DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, SAME PERIPHERIES, DIFFERENT FOCAL POSITIONS?

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INTRODUCTION
Topic: declarative and interrogative clefts of contemporary oral French (FR) and Trevigiano (TV), a Venetan dialect - morphosyntax, distribution and some theoretical speculations.

Background:
(1) *ce (quasi-argument) COPULA [Focus X ] [ relative-like clause tx ] Syntactic GAP + long-distance dependency (2):
(2) C’est [ mon père], qui ___i est allé à la messe ce matin
Ce’is my father that is gone at the mass this morning
'It’s my father that attended Mass this morning'
(ii) Any experiential role can be thematized, but the syntactic subject and “adjuncts” are the most frequently focused (Collins 1991, Katz 2000, Carter-Thomas 2009). Collins (1991): thematic prominence – most frequent themes, assigned thematic prominence via clefting.
(iii) Clefts are focus. Belletti (2015): (at least) two different types of focalisation can be expressed through a cleft: (a) focus of new information, NI (S clefts); (b) corrective or contrastive focus, C/C (S and non-S clefts).

1. (IT-)CLEFTS IN TREVIGIANO AND ORAL FRENCH
Declarative it-cLEFTs:
(3) a. (It) COPULA [Focus X ] that [TP ...tx ] Regular cleft
   b. [Focus X ] (it) COPULA that [TP ...tx ] Reverse cleft

1.1. Clefting Strategies in Declaratives
The declarative clefts of TV and FR differ in:
(i) the presence of a phonetically realized quasi-argument of the *ce*-type, unavailable in TV;
(ii) the availability of reverse constructions, categorically excluded in FR.

1.1.1 Declarative Subject CLEFTs (NI & C/C)
TV: it is never phonetically realized (4a). FR: (reduced form of) *ce is compulsory (4b).
TV & FR: the that-C that introduces the low clause *must* be realized:
(4) a. Ze Toni *(ke) ga bevuo tuto el vin COP Antony that has drunk all the wine
(Trevigiano)
   'It’s Antony that drank up the wine'

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1 This work was supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, project n° 156160, “Optional Wh-in situ in French Interrogatives: Syntax and Prosody”.
b. C’est Antoine *(qui) a bu tout le vin  
C’COP Antony that has drunk all the wine  

(5) Subject cleft (regular)  
   a. Trevigiano: Copula [focus S ] ke tS V (DO) (IndO)  
   b. French: C’ copula [focus S ] qu(i) tS V (DO) (IndO)  

Que/qui alternation  
At work here in FR (not in TV!). Rizzi&Shlonsky (2007): the morphology of the that-C is altered iff the S of the embedded clause is extracted.  
⇒ the S has been moved from a S position in the low clause to the focal region.  

!!! using que leads to ungrammaticality (6a), but the reduced version of the C is fine (5b):  

(6) a. * C’est Jean que a bu ton vin  
C’COP John que has drunk your wine  
‘It’s Jean that drank your wine’  
   b. C’est Jean qu’a bu ton vin  
C’COP John qu’has drunk your wine  

S-clitics  
TV: a lexical S must be followed by the corresponding S-clitic (7a):  

(7) a. Toni *(el) ga magnà tuti i pomi  
Antony heCL has eaten all the apples  
‘Antony ate up the apples’  

This is not true in clefts (7b-c):  

(7) b. Ze Toni ke (*el) ga magnà tuti i pomi  
low clause: X  
COP Antony ke heCL haN eaten all the apples  
‘It’s Antony that ate up the apples’  
   c. Ze Toni (*el) ke ga magnà tuti i pomi  
high clause: X  
COP Antony heCL ke has eaten all the apples  

⇒ the focalised S of the cleft must have indeed been moved from its canonical position.  

TV: reverse clefts. Only C/C focus (8):  

(8) Toni ze ke ga magnà tuti i pomi (no a Maria)!  
Antony COP ke has eaten all the apples (NEG the Mary)  
‘It’s Antony that ate up the apples (not Mary!’)  

