincà (1988) noted that the default interpretation of the Italian construction in (1a) is that of an event of motion towards a speaker-oriented location, unlike the default interpretation of the counterpart construction with subject-verb word order (1b), it has been assumed that broad focus subject inversion in Italian and other Romance languages is licensed by a silent locative argument, thus being comparable to locative inversion (Corr 2016, Pinto 1997, Saccon 1992, Sheehan 2006, Tortora 1997, 2014, a.o.).

(1) a. *Sono arrivati gli studenti*.
are arrived the students
'The students have arrived here.'
b. *Gli studenti sono arrivati*.
the students are arrived
'The students have arrived (here/at another location).'

Whether the silent argument, or Subject of Predication (SoP), of all broad focus subject inversion constructions is an argument of the verb, however, remained an open question for a long time. Working on various different languages, some scholars claimed that the SoP is indeed a thematic goal argument of some sort (see, e.g., Corr 2016, Pinto 1997), whereas others characterized it as the event argument of a stage-level predicate (Bianchi 1993). A further puzzle, which was first brought to light by Pinto (1997), was the low degree of compatibility of the broad focus subject inversion construction with some verbs, represented below in (2b) and (2c).

(2) a. *Sono morti i soldati*.
are died.MPL the soldier.MPL
'The soldiers have died.'
b. *? Si sono annoiati gli studenti*.
REFL are got.bored.MPL the student.MPL
'The students have got bored.'
c. *? Sono cresciuti i gemelli*.
are grown.MPL the twin.MPL
'The twins have grown.'

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The contrast between (2a) and (2b–c) is noticeable in out-of-the-blue contexts, that is, contexts that have neither an overt nor an understood temporal or locative topic (*in the war, at the party, in the class, this year*, etc.). It is this type of *bare* broad focus subject inversion construction which is the main focus of this paper. The contrast in (2a–c) is independent of the unaccusative-unergative divide, since all these structures fall on the unaccusative side of the split, as is testified by the selection of the perfect auxiliary *essere* 'be' and the past participle agreement with the postverbal DP (Perlmutter 1978 and subsequent literature). Importantly, the example in (3), which is fully acceptable, falls on the other side of the split.

(3) *Hanno telefonato i ragazzi*.
have phoned the kids
'The kids have phoned (here/us).'

Working on Italian, Bentley & Cruschina (2018) observe that bare broad focus subject inversion is normally ruled out with Vendler's (1957[1967]) activities and states, although three putative exceptions are mentioned below. Indeed, (4a-b) would only be acceptable with narrow focus on the postverbal DP (here indicated with small caps).[1]

(4) a. *Hanno ballato I RAGAZZI*.
have danced the kids
'THE KIDS have danced.'
b. *Sono stati male I RAGAZZI.*
are been unwell the kids
'THE KIDS have been unwell.'

Bentley & Cruschina (2018) claim that the grammaticality of the construction depends on whether a SoP is available. They distinguish two types of SoP: a thematic argument of the verb (cf. 1a, 3) and a situational argument, which arises when a bounded event is introduced into discourse (cf. 2a). The thematic SoP is the locative goal argument of a subclass of Levin's (1993) verbs of inherently directed motion. This subclass, first identified by Tortora (1997), describes movement towards a location, which can be interpreted as the location of the speaker: *arrive, come, come up, come down,* etc. The thematic SoP can also be an optional argument – or adjunct – of the following three activities: *telefonare* 'phone' (cf. 3), *chiamare* 'call' and *bussare* 'knock'. In addition to the speaker-oriented deixis of structures like (1a) and (3), important evidence that the SoP is a locative argument of the verb is provided by the fact that this argument can surface overtly in syntax.[2]

[1] For stage-level states, we refer to Bianchi (1993), discussed at length in Bentley & Cruschina (2018).

[2] For evidence of the argument status of the locative goal of verbs of inherently directed motion, we refer to Cennamo & Lenci (2018). Whether the optional location of the few activities mentioned above (cf. 3) is an argument or an adjunct is an issue that would clearly go beyond the scope of this work.

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(5) a. *Gli studenti sono arrivati **a lezione**.*
the students are arrived to class
'The students have arrived to the class.'
b. *I ragazzi hanno telefonato **a casa**.*
the kids have phoned to home
'The kids phoned home.'

