Francesco Maria Ciconte

Expletives in broad focus VS constructions of old Venetan

Abstract

In a corpus of early Venetan texts from the 14th-15th centuries, we note the optional presence of a non-referential pronominal form in broad focus VS constructions. We claim that the emergence of this kind of expletive spells out anaphoric agreement with the implicit, context-dependent (spatio-temporal) topic that sentence-focus structures presuppose. The data under scrutiny testify to the earliest stage of the emergence of a preverbal expletive form in presentational constructions, thus offering diachronic evidence in support of the view that thetic propositions are predications of an implicit stage topic, which is understood in the context of the discourse. In the diamesic dimension of the written domain of the early texts this topic recurrently surfaces in the form of spatio-temporal adverbials, which express the logodeictic coordinates in which all-new information sentences are embedded in narratives. However, we note that in the absence of such coordinates the expletives occurs.

Key words: expletive, VS order, broad focus, topic, presentational constructions, old Venetan.

1. Introduction: broad focus VS constructions

Broad focus VS structures are sentences which introduce a new event into the universe of discourse. In the literature, this type of predication is referred to as 'presentational' (Parry 2013: 511; Bentley & Ciconte 2024 and references therein). In information structural terms, presentational constructions are in broad focus, in that they convey all-new, non-derivable information which is introduced into discourse with no special presupposition. In this respect, presentational constructions appear to be 'topicless', as they do not display the binary topic-comment partition that characterizes categorical sentences. Rather, presentationals are thetic propositions, whose entire informational content falls within the scope of sentence focus, i.e., "the event reporting or presentational sentence type, in which the focus extends over both the subject and the predicate" (Lambrecht 1994: 222).

In many modern Romance languages of Northen Italy, broad-focus predications exhibit VS order and an expletive pronominal form in subject po-

sition, whereas the postverbal noun phrase, i.e., the 'pivot', lacks canonical subject-coding properties. The presence of the expletive has been argued to spell out the implicit or 'silent' topic that sentence-focus structures presuppose (Benincà 1994; Bernini 2012; Pescarini 2016: 745-747; Bentley & Cennamo 2022), building upon the view that there cannot be a topicless proposition and that presentational constructions require a stage topic (Erteschik-Shir 1997: 8) or, in syntactic accounts, a subject of predication (Benincà 1988; Calabrese 1992; Saccon 1992; Bianchi 1993; Parry 2013; Bentley & Cruschina 2018). The subject of predication expressed by the expletive is understood as an unspecified spatio-temporal, context-dependent location, which is required by the presentational construction (Benincà 1988; Calabrese 1992; Saccon 1992).

Old Venetan presentational constructions offer diachronic evidence of the emergence of such type of expletive. In fact, the data from a corpus of Venetan texts from the 14th-15th centuries testify to the earliest presence, albeit optional, of a preverbal, non-referential pronominal form in broad focus VS constructions. Observe the examples in (1)[1].

(1) a. *elo   li   vene   XI   munegi   incontra*
       EXPL   to-him   come.PST.3   eleven   monks.M.PL   across
       'There came eleven monks towards him'
       (*San Brenadano ven.*, 92.14)

    b. *ora   vene   uno   frar   de lo   monestier*
       now   come.PST.3   a   friar.M.SG   of the   monastery
       'Now, there came a friar of the monastery'
       (*San Brendano ven.*, 94.2)

The examples in (1) are clearly presentational constructions, as it is witnessed by the indefineteness of the referents expressed by the postverbal subjects, which are introduced into discourse for the first time. In (1a) the

---

[1] The data have been collected from OVI – *Opera del Vocabolario Italiano* [http://www.ovi.cnr.it/] – and have been checked in large portions of text. The examples are referenced as reported in the OVI. Also note that, since the third person verb forms are syncretic, i.e. they lack number feature in (old) Venetan, we gloss them as .3. only (cf. section 3).