(9) Subject cleft (reverse)  
Trevigiano: [focus S ] copula ke tS V (DO) (IndO)
1.1.2 Declarative Object Clefts (C/C)

(10) **Object cleft** (regular)

a. Trevigiano: Copula [\textsubscript{\text{focus DO}}] \textit{ke} (*S\textsubscript{lexical}) \textit{S-cl V tDO} (IndO)

b. French: C’ copula [\textsubscript{\text{focus DO}}] \textit{qu(e)/qui} \textit{S V tDO} (IndO)

(10) **Object cleft** (reverse)

c. Trevigiano: [\textsubscript{\text{focus DO}}] copula \textit{ke} (*S\textsubscript{lexical}) \textit{S-cl V tDO} (IndO)

(11) a. Ze Nane *(ke) i gà visto al marcà               (Trevigiano)

\hspace{1cm}COP John \textit{ke} they\textsubscript{CL} have seen at the market

\hspace{1cm}'It’s John that they saw at the market'

b. Nane ze *(ke) i gà visto al marcà!    \textit{C/C (fortified)}

\hspace{1cm}John COP \textit{ke} they\textsubscript{CL} have seen at the market

\hspace{1cm}'(False!) It’s John that they saw at the market!'

1.1.3 Declarative Indirect Object and Adjunct Clefts (C/C)

(12) **Indirect Object / Adjunct cleft** (regular)

a. Trevigiano: Copula [\textsubscript{\text{focus IO/Adv}}] \textit{ke} (*S\textsubscript{lexical}) \textit{S-cl V (DO) tIO/Adv}

b. French: C’ copula [\textsubscript{\text{focus IO/Adv}}] \textit{qu(e)} \textit{S (DO) tIO/Adv}

(13) **Indirect Object / Adjunct cleft** (reverse)

c. Trevigiano: [\textsubscript{\text{focus IO/Adv}}] copula \textit{ke} (*S\textsubscript{lexical}) \textit{S-cl V (DO) tIO/Adv}

**TV:** reverse clefts (only C/C) (14a-b):

(14) a. Al marcà ze *(ke) go catà to santoea! (Trevigiano)

\hspace{1cm}At the market COP \textit{ke} have\textsubscript{1PS} met your godmother

\hspace{1cm}'(False!) It’s at the market that I met your godmother!'

b. * Au marché c’est que j’ai croisé ta marraine!    (French)

\hspace{1cm}At the market c’COP que I’have met your godmother

**Intermediate remarks**

Long-distance clefts: clefting in the embedded part (15a), or in the root (15b):

(15) a. A Maria a pensa [ ke \textit{ze Nane} \textit{ke te ga catà al marcà }]

\hspace{1cm}The Mary she\textsubscript{CL} thinks \textit{ke COP John \textit{ke youCL} have met at the market}

\hspace{1cm}'Mary thinks that it’s John that you met at the market'

b. \textit{Ze Nane} \textit{ke} a Maria a pensa [ ke te ga catà al marcà ]

\hspace{1cm}COP John \textit{ke} the Mary she\textsubscript{CL} thinks \textit{ke youCL} have found at the market

**FR:** *que/qui alternation:* interesting patterns in long-distance S clefts (16a-d):

(16) a. Marie pense \textit{que} c’est Jean \textit{qui} a tout bu \textit{Cleft in embedded}

\hspace{1cm}Mary thinks \textit{que} c’COP John \textit{qui} has all drunk

\hspace{1cm}'Mary thinks it’s John that drank everything up'

b. C’est Jean \textit{que} Marie pense \textit{qui} a tout bu \textit{Cleft in matrix}

\hspace{1cm}C’COP John \textit{que} Mary thinks \textit{qui} has all drunk

c. * C’est Jean \textit{qui} Marie pense qu’a tout bu \textit{Cleft in matrix}

\hspace{1cm}C’COP John \textit{qui} Mary thinks \textit{qu’a} has all drunk
the focalised subject has been raised from an embedded position (17):

(17) C’est Jean que [ Marie pense t[C'est Jean] qui tJean a tout bu ]

Is the higher C a Force°-que, ≠ Fin°-que/qui of the low clause?
The answer depends on the derivation we posit for the long-distance cleft: (i) complex computation involving movement of remnant chunks to the matrix clause; (ii) the COPULA itself selects a long-distance sentence as its complement - it is not the COP-foc-chunk that moves to the highest LP (18):

(18) C’est Jean que [ Marie pense t[Jean] qui tJean a tout bu ]

Rizzi&Shlonsky (2007), refined: que/qui alternation iif the S is extracted from the embedded clause AND it is the S of the clause where it is moved (also: local vs non-local movement).