The verbs that cannot take an overt locative argument, but are admitted in the broad focus subject inversion construction, combine with a different type of SoP, which Bentley & Cruschina (2018) call *situational*.[3] Their arguments can be summarised as follows. The construction under investigation is fully predicative or thetic (see Kuroda 1972, Ladusaw 1994, Sasse 1987, and, for the related notion of presentational construction, Calabrese 1992, Lambrecht 2000). This means that there is no overt or understood topic. In fact, the postverbal DP is part of the predication alongside the verb (Fuchs 1980: 449, cited in Sasse 2006: 258, Bianchi 1993). In such structures, the argument which the predication is about must be identified. Given that no topic and no argument of the verb is available as the starting point of the predication, the situation about which the event is predicated has to be inferred. A situational argument thus arises inferentially with the utterance.

Importantly, this situational SoP only arises if the event is bounded, i.e., it involves the reaching of a final goal state, either as an entailment of the verb or as an inference. Only verbs of quantized change entail a specific final goal state (Beavers 2011, 2013, see also Hay, Kennedy & Levin 1999, Rappaport Hovav 2008). Among the diagnostics to identify these verbs, I shall mention the failure for their progressive form to entail the perfect (see 6a vs. 6b) and their incompatibility with adverbials describing the degree of the change lexicalized by the verb (Bertinetto & Squartini 1995, see 7a vs. 7b).

(6) a. *Il soldato sta morendo ≠> Il soldato è morto.*
the soldier is dying the soldier is died
'The soldier is dying ≠> the soldier has died.'
b. *I ragazzi stanno crescendo => I ragazzi sono cresciuti.*
the kids are growing the kids are grown
'The kids are growing => the kids have grown.'

(7) a. ***Il soldato è morto di parecchio.***
the soldier is died by a.lot
b. *I ragazzi sono cresciuti di parecchio.*
the kids are grown by a.lot
'The kids have grown a lot.'

[3] In light of a Definiteness Effect which is found with verbs of inherently directed motion, Bentley & Cruschina (2018) actually claim that this second type of SoP can also be found with these verbs. For brevity, I shall not discuss this issue here.

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Morire 'die' is a verb of quantized change (cf. 6a, 7a). As was shown above (cf. 2a), it is compatible with bare broad focus subject inversion. *Crescere* 'grow', on the other hand, does not entail a specific final goal state (cf. 6b, 7b) and is not readily accepted in the same construction. According to Bentley & Cruschina (2018), this is because only a bounded event, i.e., an event with a final goal state, can be predicated of the situational argument that arises in discourse.

The event can also be bounded by virtue of the *inference* of a final goal state. Following Hay, Kenney & Levin (1999), Bentley & Cruschina (2018) argue that there are two verb classes with which such an inference can arise. When the adjectival base of a deadjectival verb of change of state (e.g., *straighten, empty* (v.)) is a closed-range adjective, i.e., an adjective associated with a property that has a maximum value, a bounded difference value can be inferred. The latter is the measure of the amount to which an argument of the verb changes with respect to a gradable property. This subclass of verbs of change is also admitted in broad focus subject inversion, although these are not verbs of quantized change. (For brevity, I shall leave it to the reader to apply the relevant tests.)

(8) a. *Guarda! Si è raddrizzata l' antenna.*
look REFL is straightened the antenna
'Look! The antenna has become straight.'
b. *Guarda! Si è svuotato il serbatoio.*
look REFL is emptied the tank
'Look! The tank has become empty'

Another type of deadjectival verb of non-quantized change has an open-range adjective as its base (e.g., *short, narrow*). This type of adjective has a scalar structure that is not associated with a maximum value. Nonetheless, the inference of a bound may arise on the basis of the scalar structure of the adjective and a conventional property of the entity denoted by the argument.

(9) a. *Si è accorciata la gonna.*
REFL is shortened the skirt
'The skirt has become short(er).'
b. *Si è ristretta la strada.*
REFL is narrowed the road
'The road has become narrow(er).'

There may be a conventional length for a skirt, depending on practicality or the occasion in which it is to be worn. There may be a conventional width for a road, depending on the amount of traffic it has to cater for. The structures in (9a–b) predicate events in which such conventional bounds are reached. Therefore, they involve the inference of the attainment of a final goal state.

