The greater the contrast, the greater the potential: On the effects of focus in syntax

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ABSTRACT

The most debated syntactic reflex that is typically associated with contrast is the movement of a contrastive constituent to a dedicated, left-peripheral position. For Italian and Spanish, it has been claimed that focus fronting (FF) must be sanctioned by a contrastive interpretation of the focus, while non-contrastive focus generally occurs postverbally (see, e.g., Rizzi 1997; Zubizarreta 1998; Belletti 2004; López 2009). Only sentences with a postverbal focus are thus judged as pragmatically felicitous answers to the corresponding wh-questions. Some scholars, however, have recently reported different views and data, showing that non-contrastive preverbal foci are indeed accepted by native speakers in answers to wh-questions. In this paper, I argue that a solution to this problem can be found if the binary distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus is abandoned, and different 'degrees' or 'types' of contrastive focus are identified, depending on the way the set of alternatives is pragmatically exploited (Krifka 2007; Cruschina 2012). I show that languages are syntactically sensitive to specific types of focus with which special operations (e.g. FF) associate. Following Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016), I then argue that FF is in fact triggered not by contrast *per se*, but by the conventional implicature that is associated with a specific type of focus.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is a commonly held view that in Italian and in Spanish the fronting of the focus constituent of the sentence to a left-peripheral position (i.e. focus fronting, henceforth FF) is to be associated with a contrastive interpretation. Non-contrastive focus, instead, occurs sentence-finally – or at least postverbally (see, e.g., Rizzi 1997; Zubizarreta 1998; Belletti 2004; López 2009). Since a non-contrastive focus is expected in the answer to a wh-question, only sentences with a postverbal focus are considered to be pragmatically felicitous in the corresponding answer, as shown in (1) and (2):

(1)   *Spanish* (adapted from Gutiérrez-Bravo 2006: 110–111)
        Q: 'Who bought the records?'
        A: (# **Una muchacha**) los   compró **una muchacha**.
             a   girl   them.ACC bought a   girl
            'A girl bought them.'

(2)   *Italian* (adapted from Belletti 2004: 21)
        Q: 'Who spoke?'
        A: (# **Gianni**) ha   parlato **Gianni**.
             Gianni has spoken Gianni
            'Gianni spoke.'

In recent years, however, this view has been challenged in several studies, which on the basis of experimental data, report a different view: preverbal foci are indeed accepted by native speakers in non-contrastive contexts. Different factors seem to play a role in this controversial issue: crosslinguistic (or dialectal) variation, a different conceptualization of the notion of contrast and of contrastive focus, and the methodology at the basis of the relevant judgements, which sees a contraposition between introspection and experimental data.

In this paper, I propose a solution to this empirical tension based on a more fine-grained notion of contrast. The binary distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus, which is traditionally advocated to explain the syntactic distribution of focus, must be abandoned in favour of the identification of different 'degrees' or 'types' of contrastive focus. The different types and interpretations of focus arise from the way the set of alternatives is pragmatically exploited (Krifka 2007; Cruschina 2012), giving rise to a contextually open set (*information focus*), unexpectedness with respect to more likely alternatives (*mirative focus*) or a correction of given alternatives (*corrective focus*). A special subtype of information focus, namely, *exhaustive focus*, additionally implies the exhaustive identification or the exclusion by identification with respect to the relevant set of alternatives. On the basis of their degree of contrast against the alternatives (cf. § 2), we could order the types of focus along a scale:

(3)   *information focus > exhaustive focus > mirative focus > corrective focus*

Drawing on a sample of crosslinguistic data, I show that syntactic operations are not sensitive to the mere presence or absence of contrast, but rather to specific types of focus. Languages vary as to the focus types that admit FF, although there seems to be a general tendency to admit FF with the focus types characterized by higher degrees of contrast. We thus need to look at the contrastive meanings that associate with focal constituents in order to gain a better understanding of the grammatical effects that contrast may or may not have in a particular language. As will be shown (cf. § 3), for example, Sardinian and Sicilian allow FF with information focus, but also with the other more contrastive types, that is, with mirative and corrective focus. In Hungarian, FF is typically associated with exhaustive focus, but is also possible with mirative and corrective focus; it is not possible with (non-exhaustive) information focus. In Italian and Spanish, FF is accepted not only with 'greatest' and most explicit case of contrast (i.e. corrective focus), but also with contrast against expectations (i.e. mirative focus), while it is not possible with information focus.

The structure of the paper is the following. In the rest of this introductory section, I will discuss the notion of contrast, with special reference to its syntactic effects. In Section 2, I will elaborate on the new perspective on contrast and on the resulting classification of contrastive foci, while Section 3 will be devoted to the association – or lack thereof – between the syntactic operation

FF and the different types of focus. In Section 4, I will propose an analysis of the correlation between syntactic movement (FF) and interpretation in terms of conventionalization: following Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016), I will argue that FF is in fact triggered not by contrast *per se*, but by the conventional implicature that is associated with certain types of focus. In Section 5, the relationship between the question-answer context and the type of focus in the answer will be discussed. The use of a focus to answer a wh-question is not *per se* a sufficient condition for the definition of information focus: other types of foci can occur in answers to questions. The main points of the paper will be summarized in the concluding Section 6, which also contains some considerations for future research.

The empirical basis of this study is mostly constituted by datasets from Italian, Spanish and other Romance varieties such as Sicilian, Sardinian, and French. In relation to exhaustive focus, the discussion will turn to Hungarian.

1.1 THE SYNTACTIC EFFECTS OF CONTRAST

An essential notion for the definition of contrast is that of alternatives, both in relation to focus and topic: contrastive focus evokes a set of alternatives that share the same background (Rooth 1992); contrastive topic is also related to alternatives, even though, unlike focus, it does not involve any exclusion (Büring 1997; 2016).

(4)   a.   (A: Who did they kick out?)   B: They kicked **me** out.
        b.   (B: Who do they want to kick out?)   B: SHE wants to kick **me** out.
               (Büring 2016: 64–65)

While focus in (4a) marks the pragmatic inference that it was me and no-one else that they kicked out, the contrastive topic 'she' in (4b) does not exclude the alternatives but it in fact implies that others want to do some kicking-out as well.

Along these lines, contrast has been viewed as an autonomous and orthogonal notion of information structure that can be associated with foci and topics and that can have direct effects on the syntax, being considered responsible, for instance, for the placement of contrastive foci and topics to the left periphery of the sentence (Vilkuna 1995; Vallduví & Vilkuna 1998; Neeleman et al. 2009; see also Repp 2010; 2016). In this paper, I will only take into account contrastive focus and the association between the contrastive interpretation and syntactic movement in the operation of focus fronting (FF).

According to a widespread view, in Italian, Spanish and other Romance varieties, the focal status of a constituent alone is not a sufficient condition for FF: contrast is taken to be the interpretive feature associated with FF (Rizzi 1997; Zubizarreta 1998; Belletti 2004) or in fact a necessary requirement (López 2009). This implies that FF is not acceptable with non-contrastive focus. Let us consider information focus, which is typical of answers to questions, where the focus structure is imposed by the question-answer congruence (see, e.g., Paul [1880] 1995; Halliday 1967; Roberts [1998] 2012; Schwarzschild 1999; Krifka 2001; 2011).

(5)   *Spanish* (Gutiérrez-Bravo 2006: 110–111)
        Q: ¿Quién compró   los discos?
             who   bought   the records
             'Who bought the records?'
        A1: Los   compró **una muchacha**.
             them.ACC bought   a   girl
        A2: #**Una muchacha** los   compró.
             a   girl   them.ACC bought
             'A girl bought them.'

(6)   *Italian* (Belletti 2004: 21)
        Q: Chi   ha   parlato?
             who has spoken
             'Who spoke?'
        A1: Ha   parlato **Gianni**.
             has spoken Gianni
             'Gianni spoke'

    A2: # **Gianni** ha   parlato.
          Gianni   has spoken

There is a general consensus in the literature – but see Section 1.2 below for contrasting views – that FF proves pragmatically infelicitous with this kind of focus that does not involve a direct contrast with alternatives. This amounts to saying that FF must be sanctioned by additional or concomitant interpretive properties, that is, contrast, which for the time being can be defined as the presence of alternatives in the context:

(7)   *Spanish*
      A   **Marcos** invitaron,   no   a   Pablo.
      ACC Marcos invite.PST.3PL not to Pablo
      '(It was) Marcos (that) they invited, not Pablo.'

(8)   *Italian*
      Una tigre abbiamo visto, non un   leone.
      a   tiger have.1PL seen not a   lion
      'We saw a tiger, not a lion.'

According to this line of study, the distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus is able to account for the correlation between focus and movement: only in the presence of a contrastive interpretation is FF allowed. Under this view, the actual trigger for movement, responsible for the observed syntactic effects, is contrast. Different studies, however, have recently challenged this position.

1.2 CONTRASTIVE VS NON-CONTRASTIVE FOCUS: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The view reported in the previous section turns out to be too simplistic if crosslinguistic variation and other types of data, even just from within the Romance family, are taken into account. First of all, it seems that some varieties such as Sicilian and Sardinian allow FF with (non-contrastive) information focus in congruent answers to wh-questions (Cruschina 2012; 2015; 2016; Jones 1993; 2013). Secondly, different opinions are reported in experimental or quantitative studies, where it is in fact claimed that non-contrastive pre-verbal foci are indeed accepted by native speakers either in answers to wh-questions or in other contexts (see Gabriel 2010; Hoot 2012; 2016; Vanrell & Fernández-Soriano 2013; 2018; Feldhausen & Vanrell 2014; 2015; Uth 2014; 2018; Heidinger 2015; 2018; 2020; Jiménez-Fernández 2015a; b; Sánchez Alvarado 2018; see also Kato & Raposo 1996; Brunetti 2004; 2009; Cruschina 2012; Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2015; 2016; Belletti & Rizzi 2017; Dal Farra 2018).