Summary:
➢ TV&FR: declarative clefts require for the C ke/qu(e)/qu(i) to be phonetically realized;
➢ FR: ce quasi-argument, excluded in TV;
➢ TV: reverse clefts (only C/C focus), impossible in FR.

2.1 Clefting Strategies in interrogatives
TV: (i) wh-clefts always OK, even when the corresponding non-clefted wh-question is excluded (typical of NIDS, Poletto 1993, Poletto&Vanelli 1993, Benincà&Poletto 2004); (ii) SCII is compulsory, here the interrogative S clitic “-o” is used; (iii) three types of wh-clefts (19):

(19) a. Wh-phrase COP-(o) ke V…?
   Regular
b. COP-(o) Wh-phrase ke V…?
   Reverse
c. Wh-phrase ke V…?
   Reduced

FR, only regular (20a) and reverse (20b) clefts are possible.

**** SCII is productive in FR; however, ce+COPULA is never inverted (20c-d)!

(20) a. Wh-phrase c’copula que/qui V…? (French)
b. C’copula Wh-phrase que/qui…?
c. * Wh-phrase Copula-ce que/qui V…?
d. * Copula-ce Wh-phrase que/qui…?

Working question: could c’est be a reanalyzed cluster in this variety of FR?

The availability of reduced clefts is subject to (geographical) constraints (21a-b):

(21) a. Qui que t’as vu au marché? (CanFrench)
   Who que you’have seen at the market
   'Who did you see at the market?'
b. Ou qu’elle est partie avec Jean?
   Where qu’she is left with John
   'Where did she go with John?'
Canadian French (Mathieu 2009) might constitute the “missing link” between NIDs and European French.

2.1.1 *Interrogative Subject Clefts*

TV: (i) presence of a S-cl excluded from the low clause (22):

(22) a. **Ki ze-o *(ke) (*)el gà bevuo tuto el vin?**
    Who COP-o ke héc has drunk all the wine
    'Who is it that drank up the wine?'

    (Trevigiano)

b. **Ze-o ki *(ke) (*)el gà bevuo tuto el vin**
   COP-o who ke héc has drunk all the wine

c. **Ki *(ke) (*)el gà bevuo tuto el vin?**
   Who ke héc has drunk all the wine

(ii) yes/no subject clefts can be reverse (23a), or regular (23b-c):

(23) a. **Ze-o giani ke te gà parlà de sta roba?**
    COP-o John ke to.you has spoken of this thing
    'Is it John who told you about this?'

    (Trevigiano)

b. **Giani ze-o ke te gà parlà de sta roba?**
   John COP-o ke to.you has spoken of this thing
   surprise/disappointment

c. **Giani ze(*-o) ke te gà parlà de sta roba ?!**
   John COP-ke to.you has spoken of this thing
   ECHO

(iii) [-HUMAN] subject: kossa and ke, ≠ distribution (24a-c):

(24) a. **Kossa / *ke ze-o *(ke) ga spakà el piter?**
    Kossa / ke COP-o ke has broken the vase
    'What is it that broke the vase?'

    (Trevigiano)

b. **Kossa / *ke *(ke) ga spakà el piter?**
   Kossa / ke ke has broken the vase

c. **Kossa / *ke *(ke) ga spakà el piter?**
   Kossa / ke ke has broken the vase

b. **Ze-o ??kossa / ke *(ke) ga spakà el piter?**
   COP-o kossa / ke ke has broken the vase

FR: (i) [+HUMAN] wh-subject qui (“who”) (25a-b):

(25) a. **Qui c’èst *(qu(i)) a mangé toute la tarte?**
    Who c’COP qui has eaten all the cake
    'Who is it that ate up the cake?'

