

# A PRIMITIVE MAPPING OF THE CRITERIAL FIELD OF FOCUS<sup>1</sup>

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This contribution proposes a preliminary reassessment of the cartography of a number of syntactic phenomena that fall under the broad label of ‘focus’. The main aim of this work is to encourage a discussion and amendment of the cartography of focus projections based on a cross-linguistic comparison of the movement properties of interrogative *wh*-elements and of prosodically-marked nominal focalisations. Additionally, a new understanding of the syntactic properties of *wh*-movement and focus will be proposed which, based on Rizzi’s (2017) notions of ‘movement’ and ‘Spell-Out’ parameters, reduces the observed cross-linguistic variations to the combination of simple binary choices. I will claim that the notion of ‘focus projection’ is semantically and empirically insufficient to account for the wide array of focal phenomena attested cross-linguistically while abiding by the ‘One feature – One head’ rule and ‘Uniqueness of focus’ principle: criterial fields are needed instead.

Keywords: syntactic cartography; focus; *wh*-movement; interrogatives; parameters.

Esta contribuição propõe uma revisão preliminar da cartografia de um conjunto de fenômenos sintáticos que se enquadram no âmbito do rótulo mais geral de ‘foco’. O principal objetivo deste trabalho é propiciar uma discussão e revisão da cartografia das projeções de foco com base em uma comparação translinguística das propriedades de movimento de elementos-QU interrogativos e de focalizações nominais prosodicamente marcadas. Para além disso, será proposta uma nova compreensão das propriedades sintáticas do movimento-QU e do foco, o que – tendo em vista as noções de parâmetros de ‘movimento’ e de ‘Spell-Out’ de Rizzi (2017) – reduz a variação linguística observada à combinação de escolhas binárias simples. Argumentarei que a noção de ‘projeção de foco’ é semântica e empiricamente insuficiente para dar conta da ampla gama de fenômenos focais atestados translinguisticamente, apesar de obedecer a regra do ‘Um traço, um núcleo’ e o princípio da ‘Unicidade do foco’: os campos criteriais são, no entanto, necessários.

Palavras-chave: cartografia sintática; foco; movimento-QU; interrogativas; parâmetros.

## 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This discussion adopts the cartographic approach to syntactic structures, and proposes a novel mapping of the projections for foci. It is anchored on the widely-accepted assumption that the functional spine encompasses a highly-split functional field above TP, the HLP (‘high left periphery’), and a lower, less articulated field right above *v*P, the LLP (‘low left periphery’). Concretely, I shall pursue an architecture of syntax in which each functional head encodes only one singleton syntactically active feature (‘one feature – one head’, henceforth 1F1H). 1F1H was first elaborated in Kayne (2005), although this contribution adopts Rizzi’s (2017: 171) ‘relaxed’ version whereby a functional head that acts as a trigger of movement may encode distinct features responsible for phrasal vs head movement.

Less canonically, I shall follow authors such as Aboh & Pfau (2011) and Bonan (2021) in assuming that *wh*-elements in answer-seeking interrogatives are cross-linguistically only needed to identify the content of *wh*-questions, and do not contribute to clause-typing.

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Consequently, I embrace Cable’s (2010) claim in favour of a cross-linguistic extension of Q-particles in wh-interrogatives, which are needed both for clause-typing and to determine the scope of wh-elements stranded clause-internally.<sup>2</sup> I thus consider that the [q;focus] bundle of wh-interrogatives is shared between the Q-particle, which encodes [q], and the wh-element, that activates [focus]. In this model, what is triggered by the HLP is not the wh-element but [q], i.e., total wh-fronting is an instance of fronting of Q that ‘piggy-backs’ on the wh-element.

### 1.1 A MICRO-PARAMETRISATION OF MERGE, MOVE AND SPELL OUT

The movement data will be assessed in light of Rizzi’s (2017) understanding of movement parameters whereby MOVE involves the establishment of a probe-goal search followed by internal merge of the goal, and encompasses the two types in (1) and (2):

- (1) PHRASAL MOVEMENT (Rizzi 2017: 171 (20))
  - a. A search feature at the phrasal level;
  - b. The corresponding internal merge feature at the phrasal level (IM, formerly the EPP).
- (2) HEAD MOVEMENT (Rizzi 2017: 171 (21))
  - a. A search feature at the lexical level (Search<sub>lex</sub>);
  - b. The corresponding internal merge feature, again at the lexical level (IM<sub>lex</sub>).

The syntactically active features that count for 1FH are those responsible for phrasal movement, while the lexical features only contribute to the characterisation of the projection.

When one functional element enters the syntax and becomes a functional head in the relevant configuration, it triggers one syntactic operation on the structure which is built. The available operations are those of MERGE, MOVE, and SPELL OUT. SPELL OUT parameters deal with “variation in the obligatory, optional or impossible pronunciation of certain heads and of their immediate dependents” (Rizzi 2017: 175). For instance, Samo (2019) argues that the projection commonly taken to encode [focus] in the HLP is not realised in the same way by all languages: Focus<sup>o</sup> triggers movement of an XP that bears a relevant focus feature and, while in languages such as Gungbe this head is phonetically realised, as in (3), its Standard Italian (StandIT) counterpart is silent, as in (4):

- (3) Gungbe (Aboh 2007: 85 (9c))

[FocusP	KÒFí	[Focus <sup>o</sup>	wè	[	ùn	yró	__i	]]!
	Kofi		foc		1sg	call		

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<sup>2</sup> I shall not make a distinction between Q-projection and Q-adjunction because it would complicate the discussion unnecessarily. Cf. Bonan (2021) for an analysis of Romance interrogatives that considers the architecture of Q, and Cable (2010) and Bonan (2021b) for a thorough justification of the cross-linguistic extension of Q-particles in wh-interrogatives.