A third problem concerns the very same notion of contrast and its relationship to focus, which have been questioned from a terminological and conceptual viewpoint. As pointed out by Vallduví & Vilkuna (1998: 83), contrast turns out to be "a cover term for several operator-like interpretations of focus that one finds in the literature", including exhaustive focus (Szabolcsi 1981), identificational focus (Horvath 1986; É. Kiss 1998), and contrastive focus (Rizzi 1997). The distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus proves thus rather blurred.

The proposal I defend in this paper in order to overcome these problems runs as follows. Different degrees of contrast must be identified: in order to understand the syntactic effects of focus, the binary distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus must thus be abandoned, and different types of focus must be recognized. The association between FF and a specific type of focus can be 'conventionalized' in a given language, so that FF only obtains with certain types of focus but not with others. Let us start with our revisited definition of contrast and with the identification of different types of focus.

2 DEFINITION OF CONTRAST AND TYPES OF FOCUS

Contrast is traditionally thought of as a binary notion that admits two possible values: *+contrast* and *-contrast*. Attempts exist in the literature to outline a different conception of contrast, especially in relation to focus. Molnár (2002), for instance, arranges the most important criteria in connection with the definition of contrast in a hierarchical order. These criteria have been in

fact discussed and judged in different ways in the literature, leading to varying definitions of contrastive and non-contrastive foci. However, they can be considered as minimal requirements for different degrees of contrast along a hierarchy of necessary conditions, as shown in (9) (Molnár 2002: 149):

(9) **Contrast hierarchy:**
     highlighting > dominant contrast > membership in a set > limited set of candidates > explicit mentioning of alternatives

Focus is 'highlighted' with respect to the rest of the sentence, primarily by prosodic means. In other definitions, however, contrast requires the exclusion of certain possibilities, that is, 'dominant contrast', or the generation a set of alternatives for the focused constituent. In many approaches, moreover, the condition 'membership in a set' is narrowed down to the requirement of a limited set or the explicit mentioning of the alternatives.

Similar conditions have been carefully analysed by Repp (2010) with reference to the set of alternatives (see also Umbach 2004). According to Repp (2010), the aspects that differentiate (plain) focus from contrastive focus are related to the restrictions on the set of alternatives evoked by the focus itself. These aspects include the size of the alternative set (open *vs* closed set), and the explicit mention or the implicit presupposition of the alternatives, which is to be connected with their identifiability. A further requirement for contrastive focus seems to be the exclusion of the alternatives, in the sense that the assertion only holds for the element denoted by the contrastive focus and does not hold for its alternatives. Repp (2010: 1336) considers these aspects as conditions that provide different requirements for the opposition between contrastive and non-contrastive focus: an open set characterizes non-contrastive focus (10), but a closed set is necessary for contrastive focus; similarly, explicit mention is a typical component of contrastive focus (11), while an implicit presupposition of the alternatives defines non-contrastive focus (10) (see also Krifka 2007):

(10) A: What do you want to drink?
      B: I want **tea**.

(11) A: Did John drink tea?
      B: **Peter** drank tea.

Following this approach, but giving up on the binary distinction between contrastive *vs* non-contrastive focus, I would like to propose that different types of focus must be identified and that their different interpretations arise from the way the set of alternatives is pragmatically exploited (Krifka 2007; Cruschina 2012):

(12) a. ***information focus:*** a contextually open set (only pragmatically delimited);
      b. ***exhaustive focus:*** exhaustive identification or the exclusion by identification with respect to a set of alternatives;
      c. ***mirative focus:*** the proposition asserted is more unlikely or unexpected with respect to the alternative propositions;
      d. ***corrective focus:*** correction of explicitly given alternatives.

In this typology, I deliberately avoid the terms *contrast* and *contrastive*, assuming that all the different types of focus are characterized by a degree of contrast: the more 'active' or 'given' the alternatives are in the context, the greater the contrast (see also Titov's 2019 notion of *D-linking*). Contrast is rather weak in the case of *information focus*, where the focus constituent contrasts with the alternatives of the focal set by virtue of being a member of the same set (13). The identification of the focus constituent implies the exclusion of the alternatives: this exclusion is typically an inferred pragmatic meaning, as with information focus (cf. (4a) above; see Büring 2016: 64), but it could also be a stronger and constant value associated with focus, as with *exhaustive focus* (see example (14); cf. also § 3.3):[1]

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[1]   It is widely acknowledged in the literature that exhaustive focus is typically expressed by clefts (see, e.g., É. Kiss 1998; 1999), although the precise nature and source of the exhaustiveness effects remain contested (see Destruel & De Veaugh-Geiss 2018).

(13)   *Italian*
   A: Che cosa   avete   visto   ieri   allo   zoo?
        what   have.2PL   seen   yesterday   at-the   zoo
        'What did you see yesterday at the zoo?'
   B: Abbiamo   visto   **un tigre**.
        have.1PL   seen   a   tiger
        'We saw a tiger.'

(14)   *Hungarian* (É. Kiss 1998: 249–250)
   A: Hol   jártál   a   nyáron?
        where   went.2SG   the   summer.in
        'Where did you go in the summer?'
   B: **Olaszországban**   jártam.
        Italy.to   went.1SG
        'It was Italy where I went.'

According to É. Kiss (1998), the preverbal focus in (14B) identifies the exhaustive subset of a potential set for which the predicate phrase actually holds, indicating that for all of the alternatives triggered by focus, the proposition is not true.

The set of focal alternatives can be ordered so as to coincide with the speaker's expectations: *mirative focus* is defined as contrast against the expectations, whereby the proposition asserted is presented as being more unlikely or unexpected with respect to the alternative propositions (15):

(15)   a.   Ci avevano detto che non ce n'erano e invece…
             'They had told us that there weren't any and instead…'
       b.   Ci avevano detto che avremmo visto solo zebre e leoni e invece…
             'They had told us that we would only see zebras and lions and instead…'
       c.   … **una tigre**   abbiamo   visto   ieri   allo   zoo.
                a   tiger   have.1PL   seen   yesterday   at-the   zoo
             '… we saw a tiger yesterday at the zoo.'

The sentence with mirative focus in (15c) expresses a violation of the expectations, either because of the complete unexpectedness of the event – in the context of (15a) – or because the content of the asserted proposition was less likely than other focal alternatives – in the context of (15b) (i.e. *we saw a tiger yesterday at the zoo* is less likely than *we saw a zebra yesterday at the zoo*, *we saw a lion yesterday at the zoo*, etc.).

The set of alternatives can be said to be open with information and exhaustive focus: the set is of course pragmatically delimited by the encyclopaedic or shared knowledge of the conversation participants, but what is crucial is that no alternatives are explicitly active or given in the context.[2] The alternatives to mirative focus may be given in the context (15b), but need not be (15a) (see Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2015; 2016). It is only with corrective focus that one or more alternatives have to be active in the discourse having been explicitly mentioned or deictically identified, as in (16), where the corrective proposition '*we saw a tiger*' corrects the previous statement '*you saw a lion*':

(16)   A: Martina, tuo padre mi ha detto che avete visto un leone ieri allo zoo.
             'Martina, your father told me that you saw a lion yesterday at the zoo.'

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2   If the alternatives are mentioned in the question, they do not pertain to the factual information stored in the common ground (CG), but rather provide information that is the relevant for the following conversational moves and for how the CG content will develop (i.e. the GC management, see Krifka 2007). In this sense, Krifka (2007: 32) observes that even though the alternative question in (iA) introduces an explicit set of two alternatives (*tea* and *coffee*), the answer in (iB) "doesn't seem to be more contrastive than an answer to the non-restricted question *What do you want to drink?*" (see also Repp 2010: 1336):

(i)   A: What do you want to drink, tea or coffee?
      B: I want **tea**.

This is because the alternatives in (iA) are part of the CG management and not of the CG content.

B: **Una tigre** abbiamo visto, non un leone.
   a   tiger   have.1PL seen not a   lion
   'We saw a tiger, not a lion.'

This classification makes reference not only to the implicit *vs* explicit presence of the alternatives in the context, but also to discourse relations. Indeed, Repp (2016) proposes that different degrees of contrast emerge not only from the way in which alternatives are construed, but also from the discourse relations between the contrasted elements. Contrast always implies a relation of similarity or dissimilarity between discourse segments, but additional aspects of the contrastive relation may add to the degree of contrast. The discourse relation involved in an interrogative discourse consisting of a question and a congruent answer is intuitively non-contrastive – or the least contrastive (as with information focus) – although an implicature of exclusion may assign a higher contrastive value to the relation (as with exhaustive focus). The violation of expectations (as with mirative focus) and the incompatibility between two states of affairs (as with corrective focus) feature higher degrees of contrast. Since corrections involve explicit alternatives, corrective focus is even more contrastive than mirative focus, with which the alternatives need not be explicit but can just be situated in the interlocutors' belief systems and common ground. Indeed, mirative assertions are not corrections.

As pointed out by Repp (2016: 275), "if contrast comes in different degrees we may expect that these degrees correlate with the application of additional or different grammatical means." This is indeed what happens when we investigate the syntactic effects of focus and, in particular, the association between FF and focus types.[3] Given languages appear to selectively associate the syntactic operation FF with distinct types of focus, but not necessarily with all of them. Let us consider the behaviour of FF in our sample of languages:[4]

(17)	*information focus*	*exhaustive focus*	*mirative focus*	*corrective focus*
Italian/Spanish			✓	✓
Hungarian		✓	✓	✓
Sicilian/Sardinian	✓		✓	✓

As a tendency, and as suggested by the title of this paper,[5] the greater the degree of contrast, the greater the potential is for focus to give rise to syntactic effects and, thus, to undergo FF. In Italian and Spanish, FF is possible not only with the 'greatest' and most explicit case of contrast, that is, with corrective focus, but also with mirative focus expressing contrast against expectations, while FF is not accepted in the absence of contrast (i.e. with information focus), independently of its exhaustivity.[6] In Hungarian, FF is typically associated with exhaustive focus, but is also possible with mirative and corrective foci. In Sicilian and in Sardinian, the occurrence of FF with information focus goes hand in hand with its acceptability with all other types of focus, with the exception of exhaustive focus.