pronoun *elo*, third person masculine singular, is not co-referential with the postverbal subject *munegi* 'monks', which is masculine plural. Thus, the pronoun *elo* is unequivocally a non-referential expletive. In (1b) the expletive is not present, but we observe the occurrence of the temporal adverb *ora* 'now', which provides the contextual coordinates of the event introduced by the presentational construction. Thus, it appears that spatio-temporal reference is explicit, typically in the form of adverbials, in the absence of the expletive (cf. 1b), but need not be overtly expressed if the expletive occurs (cf. 1a). The evidence such as that of the examples in (1) supports the view that presentational VS constructions are predications of a spatio-temporal topic, which can be explicit, particularly in the logodeixis of the written domain, or implicit (Benincà 1988; Saccon 1992, 1993; Erteschik–Shir 1997; Pinto 1997; Tortora 1997, 2014; Manzini & Savoia 2005; Parry 2013; Corr 2016; Bentley 2018).

Besides exhibiting an optional expletive, old Venetan presentational constructions display VS order. However, contrary to modern Romance, in the V2 syntax of the medieval varieties postverbal subjects are not necessarily part of the focus domain, but they can also be (referential) topics. We address this issue in the next section.

2. Postverbal subjects in the 'verb second' (V2) syntax of old Venetan

In a well-established line of research, the early Italo-Romance varieties, among which old Venetan, are claimed to have been characterized by a 'verb second' (V2) syntax (Vanelli 1986, 1999; Salvi 2001, 2004, 2016: 997-1012; Fesenmeier 2003; Benincà 2006; Poletto 2006, 2014; Benincà & Poletto 2010: 28-75; Ledgeway 2012: 140-180; Ciconte 2018a; Wolfe 2018). Thus, in the early stage, the V2 clause structure is characterized by a [XVX] system where the first position is accessible by any syntactic category bearing pragmatic relevance. In this respect, the preverbal position is not restricted only to (topical) subjects, as is the case with the SVO order of modern Italo-Romance, but it can be occupied also by focal (non-contrastive) and topical (non-dislocated) objects, as well as by any predicative prepositional, adjectival or adverbial phrase. Thus, at this stage, multiple configurations are allowed, namely OVS, PPVS, AdjPVS, AdvPVS, (Ø)VS, besides, of course, SVO. However, even though subjects can occur

in both pre- and post-verbal position, their distribution is not unconstrained, depending on whether they express an 'aboutness' or 'referential' topic (Ciconte 2018b). Observe the contrast between (2a) and (2b).

(2) a. *Et atanto la dona sì taxe.   Ma Tristan*
and then the woman thus fall-silent.PST.3 but Tristan
se fexe   amantinente portar in una fanestra...
RFL make.PST.3 immediately bring.INF in a window
'And then the woman thus fell silent. But Tristan made himself pulled to a window right away...'
(*Tristano veneto*, 80, 99.27)

   b. *E li ministri fecero sì [come] comandò   loro*
and the ministers do.PST.3PL thus as command.PST.3SG them
Yhesu, e disse   Yhesu ai   servidori [...]. Questo
Jesus and say.PST.3SG Jesus to-the servants   this
miracolo fexe   Yhesu...
miracle make.PST.3 Jesus
'And the ministers did thus as Jesus ordered them, and Jesus said to the servants [...]. Jesus made this miracle...'
(*Diatessaron veneto*, 17, 35.15-21)

In (2a) the subject of the second sentence, *Tristan* 'Tristan', breaks the local thematic chain with the subject of the previous sentence *la dona* 'the woman', as it is also witnessed by the disjunctive conjunction *ma* 'but'. Thus, the informational role of *Tristan* is that of an aboutness (or shifting) topic, i.e., it is an active element of discourse that is newly introduced, newly changed or newly returned to (Givón 1983: 8; Cruschina 2015: 63), and as such it occurs in preverbal position. By contrast, in (2b) the subject *Yhesu* 'Jesus' does not break the local thematic chain, but it keeps topical continuity, being in fact restated in the following sentences (*disse Yhesu...* 'Jesus said...', *fexe Yhesu...* 'Jesus made...'). In this respect, the informational role of *Yhesu* is that of a referential (or continuing) topic, i.e., it is an element of discourse that is fully accessible, contextually given, and anaphorically linked with topics previously mentioned in the discourse (Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007; Cruschina 2011: 19), and as such it occurs in postverbal position. Also note that in the last sentence of the example (2b) the preverbal position is occupied by the