    Regular: √

b. **C’èst qui *(qu(i)) a mangé toute la tarte?**
   C’COP who qui has eaten all the cake
   Reverse: √

(ii) yes/no questions (26a-b):

(26) a. * Jean c’est qui a bu tout le vin?
    John c’COP qui has drunk all the wine
    'Is it John that drank up the wine?'

    Regular: ✗

b. **C’èst Jean qui a bu tout le vin?**
   C’COP John qui has drunk all the wine
   Reverse: ✓
(iii) [-HUMAN] subject: the wh-word qu(e) is excluded from all types of clefts. Quoi (27a-b):

(27) a. * Quoi c’est qu(i) a cassé le vase? Regular: X
   Quoi c’COP qu(i) has broken the vase
   'What is it that broke the vase?'

   b. C’est quoi qu(i) a cassé le vase? Reverse: ✔️
   C’COP quoi qu(i) has broken the vase

2.1.2 Interrogative Object Clefts

TV&FR: same as S clefts.

!!!! TV: low clause: a lexical S between ke and the S-cl degrades the sentence (28a-b):

(28) a. ?? Ki ze-o ke Toni I ga fregà? (Trevigiano)
   Who COP-o ke Tony heCL has ripped.off
   'Who is it that Toni ripped off?'

   b. Ki ze-o ke I ga fregà, Toni?
   COP-o who ke heCL has ripped.off # Toni
   'Toni, who is it that he ripped off?'

➡ there must be an adjacency requirement between the C and the S-cl in the low clause
(also witnessed by the impossibility of using the full forms of clitic pronouns - el ("he", realized as /l/, enclitic on the C).

Summary:
TV: two landing sites for wh-movement, Wh1 and Wh2, among which the COP(-o) appears. Wh2 and COP(-o)-deletion are not available for all speakers. [-HUMAN] wh-DOS: kossa occupies Wh1 (marginally Wh2); ke is only grammatical in Wh2.
FR: (i) impossible for c’est to undergo SCII; (ii) no reduced clefts (European varieties).

2. THE FINE STRUCTURE OF CLEFTS

On S extraction in Trevigiano

Unacceptability of S-cl in the low clause of S-clefts (7a-c): compatible with claim that in S relatives the S must be extracted from a vP-internal position, not from the higher criterial S position (Rizzi 1982, developed in Rizzi&Shlonsky 2007). Confirmed by S relatives (29b):

(29) a. Zé el bocia ke (*el) ze drio magnar tutti i biscoti (Trevigiano)
   COP the boy that heCL is PROGR eat all the biscuits
   'It’s the boy that’s eating up the biscuits'

   b. El bocia ke (*el) ze drio magnar tutti i biscoti el ze to fiol
   The boy that heCL is PROGR eat all the biscuits heCL is your son
   'The boy that’s eating up the biscuits is your son'

➡ S extraction directly out of the vP-shell must be at play in both S relatives and S clefts.
➡ in FR, in both constructions: OK to use the reduced C form qu’ instead of qui (30a-b): the C and the V in T° must be structurally adjacent:

(30) a. C’est la jeune femme qu’a mangé tous les biscuits (French)
   C’COP the young lady qu’has eaten all the biscuits
   'It’s the young lady that ate up the biscuits'
b. La jeune femme qu’a mangé tous les biscuits est ma copine
The young woman qu’has eaten all the biscuits is my girlfriend
‘The young lady that ate up the biscuits is my girlfriend’

My proposal: the split-IP of S relatives and S clefts must be truncated right above TP (SubjP not projected to avoid a violation in terms of Criterial Freezing (Rizzi 2006). Extraction of the S must be done as in (31):

\[ \text{[FocP Force°} \ldots \text{[FinP qui/ke [SubjP TP V \ldots [vp tS v° [vp tv \ldots]]]} \]

NOM case-assignment is not available in the low clause of clefts – the S raises to the high clause to be (exceptionally) assigned Case by the copula (ECA).

⇒ Also in non-S clefts, realizing a lexical S along with the S-clitic sounds degraded (32a-b):

(32) a. ?? Ze Nane ke e toze e gā vista al marçā
COP John that the girls theyCLF have seen at the market
'It’s John that the girls saw at the market'

b. ?? Ze el me can ke i tozati i gā moé
COP the my dog that the boys theyCL have let out
'It’s my dog that the boys let out'

| Working question: is SubjP always unavailable from the low clause of clefts? Maybe the S-cl realizes a clitic-head lower than Subj°?