That the final goal state is an inference, in (8a–b) and (9a–b), is demonstrated by its cancellability.

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(10) a. *Guarda! Si è raddrizzata l' antenna, ma non completamente.*
look REFL is straightened the antenna but not completely
'Look! The antenna has become straight, but not completely.'
a. *Si è accorciata la gonna, ma non completamente: solo un po'.*
REFL is shortened the skirt but not completely only a little
'The skirt has become short(er), but not completely: only a little.'

In further support of the hypothesis that the inference of a bound may be facilitated by a conventional property of the entity denoted by the argument, observe the contrast in (11a–b).

(11) a. *?Sono allungate le piante.*
are become.long(er) the plants
'The plants have become longer.'
b. *Sono allungate le giornate.*
are become.long(er) the days
'The days have become longer.'

The adjectival base of the verb *allungare* 'become long(er)' is not associated with a property which has a maximum value. However, the time interval between sunrise and sunset on any given day depends on spatio-temporal coordinates which can be established with precision. Therefore, (11b) can give rise to an inference of the amount to which the argument of the verb has changed with respect to a gradable property. By contrast, a reading whereby the size of a plant reaches a precise threshold is not as easily construed. This is, in my view, the reason for the contrast between (11a) and (11b). Nonetheless, imagine a situation in which the plants under discussion have grown to obstruct the view from a window. In this situation, (11a) would be meaningful as an out-of-the-blue utterance because the inference of a bound would arise.

The verbs of non-quantized change that do not readily occur in broad focus subject inversion are verbs that not only do not select a goal argument and do not entail a specific final goal state, but are also barely compatible with the inference of a final goal state. Examples were provided in (2b-c), with the psych-verb *annoiarsi* 'get bored' and the verb of physical growth *crescere* 'grow'. Bentley & Cruchina's (2018) argument is that a maximum value is not normally associated with the changes described by psych-verbs and verbs describing physical change, and there are no relevant conventional properties of their experiencer/theme arguments. However, if, contrary to expectations, a maximum value is associated with a specific event of psychological or physical change, even these verbs allow the inference of attainment of a final goal state and, as a result, they can occur in broad focus subject inversion. For example, (12) could be a meaningful announcement in the working environment, as a warning that the boss' patience threshold has been reached.

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(12) *Si è arrabbiato il Capo.*
REFL is got.angry the boss
'The Boss has got angry.'

A question that may arise in light of the evidence provided thus far is whether the inanimacy of the postverbal DP plays a role in the licensing of the construction under discussion. Indeed, verbs of psychological and physical change take [+animate], if not [+human], arguments. While the possibility that the inanimacy of the argument may contribute to the acceptability of a verb ought not to be ruled out, I would argue that this is by no means the key factor in the acceptability of verbs of non-quantized change in the construction, as is suggested by the contrast between (2b–c) and (12), in appropriate situations.

With respect to the syntax of broad focus subject inversion, Bentley & Cruchina's (2018) starting point is Bianchi & Chesi's (2014) analysis of thetic sentences, whereby the subject stays in its thematic position within the vP, and is therefore neither interpreted independently of the predicative nucleus of the clause nor presuppositional.

(13) $[_{IP} \ldots (\exists) [vP \ldots DP_{[-presupp]} \ldots]]$ (thetic structure)

The structure in (13) poses the question of how subjecthood is satisfied. Bentley & Cruchina (2018) claim that thetic sentences do not lack a subject in subject position, in that the silent thematic or situational SoP activates and occupies Cardinaletti's (2004) SubjP position. The locative goal SoP is a thematic argument and, therefore, it moves to SubjP from its thematic position (cf. 14a). The situational argument SoP (*e* in 14b below), on the other hand, is merged directly in SubjP.

(14) a. $[_{SubjP}$ SoP*loc*$_i$ $[_{TP}$ T+V ... $[_{vP}$ .. DP t_i...]]]
b. $[_{SubjP}$ SoP*e* $[_{TP}$ T+V ... $[_{vP}$ .. DP ...]]]

The argument in SubjP satisfies Rizzi's (2005) Subject Criterion (see also Bianchi's 1993 Principle of Non-vacuous Predication), providing a subject of predication to the thetic construction. On the other hand, the presence of a SoP in SubjP is claimed by Bentley & Cruchina to be in principal orthogonal to the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) or the need to check Case and φ-features. The main evidence for this claim is the known fact that the constituent in SubjP does not necessarily control agreement (Cardinaletti 2004). This is the case with the experiencer argument of psych-verbs.