object *Questo miracolo* 'this miracle', instantiating the frequentky attested OVS order of the medieval varieties. From the evidence in (2b) it follows that, in the V2 syntax of old Venetan, postverbal subjects are not necessarily part of the focus domain. Thus, at this stage, VS order is not exclusively restricted to marked or specialized constructions, namely thetic structures such as presentationals (cf. 1a-b), but it can also yield the binary topic-comment articulation, albeit reversed, of categorical sentences (cf. 2b)[2]. The examples in (2b) are transitive predications. However, the same correlation between subject distribution and type of topic holds also in predications with intransitive (unaccusative) verbs.

(3) a. *L'emperadore   se   partì   e   misser   Gibedeo   romase*
       the.emperor   RFL   leave.PST.3 and   sir   Gibedeo   remain.PST.3
       in   gran   foco   d'amore
       in   great   fire   of.love
       'The emperor left and sir Gibedeo remained in a great fire of love'
       (*Leggende sacre del Magl*, 7, 500.16)

     b. *Lo   abado   desmontà   in tera   solo   e   dise   a li*
       the   abbot   disembark.PST.3 in land alone and say.PST.3 to the
       frari   che   lo   aspetase,   e   andà   l'abado   solo
       friars   that   him   wait.PST. SUBJV.3 and go.PST.3 the.abbot alone
       per   tuta   l'isola
       across all   the.island
       'The abbot disembarked to the land alone and said to the friars that they waited for him, and the abbot went across the island alone'
       (*San Breandano ven.*, 138.11-12)

---

[2] Cartographic studies posit that the V2 system overlaps with an underlying [SVOX] default order, from which the verb is attracted to the sentence-initial position, i.e. it moves from its original position in the VP to the C-domain, namely the Head of CP, that is, the C° complementizer position (Benincà 2006; Poletto 2014; among others). Under this analysis, VS order with a referential topic is an unmarked result of verb movement. Note that in modern Italo-Romance the sentences in (2b) should be rephrased with a preverbal subject, as VS order is restricted only to mark the theticity of presentational constructions.

In (3a) the subject of the second sentence, *misser Gibedeo* 'sir Gibedeo', breaks the local thematic chain with the subject *l'emperadore* 'the emperor' of the preceding coordinated clause, expressing an aboutness (shifting) topic which is placed in preverbal position. In (3b), the VS sentence *andà l'abado* '(lit.) went the abbot' is not a presentational construction, as the postverbal subject *l'abado* 'the abbot', which has already been mentioned in the immediately preceding text, is a referential (continuing) topic, thus occurring in postverbal position. In this respect, the last sentence in (3b) is an unmarked predicate-focus structure, displaying the topic-comment partition, albeit reversed, of categorical sentences[3]. Importantly, we should mention that, in the data under consideration, the expletive is *never* attested in predicate-focus VS structures, whether these are transitive or intransitive, suggesting that the emergence of the expletive is restricted only to broad focus VS constructions.

3. The emergence of expletives in broad focus VS construction

As we have mentioned at the outset, in old Venetan the VS constructions in which the subject is part of the focal domain, i.e., sentence-focus structures, exhibit an optional expletive form in preverbal position (cf. 1). We provide further examples below.

(4) a. *el   vene   là   grandissimi   cani*
     EXPL   come.PST.3   there   very.big   dogs.M.PL
     'There came there very big dogs'
     (*Legg. ss. Piero e Polo*, 17, 50.1)

    b. *elo   vene   una gran   nivola   blanca*
     EXPL   come.PST.3   a   great   cloud.F.SG   white.F.SG
     'There came a great white cloud'
     (*San Brendano ven.*, 22-23, p. 130)

---

[3] As for the term 'predicate focus' we follow Lambrecht's (1994: 222) definition: "The unmarked subject-predicate (topic-comment) sentence type […], in which the predicate is the focus and in which the subject (plus any other topical elements) is in the presupposition". Recall that in the V2 syntax of old Venetan, the topic-comment articulation obtains, albeit reversed, also in VS structures with a referential topic. In fact, the rephrasing in modern Italian of the second sentence in (3b) would be [*L'abate*]TOPIC [*andò solo per tutta l'isola*]COMMENT, as it also is in the translation in English.