‘I called KOFI (as opposed to, for example, Enoch)’

(4) StandIT (Samo 2019: 146 (8))

[FocusP IL LIBRO<sub>i</sub> [Focus° Ø [ Gianni ha letto \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> ]]]!<sup>3</sup>  
the book foc Gianni has read \_\_\_

‘Gianni read THE BOOK (as opposed to, for example, the article)’

Samo (2019: 146) claimed that, while in the Gungbe example in (4) the criterial head is spelled-out, some languages display the movement of an already merged head. This configuration is observed in V2 languages, as illustrated by the German example in (5):

(5) German (adapted from Samo 2019: 146 (8))

[FocusP DIESES FRESKO<sub>i</sub> [Focus° malte<sub>j</sub> [ Giotto \_\_\_<sub>j</sub> \_\_\_<sub>i</sub> ]]]  
this fresco painted.3sg Giotto

‘Giotto painted THIS FRESCO (as opposed to, for example, the one over there)’

In this framework, the variability of syntactic strategies adopted by different languages stems from different combinations of the syntactic operations of MERGE, MOVE and SPELL OUT: Gungbe merges FocusP and spells out Focus°; StandIT merges FocusP but does not spell out Focus°;<sup>4</sup> German requires both phrasal movement and head movement. Additionally, while a positive setting of MERGE is a requirement in Gungbe and German, alternation between shifted and in-situ foci is observed in StandIT, as illustrated in the variant of (4) given in (4’):

(4’) [FocusP [Focus° Ø [ Gianni ha letto IL LIBRO ]]]!  
foc Gianni has read the book

‘Gianni read THE BOOK (as opposed to, for example, the article)’

The parametrisation in question can be viewed as in TABLE I:

	MERGE (M)	SPELL OUT (SO)	SEARCH (SEA)	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
ITALIAN	1	0	1	1/0	0	0
GUNGBE	1	1	1	1	0	0
GERMAN	1	0	1	1	1	1

**TABLE I: LANGUAGE VARIABILITY IN ACTIVATING FOCUSP**

I shall argue that the micro-parametrisation in Table I is particularly powerful for the understanding of the distribution of focus. In fact, the cartographic approach to syntax widely acknowledges that the desirable 1F1H-architecture seems unachievable in relation to focus

<sup>3</sup> A. Ledgeway (pc.) points out that a preverbal subject intervening between the shifted focus and the finite verb is ungrammatical for many speakers of Italian. However, this phenomenon is likely to be due to an intervention effect, and should not have consequences for my theory.

<sup>4</sup> A. Ledgeway (pc.) suggests that the focus head could be responsible for the intonational contour associated with shifted contrastive foci; accordingly, the special intonation associated with these structures would be an alternative way of spelling out (at PF) the focus head.

phenomena, which constitute an apparent problem for the theory of syntax. In StandIT, for example, what was commonly understood as a free alternation between focus in-situ and shifted focus is challenged by the observation that, while the observed alternation is productive with contrastive foci, the same movement properties are not available for informational and corrective foci (Bianchi 2013, Cruschina 2011, but also Benincà & Poletto 2004), as I discuss in §3. A single head encoding [focus] coupled with a simple ‘covert vs overt movement’ parameter (IM=0/1) is thus insufficient to account for the observed facts. This article addresses this problem and provides a novel explanation for the puzzling distributional properties of the most common types of nominal focalisations.

## 2. THE FOCUS/WH- PARALLEL

The mainstream literature on interrogatives maintains that, when functioning as interrogative operators in wh-questions, wh-phrases are obligatorily focused, and therefore target focus projections (Horvath 1986, Beck 2006, Rizzi 1997, Cable 2010, a.o.). The use of Rizzi’s (1997) high left-peripheral FocusP as a probe for totally-fronted wh-phrases is widespread in the literature, while quite a small number of works have argued instead for clause-internal wh-elements targeting a focus projection of the LLP (refer to Author 2021, §3.1 for an overview).

Horvath (1986) claimed that whenever languages have a specialised projection for contrastively-focused constituents at their disposal, this projection is also available for wh-elements. Bonan (2021b) argued that this parallelism is displayed also in Eastern Trevisan (EastTV), which attracts both contrastive foci, as in (6), and wh-elements, (7), in the LLP:

(6) ogni bocial<sub>j</sub> ghe gà consegnà AL MAESTRO<sub>i</sub> el so\*<sub>i/j</sub> libro \_\_<sub>i</sub>!  
 every boy=3PS 3.DAT has handled to.the teacher the his book  
 ‘Every boy handled their book TO THE TEACHER (e.g., not to the principal)’

(7) ghe ga-eo<sub>j</sub> consegnà A CHI / A CHE MAESTRO<sub>i</sub> el so\*<sub>i/j</sub> libro \_\_<sub>i</sub>?  
 3.DAT has=3PS handled to who to what teacher the his book  
 ‘TO WHOM/WHICH TEACHER did he handle his book?’