These facts will be reviewed in more details in the next sections, but before turning to the empirical basis of the present proposal, a clarification is in order. Speaking of a hierarchy of contrast or of different degrees may lead to a scalar conceptualization of contrast, as a kind of continuum. Although, conceptually, contrast may be indeed conceived of as a gradable notion, and even if the exact boundaries may sometimes be difficult to define in a clear-cut way, the focus types identified above have nonetheless to be envisaged as discrete categories. We need cut-off points and hence discrete categories to capture the discourse conditions that license FF.

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3   On the prosodic differences between mirative and corrective FF in Italian, see Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016).

4   The blank cells in the table indicate that FF with that specific type of focus is not available in a given language. In fact, in some cases exact information and detailed analyses in the relevant literature are still missing (e.g. with FF of exhaustive focus in Spanish). However, in the absence of evidence to the contrary and on the basis of some preliminary – but admittedly not exhaustive – inquiries, the constructions corresponding to blank cells in the table are uniformly treated as unavailable.

5   The first part of the title is a quote attributed to the Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961).

6   Here I am mainly referring to European Spanish, but the same observation may also hold true for other varieties of Spanish. I will comment more on the empirical controversies and on dialectical variation below in Section 5.

3 FOCUS FRONTING (FF) ACROSS FOCUS TYPES

Building on the definition of contrast elaborated in Section 2 and on the resulting classification in (12), in this section the associations between the syntactic operation FF and the different types of focus are presented. Let us start with corrective focus.

3.1 CORRECTIVE FOCUS

Most of the examples discussed in the studies on FF in Italian and Spanish involve corrective focus with an explicit contrast against a given alternative. These examples are generally provided in isolation, without an appropriate context, but that this type of focus concerns explicit contrast is confirmed by the sentence final negative tag that resumes the contrasted alternative, as in the examples here below:

(18)   *Italian* (Rizzi 1997: 286)
    Il   tuo libro ho   letto (, non il   suo).
    the your book have.1SG read   not   the his
    'Your book I read (, not his).'

(19)   *Italian* (Belletti 2004: 17)
    A Gianni l'ho   dato (non a Piero).
    to Gianni it-have.1SG given   not   to Piero
    'I gave it to Gianni (not Piero)'.

(20)   *Spanish* (Zubizarreta 1999: 4239)
    Manzanas compró   Pedro (y   no peras).   (*Spanish*)
    apples   bought.3SG Pedro   and not pears
    'Pedro bought apples (and not pears).'

Narrow focus in (18) yields a set of alternative propositions of the form 'I read *x*', where *x* is an entity. The sentence-final negative tag *non il suo* 'not his' implies that the focal alternative proposition *You read his book* – with the due deictic adjustments – must have been uttered in that context, qualifying as the explicit antecedent for contrast. The same holds true for (19) and (20) which imply the antecedent propositions *You gave it to Piero* and *Pedro bought pears*, respectively. In these examples, contrast is always against an explicit focal alternative.

Given its nature, Bianchi & Bocci (2012) suggest calling this type of focus *corrective focus*, which is typically used to express a contrast across utterances, whereby the asserted proposition (i.e. the corrective claim) is incompatible and inconsistent with an antecedent proposition that comes from a previous speech act, as exemplified in the exchange in (21):

(21)   *Italian*
    A: Hanno   invitato Marina.
        have.3PL invited Marina
        'They invited Marina.'
    B: **Giulia** hanno   invitato (, non Marina).
        Giulia have.3PL invited   not   Marina).
        'They invited Giulia, not Marina.'

Corrective FF is possible in Italian and in Spanish, but also in other Romance languages, with some limitations in French and in Portuguese, where clefts and/or postverbal focus are preferred strategies over FF to mark narrow focus (for the variation across groups of speakers in European Portuguese, see Costa & Martins 2011, cf. § 3.2 below; for a more detailed overview of FF in Romance, see Cruschina 2016 and Cruschina & Remberger 2017).

3.2 MIRATIVE FOCUS

In the last decades several studies have – more or less explicitly – commented on the possibility of non-contrastive FF.[7] Some scholars only speak of non-contrastive focus – non-corrective in our terminology –, while others make reference to the notion of unexpectedness or unexpected new information. Borrowing the term from linguistic typology (DeLancey 1997; 2001; Aikhenvald 2004; 2012), Cruschina (2012) labelled 'mirative focus' the type of focus that is related to new information which is particularly surprising or unexpected (see also Krifka 1995; Brunetti 2004; 2009; Zimmermann 2007; 2008; Hartmann & Zimmermann 2007; Frey 2010 on focus and unexpectedness):[8]

(22)   *Italian*
  a.   Non   ci   posso   credere!   **Due bottiglie** ci   siamo   bevuti! (*Italian*)
       not   to.it   can.1SG   believe.INF   two   bottles   REFL   be.1PL   drunk
       'I can't believe it! We drank two bottles!'

  Spanish
  b.   ¡Por Dios,   **dos botellas**   se   han   bebido! (*Spanish*)
       for   God   two   bottles   REFL   have.3PL   drunk
       'My God! They have drunk up two bottles!'

Mirative FF is very common in (almost) all Romance varieties, including Italian and Spanish (22), but also in Sicilian, Sardinian, Brazilian Portuguese and Romanian (23) (see Cruschina & Remberger 2017: §3.3):

(23)   *Brazilian Portuguese*
  a.   Imagina só!   **Por essa bestinha da Júlia** ele   foi se apaixonar!
       imagine   only   for   that   animal   of Julie   he   fell-in-love
       'Just imagine! He fell in love with that idiot of Julie!

  Romanian
  b.   **Două luni**   mi-a   luat   să   scriu   acest   articol!
       two   months   me-it   took   to   write   this   paper
       'It took me two months to write this paper!'

Despite the general idea that French does not allow FF to the left periphery of the sentence, in the corpus-based studies by Sabio (1995, 2006) and by Abeillé, Godard & Sabio (2008; 2009), cases of FF similar to our mirative focus have been described:

(24)   *French* (Abeillé, Godard & Sabio 2008: 2367)
  a.   Tu   sais   ce   qui   est arrivé?   **Le candidat du   patron**, ils
       you   know   what   that   is   arrived   the   candidate   of-the boss   they
       ont   refusé!
       have   refused
       'Do you know what happened? They refused the boss's candidate!'

  French (Abeillé, Godard & Sabio 2008: 2361)
  b.   **Trois heures** il   avait   de   retard,   le   train!
       three   hours   it   had   of   delay   the   train
       'The train was delayed by three hours!'

Authier & Haegeman (2019) explicitly argue that French allows for mirative FF, as shown by the following examples:

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7   See Vallduví (1992; 1995) on Catalan, Kato & Raposo (1996) on Brazilian Portuguese, Brunetti (2004; 2009) on Italian, Ledgeway (2009a; b) and Cruschina (2012) on southern Italian dialects, Paoli (2010) on a northern Italian dialect, Gabriel (2010), Uth (2014), Heidinger (2015), Jiménez-Fernández (2015a; b), Hoot (2016) on Spanish; Jones (2013) on Sardinian, Cruschina, Giurgea & Remberger (2015), Giurgea (2016) on Romanian.

8   The term *mirative focus*, introduced in Cruschina (2012), which first circulated as a PhD thesis in 2008, is used in several studies, including Ledgeway (2009b), Jones (2013), Cruschina, Giurgea & Remberger (2015), Jiménez-Fernández (2015a; b), Giurgea (2016), Trotzke (2017), and Cruschina (2019a; b).

(25)   *French* (Authier & Haegeman 2019: 46)

    a.   **Des   sauterelles   grillées** ils   mangent dans ce   pays.
        some grasshoppers grilled   they eat   in   this country
        'Grilled grasshoppers they eat in this country.'

    b.   **Même ses caleçons**   on   lui   a   volé.
        even   his underwear they him have stolen
        'Even his underwear they stole from him.'

    c.   **Une bulle**   il   m' a   mis, ce   salaud.
        a   bubble he me has put   that jerk
        'A fat F he gave me, that jerk.'

    d.   **Dix points de suture** ils   lui   ont   fait.
        ten stitches   they him have made
        'Ten stitches they gave him.'

In all these cases, the focus constituent is fronted to a sentence-initial position in order to mark the asserted proposition as unexpected and surprising in a given discourse situation and with respect to the set of alternative propositions evoked by the narrow focus. The alternatives need not be given or active in the context, but may simply be based on the speakers' shared knowledge and common ground.

At the same time, Authier & Haegeman (2019: 41) claim that corrective focus "cannot be expressed by fronting the focused constituent to the left periphery in French, [cf. (26a)], as it is in Italian, but is instead expressed via clefting [cf. (26b)]": [9]

(26)   A: Albert a appelé son fils.
        'Albert called his son.'

    B: a. *Non, **sa mère**   il   a   appelé (pas son fils)
           no   his mother he has called (not his   son)

        b. Non, c'est **sa mère**   qu'il   a   appelée (pas son fils).
          no   it-is his mother that-he has called (not his   son)
          'It is his mother that he called (not his son).'