The sentences in (4) are broad-focus VS constructions, as it is clearly indicated by the indefiniteness of the postverbal subject referents, which are introduced into discourse for the first time. In (4a) and (4b) the pronominal forms *el* and *elo*, which are both third person masculine singular, are not co-referential with the postverbal subjects, i.e., respectively, the masculine plural *grandissimi cani* 'very big dogs' and the feminine singular *nivola* 'cloud'. The pronouns *el* and *elo* are unequivocally non-referential expletives in these contexts.

The sentences in (4) also exhibit an invariant form of the unaccusative verb, i.e., *vene* 'came'. In old Venetan, as well as in other early northern varieties, verb morphology undergoes phonological erosion, resulting in syncretic forms that lack inflectional number features in the third person. This in turn correlates with the retrenchment of grammatical V-S agreement in these vernaculars (Bentley 2018). The emergence of the expletive in broad focus VS constructions like (4a-b) may be indicative of the lack of agreement for any φ-feature, since the preverbal pronominal form neither agrees in number with the finite verb nor in number or gender with the postverbal subject. Furthermore, the expletive might have indeed appeared to differentiate the VS constructions with a focal subject, i.e. thetic sentence-focus structures, from those in which the postverbal subject is a referential topic, i.e. categorical predicate-focus sentences. Observe the contrast between (5a-b) and (5c).

(5) a. *e trovà li frari lo monestir de san Abeo*
and find.PST.3 the friars the monastery of saint Abba
'And the friars found the monastery of saint Abba'
(*San Brendano ven.*, 88.27)

   b. *andà innanti li santi abadi infina la gliesia*
go.PST.3 ahead the saint abbots up.to the church
'The saint abbots went ahead up to the church'
(*San Brendano ven.*, 96.13)

   c. *elo li vene XI munegi incontra*
EXPL to-him come.PST.3 eleven monks.M.PL across
'There came eleven monks towards him'
(*San Brenadano ven.*, 92.14)

In the VS sentences of (5a-b) the postverbal subjects *li frari* 'the monks' and *li santi abadi* 'the saint abbots' are referential topics, since they have been previously introduced into discourse, as is also shown by their definiteness. Thus, the examples in (5a-b) are unmarked predicate-focus structures, displaying the topic-comment partition, albeit reversed, of categorical sentences. Importantly, in the data under scrutiny, the expletive is *never* attested in this type of constructions. By contrast, in the VS sentence of (5c) the postverbal subject *XI munegi* 'eleven monks' falls within the broad focus of the construction, since the pivot noun phrase is introduced into discourse for the first time, as it is clearly indicated by its indefiniteness. Thus, it is in this type of structures, namely thetic VS propositions, that the expletive starts to appear. Since at this stage topical and focal postverbal subjects can be found in the same V-S agreement pattern with the syncretic verb form, the expletive might have appeared to differentiate the structures with a focal subject (5c) from those with a topical subject (5a-b).

Leaving aside transitive predications (cf. 5a), which always exhibit a clear topic-comment partition without a preverbal pronominal form, the available data show that the expletive is attested only in unaccusative VS structures (cf. 5c), which, however, appear to be undifferentiated at this stage, insofar as a topical subject can follow the syncretic verb (cf. 5b) on a par with the focal subject of sentence-focus structures (5c). This might have been the environment where the grammaticalization of subject agreement started (Bentley 2018). The expletive emerges to spell out the implicit topic that sentence-focus structures presuppose, disambiguating this kind of unaccusative VS constructions, which are thetic, from those with a referential topic subject, which are categorical, i.e., predicate-focus sentences.