In EastTV, wh-elements/foci land lower than the low adverbial space (LAS), to which the active past participle moves (Bonan 2021: 11). That these elements surface in derived positions is supported by the lack of canonical binding properties: in (7), what follows the moved constituent is c-commanded by the rest of the clause, i.e., not dislocated to the right, as witnessed by the ability of the existential quantifier *ogni X* (‘every X’) to bind it.<sup>5</sup> EastTV does

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<sup>5</sup> The 3PS subject clitic ‘l’ in (6) does not signal the presence of subject topicalisation: subject clitics, when available, are compulsory in the unmarked clauses in this variety (Bonan 2021).

not display a phonological constraint prohibiting wh-categories in the rightmost clausal edge (cf. *Gatu magnà che?* Lit: ‘Have-you eaten what?’), supporting the idea that the movements in (6) and (7) are not driven by the incompatibility of wh-elements with the main-stress position.

## 2.1 WH-TO FOC AND ITS CROSS-LINGUISTIC EXTENSION

The interrogative syntax of EastTV was used in Bonan (2021) to elaborate an innovative theory of low focus movement named Wh-To-Foc (henceforth, W<sup>h</sup>F). W<sup>h</sup>F entails the existence of a functional periphery above  $\nu$ P that minimally contains a focus-projection, FocP, whose head encodes an uninterpretable [focus] feature (as in Belletti 2004). My claim was that in answer-seeking interrogatives, the inherent feature of the wh-element that gets activated is the one that has an output effect (in the sense of Chomsky 2001): [focus] (in contexts such as relatives, for instance, [wh] is activated instead). A [q]-feature is additionally ‘acquired’ via IM<sub>lex</sub> of an adjoined Q-particle in the sense of Cable (2010). The command can be understood as in (8):

- (8) 

if clause = interrogative: activate [foc] <i>and</i> IM <sub>LEX</sub> [q]
else: activate [wh]

In languages with low focus movement such as EastTV, once Foc is merged,  $u$ [foc] in Foc<sup>o</sup> searches the  $i$ [foc] on the wh-element, and IM is performed. Following low focus-movement, when the left-peripheral FocusP is merged the silent Q-particle attached to the *frozen-in-place* wh-element in SpecFoc is searched by the [q]-feature in Focus<sup>o</sup>, and then IM in SpecFocusP. Extraction of the Q-particle does not ‘undo’ the *frozen-in-place* wh-element (in the sense of Rizzi’s 2015 version of Criterial Freezing, CF, whereby only the criterial GOAL is frozen), the movement does not violate CF. The theory of W<sup>h</sup>F has two consequences:

- It entails that Rizzi’s (1996) Wh-Criterion is actually of a dual nature, and encompasses a Focus-Criterion (F-Cr) and a Q-Criterion (Q-Cr);
- It entails that in languages like Trevisan the ‘edge’ of the lower clausal phase is not Spec $\nu$ P but SpecFoc (‘dynamic phase edge’ à la Boskovic 2014).

The parametrisation of the projections involved in EastTV ‘wh-in situ’ are given in Table II:

	M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
F-CR (FOCP)	1	0	1	1	1	1
Q-CR (FOCUSP)	1	0	1	1	1	1
<b>TABLE II: PROJECTIONS INVOLVED IN TV ‘WH-IN SITU’</b>						

SEA<sub>lex</sub> and IM<sub>lex</sub> here are classified as ‘1’ because Trevisan has V-to-C movement in wh-interrogatives. The settings proposed for the F-CR are valid also for instances of low focus-movement as those observed in (6). I will later claim that what’s responsible for the Q-CR is in fact not Rizzi’s (1997) FocusP but rather a specialised projection, QP.

Low focus movement of *wh*-elements and foci is also attested in diachronic studies: Archaic Chinese displayed the phenomenon in the Warring states period (F-CR: IM=1), with an optionality between movement and non-movement at the beginning of the Han Dynasty (IM=1/0) (Aldridge 2010). Today the language has real *wh*-in situ and unmoved foci (IM=0), suggesting the existence of a ‘derivational simplicity principle’ (Bonan 2021b: 42) that, in the framework adopted here, entails a tendency for the setting of IM to evolve in the direction of no movement (1→0). The same evolution has been attested in the diachrony of Japanese, which went from having *W<sup>h</sup>F* in the Nara period (IM=1), to optionality between movement and non-movement in the Heian period (IM=1/0), to present-day lack of movement (IM=0) (Aldridge 2009). Nara Japanese low movement of *wh*-elements is an instantiation of *W<sup>h</sup>F* in which the need for a Q-Cr is supported by the presence of a phonetically-realised Q-particle in Focus° (*ka*). In Bonan (2021), I suggested that Northern Italian dialects (NIDs) vary to the extent in which they display subject-clitic inversion (i.e., V-to-C movement) (*SEA<sub>lex</sub>* and *IM<sub>lex</sub>* 1 vs. 0), and as to whether they have low movement of *wh*-elements/foci (IM=1 vs IM=0). NIDs are thus either at the ‘movement’ stage as attested in Archaic Chinese and Old Japanese, or at the ‘real in-situ’ stage typical of contemporary varieties of Chinese and Japanese.