French would then represent a language in which FF is accepted with mirative focus, but not with corrective focus, showing that the two types must be distinguished not only conceptually, but also empirically. We can thus update the table in (17) by adding French:

(27)	*information focus*	*exhaustive focus*	*mirative focus*	*corrective focus*
French			✓	
Italian/Spanish			✓	✓
Hungarian		✓	✓	✓
Sicilian/Sardinian	✓		✓	✓

The table in (27) displays contrastively the behaviour of French as opposed to other Romance varieties and Hungarian by highlighting that in this language FF is restricted to a particular type of focus, that is, mirative focus. At the same time, given that there are syntactic operations

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9   It must be noted that in French the use of corrective FF might be restrained or completely blocked due to the presence in the language of a more general and widespread competing structure, that is, clefting. Interestingly, clefts too have been claimed to express different types of focus, that is, exhaustive and corrective focus, not only in French but also in other languages (see Cruschina 2015 and the references therein on the interplay between clefting and FF; see also De Cesare 2017 for an overview of clefts in Romance). French clefts are also used as an answering strategy with information focus, although limitedly to subject questions (see Belletti 2005). By contrast, clefts are not readily compatible with mirative focus. Destruel, Beaver & Coppock (2019) have recently proposed a reformulation of the contrastive meaning component of clefts in terms of contrast against expectations: *contrariness*, in their terminology. As acknowledged by the authors (p. 12), the notion of contrariness is similar to the notion of correction, although it also differs from it in that it involves degrees. Despite the reference to expectations, contrariness should not be assimilated to an implementation of mirative focus because of the different functions. The speaker uses a cleft to reject or repudiate an antecedent proposition that is thought to be false and to signal an expected conflict of commitments between the discourse participants, while in a sentence featuring mirative FF the speaker asserts a new proposition that is unexpected with respect to alternative propositions (see § 5 below).

that are selectively sensitive to it, we must conclude that mirative focus is to be envisaged as a distinct type of focus, as independently argued in Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016) for Italian on the basis of the interpretive and prosodic differences between corrective and mirative focus.[10]

An important question that remains to be explored is whether a language exists that only allows FF with corrective focus. However, it is not easy at the moment to answer this question: most studies on FF, or on word order in general, do not make reference to the multi-faceted nature of contrast and use the term *contrastive focus* or *contrastive FF* in a rather broad sense. In their analysis of contrastive FF in European Portuguese, Costa & Martins (2011) recognize the existence of two groups of speakers, and hence two grammars: a less restrictive grammar (Grammar A) which allows contrastive FF and a more restrictive grammar (Grammar B), where contrastive FF is limited to deictic expressions. Grammar A of European Portuguese could thus qualify as a language in which only FF with corrective focus is accepted. Costa & Martins (2011) do not distinguish between mirative and corrective focus, even though they do acknowledge that, with respect to certain features, contrastive FF intersects with other fronting constructions including evaluative exclamatives, which at first sight have something in common with mirative FF (see Cruschina 2012: 124–125). Before addressing questions on the selective behaviour of FF, it is thus important to subject the detailed investigation of individual languages to a more fine-grained conceptualization of contrast and to a more articulated classification of the focus types.

3.3 INFORMATION FOCUS IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Non-corrective FF has also been discussed in the context of answers to wh-questions, where we would in principle expect information focus to occur. Sicilian and Sardinian allow for information FF in neutral answers to wh-questions, as shown in (28) and (29) (Cruschina 2012; 2015; Jones 2013), where the focus merely conveys new information and no focal alternatives are active in the context either as expectations or as explicit alternatives. An aspect that may be implied in answers to questions is exhaustivity: in asserting that the proposition is true for one entity or referent, it can often be implied that it is not true for other referents. In Sardinian and in Sicilian, however, this implicature can be understood as a pragmatic inference related to the maxim of quantity (Grice 1975), and not as a necessary interpretive feature as in Hungarian (cf. § 3.4) (see Cruschina 2012: § 2.5).[11]

The situation, however, is less clear for other Romance varieties, for which examples of FF in answers to wh-questions are judged as grammatical and pragmatically felicitous, but no details about the interpretation are given, as in the examples in (30) and (31) from Asturian and Central Catalan, respectively. In particular, it is still to be determined with certainty whether in these contexts FF is associated with a neutral or an emphatic interpretation:

(28)   *Sicilian* (Cruschina 2016: 605)
         A: Unni   ti   nni   jisti   airi   sira?
               where you   there.from went.2SG   yesterday   evening
               'Where did you go last night?'

---

10   Even when it is associated with a mirative or a corrective interpretation, in Romance the focus constituent need not be fronted (see Cruschina 2012; 2015). Different solutions have been proposed to the problem of the optionality of movement (see Brunetti 2009; Gabriel 2010; Bianchi & Bocci 2012; and Bianchi 2019). These solutions make different predictions about FF depending on the framework and on the approach within which they have been formulated, but in all accounts it is clear that the optionality only concerns the types of focus that allow FF, and factors other than interpretation are to be invoked as responsible for the surface position of the focus constituent. In other words, the type of focus determines a necessary condition for FF, even if this condition may not prove sufficient and may depend on other factors.

The problem of the optionality of movement does not really hold under the alternative spell-out approach, according to which FF always takes place, and that what is optional is where the moved constituent is pronounced: either in its base position, yielding in-situ focus, or in its landing site, giving rise to FF (see Bianchi & Bocci 2012). Bianchi (2019) further refines this proposal by suggesting that the alternative spell-out of one copy or the other is regulated by interface constraints such as Scope Transparency *vs* (prosodic) unmarkedness. In this approach, thus, the optionality problem it is shifted to the phonological component, where it will be determined which of the two copies will be spelled out.

11   The weaker pragmatic inference of exhaustivity, which is presumably a common feature of focus in question-answer contexts, can be treated as a cancellable conversational implicature, while, as will be argued in Section 4, the 'stronger' exhaustive interpretation of Hungarian FF can be seen as a conventional implicature (in the sense of Potts 2005; 2007). On exhaustivity in Italian, see Brunetti (2004), who convincingly shows that, unlike Hungarian, Italian FF is not exhaustive.

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

B: **Au   cinema** jivu.
to-the cinema went.1SG
'I went to the cinema.'

</div>

(29) *Sardinian* (Jones 2013: 78)

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

A: Su libru, a chie l'-as   dadu?
the book to whom it-have.2SG given
'The book, to whom did you give it?'

B: Su libru, **a Maria** l'-apo   dadu.
the book to Mary   it-have.1SG given
'The book, to Mary I gave it.'

</div>

(30) *Asturian* (Viejo Fernández 2008: 255)

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

A: ¿Qué   comió Miguel?
what ate   Miguel
'What did Miguel eat'

B: **Les pataques** comió Miguel.
the potatoes ate   Miguel
'Miguel ate potatoes.'

</div>

(31) *Central Catalan* (Vanrell & Fernández-Soriano 2013: 261)

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

A: A qui va enviar   la carta, el mariner?
to who send.PST.3SG the letter the sailor
'Who did the sailor send the letter to?'

B: **A la dama** va enviar   la carta el mariner.
to the lady   send.PST.3SG the letter the sailor
'The sailor sent the letter to the lady.'

</div>

What is the type of focus involved in the examples (30) and (31)? Corrective focus can be ruled out from this context, since they are not possible in answers to wh-questions: if no antecedent is provided, a corrective statement generally proves infelicitous (e.g. – *Who bought the newspaper? – #* **John** *bought it, not Paul*). It could well be that Asturian and Central Catalan admit fronted information foci, like in Sicilian and in Sardinian, but it could also be that the focus in the answers is not a genuine instance of information focus but, rather, an instance of mirative focus (cf. § 5).

The data and the judgements are even more controversial for Spanish, especially in the case of subject wh-questions. Different studies present different data, and this contrast seems to align with the methodology adopted: introspection-based judgements describe a grammaticality ban on preverbal foci in the case of information focus, including the case of preverbal subjects. On the contrary, experimental and quantitative investigations report cases of fronted information foci in answer to wh-questions, especially in relation to the subject of the sentence (see Uth & García García 2018 and Heidinger 2020 for an overview of this tension).[12]

According to Zubizarreta (1998), narrow foci, including subjects, must occur at the end of the sentence, where they will receive the nuclear stress, as shown in (32) (see also Ordóñez 2000; Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo 2001; Gutiérrez-Bravo 2008). Preverbal focal subjects, as well as other fronted focal constituents, are possible only in combination with a contrastive or emphatic focus, as in the correction in (33):

(32) *Spanish* (Zubizarreta 1998: 125–126)

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

A: ¿Quién te   regaló la   botella de vino?
who   to-you gave   the bottle of wine
'Who gave you the bottle of wine (as a present)?

</div>

   B1:   ***María** me   regaló la   botella de vino.
         Maria to-me gave   the bottle   of wine

   B2:   Me   regaló la   botella de vino **María**.
         to-me gave   the   bottle of wine Maria
         'Maria gave me the bottle of wine (as a present).'

(33)   *Spanish* (Zubizarreta 1998: 125)
       María me   regaló la   botella de vino (no   Juan).
       Maria to-me gave   the bottle   of wine   not Juan

These generalizations are based on the authors' intuitions and judgements. As we have already mentioned, in opposition to these observations, and on the basis of a different methodology for the collection of the data such as elicitation or acceptability ratings, other scholars have claimed that in Spanish – and in later comparative work, also in Catalan – non-contrastive (i.e. non-corrective) focus in answers to questions can occur sentence-initially, especially when it corresponds to the subject (see Gabriel 2007; 2010; Adli 2011; Hoot 2012; 2016; Vanrell & Fernández-Soriano 2013; 2018; Feldhausen & Vanrell 2014; 2015; Uth 2014; 2018; Heidinger 2015; 2018; 2020; Jiménez-Fernández 2015a; b; Sánchez Alvarado 2018).

Gabriel (2007, 2010), for example, reports data on Argentinian dialects based on semi-spontaneous elicitation which show that sentence-initial narrow focus is not completely excluded in Spanish. In particular, he shows that while final focal subjects are preferred in intransitive structures or in transitive sentences with cliticized objects, a preverbal information-focus subject is preferred over a postverbal subject in the case of transitive structures SVO with a full object, as shown in (34) and in (35):

(34)   *Argentinian Spanish* (Gabriel 2007: 67)
       A: ¿Quién secuestra a   Tarzán?
            who   kidnaps   ACC Tarzan
            'Who kidnaps Tarzan?'