The preverbal non-referential pronominal form which starts to appear in this context neither controls agreement on the finite syncretic verb nor is it co-referential with the postverbal focal subject. Rather, the expletive spells out agreement with the subject of predication, i.e. the implicit, semantically unspecified, discourse-dependent topic that broad focus presentational constructions presuppose (Benincà 1988; Calabrese 1992; Saccon 1992; Bianchi 1993; Parry 2013; Bentley & Cruschina 2018). This type of agreement can be described as 'anaphoric' (Bentley 2018, building on Bresnan and Mchombo's 1987, and refer-

ences therein). Then, at a later stage, i.e. after 16th century, concomitantly with the loss of the V2 syntax, there emerge subject clitics (Haiman 1974; Benincà 1995; Poletto 1995; Parry 2013), which gradually become, in most northern varieties, extended exponents of finite (person and number) agreement (Rizzi 1986; Brandi & Cordin 1989; Poletto 2000; among others). This later type of agreement is grammatical, in that it involves agreement with subject φ-features. Diachronically, grammatical agreement is derived from anaphoric agreement (Givón 1976; Siewierska 1999; Corbett 2003; Mithun 2003, among others)[4].

The broad focus VS presentational constructions of old Venetan testify to the earliest stage of the grammaticalization of subject agreement, when an expletive form starts to appear, though not yet consistently, to spell out anaphoric agreement with the implicit topic, i.e. the subject of predication, of broad focus structures with a postverbal subject.

3.1 The topic of broad focus VS constructions in the logodeixis of the written domain
In the diamesic dimension of the written domain the organization of discourse varies from that of the spoken domain. Whilst in the spoken domain information can be retrieved instantaneously from the deixis, i.e. the extra-linguistic environment, of the communicative situation, in the written texts information is built (or recovered) with poor or no reference to the extra-linguistic context. In fact, the informational value of the elements involved in the narratives relies mostly on intra-textual deixis, or logodeixis (Fillmore 1975: 70). Thus, the linguistic environment that surrounds a portion of text is the main source of its meaning, and it determines the informational role of the discourse referents. This kind of linguistic environment is often referred to as 'co-text' (Conte 1983: 96), i.e. the organized linguistic material that provides the interpretative features of a written text (Van Dijk 1977; Petöfi 1979; Conte 1988; Givón 1995; Andorno 2003). Since we deal with early written surces, the informational value and the propositional content of the extant examples can only be captured within their co-text, i.e. the diamesic dimension of the written domain.

---

[4] Synchronic tension between anaphoric agreement and grammatical agreement is still found in the VS structures of the northern Italo-Romance varieties (Bentley 2018).

Broad focus VS constructions introduce all-new, non-derivable focal in-formation that, whilst carrying no special presupposition, is brought about by implicit reference to the spatio-temporal coordinates of the discourse con-text. In the spoken domain, these coordinates need not be overtly expressed, as they are understood in the deixis of the communicative situation[5]. On the contrary, these coordinates often surface in the co-text of the written texts. In particular, we note that the overt expression of spatio-temporal reference is strikingly frequent in broad focus VS constructions with unaccusative verbs. We provide below only but a couple of examples (cf. also 1b).

(6) a. *Et   alora   vene   un   masano...*
        and then   come.PST.3 a   peasant
        'And then there came a peasant...'
        (*Vang. venez.*, 29.20)

    c. *Et   in   quella fiada aparse   a   questo desperado*
        and   in   that   time appear.PST.3 to this   desperate.(man)
        una ombra
        a   shadow
        'And in that moment there appeared a shadow to this desperate man'
        (*Legg. ss. Piero e Polo*, 46, 60.25)

In the examples in (6) the new events introduced by the presentational constructions are anchored to temporal expressions, i.e. *alora* 'then', *in quel-la fiada* 'in that moment', which provide the co-textual coordinates of the on-going narration. These coordinates serve as the (overt) stage topic of the VS predication. The evidence from the early written texts thus supports the view that presentational VS constructions are predications of an implicit spatio-temporal topic (Benincà 1988, Saccon 1992, 1993, Erteschik–Shir 1997, Pinto 1997, Tortora 1997, 2014, Manzini and Savoia 2005, Parry 2013, Corr 2016, Bentley 2018). Whilst in the spoken domain the implicit topic need not