The EastTV data highlight that the functional portion targeted by foci and *wh*-elements lies lower than the LAS and higher than *vP*; however, an understanding whereby the movement of all these elements is triggered by the same feature encoded by one single head is semantically untenable. Also, cross-linguistically, not all types of foci have the same distribution, suggesting that not all categories that fall under the broad label of ‘focus’ are probed by the same head, be it in the HLP or the LLP, as widely assumed. I discuss this in §3.

### **3. TOWARDS AN IDENTIFICATION OF FOCAL ‘CRITERIAL FIELDS’**

Horvath’s (1986) proposal for an interpretive similarity between contrastive foci and *wh*-elements in that both types of categories quantify over an inferable, contextually closed set faces semantic problems. Whilst this parallel can be made between certain focus categories, the difference between D-linked and non-D-linked *wh*-elements is not captured by this analysis, as it is typically assumed that only D-linked *wh*-elements involve this type of quantification. Additionally, contrastive focus differs from new information focus in that it is linked to a member of a set in the context, while the latter can be either unlinked, or linked to a *wh*-element. How to reconcile these basic observations with the 1F1H rule and ‘Uniqueness of focus’? In a system that takes *wh*-elements and foci to compete for the same Spec, this is nearly impossible.

#### **3.1 RETHINKING RIZZI’S FOCUSP**

Rizzi (2018) recently observed that the situation is in fact more complex than previously believed, as discourse-linkedness influences the distribution of wh-elements in interrogatives and calls for a splitting of FocusP.<sup>6</sup> This becomes clear comparing the distribution of StandIT *perché* ('why') with respect to a following lexical subject and focus, and that of D-linked and non-D-linked wh-elements. *Perché* is compatible with an adjacent lexical subject, and can co-occur with a following focalised constituent (Rizzi 2001), as in (9):

(9) StandIT (Rizzi 2018: 351)

- a. Perché Gianni ha messo le chiavi nel cassetto?  
 why Gianni has put the keys in.the drawer  
 'Why did Gianni put the keys in the drawer?'
- b. Perché LE CHIAVI hai messo nel cassetto, non le sigarette?  
 why the keys have<sub>2PS</sub> put in.the drawer NEG the cigarettes  
 Lit: 'Why THE KEYS you put in the drawer, not the cigarettes?'

*Perché* and its cross-linguistic counterparts are acknowledged to occupy the Spec of Rizzi's (2001) IntP, a projection that is either understood to externally-merge why-words directly in its Spec (Rizzi 2001, Stepanov & Tsai 2008) or to attract them from a lower projection in the HLP (Shlonsky & Soare 2012). Therefore, depending on the approach and possibly on the language, IntP has either SEA=0;IM=0 or SEA=1;IM=1. In languages like StandIT, in which we observe subject-inversion in the presence of *perché*, both SEA<sub>lex</sub> and IM<sub>lex</sub> are set as 1 for IntP. The distribution of *perché* pairs that of D-linked wh-elements, as in (10), while non-D-linked wh-elements are incompatible both with a lexical subject and with a following focus, as in (11):

(10) StandIT (Rizzi 2018: 351)

- a. In che cassetto Gianni ha messo le chiavi?  
 in what drawer Gianni has put the keys  
 'In which drawer did Gianni put the keys?'
- b. ? In che cassetto LE CHIAVI hai messo, non le sigarette?  
 in what drawer the keys have<sub>2PS</sub> put NEG the cigarettes  
 Lit: 'In which drawer THE KEYS you put, not the cigarettes?'

(11) StandIT (Rizzi 2018: 351)

- a. \* Dove Gianni ha messo le chiavi?  
 where gianni has put the keys

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Munaro (1999) for a similar claim applied to Venetan 'Bellunese', which licenses non-lexically restricted wh-elements clause-internally, and fronts lexically-restricted elements.

‘Where did Gianni put the keys?’

- b. \* Dove LE CHIAVI hai messo, non le sigarette?  
 where the keys have<sub>2PS</sub> put NEG the cigarettes  
 Lit: ‘Where THE KEYS you put, not the cigarettes?’

Rizzi thus proposed the updated map of high left peripheral focus phrases in (12):

(12) FOCUS PROJECTIONS IN THE HLP (as in Rizzi 2018: 351(22))

... [FP2 (**in che cassetto**) F2<sup>o</sup><sub>[+N;+Q]</sub>] [IntP (**perché**) Int<sup>o</sup>] [FP1 (**dove**) F1<sup>o</sup><sub>[+Q]</sub>] [FinP ... ]]

While the settings observed in Table I for FocusP remain unchanged, that original projection is now split in two projections surrounding IntP whose settings are as in Table III.