(15) *Ai bambini piace il gelato.*
to.the kid.PL please.3SG the ice cream.SG
'Kids like ice cream.'

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In the broad focus subject inversion constructions of Italian, the verb also carries the agreement features of the postverbal DP, which suggests that the EPP may be checked covertly by a *pro* (Rizzi 1986 and subsequent work) or in a long-distance fashion (Cardinaletti 2004: 151–152; Quarezemin & Cardinaletti 2017). In fact, Bentley & Cruchina (2018) suggest that the EPP may be substituted by the Subject Criterion or dispensed with altogether, in thetic broad focus, verb agreement being independent of it.

In the following sections I analyse thetic broad focus in further depth, and I advance a hypothesis on the restrictions on the verb classes that occur in this construction.

3. NON-DEADJECTIVAL VERBS OF NON-QUANTIZED CHANGE

Bentley & Cruschina (2018) identify three verb classes which are admitted in thetic broad focus: (i) verbs of quantized change, which entail the reaching of a specific final goal state (cf. 1a, 2a, 16a); (ii) deadjectival verbs of non-quantized change whose base, being a closed-range adjective, lends itself to an inference of attainment of a final goal state (cf. 8a–b, 16); (iii) deadjectival verbs of non-quantized change, whose base is an open-range adjective (cf. 9a–b, 16c).

(16) a. *Sono caduti due lampioni*.
are fallen two lampposts
'Two lampposts have fallen.'
b. *Si è riempita la vasca*.
REFL is become.full the bathtub
'The bathtub has become full.'
c. *Si è ristretto il maglione: non lo posso più indossare*.
REFL is shrunk the sweater NEG it can more wear
'The sweater has shrunk: I cannot wear it any longer.'

In this section, I turn my attention to non-deadjectival verbs of non-quantized change, focusing on some such verbs, which have properties that highlight the crucial role of scalar change (Beavers 2008, Rappaport Hovav 2008) in the licensing of thetic broad focus.

In Vendlerian terms (Vendler 1957[1967]), the verbs which lexically specify a scale of change are achievements and accomplishments. Achievements lexicalize two-point scales, hence their [+punctual] feature, whereas accomplishments lexicalize multi-point scales. Thus, by definition, achievements entail the reaching of a specific final goal state, and, indeed, they are admitted in thetic broad focus in Italian (provided they are intransitive, see §5).

(17) a. *Sono esplose quelle bombe.*
are exploded those bombs
'Those bombs have exploded.'

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b. *Sono apparsi dei fantasmi*.
are appeared some ghosts
'There appeared some ghosts.'

Accomplishments, instead, can lexicalize quantized or non-quantized change, and the verbs discussed in this section are of the latter type. For the sake of clarity, in Beavers' (2011, 2013) account, verbs of non-quantized change entail that a final state exists, but they do not entail a specific final state. Observe *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease': they take additions indicating gradual completion (Bertinetto & Squartini 1995) (cf. 18a) and their progressive form entails their perfect (cf. 18b).

(18) a. *I prezzi sono aumentati/ diminuiti di parecchio*.
the prices are increased decreased by a.lot
'The prices have increased/decreased a lot.'
b. *I prezzi stanno aumentando/diminuendo => I prezzi sono a. /d.*
the prices are increasing decreasing the prices are increased decreased
'The prices are increasing/decreasing => The prices have increased/decreased.'

Contrary to expectations, however, *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' readily occur in thetic broad focus.

(19) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
Sono aumentati/diminuiti i prezzi.
are increased decreased the prices
'The prices have increased/decreased.'

Rappaport Hovav (2008) states that English *increase* can have activity, accomplishment and achievement readings. Thus, in accordance with the notion of change introduced above, *increase* can lexicalize non-scalar change, as an activity, and scalar change of both the two-point and the multi-point types. With regard to Italian *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease', it should be noted that they do not appear to have activity readings. Indeed, even though they are compatible with *for* temporal adverbials (cf. 20a), they consistently select the perfect auxiliary *essere* 'be' (cf. 20a-b), which is rejected by activities (Bentley 2006). In addition, *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' do not readily combine with manner adverbs (cf. 20b). (They do take pace adverbs: *slowly, quickly,* etc.).

