The left periphery fragmented: evidence from Italian

Roberto Petrosino
University of Connecticut

Introduction. The purpose of this paper is to provide new evidence shedding light on the status of cartographic projections. The cartographic approach assumes that the underlying syntactic structure of sentences is more complex than the usual functional projections — i.e., CP, IP/TP, vP, VP, DP/NP. Thus, regarding traditional CP, Rizzi (1997) argues that the traditional CP is actually made up of several projections, where scope-discourse features (such as focus and topic) are licensed. One of the issues that is currently debated regarding Rizzi's (1997) is whether the full structure in (1) is always projected (i.e. whether CP is always fully split).

(1) [[$_{ForceP}$ Force [$_{TopP}$ Top [$_{FocP}$ Foc [$_{TopP}$ Top [$_{FinP}$ Fin] IP]]]]]

By analyzing data regarding anaphor binding across clauses in Italian, the present contribution bears on two issues. First, I show that an anaphor in an embedded clause can be bound from a higher clause only if it is at the outmost edge of the embedded clause, in compliance with the phasal approach to Condition A. Second, based on such anaphor-binding data, I show that the full CP cartography from (1) is not always projected, thus providing a new perspective on the issue.

Discussion. In Italian, anaphor binding across clauses is generally disallowed, as illustrated by (2) (all the unacceptable examples in the abstract are fine if they are modified so that they do not contain an anaphor).

(2) *Gianni$_i$ si   chiede [se   Maria ha   comprato   [il   ritratto di
    Gianni REFL ask.3SG whether Maria AUX.3SG buy.PPT.MSG [the picture of
    [se   stesso]$_i$]],
    [REFL same.MSG]
    'John$_i$ wonders whether Mary has bought the picture of himself$_i$.'

However, such examples improve if the anaphor-containing DP is fronted. Crucially, the anaphor must be fronted to the embedded clause initial position, as the examples in (3-4) show, where the anaphor-containing DP is fronted to the embedded clause initial position in (3), but not in (4).

(3) ?Gianni$_i$ si   chiede [[quale ritratto di [se   stesso]$_i$]   Maria
    Gianni REFL ask.3SG   which picture of REFL same.MSG] Maria
    ha   comprato].
    AUX.3SG.   buy.PPT.MSG
    'Gianni wonders which picture of himself Mary bought.'

(4) *Gianni$_i$ si   chiede, [Maria, [quale ritratto di [se   stesso]$_j$],
    Gianni REFL ask.3SG Maria   which picture of   REFL same.MSG]
    ha   comprato].
    AUX.3SG buy.PPT.MSG
    'Gianni wonders which picture of himself Mary bought.'

The effect is confirmed by anaphor-containing topics, as in the examples in (5-6), both of which contain a topic and a *wh*-phrase in the embedded clause. Although both orders of these two elements are in principle possible, when the topic contains an anaphor, the topic must precede the *wh*-phrase.

(5) Gianni$_i$ si   chiede, [[[il ritratto di [se   stesso]$_i$]$_j$,   chi lo$_j$ ha
    Gianni REFL ask.3SG,   the picture of   REFL same.MSG], who CL AUX.3SG
    comprato].
    buy.PPT.MSG

'John wonders, the picture of himself, who bought.'

(6) *Gianni$_i$ si   chiede,   [chi, [[il ritratto di [se   stesso]$_i$]$_j$,   lo$_j$
   Gianni REFL ask.3SG, who,   the picture of   REFL same.MSG], CL
   ha   comprato].
   AUX.3SG buy.PPT.MSG.
   'John wonders, the picture of himself, who bought.'

In the talk I will discuss a number of other constructions that involve interaction between different types of fronting and anaphor binding which all confirm the pattern that was exhibited by the above constructions: cross-clausal binding of an anaphor is possible only if the DP that contains the anaphor is clause-initial. I argue that this pattern, i.e. the data given in examples (3-6), provides support for the phase-based conception of Condition A (see Bošković 2016b, Canac-Marquis 2005, Despić 2013, Hicks 2009, Lee-Schoenfeld 2008, Safir 2014, among others), where an anaphor may be bound outside of its clausal phase only if it is located at the edge of that phase, under the assumption that the highest clausal projection is a phase (see Bošković ́2014, 2015; Wurmbrand 2014, for a number of arguments to this effect). The anaphor-containing DP is at the edge of the embedded clause phase in (3), but not in (4). It is also at the embedded clause phase edge in (5), but not in (6). Crucially, this is the case only if the full CP cartographic structure is not always projected: if it were, all the cases where the anaphor *se stesso* is not in [Spec, ForceP] should be unacceptable. Being the highest clausal projection in (1), ForceP would always be a phase if present: the anaphor-containing DP, which is located in [Spec, FocP] in (3) and in [Spec, TopP] in (5), then would not be located at the phasal edge, hence these examples should also be unacceptable. The data presented above then indicate that the finely-articulated sequence of functional projections in the traditional CP field is not always projected — in fact, only the projections with overt morphological manifestation are projected in the examples discussed above (for recent arguments to this effect from very different considerations, see Bošković 2016a, Erlewine 2016).

Conclusion. This talk provides data regarding anaphor binding across clauses in Italian which show that an anaphor may be bound cross-clausally only when it is located at the phasal edge of the clause. It is shown that the data can be captured under the phase-based approach to Condition A. The data also provide evidence that the full left periphery may not be always projected. The talk will also discuss more complicated constructions where the relevant phase has more than one edge, which will be used to test Bošković's (2016b) claim that in the case of a phase which has multiple edges, only the outmost edge counts as the phasal edge for the purpose of the Phase-Impenetrability Condition.

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