	M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
FP2	1	0	1	1/0	0	0
FP1	1	0	1	1/0	0	0

**TABLE III: TWO FOCUSPS IN STANDIT (RIZZI 2018)**

As for foci, the well-known requirement that focalisations follow *perché* (IntP>focus) seems to suggest that, at least in StandIT, shifted foci are attracted into FP1, not FP2. This however, in a framework in which wh-fronting is triggered by [q], entails that FP1 is a 1F1H-violating head. A derivation in which [focus] and [q] are encoded by different heads thus appears more plausible. While in languages like EastTV the two heads encoding [focus] and [q] are clearly separate, in StandIT the requirement for shifted foci and shifted wh-elements to surface in the HLP makes the identification of the relevant head trickier. The need for two heads is nonetheless supported by the observation that StandIT has IM=0/1 for contrastive focalisations, and IM=1 for wh-movement, with the latter additionally requiring SEA<sub>lex</sub> and IM<sub>lex</sub>=1. StandIT focus fronting is clearly a phenomenon in which Rizzi’s (2017) understanding of ‘movement’ parameters proves to be a powerful tool for the identification, classification, understanding and mapping of micro-variation, both cross-linguistically and language internally.

A consequence of the framework proposed here is that Rizzi’s (2018) FP2 can be dispensed with, and IntP used for the fronting of D-linked wh-elements: IntP does not search (SEA=0) and directly merges (M=1) why-words from the lexicon into its Spec, while it searches (SEA=1) and then merges (M=1) D-linked wh-elements. In both cases, IntP/QP searches (SEA<sub>lex</sub>=1) and merges (IM<sub>lex</sub>=1) the subject. Note that one could arguably keep Rizzi’s FP2 and understand it as a QP à la Cable (2010) and Bonan (2021), making FP2 responsible for [q] and IntP for [wh]. However, while different works have in turn used one or the other feature over the years, it seems to me that both stand for the same feature that needs checking in answer-seeking wh-interrogatives. Therefore, merging the two projections is a legitimate operation. I will henceforth call this projection Q<sub>+N</sub>.



Semantically, I have claimed that contrastive foci and D-linked wh-elements quantify over an inferable, contextually closed set, so it could be technically plausible for these to be probed by the same feature. However, the required IntP>focus ordering suggests that the projection for contrastive foci is merged lower than the one responsible for total fronting of D-linked wh-elements, Q<sub>+N</sub>; I follow Cruschina (2015) and call it CFoc. Additionally, given that unlinked wh-words surface lower than IntP but are quantificationally different with respect to contrastive foci, the possibility for the two to be attracted by the same head is excluded, even more so because IM=1/0 for contrastive foci, while for unlinked wh-words it is =1. I shall henceforth call the projection that attracts unlinked wh-words QP<sub>-N</sub>. I summarise this in Table IV (the relative position of CFoc and QP<sub>-N</sub> is not clear at this stage):

	PROBE	M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
INTP/QP <sub>+N</sub>	D-linked wh-	1	0	1	1	1	1
CFOC	Contrastive foci	1	0	1	1/0	0	0
QP <sub>-N</sub> (FORMERLY FP1)	Unlinked wh-	1	0	1	1	0	0

**TABLE IV: LEFT-PERIPHERAL PROJECTIONS FOR FOCI AND WH-ELEMENTS IN STANDIT**

### 3.2 LOW FOCUS PROJECTION(S)

I have already mentioned that some authors have highlighted the need for at least one focus projection in the LLP. Belletti (2004) notoriously posited the existence of a reduced periphery right above  $\nu$ P, consisting of a focus projection surrounded by topic projections, as in (13):

(13) ... [<sub>TopP</sub> Top° [<sub>Foc</sub> Foc° [<sub>TopP</sub> Top° ... VP ]]] (Belletti 2004:9)

The need for a LLP, and especially for a focus projection therein, was brought forward by the observation that, in StandIT, non-canonical VS orders are overwhelmingly preferred in answers to wh-questions bearing on the subject, as illustrated in (14):

(14) Question: Chi è arrivato?

who is arrived

‘Who arrived?’

Answer: È arrivato GIANNI / UN RAGAZZO.

is arrived john / a young.man

Answer’: # Gianni / un ragazzo è arrivato

John a young.man is arrived

‘John/a young man arrived’

For Belletti & Rizzi (2017), in examples like (14), the lexical subject expresses a narrow focus interpretation and is not in the canonical subject position at Spell-Out but rather in the low SpecFoc. This understanding of the Italian low left-peripheral IFoc can be seen as in Table V:

M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
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1	0	1	1	0	0
<b>TABLE V: ITALIAN IFOC AS IN BELLETTI (2004)</b>					

### 3.1.1 INFORMATIONAL FOC IN ITALIAN VS EASTERN TREVISAN

In Bonan (2021), I suggested that Belletti’s claim is particularly relevant in Eastern Trevisan, in which low movement of narrow foci is clearly visible with IOs, as in (15):

(15) EastTV (Bonan 2021: 14 (32))

Question: A KI ghe gatu dato i pomi?  
to who 3.DAT have=you2PS given the apples  
‘To whom did you give the apples?’

Answer: # ghe go dato i pomi A GIANI.  
3.DAT have1PS given the apples to john

Answer’: ghe go dato A GIANI i pomi.  
3.DAT have1PS given to john the apples  
‘I gave the apples to John’ (Lit: ‘I gave TO JOHN the apples’)

The low movement in the correct answer to (15), which further supports the presence of IFoc in the LLP,<sup>7</sup> is however not observed in standard Italian, as in (16):

(16) Question: A chi hai dato le mele?  
to who have2PS given the apples  
‘To whom did you give the apples?’