       B: **Blancanieves** secuestra a   Tarzán.
            Snow White   kidnaps   ACC Tarzan
            'Snow White kidnaps Tarzan.'

(35)   *Argentinian Spanish* (Gabriel 2010: 202)
       A: ¿Quién le   da   el diario   a   su   hermano?
            who   to-her gives the newspaper to her/his brother
            'Who gives the newspaper to her/his brother?'

       B: **María** le   está dando el diario   a   su   hermano.
            María to-him is   giving the newspaper to her brother
            'María is giving the newspaper to her brother.'

On the basis of this evidence, Gabriel (2010: 189) concludes that "it can be stated that the mechanisms of syntactic focus marking, i.e. the use of a particular syntactic construction in a given pragmatic context, is governed by strict rules to a lesser degree than suggested in much of the literature". It may well be that dialectal variation is – fully or partially – responsible for the different data and for the contrasting views. Similar data to those reported by Gabriel (2007; 2010) for Argentinean Spanish have been discussed with reference to other varieties of American Spanish (see Muntendam 2009; 2013 for Andean Spanish, and Hoot 2012; 2016 for Mexican Spanish). Let us consider Mexican Spanish.

On the one hand, Gutiérrez-Bravo (2006) declares ungrammatical preverbal foci in answers to wh-questions (cf. example (36); see also the examples in § 1 above).[13] On the other hand, Hoot (2012; 2016) challenges this view on the basis of an acceptability-judgment experiment with audio stimuli, which shows that in the case of subject focus, the version with preverbal focus subject (37A1) received higher scores than the version of the same sentence with a sentence-final focus (37A2):

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13   In fact, Gutiérrez-Bravo (2006: 110) reports that speakers of Mexican Spanish even reject preposed foci with a contrastive or corrective interpretation, that is, FF of corrective focus. This difference may indeed be due to dialectal variation.

(36)   *Mexican Spanish* (Büring & Gutiérrez-Bravo 2001: 42)
        Q: ¿Quién compró el periódico   ayer?
            who   bought the newspaper yesterday
            'Who bought the newspaper yesterday.'

        A1: #**Juan** compró ayer   el   periódico.
             Juan bought yesterday the newspaper

        A2: Ayer   compró el periódico **Juan**.
            yesterday bought the newspaper Juan
            'Juan bought the newspaper yesterday.'

(37)   *Mexican Spanish* (Hoot 2016: 356)
        Q: ¿Quién compró un carro?
            who   bought a car
            'Who bought a car?'

        A1: **Mi tío**   compró un carro.
            my uncle bought a   car
            'My uncle bought a car.'

        A2: #Compró un carro **mi tío**.
            bought a car   my uncle

The tension between the two positions is apparent. If we put aside for a moment this methodological opposition concerning Mexican Spanish, it seems that the empirical studies on the Latin American dialects of Spanish could point to a difference with respect to the European varieties. However, the same type of empirical challenges have been discussed in reference to dialects of European Spanish (see Vanrell & Fernández-Soriano 2013; 2018 for Basque, Madrid and Canarian Spanish; and Jiménez-Fernández 2015a; b; for Southern Peninsular Spanish). According to Jiménez-Fernández (2015a; b), for example, in addition to sentence final focus, speakers of Southern Peninsular Spanish accept fronted information focus in answers to questions, both in the case of a subject focus (38) and in the case of an object focus (39). The data were collected by means of an experiment in which native speakers had to judge the grammaticality of FF in a given context:

(38)   *Southern Peninsular Spanish* (Jiménez-Fernández 2015b: 126)
        A: ¿Quién ha ganado el Premio Planeta este año?
              'Who has won the Planeta Prize this year?

        B: Lo ha   ganado **Jorge Zepeda**.
              it   has won   Jorge Zepeda

        B':   **Jorge Zepeda** lo ha ganado.
              Jorge Zepeda it has won
              'Jorge Zepeda won it.'

(39)   *Southern Peninsular Spanish* (Jiménez-Fernández 2015b: 126)
        A: ¿Qué está comiendo Ángela?
               'What is Angela eating?'

        B: Está comiendo **pasta**.
              is   eating   pasta

        B':   **Pasta** está comiendo.
              pasta is   eating
              'She is eating pasta.'

The variation therefore does not seem to follow, at least not so neatly, diatopic distinctions, but appears to exist even within closely-related varieties. In light of these facts, even if in some specific cases it may in fact constitute an important factor, dialectal variation cannot alone be the answer to the attested variation and to the growing challenge to the consensus view on the distribution of focus in Spanish. In Section 5, I will return to this issue and will discuss the contribution that the focus typology outlined in this paper can make towards an explanation of this challenge. The main point will be that we need to give up on the idea that the question-

answer pairs work as a foolproof test for information focus, insofar as other focus types may occur in congruent answers to wh-questions.

3.4 EXHAUSTIVE FOCUS IN HUNGARIAN

Irrespective of its position (fronted or in situ), information focus need not exclude alternatives from a principled point of view, although this is a natural and common implicature, presumably linked to the pragmatic maxim of quantity (Grice 1975; Büring 2016: 64). In Hungarian, however, FF consistently involves the exhaustive identification or exclusion by identification of the subset of the set of alternatives (É. Kiss 1998: 249):

(40)   Mary **egy kalapot** nézett   ki   magának.
         Mary a   hat.ACC   pick.PST.3SG out herself.ACC
         'It was (only) a hat that Mary picked for herself.'

Independently of the actual nature of the exhaustivity meaning (cf. § 4 below), exhaustive FF is the preferred answering strategy in Hungarian – except when a non-exhaustive answer is intended. Starting from this observation, the question that we need to answer is the following: is the exhaustive reading the only possible interpretation that can be associated with FF in Hungarian? In this section, I show that Hungarian FF can be associated with a mirative import, both in declarative and in interrogative clauses, which is not necessarily exhaustive; in declaratives, FF can also perform a corrective function that, similarly, need not be exhaustive.

Hungarian fronted focus appears to be interpreted as exhaustive in answers to wh-questions. However, not all fronted foci are answers. In order to determine whether the exhaustive interpretation, typical of question-answer pairs, is an interpretive constant of FF, we should test FF in contexts that do not require exhaustivity, not even from a pragmatic or conversational viewpoint. Indeed, FF is also possible in other contexts and with other focus types. If, on the one hand, as is has long been recognized in the relevant literature, Hungarian does not allow FF with non-exhaustive information focus, on the other, FF proves indeed acceptable also with corrective (41) and mirative (42) focus (on the corrective function, see also Brody & Szendrői 2011):[14]

(41)   [Context: Anna and Beatrice talk about Lea, Gianni and their recent wedding]
         A: Ha jól   értettem,   a   Virgin-szigetekre mentek nászútra.
             if correctly understood.1SG the Virgin-Islands.to went   honeymoon.to
             'If I've understood correctly, they went to the Virgin Islands on their honeymoon'.

         B: Nem, tévedsz. **A   Maldív-szigetekre** mentek nászútra,   nem
             no   be.wrong.2SG the Maldives.to   went   honeymoon.to   not
             a   Virgin-Islands.to
             the Virgin-szigetekre.
             'No, you are wrong. *To the Maldives* they went on their honeymoon, not to the Virgin Islands!'

(42)   János nagyon   szereti Marit.   Képzeld!   **Egy gyémántgyűrűt**
         John very.much love.3SG Mary.ACC imagine.IMP.2SG a   diamond.ring.ACC
         adott   neki!
         gave.3SG to.her
         'John is madly in love with Mary. Guess what! *A diamond ring* he gave her!'

The question that we now need to address is the following: are corrective and mirative focus exhaustive? Assessing whether corrective focus is or is not exhaustive is a difficult task, in that either view is tenable. On the one hand, it might be argued that corrective focus necessarily requires the exclusion of the alternatives, in the sense that the assertion only holds for the element denoted by the correction and does not hold for the corrected alternative(s) (see Repp 2010). On the other, in the case of corrective focus the alternative is usually one and not a whole set, which might make the definition of corrective focus as exhaustive rather moot or

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14 Unless otherwise indicated, the following Hungarian examples and the relative judgements come from a questionnaire that I administrated to 22 native speakers (both linguists and non-linguists). See also Cruschina (2019b) for a discussion of these data.

superfluous. At any rate, assuming that the focus operator always acts on a contextually salient subset of the general set of alternatives, if a larger subset is introduced in the context, the correction may deny the truth of the antecedent proposition but, crucially, does not necessarily exclude other potential alternatives. A similar context with an anti-exhaustive corrective focus is set up in (43), where the set of grandma's jewellery is introduced in the first sentence:

(43) A: Mari kapott egy ezüst nyakláncot   nagymama   ékszerei
          Mari got   a   silver necklace.ACC grandma   jewellery.POSS.PL.3SG
          közül.
          among
          'Mary got a silver necklace of grandma's jewellery'.

      B: Tévedsz. **Egy arany nyakláncot** kapott (nem ezüstöt), és   ezen
          be-wrong.2SG a   gold necklace.ACC got   not silver.ACC and this-on
          kívül még egy pár fülbevalót.
          apart also a   pair earring.ACC
          'You are wrong. *A golden necklace* she got (not a silver one), and in addition to that a pair of earrings.'

As evident from speaker B's reply, the corrective fronted focus need not be exhaustive and an additional member of the set of the grandma's jewellery for which the predicate holds can be felicitously mentioned in the continuation to the sentence with FF.

Mirative focus is possible in contexts that neither require a strong exhaustive import nor motivate an exhaustive inference, in that there need not be any implicit question under discussion or presupposition that could justify an exhaustive identification. When asked to judge the possible continuations to the mirative utterance in (44), speakers found Continuation 1 infelicitous, since this would in fact be inconsistent with the mirative surprise import associated with the FF sentence. The aim of Continuation 2 was instead to determine whether the mirative import could be defined as a concomitant effect of an otherwise consistently exhaustive fronted focus. As expected, while Continuation 1 was judged as odd, Continuation 2 was considered natural by most speakers:[15]

(44) [CONTEXT: Two friends talking about the previous night]
      Nem hiszem el! **Két üveg bort** ittunk   meg!
      not   believe.1SG VM two bottle wine.ACC drink.PST.1PL VM
      'I can't believe it! *Two bottles of wine* we drank!'