(20) a. *I prezzi sono aumentati/diminuiti per mesi*.
the prices are increased decreased for months
'The prices have been increasing/decreasing for months.'
b. *I prezzi sono aumentati/diminuiti ?facilmente/?persistentemente.*
the prices are increased decreased easily persistently
'The prices have increased/decreased easily / persistently.'

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The compatibility of *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' with *for* temporal adverbials may simply depend on the multi-point nature of the scale that they lexicalize. Indeed, this is not a peculiarity of these two verbs: similar results are obtained with *crescere* 'grow', deadjectival accomplishments such as *invecchiare* 'become old(er)', *ingrassare* 'become fat(ter)', etc.

Similarly to English *increase*, however, *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' can have achievements readings. Observe the English example in (21), which can describe a sudden increase after a lapse of time lasting three months, in which case it describes two-point scale change, with attainment of a final goal state.

(21) *The prices will increase in three months*.

The evidence in (22) indicates that the same reading is available for Italian *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease'.

(22) a. *I prezzi aumenteranno / diminuiranno fra tre mesi, il 30 giugno*.
the prices increase.FUT decrease.FUT in three months the 30 June
'The prices will increase/decrease in three months, on 30 June.'
b. *I prezzi aumentano / diminuiscono a mezzanotte*.
the prices increase.FUT decrease.FUT at midnight
'The prices will increase / decrease at midnight.'

We can thus hypothesize that it is because of their achievement – two-point scale change – reading that *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' occur in thetic broad focus (cf. 19). The question that arises from this hypothesis, however, is what the achievement reading is a reading of. Since we have ascertained that *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease' are verbs of non-quantized change (cf. 18a–b), and therefore lexicalize multi-point scalar change, we might be tempted to assume that the achievement readings of these verbs are inferences. And yet, contrary to expectations, it does not seem to be possible to cancel them (cf. 23a), nor are there any noticeable effects of the choice of DP on the acceptability of thetic broad focus (cf. 23b vis-à-vis 19).

(23) a. *I prezzi sono aumentati/diminuiti (*?ma non completamente*).
the prices are increased decreased but NEG completely
b. *Sono aumentati/diminuiti gli studenti*.
are increased decreased the students
'The students have increased/decreased.'

A comparison with *cambiare* 'change' is of help. This non-deadjectival verb shares the behaviour of verbs of non-quantized change (cf. 24a–b), while also allowing two-point scalar change readings (cf. 25) and being admitted in thetic broad focus (cf. 26).

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(24) a. *I tassi di interesse sono cambiati di parecchio*.
the rates of interest are changed by a.lot
'Interest rates have changed a lot.'
b. *I tassi di interesse stanno cambiando => I tassi di interesse sono c.*
the rates of interest are changing the rates of interest are changed
'Interest rates are changing' => 'Interest rates have changed.'

(25) *I tassi di interesse cambieranno fra tre mesi, il 30 giugno, a mezzanotte*.
the rates of interest change.FUT in three months the 30 June at midnight
'Interest rates will change in three months, on 30 June, at midnight.'

(26) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
Sono cambiati i tassi di interesse.
are changed the rates of interest
'Interest rates have changed.'

Differently from *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease', however, *cambiare* 'change' is compatible with *not completely*. The choice of DP appears to have a bearing on this compatibility (cf. 27a–b), as well as on the acceptability of the verb in thetic broad focus: compare (26) with (28), where SV order would be preferable.

(27) a. *I tassi di interesse sono cambiati (?ma non completamente).*
the rates of interest are changed but NEG completely
'Interest rates have changed, but not completely.'
b. *I nostri rapporti sono cambiati (ma non completamente)*.
the our relations are changed but NEG completely
'Our relationship has changed, but not completely.'

(28) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
?*Sono cambiati i nostri rapporti*.
are changed the our relations
'Our relationship has changed.'

It thus appears that *cambiare* 'change' lexicalizes multi-point scalar change without lexicalizing a specific final goal (cf. 24a–b). Its compatibility with thetic broad focus can be explained in terms of an inference of two-point scalar change, which is facilitated by properties of its argument (cf. 25, 26 vs. 28): a change in interest rates can be sudden - and two-point - whereas relationships tend to change gradually.