Answer: Ho dato le mele A GIANNI  
have1PS given the apples to John

Answer: ?? Ho dato A GIANNI le mele  
have1PS given to John the apples  
‘I gave the apples to John’

It seems therefore reasonable to posit that Belletti is indeed right that informational focus is encoded in the LLP in Italian, although the movement data in (16) suggest that informational foci are in fact unmoved in Italian (Cf. Cardinaletti 2002 and Samek-Lodovici 2015 for supporting evidence). The position for informational foci is thus low in both languages but while EastTV has IM=1, StandIT has IM=0, as in Table VII:

	M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
ITALIAN	1	0	1	0	0	0
TREVISAN	1	0	1	1	0	0
<b>TABLE V: DIFFERENT REALISATIONS OF IFOC</b>						

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Author (2021) for evidence that orderings such as the one in (15) are not derived via rightward movement of what follows the focussed element.

The legitimacy of low focus projections is also independently supported by Aghem, which displays a focus marker *nó* that realises the post-verbal focus position and scopes over the element immediately to its left, as illustrated in (17).

(17) Aghem (adapted from Aboh 2007: 91)

Zì BÉ-KÓ **nó**.

eat fufu FOC

‘Eat FUFU (as opposed to something else)’

Examples like those in (17) “strongly indicate that the postverbal focus position is unique and has clear syntactic and discourse-related properties” (Aboh 2007: 91). The Aghem IFoc can thus associated to the Boolean choices in Table VI:

	M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
AGHEM	1	1	1	1	0	0

**TABLE V: THE AGHEM FOCP**

To summarize, all languages analysed in this section merge FocP, in the LLP, but only Aghem Spells-Out Foc<sup>o</sup> (SO=1). Furthermore, while Trevisan and Aghem internally merge the focalised constituent (IM=1), Italian does not (IM=0). Informational foci are associated with the same interpretation in the three languages, i.e., narrow focus, regardless of the phonetic status of the focus-head or the observed movement patterns of focalised constituents.

### 3.2.2 MORE THAN JUST ONE LOW FOCP

While the empirical evidence in support of the Aghem FocP is scarce, to the effect that we are unable to establish whether Aghem low focalisations are exclusively informational, EastTV empirically supports the idea that the LLP can attract different types of foci. In §2, I provided examples of clause-internally moved contrastive foci and D-linked/unlinked wh-elements, respectively in (6) and (7). Low focus movement is additionally compulsory in corrective focalisations, i.e., structures that correct the content of a polar question, as in (18).

(18) A: Toni ghe gaeo assà tutti i so schei a Gianni?

toni 3.DAT has=3PS left all the his money to Gianni

‘Has Toni left all of his money to Gianni?’

B: el ghe gà assà A MARIO tuti i so schei, no a Gianni!

3PS 3.DAT has left to Mario all the his money NEG to Gianni

B’: ?? el ghe gà assà tutti i so schei A MARIO, no a Gianni!

3PS 3.DAT has left all the his money to Mario NEG to Gianni

‘He left all of his money TO MARIO, not to Gianni!’

The EastTV low movement data presented throughout this paper might seem to suggest that all types of foci target the same Spec in this language. However, I have already claimed that,

both empirically and semantically, one projection is not enough to attract all types of nominal foci. StandIT strongly suggests that corrective foci also require a dedicated projection, as the in-situ/shifted alternation of contrastive focalisations does not apply, as illustrated in (19):

(19) StandIT (adapted from Bianchi 2013: 198(7))

- A: Gianni è andato a Londra?  
 Gianni is gone to London  
 ‘Did Gianni go to London?’
- B: No, è andato A BERLINO (non a Londra).  
 No, (he) is gone to Berlin (NEG to London)
- B’: # No, A BERLINO è andato (non a Londra).  
 No, to Berlin (he) is gone (NEG to London)  
 ‘No, he went TO BERLIN (not to London).’

If we abide by the 1F1H-rule (Kayne 2005, Rizzi 2017), a CorFoc is clearly needed in the functional spine. CorFoc is the only type of focalisation besides informational focus that cannot be shifted to the HLP in StandIT: my suggestion, which will have to be tested further, is that this projection could be a low left-peripheral one. Its parametrisation is as in Table VI:

M	SO	SEA	IM	SEA <sub>LEX</sub>	IM <sub>LEX</sub>
1	0	1	0	0	0

**TABLE VI: THE ITALIAN CORFOC**

The data discussed in this article argue that EastTV low nominal focalisations do not all target the same projection but rather the same, low *portion* of the spine. This functional portion dedicated to ‘focus’ is as in (20) and is located in the LLP. Note that the relative order suggested for the different focus projections is arbitrary and remains to be determined for EastTV; here, I adopt Benincà & Poletto’s (2004) claim in favour of CFoc>IFoc.

(20) DISTRIBUTION OF ‘FOCUS’ PROJECTIONS IN EASTTV

... [IP [CorFoc [ConFoc [IFoc ... [vP ]]]]]

That EastTV has low focus movement in *wh*-interrogatives is, in the theory of interrogatives outlined in the Introduction, the first step in the derivation of ‘in-situ’ *wh*-questions. Accordingly, EastTV has both QP<sub>+N</sub> and QP<sub>-N</sub> in its HLP (used either in total *wh*-fronting, or to front Q alone when the *wh*-elements is stranded clause-internally), while the projection that probes low focus movement of *wh*-elements remains to be determined. Informational focus can be both D-linked and not linked, and answer-seeking questions are instances of request for information, therefore IFoc is a plausible candidate for low focus movement of *wh*-elements. I leave this discussion for further work because the role of IFoc in the derivation of interrogatives first needs assessing in those languages that front informational foci, as those discussed in §3.3.