---

[5] Let us imagine a conversation in which one interlocutor says to the other the following out-of-the-blue sentence: *È arrivata una multa!* 'There arrived a traffic ticket!'. Both interlocutors retrieve the information that the ticket has arrived 'here and now' from the deixis of their con-textually shared communicative situation, without making explicit reference to the spatio-tem-poral coordinates in which the event happens.

be overtly expressed, its deixis being understood from the discourse-context, in the co-text of the written texts, which lack extra-textual reference, this is spelled out by spatio-temporal coordinates in which all-new information is embedded. Since the stage topic that broad focus sentence presuppose is not retrievable from the extra-linguistic context, in the written domain this is explicitly established in order to meet the conditions of textual coherence and cohesion. On the contrary, in the spoken domain these conditions are met by the understood deixis of the discourse context, and the topic can be left implicit or silent. In this respect, (early) written texts are particularly revealing, in that they show features that may be phonologically null, or silent, in the spoken domain.

Finally, we observe that, if the broad focus VS presentational construction lacks the overt expression of the spatio-temporal coordinates, the expletive occurs, as shown by the contrasted examples below.

(7) a.   *un   dì,   sì   li   aparse   una nivola molto granda*
      one   day   thus to.him appear.PST.3 a   cloud very big
      'One day there appeared to him a very big cloud'
      (*San Brendano ven.*, 108.29)

    b.   *elo li   aparse   una   isola   piziola*
      EXPL to.him appear.PST.3 a   island   small
      'There appeared to him a small island'
      (*San Brendano ven.*, 180.27)

The contrast of the examples in (7) shows that spatio-temporal reference is explicit (cf. *un dì* 'one day' in 7a) in the absence of the expletive, but need not be overtly expressed if the expletive occurs (cf. *elo* in 7b), suggesting that the expletive spells out anaphoric agreement with an implicit, context-dependent, spatio-temporal stage topic, i.e. the subject of predication, that broad focus VS constructions presuppose.

4. Conslusions

The data from a corpus of early Venetan texts from the 14th-15th centuries testify to the earliest stages of the emergence of a preverbal, non-referential pronominal form in broad-focus VS constructions with a focal subject. The

analysis of the examples shows that the presence of the expletive is asscoiat-
ed with the expression of an implicit discourse topic, which is required by the
presentational contruction. These findings thus offer diachronic evidence in
support of the view that sentence-focus structures, namely presentationals,
are predications of an implicit, semantically unspecified, context-dependent
topic. In the written domain of the early sources this topic recurrently sur-
faces in the form of spatio-temporal adverbials, which provide the logode-
ictic coordinates in which all-new information sentences are embedded in
narratives. We observe that spatio-temporal reference is explicit, typically
in the form of adverbials, in the absence of the expletive, but need not be
overtly expressed if the expletive occurs. This suggests that the emerging
preverbal proniminal form spells out anaphoric agreement with the implicit
spatio-temporal (stage) topic that thetic sentences presuppose.

References

Andorno, Cecilia, 2003, *Linguistica testuale: un'introduzione*, Roma, Carocci.

Benincà, Paola, 1988, "L'ordine degli elementi della frase: Costruzioni con ordine mar-
cato degli elementi", in Renzi, L. (ed.), *Grande Grammatica Italiana di Consultazione*,
Bologna, Il Mulino, vol. 1, 129-194.

Benincà, Paola, 1994, "Il clitico 'a' nel dialetto Padovano", in Benincà, P. (ed.), *La Vari-
azione Sintattica: Studi di Dialettologia Romanza*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 15-27.

Benincà, Paola, 1995, "Complement Clitics in Medieval Romance: The Tobler-Mussafia
Law", in Battye, A. & Roberts, I. (eds.), *Clause Structure and Language Change*, Ox-
ford, Oxford University Press, 296-325.

Benincà, Paola, 2006, "A detailed map of the Left Periphery of Medieval Romance,
in Zanuttini, R, Campos, H., Herberger, E. & Portner, P. (eds.), *Crosslinguistic Re-
search in Syntax and Semantics. Negation, Tense and Clausal Architecture*, Washington,
Georgetown University Press, 53-86.