To return to *aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease', I suggest that they lexicalize a multi-point scale *ending with a two-step change*. Their behaviour as verbs of non-quantized change (cf. 18a–b) depends on their lexical meaning of multi-point scalar change, whereas their behaviour as achievements (cf. 22a–b) depends on the specific nature of the change that they lexicalize, which necessarily

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ends with a discrete two-step component. This feature of the change that they lexicalize explains why they are not compatible with *not completely* and, crucially, allows them to occur in thetic broad focus.

In this section, I have discussed non-deadjectival verbs of non-quantized change which readily occur in thetic broad focus. Relying on the scalar notion of change, I have proposed that some of its members lexicalize multi-point scalar change, but allow an inference of two-point scalar change, which is sensitive to properties of their argument. There are two verbs (*aumentare* 'increase' and *diminuire* 'decrease') which, while also lexicalizing multi-point scalar change, are characterized by a particular feature of their lexical meaning: the progression on the relevant scale necessarily ends in a two-step discrete change. This feature allows them to behave as achievements and, crucially, to occur in thetic broad focus.

4. AN ACCOUNT OF THE VERB CLASS RESTRICTIONS ON THETIC BROAD FOCUS

In this section I seek to explain the restriction on the verbs that occur in thetic broad focus. I begin by summarising Bentley & Cruschina's (2018) account of the configuration below (cf. 14a-b).

(29) a. $[_{SubjP}$ SoP*loc*$_i$ $[_{TP}$ T+V ... $[_{vP}$ .. DP t_i...]]]
b. $[_{SubjP}$ SoP*e* $[_{TP}$ T+V ... $[_{vP}$ .. DP ...]]]

When a new event is introduced into discourse, it requires a topic of some kind, as has convincingly been argued by others (Erteschik-Shir 1997, a.o.). By topic, in this context, we mean an aboutness topic, which can be defined as what the predication is about, independently of previous mention in discourse. A locative or temporal adverbial often plays the role of an aboutness topic, in which case non-thetic broad focus obtains (see §5). If there is no overt or understood locative or temporal phrase, the situation which the event is about must be inferred. A locative goal argument of the verb will thus play the role of SoP (cf. 29a). Alternatively, a situational argument will arise as SoP (cf. 29b).

In Bentley & Cruschina (2018), we claimed that the event must be bounded in order for the thetic broad focus configuration to be licensed. By *bounded* we meant that the event must include the reaching of a final goal state, whether as an entailment of the verb or as an inference. The question that I will now address is why the attainment of a final goal state is required.

I start from the consideration that the argument of verbs that lexicalize scalar change is both an argument of a scalar change component and of a final state component in lexical-semantic structure. With verbs of quantized change a specific final goal state is entailed, whereas verbs of non-quantized change only entail that a final state exists. To account for the complexity of events of scalar change, capturing the difference between the two main types, I propose that the standard lexical-semantic representation of accomplishments shown in (30a) be adopted for

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verbs of non-quantized change, whereas verbs of quantized change ought to be represented as in (30b), where the specific final goal state, of which x is an argument, is explicitly represented.

(30) a. BECOME x<state> [lexical-semantic structure of verbs of non-quantized change]
b. BECOME x<state> & x<state> [lexical-semantic structure of verbs of quantized change]

When a final state is inferred, as can be the case with verbs of non-quantized change (see §§2, 3), the structure of the event is as in (30b), and the thematic argument of the verb is realized in syntax as the argument of a verb of quantized change.

To return to thetic broad focus, my hypothesis relies on the complexity of the semantic structure of verbs of scalar change and on the depth of semantic embedding of the thematic argument of these verbs. I propose that, in thetic broad focus, this argument, *qua* argument of a final goal state (cf. 30b), loses out in the competition for the role of subject of predication. The inferred situational argument, or a locative goal argument of the verb, will play this role, figuring in SubjP and satisfying the Subject Criterion in syntax (cf. 29a-b). The argument of the final state remains in its thematic vP-internal position in syntax, thus being encoded as part of the event and not as the subject of the predication. If there is no entailment or inference of attainment of a final goal state, the thematic argument is not as deeply embedded in semantic structure (cf. 30a). As a result, it does not occur in the configuration in (29b). Ultimately, it is the depth of semantic embedding of the thematic argument of the verb that licenses thetic broad focus. This obtains with verbs of scalar change, but not with verbs of non-scalar change (i.e., activities) or with states that do not result from events of scalar change (i.e., Vendlerian states) (cf. 4a–b and note 1). The three putative exceptions mentioned in section 1 (*telefonare* 'phone' (cf. 3), *bussare* 'knock', *chiamare* 'call') are not mere activities. Rather, they have accomplishment and achievement readings, and they select a goal argument or adjunct, which lends itself as SoP (Bentley & Cruschina 2018).