              Continuation 1: → … # bár   ezen nem lepődöm   meg…
                                      although this   not   be.surprised.1SG VM
                                      'but that doesn't surprise me…'

              Continuation 2: → … és   még három doboz sört   is (ittunk)!
                                      and even three   can   beer.ACC too (drink.PST.1PL)
                                      'and three cans of beer too (we drank)!'

Mirative FF is also possible in polar questions, as shown in (45a) (see Bianchi & Cruschina 2016 on Italian and Sicilian). In this case too, the possibility of mentioning other alternatives for which the predicate holds (45b) confirms that the mirative meaning need not be exhaustive:

(45) a. **Marit** hívták   meg?
          Mary.ACC invite.PST.3PL VM
          '*Mary* they invited?'

      b. **Marit** hívták   meg? És   Jánost is? Őrület!
          Mary.ACC invite.PST.3PL VM   and John   too oh.dear
          '*Mary* they invited? And John too? Oh dear!!'

---

15 Care is needed in interpreting the value of continuations of this type: they are distinct speech acts and may describe a change of commitment on the part of the speaker. This clearly happens when the 'contradictory' continuation is somehow motivated or introduced by 'but' or 'although' (cf. Continuation 1 in (44)). Speakers, however, have clear intuitions about this: if the continuation is accepted, they acknowledge its contradictory character. Note that the cancellation or speaker's denial test (cf. Continuation 1 in (44)) is typically used to identify conventional implicatures, which, unlike conversational implicatures, are not cancellable or deniable by the speaker. This shows that the mirative import behaves like a conventional implicature, as will be discussed in more details in Section 4.

The possibility of interpreting the fronted focus with a non-exhaustive mirative meaning shows that exhaustivity is not a necessary condition for FF, not only in declarative clauses but also in polar questions. We finally wanted to determine how prominent the mirative interpretation is as opposed to the identificational reading (Kenesei 1986; É. Kiss 1998; a.o.), and if the identificational reading is necessarily exhaustive. To this end, native speakers were asked to choose the most appropriate translation(s) for a number of polar questions with FF such as those in (46) and in (47). The translations were presented in the form of a list of possible English paraphrases of the relevant meaning: the mirative meaning was rendered with the use of the intensifier "really" (cf. Meaning 1), while the identificational reading was presented as a cleft distinguishing between plain (Meaning 2) and exhaustive (Meaning 3) identification:

(46)   Anna **azt   a   könyvet** olvasta   el?
        Anna that.ACC the book.ACC read.PST.3SG VM
        'Anna *that book* read?'

Meaning 1: → *Did Anna really read that book? Was it really that book that Anna read?*
Meaning 2: → *Is it that book that Anna read?*
Meaning 3: → *Is it only that book that Anna read?*

(47)   Márk **Szicíliára** ment   el?
        Mark Sicily.to   go.PST.3SG VM
        'Mark *Sicily* visited?'

Meaning 1: → *Did Mark really visit Sicily? Was it really Sicily that Mark visited?*
Meaning 2: → *Is it Sicily that Mark visited?*
Meaning 3: → *Is it only Sicily that Mark visited?*

Speakers found that the most prominent meaning of these polar questions with a fronted focus was indeed the identificational one (Meaning 2, e.g. *Is it Sicily that Mark visited?*). The mirative meaning (Meaning 1, e.g. *Did Mark really visit Sicily? Was it really Sicily that Mark visited?*) was also generally judged as possible with the appropriate prosodic contour and context. Crucially, however, the exhaustive translation with *only* (Meaning 3, e.g. *Is it only Sicily that Mark visited?*) was barely chosen as an option, although a few speakers pointed out that it might be possible "depending on the context". These findings lead to the conclusion that the more neutral identificational reading of polar questions with FF is not necessarily exhaustive – although I am not excluding that it might be under the appropriate pragmatic conditions. At any rate, even if one objects that the identificational function is *by default* exhaustive, the acceptability of mirative FF shows that other non-exhaustive interpretations of FF are possible in polar questions.

4 CONVENTIONALIZATION

In the previous sections, we saw that FF depends on the type of focus and that particular languages vary with respect to the focus types that admit FF. The next question to be addressed is the nature of the meanings that distinguish the different focus types. What we need is an analysis that is able to account both for the different interpretations of the focus types and for the crosslinguistic variation. Following Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016), I assume that the different interpretations associated with focus are conventional implicatures (in the sense of Potts 2005; 2007), namely, grammaticalized associations between a linguistic form and a special interpretive import, which need the set of alternative propositions evoked by the focus structure in order to be interpreted correctly. It is thus the specific conventional implicature that is ultimately responsible for the syntactic operation of FF.

The corrective import of corrective focus has been analysed as a conventional implicature in Bianchi & Bocci (2012), and has been redefined as in (48) in Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015: 12):

(48)   *Corrective implicature*:
        There is one alternative proposition, already introduced in the context, which is incompatible with the proposition expressed in the corrective reply.

Indeed, corrective focus implies that the proposition expressed by corrective claim (49B) is incompatible with one salient alternative proposition, in that it expresses an incompatible description of one and the same event:

(49)   A: Hanno   invitato Marina.
                have.3PL invited Marina
                'They invited Marina.'

          B: **Giulia** hanno   invitato (, non Marina).
                Giulia have.3PL invited,   not Marina
                'They invited *Giulia*, not Marina.'

The incompatibility between the corrective claim and the antecedent gives rise to the correction effect, typical of corrective focus, whereby speaker A's assertion is rejected by speaker B. Along the same lines, the mirative import associated with mirative focus is defined as follows (Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2015: 13):[16]

(50)   *Mirative implicature*:
        There is at least one focus alternative proposition which is *more likely* than the asserted proposition with respect to a contextually relevant modal base and a stereotypical ordering source.

In (51a), for example, the other focal alternatives belonging to the set 'they gave me *x*' are considered as more likely than the asserted proposition with the focus value denoting a diamond necklace. Being a speaker's commitment, the mirative conventional implicature cannot be cancelled or denied by the speaker herself. It would thus be odd for the same speaker to continue the mirative utterance with a sentence like (51b):

(51)   a.   **Una collana di diamanti** mi   hanno   regalato!
                a   necklace of diamonds to-me have.3PL given
                'They gave me a diamond necklace!'

          b.   #Ma la   cosa non mi   sorprende...
                 but the thing not to-me surprises
                'But that doesn't surprise me...'

Unexpectedness is then analysed in terms of the comparative likelihood of alternative propositions (following Grosz 2012) with respect to a contextually relevant modal base (the *context set*) shared by the speakers and a stereotypical ordering source defining the normal course of events (Kratzer 2012 [1981]).[17] On this account, mirative focus evokes a set of alternatives, which provides exactly the alternative propositions that are necessary for a correct interpretation of the mirative implicature.

Most analyses of the syntactic and semantic properties of FF in Hungarian agree that the immediately preverbal position dedicated to fronted foci is associated with an exhaustive interpretation, which is absent when the focus constituent occurs postverbally (see, a.o., Szabolcsi 1981; Kenesei 1986; 2006; Horvath 1986; 2000; É. Kiss 1998; 2002). In answers to questions, Hungarian FF is thus exhaustive, in the sense that it expresses both the identification of the focus value from a set of alternatives and the simultaneous exclusion of other members of the same salient set of alternatives which are identifiable or highly predictable from the context and for which the predicate can potentially hold (cf. § 3.4). Despite this general consensus about the exhaustivity of FF, different hypotheses have been formulated on the source of the exhaustive interpretation (see Pintér 2017 for an overview). On the one hand, exhaustivity has been analysed as the interpretive import of a semantic device, either an exhaustive operator or a semantic presupposition, defending the idea that the immediately pre-verbal focus in Hungarian is semantically exhaustive and, thus, that exhaustivity is part

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16   See Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016) for the application of tests that confirm that the corrective and mirative imports behave like conventional implicatures in the sense of Potts (2005; 2007). On Hungarian, see the cancellability or denial test for mirative focus presented in Section 3.4 (see also Cruschina 2019b).

17   A bouletic ordering source, instead of a stereotypical one, may be at stake in some cases, according to which the asserted proposition is less (or more) *desirable* than another alternatives (Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina 2016), as in the following Italian example:

(i)   Caspita!   **Marina** hanno   invitato!
          gosh/damn Marina have.3PL invited
          'Gosh/Damn! They invited Marina!'

of the truth conditions of the corresponding sentences (Szabolcsi 1981; 1994; Kenesei 1986; Kálmán & van Leusen 1993; É. Kiss 1998; 2006; 2010; Horvath 2007; Bende-Farkas 2009). On the other hand, other approaches reject the semantic nature of the exhaustivity associated with FF and claim that such an interpretive effect simply results from a pragmatic effect or inference (Wedgwood 2003; 2005; 2007; Onea 2007; 2009; Brody & Szendrői 2011; Onea & Beaver 2011; Gerőcs, Babarczy & Surányi 2014).

In line with the latter approach, I defend the hypothesis that the exhaustive interpretation associated with Hungarian FF is an implicature, which is directly responsible for the syntactic displacement of the focus constituent. Importantly, however, I analyse it as a conventional implicature. Unlike conversational implicatures, conventional implicatures are part of the meaning of a word or, as in our case, of a construction, but are not part of the at-issue truth conditions. Even if the term implicature is traditionally associated with the realm of pragmatics, it must be noted that, according to Potts (2005; 2007), conventional implicatures are fully semantic, not pragmatic meanings, even though they pertain to a separate non-at-issue dimension that is independent from the at-issue content (see also Balogh 2013 and Gerőcs, Babarczy & Surányi 2014). Various tests have been proposed in the literature to demonstrate the semantic nature of the exhaustive interpretation associated with FF (see Szabolcsi 1981; É. Kiss 1998; 2002). Crucially, these tests only show that exhaustivity is an essential and constant component of the focus meaning and are not really able to tell at-issue and non-at-issue meanings apart. Insofar as conventional implicatures are not cancellable and, once the conventionalization has taken place, they are a constant part of the meaning, the results of these tests are fully compatible with the hypothesis defended here that exhaustivity is a conventional implicature.