Benincà, Paola & Poletto, Cecilia, 2010, "L'ordine delle parole e la struttura della
frase", in Salvi, G. & Renzi, L. (eds.), *Grammatica dell'italiano antico*, Bologna, Il Muli-
no, vol. 1, 27-59.

Bernini, Giuliano, 2012, "Il clitico a nell'italo-romanzo settentrionale: Osservazioni
metodologiche", in Orioles, V. (ed.), *Per Roberto Gusmani: Linguistica Storica e Teorica*,
Udine, Forum, vol. 2, 269-282.

Bentley, Delia, 2018, "Grammaticalization of subject agreement on evidence from Italo-Romance", *Linguistics* 56(6), 1246-1301.

Bentley, Delia, & Cennamo, Michela, 2022, "Thematic and lexico-aspectual constraints on V-S agreement: Evidence from Northern Italo-Romance", in Ledgeway, A., Smith, J.C. & Vincent, N. (eds.), *Periphrasis and Inflexion in Diachrony: A View from Romance*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 335-361.

Bentley, Delia & Ciconte, Francesco Maria, 2024, "Microvariation at the Interfaces: The Subject of Predication of Broad Focus VS Constructions in Turinese and Milanese", *Language*s 9, 37.

Bentley, D. & Cruschina, S., 2018, "The silent argument of broad focus: Typology and predictions", *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3(1): 118.

Bianchi, Valentina, 1993, "Subject positions and e-positions", *Quaderni del laboratorio di linguistica 7. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore*, 51-69.

Brandi, Luciana & Cordin, Patrizia, 1989, "Two Italian dialects and the null subject parameter", in Jaeggli, O. & Safir, K. (eds.), *The null subject parameter*, Dordrecht, Foris, 111-142.

Bresnan, Joan & Mchombo, Sam A., 1987, "Topic, pronoun and agreement in Chichewa", *Language* 63, 741-782.

Calabrese, Andrea, 1992, "Some remarks on focus and logical structure in Italian", *Harvard Working Papers in Linguistics* 1, 91-127.

Ciconte, Francesco Maria, 2018a, "La posizione del soggetto e dell'oggetto nell'italo-romanzo antico", *Studi e saggi linguistici* 56(1), 97-136.

Ciconte, Francesco Maria, 2018b, "Postverbal subjects in old Italo-Romance", *Italian Journal of Linguistics* 30, 127–58.

Corbett, Greville, 2003, "Agreement: The range of the phenomenon and the principles of the Surrey database of agreement", *Transactions of the Philological Society* 101(2), 155-202.

Conte, Maria-Elisabeth, 1983, "La pragmatica linguistica", in Segre, C. (ed.), *Intorno alla linguistica*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 94-128.

Conte, Maria-Elisabeth, 1988, *Condizioni di coerenza. Ricerche di linguistica testuale*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.

Corr, Alice, 2016, "Wide-focus subject-verb inversion in Ibero-Romance: a locative account", *Glossa: a Journal of General Linguistics* 1(1), 11.

Cruschina, Silvio, 2011, *Discourse-Related Features and Functional Projections*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Cruschina, Silvio, 2015, "Focus structure", in Bentley, D. Ciconte, F. M. & Cruschina, S., *Existentials and Locatives in Romance Dialects of Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 43-98.

Erteschik-Shir, Nomi, 1997, *The Dynamics of Focus Structure*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Fesenmeier, Ludwig, 2003, *L'ordine dei costituenti in toscano antico*, Padova, Unipress.

Fillmore, Charles J., 1971, *Santa Cruz Lectures on Deixis*, Berkley, University of California.

Frascarelli, Mara & Hinterhölzl, Roland, 2007, "Types of Topics in German and Italian", in Winkler, S. & Schwabe, K. (eds.), *On Information Structure, Meaning and Form*, Amsterdam, Benjamins, 87-116.

Givón, Talmy, 1976, "Topic, pronoun and grammatical agreement", in Li, C. N. (ed.), *Subject and Topic*, New York, Academic Press, 149-188.

Givón, Talmy, 1983, "Topic continuity in discourse: An introduction", in Givón, T. (ed.), *Topic Continuity in Discourse: A quantitative Cross-Language Study*, Amsterdam, Benjamins, 5-41.