### 3.3 WHEN LOW PROJECTIONS ARE HIGH

I have argued that, cross-linguistically, not all types of foci have the same distribution. Our current understanding of the cartography of ‘focus’ stems from a meticulous observation of the syntax of StandIT (Rizzi 1997 and related literature), to the effect that a considerable amount of work on nominal foci and interrogative wh-movement has taken Rizzi’s (1997) FocusP and Belletti’s (2004) FocP to be the sole available projections for foci, and accepted that these are cross-linguistically located at the same structural height. Here, I have claimed that more than two functional projections related to ‘focus’ are needed in the functional spine, and offered a primitive discussion of the distribution of these in StandIT and EastTV.

It is important to acknowledge that there also exist languages in which all types of foci can be fronted, such as the variety of Sicilian in Cruschina (2013). Indeed, it has been demonstrated that Sicilian can not only front all the foci that StandIT fronts, but also informational foci which can only surface in-situ in StandIT (§2). An example is provided in (21):

(21) Sicilian (Cruschina 2013: 58 (33))

Question: Chi scrivisti?

what write.past.1sg

‘What did you write?’

Answer: Scrissi N<sup>3</sup>ARTICULU.

write.past.1s an=article

Answer: N<sup>3</sup>ARTICULU scrissi!

an=article write.past.1sg

‘I wrote an article.’

Examples like (21) argue that, in Sicilian, the answer to a question bearing on the DO can display either a VO or an OV ordering. According to Cruschina, VO is the unmarked ordering while, in the OV case, additional emphasis is conveyed. While the mapping of the HLP proposed by Cruschina takes contrastive foci and D-linked wh-phrases to compete for the same structural projection (in his terms, CFocP), which I have argued against here, it is interesting to note that all distributional tests he applied demonstrate that the IFoc is in the HLP in Sicilian. In his terms, the HLP of Sicilian is as in (22), with CFocP responsible for the attraction of contrastive foci and D-linked wh-phrases, and IFocP minimally associated to the fronting of information foci, mirative foci, and unlinked wh-phrases.

(22) The HLP of Sicilian (Cruschina 2011: 219)

... [CFocP [TopP [IFocP ]]] ...

Mirative fronting, which I have not discussed yet, is a type of informational focus that is not triggered by a previously-uttered question, i.e., it is not necessarily D-linked (Cruschina 2012, Bianchi 2015, Bianchi et al. 2016, a.o.). Whilst grouping mirative and informational fronting together is thus quantificationally plausible, and empirically justified in Sicilian, the distribution of mirative foci in StandIT suggests that the two are governed by different heads, as in (23):

(23) StandIT (Dal Farra 2018: 45)

- a. Pensa te! DI VENTI KILI è dimagrito!  
 think you of twenty kilos is lost.weight
- b. Pensa te! È dimagrito DI VENTI KILI!  
 think you is lost.weight of twenty kilos  
 ‘Guess what! He lost TWENTY KILOS!’

The fact that  $IM=1/0$  for the mirative foci of StandIT, while  $IM$  is always set negatively for IFoc argue that an additional focus projection is needed in the spine: MirFoc. Because mirative foci can be shifted in StandIT, I maintain that the Italian MirFoc is encoded in the HLP.

The empirical evidence discussed in this paper strongly suggests that the functional projections which encode ‘focus’ features are more than two in number, and are merged in language-specific fashion in the functional spine: it thus appears that nominal foci should not be studied in the absence of a preliminary mapping of the distribution of focus projections in the languages under investigation. Here, I have argued that while standard Italian has most FocPs in the HLP, apart from IFoc and CorFoc that are in the LLP, languages like EastTV realise all FocPs in the LLP, and languages like Cruschina’s variety of Sicilian encode all focus features in the HLP. I have also claimed that observed distributional microvariation can be better understood if we look at movement through the lens of Rizzi’s (2018) parameters. Accordingly, languages display different combinations of the three microparameters that regulate whether FocPs attract foci into their Spec ( $IM=1$  vs  $IM=0$ ), phonetically realise their head ( $SO=1$  vs  $SO=0$ ), and attract lexical categories ( $IM_{lex}=1$  vs  $IM_{lex}=0$ ).

### 3.4 ‘CRITERIAL FIELDS’

Given that Rizzi’s FocusP is insufficient to make sense of the complex phenomenon of nominal focalisation in Romance, I have claimed that the FocPs needed in the functional spine are minimally four: CFoc, IFoc, CorFoc, and MirFoc. Their identification has been carried out both on semantic grounds and on the observation of the distributional properties of each type of focus under consideration. On the assumption that the setting of  $IM$  for one head is fixed and unchangeable, I suggested that semantically equivalent phenomena with different distributions require the postulation of specialised projections. Rizzi’s (1997) FocusP, split into FP2 and FP1