2.1. The Cartography of Clefts

Belletti (2015) - A Focus Map of Clefts

Minimally needed assumptions:
(i) the copula selects a complement Small Clause (SC) reduced right above FocusP;
(ii) a predicative relation is established within the SC of clefts: PredP (33):

\[ \text{[COPULA [FocP Foc° [PredP Pred°} \ldots \text{[FinP that/che [TP T°]]]} \]

(iii) finally, two positions are exploited in the structure for the two types of focus:
- Focus of New Information (subject clefts): vP-peripheral (low) Focus position (as the NI postverbal S of null-subject languages as Italian) (34):

\[ \text{[TP Ce T°} \text{[FocP[NI] Sfoc [vP COP [CP} \ldots \text{[PredP [S Pred [FinP C [TP S V]}} \text{]]]]]} \]

- Corrective or Contrastive Focus (S- and non-S clefts): focus position in the LP of the complement of the copula (35):

\[ \ldots \text{COP [CP} \ldots \text{[FocP] Ofoe} \ldots \text{[PredP [?] Pred [FinP C [TP S V O(θP)]}} \text{]]]} \]

(iv) the it-S of clefts is a quasi-argument (Reeve 2010, 2011): ≠ from expletives, it raises from the SC, SpecPredP.
Derivation of a S or non-S cleft expressing corrective or contrastive focus (36):

\[
(36) \quad \left[ \text{TP} \cdots \text{FocNI} \left[ \text{vP COP} \left[ \text{CP} \cdots \text{FocPe/c} \text{Osc} \left[ \text{Pred} \left[ \text{FinP C [TP S V]} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]

Derivation of a S cleft expressing focus of new information:
The quasi-argument is merged in SpecPredP, intervention in terms of Relativized Minimality blocks S movement from TP to FocNI. Solution: Kayne&Pollock (2009)’s analysis of ce, [ce THING], merged directly in SpecPredP (37):

\[
(37) \quad \left[ \text{TP} \cdots \text{FocNI} \left[ \text{vP COP} \left[ \text{CP} \cdots \text{FocPe/c} \text{Osc} \left[ \text{Pred} \left[ \text{FinP C [TP S]} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]

When the S moves into FocNI there is no intervention (analysis of ce extended also to derivation of FocC/C).

2.2. Belletti (2015), revisited

Minimal theoretical assumption:
- cross-linguistically, the left and the low peripheries of the clause are structurally identical;
- ≠ languages might exploit ≠ left and low peripheral positions to convey similar meaning.

Redefining the status of c’est
SCII is banned from clefts in FR, despite being a productive question formation strategy:
(i) is it register? NO. SCII is not excluded from the oral varieties, if it was register, SCII of c’est should be optional;
(ii) this property does not derive from the nature of ce itself - it can undergo SCII (38a-b):

\[
(38) \quad \begin{cases} 
\text{a. Qui est-ce qui a vu Jean?} \\
\text{Who is-ce qui has seen Jean} \\
\text{’Who saw Jean?’} \\
\text{b. Serait-ce possible d’y aller en train ?} \\
\text{Would-ce possible of’there go in train} \\
\text{’Would it be possible to go there by train?’}
\end{cases}
\]

(iii) are est-ce que questions clefts with SCII on the ce-COP? NO, est-ce que also appears in genuine, information seeking yes/no questions.

My proposal: in oral FR, c’est is actually a reanalyzed whole, /se/. It behaves like a fully-fledged COPULA associated to a null expletive (39):

\[
(39) \quad \left[ \text{CopP } \text{Øexpl [se]} \right]
\]

Main difference between the interrogative clefts of the FR and TV does not lie in the absence of SCII in the former, but the presence of an overt expletive pronoun in the latter.

null expletives are attested in oral FR (n’empêche, (il) y a, (il) manquerait, (il) vaut/faut), but not null quasi-arguments (*il pleut);

natural development of the oral variety? Simplification of the structure: having an EXPL instead of a low quasi-argument solves most problems of intervention in the derivation.
2.2.1 The fine structure of declarative clefts

➡ more cleft types in TV than in FR: not all focal positions present in the vPs and CPs of bi-clausal questions might be cross-linguistically activated in the same ways and contexts.
➡ unsurprising if the focal positions exploited in the two systems were different!