Givon, Talmy, 1995, Coherence in text vs. coherence in mind. In Gernsbacher Morton, A. & Givon, T. (eds.), *Coherence in Spontaneous Text*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 59-115.

Herman, Jószef, 2000. *Vulgar Latin*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Lambrecht, Knud, 1994, *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representation of Discourse Referents*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ledgeway, Adam, 2012, *From Latin to Romance: Morphosyntactic Typology and Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Manzini, Maria Rita & Savoia, Leonardo, 2005, *I dialetti italiani e romanci. Morfosintassi generative*, Alessandria, Dell'Orso.

Mithun, Marianne, 2003, "Pronouns and agreement: The information status of pronominal affixes", *Transactions of the Philological Society* 101, 235-278.

Pescarini, Diego, 2016, "Clitic pronominal systems: Morphophonology", in Ledgeway, A. & Maiden, M. (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 742-757.

Parry, Mair, 2013, "Variation and change in the presentational constructions of north-western Italo-Romance varieties". In Barðal, J., Cennamo, M. & van Gelderen, E. (eds.), *Argument Structure in Flux: The Naples/Capri Papers*. Amsterdam, Benjamins, 511-548.

Petöfi, János S., 1979, *Text vs sentence: Basic questions of text linguistics*, Hamburg, Buske.

Pinto, Manuela, 1997, *Licensing and interpretation of inverted subjects in Italian*, PhD dissertation, Utrecht University, UiL OTS Dissertation series.

Poletto, Cecilia, 1995, "The diachronic development of subject clitics in North-Eastern Italian dialects", in Battye, A. & Roberts, I. (eds.), *Clause Structure and Language Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 295-324.

Poletto, Cecilia, 2000, *The higher functional field. Evidence from Northern Italian dialects*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Poletto, Cecilia, 2006, "Parallel Phases: a study on the high and low left periphery of Old Italian", in Frascarelli, M. (ed.), *Phases of Interpretation*, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 261-295.

Poletto, Cecilia, 2014, *Word Order in Old Italian*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Rizzi, Luigi, 1986, "On the status of subject clitics in Romance", in Jaeggli, O. & Silva-Corvalan, C. (eds.), *Studies in Romance linguistics*, Dordrecht, Foris, 391-419.

Saccon, Graziella, 1992, "VP-internal arguments and locative subjects". *Proceedings of the 22nd Meeting of the North Eastern Linguistic Society*, Amherst, GLSA, UMass/Amherst, 383-397.

Saccon, Graziella, 1993, *Post-Verbal Subjects: A Study Based on Italian and Its Dialects*. Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

Salvi, Giampaolo, 2001, "The two sentence structures of early Romance", in Cinque, G. & Salvi, G. (eds.), *Current Studies in Italian Syntax. Essays offered to Lorenzo Renzi*, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 297-312.

Salvi, Giampaolo, 2004, *La formazione della struttura di frase romanza: ordine delle parole e clitici dal latino alle lingue romanze antiche*, Tübingen, Niemeyer.

Salvi, Giampaolo, 2016, "Word order", in Ledgeway, A. & Maiden, M. (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 997-1012.

Siewierska, Anna, 1999, "From anaphoric pronoun to grammatical agreement marker. Why objects don't make it", *Folia Linguistica* 32(2), 225-251.

Tortora, Christina, 1997, *The syntax and semantics of the weak locative*, PhD dissertation, University of Delaware.

Tortora, Christina, 2014, *A comparative grammar of Borgomanerese*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Van Dijk, Teun A., 1977, *Text and Context: Explorations in the semantics and pragmatics of discourse*, London, Longman.

Vanelli, Laura, 1986, "Strutture tematiche in italiano antico", in Stammerjohann, H. (ed.), *Tema-Rema in Italiano*, Tübigen, Gunter Narr Verlag, 249-273.

Vanelli, Laura, 1999, "Ordine delle parole e articolazione pragmatica dell'italiano antico: la 'prominenza' pragmatica della prima posizione nella frase", *Medioevo Romanzo* 23(2), 229-246.

Wolfe, Sam, 2018, *Verb Second in Medieval Romance*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.