in Rizzi (2018), has traditionally been taken to host either fronted wh-phrases or contrastive foci. However, more recent developments in the theory of wh-interrogatives have suggested that wh-phrases and foci do not compete for the same projection, given that wh-fronting is triggered by [q] alone (Cable 2010, Aboh & Pfau 2012, Bonan 2021, a.o.): here, I have suggested merging Rizzi's (2001) interrogative projection IntP and Cable's (2010) FocusP into a QP, responsible for the total fronting of wh-elements, and to posit the existence of a CFoc for contrastive foci. This move is supported empirically by the syntax of StandIT (the setting of IM is 1/0 for contrastive foci and 1 for wh-phrases), and also semantically motivated: contrastive foci are quantificationally like D-linked wh-phrases, but while they systematically follow IntP in the phonetic string D-linked wh-phrases precede it, thus suggesting that the two cannot possibly compete for the same Spec. The cross-linguistic differences in the distribution of foci of the same type suggest that focus projections are indeed always encoded in the peripheries, although the height at which the different FocPs are internally merged is language-specific. Sicilian, for instance, realises all FocPs in the HLP, while EastTV does so in the LLP, and StandIT displays a mixed situation with only IFoc and MirFoc in the LLP.

Clause-internal FocPs are however problematic for the mainstream understanding of how 'focus' works semantically, at least superficially. Given that a clause-internal FocP is always criterial in the sense of Rizzi (2004), and that what is attracted into its Spec is frozen-in-place and unable to be moved further, a [focus]-feature checked in the LLP by a certain constituent makes it impossible for that same constituent to move to the HLP at LF to determine its scope. Since Chomsky (1976), focus has indeed widely been understood as associated to a movement operation, quantifier raising, that applies to the focussed constituent either overtly or at the moment of Interpretation. Relying on evidence from weak crossover effects indeed, Chomsky argued in favour of an operator-variable structure that makes the representation of Focus at LF parallel to that of structures derived by wh-movement: in place of the focussed constituent, the resulting LF representation has a variable bound by a definiteness operator. An influential non-quantificational account of Focus was however developed since in Rooth (1985), and related work, which interprets 'focus' in-situ. Rooth takes the focus of a sentence to be represented as a constituent whose value can vary and generates a set of alternative propositions, the 'focus alternative set', for the utterance. Cartographic understandings of focus have traditionally abode by Chomsky's quantificational approach. Consequently, low foci such as the ones described by Belletti have either been understood as moved into the HLP at LF, or moved there before Spell-Out. Although not in line with standard cartographic assumptions, the possibility of interpreting

foci in-situ has been largely and successfully explored in the literature (Rooth 1992, Wagner 2020, Samek-Lodovici 2015; 2020, a.o.), hence I maintain that the path is worth exploring.

Moreover, both the interpretational dissimilarities between the clause-internal and the high foci of Italian and the different movement properties displayed by the different types of foci discussed here, and the desired 1F1H architecture, argue that an in-situ interpretation of foci is more desirable. Accepting that not all foci need moving to the HLP has also the theoretical advantage of respecting Criterial Freezing: a syntactically active head that triggers movement does so for a Criterion to be met, and once a criterial spec-head configuration is obtained, the relevant constituent is frozen in place and no further movement (not even of features) can be performed, unless another Criterion comes into play: the possibility to move a low focused constituent into the HLP at LF would constitute a violation of CF, and is thus to be excluded on theoretical grounds. A constituent whose focalisation is done by means of a focus projection of the LLP meets the relevant Criterion clause-internally and is sent to interpretation from a low position, regardless of whether it is lowly shifted (as in EastTV) or unmoved (as in StandIT) at Spell-Out. Indeed, the focus data discussed here maintain that the setting of IM is irrelevant for a Criterion to be met, while  $M=1$  and  $SEA=1$  settings are a necessary condition.

Authors such as Bianchi (2013) have claimed that ‘focus’ is the only area of grammar in which the desired 1F1H configuration seems unattainable. Here, I have provided evidence that 1F1H is respected if we no longer understand focus as a projection but start thinking of it as a ‘field’, i.e., a functional portion comprising of numerous projections that encode features related to the semantic field of focus. This functional portion can be continuous (realised entirely in one periphery) or discontinuous (scattered between the HLP and the LLP). Because of the ‘Uniqueness’ principle, only one projection of the focus field can be active at any given time.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I claimed that the desired 1F1H-architecture of the functional spine can be maintained for a number of focal phenomena *iff* these are understood to be governed by different features that fall under the broad label of ‘focus’. These are encoded by specialised heads within what I call a criterial field, i.e., a portion of the spine that encompasses numerous projections whose simultaneous activation is ruled out on semantic grounds by the ‘Uniqueness of focus’ principle. I have claimed that the criterial field related to focus can, although it must not, be discontinuous, i.e., distributed across the low and the high peripheries.

I have argued that the features of the criterial field of focus are, minimally: new information (IFoc), contrast (CFoc), correction (CorFoc), and mirativity (MirFoc). I have also included  $Q_{+N}$



and Q-N in my discussion, although these projections are responsible for the interrogative, i.e., ‘non focus’, part of the derivation of wh-questions, and are therefore not part of the field.

Further research is needed to refine this preliminary discussion, to articulate its technical implementation and to test its empirical validity further. Nonetheless, the notion of ‘criterial field’ offers a novel, cross-linguistically motivated mapping of focus projections which, I hope, will inspire future investigations and debates on this composite and fascinating syntactic topic.

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