Despite being a prominent one – perhaps the most prominent –, the exhaustive reading is not the only possible interpretation that can be associated with FF in Hungarian. In particular, as shown in Section 3.4, exhaustivity is not a necessary condition for FF in contexts other than answers to wh-questions.[18] In this sense, a semantic approach to the interpretation of the fronted focus proves too strong and would make the incorrect prediction that fronted focus is always exhaustive, irrespective of the context.

In sum, all the special meanings that characterize FF are conventional implicatures, which add up to the at-issue content of the sentence. These implicatures need a focal set of alternatives in order to be interpreted correctly and are thus intimately related to focus. The association between one such implicature and the syntactic operation FF is then a matter of conventionalization and may differ from language to language. FF can be associated with a corrective or with a mirative implicature in Spanish and in Italian, but only with a mirative implicature in French (see (27) above). In Hungarian, both the mirative and the corrective implicature may trigger FF in contexts where there need not be any implicit question under discussion or presupposition that could justify an exhaustive identification. By contrast, in answers to wh-questions, exhaustivity is generally associated with focus as the result of a language-specific process of conventionalization (see also Brody & Szendrői 2011; Onea & Beaver 2011; Gercs, Babarczy & Surányi 2014).

A syntactic implementation of this account is offered in Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015) within the cartographic approach. In line with a T-model of the grammar, Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015) propose that the corrective and the mirative implicature are triggered by active features in the syntactic structure, so that they provide specific instructions to the interfaces. More specifically, they propose that these implicatures are conventionally associated with the activation of a left-peripheral functional projection where the focus-associated implicatures (FAI) are encoded as features. Since these implicatures depend on the availability, in their scope, of a set of focal alternative propositions, this projection has to be higher than FocP. It is ultimately the implicature feature that activates the focus projection in its scope and that thus acts as the syntactic trigger of focus movement. This implementation is illustrated in (52) where the exhaustive implicature has been added as a possible feature of the FAI projection:

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[18]   Interestingly, É. Kiss (2012) discusses other contexts in which the focus–background articulation created by FF seems to have been grammaticalized (or 'conventionalized' in our terms), so that a possible exhaustive specification of the focus is redundant and that the background conveys contextually new information. This happens for instance in answers to quiz questions and newspaper headlines. She thus admits that Hungarian fronted foci are not always and necessarily exhaustive, in the same way as the background need not always be presupposed.

(52) $[_{FP}\,\text{Force} \dots [_{FaiP}\,\text{FAI}^0_{[mir]/[corr]/[exh]}\,[_{FocP}\,\text{YP}_{i\,[+foc]}\,\text{Foc}^0_{[+foc]} \dots [_{TP} \dots <\text{YP}_i> \dots]]]]$

This unified analysis of the focus types maintains a uniform notion of focus and at the same times accounts for the different interpretations. Referring to Horvath's (2007) analysis of the exhaustive interpretation in Hungarian, an anonymous reviewer points out that exhaustive focus may involve a different mechanism than mirative and corrective focus. Indeed, Horvath proposes to analyse the exhaustive interpretation as the result of a null Exhaustive Identification Operator that triggers movement but that does not necessarily associate with focus (see also Horvath 2010). My proposal shares some important assumptions with Horvath's analysis, in particular, the claim that focus movement must be separated from focus, but it also differs from it in significant respects: a crucial component of my analysis is that the trigger of the movement operation requires a direct association with the focus of the sentence, an association that is less central in Horvath's analysis. If one accepts Horvath's account for exhaustive focus, moreover, corrective and mirative focus have to be treated as different phenomena; this would imply the need to postulate different mechanisms to derive focus structures with very similar syntactic and prosodic properties.

The present account relies on the assumption that the different types of focus require a direct association with focus in order to be interpreted correctly, an assumption that is also pervasively present – either implicitly or explicitly – in the specialist literature on exhaustivity (see, e.g., É. Kiss 1998; Kenesei 2006; Krifka 2007). As illustrated in (52), the mechanism ensuring the association with all different types of focus is the same: there is only one focus, the different interpretations come from a syntactically encoded conventional implicature. Another advantage of this unifying account is that it grants a semantic status to the different types of focus (as uncancellable conventional implicatures that are part of the meaning), but it attributes their origins to a conventionalization process rather than to a (language-specific) semantic operation or to a specialized semantic operator. This analysis is thus more flexible and provides a more straightforward explanation to the observed variation.

5 BACK TO INFORMATION FOCUS IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Information focus introduces new information and it mainly occurs in answers to wh-questions. In a context consisting of a question and a congruent answer, the discourse relation at play with information focus is non-contrastive (Repp 2016) or the least contrastive, insofar as it contrasts with the other alternatives of the focal set. What indeed distinguishes information focus from other focus types is that these alternatives are not necessarily included in the speakers' common ground, either as previous knowledge or as expectations; nor are they explicitly present in the context. In this sense, information focus constitutes the neutral type of focus which does not involve any implicatures about the alternatives.

The common association between the question-answer context and information focus, however, has led to a frequent misunderstanding. This context is not a sufficient condition for information focus, in that not all foci in answers to questions are necessarily information foci, especially when fronted. The fact that a constituent that is syntactically and/or prosodically marked as focus is used in the answer to a wh-question does not convert *per se* this focus into an information focus (Escandell Vidal & Leonetti 2019: 208). Other types of focus can occur in the very same context. This misconception of information focus is most probably at the basis of the empirical challenges and controversies about FF in answers to wh-questions discussed in Section 3.3, misleading several scholars both on conceptual and on methodological grounds.

The methodological problems have already been highlighted by Uth (2014) and Escandell Vidal & Leonetti (2019) (see also Uth & García García 2018). In some of the experimental and/or quantitative studies that have challenged the traditional view on the conditions licensing FF in Spanish, written stimuli were employed. As pointed out by Escandell Vidal & Leonetti (2019), in the absence of prosodic information it was not possible to ascertain whether speakers were choosing or accepting as grammatical, depending on the task, a sentence with a marked initial focus subject or rather a sentence with an unmarked SVO order. Even when acoustic information was available (e.g. in production tasks), confirming the prosodic marking of the fronted focal constituent, the interactions between the experimenter and the participants that led to the production of a preverbal focal subject (or to the choice of such an option among

different possibilities) were barely natural and therefore inadequate for a genuine question with a neutral information focus in the answer.[19] In the tasks adopted in Gabriel (2007; 2010), the participants were shown short picture stories introducing the scenario and the referents that would be involved in the questions. The same pictures were later shown once again together with the questions asking about the scenario and the referents that had already been introduced before (see Uth 2014). Moreover, the participants were explicitly asked to repeat in their answer all the constituents appearing in the question (cf. (53) which repeats the example (35) above). In other words, the background information and the questions were probably too detailed for an interpretation of the question as a neutral question:

(53)   *Argentinian Spanish* (Gabriel 2010: 202)
     A: ¿Quién   le   da   el   diario   a   su   hermano?
            who   to-her gives the newspaper to her/his brother
            'Who gives the newspaper to her/his brother?'

     B: **María** le   está dando el   diario   a   su   hermano.
            María to-him is   giving the newspaper to her brother
            'María is giving the newspaper to her brother.'

Another problem casts doubt on the naturalness of the questions asked following this methodology. An essential property of canonical information-seeking questions is speaker's ignorance, that is, the pragmatic assumption that the speakers asking a canonical question are not able to commit themselves to any of the possible alternative answers (see, e.g., Farkas 2020). Even if this condition is admittedly difficult to be met in an experimental environment, the fact that the pictures were already illustrating the answer to the question presumably made the interpretation of the question as a canonical question even harder, irrespective of the simulation exercise.

These methodological problems might have thus favoured different interpretations of the focus, rather than eliciting the desired information focus. In particular, mirative focus can also occur in an answer to a question. Consider the Spanish example in (54) and the Italian examples in (55) and (56):

(54)   *Spanish*
     A: ¿Quién está tocando el piano?
            'Who's playing the piano?'

     B: (¡No me lo puedo creer!) ¡**Juan** está tocando! (No tenía idea de que sabía tocar…)
            '(I can't believe it!) Juan is playing! (I had no idea he could play…)'

(55)   *Italian* (Belletti & Rizzi 2017: 45)
     A: Chi è entrato?
            'Who came in?'

     B: Ma pensa un po'…. **George Clooney** è entrato! Chi l'avrebbe mai detto!?
            'Guess what… George Clooney came in! Who would have thought so!?'

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19   The methodological considerations discussed in this section are not meant to account for all the diverging and controversial findings. Other factors could have played a role in individual cases. For example, on the basis of a judgment experiment with auditory stimuli, Hoot (2012; 2016) shows that in answers to questions, the order **S**-V-O (with a preverbal focal subject, as in (A1)) is more acceptable than V-O-**S** (with a postverbal focal subject, as in (A2)). See (37) above, repeated here below (from Hoot 2016: 356):

(i)   Q: ¿Quién compró un carro?
              'Who bought a car?'

       A1:   **Mi   tío**   compró un carro.
              my   uncle bought   a   car
              'My uncle bought a car.'

       A2:   #Compró un carro **mi   tío**.
               bought   a   car   my   uncle

This finding may well reflect an actual difference, but it could also be that the speakers' preferences are affected by the given object between the verb and the focal subject in the order in (A2). According to native speakers, the same order with a dislocated object – resumed by the accusative clitic *lo* – would have been much better in this context (i.e. *Lo compró mi tío*).