The study of thetic broad focus in Italian thus suggests that the meaning differences which result in different patterns of argument realization are not defined and determined by syntactic structure itself (see Borer 2005 and subsequent literature). Rather, the relevant meaning properties are determined by the lexicon, specifically, in the case under examination here, the lexical encoding of scalar change.

5. TRANSITIVES, PASSIVES AND NON-THETIC BROAD FOCUS

Assuming that VS order is a defining feature of thetic broad focus (cf. 29a–b), transitives turn out not to be allowed in this construction in Italian. This can be seen in the examples below, which can be understood as utterances occurring out of the blue, but exhibit invariant SVO order.[4]

[4] Lahousse & Lamiroy (2012) report some examples of VOS order in broad focus in Italian.

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(31) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
a. *Gli studenti hanno passato l'esame*.
the students have passed the exam
'The students have passed the exam.'
b. *I ragazzi hanno mangiato la pizza*.
the kids have eaten the pizza.
'The kids have eaten the pizza.'

The intransitives are hardly compatible, or altogether incompatible, with thetic broad focus also exhibit SV order in broad focus.

(32) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
a. *Il bambino si è annoiato*.
the child REFL is got.bored
'The child has got bored.'
b. *Il bambino è cresciuto*.
the child is grown
'The child has grown.'
c. *Il gallo ha cantato.*
the cock has crowed
'The cock has crowed.'

The fact that broad focus with SV order is not subject to the same verb class restrictions as broad focus subject inversion supports the hypothesis that the former construction is not thetic, in the sense discussed in this paper. Following Bentley & Cruschina (2018), I assume that, in non-thetic broad focus, the preverbal argument occurs in SubjP, thus satisfying the Subject Criterion and providing an aboutness topic. Alternatively, an adverbial may take this role, for example the overt locative PP of locative inversion, although the latter is beyond the scope of this work.

Passives do occur in broad focus constructions with VS order (cf. 33a–b), which poses the question whether this structure is thetic.

(33) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
a. *È stato ucciso il Presidente*.
is been killed the President
'The President has been killed.'
b. *Sono stati rubati miliardi di dollari*.
are been stolen billions of dollars

(i) Prende il telefono il direttore tecnico Ross Brown.
picks.up the phone the director technical Ross Brown
'The technical director Ross Brown picks up the phone.'

However, not only are these examples highly constrained in terms of style or register, but they also exhibit a heavy postverbal DP. With a lighter DP the structure in (i) would be unacceptable in broad focus.

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'Billions of dollars have been stolen.'

I adopt Kiparsky's (2013) analysis of the passive as demotion of the highest Theta-role that is not already demoted, an operation yielded by the passive morpheme pre-syntactically. As a result of passivization, the demoted Theta-role cannot bear structural case and hence is not eligible to the syntactic functions subject or object, although it can surface as the argument of a preposition and it is sometimes detectable with anaphora. No other stipulation about the syntax of the passive is necessary, which leaves open the possibility that the lower Theta-role, if any, may not be externalized.

With this analysis of the passive in mind, let us return to (33a-b). The higher argument is not available as the subject, as a result of passivization, while the lower argument need not be externalized. The result is the thetic broad focus configuration, in which the Subject Criterion is satisfied by the silent situational SoP that arises with the utterance. Although the verb carries the agreement features of the postverbal DP, it was argued that agreement can be dealt with independently of the Subject Criterion (§ 2).

It is not easy to verify whether the depth of semantic embedding of the thematic argument plays the same role in the passive as in the intransitive structures discussed in previous sections. On the one hand, states that do not result from events of scalar change (cf. 4b), are odd in this structure.