My proposal(s):

(i) A simplified COP-selected LP

iff c’est is a crystallized unit /se/ and the S the COP is a real EXPL (merged directly in SpecCOP, not in the embedded LP), no intervention is expected when the S moves to Foc, then THING is no longer needed, nor is PredP ⇒ the COP of these varieties selects a COMP whose LP is even more deficient than it is in standard French ⇒ structural “simplification”?

(ii) TV can make use of the high Foc/C

TV: reverse declarative clefts of c/c focus: the relevant FocP must be higher than the position targeted by the COP, hence left peripheral.

Observations:
➡ clefts are bi-partite structures;
➡ 4 focal positions are projected;
➡ the vP-internal FocusP of the low clause is not involved in the derivation (C in low FinP);
➡ only three focal positions are available: (I) the left peripheral FocusP of the COPULA-selected SC; (II) the vP-internal FocusP of the COPULA; and (III) the left peripheral FocusP of the COPULA (41):

(40) \[ CP(\text{3rd}) \text{wh-phrase} \ldots [CP(\text{high}) \text{COP t}_{\text{wh-}} \ldots [TP \ldots ]] \]

(iii) declarative clefts of both varieties: I and II are available for FR&TV; III can only be exploited by TV. The third focal position, (III): exploited in TV in reverse declarative clefts - additional meaning than regular c/c clefts: express a certain degree of annoyance:
➡ [+EXCLAMATIVE] feature in the higher LP, checking done by the focalised element.

Pairing an addition in meaning to a more complex derivation seems theoretically desirable; unavailability of such structures in FR: inherent linguistic properties.

2.2.2 The fine structure of interrogative clefts

Minimal assumptions:
(i) wh-movement is cyclic;
(ii) clefted interrogatives involve further movement compared to the declarative counterparts;
(iii) wh-words are first moved to I, then undergo “regular” wh-movement to the matrix FocusP (III).

My proposal:

(i) unmarked case: the wh-word moves from its focalisation site to the matrix FocusP, and the COP moves higher (IntP? ForceP?) ⇒ reverse interrogative cleft (c’est wh-type);
(ii) to derive a “regular” interrogative cleft (wh-c’est-type) more structure is needed ⇒ an additional CP-domain is projected (41):

(41) \[ CP(\text{3rd}) \text{wh-phrase} \ldots [CP(\text{high}) \text{COP t}_{\text{wh-}} \ldots [TP \ldots ]] \]
This move might seem theoretically unfounded, but is actually justified by the presence, in closely-related varieties like Canadian French (Mathieu 2009), of regular doubling (RegD) and reverse doubling (RevD) clefts (42a-b):

(42) b. Où c’est qu’ c’est qu’ tu vas?  
    Where c’ COP qu’ c’ COP qu’ you go  
    “Where are (on Earth) you going?”

c. C’est où c’est que tu vas?  
    C’ COP where c’ COP qu’ you go

These tri-clausal structures clearly witness that a higher CP domain can indeed be projected in interrogative clefts - how and why this is done is subject for further research.

CONCLUSIONS

➡ the clefts of Trevigiano and contemporary oral French have morpho-syntactic peculiarities that shed light on lesser discussed aspects of the derivation of clefts: S extraction, the structure of the TP of the COP-selected SC, the natures of the COP and of the quasi-argument;  
➡ my data fit perfectly into Belletti’s "embedded" analysis (Haegeman et al. 2015):
    (i) the vP- internal FocP can be exploited by both varieties, in case of NI focus;  
    (ii) in case of C/C focus, FR can only use the FocP in the low clause, whereas in TV it can move up to the high LP (movement paired with additional meaning);  
    (iii) in interrogatives, both languages either use the matrix FocP, or they project a further CP and move the wh-word higher.
➡ there is cross-linguistic evidence for the presence of a higher CP, whose analysis I leave for further research.

REFERENCES