(56)   *Italian*

    A: Che   nome   hanno   dato   al   nuovo cane?
           what   name   have.3PL given   to-the new   dog
           'What name did they give to the new dog?'

    B: **Temistocle** l'hanno   chiamato! Che   nome assurdo!
           Temistocle it-have.3PL called   what name absurd
           'They called it Temistocle! What an absurd name!'

In the answer (56B), for example, the constituent that corresponds to the wh-phrase in the question (i.e. the proper name *Temistocle* corresponding to the wh-phrase *Che nome* 'What name') is focussed, thus providing a congruent answer to the wh-question in (56A). At the same time, the assertion with mirative FF in (56B) implies that one or more focus alternative propositions would have been more likely in that given context (i.e. other dog names were more expected to be chosen), yielding a sense of unexpectedness and surprise.

Rather than a less likely alternative, the focus constituent in the answer may denote a more likely alternative with respect to the set of focal alternative propositions – or indeed the most likely. In this case, a sense of obviousness is the source of the surprise effect. A natural reading of the answer in (57B) – although presumably not the only one – involves an interpretation of obviousness: it is Juan who buys the newspaper every morning and the hearer expects this to be part of the shared knowledge of the conversation participants. Being surprised at the question itself, the hearer thus replies with (57B) to (re)state the most likely alternative (*Juan bought the newspaper, who else could have bought it?*):

(57)   *Spanish*

    A: ¿Quién   compró el   periódico?
           who   bought   the newspaper
           'Who bought the newspaper?'

    B: ¡**Juan** lo compró!
           Juan   it bought
           'Juan bought it!'

The import of obviousness is discussed in Uth (2014) and Escandell Vidal & Leonetti (2019) in reference to the marked preverbal foci in the experimental studies on Spanish FF. Indeed, in a context in which the answer is self-evident (cf. (53)), and as a consequence of the adopted methodology and of the nature of the stimuli, "the informants very probably end up with the most likely pragmatic enrichment, i.e. the encoding of the obviousness and/or the certainty of the assertions they make when answering the corresponding *Wh*-questions. […] The participants are questioned about what they see on the pictures, and even if they manage to properly reenact the 'game', the answers are still more than obvious" (Uth 2014: 95).

Uth (2014) analyses this sense of obviousness as the result of evidential and epistemic marking (see also Fließbach 2016; Reich 2018). I would instead like to propose that obviousness results from a subtype of the mirative implicature, whose specific interpretation derives from a reverse order of the expectations. Both unexpectedness and obviousness result from a violation of the expectations. Unexpectedness involves the assertion of a less likely alternatives in contrast to more likely alternatives; obviousness, on the contrary, involves the attempt to assert and restore the most likely alternative, which according to the speaker should be already part of the common knowledge, beliefs, and expectations shared by the interlocutors.

To sum up, what at first sight appears to be an instance of information focus, for the simple reason of occurring in an answer to a wh-question, at closer scrutiny turns out to be in most cases either an unmarked constituent occurring in the basic order or an instance of mirative focus. Dialectal variation is not to be excluded as a factor of variation, but I believe that the simplistic distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus, coupled with the methodological problems reviewed in this section have played a major role in the empirical controversies around the distribution of focus in Spanish.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have shown that the theoretical and empirical problems related to the licensing of FF can be better explained if the binary distinction between contrastive and non-contrastive focus is abandoned, and different subtypes of focus are identified (information, exhaustive, mirative and corrective focus). In the sample of languages examined in this paper, focus types associated with greater degrees of contrast are more likely to be marked syntactically and, thus, to admit FF. This is the case not only with corrective focus, which involves explicit alternatives as asserted antecedents and which thus features the highest degree of contrast, but also with mirative focus, which expresses a violation of expectations against alternatives that need not be explicit. This finding is in line with recent analyses of information focus. Outside the Romance languages, and on the basis of evidence from the syntax-phonology interface, Kratzer & Selkirk (2020) argue that in Standard British and American English information focus remains unmarked. The apparent prosodic effects associated with material that is merely new (i.e. information focus) are the result of default prosody.[20]

Following Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016), I have further argued that the different imports associated with FF and the different focus types are to be analysed as conventional implicatures. Indeed, the marked types of focus are associated with conventional implicatures which need a focus structure in their domain to be interpreted correctly. Syntactically, it is one of these implicatures that triggers FF, explaining the relationship between syntactic movement and focus. The crosslinguistic variation can be related to the 'conventionalization' of a given subtype of focus with a specific context, as is the case of exhaustive focus in answers to questions in Hungarian.

As observed by an anonymous reviewer, the fact that in some languages FF is compatible with more than one reading could instead favour the hypothesis that such readings are all inferential elaborations of a single meaning which depend on specific contexts. In this sense, these readings would qualify as conversational rather than conventional implicatures. However, even if the interpretations associated with the different focus types are linked to the same syntactic operation, under this account, it is essential that the different implicatures are characterized by different grammatical properties, so as to prove that they are not simply pragmatic variants of the same implicature. Indeed, for Italian, Bianchi, Bocci & Cruschina (2015; 2016) show, on the basis of experimental evidence, that the corrective and the mirative implicature are marked by distinct prosodic contours. A context may well support either implicature, but whether the implicature is corrective or mirative does not (only) depend on the context or on pragmatic conditions; the two implicatures are rather grammaticalized, in the sense that they are associated with distinct formal properties. Native speakers of the other languages considered in this paper (e.g. Spanish, Hungarian) seem to confirm that the different implicatures are characterized by distinct intonational properties, but these intuitions need to be confirmed in a more systematic way and with the aid of experimental procedures that take focus types as a factor. I leave this issue open to future research.

In answers to questions, FF does not necessarily involve information focus, but may involve other focus types such as mirative focus. Indeed, in crosslinguistic research, answers to constituent questions are still "the most widespread and most widely used test for focus" (Van der Wal 2016: 265). As we have seen, however, the new part of an answer to a wh-question might not merely express new information, but it may also involve the violation of expectations or a sense of obviousness. In the case of an imperfect methodology, it could be that the question does not succeed in eliciting the desired information structure, but is rather (incongruently) answered with an unmarked sentence exhibiting the default syntax and prosody.

Since a simple question-answer test does not distinguish between different interpretations of the focus constituent, the available data and findings from the experimental and quantitative studies are somewhat inconclusive and cannot be taken as a real challenge to the traditional view on the distribution of FF. These considerations, together with a series of methodological shortcomings, provide an explanation for the descriptive controversies about the syntactic marking of information focus in languages like Spanish.

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[20] Sicilian and Sardinian are exceptional in this respect, in that they admit syntactic marking of information focus. An investigation into the prosodic properties of information focus and into the differences with respect to other focus types would certainly constitute an interesting extension of the present study.

In this respect, I would like to conclude this paper with a reflection on the elicitation of information focus in order to combine as many empirical methods as possible and, more specifically, quantitative testing with introspection. But how can we investigate information focus in an experimental or quantitative study? It is indeed not easy to exclude a mirative interpretation of FF in an answer. I only have a suggestion for future studies in this direction. To elicit information focus is necessary to identify contexts that do not easily lend themselves to a mirative interpretation of the focus. This is admittedly not an easy task, but we can think of scenarios in which the interlocutors do not know each other and still exchange questions to seek new information. This could be the case with quiz questions or special types of interrogations such as police interrogations. In these contexts, the interlocutors usually do not share knowledge or beliefs that may generate expectations with respect to the content of the answer, as in the following examples from Italian where FF proves pragmatically infelicitous:[21]

(58)   Q: Chi   ha   scritto   il   romanzo   *Il   giovane   Holden*?
               who   has   written   the   novel   the   young   Holden
               'Who wrote the novel *The Catcher in the Rye*?'

       A1:   #**Salinger**   l'ha   scritto.
               Salinger   it-has   written.

       A2:   L'ha   scritto   **Salinger**.
               it-has   written   Salinger
               'Salinger wrote it.'

(59)   Q: Come   si   chiama?
               how   REFL   call.3SG.POLITE
               'What's your name?' (Lit. What are you called?)

       A1:   #**Mario Rossi**   mi   chiamo.
               Mario   Rossi   REFL   call.1SG

       A2:   Mi   chiamo   **Mario Rossi**.
               REFL   call.1SG   Mario   Rossi
               'My name is Mario Rossi.' (Lit. I am called Mario Rossi).

However, the researcher has to be careful also in these contexts and should avoid situations that could license non-neutral interpretations of the focus. We could think of quiz questions in an informal context, for example at home among friends, which could sound obvious:

(60)   Q: Chi   ha   dipinto   la   Gioconda?
               who   has   painted   the   Gioconda
               'Who painted La Gioconda?'

       A1:   **Leonardo**   l'ha   dipinta!   (Lo sanno   tutti!)
               Leonardo   it-has   painted   it   know.3PL   all
               'Leonardo painted it! (Everybody knows it!)'

       A2:   L'ha   dipinta   **Leonardo**.
               it-has   painted   Leonardo
               'Leonardo painted it.'

In the case of (60), FF proves more acceptable, but would trigger a mirative implicature of obviousness. It goes without saying that, as typical of mirative implicature, whether a proposition is unexpected or obvious depends on the contextually relevant modal base shared by the speakers (cf. § 4). A context in which the interlocutors have no expectations about previous knowledge of Leonardo's famous painting (e.g. a quiz question for children) would not support such an implicature and would therefore doom the sentence (60A1) to be judged as infelicitous.

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[21]   It would certainly be interesting to test these or similar data in different varieties of Spanish. Interestingly, in these contexts FF would still be acceptable in Sicilian and in Sardinian, and even in the Italian varieties spoken in the two islands. This piece of evidence further confirms that these two Romance varieties admit FF with information focus.

ABBREVIATIONS

1 = 1st person, 2 = 2nd person, 3 = 3rd person, ACC = accusative, INF = infinitive, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular, VM = verb modifier.

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