(34) [Out-of-the-blue announcement]
?Sono stati amati / rispettati / odiati / osservati i professori.
are been loved respected hated observed the teachers
'The teachers have been loved / respected / hated / observed.'

On the other hand, bi-argumental structures with verbs of non-quantized change are normally intransitive, or low in transitivity, and hence they are banned from the Italian passive for independent reasons. This is shown in (35), which is low in transitivity because of the low degree of individuation of O (Hopper & Thompson 1980), and cannot be passivized regardless of word order or information structure.

(35) **È stata mangiata pizza. / *Pizza è stata mangiata*.
is been eaten pizza pizza is been eaten

Be that as it may, the key issue with the passive is that if, as is assumed here, the lower Theta-role need not be externalized, it need not compete with the situational argument for the role of SoP.

Thetic and non-thetic broad focus in Italian are contrasted in Table 1.

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Table 1

Broad Focus in Italian

Thetic broad focus	Non-thetic broad focus
null SoP + VS	SV(O) (with S as *SoP*)

The main difference between the two structures lies in how the Subject Criterion is satisfied. Following Bentley & Cruchina (2018) I have claimed that, in thetic broad focus, a locative goal argument of the verb or a situational argument that arises with the utterance serves as the silent SoP in SubjP, while the postverbal DP remains in its thematic vP internal position. In this work I have argued that the postverbal DP, being the argument of a final goal state, yields to the locative goal or the situational argument because of its depth of semantic embedding. Contrastingly, in non-thetic broad focus the argument that occurs in preverbal position serves as SoP (cf. 31a–b, 32a–c).

Other Romance languages, for example Spanish and Romanian, exhibit more flexible and varied word order patterns than Italian, in broad focus, including VOS and VSO (Leonetti 2017).

(36) *Parchează cineva o maşină*. (Romanian, Giurgea 2017: 283)
parks somebody a car
'Somebody is parking a car.'

Romanian broad focus subject inversion has been claimed to require a *stage topic* (Giurgea 2017, see also Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Cornilescu 1997). A stage topic may be provided in previous or current discourse, and hence need not correspond to the notion of silent situational SoP adopted in this work.[5] Therefore, the structure illustrated in (35) need not represent thetic broad focus. In fact, Ion Giurgea (p.c. 18/05/2018) suggested that VOS and VSO order in seemingly out-of-the blue contexts, in Romanian, may actually rely on presupposed information provided in the preceding discourse.[6]

The word order variation attested in broad focus in Romance is irrelevant to the proposed analysis of thetic broad focus. What this variation suggests is that whereas broad focus subject inversion can only be thetic in Italian, with non-thetic

[5] Erteschik-Shir (1999:124) points out that the stage topic of an utterance can be overt or implicit. An overt stage topic or one that is understood from the previous context is different from Bentley & Cruschina's (2018) notion of situational SoP, which arises with the utterance.

[6] See also the claim that VS order is more frequent with non-agentive verbs in Romanian (Pană Dindelegan 2013: 119–125), which is reminiscent of the facts discussed in this work.

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broad focus being characterized by SV order, in other languages subject inversion may also be found in non-thetic broad focus.

6. CONCLUSION

Starting from Bentley & Cruschina's (2018) account of thetic broad focus, in this paper I have examined in greater detail the restrictions on the verb classes that occur in this construction and I have proposed to capture them in terms of the depth of semantic embedding of the postverbal DP. I have also claimed that the occurrence of passives in thetic broad focus follows from a demotion analysis which does not require externalization of the lower argument. While arguing for the disentanglement of the notions of broad focus and theticity, I also hope to have provided evidence that verbs have lexical properties which are reflected in the syntax of their arguments. The lexicalization of scalar change is key in the licensing of thetic broad focus.

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ON THETIC BROAD FOCUS[*]

Abstract

Building upon Bentley & Cruschina's (2018) analysis of thetic broad focus, this contribution examines the restrictions on the verb classes that occur in this construction in Italian and captures them in terms of the depth of semantic embedding of the postverbal DP. It is also claimed that the occurrence of passives in thetic broad focus follows from a demotion analysis which does not require externalization of the lower argument. While supporting the view that broad focus and theticity ought to be disentangled, the paper pursues the hypothesis that verbs have lexical properties which are reflected in the syntax of their arguments. The lexicalization of scalar change is the key property in the licensing of thetic broad focus.

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